

2021 Annual Report

JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021

Our Mission

To end domestic and sexual violence through advocacy, education, and social change.



Executive Director's Message

Adaptable, committed, steadfast, courageous...these are the characteristics that come to my mind as I reflect on the work of the WRC's staff, Board of Directors, and Association members over the past year and one-half.

Many of us experienced conditions and situations during the pandemic that were and remain unimaginable. Yet, despite all the barriers, quarantines, and social distancing mandates, WRC thrived and continues to provide life-saving services to adult and child victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking and human trafficking.

WRC witnessed a twenty-nine (29%) increase in requests for safe housing. WRC's housing program provided 2,943 nights of housing to adults and children fleeing domestic and/or sexual violence. The attorneys at the Barbara J. Hart Justice Center shifted their civil legal representation services into a virtual environment in order to assist program participants with custody hearing, Protection Orders, immigration matters and other civil legal needs. Advocates in the Lackawanna County and Susquehanna County crisis program responded to 10,044 hotline calls either from their homes or the Center.

WRC's prevention education team modified their programming into virtual learning opportunities and provided Safe Dates to 820 students during the school closures.

WRC's administrative team did not skip a beat to keep the agency operating during these very demanding times.

WRC's Association, Board of Directors and Campaign Cabinet worked tirelessly to continue our fundraising efforts in our new virtual world. WRC is truly grateful for Ann and Dave Hawk's leadership in our "Restoring Hope Campaign".

It certainly has been a challenging year. I am so fortunate to work with a remarkable group of people. Through our collaborative efforts, we have truly made a difference in the lives of survivors in our communities during this pandemic.

Peg Ruddy, Executive Director



A letter from the Board President

As we all continue to adapt through this pandemic, WRC has continuously maintained their important services to our community. The many services that WRC offers have become even more important as hotline calls have increased significantly throughout this pandemic. Many thanks to executive director, Peg Ruddy, and the staff at the Women's Resource Center for their endless dedication to assist victims of domestic violence.

Please take some time to read through this annual report and consider how each of the WRC programs can help victims and their families. The various programs can touch the life of a child, a young parent, or a senior citizen. David and Ann Hawk, our Restoring Hope Campaign co-chairs, along with other community leaders and WRC board members continue to work to build an organization that will serve our community for many years to come.

It has been a tremendous pleasure to serve as President of the Board of Directors of the Women's Resource Center. Thank you to the Board of Directors, the Association, the Campaign Committee and of course, the dedicated staff and many volunteers who help to make the Women's Resource Center such a valuable asset to our community.

Margaret McCormick Board President

WRC Board Officers

> Margaret McCormick President	> Katherine Leahy Treasurer
> Brian RoseVice President	> Maggie HawkSecretary

WRC Board of Directors

- > Becky Bell
- > Mark DeStefano
- > Trish Fisher
- > Pat Fricchione Jr.
- > Amanda Frieder
- > Maggie Gerrity
- > Kerri Greco
- > Linda Keene
- > Bernie M. Maopolski

- > Claudia Naismith
- > Sr. Terry O'Rourke
- > Katherine Oven
- > Michelene Pagnotti
- > Joe Palumbo
- > Colleen Pettinato
- > Gina M. Pitoniak
- > Karen A. Reid

- > Jamie Ryan
- > Deede Schneider
- > Alycia W. Schwartz
- > Elaine F. Shepard
- > Shubhra Shetty
- > Sheila Stallman
- > Steven Weinberger
- > Kim Wylam
- > Wendy Yankelitis

Crisis and Advocacy Services



WRC's Crisis and Advocacy Services Program offers 24-hour crisis invention and advocacy services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, teen dating violence, and trafficking. Services are available to significant others who are supportive of the survivor's right to live a life free from violence and oppression. Services are free and confidential and open regardless of income, race, gender, age, marital, social or economic status, cultural or religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or physical abilities.

