

# The Economic Status of Texas Women on the Border: in El Paso and McAllen–Edinburg–Mission

Women make up 50.3 percent of the Texas population, over 14 million in all. They are working, going to school and caring for families. When the women of Texas are financially secure, families and communities are strong and stable. When women are healthy and well-educated, the entire state benefits. Texas women have made great strides over the last several decades by increasing their education and taking more leadership roles in the business world. But even with significant educational and economic gains, there are still gaps. This report highlights indicators

TABLE 1  
Women’s Employment & Earnings  
El Paso and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission MSAs, Texas and the United States, 2017

	EL Paso MSA	McAllen–Edinburg–Mission MSA	Texas	United States
Women’s Median Annual Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers	\$30,639	\$26,889	\$40,000	\$40,000
Ratio of Women’s to Men’s Earnings, Full-Time, Year-Round Workers	82.3%	80.3%	81.6%	80.0%
Women’s Labor Force Participation Rate	54.4%	50.7%	57.7%	58.2%
Percent of All Employed Women in Managerial or Professional Occupations	34.8%	31.7%	41.2%	42.4%

Notes: Includes those aged 16 and older. Full-time, year-round employment is defined as working at least 35 hours per week for at least 50 weeks. County data are calculated using three years (2015–2017). Texas and the United States are 2017 data. Source: IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Version 8.0).

- Women in Texas aged 16 and older who work full-time, year-round have median annual earnings of \$40,000, which is 81.6 cents on the dollar compared with similarly employed men. Women in both El Paso and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission have lower median earnings (\$30,639 and \$26,889 respectively).
- Despite lower wages, El Paso and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission have similar gender wage gaps to Texas and the nation overall—women in El Paso earn 82.3 cents on the dollar and women in McAllen-Edinburg-Mission earn 80.3 cents compared with men.
- Nearly 58 percent of women in Texas aged 16 and older are in the labor force. The labor force participation rate in both areas—El Paso (54.4 percent) and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission (50.7 percent)—is lower than in the state overall.
- Women in Texas are less likely to work in managerial or professional occupations than women in the United States overall (41.2 percent compared with 42.4 percent). These positions tend to require a four-year degree and often have higher wages and employment benefits. The share of employed women in these occupations was significantly lower than the state average for women in both El Paso and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission.

around poverty, education, employment and earnings. How do the El Paso and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) compare with Texas overall and with the United States? How are the lives of women of color different? This data is just the first step, but helps set a foundation for programs and projects that will have the greatest impact to build stronger communities. Texas Women’s Foundation looks forward to exploring these issues further with partners from around Texas to build a better Texas.

Special thanks to Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) for providing the data for this report. IWPR conducts rigorous research and disseminates its findings to address the needs of women, promote public dialogue, and strengthen families, communities, and societies. IWPR is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that also works in affiliation with the women’s studies and public policy and public administration programs at The George Washington University.

[www.iwpr.org](http://www.iwpr.org)



Texas Women’s Foundation

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[www.txwf.org](http://www.txwf.org)

Texas Women’s Foundation (formerly Dallas Women’s Foundation) is a trusted leader in advocating for and advancing social and economic change for women and girls in Texas. We believe that economic security means having all of the resources, human, social, and financial capital, that provide safeguards against crisis, and a foundation on which to build strong futures and families. We also recognize that women are more likely than men to be dramatically underrepresented in management and leadership positions. Texas Women’s Foundation is advancing the economic security for women, girls and their families across the state by ensuring they have access to critical life and work supports that are essential to their economic security while building a culture where women and girls are full participants by strengthening the pipeline of female leaders – from the classroom to the first job, the executive suite, the boardroom and the political arena.

*This research is part of the Texas Women’s Foundation Gender Matters® research portfolio.*

# THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF TEXAS WOMEN

THE BORDER: EL PASO AND MCALLEN-EDINBURG-MISSION



TABLE 2  
Employment & Earnings Among Women of Color  
El Paso and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission MSAs, 2017

	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Native American	Other Race or Two or More Races
El Paso MSA						
Women's Median Annual Earnings	\$45,000	\$28,957	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ratio of Women's to White Men's Earnings	91.8%	59.1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Women's Labor Force Participation Rate	52.9%	54.1%	66.1%	59.7%	N/A	N/A
Percent of Employed Women in Managerial or Professional Occupations	51.8%	31.8%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission MSA						
Women's Median Annual Earnings	\$43,436	\$25,855	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ratio of Women's to White Men's Earnings	66.8%	39.8%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Women's Labor Force Participation Rate	38.6%	51.3%	N/A	73.7%	N/A	N/A
Percent of Employed Women in Managerial or Professional Occupations	N/A	29.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Notes: N/A= data not available. Calculated using three years of data (2015-2017). Includes those aged 16 and older. Earnings are for those employed full-time, year-round. Racial groups are non-Hispanic. Source: IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Version 8.0).

