

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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1. California Vision Statement

The Task Force on Education will work to transform the educational system into a learning environment that is rooted in caring and respect to ensure that all women fulfill their potential as human beings. Every girl and woman will have access to the resources she needs to achieve her spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional potential throughout her lifetime, regardless of her disability, culture, ethnicity, religion, linguistic heritage, socioeconomic status or gender identity. California must provide the resources and mandate for a lifelong, safe, accessible and relevant learning environment that empowers all students, and must transform the structure of education to enable each girl and woman to reach her full potential for full and equal participation in society.^{9+*}

Achievements

The importance of promoting STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) opportunities for women and girls in education throughout California. California is doing better than other states but more needs to be done. More than 800,000 women attend the state's community colleges. Women make up 54 percent of the community college population in California and 57 percent nationally.

Obstacles Encountered

Community colleges offer a wide range of programs of study, but California community college women, like women nationwide, earn the majority of degrees in education and the health professions but a small share in science and technology. In 2011, community college women in California earned just 22

percent of the associate degrees in computer and information sciences and 18 percent of the associate degrees in engineering, engineering technologies, and related fields.

Issues of Concern

Underrepresentation of women in STEM fields and employment

1st generation college students need funds and support services to keep them in school

Childcare services needed to allow women to go to school/work

Acknowledge ongoing food insecurity experienced by children in California

Action Plan/ Solutions

California women must work to:

- Ensure equal access to education
- Eradicate illiteracy among women
- Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education
- Develop non-discriminatory education and training
- Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of education reforms
- Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.

Increased training opportunities to allow women to reenter the workforce

Programs to foster opportunities for women to achieve economic independence

Programs such as AAUW's Tech Trek and Tech Savvy, to engage girls in

Technology at an early age will help change the stereotype about programmers

CAWA needs to make sure parents know they have a voice in education

AAUW supports federal policies that will help all women and families achieve economic security and for a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, and diversity.

AAUW supports economic security policies include legislation to close the gender pay gap and to offer families greater work-life balance and health care security.

AAUW also advocates for policies that help close the achievement gap in education and provide safe climates for all students.

Recommendations for Action

Identify agents who need to work on the specific issues as well as specific programs, policies, legislations, etc.

6.1. Can be broken down by local, state (national) agents/bodies

K-12 Education

AAUW remains committed to ensuring strong academic principles and bias-free public education that closes the achievement gap for all children regardless of gender, race, or disabilities. These objectives are at the heart of the Elementary and

Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which is long overdue for reauthorization.

AAUW rejects unproven and often discriminatory schemes such as school vouchers and single-sex education. We maintain that all schools, including charter schools, should be held accountable for compliance with all civil rights laws, including Title IX.

Federal policy can improve school climates and reduce bullying and sexual harassment.

Additional work remains to promote equity in school athletics.

AAUW will fight to maintain school reporting on these issues and to publish disaggregated and cross-tabulated data to ensure accountability.

AAUW supports promoting and strengthening science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, especially for girls and other underrepresented groups.

AAUW research shows that environmental and social barriers block women's full participation in STEM fields. AAUW supports legislation that promotes education and workplace policies that can narrow the gap.

Postsecondary Education

Because requirements for jobs increasingly require postsecondary education, we must increase access to postsecondary education for all students.

Career and technical education (CTE) programs run by state and local agencies must be held accountable for improving successful outcomes of women and girls, especially in programs that lead to high-skill, high-wage employment.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act must include accountability provisions to ensure gender equity in CTE and to prepare our entire

workforce for the demands of a global economy. Congress must also ensure college affordability, including maintaining the maximum Pell grant and easing student loan burdens. Loan repayment is a significant burden for women, who earn less on average over the course of their lives than their male counterparts and therefore face a higher student loan debt burden.

Campus sexual assault disproportionately affects college women and impedes their ability to receive equal access to higher education. Educational equity requires fair, responsive, fully developed campus sexual assault policies, knowledgeable administrators, and, ultimately, an end to sexual violence on campuses. AAUW supports vigorous enforcement of the Clery Act and Title IX.

Resource organizations:

AAUW

Alliance for Girls

California Commission on the Status of Women

Equal Rights Advocates

Fair Play for Girls in Sports (Legal Aid Society Employment Law Center San Francisco)