

Women, Work and Poverty: The 21st Century Challenge



**Charles Bruner, with Michael Crawford
and Anne Discher
Child and Family Policy Center
December 2009**



Table of Contents

Page	
iii	Foreword and Acknowledgements
iv	Executive Summary
1	Introduction
2	Women and Poverty: An Historical Overview
6	Changing Demographics – Workforce Participation Rates of Women and Men
8	Causes of the Gender Poverty Disparity I - Earnings
14	Causes of the Gender Poverty Disparity II – Single Parenting
20	Policies to Reduce Income Disparities and Poverty Rates by Gender
34	Additional Reading: Related Publications on Poverty and Public Policy
35	Appendices

Foreword and Acknowledgements

Poverty is at the root of almost all of America's social issues and concerns. It is a prominent factor in explaining differences in children's health, education, social development and economic well-being as adults. It contributes to the profound disparities that exist by race, language, culture and place in the United States.

Poverty disproportionately affects women, and it is most pronounced and devastating to children in single-parent families. In the 1970s and 1980s, the women's liberation movement made the "feminization of poverty" into a significant broad-based policy issue – with documentation and use of the wage gap experienced by women compared to men (59 cents) and the impoverishment that women often faced after divorce.

Since that time, advocates in Iowa, and in the U.S. as a whole, have made gains on many of these issues, but broad public discussion of gender-based inequities has dissipated. In the 1990s, personal responsibility became a dominant theme in welfare reform and family policy.

With poverty again taking on greater public prominence today, it is time to revisit the issue from a gender perspective.

CFPC is appreciative to David Harrison, the STEP Project and the Northwest Area Foundation for supporting this work. All the views, however, remain those of CFPC and not necessarily the Project or the Foundation.

Women, Work and Poverty: The 21st Century Challenge

Executive Summary

Introduction. There always has been a strong gender basis to poverty in the United States. Discussions of the “feminization of poverty” brought these issues to public prominence in the 1970s and 1980s. At that time, advocates of women’s rights identified multiple factors contributing to gender-based poverty:

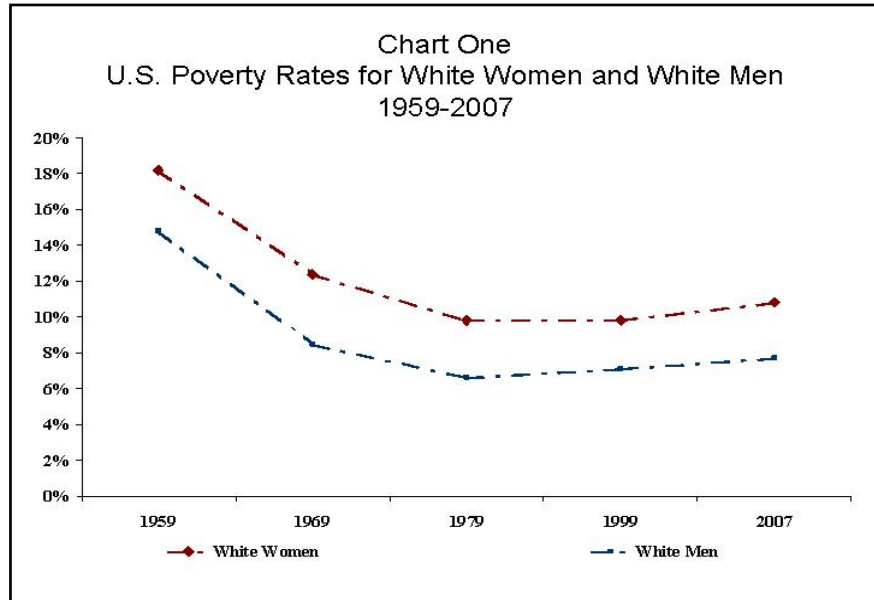
- pay inequities within job classifications and across jobs of comparable worth;
- occupational segregation, with “women’s jobs” among the lowest paid;
- employment discrimination, glass ceilings and blocked career ladders;
- the absence of family-leave policies and practices;
- the lack of affordable child care for working mothers;
- gaps in the establishment, adequacy, and enforcement of child-support orders; and
- the increase in single-parenting, a trend that places particular strains on young women raising their children.

Over the last quarter-century, lawmakers at both the national and state levels have sought to address many of these factors. In fact, trend data – both nationally and Iowa – show improvements in some areas. Still, disparities have not disappeared. Coupled with changing demographics, their persistence clearly demonstrates the need for continued and concerted public efforts to support women – particularly low-income single mothers – in obtaining the fairly-paid work they need to support their children.

Fifty-Year Overview. The last half-century has seen a persistent gap in the poverty rates of men and women. The ratio of poverty rates of women compared to men actually widened between 1959 and 1990 and has remained stable since that time. Working-age women have been 40 percent more likely to be in poverty than working-age men. The ratio of the rates among retired women and men have been even greater, although there have been dramatic reductions in poverty among seniors as a whole.

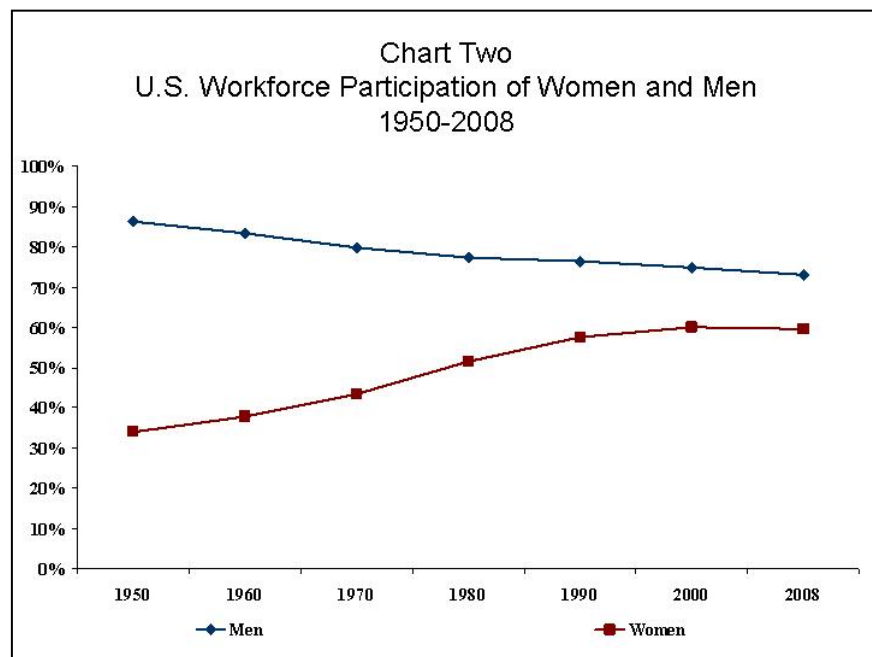
These figures confirm the persistence of large gender gaps in poverty into the 21st century.

Poverty data like these are based on household units. Both the man and woman in a married-couple household are given the same poverty designation. Therefore, the difference in poverty rates by gender is the result of differences between single-male and -female heads of households and their prevalence in society.



Workforce Participation Rates. Women have always worked, but not always in the form of paid employment outside the home. Overall workforce participation rates of women, however, have more than doubled since 1950, while rates of employment of men declined (primarily the result of reduced work levels of men over 65). By 2008 in the United States, 73.0 percent of men over the age of 16 were in the workforce, compared with 59.5 percent of women. In Iowa, participation rates were even higher and the gaps lower, with 74.7 percent of men and 63.3 percent of women in the workforce.

This increase in the workforce participation rates of women has contributed substantially to economic growth and

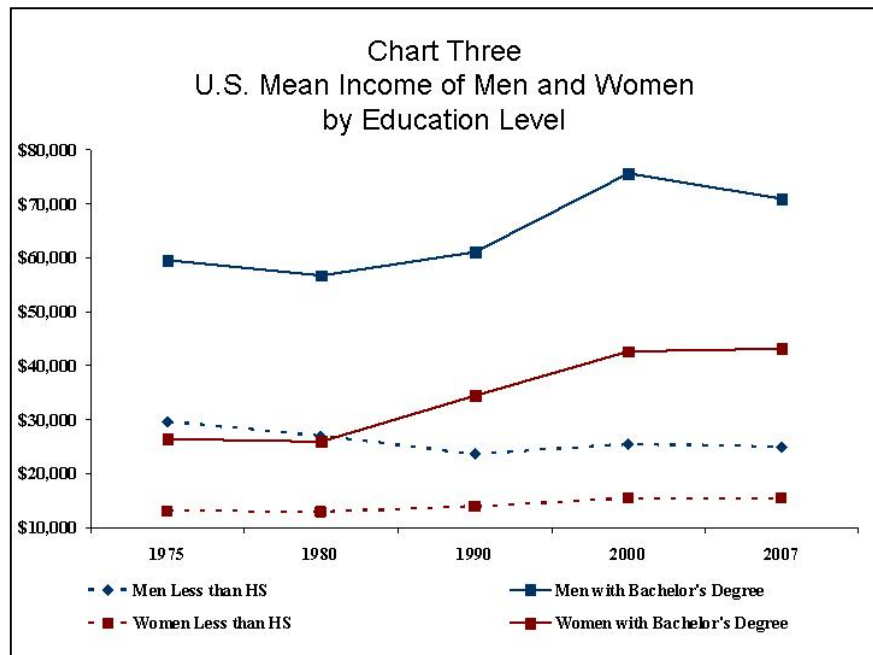


the national and state gross domestic products. It also has contributed to the much greater security and affluence among married-couple households, the majority of whom have two sources of wage-earning support.

Causes of the Gender Poverty Disparity – Earnings. One of the major policy foci in the 1970s and 1980s to addressing gender-poverty disparities was to improve wage equity. While women were increasingly likely to be in the workforce, their pay levels were consistently well below those of men. During the years that women’s workforce participation rates rose most dramatically (1955 to 1980), the median income of a full-time, year-round white woman worker actually declined relative to that of a man, from 65 cents for every dollar a man earned down to 59 cents. Since that period, this gap has narrowed by nearly one-half, to 78 cents.

Education is strongly related to earnings, and one of the factors behind the narrowing of the earnings gap between men and women is that women have increased their education levels much more dramatically than men. Between 1990 and 2007, the percentage of women in the 30- to 34-year-old age range who had college degrees increased from 24.1 percent to 37.0 percent, while the share of men in the same age range increased from 24.9 percent to 31.0 percent. This trend will have very long-term consequences for employment and wage distribution in the United States.

These trends also highlight the work still to be done. Although the wage gap between men and women of similar educational backgrounds has narrowed slightly over time, it has not disappeared. Moreover, since highly educated and compensated women are likely to marry highly educated and compensated men, the overall impact upon reducing gender-poverty disparities is likely to be minimal.



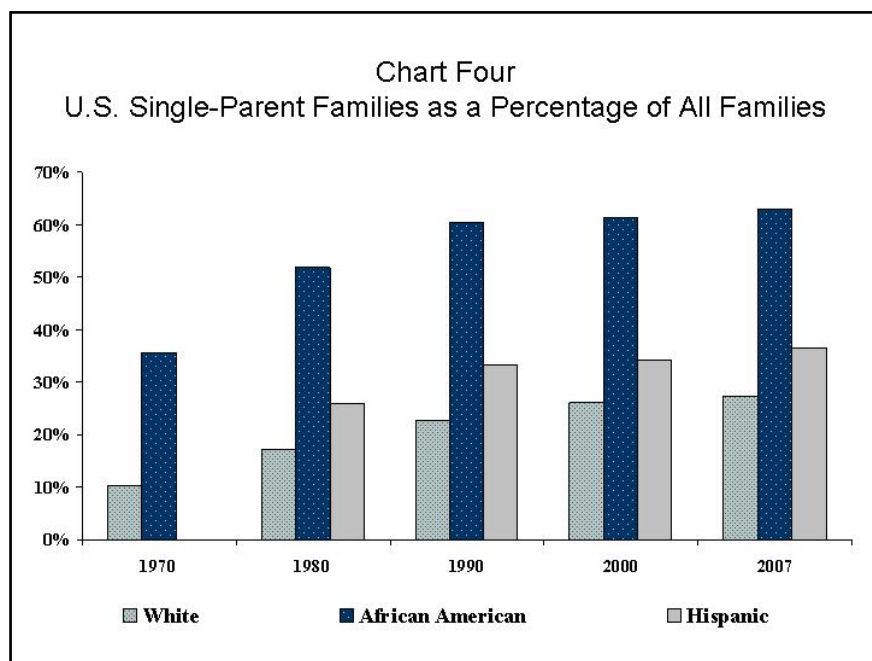
While Iowa’s trend data is similar to national data, the workforce participation of women in Iowa has grown more dramatically and is higher than that of the nation as a whole. At the same time, the proportion of both men and women with college degrees, and particularly graduate degrees, is below the national average – a cause for considerable concern for Iowa’s overall economic growth and development.

Causes of Gender-Poverty Disparity – Single Parenting. While there are differences in poverty rates among single, working-age and retired women and men, the major contributor to gender-poverty disparities is the higher prevalence of single-parent families headed by women than those headed by men – and the much higher rate of poverty among those families. Nationally, 6.4 percent of married-couple families live in poverty, compared with 36.5 percent of mother-only families and 17.2 percent of father-only families (the figures for Iowa are more pronounced – 4.4 percent, 37.1 percent, and 16.0 percent, respectively). Moreover, there are almost seven times as many mother-only families as there are father-only families.

Single-parenting rates grew steadily from 1970 to 2007 across race and ethnicity. Among whites, the percentage of single-parent families rose from 12.8 percent to 26.3 percent, and among African Americans it rose from 35.7 percent to 62.9 percent. While the African-American rate has leveled off over the last two decades (at the same time the white rate has continued to rise), the increase in incarceration rates among African-American men during this period has put additional strains on gender- and child-poverty rates in the African-American community.

