



The Women's Fund
of Central Ohio

THE PERVASIVE POWER OF GENDER NORMS

Suppressing Economic Opportunity for Central Ohio • June 2016

IN COLLABORATION WITH



KIRWAN INSTITUTE
for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

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Gender norms are the root of many issues facing women and men in our society. They are implicit or explicit rules, expectations and standards placed on both sexes regarding how they should behave and be treated by society. According to our *Womenomics* research report, one in four women in central Ohio are not economically secure. We believe this problem is caused in part by gender norms and their impact on women's economic self-sufficiency. We wanted to explore this issue and its impact in central Ohio in order to begin the conversation to create positive change.

We collaborated with **The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity** at The Ohio State University, a national expert on implicit bias and the structural factors that restrict access to opportunity. Kirwan has long held a powerful role in drawing attention to, and helping communities devise remedies for these structural disadvantages. Established in 2003, The Kirwan Institute is an applied research institute whose mission is to create a just and inclusive society where all people and communities have opportunity to succeed. For the past three years Kirwan has focused on uplifting the cognitive and social forces that contribute to racial, ethnic and gender disparity, often unintentionally (implicit biases).

Our intention is that by identifying the underlying causes of women's challenges in achieving economic self-sufficiency, we are better able to identify solutions to the problem that will create equality and empower women and girls to achieve their full potential; as well as an economically secure community as a whole. Please join us and The Kirwan Institute as we further this work, together.

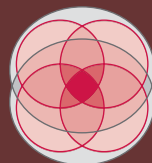
Sincerely,

Nichole Dunn, President and CEO of The Women's Fund of Central Ohio

Sharon Davies, Executive Director, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Gregory H. Williams Chair in Civil Rights & Civil Liberties, Michael E. Moritz College of Law, The Ohio State University.

As a leader of social change, The Women's Fund of Central Ohio is a public foundation committed to advocating for and convening voices to create gender equality and influence. Economic Self-Sufficiency is at the core of our work, and is supported by Lifeskills for Girls, and Leadership for Women. Underpinning this work is the effect and implications of Gender Norms. Our work is guided by our research, which informs our programs and partnerships, grant making, and advocacy efforts; all while growing women's philanthropy to influence change.

The Women's Fund
of Central Ohio



KIRWAN INSTITUTE
for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender norms and implicit bias are root causes of gender disparities in central Ohio and must be challenged and disrupted if we are to see improved economic self-sufficiency, leadership representation, and positive life skills for women and girls.

By **gender norms**, we are referring to the popular and conventional ideas most people have about what it means to “act like” a man or a woman; for example, the pervasive expectation that men are “breadwinners” while women are “caregivers.” We tend to learn them from our experiences in family, peer groups, churches, schools, movies, magazines, and the internet, for example. With persistent use, they come to be taken for granted or thought of as “natural” and “just the way things are.”

By **implicit bias**, we are referring to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Implicit biases may be activated based on identities we perceive in others, such as gender, age, or race and tend to favor our own group, creating “us” and “them” divisions. Implicit biases encompass both attitudes and stereotypes.

Gender norms and implicit biases are mutually reinforcing. Over time, observation of gender norms serves to develop and perpetuate implicit associations, as information reflecting gender norms may be ingrained in the direct and indirect messages that shape individuals’ implicit biases. These processes work together across institutions, people, and time to contract or expand opportunity for women. We also know that these twin forces can harm more than just individual women. They have material and drastic implications for the welfare of families, and for larger society.

AT A GLANCE:

What are Gender Norms?

Gender norms are the popular and conventional ideas most people have about what it means to “act like” a man or a woman. We tend to learn them from our experiences in family, peer groups, churches, schools, movies, magazines, and the internet, for example. With persistent use, they come to be taken for granted or thought of as “natural” and “just the way things are.” Gender norms tend to be narrow and significantly limit the range of possibilities for gender expression.

What is Implicit Bias?

Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Implicit biases may be activated based on any number of identities we perceive in others, such as gender, age, or race, and they tend to favor our own group, creating “us” and “them” divisions. Implicit biases encompass both attitudes and stereotypes we may unconsciously hold regarding groups in our society.

REPORT PURPOSE

This report explores the impact of gender norms and implicit biases and outcomes for women and girls in central Ohio along three dimensions: economic self-sufficiency, leadership, and life skills development. We have sought to understand what gives rise to the assumptions, associations, and expectations we place on women and men, and how these assumptions and expectations are perpetuated through our interactions and relationships with one another (via implicit biases). Gaining a clearer understanding of how gender norms are created and perpetuated allows us to strategize around disrupting these norms and mitigating the influence of such biases.

We utilized the following research methods:

- Literature review and collaboration with Riki Wilchins, Executive Director of True Child, an organization that helps donors, policy-makers, and practitioners reconnect race, class and gender through “gender transformative” approaches that challenge rigid gender norms and inequities.
- Analysis of Columbus metropolitan statistical area (MSA)* results from Harvard’s Implicit Association Test: The gender/career IAT shows whether respondents implicitly and explicitly associate women or men with family or career, giving us a snapshot into the implicit and explicit biases held by Columbus MSA residents.
- Distribution of central Ohio Gender Norms Survey: In order to gain a broader perspective into local gender norms, we conducted a survey of 919 central Ohio residents aged 9 and up.
- Consultation with Gender Norms and Bias Advisory Committee.
- Focus groups: We conducted 13 focus groups at five sites throughout the Columbus MSA, identifying the most frequent narratives that surfaced through the engagements.
- World cafés: Five world cafés were conducted at five separate sites throughout the Columbus MSA. World Café engagements are designed to allow an organization or group to effectively surface the knowledge of the group through structured small-group conversations and large-group reflection.

KEY FINDINGS

The expansion of opportunity for women was a tremendous civil rights victory of the 20th century. Despite gains in employment, education, and leadership positions, systemic and pervasive disparities still continue to harm the economic empowerment of women nationally and in our central Ohio community in the 21st century. Here, we share the key findings for economic self-sufficiency, leadership, and life skills development for women and girls in central Ohio.

Economic self-sufficiency:

In some respects, central Ohio women have advanced their position in our local economy:

- Women- owned businesses in Franklin county grew by 29% from 2007–2012

* As defined by the census, a metropolitan area consists of one or more neighboring municipality, situated around a core with a population of at least 100,000 (where at least 50,000 of which live in the core). The counties in the Columbus MSA include: Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Hocking, Licking, Madison, Morrow, Perry, Pickaway, and Union.

- In Franklin County more than 40,000 female-owned businesses in 2012 represented 39% of all business ownership

However, the gender pay gap and economic insecurity present challenges for women to translate higher educational attainment into opportunity, for themselves and their families. For example, women living below the poverty line have slightly higher educational attainment than men, yet they still have higher overall poverty rates. Consider:

- In Ohio, women earned just \$0.78 for every \$1 men earned¹
- Hispanic women earn 89 cents on the dollar when compared to Hispanic men and just 54 cents on the dollar when compared to white men.² Similarly, African American women earn 90 cents on the dollar when compared to African American men and 63 cents on the dollar compared to white men.³
- 27% of female heads of household are considered economically insecure in central Ohio.

From our engagements, we learned that women felt pressure to make it in male-dominated fields, and that economic differences place them at a disadvantage in the household.

Leadership:

In Ohio, we see evidence of systemic underrepresentation across the board: in public office, nonprofit, and corporate environments. For example:

- 1 in 6 elected statewide executives is a woman
- 10 of 53 cities (populations greater than 30,000) have female mayors
- 27 out of 99 Ohio House representatives, and 3 out of 16 Ohio Congressional representatives, are women
- 1 in 10 CEO and Executive Board positions are held by women

Through our engagements we learned that women felt the need to adjust to male peer requests in the workplace, and that being collaborative, accommodating, or non-assertive were seen as weaknesses of female leadership.

Life skills development

Schools are important sites of imparting and enforcing traditional gender norms. With the onset of adolescence, particularly during the “gender intensification” period of ages 10–14, youth are acutely aware of prevailing gender norms and actively seek to integrate them into their own lives and behavior. However, this can also be a period of significant trauma:

- A national study of 600 girls aged 12–18, 52% had experienced academic sexism, 76% had experienced athletic sexism, and 90% had experienced some form of sexual harassment.⁵
- Gendered expectations result in disparate educational opportunities, which in turn result in diverging career paths for many women versus men. Studies suggest rigid feminine gender norms also are pushing girls away from the emerging field of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), which is expected to generate a disproportionate share of the high-paying, high-advancement jobs for the 21st century.

- Columbus MSA IAT results showed that women associate women with family and men with careers more so than did men.

Thus, many young girls may not be considered by their mothers or female teachers, let alone their fathers or male teachers, when certain opportunities arise that could help them obtain skills they might need to be successful in what is stereotypically considered to be a male-dominated field. During our engagements, many local experts pointed out that girls and women need to “prove themselves” before being viewed as leaders, while for boys and men leadership is often assumed.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender norms influence all aspects of our lives in ways explicit and implicit. In central Ohio, as elsewhere, the perpetuation of gender norms has significant material and social impacts on the economic status and leadership achievement of women and girls. Because gender norms are socially constructed and perpetuated, these influences begin with the first social interactions young children experience and continue to be reinforced throughout their lives through social interactions, exposure to the media, and by parents, teachers, and other figures imagined to possess authority. Our findings suggest that these norms are deeply ingrained in the central Ohio community. To challenge and replace gender norms to open opportunity for women and girls, will require a community effort involving employers, schools, families, institutions and public policy. Several actions provide an opportunity to create an economically secure community for women and girls in central Ohio. We must work together to achieve the following goals:

- Challenge and disrupt the influence of gender norms and implicit bias. Develop *diversity and inclusion* initiatives or programs, and implicit bias and gender norm trainings, especially at the sites where we spend most of our time—in the classroom and in the workplace.
- Eliminate the gender-based pay gap and support a living wage in central Ohio. Build awareness that wage discrimination exists in central Ohio, and advocate for more corporations in our community to ensure a livable wage and family-friendly workplace policies that benefit women *and* men.
- Increase the number of women in political office and corporate executive positions in central Ohio by creating leadership pipelines. Many corporations in our community support diverse leadership—we should lift them up as exemplars for others to follow. Central Ohio also has a substantial number of women entrepreneurs; we should continue to develop programming to tap into this great resource through mentorship opportunities and other leadership development programming for girls and women at all stages of their educational/career paths.
- Engage men and boys in the conversation around gender norms and gender bias. Many programs in our community explore the ways implicit and explicit biases impact men and boys of color, raising their awareness of these challenges and devising solutions. However, these programs do not address how men and boys may be contributing to the perpetuation of gender norms and their own implicit biases in this regard, a missed opportunity. Including such training in these programs is one method for engaging men and boys in the conversation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Progress in women’s rights and equity is one of the foundational successes of the broader civil rights movement of the 20th century. Several generations of activists, organizers, leaders and pioneers challenged the barriers to opportunity and empowerment facing women and girls. The courage of these individuals and the progress by this transformative movement is unassailable, and their efforts opened pathways to opportunity for more than half of our society.

Yet despite this progress, systemic and pervasive disparities continue to harm the economic empowerment of women nationally and in our central Ohio community in the 21st century.

A large part of this disparity stems from the tremendously powerful yet subtle operation of **gender norms, and the implicit biases that result from them.**

By gender norms, we are referring to the scripts, expectations, and beliefs that most people have about what it means to “act like” a man or a woman, the social roles they are expected to fulfill, and how they are each supposed to look, feel, and dress. For example, some of these norms present as the pervasive expectation that men are “breadwinners” while women are “caregivers,” that little girls wear pink and little boys blue, or that women are good at cooking and men at math or science.

“Implicit bias” refers to the attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. With men and women, these often are the result of normative expectations around gender. For instance, in central Ohio, women implicitly and explicitly associate women with family and men with career more than do men. This suggests that there is still a lot of work to be done in central Ohio to challenge rigid gender norms and the durability of such biases.

Unpacking gender norms is not an easy task. Over the past six months, the Kirwan Institute and The Women’s Fund of Central Ohio (WFCO) have sought to better understand the complex dynamics of “gender norms” and “implicit bias” and their effects on central Ohio’s women, families, and communities. Through numerous engagements with people in our community—across race, gender, and age—we have sought to understand what gives rise to the assumptions, associations, and expectations we place on women and men, and how these assumptions and expectations are perpetuated through our interactions and relationships with one another.

The following report documents the continuing economic, leadership and life-skill barriers and challenges facing central Ohio women and girls. The report also presents a “call to action” identifying the actions, interventions and investments needed to counter the detrimental impact of gender norms and implicit bias facing women, and support equity and opportunity for all central Ohio women. We utilized quantitative data, qualitative data, and existing research to ground the findings and recommendations within this report.

To that end, thirteen focus groups, seven world cafes, more than a dozen local expert interviews and a survey with a response of more than 1,300 central Ohio residents provided valuable local insight into this research. In addition, we conducted quantitative analysis for the Columbus MSA, utilizing the national database from the Harvard implicit association test (IAT). This is the first local analysis utilizing Columbus IAT to better understand gender biases in our community.

These myriad engagements gave us a clearer understanding of how gender norms are created and perpetuated in central Ohio, allowing us to strategize around disrupting these norms—to not only challenge them but replace them with associations and expectations that open up opportunity for women and girls, rather than restricting them. This ‘opening up’ will not only benefit the women and girls in our community, but also the men and boys, indeed all of central Ohio.

2. THE CHALLENGE

GENDER DISPARITIES IN ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY, LEADERSHIP & LIFE SKILLS

Echoing the progress women have made on the national front, central Ohio's women have also advanced their position within our local economy. More than 292,000 women-owned businesses existed in Ohio in 2015, contributing significantly to Ohio's economy, employing 288,100 individuals and bringing in \$51.2 billion annually.⁶ In Franklin County, the more than 40,000 female-owned businesses that existed in 2012 represented 39% of all business ownership. The number of women-owned businesses in Franklin County grew by 29% between 2007 and 2012, and the proportion of women-owned businesses grew from 33% of local businesses to 39%.⁷ Yet while there is much to celebrate, much remains to be done, particularly in the realms of economic self-sufficiency, leadership development, and life skills development for girls.

