INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S POLICY RESEARCH

Fact Sheet

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The Status of Women in Mississippi, 2002: Highlights

Mississippi reflects both the advances and limited progress achieved by women in the United States. Women in Mississippi and the United States as a whole are seeing important changes in their lives and in their access to political, economic, and social rights. However, they by no means enjoy equality with men, and they still lack many of the legal guarantees that would allow them to achieve that equality. Women in Mississippi and the nation would benefit from stronger enforcement of equal opportunity laws, better political representation, adequate and affordable child care, and other policies that would help improve their status.

The rankings and grades for each of the composite indices in the chart below were calculated by combining data on several indicators of women's status in each of five areas. These data were used to compare women in Mississippi with women in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. In addition, they were used to evaluate women's status in Mississippi in comparison with women's ideal status, as reflected in the state's grades.

Chart I: How Mississippi Ranks on Key Indicators

Indicators	National Rank*	Regional Rank*	Grade
Composite Political Participation Index	**42**	**2**	**D-**
Women's Voter Registration, 1998 and 2000 (74.8%)	7	2	
Women's Voter Turnout, 1998 and 2000 (52.5%)	23	2	
Women in Elected Office Composite Index, 2002	48	3	
Women's Institutional Resources, 2002	20	1	
Composite Employment and Earnings Index	**49**	**4**	**F**
Women's Median Annual Earnings, 1999 ($21,714)	49	4	
Ratio of Women's to Men's Earnings, 1999 (68.5%)	44	4	
Women's Labor Force Participation, 2000 (57.0%)	44	3	
Women in Managerial and Professional Occupations, 1999 (28.0%)	46	4	
Composite Social and Economic Autonomy Index	**49**	**4**	**F**
Percent with Health Insurance Among Nonelderly Women, 2000 (81.5%)	39	3	
Educational Attainment: Percent of Women with Four or More Years of College, 1990 (13.3%)	47	3	
Percent of Businesses that are Women-Owned, 1997 (22.8%)	47	4	
Percent of Women Above the Poverty Level, 1999 (83.2%)	47	4	
Composite Reproductive Rights Index	**51**	**4**	**F**
Composite Health and Well-Being Index	**49**	**3**	**D-**

See Appendix II in *The Status of Women in the States* for a detailed description of the methodology and sources used for the indices presented here.

* 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 four and refer to the states in the East South Central region (AL, KY, MS, and TN).

Calculated by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

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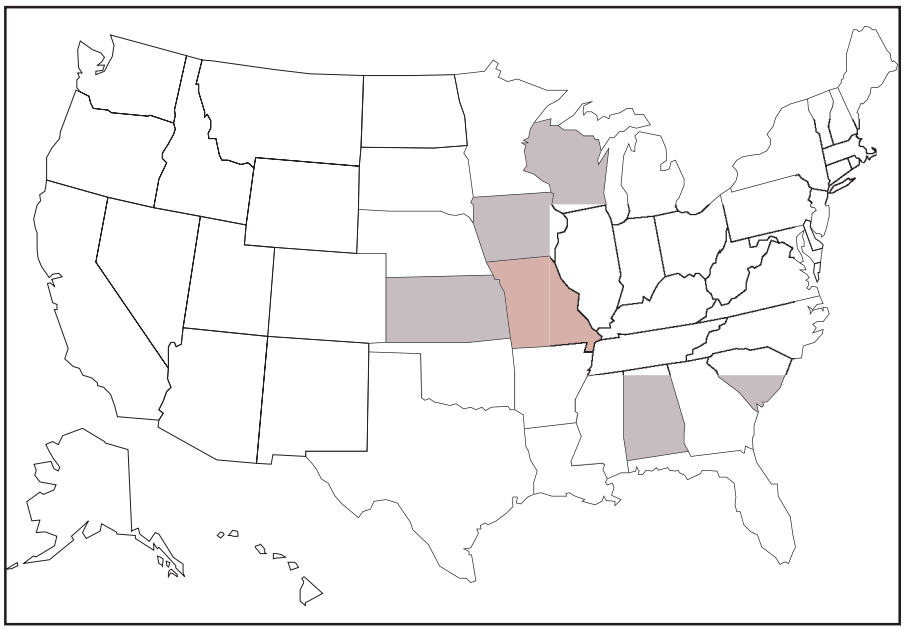
The Institute for Women's Policy Research presents

The Status of Women in the States 2002

The Status of Women in the States is part of an ongoing research project conducted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) to measure and track the status of women in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Primarily funded by the Ford Foundation, with additional funding from state and local foundations and organizations, this project intends to improve the ability of advocates and policymakers at the state level to address women's issues. The data used in each report come from a variety of sources, primarily federal government agencies, although other organizations also provide data.



The first three sets of reports were released in 1996, 1998, and 2000, consisting of 33 state reports and three national reports. The 2002 series includes nine states as well as an update of the national report. See IWPR's website (www.iwpr.org) for more information and to order copies of all the 42 state reports available (or call IWPR at 202-785-5100). The 2002 National Report provides a timely overview of women's status across all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

About the Institute for Women's Policy Research

Founded in 1987, IWPR is an independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit, scientific research organization dedicated to informing and stimulating debate on public policy issues of critical importance to women and their families. IWPR focuses on issues of poverty and welfare, employment and earnings, work and family, the economic and social aspects of health care and safety, and women's civic and political participation. The Institute works with policymakers, scholars, and public interest groups to design, execute, and disseminate research and to build a network of individuals and organizations that conduct and use women-oriented policy research. IWPR also works in affiliation with the graduate programs in public policy and women's studies at The George Washington University.

IWPR's work is supported by foundation grants, government grants and contracts, donations from individuals, and contributions from organizations and corporations. Improving women's lives--ending economic and social inequalities--this is what IWPR is all about. Your tax-deductible membership contribution to IWPR's Information Network enables IWPR to make a difference. Membership benefits include: Quarterly Newsletter, Fact Sheets, Research-in-Briefs, a 20 percent discount on publications and conference registrations, and more. To become a member or to make a donation, visit www.iwpr.org or call 202-785-5100.

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