

The Report
on the Status of
Women
and Girls
in California
2012

Prepared by

Mount St. Mary's College



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March 2012

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Mount St. Mary's College

MISSION STATEMENT

Mount St. Mary's College offers a dynamic learning experience in the liberal arts and sciences to a diverse student body. As a Catholic college primarily for women, we are dedicated to providing a superior education enhanced by an emphasis on building leadership skills and fostering a spirit to serve others. Our measure of success is graduates who are committed to using their knowledge and skills to better themselves, their environments, and the world.



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A Message From the President



Mount St. Mary's College is pleased to present the Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California. The state is home to over 18 million women and girls. While California women have made great strides in several areas — graduating in greater percentages than men from colleges and universities, expanding their ownership of businesses and increasing their survival rates for cancer — striking gender gaps still exist. Recognizing these gaps is the first step toward finding solutions.

The information in this report was gathered from existing databases and surveys at both the state and the national level, and from public and private sources. It is an overview of the challenges facing California women in 10 critical areas: demographics, poverty, education, media and technology, employment, leadership, physical health, mental health, violence, and incarceration. This summary of data is intended for a general audience with the hope that its important findings will be helpful to policymakers, agencies, foundations and journalists, and those who are concerned with the status of women and girls.

As a Catholic women's college with a mission to serve and to lead, MSMC has an inherent interest in the forces that shape women's lives. The College remains true to the spirit of its founders, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, who sought to educate women who could become leaders dedicated to service, justice and knowledge. This report provides a snapshot of the environment California women face today, with hope of progress for the women of tomorrow.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann McElaney-Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ann McElaney-Johnson
President

Overview

This report was produced by Mount St. Mary's College in an effort to contribute to the knowledge of the status of women and girls in California. Mount St. Mary's was founded in 1925 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, a group of forward-thinking educators who sought to establish an institution of higher learning where young women could find their life missions.

At the time of the Mount's founding, reaching one's potential was a novel concept to apply to women. Even though Californians had granted women the right to vote in 1911 — a full nine years ahead of the 19th Amendment granting all women in the country the right to vote — it was the rare woman who was encouraged to follow her dreams into higher education or a career. In fact, most American colleges and universities barred their entry, and few women worked outside the home.

Those facts have changed radically. Today, women make up more than half the enrollment in colleges and graduate programs. Women graduate at higher rates than men, and more women than men earn graduate degrees. One might be tempted to quote Supreme Court Justice George Sutherland when he wrote: "In view of the great — not to say revolutionary — changes which have taken place ... in the ... political and civil status of women ... it is not unreasonable to say that ... differences have now come almost, if not quite, to the vanishing point." But Justice Sutherland's words were overly optimistic in 1923, and that vanishing point remains elusive.

While legal barriers to women's full participation in society did begin to crumble with the 19th Amendment, and continued to fall with Supreme Court decisions of the 1970s that struck down laws drawing gender based distinctions, women continue to lag behind men in important ways. This report confirms that women are vastly underrepresented in elective office, scientific fields, partnership positions in law firms, and the boardrooms of America. By examining an array of studies key to economic, political, social and physical well-being, this report confirms the undeniable trend that women lag behind men in reaching positions of power. Until women reach parity with men in these areas, we have not reached the vanishing point of inequality, and we are short-changing California and our country by losing the significant contributions that women can bring to our economy and society.

This report seeks to contribute not only to the understanding of the status of women and girls in California, but to inspire deliberate steps that can be taken to address continuing inequalities. Encouraged by efforts like the federal report, *WOMEN IN AMERICA: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being*, a Mount St. Mary's team of academics gathered existing data to illuminate conditions faced by women and girls in California and are joining the voices of those calling for action to address ways to bring the women of California to their full potential. The report focuses on the following key areas: demographic trends, education, employment and earnings, poverty, leadership, media and technology, physical and mental health, violence, and incarceration.

Key information included in the report:

Demographics: Women of color comprise over half of the female population in California and nearly 40% of California women and girls speak a language other than English at home. Women are more likely than men to immigrate to California. Twenty-eight percent of

women and girls in the state are foreign born and almost half of them become naturalized U.S. citizens.

Education: In many areas, such as college-level preparedness, and post-secondary enrollment and degree completion, females overall are on par with or surpassing males. However, a closer look at subject matter achievement, particularly in most areas of science and mathematics, reveals that gender gaps appear as girls move up in grade level. In addition, women are underrepresented in these fields.

Employment and Earnings: Even with women's significant strides in educational attainment, women continue to occupy traditional jobs such as administrative assistants, nurses, and legal support workers. More men than women hold higher level jobs such as business executives, medical doctors, and lawyers. Additionally, in every job category, women's median annual salary is lower than the median salary for men.

Poverty: Nearly 17% of all women and girls in California are living in poverty. This equals almost 3.1 million females. Additionally, poverty rates for female headed households are alarmingly high - almost three times the rate of unmarried male householders.

Leadership: California women are significantly underrepresented in federal, state and local government and comprise only a small portion of public company CEO's and Directors. However, over half of California small businesses are owned or jointly owned by women.

Media and Technology: Women and girls continue to be underrepresented in family films, both in front of and behind the camera. Additionally, women lag behind men in the use of technology, and are less confident of their abilities in this area than men. This digital divide is a major concern as more jobs, particularly higher paying jobs, require technology skills.

Physical Health: Physical health is improving among California women and girls who have health insurance and access to quality health care providers, healthy food sources, and safe communities. But a closer look reveals significant health disparities for women in poverty, as well as African American women and Latinas.

Mental Health: Although California women are twice as likely to experience depression, anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder than their male counterparts, and approximately 1.5 times more likely to identify a need for psychological services, they continue to receive the same amount of treatment as men. Additionally, methamphetamine abuse among women has risen in the past 10 years.

Violence: The rate of intimate partner assault of California women is higher than the national average. While there are social services in California to support survivors of violence, they are insufficient in number to address the substantial emotional, physical, economic and social effects of violence against women. Nearly three-fourths of shelter agencies report that they are regularly at, or exceeding, capacity.

Incarceration: Despite the decline in crime rates for the past 10 years, female incarceration in California has increased, especially for non-violent crimes. While the number of White and Latina prisoners has increased, the number of African American women prisoners has declined. Additionally, the number of female juvenile offenders has dropped consistently over the past 15 years and continues to decline.

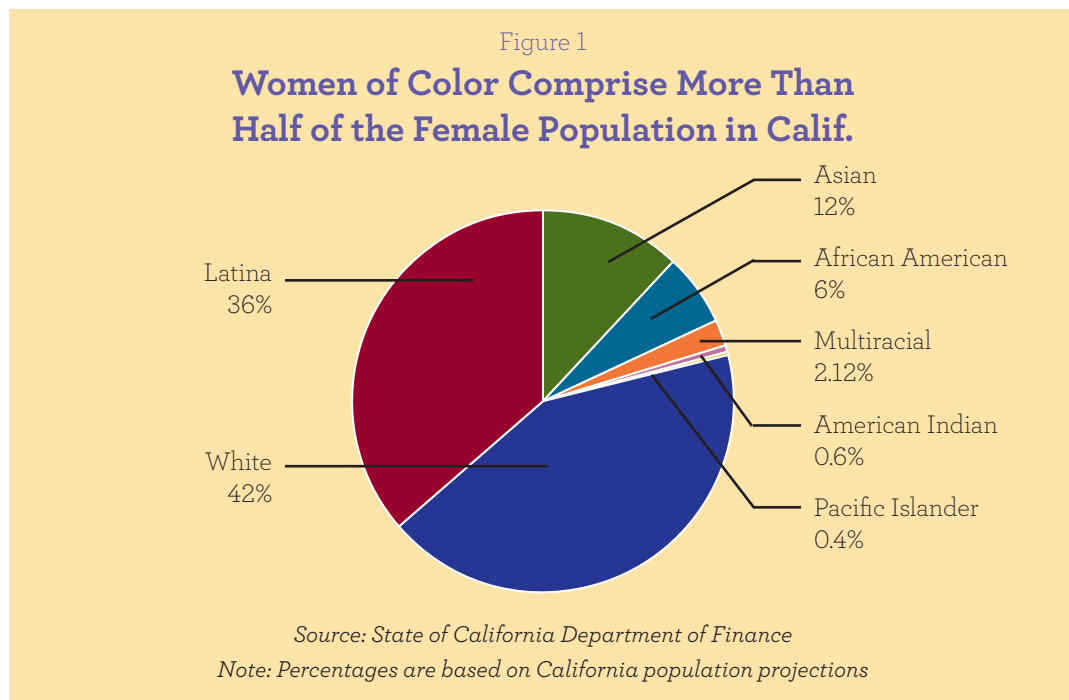
Demographics

In the past 50 years, California has undergone significant growth, making it the most populous state in the nation with over 37 million residents. While the overall ratio of females to males in California has remained roughly equal since 1970, the status of women and girls in California has not reached the levels of equity that should be reflective of their numbers. In order to fully understand the realities and issues facing today's California women and girls, it is critical to examine the complex intersection of demographic factors that shape their lives, including ethnic distribution, immigration status, age and lifespan, veteran status and family structure.

Total Population

18.7 million The number of women and girls who call California home, comprising just over half of its residents.¹

Ethnicity



Latinas, Asians, African Americans, multiracial, American Indian and Pacific Islanders comprise 57% of the total population of California women and girls [Figure 1].²

- Nearly 40% of women and girls living in California speak a language other than English in the home compared to 18% nationally.³

Immigration

28% The percentage of women and girls in the state who are foreign born. Almost half (48%) of these women became naturalized U.S. citizens. More women than men immigrate to California.⁴

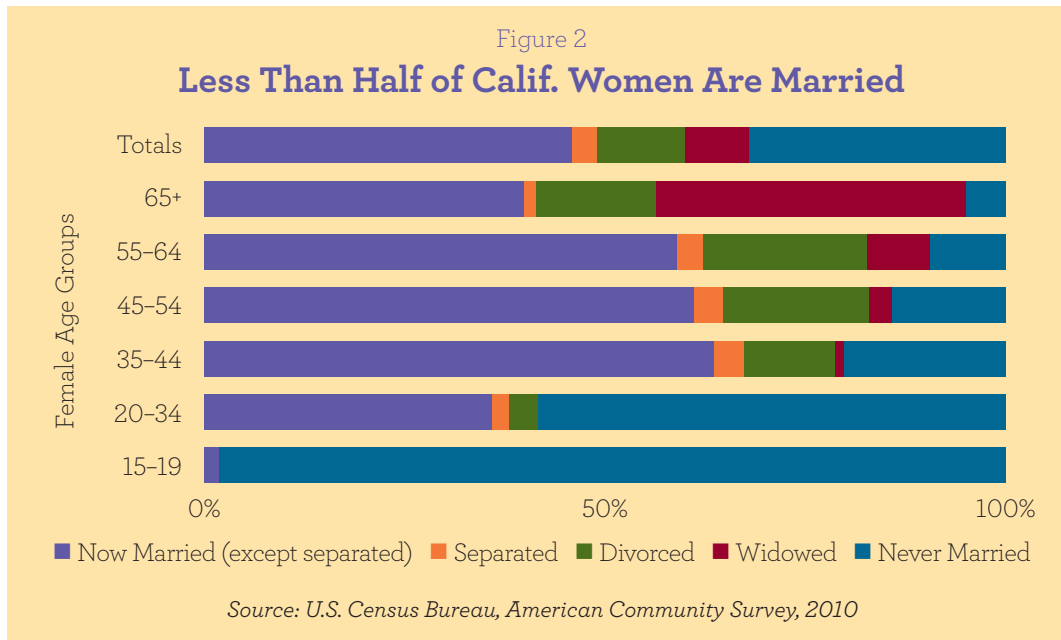
Age

36 years old The median age of women in California. Of the total population of women, 27% are under 18, and 13% are over 65.⁵

Veterans

166,709 The number of California women veterans is the largest in the United States. According to the Department of Veteran Affairs, there are 1.8 million women veterans in the U.S.⁶

Families and Singles



In California, 46% of women are currently married, while 32% have never married. For women ages 20–34, 58% have never been married [Figure 2].⁷ These numbers reflect a national trend of women delaying marriage.⁸

- Of the total family households with children, 21% are headed by women only, as opposed to 8% headed by men only.⁹

Areas for Future Research

- In order to have a more accurate understanding of the women of California and their needs, the state must collect data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity. This will enable state and local government and other agencies providing services to women to better address their unique needs with respect to health care, language acquisition, education, and other services.
- Current immigration statistics are not completely disaggregated by age and gender of immigrants. The immigrant population must be researched more closely to examine the role of gender in immigration patterns.
- More research is essential to determine the services needed by women veterans.

