

The Status of Women in Florida by County: Employment & Earnings

Women have made progress over the past several decades; there are, however, significant areas for improvement for women in Florida. Since the publication of the Institute for Women's Policy Research's 2004 report *The Status of Women in the States*, Florida's grade for women's employment and earnings has worsened from a C- to a D+.

The Status of Women in Florida by County: Employment & Earnings examines data on women's employment, earnings and occupations

and trends over time, including research and analysis necessary to make data-driven decisions.

Part of a series commissioned by Florida Women's Funding Alliance, an affinity group of Florida Philanthropic Network, and conducted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, this report aims to provide critical data that can help to build economic security and overall well-being among the state's women and girls.

Policy Recommendations



Pass paid leave legislation

Like the vast majority of states, Florida has not passed paid leave legislation. Few low-wage workers in the state receive work-life supports such as paid sick and safe days, paid family and medical leave, and predictable schedules. Because women are more likely than men to have unpaid caregiving responsibilities, these benefits are vitally important to help women remain and advance in the workforce.

Since over half of Florida families with children under 18 have a breadwinner mother (who is either a sole earner or earns 40 percent or more of the household income), policies that help women stay in their jobs and advance have the potential to increase earnings and reduce poverty for women and their families.

Close the gender wage gap

Closing the gender wage gap would not only increase women's earnings but also significantly lower poverty rates among women. Florida lawmakers can take steps to narrow the gender wage gap, especially the very large gap experienced by some women of color:

- Proactively enforce existing legislation regarding fair labor standards and strengthen protections against retaliation for those who discuss their pay to determine whether they are being underpaid relative to comparable employees.
- Pass legislation that bars employers from requiring potential employees to submit previous salary history, which can perpetuate wage inequality.
- Require employers to increase transparency about gender and racial/ethnic disparities in their hiring, compensation, and promotion practices.



Support a living wage

Increase the minimum wage in Florida to improve economic security for women, who are disproportionately represented among low-wage workers. The minimum wage in Florida in 2018 is \$8.25 per hour, yet the Basic Economic Security Tables (BEST) Index — a measure of the wage an individual must earn to meet basic needs plus minimal savings — is \$14.52 an hour for a single adult in Florida with work benefits, and \$22.56 an hour for an adult with work benefits and a preschool child. In addition, to set a reasonable wage floor, Florida should consider tying its minimum wage to cost-of-living increases.



Decrease occupational segregation

Women are concentrated in a few occupations; over two-thirds of women in the state are employed in just three of eight occupational groups. To tackle occupational segregation by gender and get more women into higher-paying jobs, educators and counselors should ensure that career advice for women and girls explicitly addresses the earnings and growth potential of different fields of study and occupations.

Employers and stakeholders in workforce development should increase active outreach and support for women pursuing careers in technical and nontraditional fields.

