

Meaningful Engagement in Action:



New York City's Young Women's Initiative

In 2014, Girls for Gender Equity (GGE), along with other community leaders, challenged the New York City Council to include the racial and gender justice needs of young women of color within the Young Men's Initiative and the national My Brother's Keeper Initiative.

Learning More

As a public Call to Action, GGE hosted a series of town hall hearings on girls of color in New York City in partnership with the African American Policy Forum (AAPF), dozens of local organizations, Public Advocate Letitia James and New York City Council Member Laurie Cumbo, Chair of the Committee on Women's Issues.

Setting Goals

Following the hearings, the NYC Council Speaker staff and GGE met to share a vision for a dedicated initiative for young women and girls of color.

Making a Plan

In March 2015, Girls for Gender Equity, the New York Women's Foundation, and the NoVo Foundation met with the Speaker's office to present a brief and discuss local and national efforts to build an agenda for young women and girls. In May 2015, City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito announced that the City Council would launch a Young Women's Initiative (YWI) focused on changing the lives of young women and girls of color. Along with Council Members Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, Elizabeth Crowley, Laurie Cumbo, and Darlene Mealy, Speaker Mark-Viverito presented an empowering vision before an audience of over 2,000 leaders of community-based organizations and philanthropic partners who gathered for the New York Women's Foundation's annual Celebrating Women Breakfast. Beginning in September 2015, over 200 stakeholders, City Council staff, and young people themselves met numerous times over a six-month period to develop policy, programs, data, and resource recommendations focused on lifting up young women and girls of color in New York City.

Writing it Down

In May 2016, the New York City Council released the New York City Young Women's Initiative Report and Recommendations that included 80+ policy, program, legislative data and budgetary recommendations from all 5 work groups and overarching recommendations.

Making it Happen

In August 2016, Girls for Gender Equity began the Young Women's Advisory Council 2.0 (YWAC) so the young women can continue to serve as strategic partners to city agencies, philanthropy and community members. YWAC acts in the capacity of advisory and accountability team as policy and program recommendations are implemented throughout New York City.

YWI Stakeholders continue to track these recommendations and work together to ensure that YWI meaningfully remains a part of the landscape of New York City.