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# COUNT THEM IN

## A Landscape Analysis of Fairfield County Organizations Supporting Women & Girls

Angela K. Frusciante, MRP, PhD
Knowledge Designs to Change, LLC

Fairfield County's
**Community Foundation**
The Fund for Women & Girls

TOGETHER WE THRIVE

KNOWLEDGE DESIGNS TO CHANGE LLC

## ABOUT THE FUND FOR
## WOMEN & GIRLS

The Fund for Women & Girls (FWG), a permanent field of interest fund of Fairfield County's Community Foundation, is the largest women's fund in New England. Our mission is to engage philanthropists and invest in sustainable solutions that lead to economically secure and healthy women and girls throughout Fairfield County. Since 1998, FWG has invested over $7 million in grants to programs that support this goal. The Fund for Women & Girls invests in supports and promotes building networks of nonprofit providers and community organizations that together create an interconnected system of opportunities for women and girls.

## ABOUT FAIRFIELD COUNTY'S
## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Fairfield County's Community Foundation promotes philanthropy as a means to create change in Fairfield County, focusing on innovative and collaborative solutions to critical issues impacting the community. As a trusted nonprofit partner and thought leader, Fairfield County's Community Foundation brings together community organizers, business experts and philanthropists to close the opportunity gap. Our goal is to create a vital and inclusive community, where every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

## ABOUT KNOWLEDGE DESIGNS TO CHANGE

Knowledge Designs to Change is a strategic research and learning practice serving philanthropic and nonprofit organizations and the social sector. At Knowledge Designs to Change, we believe that every community group, every nonprofit organization, every funder, every civic initiative, every public institution, no matter what size or monetary value, operates within a network of change potential. Each change effort can help build a more equitable, engaged society and contribute to deep and lasting structural change. Figuring out how to change, and how to advocate for change, is what we call knowledge work. Using co-designed processes for engaged inquiry and strategic design, KD2Change works across staff, leadership, and grantee and community participants to identify and implement key knowledge practices that lead to sustainable results.

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# Executive Summary

## Fairfield County is an area rich in wealth and plentiful in nonprofit and volunteer activity.

However, many needs of women and girls remain unmet, and barriers to equal opportunity for all families and communities still exist. Fairfield County's Community Foundation's Fund for Women & Girls' first Landscape Analysis generated insights on the nature and breadth of organizations improving the quality of life and opportunities for women and girls.

Focus group and survey participants shared both stories of need and a strong sense of hope. Participants helped us identify the types of capacity building required to create a functioning knowledge network for change.

### HIGHLIGHTS

Inventory and survey findings suggest that there are many organizations across the county reaching hundreds of thousands of women and girls — but there are still unmet needs and issues of access. The survey process indicates a loosely linked emerging network that supports women and girls. These are organizations, often women-led, that indicate a desire to collaborate around key issues, including advocacy, to address the underlying structures of gender bias and inequity.

Providers of supports are interested in connecting with each other and finding ways to collaborate with mission-focused partners.

Among these organizations, many that provide supports used by women and girls do not identity their supports as "gender specific." They would welcome more information about how to best support women and girls and meet their needs.

Those survey respondents who identified specifically as offering "gender-specific" supports indicated an emphasis on safety. This included healthy relationships, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, financial abuse, trafficking and legal aid.
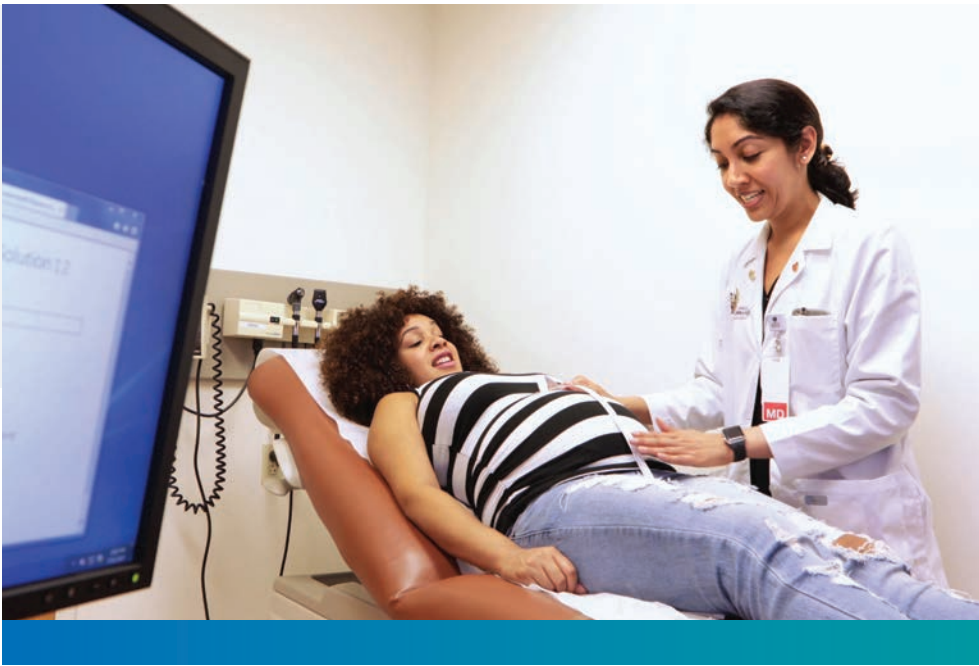
## OPPORTUNITIES

While there are varying **approaches** providers could take to support Fairfield County's women and girls, the landscape analysis surfaced six key **opportunities** that should be considered.

- There is a perception among providers that Fairfield County has a strong foundation of supports for meeting basic needs and life skills development. Strengthening a continuum of supports across the lifecycle and development phases of women, and ensuring that everyone has access to those supports, are two opportunities at hand.

- Focus group participants helped us understand that the needs of women and girls spanned the whole county, from lower income areas to those with higher overall socioeconomic status. However, they also stated that various issues and needs manifest differently in each location. Supporting women and girls is not one size fits all.

- Offering a system of supports for those who cannot afford services continues to be a challenge; consistent funding is necessary.

- Providers are interested in expanding volunteer engagement. Effective provider and volunteer support requires cultural sensitivity. Providers would like assistance in matching their supports with the right volunteers and engaging in capacity building on structural inequities.

- Issues around transportation, childcare availability, economic need, fear of government and limited awareness of what is available are all barriers recognized by providers. Language needs also are not yet being completely met by organizations.

## ACTIONS

The analysis identified that the following actions have the potential to change the culture and systems that impact the quality of life of women and girls and, in turn, families and communities across the county.

- Providers wish to hear directly from women and girls about desired supports. Some key issues such as human trafficking and sexual violence against young girls are not yet on the public's radar.

- Organizations need investment in capacity building to track client data and improve organizational effectiveness.

- Providers want assistance with various information activities happening across the county, such as asset mapping and developing resource guides. Where this information does exist, it is difficult to keep updated and connect activities to each other.

- Providers expressed a desire to more effectively increase developmental opportunities for women and girls such as workplace internships, leadership activities, civic engagement training and encouragement for girls of color to enter the STEM employment sector.

- Critical information about the statewide and national organizations providing supports in the areas of education, advocacy and leadership development needs to reach local communities.

- Evidence surfaced that providers themselves often need self-care and emotional support, and that they wish to connect more and learn about each other's practices. This suggests that supporting providers to come together as a network could have an exponential impact on bolstering their ability to support women and girls in the county.

- Forming new relationships among providers, learning together, and developing shared messages and understandings of both the barriers and possibilities for women and girls are critical in helping to close the opportunity gap.

# LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS FOR BUILDING A NETWORK

Maximizing investments to achieve equitable outcomes requires a strong network. Strong networks enable a more efficient referral system and more effective use of community and provider resources. When diversity is intentionally honored, these networks can produce more robust strategies and partnerships grounded deeply in what works in communities. Strong networks involve:

- Funders, providers and residents developing strategy from shared knowledge;

- Providers communicating with each other regularly and learning together to build shared understandings of issues and promising practices to address these challenges;

- Organizations building and using their data capacity to develop shared understandings of the needs, barriers and trends impacting women and girls, and aligning available supports;

- Organizational providers, together with those women and girls most affected, using their experience, data and voices to advocate for shared outcomes;

- Systems of care for self and others that are nurtured within the network; and

- Leadership development across stakeholders that is both sustainable and able to shift as conditions change over time.

Networks that encompass a shared framework for developing strategy, grounded processes for understanding and learning together, and readily available data focused on practice-based experience and outcomes are particularly powerful. These types of networks are referred to as "knowledge networks."

The Landscape Analysis indicates **the emergence and desire for a knowledge network**. The study provides information about existing and needed supports for women and girls, and it points toward specific actions that can deepen, broaden and maximize the ability of this emergent network to lead to equitable outcomes for women and girls throughout Fairfield County.

# Introduction

The Fund for Women & Girls (FWG) promotes building networks of nonprofit providers and community organizations that together can create an interconnected system of opportunities for the women and girls of Fairfield County.

Historically, The Fund for Women & Girls has updated its research on the status of women and girls in Fairfield County every five years. In November 2018, FWG commissioned Knowledge Designs to Change (KD2Change) to conduct the Fund's first Landscape Analysis. The purpose of the analysis is to gain a better understanding of the supports available to women and girls in the county.

The Landscape Analysis combines the ongoing five-year research update with an inventory of identified providers and an analysis that recognizes the largest gaps between needs and availability of services for our region's women and girls. The analysis is a key ingredient in building strategies to strengthen the opportunities and equitable outcomes for the county's women and girls. And, it is an important next step to enabling a stronger network of organizations to provide supports to deliver more positive outcomes throughout the region.

The Landscape Analysis research process included three major components: focus groups, a survey targeted to gender-specific supports and an inventory of organizations/programs providing services to women and girls across Fairfield County.

FWG is now positioned to share these insights and learnings with a broader community of change makers who also recognize that building strong communities and increasing economic and quality of life for all Connecticut residents depends on the strength of its women and girls.
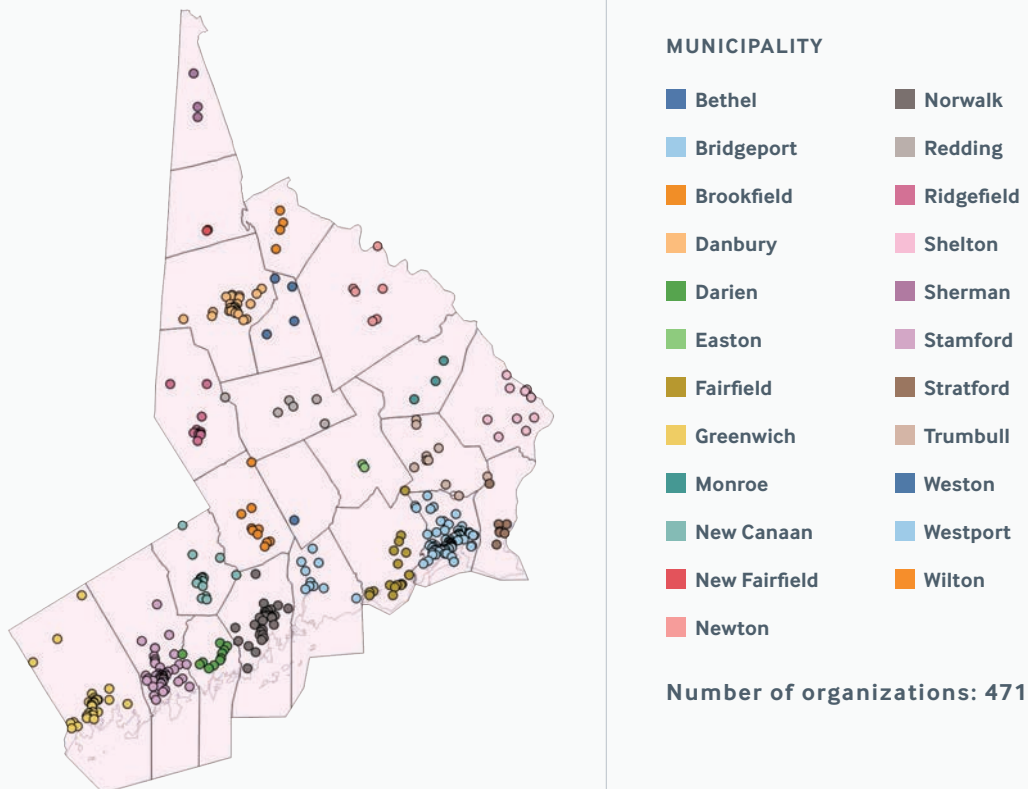
# What's Available to Women & Girls in Fairfield County

In a search dedicated to identifying supports that could be accessed by women and girls, we narrowed the inventory to 578 organizations where online information was available for categorizing. We know that there are other services not yet included in the inventory. Some exclusions were organizations or programs whose information is social-media based only; religious ministries that are focused on services to internal communities; and supports that operate within specific, even if large, communities, such as corporations and universities.

In this case, understanding the system of supports requires looking geographically at the locations of the organizational providers. Overall, the inventory includes organizations located in every city and town across Fairfield County. It is not surprising that the density of support organizations mirrors the areas of highest density and need.

## LOCATION OF RESOURCES FOR WOMEN & GIRLS IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY



**MUNICIPALITY**

| | |
|---|---|
| Bethel | Norwalk |
| Bridgeport | Redding |
| Brookfield | Ridgefield |
| Danbury | Shelton |
| Darien | Sherman |
| Easton | Stamford |
| Fairfield | Stratford |
| Greenwich | Trumbull |
| Monroe | Weston |
| New Canaan | Westport |
| New Fairfield | Wilton |
| Newton | |

**Number of organizations: 471**

Within the inventory, we confirmed through online information that 40 percent of the organizations offer at least one program or activity targeted directly to women and/or girls or an area primarily related to women and girls. If we look at survey respondents specifically as a sample, approximately 33 percent said that they do not provide gender-specific supports. There were no immediately identifiable patterns between the organizations that reported providing gender-specific supports for women and girls and those that do not. However, almost 70 percent of the organizations that do not call their supports "gender specific" did indicate that they offer programs that are used primarily by women and girls.

