

WORKPLACE JUSTICE

EQUAL PAY FOR MOTHERS IS CRITICAL FOR FAMILIES

BY KAYLA PATRICK AND JASMINE TUCKER

More than 24.3 million mothers with children under 18 are in the workforce, making up nearly 1 in 6—or 15.8 percent—of all workers.¹ The great majority of mothers in the workforce work full time.² In 2015, 42 percent of mothers were the sole or primary breadwinners in their families, while 22.4 percent of mothers were co-breadwinners, meaning mothers' earnings are critical to families' financial security.³

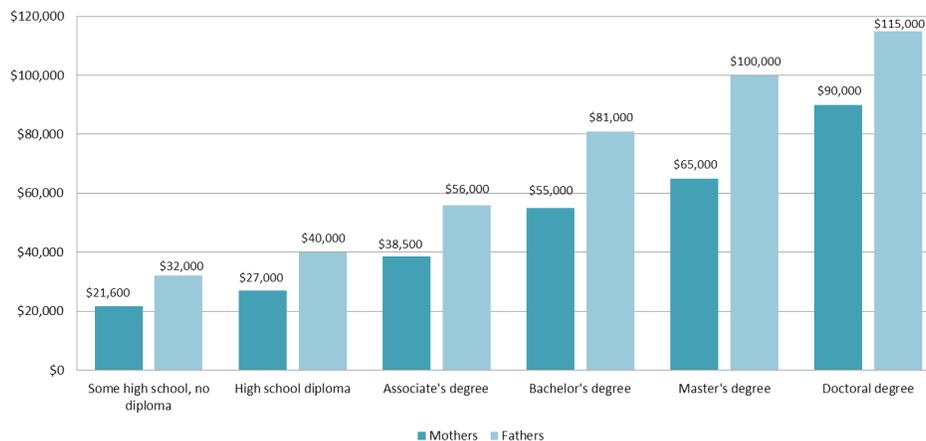
While women in the U.S. who work full time, year round are typically paid just 80 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts,⁴ the wage gap between mothers and fathers is even larger. Mothers working full time, year round outside the home are paid just 71 cents for every dollar paid to fathers, a gap that translates to a loss of \$16,000 annually.⁵ The wage gap between mothers and fathers exists across education level, age, location, race, and occupation, and compromises families' economic security.

The wage gap exists for mothers at every education level.

Among full time, year round workers, mothers with a high school diploma make just 68 cents for every dollar paid to fathers with a high school diploma.⁶ Mothers must earn a bachelor's degree or more before their typical earnings exceed that of fathers with just a high school diploma. And these mothers are still typically paid less than fathers with associate's degrees.

Moms do not begin to narrow the wage gap between themselves and fathers until they receive a doctoral degree, and even then they lose out on \$25,000 per year as compared to fathers with a doctoral degree. Fathers who earn a master's degree or a doctoral degree are typically paid \$100,000 and \$115,000 respectively. Conversely, even mothers who earn doctorates will typically be paid no more than \$90,000 annually.

Median Earnings of Mothers and Fathers Working Full Time, Year Round in 2016, by Education Level



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey using IPUMS-USA. Mothers and fathers have at least one related child under 18 at home. Figures are median annual earnings for full time, year round workers in 2016.



The wage gap persists for mothers of all ages.

Mothers who work full time, year round outside the home are typically paid less than fathers at every age. Among full time, year round workers ages 20-39, mothers are typically paid 77 cents for every dollar paid to fathers. And the gap widens with age: among workers ages 40-49, mothers are paid just 72 cents for every dollar paid to fathers, which means they are falling behind at the very time they need additional resources to invest in their families and save for retirement.⁷

Age group	Mothers' earnings	Fathers' earnings	What a mother makes for every dollar a father makes
20-29	\$27,000	\$35,000	77¢
30-39	\$40,000	\$52,000	77¢
40-49	\$47,000	\$65,000	72¢
50-59	\$50,000	\$70,000	71¢

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey using IPUMS-USA. Mothers and fathers have at least one related child under 18 at home. Figures are median annual earnings for full time, year round workers in 2016.

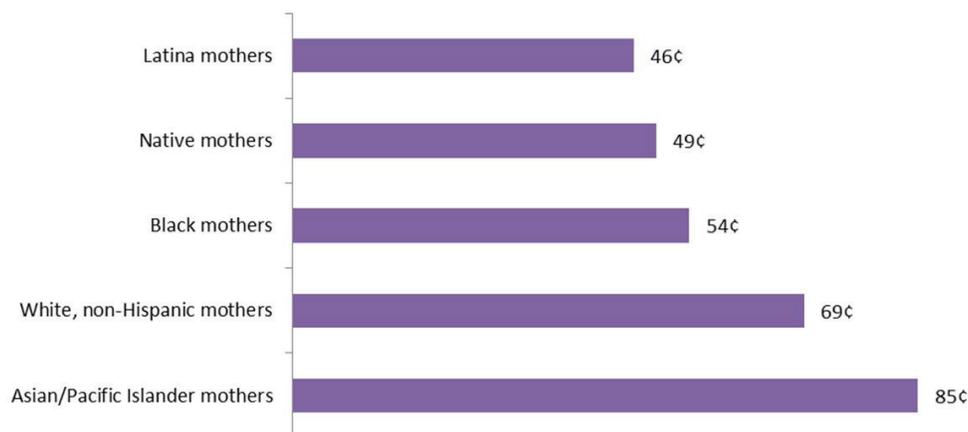
Mothers experience a wage gap in every single state.

