

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**  
columbus ohio

# 2023 ADVOCACY BRIEFING



# ADVOCACY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

YWCA Columbus is one of our region's longest-standing social justice organizations and human services agencies, providing housing and childcare to Central Ohio's most vulnerable populations. We operate two shelters – our Family Center for unhoused adults with children and our Women's Residency permanent supportive housing program for single women with disabilities – and 21 childcare sites. Through our lens of race, gender, and class, we advocate for the people we serve and for our greater community. YWCA Columbus is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and bring peace, justice, dignity, and freedom to all.

## CORE ISSUE AREAS:

### 1 | **SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE ELIMINATION OF RACISM**

Racism, discrimination, and oppression underpin all issues that impact marginalized people. We pursue justice in public safety, honesty in education, equity and justice for LGBTQ+ people, and address issues that reflect the needs of the most vulnerable groups within our community.



### 2 | **EMPOWER WOMEN**

Historically and today, women face discrimination in every sector. From the persistent wealth gap to the state and national threat to reproductive healthcare, women and nonbinary people experience exploitation as a class. We support policy measures to defend this class from further exploitation, and policy measures to support their success.

### 3 | **HOUSING JUSTICE FOR ALL**

We support housing justice, working to eliminate barriers for individuals and families to access safe, stable, affordable, and appropriate housing that meets their needs and desires.



### 4 | **CHILDCARE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

We support youth development programs, high-quality and accessible childcare for all, and before-and-after school networks, advocating for equitable funding that supports parents and caretakers. .

# 1 | SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE ELIMINATION OF RACISM



**80% WHITE RESIDENTS**  
**61% BLACK RESIDENTS**  
FEEL THE COLUMBUS POLICE  
ARE DOING A GOOD JOB

We are on a mission to eliminate racism, and we have a robust social justice agenda for education, public safety, and queer rights.

**45%**  
LGBTQ+ YOUTH  
CONTEMPLATED  
SUICIDE IN  
**2022**



## Public safety

YWCA Columbus is committed to eradicating police violence from our community. Black Americans disproportionately impacted by issues that place them in more frequent interaction with the police, such as the school-to-prison pipeline, segregation into communities that lack sufficient resources to meet basic needs, and well-documented implicit biases operating within the criminal legal system. **Black Americans, who account for less than 13% of the U.S. population, are killed at more than twice the rate of white Americans.** <sup>1</sup> In Columbus, the police department receives about **22,000 nonviolent calls a year that do not need a police officer to respond.** <sup>2</sup> We advocate for a health-centered approach to a non-police crisis response. Ending the ongoing threat of police violence will bring justice to marginalized people in Columbus.

**BLACK AMERICANS  
ACCOUNT FOR**  
**13%**  
ARE KILLED MORE THAN  
TWICE THE RATE OF WHITE  
AMERICANS



## Education

Honesty in Ohio's education is a priority for us. Education is a bridge to close the gaps caused by racism and other systems of oppression. For example, well-implemented social-emotional learning programs positively affect students' success in school. Studies show that social-emotional skills—such as problem-solving, self-regulation, impulse control, and empathy—help improve academics, reduce behaviors like bullying, and create positive classroom climates. <sup>3</sup> Legislating against honesty discourages honest conversations around eliminating racism, which is at the core of our mission.

## LGBTQ+

YWCA Columbus affirms all sexual orientations and gender identities, and condemns attacks on LGBTQ+ rights in Ohio. Unfortunately, due to historic discrimination, **one in five LGBTQ+ adults in the United States (22%) live in poverty, compared to an estimated 16% of their straight and cisgender counterparts.** <sup>4</sup> The leading cause of death for LGBTQ+ youth is death by suicide, with 45% seriously contemplating suicide in 2022, and 14% of LGBTQ youth attempting suicide in 2022. <sup>5</sup> Among LGBTQ+ youth, these statistics increase by demographic, **with 21% of Indigenous LGBTQ+ youth having attempted suicide in the last year, followed by 20% of Middle Eastern/Northern African youth, 19% of Black youth, 17% multiracial youth, 16% of Latinx youth, and 12% Asian American and Pacific Islander youth.** With gender-affirming care, family, and social support, the risk of suicide is reported as less than half the rate of those without those aspects. <sup>6</sup> Gender-affirming medical care and social acceptance are lifesaving

