The WNY Women’s Foundation’s Advocacy Agenda promotes gender equity and women’s economic empowerment by convening stakeholders, sharing stories and collective knowledge, and utilizing research and influence to affect policy and funding for the benefit of women and girls in Western New York. We aim to be a leading advocacy voice for our community’s women and girls through direct and grassroots advocacy in collaboration with local, state-wide, and national partners.

We work to drive policy decisions and funding for our region to maximize opportunities leading to economic empowerment and growth.
**MISSION**
Create a culture of possibility so each woman and girl can live, grow, and lead to her fullest potential.

**WE ADVOCATE** for social change through programs and advancing policies that reshape the future for women and girls.

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**2020 Advocacy Priorities**

**ECONOMIC EQUALITY**
Women continue to be paid less for the same job, regardless of similar qualifications and experience. The disparity perseveres across industries, occupations, and educational levels.
- Educate the community on barriers and tools to overcome the wage gap and change biased systems that hold women back from achieving economic equality.

**CHILD CARE REFORM**
Child-rearing responsibilities disproportionately fall on mothers, so challenges with child care access and affordability most frequently result in mothers making career sacrifices.
- Support policies that increase access to quality child care and sustain and strengthen the region’s current and future workforce.

**GENDER EQUITY**
Women are underrepresented in senior and middle management positions, which tend to be better paid.
- Promote workforce policies and programs that offer women and girls opportunities to achieve their personal and professional goals to unleash 100% of the talent available to WNY and give women an equitable stake in leadership.

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**VISION**
All women and girls have the opportunity to thrive, leading to a vibrant, inclusive WNY community.
2020

ADVOCACY AGENDA

Strategies

**We Convene** key partners to ignite change and create a culture where women can be successful and contribute to transforming Western New York.

**We Partner** with agencies and join coalitions that are working towards systems change at the local, state, and federal levels.

**We Educate** about issues impacting women, acknowledging barriers and identifying opportunities for success.

**We Advocate** by using strategic influence and relationships to advance specific policy or funding.

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**Economic Equality**

**Fact:** On average, women in the Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls Metro area earn only $0.74 for every $1.00 men earn.¹

**Goal:** Drive opportunities for every woman, regardless of her socio-economic background, education level, or professional status, to engage in her community and experience economic success for herself and her family.

**Strategies:**

**Advocate/Convene**

Our relationships with those in office keep our pulse on issues impacting women and girls, informing decisions in policy making.

- Host 1-2 Legislative Breakfasts to gather legislators and their staff to discuss women’s economic opportunities, identify actionable items and facilitate discussion on opportunities for change
- Develop and grant awards for legislators who have been champions for our mission
- Meet regularly with key legislators to advance our agenda

**Partner**

The gender wage gap is more than a difference in pay, it is about fully unleashing the talent of women in the public and private sectors and immediate and long term economic opportunities for women.

- Support partners leading Pay Equity events, initiatives, and legislative advocacy
- Partner with advocacy organizations to advance policy that lifts women
- Support efforts to expose adolescent girls, female students, and professional women to explore STEM and the trades through impact partners, STEM scholarships, and professional development opportunities

**Educate**

We will share our unique perspective and knowledge on economic equality through different venues to reach as many audiences as possible to engage in action.

- Participate in Equal Pay Day
- Launch MOMs SOAR series with partners to expand single mothers’ access resources, connections, and knowledge that lead to professional success
- Create engaging P2P Speaker Series that provides opportunity for networking and education

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**Partners:** Ingram Micro, SUNY Erie, JCC, NCCC

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¹ US Census Bureau. 2017 ACS 5-year estimates –Table S2411
FACT: The average annual cost of infant care in NYS is $14,144, making it the 4th most expensive in the nation and taking up more than 1/5th of a typical family's income.²

GOAL: Drive policy decisions and funding for our region to maximize opportunities for quality child care utilization as an essential workforce support, leading to economic empowerment and growth

STRATEGIES:

ADVOCATE/EDUCATE
The current child care system is not working for parents, children, the labor market, small businesses, employers, or the economy. Affordable, accessible, quality child care is essential to workforce support, workforce development, poverty reduction and economic development.

