

MINIMUM WAGE

FACT SHEET

60 Percent of Women's Job Gains in the Recovery Are in the 10 Largest Low-Wage Jobs

July 2013

Women have regained a large number of the jobs they lost during the recession, but their gains are highly concentrated in low-wage occupations. Sixty percent of the increase in employment for women between 2009 and 2012 was in the 10 largest occupations that typically pay less than \$10.10 per hour ("the 10 largest low-wage occupations").¹ In contrast, these 10 low-wage occupations accounted for only 20 percent of men's employment growth over the same period.

More than three-quarters of the workers in the 10 largest low-wage occupations are women and over one-third are women of color. The concentration of women's job growth in such low-wage occupations highlights the importance of raising the minimum wage to improve economic security and advance fair pay for women.²

The 10 largest low-wage occupations, by percent women:

Hand packers & packagers	53%
Food preparation workers	58%
Bartenders	60%
Combined food preparers & servers	65%
Waiters & waitresses	71%
Cashiers	72%
Personal care aides	85%
Home health aides ³	88%
Maids & housekeepers	88%
Childcare workers	94%

Source: BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics, 2012 and Current Population Survey, 2012

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- Men also saw large growth in these occupations. Compared to the first year of the recovery in 2009, the 10 largest low-wage occupations combined employed nearly 358,000 more men in 2012. This growth accounted for 20 percent of the total net increase in annual average employment for men in that period, though these jobs employed less than four percent of working men overall in 2009.
- Overall, these 10 occupations combined employed 834,000 more workers in 2012 than they did at the beginning of the recovery in 2009. This growth accounted for almost one-third (32 percent) of the total net increase in annual average employment in that period; in 2009, these jobs employed just nine percent of the working population.

The 10 largest low-wage occupations have accounted for 60 percent of women's job gains in the recovery and 20 percent of men's.

- Compared to the first year of the recovery in 2009, these 10 occupations combined employed more than 476,000 additional women in 2012. This growth accounted for 60 percent of the total net increase in annual average employment for women in that period, though these jobs employed less than 15 percent of working women overall in 2009.

Increase in Annual Average Employment over the Recovery (2009-2012)

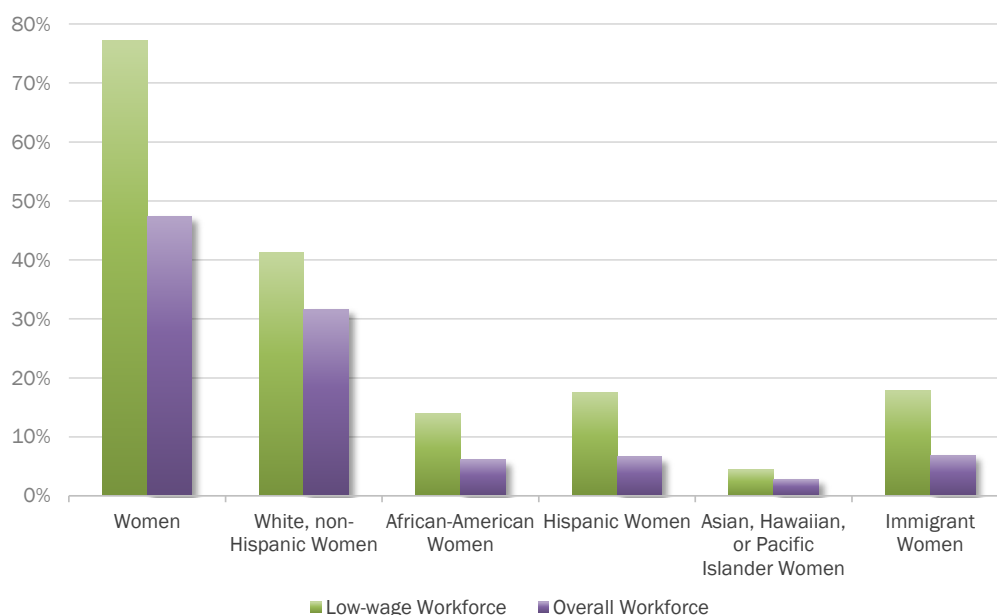
	10 Largest Low-Wage Occupations	All Occupations	Share of Overall Increase from Low-Wage Occupations
Women	476,200	798,600	60%
Men	357,800	1,793,400	20%
Overall	834,000	2,592,000	32%

Source: BLS Current Population Survey, Annual Averages.

