

# STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE STATES



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IWPR #R415

## The Status of Women in California, 2015: Highlights

Women in California 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, the gender wage gap in California has narrowed, a higher percentage of women have bachelor's degrees, and women are more likely to work in managerial or professional occupations. Yet, as in all other states, women in California are less likely than men to be in the labor force and more likely to live in poverty. Women also continue to be underrepresented in the state legislature.



If current trends continue, women in California will not see equal pay until the year **2042**.\*



Women hold **25.8%** of seats in the state legislature.

### Key Findings

- California's best grade is in the area of reproductive rights, for which it receives a B+. Its worst grade is in poverty and opportunity, for which it gets a C.
- California women who work full-time, year-round earn 84 cents on the dollar compared with similarly employed men.
- Approximately 28.9 percent of those working in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields in California are women, compared with 28.8 percent nationwide.
- As of 2015, there are two women of color in statewide elective executive office in California, and only ten women of color from the state in the U.S. Congress.
- Women in California who are unionized earn \$244 more per week, on average, than those who are not represented by a union.
- Approximately 30.9 percent of women in California have a bachelor's degree or higher, an increase of about 6 percentage points since 2000.
- In 2012–2013, 28.7 percent of California'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. California ranks 22 of 51 with a mortality rate of 122.1 per 100,000.

California	
Report Card Summary	
Political Participation	C+
Employment & Earnings	B-
Work & Family	B
Poverty & Opportunity	C
Reproductive Rights	B+
Health & Well-Being	C+

\*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 California Ranks on Key Indicators of Women's Status**

	2004 Report	2015 Report	Progress?	2015 Rankings and Grades		
				National Rank	Regional Rank	Grade
<b>Political Participation Composite Rank</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>C+</b>
Percent of Women Registered to Vote	53.6%	53.8%	Yes	50	4	
Percent of Women Who Voted	44.3%	44.7%	Yes	50	5	
Women in Elected Office Index (score)	4.23	3.38	No	3	2	
Women's Institutional Resources Index (score)	2.00	2.00	No	1	1	
<b>Employment &amp; Earnings Composite Rank</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>B-</b>
Women's Median Annual Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers	\$44,746	\$42,000	No	9	2	
Ratio of Women's to Men's Earnings	79.6%	84.0%	Yes	6	1	
Women's Labor Force Participation	58.8%	57.2%	No	38	5	
Percent of All Employed Women in Managerial/Professional Occupations	36.0%	39.6%	Yes	22	3	
<b>Work &amp; Family Composite Rank</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>B</b>
Paid Leave Legislation Index (score)	n/a	2.00	n/a	1	1	
Elder and Dependent Care Index (score)	n/a	1.00	n/a	22	5	
Child Care Index (score)	n/a	0.95	n/a	40	4	
Percentage Point Gap in Parents' Labor Force Participation Rate (fathers' labor force participation rate minus mothers' labor force participation rate)	n/a	32.3	n/a	47	5	
<b>Poverty &amp; Opportunity Composite Rank</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>C</b>
Percent of Nonelderly Women with Health Insurance	78.6%	78.6%	No	38	4	
Percent of Women with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	24.7%	30.9%	Yes	18	4	
Percent of Businesses Owned by Women	27.3%	30.3%	Yes	9	2	
Percent of Women Above Poverty	87.8%	84.0%	No	32	4	
<b>Reproductive Rights Composite Rank</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>B+</b>
<b>Health &amp; Well-Being Composite Rank</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>C+</b>

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 five and refer to the states in Pacific West region (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington). 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 California**

	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Native American	Other Race or Two or More Races
<b>Political Participation</b>						
Number of Women in Statewide Elected Executive Office, 2015 (out of 8 offices)	0	0	0	1	0	1
Number of Women in U.S. Congress, 2015 (out of 55 offices)	11	5	3	2	0	0
<b>Employment &amp; Earnings</b>						
Women's Median Annual Earnings (Full-Time, Year-Round), 2011-2013	\$51,782	\$30,000	\$43,630	\$49,718	\$39,000	\$46,572
Ratio of Women's to White Men's Earnings, 2011-2013	76.2%	44.1%	64.2%	73.1%	57.4%	68.5%
Women's Labor Force Participation, 2011-2013	56.3%	58.1%	58.6%	58.3%	50.6%	61.6%
Percent of All Employed Women in Managerial or Professional Occupations, 2011-2013	49.2%	23.0%	38.4%	47.9%	35.0%	43.1%
<b>Poverty &amp; Opportunity</b>						
Percent of Nonelderly Women with Health Insurance, 2011-2013	87.1%	65.4%	82.2%	82.2%	76.0%	82.3%
Percent of Women with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 2011-2013	38.5%	11.9%	23.8%	46.8%	17.7%	36.2%
Percent of Women Above Poverty, 2011-2013	89.1%	77.7%	75.7%	87.3%	77.2%	82.3%
<b>Reproductive Rights</b>						
Infant Mortality Rate (deaths of infants under age one per 1,000 live births), 2010-2012	3.9	4.6	9.1	3.8	6.9	n/a
Percent of Low Birth Weight Babies, 2013	6.0	6.4	11.4	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Health &amp; Well-Being</b>						
Female Heart Disease Mortality Rate, per 100,000, 2011-2013	132.1	100.2	187.2	76.5	129.6	n/a
Female Lung Cancer Mortality Rate, per 100,000, 2011-2013	35.9	12.5	36.9	18.1	29.0	n/a
Female Breast Cancer Mortality Rate, per 100,000, 2011-2013	23.7	14.9	32.1	12.7	16.2	n/a
Average Number of Days per Month on Which Mental Health is Not Good, 2011-2013	4.2	4.5	5.5	3.0	6.7	5.0
Average Number of Days per Month on Which Activities Are Limited by Health Status, 2011-2013	4.7	4.6	6.6	3.6	6.7	5.4

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. California 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 California**

Total Population, 2013	38,332,521
Number of Women and Girls, All Ages, 2013	19,273,782
Proportion of Women Aged 65 and Older, 2013	14.0%
Proportion of Women Who Are Immigrants, All Ages, 2013	27.7%
Number of Female Same-Sex Partner Households, 2011–2013	43,160
Percent of All Households Headed by Single Mothers with Children Under Age 18, 2013	7.0%

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.