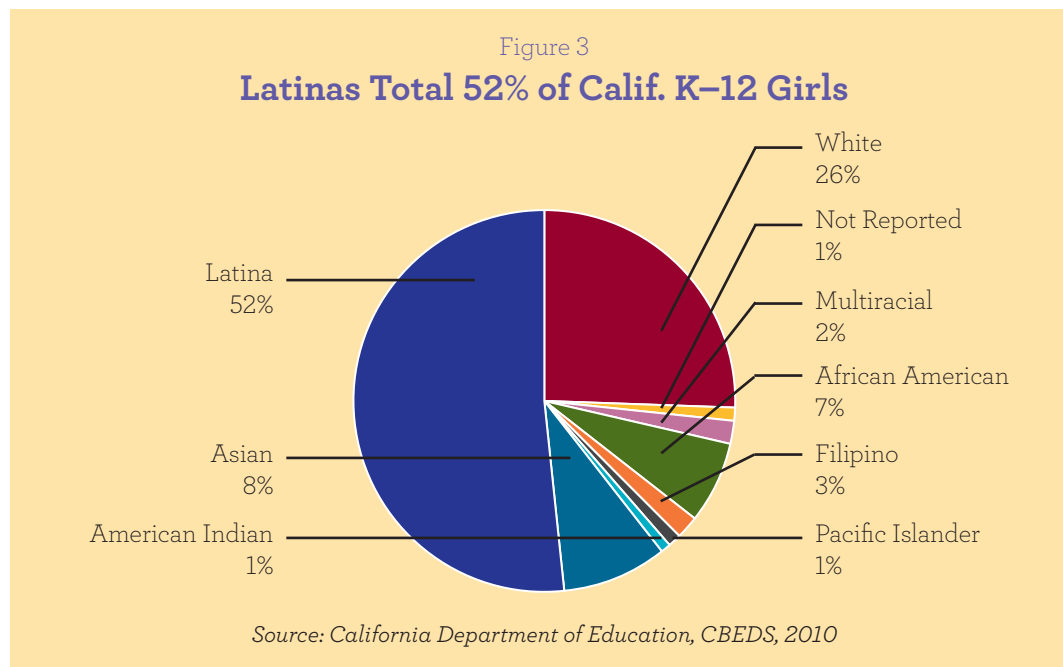


Education

California women and girls share a complex story of both achievement and continued gender gaps in the realm of education. In many areas, such as the language arts in grades K-12 and post-secondary degree completion, females overall are on par with or surpassing males. However, a closer look at the subjects of science and mathematics reveals that gender gaps appear as girls move up in grade level. In addition, fewer women than men are earning degrees in the important STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and math.

K-12 Students

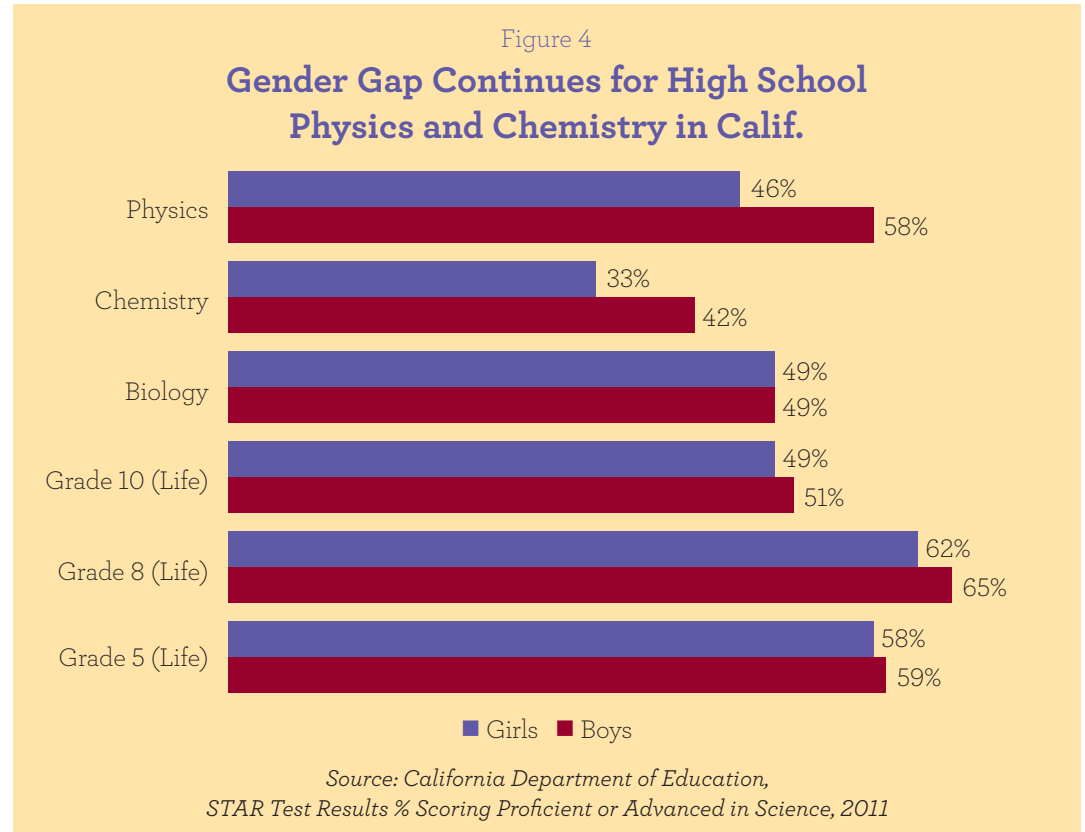
During the 2010-2011 academic year, 6.2 million students were enrolled in K-12 schools.¹⁰ Nearly half were girls.



Reflective of California's diversity, the majority of K-12 girls (74%) are from an ethnic minority background [Figure 3].¹¹



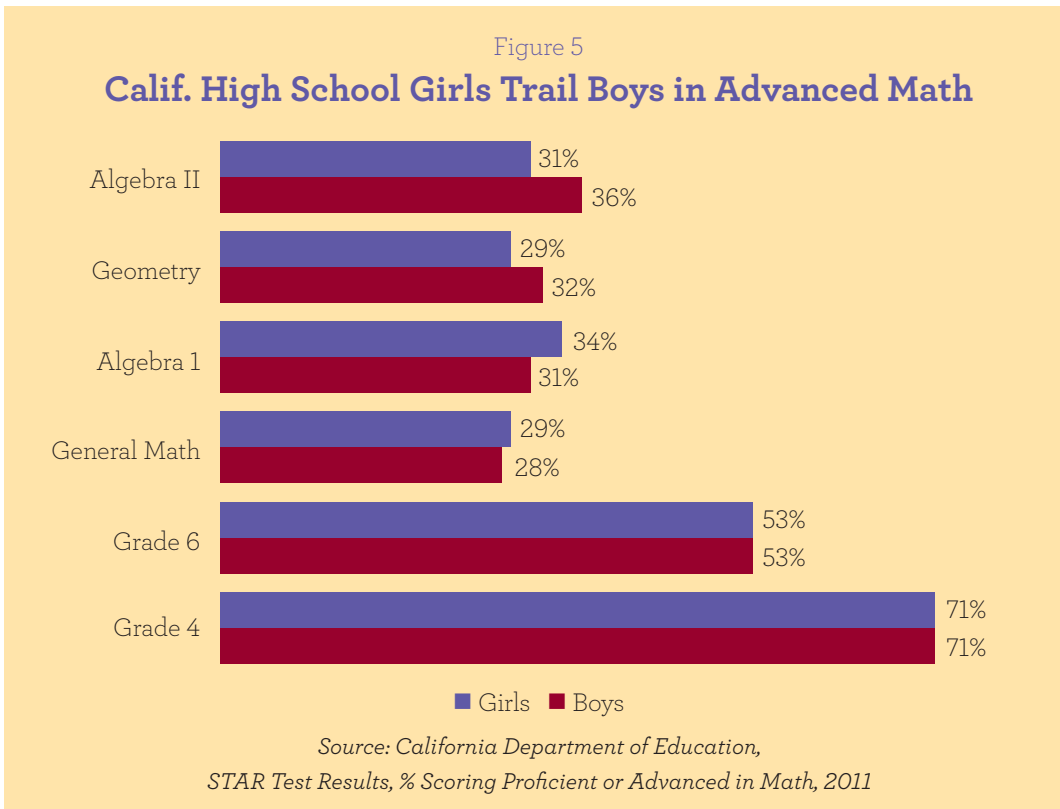
K-12 Achievement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Fields (STEM)



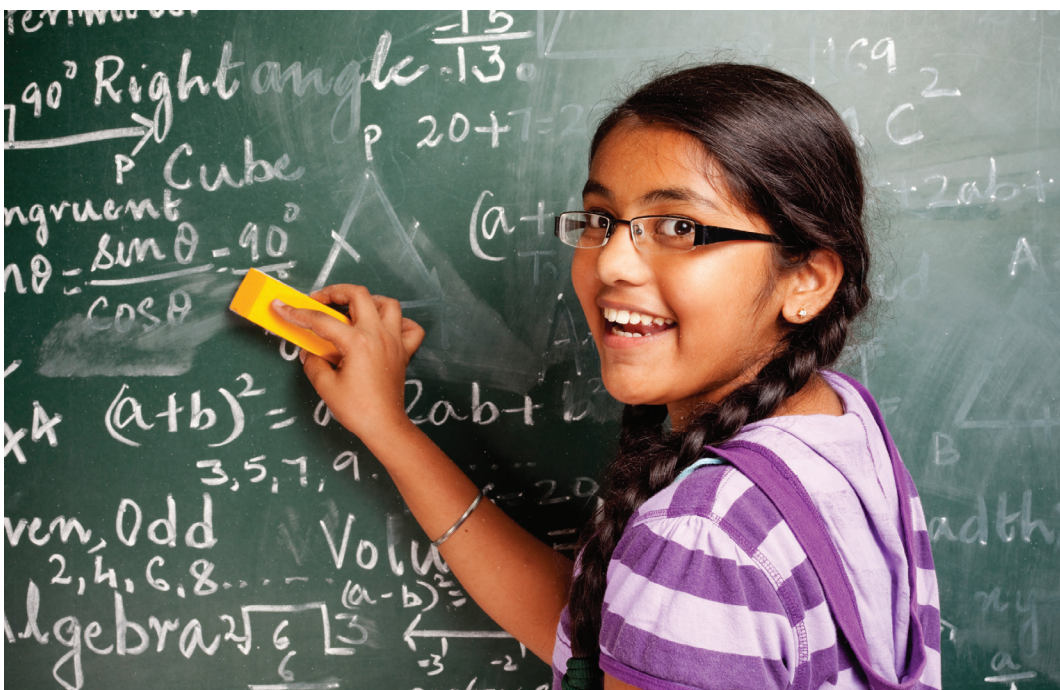
In education, a gender gap exists in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. Figure 4 reveals that these performance gaps increase dramatically when students begin taking physics and chemistry.¹² However, girls do perform on par with boys on standardized state tests in the biological sciences.

