

AIR FINDINGS REPORT



MAY 2025

Prepared by

**ALICE PAUL CENTER
FOR GENDER JUSTICE**



AIR OVERVIEW

ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION AND RESPONSIBILITY

This series of community conversations examines the legacy of the women's movement and issues of belonging with the goal of creating a community-driven policy recommendation to be presented to Burlington County stakeholders. The idea emerged from questioning how we, as women, can come together to discuss the racial and cultural cleavages that divide us in order to transcend barriers of oppression and create a community that prioritizes belonging.

THREE SESSIONS, ONE GOAL: BELONGING

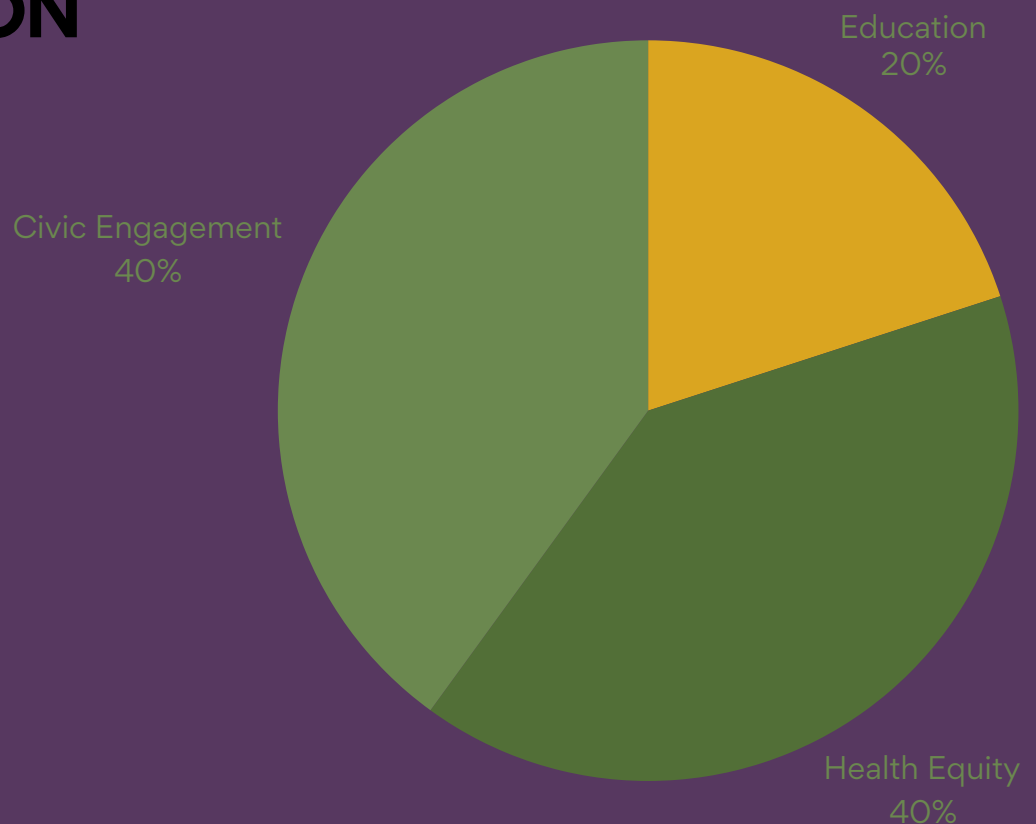
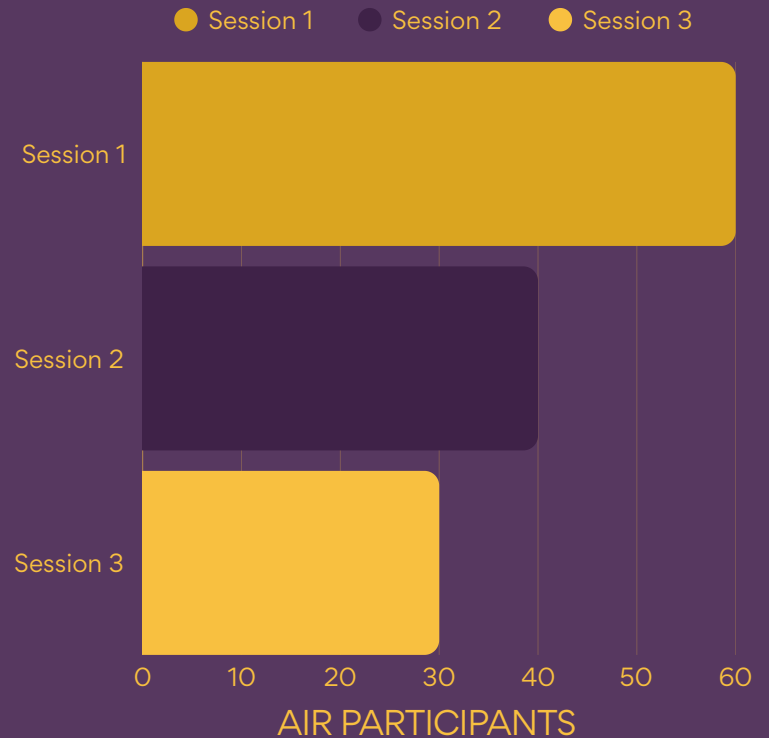
Session 1: March 4, 2023 at The Laurel House

