



Community Foundation
of Eastern Connecticut

REPORT ON
The Status *of* Women *and* Girls
in Eastern Connecticut

By Stephanie Luczak, Camille Seaberry, and Mark Abraham

DataHaven

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Responding to donor desire and local need in the Southeast area, the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut established its first Women & Girls Fund in 1999.

Individually and collectively, our Women & Girls Funds seek to attract and galvanize women as leaders and philanthropists. They support programs that break down barriers and create opportunities for women and girls as they forge positive, productive lives—for themselves and their families.

Such efforts have yielded inspirational success stories and overall social progress; however, there are still significant economic, educational, health, safety, and leadership disparities faced by women and girls in Eastern Connecticut, and especially by females of color and lower income.

We commissioned this report to inform our donors, nonprofits, community leaders and policymakers on challenges, opportunities and effective strategies to advance gender equity across our region. It is our hope that this analysis is used to guide thoughtful conversations and a productive community agenda for social and policy advancements.

We want to encourage more women and girls to rise up, to achieve, to thrive, and to lead—including as elected officials. And we need you, the good women and men of Eastern Connecticut, to help champion that call.

Together, we can help more women and girls actualize their amazing potential, and in the process, strengthen Eastern Connecticut’s families and communities, now and for generations to come.

In partnership,

Maryam Elahi
President & Chief Executive Officer

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Introduction	Executive Summary	Demographics	Economic Security	Education	Health & Wellbeing	Leadership	Recommendations	Figures & Endnotes

INTRODUCTION

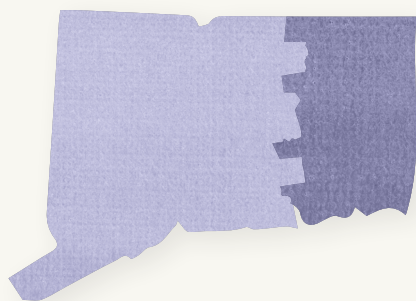
The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut (CFECT) has been committed to promoting positive outcomes in the lives of women and girls since the creation of its first Women & Girls Fund in 1999.

Four years prior to that, thousands of people gathered on the opposite side of the globe at the 1995 United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, creating the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as global frameworks for gender equality and the empowerment of all women. More than 20 years later, gender inequality still persists worldwide.ⁱ

Despite worldwide achievements and monumental progress made in achieving gender equality, women and girls around the world are still unable to exercise their full freedom in ways that ultimately affect their quality of life and wellbeing. On January 21, 2017, over 2.5 million people united for a global "Women's March" to support the notion that "women's rights are human rights," regardless of any other makeup of social identity.ⁱⁱ The momentum created by the march was demonstrated in the January 2018 anniversary marches and in the impact of the "#metoo" movement in our society.

Advocating for gender equality requires recognizing how "intersecting" identities—of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, age, and geographic location, for example—shape how many women experience oppression and discrimination.¹

This report examines several areas affecting the quality of life of our region's women and girls, including economic security, education, health and wellbeing, and leadership. It is through this multifaceted lens that community members, key stakeholders, policy makers, philanthropists, and advocates can consider the gender issues at play in Eastern Connecticut and work to advance gender equality for all women throughout our region.



The Community Foundation serves 42 towns in Eastern Connecticut—including New London County, Windham County and six towns of Tolland County—which over 227,000 women and girls call home.

¹ Originally coined by activist Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, an intersectional lens has been defined as "the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power."

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT OUR WOMEN & GIRLS FUNDS

We are committed to helping women and girls in Eastern Connecticut lead more fulfilling, productive, healthy lives. With a combined endowment of \$3.6 million, our funds help women provide economic security for their families, prevent domestic violence and make positive life decisions.

Southeast Area Women & Girls Fund

- Our original fund, founded in 1999, serves women and girls in East Lyme, Groton, Ledyard, Lyme, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Old Lyme, Stonington and Waterford.
- Its 200 founding members and subsequent donors have built an endowment of \$3 million, which includes 21 charitable funds established by individuals and organizations.
- This fund has awarded more than \$1,300,000 to hundreds of programs since its inception.

Windham Area Women & Girls Fund

- Founded in 2004, this fund serves women and girls in Ashford, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Mansfield, Scotland, Stafford, Union, Willington and Windham.
- Its 102 founding members, subsequent donors and a challenge grant from the Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation have built this fund into a \$400,000 permanent endowment.
- This fund has awarded more than \$344,500 to more than 100 programs since its inception.

Norwich Area Women & Girls Fund

- Founded in 2006, this fund serves women and girls in Norwich, Bozrah, Colchester, Franklin, Griswold, Lebanon, Lisbon, Preston, Sprague and Voluntown.
- Its 41 founding members, subsequent donors and a challenge grant from the Edward & Mary Lord Foundation have established an endowment of \$114,000, with the goal of increasing it to \$300,000 in the next few years.
- This fund has awarded \$100,000 in grants to 37 programs since its inception.

Northeast Area Women & Girls Fund

- Our newest fund, founded in 2013, serves women and girls in Brooklyn, Canterbury, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Sterling, Thompson and Woodstock.
- Its 50 founders and subsequent donors have contributed more than \$80,000 towards its endowment.
- This fund has awarded \$43,000 in grants to 19 programs since its inception.

Significant progress has been made in recent decades towards achieving gender equality. It comes as no exception that women and girls in Eastern Connecticut have shown true resilience in making social, political, and economic strides, yet several challenges persist.

Through a variety of data sources, including the 2015 DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey, this report considers several areas where women still face obstacles that limit full gender equality. Based on the findings of this report and the recommendations that follow, key stakeholders can develop and implement programmatic and policy changes that will lead to improved quality life for women and girls in Eastern Connecticut.

