



WORKPLACE JUSTICE

THE WAGE GAP AND ASIAN WOMEN

Asian women¹ in the U.S. who work full time, year round are paid only 85 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.² This gap, which amounts to a loss of \$8,733 a year, means that Asian women have to work more than 14 months—until early March this year—to make as much as white, non-Hispanic men did last year alone. Many racial and/or ethnic subgroups of Asian women experience much larger wage gaps compared to white, non-Hispanic men.

Asian women working full time, year round are typically paid only 85 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts - but the wage gap is substantially larger for some subgroups of Asian women.

The gap between Asian women's and white, non-Hispanic men's earnings is 5 cents smaller than the wage gap for all women compared to all men: women working full time, year round in the United States are paid only 80 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts. However, the gap between Asian women's and Asian men's earnings is even larger: Asian women working full time, year round in the United States are paid just 78 cents for every dollar compared to Asian men.³

Some subgroups of Asian women experience substantially wider wage gaps.

- Certain Asian women experience a larger wage gap than is reflected in the number for Asian women overall. Among full time, year round workers in 2015:⁴
 - o Burmese and Fijian women make less than half—44 percent and 45 percent respectively—of what white, non-Hispanic men make. Hmong and Cambodian make little more than half (55 percent) of what white, non-Hispanic men make.
 - o Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Indonesian, Thai, Bangladeshi, Hawaiian, Vietnamese, and Laotian women all make less than 80 cents for every dollar made by white, non-Hispanic men.
 - o A few subgroups of Asian women typically make more than white, non-Hispanic men: Malaysian, Indian,⁵ and Taiwanese women were paid \$25,000, \$10,000, and \$5,000 more than white, non-Hispanic men respectively. However, compared to Indian men, Indian women make just 76 cents and compared to Taiwanese men, Taiwanese women are paid just 80 cents.⁶ And while Chinese women are typically paid the same as white, non-Hispanic men, compared to Chinese men, they are paid just 89 cents on the dollar.



Asian Women's Wage Equality by Subgroup

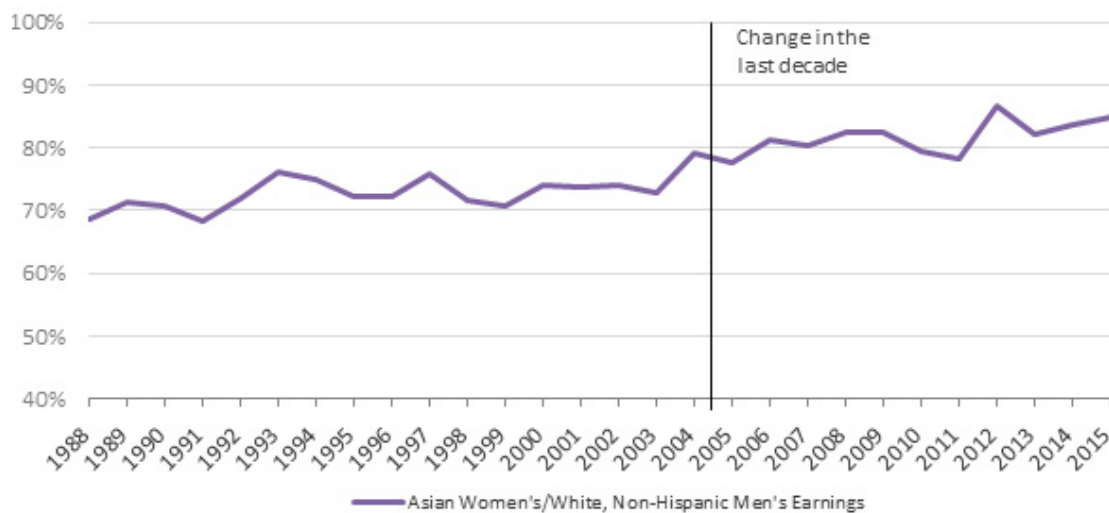
Subgroup	Asian women's earnings	Asian women's earnings/White, non-Hispanic men's earnings	Asian women's earnings/Asian men's earnings (within subgroup)
Malaysian	\$80,000	145%	*
Indian	\$65,000	118%	76%
Taiwanese	\$60,000	109%	80%
Chinese	\$55,000	100%	89%
Japanese	\$51,000	93%	73%
Korean	\$47,000	85%	85%
Filipino	\$45,000	82%	92%
Pakistani	\$42,000	76%	81%
Sri Lankan	\$39,300	71%	77%
Indonesian	\$39,000	71%	87%
Thai	\$36,400	66%	74%
Bangladeshi	\$36,000	65%	95%
Vietnamese	\$35,000	64%	78%
Hawaiian	\$35,000	64%	78%
Samoan	\$35,000	64%	97%
Guamanian/Chamorro	\$35,000	64%	73%
Laotian	\$34,600	63%	87%
Cambodian	\$30,350	55%	80%
Hmong	\$30,000	55%	83%
Fijian	\$25,000	45%	50%
Burmese	\$24,000	44%	96%

