



RESEARCH REPORT ON
**THE STATUS
OF WOMEN
AND GIRLS**
IN WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS
2019 KEY FINDINGS



WOMEN'S FUND
Leadership • Local • Shared
WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS



Mission

WFWM advances gender equity by providing community investments informed by research and best practices both locally and nationally.

Community investments include:

- **Responsive Initiatives:** Creating or supporting opportunities that have already proven they can catalyze girls and women in Western Massachusetts
- **Capacity Building for Nonprofits Serving Women and Girls:** Strengthening and sustaining nonprofits that serve women and girls through technical assistance, leadership development scholarships, and the provision of data and research
- **Impact Training:** Providing women and girl leaders the advocacy and policy tools they need to dismantle systems

Welcome from the CEO

The Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts is pleased to share our second research report focusing on women and this time, expanding the lens to include girls: *The Status of Women and Girls in Western Massachusetts, 2019*. Since the publication of our *Status of Women in Western Massachusetts, 2013*, we have seen progress in a number of areas for women, as well as places to grow.



In terms of progress, we see that more women are being educated at both the high school and college levels. While the trend is in the right direction, there is much room to grow, particularly in Hampden County. We see progress with more women being elected to office, but we must encourage women to reach higher so we can achieve shared leadership. Additionally, our region is very slowly becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. While most of Western Massachusetts' diversity still lies within Hampden County, the other three counties have made small gains.

Areas to focus attention and resources for women and girls include economic security, particularly for women of color, leadership, and health and safety. Hampden County, our most populated county, also deserves special consideration. Women and girls from Hampden County fare worse overall than in other Western MA counties. For girls in particular, we are concerned by health and safety indicators that show that girls are experiencing higher rates of child exploitation, depression, and sexually transmitted infections as compared to boys. Finally, we see a need for more supportive services for our region's incarcerated women, and full compliance with the anti-shackling legislation passed in 2014.

What follows are the Key Findings of our full report which highlights the most important challenges and opportunities for women and girls in our region. To read the full report for sourcing information and more, visit www.mywomensfund.org.

This report would not have been possible without support from our donors who are passionate about identifying and addressing challenges and opportunities faced by our region's women and girls. Our research partner, the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts, and our Research Advisory Board were indispensable partners without whom this report could not exist.

We intend to use this report as both an educational tool and a call to action with our community, our policymakers, and other organizations devoted to advancing gender equity.

Onward,

Donna Haghighat
CEO

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Demographics

Western MA

Age and Geographic Distribution

Women and girls in Western MA make up just over half of the population. More than half of the region's women and girls reside in Hampden County, the county with the largest population and highest population density in the region.¹

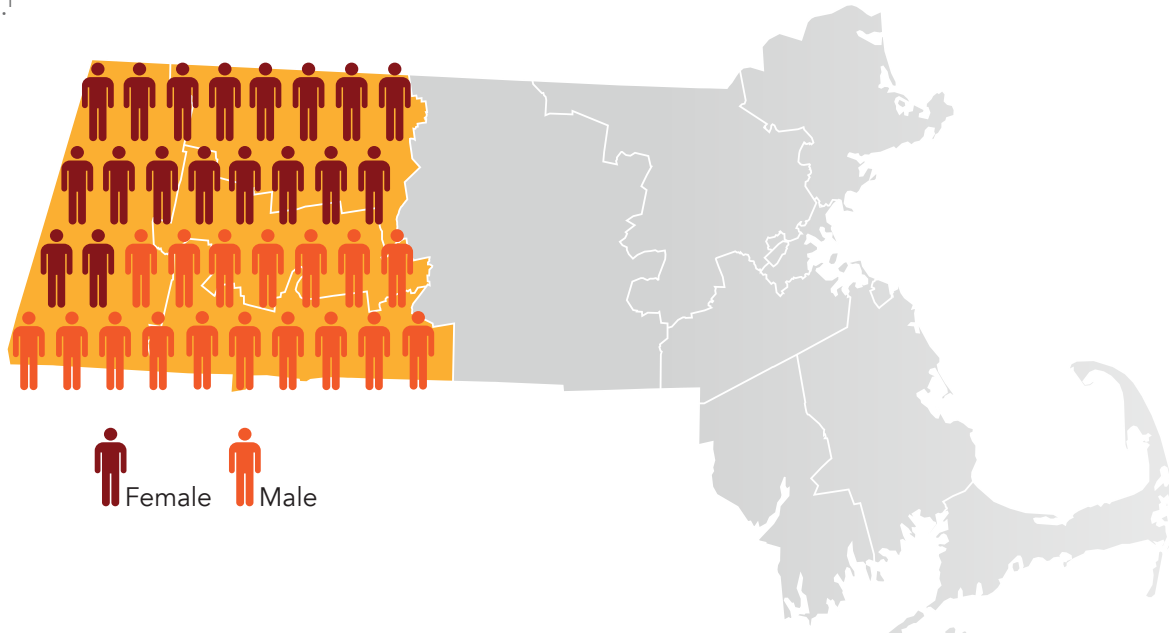


Table 1. Select Sociodemographic Characteristics of Women in Western MA Counties

	BERKSHIRE (Pop. 126,313)	FRANKLIN (Pop. 70,702)	HAMPDEN (Pop. 469,818)	HAMPSHIRE (Pop. 161, 834)
Population (% of total pop.)	65,216 (51.6%)	36,259 (51.3%)	242,789 (51.7%)	86,385 (53.4%)
Age				
Median	48.8	47.9	40.5	36.4
Under 18	16.5%	16.8%	20.2%	13.4%
65 and Older	24.1%	22.7%	18.3%	17.2%
Race/Ethnicity				
White*	88.9%	91.3%	62.6%	83.4%
Latinx	4.4%	3.7%	25.3%	5.7%
Black*	2.8%	1.2%	7.7%	2.7%
Asian*	1.7%	1.7%	2.6%	6.0%
American Indian/ Native Hawaiian*	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%
Two or More Races*	2.1%	1.8%	1.6%	2.0%