Key findings about our region:

- The population of women ages 65 and up is projected to grow significantly over the next decade.
- Young women are achieving in school, but greater educational attainment has yet to translate to economic equality.
- Positive educational outcomes and economic equality are further out of reach for women of color.
- Many occupations remain segregated by gender, and women make up a majority of part-time workers.
- Women are at greater risk of financial insecurity, with single mothers at the greatest risk.
- Overall, women in Eastern Connecticut have significantly better birth outcomes than the rest of the state, yet disparities exist.
- The opioid epidemic continues to ravage our communities, with deaths of women in 2016 more than double those of 2012.
- Young women are at heightened risk for many mental health conditions.
- Violence against women continues to be a major public health problem.

Over 453,000 people—including 227,000 women and girls—live in the region. The female make-up of the area’s population is:

AGES

0-17: 10%
 18-24: 6%
 25-34: 5%
 35-64: 21%
 65+: 8%

CFECT POPULATION

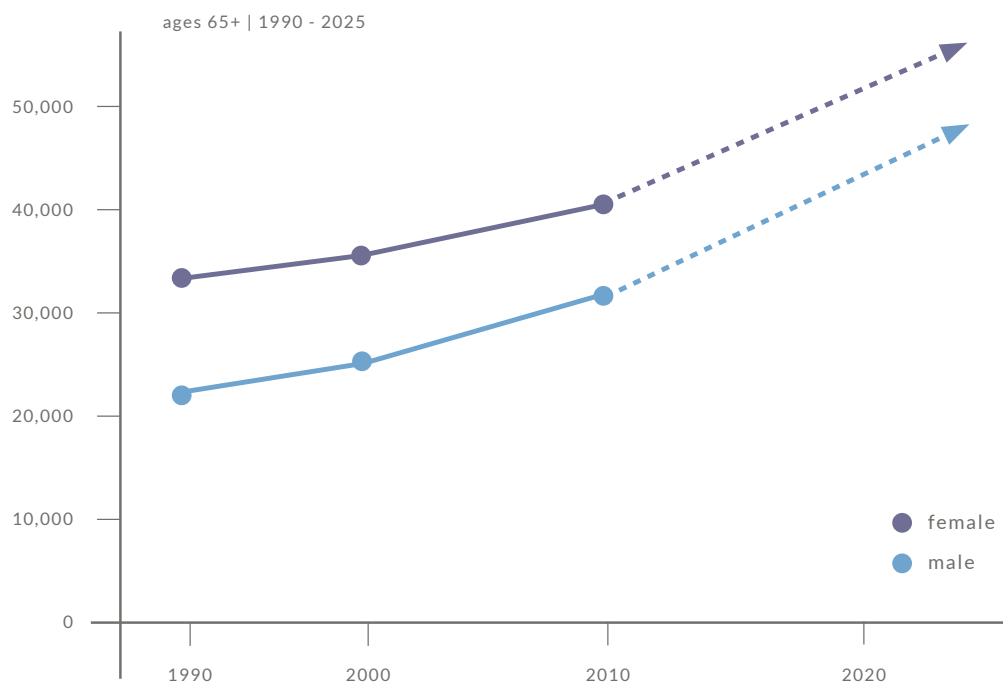


Figure 1. CFECT population ages 65+, 1990-2025

- The region’s population ages 65 and higher is projected to grow 44 percent between 2015 and 2025, though the total population is expected to stay roughly the same.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Eighty percent of the region’s residents identify as non-Hispanic white, compared to 70 percent across the state. The region is 9 percent Latina, 4 percent Black, and 4 percent Asian.
- More than 33,700 residents—7 percent of the region’s population—are foreign-born, about the same share as in 1990. New London, Norwich, Mansfield, and Windham’s populations are each at least a tenth foreign-born.^{iv}

Financial security often defines success in our society. It provides women with the ability to build assets and cope with financial instability in the future. Women must have stable work, equitable opportunity and pay, and access to affordable childcare in order to achieve economic security.

Despite significant gains in workforce participation and the passage of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, the economic security of women throughout the region remains hindered. Working to increase women's financial security through social action and policy change not only improves the quality of economic wellbeing for women, but improves economic growth for all.^v

Stable participation in the workforce is crucial in order to establish and maintain financial security. In both Connecticut as a whole and in Eastern Connecticut, women ages 20 to 64 have a labor force participation rate of 78 percent, 7 percentage points behind that of men.^{vi}

Occupations remain segregated by gender. Women make up only 22 percent of workers in computer, engineering, and science occupations, and just 3 percent of workers in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.^{vii} In general, higher-paying jobs are more likely to be held by men.

