

# THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN MICHIGAN: HIGHLIGHTS

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) has prepared a report on the *Status of Women in Michigan* to inform Michigan residents about the progress of women in Michigan relative to women in other states, to men, and to national trends. In addition to this report, IWPR staff have produced reports on 12 other states and the District of Columbia as well as a national report that summarizes key findings for all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

In each report, various indicators describe women's status in four important areas: political participation, employment and earnings, economic autonomy, and reproductive rights. Basic health and demographic data are also provided. On each of the four aspects of women's well-being for which IWPR calculated composite indicators, Michigan ranks in the middle or bottom third of the nation. Along with its relatively low ranks nationwide, Michigan ranks third or fourth in the East North Central region (consisting of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin in addition to Michigan) on each of the four composite indicators. Thus Michigan still has room for improvement in the status of its women.

## POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

### *Ranks*

The composite political participation rank is based on women's voter registration and turnout, women elected officials at the state and federal levels, and women's institutional resources in the state (such as a state commission for women). The national rank is of a possible 50, because the District of Columbia is not included in this ranking. The regional rank is of a maximum of five and refers to the states in the East North Central region.

- Michigan ranks 24th in the nation and third in the East North Central region on the political participation composite indicator.
- Michigan ranks tenth in the nation and second in its region on women's voter registration. There are over 581,750 unregistered women who are eligible to vote in the state of Michigan.

### *Facts and Figures*

- Michigan ranked 22nd among all states in terms of the percentage of women in the state legislature. In 1996, 22.3 percent of Michigan's state legislators were women.
- Since 1964, female voters in the United States have outnumbered male voters, but voter turnout is relatively low for both sexes by international standards. Sixty-seven percent of eligible women and 65 percent of eligible men in Michigan reported that they voted in the November 1992 election. Voter turnout rates in Michigan for women and men were still slightly higher than the rates for women and men nationally.

## Chart I. How Michigan Ranks on Key Indicators

	National Rank*	Regional Rank*
<b>COMPOSITE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION INDEX</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3</b>
Women's Voter Registration, 1992-1994	10	2
Women's Voter Turnout, 1992-1994	17	2
Women in Elected Office Composite, 1996	33	4
Women's Institutional Resources, 1996	10	1
<b>COMPOSITE EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS INDEX</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3</b>
Women's Median Annual Earnings, 1990	13	2
Ratio of Women's to Men's Earnings, 1990	45	4
Women's Labor Force Participation, 1994	35	4
Women in Managerial and Professional Occupations, 1994	34	3
<b>COMPOSITE ECONOMIC AUTONOMY INDEX</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>3</b>
Percent with Health Insurance Among Nonelderly Women, 1991-1992	10	2
Educational Attainment: Percent of Women with Four or More Years of College, 1990	36	3
Women's Business Ownership, 1992	16	1
Percent of Women Above the Poverty Level, 1990	31	5
<b>COMPOSITE REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS INDEX</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><i>See Appendix I of The Status of Women in the States, available from IWPR, for a detailed description of the methodology and sources used for the indices presented here.</i></p> <p>* The national rankings are of a possible 51, referring to the 50 states and the District of Columbia, except for the political participation indicators, which do not include the District of Columbia. The regional rankings are of a maximum of five and refer to the states in the East North Central region (Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana).</p>		

*Calculated by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.*

## EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS

### *Ranks*

The composite employment and earnings rank is based on women's earnings, the female/male earnings ratio, women's labor force participation, and the proportion of working women in professional and managerial positions. The national rank is of a possible 51, referring to the 50 states plus the District of Columbia.

- Michigan ranks 27th in the nation and third in its region on the employment and earnings composite indicator.
- Although Michigan ranks in the top third for women's median annual earnings, it ranks 45th in the nation and fourth in its region in terms of the ratio of women's to men's earnings.

## *Facts and Figures*

- Compared with the nation as a whole, Michigan women have less earnings equality with men. In 1990, the ratio of the median annual earnings of women to those of men for full-time, year-round workers aged 18 to 65 was 68.5 percent in the United States and 62.0 percent in Michigan.
- The female unemployment rate in Michigan is the lowest in the East North Central region and the 33rd lowest in the nation. In 1994, the unemployment rate for women in Michigan was 5.9 percent compared with the nation's 6.0 percent female unemployment rate.

## **ECONOMIC AUTONOMY**

### *Ranks*

The composite economic autonomy rank is based on women's access to health insurance, women's educational attainment, women's business ownership, and the proportion of women living above poverty.

