



WORKPLACE JUSTICE

EQUAL PAY FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN

When we compare all women to all men, we find that women who work full time, year round in the United States are paid only 79 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts.¹ But the wage gap is even larger when we look specifically at African American women who work full time, year round—they are paid only 60 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.² This gap, which amounts to a loss of \$21,937 a year, means that African American women have to work nearly 20 months—until almost the end of August—to make as much as white, non-Hispanic men did in the previous 12-month calendar year.

African American women working full time, year round are typically paid only 60 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.

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 only a high school degree, African American women typically make only 61 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make.
- African American women with a bachelor’s degree or higher typically make \$50,559—about what white, non-Hispanic men who have some college but lack a degree make (\$50,571). African American women with a bachelor’s degree typically make \$46,825—only \$1,849 more than white, non-Hispanic men with only a high school degree make.

African American Women’s Wage Equality by Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	African American Women’s Earnings	White, non-Hispanic Men’s Earnings	What an African American Woman Makes for Every Dollar a White, non-Hispanic Man Makes	Wage Gap
No high school degree	\$21,264	\$35,961	59.1¢	40.9¢
High school degree	\$27,428	\$44,976	61.0¢	39.0¢
Some college, no degree	\$31,708	\$50,571	62.7¢	37.3¢
Associate’s degree	\$32,482	\$52,336	62.1¢	37.9¢
Bachelor’s degree or more	\$50,559	\$77,356	65.4¢	34.6¢
Bachelor’s degree	\$46,825	\$71,320	65.7¢	34.3¢
Master’s degree	\$55,383	\$85,312	64.9¢	35.1¢

³“What an African American Woman makes for Every Dollar a White, non-Hispanic Man Makes” is the ratio of African American female and white, non-Hispanic male median earnings for full time, year round workers. Earnings are in 2014 dollars. The “wage gap” is the additional money an African American woman would have to make for every dollar made by a white, non-Hispanic man in order to have equal annual earnings. NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2015 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table PINC-03. Educational Attainment, People 25 years old and over, by total money earnings in 2014, available at <http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-03.html>.



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 71 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make—but older women fare far worse.
- Among workers 25-44, African American women make just 63 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make. And for those 45-64, they make just 60 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.

African American women have to work longer to keep up.

- Over the course of a 40-year career, if the current wage gap does not close, African American women will typically lose nearly \$877,480 to the wage gap—this means African American women would have to work more than 66 years to earn what white, non-Hispanic men earned in 40 years.⁵
- In six states, African American women would lose more than \$1 million over a 40-year career as compared to white, non-Hispanic men.

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

Rank	State	African American Women’s Earnings	White, Non-Hispanic Men’s Earnings	African American Women’s Lifetime Losses Due to Wage Gap	How Many More Years an African American Woman Must Work to Catch up to What a non-Hispanic White Man Makes in 40 Years
	<i>United States</i>	\$33,533	\$55,470	\$877,480	26.2
10	Utah	\$29,736	\$53,504	\$950,720	32.0
9	Rhode Island	\$32,639	\$56,965	\$973,040	29.8
8	Virginia	\$36,542	\$61,218	\$987,040	27.0
7	Texas	\$35,248	\$60,185	\$997,480	28.3
6	Massachusetts	\$40,460	\$66,021	\$1,022,440	25.3
5	California	\$44,631	\$70,805	\$1,046,960	23.5
4	Louisiana	\$26,400	\$54,772	\$1,134,880	43.0
3	Connecticut	\$40,942	\$69,452	\$1,140,400	27.9
2	New Jersey	\$42,761	\$73,551	\$1,231,600	28.8
1	District of Columbia	\$49,871	\$89,751	\$1,595,200	32.0

Figures are based on women’s and men’s median earnings for full time, year round workers. “African American Woman’s Lifetime losses due to wage gap” is what African American 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 2014 dollars. Ranks based on unrounded data. State wage gaps calculated by National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) are based on 2010-2014 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>). National wage gap calculated by NWLC is based on 2015 Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/>).

