



Introduction

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Why Focus on Women?

Though the status of women in this country has certainly improved over the past century, there is still much progress to be made. While women are better represented in the workforce than they were in the past, they are increasingly challenged to manage finances, family services, health care, and childcare in single parent, single income homes. At the same time, women have yet to achieve equal pay or equal rights and face barriers to job promotion, education, and access to quality and affordable health-care services.

The qualitative well-being of women has long been intuitively and empirically understood as a proxy for, or a way to gauge, the quality of life for communities and families. Women usually have less access to resources than men. Women typically are primary caretakers of dependent family members, and women are typically the head of household in single-family households that include dependents.

The well-being of women has long been understood as a way to gauge the quality of life for communities and families.

Prior Reports of Women's Status

The need to examine and track economic and social indicators reflecting women's lives has been recognized for at least 65 years. The United Nations formed the Commission on the Status of Women in 1946, stating:

The functions of the Commission shall be to prepare recommendations and reports to the Economic and Social Council [of the United Nations] on promoting women's

rights in political, economic, social, and educational fields. The Commission shall also make recommendations to the Council on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights.ⁱ

Furthermore, the United Nations declared 1975 the International Women's Year and 1976-1985 as the UN Decade for Women. Since then, the UN has encouraged countries to collect data that describe and track the status and quality of women's lives.ⁱⁱ

In the United States, the President's Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) was formed in 1961 to examine employment issues, education, and Social Security issues that pertain to women.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) has become a leading source of analysis of women's status across the country. In addition to its *The Status of Women in the States* report,^{iv} between 1996 and 2004, IWPR produced individual reports on women's status in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as biennially updated reports on national trends across the states. The IWPR reports have three main goals: 1) to analyze and disseminate information about women's progress in achieving rights and opportunities; 2) to identify and measure the remaining barriers to equality; and 3) to provide baseline measures and to continue to monitor women's progress throughout the country. The IWPR issued their comprehensive report on Missouri, *The Status of Women in Missouri*, in 2002.^v

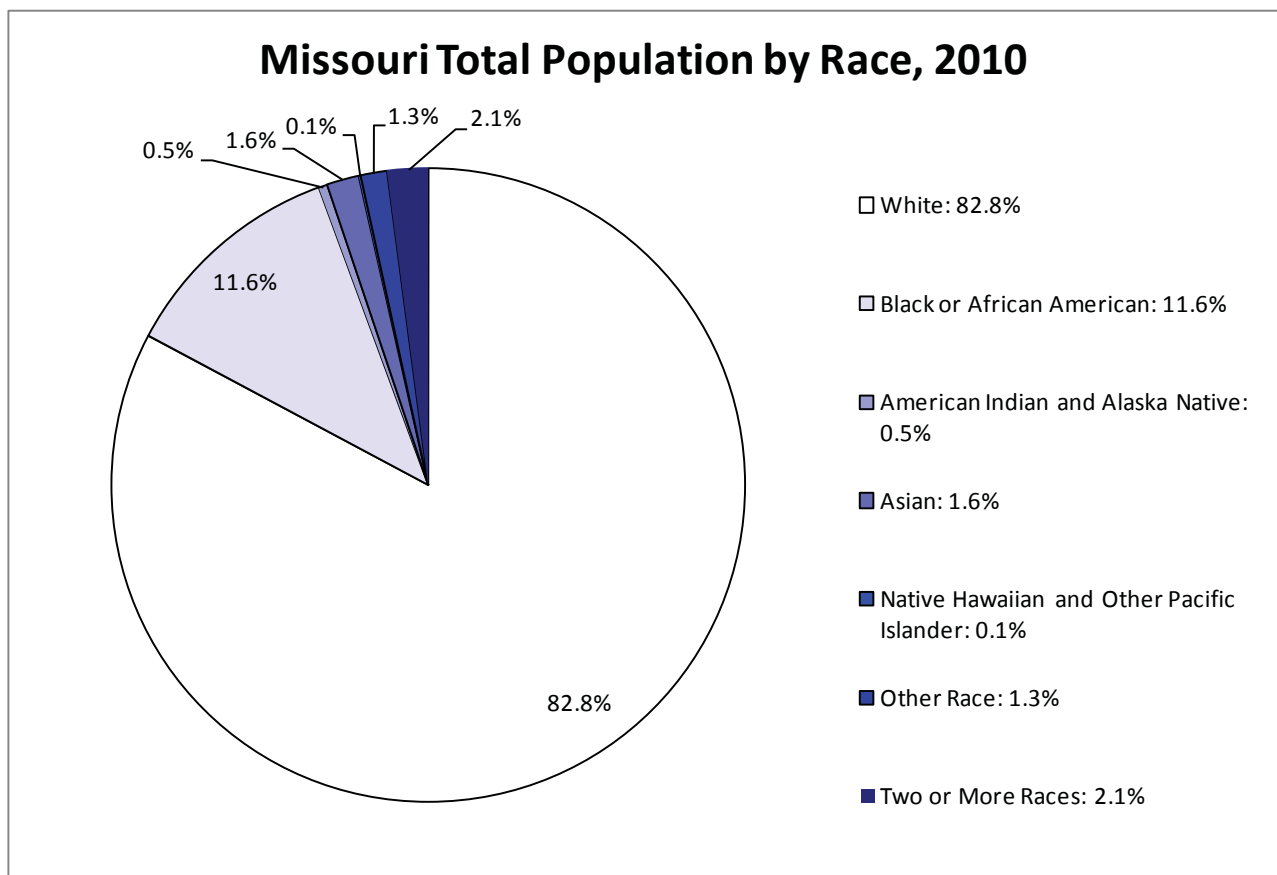
More recently (March 2011), a *Women in America* report was released by the White House Council on Women and Girls.^{vi} Its focus was on providing longitudinal data on the status of women with social and economic indicators, using data collected by Federal agencies. This landmark report also informed work on the *Missouri Women's Report*, and further demonstrates the timeliness of examining the local contexts in which Missouri's women live.