2.1 CHALLENGE: ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Although nationally more women attain college degrees than men, they have yet to achieve economic parity with men, or to achieve top leadership position in proportion to their numbers. The gender pay gap has remained relatively constant (between 76 and 78 cents on the dollar) since 2001, even as women surpass men in "human capital" (i.e. education and on-the-job skills and qualifications).⁸

Education is meant to serve as an equalizer, however, increasing educational attainment of women has not translated into improved pay parity. In fact, the gender pay gap actually widens the higher one progresses in education, with the largest gap between men and women with professional degrees (women make just 67 cents on the dollar).

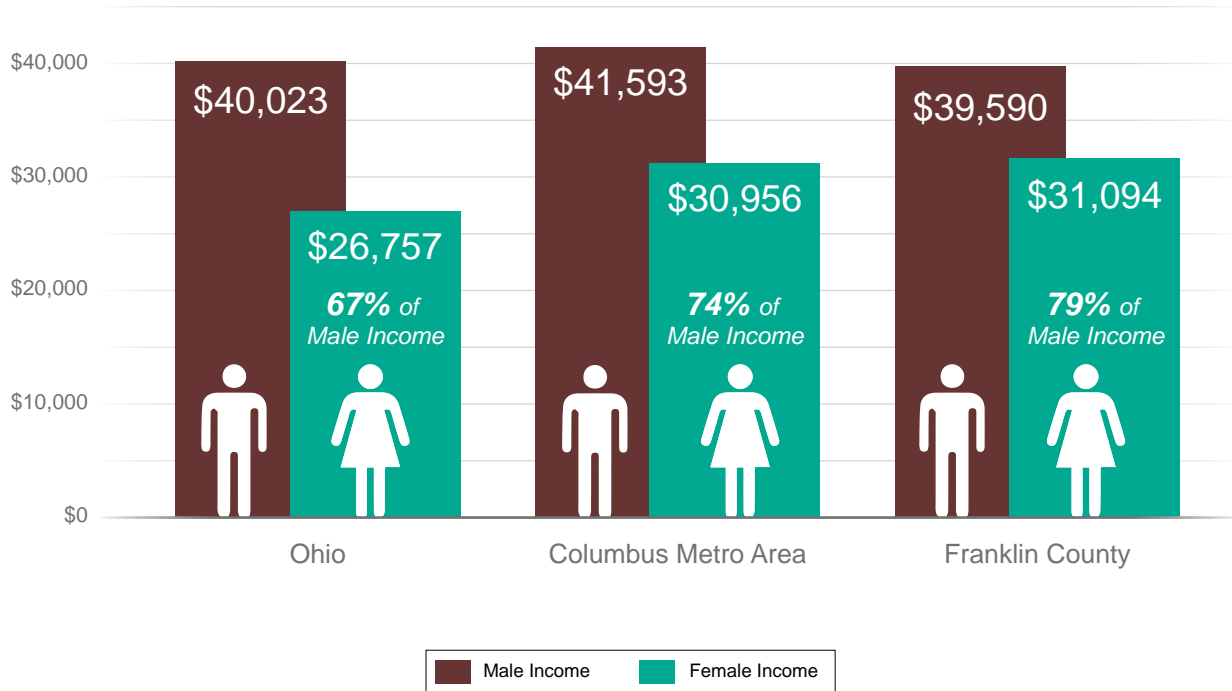
The gender pay gap is far more than a difference in earnings; it includes paid leave, pensions, and employer-provided health care—all aspects of economic security on which women fare less well than men.⁹ Further complicating the gender pay gap issue is the prevalence of "pay secrecy", where employees are formally prohibited from discussing salaries with colleagues. Such employer-driven policies make it likely that many women may not even realize they are victims of wage discrimination.¹⁰

Leadership disparities also persist, whereby women make up only 5% of corporate CEOs for Fortune 500 companies; as of 2013, 17% of Fortune 500 board members were women.¹¹ Currently women make up only 19% of U.S. Congress members.

These disparities are mirrored locally. While women-owned firms make up 39% of businesses, they represent only 12% of revenue, receipts or sales.¹² The "earnings gap" by gender is also found locally (**Figure 1**). In 2014, the American Community Survey estimates women in the labor force earn 78% of the median earnings of men in the labor force for Franklin County, OH. The disparity is even larger for the Columbus MSA (74%) and the State of Ohio (67%). The median female worker over age 16 in the Franklin County labor force earned just over \$31,000 in 2014, which is less than \$8,000 of the median male worker.¹³ This disparity persists across all occupations, with a gender-based pay disparity found in every

Figure 1

Median Income by Gender (And Disparity Between Male and Female Median Income):
Ohio, Columbus Metro Area and Franklin County 2014



major occupation group for Franklin County in the 2014 American Community Survey. The disparity in pay ranges from 59% to 91% in occupations locally, and is highest in Legal Occupations, Natural Resource & Construction, Health Care and Production Occupations (**Figures 2 and 3**).

To be considered “economically secure,” one must have sufficient income to meet the household’s basic needs, including housing, child and health care, food, transportation, utilities and taxes.¹⁴ According to WFCO’s *Womenomics* Report, a single mother with one child would need to earn 235% of the federal poverty guideline (or, \$27,660/year) in order to meet this definition of economic security.¹⁵

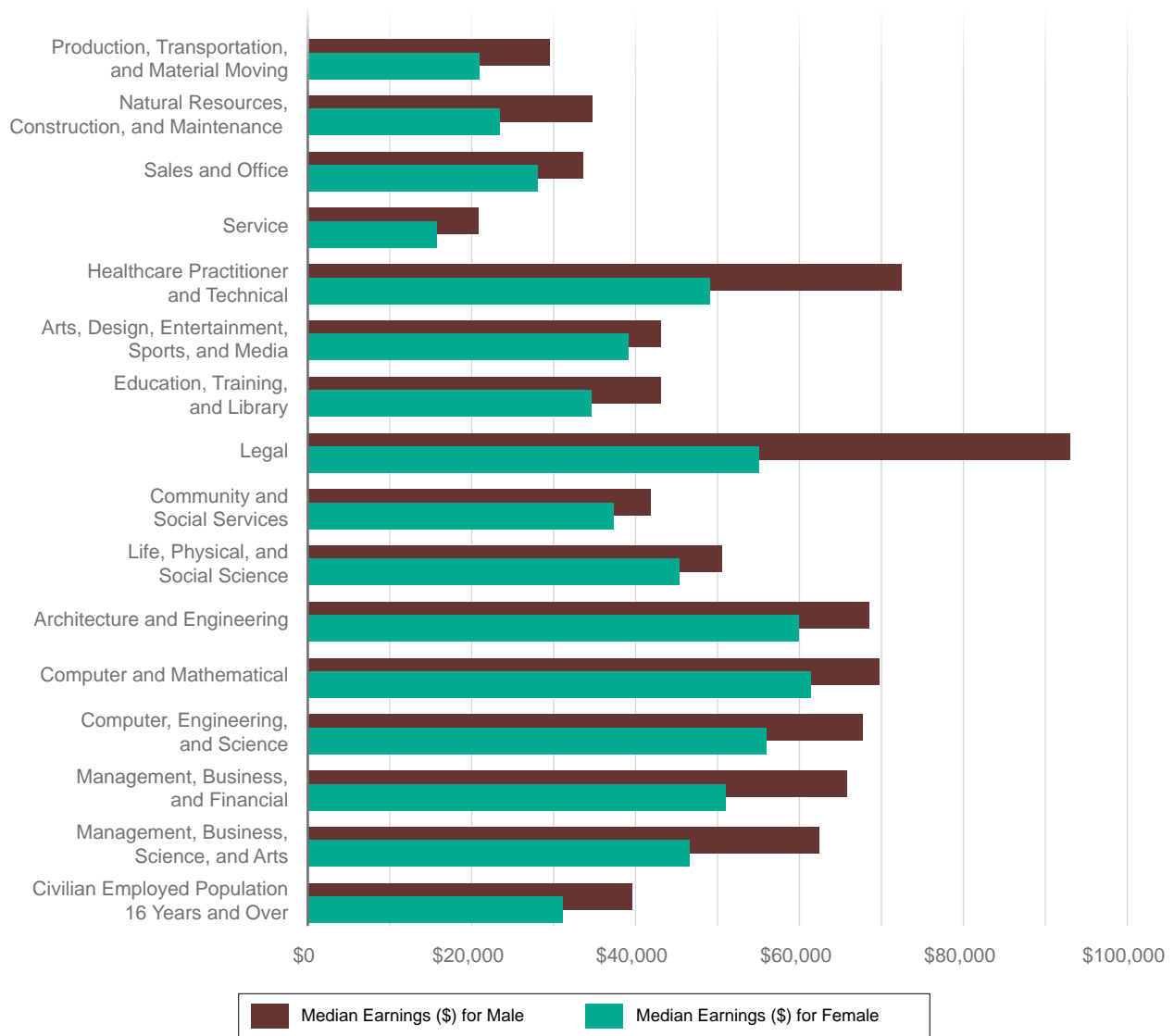
Nationally, mothers are primary or sole breadwinners in nearly 40 percent of families, and married mothers are the primary or co-breadwinners in more than half of families. In Ohio, many women are not making enough to fully care for their families. For example, more than 589,000 family households in Ohio are headed by women, and 35 percent of those families (or 204,139 households) have incomes that fall below the poverty level.¹⁶

While women in central Ohio are more economically secure than the national average, they still face obstacles. For example, 27% of female heads of household in central Ohio are not economically secure. Looking only at unmarried female heads of household in central Ohio that number jumps to 45%.¹⁷

Finally, while one-third of central Ohio households rely on a woman’s income for economic security, only about half of central Ohio women with full-time employment earn enough to be considered economically secure without financial assistance.¹⁸

Figure 2

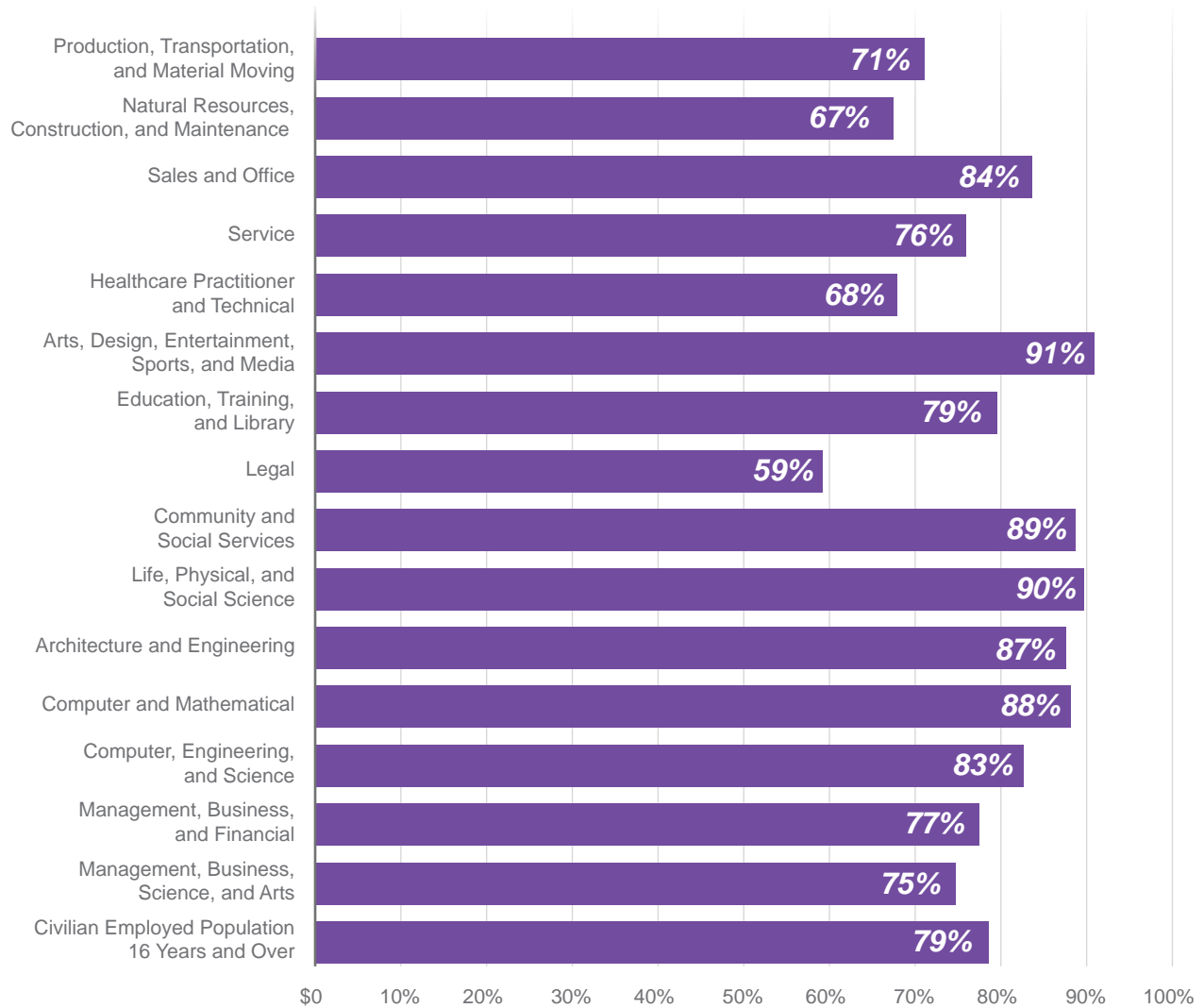
Median Earnings by Gender for Major Occupations; Franklin County 2014



