

# Women's FOUNDATION *of Lincoln & Lancaster County*

## 2018 WOMEN'S VOICES PROJECT

"It takes a thousand **voices**  
to tell a single story."

Native American Proverb

### 2018-2019 Mayor's Commission on Women

Becca Brune  
Lyndie Christensen Nader  
Sarah Gauger  
Mary Herres  
Jessica Hesse  
Katie McLeese Stephenson  
Meg Mikolajczyk  
Mahe Naseem  
LeeAnn Pancharoen

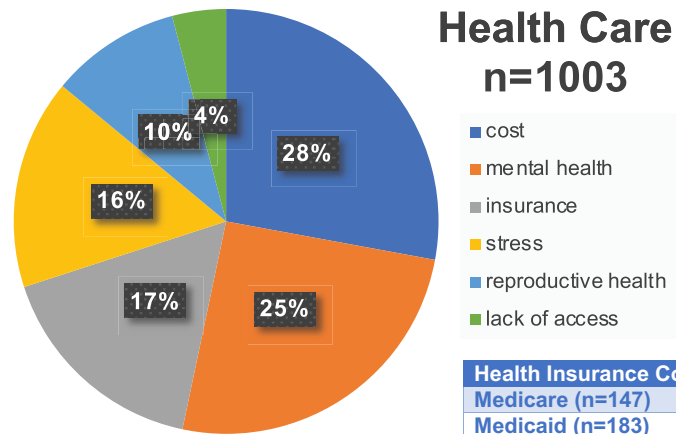
Josie Rodriguez  
Pat Shepard  
Rosalind Sipe  
Abbi Swatsworth  
Nicole Trevena Flores  
Kathie Uhrmacher  
\*Kimberly Taylor-Riley,  
Former Director of Equity,  
City of Lincoln



A total of 1,120 women lent their voices to this project to tell the "story" of women in Lincoln and Lancaster County.

## Ranking of Issues

Issues	Percentage
Health Care	57.9%
Employment	47.1%
Basic Needs	38.6%
Violence	36.8%
Education	33.5%
Discrimination	29%
Family	28.6%
Housing	26.5%
Child Care	25%
Transportation	12.5%
Substance Abuse	6%



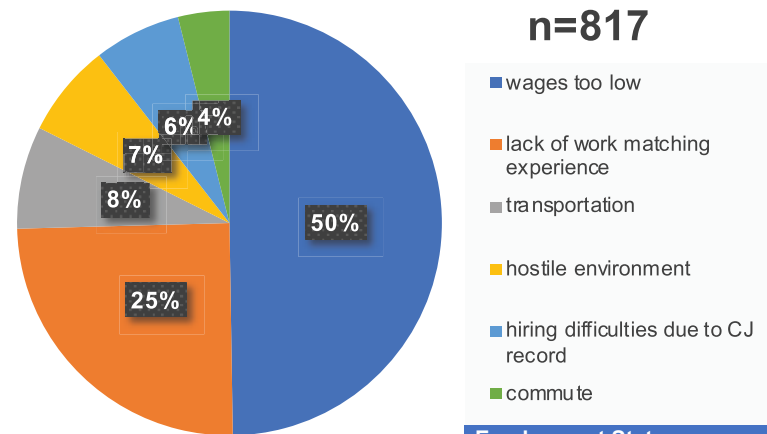
**Health Care**  
n=1003

- cost
- mental health
- insurance
- stress
- reproductive health
- lack of access

Coverage Type	Percentage
Medicare (n=147)	13.1%
Medicaid (n=183)	16.3%
Employer/Supplemental (n=522)	46.6%
ACA coverage (n=44)	3.9%
Self-insured (n=38)	3.4%
No Insurance (n=123)	10.9%

## Employment

n=817



- wages too low
- lack of work matching experience
- transportation
- hostile environment
- hiring difficulties due to CJ record
- commute

Status	Percentage
Full-time (n=518)	46.3%
Part-time (n=200)	17.9%
In School (n=89)	7.9%
Homemaker (n=71)	6.3%
Retired (n=109)	9.7%
Looking for Work (n=37)	3.3%
Unemployed (n=115)	10.3%

According to the latest census, women 1) make up 50% of the population of Lincoln 2) earn approximately 79 cents for every dollar earned by men, 3) own 36% of local firms, and 4) are the heads of 11,183 family households.

Statistics provide a valuable tool for understanding women in our community, but statistics alone cannot tell their "story." The complexities of being a single mother caring for school-aged children, or an elderly woman on a fixed income or a refugee navigating life in a new city require more than numbers. In an effort to learn more about the current status of women in Lincoln and Lancaster County, the Women's Foundation wanted to highlight their voices.

In 2002, the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission created a survey with the objective of identifying the most pressing concerns of women in the community. In 2012, responding to the changing face of Lincoln and Lancaster County and with even more challenging economic times, the Lincoln Mayor's Commission on Women decided to undertake a similar project. Through 2017 and 2018, we have again conducted the survey. The goals of the "Women's Voices" project are to 1) learn to what extent concerns had changed or remained the same and, 2) to inform the future programming of local agencies and organizations for women and their families.