While divorce plays a role in this increase in single parenting, the biggest factor is the increase in the share of never-married parents-- a pattern most common among women with low levels of education. Contrary to popular belief, this has not been the result of greater rates of adolescent child-bearing, as the birthrate among 15- to 19-year-old women declined over the period. Those that did give birth, however, were much less likely to be married.

Currently, Iowa's rates of single parenting, never-married parents, and birthrates among adolescents remain lower than those in the country as a whole, but Iowa is catching up. The gap between the proportion of children living in single-parent families in Iowa and the U.S. has narrowed by more than half since 1980. While the rate of



adolescent parenting among whites in Iowa remains below the national average, adolescent parenting among African Americans and Hispanics has increased and, among African Americans is two-thirds higher than in the country as a whole.

Iowa Policies to Reduce Income and Poverty Disparities by Gender. Since the “feminization of poverty” was brought to the attention of state policymakers in the 1980s, Iowa has taken a number of steps to address poverty and the gender bases to that poverty. Some have shown significant success in addressing particular factors associated with poverty, but other policies have not kept pace with changing Iowa demographics.

Equal Pay, Comparable Worth, and Low-Wage Women’s Jobs. Wage disparities still exist within specific job classifications, but both federal and state Equal Pay statutes have worked to eliminate discrimination by gender regarding “equal pay for equal work.” In addition, recognizing that many jobs were segregated by gender, in 1983 Iowa became one of a handful of states to enact comparable worth legislation designed to provide “equal pay for jobs of comparable worth” in state government, as defined by the skills, safety concerns, and responsibility of the jobs. Iowa’s comparable worth legislation resulted in very significant pay-grade increases in many jobs held predominantly by women, particularly in nursing, social work and residential treatment. At the time, two-thirds of Iowa job classifications were segregated by gender. Comparisons of the pre-comparable worth state workforce in 1982 with the workforce today show an increase in the percentage of women employed by the state and a very dramatic narrowing in pay-grade differentials between women and men employees – from six pay grades to one. In addition, female pay as a proportion of male pay has increased from 76 cents on the dollar to 96 cents, and women moved from holding 11.0 percent to 34.9 percent of the highest pay-grade jobs.

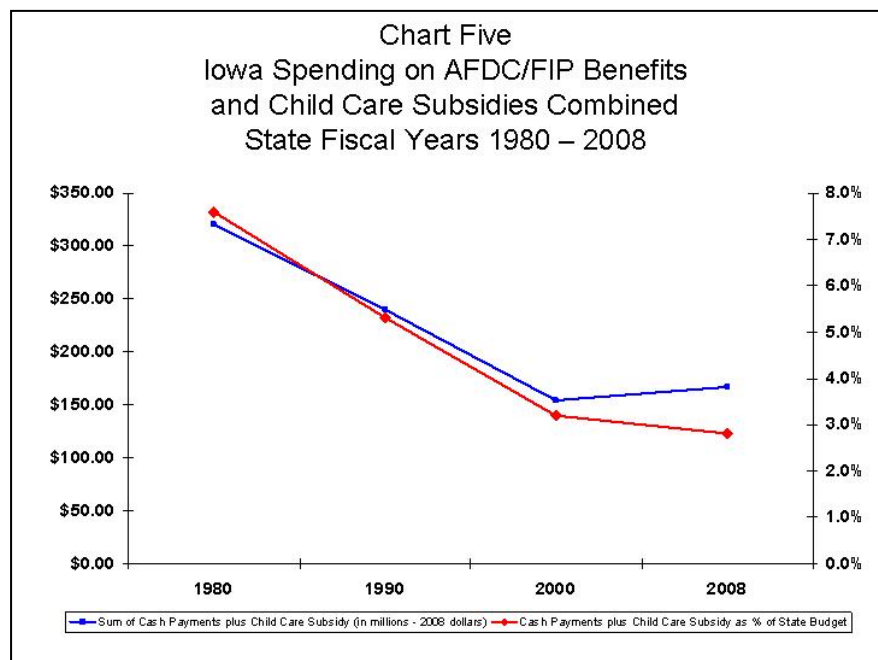
While these are dramatic improvements in the state workforce, they do not speak to the private workforce, where most people are employed. There remains substantial segregation of employment by gender, with women disproportionately represented in some of the lowest-paid jobs. This includes areas of rapidly growing employment, such as child care and home-health care. Both fields are comprised of approximately 90 percent women, and their mean hourly wages are 51.7 percent and 62.2 percent of the Iowa mean hourly wage for all work, respectively.

Direct Public Assistance and Transfer Payments – AFDC/TANF Benefits and Child Care Subsidies. While not necessarily moving families above the poverty line, federal and state governments provide safety-net services to support families with children. The Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program was established in 1935 to provide a financial safety net to children who were deprived of a family breadwinner, usually due to death, divorce or disability. In the 1960s and 1970s, there was much attention to raising benefit levels for low-income parents to enable them to stay at home to care for their children. Welfare reform in the 1990s resulted in a philosophic and financing shift toward Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) as a bridge to employment, with the expectation that families must seek to take on breadwinning, as

well as caregiving roles, in order to receive assistance. Child-care subsidies grew during this period as a means to enable families to be at work.

In light of shifting policy priorities in Iowa and most of the rest of the country, there has been a dramatic erosion of the value of these welfare payments due to inflation and a freezing of benefit levels. In 1980, AFDC payment levels to families with no other income represented 61.5 percent of the federal poverty level. In 2008, TANF payments had declined to just 29.5 percent of the federal poverty level. Welfare caseloads also declined substantially during this period as well.

Meanwhile, funding for child-care subsidies grew dramatically, and by 2008 surpassed funding for direct welfare payments. Overall, however, between 1980 and 2008, Iowa investments in direct welfare payments and child-care subsidies combined – supports primarily to single-parent families in or at risk of poverty – declined by nearly one-half in inflation-adjusted dollars. As a share of the Iowa budget, they declined by two-thirds, from 7.6 percent to 2.8 percent. In fact, Iowa’s child-care subsidy program has one of the lowest eligibility ceilings in the country – 145 percent of the federal poverty level.



Similarly, expansions in the federal supplemental nutritional assistance program, SNAP (the successor name for food stamps), mean its role in supporting low-income families now well exceeds that of TANF direct payments, even though Iowa has not yet taken up the federal option to expand eligibility for SNAP for working families above 130 percent of poverty.

The relatively low cut-offs for child-care subsidies and SNAP benefits contribute to a “cliff” in the government support available to low-income families, as the reductions in food support and child-care subsidies negate most, and sometimes all, of the gains they see from even modest improvements in their wages.

Iowa has made substantial gains in providing health-insurance coverage for low-income children, through both Medicaid and *hawk-i*, and these gains have helped address children’s health needs amidst rising costs and reduced employer coverage. These

programs do not provide additional income supports to families, however. Further, Iowa's coverage of adults under Medicaid only covers very low-income parents, those with incomes well below the federal poverty level.

Tax Credits and Supports – Earned Income Tax Credit and Child and Dependent Credit. At the federal level, the most significant actions, in dollar terms, to address poverty have been through the tax code – the enactment and major expansions of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the establishment of a very significant child credit. The refundable nature of these credits effectively has lifted tens of millions of children and families out of poverty.

Iowa was one of the first states to adopt a state earned income tax credit (in 1989), but Iowa's EITC has been expanded only slightly since that time. Because of its minimal child and dependent credits and its small EITC, Iowa's income tax code actually negates some of the benefits of the federal earned income tax credit. A working single parent, as well as a working two-parent family, begins paying Iowa income taxes at the poverty level, although those families receive refunds from the federal government until they earn at almost 200 percent of poverty level. Iowa's tax structure places much heavier relative burdens on working families with children than it does on any other type of taxpayers.

Alimony and Child Support. Divorce not only disrupts social relationships, it has serious economic consequences, with women often left worse off than men. When there are children involved, the custodial parent – still most likely to be the women – faces particular challenges. Alimony and child-support laws were placed under great scrutiny in the 1980s, and both Iowa and the nation enacted major reforms to address problems – in paternity determination, Child Support Orders, and the enforcement and collection of that support. The Iowa Supreme Court made major changes to Child Support Order guidelines and protocols and continues to do so, including updating award orders. The Iowa Department of Human Services dramatically increased its work in child-support enforcement, with the benefit of technology that enables wage withholding and tax-refund enforcement. Today, 95 percent of all births have paternity determinations and expectations for economic responsibilities for child-raising by both parents. As a result, public child-support enforcement efforts nationally now gather over \$26 billion annually, superceding the amount of benefits under TANF. In fact, public child-support enforcement, along with the EITC and food stamps now represent the major public income-supplementation efforts for families, with the benefits accruing particularly to single mothers with young children.

Family Leave. Many countries seek to address the economic needs of families with very young children through family leave policies. Families with young children are most likely to be in poverty, because they tend to be at starting and lower-end salary stages of their careers and because their parenting responsibilities are most time-consuming during this period. Paid family leave has been demonstrated in other countries to reduce poverty and to address gender disparities in income. Increasingly, states, including

Iowa, are looking at family-leave policies and options for paid family leave, as another way to address family economic stability and gender disparities in poverty.

Conclusions. In Iowa, the work in the 1980s on the feminization of poverty included positive action in state comparable worth, greatly improved child-support enforcement, the expansion of child-care subsidies, and the adoption of a state Earned Income Tax Credit. Welfare reform in the 1990's created a new expectation for persons receiving welfare benefits to secure employment, but actual state financial support to families on welfare – disproportionately women with children – actually declined.

The issues that focused policymakers on “the feminization of poverty” decades ago remain today. Women continue to earn less than men. Work supports continue to be insufficient to ensure financial security for lower-waged employment. The rate of single-parenting continues to rise. Families of color face special obstacles to family stability. These challenges will require continued attention by federal and Iowa officials to the many policy areas touching the lives of working mothers.

Women, Work, and Poverty: The 21st Century Challenge

Introduction

Historically, there always has been a strong gender basis to poverty. Throughout America's history, women have been more likely to be poor than men. In the 1970s and 1980s, the discussion of the "feminization of poverty," as well as the women's liberation movement, raised to public prominence a number of gender-based economic issues that contributed to these disparities:

- pay inequities within specific job classifications and across jobs of comparable worth;
- continued occupational segregation of women and men, with "women's jobs" among the lowest paid;
- employment discrimination, glass ceilings and blocked career ladders;
- family leave policies and practices;
- the lack of affordable child care for working mothers;
- the establishment, adequacy, and enforcement gaps in child support; and
- the increase in single-parenting, placing particular strains on young women raising their children.

A 1983 report by then Iowa State Senator Charles Bruner, entitled *Women, Work, and Poverty: Trends and Their Consequences for Iowa Government*, provided a wealth of trend data and statistical information regarding women, work, and poverty in Iowa. The report proved to be influential in establishing Iowa's comparable worth legislation, strengthening child support enforcement laws, developing two-generation family development approaches to support families on public assistance, and expanding Iowa's child care subsidy programs. Since that time, many significant actions have been taken in Iowa and the nation to address gender-based poverty concerns.

Even before the 2008 recession had begun to show itself, the issue of poverty had again risen to public prominence. John Edward's Presidential campaign created a prominent focus upon poverty reduction, taken on by other candidates for President, including then Presidential candidate Barack Obama. Several states established Commissions with goals to reduce poverty in half within a decade. A bipartisan group of Iowa legislators established a Successful Families caucus to develop proposals to reduce poverty. First Lady Mari Culver convened a Conference on Solutions to Poverty in September 2008, which brought together key stakeholders in developing policy priorities to reduce poverty and increase economic stability and success.

The recession and economic crisis currently facing Iowa and the nation now threaten to put more families into poverty. Absent significant policy actions, women and children are expected to bear the brunt of the recession.

The issues raised in the 1970s and 1980s regarding the feminization of poverty remain relevant today. The statistical and trend data provided in *Women, Work, and Poverty* deserves to be updated and placed in a 21st Century context.

This report does just that. It provides statistical and trend data that can inform discussions on how best to respond to the current recession and reduce poverty over the long-term, with a specific focus upon gender. There are both hopeful and discouraging signs within the data. On the hopeful side, there is much evidence that many public actions that have been taken since 1983 do help to reduce gender inequities and poverty among women. On the discouraging side, some social trends have increased the challenges that society faces to addressing gender disparities in poverty.

As the 1983 report concluded, there are no simple answers to complex issues. Addressing poverty, and specifically female poverty, will require responses on multiple fronts. Most of the issues that were raised in 1983 remain relevant today, despite a quarter century of work and activity. At the same time, the direction, if not the size, of the responses made over this period represent something to be built upon for future actions. Iowa policy makers can learn from the past in fashioning solutions that not only can reduce poverty but can do so in ways that reduce gender disparities in poverty as well.

Women and Poverty: An Historical Overview

Poverty and Gender. Poverty is a concept that has been applied to a household unit and not to an individual. The federal poverty rate is determined by income and family size. In married couple families, for instance, income from both spouses is combined and poverty is determined based upon that income and the number of members in the household. All members of that family are considered to be in poverty if the family is determined to be in poverty.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services produces annual poverty guidelines (based on the poverty thresholds of the United States Census) used to determine eligibility for a number of federal programs, and the most recent guidelines are shown in Table One. For 2009, a married couple with two children is considered to be in poverty if its income is below \$22,050.

Table One The 2009 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia	
Persons in family	Poverty guideline
1	\$10,830
2	14,570
3	18,310
4	22,050
5	25,790
6	29,530
7	33,270
8	37,010

For families with more than 8 persons, add \$3,740 for each additional person.

While there is much debate over the manner in which poverty levels should be calculated, with many arguing for revisions to the calculations and much higher levels, the method for calculating poverty has remained consistent over time and allows for comparisons in poverty rates over the years. While the United States Census consistently has reported poverty rates among households, however, it has not always made information available by different types of households or by age and gender.