* Data unavailable due to small sample size for Malaysian men working full time, year round.
 NWLC calculations based on 2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates using IPUMS-USA available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/> (IPUMS). Figures are based on women's and men's median earnings for full time, year round workers. The typical white, non-Hispanic man earned \$55,000 in 2015. Indian women represent those who self-selected "Asian Indian" as their race.

www.nwlc.org 

The Wage Gap Over Time for Asian Women Compared to White, Non-Hispanic Men

Ratio of Median Earnings of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers



Source: Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

www.nwlc.org 



Over her career, an Asian woman typically loses at least \$349,000 to the wage gap; in some states, the situation is much worse.

- In 1988, the earliest year for which data are available, an Asian woman working full time, year round typically made only 69 cents for every dollar paid to her white, non-Hispanic male counterpart. By 2015, this figure stood at 85 cents—16 cents less than it was a quarter of a century ago.⁷
- While the wage gap has narrowed somewhat over the last few decades, Asian women still typically lose \$349,320 to the wage gap over a 40-year career. This means Asian

women have to work more than 47 years to make what white, non-Hispanic men were paid in just 40 years.⁸

- In many states, Asian women stand to lose more than half a million dollars over a 40-year career as compared to white, non-Hispanic men.
- In Alaska, the state with the largest lifetime losses for Asian women due to the wage gap, Asian women stand to lose more than \$1 million over a 40-year career. The typical Asian woman living in Alaska would have to work for more than 77 years to make what white, non-Hispanic men made in just 40 years.⁹

Ten Worst States for Asian Women’s Lifetime Losses Due to Wage Gap

	State	Asian women’s earnings	White, non-Hispanic Male Earnings	Lifetime Losses Due to Wage Gap	How Many Years an Asian Woman Must Work to Make What a non-Hispanic White Man Makes in 40 Years
	<i>United States</i>	\$48,471	\$57,204	\$349,320	47.2
10	Rhode Island	\$40,336	\$56,468	\$645,280	56.0
9	Nevada	\$37,169	\$53,760	\$663,640	57.9
8	Utah	\$37,021	\$53,846	\$673,000	58.2
7	Oklahoma	\$37,026	\$48,166	\$685,600	62.1
6	Colorado	\$40,287	\$57,895	\$704,320	57.5
5	California	\$51,308	\$70,805	\$779,880	55.2
4	Vermont	\$27,474	\$47,070	\$783,840	68.5
3	Louisiana	\$32,163	\$55,386	\$928,920	68.9
2	District of Columbia	\$69,415	\$92,679	\$930,560	53.4
1	Alaska	\$33,039	\$63,779	\$1,229,600	77.2

State wage gaps calculated by National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) are based on 2011-2015 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>). National wage gap calculated by NWLC is based on 2016 Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/>). All earnings are in 2015 dollars. Figures are based on women’s and men’s median earnings for full time, year round workers. “Lifetime losses due to wage gap” is what Asian women would lose, based on today’s wage gap, over a 40-year career, compared to white, non-Hispanic men. Figures are not adjusted for inflation. Earnings are in 2015 dollars. Ranks based on unrounded data.

