

2017 Annual & RBA Report

Connecticut Commission on
Women, Children *and* Seniors



CWCS



Table of Contents

Statutory Mandate 1

Letter of Transmittal 2

Mission Statement and Priorities 3

CWCS Commissioners and Staff 3

Legislative Agenda for 2018 Session 4

Legislative Highlights of 2017 Session 4-6

RBA Quality of Life Result 7-15

#1: *All Connecticut women have optimal health, opportunity and safety throughout the lifespan.* 7-9

#2: *All Connecticut children and youth are safe, and school- and workforce-ready.* 10-12

#3: *All older Connecticut adults can age safely and productively in their community.* 13-15

Highlighted Initiatives 16-20

Opioid and Heroin Use Prevention 16

Senior Center Task Force Study 17

Statenwide Women's Organizations Network 17

Workplace Discrimination Investigation Trainings 18

Preventing Human Trafficking 18

Parent Leadership Training Institute 19

Building Empathy through the Arts 21

Coalitions 22

Outreach & Speaking 22

Media 22



CWCS staff (front row): C. Palm, S. Hernández, C. Kovel;
(back row): M. Noehren, R. López, H. Petit and M. Hill.

OUR MANDATE (excerpted)

Sec. 131. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2016) (a) There is established a Commission on Women, Children and the Elderly, which shall be part of the Legislative Department. The commission shall focus on issues affecting each of the following underrepresented and underserved populations: Women, children and the family and elderly persons. The Commission on Women, Children and the Elderly shall constitute a successor to the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, Commission on Children, and Commission on Aging in accordance with the provisions of subsections (b) to (d), inclusive, and subsection (f) of section 4-38d and section 4-38e of the general statutes.

Sec. 132. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2016) (a) The Commission on Women, Children and the Elderly shall:

(1) Focus its efforts on the following quality of life desired results for women, children and the family and elderly persons in the state: That they are (A) healthy, safe and achieve educational success; (B) free from poverty; and (C) free from discrimination;

(2) Make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor for new or enhanced policies, programs and services that will foster progress in achieving the desired results described in subdivision (1) of this subsection. Such recommendations shall, when applicable, include, but need not be limited to: (A) Systems innovations, model policies and practices which embed two-generational practice in program, policy and systems change on the state and local levels; (B) strategies for reducing family poverty, promoting parent leadership and family civics; (C) the promotion of youth leadership opportunities that keep youth engaged in the community; and (D) strategies and programs that address equitable access, impede bias, and narrow the opportunity gap for women, children and the family and elderly persons in the state. Such recommendations may include other state and national best practices, and recommendations on federal funding maximization;

(3) Review and comment, as necessary, on any specific proposed state legislation or recommendations that may affect women, children and the family and elderly persons in the state and provide copies of any such comments to members of the General Assembly;

(4) Advise the General Assembly concerning the coordination and administration of state programs that affect women, children and the family and elderly persons in the state;

(5) Gather and maintain, as necessary, current information regarding women, children and the family and elderly persons in the state that can be used to better understand the status, condition, and contributions of such groups. Such information, as appropriate and pertinent to the desired results delineated in subdivision (1) of this subsection, shall be included in the annual report submitted in accordance with subsection (b) of this section and shall be made available to legislators and other interested parties upon request;

(6) Maintain liaisons between women, children and the family and elderly persons of the state and government agencies, including the General Assembly; and

(7) Conduct educational and outreach activities intended to raise awareness of and address critical issues for women, children and the family and elderly persons of the state.



Dec. 20, 2017

Joint Committee on Appropriations
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Honorable Appropriations Committee Members:

I am pleased to present the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors' (CWCS) 2017 Results-Based Accountability (RBA) and Annual Report to the General Assembly.

This has been a year of tremendous challenges for the state. Despite losing two CWCS staff members, who left to pursue more secure positions, CWCS staff have continued to work diligently to advocate for women, children and older adults. Consequently, we lost a few valuable programs, even as remaining staff stepped up and took on more work.

Last year at this time, I mentioned three basic principles that would guide our (then) newly formed commission. As I re-read them today, they are as pertinent as ever, and I am proud to say we never wavered from them:

- Any position we take, or advice and support we give, on an issue or policy will be informed by data, best practices, or both;
- When necessary, we will ask the tough questions that test the status quo and which may lead to reform or innovation; and
- We will strive for efficiencies, both systemic and programmatic, which will benefit our constituencies while saving the state time, money and effort.

It continues to be a privilege to work on behalf of our three underrepresented, and at times underserved, populations.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Steven Hernández".

Steven Hernández, Esq.
Executive Director

COMMISSION OFFICERS

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Communications and Women's Policy Analyst

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Children's Policy Analyst

Mission Statement and Priorities

The Commission on Women, Children and Seniors (CWCS) is a non-partisan arm of the Connecticut General Assembly. As staff to the legislature, the CWCS researches best practices, coordinates stakeholders, and promotes public policies that are in the best interest of Connecticut's underserved and underrepresented women, children and older adults.

The agency recognizes that the experiences and needs of each population, while interconnected, are unique and may require individual public policy action. Therefore, the commission's legislative priority areas are meant to:

For Women:

- Enhance women's economic security through leadership development and such family-friendly workplace policies as paid family leave and pay equity;
- Ensure wellness throughout the lifespan, including access to the full range of reproductive healthcare; and
- Eliminate gender-based discrimination in the workplace and in government.

For Children:

- Empower families and community leaders to be change agents on behalf of children;
- Remove the economic and academic obstacles that prevent children and their families from reaching their full potential; and
- Promote the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of children.

For Seniors:

- Promote economic security, choice and independence for older adults in both work and retirement;
- Support livable and accessible communities where older adults can retain their dignity and age in place; and
- Enhance the safety and wellbeing of seniors by preventing physical abuse and financial exploitation.

2018 Legislative Agenda

2018 Legislative Priorities

Legislative priorities are policy measures that the CWCS takes the lead on by convening key stakeholders and working with legislators directly on specific bills that will move forward an agenda that serves our three populations.

Women:

Women's Healthcare Access and Reproductive Rights

Enhance women's healthcare by retaining and protecting current access and provisions available under the ACA, including co-pay-free birth control, as well as access to safe and legal abortions. Increase coverage and privacy, ensuring that preventive care includes a diversity of needs, and that care is not compromised as hospital and healthcare systems are acquired and merged.

Children:

School Climate and Social-Emotional Learning

Make Connecticut the first state in the country to fully embrace best practices in our schools in the form of social and emotional skills building, which is a proven method of reducing bullying, tapping into children's potential, narrowing the achievement gap, increasing safety, and promoting relational success in life. Strengthen the state's role as a leader in a multi-state collaborative that includes the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, UConn's Neag School of Education, CCSU and the Dalio Foundation.

