

EMPLOYMENT

FACT SHEET

Equal Pay for African American Women

July 2014

Women overall working full time, year round in the United States are paid only 77 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts.¹ But the wage gap is even larger for African American women who work full time, year round—they are paid only 64 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.² This gap, which amounts to a loss of \$18,650 a year, means that African American women have to work nearly 19 months—until almost the end of July—to make as much as white, non-Hispanic men did in the previous year alone.

*African American women working full time, year round are typically paid only **64 cents** for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.*

African American women experience a wage gap at every education level—and it is widest among those with the least education.³

- Among individuals working full time, year round who have a high school degree or less, African American women typically make only 62 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make.
- African American women with a bachelor's degree or more typically make \$50,200—about the same as white, non-Hispanic men who have some college but lack a degree (99 cents for every dollar). African American women with only a bachelor's degree typically make \$46,000—about \$3,500 more than white, non-Hispanic men with only a high school degree (\$1.08 for every dollar).

African American Women's Wage Equality by Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	African American Female Earnings	White, non-Hispanic Male Earnings	What African American Women Make for Every Dollar White, Non-Hispanic Men Make	Wage Gap
High school degree	\$26,557	\$42,558	62.4¢	37.6¢
Some college, no degree	\$32,276	\$50,570	63.8¢	36.2¢
Associate's degree	\$34,467	\$52,014	66.3¢	33.7¢
Bachelor's degree or more	\$50,207	\$76,708	65.5¢	34.5¢
Bachelor's Degree	\$46,007	\$70,021	65.7¢	34.3¢
Master's Degree	\$55,843	\$86,330	64.7¢	35.3¢

"What a woman makes for every dollar a man makes" is the ratio of female and male median earnings for full-time, year-round workers. Earnings are in 2012 dollars. The "wage gap" is the additional money a woman would have to make for every dollar made by a man in order to have equal annual earnings. NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table PINC-03. Educational Attainment, People 25 years old and over, by total money earnings in 2012, available at http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032013/perinc/pinc03_000.htm.

African American women’s wage gap is wider among older women.

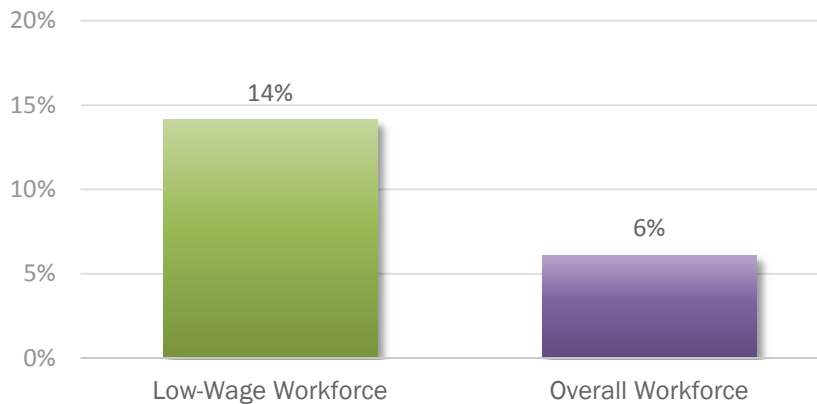
- Among full-time, year-round workers ages 15-24, African American women typically make 82 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make—but this figure is far worse for older women. Among workers 25-44 it is 67 cents and among those 45-64 it is 59 cents.⁴ These larger gaps mean that African American women are falling behind at the very time they need additional resources to invest in their families and save for retirement.
- Over the course of a 40-year career, African American women would typically lose \$746,000 to the wage gap—this means African American women would have to work 62 years to earn what white, non-Hispanic men earned in 40 years.⁵

African American women experience a wage gap across occupations.

- In a wide variety of occupations—those that are well-paid and poorly paid, those that are female-dominated and those that are non-traditional for women—African American women working full time, year round make less than white, non-Hispanic men.⁶
 - o African American women working as physicians and surgeons—a traditionally male, high-wage occupation—make 52 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.

- o African American women working as customer service representatives—a mid-wage, female-dominated occupation—make 79 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.
- o African American women working as construction laborers—a traditionally male, mid-wage occupation—make 86 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.
- o African American women working as personal care aides—a heavily female, low-wage occupation—make 85 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.
- In addition to wage gaps within occupations, African American women are overrepresented in some of the most poorly paid jobs in the nation. African American women’s share of the 10 largest low-wage jobs (14 percent) is 2.3 times larger than their share of the overall workforce (6 percent).⁷ Even in these low-wage occupations that typically pay \$10.10 per hour or less, African American women working full time, year round experience a wage gap, making only 84 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make.⁸