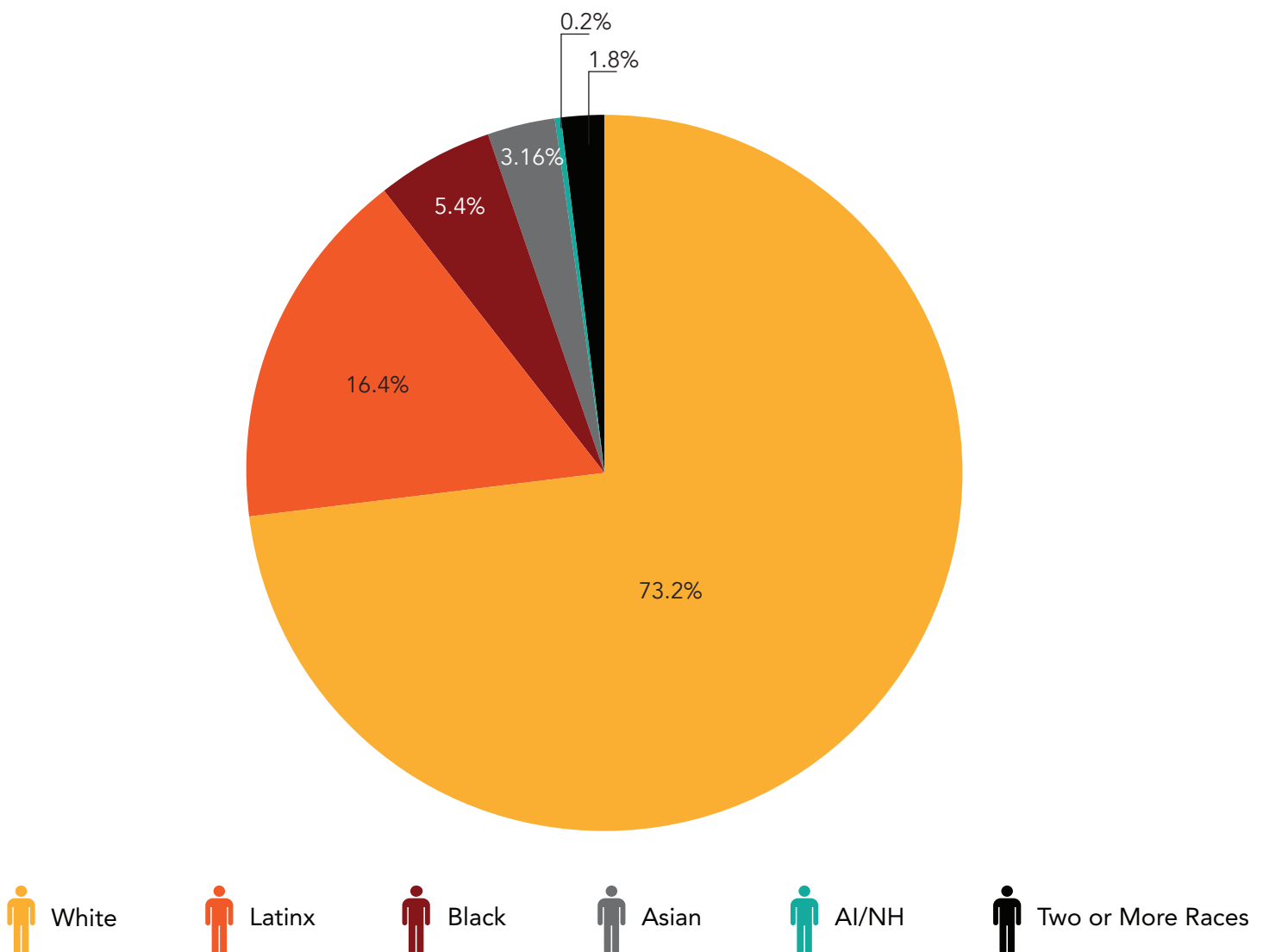
Source: U.S. Census, ACS, 2017 1-Year Estimate

* Non-Hispanic/Latinx

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

In Western MA, approximately 26.0% of the female population identified as women and girls of color (Figure 1). The racial and ethnic distribution among females varies substantially across Western MA, from a female population comprised of 8.7% women and girls of color in Franklin County, to a female population who are 37.4% women and girls of color in Hampden County, which is home to the largest urban area in the region (Springfield). Among women of color, the largest population is Latinx women, with the majority residing in Hampden County (87.0%), where 25.3% are Latinx. Black women comprise 5.4% of the population with Hampden County home to 82.3% of the Black women and girls in the region. Eight percent of women and girls in Western MA were born outside of the U.S. Important to note, though, is that this estimate does not take into consideration any immigrants or refugees who are living in Western MA and currently undocumented. Eighteen percent of the Western MA population (not exclusively women and girls) speak a language other than English at home, and over three quarters (77.8%) of these reside in Hampden County.ⁱⁱ

Figure 1. Racial Diversity among Women and Girls in Western MA



Source: U.S. Census, ACS, 2017 1-Year Estimate



Single Mother Households

Women headed 79.7% of the estimated 34,266 single parent households in Western MA. The rate of single parent households was highest in Hampden (81.4%) and lowest in Franklin (74.2%).ⁱⁱⁱ

Marital Status

Among women in the Western MA counties, an estimated 38.3% had never been married, 42.4% were married, 13.1% were divorced or separated, and 6.2% are widowed. Women aged 15 and older in all four counties reported their marital status as divorced at higher rates than men. They also reported lower rates of currently being married and never being married (Table 2). Women aged 65 and older, across the four counties of Western MA, were widowed at rates around three times higher than males the same age (Table 3). Two communities where these rates were even higher were the towns of Orange and Ware where the women aged 65 and older were widowed at rates greater than five times higher than men.^{iv}

Table 2. Marital Status of Individuals Aged 15 and Older by Gender and County.

	Divorced (%)		Currently Married (%)		Never Married (%)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
BERKSHIRE	12.1	14.8	47.3	43.2	35.8	29.8
FRANKLIN	10.6	15.0	50.4	47.0	35.1	26.7
HAMPDEN	9.1	12.8	44.3	39.1	41.9	36.0
HAMPSHIRE	8.2	10.7	42.6	37.0	45.5	44.0

Source: U.S. Census, ACS, 5-Year Estimate 2013-2017

Table 3. Percent of Widowed Seniors Aged 65 and Older by Gender and County.

	Males (%)	Females (%)
BERKSHIRE	11.2	32.9
FRANKLIN	10.1	33.9
HAMPDEN	12.7	36.1
HAMPSHIRE	10.6	31.5

Source: U.S. Census, ACS, 5-Year Estimate 2013-2017

Economic Security

For a person or a family to be economically secure, the head of household must be able to provide for all basic needs such as shelter, health care, and food. In Western MA, women head almost 80.0% of the estimated 34,266 single parent households and on average, women in this region earn \$0.81 to every dollar a man earns. The wage gap widens specifically for women of color. With the highest rates of poverty experienced in Western MA by 42.0% of Latinx women and girls in Hampden County and 54.0% of Black women and girls in Franklin County, our communities must empower women and girls of color in education and in the workforce.

Education

Across all four counties of Western MA, women and girls completed higher levels of education than men and boys.

