Your Activism Doesn’t Stop at Election Day

Right now, across the country women are leaving the workforce at four times the rate as men. And, here in our state, the Connecticut Department of Labor reported 100,000 women filed unemployment claims during the month of September, compared with 80,000 men.

Women, especially women of color, are experiencing the most severe financial, social, and emotional impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 public health crisis. Women continue to carry the majority of caregiving responsibilities in their families and juggle work with raising children or caring for loved ones during the pandemic.

Thanks to our supporters like you, CWEALF released our 2020 Voter’s and Candidate’s Guide to Women’s Economic Security to provide the tools voters needed this election cycle to elevate issues critical to women’s economic security on the campaign trail. Policy Director Madeline Granato and Policy and Program Associate Nicole Sanclemente spoke with candidates running in local races across Connecticut to discuss why women’s economic security MUST be their priority during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

You Voted! Now What?

Your work doesn’t stop there! Thanks to people like you who donate and volunteer your time, CWEALF works to advance legislation that combats the gender wage gap, increases access to affordable child care, and enhances women’s rights and protections at work.

We can’t do this work alone. Use your voice and your power - as well as the Voter guide - to continue to interact and connect with your newly elected officials after the election. They need to know what’s important to YOU and your community once the 2021 legislative session begins! Find the Voter Guide at www.cwealf.org.
Be A CHAMPION Like RBG

We are so grateful for Supreme Court Justice Ginsburg’s lifelong pursuit of gender equity. All of our lives are better for her work and tireless advocacy for equality that paved the way for CWEALF to push for progress. Today, CWEALF advocates for issues including pay equity, rights and safety in the workplace, and access to reproductive healthcare because Justice Ginsburg’s fight was just the beginning. It’s up to each of us to continue Justice Ginsburg’s legacy and commitment to defend and advance the rights she worked tirelessly to ensure.

On September 19, CWEALF co-sponsored a vigil to honor and mourn Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the steps of the Connecticut Supreme Court, Hartford. Photo credit: NARAL Pro-Choice CT.

As a proud member of the CT Coalition for Choice, CWEALF is committed to protecting access to comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion, in our state. This fall, CWEALF Policy Director Maddie Granato joined U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal and community partners from Planned Parenthood Votes!, NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut, and Greater Hartford Legal Aid for a discussion on what is at stake for women’s rights and reproductive freedom with Justice Ginsburg’s vacancy on the Supreme Court.
CT Paid Leave + You

Thanks to activists like you, Connecticut passed one of the strongest paid family and medical leave programs in the nation in 2019. Now, paid leave is right around the corner! Contributions to the program will begin in early 2021, and benefits will be available to eligible workers in early 2022.

As Chair of the Campaign for Paid Family Leave, CWEALF will continue to monitor implementation of the program and work alongside the Connecticut Paid Leave Authority to ensure workers across the state know and understand their rights under the law. Learn more about the CT Paid Leave Authority by visiting their new website, ctpaidleave.org.

Know Your Rights in the Workplace

CWEALF is available to help individuals navigate through their legal rights during COVID-19. When you contact our Information and Referral Line, staff and volunteers are ready to help find the resource you need or connect you with an attorney in our Cooperating Attorney Network or community agency.

Contact Legal Education Manager Denise Rhone at drhone@cwealf.org to schedule a Know Your Rights Workshop for your organization. CWEALF’s COVID-19 guides with information regarding unemployment insurance, paid sick leave, FMLA, and other programs in English & Spanish are available at www.cwealf.org/legal-education/

CWEALF’s Legal Education Manager Denise Rhone joined longtime CWEALF supporter and volunteer Attorney Deborah McKenna of Hayber, McKenna & Dinsmore, LLC this summer to present a virtual version of our Know Your Rights in the Workplace: COVID-19 workshop thanks to hosts Dress for Success Mid-Fairfield County.
Each year CWEALF celebrates women who make a difference in the lives of women and girls in Connecticut. This year, to keep everyone healthy and safe, we’ve reimagined our annual event into our One Woman Makes a Difference Virtual Celebration Series.

2020 Maria Miller Stewart Honorees:

CT UndocuFund, Organizers Carolina Bortolleto & Katia Ruesta

CWEALF honors the organizers behind the CT Undocufund for quickly establishing a fund to provide direct assistance to undocumented immigrant families and individuals who were ineligible for state or federal relief aid during the COVID-19 public health crisis. CT Undocufund’s goal is to address this gap through fundraising in an effort to provide direct assistance to the most vulnerable members of the community. The first round of applications launched in May 2020 resulted in over $80,000 distributed to 99 families, and the second round resulted in over $90,000 to 103 families.