African American Women’s Share of Low-Wage and Overall Workforces

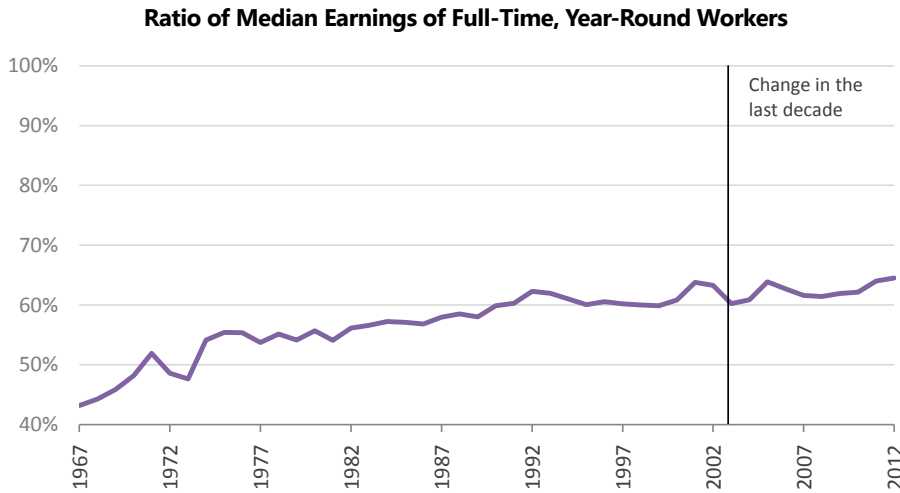


Source: NWLC calculations based on IPUMS-CPS (2013). Figures are for employed workers. The low-wage workforce is defined here as the 10 largest occupations with median wages of less than \$10.10 per hour per BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics.

African American women’s wage gap has persisted over decades.

- In 1967, the earliest year for which data are available, an African American woman working full time, year round typically made only 43 cents for every dollar paid to her white, non-Hispanic male counterpart.
- By 2012, the most recent year for which data are available, that gap had narrowed by 21 cents, but African American women working full time, year round were still only paid 64 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.

The Wage Gap Over Time for African American Women Compared to White, non-Hispanic Men



Source: Census Bureau, Current Population Survey



African American women’s wage gap is substantially wider in some states.

- In Louisiana and Wyoming African American Women typically make less than half of what white, non-Hispanic men make.
- African American women in Washington, D.C. have the fourth worst wage gap in the country at 44 cents,⁹ even though women overall in Washington, D.C. have the smallest wage gap at just 10 cents.¹⁰

Ten Worst States for African American Women’s Wage Equality

Rank	State	African American Female Earnings	White, non-Hispanic Male Earnings	What a woman makes for every dollar a man makes	Wage Gap
1	Louisiana	\$26,030	\$53,334	48.8¢	51.2¢
2	Wyoming	\$26,398	\$53,845	49.0¢	51.0¢
3	Mississippi	\$24,930	\$45,807	54.4¢	45.6¢
4	District of Columbia	\$48,390	\$86,831	55.7¢	44.3¢
5	Alabama	\$27,876	\$49,653	56.1¢	43.9¢
6	South Carolina	\$27,103	\$47,917	56.6¢	43.4¢
7	New Jersey	\$42,109	\$72,251	58.3¢	41.7¢
8	Utah	\$30,245	\$51,865	58.3¢	41.7¢
9	West Virginia	\$25,988	\$44,218	58.8¢	41.2¢
10	Virginia	\$35,398	\$60,222	58.8¢	41.2¢

“What a women makes for every dollar a man makes” is the ratio of female and male median earnings for full-time, year-round workers. Earnings are in 2012 dollars. The “wage gap” is the additional money a woman would have to make for every dollar made by a man in order to have equal annual earnings. Calculations are based on 2010-2012 American Community Survey Three-Year Estimates (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>).



- 1 National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) calculations from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, (*hereinafter* CPS-ASEC 2013) Table PINC-05: Work Experience in 2012—People 15 Years Old and Over by Total Money Earnings in 2012, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex, *available at* http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032013/perinc/pinc05_000.htm (last visited Oct. 18, 2013).
- 2 *Id.* This fact sheet only addresses the wage gap for African American women, but the wage gaps for Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian women compared to white, non-Hispanic men are also substantial. Among full-time, year-round workers Hispanic women make only 54 cents for every dollar made by white, non-Hispanic men, Asian American women, 87 cents and American Indian women, 60 cents. Data on pay inequality for American Indian women compared to white, non-Hispanic men are from the American Community Survey 2012, Tables B20017H and B20017C, *available at* <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>.
- 3 CPS-ASEC 2013, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-03: Educational Attainment, People 25 years old and over, by total money earnings in 2012, *available at* http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032013/perinc/pinc03_000.htm. Figures are for full-time, year-round workers.
- 4 NWLC calculations based on CPS-ASEC 2013, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-05.
- 5 Figure assumes a wage gap of \$18,650—the gap in median earnings between full-time, year-round working African American women (\$33,885) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$52,535) in 2012—each year for 40 years. Figures are not adjusted for inflation.
- 6 NWLC calculations based on American Community Survey 2008-2012 (5-year average) using Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010 *available at* <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. Figures are for full-time, year-round workers. Female-dominated occupations are more than 60 percent female. Male-dominated occupations are more than 60 percent male.
- 7 NWLC, Women are 76 percent of workers in the 10 largest low-wage jobs and suffer a 10 percent wage gap (Apr. 2014), *available at* <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/women-are-76-percent-workers-10-largest-low-wage-jobs-and-suffer-10-percent-wage-gap>. Figures are for occupations that typically pay \$10.10 per hour or less.
- 8 NWLC calculations based on 10 largest low-wage occupations (see NWLC, 76 percent, *supra* note 7 for details).
- 9 NWLC, The Wage Gap By State for African American Women (Nov. 2013) *available at* <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/wage-gap-state-african-american-women>.
- 10 NWLC, The Wage Gap By State for Women Overall (Nov. 2013) *available at* <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/wage-gap-state-women-overall-0>.