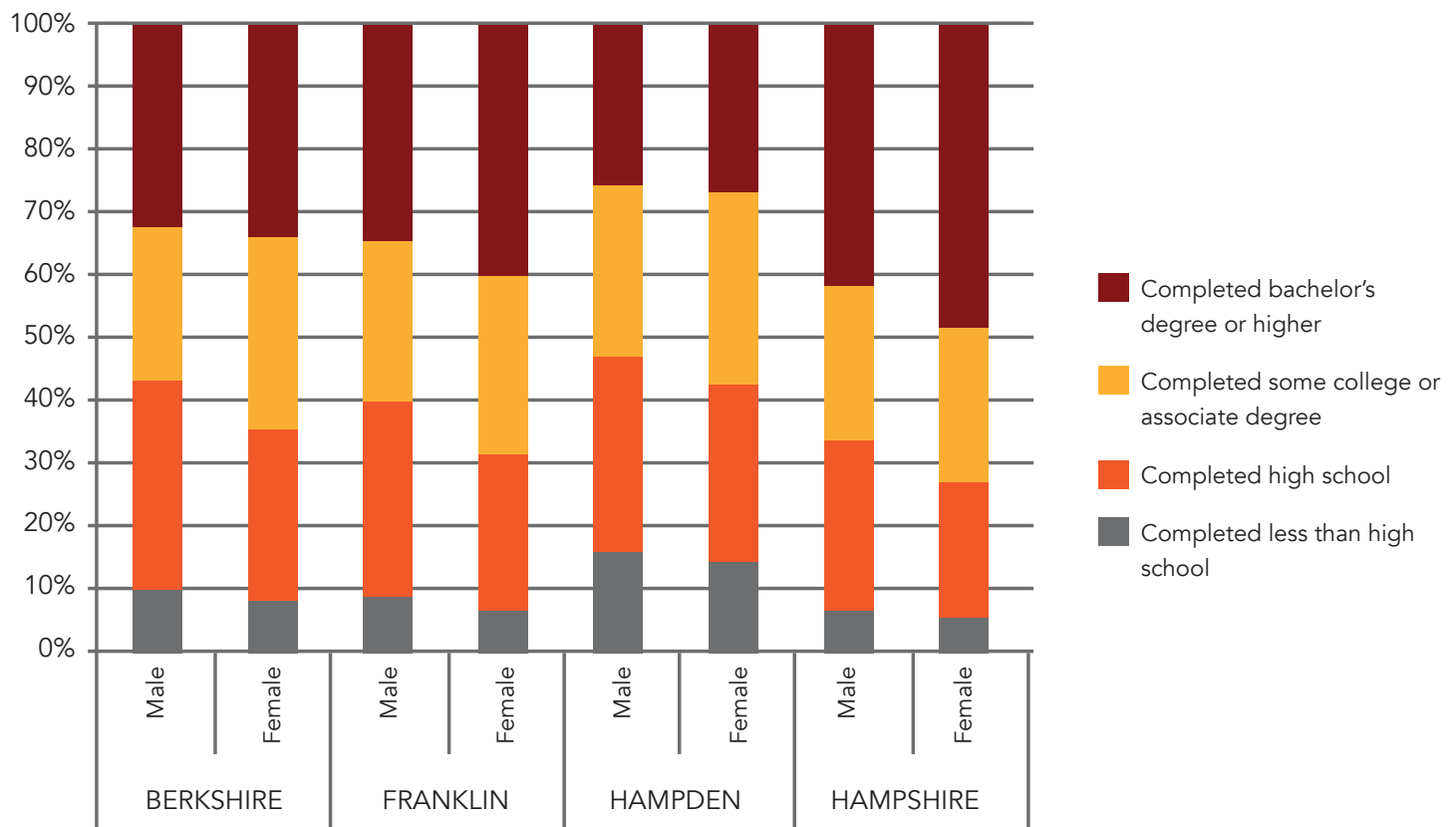
Hampshire County had the largest proportion of college-educated women at 48.6%, followed by Franklin County at 39.5%. Hampshire County also had the smallest proportion of women who did not complete a high school education at 5.3%, again followed by Franklin County at 6.1%. Hampden County had the highest rate of women who did not complete high school at 13.9% (Figure 2).^v



I have felt like my male classmates are smarter than me when we get virtually the same grades, and I've felt like I've needed to work harder because of my gender."

— Age 15, Hampden County

Figure 2. Educational Attainment by Gender and County



Source: U.S. Census, ACS, 5-Year Estimate 2013-2017

Workforce

Academic achievement among women continues to show growth, and regionally women are completing higher levels of education than their male counterparts. However, women continue to participate in the labor force at lower rates than men, and, on average, continue to earn less than men (Table 4). The U.S. Census Bureau defines participation in the labor force as currently employed or unemployed, but looking for or waiting for employment.¹

Table 4. Percent Participation in Labor Force and Unemployment by Gender, County, and Select Municipalities

	PARTICIPATION IN LABOR FORCE (%)		UNEMPLOYED (%)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
BERKSHIRE COUNTY	81.3	78.6	8.3	5.1
North Adams	72.5	74.2	11.7	7.3
Pittsfield	80.9	78.1	9.1	6.4
FRANKLIN COUNTY	82.0	77.5	6.6	5.1
Greenfield	80.1	80.2	6.4	4.9
Montague	81.9	77.1	9.6	6.4
Orange	74.5	63.2	13.6	6.3
HAMPDEN COUNTY	79.5	72.9	7.6	6.7
Chicopee	81.8	73.4	7.8	6.0
Holyoke	69.4	69.5	9.5	8.7
Springfield	71.9	67.6	10.0	10.1
West Springfield	86.2	73.5	7.9	3.9
Westfield	86.3	77.6	8.1	3.6
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY	79.8	77.3	6.8	4.8
Amherst	66.3	67.7	9.5	6.7
Easthampton	82.1	84.9	9.2	5.5
Northampton	81.5	75.7	6.0	4.4

Source: U.S. Census, ACS, 5-Year Estimate 2013-2017



¹ According to the US Census Bureau's glossary of terms, "the labor force includes all people classified in the civilian labor force, plus members of the U.S. Armed Forces (people on active duty with the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard). The civilian labor force consists of people classified as employed or unemployed." Individuals, male or female, who are unable to work and/or choose not to seek employment (e.g., to stay home to care for their children) are not considered part of the labor force.

