

Equity for Women in New Jersey: Identifying Needs and Priorities

Rutgers Center for Women and Work

In collaboration with :

- New Jersey Advisory Commission on the Status of Women
- New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission-
Council on Gender Parity in Labor and Education
- NJ Department of Children and Families-Division on Women

Welcome and Introductions

- Department of Children and Families – Division on Women
- Rutgers Center for Women and Work
- New Jersey Advisory Commission on the Status of Women
- Additional Guests

Report Background



- The New Jersey Advisory Commission on the Status of Women (NJACSW) in partnership with the Department of Children & Families - Division on Women (DCF-DOW) released a brief survey in 2022 to help identify the top issues of concern for New Jersey's women.
- The survey received over 3,000 responses.
 - Access to/cost of childcare
 - Access to/cost of healthcare
 - Gender Parity/Equal Pay
 - Career Development and Opportunities
 - Gender based violence-domestic and sexual

Phase II – Community Conversations



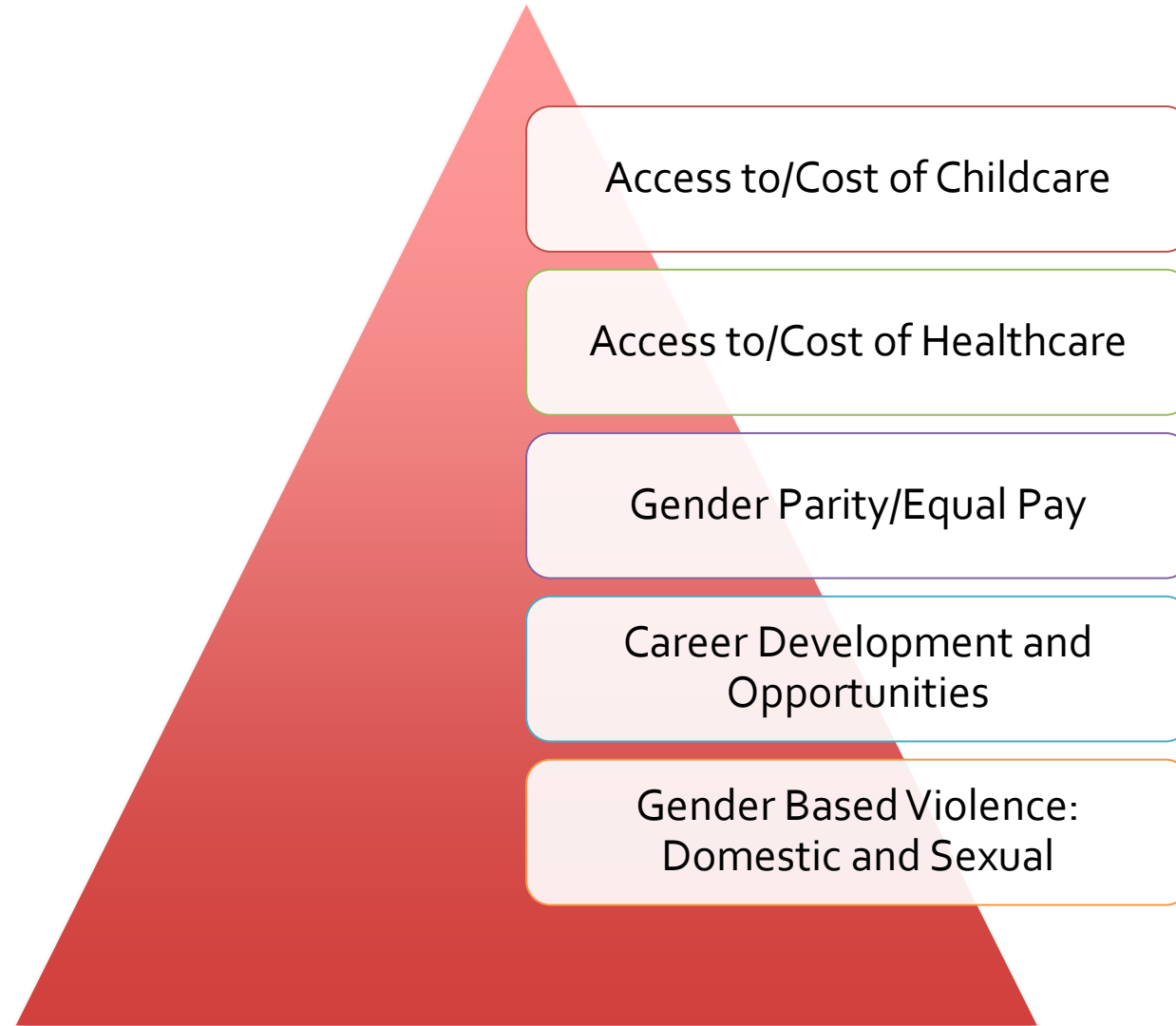
- Focused on expanding opportunities to gather additional data and information to inform the development of a multi-year action plan that responds to the issues identified via the survey.
- NJACSW and DCF-DOW partnered with the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission– Council on Gender Parity (NJSETC-GPC) and Rutgers – Center for Women & Work (CWW) to host a series of community conversations throughout the State.

Overall Goal

Secure meaningful engagement around the priorities identified from the survey and possibly identify additional issues, specific to certain communities.



