



**Louisiana Women's Policy and
Research Commission
2013 Report to the Governor**

LOUISIANA WOMEN'S POLICY AND RESEARCH COMMISSION
2013 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR

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The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission hereby submits to Governor Bobby Jindal for his consideration this detailed annual report for 2013, required by R.S. 2003 ACT No. 668, which addresses the issues set forth as the duties of this Commission:

Commission Duties

- To monitor the status of Louisiana women for the purpose of evaluating their economic, educational, and health concerns, needs and/or hardships
- To identify and analyze trends that impact the health and prosperity of Louisiana women
- To advise the Governor on particular hardships, concerns, and needs that challenge Louisiana women and their possible solutions

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission is comprised of members appointed by the Governor to serve during the Governor's term of office. Members are selected from state agencies, the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus, and academic or professional areas including law, education, health, and social sciences to represent the racial, ethnic, regional, religious, socioeconomic, and political diversity of women in the state.

2013 Commission Members

- **Laura Badeaux, Chair, Louisiana Center for Women and Government, Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, LA**
- **Representative Regina Ashford-Barrow, LA State House of Representatives, District 29, member of the Legislative Women's Caucus**
- **Nancy Beben, Designee of the Louisiana Department of Education, Baton Rouge, LA**
- **Tonya Bolden-Ball, appointed by the Governor, expertise in social sciences or social work and violence against women, Lafayette, LA**
- **Martha Bryant, appointed by the Governor, expertise in education, Lafayette, LA**
- **Representative Simone B. Champagne, appointed by the Governor, expertise in gender studies, LA State House of Representatives, District 49**
- **Alexis Ducorbier, appointed by the Governor, expertise in business and industry, Hammond, LA**
- **Pamela Egan, appointed by the Governor, expertise in public health and education, Covington, LA**
- **Cordelia Heaney, Executive Director, Office on Women's Policy, Department of Children and Family Services, New Orleans, LA**
- **Racheal Hebert, appointed by the Governor, expertise in violence against women, Baton Rouge, LA**
- **Melissa Horton, Designee of the Secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, Baton Rouge, LA**
- **Conshonda Houston-Dotie, appointed by the Governor, expertise in youth organizations for girls, Shreveport, LA**
- **Stephanie LeGrange, Designee of the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, Baton Rouge, LA**
- **Michelle A. Massé, Designee of the Louisiana Board of Regents, Baton Rouge, LA**
- **Claudeidra Minor, Designee of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, Baton Rouge, LA**
- **Sue McNabb, appointed by the Governor, expertise in law and social science, Clinton, LA**
- **Kathleen Mix, appointed by the Governor, expertise in women's organizations, Metairie, LA**
- **Stafford Palmieri, appointed by the Governor, expertise in education, Baton Rouge, LA**
- **Christie Smith, Executive Director of the Children's Cabinet and State Interagency Coordinating Council, Baton Rouge, LA**
- **Representative Patricia Haynes Smith, LA State House of Representatives, District 67, member of the Legislative Women's Caucus**
- **Representative Karen St. Germain, LA State House of Representatives, District 60, Chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus**
- **Elizabeth Dent Sumrall, appointed by the Governor, expertise in business and industry, Baton Rouge, LA**
- **Lauren Wingo, Designee of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Baton Rouge, LA**

Executive Summary

Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission 2013 Report to the Governor

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission, first established in 1964, is the state commission charged with monitoring the status of Louisiana women for the purpose of evaluating their economic, educational, and health issues, analyzing trends that impact women's health and prosperity, and providing policy recommendations to address the challenges women in our state face. Prevention, protection and progression were themes at the heart of this year's annual Report to the Governor. Encouraging women to access preventative health care, exploring the need for a greater policy emphasis on protecting women and children from gender-based violence, and recommending ways to help women progress in the education and labor force arenas are central components of this year's report.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission's 2013 Report to the Governor is a resource for citizens and lawmakers interested in women's issues and is meant to provide readers with data and information on the status of Louisiana women. It includes updates on new initiatives and 2013 policy successes that positively impacted women around the state, and policy recommendations constructed by the Commission to help further the progress of women in our state. The four main areas of focus in the 2013 report are *Women's Health, Gender-Based Violence, Women, Education and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)*, and *Women and Economic Concerns*, as well as a special *Trends* section with a focus on incarcerated women in Louisiana.

Monitoring the Status of Louisiana Women

Women's Health

There were two major changes in women's access to health care in 2013: the opening of the federally-facilitated Health Insurance Marketplaces, and the addition of Women's Preventative Services as required coverage under all new health plans. These changes mean women are now guaranteed a variety of free preventative health screenings, such as well-woman visits and screenings for gestational diabetes and HIV, as part of any new insurance plan.

Although Louisiana is not expanding its Medicaid program under the terms of the Affordable Care Act, the state continues to provide a safety-net of health care services through LSU and its partners throughout the state for individuals who cannot afford to purchase health coverage. Appendix V, "Access to Safety-Net Services in Louisiana," provides regional contact information for those interested in learning more about accessing these services in their area; individuals can also visit <http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov>.

This year, the Commission report examined the issue of chronic disease and its effect on Louisiana women, specifically heart disease, diabetes, cancer and obesity. These diseases, whose rates are high in Louisiana, can contribute to many other long-term illnesses, and lead to costly medical expenses. In Louisiana one in four deaths is caused by heart disease, and 4.6% of women in Louisiana suffer from it. The rates of obesity among Louisiana women are equally alarming and also on the rise. The adult obesity rate in Louisiana is 34.7%, the highest in the nation. Louisiana's rate of breast cancer incidence is only slightly higher than the national average, but more women die of breast cancer in Louisiana: we rank 49th out of 50 states and the District of Columbia for our high rate of female breast cancer fatalitiesⁱ due in no small part to the fact that women are waiting until they have already developed late-stage cancer to consult a physician, rather than regularly accessing preventative healthcare.

There are several lifestyle changes women can make to help prevent different cancers, including eating more healthy vegetables, not smoking, and avoiding unnecessary exposure to harmful chemicals, particularly those found in certain plastics. In addition, exploring various policies that could potentially help increase women's access to affordable preventative healthcare (for example, increasing access to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses), could lead to a significant positive impact on Louisiana women's health outcomes.

Louisiana's teen birth rate rose from ranking 13th highest among states in 2008 to 6th highest in 2010, and remained at 6th for 2011.ⁱⁱ Of the 50 states, Louisiana ranks 3rd highest in chlamydia case rates,ⁱⁱⁱ 3rd for congenital syphilis case rates,^{iv} 1st in gonorrhea case rates,^v and 1st in primary and secondary syphilis case rates.^{vi} Louisiana ranks 3rd highest in national AIDS rates^{vii} and in 2010 Baton Rouge and New Orleans ranked 1st and 5th respectively among Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

Therefore, the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that:

- *...the Department of Health and Hospitals maintain the sustainability of the Bayou Health, Managed-Care Medicaid Program, in order to provide comprehensive, patient-centered medical homes for low-income women. Additionally, it is recommended that a greater emphasis be placed on improving health outcomes, especially in regard to chronic diseases like diabetes, obesity, cancer, and heart disease.*
- *...members of the Louisiana State Legislature propose legislation to grant full autonomy to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses, eliminating the formal collaborative practice agreement requirement, and allowing them to practice their trade.*

Gender-Based Violence

"Gender-based violence" is a broadly defined term that includes the frequently co-occurring issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and stalking. Louisiana is currently ranked 9th in the nation for homicides of women murdered by men by the national Violence Policy Center. According to the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (LCADV) their member domestic violence programs provided almost 91,000 nights of emergency shelter and took more than 38,000 crisis calls in 2012. Regrettably, these programs also documented more than 1,800 incidents of unmet needs due to low staff and full shelter beds.

Firearms are the most common weapon used in domestic violence homicides; 66% of Louisiana domestic violence homicides were committed with a gun.^{viii} While Louisiana orders of protection state that under Federal law, persons subject to some orders of protection are not permitted to own or operate firearms, and those convicted of domestic violence-related misdemeanors and felonies are permanently prohibited from owning firearms, because Louisiana does not have state legislation mirroring that federal legislation, law enforcement and courts do not currently have an established statewide system to actively collect and store firearms from those subject to protective orders or who have recently been convicted of domestic violence crimes. Furthermore, the language of Louisiana orders of protection is legalistic and difficult to read, obscuring the fact that shipping, transporting, or possessing firearms is prohibited for these offenders.

According to the Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault (LaFASA), their crisis line received 6,396 calls in 2012, and their 13 partner centers served 3,750 survivors in Louisiana last year. National data estimates that 1 in 6 women experience sexual violence in their lifetime; since Louisiana's female population is well over 2 million, it is estimated that there are approximately 400,000 victims of sexual violence among us. In Louisiana, sexual assault response and evidence collection protocols differ from community to community, there is no state-wide response protocol to sexual assault, and sexual assault centers receive no state general funds. In sexual assault cases, properly administered forensic exams and rape kits are an essential component to effective prosecution of offenders. However, while Louisiana requires that all hospitals offer services to rape victims that include court-admissible rape kits, not all hospitals across the state are properly equipped to provide these services.

Stalking is defined as "a pattern of repeated and unwanted attention, harassment, contact, or any other course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear."^{ix} Nationally, 1 in 9 women and 1 in 16 men are stalked every year. Protective orders are a proven deterrent that can protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, teen dating violence and stalking from further victimization, and are a valuable tool in assisting law enforcement in handling repeat offenders. Legislation passed in 2012 added criminal orders of protection in stalking cases to be entered into the Louisiana Protective Order Registry, regardless of the relationship of the stalker to the victim; however, there remains a gap in the law that does not

allow civil orders of protection to be entered into the Louisiana Protective Order Registry when the stalker and victim do not have a former or current domestic or dating relationship. Since national statistics show that only 28.1% of stalking victims were victimized by a current or former intimate partner/spouse, this gap potentially impacts many stalking victims.^x

This year saw several significant achievements in the area of human trafficking in Louisiana. Legislation to strengthen enforcement of a requirement that certain establishments post the National Human Trafficking Hotline number, to allow for pre-adjudication diversion programs for juveniles alleged to have engaged in prostitution-related offenses to help treat sexually-exploited children who may have been trafficked, and to create a civil cause of action for victims, making victim restitution mandatory and establishing victim assistance guidelines for law enforcement, District Attorneys and the Attorney General's office were all passed. In addition, the Joint Human Trafficking Study Commission was created. The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission is gratified that this new study commission was created, and look forward to reviewing its forthcoming recommendations.

The cost of gender-based violence to our state cannot be underestimated. Law enforcement costs, lost wages, health care costs, and mental health costs to the nation are substantial. For example, in 2008, violence and abuse constituted up to 37.5% of total national health care costs, which is approximately \$750 billion.^{xi} The long-term effects of exposure to gender-based violence bring with them additional costs: child abuse victims are 25% more likely to experience teen pregnancy,^{xii} abused and neglected children are eleven times more likely to engage in criminal behavior as teens, and are 3.1 times more likely to be arrested for one of many forms of violent crime.^{xiii}

Therefore, the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that:

- *...the Louisiana Legislature amend the statute that establishes a sexual assault task force, with the addition of a representative from the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission. The task force would develop statewide protocols for sexual assault prevention training, response, evidence collection and prosecution. In addition, the task force would study the costs and policy changes necessary in order to effectively revise existing legislation that requires every Louisiana hospital with an emergency room to have medical staff that can perform a court-admissible sexual assault forensic exam.*
- *...the Louisiana Legislature request that the Louisiana Law Institute investigate the protocols to develop a law aimed at allowing victims of stalking to obtain a civil order of protection in a manner similar to La. R.S. 46:2131, et seq. (Domestic Abuse Assistance Act), and to allow the order to be entered into the Louisiana Protective Order Registry, regardless of the relationship between the stalker and victim.*
- *...the Judicial Administrator's Office of the Louisiana Supreme Court and the Steering Committee of Louisiana Protective Order Registry simplify protective order language to include more clear language regarding possession of firearms.*
- *...the state budget match the federal funds sexual assault centers receive for prevention programming through the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Office of Public Health, and that sexual assault centers then be charged with providing free, age-appropriate gender-based violence prevention training to all elementary through high school professionals responsible for health education in their area. Trainings would be evidence-based and would be geared toward educating students from third grade through twelfth grade.*

Women, Education and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

The Commission focused its education research this year on the importance of preparing more female students for college and high-need, high-wage jobs. With that in mind, this year's report focuses on efforts currently occurring in Louisiana to increase the number of girls succeeding in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) studies, as well as increasing the number of Louisiana women entering into STEM careers, where the gender wage gap tends to be narrower and the wages higher than in other fields. Appendix III, "Quick Facts on Education in Louisiana," provides data on the current achievement gap between males and females in STEM areas in Louisiana, and Appendix IV, "Preparing Girls for Careers in STEM: Louisiana Best Practices," highlights five exemplary programs currently working to encourage more Louisiana girls to get excited about STEM.

Increasing girls' exposure and access to hands-on activities and high-quality science labs and technology can help increase the number of young women pursuing careers in STEM. Education leaders should work to identify new resources to help provide additional skills development opportunities for teachers and students.

Therefore, the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that:

- ...Louisiana Local Education Agencies (LEAs) make capital investments in building/upgrading science labs for middle and high-school students a budget priority, and encourages the Louisiana Department of Education to continue to seek funding and public-private partnerships to increase access to technology in all LEAs.
- ...the Louisiana Legislature raise the amount of funds appropriated to the Quality Science and Math Council (QSM) so that they can raise the maximum amount of funding available to teachers for science and math-related classroom materials, and that special education teachers be permitted to apply for Quality Science and Math Grant funds.
- ...Louisiana Local Education Agencies aggressively seek public-private partnerships to increase the availability of professional development opportunities for teachers in the sciences, especially engineering.
- ...Louisiana Local Education Agencies encourage their middle and high schools to establish STEM-related clubs for students, and actively encourage female students to join them.

In addition:

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission and the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus plan to co-sponsor a resolution addressing women in STEM disciplines during the 2014 legislative session, which will request that the Louisiana Department of Economic Development encourage new and existing Louisiana companies to create strategies that would increase the number of women employed in STEM positions.

Women and Economic Concerns

In 2012, even as the national gender wage gap improved (women now earn 78.8 cents on average to every dollar a man earns, up from 77 cents in 2011), for Louisiana women the gender wage gap actually grew worse (just 66.9 cents for every dollar earned by a Louisiana man, a gender wage gap of 33%, and a gap 2 cents greater than in 2011). The disparity in earnings between Louisiana women and men has consistently ranked Louisiana 49th or 50th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. For 2012, Louisiana was again 50th with only Wyoming having a larger wage gap (63.8).

Among Louisiana's top earners, only 3.2% of women who worked full-time, year-round earned \$100,000 or more in 2012 compared to 12.9% of men.^{xiv} Only 13.6% of the top 50 publicly traded companies in Louisiana's executive officers, or 39 individuals, are female, compared to 86.4%, or 248 males.^{xv} Appendix I, "Louisiana Women Workers: 2012," provides further data on the status of Louisiana women workers.

The availability of quality, affordable childcare is another key challenge Louisiana women workers face. Act 3 of the 2012 legislative session called for the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to implement a statewide Early Childhood Care and Education Network for all publicly-funded programs (Head Start, child care, prekindergarten). In 2013, the Louisiana Department of Education, along with the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services and BESE, initiated the Early Childhood Network Pilots. The pilots have five goals: unify expectations; support teachers and providers; measure and recognize progress; fund high quality providers; and provide clear information to families and high quality choices.

With more than \$60 billion of plant expansions and new plants announced, Louisiana faces an industry demand for more than 86,300 new craft workers through 2016.^{xvi} Encouraging women to seek employment in non-traditional occupations will help build Louisiana's craft workforce, and can help women enter into careers that, similarly to those in the STEM fields, tend to be high-paying and to have a smaller gender wage gap for women. Appendix II, "Nontraditional Occupations for Women in 2009," provides national data on the number of women working in craft jobs.

Therefore, the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that:

- *...the Workforce Investment Council and Louisiana Workforce Commission's Craft Workforce Development Task Force recruitment committee develop strategies that will actively encourage women to seek high-demand, high-wage craft jobs available in the state.*

Trends Special Section: Incarcerated Women in Louisiana

Each year, the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission examines trends that impact the health and prosperity of Louisiana women. This year Commission members dedicated the Trends section of the report to a single key issue, women's incarceration, recognizing its impacts on the health, safety and well-being of many women and communities throughout Louisiana. Louisiana's rate of incarceration in 2010 was 867 per 100,000 people, ranking us highest around the globe for our rate of incarceration.^{xvii} While nationally the rate of incarceration decreased from 492 per 100,000 people in 2011 to 480 per 100,000 people in 2012, in Louisiana it increased from 865 per 100,000 people in 2011 to 893 per 100,000 people in 2012. This rate is 20% higher than any other state; the second highest rate is Mississippi's (717), followed by Alabama's (650), Oklahoma's (648), and Texas' (601).^{xviii}

Members of the Commission visited the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW) in September, and made it the focus of their research on Louisiana incarcerated women's issues. LCIW is the only female correctional facility operating at the state level.

Of the 1,080 inmates the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women housed in the 2013 fiscal year, 44% were listed as being on psychiatric medication, 34% were categorized as suffering from severe mental illness, and 78% were categorized as having an addiction disorder.^{xix} The overrepresentation of people with mental health and substance use disorders in the justice system is expensive, and individuals with these behavioral health issues have high recidivism rates. While LCIW offers support groups and makes quality healthcare available to many inmates who may have never had adequate access to healthcare prior to their incarceration, LCIW does not currently have the resources to offer individual drug treatment to inmates, and only 25 slots at the state's drug treatment program, the Steve Hoyle Intensive Substance Abuse Treatment Program located at Bossier Parish Prison, are currently reserved for incarcerated women.

Most women incarcerated in Louisiana are in prison for non-violent, poverty-related property and drug crimes. In order to lower female recidivism rates, it is therefore crucial that they be provided with opportunities to receive adequate job training in industries where they can earn a living wage upon release. At present, however, women prisoners at LCIW are only offered training in Culinary Arts and Upholstery classes. In contrast, male inmates in the Louisiana prison system have the option to receive training in more lucrative, high demand craft occupations that can help them successfully support themselves and their families upon release.

Therefore, the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that:

- *...the Department of Corrections explore partnerships with area universities to provide access to additional individual therapy and drug treatment for inmates at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women.*
- *...the Department of Corrections align all of its job training across the prison system to high demand, high wage jobs in a gender-neutral manner to help women attain jobs upon release that offer them financial independence and reduce their likelihood of reoffending.*

Activities Undertaken by the Louisiana Women’s Policy and Research Commission in 2013

A. Additional 2013 Louisiana Women’s Policy and Research Commission Activities

The Louisiana Women’s Policy and Research Commission hosted expert speakers at several of our meetings this year, who presented on a range of topics pertinent to women’s issues in our state, including bullying, gender-based violence, and services for incarcerated women.

B. Office on Women’s Policy

The Office launched a new web page, www.dcfslouisiana.gov/Women, this year. The page includes information on the Louisiana Women’s Policy and Research Commission, upcoming women’s interest events from around the state, special projects, a list of women’s organizations (Advocacy, Business and Economic Interests, Gender-Based Violence, Homeless Women, National Organizations, Regional Women’s Commissions, Service Organizations, University Resources, and Women’s Health), and an Office on Women’s Policy e-newsletter.

C. Regional Women’s Commissions

In an effort to ensure that the statewide Commission’s work is representative of women’s interests around the state, the Commission also focused on Louisiana’s regional women’s commissions this year. One Commission meeting was focused on presentations by established regional women’s commissions, and the Commission created a new annual survey that regional commissions submitted to share their interests, concerns and activities with the Commission. A new regional women’s commission handbook was developed, and members of the Commission began outreach efforts to establish new regional women’s commissions. Appendix VI, “Louisiana Regional Women’s Commissions: 2012-2013 Activities” provides a summary of their major activities and accomplishments this year, as well as their leadership roster and contact information so others can get more involved.

Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission 2013 Report to the Governor

I. Monitoring the Status of Louisiana Women

Marie Corinne Morrison Claiborne Boggs, widely known as Lindy Boggs, Louisiana's first female congressperson, passed away this year at the age of 97. Ms. Boggs served in Congress for 18 years, was the first female ambassador to the Holy See, and was a staunch advocate for Louisiana, especially Louisiana women. She focused on women's economic issues and fought for equal rights for women in business, banking, and homeownership, and for equal opportunities for women in higher education, especially science and medicine. She believed in the value of the contributions women make to the community, the family, and the workplace. In this spirit, the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission's 2013 Report to the Governor strives to highlight the initiatives taking place in Louisiana to improve the lives of women and girls in our state, to provide useful information on the continued challenges Louisiana women face, and to emphasize the areas where women have more potential opportunities to help our state move forward.

This year, the Commission focused on three key themes: prevention, protection, and progression. Prevention is an essential component of any effort to improve the health of Louisiana women, and empowering women through information and access to quality health care positively impacts health outcomes. Outlining the impact of gender-based violence in our state and examining potential policies that can increase collaborative efforts around gender-based violence prevention helps protect women and children. Encouraging the adoption of education-focused initiatives to increase the number of women entering into careers in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, and initiatives to help encourage more women to pursue non-traditional/craft work, helps Louisiana women play a more active role in the economic advances Louisiana is currently experiencing.

A. Women's Health

1. Changes in Women's Access to Health Care

Since the 2012 Commission Report was released, there have been significant changes in the nation's and the state's healthcare systems, and while the effect of these policies on women's health in the state of Louisiana has yet to be determined, the changes have been significant. Notably, these changes include (a) the opening of the federally-facilitated Health Insurance Marketplaces on October 1, 2013 and (b) the addition of Women's Preventative Services as required coverage under all new health plans (with certain exceptions for certain religious institutions).

Federally-Facilitated Health Insurance Marketplace in Louisiana

The federally-facilitated Health Insurance Marketplace opened in Louisiana on October 1, 2013 and provides subsidized insurance coverage to all those between 100 and 400% of the federal poverty level or an income between about \$12,000 and \$48,000 for an individual, based on projected figures for 2014. The Marketplace can be accessed through <http://www.healthcare.gov> and 1-800-318-2596. The call center is open 24/7 and the website also includes a feature where you can chat with a representative.

Women's Preventative Services

As of August 1, 2012, all new health plans must cover a range of women's preventive services without cost sharing, including:

- Breastfeeding support, supplies, and counseling;
- Screening and counseling for interpersonal and domestic violence;
- Screening for gestational diabetes;
- DNA testing for high-risk strains of HPV;
- Counseling regarding sexually transmitted infections, including HIV;

- Screening for HIV;
- Contraceptive methods and counseling; and
- Well-woman visits.

Employees of religious institutions granted the contraception exemption can receive free, stand-alone federal insurance to cover these services.

Access to Safety-Net Services in Louisiana

While Louisiana is not expanding its Medicaid program under the terms of the Affordable Care Act, the state continues to provide a robust safety-net of health care services through LSU and its partners throughout the state for individuals who cannot afford to purchase health coverage. To learn about these resources or to schedule an appointment at an LSU or affiliated clinic, individuals can select from the telephone numbers listed in Appendix IV, "Access to Safety-Net Services in Louisiana," based upon the region in which they live.

2. Prevention: Risk Factors and Chronic Disease

This year, the Commission examined the issue of chronic disease and its effect on Louisiana women, specifically heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity, which have elevated rates in Louisiana. Heart disease and obesity can contribute to many other long-term illnesses, and lead to costly medical expenses. Heart disease is the nation's leading cause of death, and in Louisiana one in four deaths is caused by heart disease. According to the 2012 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey results, 4.6% of women in Louisiana suffer from it. Louisiana's mortality rate of 229 deaths per 100,000 people is higher than the national average of 179 per 100,000. Louisiana women overall have a mortality rate of 185 per 100,000; the rates are highest for African American women at 219 per 100,000 followed by White women at 173 per 100,000.^{xx} Although the rate of women with heart disease is smaller than the rate of men with heart disease, this issue is of special concern to the Commission. The rise of chronic disease is steadily increasing and measures need to be taken to change this dangerous trajectory. In addition to the alarming rates of heart disease in Louisiana, the rates of obesity among Louisiana women are on the rise. The adult obesity rate in Louisiana is 34.7%, putting us highest in the nation in obesity rates. Among women, the rate rises to 36%. The rates for diabetes are higher for women at 12.7%, compared to men at 11.8%.^{xxi}

Over the past year, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) has seen positive outcomes in their initiatives towards the goal of improving health outcomes and obesity rankings in Louisiana. The Louisiana Diabetes Excellence Initiative (LaDEI) in Richland Parish saw two positive outcomes: (1) the providers in Richland Parish's rural health clinic that are recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Diabetes Recognition Program rose from zero to six and (2) the development of an electronic diabetes registry in Richland Parish Hospital Service District (RPHSD) that now tracks BMI, blood pressure, A1C (gives you a picture of your average blood glucose (blood sugar) control for the past 2 to 3 months), and LDL (low-density lipoproteins) of patients with diabetes.

In addition to the previous steps taken by DHH, the department was awarded a grant for \$615,132 through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity and Associated Risk Factors and Promote School Health Program. This program will implement an approach to prevent, reduce, and/or manage chronic disease. The grant combines four previously funded chronic disease prevention and health promotion programs. The purpose of the program is to support statewide chronic disease prevention and control efforts that will result in measurable impacts to address school health, nutrition and physical activity, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

Companies like Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana continue to take efforts to combat obesity in Louisiana. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation (BCBSLAF) partnered with Pennington Biomedical Research Center through the Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana program, which works to "support communities in the

implementation of healthy eating and active living programs along with environmental change initiatives that support healthier communities for children and families across Louisiana.”^{xxii} In October 2013, the grantees from the program met during the Annual Challenge Grantee Meeting at Pennington Biomedical Research Center and shared some of the outcomes from the first year of the program. In its initial award last year, BCBSLAF awarded \$10.2 million to 12 grant applicants throughout the state. Some of the programs started by grant applicants include: the Healthy Living Club in Lafayette which operates a mobile food pantry and Live Lively LaSalle which gave fitness scholarships in their community and set up a new walking trail and splash park for local kids.^{xxiii}

Other organizations in the state are taking significant actions to combat obesity as well. In 2011, Pennington Biomedical Research Center convened an advisory committee that challenged the state to reduce childhood obesity prevalence in the state to 23.3% by 2020. Responding to the challenge issued by the advisory committee, a committee (PRISM) was organized between Pennington, DHH, and the American Heart Association (AHA) to determine how this challenge could be achieved. In October of 2013, Pennington published a report titled “Obesity in Louisiana: An Evidence-based Approach to Inform Policy Decisions.” This report highlights both obesity statistics in Louisiana and discusses the Prevention Impact Systems Model (PRISM) Committee in greater detail.^{xxiv}

On November 6, 2013, Pennington announced Peter Katzmarzyk, Ph.D., Professor and Associate Executive Director for Preventive Medicine and Healthy Aging, as the Marie Edana Corcoran Endowed Chair in Pediatric Obesity and Diabetes at Pennington Biomedical Research Center. This endowment was made possible by donations from the Our Lady of the Lake Foundation and the Louisiana Educational Quality Support Fund, a program of the Louisiana Board of Regents. Dr. Katzmarzyk will be leading efforts to combat childhood obesity and diabetes in Louisiana.^{xxv}

Breast cancer in the United States is the most common cancer in women without correlation to race or ethnicity. It is the most common cause of death among Hispanic women. It is the second most common cause of death from cancer among white, black, Asian-Pacific Islander, and American Indian-Alaska Native women.^{xxvi} In 2008, over 210,000 women in the United States were diagnosed with breast cancer, and nearly 41,000 died from the disease. The national rate of breast cancer incidence (being diagnosed with breast cancer), is 123.1 people per 100,000; Louisiana is just slightly higher than this average, at 123.4 incidents per 100,000 people.^{xxvii} However, Louisiana ranks 49th out of 50 states and the District of Columbia for its high rate of female breast cancer fatalities,^{xxviii} due in no small part to the fact that women are waiting until they have already developed late-stage cancer to consult a physician, rather than regularly accessing preventative medicine.

From 2002-2006, for all Louisianans combined, the most frequently diagnosed cancers were lung (16.3%), prostate (15.5%), breast (13.5%), colon and rectum (11.5%), and non-Hodgkin lymphoma (4.0%). For white women: breast (29%), lung (15%), colon and rectum cancers (11%), non-Hodgkin lymphoma (5%), and uterine cancer (4%). For African-American women: breast (31%), colon and rectum (14%), lung (12%), uterus (5%), and cervix (4%).^{xxix}

There are several lifestyle changes women can make to help prevent different cancers. Consuming more cruciferous vegetables like cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts has been found to prevent some cancers;^{xxx} getting enough time outdoors boosts vital key Vitamin D levels;^{xxxi} eating a high-fiber diet can reduce the likelihood of dying from cardiovascular, infectious, and respiratory diseases;^{xxxii} abstaining from smoking cigarettes; and getting enough exercise is a strong preventative strategy for lessening the likelihood of developing a host of ailments that effect women.^{xxxiii}

According to the United Health Foundation America’s Health Rankings, 25.7% of Louisianans over the age of 18 are regular smokers (smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime and currently smoke every day or some days).^{xxxiv} DHH continues to take significant efforts to address this percentage and improve health outcomes through the Louisiana Tobacco Control Program’s cessation initiative. The program uses the recommendations of

the U.S. Public Health Service to increase access to cessation services through: (1) health care provider outreach to increase adherence to public health service clinical practice guidelines in treating tobacco dependence; (2) tobacco Quitline services; and (3) policies that promote cessation services. The Louisiana Tobacco Control Program is currently promoting cessation through a range of projects and services targeting groups and individuals throughout the state.

Avoiding unnecessary exposure to harmful chemicals found in pesticides, insecticides, and in many plastic “to go” containers, Styrofoam food packaging, plastic wrap, and beverage bottles is another positive lifestyle change. There is a correlation between higher levels of BPAs (biphosphenates) and other endocrine disrupting chemicals found in plastics and higher rates of diabetes, obesity, infertility, breast cancer, and thyroid disruption.^{xxxv} These chemicals are released by certain plastics often used in food preparation and storage, and can leach into food or be released when the plastics are heated.^{xxxvi}

3. Prevention: Affordable Primary Care

As a component of its work to address the health concerns of Louisiana women and its examination of methods to increase women’s access to preventative healthcare, the Commission reviewed information on the need for more primary care physicians in the state, and some possible solutions. According to the American College of Emergency Physicians’ “National Report Card on the State of Emergency Medicine,” Louisiana has a severe shortage of primary care physicians, and ranked 47th in the nation in 2008.^{xxxvii} The Louisiana Workforce Commission is forecasting a 31% increase in demand in family and general practitioners by 2020 (from 1,370 in 2010 to 1,800 by 2020), a 33% increase in demand for general internists (2,070 to 2,750), a 31% increase in demand for general pediatricians (1,000 to 1,300), and a 34% increase in demand for gynecologists and obstetricians (680 to 910) in Louisiana.^{xxxviii}

As the state works to recruit and retain more primary care physicians, one of the possible additional solutions considered by the Commission was increasing citizens’ access to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs, otherwise known as ‘nurse practitioners’). Louisiana is fortunate to have Advanced Practice Registered Nurses available to fill many gaps in primary care at lower cost with high-quality outcomes, and to serve underserved communities like rural areas and long term care facilities. Advanced Practice Registered Nurses are also leaders in providing care in the home and at worksites – two locations where demand is growing faster than the health system’s capabilities to meet it.^{xxxix} In 2009, 80% (685) of the students enrolled in an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse program in Louisiana were female,^{xl} and currently there are Advanced Practice Registered Nurses practicing in 62 of Louisiana’s 64 parishes.^{xli}

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses in Louisiana are required to have a signed collaborative practice agreement, and must find a physician who is willing to enter into a collaborative agreement in order to provide care for Louisiana residents. This agreement limits where an APRN can practice, and can require APRNs to pay their contracting physician thousands of dollars annually. The Commission discussed the removal of the formal collaborative practice agreement requirement which could potentially provide more access to primary care to underserved areas of the state.

4. Reproductive Health: Maternal and Child Health

Studies find that promoting breastfeeding can address a host of health concerns for mothers and children: breast-fed children have lower rates of obesity, type 2 diabetes, asthma and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). For mothers, breastfeeding is found to decrease the rates of postpartum depression, type 2 diabetes, ovarian cancer, and breast cancer, and breastfeeding moms lose their pregnancy weight more quickly. Furthermore, breast-fed babies are sick less frequently and their mothers miss less work.^{xli}

The Louisiana Women’s Policy and Research Commission has supported the Department of Health and Hospitals’ efforts to improve Louisiana’s birth outcomes and maternal and child health through programs like the Birth

Outcomes Initiative, and is pleased that Louisiana made marked strides this year in its efforts to improve maternal-child health as it relates to breastfeeding, jumping four spots in its ranking for breast-feeding rates; Louisiana is now 44th in the nation.^{xli} In addition, during the state's 2013 legislative session Act 87 was passed; it requires city, parish, and other local public school boards to adopt policies to require schools to provide certain accommodations for employees to express breast milk.

5. Reproductive Health: Teen Pregnancy, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and HIV/AIDS

Louisiana's teen birth rate was 45.1 per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 for 2011, resulting in a ranking of 6th highest in the nation and maintaining the same ranking from 2010. This is an increase from ranking 13th highest among states in 2008, and higher than the national average (31.3).^{xlii} Sexually Transmitted Infection rates including HIV in Louisiana are among the highest in the nation. Of the 50 states, Louisiana ranks 3rd highest in chlamydia,^{xliii} 3rd for congenital syphilis case rates,^{xliv} 1st in gonorrhea case rates,^{xlv} and 1st in primary and secondary syphilis case rates.^{xlvi} In 2011, of the 50 states, Louisiana ranked 3rd highest in national AIDS rates^{xlvii} and in 2010 Baton Rouge and New Orleans ranked 1st and 5th respectively among Metropolitan Statistical Areas.^{xlviii}

Under Louisiana law, each public local or parish school board may, but is not required to, offer instruction in subject matter designated as "sex education," and whether or not instruction is offered and at what grade level it is to be offered is at the discretion of each public local or parish school board. Parishes are not permitted to offer sex education until students are at least in the 7th grade (except in Orleans Parish, where it is permitted starting in 3rd grade).

During the 2013 legislative session, House Concurrent Resolution 90 established the creation of a task force to study and evaluate the effectiveness of sexual health education programs used throughout the state and other states and to submit a written report of findings and recommendations. The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission applauds the creation of this task force, and hope to collaborate with the task force once its recommendations are released.

B. Gender-Based Violence

1. Domestic Violence

For 2011, Louisiana ranked 9th in the nation for homicides of female victims murdered by men,^{xlix} and at least one domestic violence homicide was documented in all but one Louisiana parish between 1997 and 2009.^l According to the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (LCADV), in 2012 its member domestic violence shelters provided almost 91,000 nights of emergency shelter and took more than 38,000 crisis calls, but documented more than 1,800 unmet needs due to low staff and full shelter beds.

Firearms are the most common weapon used in domestic violence homicides; 66% of Louisiana domestic violence homicides were committed with a gun in 2011.^{li} Louisiana ranks second highest in the nation for our rate of gun-related deaths overall, and 45.6% of Louisiana households have guns.^{lii} While Louisiana orders of protection state that under Federal law, persons subject to some orders of protection are not permitted to own or operate firearms, and those convicted of domestic violence-related misdemeanors and felonies are permanently prohibited from owning firearms, because Louisiana does not have state legislation mirroring federal legislation, law enforcement and courts do not currently have an established statewide system to actively collect and store firearms from those subject to protective orders or who have recently been convicted of domestic violence crimes. Furthermore, the language of Louisiana orders of protection is legalistic and difficult to read, obscuring the fact that shipping, transporting, or possessing firearms is prohibited for these offenders.

During the 2013 Legislative Session House Concurrent Resolution 76 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 95 established a statewide Domestic Violence Study Group. This group was tasked with developing strategies

to create a state needs assessment and a comprehensive and integrated service delivery approach that meets the needs of all domestic violence victims; with establishing a method to transition domestic violence service providers towards evidence-based national best practices focusing on outreach and prevention; with developing a plan that ensures that Louisiana laws on domestic violence are being properly implemented and provides for training on domestic violence and its many dimensions to law enforcement and the judiciary; and with developing a framework to collect and integrate data and measure program outcomes. The Louisiana Women’s Policy and Research Commission supports the creation of the Domestic Violence Study Group, and will continue to follow the progress of the group.

2. Sexual Assault

It is estimated that 207,754 people age twelve and older are victims of sexual assault each year in the United States,^{liii} or about one every two minutes.^{liv} One in six women in the U.S. will be victims of attempted or completed sexual assault in their lifetime (14.8% completed rape; 2.8% attempted rape), and one in thirty-three men will be victims.^{lv} The rate climbs to one in five for women on college campuses.^{lvi} About 54% of rapes are not reported to the police, and about two-thirds of assaults were committed by a person known to the victim.^{lvii}

In Louisiana, the 2012 forcible rape rate was 25.2 per 100,000 people; the average rate of forcible rapes in the United States was 26.9 per 100,000 people in 2012.^{lviii} 2012 FBI sexual assault statistics for the four largest cities in Louisiana (Shreveport, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Lafayette) suggests that there is a significant amount of variability in the frequency of reported forcible rape numbers in different regions of the state.

City	Year	Number of Forcible Rapes	Population Size	Number per 100,000 people
Baton Rouge	2011	51		22
	2012	64	231,500	27.6
Lafayette	2011	15		12.2
	2012	11	122,852	8.9
New Orleans	2011	163		44.9
	2012	136	362,874	33.3
Shreveport	2011	121		59.9
	2012	92	202,164	45.5 ^{lxii}

According to the Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault (LaFASA), their crisis line received 6,396 calls in 2012. Their 13 partner centers served 3,750 survivors in Louisiana last year. Of these, only 1,985 reported the crime to the police and only 1,147 reported seeking medical attention. Starting in 2011, all Sexual Assault Centers in Louisiana must be accredited by LaFASA. To be recognized as a Sexual Assault Center by LaFASA, an agency must provide, at a minimum, a 24-hour crisis line; in-person short-term crisis intervention; information and referrals; training of allied professionals; and primary prevention programs. The agency must also be an active member of LaFASA, have a current strategic plan, and comply with the Standards of Service, Ethics, and Training for Sexual Assault Centers. At present, sexual assault centers receive no state general funds.

3. Stalking

Stalking is defined as “a pattern of repeated and unwanted attention, harassment, contact, or any other course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.”^{lxiii} Nationally, 1 in 9 women and 1 in 16 men are stalked every year. 28.1% of stalking victims were victimized by current or former intimate partners/spouses, and 41.8% by non-intimate people they knew (a relative, friend/roommate, person known from work or school, acquaintance). 9% of stalkers were identified but were strangers to the victim, and the remaining 21% were unidentified or the victim could not identify a single offender.^{lxiv}

The Louisiana Protective Order Registry (LPOR) is a statewide repository of court orders issued to prohibit domestic abuse and dating violence. The registry was established by legislative act (La. R.S. 46:2136.2) in 1997, for the purpose of enhancing court-ordered protections for the purpose of preventing harassing, threatening, or violent acts against a spouse, intimate cohabitant, dating partner, family or household member. In addition to developing and maintaining the database, the Judicial Administrator's Office is responsible for creating and disseminating standardized order forms, called Uniform Abuse Prevention Order forms. All courts are mandated to use these standardized forms. Legislation passed in 2012 added orders of protection issued in criminal stalking cases, regardless of the relationship of the stalker to the victim, to the list of orders that courts must send to the Registry.

