

Women in the District 2005

In 1987, Congress declared March Women's History Month to recognize the contributions women of every race and class have made to help shape and strengthen this country, and to promote the teaching of women's history. In observance of this annual event, the Office of Planning, State Data Center presents selected statistics with a focus on women in the District using data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 2005.

Educational Attainment

In 2005, the District led the nation in educational attainment for persons 25 years and over. Forty-five percent of District residents 25 years and over held a bachelor's degree or higher in 2005. While 43 percent of women 25 years and over held a bachelor's degree or higher, men had a higher rate at 48 percent.

Median earnings for women 25 years and over were in direct relationship to their educational attainment levels in 2005. Women with less than a high school education had a median annual earning of \$18,880, high school graduates earned \$24,656, bachelor's degree holders earned \$48,183, and graduate or professional degree holders earned an average of \$60,824.

Earnings and Employment

In the District, the median annual earnings for women 16 or older who worked year-round, full time in 2005 was \$46,959, with women earning 91 cents for every \$1 their male counterparts earned. Among all states or state equivalents, District women were closest to earnings parity with men. Maryland and Connecticut were the only states where median earnings for women were above \$40,000. Nationally, the median annual earnings for women 16 or older who worked year-round, full time in 2005 was \$32,168. Women earned 77 cents for every \$1 earned by men nationally. Beside legal occupations where salaries averaged over \$100,000 annually, computers and mathematical occupations paid the highest salaries for women in the District. The only two areas where women substantially earned more annually than men were in community and social services occupations, and healthcare practitioners and technical occupations.

Women working with the federal government earned the highest median annual salaries (\$58,493), followed by those working for private not-for-profit entities (\$49,168). This is in contrast to men who earned their

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highest median annual salaries (\$97,379) as self-employed in their own incorporated businesses. For the population 20 to 64 years old in the District, 75 percent of women were in the labor force compared to 83.7 percent of men in 2005. Sixty-eight percent of all women were employed compared to 76 percent of men. In 2005, the unemployment rate among women and men was about the same at 8.8 percent.

Poverty

The poverty rate among females in the District was 5 percent higher than for males in 2005. While the District wide poverty rate was 19 percent, the rate among females was 21.3 percent and 16.4 percent among males.

Poverty levels also varied by educational attainment - the more educated you are, the less likely you are to be in poverty. For women 25 years and over in poverty, 34.5 percent had less than high school education, 26.7 percent were high school graduates, 15.9 percent had some college or associate's degree, 6.8 percent had a bachelor's degree and 4.4 percent had a graduate or professional degree.

Poverty does not only exist among the unemployed, there are degrees of poverty among the employed population as well. There was a 40 percent poverty rate for all persons unemployed, with unemployed females at a 51.5 percent poverty rate and unemployed males at a 28.9 percent poverty rate. For the employed, the female poverty rate was 5.8 percent and the male poverty rate was 4.6 percent in 2005.

Fertility

The fertility rate (number of births to women of childbearing age per 1,000 women in the population) for women ages 15 to 50 years in the District was 62 per 1,000 women in 2005. For the age group 15 to 19 (teenagers), the fertility rate was 42 per 1,000. For women 20-34 years old the fertility rate was 82 per 1,000. For women 35 to 50 years old the fertility rate was 43 per 1,000. Fertility rate among blacks in the District was 65 per 1000, while the rate for whites was 55 per 1,000. Among Hispanics, the fertility rate was 113 per 1,000. Fertility among District women native to the United States was 57 per 1,000, while the rate for foreign born women was 91 per 1,000.

Educational attainment was found to be inversely related to the fertility rate up to the bachelor's degree level. For instance, the fertility rate for women with less than high school graduate level education was 101 per 1,000, for high school graduates it was 84 per 1,000, and for bachelor's degree holders it was 36 per 1,000. However, the rate increases again for the graduate or professional degree women whose fertility rate was 60 per 1,000.

Commuting Characteristics

Forty-five percent of District residents drive to work in the District or elsewhere. The second highest means of transportation to work was by public transportation (37.7 percent), followed by walking (10 percent), biking (1.7 percent), and other means (0.9 percent). The percent of residents working from home increased to 4.4 percent in 2005. Of the residents who drive to work, women (8.2 percent) were more likely to carpool than men (7.2 percent). A higher percent of women than men take public transportation (41.5 percent and 34 percent, respectively). However, more men walked and biked to work than women (10.2 and 2.7 percent for men and 9.7 and 0.8 percent for women). While 77.8 percent of women live and work in the District of Columbia, only 68.8 percent of men live and work here.

Disability

Fifteen percent of the population 5 years and over in the District had one or more types of disability in 2005. Among females, 6.7 percent had one type of disability, while 8.5 percent had two or more types. The corresponding numbers for males were 6.5 percent and 6.4 percent, respectively. Disability among the District population 65 years and over was 37.4 percent, with the percentage for females (40.5 percent) higher than for males (32.6 percent). Physical disability was the most common type among females 65 years and over (31.6 percent). Forty-six percent of the population with one or more type of disability was in the labor force in 2005.

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