- Girls report less interest and confidence in STEM fields, particularly after middle school.¹³ Only a small number of girls take these subjects in advanced placement programs in high school. For example, girls comprise only 36% of those students enrolled in advanced placement physics.¹⁴

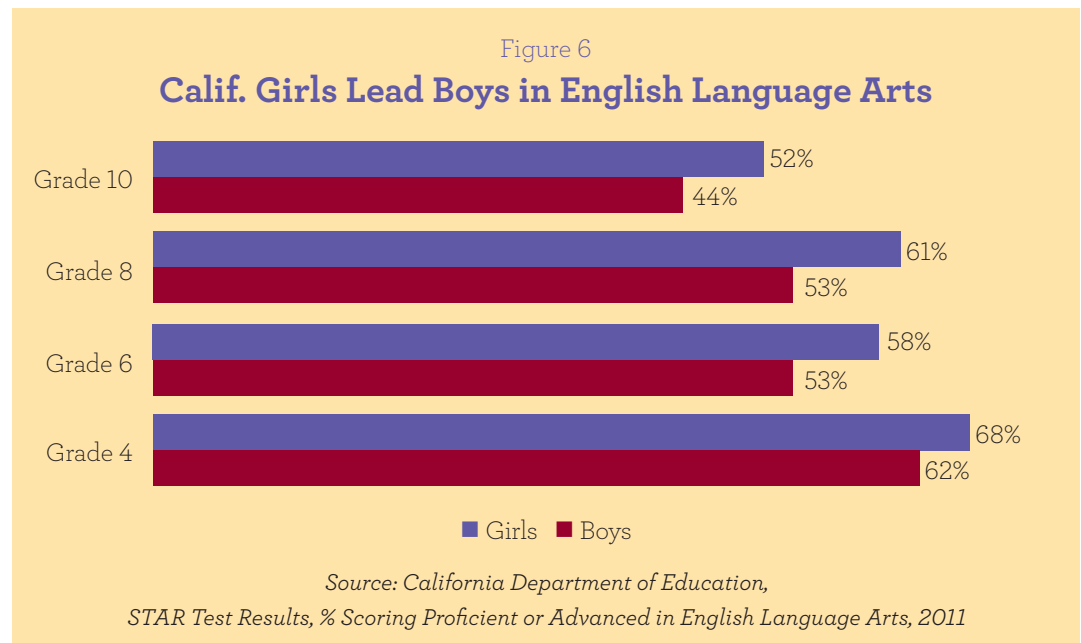
K-12 Achievement in STEM



In the elementary years, girls are on par with boys in math. However, girls begin to fall below boys on tests for geometry and algebra II [Figure 5].¹⁵

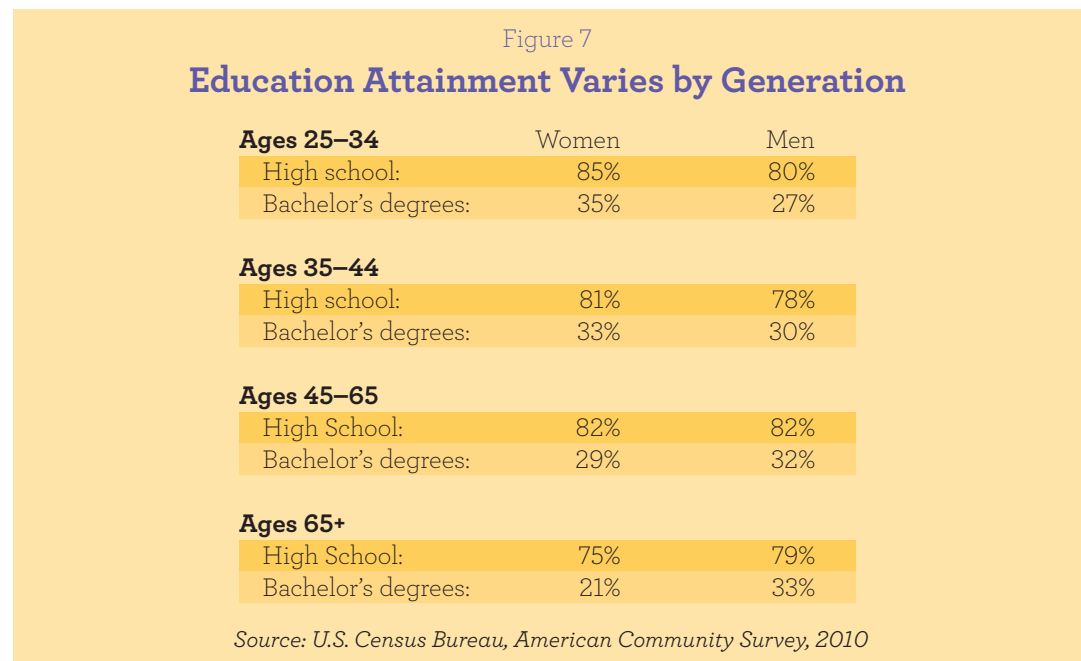


K-12 Achievement in Language Arts



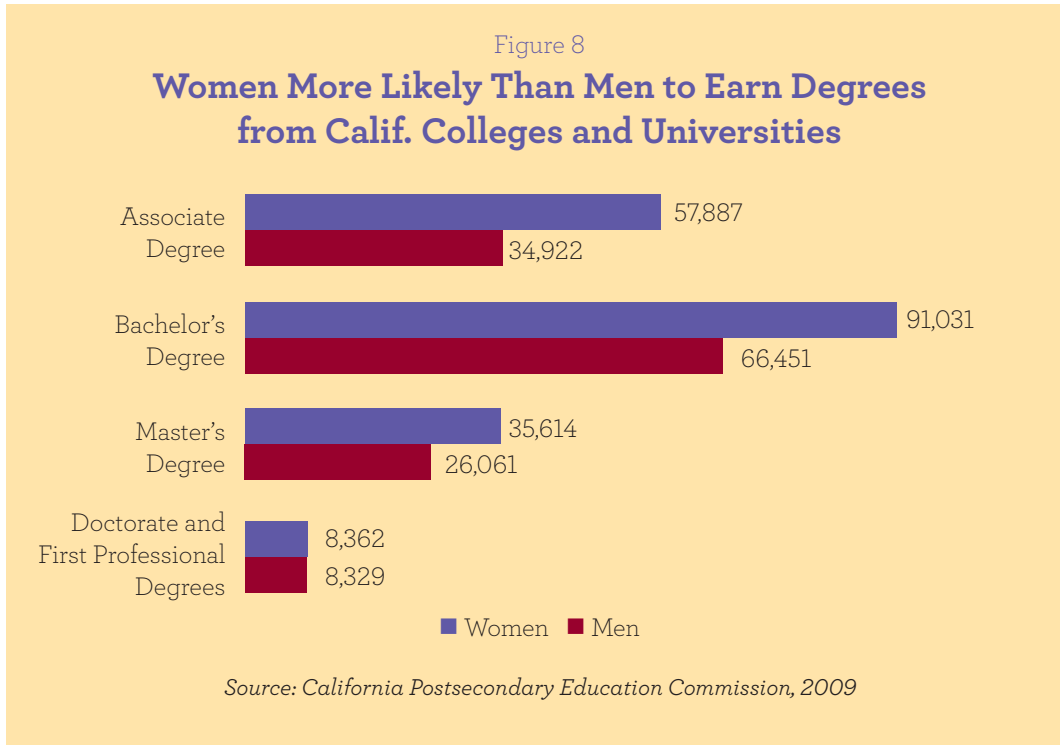
- Throughout K-12 education, girls outperform boys in language arts on California standardized tests.¹⁶

Educational Level

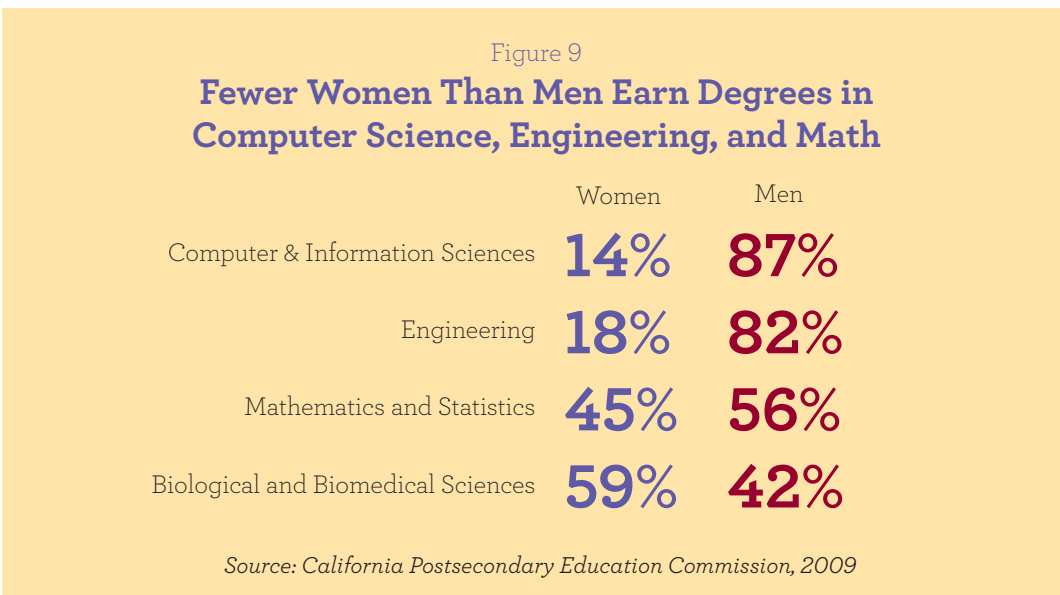


Women and men ages 25 and over have similar rates of education; however, if one looks just at ages 25-34, women hold 35% of the bachelor's degrees while men hold 27% (and 85% of women have completed high school versus 80% of men). This is in contrast to women and men over the age of 65, where men hold 33% of bachelor's degrees and women only hold 21%.¹⁷

Postsecondary Education



Across degree types women are graduating from California colleges and universities at a higher rate than men [Figure 8].¹⁸



- Although California women are graduating from college at higher rates than men, fewer women are earning degrees in computer and information sciences, engineering, and mathematics and statistics.¹⁹ More women than men are earning degrees in biological and biomedical sciences.

Areas for Future Research

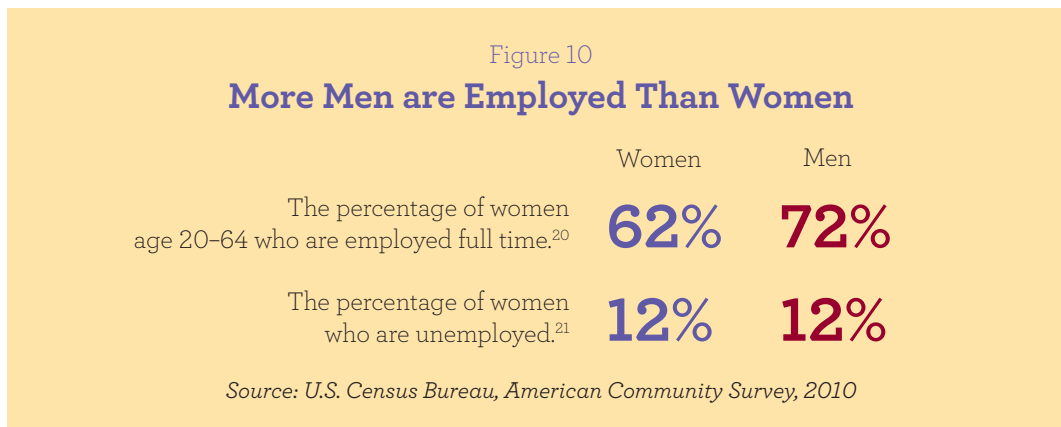
- More research is needed to examine factors that keep girls and young women from enrolling and excelling in STEM areas and completing college degrees in STEM fields.
- Research is needed on effective teaching practices at elementary and secondary levels that engage girls in science and math.



