

NEWSLETTER

Looking for a New “Normal”



The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have caused massive changes to our daily lives. Changes that has happened quickly and abruptly. These changes have come with a wide range of adjustments and emotions as we continue to look for the “new normal” in how we communicate, shop, and do everything simple things that we once took for granted. The “new normal” may still consist of social distancing and wearing masks depending on your local government guidance.

The AAUW-NYS Board met in person for the first time since 2018. It was very refreshing to see board members in person and face to face. As part of the “new normal” we were able to get lots of business taken care of during the weekend gathering. The work in our communities is still needed. Continue to advocate for women and girls in your local community because we are still a vulnerable group.

AAUW has not given in any guidance on in person meetings and activities for branches. I would encourage every branch to practice safety when planning activities. The pandemic isn’t over, and many of us may engage with others wo may not be vaccinated. It's also worth remembering that virtual gatherings can help enable diversity and inclusion by allowing you to expand your reach to new groups. As you make program plans, remember it’s not all bad, adjusting to your “new normal”.

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AAUW-NYS 2021 SPECIAL ELECTION

Suzanne Mercer-Young

The AAUW-NYS bylaws that were passed in June require the establishment of the position of President-Elect. As a result, AAUW-NYS must have a special election to elect this position. The special election will be held on November 1st, 2021. Each branch must submit the names of their delegate no later than 11:59pm on October 15th to the special election email at aauw.nysspecialelection@gmail.com. See your branch delegate count as of September 15th [here](#).

The voting body of AAUW-NYS will include the following categories of people: elected and appointed members of the AAUW-NYS board, Chairs and members of committee and task forces, Past-Presidents and Delegates as appointed by the branch. If you fall into any of these categories, send your name and email address to the special elections email at aauw.nysspecialelection@gmail.com. We must receive your name and email no later than October 15th at 11:59pm. The elections will be held via Elections Buddy, an electronic voting system.



AAUW-NYS NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Suzanne Mercer-Young

The Nominating Committee submitted a slate to the AAUW-NYS board for the position of President-Elect. The committee received only one application for the position. The report was presented with Carol Griffith as the candidate for President-Elect. During the election process, a candidate can be nominated from the floor. The candidate must give acceptance of the nomination.

PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

Submitted by Hon Edwina F Martin, Esq– AAUW-NYS Past President

The Developments in the Fight for Workplace Rights: The Civil Rights of Domestic Workers

The Domestic Worker industry is one of the fastest growing in the country, with the need for childcare workers anticipated to increase by seven percent in the next several years, while the need for home health care and personal care aides will almost double. Domestic workers, who are overwhelmingly female (95%) and of color (54%), often face poor working conditions, vulnerable to abuse such as sexual harassment, assault, and other forms of discrimination.

Recently, there have been some significant gains in the fight for workplace rights for this female-dominated workforce:

New York City

There are over 200,000 domestic workers in New York City, with the number expected to increase in years to come. New York City Human Rights Law only applied to employers with four or more employees, however, and domestic workers typically are employed in private homes with few employees. While New York State removed its four-employee requirement under its Human Rights Law in 2019, its definition of employee excludes domestic workers. Thus, the many protections against harassment and discrimination afforded under our basic civil rights protections have not been available for this vulnerable workforce – until now.

On August 25th, Mayor Bill de Blasio signed Intro. 339B-2018 into law. This legislation amends the definition of “employer” in the city’s Human Rights Law to include employers that have one or more domestic workers. Now, under this first of its kind legislation, house cleaners, nannies, home health care aides, and other domestic workers in New York City have the same human rights protections available to all other workers and it is illegal to discriminate against them!!

New York State

While New York was the first state to pass the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights in 2010, domestic workers, by being excluded in the definition of “employee” under state law, remain excluded from basic labor protections that are fundamental to their human rights. These legal gaps leave domestic workers vulnerable to discrimination based on disability, race, religion, age, nationality, pregnancy, and more. Recently, the New York State Senate and Assembly passed legislation to address this oversight by repealing the section of state law excluding domestic workers, S5064 (J. Ramos)/A8007 (A. Rajkumar); it awaits signing into law by Governor Hochul.

