



**THE STATE OF OUR UNION:
BLACK WOMEN AND GIRLS IN DELAWARE**

**WE HOLD THE POWER
TO CHANGE THE DYNAMICS
IN OUR STATE.**





The National Coalition for 100 Black Women Inc., Delaware Chapter (NC100BW-DE) is a local affiliate of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc. NCBW is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization with 60 affiliate chapters across the United States. Our mission is to advocate on behalf of Black women and girls through national and local actions and strategic alliances that promote leadership development and gender equity in the areas of health, education, and economic empowerment.

The NC100BW-DE Public Policy Committee researches current and proposed information and examines how policies and regulations might work for or against the NC100BW-DE agenda to empower Black women and girls in the areas of health, education and economic empowerment. The committee works on voter education, registration and participation; increasing the number of women holding elected office; issues policy alerts; and formulates position papers. Learn more at www.ncbwde.org.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

H. Raye Jones-Avery

President
NC100BW-DE
Delaware Chapter

The National Coalition of 100 Black Women, DE Chapter is pleased to release the first edition of our report on the status of Black women and girls – *The State of Our Union: Black Women and Girls in Delaware*. Structural inequalities predicated on race, zip code, gender, social economic class and lifestyle are persistently widespread. That is why 22 years ago, a small group of Black women in DE began meeting to organize a collective voice to drive impactful, positive change in the first state.

Today, NC100BW-DE represents a bold movement of progressive women demanding parity, equity, and social justice for Black women and girls. We are also committed to fostering a new pipeline of effective leaders to advance our mission.

Our membership includes a phenomenal group of women ages 20 through 85 residing in New Castle, Kent and Sussex counties who are intentional about bettering lives. We are daughters, siblings, aunts, mothers, mentors, wives, entrepreneurs, educators, attorneys, artists, accountants, counselors, legislative aides, pastors, physicians, social workers, scholars, scientists, elected officials, executives, thought-leaders and so much more. Most of all, we are our Sister's Keepers.

NC100BW-DE core priorities center around self-care, empowerment, and advocacy related to gender equity, economic opportunity, health, education, mentoring, public policy and stakeholder engagement. We have produced *The State of Our Union: Black Women and Girls in Delaware* report because it is only by understanding the challenges we face that we can promote solutions to ensure Black women and girls achieve parity in every aspect of our lives. We seek to educate ourselves first as well as other stakeholders across the state about the disparities affecting Black women, Black girls and our families.

With data as a foundation, we plan to build strategic alliances across sectors that will propel us to work together to eradicate disparities wherever they exist. We believe that when we advocate for gender and racial equality, we break the cycles of bias, poverty and violence against Black women and girls.

NC100BW, DE Chapter has been working hard identify and narrow these gaps. This publication as well as our bi-annual "My Sister's Keeper" Leadership Summit are just two examples of how our members and the public gain valuable information to guide our advocacy.

This year, we are also taking a bold new step by launching the Mary Shadd Cary/ Margaret Rose Henry Civic Engagement Initiative which will expand our advocacy efforts by developing leadership training programs for Black women statewide. The goal is for Black women from all walks of life to achieve more active roles in civic and governmental affairs.

Whether it's through our Public Policy Action Agenda, the 100 Bridges Program connecting girls with mentoring & STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) opportunities, the Dr. Teresa D. Drummond Scholarship Program for traditional and non-traditional students, our signature fund raiser *The Gentleman's Cook-Off: Cooking for A Cause, Diamonds & Denim* and more--we are not just a Coalition. We are a Movement ---neither voiceless nor invisible.

Thank you to all Black women and girls who bravely speak your truth. We are grateful to our members, donors, partners and interested individuals for your unending commitment to be our "Sister's Keepers."

FORWARD



Kristen S. Williams
Charter Member

The State of Our Union: Black Women and Girls in Delaware is a groundbreaking report and the beginning of an on-going effort led by the NC100BW-DE to establish baseline measures of the status of Black women and girls in Delaware. For over 22 years, our mission has been to advocate on behalf of Black women and girls in DE. This report is a result of our insatiable interest in understanding the forces shaping the lives of Black women and girls and provides a snapshot of the environment in DE today.

The information in this report was gathered from existing databases and surveys at both the state and the national level, as well as public and private sources. It is an overview of the challenges facing Black women and girls in Delaware in critical areas: education, health, employment, economic opportunity, poverty, and violence. This summary of data is intended for a general audience with the hope that its important findings will be helpful to policymakers, civic organizations, agencies, foundations, journalists, and those who are concerned with the status of Black women and girls.

This report confirms that Black women are vastly underrepresented in elective office, scientific and other professional fields as well as boardrooms in the state of Delaware. There is also an undeniable trend that Black women and girls lag in virtually every category. Until we close the gap on these disparities, we are short-changing the First State by losing the significant contributions that Black women and girls can bring to our economy and society.

Finally, we seek to contribute not only to the understanding of the status of Black women and girls in Delaware, but to encourage action to address these ongoing disparities. Encouraged by efforts like the Black Women's Roundtable report, Black Women in the United States (2014) and the recent establishment of the Congressional Caucus on Black Women and Girls, NC100BW-DE realized the need to gather data to shed light on the conditions faced by Black women and girls in Delaware and sound the call for the need for change. It is important to clearly identify and analyze the needs and conditions of Black women and girls throughout the state with an eye toward improving the ability of advocates and policymakers to address these issues. Recognizing these gaps is the first step toward finding solutions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written and prepared for and by Black Women in the State of Delaware. Simone Philpotts, University of Delaware Ph.D. Student, Principal Researcher & Author.

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YOUTH VOICE

KAAMILAH DIABATE'

Kaamilah ' is currently a senior at Howard High School of Technology. Throughout her high school career, she has maintained a 4.0 GPA while serving as the captain on Howard's varsity basketball team and pursuing many other endeavors both in and out of school. Among several prestigious awards, including first place in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Communication Contest and the 19th Annual NAACP Essay Oratory Contest, she also managed to speak at the 2016 TEDxWilmington Annual Conference. In June 2017, she competed in Skills USA National Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. She was awarded a non-legislative resolution by the City of Wilmington in December 2017.

Kaamilah is a voice of her generation.

*With my nose spread wider than the hips of the Black woman who birthed me.
With my roots thicker than the resentment towards my brown skin.
I am labeled tainted.
Void of light.
Black as night.
Not "Black" enough for my peers, but too "Black" for the oppressor.
My shoulders, broader than the will of my great grandmother's great grandmother
as she fought for her child, my eyes darker than the misty October nights we hid in,
my screams, louder than the cry of a new widow as she watched Master beat the last
breath out of her last son.
My future, brighter than the sun that told me it was time to rise and slave for hours
and hours and hours again.
My womb, the birthplace, the motherland, the ache of my heart as my Black boy, my
Black son enters the American world.
My Trayvon, my Freddie, my Michael, my Tamir.
Don't forget my Sandra.
My mother's mother Rosa told me this day would come.
The day I watched Laquan fall, the day Eric screamed, "I CAN'T BREATHE",
the day I turned to every news channel and saw the same headline.
Rape.
Murder.
Rape.
Murder.
The day I'd cry for my daughters.
My Assata, my Maya, my Angela.
The day I'd walk outside the William Hicks Center and be hit with a bullet that
wasn't meant for me.
But meant for my Black boy.
My Tupac, my Christopher.
My feet, with blisters from walking the same broken path,
these feet passed down to me.
My heart, palpitating the same way Coretta's did when Martin layed on the
balcony, with my nose spread wider than the hips of the Black woman who birthed
me.
(1/8/16)*



“Hop on my shoulders and travel with me on a legacy trail of pathways to success built by a generation of Black women and girls. We are the “achievers” who excel in our personal and professional lives and, creatively and collectively improve the world in which we live. In a world where race and gender not only intersect, but dictate the public places where we live, speak, drink water, stand, talk, pray, sing or attend school.”

- Jean Dowding

Jean Dowding Founder/CEO Dowdling Resource Group 2017-2018 Delaware Association of Realtors Good Neighbor Kent County Award Recipient for Community Service with Combat Veterans Suffering with from PTSD.