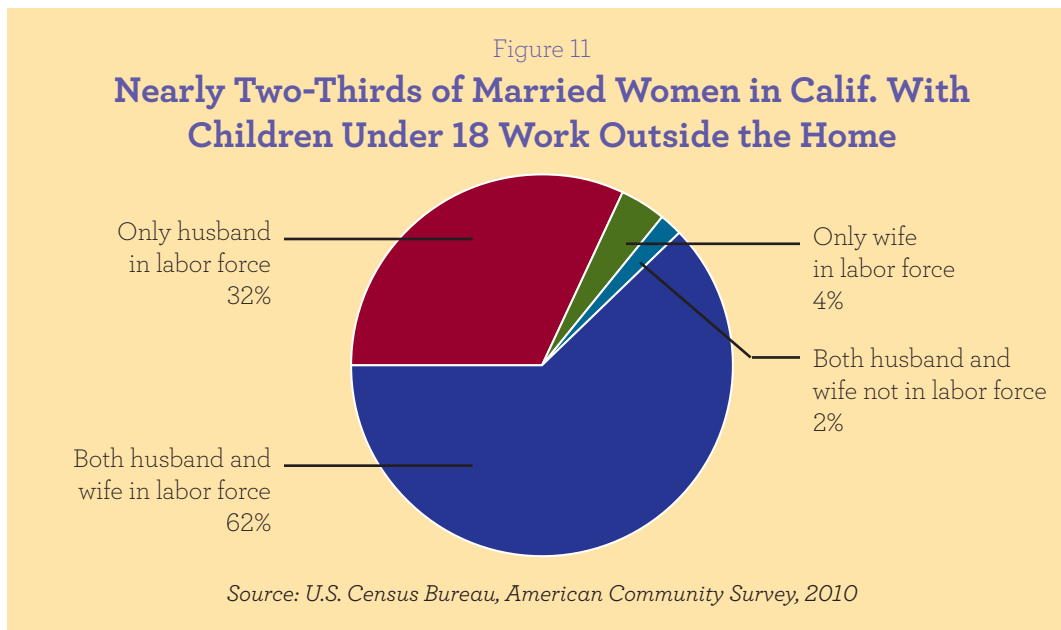
Employment and Earnings

When examining the employment of women in California, it is important to consider three main categories: current status, current occupational concentration and future projections, and earnings. Despite women’s advances in education and career fields, the greatest percentages are still concentrated in occupations traditionally held by women, such as administrative and executive assistants, nurses, teachers and social workers. Additionally, women earn less than men. Yet future job growth projections bring the promise of new positions and higher wages for California women.

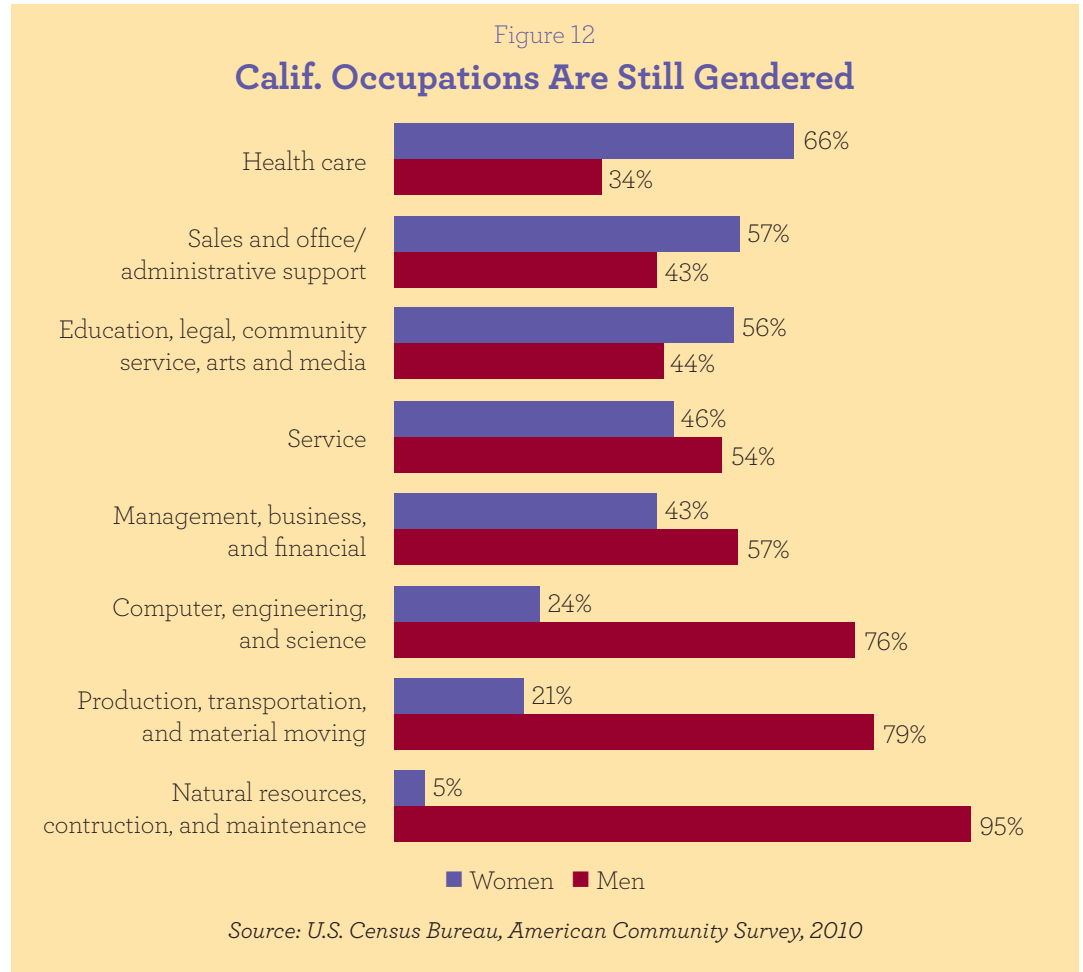
Employment Status



- Fewer women (62%) are employed than men (72%). [Figure 10]. Only 54% of women with children under the age of 6 are employed.²²



In California, the rate of married women with children under 18 who are working [Figure 11] mirrors the national number.²³ This rate has been consistent since 1995.²⁴



Women represent a majority of employees in the health care field, followed closely by sales and office occupations, and education, legal, community service, arts, and media occupations [Figure 12].²⁵

While women are the majority of health care and education/legal occupational clusters, there is great variability even within these clusters.

- Health Care Practitioners: Women constitute 86% of registered nurses but only 33% of Physicians and surgeons.
- Education/Legal: Women constitute 75% of K-8 teachers and 45% of postsecondary teachers; women are 77% of paralegals and only 34% of lawyers and 46% of judges.
- STEM: Women constitute 46% of life and physical scientists, 16% of engineers and architects, 24% of mathematical or computer occupations.

Earnings

Figure 13

Calif. Women Earn Less Than Men

	Women	Men
Overall	84¢	\$1
African American women	68¢	\$1
Latinas	59¢	\$1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010

Figure 14

**Calif. Women Still Earn Less Than Men
in all Occupational Categories**

Occupational Earnings by Gender	Females	Males	Difference
Management, business, and financial	\$61,126	\$80,794	-\$19,668
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	\$23,763	\$39,000	-\$15,237
Computer, engineering, and science	\$71,512	\$86,193	-\$14,681
Education, legal, community service, arts and media	\$54,018	\$65,929	-\$11,911
Health care	\$71,087	\$81,714	-\$10,627
Production, transportation, and material moving	\$24,365	\$34,130	-\$9,765
Service	\$23,234	\$30,456	-\$7,222
Sales and Office	\$36,534	\$43,547	-\$7,013

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010

In all occupational fields, women's annual median earnings consistently fall below that of men. The greatest difference was in management, business, and financial occupations, where women earned \$19,668 less than men.²⁶ [Figure 10]

- The top four occupations with the highest projected growth in California in the next five years are in STEM areas: biomedical engineers, network systems and data communications analysts, biochemists and biophysicists, and medical scientists. These occupations also represent some of the highest average annual wages, ranging from \$82,212 to \$93,327.²⁷

Areas for Future Research

- There is limited information available in several key areas of employment in California. For example, the breakdown of employment status is not disaggregated by ethnicity within gender, and it is not possible to access data on the gender breakdown of specific jobs.
- When evaluating salaries, the only information available on median earnings is by occupational cluster. A breakdown of earnings by specific job is needed to provide a clearer understanding of differences in pay by gender. Also, this information should be provided in historical context to changes in women's salaries over the years.



Poverty

Poverty Level

Poverty affects every aspect of a person's life. In California, gender increases the likelihood of being poor, as more women than men are living below the federal poverty threshold. Single mothers are more likely to live with financial insecurity and are more likely to fall into poverty. Additionally, women of color are more likely to live below the poverty level than white women.

- A person is considered poor if her pre-tax income falls below the federal poverty threshold. The threshold is divided into multiple categories based on annual income, family size and age of householder. For example, the poverty threshold for a family of three members is \$17,568.
- The poverty rate for all women and girls living in California is 17%, while the poverty rate for men and boys is 15%.²⁸

Figure 15

Poverty Rate of Calif. Females Varies by Age

Age in Years	Number of Calif. Females Living in Poverty	% of Calif. Females Living in Poverty
All Calif. Females	3,090,890	17%
Girls <17	990,508	22%
Women 18+	2,100,382	15%
Women 65+	262,590	11%

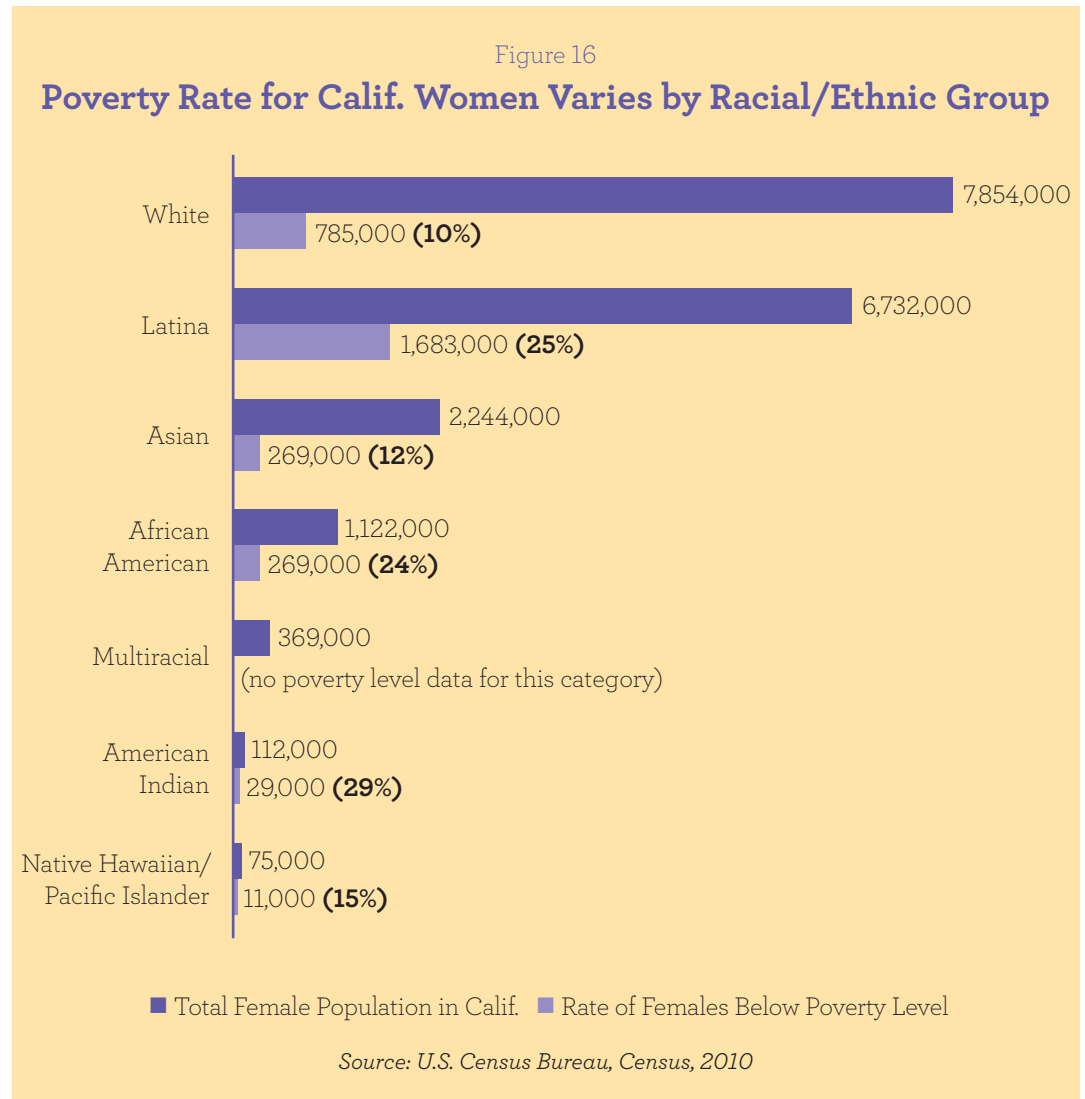
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census, 2010

