



FACT SHEET

The State of Women in Iowa

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. Iowa is no better than the middle of the pack. Across 36 factors of economic security, leadership, and health, Iowa ranks 21st in the nation for how women are faring. This illustrates the long path ahead before women in Iowa can get a fair shot at achieving economic security, reaching success, and living a healthy life.

Overall grade

C+

National ranking

21

Iowa facts

Economic security

Iowa received a “D+” on the economic factors examined in the report. Overall, Iowa ranks 32nd in the nation based on the economic factors analyzed.

- **Women in Iowa make 78 cents for every dollar a man makes.** This places Iowa as the state with the 21st-largest wage gap in the nation. The statistics are even worse for women of color: Hispanic women in Iowa make only 58 cents for every dollar a white male makes.
- **Almost 14 percent of women in Iowa live in poverty.** This places Iowa as the state with the 14th-lowest poverty rate for women in the nation. The statistics are worse for women of color: 40.1 percent of African American women in Iowa live in poverty.
- **Iowa 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

Iowa received an “F” on the leadership factors examined in the report. Overall, Iowa ranks 42nd in the nation based on the leadership factors analyzed.

- **None of Iowa’s congressional seats is held by a woman.** Iowa is one of 15 states that have no female elected officials in Congress.
- **Almost 67 percent of the managerial jobs in Iowa are held by men.** Women hold only 33.3 percent of the managerial jobs in Iowa, despite making up 51 percent of the state’s population.

Health

Iowa received an “A-” on the health factors examined in the report. Overall, Iowa ranks seventh in the nation based on the health factors analyzed.

- **Almost 10 percent of nonelderly women in Iowa are uninsured.** Despite the number of uninsured, Iowa refuses to expand Medicaid, which could provide insurance for 48,000 women.
- **Iowans have difficulty accessing health care:** There is only one OB-GYN for every 12,210 women in the state.
- **Overall, women in the United States already face a greater risk of maternal death than women in 40 other countries.**³ Within the United States, Iowa has the 15th-lowest maternal mortality rate in the nation. Women in the state contend with a maternal mortality rate of 4.8 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/>.

3 National Women’s Law Center, “Maternal Mortality Rate (per 100,000),” available at <http://hrc.nwlc.org/status-indicators/maternal-mortality-rate-100000> (last accessed September 2013).