

VOTER EDUCATION GUIDE

LEARN ABOUT IMPORTANT ISSUES
FACING WOMEN & FAMILIES

2018



WNY WOMEN'S FOUNDATION



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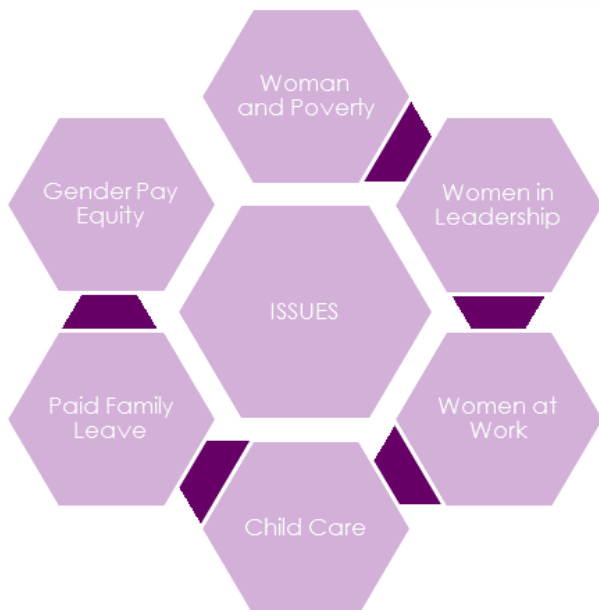
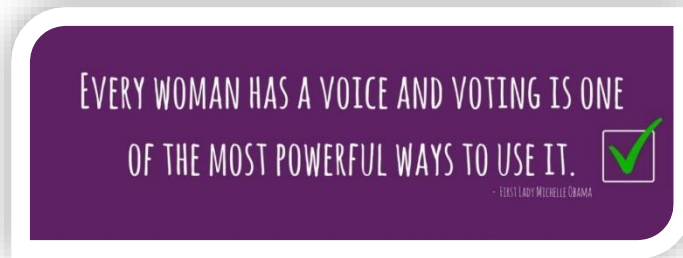
Transforming Our Community by Investing in Women and Girls

VOTER EDUCATION GUIDE: 2018

By voting, you are making your voice heard and registering your opinion on 1). Decisions and priorities of government leaders and 2). Policies that will affect your community. Unfortunately, in 2016, New York State was ranked 41st in the United States for voter turnout. Only **19.7%** of eligible New Yorkers voted in the last presidential primary. Nationwide, only 56% of all eligible voters reported voting in 2016! In recent elections, voter turnout rates for women has equaled or exceeded voter turnout rates for men.

The WNY Women's Foundation is committed to creating a vibrant WNY community where women and girls have the opportunity to grow and thrive. One of the ways we achieve this goal is to inform and educate the public on issues affecting girls, women, and families – especially related to their economic self-sufficiency. Some of the most pressing issues for women and family are highlighted below to educate YOU, the voter. We hope that the questions we outlined inspire you to reach out to the candidates in your district and find out where they stand prior to voting on Tuesday, November 6th, 2018.

While this guide also provides the information you need about how, what, where and why to vote – who you vote for is completely up to you!



VOTING 101

- What are my rights?
- How do I register (or re-register) to vote?
- Where & When do I vote?
- Who are my candidates?