Over 2,045 adults and children in crisis were provided services by WRC over the last year.

In 2020-2021, WRC provided services to 1,731 survivors of domestic violence.

WRC provided services to 314 survivors of sexual assault.

10,044 calls were received on our 24-hour crisis hotline.

Economic Advocacy Project & Safe Housing Program

WRC provides emergency safe housing for those adults and children who must flee their homes to be safe. Longer-term transitional and rapid rehousing assistance is available to assist survivors in securing a life free from violence and oppression. From emergency housing, they are moved into transitional housing and given financial aid for a security deposit, rent, utilities, furnishings, and food. Advocates continue to work closely with them to find employment and eventually a permanent, affordable home of their own.

29 adults and **62 children** were provided 3-18 months of rental assistance and security deposits.

A total of **101 families** received additional assistance to address economic barriers that included: moving expenses, household furnishings, utility costs, childcare, transportation costs, small car repairs, educational and career-related expenses.

Over **90%** of the families receiving more than 6 months of rental/financial assistance in tandem with advocate support, legal advocacy, and/or attorney representation were able to escape and stay out of the abusive relationship long term.



WRC's Safe Nights of Shelter program allows donors to help WRC provide safety and shelter for survivors and their family members for one night or more. Over the past year, WRC has provided 140 adults and 119 children with 2,943 nights of safe nights. Additionally, WRC provided 29 adults and 32 children with 14,679 nights of safe housing through rental assistance and other long-term assistance.





Barbara J. Hart Justice Center

Our Barbara J. Hart Justice Center provides legal assistance to program participants, including representation, consultation, and court preparation. Services include safety planning, Protection From Abuse orders, child custody, child support, divorce, nuisance ordinances from landlords, evictions, consumer debt, banking, and tax issues, immigration, issues, and employment cases.



32 custody cases



13 divorce cases



3 appeals



2 Landlord/ Tenant cases



13 support cases



80 PFA cases



1 immigration cases



2 Sexual Violence Protection Orders



56 Other/
Consultations

Total cases opened 2020 and 2021: 202

Restoring Hope Capital Campaign

To ensure the future of WRC's comprehensive and vital services, we have continued our capital campaign fundraising efforts by reaching out to community groups, corporations, foundations, and individuals. With this growing number of donors and dollars we will continue to serve the victims who come to us, and prevent others from becoming victims.

As we publish this report we have raised almost \$2 million dollars toward our \$2.5 million-dollar goal. We couldn't do it without the commitment and support of our capital campaign fundraising committees and co-chairs David and Ann Hawk of the Hawk Family Foundation. Committee members include: Michael & Donna Barbetti, Mark DeStefano, Peter & Laura Frieder, Linda Keene, Kate Leahy, Margaret McCormick, Caroline Munley, Dr. Bob & Claudia Naismith, Michelene Pagnotti, and Kim Wylam.



Community Outreach

Despite the pandemic, the Women's Resource Center was able to participate in several outreach events with our community partnerships. For example, WRC was the **charity of choice** for the **Joe Torre Safe at Home Foundation night at the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre Railriders**.

We also participated in the **Scranton Area Foundation's NEPA Gives Day** and raised over \$30,000!

WRC held its **30th annual Great Chefs** event virtually in June raising over **\$50,000**.

Zummo's Café commissioned a local artist to paint a **mural** in tribute to the Women's Resource Center and **donated \$1,400**.

Covenant Presbyterian Church donated hospital bags for our program participants.

In April, numerous Lackawanna County coffee shops had special coffee sleeves to recognize Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

In Susquehanna County, the **police** placed magnets on their vehicles to show **support of Sexual Assault Awareness Month**. Also, **Scoops ice cream parlor** let WRC celebrity scoopers **collect tips for WRC**.