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No comprehensive analysis of the status of women in Missouri has been conducted since the 2002 report issued by the IWPR. This *Missouri Women's Report* builds upon work done by the IWPR and the White House Council on Women and Girls to examine how women and, by extension, communities, are faring within Missouri as a whole as well as counties within the state. It is clear these tools can play a critical role in indentifying strengths, and help to pinpoint areas in which policy changes could be instrumental in improving the lives of women.

Who are Missouri's Women?

According to the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census, women comprise 51.0%, or approximately 3.1 million, of the state's total population of 5,988,927 persons. Missouri's total population is primarily White (82.8%), with Black or African Americans comprising the largest racial minority in the state (11.6%). Additionally, approximately 3.5% of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

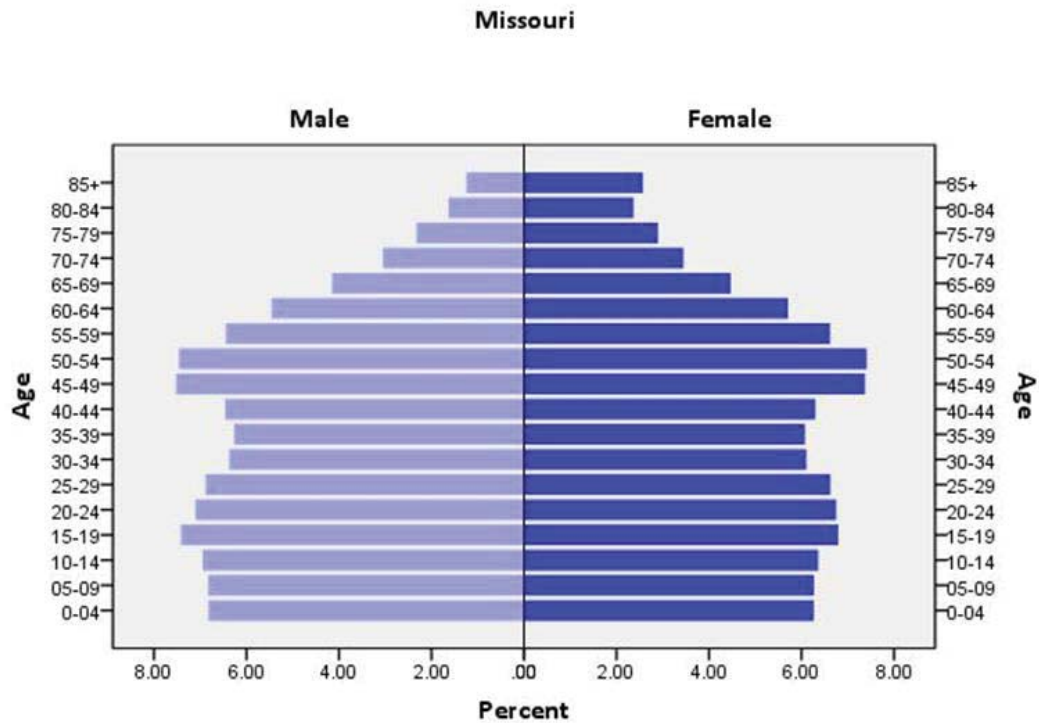


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 SF1

The shape of the population pyramid below provides important information about the composition of Missouri's population. As the pyramid shows, the overall population is relatively evenly split between males and females. The Baby Boom population is evident in the pyramid as a bulge in the middle at ages 45 to 64. The uneven point at the top of the pyramid reveals the differences in the number of males and females at older ages. Variations significant enough to impact public policy do exist between males and females by geography, life cycle and household composition.

The population of Missouri and the United States has continued to grow older. Examining a population's age and sex is a way to help understand variation over time. In 2010, 13.8% of the population was 65 and older in the United States; in the same time period 14% of the population was 65 and older in Missouri. Relative to the U.S., trends since 1980 in Missouri's population percentages indicate there are slightly more women, a reflection of the state's older-than-average demographic. In 2010 females 65 and older comprised 7.9% of the total U.S. population; females 65 and older comprised 8% of the total Missouri population.

