

Talking Inequality

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That women have suffered social, economic and political inequalities over time is not startling news. However, the fact that many of these inequalities still are not being addressed needs to be brought to the forefront of public discussion, says Beth Willinger, a Tulane research professor and executive director emerita of the Newcomb College Center for Research on Women.



“Women in Louisiana truly are at the bottom of the barrel on just about every indicator that I’ve looked at,” says researcher Beth Willinger, who studies gender inequality. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

To rekindle the dialogue about gender inequality, Willinger is regularly releasing fact sheets addressing problems facing women in New Orleans and in Louisiana. It's a project to document the status of Louisiana women that she initially had undertaken with her students in a women's studies class in the late 1990s. Following Hurricane Katrina, she also turned her attention to New Orleans women specifically.

In the ensuing years, “nothing has changed,” says Willinger, who believes that making this information easily accessible could aid in policy-making decisions.

“Women in Louisiana truly are at the bottom of the barrel on just about every indicator that I've looked at, and I hope to find the place where all of these inequities begin.”

In the past, Willinger's fact sheets have contained statistics relating to race and ethnicity, the number of women in the labor force and the annual earnings of New Orleans men and women. Her findings on women in Louisiana have led her to begin a new project on the quality of life for girls in the state.

In a [fact sheet](#) posted online by the Newcomb College for Research on Women, Willinger notes a substantial decline between 2005 and 2008 in the number of girls under the age of 18. Although she says the number was likely affected by families who did not return following Hurricane Katrina, she says it's important to observe these changes and contemplate their implications.

Her most recent fact sheet provides about 20 “Quick Stats” on women workers in the state. Her upcoming fact sheet will analyze the wage gap between Louisiana women and men.