Cooper's Seafood House presented the Women's Resource Center (WRC) a check for \$7,645 from its one-day lobster bisque soup sale as part of recognizing Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The day helped raise critical funding and without the support of businesses like Cooper's and our community, we wouldn't be able to help thousands of adults and children in our area building a new life free from violence.

It was a busy year!

COOPERS

COO

Prevention Education Programs

The Prevention Education Program continues actively working toward the prevention of dating and sexual violence — stopping violence before it starts. WRC is expanding the program in the 2021-2022 school year by hiring an additional educator and providing prevention education programs in middle school grades in Lackawanna County.

Safe Dates: An evidence-based program, the Safe Dates curriculum educates youth on how to identify and prevent dating violence. From July 2020-June 2021, approximately 820 Lackawanna County students across three high schools, and four middle schools participated in Safe Dates. This includes public and private schools. Schools include Abington Heights High School, Scranton High School, West Scranton High School, as well as Abington Heights Middle School, Nativity Miguel School, St. Mary's of Mt. Carmel, and St. Paul's School. Due to the uncertainty and needs of the pandemic, two schools did not participate in the program this year. Schools were hybrid (some students in person and some virtual), fully in person and fully virtual. WRC staff were able to adapt to the changing modes of instruction while actively working toward implementing the curriculum in a trauma informed way. WRC also purchased an updated Safe Dates curriculum for both counties and created short videos for some of the topics addressed in the curriculum.

WRC created tear-off posters with a QR code for schools to hang in bathrooms and guidance offices which are geared specifically to teens.

School Professionals Training: WRC Prevention Education staff developed a Trauma-Informed Schools Training for school professionals such as principals, teachers, administrators, and counselors. Trauma affects youth in all communities, and responses to those experiences by youth-serving systems are critical. This training also addresses selfcare. WRC will work with each school to meet their current needs. Trainings were provided at the Career Technology Center and St Mary's of Mt Carmel School.

In addition to our work with professionals in K-12 schools, as part of a grant, WRC created trainings for faculty and staff at Marywood University. WRC staff created virtual training broken down into four short modules including videos, slides, and quizzes. The trainings were: Introduction to Trauma-Informed College Campuses and Introduction to Bystander Intervention on College Campuses and the goal was to build awareness, knowledge and skills to help foster social, emotional, and physical safety for students, colleagues and themselves.



Prevention Education Programs

Stop Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN):

SCAN is a school-based program designed to provide child abuse prevention and safety information. WRC staff members taught 305 students in Susquehanna County about personal safety including internet safety, and bullying.

School Policy Report: In September of 2020, WRC applied for and received a competitive grant from the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) to address prevention at the community level. WRC's project for this one year grant is to create a report, The State of Dating Violence Policies in Public School Districts in Lackawanna and Susquehanna Counties. Data from this report comes from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PA DOE) recommendations for dating violence policies as well as existing research by national leaders in domestic and sexual violence. WRC created a District Scorecard to compare existing dating violence policies in the two counties with the PA DOE recommendations. School district policies can create safer schools and safer students by addressing intervention, response to and prevention of dating violence in all its forms through a clear written policy. Addressing school district policies is considered community-level prevention by the CDC. WRC was invited to speak on the progress of this report at a statewide Ignite Call through PCADV in January 2021.

Statewide Coalitions: WRC staff have been active in statewide coalitions through PCADV and PCAR. In these ongoing monthly Zoom meetings, preventionists from across the state share ideas, resources, and participate in trainings related to prevention. Additionally. WRC received a technology grant through PCAR including software and hardware to increase our ability to provide prevention programs throughout the pandemic while remote learning and meeting were the norm.

For More Information: To schedule a training, or to obtain educational resources, please contact Sarah Dawgert, Education Manager, at sarahd@wrcnepa.org.