Seniors:

Senior Centers-Recommendations from the Task Force

CWCS chairs the Senior Center Task Force (SA 16-7), which will report in February 2018 on findings concerning the status of the state's roughly 160 senior centers, including resource, training and capacity needs for senior center directors. We will actively work to advance recommendations that come out of that report, especially those that enhance the physical and financial safety, emotional well-being and overall independence of the state's older adults.

Legislative Support Issues

CWCS will collaborate with – and support – stakeholders and legislators by serving on coalitions, providing data, and giving testimony on general policy topics that affect our three constituent populations.

Establish a system of Paid Family and Medical Leave that can support Connecticut's working families.

Enhance current anti-trafficking laws by expanding the age limit for a "minor child."

Prevent opioid abuse by promoting a proven education strategy that engages schools, parents and community as partners to teach children about the perils of drug use and abuse.

Improve access to high-quality child care for children experiencing homelessness by extending the 90-day grace period for compliance with immunization and other health and safety requirements.

Support housing policies for seniors that allow older adults to age safely and productively at home.

Protect the "safety net" of seniors' services, such as Medicare, Meals on Wheels, and the CT Home Care Program.

2017 Legislative Session Highlights

For Women

Human Trafficking

P.A. 17-32; H.B. 7309, AAC Human Trafficking

Increases penalties against traffickers, and creates a standalone crime of “commercial sexual abuse of a minor” -- punishable as either a class A or class B felony. Requires posting of signs about trafficking in hotels, motels, nail salons and other establishments and provides for training and education.

Pregnancy Protections

P.A. 17-118; sH.B. 6668, AAC Pregnant Women in the Workplace

Requires employers to offer reasonable accommodations to pregnant and breastfeeding women, if requested. Bipartisan support in House and passed unanimously in the Senate.

Protection Privacy of Adoptive Families

P.A. 17-18; sH.B. 7121, AAC Revisions to the State’s Safe Havens Law

Protects privacy of surrendered child, birth parents and adoptive parents. by strengthening protections for individuals caring for infants who are considered to be in the custody of the Department of Children and Families under the state’s Safe Haven program.

Domestic Violence

P.A. 17-31; H.B. 7299, AAC Strengthening Laws Concerning Domestic Violence

Changes the “standard of fear” required for the stalking statutes and expands stalking definition, includes suffocation, increases penalties.

Witness Protections in DV Cases

P.A. 17-24; S.B. 980, AAC Intimidating a Witness

Increases penalties for intimidating a witness from Class C to Class B felony. Gives notice to a person protected by a restraining or protective order as to whether the subject of such order has transferred, delivered or surrendered any pistols, revolvers and other firearms or ammunition as required by law.

Gender and Hate Crimes

P.A. 17-111; H.B. 5743, AAC Hate Crimes

Increases penalties for hate crimes, and broadens hate crimes to include bias against the gender of a person. Also establishes a State-Wide Hate Crimes Advisory Council.

For Children

Early Education and Family Stability

S.B. 873, AAC A Two-Generational Initiative

Fosters family self-sufficiency through a comprehensive two-generational service delivery approach; now coordinated by Office of Early Childhood.

Universal Pre-School

S.B. 954, AAC the Development of a Plan for Universal Pre-School

Requires SDE to develop a plan for universal preschool in CT by July 1, 2022.

LGBTQ Rights

P.A. 17-5; H.B. 6695, AAC the Protection of Youth from Conversion Therapy

Protects minors by prohibiting the practice of conversion therapy.

Early Literacy

H.B. 7205, AAC Early Literacy

Requires SDE to provide Alliance schools and Commissioner Network schools with tiered reading interventions for a school/district based on need.

Parental Rights

S.A. 17-6; H.B. 6297, AAC Voluntary Placement in the Custody of the Department of Children and Families and Parental Rights

Establishes a task force to study termination of parental rights in cases of voluntary admission.

Child Passenger Safety

P.A. 17-230; H.B. 7055, AAC the Use of Child Restraint Systems

All children age 2 and until they reach 30 lbs. shall be restrained in rear-facing car seats, as recommended by the APA.

Police Officer Training on Autistic Children’s Safety

S.A. 17-6; H.B. 6260, AAC Training Programs for State and Local Police Regarding Juveniles with Autism Spectrum Disorder or

Non-Verbal Learning Disorder.

Requires state/local police receive training on techniques for handling incidents of children with autism spectrum disorder or nonverbal learning disorder.

Isolated Confinement Reform

S.A. 17-6; H.B. 7302, AAC Isolated Confinement and Correctional Staff Training and Wellness

No child with shall be subjected to isolated confinement, except (1) during a facility-wide lockdown or a Class 1 Incident as defined in the Department of Correction’s Administrative Directive 6.6, or (2) as a temporary, emergency response to a substantiated threat of imminent physical harm to correctional staff or other inmates.

2017 Legislative Session Highlights, *Continued*

For Older Adults

Temporary Health Care Structures

P.A. 17-155; S.B. 922, AAC Temporary Health Care Structures

Provides families and caregivers with the option of installing temporary health care structures on residential property, thus allowing seniors and people with disabilities to remain in their communities while receiving care. (Allows municipalities to opt out.)

Tenant's Security Deposit

P.A. 17-236; H.B. 7019, AAC the Department of Banking

Requires landlords, at the tenant's request, to return any portion of a security deposit that exceeds one month's rent if the tenant turns age 62 after paying the deposit.

Background Checks for Long-Term Care Facility Workers

PA 17- 146, § 19; H.B. 7222, AAC Department of Public Health's Various Revisions to the Public Health Statutes

By law, long-term care facilities must require people who will have direct access, or provide direct service, to patients or residents to undergo a federal and state criminal history record checks.

Home Health Care Registries

PA 17-53; S.B. 867, AAC Notice Requirements for Home Health Care Registries

Requires homemaker-companion service registries, absent a bona fide emergency, to give consumers a written, legal liability notice before commencing services.

Food Donations to Senior Centers

P.A. 17-93; S.B. 901, AAC Dept. of Public Health's Recommendations Re Adoption of a Model Food Code

Exempts people who donate food, and nonprofit organizations that distribute donated food, to senior centers or political subdivisions of the state from liability for civil damages or criminal penalties resulting from the food's nature, age, condition, or packaging.

Financial Planners Serving Seniors

P.A. 17-120; H.B. 6992, AA Protecting the Interests of Consumers Doing Business with Financial Planner

Establishes advertising and disclosure requirements for financial planners who are not otherwise regulated by state or federal law.

Income Tax Withholding for Pension and Annuity Payments

P.A. 17-147; H.B. 7312, AAC State Taxation and Collection, Tax Gap Compliance...