Session 2:: September 9, 2023 at The Mt. Laurel Community Center

Session 3: April 27, 2024 at The Burlington County Emergency Training Center

AIR BY THE NUMBERS

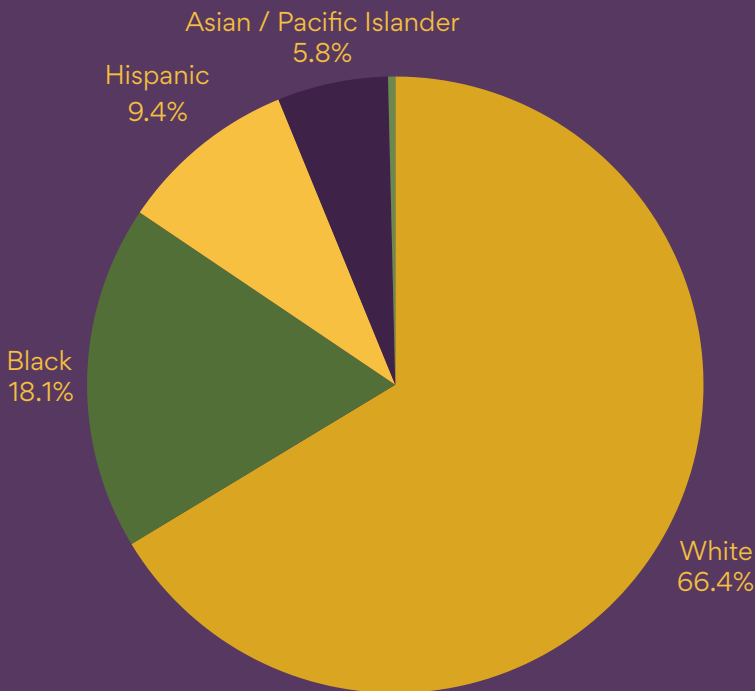
AIR PARTICIPANTS
VOTED ON WHICH
ISSUE WAS MOST
IMPORTANT TO
ENCOURAGE
BELONGING IN
BURLINGTON
COUNTY



BURLINGTON COUNTY

**475,515
RESIDENTS**

**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD
INCOME: \$105,271
ABOUT 30% HIGHER
THAN NATIONAL
AVERAGE**



**5% OF
BURLINGTON
COUNTY
RESIDENTS
ARE
UNINSURED**

**7% OF
BURLINGTON
COUNTY
RESIDENTS
LIVE IN
POVERTY**

**6% OF
RESIDENTS
DO NOT HAVE
COMPUTER
OR WIFI
ACCESS**

SESSION 1: MARCH 4, 2023

Our first AIR session welcomed over 30 community members to answer the following questions:

1. When we talk about the glass ceiling, whose history are we erasing? Why are workplace considerations all about social class, and how does “girl boss” feminism ignore the realities of poor women?
2. How can we stop historic erasure of BIPOC women in the way we talk about the suffrage and women’s liberation movements today?
3. What’s wrong with “ordinary equality” as a concept? What does it show us about Alice’s blind spots and privilege that could even make a statement like that, and how do we use this insight to be better movement builders ourselves? We all have privilege, and we all experience marginalization in some ways. How do we acknowledge our own positions of power in ways that are not defensive but that instead can be productive and drive progress for everyone?



KEY FINDINGS:

-IN ADDITION TO GENDER, THERE IS A PERSISTENT RACIAL OPPORTUNITY GAP.

-WE AREN'T HAVING HONEST CULTURAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE ONGOING LEGACY OF RACISM IN OUR SOCIETY

-PAYING LIP SERVICE TO DIVERSITY DOESN'T CREATE ACTUAL INCLUSION OR BELONGING

-REPRESENTATION AND EDUCATION ARE RECIPROCAL AND EQUALLY NECESSARY

-WE THINK ABOUT OUR ISSUES ARE SEPARATE BUT THEY ARE ALL INTERTWINED



SESSION 2: SEPTEMBER 9, 2023

Based on the takeaways from session one, five themes were identified. Through conversation, each group identified a specific problem impacting belonging within each theme.

Education: People making decisions about education need to hear about the needs of their diverse students and teachers.

Health Equity: There are persistent racial disparities in maternal health outcomes.

Workplace Culture: Workplaces use DEI as a checkbox for funding, instead of supporting honest employee participation in workplace culture.

Public Policy: Many people lack the information and support they need to engage in local politics.

Accessing Community Resources: Local organizations are too siloed and we do not have an infrastructure that helps people easily understand all the local resources that exist.

SESSION 3: APRIL 27, 2024



PANEL OF COMMUNITY LEADERS

AIR participants listened to a panel of local experts discuss each of the five topics before splitting up into self selected break out rooms.



AMBER JEFFRIES
HR MANAGER AMAZON

DAN MASTERS
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH EQUITY AT
VIRTUA HEALTH

KRISTI HOWELL
PRESIDENT OF BURLINGTON COUNTY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

KEISHA TAYLOR
SENIOR DIRECTOR ALUMNI
ENGAGEMENT NAME A FUTURE

SENATOR TROY SINGLETON
STATE SENATOR REPRESENTING NEW
JERSEY'S 7TH DISTRICT

Session 3 Findings:

- Many community members are not aware of the different services and programs their government provides.
- Lack of transparency for elected officials reduces public trust.
- Partnerships and community as means to achieve positive change.
- Intentional communication lacking between service providers, government agencies, and Burlington County citizens.
- Our education systems are not encouraging critical thinking or civic engagement.

FINDINGS: HOW CAN WE FOSTER BELONGING IN BURLINGTON COUNTY?

EDUCATION:

“THE COST OF COLLEGE CONTINUES TO RISE, CAN GRADUATES EVEN SUPPORT THEMSELVES? IF THEY DO, WILL THEY RETURN TO BURLINGTON COUNTY?”



“WHEN POLICY MAKERS WANT TO MAKE CHANGE, DO THEY ASK STUDENTS WHAT THEY NEED?”



42.4% of Burlington County residents have a Bachelor's Degree or higher


AIR PARTICIPANTS ASKED:

- **HOW DO WE MAKE EDUCATION BETTER FOR THE NEXT GENERATION?**
- **WHAT DOES BULLYING INTERVENTION LOOK LIKE WITH RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN MIND?**
- **HOW DO WE UPLIFT STUDENT VOICES?**
- **HOW TO BAKE CAREER PREP INTO EDUCATION?**

HEALTH EQUITY

PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED BY AIR PARTICIPANTS:

- **SELF ADVOCACY**
- **PATIENT RELATIONSHIPS**
- **HEALTH CARE DETERMINED BY ZIP CODE**
- **UNCONSCIOUS BIASES**
- **LACK OF TRANSPARENCY**



“WE NEED OUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS TO UNDERSTAND THEIR UNCONSCIOUS BIASES.”