4. Human Trafficking

The term human trafficking is federally defined as "the act of compelling or coercing a person's labor, services, or commercial sex acts."^{lxv} However, the term human trafficking is frequently used when discussing sex trafficking or forced prostitution. Human trafficking efforts in Louisiana have focused on combating commercial sex trafficking in our state, with significant legislative improvements and increased awareness of the issue's negative effects on our state in the last two years

Concise data on sex trafficking rates in Louisiana can be difficult to attain, due to the highly secretive nature of this crime, but it is known that Louisiana has the highest rate of homeless children in the country, and that 30% of homeless shelter youth and 70% of street youth are victims of commercial sexual exploitation.^{lxvi} To address the occurrence of human trafficking in our state, Louisiana has made marked efforts to combat the issue in recent years, and currently ranks as one of the top ten states with the strongest anti-human trafficking laws. The Governor signed two bills during the 2013 legislative session that address human trafficking. The bills aim to strengthen protections for victims and enhance penalties for perpetrators. While trafficking can affect anyone, victims are predominantly women and children.

House Bill 126, authored by Rep. Valerie Hodges, strengthens enforcement of a current law that requires certain establishments to post the National Human Trafficking Hotline number, and also adds penalties for the failure to post the hotline number and allocates the authority to announce rules regarding posting specifics to the Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control.

Senate Bill 88, authored by Sen. Sharon Broome, helps treat sexually-exploited children who may have been trafficked by allowing for pre-adjudication diversion programs for juveniles alleged to have engaged in prostitution related offenses. SB 88 also takes extra steps to protect victims of human trafficking by creating a civil cause of action for victims, making victim restitution mandatory and establishing victim assistance guidelines for law enforcement, District Attorneys and the Attorney General's office.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 27, also passed in 2013, created the Joint Human Trafficking Study Commission to study the conditions, needs, issues, and problems relative to human trafficking in Louisiana and to recommend any action or legislation that the commission deems necessary or appropriate. The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission is gratified that this new study commission was created, and look forward to reviewing its forthcoming recommendations.

5. The Cost of Violence Against Women

The *No More Violence Against Women Report* found that 60% of Americans know someone who is a victim of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.^{lxvii} The impact of this issue stretches beyond the primary violent criminal acts themselves, and results in high economic costs as well. In fact, the cost of rape is more than 25% of total crime victimization costs nationwide, with total estimated costs at \$127 billion per year.^{lxviii} This figure does not include sexual assault against children which is an additional \$3.4 billion of immediate costs annually and \$35

billion annually for long-term costs.^{lxi}

Several factors contribute to the high cost of violence against women. The costs include, but are not limited to, increased law enforcement, legal costs, lack of productivity in the work force, future crimes committed by child victims, health care costs, and mental health costs. In 2008, violence and abuse constituted up to 37.5% of total health care costs, which is approximately \$750 billion.^{lxx} Prevalent substance abuse by victims and other self-destructive behavior contributes heavily to the unemployment or underemployment of survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence. 50% of sexual assault victims lose their employment in the first year due to their severe reaction to the trauma.^{lxxi} For reasons such as these, survivors of violence have a lifetime income loss estimated at \$241,600.

Because women who are survivors of violence are more likely than men to express their reactions in self-destructive behavior like substance abuse, withdrawal, and depression, there is an increased cost associated with providing survivors with healthcare.^{lxxii} This affects not only the survivor, but children, employers, and the community. Victims of child abuse and neglect are 25% more likely to experience teen pregnancy.^{lxxiii} This increases the burden on assistance programs, and our economy as it impacts our viable workforce. Additionally, abused and neglected children are eleven times more likely to engage in criminal behavior as teens, and are 3.1 times more likely to be arrested for one of many forms of violent crime.^{lxxiv}

In the prison population, one of the most frequently cited gender differences concerns women inmates' higher rates of past experience with abuse. Higher incidences of sexual abuse and physical abuse histories among women have been found in offender populations; some studies have found that up to 80% of incarcerated women have a history of abuse, either as a child or adult.^{lxxv} However, the numbers regarding male offenders also show a significant history of abuse. In a study of 747 males, the risk of becoming a perpetrator was positively correlated with reported sexual abuse victim experiences. The overall rate of having been a victim was 35% for perpetrators.

^{lxxvi}

C. Women, Education and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

STEM stands for "science, technology, engineering, and mathematics," but the acronym has come to represent much more than just the inclusion of these four content areas. STEM represents an interdisciplinary and applied approach to learning that incorporates problem-based learning and the use of the scientific method. The STEM approach removes barriers among the four subjects and prepares students to be innovators, thinkers, and problem-solvers. This approach enables students to make connections between school, community, work, and global issues.

1. Preparing students for college and high-need, high-wage jobs

The Louisiana State Superintendent of Education has made visits to all sections of the state to gather ideas for revisions to high school requirements. The goal is to design one diploma with options for students that will prepare them for success in college or for success in a high-wage job in Louisiana. Some regions have volunteered to develop pilot programs.

Louisiana L-STEM Initiative is one attempt to create a collaborative network between K - 12 schools, post-secondary institutions and industry to communicate opportunities in STEM education and STEM careers to Louisiana students (with a focus on female and minority students). A critical component of the L-STEM initiative is providing students with more hands-on opportunities (i.e., science fairs, STEM projects/competitions) to nurture their interest in STEM subjects and eventually STEM careers. Supporting initiatives like L-STEM will be critical to helping Louisiana students take full advantage of future STEM careers.

Appendix III, "Quick Facts on Education in Louisiana," provides more data on STEM and Louisiana girls' academic performance. Appendix IV, "Preparing Girls for Careers in STEM: Louisiana Best Practices" highlights

five exemplary programs from around the state that are already working to encourage more Louisiana girls to get excited about science, engineering, technology and math, and that can serve as models for those interested in developing more STEM-focused programs and initiatives for girls in their community.

2. Gap in achievement in STEM fields

There continues to be an achievement gap between males and females in the STEM content areas in the United States, but not necessarily in other countries.^{lxvii} In Advanced Placement (AP) courses, the average scores of females on AP exams in all the STEM subjects are lower than males. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) science assessment in 2009, females scored lower than males in the three grades tested: 4th, 8th, and 12th. On the math NAEP (last administered in 2011), males scored slightly better in 4th and 8th grades but significantly better in the 12th grade. On an international exam, the Program for International Assessment (PISA), the average score for males was higher in math than females across the 34 countries tested. In science there was generally no measurable difference between the sexes, but the scores for the United States did show a gender gap. In another international assessment, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), females generally scored higher than males, but not in the United States. Some research shows that the acquisition of skills in math and science is strongly influenced by cultural factors.^{lxviii}

There is some evidence of an achievement gap over time for males and females on Louisiana assessments. Students are considered proficient if they score Basic or above on the LEAP test. In math at the 4th grade level, the percentage of boys and girls considered proficient is generally about the same or the percentage of girls who were proficient was slightly higher. However, in the 8th grade, more boys were proficient most years. Interestingly, in 2013, 68% of the girls were proficient in math and 63% of the boys. In science, boys consistently outperformed girls in both 4th and 8th grades.

In high school, Louisiana students are required to take six end-of-course (EOC) tests. Three of those tests are in STEM fields (Algebra I, Geometry, and Biology). Students are considered proficient if they score Good or Excellent. In Algebra I, a higher percentage of females scored Good or Excellent than males. In Geometry and Biology, the percentage of proficient males was higher each year.

Advanced Placement (AP) courses and exams provide students an opportunity to take college level courses in high school. Students scoring high enough on the AP exams can earn college credit. In Louisiana, significantly more females take the Biology and Environmental Science AP courses and exams than males. The opposite is true for all the other STEM AP courses. Males in Louisiana outscored females in all STEM AP exams except for Calculus BC in 2010.

The state is investing and expanding heavily in rigorous STEM Advanced Placement opportunities by increasing access through AP training initiatives and the Course Choice Program with the following goals:

- Increase the number of STEM Advanced Placement courses offered.
- Increase the number of teachers and administrators trained to teach and support AP.
- Increase the number of African-Americans, Hispanics, and students of poverty taking AP courses.
- Increase the number of students taking STEM AP courses.
- Increase the numbers of students successfully completing a STEM AP course.

This year all students in the 11th grade were required to take the ACT. The data from 2008 through 2012 shows the expected gaps with girls doing better in English and boys doing better in math and science. Requiring all 11th graders to take the ACT this year meant that students who weren't planning to go to college and who wouldn't normally take the ACT were taking it. The data for 2013 show the gaps in math and science decreased significantly. In 2013 there were 46% more males taking the ACT than in 2012 and there were 22% more females. The disproportionate increase in males had a dramatic effect on the results for males, but the change on the girls' scores was not as significant because of the smaller increase in numbers.

The result of the decline in girls' STEM test scores as they advance through elementary and high school can be seen later in the degrees they attain in college. In 2013, women graduating from Louisiana public universities graduated with significantly fewer degrees in engineering (14.1% female vs. 85.9% male), mathematics (39.4% female vs. 60.6% male), physics (12% female vs. 88% male), and computer science (23.2% female vs. 76.8% male). The only STEM majors with relative parity were Biology (56.7% female vs. 43.3% male), Chemistry (49.7% female vs. 50.3% male) and agricultural science (49.4% female vs. 50.6% male).

D. Women and Economic Concerns

1. Pay Equity

Nationally, the wage gap between men and women improved slightly from 2011 to 2012; according to the latest United States census data, nationally women now earn 78.8 cents on average to every dollar a man makes. Unfortunately, during this same time period, the gender wage gap in Louisiana actually grew wider: in 2012, Louisiana women working full-time, year-round earned just 66.9 cents for every dollar earned by a Louisiana man, a gender wage gap of 33 percent, and a gap 2 cents greater than in 2011. The disparity in earnings between Louisiana women and men has consistently ranked Louisiana 49th or 50th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. For 2012, Louisiana was again 50th with only Wyoming having a larger wage gap (63.8 cents). The largest wage gap was between white women and men (67.5 cents); the narrowest was between Hispanic or Latino women and men (91.2 cents). However, when compared to white men, the largest earnings gap was between white men and black women (49.2 cents).^{lxxix}

Women make up a large segment of the Louisiana work force: in 2012, women comprised 44.3 percent of the full-time, year-round Louisiana labor force. However, even with so many women working, on average they are earning less than men. Louisiana women working full-time, year-round in 2012 earned \$31,586 on average, \$276 less than in 2011. In contrast, Louisiana men working year-round, full-time earned on average \$47,249 (up \$936 from 2011), maintaining the men's 2011 ranking of 22nd in the nation in 2012. 22.2% of Louisiana women and girls experienced poverty in 2012 (up from 20.6% in 2011), more than women and girls in every other state and the District of Columbia except Mississippi (26.7%). Poverty in Louisiana is experienced primarily by female-headed families with children under 18 years of age (49%).^{lxxx}

At the other end of the economic spectrum, among Louisiana's top earners, only 3.2% of women who worked full-time, year-round earned \$100,000 or more in 2012 compared to 12.9% of men.^{lxxxi} In addition to the lack of women in high-earning positions, other gender disparities can be seen in positions of power in Louisiana businesses. Of the top 50 publicly traded companies in Louisiana, women make up just 7.2% of their boards (compared to 10.7% in Texas, and 19% in the New York Metro region). Only 13.6% of these companies' executive officers, or 39 individuals, are female, compared to 86.4%, or 248 males.^{lxxxii} See Appendix I, "Louisiana Women Workers: 2012," for further information on the status of Louisiana women workers. A great deal of activity around gender and fair pay issues occurred during the 2013 Legislative Session. Three equal pay bills were proposed, and Act 374, the Equal Pay for Women Act, was ultimately signed into law. Act 374 states that "a woman who performs public service for the state is entitled to be paid the same compensation for her service as is paid to a man who performs the same kind, grade and quality of service, and a distinction in compensation may not be made because of sex." House Concurrent Resolution 145 established the Louisiana Fair Pay Task Force, which was charged with studying wage disparities between men and women in the workforce in the state in both the public and private sector. They were tasked with examining the extent of wage disparities between men and women in the workforce including certain public sector employment; the factors that cause, or tend to cause, wage disparities, including segregation between men and women across and within certain occupations and professions, such as the payment of lower wages for female dominated occupations, child-rearing responsibilities, education, and training; the consequences of such disparities for the economy of our state and for families; to collect data that provides statistics on wages of women and of men categorized by ethnic group, from each department; and to develop actions including policy recommendations and legislation that are

likely to lead to the prevention and elimination of wage disparities between the sexes. The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission applauds the passage of the Equal Pay for Women Act and the establishment of the Fair Pay Task Force, and look forward to reviewing the task force's findings.

2. Cost, Quality and Availability of Childcare in Louisiana

The cost and availability of quality childcare in Louisiana impacts families at most income levels. The cost of childcare in Louisiana for one infant was on average between \$4,766 (family child care homes) and \$5,574 (child care centers) annually in 2012.^{lxxxiii} To put that in perspective, it costs \$5,812 annually on average to send a student to college in Louisiana with in-state tuition,^{lxxxiv} a full-time employee working minimum wage (forty hours per week for 52 weeks) in Louisiana earns \$15,080; annual average rent payments in Louisiana are \$9,048 and average mortgage payments are \$14,304 annually.^{lxxxv} Because of the high costs of childcare and the difficulty parents have accessing quality care, families in Louisiana are sometimes forced to consider if having a parent leave the workforce to care for children is more cost-effective than working. This is especially true for women workers, who disproportionately work in lower-income jobs and industries. Leaving the workforce to care for children can mean lost wages and work experience, and missed opportunities for promotion and advancement.

Childcare assistance is available for parents with a child under 13, or a disabled child under 18, that are working or going to school or job training in Louisiana, through the Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP) housed in the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services. About 189,108 families received these childcare subsidies in the 2012-13 fiscal year.^{lxxxvi} The amount that is paid for childcare is based on household size and income, the number of hours the parent and any other adults/parents in the household work or attend an educational or training program, the number of hours the child is in care, and the applicable maximum rate. Parents are responsible for paying the provider the difference between the total amount charged and the amount the program pays.^{lxxxvii} In order to qualify, families may not earn more than about \$33,000, 55% of the state's median income (SMI), which was \$66,109 for 2012.^{lxxxviii}

Currently, only 54% of our children arrive in Kindergarten with the skills ready to succeed. Additional concerns include: children do not have equal access to high quality early childhood programs; quality of programs varies across the state; availability of programs varies across the state; families do not have clear, comparable information on the quality of programs; programs have different standards and measures of success which makes it difficult for families to compare the quality of programs; providers are held to different standards; and programs have different regulations and accountability which creates a range of quality. Finite numbers of the total childcare openings statewide are difficult to determine because the number of unlicensed childcare providers can't currently be counted. At present only 1% of childcare centers in Louisiana are nationally accredited.^{lxxxix} Research suggests that children who participate in high quality early childhood programs are more likely to enter kindergarten ready to succeed. It is well known that low income and at-risk children benefit the most from high quality early childhood programs. The short-term benefits of early childhood programs include better performance in school (academic and social) and fewer referrals to special education. The long-term benefits include higher graduation rates, increased learning potential, and increased participation in the labor force.

Act 3 of the 2012 legislative session called for the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to implement a statewide Early Childhood Care and Education Network for all publicly-funded programs (Head Start, child care, prekindergarten). The cornerstones of the Network include standards for kindergarten readiness, information for families to choose the program that will prepare their child for success, expanded access to high quality programs, support of the early childhood workforce, participation in the Quality Start Child Care Rating System, and coordinated funding based on quality. Act 3 also requires that the departments work to reduce barriers and streamline processes in order to support providers in their work to care and educate children birth to school entry.

In 2013, the Louisiana Department of Education along with the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services and BESE initiated the Early Childhood Network Pilots. The pilots have five goals: unify expectations;

support teachers and providers; measure and recognize progress; fund high quality providers; and provide clear information to families and high quality choices. Listed below are more specific details of the five goals.

- a. Unify Expectations
 1. The new Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards have been developed and are now being used statewide.
 2. A common child and program observation tool will be used to improve teaching practice and tailor instruction for each child.
 3. Child care licensing will be streamlined.
- b. Support Teachers and Providers
 1. Teachers will use information gathered from the child observation and program observation tools to improve and tailor their instruction for each child.
 2. The local Early Childhood Network Pilot leaders will ensure that teachers receive ongoing training and feedback.
 3. The leaders will coordinate resources across providers.
 4. The state will work to articulate streamlined early childhood courses across higher education providers.
 5. The state will release incentives for high quality teachers to be attracted to and retained in high quality settings.
- c. Measure and Recognize Progress
 1. The state will assist the local Early Childhood Networks to use the child and program observation tools to improve supports for teachers and providers.
 2. Report cards will be used to distinguish providers that are meeting expectations and those who are not to ensure that families have information to choose the best quality provider for their children.
 3. The state will work with local Early Childhood Networks to determine the components and methodology for the report card.
 4. Targeted support will be provided to providers in need.
- d. Fund High Quality Providers
 1. A common online application will be used for prekindergarten funding.
 2. Funds will be targeted based on areas of greatest need and to providers with the highest quality.
 3. The Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) grant will be transferred from the Department of Children and Family Services to the Louisiana Department of Education to:
 - a. allow streamlined access to families for child care;
 - b. improve braiding of funds;
 - c. reduce burdens to providers; and
 - d. improve continuity of care/education for children.
 - e. Provide Clear Information to Families and High Quality Choices
 1. The local Early Childhood Network Pilots will:
 - a. design and implement a common enrollment system;
 - b. develop community partnerships to increase information resources for families;
 - c. manage enrollment portfolio locally;
 - d. count, identify, allocate and enroll children; and
 - e. support families in choosing the best option for children.

Currently, there are 13 Early Childhood Networks pilots across 15 parishes. The Louisiana Department of Education and the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services is planning on scaling up the pilots beginning in the spring of 2014 with the last cohort of pilots joining in July of 2015. The pilots are accomplishing a tremendous amount of work in such a short period of time and their dedication to the care and education of Louisiana's youngest children is their driving force.

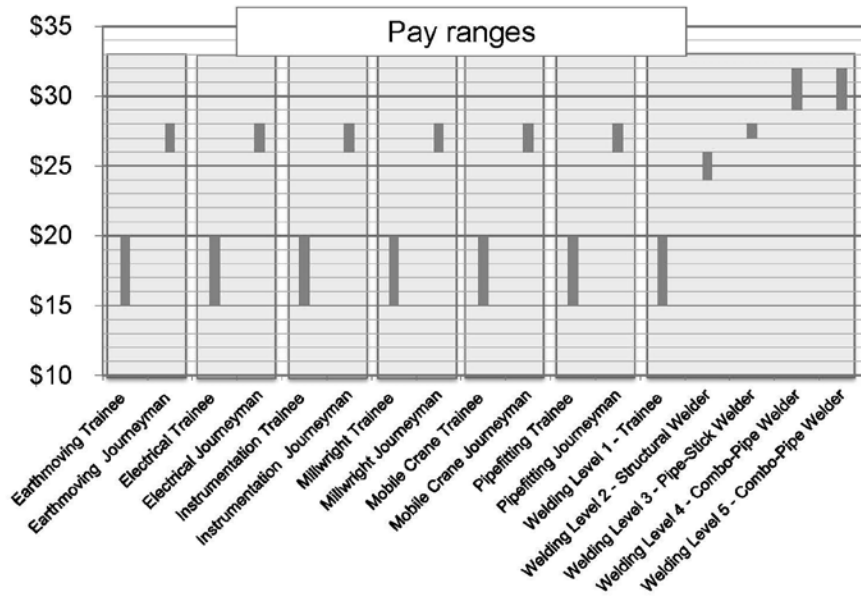
3. Encouraging Women to Seek Employment in Non-Traditional Occupations/Jobs; Building Louisiana's Craft Workforce

Engaging women in non-traditional employment offers several benefits that enable women and girls to become economically self-sufficient, support their families, and build assets to obtain a home or pursue a higher education.