Beginning January 1, 2018, Connecticut residents receiving certain pensions or annuities must have income tax withheld from those payments. Previously they had the option to request that income tax be withheld.



Chief State's Attorney Kevin Kane addresses Trafficking in Persons Council. Rep. Diana Urban is to the left.



State Representatives William Petit, Tim LeGeyt and Tony Hwang at a forum on literacy.address forum on literacy.



Judith Stein, Executive Director, Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc., provides an update at the CT Elder Action Network (CEAN) forum.

RBA Quality of Life Results

RBA Quality of Life Result #1:

All Connecticut women have optimal health, opportunity and safety throughout the lifespan.

Indicator 1: Economic security at work and home

Story behind the baseline:

Connecticut, which some years back earned an “A” for quality of life issues for women (IWPR State of the State report) lost several key opportunities this year to continue its historically progressive trending.

First, it lost an opportunity to pass a Paid Family and Medical Leave bill. While other states, including California, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey, recently passed legislation to ensure a Paid Leave plan, Connecticut’s Senate failed to bring it to a vote, despite its passage in the House and despite the moving testimony of several Senators.

Paid Leave increases family security, allows women to continue on career paths to success, protects elders and children and allows families to avoid making impossible choices about whether to work, or to care for loved ones.

Additionally, Connecticut lost an opportunity to pass meaningful pay equity legislation when it passed a watered-down version of that removed the key provision of preventing corporations from asking about past wage history. The Pay Equity Coalition was formed to work on a reintroduced bill.

Finally, women’s status was held back when the General Assembly failed to pass a healthcare protections bill (S.B. 586: AA Expanding Mandated Health Benefits for Women, Children and Adolescents), which would have helped to block the deleterious “trickle down” of national policy trends. This legislation would have preserved women’s access to preventive health services – including contraception – with no out-of-pocket cost. On the final day of Session, the House tabled it without a vote, after a legislator introduced an anti-choice parental notification amendment. Similar legislation has passed in Illinois and Maryland.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Enact a system of Paid Family and Medical Leave;
- Enact legislation that supports family-friendly workplaces, including a strong pay equity bill; and
- Better coordination among advocacy groups working on women’s issues, including the Pay Equity Coalition.

CWCS supports these strategies through:

- CWCS supports legislation aimed at increasing women’s financial security; and
- Opportunities provided through the Young Women’s Leadership Program (*N.B. This program was discontinued when its director took a new job.*)

Data development needed:

- Study ways other states have managed to pass Paid Family and Medical Leave
- Update the Self-Sufficiency Standard for Connecticut (2015);
- Update the Status of Women in Connecticut’s Workforce Report (2015).



In Old Judiciary Room in September, Communications and Women’s Policy Analyst Christine Palm discusses with legislators ways pay equity would reduce poverty in Connecticut.

Indicator 2: Violence and discrimination against women

Story behind the baseline:

Domestic violence affects thousands of individuals in Connecticut, a disproportionate number of whom are women.

The Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV), which partners with CWCS on combatting the crime of domestic violence, reports 38,404 victims of domestic abuse in Connecticut for the year 2017.

In the 2017 session, CWCS worked on several Domestic Violence bills, including one that strengthened penalties for physical abuse and expanded the definition to include emotional abuse, online stalking, strangulation and suffocation.

Additionally, our chair Karen Jarmoc worked with Sen. Mae Flexer on a roundtable to address Connecticut's disproportionate rate of dual arrests, which can discourage a woman from reporting intimate partner violence.

It should be noted that the year 2017 saw a tremendous rise in the reporting of -- and consequent awareness of -- the prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse. Domestic violence is on a continuum of what is often being referred to as "rape culture" and "toxic male behavior."

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Advocate for legislation to support and protect victims through the judicial process; and
- Support domestic violence services in order to ensure women's access to confidential care, information, referral and safety.

CWCS supports these strategies through:

- Deepening connections with advocacy groups such as The Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence;
- Partnering with the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) to support legislation that would protect the current restraining order process (which removes firearms from an abuser when a judge deems that a woman is in imminent danger and grants a temporary restraining order); and
- Meeting with lawmakers to support the work of CCADV and their member centers throughout the state and legislation that seeks to strengthen protections for victims and prevent domestic violence.

Data development needed:

- The role of dual arrests in discouraging women from seeking help in intimate partner violence situations.



CWCS Chair Karen Jarmoc (far left) and Sen. Mae Flexer discuss dual arrest rate with advocates and municipal law enforcement.

Indicator 3: Human trafficking

Story behind the baseline:

Human trafficking remains a form of modern-day slavery that exists everywhere -- including here in Connecticut. And in addition to the thousands of adult women (and some men) who are victims of sex trafficking, the state's Department of Children and Families (DCF) is tracking 456 minor children who are known to be -- or are at serious risk of becoming -- trafficking victims.

To combat this, the Trafficking in Persons Council (TIPC), which is chaired by the CWCS, will, with technical assistance from the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking (LCHT), embark on an initiative that will develop sustainable efforts to end human trafficking with the essential input of those working in the field. By utilizing the structure established by the United States Department of State's "4P" paradigm -- prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership -- the TIP Council will embark on a statewide needs assessment on sex and labor trafficking in Connecticut, the results of which will inform a coordinated response to trafficking in persons that is community-led and can serve as a bridge among geographic areas of Connecticut, among sectors, and among anti-trafficking groups.

Every community in Connecticut is unique—from cities, to casinos, to rural communities, and so each has particular resources, industries and community dynamics. These characteristics are essential to an understanding of how trafficking manifests differently and will be the principle guiding force behind organizing a community-based human anti-trafficking response around the 4 P's. This project will allow the TIP Council to build on Connecticut's strengths in a data-informed manner as a community, more comprehensively and more collaboratively.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Legislation to address the workplace and employment violations at Connecticut nail salons; and
- Greater public awareness of the "demand side" of the crime of trafficking.

CWCS supports these strategies through:

- CWCS chairs, pursuant to statutory mandate, and convenes, on a bi-monthly basis, the TIPC;
- Meetings with lawmakers to discuss potential policies to address nail salon issues and the lack of prosecution for trafficking in persons;
- CWCS supports the TIP's efforts to disseminate the "End Demand" campaign, using traditional and social media to educate the public about the crime of purchasing victims for sex; and
- Connecticut Sentencing Commission Requests -- the TIP Council made a request to the Commission to recommend that the felony charge for trafficking in persons be added as an offense that makes someone register on the sex offender registry. They included this as one of their recommendations.

Data development needed:

- A statewide needs assessment study to ascertain the magnitude and nature of the problem; and
- A study of the extent of trafficking in Connecticut's nail salons.