More than one in five girls under age 18 and one in nine women 65 and older are living below the poverty level [Figure 15].²⁹

Households Headed by Women

- More than one in three households headed by woman with children (35%) have income that falls below the poverty level.³⁰
- Single mothers are losing jobs faster than married parents.³¹ As a result, single mothers with children under the age 5 are more likely to be poor, with a poverty rate at 40%.³²

Poverty Level by Ethnicity



Women of color are more likely to live below the poverty level than white women. For example, 25% of Latina women and 24% of African American women lived in poverty last year, versus 10% of white women [Figure 16].³³

Areas for Future Research

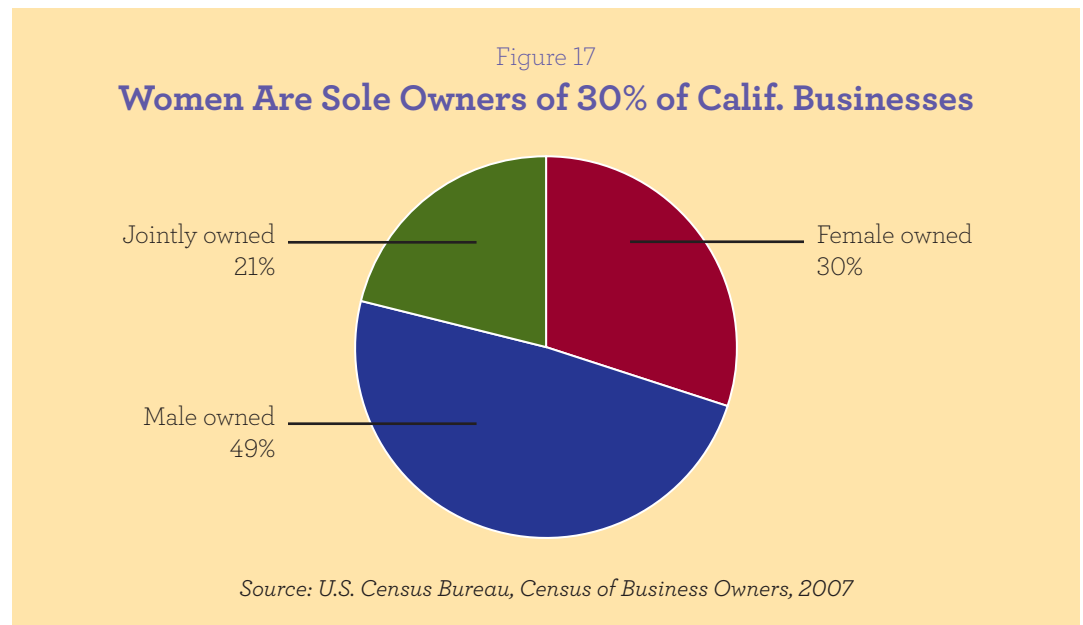
- The U.S. Census Bureau's federal poverty threshold is not an accurate form of poverty measurement in California. Additional research is needed to assess annual incomes, develop alternative methods to ascertain true poverty rates, and propose legislation to adjust the federal threshold.



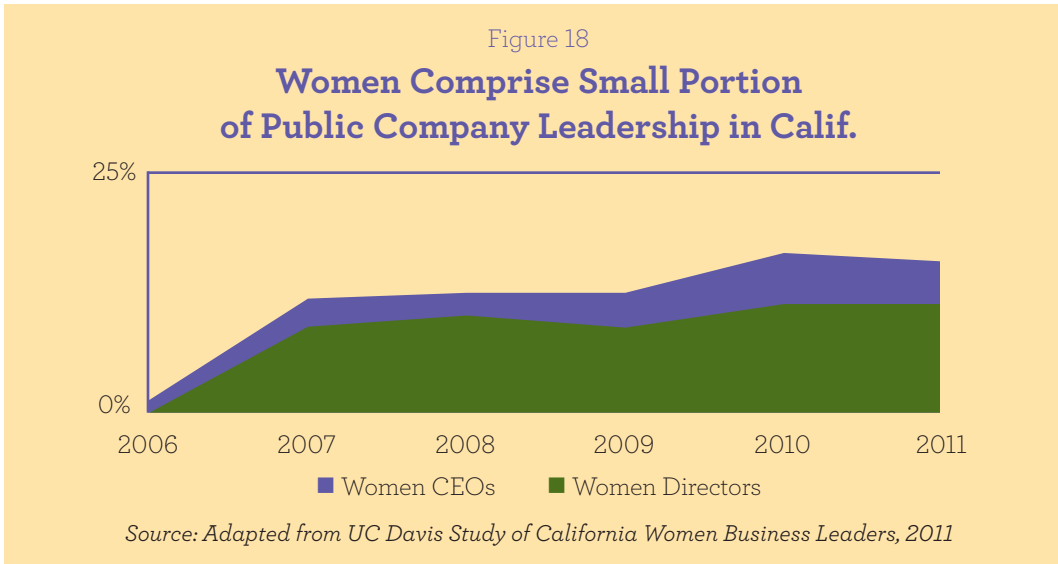
Leadership

As the most populous state in the union, California wields a significant amount of power and influence in the United States and internationally. However, while women comprise nearly half of the state's population, significant gender gaps continue to exist in organizational leadership and political representation. While women are making gains in formal leadership, areas of particular concern are positions in for-profit businesses and government.

Private Sector

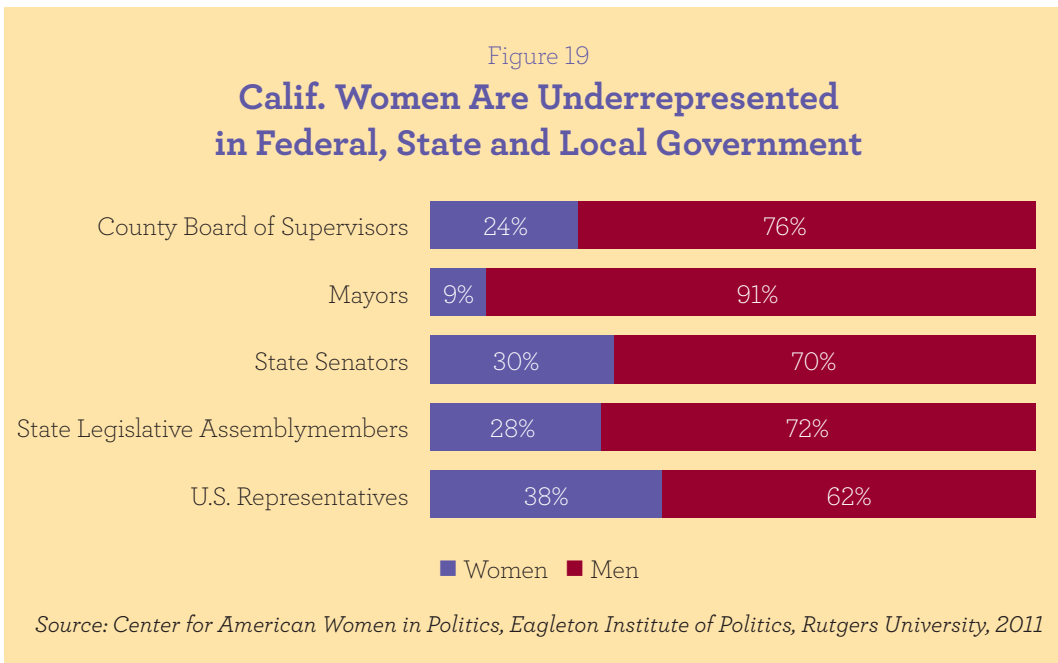


From 1997 to 2007, there was a 48% increase in the number of women-owned businesses in California. Despite this growth, in 2007 women-owned firms only accounted for 30% of all California businesses, while 49% of businesses were owned by men [Figure 17].³⁴ However, California leads the nation in the number of women-owned businesses.³⁵



- Only 3% of CEOs and only 10% of board directors are women in California’s Fortune 400 companies [Figure 18]. Real estate and utilities industries have the highest percentage of women directors at 14% and 13%, respectively.³⁶

Public Sector



While women comprise nearly half of California’s population, they are underrepresented in federal, state and local government [Figure 19].³⁷

Areas for Future Research

- In California, women-owned businesses account for over \$180 billion in annual receipts earned. However, women-owned firms only account for 30% of all California businesses. More research must be conducted to determine what barriers exist that hinder the launch of women-owned businesses.
- A comprehensive analysis of commission appointments by gender is necessary to determine if there are any correlations between appointed offices and elected offices.
- Additional research is essential in helping to determine the main factors preventing women from entering politics and to create effective strategies to overcome these barriers.
- More research is needed to determine effectiveness of programs (e.g., education, training and mentoring) addressing the issues relating to women in the top ranks of business.



Media and Technology

Media and technology play an enormous role in the lives of women and girls. Currently, Americans spend more than \$280 billion on entertainment on an annual basis and exposure of girls ages 8–18 to media exceeds over 8 hours a day.³⁸ Although females represent half of the overall population, they continue to be less prevalent in family entertainment. In addition, despite California’s technological advances in recent decades, there is a gender digital divide that needs to be addressed. Women report less knowledge, ownership and use of information and communication technologies than men. Even college-age women self-report feeling less confident in their computer skills than young men their age. This puts women at a critical disadvantage as they venture into a job market which increasingly requires technology skills.

