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NEWS

Study: Collier women struggle with housing, health care and child care

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Key Points

- A new study reveals women in Collier County face significant economic hardships and barriers to opportunity.
- Key challenges for women include limited access to affordable housing, health care, and child care.
- The study also found that girls under 18 struggle with bullying, peer conflict, and social media pressures.

Women in Collier County are struggling with economic hardships for basic day-to-day needs that create barriers to pursue opportunities to get ahead.

The Women's Foundation of Collier County has released findings of a 2026 study on how women and girls are faring, showing a lack of access to affordable housing, health care and child care.

Girls under the age of 18 face bullying, peer conflict, social media pressures and online safety concerns, according to the findings.

The Women's Foundation, established in 1996 by the Collier Community Foundation, is focused on fostering improvements in the lives of women and children through advocacy, education, and grants to date totaling $2.4 million to organizations with a similar mission.

Priorities include addressing the immediate needs of senior women, namely housing instability and social isolation. For young women and girls, the focus is on

helping them reach their potential through mentoring, education, scholarships, and career development.

The 2026 survey by the Women's Foundation is not a new undertaking.

It partnered with Q-Q Research Consultants in 2018 and 2022 on a broader community assessment. It retained the firm again on for the recent assessment specifically focused on women and children.

The study examined current data and survey responses of 614 women aged 18 and older. The results include feedback from representatives of organizations that serve local women.

A breakdown shows 71% of the survey respondents are white and 25% identified as Hispanic, Latin, or of Spanish origin.

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What the survey found

- 74% of respondents reported limited access to affordable housing
- 47% were dissatisfied with housing assistance
- 55% reported limited access to affordable health care
- 68% reported stress or anxiety
- 56% said childcare is a barrier to employment
- 51% reported the need to work is a barrier to job training and education
- 40% reported limited access to affordable transportation
- 33% were dissatisfied with legal or immigration services
- 41% reported online safety is a major concern
- 32% of girls face online or social media pressures
- 42% of caregivers struggle to balance responsibilities
- 24% report cost of care is a challenge

The takeaway from the Collier Community Foundation

Eileen Connolly-Keesler, president and chief executive officer of the Collier Community Foundation, said the clearest takeaway is that the challenges identified in the study are deeply interconnected.

“Women are not experiencing challenges in isolation,” she said. “Taken together, these findings show that opportunity is often shaped by a web of practical realities. A woman may have access to a job, educational program, or career advancement opportunity, but still be unable to take advantage of it without affordable childcare, healthcare, transportation, or stable housing.”

Connolly-Keesler said the findings about girls are equally noteworthy about bullying or peer conflict, along with concern about online safety and social media pressures.

When asked if the findings reflect progress in improving access to affordable housing, health care and child care, Connolly-Keesler said the findings are a snapshot of the experiences of women and children.

“What the findings do tell us is that affordable housing, healthcare, and childcare remain significant challenges for many women in our community,” she said.

“Despite ongoing investments and efforts across these areas, respondents continue to report barriers that affect their economic stability, career advancement, health, and overall wellbeing,” she said.

She added: “The study highlights where needs continue to exist and where additional attention may be warranted. It provides current data that can help nonprofits, funders, employers, healthcare providers, educators, and public leaders make informed decisions about where resources and partnerships can have the greatest impact.”

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