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Due to low sample sizes, we are unable to provide data for many racial and ethnic groups in these MSAs.  
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- Women’s earnings vary substantially by race and ethnicity. In both MSAs, White women have the highest earnings (\$45,000 in El Paso and \$43,436 in McAllen-Edinburg-Mission) while Hispanic women have the lowest (\$28,957 and \$25,855 respectively).
- The gender wage gap is much more significant in McAllen-Edinburg-Mission than in El Paso. Hispanic women in McAllen-Edinburg-Mission earn less than 40% of White men’s earnings, while White women in El Paso earn nearly 92% of White men’s earnings.
- Among women, there is also significant variation in the labor force participation rate. In El Paso, Black women have the highest rate (66.1 percent) and Asian/Pacific Islander women have the highest rate in McAllen-Edinburg-Mission (73.7 percent).
- In El Paso, Hispanic women are least likely to be employed in managerial or professional occupations. This rate is even lower in McAllen-Edinburg-Mission.



TABLE 3  
Women’s Poverty & Opportunity  
El Paso and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission MSAs,  
Texas, and the United States, 2017

	EL Paso MSA	McAllen- Edinburg- Mission MSA	Texas	United States
Percent of Women Aged 18-64 with Health Insurance	71.8%	54.5%	77.6%	89.2%
Percent of Women Aged 25 and Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	22.7%	18.9%	30.1%	32.6%
Women-Owned Businesses, 2012	39.3%	43.9%	36.8%	35.8%
Percent of Women Aged 18 and Older in Poverty	20.4%	28.0%	14.5%	13.4%

Sources: Data on women-owned businesses are from the U.S. Department of Commerce's 2012 Survey of Business Owners accessed through American Fact Finder. Remaining indicators are IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Version 8.0); data for the three counties are calculated using three years of data (2015-2017). Data for Texas and the United States are 2017 data.

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If working women in Texas were paid the same as comparable men, their average annual earnings increase would be \$7,300 and their poverty rate would be reduced by 51%.  
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- Nearly 78 percent of Texas’s women aged 18 to 64 have health insurance coverage, which is below the national average for women (89.2 percent). Significantly fewer women in McAllen-Edinburg-Mission have health insurance (54.5 percent), while El Paso is closer to the state rate, at 71.8 percent.
- Approximately 30 percent of women aged 25 and older in Texas and the nation have a bachelor’s degree or higher. These rates are significantly lower in both El Paso and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission.
- In Texas, 36.8 percent of businesses are owned by women, slightly above the national average of 35.8 percent. Rates of business ownership among women in both MSAs are above the state and national averages. Women in McAllen-Edinburg-Mission are particularly likely to own businesses (43.9 percent).
- 14.5 percent of Texas women aged 18 and older live in poverty, with significantly higher rates of poverty in these MSAs. Over 20 percent of El Paso women live in poverty. The rate in McAllen-Edinburg-Mission (28 percent) is double the state poverty rate.

TABLE 4  
Poverty & Opportunity Among Women of Color  
El Paso and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission MSAs, 2017

	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Native American	Other Race or Two or More Races
El Paso MSA						
Percent of Women Aged 18-64 with Health Insurance	89.6%	68.3%	92.7%	95.1%	N/A	N/A
Percent of Women Aged 25 and Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	42.3%	18.7%	37.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percent of Women Aged 18 and Older in Poverty	10.2%	22.4%	8.4%	8.4%	N/A	N/A
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission MSA						
Percent of Women Aged 18-64 with Health Insurance	87.0%	52.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percent of Women Aged 25 and Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	33.4%	16.9%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percent of Women Aged 18 and Older in Poverty	9.6%	29.9%	N/A	8.6%	N/A	N/A

Notes: N/A= data not available. Calculated using three years of data (2015-2017). Racial groups are non-Hispanic. Source: IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Version 8.0).

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If current trends continue, women in Texas will not receive equal pay until 2049.  
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- In both MSAs, Hispanic women are the least likely to have health insurance coverage, by a significant margin.
- Hispanic women are the least likely to have a bachelor’s degree or higher in both

MSAs (less than 19 percent in each area), while White women are the most likely (42.3 percent in El Paso).

- Poverty rates vary widely by race and ethnicity. About eight percent of Asian/Pacific Islander and Black women in El Paso live in poverty, while Hispanic women in McAllen-Edinburg-Mission have the highest poverty rate at 30 percent.