Women and Media

3 men to 1 woman Since 1946, male presence on screen in G-rated family films has dominated over female presence at a ratio of 3 to 1.³⁹

20% From 2006 to 2009, only 20% of employed characters portrayed in G-rated family films were female, of which none were depicted as members of the medical sciences, or as leaders, in business, law, or politics.⁴⁰

5 men to 1 woman Unfortunately, women are also underrepresented behind the scenes with five males to every one female holding key production roles, such as directors, writers, or producers.⁴¹



Internet Usage

- California is a national leader in technology development, and its residents are more likely to report use of the Internet (84%) than the rest of the nation (77%).⁴²
- Despite California's technological advances, how technology and the Internet are used remains divided by gender. Women own less computer technology, operate it less frequently and report less confidence in usage. The size of the gender gap varies by region. San Francisco Bay and the Central Valley report fewer gender disparities in terms of Internet use compared to Los Angeles and other Southern California regions.⁴³

Technology Ownership

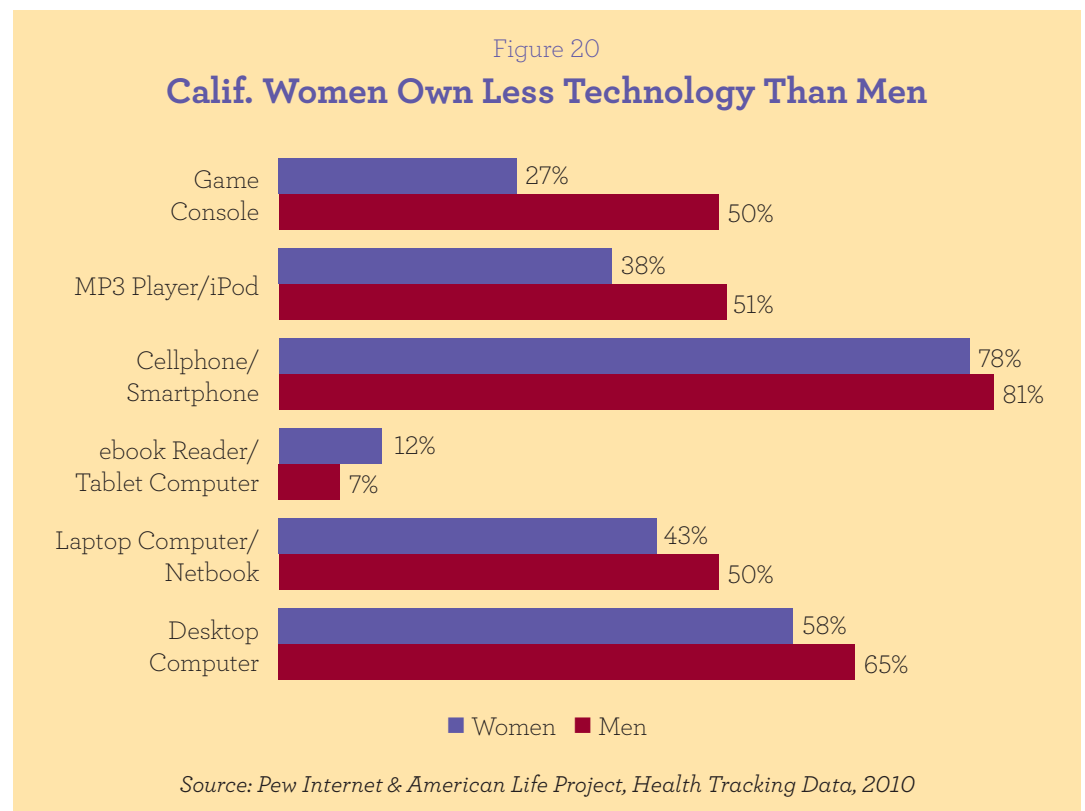


Figure 20 shows that a smaller percentage of California women than men own a computer, cell phone, MP3 player and gaming console.⁴⁴

Women's Perception of Technology Skills

Figure 21

More Calif. College Women Self-Report Average or Below Average Computer Skills



Source: Cooperative Institutional Research Program, 2010

- A survey of students enrolled in California colleges revealed a larger percentage of women (70%) self-report average or below average computer skills in contrast to 51% of men.⁴⁵ One explanation for this greater confidence among men stems from early exposure to games and gaming consoles.⁴⁶ As gaming consoles become more integrated into entertainment systems that not only play games but also enable social interaction, girls and women may be at a disadvantage in terms of computer technology knowledge and skill trajectories.⁴⁷

Areas for Future Research

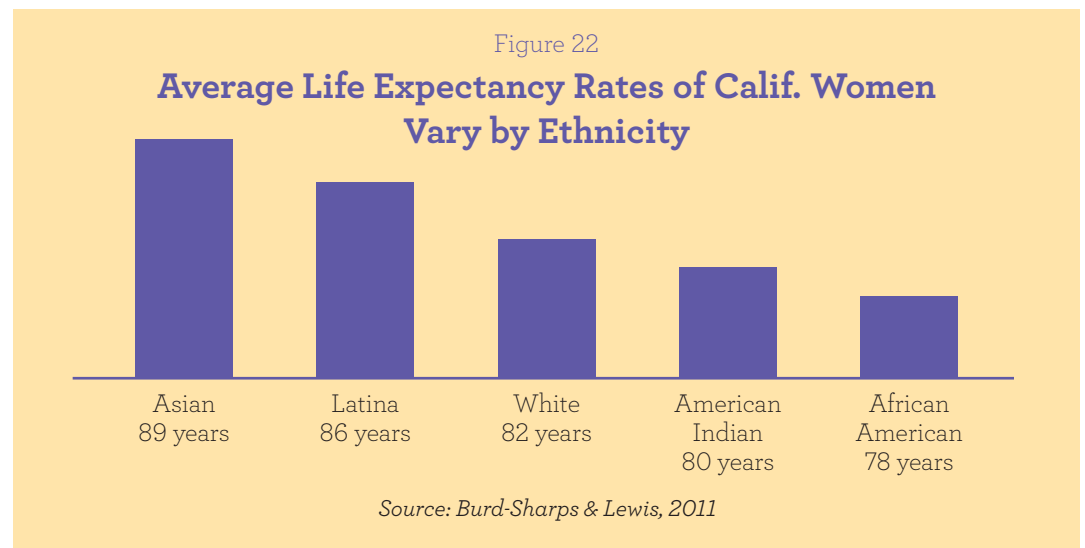
- Access to technology needs to be improved for all women and girls in California to promote continued technology use and confidence. Further analysis is needed to ascertain how technology is currently integrated, taught and learned in classrooms, homes and work environments.



Physical Health

Evaluating the health of women and girls in California is an important step toward understanding the strength and resilience of the population. Overall health status is influenced by many factors. Key areas assessed include access to care, leading causes of death, obesity, birthrates, and maternal mortality. Mirroring national trends, income and ethnicity remain major factors in health disparities of California women.

Life Expectancy



Asian and Latina women live longer than the average life expectancy of 83 years for all California women. [Figure 22].⁴⁸

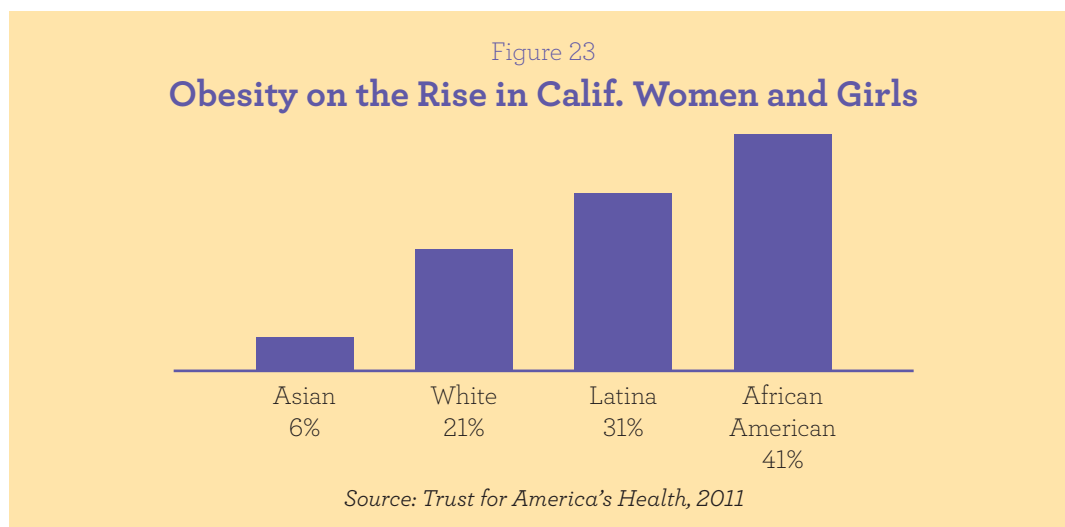
Leading Causes of Death

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in California, affecting 12% of women over the age of 55. For low-income women over the age of 55, the rate is 16%.⁴⁹
- Cancer prevention and treatments have improved significantly, boosting overall survival rates for cancer patients. By 2007, cancer mortality in the state for women ages 50 and over had dropped to 461.2/100,000 from its 1987 peak of 569.5/100,000.⁵⁰

Heart Disease Still
Leading Cause of
Death for Women
Over the Age
of 55 in Calif.

12%

Obesity



- In 2010, 25% of women in the state were obese, compared with 14% in 1995.⁵¹ Differences exist among ethnic groups: 2010 obesity rates are 21% for white women over age 18, 31% for Latinas and 41% for African American women [Figure 23].⁵²
- Overall obesity among low-income women is 28%, compared with 20% of higher income women.⁵³ Among California girls ages 12-17, the obesity rate is 10%.⁵⁴
- Only 13% of teenage girls were physically active for the recommended 60 minutes each day.⁵⁵ Physical activity contributes directly to the overall health and well-being of children, and establishing physically active habits in childhood can help reduce adult obesity rates.



Maternal and Infant Health

- Maternal mortality rates in California have more than doubled since the mid-1980s, from six deaths /100,000 live births to 14 /100,000. African American women are four to five times more likely to die from obstetrical complications than all other races combined.⁵⁶
- Cesarean birth rates in California have climbed from 7% in 1970 to 32% in 2007.⁵⁷ The data show that first-time and repeat cesarean section procedures increase the risk of maternal death.⁵⁸
- Breastfeeding is an important public health strategy for preventing childhood obesity.⁵⁹ California women initiate breastfeeding at the rate of 90%, which exceeds the national average.⁶⁰



Figure 24

Infant Mortality Rates in Calif. Vary by Ethnicity

12.6 / 1,000	African American
5.3 / 1,000	Latino
4.4 / 1,000	White
4.4 / 1,000	Asian American

Source: California Department of Public Health, 2009

- The total infant mortality rate in California is 5.3 deaths per 1,000 births. African American babies die at more than twice the average rate.⁶¹

Teen Pregnancy

Births to teens have been declining for the past two decades, from its peak at 71 births for every 1,000 teens in 1991 to 32 in 2009.⁶²

Figure 25

Calif. Teen Birth Rates Varied by Ethnicity in 2009

Per 1,000 teens

White	11.0
African American	37.0
American Indian	25.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	8.5
Other	28.9
Latinas	50.8

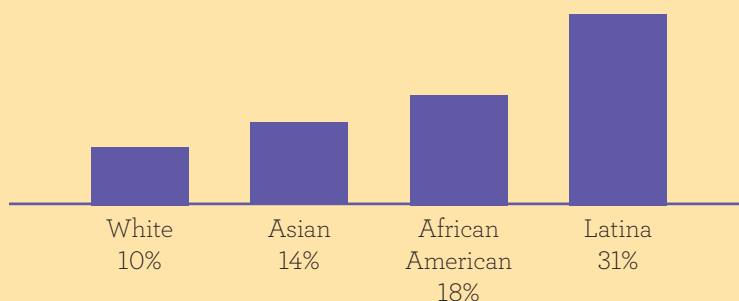
Source: California Department of Public Health, 2009

- While Latina teens have the highest birth rate compared to other ethnic groups, they had the biggest drop in three years, from 62/1,000 in 2007 to 51/1,000 in 2009 [Figure 25].⁶³
- Poor and low-income teens account for 83% of teens who give birth.⁶⁴

Access to Health Care

Figure 26

Latinas in Calif. Are More Likely to be Uninsured



Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2009

- Estimates suggest that 23% of women ages 19–64 in the state of California are uninsured compared to the national average of 20%.⁶⁵ Latinas ages 19–64 report being uninsured at a rate of 31%, more than three times the rate of white women (10%) [Figure 26].⁶⁶

Uninsured women receive less preventative care and fewer recommended screenings and are less likely to participate in chronic disease management. Together, these facts allow many women to succumb to diseases that could have been prevented by early detection.⁶⁷