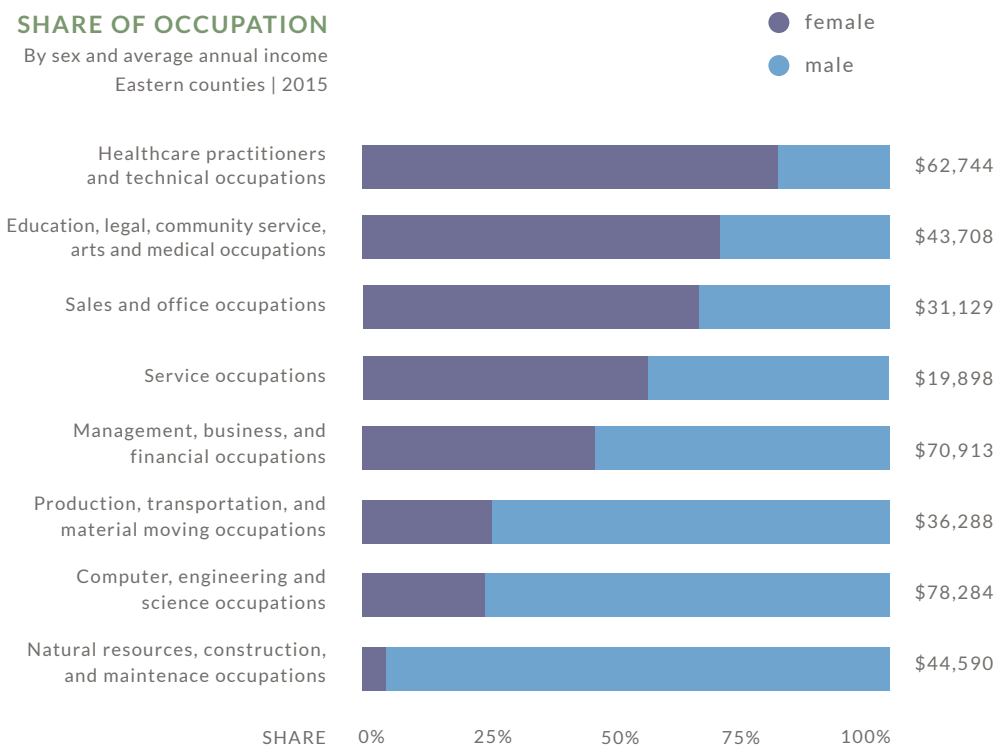


Figure 2. Share of occupation by sex and average annual income, Eastern counties, 2015.

WAGES PER MALE DOLLAR

Full-time year-round workers

Eastern counties | 2015

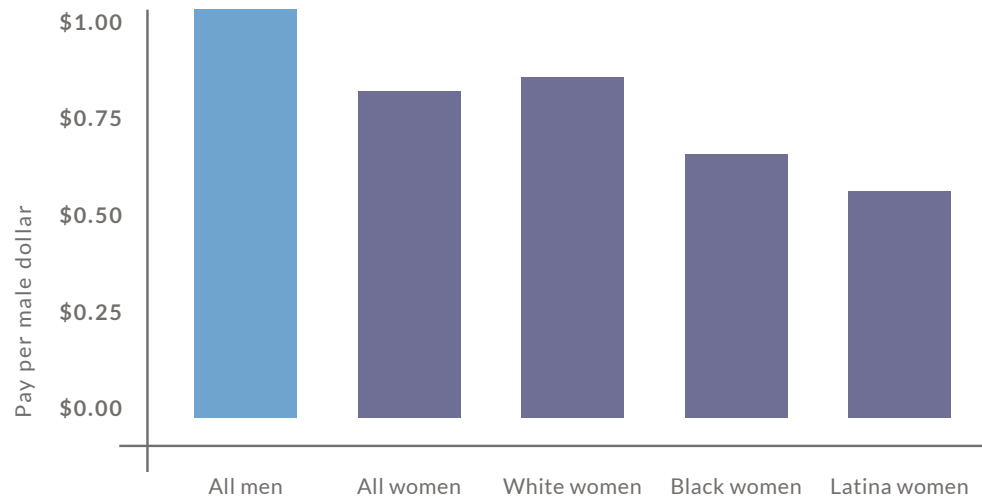


Figure 3. Wages per male dollar, full-time year-round workers, Eastern counties, 2015

Statewide and in Eastern Connecticut, the average full-time, year-round female worker makes about 81 cents for every dollar made by her male counterpart.^{viii}

This ratio holds true in the three Eastern Connecticut counties, though median incomes in the region are lower than those of the state: on average, women working full-time in Eastern Connecticut make about \$46,000 per year, while men make about \$56,000.

When broken down by race as well as gender, the wage gap widens further. White men earn by far the most of any major demographic in the region. Black and Latina women working full-time make only about 61 cents and 53 cents, respectively, for every white male dollar. White women out-earn their black and Latina counterparts by large margins as well, and have a higher average income than men of color.^{ix}

Adding to the gaps between full-time workers, women in the region are more likely to work part-time or less than the full year: only 55 percent of female workers are working full-time, year-round, compared to 72 percent of male workers.^x

While the reasons why some women work part-time are complex and are often tied to caretaking responsibilities, part-time workers are often paid less than full-time workers. Part-time workers are less likely to have employer benefits, are less likely to be promoted, and have less control over their schedules.^{xii}

Additionally, 17 percent of women in the region were under-employed in 2015 (defined as those who were unemployed and looking for work plus those who were working part-time but said they would prefer full-time work).^{xiii}