Asian women experience a wage gap at every education level, and it is widest among those with the least education.

- Among full time, year round workers, Asian women without a high school degree typically make only 64 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men without a high school degree make. Asian women with an associate’s degree typically make less—by about \$8,076 each year—than white, non-Hispanic men with only a high school degree (about 83 cents for every dollar).¹⁰

- While the wage gap for Asian women declines as they obtain more education, Asian women must obtain a bachelor’s degree or more before their typical wages exceed those of white, non-Hispanic men without a bachelor’s degree. Asian women with a bachelor’s degree are paid \$60,660—only about 18 cents more (\$1.18) for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men with some college but no degree.



Asian Women’s Wage Equality by Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Asian women’s earnings	White, non-Hispanic men’s earnings	What Asian women make for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make	Wage gap
At least 9th grade but no high school degree	\$23,258	\$36,480	63.8¢	36.2¢
High school degree	\$30,419	\$46,729	65.1¢	34.9¢
Some college, no degree	\$35,907	\$51,546	69.7¢	30.3¢
Associate’s degree	\$38,653	\$54,620	70.8¢	29.2¢
Bachelor’s degree or more	\$67,030	\$80,974	82.8¢	17.2¢
Bachelor’s degree	\$60,660	\$75,080	80.8¢	19.2¢
Master’s degree	\$80,736	\$87,051	92.7¢	7.3¢

NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2016 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table PINC-03. Educational Attainment, People 25 years old and over, by total money earnings in 2015, available at <http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-03.html>. “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 2015 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.

Asian women’s wage gap is widest among older women.

- Among full time, year round workers ages 25–44, Asian women typically make 97 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make—but older Asian women experience far larger wage gaps. Asian women ages 45–64 make 69 cents for every dollar made by their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts, and Asian women 65 and older make only 58 cents for every dollar made by white, non-Hispanic men.¹¹ These larger gaps mean that Asian women are falling behind at the very time they need additional resources to invest in their families and save for retirement.

Asian women experience a wage gap across occupations.

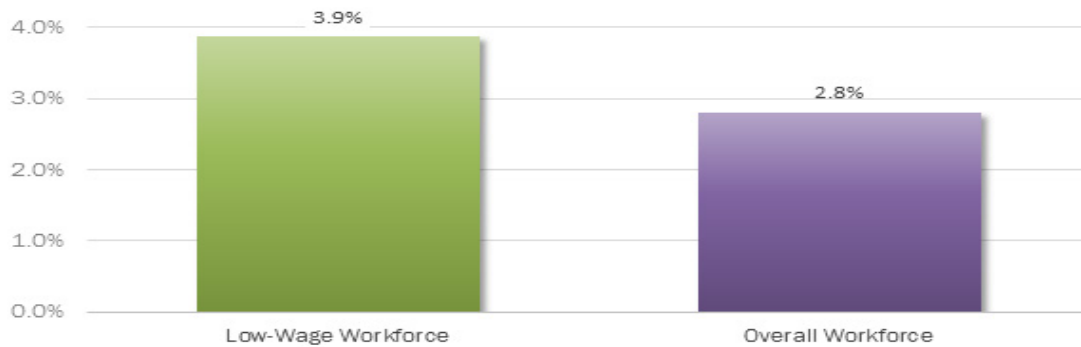
- In a wide variety of occupations—those that are well-paid and poorly paid, those that are female-dominated and those that are non-traditional for women—Asian women working full time, year round make less than white, non-Hispanic men.¹²
 - o Asian women working as physicians and surgeons—a male-dominated, high-wage occupation—make 57 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.

- o Asian women working as customer service representatives—a mid-wage, female-dominated occupation—make 80 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.
- o Asian women working as hand laborers and freight, stock, and material movers—a male-dominated, low-wage occupation—make 76 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.
- o Asian women working as child care workers—a female-dominated, low-wage occupation—make 82 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.

