



WOMEN'S FUND
OF GREATER FORT WAYNE

2025

MOVING WHAT MATTERS

**2025 ALLEN COUNTY
WOMEN AND GIRLS UPDATE**



When the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne created the *2020 Allen County Women and Girls Study*, it led to the establishment of the Women’s Fund of Greater Fort Wayne. As an organization, we engage and educate our community about opportunities to enhance the lives of women and girls by amplifying their voices and driving systems-level change in our region and state.

Five years into this work, we have heard from thousands of women and girls in our community.

We have actively worked in each focus area identified from the 2020 study—Economic Security, Personal Safety, and Young Women & Girls—deepening our understanding of what women and girls in our community need to succeed.

But we didn’t stop there. We developed plans, mobilized volunteers, and led initiatives in direct response to what we heard. We’ve accomplished so much already, but we still have a long way to go.

Five years into this work, we need a renewed commitment to taking action—as the Women’s Fund, as individuals, as employers, and as a community.

As Allen County continues to grow and become a community of choice, each person in our community has a role to play. We hope you’ll take this information and join us in *moving what matters* for women and girls each day.

Your partners in change,

Cassie Beer
Women’s Fund Director

Nikki Quintana
Women’s Fund Chair

Key Takeaways

Economic Security

Workplaces could better meet the needs of women.

- **Compensation** is a top concern.
- **Flexibility** is a key factor in the workplace.
- Many aren’t **saving for retirement**.

Personal Safety

Sexual harassment, rape, and domestic violence policies need improvement.

- Indiana lacks **a clear legal definition for consent**, making it difficult to uphold **survivor rights and protections** and prosecute offenders.
- **Loss of funding** undermines Indiana’s capacity to support survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Young Women & Girls

Communication is key for young women and girls’ well-being.

- The impact of social media on **emotional health and safety** is concerning.
- Families value **education, training, and career prep programs** for young women and girls.
- Parents and caregivers believe many resources exist for **discussing tough topics** like mental and reproductive health.

About the Women’s Fund

Through research, education, and collaboration, the Women’s Fund of Greater Fort Wayne works to uncover and address the most important issues faced by women and girls in Allen County.

Launched on August 26, 2020—the centennial anniversary of women’s right to vote—the Women’s Fund focuses on changing the lives of women and girls in our community in three key areas: Economic Security, Personal Safety, and Young Women & Girls.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

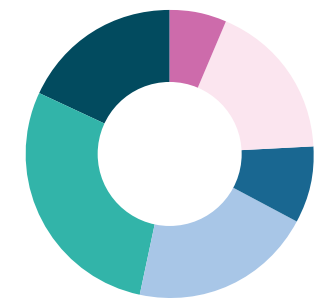
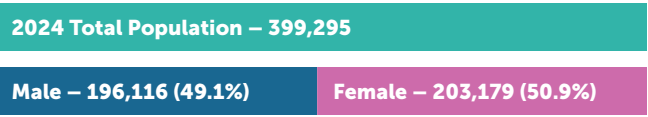
- 1

