



PARTICIPATION DOCUMENT

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Connecticut Collective for Women and Girls is a community of organizations committed to the advancement of women and girls, including those who are cisgender, transgender, and non-binary, in the state of Connecticut. The Collective is a network that brings participating organizations together to highlight and amplify their work while drawing on the collective power of collaboration.

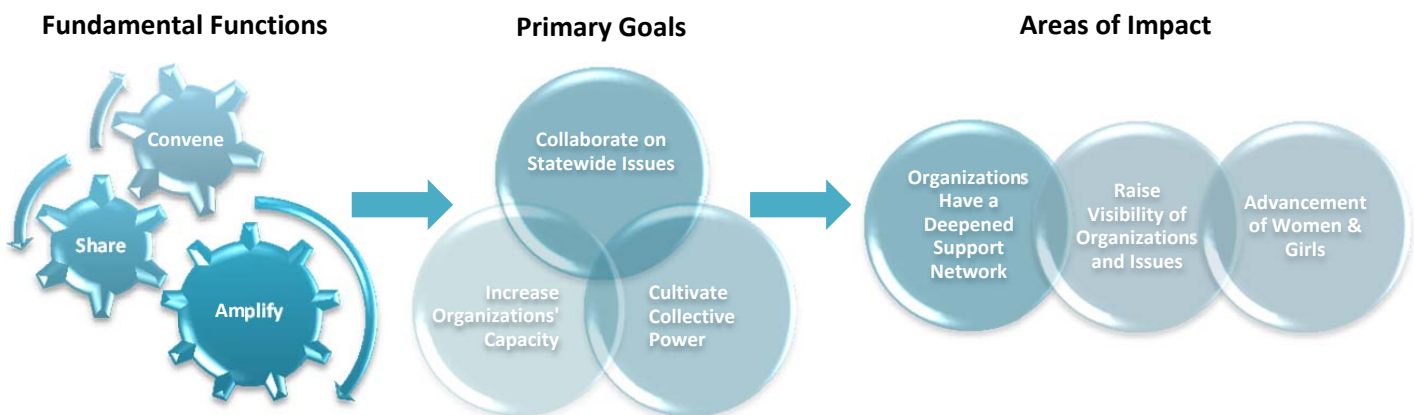
Many organizations in the state of Connecticut are doing critical work to transform the lives of women and girls everywhere. But, too often, these organizations operate separately, leading to silos. Thus, the CCWG was formed to expand our strength as a collective force to advance women and girls.

VALUES:

The Connecticut Collective for Women and Girls is guided by the following principles: gender equity, racial justice, LGBTQIA rights, civil rights, disability rights, ending and preventing violence, economic justice, reproductive rights, and immigrants' rights.

IMPACT:

The Collective builds on the assets of each participating organization joining them to a network of organizations to uplift and amplify each other's work. The very act of coming together in this way increases each organization's impact to advance rights and opportunities for women and girls in Connecticut.



The Collective **convenes** so that organizations throughout the state can work together toward common goals, **shares** resources and expertise, and **amplifies** our unified voice on issues that affect women and girls throughout Connecticut.

The above primary goals guide the activities of the Collective. The steering committee establishes specific goals annually.

Our broad base of participating organizations throughout the state bolsters the Collective's impact. We believe that as the Collective strengthens and enriches each organization, the work for the advancement of women and girls is more effective.

STRUCTURE:

The Collective is led by a steering committee comprised of (2) representatives from the Governance Committee, (2) representatives from the backbone organization, and (2) representatives from the funders circle. The steering committee meets annually to establish dues, and set goals and priorities. This group also meets quarterly to review goals and priorities and schedule events.

The Funders' Circle: A partnership of foundations and individuals committed to funding and supporting the purpose and values of the CCWG and its ongoing sustainability.

Responsibilities of Funders:

- Invest financial support for the activities and existence of the Collective, as well as non-monetary support, as possible.
- Maintain missions and values that support the purpose and values of the Collective. If a potential funder's mission or values do not align with that of the Collective, the Steering Committee may reject the Funder.
- Appoint a liaison of the Funders' Circle to maintain ongoing communication with the Backbone/Coordinator.
- Conduct outreach to stakeholders and/or grantees regarding recruitment, participation, and events of the Collective.

Backbone Organization: The organization responsible for coordinating ongoing technical assistance support and organization for the CCWG. Currently the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (*CWEALF*) serves as the backbone.

