



# WomenNC

**Eliminating Injustices Against Women and Girls**

[www.womennc.org](http://www.womennc.org)

## About WomenNC

### Mission and Vision

WomenNC's mission is to lead North Carolina's young adults in the elimination of injustice against women and girls. Our vision is to raise a generation that honors women's human rights.

### History and Accomplishments

An Iranian immigrant, Beth Dehghan, founded WomenNC. When Iran's fundamentalist regime began, Beth saw women's key roles in resisting oppression and violence. She first immigrated to the United States in 1981, where she quickly joined local efforts of the Iranian refugee community as a voice against human rights abuses in Iran. Moving to NC in 1998, she worked with Stop Child Abuse NC, the Wake County Commission for Women, women's shelters, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, and more.

During Beth's lifetime of advocacy and activism work, a common theme in global women's issues emerged for her: women are half the world's population yet consistently and widely experience discrimination and disparity. Having seen and experienced the profound impact of women's involvement in protecting civil liberties, Beth founded WomenNC to motivate and engage women and young people in advocating for gender equality and the end of discrimination.

Since its founding in 2009, WomenNC has demonstrated a track record of success, training 39 Fellows and directly impacting 35,000+ change agents including legislators, policymakers, community leaders, and local residents through annual seminars, workshops, events, personal meetings, and panel discussions in North Carolina and at the United Nations' annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). WomenNC's programs have been recognized for excellence by the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and several national and local organizations including the Duke University Women's Center, the Women's Intercultural Network, and the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women.

### Why We Work

Despite the fact that women make up 54 percent of the population in North Carolina, women in this state experience widespread disparities and discrimination:

- Women hold less than 25 percent of all appointed elected offices.
- Women make only 83 cents to each dollar earned by men (AAUW, 2016).
- In 2014-15, nearly 47,000 women were victims of domestic violence and 11,820 were reported victims of sexual assault (NC Council for Women, 2016).
- More than 40 percent of employed women lack access to paid sick days for their own illnesses or to care for sick children (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2013)

Progressive solutions to these issues often fail due to insufficient resource allocation. Municipal budgets impact women and men differently due to different socio-economic standings. Research shows inadvertent discrimination is common without proactive review of city activities. WomenNC's program has been specifically designed to address and impact these discrepancies.



# WomenNC

Eliminating Injustices Against Women and Girls

[www.womennc.org](http://www.womennc.org)

## Core Programs

WomenNC combats discrimination and advances gender equity through two uniquely integrated programs: the Commission on the Status of Women Fellowship and the Cities for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) initiative. These programs develop young people into human rights leaders and advocate at the local level to help cities address critical issues of accountability, budget limitations, and inclusion.

*"WomenNC is creating...sustained change for women at the local, national, and global level."*

**Kimmie Gardner, CSW Fellow  
2011**

### Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Fellowship

Each year, WomenNC recruits 4-7 local college students, pairs them with noted local human rights advocacy mentors, and equips them with more than 500 hours of training in research, advocacy, public speaking, and education on the local and global status of women.

### Bringing the Global back to Local



Fellows then conduct rigorous analyses of the status of women in North Carolina. Fellows present their research and data-driven recommendations for change to the Durham City Council and policy leaders of the Greater Triangle as part of our CEDAW initiative.

Fellows also represent North Carolina at the Commission on the Status of Women sessions at the United Nations each year, drawing global attention to human rights injustices in North Carolina by presenting research, participating in workshops and trainings, and exchanging their local best practice solutions with a global audience.

Fellows then incorporate global best-practice solutions to women's issues at the local level (*Local to Global to Local*) by sharing their experiences with the NC community through subsequent workshops and speaking engagements.

Since its inception in 2009, WomenNC has trained 39 Fellows who continue to expand women's rights advocacy networks in North Carolina. Each year, our cohort of fellows report increased skills in advocacy, public speaking, and research. Even after their tenure with WomenNC, our fellows continue to be human rights advocates in their careers in women's rights and local nonprofit work.



## WomenNC

Eliminating Injustices Against Women and Girls

[www.womennc.org](http://www.womennc.org)

### Cities for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

**CEDAW is a national movement to advance women's rights and gender equity.** CEDAW requires cities to annually evaluate their programs and budgets to address barriers to full equality for women and answer important questions:

- Given limited funding, are there equal opportunities for all residents, regardless of gender, race or ethnicity, age, and physical/mental ability?
- Are public resources being distributed equitably?
- Can we identify and fix practices and policies that discriminate against women and girls?

**In North Carolina, WomenNC is leading the charge,** using Durham as a key test city for adopting CEDAW's principles and processes in the southeastern US. Our primary goal is to achieve equitable resource allocation of Durham's budget, advocating for an allocation of at least 50 cents per woman resident toward program and policy reforms affecting women and girls.



**Durham's pathway to adopting principles of CEDAW is based on tested national strategies:**

1. Convening a local CEDAW coalition of city officials and community-based advocates
2. Training Fellows to conduct preliminary gender analyses
3. Working with Durham City Council members to pass an ordinance to support the implementation of CEDAW at the local level
4. Advocating for the creation and funding of a CEDAW oversight body—the Durham Council for Women—which will coordinate progress toward gender equity in Durham.
5. Working with the CEDAW coalition and oversight body to analyze the status of women and the city budget impacts on gender equality.
6. Based on analyses, working with the Durham City Council to install gender-responsive budgets reflecting evidence-based best practices in gender equity.

Since April 2015, we added ActionNC and Durham NOW to our eight-member coalition, worked with UNC's Public Policy department to report on the economic status of women in NC; collected 1,000+ CEDAW petition signatures; educated 5,000+ community members; and helped create the Durham City Council for Women (*pending approval*).

**CEDAW works.** Twenty-four US cities have passed a CEDAW ordinance or resolution. Twenty-one others are exploring possible adoption of its core principles. Other cities that have adopted principles of CEDAW have experienced great outcomes. For instance, San Francisco saw the cross-agency approach to domestic violence response lead to a record 44 months without a single domestic violence homicide. They also established a family friendly workplace ordinance, which gives working parents and caregivers the right to request a flexible or predictable work schedule without fear of retaliation.