



FLORIDA COMMISSION  
*on the STATUS of WOMEN*

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Fellow Floridian,

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women proudly presents its 2019 Annual Report. Pursuant to Section 14.24, Florida Statutes, the Commission is mandated annually to study the changing and developing roles of women in American society, including the implementation of recommendations to improve working conditions, financial security, and the legal status of both sexes.

We believe that the research and information provided herein sheds light on the issues and challenges specific to Florida women and highlights the tremendous achievements and progress that women have made statewide. To that end, we are pleased to present our Annual Report to the citizens of Florida for their thoughtful consideration.

Thank you for your support of the Commission, and through us, your support for the Women of our State. If you have any questions or need assistance, please feel free to contact the FCSW Office at (850) 414-3300.

Sincerely,



**LADY DHYANA ZIEGLER, DCJ, PH.D.**

Chair







## ABOUT THE FLORIDA COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Since 1991, leaders from across Florida have been appointed to the Florida Commission on the Status of Women. Collectively, these leaders, with the support of dedicated staff, work to deliver programming aimed at improving the well-being of Florida women and girls – and by extension, all Floridians.

**We have a three-fold mission: Collaboration. Education. Celebration.**

We **COLLABORATE** with organizations statewide to raise awareness of the challenges and issues facing Florida women and families, and the resources available for assistance.

We **EDUCATE** Floridians by hosting educational forums and seminars on far-ranging women's issues; from economic challenges to climbing the ladder of success.

We **CELEBRATE** the contributions and successes of women and girls.



## MISSION STATEMENT

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women recognizes and supports women of all ages as they strive to achieve their fullest potential.

## COMMISSIONERS

Members of the FCSW represent all areas of the state and volunteer their time to make life better for the women and girls of Florida.

Nancy C. Acevedo (Winter Springs)

Maruchi Azorin, MBA (Tampa)

Dr. Madelyn E. Butler (Tampa)

Jennifer Houghton Canady (Lakeland)

Rita Barreto Craig (Palm Beach Gardens)

Denise Dell-Powell (Orlando)

Sophia Eccleston (Wellington)

Representative Heather Fitzenhagen (Ft. Myers)

Yvonne Fry (Plant City)

Senator Gayle Harrell (Stuart)

Karin Hoffman (Lighthouse Point)

Carol Schubert Kuntz (Winter Park)

Wenda Lewis (Gainesville)

Rosie Paulsen (Tampa)

Cara C. Perry (Palm City)

Jenna Persons (Ft. Myers)

Rachel Saunders Plakon (Winter Garden)

Elena Guardiola Spottswood (Key West)

Marilyn Stout (Cape Coral)

Ashley Wood (Rockledge)

Lady Dhyana Ziegler, DCJ, Ph.D. (Tallahassee)

## FCSW STAFF

Kelly S. Sciba, APR, Executive Director

Kimberly S. Mehr, Operations Coordinator

Rebecca Lynn, Public Information and Events Coordinator



## ENABLING LEGISLATION

The Commission's legislative authority exists in Section 14.24 Florida Statutes.

- (1) There is established in the Office of the Attorney General the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, consisting of 22 members. The Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, the Attorney General, and the Governor shall each appoint four members, and the Chief Financial Officer and the Commissioner of Agriculture shall each appoint three members, for a term of 4 years. The members appointed shall include persons who represent rural and urban interests and the ethnic and cultural diversity of the state's population. No member shall serve more than 8 consecutive years on the Commission. A vacancy shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.
- (2) The Commission shall meet once in the first, second, and fourth quarters of each year and upon the call of the chairperson or two other officers. Annually, at the meeting in the first quarter, officers consisting of a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and treasurer shall be elected. Each officer shall serve until a successor is elected and qualified. No officer shall serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.
- (3) Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses in accordance with s. 112.061.
- (4) It shall be the duty of the Commission to study the changing and developing roles of women in American society. The study shall include, but not be limited to, the following areas:
  - (a) **The socioeconomic factors that influence the status of women.**
  - (b) **The development of individual potential.**
  - (c) **The encouragement of women to utilize their capabilities and assume leadership roles.**
  - (d) **The coordination of efforts of numerous women's organizations interested in the welfare of women.**
  - (e) **The identification and recognition of contributions made by women to the community, state, and nation.**
  - (f) **The implementation of paragraphs (a)-(e) where working conditions, financial security, and legal status of both sexes are improved.**
- (5) The Commission may apply for and accept funds, grants, gifts, and services from the state, the government of the United States or any of its agencies, or any other public or private source for the purpose of defraying clerical and administrative costs as may be necessary in carrying out its duties under this section.
- (6) Beginning January 1, 1993, the commission shall report annually on January 1 to the Governor, the Attorney General, the Cabinet, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the minority leaders of the House and Senate on the study carried out under the provisions of this section.

# SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE STATUS OF WOMEN

NUMBER OF WOMEN IN FLORIDA:

**10,894,649**

PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION:

**51.2%**

MEDIAN ANNUAL INCOME FOR FLORIDA WOMEN:

**\$37,821**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The socioeconomic status of women refers to the social standing or class of the group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation.

The US Census Bureau 2018 estimates that there are just over 10 million women living in Florida, making up 51.2% of the total population.

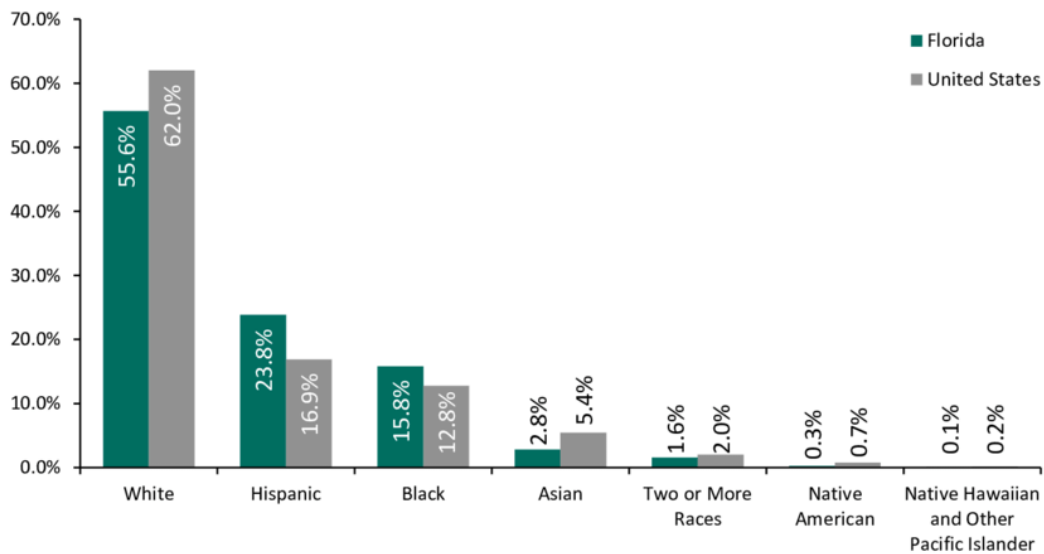
The median age of Florida women is highest of all states at 43 years compared to 39 years for men. Florida has the highest proportion of women aged 65 and older. This trend for both men and women, known as the "Silver Tsunami," is expected to grow and will impact housing, transportation, extended care resources, medical care, neighborhoods, and families.

