

STATUS OF WOMEN OF COLOR IN MINNESOTA

Research Overview

The economic and social vitality of Minnesota depends upon its people. As opportunities have expanded for women to contribute their best efforts as full and equal partners in the workplace, home, community and government, the state has benefited enormously from their contributions.

This report examines the status of the 283,020 women of color in Minnesota—those of African, Asian, Native, and Hispanic origin.¹ As eleven percent of the state's female population, women of color contribute significantly to Minnesota. Their participation on the state's labor force is amongst the highest in the nation when compared to their counterparts in other states.

The data presented herein demonstrates that women of color have far from realized their full potential as an invigorating force in the state of Minnesota. The poverty rates among African American, Asian American, and Native American women are higher in Minnesota than the national rates for these groups. High disease and mortality rates among Minnesota women of color—in some categories among the worst in the nation—are likely related to their poor economic status. At the same time, there is an overwhelming absence of Minnesota women of color holding state and national office to provide more of the leadership needed to overcome these economic and health disparities.

The Status of Women of Color in Minnesota provides the first focused look at key data from the United States Census on women of color in the state. It is presented as a stimulus and a tool for leaders and communities. Creative, integrated, community-wide solutions are urgently needed in order to unlock the economic, social, and political potential of Minnesota's women of color and the families to whom they are essential. The more this important segment of its population thrives, the more Minnesota will thrive.

The data were analyzed by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, as part of its on-going national research on the status of women in the states, sponsored, in-part by the Women's Foundation, which has organized the information into three categories: (1) Economic Status, Employment, and Education; (2) Health and Well-Being; and (3) Political Representation.

¹This number includes women of other/two or more races.

OVERVIEW OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN OF COLOR IN MINNESOTA					
	WHITE WOMEN	AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN	HISPANIC WOMEN	ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN	NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN
ECONOMIC STATUS, EMPLOYMENT, & EDUCATION					
Median Annual Earnings (for full-time, year-round employed women), 1999 (in 2003 dollars)	\$32,000	\$28,500	\$23,500	\$28,700	\$26,500
Earnings Ratio Between Women and White Men, 1999	72.5%	64.5%	53.3%	65.0%	60.0%
Women's Labor Force Participation, 2000	67.6%	67.5%	61.4%	61.2%	64.0%
Women in Managerial or Professional Occupations, 2000	38.5%	29.6%	22.8%	32.6%	29.4%
Percent of Women with College Education (two- or four-year degree or higher), 2000	34.9%	23.5%	18.5%	37.1%	20.2%
Percent of Women Above the Poverty Level, 1999	92.9%	72.2%	78.1%	85.4%	73.7%
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING					
Female Heart Disease Mortality, per 100,000, 1999-2001	137.0	147.7	129.9	56.5	158.4
Female Lung Cancer Mortality, per 100,000, 1999-2001	36.0	62.6	N/A	N/A	72.8
Female Breast Cancer Mortality, per 100,000, 1999-2001	25.8	32.7	N/A	N/A	N/A
Average Annual Incidence Rate of AIDS Among Women (per 100,000 adolescents and adults), 1999	0.7	32.4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percent of Mothers Beginning Prenatal Care in the First Trimester of Pregnancy, 2001	89%	66%	63%	72%	64%
Infant Mortality Rate (deaths of infants under age one per 1,000 live births), 2001	4.6	8.0	6.0	8.6	N/A
Percent of Babies with Low Birth Weight, 2001	5.9%	9.8%	6.2%	7.8%	6.7%
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION					
Number of Women in Elected Statewide Executive Office, 2004	3	0	0	0	0
Number of Women in U.S. Congress, 2004	1	0	0	0	0

Compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research

Economic Status, Employment, and Education

Among many women of color, labor force participation rates in Minnesota are among the highest in the country. Yet women of color stand on the bottom rung of the economic ladder in Minnesota for their earnings, occupations and education. They are highly over-represented among the poor in the state.

Leaders across the world have identified women’s economic progress as key to economic, social, and environmental progress for society as a whole.² Poverty is the most significant barrier to economic progress. It is in all Minnesotans’ interest for communities, workplaces, families, and government to work in partnership with women of color on economic development strategies.

