



City and County of San Francisco

Department on the Status of Women

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THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN SAN FRANCISCO

2009

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The Status of Women in San Francisco, 2009

The following report summarizes general data and key issues that affect women at the national, state, and local level. Data regarding basic demographics, education, employment, economics, and housing, as well as civic engagement are among the topics discussed here. Where possible, data was disaggregated by gender and race. Though some key indicators of women’s lives have not been addressed, such as women’s health and safety, women’s involvement in the criminal justice system, and explorations of women’s roles within their families, nonetheless, this report creates a benchmark for understanding the 365,000 women and girls living in San Francisco.

I. BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS

San Francisco is one of the most diverse cities in the nation. The rich intermingling of cultures makes the City strong. What follows are brief summaries of some of the most basic demographic indicators, including the number of women in San Francisco, information relating to ethnicity, immigration status, language proficiency, and age.

A. Numbers

In 2006, San Francisco boasted 744,041 residents.¹ Women made up 49% of that population, with men comprising 51%. Neighborhoods with the highest percentages of women include the Marina (Zip Code 94123) at 53%, Lake Merced (Zip Code 94132) at 53%, and the Inner and Outer Richmond (Zip Codes 94118 and 94121) at 53% and 52%. The Tenderloin (Zip Code 94102) and SOMA (Zip Code 94103) have the fewest women, at 39% and 40% respectively. The gender breakdown of specific neighborhoods is as follows:

Figure 1: Percent of Women in San Francisco by Neighborhood

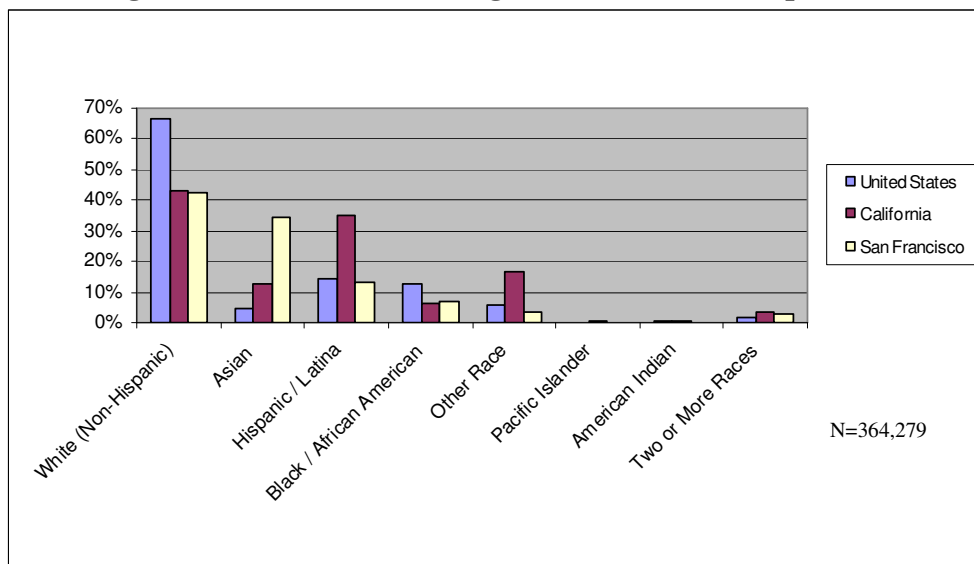
Zip Code	Neighborhood	% Female
94118	Inner Richmond	53
94132	Lake Merced	53
94123	Marina	53
94122	Sunset	52
94115	Western Addition	52
94116	Forest Hill	52
94124	Bayview	52
94121	Outer Richmond	52
94112	Excelsior	51
94127	West Portal	51
94134	Visitacion Valley	51
94108	Chinatown	51
94133	North Beach	50
94019	Nob Hill	48
94103	SOMA	40
94102	Tenderloin	39

Source: U.S Census, 2006.

B. Race/Ethnicity

San Francisco possesses an incredible ethnic and racial diversity, with people of color comprising over half of the City’s population. Of the 364,279 females that live in San Francisco, 42% are White, 34% are Asian, 13% are Latina, and 7% are African American.² There is tremendous diversity within each of these categories. For example, the broad category “Asian” includes Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Cambodian, Laotian, Vietnamese, Indian, and Pakistani individuals, to name just a few sub-categories. Each of these communities has specific language and cultural needs. The City has over twice the percentage of Asian residents than both the nation (5%) and California (13%). The percentage of female African American residents of San Francisco (7%) is on par with that of California (6%), but much smaller than the nation (13%). The Latina population of San Francisco (13%) mirrors national levels (14%), but is much smaller than state levels, in which the Latina population comprises 35% of the total female population. Figure 2 below shows the racial breakdown of women in San Francisco as compared to California and the nation as a whole.

Figure 2: Race as a Percentage of Total Female Population



Source: U.S. Census, 2006.

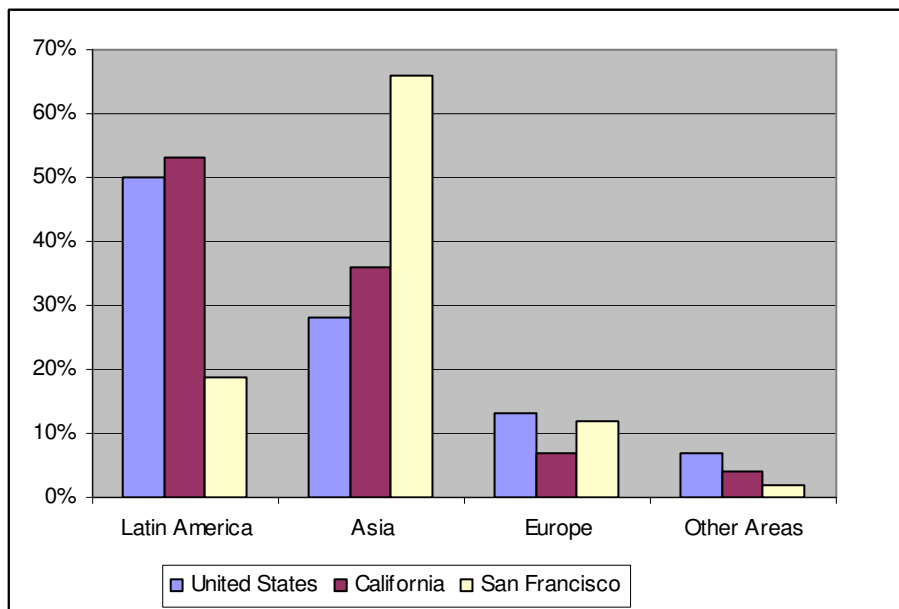
In general, ethnic demographics of males and females are consistent geographically. The only area of significant difference appears when comparing Asian males and females in San Francisco. Approximately 34% of San Francisco’s female population is of Asian descent, whereas only 29% of the males in San Francisco identify as Asian. All other discrepancies are within 1 to 2 percentage points.³