BLACK WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP & POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

AUTHENTIC ADVOCACY USING OUR OWN VOICES

The mantra My Sister's Keeper was first uttered by such heroines as Harriet Tubman and Mary Ann Shadd Carey in the 1800s during a time when women were not permitted to preach from a pulpit nor speak at the national Colored Conventions. A few exemplified the courage and tenacity to forge paths on unchartered territories. Countless Black women with shared hardships and triumphs lead in ways that shape the future. Mary Ann Shadd Carey was an anti-slavery activist, teacher, attorney and the first Black woman publisher in North America. Like Shadd Carey, Black women have been blazing trails in politics and law in Delaware. Hattie Phalen was the first African-American woman elected to Wilmington's City Council in 1969. Henrietta Johnson was the first African American woman elected to the House of Representatives serving from 1970-1978. Beatrice Patton Carroll, a graduate of Wilmington's Howard High School and Howard University, became interested in politics in 1960 when John F. Kennedy ran for president. In 1993, Carroll became the first Black woman to run for Mayor of Wilmington. Reverend Grace Batten of the Mount Zion Holy Episcopal Church in Milton was elected to the Milton Town Council in 1982. In 1994, Reverend Batten became Delaware's first and only Black female mayor. We saw two major victories in 1994 as Senator Margaret Rose Henry, a tenured leader in Delaware's non-profit sector, was elected to fill a vacancy left by the late Senator Herman Holloway. Henry won 54% of the vote in a three way race to become the first Black woman state senator.

Representative Stephanie T. Bolden is the longest serving Black female elected official in the state. First elected in 1992, Bolden is distinguished as a five-term Wilmington City Councilwoman and first female President Pro Tempore. Subsequently, Representative Bolden was elected to the Delaware General Assembly in 2010 where she serves presently. In 2016, three term Wilmington Councilwoman Hanifa Shabazz was elected as the first female president of City Council. Velda Jones Potter, became the first Black woman State Treasurer in 2009 and in 2016, the first to serve as City Treasurer.

Paulette Sullivan Moore became Delaware's first Black female lawyer in 1977. Today, over 45 Black women have successfully received membership into the Delaware State Bar Association and are currently serving as attorneys in the state. Judge Haile L. Alford became the first Black female judge to be appointed as the 14th Judge of the Superior Court of Delaware in 1992. In Governor Castle's remarks at Judge Alford's investiture ceremony, Governor Castle stated:



“



In one sense I am honored to be celebrating Delaware’s first woman African-American Judge, but in another sense I am keenly aware that this has been too long in coming, and my fervent hope is that children, students and young attorneys will use Haile’s perseverance, work and commitment as an inspiration and as the basis for believing that they too can break down any barriers before them and be successful, and hopefully the effect of all this will help create a larger number of women and minority candidates for judicial positions in the future.”

- Governor Mike Castle

”



Black women candidates report being discouraged by men from running for elected office. They are told that Black women are unelectable. Racism is often entangled with sexism as yet another structural barrier. Black women typically do not have the wealth or political inheritance to get a jumpstart in running for office. Despite these challenges, more and more Black women are determined to run for office. In November 2016, Lisa Blunt Rochester was elected as the state’s first woman and first Black Delawarean to serve in Congress. Vermont and Mississippi are the only two states to have never elected a woman to Congress. Congresswoman Rochester ran on the slogan:

“When Lisa goes to Washington - we all go to Washington!”

Pictured from left to right: Wilmington City Council President Hanifa Shabazz, State Senator, Margaret Rose Henry, and U.S. Congresswoman from Delaware, Lisa Blunt Rochester

LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER CONGRESSWOMAN

“Know your purpose on this Earth and fully step into it, and that you do it afraid if you have to. Trust that if you’ve been called to do something, you have everything you need. Be a lifelong learner of people, places, and things. And finally, take care of yourself – mentally, physically, and spiritually. You can’t travel far on an empty tank. The bottom line is that we are here to love and serve.”



I am a child of the 1960’s — civil rights, women’s rights, peace and Black power. These movements, my family and my faith shaped me. It was in 2014, that this foundation was tested.

Work and living one’s purpose has always been my driver. My first job was at the McDonalds on Market Street. From there, I would go on to work in government — County Summer Youth coordinator, an intern for then-Congressman Tom Carper, and a caseworker in his district office. I was fortunate to serve two governors as Deputy Secretary of Health and Social Services, the Secretary of Labor and Head of State Personnel. After my time in government, I became the CEO of the Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League.

Then life intervened, after raising two children and ending a 20-year marriage, I met Charles Rochester, the love of my life. We married in 2006. My life changed! I quit my job, I sold my house and my car, and I moved to China for love. We travelled around the world and just lived very much in the moment. In 2014, Charles ruptured his achilles tendon while

playing basketball on a business trip and blood clots went into his heart and lungs. This healthy, passionate, loving man passed away unexpectedly at the age of 52.

I felt a pain I’d never experienced. I spent the following year on autopilot. And then one day, I remember standing behind a father and three kids in the Supermarket, who had to put back grapes because they were nine dollars and he couldn’t afford them. I then later heard Kristen S. Williams give the state of Black women and girls at the reclaiming ceremony of the NC100BW Delaware Chapter. By God’s grace my eyes were opened to other’s loss — of their jobs, homes, or a child to gun violence.

I felt compelled to run for office. It was a six-way Democratic primary, five men and myself and then a four-way general election. My life had changed, and I realized I had nothing to lose and everything to give. Running for Congress gave me my joy back. In the fall of 2016, I became the first woman and first person of color to be elected to federal office in Delaware.



In addition to encouraging Black women to run for elected office and individuals to exercise our right to vote, it is equally important to create parallel tracks which open up opportunities for appointed positions, civil service leadership, voluntary task forces and committees. Cynthia Primo Martin founded the organization, Trustees of Color, to ensure diversity by expanding the pool of people of color to serve on Delaware's nonprofit boards. Her organization has placed 500 people of color on non-profit boards in the span of 13 years.

Elizabeth Neal was the first Black woman to serve as Warden of a male correctional facility in Delaware. Sherese Brewington-Carr succeeded her in 1995 as the second in the history of the Department of Corrections to date. In 2013, Sherrie Tull Hubbard, became the first Black female Captain to serve in the Wilmington Police Department. Arnetta McCrae, Esquire served as the First Black woman Trademark and Copyright Counsel with the DuPont Company until she retired in 1996. She also served as the first Black female Chair of the Delaware Public Services Commission.

In 2008 Michelle Taylor became the first Black woman to serve as President and CEO of United Way of Delaware, the state's largest philanthropic agency. Dr. Patrice Gilliam-Johnson, PhD. served as the second Black woman Labor Secretary in Delaware from 2015-2017. On March 8, 2018 LaVerne Harmon, President of Wilmington University became the first Black woman to head a university in Delaware.



MARGARET ROSE HENRY DELAWARE STATE SENATOR

In 1994, I became the first woman of color elected to the Delaware State Senate. I had never been a politician before—my career had been spent in nonprofits that focused on the needs of children, women, seniors, and working families. I had been shaped by my childhood in Rayne, Louisiana, a town where the median family income is less than half of Delaware’s. I was shaped by my experience as a Black woman in the workforce and as a divorced mother raising two children. I was shaped by what I saw average people go through when society left them behind.

I came to public service because I had seen firsthand what it meant to be in poverty. I knew what it was to live on the margins of society. I wanted to be a fighter for people who couldn’t make their voices heard. It’s never been easy, but I’ve been steadfast in the fight for women’s rights, affordable housing, and coverage for mental health and prescription drugs, child support, compassionate drug policy and tax policy that supports the working class. I’ve fought against domestic violence, child abuse, and criminal justice policy that has decimated entire communities. I continue to fight for a school system that provides truly equal opportunity to all children, including thousands in Wilmington who have been failed by society time and again.

Many of those fights began before I came to the Senate. Each of them will continue after I leave. Since joining the Senate I’ve become a grandmother, and my time with my family becomes more precious with each passing year. I’ve seen the growth of a generation of leaders who give me hope for a brighter future. It’s time to for them to lead.

I plan to use each day left in my term serving my district and fighting for the causes I hold dear. I am grateful beyond words for your kind recognition, support and friendship over the years.