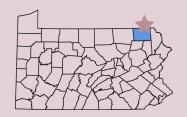








Services in Susquehanna County



WRC's Susquehanna County office has continued to expand our housing services for survivors. In addition to the Rapid Rehousing (RRH) funding that began in 2020. WRC was also awarded Home4Good funds through PCADV's application to the Eastern Continuum of Care. This grant of flexible funding was shared among the DV centers involved in the initial RRH application and allowed WRC to meet the various economic needs of survivors who were at risk of becoming homeless. Between July and November of 2020, WRC was able to provide over \$11,000 in assistance to ten survivors and their 21 children in the areas of rental assistance, emergency shelter, moving assistance, transportation, day care and access to phones and phone service. These needs often fall outside of funds that are available through traditional grants, yet frequently make the difference between a family remaining stably housed or entering homelessness. At the end of the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the Susquehanna County office had 3 families in the RRH program and one family successfully exited from RRH services.

With regard to the Transitional Housing Program in Susquehanna County, WRC was awarded an additional 3-year grant to continue housing survivors with OVW funds in Susquehanna County. One family was able to remain in TH through the transition from the first grant to the second and two additional families have entered TH in the last year.

WRC's legal advocacy program has continued to provide advocacy, accompaniment and court packets for survivors. The Susquehanna County Legal Advocate is also the secretary for the Susquehanna County Criminal Justice Advisory Board and co-chairs the Sexual and Domestic Violence Advocacy Coalition with Sheriff Benedict. Meetings continued to be held quarterly using virtual platforms due to the pandemic.

The Susquehanna County Teen Counselor Advocate has continued to work to provide prevention and education services to the local school districts. This year PCAR provided centers with laptops and technology to assist in

delivering prevention programming virtually, which allowed WRC to continue to offer programs to schools regardless of their instructional model. In addition, several school districts reached out to our teen advocate to request supportive services to student survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Sadly, at the end of the year Kimberly Tuttle resigned her position at WRC; in August, the Susquehanna County team welcomed Andrew Granick into the role of TCA. Andrew has many years of experience providing prevention programming to schools in Susquehanna County through his former employment at Trehab. He is well connected in the community and enthusiastic about collaborating with schools to help educate children about the topics of domestic and sexual violence, healthy relationships and how to help friends.

While community events were largely put on hold due to the pandemic, WRC observed Domestic Violence Awareness month with a sign on the green and purple ribbons on light posts on Lake Avenue in front of the courthouse. Early in November, WRC assisted in providing a virtual half day training on the Impact of Domestic Violence on Children, which was well-attended by professionals from a variety of disciplines in our community. In April, for Sexual Assault Awareness month, WRC handed out bags packed with information and resources during Soup Nite at the South Montrose Community Church and displayed a table outside of Susquehanna Scoops, where staff served as guest ice cream scoopers.

WRC's Susquehanna County office continues to receive community support through donations, grants and requests to speak to community groups. In addition to the Christmas program that has been organized for many years by the Lutheran Mission for survivors in Susquehanna County, Armetta's Pizzeria and Pub in Gibson held a toy drive for WRC during the holidays, collecting hundreds of toys for families and their children. We are so thankful for the generosity of our community!

Medical Advocacy Program

Medical Advocacy includes the healthcare-based identification of domestic violence, sexual assault & human trafficking victims within the healthcare setting. Our program includes developing and implementing policies and procedures to enhance the health care response to these victims at various medical practices & institutions. The Medical Advocacy Program seeks to establish relationships between health care systems and WRC to better serve patients and healthcare professionals alike.

Trainings provided by our Medical Advocacy Program (MAP) are at no cost and cover how to identify, address and refer survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking. Throughout the pandemic, our MAP has continued to provide trainings to approximately 260 Medical Professionals in various fields including ER staff, EMTs, primary care physicians, dietitians, nursing students and OBGYNs via Zoom. With the help of community partners, MAP has also been able to offer CEUs for several of these trainings.