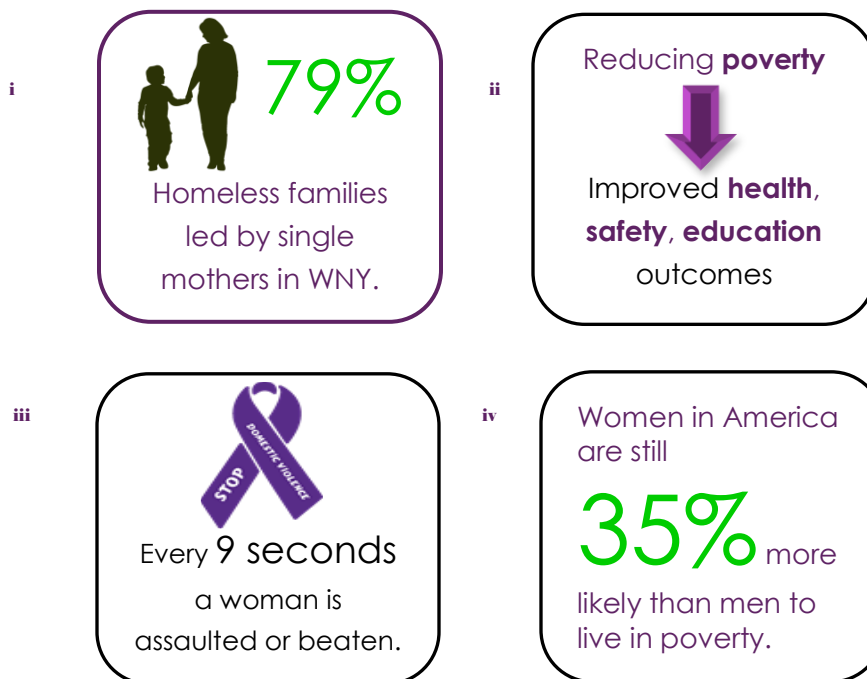


THE ISSUES

Poverty Reduction & Public Health

In New York State, women make up more than half of all people living in poverty. The rates are even more disproportionate for single mothers, women of color, millennial women, and women in retirement. Poverty is linked with substandard housing, long-term trauma, intimate partner/domestic violence, homelessness, poor nutrition, food insecurity, low quality child care, inadequate health care, unsafe neighborhoods, and under-resourced schools. It is our priority to advocate for the women and families whose health and safety continue to be threatened.

Did You Know...?



Questions to ask your candidates about **POVERTY AND PUBLIC HEALTH**:

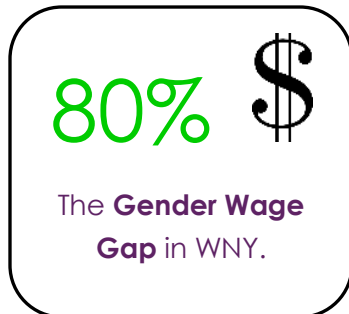
- o Do you plan to increase investment in programs that assist women and children living in poverty, and if so, how?
- o What will you do to ensure single mothers have the support they need to secure family sustaining jobs and end the intergenerational cycle of poverty?
- o What will you do to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable elderly women in WNY?
- o How will you address the learning gap between children from low-income households and those from middle/upper class backgrounds?

Gender Pay Equity

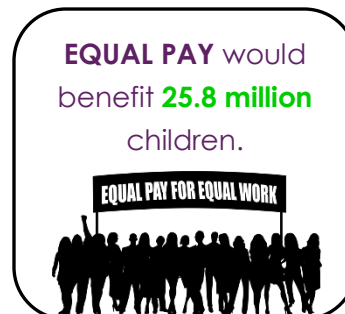
Gender pay inequity continues to be a problem faced by women of all education levels in the United States and in WNY. At the current rate of change, women will not see wage parity until the year 2119. The wage gap is even worse for women of color. Hispanic women will have to wait until 2233 and Black women will have to wait until 2124 for equal pay. Closing the wage gap would result in widespread economic and social benefit to our entire community.

Did You Know...?

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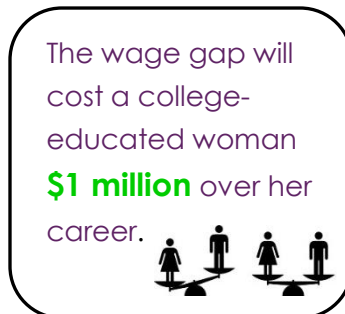
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Questions to ask your candidates about **GENDER PAY EQUITY**:

- ❖ How can NY State continue to address closing the gender wage gap?
- ❖ How will you collaborate with businesses and state/federal governments to promote or enforce fair policies that accommodate employers and employees and improve the economic status of women?
- ❖ What policies will or have you championed to promote fiscal parity and equal opportunity, especially for working women and minorities?
- ❖ How would you address severely undervalued and underpaid jobs done primarily by women and people of color? Are you concerned about the unequal pay that is specific to workers in childcare (disproportionately women), social work, food service, etc.?
- ❖ How will you strengthen equal pay laws so that women are better able to fight back against pay discrimination?

