



Engaged research at the Dallas Women's Foundation seeks to increase community awareness, inform those making policy decisions and create an environment for collaboration and action. This program provides locally focused, gender-specific research, as well as information about emerging trends and other issues impacting the well-being of women and girls.

All of the research presented in *Gender Matters: An Analysis of the Texas State Budget* was conducted by the Center for Public Policy Priorities on behalf of the Dallas Women's Foundation. The Center for Public Policy Priorities is a nonpartisan, nonprofit policy institute committed to improving public policies to better the economic and social conditions of low- and moderate-income Texans.

The Dallas Women's Foundation strengthens the entire community by increasing the investment in women and girls and empowering women's philanthropy. The foundation demonstrates its impact on the status of women and girls through gender-specific research, targeted grant making and philanthropy education. One of the oldest and the largest of the 150 women's funds world-wide, Dallas Women's Foundation has invested more than \$12.5 million in nearly 1000 programs primarily in Dallas, Denton and Collin counties, assisting a million women and girls.

Note: Sources for the enclosed findings are detailed in the Dallas Women's Foundation *Gender Matters: An Analysis of the Texas State Budget* report available at www.dallaswomensfoundation.org/research.

For more information about the Dallas Women's Foundation and how to get involved visit www.dallaswomensfoundation.org or call 214-965-9988. To be added to Dallas Women's Foundation's secure database to receive invitations to events and periodic updates, please email lgrindele@dallaswomensfoundation.org.

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GENDER MATTERS

An Analysis of the Texas State Budget

2010-2011



Study Underwritten by the
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at the
Dallas Women's Foundation

Lifting Communities
by investing
in women

GENDER MATTERS

An Analysis of the Texas State Budget

The lives and needs of women and men differ in documented and meaningful ways, from reproductive roles and longevity to educational achievement, labor force participation and family care-giving. Examining our state budget through a gender lens will help determine where allocations should be different to address these unique needs.

This study specifically focuses on challenges facing women and girls in Texas, not merely in the interests of equality but also in pursuit of a healthy, thriving state now and in the future. It is a widely acknowledged fact that when you help a woman, you also help her family and, ultimately, her community. Investing in women is the fastest, surest way to create a ripple effect that will produce profound social change.

OVERVIEW

Gender Matters: *An Analysis of the Texas State Budget* focuses on the impacts of fiscal policy on the health, safety, education and economic security of women and girls. The study, conducted by the Center for Public Policy Priorities and the Dallas Women's Foundation, identifies intervention points and considers actions needed to improve outcomes for women and girls in our state.

KEY FINDINGS

FISCAL POLICY: *State fiscal policies place heavy tax burdens on female-headed households and fail to maximize federal dollars available to assist women and girls in Texas.*

The economic vulnerability of Texas' 2.4 million female-headed households is compounded by the regressive tax system in this state. Under current policy, proportionately more is taken from low-income households, leaving them with less to pay for other household essentials or save for a rainy day. More than half of all female-headed households report incomes in the lowest 20 percent of all Texans and therefore pay 12.4 percent in state and local taxes – twice the rate of 6.2 percent that other Texans pay.

In addition, generally low tax rates in Texas yield fewer program dollars to bring matching federal monies back into the state. Of particular importance to women and girls, Texas forfeits billions of federal dollars in health and child care subsidies each year.

HEALTH & SAFETY: *State investments in health and safety programs for Texans consistently rank among the lowest in the nation, resulting in limited services and protections for victims of family violence, who are predominantly women and girls.*

A concerted effort has been made recently in the state budget to improve outcomes of child abuse investigation, foster care and adoption subsidy programs. Yet, Texas still spends very little compared to other states, ranking 45th in public spending per capita on child abuse programs.

Texas also spends far less on emergency shelter and other services for victims of domestic violence than do other high-population states such as Illinois and New York. The state currently funds approximately 38 cents on the dollar for these programs, placing the remainder of the burden on local governments, private foundations and individual donors.

ECONOMIC SECURITY: *Rising higher education costs, combined with exceptionally low investments in cash assistance and child care subsidies for poor families, undermine the economic security of women in Texas, particularly single mothers and their children.*

Access to higher education: For women, even more so than for men, a college degree is the best defense against poverty. To lower her risk of poverty below 10 percent, a woman in Texas must achieve a higher degree, while her male counterparts need only have some post-secondary education. Unfortunately, tuition deregulation and stagnant general revenue support from the state budget are making the type of education essential to a woman's economic stability less affordable.

Child care and support: In 2008, child support enforcement programs in Texas pulled 83,000 children out of poverty. However, Texas provides very little in cash assistance and child care subsidies, which are critical supports for the state's families led by single mothers. Only three states provide lower cash grants for poor families, and only four report smaller shares of low-income children in subsidized child care.

Public employment: Women are almost twice as likely as men to work for the government. As such, legislative decisions related to staffing levels and compensation in Texas affect women disproportionately, especially in the case of state health and human services agencies as well as public elementary and secondary schools.