## FLORIDA WOMEN:

Median Age	43
Proportion of Females Aged 65 and older	20.1%
Proportion of Women who are immigrants	20.1%
Percent of Federal & State Prison Population who are Women	7.1%
Proportion of Women with a Disability (Ages 21 - 64)	10.5%



## FLORIDA WOMEN BY RACE/ETHNICITY



The Status of Women in Florida by County: Population & Diversity - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Distribution-of-Women-of-All-Ages-by-Race-Ethnicity-Florida-and-United-States-2014\\_fig1\\_316655816](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Distribution-of-Women-of-All-Ages-by-Race-Ethnicity-Florida-and-United-States-2014_fig1_316655816) [accessed 18 Dec, 2019]

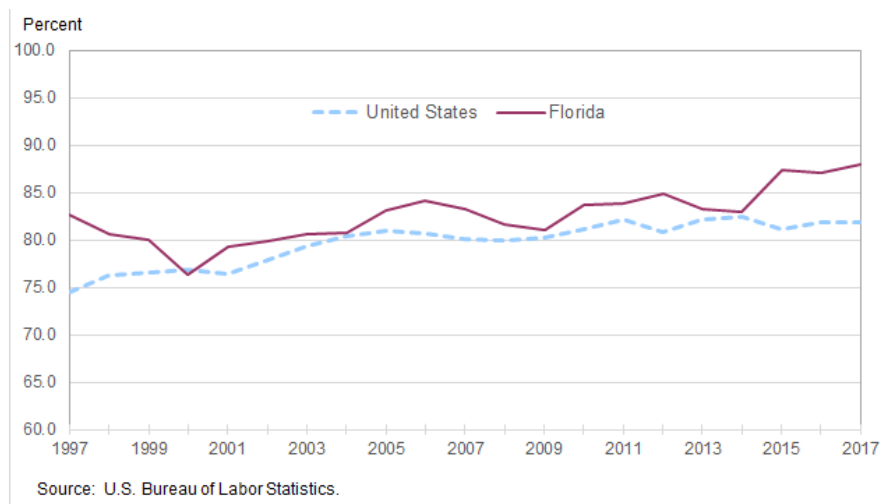
Florida has long been home to a large number of immigrants, many from the Caribbean. The Pew Research Center reports 19.5 percent of Florida residents are foreign born and Florida is home to approximately 2 million immigrant women.

Florida has one of the smallest shares of women in the labor force in the country, 53.7 percent, 48th of all states. This is possibly due to its higher than average senior population. Among Florida

women, those who identify as Black, Hispanic, or multiracial are most likely to be in the labor force. White women have the lowest labor force participation rates at 51.4%.

Florida is among the top states to close the gender pay gap, where a woman makes 85 cents for every dollar a man makes in 2018. The gap narrowed after the *Great Recession* when men's earnings declined.

## WOMEN'S EARNINGS AS A PERCENT OF MEN'S 1997 - 2017





## DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL POTENTIAL

Individual development includes activities that improve awareness and identity, develop talents and potential, build human capital and facilitate employability, enhance the quality of life and contribute to the realization of dreams and aspirations.

The Commission supported the development of individual potential in 2019 in two ways: holding the **2019 Florida Women's History Essay Contest** and through our partnership in hosting the **2019 Women's Economic Security Summit in Tallahassee**.

Celebrating women's history presents the opportunity to honor and recount stories of our female leaders' talents, sacrifices, and commitments and inspires today's generations. The Florida Women's History Essay Contest is designed to inspire the future leaders of our state and to help them learn about women's history.

The middle-school participants in this year's contest were challenged to write about an individual whose life of service has made a significant impact on them, just as Women's Hall of Fame member Mary McLeod Bethune inspired generations to service. The Commission honored the winners of the contest during a celebration luncheon on the 22nd floor of the Florida Capitol as part of the **2019 LEAD Summit**.



Florida Lt. Governor Jeanette Núñez, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Nikki Fried, Tallahassee Mayor John Dailey, and Commission Chair Lady Dhyana Ziegler, DCJ, Ph.D., with winners of the 2019 Essay Contest.