STEPHANIE T. BOLDEN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

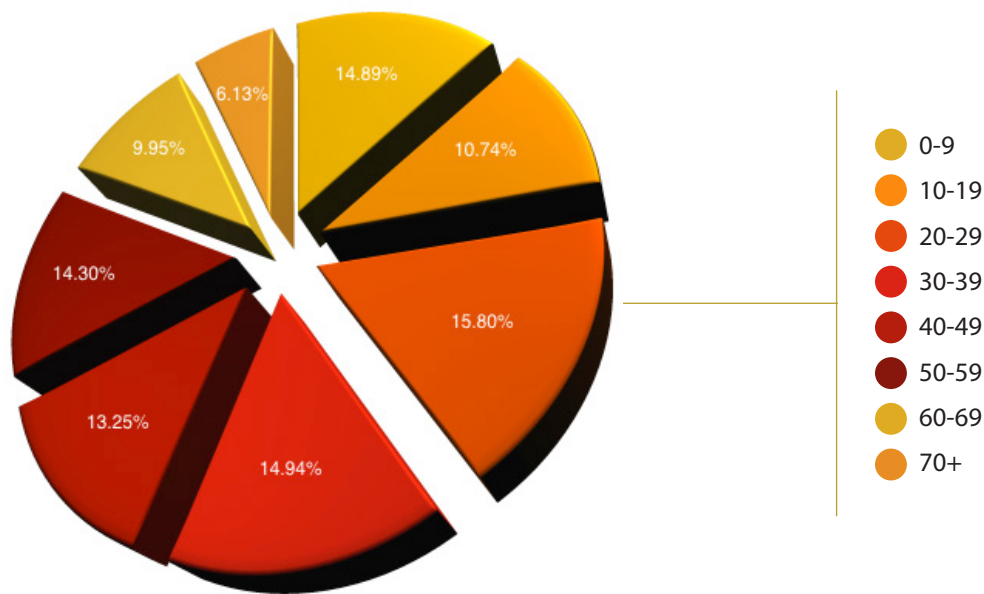
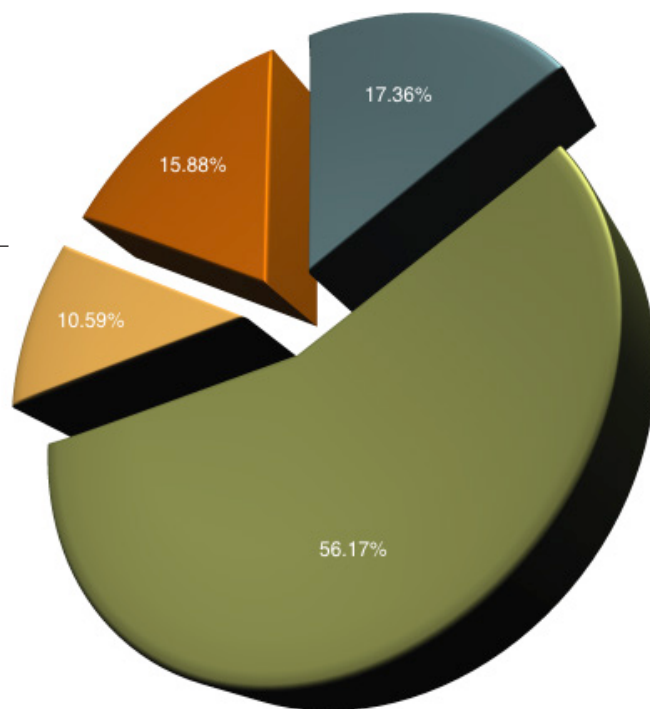
Advocacy and Public Policy are the cornerstones of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc. - Delaware Chapter. Our strategic agenda is to provide a culturally relevant voice for Black women and girls in the state of Delaware to effectuate positive change for ourselves, for our families and for our communities. NC100BW-DE's advocacy agenda is ever evolving to meet the needs of our constituency. Aligned with our national agenda, we believe "No One Can Speak For Us Better Than We Can". NC100BW- DE's strategic advocacy areas are informed by data and other considerations to create a framework for our public information, partnerships and public policy efforts. We pledge to shape a collective agenda in step with our key thought partners.

The information gathered in this report provides a baseline of facts to guide, support, and sustain efforts to elevate the status of Black women and girls.

The total population of Delaware is 961,939. The total number of women in Delaware is 496,360 representing 51.6% of the total state population. The total number of Black people in Delaware is 217,398 representing 22.6% of the total state population. According to the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, there were approximately 111,785 Black Women in the state of Delaware in 2016 representing 11.7% of the total population.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTY & THE CITY OF WILMINGTON

- Kent
- New Castle
- Sussex
- Wilmington



Sources: Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health Statistics Center Delaware Population Consortium, 2016



FAST FACTS

(Photo credit: PAUL J. RICHARDS/AFP/Getty Images)

The majority of the population of Black women in Delaware live in New Castle County.

Black women vote at comparatively high rates and had a higher voting rate than all other groups of men and women during the last two presidential elections.

Black women remain underrepresented at every level of federal and state political office in the United States.

In 2014, Black women comprised 6.4% of the US population, but as of August 2016 held only 3.4% of seats in the US Congress and no seats in the US Senate until Kamala Harris from California was elected in 2017. Carol Moseley Braun was the first Black female U.S. Senator from Illinois who served from 1993 to 1999.

In state legislatures, Black women held just 3.5 percent of seats. Only two Black women in the country held a position in statewide executive elected office. 17 States have sent a Black woman to Congress, 34 have not. In Delaware we have 1 Black Congresswoman, 1 Black Woman State Senator (who is retiring in 2018) and 1 Black Woman State Representative.

In 2018, 1,871 (25.3%) of the 7,383 state legislators in the United States are women. Women currently hold 446 (22.6%) of the 1,972 state senate seats and 1,425 (26.3%) of the 5,411 state house or assembly seats. 450 (24.1%) of the 1,871 women state legislators serving nationwide are Black women. Black women constitute 6.1% of the total 7,383 state legislators.

There are 111,785 Black women in Delaware with real stories living in the shadow of statistical numbers. Take a brief glimpse into the abridged personal narratives of a few self-identified women who mirror thousands of real women we all know. Our names and circumstances vary but we share a common bond.



“*“For 23 years I lived the life of a statistic, which was nothing more than a nameless item of collected information -- a mathematical equation..”*

YAH HUGHES

“For 23 years I lived the life of a statistic, which was nothing more than a nameless item of collected information-- a mathematical equation used to analyze what is happening in the world around us. This very information stated I was among: the 68% of children who grew up without a father; the 87% that were below the poverty line; and the 50% of those who were abused either physically, mentally, verbally and/or emotionally. These predictions would be easy if the data always sent a clear message, but the message is often obscured by variability.

Growing up in the inner city of Philadelphia, statistics were not something we “majored in” or studied, but we understood them. Statistics didn’t show how often I cried, how I never believed I would amount to anything, how I walked around believing statistics that told me I would have a child out of wedlock; would never graduate from high school and especially never attend college. I craved more and decided to no longer be the one who “wouldn’t amount to anything”. I would not be defined by my drug addicted parents, by my economic status or my surroundings.

God created me to be more so I worked hard to be a new set of statistics. I was amongst the 35% that grew up in a house with drugs but was not an addict. I was in the 4% of those in my immediate family to graduate and earn not one but two college degrees. I was the only one of my immediate family and friends to give the collegiate commencement address and I am one of the 68% of Black females who serves as a mentor and role model.

The moment I realized statistical data had two sides and variables change, that was the moment I knew that I could change my status. I had to change what I looked at, what I believed and how I lived. With a whole lot of help from family, much prayer and even more faith, I stand today 15 years later beating the odds, breaking generational curses and rewriting history.”

