



Illinois Council on Women and Girls

Chaired by Illinois Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton

Annual Report 2023

JULIANA STRATTON



OFFICE OF LT. GOVERNOR

Letter from the Chair – Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton

The Illinois Council on Women and Girls is committed to understanding the barriers impacting women, girls and non-binary people so that we may create avenues towards a more equitable future. It is important for us to acknowledge the challenges before us, as we seek to overcome those obstacles through meaningful actions. In 2023, we remained steadfast in our commitment to educating women on their rights, privileges and opportunities and empowering them to make use of the tools available. We remain committed in our support of women so they can access the economic, educational and social resources and services necessary to pursue a brighter future. As chair of the Council, I am proud of our collaborative spirit, fortitude and dedication to uplifting each other.

The Illinois Council on Women and Girls collaborates with stakeholders and community members to address various issues impacting women, while diligently pursuing progressive initiatives that will benefit women, girls and non-binary people. I'm proud that for the second year in a row, we have produced a "Know Your Rights" webinar to help educate and train the community and ourselves, on ways to be culturally competent partners and leaders against gender-based violence. We came together to surround communities impacted by senseless mass-gun-violence and we continue to honor survivors by listening to mental health and safety experts. We created space for our women and girls to share their ideas and visions for change in their local communities, because we know that the best ideas often come from those with lived experience. Perhaps most importantly, in 2023, we launched our inaugural Girls Lead program, which seeks to inspire and equip the next generation of women leaders by providing mentorship opportunities and unique experiences with women of the Illinois General Assembly and myself.

In this report, you will find highlights of the existing projects and upcoming plans for each of the Council's sub-committees. Reflecting upon our work, I express my deep appreciation to all members of the Council for their efforts to ensure the proper functioning of both their committees and the Council. I extend my unwavering gratitude for the incomparable support of my staff. As we welcome the new year, we will be sure to always remember that with every step forward, we clear a new path for generations to follow.

Respectfully,



Juliana Stratton
Illinois Lieutenant Governor
Chair, Illinois Council on Women and Girls

Executive Summary

Pursuant to 20 ILCS 5130/15, this report from the Illinois Council on Women and Girls (the “Council”) describes the creation, membership of the Council, and activities the Council conducted. The progress made on the Council’s policy and advocacy recommendations was provided to the Governor and General Assembly. The Council furnishes this report and its recommendations to improve the lives of women and girls as they relate to the four issue-based committees the Council opted to create, which include: **1) Gender-Based Violence, 2) Health & Healthcare, 3) Leadership & Inclusion, and 4) Academic & Economic Opportunity.**

Council Overview and Activities

The Illinois State Legislature established the Illinois Council on Women and Girls Act in 2018, sponsored by Illinois State Senator Jacqueline Collins and Illinois State Representative Anna Moeller. The statute mandates that the Council “advise the Governor and General Assembly on policy issues and initiatives impacting the lives of women and girls in Illinois.”ⁱ

The statute establishes a 32-member Council composed of ex-officio members representing state agencies, as well as individuals appointed by the Governor and the General Assembly.

Recommendations and Progress

During the Council’s Inaugural year, the committees made a total of 14 recommendations. There were four related to gender-based violence, four related to academic & economic opportunity, three related to leadership & inclusion, and three related to health & healthcare. In 2021, the Council built upon these recommendations to advise the Governor’s Office and General Assembly on ways to advance policies that improve the lives of women and girls throughout Illinois. While advancing issue-based recommendations, the Council formed a Girls Committee in 2021 to represent the voices of Illinois’ youth in the policy-making process. In 2022, the Council continued its work and members used their voices in advocacy to shape the efforts of essential initiatives. Highlights from 2022 include: hosting the first “Know your Rights” webinar, hearing from Girls in the Game organization, and holding our 4th Quarter Council meeting at Chicago Women in Trades.

Report Structure

This report restates the recommendations that were published in the 2021 Council on Women and Girls Report and discusses the progress that has been made by the Council on the recommendations in each issue area. It concludes with information on the Girls Committee as well as an update on state-level policy developments that are relevant to the Council’s work.

