



# Diane

The Magazine

## The State of Women in Central Indiana

P4

Grantees Advancing  
Reproductive Health

P12

2024 Reports on Girls  
and Senior Women

P14

## February 2025

Women's Fund of Central Indiana convenes, invests, and advocates so all who identify as women or girls living in Central Indiana have an equitable opportunity to reach their full potential no matter their race, place, or identity.



Diane B. Brashear, Ph.D. was the founding force behind Women's Fund of Central Indiana. Photo courtesy of IUI University Library Special Collections and Archives

**Women's Fund of Central Indiana**  
**615 N Alabama St. Suite 300**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46204**  
[info@womensfund.org](mailto:info@womensfund.org)  
**(317) 634-2423**

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Tamara Winfrey-Harris  
[TamaraWH@womensfund.org](mailto:TamaraWH@womensfund.org)  
**(317) 634-2423 x187**



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OPTIONS Class 23



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# Letter from the President

The past is a gift—one we celebrate through history and heritage months. It offers us lessons in resilience, insights into what has shaped our present, and inspiration to build a more equitable and stable future. As we reflect on the past, we welcome the opportunity to break cycles and create meaningful change for women and girls in Central Indiana.

This February issue of *DIANE* is devoted to the state of women and girls in our region. At the Women's Fund of Central Indiana, we embrace the past to inform how we progress, recommitting our place as a visible ally for women and girls. We remain a trusted source of information for those striving to improve outcomes for Hoosier women and girls, and we will continue to be a convening force for the many groups tackling the obstacles ahead.

I hold in deep reverence the research and dedication given to *The State of Women Report*, developed by the Women's Fund of Central Indiana in partnership with The Polis Center at Indiana University Indianapolis. The report offers a comprehensive, albeit sobering, view of life for women in Central Indiana. It reveals the duality of a woman's experience—the progress and the persistent challenges.

The good news begins with education. Indiana University reports a rising number of women pursuing higher education degrees, a trend consistent with national data. Additionally, the Indiana Department of Education shows improvements in high school graduation rates for women, leading to increased postsecondary enrollment. These gains set a foundation for further progress.

However, challenges remain, particularly in health and economic disparities. The report underlines the inaccessibility of equitable and attuned healthcare, worsened by wage disparities that are more severe in Indiana than the national average. Wage inequity limits women's ability to secure adequate healthcare coverage, compounding issues related to structural barriers such as environmental hazards, unsafe neighborhoods, and inadequate

housing. These conditions significantly impact health outcomes, life expectancy, and overall quality of life.

Recognizing the critical importance of women's health, we are deepening our investment in research. In addition to *The State of Women Report*, this year we are partnering on two white papers and community conversations focused on reproductive health and mental health. These will complement existing research, providing a comprehensive view of women's experiences in Central Indiana—from birth throughout life.

This issue of *DIANE* also shares findings from the State of Aging Report and Indiana Girl Report, illustrating women's experiences through every stage of life. Our grantee highlights section show-

cases organizations working tirelessly to ensure access to reproductive care for Central Indiana women. Meanwhile, in the donor spotlight, OPTIONS alumnae and co-chair of the Women in Health Giving Collaborative Steering Committee, Cara Berg-Raunick, details what powers her philanthropy and commitment to women's reproductive healthcare and rights.

As we begin another year, Women's Fund honors women in all roles, neighborhoods, and walks of life. We remain committed to ensuring women are empowered to lead, whether in boardrooms, classrooms, communities or homes. We are inspired by the caretakers, teachers, and parents who dedicate themselves to creating a promising tomorrow.

In Central Indiana, and across the state, the prospects for a brighter future begin with improved outcomes and opportunities for women and girls. Together, we can push for every woman to have the support and resources she needs to live life to the fullest.



Tamara Winfrey-Harris  
President  
Women's Fund of Central Indiana

# The State of Women in Central Indiana Report

In 2024, Women's Fund commissioned Indiana University's Polis Center to research and write *The State of Women in Central Indiana Report*. Our ambition was to describe the experiences of women in our region as fully as data would allow and use community voices to illuminate what data fails to reveal. We did this for three reasons:

- To better educate residents on the condition of women in our region
- To better direct women-focused philanthropic resources
- To inform more effective state and local policy, leading to better outcomes for women in Central Indiana

*The State of Women Report* cannot do any of those things on its own. To achieve the outcomes above, the report relies on an audience of residents, philanthropists, and policymakers willing to listen to and learn from women.

Some Hoosiers worry that such an audience may not exist in numbers large enough to make the deep, systemic changes necessary to improve women's health in Indiana.

Terri Lee, Senior Director for Health Equity at Aspire, puts it bluntly: "I cannot say with full confidence that policymakers have my best intentions in their heart."

Wendy Noe, CEO of Dove Recovery House for Women, states the case: "The rights of women are not a given in Indiana."

It is likely not a coincidence that Indiana ranks low among U.S. states for both women's health outcomes and in female legislative representation.

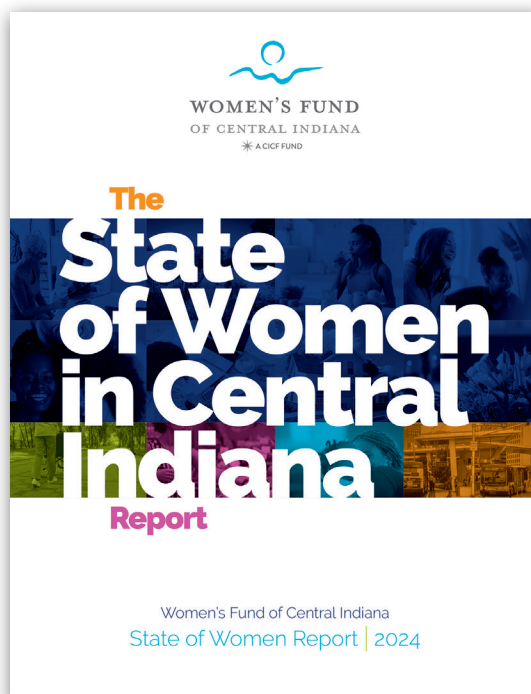
But while *The State of Women in Central Indiana Report* may not always be an easy read, it is true. And any significant, positive change will always begin there—with what is true. Equipped with this data, the onus is on our community (especially its policymakers) to respond.

