

Women's Well-Being Index

Executive Summary — Greater Milwaukee

Scope

The Women's Well-Being Index reports on the multiple dimensions of women's lives in Greater Milwaukee—including education, economic security, health & safety, housing—to illuminate inequities, guide resource allocation, and inform policy.



Note

Nearly 800,000 women and girls live in Greater Milwaukee. The population is younger than the Wisconsin average.

Key Findings

Education

- Educational attainment is relatively strong: 39% hold a bachelor's or higher degree (including 14% graduate) vs 34% statewide.
- However, about 7% of women lack a high school diploma—slightly higher than the state average.

Economic Security

- Despite high education, a gender pay gap persists and is wider locally: women earn about \$0.74 for every dollar earned by men in Greater Milwaukee.
- Significant racial disparities: White and Asian women are more likely to earn \geq \$55,000; only 25-30% of Black or Hispanic women reach that threshold.
- Poverty rates among women differ sharply by race: 32% of Black women, 21% of Hispanic women, versus 7% of white women.

Health & Safety

- Health insurance coverage is high among women in Greater Milwaukee, with about 5% uninsured versus 7% of men. However, coverage gaps are greater among younger women (19-34 years.)
- Maternal health issues are stark: preterm birth rates in Milwaukee County (11.6%) and City of Milwaukee (13%) exceed state averages.
- Women of color face disproportionately high risks of violence; Black women and other women of color in the city are disproportionately likely to be killed by someone they know.

Housing

- Homeownership by women is lower locally (60%) compared to Wisconsin generally (68%). Particularly large disparities by race: only 27% of Black households and 44% of Hispanic/Latino households own homes vs 70% of white households.
- Rent burden is significant: many renters who are women pay more than 30% of income for housing. Milwaukee County is among the counties with the highest rates of cost-burdened renter households.
- Eviction rates for women are elevated: about 5.9 evictions per 100 renter households in Milwaukee County vs 2.8 statewide.
- Median rent (including utilities/fuels) for women in Greater Milwaukee \$1,088/month vs state median \$992.

Conclusion

Greater Milwaukee exhibits strength in educational attainment and meaningful engagement of women in the labor force, yet persistent and in many cases deep inequalities remain in pay, housing, safety, and health outcomes.