



The Best City for Women in America? Washington, D.C

By Lylah M. Alphonse | May 15, 2012

Women who live in Washington, D.C., Boston, and San Francisco have the highest levels of well-being in the United States, according to a new report. Women there earn more money and have the highest levels of education compared to their peers in 25 other major metropolitan areas.

The report, *Women's Well-Being: Ranking America's Top 25 Metro Areas*, analyzed data from official government sources to determine how women in the 25 largest cities in the country fared. The cities were judged based on health indicators like life expectancy, knowledge indicators like school enrollment levels and degrees obtained, and the median earnings for their female residents. The study was done by Measure of America, a project of the Social Science Research Council.

"Countless studies focus on gender inequality -- the differences between women and men -- but few examine the disparities between different groups of women," Kristen Lewis, co-director of Measure of America, said in a statement.

Though Washington, D.C., was at the top of the list, women in San Francisco had the longest life expectancies -- 84.5 years, compared with a national average of 81.3 years. Women in Boston had the highest level of school enrollment -- 82.2 percent, compared to 78.8 percent nationwide. Minneapolis-St. Paul, and New York City rounded out the top five.

"No one part of America has a lock on well-being for women," the report points out. "The top five metro areas include at least one location from each of the four major U.S. Regions, the West, Midwest, Northeast, and South. The bottom five include major metro areas in the West, Northeast, and South."

At the bottom of the list: Pittsburgh, Tampa-St. Petersburg, Houston, San Antonio, and Riverside-San Bernadino. In lowest-ranking Riverside-San Bernadino, one out of five adult women have never completed high school, and typical female wage-earners bring home about \$22,300 a year. (Women in top-ranking Washington, D.C., earn about \$37,650, according to the report, which also pointed out that women tend to earn more in areas where more women are unmarried.)

While women in major metro areas are doing better than the typical American woman in general, the report pointed out, we still have a long way to go. "By studying differences between groups of women, across race and region, patterns begin to emerge that can inform policy-making discussions and highlight areas that require resources and attention from the public and private sectors -- government, philanthropy, and academia," said Measure of America co-director Sarah Burd-Sharps.