The good news—because yes, there is good news—is that our region is full of women who are leading the charge for a better future. We hear from many of them throughout *The State of Women in Central Indiana Report*. And every chapter includes callouts of organizations

that offer strength and abundance to women in Indiana.

What follows is a partial summary of the report. Women's Fund encourages you to view the complete document at

**[WomensFund.org/report](https://WomensFund.org/report)**.



## OVERVIEW and DEMOGRAPHICS

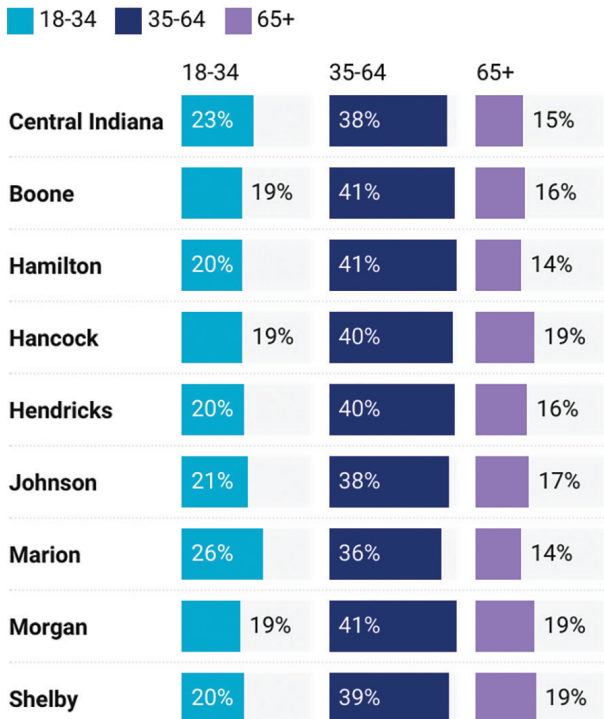
The study is divided into two sections: Basic Needs and Health & Well-being. Between them, they feature 10 individual chapters examining Central Indiana women's relationship to everything from housing to transportation to food and beyond.

But before getting into the condition of women in Central Indiana, let's understand who we are talking about.

Throughout the report, "Central Indiana" is mostly defined as the eight-county region of Boone, Johnson, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Marion, Morgan, and Shelby (although, some of the report's data sources expand it to include Madison Co. and, occasionally, Brown and Monroe counties).

### Marion County has the highest portion of young women

Central Indiana women by county and age



Source: ACS 2022 5-Yr Estimates; Graphic by the Polis Center

**The good news is that our region is full of women who are leading the charge for a better future.**



In that eight-county region, 52% of the population identifies as female: that compares to only 50.4% at the state level and 50.5% at the national level. So, when we talk about females in Central Indiana, we are talking about a statistical majority of the eight-county region

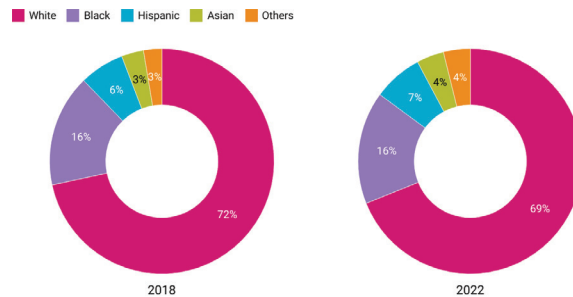
While most of these counties have similar demographic breakdowns, there are deviations. Marion County overrepresents in younger, non-White women relative to surrounding counties.

Meanwhile, though immigrant populations have been increasing in most Central Indiana counties (now comprising 10% of Marion and 8% of Hamilton counties), foreign-born populations have slightly *decreased* in both Madison and Morgan counties.

Women's racial/ethnic demography in Central Indiana overall has shown small decreases in its White population and slight increases in the categories Asian and Other:

### The racial composition of Central Indiana is consistent for Black and Asian females between 2018 and 2022

Women population by race and ethnicity, 2022



Source: ACS 2022 5-Yr Estimates; Graphic by the Polis Center

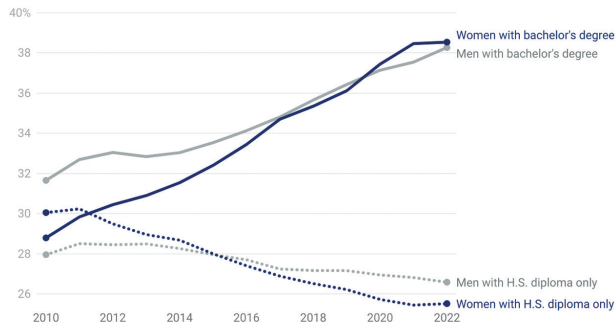
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## FINANCIAL STABILITY

Throughout *The State of Women in Central Indiana Report*, outcomes have a strong (though, not exclusive) relationship with incomes. Today, we often need some form of post-secondary education to access a livable wage. It is here that the study measures one of the biggest shifts for women in Central Indiana over the last decade.