C. Immigration Status and Languages Spoken

Adding texture and perspective to San Francisco’s landscape is the City’s diverse immigrant population, one of the largest in the nation. More than half of all female immigrants in San Francisco are from Asia (66%), followed by Latin America (19%). This data stands in stark

contrast to both state and national immigration patterns. In the United States and California more than half of females born outside the United States are from Latin America, and are primarily emigrating from Mexico.⁴ Consistent in all regions is a relatively low rate of European immigration into the United States. The graph below illustrates these breakdowns:

Figure 3: Percent Foreign Born Females by Place of Origin, 2006



Source: US Census, American Communities Survey, 2006

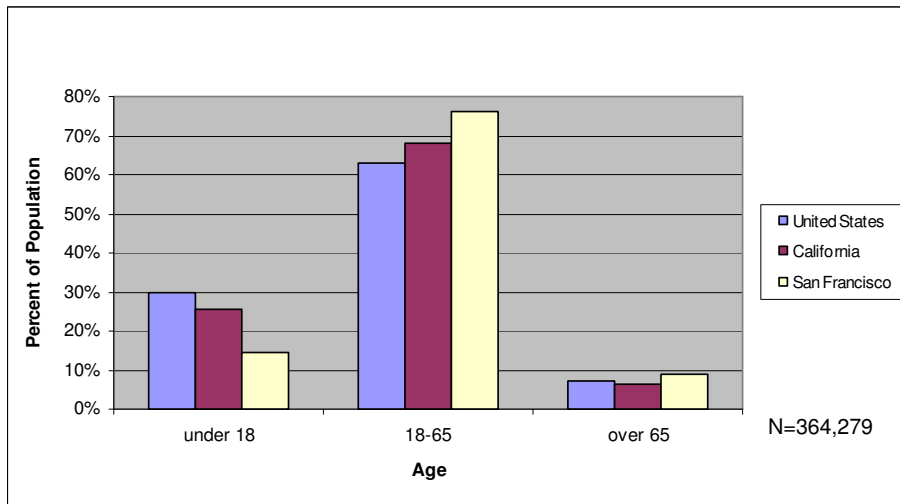
Men and women immigrate at fairly comparable rates. Immigrant women living in San Francisco are twice as likely to be naturalized citizens as non-citizens, a rate significantly different than the national and statewide averages.⁵

The 2006 American Communities Survey stated that 15% of all Spanish-speakers and 26% of all Asian/Pacific Island language-speakers reported that they speak English “less than very well.” A recent poll found that 2 in 5 Californians speak a language other than English in the home, and 1 in 5 stated they speak English “less than very well”. With 43% non-native speakers, California more than doubles the national average of about 20%.⁶

D. Age

There are approximately 276,852 women ages 18 to 65 living in San Francisco (76% of the female population). San Francisco has a low population of girls under age 18, only 15% compared to 26% in California and 30% nationally. In contrast, San Francisco has a slightly higher percentage of older females (9%) than California (6%) and the United States.⁷ The age demographics of men in San Francisco are comparable to that of women, with similarly low proportion of boys in relation to state and national levels, and slightly higher than average rates of older men. Figure 4 illustrates these comparisons.

Figure 4: Age of San Francisco Females Compared to the United States and California, 2006



Source: U.S Census, 2006.

II. ECONOMICS, EMPLOYMENT, AND HOUSING

Economics, employment and housing of women in San Francisco varies a great deal based on class and ethnicities of women. What follows are brief summaries on relative poverty, family poverty, homeownership, homelessness, wages, and occupational distribution of women in the workforce.

A. Economic Status

Despite the nation's economic downturn, San Francisco's female residents have maintained upward mobility. As of 2002, the San Francisco metro area ranked 3rd highest in average family income. San Francisco ranks number 1 among America's top 3 cities (with Washington D.C. and New York City) for women's entrepreneurship, education, and pay levels. These are measured by the number of woman-owned businesses per 10,000 residents, women with bachelor degrees, and women with salaries of \$100,000 or more.⁸ Figure 5 illustrates San Francisco's ranking in each of these areas.

Figure 5: Women’s Entrepreneurship, Education and Pay Levels, San Francisco, 2002

Women in Charge of Businesses		Rank in Study
Woman-owned businesses per 10,000 residents	306	2
Number of all woman-owned businesses	127,385	6
Annual pay per woman-owned business employee	\$28,900	7
Annual revenues per woman-owned business	\$164,500	23
Employees per woman-owned business	7.7	59
Women in the Workforce		Rank in Study
Women holding bachelor's degrees	42%	2
Female workers who are paid \$100,000 or more	8%	2
Women holding advanced degrees	15%	5
Typical woman's pay per \$1,000 for typical man	\$748	6
Management and professional jobs held by women	42%	13

Source: Bizjournals, 2007. Business statistics come from the 2002 federal economic census. All other statistics are from 2005 census reports.

However, the economic picture of San Francisco varies across indicators and still includes tremendous barriers and discrepancies for women.

1. Poverty

The overall United States poverty rate increased from 12.5% in 2003 to 12.7% in 2004, leaving 1.1 million more people in poverty. However, in 2005, San Francisco had a poverty rate of 10%, one of the lowest rates nationwide, and has the third highest median income in the nation at \$60,031.⁹ Nonetheless, while the rate of poverty in San Francisco is lower than that of the state, when examining the level of poverty experienced by the most impoverished, other factors are brought to light.

Like the state of California, there are smaller percentages of individuals who are at the lowest levels of poverty in San Francisco than those who earn 300% and above the Federal Poverty Limit (FPL). For a single person to be at the FPL they will have made about \$10,000 a year. Thus, someone at 300% the FPL would earn about \$30,000 per year. Over 65% of those living in poverty earn \$30,000 per year or more. However, when compared to the rates of this poverty level in California, San Francisco is 13% higher than the state and 16% higher among women alone.¹⁰ When looking at the overall rates of poverty for women compared to men in San Francisco, there is a slight discrepancy in rates, with men representing about 51% of those in poverty. Percentages of female poverty rates in San Francisco are slightly higher among those at 100-199% the FPL (see Figure 6).