We understand from focus group comments that government organizations, such as municipalities, tend to not specify gender because they are publicly funded and thus required to serve "all" people. This ambiguity occurs even when the program staff is aware that the focus of the program is on the needs of women and girls.

Interestingly, of those indicating that they do not currently provide gender-specific supports, almost 20 percent indicated that they have plans to increase their gender-specific supports, and another 20 percent said they might increase gender-specific supports in the near future.

**There are many organizations that provide supports that are used by women and girls, but do not identify their supports as "gender specific." These organizations would welcome more information about how to best support women and girls and meet their needs.**

The survey organizations that did not identify their supports as gender specific collectively reported that over 38,000 women and girls access their supports per year. It is important to note that these numbers are self-reported and could include duplication and/or omission within or across organizations. These numbers also may be estimated rather than systematically

collected. Nevertheless, the number of women and girls served and the indications of future plans demonstrate that organizations that work with women and girls, but do not identify their supports as gender specific, are a **potential audience for information and learning**.

These organizations want to know where and what the needs of women and girls are, what knowledge and skills should be developed, and what major obstacles are preventing these needs from being addressed. They want data disaggregated by age and gender. They want information on women's career aspirations and voting patterns. And, they want to know where their services can be best directed and are curious about the best practices of organizations that are working to support women and girls. Moreover, they want to share information and find places to connect women and girls with their resources. Some organizations would even welcome regular updates about the needs of women and girls, such as at coalition meetings.

Service providers indicated wanting survey results and direct input from women and girls about their needs. One survey respondent shared how helpful it would be to have "staff training in how best to serve women and girls and develop program specific opportunities."

Of those who responded to the survey, many organizations indicated that their participants most often find out about their supports through word of mouth and their website. Social media, a referring agency and school counselors/social workers were noted as well. Advertising was the least checked response.

During our focus groups, participants mentioned the increase in use of social media and specifically Facebook groups (including moms' groups and neighborhood or town groups) as a way that participants are finding out about supports. They also identified a need for support in their outreach efforts so they can better keep up with the best communication and marketing trends.
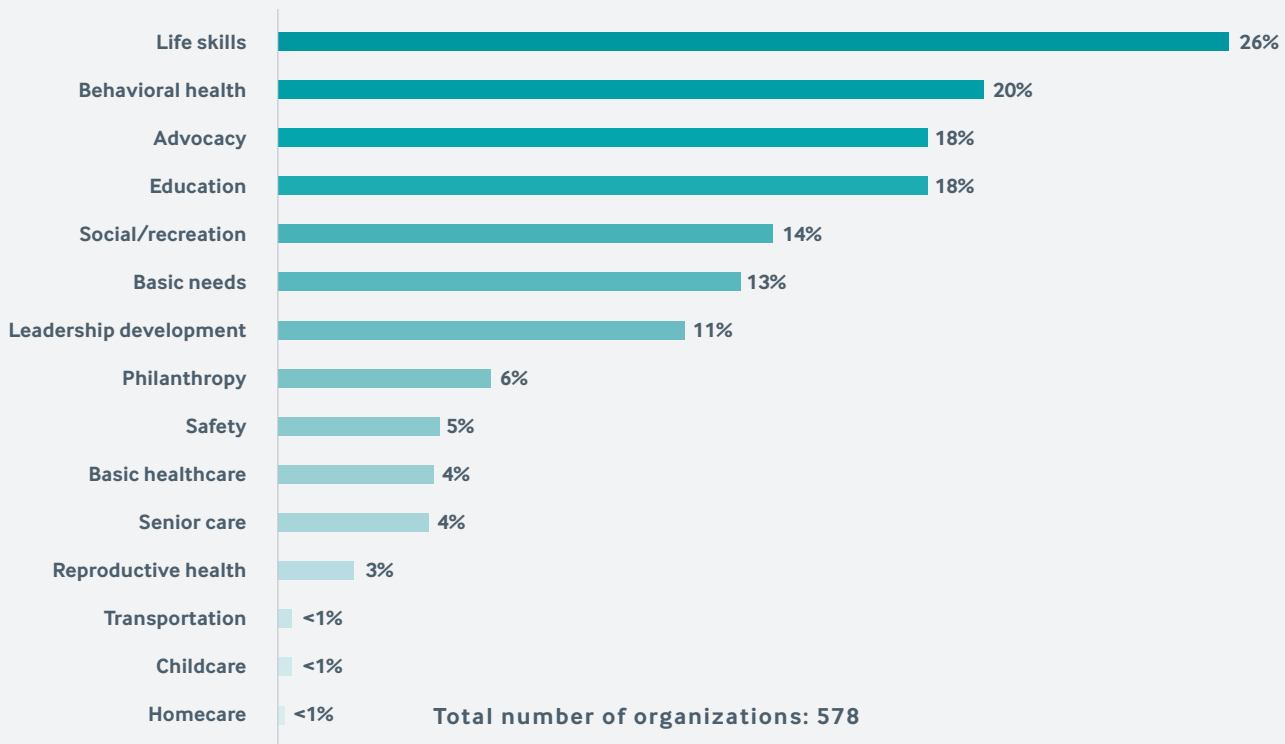
# Types of Supports

Through the focus groups and the online survey, organizations shared the many ways that women and girls are being supported across the county. They pointed to ways in which social, emotional and physical needs are being met, and they highlighted the commitment of women volunteers interested in, or already contributing to, addressing the needs of women and girls. Providers noted the increasing strength of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics) programming for girls; referred to many "education, enrichment and self-esteem" supports across the county; and emphasized the importance of building "a network of women who they can trust to support them [so that] confidence is gained, relationships are formed, [and] women and girls feel empowered."

**There is a perception among providers that Fairfield County has a strong foundation of supports for meeting basic needs and life skills development. Strengthening a continuum of supports across the lifecycle and development phases of women and ensuring that everyone has access to those supports are two opportunities at hand.**

The inventory analysis confirms the perception of focus group and survey participants that a majority of the organizations focus on foundational supports like life skills. Life skills include socio-emotional learning, self-advocacy, negotiation skills, parenting skills, mentoring and social capital development, intergenerational supports, and nutritional and wellness supports.

## ORGANIZATIONAL INVENTORY – TYPE OF SUPPORTS
### Percentage of organizations offering type of support

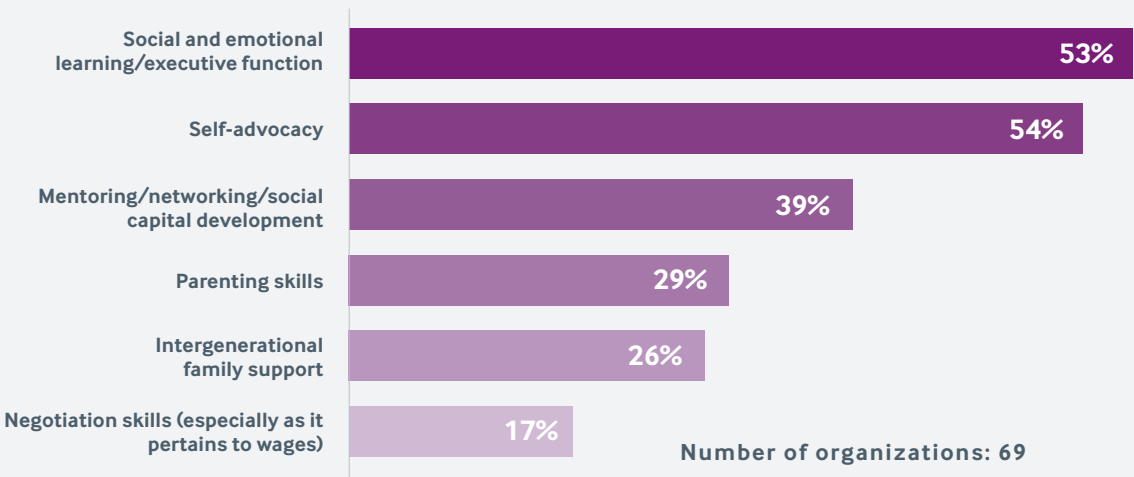| Type of support | Percentage |
| --- | --- |
| Life skills | 26% |
| Behavioral health | 20% |
| Advocacy | 18% |
| Education | 18% |
| Social/recreation | 14% |
| Basic needs | 13% |
| Leadership development | 11% |
| Philanthropy | 6% |
| Safety | 5% |
| Basic healthcare | 4% |
| Senior care | 4% |
| Reproductive health | 3% |
| Transportation | <1% |
| Childcare | <1% |
| Homecare | <1% |

Total number of organizations: 578

The supports most commonly offered by organizations in the inventory are consistent with the more detailed online survey results. The survey sought to identify the subset of organizations that identified as offering "gender-specific supports" for women and girls. The definition used in the survey was:

"By saying gender-specific supports for women and girls, we are referring to the explicit naming of women and girls as the primary focus and designing the support(s) with them in mind. We are asking about efforts that take into consideration and place women and girls at the center. This means recognizing that the n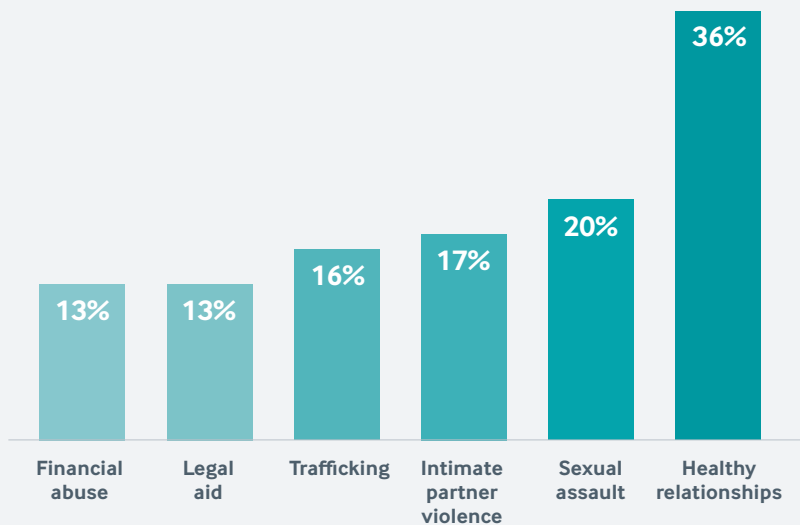eeds of women and girls may be different than men and boys. It means trying to challenge and address the specific power structures that impact women and girls and the specific barriers women and girls face. Using a gender-specific focus for women and girls also recognizes and celebrates the many ways in which women and girls contribute to our communities and society."

The following charts illustrate the results of the online survey. The results only include respondents who indicated providing "gender-specific" supports. The charts provide information on the number of organizations surveyed offering supports in the subcategories of each type of programming, beginning with **life skills**.

**TYPE OF LIFE SKILLS OFFERED BY SURVEYED ORGANIZATIONS**

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Social and emotional learning/executive function | 53% |
| Self-advocacy | 54% |
| Mentoring/networking/social capital development | 39% |
| Parenting skills | 29% |
| Intergenerational family support | 26% |
| Negotiation skills (especially as it pertains to wages) | 17% |

Number of organizations: 69

## TYPE OF SAFETY SUPPORTS OFFERED BY SURVEYED ORGANIZATIONS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13% | 13% | 16% | 17% | 20% | 36% |
| Financial abuse | Legal aid | Trafficking | Intimate partner violence | Sexual assault | Healthy relationships |

**Number of organizations: 69**

## TYPE OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUPPORTS OFFERED BY SURVEYED ORGANIZATIONS

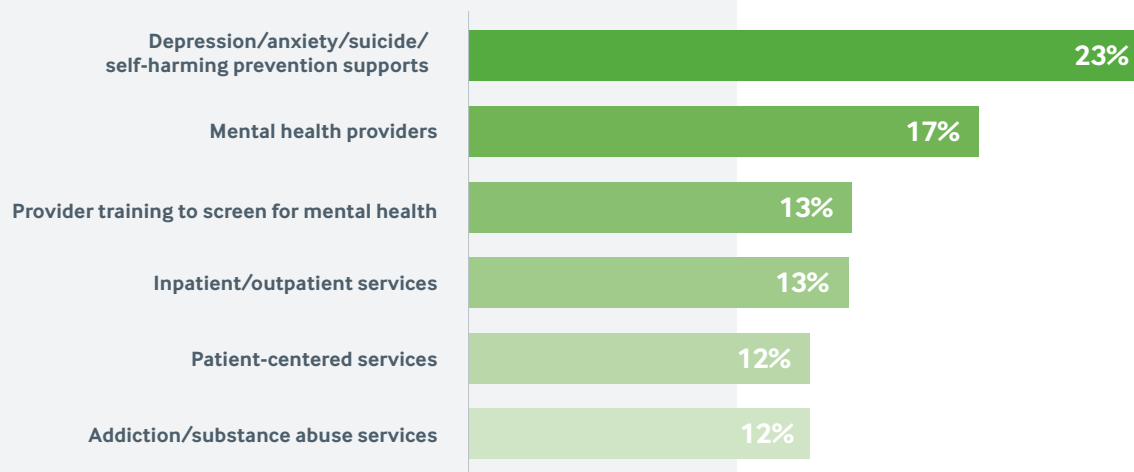| | |
|---|---|
| Depression/anxiety/suicide/ self-harming prevention supports | 23% |
| Mental health providers | 17% |
| Provider training to screen for mental health | 13% |
| Inpatient/outpatient services | 13% |
| Patient-centered services | 12% |
| Addiction/substance abuse services | 12% |

**Number of organizations: 69**

**Safety supports and behavioral health services followed life skills as the areas documented most often across organizations that provide gender-specific programming.**

As a backdrop for understanding the needs regarding self-esteem, confidence building, success in financial and communication skills, and overall leadership development and career exploration, providers indicated concerns about the trauma — and potential trauma — faced by women and girls. Providers mentioned discussions with school personnel astonished by the number of female students who during immigration processes had experienced sexual assault. Other providers noted that a frightening number of girls have experienced some level of sexual violence by the time they are in high school. Providers sought to fill in perceived gaps in sexual assault services and education.
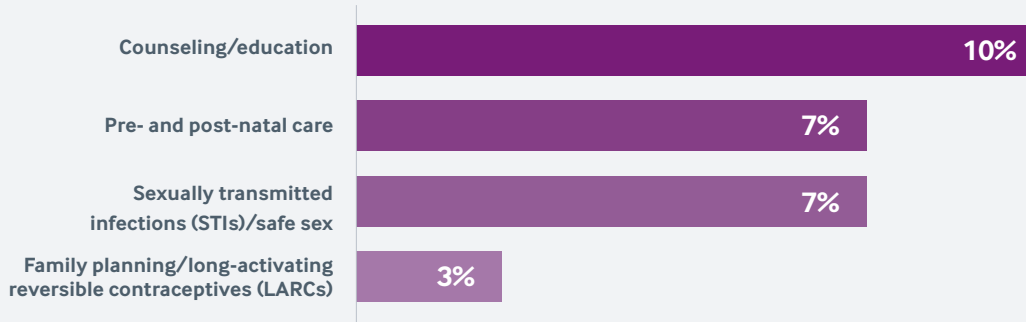
Survey respondents listed a range of supports available for trauma-related services, and one respondent referred to crisis intervention as a strength in her community. It was hopeful that another individual noted that "girls are increasingly aware of their mental health needs and how to access services."