Priorities Identified to Date



Methodology

Developed Sessions Protocol:

- ~January – March 2023
- ~DOW, GPC, & CWW

Identified Host Agencies:

- ~Trusted partner
- ~Able to leverage existing relationships
- ~Deep knowledge of respective community

Recruited Working Partners:

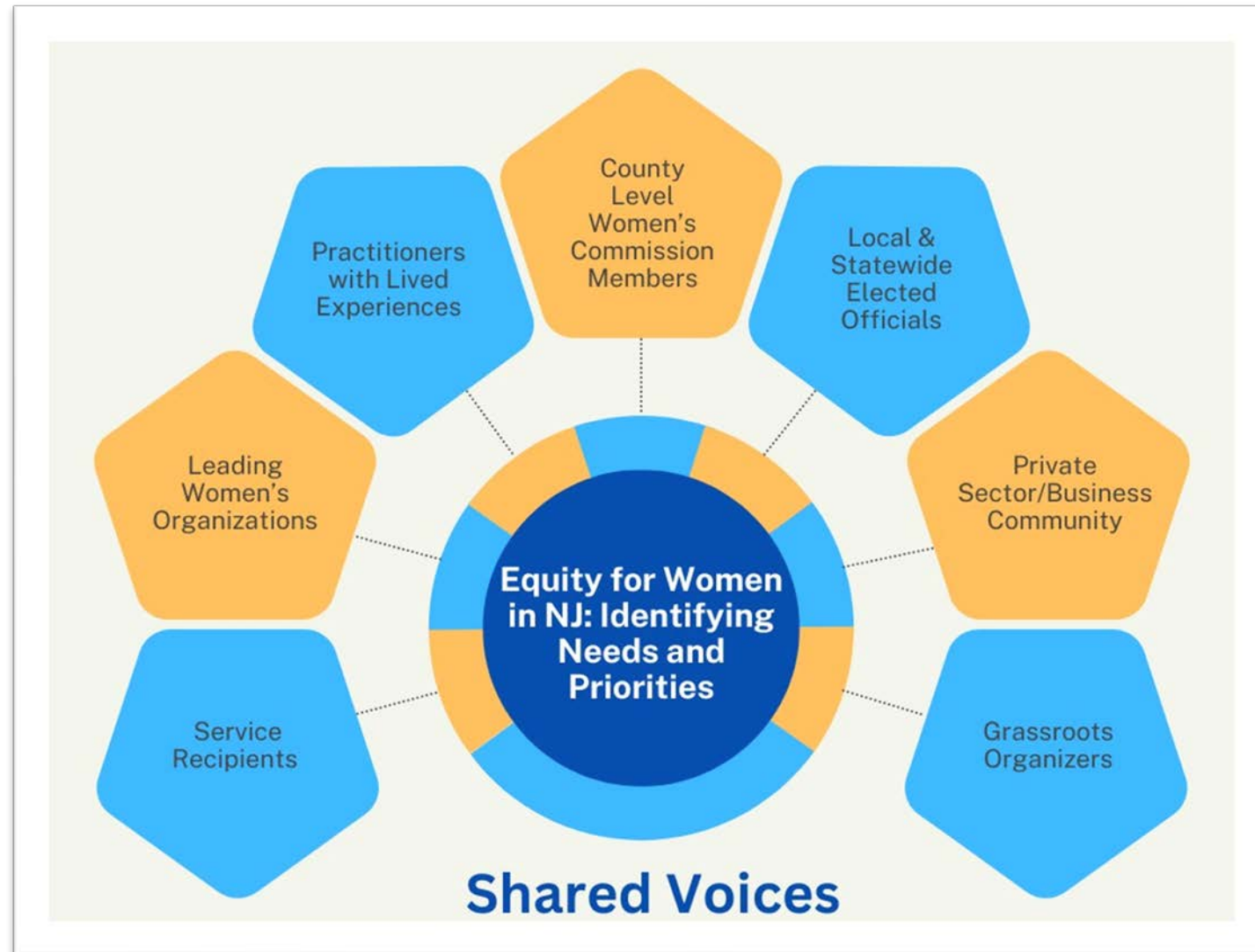
- ~8-20 pp requested
- ~Local partners working with women in their region

Target Audience



- Intergenerational focus
- Municipal Revitalization Index (MRI) identified communities (*the MRI "serves as the State's official measure and ranking of municipal distress" - NJ Department of Community Affairs*)
- At least 8-10 practitioners per group
- Varied voices from practitioners: business sector, grassroots organizers, healthcare staff, etc.