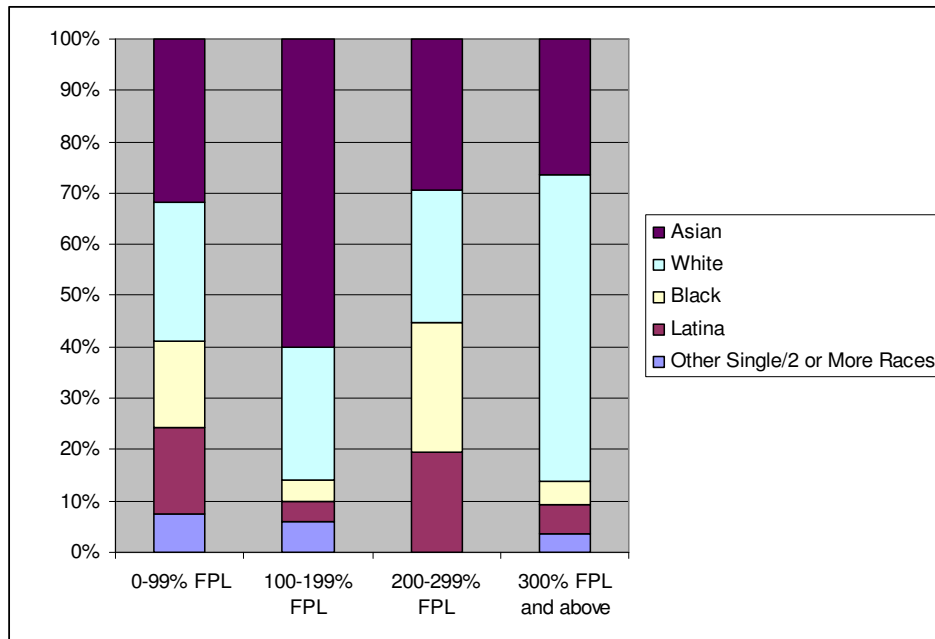
Figure 6: Poverty Level of San Francisco Residents by Gender, 2007

Poverty Level	Annual Income Equivalent	Male		Female		All	
		Estimated Number	%	Estimated Number	%	Estimated Number	%
0-99% FPL	\$10,000	63,000	16	37,000	10	100,000	13
100-199% FPL	\$20,000	41,000	10	51,000	13	93,000	12
200-299% FPL	\$30,000	39,000	10	40,000	10	79,000	10
300% FPL and above	\$30,001+	260,000	64	258,000	67	517,000	66
TOTAL		403,000		386,000	100	789,000	

Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2007.

When poverty is examined across racial groups in San Francisco, Asian women make up the highest percentage (32%) of those in the lowest poverty bracket (0-99% FPL).¹¹ This percentage is a little more than double that of Latina and African American women, and only slightly higher than White women. This remains fairly consistent in the various poverty levels as Asian women comprise higher percentages of each poverty group, except the 300% FPL and above (see Figure 7)¹. While these numbers may appear to show higher concentrations of poverty among White and Asian women, among Latina and African American women in poverty 1 in 5 are in the lowest poverty bracket.

Figure 7: Poverty Level by Race, Females, 2005, San Francisco



Source: 2007 California Health Interview Survey

The FPL offers limited information on region-specific poverty levels. The Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Standard (Self-Sufficiency Standard) for California was developed to provide a more accurate calculation of income adequacy based on county specific costs for basic needs such as food and housing, as well as costs associated with work, such as transportation and

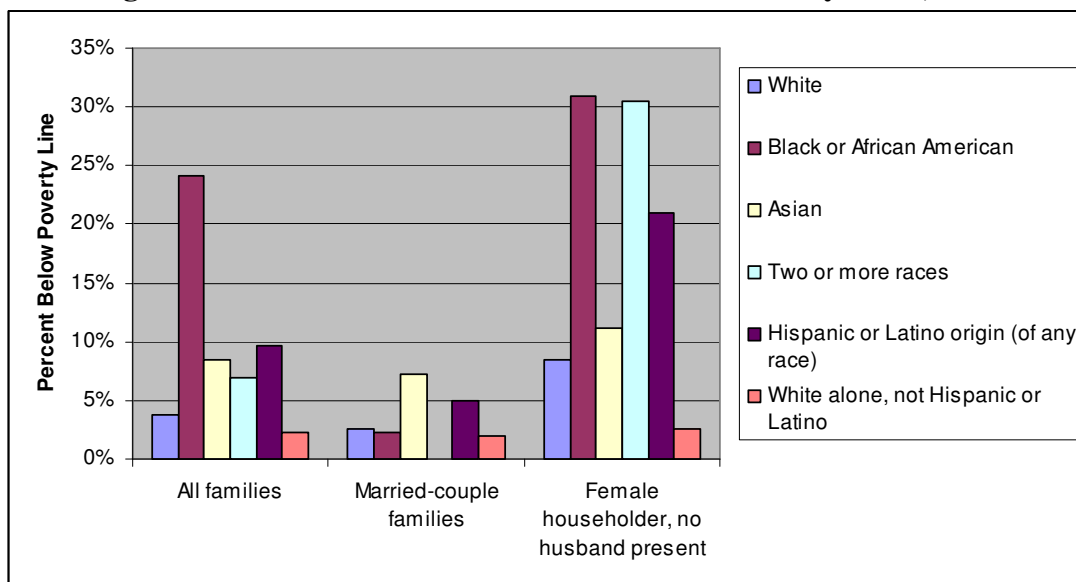
¹ CHIS has reported that some of this data is “statistically unstable” due to small sample size.

childcare.¹² According to the Self-Sufficiency Standard, a single adult living in San Francisco County must earn \$12.17 per hour, for an annual salary of \$25,693, to be self-sufficient. An adult living in San Francisco with a preschooler and a school-age child must earn \$57,658 to meet his or her family's most basic needs. Even by working 2 full-time jobs at San Francisco's 2009 minimum wage would not provide enough income to meet the self-sufficiency standard. As seen in the section below, many women in San Francisco are falling below this critical line.

2. Family Poverty

The 2007 American Community Survey reported that 8% of San Francisco's 2-parent households with children under 18 had incomes that fell below the federal poverty level in the previous 12 months. In 2007, there were 13,905 female headed households (no male present) with children under 18 (23% of the total households in San Francisco). The poverty rate in these female headed households was almost double that of 2-parent homes, reaching 15%. African American and Latina female-headed households have higher rates of poverty than other groups.¹³ Figure 8 illustrates these disparities.

Figure 8: Families with Income Below Federal Poverty Level, 2007



Source: U.S Census, American Community Survey, 2007.²

Poverty rates for single female householders with children were drastically different for those with varying education levels. In 2006, 26% of those with less than a high school degree lived in poverty, while only 7% of those with a bachelor's degree or higher lived in poverty.¹⁴ More details about educational attainment will be discussed later in the report.

² Totals do not equal 100% because some of the races groups were reported by the US Census have too small sample cases to be reported.