**College attainment for women has increased 10 points** since 2010, closing the gender gap with men

Percent of adults (age 25+) by education and gender



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Averages; Graphic by the Polis Center  
Central Indiana (8-county region)

In 2010, women in the region were less likely than men to have a bachelor's degree and *more* likely to stop their education after high school. By 2019, both of those outcomes were reversed. Nationally, that switch happened in about 2002 (Pew, 2023).

And yet, overcoming the education gap between men and women did not overcome the wage gap.

In 2022, Hoosier women earned about 75 cents for every dollar earned by a man. While that was a small improvement over 2012 (73 cents), it compared poorly to the nation's narrower wage gap of 83 cents. Surprisingly, part-time wages were at parity in 2012. However, by 2022, men's part-time pay had increased 87%, leaving women making 80 cents on the dollar compared to men at part-time positions. The gap is even larger for women of color.

## Women earn less than men in both full-time and part-time work

Earnings by gender and work status

### 2012

	Part-time	Full-time
Men	12,665	56,951
Women	12,442	41,797

### 2017

	Part-time	Full-time
Men	14,484	65,383
Women	14,554	48,972

### 2022

	Part-time	Full-time
Men	23,715	78,325
Women	19,057	58,923

Source: 2022 ACS 1-Year Averages; Graphic by the Polis Center  
Central Indiana (8-county region)

The reasons for wage disparity have been long debated. The *State of Women Report* cites the Nobel-Prize-winning work of Claudia Goldin who examined over two centuries' worth of American labor and wage data with respect to gender. We recommend her 2021 book *Career & Family: Women's Century-long Journey Toward Equity*; it outlines the measurable impact of prejudice and chosen career paths on wage inequity.

The *State of Women Report* outlines the participation rate of women in different Central Indiana job sectors.

As women make up a smaller share of an industry's workforce, their earnings tend to fall further behind male colleagues'. In sectors where women make up the workforce majority, they earn an average of 82 cents to their male colleagues' dollar; when they're the minority, 72 cents.

However, one industry proves an exception: computer/mathematics. This is the only job sector where women outearned men in Central Indiana. It is also one of the most male-dominated job sectors.

As the full report shows, women's financial stability is the primary link in a chain that impacts housing, health, safety, and more.

There is a **gender pay gap** in almost **every occupation**

Employment and earnings by occupation

Occupation	Sorted by Gender representation ← More women • More men →	Median earnings All workers	Gender pay gap % less than men's earnings
Healthcare support	73%	\$30,357	0%
Health technologists and technicians	62%	\$41,812	23%
Personal care and service	59%	\$21,275	3%
Community and social service	34%	\$50,577	5%
Food preparation and serving	15%	\$16,679	13%
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	10%	\$46,017	21%
Legal	4%	\$75,160	40%
Life, physical, and social science	4%	\$84,208	23%
Building and grounds maintenance	18%	\$23,742	45%
Computer and mathematics	45%	\$80,268	2%
Firefighting	48%	\$47,065	61%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	54%	\$30,033	
Law enforcement	65%	\$76,571	42%
Architecture and engineering	70%	\$85,165	23%
Transportation	71%	\$45,065	46%
Construction and extraction	93%	\$43,525	21%
Installation, maintenance, and repair	93%	\$51,900	21%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Averages; Graphic by the Polis Center Central Indiana (8-county region)

**HOUSING**

In the last issue of *Diane*, we saw how housing for women—especially women of color—is negatively impacted by a low-wage state economy with few safeguards for renters.

The *State of Women Report* expands that discussion by examining the two worst outcomes: eviction and homelessness.

In Central Indiana, a majority of renters are women. Renters who are single mothers pay an average of 48% of their income toward housing costs. That leaves them most vulnerable to rent increases.

From 2019 to March of 2024, rent prices in Central Indiana increased an average of 35%. That led to an estimated 60% of all eviction filings in the region to be filed against women in recent years.

As shown in our last issue, laws that impact renters in Indiana largely favor property owners and landlords. That has caused the state to gain

fame as a prime target for real estate investor groups even as Indianapolis earns an unwelcome reputation as an eviction capital.

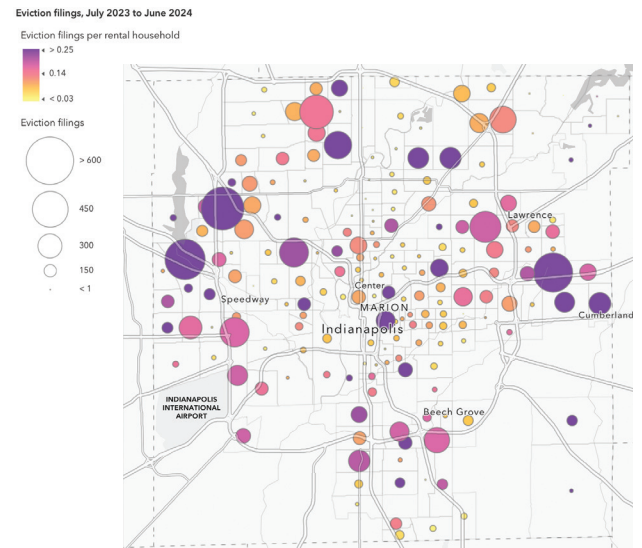
Rhonda Bayless, Executive Director at Centers of Wellness for Urban Women:

“Being a Black woman may mean you are more likely to have an eviction on your housing record... The lack of homelessness prevention programs and financial support focusing on keeping families housed before an eviction—that is the heart of this issue.”

In 2024, Indy ranked fifth in eviction filings among American cities, maintaining a presence in the top five for several years running. Eviction filing rates tend to be highest near the county's edges rather than in the city's lowest-income census tracts.