Currently, the poverty rate in Columbus stands at 15.2% with women making up 54.6% of Columbus residents living in poverty. While 67.6% of the male population living in poverty is employed, 72.6% of the female population living in poverty is. Furthermore, women living below the poverty line have slightly higher educational attainment than men, yet they still have higher overall poverty rates.¹⁹

For single female-headed households, poverty figures are significant. Data from the 2014 American Community Survey for Franklin County indicates that 1 in 5 single female-headed households are at 50% of the poverty rate, 1 in 3 are at 100% of the poverty rate (38%), and almost 1 in 2 are at 125% of the poverty rate.²⁰

Figure 3
 Percent of Earnings (Median Female as a Percentage of Median Male Earnings) in Franklin County by Occupation 2014

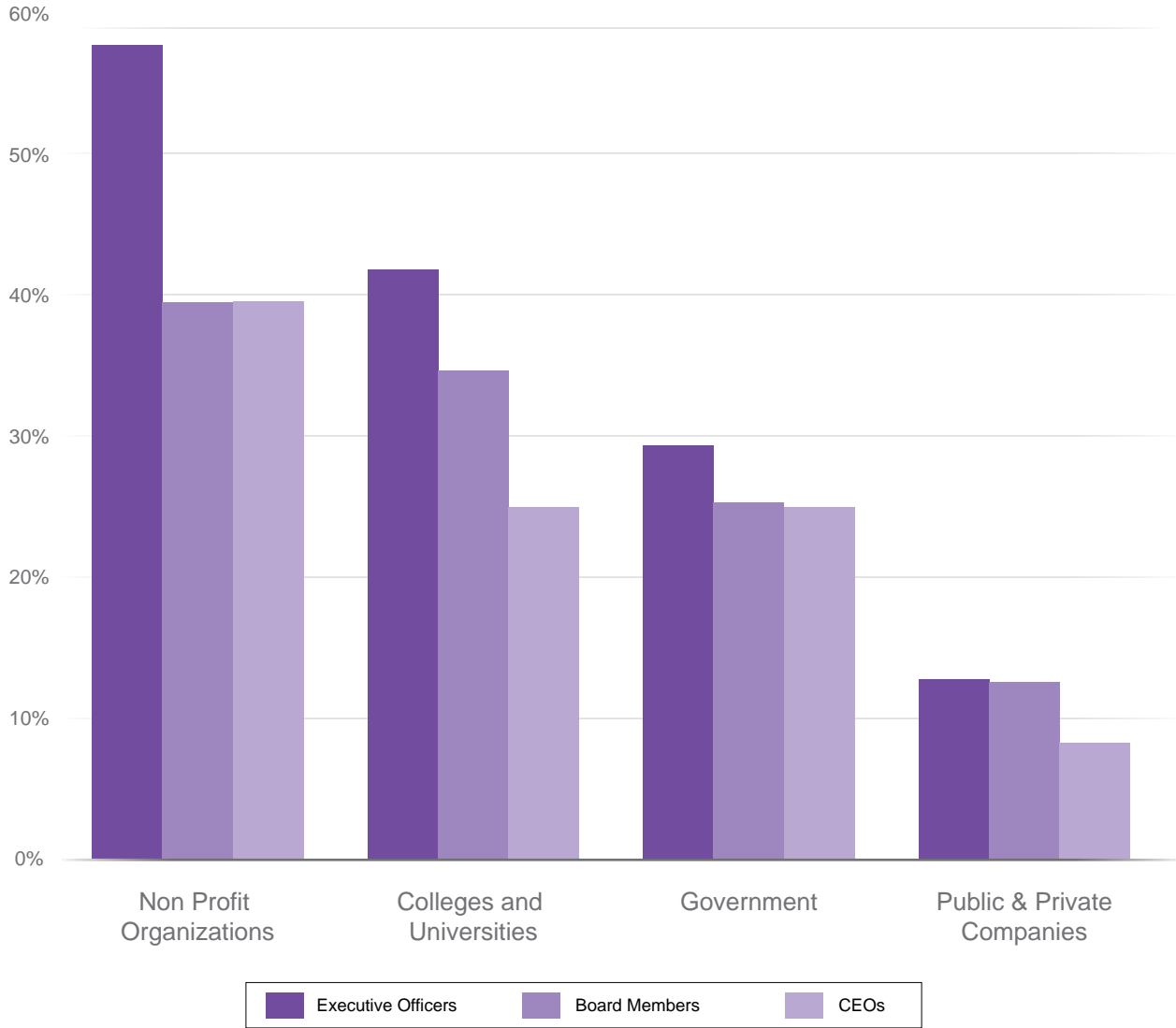


2.2 CHALLENGE: LEADERSHIP

In Ohio, we see evidence of systemic gender disparities in political leadership. In the field of public office, wide-ranging disparities can be found in the gender representation of state and local elected officials.²¹ Ohio has never had a female senator and only one female governor. In the state's history, Ohio has only elected 11 women to the House of Representatives. One of six elected statewide executive officials in Ohio is a woman (just over 16 percent of all elected statewide officials), and 10 of the 53 cities with populations over 30,000 have female mayors. Only 27 out of 99 Ohio House representatives are women, and only 3 out of 16 Ohio Congressional representatives are.

Figure 4

Women as a % of Leadership Positions by Gender 2011: Columbus Metro Area (Source: Central Ohio Leadership Census. From the Institute on Women, Otterbein University, and Women for Economic and Leadership Development)



These disparities are reflected across various levels of leadership. According to a 2011 study by the Institute on Women, Otterbein University, and Women for Economic and Leadership Development, we see gender-based disparities in leadership positions across the corporate and nonprofit landscape.²²

Approximately 1 in 10 CEO, executive and board positions in public and private companies were held by women. For government executive and board positions, women represent 1 in 4 leadership positions. For the nonprofit sector and colleges or universities, approximately 1 in 3 leadership positions were held by women (**Figure 4**).

2.3 LIFE SKILLS FOR GIRLS: CHALLENGES DURING CHILD DEVELOPMENT

With the onset of adolescence, particularly what some researchers have termed the “gender intensification” period of ages 10–14, youth’s interest in traditional gender norms accelerates, and their belief in them starts to solidify. This includes their understanding of gender in the context of their own identity.²³ Indeed, learning how to be a masculine young man or a feminine young woman is a primary rite of passage and key developmental task for nearly every adolescent. During this period, youth are acutely aware of prevailing gender norms and actively seek to integrate them into their own lives and behavior.

Unfortunately, this is also a period during which adolescent girls may be experiencing a high degree of discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexism. A 2008 study found that of 600 girls aged 12–18, 52% had experienced academic sexism, 76% had experienced athletic sexism, and 90% had experienced some form of sexual harassment.²⁴ All of these experiences converge to influence how girls see themselves, other women, and boys and men—as well as their sense of safety in the world and in their own bodies.

2.4 INTERSECTIONAL CHALLENGES: THE INTERSECTION OF GENDER AND RACE

Economic standing for women becomes more precarious when race is factored in. The intersection of disparities in wages by gender and race places women of color at a significant economic disadvantage. For example, Hispanic women earn 89 cents on the dollar when compared to Hispanic men and just 54 cents on the dollar when compared to White men.²⁵ Similarly, African American women earn 90 cents on the dollar when compared to African American men and 63 cents on the dollar compared to White men.²⁶ While African American and Hispanic women earn less than their male peers within their racial or ethnic groups, they earn less than both men and women who identify as non-Hispanic White or Asian. In fact, Asian women earn 115% of what White women earn (**Figure 5 and 6**). These compounding disparities place many women of color in an economically challenging environment, thus the highest poverty rates for single-headed households are often found in households headed by single women of color.

Figure 5

Median Earnings by Gender & Race: Columbus Metro Region 2014

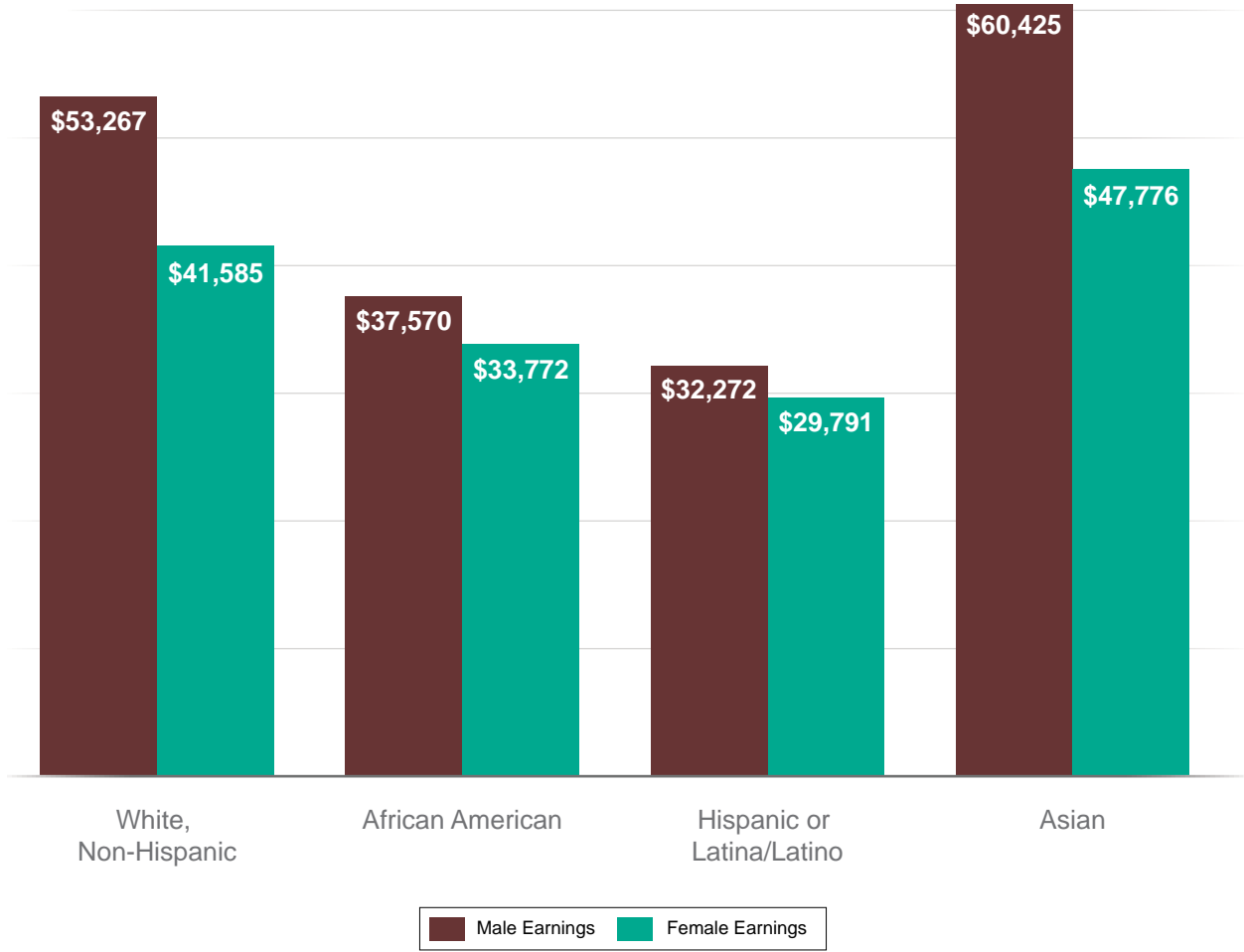
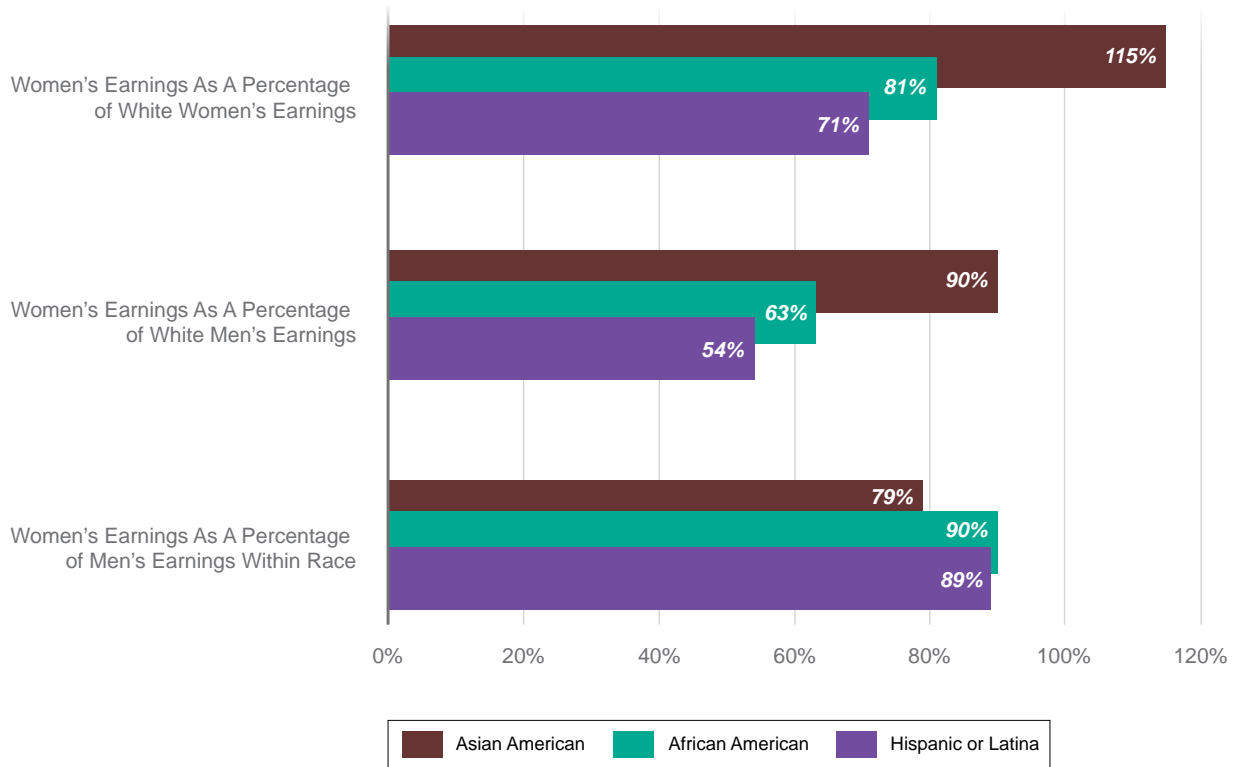


Figure 6
 Earnings by Women of Color Relative to Other Populations:
 Columbus Metro Area 2014



3. UNDERSTANDING OUR CHALLENGE

THE IMPACT OF GENDER NORMS & IMPLICIT BIAS

So how do we begin to understand why women continue to be underpaid for similar work as men? Or how to understand the continuing gender disparities in leadership positions facing women? Or that women continue to be over-represented in lower paying professions requiring higher education (e.g. nurses, teachers) careers compared to men? How do we begin to challenge the dominant association that women “should be” caregivers and men “should be” breadwinners, despite the fact that more households are headed by women who are the primary providers?