B. Employment

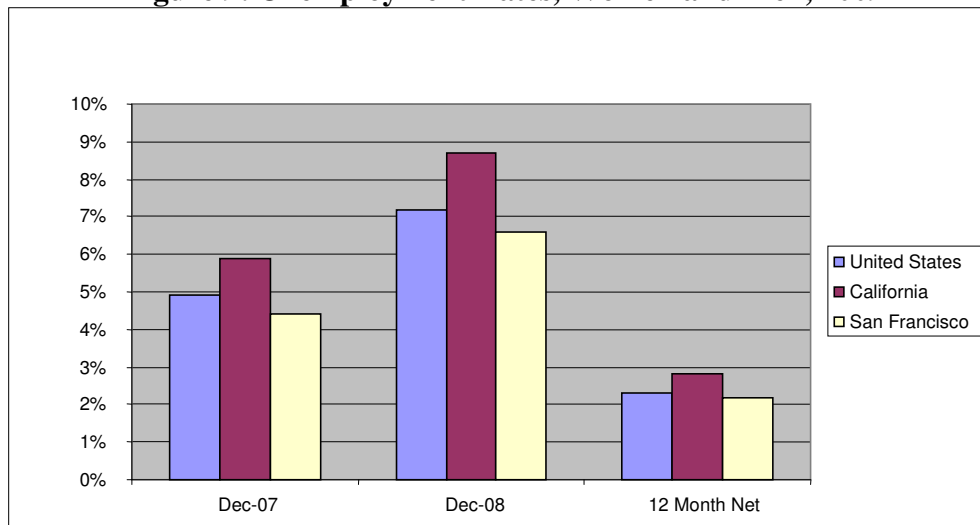
According to the U.S Census Bureau, the 2005 unemployment rate for the entire population age 16 and over (both men and women) was 7%, and for women specifically it was 6%. Although women had a lower unemployment rate, their labor force participation rate was also lower than the population mean. In 2005, 63% of San Francisco’s females ages 16 and over were labor force participants compared to 68% of the entire San Francisco population ages 16 and over.¹⁵ Women constitute an increasing share of the San Francisco labor force. In 2000, women represented 45% of the San Francisco labor force, increasing to 46% in 2005.¹⁶

1. Trends in Unemployment during the Current Economic Downturn

The aforementioned rates of employment and unemployment are representative of San Francisco’s trends before the economic downturn of 2008 and 2009. However, current rates offer a different picture of women’s status in the workplace. The overall United States unemployment rate in January 2009 was 9%.¹⁷ Nationally, both women and men are losing jobs at high rates, though men have been impacted slightly more.¹⁸ *The New York Times* recently reported that “a full 82% of the job losses have befallen men, who are heavily represented in distressed industries like manufacturing and construction.” Women tend to be employed in areas like education and health care which are less sensitive to economic fluctuations.¹⁹ As of December 2008, employers have shed 2.6 million employees. Within this number, men have lost 4 out of every 5 jobs dropped. Thus women in many U.S. households are left as sole supporters of the family.²⁰

California’s unemployment rate for January 2009 was 11%.²¹ In 2008, average labor data for the year indicate that 8,222,000 women (45% of workforce) participated in the labor force versus 10,209,000 men (55% of workforce).²² At 8%, San Francisco’s unemployment rate in January 2009 is less than California’s rate and slightly less than the national rate.²³

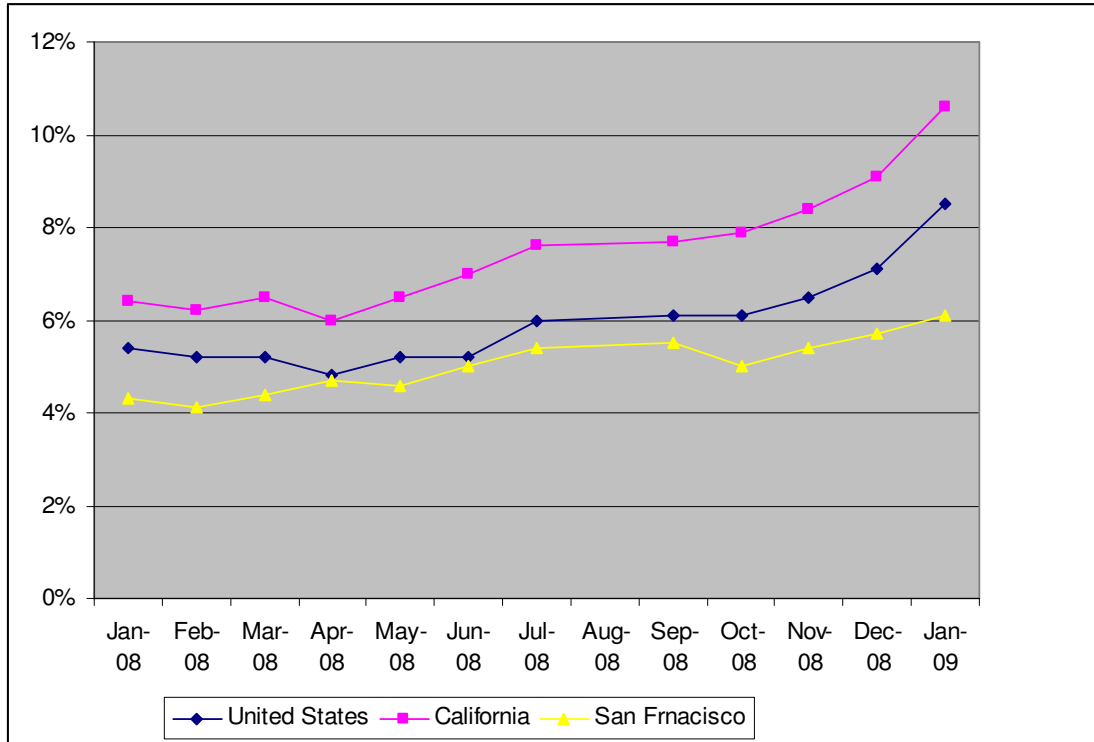
Figure 9: Unemployment Rates, Women and Men, 2009



Source: U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009.

The unemployment in San Francisco Region (including San Francisco, Marin, and San Mateo counties) was 8% in January 2009, up from 6% in December 2008, and above the year-ago estimate of 4%.²⁴ The chart below illustrates recent unemployment historical trends in the San Francisco Region.²⁵

Figure 10: Unemployment Rate, Year Long Trend



Source: State of California, Employment Development Department, 2009.

From January 2008 through January 2009, the total number of jobs in the San Francisco region fell by 20,700 jobs, or 2%. In particular, trade, transportation, and utilities contracted by 7,500 jobs, retail trade fell by 6,300 jobs, construction lost 5,700 jobs, and the financial field went down by 4,200 jobs. Other major industries with losses of at least 1,000 jobs each were professional and business services, manufacturing, leisure, and hospitality. On the up side, private education and health services added 1,900 jobs.²⁶

The graph below summarizes San Francisco regional employment data (figures in parentheses are job losses). While this data has not been disaggregated based on gender, we know that, in San Francisco, women make up the bulk of the educational (60%) and health services fields (65%), and men make up the bulk of the construction (94%) and transportation (72%) jobs.²⁷

Figure 11: San Francisco Region Employment by Industry

Industry	Jan-08	Jan-09 (Prelim)	Change
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	162,500	155,000	(7,500)
Construction	44,700	38,000	(6,700)
Financial Activities	87,400	83,200	(4,200)
Professionals & Health Services	207,800	206,100	(1,700)
Manufacturing	43,000	41,600	(1,400)
Leisure and Hospitality	121,000	119,700	(1,300)
Information	39,800	39,200	(600)
Other Services	38,100	38,000	(100)
Government	137,800	137,700	(100)
Educational and Health Services	103,400	105,300	1,900
Natural Resources, Mining	200	200	-
Total, All Industries	988,200	967,500	(20,700)

