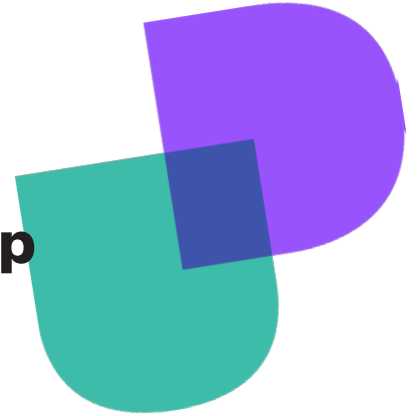




GENDER JUSTICE YOUTH COUNCIL

Welcome to NWLC's Gender Justice Youth Council Leadership and Advocacy Celebration!



THE NWLC GENDER JUSTICE YOUTH COUNCIL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In October 2024, the National Women's Law Center launched its inaugural Gender Justice Youth Council (GJYC) program. This leadership and advocacy professional development program aims to empower a new generation of gender justice advocates that are prepared to lead.

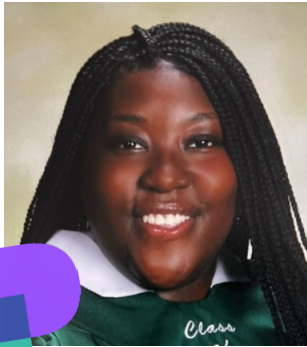
For the first cohort, we sought young women and gender non-conforming youth, who were interested in gender justice advocacy and reside or attend school in DC, MD, VA, NY, NJ, or PA.

Through a competitive application process, we selected members of the EmpowerHer cohort who came to the program with a variety of experiences and interests. This Leadership and Advocacy Celebration is the culmination of their hard work over the past 8 months.

Here are some key components of their experience as GJYC councilmembers:

- **Leadership Development and Advocacy Training:** Engaged in training sessions designed to expand their knowledge about key policy priorities for the NWLC empower you with essential skills and knowledge in advocacy and leadership. Some of our trainings included:
 - *Coalition Building*
 - *Community Organizing*
 - *Communications and Media training*
 - *Connecting with Policymakers*
 - *Resume Building*
 - *Public Speaking*
- **Policy Expertise:** Learned about key issue areas in education policy from the NWLC Education team to gain applied knowledge about gender justice advocacy in education.
- **Capstone Project:** Councilmembers were able to choose a gender justice issue aligned with one of NWLC's priority policy areas. For their capstone project, they were required to meet with one local, state, or federal policymaker (including university administrators) and provide one written product like a blog, op-ed, or sign-on letter advocating for their selected issue.
- **Mentorship:** Councilmembers were assigned an NWLC mentor to provide policy expertise on their Capstone Project.
- **Stipend and Certificate:** For participating on the Council, councilmembers received a monthly stipend. Upon successfully completing program requirements, including the capstone project, councilmembers receive an advocacy certificate to acknowledge their hard work and accomplishments.

Congratulations to Our Council Members for Their Successful Completion of this Council Year!



Ava Edwards (she/her) is a freshman at Lincoln University, pursuing a major in Criminal Justice with minors in Pre-Law and Political Science. Driven by a commitment to advocacy and community change, Ava served as Black Student Union President for two years in high school, where she advocated the rights of underrepresented students. Now at Lincoln University, she continues her advocacy as Secretary for the Class of 2028 and as a member of the 77th Student Senate, organizing events and working to enhance student life.

Gender advocacy is a deeply personal passion for Ava, inspired by her own experiences with gender inequality. She has hosted events celebrating women pioneers, recognizing their contributions and inspiring others in her school community. Ava joined the Gender Justice Youth Chapter to gain hands-on experience in gender rights activism and policy awareness, and further her understanding of advocacy. Her goal is to use her voice to support and protect women's legal rights in both local and academic communities.

Outside of her academic and advocacy work, Ava enjoys hobbies that bring her joy and creativity. She enjoys walking, reading, and crocheting after a long day of hard work. These hobbies remind her to stay balanced during her busy schedule.

Ava's Capstone Project aims to bring awareness to the affects of sexual harassment and catcalling on HBCU campuses, and how Title IX support on campus can help.

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Ameara Smith (she/her) is a freshman at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. Born and raised in Philadelphia, she previously served on the 2021-2022 cohort of the Girls Inc. National Teen Advocacy Council. Regarding gender justice, Ameara is extremely interested in the prison-industrial complex and its impact on women and children. Ameara is also concerned with menstrual inequity and has been working toward raising awareness of the issue.

At Georgetown, Ameara is involved in the school newspaper, *The Hoya*, as well as a part of the NAACP. In her free time, she loves to travel, read, and play tennis.

Ameara's Capstone Project highlights period poverty and its effects on college students in the US.