Eviction filings are most common where large apartment complexes are located near Interstate 465

Evictions by census tract, July 2023 to June 2024



One possible reason why: According to the Indianapolis Star, 88% of eviction filings in 2021 came from corporate landlords as opposed to private individuals. Large complexes near I-465 are usually corporate-owned as opposed to smaller complexes in the city's core.

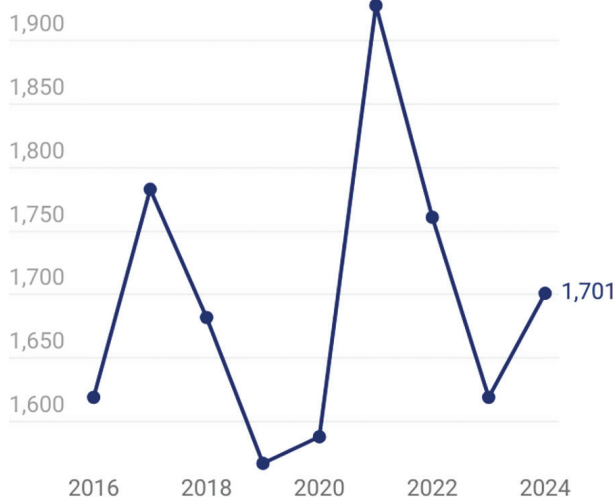
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Even if a filing stops short of a full eviction, it can make future housing options for a family challenging. In the worst cases, it leads to a full eviction and homelessness.

In 2024, Indianapolis recorded 1,701 individuals experiencing homelessness on a given night. This was a slight improvement from the pandemic high of 1,928 individuals in 2021.

### Homelessness count increased from 2023 to 2024

Point-in-time count of people experiencing homelessness, Indianapolis (Marion County)



Source: Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention; Graphic by the Polis Center

While the creation of more housing stock can help alleviate housing costs and reduce homelessness, housing construction levels are still at historic lows in the long wake of the 2008 recession.

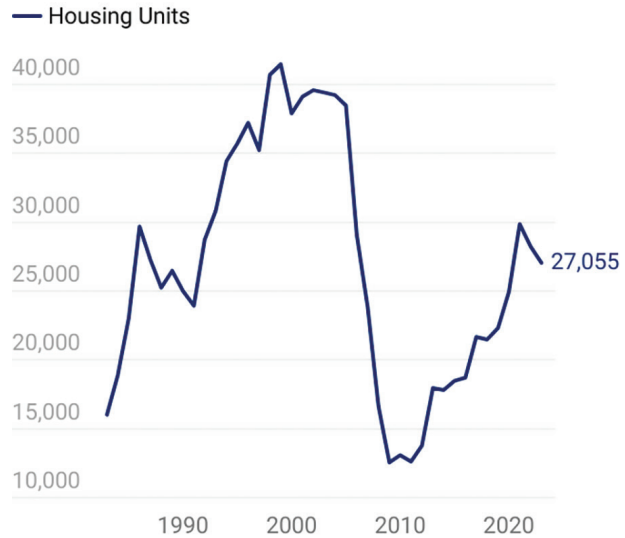
Existing, vacant housing will play a role in returning more residents (disproportionately single mothers) to permanent homes.

The *State of Women in Central Indiana Report* cites a need for improving voucher systems through the Indianapolis Housing Agency (IHA).

The report also points to Indianapolis' new "master leasing" program. Inspired by a successful effort in Milwaukee, this program allows the city's Department of Metropolitan Development to hold a lease on units occupied by those experiencing housing instability.

### After recovering from Great Recession, housing construction only at 1987 levels

Building permits per year, Indiana 1983-2023



Source: U.S. Census Building Permit Survey; Graphic by the Polis Center  
Indiana (Statewide)

## SAFETY

Danyette Smith, MHS, survivor and Director of Domestic Violence Prevention at the Indy Public Safety Foundation, speaks to the impact that a lack of stable housing can have on women's safety:

"It's very hard to flee a domestic violence situation without housing. It's a part of your wellbeing. Little has been done [about housing] from a domestic violence perspective."

Among U.S. states, Indiana routinely sits among the top five for its rate of domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV, defined as violence between intimate partners who do not live together).

Higher rates of poverty typically increase the likelihood of DV/IPV, meaning historically disadvantaged populations will often experience DV/IPV more frequently.

**"It's very hard to flee a domestic violence situation without housing. It's a part of your wellbeing."**

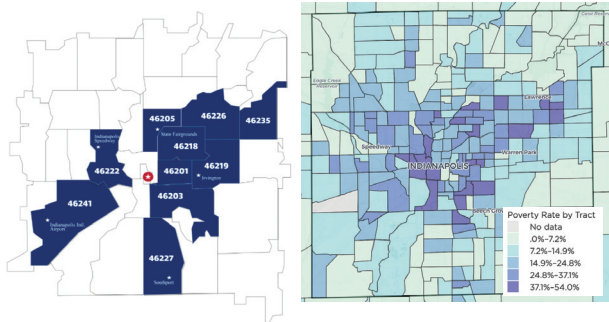




The *State of Women Report* demonstrates the income linkage visually for Marion County, highlighting the overlap between census tracts with higher rates of 911 calls for domestic violence alongside areas with higher rates of poverty.

### High rates of domestic violence overlap with high rates of poverty

Ten ZIP codes with most requests for domestic violence police dispatches, compared to poverty rate by tract



Source: Indy Public Safety Foundation, American Community Survey; Graphics by the Polis Center

However, it's important to note that DV and IPV can and do impact households in every income level and Central Indiana county.

