



FACT SHEET

The State of Women in Kentucky

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 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. Kentucky stands out as one of the states that are among the worst in the nation for women. Across 36 factors of economic security, leadership, and health, Kentucky ranks 32nd in the nation for how women are faring. This illustrates the long path ahead before women in Kentucky can get a fair shot at achieving economic security, reaching success, and living a healthy life.

Overall grade

D+

National ranking

32

Kentucky facts

Economic security

Kentucky received a “D” on the economic factors examined in the report. Overall, Kentucky ranks 35th in the nation based on the economic factors analyzed.

- **Women in Kentucky make 76 cents for every dollar a man makes.** This places Kentucky with the 13th-largest wage gap in the nation. The statistics are even worse for women of color: Hispanic women in Kentucky make only 57 cents for every dollar a white male makes.
- **Almost 21 percent of women in Kentucky live in poverty.** This places Kentucky with the fifth-highest poverty rate in the nation for women. The statistics are even worse for women of color: 38.6 percent of African American women in Kentucky live in poverty.
- **Kentucky does not have a policy providing for paid family, medical, or temporary disability leave.** This leaves women—and men—without the security of knowing their job will be there if they need to take time off to care for family or medical issues.

Leadership

Kentucky received an “F” on the leadership factors examined in the report. Overall, Kentucky ranks 48th in the nation based on the leadership factors analyzed.

- **None of Kentucky’s congressional seats is held by a woman.** Kentucky is one of 15 states that have no female elected officials in Congress.
- **More than 62 percent of the managerial jobs in Kentucky are held by men.** Women hold only 38.1 percent of the managerial jobs in Kentucky, despite making up 52 percent of the state’s population.

Health

Kentucky received a “C+” on the health factors examined in the report. Overall, Kentucky ranks 21st in the nation based on the health factors analyzed.

- **More than 16 percent of nonelderly women in Kentucky are uninsured.** Despite the number of uninsured, the state refuses to expand Medicaid, which could provide insurance for 139,000 women.
- **Kentuckians have difficulty accessing health care:** There is only one OB-GYN for every 4,095 women in the state.
- **Kentucky places unconstitutional restrictions on a woman’s access to reproductive health care.** The state has passed Targeted Restrictions on Abortion Providers, or “TRAP” laws, that aim at requiring regulations of women’s health centers so burdensome as to result in many of them shutting down.
- **Kentucky ranks 32nd in the nation on infant mortality rate,** with 6.8 deaths for every 1,000 infants.

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/>.