An extensive body of research helps us illuminate the cause of this challenge, as described by the Council of Economic Advisors.

“Even when we hold education, experience, employment gaps due to children, occupation, industry, and job title constant, there is a pay gap. This “unexplained” pay gap leaves little beyond discrimination to explain it. Some research has found that this unexplained portion is a sizeable share of the gap—41%.²⁷”

As described by the Council of Economic Advisors, the systemic nature of economic disparities facing women suggest continued discrimination provides barriers to economic opportunity, leadership and life skills development, impeding the progress of women in our nation and our local community. Research demonstrates that two powerful forces impacting the gender-based disparities found in our society and our community are gender norms and implicit bias.

3.1 THE POWER & INFLUENCE OF GENDER NORMS

We learn gender norms from our family, peer groups, churches, schools, and media. Over time, we take them for granted and think of them as “natural” and inevitable—just “the way things are.” Yet far from being fixed and universal categories, gender norms and their manifestations are complex social creations, which vary widely across different societies, and have changed dramatically over time. Gender norms tend to be narrow and limit the range of possibilities for gender expression.

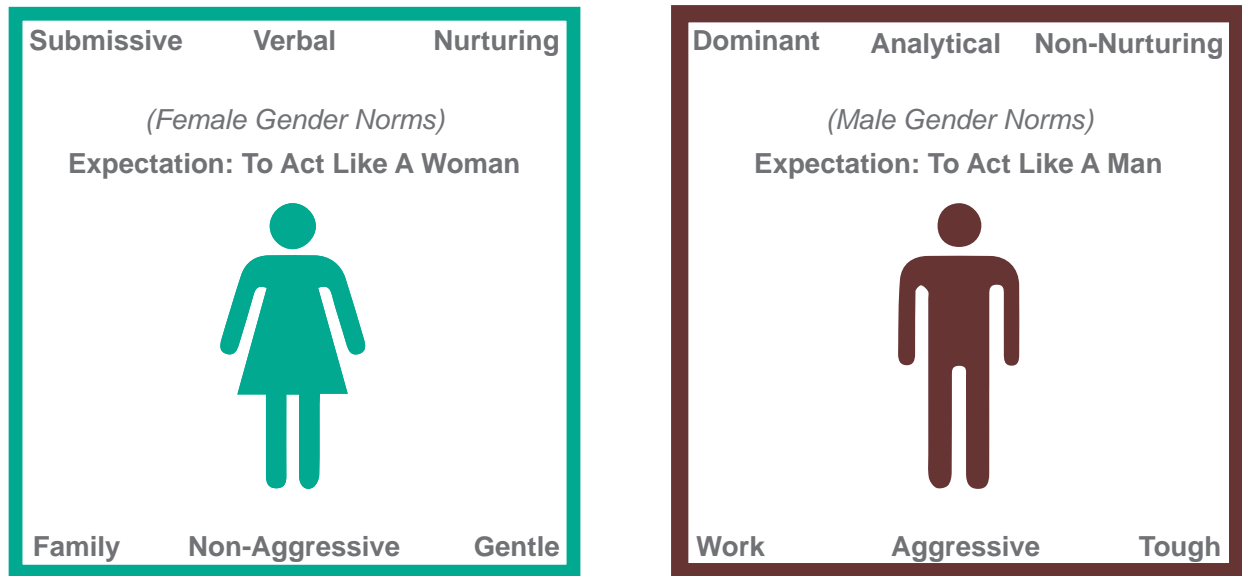
When people stray from expected beliefs or behaviors, they are ‘punished’ for deviating from or challenging the accepted gender norm.²⁸ Internally they may experience unpleasant feelings of self-consciousness or shame.

Gender expectations also act in dramatic ways to shape individuals’ own subjectivity, their sense of themselves, and what is expected of them. In this way, gender norms can act as invisible “guard rails,” shaping and constricting personal opportunities, choices, and horizons. Extensive research suggests that within social institutions, gender plays a large role in how individuals are perceived, treated, and rewarded or disciplined.²⁹

Figure 7

What are gender norms? A visual representation.

Gender norms are a set of societal norms representing what it means “to act” female or male. These norms act as a “box” inhibiting the expression of behaviors or traits that do not meet societal norms and expectations.

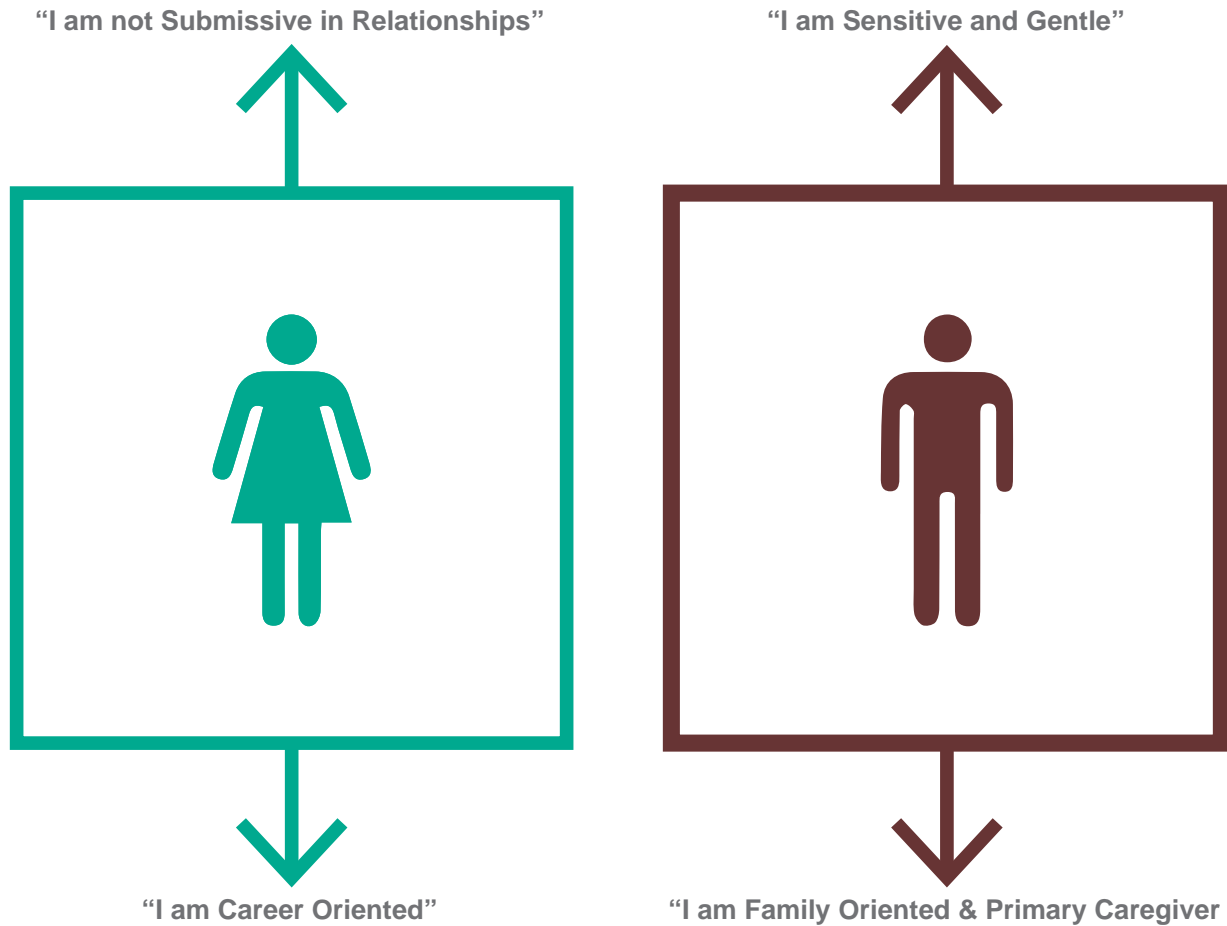


Normative expectations around gender can also adversely impact those who are gay or transgender, or simply gender non-conforming. Studies show that LGBTQ students (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning) are more likely to be harassed at school, ostracized, or physically bullied. Gay and transgender people also continue to face higher rates of workplace discrimination, particularly if they are also Black or Hispanic.

Different aspects of gender norms become more relevant when intersected with other identities such as race, class, or sexuality.³⁰ In a sense, gender norms place artificial boundaries (or a box) around people, which are constructed of the norms perpetuated by society (Figure 7). Society preserves gender norms through “punishing” those who step outside of their prescribed gender boundaries (Figure 8), while rewarding those who remain within them or even exemplify traditional masculinity and femininity. These punishments for defying gender norms could range from criticism and exclusion from opportunities to harassment, threats, or violence. Rewards can range from praise, job advancement, or greater access to opportunities, to enhanced social status and dating opportunities.

Figure 8

Defying gender norms – consequences of leaving “the box”. A visual representation. Society punishes those individuals who act outside their gender norms, thus inhibiting their behaviors and expressions. These punishments can be subtle or extreme. Punishments for defying gender norms could range from criticism and exclusion from opportunities to harassment, threats or violence.



3.2 THE POWER & INFLUENCE OF IMPLICIT BIAS

“Implicit bias” refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Implicit biases may be activated based on any number of identities we perceive in others, such as gender, age, or race, and they tend to favor our own group, creating an “us” versus “them” binary. Implicit biases encompass both attitudes (concept/valence associations) and stereotypes (group/trait associations).

Implicit biases can undermine opportunity for women (and gender non-conforming individuals) without our awareness. Because they operate outside of our conscious awareness, implicit biases do not necessarily align with individuals' explicit beliefs.

For example, while an individual may explicitly endorse the idea of women being in powerful professional roles such as CEO, it is possible that same individual may simultaneously—on an unconscious, implicit level—possess associations that more closely connect men (rather than women) with professional careers and/or positions of authority. As such, scholars often regard implicit and explicit biases as related but distinct mental constructs that are not mutually exclusive and may even reinforce each other.

Perhaps most significantly, extensive research has documented the real-world impacts of implicit biases.³¹ The effects of implicit bias on decision-making and outcomes have been documented in a vast number of domains, including health care, education, criminal justice, employment, and other arenas.

Collectively, this research provides compelling evidence that these unconscious dynamics have a powerful influence and result in differential, if unconscious, treatment along various attributes (sex, race, etc.). Even more challenging for policy and programmatic changes is some research suggesting that implicit attitudes may be better at predicting and/or influencing behavior than are self-reported explicit attitudes.

3.3 THE INTERSECTION OF GENDER NORMS & IMPLICIT BIAS

Taken together, implicit biases and the gender norms on which they are based can be understood as concepts that may be mutually reinforcing and also mutually reproduced by individuals engaging with one another and with systems and institutions. This practice of ascribing certain gender-dependent actions is often done without thought (implicitly). Subtle yet powerful implicit associations may contribute to the propagation of gender norms by reinforcing “scripts” (i.e. mental narratives) and perceived roles about what is expected for and of men and women. Common societal narratives, such as men being more analytical and women being more verbal, or that men are naturally proficient at math and women are naturally less proficient, are examples of these “scripts.”

Developing over the course of a lifetime, these associations are generally believed to begin at a very early age through exposure to direct and indirect messages. For example, early life experiences comprise one source of gender norms and bias. In the context of gender, an example of this would be a young child's observation of the gender roles he or she experiences in family dynamics and interactions.

In addition to early life experiences, the media and news programming are often-cited origins of implicit associations. Recognizing the pervasive nature of these direct and indirect messages, one scholar noted that exposure to commonly held attitudes about social groups permeate our minds even without our active consent through “hearsay, media exposure, and by passive observation of who occupies valued roles and devalued roles in the community.”³²

Importantly, the direct and indirect messages that undergird the formation of implicit gender biases may stem from misleading, distorted, or otherwise inaccurate inputs, thereby creating associations about what is “appropriate” for each gender that may not be grounded in reality.

Over time, observation of gender norms can serve to develop and perpetuate implicit associations, as information reflecting gender norms may be ingrained in the direct and indirect messages that shape individuals' implicit biases. For example, a young child who largely only experiences or observes women in caretaking roles may develop an implicit association reflecting women rather than men as nurturers, even though that does not objectively reflect men's abilities and does not square with her conscious beliefs.

3.4 GENDER NORMS & IMPLICIT BIAS: IMPACTS ON ECONOMIC SELF SUFFICIENCY

One outcome of these exclusions is the persistent and large wage differentials we continue to see despite women's growing numbers with advanced degrees. This disparity highlights the very real struggle women continue to face in the workplace—being valued for their capabilities, and not prematurely judged (implicitly or explicitly) based on their gender. A 'glass ceiling' continues to thwart women's advancement to top leadership positions, especially in the corporate world, often forcing women to make unnecessary choices between work and family.

