



FACT SHEET

The State of Women in California

Despite the advancements made by women over the past few decades, it is still difficult for women to get ahead and not just get by. There remain challenges on economic security, leadership, and health issues that make it harder for women to have a fair shot at success. While an increasing number of women are either the sole breadwinner for their family or share the role with their partners, women nationwide are still paid only 77 cents for every dollar a man makes.¹ And while 2012 was a watershed year for women in terms of getting elected to public office, women comprise only 18.1 percent of Congress despite making up more than half of the U.S. population.² And on the health front, 2012 saw continued efforts by conservatives to erode women's ability to make their own decisions about their reproductive health and well-being.

A deeper examination shows that women in some states face higher barriers to success than others. California, however, stands out as one of the states that are among the best in the nation for women. Across 36 factors of economic security, leadership, and health, California ranks fourth in the nation for how women are faring. On many issues important to women, California should provide an example for the rest of the country and demonstrate how women can get a fair shot at achieving economic security, reaching success, and living a healthy life.

Overall grade

A

National ranking

4

California facts

Economic security

California received an “A” on the economic factors examined in the report. Overall, California ranks second in the nation based on the economic factors analyzed.

- **Women in California make 84 cents for every dollar a man makes.** California has the fourth-smallest wage gap in the nation for women overall. However, women of color are not faring as well: Hispanic women in California make only 44 cents for every dollar a white male makes, the biggest gap in the nation.
- **California is doing better than 33 other states in terms of poverty rates for women overall.** However, 18 percent of women in California still live in poverty. Women of color are doing even worse: 27 percent of African American women in California live in poverty.

- **California is one of the few states that have enacted policies providing for paid family, medical, and temporary disability leave.** This leaves women—and men—with the security of knowing their job will be there if they need to take time off to care for family or medical issues.

Leadership

California received an “A” on the leadership factors examined in the report. Overall, California ranks fifth in the nation based on the leadership factors analyzed.

- **California ranks fifth in the nation on female elected officials in Congress.** More than 36 percent of California’s congressional seats are held by women.
- **Women hold 39.1 percent of the managerial jobs in California.** This puts California at 17th-best in the nation. However, the state still has a ways to go, as women make up 51 percent of the California’s population.

Health

California received a “B” on the health factors examined in the report. Overall, California ranks 14th in the nation based on the health factors analyzed.

- **More than 18.4 percent of nonelderly women in California are uninsured, but California is taking steps to help its people.** California stands out as a state that is expanding Medicaid, which could provide insurance for 856,000 more women.
- **California has the 16th-worst maternal mortality rate in the nation,** with 12.5 deaths for every 100,000 live births.

Endnotes

1 National Women’s Law Center, “The Wage Gap By State for Women Overall,” April 2, 2013, available at <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/wage-gap-state-women-overall>.

2 Jane Farrell, “Infographic: Where Are U.S. Women in 2013?,” Center for American Progress, March 8, 2013, available at <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/labor/news/2013/03/08/55678/infographic-where-are-u-s-women-in-2013/>.