Nationwide, mothers are paid just 71 cents for every dollar paid to fathers. But depending on the state a mother lives in, the wage gap varies. In Maine, where the wage gap between mothers and fathers is smallest, mothers are paid 85 cents for every dollar paid to fathers, translating to a loss of \$8,000 annually.⁸ In Utah and Louisiana, where the gap is largest, mothers are paid just 58 cents and 61 cents respectively for every dollar paid to fathers. In Utah, mothers lose \$25,000 annually compared to fathers and in Louisiana, \$22,000.⁹

Mothers of every race are typically paid less than white, non-Hispanic fathers.

While overall, mothers are paid less than fathers, the wage gap is even wider for many mothers of color as compared to white, non-Hispanic fathers. Asian/Pacific Islander mothers are paid 85 cents;¹⁰ white, non-Hispanic mothers are paid 69 cents; Black mothers are paid 54 cents; Native mothers are paid 49 cents; and Latina mothers are paid just 46 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic fathers.¹¹

What Mothers Were Paid for Every \$1 Paid to White, non-Hispanic Fathers in 2016



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey using IPUMS-USA. Mothers and fathers have at least one related child under 18 at home. Figures are median annual earnings for full time, year round workers in 2016.



Mothers 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—mothers working full time, year round are paid less than fathers.

More than 2 in 5 mothers (42.2 percent) are employed in one of twelve occupations; in every one of those occupations, mothers are paid between 52 cents and 85 cents for every dollar paid to fathers. In addition, many of the occupations in which mothers are most likely to work pay low wages—at least to mothers. For example, three common occupations for mothers—waiters and waitresses, child care workers, and janitors, building cleaners, maids and housekeepers—typically pay mothers \$10.00 per hour or less. In addition, cashiers and retail

salespeople jobs typically pay mothers just \$10.58 per hour, or just 52 cents for every dollar paid to fathers. However, none of these twelve occupations typically pays fathers less than \$13.80 per hour.¹²

Particularly when mothers support children on their own, these lower wages leave families below or dangerously close to the poverty line. A single parent with two children needs to make \$19,749 per year—about \$9.49 per hour for someone working full time, year round—just to lift their family above the poverty line.¹³ Indeed, more than 1 in 9 single mothers who held full time jobs throughout 2016 were poor.¹⁴ More than half of all poor children lived in families headed by women in 2016, and female-headed households with children were much more likely to be poor in 2016 (35.6 percent) than male-headed households (17.3 percent) or households headed by married couples (6.6 percent).¹⁵

Common Occupations for Working Mothers

Occupation	Percent of mothers employed in occupation	Percent of workers in occupation who are mothers	Median hourly wage for mothers in occupation	Median hourly wage for fathers in occupation	What a mother makes for every dollar a father makes
1 Pre-K, K-12, and special education teachers	7.3%	33.0%	\$22.84	\$26.92	85¢
2 Secretaries, administrative assistants, office clerks, receptionists, and information clerks	6.5%	27.2%	\$15.38	\$21.63	71¢
3 Nursing, psychiatric, and home health, and personal care aides	4.5%	34.2%	\$11.54	\$14.42	80¢
4 Registered nurses	4.5%	31.3%	\$28.85	\$34.62	83¢
5 Cashiers and retail salespeople	4.4%	15.1%	\$10.58	\$20.19	52¢
6 Janitors, building cleaners, maids, and housekeepers	3.4%	19.4%	\$9.62	\$14.47	66¢
7 Customer service representatives	2.3%	19.9%	\$14.42	\$21.63	67¢
8 Misc. managers such as postmasters, mail superintendents, and funeral service managers	2.0%	11.1%	\$33.65	\$43.27	78¢
9 Retail sales supervisors	2.0%	15.0%	\$15.87	\$25.00	63¢
10 Accountants and auditors	1.8%	22.6%	\$28.37	\$43.27	66¢
11 Waiters and waitresses	1.7%	18.4%	\$9.62	\$13.80	70¢
12 Child care workers	1.7%	30.4%	\$10.00	\$14.42	69¢

Source: NWLC calculations based on 2016 American Community Survey using IPUMS. Figures are in 2016 dollars. Median hourly wages are for full time, year round workers. Mothers and fathers have at least one child under 18 at home. Hourly wages for mothers and fathers are derived by dividing median annual earnings by 2,080 hours, which assumes a 40-hour work week for 52 weeks.