Economic Security
- 2

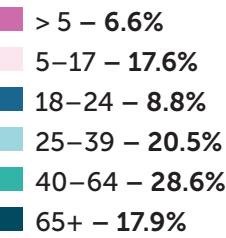
Personal Safety
- 3

Young Women & Girls

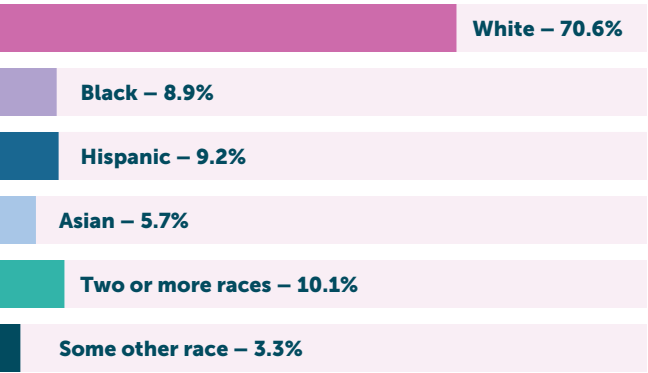
About Women and Girls in Allen County



Population by Age



Population by Race/Ethnicity



Methodology

2020 REFLECTIONS

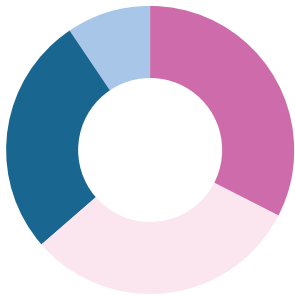
The 2020 Allen County Women and Girls Study emphasized the need for an organization dedicated to improving the economic well-being of women and girls in our community. In response, the Women’s Fund of Greater Fort Wayne, an initiative of the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne, was established.

Reflecting on its first five years, the Women’s Fund recognizes major global changes. The 2020 research, conducted from January to February 2020, happened right before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Shortly after, in March 2020, Breonna Taylor was fatally shot after Louisville Metro Police Department officers forced entry into her home, resulting in large-scale racial injustice and police brutality protests. The world women and girls live in today has shifted significantly over the last five years, and the injustices facing them still persist.

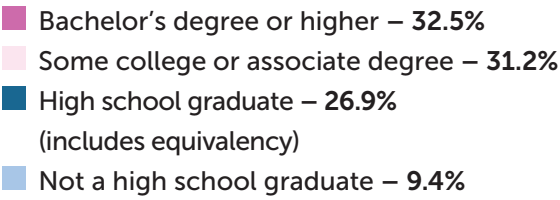
2025 APPROACH

Our approach to the 2025 study centered on each of the Women’s Fund’s focus areas. We partnered with the Purdue University Fort Wayne Community Research Institute (CRI) to conduct research most relevant to these areas, including a survey conducted through SurveyUSA and data from the U.S. Census Bureau. We also drew on information gathered from the Women’s Fund’s initiatives, sources such as the Fort Wayne Police Department and Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, and other research performed over the past five years.

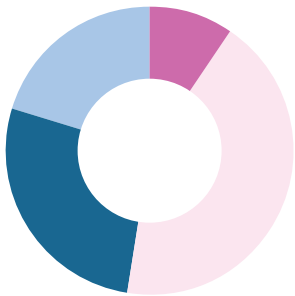
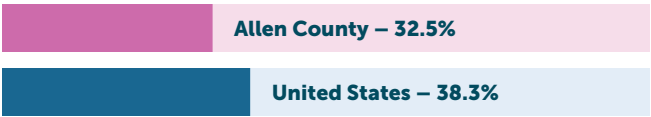
For more information or to access the full research, contact the Women’s Fund Director, Cassie Beer, at cbeer@cfgfw.org.



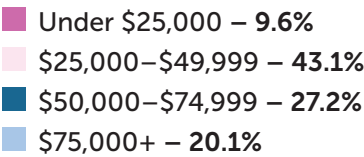
Educational Attainment



Women Holding Bachelor’s Degree or Higher



Annual Earnings of Allen County Women Employed Full Time



2024 U.S. Census Data

Economic Security

The Women’s Fund addresses the issues that impede women and girls from reaching their full economic potential. Through this work and our research, we’ve learned that **workplaces could better meet the needs of women.**

COMPENSATION

Compensation is a primary concern for women. 74.7% of working-age women in Allen County participate in the workforce, with 70% of women who work full time needing to do so for financial reasons.

\$16,173

Allen County’s pay gap in 2023.