As noted in the report:  
*...[L]eaders of DV service organizations across Central Indiana noted similar barriers for survivors in suburban counties. Often, women lack independent resources to leave a violent relationship. This includes lack of transportation, childcare, income, and housing.*

According to the report, 1 in 5 Central Indiana women have experienced sexual assault; however, a majority of assaults likely go unreported to police. Surveys show that the three most common reasons women give for choosing not to report are a fear of reprisal, police bias against victims and, most commonly, that the abuse was "a personal matter," with the assailant being known to the victim.

"A lot of women go back when they lack understanding, and it's a vicious cycle," said Danyette Smith.

The report highlights Beacon of Hope Crisis Center, a Women's Fund 2023 grant recipient which provides financial assistance to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

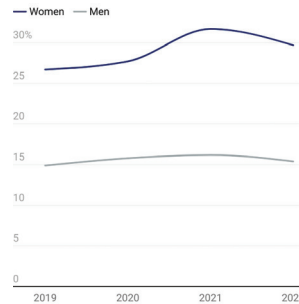
## MENTAL HEALTH

The *State of Women Report* revealed several correlations between mental health and variables like income, age, race and gender.

For instance, while women reported higher rates of depression and frequent mental distress than men...

For residents **18 or older, 1 in every 3 women** suffers from **depressive disorders, compared to 1 in 8 men**

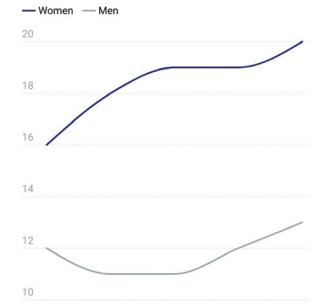
Depression by gender in Indiana



Source: BRFSS, 2019-2022; Graphic by the Polis Center  
 Age Group (18 and older)

In **2022, 1 in 5 women** in the state reported suffering from **frequent mental distress, compared to 1 in 8 men**

Frequent mental distress gender disparities

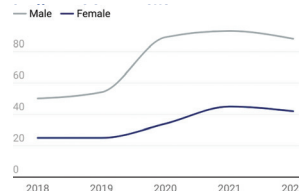


Source: BRFSS, 2019-2022; Graphic by the Polis Center  
 18 and older

...men demonstrated significantly higher rates of overdose death and suicide, especially after the onset of the pandemic.

While **men continue to experience higher overdose mortality rates, the gap is narrowing as women's mortality rates rise consistently each year**

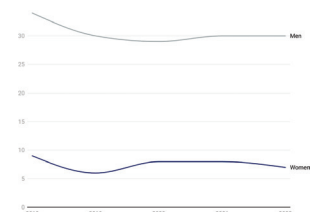
Crude Mortality Rate per 100,000 for Overdose Deaths, Central



Source: CDC WONDER Drug overdose deaths are identified using ICD-10 underlying cause-of-death codes: X40-X44, X60-X64, X85, and Y10-Y14.7; Graphic by the Polis Center  
 Crude Mortality Rates Used Age Adjustment is impossible due to data suppression for 5-year age groups

The **suicide mortality rate for men** remains **significantly higher** than that for **women**

Crude Mortality Rate per 100,000 for Men vs Women Central Indiana (Age 20+)



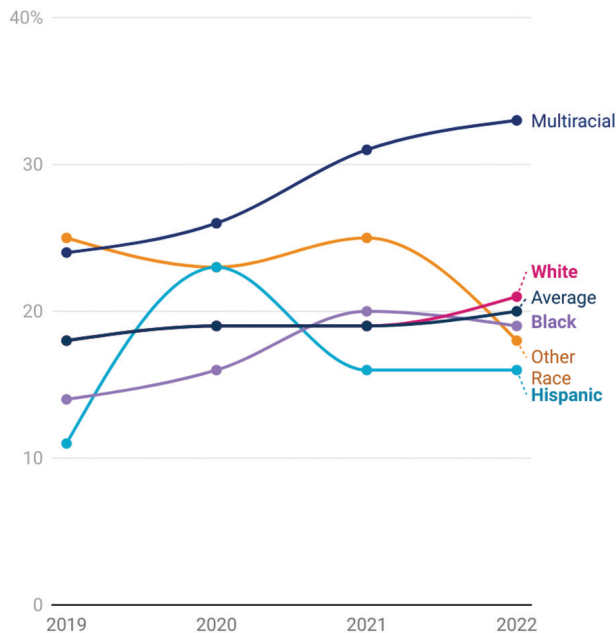
Source: CDC WONDER, 2018-2022; Graphic by the Polis Center  
 Crude Mortality Rates used as data for 5-year age groups were suppressed

Continued on page 10

And while race has an impact on women's frequent mental distress (defined as 14 or more poor mental health days a month), the most negatively impacted group is multiracial women, who report nearly twice the rate of frequent mental distress as Hispanic women.

**Multiracial women in Indiana experience significantly higher rates of frequent mental distress**

Frequent Mental Distress in Women by Race in Indiana



Source: BRFSS, 2019-2022; Graphic by the Polis Center 18 and older

From the report:

*The pandemic had a tremendous effect on the connectedness of communities, causing increased feelings of social isolation. [...] Most of our interviewees felt that there was more isolation overall, and that can have effects on women, particularly.*