Some important indicators of the overall economic status of women of color in Minnesota include:

Poverty

- The poverty rates among African American, Asian American and Native American women are higher in Minnesota than the national rates for these groups.
- Poverty among African American single mothers is 38.5 percent, 23.0 points higher than the poverty rate among white single-mother families, which is 15.5 percent.

² See, for example, *Empowerment of Women as a Transformative Strategy for Poverty Eradication*, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2001.

Employment

- The lowest wages of all Minnesota women are among Hispanic women, a median of \$23,500, and they are the least likely group of women in the state to be college educated.
- Asian American women are almost 9 percentage points less likely to work in managerial and professional jobs in Minnesota as they are nationally, and they have lower rates of college education than they do nationally.
- In comparison with white men, the ratio of African American, Native American, and Hispanic women’s wages is higher in Minnesota than nationally, but it is lower for Asian American women than in the nation.

Education

- African American, Hispanic, and Native American women in Minnesota have two- or four-year college degrees, or more, at lower rates than do white women.
- Asian American women in Minnesota are almost 10 percentage points less likely to have a two-or-four-year college degree than they are nationally.

WOMEN’S MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS AND THE EARNINGS RATIO BETWEEN WOMEN AND WHITE MEN IN MINNESOTA AND THE UNITED STATES, BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 1999 (2003 DOLLARS), DECENNIAL CENSUS

RACE AND ETHNICITY	WOMEN’S MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS		EARNINGS RATIO		WOMEN’S MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS	EARNINGS RATIO
	MINNESOTA	NATIONAL RANK	MINNESOTA	NATIONAL RANK		
ALL	\$31,300	13 OF 51	70.8%	10 OF 51	\$29,800	67.5%
WHITE	\$32,000	15 OF 51	72.5%	14 OF 51	\$30,900	70.0%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	\$28,500	16 OF 43	64.5%	18 OF 43	\$27,600	62.5%
HISPANIC	\$23,500	21 OF 48	53.3%	27 OF 48	\$23,200	52.5%
ASIAN AMERICAN	\$28,700	21 OF 45	65.0%	32 OF 45	\$33,100	75.0%
NATIVE AMERICAN	\$26,500	16 OF 43	60.0%	27 OF 43	\$25,500	57.8%
OTHER/TWO OR MORE	\$28,200	16 OF 46	63.8%	19 OF 46	\$28,400	64.3%

Compiled by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research

CHECKLIST FOR CHANGE

WORKPLACES

- ✓ What are we doing to recruit women of color into predominantly male jobs that pay well, as opposed to traditionally female jobs that require similar education and skills?
- ✓ How are we working proactively to prevent harassment and discrimination in traditionally male fields and workplaces?
- ✓ How are we regularly evaluating our wage and promotional practices to ensure that women and men of all races and ethnicities are fairly compensated for their work?
- ✓ Have we provided the greatest possible availability of paid parental and dependent care leave policies at all pay levels?

GOVERNMENT

- ✓ To what extent do we invest in the enforcement of equal opportunity laws in order to resolve complaints more quickly and audit large employers regularly for discrimination?
- ✓ How effectively do we provide support services to women, such as high quality education and training opportunities, as part of implementing welfare reform?
- ✓ How strong is our safety net for those who earn very low wages or cannot work?
- ✓ How do we use investments in colleges and universities, including tribal colleges, to expand educational opportunities for women of color

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- ✓ How are we using affirmative action policies, increased financial aid, and scholarship programs to encourage the enrollment of women of color in higher education?
- ✓ Are we actively enforcing Title IX rules, giving women of all races equal access to educational programs at the elementary and secondary school levels, as well as colleges and universities?
- ✓ How do we encourage women of color to prepare educationally for a broad range of employment sectors, especially those with high paying jobs?

