

# Women's Policy Agenda

Women helped to make Chicago the city it is today. Black, Brown, Immigrant, and activists all contributed to advances in culture, environmental justice, civil rights, and reproductive justice - Margaret Burroughs, Hazel M. Johnson, Kittahawa, Jane Addams, Dr. Rachele Slobodinsky Yarros, Teresa Fraga, Bernarda Wong to Ida B. Wells. Cultural treasures like Oprah, Barbara Gains, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Sandra Cisneros enriched our lives. These are the names you know, but generations of Chicago women whose names you will never know, in every neighborhood and in every way helped make Chicago a city where all could thrive.

## *Reproductive and gender-affirming health care*

- In 2019, the abortion rate for Black women was 23.8 per 1,000 women. For Hispanic women, it was 11.7 per 1,000. And for White women, it was 6.6 per 1,000.
- Severe Maternal Mortality rates are consistently higher among Black, Latina and Asian women compared to White women, regardless of age or type of insurance.

## *UnHoused Women*

- Black Illinoisans comprise 59% of residents experiencing homelessness. In 2018, 39.5% of all homeless individuals in Chicago were women.
- In Chicago, Black residents are more likely to pay more than they can afford in rent, and low-income Black women and mothers are evicted at alarming rates.
- 12 percent of the city's homeless population is Latino.
- 10,431 Chicagoans were living on the streets in 2020. Beyond that, more than half a million people live below the poverty line, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, which poses economic barriers to access to hygiene products.

## *Public Safety and Crime*

- In Illinois, 37.7% of women experience intimate partner violence in their lifetimes. Forty-three percent of Black women have endured intimate partner violence or stalking. 1 in 3 Latinas experiences intimate partner violence in their lifetime.
- In Chicago, calls to emergency services for domestic battery were 3.5 times more likely than a call about robbery, and 6 times more likely than a call about a shooting. There were about 49,000 calls to emergency services in Chicago for domestic violence between 2017 and 2020.

## *An Equitable Recovery*

- In Illinois, Latinas earned on average 53 cents for every dollar white men earned. Nationwide Latinas earned on average 57 cents for every dollar non-Hispanic white men took home.

- 40.5 percent of Latinas are their family's primary earner.
- In Illinois Latinas' full-time earnings ranked at the bottom in 2019, taking home \$32,458, compared to \$40,212 for Black women, \$48,326 for White women, \$56,911 for Asian women and \$61,676 thousand for white men.
- Women are tasked with more caregiving responsibilities than their male partners. Women of color are more likely than their white counterparts to have multi-generational households and thus more likely to have adult and child caregiving duties simultaneously. 27 percent of Latinos and 29 percent of Asians live in multi-generational homes.

## Impact of COVID 19

- Pre-COVID and nationally, 84.4 % of Black mothers are the primary or co-earners for their families. Almost half (47%) of all black children live with single mothers.
- Black women entrepreneurs are also disproportionately impacted by this virus. Women of color control 44% of women-owned businesses. However, these businesses lack access to capital and lag behind in sales when compared to white-woman-owned businesses. And now, Black women, along with most minority-owned businesses, have largely been shut out of federal aid.
- 24% of Latinas were more likely to have lost their job (+6% relative to Latino men).
- 36% of Latinas lost wages due to missing work (+7% relative to Latino men).
- 37% of Latinas depleted their savings to pay for health care costs (+2%)

### *Incarcerated women*

- Black people are overrepresented in Illinois jails and prisons. The female population in the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) has grown over the years, with most being mothers.
- The incarceration rate in Illinois is 497 per 100,000 people. Approximately 5.5 percent of prisoners in Illinois are women.
- Latinas and girls of color are being incarcerated at increasing rates. From 1997 through 2017, there was a 52% increase of Latinas, both girls and women, incarcerated nationally.

Chicago is a great city because of women; it needs a reset to be a great city for and with women.

### *1. Reproductive and gender-affirming health care - Promote Real Choice:*

Reproductive and gender-affirming health care is a fundamental right. Any person who wants it, should have access to safe abortions and reproductive care. Pregnant people should have access to quality, affordable prenatal and parental care. Chicago should remain a sanctuary city for abortion and reproductive care. As Mayor, I will:

- **Appoint a Deputy Mayor (DM) focused on Gender Equity & the Economy** to ensure there is a dedicated individual inside the Mayor's office fighting to ensure women and LGBTQ+ people are central in the administration.
- **Strengthen Infrastructure, Protection and Increase capacity at reproductive care health facilities**, due to the surging demand from women and people who can get

pregnant who live in states like Indiana and Wisconsin where abortion is banned or criminalized