**TYPE OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SUPPORTS OFFERED BY SURVEYED ORGANIZATIONS**

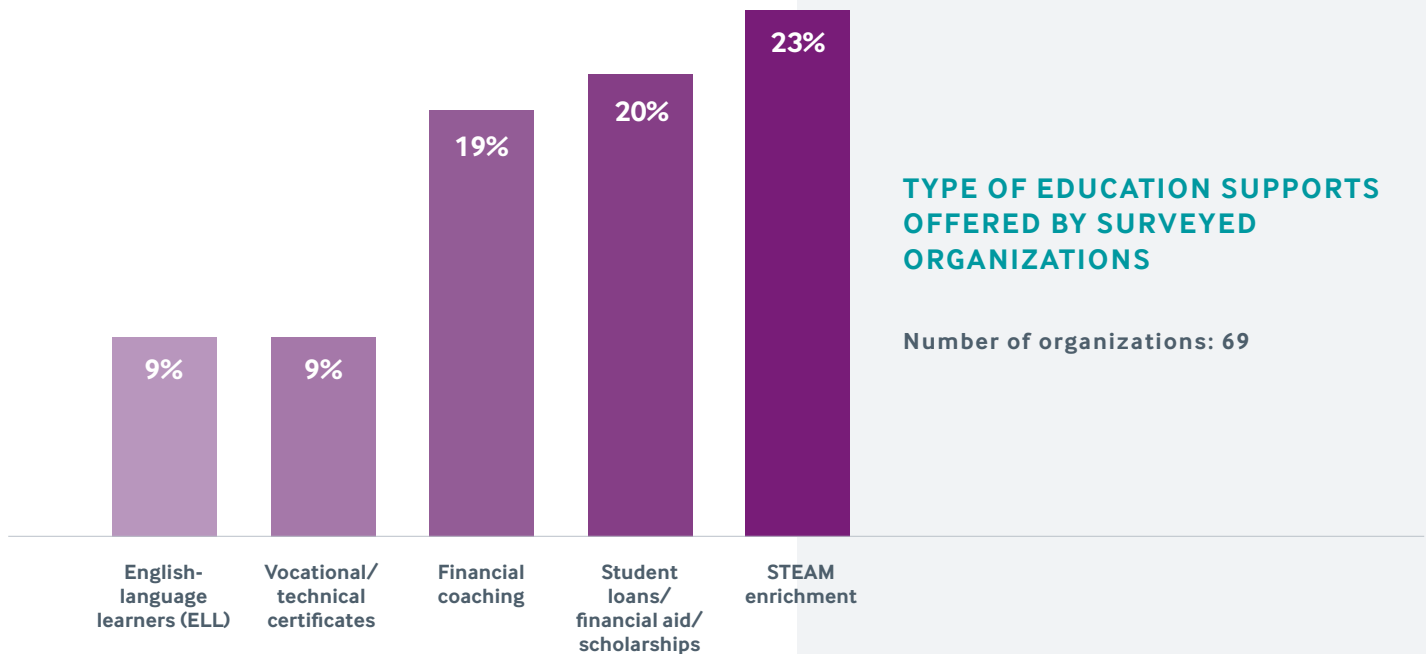| Support | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Counseling/education | 10% |
| Pre- and post-natal care | 7% |
| Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)/safe sex | 7% |
| Family planning/long-activating reversible contraceptives (LARCs) | 3% |

**Number of organizations: 69**

The most common subcategory reported as a support offered by the largest number of organizations for reproductive health was counseling and education.

Focus group and survey participants noted the critical nature of reproductive health and the ways that today's young women access information about it. There were concerns expressed about social media rapidly replacing safe spaces where girls and young women could socialize and talk about issues related to sexuality and health. This, coupled with participants' perceptions of pervasiveness of sexual trauma, demonstrated and reinforced the level of urgency around **reproductive health**.

**Education** is a category where complexity was evident. There were variations in need across ages. There is an awareness by some providers of the benefits of two-generational supports and a desire that supports be family focused. From tutoring, mentoring and college counseling to financial self-sufficiency and promoting successful women as role models for the "next generations of women leaders," education was both distinct and interwoven with other categories of supports. For example, education could be expressed as part of leadership development, life skills and reproductive health.



## TYPE OF EDUCATION SUPPORTS OFFERED BY SURVEYED ORGANIZATIONS

Number of organizations: 69

| English-language learners (ELL) | Vocational/ technical certificates | Financial coaching | Student loans/ financial aid/ scholarships | STEAM enrichment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9% | 9% | 19% | 20% | 23% |

Finally, while the category of **leadership development** was very specific, open-ended responses to the survey showed that, like education, leadership development is a concept that spans across or connects with the other types of supports. Whether in civics, business or community and family, the characteristics typically associated with leadership were mentioned often, including self-confidence, courage, self-esteem and empowerment.
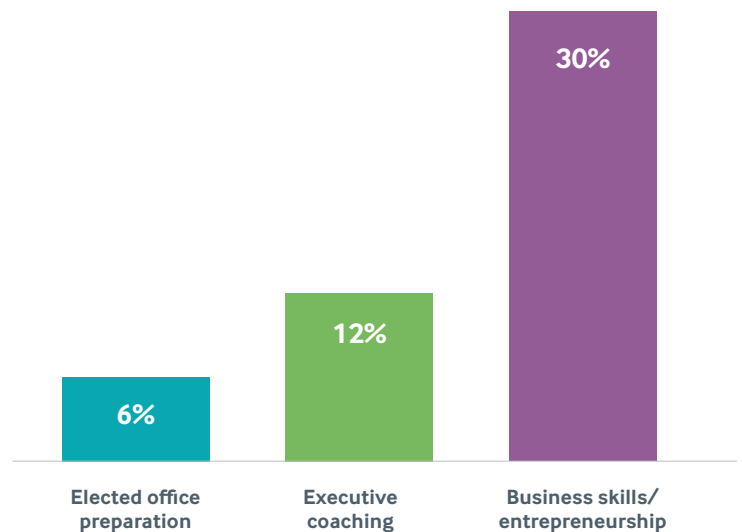
**Affordable childcare** is another significant area of needed supports, and its challenges are threefold. The first challenge is an ability to access the supports necessary for families to obtain quality child care and the impact of that access on women being able to stay in the workforce. Second is the issue of the structures necessary to provide for a stable "childcare market."

One survey respondent noted that the increase in publicly funded pre-K is actually "destabilizing the childcare market" because older children are moving into school-based programs. Infants and toddlers are increasingly becoming the majority of participants in early care and these are the more expensive ages of care.

Unintended consequences like these are adding to the expected stressors that impact availability and quality. And third, focus group participants discussed how childcare providers themselves, because of low wages, are often in need of services and supports.

## TYPE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTS OFFERED BY SURVEYED ORGANIZATIONS

| Elected office preparation | Executive coaching | Business skills/ entrepreneurship |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 6% | 12% | 30% |

**Number of organizations: 69**

When looking at the broader inventory data, the types of supports offered are almost identical between all inventory organizations and those that confirmed to target supports to women and girls. This pattern of supports also holds for the most part when comparing to types of services reported by survey respondents who identify as providing "gender-specific supports" with one major exception:

**Survey respondents who identified specifically as offering "gender-specific" supports indicated a much greater emphasis on safety. This included supports for healthy relationships, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, financial abuse, trafficking and legal aid.**

As indicated by the inventory, these organizations were in all towns and cities in Fairfield County. As expected, there is a concentration of organizations in the most densely populated areas. Although not a perfect mirroring, the inventory organizations overall and those organizations that were confirmed to target supports for women and girls show similar patterns of concentration.

The following towns and cities included more than 25 such organizations each: Fairfield, Danbury, Greenwich, Norwalk, Stamford and Bridgeport (in order from least to most in the overall inventory). Not surprisingly, these locations align with higher population density and higher numbers of residents living in low-income conditions.

When looking at more detailed information provided in the surveys by those who identified as providing gender-specific supports, we can see a similar patterns of support provision. The largest number of organizations indicated providing supports for participants who live in the higher population density locations of Bridgeport, Norwalk and Stamford.

## SURVEYED ORGANIZATIONS WITH GENDER-SPECIFIC SUPPORTS BY PARTICIPANT LOCATION

Number of organizations: 68



Number of organizations

47

13
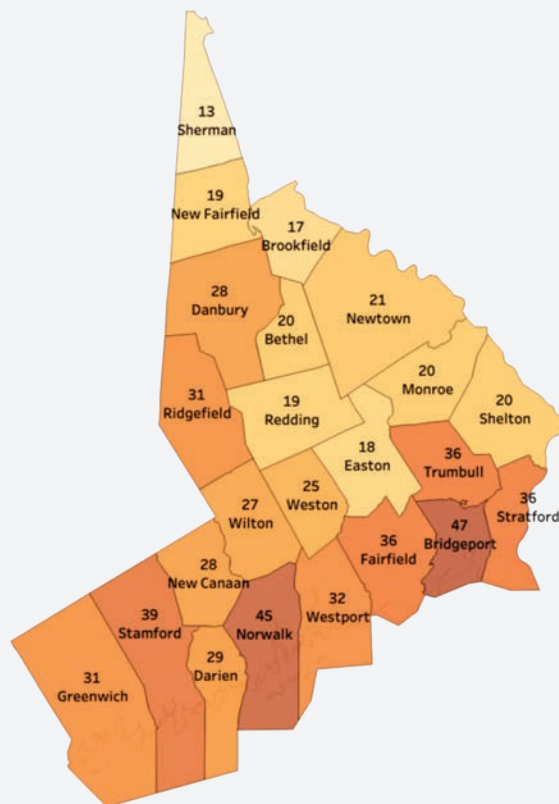
Most survey respondents indicated tracking participants by address only. About 25 percent indicated tracking by town/city and only two organizations indicated that they track any specific neighborhood or census tract level information. Still, it is important to note that all towns and cities in the county were captured in the survey responses.

**Focus group participants helped us understand that the needs of women and girls spanned the whole county, from lower-income areas to those with higher overall socioeconomic status. However, they also stated that various issues and needs manifest differently in each location.**

Supporting women and girls is not one size fits all.

# Supporting Participants

The most detailed information in this analysis comes from the online survey and the organizations that indicated providing gender-specific supports. Although this snowball* sample is not statistically significant, the patterns of alignment with the inventory data make it reasonable to suggest that this sample information can begin to help us understand patterns of supports across Fairfield County.

**Inventory and survey findings suggest that there are many organizations across the county reaching hundreds of thousands of women and girls — but there are still unmet needs and issues of access.**

At 70 percent, the majority of organizations indicated that their participants did not pay for the supports. Participant eligibility criteria ranged across organizations and included financial need, referrals or references, and location, such as town residency or school district. Many organizations offered supports in their own dedicated space, client communities or homes. Another popular approach was to offer supports in coordination with other organizations such as schools, libraries, shelters, university spaces, clinics, hospitals, town halls and other sites that could have been categorized as "in the community" but were mentioned separately by respondents. Approximately 74 percent indicated that all the supports they offered were provided near public transportation.
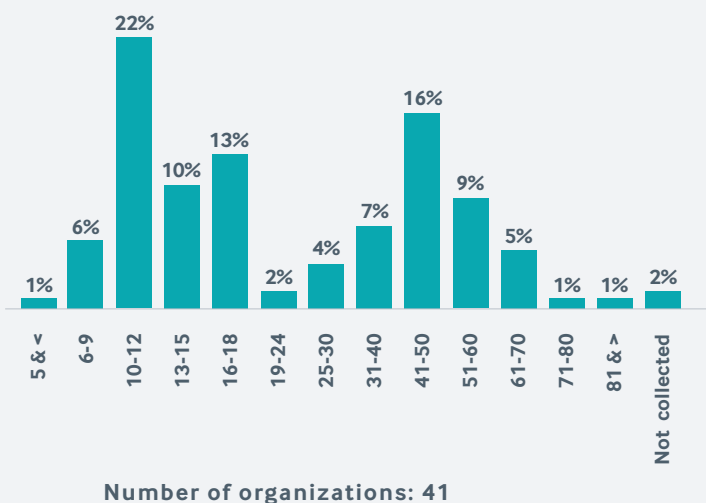
**Offering a system of supports for those who cannot afford services continues to be a challenge; consistent funding is necessary.**

*For a definition of "snowball" see the "Appendix: Study Overview" on page 38 and the "Landscape Analysis: Methodology" on page 40 for more complete details.

# Demographics of Women & Girls Accessing Services

The survey participants indicated that it is a challenge to consistently meet the varied needs of women and girls across age groups.