↑ \$1,482

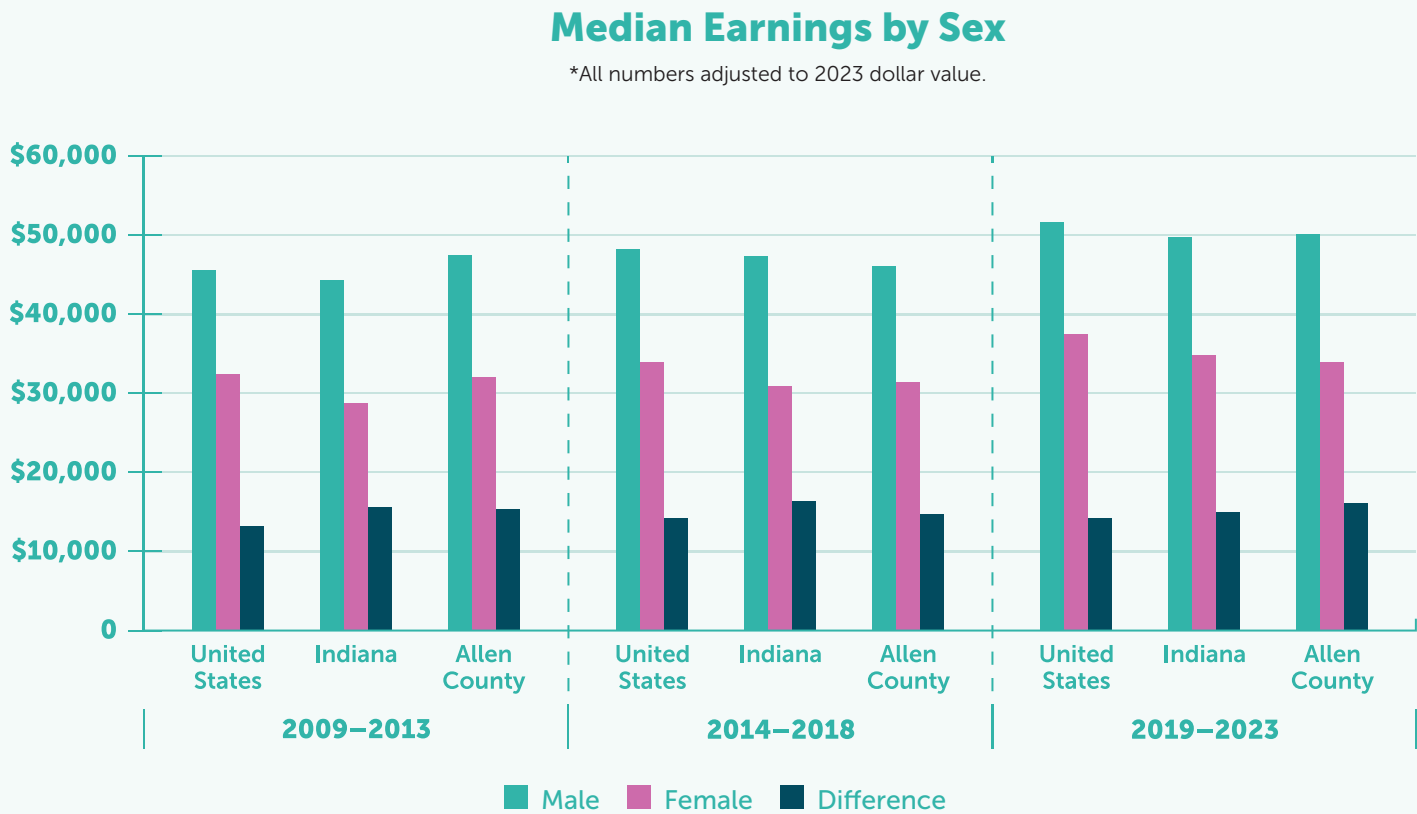
Allen County’s pay gap increased from \$14,691 in 2018 to \$16,173 in 2023.

\$1,256

Allen County’s pay gap (\$16,173) is wider than that of Indiana (\$14,917).

\$1,954

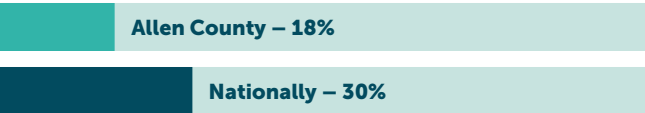
Allen County’s pay gap (\$16,173) is wider than that of the United States (\$14,219).



