THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE STATES DATA: WHERE IT COMES FROM, WHAT IT IS USED FOR, AND HOW IT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Main project page: http://www.iwpr.org/initiatives/states
About the project: http://www.iwpr.org/initiatives/states/about-the-project

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN’S POLICY RESEARCH (IWPR)

The Institute for Women’s Policy Research conducts rigorous research and disseminates its findings to address the needs of women, promote public dialog, and strengthen families, communities, and societies.
THE STATUS OF WOMEN PROJECT: BACKGROUND & HISTORY

- Launched in 1996
- Produced research reports and data analyses on
  - each U.S. state and the District of Columbia
  - several city/area reports
  - a series of reports and a toolkit on women in the Middle East and North Africa
- Provides reliable data on the economic, social, and political status of women
- In 2000, both presidential candidates – Al Gore and George W. Bush – cited statistics from The Status of Women in the States

WHAT TOPICS ARE COVERED IN STATUS OF WOMEN REPORTS?

More than 50 indicators addressing multiple issue areas

- Employment, education, and earnings
- Economic security and poverty
- Health and well-being
- Reproductive rights
- Violence and safety
- Political participation
- Work-family
- Basic demographic statistics
WHY FOCUS ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN?

Persistent challenges:
- Women earn less than men
- Experience higher poverty rates than male counterparts
- Face specific adverse health conditions
- Remain underrepresented in political office

Economic instability leaves women vulnerable to other hardships, such as:
- Domestic violence
- Lack of access to health care services
- Inability to pay for the child care needed to maintain employment
- Inadequacy of social safety nets

THE STATUS OF WOMEN PROJECT: GOALS

- Raise awareness about the needs of women and families
- Educate the public, the media, policymakers, and other leaders
- Benchmark and monitor women’s progress
- Inform programmatic initiatives and grantmaking
- Create public policies that will help women and girls reach their full potential
- Build capacity among local groups to do their own status of women reports
IWPR TOOLKITS ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN: BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY

Models for Action: Making Research Work for Women
Status of Women in the States: State Advisory Toolkit
The Status of Women in Your County: A Community Research Tool
Assessing the Status of Women at the County Level: A Manual for Researchers and Advocates

HOW DO I ACCESS STATUS OF WOMEN DATA FOR MY STATE OR COUNTY?

Key sources:
- Federal government data sources
- Local and state government agencies
- Research institutes
- Women’s centers at colleges and universities
- Research studies specific to your state or area
DATA ON BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

Answers to questions such as …

- How many women and girls live in my county or state?
- What percent of women and girls in my county or state are white, African American, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American?
- What percent of women in my county or state have a disability?
- What percent are married, single, and widowed or divorced?
- What percent of women in my county or state are older than age 65?

…can be found through the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Fact Finder—http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml.

Access to the American Community Survey, the Decennial Census, and other surveys.

DATA ON EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

American Fact Finder is also a great resource for questions such as:

- What percent of women in my county or state are in the labor force? What percent work full-time?
- What percent of women in my county or state have less than a high school education? A bachelor’s degree or higher?
- What are the median annual earnings of women in my area? How many live in poverty?
- How many women in my area are single moms?
- What are the most common occupations among women in my county or state?
- How many women in my area do not have health insurance?
Helpful hint: use the guided search function.

Useful tables for assessing the status of women:
- S1701. Poverty Status in Past 12 Months
- B17010. Poverty Status in Past 12 Months of Families by Family Type
- B20017. Median Earnings in Past 12 months by Sex by Work Experience
- B24010. Sex by Occupation for the Civilian Employed Population
- C23002. Sex by Age by Employment Status
- C15002. Sex by Educational Attainment
- DPO2. Selected Social Characteristics

DATA ON WOMEN’S HEALTH

Two key sources:
State health departments or departments of vital statistics
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- U.S. Cancer Statistics Working Group (for counties and states).
  http://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/deathrates/deathrates.html

- CDC WONDER (for counties and states)
  http://wonder.cdc.gov/
  Data on mortality rates from various health conditions, such as:
  - Heart disease
  - Stroke
  - Diabetes
  Click on “detailed mortality,” then accept terms of agreement and enter search parameters.
OTHER DATA SOURCES ON WOMEN’S HEALTH...

CDC’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (for states)
http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss/
Indicators related to personal health behaviors, such as:
- Smoking
- Binge Drinking
- Exercise
- Diet
- Obesity
- Mental Health

See also Kaiser Family Foundation—http://kff.org/
Guttmacher Institute--http://www.guttmacher.org/

DATA ON WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

For questions such as:
- What percent of my state’s legislators are women?
- What percent of my state’s elected executive office holders are women?
- How many of the U.S. congressional senators and representatives from my state are women? Women of color?
- Where does my state rank compared with other states on these indicators, and how much has my state progressed over the last several decades?

See the Center on American Politics and Women—www.cawp.org

For data on women’s voter registration and turnout, see the U.S. Census Bureau’s Population Characteristic Reports and Detailed Tables  http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/p20/index.html
Other useful sources: state and local government websites
HOW CAN THE RESEARCH BE USED?

Policymakers, advocates, and other leaders need reliable information about women’s status to:

- Inform legislation and policy agendas
- Shape educational initiatives to raise awareness of women’s issues
- Strengthen institutional resources for women
- Develop new programmatic initiatives
- Inform grantmaking

INFORMING LEGISLATION AND POLICY AGENDAS

*Economic Status of Women in Arizona* informed key budget decisions by both the Governor’s Office and Arizona Legislature on child care subsidies and domestic violence funding.

- Received additional $6 million in domestic violence shelter funding and $9 million for child care subsidy rate increases over two budget sessions.

*The Status of Women and Girls in New Haven*

- Report used as a platform by the first woman elected mayor of the city.
SHAPING EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

- Public education via conferences, symposiums, summits, workshops
- Aiding student education
- Educating educators
- Developing resources such as power point presentations, resource directories, and toolkits for agencies serving women and girls

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES FOR WOMEN

Led to the creation or strengthening of women’s commissions, councils, or task forces in more than 15 states

Helped revitalize or form statewide women’s groups and coalitions

- Wisconsin Women=Prosperity formed in response to status of women report, increased number of women in political office
- Formation of statewide coalition that created the first ever New Hampshire women's agenda
- Public policy coalition called Women’s Foundation of Southern Arizona was created and lobbied with Planned Parenthood on behalf of contraceptive equity, for which a bill was later passed in the state
DEVELOPING NEW PROGRAMMATIC INITIATIVES

- In Arizona, the Fresh Start Women’s Foundation began an HIV program targeted specifically for African American women based on findings from the Economic Status of Women in Arizona.

- The Status of Women in Colorado led the Women’s Foundation of Colorado to fund a girls’ technology collaborative created and operated by Colorado State University.

- The Minnesota Dream Fund was created to address inequities in education and employment affecting women and people of color in Minnesota.

INFORM GRANTMAKING

- Help foundations determine their strategic priorities

- Inspire people to apply for grants

- Help women’s foundations make the case to receive funding from federal and other grant programs
QUESTIONS?

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Informing policy. Inspiring change. Improving lives.