- **Work with the CDPH, community health centers, (CHCs), and Cook County to establish a reproductive healthcare pilot project** to support innovative approaches and patient-centered collaborations to safeguard patient access to abortions, regardless of residency.
- **Work with CDPH, local pharmacies and CHCs, and the County to address pharmacy, contraceptive and health deserts** on the South and West Sides
- **Ensure enforcement of HB4664 that prohibits foreign subpoenas and the release of information of patients seeking reproductive or gender-affirming care** coming from states where this health care is criminalized or prohibited
- **Promote community birthing options by allowing licensed certified midwives to practice as primary birth attendants**, increasing birth center reimbursements, and reducing unnecessary administrative rules
- **Require cultural competency training for public-facing city workers** including healthcare providers, first responders, police, etc.
- **Ensure virtual health care, free meals and housing support, and wraparound services implemented during the pandemic are sustained.**

## *2. UnHoused Women:*

As Mayor, I will:

- **Address Period Dignity for UnHoused Women** - Partner with local nonprofits to provide Free sanitary products at CTA - similar to mask distribution

## *3. Public Safety and Crime:*

As Mayor, I will:

- **A modern police department understands that a one size fits all solution does not work.** In cases involving gender-based violence and the LGBTQ+ community, in particular trans women, a trauma-informed and culturally competent responsive approach is necessary and I will invest in the training required for police officers.
- **Partner with civilian and community partners to prioritize Gender-Based Violence Services Over Other Systems of Response.**
- **Increase Gender-Based Violence Data Collection and Availability.**

## *4. An Equitable Recovery:*

**A recovery plan for women addresses flexible working hours, paid time off, workforce safety and fair compensation will elevate women, and as such, elevating families.** As Mayor I will:

- **Advocate for access to paid family and medical leave**

- **Collaborate with Public entities at the County and State Level and Philanthropy around the strategic action plan for aging equity in Illinois**
- **Collaborate with women and LGBTQ+ led community-based organizations to create a hub for economic opportunity for women and gender-diverse populations**
- **Make it Easier for Small and Minority-Owned Businesses to Do Business with Chicago.**
  - Streamline the process – and expand eligibility – for small and minority-owned businesses to Streamline Procurement processes, expand procurement opportunities and provide procurement liaisons for historically disadvantaged groups
- **Workers and Gender-Based Violence**
  - Strengthen enforcement and Ensure Awareness of the Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act, which provides that employers may not fail to hire, refuse to hire, discharge, harass or discriminate against any individual because the individual is or is perceived as a domestic violence or sexual assault survivor
- **Advocate for Legislative solutions that would make child care universal and affordable**, which are critical to eliminating pay inequities. Universal Pre-K alone would save Black families over \$1.2 billion dollars annually.
- **Education and Student Loan Forgiveness**
  - Support city colleges in efforts to provide tuition and debt-free options targeting, adult learners, immigrants, women, trades, and veterans.
  - Provide student assistance, making college more accessible to low-income Illinois students.
  - Develop Career pathways programs in partnership with nonprofits, businesses, and government stakeholders.
  - Increase demand for a more diverse workforce through pre-apprenticeships programs in partnership with The State of Illinois, the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, and Chicago philanthropy.

#### 5. *Incarcerated women:*

As Mayor, I will:

- **Invest in Re-entry Efforts:** The experience of incarceration is also uniquely traumatic for women in ways that can deter long-term economic security, even after release. The criminal justice system must focus on supporting formerly incarcerated persons to become self-sufficient, productive community members, so they are not forced to cycle in and out of the corrections system. I will partner with organizations doing this work, the County, and the State to ensure that we have gender-responsive strategies for formerly incarcerated women.

#### 6. *Promote women's representation, political leadership, and Access to Voting And Democracy:*

As Mayor, I will:

- **Commit to Gender Parity including LGBTQ+ persons in Administration and agencies via commissions, department, and staff leadership - ensure leadership is reflective of gender demographics of the city.**
- **Expand and support methods that protect and expand voting rights for everyone, e.g., new and accessible polling places, in collaboration with the County**
- **Acknowledge Chicago women and LGBTQ+ history**

Finally, the Mayor of Chicago is the Mayor of the 3rd largest city in the country and a sanctuary city for immigrants, reproductive and gender-affirming health care, and justice and democracy. I am committed to using the bully pulpit to be an advocate and a champion for women and LGBTQ+ people.

- **Support national legislation that assures universal coverage – health care for all – and lowers costs.**
- **Support legislation that assures access to comprehensive care, including reproductive, gender-affirming, dental, mental health, vision, elder care services, and long-term care in all communities, both urban and rural.**
- **Support legislation at the federal level that keeps families together by advocating for an end to the punitive and inhumane immigration system that criminalizes and separates families**
- **Work for passage of national legislation that codifies the right to abortion and gender-affirming care. Pass the Women's Health Protection Act or an equivalent.**