Population by Age & Sex, 2009

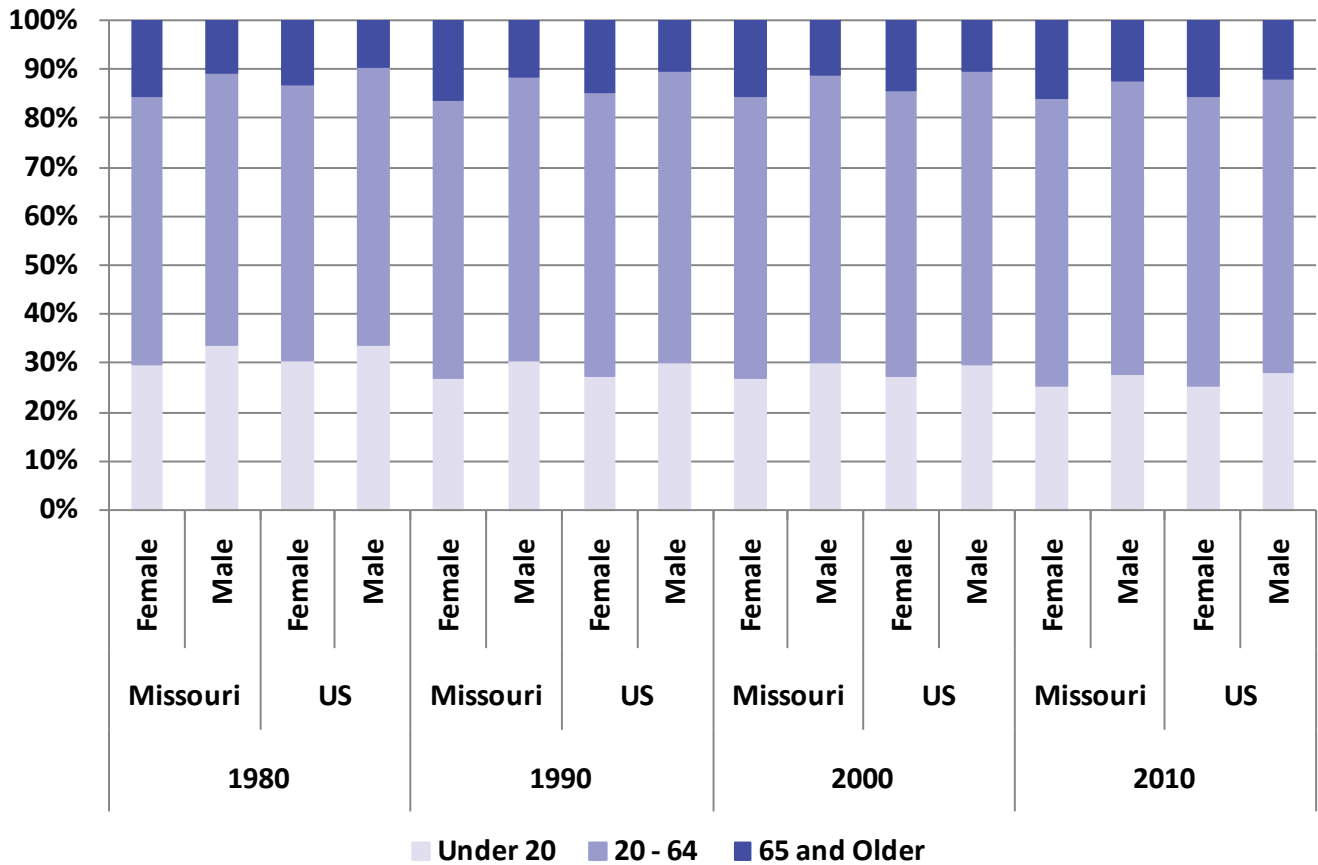


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey

Women have longer life expectancy than men, and aging women are more likely to live alone, be frailer, and live in poverty.

Population by Age

(Percent Distribution by Selected Age Groups and Sex, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010)



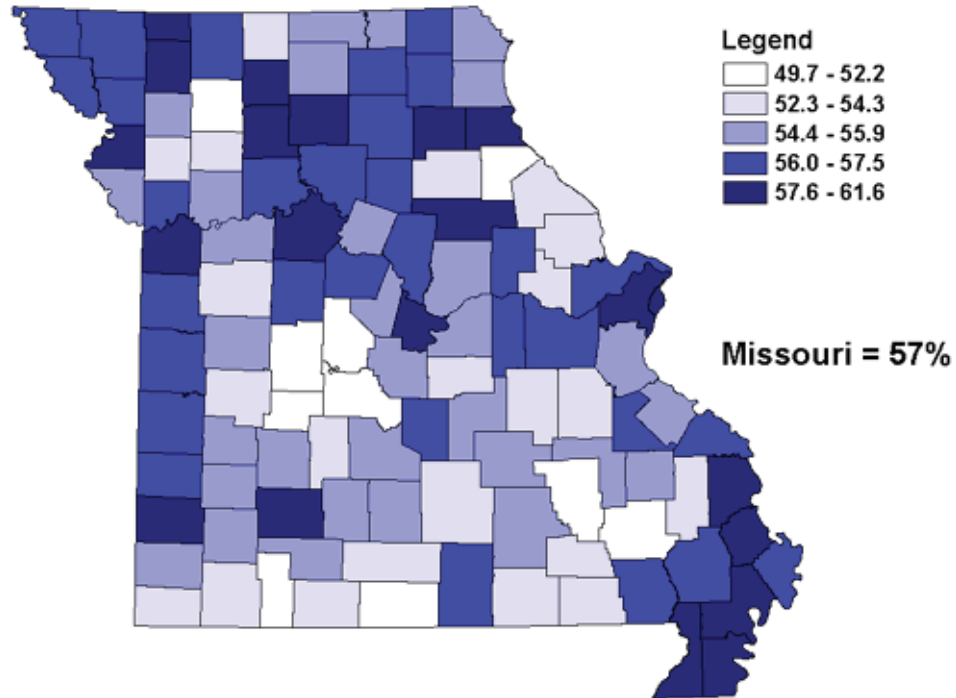
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010 SF1

Generally, life expectancy for women is longer than it is for men. In the 2010 Census, there were approximately twice as many women as men at age 89, for both Missouri and the United States. As women age, particularly past 65, they are more likely to live alone, become frailer and poorer. As the Baby Boomers age, particularly in Missouri's most rural counties, policy makers can anticipate the need for a shift in health care, transportation and housing resources for this population.