Working Partners



Regions

170 - Total Participants

104 - Working Partner Groups

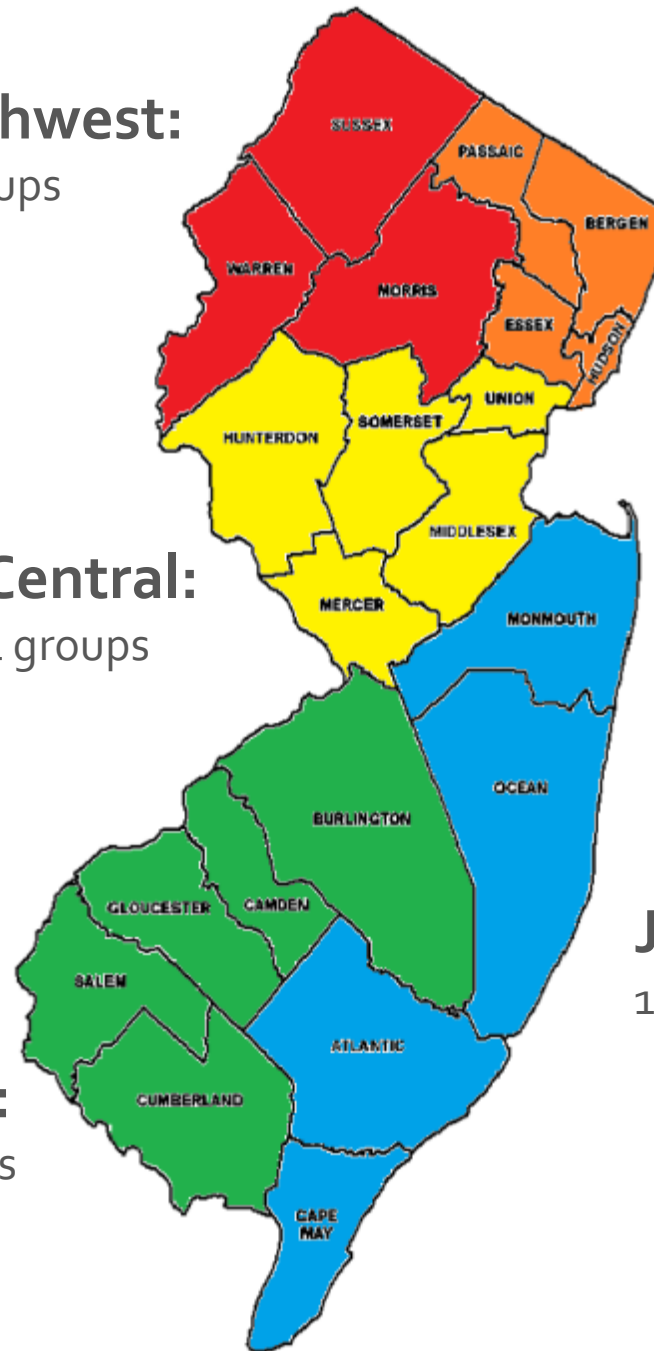
Northwest:
19 groups

Northeast:
7 groups

Central:
4 groups

Jersey Shore:
17 groups

South:
47 groups



Identified Priorities

- Access to/Cost of Childcare
- Access to/Cost of Health Care
- Gender Parity/Equal pay
- Career Development and Opportunities
- Gender-Based Violence: Domestic and Sexual

Access to/Cost of Childcare

- Home-based childcare emerged in almost every session as the preferred type of childcare. It was noted as being the most accessible, affordable, flexible, and culturally responsive option for many.
- Cost and flexibility of childcare were among the top concerns.
- Many stated that the above factors played a big role in the high rates of unemployment among the women in their communities.



Childcare Recommendations

Types of Care

- Increase home-based services
- Offer technical assistance so that more providers can get licensed.
- Childcare centers should have extended hours on evenings and weekends.
- Offer free or low-cost before/after care programs and summer programs for school-aged children
- Provide more employer-sponsored childcare (look at state funding to make these more available)
- Expand free Pre-K and make it full day
- Make childcare centers with multiple age ranges available
- Offer childcare centers at high schools for students with children

Funding

- Expand childcare tax credits and subsidies, stipends, etc.
- Re-evaluate income requirements
- Provide transportation assistance
- Provide more incentives for providers
- Increase pay for childcare workers

Quality of Care

- Provide more training and monitoring to address potential issues of abuse
- Improve training and education requirements