Full-Time Earnings Categories by Sex

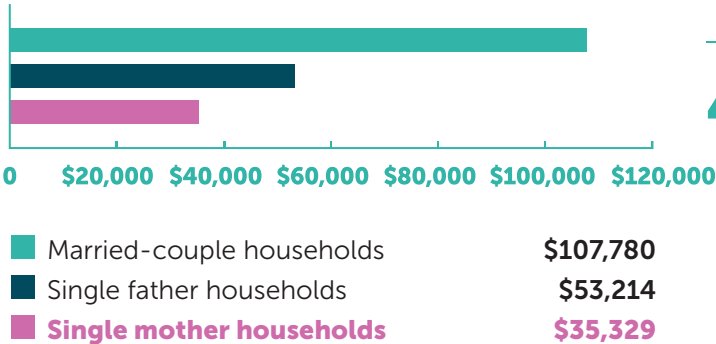
		2009–2013			2014–2018			2019–2023		
		United States	Indiana	Allen County	United States	Indiana	Allen County	United States	Indiana	Allen County
Less than \$25,000	Male	17.0%	15.4%	13.9%	14.3%	12.9%	13.3%	8.1%	7.7%	7.5%
	Female	24.5%	27.2%	23.7%	20.6%	22.3%	23.5%	11.7%	11.9%	11.7%
\$25,000–\$49,999	Male	33.9%	38.5%	38.6%	32.7%	36.2%	37.5%	26.6%	28.7%	30.0%
	Female	41.5%	47.0%	51.2%	39.7%	46.5%	48.6%	34.2%	41.8%	44.5%
\$50,000–\$74,999	Male	22.0%	24.5%	26.7%	22.6%	25.7%	26.0%	22.9%	26.4%	26.5%
	Female	19.4%	17.1%	17.8%	21.1%	19.4%	18.9%	23.8%	25.0%	25.4%
\$75,000–\$99,999	Male	11.2%	10.8%	9.6%	11.5%	11.6%	10.2%	14.4%	15.3%	15.2%
	Female	7.8%	5.2%	4.1%	9.0%	6.4%	4.9%	12.9%	10.5%	9.6%
\$100,000 or more	Male	15.8%	10.9%	11.2%	19.0%	13.5%	13.0%	28.0%	21.9%	20.7%
	Female	6.9%	3.6%	3.2%	9.7%	5.3%	4.1%	17.4%	10.8%	8.8%

Women Working Full Time and Earning \$75,000 or More Annually



The percentage of full-time working women earning less than \$25,000 decreased from 2018 to 2023, from 23.5% to 11.7%.

Median Annual Income of Households in Allen County with Children Under the Age of 18



The median income for single-mother households with kids is 33 cents on the dollar compared to married-couple households.

Women who are currently working or looking for work say in the next three to five years:

- 92% Earning more money or getting a raise is somewhat or very important.
- 89% Job security with a low risk of layoff or termination is somewhat or very important.
- 60% Getting a promotion or prestigious job title is somewhat or very important.
- 49% Looking for a new job at their current or new employer is somewhat or very important.

Economic Security

FLEXIBILITY

Workplace flexibility is crucial for women. The most common industries where women who responded to the survey work are healthcare (26%), education (14%), and retail (11%), all known for their structured schedules and in-person work environments. Most caregivers say these responsibilities impact if and how they work.

37% Women who work say their daily start and stop times are not flexible or only minimally flexible.

57% Women who are working or looking for work say that schedule flexibility, such as hours or location, is extremely or very important.

13% of women working or looking for work primarily work from home.

Among those who do not primarily work from home, 56% say they never work from home; 34% can work from home at least some of the time, and 10% have worked from home in the past but do not currently.

Women Currently Working or Looking for Work With Access to Paid Time Off

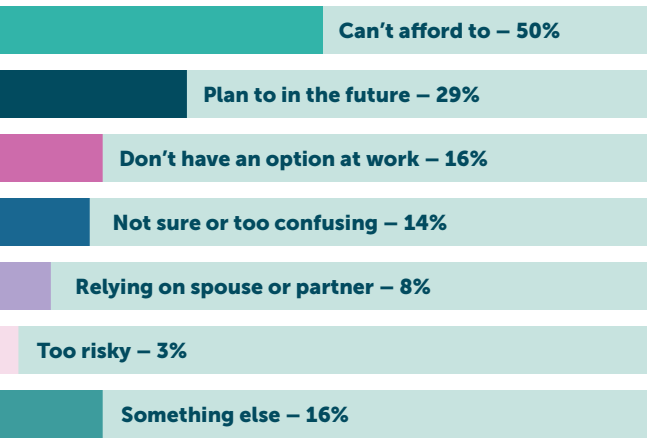
- Yes – 68%
- No – 23%
- Not sure – 4%
- Not currently working – 4%

Less than 70% of working women have access to paid time off.

