



Report on the Status of **Women and Girls** in Leon County **2012**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Leon County Commission on
the Status of Women & Girls

Executive Summary: Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Leon County - 2012

This Report addresses the Leon County Commission's request for an assessment of the status of women and girls in Leon County. The county's first Commission on the Status of Women and Girls began its work on this very broad mandate by dividing into committees that reflect issue areas of importance: Crime and Justice, Economic Security, Education, Health and Mental Health, Leadership, and Services and Resources. Easily the subject for many years of work and study, this Report, produced over 18 months, represents hundreds of volunteer hours from Commission members and several key community allies as well as untold hours from our small, extremely dedicated staff at The Oasis Center for Women and Girls.

Women and girls comprise 52.4%, or the majority, of Leon County residents. Regardless of this majority status, the female population ranks below males in too many key social and economic categories across the board.

Crime & Justice

The reality for women and girls who are impacted by crime and justice, overall, differs greatly from men and boys.

Violence against women

Violence against women remains a pervasive and significant problem in our community. In 2011, approximately 36% of all murders committed in Leon County involved domestic violence. Approximately 15% of all reported rapes and 22% of all aggravated assaults were classified as "domestic violence." These largely unreported crimes constitute a significant proportion of all of the violent crimes reported in Leon County.

Female inmates

On any given day in Tallahassee, there are an average of 127 women incarcerated in the Leon County Jail and 1,100 in the Federal Correctional Institute.

Legal services

Civil legal services for low income and victimized women in Leon County are severely inadequate.

Juvenile Justice

The number of girls who are arrested for delinquency and who are placed on probation has declined in recent years.

Economic Security

The Economic Security of women and girls is at risk. A community successfully promotes women's economic security when it goes beyond providing for immediate and basic needs by providing for their futures through insurance, investments, and increased access to job training and education. When women and girls are economically secure, they thrive. When they do not, we all suffer, and we all pay a significant cost in real dollars and lost potential. Across the board, women are significantly insecure economically:

Men earn more

Virtually all women earn less for comparable work than men, and African American, Hispanic and Asian women earn less than their white counterparts. Men are disproportionately employed higher wage-earning industries and professions than are women.

Women in poverty

Forty percent of single women with children under the age of 18 and 58% of single women with children under the age of five live in poverty in Leon County. In order to meet the most basic costs of living, a single woman without children in Leon County would have to earn \$9.42 an hour, nearly two dollars over Florida's minimum wage. A woman with two children would need to make \$21.63 an hour or \$45,674 annually, a salary higher than the \$40,079 median income for all families in Leon County.

Women-friendly workplace policies

Regarding local women friendly workplace policies, it is rare that workplaces offer childcare and few employers understand or provide basic workplace policy protections for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Education

In education, girls' graduation rate reported by Leon County Schools has shown a steady improvement, from 76.2% in the 2005-06 academic year to 80.2% in the 2009-10 academic year, and in all schools there was a slightly higher percentage of girls graduating. Additionally, key findings from this section of the Report show:

Dropout rates

In Leon County, the dropout rate for females of 2.7% during the 2010-2011 school year was higher than the statewide average of 1.9%. While boys drop out of school at slightly higher rates than girls, each gender cites differing reasons for dropping out. The lifetime economic implications are more harmful, severe and long lasting for females.

African American girls expelled more frequently

The majority of females recommended for expulsions are black. As of February 2012 in the 2011-2012 school year, 20 females had been recommended for expulsion—19 black students and 1 white student. The vast over-representation of African American students in this population presents an issue that needs to be

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addressed in more detail at the district level.

Race and graduation rates

There is a racial disparity for female graduation rates. Black females had the lowest graduation rate (72.3%) among females in Leon County public schools in 2009-2010 followed by Hispanic females (80.2 %). White and Asian females graduated at significantly higher rates than their black and Hispanic counterparts.

Pregnancy reduces female educational achievement

Despite a slight overall decline in frequency, pregnancy and parenthood remain primary barriers to the educational achievement of females.

Health & Mental

There are significant challenges facing women and girls' health and mental health.

Sexually transmitted diseases

Sexually transmitted disease is a significant problem among women in Leon County where the rates are more than 1.5 times higher than the rest of the state.

Access to health care

Women in Leon County have access to health care at about the same rate as their counterparts statewide; however, fewer non-Hispanic black women report that they have a personal physician than non-Hispanic white women.

Health insurance coverage

There is racial disparity in the number and percentage of women in Leon County reporting any kind of health insurance coverage; 92.9% of non-Hispanic white women reported such coverage in 2010 versus 81.8% of non-Hispanic black women.

Mood and anxiety disorders

At the Apalachee Center, more than one-half of women treated were diagnosed with mood disorders or anxiety disorders (52%) as compared to one-third of the male sample (35%). It is important to understand the relationship between trauma and mood and anxiety disorders.

HIV and racial disparities among women

HIV case rates are 15 times higher among black women than white women in Leon County. In comparison, HIV is 9 times higher among black men than white men.

Leadership

Women lag behind men in terms of access and opportunity in key leadership positions in our community, ranging from State and local government to business. Only in the non-profit sector, where employees are overwhelmingly female, do women comprise the majority of highest paid employees and holders of the highest leadership positions.

Elected state government

Since 1994, only three women have served terms in the Florida House or Senate representing Leon County, and since 2007 there have been no women serving in the Florida State Senate representing Leon County.

Elected local governments

In 1978, Leon County elected its first woman to the Leon County Commission. Thirty-four years later, only six women have held seats on the County Commission. From 1972 to 2012, only seven women have held seats on the Tallahassee City Commission.

Elected School Board

Fourteen women have served on the Leon County School Board since 1965, making up about 37% of the School Board representation since then. There have been no female Superintendents of Schools.

State employees

There are a total of 4,569 leadership positions in the 29 state governmental units evaluated in this report. Relative to their numbers, men occupy roughly 47% more leadership positions than women.

Private for-profit and non-profit sectors

Of the 12 major Tallahassee employers who reported the gender of their highest paid employee, 75% of those top paid employees were male. Women make up about 84% of the professional staff and 75% of the support staff. About two-thirds of the non-profits reviewed identify women as the highest paid employees.

The next phase of the Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is to address these findings with concrete recommendations for action that will both raise awareness of these wide disparities and significant challenges women and girls face and to help create a community where everyone, regardless of gender, has equal access to education, economic security, leadership, the justice system, health care and so therefore, will have equal opportunities to thrive.



Leon County Commission on the Status of Women & Girls

To learn more about the Leon County Commission
on the Status of Women and Girls, please visit
<http://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/committees/detail.asp?id=123>
or www.theoasiscenter.net. You can also reach The Oasis
Center for Women & Girls by phone at 850-222-2747. To
download the entire Report on the Status of Women and
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www.theoasiscenter.net.



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