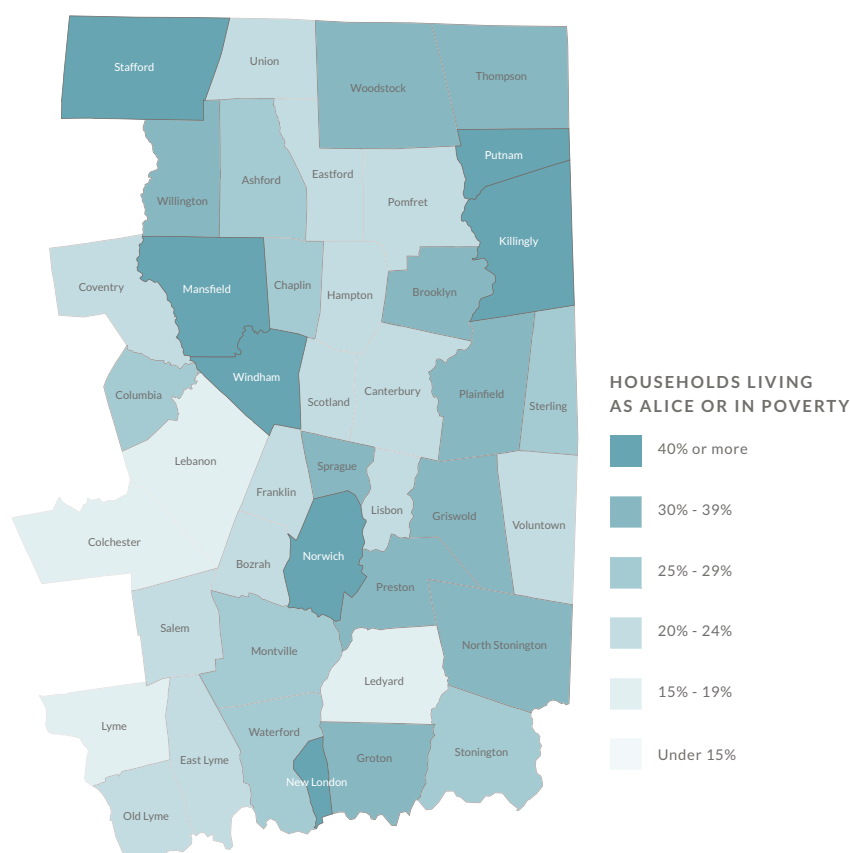


Figure 4. Percentage of households living as ALICE or in poverty.

STRUGGLING HOUSEHOLDS ►

Factors such as discrimination and the wage gap perpetuate the disproportionate share of women living in poverty, with single mothers, women of color and elderly women more vulnerable to economic struggles.

- Nine percent of the male population and 11 percent of the female population, including more than 6,200 girls, live in households below the federal poverty line.^{xv}
- Younger women (ages 18 to 34) have a much higher poverty rate—18 percent—than any other age and sex group.^{xvi}

Many women in the region are “ALICE”: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. Coined by United Way, the term describes households that are above the federally defined poverty line, but make less than what is needed to cover basic costs such as housing, child care, food, transportation and health care.

- In addition to the 10 percent of the Eastern counties’ households below the poverty line, another 25 percent are ALICE.
- In Killingly, Mansfield, New London, Norwich, Putnam, Stafford, and Windham, more than 40 percent of households are ALICE or in poverty.

United Way developed a “Household Survival Budget” to determine the cost of basic needs, in which housing and child care are the two largest expenses for struggling families. Average Household Survival Budget for Eastern counties^{xvii}:

SINGLE ADULT: \$22,143

ONE ADULT, ONE CHILD: \$34,720

2 ADULTS, 2 CHILDREN: \$54,636

HOUSING ►

Of all the single parent-headed households, the vast majority—about 90 percent—are headed by mothers^{xviii}. One quarter of all children in the region live with a single mother, with higher rates in our larger cities.^{xix} The poverty rate of families led by single female renters is 37 percent—more than three times higher than those led by single female owners, and nearly twice as high as those led by single male renters.^{xx}

The relative cost of housing has risen significantly in the past two decades, particularly among renters. In the region, 15 percent of households spend more than 50 percent of their incomes on housing costs.

CHILD CARE ►

Regulated childcare slots are enough to cover only about a quarter of the region’s infants and toddlers, and 86 percent of children ages 3 and 4.^{xxi} In addition to the lack of availability, many families struggle with affordability. Connecticut is the 6th most expensive state for infant care.

Federal guidelines suggest that no more than 10 percent of a family’s budget go toward child care, yet with costs for infant and toddler care in Connecticut estimated at nearly \$15,000 per year, only 28 percent of families in the state could adequately afford it under this guideline.^{xxii} In addition, programs such as Care4Kids, which assists low- to moderate-income working families with child care costs, have been cut to help mitigate the state budget deficit. Approximately 28 percent of the Care4Kids slots in Eastern Connecticut were eliminated by the state between August 2016 and February 2017.^{xxiii}

ECONOMIC SECURITY

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT FINANCIAL SECURITY ►

It comes as no surprise that given women's overall lower wages, frequent role as single parent and head of household, and relative difficulty affording housing, child care and other basic household expenses, women report higher levels of financial stress and are less likely than men to be able to rely on assets and savings.



Figure 5. Financial security by sex, Eastern counties, 2015

Educational attainment serves as an important pathway toward financial security and upward mobility in the labor force. While many women are achieving in high school and college at higher rates than their male counterparts, racial disparities are stark.

The region has slightly higher public high school graduation rates than the state. Female students have an even higher graduation rate, with 90 percent of girls in the region's class of 2016 graduating within four years.^{xxiv}

The share of women over 25 without a high school diploma is lower in the region than the state, though nearly 1 in 5 women in the cities of New London and Windham lack a high school diploma.^{xxv} Moreover, educational attainment varies drastically by race. In the region, one in five black women and one in four Latina women have no high school diploma, compared to fewer than one in ten of their white female counterparts.^{xxvi}

While more women in the region have a bachelor's or higher degree compared to the state, black and Latina women earn them at roughly half the rate of white women.

The region is home to two community colleges, in which most students enrolled are women. A total of 481 women received degrees or certificates in the 2015-16 school year, compared to 353 men.^{xxvii} A majority of women studied liberal arts/general studies or health professions, compared to 33 percent and 5 percent of men, respectively. Because community colleges are an accessible gateway to further higher education or a career with a livable wage, community colleges should encourage more women to participate in job training programs and provide opportunities that guarantee a livable wage.