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

- In Louisiana, the worst state for African American women’s wage equality, African American women typically make less than half of what white, non-Hispanic men make.⁶
- African American women in Washington, DC have the second worst wage gap in the country at 44.4 cents, even though women overall in Washington, D.C. have the smallest wage gap at just 10.5 cents.⁷



Ten Worst States for African American Women's Wage Equality

Rank	State	African American Women's Earnings	White, Non-Hispanic Men's Earnings	What an African American Woman Makes for Every Dollar a White, non-Hispanic Man Makes	Wage Gap
10	Connecticut	\$40,942	\$69,452	59.0¢	41.0¢
9	Texas	\$35,248	\$60,185	58.6¢	41.4¢
8	New Jersey	\$42,761	\$73,551	58.1¢	41.9¢
7	South Carolina	\$27,948	\$48,640	57.5¢	42.5¢
6	Rhode Island	\$32,639	\$56,965	57.3¢	42.7¢
5	Alabama	\$28,564	\$50,194	56.9¢	43.1¢
4	Mississippi	\$25,961	\$46,557	55.8¢	44.2¢
3	Utah	\$29,736	\$53,504	55.6¢	44.4¢
2	District of Columbia	\$49,871	\$89,751	55.6¢	44.4¢
1	Louisiana	\$26,400	\$54,772	48.2¢	51.8¢

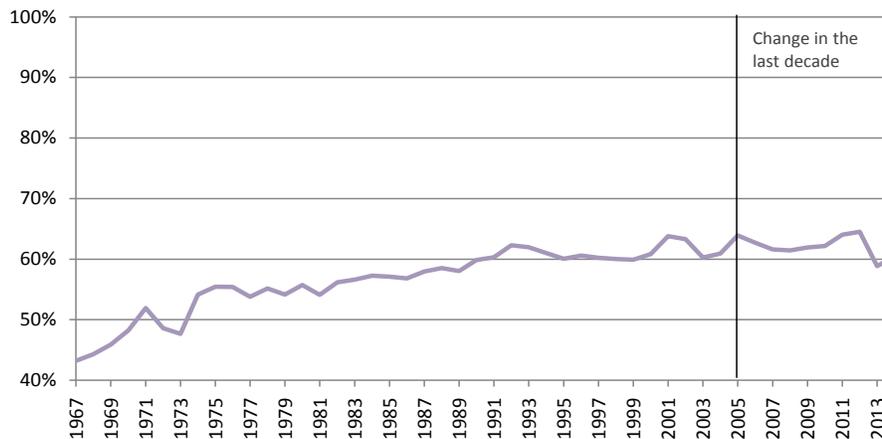
"What an African American Woman Makes for Every Dollar a White, non-Hispanic Man Makes" is the ratio of women's and men's median earnings for full time, year round workers. Earnings are in 2014 dollars. The "wage gap" is the additional money a woman would have to make for every dollar made by a man in order to have equal annual earnings. Ranks based on unrounded data. State wage gaps calculated by National Women's Law Center (NWLC) are based on 2010-2014 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>). National wage gap calculated by NWLC is based on 2015 Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

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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.⁸
- By 2014, the most recent year for which data are available, that gap had narrowed by 17 cents, but African American women working full time, year round were still only paid 60 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.

The Wage Gap Over Time for African American Women Compared to White, Non-Hispanic Men Ratio of Median Earnings of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers



Source: Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

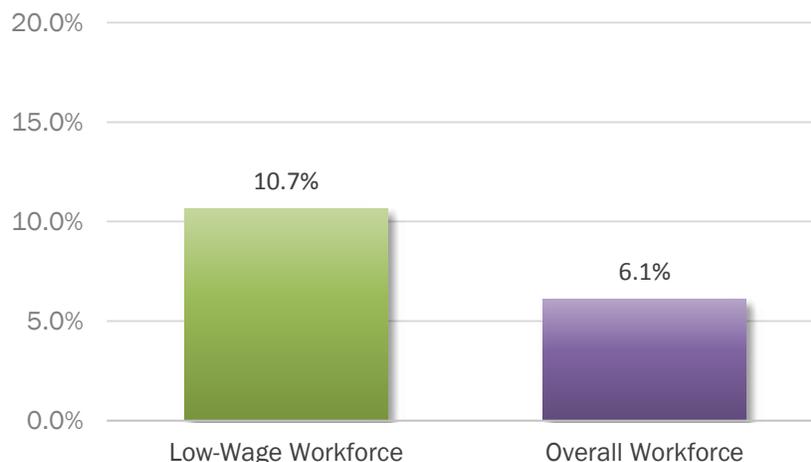
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African American women experience a wage gap across occupations.