## 2 | EMPOWERING WOMEN



**1 IN 4 WOMEN**  
IN CENTRAL OHIO  
IS ECONOMICALLY  
INSECURE



THE AVERAGE WOMEN MAKE **83 CENTS** TO  
EVERY **DOLLAR** THAT A MAN MAKES

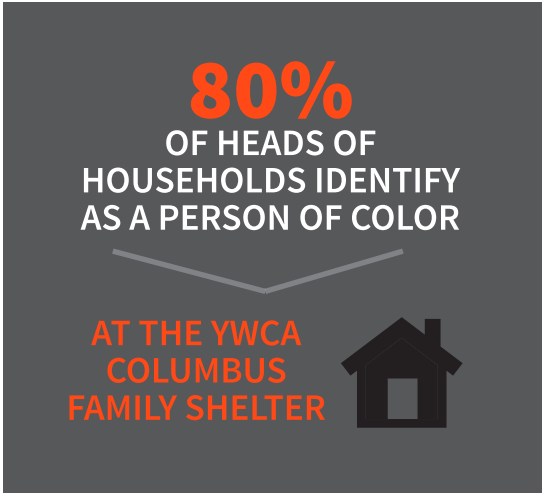
Supporting women across industries means eliminating barriers to equal pay, financial and wealth equity, and promoting the economic success of women. One in four women in Central Ohio is economically insecure. This year, Equal Pay Day – or the day women must work until to be paid what men were paid the year before – is March 15, 2023. The average woman makes 83 cents to every dollar that a man makes.<sup>7</sup> **However, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders make 75 cents to a man’s dollar, followed by Black women (58 cents), Latina women (54), and Native women (51 cents).** Additionally, mothers face a gap between what they are paid versus fathers (58 cents for every dollar paid to dads), and **transgender women earn approximately 60 cents for every dollar the typical U.S.<sup>8</sup> worker earns.** Equipping women to be financially independent is an integral part of empowering women to live their safest, most authentic lives.

The right to all reproductive healthcare, including abortion, is a fundamental human right, and YWCA Columbus supports the full reproductive justice framework coined by Black women in 1994. True “choice” means ensuring people have low barriers to safe care and the financial security to choose what’s best for themselves and their families – having a baby or not, breastfeeding freely, accessing paid family leave, and affording high-quality childcare. And while the right to choose is a fundamental human one, we also note that it is an economic one. Wages significantly increase for women when they have the ability to control when they start a family—and, Black women, in particular, see a 10 percent increase in earnings.<sup>9</sup> Abortion is an economic and racial issue, and we support all women, femmes, and non-men who are marginalized by gender-based discrimination and oppression. We support policy and practice changes that empower this class of people, with an emphasis on building a liberated future where all misogyny-affected people experience liberation from patriarchal systems of oppression.

### More to consider:

- The hourly wage needed to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment in Franklin County is \$19.08/hour. At Ohio’s minimum wage, a wage earner must work 88 hours per week, every week of the year to afford an apartment at the fair market rent. In high-cost Central Ohio zip codes, the hourly “housing wage” is even higher, often topping \$20/hour. ([Out of Reach: the High Cost of Housing, 2020.](#))
- The living wage in Franklin County for one adult with 0 children is \$16.32. However, currently, the minimum wage of \$10.10 in Ohio does not meet the needs of residents of Central Ohio.

# 3 | HOUSING JUSTICE



Fair, equitable, and safe housing for all is a cornerstone of social justice and a core program to YWCA Columbus. We envision a world where policy mechanisms ensure access to housing and sever the link between geography and opportunity.

### Shelter

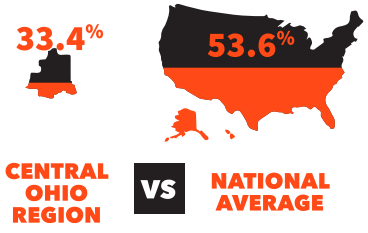
YWCA Columbus operates two shelters – a family shelter for families in crisis and a permanent supportive housing program for women with disabilities. We advocate for equitable housing policies that center Black, Indigenous, and people of color, disabled people, and other historically disenfranchised groups. Consider the following: on a single night in 2022, roughly 582,500 people were experiencing homelessness in the United States. Six in ten (60%) were staying in sheltered locations—emergency shelters, safe havens, or transitional housing programs—and four in ten (40%) were in unsheltered locations.<sup>10</sup> Expanding access to shelter necessitates expanding shelter services, and equitable funding from government partners. At YWCA Columbus, 80% of the heads of households we serve identify as a woman of color. Women, people of color, and queer people experience disproportionate rates of homelessness. Safe and accessible shelter programming is a need for Central Ohioans today.



