State Overview

Mount St. Mary’s College is pleased to present this State Overview to our third annual Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California™. We publish this Report because we believe gender equality is not only a women’s issue. It is a human issue, and it is an economic issue that is key to the vitality of our state. It is our hope that this Report brings awareness to inequities that persist for California’s women and girls. Change will require action from everyone to ensure that women and girls can pursue their dreams and achieve full participation in society.

The 2014 Report includes key information on the status of the 19 million women and girls who call California home. This year’s summary reveals slow and steady improvement for women in some areas, but persistent, troubling patterns in others. While we should celebrate the gains women have made, we should not become complacent about the unequal conditions that remain for our state’s women and girls.

California: An Overview

California is the nation’s most populous state, with 12% of the U.S. population living here. More than 19 million women and girls call California home, and they alone make up 6% of the entire U.S. population. Women of color now comprise 60% of all California women, and more female immigrants settle in California each year than do male immigrants. But while demographics shift, many women are encountering the same challenges that have persisted for too long in California.

- In California, females graduate from both high school and college at a higher rate than men. However, women and girls are still underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and math courses that lead to higher-paying STEM careers.

- California women are more likely to live in poverty than are men. Out of all women living in poverty in the state, 54% are Latina.

- Political representation remains heavily skewed toward men. Since 2005, California has dropped from 10th to 19th place, nationally, in the number of women serving in state legislative office.

- In the private sector, California boasts the most women-owned businesses in the nation. It’s a different story when it comes to the state’s 400 largest companies — there, women hold only 11% of top positions, including just 3% of all CEOs.

- While ethnic disparities do exist, California women continue to show longer life expectancies. The state’s women enjoy a slightly longer lifespan than the national average.

- Around 40% of California’s women report experiencing intimate partner violence during their lifetimes, a significantly greater rate than the national average of 24%.

More than 19 million women and girls call California home, and they make up 6% of the entire U.S. population.
State of California: Report Highlights

Demographics

One of California’s greatest strengths remains its ethnic diversity. Women of color make up the majority of the state’s female population.

More than 19.1 million women and girls now live in California, and women of color make up 60% of that total. As of 2010, white women accounted for 40% of all females in the state, with Latinas representing 37%, Asian American women at 14% and African American women at 6%. While the number of births in California has generally declined over the last five years, 27 percent of the state’s population — 10.3 million people — report being foreign born.

Education

Women are still underrepresented in most science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) courses that lead to higher-paying careers.

In California, high school and college graduation rates are higher for women than men; overall, women also earn more postsecondary degrees in the state than men. Ethnic disparities persist, however. And women and girls are consistently underrepresented in most STEM degrees. Compared with men, California women earn only 10% of technology degrees; 13% of degrees in computer science, 18% in engineering, 40% in mathematics and 41% in physical sciences. Women do earn 58% of degrees in life sciences.

Women of color make up 60% of California’s female population

Compared with men, women earn far fewer STEM degrees that can lead to higher-paying careers.
### Employment and Earnings

**California women still earn less than men across all occupational categories.**

California's gender wage gap is not as wide as the national average. Women in the state earn 83 cents on the dollar compared with their male counterparts, while the national gender wage gap is 78 cents on the dollar. Still, California women earn less in every occupational category compared with men. And fewer women hold jobs in STEM fields than men in California, with the greatest discrepancies in engineering and technology careers.

### Poverty

**In California, poverty has a woman's face, with women more likely than men to live in poverty.**

Of Californians living in poverty, 54% are females. Nearly one-third of these women are under the age of 18; 9% are under the age of five. And 54% of all California women living in poverty are Latina. Those females hardest hit by poverty are those with the least amount of education.

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Political Leadership

Fewer California women than men are represented in federal, state and local government – and the percentages are trending downward.

In California, significant gender gaps exist in the numbers of women among California’s political leaders. While the state has two women serving as U.S. senators, women account for 34% of California’s delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives. And the number of women serving in the state legislature has declined over the past decade, from 37 women in 2005 to 32 women today — out of 120 total members.

Over the past decade, California has DROPPED FROM 10TH PLACE TO 19TH PLACE, nationally, in the number of women serving in state legislative office.

Business Leadership

Compared with other states, California is home to the greatest number of women-owned businesses in the country.

Out of approximately 8.6 million women-owned businesses in the United States, an estimated 1.1 million are based in California — accounting for 30% of all companies in the state. The past year also saw an increase in the number of companies with women on their board of directors. However, among California’s 400 largest public companies, women still hold only 11% of top positions, including just 3% of all CEOs.

For the third straight year, women account for only 3% of all ‘California 400’ CEOs.
**Media**

Women continue to be underrepresented both behind the camera and as actors in film and television.

Women hold 18% of key, behind-the-scenes occupations in the film industry, primarily as editors (20%) and producers (25%). Women fare slightly better in television, holding 28% of behind-the-scenes occupations. Even in front of the camera, more men than women still play leading roles on television. A Mount St. Mary’s study of new, fall 2013 television programming revealed that minorities were greatly underrepresented in front of the camera, with white women accounting for 86% and 79%, respectively, of primary and secondary roles.

California women are living longer than ever, yet obesity rates among California women continue to rise.

California women show increasingly longer life expectancy, though disparities based on ethnicity persist — Asian American women have the longest life expectancy at 89 years and African American women have the shortest at 78 years. The percentage of overweight and obese females is increasing, though fewer California women are overweight compared with men. Nine percent of California’s female population report serious psychological distress.

California women have a **LONGER LIFE EXPECTANCY** than the national average, but ethnic disparities exist.

In film and television, women account for **LESS THAN A QUARTER** of all key, behind-the-scenes occupations.
Nearly 40% of California women have experienced intimate partner violence.

Approximately 40% of California adult females report experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) during their lifetime, significantly higher than the national rate of 24%. The greatest incidence of IPV in California was among women ranging from 18-24 years of age. Nearly 1 in 5 California women (18%) report being raped during their lifetime, mirroring the national average.

In California, 40% of women have experienced intimate partner violence; the U.S. rate is 24%.

Women comprise 10% of all military veterans in the state.

In 2013, the U.S. military formally ended its ban on women serving in front-line combat roles, opening up new opportunities for female servicemembers. While women receive many benefits as members of the Armed Forces, there are also challenges for these women, including access to healthcare once they return to civilian life. Eighty-one percent to 93% of women veterans experience factors known to increase homelessness.

Female veterans are the FASTEST-GROWING SEGMENT of the state’s HOMELESS POPULATION.
State Overview

To read the full 2014 Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California, please visit: statusofwomen.msmc.la.edu.
A complete list of footnotes is also included in the full Report.

State Overview sources:
• California Partnership to End Domestic Violence
• California Postsecondary Education Commission
• California Research Bureau
• Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University (2013)
• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics Reports
• The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media at Mount St. Mary’s College, “Fall 2013 Snapshot of New Television Programs on Broadcast Networks and Selected Cable Channels”
• National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
• State of California, Department of Education; Department of Finance; Department of Healthcare Services; Department of Public Health; Department of Veterans Affairs
• UCLA Center for Health Policy Research; California Health Interview Surveys
• U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Surveys and Annual Estimate reports
• World Health Organization

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