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RADIO

'Two Minnesotas' for girls

by [Tim Nelson](#), Minnesota Public Radio
April 28, 2008

A new study by the Women's Foundation of Minnesota says girls more likely than boys to be poor, suffer from assaults and contract sexually transmitted diseases.

St. Paul, Minn. — The new report looks at the health, education and welfare of Minnesota girls through age 19. It found that girls, on the whole, do well.

But it also found that black, Hispanic, Native American and Asian girls in Minnesota are more likely to be poor than minority girls in the nation as a whole.

The report says poverty, violence and an educational achievement gap are holding girls back.

Erika Williams is study director with the Washington D.C., based Institute for Women's Policy Research.

"Some of the economic data that we compiled in this report really tells the story of two Minnesotas," said Erika Williams, study director with the Institute for Women's Policy Research. "One in which girls are doing pretty well, are actually working pretty hard and have low poverty rates overall, and another in which girls of color have drastically higher poverty rates, and actually are more likely to be poor than girls of color in the nation as a whole."

Women's Foundation president Lee Roper-Baker said researchers were particularly struck by an persistent educational gap for girls.

"We hear a lot lately about, 'What about the boys?' And it was particularly shocking to learn of the ACT disparities that our girls -- even though they're earning better grades in schools, studying and working very hard, that isn't paying off for them," said Roper-Baker.

The report draws on data from a variety of existing sources. It's the first time the information has been brought together for a snapshot of young women in Minnesota.

The Women's Foundation of Minnesota will be touring Minnesota in May to talk about how girls are doing in various regions around the state.

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