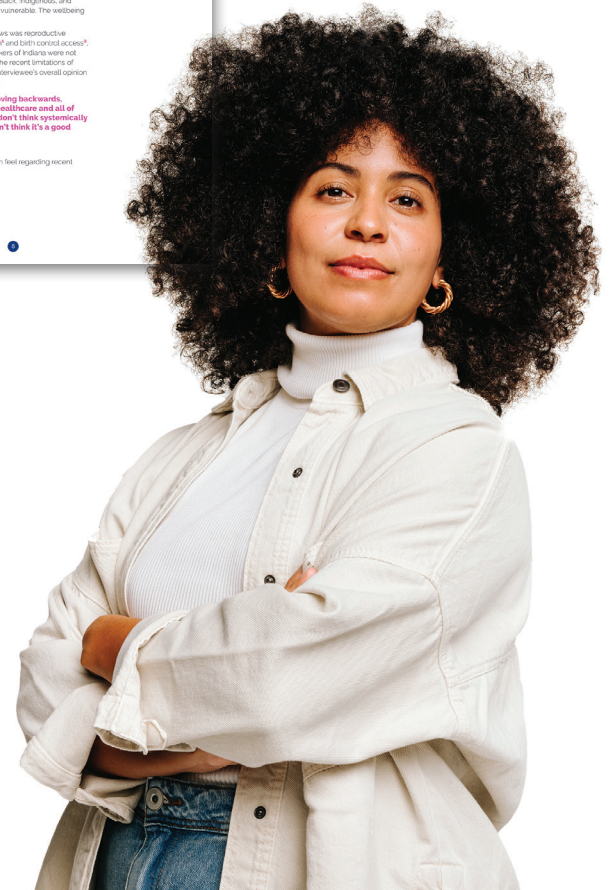
**NOT JUST NUMBERS**

As with any large report, we run the risk of data numbing us to the very human experiences that the data represent. For that reason, you will encounter women's voices throughout this report.

Doneisha Posey, CEO of Impacto Strategies and Co-Founder of Women's Equity (WE) Brunch says it well:

**"Policy makers should be listening to women... Data can tell many different stories, and it can tell whatever story that you want it to tell. So, if we're not ... listening to women and their needs, you will continue to do a disservice"**

Women's Fund is grateful to all the women who lent their voices to give shape and meaning to *The State of Women Report*.





## What We're Watching, Reading and Listening To

As advocates, conveners, community members and investors in women and girls, it's essential that we focus on supporting media produced by and for women. Staying up to date with critical issues keeps us informed and inspired. Below is a list of books, articles, videos and podcasts focused on women that Women's Fund recommends.

### WHAT WE'RE *watching*

#### **Daughters**

In this universally acclaimed documentary four young girls prepare for the Daddy Daughter Dance with their incarcerated fathers in a Washington, D.C. jail. | [Watch on Netflix](#)

#### **Wicked (2024 Film)**

Set in the Land of Oz, largely before Dorothy Gale's arrival from Kansas, the film covers the events of the musical's first act, following Elphaba's studies at Shiz University and her path to ultimately becoming the Wicked Witch of the West, alongside an unlikely friendship with a classmate who later becomes Glinda the Good Witch of the North. | [Out now](#)

#### **Loud And Clear: Using Your Voice to Build a Brand and Movement**

Drew Afualo, content creator, women's rights advocate, podcast host and *New York Times* best-selling author, discusses building a brand and community. | [Find on Forbes](#)

### WHAT WE'RE *reading*

#### **Hood Wellness: Tales of Communal Care from People Who Drowned on Dry Land**

Author Tamela Gordon explores approaches to self-care given a health industry that too often fails vulnerable communities. Through humor and candid storytelling, Gordon offers more accessible models for preserving our well-being. | [Buy it at your local bookseller](#)

#### **Research: Flat Hierarchies Discourage Women Applicants**

New research uncovers a surprising finding about a tactic used to attract a diverse talent pool, particularly women. Companies often tout flatter organizational structures in their recruitment materials, but a flatter hierarchy may diminish women's representation in the applicant pool. | [Harvard Business Review](#)

#### **The Uprising of Women in Philanthropy**

*Uprising* details the inspiring, never-before-told story of the global women's funding movement. Written by leaders in the movement, this book is for those interested in focusing the power of philanthropy on leveraging systemic victories and gender equality gains. | [Buy it at your local bookseller](#)

#### **Faux Feminism**

After over 175 years, the feminist movement, now in its fourth wave, is at risk of collapsing on its eroding foundation. In *Faux Feminism*, political philosopher Serene Khader advocates for another feminism—one that doesn't disproportionately serve the White and affluent. | [Buy it at your local bookseller](#)

### WHAT WE'RE *listening to*

#### **Make Rest Your Revolution with Tricia Hersey**

Tricia Hersey (artist, theologian, poet, activist) returns; Abby Wambach, Glennon Doyle and Amanda Doyle talk to Tricia about her foundations, philosophies and approaches to resistance through the medium of rest. | [Listen to "We Can Do Hard Things" wherever you get podcasts](#)

#### **Labour by Paris Paloma**

An indie folk song by British singer-songwriter Paris Paloma is described as an anthem that addresses issues of gender inequality within societal structures. | [Listen on your favorite music streaming platform](#)

# Five Women's Fund Grantees Advancing Reproductive Health

Women's Fund has always supported organizations that work to improve women's health and wider access to reproductive healthcare in Indiana.

In a health landscape fraught with new laws, restrictions, and soaring costs, our efforts have only redoubled. Read about five organizations dedicated to women's health that received grant funding during our latest grant round.

## All-Options

**Amount granted: \$17,500**

**Grant for: Education on Reproductive Health Options**

All-Options promotes judgment-free support for women in their decisions, feelings, and experiences with pregnancy, parenting, abortion, and adoption. They do so by sharing accurate and unbiased information while also providing resources such as condoms, emergency contraception, pregnancy tests, diapers, menstrual products and other services through a variety of community outreach methods.

A grant from Women's Fund will support its work in Central Indiana to ensure that underserved and marginalized women and girls have access to this information.

## Gennesaret Free Clinic

**Amount Granted: \$20,000**

**Grant for: Women's Health Services**

Gennesaret Free Clinic provides healthcare services to low-income and unhoused populations of Indianapolis.