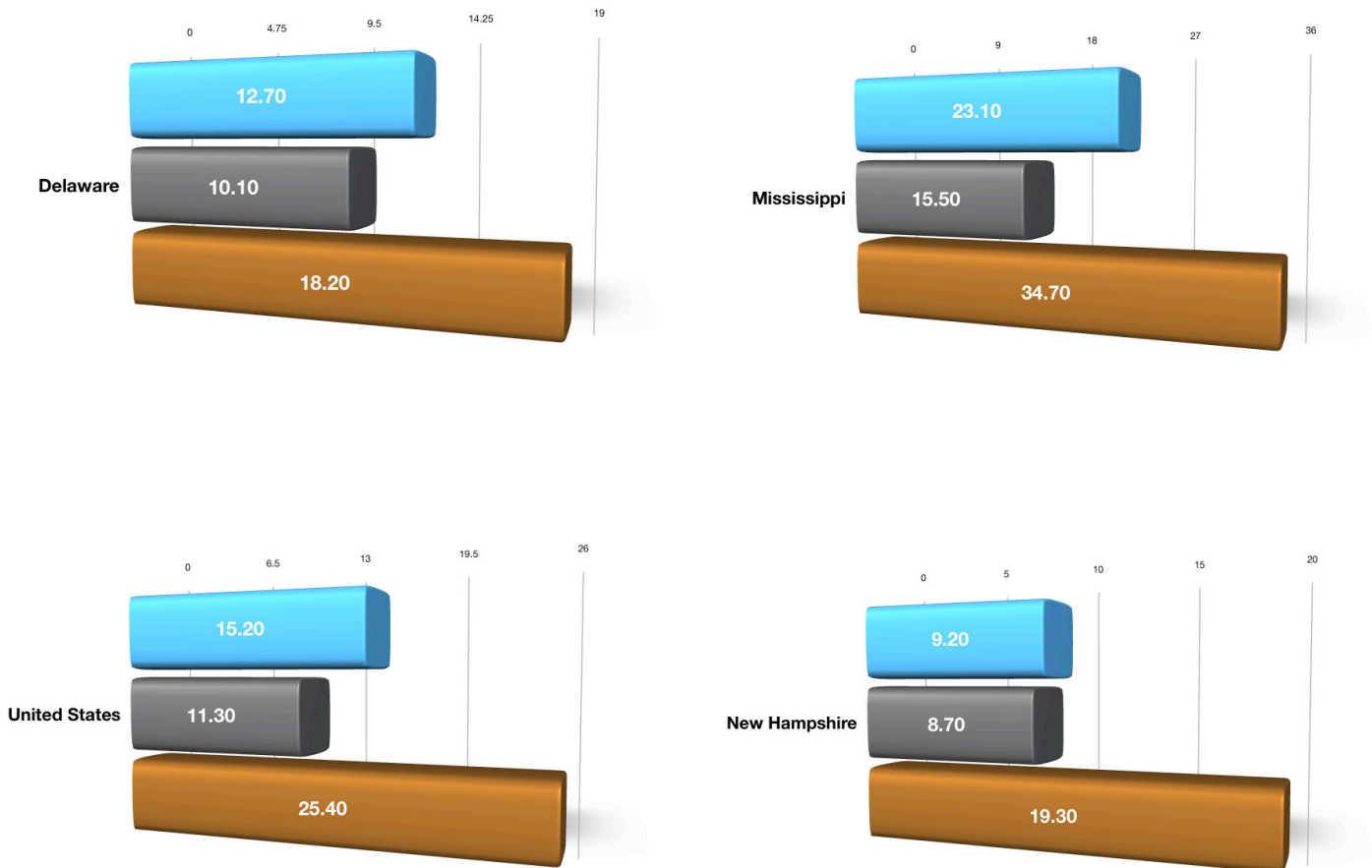


EMPLOYMENT & EARNINGS

Black women in Delaware have made advances in recent years but still face inequities. Since the 2004 publication of the Status of Women in States report, the gender wage gap in Delaware has narrowed. A higher percentage of Black women have bachelor's degrees, and Black women in Delaware are more likely to work in managerial or professional occupations than the average Black woman in the nation. Like Black women across the country, Black women in Delaware are highly represented in the labor force yet are more likely to live in poverty. Delaware has a greater percentage of Black married couples with children with a female breadwinner at 59% compared to the US at 51.7%.

WOMEN BELOW THE POVERTY LINE

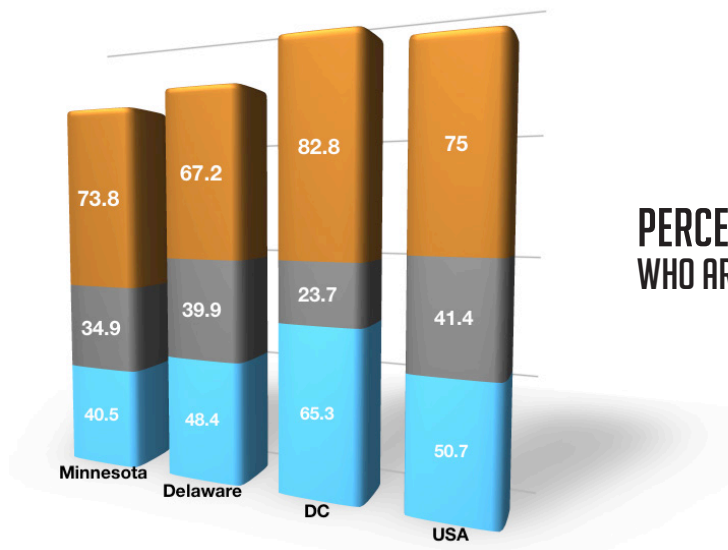
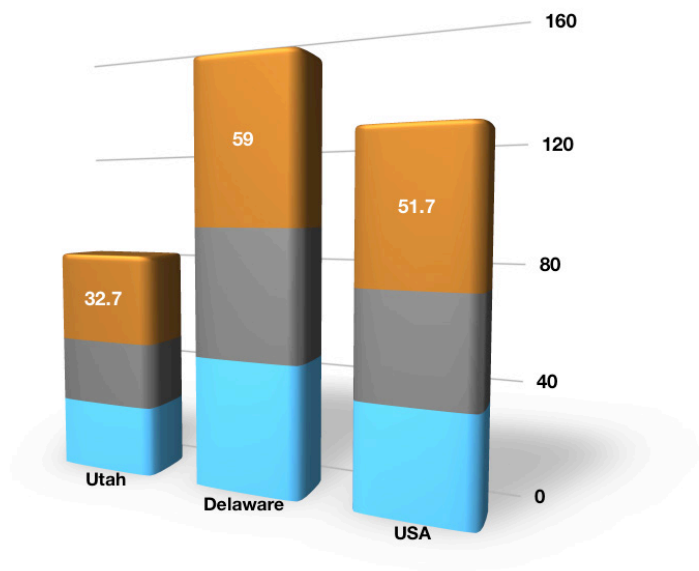
● All Women ● All White Women ● All Black Women





● All Women ● All White Women ● All Black Women

PERCENT OF MARRIED COUPLE HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN WITH A FEMALE BREADWINNER

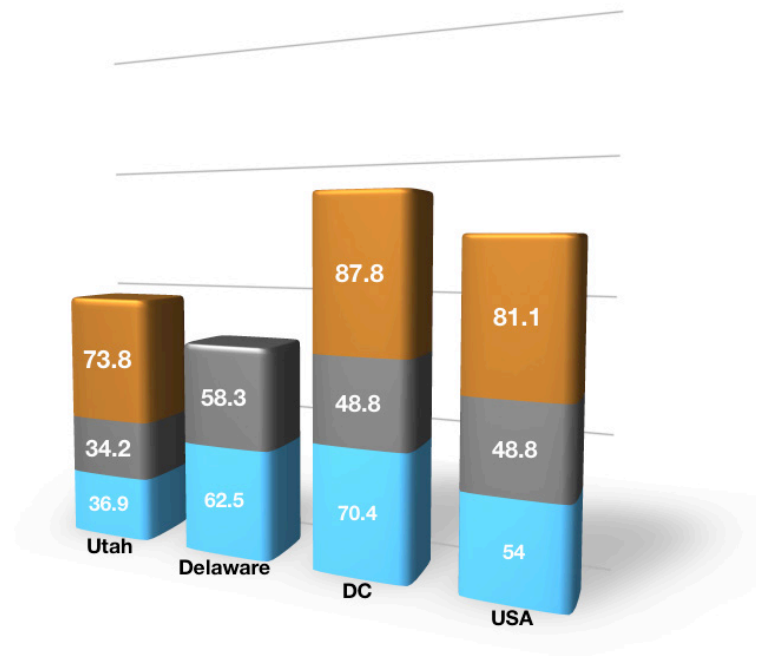


PERCENT OF BREADWINNER MOTHERS WHO ARE SINGLE MOTHERS



● All Women ● All White Women ● All Black Women

PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH MOTHERS OF CHILDREN UNDER 18 THAT HAVE A BREADWINNER



	% of Women 18-64 Yr. Old w/ Health Insurance		% of Women w/ a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, aged 25 and Older		% of Women Living Below Poverty, Aged 18 and Older	
	Black Women	All Women	Black Women	All Women	Black Women	All Women
Hawaii	94.8%	92.1%	n/a	32.5%	10.0%	11.3%
Delaware	90.1%	90.0%	25.1%	30.6%	18.2%	12.7%
Louisiana	72.3%	77.7%	16.8%	23.6%	31.3%	19.8%
United States	80.3%	82.8%	21.4%	29.7%	25.4%	15.2%



Even though Black women have been at the forefront of many of our nation's achievements, when compared to other groups, Black women are disproportionately affected by economic hardship. We are paid 64% of what White men are paid. Additionally, where applicable, affordable child care has become an unreasonably high burden for Black mothers. There was no women's movement needed to infuse Black women into America's workforce, we've been here all along. Despite stereotypes about Black women and our perceived unwillingness to work (i.e. "Welfare Queens"), we remain more likely than any other group of women in America to work. Even with our drive, determination, and unflinching commitment to the labor force, the ability of Black women to ascend to official leadership at the workplace is exceedingly rare.

FAST FACTS

Black women experience poverty at higher rates than Black men and women from all other racial/ethnic groups except Native American women.

More than six in ten (62.2%) Black women are in the workforce, making them one of the two racial groups of women with the highest labor force participation rate among women and the only group of women with a higher labor force participation rate than their male counterparts.

Black women's median annual earnings (\$34,000 for those who work full time, year-round) lag behind most women's and men's earnings in the US.