Meanwhile, fathers tend to be concentrated in occupations that are more highly paid. In the twelve most common occupations for fathers, none typically pay fathers less than \$12.02 per hour. And while there is overlap between the most common occupations for mothers and fathers, fathers are more likely than mothers to be in high paying occupations and mothers are more likely to be in lower paid occupations.

For example, fathers are 3.5 times more likely than mothers to be a CEO or legislator. In contrast, mothers are 5.1 times more likely than fathers to be a waiter or waitress. And again, when fathers and mothers work in the same occupation, fathers are still paid more; in the twelve most common occupations for fathers, mothers are typically paid between 52 and 94 cents for every dollar paid to fathers.



Common Occupations for Working Fathers

	Occupation	Percent of fathers employed in occupation	Percent of workers in occupation who are fathers	Median hourly wage for mothers in occupation	Median hourly wage for fathers in occupation	What a mother makes for every dollar a father makes
1	Misc. managers such as postmasters, mail superintendents, and funeral service managers	4.0%	23.6%	\$33.65	\$43.27	78¢
2	Truck drivers and driver sales workers	4.0%	28.7%	\$14.42	\$21.63	67¢
3	Construction Laborers	2.3%	33.4%	\$13.94	\$16.83	83¢
4	Retail sales supervisors	2.3%	18.4%	\$15.87	\$25.00	63¢
5	Cashiers and retail salespeople	1.9%	7.0%	\$10.58	\$20.19	52¢
6	Janitors, building cleaners, maids, and housekeepers	1.8%	10.9%	\$9.62	\$14.47	66¢
7	Carpenters	1.7%	35.2%	\$14.42	\$19.23	75¢
8	Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers	1.7%	18.6%	\$12.02	\$16.35	74¢
9	Grounds maintenance workers	1.5%	28.4%	\$11.35	\$12.02	94¢
10	Software developers	1.5%	29.6%	\$43.27	\$52.88	82¢
11	Wholesale and manufacturing sales representatives	1.4%	26.9%	\$27.88	\$38.46	73¢
12	CEOs and legislators	1.4%	28.2%	\$52.88	\$72.12	73¢

Source: NWLC calculations based on 2016 American Community Survey using IPUMS. Figures are in 2016 dollars. Median hourly wages are for full time, year round workers. Mothers and fathers have at least one child under 18 at home. Hourly wages for mothers and fathers are derived by dividing median annual earnings by 2,080 hours, which assumes a 40-hour work week for 52 weeks.

Families can't afford for mothers to be shortchanged any longer. It's time to close the gap.

- NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey using IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. Mothers and fathers have at least one related child under 18 at home.
- NWLC, A Snapshot of Working Mothers (Apr. 2017), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/a-snapshot-of-working-mothers/>.
- Center For American Progress, Breadwinning Mothers Are Increasingly the U.S. Norm (Dec. 2016), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2016/12/19/295203/breadwinning-mothers-are-increasingly-the-u-s-norm/>.
- NWLC, The Wage Gap: The Who, How, Why, and What to Do (Sept. 2017), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/the-wage-gap-the-who-how-why-and-what-to-do/>.
- NWLC calculations of U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey using IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. Mothers and fathers have at least one related child under 18 at home. Figures are median annual earnings for full time, year round workers in 2016.
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*
- NWLC, The Wage Gap for Mothers, State by State (May 2018), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/the-wage-gap-for-mothers-state-by-state/>.
- Ibid.*
- Some subgroups of Asian/Pacific Islander women experience a larger wage gap than is reflected in the 87 cent wage gap for Asian women overall. For more information, see NWLC, Equal Pay for Asian and Pacific Islander Women (Feb. 2018) available at: <https://nwlc.org/resources/equal-pay-for-asian-pacific-islander-women/>.
- NWLC calculations of U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey using IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. Mothers and fathers have at least one related child under 18 at home. Figures are median annual earnings for full time, year round workers in 2016. Black mothers are those who self identified in the survey as Black or African American. Native mothers are those who self identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native. Asian/Pacific Islander mothers are those who self identified as Asian or Pacific Islanders. Latina mothers are those who self identified as being of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin and may be of any race. White, non-Hispanic mothers and fathers are those who self identified as white and not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.
- NWLC calculations of U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey using IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, available



at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. Mothers and fathers have at least one related child under 18 at home. Figures are median annual earnings for full time, year round workers in 2016. Hourly wages are derived by dividing median annual earnings by 2,080 hours, which assumes a 40-hour work week for 52 weeks.

13. U.S. Census Bureau, Poverty Thresholds for 2017 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years (Sept. 2017), available at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html>.
14. Kayla Patrick, NWLC, National Snapshot: Poverty Among Women & Families, 2016 (Sept. 2017), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/national-snapshot-poverty-among-women-families-2016/>.
15. *Ibid.*