**AGE OF PARTICIPANTS ACCESSING SUPPORTS FROM SURVEYED ORGANIZATIONS**

Age group percentages:
- 5 & <: 1%
- 6-9: 6%
- 10-12: 22%
- 13-15: 10%
- 16-18: 13%
- 19-24: 2%
- 25-30: 4%
- 31-40: 7%
- 41-50: 16%
- 51-60: 9%
- 61-70: 5%
- 71-80: 1%
- 81 & >: 1%
- Not collected: 2%

**Number of organizations: 41**

Although detailed demographic data collection by organizations is minimal, survey respondents provided a sense of the additional demographic characteristics related to women and girls currently utilizing supports. For example, of the responding organizations, only 27 indicated they collected gender information about their participants. Estimates were that 85 percent of those accessing supports were cisgender females. In the survey, the following definitions were provided:

**Cisgender** — A term for those who exclusively identify as their sex assigned at birth. The term cisgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy or how one is perceived in daily life.

**Transgender** — An encompassing term of many gender identities of those who do not identify or exclusively identify with their sex assigned at birth. The term transgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy or how one is perceived in daily life.

**Gender Nonconforming** — A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their assigned gender.

Focus group and survey participants noted the need for more LGBTQ supports, and some specifically noted that "binary and cis girls/women are better integrated into society than trans and nonbinary folks."

It is interesting to note that over 75 percent of organizations did not collect information about the **household types** of their participants. Those that estimated indicated "single with children" as their primary category of program participants. Focus group participants also shared their specific concerns about the increasing number of grandparents and great-grandparents without adequate supports who are serving as caregivers to children in Fairfield County.

Many organizations also do not collect information on their participants' **highest level of education**. However, for those that estimated this data, supports were most often accessed by individuals with some high school or general education diplomas (GEDs). These estimates included both girls and women, so there is not a clear indication of the percentage of adults without a high school degree. Interestingly, focus group participants did indicate a higher percentage of low-wage workers accessing their supports. This may coincide with barriers to educational achievement.

**Providers are interested in expanding volunteer engagement. Effective provider and volunteer support require cultural sensitivity. Providers would like assistance in matching their supports with the right volunteers and together engaging in capacity building around structural inequities.**

The chart to the right indicates the percentages reported when asked about **race/ethnicity** of their program participants. Many organizations that completed the survey indicated they do not consistently collect this level of detail when interacting with their participants, while approximately 33 percent of them shared that they did not collect this level of detail at all.

### RACE/ETHNICITY OF PARTICIPANTS ACCESSING SUPPORTS FROM SURVEY ORGANIZATIONS



- Black — 23%
- Hispanic/Latinx — 20%
- White — 20%
- Other — 4%
- Unknown/not collected — 33%
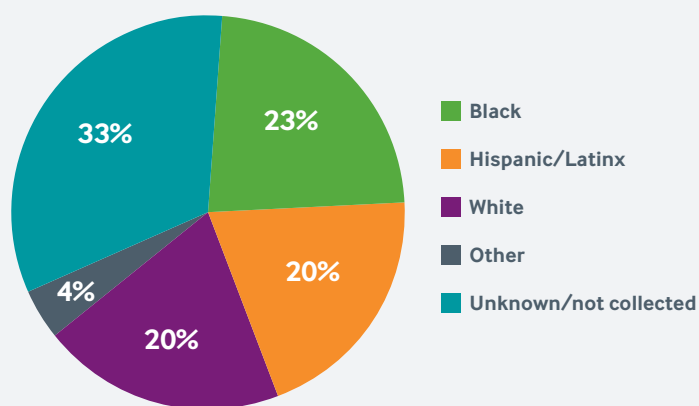
**Number of organizations: 67**

When asked in what **languages** supports were offered, most responses were English and Spanish. Other languages mentioned were French, Portuguese, Creole, Haitian Creole and Arabic (in no particular order). Of the respondents, 55 percent expressed not having enough staff members with language skills to provide for English language learner (ELL) participants without adequate supports who are serving as caregivers to children in Fairfield County. Of those who responded, about 30 percent indicated using interpreters, but most of them clarified that this use was rare.

Reasons for this lack of use included that it simply was not an issue or that they had staff members with the requisite language skills. Interpreters were only called for on a case-by-case basis. Focus group participants shared that there was additional need for language resources. While this may seem contradictory, both survey respondents and focus group participants agreed that, beyond language skills, they hoped for more support in **cultural sensitivity**, as this is crucial to build the trust needed to support women and girls in the county.

# Strengthening Supports for Women & Girls

## Participants want to know more about what supports are currently available to women and girls.

They acknowledged that without this information, it was difficult to say definitively where the gaps in supports were, and yet providers are still keenly aware of the gaps they witnessed in their own practice. During the focus groups and in open-ended questions in the online survey, participants shared their insights about needs they believe are not being met.

Although participants acknowledged issues faced by women and girls of all socioeconomic and geographic categories, they placed emphasis on underserved populations and contexts where the most barriers exist. Highlighted situations included those where financial and other barriers have a great impact on access, such as single-parent households and immigrant communities for individuals with and without legal documentation. They noted that it is getting more arduous for parents to register children for programs because of the increase in complicated legal forms.

Providers emphasized the level of **victimization** experienced by women and girls, including sexual violence, domestic abuse and the increasing, but still not readily discussed, issue of trafficking. They noted the shame, guilt and sometimes cultural norms that prevent women from seeking support in addition to the cost of such services. They emphasized the prejudice and bias experienced by LGBTQ women and conveyed that this bias has had a "disproportionate impact on women, girls and nonbinary folks of color."

**Issues around transportation, childcare availability, economic need, fear of government and limited awareness of what is available are all barriers recognized by providers. Language needs also are not yet being completely met by organizations.**

**Language** itself was linked to underdeveloped cultural understanding and noted as a critical barrier to meeting the needs of women and girls, particularly those who are underserved and may not feel comfortable accessing supports. More specifically, providers noted current immigrant communities such as Brazilian, Central American, Haitian and others with populations of English language learners as not yet receiving the supports they need.



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Providers want to improve their capability to address crisis situations and longer-term **mental health** concerns. More women's healthcare clinics, short-term housing, trauma-informed clinical care, substance abuse treatment (especially among adolescents) and mental health supports for depression are all needs that were noted. They believed that schools and service providers should have a better understanding of "how trauma impacts girls, their behavior and their engagement with school and services." To address the highest needs, there is a desire to form a system of communication and coordination among organizations.

**Role models** were understood as important for girls and young women. Ongoing supports require an increase in the number of adult and peer mentoring opportunities not just in schools, but also in community settings. There also is a desire for more counselors of color who can understand and relate to young girls of color. In addition to mentors, providers indicated that it would be helpful to have a centralized volunteer match platform so that providers would have access to an identified pool of willing volunteers to reach out to for assistance.

**Financial empowerment** through better-paying jobs and financial education was stated as an unmet need. However, there was also a concern that financial education was being provided in varied ways across providers, such as through corporate volunteers and not always targeted to the needs of lower-income communities. Nonprofit providers feared that utilizing multiple approaches could be confusing to participants and that a common curriculum needed to be developed and shared. For example, providers want partnerships with business and banking organizations that are eager to provide financial education in uniform ways that ensure underserved community participants are receiving the basics of financial education.

**Strengthening parents** and their parenting skills and emphasizing family supports was highlighted, including addressing "father absence" and its impact on young girls, supporting single-parent households and establishing support groups for new moms in need. Respondents stressed providing parenting supports to pregnant teens in high school settings. Two-generational and family strategies of support were also mentioned as an important approach to addressing complex issues impacting women and girls when it comes to parenting.

Providers yearn for mechanisms and tools to understand the **underlying causes** of prevalent issues and to be more preventative in addressing possible issues earlier. One way they felt this could be done would be with more developmental supports for girls. Establishing personal boundaries and healthy relationships were among the specific areas mentioned, as well as meeting socio-emotional needs, building confidence and self-esteem, managing stress and conflict, learning skills to advocate for oneself and to communicate with medical professionals, and building resilience. These are all areas that providers expressed wanting to address more effectively than they currently are.

**Providers wish to hear directly from women and girls about desired supports. Some key issues such as human trafficking and sexual violence against young girls are not yet on the public's radar.**

Across the focus groups and in surveys, a key to supporting girls in their development was creating more **safe spaces** for girls to talk to each other. Providers commented on the limited spaces — such as teen centers — where girls could communicate openly. The ideal places and programs are those where girls can connect to adults but are not overly "programmed with pre-identified outcomes and models." This was identified as an especially important alternative to social media for learning about sexuality.

This desire for safe spaces extended to identifying places where women already gather that could be used to provide supports. There was also a sense that women and girls needed more creative outlets for drama, art, dance and the community spaces for sharing their creativity as women used to do in past generations, such as with quilting bees. Closely related to this need for accessible spaces is for participants to have the time, insurance and transportation that makes access realistic.

**Providers expressed a desire to increase professional development opportunities for women and girls such as workplace internships, leadership activities, civic engagement training and encouragement for girls of color to enter the STEM employment field.**
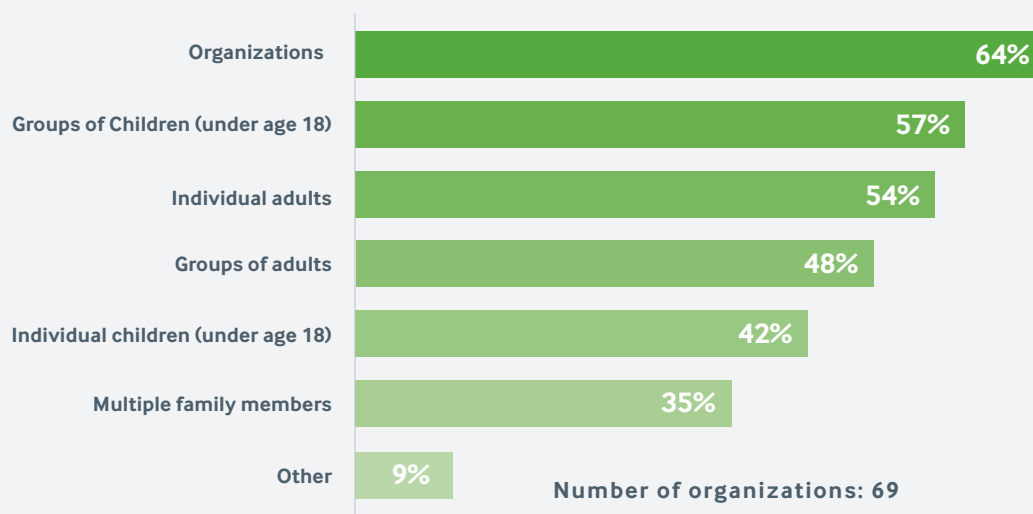
Finally, without overarching supports, it would be hard to increase or sustain any gains made by women and girls. Whether it is in the form of individual legal services, group organizing and mobilizing, or advocacy, both systems and policy change are essential to any long-term approach. There was a shared sense among providers that that specifically targeting advocacy for childcare and home healthcare workers would be doubly

effective, as they are some of the lowest-wage workers in Fairfield County. These groups of women are often in need of access to multiple supports, such as childcare and food.

How organizations responded about their programming when given the choice of "continue as is," "stop," "grow existing," "reduce," "add new" or "don't know," most (approximately 81 percent) indicated they plan to continue as is or grow existing programs. Only 18 percent of providers indicated they plan to add new programs. This suggests that as understandings of needs change, focus on encouraging existing organizations to shift their work in the necessary direction will be required.

One area where this desire to stay the course may be challenging is in aligning with the emerging attention on family-oriented supports noted by the focus groups in the recent DataHaven research with that of our focus groups. The majority of providers from the Landscape Analysis groups work with organizations and/or individuals and groups rather than with a multiple-family-member approach. This suggests that providing guidance on family-centered strategies would be beneficial to many organizations.

## TYPE OF SUPPORT APPROACH USED BY SURVEYED ORGANIZATIONS

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Organizations | 64% |
| Groups of Children (under age 18) | 57% |
| Individual adults | 54% |
| Groups of adults | 48% |
| Individual children (under age 18) | 42% |
| Multiple family members | 35% |
| Other | 9% |

Number of organizations: 69

Some differences did surface in assessing the feedback among provider offerings. One provider emphasized that there seems to be an overall proliferation of programs and small organizations duplicating efforts. However, there was also a counterpoint offered by another provider that suggested that seemingly overlapping programs may have the same target issue, but often tackle the issue using very different approaches.

The organizational profile from our survey respondents represented a range of types. Surveys were primarily completed by 501(c)(3)s. Other types included 501(c)(4), fiscal-sponsored and for-profit entities. When indicating a type that was different from our categories, the response most often given was municipal or government.

Beyond the type of organization, there was a wide range to the organizations that identify as providing gender-specific supports for women and girls. The completed surveys included organizations that had annual operating budgets from zero to $14 million. The organizations ranged from newer organizations/ programs in existence from two years to more established organizations of over 150 years. The organizations' staff ranged from one to 300-plus members and supports provided to as few as three participants to as many as 19,000 annually, across every town and city in Fairfield County, and through every support type identified by FWG.

## ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL OF COMMITMENT TO WOMEN & GIRLS SUPPORTS



Special projects or initiatives: 61%
Programming: 73%
Mission: 70%
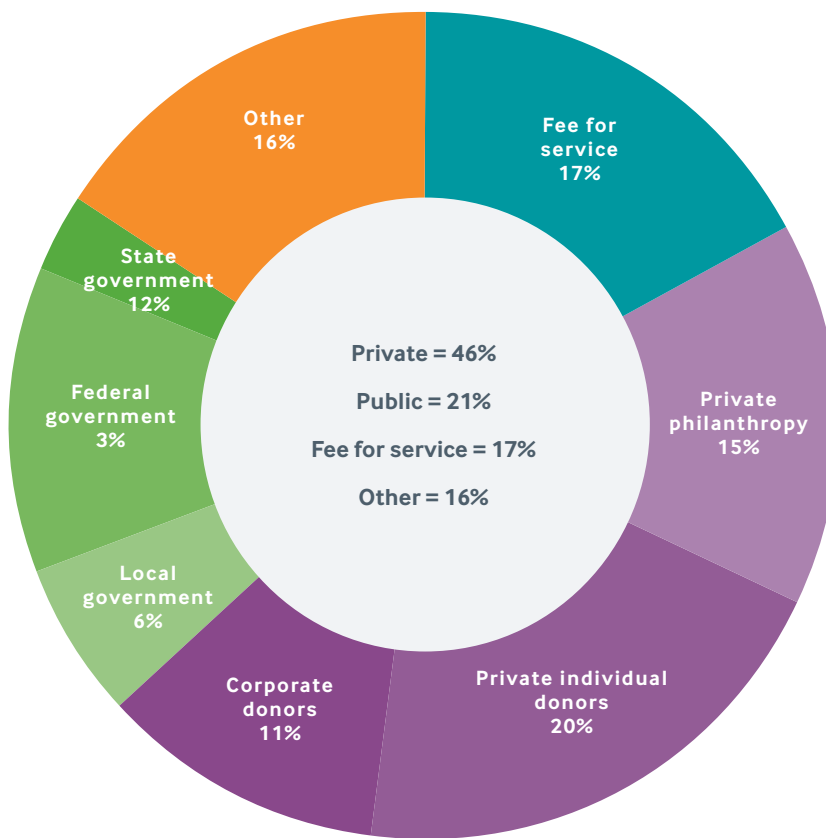
**Number of organizations: 67**
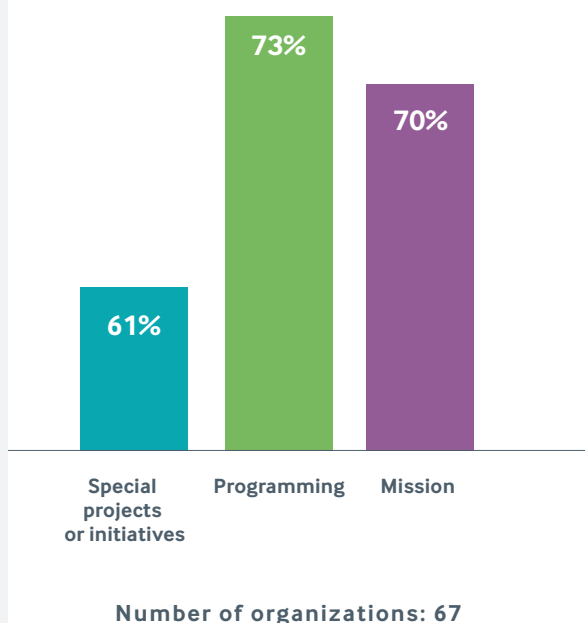
Of the organizations that responded to questions about the organization itself:

- 91 percent indicated having a formal board structure;

- 61 percent indicated having some "rainy day" funds;

- Approximately 69 percent had a hybrid staff and volunteer structure, 12 percent were volunteer only and 19 percent were staff only; and

- 87 percent indicated that their organizations are women led.

For the organizations that responded, their **commitment to gender-specific supports** shows up at different levels within their organizational structure from mission to programming to special initiatives. In many cases, this commitment also is embedded at multiple levels in a single organization.

When sharing information about their **annual budgets**, collectively 46 percent of funds came from the private sector, 21 percent came from the public sector, 17 percent from fees and 16 percent from other sources. A more detailed breakdown is in the accompanying chart.

## TYPE OF FUNDING IN ANNUAL BUDGETS OF SURVEYED ORGANIZATIONS IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY

Other
16%

Fee for
service
17%

State
government
12%

Private
philanthropy
15%

Federal
government
3%

Private = 46%

Public = 21%

Fee for service = 17%

Other = 16%

Local
government
6%

Private individual
donors
20%

Corporate
donors
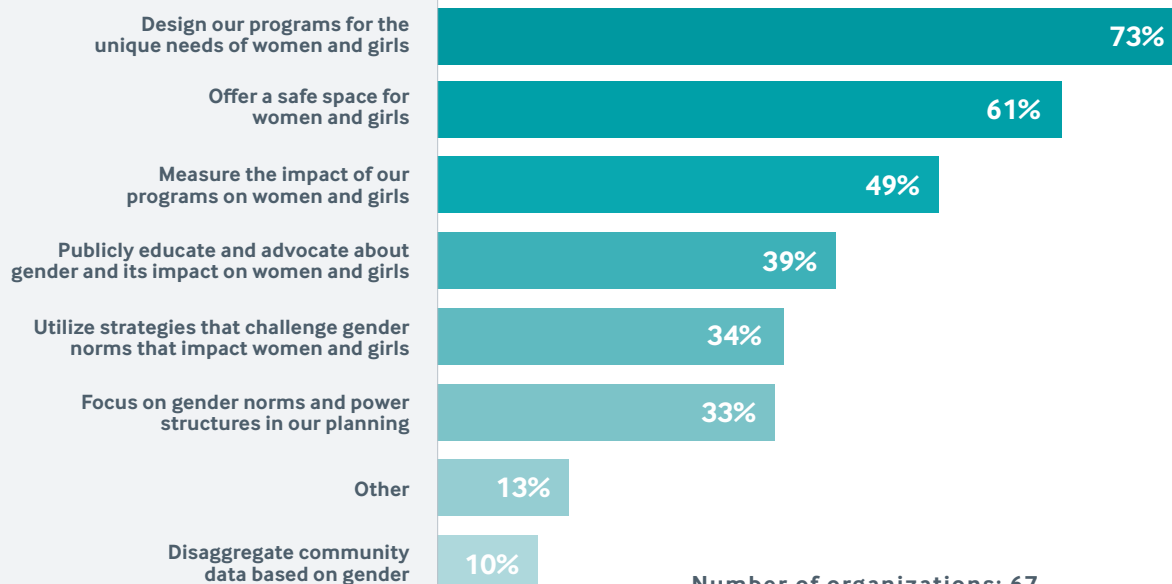11%

**Number of organizations: 59**

From the Landscape Analysis, we can start to form a picture of the range of supports connected to a wide range of organizational characteristics.

Some organizations in our survey specifically stated that they go beyond a singular program focus in their commitment to women and girls. These organizations incorporated multifaceted approaches, including direct supports, advocacy and even creating spaces where activities are co-designed with women and girls. Organizations also found ways to focus on "feminine energy" and stressed a more holistic approach honoring the "uniqueness of the girls' overall well-being, skills, abilities and personalities." And some organizations incorporated women as staff and volunteers, creating opportunities for them to counsel and educate young girls.

More specifically, survey respondents that offered gender-specific supports elaborated on actions they were taking organizationally in their dedication to supporting women and girls as reflected in the chart below.

## HOW SURVEYED ORGANIZATIONS INCORPORATE A GENDER-SPECIFIC APPROACH

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Design our programs for the unique needs of women and girls | 73% |
| Offer a safe space for women and girls | 61% |
| Measure the impact of our programs on women and girls | 49% |
| Publicly educate and advocate about gender and its impact on women and girls | 39% |
| Utilize strategies that challenge gender norms that impact women and girls | 34% |
| Focus on gender norms and power structures in our planning | 33% |
| Other | 13% |
| Disaggregate community data based on gender | 10% |

**Number of organizations: 67**

We can see from the data that organizations often use these actions within their work, with program design as the element used most often. Study participants also suggested that there were many untapped opportunities to connect across organizations to maximize the opportunities for equitable outcomes.

The inventory and surveys included nonlocal organizations – regional, statewide, national – that provide supports in Fairfield County. These were included as they surfaced in the snowball process. While these organizations made up only 17 percent of the total inventory list, when looking specifically at those organizations confirmed to target services to women and girls, the number rose to 24 percent of total organizations. These organizations predominantly operated in the areas of **advocacy, education and leadership development** – areas that featured prominently in the types of services targeted to women and girls.

Inventory categories were defined as:

**Advocacy** included the various ways that community voice is amplified including research, information sharing, women's issue journalism, collaborative infrastructure and organizing.
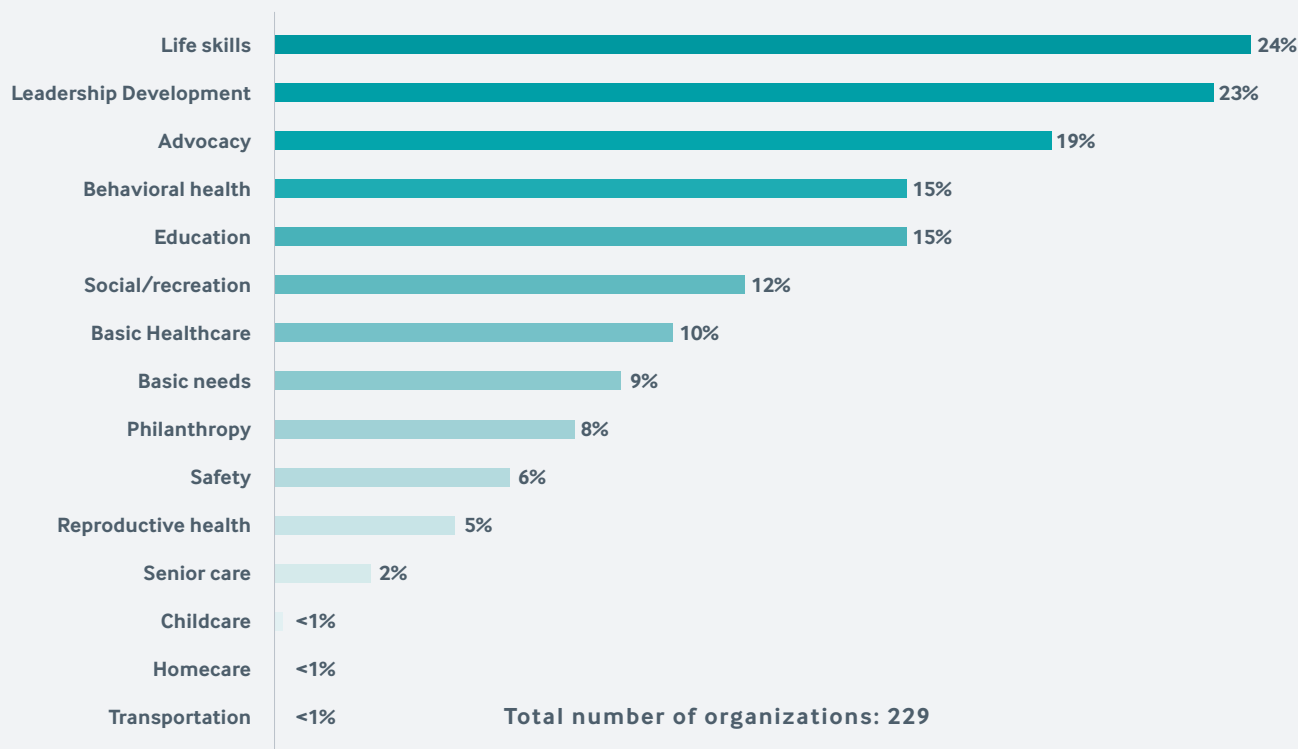
**Education** included student loans/financial aid/scholarships, financial coaching, STEAM enrichment, English language learners (ELLs) and vocational/technical certificates.

**Leadership development** included business skills/entrepreneurship, executive coaching, elected office preparation and professional associations/development.

The predominance of these supports and their locations suggests a need to understand the connections between local supports and those originating with organizations located outside the county.

## ORGANIZATIONS WITH CONFIRMED WOMEN & GIRLS PROGRAMMING
### Percentage of organizations by type of supports

| Type of support | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Life skills | 24% |
| Leadership Development | 23% |
| Advocacy | 19% |
| Behavioral health | 15% |
| Education | 15% |
| Social/recreation | 12% |
| Basic Healthcare | 10% |
| Basic needs | 9% |
| Philanthropy | 8% |
| Safety | 6% |
| Reproductive health | 5% |
| Senior care | 2% |
| Childcare | <1% |
| Homecare | <1% |
| Transportation | <1% |

Total number of organizations: 229

## LOCATION OF ADVOCACY, EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES ACCESSED BY FAIRFIELD COUNTY WOMEN & GIRLS

**Service**

- Advocacy
- Education
- Leadership development
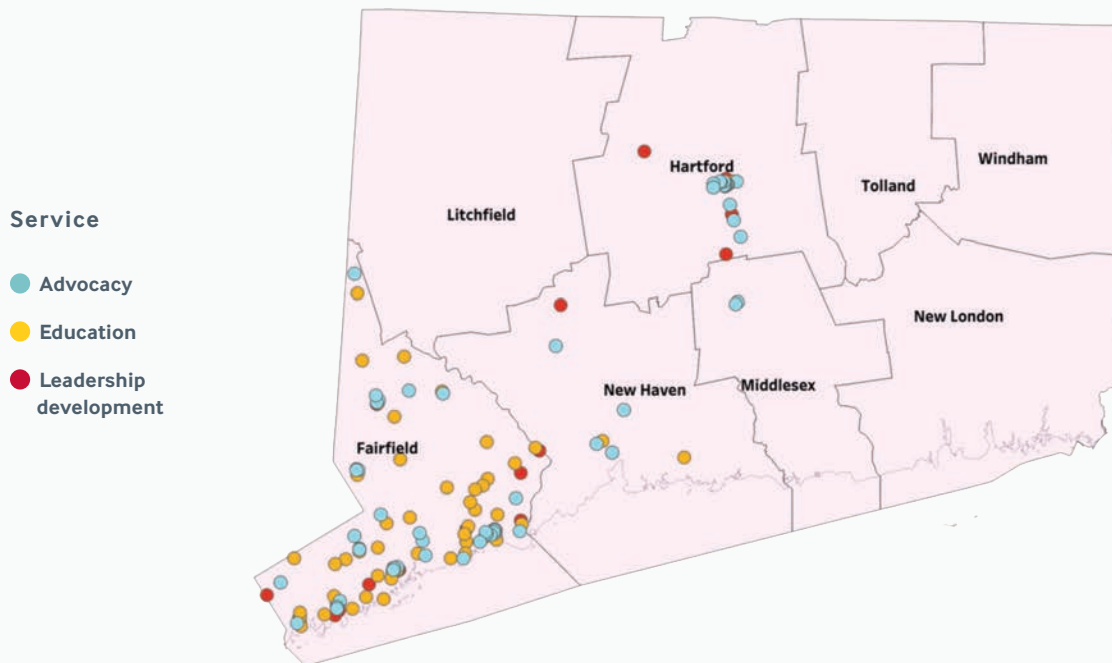
**It is critical that information about statewide and national organizations providing supports in education, advocacy and leadership development reach local communities.**

Furthermore, understanding the various locations and characteristics of organizations committed to women and girls is important to learning about what resources are available. It is also important to note the shared needs and commitments that exist across organizations. What was clear from the surveys was that providers yearn to connect with each

other, understand promising approaches, and develop deeper clarity about how to collaboratively address structural inequities intertwined with class, race and gender.