Task Forces in both Lackawanna County and Susquehanna County are made up of Medical Professionals who meet quarterly to discuss current/ongoing issues and help configure solutions for these problems. Our Lackawanna County Task Force began meeting via Zoom and has already provided valuable insight and helped navigate MAP to other potential community partners. Our Task Force is currently made up of 13 professionals from EMS, nurses, mental health providers, and dietitians.

Protocol and Policy development, through research and with the input of our Task Force, helps meet the needs of both patients and the time constraints of medical professionals.

During the past year, MAP has distributed 120 hospital bags for sexual assault survivors between the two counties. Bags include clothing, toiletries, and information for people who go to the hospital for a Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit, or for a medical exam. Additionally, 300 WRC posters with tear-off cards were distributed to hospitals in both counties to be hung in exam rooms.

MAP has also taken part in statewide workgroups with other centers from across Pennsylvania. Through PCADV, MAPs throughout the state come together to strategize, support and problem solve, focusing on working with Pharmacies, as well as general outreach.

WRC also began a partnership with Geisinger School of Medicine's Community Engagement/Service Learning Project. Students from the GSOM will partner with our MAP program for two years on ongoing projects. Students will: develop and administer a strength & needs assessment for local hospitals regarding domestic violence, sexual assault & human trafficking needs; help organize a conference with WRC & present on related topic at conference; develop a resource for hospitals to use to screen for human trafficking, as well as general outreach to the medical community.

This year WRC also began a partnership with Victims Intervention Project (VIP), which serves Wayne and Pike Counties, to host a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) training. NEPA as a whole is in desperate need of SANE nurses and providing trainings like this is one way WRC is trying to bridge that gap. Funding is provided by an AllOne Foundation Grant.

For more information, to schedule a training, or to obtain resources for a medical provider, please contact WRC Medical Advocate Sabrina Hannon at MA@wrcnepa.org

WRC Pet Program

Pets can be victims of domestic violence too. Survivors may be reluctant to leave their abusers if they cannot take their pets, the only support some survivors have, with them. By partnering with animal-friendly professionals, the Women's Resource Center has expanded its services to assist the pets of those who seek help fleeing from domestic violence. WRC's "Protecting Pets Against Domestic Violence" Program provides emergency safe house accommodations for cats and dogs, grooming services for those who have fallen to unintentional neglect, and veterinary services for those who could not afford to provide the medical care their pets needed including vaccinations, spay/neuter, sick appointments, and emergency visits. In addition to these services, WRC's "Protecting Pets Against Domestic Violence" Program also supplies the survivors we help with pet-related necessities including food and water bowls, pet food, litter, and more. Since the creation of WRC's "Protecting Pets Against Domestic Violence" Program several companion animals have received help getting out of an abusive situation. The Women's Resource Center is eager to continue expanding on the resources we already have in place to serve even more pets of the survivors of domestic violence across Lackawanna and Susquehanna Counties, keeping all family members including the furry ones, together.

WRC Is grateful to the Robert H. Spitz and Banfield foundations for providing the financial resources to support this program.





Revenue Streams

Federal/Government	\$ 2,197,431.00
State/Government	\$ 756,990.00
Foundation Support	\$ 262,960.00
Donations & Contributions	\$ 646,226.00
Special Fundraising Events	\$ 106,394.00
Local Grants	\$ 400,947.00
Total	\$ 4,370,948.00