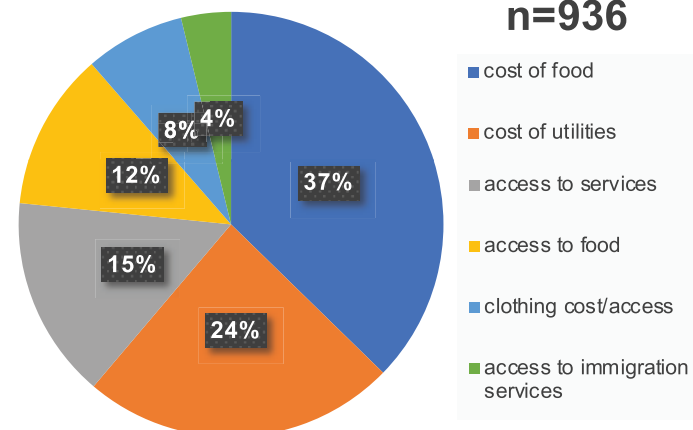
The survey seeks to gain both demographic information and issue-related data. Approximately half of the questions ask for demographic characteristics such as age, marital and employment status, education, and race/ethnicity. The remaining questions aim to gather information on challenges specific to aspects of daily life such as health care, work, family, discrimination, and education. In order to compare the results with those of the previous surveys, many questions were the same or similar. In the 2017 version, we expanded responses related to employment, family, violence, and substance abuse.

A total of 1,120 women lent their voices to this project to tell the "story" of women in Lincoln and Lancaster County. The Commission distributed the survey to various groups including, but not limited to, work sites, professional organizations, cultural community centers, and service agencies from June 2017 to September 2018. In an effort to include as many women as possible, the surveys were available in English and Spanish. Respondents were able to take the survey on paper or online at [lincolnwomen.org](http://lincolnwomen.org). Data analysis was supported by the Bureau of Sociological Research at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

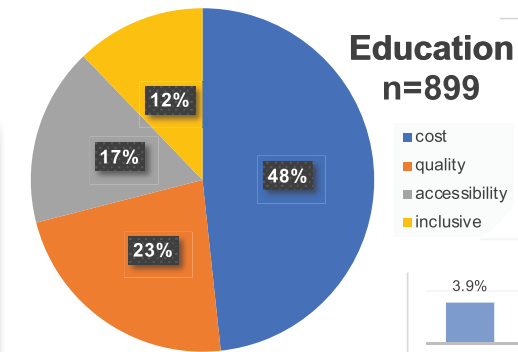
To all of the women who shared their voices, we are truly grateful.

## Basic Needs

n=936



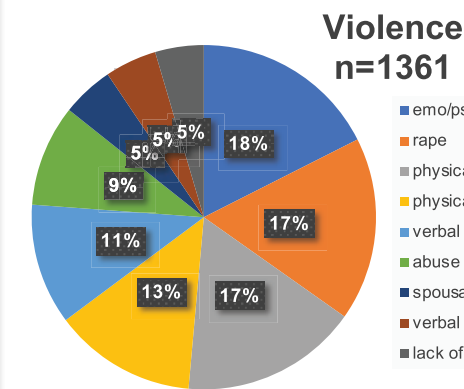
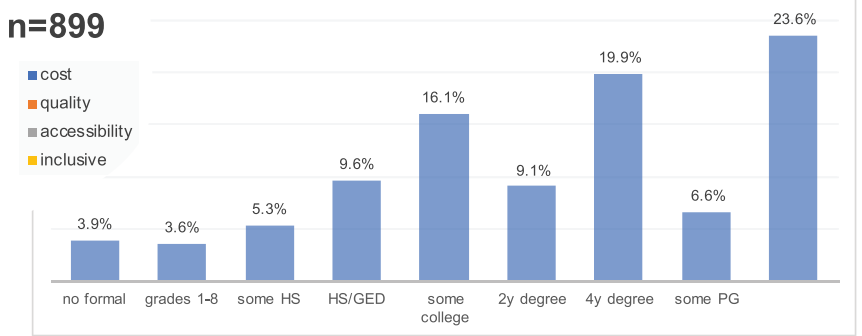
- cost of food
- cost of utilities
- access to services
- access to food
- clothing cost/access
- access to immigration services



**Education**  
n=899

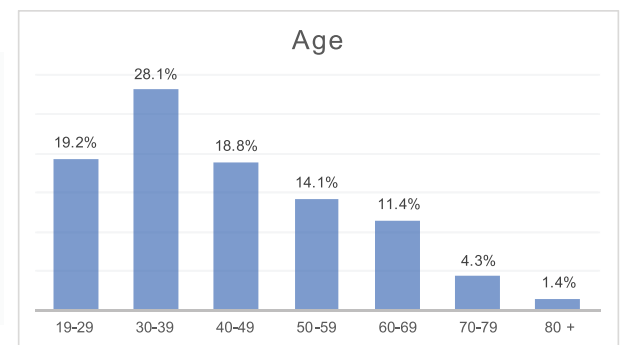
- cost
- quality
- accessibility
- inclusive

