

Snapshot: The Status of Women in Hawai'i

Women in Hawai'i have a wide variety of experiences, hopes, and challenges. Below, a variety of indicators of women's economic, health, and political status in Hawai'i are explored.

Economic Security and Employment

- According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research's 2019 update to the Employment and Earning Index, Hawai'i ranked **18th nationally** across four indicators: women's earnings, gender wage gap, women's labor force participation, and women's representation in managerial and professional occupations.
- In 2021, median annual earnings for Asian American Pacific Islander full-time, year round (FTYR) women workers in Hawai'i was **\$42,615** compared to the median earnings of white men who are not of Hispanic or Latino heritage at \$60,000.
- In 2019, the labor force participation rate for women in Hawai'i was **60.9%**.
- In 2019, **40.1%** of all employed women in Hawai'i were engaged in Managerial and Professional Occupations, ranking 47th nationally.
- In 2020, about **15% (6,801)** of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women had at least a Bachelor's degree compared to only 13% (5,927) of men. This number rises to 36% (84,754) for Asian women compared to 34% (64,788) for men.
- Older women in Hawai'i are more likely than older men to live in poverty.
 - In 2019, **54.8%** of people 65 and older in Hawai'i were women.
 - Just over **nine percent** (9.1 percent) of older women in Hawai'i lived in poverty in 2019, compared with 5.8 percent of older men.
 - In 2019, Asian women who are not of Chinese heritage had the highest poverty rate (**19.3 percent**), followed by Chinese women (14.7 percent) and Latinas (11.7 percent). Older Filipinas are the least likely to live in poverty (6.4 percent).

Health and Reproductive Rights

- On IWPR's 2022 Reproductive Rights Index, Hawai'i ranks 11th in the nation.
- While Hawai'i mandates **sexual education in public schools**, the curriculum does not ensure consistent quality.
- As of September 2021, Hawai'i **has not expanded** eligibility under Medicaid to cover family planning services.
- Hawai'i's progressive abortion laws benefit the economy and contribute to labor force participation. According to IWPR analysis, the state economy benefits from an estimated **\$239,083,585** in earnings for employed women (18-44 years old) in the absence of abortion restrictions. **\$106,190,228** from the AAPI community.¹

¹ In 2020 dollars.

- Positively, period products are now free in Hawai'i's [public schools](#).
- **Maternal Health:**
 - A [systematic review](#) by Hawai'i's Maternal Mortality committee found 44% of 25 reviewed pregnancy related deaths between 2015 and 2017 occurred among Native Hawaiian women and 32 percent among Asian women. More than half of the deaths related to pregnancy were deemed preventable.
 - The infant mortality rate in 2020 was [4.86 per 1,000 live births](#), 15th nationally.
- The CDC estimated that in 2020 approximately [93 percent](#) of people in Hawai'i have health insurance coverage.
- In 2020, [78 percent](#) of women aged 40 years or older reported receiving a mammogram within the last two years. [76.2 percent](#) of women aged 21 to 65 years old reported receiving a pap test in the last three years.
- Hawai'i had an estimated suicide rate of [12.9 deaths](#) per 100,000 people in 2020, the 11th lowest suicide rate in the country. In 2019, suicide was the [leading cause](#) of death for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders aged 15 to 24 years.²
- In 2020, Hawai'i had a firearm mortality rate of [3.4 per 100,000](#) people, the lowest in the country. According to the FBI's [Supplemental Homicide Report](#) from 2016 to 2020, 14 women in Hawai'i were murdered with firearms. 64 percent of these deaths occurred among Asian and Native Hawaiian communities.³

Political Representation

- According to the Center for American Women in Politics, [25%](#) of federal-level office holders are women in Hawai'i.
- [No women](#) are currently serving in Executive Office in Hawai'i, which has remained stagnant since the end of Gov. Linda Lingle's term in 2010.
- There are currently 27 women in the Hawaiian state legislature, making up [35.5% of 76 seats](#).

CONCLUSION

While Hawai'i ranks comparatively well on indicators of women's status across the United States, Hawai'i has yet to achieve full gender equity or justice. Experiences of political representation, economic security, and health varies widely across women's circumstances and lived experiences.

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² Data is [lacking](#) on the gender breakdown of mental health outcomes by race.

³ Note, not all homicides in Hawai'i are reported to the FBI.