Federal

On the federal level, the National Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, originally introduced in 2019 by then Senator Kamala Harris, has been re-introduced by Senators Kisten Gillibrand and Ben Ray Lujan and Representative Pramila Jayapal (S.2569/H.R.4826). Its goal is to ensure domestic workers are included in common workplace laws while creating new protections for these vulnerable workers and stronger ways to enforce them. The legislative includes, amongst other things, extending civil rights protections against workplace harassment, and ensuring domestic workers have access to paid sick leave.

AAUW-NYS MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Karen Martin, Membership VP

We hope all of our members are staying safe and healthy and have had a good summer. Many members are understandably eager to return to in person-affiliated gatherings. However, due to the recent rise in the COVID-19 delta variant, we strongly advise caution. It's critical to follow all city, state, and county guidance and be mindful of the risks. Think of virtual gatherings as enabling diversity and inclusion by allowing you to expand your reach to new groups.

That being said, most branches are preparing or have had their Kick-Off meeting.

Welcome members of all standing: those who excited and anticipatory and those with experience and wisdom. There are several ways to provide an invitation for visitors to become members.

View our National website and make yourself familiar with AAUW selected issues. You will find topics for potential conversation with people you meet.

Check out our Webinars on the AAUW National site.

This summer I participated in an informative webinar; please check out what is available for the fall. Register now for Sept. 23rd webinar on [Understanding Implicit/Unconscious Bias.](#) (Who could this be?) Registration is also available for [In Conversation with Dr. Rajika Bhandari: America Calling: A Foreign Student in a Country of Possibility \(date changed to 9/30\).](#) Attend a Webinar with a fellow member and then share it at a branch meeting to perk the interest of all.

Happenings on our local branches: see the NYS calendar.

Buffalo branch is examining women's rights with Historian Sally Roesch Wagner, 10/2. All are invited.

Membership renewal is an integral part of our organization. Our renewal deadline is September 30 at this time. Reach out with personal phone calls to those members you have not heard from. "Trouble shooting" can be a fuzzy blanket for those feeling cold and left out!

As your Branch develops ideas for reaching out to new folks and retaining members, please feel free to share them with me. My email is: aauw.kmartin@gamil.com.

Membership

On behalf of AAUW-NYS Board of Directors, we would like to send our condolences to the family of Lynne Rapin, member of Buffalo Branch and past Secretary for AAUW-NYS. She passed a few weeks ago. Her family wishes not to be shared publicly.



CANDIDATE-PRESIDENT-ELECT



Ms. Griffith is a member of the Federal Workforce, Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration and currently holds the position of Patient Representative at the VA WNY Healthcare System, Buffalo, New York. Ms. Griffith has been employed by the federal government for thirty-nine years.

Ms. Griffith is a graduate of the University of Buffalo, School of Social Work, Buffalo, New York, State University of New York, Empire State College, Saratoga Springs, New York, New York State Medical and Dental Assisting School, Forest Hills, New York and Wyoming Central High School, Wyoming, New York

Ms. Griffith is Vice President of the Friends of the Women's Rights National Historical Park for the 2021-2023, term and held the position of secretary for many years. Ms. Griffith was recently honored for her financial support and committee development of the second floor Visitor Center exhibit on Radical Optimism, Seneca Falls, New York. Ms. Griffith has been an active supporter of the National Women's Hall of Fame, Seneca Falls, New York. Ms. Griffith has been a board member and past secretary of the National Women's History Project which is now National Women's History Alliance. Ms. Griffith, was a Federal Women's Program Manager for the VA WNY Healthcare System for eighteen years and Network Director for two year and one half years.

