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# PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**

Policy positions intrinsic to YWCA's mission are directed to elimination of racism and the empowerment of women and girls. Priority statements are also addressed to issues directly affecting the lives of women and children, especially those who reside in YWCA Madison housing or participate in its programs. These priorities were developed through interviews with YWCA staff as well as focus groups with YWCA residents, students, and YWebCA participants.

## **HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS**

Housing is a basic human right. There simply is not enough affordable housing in Dane County to house and support individuals and families. Without stable housing, individuals and families are unlikely to meet other basic needs such as employment, food, clothing, and education.

Not only do we need additional affordable housing, we need resources and emergency funding to support people in maintaining their housing. Our homeless outreach and services must be detailed and comprehensive, utilizing best practices to help move everyone into housing.

## **FUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND PROVIDE WRAP-AROUND SUPPORT**

- Fund Public and Private Affordable Housing
- Support Funding and Programming for Wrap-Around Services for Those Receiving Housing Assistance or in Low-Income Housing

## **STOP CRIMINALIZING HOMELESSNESS<sup>1</sup> AND PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**

- Stop Criminalizing Homelessness
- Fund and Support Comprehensive Street Outreach

## **SUPPORT PRO-TENANT POLICES THAT ALLOW INDIVIDUALS TO QUALIFY FOR HOUSING AND MAINTAIN HOUSING**

- Repeal Laws that Allow Individuals to Lose or Be Denied Tenancy Based on Reasons Beyond Being a Good Tenant
- Require Local Governments to Rise Above State Rental Standards

<sup>1</sup>According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, "the criminalization of homelessness refers to measures that prohibit life-sustaining activities such as sleeping/camping, eating, sitting, and/or asking for money/resources in public spaces. These ordinances include criminal penalties for violations of these acts."

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**YWCA IS ON A MISSION**

<sup>2</sup> “Wisconsin’s Extreme Racial Disparity 2017,” from the Center On Wisconsin Strategy, or COWS: [https://www.cows.org/\\_data/documents/1816.pdf](https://www.cows.org/_data/documents/1816.pdf)

LGBTQ+ people are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. They are frequently targeted by, and vulnerable to increased criminalization and abuse by, law enforcement. They regularly experience assault and violence in correctional settings.

<sup>3</sup> Youths should not be arrested or detained for status offenses, such as truancy and curfew violations (and/or any other offenses that would not be crimes if committed by adults).

<sup>4</sup> All correctional facilities should be required to be accredited with the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCCHC).

<sup>5</sup> “Out of Reach Report 2017, p.260” from the National Low Income Housing Coalition: [http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/OOR\\_2017.pdf](http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/OOR_2017.pdf)

- Fund Emergency Support to Keep People in Housing
- End Housing Discrimination Based on Membership in a Protected Class

## **RACIAL JUSTICE AND CIVIL RIGHTS**

Wisconsin has some of the worst racial disparities in the nation<sup>2</sup>, and Dane County is one of the worst in Wisconsin. If we want to impact that disparity rate, we must interrupt and reform the systems in place that feed into the cycle of racism. People of Color are living in fear in our nation, and our community is no exception. In our cities, in our schools, and in our businesses, we must affirmatively disrupt the status quo.

### **REFORM THE POLICING OF COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AND END RACIAL PROFILING**

- Stop Over-Policing Communities of Color
- Mandate an Understanding of Structural Racial Inequity as a Competency for the Hiring and Ongoing Evaluation of Law Enforcement
- Regulate Private Police and Security Guards

### **REFORM SCHOOL POLICIES THAT DISPARATELY IMPACT YOUTH OF COLOR**

- Stop Criminalizing Youth<sup>3</sup> in our Schools and Eliminate Zero Tolerance Policies
- Eliminate the Criminalization of Girls of Color and Develop Programming and Services to Support Girls of Color
- Support and Fully Fund Public Schools

### **REFORM CRIMINAL & CIVIL JUSTICE SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES OF COLOR**

- Restrict Public Access to Wisconsin Court System - Consolidated Court Automation Program (CCAP) and Remove Listings of Dismissed or Expunged Charges
- Fund and Expand Restorative Justice, Community Court, and Other Alternatives to Incarceration Programs
- Reform Child Support Policies
- Eliminate Solitary Confinement and Unsafe Jail Conditions<sup>4</sup>
- Stop Suspending Driver’s Licenses for Non-Traffic Violations and Ensure Uniform and Equitable Reinstatement of Suspended Driver’s Licenses

## **EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT**

Minimum-wage, full-time workers cannot afford housing in Dane County<sup>5</sup>, let alone support themselves and their families. We need policies and services that lift workers out of poverty and allow them to thrive in our community.