RETIREMENT

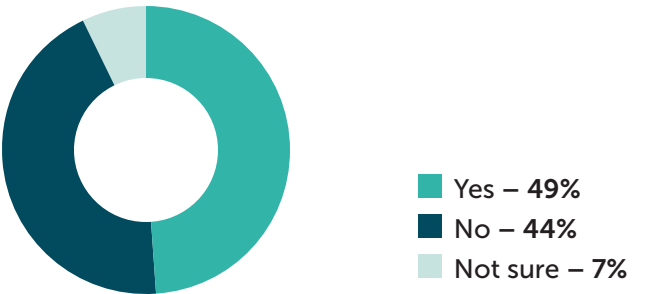
Less than half of women reported having retirement savings in their own names, according to our survey. Lack of financial capacity was the most common reason cited for not saving, at half of those without savings in their own name. Compared to men, women usually earn less over their careers because they often have gaps in employment or work for lower pay.

Why Women Aren't Saving for Retirement



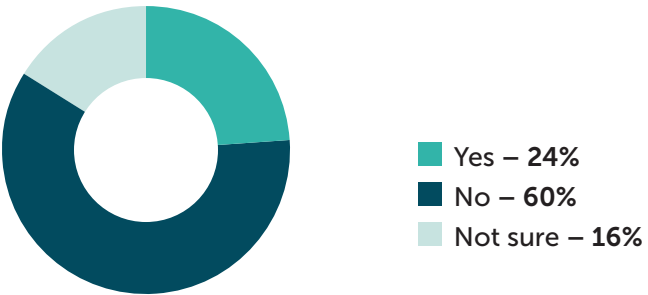
\$\$\$ Inadequate compensation is the main reason women don't save for retirement.

Women Who Have Retirement Savings in Their Name



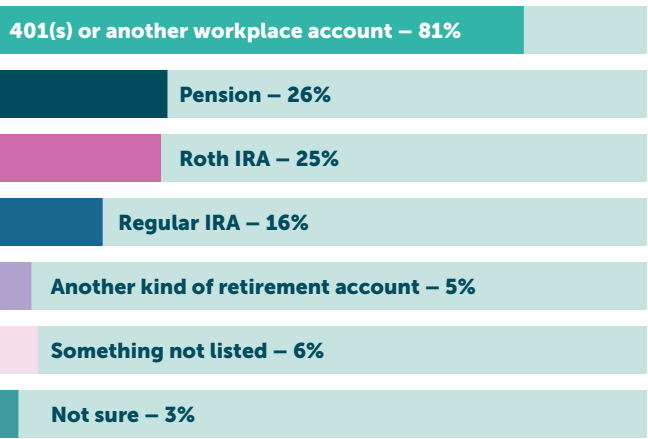
51% 51% of women either do not have or are unsure if they have retirement savings in their name.

Women Who Rely on a Spouse or Partner's Retirement Savings



Most women are not planning to rely on their spouse or partner for their retirement savings.

Accounts Held by Women With Own Retirement Savings



Women depend on their workplaces for retirement savings, yet many employers do not automatically enroll employees into plans.

Personal Safety

The Women’s Fund promotes programs and systems that ensure the safety of women and girls. Our efforts reveal a harsh truth: **sexual harassment, rape, and domestic violence are common for women in Allen County, and current policies need improvement.** Instead of making women relive their trauma by asking them to tell their stories again, we focused on policies that allow these issues to continue.

LEGAL DEFINITION OF CONSENT

Indiana’s definition of consent went unchanged for more than 200 years. Its criteria depended on force, incapacity, or the victim’s mental state. House Enrolled Act 1079, effective July 1, 2022, added language that covers situations where a survivor clearly communicates refusal verbally, physically, or through visible actions (e.g., turning away, pulling clothes up).