Any occupation that generally employs far fewer women than men can be described as a non-traditional choice for women. The U.S. Department of Labor defines a non-traditional occupation (NTO) for women as one in which less than 25% of those employed in the field are women. Examples of non-traditional careers for women include trades/crafts, technology and science fields. These occupations are generally higher paying than occupations traditionally held by women who do not have a four-year, post-secondary degree.

With more than \$60 billion of plant expansions and new plants announced in Louisiana – and the very real prospect of more projects on the way – Louisiana faces an industry demand for more than 80,000 new crafts workers through 2016.^{xc} This high demand for skilled craft workers creates opportunities for women in Louisiana to pursue high-wage careers.

High-wage, high-demand jobs



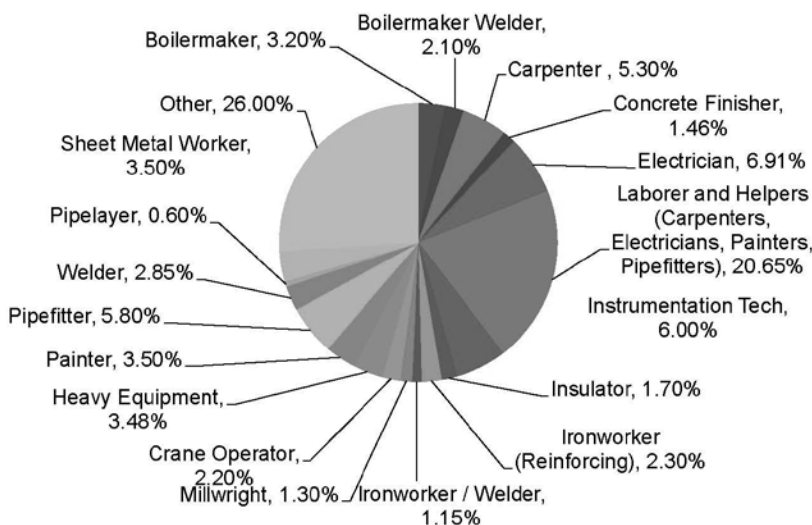
Source: Building Louisiana's Craft Workforce, A Project of the Craft Workforce Development Task Force of the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council, Louisiana Workforce Commission.

In Louisiana, women's average income in 2012 was \$31,586 versus the men's average income of \$47,249 (see Appendix I, "Louisiana Women Workers: 2012"). Researchers have concluded that if more women pursue non-traditional occupations, such as those in the skilled crafts, the wage gap between men and women is expected to decrease.^{xcii}

The skilled crafts that will be in high demand in Louisiana for much of the next decade include pipefitter, boilermaker, carpenter, concrete finisher/cement mason, electrician, instrumentation technician, insulator, ironworker, millwright, heavy crane and heavy equipment operator, industrial painter, scaffold builder, laborer, sheet metal worker, helper, plumber and welder. These occupations pay comparatively well for jobs that usually require only short-term training beyond high school. In apprenticeship programs, workers are paid while they train.

The Craft Workforce Development Task Force found that with, on average, about three months of training beyond high school, individuals can command salaries of \$15-\$20 an hour (\$600-\$800 a week or \$31,200-\$41,600 a year) as helpers on industrial construction projects. With another 3 months or so of training and two years of work experience, wages increase to \$26-\$32 an hour (\$1,040-\$1,280 a week or \$54,080-\$65,560 a year). These wages are anticipated to increase as more of the announced projects begin construction.

All crafts are in demand



Source: Building Louisiana's Craft Workforce, A Project of the Craft Workforce Development Task Force of the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council, Louisiana Workforce Commission.

Note: See Appendix II for craft occupations that comprise "Other" category.

These wages are much higher than the median weekly wage for women in Louisiana who have a high school diploma and no college, which was \$480 per week in 2012.^{xcii} These wages are significantly higher than those paid in some occupations where women predominate, such as cashiers (\$357 a week), retail sales (\$459 a week), and home health aides (\$380 per week).^{xciii}

To ensure that the economic benefit of the more than \$60 billion in plant investment stays in Louisiana and to build long-term prosperity for the state, its workers and communities, the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council's plan addresses two distinct issues: (1) the immediate need for construction workers, beginning in 2013, and (2) the need for a framework for continued expansion of the education and training pipeline to meet future skilled industrial construction labor demands.

The analysis conducted for Louisiana's craft workforce development plan shows Louisiana can reasonably expect to recruit about 50,000 additional people from within the state to construction careers through 2016. Those people would be recruited from among high school students, the unemployed, under-employed, veterans, ex-offenders and so forth. The Louisiana Workforce Commission has partnered with a national construction workforce recruitment web site to inform job seekers about training and jobs in the crafts in Louisiana, and its material features women in its material on painters, plumbers and sheet metal workers (<http://louisiana.byf.org/>)

professions). The Craft Task Force formed several sub-committees to carry out the execution of its workforce development plan. The Recruitment sub-committee, which is comprised of key stakeholders from business and industry, education, and government including the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission, will focus on aligning the state's efforts to recruit individuals into craft training and employment. Recruiting women and other underrepresented groups to this industry will be crucial to meeting the demand for workers with Louisiana citizens.

To respond to the training and educational demand for skilled craft workers, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) has transformed the way it provides training leading to industry-based credentials. As of July 2013, LCTCS began compressed schedules for craft training. Additional public and private training providers are partnering with the Council to meet the demand for skilled craft workers. Such partners include, but are not limited to, Louisiana Workforce Commission, Associated Builders and Contractors, AFL-CIO (Union Training) and high schools in the state.

While there is no definitive data on the number of women in Louisiana currently working in non-traditional occupations, an extensive list from the U.S. Department of Labor in Appendix II, "Nontraditional Occupations for Women in 2009," includes statistics on the number of women working in a variety of craft occupations nationally, and what percentage of those industries are made up by women.

II. Trends Special Section: Incarcerated Women in Louisiana

Each year, the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission examines trends that impact the health and prosperity of Louisiana women. Rather than offering a review of the past year's various new women-focused policies in this section, as has been the traditional practice of the Commission, this year members decided to dedicate the Trends section of the report to a single key issue, recognizing its impacts on the health, safety and well-being of many women and communities throughout Louisiana: incarceration.

Over 625,000 women and girls are held in penal institutions throughout the world, either as "pre-trial detainees (remand prisoners)" or having been convicted and sentenced. Nearly a third of these are in the United States (201,200). The next three countries in terms of numbers are China (84,600), the Russian Federation (59,200), Brazil (35,596) and Thailand (29,175). The only other countries with more than 7,000 female prisoners are India (15,406), Vietnam (12,591), Mexico (10,072), Ukraine (9,697) and Philippines (7,726). As of 2009, women make up 8.8% of the United States prison system.^{xciv}

The United States has had the highest incarceration rate in the world since 2002. We had an incarceration rate of 497 prisoners per 100,000 residents, or about 1.6 million prisoners as of 2010.^{lix} While nationally the rate of incarceration decreased from 492 per 100,000 people in 2011 to 480 per 100,000 people in 2012, in Louisiana it increased from 865 per 100,000 people in 2011 to 893 per 100,000 people in 2012. Louisiana is ranked first in the nation for our high rate of incarceration, and therefore likely the highest rate in the world. This rate is also 20% higher than any other state in the United States; the second highest rate is Mississippi's (717), followed by Alabama's (650), Oklahoma's (648), and Texas' (601).^{lx} Louisiana's high incarceration rate impacts the health, safety, and well-being of many women and communities throughout the state, both while the women are inmates and after their release.

1. Incarcerated Women's Access to Health Care

Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW) is the only female correctional facility operating at the state level. Approximately one third of women entering the facility have significant health issues, not including addiction disorders, and out of an average population of 1,080 for fiscal year 2013, 864 offenders were on prescription medications. The Department of Corrections conducts an extensive multi-step process of mental and health care screenings, and have found that a majority of incoming prisoners have had limited or no access to adequate health care prior to incarceration.^{xcvii}

Out of an average population of 1,080, 371 inmates were listed as suffering from severe mental illnesses, and LCIW medical staff provided 12,619 psychiatric prescriptions in fiscal year 2013.^{xcviii} LCIW currently has one part-time psychiatrist, 1 part-time nurse practitioner, and nine full-time social workers on staff to provide mental health services for all inmates. LCIW offers a number of support groups and services for women: Human Awareness Group (for women inmates living with HIV), Survivors of Domestic Violence Program, Sexual Trauma Resolution Group; two life skills programs: Character Counts (a “nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian character education framework that teaches the Six Pillars of Character: *trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship*”), and Moral Reconciliation Therapy (an “educational program that confronts irrational beliefs” and focuses on alternative behaviors to criminal conduct); Madison County Risk Management Psycho-Social Program (treatment for sex offenders); three options for parenting skills courses; and reentry preparation.^{xcix}

According to the Louisiana Department of Corrections, approximately 78% of the offenders in our correctional system have substance abuse problems that contribute to their criminality. Out of an average population of 1,080, 847 inmates at LCIW were categorized as having an addiction disorder. LCIW offers several different types of support group services for inmates with drug and alcohol issues: Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and Living in Balance.^{lxi} At this time, no drug treatment programs exist at LCIW. In an effort to address the needs of inmates across the state with substance abuse issues, the Steve Hoyle Intensive Substance Abuse Treatment Program, located at Bossier Parish Prison, was founded in February 2010. Forcht Wade Correctional Center was converted into an intensive substance abuse treatment and intervention facility with a capacity for 498 offenders, 25 of which can be female. The nine-month program focuses on addictive disorders, psychological concerns of the individual and family, a therapeutic community, measurable objectives, and reentry support. Its progress is being monitored on a monthly basis.

2. Aligning Female Offender Education Programs with High Demand Occupations and/or High Demand Craft Occupations

To increase employment among released female offenders while reducing prison populations, a high priority must be placed on aligning the educational programs at Louisiana’s female prison with high wage jobs, particularly high-demand craft occupations currently driving the Louisiana economy.

Survey data shows that after returning home, ex-offenders are out of work about half the time, earn on average around \$9,000 a year, and experience virtually no growth in earnings.^{ci} More than two-thirds of former state prisoners were rearrested within three years of release, and half of those rearrested were back in prison within that time.

In a December 31, 2012 snapshot by the Louisiana Department of Corrections, 2,389 women in Louisiana were incarcerated,^{cii} and make up 6% of all inmates. The average age of an incarcerated woman is 32.8, slightly higher than men’s average of 32.6. Race is more evenly distributed among female inmates (52.9% Black, 46.9% White, .2% Other) versus male inmates (70% Black, 29.5% White, .5% Other).

Louisiana women are more likely to be incarcerated for crimes related to drugs and poverty than men: 28% of female inmates were convicted of violent crimes (versus 42.3% of men); 34.4% were convicted of drug crimes (versus 25.8% of men); 25.5% were convicted of property crimes (versus 17.5% of men), and 11.3% of women were convicted of all other crimes (versus 14.4% of men).^{ciii}

As well as providing education classes (Basic Adult Literacy, Adult Basic Education (ABE)/Developmental Studies and GED), until recently the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women offered 6 different types of job development services for female inmates: job/life skills (training on the steps of the job search process, employment resources, job applications, job interviews, resumes, cover letters, and interview skills), marketing management (training on marketing techniques and practical applications of marketing in a business context), upholstery classes (training is provided in restoring furniture, upholstered items, and automobile and boat interiors), horticulture classes (to prepare for jobs as skills necessary for employment as arborists, florists, horticulturists, and landscape contractors), culinary arts (training is meant to prepare inmates for work in service,

production, fast foods and baking areas of the food service industry), and office systems technology (to prepare for entry-level office work).^{civ} However, as of October 2013, only the job/life skills course and upholstery and culinary arts job trainings are being offered.

The current workforce development programs offered in the state's female prison do not train female inmates for high demand careers. This is in contrast to the job training provided at men's facilities, which prepare males for more lucrative potential careers upon release.

For example, at Dixon correctional Institute training options include collision repair, carpentry, automotive technology and welding;^{cv} at Elayn Hunt Correctional Center, which is only one mile away from the women's facility, Louisiana Technical College programs are available in welding, automotive technology, carpentry, air condition and refrigeration, and outdoor power equipment technology. Qualifying offenders can also earn certifications such as National Center for Construction Education and Research — NCCER Module Credits, HVAC/EPA certification for A/C technicians, and OPEESA Small Engine Technician certification.^{cvi}

Women released from our state prisons face high rates of unemployment and recidivism. Both of these measures – unemployment and recidivism for female inmates – reflect the acute challenge of reentering society and assuming mainstream social roles upon release. The lack of job training available to female inmates in high-demand jobs that offer living wages makes it more difficult for women who have completed their sentences to avoiding recidivism, and providing training in low-paying, low-growth, traditionally female-dominated occupations is wasting an essential opportunity to help rehabilitate female offenders.

More than \$60 billion of plant expansions and new plants have been announced in Louisiana. Given this economic boon, the state faces a massive demand for more than 80,000 new craft workers. Failing to train all eligible residents in the state to fill the jobs being created by the plant expansions and new plants can risk the positive economic impact of these investments flowing out of state rather than to Louisiana communities and workers.

In order for Louisiana to flourish going forward, connecting the female educational programs with economic development and employer needs will yield a sustainable public safety impact that overcomes the long-term negative consequences of criminal punishment and promotes the economic improvement in the state. Studies have shown that as an ex-offender's educational attainment increases, an employer's willingness to hire the ex-offender also increases.^{cvii}

According to the Louisiana Department of Corrections, 17,000 offenders are released annually from our prisons and jails having served their sentence. Of that number, 1,766 female offenders were released in 2012. For 2011, there were 1,839 female offenders released, and 1,897 in 2010.

Many ex-offenders, despite having received certification through the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), American Welding Society (AWS), Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) and other bodies, are either unemployed or underemployed. While they face obstacles with the stigma associated with being an ex-offender, many are motivated to change and become productive, law-abiding taxpayers. If given the opportunity, they could compete for vacant jobs and add to the skilled craft workforce.^{cviii}

Additionally, the less-skilled ex-offenders and those whose criminal records present a barrier to their employment on plant sites could be excellent candidates to replace building construction workers who migrate to plant construction.^{cix}

III. Recommendations of the Commission

As part of its charge to advise the Governor on the particular hardships, concerns, and needs that challenge Louisiana women and their possible solutions, the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission offers the following recommendations:

A. Women's Health

1. Chronic diseases such as heart disease and obesity can contribute to many other long-term illnesses, and lead to costly medical expenses for the state. By focusing on supplying affordable, accessible prevention-focused health care services, we can save the lives of a great many women in our state.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Department of Health and Hospitals maintain the sustainability of the Bayou Health, Managed-Care Medicaid Program, in order to provide comprehensive, patient-centered medical homes for low-income women. Additionally, it is recommended that a greater emphasis be placed on improving health outcomes, especially in regard to chronic diseases like diabetes, obesity, cancer, and heart disease.

2. Another possible option for addressing Louisiana women's high rates of chronic disease and need for increased access to affordable preventative healthcare is to consider eliminating rules and regulations that hinder the cost-effective use of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), both as individual practitioners and as fully qualified members of care delivery teams. Nineteen states' practice and licensure laws permit APRNs to evaluate patients, diagnose, order and interpret diagnostic tests, and initiate and manage treatments under the exclusive licensure authority of the of the state board of nursing,^{cx} which is the model recommended by the Institute of Medicine and National Council of State Boards of Nursing.^{cxii} Permitting Advanced Practice Registered Nurses in Louisiana to practice without a collaborative practice agreement with a physician could increase access to health care services for underserved citizens.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that members of the Louisiana State Legislature propose legislation to grant full autonomy to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses, eliminating the formal collaborative practice agreement requirement, and allowing them to practice their trade.

B. Gender-Based Violence

1. National data estimates that 1 in 6 women experience sexual violence in their lifetime; since Louisiana's female population is well over 2 million, we can calculate that there are approximately 400,000 victims of sexual violence among us. In Louisiana, sexual assault response and evidence collection protocols differ from community to community, and there is no state-wide response protocol to sexual assault, which means there is also no effective way to monitor trends and share innovative ideas. A sexual assault task force was established during a previous legislative session to study some of these concerns, but was derailed by Hurricane Katrina.

In sexual assault cases, properly administered forensic exams and rape kits are an essential component to effective prosecution of offenders. While Louisiana requires that all hospitals offer services to rape victims that include court-admissible rape kits, not all hospitals across the state are equipped to properly provide these services. Since each parish in the state has different policies for where rape victims must go to receive forensic exams, it is often left to the victim to go to multiple hospitals before finding the necessary services. This confusion acts to re-traumatize the victim, and can mean the difference between a victim pursuing their case with law enforcement and giving up.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Louisiana Legislature amend the statute that establishes a sexual assault task force, with the addition of a representative from the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission. The task force would develop statewide protocols for sexual assault prevention training, response, evidence collection and prosecution. In addition, the task force would study the costs and policy changes necessary in order to effectively revise existing legislation that requires every Louisiana hospital with an emergency room to have medical staff that can perform a court-admissible sexual assault forensic exam.

2. Orders of protection are a proven deterrent that can protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, teen dating violence and stalking from further victimization, and are a valuable tool in assisting law enforcement in handling repeat offenders. Legislation passed in 2012 added criminal orders of protection in stalking cases to be entered into the Louisiana Protective Order Registry, regardless of the relationship of the stalker to the victim; however, there remains a gap in the law that does not allow civil orders of protection to be entered into the Louisiana Protective Order Registry when the stalker and victim do not have a former or current domestic or dating relationship.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Louisiana Legislature request that the Louisiana Law Institute investigate the protocols to develop a law aimed at allowing victims of stalking to obtain a civil order of protection in a manner similar to La. R.S. 46:2131, et seq. (Domestic Abuse Assistance Act), and to allow the order to be entered into the Louisiana Protective Order Registry, regardless of the relationship between the stalker and victim.

3. Louisiana ranks second highest in the nation for our rate of gun-related deaths overall, and 45.6% of Louisiana households have guns.^{cxii} Firearms are the most common weapon used in domestic violence homicides; 66% of Louisiana domestic violence homicides were committed with a gun.^{cxiii} Currently, orders of protection state the following:

"PURSUANT TO 18 U.S.C. § 922 [g][8], AFTER NOTICE AND OPPORTUNITY FOR A HEARING, THE DEFENDANT IN AN ORDER THAT EITHER INCLUDES A FINDING BY THE JUDGE OR BY ITS TERMS EXPLICITLY PROHIBITS CERTAIN BEHAVIOR MAY BE PROHIBITED FROM PURCHASING OR POSSESSING FIREARMS OR AMMUNITION FOR THE DURATION OF THE ORDER IF THE PROTECTED PERSON(S) IS RELATED TO THE DEFENDANT AS A CURRENT OR FORMER SPOUSE, CURRENT OR FORMER COHABITING INTIMATE PARTNER, CHILD, HAS A CHILD IN COMMON WITH THE DEFENDANT, OR IS THE CHILD OF DEFENDANT AND/OR DEFENDANT'S CURRENT OR FORMER INTIMATE PARTNER."

The firearm prohibition in Louisiana orders of protection is difficult to understand and it does not state the consequences of possessing a firearm or ammunition while the order is in effect. Instead, the order of protection should include a clear and concise statement explaining the Federal law, such as the following recommended language from the U.S. Department of Justice:

"As a result of this order, it may be unlawful for you to possess or purchase a firearm, including a rifle, pistol, or revolver, or ammunition pursuant to Federal law under 18 U.S.C. 922(g)(8). If you have any questions whether these laws make it illegal for you to possess or purchase a firearm or ammunition, you should consult an attorney."^{cxiv}

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Judicial Administrator's Office of the Louisiana Supreme Court and the Steering Committee of Louisiana Protective Order Registry simplify protective order language to include more clear language regarding possession of firearms.