## Educational Attainment



**Violence**  
n=1361

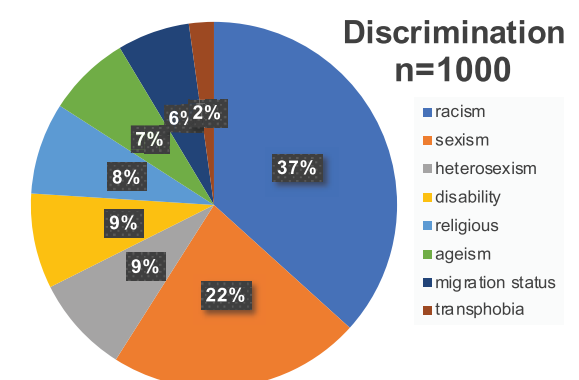
- emo/psych abuse
- rape
- physical harassment
- physical abuse
- verbal harassment
- abuse to children
- spousal abuse
- verbal abuse
- lack of access to services



**Age**

Issue	Percentage
Single parenting	33.1%
Communicating with teens	18.2%
Co-parenting	16.3%
Out-of-home placement	14.4%
Conflicts – parents/kids	8.4%
Need for youth activities	6.1%
Conflicts – extended family	3.5%

Status	Percentage
Single (n=303)	27.1%
Partnered (n=64)	5.7%
Married (n=568)	50.7%
Divorced/Separated (n=132)	11.8%
Widowed (n=35)	3.1%



**Discrimination**  
n=1000

- racism
- sexism
- heterosexism
- disability
- religious
- ageism
- migration status
- transphobia

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
Native American (n=22)	1.9%
Latinx (n=76)	6.8%
Black (n=43)	3.8%
South Asian (n=25)	2.2%
Asian Pacific Islander (n=21)	1.8%
Middle Eastern (n=40)	3.6%
Biracial / Multiracial (n=22)	1.9%
White non-Latinx (n=844)	75.4%

Orientation	Percentage
Heterosexual (n=833)	74.4%
Lesbian (n=56)	5%
Bisexual (n=89)	7.9%
Other (n=28)	2.5%

Housing (n=809)	
Affordability	61.2%
Insecurity / Homelessness	17.6%
Quality	10.1%
Location	9.1%
Space / Crowding	2%

Housing	
House (n=662)	59.1%
Apartment (n=286)	25.5%
Townhouse (n=48)	4.3%
Duplex (n=68)	6.1%

Child Care (n=660)	
Cost	59.8%
Quality	21.2%
Availability	12.6%
Accessibility	6.4%

Transportation (n=527)	
Lack of bus service	55.8%
No personal car	28.8%
Bicycling issues	15.4%

Substance Abuse (n=668)	
Others' addiction (family/friends)	26.3%
Alcohol	24.6%
Drugs	22.8%
Prescription drugs	18.7%
Tobacco	7.6%

The survey shows that women living in Lincoln and other Lancaster County communities report concerns with 1) health care, 2) employment, 3) basic needs, 4) violence, 5) education, and 6) discrimination. These are the top six issues reported by respondents.

### Key findings of the survey include:

- 57.9% of women ranked health care as one of their primary concerns, with cost, mental health, and reproductive health services as the chief reasons for the top ranking.
- Approximately one half of the women surveyed were employed full time. 17.9% of women reported they were working part-time, 7.9% were in school, and 13.6% were unemployed or looking for work. Compared to 2012, fewer women are currently in school and a higher percentage are unemployed or looking for work.
- 47.1% of women noted that employment was a top concern, with low wages, lack of work opportunities (matching degree/experience or due to criminal justice record), hostile work environments, and work/family balance as the major issues.
- 38.6% of women noted basic needs (38.6%) as challenging, particularly due to the costs of food and utilities.
- Ranked fourth was violence (36.8%). The most concerning aspects of violence included emotional/psychological abuse (17.3%), rape (17%), groping and unwanted physical contact (16.4%), physical abuse (13.2%), and verbal harassment (11.2%).
- The fifth most-cited concern was education (33.5%), with cost and quality topping the list of concerns. Of those who responded, 59.2% indicated a post-secondary degree, 25.7% indicated high school completion, and 12.8% had less than 12 years of education.
- Discrimination rounded out the top six at 29%. Respondents are particularly concerned about racism (36.7%) and sexism (22.3%).

### Conclusions and Implications:

The rankings of health care, employment, and basic needs as the top three concerns likely reflect continuing economic challenges and rising cost of health care.

Economic insecurity has increased as the cost of living has risen, including health care expenses and the costs of food and utilities.

Although Lincoln has relatively low unemployment compared to other cities in the US, this survey shows that underemployment and lack of work opportunities affect the status of women in our community.