Further, there is a wealth of literature on the impacts of poverty on well-being, both for adults and for children. Many social problems are viewed to have their primary roots in poverty and the lack of resources within families to meet basic needs and plan for and invest in the future. Child poverty, in particular, is associated with poorer health, lack of school readiness, school failure, abuse and neglect, exposure to environmental toxins and violence, and juvenile delinquency, which in turn lead to marginalization and similar problems as adults.

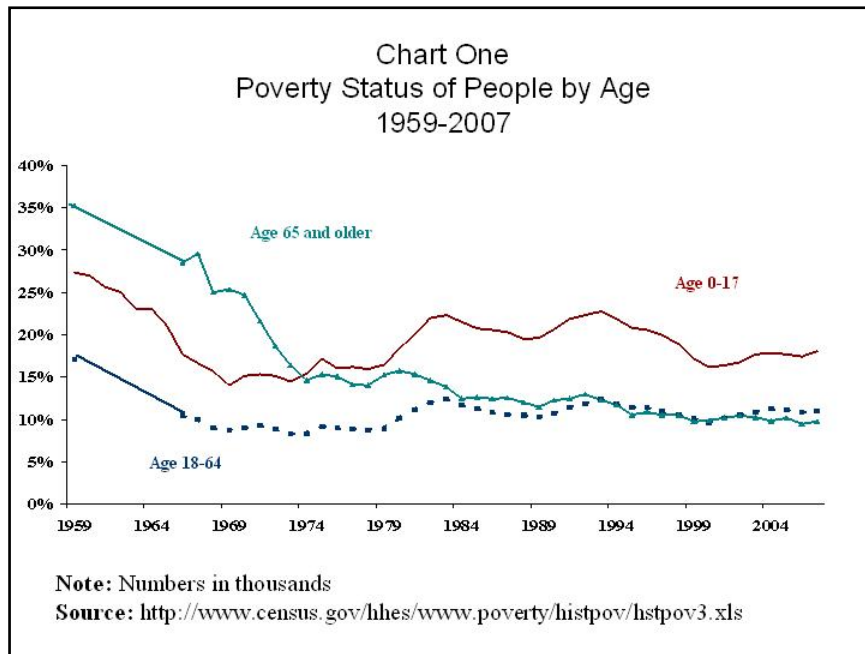
The majority of adult women are part of married couple families, so their likelihood of being in poverty is the same as those of their spouses. Differential poverty rates between adult men and women are therefore due to the experience of unmarried retired individuals (who disproportionately are women), single parents (also disproportionately women), and single childless individuals of working age.

While wage disparities between men and women represent one factor that can contribute to higher poverty rates among women, single-parenting and retirement income play more prominent roles in differential poverty rates, as further analysis will show.

Poverty and Gender in America Since 1950. Historically, McLanahan, Sorenson, and Watson (1989) have done the most thorough analysis of available data on poverty and gender in the United States between 1950 and 1980. They found that the adult female/male poverty ratio between 1950 and 1980 had increased, among both Whites and African Americans. Among Whites, women's poverty rates were 10% higher than men's in 1950, but had risen to be almost 50% higher by 1980. The rise was especially dramatic for those over age 65; women's poverty rates were 13% higher than men's in

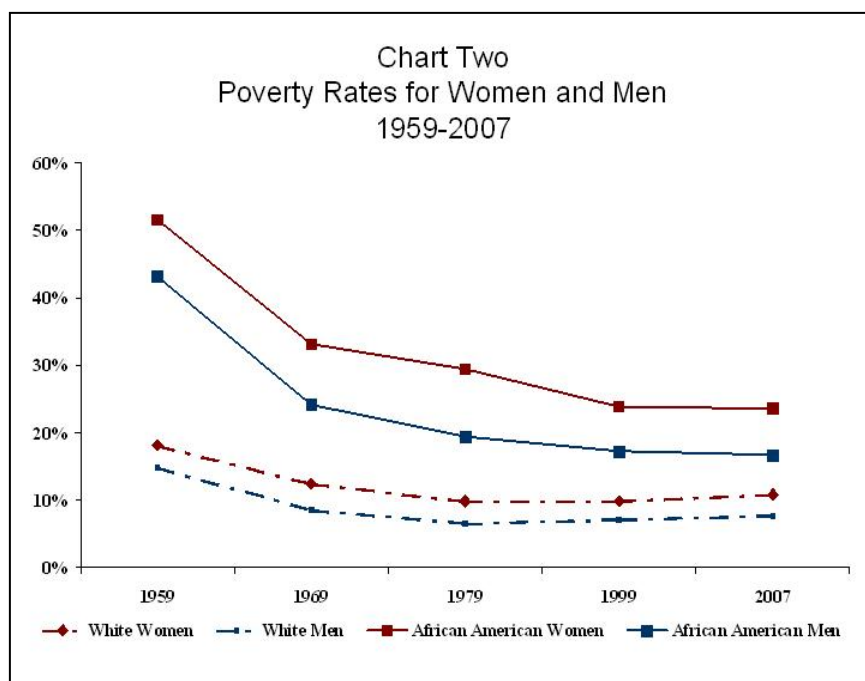
1950 but climbed to 76% higher by 1980. This climb in the relative poverty rate of women over 65, however, does not tell the entire story, as poverty rates among seniors declined substantially over this period.

Chart One shows the poverty status of the United States' population by age, which clearly shows the decline in poverty among seniors since 1959, but the persistence of a gap between children and working-age adults over the entire period.



The higher poverty status among children (whose poverty rate has exceeded that of the elderly since the early 1970s) is largely due to the increase in single-parent families, which continue to be predominantly mother-headed households.

Overall, the national data on differentials in adult poverty by gender, for White and African Americans, is shown in Chart Two.



As Chart Two shows, the poverty rate among women, relative to men, increased for both Whites and African Americans between 1959 and 1969, increased slightly through 1979, and has subsequently declined somewhat since that time. Still, in 2007, the ratio of poverty among White women compared to men was 1.40, while in 1959 it was 1.23. The ratio of poverty among African American women compared to men was

1.41 in 2007, compared to 1.19 in 1959. When further broken out by age (see Appendix for Table A), the data show that the overall decline between 1979 and 2007 for White women is due to substantial reductions in poverty disparities among those over 45. Growing poverty disparities over this same period are predominantly caused by single parenting hardship. As women get older, their likelihood of being single parents of children under 18 declines.

Poverty and Gender in Iowa – 1990 to 2007. Census data is available for Iowa and the United States on poverty and gender for the period from 1990 to 2007, so it is possible to compare Iowa’s rates with national rates.

Table Two shows the poverty ratios for women compared to men for both Iowa and the United States for the 18-64 and 65+ populations from 1990 through 2007. The Appendix includes a table showing more complete information for these years.

Table Two Female Poverty and Female/Male Poverty Ratios in Iowa and the United States: 1990-2007			
	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2007</u>
18-64 Female Poverty Rates			
Iowa	11.8%	9.7%	12.6%
United States	12.8%	12.6%	13.5%
65+ Female Poverty Rates			
Iowa	14.3%	9.6%	9.7%
United States	15.8%	11.9%	11.4%
18-64 Female/Male Poverty Ratios			
Iowa	1.36	1.28	1.40
United States	1.39	1.31	1.39
65+ Female/Male Poverty Ratios			
Iowa	2.13	1.80	1.90
United States	1.88	1.70	1.63

Table Two shows that Iowa’s poverty rate among both women 18-64 and 65+ has been somewhat below national poverty rates for women, with this difference more pronounced for the 65+ population than for the 18-64 population. At the same time, the ratio of female to male poverty for the 18-64 population has been almost identical to that for the United States population as a whole. Although not shown in Table Two, Iowa’s ratio has been substantially higher for the 65+ population, a statistic largely attributable to the percentage of women 75+ who are in poverty – 12.7% in 2007, compared to only 5.7% of men 75+ who are impoverished in the state.

Although poverty rates have been generally lower in Iowa than the country as a whole, particularly for the 65+ population, adult women in Iowa remain much more likely to be in poverty than adult men, with that likelihood much more pronounced among women over 65. Gender-based poverty continues to be an important policy issue and concern for Iowa and the United States.

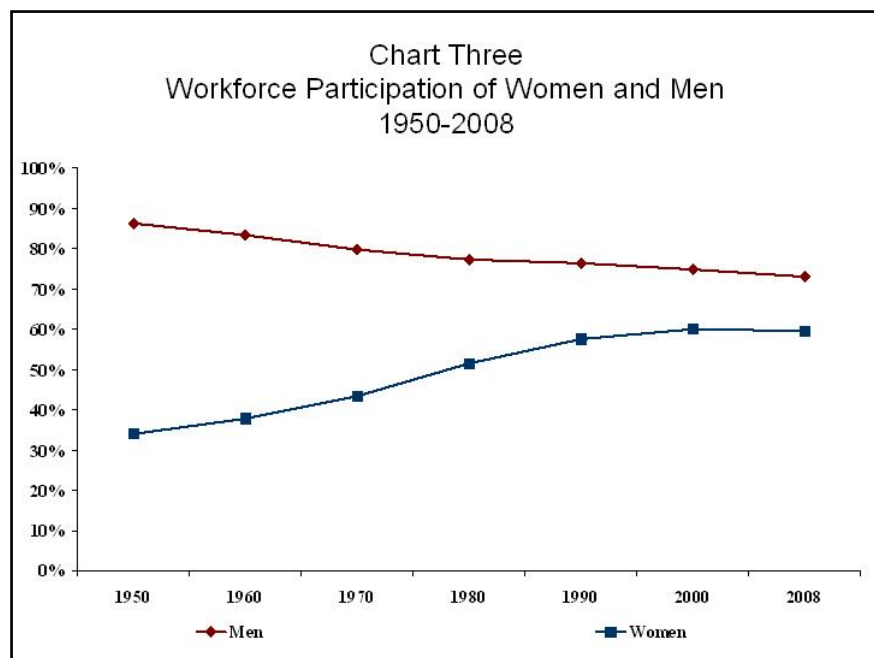
Since this paper is focused upon women, *work*, and poverty, it will give primary attention to working age women. The next two sections discuss factors that contribute to gender poverty disparities among working age women and men.

Changing Demographics – Workforce Participation Rates of Women and Men

Women have always worked, although this has not always been in paid employment outside the home. In agrarian America, men and women traditionally shared work responsibilities in planting and harvesting crops, and managing poultry and livestock, although neither gender conducted this work in salaried positions. As America industrialized, women and children alike worked in factories; and during World War II women took on many construction and manufacturing roles while men were overseas.

When America emerged from the Second World War as the only largely intact large industrial country in the world, its opportunities for economic expansion were pronounced and wages for blue-collar as well as white-collar employment increased dramatically. The 1950s and 1960s represented a unique era in American society where a single wage earner, usually the man, working in the non-farm sector, was able to earn enough to provide for the family. While some married women worked during this era and most single women worked, the dominant American presentation of the American family was of a full-time working father and a homemaking mother, not working outside the home but instead managing the household and caring for the children.

National Trends of Overall Workforce Participation. Mid-century, the participation of women in the paid workforce relative to men was at its lowest level in American history. In 1950, 86.4% of all men over the age of 16 were in the workforce, compared with 33.9% of women. In 2008,



however, 73.0% of men over the age of 16 were in the workforce, compared with 59.5% of women. As Chart Three shows, the majority of the growth in workforce participation among women occurred between 1950 and 1990. The decline in male workforce participation over this period was primarily the result of much reduced workforce participation among men over 65 (from 45.8% in 1950 to 16.5% in 1998) and a smaller reduction of workforce participation of men between the ages of 16 and 24 (from 77.3% to 68.4%). Meanwhile, women's workforce participation increased for all age ranges.

Nationally, there has been an even more dramatic increase in workforce participation rates of mothers of young children and of both spouses in married couple families.

Iowa Workforce Participation Rates. Iowa's workforce participation rates have generally been higher than the country's as a whole, for both men and women. Table Three shows the workforce participation rates both for women and men as a whole, and for mothers with young children.

Table Three					
Iowa Workforce Participation of Women, Men, Married Couples, and Mothers with Young Children (in percentages)					
	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2007</u>
Workforce Participation Rates age 16+					
Total	57.7	62.6	66.0	68.2	68.9
Men	77.2	76.3	75.0	74.2	74.7
Women	40.0	50.1	57.8	62.7	63.3
Workforce Participation Rates of Married Couples					
Both in Labor Force	28.5	47.7	55.4	61.1	61.5
One in Labor Force	52.2	38.0	26.6	22.2	23.3
Neither in Labor Force	19.3	14.3	18.1	16.7	15.2
Workforce Participation Rates of Mothers with Children 0-5					
Total	29.9	49.1	67.4	72.8	72.8
Two-Parent Households	28.3	48.2	69.4	72.2	71.8
Single-Parent Households	50.6	56.9	56.3	75.9	76.5

As Table Three shows, 63.3% of Iowa women were in the workforce in 2007, which compares to a national rate of 58.6%. Only four states have higher women's workforce participation rates than Iowa. By comparison, 74.7% of Iowa men were in the workforce, compared with a national rate of 71.3%, ranking Iowa eighth among states in the proportion of men who work. Women make up nearly half (47.1%) of Iowa's workforce.

Particularly noteworthy in Table Three is the growth in workforce participation of mothers with young children, which is even more pronounced than for women as a whole. In the 1970s, women in two-parent households predominantly did not work outside the home, but their workforce participation grew steadily from then to 1990.

This increase over two decades actually eclipsed the workforce participation of single mothers, who previously had been much more likely than their married peers to work outside the home. Welfare reform in the 1990s, however, largely was designed to fulfill a societal expectation that single mothers be in the workforce. Since welfare reform was enacted, single mothers with young children now are more likely to be in the workforce than mothers in two-parent families. Women with young children in two-parent families may have more discretion to stay at home, particularly if their spouse has high-paying employment, than women in single-parent families, who need to work to provide for their family.

