

WORKPLACE JUSTICE

EQUAL PAY FOR MOTHERS IS CRITICAL FOR FAMILIES

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More than 22.8 million mothers with children under 18 are in the workforce, making up nearly 1 in 6 - or 15.5 percent - of all workers.¹ The great majority of these mothers work full time.² In 2015, 42 percent of mothers were sole or primary family breadwinners, while 22.4 percent of mothers were co-breadwinners, meaning families are increasingly relying on mothers' earnings.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

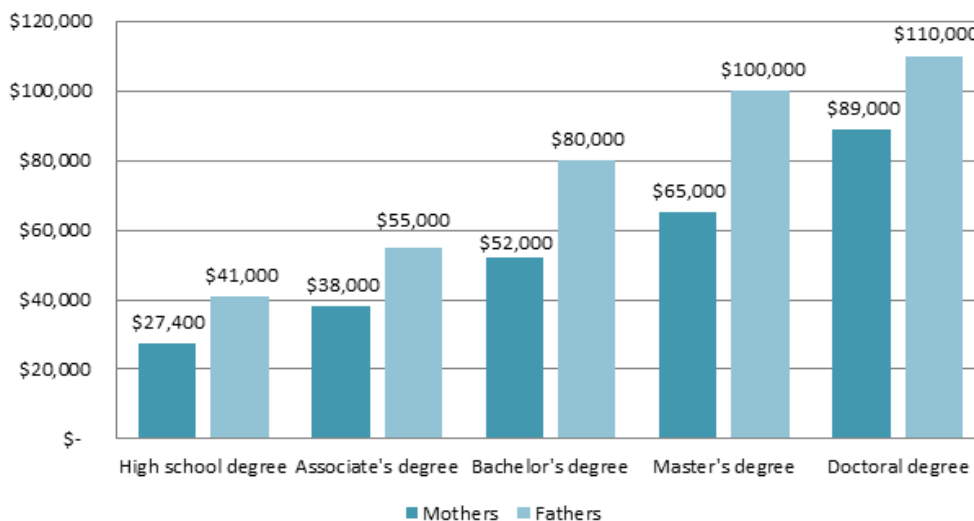
gap between mothers and fathers exists across education level, age, location, race, and occupation, and compromises families' economic security.

The wage gap exists for mothers at every education level.

Among full time, year round workers, mothers with a high school degree make just 67 cents for every dollar paid to fathers with a high school degree.⁶ In fact, mothers must earn a bachelor's degree or more before their typical earnings exceed that of fathers with just a high school degree. And these mothers are still typically paid less than fathers with associate's degrees.

Fathers who earn a master's degree or a doctoral degree are typically paid \$100,000 and \$110,000 respectively. Conversely, regardless of the level of education a mother completes, she will typically be paid no more than \$89,000 annually.

Median Annual Earnings of Mothers and Fathers Working Full Time, Year Round 2015, by Education Level



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 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 2015.



The wage gap persists for mothers of all ages.

Mothers who work full time, year round outside the home are paid less than fathers at every age. Among full time, year round workers ages 20-29, mothers are typically paid 74 cents for every dollar paid to fathers. Among workers ages 40-49, mothers are paid just 69 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	\$26,000	\$35,000	74¢
30-39	\$40,000	\$52,000	77¢
40-49	\$45,000	\$65,000	69¢
50-59	\$50,000	\$69,000	72¢

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 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 2015.

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 Delaware, where the wage gap between mothers and fathers is smallest, mothers are paid 83 cents for every dollar paid to fathers, translating to a loss of \$10,000 annually.⁸ In Utah and Louisiana, where the gap is largest, mothers are paid just 58 cents for every dollar paid to fathers. In Utah, mothers lose \$25,000 annually compared to fathers and in Louisiana, \$24,000.⁹

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 as compared to white, non-Hispanic fathers. Asian and Pacific Islander mothers are paid 85 cents; white, non-Hispanic mothers are paid 69 cents; Black mothers are paid 51 cents; Native mothers are paid 49 cents; and Latina mothers are paid just 46 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic fathers.¹⁰

What Mothers Were Paid for Every \$1 Paid to White, non-Hispanic Fathers in 2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 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 2015.