Lt. Governor Stratton, fourth from left, with U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Julie Su, and women from the Chicago Women in Trades – August 2023



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Lt. Governor Stratton greeting a supporter – October 2023

Council Overview and Activities

The goal of the Council, pursuant to the Illinois Council on Women and Girls Act (20 ILCS 5130/15), is to advise Governor JB Pritzker and the General Assembly on policy issues and initiatives impacting the lives of women and girls in Illinois. This mandate includes, but is not limited toⁱⁱ:

- Advancing civic participation of women and girls in Illinois.
- Advocating for programs and policies that work to end the gender pay gap and discrimination in professional and academic opportunities.
- Promoting resources and opportunities for academic and professional growth.
- Improving legal protections and recourse regarding sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Reducing violence against women.
- Improving standards of, and access to, healthcare in general and reproductive healthcare in particular.
- Researching the various points of impact a lack of access to healthcare has on the lives of women and girls.
- Improving protections for transgender individuals, especially protections against violence and harassment.
- Increasing fair and equal access to culturally competent healthcare, housing, employment, and other factors related to the quality of life.
- Disseminating information to, and building of relationships with, state agencies and commissions in furtherance of the Council's goals; and
- Increasing attention around the inclusion of women, especially those of color, in decision-making capacities.

Council Composition

The Illinois Council on Women and Girls is composed of the following 32 members:

- 16 public members appointed by the General Assembly
 - 4 appointed by the House Speaker
 - 4 appointed by the House Minority Leader
 - 4 appointed by the Senate President
 - 4 appointed by the Senate Minority Leader
- 1 representative of the Governor's Office appointed by the Governor
- 4 public members appointed by the Governor
- 11 ex-officio members or their designees
 - Lieutenant Governor
 - Chief of the Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services, Department of Human Services
 - Director, Executive Director or Superintendent of the following State Agencies:
 - Department on Aging
 - Department of Human Rights
 - Department of Children and Family Services
 - Department of Healthcare and Family Services
 - Department of Public Health
 - Department of Labor
 - State Board of Education
 - Board of Higher Education
 - Community College Board

Membership

Below are the public members appointed to the Council at the time of the creation of this report.

Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton, Chair	Ex-Officio Member
Marla Courts	Ex-Officio Member
Director Theresa Eagleson**	Ex-Officio Member
Agata Fieske-Nesheiwat	Ex-Officio Member
Jaclyn Matthews*	Ex-Officio Member
Jane Flanagan	Ex-Officio Member
Gloria Gibson	Ex-Officio Member
Director Sameer Vohra	Ex-Officio Member
Chris Smith	Ex-Officio Member
Jennifer Hebel	Ex-Officio Member
Sol Flores**	Governor's Office Representative
Veronica Espina	Public Member (Governor Appointed)
Alexa Rice	Public Member (Governor Appointed)
Nikita Richards*	Public Member (Governor Appointed)
Kaylyn Ahn	Public Member (Governor Appointed)
Ines Kutlesa*	Public Member (Minority Leader of the House Appointed)
Rhonda Thomas	Public Member (Minority Leader of the House Appointed)
Theresa Forthofer	Public Member (Minority Leader of the House Appointed)
Maaria Mozaffar*	Public Member (Speaker of the House Appointed)
Wendy Pollack	Public Member (Speaker of the House Appointed)
Kaethe Morris Hoffer	Public Member (Speaker of the House Appointed)
Dr. Vidhya Prakash*	Public Member (Minority Leader of the Senate Appointed)
Pamela Althoff	Public Member (Minority Leader of the Senate Appointed)
Sylvia Matos-Collins	Public Member (President of the Senate Appointed)

Rochelle Crump	Public Member (President of the Senate Appointed)
Amina Jaffer	Guest Member
Shreya Nallamothu	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Jessica Perez-Ferman	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Jessica Garcia	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Nandana Voolapalli	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Sydney Stewart	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Eleana Liu	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Nethmi Hewawitharana	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Annie Thomas	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Ranyia Cox	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Angela Guo	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Amelia Martin	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Maryam Abbas	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Jennie Ren	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Petra Petty	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Anna Gange	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member
Cherie Animashaun	Guest Member, Girls' Committee Member

* Denotes committee chair/co-chairs

** Denotes vacancy to be filled in 2024

Guest members are individuals who are not formally appointed but who are active with the Council. Guest members do not have a vote in official Council business. They are encouraged to participate in the meetings and may serve on committees formed by the Council.