At a press conference in January, anti-trafficking advocates and Gov. Dannel Malloy announce cooperative venture between the State and the lodging industry. CWCS Executive Director Steven Hernandez is to the Governor's left.

RBA Quality of Life Result #2:

All Connecticut children and youth are safe, and school- and workforce-ready.

Indicator 1: Early education and family stability

Story behind the baseline:

Low-income families in Connecticut continue to face substantial obstacles to economic self-sufficiency and access to quality early childhood education for their children. In Connecticut, 109,000 children live in poverty, 27% percent of children have parents who lack secure employment, and 8% of parents do not have a high school diploma.

Families face challenges at work and home with their childcare and education due to inflexible, unpredictable jobs and insufficient income coupled with the lack of access to quality early childcare and education. These challenges lead to a continuum in the cycle of poverty, parent and child stress at home, and undiagnosed developmental and mental health needs.

The Commission on Women, Children and Seniors administers the Connecticut General Assembly's statewide Two-Generational Initiative. The Two-Generational initiative works to create systemic change to help lift barriers and work with families holistically; by equipping families with the tools and skills they need to get on the path to opportunity and overcome obstacles they face; and by ensuring education and workforce development services for parents and high-quality early education for children.

By meeting the needs of children and parents together, the family builds education, economic assets, social capital, and health and well-being to create a legacy of economic security that passes from one generation to the next.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Help social service providers to see families as units of people with integrated needs;
- Improve results for families by making systemic changes to lift barriers and increase service of families more holistically; and
- Develop leadership in parents and teach them how to be advocates for their children in schools and through civic engagement

CWCS supports these strategies through:

- Two-Generational Initiative
- Family Support Council
- Parent Leadership Training Institute

Data development needed:

Further develop the Hartford region's data system to be used statewide by all providers who serve families. The data system would include a common intake and enrollment process form, middleware to aggregate data from providers and modules for referrals and scheduling to streamline the process for providers and families.



At the grand opening of the Two-Gen site in East Hartford in January are (left to right): Sarah Dudzic, Richard Sussman, Heather Petit, Rep. Jeff Currey, Veronica Rosario, Jamal Jimerson and Nathan Quesnel.

Indicator 2: Literacy

Story behind the baseline:

Over the last few years, the CWCS and the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, in partnership with the State Department of Education, The University of Connecticut Neag School of Education, Literacy How, Hill for Literacy, and the Grossman Foundation, sought to pilot, learn from, and grow an intentional set of literacy reforms to significantly narrow the opportunity gap in reading.

Policies have developed, as needed, to facilitate this intensive response to what continues to be an education crisis in the state. Initial reforms piloted the use of alternative instruments to assess children's reading level and building capacity of all teachers in the science of teaching reading. As we learned the extent of the need, a new pilot was developed in 2012 to focus on the 50% of African American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students who were not reading at proficiency. This included individualized reading interventions to help these students move forward successfully.

Building on the results and learning from the ongoing, now-consolidated reading pilots, the CWCS continues to participate in leading a coordinated state-wide literacy effort by 1) building internal capacity in tier 1 and 2 literacy efforts in Alliance Districts and Commissioner's Network schools; and 2) providing technical support in the development of district plans for improving literacy, leadership training modules with teacher leaders, principals, district reading coordinators and superintendents, to create and sustain reading improvement in their schools and districts, and an annual statewide reading conference (READCONN).

The CWCS continues to work with the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus and other stakeholders to bring these much needed interventions to scale in the state. During the 2017 legislative session, the CWCS worked with the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus on HB 7205 (PA 17-101), AAC Early Literacy, which was passed with bipartisan support. The legislation enhances efforts to close the achievement gap in reading by requiring the State Department of Education to establish reading readiness programs for Alliance District schools and Commissioner's Network schools as needed, as well as, requiring that results of literacy surveys of Pre-k to Grade 3 teachers be distributed to the teacher and the supervisor responsible for facilitating said teacher's professional development.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Increase literacy among minority and low-income children;
- Encourage parents to read to their children and help parents improve their own literacy skills; and
- Improve oversight of achievement gap in literacy in schools statewide.

CWCS supports these strategies through:

- Connecticut K-3rd Grade Literacy Initiative (CK3LI) – partnership with UConn and State Dept. of Education to address achievement gap;
- Conduct 3 parent literacy trainings per year in 40 schools;
- Hold forums with Pre-K and Birth-to-3 coalition leaders;
- Serve on the Achievement Gap Task Force; and
- Serve on Interagency Council to End the Achievement Gap.

Data development needed:

- Enhance the research and evaluation arm of CK3LI in partnership with the Neag School of Education to 1) disseminate research findings from CK3LI pilot, and 2) access and aggregate data from expanded implementation of CK3LI in Alliance District schools and Commissioner's Network schools to evaluate the impact of the initiative on change in practice and student reading achievement.



Dr. Margie Gillis, Dr. Michael Coyne, and Rep. Patricia "Billie" Miller at the CK3LI Literacy Forum last spring.

Indicator 3: School climate

Story behind the baseline:

The National School Climate Council defines school climate as “the quality and character of school life.” In many school communities, over 50% of students do not feel safe in school. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention affirmed that bullying is a public health problem. In fact, one in three students reports being bullied, and there is a growing body of research that shows that mean, cruel and/or bullying behaviors adversely affects everyone involved. The Commission remains committed to working with school districts and partners on increasing the emotional wellbeing for all of Connecticut’s children and youth.

A sustainable, positive school climate can be achieved through social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL teaches children to recognize and understand their emotions, feel empathy, make decisions, and build and maintain relationships. The Commission and key partners including Facebook inspirED, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), brought together high-school youth leaders, school administrators, school staff and legislators from around the state for a Leading with Kindness student summit at the State Capitol.

At the summit, youth had the opportunity to connect with their peers and discuss ideas and collaborate with students from other districts on how to be changemakers, create a more positive school climate within their community, and how to lead with kindness.

Educators learned the importance of SEL and its five core competencies which are 1) self-awareness, 2) self-management, 3) social awareness, 4) relationship skills, and 5) responsible decision-making. These core competencies can be enhanced through self-curriculum and instruction, schoolwide practices and policies, and family and community partnerships.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Continue work toward having Connecticut become the first Social/Emotional state in the country;
- Promote positive school climates through research-based prevention, including multi-tiered interventions and supports, school-wide assessment and data tracking on climate and culture;
- School-wide climate training, social and emotional skills building and integration of such skills throughout the school day; and
- Asset-based behavioral and restorative interventions.