- Identify relevant research to better inform employers and key stakeholders on the value of child care as investment in our community and future workforce.
- Continue the discussion to reduce family share under Erie County Facilitated Enrollment child care subsidy programs to 17.5%
- Secure an increase to $2 million for Erie County Facilitated Enrollment
- Advocate at the state level for co-pay reductions with the long-term goal that no family expends more than 10% of income on child care
- Promote family sustaining wages for child care providers and Empire State Campaign for Child Care ask.

PARTNER
We will join coalitions that are working towards systems change at the local, state, and federal levels. These partnerships will provide different perspectives and give us further guidance on precise asks.

- Work with Partnership for the Public Good and fellow plank members to support increasing child care subsidy to individuals
- Provide leadership for Winning Beginnings NY and Empire State Campaign for Child Care to implement strategies to increase budget appropriations for child care and push for more equitable distribution of NYS subsidy funding
- Provide leadership for NYS Child Care Taskforce’s recommendations into current agenda, focusing asks to build off of recommendations
- Partner with Live Well Erie to assist in implementing interventions for working families to reach long-term goals set by the initiative
- Facilitate creation of an Early Childhood Program on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus
- Convene child care providers to develop a uniform stance on Child Care Reform

Partners: Partnership for the Public Good, NYS Child Care Taskforce, Winning Beginnings NY, Empire State Campaign for Child Care, Child Care Resource Network, Live Well Erie, LiftOff

² New York State Department of Labor. Closing the Gender Wage Gap in New York State. 2018
Gender Equity

**FACT:** For every 100 men promoted to manager, only 79 women receive those promotions. This is why men end up holding 62% of manager positions, while women hold only 38%. ³

**GOAL:** Drive opportunities in leadership and education to promote the importance of supporting women in positions of power in the workforce and all other realms of society

**STRATEGIES:**

**EDUCATE**

Women must be treated as equals in the workplace and encouraged to enter fields where women have traditionally been under-represented. We will promote powerful data and stories to encourage all state and local decision makers, community leaders, employers, and voters to galvanize around smart solutions that strengthen and create economic opportunities for women and families in WNY.

- Develop a social media campaign around the upcoming general election, and how it impacts women and children in our community
- Share our data and research across multiple social media platforms, working with stakeholders to broaden our reach
- Lend our voice to community planning processes and events such as Women’s History Month and the Centennial of Women’s Suffrage
- Promote an accepting environment and reduce barriers for women in STEM and non-traditional workforce fields through Impact Grants funding
- Collaborate with Buffalo and Erie County Complete Count Committee to coordinate statewide efforts to raise awareness of Census 2020 and educate on its impact
- Monitor and intervene on issues that impact women’s economic security during the regular legislative session

**CONVENE**

When young mothers and young children are undercounted in the Census, their needs may not be represented or prioritized according to their real share of the population, and political boundaries may not accurately represent reality. An accurate count of all persons is crucial to the basic principles of a representative government and ensuring federal funding is fairly allocated for programs such as child care. To reach our goals of equity, our ALL IN initiative establishes a network of pathways for employers, female entrepreneurs, and individuals to take steps to make a difference.

- Coordinate 4 Learning Collaboratives for ALL IN partners, diversifying topics of discussion
- Identify potential ALL IN partners in WNY
- Implement Gen-W plan to empower and connect young female leaders
- Discuss best practices for implementing gender equity in the workplace, promoting women into leadership positions, and identifying appropriate benchmarks of success
- Apply comprehensive strategy that not only ensures a gender-inclusive workforce, but concurrently centers women as a key driver of their family’s economic success

**Partners:** League of Women Voters, Erie Coalition on the Status of Women, Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo, Buffalo and Erie County Complete Count Committee

³ Fast Company. *These Companies are Making Sure More Women Get Promoted to Management.* 2019