The Creation and Convening of the Illinois Council on Women and Girls

Created by Illinois State Senator Jacqueline Collins and Illinois State Representative Anna Moeller, the Illinois Council on Women and Girls Act was signed into law in 2018. At its inaugural event in 2019, Governor JB Pritzker appointed Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton as the first chair of this Council.

In 2023, the Council held four quarterly meetings, which took place on February 21st, May 24th, September 5th, and December 12th. The quarterly meetings were held in a hybrid format (in-person and online).

Convening both virtually and in person, the Council carried forward recommendations, continued key topic conversations, and began to plan for future initiatives through its sub-committees. These four issue-based committees are: 1) Gender-Based Violence, 2) Health & Healthcare, 3) Leadership & Inclusion, and 4) Academic & Economic Opportunity. The committees convened virtually between Council meetings to discuss how to advance their recommendations.



Lt. Governor Stratton, center, with twin sisters Kyra and Phallon Pierce – March 2023

Recommendations and Progress Updates

Gender-Based Violence Committee

Sexual and gender-based violence “refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships,”^{iii, iv} including acts of domestic violence. The Gender-Based Violence Committee of the Council aims to reduce brutality against women, girls, and non-binary people, while simultaneously building partnerships for better state-wide resources for residents who are survivors of gender-based violence.

Recommendations:

The Committee continues to work on the following four recommendations regarding Gender-Based Violence:

1. Increasing visibility and support networks by implementing public awareness campaigns about gender-based violence and available resources in rural communities with messaging specific to veterans, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ communities.
2. Tracking the prevalence of gender-based violence across the State by collaborating with local governments.
3. Reducing the overall trauma associated with gender-based violence by ensuring that elementary and secondary school students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of gender-based violence can safely stay in school, succeed academically, and complete their education.

Progress Update:

During Women’s History Month, the Gender- Based Violence Committee held its second installment of the “Know Your Rights” webinar series, cohosted by Chairperson of the Gender-Based Violence Committee, Ines Kutlesa and Lieutenant Governor

Juliana Stratton. The event brought together a diverse panel representing different communities and regions in Illinois to discuss their work in addressing gender-based violence and the significance of cultural competency in service development and delivery. We delved into the cultural and other unique challenges survivors encounter. It was a priority to also address additional barriers faced by individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals and families, immigrants, LGBTQ+, rural communities, and communities of color.

“Know Your Rights” was moderated by Amanda Pyron, *Executive Director of The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence*, a member-based nonprofit organization made of more than 40 direct-service providers working with survivors of gender-based violence in the greater Chicago area. The Network operates the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline and provides education and technical training for gender-based violence professionals and the community through their Centralized Training Institute. The Network is a community leader in advocating for survivor-centered policies across Illinois.

“Know Your Rights” Panelists included: Jae Rice, *Interim CEO & Director of Communications at Brave Space Alliance*, the first Black-led, trans-led LGBTQ+ Center located on the South Side of Chicago, dedicated to creating and providing affirming, culturally competent, for-us by-us resources, programming, and services for LGBTQ+ individuals on the South and West sides of the city; Ji Hye Kim, *Executive Director of KAN-WIN*, whose mission is to eradicate gender-based violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault, especially for women and children across Asian American communities and beyond through culturally competent services, community engagement, and advocacy in English, Korean, Chinese, and Mongolian; Linda Xóchitl Tortolero, *President & CEO of Mujeres Latinas en Acción*, a bilingual/bicultural organization that seeks to empower Latinas and their families to become self-reliant, take full advantage of available and new opportunities to improve their lives by developing a comprehensive array of social services and advocacy

initiatives that promote non-violence and leadership development; and Dona Leanard, *Executive Director of the Crisis Center Foundation*, a Jacksonville, Illinois-based organization that operates a 24/7 crisis hotline and emergency shelter where supportive services are provided for women, men, and their dependents who are victims of domestic violence.