CWCS supports these strategies through:

- Participation in the School Climate Task Force;
- Partnering with Stand Up and Speak out to bring empathy and connection through the arts;
- Promoting statewide adoption of sensible, fair and effective restorative practice laws, National School Climate Standards, and district and school adoption of and implementation of model climate policies;
- Founding member of a national collaborative on academic, social and emotional learning developing integrative SEL guidance for schools;
- Partnering with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Born this Way Foundation and Facebook on InspirED and the youth-led Emotion Revolution; and
- Working with the State Department of Education on integrative social and emotional learning standards for schools.

Data development needed:

- School-based, grade-appropriate school climate assessment in every Connecticut school; and
- Data on schools and personnel that have received school climate and tiered intervention and supports training, and information on school climate indicators in those schools pre- and post-training, including attendance, referrals, and exclusionary discipline.

RBA Quality of Life Result #3:

All older Connecticut adults can age safely and productively in their community.

Indicator 1: Long-term services and supports

Story behind the baseline:

With the rapidly growing population of older adults in Connecticut, rebalancing the Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) system towards a model of home and community based services (HCBS) versus institutional care costs significantly less and honors personal choice. Over the past several years, Connecticut has made progress towards in systematic change that allows more choices and options for older adults and individuals with disabilities. While progress has been made, ongoing state budget challenges impact the aging services network's ability for innovation and growth.

It is generally accepted that it is preferable to increase the percent of people receiving LTSS in the community because: 1) people prefer living in their own homes in a community setting rather than in a nursing home or other institutional setting, and 2) it can be less expensive than delivering services in an institution. (Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee Connecticut General Assembly, Factors Influencing Receipt of Long-Term Care Services and Supports in Home and Community Settings-Staff Findings and Recommendations Report-12/7/2016)

To this end, CWCS will focus our efforts in supporting systems change that “rebalance” the Long-Term Services and Supports system.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Coordinate and encourage communications among stakeholders in the aging community;
- Provide an opportunity for forums with members of the aging network and policy-makers; and
- Monitor changes in Medicaid and Medicare as they affect older adults.

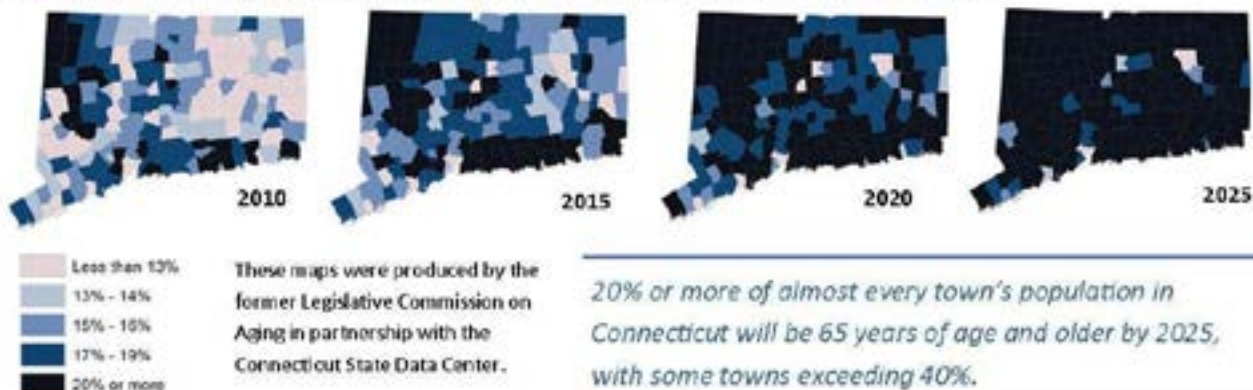
CWCS supports these strategies through:

- CWCS chairs and convenes the Long-Term Care Advisory Council (CGS Sec. 17b-338);
- CWCS participates in MAPOC, a stakeholder group that identifies, pursues and designs federal opportunities to streamline the HCBS system;
- CWCS is a member of the CT Elder Action Network (CEAN) which fosters dialogue and education regarding aging programs and policy; and
- Education and engagement of local municipalities in their efforts to respond to their changing demographics.

Data development needed:

- Updated demographic data trends concerning Connecticut's aging population.

Figure 1. Percentage of People Age 65 and Older as Proportion of Total Population



Indicator 2: Aging in place

Story behind the baseline:

Connecticut's population is aging, and that demographic transformation is both dramatic and permanent. By 2025, almost every town in Connecticut will have 20% or more of its population 65+.

At the same time, the state is becoming more diverse in terms of color, culture, identity, disability, and socioeconomic status. Preferences on where and how older adults age continues to change, too.

These changing demographics will affect nearly every facet of society, ranging from retirement, housing, transportation to programs and services.

According to a recent AARP survey of Americans over 65 discovered that 87 percent wanted to stay in their own homes as long as possible. Aging in Place is defined as “the ability to live in one’s own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level” (according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)).

Communities that feature strong social services and supports for older adults are known to prevent initial (and repeated) encounters with the health care system. They also improve quality of life, and keep people in their homes and communities longer. In the past several years, legislation and program initiatives have promoted Aging in Place programs, stemming from the legislative Aging in Place Task Force (SA 12-6) in 2012.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Assess programs and service delivery systems available to older adults in their communities; and
- Create/support legislation responsive to changing state demographics that promote aging in place.

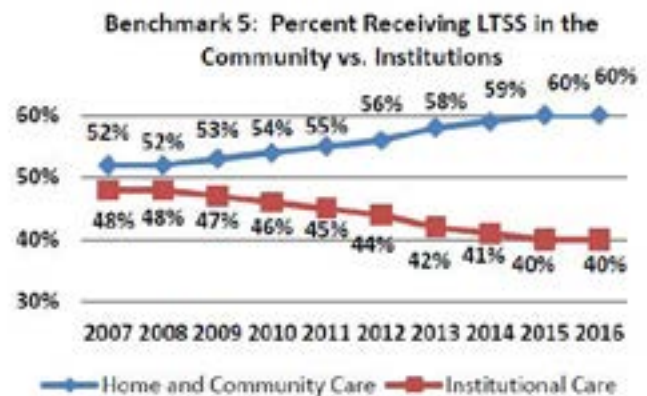
CWCS supports these strategies through:

- CWCS serves as administrative staff to the legislatively mandated Senior Center Task Force (SA 16-7) charged with assessment of delivery of health and human services and related information to persons age 60 years and older by senior centers, municipal agents, appointed pursuant to section 7-127b of the general statutes and other municipal employees (*report to be released February of 2018*); and
- CWCS monitors and testifies on legislation supporting aging in place initiatives.

Together with stakeholders, CWCS will continue to create and promote policy that addresses the growing numbers of diverse older adults in Connecticut, honoring consumer choice and fostering collaboration and systems change.

Data development needed:

- A follow-up review of the Aging in Place Task Force Report (2012).