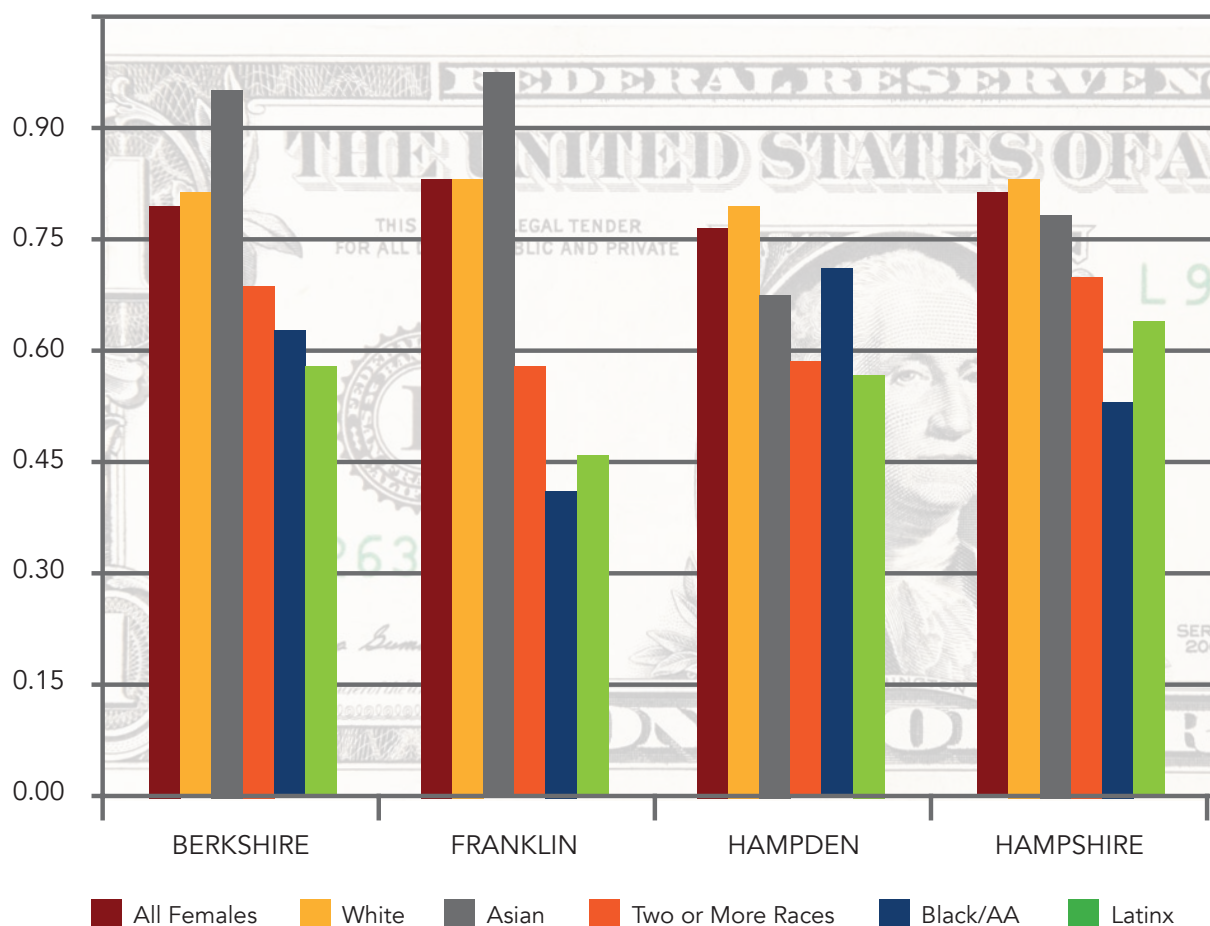
Gender Wage Gap

Women in Western MA experience a disparity in earnings similar to that of the rest of the state and the nation. The Bureau of Labor Statistics released a report in 2018 showing ten-year trends on the persistent wage gap between women and men in MA. According to the report, since 1997, women's earnings compared to those of men have fluctuated, with a low of 74.8% of men's earnings in 2007 and a high of 84.3% in 2016. In 2017, MA women's earnings decreased to \$0.81 to each dollar men earned,^{vi} while in Western MA women earned slightly more at \$0.83.^{vii}

This income disparity was much more pronounced when considering women's race and ethnicity and level of education. Women of color experienced larger disparities in earnings compared to white women. Women of color in Western MA, with the rare exception, made considerably less than white women. This gap ranged from \$0.04 among Asian women in Hampden County to \$0.42 among Black women in Franklin County (Figure 3).

Black women in Franklin County earned the least of all groups of women in Western MA at \$0.41 to each dollar white men earned, followed by Latinx women in Franklin County at \$0.46. In Berkshire and Franklin Counties, Asian women had the highest earnings among women in Western MA at \$0.95 and \$0.98, respectively.² Women of color, and more specifically Black women, Latinx women, and women who identified with two or more races all experienced lower earnings proportional to men who identified as their same race/ethnicity (Figure 3).^{viii}

Figure 3. Women's 12-Month Earnings Ratios Compared with Every Dollar White Men Earned by Race/Ethnicity and County.



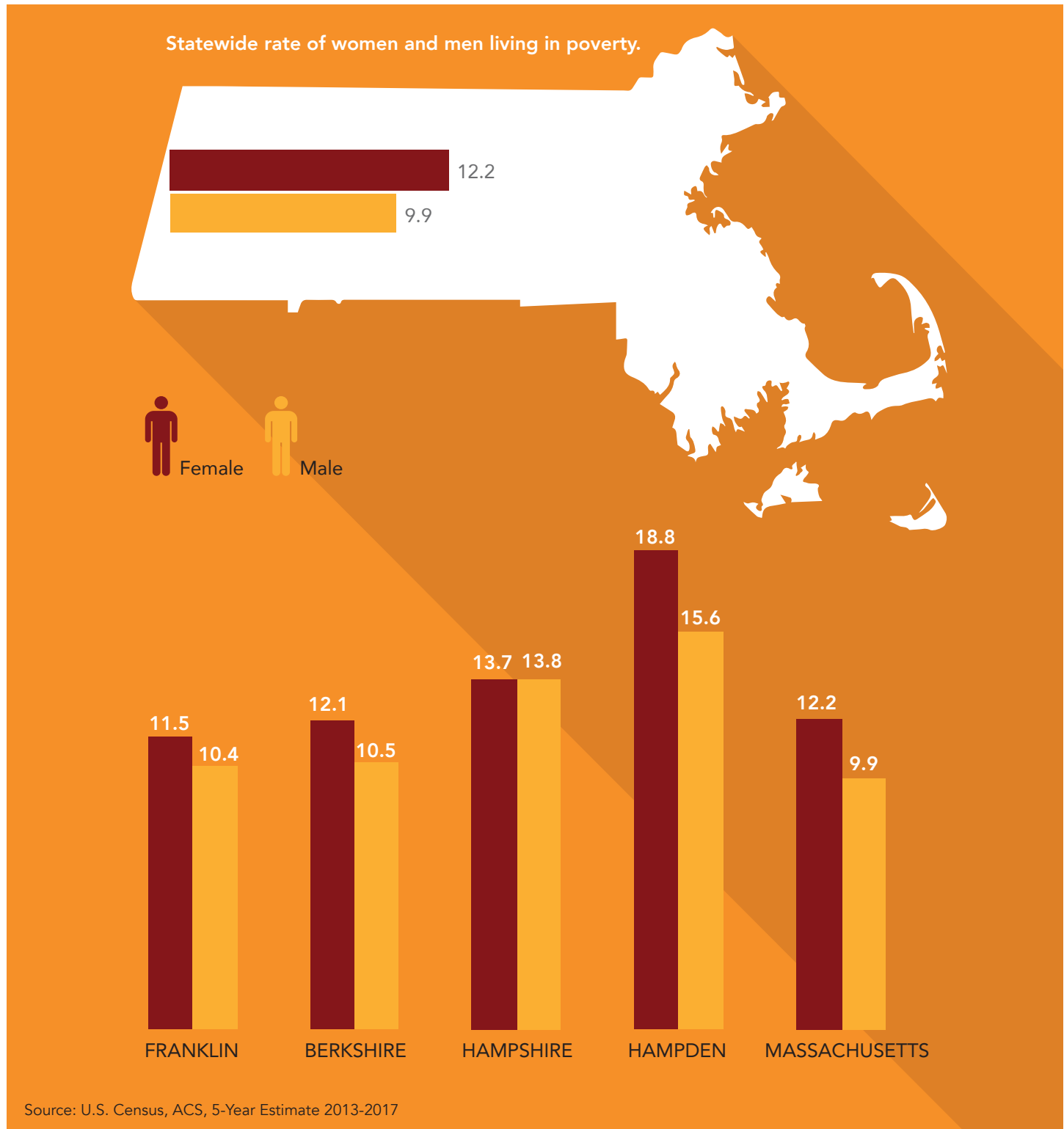
Source: U.S. Census, ACS, 5-Year Estimate 2013-2017

² Note that these median income estimates may be based on a small sample of Asian women given the number of women aged 18 to 64 is 835 and 411 in Berkshire and Franklin Counties, respectively. Asian women in these two counties make up 41.0% and 43.0%, respectively, of the Asian populations. And it is estimated that just over 70.0% of the Asian population of each county participates in the labor force.

Poverty

Rates of poverty among women in Western MA range from 11.5% in Franklin County to 18.8% in Hampden County, well above the statewide rate of 12.2%. Women in Western MA are living in poverty at higher rates than their male counterparts, with the exception of Hampshire County where the rates are comparable (Figure 4). The persistent gender wage gap plays a role in this disparity, although is likely not the only factor (as demonstrated in Hampshire County). Women and girls of color faced substantially higher wage gaps and higher rates of poverty than white women and girls. With poverty rates of up to 41.7% among Latinx women and girls in Hampden County and up to 54.1% among Black women and girls in Franklin County, these are among the highest rates of poverty experienced in Western MA.^{ix}

Figure 4. Percent of Population Living in Poverty by County and Gender





Tyeka Robinson

Impact Spotlight

Work Smart Salary Negotiation Workshops

The Women's Fund and the Massachusetts Office of Economic Empowerment teamed up with Springfield Technical Community College and Greenfield Community College to offer free salary negotiation workshops for women. These sessions are accessible to all women in the community and are designed to equip women with the tools, research, and confidence to advocate for fair pay for their expertise. This year's workshops were held in Springfield and Greenfield, MA.