Labor Force Participation Rates and Gender Poverty. The increase in workforce participation among women has produced substantial gains in overall American economic activity. Women’s entry into the paid workforce between 1950 and 2008 has had a profound impact upon productivity.

For married couple families, this increased workforce participation has created greater earnings and economic security. It has meant that families have two sources of economic support, which also has helped to offset declining real wages during much of this period for lower-educated and lower-skilled male workers. One reason so many mothers of young children in two-parent families are in the workforce today is that their incomes are viewed as necessary to provide economic security for their families. In the 1950s, working class men (with a high school diploma or less) earned substantially more in real dollars than they do today, which enabled their spouses to remain with their young children. The same does not hold today. The increased workforce participation rates of mothers in two-parent families have helped to reduce the overall poverty rate. For single-parent families, however, employment alone often has not been sufficient to lift households out of poverty. Despite being more likely to be in the workforce, single mothers with young children face serious challenges to overcoming poverty, as subsequent sections will show.

Causes of the Gender Poverty Disparity I – Earnings

The previous section spoke only to workforce participation and not to the quality or compensation of employment. Historically, there have been substantial disparities in earnings between women and men, although the overall income disparities in earnings for full-time, year-round workers by gender have declined over time.

Causes of Gender Disparities in Earnings. In some measure, these disparities can be accounted for in terms of overall levels of involvement in the workforce (both full-time employment status and job experience and tenure). Women remain more likely than men to take some time out of the workforce or to reduce their work hours to provide care for their children, particularly when they are of preschool age. This can affect career development and employment opportunity.

Historically, there have been pay differentials between men and women for working at the same job, although “equal pay” laws and rulings, particularly the Equal Pay Act of

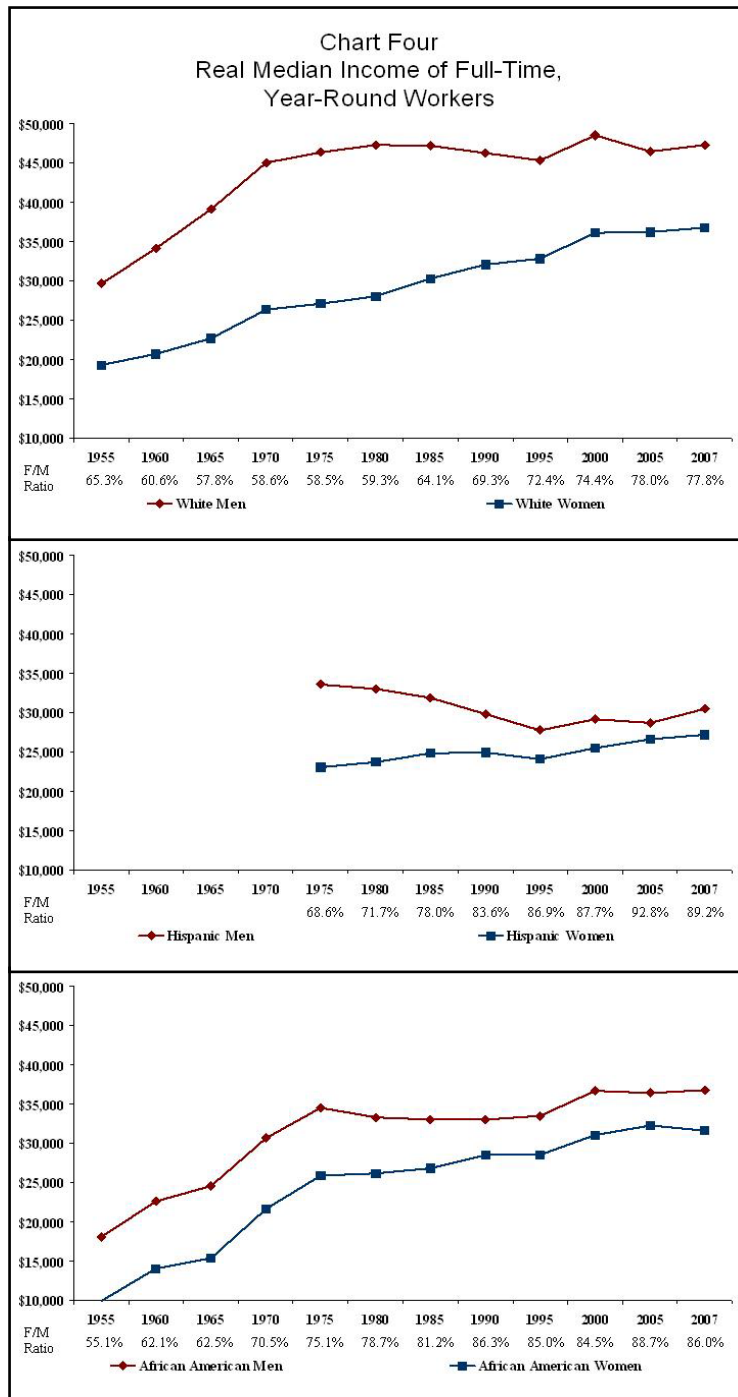
1963, means that this is no longer legal. There also is substantial segregation of employment by different job categories or types, and female-dominated jobs generally are concentrated at the lower end of the employment structure in terms of compensation. There is substantial research to show that female-dominated jobs tend to have lower compensation than male-dominated jobs, even when their “comparable worth” to society (e.g. their skill requirements and social and economic impacts) is equivalent. Particularly in the 1980s a number of states, including Iowa, sought to reorganize pay for public employee jobs based upon concepts of comparable worth, in order to reduce such disparities. Unlike equal pay for equal work, however, where side-by-side discrimination can be identified, equal pay for comparable worth does not have clear metrics upon which to make determinations of discrimination.

Historically, women have been barred from some professions or managerial positions, either on a formal or de facto basis, due to hiring or advancement practices. While no longer legal, there still is evidence that glass ceilings do exist. Women can face more barriers than men in advancing and in receiving appropriate compensation. While women have legal redress for discrimination in employment and advancement, this involves individual-level actions.

The next parts of this section present data on earnings disparities, including information that can provide some indication of the source of current earnings disparities.

National Income Trends for Full-Time Workers by Gender. During the first part of the period that women’s participation in the workforce rose most dramatically (1955 to 1980), the median income of a full-time, year-round White women worker compared to her male counterpart actually declined, although the relative income of African American women workers increased. In 1955, the median income for a White woman compared with a White male was 65.5%; by 1980 that figure had fallen to 59.3%. The National Organization for Women, founded in 1966, made raising this 59 cents to parity one of its organizing calls. Fred Small even wrote a song about it that Peggy Seeger sung, titled “59 Cents.”

As Chart Four shows, the wage gap between male and female full-time White and African American workers has narrowed since 1965, as has the wage gap for Hispanic workers since 1975 (the first time census data is broken out for Hispanics on this measure). Current wage differences between men and women full-time White workers have decreased to 77.8% and for African American and Hispanic workers to 86.0% and 89.2%, respectively. Chart Four also shows the substantial differences between White workers and non-White workers.

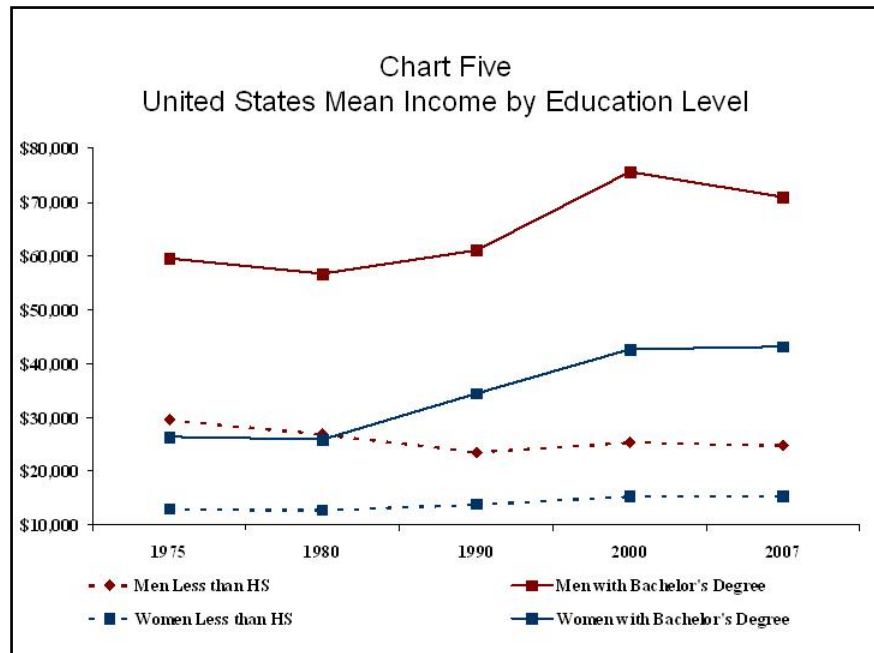


Overall, there has been substantial progress made in women's earnings relative to men, there still remain substantial disparities. While some of the differences could be attributed to less tenure and career advancement in the workforce, choice of profession, or skill level, this is unlikely to account for the full difference. Such income differentials also exist for part-time employed individuals, who are more likely to be women. In particular, as education is a measure of skill and earnings potential, comparisons by education also are needed.

National Trends in Education and Earnings. Education has been called the great economic equalizer. Particularly over the last fifty years, as the American economy has moved from an agricultural and manufacturing base to an information and technology base, earnings potential has been more strongly tied to educational level. Since 1950, there has been declining real income for persons with a high school diploma or less, with earnings growth among those with college and post-secondary education.

Chart Five shows changes in income for men and women workers with less than a high school diploma and with a bachelor's degree. More complete information is found in the Appendix Table C.

As Chart Five shows, there has been a substantial decline overall in the earnings of male workers with less than a high school degree, although women have experienced some gain. At the same time, the wage differential between men and women, although narrowing, is still large, the difference between \$15,315 and \$24,985 in income. There have been increases in the



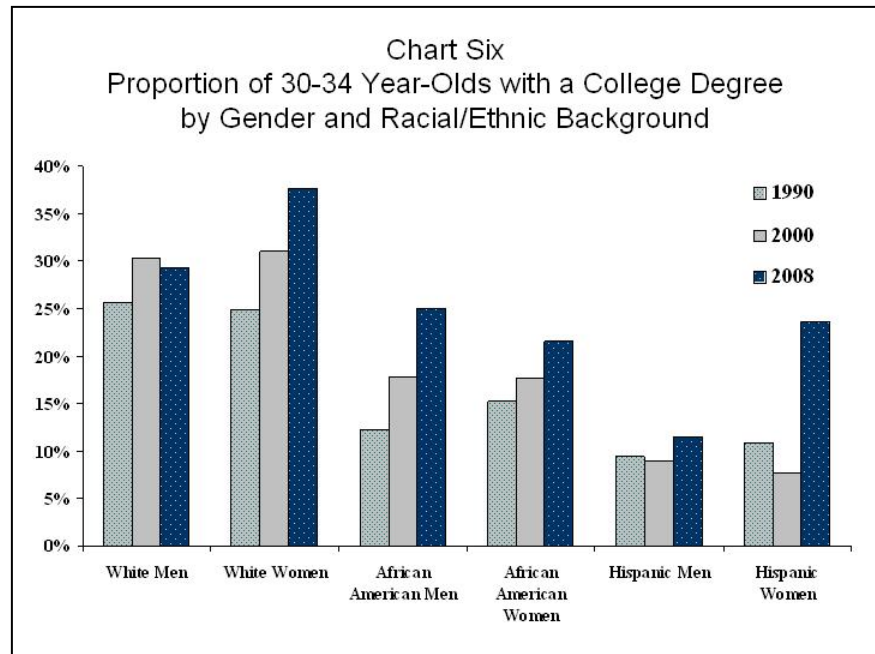
earnings of those with a bachelor's degree for both men and women, with women's increase over the period representing 63.7%, compared with 18.9% for men. Still, the mean income of women with a bachelor's degree is well below the mean income of men, \$43,127 compared to \$70,898.

As has been stated earlier, one of the reasons for the increase in women in the workforce relates to the declining real wages of working men without post-secondary education. At the same time, while women's earnings have increased relative to men's at all education levels, women's incomes still remain much lower than men at every educational level. Only a part of this difference can be attributed to women being more likely to work part-time or for fewer hours than men.

National Trends in Male and Female Education Levels. The G.I. Bill is widely credited with expanding the number of individuals with post-secondary education in the United States, with servicemen returning from World War II and provided the opportunity to return to school for education and skill training. Since 1950, the proportion of the United States adult population (25-64) with post-secondary education

has steadily increased. While the G.I. Bill primarily benefited White men, however, the actual gains in educational attainment since 1950 have been much greater among women than among men. In 1970, for instance, men represented the majority of college students (58%), but by 2000 the figures had been nearly reversed, with women making up 56% of college students.

Overall, national trends in college graduates among 30-34 year-olds, by gender and racial/ethnic background, are shown in Chart Six. College graduation rates represent a good marker for all levels of educational attainment, from high school graduation to associate degrees to advanced degrees beyond college. The 30-34 year-old years are depicted here since they represent the time at which most individuals who complete college will have done so and they also show changes over time in educational attainment of a college-aged cohort.