Graphic courtesy of University of Connecticut Health Center from “Connecticut Money Follows the Person” Quarterly Report.

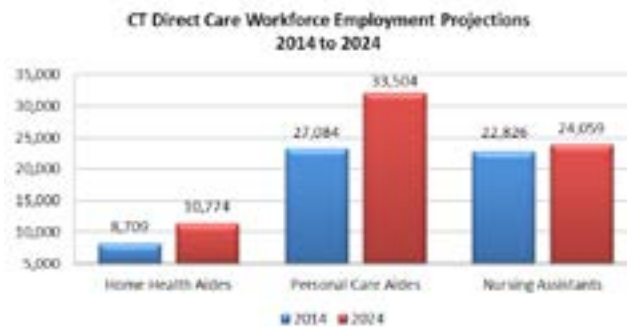
Indicator 3: Direct care workforce employment

Story behind the baseline:

Around the nation, states are grappling with how to meet the escalating demand for Long-term Services and Supports (LTSS) while at the same time reframing their service delivery systems toward home- and community-based settings and away from institutional ones.

In the past year the Department of Social Services updated and relaunched the My Place CT website. My Place CT is a single, well-vetted resource of information about LTSS. Direct linkage to Connecticut 211 connects to local providers with a network of partners in every Connecticut town to help people find services and navigate the system. Additionally on this site, My Place CT has created CaringCareers.org, which is a new resource for in-home careers. CaringCareers.org connects home care job seekers to employment tips and information specifically for the home care field. This resource provides additional communication and support for the direct care workforce.

Workforce development is one of the most significant components to achieve success in LTSS “rebalancing.” Connecticut possesses many valuable resources and initiatives for health care education and training, including a large number of strong institutions, associations, and professionals. Initiatives in recent years have laid a foundation for shared planning and action, and additional collaboration and coordination is critical to meet the anticipated growth in workforce projections. To continue addressing this challenge, CWCS will promote workforce initiatives that are proven to support consumer choice, self-direction and quality while enhancing recruitment, retention, productivity and training of the direct care workforce.



Workforce employment projections graphic courtesy of the Connecticut Department of Labor.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Support workforce development initiatives that help create a quality workforce to care for the growing number of older adults in Connecticut;
- Promote efforts and legislation to ensure a properly trained aging services workforce; and
- Collaborate with provider organizations to advocate for adequate reimbursements.

CWCS supports these strategies through:

- Support policy initiatives that encourage professional development in the aging services workforce;
- Raise awareness of the importance and value of the paid and unpaid direct care worker; and
- Support organizations and institutions that create a pipeline of direct care workers with opportunities for career advancement.

Data development needed:

- A systematic inventory of stakeholders to ascertain growing labor needs over the next five- and 10-year periods.



Highlighted 2017 Initiatives

The year 2017 saw increased activity and progress in two particular areas: preventing human trafficking (pg. 18), and increasing parental engagement in helping form public policies as a way of empowering families (pg. 19).

Additionally, we continued to advocate for our older adults through the Senior Center Task Force study (pg. 17), and our team addressed the skyrocketing incidents of opioid abuse (pg. 16).



Danbury PLTI 2017 graduating class.

Preventing Opioid and Heroin Abuse

Opioid use and fatal overdoses have skyrocketed in Connecticut over the recent years. In 2012, there were 357 overdose deaths, compared to 2017, where we will have seen approximately 1,078 deaths by year's end. The epidemic is not going away; instead it's getting worse – we saw an 18% increase in overdose deaths from last year alone. The Commission and legislators committed to helping solve this problem, met with communities, families directly affected, and partners to brainstorm solutions to end this child crisis.

We found that the best ways to prevent opioid overdose deaths are to improve opioid prescribing, reduce exposure to opioids, prevent misuse, educate to prevent, and treat opioid use disorder. [1] The Commission and the Courage to Speak Foundation, created a partnership to help save lives by empowering youth to be drug free and encouraging caregivers to talk to their children about the dangers of drugs. The Courage to Speak Foundation created drug prevention programs and curriculum for elementary, middle and high school students, as well as parents. Ginger Katz, founder of the Courage to Speak Foundation, lost her teenage son to a drug overdose in 1996 and has made over 1,000 drug prevention education presentations throughout the country.

Going forward, our partnership will work toward prevention through education as well as identifying critical legislation to help end this epidemic. Part of the Commission's legislative agenda for the 2018 legislative session includes hosting a forum with key partners, parents/caregivers, and experts on preventing drug use and overdose deaths. In addition, the Commission will be steadfast in encouraging legislation that includes opioid education and prevention for all children by giving them a toolbox of knowledge and refusal skills. Together and in partnership, we can make positive strides toward limiting the use of opioids and heroin in our communities.

Resources, Training Needs and Capacity of Senior Centers

SA 16-7: An Act Concerning Senior Centers establishes a task force (with CWCS serving as the administrative staff) to study best practices concerning the delivery of health and human services and related information to persons age sixty and older by senior centers, municipal agents, appointed pursuant to section 7-127b of the general statutes, and other municipal employees. Per legislation, the task force shall examine (1) the resources and training needs of senior center personnel, municipal agents and other municipal employees to allow them to facilitate delivery of health and human services and related information, (2) the most effective means to provide such resources and training, (3) current information delivery practices, (4) best practices in this state and other states for the delivery of such services and information, (5) barriers to access to information, and (6) data on the cost of resources and staff provided by emergency medical services, municipal police departments and other entities to provide such health and human services and information in the calendar year 2015.

The task force met eight times between May 2017 and December 2017. The group invited experts to present at meetings to speak on areas under study. Invited speakers and guests included: David P. Stevens, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging; Manoj Pardasani, PhD, LCSW, ACSW, Senior Associate Dean, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Research Scholar, Ravazzin Center on Aging, Graduate School of Social Service Fordham University; and Sherry Ostrout, Director of Government Initiatives, CT Community Care Inc. Members of the Task Force also presented information specific to their area of expertise. The task force is expected to conclude their work and issue a report with findings and recommendations to the General Assembly in February 2018.



Senior Center Task Force members, front row: Catherine Dinsmore, Harvey Frydman, Dianne Stone, Chair. Top Row, Christianne Kovel, Maureen McIntyre, Tina Doyle, Sandra Leubner, Steven Hernandez. Not pictured: Senator Doug McCrory, Representative Daniel Rovero.

Statewide Women's Organizations Network

In 2017, CWCS collaborated with a strengthen ties with organizations that serve women and girls in a vibrant new network that includes the following groups. New groups are being added regularly!