If the current trends continue, Black women in Delaware will not see equal pay until the year 2051.

About 28% of employed Black women work in service occupations which is the occupational group with the lowest wages. Jobs in this broad occupational group often lack important benefits such as paid sick days.

Black families depend on Black women's earnings. 8 out of 10 (80.6%) Black mothers are breadwinners, who are either the sole earners or earn at least 40% of household income.

Quality child care is unaffordable for many Black women. In all but two states in the country, the average costs of child care exceeds 20% of Black women's median annual earnings.

The number of business owned by Black women increased by 178% between 2002 and 2012, the largest increase among all racial groups of women and men.

PERCENT OF BLACK WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE COMPARED TO SELECTED STATES & THE NATION

	% in Labor Force		Median Annual Earnings		Earnings Between Women and White Men		% of All Employed Women in Managerial or Professional Occupations	
	Black Women	All Women	Black Women	All Women	Black Women	All Women	Black Women	All Women
DC	56.7%	66.1%	\$48,000	\$60,000	55.2%	69.0%	43.1%	61.3%
Delaware	64.8%	59.9%	\$38,000	\$41,000	71.7%	77.4%	37.2%	42.7%
Louisiana	59.7%	56.2%	\$25,000	\$31,500	46.3%	58.3%	28.3%	37.2%
U.S.	62.3%	58.5%	\$33,600	\$38,000	64.6%	73.1%	33.0%	40.1%

Source: 2017 Status of Black Women in the United States Report

WOMEN'S BUSINESS OWNERSHIP (HOW DELAWARE COMPARES)

	% of All Business Owned by Women	% Distribution of Women-Owned Businesses	
		All Women	Black Women
DC	42.7%	47.1%	45.9%
Delaware	32.6%	74.7%	19.4%
South Dakota	29.2%	95.3%	0.7%
U.S.	35.8%	72.5%	15.4%



ESTHER RICH
SPECIAL TOUCH CARD CREATION
NEW CASTLE COUNTY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2018
AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR

I came from a blue collar family and had never heard the word entrepreneur in my household. The only crafty projects I ever did growing up was to learn how to sew. After graduating from West Catholic Girls HS in 1972, I began full time employment with the Commonwealth of Pa., Dept. of Public Assistance. During my years of service, I worked my way up from clerk-typist to Supervisor and retired as an Administrative Officer in June 2005 after 32 years of service.

In 2001, I purchased my 1st computer and I became interested in designing cards and scrapbooking. My stationary business MsEssie Creations was born, and I planned on becoming my family's 1st Entrepreneur after I retired. A people person, I realized that being isolated in a home office gave me a feeling of being disconnected from the rest of the world, and it was not a good feeling. I began working outside the home doing a variety of jobs over the next 6 years. The home base business industry was introduced to me in March 2011 and this was a new beginning for me as an entrepreneur.

With the help of Facebook, I reconnected with my ex-husband on October 2011, the 2nd time around. Paul Rich loved me enough to leave the palm trees and white sand of Palm Beach, Florida and re-locate to Delaware in June 2013.

Being new to Delaware, I needed a way to meet other business owners to grow my gourmet coffee and tea business. I met with Chris Marchak, from the New Castle County Chamber of Commerce in April of 2014, became one of their newest members and my life of networking began. The following May 2015, I was chosen as an Ambassador. In May 2016, I attended a life changing workshop on how to be a successful entrepreneur. I left that workshop with more clarity than I had felt in a long time. After talking to my husband, Paul he said, why don't you start your own greeting card business, you know how much you love making cards. In August 2016, Special Touch Card Creations, Your One-Of-A-Kind Greeting was launched.

After celebrating my first year anniversary in 2017, I began realizing that personalized greeting cards are just one piece and I began designing unique one-of-a-kind thank-you cards for many business owners who would like to express gratitude to their customers and clients.

I am now serving as the NCC Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Chairwoman for 2018 and was chosen as the first African American woman for Ambassador of the Year in 2018. I am so excited to not just be a member of one of the best chambers in DE, but also to represent the Chamber and serve in any capacity where needed.



VIOLENCE & CRIME

BROOKLYNN HITCHENS, M.A.

DOCTORAL CANDIDATE

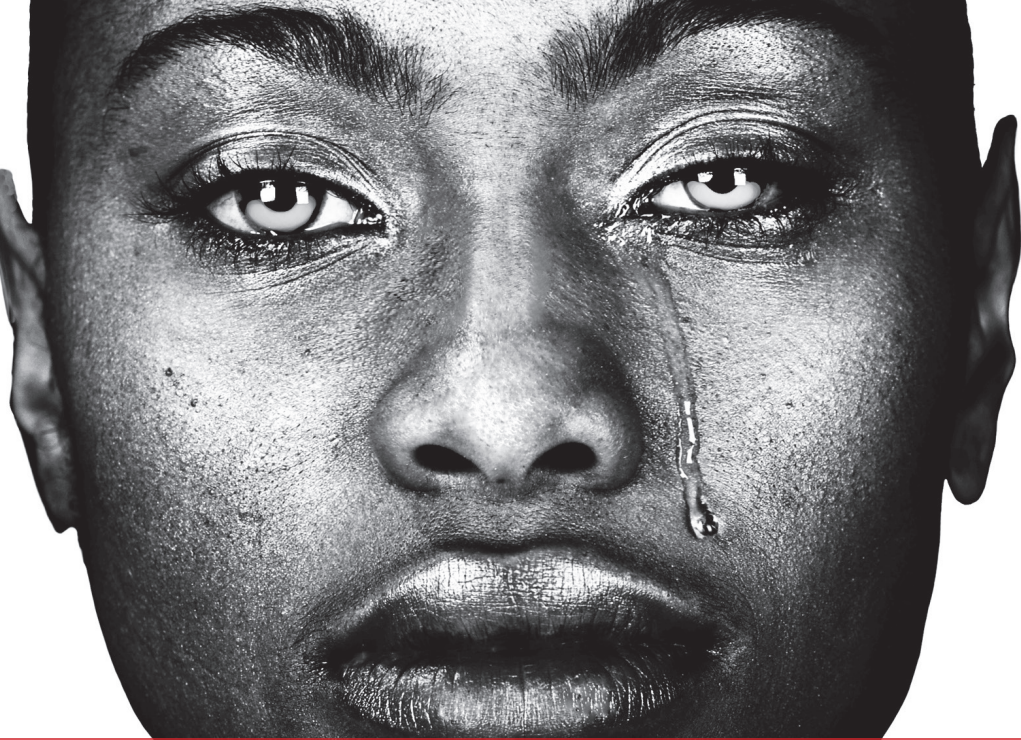
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY- NEW BRUNSWICK

In 2016, there were 5.1 violent crimes reported per 1,000 residents - slightly higher than 2015 and down 26% from 2000. Wilmington, in New Castle County, had the highest rate in the state at 18, up 3% since 2000. Other communities with the highest rates of violent crimes in their counties were Milford in Kent County (9.6) and Laurel in Sussex County (11) per 1,000 residents.

Wilmington is a small, urban city of approximately 71,000 residents, Wilmington has one of the highest per capita homicide rates in the United States, which was about 45 per 100,000 residents in 2017 (FBI Uniform Crime Reports 2016; Wilmington Shootings Database 2017). This rate is about nine times the national rate, and in 2015, Wilmington was the fourth most violent city of its size (CDC 2015; Center for Drug and Health Studies 2016; Parenting Magazine 2012). Given this record, Wilmington was dubbed “Murder Town USA” by Newsweek Magazine (Jones 2014) and even ABC TV Network (Cormier 2015), and Wilmington’s per capita homicide rate is frequently in competition with other similarly-sized cities such as East St. Louis, Illinois; Camden, New Jersey; and Flint, Michigan (Cornish 2014; Neighborhood Scout 2016). In 2017, Wilmington surpassed its previous records for shootings and homicides—with 32 murders, 166 shooting incidents, and 197 total victims (FBI Uniform Crime Reports 2016; Wilmington Shootings Database 2017). This was a 23% increase from the previous year of 26 murders. In 2016 and 2017 alone, 342 residents were shot in Wilmington, the most in any two years in the city’s history (Wilmington Shootings Database 2017). Similarly, rates of aggravated assault are four times higher than the nation’s average in Wilmington, outpacing larger cities such as Philadelphia, Chicago, Newark, New York City, and Baltimore (FBI Uniform Crime Reports 2016).