As can be seen in the accompanying map, in 2009, of the Missourians 65 and older, 57% were female. In

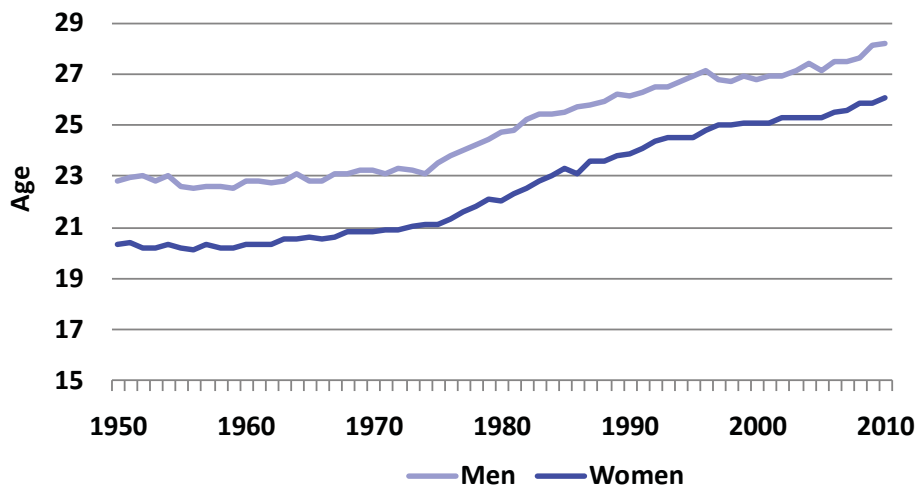
twelve Missouri counties and the City of St. Louis, females comprised 52% or more of the total population. All of these 13 geographies had a greater percent of females age 65 and over, ranging from 58.4 to 64.1% of the total population age 65 and over, compared to 57.9% for the state overall. Women age 65 and older comprised 60% or more of the 65 and older population in nine Missouri counties and the City of St. Louis. With the exception of the City of St. Louis and Buchanan County, these counties are quite rural and clustered in the Northeast and Southeast quadrants of Missouri.

Missouri Population Age 65 and Over, Percent Female, by County, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 SF1
 Map Prepared By: University of Missouri Extension, Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED)A
 Map Generated On: 15, October 2011

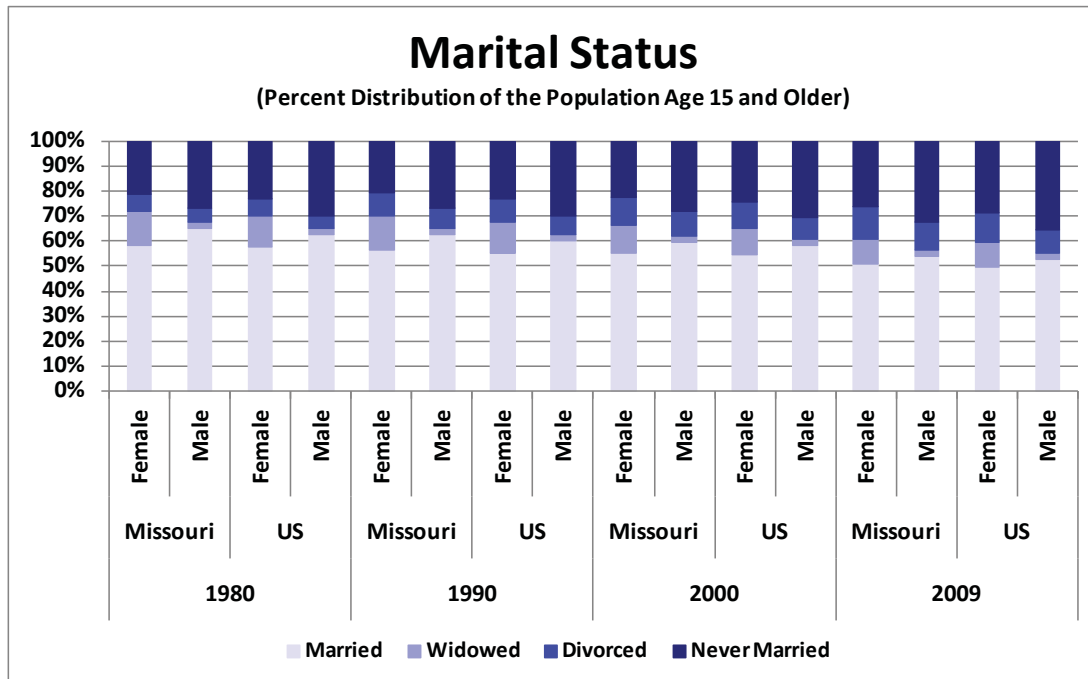
US Median Age at First Marriage (1950-2010)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2010 and earlier