PHILANTHROPIES

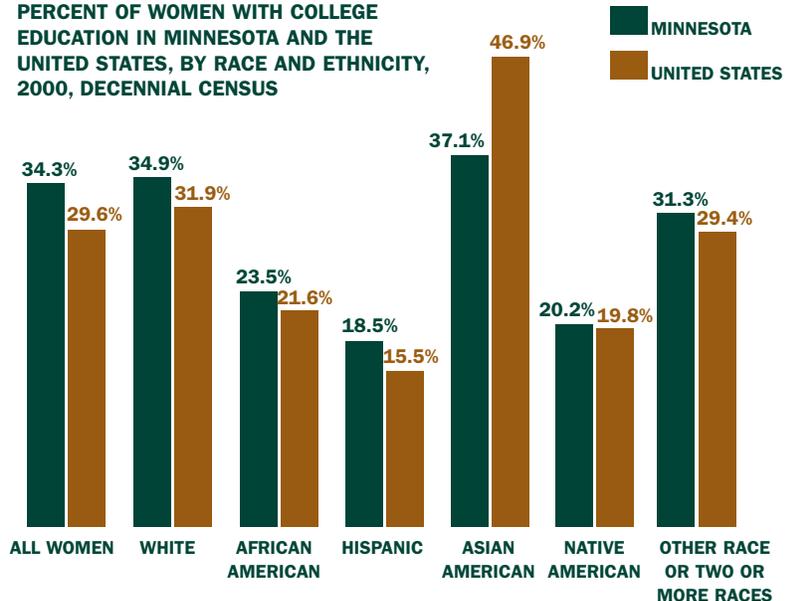
- ✓ How are we investing to help women of color prepare for and move into predominantly male jobs that pay well, and/or raise the wages of traditionally female jobs?
- ✓ How well does our grantmaking take into consideration the impact of the issues we care about (e.g., poverty, health, education, etc.) on Minnesotans according to their gender, race and ethnicity?

PERCENT OF WOMEN LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE IN MINNESOTA AND THE UNITED STATES, BY RACE AND ETHNICITY 1999, DECENNIAL CENSUS

	RACE AND ETHNICITY	
	MINNESOTA	UNITED STATES
ALL WOMEN	8.5%	12.6%
WHITE	7.1%	9.0%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	27.8%	24.1%
HISPANIC	21.9%	22.5%
ASIAN AMERICAN	14.6%	12.4%
NATIVE AMERICAN	26.3%	25.0%
OTHER/TWO OR MORE	18.5%	17.5%

Compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research

PERCENT OF WOMEN WITH COLLEGE EDUCATION IN MINNESOTA AND THE UNITED STATES, BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2000, DECENNIAL CENSUS



Compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research
These data include women with a two-year or four-year degree or higher.

MEDIA

- ✓ How often do we broadcast images of women of color employed and succeeding in higher-paying jobs traditionally predominated by men?
- ✓ How effectively do we use editorials, reporting, and talk shows to zero in on the economic disparities affecting women of color?
- ✓ To what extent are women of color represented on our editorial boards and decision-making positions?

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Health and Well-Being

Disparities in access to health care, rates of disease, and reproductive health are especially wide between women of color and white women in Minnesota. Not only do women of color lag behind in these categories, but, in some categories, Minnesota stands out as having one of the worst records in the nation. For example, it has one of the worst rates of mortality among Native American women due to lung cancer, and it has very high adolescent pregnancy rates among Hispanics and African Americans.

The economic status of women of color, who earn less than other Minnesotans, is an important element in this picture. Minnesota's African American, Asian American, and Native American women, as well as those of two or more races, are more likely to live below the poverty line than are their counterparts nationally. This strongly suggests that an integrated approach-i.e., one which addresses both poverty and specific health problems-is necessary to reduce the health disparities that affect women of color in the state.

