

ACTION4EQUITY WINSTON-SALEM

MISSION: to collaborate and influence policy decisions through systems change that foster equity in education

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Foreword: Through a Gender Lens 2026

Action4Equity was born out of a vision and demand that Black children in Forsyth County deserve the opportunity to live, learn, and grow in a thriving community. We believe that “community knows what community needs,” and our work centers those closest to the work to guide the work. And so - we begin this report with a simple truth: the conditions shaping the lives of women and girls in Forsyth County are not accidental.

They are the result of systems, both historical and present, that have determined whose lives are valued, whose labor is extracted, whose bodies are protected, and whose voices are heard.

And yet - we also begin with love. A love that believes women, girls, and gender-expansive people are not problems to be solved - they are leaders, knowledge holders, and architects of a more just future.

At Action4Equity, we understand that economic security cannot be separated from race, from place, from gender, from power. To speak of “women and girls” without naming these intersections is to tell an incomplete story. And incomplete stories too often lead to incomplete solutions.

This report, Through a Gender Lens 2026, moves us closer to truth.

Community Voice that Builds Power

Developed in partnership with Forsyth Futures and The Women’s Fund, this work reflects what becomes possible when research is rooted in community and when data is not extracted, but shaped by the voices, experiences, and wisdom of those most impacted.

The mothers navigating systems never built to hold them and their children. The girls imagining futures beyond what they’ve seen and been told is possible. Women and people who are caregivers, workers, and community leaders holding families and neighborhoods together with brilliance, creativity, and care -often without recognition or resources, carrying others while climbing a slippery slope, where stability is never guaranteed and that weight is rarely shared.

To honor these truths is to shift how we understand both the problem and the path forward. We believe research *must* do more than describe disparities and tell stories, it must disrupt them.

That means naming the ways structural racism, gender oppression, and economic exclusion intersect to shape outcomes. It means rejecting deficit-based narratives that locate harm in individuals instead of systems. And it means committing to a

different way of working - centering culture, healing, building power, and redistributing decision-making to the community.

For our entire community, we offer our contributions to this report as a reminder that equity is not a destination, it is a practice. One that asks us, again and again, to align our actions with our values.

At Action4Equity, we remain committed to transforming community voice into progress, to building systems that honor the full humanity of Black women and girls, and to ensuring that those closest to the challenges are closest to the solutions.

Because when we tell the truth about what is and make radical investments in what could be - we create the conditions not just for survival, but for joy, dignity, and liberation.

In love, accountability, and collective action,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kellie P. Easton'.

Kellie P. Easton
Co-CEO
Action4Equity

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kenneth Reid'.

Kenneth Reid
Co-CEO
Action4Equity