

**The  
Report**  
ON THE **Status**  
OF **Women**  
**and Girls**  
IN CALIFORNIA™

**2016** Fifth  
Anniversary  
Edition

OVERVIEW

PREPARED BY

Mount   
Saint Mary's  
University  
LOS ANGELES



## OVERVIEW

This fifth Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California™ brings attention to the triumphs and the challenges faced by the women and girls of California. Mount Saint Mary's University publishes this annual assessment with two goals in mind: To enlighten the public and to guide leaders in developing and implementing solutions to the barriers that prevent women from playing a full role in California's present — and future. All data are pulled from the most recent and best available sources.

- The median earnings of California women working full time is 84% that of men.
- While California women hold a majority of associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees, they hold less than half of all professional and doctoral degrees.
- California is one of the nation's largest television and film production centers. Yet over the last 15 years, fewer than one in five directors, writers or producers have been women.
- The number of California women-owned businesses grew 9% over the past year. However, women still represent less than 15% of board directors at California's largest public companies.
- Despite their significant underrepresentation, women serving in the state legislature achieved notable gains with passage of several bills benefitting women, among them the Fair Pay Act and Senate Bill 1135, which bans the forced sterilization of women prison inmates.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

**19.5 million**

The number of women and girls in California, of whom one-third are under the age of 25

**62%**

Percentage of California's female population who are women of color

Latinas are poised to become California's largest ethnic group. Latinas, who comprise the state's youngest female ethnic group with a median age of 29, and Asian Americans are driving the increase in the number of women of color. California has the country's largest number of residents who identify with two or more races.

Foreign-born residents represent 27% of California's population, which is more than twice the national rate. Fifty-two percent of California immigrants are women. Since 2010, 58% of immigrants have come from Asia.



In 2005, 44% of California's female population was white. By 2014, that percentage decreased to 38%, equal to Latinas.



## EDUCATION

**85%**

Public high school on-time graduation rate for girls, compared with 77% for boys (2013–2014)

Girls represented nearly half of the 6.2 million students enrolled in California public K-12 schools in 2014–2015.

In California, women hold 53% of all undergraduate college degrees (including associate's degrees). At the post-graduate level, women hold 52% of master's degrees, 44% of professional degrees and 39% of doctorates.

Between 2002 and 2014, the percentage of high school girls completing all courses for University of California or California State University undergraduate admission increased from 37% to 47%.



For almost two decades, the rate of women holding bachelor's degrees in education has remained static at slightly more than 75%. However, women have earned at most one-third of all degrees in the STEM fields.

## EMPLOYMENT & EARNINGS

**\$8,000**

California women's average lost annual wages due to a gender wage gap

California's gender wage gap for full-time, year-round workers is 84 cents on the dollar, compared with 79 cents nationally. Women of color earn even less.

White women who work full time earned 77% of the wages of their white men counterparts. Latinas

are particularly affected by wage inequities, with median full-time earnings 42% of what white men earn.

In healthcare, sales and office, education and law occupations, California women are overrepresented in lower-paying positions and underrepresented in higher-paying ones. Men represent more than 75% of the employees in higher-paying computer, engineering and science occupations.



In 2006, California women working full-time earned 82% of what white men earned, compared with 84% today. That percentage varies by ethnicity over the same time period: White and Asian-American women saw their earnings gap narrow compared with earnings by white men, while Latinas' wage gap remained static and African-American women's wage gap widened.

## POVERTY

**38%**

Poverty rate for single-mother households with children under 18 years of age

Eighteen percent of all California females live below the federal poverty level, compared with males at 15%. At least one out of every four African American, Alaska Native/Native American females and Latinas lives in poverty. Out of all Latinas, 37% of single-woman family households live in poverty, compared with 17% for white single-woman family households.

For households headed by a single woman, the likelihood of living in poverty is nearly one in two (48%) when the woman lacks a high school degree. That percentage drops to 32% for households headed by a single woman with a high school degree. A bachelor's degree or higher further decreases that rate to 11%.

THEN & NOW



Between 2010 and 2014, the poverty rate of all single-woman family households increased from 26% to 28%, with the largest increases found among households headed by African American (up 4%) and Native Hawaiian/Pacific-Islander (up 5%) women.

## FILM & TELEVISION

7%

The percentage of women directors in the top 250 U.S. films (2014)

12%

The percentage of women directors in broadcast, cable and Netflix programs (2014–2015 season)

In 2014, women represented 29% of all major characters and 30% of all speaking characters in U.S. films and 40% of all major characters on broadcast, cable and Netflix programs.

White women portrayed 78% and 74%, respectively, of all female characters on broadcast television and in the top 100 films of 2014. African-American women held 13% and 11% of all female roles, respectively. Latinas and Asian-American women each held 4% each in both categories.

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During the last 18 years, the percentage of women in key behind-the-scenes television positions has increased just 6%. This is important because the presence of women behind the scenes and on-screen increases when women occupy key roles as producer, director or creator.

## POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

24%

The percentage of women in the California State Assembly

30%

The percentage of women in the California State Senate

In a state where females make up 50% of the population, women hold only two of California's eight elected statewide positions. As of mid-2014, women represented 25% of county supervisors, 47% of school board members and 29% of all city council members statewide.