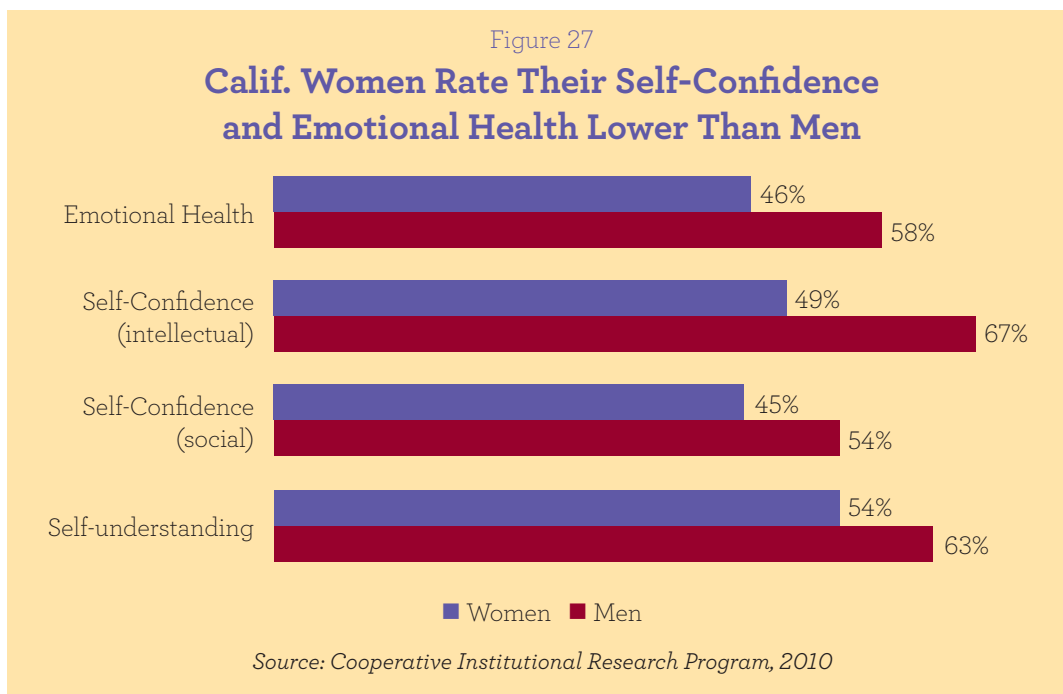
Areas for Future Research

- More information is needed about the quality and quantity of family-friendly employment practices that support working mothers in California. More research is needed on how employers are addressing issues around lactation, on-site child care, and paid maternity leave beyond the state disability time.
- Further analysis is necessary to determine what factors are contributing to the alarming rise in obesity among women and girls.
- Research is needed to explore racial disparities in access to care, utilization of care, and health outcomes.



Mental Health

California women's mental health status includes both psychological disorders and substance abuse. Although California men and women receive mental health treatment at the same rate, women report greater psychological distress for longer periods of time and identify a need for psychological services more frequently than men. California's girls are not immune to these disorders and are treated for depression, anxiety and bipolar disorders more often than boys. In examining the frequency of substance abuse, women are abusing methamphetamine at a significantly higher rate than seen nationally, and at a greater rate than males.



- In a recent survey of first-year California college students, more male freshmen reported having higher emotional health, self-confidence and self-understanding than female freshmen [Figure 27].⁶⁸

Mental Health Treatment

Figure 28

Calif. Women Report Greater Psychological Distress for Longer Periods of Time

Occurrence of Psychological Distress	Women	Men
In the Past Year	8%	5%
In the Past Month	4%	3%

Number of Days in Poor Mental Health In the Past Month	Women	Men
0 Days	48%	61%
1-6 Days	29%	24%
7-13 Days	8%	6%
14+ Days	15%	10%

Source: California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), 2009

Self-report surveys also indicate that women experience greater psychological distress for longer periods of time than men [Figure 28].⁶⁹

- Studies have found between 10% to 15% of new mothers are affected by postpartum depression.⁷⁰



Figure 29

Calif. Women More Likely to Report Mental Health Needs

	Women	Men
Needed help for emotional/mental problems	23%	14%
Did not do usual work due to emotional problems	19%	14%
Did less due to emotional problems	15%	11%
Received psychological counseling	11%	10%
Took prescription medication for emotional problems	37%	30%

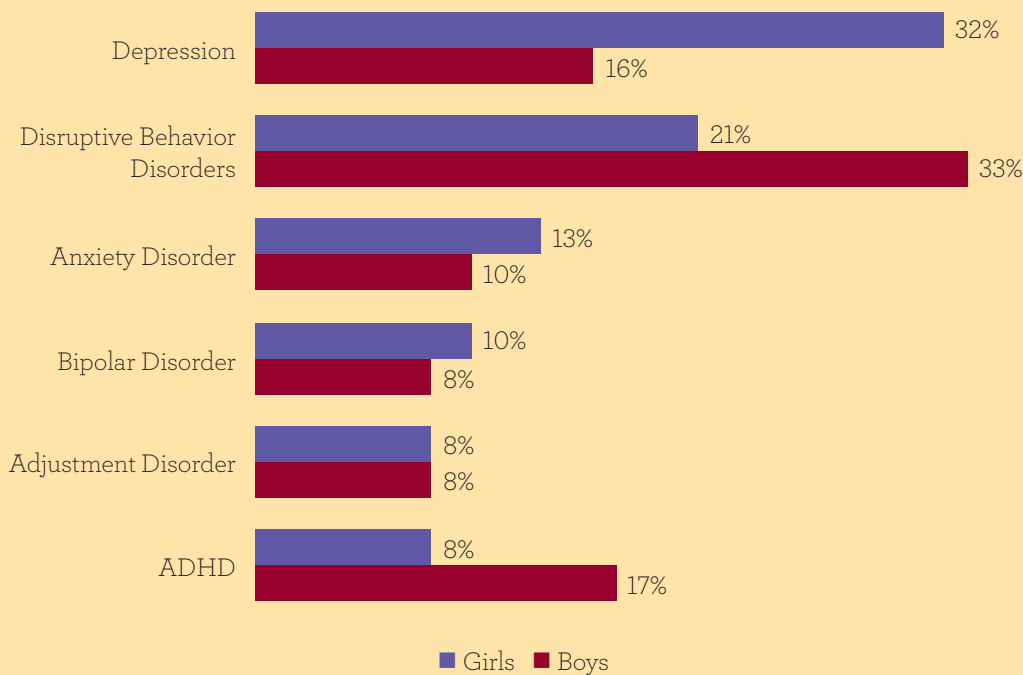
Source: California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), 2001

While 23% of women reported needing counseling for mental health problems, only 11% received counseling [Figure 29].⁷¹

Psychological Disorders in Girls

Figure 30

Calif. Girls More Likely to be Treated for Depression than Boys



Source: California Women’s Mental Health Policy Council, 2004

- California girls are treated for disorders like depression, anxiety and bipolar more often than boys [Figure 30].⁷²

Substance Abuse

Figure 31

Rise in Rate of Methamphetamine Abuse Among Calif. Women and Girls in Treatment

Type of Substance	Calif.		National	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
Methamphetamine	33%	23%	8%	4%
Alcohol	23%	24%	35%	45%
Marijuana	15%	21%	15%	14%
Heroin	13%	17%	15%	20%
Cocaine	8%	9%	12%	8%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services,
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2009

California women abuse methamphetamine at a rate significantly higher than seen nationally, and at a greater rate than males. Nationally, methamphetamine is the primary substance of abuse for only 8% of females (women and girls), as compared to 33% for females in California [Figure 31].⁷³ The rate of methamphetamine abuse has risen in the past 10 years. In 2000, the rate of methamphetamine abuse was 24% for California women.⁷⁴

- The most common primary substance of abuse for women entering treatment in California is methamphetamine. Treatment for alcohol is the next most common, followed by marijuana and heroin.⁷⁵ For girls, the most common primary substance of abuse is marijuana.

Areas for Future Research

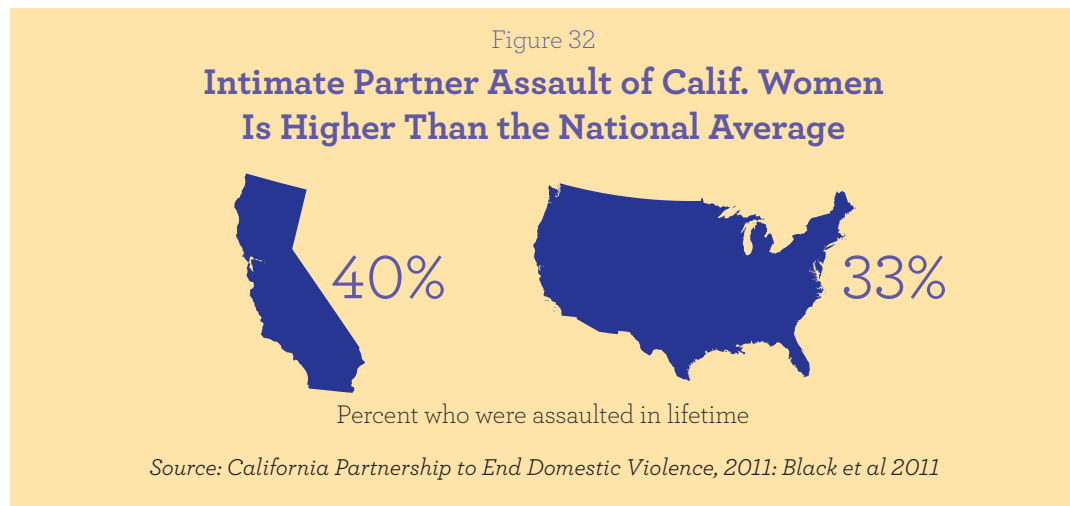
- The mental health statistics currently available are based on California Department of Mental Health data, which only serves women from low income and indigent families. The incidence of mental illness and the need for and use of mental health services for all women in California are not represented by this data. Similarly, the substance abuse data is restricted to women and girls who have received treatment. It does not reflect women who are abusing alcohol and illicit substances and not receiving treatment for their addictions. Large-scale surveys of women must be conducted to provide a more complete picture of the state of women's mental health and substance abuse.
- More research is needed to identify contributing factors to the increased use of methamphetamine among California women and to develop treatment and prevention methods.



Violence

Violence has a startling impact on many California women's daily lives and functioning. It can prevent them from feeling safe in public places, in the workplace and in their homes. California women report higher incidences of intimate partner assault than national averages. However, violence is not only an adult phenomenon. Girls experience abuse at the hands of parents or caretakers and are harassed and bullied by friends and peers. Throughout their lives, women and girls are rarely free from the threat of violence. At this time, the state's social service resources are insufficient to address all the emotional, physical and economic effects needed to fully support victims of violence.