Ines Kutlesa, event cohost and *Chief Executive Officer*, represented **Guardian Angel Community Services** at the event. Having operated for over 125 years, Guardian Angel Community Services is the oldest social service organization in Will County. This year, Guardian Angel commemorated the Groundwork Domestic Violence Programs’ 40-year anniversary. The organization’s mission is to provide diverse services that inspire people to improve the quality of their lives in their greatest time of need. Comprehensive services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault are provided through Groundwork, Suzy’s Caring Place, and the Sexual Assault Services Center. The agency also operates a Partner Abuse Intervention Program, Exchange Club Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, and Foster Care, and serves thousands of people annually through prevention education and community outreach.

Following a presentation on agency programs and services, a robust conversation, and Q&A session, participants were issued with a resource list of services available. The Gender-Based Violence Committee also selected its next project – an educational campaign on the Victims’ Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA).



The second installment of the “Know Your Rights” campaign’s virtual series held during Women’s History Month in 2023.

Academic & Economic Opportunity Committee

The Academic & Economic Opportunity Committee focuses on policies and programs that break down barriers and build pathways for women to succeed academically, professionally, and economically.

Recommendations:

The Committee continues to work on the following four recommendations regarding Academic & Economic Opportunity:

1. Empowering girls and young women by creating opportunities to engage with the executive branch on priority issues within their communities.
2. Integrating efforts to better serve students and parents on and around Illinois military bases by increasing collaboration among existing institutions, like the Illinois Educational Opportunities for Military Children Council and the Military Economic Development Committee.
3. Allowing more women to enter and remain in the workforce by increasing access to affordable childcare, especially for working women and women in school.
4. Encouraging girls and women to pursue higher education to increase their wage potential by creating greater opportunities for trauma-informed services for students who experience gender-based violence.

Progress Update:

The Academic & Economic Opportunity Committee focused on recruiting new members and began to reestablish new ideas for 2024 and beyond. As this committee collects new perspectives, its members remain committed to amplifying the voices of women and girls and the Council at large.

Leadership & Inclusion Committee

The Leadership & Inclusion Committee works to construct avenues for women and girls to access leadership opportunities in all fields.

Recommendations:

The Committee continues to work on the following three recommendations regarding Leadership & Inclusion:

1. Encouraging the involvement of women and girls in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) career pipelines by examining existing and new opportunities for entry. Specifically, opportunities to enter STEAM career pipelines should be focused on access for current and former youth in foster care, youth with disabilities, youth from LGBTQ+ communities, immigrants and refugees, and racially diverse groups.
2. Informing school groups about how engagement in our systems of government can expand opportunities for underrepresented people by utilizing local youth advisory boards led by elected leaders.
3. Improving professional opportunities by encouraging the expansion of internships targeting young women through partnerships between schools and high-growth industries

Progress Update:

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Illinois ranks 25th in the U.S. for the percent of women in a state legislature with about 41 percent of the legislature being women.

For adult women, there are many external factors impacting the disparity in female leadership in boardrooms, on committees or taskforces, and in policy-making positions. These factors include, but are not limited to a lack of institutional support, socioeconomic barriers, maternity leave policies, and a lack of access to professional networking & mentoring

groups. The Leadership and Inclusion Committee continues to identify these obstacles and is committed to creating a pipeline for Illinois girls to attain career opportunities by providing them with exposure and practical experiences.

The recognition of gaps in access led to the launch of Illinois Girls Lead on May 1, 2023. The initiative received over 225 applications and ultimately 33 girls were enrolled. The Leadership and Inclusion Committee built the program and application process, created program documents, conducted interviews, identified community stakeholders and partners including school district superintendents, counselors, youth group organizations, and social services, garnered the support of State assemblywomen and guardians, and worked closely with the Office of the Lt. Governor to carry out a successful program.

These deserving girls were paired with women legislators from their districts, and took part in mentorship opportunities including career shadowing days and research projects.

Meryem Uysal ~ *I shadowed with my female role model, State Representative Nabeela Syed. I would like to thank the Girls Lead Program for providing me with this amazing opportunity. I truly enjoyed every moment of this experience and feel honored to have been selected for this program.*

Helena Garcia ~ *Thank you for allowing me to be a part of such a great program!*

Brinda Prasanna ~ *I really enjoyed being part of this program and I really enjoyed learning about some issues in my district.*

These amazing girls participated in research ranging from affordable housing in Illinois to informal care provider support. As a result of Illinois Girls Lead's inaugural program, several developments are now underway:

- An OP-ED co-authored by an Illinois Girl Lead participant with the Lt. Governor Stratton;

- A Girls Lead Cohort report published on website; and
- End-of-Program Recognition Celebration

In preparation for the new year, we're evaluating opportunities for growth and additional committee initiatives. We will continue to support Lt. Governor Stratton's work to improve the lives of women and girls throughout Illinois.