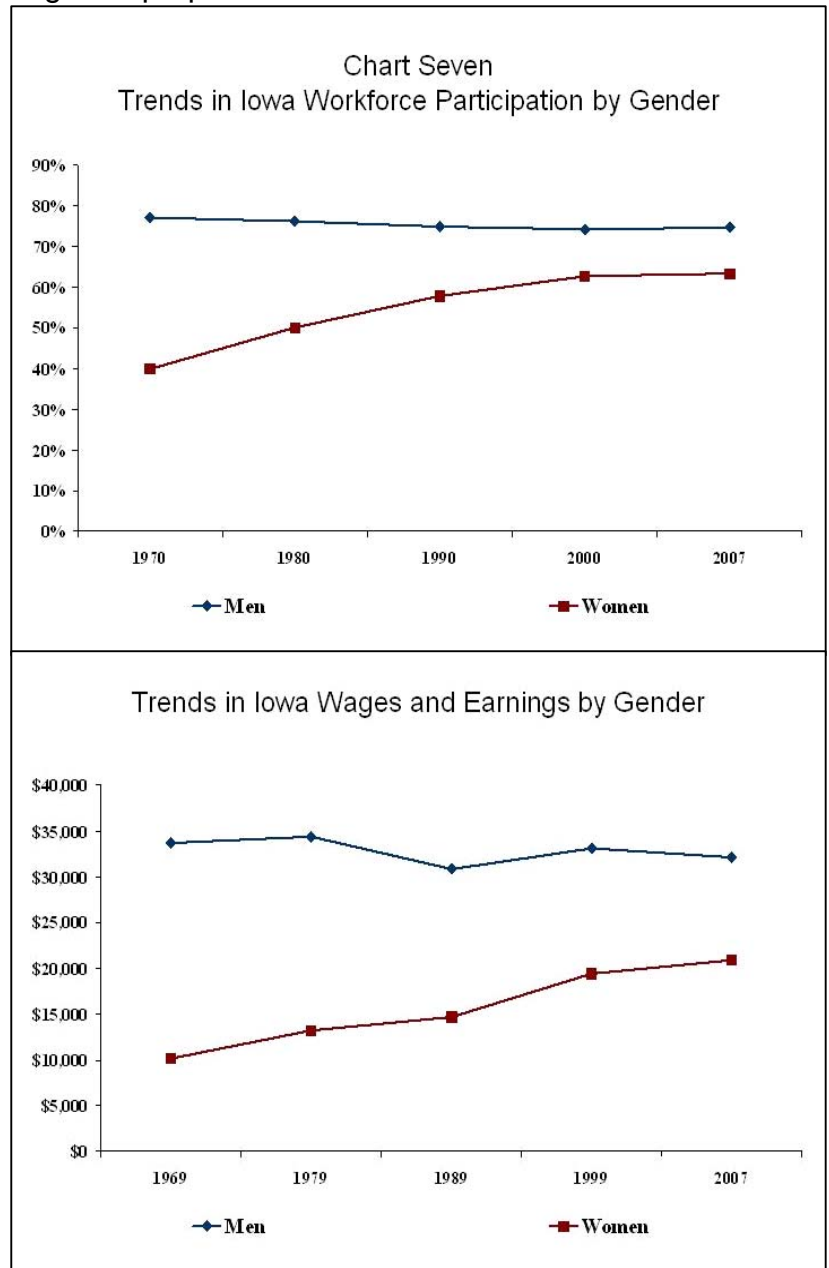
As Chart Six shows, while in 1990 30-34 year-old men and women were almost equally likely to be college graduates, by 2008, women had surpassed men by 6 percentage points, moving from 24.1% to 37.0%, while men increased from 24.9% to 31.0%. Only among African Americans were the gains greater for men than women.

Clearly, this increase in higher education has benefited women economically as a whole. It also has contributed substantially to women's entry into many professions, as women's participation in graduate education, in medicine and law in particular, has opened those fields to many more women. As will be discussed later, college-educated women also are more likely to be married than non-college educated women. They are likely to have fewer children overall, and have a spouse with higher education and earnings overall. Therefore, the impact upon poverty among women from increased levels of education has been modest. It actually has contributed, in some measure, to increases in the overall earnings gap between the top quintile of families in the United States (many with two higher-income professionals) and the lower two quintiles of families (with a disproportionate number of single-parent and single-income families).

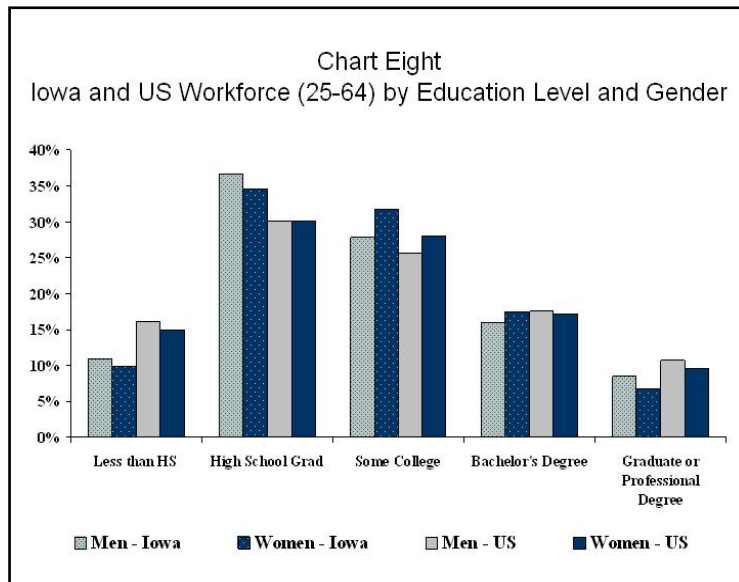
Iowa Trends in Workforce Participation, Wages and Earnings, and Education.

Iowa trends in workforce participation and wages and earnings are generally similar to those in the country as a whole, although the proportion of both women in the workforce is higher and overall wages are lower. Chart Seven shows both the participation rates of women and men in the workforce and their median income levels.

Compared with the United States as a whole, the workforce participation of Iowa men has declined more slowly, with Iowa men in 2007 being slightly more likely to be working than men in the country as a whole (74.7% compared with 73.0%). Women's participation has increased more dramatically in Iowa than the nation as a whole, from below the national average in 1970 (40.0% compared with 43.3%) to well above the national average (63.3% compared with 59.5%). Over eighty percent of the increase occurred between 1970 and 1990 in both Iowa and the country as a whole, and the trends suggest that further dramatic increases in employment among women are not likely to occur. While working is a major factor in avoiding poverty, it is unlikely that increasing the participation of women in the workforce over the long term will be a major contributor to reducing disparities in poverty between men and women.



Iowa prides itself on being a highly literate state, with a strong public education system and commitment to learning. In fact, however, while Iowa ranks very high among states on the high school graduation rate among its adult population, it does not rank so highly with college-educated, and particularly postgraduate-educated, adults. Chart Eight shows the education levels of Iowa's adult workforce, compared with the country as a whole and broken down by both gender and education level.



As Chart Eight shows, Iowa has a much lower percentage of adults over twenty-five with less than a high school diploma, but a somewhat lower percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree and a very significantly lower percentage of adults with a graduate or professional degree (nearly one-fifth lower than for the country as a whole). Iowa women are nearly as likely as men to have at least a bachelor's degree, but substantially less likely to have a graduate or professional

degree. Compared with the United States as a whole, Iowa women are much less likely to have graduate or professional degrees, although this also may reflect the relatively older Iowa population and not the status of younger women in the state.

Chart Eight should not be interpreted as reflective of the quality of Iowa's education system or what proportion of Iowa youth secures college or postgraduate degrees. Iowa youth who graduate from college or graduate schools may not stay in Iowa but move to other states. Iowa may not attract as many college-educated adults from other states as other states attract from Iowa. The composition of the adult workforce is dependent in significant measure to the types of employment opportunities that exist in the state. Still, understanding the education levels of the adult workforce is important to determining what strategies are needed to address poverty issues and the degree to which education can play a role in reducing poverty, and gender-based poverty in particular. Clearly, Iowa's adult population does not have the upper-level educational backgrounds that command the highest wages and that most contribute to economic growth in the information age. This is particularly true for Iowa women.

Causes of the Gender Poverty Disparity II – Single Parenting

As the preceding section showed, individuals with a high school diploma or less have experienced declining real wages over the last fifty years. A single blue-collar job that might have supported a family in 1950 no longer does so. Except for the more highly skilled and compensated jobs, it generally takes two incomes to raise a family. While there has been an increase in education and skilled employment in the country that has contributed to economic growth and supported family economic self-sufficiency, there also has also been a dramatic increase in the proportion of children living in single-parent families, particularly single-parent families headed by less-educated and lower-skilled women.

This is due to a variety of factors, including an increase in divorce rates, an increase in the proportion of births to unmarried women, and an increase in incarceration rates. While single parenting *per se* does not produce either poverty within families nor deny children the opportunity to fulfill their aspirations, the statistics regarding single parents and their children are sobering.

Single parents are significantly more likely to live in poverty (see Table Four) and to be homeless. They are more likely to lack post-secondary education experiences and be in lower-wage employment. Their children are more likely to struggle in school, be subject to maltreatment, and become involved in the juvenile justice system. While there has been an increase over the last two decades in the proportion of single parent families headed by a man (prior to 1980, the census bureau did not provide information on male-headed single-parent families), over three-quarters (76.5%) of all single parent families in the country were headed by a woman in 2007. Further, as Table Four indicates, single parent families headed by men tend to be better off economically than single parent families headed by women, although they are still much more likely than two parent families to live in poverty.

		<u>Number of</u> <u>Households</u>	<u>Number of</u> <u>Households</u> <u>in Poverty</u>	<u>Percent of</u> <u>Households</u> <u>in Poverty</u>
Married Couple Families	Iowa	265,807	11,823	4.4%
With Children Under 18	United States	25,470,441	1,623,871	6.4%
Mother Only Families	Iowa	81,931	30,394	37.1%
With Children Under 18	United States	9,659,915	3,526,273	36.5%
Father Only Families	Iowa	28,169	4,518	16.0%
With Children Under 18	United States	2,964,759	508,643	17.2%
Married Couple Families	Iowa	374,468	7,954	2.1%
No Children Under 18	United States	30,396,650	911,398	3.0%
Grandparent Household	Iowa	12,941	1,537	11.9%
With Children Under 18	United States	2,514,131	481,537	19.2%
Women Nonfamily	Iowa	221,784	43,690	19.7%
	United States	19,947,474	4,069,403	20.4%
Men Nonfamily	Iowa	198,249	30,357	15.3%
	United States	17,311,243	2,618,332	15.1%

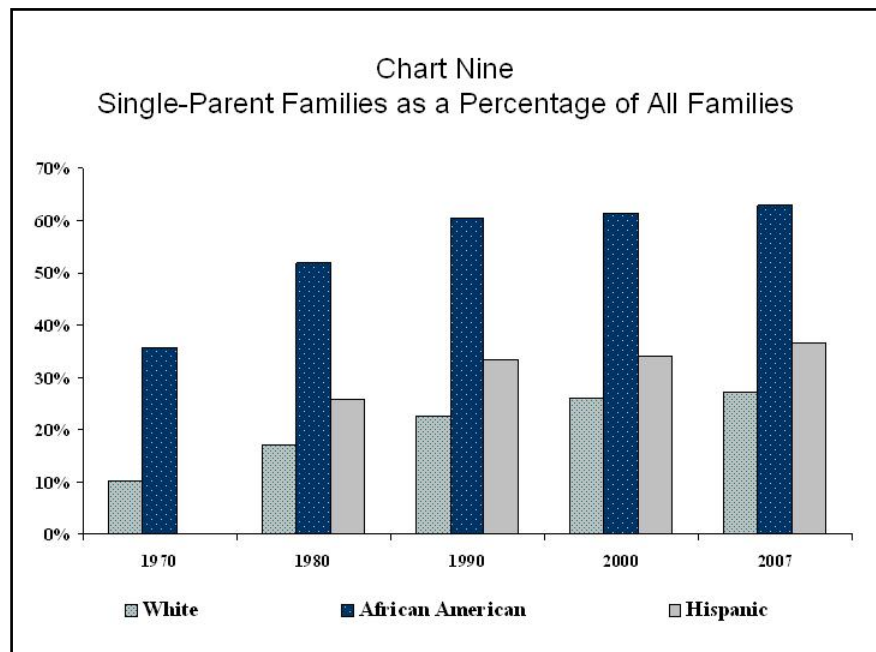
In Iowa in 2007, nearly two in five single parent families headed by a woman (37.1%), which is more than double the rate for single parent families headed by a man (16.0%)

and more than eight times the rate of married couple families with children (4.4%). The majority of families in poverty were single parent families headed by a woman.

National Single Parenting Rates and Births to Adolescent Women. Nationally, there has been an increase in the proportion of children living in single-parent families across all races, but the rates are by far the highest among African American families, as Chart Nine shows.

In fact, in 1964 the Department of Labor's *The Negro Family in America*, the so-called Moynihan Report, was highly controversial for its assertion that the high rate of single-parenting among African Americans represented a key obstacle for their economic development and achieving all civil rights goals. At the time, about one-quarter of African American families were headed by a single parent, slightly below the rate of single parenting among White, non-Hispanic families today. Since then, single parenting among African Americans has become the norm, with over three in five of all African American families (62.9%) headed by a single parent.

As Chart Nine shows, overall, from 1970 to 2007, the single-parenting rate among White, non-Hispanic families grew from 12.8% to 26.3% and in African American families it grew from 35.7% to 62.9%. The rate of single parenting among Hispanic families has grown from 25.9% in 1980 to 36.5% in 2007. The single-parenting rate remains lowest among Asian families (not shown in chart), at 17.1% in 2007.



While the growth rate in single parenting on a percentage basis has been largest among White, non-Hispanic families, the size of the increase has been largest among African American families. Again, the majority of the increase in single parenting occurred between 1970 and 1990, with African American single parenting leveling off at the point, while both White and Hispanic single parenting has continued to increase, although at a lower rate.

The dramatic rise in incarceration over the last two decades, which disproportionately has impacted African American young men, further has weakened the ability of the

African American community to provide two sources of economic and parenting support for children. Nearly one in ten African American men between the ages of 18 and 30, prime ages for starting a family, is in prison or jail. While single parenting among African Americans had nearly peaked by 1990, the high rates of incarceration among African Americans present an additional barrier to turning the curve and lowering the prevalence of single parenting among African Americans.