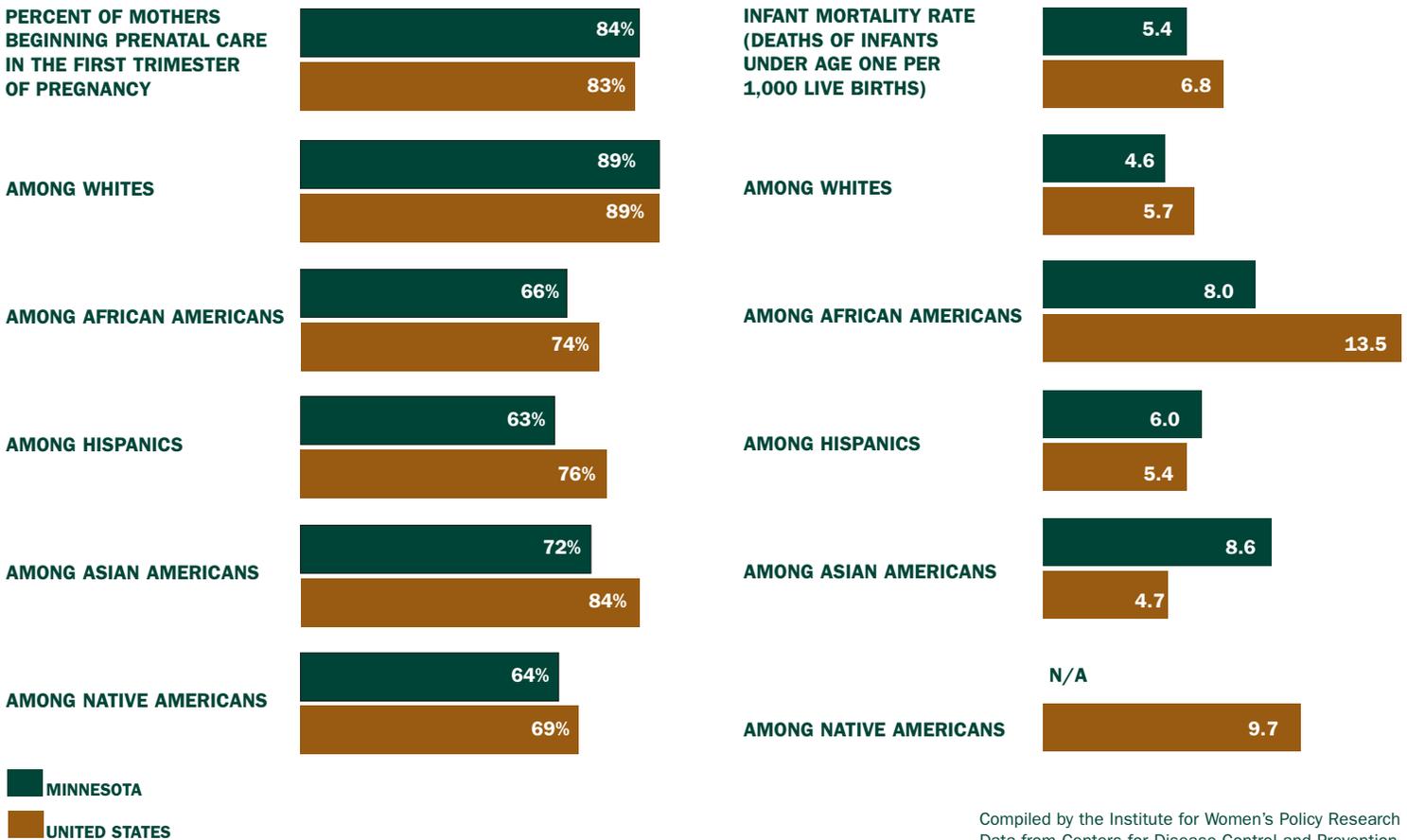
Access

- Although Minnesota women as a whole are more likely than women in the United States to have health insurance, 25 percent of low-income women in Minnesota are uninsured.
- Rates for use of prenatal care are lower in Minnesota than nationally in all major racial and ethnic groups of women except white women.

Disease & Mortality Rates

- African American women are 46 times more likely to have AIDS than white women.
- Native American women have the highest heart disease mortality rates of all racial and ethnic groups of women in Minnesota, at 158.4 per 100,000. In contrast, Asian American women have a heart disease mortality rate that is half the national rate.

PRENATAL CARE AND INFANT MORTALITY IN MINNESOTA AND THE UNITED STATES, BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2001



Compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research
 Data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- In Minnesota, both Native American and African American women experience a higher rate of mortality from lung cancer than they do in the nation as a whole; and the rate of mortality for Native American women is more than double that for Native American women nationally.³
- Nationally, women of color are two to three times more likely than white women to develop type-2 diabetes.

³It is not known what percentage of these deaths occur as a result of environmental factors, smoking, or other factors.

Reproductive Health

- The infant mortality rates are higher among Hispanic infants and much higher among Asian American infants in Minnesota than nationally.
- While teen pregnancy rates have declined overall in the past ten years, they are disproportionately high for teens of color.
- In 1989 the birth rate for Hispanic teenagers was 78.9 per 1,000. In 1999 that rate had risen to 137.5 per 1,000, making Minnesota's Hispanic teen birth rate the second highest in the nation.

