



Philadelphia
Commission for Women



Annual Report

2018



Message from Mayor Jim Kenney

I am pleased to share the second annual report produced by the Philadelphia Commission for Women. This report shines a light on issues that many women experience today. My administration remains dedicated to pursuing policies that promote economic empowerment and wage equity, alleviate poverty and its disproportionate effects on women, and foster environments where women can thrive.

We must protect the rights women have fought so hard to win, while we continue to fight for the rights that women deserve. This includes rights like workplace equality, access to reproductive healthcare, and the continued demand for racial and gender equality. While protecting these rights, we must remain focused on intersectionality and the unique challenges faced by women of color, trans women, women with disabilities, and challenges based on sexual orientation and gender expression.

This year, we have a lot to celebrate, but also a lot more work to do. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld the Philadelphia Beverage Tax, which offers renewed hope for tens of thousands of Philadelphia women, children and families who struggle to better their lives in the face of rampant poverty.

These families – and Philadelphia as a whole – now have a clear path toward substantive, tangible improvements in their lives. It is a path that will bring the educational gains of free, quality pre-K, the benefits to neighborhoods brought by programs and services offered at our Community Schools, and the quality of life improvements brought by rebuilding our city's aging parks, recreation centers, playgrounds and libraries. These programs, funded by the beverage tax, will fuel the aspirations and dreams of those who have waited too long for investments in their communities.

In 2017, my administration began a comprehensive review of our policies and practices around sexual harassment prevention training, reporting, and investigations. The result of this work will be implemented within the Executive Branch with a new Executive Order and governing policy. This will provide the framework for improved training, reporting and investigations of such incidents. These, in turn, will provide concrete, tangible steps towards ensuring a professional work environment free from sexual harassment and discrimination. Our hard-working City employees deserve nothing less.

Through these changes and more, the Philadelphia Commission for Women has been a critical and persistent voice in representing the women who work and live in Philadelphia. The Commission's input and guidance has helped ensure that my administration continues to implement and advocate for policies that will help all women thrive.

I am confident that the end result will be a stronger and more vibrant Philadelphia. The women serving on this commission have proven that they are committed to helping all women succeed, and I look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,

James F. Kenney
Mayor

Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown

To the Women of Philadelphia

I am proud to present you with the 2018 Annual Report from the Philadelphia Commission for Women. This report continues to unveil issues that many women experience across our great City as well as contributes to my office's legislative agenda and how we work to resolve them. My office and the entire City Council remain steadfast in pursuing policies that promote wage equity and economic empowerment, alleviate poverty and its disproportionate effects on women, and foster stable living and working environments for women, no matter their zip code or socioeconomic background. We are dedicated to providing women and girls economic security as well as positively impacting health, education, hunger, inequality, jobs and growth across Philadelphia.

One of the greatest takeaways from last year's report for me was the fact that a zip code could increase or decrease a woman's life expectancy in Philadelphia by 20 years. If that is not the definition of the birth lottery, I do not know what is. That fact might not surprise some because Philadelphia has one of the highest poverty rates of the top ten biggest cities in the country, but it should certainly incite us to do better by our women and girls.

A society is often evaluated by how they both treat and value their women and children. I can assure you that Philadelphia holds ours in the highest regard and we are putting forth the legislation to make certain that value is reflected. No longer should a zip code determine a young woman's destiny. We, as elected officials, must ensure that each woman and child is equipped to decide their own limitless futures and possibilities.

The imperative for women's economic empowerment is clear. Greater gender equality boosts economic growth and leads to better development outcomes. It contributes to reducing income inequality and boosting economic diversification and, in turn, supports economic resilience. Women's economic empowerment can therefore be fundamental to strengthening women's rights and enabling women to have control over their lives and exert influence in society. Empowering women and girls also stops them from being disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and exploitation.

Experts predict that it will take more than 170 years to close the economic gender gap at the current rate of change, but when we think about economic empowerment, we must also look at the social, psychological, and cultural factors that measure economic success. We must also stop viewing empowerment as something that we do for somebody else and put in place structures that enable choice and decisions by women and girls themselves.

We must collectively build ladders to better paying jobs for women by removing barriers to entry in male-dominated fields. We must increase the minimum wage and increase the availability of high-quality, affordable childcare. Women must be able to meet caregiving responsibilities and employers must provide paid family and medical leave. We must also stop the never-ending assault on women's access to reproductive healthcare they need. We must fight every day for a woman's ability to participate in her community as an economic actor, in order to make decisions for her own financial well-being, as well as that of her family. It is no secret. I have learned to be unapologetic -sometimes dogmatic as I have dedicated my career to putting people first and advocating for women, children, and their families across the City of Philadelphia. I will continue to work with you and for you.

In Service,



Blondell Reynolds-Brown
Councilwoman At-Large



Office of Public Engagement **Ajeenah Amir, Director**



It is my immense pleasure to congratulate the Philadelphia Commission for Women and the Office of Engagement for Women for the release of their 2018 Annual Report. Since joining the team as Director for the Office of Public Engagement earlier this year, I have been continuously impressed with the passion demonstrated by the Philadelphia Commission for Women, and the ideas that have been actualized as a result.

As you will discover in this report, the commission has used their voice, energy and talent in numerous ways to influence city policy, and raise awareness about issues that impact the most vulnerable among us, all to move women and girls of Philadelphia forward. Whether it was providing space for female entrepreneurs to network and learn from each other, providing toiletries and personal care items to women desperately in need, or providing enriching mentorship experiences to young women and girls, the PCW and Office of Engagement for Women work together to make a collective impact in their work. Their powerful and meaningful engagement with Philadelphia's women and girls over the past year is commendable and shows their unwavering dedication to improving lives of women and girls in Philadelphia.

Our current times require all of us to speak up, work and fight to preserve the freedoms and rights that our mothers and grandmothers gained, and keep pressing forward to make our city, country and world even better for our children. I'm so proud to work with a team of women that not only are leaders and trailblazers in their professional lives, but also are diligent in their desire and efforts to connect with and learn from the spectrum of women across the city. Together, they are building a community of empowered women and girls in Philadelphia.

Philadelphia Commission for Women **Felicia D. Harris, Chair**



The Philadelphia Commission for Women is committed to serving as a voice for women across our great city. While we are just two years in progress, our commission strives to be an example to the nation of how representation for women's equality and unity should look.

The work of our commission has never been more important. I believe, as women, our united voice is crucial to ensuring human decency, fairness, and a sustainable future for our children. Our voices make a difference in every aspect of our lives, whether its full possession of our personhood, making a difference at the ballot box, demanding accountability from our elected officials, or closing the gender wage gap.

During our first year, we spent time in communities across the city hearing from you about issues most important to women. We have also held two annual summits during the month of March for women and girls. Both sold out and were warmly received. From the feedback received at our summit and from our public meetings, our commission decided to spend time exploring Economic Empowerment as it impacts Education, Pay Equity, Entrepreneurship and Mentoring.

We've been extremely busy and we're just getting started! Special thanks to all those who have volunteered their time to work with us and to those organizations who have collaborated with us: Black Women's Health Alliance, Maternity Care Coalition, New Voices for Reproductive Justice Pennsylvania Street Harassment Advisory Task Force, Philadelphia Reentry Coalition, Philadelphia Sexual Assault Advisory Committee, Cristo Rey Work Study Program, Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania, the Women's Law Project and Women Organized Against Rape. These strategic partnerships are valuable as we work together to enhance the social and economic outcomes for women and their families.

Our collaboration with the progressive members of City Council are critical for advancing legislation that not only benefits women and their families, but all Philadelphians. We are particularly grateful for the continued legislative leadership of Councilwomen Blondell Reynolds Brown and Helen Gym, and Councilman William Greenlee who consistently champion initiatives that increase opportunities that help lift our residents out of poverty.

As Chair of the Commission, I am honored and humbled to serve the women and girls of our city. I am confident that through continued hard work, focus, and collaboration, we will continue to achieve our goals.