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Women's Share of Low-Wage and Overall Workforces



Source: NWLC calculations based on IPUMS-CPS (2012). Figures are for employed workers. The low-wage workforce is defined here as the 10 largest detailed low-wage occupations with median wages of less than \$10.10 per hour per BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics.

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Women, especially women of color, are disproportionately represented in the 10 largest low-wage occupations.

- Women represent over 77 percent of the workforce in these jobs combined, compared to 47 percent of the workforce overall.
- Women of color represent over 36 percent of the workforce in these jobs combined, compared to less than 16 percent of the workforce overall.⁴
- White, non-Hispanic women are over 41 percent of workers in the 10 largest low-wage occupations, compared to less than 32 percent of all workers.
- African-American women are 14 percent of workers in the 10 largest low-wage occupations, compared to just over six percent of all workers.
- Hispanic women are almost 18 percent of workers in the 10 largest low-wage occupations, compared to less than seven percent of all workers.
- Asian, Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander women are over four percent of workers in the 10 largest low-wage occupations, compared to less than three percent of all workers.

- Immigrant women are almost 18 percent of workers in the 10 largest low-wage occupations, compared to less than seven percent of all workers.⁵

Wages in low-wage jobs are declining while the number of workers employed in low-wage jobs is increasing.

- The National Employment Law Project found that between 2009 and 2012, real median hourly wages declined by 3.0 percent for jobs that typically paid less than \$10.60 per hour.⁶
- The Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2013, introduced in March, would gradually increase the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 per hour. The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) estimates that if the minimum wage were increased to \$10.10 in three steps between 2013 and 2015, more than 30 million workers would get a raise by 2015 – including 9 million workers earning between \$10.10 and \$11.05 per hour, who would see their pay increase due to the higher floor set by the new minimum wage. Of the total affected workers, about 17 million (56 percent) are women.⁷

Source notes: Ranking of occupation by size and median hourly wage: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Occupational Employment Statistics (OES), May 2012 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm. Share of women in occupation and change in employment overtime: BLS, Current Population Survey, Annual Averages, 2009 through 2012, Table 11: Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, available at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/tables.htm#annual>. Data on women of color in the 10 largest low-wage jobs and the overall workforce are NWLC calculations based on the Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2012 courtesy of IPUMS-CPS.

- 1 The 10 largest low-wage occupations are the 10 detailed occupations with median hourly wages of less than \$10.10 per hour that employ the most workers. “Low-wage” occupations could be defined in different ways; this analysis uses an hourly earnings cut-off of \$10.10 per hour in light of The Fair Minimum Wage Act (S. 460/H.R. 1010) pending in Congress, which would gradually raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 per hour. (It also would increase the tipped minimum cash wage from \$2.13 per hour to 70 percent of the minimum wage and index these wages to keep pace with inflation.)
- 2 NWLC, Fair Pay for Women Requires Increasing the Minimum Wage and Tipped Minimum Wage (Mar. 2013), available at <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/fair-pay-women-requires-increasing-minimum-wage-and-tipped-minimum-wage>.
- 3 The detailed occupation category of “home health aides” is one of the 10 largest detailed occupations paying under \$10.10 in 2012 according to OES. However, this detailed category is not available in the Current Population Survey Annual Average Tables. Our analysis of annual average employment instead uses the related broader employment category which also includes orderlies, nursing aides, and psychiatric aides.
- 4 NWLC calculations based on Miriam King, Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Sarah Flood, Katie Genadek, Matthew B. Schroeder, Brandon Trampe, and Rebecca Vick, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 3.0 (IPUMS-CPS), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010. Data are for 2011. The sample of Native American women is too small to include in this analysis. All figures are for employed workers.
- 5 A worker is counted as an immigrant if she is a naturalized citizen or not a citizen.
- 6 National Employment Law Project (NELP), The Inequality of Declining Wages During the Recovery (July 2013), available at <http://www.nelp.org/page/-/Job-Creation/NELP-Fact-Sheet-Inequality-Declining-Wages.pdf?nocdn=1>. Jobs that typically paid \$8.78 to \$10.60 per hour in 2012 were in the bottom quintile.
- 7 David Cooper & Doug Hall, EPI, Raising the Minimum Wage to \$10.10 Would Give Working Families, and the Overall Economy, a Much-Needed Boost, at 5, 20-21 (Mar. 2013), available at <http://www.epi.org/files/2013/bp357--federal-minimum-wage-increase.pdf>.