4. It is paramount that we break the cycle of violence. It is reported that all forms of intimate partner violence (from episodic violence to long term battery and/or sexual violence) are preventable. The key to prevention

is early intervention and education.^{xcv} Prevention is a systematic process that promotes healthy environments and behaviors, as well as reduces the likelihood or frequency of violence against women.^{xcvi} If we can change the attitudes of even 5% of the population, there is a tipping point where cultural change occurs and with continued work, societal change happens. It costs just over \$10 to train one adult, and training one adult can save ten children from being abused. With the dollars equal to the immediate cost of one sexual assault case, you can train 1,362 adults.^{xcvii} While the economic impact that training adults has is clear, it is crucial that we also start prevention training with young children. There is nothing more sobering than the increased risk that the abused child will turn his or her pain against others, thereby creating a cycle of violence.^{xcviii}

In 2010 legislation was passed to incorporate teen dating violence prevention into the existing health class curriculum for Louisiana public schools. However, there is no reporting mechanism to evaluate how frequently or consistently it is taught, and prevention information on the other forms of gender-based violence (sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking) is not required as part of the health class curriculum. The 13 sexual assault centers in Louisiana receive between \$150,000 and \$250,000 annually in federal funds to provide prevention education in the communities they serve, and expanding their ability to provide trainings to educators on how to teach students about sexual assault, domestic violence, and other forms of gender-based violence would help more schools offer quality gender-based violence prevention education as well as helping schools learn about resources for victims that are available in their communities.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that the state budget match the federal funds sexual assault centers receive for prevention programming through the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Office of Public Health, and that sexual assault centers then be charged with providing free, age-appropriate gender-based violence prevention training to all elementary through high school professionals responsible for health education in their area. Trainings would be evidence-based and would be geared toward educating students from third grade through twelfth grade.

C. Women, Education, and STEM

1. Hands-on experience with science and technology are essential components for educating Louisiana students to compete in a truly global workforce. However, Louisiana students don't currently have adequate access to quality science labs. The 2011 data on 8th graders whose schools have science labs, by income, show that 58% of students eligible for free/reduced price lunches and 52% of students not eligible for partial or free school lunches have access to science laboratories at school, compared to 84% and 89%, nationally.^{cxix}

Only 2 out of 3 households in Louisiana have access to broadband. According to the Louisiana Broadband Initiative, "a 2009 study in Texas found that low-income students who were given laptops to study at home tested higher in both reading and math and participated more in group projects and discussions than those who did not have online access at home. Without the Internet or a computer at home, the struggle to complete homework or learn important computer skills eventually makes it harder for students to compete in the job market."^{cxx}

In August 2013 the Louisiana Department of Education released its third semi-annual *Louisiana Technology Footprint*, indicating that the number of technology-ready Louisiana school systems has increased by a factor of seven since July 2012. Over the last year, school districts across the state have upgraded or purchased an additional 65,281 devices such as computers and tablets. Because of these efforts, Louisiana now has 1,208 schools and 38 districts meeting the state's minimum technology device standards of one computing device for every seven students. This is up from 812 schools and 17 districts in January 2013. Now more than 86 percent of Louisiana public school students attend a school that meets 7:1 minimum technology standards. These upgrades are essential to providing individual learning opportunities for students that prepare them for college or career.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that Louisiana Local Education Agencies (LEAs) make capital investments in building/upgrading science labs for middle and high-school students a budget priority, and encourages the Louisiana Department of Education to continue to seek funding and public-private partnerships to increase access to technology in all LEAs.

2. Quality Science and Math (QSM) Grants enable teachers to apply for “non-consumable” science and technology materials for their classrooms. Grants are awarded annually on a competitive basis to individual classroom teachers to use in providing standards-based instruction to help meet state accountability goals, but the maximum amount of funds available has stagnated at \$750/year for years, and are only available to ‘regular’ classrooms, not for teachers who serve special needs students. Investing more in math and science materials and technology in our schools and making these materials available to more students would help expose and encourage more young women to pursue careers in STEM.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Louisiana Legislature raise the amount of funds appropriated to the Quality Science and Math Council (QSM) so that they can raise the maximum amount of funding available to teachers for science and math-related classroom materials, and that special education teachers be permitted to apply for Quality Science and Math Grant funds.

3. Middle- and high-school science and math teachers in Louisiana frequently did not major in those fields in college, and can sometimes struggle with remaining up-to-date in these subjects. They especially struggle with incorporating an engineering emphasis in their work with students, even though this is a key area of job growth in Louisiana. Unfortunately, we have a dearth of available, affordable professional trainings for these teachers to increase their skills. Increasing the availability of quality professional development for middle- and high-school math and science teachers is an essential component in our work to increase the number of young women going into these fields.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that Louisiana Local Education Agencies aggressively seek public-private partnerships to increase the availability of professional development opportunities for teachers in the sciences, especially engineering.

4. Another key avenue for increasing the number of women in the STEM fields is helping female middle- and high-school students to have opportunities outside of the classroom to experience hands-on activities. Studies find that girls enjoy working collectively on STEM-related projects more than boys do, and are more inclined to pursue STEM-related professions where they can help others and work toward the greater good.^{cxxi} Women benefit from near-peer and older female mentors, and providing supportive environments for girls interested in STEM can help increase their confidence in their abilities as well as their understanding that STEM careers are appropriate for both men and women.

The Department of Education will continue to foster, expand and promote the STEM team competitions. Robotics, eCYBERLEARNING, Science Olympiad, Real World Design Challenge, NASA HUNCH. Year after year we see the teams of high school students at the middle and high school robotics tournaments and they are populated by both girls and boys. Girls are designing Apps that lead to improving lives.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that Louisiana Local Education Agencies encourage their middle and high schools to establish STEM-related clubs for students, and actively encourage female students to join them.

5. STEM disciplines are the key to high paying jobs across the country. Schools across the state of Louisiana have recognized this and are working to encourage young women to choose STEM careers. As education reform measures are implemented in our K-12 curriculum, special emphasis should be incorporated into the

curriculum to entice young women into the STEM discipline by creating mentoring programs, participating in Take You Daughter to Work programs, encourage participation in clubs supporting STEM and other measures that would increase the number of women in these disciplines.

Companies relocating to Louisiana can show their commitment to women in STEM by showing the diversity of their current staff and by working with the educational systems in Louisiana to promote women in STEM.

Through a collective effort between the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus, the Office on Women's Policy, the Louisiana Department of Education, the Louisiana Board of Regents, and Louisiana Economic Development, there can be a strong commitment to seeing an increase in the number of females studying and working in the STEM disciplines.

The state should continue to encourage Louisiana firms offering STEM-related jobs to make these jobs known to students through both the Louisiana Connects and Star Jobs computer systems. These portals have the potential to be essential two-way communication links between students and employers, providing students with insights into available STEM jobs and the motivation to achieve academically in order to qualify for these careers.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission and the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus plan to co-sponsor a resolution addressing women in STEM disciplines during the 2014 legislative session, which will request that the Louisiana Department of Economic Development encourage new and existing Louisiana companies to create strategies that would increase the number of women employed in STEM positions.

D. Women and Economic Concerns

1. Louisiana's demand for more than 80,000 new crafts workers through 2016 poses a real opportunity for more women to enter into the craft workforce, and since craft jobs pay higher wages on average than traditionally female-dominated occupations requiring similar levels of training, encouraging more Louisiana women to pursue craft careers can help narrow the gender wage gap. Louisiana contractors have said they would welcome more women applicants and employees. To match this demand for female workers with a higher supply of female job applicants, women need to be actively encouraged to pursue craft work and female-focused recruitment strategies should be explored. For the purposes of this report, high-demand, high-wage jobs are defined by the Louisiana Star Jobs System of the Louisiana Workforce Commission and the skilled crafts jobs identified in the Building Louisiana's Craft Workforce Report, a project of the Craft Workforce Development Task Force of the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council, Louisiana Workforce Commission. ***The Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Workforce Investment Council and Louisiana Workforce Commission's Craft Workforce Development Task Force recruitment committee develop strategies that will actively encourage women to seek high-demand, high-wage craft jobs available in the state.***

E. Trends Special Section: Incarcerated Women

1. At the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW), 44% of inmates were listed as being on psychiatric medication, and 34% of inmates were categorized as suffering from severe mental illness in the 2013 fiscal year. Likewise, 78% of offenders at LCIW were categorized as having an addiction disorder. The overrepresentation of people with mental health and substance use disorders in the justice system is expensive; while a national average is not available, some states report spending more than double the amount on mentally ill patients, and the enforcement of drug laws includes \$31 billion in public criminal justice costs nationally.^{cxviii} In addition, individuals with these behavioral health issues have high recidivism rates. While support groups and medication provide critical support for inmates with behavioral health issues, offering additional individual therapy and drug treatment at LCIW could potentially provide significant

positive impacts to the long-term costs to the community.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Department of Corrections explore partnerships with area universities to provide additional access to individual therapy and drug treatment for inmates at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women.

2. The June 2013 plan of the state's workforce board – the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council – stressed that all potential sources of labor supply should be targeted to find workers with the skill sets required to fill craft jobs in demand the next year and beyond, and to recruit people for training so that they can take advantage of rapidly growing career opportunities in industrial construction. The plan highlighted those individuals who could transition to industrial construction jobs immediately or with limited training are likely to come from several groups including ex-offenders.

Most women incarcerated in Louisiana are in prison for non-violent, poverty related property and drug crimes. In order to lower female recidivism rates, it is therefore especially crucial that they be provided with opportunities to receive adequate job training in industries where that can earn a living wage. At present, however, women prisoners are only offered training in Culinary Arts and Upholstery classes. In contrast, male prisoners have the option to attain training in much more lucrative professions where workers are in high demand, like car collision repair, carpentry, automotive technology and welding. Providing training to incarcerated women based on outmoded gender stereotypes instead of basing it on industries where women can earn a living wage only reinforces the cycle of poverty that led many women to commit crimes to begin with.

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission respectfully recommends that the Department of Corrections align all of its job training across the prison system to high demand, high wage jobs in a gender-neutral manner to help women attain jobs upon release that offer them financial independence and reduce their likelihood of reoffending.

IV. Activities Undertaken by the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission in 2013

A. Additional 2013 Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission Activities

The Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission was fortunate to host expert speakers at several of their meetings this year, who presented on a host of topics pertinent to women's issues in our state:

- Paulette Norvel Lewis, the Regional Administrator for the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, spoke to the Commission on the Women's Bureau's four current areas of focus: women veterans experiencing homelessness, equal pay, workforce flexibility, and higher paying jobs for women.
- At a meeting hosted by the Louisiana Women's Legislative Caucus, leaders from Louisiana State University's Women and Gender Studies Graduate Student Organization presented research to the Commission on bullying research and comparative policy.
- Kati Bambrick Rodriguez, the Domestic Violence Program Director for the City of New Orleans; Beth Meeks, the Executive Director of the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence; and Racheal Hebert, the Executive Director of STAR Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response Center in Baton Rouge presented information to the Commission on gender-based violence issues in Louisiana.
- Whalen Gibbs, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Corrections, presented to the Commission on incarcerated women's job training and health concerns.

Members of the Commission traveled to St. Gabriel, LA for a tour of the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women in September. The trip included meetings with prison staff and inmates, and a tour of the facility including

the medical wing, housing, job training, and education facilities.

B. Office on Women's Policy

The Office launched a new web page, www.dcf.la.gov/Women, this year. The page includes information on the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission, upcoming women's interest events from around the state, special projects, a list of women's organizations (Advocacy, Business and Economic Interests, Gender-Based Violence, Homeless Women, National Organizations, Regional Women's Commissions, Service Organizations, University Resources, and Women's Health), and a monthly Office on Women's Policy newsletter.

Cordelia Heaney, the Executive Director of the Office on Women's Policy, served on several women's interest task forces and study groups this year, on behalf of the Commission and the Department of Children and Family Services. They included the Sexual Education Task Force, the Fair Pay Task Force, and the Domestic Violence Study group, which she facilitated.

C. Regional Women's Commissions

In an effort to ensure that the statewide Commission's work is representative of women's interests around the state, the Commission also focused on Louisiana's regional women's commissions this year. One Commission meeting was focused on presentations by established regional women's commissions, and the Commission created a new annual survey that regional commissions submitted to share their interests, concerns and activities with the Commission. A new regional women's commission handbook was developed, and members of the Commission began outreach efforts to establish new regional women's commissions.

There are currently 4 active regional women's commissions in Louisiana that were established by parish or city statute: Appendix VI, "Louisiana Regional Women's Commissions: 2012-2013 Activities" provides a summary of their major activities and accomplishments this year, as well as their leadership roster and contact information. For more information on establishing a regional women's commission in Louisiana, please contact: Dr. Laura Badeaux, Chair of the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission and President of the Lafourche Parish Commission for Women, at Laura.badeaux@nicholls.edu.

Appendices

Appendix I. Louisiana Women Workers: 2012

Compiled by Beth Willinger, PhD, October 2013

In 2012, the population of Louisiana reached an estimated 4,601,893 people, an increase of nearly 58,000 over a population of 4,544,228 in 2010, and up more than 132,917 from a population of 4,468,976 in 2000. Females continue to outnumber males and have consistently comprised approximately 51.1 % of the state's population (2,351,567 in 2012) (Table S0201).

- Of the 1.86 million women age 16 years and over in Louisiana, 56.9 percent were labor force participants working full- or part-time, or looking for work in 2012; 59.3 percent of women workers were employed full-time, year-round (Tables DP03, C24020).
- Women make up a steady number of the Louisiana work force. In 2012, women comprised 44.3 percent of the full-time, year-round Louisiana labor force, approximately the same as in 2011 (44.7%) and 2010 (45%) (Table S2402).
- Louisiana women working full-time, year-round in 2012 earned on average \$31,586— \$276 less than in 2011. The decrease in Louisiana women's earnings dropped Louisiana's ranking from 43rd to 46th lowest among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Louisiana women's median annual earnings were greater than the earnings of women in only 5 other states (Table R2002).

Nationally, women's median annual earnings were \$37,412. The highest paid women workers were in the District of Columbia (\$60,116); the lowest paid were in Mississippi (\$30,287) (Table R2002).

In contrast, Louisiana men working year-round, full-time earned on average \$47,249 (up \$936 from 2011) ranking Louisiana men 22nd with average earnings greater than the earnings of men in 29 other states. Nationally, the median annual earnings for men in 2012 was \$47,473 (Table R2001).

- In 2012, Louisiana women working full-time, year-round earned just 66.9 cents for every dollar earned by a Louisiana man, a gender wage gap of 33 percent, and a 2 percent greater gap than in 2011 (Table R2001, R2002).

The great disparity in earnings between Louisiana women and men has consistently ranked Louisiana 49th or 50th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. In 2012, Louisiana was again 50th with only Wyoming having a larger wage gap (a wage gap of 36.2 percent). Nationally, women made strides in closing the wage gap. The gender median earnings ratio for women nationally was 78.8 percent compared to 77 percent in 2011.

- Among the states' top earners, 3.2 percent (20,767) of women who worked full-time, year-round earned \$100,000 or more compared to 12.9 percent (105,185) of men (Table B20005).
- Among the state's poorest paid workers, 9.3 percent (59,127) of women who worked full-time, year-round had annual earnings less than \$12,500, compared to 4.8 percent (38,760) of Louisiana men (Table B20005).
- 22.2 percent of Louisiana women and girls experienced poverty in 2012, more than women and girls in every other state and the District of Columbia except Mississippi (26.7%). Nationally, the poverty rate for women and girls averaged 17.2 percent. Of those in poverty in Louisiana, poverty is the most prevalent

among female-headed families with children under 18 years of age (49%) (Tables C17001, DP03; Center for American Progress).

- Poverty rates were highest in Louisiana for black women and girls at 36.1 percent, followed by Hispanic females at 27 percent, Asian females at 25.6 percent, and white females at 14.3 percent (Tables C17001 A,B,D,I).
- The 2012 average earnings and the gender wage gap for Louisiana women and men differed significantly by race and ethnicity. Women of all races and ethnicities earned less than men of the same race and ethnicity. The largest wage gap was between white women and men (32.5%); the narrowest was between Hispanic or Latino women and men (8.8%). However, when compared to white men, the largest earnings gap was between white men and black women with black women earning less than half the earnings of white men for an earnings ratio of just 50.8 percent (Tables B20017 A,B,D,I).

White, black, and Asian women experienced a decrease in average earnings between 2011 and 2012; Latinas were the only workers to register an increase in average earnings.

In 2012, white women earned on average \$35,291 compared to \$52,282 for white men for a gender earnings ratio for full-time, year-round work of 67.5.

Black or African American women earned on average \$25,736 compared to \$32,409 for black or African American men for a gender earnings ratio for full-time, year-round work of 79.4.

Asian American women earned on average \$32,086 compared to \$42,153 for Asian American men for a gender earnings ratio for full-time, year-round work of 76.1.

Hispanic or Latina women earned on average \$29,609 compared to \$32,464 for Hispanic or Latino men for a gender earnings ratio for full-time, year-round work of 91.2.

- Louisiana women and men are not paid equitably for their occupational achievements. In 2012, average earnings for women and men in the five major occupational categories showed the largest wage gap to be between women and men employed in Production, transportation, and material moving occupations with women earning just 51.8 cents for every dollar earned by men in those occupations. Median annual earnings for women employed in Service occupations and Natural resources experienced a decrease in average earnings and a widening of the wage gap between 2011 and 2012 (Table S2402).

For full-time, year- round employment in 2012:

Women in Management, business, science, and arts occupations earned on average \$45,203 compared to an average of \$67,705 for their male counterparts (earnings ratio 66.8);

Women in Service occupations earned \$18,914 compared to \$30,613 for men in Service occupations (earnings ratio 61.8);

Women in Sales and office occupations earned \$29,097 compared to \$45,029 for men in Sales and office occupations (earnings ratio 64.6);

Women in Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations earned \$26,443 compared to \$41,108 for their male counterparts (earnings ratio 64.3);

Women in Production, transportation, and material moving occupations earned \$23,504 compared to \$45,409 for men in the same occupations (earnings ratio 51.8).

- Among women employed full-time, year-round, 42.3 percent worked in Management, business, science and arts occupations; 32.9 percent worked in Sales and office occupations; 20.2 percent worked in Service occupations; 3.6 percent in Production, transportation, and material moving occupations; and 1 percent in Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations (Table C24020).
- The largest percentage of employed white and Asian women worked in Management, business, science, and arts occupations (41.1 percent and 37.1 percent respectively); the largest percentage of employed black women worked in Service occupations (37.1%); while Hispanic women workers were about equally divided between Management and Service occupations (34.1 and 34.3 percent respectively) [Includes both part-time and full-time workers] (Tables 24010 A,B,D,I).
- The five leading occupations of women employed full-time, year-round in 2012 and their average annual earnings compared to the average annual earnings of men:

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Total Employed</i>	<i>Annual Earnings</i>	
		<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
Office and Administrative support	143,510	\$29,957	\$39,687
Education, legal, community service, arts, media	92,056	41,167	50,764
Management, business, and financial	89,743	45,984	70,844
Healthcare practitioners and technical	69,359	50,293	83,990
Sales and related	63,375	26,711	46,841

- Women’s median earnings are lower than men’s in all but one of the twenty-five intermediate occupational groups reported by the American Community Survey 2012. Women employed full-time, year-round in Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations earned on average \$287 more than men: \$38,125 for women compared to \$37,838 for men (Table S2402).
- As a class of workers, women made up (Table S2409):
 - 65 percent of all private not-for-profit wage and salary workers;
 - 40.3 percent of private for-profit company employees;
 - 64.5 percent of state government workers;
 - 55.8 percent of local government workers;
 - 43.4 percent of Federal government workers;
 - 28 percent of workers self-employed in their own not-incorporated business; and
 - 23.2 percent of workers self-employed in their own incorporated business.
- As a class of workers, women working in the Federal government earned the highest wages with average annual earnings of \$45,694; while women who were self-employed in their own not-incorporated business earned the least with earnings of \$24,166 (Table S2409).
- In 2012, the Louisiana unemployment rate was 8.8 percent compared to 9.4 percent nationally. The unemployment rate for Louisiana women and men 16 years and over participating in the Louisiana labor force was roughly the same. Black or African American women experienced the highest rate of unemployment at 13.5 percent followed by Hispanic or Latina women at 9.8 percent, then white women at 6.4 percent. Asian women again had the lowest rate of unemployment at 3.7 percent (Tables C23001, C23002 A,B,D,I).
- Educational attainment is somewhat greater for Louisiana women than men 25 years old and over. 84.7 percent of Louisiana women have a high school education or higher, 15 percent of whom have attained a bachelor’s degree and 7.8 percent a graduate or professional degree. For Louisiana men, 81.2 have a high

school education or higher with 13.7 attaining a bachelor's degree and 7.3 percent attaining a graduate or professional degree (Table C15002).