Gun violence in Wilmington is centralized predominately in the Northside and Westside neighborhoods, although the Southbridge and Eastside neighborhoods are also adversely affected by violent crime. Data show that less than 8% of Delaware’s population accounts for nearly half of the state’s homicides and shootings, and one-quarter of violent crime (Center for Drug and Health Studies 2016). Recent Gun Violence Archival data find that Wilmington leads the country in teen shootings, and 12 to 17 year olds are more likely to be shot in the city than elsewhere in the United States (Linderman et al. 2017a, b). In 2014, in response to public outcry over the increase in gun violence, the Wilmington Police Department (WPD) and Office of the Mayor launched the city’s first homicide unit (Wilmington Public Safety Strategies Commission 2015). In 2015, the Wilmington City Council and Delaware Division of Public Health solicited the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide an epidemiological investigation of urban firearm crime as an official public health issue in the city (CDC 2015). These efforts, along with the data and activism of the Wilmington Street PAR Project, are working to systematically examine and curtail the dramatic escalation of violence in Wilmington.



VIOLENCE & CRIME

Critical to understanding this acceleration of violence in Wilmington is the reality of structural inequality that creates and sustains a hostile and harmful living environment for low-income people of color. Such racial-ethnic stratification manifests through socioeconomic disparities (e.g. Blacks are five times as likely to be unemployed than Whites in Wilmington), concentrated disadvantage (Blacks are more likely than Whites to live in poor, under-resourced communities in Wilmington), neighborhood racial segregation (e.g. over half of Wilmington's White population would need to move to another neighborhood to make Whites and Blacks evenly distributed across the city), and inadequate school systems (e.g. Black youth are more likely than White youth to attend underfunded schools where they are more often suspended, expelled, and pushed out).

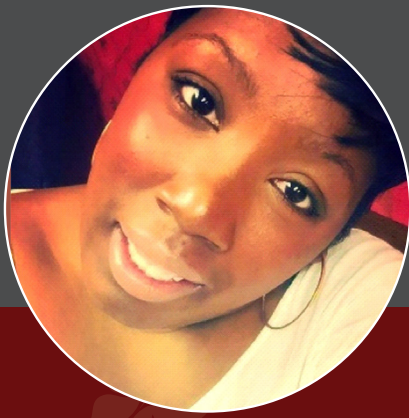
Research consistently shows that Whites leverage their privilege to distance themselves from Blacks and disadvantaged communities within cities, and that such residential segregation has material consequences for the prevalence of violence in poor communities of color (Kriwo et al. 2009). Unemployment exacerbates community tension and strain, debilitates urban Black neighborhoods, and thereby increases the likelihood that individuals will engage in street life, crime, or violence in urban communities (Payne & Brown 2016). For example, Kubrin and Weitzer (2003) found that neighborhoods with concentrated disadvantage, particularly related to economic deprivation and unemployment, are more conducive to retaliatory homicides. Research on shootings in Wilmington affirms this finding, as officials contend that much of the gun violence in Wilmington is based on retaliation following a previous shooting (Horn 2015).

NOTE: Violence is a statewide concern. The data presented is specific to Wilmington. Disaggregated data by gender was not available. Gender specific data as well as comparable information for Kent and Sussex Counties will be disseminated when it becomes available. County-level data were not available for Delaware. Crime reports are never complete because not all crimes are reported, and some crimes in particular, such as rape and assault, are believed to be underreported. Data are from the FBI's Uniform Crime Report. It should be noted that this indicator represents crime penetration. Because areas vary in population, counts of criminal incidents do not accurately measure impact. By presenting crimes per 1,000 residents, it is possible to compare rural and urban areas of the state.



SONYA MCCRAY HEALTH & WELL BEING

“Three and a half years after entering college as one of the only Black women in my classes, I completed with a degree in one hand, a two-month-old baby in the other, and a shattered compass before me. Hoping graduate school at Wilmington University would be my families’ ticket to stability, after working eight hours days; I would only be home to kiss my two children goodnight. That spring, I had a heart attack. I didn’t feel like the independent strong Black women in the movies, vacationing in the islands and dancing through the night. My pride was shattered, my heart broken. While getting divorced, going through depression and battling major health concerns, I wore the mask of “I’m Ok” all too well. Soon, I learned that I did not have to struggle alone. Many mature hands guided my steps. They were often clothed in brown skin with manicured nails. A budding entrepreneur pushed me to use my God given gifts to start a business. When I removed the mask, support enveloped me like the ocean, pushing and pulling me gently in the direction of my dreams. Jumping health, wellness, and educational hurdles was much easier with coaches along the path. I pray every melanin enriched woman and girl knows she is surrounded by safety nets and supportive hands. Life’s obstacles are tests and lessons lead us to exactly where we’re supposed to be. Our compass is never truly broken, and we are never alone. We are stronger Black women together, interdependent, and propelling each other to live among and not under our stars.”



SADE' TRUIETT HEALTH & WELL BEING

"I didn't know what just happen. All I knew was that I was getting up off my bedroom floor from a puddle of tears. I felt totally depleted but light. I had an inner knowing that what just happen to me had truly set me free from the bondage and fears that I was entangled in. I left my girlhood and entered womanhood in a moment. My Mother taught me how to be a lady but also a strong and independent. However it was a surprise to many that from the age of 12 until 23 I suffered with extreme low self-esteem. I hated what I saw in the mirror, I hated that despite how hard I worked in education I still felt not good enough. I hated that it seemed that everyone around me was happy and living life but me. I knew that I was created for more and to be more. I knew that God loved me but I had no idea how to receive that love so I could love myself. On a cold rainy day on the eve of my 23rd birthday I made a decision that I was done with feeling insecure and less than. It was my time to thrive and live. I made a promise to myself on my bedroom floor that as soon as God delivered me from that pain of insecurity I would live for God forever, and every woman that I encountered will know that they are valuable and WORTHY. Five years later I birthed a mentoring program for at risk teen girls called G.I.R.L (Gifted, Intellectual, Royal, and Leader) Talk, mentoring over 50 girls. This program equips girls with the skills and confidence to live, lead, and love boldly with purpose and passion. I am grateful to God for loving me enough to set me free to live life with purpose and passion."



TARIA PRITCHETT TAKE HEED: BLACK GIRLS NEED EMPOWERMENT INDEED

"Growing up, my mother always made it a point to expose me to African American history and culture. My foundation was especially laid as a regular participant at Christina Cultural Arts Center in Wilmington, Delaware. Here I would discover music, dance, and art rooted in African tradition. However, it was the times when I was alone: reading that would change my life forever. I remember ending dance class, and running across Market Street mall to get the latest JET magazine. When I saw the representation of a Black girl in a book or a Black girl as an artist it made my little heart smile."



VELMA P. SCANTLEBURY-WHITE, M.D. HEALTH & WELL BEING

Dr. Velma P. Scantlebury-White became the nation's first African-American female transplant surgeon in 1989. She is the associate director of the Kidney Transplant Program at Christiana Care and has been recognized as one of the Best Doctors in America by BestDoctors.com. Dr. Scantlebury-White has served as a national spokesperson for Linkages to Life, an initiative to address the shortage of African-American organ donors. In her career, she has performed more than 2,000 kidney transplants.

From lack of attention to chronic diseases that are disproportionately fatal to Black women and girls, to diminishing choices in making decisions regarding reproductive rights, Black women and girls continue to be overlooked in the discussion on access to quality health care.

Our goal is to improve health outcomes by advocating improved access, raising awareness through education forums, outreach efforts, and partnerships in the areas of holistic health and wellness, reproductive and sexual health, nutrition and lifestyle choices.

March 24, 2018 marks the eighth anniversary of the Affordable Care Act. Although now dismantled, this historic legislation expanded access to medical care for millions across the country, including 2.3 million specifically within the Black community. At this very moment, with the on-going political battles around access to the Affordable Care as well as continued threats to women's reproductive health services, the lives of Black women are quite literally, left hanging in the balance.

Nine out of the top 10 states that boast the lowest percentage of uninsured Black women are states that have adopted Medicaid expansion. Black women who live in states that have accepted Medicaid expansion are much less likely to be uninsured than those who don't. Delaware has accepted Medicaid expansion and is among the top 10 in the nation with the lowest percentage of uninsured Black women.



HEALTH & WELL BEING

One in Five African Americans is a Caregiver. 40 million caregivers in the United States provide 37 billion hours of care worth an estimated \$470 billion to their parents, spouses, partners, and other adult loved ones each year. African-American caregivers face unique challenges. According to a recent AARP study, while African-American caregivers spend similar amounts as white caregivers, their burden is higher due to lower average household incomes. African-American caregivers devote more than 34% of their annual income to expenses associated with providing care, compared with 14% for white caregivers. African-American caregivers are also more likely to spend over 21 hours per week caregiving, and the majority provide all or most of the care themselves, without the assistance of paid help.