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Acknowledgments

The Philadelphia Commission for Women and the Mayor's Office of Engagement for Women would like to express our sincere appreciation to the thoughtful contributions of University of Pennsylvania Fels Institute of Government Fellow Mollie Williamson, author of "Human Trafficking in Philadelphia: An Overview" and individuals who were generous with their time and expertise who were interviewed for this article.

We also express our sincere gratitude to the People's Paper Co-op Fellows Faith Bartley, Latyra Blake and Teresa Saunders who with assistance from Courtney Bowles and Mark Strandquist

provided a compelling account of the 2nd Reentry Day Symposium and the recommendations that emerged from the women who attended.

We also wish to thank contributors Latonya "T" Myers, Nikki Lee-Smith and Chasity Alexander.

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Economic Empowerment: Strategies for Lifting Women and Families

From its inception, created by legislation authored by Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown, the Philadelphia Commission for Women has focused on our mission to promote civic, educational and economic policies for women and provide advice and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on policies and programs that advance equal rights and opportunities for women in the City of Philadelphia. We expanded that mission to include girls because we believe that making a lasting impact on gender equality and equity is a lifelong proposition. It is incumbent on us to support efforts that nurture girls and enable them to become healthy, smart, successful women.

Our first report, the State of Women and Girls of Philadelphia 2017, provided a baseline and a roadmap for how we would proceed. We started with the premise that our advocacy on behalf of women and girls would be approached using an intersectional lens that considers how race, ethnicity,

age, economic circumstances, sexual orientation, gender expression, zip code and a range of experiences impact gender inequality. We learned a lot:

- Women in Pennsylvania still earn 79 cents to every dollar earned by white males.
- For African American women its 58 cents and Latinas earn 56 cents for every dollar earned by white males.
- Philadelphia's persistent poverty rate of 25.7 percent has a devastating impact on quality of life for women and their families.
- Even though women make up to 52 percent of the City's population they own less than 40 percent of the City's businesses.
- African American women who comprise 44 percent of the population, only own 25 percent of the City's businesses.

Economic Empowerment: Strategies for Lifting Women and Families

- Philadelphia has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the nation.
- Sixty percent of Philadelphia's children under 18 are growing up in female headed households.
- Women remain underrepresented in STEM/STEAM occupations.
- Eighty percent of incarcerated women are mothers, yet there are few reentry programs tailored to their circumstances as mothers and caregivers.

Considering these factors, the commission made the decision to focus on Economic Empowerment for Fiscal Year 2018 and to make Economic Empowerment the theme for the 2018 Summit for Women and Girls. We will continue that focus. At a time when we are experiencing many setbacks—draconian immigration policies that separate children from their parents, barriers to access to affordable healthcare and the ominous threat to *Roe v. Wade*—victories have been few. However, we can look ahead with optimism and hope for cultural shifts that have the potential to have a long-term influence on the economic future and well-being of women and continue to cultivate partnerships to help develop strategies to lift women out of poverty.

Tarana Burke's #MeToo movement has had an unprecedented impact on awareness of workplace behavior. Employers, including the City of Philadelphia, are taking a second look at policies to prevent sexual harassment and make perpetrators of sexual misconduct more accountable. Our office was instrumental in helping to develop the new policy that requires that every City of Philadelphia employee receive sexual harassment prevention training and be made familiar with reporting incidents of sexual harassment.

We can also celebrate the recent PA Supreme Court decision that has allowed the Philadelphia Beverage Tax to prevail providing the resources to expand early childhood education, support Community Schools and rebuild the city's parks, libraries and recreation centers.

Over the course of the past year our advocacy for wage equity has not faltered. We continue to support legislation that would prohibit employers from asking job applicants questions regarding salary history and legislation calling for fair work schedules. Efforts to increase the minimum wage would help to bridge the gender wage gap and go a long way to helping Philadelphia's women achieve more economic security. We also provided testimony to support legislation to provide sexual harassment prevention training for all City workers. The outcome has been the City of Philadelphia's updated sexual harassment policy with a focus on more training and more accountability.

We are particularly grateful to the People's Paper Co-op fellows who authored the "Women's Bill of Rights: A Blueprint for Keeping Women Free" that captures the poignant voices of formerly incarcerated women. Their essay is at the heart of an inclusive public engagement process that the Commission and the Office of Public Engagement seeks as a norm for exploring public policy solutions to the issues that stand in the way of economic security.

State of Women and Girls
Report 2017
Year in Review



The first ever State of Women and Girls Report 2017 was released in September 2017. In addition to a summary of the report, the Commission released the data from the 2017 Summit which informed the commission's priority to focus on economic empowerment. Highlights of the report:

- Philadelphia is the only city among the nation's 10 largest where women comprise more of the external workforce than men.
- Women hold 57.5 percent of the jobs in education and medicine in the city.
- The median wage for women in Philadelphia is \$29,816, trailing \$35,599 for men.
- Domestic violence remains a growing challenge for women. In 2015, women were the victims of 19 homicides due to intimate partner violence.
- According to the CDC, 14 percent of 9th to 12th graders in Philadelphia attempted suicide in 2015, with the rate of increase greatest for girls 10 to 14 years old.
- The City of Philadelphia has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the nation at eight infant deaths for every 1,000 births.

At the September 2017 meeting to release the report the commission also kicked off recruitment for the Policy and Advocacy, Entrepreneurship, Education, Mentorship and Pay Equity work groups. The online edition included a link to the first ever Philadelphia Reentry Coalition's Women in Reentry Report. The Commission was also pleased to learn that the Office of Adult Education shared an excerpt from the 2017 State of Women and Girls Report to their 14,000 online newsletter subscribers and partners.



March 23, 2018 marked the day that history was made. A diverse group of women came together for the 2nd Annual Summit for Women and Girls hosted by the Philadelphia Commission for Women. At the summit, many amazing speakers graced the stage: Commissioner Felicia Harris, 6ABC News host Tamala Edwards, CEO of the American Jewish History Museum Ivy Barsky, Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds-Brown, and Mayor Jim Kenney.

As I walked into the room the spring sun illuminated the area, scents of fresh tulips bathed the room. The variety of skin colors, ages and status created an atmosphere of unity among strangers. How could one event influence hundreds of bonds—a moment of change? Everyone spoke in a genuine tone with good vibes throughout the audience planting seeds of curiosity that will surely bloom. A mixture of inspiration and trust filled me. With all the evil and oppression in the world, I knew that change was about to happen and it would start with us—women. We mustn't let time pass, but rather reclaim it.

Each speaker was a gift, but the address that gave me goosebumps was the keynote speaker and founder of The Black Voters Matter Fund, Latosha Brown. Brown held the audience in her hands with her stage presence and southern charm. She spoke of her journey on the path of encouraging black people in Alabama to register to vote, and then turnout to vote.

Brown told us of the oppression that Alabama and its impoverished residents have gone through. She told us that her sharing was not for others to feel disheartened, but to realize the greatness that came from these women in spite of oppression and poverty. Brown's lecture was uplifting for all women.

In 2018, women are still paid less than men, women are sexually harassed and abused, and our President has openly disrespected and harassed women. These facts are disheartening, but that shouldn't be discouraging. We as woman should be compelled to rise above these problems and create a revolution—seize our time—whether our time is today or tomorrow, our time will be reclaimed.

Chasity Alexander
Cristo Rey High School
Class of 2019



Personal Care Collection Drive for Survivors of Human Trafficking

For the second year, in partnership with the Hope Bag Mission, the Philadelphia Commission for Women commemorated Human Trafficking Awareness Month in January 2018 by hosting a personal care collection drive. The drive collected more than 850 personal care items distributed to agencies that provide social services and shelter to survivors of Human Trafficking and underscores our partnership with the Philadelphia Anti-Trafficking Coalition.

Cristo Rey Work Study Program

For the second year, the Office of Engagement for Women mentored high school girls in grades 9-12. Each girl participated in two and a half month rotations, and attended the Office of Public Engagement and Office of Engagement for Women meetings, helped plan public events, assisted with data entry and observed City Council meetings when issues of affordable healthcare, reproductive justice, pay equity and unstable work hours were on the agenda. Cristo Rey Philadelphia was founded in 2015 and is part of a nationwide network of 35 independent Catholic high schools. All of their graduates have been accepted to four-year colleges.