- Louisiana women and men are not paid equitably for their educational attainment. Women who had not graduated high school earned \$12,800, while men with the same education earned nearly twice as much with average earnings of \$23,812 for a gender earnings ratio of 53.8 (Table B20004).

Women who graduated high school (includes equivalency) earned \$19,889 on average. Their earnings were \$17,581 less than the average earnings of male high school graduates (\$37,470) for a median gender earnings ratio of 53.1 percent.

Women with some college or an associates degree earned \$24,404. Their earnings were \$13,066 less than the earnings of males with just a high school diploma, and \$16,336 less than men with a comparable education (\$40,740) for a gender earnings ratio of 60 percent.

Women with a bachelor's degree earned \$40,313, nearly \$20,000 less than men with a bachelor's degree (\$60,107) for a gender earnings ratio of 67.1 percent.

Women with a graduate or professional degree earned \$48,280, \$26,154 less than men with a graduate or professional degree (\$72,434) for a gender earnings ratio of 66.7 percent.

All findings and calculations are based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, 1- year estimates unless otherwise noted. Data for 2012 was released in September 2013. All categorical titles, such as those used for occupations and race, are those used by the U.S. Census Bureau. Table references are in parenthesis.

Appendix II. Nontraditional Occupations for Women in 2009

Nontraditional Occupations¹ For Women in 2009
(Numbers in thousands)

Occupation	Employed <u>Both Sexes</u>	Employed <u>Female</u>	Percent <u>Female</u>
Chief executives	1,631	408	25
Network systems and data communications analysts	401	99	24.7
Drafters	149	37	24.7
First-line supervisors/managers of correctional officers	50	12	24
Butchers and other meat, poultry and fish processing workers	302	69	22.8
Supervisors, transportation and material moving workers	221	50	22.6
Network and computer systems administrators	207	46	22.3
Baggage porters, bellhops, and concierges	74	16	22.2
Printing machine operators	155	44	21.9
Security guards and gaming surveillance officers	942	206	21.9
Supervisors, protective service workers, all other	102	22	21.7
Dishwashers	263	55	20.9
Metal workers and plastic workers, all other	284	59	20.8
Chefs and head cooks	348	72	20.7
Computer software engineers	952	192	20.2
Computer programmers	498	101	20.2
Engineering technicians, except drafters	365	71	19.6
Chiropractors	58	11	19.6
Barbers	93	17	18.6
Miscellaneous agricultural workers	681	172	18.6
Chemical engineers	65	12	18.4
Surveyors, cartographers, and photographers	53	10	18.2
First-line supervisors/managers of production and operating workers	739	134	18.1
Farm, ranch, and other agricultural managers	226	39	17.5
Couriers and messengers	225	45	17.5
Industrial engineers, including health and safety	186	32	17.4
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	1,707	294	17.2
Clergy	427	72	17
Transportation, storage, and distribution managers	234	38	16.4

Industrial production managers	240	39	16.4
Police and sheriff's patrol officers	714	111	15.5
Precision instrument and equipment repairers	58	9	15.4
First-line supervisors/managers of police and detectives	91	13	14.7
Taxi drivers and chauffeurs	377	55	14.6
Engineers, all others	346	48	13.8
Parts salespersons	102	13	13.2
Crushing, grinding, polishing, mixing, and blending workers	108	14	13.1
Service station attendants	89	12	13
Computer, automated teller, and office machine repairers	329	43	13
Parking lot attendants	84	18	11.8
Cost estimators	117	13	11.4
Announcers	52	6	11.2
Cleaners of vehicles and equipment	316	35	11.2
Painting workers	153	16	10.4
Computer control programmers and operators	64	6	9.8
Broadcast and sound engineering technicians and radio operators	93	8	9.4
Electrical and electronics engineers	314	29	9.4
Other installation, maintenance, and repair workers	195	17	8.8
First-line supervisors/managers of mechanics, installers, and repairers	342	30	8.7
Computer hardware engineers	61	5	8.6
Transportation inspectors	54	5	8.6
Radio and telecommunications equipment and installers repairers	179	15	8.3
Engineering managers	124	10	8.1
First-line supervisors/managers of fire fighting and preventing workers	54	4	7.3
Civil engineers	338	24	7.1
Industrial truck and tractor operators	507	35	6.9
Painters, construction and maintenance	552	38	6.9
Construction and building inspectors	99	6	6.3
Aerospace engineers	136	8	6.1
Dredge, excavating, and loading machine operators	50	3	6
Motor vehicle operators, all other	61	4	5.9
Mechanical engineers	302	18	5.9
Motor vehicle operators, all others	61	4	5.9
Railroad conductors and yardmasters	50	3	5.9
Water and liquid waste treatment plant and system operators	72	4	5.8

Refuse and recyclable material collectors	83	5	5.8
Machinists	372	20	5.4
Grounds maintenance workers	1,178	62	5.3
Surveying and mapping technicians	80	6	5.2
Driver/sales workers and truck drivers	3,151	163	5.2
First-line supervisors/managers of landscaping, lawn service, and grounds keeping workers	263	13	5
Welding, soldering, and brazing workers	492	18	4
Aircraft mechanics and service technicians	142	5	3.8
Cabinetmakers and bench carpenters	50	2	3.7
First-line supervisors/managers or construction trades and extraction workers	734	27	3.7
Helpers, construction trades	64	2	3.7
Structural iron and steel workers	63	2	3.7
Telecommunications line installers and repairers	183	7	3.7
Pest control workers	55	2	3.5
Industrial and refractory machinery mechanics	418	15	3.5
Construction managers	1,099	65	3.5
Security and fire alarm systems installers	71	2	3.5
Fire fighters	284	10	3.4
Millwrights	54	2	2.9
Other extraction workers	55	2	2.8
Construction laborers	1,427	38	2.7
Stationary engineers and boiler operators	98	3	2.7
Maintenance and repair workers, general	415	11	2.6
Sheet metal workers	132	3	2.5
Miscellaneous vehicle and mobile equipment mechanics, installers, and repairers	91	2	2.4
Carpet, floor, and tile installer and finisher	223	5	2.3
Highway maintenance workers	108	2	2.3
Locomotive engineers and operators	57	1	2.2
Drywall installers, ceiling tile installers, and tapers	170	4	2.2
Electricians	776	17	2.2
Mining machine operators	54	1	2
Insulation workers	875	9	1.9
Automotive service technicians	799	14	1.8
Electronic home entertainment equipment installers and repairers	1,264	20	1.6
Heavy vehicle and mobile equipment service technicians and mechanics	223	4	1.6
Automotive body and related repairers	163	2	1.5
Carpenters	1,562	24	1.5

Operating engineers and other construction equipment operators	377	6	1.5
Aircraft pilots and flight engineers	126	2	1.3
Pipelayers, plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	536	7	1.3
Electrical power-line installers and repairers	126	2	1.3
Crane and tower operators	61	1	1.1
Structural iron and steel workers	77	1	0.9
Tool and die makers	54	1	0.9
Bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists	330	3	0.8
Heating, air conditioning, refrigeration mechanics and installers	376	3	0.7
Logging workers	59	<1	0.7
Cement masons, concrete finishers, and terrazzo workers	74	<1	0.6
Small engine mechanics	58	<1	0.5
Roofers	216	1	0.5
Brickmasons, blockmasons, and stonemasons	151	<1	0.1

Note: Data not shown where base (total employed, both sexes) is less than 50,000.

¹Nontraditional occupations are those in which women comprise 25 percent or less of total employed.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Averages 2009. Women's Bureau April 2010

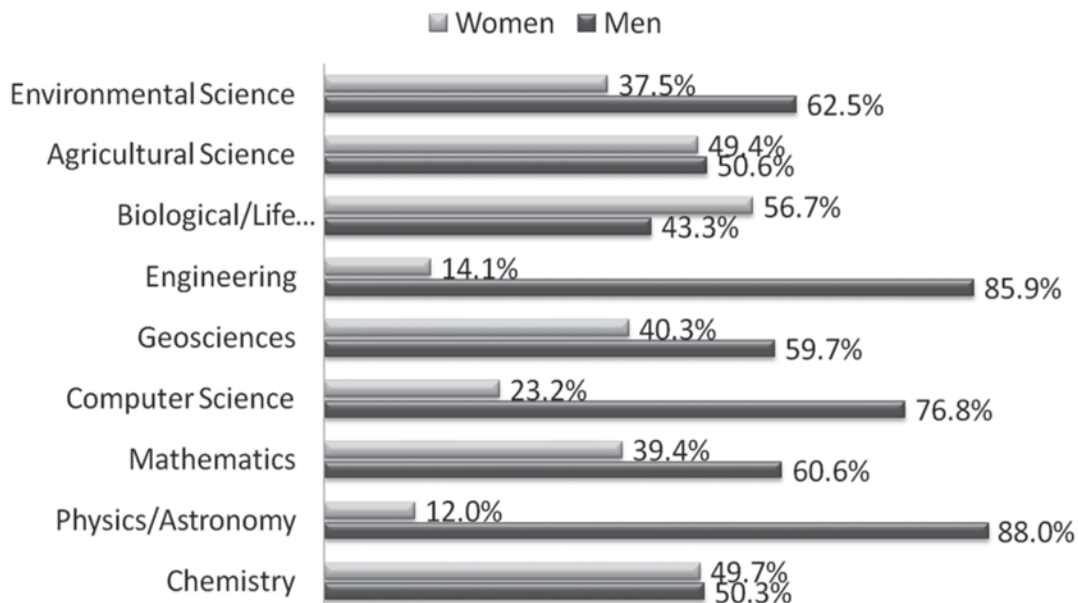
Appendix III. Quick Facts on Education in Louisiana

2012-2013 Math & Science Degrees and Certificates Awarded Louisiana Public Institutional Totals

Degree Area	Men	Women
Chemistry	93	92
Physics/Astronomy	66	9
Mathematics	149	97
Computer Science	743	224
Geosciences	71	48
Engineering	2,257	369
Biological/Life Sciences	587	769
Agricultural Science	210	205
Environmental Science	30	18

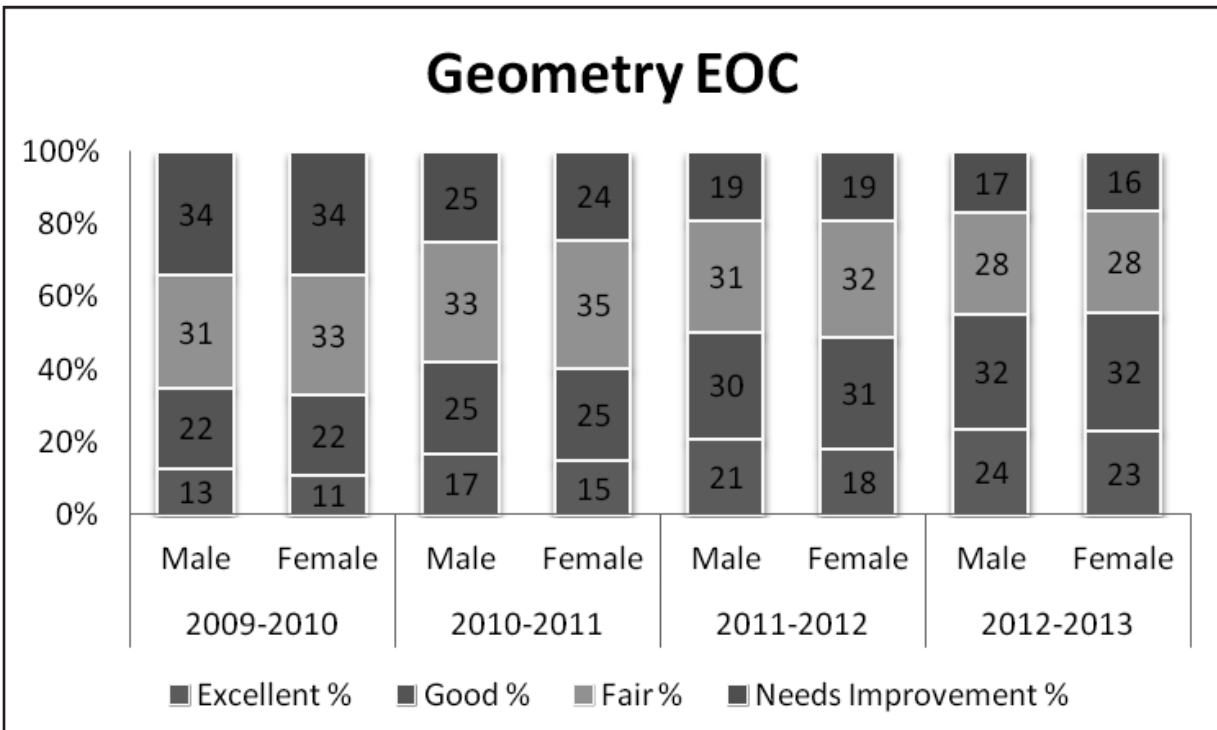
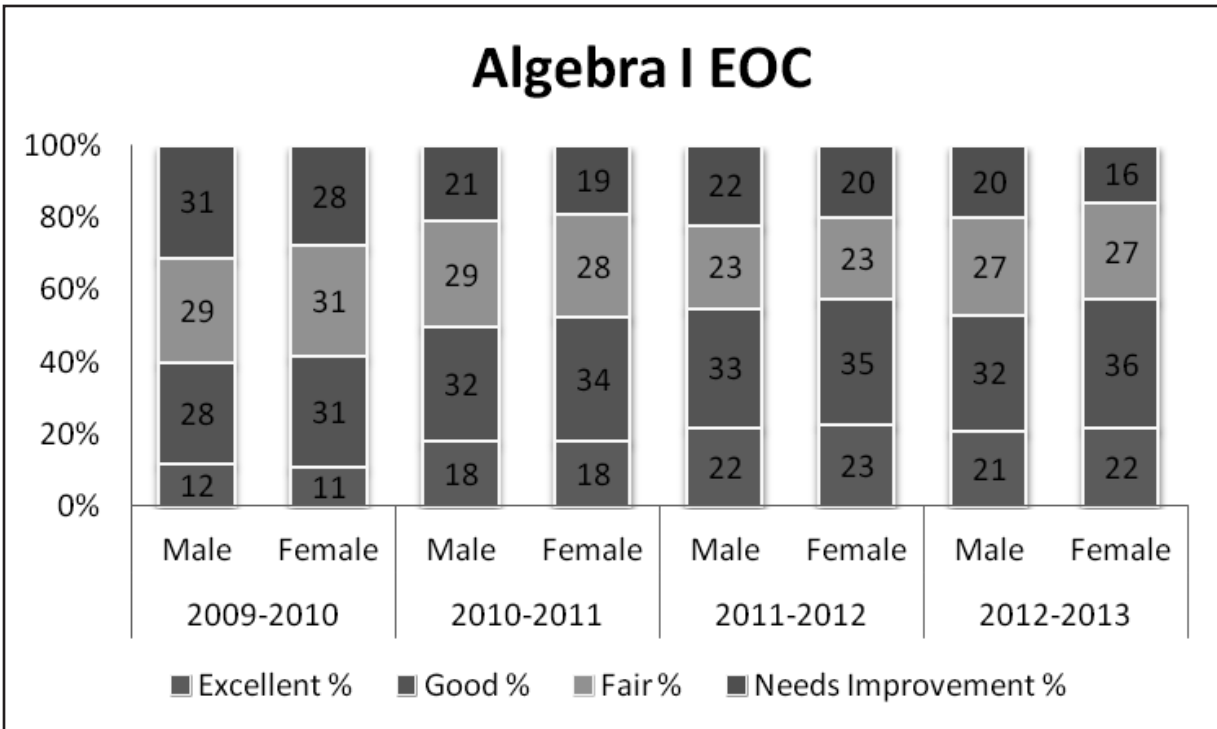
Compiled by the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus with information obtained from the Louisiana Board of Regents. (Run-Date August 12, 2013) 2012-2013 Math and Science Degrees and Certificates Awarded Public Institutional Totals (CMPLAMP)

2012-2013 Math & Science Degrees and Certificates Awarded Louisiana Public Institutional Totals