- In addition to wage gaps within occupations, Asian women are overrepresented in the most poorly paid jobs in the nation. Asian women’s share of the low-wage workforce (3.9 percent) is nearly 1.4 times larger than their share of the overall workforce (2.8 percent).¹³ Even in low-wage occupations, Asian women working full time, year round experience a wage gap, making only 81 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make.¹⁴



Asian Women’s Share of Low-Wage and Overall Workforces



NWLC calculations based on Current Population Survey (CPS) 2016 IPUMS, available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/> (IPUMS).

www.nwlc.org 

- 1 Data in this analysis comes from the U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey and American Community Survey and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey. In these sources, Asian women include those who identified themselves to be Asian. In some cases, these means Asian only, and in others it means Asian or Pacific Islander. Please reference the individual sources cited for further detail.
- 2 This fact sheet only addresses the wage gap for Asian women, but the wage gaps for other groups of women compared to white, non-Hispanic men are also substantial. Among full time, year round workers, Black women make only 63 cents for every dollar made by white, non-Hispanic men, Latinas, 54 cents, white, non-Hispanic women, 75 cents, and Native American women, 58 cents. Data on pay inequality for Native American women compared to white, non-Hispanic men are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2015, Tables B20017H and B20017C, available at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>. Wage gap figures are calculated by taking the median earnings of women and men working full, time year round. Median earnings describe the earnings of a worker at the 50th percentile – right in the middle.
- 3 National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) calculations from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2016 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table PINC-05: Work Experience in 2015—People 15 Years Old and Over by Total Money Earnings in 2015, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex, available at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html>.
- 4 NWLC calculations based on American Community Survey (ACS) 2015 (1-year average) using Steven Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015 available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/> (IPUMS). Figures are for full time, year round workers. The American Community Survey allows respondents to select from several race categories. See generally <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaire-archive.2016.html>. Women in each specific race subgroup self-selected into that race category in the American Community Survey.
- 5 Indian women are those who self-selected “Asian Indian” as their race.
- 6 Insufficient data due to small sample size prevented a comparison between Malaysian women and men working full time, year round.
- 7 NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Historical Data, Table P-38: Full-Time, Year-Round Workers by Median Earnings and Sex, available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/historical/people/>. Median earnings are in 2015 dollars. Figures may differ from those in other NWLC reports due to rounding or updated Census estimates. Data for white, non-Hispanic men are for “white alone, not Hispanic” from 2002-2015, “white, not Hispanic” from 1988-2001, and “white” from 1967-1987. Data for Asian American women are for “Asian alone” from 2002-2015 and “Asian” from 1988-2001.
- 8 Figure assumes a wage gap of \$8,733—the gap in median earnings between full time, year round working Asian women (\$48,471) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$57,204) in 2015—each year for 40 years. Figures are not adjusted for inflation.
- 9 State wage gaps calculated by National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) are based on 2011-2015 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>). National wage gap calculated by NWLC is based on 2016 Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/>). Figures are based on women’s and men’s median earnings for full time, year round workers. “Lifetime losses due to wage gap” is what Asian women would lose, based on today’s wage gap, over a 40-year career, compared to white, non-Hispanic men. Figures are not adjusted for inflation. Earnings are in 2015 dollars. Ranks based on unrounded data.
- 10 CPS-ASEC 2016, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-03: Educational Attainment, People 25 years old and over, by total money earnings in 2015, available at <http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-03.html>. Figures are for full time, year round workers.
- 11 NWLC calculations based on CPS-ASEC 2016, *supra* note 3, Table PINC-05.
- 12 NWLC calculations based on American Community Survey (ACS) 2015 (1-year average) using Steven Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015 available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/> (IPUMS). Figures are for full time, year round workers. Female-dominated occupations are more than 60 percent female and male-dominated occupations are more than 60 percent male based on Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey Annual Averages for 2015, Table 11: Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, available at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>. Wage level was determined by examining 820 detailed occupations with annual mean earnings categorized by the Occupational Employment Statistics data for May 2015, available at http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm. High-wage jobs were in the top one-fifth, mid-wage jobs were in the middle three-fifths, low-wage jobs were in the bottom one-fifth.



- 13 NWLC calculations based on Current Population Survey (CPS) 2016 using Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015 available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/> (IPUMS).
- 14 *Id.* Figures are for full time, year round workers.