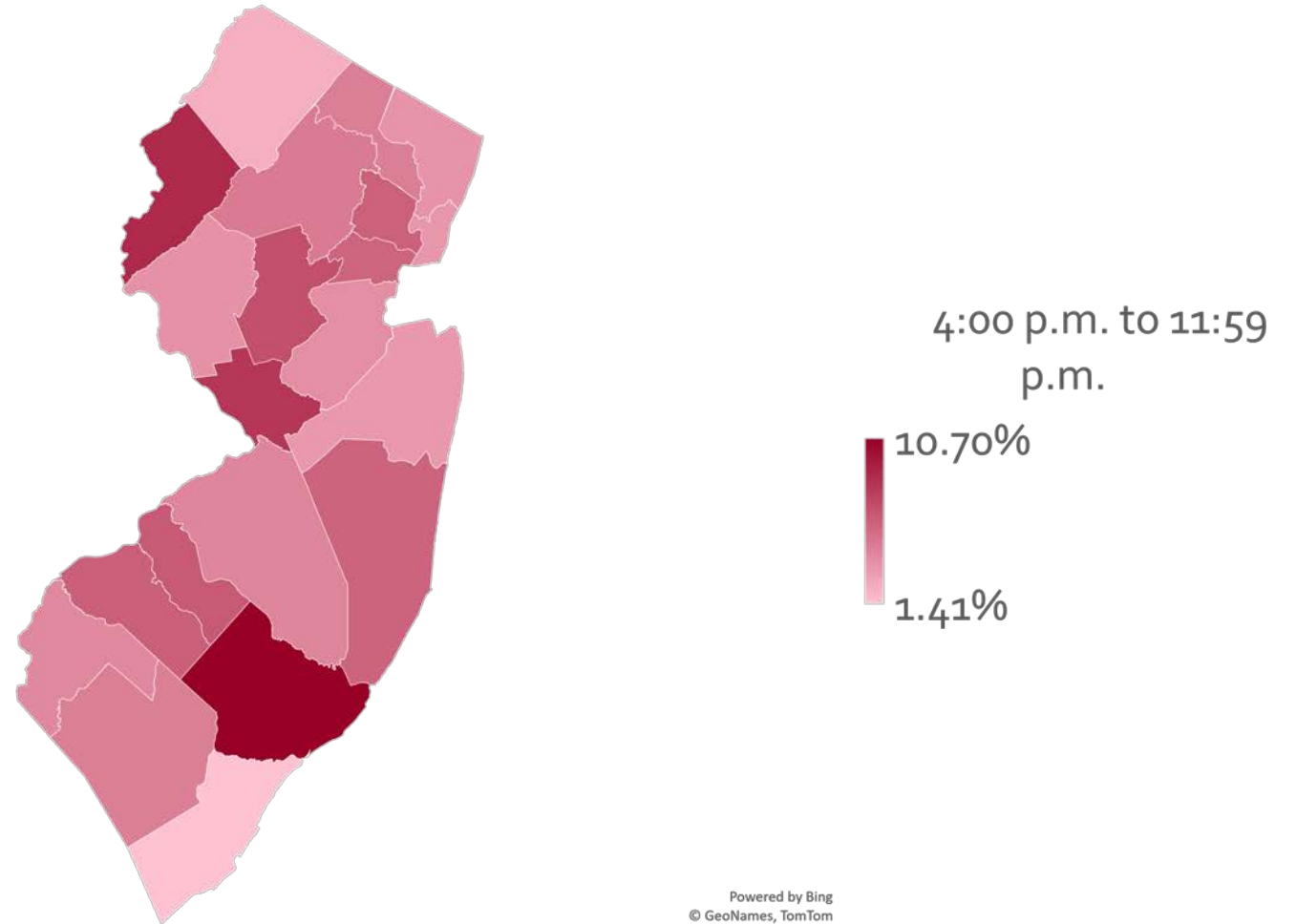
Childcare Recommendations

Administrative Processes

- Re-evaluate debt to income ratio
- Explore a voucher system (make it a tiered system)
- Make insurance cover childcare as an added benefit for employees.
- Pair unemployment services with childcare
- Create a one-stop portal to access childcare resources (include info on subsidies, local childcare centers, etc.)
- Make application and eligibility requirements more accessible

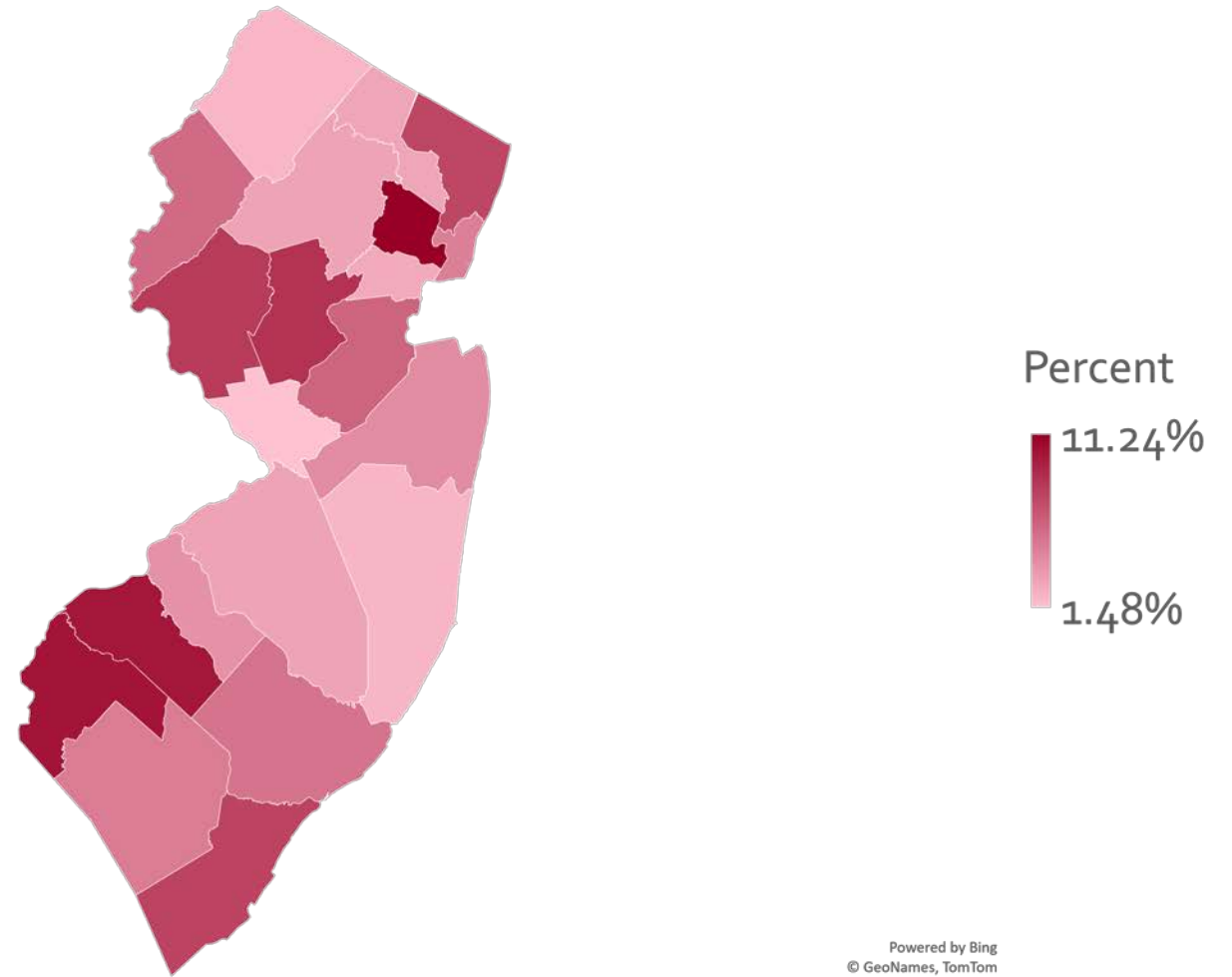


Figure 2: percent of women who begin work between 4 PM – 12 AM



CWW's calculation of American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2021 – Table B08011 (calculated from sample of workers ages 16 and over who do not work from home)

Figure 3: percent of female-headed households making below 185% of the poverty line (likely eligible for childcare subsidies)



CWW's calculations of American Community Survey 1-year 2021 – Table C17022



Access to/ Cost of Health Care

- Very few of the women (served by the working partner group participant organizations) have coverage via the Marketplace or individual employers
- Most are accessing healthcare services via Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Plans, Charity Care, or Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers (FQHCs)
- Problems with Medicaid and Charity Care

Healthcare Recommendations

Community Responsive Interventions

- Establish “wellness” hubs for people to use instead of hospital ERs
- Utilize more mobile vans for screenings
- Create apps (Otter App; Connecting NJ) to keep track of what is shared in meetings
- Create a healthcare navigator program to explain things to clients (Center for Family Services, Camden)
- Increase number of nurses and counselors that can help until professional services are available
- Implement shuttle services in counties that lack prenatal care (Sussex and Cape May)
- Increase number of food banks
- Attach clinics or urgent cares to hospitals

- Place physicians (or more nurses) in schools
- Incentivize pediatricians to stay open later hours
- Develop a tool to help people determine what is an emergency and what is not

Education

- Provide more education on healthy eating
- Ensure that all healthcare professionals and providers are well educated on the spectrum of services provided at their facilities
- Remove the stigma around using government services, especially for men
- Increase access to knowledge and resources (combat misinformation)
- Host monthly virtual meetings for sharing resources and assistance options

Healthcare Recommendations

Funding

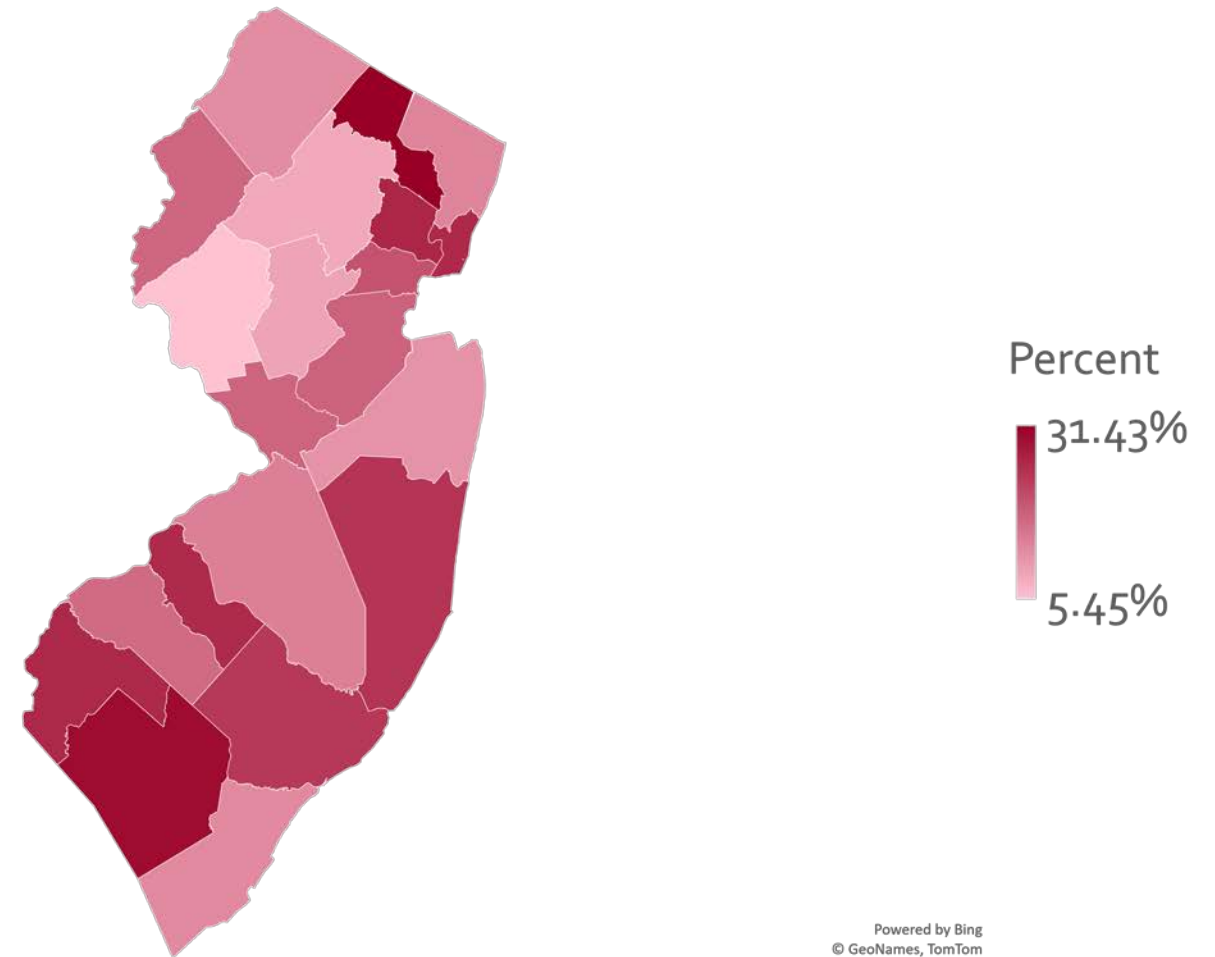
- Provide more state funding to facilitate partnerships and sharing of resources