Three Rivers Community College is committed to providing education and training opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math industries. These jobs provide a sustainable standard of living and upward mobility for women like Monica Bonner. Monica was a star student in our first Outside Machining Class, funded by the Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline in collaboration with the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board. Prior to this program, Monica had held many jobs, but never had a career. She was hired by Collins & Jewell Company in Bozrah, and they sent her through our Welding Program. Now she is on a clear career pathway that will sustain her and provide advancement.

- Mary Ellen Jukoski, President, Three Rivers Community College

WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY RACE

2015

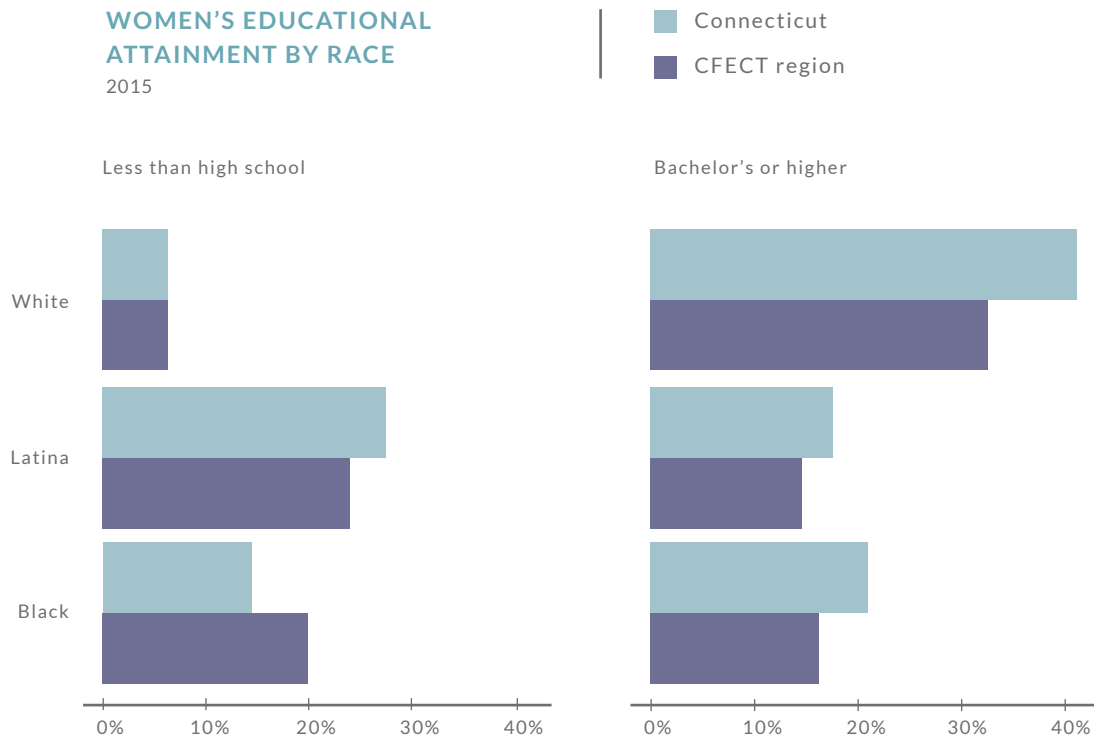


Figure 6. Women's educational attainment by race, 2015

GIRLS IN STEM ►

While girls and boys throughout their secondary education achieve relatively similar test scores in math on state assessments, a persistent gap exists for women with degrees in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields that offer stable, well-paying jobs. Though a larger share of residents of the region—40 percent—majored in science and engineering fields than in the state or the nation, men in the area are much more likely than women to have majored in science and engineering fields (51 percent versus 30 percent).^{xxviii}

But there is a bright spot: Unlike previous generations of female college graduates, younger women are increasingly studying the sciences—37 percent of women ages 25 to 39 with degrees majored in the sciences, and an additional 10 percent majored in science-related fields such as math education and nursing.^{xxix}

Middle school math is where the shift in girls' long-term educational trajectory starts to show. Seventh and eighth grade algebra is a gatekeeper for future academic success. Middle school math teachers have an enormous responsibility and we must focus on ensuring that they receive the best training possible. Adolescent girls are often perfectly comfortable saying they're "not good at math." The consequences of this belief are real and significant. We must make math proficiency a priority at the middle school level to support the full potential of all of our girls.

– Dr. Margaret O'Shea, Women & Girls Fund donor and longtime educator

Women in Eastern Connecticut are healthy, with a life expectancy of about 82 years—slightly above the national average, but below the state average.

Life expectancy and levels of wellbeing are generally significantly higher in wealthier sections of the region. While genetics and personal choices influence these health outcomes to some extent, factors such as socio-economics and physical environment are more influential and can be remediated through access to resources and policy changes. For example, residents who are unable to provide basic necessities for themselves or their families have significantly higher rates of mental and physical distress than those who can, regardless of income level or other factors. Removing obstacles to health would lead to health equity: the idea that all persons have a fair opportunity to reach their most positive health outcomes.