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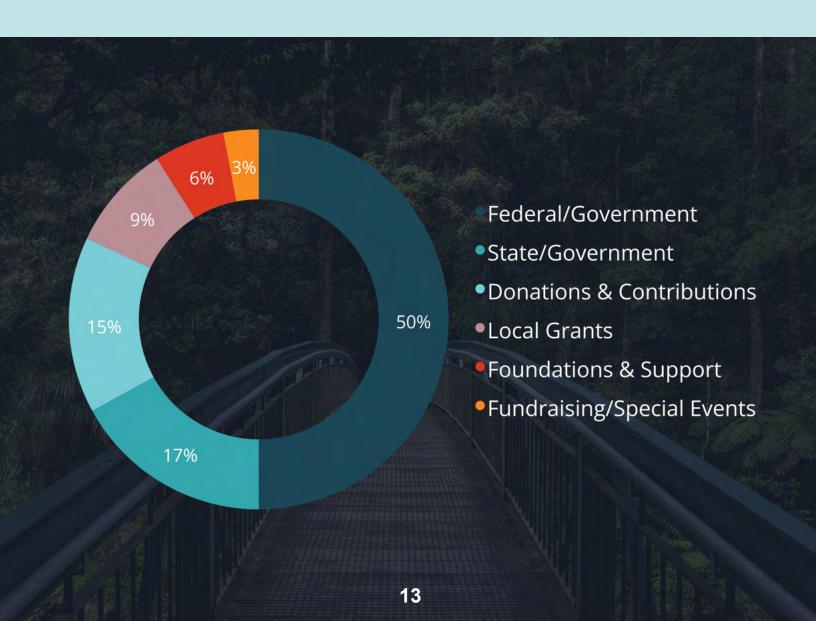
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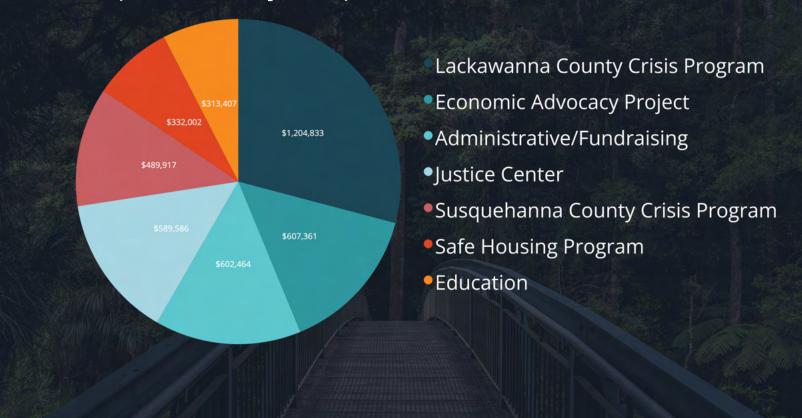
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Expenses by Department



Lackawanna County Crisis Program	\$1,204,833.00
Economic Advocacy Project	\$ 607,361.00
Administrative/Fundraising	\$ 602,464.00
Justice Center	\$ 589,586.00
Susquehanna County Crisis Program	\$ 489,917.00
Safe Housing Program	\$ 332,002.00
Education	\$ 313,407.00
Total	\$ 4,139,570.00

I was working to get my life in order out of co te chaos, one of the amazing staff members loc te in the eye and say 'See you on the other sid

WRC Association

The dedication of the volunteers, WRC Association members, has enabled WRC to continue to provide services for thousands of adults and children in crisis. We had to cancel Santa's Snippers this past year due to the pandemic, however, people still sent in donations. Also, Great Chef's this year was a virtual event.

The WRC Association raised \$48,347.85 through Great Chefs, \$4,808.95 through the 50/50 Raffle, \$4,445.00 for Santa's Snippers and \$43,556.59 for WRC's Annual Appeal.

Our Association Board Members

2020-2021

> Gina Pitoniak	. President	> Maura Boland	Secretary
> Tara Smith	. Vice President	> Allison Uhrin	Treasurer

Members of the Association for 2020-2021 program year included: Mari Bowen, Carol Chisdak, Katie Connors, Joanne DeMarco. Jessica DeMarco, Amanda Frieder, Maureen Guzzi, Linda Hansen, Peggy Hennemuth, Kerri A. Holland, Courtney Lisk, Elaine Mazzoni, Claudia Naismith, Colleen Pettinato, Sally Preate, Elaine Shepard Maria Valvano, Peg Ruddy, Amy Everetts, Karen Connors, Peggy Gutowski, Nancy Perri, Brianna Bednash