CHECKLIST FOR CHANGE

WORKPLACES

- ✓ What are we doing to provide health insurance coverage which allows our lowest paid workers to obtain access to prenatal care and family planning?
- ✓ How do we use in-service education as a way to address health prevention topics for women at all pay levels?

GOVERNMENT

- ✓ How effective is our safety net of health insurance and services (including preventive care and screening for diseases) for low-income women and their children?
- ✓ How well are we addressing the higher rates of AIDS, breast cancer, and lung cancer and other diseases that are disproportionately affecting women of color?
- ✓ To what extent do we consider the impacts of current policies and the legacies of former policies on the reproductive rights and health of women of color?

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- ✓ Do we have a human sexuality curriculum that provides comprehensive information on birth control and reproductive health options?
- ✓ Do we have recruitment and scholarship programs that encourage women of color to become health care providers?

HEALTH INSTITUTIONS

- ✓ How effectively are we addressing the higher rates of AIDS, breast cancer, and lung cancer and other diseases that are disproportionately affecting women of color?

- ✓ How well do we provide training to health care providers on the cultural and socioeconomic issues facing women of color in their reproductive lives and in their access to health care and family planning?

PHILANTHROPIES

- ✓ What percentage of grant dollars are we directing to address the higher rates of AIDS, breast cancer, lung cancer and other diseases that are disproportionately affecting women of color?
- ✓ How well have we researched the health needs of women of color?

COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

- ✓ What have we done to build advocacy and self-help skills to help women improve their health status?
- ✓ To what extent do we advocate for adequate health insurance and services (including preventive care and screening for diseases) for low-income women and their children?

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

- ✓ What are we doing to increase awareness of the health disparities affecting women of color?
- ✓ How much of our legislative agenda is devoted to insuring an adequate safety net of health insurance and services (including preventive care and screening for diseases) for low-income women and their children?

Political Representation

How effective can a representative government be in a diverse society if key segments of the population are not included in its ranks? The serious, documented economic and health disparities experienced by women of color in Minnesota and outlined in this report, call for comprehensive, integrated solutions. They call for a partnership between all Minnesotans and the state's Native American, Hispanic, African American, and Asian American women. But today, a strategic partnership of this kind would not be possible to begin at the top, among our highest elected leaders, due to the overwhelming absence of women of color holding state and national office.

There is potential for change. Among local elected officials—e.g., mayors, school board members, and city council members—there has been growth in representation by women of color.⁴

⁴The extent of growth has unfortunately not been documented to date. The associations of cities, school boards and counties do not track the elected officials they represent by race, ethnicity, or gender.

⁵*The Impact of Women in Public Office*, Center for American Women and Politics, Indiana University Press, 2001.

National

- No woman of color has ever served in Minnesota's congressional delegation.

State

- In Minnesota, no woman of color has ever served in a statewide elected office.
- Two women of color served in Minnesota's legislature in 2004.

Tribal Governments

- 27% of elected tribal officials are women.

Research on the impact of women public officials has shown that, in general, women do have a gender-related impact on public policy and the political process. It is also documented that "their identification with feminism and/or of a particular racial or ethnic group also influence how and to what extent women public officials are making a difference."⁵ For example, women are more likely to put issues involving gender discrimination, child care, and women's health on legislative agendas. This suggests that issues of particular importance to women of color may gain more prominence in legislative agendas as the number of women of color holding office grows.

WOMEN IN ELECTED OFFICE IN MINNESOTA AND THE UNITED STATES, 2004		
Compiled by the Institute for Women's Policy Research and the Women's Foundation of Minnesota		
NUMBER OF WOMEN IN STATEWIDE EXECUTIVE ELECTED OFFICE	MINNESOTA	UNITED STATES
Number of Women in Statewide Executive Elected Office	3	80
Women of Color	0	5
Number of Women in the U.S. Congress		
U.S. Senate	0 of 2	14 of 100
Women of Color	0	0
U.S. House	1 of 8	60 of 435
Women of Color	0	18
Percent of State Legislators Who Are Women	27.4%	22.4%
Women of Color	1.0%	4.3%
Percent of Tribal Government Elected Officials who are Women	27.0%	N/A

Note: 8 out of 10 tribal governments reporting.