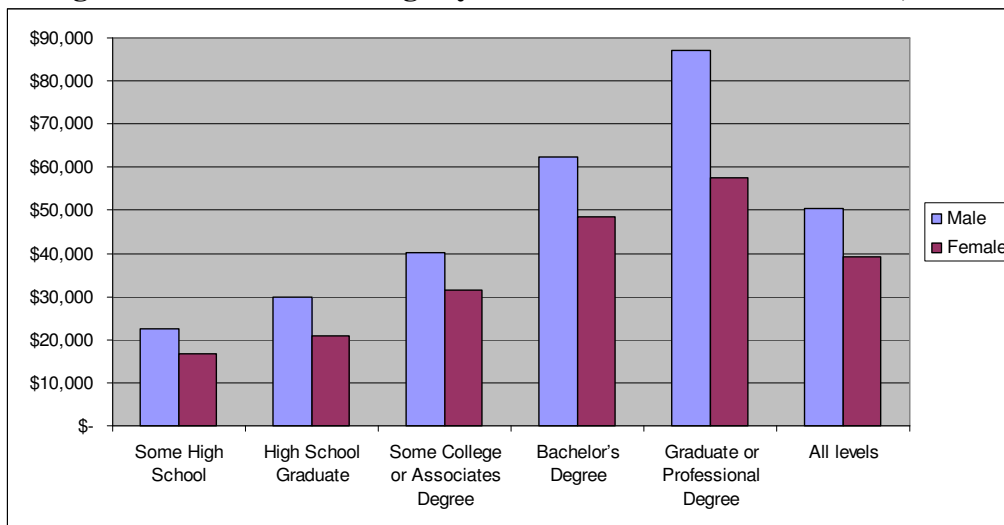
Source: State of California, Employment Development Department, 2009.

2. Wages

The wage gap in the County of San Francisco remains significant. In 2006, the median earnings for the average male worker were \$49,708, falling to \$39,017 for women workers. Women, on average, earned 78% of men's earnings in San Francisco, a pattern that is mirrored nationally.²⁸

The following chart compares women's and men's earnings based on educational attainment. This data represents the population age 25 and older and includes both full-time and part-time workers.

Figure 12: Median Earnings by Sex and Education Attainment, 2006



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006.

This data illustrates that, though women at all educational levels still face significant pay gaps, it closes for women with some college or an associate's degree and for women with a bachelor's

degree. Surprisingly, the pay gap is the largest for those women with graduate or professional degrees, with these women earning 66% of men’s earnings (see Figure 13).²⁹

Figure 13: Pay Gap in San Francisco by Educational Attainment, 2006

Educational Attainment	Women’s Earnings as a Percentage of Men’s Earnings
Total	78%
Some high school	74%
Some college or associates degree	78%
High school graduate	70%
Graduate or professional degree	66%
Bachelor’s degree	78%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006.

The pay gap also differs by race, widening tremendously for women of color. White women earn 88% of the average man’s earnings, which constitutes a smaller gap than that faced by the average (78%).³⁰ However, the earnings of women of color as a percentage of men drop dramatically. Asian women earn 63% of men’s earnings, while Black or African American women earn 58%, and Hispanic or Latina women earn only 52% of men’s earnings. The average man earns approximately double the salary of the average Latina woman (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Pay Gap in San Francisco by Race, 2006

Race	Median Annual Earnings	Percentage of Men’s Earnings
White Women	\$40,846	88%
Asian Women	\$29,082	63%
Black or African American Women	\$26,654	58%
Hispanic or Latina Women	\$23,894	52%

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2006.

3. Occupational Distribution

Historic patterns of occupational segregation still persist in San Francisco, and women and men are often found working different kinds of jobs. Figure 15 below presents sample occupations with their total number of workers in San Francisco, the percentage of women employed, and the median earnings for men and women.

Figure 15: Occupation by Sex, Compensation, and Employees in San Francisco, 2006

Sample Occupations	Median Earnings	Total Workers	% Females Employed
Healthcare Support	\$40,845	5,082	78%
Personal Care and Service	\$17,680	12,836	76%
Healthcare Practitioner and Technical	\$74,795	17,278	65%
Office & Administrative Support	\$35,738	43,649	61%
Education, Training, and Library	\$41,338	24,332	60%
Community and Social Services	\$38,971	5,925	52%
Legal	\$100,000+	14,283	43%
Management, Business, and Financial	\$71,752	86,238	43%
Architecture and Engineering	\$70,694	9,931	27%
Computer and Mathematical	\$82,489	18,777	26%
Law Enforcement	\$86,505	1,331	15%
Construction, Extraction, Maintenance, and Repair	\$35,247	18,464	6%
Motor Vehicle Operators	\$25,453	5,064	3%

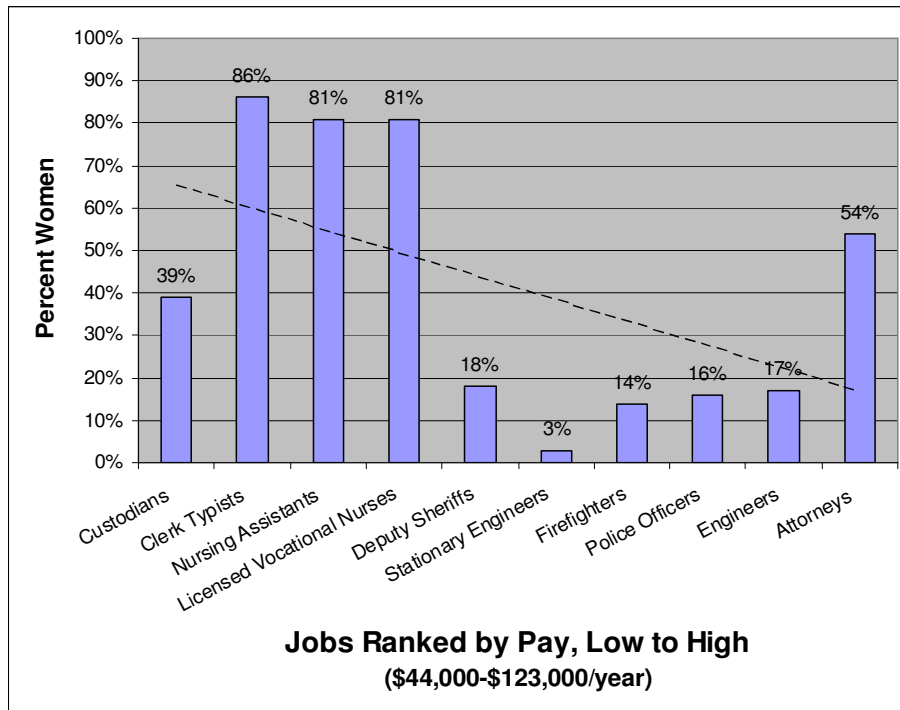
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006.