Social categorization, interpersonal judgments, and meaningful opportunities for work in an organization are all affected by explicit and implicit beliefs. For many women, the pressure to conform, whether implicitly or explicitly encouraged, is a strong one. For example, experience in the legal realm is illustrative of corporate culture regarding women: *"as the experience of women dramatically underscores, law firms have typically taken the position that newcomers must conform to the traditional views of the firm (such as the value that equates number of hours worked with commitment and professionalism, rather than the other way around."*³³

Research around corporate diversity is finding that "[a]cross American workplaces, employees are often being asked—explicitly and implicitly—to shape aspects of their identity to fit into a dominant workplace culture,³⁴" to take on the "supra-identity" of the organization, organizations that are still overwhelmingly headed by White males.

Gendered expectations resulting in disparate educational opportunities, in turn drive diverging career paths for many women versus men. Today women earn more college degrees than men,³⁵ and yet they are not equally represented across all fields, especially STEM fields.³⁶

Even when women do choose and succeed in STEM careers, as in medicine, they are more likely to end up in those tied to caregiving and so-called "soft science" (pediatric, veterinary) than those considered "hard science" (i.e., cardio-thoracic or neurosurgery).³⁷ These careers also are accorded greater esteem and higher pay.³⁸ And while women have advanced in their education, society has yet to catch up. For example, local experts repeatedly pointed to societal pressures and institutionalized gendered expectations as barriers to economic self-sufficiency for women in central Ohio.

3.5 GENDER NORMS & IMPLICIT BIAS: IMPACTS ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership qualities, characteristics, and roles have historically been overwhelmingly associated with more stereotypically male traits in US society, leading to the systemic underrepresentation of women in leadership.³⁹ This bias has led to two key outcomes: women are perceived as less capable to succeed in leadership positions; and, women are evaluated less favorably when they perform leader-oriented behaviors.⁴⁰

Interestingly, both men and women report being more comfortable reporting to male managers (although women somewhat less so). In addition, femininity and power continue to have a complex relationship in the American mind. Strong, isolated, charismatic male leaders are generally viewed positively, while women leaders who display the same traits are often perceived as cold, unfriendly, unattractive, and unfeminine. For example, assertive women are often called 'bossy' while assertive men are admired for their leadership.

3.6 GENDER NORMS & IMPLICIT BIAS: IMPACTS ON LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR GIRLS

Schools are important sites of imparting and enforcing traditional gender norms. In addition to imparting knowledge, they play a critical role in socializing children, teaching them social norms, including how to understand and how to “act out” masculine and feminine dress, behavior, and feelings.

Both teachers and peers play key roles in promoting and modeling gender normative behavior. Teachers do so through conscious or unconscious biases resulting in disparate treatment of students based on gender;⁴¹ peers do so through self-selecting gender-segregated social groups,⁴² and policing each other’s gender performance.⁴³

How teachers and peers reinforce accepted gender norms may result in differences in academic achievement. For example, some studies confirm gendered stereotypes of girls outperforming boys in reading and boys outperforming girls in math,⁴⁴ while others show that girls in fact earn higher average test scores than boys overall.⁴⁵ A recent study finds that even high school girls who received high marks on math and science tests nonetheless self-report low confidence and proficiency in math and science.⁴⁶

Gender norms in the classroom may present as behavioral challenges. For boys, learning masculinity often means learning to assert dominance, strength, individualism, and aggression. These norms can translate into rule-breaking, defiance of authority, and disdain for academic endeavors as weak, feminine, or gay—attitudes not only tied to lower performance but also to generally greater engagement with school disciplinary (i.e., Zero Tolerance) and juvenile justice regimes.

Some studies suggest that such codes of masculinity among young men of color continue to play an outsized role in moving young men out of the school-system.⁴⁷ For instance, because of implicit biases around both race and gender, young Black and Latino males are more likely to be viewed as insubordinate, more likely to be punished for oppositional behavior than their White peers, and more likely to be suspended or expelled for the same infractions.⁴⁸

For girls, learning traditional femininity often means mastering (what *TrueChild* calls) the “three Ds” of being deferential, desirable, and dependent. Internalizing these can mean valuing male appeal over career and academic success. These norms are, again, often at odds with academic achievement, and future economic security.

In addition, both males and females who internalized traditional gender norms are more likely to drop out of school early, and more likely to be involved in teen and unplanned pregnancies.⁴⁹ Some girls end up prioritizing their body and appearance in order to attract a high-status male who can support them financially and psychologically –thus lowering their odds of being economically independent and empowered.⁵⁰

Young men are likely to prioritize “cool over school,” focusing on sports, cars, and girls at the expense of books, tests, and college preparedness. The impacts can be enhanced in low-income communities, where the lack of resources can cause gender codes to be especially narrow, and penalties for transgressing them particularly harsh.⁵¹

Finally, studies suggest rigid feminine gender norms also are pushing girls away from the emerging field of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), which is expected to generate a disproportionate share of the high-paying, high-advancement jobs for the 21st century. As they enter adolescence, girls face a choice between being considered pretty and feminine, or smart and good at math and science; and in this contest, STEM loses.⁵²

For instance, when *TrueChild* asked young girls of color in a focus group if they could be pretty *and* smart at math and science, they all looked at each other and then burst out laughing, explaining, “Not in middle school you can’t!”

4. CENTRAL OHIO'S PERSPECTIVE

LOCAL GENDER NORM EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS

Central Ohio residents were asked to define gender norms through surveys and qualitative engagements. The responses articulate the gendered associations that can be found locally and also reflect national research. When asked to identify adjectives as being more likely to be perceived as feminine or masculine, a distinct profile of norms for genders was identified locally.

Central Ohio residents viewed traits such as emotional, polite, easy going, nurturing, gentle and bossy as feminine. Conversely, traits such as assertive, ambitious, brave, confident, analytical and strong were viewed as more masculine (**Figure 9**).

Central Ohio survey participants noted several gender inequities and challenges facing women in our community (**Figure 10**). Only 40% of survey respondents agreed that women and men were treated equally in the U.S. Ninety four percent of respondents agreed that women were under more pressure to look a certain way. Only 20% of survey respondents felt the health care system was sensitive to the needs of women and only 14% of respondents thought the legal system did a good job of addressing crimes against women. Local respondents also identified significant intersectional challenges. More than 80% percent of survey respondents felt women of color face more workplace obstacles than White women, and only 11% of respondents thought women of color were adequately represented in positions of social influence.

Participants in central Ohio surveys, focus groups and world cafés identified the various ways gender norms impact women in our community. Central Ohio residents noted particular impacts in economic self-sufficiency, leadership and the development of life skills for girls. Central Ohio residents also identified the unique challenges facing women of color and the various influences that support restrictive gender norms.

4.1 ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

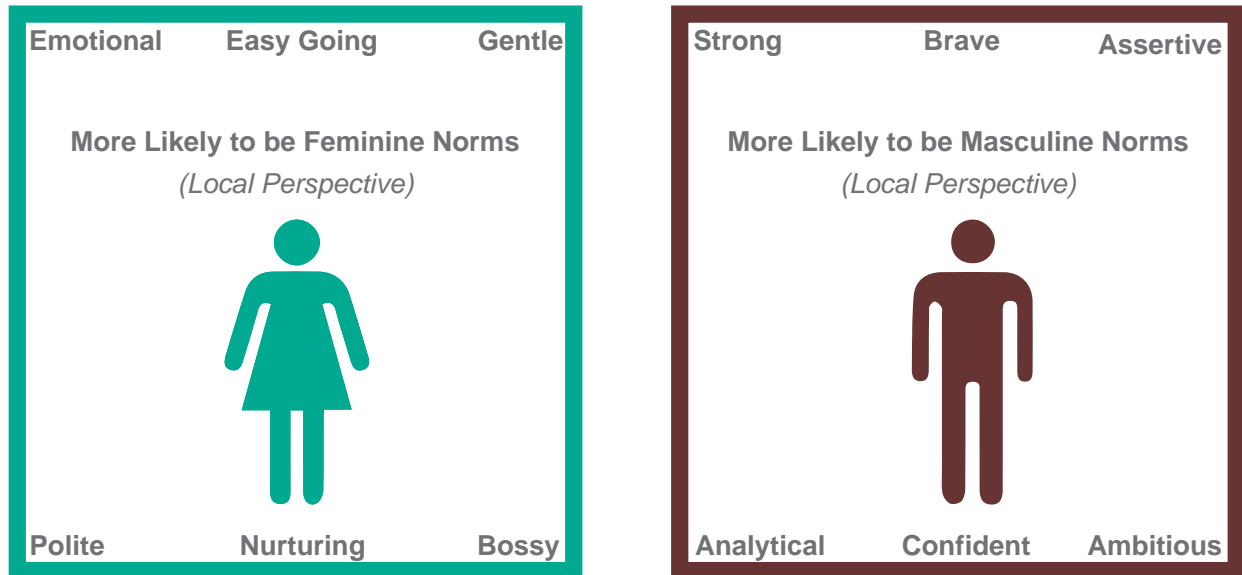
"I was part of an engineering project that I was the only girl. I was very intimidated to say anything because I assumed they were experts. Anytime I went to open my mouth, it was like 'oh she's talking again' so I felt very conscious. Instead of trying to push it, I accepted it and said if they're going to expect me to be the woman who just writes the notes and write the reports, then I'm going to let them do that because I was too intimidated by overcoming this..."

- Female gender norms focus group participant

A major theme of economic self-sufficiency shared by the central Ohio women with whom we engaged was the challenge to "make it" in male-dominated fields, and of being deterred from entering professions deemed "men's work." Indeed, many of the women in our conversations talked about not even realizing their own interest in particular "male" fields until later in life, because they hadn't been exposed to these professions and hadn't been encouraged to imagine themselves doing this kind of work (unconsciously echoing the view of gender norms as "invisible guard rails"). When central Ohio women pushed back against these gender norms, there were social and personal consequences.

Figure 9

Local expressions of gender norms – what does Central Ohio say? A visual representation. A survey of Central Ohio asked participants to identify particular adjectives as more feminine or more masculine. The following identifies the view of Central Ohio residents on which adjectives or particular traits were more likely to represent norms for women or men.



Women and girls talked about STEM fields as “unwelcoming” or steeped in “male-dominated culture.” College-aged and older women shared stories about pursuing other careers rather than face the discrimination, snide or degrading remarks, and general lack of respect that many other women reported experiencing when beginning work in a STEM field or while in training.

One young woman, who had been deterred from the field of engineering by blatant exclusion and pervasive sexualization, lamented that the fields that felt more open and safe to her would not provide equivalent earnings potential. Making a choice between dignity and income proved to be, for her, one of the “punishments” for rejecting gendered expectations that she be “available” and “subservient” to men in engineering.

“There are only so many spots at the table for women...the guys have access to all the spots, always.”

- Gender norms research advisory committee member

Economic self-sufficiency was important not only for allowing women greater economic security, but also in the ways that economic disparities reinforced gender norms in the home. A theme identified by focus group participants was the impact of gender-based economic disparities in supporting gender norms, particularly in the household. Economic differences disempowered women and placed them at a disadvantage. As described by a female focus group participant,

“Finances have a great (role) to play in that [taking back the gender roles]. ...As long as they [men] are the breadwinner, I don’t think it’ll ever change.”

- Female gender norms focus group participant

Survey respondents noted the unequal pressure of presenting a specific physical appearance that faced women in central Ohio (**Figure 10**). One focus group participant illustrated the consequences of this appearance pressure on her career development, particularly in male-dominated environments.

“They were all guys, my advisor was a guy...when I gave a presentation to the company, it was all men, and I just felt...I could tell when I gave the presentation they were not paying attention to what I was saying, they were looking at what dress I was wearing...”

- Female gender norms focus group participant

4.2 LEADERSHIP

“There’s a pressure on ourselves to do it all: career, family, community, volunteering, church...”

- Gender norms research advisory committee member

Throughout our engagements with central Ohio residents, two themes came up repeatedly in relation to the impact gender norms have on women and leadership. The first has to do with the gendered expectations women face regarding the expectation to be “accommodating,” “supportive,” “conflict-avoiding,” and “collaborative” with their colleagues and employers within the work environment but also in semi-social work contexts (office parties, gatherings outside of work, etc.). Women participants describe being expected to adjust to the needs and requests of their male colleagues while lower level employees, in order to avoid being seen as overly assertive.

