



Texas Women's Foundation
STRONG WOMEN. BETTER WORLD.

Young
Women's
Initiative

ntarupt
north texas alliance
to reduce unintended
pregnancy in teens

Community Partner

Dallas Young Women's Initiative: Year Three Evaluation Summary

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The Texas Women's Foundation (TXWF) launched the Dallas Young Women's Initiative (YWI) in 2017 to provide leadership opportunities to young women of color ages 16 to 24 from Dallas' southern and western sectors. The mission of the Dallas YWI is amplifying the voices and power of young women of color in Texas through a commitment to racial and gender equity and social justice, leadership, and collective action. The North Texas Alliance to Reduce Unintended Pregnancy in Teens (Ntarupt), is the TXWF community partner in Dallas for the YWI project.

Evaluation Question & Data Collection

CORE is collaborating with TXWF, Ntarupt and the Young Women Advisory Council (YWAC) on a *formative, participatory, and developmental evaluation using mixed-methodologies*. The evaluation questions for Year Three were: 1) *What are the emerging components of the Dallas YWI program?* 2) *In what ways do young women of color benefit from participating in the Dallas YWI program? What are the individual benefits? What are the collective benefits?* and 3) *In what ways did the YWAC implement actions related to local and national issues (i.e., the Legislative Initiative)? What do the outcomes look like?* The data collection activities included document reviews, interviews with YWI program staff and YWAC, focus group with the YWAC, surveys, session observations and field notes.

Participant Demographics

Cohort Three of the Dallas YWI program initially recruited 20 Fellows, including three returning Fellows from the 2019 cohort. During the course of the program, four Fellows did not actively participate in meetings, leaving a total of 16 active Fellows. The program sought to recruit young women of color with a broad range of experiences from diverse racial and ethnic groups, identities, and communities. Of the 20 Fellows who participated in the Demographics survey, 60% were Hispanic/Latino and 35% were Non-Hispanic/Latino.

Key Findings

- The YWAC grant-making committee members conducted research and awarded \$11,829 as Micro Grants and \$30,000 as Nonprofit Grants. The grants were awarded to individuals and organizations with a mission to serve young women of color. These include causes around women of color artists, wellness and self-care through dance, yoga and meditation among others.
- During 2020 and 2021, several YWAC Fellows served on over 9 committees, boards, centers, or groups in the community to take actions and advance work for communities of color. 7 fellows noted that they served on a Board, Committee, and/or Council since being a YWAC fellow. The Fellows were advocates for girls & women of color, racial equity, voter rights, educational equity, and city & government policy. One Fellow specifically noted that she was the youngest and only Latina on her Board.
- 14 Fellows reported in the YWI end-of-year program survey that the YWAC Legislative Initiative inspired them to take individual actions. Fellows participated in individual and collective actions around the Legislative Initiative that entailed 1) 36% drafting a policy position 2) 54% calling/emailing Senators 3) 63% calling/emailing Representatives 4) 27% submitting

written testimony on behalf of YWAC 5) 9% providing oral testimony on behalf of YWAC 6) 27% sending letters addressed to specific committee or legislator 7) 18% creating one-pagers or social media graphics and messaging for a mass audience and 8) 63% partnering with a nonprofit for an advocacy day.

- Fellows created a YWAC Legislative Agenda for the 87th Texas Legislative Session around five main policy areas that affect young women of color that included Education, Voting Rights, Food Security, Homelessness Solutions, and Support for Underrepresented Communities.
- At the end of the cohort year, Fellows wrote op-eds about their experience doing legislative advocacy work as young women of color. The op-ed of fellow Karyna Valencia titled “[Letter to our Texas Children: A Change in Quality of Texas Child Care](#)” has been published in the *Visible Magazine*. The other Op-Eds will be published in late summer 2021.
- 100% of the fellows strongly agreed or agreed that the Dallas Young Women’s Initiative program increased their knowledge in Racial & Gender Equity, Social Justice, Advocacy, and Dallas History. 88% of fellows strongly agreed or agreed that program increased their knowledge and skills in Research, Civic Action & Governance, and Leadership during crisis.
- The YWAC cohort unanimously agreed that the YWI program helped them advance their leadership skills.
- 100% of fellows agreed that the YWI program helped strengthen 8 actions to build positive relationships among Fellows. They include: Listen, Encourage, Empower, Advocate, Let me lead, Inspire, Broaden horizons, and Connect.
- 100% of fellows agreed that the YWI program helped strengthen internal assets related to Caring, Equality and Social Justice, Integrity, Honesty, Responsibility, Interpersonal competence, Cultural competence, Personal power, Self-esteem, Sense of purpose, and Positive view of personal future.
- 100% of fellows agreed that the YWI program helped strengthen external assets related Other adult relationships, Community values youth, and Service to others. The Fellows already had strong family support and positive family communication.

Individual Accomplishments

- Sommer Iqbal, a former fellow and alumni of the Dallas Young Women’s Initiative provided guidance and leadership to the current cohort around the 87th Texas Legislative Session and navigating the legislative process. Through the cohort year, she helped the fellows develop the legislative agenda, policy priorities and advocacy strategies around the legislative process guiding them to take various individual and collective actions.
- Fellow Andrea Flores testified at the [Legislative Session \(1:49:20\)](#) in support of online voter registration and fair redistricting practices, and testified in opposition to SB7/HB6 (two companion omnibus voting rights and election integrity bills). She also created a [presentation](#) through her organization MOVE Texas to educate other Fellows and community members on how to prepare a testimony. In addition, Andrea was served as the Bill Tracker for the YWAC. Moving forward, Andrea is organizing a Dallas youth coalition in support of voting rights.
- Fellow Misaki Collins, who works for a local nonprofit doing neighborhood development and economic mobility work in South and West Dallas, spoke on a panel during IGNITE’s annual “Ignite the Capitol” event. She spoke about how to get involved in the legislative process and how bills can affect the lives of women in Texas. She also spoke on Instagram live with the Minnesota Women’s Foundation about the missing and murdered African American women. In addition, she shared multiple infographics and tweets pertaining to various legislative initiatives.

- Fellow Karyna Valencia leveraged her social media platform by creating and sharing a step-by-step guide on how to use Texas Legislature Online to search for bills that affect them and their communities. She also made a video on the importance of supporting SB2087 (related to subsidized childcare programs).
- Fellows Angelica Avila and Vanessa Rodriguez worked with various organizations to promote campaigns related to food security. They advocated in support of SB224 (related to simplified certification program for the supplemental nutrition assistance program), which was passed favorably out of both chambers. They participated in campaigns with Feeding America to email representatives and participated in day of action with North Texas Food Bank for Hunger Awareness Month. In addition, they educated coworkers about the legislative session, different campaigns, and encouraged them to advocate for bills.