**ISSUE STATEMENT & ANALYSIS**

In the United States we are taught that our system of government was formed by founding fathers through the Constitution. However, too often we forget that it was based on the structure of government created by the Iroquois Confederacy, in which women wielded the power to influence governance. In contrast, the Constitution embedded in its creation the unequal distribution of rights and opportunities enforced through its laws and systems. As a result, this has been our inheritance: a hierarchy of human value, a term coined by Dr. Gail Christopher, where girls, young women, and gender-expansive young people, particularly youth of color, are pushed to the bottom. Recognizing these difficult truths, it is no coincidence that we live in a society marked by racism, sexism, misogyny, xenophobia, heterosexism, ableism, ageism, and classism that disproportionately impacts girls and gender-expansive young people. As a result, generations of girls and gender-expansive young people have and are experiencing epidemic levels of chronic adversity and violence.

This deeply embedded injustice is perpetuated implicitly and explicitly by social ideologies and systems that further marginalize, traumatize, punish, and stigmatize girls and gender-expansive young people, particularly youth of color, their families and their communities. Public systems are most often siloed, biased, broken, and unable to meet their complex needs and support their potential to thrive. All forms of oppression – including their individual, social, and systemic manifestations – and the false narratives that underlie them, must be disrupted, dismantled, and replaced with a society that provides support and services grounded in compassion, healing, opportunity, and justice. This transformation is personal, it is political, and it is complex. It will take time and requires strong, diverse alliances, movements, and the leadership of those most impacted to achieve justice and liberation.

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**OUR VISION**

We envision a world in which all girls, young women and gender-expansive young people can achieve their potential and live unapologetic, liberated lives without fear of violence or injustice.

**OUR MISSION**

National Crittenton advocates for social, economic, and political justice with and for girls, young women, and gender-expansive young people impacted by chronic adversity, violence, and oppression.

**OUR GOALS**

Advance the collective power required to secure social justice with and for girls and gender-expansive young people.

Ensure that girls and gender-expansive young people have the support and opportunities they need to heal, be safe, be free, and experience joy.

Transform the deficit narrative about girls to one of power, brilliance, and potential.

**OUR STRATEGY**

Reshape and/or radically reimagine biased and broken policies, practices, and systems by centering the wisdom of those most impacted and including the expertise of providers.

Support an intersectional movement of vibrant and sustainable organizations united in collective action to achieve justice.

Address gaps in the availability and use of intersectional data about girls and gender-expansive young people to inform or transform policies and practices.

Ensure that pathways and support exist for girls and gender-expansive young people, particularly youth of color, to participate in advocacy at all levels.

Contribute to the ongoing national dialogue that confronts biases about, and promotes the strengths of, girls and gender-expansive young people.

**OUTCOMES**

Strong, sustainable organization(s) and movement(s) working over the long-term to achieve social, economic, and political justice with and for girls and gender-expansive young people.

Broad consensus held by an ever-widening constituency of people with a common understanding of the need to abolish social constructs and systems that marginalize and harm girls and gender-expansive young people.

Increased visibility of issues impacting girls and gender-expansive young people, particularly youth of color, in policy change processes, resulting in deep system transformation or abolition.

Eradication of social norms, behaviors and narratives rooted in destructive, biased, and bigoted expectations and treatment of girls and gender-expansive young people.
We center the wisdom inherent in the lived experience of those most impacted by generational chronic adversity, violence, and oppression as fundamental to human dignity and the achievement of social, economic, and political justice.

We believe that building and sustaining collective strength and power with those most impacted in collaboration with a diverse array of partners is key to disrupting and eradicating all forms of oppression.

We realize that the health and success of our communities and society are contingent on the health, success, and liberation of the girls and gender-expansive young people who inhabit them.

We use an intersectional approach to address the root causes of injustice, understanding the compounding effects of our multilayered identities.

We recognize the urgent need for healing to counteract the cumulative impact of historical, cultural, and intergenerational collective and individual trauma.

We ground ourselves in conscious compassion, which calls on us to be introspective and respond with generosity and empathy to the intricate circumstances of people’s lives.

As a national advocate we take a cross cutting approach, refusing to accept silos and politics that divide us. Connections and collaboration are hallmarks of our work and we are grounded and led by the wisdom of those most impacted by injustice and oppression. As a result, we know that eradicating injustice can be advanced in some cases through reform but in others radical reimagination or abolition is required. National Crittenton employs a robust mix of tools to advance justice for girls and gender-expansive young people. We center the lived experience of girls and gender-expansive young people of color because of the compounding impact of the multiple forms of oppression they face.

See Figure 1: Advocacy Toolbox.