Yes Means Yes / Enough Is Enough

California’s “Yes Means Yes” and New York’s “Enough is Enough” frameworks serve as useful models, even though they are not criminal laws. They adopt an affirmative-consent standard, emphasizing that silence or lack of resistance does not imply consent, and specify that consent must be both enthusiastic and continuous.

RAPE KIT BACKLOG AND FORENSIC TESTING

Indiana ranks the worst in the nation for untested rape kits per capita, with over 6,000 untested kits across the state. The state has adopted two of the six pillars of reform outlined by the national End the Backlog initiative: a one-time inventory of untested kits and building a tracking system to inform survivors of their kit’s location and status.

While \$2.5 million was designated to start addressing the backlog in the 2025 Indiana budget, legislators have not passed bills like HB1413-25 and SB533-25, which would require all backlogged kits to be tested by a firm deadline, improve survivors’ rights, and establish processes to prevent the backlog from growing.

Victims have dutifully subjected themselves to invasive rape kit collections, while the evidence sits untested and offenders walk freely, potentially repeating these acts. DNA evidence testing has advanced in recent years. Indiana’s practices have not.

40% of women ages 18–64 in Allen County have experienced sexual assault or rape, an increase from 30% in 2020.

6,000+ Untested rape kits in Indiana.

SURVIVOR RIGHTS AND SYSTEMIC PROTECTIONS

Indiana lacks a comprehensive Survivor Bill of Rights, including laws that ensure rape kit testing, provide access to case documents and law enforcement reports without fees or modifications, and require victim advocates to be present during questioning and procedural steps. Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, and Michigan have all passed a Survivor Bill of Rights.

Current laws also permit workplaces with fewer than 15 employees to prevent sexual assault cases from going to court if the employer withholds consent, effectively silencing survivors. Additionally, there are no restrictions on nondisclosure agreements in such cases, meaning survivors might be barred from speaking out about their assault.

>50% More than half of women ages 18–64 in Allen County have experienced sexual harassment.

NO
MATTER
WHAT*

*WE ARE HERE FOR YOU.

What Is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment involves any unwanted sexual attention—such as lewd jokes or offensive language; sexual comments about them or others’ appearance, clothing, or body parts; inappropriate sexual gestures; or inappropriate touching or comments—that creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment. It can occur at work, school, online, in public places, or even at home.

Learn more at NoMatterWhatFW.org.

Personal Safety

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROBLEM-SOLVING COURT

Allen County leads Indiana in domestic violence arrests and homicides. The Women’s Fund helped establish a Domestic Violence Problem-Solving Court in 2023 based on input from the Mayor’s Commission on Domestic Violence, Rape, and Sexual Harassment and stakeholder interviews. This court requires jury education on domestic violence, replaces court-ordered anger management with evidence-based programs, and promotes collaboration among agencies, law enforcement, and courts. It also examines protective order procedures, family support, and documentation processes.

45% of women ages 18–64 in Allen County have experienced domestic or intimate partner violence, an increase from 35% in 2020.

19% increase in FWPD rape arrests from 2024 to May 2025.

10,000 Average calls per year to FWPD Victims Assistance regarding experiences of domestic violence.

LOSS OF FUNDING

Recent federal grant policy changes have weakened Indiana’s support for sexual assault and domestic violence survivors, especially with cuts from the Justice Department’s Office on Violence Against Women. The sudden cancellation of grants threatens vital programs like legal advocacy, housing, emergency relocation, and mental health services. For organizations already experiencing an 80% Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) fund reduction—from \$66 million to \$15 million—these cuts are particularly dangerous.

Indiana’s lawmakers, community leaders, and residents must act now—through state-level funding, policy reform, and public advocacy—to ensure survivors are not left without a lifeline.

In Allen County, local foundations and private philanthropy also have a significant role to play. Agencies supporting survivors of sexual and domestic violence report tremendous need for multiyear, unrestricted funding to best serve survivors. These entities need long-term housing solutions for survivors, staffing to provide more community-based prevention and education, and research for outcome tracking.