This grant will support Gennesaret Free Clinic's Women's Health Services program, which provides free pap and pelvic exams, STI testing, breast screening services, patient education, access to breast diagnostic services, patient navigation services, and direct financial assistance that covers unmet costs that may impede a woman's health journey as a patient. It provides family planning and free birth control through a partnership with PATH4YOU.

## HamCo Love

**Amount Granted: \$7,500**

**Grant for: Period Supplies for Hamilton County Schools**

HamCo Love provides necessary period care products to Hamilton County residents, including more than 45 Hamilton County schools. It directly supplies school clinics, stocks menstruation stations in restrooms, and/or gives teachers a stash to provide in their classrooms.

The grant from the Women's Fund will allow HamCo Love to increase its capacity, install more menstruation stations, and work with nurses and counselors to provide "to go" packs for students to take home as needed.

## Indiana University Foundation

**Amount Granted: \$25,000**

**Grant for: Patient-Centered Contraception Care through PATH4YOU**

Pregnancy at a Time that is Happy and Healthy for You (PATH4YOU) reduces infant and maternal mortality by helping plan healthy pregnancies. The program is based at the Indiana University School of Medicine.

Women's Fund's Grant will support PATH4YOU's contraceptive initiative in central Indiana, which provides free, same-day access to all forms of reversible birth control. All patients receive pregnancy intention screening, contraception information and counseling, and same-day access to their chosen contraceptive method.

## Just Community

**Amount Granted: \$20,000**

**Grant for: JUST Doula Culturally Responsive Training Design Initiative**

A Women's Fund grant will help Just Community develop the JUST Doula Culturally Responsive Training Design Initiative, a specialized training program for doulas that emphasizes cultural responsiveness and incorporates comprehensive training in trauma-informed care, mental health, and physical and emotional support for women throughout their pregnancy. It will enhance the capabilities of current doulas and train new doulas to meet the diverse needs of mothers, particularly focusing on Black populations in Marion County.



# The 2024 Indiana Girl Report



The *Indiana Girl Report* comes from a collaboration of the Girl Scouts of Central Indiana, Girl Coalition of Indiana, and the Indiana Youth Institute. In the words of Executive Director of Girl Coalition of Indiana Mackenzie Pickerrell, the report looks to “affirm what girls are feeling and experiencing as they navigate uniquely challenging times,” while also inspiring “the collective action of caregivers, educators, [...] and corporate, local, and state decision makers” to make necessary changes.

Find the full report online at [GirlCoalitionIndiana.org/report](https://GirlCoalitionIndiana.org/report).

As one might expect, the *Indiana Girl Report* previews some of what we find in *The State of Women in Central Indiana Report*, especially concerning barriers to physical and mental health.

The report offers three general focus areas for improving outcomes for Hoosier girls:

## POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Fostering more positive experiences early on better equips girls for adulthood.

While many Hoosier girls' responses aligned closely with national trends, areas in which Indiana fared poorly included low involvement in after-school activities, high levels of homelessness among students, and low levels of daily physical activity.

Fortunately, 9 in 10 Hoosier girls aged 6 to 17 have an adult mentor beyond parents or caregivers; however, more than 1 in 5 female students in grades 7 and up said they are unable to ask a parent for help with personal issues.

## ADDRESS BULLYING AND VIOLENCE

Bullying has been a part of teenage life for as long as there have been teenagers. But for many kids, social media has turbocharged their exposure to cruel and even traumatic bullying from peers.

Alongside this, over 17% of high school girls reported experiencing sexual violence in a single year—and as with adult counterparts, that figure is likely low due to underreporting.

Even so, these girls will grow up in a state that is routinely in the top 10 for its rate of domestic violence. More effective statewide intervention is needed to disrupt what are often cycles of violence.


## INCREASE ACCESS TO CARE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Given how girls report seven times the level of dating violence as boys, as well as having fewer positive childhood experiences, it is not surprising that girls in grades 7 through 12 are twice as likely as boys to report mental health challenges.

They are also twice as likely to “seriously consider suicide” and more likely to have used alcohol, over-the-counter drugs, marijuana, and cigarettes.

Not only can a dramatic increase in access to care for mental health help Hoosier girls today, but it can disrupt cycles of aggression, violence, and mental illness for future generations.

In a recent appearance on the podcast *How They See Us*, Mackenzie Pickerrell and Women's Fund President Tamara Winfrey-Harris noted the small percentage of total charitable dollars that go to women- and girl-serving organizations (1.9%). What is also critical to understand is the multiplier effect of supporting these organizations. By uplifting women and girls, we support those who disproportionately care for others (or will soon)—as mothers, teachers, mentors, caretakers and more.

In this way, Indiana's future is in women's hands, and it starts with Indiana girls. 

# The State of Aging in Central Indiana Report



In December of 2023, the *State of Aging in Central Indiana* report was released by the Central Indiana Senior Fund (a CICF fund). You can find the full report online at [CentralIndiana.StateOfAging.org](https://CentralIndiana.StateOfAging.org).

Another collaboration with The Polis Center at Indiana University Indianapolis, the report looks at the health, needs, and well-being of our aging population.

While the report includes both men and women, it offers valuable data frequently disaggregated by gender.

Combined with the *Indiana Girl Report* and the *State of Women in Central Indiana Report*, Hoosiers now have unprecedented access to the lifelong experience of women in our state.

Some notable findings in the *State of Aging* report:

- Seniors (65+) are the fastest-growing population, both nationally and in Central Indiana.
  - The demographic is growing at four times the rate of younger generations in Central Indiana.
- Women make up 55% of Central Indiana's 60-and-over population (compared to a 52% majority of all ages).
- A third of Central Indiana's older population lives alone.