Administrative Processes

- Improve process for credentialing doulas via Medicaid
- Institute regulations for charity care reporting to collection agencies
- Provide assistance and guidance on filling out applications



Figure 4: Percent of Women by County Who Have Medicaid or Other Means-Tested Public Health Insurance Coverage



CWW's calculations of American Community Survey 1-year estimates 2021 – Table B27007

Career Development and Opportunities



Overall Themes Noted:

- Mostly low-wage work noted in all but one county (Burlington), and mostly “woman’s work” occupations
- Unusually high unemployment rates, large fluctuations even within counties and regions
- Finding employment mostly by word-of-mouth referrals, followed by one-stops and community centers
- Low levels of educational attainment, mostly HS diploma or GED
- Poor job quality, lacking benefits, no paid time off, and limited opportunities for advancement

Industries and Occupations

Northwest

- Service jobs
- Healthcare
- Teaching
- Customer service
- Factories
- Cleaning
- Restaurants
- Care work
- Business owners – selling food, baking from home, etc.
- Gig work – Uber, Amazon, etc.
- Education
- Social work
- Accounting/bookkeeping

Northeast

- Airlines
- Trades: construction, landscaping, painting, roofing
- Childcare workers, babysitting
- CNAs/home health aides
- Retail workers
- Restaurant workers, fast food
- Factory work
- Cleaning houses, offices, etc.

Industries and Occupations

Central

- Landscaping
- Retail
- Restaurants
- Transit workers
- Cleaning/custodial
- Childcare
- Manufacturing (warehouses, UPS, Amazon, etc.)
- Healthcare/social services
- Corporate industry

Jersey Shore

- Casinos
- Law enforcement
- Service and hospitality
- Healthcare/dentistry
- Retail
- Education

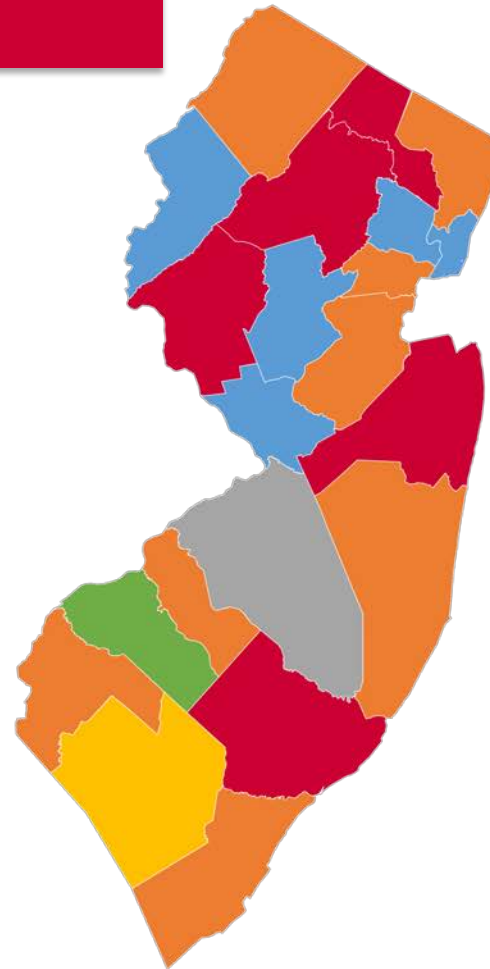
Industries and Occupations

South

- Produce production, farming
- Meat packing
- Airlines
- Business owners (leaders, executives, lifestyle influencers)
- Mid-senior level (Wall Street, customer service, engineering, etc.)
- Food service
- Healthcare
- Hospitality
- Education
- Childcare
- Group homes
- Retail
- Factories
- Warehouses (Amazon)
- Social work
- Cleaning



Figure 5: occupations with the lowest median incomes by county - women



- Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations
- Food preparation and serving related occupations
- Personal care and service occupations
- Transportation occupations
- Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations
- Firefighting and prevention, and other protective service workers including supervisors

CWW's calculations of
American Community Survey
5-year estimates 2021 – Table
B24012

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Gender Parity/Equal Pay

- Gender wage gaps are calculated using the wages of workers who were employed full time and year-round.
- If we include part-time and seasonal workers, which are overrepresented in this report, the wage gap grows even larger.
- The 2022 wage gap for all women was .84; Black women was .69; and Latinas was .57. (AAUW)

Recommendations for Government Interventions: Career Development and Equal Pay

Education

- Establish more educational pathways
- Improve advertising of existing programs
- Offer more paid training opportunities, stipends, etc.
- Set up information hubs
- Educate women on what jobs and industries are paying
- Work collaboratively (too many silos)
- Start with youth - use social media to educate them and work with them in schools/programs.
- Dismantle stereotypes about jobs
- Increase number of women in politics and leadership positions
- Educate women how to advocate for themselves
- Create education and awareness campaigns
- Examine transferable skills for “white-collar” jobs

Funding

- Offer scholarship programs
- Provide more programs and funding for small businesses and women-owned businesses
- Focus on community level funding, not big corporations

Legal and Regulatory Issues

- Raise the minimum wage
- Lower federal poverty levels
- Establish regulations to track private sector companies on equality
- Improve degree validation process (too expensive and complicated)