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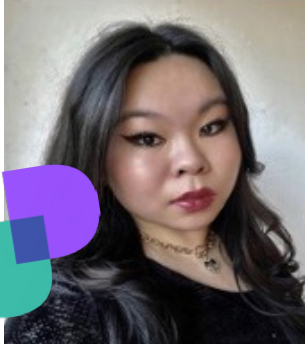


Breanna 'Bre' Jimenez (she/her) is a current first-year student at American University in Washington, DC studying Political Science with a minor in Public Administration and Policy. On her college campus, Bre is involved in March For Our Lives and AU Repro, as well as serving as a First-Year Fellow for Kennedy Political Union and Students for Change.

Originally from San Antonio, Texas, Bre found her interest in gender justice through the platform of advocating for comprehensive sexual education and reproductive rights in her community. She believes that an intersectional and comprehensive approach to sex-ed is imperative for healthy living and healthy communities. Her advocacy efforts have led her to speaking on panels with The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) and *Good Morning America*. Bre has lobbied at the state level for policies centered around increased youth representation on School Health Advisory Councils, and at the federal level for the divestment from abstinence only sex education curricula. Alongside her passion for advocacy work, Bre enjoys reading, spending time outdoors, and exploring the countless free museums around DC.

Bre's Capstone Project highlights barriers to education for teenage pregnant and parenting students in Texas high schools.

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Brittany Peng (she/her) is a senior at Georgetown University Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, majoring in International Politics with a concentration in International Law, Institutions, and Ethics and a minor in Women's and Gender Studies. Through her studies, Brittany has pursued the issue of the elimination of violence against women (VAW) and gender-based violence (GBV) vis-a-vis international human rights, humanitarian, and criminal law.

In accordance with her academic pursuits, Brittany has past experiences interning at the Rise Now Nonprofit for sexual assault survivor legislative advocacy, the US Department of State: Secretary's Office of Diversity and Inclusion for the launch of the #FacingDiplomacy storytelling campaign, and the Council of Women World Leaders housed in the United Nations Foundation. In the future, Brittany aspires to be an international human rights attorney.

Outside of school and work, Brittany's passions are in music, arts, and culture. She was a classically trained cellist, having begun her training at the age of 9, and listens to various genres of music from classical to R&B. Brittany also enjoys keeping up with the latest trending makeup and skincare products, as well as reading intersectional feminist literature.

Brittany's Capstone Project addresses how online sexual harassment via artificial intelligence-produced and disseminated materials is being addressed by lawmakers in our contemporary era of emerging technologies.

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Xiyuan “Dora” Lin (she/her) is a sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania double majoring in Gender, Sexuality, & Women’s Studies and Political Science with minors in Law and Society and American Public Policy. Born and raised in Fuzhou, China, Xiyuan saw the education gap against women firsthand. The rampant misogyny she witnessed and experienced fuels her dream of increasing access to education for women through legal reform.

At Penn, Dora helps high-achieving, low-income high school upperclassmen apply to college as a Head Advising Fellow for Matriculate and chairs the Admissions Dean’s Advisory Board. She loves bubble tea and crème brûlée way too much, creative writing, and reading; her favorite book is *Handle with Care* by Jodi Picoult. After undergrad, Dora strives to become a lawyer and use her J.D. to empower her beloved communities. She is very excited to be on GJYC at the National Women’s Law Center!

Dora’s Capstone Project deals with immigrant women’s right to education, specifically cultural and systemic barriers that may impact enrollment and retention.

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Zoe Larkey (she/her) is a third-year student at George Washington University studying Human Services and Social Justice with a minor in Psychology. She is a passionate gender justice advocate with a specific interest in sexual violence prevention. Zoe is actively engaged in efforts to create safer communities on campus, serving as the founding president of my school's chapter of It's On Us.

Outside of advocacy, she enjoys creative hobbies such as watercolor painting and scrapbooking and is a member of the Women's Rowing team at George Washington.

Zoe's Capstone Project focuses on preventing sexual violence on college campuses and the needed resources to support survivors.



Gender Justice Youth Council Capstone Presentation Program

Welcome and Opening Remarks

1:30 pm

Capstone Presentations

1:40 pm – 2:10 pm

Ava Edwards

2:10 pm – 2:40 pm

Breanna 'Bre' Jimenez

2:40 pm – 3:10 pm

Brittany Peng

3:10 pm – 3:40 pm

Xiyuan "Dora" Lin

3:40 pm – 4:10 pm

Ameara Smith

4:10 pm – 4:40 pm

Zoe Larkey

Closing Remarks

5:10pm – 5:15pm

Reception and Certificate Ceremony

5:15 pm – 6:30 pm

by invitation only