Historical adversity, including the lingering impact of slavery, sharecropping and race-based exclusion from health, educational, social and economic resources, translate into socioeconomic disparities experienced by African Americans today. Socioeconomic status and chronic disease in turn, are linked to mental health. People who are impoverished, homeless, incarcerated or have substance abuse problems are at higher risk for poor mental health. Despite progress made over the years, racism continues to have an impact on the mental health of African Americans.



STATES WITH PERCENT OF BLACK WOMEN UNINSURED

	% of Uninsured	Ranking
Massachusetts	4.6	1
DC	6.7	2
Hawaii	7	3
Vermont	9.4	4
Delaware	9.9	5
New York	10.8	6
Maryland	11	7
Iowa	11.4	8
Connecticut	11.9	9
Wisconsin	12.5	10

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 Small Area Health Insurance Estimates

FAST FACTS

90% of Black women in Delaware are insured.

Black women's average annual heart disease mortality rate declined by 38.5% between 1999 and 2013

Black women's average incidence of AIDS is five times higher than any other racial group of women.

In Delaware in 2015, there were 100 infant deaths of which 39 of them were Black and 44 white.

According to the CDC, Black women are 243 percent more likely to die from pregnancy or childbirth-related causes than White women, one of the widest of all racial disparities in women's health.

Approximately 45% of abortions that were administered in Delaware in 2016 were administered to Black women.

The American Cancer Society reports that as of 2015, white women have a 39% greater chance of surviving breast cancer than black women.

The study noted that while deaths from breast cancer declined overall by nearly 40% between 1989 and 2015, the racial disparity that first presented itself in the early 1980s has widened.

There are biological differences between the kinds of breast cancer that women of different races tend to get. The aggressive triple-negative form of breast cancer is two times as likely to affect black women.



EDUCATION

Black girls have historically been excluded from equal educational opportunities over the past several centuries and as such remain near or at the bottom of the achievement hierarchy today. About 15% of the students enrolled in Delaware's public schools are Black girls. 24% of Black girls enrolled in public schools are in Kent County, about 65% are enrolled in New Castle County, and about 12% are enrolled in Sussex County. Statewide, students are performing at a 43% proficiency level on the Math Section of the Smarter Balance Assessment and 54% on the English Language Arts section of SBAC. Statewide, Black girls are performing at a 27% proficiency level on the Math section of the SBAC and 44% on the English Language Arts section of SBAC. Black girls perform significantly lower in Math and just 10 percentage points lower in ELA. Overall, Black girls are performing lower than their counterparts.

The goal for America's educational system is that every student graduate from high school ready for college or a career. Every student should have meaningful opportunities to choose from upon graduation from high school. While all states have developed and implemented standards as required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, in many cases, these standards do not reflect the knowledge and skills needed for 21st Century success.

Of the many roadblocks to success that Black girls face, the disparities in school discipline are striking. Although the numbers of Black girls traveling along the school-to-prison pipeline have been growing, their experiences have only recently been documented.

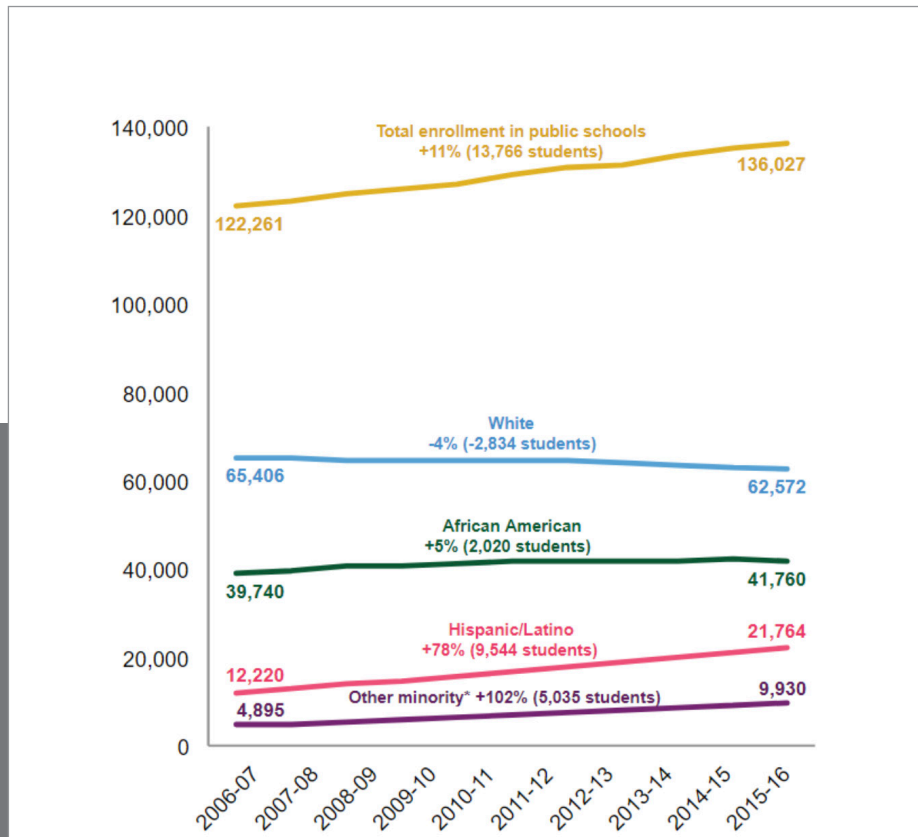
About 12% of Black girls are suspended from school nationwide, a rate six times higher than that of white girls. Black girls are routinely punished more harshly than white girls for the same offences, and are often suspended from school for minor and subjective offenses like "disobedience" or "disruptive behavior". Although Black girls only make up about 15% of the total public school statewide population, in Delaware about 19% of Black girls encounter discipline incidents varying from detention, suspension, and expulsion. When children are punished for unfair and unspecific infractions like "disobedience" they are more likely to mistrust adults, they end up with lower grades from loss of instructional time, and they have a higher likelihood of dropping out of school entirely.

Despite the blatant inequities that Black girls face, we sing the tune of resilience and tenacity.

Research has largely ignored the relevance of racial, ethnic, and cultural factors, nuances, and competencies, particularly as they relate to resilience and strength of African American youth. The field's focus on quantitative disparity data in terms of economic conditions, single female-headed households, academic underachievement and involvement with the criminal justice system neglects to inform professionals about attitudes, behaviors, and processes that contribute to the strength and resilience of African American children and adolescents.

Meaningful consideration of the strength and protective components of resilience among African American youth must take into account their cultural identity as well as their unique experience as an involuntary ethnic minority in the United States. Continued cultural oppression places all African American youth, including well-resourced youth, at some degree of risk for pervasive, yet subtle, forms of racialized discrimination and oppression.

TOTAL ENROLLMENT IN DELAWARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Source: Rodel Foundation of Delaware

More students, more need! High-need student populations grow every year. The state spends \$1.4 billion annually on education and is one of the top states in terms of education spending. Delaware is sending more money to its affluent schools than its low-income schools. Delaware has one of the oldest public education funding models in the country developed in the World War II era and is one of only 4 states that does not provide funding for low-income students or English language learners. (Education Commission of the States) Our system makes it hard to see school-level spending. The time is now for Delaware to overhaul its funding system to increase efficiency, build in transparency and drive towards equity.



BLURRED CONSTITUTIONAL LINES: FROM EQUAL TO EQUITABLE FINANCING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN DELAWARE'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CIMONE PHILPOTTS, M.P.A.

Doctoral Student
Urban Affairs and Public Policy

“Equity” has become somewhat of a buzz word in policy spaces, but the reality is with rates barely improving for Black women and girls compared to their counterparts, the challenge has not been how do we get closer to an equal state, rather how do we ensure that basic human rights are honored and for all people.

Groups who have historically been excluded from equal educational opportunities over the past several centuries are the very groups who continue to be at or near the bottom of the achievement hierarchy today. Many agree that these groups of students need more resources to truly attain equal education opportunity however, how much is needed and the method in which resources get allocated is under constant debate. Northern Delaware's public schools were once racially segregated, then desegregated through court-order and are now resegregated with the end of federal oversight. The public school system is failing the children and families who need their help the most.

Conflict Theory in education posits that property taxes fund most schools; therefore schools in affluent districts have more money. Such areas are predominantly white. They can afford to pay higher salaries, attract better teachers and purchase newer texts and more technology. Students who attend these schools gain substantial advantages in getting into the best colleges and being tracked into higher-paying professions. Students in less affluent neighborhoods that do not enjoy these advantages are less likely to go to college and are more likely to be tracked into vocational or technical training. They also represent far higher numbers of Black and Latino students.