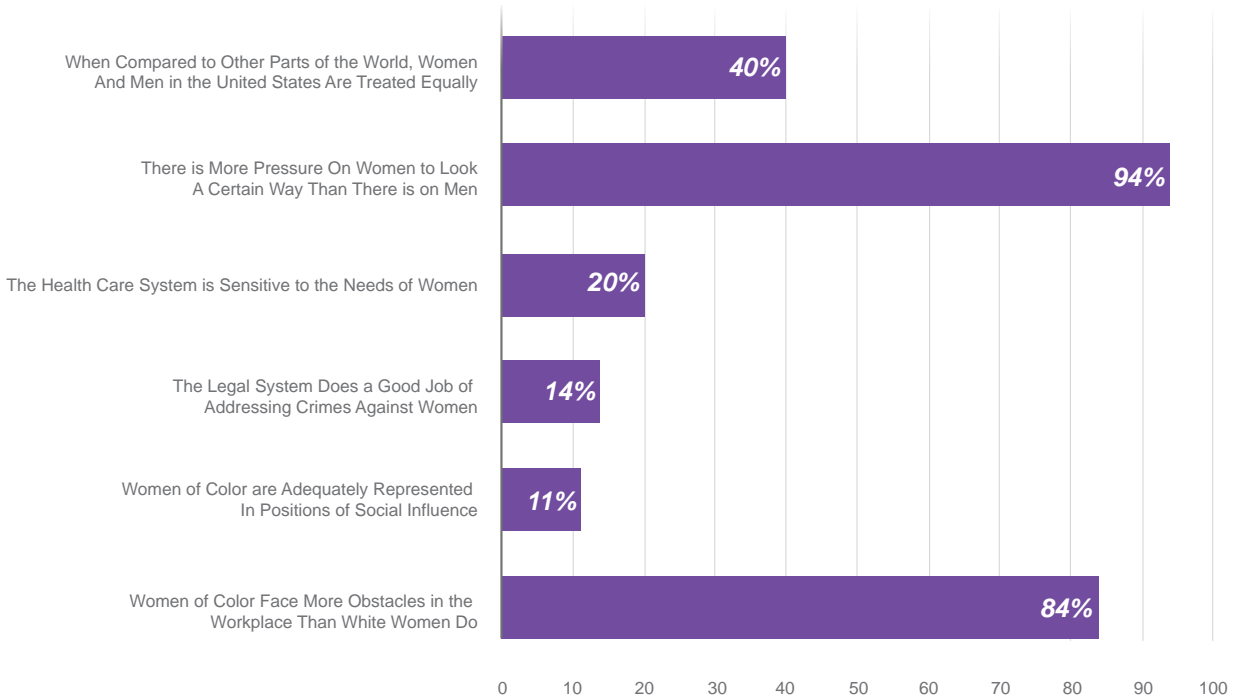
The second theme described how, at the point of moving into leadership positions, being collaborative, accommodating or non-assertive are seen as weaknesses. This results in a systemic challenge to women who have to walk a very fine line between assertiveness and accommodation as they move up in the ranks of leadership.

This is not only an issue of the performance of feminine gender, but also one of masculinity, as it is the fragility of traditionally masculine performances of gender that are being protected by this ceiling, creating expectations for women’s behaviors in the context of work and leadership.

Once in the workforce, women face many obstacles as a result of normative expectations about their behavior. These traditional roles based on the caregiver/breadwinner model continue to affect women’s economic self-sufficiency through their careers in a number of ways. One of the most profound is that, although gender role balances between men and women continue to shift, women are still expected in most relationships to do the bulk of cleaning, cooking, and child-rearing.⁵³ Many men (and more than a small number of women) still confess to feeling discomfort when the wife earns significantly more than the

Figure 10

Local expressions of gender norms – what does Central Ohio say?
Percentage of survey respondents agreeing with the following statements.



.....

husband, and many families are still much more likely to move when it is the husband who has a chance to pursue career advancement.⁵⁴ Women continue to be more likely to take extended leave for the birth of a child, and may often find themselves “mommy-tracked” at work for doing so when they attempt to return.

4.3 LIFE SKILLS FOR GIRLS

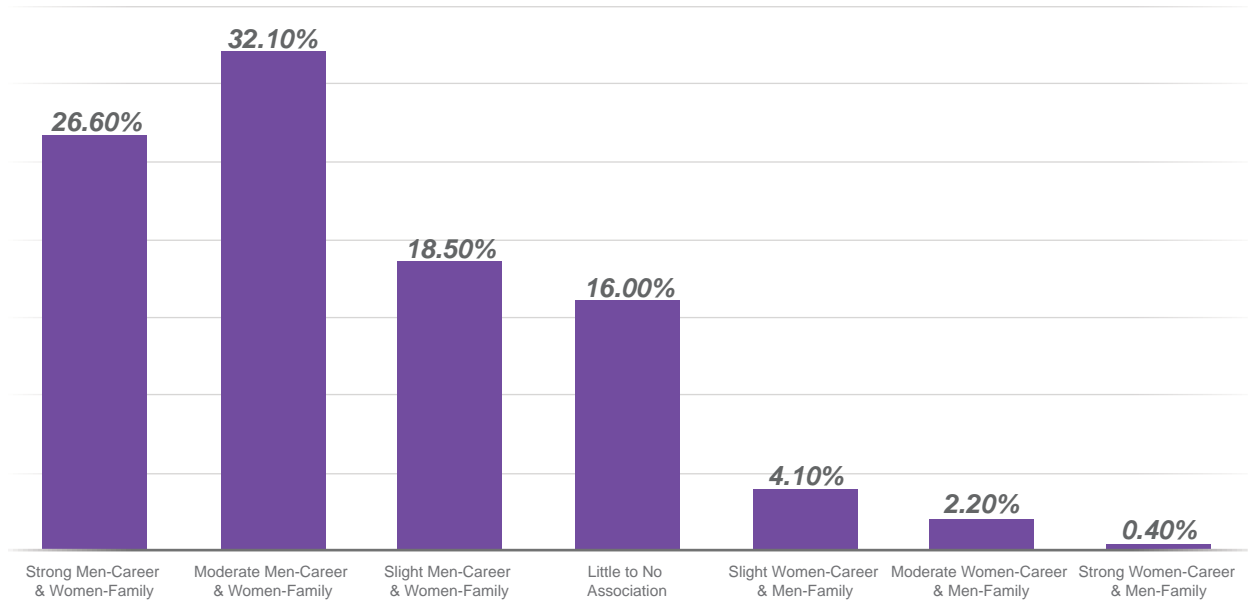
“Girls think they have to do all these things so that leadership is a possibility, while boys just have to exist and leadership is always an opportunity”

- Gender norms research advisory committee member

According to local data in the Harvard Implicit Association Test, central Ohio women more strongly implicitly and explicitly associate women with family and men with careers than do central Ohio men. This can have very real implications for girls.

Figure 11

Strength of Implicit Gender-Career Associations for All Columbus MSA Implicit Association Test Respondents (2005–13)



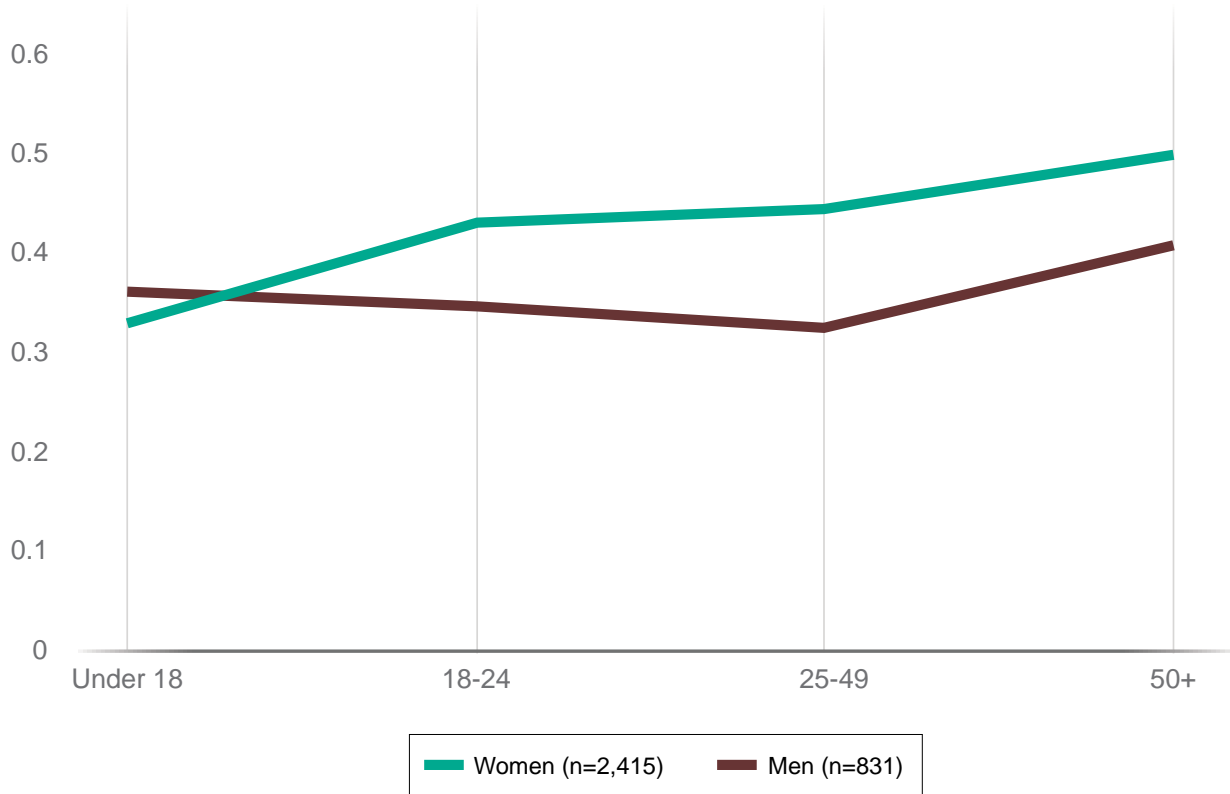
For example, many young girls may not be considered by their mothers or female teachers, let alone their fathers or male teachers, when certain opportunities arise that could help them obtain skills they might need to be successful in what is stereotypically considered to be a male-dominated workplace (such as construction) in the future.

Further, because STEM fields are more generally associated with men than women, girls might not be readily offered opportunities for exposure to these fields because of biases held by the influential adults in their lives.

During interviews with local experts, many suggested that access to opportunity is a key ingredient to raising strong, confident, and independent girls. Many local experts pointed out that girls and women need to “prove themselves” before being viewed as leaders, while for boys and men leadership is often assumed. Interviewees suggested that perception must change in order for girls to see their own capacity to possess leadership potential in the ways boys do.

Figure 12

Gender-Career IAT D-scores (representing strength of gender based implicit association) for Columbus, OH MSA Participants Across Age Groups, By Gender (2005–13)



4.4 CENTRAL OHIO & IMPLICIT BIAS: LOCAL ANALYSIS OF THE IAT

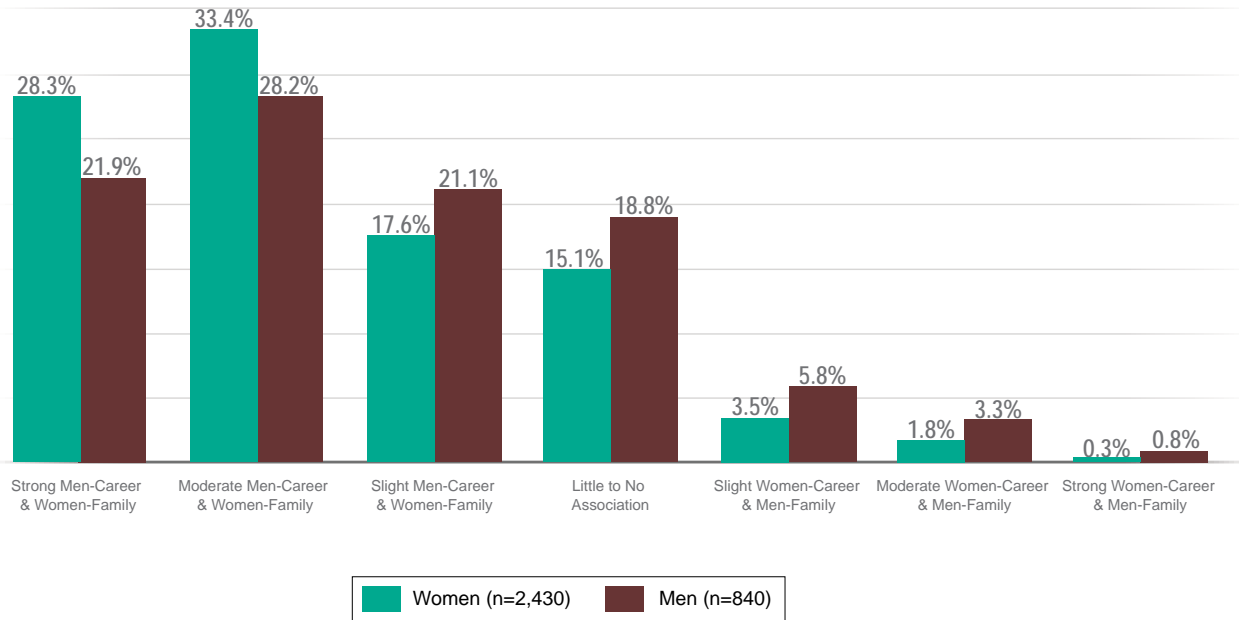
To explore the operation of gender norms in the context of implicit biases in central Ohio, we analyzed data from the gender-career Implicit Association Test (IAT). The IAT is one of the most popular and reputable ways to assess implicit associations. Designed as an online task in which participants are asked to pair concepts as quickly as possible, the IAT measures (in milliseconds) how quickly individuals can make certain associations versus others.

