



Broward County Commission on the Status of Women

The Status of Women in Broward County Report 2024

Recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners



There is transformative power in empowering women, it can lead to positive change for individuals, families, & communities.

Visit us at our website at <https://www.broward.org/StatusofWomen/pages/default.aspx>

2024 Officers:

Chair: Caroline Collette

1st Vice Chair: Angine Moss

Chair's Report

As Chair of the Broward County Commission on the Status of Women for 2024, I am pleased to share the accomplishments and initiatives of our commission over the past year.

One of our key successes was the work of the Mindfulness Committee, which developed three mindful public service announcements (PSAs) that were reviewed and approved by Broward County Communications for distribution to the community. These PSAs reflect our ongoing commitment to promoting wellness and mental health awareness among women in Broward County.

In 2024, we also revitalized the commission's social media presence. Our Instagram account was reactivated, and a comprehensive social media calendar, strategy, and plan were implemented. These efforts resulted in more than doubling our followers on Facebook and more than tripling our Instagram followers, significantly expanding our reach and engagement with the community.

Another key development this year was the establishment of an Events Committee, which assisted in planning our March Women's History Honorary Social and laid the groundwork for additional public panel discussions to engage and educate the community on women's issues.

In response to growing concerns about women's health, the commission chose to focus more closely on maternal health in Broward County. Individual board members conducted independent research to better understand local needs, providing valuable insights to inform the commission's future initiatives and advocacy efforts.

2024 has been a year of growth, increased engagement, and strategic planning for the Broward CSW. These achievements reflect the dedication of our commissioners and our continued commitment to advancing the well-being, equity, and empowerment of women throughout Broward County.

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Collette

Summary

The Status of Women in Broward County Report 2023 paints a sobering picture of the challenges faced by women in our community. Despite significant strides, persistent disparities in maternal and infant health, mental health, and housing continue to hinder the progress of many women.

To ensure a brighter future for all women in Broward County, we must take decisive action to address these disparities. By implementing the following recommendations, we can work towards a more equitable and just society.

Recommendations from the Broward County Commission on the Status of

Women: Maternal and Infant Health Disparities

Broward County's infant mortality rate is 6.6 deaths per 1,000 live births, significantly higher than the state average of 5.3. **Black women in Broward County are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women.** This stark disparity underscores the urgent need for improved access to quality prenatal care and culturally competent maternal health services.

Recommendation:

Expand Access to Quality Prenatal Care:

- **Increase funding** for community health centers and public health programs to provide comprehensive prenatal care, including nutrition counseling, health education, and mental health services.
- **Implement targeted outreach** to underserved communities, such as those in North Lauderdale and Lauderhill, where maternal mortality rates are significantly higher than the county average.
- **Promote culturally competent care** by training healthcare providers to address the unique needs of diverse populations, particularly Black and Hispanic women, who experience disproportionately higher rates of maternal mortality.

Reduce Infant Mortality Rates:

- **Expand home visiting programs** that provide support and education to new parents, particularly in high-risk communities.
- **Increase access to breastfeeding support** through lactation consultants and breastfeeding friendly workplaces.
- **Implement evidence-based interventions** to reduce sleep-related infant deaths, such as safe sleep education campaigns.

Address Racial Disparities in Maternal and Infant Health:

- **Collect and analyze data** on racial and ethnic disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes to identify specific needs and target interventions.
- **Partner with community organizations** to develop culturally appropriate programs and services that address the unique needs of Black and Hispanic women.
- **Support research** to investigate the underlying causes of racial disparities in maternal and infant health.

Mental Health Disparities

Women in Broward County report higher rates of anxiety and depression than men, with 26.6% of women experiencing anxiety and 22.2% experiencing depression.

Recommendation:

1. Increase Access to Mental Health Services:

- **Expand mental health services** in schools, workplaces, and community health centers, particularly in areas with high rates of poverty and crime, such as Pompano Beach and Fort Lauderdale.
- **Reduce stigma associated with mental illness** through public awareness campaigns and education, emphasizing the importance of seeking help.
- **Increase funding for mental health crisis services** and support hotlines, such as the 211 helpline.

2. Promote Mental Health Awareness and Education:

- **Develop and implement mental health curriculum** in schools to teach children and adolescents about mental health, coping strategies, and help-seeking behaviors.
- **Provide mental health training** for healthcare providers, educators, and community leaders, especially those working with marginalized populations.

Housing Disparities

Women in Broward County are more likely to experience housing instability and homelessness than men. Low income households, particularly those headed by single mothers, face significant housing challenges.

Recommendation:

1. Increase Affordable Housing:

- **Expand affordable housing programs** and provide rental assistance to low-income women and families, particularly those facing domestic violence or fleeing abusive situations.
- **Support the development of mixed-income housing** in areas with high demand, such as downtown Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood.

- **Implement policies to protect tenants' rights** and prevent displacement, especially for women of color who are disproportionately affected by eviction.

2. Address Housing Instability and Homelessness:

- **Expand supportive housing programs** that provide housing and services to individuals experiencing homelessness, with a focus on women and families.
- **Increase funding for rapid rehousing programs** to help individuals transition out of homelessness quickly, especially for women with children.
- **Implement policies to prevent eviction** and provide legal assistance to tenants facing eviction, particularly those who are victims of domestic violence.

By addressing these disparities, Broward County can improve the health, well-being, and overall quality of life for women and families.