

Girls and Careers

Girls' education is essential in a knowledge-based economy

- ◆ In 2000, approximately 84% of young women ages 18–39 had completed high school by diploma, and 5% earned a GED. Overall, 11% of young women left high school before completion that year.⁶
- ◆ In 1998, young women were 59% of public high school graduates who earned three or more credits in vocational coursework. Young women concentrated their vocational credits in fields such as business, consumer and homemaking, and technical and communications.⁷
- ◆ The proportion of women of color in college has been increasing, especially among Hispanic and Asian and Pacific Islander women. In 1976, Hispanic women ages 18–34 were 6% of U.S. women in that age group, yet constituted 3% of women enrolled in college. In 1999, Hispanic women were 13% of U.S. women, yet accounted for 9% of women in college.⁶ Asian and Pacific Islander women those ages were 5% of the female population in 1999, yet accounted for 6% of women enrolled in college that year.^{5,6} (See also Figure 1.)
- ◆ More women than men earn associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees. Between 1989 and 1999, the number of bachelor's degrees awarded to women rose by 26% (to 57% of these degrees), while those awarded to men increased by 8%. In 2000, women earned 44% of doctoral degrees in the U.S.⁶
- ◆ In 2000, women ages 16 and older who had finished high school (only) were two and a half times as likely to be unemployed as women who had finished college. Among the same group, 4% who earned a bachelor's degree or higher were unemployed.⁶

Girls have a huge stake in the future job market

- ◆ The majority of working-age women participate in the workforce. Overall, 74% of women ages 25–54 were employed in 2001, and the percentages vary by age and race. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of Black women and White women, and 63% of Hispanic women ages 25–54 were employed in 2001.⁵ (See also Figure 2.)
- ◆ For women, median weekly earnings vary considerably by educational level. For example, women with a bachelor's degree earned two and a half times as much as those with less than a high school diploma — \$784 per week, compared with \$314 per week.² (See also Figure 3.)
- ◆ New career opportunities will most benefit women working in areas such as computer, legal and health related occupations, social services, natural science, teaching, and finance.⁹ (See also Figure 4.)

Figure 1: Women enrolled in college by race and ethnicity, in 1976 and 1999.^{5,6}

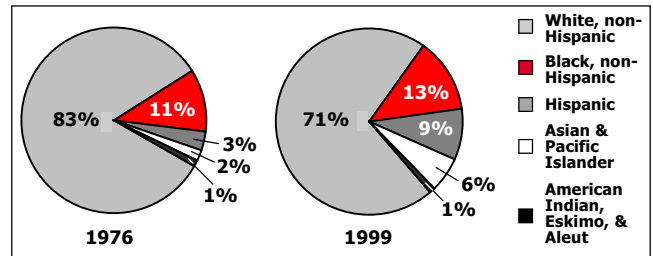


Figure 2: Percentage of women in the labor force in 2001, by race/ethnicity and age.⁵

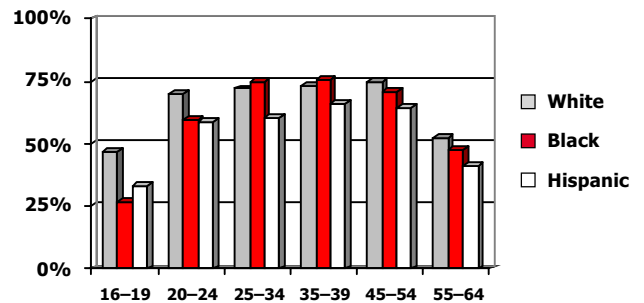


Figure 3: Median annual earnings of women ages 25 and older, by educational attainment, 1999.⁶