Life cycle transitions also affect the social and economic opportunities and obligations of women. Traditionally, women who marry increase their economic and social status in a community. For the last several decades, the median age at first marriage has been increasing, both for men and for women. Women tend to marry men who are slightly older.

Life cycle transitions affect women's social and economic opportunities, as well as their obligations.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 1980, 1990, 2000 SF3; 2009 American Community Survey

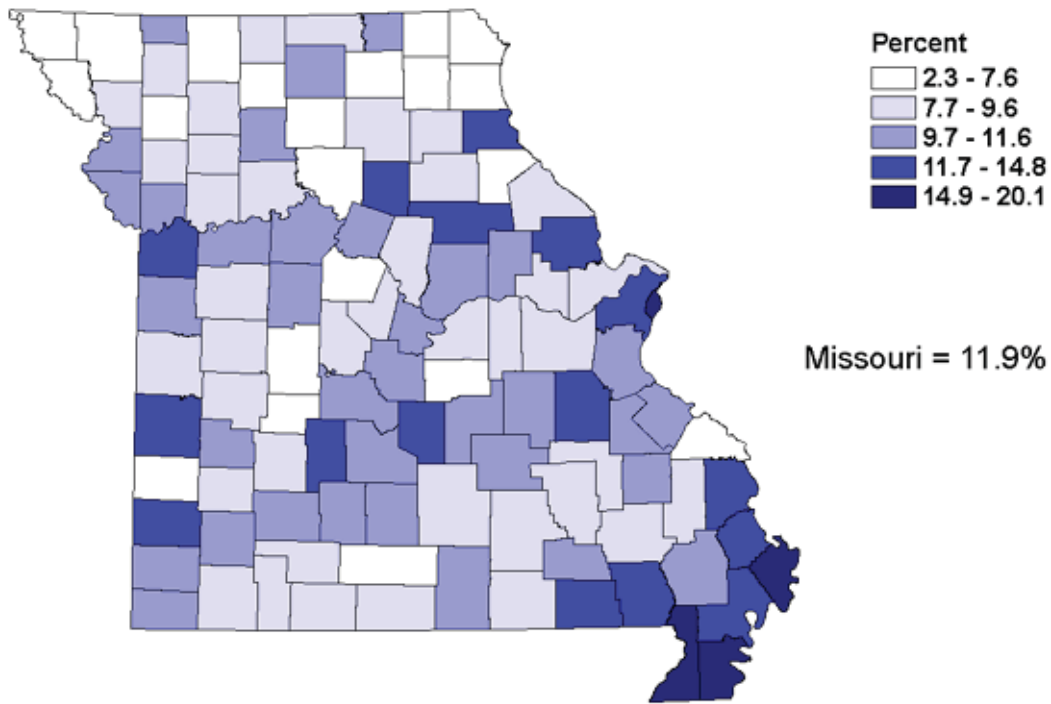
Similarly, the proportion of the adult population that has never been married has increased since 1980, and the proportion of the population that is currently divorced has increased slightly over this time as well. Women are consistently more likely than men to be widowed, which is not surprising given women's greater longevity and tendency to marry older men.