- Michigan ranks 28th in the nation and third in its region on the economic autonomy composite indicator.
- Michigan ranks 36th in the nation and third in its region in terms of women's educational attainment.

### *Facts and Figures*

- Women in Michigan are much less likely than women in the United States as a whole to be uninsured (9.3 percent compared to 13.8 percent). Women workers in Michigan are also more likely than women workers nationally to have employer-based health insurance (68.1 percent compared to 63.7 percent).
- The business receipts of women-owned businesses in Michigan rose by 82.7 percent in constant dollars between 1987 and 1992. This compares with an increase of 87 percent in business receipts for women-owned firms nationally and 35 percent for all firms in the United States during this time period, also adjusted for inflation.

## **REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

### *Ranks*

The composite reproductive rights rank is based on information on legislation relating to access to legal abortions, the availability of public funding for abortions and infertility treatments, the position of the governor and state legislature on reproductive choice, maternity stay laws, and legislation regarding adoption by gay and lesbian couples.

- Michigan ranks 45th in the nation and fourth in its region on the reproductive rights composite indicator.

### *Facts and Figures*

- Twenty-two percent of counties in Michigan have abortion providers, six percentage points above the national average.
- Michigan is one of 33 states that restrict public funding for abortions. Like 21 other states, Michigan funds abortions only in cases of life endangerment, rape, and incest.

## HEALTH AND VITAL STATISTICS

- Michigan has higher infant mortality rates (deaths of infants under age one per 1,000 live births) and lower fertility rates (live births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44) than the nation as a whole. The percent of low birth weight white babies is the same in Michigan and the United States as a whole (6.1 percent), but the percent of low birth weight African-American babies is higher in Michigan than in the nation (14.4 percent compared to 13.2 percent). This may indicate that in Michigan there is differential access to prenatal care depending on a woman's race and/or ethnicity.
- The percentage of the population enrolled in HMOs in Michigan is slightly higher than in the United States as a whole (20.2 percent compared to 19.5 percent). While Medicare recipients in Michigan are less likely than those nationwide to be enrolled in an HMO (0.6 percent versus 9.2 percent), Medicaid recipients in Michigan are more likely than those nationwide to be HMO members (34.8 percent versus 21.4 percent).

## BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS

- Compared with the nation as a whole, Michigan has a relatively small female elderly population and the proportion of women who are foreign-born is much smaller than the national average (4.0 percent versus 7.9 percent).
- The female population in Michigan is less ethnically diverse than in the nation as a whole, with minority women making up about 18 percent of women in Michigan and 24 percent of women in the United States as a whole.

---

*The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) is an independent, non-profit, scientific research organization founded in 1987 to meet the need for women-centered, policy-oriented research. This fact sheet is based on the report The Status of Women in Michigan, part of a larger research project funded by the Ford Foundation and the Nokomis Foundation. The data used in the report come from a variety of sources, primarily government agencies, and individuals and organizations in Michigan assisted in reviewing the report. The Advisory Committee for the report in Michigan was chaired by Kymberly A. Mulhern, Nokomis Foundation and Deborah Z. Bloom, Women Matter, and included Sharon Miller, Michigan Women's Commission; Jan Mancinelli, Women's Resource Center of Northern Michigan; Marsha Barber Clark, Crooked Tree Girl Scout Council; Carol Hollenshead, Center for the Education of Women, University of Michigan; Mary Ann Adams, Michigan Education Center; Suzanne Kensington, Women's Center; Peggy Kahn, Department of Political Science, University of Michigan-Flint; Pamela Gustairs, Women's Economic Club; Margaret Talburtt, Michigan Women's Foundation; and Gwendolyn McMillon, Michigan Center for Career and Technical Education, Michigan State University.*

*This Research-in-Brief was written by Stacey Friedman and prepared by Megan DeBell in March 1997. The full report, The Status of Women in Michigan, is available for \$10.00 from the Institute for Women's Policy Research. Members and affiliates of the Institute's Information Network receive regular reports and information. For a copy of the full report or more information on membership, contact IWPR at 1400 20th Street N.W., Suite 104, Washington, D.C. 20036, phone 202/785-5100, fax 202/833-4362, or visit our web site at <http://www.iwpr.org>.*

*In Michigan, for copies of the report, contact: Nokomis Foundation, 96 Monroe Center, NW, Suite 205, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, phone 616/451-0267, fax 616/451-9914.*