Public Meetings

Over the course of the fiscal year the commission hosted several public meetings to inform and engage policy stakeholders around issues that impact women and their families, and most importantly to receive stakeholder feedback. Each meeting is summarized with a set of recommendations.

Public Policy 101, November 15, 2017

The Policy and Advocacy committee planned a panel discussion which included Councilman William Greenlee, Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown, Assistant Policy Director Yuan Huang, State Representative Morgan Cephas, Pennsylvania Commissioner for Women Jazelle Jones, and representatives from the offices of Congressman Brendan Boyle and Senator Bob Casey providing an overview of the top initiatives of their offices. They offered these recommendations for influencing public policy:

- Know who your legislators are and meet with them.
- Contact your legislators. Legislators pay attention to phone calls, letters and emails.
- Do your homework—become well versed on the pros and cons of your issue.
- Form coalitions—there's strength in numbers.
- Get Involved—organize around your issue.
- Bring your support and talent to the effort.
- Vote.

Time's Up—No More Silence: Sexual Harassment at the Workplace, January 30, 2018

In response to publicized incidents of sexual harassment and assault, the meeting opened with Oprah Winfrey's moving 2018 Golden Globe Awards speech. Panelists included Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown; State Representative Margo Davidson; Carol Tracy, Executive Director and Terry Fromson, Managing Attorney of the Women's Law Project; Jackie Linton, Director of Human Resources and Talent, City of Philadelphia; Dana Johnson, Mayor's Office of Labor Relations; and Pamela Gwatney, Deputy Director of the Philadelphia Human Relations Commission.

Citing Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin and religion (and in Philadelphia, gender identity), panelists discussed confidentiality agreements, elected officials accused of harassment and what to do if you are harassed. They made the following recommendations:

- Keep good records. Document time, date and location.
- If a crime has been committed, in the case of assault, file a police report.
- Note the name/names of bystanders (if any).
- Follow procedures outlined by your employer.
- Report sexual harassment to the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations.
- Confidentiality agreements should be up to the victim.
- Report any incidents of retaliation.
- Remedies for elected officials vary. In many cases non-disclosure settlement agreements have protected perpetrators. Ultimately voters have the last word.

Economic Empowerment Summit for Women and Girls: Reclaiming Our Time, March 23, 2018

For the Commission's second annual summit to commemorate Women's History Month, over 200 women and girls came together at the National Museum of Jewish American History and were engaged with a choice of workshops that included "Business Start Up 101," organized by Commissioners Katelyn Feldstein and Anne Wakabayashi; "Know Your Value," a workshop for teens and young women organized by Commissioner Tiphonie White; and "Overcoming Barriers in the Tech Industry: Breaking the Gender Firewall," organized by Commissioners Roxanne Horrell and Karen Bojar.

Graciously welcomed by 6ABC anchor Tamala Edwards, attendees of the summit were inspired by the powerful keynote address delivered by community organizer/philanthropist LaTosha Brown the co-founder of Black Voters Matter. Brown inspired and encouraged women and girls to become engaged in the economic, social and political health of their communities. "When women work, they win," she said.

Summit Recommendations

For each of the Summit's workshop sessions a conversation recorder was selected for each breakout session to summarize each workshop and to present participants' recommendations to the full group. Below are the recorded recommendations from each session:

Business Start-Up 101

- Use free resources including those offered by the Free Library of Philadelphia's. Business Resource Innovation Center and the Regional Foundation Center and business support

services offered by the Philadelphia Commerce Department including resources for Minority/Women/and Disabled Owned Business Enterprises (M/W/DSBE).

- Use resources for small businesses offered by banks and financial institutions, including preparation for applying for lines of credit and business loans.
- Surround yourself with mentors.
- Recognize that every path is different.

Know Your Value

- Respect and understand yourself.
- Cultivate healthy relationships.
- Be careful about how you use social media. How you present yourself on social media is a reflection of you.
- Always put your best foot forward.

Overcoming Barriers in the Tech Industry: Breaking the Gender Firewall

- Develop the necessary skill set for identifying talent.
- Network with other women in technology.
- Support one another.
- Encourage more opportunities for community engagement around careers in technology.

An exit survey of summit participants concluded that the most pressing issues facing the city as they relate to women and girls were resources for mental health, financial literacy, career and college readiness, and for increasing the number of women in leadership roles.

National Equal Pay Day, April 10, 2018

National Equal Pay Day symbolizes how many more days a woman would have to work to earn as much as a man and brings awareness to the persistent issues of gender wage inequality. In recognition of this day, the Commission hosted a public conversation to examine this issue and support their collective mission to promote economic empowerment for women in Philadelphia. Panelists for this discussion included labor leader Karen Black of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, Marianne Bellasorte of Pathways PA, Rose Holandez of the US Labor Department, and Mary Tiernan of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Citing statistics from the US Labor Department, closing the gender wage gap would mean 80 more weeks of food, eight additional months of mortgage payments and more than 12 months of additional rent.

Recommendations included:

- Support for the enactment of Philadelphia's Wage Equity Bill, currently on hold because of ongoing litigation.
- Support modifications to the PA Equal Pay Act. At the current pace for closing the gender wage gap, women won't achieve equal pay until the year 2058. Pennsylvania women won't achieve pay equity until 2068.
- Increase the minimum wage.
- Increase the minimum wage for tipped workers.
- Support "Fair Work Week" legislation that would provide more predictability for hourly workers.

Entrepreneurship: Successes and Challenges in Starting a Business, May 30, 2018

Successful local business women, including Philly PR Girl Kate Marlys, Sonia Lewis, CEO of the Student Loan Doctor, Rakia Reynolds, CEO of Skai Blue Media, Melissa Alum, CEO of Femme and Fortune and Allegra Derengowski, Founder of Birchtree Catering, offered inspiring stories of getting their businesses off the ground. The entrepreneurs provided the following recommendations for aspiring entrepreneurs:

- Research. Who else is doing what you're doing and how can you do it better?
- Know your pitch—become your own best sales person. Continue refining it.
- Learn from your mistakes.
- Capture your niche.
- Don't depend on social media
- Don't compare yourself to others you see online.
- Be authentic. It counts.
- Find mentors.
- Utilize the free technical assistance support services offered by the Commerce Department

 Brown inspired and encouraged women and girls to become engaged in the economic, social and political health of their communities. When women work, they win. 

A group of people are seated around a large, dark wooden conference table in a formal meeting room. The room features high ceilings, large columns, and arched alcoves with framed portraits. The lighting is warm and focused on the table. The text "Strategic Partnerships and Policy Advocacy" is overlaid in white on the right side of the image.

Strategic Partnerships and Policy Advocacy

Over the course of the past year, the Commission has partnered with organizations to heighten awareness of critical issues. The Commission has partnered with the Black Women's Health Alliance, Maternity Care Coalition, New Voices for Reproductive Justice, Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition and the Women's Law Project on many issues that have included access to affordable reproductive healthcare including abortion, establishing gender neutral language for reproductive healthcare advocacy, and ensuring workplace accommodations for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers who are incarcerated. With our partners we have also participated in public policy roundtables around issues of increasing the minimum wage, pay equity, fair work week scheduling, workplace policies for women and families, and advocacy for incarcerated and reentering women.

Additional partnerships in advocacy include the following:

Women Organized Against Rape (WOAR) "Hands Around City Hall"

Hands Around City Hall has become a signature event for both the Philadelphia Commission for Women and for WOAR. The April event during Sexual Violence Awareness Month is an opportunity to call for an end to sexual and domestic violence, to advocate for supportive services for victims of sexual assault and violence and to stand in solidarity with survivors of sexual assault, rape and domestic violence.

Philadelphia Sexual Assault Advisory Committee

Along with law enforcement and social service agencies, the commission serves to provide a collective approach to resource sharing, education and outreach for victims of sexual assault. In this capacity, the Commission joins social service agencies, law enforcement, health care providers and other stakeholders to recommend policies and procedures on behalf of the victims of sexual assault.