This may be a key moment for this **emerging network** to bring together the more established organizations with the newer, smaller and still emerging programs to create a fertile space to explore the innovative approaches grounded in experiences of the county's diverse providers and communities.

# Strategic Opportunities for Equitable Outcomes

For the Landscape Analysis, the research team constructed multiple datasets from a variety of information sources. The datasets came from background searching, focus groups, an inventory of organizations (both those that surfaced in a general search for women and girls and those confirmed to have programs targeted to women or girls), and direct survey data of organizations that do and do not self-identify as providing "gender-specific" supports.

As previously discussed, the Landscape Analysis shows the emergence and desire for a **knowledge network**. The study provides information about existing and needed supports for women and girls, and points toward specific actions that

can deepen, broaden and maximize the ability of this emergent network to lead to equitable outcomes for women and girls in Fairfield County.

There are multiple opportunities that The Fund for Women & Girls, and sister funds and organizations across the state, might take to strengthen the supports for women and girls. This analysis suggests the following four focus areas of attention and investment:

- Programming outside the norm;

- Organizational development through a new community of practice;

- Mission-connected partnerships; and

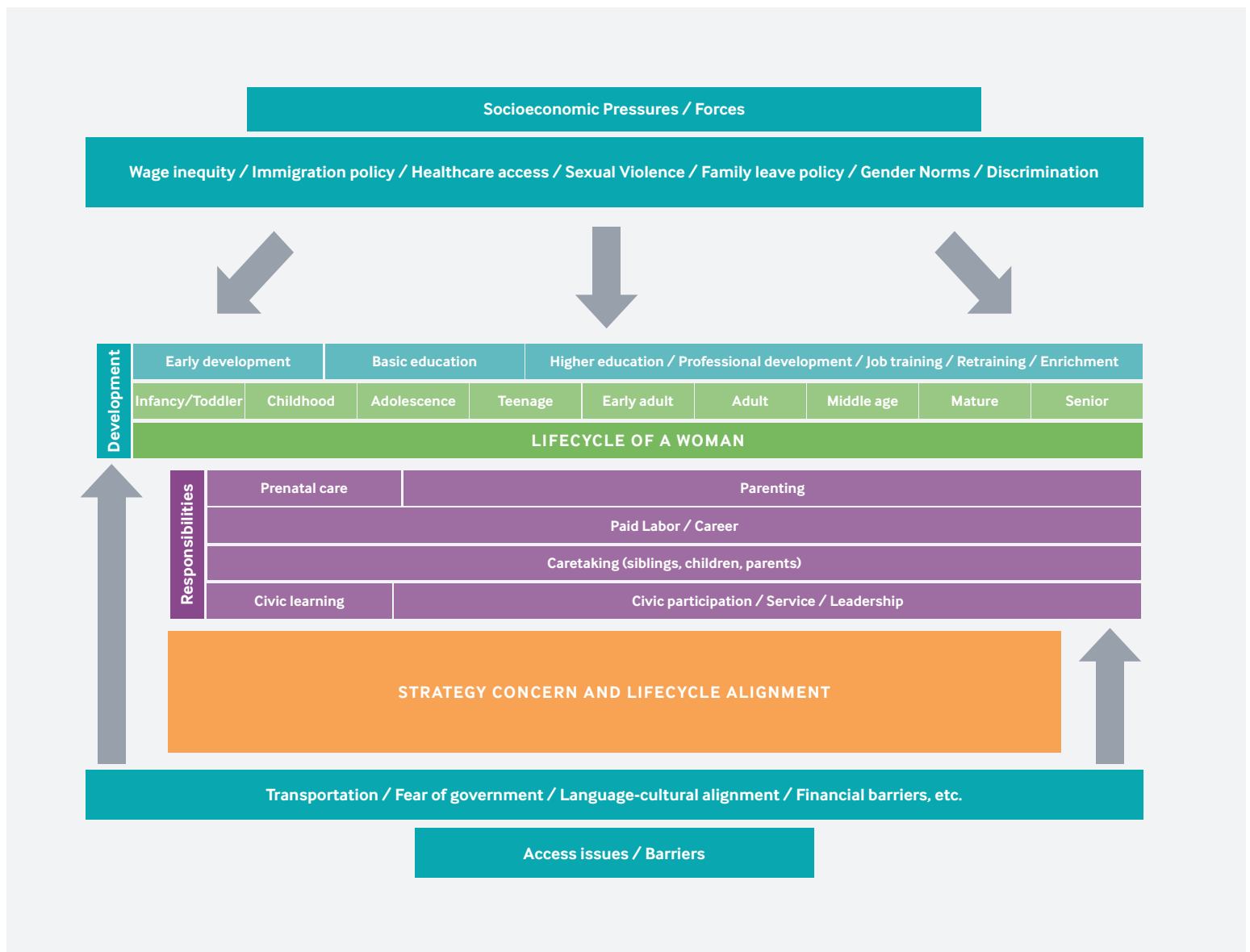- Knowledge network for learning in action.

At the center of each of these, is the need for a shared framework to bring together the various participants in this emerging network to create shared change strategies.

# Lifecycle Framework for an Emergent Network

The Landscape Analysis suggests that strengthening equitable outcomes is tied to the realities for women and girls as they show up across their lifetime. A lifecycle framework is based on our learning that women and girls require varied supports over their lifetime. Equity is affected by the **differential pressures or forces** that act upon women. At the same time, there are various barriers that affect the ability of an individual or group to access even readily available supports. Using a lifecycle framework for engaging network partners and participants would help us develop shared strategies that could lead to a seamless system of supports for women and girls in Fairfield County.

In addition, the analysis helps us in understanding the importance of stressors and barriers that impact the reality of access to supports. The information obtained in this analysis suggests the utility of a more holistic understanding of the factors affecting the lives of women and girls over the lifecycle.

The following graphic shows how a lifecycle understanding of women and girls can develop. This includes identifying the responsibilities women and girls are expected to take on at different stages of life. It includes recognition of the phases of development in connection with possible stressors that they face, alongside the potential barriers to accessing needed supports. A lifecycle framework can help a region develop greater strategic alignment among providers serving women and girls.

**Socioeconomic Pressures / Forces**

**Wage inequity / Immigration policy / Healthcare access / Sexual Violence / Family leave policy / Gender Norms / Discrimination**

| Development | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Early development | | Basic education | | Higher education / Professional development / Job training / Retraining / Enrichment | | | | |
| | Infancy/Toddler | Childhood | Adolescence | Teenage | Early adult | Adult | Middle age | Mature | Senior |

**LIFECYCLE OF A WOMAN**

| Responsibilities | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Prenatal care | Parenting |
| | Paid Labor / Career | |
| | Caretaking (siblings, children, parents) | |
| | Civic learning | Civic participation / Service / Leadership |

**STRATEGY CONCERN AND LIFECYCLE ALIGNMENT**

**Transportation / Fear of government / Language-cultural alignment / Financial barriers, etc.**

**Access issues / Barriers**

Understanding the stage of a woman in her lifecycle is critical. For example, a grandmother serving as the primary guardian for a grandchild may be facing different challenges than a middle-aged woman who is engaging in civic leadership.

# Programming Outside the Norm

## Through the focus groups, surveys and team conversations, it became clear that there are many perspectives on what new supports are needed to improve the quality of life for women and girls.

Depending on provider experience and the range of supports they offered, there were differences in the organizations' priorities. Some providers emphasized needing more supports for middle school girls. Others noted high school needs. Still others wanted to alleviate pressures on senior women who want to remain economically independent and in their own home. Some talked about overarching types of activities like advocacy, while others referred to very specific skills and career aspirations for which they wanted to support girls and women.

Using the lifecycle framework with relevant data can offer opportunities that help connect the dots to form the specific strategies needed for **achieving impact** on key issues. For example, by inserting data related to availability of supports for various age groups, we can start to see where there is unevenness in supports across the lifecycle.

As one provider emphasized in the survey, what is needed is an openness for "programming outside the norm." Since some organizations are already incorporating a gender-specific program focus, there are many opportunities to grow and strengthen current program offerings by exploring innovative approaches.

**Providers want help with various information activities happening across the county, such as asset mapping and developing resource guides. Where this information does exist, it is difficult to keep updated and connect activities to each other.**

From the survey data we can easily see the opportunity to build provider capacity to utilize data to understand current issues, develop better strategy and measure outcomes. Given the range in organizational size, funding and capacity, plus the participant enthusiasm to learn together, there are new **opportunities to connect** across organizations in targeted and creative ways.

**Organizations need investments in capacity building to track data and improve effectiveness.**

Focusing on data analysis skills, organizational capacity, methods for identifying impact and continuously adapting strategies are all ways to help strengthen the types and delivery of supports.

# Organizational Development through Community of Practice

## Whether their efforts were very pragmatic or grounded in feminist structural theories, providers valued being asked about their work.

Overall, being asked about their practice resonated with focus group and survey participants. This enthusiasm for sharing their specialized insights indicates that there is growing potential for developing a unique field and body of knowledge around supporting women and girls. However, the analysis also showed that strengthening organizations and the field overall requires attention to both general organizational skills and those capacities specific to providing gender-specific supports. Investing in a new community of practice is an immediate opportunity given the enthusiasm of providers and the stage of an emergent network.

**It is evident that providers themselves often need self-care and emotional support and wish to connect more and learn about each other's practices. This suggests that supporting providers to come together as a network could have an exponential impact on their abilities to support women and girls in the county.**

Providers specifically noted a desire for specific training related to **cultural sensitivity** and ending **racism**, in conjunction with activities to develop participatory skills for hearing directly from their communities. One respondent expressed that staff needed more training to "equip them with the understanding, insight and information" to support women and girls. Others mentioned wanting to learn how to better utilize community institutions like libraries and museums to provide programming for women and girls. Providers were aware and often eager to find ways to collaborate.

The lifecycle framework is one way to bring together various participants so they can share their knowledge of particular aspects and focus that knowledge toward shared strategy. This type of community of practice can offer the connection and continuous improvement necessary to sustain a viable network for women and girls.

# Mission-Connected Partnerships

## Providers were concerned at how little they knew of each other and what supports were available across Fairfield County.

Providers want to collaborate and create partnerships but revealed that they knew neither each other nor what was available across the county. Simply knowing of each other would enable them to partner not just with organizations with aligned missions, but also to make referrals to organizations that provide services different from their own.

Even though there was mention of multiple asset mapping or resource-guide development efforts, providers emphasized how difficult it was to produce and maintain accurate information given the rapid change in the supports offered. While consistent funding is an obvious component, participants in the survey provided lists of resources that could be helpful in growing and strengthening the supports, including:

- Survey data on critical needs as identified by parents and elementary/middle/high school students;

- Reports from nonprofit and public agencies that specifically work with women and girls;

- Local data on women's health, women's issues, women's empowerment and women in leadership;

- Community-specific and even "micro-targeted" data related to specific neighborhoods;

- Trend data;

- Information about promising and best practices offered by Fairfield County and Connecticut providers; and

- Information sharing across agencies.

Furthermore, beyond just knowing about each other, they are looking for opportunities to develop relationships and collaborate in ways that were deeply grounded in research and analysis of practice. In one example, an individual noted that research on communication patterns of girls may suggest that at certain grade levels afterschool programming is a better vehicle for information delivery about sexuality than in-school programs. This type of research-informed understanding can lead to creative partnerships and shared action.

**Providers are interested in connecting with each other and finding new ways to collaborate with mission-focused partners.**

It is critical to have a framework for bringing together research and practice knowledge in a region. Focus group and survey participants indirectly and directly indicated that they would look to local funders to convene and encourage collaboration (one person even suggested "requiring" it). They also emphasized the value of regular meetings and noted how important it is to incorporate adequate time for providers to interact with each other. One person talked about the Community Foundation's many nonprofit convenings as an opportunity to "nourish the soul."

Providers wanted more opportunities to engage at a very deep level in strategy development. They are excited about creating ways to engage those women and girls most affected in designing supports that can achieve the greatest impact.

# A Knowledge Network for Learning in Action

## To maximize the potential for equitable outcomes, an increased attention is necessary to building this network.

This Landscape Analysis begins to tap into the existing loose network of community providers, advocacy organizations, intermediaries and volunteers that support women and girls in Fairfield County, and it starts to surface the desire for and beginnings of a new knowledge network. The study points toward specific actions that can deepen, broaden and maximize the ability of this emergent network to lead to equitable outcomes for women and girls in Fairfield County.

**The survey process indicates the existence of a loosely linked emerging network that supports women and girls. These are organizations, often women-led, that indicate a desire to collaborate around key issues, including advocacy to address the underlying structures of gender bias and inequity.**

Strengthening that network to build greater effectiveness requires dedicated attention to nurturing relationships, structuring a community of practice and creating space where collaboration can take shape. It also requires solidifying the connection linking statewide and national resources with local knowledge. With appropriate supports and continuity, providers seem to believe that bringing together providers and those most affected can lead to more

robust strategies. Local funders — as not only investors but also partners — are key to ensuring the development and continuity of a knowledge network.

The providers themselves are self-aware and have begun to articulate limitations and opportunities to move the work forward. They are seeing the potential of a new network that provides opportunities to build community, discuss practices, share information, support collaboration and innovation, and provide for the connection and self-care that can come through strong relationships. They want to develop a "uniform message across women's and girls' supports" and to find others to form "mission-focused" partnerships. Many providers also believe it is critical to find ways to hear directly from women and girls in order to shape programming.