In addition to equitable pay, the Women's Fund hosted a series of interviews with real, hard-working women in the community to discuss gender equity as it pertains to many people's lives today. For a look into life as a successful woman in the trades, listen to Olivia McCulloch interview Carpenter, Tyeka Robinson.

Women in the Trades Podcast

<http://bit.ly/TyekaInTrades>

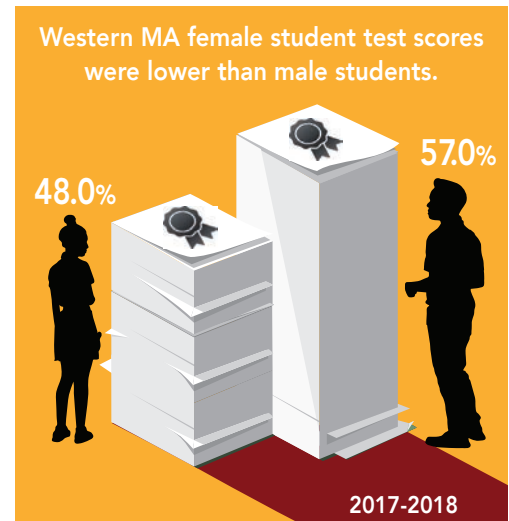
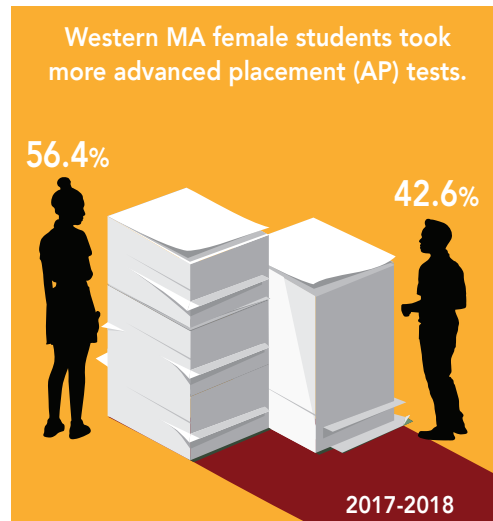
Leadership and Achievement

In Western MA, women are underrepresented in leadership positions in business, STEM, healthcare, education, and in political representation, with few exceptions. The most astounding lack of female representation is in STEM—women hold less than one-third of all STEM jobs—and politics. When disaggregated by race and ethnicity, the data still posits that women of color are severely underrepresented.

Disparities in Test Results

Female students in Western MA are taking advanced placement and college entrance exams at higher rates, yet consistently scoring lower, than male students. According to the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE), female students took 56.4% of the advanced placement (AP) tests taken in Western MA in 2017–2018. However, only 48.0% of

female students' test scores were in the higher range of 3 to 5 as compared with 57.0% of male students' test scores. The participation rate of female students in Western MA was comparable to the statewide rate. However, female students in Western MA had a lower rate of high scores (3 to 5) than female students statewide (63.6%, which was still lower than male students statewide at 69.1%).^x



Business

In 2012, the most recent Survey of Business Owners data available, women owned one-third of all business firms in Western MA, comparable to the proportion of firms owned by women statewide. Women in Berkshire and Hampden Counties owned slightly lower proportions (30.4% and 30.9%) and Franklin and Hampshire County ownership among women was slightly higher (32.6% and 34.5%).^{xi}

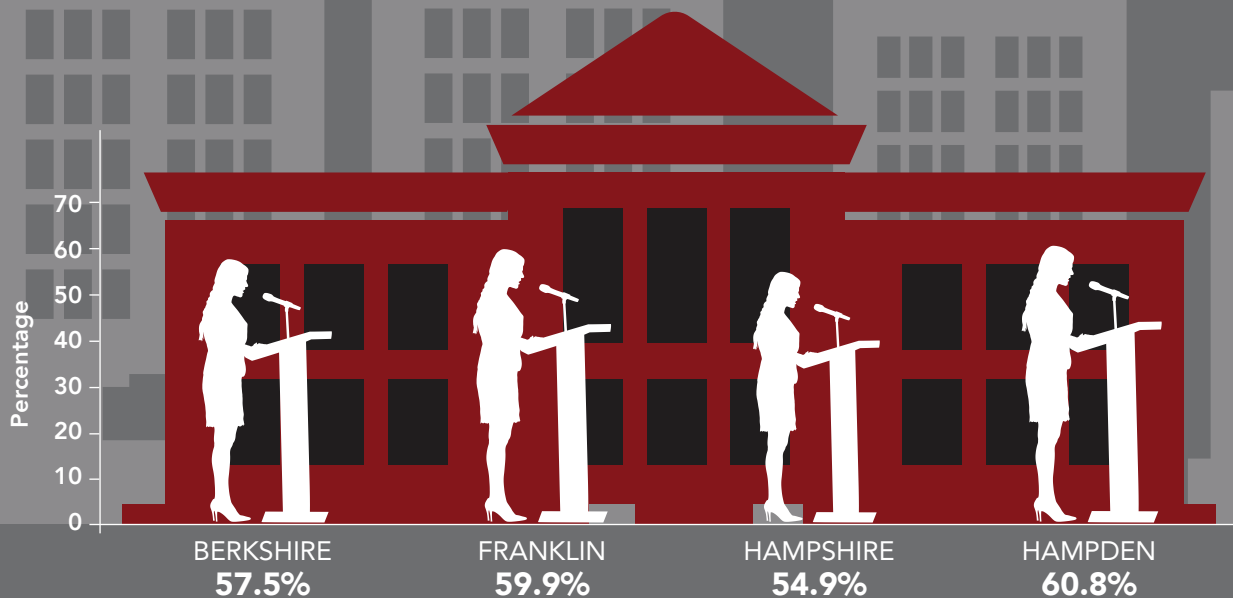
Healthcare

Healthcare is one of the largest employment sectors in Western MA. Leadership analysis of the largest non-governmental hospitals and healthcare systems showed at least 41.0% of leadership positions are held by women with the exception of one hospital with 16.3%.

STEM

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's most current occupation-related five-year estimates, 2006–2010, women were largely underrepresented in the STEM field. Only 2.4% of women in Western MA worked in STEM jobs. When race and ethnicity were factored in, the divide was even larger. Only 2.2% of Black women and 1.6% of Latinx women were in STEM occupations. Asian women had the largest percentage of women in the STEM workforce in Western MA (8.1%), yet it is still substantially lower than that of Asian men (20.3%). Within the STEM field, women in Western MA held less than one-third (28.4%) of all STEM jobs. Among the four counties, this proportion was highest in Franklin County (33.5%).

Women made up the majority of school principals or heads of school in all four Western MA counties (2017-2018 school year).



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. School and District Profiles, 2017-2018.