- AAUW CT
- Alpha Kappa Alpha
- Aurora Foundation for Women and Girls
- Caribbean Women's Network
- CFGNH Community Fund for Women & Girls
- Commission on Equity & Opportunity
- Commission on Women, Children, and Seniors
- Community Foundation of Eastern CT
- CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence
- CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- CT Community Foundation
- CT Council on Philanthropy
- CT NOW
- CT Women's Consortium
- CT Women's Education and Legal Fund
- CT Women's Hall of Fame
- Diaper Bank
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
- Emerge
- Empowering Through Beauty Foundation
- Fairfield County Community Foundation
- Girl Scouts of Connecticut
- Girls on the Run
- Interval House
- Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Hartford
- League of Women Voters of CT
- LiveGirl
- Lumenance Consulting LLC
- Main Street Community Foundation
- Middlesex County Community Foundation
- NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut
- New Canaan Community Foundation
- NHAC Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc
- Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation
- NOW
- PCSW, Inc.
- Peters Associates
- Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
- The Vinci Group
- Urban League of Greater Hartford
- Urban League of Southern CT
- WBDC
- Women & Family Life Center
- Women Empowered - Quinnipiac University
- Women's Campaign School at Yale
- Women's March CT
- Women's Studies Program, SCSU
- YWCA Hartford

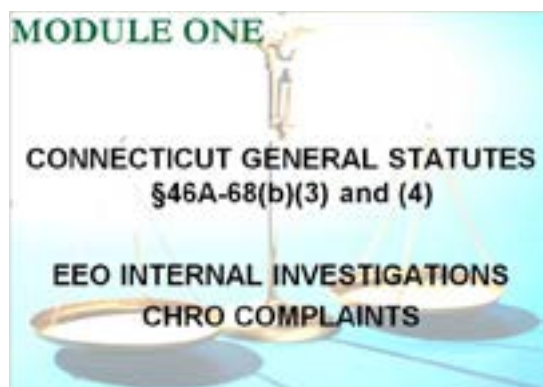
Workplace Discrimination Investigation Trainings

In cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO), the CWCS conducts annual Workplace Discrimination Investigations Foundation Training, and biennial Update trainings, as required by C.G.S. §46a-68(b)(3).

These trainings are for State employees who conduct employment discrimination investigations, including Attorneys General Designee, and Equal Employment Opportunity Officers (formerly known as Affirmative Action Officers). In addition to yearly Foundation training held in autumn, every other year, CWCS and CHRO give an Update training in summer, in recognition of the fact that laws change frequently.

Material covered includes: Understanding C.G.S. Statute §46a-68(b); Protected Classes & Discriminatory Conduct; Sexual Harassment; Other Areas of Discrimination; the CHRO Complaint Process; Review Mock Complaint; Conducting Internal Investigations; Duty to Investigate; Interviewing and Gathering Facts; and Making a Finding and Writing a Report.

In 2017, owing to the uncertainty of the Commission's fate last spring, we pushed the Update training off into the autumn. In 2017, we trained 144 State employees in the biennial Update Trainings (held Sept. 19 and 27) and 10 State employees in the Foundation Training, held on Oct. 25.



Raising Awareness about Human Trafficking

The TIP Council made significant progress toward understanding the nature of trafficking in our state and coordinating resources that address it. Additionally, the General Assembly passed significant legislation to combat the crime.

Key topics addressed at TIP meetings this year included the Illicit Massage Businesses. TIP recognizes the need to do more to respond in a victim-centered way to illicit massage businesses and address the networks that are in place that allow these businesses to open.

Additionally, the TIP Council is using research from the nationally recognized Polaris Project to update signs that will be posted in various entities throughout Connecticut.

Another link in the chain of building awareness is the creation of a CT- Based Needs Assessment of Human Trafficking. Under leadership of Jillian Gilchrest and CCADV, the TIP Council obtained private funds to begin this project. Since starting in September, the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking has come to Connecticut to train the project working group, composed of members of the TIP Council and community partners. The UCONN School of Social Work is leading the research team that is conducting this project in Connecticut.

And the “End Demand CT” public education campaign continues to raise awareness through targeted posters (shown below) and social media.



Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI)

The Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), created 25 years ago by the Commission on Children, continues to be the premier leadership training initiative for parent leaders in Connecticut. Through PLTI, parents who wish to improve the lifelong health, safety and learning of children become practiced change agents for the next generation. Communities sponsor the 20-week program in which parents complete a community civic project and accrue college credit for the program through Charter Oak State College. Each PLTI alumni class mentors the next, creating a ripple effect of community caring and a developing coalition of parent leaders. The program is evidence-based and program evaluation is done by parents weekly. Additionally, parents complete a pre- and post-survey.

PLTI seeks to dignify the role of parents as change agents within community and government by building their capacity as well as continuing to elevate the field of parent leadership nationally. Parents use their new civic tools to address issues that affect children and families primarily and engage in small and large group discussions that facilitate the process of learning the tenets of democracy and how to work with local and state government in the best interest of children.

Similarly, institutions, through parent leadership training, improve their capacity to work with and empower parents. PLTI has worked with early care and education programs, social services institutions and cities to improve: 1) parent engagement policies; 2) consumer-driven service delivery; and 3) leadership opportunities for parents.

This year, as part of the CWCS arm, PLTI collaborated with parents and communities by providing opportunities for families and community leaders to be change agents on behalf of children through participation on panels, public hearings and forum. PLTI worked to remove the economic and academic obstacles that prevent children and their families from reaching their full potential by raising awareness and working in concert with 2Gen leaders in the State to train and mentor 2Gen parents into leadership roles. Additionally, we partnered to promote the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of children in Connecticut.

The Children's Leadership Training Institute (CLTI) is a parallel course to the Parent Leadership Training Institute. Following the profile of PLTI, it is organized into the two sections: Phase I – Developing Communi-

ty and Phase II – Democracy and civic skills. CLTI was an idea that emerged at a PLTI graduation. It was there that the children's pride in both their parents' accomplishments and their own became visible. This challenged us to develop a parallel childcare component that includes parallel content. It is an organic bridge for parents and children who would now share the course experience.

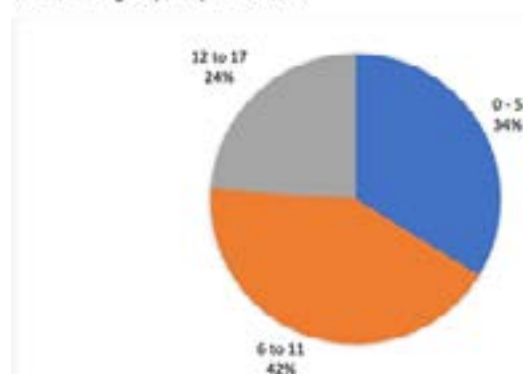
CLTI uses literacy as a base and creates a full spectrum of activities that parallel the PLTI course and encompass the multiple intelligences.