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN BURLINGTON COUNTY: IS EDUCATION THE MISSING LINK?

ONLY 62% OF REGISTERED VOTERS CAST A BALLOT IN THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

78.3% OF BURLINGTON COUNTY RESIDENTS OF VOTING AGE ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE

WHAT DID AIR PARTICIPANTS SAY ABOUT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?

“WOMEN DON’T REALIZE HOW FAR WE’VE COME, MY HUSBAND HAD TO CO-SIGN MY FIRST CREDIT CARD. WE CAN’T TAKE PROGRESS FOR GRANTED.”

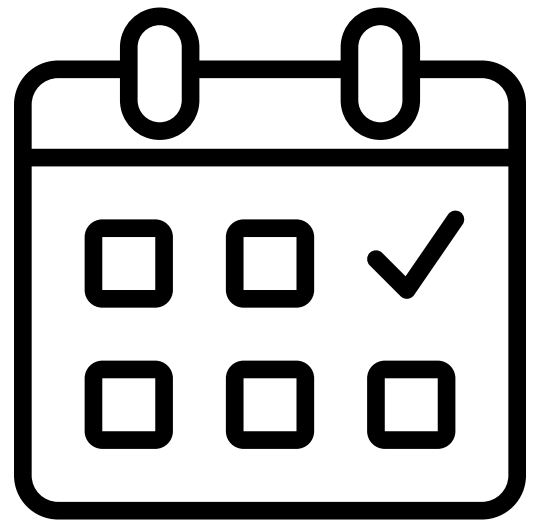
“ARE KIDS LEARNING ABOUT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL? HOW CAN WE GET VOTER REGISTRATION TO 100%?”

“THE MISSING PIECE IN CURRENT LEADERSHIP IS HUMILITY, WE HAVE TO TACKLE ELITISM IF WE WANT MORE PEOPLE TO HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE.”

ACCESSING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

NEED FOR MORE INTENTIONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- Lack of central repository for community events and programs.
- Qualifications for certain social services prevent people from accessing them.
- Social stigma and shame prevent people from accessing services they need.
- At the state and local level, is there open communication to better understand overlapping services?



WORKPLACE CULTURE

- DEI policies ought be legislative priorities.
- Do professionals in Burlington County have space to grow and enhance skills?
- What programs exist to develop leadership skills?
- Importance of affinity groups for workers who belong to minority or marginalized groups.

“THE DEI POLICIES AT MY JOB
FEEL LIKE THEY ARE JUST
CHECKING A BOX, HOW CAN
WE MAKE SURE THEY
ENCOURAGE TRUE
BELONGING?”

POLICY SUGGESTIONS

* COMMUNICATION IS KEY

A common theme throughout all three sessions, was the lack of knowledge of public programs and events. A communication strategy informed by intersectionality means understanding while digital communications may work to inform one group, it will not work for everyone. Merging physical and digital communications **in addition to reaching out to nonprofits, places of worship, schools, and community centers is imperative to ensure stronger and more intentional communications.** **How can you ensure your constituents know about your programs, events, and work?**

* IT STARTS WITH EDUCATION

Participants agreed, civic engagement is lacking in Burlington County. Can we encourage voter turnout in schools by prioritizing civics?

Trust in elected officials and organization leaders is built by showing up, how can we show up for our youth while they are in school?