ADULT HEALTH AND WELLBEING ►

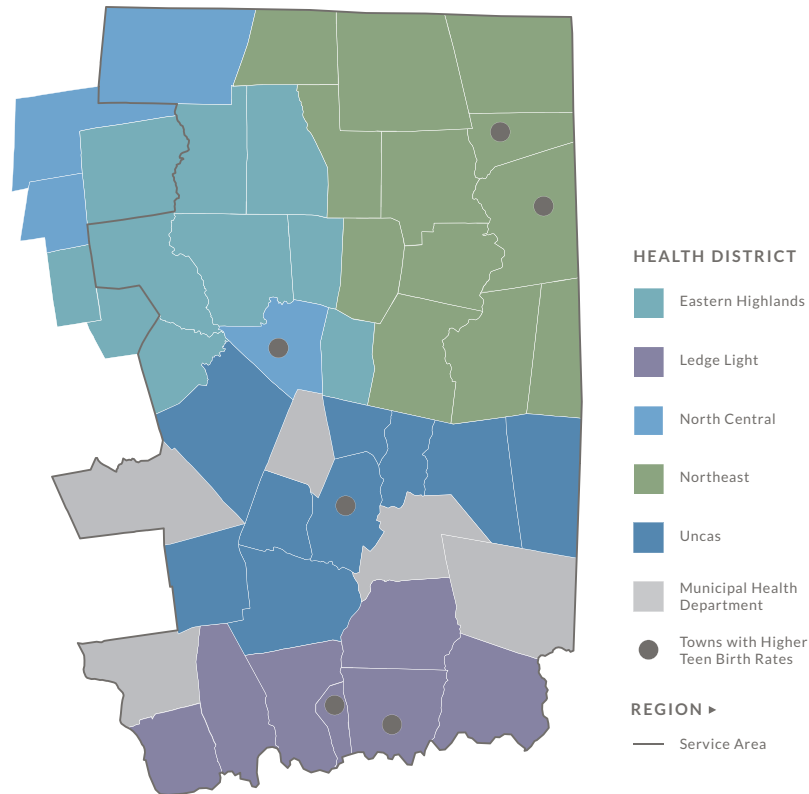
The DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey, supported by over 50 funders including CFECT, provides a rich source of local-level data including metrics on adult health and wellbeing as well as other measures used throughout this report. According to the Community Wellbeing Survey, women in Eastern Connecticut:

- Have higher rates of asthma than men in the region, at 19 percent compared to 11 percent.
- Have higher rates of smoking (15 percent) than their female counterparts statewide (13 percent).
- Are more likely than men to report not getting the health care that they needed in the past year, often attributing this to reasons such as worries about cost, lack of time, inability to make appointments, caregiving responsibilities, and limited transportation access.

Despite these concerns, women in Eastern Connecticut report relatively high levels of overall life satisfaction, happiness, reported time to enjoy life, and other measures of personal wellbeing. Disparities in these measures are evident, however, when the population is stratified by household income, underemployment, financial stress, or difficulty in obtaining health care, among other factors.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ►

Overall, women in Eastern Connecticut have more positive birth outcomes than elsewhere in the state. The four largest health districts in Eastern Connecticut (Eastern Highlands, Ledge Light, Northeast, and Uncas Regional) report higher rates of adequate prenatal care than the state of Connecticut as a whole.^{xxx} In addition, teen birth rates are at an all-time low throughout the state and region.



At the same time, significant disparities exist throughout the region. Six towns in the area have significantly higher teen birth rates than the statewide teen birth rate: Groton, Killingly, New London, Norwich, Putnam, and Windham. Both Putnam and Norwich have rates higher than the national teen birth rate, at 27 and 31 per 1,000, respectively.^{xxxi} The educational and economic prospects for teenage mothers are dim; nationally, only 38 percent of all mothers under 18 receive their high school diploma.^{xxxii}

The Northeast District Department of Health has a higher prematurity rate of 15 percent compared to a statewide rate of 10 percent. Furthermore, while 4 percent of women statewide smoke during pregnancy, three of Eastern Connecticut's health districts (North Central, Northeast, Uncas Regional) have rates of 10 percent or higher.^{xxxiii}

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE ►

- Data show gender differences in mental health. In line with other statewide and national data, the DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey suggests that women in Eastern counties experience slightly higher rates of depression than men, at 12 percent versus 10 percent. In Connecticut, these rates are 10 percent and 8 percent, respectively, among women and men.
- By mid-adolescence, girls are more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with mood disorders than boys.^{xxxiv} Among Connecticut high school students, approximately 35 percent of female students reported feelings of hopelessness or depression, versus 19 percent of male students.^{xxxv}
- The American Psychological Association links sexualized images of women in media to eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression.^{xxxvi} Approximately 6 in 10 female students in Connecticut have tried to lose weight, twice as many as their male counterparts (31 percent).^{xxxvii}
- While men are more likely to die by suicide, women are three times more likely to attempt suicide than men.^{xxxviii} This is especially crucial for girls going through adolescence, particularly survivors of trauma. In Connecticut, hospitalizations for suicidal ideations among adolescents ages 15 to 19 are disproportionately female, though rates of these hospitalizations overall were lower in a few Eastern Connecticut school districts.^{xxxix}
- Overall, Connecticut is ranked eighth in the nation for its opioid death rate.^{xl} The state experienced a 158 percent increase in drug-related deaths from 2012 to 2016. Thirty-eight women in the region died of drug-related causes in 2016, more than double the number in 2012.^{xli}