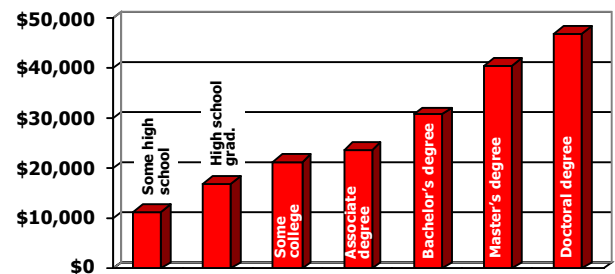
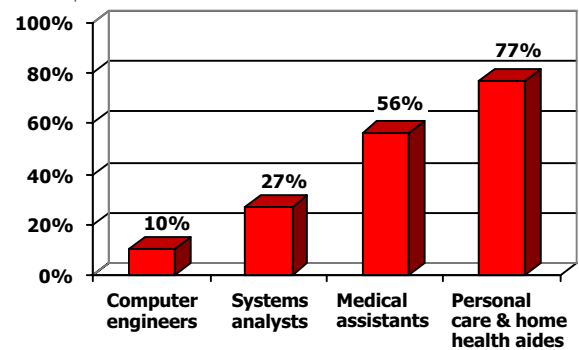


Figure 4: Fastest growing occupations, 1998–2008, and percentage of women in those occupations in 2001.⁹



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Girls and Careers (2)

- ◆ Between 1998 and 2008, women's participation in the labor force is expected to increase by 15%. As a result, women will increase their share of the labor force from 46% to 48%. The fastest increase in labor force participation between 1998 and 2008 is projected to be among Hispanic and Asian women.⁹
- ◆ According to a nationally representative survey, over three times as many girls as boys in grades 3–12 wanted to be doctors (10% and 3%, respectively). More girls than boys also indicated they wanted to be lawyers (6% and 4%) and nearly as many girls as boys said they wanted to be scientists (4% and 5%).³ (See Figure 5.)
- ◆ Between the ages of 18 and 30, the average woman will hold 8.4 jobs.¹⁰

The wage gap is least among younger workers

- ◆ In 2001, salaried women working full time had median weekly earnings that were 76% of men's earnings.² (See also Figure 6.)
- ◆ The difference between women's and men's earnings is least among younger workers. Women ages 16–24 earned 90% as much as their male counterparts, while women ages 45–54 earned 74% as much as men in the same age group.²
- ◆ Among full time workers in 1999, women ages 25 and older who had a bachelor's degree earned about the same amount as did men with a high school diploma only (\$30,730 and \$29,917 respectively).⁶
- ◆ Women most likely to be paid at or below the minimum wage are the youngest workers (ages 16–19) and those who are hourly workers.⁹

Nontraditional jobs tend to pay a higher wage than many of the occupations in which women have traditionally worked

- ◆ In 2001, women were more likely than men to work in lower paying professional occupations, such as teaching. Men were more likely to be employed in the highest paying professions, such as engineering and computer science.² (See Figure 7.)
- ◆ According to 2001 Census Bureau data, one out of ten employed engineers was a woman.²

Figure 5: Students' career goals, by sex, grades 3–12.³

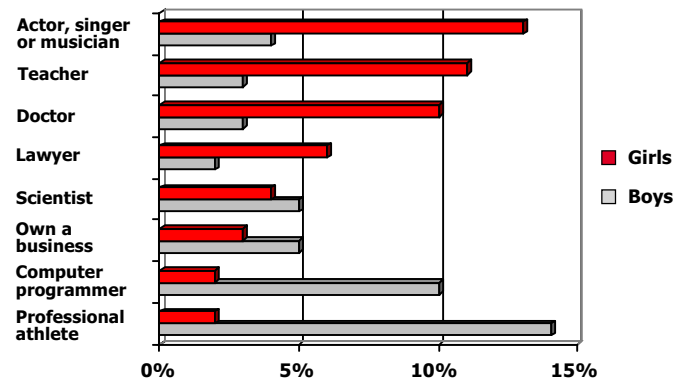
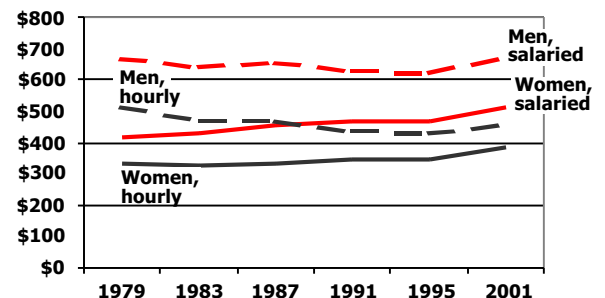


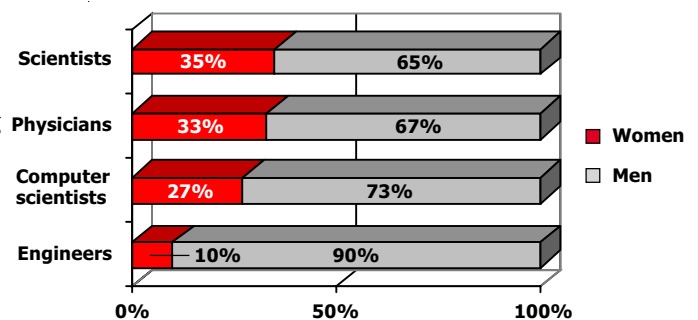
Figure 6: Median usual weekly earnings in constant dollars by sex, salaried and hourly workers.²



Among full-time salaried workers, for every dollar men earned in 2001, women earned **76¢**.

Among full-time hourly workers, for every dollar men earned in 2001, women earned **84¢**.

Figure 7: Percentage of salaried workers who work in selected occupations, by sex.²



Girls and Careers (3)

Education beyond high school is good insurance against poverty.

- ◆ In 2001, the poverty rate in the U.S. was 11.7%. At 16.3%, the poverty rate for children remained higher than that for any other age group.⁴
- ◆ Of the 31 million people (11.3% of the population) living at or below the poverty level in 2000, 6.4 million were classified as working poor*. Overall, 3.5 million women and 3 million men ages 16 and older were working poor.¹ (See also Figure 8.)
- ◆ Young workers have lower earnings and are more likely to be unemployed than are older workers. Additionally, Black and Hispanic workers experienced poverty at much higher rates than did White workers in 2000. Among women ages 16–34, 16% of Black women were working poor, compared to 12% of Hispanic women and 7% of White women.¹
- ◆ More than 9 in 10 employed, civilian women age 16 and over work in one of three occupational groups: sales and office (37%); management, professional and related (36%); and service (18%).¹ (See also Figure 9.)
- ◆ In 2000, young women who had less than a high school diploma were more than twice as likely to be working poor as those who were high school graduates (16% and 7%, respectively).¹ (See also Figure 10.)

Figure 8: Percentage of people who were working poor*, ages 16–34, by sex and race/ethnicity, 2000.¹

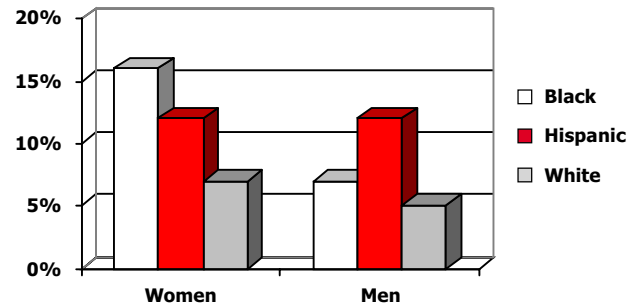


Figure 9: Percentage of people who were working poor, by sex and occupation.¹

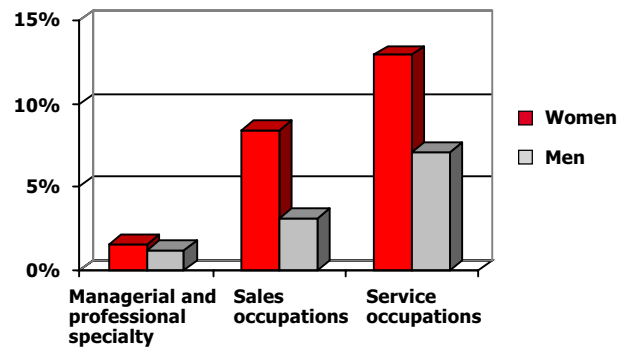
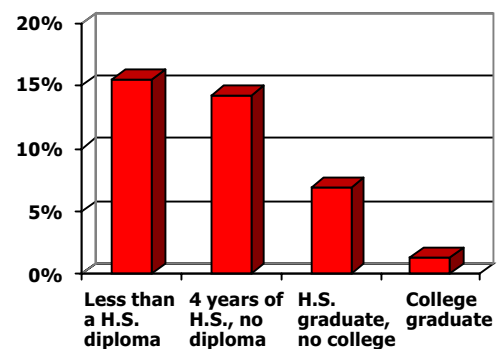


Figure 10: Percentage of women who were working poor, by educational attainment, 2000.¹



* Individuals who spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force (working or looking for work), but whose incomes fell below the official poverty level.¹

Girls and Careers (4)

For more information on girls and economic issues, see these Girls Incorporated® Facts Sheets:

- ◆ **Girls and Economic Literacy**
- ◆ **Girls and Information Technology**
- ◆ **Girls and Science and Math**

Girls Incorporated® covers girls and careers in its program **Girls Inc. Economic Literacy**, where girls learn that money is neither good nor evil, but a tool to be used intelligently, saved or invested for the future, or given away to support something valued by the giver. Girls also learn about their role in the world economy. **Girls Inc. Economic Literacy** introduces girls ages 6-11 to banks and the concept of saving on a very concrete level, delaying gratification today to amass enough money for something one wants or needs in the future. The program also introduces girls to the concept of equal pay for equal work.

Girls Inc. is a national nonprofit youth organization dedicated to inspiring all girls to be strong, smart and bold. For over 50 years, Girls Incorporated has provided vital educational programs to millions of American girls, particularly those in high-risk, underserved areas. Today, innovative programs help girls confront subtle societal messages about their value and potential, and prepare them to lead successful, independent and fulfilling lives.

Girls Inc. reaches 920,000 girls ages 6–18 through programs and public education. Of the girls the organization serves, 70 percent are girls of color; 75 percent come from families earning \$25,000 annually or less; and 37 percent live with two parents.

Girls Inc. develops research-based informal education programs that encourage girls to take risks and master physical, intellectual and emotional challenges. Major programs address math and science education, pregnancy and drug abuse prevention, leadership, media literacy, economic literacy, adolescent health, violence prevention and sports participation.

The National Resource Center (NRC) is the organization's research, program development, national services, and training site. Research and evaluation conducted by the NRC provide the foundation for Girls Inc. programs. The NRC also responds to requests for information on girls' issues and distributes Girls Inc. publications.

Girls Inc. informs policy makers about girls' needs locally and nationally. The organization educates the media about critical issues facing girls. In addition, the organization teaches girls how to advocate for themselves and their communities, using their voices to promote positive change.

Girls Inc. is a nonprofit organization which receives 77 percent of its revenue from public support – corporations, foundations, government grants and individuals. The remainder comes from affiliate dues, fees, interest and dividends. More than three-quarters of the organization's functional expenses go directly to support program services for girls.

Girls Inc. national leadership focuses on developing innovative ways to leverage our most valuable asset – acknowledged expertise as the nation's premiere program provider and advocate for girls – to expand our reach to more than a million girls by the year 2002. Our leaders include Francis X. Burnes, III, Chair of the National Board; Joyce M. Roche, President and CEO; and Donna Brace Ogilvie, Honorary Chair.



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