**Forming new relationships between providers, learning together, and developing shared messages and understandings of both the barriers and possibilities for women and girls are critical in helping to close opportunity gaps. These actions have the potential to change the culture and systems that impact the quality of life of women and girls and, in turn, families and communities across Fairfield County.**

# Next Steps

Providers have indicated that a network of paid and volunteer resources and direct connection to women and girls will lead to more effective and efficient uses of investments.

Examples of next steps suggested by participants in the Landscape Analysis are:

- Create and publish a countywide resource guide that includes organizations that self-identify as providing supports for women and girls. To ease the maintenance concerns, this could be an online resource (rather than print) or even kept up-to-date by organizations themselves.

- Develop the facilitation skills to convene direct focus groups of women and girls across the county to better understand their needs and desires for supports. These focus groups should be conducted by community leaders themselves, including youth. The groups need to be conducted in multiple languages and in environments where participants not only feel comfortable in sharing their experiences, but also can access easily by public transportation.

- Convene providers in ways that encourage relationship building and support innovation in collaborative partnerships.

- Offer cultural sensitivity training to staff and volunteers to help them better provide supports. Support dialogue about seeing and addressing structural inequities that impact women and girls, including poverty, racism and cultural norms around gender.

- Support the data capacity of providers and create opportunities for learning and sharing both the data and the promising practices across organizations and throughout the network.

This Landscape Analysis is an important first step in the process of strengthening supports for women and girls in Fairfield County.

Bringing providers together with women and girls into a new knowledge network is achievable. However, designing a knowledge network that supports learning and development for participants requires deeply grounded experience of what works in communities. Accordingly, local funders are key as both investors and institutional partners to ensure this network evolves and endures.

# Appendix: Analysis Overview

The Landscape Analysis has resulted in an inventory of supports for women and girls developed from online research, focus groups and an online survey. The study started with identification of more than 700 individuals/organizations/programs with over 475 invitations to participate in an online survey sent to individuals. Nearly 600 organizations were later cataloged into an inventory of supports.

The inventory is categorized according to codes that identify the type of support available to women and girls. While each of the organizations provides services to women and/or girls, we confirmed through a website review which organizations offered targeted supports.

The inventory drew from background information from our initial searches. In addition, from the initial design, we built upon the knowledge from providers in the field of women's and girls' supports. To accomplish this, we designed a "snowball approach." This meant that we started with our background list of a known sample of providers. This list was created from online research and existing FWG grantees and partners. At each stage of the research, we asked participants, "Who else should we speak with to better understand what is happening in Fairfield County?"

Approaching the research in this way provided valuable information and helped us to identify opportunities for strengthening both supports and an emerging network of providers.

Critical to the Landscape Analysis process was embracing diversity in multiple ways. Regarding the focus groups, we sought to engage participants from a variety of personal backgrounds, locations and support types. Deliberate effort was made to invite a focus group co-facilitator who broadened the cultural, racial and life perspectives of the research team. This broadened perspective was key to the success of conducting the focus groups, as it created a safer space for participants from various backgrounds to share not only their professional responsibilities, but also knowledge from their own personal experience.

Additional ways that openness to diversity showed up included examining the language we were using, identifying focus group and survey participants from beyond the pool of existing FWG grantees, and adopting a team approach throughout the research process.

One result of this openness was that focus group participants helped inform the language that we used in the survey description and final questions. Provider input ultimately shifted our survey language from "services" for women and girls to "programs and activities" to "services/supports/development opportunities" to "gender-specific supports" for women and girls. This final version was deemed the most inclusive language.

As the final part of the study, we used focus group and survey responses to refine our categories for types of services as part of an inventory of supports across Fairfield County. Entries in the inventory for 578 organizations were based on focus group and survey participant suggestions, and background research

through a dedicated search about women and girls. However, being included in the inventory did not mean that the organization targeted supports specifically to women and girls. Of the possibilities included in the inventory, the research team was able to confirm through website information that 231 of the organizations offered at least one program or activity targeted to women or girls or to a service primarily used by women or girls.

The completed surveys provided a more focused "sample" of the broader pool of available supports categorized in the inventory. Over 100 organizations completed surveys. Ultimately, the survey incorporated information from organizations providing supports across Fairfield County towns and cities, and in all support category types identified by FWG.

This sample included 69 organizations that indicated that they provide gender-specific supports. Together, these organizations estimated providing supports to over 123,000 women and girls per year. This large number of recipients is an indication of how critical it is to understand these organizations as we seek to address the needs of

women and girls in Fairfield County. While there are promising findings, focus group and survey participants were adamant about the importance of gaining further understanding and targeting their supports with input from their program participants.

There are more gender-specific supports for women and girls that this Landscape Analysis has not yet identified. Creating an inventory of all services accessed by women and girls is particularly challenging because of the breadth of roles women are responsible for fulfilling. For example, despite cultural shifts in social responsibilities, women still hold much of the family caregiving duties. Even if a program is not identified as for women only, there may be an underlying cultural reason why women would access specific services more often. This can relate to school-parent groups, nutritional classes, senior care respite support and more.

Furthermore, beyond identifying possible organizations, it can often be difficult to confirm the level of support for women and girls. The organizations surveyed have limited data capacity to track and improve effectiveness. Many organizations do not collect

participant information necessary to understanding service provision and impact. Others do not currently collect this information consistently. Smaller providers that operate through social media, as part of church missions or informally among neighbors, may not have email addresses or a web presence.

Additionally, **issues of access** to resources is a complex one. The notion of accessibility is important but beyond the scope of this study. Access is about more than availability; it involves knowing that a resource exists and understanding that you are eligible for the resource. Access may mean having the time, resources, transportation and language skills to obtain the support. Access also includes feeling safe, physically, emotionally or culturally, to engage in the support. The multiple components of this study start to answer some questions, and inevitably raise even more about the opportunities and barriers experienced by women and girls in Fairfield County.

# Methodology

In November 2018, The Fund for Women & Girls commissioned Knowledge Designs to Change (KD2Change) to conduct its first Landscape Analysis to better understand the supports available to women and girls in the county.

The Landscape Analysis complements The Fund's most recent five-year research update* with an inventory of identified providers, as well as an analysis that recognizes the largest gaps between needs and availability of services for our women and girls. This analysis is a key ingredient in building strategies to strengthen the opportunities and equitable outcomes for the county's women and girls. And, it is an important next step to enabling a stronger network of organizations to provide supports to deliver more positive outcomes throughout the region.

The process included three major components — focus groups, a survey targeted to gender-specific supports and an inventory of organizations/programs providing services to women and girls across Fairfield County.

From its initial design, the analysis process was intended to draw from, and build upon, the knowledge in the field of women and girls supports. Approaching the research this way provided valuable information, helping us to identify opportunities for strengthening not only supports, but also an emerging network of providers. Additionally, the framing of

the research provided an indication of the breadth and technical capacities of these organizations, and it enabled us to start identifying — both through the process and how organizations responded — the level of connectedness of this self-identified network.

Critical to the analysis process was embracing diversity in multiple ways. Through the focus groups, we sought to engage participants from a variety of personal backgrounds, locations and support types. Deliberate effort was made to invite a focus group co-facilitator who broadened the cultural, racial and life perspectives of the team. This broadened perspective was key to the success of the focus groups, as it created a safer space for participants from various backgrounds to share not only their professional responsibilities, but also knowledge from their own personal experience.

Additional ways that diversity surfaced included an openness on the Fund's part to examine the language it was using, identifying focus group and survey participants from beyond the pool of existing its grantees, and adopting a team approach throughout the research process. Most important, in the focus group process, participants helped inform the language that we used in the analysis, such as in our descriptions, definitions and final survey questions.

*Count Her In: *A Status Report on Women & Girls in Fairfield County, Connecticut, June 2019,* prepared by DataHaven for Fairfield County's Community Foundation

# Adapting Language

Important changes happened in the co-design process regarding the language (i.e., word choice and phrasing) we used in all communications and public materials. After initial conversations with FWG about how to represent the work, the following statement was included for use with the focus groups to clarify what FWG meant by "gender specific."

"We understand that there are many programs and activities that include and benefit women and girls. By 'gender lens,' we are referring to the explicit naming of women and girls as the primary focus of an activity. We are asking about efforts that take into consideration and place women and girls at the center. This means recognizing that the needs of women and girls may be different than [those of] men and boys. It means trying to challenge and address the specific power structures that impact women and girls and the specific barriers women and girls face. Using a 'gender lens' also recognizes and celebrates the many ways in which women and girls contribute to our communities and society."

During focus groups, we heard very emphatically that the term gender lens was perceived to be very academic and not a term used by providers or communities. However, there was clear support for asking questions about provider and organizational "practice." Participants appeared genuinely appreciative of being asked questions about how they approach their work. They were eager to learn that their practice is valued and is forming an identifiable field of work.

Further team discussion and focus group suggestions would ultimately move the language from "services" for women and girls to "programs and activities" to "services/supports/development opportunities" to "gender-specific supports" for women and girls. This final version was deemed the most understandable and inclusive language.

# Team Approach

In conversations about FWG's request for proposals and during initial research design discussions, it became clear that FWG was interested in a collaborative, co-design approach to this study. The Fund's leadership indicated that it wanted to learn together about both the process and the data as it emerged.

As we engaged in the process together, it became clear the level of care that FWG has for its grantees and community, and its respect for the emerging network of practitioners who are at the core of building a system of support for women and girls. Not surprisingly, care and trust became integral to the research design.

The Landscape Analysis was completed as a multidisciplinary team endeavor. FWG brought together its volunteer committee members and internal data expertise, rounding out the team with an independent consultant, Knowledge Designs to Change (KD2Change). The consultant brought specific experience in nonprofit support to the discussions of research design and data analysis.

In addition to very detailed input on the process of actual survey questions, the team participated in the analysis as it unfolded. This was done through meetings where FWG's team viewed initial data and talked through its assumptions and key takeaways. FWG also invited KD2Change's principal researcher to participate in FWG and FCCF meetings to better understand FCCF's approach and ways of working with partners.

KD2Change incorporated a team approach internally as well. A project/information manager was brought on to help organize the project and to be responsible for direct outreach to survey respondents. This position was important in supporting organizations that may have never participated in a survey of this type and was essential to ensuring data quality. The project/information manager was encouraged and financially supported in continuing her own diversity, equity and inclusion training as an integral part of the process.

Once contracted, KD2Change proposed a research process that would meet the following goals:

- Answer programming questions that are relevant to FWG's future strategic grantmaking goals;

- Provide a framework and tools for identifying key aspects of relevant programs;

- Document all relevant programs in the designated geographic location;

- Capture key aspects of programming in a way that can be aligned with additional research to identify gaps, assets and opportunities; and

- Create a report for sharing the above items with the broader community.

Given FWG's prioritization of equity, KD2Change highlighted that "two of the most critical challenges to be addressed were: 1) ensuring that the process identifies obvious and not-so-obvious paid and free services for women and girls; and 2) ensuring that the question framework captures the work being done even if the organizations may use different language or are not yet evidence-based in their service provision."

Decisions about research design were consistently discussed by the research team with reference to how to ensure that the research would be as inclusive as possible and contribute to FWG's intention to value and support our region's providers.

# Study Design

To meet the identified goals, KD2Change proposed a "snowball process" that was co-designed by the larger team. Snowball meant that at each stage, we would prioritize and build on information that came from the emerging network of those providing supports for women and girls in Fairfield County. At each stage, we sought to find the programs that self-identify as providing gender-specific supports for women and girls, and to ask them, "Who else should we talk to?"

Additionally, the snowball framing of the research provided an indication of the breadth and technical capacities of organizations. Through the process and how organizations responded, we could start to sense the level of connectedness of this self-identified network. The open-ended responses in the focus groups and survey provided some leads on the desire and readiness for a new knowledge network.

## The components of the snowball design were:

# 1. Building a Diverse Survey List

An essential aspect of the snowball process was the development of a diverse survey outreach list. The KD2Change team started with information from FWG and the focus groups.

- FWG resources (grantee history, interviewees, resource guide, suggestions)

- Focus group recommendations of specific organizations and type of organizations

- Later, survey recommendations were added to the survey invite list in a rolling process

Since this was FWG's first Landscape Analysis, and due to the desire to identify a broad array of supports for women and girls as offered by known and not-yet-known organizations, the KD2Change research team also engaged in an extensive online search to identify organizations to include on our survey outreach list. The list on the following page includes the search subjects used. When necessary, these subjects were combined with relevant location/ municipality search terms, such as "Fairfield County" or "Bridgeport" and focus area search terms, such as "women and girls." Google was the search engine of choice for this step.

- Searches for Connecticut (including — gender, women, girls, equity)

- Town/city services website for each municipality

- Libraries

- Hospitals

- Clinics (offering women's health services on a sliding scale)

- YMCAs and YWCAs

- Statewide resources:
  - Connecticut Association for Community Action
  - Connecticut Association of School Based Health Centers
  - Connecticut Collective for Women and Girls
  - Connecticut Department of Children and Families
  - Connecticut Department of Social Services
  - Connecticut Girls Collaborative Project
  - Community Health Center Association of Connecticut
  - Connecticut Youth Services Association
  - General Federation of Women's Clubs of Connecticut, Inc.
  - John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut
  - WIC (Women, Infant, Children)
  - Women's Business Development Council

- Faith-based associations (larger organizations; specific organizations only when recommended)
  - Bridgeport Islamic Community Center
  - Connecticut Wiccan and Pagan Network
  - The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport
  - Diocese of Bridgeport
  - Episcopal Church of Connecticut
  - Islamic Community of Fairfield County
  - United Jewish Federation of Greater Stamford, New Canaan and Darien
  - United Methodist Church — General Commission on the Status and Role of Women
  - United Methodist Church — New York Conference

- Women's professional associations — Connecticut chapters

- Universities/community colleges

Our online search also utilized the following online databases using women and girls as search terms.