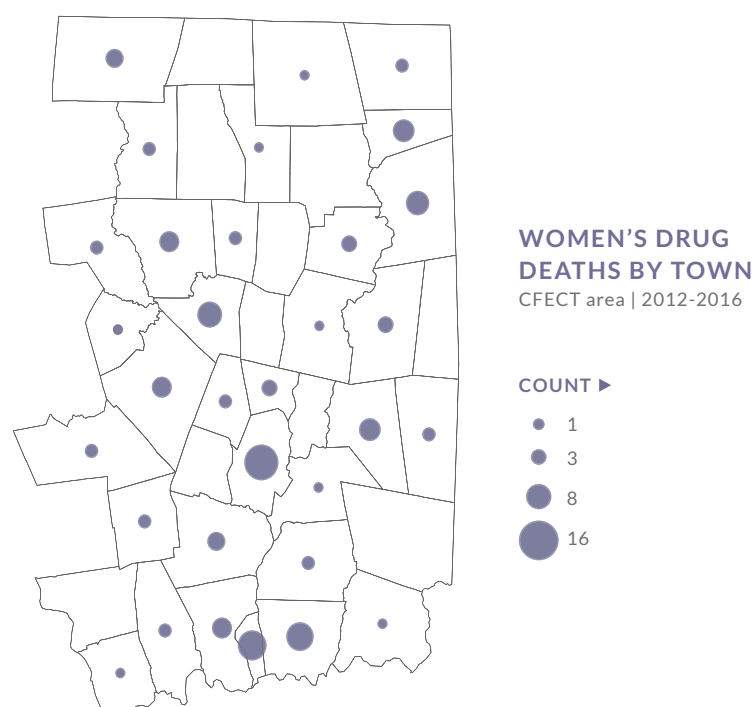


Figure 7. Women's drug-related deaths by town, 2012-2016

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE is defined as “a pattern of coercive, controlling behavior that can include physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, or financial abuse.”^{xlii}

The CDC recently reported that more than half of all homicides of women were committed by a male partner.^{xliii}

VIOLENCE AND SAFETY ►

Worldwide^{xliv} and in the United States^{xlv}, more than 1 in 3 women have experienced either intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. In addition to the negative ripple effects of domestic violence on women, families and communities, escaping from an abusive relationship may lead to economic insecurity and homelessness for many women and their children.

The average length of stay at one of the region’s three domestic violence shelters—located in Windham, New London, and Killingly—is 38 days.^{xlvi} Overall, both the state and region have seen an increase in length of stay since fiscal year 2008, likely due to cuts in other service areas.^{xlvii} All three shelters operate near or at full capacity.

In 2015 and 2016, Safe Futures provided over 3,200 women in New London County with direct service programs and shelter to 162 women.^{xlviii} During that same period, United Services provided services to over 900 adults and children and shelter to 110 women and 47 children in Windham County.^{xlix}

Along with other domestic violence shelters across the state, Safe Futures and United Services work with law enforcement to strengthen the support for victims of domestic violence. The Lethality Assessment Program is used by law enforcement in many communities across the country to determine a victim’s level of danger when called to a domestic incident. In 2015 and 2016, police officers called in 343 unique incidents to the Safe Futures line, in which 91 percent of victims immediately utilized Safe Futures’ services. United Services had 130 officer calls through the Lethality Assessment Program, in which victims utilized services 31 percent of the time.^{li}

In 2015, municipal and state police departments in the region made arrests in 3,685 family violence incidents, of which 806 were assaults and 3 ended in homicide. About 71 percent of victims and 24 percent of offenders were female.^{lii}

Residents’ personal perceptions and experiences of safety differ by gender. According to the DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey:

- Statewide, 21 percent of men and 35 percent of women feel unsafe to go on walks in their neighborhood at night; this number rises to nearly half of women in New London and Norwich.^{liii}
- Men and women statewide and in Eastern counties report similarly low rates of being the victim of violence. However, the circumstances differ: women are more likely to know their attacker and to have been attacked more than once in the past year.^{liv}

Despite recent progress women have made as leaders in areas such as business, government, and education, prejudice, caring for families, and lack of capital all can hinder a woman's climb to the top. Increasing gender diversity in leadership and management not only advances gender equity, but can also lead to greater overall success.^{lv}

BUSINESS ►

According to the National Women's Business Council, women often have access to half as much capital as men, creating a significant barrier to business ownership.^{lvi} Only a quarter of the private businesses in the Eastern counties are owned or mostly held by women, the same share as firms statewide.^{lvii} The area's 1,394 women-owned firms with paid employees provide jobs to a total of 10,269 people, and have a combined payroll of \$259,914,000; however, this is only 10 percent of the combined payroll of all privately held firms.^{lviii}

EDUCATION ►

Nationally, an overwhelming 76 percent of all K-12 public school educators are women, yet there is a lack of representation in top leadership.^{lix} About a third of Connecticut's 171 school districts have female superintendents, while in the region, only 11 of the 41 public school districts' superintendents are female.^{lx}

GOVERNMENT ►

Holding office—whether it be local, state, or federal—is a direct way for women to create social change. A recent study found that women in Congress are “more results-oriented, more likely to emphasize achievement over ego, and more concerned with achieving policy outcomes rather than receiving publicity or credit.”^{lxi} Women are not equally represented in Eastern Connecticut's local governments, nor in delegations to state and federal branches of government. However, women in the CFECT region hold State Representative and Senate seats at closer to parity than the rest of the state.^{lxii}

