

## YWCA Central Maine's 2023 Advocacy Agenda

YWCA Central Maine is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, stand up for social justice, help families, and strengthen communities. From voting rights to civil rights, from affordable housing to pay equity and from violence prevention to health care reform—we are dedicated to social action and advocacy to advance our mission in collaboration with community partners and coalitions. Our priorities include policies that create safer, healthier, more equitable, and more inclusive communities in Maine and across our nation.

**You are a crucial part of this work.** Your voice is critical as we advocate for policies that bring us closer to eliminating racism, empowering women, and ensuring peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. If you would like to learn more about our advocacy and how you can make a real difference by sharing your story or volunteering your time, please email Amanda at [ahatch@ywcamaine.org](mailto:ahatch@ywcamaine.org)

### 2023 Priority Legislation Areas

*Note: Advocacy is critical to making the real and meaningful mission impact we seek to achieve in our state. For this reason, YWCA Central Maine supports numerous and varied policies. These are policy issues, not partisan issues – and the list below is not comprehensive. Please reach out if you have any questions about the policies we support and how they relate to our mission.*

#### Racial Justice & Tribal Sovereignty

Many of the policies supported by YWCA Central Maine cover multiple priority areas – and racial justice is no exception. Our racial justice priorities are varied – from tribal sovereignty, to offering healthcare coverage and identification cards to all immigrants, to housing and workforce development policies that disproportionately impact communities of color, and more – we work in collaboration with community partners to move legislation impacting racial justice forward. Key partners in this work include: *Vision for an Equitable Maine Coalition, Maine Equal Justice, Maine Immigrant's Rights Coalition, Wabanaki Alliance, Maine People's Alliance*, and more.

#### Childcare & Education

There are numerous bills in Augusta that would improve the quality and accessibility of childcare in our state—for providers and families alike. YWCA Central Maine works with numerous organizations and coalitions to actively support these policies, including *Right from the Start, Maine Children's Alliance, Maine Association for the Education of Young Children, Maine Women's Lobby*, and more. YWCA Central Maine also actively seeks and supports local and state-wide policies that increase awareness of and support for inclusive, mission-based programming and curricula in childcare, out-of-school programs, and public schools.

### **Economic Security & Gender Justice for All**

YWCA Central Maine partners with organizations such as *Maine Women's Lobby*, *Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition*, and *Maine Business Immigration Coalition* to support policies that ensure safe, fair, and inclusive workplaces and expand workforce opportunities for women, LGBTQIA+ people, Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other people of color, and members of other historically marginalized communities. We also seek out and support local, state, and national policies to restore safety net funding, improve economic self-sufficiency, and protect vulnerable families, including assistance for all immigrants and asylum seekers.

### **Paid Family and Medical Leave (LD 738)**

YWCA Central Maine is a member of the *Paid Leave Coalition* and an active member of this coalition's organizing committee. Since 2022, we have visited the state house, collected ballot signatures, hosted numerous on-site partner events, submitted letters to the editor, and more. From YWCA USA: "YWCA's mission to empower women includes a dedication to improving the economic and physical security of women. We believe that no one should have to choose between their livelihood and their health, their family, or their safety. Yet far too many women and families, particularly women and families of color, must make this choice every day."

### **Strengthening our Democracy**

YWCA Central Maine actively supports legislation to defend and protect equal access to the ballot box and strengthen our democracy by partnering with organizations focused on these bills to back their efforts, including *Maine Women's Lobby* and *League of Women Voters of Maine*. We also regularly lead voter registration, voter engagement, and Census efforts in the Lewiston-Auburn communities.

### **Reproductive Justice & Abortion Access**

All YWCAs support strengthening and protecting access to maternal health services and safe, legal abortion care. In Maine, we support the work of partners such as *Planned Parenthood*, *Maine Family Planning*, and *Mabel Wadsworth Center*. YWCA Central Maine also advocates for policies and practices that eliminate racial health disparities and barriers to women receiving adequate health and preventive care, including maternal and reproductive health care.

### **Gender-Based Violence**

All YWCAs support local and national policies to support survivors and prevent domestic violence, sexual assault, and other forms of gender-based violence. In Maine, we support the work of partners such as *Safe Voices*, *Her Safety Net*, *Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence*, *Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault*, *Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services*, and *Immigrant Resource Center of Maine*.