For example, in the gender-career IAT, individuals are presented with male names (e.g., John, Paul) and/or female names (e.g., Michelle, Emily) and asked to quickly pair those with either words related to career (e.g., professional, management) or family-oriented terms (e.g., home, relatives). The speed of the task taps into individuals' unconscious associations, and the time differentials in individuals' abilities to pair various concepts is generally regarded as a valid and reliable measure of implicit biases.⁵⁵

To shed light on the nature of implicit stereotypes about gender and professional careers vs. family associations, this analysis considers IAT data from 2005–2013 for individuals in the Columbus, Ohio MSA. Of the 3,524 test takers, IAT results were available for 3,284. Analysis for the Columbus MSA illustrates four distinct findings for our community:

Figure 13

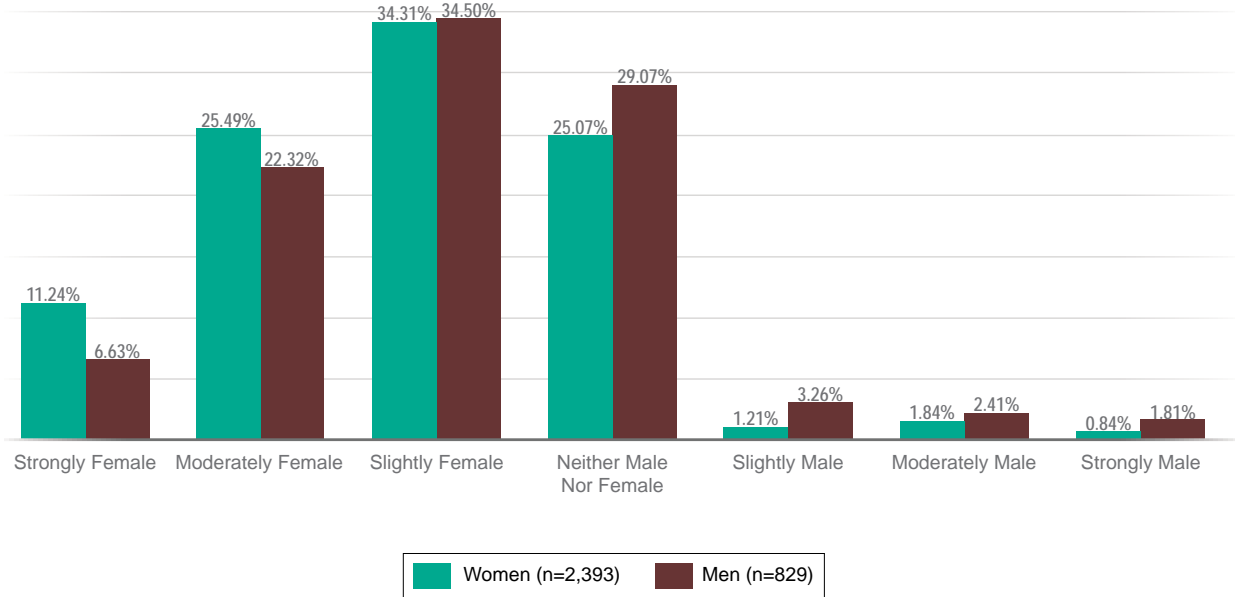
Strength of Implicit Gender-Career Associations for Female and Male Columbus MSA respondents (2005–13)



1. *Moderate to strong implicit biases are prevalent in regards to women being more associated with family and less associated with career than men.* More than half of Columbus MSA IAT test takers (58%) had a moderate to strong bias toward associations of women with family and men with career (Figure 11).
2. *Implicit biases in relation to women's association with home/family instead of career increase with age in our community.* The relative strength of implicit bias scores increase for both men and women in older age groups, with the strength of implicit associations for gender highest for those 25 and older (Figure 12).
3. *Women taking the IAT in Columbus MSA demonstrated larger biases toward women's association with family and not career than men who took the IAT.* More women than men demonstrated moderate or strong implicit bias toward women's association with family and not career. Overall, the strength of implicit biases regarding women and family vs. career are higher for women over age 18 than the strength of scores for men (Figure 12 and 13).
4. *Implicit biases in regards to women in relation to career are stronger than explicit biases in central Ohio.* Extensive research suggests that individuals' implicit associations do not necessarily align with their explicit beliefs. As such, we also considered how this gender-career IAT data aligned with respondents' explicit reports of their gendered associations. While the IAT data for both men and women in the Columbus MSA across time generally fell in the "Moderate" to "Strong" range of bias. But, when asked

Figure 14

Distribution (in Percentages) of Explicit Associations Related to Family and Gender, by Gender (Columbus MSA)



about explicit biases reflecting norms of “men and careers” and “women and family” associations, respondents’ answers to questions regarding their explicit beliefs were not as strong as their implicit bias scores (Figure 14).

4.5 LOCAL IMPACTS: THE IMPACT OF GENDER NORMS & IMPLICIT BIAS IN CENTRAL OHIO

Gender norms influence all aspects of our lives in ways explicit and implicit. Our local research illustrates that in central Ohio, as elsewhere, the perpetuation of gender norms has significant material and social impacts on the economic status and leadership achievement of women and girls. Because gender norms are socially constructed and perpetuated, these influences begin with the first social interactions young children experience and continue to be reinforced throughout their lives through social interactions, exposure to the media, and by parents, teachers, and other authority figures. Our findings suggest that these norms are deeply ingrained in the central Ohio community.

5. OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTION

CREATING AN ECONOMICALLY SECURE COMMUNITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN CENTRAL OHIO

“if we limit ourselves and say it’s going to take a long time, then it is in our mindset, if we say change is here and change is now, and repeat it and keep on saying it to others...it takes one seed to make a tree grow. And if everybody waters it, it’s gonna be a strong tree and keep on growing until after we grow and our kids and grandkids will see it...”

- Gender norms focus group participant expressing their vision for the collective change needed in our community to change gender norms

Gender norms and gender bias contribute to the economic, educational, and leadership disparity among women and girls in central Ohio. These norms, attitudes and beliefs impact us on an individual and institutional level. How do we challenge and replace gender norms to open opportunity for women and girls so that all members of the community benefit? The answer to this question will require a community effort involving employers, schools, families, institutions and public policy.

5.1 RECOMMENDATION: CHALLENGE AND DISRUPT THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER NORMS AND IMPLICIT BIAS

Gender norms and bias are the root causes of the economic, educational, and leadership disparities among women and girls in central Ohio. For example, when it comes to the gender pay gap, when factors such as education, occupation, and experience are taken into account, an unexplained portion still remains. This “gap” can be attributed to gender norms and implicit bias. Solutions to this problem can occur at home, schools, or work, in local media, and in our public dialogue.

Strategies:

1. *Support diversity and inclusion efforts that create meaningful interactions and social capital building across lines of gender, class and race:* Opportunities to engage with diverse people offers numerous benefits to individuals, groups, and society at large. However, the benefits of diversity cannot be fully appreciated when people do not have (or fail to embrace) opportunities to intentionally get to know others across the lines of difference. By encouraging people to interact with other people or groups that they generally might not encounter, we can challenge biases that may otherwise be formed or perpetuated. Diversity efforts must not be limited to one environment but focus on schools, workplaces, community spaces and within our institutions. To that end, we encourage a convening of diversity officers from large employers in central Ohio, including OSU, Cardinal Health, Battelle, Nationwide, etc. to encourage central Ohio employers to include gender bias awareness in their diversity training programs.
2. *Provide gender transformative funding:* Funding is needed to support projects and programs that challenge gender norms and implicit bias, but do so in a way that sustains them over an extended period allowing for the production of cross-generational impact. “Gender Transformative” refers to

the processes by which we break down the engrained gender norms that people have and promote gender equity to make a more just reality for women and men. TrueChild reviewed myriad programs and put forth several that successfully address this goal—from educational sources that challenge young boys and girls to think beyond their traditional conceptions of gender, to others that encourage youth to reflect on how gender impacts their lives. These programs include “*What’s the REAL DEAL about Gender, Power, and Relationships*” which invites young people to really dig deep into their understandings and beliefs surrounding gender as well as allowing them to share ideas about how these perceptions pervade their realities. Formulating programs in conjunction with local community based organizations can foster environments that encourage young boys and girls to develop equal views of men and women. These programs will ensure that as the youth in central Ohio grow up, they remain aware of the importance of gender equity and inclusion throughout their lives.

3. *Support Implicit Bias trainings:* Implicit bias education and training can help us become aware of our own biases, which is the first step to addressing them. While all people can benefit from implicit bias training, work with people in influential positions or positions of power can be most beneficial and impactful because often these individuals act as gatekeepers to opportunities for women and girls. Specifically, gender diversity trainings have been shown to shift male faculty participants’ implicit associations regarding women in STEM positively.
4. *Start early and involve schools and parents:* Additional awareness-building and trainings should be implemented when gender norms are being solidified most rapidly—during the gender intensification period in young adolescents (i.e. grades 5–8). Trainings could be given by teachers, materials developed for parents to have conversations at home, and a de-biasing curriculum piloted. Some of this work is already being done for young adults, and provides a model for implementing a program targeted to younger audiences. For example, the Kirwan Institute was invited to serve as a partner institution for “Look Different,” a multi-year MTV campaign designed to help Millennials recognize and respond to bias. Launched in April 2014, this three-year campaign specifically addresses racial, gender, and anti-LGBT bias, with the goal of empowering Millennials to better counter hidden biases they see and experience. The multifaceted campaign includes on-air programming, social media activity, innovative digital tools, and celebrity engagement, among other approaches. This campaign could easily be brought into the classroom.
5. *Encourage conversation with children surrounding gender perceptions from the media:* Equipping teachers and parents with the knowledge and skills to challenge gender norms as they are formed through media’s influence is important for the youth of central Ohio, using a framework set forth by TrueChild. There are seven steps in total for adults to open up conversation with children—engage, question, listen, don’t argue, reflect and share discomfort and alternatives, invest the energy elsewhere, and make a game of the activity. TrueChild provides a detailed outline for parents (or teachers) to follow on their website, as part of the Media Literacy Tool.
6. *Community engagement focused on gender norms and implicit bias:* Community engagements and community forums on gender norms and implicit biases can assist in better documenting the impact of gender norms and bias in our community. The development of powerful narratives from local experiences is critical to building awareness and supporting strategies for change.

5.2 RECOMMENDATION: EFFORTS TO HELP ELIMINATE THE GENDER-BASED PAY GAP AND SUPPORT A LIVING WAGE IN CENTRAL OHIO

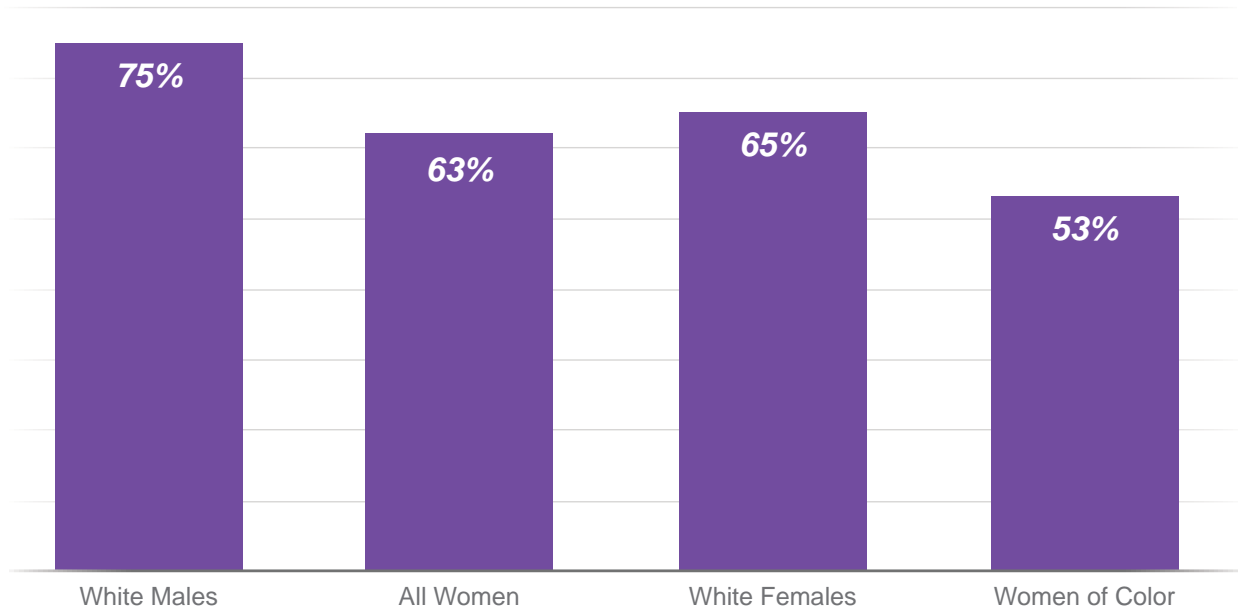
On average, women in central Ohio earn less than men, but it is even worse for women of color. For example, the \$15 wage is often utilized to understand who earns less than a living wage in a community. In the Columbus region, there are stark disparities in who sustains a living wage across dimensions of gender and race. In the Columbus MSA in 2012, only 2 out of 3 women earned more than \$15 per hour, compared to nearly 3 out of 4 men. For women of color, only 1 in 2 earned more than \$15 per hour (**Figure 15**). Pay secrecy continues to obscure the reality of wage discrimination against women in many workplaces across the country. The Obama Administration has taken steps to bring this discussion out of the shadows (for example through the Lilly Ledbetter Act and Paycheck Fairness Act), but local efforts around awareness-raising can occur while we wait on Congress to act. Policy reforms and campaigns in this domain would boost the income of thousands of central Ohio families.

Strategies:

1. *Business and organizational action to ensure a livable wage:* Businesses have an important self-interest in assuring livable wages, as living wage employment can assist in employee recruitment and retention.⁵⁷ Locally, Nationwide Insurance and Mid-Ohio Foodbank have been two local organizations which have recently adopted policies ensuring living wages for their employees.
2. *Family-friendly workplaces:* In addition to supporting pay fairness, women and men today are placing a premium on work-life balance and choosing employers that offer family-friendly work schedules by offering, for example, flexibility to shift either work location or time. One study found that nearly half of all parents have reported foregoing a job opportunity because it would interfere with family obligations.⁵⁸ Pay parity, while important, is but one aspect of the gender gap that families face. Businesses are starting to adapt and realizing multiple benefits, including more productive employees, improved employee retention, improved quality of life for employees, and less-stressed employees.⁵⁹ However, it's important that such policies are gender neutral, allowing both women *and* men to take advantage of family-friendly policies; researchers have noted unintended consequences for women as a result of women-specific policies (for example, more temp or contract positions, less pay, fewer promotions, or outright discrimination in the hiring process).⁶⁰ Encouragingly, male and female millennials are optimistic that in the future, workplaces will be flexible—allowing for a fluid relationship between home and work—enabling women to not abandon their career goals in order to start or raise a family.⁶¹
3. *Federal policy:* Federal policy proposals, such as the *Paycheck Fairness Act* create federal guidance and support labor policies that can assist in documenting gender-based pay disparities and provide remedies to those challenges. Strategies like this are potential solutions to support greater equity for men and women in our society.
4. *State and local policy:* Policy efforts at the state and local level can encourage and support living wages. Communities can utilize *Community Benefit Agreements* to ensure businesses receiving significant public subsidy pay living wages.
5. *Improve Ohio's Childcare Assistance, a project of Policy Matters Ohio:* In 2014, Ohio ranked 48th in difficulty to qualify for childcare assistance. Despite some advances in state policy, cracks still remain that leave many without access to affordable childcare, and effectively stunt the careers of hundreds of thousands of women who disproportionately shoulder the burden of childcare in their homes. Improving Ohio's Childcare Assistance specifically builds economic self-sufficiency for Ohio women by providing a greater opportunity to advance their careers with easier access affordable childcare.