- 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.
 - African American women working as physicians and surgeons—a traditionally male, high-wage occupation—make 52 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.
 - African American women working as customer service representatives—a mid-wage, female-dominated occupation—make 79 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.
 - African American women working as construction laborers—a traditionally male, mid-wage occupation—make 85 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.
 - African American women working as personal care aides—a heavily female, low-wage occupation—make 85 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.
- In addition to wage gaps within occupations, African American women are overrepresented in the most poorly paid jobs in the nation. African American women's share of the low-wage workforce (10.7 percent) is much higher than their share of the overall workforce (6.1 percent). Even in these low-wage occupations that typically pay \$10.50 per hour or less, African American women working full time, year round experience a wage gap, making only 74.5 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make.

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



Source: NWLC calculations based on IPUMS-ACS. Figures are for employed workers in 2014. The low-wage workforce is defined here as occupations with median wages of \$10.50 or less per hour based on BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics.

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Union membership is especially important for closing the wage gap for African American women.

- Among full time workers, the wage gap between African American women and white men who are union workers is more than 20 percent smaller than the wage gap among non-union workers (27 cents for union workers, compared to 34 cents for non-union workers).¹²
- African American women are the most likely group of women to be union members and yet in 2015, just 12.8 percent of employed African American women were members of unions.¹³



- 1 National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) calculations from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2015 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, (*hereinafter* CPS-ASEC 2015) Table PINC-05: Work Experience in 2014—People 15 Years Old and Over by Total Money Earnings in 2014, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex, *available at* <http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html>.
- 2 *Id.* This fact sheet only addresses the wage gap for African American 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, Latinas make only 55 cents for every dollar made by white, non-Hispanic men, Asian American women, 84 cents, white non-Hispanic women, 75 cents, and Native American women, 59 cents. Data on pay inequality for Native American women compared to white, non-Hispanic men are from the American Community Survey 2014, Tables B20017H and B20017C, *available at* <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>.
- 3 CPS-ASEC 2015, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-03: Educational Attainment, People 25 years old and over, by total money earnings in 2014, *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.
- 4 NWLC calculations based on CPS-ASEC 2015, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-05.
- 5 Figure assumes a wage gap of \$21,937—the gap in median earnings between full-time, year-round working African American women (\$33,533) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$55,470) in 2014—each year for 40 years. Figures are not adjusted for inflation.
- 6 NWLC, The Wage Gap By State for African American Women (Dec. 2015) *available at* <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/wage-gap-state-african-american-women>.
- 7 NWLC, The Wage Gap By State for Women Overall (Sept. 2015) *available at* <https://nwlc.org/resources/wage-gap-state-women-over-all-2014/>.
- 8 NWLC, The Wage Gap Over Time for African American Women (Sept. 2015) *available at* <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/wage-gap-over-time>.
- 9 NWLC calculations based on American Community Survey 2010-2014 (5-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/>. 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.
- 10 NWLC calculations based on American Community Survey 2014 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/>. Data are for 2014. Figures are for employed workers. The low-wage workforce is comprised of workers in occupations that typically pay \$10.50 per hour or less.
- 11 *Id.*
- 12 NWLC calculations based on Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Union Members - 2015, Table 2: Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers by Union Affiliation and Selected Characteristics, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nr0.htm>. Data on union representation (workers represented by unions include both workers who are union members as well as those who are not members but whose jobs are covered by a union contract) are not reported here but are similar to those for union membership. Wage gaps are calculated based on median weekly earnings. These data differ slightly from the often-used measure of median annual earnings for full-time, year-round workers.
- 13 NWLC calculations based on Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Union Members - 2015, Table 1: Union Affiliation of Employed Wage and Salary Workers by Selected Characteristics, 2014-2015 Annual Averages, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nr0.htm>.