Pennsylvania Street Harassment Advisory Task Force

The Commission serves on the Pennsylvania Street Harassment Advisory Task Force, an initiative spearheaded by State Senator Larry Farnese to explore policies and legislative remedies for street harassment. During his time as a City Councilman, Mayor Kenney was the first official to call attention to this pervasive invasion of privacy with public hearings. The Commission serves as one of several advisory individuals and organizations to make recommendations for policy and legislation to curb street harassment.

Royal Court Women's Coalition *Queens Adjust Their Crowns*

One of the Commission's proudest accomplishments is working collaboratively with the Royal Court Women's Coalition. The women collectively attended the first summit in March 2017. Inspired by the camaraderie engendered by the summit they continued to meet with a mission to empower women in various stages of their lives through information and personal growth. The *Queens* completed 400 interviews in communities around the city to assess how they could make the most impact with limited resources. They have either sponsored or participated in autism awareness projects and information fairs, and sponsored First Fruit gatherings to bring women together. They are also exploring ways to encourage and strengthen women entrepreneurs. The Royal Court Women's Coalition meets on the 4th Saturday of each month in City Hall Room 112. For information contact: Phyllis Walker womencommission.fullcircle@gmail.com

Human Trafficking in Philadelphia: An Overview

By Mollie Williamson

Executive Summary

Human trafficking, or modern-day slavery, causes significant and lifelong physical and mental costs to its victims. Victims of human trafficking can be divided into three populations: children under the age of 18 induced into commercial sex, adults (age 18 or over) induced into commercial sex through force, fraud, or coercion, and children and adults induced to perform labor or services through force, fraud, or coercion. Prevention is a priority but, despite growing literature on trafficking, data regarding trafficking is scarce and often unreliable. To combat this, it is critical to use data-driven methods to identify at-risk populations, provide continued and increased funding for services and resources for already-identified victims, and invest in programming to reduce vulnerability and improve resiliency.

Methodology

The following information was collected through conversations with Detective Kathryn Gordon (Philadelphia Special Victims Unit Human Trafficking Task Force), Arielle Curry (Salvation Army, Philadelphia Anti-Trafficking Coalition), and Sarah Wasch (Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research, University of Pennsylvania), as well as data from The Project Dawn Court Overview, the Human Trafficking Prevalence and Child Welfare Risk Factors Among Homeless Youth report compiled by The Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research (an interdisciplinary collaboration of the University of Pennsylvania's Schools of Social Policy & Practice, Law, Medicine, and Nursing, Covenant House, and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia), and cited sources.

Background

Under the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, sex and labor trafficking are considered "severe forms of trafficking in persons" defined as:

1. **Sex trafficking:** A commercial sex act induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age.
2. **Labor trafficking:** The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.¹

Human trafficking is built on the exploitation of already vulnerable populations. Victims endure debilitating physical detriment due to grueling working conditions and savagery at the hands of their traffickers, are exposed to serious health risks, and suffer profound psychological repercussions.

The weight of human trafficking continues even after victims escape bondage. In addition to the physical and mental toll, survivors also must contend with diminished economic opportunity and housing and support barriers due to involvement with the criminal justice system. There is also a cost to the larger community, as trafficking victims who flee abusive situations need financial and other supports, like housing assistance, legal assistance, physical and mental health services, counseling for psychological trauma, substance abuse treatment, education, and job training, among other services.

Despite the increased attention that human trafficking has received in the United States since the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, it continues to be a struggle to adequately address this issue. It is estimated that there are anywhere from 600,000 to 800,000 trafficking victims in the United States today, though the true scope is unknown. In Pennsylvania in 2017, there were 331 calls placed to the National Human Trafficking Hotline and 117 human trafficking cases reported. Philadelphia, in particular, is believed to be a trafficking hub due to its close proximity to ports and other major cities. Though Philadelphia has taken steps to implement initial efforts to address this issue by developing the Anti-Trafficking Coalition in January 2018, advocates still work to compile data and develop best practices for service.

“ It is estimated that there are anywhere from 600,000 to 800,000 trafficking victims in the United States today. ”

¹ <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/what-human-trafficking/federal-law>

Key Findings

Adults:

The Project Dawn Court (PDC), a problem solving court in Philadelphia, is dedicated to helping female survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) break free from the never-ending cycle of prostitution leading to incarceration. PDC was founded in January 2010 as a pilot program and later formalized into a court in 2012. PDC is a "problem-solving" diversionary court that uses a collaborative approach to criminal justice proceedings. The First Judicial District of Pennsylvania works in conjunction with the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services, the Philadelphia District Attorney, the Defender Association of Philadelphia, and the Adult Probation and Parole Department in order to address two goals: (1) reducing recidivism rates for women arrested for prostitution by helping them leave prostitution and (2) decreasing the population in the Philadelphia County jails. The Project Dawn Court process is designed to engage a participant in treatment in five basic stages. The first four stages require a minimum of 12 months to complete successfully. The fifth stage is one year post program graduation, during which time the participant must remain drug and conviction free. The five phases typically involve 1) non-medical detoxification (except where hospital detoxification is medically necessary) and assessment, 2) intensive treatment, 3) focus on life-skills such as education and employment, 4) pre-graduation phase with continued focus on life skills, and 5) graduation and aftercare.

- **Demographics** Since its inception in 2012, PDC has had a total of 132 participants. There are currently 47 active participants in the diversionary program, and there have been 67 successful completions/graduations. The age range for participants at admission is 20-51 years old. 41.67% of participants have an 11th grade education or lower; 34.85 have a GED or High School diploma; 2.28% have a 2-4 year degree.

- **The majority of diversion court participants are assault survivors.** 92% of PDC participants have experienced sexual assault, 84% of PDC participants have experienced physical assault, 64% of PDC participants have reported being the victim of domestic violence, and 60% of PDC participants have experienced child abuse. Individuals who have experienced violence and trauma in the past are more vulnerable to future exploitation, as the psychological effect of trauma is often long-lasting and challenging to overcome. Victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, war and conflict or social discrimination may be targeted by traffickers, who recognize the vulnerabilities left by these prior abuses. Violence and abuse may be normalized or beliefs of shame or unworthiness lead to future susceptibility to human trafficking.²
- **Nearly all participants suffer from co-occurring issues.** 96% of PDC participants suffer from co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders. The types of physical and psychological abuse human trafficking victims experience often lead to serious mental or emotional health consequences, including feelings of severe guilt, posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, substance abuse (alcohol or narcotics), and eating disorders.³ Substance use is often not only a resulting effect of human trafficking, but also a tool for recruiting and sustaining it. Opioids in particular are an effective coercion tool for traffickers because they numb both emotional and physical pain; clinicians have noted clear links between the current US opioid epidemic and trafficking. In fact, some traffickers recruit directly from substance use disorder treatment facilities.⁴
- **There is a scarcity of services directed specifically towards trafficking victims needs.** Finding shelter or other temporary housing appropriate for trafficking survivors is a particularly difficult task. Only one of the

² <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/what-human-trafficking/human-trafficking/victims>

19 ³ <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/4-supporting-victims/44-comprehensive-victim-services/mental-health-needs/>

⁴ <http://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/2017/01/ecas3-1701.html>

Human Trafficking in Philadelphia: An Overview

comprehensive services sites in Philadelphia has a shelter devoted specifically to trafficking victims, and space is extremely limited. For clients who are not housed in a trafficking-specific shelter, housing is often secured through the emergency shelter (homeless) or domestic violence service system, but neither solution is perfect; homeless shelters may not offer the type of programming and advocacy these victims need, and their approach of encouraging residents to go into the community during the day may be counterproductive to victims' safety needs—especially if the shelter is located in the community where the trafficker lives and where the victim may have been held. Domestic violence shelters are a closer fit, since they are oriented toward a victim clientele, but there is still a mismatch between victim needs and this type of shelter environment. For example, domestic violence systems are not equipped to handle the patterns of case flow one finds with trafficking victims. Domestic violence victims typically enter local service systems (needing protection, shelter, and support) one victim (sometimes with her children) at a time. Often they have been isolated by their batterers, and joining a group shelter with other victims allows the opportunity to work on domestic violence issues with others whose experiences have been similar. With trafficking victims, however, the service system needs to be able to absorb large numbers of victims at a time (in the case of raids on large brothels or sweatshops), and in some cases groups of victims may prefer to remain together through the post-trafficking period. Since domestic violence shelters typically have few beds available and shelters may be scattered geographically across communities or regions, victims from a large raid may have to be dispersed across different shelters, isolating them from natural support networks they may have with fellow victims.⁵