In the sample of occupations, there appears to be parity in the Community and Social Services occupations. However, many of the occupations are largely male or largely female. Careers in computers, mathematics, architecture, and engineering are almost 75% male, while personal care and healthcare support are more than 75% female. Construction, extraction, maintenance repair, and motor vehicle operators are comprised of less than 10% women. Many of the occupations also exhibit a correlation between pay and sex distribution. For example, personal care and service occupations, dominated by women, have the lowest median earnings of those occupations included below.³¹

Figure 16 shows that patterns of gender-segregated jobs and low median earnings for women exist within City and County government, as well as the private sector.³² Of the selected job classes, 4 out of 5 are more than 80% male. The trend line in Figure 13 shows that women, on average, are more highly represented in lower-paying jobs. The clerk typist jobs, with a median compensation level of \$45,617 (86% women) and the stationary engineer jobs, with a median compensation level of \$72,446 (3% women) had the greatest gender disparity. The job class which had the least gender disparity was attorney (54% women), with a median compensation level of \$122,668. Of the selected job rankings, firefighters and police officers have the largest number of employees and are both 80% male.

Figure 16: Percent of Women in Selected City and County of San Francisco Job Classes by Median Annual Compensation, 2006

Dashed line represents a correlation between compensation level and % women.



Source: City and County of San Francisco, 2006.

The fact that highly educated women are earning only 66% of men's earnings is not unrelated to the fact that fewer women are present in many higher paying jobs. The data above shows that there is still a glass ceiling in San Francisco. Highly educated women are still paid less and hold fewer high level jobs than men. Current data shows that women's workforce participation is declining and that the wage gap is widening as a result of the economic downturn.³³

National unemployment data for February 2009 shows that, women's unemployment rate rose faster than men's.³⁴ The National Women's Law Center found that, since September 2008, as the recession spread to female-dominated service and retail sectors, women's unemployment has increased by 37%, faster than men's at 31%. Women of color in particular, have seen dramatic increases in unemployment. The rate of unemployment for adult Hispanic women climbed to 10% in February 2009, an increase of 76% from a year ago. African American women's unemployment rate climbed to 10%, a 52% increase since February 2008. The unemployment rate for women heads of families, currently at 10%, has increased 54% in the past year.³⁵

C. Housing

Within the last 6 years, the median price for all San Francisco home types rose 114% to \$790,000. Based on this data, a San Francisco household must earn at least \$196,878 per year to afford a home. San Francisco County has the lowest rate of homeownership in California with only 4 in 10 households owning their homes. In addition to the exorbitant costs of homeownership, San Francisco's rent prices have skyrocketed. The average rent in 2008 for all

apartment types was \$2,326, a 25% increase from 2002. As a result of the high cost of living, many low- and moderate-income families are fleeing the city.³⁶

The chart below shows the rate of homeownership among immigrants and those born in the United States. For 2 decades, homeownership among San Francisco residents born in the United States has been higher than homeownership among immigrant residents.³⁷ Though both immigrant and non-immigrant residents have seen a decline in homeownership, immigrant homeownership has declined at a much sharper rate over a 20 year period. Both immigrant and non-immigrant San Francisco residents have seen a decline in homeownership. Gender aggregated data was not available for immigrant populations.

Figure 17: Immigrant vs. Non-immigrant Homeownership in San Francisco, by Decade

	1980	1990	2000
Non-immigrant Homeownership Rate	56%	52%	50%
Immigrant Homeownership Rate	54%	48%	39%

Source: Pamuk 2004, Based on analysis of Public Use Microdata Samples of the U.S. Census, 1980, 1990; U.S. Census, Current Population Surveys.

In the United States, the rate of homeownership among women has increased since the 1980's. Women in one-person households are most likely to own their homes.³⁸

1. Homelessness

According to the 2007 San Francisco Homeless Count, San Francisco's homeless population is lower than that of other large cities and counties in California, including the city of Los Angeles and Orange County (see Figure 18). However, the number of homeless persons per square mile far outreaches those regions, with San Francisco having more than 7 times the number of Los Angeles.³⁹

Figure 18: Homeless Population in San Francisco and Comparable Locations, 2007

Location	Total Homeless Persons	Homeless Persons per 1,000 Pop.	Homeless Persons per Square Mile
San Francisco	6,377	8	137
Los Angeles City	40,144	11	86
Orange County	34,898	12	44
Los Angeles County	74,731	8	18

Source: San Francisco Human Services Agency, 2007.

Despite the large number of homeless persons per square mile, San Francisco's homeless population has remained relatively stable over the past 5 years.⁴⁰ The following graph illustrates demographic data for San Francisco's homeless population by supervisorial district. District 6 has by far the largest number of homeless individuals in San Francisco. Overall, males are most likely to be homeless. The highest percentages of homeless females were counted in District 4 and District 7.

Figure 19: Homeless Population in San Francisco by Gender and Supervisor, 2007

Supervisor District	Neighborhoods	Male	Female	Unknown	Total
6	Civic Center, Downtown, Union Square, Mission, South Of Market, Tenderloin, and Treasure Island	741	212	280	1,239
10	Potrero Hill, Bayview-Hunters Point, Visitacion Valley, Dogpatch, and Portola	152	66	130	349
1	Golden Gate Park, Inner Richmond, and Outer Richmond	80	16	122	218
3	North Beach, Chinatown, Telegraph Hill, Russian Hill, Nob Hill, Union Square, Financial District, and Fisherman's Wharf	150	17	39	206
9	Mission, Bernal Heights, and Portola	121	6	73	200
8	Noe Valley, Castro, Glen Park, Diamond Heights, Duboce Triangle, Dolores Park, and Buena Vista Heights	119	20	51	190
5	Alamo Square, Cole Valley, Haight Ashbury, Panhandle, Hayes Valley, Inner Sunset, Japantown, Lower Pacific Heights, Western Addition and Fillmore	76	11	27	114
2	Presidio, Cow Hollow, Marina, and Pacific Heights	38	8	35	81
4	Sunset and Parkside	5	3	2	70
7	Twin Peaks, Lake Merced, and Southwest	5	3	12	21
11	Crocker Amazon, Excelsior, Ingleside, Merced Heights, Mission Terrace, Balboa Park, Oceanview, and Outer Mission	7	2	11	20
Total		1,548	375	842	2,771
Count %		56%	14%	30%	

Source: San Francisco Human Services Agency, 2007.

In the 2007, the majority of homeless people in all age groups tended to be either African American and Black or White.⁴¹ Among the 375 homeless women counted, 47% were African American and Black and 38% were White. About 90% of the homeless people counted were adults, and most were single.