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 50 cents and 86 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, one common occupation for mothers – waiters and waitresses – typically pays mothers just \$9.12 per hour while three others – child care workers; janitors, building cleaners, maids and housekeepers; and

cashiers and retail salespeople – pay mothers less than \$10.50 per hour. However, none of these twelve occupations typically pays fathers less than \$12.50 per hour.¹¹

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 \$19,319 per year – about \$9.29 per hour for someone working full time, year round – just to lift their family above the poverty line.¹² Indeed, more than 1 in 9 single mothers who held full time jobs throughout 2015 were poor.¹³ More than half of all poor children lived in families headed by women in 2015, and female-headed households with children were much more likely to be poor in 2015 (36.5 percent) than male-headed households (22.1 percent) or households headed by married couples (7.5 percent).¹⁴

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	7.4%	33.2%	\$22.29	\$26.35	85¢
2 Secretaries, administrative assistants, office clerks, receptionists, and information clerks	6.7%	26.3%	\$15.20	\$19.76	77¢
3 Registered nurses	4.5%	35.3%	\$28.88	\$33.65	86¢
4 Nursing, psychiatric, and home health, and personal care aides	4.5%	29.8%	\$11.25	\$14.54	77¢
5 Cashiers and retail salespeople	4.3%	14.3%	\$10.32	\$20.69	50¢
6 Janitors, building cleaners, maids, and housekeepers	3.3%	18.5%	\$9.44	\$14.68	64¢
7 Customer service representatives	2.3%	20.7%	\$14.92	\$21.28	70¢
8 Retail sales supervisors	2.0%	14.9%	\$15.65	\$24.46	64¢
9 Accountants and auditors	1.9%	22.1%	\$26.47	\$40.91	65¢
10 Misc. managers such as postmasters, mail super intendants, and funeral service managers	1.9%	11.8%	\$32.26	\$43.07	75¢
11 Childcare workers	1.7%	29.9%	\$9.62	\$12.90	75¢
12 Waiters and waitresses	1.7%	17.2%	\$9.12	\$12.50	73¢

Source: NWLC calculations based on 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year averages using IPUMS. Figures are in 2015 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 \$12.41 per hour. And while there is overlap between the top 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 5.6 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 50 and 86 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 super intendants, and funeral service managers	4.0%	25.8%	\$32.26	\$43.07	75¢
2	Trucker drivers and driver sales workers	3.9%	28.3%	\$14.42	\$20.27	71¢
3	Retail sales supervisors	2.3%	18.5%	\$15.65	\$24.46	64¢
4	Construction Laborers	2.1%	31.3%	\$13.68	\$16.27	84¢
5	Cashiers and retail salespeople	1.9%	6.7%	\$10.32	\$20.69	50¢
6	Janitors, building cleaners, maids, and housekeepers	1.7%	10.3%	\$9.44	\$14.68	64¢
7	Carpenters	1.6%	34.0%	\$13.03	\$17.61	74¢
8	Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers	1.6%	17.6%	\$11.74	\$16.21	72¢
9	Wholesale and manufacturing sales representatives	1.5%	26.6%	\$28.85	\$36.06	80¢
10	Software developers	1.5%	33.5%	\$42.79	\$49.90	86¢
11	Grounds maintenance workers	1.4%	26.3%	\$9.63	\$12.41	78¢
12	CEOs and legislators	1.4%	29.4%	\$48.92	\$66.35	74¢

Source: NWLC calculations based on 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year averages using IPUMS. Figures are in 2015 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.

- 1 NWLC calculations of U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 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 2015.
- 2 NWLC, A SNAPSHOT OF WORKING MOTHERS (Apr. 2017), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/a-snapshot-of-working-mothers/>.
- 3 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/>.
- 4 NWLC, THE WAGE GAP: THE WHO, HOW, WHY, AND WHAT TO DO (Sept. 2016), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/the-wage-gap-the-who-how-why-and-what-to-do/>.
- 5 NWLC calculations of U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 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 2015.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 NWLC, THE WAGE GAP FOR MOTHERS, STATE BY STATE (Nov. 2016), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/the-wage-gap-for-mothers-state-by-state/>.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 NWLC calculations of U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 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 2015. Black mothers are those who self identified in the survey as Black or African American. White, non-Hispanic mothers are those who self identified as white and not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. 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.
- 11 NWLC calculations of U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 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 2015.



- 12 U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, POVERTY THRESHOLDS FOR 2016 BY SIZE OF FAMILY AND NUMBER OF RELATED CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS (Sept 2016),
available at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html>.
- 13 TUCKER, JASMINE AND CAITLIN LOWELL, NWLC, NATIONAL SNAPSHOT: POVERTY AMONG WOMEN & FAMILIES, 2015 (Sept. 2016), *available at*
<https://nwlc.org/resources/national-snapshot-poverty-among-women-families-2015/>.
- 14 *Ibid.*