### 2019 Florida Women's History Essay Contest Winners

#### 6th grade:

1st Place – Kahni Watts, Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School, Ft. Myers

2nd Place – Alexa Hoch, Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School, Ft. Myers

#### 7th grade:

1st Place – Devanshi Wable, Morgan Fitzgerald Middle School, Largo

2nd Place – Addyson Domian, Pine View School, Osprey

#### 8th grade:

1st Place – Autumn Rhodes, Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School, Ft. Myers

2nd Place – Makayla Splittorff, Liberty Pines Academy, St. Johns

## ADDRESSING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY

Economic security, a cornerstone of individual potential, includes having a stable source of income and enough human capital (education, skills, training, confidence, and knowledge) to sustain an



Roughly 135 state and community leaders attended the 2019 Women's Economic Summit hosted by the Tallahassee-Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls and supported by the Florida Commission on the Status of Women.

acceptable standard of living and building towards the future. Reducing the social costs of poverty, strengthening the workforce, and building a more prosperous and sustainable community are goals on which most communities agree. Research shows that the economic security of women is one of the foundations for the state and nation.

The **Women's Economic Security Summit** held on October 30, 2019 in Tallahassee highlighted local, state, and national trends rooted in causes and solutions for addressing economic security and poverty facing Florida women. Philip E. Devol facilitated the discussion and shared his research which helped develop the *Bridges Model* to address community poverty.

*Bridges* brings people from all sectors and economic classes together to improve job retention rates, build resources, improve outcomes, and support those who are moving out of poverty.

### FLORIDA WOMEN AND POVERTY - WHAT WE KNOW:

- In 2016, 45% of Florida's families struggled to pay their bills and keep their heads above the financial waters.
- The poverty rate for women who live in Florida is 16.5% compared to 14.4% for men.
- 41.5% of single women with children are in poverty in our state.
- A working adult with one preschooler and one school age child needs an hourly wage of \$28.60, or an income of \$5,034 per month or \$60,408 per year, to be economically secure.
- Florida's high poverty rate among women makes it fertile ground for human trafficking and violence.

## ENCOURAGEMENT OF WOMEN TO UTILIZE THEIR CAPABILITIES AND ASSUME LEADERSHIP ROLES

Evidence shows that organizations with more female leaders achieve greater performance. Women are powerful agents of change, and the far-reaching benefits of diversity and gender parity in leadership and decision-making are increasingly recognized in all spheres.

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women has developed two powerful programs to help encourage women to become leaders; the **LEAD** (Leadership, Education, Advocacy, and Development) **Summit** and **LEAD Lunch & Learn**.

### 2019 LEAD SUMMIT

This year, more than 200 participants from across the state took part in the free, two-day event to learn about how to engage with the Florida Legislature and navigate the legislative process. Attendees had the opportunity to hear presenters, discuss topics important to women, and better understand how to strengthen their local community and by extension the State of Florida. Delivering this summit as a resource to women across Florida is a key piece to provide them with entrance into the legislative process.



### LEAD LUNCH & LEARN WEST PALM BEACH



The Commission held its second LEAD Lunch & Learn event at Keiser University in West Palm Beach in September. Presented as an spinoff of the Commission's LEAD Summit, the program offers opportunities for development in leadership in local communities, taking the Capitol out to the state and making it accessible to all.



## COORDINATION OF EFFORTS OF NUMEROUS WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS INTERESTED IN THE WELFARE OF WOMEN

Wanting to be responsive to the specific concerns of women in Florida, the Commission partnered with the National Association of Commissions for Women to host the **2019 Voices of Florida Women** Listening Tour and online survey. The Listening Tour is a coordinated partnership with local commissions for women and other organizations from the panhandle to Key West designed to give women in Florida's diverse communities an opportunity to share about the challenges they encounter in their everyday lives.



The Commission spent close to a year developing the project which was launched in June 2019, and the final public forum will be held on January 16, 2020. At each of these two-hour forums, women were invited to share their views on issues important to them in their homes, workplace, and communities. They were asked to prioritize the issues raised and to develop recommendations to resolve these issues. Participants included residents of the area, service providers, legislators and policy-makers, advocates, and representatives of community organizations.

To ensure that women who were not able to attend one of the forums could voice their concerns, the Commission developed an online survey which asked women to select from a list of predefined issues those they believed affected women in their community as well as issues that affected them personally.

A report with the findings and recommendations will be released in February 2020 during the annual LEAD Summit.