III. EDUCATION

Nearly 150 years after women in the United States were granted access to college, the gap in higher education between men and women is narrowing. In fact, many studies show that the gap is widening in favor of women. Today, girls are much more likely to graduate from high school and go to college, as well as succeed in higher education.⁴² The following summary outlines the trend in high school graduation rates and post high school education across the country, in California, and in San Francisco.

A. High School Graduation

According to a 2007 study, girls across the United States are attending and graduating high school at a higher rate than boys.⁴³ On average, 8% more girls are graduating from high school

than their male counterparts. In California, 74% of girls finish high school, while boys lag behind at 65%. About 30% of all students in the U.S. do not graduate from high school.

Statistics show that San Francisco is ahead of the curve. San Francisco County’s high school dropout rate is much lower than state or national averages, at 11% in 2006, and with San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) at a mere 7%.⁴⁴ In San Francisco overall, 85% of students graduate from high school, compared to 84% of the rest of the nation.⁴⁵

When dropout rates are disaggregated by gender, San Francisco girls are matching boys in current high school dropout rates. In 2006, the high school dropout rates for females and males in the SFUSD were each 2%, compared to a 3% rate for females and a 4% rate for males in the state of California.⁴⁶ However, the dropout rate for females still exceeded the rate for males in 8 San Francisco high schools, with Balboa High facing the greatest gap, 5% for girls and 3% for boys. The following chart illustrates the dropout rates for all of San Francisco County, including SFUSD and private schools, in comparison to state and national data.

Figure 20: Dropout Rate Comparison by Gender, 2006

	Girls (%)	Boys (%)	Total (%)
San Francisco	3	3	3
California	3	4	3
United States	3	4	4

Source: California Department of Education, 2008 and Laird, Cataldi, Kewal, Ramani, & Chapman, 2008.⁴⁷

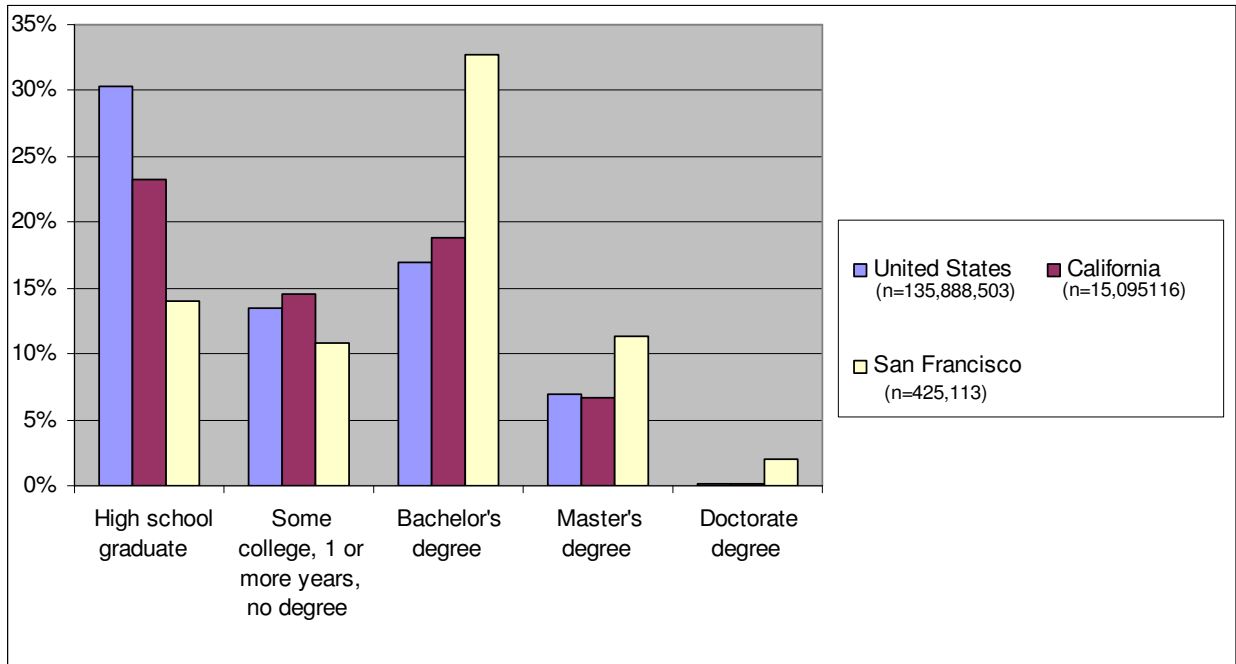
San Francisco girls are making progress in education by closing and reversing historic gender gaps in science and math. In both San Francisco and California, the enrollment rate of girls exceeded the enrollment rate of boys for most advanced courses in math and science.⁴⁸ The enrollment rate was higher for girls than for boys in Intermediate Algebra, Advanced Math, and 1st Year Chemistry, but was slightly lower for 1st Year Physics.

B. Post-Secondary School Education

A 2008 U.S. Census Bureau report found that not only are more women going to college than men, more women are obtaining associates, bachelors, and master’s degrees.⁴⁹ According to a Higher Education Research Institute report, women are more likely than men to work hard in college, more likely to focus on getting good grades, and more likely to graduate with honors.⁵⁰

San Francisco in particular has one of most highly educated female populations in the nation, as seen in Figure 21. In 2006, about 1/3 of the female population over 25 had a bachelor’s degree, about twice the rate of California (19%) and the United States (17%).⁵¹ San Francisco also has over twice the percentage of women with higher degrees than California and the United States.

Figure 21: Level of Education among Females over Age 25, 2006

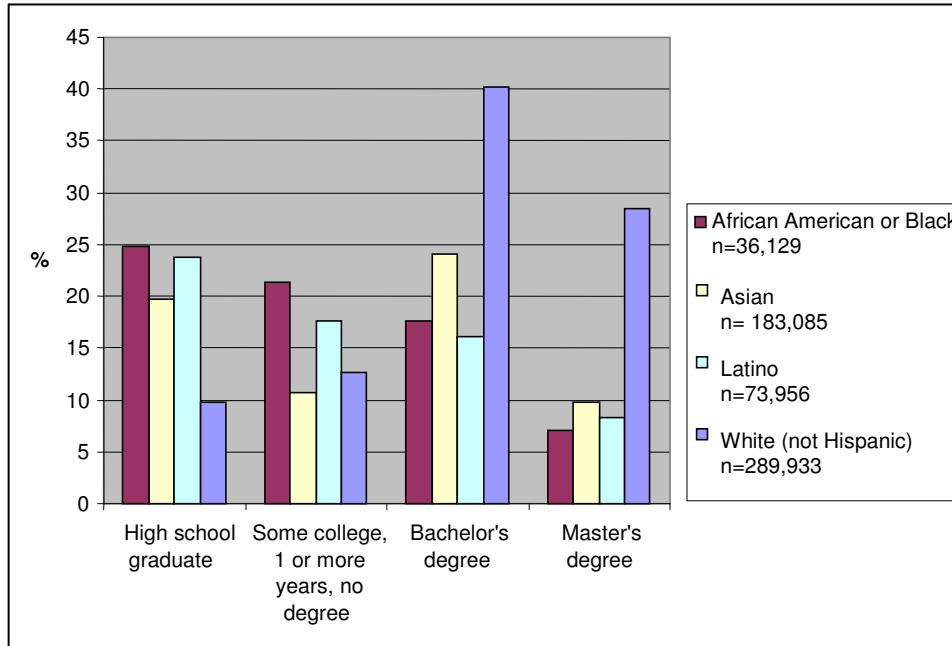


Source: American Community Survey, 2006.