## ■ Poverty

- 1 in 12 Central Indiana seniors experiences poverty.
- Over half of seniors who rent in Central Indiana pay over 30% of their income to housing costs.
- Not only are rates of poverty for older women (8.9%) higher than older men (7.2%), but older Black and Hispanic adults are likelier to experience poverty than White peers, leaving older women of color at an increased risk.

## ■ Health

- For every 1,000 Hoosiers age 65+, there are 34 home-health workers; that compares to a national average of 60 workers.
- Health providers surveyed in the study identified falls, mental health, dementia, and fragmented care in rural areas as needing more resources in our region.

## ■ Disability

- In Central Indiana, 29% of those aged 65 to 84 have a disability
- Only a quarter of older adults say information is available about services to allow them to remain in their homes and communities as they age.

## ■ Transportation

- 1 in 3 older adults in Indianapolis live in a neighborhood with minimal to zero public transit service.
- Only 20% of older adults in Central Indiana positively rate the accessibility of public transit.

### Living with grandchildren is most common among those age 65-84

Percent of adults age 55+ in each age group living with their grandchildren.



Source: PUMS, ACS 2017-2021 five-year estimates • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

### Older adults find car travel easy, but less than one in five finds transit easy to use in their community.

Percent of older adults in Central Indiana who say they have good or excellent ease of travel by...



Source: CASO, 2021 • [Get the data](#) • [Embed](#) • [Download image](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

## Donor Profile

# Cara Berg Raunick, DNP



Cara Berg Raunick

Women's Fund believes women working in all areas of healthcare should play a role in making grant decisions that can improve health outcomes for women and girls in Central Indiana.

That was the motivation behind our Women in Health Collaborative Fund. Last month, the steering committee for Women in Health reviewed applications and provided a list of those for donors to consider.

The co-chair of that steering committee is Cara Berg Raunick, DNP, Director of Clinical Quality and Advancement for HCET (Health Care Education & Training). She is also a Women's Fund OPTIONS Alumnae donor. We caught up with Cara to ask what motivates her to secure wider access to care in Indiana.

*(This interview has been edited for length)*

### What inspires your work, both personally and professionally, in support of reproductive health and reproductive justice?

I am passionate about normalizing and talking about things that people find hard to talk about. Reproductive and sexual health covers a huge range of things and truly affects all people, and yet we are so afraid to talk about it and it is shrouded in such stigma. People deserve medically accurate, inclusive, trauma-informed care. I want to normalize reproductive health as just another part of health and these conversations and experiences as another part of the human experience. I trust women. I trust people to know what is best for themselves and their families.

### Tell us about your philanthropic journey. How do you use philanthropy to supplement the time and talent you dedicate to reproductive health and reproductive justice?

Throughout my childhood my parents reinforced the Jewish values of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) and Tzedakah (righteousness, commonly translated as charity). I remember early lessons about the value of giving, especially when it is done without an expectation of recognition or thanks but rather with a focus on making the world better, easing suffering, or helping someone to thrive. I come from a place of privilege and my parents always emphasized that it was a responsibility to help with the resources we had and that we must continue to look outward not inward.


Another big influence on my philanthropy was being part of OPTIONS Class 16. I am so grateful for everything I learned both about the greater Indianapolis community and philanthropy more

generally through that experience. It absolutely changed the way I give and helped me be more strategic and impactful.

### What legacy do you hope to leave your daughter and her generation?

I want the girls of today to know that they are valuable, that they are strong, that they are worthy, that they can lead. I want them to feel safe. I want them to know that supporting one another will always get them farther than tearing each other down. My daughter is young, so I am always trying to balance being honest and sharing the world as it is with her while also keeping her unafraid and keeping things developmentally appropriate. So, when I think about the moment we are in, I hope I am modeling all of that for her. I want her to remember that when women's rights were taken away, when vulnerable people were being harmed, that I didn't stand by, but was always working hard to make the world a better place for her, for other women and girls, for others who don't have the resources or voice that I have.

### What gives you hope for a better tomorrow?

It's definitely been a hard season. But, when I look around even just in my immediate community, I know of so many incredible people, especially incredible women, who are working every day to make the world a better and more just place. We may not always win, but we are always there, doing what we can to move things forward. It can feel like two steps forward, one step back, or even one step forward, two steps back sometimes. But I believe that standing up for women and for the vulnerable will always be the right side of history. 



WOMEN'S FUND  
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615 N Alabama St. Suite 300  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

**Did you know that issues specific to women and girls receive only 1.9 % of all U.S. philanthropic giving?\***



WOMEN'S FUND  
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And yet, women and girls across our country and here in Central Indiana face tremendous challenges. The Institute for Women's Policy Research keeps a report card for each state, and Indiana ranks among the worst for women's well-being, earning a D grade.

In Central Indiana, far too many women face inequitable pay, rising housing costs and evictions, lack of access to the full range of reproductive care, high rates of infant and maternal mortality, inadequate transportation, intimate partner violence and other challenges.

Girls face pressures unimaginable to past generations, from relentless social media to escalating mental health crises. And while some girls are thriving, far too many are entrenched in situations and stresses that could leave them struggling.

Women's Fund asks you to stand with us, to invest in and support the women and girls around you, to show that Central Indiana is not a community of exposed vulnerability, but of strength and possibility.

**Please donate to Women's Fund.** Each gift, no matter the amount, builds our collective power. Together, we can work to make sure every woman and girl in Central Indiana has the chance to reach her full potential—no matter her race, place or identity.

To donate, visit: [womensfund.org/donate](https://womensfund.org/donate), or mail your gift to Women's Fund of Central Indiana, 615 N. Alabama Street, Suite 300, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

\*2024 Women and Girl Index, Women's Philanthropy Institute of Indiana University, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy