



Women in America: Education

Women in America provides a statistical portrait showing how women's lives are changing in five critical areas: people, families and income, education, employment, health, and crime and violence. By bringing together data from across the Federal government, the report is one of the most comprehensive sources for information on women's lives today and greatly enhances our understanding both of how far American women have come and of the areas where there is still work to be done.

Women's lives have changed substantially in recent decades. As the report indicates in regards to education:

- Women's gains in educational attainment have significantly outpaced those of men over the last 40 years. Today, younger women are more likely to graduate from college than are men and are more likely to hold a graduate school degree. Higher percentages of women than men have at least a high school education, and higher percentages of women than men participate in adult education.
- Educational gains among women relative to men can be seen across racial and ethnic groups and this trend is also present in other developed countries.
- Despite these gains in graduation rates, differences remain in the relative performance of female and male students at younger ages, with girls scoring higher than boys on reading assessments and lower on math assessments.
- These differences can be seen in the fields that women pursue in college; female students are less well represented than men in science and technology-related fields, which typically lead to higher paying occupations.

The additional data referenced in the online compendium of Federal government data relating to women, accessible at <http://wh.gov/data-on-women> like, further indicates:

- Women are more likely to get support for education in terms of aid and grants and also more likely to take loans for undergraduate education than male counterparts.

- Since 1996, the number of female high school completers enrolled in a 2 or 4 year institution by the October immediately following high school completion is higher than the number of male high school completers.

Winning the Future Through Education and Worker Training

President Obama believes that nations that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow. That's why he has set a goal to have the highest proportion of students graduating from college in the world by 2020. The President believes that regardless of educational path after high school, all Americans should be prepared to enroll in at least one year of higher education or job training to better prepare our workforce for a 21st century economy. Education reform is a major pillar of the President's domestic agenda and our Administration has made significant progress, including:

The Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act. In March 2010, President Obama signed the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, which delivered a significant down payment on the President's ambitious agenda to ensure America once again leads the world in college graduation rates and help more Americans earn a college degree. This legislation represents the largest investment in higher education since the G.I. Bill and expands college opportunity for all Americans by ending \$60 billion in wasteful subsidies to banks and strengthening the Pell Grant program to ensure that all eligible students receive an award. And it helped student borrowers manage their student loan debt by capping repayments at 10% of their discretionary income. In addition, the Act provided an historic investment in community colleges—\$2 billion over four years—to expand education opportunity and career training programs and prepare more students for the jobs of tomorrow as well as investments in Historically Black Colleges and other Minority Serving Institutions.

The Race to the Top: President Obama's Race to the Top initiative has dedicated over \$4 billion to twelve states in an effort to spur systemic reform and embrace innovative approaches to teaching and learning in America's schools. Forty-six states and the District of Columbia applied for Race to the Top funding, and most of those states have made significant changes in laws or policies to promote education reforms that are consistent with the principles reflected under the Race to the Top.

The American Opportunity Tax Credit: Created in the Recovery Act, the American Opportunity Tax Credit triples the investment in college tax credit for middle class families.

Investing in Innovation. The Obama Administration launched the \$650 million Investing in Innovation program, which supports research-based programs to improve outcomes for high-need students. Nearly 1,700 applicants responded, and 49 school districts, nonprofits, and institutions of higher education were funded. These grants will leverage an additional \$130 million from the private sector to support innovative reforms.

School Improvement Grants. The Obama Administration has invested over \$4 billion in School Improvement Grants to challenge states and districts to implement reforms targeted to transform the 5,000 lowest-performing schools in America. These Title I School Improvement

Grants will provide up to \$6 million per school over three years to dramatically transform these lowest-performing schools.

Promise Neighborhoods. The Obama Administration created a new Promise Neighborhoods initiative that takes a comprehensive approach to ensure that children have access to a continuum of cradle-through-college educational and community supports. Planning grants have been awarded to 21 communities, including both rural and urban areas across the nation, selected from among 339 applicants.

Assessing Student Growth Metrics: President Obama dedicated \$350 million in Recovery Act funding to support the development of the next generation of assessments that will allow states to measure student and school growth and progress. As part of Race to the Top, this initiative supports consortia of states in the development of comprehensive assessment systems.

Transformative Change in Low-Performing Schools: Nearly 5 percent of all schools across the country are consistently low-performing. Aiming to close the resulting achievement gap, the Obama Administration has committed over \$4 billion to support states' efforts to make bold interventions in school improvement. Fourteen states have already changed their laws to prioritize and support their low-performing schools in response to President Obama's call to action.

Great Teachers and Leaders: The Obama Administration is dedicated to working in partnership with teachers and principals to improve teacher preparation and development, establish new and innovative models of evaluation and compensation, and ensure that teachers have the support and opportunity they need to improve their craft and advance in their profession. Seventeen states have charted new directions in measuring teacher performance and student achievement.