The number of women entering college is growing every year. Starting in 2003-2004, the percent of women entering college began to outnumber men. San Francisco State University enrolled 60% female students in 2006.⁵² Across the county, the average entering class in 2007 had 57% female students.⁵³ Women make up 61% of undergraduate students over age 25.⁵⁴ These statistics show that not only are more women going to college, but more women go back to college at an older age than do their male counterparts.

Though women in general are attending college at higher and higher rates, the data is not consistent when disaggregated by race. Whites (40%) are more than 2 times likely to have a bachelor's degree when compared to Blacks (18%) and Latinos (16%).⁵⁵ Asians also lag behind Whites, with just 24% of the female population obtaining a bachelor's degree. When examining the attainment of a master's degree, Whites are more than twice as likely as Asians, and more than 3 times as likely as Blacks and Latinos to have acquired one. The following graph illustrates these numbers:

Figure 22: Education Attainment of Female San Francisco Residents by Race, 2007



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007.

IV. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement as defined by civic, political and electoral participation is difficult to measure, as gender specific data is not consistently tracked. Nonetheless, this report will provide some data regarding the number of women in public office, as well as local voting trends of female residents.

A. Women in Public Office

San Francisco is at the forefront of putting women in positions of power. The *San Francisco Chronicle* called San Francisco “Pink City” in 2004 when, with appointments made by Mayor Gavin Newsom, it became the only metropolitan city in the United States where the Police Department, the Fire Department, and Port Authority were headed by women.⁵⁶ The District Attorney, School Superintendent, Chief of Probation, Director of Emergency Management, and the Mayor’s Budget Director have all been positions of authority that women have occupied through appointment or election.

Nationally, as of April 2009, the United States Congress only has 21% female representation.⁵⁷ The California Legislature has a slightly higher female representation, with of 37% its members women. On a national level, San Francisco women have gained important political positions. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, two Bay Area politicians, have led the way in to the Senate. Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, a San Francisco resident, became the first female U.S. House of Representative minority leader in 2003 and the first female and Californian Speaker of the House in 2007.

Among elected and appointed officials in San Francisco, women have high representation in various areas. While not achieving parity, the criminal justice arena along with appointments to San Francisco Boards, Commissions, and Taskforces, are made up of 48% and 44% women, respectively (see Figure 23). Women also make up 88% of the San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education. The Board of Supervisors lags behind in female representation with only 3 (27%) women elected to the 11 member board as of 2009.

Figure 23: Percent of Women in Elected and Appointed Offices, San Francisco

Elected/ Appointed Officials	% Women
Board of Supervisors	27%
Board of Education (San Francisco Unified School District)	88%
Criminal Justice: District Attorney, Sheriff, San Francisco Superior Judges	48%
San Francisco Boards, Commissions, and Taskforces (based on 2007 data)	44%

B. Voting Trends

According to the 2006 US Census, San Francisco has a population of 744,041 people. Of those, 477,651 were registered to vote in the November 4, 2008 presidential general election, with 81% casting ballots.⁵⁸ Just 48% of women in San Francisco voted in the 2000 election,⁵⁹ 29% in the 2004 election, and 35% in the 2008 election.⁶⁰ Local voting trends for women appear to lag behind California as a whole. Statewide statistics show that 51% of percent voters in the 2008 election were women.⁶¹ However, local data may also be incomplete, as gender is not a required field on voter registration cards, and the data thus only represents an aggregation of those individuals choosing to indicate a salutation (i.e. Ms., Mrs., or Miss) when registering to vote.

San Francisco is a highly democratic, with 57% of residents registered as Democrats in 2009, placing San Francisco second on the list of top democratic counties in California, behind Alameda County.⁶² In the 2008 general election, 84% of San Franciscans voted for the Democratic presidential candidate.⁶³ In the November 2004 election, 83% voted for the Democratic presidential candidate, compared to the 15% who voted for the Republican candidate.⁶⁴

Young people in the San Francisco Bay Area have a high participation rate in elections. A 2006 report shows that 31% of people between the ages of 18 to 29 years old in the Bay Area voted, compared to 25% of California residents of the same age group.⁶⁵ In comparison to young men, young women have voted at a higher rate since 1996.⁶⁶ In the 2004 presidential election, 55% of females ages 18-24 were registered to vote, compared with 48% of males the same age.⁶⁷ Of those who actually voted, 45% were young women compared to 39% of young men.⁶⁸

Women's voting trends are distinctive. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported, based on a 2003 poll of the Mayor's race, that 25% of female voters under age 30 and 23% of female voters under age 50 were undecided about their choice for Mayor 3 weeks before the election.⁶⁹ In the 2004 presidential general election, women made up a high percentage of undecided and swing voters.⁷⁰ Two weeks before the election, women were found to make up 60% of undecided likely voters. On average, women vote in higher rates than men, and have done so since 1964.

Issues important for women include healthcare (10%), national security (12%), and the Iraq war (15%).⁷¹ Women tend to lean more left than men not only in San Francisco, but nationwide. In the 2004 Presidential Election, 56% of young women voted for the Democratic candidate, in comparison to 51% of men.⁷²

V. CONCLUSION

The mission of the Commission and Department on the Status of Women is *to ensure the equitable treatment and foster the advancement of women and girls throughout San Francisco through policies, legislation, and programs that focus on populations in need*. San Francisco is a diverse and unique community, and the women and girls residing in the City have rich and varied lives and needs. This report creates a benchmark for understanding the 365,000 women and girls living in San Francisco, and assessing the needs specific to our local community.

This report is a snapshot only, and is limited in its scope in several ways. For example, issues of women's health and safety have not been explored, women's involvement in the criminal justice system are lacking, as are explorations of women's roles within their families (e.g., marital status, parenting status, care-giving patterns, etc.). Though these areas are beyond the scope of this publication, the Department hopes to address them in future reports.

The data in this report may have important policy implications. For example, the wage gap that persists in San Francisco is of particular concern for women struggling to support themselves and their families, and the significant wage gap for women of color highlights alarming racial disparities that must be addressed for San Francisco's women to achieve full equality. The diversity of San Francisco's female community is a powerful foundation for the City, and strategies to address inequalities should take into account the culture, language, immigration status, educational attainment, age, and job skills of the population. By building on these strengths, we can create an equitable San Francisco.

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