Thanks to YOU – CT’s Women Won’t Face the COVID Crisis Alone

Life is challenging right now, and it’s never been more critical to be there for the people who need us. Because generous people like you donate to CWEALF, we were able to take immediate action at the beginning of the COVID-19 public health crisis to meet the needs our Legal Education clients remotely.

CWEALF’s Community Advocacy Manager Nilda Rivera misses meeting with people face to face in her office, or out in the Hartford and New Haven communities that she loves. Nilda is doing everything she possibly can from her remote home office to provide free and confidential bilingual legal advocacy with compassion.

Thanks to you, Nilda is there for women like Lucy*, who called seeking guidance about emergency child custody arrangements when one parent is positive for COVID-19 (*name changed).

CWEALF’s staff and dedicated volunteers answer calls and emails each day from women asking about unemployment insurance, paid sick leave, evictions, and child custody arrangements. Many of our Legal Education clients are undocumented women trying to protect themselves and their families during this public health crisis.

Thanks to your continued support, we’ll find new and innovative ways to serve women across the state!
Dear CWEALF Family,

All of us at CWEALF hope that you and your loved ones are staying healthy. While we’re all facing new experiences both in our personal and professional lives these days, I want to acknowledge the transitions also occurring at CWEALF. As you may know, Kate Farrar recently left her role as Executive Director to expand her passion for making a positive impact in Connecticut by running for State Representative. On behalf of the CWEALF board and staff, we all wish Kate the best in her run for elected office!

Thanks to your support and activism in the last four years, CWEALF expanded our statewide reach of legal education services and launched the She Leads Justice project to train previous clients as peer advocates. We successfully led the Campaign for Paid Family Leave to pass of one of the most comprehensive paid family and medical leave programs in the country! Because of you, CWEALF launched a nationwide model of collaboration with the CT Collective for Women and Girls and invested in racial justice training and consultation to advance our value of intersectionality and our journey to become an anti-racist organization.

We know we have big shoes to fill, as we undertake an Executive Director search during unprecedented times. The Executive Transition Task Force, led by Board Vice President Ashika Brinkley, has taken the important step of hiring Interim Executive Director, Eileen Scully to lead CWEALF through this transition period.

CWEALF has a 46-year history of fighting for gender equity in Connecticut and will continue to be the state’s leading champion for women and girls—because of people like YOU who make this work possible!

With gratitude,

Kristiana Sullivan, Board President

Outgoing Executive Director Kate Farrar
Welcome to Eileen Scully, Interim Executive Director

We’re thrilled to have the leadership of Eileen Scully during our transition and executive search process. Eileen is an author, activist, and lifelong advocate for the advancement of women and girls. As the founder of The Rising Tides, a consulting firm focused on gender equity in the workplace, Eileen works with Fortune 500 companies to open the doors of power and influence to all.

Her book, “In the Company of Men: How Woman Can Succeed in a World Built Without Them” explores the ways women in male dominated industries are changing those spaces from inside.

Eileen currently serves on the Steering Committee for the Fairfield County Community Foundation Fund for Women and Girls, is the former Board Chair and board member of the Get in Touch Foundation, and volunteers for the Connecticut Special Olympics and Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS) in New Haven.

Responding to COVID-19

Women are over-represented in industries laying off workers and women are on the front lines of the battle against COVID-19.

In these uncertain times, it’s critical that every worker in our state knows their rights in the workplace and has access to legal justice. Thanks to the support of our donors like you, CWEALF responded in the early days and weeks of the crisis:

- Created the Know Your Rights in the Workplace: COVID-19 guide in English and Spanish for information regarding unemployment insurance, paid sick leave, FMLA, and other programs. The guides are available at CWEALF.org and updated regularly.

- Joined more than 40 organizations asking CT government officials to act immediately to ensure the State’s response to COVID-19 doesn’t leave underserved and marginalized people behind.

- Created a Women & COVID-19 Fact Sheet available at CWEALF.org
Thank you for raising your voice loud and clear early in the 2020 legislative session to advocate for women’s economic security issues like pay equity, a fair workweek, and access to affordable childcare and healthcare.

Many of CWEALF’s legislative priorities didn’t have time to cross the finish line before the session ended, but that doesn’t mean our policy advocacy work stops! The COVID-19 public health crisis exacerbates inequality along gender, racial, and economic lines.

According to the National Partnership for Women and Families, 67% of Connecticut’s workers in the industries on the front lines of the crisis are women. In Connecticut, women make up 84% of childcare or social service workers, 77% of healthcare workers, and 48% of grocery, convenience and drug store workers.

That’s why it’s so important that our state leaders keep women at the forefront of the health and economic response, but especially address the inequities faced by women and girls of color.
She Leads Justice Project in Action

In spring 2019, CWEALF launched our three-year She Leads Justice project with the generous help of our donors and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. She Leads Justice empowers women to be leaders in their own communities through peer advocacy.

The early phase of She Leads Justice focused on expanding our in-depth bilingual advocacy services and gathering feedback from former CWEALF clients during roundtable discussions about their goals and aspirations for the Peer Advocacy program. The Peer Advocacy program trains 2-3 Peer Advocates per cohort and provides a stipend during participation. In April 2020, CWEALF launched the first training program with two participants! Policy and Program Associate Nicole Sanclemente facilitates the Peer Advocacy Program.

Meet the Peer Advocates!

Daphney Louissaint, Bristol, CT

“I am participating in this program because I want to help. From my experience, I know that it is difficult for a woman to be an immigrant in a country where we do not speak the same language. I have been surrounded by help and guidance, so I want to help. I would like to help women who find themselves in the same situations as me, be able to make the best decisions knowing they will be surrounded by help and guidance like I have been given.”

Fun Facts: “I love to go to the beach, watch movies, have a good time with friends and read good books.”

Raquel Smith, Hartford, CT

“I enjoy helping other people because I know how it feels to be in circumstances where you’re not sure what to do or who to go to for help or support. The more I learn throughout the program, the more I am able to serve my community with the information that I am being educated about.”

Fun Facts: “I enjoy helping people and I am a very outgoing person.”
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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