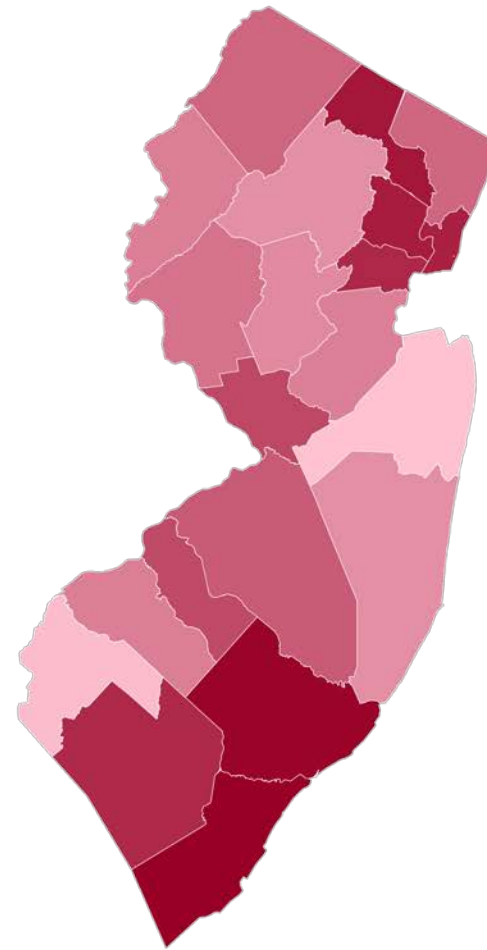
Recommendations for Private Sector Interventions: Career Development and Equal Pay



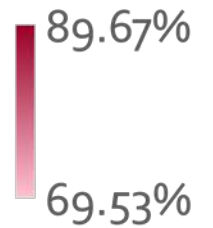
- Implement regular equity audits and systems for accountability
- Be transparent regarding salaries, job postings, benefits, etc.
- Build allyship with men, mentorship opportunities, etc.

Figure 7: women's median income as a percent of men's by county

CWW's calculations of American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2021 – Table B19326



Median Income as Percent (full-time)



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Gender-Based Violence: Domestic and Sexual

- Not always enough time in our sessions to have a robust discussion on this topic
- Heavy focus on prevention and education
- Most existing programs and funding go towards providing resources for survivors

Recommendations for Gender-Based Violence Interventions

Education

- Educate young women and girls , start in elementary schools
- Employ victim advocates who go to the schools and offer early intervention
- Help women and girls advocate for themselves
- Educate people on the spectrum of abuse
- Educate police on how to address DV situations
- Ensure that shelter staff are trained, compassionate, and professional
- Educate women on existing resources (can use social media for this)
- Educate people on reporting processes, especially for the undocumented because they fear being deported.

Programming

- Implement more programs to combat GBV
- Implement programs to help women be more self-sufficient
- Implement programs and mentorship for boys
- Expand restorative justice processes for boys
- Work with fathers more, especially young fathers
- Provide more support groups/victim services