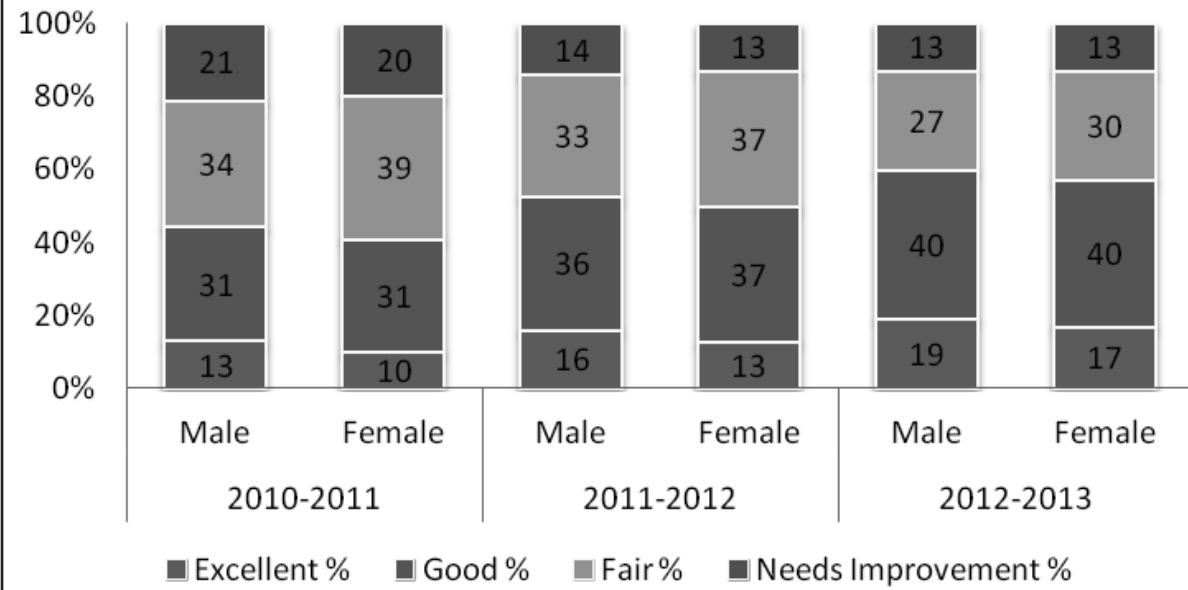


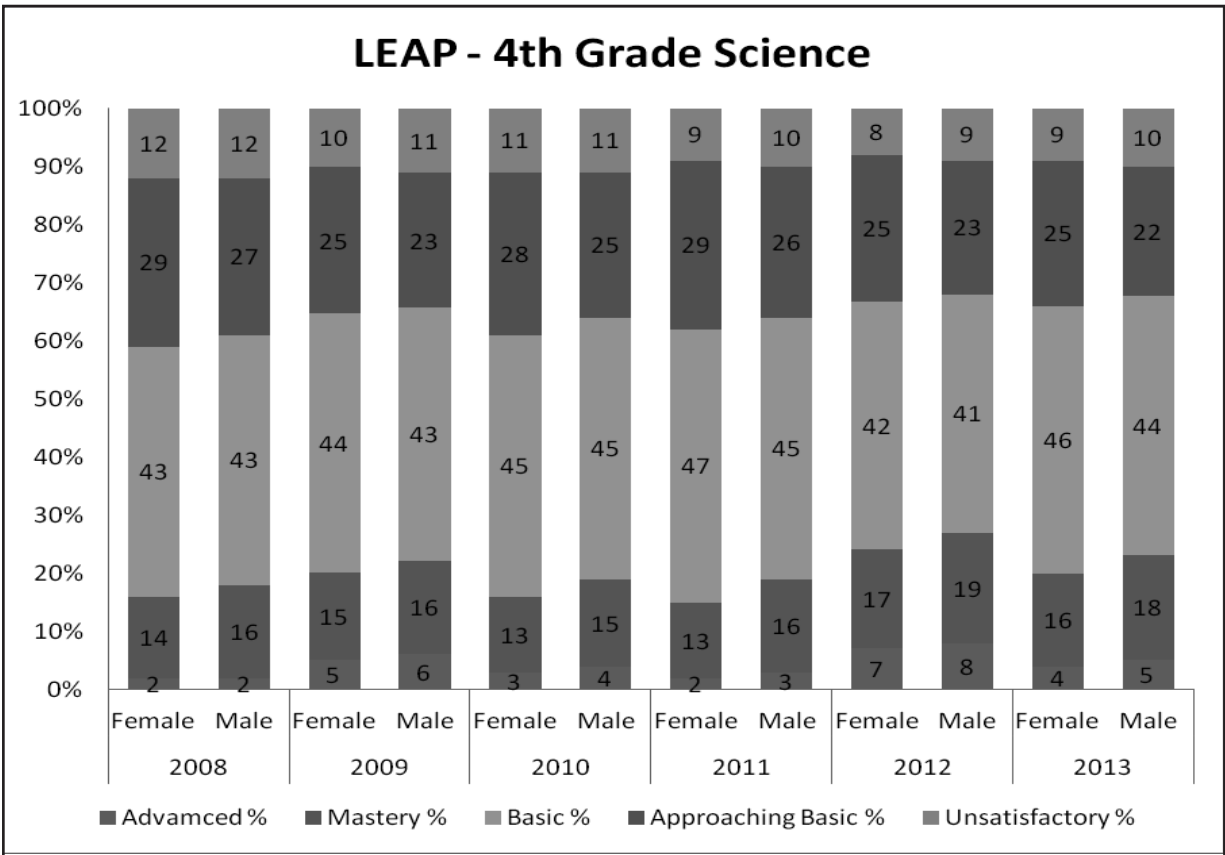
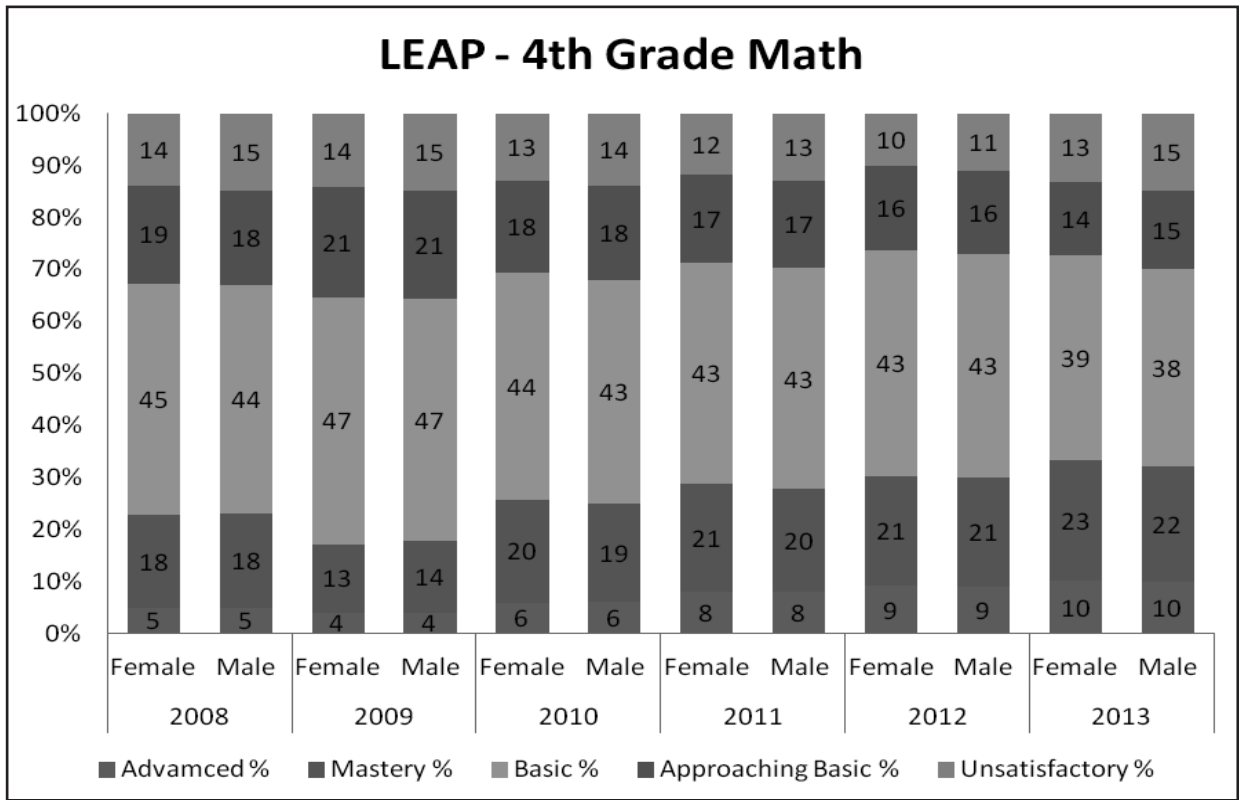
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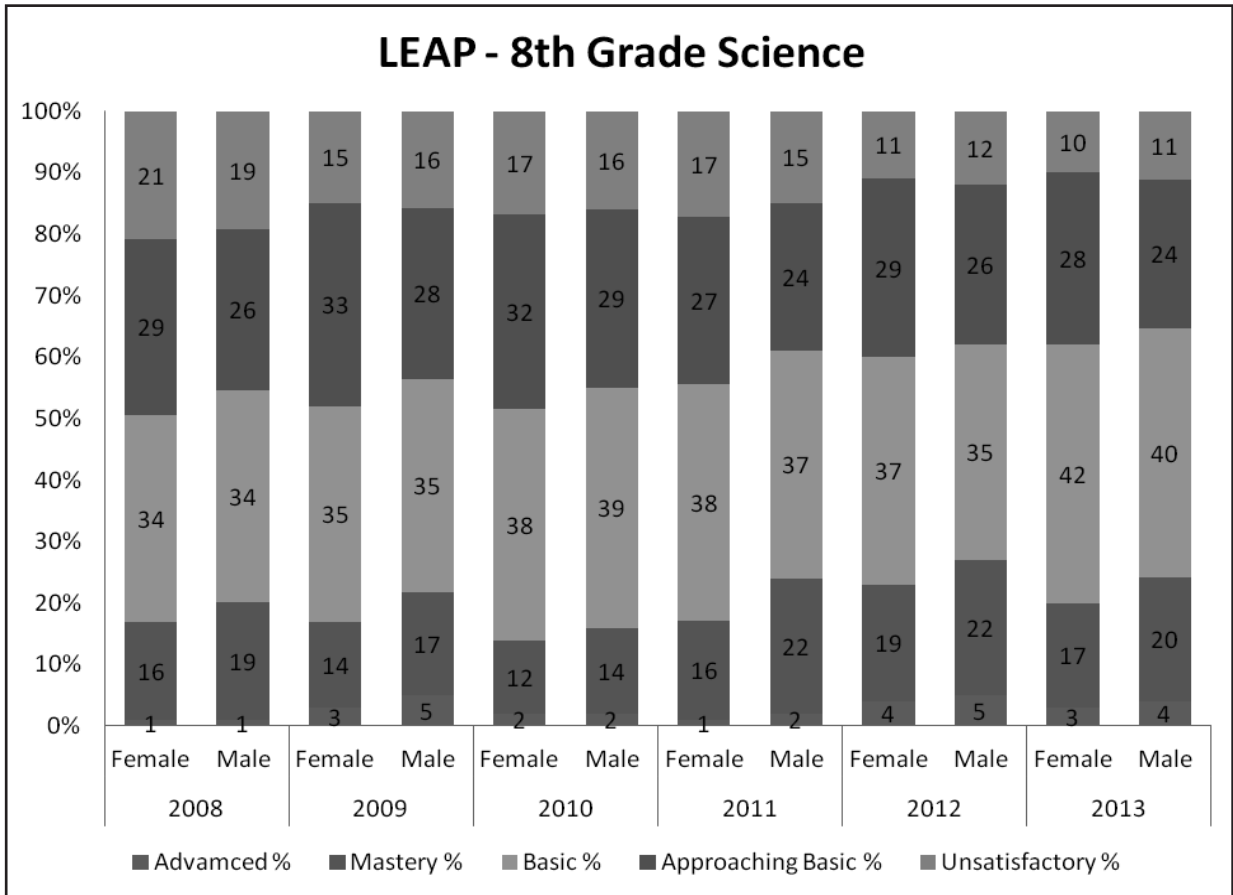
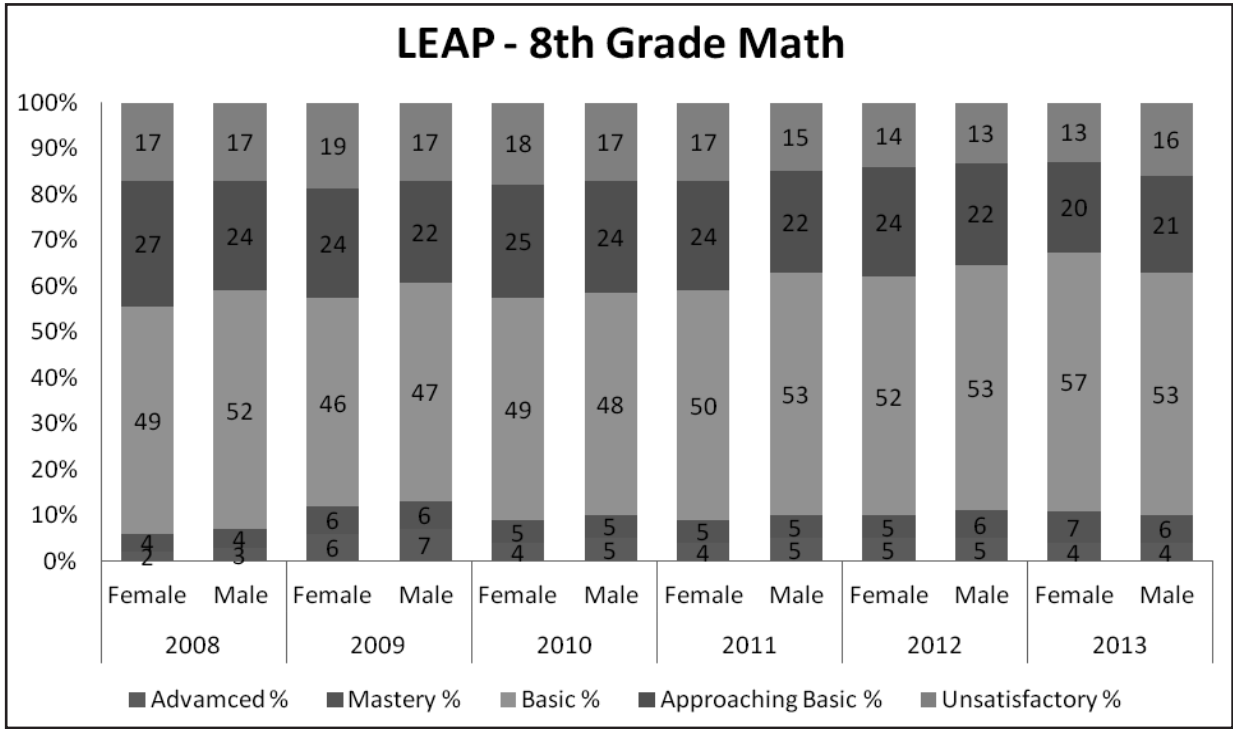
The following charts were provided by the Louisiana Department of Education
As of October 9, 2013



Biology EOC







Advanced Placement 2008

AP Subject	Female Count	Female Average Score	Male Count	Male Average Score
Biology	218	2.1	156	2.3
Calculus AB	270	2.2	283	2.5
Calculus BC	41	3	66	3.4
Chemistry	90	2.3	107	2.8
Computer Sci AB	~	~	12	4.1
Environmental Sci	45	3.2	40	3.7
Physics B	11	1.5	27	1.7
Physics C: Mech	22	3	53	3.1
Statistics	~	~	16	2.6

Advanced Placement 2009

AP Subject	Female Count	Female Average Score	Male Count	Male Average Score
Biology	196	2.3	128	2.4
Calculus AB	315	2.1	319	2.6
Calculus BC	33	3.5	61	3.8
Chemistry	89	2.1	109	2.5
Computer Sci AB	~	~	11	3.3
Environmental Sci	23	3.6	16	4
Physics B	36	1.2	46	1.5
Physics C: Mech	21	2.2	49	3
Statistics	37	2.7	39	2.5

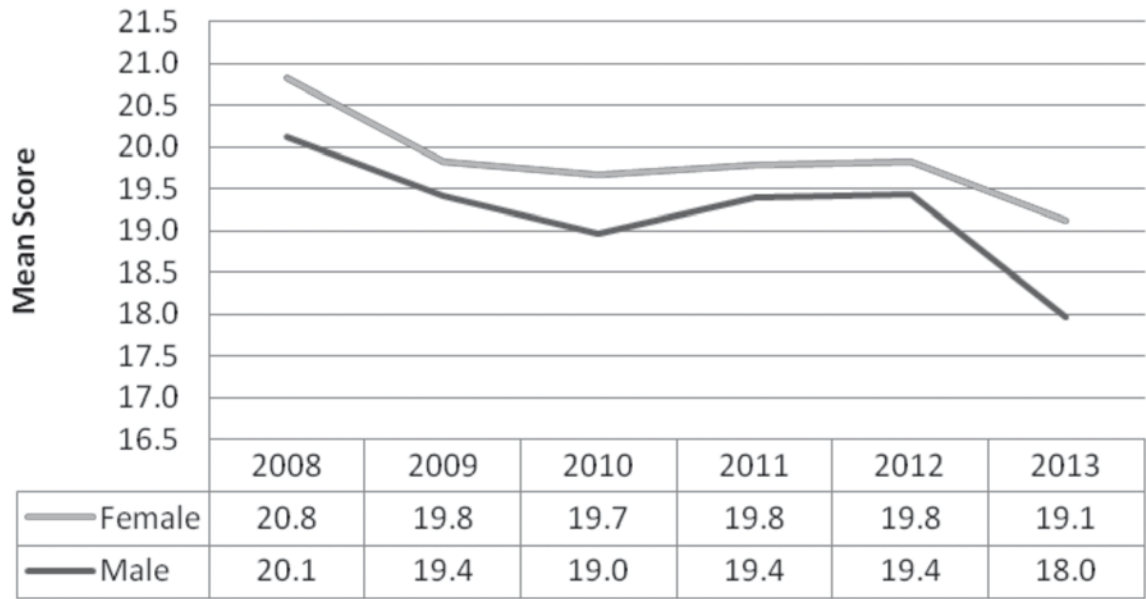
Advanced Placement 2010

AP Subject	Female Count	Female Average Score	Male Count	Male Average Score
Biology	256	1.8	176	2.2
Calculus AB	338	1.9	376	2.3
Calculus BC	40	3.8	59	3.7
Chemistry	138	2.2	121	2.4
Computer Sci A	~	~	12	4.2
Environmental Sci	57	3.1	35	3.5
Physics B	~	~	19	2.6
Physics C: Mech	30	2.1	49	2.8
Statistics	42	2.1	41	3