* SEEK OUT CONTENT EXPERTS

Local nonprofits want to hear from elected officials! These organizations are a great resource to build expertise on complicated intersectional topics. **How can you build relationships between local nonprofits and elected officials to gain key insights into your constituents while developing a richer expertise on topics related to gender, class, race, and sexuality?**

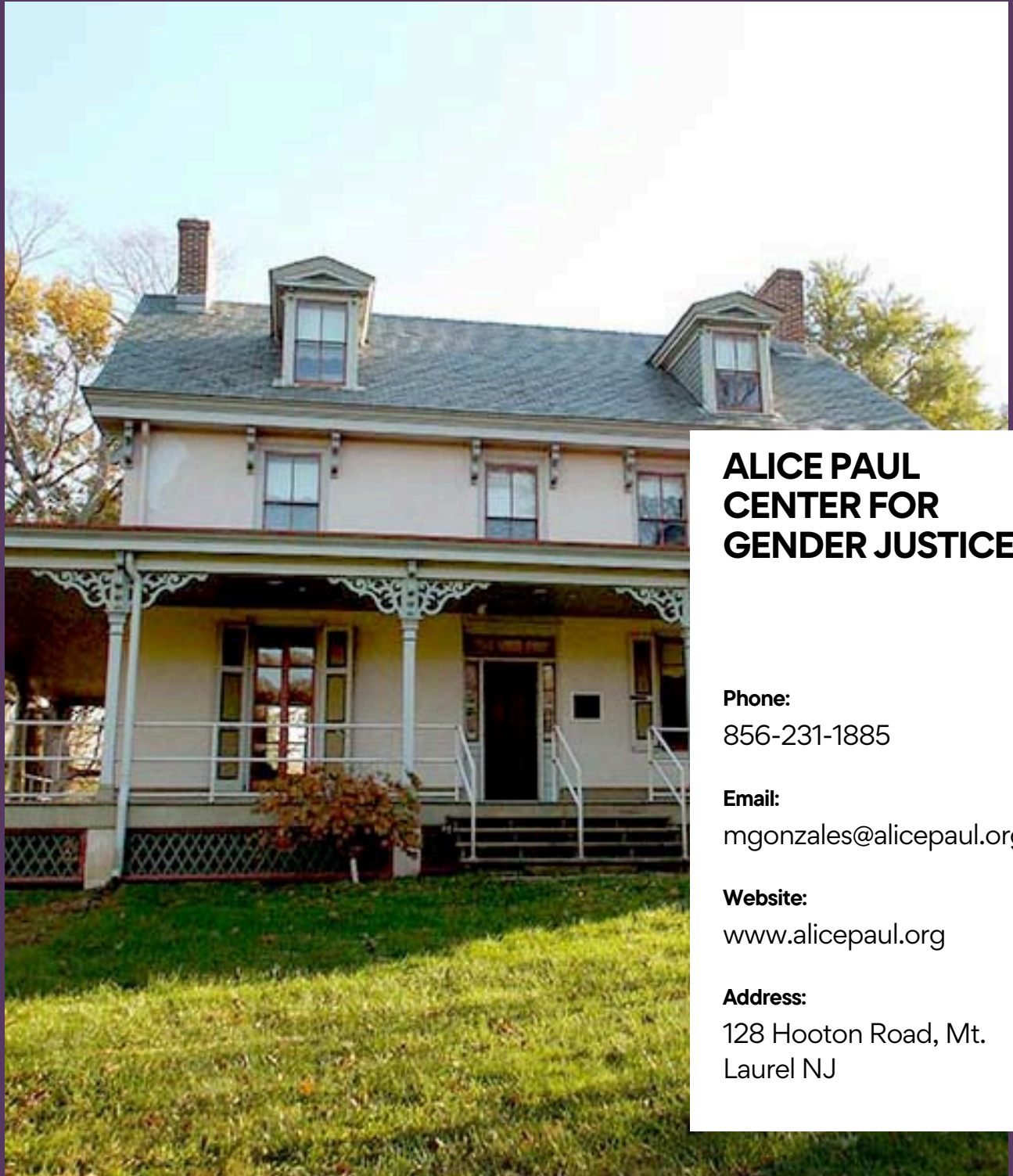
* PARTNERSHIPS BUILD COMMUNITY

Policy change for school districts can take years to implement, community members note that for corporations or major private employers, this change can happen in months.

How can the private and public sector work together to encourage inclusion and belonging in Burlington County?

What are ways your organization can form partnerships to better serve this community?

CONTACT US



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