Demographics

PLTI participants are diverse by age, race/ethnicity, education level, income, employment status, country of birth, language, religion, geographic location, marital status, and age of children.

Connecticut PLTI participants overwhelmingly leaned female (92%). White (41%) was the largest racial/ethnic group, but all other racial/ethnic groups from which respondents could choose were represented. Native American was the least common (1%). The most common education level was Masters/PhD/Professional (37%); the least number of participants had less than a high school diploma (1%). The largest income group was \$85K+ (37%), and the smallest was <\$20K (10%). The majority was in paid work (63%). Additionally, 34% were not born in the U.S. and 41% spoke a language other than English at home. All possible religious groups were represented, but to varying degrees. The largest religious groups were "other Christian," (25%) and "Catholic" (24%) and the smallest was "Muslim" (1%). The most common marital status was "married" (67%). Although parents had children in all three possible age groups, the most commonly selected was the 6-11 years old range (42%).

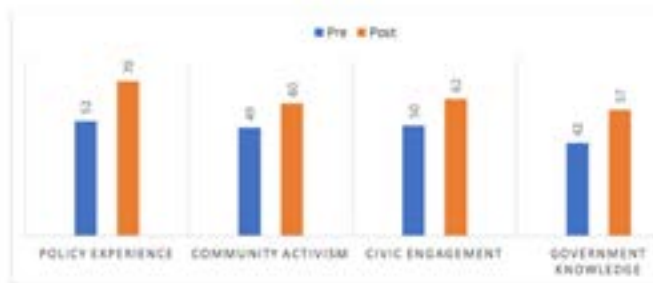
Number and age of participants' children



Outcomes

This year, PLTI graduated 130 parent leaders from eight communities throughout Connecticut: Bridgeport, Danbury, Hartford, Milford, Stamford, Waterbury, West Hartford and Windsor Locks. During the 2017 election season there were parent leaders across the state who ran for office and won! Many ran for Board of Education or City Council. A few winners: Rachel Chaleski - Danbury Board of Education, Melissa Sorano-Adorno – Waterbury Board of Education, Mary Fay – West Hartford Town Council, Sue Davis - Suffield School Board, Briana J. Brumaghim – Plymouth Board of Finance and there are too many to list!

The parent survey measures the impact of the initiative on parents' civic skills, engagement, and knowledge, as well as their experiences with the initiative. (See graph.)



By the end of the program, parents reported engaging at a higher rate in a range of civic behaviors, particularly in contacting elected officials, working with others in immediate neighborhood to fix or improve something, and receiving a request to take an active role in addressing a community issue. In addition to changes in civic attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors, the majority of parents reported that as a direct result of PLTI, they had thought about or taken steps to make changes in their personal lives, such as furthering their education, changing/advancing their careers, and making changes in their emotional, social, or physical health. Furthermore, parents reported that they had positive experiences in the program, as evidenced by high ratings when asked about perceived sense of community, opportunities for leadership, peer connection, and likelihood to recommend PLTI to a friend.



State PLTI Coordinator Melvette Hill (at right in photo to left) with Ingrid Canady, executive director of PLTI partner State Education Resource Center (SERC). Below: PLTI state graduation in the lobby of the Legislative Office Building, June, 2017.



Building Empathy through the Arts

This year, the Commission and Stand Up and Speak Out worked together to help foster a positive school climate for children and youth throughout Connecticut by building empathy through the arts. The signature achievement was a multi-cultural cast performing *Her Song*, a musical about the effects of bullying. It is being performed in communities throughout the state, with a kick-off performance for Legislators on XX in the Legislative Office Building.

The musical highlights the severity of an issue that many children face today through entertainment and education. It addresses the effects that exclusion and negativity have on our youth, and informs students about ways in which they can step up against the cycle of insensitivity.

Written and produced by four-time Emmy nominee Jill Nesi, *Her Song* debuted at the Ivoryton Playhouse in May 2017 with outstanding reviews from educators and students alike.

The goal of the Commission and Stand Up and Speak out is to raise awareness about the critical importance of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and empowering youth leaders across our state. By leading with kindness, youth can combat negativity and exclusion. Building evidence-based programs is a way to reach those that have been affected.

Far too often, our youth feel excluded and disconnected from their peers, schools, and communities, which has led to increased mental health illness and suicide rates. This life-changing musical, casts youth from each community in which it is held, featuring children of all ages.



Cast and producers of “Stand Up and Speak Out” after a performance before the House of Representatives. Rep. Noreen Kokoruda is at center, back row. Producer Jill Nesi is in front row, center.

CWCS Coalitions

The CWCS serves on the following coalitions:

Coalition for Choice
Healthy Youth Connecticut
Family Law Working Group
Maternal and Child Health Coalition
Campaign for Paid Family Leave
Secretary of State Civic Health Advisory Group
Safe Havens Working Group
Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance
Commission on the Standardization of the
Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations
Trafficking in Persons Council
Commission for Child Support Guidelines
Governor's Sexual Assault Kit Working Group
Long-Term Care Advisory Council
Council on Medicaid Assistance Program Oversight
Task Force on Senior Centers
Hospital Merger Watch Coalition
Legislature's Task Force to Study School Climate
Children's Behavioral Health Plan Implementation
Advisory Board
MTR Policy Oversight Committee
Legislature's Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force
Legislature's Achievement Gap Task Force
LGBT Aging Advocacy
Family Support Council
Two-Generational Interagency Working Group
CT Women's Organization Network
Connecticut Elder Action Network (CEAN)

Outreach/Speaking

Informing the public of our work means reaching out to community groups, colleges, high schools, advocacy groups and coalition partners. This work is as local as the school down the street and as far away as national summits. Here is a partial list for the year 2017:

CASEL

Hartford Involvement in Leading with Kindness

NCSL Legislative Forum

Morgan School Opening Assembly

VOICES Forum

Leading for Literacy

2Gen Policymakers Institute

Two-Gen Talk-Back: Strategic Evidence Building

Feedback Summit 2017: Partnership for Public Service

NYC Superintendents Meeting

Annual Higher Education Institute

NCSL Capitol Forum

University of Hartford

Alliance for Retired Americans

WestCOG-Western CT Council of Governments

CT Department of Transportation

Connecticut Community Foundation

Tunxis Community College

CT Coalition on Aging

Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities

University of Connecticut School of Law

Media

Informing the media of the needs of our three under-represented populations is a major focus of CWCS. Statistics for the six months of our operation (tracked since July 1, 2017) are:

Website hits: 44,063

Facebook fans: 4,821

Twitter followers: 1,758

Press conferences: 5



Connecticut Commission on
Women, Children *and* Seniors



CWCS