**SUPPORT LOW-INCOME WORKERS**

- Provide All Workers with Paid Family and Medical Leave
- Increase the National and State Minimum Wage and Index it to a Living Wage

**SUPPORT JOB SEEKERS AND EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAMMING**

- Fund Quality Employment Training Programs
- Provide Job Placement for Individuals Completing Employment Training
- Scale Public Benefit Assistance so that Individuals are not Suddenly Removed from Government Subsidies

**FUND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORTS WORKERS**

- Expand Affordable Mass Transit Options and Subsidize Mass Transit for Low-Income Individuals
- Ensure Access to Free Wi-Fi Throughout Dane County

**HUMAN DIGNITY AND EQUITY**

YWCA Madison is committed to improving our community for everyone. In our policy platform, we have chosen to focus specifically on the issues that are of the greatest concern to the people we serve. However, there are many other policy needs that we care about and that are connected deeply to our mission. We have listed many of these areas in this section, and we pledge to work with, support, and uplift community partners who take the lead on these issues to ensure respect, dignity, and an opportunity to succeed are afforded to all.

**OUR ELECTED LEADERS ON THE FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LEVELS SHALL:**

- Protect the Interests of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning Communities
- Oppose Deporting Undocumented Individuals and Stop Profiling Immigrant Communities
- Protect Women's Access to Abortion and the Full Range of Comprehensive Reproductive Health Care
- Enact and Enforce Laws that Protect Domestic Violence Survivors
- Enact and Enforce Laws that Protect Victims of Human Trafficking and Fund Services to Support Victims' Recovery
- Eliminate Drug Testing of Individuals Receiving Government Support for Housing, Food, Employment, Education, and all other Basic Human Needs
- Provide All Individuals with Access to Quality, Affordable, Comprehensive Health Care, including Mental Health and Dental Health
- Ensure All Individuals Have Access to Healthy Food and Clean Water
- Support Common-Sense Gun Control and Prohibit Guns in Closed Public Spaces Including Schools and Mass Transportation

## **POLICY REFORM**

State, County, City, and School Board laws and policies need to go through a racial and equity analysis before becoming laws. All too often, well intentioned laws exacerbate already existing racial and gender disparities. Good intentions aren't good enough. Through detailed policy analysis, legislators can understand the impacts of their proposals and prevent bad laws from being implemented.

- Require Racial Analysis of Proposed Policies and Legislation

## **A CALL TO ACTION AND NEXT STEPS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

1. Educate yourself and others
2. Advocate with your elected officials and representatives
3. Support organizations that align with your values and priorities through volunteering or donating

## **A CALL TO ACTION AND NEXT STEPS FOR CITY, COUNTY, AND STATE LEGISLATORS**

1. Educate yourself and your colleagues on the issues in this Public Policy Platform
2. Use an equity impact assessment tool that includes centering the voices of the people most impacted in all proposed legislation
3. Support and propose legislation that is aligned with the recommendations in this Public Policy Platform

YWCA Madison envisions a community where people of all racial, ethnic, socio-economic and gender groups are valued and included, and discrimination and injustice are eliminated. To this end, YWCA Madison provides leadership in our community to create social change for all racial, ethnic, gender and economic groups. Through YWCA programming and collaborative initiatives, individuals, families and the community at large are empowered to greatly improve their quality of life.

YWCA Madison is a partnered agency of United Way of Dane County.



# **GET INVOLVED!**

Contact **Advocacy Team**, YWAct at 608.257.1436, option 2 or [policy@ywcamadison.org](mailto:policy@ywcamadison.org)

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