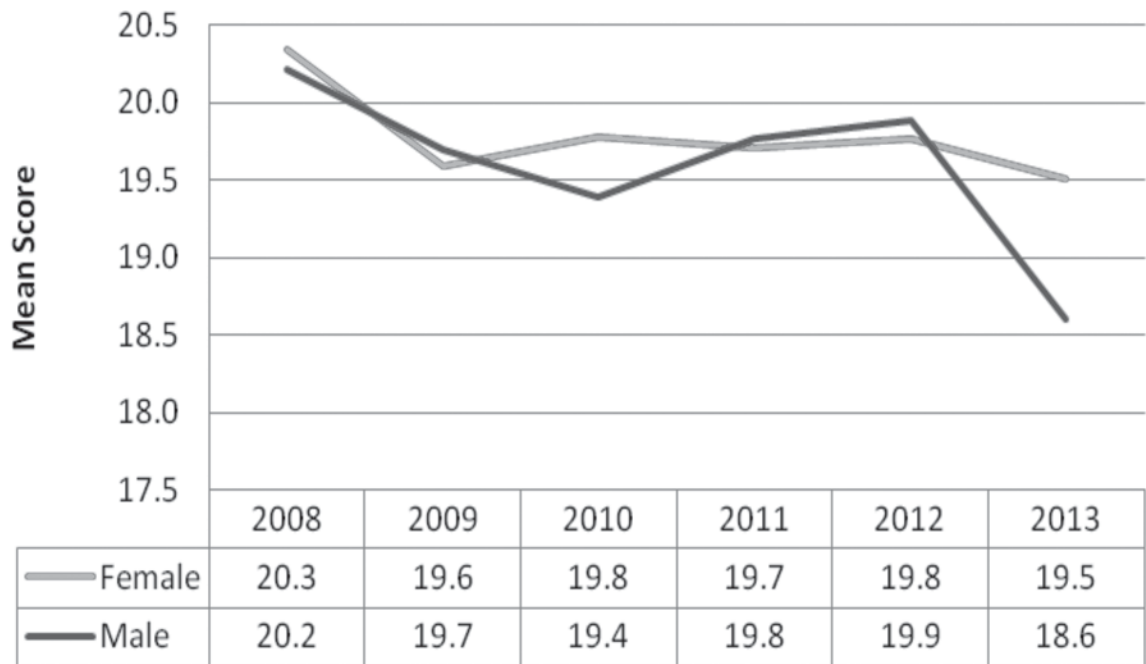
Advanced Placement 2011

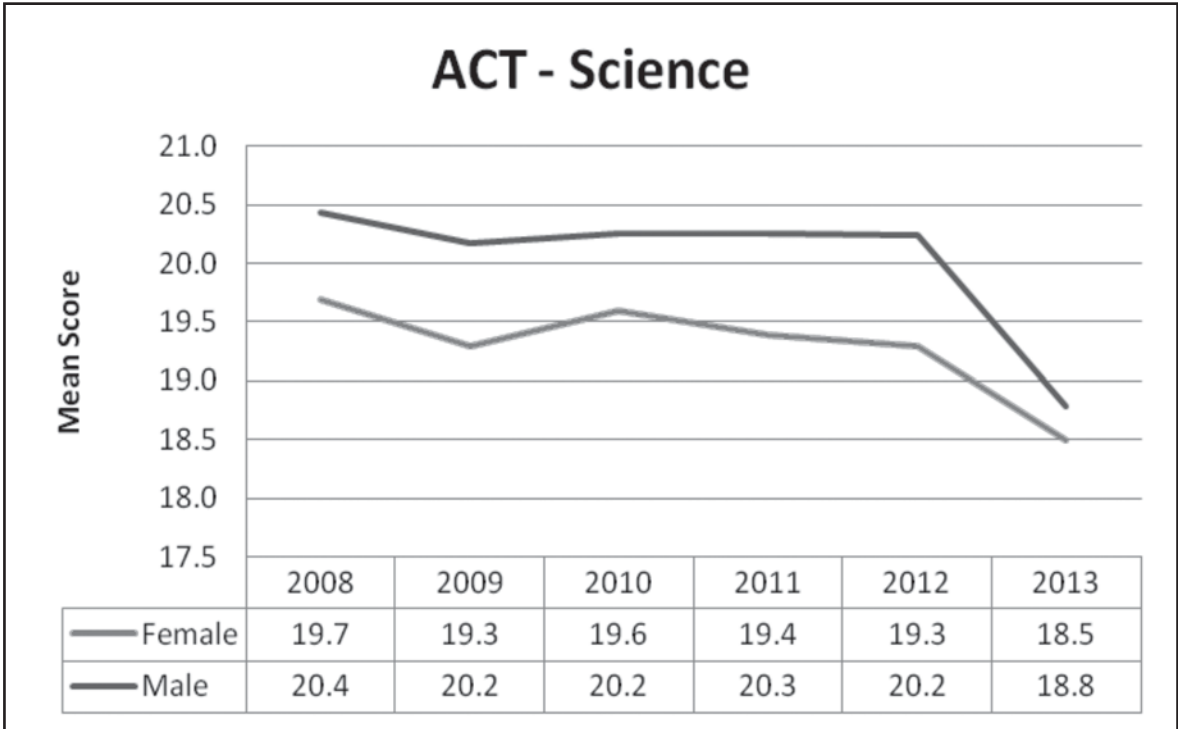
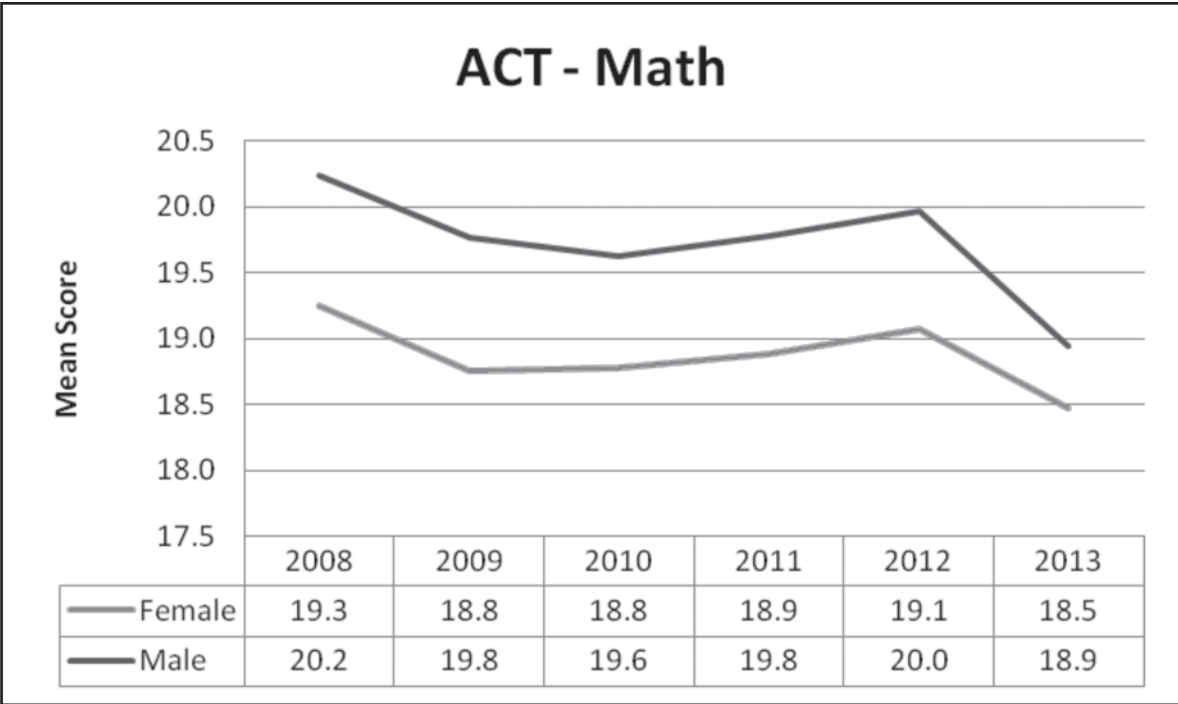
AP Subject	Female Count	Female Average Score	Male Count	Male Average Score
Biology	337	1.9	220	2.2
Calculus AB	373	2	416	2.3
Calculus BC	47	3.3	73	4
Chemistry	159	1.8	171	2.2
Computer Sci A	~	~	14	4.2
Environmental Sci	67	2.9	47	3.5
Physics B	~	~	38	2.8
Physics C: E&M	~	~	13	3.9
Physics C: Mech	35	2.5	60	3.1
Statistics	54	2.3	70	2.8

ACT - English



ACT - Reading





The Louisiana Department of Education has modified and/or suppressed data reported to protect the privacy of students in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) codified at 20 U.S.C. 1232g. The strategies used to protect privacy vary and may include rounding or other techniques but do not substantially affect the general usefulness of the data. Because of the privacy protections, numerical and percentage totals may not add precisely to the sum of the row or column to which the total refers.

Appendix IV. Preparing Girls for Careers in STEM: Louisiana Best Practices

Preparing Louisiana students for 21st Century college and career opportunities is critical to the well-being of our state. There is, however, a need to pay special attention to our young women and female students. Studies have frequently shown that the pay gap between women and men in Louisiana is among the largest in the country. A key reason for this is that often men work in careers in a higher wage bracket. Often this can be traced back to the educational background and experiences of the employee.

Louisiana has some outstanding STEM programs in place for female students. However, the number is far too few and there is a need to cover the whole state with opportunities for our female students. The programs selected for inclusion in this Appendix are excellent models and could be easily replicated in other locations around our state.

We believe the experiences offered to young females showcased here through XCITE at LSU, LA Tech's efforts with the National Center for Women & Information Technology, the Society of Women Engineers and the Girl Scouts with FIRST, Tulane's GIST program and the Louisiana Art and Science Museum's Youth Alive! should be studied and shared. They demonstrate key ingredients of community partnerships, engaging activities, motivational experiences and educational opportunities. These are central to an understanding that for Louisiana to move forward in development the success of every one of our citizens is vital and no group can be overlooked or left behind.

eXploration Camp Inspiring Tomorrow's Engineers (XCITE) LSU College of Engineering Office for Diversity Programs

eXploration Camp for Inspiring Tomorrow's Engineers (XCITE) is a one-week, summer residential program for girls entering the 9th and 10th grades hosted by the Louisiana State University College of Engineering Office for Diversity Programs. Since 2008, through the generous support of Marathon Oil, Fluor and Dow, over 100 female high school students have had a chance to learn about engineering through lectures, hands-on engineering activities, field experiences and laboratory demonstrations. The XCITE schedule is designed to offer female students the opportunity to learn about the various career and educational opportunities within engineering, construction management, and computer science. Program participants also learn about the positive impact female engineers have had on engineering design and utilized the engineering design process. XCITE campers are also mentored by female engineering students, faculty, and professionals throughout the week. The four main components to the XCITE are: the residential experience, Engineering 101 Series, Professionalism 101, and the design project. The sessions are designed to increase participant's interest and understanding of engineering-related fields and the career opportunities associated with those fields. In addition to the engineering-related activities and demonstrations, the XCITE participants also participated in sessions to develop their academic skills and test taking strategies.

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National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT)

The specific goal of the Louisiana Affiliate Program for the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) and the Aspiration Awards Program is to encourage young women at the high school level in Louisiana to pursue computing-related courses, activities, interests and achievements. The program also aims to encourage high schools and high school teachers in the state to encourage young women to explore their interest in computing and technology. Led by Dr. Jenna Carpenter, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies in the College of Engineering and Science at Louisiana Tech, the Leadership Team for the program undertook this initiative to increase the visibility of computing-related majors, careers, and job opportunities among high school women in the state. By encouraging high school women in Louisiana to seriously consider and pursue computing-related activities, the state can produce more college graduates in computing-related fields to meet the rapidly growing workforce demands in these areas in the state. In addition, this emphasis should help increase the diversity of computing graduates, which research has repeatedly shown leads to better innovation and creativity in the workplace. The Program offers both national and local affiliate competitions to generate support and visibility for women's participation in communities nationwide.

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Society of Women Engineers Coaches All-Girl "FIRST" LEGO® League® Robotics Teams



2013 is the fifth year that the New Orleans section and the fourth year that the Baton Rouge section of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) have coached all-girl *FIRST* LEGO League (FLL) teams. SWE has partnered with the Girl Scouts, a perfect organization for providing the girls (age 9-14 yrs.), for their ten-member teams. FLL introduces real-world engineering challenges by building LEGO-based robots to complete tasks on a thematic play service. In addition, the FLL team researches an engineering topic, proposes a solution to a real-world challenge and communicates their findings to judges during competition.

These teams provide the perfect vehicle for SWE to not just tell the girls about engineering, but to show them. SWE mentors expose them to real-women STEM role-models, proving that engineering is a desirable and woman-friendly career choice. The girls are also building their courage, confidence, and character (the Girl Scout mission) by learning to work together as a team and participate in team competitions.

Most girls come to the team with no knowledge of what engineers do. Now some are considering engineering or other STEM careers. They have become passionate about their robot and hence engineering and science. This will stay with them as they progress from young girls to teenagers to college students. Whether they decide on careers in engineering or other STEM fields, their passion for science and knowledge of engineering careers has been greatly enhanced by this program. Says a BotGurlz Girl Scout team member, "I really like FLL because it gives me the opportunity to form deeper friendships with girls I wouldn't have otherwise known. And before I started, I did not think I would like engineering, but I was really impressed and now find it intriguing!"

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Get the GiST and Get Inspired: Girls in STEM at Tulane

The Girls in STEM at Tulane (GiST) program provides fifth through seventh grade girls with the opportunity to meet and work with women role models in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. Workshops developed and led by faculty and student teams in the School of Science and Engineering (SSE) encourage and empower girls to inquire, investigate, and discover in a positive environment. Our goal is to open the doors wide and welcome young students to careers in STEM fields by encouraging creative thinking, promoting self-esteem, and increasing awareness of their opportunities. On February 23rd, 2013 the SSE community, with support from the Newcomb College Institute, hosted 120 middle school girls from 38 schools in southeast Louisiana. Faculty members and students in nine SSE departments ran STEM activity welcome tables and workshops for our participants. GiST is now offered every semester. The following quotations from undergraduate and graduate student group leaders reflect the positive outcomes of GiST:

“The day was great! The girls were engaged and positive about the workshops, enjoyed answering and discussing different science questions and how creativity relates to science. I think that it is important to help the girls understand that they can build a network of supportive like-minded females whether they are to assist them in problem-solving, idea collectives, or general support.”

“The students I interacted with were really inspired by the workshops they attended. I am certain that they walked away from the day having learned a lot, and with new interests in science. For example, one student who started the day saying she was interested in computer science said that after the physics workshop she was considering physics as well.”

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YouthALIVE! at the Louisiana Art & Science Museum

YouthALIVE! at LASM stands for Youth Achievement through Learning, Involvement, Volunteering, and Employment. Targeting 11-to 18-year-old unserved and underserved girls in the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Area, YA provides opportunities for young women to engage in STEM-focused educational activities, become familiar with STEM-related college and career opportunities, interact with positive role models, receive life-skills training, gain artistic literacy, provide service to their community, and become well-rounded productive citizens. The demands of the 21st century require an innovative approach to education to fully prepare students for college, careers, and citizenship. Our focus at LASM is to help create a community of lifelong learners who, through scientific and artistic literacy, will gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world.

The YouthALIVE! program grew out of an Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC) initiative in 60 science centers that, from 1991 through 1999, were supported by the Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. YA was initiated at the Louisiana Art & Science Museum (LASM) in 1993, with LASM chosen as one of the first ten U.S. museums to pilot the program. With an average annual membership of 25-30 participants, YouthALIVE! at LASM has positively impacted over 400 young women since its inception twenty years ago. New members qualify as unserved or underserved girls, ages 11 through 14, and those who are committed to the program may choose to remain active members through high school graduation, serving as mentors for the younger girls.

With the availability of the diverse educational resources of LASM, YouthALIVE! provides many unique opportunities to engage participants in STEM education. LASM offers planetarium programs, science classes, interactive educational theater presentations, participatory galleries, and many additional opportunities for hands-on, minds-on learning. The flexibility and diversity of an informal museum education program in terms of curriculum, activities, environment, and staff creates a welcoming culture where YouthALIVE! members gain confidence, skills, knowledge, and experience to help them achieve their goals. Research confirms that 8th graders with an interest in STEM are three times more likely to pursue degrees in those fields. Consequently, sowing the seeds of encouragement, empowerment, and opportunity early continues to produce life-changing results in the lives of these outstanding young women.

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Appendix V. Access to Safety-Net Services in Louisiana

While Louisiana is not expanding its Medicaid program under the terms of the Affordable Care Act, the State continues to provide a robust safety-net of health care services through LSU and its partners throughout the state for individuals who cannot afford to purchase health coverage. To learn about these resources or to schedule an appointment at an LSU or affiliated clinic, individuals can call the numbers below based upon the region in which they live.

Lake Charles
Walter O. Moss Memorial Health Clinic
337-475-8100

Houma
Chabert Medical Center
985-873-2200

New Orleans
Interim LSU Hospital
504-903-2373 or 504-903-5700

Lafayette
University Hospital and Clinics
337-261-6000

Independence
Lallie Kemp
985-878-1610

Bogalusa
Bogalusa Medical Center
985-730-6700

Baton Rouge
LSU Health Baton Rouge
225-358-4853
Urgent Care Clinic: no appointment necessary
at
5439 Airline Highway

Below numbers subject to change as transition to private partner operation occurs
Shreveport
LSU Hospital Shreveport
318-675-6402 or 800-488-2957

Monroe
EA Conway
Adult Medicine Clinic: 318-330-7167
Pediatric Clinic: 318- 330- 318-7173
Family Medicine Clinic: 318-330-7600
OB/GYN Clinic: 318-330-7300

Alexandria
Huey P. Long
318-448-0811

Additional safety-net resources are available through community health centers located across the state. To locate one, individuals can visit <http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov>.

Appendix VI. Louisiana Regional Women's Commissions: 2012-2013 Activities

There are four active, regionally-based commissions on women in Louisiana: the Commission for Women of Bossier City, the Lafourche Commission on Women, the Lafayette Commission on Women, and the Shreveport Mayor's Women's Commission. The focus of these groups is programming, rather than research.

The Commission for Women of Bossier City emphasizes mentoring, education, and community outreach in their activities. Its outstanding programs include "Bossier's Women Leaders of Tomorrow," "Lead Award Scholarships," and "Inspiring Women's Week."

Bossier's mentoring and educational activities have included political forums, dating and violence awareness programs, outreach through the Bossier Parish School Board, job shadowing, and city council and veterans outreach. Mentees from at least six schools are involved with the Commission. The Lead Award Scholarships, totaling approximately \$3,000 for student winners, have been linked to mentoring programs. Bossier's Inspiring Women's Week Program has scheduled a kick-off breakfast, sexual assault and self-defense classes, domestic violence education programs, and health care seminars on cancer, obesity, and heart disease. Other events have included crime prevention days, a family day, and an art event.

The Lafourche Commission on Women partners with the Louisiana Center for Women and Government, the Legislative Women's Caucus and businesses to co-host three programs a year: the Louisiana Girls' Leadership Academy (LGLA), the Louisiana Women's Leadership Conference on Small Business Entrepreneurship (LWLS) which is convened as a National Summit every other year (NWLS), and the Hall of Fame.

The LGLA brings girls entering 9th through 11th grades from across Louisiana together for a four-day intensive training at Nicholls State University in communications, leadership competence, social media, the "ABC's of Running for Office," student alienation and bullying awareness, team building, and non-partisan public policy education. Participants also work in competitive teams to create Girls Public Service Project on Energy and the Environment, which are judged by industry leaders.

The 2013 Entrepreneurship Conference was national and focused on healthcare, traversing technology, becoming bankable, "Hollywood South," non-traditional opportunities, and leadership. Participants heard from and networked with professionals and celebrities, including in 2013 environmental activist Erin Brockovich; CEO of Forbes, Moira Forbes; CNN's Donna Brazile; Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn (TN-R); Congressman Cedric Richmond (LA-D); and 25 national and statewide expert panelists. Women entrepreneurs and CEOs are also honored as role models of outstanding accomplishment in business. Hall of Fame honors women for achievements and a commitment to public service and was held in 2013 in conjunction with the summit.

The Shreveport Mayor's Women's Commission (SMWC) hosts three major events annually, all designed to encourage women to volunteer in various activities to improve the lives of Shreveport women and youth.

The first two annual events are sponsorship of a Kick-off Breakfast for the community's annual Celebration of Women's History Week, and the Cora M. Allen Day Celebration, which recognizes the historic achievements and civic contributions of a prominent Shreveport visionary and women's leader of the Roaring '20s and Great Depression era. Both events are held in March in conjunction with National Women's History Month, and celebrate outstanding volunteer accomplishments made by Shreveport women.

The third event is the SMWC's annual awards program, the HERA Awards, held each fall. Three "Unsung Heroines" who have played important roles in improving the lives of women and youth in Shreveport are recognized at this event. The awards are in recognition of the recipients' volunteer contributions in one of the following areas: Advocacy, Education, or Quality of Life. The awards program, introduced in 2008, is designed to recognize the recipients' untiring and selfless efforts to be **H**elpful, **E**ffective, and **R**esponsible **A**dvocates for Shreveport women and youth.

Additional SMWC activities include supporting Dress for Success, which provides underprivileged women with access to a closet of professional attire for job hunting; Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana activities; and obesity and diabetes seminars in conjunction with the Martin Luther King Health Center.

In 2014, the SMWC also will sponsor programs urging women to make their voices heard in 2014 elections through informed voting and active participation as candidates. Additionally, SMWC will host an Employment and Training Resource Seminar in partnership with local agencies, schools, colleges, and employer groups to advocate for opportunities for women and young people to gain employment and entrepreneurship skills and credentials enabling them to compete more effectively for better employment opportunities.

The Lafayette Commission on the Needs of Women continues to focus on two key areas: being a source of collected information to help identify the needs of women and services available to women within the community, and advocacy for change in public policy that can affect positive change for women. This is actualized through the promotion of programs that improve the well-being and status of women in an effort to improve and affect lasting change for women within the community.

For the past 35 years, the Lafayette Commission has successfully impacted women within the community by sponsoring projects such as the endorsement of the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, hosted and moderated a parent forum, supported the formation of a battered women's shelter, the development of a childcare directory in conjunction with the Junior League of Lafayette, the development of a Summer Youth Directory for summer activities, maintenance of a free resource directory of services for women and children, and, annually sponsor the Women of Excellence Awards Ceremony. This ceremony provides the opportunity for members of the community to nominate women who have provided a direct impact to the community beyond reasonable responsibilities and who volunteer their time for the betterment of women within their community.

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Vonnie Hawkins, Interim Executive Director, Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault

Trin Johnson, Executive Director of the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus

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Jean May-Brett, Department of Education

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Beth Willinger, PhD, former Executive Director of the Newcomb Center for Research on Women, Tulane University, and acting chair (2009-2012) of the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission

Louisiana Board of Regents

Louisiana Center for Women and Government, Nicholls State University

Louisiana Department of Administration

Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services

Louisiana Department of Economic Development

Louisiana Department of Education

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus

Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus Foundation

Louisiana State University's Women & Gender Studies Graduate Student Organization

Louisiana Workforce Commission

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