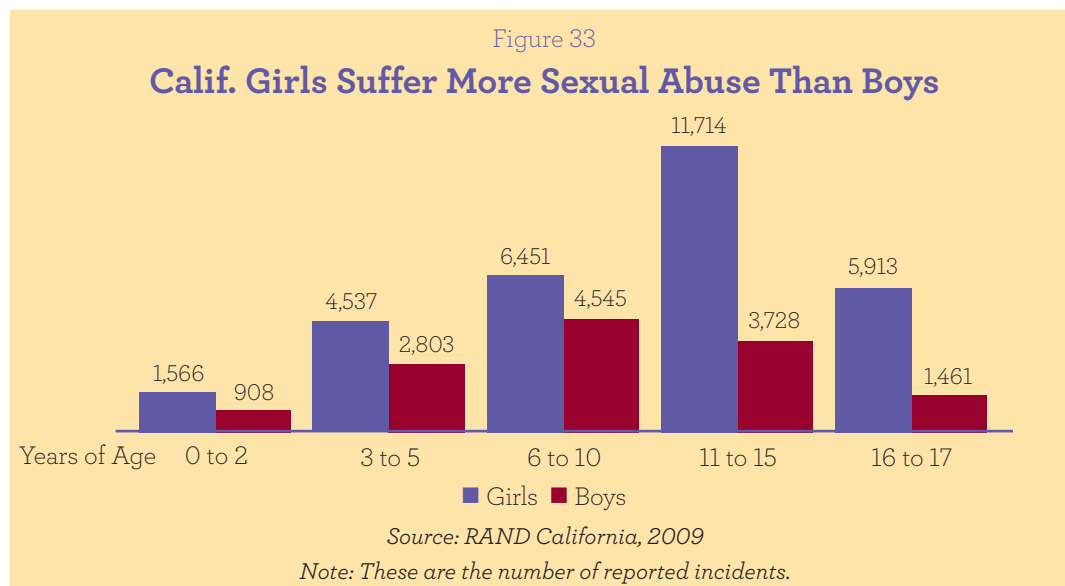
Intimate Partner Violence



A total of 40% of California women surveyed report that they have been physically assaulted by an intimate partner during their lifetime.⁷⁶ Nationally, 33% of women were assaulted by an intimate partner at some point during their lifetime [Figure 32].⁷⁷



Sexual Assault



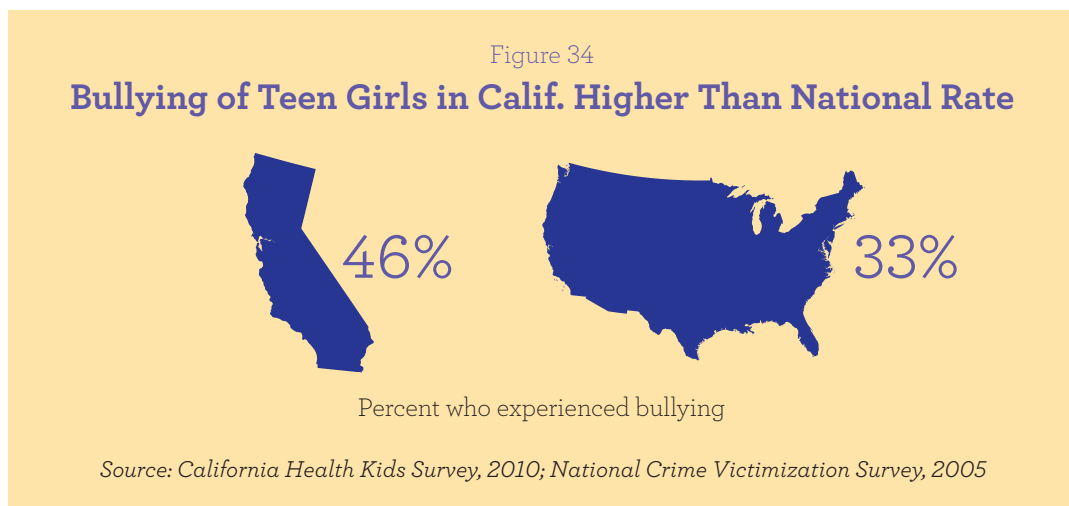
Overall, girls are sexually abused more often than boys and are most at risk for sexual abuse during the ages of 11-15 [Figure 33].⁷⁸

- Over the course of their lifetimes, 14% of California women reported that they have been raped.⁷⁹
- It is estimated that there are 27 million modern slaves around the world today.⁸⁰ They are victims of human trafficking. About half of these victims are children. California has been identified as the top destination for traffickers — with most victims being women and girls who are forced into prostitution.⁸¹

Social Services

- While there are social services in California to support survivors of violence, they are insufficient in number to address the substantial emotional, physical, economic and social effects of partner violence. About 72% of shelter agencies report that they are regularly at, or exceeding, capacity. Because of a lack of resources, approximately 7,348 adult women and men victims are turned away from California shelters each year.⁸²

Bullying



In California, 46% of girls (grades 7-11) report being bullied about their ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.⁸³ Bullying occurs when a person is threatened, harassed, intimidated, defamed, or attacked by another individual or group with the intention of harming the victim physically, psychologically or verbally.⁸⁴ Nationally, 33% of girls between the ages of 12-18 report being bullied at school [Figure 34].⁸⁵

Areas for Future Research

- Because of the hidden nature of human trafficking and sex trafficking, identifying women and children who have been trafficked is particularly difficult and needs further research. Understanding the magnitude of the trafficking problem in California is essential to being able to design effective prevention strategies and provide support for victims.
- Bullying experienced by girls is receiving new attention in both the research and policy areas. A fuller understanding of what constitutes bullying and cyber bullying, how it is experienced by young women, and what interventions schools and families can use to address bullying is needed.

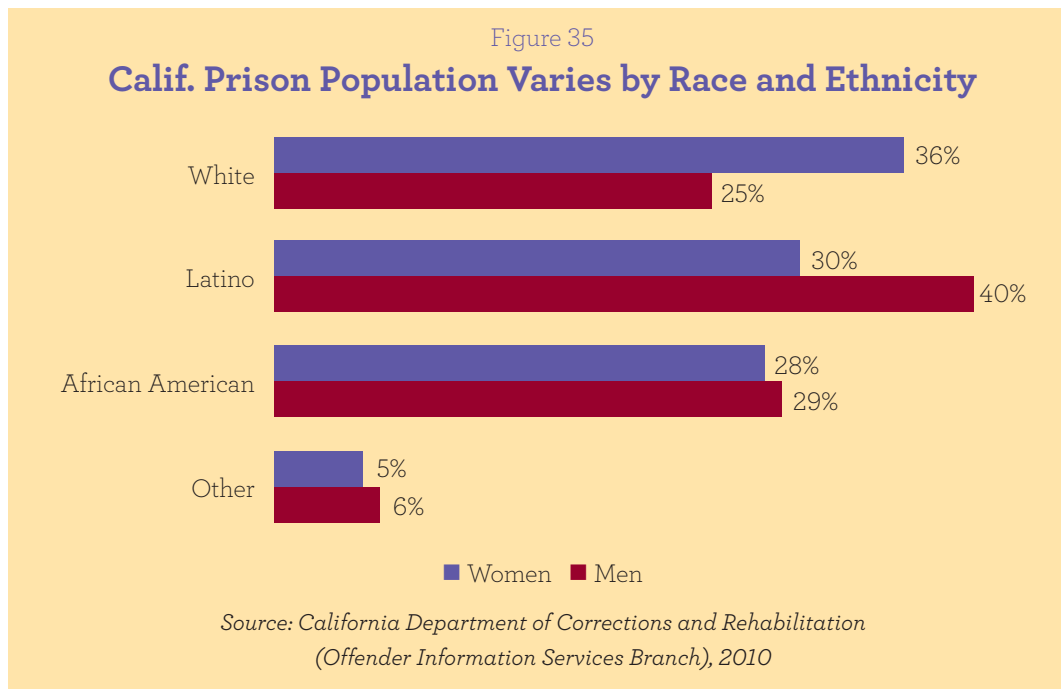
Incarceration

Overall, women account for a relatively small share of persons in correctional systems throughout the United States, and California is no different. However, despite the decline in crime rates for the past ten years, female incarceration in California has surged.

Women, by and large, are arrested and subsequently incarcerated for non-violent acts, most of which stem from property and drug related crimes. Though these crimes are non-violent, because of strict California statutes, these offences often carry lengthy sentences. Reform efforts over the past decades have placed emphasis on examining the variables surrounding female prison incarceration in the State of California to address this problem.

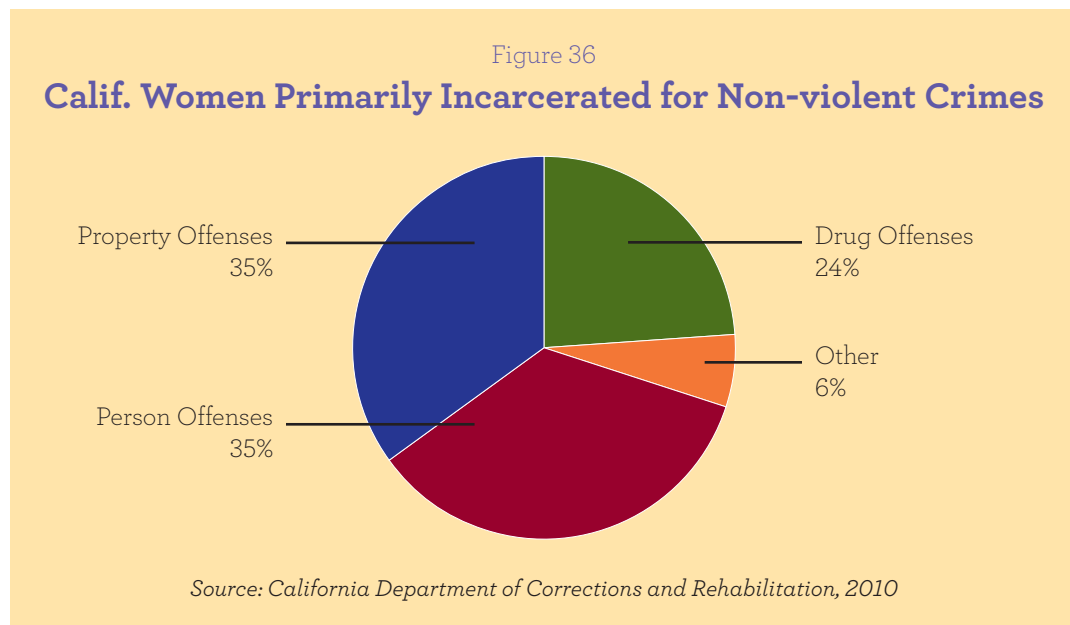
Incarceration Rate

- Women comprise 6% (or 10,812) of the total incarcerated population.⁸⁶
- In California, girls are less likely to be re-arrested after serving their sentence than boys. Female juveniles have a recidivism rate of nearly 40%, whereas male juveniles' recidivism rate is slightly above 57%.⁸⁷



- White women are the predominant racial/ethnic group among women in California state prisons, followed by Latinas and African American women [Figure 35]. Since 1990, the number of Latina prisoners has increased by 8%. White prisoners have increased by just over 2%, and African American women prisoners have experienced a decline of approximately 11%.⁸⁸

Prevalent Offenses



The top three offenses – property, person and drug offenses [Figure 36]⁸⁹ – are highly correlated; many times women commit crimes to support a drug habit.⁹⁰

Areas for Future Research

- With regards to female ethnicity in prisons, the largest population groups are whites, Latinas, and then African Americans. However since 1990, whites have held steady in population growth, Latinas have increased steadily, yet African Americans have experienced a decrease. More analysis is needed to examine the phenomena of Latinas as the only group with a steady increase in prison population.
- There is a drastic decrease in juvenile females being incarcerated at the state level based on legislation that essentially prohibits persons receiving lower criminal sentences to be incarcerated within the state system. The onus has been placed upon the counties to provide either housing or alternative housing for these young women. Research is needed to examine the efforts counties have made to rehabilitate female juveniles.

A Call to Action

In December 2011, faculty from Mount St. Mary's College, fellow academics and researchers, and representatives of the California Commission on the Status of Women gathered to discuss these research findings, look for patterns in the data, identify need for future research and consider calls to action to address what might be done to improve gender equality. A troubling pattern became apparent: as girls become women they start to fall behind their male counterparts in important skill areas, and, as a result, when they have reached their prime earning years of middle age, they have fallen well behind. Girls are equal to boys in math skills in elementary school, but sharply fall behind in their teen years. Women are close to being the majority in law school, but 10 years later they are less likely to be partners, and 20 years later they are unlikely to hold the highest leadership positions in law firms. Women are entering and starting businesses, but women CEOs are rare.

In light of this pattern, it is imperative that academia play a role in examining the extent to which young women may face barriers in rising to the top in crucial sectors of our society and economy.

We have seen the first woman become Speaker of the House; make a serious bid for the Presidency; be elected Attorney General of California; and for the first time in history we have three women on the Supreme Court of the United States. But much work remains to be done. To find the best path to equality, more research is needed to fully understand the conditions facing young women and girls. Not enough of the research in the areas examined by this report disaggregates data by gender. By examining the role of gender in greater depth, we can pave the way for true equality and a culture that fosters the success and well-being of the women and girls of California.

At Mount St. Mary's College, we have the privilege to educate young women. We need to look no further than our students and their incredible success stories to find our inspiration to dedicate ourselves to finding the best practices to help them become healthy, active, educated women. We call on all those concerned with the well-being of the women and girls of California to let this report be an inspiration to support these women in finding their paths to become all they are capable of being — in the spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

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The Report
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