Ms. Griffith has been honored with the "Bravo Zulu" Award by the Buffalo Area Waves Unit 143 in (2017). Ms. Griffith has been a recipient of the "The Legion of Honor Humanitarian Award (2018)", and Buffalo Federal Executive Board for Excellence in Government Award (2012), including the John E. Foley Award in (2003). Ms. Griffith received the "Leader Luncheon Award by the YWCA for eliminating racism and empowering women in (2007).

Ms. Griffith is an AAUW Buffalo Branch Member and started her membership as a friend, a member of the International Women's Day committee and eventually Director, Scholarship Director, Sister to Sister board member and volunteer for the yearly Buffalo Branch book sale until the pandemic. Ms. Griffith is currently AAUW-NYS Vice President of Development, completing her second term. Ms. Griffith has been a three year member of the financial committee and voted to remove the requirement for members to pay state board dues for 2021 and also voted to provide financial support for our branches Zoom accounts 2020. Ms. Griffith was appointed to the governance board to work on the updating of AAUW-NYS by-laws in 2020. Ms. Griffith was a co-chairperson for the planning committee for the cancelled 2020 annual convention to be held in Rochester, New York to celebrate the 100th anniversary of AAUW-NYS.



AAUW State Board and Bylaws Committee

AAUW-NYS Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

<https://aauw-nys.org>

FOCUS is a quarterly newsletter published by the American Association of University Women-New York State.

FOCUS is a publication of the AAUW-NYS Board

Questions and articles should be delivered to the State President,

Janice Brown, 27708 Rogers Rd, Evans Mills, NY 13637

Email: president@aauw-nys.org

Submissions are accepted at the discretion of the editor

**FOLLOW US ON
SOCIAL MEDIA**



[@aauwnewyork](https://www.instagram.com/aauwnewyork)

AAUW-NYS is looking for members to form a DEI committee to help AAUW-NYS Branches create inclusive environments.

We are looking for a “FEW GOOD WOMEN” to take on this assignment. This assignment might take several months and will be conducted over Zoom.

If interested, please contact Suzanne Young-Mercer 845-406-5156 or smymaauw@gmail.com



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020-2021

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AAUW-NYS Branch Program Grants

AAUW-NYS has allocated up to \$500 per branch to support ongoing and new MISSION-BASED programming this year. Funds may be used to support Zoom Accounts, printing charges, supplies, space rental, hospitality, honorariums or fees, speaker travel costs, advertising, or other related expenses. The branch may request \$100-\$500 by submitting the grant request form located on the State website.

The program grant request must be submitted 60 days prior to the program date and include the following content:

1. A detailed proposed budget to include specific uses of the funds requested
2. An outline of the program and its mission
3. A statement demonstrating how the program will increase AAUW visibility, show AAUW leadership in community collaborations, and help build membership opportunities
4. Program goals and their relation to AAUW Mission and Vision.

No budget is needed for the Zoom Account request, but must state when/how the Branch will use the Zoom account. All Zoom grant requests must be received by October 31, 2021.

AAUW-NYS COMMUNICATIONS DR CHERYL MCKIEVER

Calling all branches of AAUW-NYS. The pandemic has given us the opportunity to share our programs with members around the state. If you have a program that you would like shared on the AAUW-NYS website, send program information to include flyer to Betty Preble.



AAUW-NATIONAL Economic Security

Mission
To advance gender equity
for women and girls
through research, educa-
tion, and advocacy.

Vision
Equity for All

Values
Nonpartisan. Fact-based.
Integrity. Inclusion and
Intersectionality.

Introducing Money Smart

With the generous support of The Coca-Cola Foundation, AAUW is pleased to launch our new [MONEY SMART](#), a series of free virtual workshops designed to support women in navigating their personal finances. We particularly encourage women of color to join us for information and resources to help address the disproportionate and systemic fiscal challenges faced by Black and Brown women. These include a vast racial wealth gap and wider-than-average gender wage gap. Please share with your networks!



American Association of University Women-New York State

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status.

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