Youth

Philadelphia was part of a 2018 three-city research study about human trafficking involving youth. Although Philadelphia was not the only city included in this study, the data was almost identical across cities. While the small sample size limits the ability to generalize to other victims, it is important to provide some descriptive information about the young people interviewed. Philadelphia interviews all took place with 100 youth at Covenant House Pennsylvania.⁶

The attendees at the in-person direct service provider interviews on May 18, 2018 were, among other professionals:

Christine Woolslayer

Public Health Advisor, US Department of Health and Human Services

Heather Larocca

Salvation Army, Human Trafficking

Trish Danner

Office of the Regional Director

Brian King

Retired Sergeant, Philadelphia Police Department

Viviana Reyes

Detective, Philadelphia Police Department

Ashley Capaldi

Officer, Philadelphia Police Department

Kate Gordon

Special Victims Unit, Philadelphia Police Department

Jackie Goldstein

Victim Assistance Specialist, Department of Homeland Security

⁵ <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/43051/411507-Comprehensive-Services-for-Survivors-of-Human-Trafficking.PDF>

⁶ <https://fieldcenteratpenn.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/6232-R9-Philadelphia-Site-Report-Web.pdf>

Demographics

of the Philadelphia youth surveyed

19% | some form of
human trafficking

18%
trafficked for
sex

5%
other forced
labor

4%
both sex &
labor trafficking

Sex Trafficking

Fourteen percent engaged in "survival sex" to meet their basic needs. A total of 33% of those interviewed reported engaging in a commercial sex act (defined as any sex act in which anything of value is given or received by any person, including sex trafficking and survival sex, as well as commercial sex that does not fall under these categories) at some point in their lives. 40% of women, 21% of men, and 75% (3 of 4) of transgender participants were sex trafficked. 50% of Latino respondents, 27% of Caucasian respondents, 15% of multiracial respondents, and 10% of African American respondents identified as victims of sex trafficking. Of the 18 respondents identified as having been sex-trafficked, 10 were classified as victims because they had engaged in commercial sex acts while under the age of 18, one because he or she engaged in sex because of force, fraud, or coercion, and 7 were victims of sex trafficking as both a function of their age and force, fraud, or coercion. 14 participants engaged in survival sex; 10 of them were straight; 4 identified as LGBTQ; 7 were female, 4 were male, and 3 were transgender.

Labor Trafficking

All five labor trafficking victims surveyed were heterosexual males. Education and race varied among those who were labor trafficked, with no obvious trend among the five victims. All five labor trafficking victims also engaged in commercial sex, and two engaged in survival sex. Four of the labor trafficking victims either engaged in the sex trade as minors or were engaged in the sex trade through force, fraud, or coercion, and were therefore also characterized as victims of sex-trafficking.

- **Children and youth who are disconnected from their family**, including those in foster care, are at a greater risk for becoming victims of trafficking. It is estimated that, on a national level, approximately 60% of trafficked youth have a history in the foster care system. There are a number of risk factors that increase the likelihood of human trafficking for an individual, most of which pertain to foster youth; in Philadelphia specifically, 61% of youth surveyed reported that they had some child welfare involvement growing up, and 80% of them experienced at least one out-of-home placement; 42% spent time in a foster home, and 33% had lived in a group home or congregate care setting. More than one-third reported having lived in at least ten places. Out of the young people in the three cities studied, youth from Philadelphia reported the highest number of placements among those involved in these settings, with an average of four placements each. Of the 54 youth who were approached by someone who wanted them to sell sex, 44% were approached while homeless; one-third of them experienced this on their first night of homelessness.
- **LGBTQ youth experience a higher level of sex trafficking.** In general, LGBTQ youth are 7.4 times more likely to experience sexual violence than their heterosexual peers and are 3-7 times more likely than their heterosexual peers to engage in survival sex to meet basic needs such as shelter, food, drugs, and toiletries. 39% of surveyed youth who were sex trafficked identified themselves as LGBTQ, and 75% of transgender youth reported being trafficked for sex. A possible explanation for these elevated rates is that LGBTQ youth face higher rates of discrimination, violence, and economic instability than their non-LGBTQ peers. When faced with fewer resources, employment opportunities, or social supports, LGBTQ youth who are away from home must find ways to meet their basic needs and may therefore enter the street economy, engaging in commercial sex to meet these needs.⁷

Human Trafficking in Philadelphia: An Overview

- **Education is a protective factor.** 37% of surveyed youth who either had a GED, were still in high school, or had dropped out of high school were victims of sex trafficking, more than four times higher than the 8% of those who either had a high school diploma as their highest level of education or had at least entered college. Education as a combination of several forms - academic training, skills development, and varied life experiences, also improves the resiliency in human trafficking survivors.⁸

Systemic Needs of Trafficking Victims

Youth placement that specifically addresses trafficking victim needs.

- Foster care poses many problems when addressing victims' needs:
 - There is a significant culture shift in foster care. Many youth don't see themselves as victims, and entering an environment where they have little autonomy/decision-making increases the chances of them resisting assistance. Even allowing youth the freedom to choose what to eat for dinner provides a protective factor in place.
 - Foster care staff often aren't equipped to serve trafficking victims. There are no adequate trafficking-focused trauma therapy resources for youth in Philadelphia, and staff members often re-victimize youth by making comments, revealing their histories to other youth in the care system, and making it known that they are cooperating with the FBI (thereby branding them a snitch).
 - Trafficking victims often have a difficult time developing relationships with their foster care peers, as they are more "grown up" and face stigma.

Contributing factors for recruiting⁹

- **Opioid addiction** - rise in familial trafficking/parents trafficking their children
- **Foster care** - responders report that most youth victims have history with Office of Children and Youth (OCY) and Department of Human Services (DHS)
- **Peer involvement** - youth are being recruited in schools by friends who are still in the grooming, or "Romeo" stage of trafficking. Social media use further facilitates this.

Of the 54 youth who were approached by someone who wanted them to sell sex, 44% were approached while homeless; **one-third of them experienced this on their first night of homelessness.**

⁸<https://scholarworks.smith.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1966&context=theses>

⁹Direct service providers, personal communication, May 18, 2018

- **Secure placement for youth.**
 - Because foster care is not a secure facility, youth often immediately run away and return to their traffickers. The few alternative housing options are often in remote locations. When youth run away from these facilities they are at risk for engaging in sexual bartering to secure transportation to more familiar surroundings.
 - Youth with criminal backgrounds actually have the best chance of survival because they are regularly monitored. Although youth are victims, foster care is not an appropriate place for them to be, and it puts other youth at risk for being recruited. Service providers suggest putting a 90-day commitment policy, similar to an involuntary mental health commitment, so they don't fall through the cracks. There needs to be a buffer between the lives that the youth are coming from and a traditional foster care placement.
- **Building partnerships with local businesses and government programs to address client needs and promote resiliency.**
 - It is critical to connect City programs that focus on creating coalition work with organizations that address human and labor trafficking. This includes connecting victims with healthcare and dental services, psychiatry assistance, job skills, GED and ESL courses, tutoring, and other economic and employment services outside basic learning center services.
- **Access to high-quality psychiatric services.**
 - Human trafficking victims frequently struggle with substance addiction. Traffickers employ drugs as a form of victim control, and drug use is often a way for victims to manage symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Many victim facilities often require sobriety as a condition for placement (Dawn's Place,

a residential facility that serves survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, requires 3 months of sobriety to access services) but individuals aren't able to abstain from drugs without another means of managing their trauma. These individuals don't want to detox in a mental health facility; psychiatry services would provide avenues for victims to obtain additional services.