The serious, documented economic and health disparities experienced by women of color in Minnesota and outlined in this report, call for comprehensive, integrated solutions. They call for a partnership between all Minnesotans and the state's Native American, Hispanic, African American, and Asian American women.

CHECKLIST FOR CHANGE

WORKPLACES

- ✓ How effective are we at promoting leadership by women of color within our organization?
- ✓ What internal and external networks do we access to provide women of color employees with more support and leadership development opportunities?
- ✓ How effective have we been at recruiting women of color into governance level positions, such as officers and directors?

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

- ✓ What investments have we made in training women of color to lead campaigns and run for office?
- ✓ To what extent do we have strategies to move women of color in local elected offices to higher offices?

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- ✓ What have we done to encourage young women of color to choose and be educated for careers in public policy?
- ✓ How well are we doing at providing leadership and networking opportunities for women of color?
- ✓ How effective have we been at recruiting and retaining women of color in our own leadership?

PHILANTHROPIES

- ✓ What percent of our grants enable greater activism in the democratic process by women of color?
- ✓ How well are we doing at recruiting and retaining women of color on our governing board?
- ✓ How much are we investing in leadership training for women of color?

COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

- ✓ How effective are we at promoting women into leadership positions in our organizations?
- ✓ To what extent are we encouraging young women to choose and be educated for careers in public policy?

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

- ✓ How carefully have we considered the impact of diverse leadership in women's organizations?
- ✓ How effective are we at recruiting and retaining women of color in our organization's leadership?

COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

- ✓ To what extent are we mentoring young women and encouraging them to get a college degree?
- ✓ How do we help girls prepare for economic independence?
- ✓ How are we organizing in our communities to combat discrimination and harassment against women in order to help them get ahead?

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

- ✓ To what extent do our programs try to solve the economic and education problems which are most glaring for women of color?
- ✓ How effective are we at recruiting women of color to our governing boards and other leadership positions?
- ✓ To what extent is our advocacy for women's equality "color blind" and how does that influence our impact on women of color?

ON-LINE RESEARCH EASY TO ACCESS

The in-depth version of this report is available on our website at www.wfmn.org.

1. Click on *Research & Advocacy*.
2. Click on *Status of Women of Color in Minnesota*.
3. The table of contents is hyper-linked allowing you to move quickly between sections of the report.



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The Women's Foundation of Minnesota champions economic, political, and social equality for women through fundraising, grantmaking, research, and public advocacy.

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**THE REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS
OF WOMEN OF COLOR**

Women of color and indigenous women in the United States have a history of reduced access to reproductive rights and resources, in part due to inequalities in factors such as education, access to health care, and socioeconomic status, but also in part due to a history of discrimination and racism specific to reproductive health policies. These factors are summarized in a special section of *The Status of Women of Color in Minnesota*, on-line at www.wfmn.org.

1. Click on *Research & Advocacy*
2. Click on *Status of Women of Color in Minnesota*
3. Click on *Appendix II: The Reproductive Rights of Women of Color* in the table of contents.

DEFINITIONS

Most of the data presented in this report are from the most recent decennial census, collected by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The 2000 Census data allows researchers to generate statistics on a variety of indicators of women's economic status—including earnings, the gender wage ratio, labor force participation, education, and poverty—by race and ethnicity. Within this report, data reported for the major U.S. races included in the Census data (whites, African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans and other/two or more races) do not include Hispanics unless otherwise noted. In addition, when the report refers to the various racial groups, it refers only to those people who indicated belonging to one race alone. Although excluding people who mark "two or more races" underestimates the numbers of all racial categories, by far the largest impact is on the American Indian population.

Please note that immigrant women are grouped within the larger racial and ethnic categories provided. Within the U.S. Census, it is possible to analyze whether individuals are born inside or outside the United States, and where possible at the state level in Minnesota, data are provided on differences between men and women in each category within the larger racial and ethnic groups. Within the confines of this project, it was not possible, however, to analyze differences by how long immigrants had been residing in the United States. The Women's Foundation regards this report as an important tool, yet recognizes that research of this kind is constricted by the limitations of the data and the resources available to researchers. The Foundation encourages questions and comments on how its research on Minnesota women can be expanded.