Education

During the 2017-2018 school year, women made up the majority of school principals or heads of school in all four Western MA counties (Berkshire – 57.5%, Franklin – 59.9%, Hampshire – 54.9%, Hampden – 60.8%). There were few principals or heads of school of color (Berkshire – 2.4%, Franklin – 0%, Hampshire – 5.5%), except in Hampden County where nearly one in five (18.7%) were people of color, almost double the rate of teachers of color in the same county. (Note: When looking at district-level data, MA DESE does not provide principals' and heads of school's race and ethnicity by gender.) Of the 90 superintendent positions in Western MA, some of which are part-time and some of which are full-time, 37 (41.1%) were held by women during the 2017-2018 school year. Women held 18 (39.1%) of the 46 full-time superintendent positions. Of the female superintendents, only 3 (8.1%) of those positions were held by women of color.^{xii}

Higher Education

Despite female students comprising the majority of students enrolled in higher education in Western MA institutions, women often do not hold the majority of institutional leadership positions in higher education. Of the 16 institutions in Western MA during the 2017-2018 school year, 43.8% had female Presidents and 81.2% had female Provosts. At seven (46.7%) of the colleges and universities, women made up at least 50.0% of the highest salaried positions (Note: This information was not available for one of the colleges).

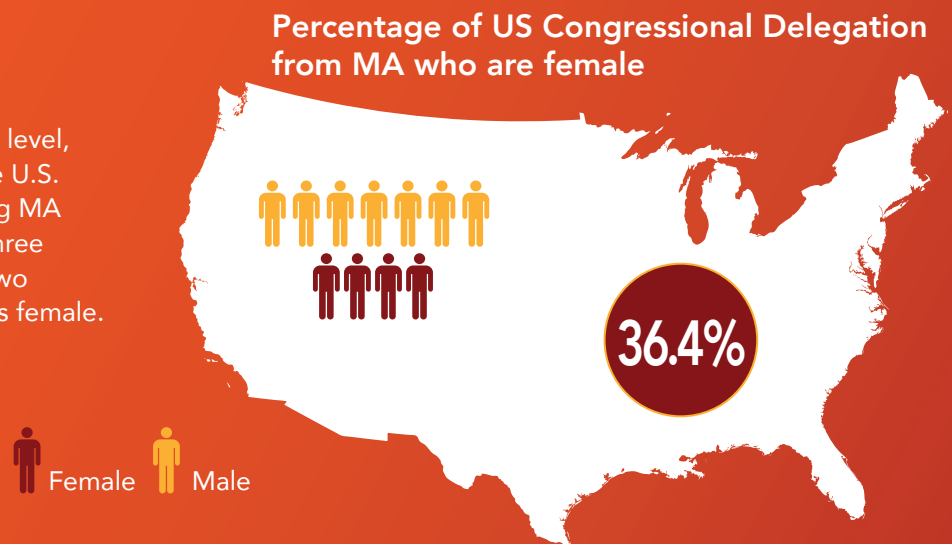
Political Representation



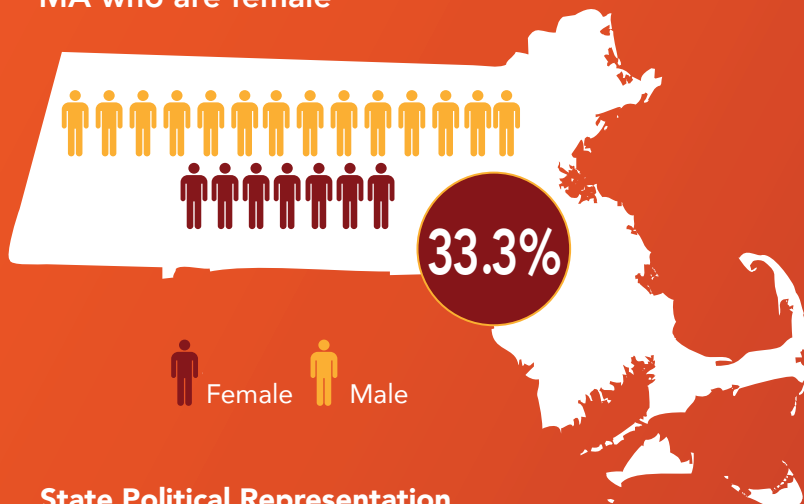
“Women belong in all places where decisions are being made,” she said. “I don’t say [the split] should be 50-50. It could be 60 percent men, 40 percent women, or the other way around. It shouldn’t be that women are the exception.” — Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Federal Political Representation

As of the 2018 election, at the federal level, four of the 11 members (36.4%) of the U.S. Congressional delegation representing MA were female—one U.S. Senator and three U.S. Representatives. Neither of the two Representatives from Western MA was female.



Percentage of MA Legislature from Western MA who are female



State Political Representation

Although women represent slightly over half (52.0%) the population of Western MA, they make up only one-third (33.3%) of MA Legislators—both MA Senate and House of Representatives Members—from Western MA.

Percentage of Mayors from Western MA who are female



Local Political Representation

Elected positions for local leadership and representation of 13 municipalities across the four counties remain largely held by men. These include mayors, city council members, and select board members. Of the 13 municipalities, 10 have mayors, 20.0% of whom are women. All of the 13 city councils or town select boards are majority male with the exception of the Amherst Town Council.



Impact Spotlight

Leadership Institute for Political and Public Impact and Young Women's Initiative

The Women's Fund leadership development programs [Leadership Institute for Political and Public Impact (LIPPI) and Young Women's Initiative (YWI)] aim to empower women with the confidence and skills needed to be successful in political and leadership roles. LIPPI women are running for office or currently hold positions in office, sitting on boards, writing policy, promoting public advocacy or drafting legislation while encouraging respectful and meaningful civic engagement. The Springfield YWI is comprised of two bodies [the Cross-Sector Steering Committee and the Young Women's Advisory Council (YWAC)] that work in harmony to advance gender equity in Springfield. The young leaders who participate on the YWAC work through leadership development curriculum while cultivating mentorship relationships to investigate barriers to their success, explore solutions, and finalize recommendations that aim to create a more socially just Springfield.

“

I loved being part of YWAC. This program gave me the opportunity to not only grow personally, but to learn skills that can benefit me in the future. YWAC has inspired me to achieve my goals in life and to aspire to greater things.”

— YWAC Alumna, Ramona Williams

Health and Safety

Available data suggest that more attention needs to be paid to addressing the mental health, sexual and reproductive health, and physical safety of women and girls in Western MA. Across a number of health indicators, adolescent girls in general, and women and girls of color in Western MA experienced clear disparities compared with their male peers or females overall.

Mental Health



Girls in Western MA consistently (across multiple school-based surveys) reported depressive symptoms or were assessed at high risk for depression at elevated rates (Table 5). Consistent with statewide findings,^{xiii} students in Franklin and Hampshire Counties and the City of Springfield, who identified as LGBTQI+³ reported alarmingly elevated rates of being at high risk for depression. In Franklin County, 72.2% of students who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or unsure about their sexuality were at high risk of depression. In Hampshire County, more than 76.0% of transgender and gender-neutral students were at high risk for depression.^{xiv}

Table 5. Percent of Students at High Risk for Depression by Gender.

	Male students (%)	Female students (%)
BERKSHIRE	29.5	53.7
FRANKLIN	30.8	62.4
SPRINGFIELD	32.0	55.7
HAMPSHIRE	27.7	46.7

Source: Prevention Needs Assessment Surveys, 2017 (Berkshire, Hampshire) & 2018 (Franklin, Springfield)

³ Questions about gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation were not asked in a uniform way across the Prevention Needs Assessment Survey (PNAS) conducted in Franklin and Hampshire Counties and the City of Springfield, and not asked at all in the 2018 PNAS in Berkshire County. It is due to this limitation that these data are not presented per county/city.



Sexually Transmitted Infections

Between 2013 and 2017, among women across the four counties of Western MA, the average annual rates of syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia (per 100,000) were highest in Hampden County. Rates of syphilis (6.5) and gonorrhea (107.6) among women in Hampden County were 3.4 and 1.4 times higher, respectively, than statewide rates.

Among female adolescents aged 15 to 19, rates of gonorrhea and chlamydia were particularly concerning with rates much higher than overall female rates in each county, with the exception of rates of gonorrhea in Franklin County (Figures 5 and 6).

Figure 5. Average Annual Rates of Gonorrhea among Women and Girls by County (per 100,000), 2013-2017

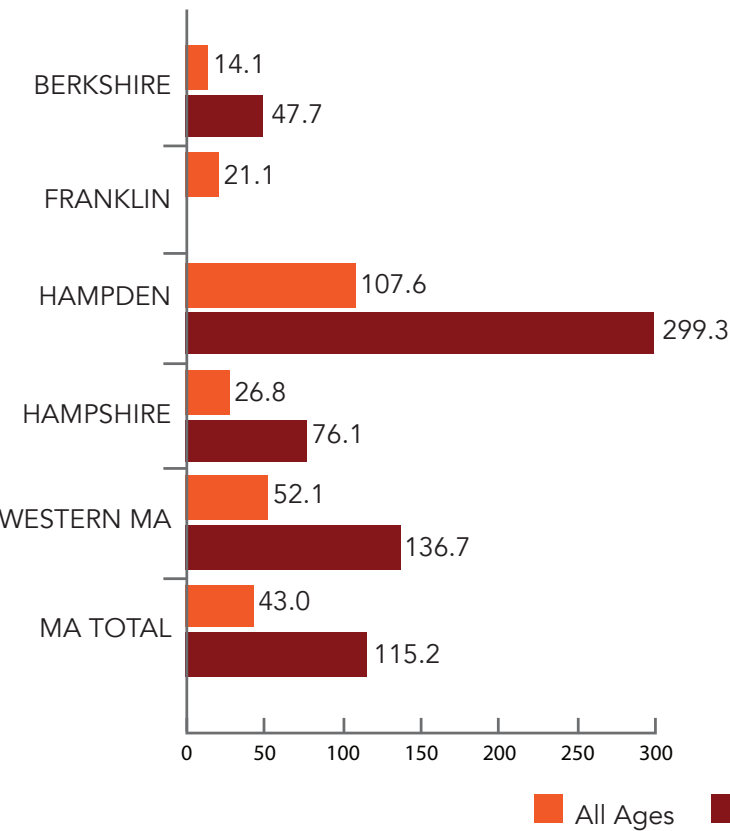
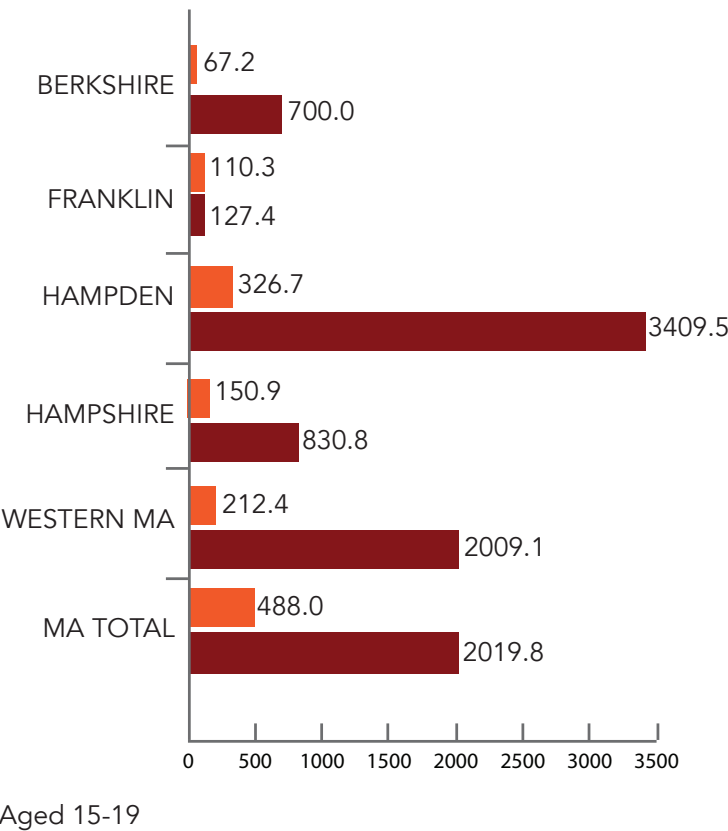


Figure 6. Average Annual Rates of Chlamydia among Women and Girls by County (per 100,000), 2013-2017

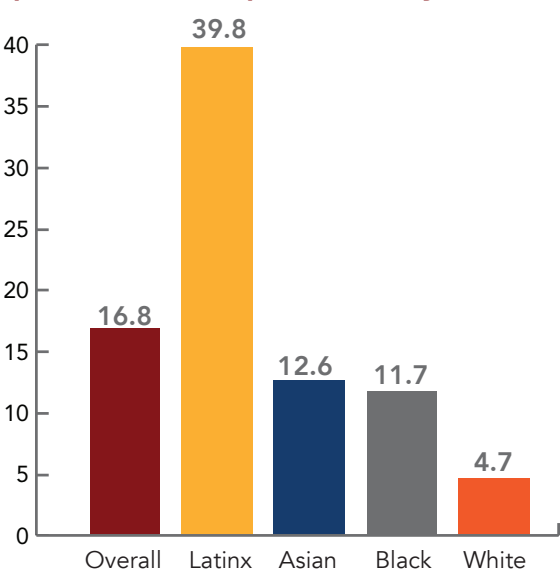


Source: MA DPH, Department of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences, Sexually Transmitted Infections 2013–2017

Teen Births

In 2016, the MA teen birth rate was among the lowest in the country at a rate of 8.5 per 1,000 compared to 20.3 per 1,000 nationally.^{xv} Rates were 30.0–98% higher than the state rate in all Western MA counties except Hampshire. **Large inequities exist among Latinx teens, particularly in Hampden County, where the Latinx teen birth rate was over four times that of the overall state rate** (Figure 7). Latinx teen births made up 74.4% of the teen births in Western MA.^{xvi}

Figure 7. Teen Birth Rates (per 1,000) Hampden County, 2016.



Source: MA DPH Birth Data Set, 2016

Prenatal Care

Adequacy of prenatal care (APNC) is determined by the timing of the initiation of prenatal care and the frequency of prenatal care visits, as measured by the Adequacy of Prenatal Care Utilization (APNCU) Index (Table 6). The APNCU identifies women who have received at least basic adequate prenatal care as women who begin receiving prenatal care by their fourth month of pregnancy and attend at least 80% of recommended prenatal care visits.^{xvii}

Across the four counties of Western MA, more than 80.0% of women received APNC in 2016, although this varied by county. In Berkshire and Hampden Counties, a lower percentage of women (80.6 and 81.3, respectively) received APNC than women in Franklin and Hampshire Counties (87.8 and 87.2, respectively).^{xviii}

This proportion noticeably varied in Berkshire and Hampden Counties by race/ethnicity, where only 74.0% of Black and Latinx women in Berkshire and 73.0% of Black women in Hampden received APNC (Table 6). Studies suggest that racial and ethnic disparities in receiving adequate prenatal care is linked to systemic injustices facing many individuals of color, including lower insurance rates, practitioners’ stereotypes of women of color when providing care, and unequal education opportunities.^{xix}

Table 6. Percent Pregnant Women Who Received Adequate Prenatal Care by County, 2016.

	Overall (%)	Latinx (%)	Asian/ Pacific Islander (%)	Black (%)	White (%)	Other (%)
BERKSHIRE	80.6	74.0	88.9	74.2	81.4	82.4
FRANKLIN	87.8	81.3	61.5*	100.0*	88.7	-
HAMPDEN	81.3	79.7	82.5	73.0	84.2	80.0
HAMPSHIRE	87.2	86.7	84.1	95.7	87.5	77.8*
STATEWIDE	82.3	78.8	82.9	69.8	85.7	75.6

Source: MA DPH Birth Data Set, 2016

An estimate with a numerator count less than 10 should be interpreted with caution and is indicated by an asterisk (*).

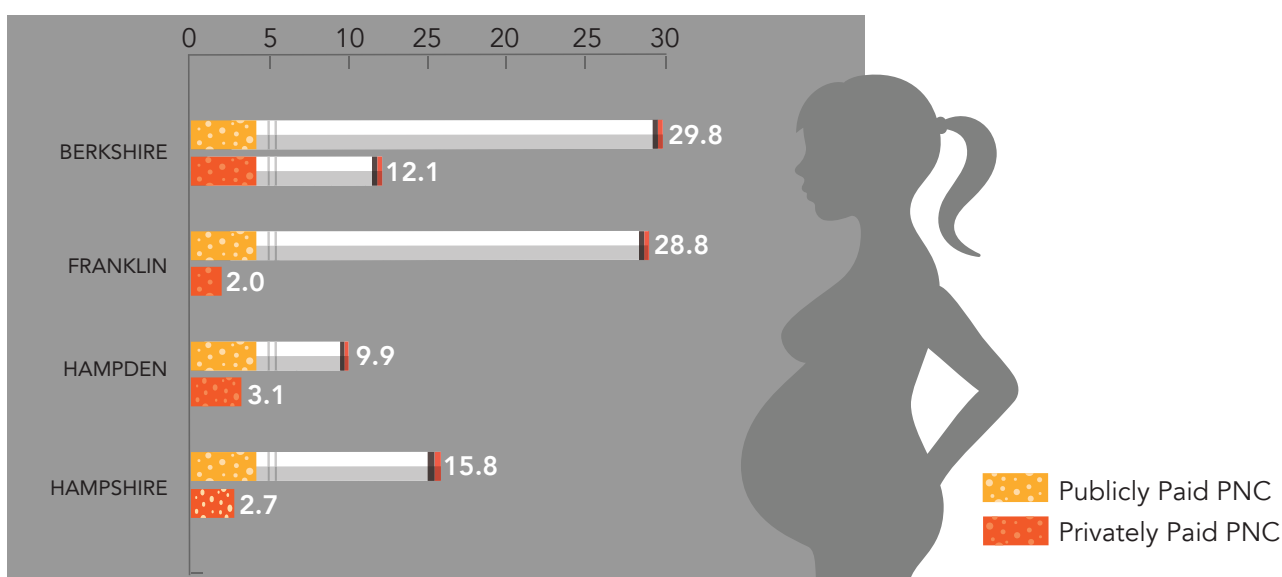
Smoking During Pregnancy

Smoking during pregnancy disproportionately occurred in rural areas and among White women on public insurance in Western MA. The proportion of women who smoked during pregnancy in Western MA in 2016 exceeded the 5.4% of pregnant women statewide. This gap was most obvious in the two most rural counties in the state where rates were over double that of the state rate: Berkshire (19%) and Franklin (12.3%). Pregnant women of all races/ethnicities in Western MA were smoking at higher rates than statewide, with the highest rates in Berkshire County across all racial/ethnic groups.

The proportion of pregnant teens (aged 15 to 19) who reported smoking was nearly twice that of all pregnant women who smoked in Berkshire (36.2%) and more than twice that of all pregnant women who smoked in Franklin (27.3%). In Hampden the proportion of pregnant teens who smoked (4.3%) was less than that of all pregnant women (7.4%). This stark contrast in Hampden may be due to lower smoking rates among Latinx women combined with Latinx teens representing 74.4% of the county's teen births.

The proportion of pregnant women who reported smoking during pregnancy was higher among those whose prenatal care was paid for through public insurance, suggesting a difference by income level and/or employment status (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Percent Pregnant Women Who Smoked by Payer and County, 2016



Source: MA DPH Birth Data Set, 2016

Public Safety and Crime

In MA, one way incidents of sexual violence are measured is through the completion of Provider Sexual Crime Reports (PSCRs) (Table 7). Typically, a medical provider completes a PSCR when an individual seeks medical attention (most often in a hospital/medical center) following a sexual assault. These data are based on those individuals who sought medical attention after a sexual assault, where a PSCR was completed, and the institution submitted the reports to Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS). A higher number of cases from a particular county could signify a higher incidence of sexual violence, but it could also signify a higher rate of help seeking and/or PSCR completions and submissions.

Table 7. Distribution of 2017-2018 PSCRs in Western MA

	Number of PSCRs	Percent of PSCRs (%) (n=394)
BERKSHIRE	91	23.1
FRANKLIN	15	3.8
HAMPDEN	218	55.3
HAMPSHIRE	70	17.8

Source: MA EOPSS, PSCRs 2017-2018

Public safety is key to a community's feeling of safety and we believe accurate representation of data in this area is crucial to understanding our communities. Due to the nuances of data collected on public safety and crime, we ask you to refer to the full report on www.mywomensfund.org for more information.



Impact Spotlight

MotherWoman

This project empowers participants to share their stories to create lasting impact on policy for mothers in Massachusetts; specifically pregnant workers. MotherWoman has formed a national coalition to advocate for the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA). PWFA ensures protections in the workplace so that pregnant women and mothers do not lose their jobs or end up living in poverty.

Recommendations

Gender Inclusivity in Data Collection

While this report illuminates a great deal of data, it highlights the unattainable information that is currently not being collected. We recommend information be collected that is more inclusive of all identities on the gender spectrum instead of the traditional binary choices.

Data on Women in Leadership Positions

Women—and women of color—in leadership positions is a key element of modeling what is possible for today's young women and gender non-conforming youth. We encourage this region to consider how to better collect this information so we may empower the leaders of tomorrow.

Need for Countywide Youth Data

To better understand and advocate for youth needs in Hampden County and in all Western MA counties, we encourage uniform methods of data collection in each county.

Areas That May Merit Further Exploration

While this report is as comprehensive as possible within our resources and the data readily available, we are aware of other areas that may merit further exploration. These include period poverty, the effects of the opioid crisis on women and girls in Western MA, and early marriage.



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RESEARCH REPORT ON
**THE STATUS
OF WOMEN
AND GIRLS**
IN WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS
2019 KEY FINDINGS

Key Findings based on the full research report on the Status of Women and Girls in Western Massachusetts created by Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts, Jessie Gleckel, MPH. The full report can be found at mywomensfund.org.



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