Criteria:

- Statewide Organization
- Demonstrated financial stability
- History of a commitment to serving women and girls
- Possess a 501(c)3 status
- *(Additional criteria may be set by the steering committee)*

Selection Process:

- Every two years the Steering Committee shall appoint a backbone organization
- The funders circle will release an RFP to the participating organizations within the Collective.
- Participating organizations within the Collective who desire to take on the role of the backbone will complete an application
- The steering committee will review all applications and select the new backbone organization
- Steering committee members who represent applicant organizations will abstain from the selection process

Responsibilities of the Backbone:

- CWEALF organizes and manages the Collective by dedicating staff and other resources to create the collaborative infrastructure and facilitate ongoing communication among participants.
- CWEALF maintains updated rosters of participants, prospective participants and funders.
- CWEALF convenes meetings and action sessions, facilitates communication among the participants, engages participants to share information, data, and best practices, coordinates action on larger system-change opportunities, engages the power and resources of participant organizations, and seeks regular feedback.
- CWEALF leads efforts to fund the Collective by collecting participant dues and garnering support through a partnership of funders throughout the state who recognize the need for collaboration and unification among women’s organizations statewide, and invest in the ongoing collaboration of these organizations.
- CWEALF serves as the Collective’s fiscal agent, maintaining the funding relationships, and providing reports to both participants and funders.

Governance Committee: The committee responsible for soliciting feedback from participants regarding the function of the CCWG, the role of the Backbone/Coordinator, and any potential changes in structure. This committee is also responsible for engaging organizations who express a desire to join the Collaborative. In collaboration with CWEAL, the governance committee makes the determination on participation.

PARTICIPATION:

Collective participants are organizations throughout the state with expertise in fields such as girls’ leadership, entrepreneurship, violence against women, reproductive care, civic engagement, and more. They have a shared commitment to advance the rights and opportunities of women and girls, aligned with the Collective’s shared values. Collective participants drive the vision, agenda, and priorities. They also drive the solutions. Participants meet regularly to share resources, identify gaps in services and participation, and work to cultivate a network that addresses the diverse needs of populations that are working toward equity. Through participation in the Collective, they have access to experts in women and girls’ issues, best practices for nonprofits, opportunities for data and research sharing, trainings, networking, shared capacity to advance the movement to gain equity for women and girls, and more.

PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES:

1. Trainings and professional development on topics such as leadership, diversity, and research;
2. Issue briefings on policy topics impacting women, girls, and gender;
3. Networking with leading agencies in the advancement of women and girls; access to a directory of participating organizations and their profiles;
4. Accessing shared resources and expertise; opportunities to share data and research; capacity building; and

5. Regular communication with all participants to promote internal projects and events, with opportunities for collaboration with other participants.
6. Periodic networking events and forums.
7. Statewide visibility of the organization's expertise.

PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS:

1. Each participating organization will identify two individuals to serve as the representatives, if feasible, with one key contact. These individuals are expected to attend quarterly action sessions, occasional conference calls, and provide feedback as needed. The organization shall select one individual with the ability to exert decision-making authority. Representatives must have the ability to attend meetings. In choosing two designees, organizations are encouraged to give consideration to the Collective's goals of diversity in line with our values.
2. In a calendar year, each participant shall volunteer to: a) serve on at least one committee, standing or ad hoc; b) provide an educational briefing to the collective; or c) serve as a brand ambassador by promoting/sharing 2-3 Collective events or projects with your own network.
3. If a participant has not responded to invitations to more than four action sessions or conference calls, the Backbone/Coordinator, in consultation with the Participation Committee, may revoke participation (without dues returned) or reject subsequent renewal.
4. Annual dues: The Participation Committee will determine at the end of each calendar year whether or not to implement annual dues for the following year based on a projected budget and cost. It will establish dues on a sliding scale based on the annual budget of each participating organization. Sliding scale will range from, free for organizations with no paid staff with to a cap of \$75 a year for large organization.
5. Contribute to requests for data and information about the organization's programming, population, and resources; willingness to share knowledge base and expertise.

COMMITTEES:

Standing and ad hoc committees aid in the day to day functions of the Collective and take ownership of responsibilities that move us toward our goals. Standing committees include: steering, governance, data and evaluation, and events.

Committee guidelines:

- Committee members are identified on a voluntary basis
- Standing committees must meet twice a year at minimum. Ad hoc committees meet as needed.
- Each committee will appoint their chair and co-chair annually.

AGREEMENT OF CONDUCT:

To ensure a safe, productive and inspiring environment, participants agree to:

- Respect and preserve the confidentiality of information shared by other participants;
- Engage in open and respectful communication, and share best practices and lessons learned;
- Abstain from approaching funders during CCWG activities to solicit funds; and
- The steering committee will work with all participants to resolve public disputes publicly and all private disputes privately, when needed

ONBOARDING PROCESS:

Organizations interested in joining the Collective must complete the participation form and return to CWEALF. Governance Committee will then conduct a brief conversation with the interested party to assess whether the Collective’s purpose aligns with the work and needs of the interested party. If an affirmative assessment is made, CWEALF will subsequently send out the participation agreement to the interested party, as well as a description of next steps. The organization’s CEO, executive director, or other authorized representative must sign the participation agreement and return to CWEALF.

If the Governance Committee determines that the interested organization’s mission or values conflict with the purpose or values of the Collective, it may, after consultation with CWEALF, decline the party’s participation in the Collective.

