



The Status of Women in the District of Columbia, 2015: Highlights

Women in the District of Columbia have made considerable advances in recent years but still face inequities that often prevent them from reaching their full potential. Since the 2004 *Status of Women in the States* report was published, a higher percentage of women have bachelor's degrees, and women are more likely to work in managerial or professional occupations. Yet, the gender wage gap in the District of Columbia has widened, although it remains one of the most narrow gaps in the nation. In addition, as in all other states, women in the District of Columbia are less likely than men to be in the labor force and more likely to live in poverty.



If current trends continue, women in the District of Columbia
will not see equal pay until the year **2055**.*

Key Findings

- The District of Columbia's best grade is in the area of employment and earnings, for which it receives an A. Its worst grade is in health and well-being, for which it gets an F.
- The District of Columbia women who work full-time, year-round earn 87 cents on the dollar compared with similarly employed men.
- Approximately 44.2 percent of those working in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields in the District of Columbia are women, compared with 28.8 percent nationwide.
- Women in the District of Columbia who are unionized earn \$48 more per week, on average, than those who are not represented by a union.
- Approximately 53.5 percent of women in the District of Columbia have a bachelor's degree or higher, an increase of about 17 percentage points since 2000.
- In 2012–2013, 100.0 percent of the District of Columbia's four-year-olds were enrolled in state pre-K, preschool special education, or state and federal Head Start.
- Heart disease is the biggest killer of women in the United States. The District of Columbia ranks 45 of 51 with a mortality rate of 166.8 per 100,000.

The District of Columbia

Report Card Summary

Political Participation	n/a
Employment & Earnings	A
Work & Family	B
Poverty & Opportunity	A-
Reproductive Rights	A-
Health & Well-Being	F

*Equal pay projection is based on rate of progress between 1959 and 2013. See Appendix A2 of *The Status of Women in the States: 2015* for sources and methodology. Calculated by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

Table 1. How The District of Columbia Ranks on Key Indicators of Women’s Status

	2004 Report	2015 Report	Progress?	2015 Rankings and Grades		
				National Rank	Regional Rank	Grade
Political Participation Composite Rank	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percent of Women Registered to Vote	72.0%	69.9%	No	17	3	
Percent of Women Who Voted	59.4%	57.2%	No	18	3	
Women in Elected Office Index (score)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Women's Institutional Resources Index (score)	n/a	1.00	n/a	25	6	
Employment & Earnings Composite Rank	1	1	No	1	1	A
Women's Median Annual Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers	\$51,737	\$60,000	Yes	1	1	
Ratio of Women's to Men's Earnings	92.5%	87.0%	No	3	2	
Women's Labor Force Participation	61.1%	64.4%	Yes	7	2	
Percent of All Employed Women in Managerial/Professional Occupations	49.3%	61.9%	Yes	1	1	
Work & Family Composite Rank	n/a	3	n/a	3	1	B
Paid Leave Legislation Index (score)	n/a	0.67	n/a	5	1	
Elder and Dependent Care Index (score)	n/a	1.38	n/a	14	1	
Child Care Index (score)	n/a	1.73	n/a	2	1	
Percentage Point Gap in Parents’ Labor Force Participation Rate (fathers’ labor force participation rate minus mothers’ labor force participation rate)	n/a	28.8	n/a	37	8	
Poverty & Opportunity Composite Rank	2	1	Yes	1	1	A-
Percent of Nonelderly Women with Health Insurance	87.4%	94.3%	Yes	2	1	
Percent of Women with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	36.8%	53.5%	Yes	1	1	
Percent of Businesses Owned by Women	30.9%	34.5%	Yes	1	1	
Percent of Women Above Poverty	82.1%	81.1%	No	47	8	
Reproductive Rights Composite Rank	11	8	Yes	8	2	A-
Health & Well-Being Composite Rank	51	48	Yes	48	9	F

Notes: See Appendices A1–A6 in *The Status of Women in the States: 2015* for methodology and sources. Earnings are in 2013 dollars and compare 2000 Decennial Census data with 2013 American Community Survey data. Health insurance data are for 2013, prior to the full implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The regional rankings are of a maximum of nine and refer to the states in South Atlantic region (Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia, and the District of Columbia). n/a=not available. All indicators are defined so that a higher rate translates into higher rankings and letter grades. **Calculated by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research.**