Single parenting certainly has affected parents from all social and economic backgrounds, with divorce among middle and upper-income families often pushing custodial parents, who predominately are women, into poverty.

Never-married parenting, however, is most common among low-income and less-educated women and has contributed most to the rise in single-parenting overall. Women with less than a high school diploma not only are much more likely to bear children outside a marriage, they do so at a younger age and have more children. In 2007, for instance, nearly half of all births nationally to 15-50 year-old women with a high school education or less were to unmarried women (49.1% of all births), compared with only 7.7% of all births to women with a bachelor's degree or above (see Table in Appendix Table D). While one third (33.5%) of all births were to unmarried women, this overall figure masked these huge differences by education level.

By and large, single parents work, although their number of work hours (and their likelihood of having two jobs) is lower than for primary wage-earning parents in two-parent families. In fact, there has been a long-term increase in the proportion of single parents who are working at the same time their likelihood of living in poverty has increased.

This increase in the proportion of families headed by a single parent often has been attributed to adolescent child-bearing and even “the breakdown of the American family.” Births to unmarried teens grew dramatically as a proportion of all births from the 1960s to the 1980s, but this in large measure reflected a reduced likelihood that teens who gave birth would be or become married, as was the case in the 1940s and 1950s, rather than a dramatic increase in the proportion of adolescent women giving birth. Further, declining birth rates among women in their twenties and thirties also have elevated the percentage of births to adolescents as a proportion of all births.

Chart Ten provides national trend data on the actual adolescent (15-19 year-olds) birthrate as a percentage of all adolescent women.

As Chart Ten shows, there was a substantial increase in adolescent parenting between 1980 and 1990, but this has been reversed. Since 1990, there has been an overall decline of 30.0% in the birthrate among adolescent women in the United States, from 59.9 births per thousand women aged 15-19 to 41.9 births. Although the rate remains higher among African Americans, their rate of decline during this period (42.7%) was even greater. Births to Hispanic adolescents also declined, but at a lower rate, 17.2%, and were the highest among any ethnic group in 2007, at 83.0 births per thousand

women aged 15-19. The rapid growth of the Hispanic population in the United States and its higher adolescent birthrate has an increasing impact on overall national rates.

Iowa Trends in Single-Parenting and Births to Adolescent Women.

Iowa trends are very similar to national trends in the increase in the proportion of children being raised by single parents and in overall adolescent birth rates, although the overall rates are much lower than national rates, in part because Iowa is not nearly as diverse as the country as a whole. At the same time, Iowa's African American adolescent birth rate has not declined in the way it has for the country as a whole.

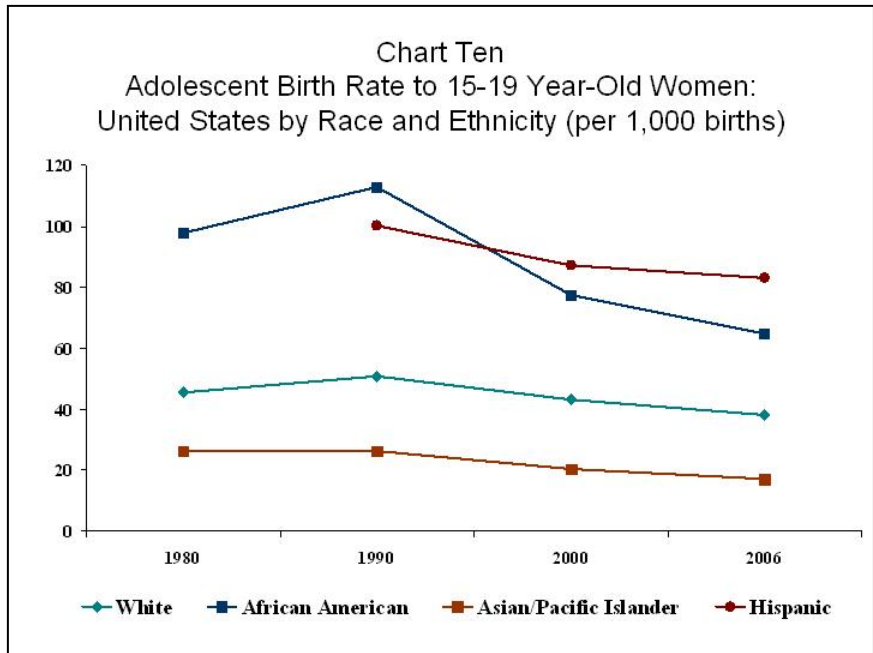
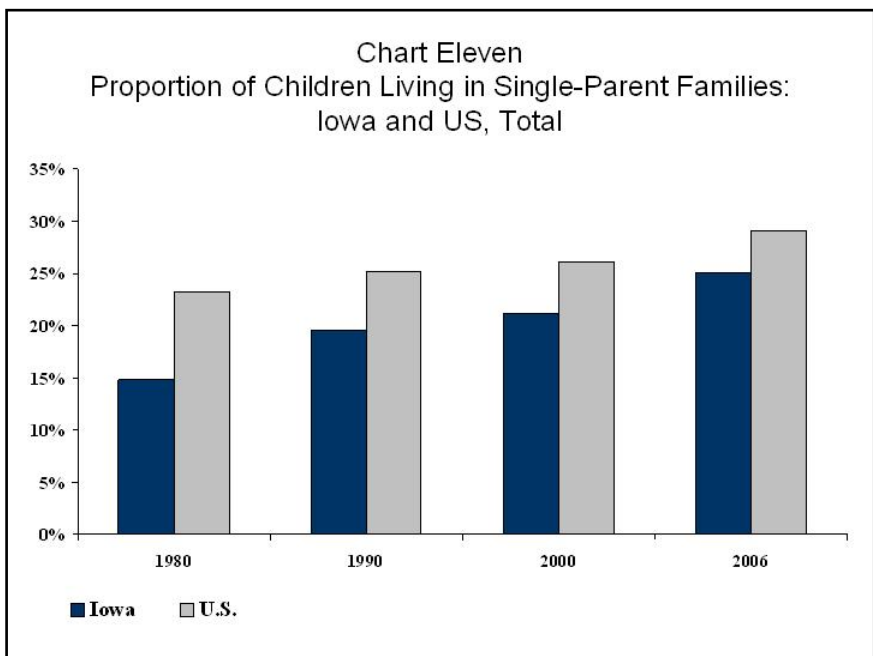


Chart Eleven shows trend data on the proportion of children being raised by a single parent, comparing this data with national data for all children.

As Chart Eleven shows, there has been a substantial increase in Iowa in the proportion of children being raised in single parent families. While Iowa's overall rates of single-parenting are well below those for the country as a whole, the rates for White, non-Hispanic children have risen substantially since 1980 and today are comparable to those in the United States.

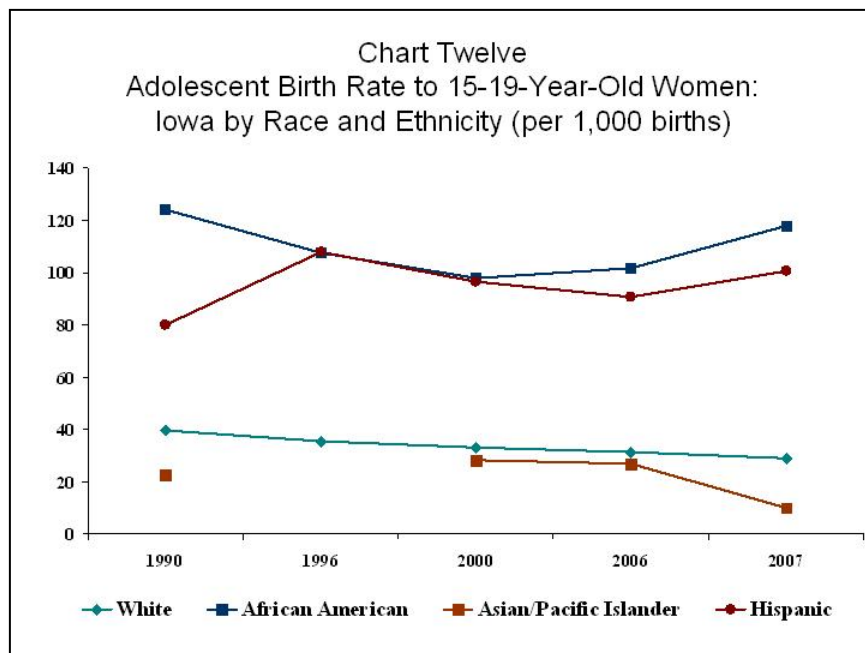
Iowa's lower overall rate of single parenting compared with the country as a whole is attributable to its relatively homogenous



racial and ethnic demographics and not to differences between Iowa and the United States within those groups. There does not appear to be a protective Iowa culture that makes single parenting less likely than for the country as a whole, although that might have existed earlier, in 1980, when Iowa's rates were substantially lower than those for the United States within different racial groups.

In particular, the proportion of births to unmarried women in Iowa has continued to grow, with 34.3% of all births in 2007 to unmarried women, the highest rates in history. This percentage has grown steadily over the decades, from 2.3% in 1960 to 7.2% in 1970, 10.2% in 1980, 21.0% in 1990, and 28.0% in 2000. The factors affecting this increase are multiple, including the reduced likelihood that unmarried women who become pregnant will get married prior to the birth of their child and the greater likelihood that unmarried women will have subsequent children as unmarried women.

Actual adolescent child bearing rates, however, are not the cause for this increase. Chart Twelve provides similar trend data on rates of child bearing to adolescent women in Iowa to those provided for the United States as a whole. As with national data, the birthrate among adolescent women in Iowa has continued to decline, overall.



While White, non-Hispanic adolescents in Iowa have birth rates well below the national average (31.5 births per thousand in 2006 compared 38.2 births per thousand nationally), the birthrates for African American adolescents and for Hispanic adolescents in Iowa have not followed national trends. In particular, the birthrate in Iowa among African American adolescents is two-thirds higher than for the country as a whole

(101.8 births per thousand in 2006 compared with 64.6 births per thousand). This deserves special attention and focus in developing strategies to ensure economic self-sufficiency and reduce disparities in poverty by both gender and race.

Clearly, the increase in single parenting in Iowa and the United States has contributed to the continued gap in poverty rates between men and women and to disparities in earnings. Single parenting not only makes families more vulnerable to poverty and economic distress; it also places more challenges and needs on families in providing

stable and nurturing home environments. Single-parent families with children are more likely to require child care and other supports from outside the family in supervising and supporting their children. Because they are less likely to be able to extend their work hours or take on two jobs than primary wage earners in two-parent families or to pursue training and education programs to advance themselves, single-parent families have more difficulty in increasing their overall earnings and advancing their careers. Single parents generally do work hard, but combining full-time care giving and full-time breadwinning roles involves significant strains and often does not enable them to do more than sustain their families and not make the investments to advance their careers.

In fact, they are much more likely to be dependent upon public supports – such as food stamps, housing assistance, child care subsidies, and medical benefits (particularly for their children) – simply to get by. The sufficiency of these income supports has a great deal to do with the economic stability of these families and their ability simply to make ends meet.

Policies to Reduce Income Disparities and Poverty Rates by Gender

The preceding sections have described income and poverty disparities by gender and have outlined some of the causes for those disparities. They have focused primarily upon families with children and not on single women without dependent children (either those of working or retirement age), although a number of policies to reduce income disparities would affect these women as well.

This section discusses Iowa policies, in particular, to reduce income and poverty disparities by gender.

Equal Pay, Comparable Worth, and Low Wage Women’s Jobs. Wage disparities still exist within specific job holdings, but there is substantial federal legislation that prohibits discrimination by gender in employment and requires “equal pay for equal work.” In 2009, the Iowa General Assembly took action to further add safeguards at the state level with a bill modeled after the federal Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 that outlaws wage discrimination based on a worker’s gender, race, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or religion. The Iowa law applies to businesses with four or more employees, making it one of the strongest laws in the nation designed to protect workers against discrimination (the federal law applies only to employers with 15 or more employees).

While Equal Pay legislation speaks to individuals who hold the same jobs, there also is substantial gender segregation across jobs. Jobs involving outside manual labor disproportionately are held by men, while those involving services provided inside institutions (particularly those involving care giving) disproportionately are held by women. While these different jobs may require comparable skills, involve comparable risks, and have comparable impact on society, they may be paid quite differently. Market forces of supply and demand affect the compensation, but glass ceilings and other gender power relationships can affect labor market forces. Restricting the supply

of workers to “men’s jobs” creates an artificial scarcity and higher wages for men, while consigning women to “women’s jobs” creates a labor surplus that holds wages down for women.

For this reason, and particularly in the 1980s, the concept of “comparable worth” came into public debate. Iowa was a leader among states in conducting a comparable worth study of state employees and then instituting changes in pay grades to adjust particular job classifications that were determined to be undervalued relative to their comparable worth.

Over 750 Iowa merit job classifications in use in 1982 were evaluated for their “comparable worth” – based upon the skills required to do the work, the conditions under which the work was conducted, the hazards surrounding the jobs, and the impact that errors in performing the work would have. They were then scored and their resulting pay grades according to their comparable worth scores were contrasted with their current pay grades and adjusted upward, if their comparable worth scores would assign them a higher pay grade.

The results of this comparable worth action, enacted by the General Assembly in 1983, were very significant pay grade improvements in a number of female-dominated job classifications (where 70% or more of the employees are female) – particularly residential treatment workers at the state mental health institutions and hospital schools, nurses and social workers across public health and human services programs, and secretaries. Residential treatment workers were found to be very similar to corrections officers on the basis of comparable worth (they actually were more likely to be injured on the job but to have comparable education and skill level requirements), but had been paid eight pay grades below corrections officers. In 1982, 623 of the 767 (68.2%) merit job classifications with at least one employee were segregated by gender, according to a definition of segregation that 70% or more of the job holders are of the same sex.