- GuideStar search of organizations located in Fairfield County, with a minimum of $250 in revenue that are categorized under the terms "women" or "girls" and provided services within Fairfield County

- NewsBank — online browsing for events and stories on women and girls

- United Way of Connecticut 211

To diversify our search, we also performed an old-fashioned search of the Fairfield County Yellow Pages print phonebook and incorporated the One Circle Foundation's participant list of Fairfield County organizations using its materials.

We considered the search process comprehensive for a first Landscape Analysis as it provided a breadth of information. At the same time, we acknowledge that there were multiple times that we aborted a path at the initial stage. This was done when it was recognized that a deeper look into a specific area would require a separate design process.

One example of this was in the area of Higher Education. We completed a first level identification across higher education institutions in the county and identified some supports. However, we believe that the possible supports for women are so distributed across colleges and universities, that a specific design would be necessary to unearth all supports across each campus.

Another example was in the area of groups that operate through or solely within social media spaces such as Facebook and Meetup. While we gathered what information we could at the first pass, we realized that often there was not enough information to confirm the appropriateness of inclusion. In many other cases, there was simply not enough contact information to invite the organization without utilizing the social media platform itself. A more focused and specific social media survey strategy involving professional social media accounts would be necessary to truly identify and learn more about this new world of supports.

# 2. Focus Groups

The purpose of the focus groups was to 1) inform our identification process to ensure we were capturing nonformal paths; 2) check in on language for understandability; and 3) identify additional points of contact for service identification.

Our specific aims were to:

- Engage groups of individuals familiar with women's and girls' services/supports/development opportunities in discussion;

- Generate input on our process for identifying services/supports/development opportunities;

- Solicit thoughts on what services exist in Fairfield County for women and girls while also listening for gaps;

- Learn more about the language that is used in the field of women and girls, and receive feedback on the clarity of specific questions to be used in our survey and questionnaire; and

- Add to our survey a list of people to reach out to for information.

Fifty-six people were contacted to request suggestions for organizational colleagues, staff or community partners who might be suitable focus group participants. These initial calls spanned content area, nonprofit and public sector, and geographic location. We also acted with explicit intention to reach out to men, youth, grassroots groups and town governmental services. A total of 29 people participated in the focus groups. An additional three people provided input by phone.

Specific attention was placed on achieving diversity in the focus groups. The type of diversity desired included age, gender, race, class, field of work (e.g., health, education, justice), organization type (e.g., large, small, volunteer run), sector (private, public, nonprofit, community), race/ethnicity, geographic location (across Fairfield County), location type (town, city) and location socioeconomics. This diversity would provide a breadth of valuable information as the participants drew from both their professional and personal experiences during the activity.

Actual participation did have some limitations. The age diversity did not include youth/young adults — no one under the age of 25 attended. Even with intentional outreach to male directors and to fathers' groups, the participation of men was limited. Some just did not understand why they would be included since their programs only supported men. The design also did not target beneficiary groups directly. Although we did ask for recommendations of "community partners" and various individuals discussed bringing program beneficiaries (e.g., youth, people who received mental health supports), the reality of who was in the room was clearly provider-focused.

To maximize participation, we sought to conduct focus groups across Fairfield County, on both weekdays and weekends, and at various times. We conducted the groups at public libraries in Bridgeport,

Danbury and Stamford with all locations close to public bus stops. Refreshments were provided consistent with time of day, and honoraria were offered to participate.

We intentionally designed the focus groups with a co-facilitation approach. The co-facilitators included the KD2Change principal researcher, the project/information manager and an independent contractor. The independent contractor was brought on explicitly to add racial diversity to the facilitation and to model openness to diverse life perspectives. The project/information manager brought a youthful tone to the focus groups and provided a consistency of personal contact from the focus groups to the pilot survey and data collection. The intention of the co-facilitation was stated in each focus group introduction.

Each of the team members had focus group facilitation responsibility in addition to visibly contributing to the hosting activities, including the food set up and clean up. The intention of this format was to demonstrate a collaborative effort with responsibility shared across race, class and professional status.

The co-facilitation proved to be a critical element for ensuring that the engagement was viewed as welcoming and culturally competent. The inclusion of a co-facilitator who had worked both in nonprofit programming and as a grassroots community leader helped bridge language boundaries prevalent across those providing supports for women and girls. The co-facilitation team explicitly agreed to bring its own personal backgrounds (race, class and gender) "into the room" when asking questions about participant experience in their communities. This created an encouraging space for participants to share and tapped into multiple aspects of participant knowledge, effectively maximizing the contribution of the focus groups to the depth of the overall research.

# 3. Pilot Survey

After the focus groups, 23 of the 29 attendees participated in the pilot survey process with 14 successfully completing surveys. This disparity between pilot survey invitations and survey completions is because the focus groups included individuals who were volunteers or not in the executive leadership of their organizations. As a result, once some of them saw the survey questions, they did not feel they had enough organizational insight to complete the survey. In these cases, their recommendations of who to contact instead were included in the finalized survey invite list.

This pilot process enabled us to obtain useful feedback about the survey process, identify a few necessary technical changes and to test the amount of time needed to complete the survey. From the pilot through completion of the survey process, we maintained a target time of under 30 minutes with the recorded "typical time to completion" at 24 minutes.

# 4. Online Survey

The survey process was originally designed as a two-step process to solicit contacts for the survey outreach list before asking for detailed program information. We decided to adjust to a single survey because:

- We recognized the time constraints of the project and wanted to allow enough time for the snowball identification process to proceed appropriately;

- We made an in-the-field assessment of the burden that two surveys would put on organizations; and

- We became aware of the already high appetite that the organizations that participated in focus groups had for jumping right in, providing information and engaging in network building.

# 5. Encouraging Participation with Incentives

To achieve the highest response rate, we personalized the survey invitations by name. Later, due to potential confusion for individuals who were associated with multiple organizations, we targeted the invitations by specifying program name. When applicable, we also included the name of the person who recommended the organization.

Early in the co-design, because of the length of the survey, FWG decided to add the incentive of a small grant "prize" to be determined through a random drawing of completed surveys. Based on focus group comments about the desire to learn more about available supports, FWG also decided to add the development of a resource guide as an incentive to sharing data and information. Both these incentives were stated in the survey invitation, and an FWG letter was included with the invite email as well.

During the process, we became concerned with less-than-expected survey responses. FWG sent out encouragement emails to invitees who had not responded. There was indeed a spike in survey responses immediately after the FWG direct email. Overall, at least one reminder email was sent to every invitee from the KD2Change team in addition to those that came directly from FWG. Also anyone who started a survey but did not complete it received a phone call with a direct request and an offer to assist with completion. In this way, the KD2Change team ensured that interested survey respondents had technical support available to them.

Even though we made efforts to avoid emails going into spam filters, the survey response rate was lower than hoped. We were informed at the end of the survey process that organizations were being targeted by intricate spam emails and were suspicious of any survey request. We believe that this unfortunate filtering and timing played a role in the survey response rate.

# 6. Inventory Building

After finishing the survey process, the research team revisited the input from the focus groups and surveys and refined the coding list needed to create a more detailed organizational inventory. Organizations were coded by type of service and location, allowing us to map the broader base of organizations where women and girls might be accessing support. The inventory analysis is thus based on 578 organizations that surfaced through this dedicated search. However, being included in this search does not mean that the organization did any specific targeting of women and girls. Of these possibilities through website information, the research team was able to confirm that 231 organizations, approximately 40 percent, offered at least one program or activity targeted to women or girls or to a service primarily used by women or girls.

The inventory is intended to provide a broad view of supports for women and girls. This list is researcher-defined, and these organizations have not been asked to confirm their categories or to self-identify into the emerging network for women and girls. Note that the intention was to capture publicly available programming. Religious communities that had supports internal to their church membership were not included in the inventory. Similarly, for schools, colleges and universities, programs were included only if they also had some public outreach component.

The codes used were adapted from the survey codes based on additional categories that arose during the research process. The list of codes used in the inventory are below.

### Basic Needs

- Shelter/housing
- Good
- Clothing
- Energy assistance

### Basic/Preventative Healthcare

### Behavioral Health

- Inpatient/outpatient services
- Patient-centered services
- Mental health providers: including doctors, licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs), therapists, support groups, teenage and pediatric services, and services to the underserved, underinsured and uninsured
- Provider training to screen for mental health issues
- Addiction/substance abuse services
- Depression/anxiety/ suicide/self-harming prevention services/ support
- Diagnosis-based supports

### Reproductive Health

- Family planning/ long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs)
- Pre- and post-natal care
- Sexually transmitted infections (STI)/safe sex
- Counseling/education

### Life Skills

- Social and emotional learning/executive function
- Self-advocacy
- Negotiation skills (especially as it pertains to wages)
- Parenting skills
- Mentoring/networking/ social capital development
- Intergenerational family supports
- Nutritional/wellness

### Social/Recreational/ Sports/Service Activities

### Education

- Student loans/financial aid/scholarships
- Financial coaching
- S.T.E.A.M. enrichment
- English language learners (ELLs)
- Vocational/technical certificates

### Affordable/Subsidized Childcare

- Early childcare
- Alternative/flexible-hour childcare

### Transportation

- Between/within communities and employment hubs
- Driver's license assistance to services

### Leadership Development

- Business skills/ entrepreneurship
- Executive coaching
- Elected office preparation
- Professional associations/ development

### Senior Care/Learning/ Engagement

### Homecare

### Safety

- Healthy relationships
- Intimate partner violence
- Sexual assault
- Financial abuse
- Trafficking
- Legal aid

### Philanthropy

- Grantmaking
- Operating

### Advocacy

- Research
- Information
- Women's issues journalism
- Collaborative infrastructure
- Organizing

### Other

# 7. Mapping

The maps provided are intended to be representational and based on the inventory categories and organizational information available online. This information is for background and has not been confirmed by the organizations.

# 8. Additional Use of the Data

A separate resource guide is being developed by FWG that will include information intended for public use. This resource guide will include organization-confirmed data with pertinent services.

# 9. Data Notes

Throughout the snowball process, the team identified 711 individual contacts from whom to gather information and recommendations. By removing individuals that were outside of the defined landscape scope and eliminating those that did not have adequate contact information for successful outreach, we narrowed the invitation list to 484 to whom we would send surveys. We received 147 survey responses for a response rate of 30 percent. Of these, 49 respondents partially completed the survey.

Most of the partial respondents indicated they were 501(c)(3)s and offered gender-specific supports. However, beyond that question, no information was provided. As previously mentioned, we reached out to all partial respondents and offered assistance with survey completion.

After accounting for duplicate organizations where more than one person completed a separate survey for that organization, and after removing an individual who was no longer working for the identified organization, at the completion of the research, there remained incomplete responses. While we do not know the all the reasons why these remained incomplete, informal feedback from a few participants indicated that the request was for information that they simply do not collect, or they would not share information that they considered internal to the organization. Others had technical challenges with the survey platform and declined the assistance of the research team.

After completing the data cleaning and outreach, the final number of analyzable surveys is 105. Ultimately, the survey drew information from organizations providing supports in all 23 Fairfield County towns/cities and across all support category types identified by FWG. This subset included those organizations that completed surveys, as well as both organizations that did indicate offering gender-specific supports for women and girls and organizations that did not consider their supports gender specific.

Targeting respondents who indicated they provide gender-specific supports for women and girls, we used 69 surveys as the sample for the detailed gender-specific data analysis. Together, these 69 organizations estimated providing supports to over 123,000 women and girls per year. Thus, the most targeted analysis is of the detailed information from those organizations that explicitly identified their supports as gender specific. We drew from this subset of organizations because of their explicit focus on gender. Our expectation is that this targeted sample will provide valuable insights into the broader field of supports for women and girls.

## OVERVIEW OF DATA USED IN THE STUDY

**UNIVERSE**
All supports available to women and girls (number = unknown)

**INVENTORY**
Organizations offering supports for women and girls (n = 578)

**CONFIRMED INVENTORY**
Organizations offering at least one program or activity targeted to women or girls or to an issue predominantly related to women or girls (n=231)

**SURVEYS**
Organizations with programs used primarily by women or girls (n=23)

**SURVEYS**
Organizations that provide gender-specific supports for women and girls (n=69)

# 10. Challenges

Creating an inventory, survey invite list and resource guide specific to women and girls is particularly challenging for a few reasons:

- Many organizations provide supports that women and girls use but are not technically restricted to women and girls, making it inaccurate to classify them as gender-specific supports. Examples include hospitals, clinics, recovery programs, housing agencies and legal aid.

- Some organizations, because of a public mandate or funding availability, may have services that are primarily used by women and girls but cannot be classified as gender specific for risk of being viewed as discriminatory. This makes it difficult to root out these supports with rudimentary searching for "supports for women and girls." Examples of this are family planning and pregnancy supports.

- Despite cultural shifts in social responsibilities, women still hold much of the family caregiving duties.

Even if a program is not identified as "for women only," there may be an underlying cultural reason why women would access the services more often, leaving it debatable as to whether or not the support truly is gender specific. Examples include school-parent groups, nutritional classes, senior care respite support and more.

- For certain needs, while not exclusive to women or girls, research and practice confirm that the issues are more often faced by women or girls. This is the case with sexual trafficking, domestic abuse, income inequity and some forms of discrimination. Additionally, it is difficult to track down these supports, as although they are mostly utilized by women and girls, they are not always provided by formal 501(c)(3) organizations.

For these reasons, the inventory analysis has limitations that come solely from the topic at hand. The research team has addressed these limitations by focusing on diversity of input, drawing from the knowledge of providers themselves, and conducting a thorough online search and a snowball survey process. A general caveat was that we limited the depth of online searching mostly to direct organizational website availability, and only to the level of mission and programs. Where possible on an organization's website, a search for "women" and "girls" was done.

In addition to the methodological challenges with building an inventory of available supports, any inventory would not address the key issue of access. The issue of access to resources is a complex one. Access is about more than availability; it involves knowing that a resource exists and understanding that you are eligible for that resource. Access may also mean having the time, transportation and language skills to obtain the support. Access also includes feeling safe — physically, emotionally or culturally — to engage in the support.

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**Fairfield County's Community Foundation**
40 Richards Avenue | Norwalk, CT 06854
203.750.3200

**FCCFoundation.org/fwg**
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