Lt. Governor Stratton with Girls Lead participant, Georgette G. - August 2023

Health & Healthcare Committee

The Health & Healthcare Committee recommended policies related to health and healthcare access for women and girls in Illinois.

Recommendations:

The Committee continues to work on the following recommendations regarding Health & Healthcare:

1. Highlighting healthcare disparities by improving data collection.
2. Supporting communities experiencing gun violence and other forms for violence.
3. Expanding and improving health and healthcare access for women and girls.

4. Expanding access to postpartum healthcare coverage to reduce maternal-care disparities.
5. Increasing access to substance use and mental health services for pregnant and postpartum women to reduce rates of maternal morbidity.

Progress Updates:

The Health and Healthcare Committee hosted a powerful webinar panel discussion, “**Gun Violence: A Public Health Crisis**” on June 28, 2023. The conversation was moderated by Council member Sylvia Matos-Collins and Girls Committee member Shreya Nallamothe, and featured experts on healthcare, mental health, and violence prevention. Panelists included Dr. Scott Pasichow (SIU School of Medicine), Dr. Richard Austin (SIU School of Medicine), Jen McGowan-Tomke (NAMI-Chicago), and Chris Patterson (Crown Family Philanthropy). Key takeaways from the session were that gun violence is not and should not be the norm, gun violence affects all of us, and our communities grieve with every act of gun violence. Data must be the foundation for solutions and shaping of policies. Further, we must steer clear of false dichotomies in order to foster honest dialogues about the impact of gun violence. The Health and Healthcare Committee is grateful to have heard the panelists’ perspectives on gun violence prevention and strategies to improve public safety in Illinois. The Committee continues to make progress on a formal statement calling for laws and initiatives to prevent violence due to firearms.

Girls Committee

The Girls Committee provides input on the Council’s existing work, including reports and programming, while pursuing their own projects as a standing committee. Council member Jackie Matthews leads the Girls Committee.

The newly elected 2023 Girls Committee members held their first meeting on Dec. 19, 2022. The Girls Committee established three new leadership positions to help guide the work and organization of the Committee:

- **Chair:** Facilitates committee meetings and guides the agenda, sends reminder emails about upcoming meetings, delegates action items for projects.
- **Vice Chair:** Serves as Chair in the case of Chair’s absence, assists with delegating action items, checks in with project leads on progress.
- **Secretary:** Takes meeting minutes and attendance, sends follow-up emails, keeps track of next steps and action items for different committee members.

At the Feb. 7, 2023 meeting, Girls Committee members nominated themselves and each other for the three leadership positions. Each nominee gave brief 1-minute remarks about their interest and qualifications for the role. Girls Committee members voted to elect the following members:

- **Chair:** Angela Guo
- **Vice Chair:** Shreya Nallamothe
- **Secretary:** Maryam Abbas

The members also brainstormed areas of interest pertaining to the broader Council’s four issue sub-committees: Leadership & Inclusion, Health & Health Care, Academic & Economic Opportunity, and Gender-Based Violence. Their many areas of interest spanned topics including offering support for new immigrant women and families, girls in STEM, social media safety and body image protection for girls, and raising awareness of resources for victims of gender-based violence.

Illinois State Representative Barbara Hernandez served as the guest speaker for the March 1, 2023, Girls Committee meeting. Rep. Hernandez spoke about her efforts as a co-sponsor of Public Act 102-0340, which requires schools to provide menstrual hygiene products in bathrooms, about her other legislative priorities pertaining to women and girls, and about her professional journey as a woman elected official. Girls Committee members also shared their own experiences with the implementation of Public Act 102-0340 in their local schools and how the law has impacted them, their peers, and their community.