- **Statewide trainings on identifying and understanding human trafficking.**
 - Philadelphia law enforcement training is ongoing. Officers attend conferences across the country, doing case studies, identifying trafficking themes across geographical areas, and determining the questions that need to be answered in investigations. DHS also does extensive screening and acts as a referral point. Special Victims Unit training needs to expand in order to address trafficking on a systemic level. This includes the school district, judges and court staff, Uber/Lyft, Parent Teacher Alliances, coaches and rec centers, Parks and Recreation employees, hospitals and ERs, City Council, and child welfare providers.
- **Public awareness campaigns.**
 - Posting trafficking indicators in doctor's offices, on SEPTA, and in churches and other faith-based organizations would contribute to more reporting. These awareness campaigns could also focus on letting people who are trafficked know the options available to them including existing benefits for immigrants seeking victim assistance.

Recommendations

- **Utilize data to identify populations at highest risk for human trafficking and create targeted prevention services.**
 - It is essential to integrate and standardize data collection systems and create an assessment of local cross-agency data tracking systems. This will help identify victim demographics and characteristics, evaluate intervention strategies, mobilize key stakeholders, and identify transmission channels of policy. As LGBTQ youth are found to be frequent targets, victimization minimization services need to be developed for this population. Additionally, early identification and facilitation of supportive relationships can serve to prevent youth from becoming victimized and provide a resource should they end up needing support and assistance. Identifying and fostering emotional attachments for vulnerable children and youth with both family members and other caring adults, including natural mentorship initiatives will help connect at-risk youth with caring adults in their lives. Similarly, efforts should be taken to promote programs that support youth to remain in school and graduate from high school.
- **Support continued and increased funding for programming, resources, and beds for homeless individuals on both state and federal levels to stem the pipeline.**
 - Finding adequate and appropriate emergency, transitional, and long-term housing is often the biggest service-related challenge that anti-trafficking task forces face. Task forces should take an expansive view of the housing options in their communities and seek partnerships

to meet the diverse needs of trafficking victims.¹⁰ In order to create specific housing facilities for human trafficking victims, task forces can work with, integrate, and bolster existing housing resources in creative ways. For example, shelters may be able to make space available for long-term placements for trafficked persons, or make a financial agreement to ensure that one bed is always available for a trafficking victim. Transitional or affordable housing programs may provide access to long-term housing to support victims in attaining their long-term goals. Establishing a shelter point of contact for anti-trafficking task forces, seeking federal victim assistance and victim compensation, and taking into consideration short-term housing options for victims with a criminal history that may prohibit them from placement in other housing are also important steps to consider.

- **Institutionalize response and trainings at scale:**
 - Policy-level approaches ensure that the changes that are being advocated for are sustainable and long-lasting. These efforts include the analysis and passage of ordinances and departmental policies, engaging stakeholders like the Philadelphia Health Department and Philadelphia Municipal Court, assisting Philadelphia Police Department/Jail Division in determining the best access points to identify victims and exploring additional opportunities related to jails and procedures related to screening for human trafficking victims at intake.
- **Raise awareness and change public perception in order to combat under-reporting.**
 - Efforts should be made to raise public awareness of the problem of human trafficking through public information campaigns and other means. In the case

¹⁰ <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/4-supporting-victims/44-comprehensive-victim-services/safe-housing-options/> 24

of victims, public information campaigns should also address basic human rights standards and make victims aware that trafficking is a crime, that they are being victimized and that they can seek the protection of the law. Campaigns should be formulated in ways that will be understood by victims, using materials in appropriate languages adapted for and relevant to the target audience.

- **Coordinate victim's services and engage in direct outreach.**

- In order to ensure seamless access to services and resources, it is critical to build the capacity of service-providers and to integrate efforts into a coordinated system to identify, assess, and provide direct services to victims of human trafficking. Promising outreach efforts include the use of public service announcements, use of billboards, distributing flyers (in multiple languages), index cards, and other items (e.g., matchbooks, personal hygiene items, band aids, bumper stickers) at laundromats, beauty parlors, bus/train stations, shopping malls, and other establishments that victims may be allowed to visit. While not systematically tracked, several providers report increases in self- and other referrals following outreach efforts.¹¹ The key elements of effective outreach are (1) consistency (regularly visiting the same locations and not changing your approach/interaction with the client), (2) trust (sometimes not initially involving law enforcement), and (3) follow-through (consistently keeping promises). Another key to effective outreach is the involvement of survivors in outreach activities. More specifically, involving survivors in the development of outreach materials and the identification of areas to target for outreach is viewed as a promising practice.

- **Work within the child welfare system to reduce youth vulnerability.**

- Support policies that promote out-of-home-placement stability for youth, as multiple moves place them at greater risk. Philadelphia youth reported double the number of placement moves than youth in the other two cities, so this initiative is critical. Exploring the implementation of new and innovative out-of-home placement models that are targeted to older youth can also mitigate risk, as can providing youth with the tools for security in life beyond the welfare system. Assuring that youth who exit the child welfare system are financially literate and are provided with transitional and after-care services will foster a successful transition to independence.

Mollie Williamson is a Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania Fels Institute of Government.



FREE OUR MOTHERS
UNCUFF OUR COMMUNITIES!



PEOPLE'S PAPER CO-OP

WALK ACCESS
FRIDAY STREET WALK
100-1000
100-1000

“Women’s Bill of Rights: A Blueprint for Keeping Women Free.”

Report Back from Philadelphia’s 2nd Women in Reentry Day

May 10, 2018

Co-written by People’s Paper Co-op Fellows
Faith Bartley, Latyra Blake, and Teresa Saunders
with assistance from Courtney Bowles and Mark
Strandquist and contributions from Latonya “T”
Myers and Nikkie Lee-Smith

The People’s Paper Co-op, the Village of Arts and
Humanities and the Philadelphia Community Bail
Fund hosted a Movement Building Symposium
in May, 2018. They have generously shared their
“Women’s Bill of Rights: A Blueprint for Keeping
Women Free.” The article is poignant and
compelling. It is a prime example of how to go about
designing meaningful participatory stakeholder
engagements that help develop public policy.

The symposium is a logical follow up to last year’s
Women in Reentry Report by the Philadelphia
Reentry Coalition that can be found on our website.

We the women!

*We the women are powerful! We
the women are wild!
We the women are fierce!
We women are unstoppable,
ya dig!*

*We are masterpieces, the CORE
of the family.
We are strong, Wonderful, the
backbone of the world!*

*We are WHAT our communities
need!*

Excerpt from People’s Paper Co-op
collective poem, 2017

“Women’s Bill of Rights: A Blueprint for Keeping Women Free.”

We, the women of the People’s Paper Co-op (PPC), are Philadelphia’s mothers, daughters, caregivers, artists, and advocates. We, who are formerly incarcerated, who have been impacted by the criminal justice system, are now using our voices to advocate for the rights, lives, and futures of women across Philadelphia. Our personal experiences mean that we have insights and perspectives that are rarely heard by those in positions of power but so important to changing our broken systems. We are the experts that you need to hear from. We hope you will listen, learn, and support the voices of the women featured in this article.

The PPC is a women-led, women-focused, women-powered art and advocacy project at the Village of Arts and Humanities. Biannually, the PPC works with a group of formerly incarcerated women to connect women in reentry to an incredible group of artists and advocates; create media campaigns to destroy stereotypes about women in reentry; and connect with service providers and advocates to help expand, transform, and amplify their work.

Why Is This Important?

Women are the fastest growing prison population. Between 1980 and 2014, the number of incarcerated women nationwide increased by more than 700%, rising from a total of 26,378 in 1980 to 215,332 in 2014.¹² In Philadelphia alone, as of July 26, 2018, there were 453 women held in custody of the Philadelphia Prison Department.¹³ Eighty percent of all incarcerated women are mothers and 80 percent of incarcerated women are survivors of sexual violence.¹⁴

In response to this crisis, PPC fellows worked together to design and organize Women in Reentry Day focused on three main goals:

- Creating a platform for formerly incarcerated women to share their stories, experiences and visions for a more just world, brings awareness to and share their insight into the impact incarceration has on communities, families, and individuals.

