

# **Women's Social and Economic Status in Arkansas**

**Interim Study Proposal 2011-032**

**Representative Kathy Webb**



**2012**



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## Introduction

During its 2011 Regular Session, the Arkansas General Assembly considered House Bill 1911, which called for the City, County and Local Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives to “collect economic data from the political subdivisions across the state to determine women’s economic status in Arkansas.” The bill, sponsored by Representative Kathy Webb and Senator Linda Chesterfield, was adopted as an interim study proposal. The measure was based on a 2002 Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) report, *The Status of Women in the States*. IWPR updated the report in 2004 and again in 2009 in an abbreviated format. The 2009 report found that Arkansas ranked between 47<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> on most measures examined.<sup>1</sup> The table below lists IWPR’s findings:

	Arkansas	Arkansas’s Ranking
Women’s Median Annual Earnings, 2009	\$28,640	47 <sup>th</sup>
Earnings Ratio Between Women and Men, 2009	78.5%	15 <sup>th</sup>
Percent of Women in the Labor Force, 2009	55.7%	47 <sup>th</sup>
Percent of Employed Women in Professional or Managerial Occupations, 2009	35.4%	45 <sup>th</sup>
Percent of Women With Health Insurance, 2009	84.0%	40 <sup>th</sup>
Percent of Women With Four or More Years of College, 2009	19.0%	50 <sup>th</sup>
Percent of Businesses That Are Women-Owned, 2007	24.5%	49 <sup>th</sup>
Percent of Women Living Above Poverty, 2009	79.6%	49 <sup>th</sup>

This interim study aimed to update IWPR’s data and expand on these measures. In calling for this interim study, the Legislature recognized that the IWPR report found that women in Arkansas fare poorly economically and that wide disparities were based on gender, race, ethnicity and region-based, factors including without limitation:

- (1) Elderly women living in poverty;
- (2) Women-owned business;
- (3) Women without insurance;
- (4) Women in professional positions; and
- (5) Women with college degrees.

To conduct the study, Representative Webb invited a diverse group of women from across the state, many of whom had been working on these issues in myriad forums for many years. Theresa Carpenter, a student at the UALR Bowen School of Law, served as extern on the project. The participants included:

- |                                     |                             |                        |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Senator Joyce Elliott            | 7. Theresa Carpenter        | 16. Sarah Beth Estes   |
| 2. Representative Greg Leding       | 8. Jennifer Carson          | 17. Laura Frankenstein |
| 3. Representative Leslee Milam-Post | 9. Yvonne Case              | 18. Diana Glaze        |
| 4. Representative Johnnie Roebuck   | 10. Kae Chatman             | 19. Katheryn Hargis    |
| 5. Patty Barker                     | 11. Sharon Collier-Tennison | 20. Stephanie Harris   |
| 6. Terri Beiner                     | 12. Cynthia Crone           | 21. Sharl Hill         |
|                                     | 13. Dianne Curry            | 22. Denise Hoggard     |
|                                     | 14. Ravina Daphtary         | 23. Kim Kelley         |
|                                     | 15. Lee Lee Doyle           | 24. Karen Lindsey      |
|                                     |                             | 25. Suzanne McCarthy   |

26. Sarah Marsh  
27. Julie McDonald  
28. JoAnne Mills  
29. Kim Mullen  
30. Christina Mullinax  
31. Susana O’Daniel  
32. Gigi Peters  
33. Janet L. Pulliam  
34. Liz Russell  
35. Melissa Rust

36. Willa Sanders  
37. Laura Shue  
38. Callie Slade  
39. Michelle R. Smith  
40. Anna C. Strong  
41. Sharon Collier-  
Tennison  
42. Kelly Terry  
43. Jane Gray-Todd  
44. Hilary Trudell

45. Dawne Vandiver  
46. Deborly (Deb)  
Wade  
47. Caeli Waldron  
48. Pam Walker  
49. Jean Wallace  
50. Lynnette Watts  
51. Stephanie Williams  
52. Barbara Yarnell

The group’s charge was to study the issues in a data-driven format. The group divided into six subgroups, and the subgroups met individually to research and draft sections of this report. While each subgroup had its own discrete topics, this report recognizes that the issues are interconnected.

*“Within the stable economy, it’s necessary to eliminate all forms of sexual discrimination, and to provide women for the first time in our history with economic opportunities equal to those of men.”*

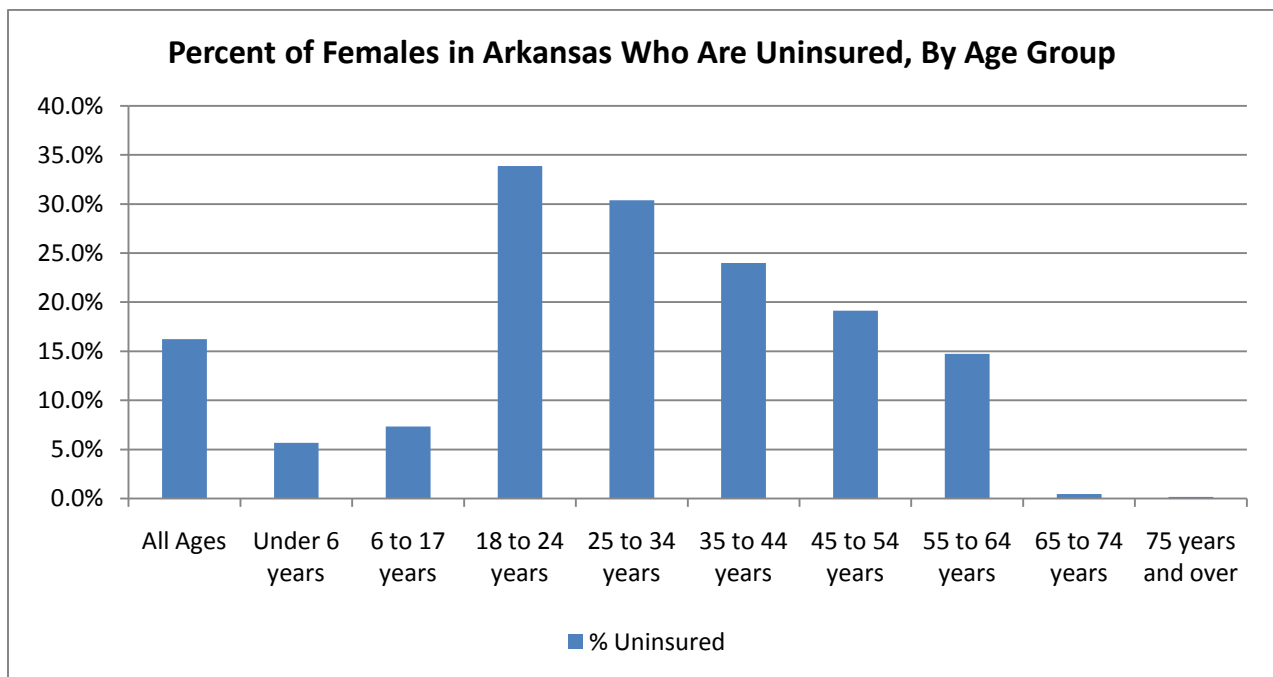
***President Jimmy Carter***  
*[October 2, 1976]*

## Health

Today's Arkansas women face an unprecedented health care crisis. Women in nearly a quarter of Arkansas counties are expected to die younger than they were a generation ago, a setback that has not happened since the 1918 Spanish Influenza epidemic. Nineteen counties in Arkansas saw female life expectancy fall between 1987 and 2007, with a growing disparity between healthy and unhealthy areas. The widest gap is between Benton County, with female life expectancy at 81.8 years, and Phillips County with female life expectancy at 75.0.<sup>2</sup>

## Current Status

Health insurance is a critical factor in making health care accessible to women. Women with health coverage are more likely to obtain needed preventive, primary and specialty care services, and have better access to new advances in women's health. In Arkansas, 16.2 percent of women and girls are uninsured, while 18.3 percent of men and boys are uninsured.<sup>3</sup> The rate of uninsured women in Arkansas is nearly three percentage points higher than the rate of women who are uninsured nationally (13.5 percent). In Arkansas, the age group with the highest percentage of uninsured women—nearly 34 percent—is the 18- to 24-year-old group.



Source: American Community Survey, Health Insurance Coverage Status by Sex, By Age, 3-year estimates, 2008-2010

According to research conducted by the National Women's Law Center, a majority of non-elderly adults receiving Medicaid in Arkansas are women. About 94 percent of non-elderly adult Medicaid recipients are women, many of whom are mothers struggling to raise their children in difficult economic times, according to the NWLC research. Additionally, women make up 73 percent of elderly individuals who receive Medicaid in Arkansas. Women also make up 55 percent of individuals who receive Medicaid on the basis of disability in Arkansas.

In addition to lack of health insurance, the health of Arkansas women is threatened by a number of other confounding factors. Arkansas has high rates of heart disease, stroke, cancer, lung disease, and

obesity.<sup>4</sup> The teen birth rate for Arkansas for 2010 was 52.5 per 1,000 births, 49<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation.<sup>5</sup> Arkansas has one of the oldest populations in the country.<sup>6</sup> Among Arkansas adults, 20 percent read at or below 5<sup>th</sup>-grade level, hindering *health literacy*, the ability to understand and use information in health-promoting ways.<sup>7</sup> The Arkansas Legislative Taskforce on Reducing Poverty and Promoting Economic Opportunity, in its 2010 final report, identified the following additional poverty-related barriers:

- Lack of support to consumers to navigate the health care system
- Lack of insurance options
- Lack of evidence-based substance abuse and mental health treatment
- Workforce shortages in primary care and dental care.<sup>8</sup>

Good health and well being are particularly in jeopardy for women in the St. Francis County and surrounding Delta communities. The life expectancy for St. Francis County is among the lowest for women, and the infant mortality rates for St. Francis County and surrounding areas are among the highest.<sup>9</sup> The area suffers from shortages of primary care, dental, and mental health care.<sup>10</sup> Medicaid eligibility in St. Francis County exceeds 73 percent.<sup>11</sup>

Arkansas Institutions have been aggressively gathering information on these issue and making it available to policy makers. Without question, the very underpinning of this section on access to health insurance was the “Arkansas Health Insurance Expansion Initiative: Roundtable Report,” prepared in March 2002 by the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement.<sup>12</sup>

## Access to Health Insurance

The National Women’s Law Center’s March 2012 report, “Turning to Fairness: Insurance Discrimination Against Women Today and the Affordable Care Act,”<sup>13</sup> shows that:

- There are significant differences between the amount women are charged for health insurance and the amount men are charged—even when maternity care is excluded. The gaps vary both within and across states and from one insurer to another. For example, one plan examined in Arkansas charges 25-year-old women 81 percent more than men for the same coverage, while a similar plan in the same state charges women only 10 percent more for coverage than men. Gender rating occurs in the individual market and the group market. In its research, NWLC found that businesses with predominately female workforces are routinely charged more for group coverage.
- The differences are the result of gender rating, the practice of charging women different premiums than men. Fourteen states have banned or limited gender rating in the individual market, and 17 have banned or limited gender rating in the small group market. (Most, but not all, of the states that have banned gender rating in the individual market have also banned gender rating in the small group market.) In states like Arkansas that have not banned the practice, the vast majority—92 percent—of the best selling plans gender rate, according to the NWLC’s research. Only 3 percent of these plans cover maternity services.
- The National Women’s Law Center estimates that gender rating costs women approximately \$1 billion a year. The Center’s estimates are based on an average of currently advertised premiums and the most recent data on the number of women in the individual health insurance market.



- Maternity coverage is largely unavailable in the individual market. Just nine states require all insurers in the individual market to cover maternity care. Three other states require some plans in the individual market to provide maternity coverage. In states where it is not mandated, only 6 percent of the health plans available to a 30-year-old woman provide maternity coverage, according to the NWLC. Even when states that mandate maternity coverage are included in the calculation, the number reaches only 12 percent. Under Arkansas law, health insurers are not required to provide maternity benefits. However, insurers that do provide maternity benefits are subject to certain restrictions. For example, they may not restrict hospital stays to less than 48 hours after normal vaginal deliveries or 96 hours after cesarean section.<sup>14</sup>
- Maternity riders were available in 7 percent of plans NWLC studied, but usually at a prohibitively expensive rate and with limited coverage. For instance, a plan NWLC examined in Kansas offered a rider that cost over \$1,600 a month, while even the most expensive best-selling plan for overall coverage in the state cost only \$222.76 a month. Maternity riders may also include a waiting period of up to two years before the coverage takes effect.

### Health Insurance Coverage Under the Affordable Care Act

In passing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA), Congress adopted important non-discrimination protections for insurance coverage. The ACA mandates that insurance plans in state-based or federal health insurance exchanges cover broad categories of “essential health benefits,” including outpatient and hospitalization care, prescription drugs, rehabilitation, mental health care, and maternity care, all of which have important implications for women’s health. The ACA prohibits health plans from gender rating, a provision that takes effect for all new plans for plan years beginning no later than January 1, 2014. It also bars them from excluding maternity coverage. The inclusion of maternity services, in particular, will have a major impact, given the large number of plans that do not currently cover such services.

The law also requires that new private plans cover preventive services and vaccines recommended by federally-sponsored committees without co-payments or other cost sharing. This includes pap tests, mammograms, bone density tests, as well as the HPV vaccine. Beginning in August 2012, this provision extends access to preventive care by including an additional set of preventive services for women, which were recently approved by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). These services include contraceptives prescribed by a provider; breastfeeding supplies and supports, such as breast pumps; screening for domestic violence; well woman visits; and several counseling and screening services.<sup>15</sup>

Additionally, Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act prohibits discrimination in health programs receiving federal dollars, including insurance programs and health insurance exchanges, and other programs operated by the federal government.

Under portions of the ACA that have already taken effect, good things have already happened. Arkansas children, from birth to age 26, are no longer excluded from health insurance policies because of a pre-existing condition. With this provision, the United States essentially joined the remaining democracies of the world in August of 2011. Additionally, all children can remain covered under their parents’ employer-based plans until they are 26. This provision went into effect in 2010.

The key to ensuring that women have access to coverage will be the exchanges. The Arkansas Insurance Department has worked assiduously to partner with the federal government to ensure that Arkansas’s demographic and economic conditions are handled appropriately.

## Accessing Health Care Providers in Arkansas

Many communities throughout the state have a low health literacy rate and a high distrust of health care professionals. The Community Connector Program was created to train community health workers in Arkansas to be liaisons between health care providers and members of the community. Ms. Naomi Cottoms, director of Tri-County Rural Health Network, created the program and was recognized for her efforts at an award ceremony in Washington, D.C. in December 2011.

The program was established in 2003 by organizers who held community forums, participated in one-on-one conversations, and performed asset mapping. Organizers learned that citizens were not using available health resources, did not know how to access the resources, and didn't know which resources were available, particularly in the Delta regions of the state. Trust was also a major issue, due to many years of racial problems in the Delta communities. The Community Connector Program partnered with the following organizations:

- University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), College of Public Health
- Arkansas Rural Development Network
- Foundation for the Mid-South
- Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

Ms. Cottoms said the program:

- Connects citizens to health resources and encourages, motivates, and persuades people to take advantage of opportunities.
- Focuses on the elderly and adults living with disabilities.
- Ensures savings of Medicaid funds.
- Helps citizens access home and community-based health resources.
- Enables citizens to remain in their homes instead of going into a nursing home.

Ms. Cottoms explained that much of the original work was done to help demonstrate cost neutrality. A team from the UAMS College of Public Health evaluated the program, concluding that it actually saves \$3.00 for every \$1.00 invested. As a result the program is now funded through Medicaid.

Ms. Cottoms stated that the program hires non-traditional leaders, such as lay citizens to serve as connectors. Connectors hold forums, meet in little "holes in the walls," and go anywhere they are needed to reach citizens in their communities. The connectors are people not traditionally thought of as employees. Some Connector employees have not had a lot of work experience. Many connectors have no college experience, and some have not finished high school. Connectors begin with six to eight weeks of training. Weekly review sessions are held with the connectors to provide on-going training and monitoring. Ms. Cottoms said the curriculum and training techniques being used are very effective. The Connector Program also has developed a relationship with the Phillips Community College in Helena. A professor from Phillips Community College has implemented classes, which are offered in program satellite offices. Ms. Cottoms said the smaller setting provides a non-threatening environment for connectors who are encouraged to take college courses. Many connectors have taken classes on their own and are pursuing degrees.

The program was first established in Lee, Monroe, and Phillips counties, and has expanded into 15 counties throughout the Delta region of the state. Ms. Cottoms provided the following numbers for connectors in the 15 counties:

- 25 total connectors in the 15 counties
- Typically 2 connectors per county
- 3 outreach coordinators
- 1 program manager
- 1 assistant trainer

The services the connectors currently provide make them a natural fit for the role of Navigators, a new consumer assistance provider established by the Affordable Care Act.

### Role of Navigators Under the Affordable Care Act

Section 1311 of the Affordable Care Action creates a grant program that will designate entities, called Navigators, to help consumers navigate the health insurance system. Navigators' responsibilities will include conducting public awareness campaigns, distributing objective information about health plans and facilitating enrollment in health plans. This provision of the law, which takes effect in 2014, allows Navigators to be "community & consumer-focused nonprofit groups." Because of the role that Community Connectors already serve, the Navigator program presents an opportunity to utilize existing resources and avoid recreating the wheel. The necessary training could be provided for the Community Connectors, and this group could be required to meet the necessary criteria and certification set out by the Arkansas Department of Insurance and/or the federal government. If the Community Connector serve as Navigators, they can provide access to the health benefits exchange for the 15 counties they already serve.

In the event the state does not partner with the federal government for its health benefits exchange, the committee recommends that the Insurance Commissioner act as a liaison to connect the group with the federal exchanges.

### School-Based Community Health Centers

For some children, good health and wellness are hindered by the lack of access to physicians and other health providers. To address this issue, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Office of Coordinated School Health in collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI), and Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) funded nine Coordinated School Health and Wellness Center Initiative (CHS & WCI) grants under Act 180 of 2009, the tobacco excise tax. Jared Cleveland, former Lavaca School Superintendent, presented information to the legislative study group about the Lavaca Wellness Center. School-based Community Health Centers (SBCHCs) provide basic physical, mental, dental or other services beyond the scope of the school nurse and are not intended to replace school nurses. The SBCHCs are required to maintain a working relationship with the physician of a child's medical home and to ensure that individual patient health plans are executed effectively and efficiently. Students can apply for ARKids and local resources connected to the health center for students and family convenience. The intent is for the center to act as a resource for wellness and prevention. The following are typical characteristics of SBCHCs:

- They are located in the school or on school grounds.
- They work cooperatively within the school to become an integral part of the school.
- They provide a comprehensive range of services that meet the specific physical and behavioral health needs of the young people in the community.

- They employ a multidisciplinary team of providers to care for the students: nurse practitioners, registered nurses, physician assistants, social workers, physicians, alcohol and drug counselors, and other health professionals.
- They provide clinical services through a qualified health provider such as a hospital, health department, or medical practice.
- They require parents to sign written consents for their children to receive the full scope of services provided at the SBCHC.
- They have an advisory board consisting of community representatives, parents, youth, and family organizations, who provide planning and oversight.<sup>16</sup>

Positive outcomes were achieved through the state's pilot initiatives, including a reduction in the sick/personal day usage of school staff and improved access to health care for students and families.

## Education

### Current Status

Nationally and in Arkansas, women’s gains in educational attainment have outpaced those of men over the last 40 years. At the primary school level, female students across the U.S. score slightly higher than males on reading assessments and lower than males on mathematics assessments.<sup>17</sup> In Arkansas, females score slightly higher on both assessments. High school graduation rates show women graduating at a higher rate than males both nationally and at home,<sup>18</sup> and, at the post-secondary level, women in Arkansas colleges and universities earn bachelor’s degrees at a higher rate than men.<sup>19</sup> The differences in Arkansas are wider than the gap between males and females in the national rates.<sup>20</sup>

The implementation and enforcement of the federal Education Amendments of 1972 have made gender discrimination, like that of discriminatory practices of the designation of gender-stereo-typed courses, illegal in U.S. schools. The success of this legislation is evident particularly at the primary school level.

While this is welcome news, the percentage of all adult women with a bachelor’s degree or more continues to lag behind the rate for men.<sup>21</sup> Arkansas ranks among the lowest in the U.S. in the percentage of women 25 years old or older with a bachelor’s degree. In post-secondary collegiate athletics, female students receive less than half as many full/partial athletic and non-athletic scholarships than male students<sup>22</sup>.

While women are making gains in achieving an education, they continue to hold far fewer leadership positions at all levels of the education spectrum—K-12 as well as two- and four-year colleges/universities.

This section of the report addresses issues in Arkansas women’s high school and college completion rates, women’s faculty and leadership roles in higher education institutions, the link between women’s education and their job prospects and the educational opportunities for incarcerated women.

*“A woman just can’t make it with only a high school diploma. Women need education beyond high school to earn the same wages as men with only a high school diploma. For example, a man can earn \$35,000 annually with a high school diploma in the manufacturing sector, while a woman must obtain a postsecondary credential and work in health care to earn as much.”*

**Anthony P. Carnevale, Research Professor at Georgetown University, Director of the Center on Education and the Workforce, quoted in *Bachelor’s Degree is Still Best Path to Middle Class Jobs and Earnings, Chronicle of Higher Education* [November 14, 2011 – Jennifer Gonzalez]**

### Higher Education

Arkansas is ranked 51<sup>st</sup> in the nation in terms of 25-34 year-olds with an associate’s degree or higher, with only 27 percent of residents attaining this educational status (*Half in Ten: Restoring Shared Prosperity*, 2011). According to U.S. Census Bureau information from the 2008 American Community Survey, the percentage of Arkansas residents between the ages of 25 and 64 holding only a high school diploma or equivalent was 35.2 percent, while residents achieving some college but no degree came in at 23.5 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Survey retrieved from “A policy brief from Lumina Foundation for Education”).

Furthermore, only 19 percent of all Arkansas women had a college education of four years or more in 2009, ranking the state 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation, according to fact sheet compiled by the Institute for Women’s

Policy Research in Washington, DC, (Arkansas Factsheet, 2009). This low statistic shows that despite fewer gender discriminations in Arkansas today, there is still a major problem with retaining women in the education system.

Authors Mary Dee Wenniger and Mary Helen Conroy researched and analyzed statistics on women in higher education. Their book, *Gender Equity or Bust* [2001], presented their findings from three perspectives – students, faculty and administrators. Some of their analysis and conclusions are summarized below:

**AS STUDENTS** - The percentage of female students enrolled in higher education institutions has increased steadily since the 1970s. In 1999, 55.6 percent of all undergraduates were female. During that same year, higher education held a conference to address the change in their market's gender, asking the question "where the boys had gone, why, and what to do about it."

Women are steadily gaining on men and surpassing them in earning bachelor's and master's degrees. In 1900, women earned 19 percent of all bachelor's degrees, 40 percent in 1930, 43 percent in 1970, 55 percent in 1994, and 57 percent in 1999. Of the master's degrees awarded in 1999, women earned 52 percent. Among doctoral degrees earned by U.S. citizens in 1999, women earned almost half, 48 percent compared with 52 percent for men. According to the 2011 White House Council on Women and Girls report "Women in America," published a decade after *Gender Equity or Bust*, more doctoral degrees were conferred to women in 2008 than to men.

Wenniger and Conroy noted that college and university students are more likely than in earlier decades to be older (age twenty-five and up), attend part-time, live off-campus, and have other responsibilities such as a job and a family. Additionally older females are more likely to return to school when relationships end due to death or divorce.

**AS FACULTY** - The gender of the faculty in higher education has remained primarily male, as have the standards by which faculty are judged for hiring, salary and promotion. However, the number of women is increasing among all ranks of faculty.

Women are more likely than men to fill part-time and adjunct positions. Part-time positions held by both men and women have increased to more than 40 percent. Women are more likely to teach in private, four-year schools or in two-year public community colleges. There has been a similar increase in women who accept full-time, non-tenure track faculty positions [45.5 to 50.1 percent].

More women are joining the tenure track, having increased from 34 percent in 1983 to 42 percent in 1991. However, according to a report from the American Association of University Women, 48 percent of female faculty was tenured in 1999, compared to 72 percent of male faculty. Over the last twenty years, there has been an increase of 1.5 percent in the rate of women gaining tenure, compared to an 8 percent increase for men.

Women continue to get unequal pay for equal work. According to the 1999-2000 salary survey of the American Association of University Professors, there are significant pay discrepancies based on gender. At schools that grant doctorates, male professors earn 9.8 percent more than women. At public schools, the gender pay gap increased from 10.5 percent in 1982 to 13 percent in 1998. According to the American Association of University Women, female college professors earn 77 percent of what male college professors earn. Part of this discrepancy is due to women being concentrated in the lower-paying social sciences (nursing, education, and teaching), whereas men are in the higher-paying hard sciences (engineering, computers, and math).

**AS ADMINISTRATORS** - The number of women in higher education administration has been increasing since 1970, which many believe resulted from the women's movement, affirmative action and the

strong work ethic and abilities many women possess. Five percent of all college and university presidents in 1975 were women, according to the American Council on Education's Office of Women in Higher Education. The rate increased to 12 percent in 1992, 16.5 percent in 1995, and 19.3 percent by 1998, according to Wenniger and Conroy. The largest percentage of women presidents lead private, two-year colleges (27 percent), followed by private, four-year colleges (15 percent) and public universities (14 percent).

In other top administrative jobs, women are increasingly being named provost, vice president and dean. Women hold an estimated one-third of department chairs.

## Arkansas Women in Education

Arkansas data on women as students, faculty and administrators reveal that:

**AS STUDENTS** – Arkansas's high school graduation rate of 74 percent ranks the state 36<sup>th</sup> in the nation, and Arkansas girls' graduation rate is even higher at 77.3 percent.<sup>23</sup> However, the college-going rate for females, according to the Comprehensive Arkansas Higher Education Annual Report, is 56 percent, compared with the college-going rate of 51.7 percent for all public high school graduates. The national college-going rate, calculated by National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), using a different formula, is 63.3 percent. NCHEMS calculates Arkansas's college-going rate at 62.5 percent, just under the national rate.<sup>24</sup>

**AS FACULTY** – Women hold 38 percent of all faculty positions in Arkansas, but are more apt than men to fill part-time and adjunct positions. Women continue to receive unequal pay for equal work in university settings. Data gathered in October 2011 shows significant pay discrepancies based on gender. At the Chancellor/President level, the average salary for women was \$147,570, while the average salary for men was \$198,695. Female Chairs, on average, received \$134,316 to men's \$191,629. For faculty, the average female wage was \$86,111, compared with men's average of \$97,415.<sup>25</sup> One theory for this discrepancy is due to women being concentrated in the lower-paying social sciences (nursing, education, and teaching), whereas men were in the higher-paying hard sciences (engineering, computers, and math).

In K-12 education, women made up 38 of the 240 superintendents in 2009-10. Not only was the number of women in this position lower, but the median salary for women (\$93,809) was also lower than men's (\$95,010).<sup>26</sup>

**AS ADMINISTRATORS** – Data collected in October 2011 found that of the 34 individuals occupying Chancellor or President positions in Arkansas's two- and four-year institutions, just six were women. Since then, at least one more woman has joined those ranks. In June 2012, Pulaski Technical College selected Dr. Margaret A. Ellibee as its new President. Among the positions of Provost, Vice President and, especially, Dean, the number of women is increasing, but it still lags behind the number of men. Forty-three percent of top administrative positions are held by women, according to the 2011 data. In Arkansas, women hold almost one-half (44 percent) of department chairs.<sup>27</sup>

## Women in Athletics

Public records clearly indicate that male athletes in Arkansas receive more scholarships – both full and partial – than female athletes.<sup>28</sup> Data also show that more males participate in inter-collegiate sports in Arkansas than females. Although this data demonstrates some disparities in numbers, all of Arkansas colleges and universities are in compliance with federal Title IX requirements. What is not included in these data are the number and size of scholarships awarded to male and female athletes by alumni foundations. It is a commonly held belief that more males receive such funding than females, but that

assumption cannot be proven because foundation records are not reported publicly. It has been estimated that in the U.S., men receive \$133 million more per year than women in athletic scholarships (National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education, 2005).

Current data from Arkansas colleges and universities illustrate that participating in sports has a significant impact on women athletes' college retention rates. In Arkansas, women show higher retention rates during their first three years of athletic participation/study as compared to male athletes. These numbers tend to reverse in years 4 and 5 of college.

An article published by the *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*<sup>29</sup> reported that scholarship support alone is not significantly related to retention; however, *gender* is a significant predictor of retention, with female athletes having a higher rate. Drop-out decisions for male athletes are often determined by grade performance, while women more often consider factors such as allegiance to their school, enjoyment of the social aspect of the athletic program and contentment with their current situation.

Another factor impacting retention rates for both male and female athletes is the opportunity for participation in professional athletics for male student athletes after college play. For men, there are many such opportunities after college, while opportunities for women athletes are limited. Salaries for male athletes are much higher in professional sports than for female athletes. These two factors – more opportunities and higher pay for male athletes – may be the reason women athletes persevere as students while in college. The prospect of receiving a college education through sports participation may also be the reason many women athletes pursue athletic scholarships.

There are many elements contributing to retention rates that go beyond athletics: grades, academic climate, relationships with professors, personal beliefs, and many others. Discerning the factors that affect retention is most important if the schools are able to identify them, make changes and cater to the needs of the student athletes who are more likely to drop out. Higher grades, higher levels of academic support, and effective coping strategies all improve a student athlete's chances of remaining at the same school.<sup>30</sup>

Athletic Scholarship's report entitled, "Title IX and Its Effects On College Athletic Programs,"<sup>31</sup> points out the positive effects of Title IX for females. Benefits of playing sports include gaining leadership skills, higher academic performance, increased self esteem, increased health, and a more responsible social behavior. The report states that before Title IX, 1 in 27 girls nationally played varsity sports; today that figure is 1 in 2.5. There are currently 2.8 million girls across the U.S. playing high school sports with the hopes of obtaining a scholarship to a college or university. Prior to Title IX, athletic scholarships for women were virtually non-existent. Today, there are over 10,000 athletic scholarships awarded to women to compete at the collegiate level each year.

## Education and Job Prospects

In today's economy, not having a college education can lead to fewer job opportunities and lower potential for wealth. A 2007 article published in the journal *Higher Education* claims a "positive correlation between higher levels of education and higher earnings for all racial/ethnic groups and for both men and women."<sup>32</sup> The article asserts that "students who attend institutions of higher education obtain a wide range of personal, financial, and other lifelong benefits; likewise, taxpayers and society as a whole derive a multitude of direct and indirect benefits when citizens have access to postsecondary education" (Baum and Ma, 2007). Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows that the median weekly salary for a worker obtaining a bachelor's degree is \$1,053, whereas the median weekly salary for a worker with only a high school diploma is \$638.<sup>33</sup> In addition, having parents with a college degree increases the



likelihood that a child is planning to obtain a college degree.<sup>34</sup> Thus, a college education is an important means for increasing the economic opportunities for both poor women and their children.<sup>35</sup>

Yet, despite the fact that the college-going rate for females in 2010 was 56 percent, compared with 47.1 percent for men (2011 Annual Comprehensive Report, Arkansas Department of Higher Education), “women still earn less, are less likely to have a Bachelor’s or professional degree, or to own a business, and are more likely to live in poverty than men across the states,” according to a briefing paper from the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (*The Best and Worst State Economies for Women*, December 2006).

As all education, and especially the education of women, is important for the growth and health of a community’s well-being and economy, the existing problem in Arkansas of so few women having a four-year degree is unsettling. This is primarily because “a college education continues to be the key to earning higher wages in Arkansas” (Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, *The State of Working Arkansas*, 2011). Further, the reciprocal positive effects of students of any state obtaining an associate’s, bachelor’s or master’s degree can include higher earnings, new job development, and increased state tax revenue for that state (Alliance for Excellent Education, *Arkansas High Schools*, 2012). A state report conducted by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce states that “52% of all jobs in Arkansas (750,000 jobs) will require some postsecondary training beyond high school in 2018,” while a report from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems holds that “more students complete high school in Arkansas than the national average, but of these students, fewer enroll in college directly out of high school compared to the nation” (*Help Wanted*, 2010 and *Increasing the Competitiveness of the Arkansas Workforce for a Knowledge-Based Economy*, 2011). The economic benefits and necessity to advance educationally as a state are reason enough to encourage the post-secondary education of men and women alike.

The following describes the job prospects and economic opportunities for each educational attainment level.

**HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA** - Addressing the high school dropout rate is a key strategy for the economic growth of Arkansas. In general, dropouts face significant challenges to obtaining employment and achieving economic security. Female dropouts are at particular economic risk. Compared with their male peers, girls who fail to graduate from high school have higher rates of unemployment, make significantly lower wages, and are more likely to rely on public support programs to provide for their families.

The National Center for Educational Statistics at the Institute of Education Sciences reports the high school drop-out rate among females in Arkansas is 3.5 percent, lower than the dropout rate for Arkansas males but higher than the national rate for females.<sup>36</sup> Twenty-eight states have lower dropout rates for females than Arkansas.

	Female Dropout Rate	Male Dropout Rate	Combined Dropout rate	State Rank of Female Dropout Rate
Arkansas	3.5%	4.7%	4.1%	29 <sup>th</sup> lowest
U.S.	2.7%	3.6%	4.1%	

Females in Arkansas also graduate from high school at a higher rate than Arkansas males, but they graduate at a lower rate than females nationally.<sup>37</sup> Thirty-seven states have a higher female graduation rate than Arkansas.

	Female Graduation Rate	Male Graduation Rate	Combined Graduation rate	State Rank of Female Graduation Rate
Arkansas	77.3%	71.0%	74.0%	37 <sup>th</sup> highest
U.S.	78.9%	71.8%	75.5%	

On average, a high school graduate in Arkansas earns \$5,339 more each year than a high school dropout.<sup>38</sup> Roughly 11,400 students in Arkansas did not graduate from high school in 2011; the lost lifetime earnings for that class of dropouts alone total \$974 million.<sup>39</sup>

If just half of Arkansas’s dropouts had graduated, they likely would have provided the following economic benefits to the state<sup>40</sup>:

- \$60 million in increased home sales and \$5.9 million in increased annual auto sales
- 300 new jobs and a \$51 million increase in the gross state product
- \$3.5 million in increased annual state tax revenue

Since 47 percent of all drop-outs in Arkansas are female, the statistics above can be used to illustrate the economic impact of keeping Arkansas’s young women in school.

While job opportunities still exist for those whose highest education attainment is a high school diploma, the better paying opportunities for those holding only a high school diploma or less are in the male-dominated fields of manufacturing, architecture and construction, distribution and logistics, and hospitality. For female workers with only a high school diploma, the picture is one of restricted opportunity.

**SOME COLLEGE OR ASSOCIATE’S DEGREE** - For workers who obtain some college credit or earn an associate’s degree, the future is somewhat brighter. Jobs for people with this level of education are available in the following fields: business, management and administration, manufacturing, and health science. However, the best paying opportunities in female-dominated middle skill jobs pay less than the best paying opportunities in male-dominated jobs that require a high school diploma or less education.

**BACHELOR’S DEGREE OR HIGHER** - The opportunities are greatest for those who earn a bachelor’s degree or higher (*The Chronicle of Higher Education* [11/14/11] – “Bachelor’s Degree Is Still Best Path to Middle-Class Jobs and Earnings, Report Says” [Jennifer Gonzalez]). Where high school graduates find themselves limited to a handful of careers in job clusters that either are not growing or do not pay middle class wages, college graduates can find opportunity just about anywhere. In addition, the occupational clusters with the highest demand for workers with postsecondary education tend to be those that are growing – actually adding new jobs in addition to replacement positions. “Seventy-two percent of the jobs available for such workers were concentrated in nine occupational clusters, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics; government and public administration; information technology; and health science,” according to the article. Clearly, a college education is still valuable, even in a down economy.

While high school graduates should not despair if they cannot go onto college; neither should they be satisfied with their diploma alone if they can further their education. Going to college pays off – not just in higher wages, but in better jobs, wider opportunities and a shot at achieving the American dream.

The report “Career Clusters: Forecasting Demand for High School Through College Jobs, 2008-2018” outlined the following key highlights concerning the economy and future job prospects:

- While jobs for workers with high school diplomas are in decline, they still exist.

- Jobs for high school graduates and high school dropouts will grow more slowly than jobs for those with postsecondary education.
- Manufacturing will continue to decline in total employment, but retiring baby boomers will create 2 million job openings.
- Jobs for middle skill workers (jobs for workers with some college, a certificate, or an associate's degree) will make up 29 percent of the workforce by 2018.
- By 2018, there will be about 150,000 jobs in Arkansas for those with certificates.
- Arkansas is one of five states that will lead the nation in the share of total jobs within the state in agriculture; food and natural resources; manufacturing; and the transportation, distribution and logistics career clusters by 2018.
- Arkansas, however, is not projected to be a leader in the share of total jobs in architecture and construction; arts, A/V technology and communications; business, management and administration; education and training; finance; government and public administration; health sciences; hospitality and tourism; human services; information technology; law, public safety, corrections and security; marketing, sales and services; and STEM career clusters by 2018.
- Hospitality and tourism will add the most jobs in Arkansas through 2018.
- In 2018, 37 percent of all jobs in Arkansas will be found in the business, management and administration, marketing, sales and services, and hospitality and tourism clusters.
- In Arkansas, the business, management and administration cluster will be the largest cluster overall, but information technology will be the fastest growing. Jobs in the information technology sector are projected to increase by 31 percent by 2018.
- The largest cluster — business management and administration — will require substantial postsecondary education in 2018, growing by 13 percent for those with postsecondary education and 8 percent for those without.
- The gender gap in wages varies greatly from cluster to cluster. For example, the gap in architecture and construction is \$2,000; in health sciences, it is \$69,000.

## Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Fields

The question of what subjects young women are encouraged to study is also important in determining the jobs that Arkansas women eventually pursue or fall into. According to the March 2011 White House Council on Women and Girls report *Women in America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being*, the common professions of women continue to be concentrated in a small cluster of occupations including “secretaries, registered nurses, elementary school teachers, cashiers and nursing aides” (*Women in America*, 2011). The report states that “women have long earned the great majority of degrees conferred in health and education fields, especially nursing and teaching at the primary and secondary levels” (*Women in America*, 2011). Further, the likelihood of women pursuing “lower-paying jobs” within the professional fields of education and healthcare were 70 percent in 2009, compared with 32 percent for men (*Women in America*, 2011). However, “only 7 percent of female professionals were employed in the relatively high paying computer ... and engineering fields ... compared to 38 percent of men” (*Women in America*, 2011).

This report states that “women earn less than half of all bachelor’s degrees in mathematics and physical sciences, as well as in engineering and computer sciences” (*Women in America*, 2011). Finally, women earn “less than 20 percent” of engineering and computer science degrees, a rate that has decreased over the past decade (*Women in America*, 2011).

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education provided a review of disciplines of Arkansas graduates for the past five academic years and current students. The information shows that, in the following academic disciplines, men consistently outnumber women by approximately:

- 6:1 in engineering [e.g., civil, electrical, mechanical, chemical, computer and industrial]
- 5:1 in computer science and technology [e.g., information systems, systems engineering, spatial information systems, and industrial technology]
- 4:1 in physics

Women are more evenly represented in the following academic disciplines:

- Chemistry
- Biology
- Mathematics

In addition to more equal representation needed in these fields, more overall involvement in the STEM fields will prove beneficial for Arkansas' economy. In a 2011 report from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, authors claim that "increasing the number of bachelor's degrees, especially in the critical fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) must be a priority if [Arkansas] is to make the transition to a knowledge-based economy" (*Increasing the Competitiveness of the Arkansas Workforce for a Knowledge-Based Economy*, 2011).

Women also are underrepresented among higher education faculty member in STEM disciplines. An article in the journal *Science*, "Survival Analysis of Faculty Retention in Science and Engineering by Gender" concluded that it could take nearly 100 years before half of all professors in science and engineering are female.<sup>41</sup> "In the last four years we're seeing 27 percent of new hires in science and engineering are women," said Cheryl Geisler, dean of the faculty of communication, art, and technology at Simon Fraser University, in Canada, and a co-author of the article. "It was 25 percent earlier in the decade, so it's just been creeping up."

"At that rate, it may be 2050 before 50 percent of new hires in science and engineering are female," said Deborah A. Kaminski, a professor of mechanical engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Ms. Geisler's co-author. Even after one-half of all faculty members hired are women, "it will likely take at least another 40 years before the actual population of science, engineering, and mathematics professors is 50 percent women."

A separate article in *American Scientist*, meanwhile, states that the proportion of female professors entering math-intensive fields like chemistry, computer science, engineering, and physics is low not because of gender bias in hiring or because women are less proficient at math than men are, but because many women who want to become mothers are simply uninterested in pursuing academic careers in those fields. In the March-April issue of *American Scientist* ["When Scientists Choose Motherhood"], authors Wendy M. Williams, professor of human development at Cornell University, and Stephen J. Ceci, professor of developmental psychology, found that "the effect of children on women's academic careers is so remarkable that it eclipses others factors in contributing to women's underrepresentation in academic science." While acknowledging that universities have taken steps to make it easier for academic women to have children and to hang on to their university jobs, the authors concluded that institutions should explore other options, including instituting part-time tenure-track positions, providing post doc assistance to cover lab work when female professors are on family leave, and adjusting the length of time allocated for work on grants to accommodate child rearing.

## Women in Leadership

A sampling of Arkansas higher education institutions reveals that, generally speaking, campuses do not offer leadership courses specifically targeted for female students. However, a pilot program recently created at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock geared toward student retention and led by Dr. Shannon Collier-Tenison [Social Work], has hosted a program in women's leadership. The program includes close to 20 junior-level students from various programs within the college. Students have both a faculty and a community mentor, and are exposed to guest speakers who discuss their paths to leadership, read assigned coursework and collectively discuss their experiences. Additionally, UALR's College of Business embeds leadership concepts in other coursework and, more specifically, offers a Team Development course [Management 7312 Team Development] that is available to MBA students. The interest in women assuming leadership roles has been observed by the very high rate of female officers in several student organizations in the pre-medical and pre-health care fields [Alpha Epsilon Delta], American Chemical Society and Biology Club.

The University of Arkansas at Fort Smith offers a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership that contains several leadership courses, as well as courses in Interdisciplinary Studies – Foundations of Learning, which is designed to aid students in being successful at the collegiate level, as well as throughout their personal and professional lives as lifelong learners. The campus also offers a Leadership Development Studies course and seminar where students explore the frequently discussed, but difficult to define, concept of leadership.

The University of Arkansas, Fayetteville offers leadership courses in a variety of disciplines, including courses in the field of engineering where female students tend to be underrepresented - in Industrial Engineering [Leadership for Operations Managers: Principles and Practices, Systems Engineering and Management, and Project Management].

At Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, the institution offers a twenty-two hour minor in Leadership Studies for students of all majors. The goal is to prepare students for leadership roles and responsibilities by expanding the knowledge, skills and understanding of specific leadership theories, concepts, models and current leadership issues in applied settings. Additional leadership courses are offered as well, including Seminar in Leadership Development [UC3012], Washington Center Civic Engagement and Leadership [UC4003] and Internship [UC401V], and Special Problems in Leadership Development [UC480V], Leadership in Agriculture [AGED3443] and Global Leadership Experience [IB3013].

Southern Arkansas University is introducing a new course in management entitled Ethics in Leadership [MGMT3083]. The course will address a study of philosophical models and practical techniques for leading an organization, and for dealing with the types of ethical issues business leaders are likely to encounter. An existing Theory and Behavior course [MGMT3023] includes a leadership component as well.

Approximately four years ago, the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges identified a need to develop leaders from within the community colleges to address the retirement of many higher education leaders over the next decade. The result was the creation of a leadership program named the Higher Education Leadership Institute. The institute is managed by Dr. Linda Beene, former Director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. While the focus is on general leadership issues in higher education, students are exposed to any number of issues such as fiscal, legislative, legal, personnel, facility management, adult education and concurrent enrollment. Approximately one hundred students have graduated from the program. While not specific to women, many apply for and are selected to participate in the program.

## Women Mentoring Women

At the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, the campus recently established a Commission on Women recognizing that networking and personal support are key elements in job satisfaction and success for women in the workplace. The goal of the Commission is to recognize the contributions that women bring to higher education and the University of Arkansas specifically. During March 2012, in conjunction with the International Day of Women, the Commission held its first forum entitled “Women Helping Women: It Takes a Village.” According to Amy Farmer, Professor of Economics and Commission Chair, “[M]any women who have been successful at rising through the ranks in their professions have had help, support, and promotion at key points in their careers ... [W]e can, and should be, resources for each other. It is also critical for women in the workplace to be open to opportunities and to take action on their own behalf when those opportunities present themselves.”

The panel discussion featured three university women, one of whom was Sharon Gaber, the first female provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs in university history. According to Chancellor Gearhart, “[T]he Chancellor’s Commission on Women has identified a critical area of professional development. The presence of a concerned mentor can have an incalculable impact on the course of one’s career. Almost every successful leader has benefitted from standing on the shoulders of her or his predecessor. I’m glad the forum will be exploring this crucial but often underappreciated discussion.”

## Incarcerated Women and Education

A woman’s lack of education also may be linked to her potential for incarceration. About 800 to 1,000 women are incarcerated in Arkansas each year. Of these women, just 5 percent have a college education, and less than half—47 percent have a high school diploma. Each inmate is tested upon entering the corrections system, and results indicate the average grade level of women entering prison is 8.4. In Arkansas, all inmates must attend school as long as they are incarcerated. Some will finish while they are in prison, depending on the length of their sentence.

About 465 women are released from the corrections system each year. Of the women who graduate with a GED while in prison, only about 15 percent return to prison. Just 2 percent of the women who receive an associate’s degree return to prison. In 2010, three incarcerated women earned an associate’s degree.

The Arkansas Department of Correction describes one college program offered to inmates with the following information<sup>42</sup>.

<b>Description:</b>	Funded by the Department of Education. All college courses are taught potentially leading to an Associate of Arts Degree from a higher education institution.	
<b>Capacity:</b>	65 grant slots, but open to self-pay students. Approximately 78 enroll each semester.	
<b>Impact:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grimes</li><li>• Diagnostic Unit</li><li>• McPherson</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• North Central</li><li>• Varner</li><li>• (JCCF &amp; PBU inmates can participate at DGU)</li></ul>

- Requirements:**
- GED or high school degree
  - Accepted to the institution of higher learning
  - 25 years of age or younger (for grant)
  - Five years or fewer left on sentence (for grant)
  - No parole or transfer date prior to end of the semester
  - Grant limited to \$1,500 per student per year, or ability to pay (if not grant eligible).

**Staff:** Volunteer Coordinator, College Staff

**Subprograms:** Varies with semester

**Comments:** Program has been operational since 1998. Night courses are scheduled not to interfere with operation of the institution. Minimal cost to the state. Assist with self discipline and goal setting, as well as educational development.

## Human Trafficking

### Defining the Problem

Sex trafficking or human trafficking is defined as the act of forcing or coercing someone into the commercial sex trade against his or her will. (Polaris Project) Another definition of sex trafficking describes it as an action in which a commercial sex act is induced by force or fraud, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age. (Arkansas Catholic)

Unlike the federal definition of sex trafficking, the state definition requires proof of force, fraud or coercion, even when minors are involved in a commercial sex act. All minors involved in the commercial sex industry should be recognized as victims instead of prosecuted for offenses related to their victimization, including prostitution. This prosecutorial shift would put greater focus on the traffickers behind the minor's involvement and lead to an increased arrest rate of traffickers.

One problem in Arkansas is that no records on sex trafficking are being kept. While there may be no statistics on sex trafficking, state officials acknowledge the problem does exist in Arkansas. Over the past two years one agency has been tracking, but that initiative is not complete. Agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI, assert that disclosing the data is against agency policy/rules.

### Perception of Human Trafficking

The common public perception of prostitution is that it is a victimless crime involving consensual transactions between adults. This view permeates private and professional sectors. Because of that perception it has become a low priority for law enforcement. Few resources are dedicated to eradicating prostitution or responding to incidents involving commercial sex where the actors are believed to be adults. Because prostitution is seen as a consensual act between two adults, "Johns" are infrequently arrested. Demand is driving supply in the commercial sex industry. Even those Johns who believe they are purchasing sex from a consenting adult are fueling an increased demand and a parallel increase in sex trafficking.

Public stigma placed on "prostitutes" prohibits a further look into the circumstances surrounding each individual's involvement in the commercial sex industry and the discovery of forced or coerced participation. This stigma also inhibits victim reporting. Law Enforcement officers are often in the best position to identify victims; however the vast majority of agencies across the state have not received any training regarding human trafficking to date and are therefore unable to correctly identify victims with whom they may come into contact.

Addressing human trafficking involving minors is an even more challenging problem. Currently there is no mechanism in the state to take minor victims of trafficking (domestic or international) into custody, other than through the juvenile justice system. The Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) works with dependency-neglect cases where there is a parent or guardian involved who can be sued. Children who are victims of human trafficking do not have an identified parent or guardian who can be sued when they are identified. These children need to be included under the scope of DCFS and routed toward specific placements once taken into care. Specific placements can include foster homes that have received additional training in working with victims of trafficking and facilities designated for the care of victims of trafficking (should such a facility open in the state).

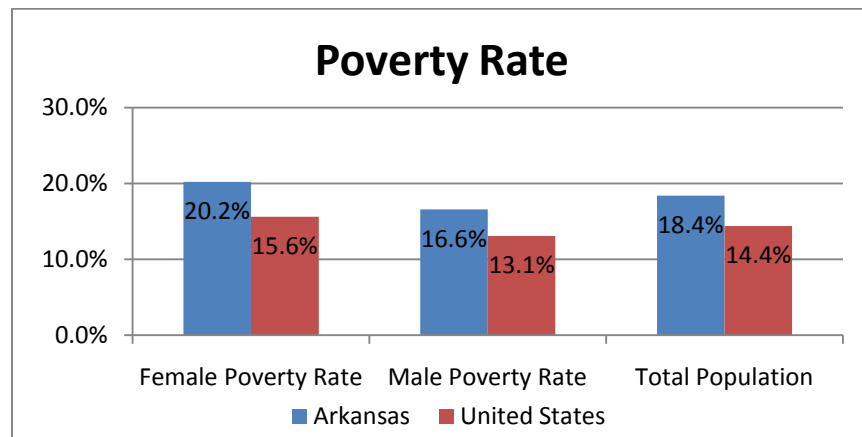


## Economic Status

### Current Status

Poverty is a persistent and pernicious problem for women in Arkansas. Among the fifty states and the District of Columbia, the poverty rate for women in Arkansas is the 7<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation.<sup>43</sup>

The Census Bureau's latest figures on poverty show that significant numbers of U.S. women are living in poverty: 23.8 million, or 15.6 percent, compared with 19.1 million, or 13.1 percent of males.<sup>44</sup> The poverty rate among women in Arkansas is considerably higher than the national rate. In Arkansas, 20.2 percent of women live in poverty, compared with 16.6 percent of men.<sup>45</sup> The overall poverty rate for all people in the United States was 14.4 percent,<sup>46</sup> compared with Arkansas's total poverty rate of 18.4 percent.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, 2008-2010 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

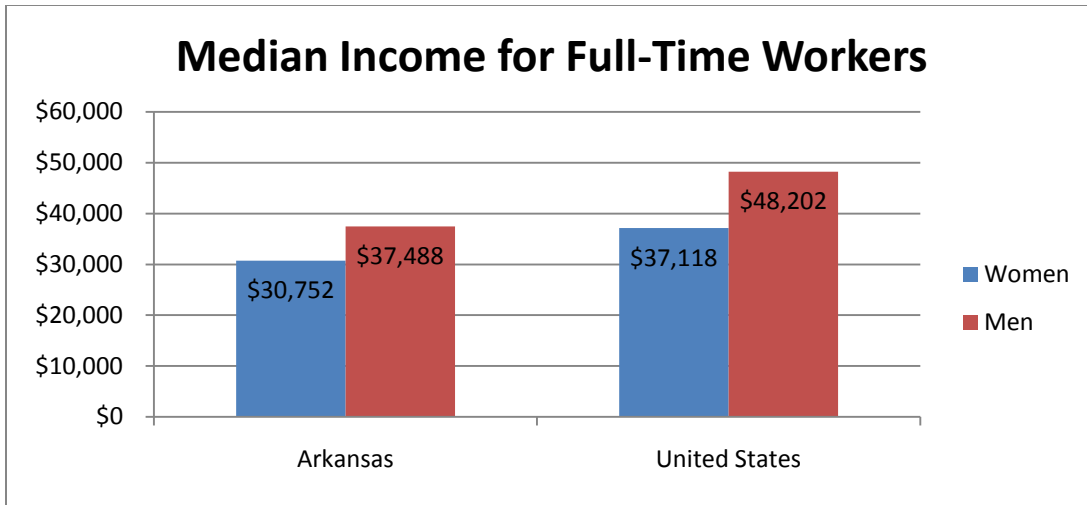
Based on data from the 2010 Census, the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) created a factsheet compiling information regarding the poverty rates and economic status of women in Arkansas.<sup>47</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all of the statistics below are from the NWLC factsheet:

- The poverty rate for women 65 and older is 12.6 percent.
- The poverty rate for black women is 30.3 percent; for Hispanic women, 31.3 percent; for Native American women, 14.5 percent; for Asian women, 13.2 percent; for white, non-Hispanic women, 14.9 percent.

Single mothers and children in Arkansas are particularly vulnerable to poverty. The poverty rate for female-headed families with children was 47.4 percent, compared with the national rate of 38.1%.<sup>48</sup>

- The poverty rate for children is 27.6 percent.
- 61.3 percent of all poor children live in female-headed families.
- 8.7 percent of women are unemployed.

Women's economic insecurity is exacerbated by disparities between men's and women's wages. Arkansas women working full-time, year-round are paid 82 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts. This is five cents more than the national rate, with women earning 77 cents for every dollar a man is paid.<sup>49</sup>



Source: National data come from U.S. Census Bureau, Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2011, Table A-4, Number and Real Median Earnings of Total Workers and Full-Time, Year-Round Workers by Sex and Female-to-Male Earnings Ratio: 1960-2011. State data come from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (In 2011 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex By Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over With Earnings in the Past 12 Months

## Job Training and Job Opportunities

A lack of employment opportunities, a lack of appropriate job skills and training, and a lack of adequate child care are factors that affect women’s employment opportunities, particularly for single mothers. To reduce the staggeringly high poverty rate of single mothers, more must be done to provide this group with job training, job opportunities, and child care.

In *The State of Working Arkansas 2011*, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families reports that “Arkansas depends more on manufacturing jobs than many other states in our region.”<sup>50</sup> However, the number of manufacturing jobs in Arkansas is declining. While close to 25 percent of jobs in Arkansas in 1990 involved manufacturing, that number fell to about 14 percent in 2009.<sup>51</sup> Conversely, “Arkansas jobs in the professional and business services sector have seen more growth than [any] other sector since 1990. Education and health services jobs come in second.”<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, the state’s efforts to provide job training and skills development for single mothers should focus on employment in the professional and business services, education, and health services sectors. “Investing more in education at all levels and particularly in training in the use of new technologies will improve economic growth for all.”<sup>53</sup>

*“When women are denied the opportunities to which their training and education and interests entitle them, we are permitting not only unjustifiable discrimination, but senseless waste.”*

***Governor Dale Bumpers upon creating the Governor’s Commission on the Status of Women, 1973.***

## Women Owned Businesses

Arkansas must also foster women’s entrepreneurial initiatives. There were 58,558 women-owned firms in Arkansas in 2007, according to the latest Census data available. Women-owned firms made up 24.5 percent of the 239,150 total firms in the state. Arkansas’s rate is four percentage points lower than the national rate of 28.7 percent. Though women-owned businesses make up a quarter of all businesses in the state, the Office of State Procurement awarded just 2.3% percent of the state contracts exceeding \$25,000 to women owned-businesses during the 2011 calendar year. Those contracts made up .6 percent of all dollars contracted.<sup>54</sup>

Arkansas law does not require state agencies to provide any set-asides for women-owned businesses. The Institute for Women’s Policy Research asserts that “[w]omen’s business ownership can be encouraged by increasing contract set-asides for women-owned businesses at all levels of government.”<sup>55</sup>

## Child Care

For working mothers, particularly single mothers, finding affordable quality child care is a crucial part of successful employment. Arkansas provides vouchers to help some low-income families pay for child care. The vouchers, provided through the federal Child Care Development Fund, are available for families with incomes at or below 60% of Arkansas’s median income, or about \$32,600 for a family of four. Currently the vouchers serve about 22,000 children annually. There are three categories:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/Extended Supportive Services (ESS) clients through Department of Workforce Services. These clients comprise the largest number in the voucher program — usually around 60% of the total.
- Foster children and children in protective care living with foster care families who need assistance with child care. These cases comprise about 18% of the total program.
- Low-income families in which the parent is working or in school or a combination. These families make up about 22%.

The total cost is around \$40 million. The Department of Human Services does not currently have a waiting list, but estimates suggest that only about 1 in 6 or 7 eligible children are served in this program nationally.<sup>56</sup>

According to the Legislative Taskforce on Reducing Poverty and Promoting Economic Opportunity, states are allowed to transfer up to 30 percent of their eligible TANF funds to child care for low-income families.<sup>57</sup> Currently no TANF funding is transferred for this purpose. However, \$7.5 million is transferred annually from the Department of Education for the Arkansas Better Chance program for state-funded Pre-K.<sup>58</sup> The Legislative Taskforce on Reducing Poverty recommended in its 2010 final report that access to subsidized child care be improved by using available state TANF funding for child care.<sup>59</sup>

The Legislative Taskforce on Reducing Poverty also recommended improving case management services for young mothers seeking assistance through TANF. Such services help place these women in career paths and link them with resources.<sup>60</sup>

Additionally working parents should be afforded paid family leave. Data from a study of leave-taking in California suggested that paid family leave increased the usual weekly work hours of employed mothers of one- to three-year-old children by 6 to 9 percent, and that their wage incomes may have risen by a similar amount.<sup>61</sup> Those in less-advantaged groups—those without the resources to take unpaid leave—were particularly affected.

## Policy Research and Development

The Legislative Task Force on Reducing Poverty called for the creation of a Consumer Advisory Council, the members of which would include people who receive benefits from the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health, and the Department of Workforce Services.<sup>62</sup> The purpose of this Council is to “identify areas for improvement as well as to vet changes to policies and programs.”<sup>63</sup> Since the members of this Council interact with state agencies in the receipt of public benefits, they are uniquely qualified to identify shortcomings in the state’s processes for awarding and distributing such benefits. The members of this Council also can be helpful in determining why some public-assistance

programs are under-utilized by women and others who qualify for such programs. The estimated cost for this Council would be minimal.<sup>64</sup>

Both legislative taskforces and nonprofit organizations, such as Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, have studied poverty in Arkansas and produced multiple reports on the subject. However, there is no state entity that coordinates efforts to reduce poverty in Arkansas and evaluates the progress and effectiveness of anti-poverty initiatives. The Arkansas Legislative Taskforce on Reducing Poverty recommended that a permanent advisory council for poverty reduction and economic opportunity be formed “to monitor accomplishments, make adjustments to plans when needed, assess new situations that need response, and evaluate research suggesting new solutions to existing problems.”<sup>65</sup> According to the Center for Law and Social Policy, 19 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have created poverty and opportunity task forces.<sup>66</sup>

## Recommendations

### Health

#### 1. Health Insurance

- 1A. The Arkansas Insurance Commissioner should partner with the federal government to certify and train the Navigators required by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). The Navigators in 15 counties should be part of the existing Community Connector program, which partners with the UAMS College of Public Health. In the event the Arkansas Insurance Department does not partner with the federal government, the Insurance Commissioner should act as a liaison to introduce the Community Connectors to the federal exchanges.
- 1B. The Insurance Commissioner should monitor specific instances of gender discrimination in policy exclusions of coverage, and in gender rating in both individual and group markets, and make any findings public for the women and men of the state.

We request that recommendations 1A and 1B be forwarded to the Arkansas Insurance Commissioner and to Kate Stewart, M.D., M.P.H., Associate Professor, Health Policy and Management and Director Office of Community Based Public Health, and to Naomi Cottoms, Executive Director Tri-County Rural Health Network, Inc.

#### 2. School-Based Community Health Centers (SBCHCs)

- 2A. The SBCHC program should:
  - Expand to include targeted wellness services for women in the communities served, especially Medicaid-eligible services for women.
  - Expand mental health services at the existing SBCHC facilities.
  - Develop health literacy components as part of the SBCHCs.
- 2B. Due to low life expectancy for women, high infant mortality rates, shortages of health care providers and high Medicaid eligibility in St. Francis County and surrounding areas, an additional SBCHC site should be located in St. Francis County
- 2C. Additional potential sites for SBCHCs should be investigated. The sites should be selected based on 1.) needed services as identified by compelling health data and 2.) a shortage of existing health care personnel and facilities.
- 2D. SBCHC data should be collected and analyzed for feasibility studies to be presented to designated legislative committees for further recommendations.

We request that this recommendation be forwarded to Jared Cleveland, Assistant Commissioner at ADE for implementation.

#### 3. Health Literacy

- 3A. A Center for Health Literacy should be established to coordinate and fund activities that improve health literacy in Arkansas. This could include, but is not limited to developing educational materials, coordinating public education and outreach efforts, and reaching out to underserved populations. This resource center should work with school-based clinics and dedicated health resource centers in school libraries.

## Education

### 4. Data Collection and Research

- 4A. The Arkansas Resource Center (ARC) should conduct more gender-based research. Further research on gender-based differentials is necessary to identify factors that affect male and female students differently, either in type or degree, and to evaluate the most effective interventions for different groups of students. Such research should rely on data that are fully disaggregated by sex, by race, and by other relevant criteria, and assessment of any gender-based differences in impact should be part of the evaluation process for intervention strategies.
- 4B. ARC, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) should collect and publicly report gender-specific data on educational performance and graduation rates (high school and college).

### 5. Pre-Kindergarten

- 5A. Expand access to quality early childhood education for children age birth to five years, especially for at-risk children.

### 6. Primary Education

- 6A. ADE should encourage parent involvement in schools by increasing opportunities for teachers and parents to collaborate about additional means to reinforce academic principles, such as math card games, websites, available software, and tutorial resources to supplement information taught at school (e.g., The Kahn Academy [[www.kahacademy.org](http://www.kahacademy.org)]).
- 6B. ADE, ADHE, the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority and higher education institutions should create a venue to introduce parents to professionals, secondary and higher education faculty members who work in STEM or other male-dominated fields to discuss how parents can use math, science and technology on a daily basis.
- 6C. ADE should encourage the use of literacy targeted toward STEM and other historically male-dominated fields of study.
- 6D. ADE should include women's history and accomplishments in the state's K-8 curriculum.
- 6E. ADE should encourage sports participation/physical education for girls in grades K-8.

### 7. Secondary Education

- 7A. ADE should focus funding and programming toward testing/tutoring programs for high school-age women.
- 7B. ADE, the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority and the Arkansas Economic Development Commission should provide opportunities for female students to interact and engage with professionals employed in fields historically associated with males. These agencies should also hold targeted career fairs for science, math and technology-related jobs.
- 7C. ADE, the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority and the Arkansas Economic Development Commission should expand junior and senior high school counseling opportunities for female students to learn about existing and emerging fields of study and jobs with economic potential

generally associated with males. The agencies should ensure that girls have equal access to academically rigorous career and technical education training for high-skill, high-wage jobs. As required by Title IX of the federal Education Amendments of 1972, the agencies should ensure that girls have equal access to academically rigorous career and technical education training for high-skill, high wage jobs.

- 7D. ADE should increase the emphasis on science and mathematics literacy in junior and senior high schools.
- 7E. ADE should increase its emphasis on high achievement on the ACT/SAT, as well as on high GPAs in science and mathematics.
- 7F. ADHE and the state's higher education institutions should provide scholarships to college-bound women graduates interested in pursuing a career in STEM fields.
- 7G. The Arkansas Department of Education should examine best practices at all high performing schools, and the University of Arkansas should examine best practices of the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts (ASMSA) to inform public education.
- 7H. ADE should increase the school accountability for dropouts.
- 7I. ADE and the Arkansas Department of Correction should provide additional support for pregnant and parenting students in primary and secondary school and for women who are incarcerated.
- 7J. ADE should include women's history and accomplishments in the state's 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum.
- 7K. ADE should encourage sports participation/physical education for young women in grades 9-12.
- 7L. Local school boards should increase the number of women appointed as principals and superintendents.
- 7M. ARC and ADHE should develop a better tracking system to collect gender-specific data on the fields of study selected by students upon entry to post-secondary education and at graduation.

## 8. Higher Education

- 8A. ADHE and the state's higher education institutions should increase their emphasis on recruitment efforts of women in male-dominated fields of study.
- 8B. ADHE and the state's higher education institutions should increase their emphasis on recruiting more women across the spectrum of top-level administrative and faculty positions who can serve as mentors to women seeking degrees in fields of study historically associated with men should be increased.
- 8C. ADHE and the state's higher education institutions should increase their emphasis on collaborative opportunities for women. They should establish support systems in degree programs to foster the retention and academic success of women, and they should establish support systems for women participating in athletics.
- 8D. ADHE and the Arkansas Department of Correction should provide additional support for pregnant and parenting students in higher education and for women who are incarcerated.

- 8E. ADHE, AEDC the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority and the state’s institutions of higher education should increase their emphasis on mentoring and professional networking opportunities should be encouraged for women with faculty members and professional women in career-related business and industry (e.g., Commission on Women at the University of Arkansas; Arkansas Council for Women in Higher Education).
- 8F. ADE, ADHE, K-12 public school districts, and higher education institutions should increase their emphasis on partnerships between two- and four-year institutions and local high schools to foster learning opportunities for female students in historically male-dominated fields of study.
- 8G. ADHE, higher education institutions, and the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges should increase their emphasis on women transferring from two-year colleges to four-year universities.
- 8H. Women should be encouraged to seek appointments to the governing boards of higher education institutions.
- 8I. Colleges and universities should encourage qualified applicants, including women, to apply for president and chancellor positions at higher education institutions.

## Human Trafficking

### 9. Legal Definition and Classification

- 9A. The state definition of sex trafficking involving a minor should be changed by eliminating the requirement that force, fraud or coercion must be proved in cases where a minor is involved in a commercial sex act. This change would ensure the state definition reflects the federal definition.
- 9B. All minors involved in the commercial sex industry should be recognized as victims, instead of prosecuted for offenses related to their victimization, including prostitution. This prosecutorial shift would put greater focus on the traffickers behind the minors’ involvement and lead to an increased arrest rate of traffickers.
- 9C. Human trafficking should be prosecuted as a Class Y or Class A Felony. The heinousness of the act of buying and selling of human beings should be reflected in the penal code.

### 10 Victim Support

- 10A. The supports and systems within the state must be capable and prepared to address the needs of trafficking victims.
- 10B. A mechanism outside the authority of the juvenile justice system should be developed to take minor victims of trafficking (domestic or international) into custody. Unlike children of neglectful or abusive parents, who can be sued by the Division of Children and Family Services, trafficking victims do not have identified parents or guardians who can be sued.
- 10C. These children should be included under the scope of DCFS and routed toward specific placements once taken into care. Specific placements can include foster homes that have received additional training in working with victims of trafficking and facilities designated for the care of victims of trafficking (should such a facility open in the state).
- 10D. Additional legislative sanctions, such as asset forfeiture and restitution, should be explored as potential funding sources for needed social services for trafficking victims.



## 11. Public Awareness and Law Enforcement Education

- 11A. The vast majority of law enforcement agencies across the state have not received any training regarding human trafficking and are therefore unable to correctly identify victims with whom they come into contact. A plan for mandatory training for law enforcement regarding human trafficking should be developed and implemented. Mandatory training should specify the number of hours required, frequency and responsible agencies. The ideal requirements would establish human trafficking as a required topic for new officers and as a two-hour minimum for continuing education on a biennial basis.
- 11B. Awareness of and education about human trafficking throughout the state should be improved. A public awareness campaign should be developed, utilizing the National Human Trafficking Hotline and existing materials.

## Economic Status

### 12. Job Training and Education

- 12A. Women’s access to college education must be improved to ensure greater earning power in adulthood.
- 12B. To reduce the staggeringly high poverty rate of single mothers, more must be done to provide these women with job training and job opportunities.
- 12C. The state’s job training efforts for single mothers should be directed toward professional, non-manufacturing jobs, such as business services, education, and health services. State investment in job training programs should be focused on the use of new technologies.

### 13. Child Care and Family Life

- 13A. Case management services for young mothers seeking assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) should be improved to help link them with resources and ensure their career paths. Arkansas should also use some of its TANF funds each year for child care services.
- 13B. The Arkansas General Assembly should establish a paid family leave for parents.

### 14. Pay Equity and Women-Owned Businesses

- 14A. The Arkansas General Assembly should pass legislation requiring the Office of State Procurement and procurement offices in state agencies to revise their contracting and purchasing policies to create set-asides for women-owned businesses.
- 14B. The Arkansas General Assembly should require businesses seeking contracts with state agencies to demonstrate their commitment to identifying and combating pay inequality and job segregation by sex.
- 14C. The Arkansas General Assembly should pass a pay equity law for public workers.

### 15. Policy Research and Development

- 15A. The Legislative Women’s Caucus should work toward legislation to reinstate the Arkansas Women’s Commission. The Commission should consider developing a permanent advisory council on poverty reduction and economic opportunity to coordinate efforts to reduce poverty in Arkansas and evaluate the progress and effectiveness of anti-poverty initiatives. The

Women’s commission should also consider establishing a consumer advisory council to identify policy changes and areas for improvement in the state’s processes for awarding and distributing public health benefits. The members of the council should include people who receive benefits from the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health, and the Department of Workforce Services.

- 15B. The Arkansas General Assembly should establish a Pay Equity Task Force that is tasked with establishing the pay equity program listed in 14C above and for studying a pay equity law that applies to all employers. The Pay Equity Task Force should focus on sections of the proposed federal Paycheck Fairness legislation on training, negotiation skills and research, education, and outreach.<sup>67</sup>

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