Table 2. Overview of the Status of Women of Color in The District of Columbia

	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Native American	Other Race or Two or More Races
Political Participation						
Number of Women in Statewide Elected Executive Office, 2015	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of Women in U.S. Congress, 2015	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Employment & Earnings						
Women's Median Annual Earnings (Full-Time, Year-Round), 2011–2013	\$70,424	\$42,615	\$48,703	\$64,210	n/a	n/a
Ratio of Women's to White Men's Earnings, 2011–2013	80.0%	48.4%	55.3%	73.0%	n/a	n/a
Women's Labor Force Participation, 2011–2013	75.4%	71.7%	55.6%	74.0%	n/a	65.2%
Percent of All Employed Women in Managerial or Professional Occupations, 2011–2013	79.7%	38.3%	42.9%	77.1%	n/a	70.5%
Poverty & Opportunity						
Percent of Nonelderly Women with Health Insurance, 2011–2013	97.2%	87.3%	91.7%	92.8%	n/a	95.8%
Percent of Women with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 2011–2013	90.3%	38.3%	25.1%	79.5%	n/a	70.3%
Percent of Women Above Poverty, 2011–2013	91.4%	82.1%	74.6%	85.2%	n/a	86.0%
Reproductive Rights						
Infant Mortality Rate (deaths of infants under age one per 1,000 live births), 2010–2012	3.0	n/a	11.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percent of Low Birth Weight Babies, 2013	5.8	7.5	12.3	n/a	n/a	n/a
Health & Well-Being						
Female Heart Disease Mortality Rate, per 100,000, 2011–2013	85.9	84.2	211.9	n/a	n/a	n/a
Female Lung Cancer Mortality Rate, per 100,000, 2011–2013	22.8	n/a	41.7	n/a	n/a	n/a
Female Breast Cancer Mortality Rate, per 100,000, 2011–2013	26.1	n/a	33.4	n/a	n/a	n/a
Average Number of Days per Month on Which Mental Health is Not Good, 2011–2013	2.6	4.3	4.6	3.9	n/a	5.1
Average Number of Days per Month on Which Activities Are Limited by Health Status, 2011–2013	2.6	3.9	5.8	3.6	n/a	5.0

Notes: n/a=not available. Data on statewide elected executive office include the governorship. Earnings are in 2013 dollars. Health insurance data are for 2013, prior to the full implementation of the Affordable Care Act. See Appendices A1–A2 and A4–A6 of *The Status of Women in the States: 2015* for sources and a description of how race and ethnicity are defined in the data presented here. **Calculated by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.**

Table 3. The District of Columbia State Laws

Provide the Right to Earn Paid Sick Days	Yes
Adopted the Medicaid Expansion under the ACA or State Medicaid Family Planning Services Eligibility Expansion	Yes
Recognize Same-Sex Marriage and/or Allow Second-Parent Adoption	Yes
Allow Women to Obtain an Abortion without a Mandatory Waiting Period	Yes
Bar Gun Possession for Individuals Convicted of Misdemeanor Domestic Violence Crimes	Yes

Notes: Data are current as of April 2015, except for the bar on gun possession, which is current as of June 2014. See Appendices A3, A5, and A7 of *The Status of Women in the States: 2015* for sources.

Compiled by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research.

Table 4. Basic Demographic Statistics for The District of Columbia

Total Population, 2013	646,449
Number of Women and Girls, All Ages, 2013	341,690
Proportion of Women Aged 65 and Older, 2013	12.9%
Proportion of Women Who Are Immigrants, All Ages, 2013	14.7%
Number of Female Same-Sex Partner Households, 2011–2013	1,045
Percent of All Households Headed by Single Mothers with Children Under Age 18, 2013	7.7%

Note: See Appendix B8 in *The Status of Women in the States: 2015* for additional demographic information.

Sources: IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata.

About the Status of Women in the States



The Status of Women in the States is an ongoing research project conducted by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) to measure and track the status of women in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. IWPR appreciates the support of the Ford Foundation, the American Federation of Teachers, and the Women’s Funding Network for the production of this fact sheet.



The Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) conducts rigorous research and disseminates its findings to address the needs of women, promote public dialogue, and strengthen families, communities, and societies. The Institute’s research strives to give voice to the needs of

women from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds across the income spectrum and to ensure that their perspectives enter the public debate on ending discrimination and inequality, improving opportunity, and increasing economic security for women and families. The Institute works with policymakers, scholars, and public interest groups to design, execute, and disseminate research and to build a diverse network of individuals and organizations that conduct and use women-oriented policy research. IWPR’s work is supported by foundation grants, government grants and contracts, donations from individuals, and contributions from organizations and corporations. IWPR is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that also works in affiliation with the women’s studies and public policy and public administration programs at The George Washington University.