Figure 15

Percentage of Workers Earning More Than \$15 Per Hour:
Columbus Metro Area 2012



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- Promote economic independence to help women and girls overcome traditional biases:* Financial literacy training should be implemented in schools for school-age children as well as their parents. Trainings should be provided in a way that includes immigrant households.
 - Engage women entrepreneurs as mentors and role models:* Central Ohio has a large number of successful women-owned businesses. We recommend looking into developing a mentorship program that pairs women entrepreneurs with school-age children. Programs are up and running around the country that could provide valuable insight into structuring such a program in central Ohio. For example, the Girls Leadership and Mentoring Movement, Inc (GLAM) in Los Angeles focuses on girls in underserved communities and covers a wide-range of topics and skill-building related to girl empowerment, from their “Best You Forward” life skills program, to a “Sip & Chat” monthly Saturday morning session with a mentor, to a summer camp one-day summit on developing positive self-esteem.⁶²
 - Build on existing efforts to engage women in STEM:* There are already many well-funded programs aimed at encouraging STEM education for women. Inclusion of gender bias awareness could be a helpful addition. In central Ohio, we are fortunate to have exemplar STEM-focused high schools that

also have a mission of inclusion for under-represented groups, including females, low-income students, and students of color. Partnerships could be engaged with STEM oriented schools around gender de-biasing as part of a STEM curriculum.

5.3 RECOMMENDATION: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL OFFICE AND CORPORATE EXECUTIVE POSITIONS IN CENTRAL OHIO.

Women in central Ohio have made great strides as business owners. The number of women-owned firms in Ohio has grown by 42% a year since 1997. However, challenges remain when it comes to corporate and political leadership. Ohio has never had a female senator, and only 1 in 10 women hold a position as a CEO, executive or board member (**Figure 4**). While women make up 51% of the US population, they are vastly underrepresented in government. Only five states have a female governor, nationally less than 25% of statewide and state legislative offices are held by women, and only 12 of our 100 largest cities have female mayors.

In order to have the best representation and leadership in government, 100% of the talent pool is needed. More women in elected office translates into policies that represent more Americans. The symbolic importance also galvanizes women, leading more to become interested and actively involved in the political arena; inspiring women to take leadership roles in all sectors. As a group, women are more likely to be consensus builders and inclusionary in style, resulting in more effective legislation. They are also more likely to prioritize issues affecting women, men and families. All politicians bring their personal experiences and their lens on life to their office, to be a truly representative government we need to have a complete picture of the American public represented.

Studies have shown that women's leadership increases profits for companies. Yet, increasing diversity in top leadership positions is more involved than simply hiring more women. We must be strategic and inclusive in how we think about achieving greater diversity, or more accurately, greater inclusion.

Best Practices:

1. *Boards and accountability:* Public, State, County and City boards, and corporate and nonprofit boards must seek to support increased gender and racial representation and be encouraged to report on the gender diversity within their leadership. Public policy efforts must also ensure gender and racial diversity in community representation in local public engagement efforts.
2. *Building leadership pipelines:* Our local gender norms survey found 48% of central Ohio respondents "strongly agreed" that it is important to have programs specifically for girls to learn leadership and group management skills. Several local programs are model practices that provide inspiration for future efforts and leverage points for expanding women's leadership in our community. Cardinal Health's Diversity Initiative provides an excellent corporate model for leadership development—it recognizes that true opening up of opportunity requires a commitment to *inclusion*, above and beyond diversity, and that "inclusion" incorporates "thoughts, communication styles, interests, languages, values and beliefs, and a variety of dimensions."⁶³ At The Ohio State University, the John Glenn College New Leadership Ohio and Ready to Run programs. For example, The New Leadership Ohio program is a national bi-partisan program that addresses the underrepresentation of women in US politics. The five-day residential summer institute allows college women to: learn the history of women's involvement in public life, gain leadership skills in public speaking, advocacy, and diversity, and form a network of their peers as well as current women leaders, and encourages them to become effective leaders in the political arena.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion's *The Women's Place* leadership programs (*Authentic Leadership in Action*, *Higher Education Resource Services*, *Staff Leadership Series*, *President and Provosts Leadership Institute*) are all promising models of university-based leadership initiatives.

3. *Supporting young women and girls*: Leadership development and economic empowerment for women is critical at all stages of development, particularly for children. Local programs such as *Rise Sister Rise* are important initiatives focusing on the needs of young women of color, a population often not well-supported by programmatic efforts for youth. *Rise Sister Rise* is a research project exploring the ways in which young Black girls in four cities in Ohio experience their world, and the ways in which they are affected by those experiences, especially regarding trauma and resiliency. In particular, the findings of the research can change how young Black females are perceived, and how services are delivered to this population.⁶⁴ At The Ohio State University, efforts to encourage STEM careers through special educational offerings and peer mentoring for women are models that can be emulated more broadly. Additional local programs include:
 - Girls with Great Futures, a program of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Columbus - The Girls with Great Futures initiative is a program that works to specifically empower teen girls to think big and raise their expectations for their own potential. Girls with Great Futures helps fill the gap for girls between career preparation and career achievement by addressing issues of gender norms and how these norms cause gender inequality.
 - The Economic and Community Development Institute (ECDI) - The Women's Business Center DreamBuilder Initiative. The DreamBuilder program is a proven, Small Business Administration (SBA) approved curriculum that offers a women-centric approach to entrepreneurial education. Through in-class courses, offered in English or Spanish, women entrepreneurs "walk through" the small business start-up or growth process with the assistance of certified instructors. An online option provides additional participants with a "stop and go," individualized curriculum, perfect for the busy schedules of working women and mothers.
 - League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund - Women's Voices: Preparing the Next Gen of Women Leaders Women's Voices. This program aims to connect current women political leaders in our communities with high school girls to serve as role models and encourage youth civic engagement. The project includes an introductory assembly or event at the high school, ongoing mentoring, and tools for high school girls to become engaged voters.
 - The Women's Leadership Network - The Otterbein Women's Leadership Network, known in the community as "The NET," provides a stream of educational, networking, and transformational leadership opportunities for girls, university students, and women community leaders. The NET mobilizes over 650 participants and 85 organizations in their network through intergenerational opportunities. NET participants develop a deeper understanding of how to navigate obstacles to their success while cultivating innovative leadership and advocacy skills.

5.4 RECOMMENDATION: ENGAGE MEN AND BOYS IN THE CONVERSATION AROUND GENDER NORMS AND GENDER BIAS

Gender norms and biases directly impact everyone, not just women and girls, but harm our entire community. Men and boys are also impacted by gender norms and gender bias. Not only are they forced into rigid norms, they also can be in positions of power where they can either enforce or challenge these norms. It is important for men and boys to understand how gender norms affect women and girls, their role in reinforcing these norms, and how they can reduce their implicit biases. Their participation in discussions challenging these impediments is crucial to the eradication of gender norms and gender bias.

Best Practices:

1. *Developing allies:* Partner with men's organizations to challenge destructive gender norms in our community, schools and work places. Community engagements with films such as "The Mask You Live In" provide effective tools to engage dialogue about the destructive impacts of gender norms on men and boys. Locally, *My Brother's Keeper* efforts, led by Franklin County, the Columbus Urban League and the City of Columbus, provide an opportunity to challenge the biases and norms that harm men and boys of color. However, these programs have a key missing element: it is important for men and boys to understand how gender norms affect women and girls, their own role in reinforcing these norms, and how they can reduce their implicit biases. Another potential curriculum that could be utilized well in central Ohio is one modeled after the "A Call to Men" program (a *TrueChild* program) that provokes young boys to reevaluate the way they perceive women and develops their ability to live a healthy and inclusive lifestyle.

6. ADDENDUM

RESEARCH METHODS & APPROACH

We applied a mixed methods approach to understanding gender norms in central Ohio and how these norms impact the economic success of women and girls living in the region. By combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods, we are able to ground quantitatively generated data we garnered from the literature, survey, and other analyses, with the qualitative data that emerged through our engagements with the central Ohio community in focus groups and world cafés. We made an intentional effort to include men and boys in these conversations, and strived for diversity in age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and education. This provided a more nuanced understanding of how these issues impact the lives of girls and women in central Ohio.

6.1 LITERATURE REVIEW AND COLLABORATION WITH RIKI WILCHINS

The report was informed by the most prominent literature on gender norms and bias in order to build a strong foundation for the research. We also collaborated with national gender norms expert Riki Wilchins, who founded *TrueChild*, to ensure that the literature review included all relevant studies pertaining to these subjects. Grounding our approach in the literature enabled us to confidently proceed with the research design and bolstered our understanding of the complexities surrounding gender norms and bias.

6.2 IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST DATA ANALYSIS

Following the creation of a literature review, we conducted an analysis of Implicit Association Test (IAT) data from Harvard University. We analyzed the gender/career IAT data for the Columbus MSA and for the nation. The gender/career IAT shows whether respondents implicitly and explicitly associate women or men with family or career, giving us a snapshot into the implicit and explicit biases held by Columbus MSA residents. Comparing this data to the national sample allowed us to discern notable differences between biases held by Columbus MSA residents and the national sample.

6.3 CENTRAL OHIO GENDER NORMS SURVEY

In order to gain a broader perspective into local gender norms, we conducted a survey of 919 central Ohio residents aged 9 and up. In the survey we asked 15 questions aimed at identifying prominent themes in central Ohioan's understanding of gender norms, along with 8 additional demographic questions that enabled us to determine whether or not our sample was representative of the region. The adult results were referenced within this report and were statistically valid.

6.4 GENDER NORMS AND BIAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We consulted with an advisory committee that included 19 local experts. We met on four occasions in September and October of 2015. During these meetings the advisory committee provided feedback on the research questions, survey questions, and engagement materials. In addition, we interviewed a total of 19 local experts, many of whom were members of the advisory committee who drew on their experience and research to provide perspectives on how gender norms are produced, internalized, and perpetuated in central Ohio. The following individuals and organizations made up the Advisory Committee:

Suzanne Roberts, Women Generating

Angela Stewart, Maryhaven

Jess Sparks, Girls on the Run

Maria Stockard, Columbus City Schools

Amy Hawthorne, HelpLine of Delaware & Morrow Counties

Meredith Kits, New Directions

Caroline Woliver, New Directions

Alesia Gillison, Columbus City Schools

Joyce Ray, Columbus Foundation

Sue Wismar, SARNO

Lauren Strand, Ohio State, Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Jill Yavorsky, Ohio State, Department of Sociology

Haley Swenson, Ohio State, Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Wendy Smooth, Ohio State, Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Yolanda Zepeda, Ohio State, Office of Diversity and Inclusion

6.5 FOCUS GROUPS

We conducted 13 focus groups at five sites throughout the Columbus MSA. Each focus group was recorded and the audio was analyzed in NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software tool that enables users to code both audio and transcripts and run various other analyses on the materials. The coded audio was then transcribed and analyzed further for themes. The themes identified were the most frequent narratives that surfaced through the engagements and are discussed in subsequent sections of this report in addition to the detailed summary of the focus groups in the appendix.

6.6 WORLD CAFÉS

Five world cafés were conducted at five separate sites throughout the Columbus MSA. World Café engagements are designed to allow an organization or group to effectively surface the knowledge of the group through structured small-group conversations and large-group reflection.

7. ADDENDUM

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Addendum: Distribution of earnings by occupation and gender for Columbus MSA

	Median earnings (dollars) for male	Median earnings (dollars) for female	% of Earnings (Female to Male)
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	39,590	31,094	79%
Management, business, science, and arts occupations:	62,486	46,634	75%
Management, business, and financial occupations:	65,848	50,970	77%
Management occupations	70,320	52,722	75%
Business and financial operations occupations	60,121	49,077	82%
Computer, engineering, and science occupations:	67,788	55,969	83%
Computer and mathematical occupations	69,793	61,436	88%
Architecture and engineering occupations	68,526	59,909	87%
Life, physical, and social science occupations	50,543	45,316	90%
Education, legal, community service, arts, and media occupations:	47,643	37,283	78%
Community and social services occupations	41,831	37,367	89%
Legal occupations	93,098	55,084	59%
Education, training, and library occupations	43,530	34,583	79%
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	43,139	39,138	91%
Healthcare practitioner and technical occupations:	72,455	49,143	68%
Health diagnosing and treating practitioners and other technical occupations	97,465	57,898	59%
Health technologists and technicians	39,101	33,941	87%
Service occupations:	20,800	15,774	76%
Healthcare support occupations	26,801	20,916	78%
Protective service occupations:	44,948	32,228	72%
Fire fighting and prevention, and other protective service workers including supervisors	32,778	24,971	76%
Law enforcement workers including supervisors	61,359	48,272	79%
Food preparation and serving related occupations	14,460	11,915	82%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	22,093	14,383	65%
Personal care and service occupations	20,286	14,797	73%
Sales and office occupations:	33,564	28,043	84%
Sales and related occupations	39,868	19,277	48%
Office and administrative support occupations	30,850	30,741	100%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations:	34,747	23,442	67%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	22,788	6,964	31%
Construction and extraction occupations	30,938	23,015	74%
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	39,905	28,500	71%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations:	29,541	20,960	71%
Production occupations	33,678	22,085	66%
Transportation occupations	32,235	25,367	79%
Material moving occupations	21,902	17,529	80%



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