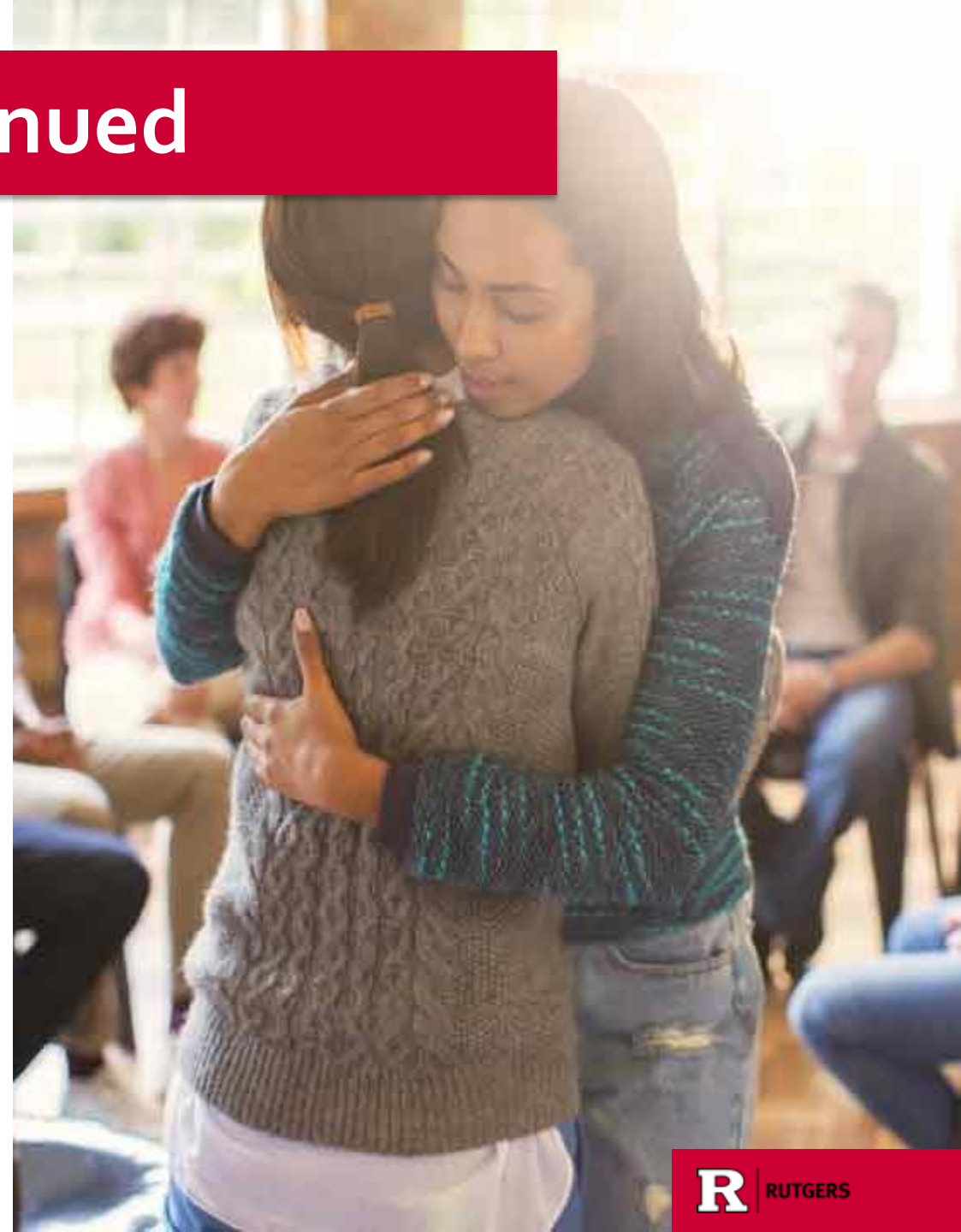
GBV Recommendations Continued

Funding

- Provide more funding for proper shelters (not all communities have easy access to them)
- Provide more affordable housing
- Increase access to mental health services and legal services
- Make money or cards available for Uber rides when women are in danger or need help

Community Responsive Interventions

- Implement more trauma-informed care
- Check in on people at their homes





Additional Themes

- Housing
- Transportation
- Immigration
- Inflation
- Eldercare
- Maternal Health
- Paid Family Leave

Things to Consider Moving Forward

- **A targeted community level approach**
 - Participants stressed the importance of “meeting people where they are”, both literally and figuratively.
- **Access to information**
 - There are many programs that currently exist that people don’t know about thus they may be underutilized by those who need them most.
- **Focus on overlooked or “forgotten” communities**
 - Rural and hard to reach towns (such as Paulsboro, Newton, and Cape May) don’t always receive the same attention and funding as bigger urban areas.



APPENDIX – HOST ORGANIZATIONS AND WORKING PARTNERS

Host Organizations & Participants

Northwest

Project Self-Sufficiency

- First Presbyterian Church of Newton
- Thorlabs
- Sussex County Chamber of Commerce
- Special Child Health Services
- Sussex County Food Pantry
- Former Director of the Sussex County Department of Health and Human Services
- Dolan Law
- Selective Insurance
- Project Self-Sufficiency
- NJ Dept. of Education – Sussex County
- Former County Commissioner
- Sussex County College

Morris County Office of Hispanic Affairs

- Hope House

- Dover Public Schools
- MCOHA
- The Women’s Center at County College of Morris
- La Oficina Professional Services
- Town of Dover Health Dept.

Northeast

La Casa de Don Pedro

- Center for Family Services
- Shani Baraka Center
- La Casa de Don Pedro
- Wellcare of NJ
- Hispanic Women’s Resource Center

CUMAC

- Health Coalition of Passaic County
- CUMAC

Host Organizations & Participants

Central

Community Affairs and Resource Center

- Greater Somerset County YMCA
- Trenton Area Soup Kitchen
- Salvation and Social Justice
- NJ Advisory Commission of the Status of Women

Jersey Shore

Community Affairs and Resource Center

- Mercy Center
- Community Affairs and Resource Center
- United Healthcare Center
- VNACJ Community Health Centers

- Interfaith Neighbors
- Fulfill Monmouth and Ocean
- Monmouth Family Health Center
- Childcare Resources

Cape Assist

- Cape May County Prosecutor
- Cape May County Dept. of Health
- Cape Assist
- Upper Township
- Coalition Against Rape and Abuse
- Volunteers in Medicine
- Atlantic Cape Community College
- Country School Preschool
- Cape May Chamber of Commerce

Host Organizations & Participants

South

Gateway

- Headstart
- Gateway Wellness Center
- CompleteCare Health Network
- Salem County Interagency Council
- Gloucester County Commission for Women
- Gateway Community Action Partnership
- NJ Judiciary
- Center for Family Services
- Gill Memorial Library
- Paulie's Safe House
- Boys and Girls Club of Cumberland County
- Golden Gate, Inc.
- Bridgeton City Council
- Rowan University and H.O.P.E.
- Salem County Probation
- Dept. of Child Protection and Permanency

Chamber of Commerce of Southern NJ

- This Is It Network
- JW Professional Writing Services
- Mindset Strategies
- NJ Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- National Academy Foundation
- McGroarty & Co. Consulting
- JL Weiner and Associates
- Diversity and Equal Opportunity Network

Host Organizations & Participants

South

Puerto Rican Action Committee

- Dr. William Mennies Elementary School
- Social Security Administration
- City of Bridgeton Police Dept.
- Inspira Health Care
- Monarch Family Success Center
- Axia Women's Health
- Love through Laces
- Puerto Rican Action Committee
- NJ Superior Court
- Hispanic Women's Resource Center – Atlantic
- Hispanic Women's Resource Center – Cumberland
- Sister Will You Help Me
- MLA -CC

Hispanic Family Center

- Osborn Family Health Center
- Parents Invincible
- Saint Joseph Carpenter Society
- Hispanic Family Center
- TaylorCare
- Acelero Learning
- Girls, Inc.
- The WOW Center
- Hispanic Women's Resource Center
- ADP

Host Organizations & Participants

Virtual Sessions

Leading Women's Groups

- American Association of University Women
- Alice Paul Institute
- Former GPC member
- NJACSW
- Coalition Against Rape and Abuse
- Berkeley College
- Latino Action Network Foundation
- American Heart Association
- NJ Historical Commission
- Warren County Board of County Commissions



Questions??