Equitable Community

Sexism, racism, and prejudices in general have been normalized in society, causing many to believe they are no longer an issue. When it comes to major obstacles for getting ahead, women statistically identify far more than their male counterparts do. As a society, we need to build awareness around the barriers and opportunities for women of all ages and from all backgrounds in order to create a more equitable community.

Did You Know...?

ix

Women hold 2/3 of the country's \$1.3 trillion student debt.



x

Women are **3x** more likely than men to say they have faced gender discrimination.

xi

Women are **80%** more likely than men to be impoverished during retirement.

xii

81% of women have experienced sexual harassment or assault.

Questions to ask your candidates about creating an **EQUITABLE COMMUNITY**:



- ❖ How will you educate the WNY community on the barriers faced by women, girls, and minority communities in order to move towards a culture of equity and greater opportunities for all?
- ❖ How will you address the economic disparity between men and women during retirement?
- ❖ What will you do in order to create a safer community for women to help prevent sexual harassment and assault?
- ❖ How will you help those for whom culture, language, sexual orientation, identity, gender, etc. serves as a barrier to accessing tools and resources in order to advance in their careers and society as a whole?
- ❖ How will you address and combat racism, sexism, and other prejudices in the community?

Child Care Reform

CHILD CARE BELOW

Affordable, accessible high quality childcare supports economic growth, family stability and positive child outcomes within our communities. Access to high quality early childhood programs have lasting effects from greater academic success to lower juvenile crime and lower adolescent pregnancy rates. Investing in these programs ultimately supports our workforce, combats poverty, and helps our children. Unfortunately, in 2014, only 17% of NYS families eligible for childcare subsidies actually received them due to a lack of funding. This poses a serious barrier to working for many low-income families.

Did You Know...?

<p>xiii Only 17% of eligible children received childcare subsidies in NYS.</p> 	<p>xiv Employees with access to childcare are more...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Punctual✓ Focused✓ Productive
<p>xv Average childcare costs in NYS</p> <p>></p> <p>In state SUNY college tuition!</p>	<p>xvi For every \$1 spent on childcare...An additional \$2.05 is put into the local economy.</p> 

Questions to ask your candidates about **CHILD CARE**:

- ❖ How can NYS government increase affordable, accessible, quality childcare?
- ❖ What are you prepared to do to ensure the County's Child Care Subsidy program receives increased funding?
- ❖ How will you address the new unfunded federal health and safety mandates to ensure funding is available to cover the needs without sacrificing essential programs such as childcare subsidies?
- ❖ What will you do to expand the facilitated enrollment childcare subsidy program in Erie County and make it available in Niagara and Chautauqua Counties?

Women in Work

Sixty percent of new jobs that will open in the 21st century will require skills possessed by 20% of the workforce. The United States will be short as many as three million high-skilled workers by 2018. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) job creation is expected to grow significantly faster than non-STEM jobs in the next decade. Other obstacles women face in the workplace are sexual harassment and discrimination.

Did You Know...?

xvii

Women comprise
of $\frac{1}{2}$ of overall
workforce but only
24% of **STEM**.

xviii

42% of women
say they have
faced
discrimination on
the job.

xix

Women of color
represent **$\frac{1}{2}$**
of the **low wage**
workforce.

xx

Women make up $\frac{1}{2}$
of law school
graduates but only
17% of equity
partners.