SHARE OF WOMEN
IN ELECTED OFFICE

2016

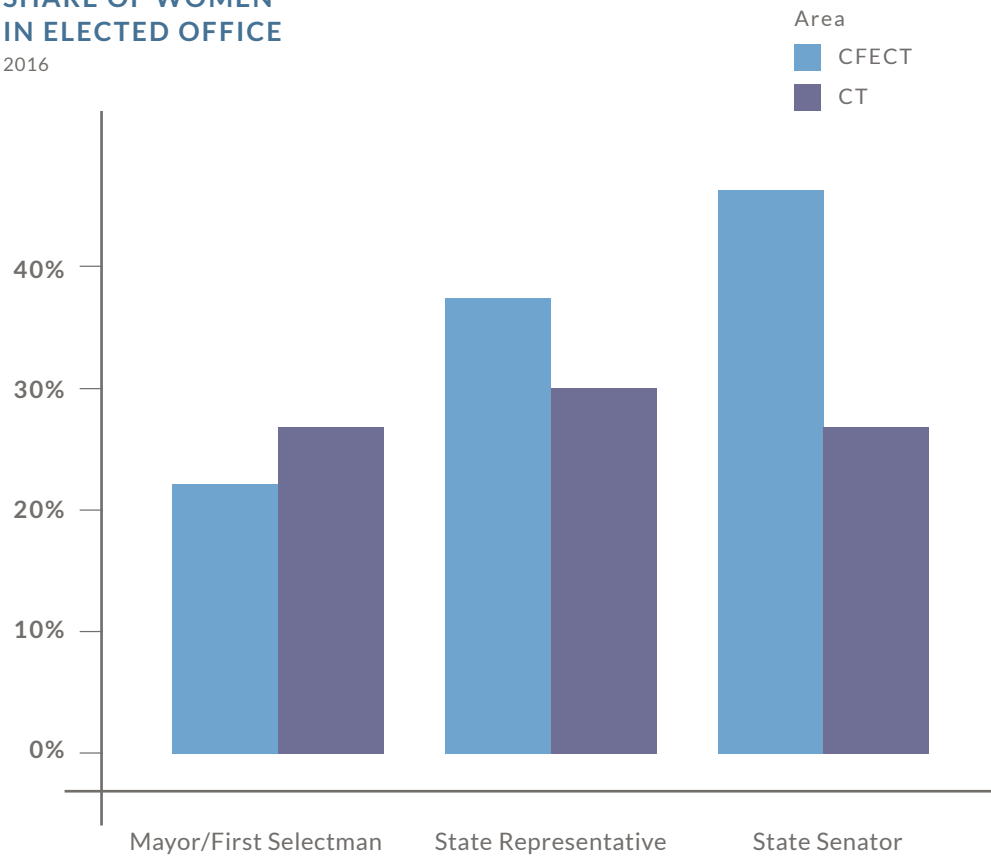


Figure 8. Share of women in elected office, 2016

I would like to work for some branch of the government because I believe that there is a lot of power and control in those jobs that would allow me to be able to help people who don't have power or much say on things that affect them.

– Alicia Martin of New London, a political science major at Eastern Connecticut State University and recipient of CFECT's Margaret Mary Curtin Scholarship

The Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation and I, personally, decided to team up with the Windham Area Women & Girls Fund to invest in the health and wellbeing of women because we believe that it translates into healthier, more stable families and communities. It's a ripple effect. —Eileen Ossen

With our municipal, state and federal governments facing difficult fiscal realities, it is more important than ever that organized philanthropy, individual donors, nonprofits, advocates, policymakers and community leaders work together on a community agenda around the health and wellbeing of women and girls and thus, our region.

FOLLOWING ARE SOME FIRST STEPS:

- **STEM EDUCATION:** Encourage experiential STEM education in elementary, middle and high school grades to build knowledge, skills and interest in STEM careers that are likely to offer living-wage salaries. Focus in particular on developing girls' success and confidence with middle school math.
- **JOB TRAINING:** Support accessible job training programs and continued funding for community colleges. Encourage women to pursue education and job training, particularly at community colleges, in technical and scientific fields for which there is local demand and that offer good salaries.
- **EQUAL PAY:** Demand equal pay for equal work. Support nationwide and statewide policies to close the wage gap for women of all social identities and hold employers accountable for implementing such policies.
- **QUALITY CHILDCARE:** Expand availability and accessibility of quality childcare, including universal preschool. Connecticut should restore funding for Care4Kids, as well as increased funding for universal preschool.
- **HEALTH CARE:** Protect access to health care for women and their dependents. Preventive care is crucial in early detection of serious illnesses. Providing breast cancer screening and prenatal care could greatly advance the health of women in our community.
- **OPIOID TREATMENT:** Increase access to treatment for opioid addiction. Create, link and support multiple access points to treatment, particularly for women in their childbearing years, to stem the epidemic.
- **BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH:** Implement universal screening for behavioral and mental health issues in all schools. The drastic gender difference in mental health among adolescents can be better addressed and help better identify at-risk students.

- **ELDERCARE:** Expand funding for eldercare. As the state and region are both projected to experience a vast increase in the elderly population—a majority of which will be women—funding should be expanded for both in-home and community services to ensure that this population is supported in the most appropriate ways possible.
- **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:** Protect funding for domestic violence shelters. The region's three domestic violence shelters, along with those throughout the state, provide crucial support and services for women suffering from an abusive relationship. Priority should be given to funding these services, as well as prevention and education efforts among young people to address issues of unhealthy relationships and violence further "upstream."
- **LEADERSHIP:** Develop tomorrow's leaders today. Promote leadership development programs that encourage girls and women to become engaged as leaders.

What do this report and its recommendations say to you? What can we do, individually and collectively?

In these days rife with complex challenges at every level, we ask you to join us, the Women & Girls Funds and the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut. Together we will move forward, step by step, day by day, to protect the rights, health, wellbeing, and future of our daughters, mothers, sisters, and neighbors. Gender equity means healthy, just, civil communities for all of us. For you and your family, for all the women in your life, and for all the girls coming up behind us.

FIGURES ►

Figure 1. CFECT population ages 65+, 1990-2025. U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). 2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Table B01001, Sex by Age. Available at <http://factfinder.census.gov/>; and Connecticut State Data Center at the University of Connecticut Libraries Map and Geographic Information Center—MAGIC. (2012). 2015–2025 Population Projections for Connecticut at State, County, Regional Planning Organization, and Town levels—November 1, 2012 edition. Retrieved from http://ctsdsc.uconn.edu/2015_2025_projections/

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Community Foundation
of Eastern Connecticut

ABOUT THIS REPORT ►

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