In 2014, there were more than three times as many men as women political candidates in California primary and general state legislature elections, resulting in fewer women serving in elected office.

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In 2015, the California legislature had the fewest number of women serving since 1998 and ranked 20th nationally in women's state legislative representation. At the federal level, in 1975, 19 women served in the U.S. Congress; the current U.S. Congress includes 104 women.

## WOMEN & BUSINESS

17

The number of women CEOs among California's 400 largest public companies

46%

The percentage of all California firms owned or equally co-owned by women

California is home to more than 1.2 million women-owned firms, the most of any state. In 2015, Latinas owned 21% of such firms, followed by Asian American (18%) and African-American women (7%).

Among the 90 California-based public companies listed on the Fortune 1000, women hold 17% of board of director seats. Ninety percent of female board directors are white, with Asian-American women representing 6% and Latinas and African-American women each representing 2%.

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From 1997 to 2015, the percentage of women of color owning their own business increased from 32% to 49%. For Latinas, that percentage grew from 14% to 21% over the same time.

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

83.5 years

Life expectancy of California women

Asian-American women have the longest life expectancies (89.1 years), followed by Latinas (86.1), white (82.3) and African-American women (78.3).

In 2014, the percentage of California women not covered by health insurance was highest among Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (32%) and Latinas (14%), followed by Asian American (9%) and African-American women (6%). Latinas were more likely than other women to postpone care due to the cost or lack of insurance.

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From 2007 to 2012, the state's teen pregnancy rate dropped from 40.1 per 1,000 women (age 15-19) to 25.7 per 1,000 women (age 15-19).

## MENTAL HEALTH

11%

Percentage of California women 18–64 years old experiencing serious psychological distress (2011–2012)

Fewer California women than men are enrolled in community mental health programs even though women report higher rates of serious psychological distress than men.

California women with a family income below the federal poverty level are twice as likely to experience serious psychological distress.

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In 2014, the self-rated emotional health of incoming first-year college women was at its lowest point since the question was first asked in 1985.

## VIOLENCE

9,397

Reported rapes and attempted rapes in California (2014)

Ninety-eight percent of those arrested for these crimes were men.

In addition, California's law enforcement agencies received just under 156,000 calls related to domestic violence in 2014. Forty-three percent of these calls involved a weapon.

Of the 979 cases of human trafficking reported in California in 2015, approximately 90% of the victims were female and 30% of those cases involved minors.

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There were nearly 156,000 domestic violence-related calls made to

California law enforcement agencies in 2014, compared with a peak of more than 250,000 in 1994.

## VETERANS & WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

#2

California's women veteran population ranked nationally

Nearly 165,000 of the country's more than 2 million women veterans reside in California. By 2034, women veterans will represent 15% of the state's total veteran population. Forty percent of California's women veterans identify as women of color, with white women representing 60%.

Among California women veterans, 33% have a minimum of a bachelor's degree, compared with 28% of all California women.

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California women veterans earned 85% of what men veterans earned in 2014, compared with 74% in 2006.



## SPECIAL REPORT: SPORTS & WELLNESS

For school-aged youth, sports and physical activity can improve academic achievement, including grades and standardized test scores. It also has a positive impact on cognitive skills, attitudes and academic behavior, by enhancing concentration and attention as well as classroom behavior.

Women and men who walk at least two hours a week reduced their incidence of premature death from cardiovascular disease by about 50%.

Women currently comprise about 10% of all high school athletic directors and less than 20% of college athletic directors. Among NCAA Division 1 institutions, only 2% of men's teams have women as head coaches; just over 40% of women's teams have women as head coaches.

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Title IX, passed in 1972, calls for equal opportunity participation for females and males in federally funded organized sports. However, the gender gap in high school sports has slightly widened over the past decade: In 2000, 32% of girls and 43% of boys had the opportunity to participate in school sports; in 2010, the rates were 41% for girls and 53% for boys.



## READ THE FULL REPORT

The complete 2016 Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California™ is available at [msmu.edu/statusofwomen](http://msmu.edu/statusofwomen). It contains additional data for all sections, as well as full source citations. For more information about this Report, please call 213.477.2764.

## 2016 CALIFORNIA OVERVIEW SOURCES

American Express OPEN Report	National Center for Education Statistics
California Research Bureau	National Human Trafficking Resource Center
California State Legislature	Public Health Institute
California Women Lead	Social Science Research Council
Canadian Medical Association Journal	Sport, Health and Activity Research and Policy Center for Women and Girls
Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey	State of California, Department of Education; Department of Justice; Department of Public Health; Department of Veterans; Secretary of State
Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, San Diego State University	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport
Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking	UC Davis School of Management
Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media at Mount Saint Mary's University	U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Surveys
Leadership California Institute	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
League of Cities Women's Caucus	Women's Sports Foundation
	World Heart Federation

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## ABOUT MOUNT SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY

Mount Saint Mary's is the only women's university in Los Angeles and one of the most diverse in the nation. The University is known nationally for its research on gender equity, its innovative health and science programs, and its commitment to community service. As a leading liberal arts institution, Mount Saint Mary's provides year-round, flexible and online programs at the undergraduate and graduate level. Weekend, evening and graduate programs are offered to both women and men. Mount alums are engaged, active, global citizens who use their knowledge and skills to better themselves, their communities and the world. [msmu.edu](http://msmu.edu)



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