Questions to ask your candidates about **WOMEN AT WORK**:

- ❖ How can we increase access to higher paying, "non-traditional" jobs for women?
- ❖ How will you support, engage, and empower young girls to pursue STEM related subjects?
- ❖ How can we get women into better paying jobs and career tracks?
- ❖ How will you engage employers to take steps to improve their organizational cultures and processes with the intention of fostering a positive and inclusive environment?
- ❖ Will you support education initiatives to encourage utilization of the Paid Family Leave Insurance program in NYS?
- ❖ How will you address the need for family friendly workplace practices that go beyond paid family leave?

Women in Leadership

Barriers to gender parity in leadership are a long-standing issue for women in the workforce, in WNY and throughout the United States. Out of the 100 largest employers in WNY, female top local executives lead only 21 of them. Equal representation for women in leadership positions benefits women, business, and the economy.

Did You Know...?

xxi

Women make up
5% of **Fortune 500**
CEOs.



xxii

Only **19.2%** of
the **2017 Buffalo**
Business First Power
250 honorees were
women.

xxiii

Only 11% of the
combined
members of the Erie
and Niagara
county legislatures
are women.

xxiv

78% of elected
officials in the U.S.
are men.



Questions to ask your candidates about **WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP**:

- ❖ How will you use your office to promote women in leadership roles across various sectors in the community?
- ❖ How will you be sure women's voices are included in policy development and budget negotiations?
- ❖ What will you do to educate government and business on the benefits of including women in leadership positions and on boards?
- ❖ How will you engage employers to take steps to move women into leadership positions?
- ❖ How will you engage and support female entrepreneurs in WNY?

VOTING

Your vote is your ability to have a say in decisions that are made that affect you and your community every day. Smaller elections matter, too! Voting in city and state elections determines how your city and state are run. Elected officials at the state and local levels are responsible for things like education, housing policy, tax breaks and tax increases, funding for emergency services and police departments, social programs, neighborhood revitalization, and help for local businesses.



VOTING 101

- ✓ Know Your Rights!
 - **NYS Voter Bill of Rights**
(<http://www.lwny.org/advocacy/vote/VotersRights103108.pdf>)
- ✓ How do I register to vote at my **current** address?
 - Download an English or Spanish voter application form at www.elections.ny.gov. Upon completion, mail or deliver it in person to your local board of elections.
 - You can register in person at your County Board of Elections or local DMV, or call the NYS Board of Elections at 1-800-FOR-VOTE to request a voter application
 - **Register Online Here** (<https://www.vote.org/>) or through www.ny.gov/vote
 - **Erie County Voter Registration** (<https://www.elections.erie.gov/voter-information/voter-registration-information/>)
 - **Niagara County Voter Registration** (<http://elections.niagara.ny.us/voter-information/>)
 - **Chautauqua County Voter Registration** (<http://chautauqua.ny.us/539/Voter-Registration-Form>)
- ✓ Already registered to vote? Find your polling place **here** (voterlookup.elections.ny.gov)
 - Polls open at 6 AM and close 9 PM
- ✓ Don't know your State and Federal voting districts? Look them up **here**.
(<https://www.elections.ny.gov/district-map/district-map.html>)

ABSENTEE BALLOT 101

✓ **Qualifications:**

- Absent from your county or, if a resident of New York City absent from said city, on Election Day
- Unable to appear at the polls due to temporary or permanent illness or disability; or because you are the primary caregiver of one or more individuals who are ill or physically disabled
- A resident or patient of a Veterans Health Administration Hospital
- Detained in jail awaiting Grand Jury action or confined in prison after conviction for an offense other than a felony

✓ **How to Obtain an Absentee Ballot:**

- Visit your county board of elections
- Download an English or Spanish form online
 - **Chautauqua County Absentee Ballot**
(<http://chautauqua.ny.us/551/Absentee-Ballot-Application>)
 - **Erie County Absentee Ballot**
(<https://www.elections.erie.gov/voter-information/absentee-information/>)
 - **Niagara County Absentee Ballot**
(<http://elections.niagara.ny.us/voter-information/>)

Upon completion, applications must be mailed to your county board no later than the seventh day before the election or delivered in person no later than Nov. 5 (day before election).