- Bringing women together with allies and advocates from across the city
- Working together to co-create a vision for keeping women free

During each cohort, the PPC partners with organizations across the city to help propel and advance their advocacy campaigns. In the spring of 2018, the PPC acted as consultants to, and partners with, the Philadelphia Community Bail Fund. During our time together, we:

- Met with the bail fund organizers to further understand their work
- Created art and advocacy pieces to amplify their campaign (helping to raise over \$95,000 to bail mothers out prior to Mother’s Day)
- Went to Riverside Correctional Facility and transformed an isolated bus stop, where women being released are dropped off with a token and a dollar, into a beautiful art exhibit and welcome home party where the women of the PPC and Bail Fund organizers greeted everyone with hugs and powerful peer support

On May 10th, two days after the bail out, we held a press conference at City Hall to celebrate the freedom of those bailed out and to — publically call for an end to cash bail. Formerly incarcerated women, including some who had just been bailed out, shared their testimonies about how incarceration impacts women, their families, and communities in different, and often devastating ways.

It was important that, as formerly incarcerated women, we were able to give our true opinions without feeling like we were being judged. It was a time that we were able to stand up for our rights and be heard. The stage was full of photo banners created to let the public, press, and city officials know that we are valuable and our voices need to be heard. Standing with our peers before the crowd of supporters felt amazing. We felt like role models. Passers-by stopped in their tracks to stand

¹² The Sentencing Project. “Incarcerated Women and Girls” November 2015

¹³ Philadelphia Department of Prisons via the online census, retrieved July 2018 <http://www.phila.gov/prisons/inmatesupport/Pages/Census.aspx>

¹⁴ The Vera Institute. “Overlooked: Women and Jails in An Era of Reform,” August, 2016 <http://www.phila.gov/prisons/inmatesupport/Pages/Census.aspx>

"Women's Bill of Rights: A Blueprint for Keeping Women Free."

in solidarity with us. To see people genuinely express interest in us and the issues we were talking about was so profound and beautiful.

After the press conference, the crowd joined us for a parade down Broad Street. As we marched, our banners took over two lanes of traffic; it was surreal. We all felt so strong, that we were motivating others to impact change and making a difference; it was an exhilarating and empowering experience.

As we marched, our ears were filled with the sounds of the citizens of Philly screaming the chants we came up with, "Free our Mothers, End Cash Bail! Free our Mothers, Uncuff Our Communities!" It was poetry in motion.

Our eyes were filled with the sight of powerful women marching for a great cause; friends, family members, coworkers, legal organizations, journalists and city officials such as Ceciley Jones from RISE and Councilwoman At-Large Helen Gym who all came to show support. Seeing people carry the art we created and wear our shirts felt like Philadelphia was really the City of Brotherly/Sisterly Love.

But most importantly, we were there. We felt like we made our mark, that we have proof to show that we are worthy of being heard, that we are not alone and proud to show the world who we are and how we feel. Our past is our past. Today, tomorrow are what should matter. The parade reminded us NOT to be ashamed, but to celebrate who we are and the powerful work we are creating together. We want women in the future who are incarcerated, who are held on cash bail, to know that they are not alone- that we are here to support in any way we can.

The parade ended at Broad Street Ministry with a final group cheer before heading inside for the Women in Reentry Day symposium.

The goals of the symposium were to:

- bring together a coalition of partners to imagine and demand how Philadelphia can better support women impacted by the criminal justice system;

- to bring awareness to the issues that returning citizens/women have;
- to increase the knowledge of resources that may be available upon release;
- to build and foster connections;
- to bring people together to discuss urgent issues that need addressing and try to come up with solutions and ways to help the brokenness.

People walked into Broad Street Ministry to find a beautiful and welcoming space that we had transformed into an art exhibit filled with our poems, posters, sculptures, and banners. Attendees were invited to engage with the exhibit, have some refreshments, and take any of the resources that had been brought by partnering organizations.

In addition to resource tables, the room was dotted with circular tables; each with a different theme. The themes were chosen by women in our program to signify the hurdles we've struggled with in reentry. Participants were asked to self select and sit at a table whose theme they connected with or would like to learn more about. Once at the tables, they joined women who could speak to each theme from experience, and individuals who work in related fields.

In one way or another, all returning citizens struggle with these upon release. Due to a lack of reentry programs designed specifically for women, we particularly need assistance in these areas, to help break the vicious cycle of recidivism and to thrive, not just survive.

The themes chosen for each table included: equal housing, fair employment, education, family and community reunification, health/mental health, addiction support, probation/court financial burdens and peer mentors.

In an effort to craft a community created document, each table was given instructions and spent an hour identifying solutions to the various barriers women face in reentry, and worked to come up with a list of demands to keep women free and help them thrive.

To Keep Women Free, We Demand...

(Excerpt from the Women's Bill of Rights: A Blueprint for Keeping Women Free)

Equal Housing

- "More beds in transitional housing, domestic violence shelters, reentry programs, education programs to teach landlords, tenants, and homeowners about the importance of renting to women with criminal records...Allow those with records to live with family in PHA homes..."

Fair Employment

- "Felon friendly employers...Access to reliable transportation...affordable childcare...a trauma informed/healthy workplace...a living wage..."

Education

- "Legislation that enforces that people have a right to education and a right to a job which provides gainful employment...Universities and colleges need to ban the box from applications (everyone deserves access to higher education)..."

Family/Community Reunification

- "Policy changes to DHS's timeline... children need more contact and visitation with their moms while they're incarcerated, and a clear understanding of next steps upon release...better policies/ hours/ atmospheres...healthy coping skills during times of crisis or conflict..."

Health /Mental Health

- "Peer support programs with responsive counseling and care...Mental health services that support both women and their children...Bring our voices to policy makers..."

Addiction Support

- "That you remember the importance of language...That you hold recovery centers accountable...that you make sure people close to the issues are helping to provide the solutions..."

Probation / Court Financial Burdens

- "Consolidation of multi-county probation... Missing payments should not result in additional jail time...Financial counseling...Stop ordering restitution/fines for people who cannot afford it"

Peer Mentors / Connections To Positive People

- "We need mentors while incarcerated...and on the 1st day we get out (not prepared for what to expect when we're released); we need mentors who have been in our shoes, who can share a blueprint for us to look to..."

“Women’s Bill of Rights: A Blueprint for Keeping Women Free.”

These demands were developed by a group of returning citizens, advocates, allies, and professionals in various fields associated with the barriers women face. The diversity of partners we had for the event emphasizes the impact incarcerating women have on countless parts of society.

The resulting document, “Women’s Bill of Rights: A Blueprint for Keeping Women Free,” is not complete. It is a list of demands that we created collectively with the hopes of presenting it to the city in response to the larger need for resources and solutions. We will be turning it into a larger document that will eventually be presented to city officials. We invite you to add to it and share it. We need to build this together. <http://peoplespaperco-op.weebly.com/>

By positioning women in reentry as the experts the city needs to hear from, and connecting them with powerful artists and advocates, we believe we can make change on personal and systemic levels. We are here. If you have questions, reach out to us. Together we are stronger and we can utilize our experience to help change the systemic issues that impact us, our families, our communities, and the city of Philadelphia. Just ask, we’re here to talk if you’ll listen.

If you’d been there you would have seen the tears of pride in our eyes as the mothers that had just been released were acknowledged and felt the sense of unity and camaraderie as we worked together to help mend struggles with separation and equality within our city. Thank you.

To find out more about the organizations that are working directly with Women In Reentry, read the informative 2017 report *Women and Reentry: A Snapshot of National and Local Data and a Spotlight on Efforts in Philadelphia*, by the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition available on the commission’s website: <https://beta.phila.gov/departments/commission-for-women/>

To access a list of Women In Reentry Day partners and include your voice in the “Women’s Bill of Rights: A Blueprint for Keeping Women Free,” visit: <http://peoplespaperco-op.weebly.com/>

“ Our mothers took 9 months to create us, a lifetime to raise us, and no jail should separate us.”

**Nikkie Lee-Smith, PPC
Advocacy Fellow, Spring
2018**

Partners:

Village of Arts and Humanities, Philadelphia Community Bail Fund, Broad St Ministry, Reentry Think Tank, Community Legal Services, Ardella’s House, Black Lives Matter Philadelphia, MENTOR, The Lifelines Project, Philadelphia Print Works, ACLU PA, Why Not Prosper, Mothers In Charge, Institute for Community Justice, Maternity Care Coalition, RISE, Fair Housing Rights Center, Leeway Foundation



Women
In Reentry

Day made me feel like I am NOT ashamed of anything in my past and that I want ladies who go through this in the future to know that they can come to me for any support that I can provide. It was life changing for me.