Missouri are likely to have the greatest percent of single female heads of households, while northern rural Missouri counties have the least. These findings are likely driven by the fact that Bootheel and urban counties have larger minority populations and minority women are more likely to be single heads of households than non-minority women.

In seven Missouri counties and the City of St. Louis, 20 to 40% of families are headed by single females, which tend to be more stressed financially and socially than family households with more than one income. Conversely, there are only 14 Missouri counties with less than 10% of families headed by single females. The most urbanized and the Bootheel counties in

Recent decades have seen an increase of women in the workforce, increases in the age of first marriage and the birth of first child, and more women who are heads of single-parent households. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact cause(s) of these highly interrelated changes, they highlight the critical importance of women in our social, political,

Percent of Female-headed Households by County, 2009



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Map Prepared By: University of Missouri Extension, Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSEDA)
Map Generated On: 14, August 2011

and economic lives. As public policy makers prioritize need and deploy resources, they need to keep in mind the trends that increase the diversity of Missouri's households particularly with respect to geography, life cycle, and family composition.

How Should This Report be Used?

The *Missouri Women's Report* provides gender-specific data and analysis to legislators, advocacy groups, and Missouri citizens in order to highlight current issues that have both positive and negative impact on the lives of women in Missouri. All levels of government need reliable information to implement and evaluate programs and policies. In addition, the *Missouri Women's Report* identifies opportunities for policy reform to significantly improve the lives of women in our state.

Those interested in influencing women's issue-oriented policy changes should be armed with the most accurate picture of the lives of women in their state. To that end the Women's Policy Alliance and The Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis have partnered to publish *The Missouri Women's Report*. This report will be disseminated to advocates, policy makers and citizens around the state in hopes of stimulating policy initiatives that will have a positive impact on Missouri women.

How We Measure the Well-being of Women in Missouri

The *Missouri Women's Report* provides a snapshot of the well-being of women in the state and for each of Missouri's counties. The indicators and measures were selected through input from Missourians with a personal and professional passion for the well-being

of women. The Women's Policy Alliance and the MU Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis conducted focus groups throughout the state and established an advisory panel to provide input into the structure and content of the report.

Indicators and Measures

The indicators and measures presented in the *Missouri Women's Report* are organized around four categories of information:

- Health and Well-being
- Workforce and Education
- Economic Justice
- Civic Engagement.

Because the cost of primary data collection is prohibitive, the *Missouri Women's Report* relies on indicators derived from reliable secondary data sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau and Missouri state agencies.

Women's lives and the role women play in Missouri communities are complex and multi-faceted. While it is necessary to use categories for purposes of analysis, it is important to acknowledge that these categories are artificial. They are useful for analysis and thinking through policy options, but a necessarily imperfect method for quantifying the evolving combination of contributions made by women to our communities and our economy, and the barriers to opportunities that women continue to face.

ⁱ United Nations (June 13, 1946). Resolution establishing the Commission on the Status of Women. *Journal of the Economic and Social Council, First Year, 29*, 525-526.

ⁱⁱ Kim, Y. & Yoon, H. (1997). The development social indicators for women. *Women's Studies Forum, 13*, 209.

ⁱⁱⁱ Exec. Order No. 10980, 26 Fed. Reg. 12059 (Dec. 16, 1961).

^{iv} Werschkul, M., & Williams, E. (2004). *The status of women in the states*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Women's Policy Research. <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/the-status-of-women-in-the-states>

^v Caiazza, A. B. (Ed.). (2002). *The status of women in Missouri*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Women's Policy Research. <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/the-status-of-women-in-missouri>

^{vi} White House Council on Women and Girls (March, 2011). *Women in America: Indicators of social and economic well-being*. Prepared by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration; and the Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cwg/data-on-women>