### Affordable housing

Shelter alone cannot end the homelessness crisis. Investing in affordable housing and Black homeownership is a must. The U.S. Census Bureau data shows that the gap between white and Black homeownership is wider now than it was in 1960, when housing discrimination was rampant and legal. In 2022, 74.6% of white households owned their homes, compared with 45.3% of Black households — a gap of more than 29 points. In 1960, the white homeownership rate was 65% and the Black rate was 38%, a 27-point gap.<sup>11</sup> Closing this gap is crucial for Black families to stabilize and build wealth. Currently, within the rental market, stable housing

### BLACK HOMEOWNERSHIP



is difficult to find, with 72,493 “extremely low-income renter households” in Columbus and only 23,410 affordable units.<sup>12</sup> Equitable housing is also a tool to end racial discrimination and de facto segregation: Ohio ranked the eighth worst for Black-white segregation in residential areas among all states in the U.S. Intentionally designing the Central Ohio region will help redefine that reality and create healthy, diverse communities where all people thrive.

To end the crisis of homelessness, we must improve access to homeownership, renting, and shelter will help create a future of housing justice.

# 4 | **CHILDCARE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**



## **DISCRIMINATION AND DISPARITY IN CHILDCARE**



As a historic women’s agency, YWCA Columbus sees firsthand the discrimination and disparity that occurs in the childcare sector. Beyond the industry of childcare, however, YWCA Columbus seeks to protect and encourage youth development as a universal right. All children deserve to be ready by kindergarten, with access to high quality afterschool programs, and their families represented in the policymaking process.

### **Consider the following:**

- **Approximately six out of every ten families** whose children were cared for outside the home in **Franklin County reported having a somewhat or very difficult time finding good quality care for their child.** With that said, parents reported difficulty in finding good quality care were significantly higher in Linden, Hilltop, and Southside by approximately 10 percentage points.
- In the United States, the wealthiest nation on earth, nearly **1 in 5 children live in poverty.** Ohio mirrors these statistics as well.
- Our young people’s needs for quality learning are unmet. As of July 2022, Franklin County reports: **Children living in poverty 20.3%, students economically disadvantaged 55.4%, and children in publicly funded childcare 10.2%.** Clearly, these numbers do not match.
- In Central Ohio, there are three times more single woman-headed households (11.8% of all households) than single man-headed household (3.9%). Single parent households are disproportionately low-income; the excess burden of expensive childcare leaves them vulnerable to further impoverishment.

### **CENTRAL OHIO**

# 3X

**MORE SINGLE FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS THAN SINGLE MALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS**



**IN FRANKLIN COUNTY 59% OF 3-4 YEAR OLDS ARE NOT ENROLLED IN PRESCHOOL**

Now is the time to invest in youth development and build public infrastructure to support caregivers and children. Affordable and high-quality childcare and youth development programs will support educational outcomes for children, creating long-term impacts on their academic success and later workforce success.

# INITIATIVES WE ARE ENGAGED IN

**YWCA COLUMBUS BELIEVES IN STRONG PARTNERSHIPS AND AMPLIFYING THE EFFORTS OF OTHER PARTNERS AND INITIATIVES IN THE COMMUNITY. AS SUCH, YWCA COLUMBUS ALSO:**

## **[Convergence Columbus](#)**

Supports mission to increase homeownership among Black and other diverse households in Columbus, Ohio, and the wealth-building opportunities that come with it.

## **[Columbus Women's Commission](#)**

Supports the Commission's mission to advance the economic well-being of women in the Columbus community by directly influencing policies and procedures to make big change happen in Columbus.

## **[Columbus Safety Collective](#)**

Supports the effort by a coalition of organizations and concerned citizens to advocate for funding and implementing a health centered, antiracist non-police crisis response in place of police answering mental health calls.

## **[Honesty for Ohio Education](#)**

Supports a diverse coalition of education organizations, educators, DEI professionals, and concerned citizens to protect teaching an honest curriculum in schools and in public settings.

## **[Women's Public Policy Network](#)**

Supports a coalition of diverse organizations with an intersectional lens, advocating for policies concerning the wellbeing of women, particularly women of color and other marginalized women.

# CITATIONS

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