The conversation about disparities in implementation – with some schools not having menstrual products at all, some schools frequently running out of products, and other schools experiencing vandalism of the product dispensers in boys’ bathrooms – inspired State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders to focus his March 7, 2023, Weekly Message newsletter column about Women’s History Month on the law, its purpose, and its importance.

Illinois State Senator Karina Villa joined the March 22, 2023, Girls Committee meeting to discuss her career path and her leadership related to enacting Public Act 102-0055, which requires every public high school to include a unit of instruction on media literacy in its curriculum. Sen. Villa went on to speak about harnessing her passion as a social worker to successfully run for office, and channel her commitment to children and families into legislation.

Meanwhile, the Girls Committee members were assigned to each of the Council’s four issue sub-committees and met in groups to develop project proposals for the Committee to focus on that 1) were able to be completed within the next six months, 2) were feasible for the Committee to achieve, and 3) allowed for all members of the Committee to contribute and participate.

At the April 19, 2023, Girls Committee meeting, Illinois State Board of Education Director of Governmental Affairs Hector Rodriguez provided a live tour and demonstration of how to navigate the

Illinois General Assembly website (ilga.gov) to track bills, file witness slips, and understand the legislative activity of General Assemblymembers.

Girls Committee members also presented project proposals and voted on which of those projects the Committee will pursue.

At the May 3, 2023, Girls Committee meeting, representatives from the Praxis Institute, working with the Illinois State Board of Education and the Center for Childhood Resilience at Lurie Children’s Hospital, conducted a focus group with Committee members about what it means to feel safe at school and how Committee members know their school cares for their mental health. The focus group was part of a state-level effort to develop a Resilient Schools Designation that schools in Illinois will be able to earn to demonstrate their commitment to trauma-informed practices.

The project selected by the Girls Committee is a newsletter for girls in Illinois. Committee members worked in their issue sub-committees to develop content for four sections: (1) Academic Opportunities in Illinois, (2) Internships, Jobs, and Summer Programs, (3) Stories and Interviews of Role Models, (4) Cultural Calendar and New Legislation for Schools and Women.

Girls Committee members also volunteered to support the Leadership & Inclusion sub-committee by reviewing applications to the new Girls Lead pilot program.

Illinois State Representative Nabeela Syed joined the June 14, 2023, Girls Committee meeting as the guest speaker. She described what inspired her to pursue public service and elected office, her successes and challenges along the way, the issues she focuses on as a lawmaker, and her accomplishments and future plans. The Girls Committee members were tremendously inspired by her passion and experiences as one of the youngest members ever elected to serve in the Illinois General Assembly.

On June 28, 2023, Committee member Shreya Nallamothe moderated a webinar panel discussion –

“**Gun Violence: A Public Health Crisis**” – featuring experts on healthcare, mental health, and violence prevention, hosted by the Health and Healthcare Committee.

The Girls Committee members completed the first draft of their newsletter in July and met again on Aug. 30, 2023, to discuss issues facing girls in the new school year. This discussion informed their focus for the remainder of the 2023 term.

Progress Updates:

The 2023 Girls Committee will have a final meeting, after which they will submit reflections on their Council experience. Councilmember Jackie Matthews will lead the launch of the application for the 2024 Girls Committee.

The 2024 members of the Girls Committee will serve on the four issue-based committees of the Council. They will attend Council and sub-committee meetings and give their input, as well as meet as a standing committee to develop their own platform for the upcoming year.

Next Steps

The Council will build on its recommendations and continue to work alongside organizations, state agencies, the legislative body, as well as with women and girls across the state, to engage in mindful gender-focused policy and advocacy. As various national and statewide issues occur, the Council will continue to center the voices of women, girls, and non-binary residents in Illinois’ policymaking.

Acknowledgments

The Illinois Council on Women and Girls is made up of appointed and ex-officio members who contributed their time, talent, and ideas to the work of the Council and this report. The Council is extremely grateful to the governmental bodies, non-profit organizations, and companies that gave their time to support the Illinois Council on Women and Girls. The Office of Lieutenant Governor Stratton served in an administrative capacity to support all works of the Council.

References

Editor’s note: discrepancies in how studies obtained data limit continuity for statistics related to sex and gender referenced in this report. This report uses the terms such as women, cisgender women, and female according to terms used from the source material for supporting data.

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