January 2018, the ACLU of Delaware filed a complaint against the State of Delaware arguing that in order to successfully educate all Delaware's students, schools need specialists, counselors, small class sizes, necessary technology, and specialized training and support for teachers and staff so that they can provide high quality education. Delaware's system of school governance and funding is not providing these resources to every school. The complex way in which the state allocates education dollars often leads to schools with a higher percentage of low income students receiving less state financial support on a per pupil basis than schools with a lower percentage of low income students. Many schools face dire resource shortages. Although the state recognizes these unequal and unfair outcomes, the “equalization formula” it uses to try to correct this problem does not even come close to doing so.

The idea that equal inputs will produce equal outcomes presumes a degree of similarity across families and neighborhoods. Yet generations of inequality have constrained opportunities for people in marginalized communities, often most forcefully through racially isolated neighborhoods with vastly uneven access to mainstream, social, political, and economic life. This paper investigates resources available to schools located in high poverty neighborhoods and schools located in more affluent neighborhoods in Delaware and it measures and describes the size of racial and ethnic gaps in resource allocation.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION & POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

	PERCENTAGE
Delaware State University	7%
University of Delaware	24%
Delaware Technical and Community College	28%
Wesley College	3%
Wilmington University	5%
Out of State	35%
Total	100%

Source: Delaware Department of Education School Profiles 2015-2016

The best path to a job that pays a living wage capable of sustaining a family is through postsecondary education. In the US, women with a bachelor’s degree earn, on average, more than twice the amount that women with less than a high school diploma earn. Yet, women who work full-time, year-round earn less than men at the same educational level. And at all but one level women earn the same as or less than men with lower educational qualifications, indicating that women need more educational qualifications than men do to secure jobs that pay well.

One in four college students in the United States is raising a child. Nearly half of Black women college students are raising children. While college tuition continues to skyrocket, it’s well known that postsecondary education is linked to future economic prosperity. Black women have seen the most advances in educational attainment as women among most racial and ethnic groups are receiving degrees at higher rates than men. But Black women continue to experience setbacks in breaking into more lucrative fields such as math and science, face financial difficulties, and have lower completion rates in comparison to white women. Although Black women have steadily progressed in postsecondary education, those efforts do not always translate into equal earnings later down the road.

According to the Office of Equity and Inclusion Annual Report, 5.6% of the undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Delaware during the 2017-18 school years were Black. 5.4% of the graduate students enrolled were Black. Of the Black undergraduate students enrolled, 48% of the students were Black women. That is 2.9% of the total undergraduate population. Of the Black graduate students enrolled, 64% of the graduate students were Black women. That is, 4% of the total graduate population. The majority of the Black undergraduate women are enrolled in Biological Science and Psychological and Brain Science degrees. The majority of the Black graduate women are enrolled in Education, Nursing, and Business Administration graduate degree programs.

70% of undergraduate students enrolled at Delaware State University, which is the state's only Historically Black University, are Black. 63% of the undergraduate students are female. 43% of undergraduates graduate within 6 years. 46% of women graduates, and 43% of Black undergraduate students graduate within 6 years.

According to Wilmington University's 2016 enrollment data, Wilmington University is predominantly female with about 64% of women making up their entire population. 53% of their students are white and 25% are Black students. 80% of the Faculty is white and 14% is Black.

Black women continue to make gains in educational attainment, but large racial disparities in educational access and attainment still exist and remain a major concern.



DR. LAVERNE T. HARMON

On March 8, 2018 Dr. Laverne T. Harmon became the first Black woman to become President of an institution of higher learning in Delaware by assuming the helm at Wilmington University. During the past 28 years at Wilmington University, Harmon has served as an assistant, a Director of Human Resources, Director of Student Affairs and Alumni Relations, and Vice President of Student Affairs.



“*#BlackGirlMagic celebrates the magnificent, awe-inspiring resilience of Black women.*”

DR. CAROL E. HENDERSON

VICE PROVOST FOR DIVERSITY
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AND AFRICANA STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

In the summer of 2010, I had the good fortune of connecting with 11 beautiful young women who were vying for the 2011 National Miss Black USA Teen Pageant title here in Delaware. I taught them a four-part monthly workshop on the Power of Black Women: History, Culture, Tradition. It was amazing watching these young ladies evolve over the course of six months as they learned more about their ancestral legacy, becoming more confident, poised, and prepared to enter the national teen pageant as Delaware’s representative. As they absorbed more information about relationships and etiquette, holistic wellness, health and fitness, beauty and fashion, economic empowerment and education and careers, we watched our “Black butterflies” spread their wings as they became designers of their own destinies. While only one young lady could become queen, we reminded them of their responsibilities as princesses—to share what they had learned with other young ladies in their immediate circles. To remind their sister that beauty is connected to the inner self, that self-love is the best kind of love because how can I love me and hate you if you look like me?

Often, what we hear about our young women in training is not pretty. The media and other segments of society are quick to exploit the sensational, to twist the pain and captivity of those who are spiritually and emotionally wounded in our community, into an unrecognizable portrait of Black humanity. This portrait becomes the badge of honor for all Black people—and yes, some of our young sistahs need our help, love, guidance. Sometimes we can be the architects of our own drama—comfortable in the complacency and malaise of apathy, hopelessness, and unethical behavior.

But we queens—the wisdom in our communities—we often forget that we were princesses once—unguided, awkward, unsure of our outer or inner beauty. Bruised by love, harden yet wiser because of our missteps. Our rites of passage—from girlhood to womanhood—were shaped by the pain and angst, the love and affirmation of our communal village—mothers, fathers, other mothers, aunts, cousins, godmothers, grandmothers, uncles, and cousins. Our rites of passage to womanhood were also forged through real life experiences that speak of our resilience to persevere no matter what obstacles we face.

In the founding principles of three programs that serve as rites of passages for young Black girls and women here in Delaware—The Annual Father & Daughter Dance, Being Beautiful is Being Me Female Empowerment Program, and the Saving Our Sisters Yearly Symposium, we find our communal strengths and spoken truths manifested. Each of these ceremonies offer insight into Black girls and women experiences here in Delaware, and these programs are also used to engage Black girls and women in thinking holistically about their lived experiences, and their connections to concepts such as self-love, self-care, healthy body image, sisterhood, and family, and self-image. In the end, these interventions help to facilitate community engagement, and re-imagine educational practices both in and outside of the classroom.



CONCLUSION

After over 250 years of history in Delaware, Black women use our skills, express our interests, and shape our communities in visible ways. The progress we have made is undeniable and encouraging. The progress has come largely from Black women creating our own opportunities and remaining our sister's keeper along the journey. It is not possible to note all achievements of Black women in Delaware who have worked hard to make Delaware and America a better place. Many of the women noted in this report, however, have broken race and gender barriers once thought immovable. In doing so, they have created a greater chance for the women and girls who will follow. It will be up to today's women and girls to create even more opportunity for the future.

Ultimately, the goal of this report is to raise awareness about the issues and concerns of Black women and girls, to begin building a more unified research and advocacy agenda, and to provide information that can be used to create public policies that help Black women and girls in Delaware reach their full potential. NC100BW, DE Chapter will remain committed to an advocacy agenda that continues to elevate the status of Black women and girls through every aspect of our lives. Moving forward, we will continue to highlight amazing women and girls through our social media outlets. We will continue to engage and educate through our signature My Sister's Keeper Summit on the issues as well as our Living Room Series and 100 Bridges Mentoring program which provides women and girls a safe forum to have important conversations about our health, education and economic status. We will continue to cultivate leaders, both elected and appointed, to advance the needs of Black women and girls at decision-making tables across the state. We will continue to remain our Sister's Keeper and this report reminds us why.



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Laurie Jacobs	Daya Washington
	Lorraine Watson
	Michele Williams
	Johneeda Williams
	Dr. Angela Winand

* Members for Registration, Hostess, Information

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WE HOLD THE POWER TO CHANGE THE DYNAMICS IN OUR STATE.

NC100BW-DE PATH FORWARD

We hope that policy makers, funders, and business leaders will read the report. There is valuable information here to understand the lived experiences of Black women and what this means for research, policies, access, availability and partnerships. But the most important reader is us: the everyday woman, doing our very best to be healthy and keep our family together and be our sister's keeper. This report is just the beginning of a series of publications to be disseminated aimed at identifying, addressing, and closing equity gaps that Black women and girls face throughout the state of Delaware. We invite celebration of achievements as well as a robust dialogue concerning the vast array of issues we face. Next steps include county focused asset mapping, program/service inventory and resource analyses to better understand progress towards the advancement of the Black woman and girls resulting in closure of the equity gap. This process involves statewide coalition building and strategic alliances, additional research, and policy formulation and advocacy.

Do you vow to be My Sister's Keeper?

**THE STATE OF OUR UNION:
BLACK WOMEN AND GIRLS IN DELAWARE**



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