



FACTS

about
Connecticut's
young women

Young Women's Leadership Program

a project of the Connecticut General Assembly's

Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

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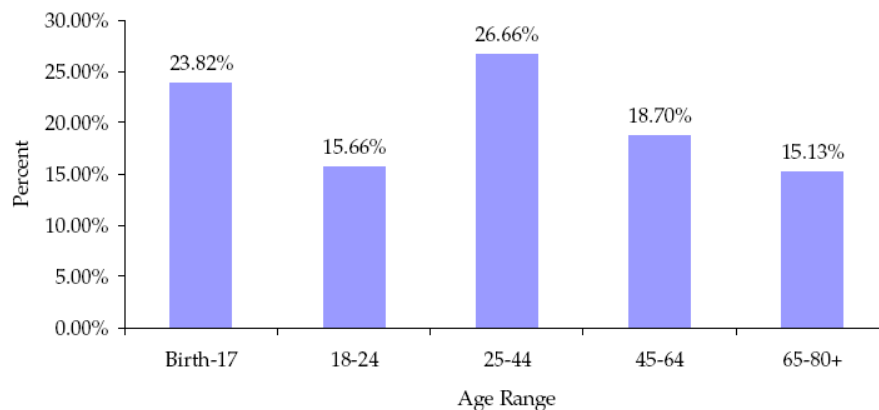
Affordable Education and Young Women

Supporting college education is one of the best ways to invest in Connecticut's future. While the initial cost of expanding Connecticut student aid may seem high to some, student aid pays for itself by stimulating the economy, creating a more skilled workforce and encouraging Connecticut college graduates to remain in the state in which they received their degree.

Low-income Young Women

Increasing access to financial aid is important, especially to lower-income women. Based on information from 2004, 15.66% of young women ages 18-24 are living in poverty. In addition, 22.66% of women ages 25-44 live below the poverty line.¹ Without access to deeper pockets of financial aid, these women face huge financial barriers when thinking about furthering their education. Thus, the cycle of poverty continues because without opportunities for higher education, women in poverty remain in poverty due to the lack of skills necessary to move up in the workforce.

CT Women in Poverty by Age 2004



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey, 2004

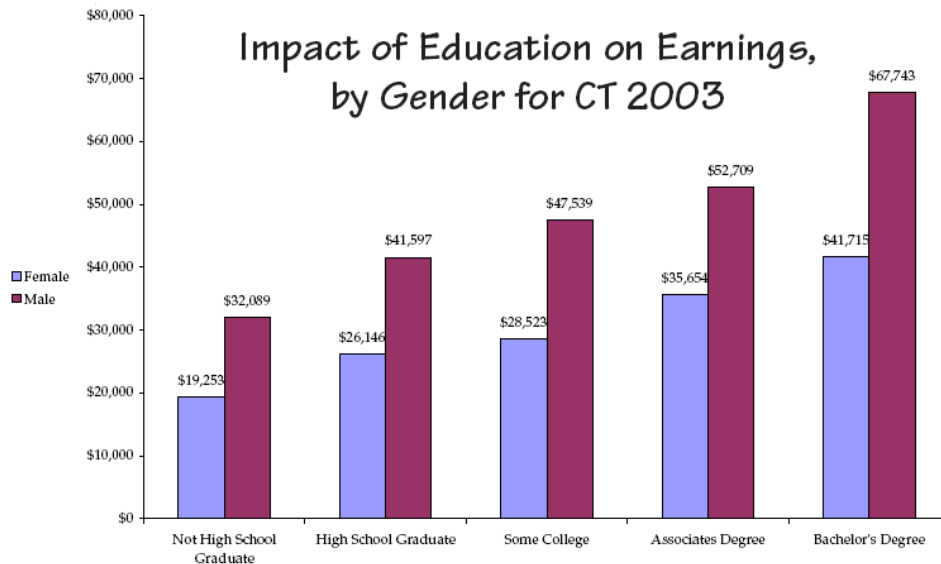
¹ U.S. Census

Working Young Women

Studies show that more part time students work full time compared to their full time counterparts. According to the 2003-2004 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, released in September 2006, 51% of part-time students worked full time while enrolled and earned on average \$17,800, while the average price of attendance for part-time students is \$7,400 for in-state tuition annually.² In comparison, 14.3% of full time students worked a full time job. That means for a part time student who receives no financial aid, would spend roughly 42% of their income on their education. That may be a financial risk that many women (and men) are not willing to take.

Young Women and Self Sufficiency

Education is the key to self sufficiency for young women. Women who did not graduate high school in 2003 were earning an average of \$19,253 a year; women who completed high school that same year made an average of \$26,146. By comparison, women earn on average \$41,715 if they had a bachelor's degree.³ There is no question that a bachelor's degree helps create more well-paying job opportunities for young women.



Source: United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey 2003

Recommendations

Improve affordability of higher education and invest in need based financial aid, strengthen gender equity in career and technical education and prioritize non-traditional [including Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)] training programs for women.

² <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/2006158.pdf>

³ PCSW's FACTS about the Status of Women in Connecticut, 2005 Edition