Our Staff

Administration:

- > Peg Ruddy Executive Director
- > Karen Connors Fiscal Director
- > Brianna Bednash Assistant Fiscal Director
- > Amy Everetts Director of Development
- > Peggy Gutowski Operations Coordinator
- > Rita Loughman Fiscal Clerk
- > Sharon Perrotti Payroll and Benefits Coordinator
- > Jennifer Posaski Fiscal Coordinator
- > Colleen Gedrich Data Entry Clerk
- > Sam De Fazio Maintenance and Safety Instructor
- > Stacey Andrews Maintenance
- > Rosealie Serafin Admin Relief
- > Denise Pinto Admin Relief

Education:

- > Nancy Perri Grants & Education Programs Director
- > Sarah Dawgert Education Manager
- > Sabrina Hannon Medical Advocacy Program Coordinator
- > Patty McLain Teen Educator

Crisis and Advocacy Services:

- > Anna Faramelli Crisis and Advocacy Services Director
- > Lori lannetta Lackawanna County Program Manager
- > Phyllis Brown Program Assistant
- > Judy Copeland Senior Counselor Advocate
- > Christa Capwell Counselor Advocate
- > Ashlynn Doyle Counselor Advocate
- > Shelley Doyle Counselor Advocate
- > Yelsy Ferreras-Sanchez Counselor Advocate, Weekend
- > Mary Clare Mecca Counselor Advocate
- > Alexa Menichelli Counselor Advocate Weekend
- > Nuris Perdomo Counselor Advocate, Teen
- > Nilda Perez Crisis Intervention Advocate
- > Devon Cable Jesuit Volunteer Corps Advocate
- > Melissa Conrad Emergency Response Advocate
- > Jailyn Guzman Emergency Response Advocate

Economic and Housing Services:

- > Carol Shoener Economic Advocacy Director
- > Leticia Covarrubias-St Martin, Legal Advocate, Lack Co
- Amanda Garcia Economic and Housing Advocate (Safe Housing)
- > Ganessa Hans Legal Advocate, Lack Co.
- > Rachel Ingalls Legal Advocate, Lack Co.
- > Brooke Lamberti Economic and Housing Advocate
- > Melanie Maskowski Economic and Housing Advocate
- > Hilda Rodriguez Economic and Housing Advocate
- > Kimberly Stout-Kramer Economic and Housing Advocate

Susquehanna County Staff

- > Tiffany Benedict Susquehanna County Program Manager
- > Nichole Jesse Rural Economic & Housing Advocate
- > Rachel Mercuri Legal Advocate, Susquehanna County
- > Kimberly Tuttle Counselor Advocate, Teen
- > Sarah Watson Rural Counselor, Housing Advocate

Justice Center Staff

- > Judith Lewis Legal Director
- > Denise Burgos Legal Assistant
- > DeAnne Greene Staff Attorney
- > Nina Menichelli Staff Attorney
- > Juliana Petro Staff Attorney
- > Melissa Reuter Staff Attorney
- > Hope Silberstein Staff Attorney



The Women's Resource Center is a private non-profit organization funded in part by individual donations, business and corporate contributions, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, United Way of Lackawanna County and Wayne Counties, United Way of Susquehanna County, Lackawanna County, Lackawanna Behavioral Health/Intellectual Disabilities/Early Intervention Program, Office of Economic and Community Development of Scranton, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Justice / Office of Violence Against Women, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Pennsylvania State Food. Lackawanna County Office of Youth and Family Services and special project grants.











Lackawanna County: PO Box 975, Scranton, PA 18501 Hotline: 570-346-4671 Business: 570-346-4460

Susquehanna County: PO Box 202, Montrose, PA 18801 Hotline: 1-800-257-5765 Business: 570-278-1800





wrcnepa.org facebook.com/wrcnepa

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania at 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.