## IDENTIFICATION AND RECOGNITION OF CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY WOMEN TO THE COMMUNITY STATE AND NATION



Members of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, 2019 Women's Hall of Fame Inductees and their families.

By celebrating women's historic achievements, we present an authentic view of history. The knowledge of women's history provides a more expansive vision of what women can do and encourages us all to think larger and bolder.

Women's achievements are recognized on both the state and local level each year, through the **Florida Women's Hall of Fame** and the **FCSW Spirit of Community Awards**.

The Florida Women's Hall of Fame was created by Florida Statute in 1982 to honor women who, through their lives and efforts, made significant contributions to the improvement of life for women and all Florida citizens. They are pioneers who have broken down barriers, created new opportunities, and championed issues to better Florida and its people. These women are immortalized on an honorary wall in the halls of the Florida Capitol.



## 2019 FLORIDA WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women inducted three new members into the **Florida Women's Hall of Fame** at a distinguished ceremony in Orlando as a part of the Florida Chamber Foundation's Future of Florida Forum. Celebrating its 37th anniversary, the Hall of Fame honored 2019 inductees **Doris Mae Barnes, Dr. Judith Ann Bense**, and **Mildred "Millie" Wilborn Gildersleeve** for significant contributions to the citizens of Florida.

The ceremony included an evening of honor with remarks from Florida Attorney

General Ashley Moody; Todd Powell, Florida Chamber Foundation; Pamela Rauch, Florida Power & Light; Mark Wilson, Florida Chamber of Commerce; and Commissioners from the Florida Commission on the Status of Women.

Joined by family and friends, the Hall of Fame celebrated the inductees with commemorative videos and remarks about the legacy of accomplishments and the contributions each made to the lives of people across Florida.

*"Being selected to enter the Florida Women's Hall of Fame is an honor and privilege. I have been asked to join a very special group of incredibly accomplished women who exemplify the very highest of achievements. As an archaeologist, I have discovered and shared Florida's rich heritage my entire career at the University of West Florida where I had the privilege of being President. As a native of the panhandle, this honor is especially meaningful."*

*- Dr. Judy Bense, 2019 Florida Women's Hall of Fame Inductee*



Doris Mae Barnes



Dr. Judith Ann Bense



Mildred "Millie" Wilborn Gildersleeve



## FCSW SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARD

The Spirit of Community Award recognizes meritorious women and men who have improved the lives of women of Florida and have served as positive role models for women and girls in their community. The awards are to honor community volunteers who are nonpaid (or not paid on a consistent basis).

### 2019 HONOREES

- Sharon Berrian of Tallahassee
- Lauren DePaola of Gainesville
- Chase Hartman of Tampa
- Tina Kadolph of Sanford
- Sharon Kendrick-Johnson of Miami
- Barbara Melvin of Ave Maria
- Paloma Rambana of Tallahassee
- Sue Sifrit of Punta Gorda
- Susan Chenault of Vero Beach



## IMPLEMENTATION WHERE WORKING CONDITIONS, FINANCIAL SECURITY, AND LEGAL STATUS OF BOTH SEXES ARE IMPROVED



### FOLLOW THE FCSW IN 2020



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@FCSWOMEN

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women represents the State of Florida's commitment to improving the quality of life for women and families. We recognize that when we help a woman succeed, we help her family, her community, and her state.

The FCSW will focus its efforts on the five priority areas that will be identified during the **2019 Voices of Florida Women** initiative. Preliminary survey findings show that Florida women are most concerned with: 1) financial security 2) health and caregiving 3) work-based issues; 4) violence against women; and 5) leadership.

The information gathered during this initiative is integral to the Commission's future efforts and helps identify challenges, potential solutions, and develop partnerships that will ensure Florida continues to be a state of opportunity and economic security for all women and girls.

We thank the appointing authorities who entrust the FCSW with the responsibility of promoting women's full participation in society, making Florida a better place to live, work and raise a family.



FLORIDA COMMISSION  
on the STATUS of WOMEN

# WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?

2019 Voices of Florida Women  
[www.fcs.w.net](http://www.fcs.w.net)