- Send a Letter to your county board of elections

The letter must contain: the address where you are registered, the address where the ballot is to be sent, the reason for the request, and the signature of the voter.

The letter must be received by your county board no earlier than 30 days and no later than seven days before the election. An application form will be mailed with your ballot; it must be completed and returned with your ballot.

✓ **Unable to pick up your ballot?**

You have the right to designate someone to pick up your ballot for you, if you are unable to. Only the designated individual may pick up and deliver your ballot.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS (Town, Village, City, County, etc.)

You may live in an area where there are elections for positions in **Local Government**, such as county clerk, judge, city or town council, sheriff, district attorney, etc. Those candidates are not listed above, but they will show up on the ballot on November 6th. The offices up for election in Erie County can be found [here](http://www.elections.erie.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Offices-to-be-Elected-9.23.16.pdf) (<http://www.elections.erie.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Offices-to-be-Elected-9.23.16.pdf>). The offices up for election in Chautauqua County can be found [here](http://chautauqua.ny.us/DocumentCenter/View/717/Offices-Up-for-Election) (<http://chautauqua.ny.us/DocumentCenter/View/717/Offices-Up-for-Election>). The offices up for election in Niagara County, as well as the candidates for each office, are listed [here](http://elections.niagara.ny.us/pdfs/GE16%20Ballot%20Order.pdf) (<http://elections.niagara.ny.us/pdfs/GE16%20Ballot%20Order.pdf>). If you have any questions, please contact the [Erie County Board of Elections](https://www.elections.erie.gov/contact-us/) (<https://www.elections.erie.gov/contact-us/>), [Chautauqua County Board of Elections](http://chautauqua.ny.us/161/Board-of-Elections) (<http://chautauqua.ny.us/161/Board-of-Elections>), or the [Niagara County Board of Elections](http://elections.niagara.ny.us/contact/) (<http://elections.niagara.ny.us/contact/>).

CONTACTING YOUR CANDIDATES

Go to <https://lwny-vote.civicengine.com/> to find out who your **State and Federal Government** candidates are! Your local Board of Elections will also have helpful information.

Contacting your candidates through their active campaign websites or social media pages is usually the most effective way to reach them. Candidates for office may show up at forums, debates, or town hall events in your area, so be on the lookout!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- ✓ [Ballotpedia "Voting in New York"](https://ballotpedia.org/Voting_in_New_York) (https://ballotpedia.org/Voting_in_New_York)
- ✓ [NYS League of Women Voters](http://www.lwvny.org/) (<http://www.lwvny.org/>)
- ✓ [Erie County Board of Elections](https://www.elections.erie.gov/) (<https://www.elections.erie.gov/>)
- ✓ [Niagara County Board of Elections](http://elections.niagara.ny.us/) (<http://elections.niagara.ny.us/>)
- ✓ [Chautauqua County Board of Elections](http://chautauqua.ny.us/161/Board-of-Elections) (<http://chautauqua.ny.us/161/Board-of-Elections>)
- ✓ [NYS Board of Elections](https://www.elections.ny.gov/INDEX.html) (<https://www.elections.ny.gov/INDEX.html>)
- ✓ [Vote.org](https://www.vote.org/) (<https://www.vote.org/>)
- ✓ [PowHer the Vote](http://www.powherny.org/) (<http://www.powherny.org/>)
- ✓ [When We All Vote](https://www.whenweallvote.org/) (<https://www.whenweallvote.org/>)
- ✓ [Time to Care Coalition](http://timetocareny.org/) (<http://timetocareny.org/>)
- ✓ [Winning Beginning NY](http://winningbeginningny.org/) (<http://winningbeginningny.org/>)
- ✓ [Women and Good Jobs](https://womenandgoodjobs.org/) (<https://womenandgoodjobs.org/>)
- ✓ [Women in the Workplace](https://womenintheworkplace.com/) (<https://womenintheworkplace.com/>)

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