Since 1983, there have been obvious continued changes in Iowa Merit Employment job classification and pay schedules, but a comparison of state employment between 1982 and 2008 show very substantial reductions in wage disparities by gender. While this may be attributed to many factors, the changes in pay grades made by comparable worth for many female-dominated job classifications certainly played a major role. Table Five provides this comparison.

As Table Five shows, there has been a relative increase in the proportion of state employees who are women, from a minority in 1982 to a majority in 2008. While the median female state employee is still at a slightly lower pay grade than the median male state employee, the gap has narrowed very significantly, from a six pay grade to a one pay grade difference.

Table Five
Iowa Merit Employment Job Classifications by Gender and Compensation:
1982 and 2008 Comparisons

	1982	2008
	(pre-comp. worth)	(post-comp. worth)
Number of State Employees	20,052	22,596
Number of Women Employees	9,530	12,011
Women Percentage, All Employees	47.50%	53.20%
Median Pay Grade Female Employees	15	24
Median Pay Grade Male Employees	21	25
Difference	6	1
Median Female Employee Pay*	\$13,455	\$44,679
Median Male Employee Pay*	\$17,597	\$46,592
Female Pay as % of Male Pay	76.40%	95.90%
% of Women in 1000 Highest Pay Grade Positions	11.00%	34.90%

*Figures reflect the mid-point of the salary range for the median pay grade. In 2008, the salary range for pay grade 25 was \$37,336 to \$55,848, so the mid-point salary for that pay grade is \$46,592.

This translates, in terms of salary, from the median female employee making 76.4% of the salary of the median male employee in 1982, to making 95.9% of the median male salary in 2008. The percentage of women assuming the highest pay grade jobs in state government more than tripled, from 11.0% to 34.9% of all employees. This suggests that both comparable worth and changes in hiring practices of women at the top pay grade positions have occurred since 1982.

The Iowa comparable worth experience did not extend to the private employment sector, although the courts, the Regents institutions, and some local governments in Iowa also implemented comparable worth studies. Iowa remains one of the few states in the country that has implemented comparable worth, but it does appear from the data that the policy has helped reduce pay disparities among male and female workers.

The next steps in comparable worth in Iowa could explore how this policy could extend to how the state of Iowa's contracting for services with private individuals or organizations. Particularly in the areas of child care, home health care, and services to children in foster care, the state plays a major role in determining workforce compensation by the contracts it establishes with such providers. These providers

represent some of the most female-dominated positions in society and are among the least well-compensated, particularly in terms of their comparable worth.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics provides both state and national employment and wage data on a broad array of job classifications and also provides national information on the gender composition of those jobs. Trends in employment in different jobs, as well as their wages, can be compared over the last decade and with other jobs and employment as a whole. Table Six provides some of this information, with respect to two job classifications that are held predominantly by women in which state government invests substantially – home health aides and child care workers.

Table Six				
Child Care and Home Health Care Workers, Compensation, and Composition				
	<u>1997</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Change 2001-2008</u>
Overall Iowa workforce	N/A	1,418,580	1,502,600	5.6%
Mean hourly wage of Iowa workforce	N/A	\$14.10	\$17.27	22.5%
Iowa child care workforce	6,800	5,700	8,060	41.4%
Mean hourly wage of child care workforce	\$5.81	\$6.95	\$8.92	28.3%
Child care mean wage as % of Iowa mean hourly wage	N/A	49.3%	51.7%	4.9%
Iowa home health aide workforce	3,701	6,190	10,670	72.4%
Mean hourly wage of home health aide workforce	\$7.46	\$8.50	\$10.74	35.8%
Home health aid mean hourly wage as % of Iowa mean hourly wage	N/A	60.3%	62.2%	3.2%
National Composition of Workforce by Gender and Minority Status, 2008				
	Female	Minority		
All Workers	46.7%	29.8%		
Child care workers	95.6%	40.1%		
Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides	88.7%	51.9%		

National data indicate that these two job classifications are very disproportionately ones held by women and by minorities, with 95.6% of child care workers and 88.7% of home health aides being women and 40.1% of child care workers and 51.9% of home health aides being from minority groups. While there has been significant wage growth for these workers over the last decade, their wages still are in the bottom quintile among all job classifications and well below the mean annual income for jobs as a whole (51.7% of the mean annual wage for all jobs for child care workers and 62.2% for home health

aides). At the same time, both job classifications have shown significant workforce growth over the last decade and, with the continued aging of society, it is projected that there will be continued substantial growth in home health aide positions. As stated earlier, through child care subsidies and through health care benefits and state regulation of these industries, state government plays a very significant role in determining the quality and compensation of this workforce. From a perspective of wage equity and of addressing women's needs, these and other helping professions, which tend to be female-dominated and rely upon public sector support, need to be examined for ways to improve or supplement their wages.

Direct Public Assistance and Transfer Payments – AFDC/TANF Benefits and Child Care Subsidies. While not necessarily moving individuals and families above the poverty line, both the federal government and state governments have provided a variety of “safety net” programs and transfer payments to help meet basic needs. These have changed and evolved over time and generally been targeted both to specific groups and to specific basic needs (food, medical care, child care, and housing). As will be discussed in the next section, tax credits have played an increasing role in providing income support, particularly to working families with children.

In particular, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program and its successor, the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, represent federal and state funding partnerships to provide income supports to families with children, with the vast majority being single-parent families headed by a woman. The AFDC program was established in 1935 and had a mission to provide a safety net of support to children who were deprived of a family breadwinner, usually due to death, divorce, or disability.

As times changed in terms of employment and earnings, AFDC began placing more emphasis upon workforce participation by families. In the 1970s and 1980s, Congress enacted the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program and the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills training (JOBS) program within AFDC, both designed to strengthen workforce participation of AFDC recipients and deal with the rise in adolescent and single parenting that some contended was related to the availability of public assistance.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 established the TANF and Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) from the AFDC program and earlier child care funding streams, continuing the shift in welfare philosophy from a safety net for children in families without economic means to a transition program to assist families in securing employment. TANF was established as a block grant rather than an open-ended federal funding partnership, with additional options to use TANF funds to prevent welfare or provide other economic supports, particularly child care, to working families. Iowa, along with many other states, has used a very significant share of TANF funds to support the state child care subsidy program.

Even prior to this transition, however, the AFDC programs in most states had not raised the level of AFDC benefits to account for inflation. As a result, there had been substantial erosion on the actual purchasing power of those benefits, due to inflation, while there also had been increases in funding for child care and work-related expenses.

In Iowa, the actual benefit levels under AFDC and the Family Investment Program (FIP, Iowa's name for the payment program under TANF) have increased only twice since 1980, with no increase since 1990. Table Seven shows welfare benefit levels and total cash assistance payments in Iowa from 1980 to 2008, along with total child care subsidy payments – also providing the information in terms of real (inflation-adjusted) dollars and as a share of the overall state budget.

Table Seven				
Iowa Spending on AFDC/FIP Benefits				
and Child Care Subsidies – State Fiscal Years 1980-2008				
	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2008</u>
AFDC/FIP Benefit Level – 3-person family (real dollars)	\$340	\$426	\$426	\$426
AFDC/FIP Benefit Level – 3-person family (2008 dollars)	\$828	\$669	\$515	\$426
Total AFDC/FIP Cash Payments (in millions - real dollars)	\$131.4	\$150.6	\$79.8	\$70.8
Total Child Care Subsidy Payments (in millions - real dollars)	\$ --	\$2	\$47.8	\$95.9
Sum of Cash Payments plus Child Care Subsidy (in millions - real dollars)	\$131.4	\$152.6	\$127.6	\$166.7
Sum of Cash Payments plus Child Care Subsidy (in millions - 2008 dollars)	\$320.0	\$239.7	\$154.1	\$166.7
State Budget (in millions - 2008 dollars)	\$1,730	\$2,860	\$4,760	\$5,898
Cash Payments plus Child Care Subsidy as % of State Budget	7.6%	5.3%	3.2%	2.8%

As Table Seven shows, there has been a major shift in funding from providing direct income supports to families under TANF/FIP to providing child care as a work-related or education-related support. At the same time, however, the combined investments in TANF/FIP and child care subsidies now represent a much smaller investment relative to the overall state budget than they did in 1980, declining by more than two-thirds (from 7.6% in 1980 down to 2.8% in 2008). Investments in real dollars in cash payments have declined from \$131.4 million in 1980 to \$70.8 million in 2008.

In particular, the value of the cash benefit under FIP today is only a little more than one-half of what it was in 1980, where it came much closer to meeting basic needs. In 1980, the \$340 per month cash benefit for a family of three represented 61.5% of the federal

poverty level; in 2008 the \$426 cash benefit represents 29.5% of the federal poverty level. The decline in overall funding for cash assistance also is a reflection of the reductions in overall caseloads that occurred after passage of PRWORA, in some measure due to the establishment of time limits for receipt of benefits and work expectations for recipients, but also possibly because the continued erosion of the value of benefits may have made applying less attractive.

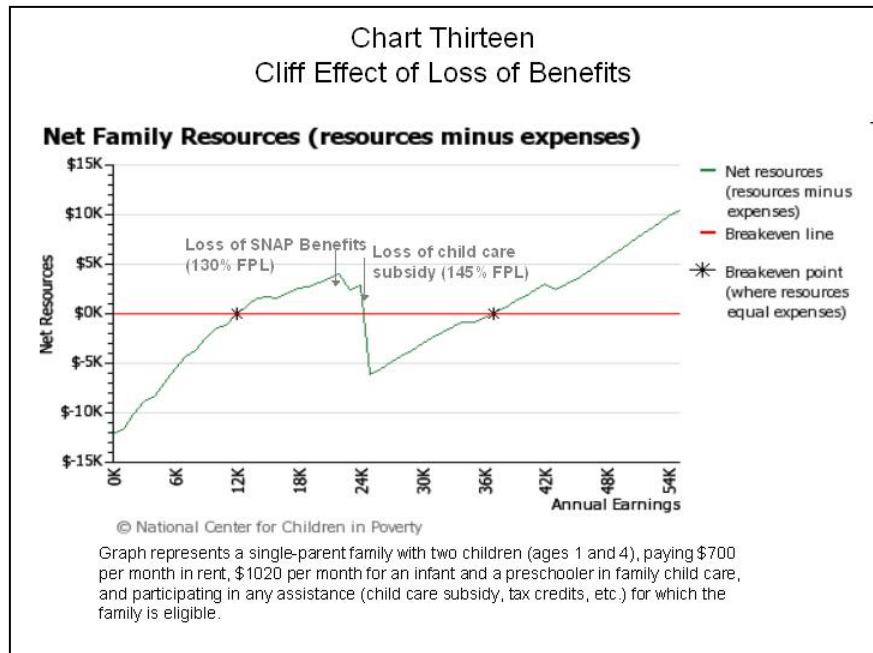
For many families, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (formerly known as food stamps) provide larger economic benefits than would the FIP benefit they would be eligible to receive.

During this period, there also have been very significant expansions in child health benefits, first by de-linking Medicaid eligibility from AFDC eligibility and broadening the income eligibility levels, and then by establishing the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), known in Iowa as *hawk-i*. This has helped to ensure many more low- and moderate-income children have health insurance coverage, at very modest cost to their parents. This has not, however, extended to coverage for their parents, and single parent mothers currently are eligible for Medicaid in Iowa only up to 58% of the federal poverty level. In fact, although public child health insurance coverage under Medicaid and *hawk-i* has provided relief from rising health care costs for child health coverage, it has not generally provided any more discretionary income to those families. When the parents' health costs also are considered, many female-headed households face increased overall health costs today than what they experienced two or three decades ago.

In short, Table Seven shows that overall welfare transfer payment spending that largely has been focused upon single-parent (and usually single-mother) families with children provides less of a safety net today than it did in 1980, even though the numbers of such single parent families has increased very significantly.

Work supports in the form of child care subsidies have grown to actually assume a greater Iowa investment in transfer spending to low-income families than direct payments under FIP. At the same time, Iowa's child care subsidy program has a very low income cut-off, at 145% of poverty, ranking Iowa 46th among states in that respect. This creates a very large "cliff effect" for families relying upon the subsidy whose income increases above 145% of poverty.

As Chart Thirteen shows, based upon the National Center for Children in Poverty's simulator, shows, as income from work for families with children increases, some of that increase is offset by reduced eligibility for such benefits as FIP, SNAP benefits, child care subsidies, and tax benefits and payments under federal and state personal income taxes (including the substantial benefits of the Earned Income Tax Credit, discussed later). The loss



of benefits due to reaching certain thresholds (first for SNAP benefits and then for child care subsidies) actually puts families in a worse economic position than they had been before the increase. For the single-parent family paying for care for two children in a family child care home, as represented in Chart Thirteen, the “cliff” from the loss of the state child care subsidy is nearly \$9,000 in income. Eliminating this cliff would require extending, on a sliding fee schedule, child care subsidy eligibility at least up to 200% of poverty. The NCCP simulator shows this in terms of a baseline amount that the family needs simply to meet basic needs for housing, food, transportation, clothing, and other necessities (net family resources less basic need expenses). The break-even point for a family is when resources exactly meet basic need expenses, or \$0K on the chart. While the family moves above this break even point as its income rises to 145% of poverty, the loss of child care subsidies drops it off a “cliff” and far below that point. It takes \$12,000 in additional earnings simply to get back to the break even point. Clearly, such a family cannot afford to pay for quality child care arrangements without the subsidy, and the loss of subsidy at 145% of poverty will force the family to make other choices care child care or to avoid making career moves that could improve self-sufficiency long-term. The existence of these cliffs clearly can be very disruptive to families pursuing pathway to economic self-sufficiency and potentially jeopardize the care and development of their young children, as well. The break-even point itself does not provide the family with any discretionary income to invest in itself or its future.