**Teresa Saunders, PPC
Advocacy Fellow, Spring
2018**

Resources

Ardella's House

2428 N. 33rd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19132
215-200-6006
www.ardellashouse.com

I'm FREE (Females Reentering Empowering Each Other)

4700 Wissahickon Ave., Suite 126, Bldg. A
Philadelphia, PA 19144
215-951-0300 Ext. 2147
ImFREEonline@gmail.com
www.imfreeonline.org

Maternity Care Coalition

2000 Hamilton Street, #205
Philadelphia, PA 19130
215-972-0700
<http://maternitycarecoalition.org/>

Mayor's Office of Reintegration Services—RISE

1425 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-972-0700
www.phila.gov/rise/pages/default.aspx

Mothers in Charge

520 N Delaware Ave, Suite 302
Philadelphia, PA 19123
(215) 228-1718
info@mothersincharge.org
www.mothersincharge.org/

The People's Paper Co-Op

2544 Germantown Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19133
courtbowles@gmail.com
peoplespaperco-op.weebly.com/

Why Not Prosper

717 E. Cheltenham Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144
215-842-2360
www.whynotprosper.org
www.phila.gov/rise/pages/default.aspx

Meet the Philadelphia Commission for Women



Jovida Hill
Executive Director
Appointed by Mayor James F. Kenney
Office of Engagement for Women
Philadelphia Commission for Women



Felicia Harris
Chair
Appointed by Mayor James F. Kenney
Felicia Harris is the Principal of HiTouch Enterprises that provides strategic development, planning, marketing and branding services for a diverse client roster.



Karen Bojar, Ph.D.
Vice Chair
Appointed by Councilwoman Helen Gym, Dr. Bojar is Professor Emeritus of English and Women's Studies at Community College of Philadelphia and is the author of *Feminism in Philadelphia: The Glory Years, 1968-1982* and most recently *In Search of Elena Ferante: The Novels and the Question of Authorship*.



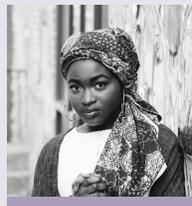
Noelle Marconi
Co-Chair, Policy and Advocacy
Appointed by Councilman William Greenlee, Ms. Marconi is the Legislative Director for Councilman Greenlee with an impressive body of legislation that has included Earned Paid Sick Leave, Pregnant Worker's Anti-discrimination Bill and legislation to protect women from being evicted by landlords based on their status as domestic violence victims.



Dawn Chavous
Secretary
Appointed by Mayor James F. Kenney, Dawn Chavous is the President & CEO of Chavous Consulting, LLC, a WMBE/DBE management consulting firm, overseeing operations, projects and initiatives for a diverse clientele.



State Rep. Morgan Cephas (192nd District)
Appointed by Councilman Curtis Jones Representative Morgan Cephas was elected to serve her first term in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in November 2016. She chairs the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus Subcommittee on Women and Girls.



Kadidja Cisse
Appointed by Councilwoman Maria Quinones Sanchez Kadidja Cisse is an award-winning student leader, poet, performer, youth activist and Community College of Philadelphia freshman.



Katelyn Feldstein, Esq.
Appointed by Councilman Allan Domb Katelyn Feldstein serves as Legislative Counsel to Councilman Domb managing the Councilman's legislative priorities.



Vanessa L. Fields
Appointed by Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown Vanessa Fields is the recently retired Vice President of the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) District Council 47 (Local 2187).



Marleny Franco, MD
 Appointed by Mayor James F. Kenney
 Dr. Franco is an attending physician
 in the Department of Emergency
 Medicine at Children's Hospital
 of Philadelphia and a pediatric
 emergency medicine specialist at St.
 Mary Medical Center.



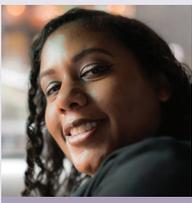
Aleida Garcia
 Appointed by Mayor James F. Kenney
 Aleida Garcia is a Compliance Monitor
 for the School District of Philadelphia
 and founder of the National Homicide
 Justice Alliance that advocates on
 behalf of families of homicide victims.



Khara Garcia
 Appointed by
 Councilman Al Taubenberger
 Khara Garcia is the former graphic
 designer and sublimation art technician
 for Boathouse Sports, designers and
 manufacturers of sports apparel. She
 has recently been appointed as the
 graphic designer for City Council.



Lisa Holgash
 Appointed by
 Councilwoman Cindy Bass
 Lisa Holgash is a labor and education
 policy advocate.



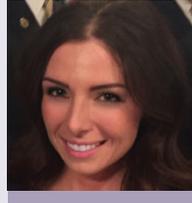
Roxanne Horrell, Esq.
 Appointed by
 Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell
 Roxanne Horrell is Legislative
 Counsel to Councilwoman Blackwell,
 conducting public policy research,
 drafting legislation and organizing
 public hearings.



Farzana Rashid Hossain, MD
 Appointed by Mayor James F. Kenney
 Dr. Hossain is an Assistant Professor
 at the University of Pennsylvania
 Medical School, Department of
 Gastroenterology (GI).



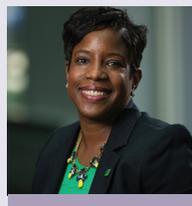
Lois (Soon Chun) Kang
 Appointed by Councilman David Oh
 Lois Kang is the Director of Urban Policy
 and International Affairs for Councilman
 Oh, developing public policy and
 legislative proposals for implementing
 a comprehensive global business
 strategy for the City of Philadelphia.



Danielle McDermond
 Appointed by Councilman Brian O'Neill
 Danielle McDermond is the
 Councilman's Administrative and
 Constituent Services Assistant.



Maggie Stauffer Holroyd
 Appointed by
 Councilman Bobby Henon
 Maggie Stauffer is the Director of
 Residence Life at Curtis Institute of
 Music and is a 2019 candidate for her
 Ed. D in Student Affairs Leadership
 from Widener University.



Shelley Sylva, Esq.
 Appointed by Councilwoman
 Chelle Parker
 Shelly Sylva is First Vice President and
 Senior Manager of Legal Operations
 and Governance for TD Bank.



Jennifer M. Slavic
 Appointed by Councilman Mark Squilla
 Jennifer Slavic serves as the
 Councilman's Constituent Services
 Representative on issues regarding
 real estate, property taxes and
 abatements.



Julia Terry
 Appointed by Councilman Derek
 Green
 Julia Terry is an award-winning art
 educator and Associate Director of
 ArtWell where she creates innovative
 programing, training and professional
 development.

Nina Tinari
 Appointed by Mayor James F. Kenney
 Nina Tinari is Chief Operating Officer
 for the Schulson Collective of some of
 the city's best loved restaurants. She
 is the out-going chair of the Marian
 Anderson Awards.



Leigh N. Whitaker, Esq.
 Appointed by Council President Darrell
 Clarke
 Leigh Whitaker is the Director of
 City Relations for the University of
 Pennsylvania Office of Government
 and Community Affairs.



Lexi White

Appointed by Mayor James F. Kenney
Lexi White is the Policy Manager for New Voices for Reproductive Justice where she manages advocacy projects around issue of sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, incarceration, environmental justice, voting rights, and healthcare access.



Tiphonie White

Appointed by Councilman Kenyatta Johnson
Tiphonie White is Office Manager and Special Events Coordinator for Councilman Johnson and is responsible for public policy research and planning.



Tonie Willis

Appointed by Mayor James F. Kenney
Toni Willis is founder and Executive Director of Ardella's House that provides support programs for incarcerated and returning women.

Created by an amendment to the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, the Philadelphia Commission for Women is comprised of 10 women appointed by the Mayor and 17 women appointed by each member of City Council.



For information:

City Hall, Room 115
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Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-686-2154

phila.gov/departments/commission-for-women

 **@philawomencommission**