Young Women & Girls

The Women’s Fund listens to and amplifies the voices of young women and girls, so they know they are supported and celebrated. Our collaborations with leaders and organizations serving them have shown us that **communication is essential for the well-being of young women and girls.**

GIRLS’ WELL-BEING

Middle and high school girls report feeling sad and hopeless. The reasons for this are numerous—young women are concerned about gender-based violence, racism, and mental health, while parents and caregivers worry about how social media impacts their emotional well-being and safety.

COMMUNICATION AND RESOURCES

While parents and caregivers believe many resources exist for discussing tough topics like mental and reproductive health, they feel other resources are lacking to help young women and girls navigate life. Families want more education, training, and career preparation programs for young women and girls. Young women and girls continue to express the need for safe, female-focused spaces in our community.

THE INVISIBLE GIRL

For every young woman and girl we speak to, there are countless others whose voices we’re missing. Communication with girls who are often unheard—like those in the justice system and teenage mothers—deserves more focus, and the Women’s Fund is committed to reaching them in the future to listen to their stories.

30% of young women and girls experience anxiety, depression, and stress.

28% of young women and girls are not aware of any supports specific to young women and girls.

Our Next Steps Your Next Steps

Following our strategic plan, which is informed by data, research, and input from stakeholders throughout Allen County, we will continue to promote equity and opportunity for women and girls in our community across all focus areas.

Economic Security

We will refine our *Women in the Workplace* initiative to advocate for fair compensation, flexible scheduling, and expanded retirement plans in local workplaces. We will continue advocating for state and local policies that strengthen economic security, including childcare access and paid family leave.

Personal Safety

We will promote and implement structural changes to support survivors of gender-based violence by advocating for a criminal Domestic Violence problem-solving court, raising awareness through the *No Matter What* campaign, and advocating for both local and statewide policy change for survivors.

Young Women & Girls

We will develop and implement research-informed priorities for young women and girls while amplifying their voices. This includes developing the *2027 Allen County Women and Girls Report*, hosting a training summit, and convening local organizations.

For our community to thrive, we must all rise together. Your role in ensuring equitable opportunities for women and girls in Allen County begins now.

Share This Report

The data in this report can help guide initiatives across our community. Consider sharing this report with your elected officials, colleagues, peers, employer, family, and beyond.

Engage Your Workplace

Connect with us at WomensFundFW.org/workplace to access trainings and programs designed to support local employers in building equitable workplaces for all.

Give to Women and Girls

Only 1.9% of charitable giving goes to programs for women and girls. We encourage our community to make philanthropic investments in local initiatives that serve women and girls.



MOVING WHAT MATTERS

Our work wouldn’t be possible without the generosity of our members, volunteers, and supporters.

Steering Committee

- Harini Bonam
- Councilwoman Michelle Chambers
- Ewelina Connolly
- Stephanie Crandall
- Sherry Early
- Sharon Eisbart
- Andie Hines-Lagemann
- Paula Hughes-Schuh
- Rochelle Joseph
- Nikki Quintana, Chair
- Dr. Lawanda Ravoira
- Joanna Rogers
- Nancy Stewart
- Stephanie Veit
- Pone Vongphachanh
- Irene Walters
- Township Trustee Denita Washington
- Paige Wilkins

Supporters

- Doermer Family Foundation
- Lilly Endowment Inc.

The Women’s Fund is an initiative of the **Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne**, and we’re grateful for their ongoing support.

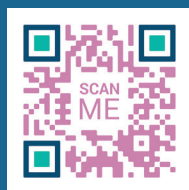
For a full list of Women’s Fund founders, members, collaborators, and supporters, please visit WomensFundFW.org/members.

Join the Movement



555 E. Wayne Street
Fort Wayne, IN 46802

260-426-4083
WomensFundFW.org



The Women's Fund of Greater Fort Wayne is funded by individuals and organizations that are passionate about a more equitable future for girls and women in Allen County. We need your help to keep *moving what matters*.

Help us create change by becoming a member today.