The loss in SNAP food assistance benefits at 130% of poverty produces a small, but still very significant cliff effect. At the direction of the Iowa General Assembly, the Iowa Department of Human Services is exploring the potential for increasing Iowa's gross income level (currently 130% of poverty) for SNAP program participation for non-elderly families to 160% of poverty, which would eliminate this cliff. Such action would have relatively small costs to the state, as the federal government pays the full cost for SNAP

benefits, and Iowa's costs would only be for half of any administrative costs in handling and processing claims for those families.

These two cliffs also are shown for a single parent family with one preschool child in Table Eight. In Table Eight, the actual incomes and their relation to poverty are shown both immediately before and after the two cut-off levels of 130% of poverty and 145% of poverty, along with the SNAP benefits that the family is eligible to receive (as of October 1, 2009) and the out-of-pocket expenses that the family has to incur for child care. The Table assumes the family works full-time and this is the only source of household income, has housing costs of only \$500 per month, and has found a child care setting for its preschooler that charges only \$4,500 per year (well below the current market rate for care).

As Table Eight shows, a mere fourteen cent increase in hourly wages can actually result in the family being worse off financially than it was before the increase. Moving from 129% of poverty to 131% of poverty results in a modest increase in co-payments for child care and a complete loss of SNAP benefits. The family actually has \$630 less in available income than before the raise. Moving from 144% of poverty to 146% means a complete loss of child care subsidies, and the family is set back by \$2,412. This represents a simplified table, as the family also is eligible to receive tax credits such as the state and federal earned income tax credits and the child and dependent care credits. These contribute to some increase in overall available income (although they are generally received as a lump sum benefit at tax filing time), but these do not have a cliff effect, although they do decline as income rises. They are included in the NCCP chart.

**Table Eight
Resources of a Single-Parent Family
with One Preschool-Aged Child as Income Moves Over
SNAP and Child Care Subsidy Eligibility Caps**

Annual Income	Hourly Income	% of 2009 Poverty	SNAP Benefits	Family Child Care Costs	Income + SNAP – CC
\$14,570	\$7.00	100%	\$1,740	\$0	\$16,310
\$18,795	\$9.04	129%	\$797	\$1,274	\$18,318
\$19,087	\$9.18	131%	\$0	\$1,404	\$17,683
\$20,981	\$10.09	144%	\$0	\$1,796	\$19,185
\$21,272	\$10.23	146%	\$0	\$4,500	\$16,772

SNAP (Food Stamp) Benefits were approximated using the USDA eligibility calculator. Child care subsidy was approximated using the Iowa DHS Administrative Policy Manual guidelines on co-payments paid by families for care. SNAP benefits are based upon what families will receive on October 1, 2009, when new 2009 poverty guidelines go into effect for federal programs.

Clearly, the cliff effects shown in Chart Thirteen and in Table Eight involve families above the federal poverty level, but families who still have substantial economic needs. Both Chart Thirteen and Table Eight also show how little families actually see in a gain from improving their earnings and work status. As Table Eight shows, **as a family with a young child increases its earnings from \$14,570 to \$21,272 (\$6,702), its actual gain in disposable income is only \$462, an effective “tax on earnings” of over 90%.** Clearly, the cliffs and taxes on earnings are most pronounced for families with younger children, who have needs for child care while the parent or parents work. They need to be addressed through direct supports to cover the costs of child care, and in particularly expansions of the child care subsidy to go at least to 200% of poverty.

Addressing these cliff effects will affect both men and women, but will have a more pronounced impact upon women, as single parent families will be disproportionate beneficiaries from these changes.

Tax Credits and Supports – Earned Income Tax Credit and Child and Dependent Care Credits. Particularly at the national level, the major efforts to address poverty and provide security for families with children over the past quarter century have been through the tax code. The federal Earned Income Tax Credit now is the largest federal anti-poverty effort, and the refundable child tax credit provides substantial additional assistance to working families.

The Earned Income Tax Credit was enacted in 1975, as part of welfare reform discussions at the time. Originally it was intended to offset the social security taxes that lower-wage families with children paid and to provide a specific incentive to work. It was expanded significantly in 1990 under President Bush, who also promoted it as a way to provide economic support to working, two-parent families with young children in order to enable one spouse to stay home to care for the children. It has proven to be a very popular program across both sides of the political aisle. It is based upon personal responsibility and promoting work, as eligibility and benefit size is dependent upon earned income. Further, it represents an alternative for helping low-wage families to the option of raising the minimum wage or imposing other governmental controls to raise low wages.

Iowa was one of the first states in the country to enact a state earned income tax credit, based upon the federal credit, doing so in 1989 for the 1990 tax year and expanding it to 6½ percent of the federal credit in 1991. The Iowa EITC remained at that level until 2007, when the General Assembly raised it to 7% and made it refundable. Since Iowa's overall personal income tax is about one-third as large as the federal income tax, to be equivalent to the federal credit, the Iowa credit would need to be in the vicinity of 30%.

The federal EITC actually has become a tool to provide direct support to many working families through the tax code, because the EITC is refundable. A family of four with a \$30,000 income has no federal income tax liability and is eligible to receive a refund

check of \$2,060. In essence, this is a “reverse income tax” or, in economic terms, a welfare transfer payment. In 2006, the value of the federal earned income tax credit to lowans was \$313 million, with \$277 million in the form of actual refunds over and above any tax obligation the family may have had.

As Table Nine shows, for federal income tax purposes, a family of four with only earned income has no tax liability until the family earns \$41,870, or 190% of the poverty level. A single mother with two children does not have any federal tax liability until the family’s income exceeds \$35,250, or 194% of the poverty level. By contrast, however, an Iowa family of four in Iowa begins paying state income taxes at \$19,562, just at the federal poverty level. A single mother with two children begins paying state income taxes where her income exceeds \$18,818, at 103% of the federal poverty level.

Table Nine:				
2009 Personal Income Tax Thresholds for Different Families				
(Income Level at Which Filers Begin to Owe Tax)				
United States and Iowa				
	U.S.	% of Pov.	Iowa	% of Pov.
Single working individual	\$11,045	103%	\$9,025	83%
Single retired individual	\$21,705	232%	\$35,501	328%
Working married couple, no children	\$18,705	128%	\$14,621	100%
Working married couple, two children	\$45,131	190%	\$22,235	101%
Retired married couple, no children	\$33,205	205%	\$44,061	302%
Working single parent, one child	\$31,029	194%	\$17,125	118%
Working single parent, two children	\$38,767	194%	\$18,818	103%
Source: Iowa Department of Revenue				

A family of four making \$30,000 (with one \$18,000 and one \$12,000 income) owes \$636 in state income taxes, offsetting nearly one-third of the assistance the family receives from the federal EITC. Iowa’s income tax structure provides the least recognition of the cost of raising children of any state income tax system in the country, and taxes tens of thousands of working Iowa families that owe no federal income tax.

While Iowa has much more generous tax treatment of retired individuals, it places a much greater burden on families with children.

The effect of Iowa’s tax code in this respect is to further exacerbate the challenges of single women working and raising children. As previous sections have shown, single women working and raising children are disproportionately at lower income levels and would be disproportionate beneficiaries of Iowa tax policies that provide benefits at the

lower income levels. In particular, expansion of Iowa's earned income tax credit and its tax treatment of dependents could play a significant role in reducing the gender inequities in income and not taxing families on income needed to provide for basic necessities.

Alimony and Child Support. Divorce, particularly when children are involved, often produces economic hardship. Custodial spouses often experience substantial economic disadvantage and can fall into poverty. Many who were in economically secure positions prior to divorce struggle to make ends meet after divorce. Non-custodial spouses also often experience economic disadvantage, particularly when child support orders are considered.

Alimony, child support, and property settlements are designed to begin to address these issues and balance obligations between ex-spouses.

Although gains have been made in the earnings of women, women in marriages that end in divorce typically have less earned income than their former husbands. When children are involved, although joint custody settlements have become more common, women are far more likely to be the actual custodians and day-to-day caregivers for the children. Child support also can be awarded through paternity determinations, in cases where there is no marriage.

Courts have established guidelines for awarding child support and alimony, based upon the incomes of both spouses and the number of children involved. While most alimony awards are time-limited and tend to be present in a small portion of dissolutions, child support generally applies throughout childhood and into early adulthood. In many instances, the non-custodial spouse provides health coverage for the child under the spouse's health benefits, as well as direct income support.

In addition, states have the ability to adopt child support policies that "pass through" payments to custodial families, rather than retaining those payments to offset welfare expenditures. States are also able to disregard these pass-through payments in determining a family's eligibility for benefits. Through the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, states that enact these policies are eligible for incentives, as a way to encouraging them to further support custodial families in achieving income independence. As of January 2009, 22 states have created such policies, but Iowa is not one of them.

While child support and alimony orders cannot address the fact that two households are more costly to maintain than one and there is likely to be some decline in economic well-being as a result of divorce, they can seek to ensure a balance in responsibilities and, in particular, help to ensure that children do not suffer avoidable economic hardships.

In examining state child support systems, it is important to give attention to a variety of different issues: (1) the establishment of awards, including paternity determinations for children in single-parent families; (2) the adequacy of the guidelines and award

structure used in making awards; (3) the use of those guidelines both in making initial orders and providing timely adjustments to those orders to reflect changes in circumstances; (4) the enforcement of those orders and the timely and consistent payment of awards; and (5) the enactment of policies like “pass through” payments and disregards to further support custodial parents.

Over the last three decades, there have been major advances in all these areas, with 95% of births now having a paternity determination, even though over one-third of all births are to an unmarried woman. States have adopted child support guidelines that better recognize the earnings levels of both spouses, and there are now requirements for regular (every three year) updates in those awards. Federal and state child support enforcement efforts have dramatically increased the proportion of awards that are actually paid, with the public efforts through child support enforcement now yielding over \$26 billion annually in benefits to families. This has superceded in size the level of support to families through TANF cash assistance payments and, with the earned income tax credit and SNAP food assistance, represents the major income supplementation support for families.

The continuing challenges around child support adequacy and coverage, however, remain. Research is clear that families who struggle most are those at the low end of the income scale, including both the custodial and non-custodial parent. For these situations, developing a child support assurance system, which was proposed but not enacted during welfare reform, is likely to be needed to address these issues. Establishing pass-through policies is another way to enable custodial families to have more economic resources.

Family leave policies. Whether married or unmarried, women who give birth often are faced with difficult decisions regarding their employment. Current family leave policies in the United States lag behind policies in many other countries with respect to providing paid family leave options. Some women even experience challenges in taking unpaid leave without losing their jobs. While many employers have established family leave policies that recognize the need to provide employees with time off for caring for a newborn or a dependent’s health needs, only a small minority of employees have access to any form of paid leave. Increasingly, states are developing family leave programs, patterned after unemployment compensation programs, which provide leave options with compensation. Such options can enable participants both to retain a position, and its career options, while maintaining financial support. While eligible to both men and women, family leave policies disproportionately benefit women as the primary caregivers.

Conclusion

The 1983 *Women, Work, and Poverty* report concluded with recommendations in four areas: (1) welfare reform (including tax policies); (2) child support; (3) child care and counseling; and (4) pay equity. This report has shown that progress has been made in some of these areas and not in others, and that demographic changes have heightened

the importance of addressing poverty and self-sufficiency from both a gender and a race and ethnicity perspective.

The four areas still are relevant and deserve attention in addressing issues of women, work, and poverty. In some areas, like comparable worth, Iowa has been a leader. In others, like child care subsidies and personal income tax policies, Iowa does not compare well with other states.

The information presented here shows long-term demographic and economic trends, but it does not speak to cultural changes that also have occurred over this period. Both factor into the context for public policy responses and the manner in which policies need to be implemented. While the report is about women, work, and poverty, men play a major role in family self-sufficiency. For women with children, responsible fatherhood is also a key to ensuring gender economic equity, along with tax policy, child care support, and government transfer payments.

For Additional Reading: Related Publications on Poverty and Public Policy

Bruner, C. (2008). ***Reshaping the Advocacy Direction on Poverty Reduction: Bridging Individual and Community Strategies***. Volume One of Northwest Area Foundation Policy Series: *Policy Matters: Policy Levers to Reduce Poverty and Build Prosperity*. [Find at: www.nwaf.org or www.cfpciowa.org]

Reshaping the Advocacy Direction on Poverty Reduction describes two complementary but traditionally separate approaches to poverty reduction: (1) a work pathway to economic self-sufficiency approach that focuses upon individual and personal responsibility and opportunity, and (2) a community-building and social-justice pathway to community vitality approach that focuses upon broader community economic development strategies. It then describes the lessons learned from past efforts in each area and argues for developing advocacy strategies within states that bridge the two.

Bruner, C. & Crawford, M. (2005). ***Securing Iowa's Economic Future: Strengthening Skills, Work Supports and Economic Security for Working Families***. Policy Paper: Iowa Fiscal Partnership. [Find at: www.iowafiscal.org]

Securing Iowa's Economic Future examines the poverty levels and educational status of Iowa working families and the investments government currently makes to help them achieve economic self-sufficiency. It shows that many of these investments have declined over the last two decades, while Iowa's workforce has not kept pace in education and skill development with the country as a whole. It contrasts this decline with the increasing investments made through tax credits and new grant programs to stimulate business, which at best represent only one part of the equation in building a strong Iowa workforce.

Child and Family Policy Center (2006). ***The Challenges of Getting By and Getting Ahead: A Multi-Pronged Strategy to Help Families Get Out of Poverty***. Policy Brief Series: Every Child Counts. [Find at: www.everychildcountsiowa.org]

This series of policy briefs outlines state policies to support working families in getting out of poverty and achieving financial security. The series discusses five complementary strategies: (1) making work pay; (2) providing needed work supports; (3) investing in education, skill development, and entrepreneurship; (4) promoting savings and addressing debt; and (5) welcoming new workers. Each policy brief begins with a description of a family struggling to get by and describes policies need to help that family address current barriers getting ahead.



Contact Information:

Child & Family Policy Center

505 5th Street, Suite 404

Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Fax: 515-244-8997

Phone: 515-280-9027

www.cfpciowa.org