Melinda Johnson, Director, Community Engagement & Advocacy, YWCA Hartford Region, First Lady of Urban Hope Refuge Church

CWEALF honors Melinda Johnson for her service to the Hartford community and beyond; her advocacy for racial justice; and for organizing and leading a televised memorial service to honor George Floyd and other victims of police violence in June 2020. This event galvanized hundreds in solidarity to mourn Mr. Floyd and commit to ending racial injustice across our state. Melinda’s fearless leadership and call to action inspire all of us.
Rochelle Palache, Assistant Director, SEIU 32BJ

CWEALF honors Rochelle Palache for her commitment and leadership to protect and advance workers’ rights in Connecticut. In 2019, Rochelle was a leader in advocating for the passage of legislation to raise Connecticut’s minimum wage, to implement one of the most comprehensive paid family and medical leave programs in the nation, and the TRUST Act to strengthen protections for Connecticut’s immigrant community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Rochelle has led efforts to protect essential workers in service plazas and rest stops from wage theft and other violations of workers’ rights.

Jacqueline Rabe Thomas, Education and Children’s Issues reporter, CT Mirror

CWEALF honors Jacqueline Rabe Thomas for her commitment to outstanding, in-depth investigative reporting on housing segregation and educational equity issues in Connecticut’s past and present. Her tireless advocacy has brought these systemic injustices to light so that they can be addressed and eradicated. In 2019, Jacqueline won first place in the New England Newspaper & Press Association’s investigative/enterprise reporting category for her outstanding yearlong series, “Separated By Design.”

Who Was Maria Miller Stewart?

Maria Miller Stewart was a free Black woman in Hartford in 1803 who became the first American-born woman to speak in public at an organized lecture. Stewart spoke out with force on the rights of women.

CWEALF views Maria Miller Stewart as a role model in her efforts to advance the cause of equality. As an organization, CWEALF strives to educate the public about women’s rights and advocate for their full participation in society.
We are honored to be able to bring the essence of One Woman to the virtual world, as well as connect with you. This is the biggest fundraiser of the year to support CWEALF’s work across the state!

Learn more about this innovative celebration series this year and choose how to virtually participate at www.cwealf.org/onewoman or contact Development & Communications Coordinator Meg Dubois at 860-610-6046. Become a virtual party host, sponsor, or purchase a ticket to one of the pre-scheduled virtual celebrations.

Meet CWEALF’s Interns!

Our interns and volunteers play critical roles in the fight for gender equity and access to legal justice in Connecticut.

Claire Chang
Claire is a rising sophomore at Yale University intending to major in history. She is a member of two Democratic political campaigns and really hopes you voted this year! The political issues that are most important to her are racial justice, women’s rights, and immigration and refugee/asylee policy. Claire is considering going to law school to be either a human rights or immigration lawyer in the future.

Hannah Halloran
Hannah is a second-year student at UConn School of Social Work earning her Master of Social Work, with a concentration in Policy Practice. Hannah’s professional interests are in gender equity and interpersonal violence prevention, particularly in higher education. She most recently worked with the Intimate Partner Violence Sexual Assault Prevention Program (IP-V-SAPP) at Naugatuck Valley Community College.
Lizzette Perez

Lizzette is a sophomore at the University of Connecticut, Storrs with an interest in law, public policy, and advocacy. Lizzette looks to give back to her community and raise awareness on issues such as immigration, racism, human rights, and higher education for marginalized students.

Shirley Bysiewicz Legacy Society

Shirley Bysiewicz, tenured Professor and longtime law librarian at the University of Connecticut School of Law, was one of CWEALF’s founders and the first President of CWEALF.

Membership to the Legacy Society is open to those who have included CWEALF in their wills and other estate planning. Please call Development & Communications Coordinator Meg Dubois at 860-610-6046 if you have made provisions for CWEALF in your will, or if you would like more information about how to make a bequest.
Sign up for our email newsletter at cwealf.org to be ready to take action for women and girls!

Stay Connected with CWEALF

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Do You Need Legal Help?

Contact CWEALF’s Legal Education Program

Information & Referral Service
¡Se habla español!
Call 860.524.0601
or toll free 1.800.479.2949
Mon-Thurs 9AM – 2PM
Fri 9AM -1PM

Visit cwealf.org for more information and resources