



WORKPLACE JUSTICE

WOMEN EXPERIENCE A WAGE GAP IN NEARLY EVERY OCCUPATION

By Jasmine Tucker

Women who work full time, year round in the United States are paid just 80 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts.¹ This gap, which amounts to a typical loss of \$10,086 per year for a working woman—or \$403,440 over a 40-year career—means that women have to work 15 months, until April 10, to make what men did in the previous 12-month calendar year.²

Despite the fact that women have made enormous gains in educational attainment and labor force involvement in the last several decades, unequal pay remains pervasive in 97 percent of occupations,³ showing that no matter what their job, women are paid less than men doing the same job in nearly every sector of work.

Women are overrepresented in low-wage jobs, and underrepresented in high-wage jobs.

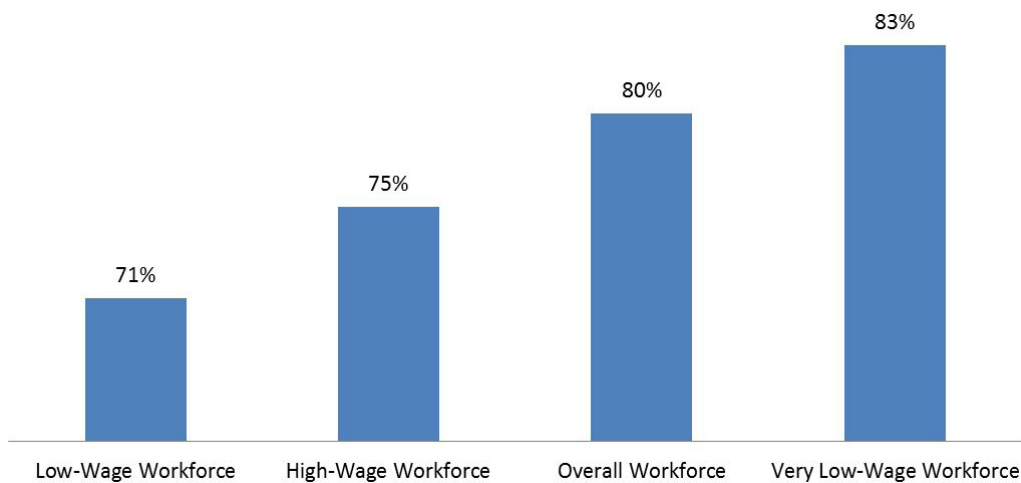
- Women make up about 47 percent of the overall workforce, yet make up 58 percent of the low-wage workforce, defined as those working in jobs that typically pay less than \$11 per hour, or about \$22,880 annually.⁴ And they make up an overwhelming 69 percent of the very low-wage workforce—those working in jobs that typically pay less than \$10 per hour.⁵
- In addition, women's share of the high-wage workforce—those working in jobs that pay more than \$48 per hour, or about \$100,000 annually—is less than their share of the overall workforce. Women make up only 35 percent of workers in high-wage jobs.⁶

Whether they work in low-wage or high-wage occupations, women are typically paid less than men in the same occupations.

- Among full time, year round workers in low-wage jobs—such as childcare workers, bartenders, and personal care aides—women make just 71 cents for every dollar paid to men.⁷
 - Women in these occupations are typically paid about \$22,000 annually, compared to the \$31,200 typically paid to men.
 - This gap translates to a loss of \$9,200 each year to the wage gap—more than enough to pay for nine months' worth of rent or more than 13 months of childcare costs.⁸
 - This wage gap adds up to a loss of \$368,000 after a 40-year career.
- Among full time, year round workers in high-wage occupations—such as lawyers, engineers, and physicians or surgeons—women are paid 75 cents for every dollar paid to men in the same occupations.⁹
 - Women in these occupations are typically paid about \$83,000, compared to the \$110,000 typically paid to men in these same jobs.
 - This wage gap amounts to a staggering annual loss of \$27,000 each year, or nearly \$1.1 million dollars over a 40-year career.



Women's Earnings as Compared to Men's Earnings in the High-Wage, Overall, Low-Wage, and Very Low-Wage Workforces



Source: NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey using IPUMS.

Women experience a wage gap across occupations.¹⁰

- Women working as travel agents—a mid-wage, female dominated occupation—make 87 cents for every dollar paid to men working as travel agents.
 - Women in this occupation lose \$6,000 per year – or \$240,000 over a 40-year career.
- Women working as construction laborers—a traditionally male, mid-wage occupation—make 94 cents for every dollar paid to men working as construction laborers.
 - Women in this occupation lose \$2,000 per year – or \$80,000 over a 40-year career.
- Women working as physicians and surgeons—a traditionally male, high wage occupation—make 66 cents for every dollar paid to men working as physicians and surgeons.
 - Women in this occupation lose \$85,000 per year—or \$3.4 million over a 40-year career.

Women experience a wage gap even in occupations where they are overrepresented.

- Nearly two in five women (38.6 percent) are employed in one of ten occupations; in every one of those occupations, women are typically paid less than men.¹¹
- Among the ten most common occupations for women, two of those occupations—waiters and waitresses and janitors, building cleaners, maids, and housekeepers—typically pay women earnings that are defined as low-wage (less than \$11 per hour), while typically men in these same occupations are not.¹²
- Four of these common occupations typically pay women less than \$12 per hour while none of them typically pays men less than \$12.
- Even in better paying jobs where women make up a substantial share of the workforce, such as pre-K, K-12, and special education teachers, or registered nurses, women are paid less than their male counterparts.



Common Occupations for Women

	Occupation	Percent of Women Employed in Occupation	Percent of Workers in Occupation Who Are Women	Median Hourly Wage for Women in Occupation	Median Hourly Wage for Men in Occupation	What a Woman Makes for Every Dollar a Man Makes
1	Secretaries, administrative assistants, office	7.2%	90.5%	\$16.44	\$18.41	.89¢
2	Cashiers and retail salespeople	5.9%	62.1%	\$11.01	\$16.83	.65¢
3	Pre-K, K-12, and special education	5.7%	78.4%	\$22.60	\$25.48	.89¢
4	Nursing, psychiatric, home health, and personal care aides	4.1%	85.7%	\$11.54	\$12.98	.89¢
5	Registered nurses	3.9%	89.3%	\$30.77	\$33.65	.91¢
6	Janitors, building cleaners, maids, and housekeepers	3.1%	54.4%	\$10.10	\$14.42	.70¢
7	Customer service representatives	2.5%	65.1%	\$15.38	\$16.83	.91¢
8	Waiters and waitresses	2.2%	69.3%	\$9.62	\$12.02	.80¢
9	Misc. managers, incl. funeral service managers, postmasters, and mail superintendents	2.1%	35.6%	\$32.69	\$39.90	.82¢
10	First line supervisors of retail salespeople	2.0%	45.2%	\$16.25	\$21.63	.75¢

Source: NWLC calculations based on 2016 American Community Survey 1-year estimates using IPUMS. Figures are in 2016 dollars. Median hourly wages are for full time, year round workers. Hourly wages are derived by dividing median annual earnings by 2,080 hours, which assumes a 40-hour work week for 52 weeks.

1. National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2016 Annual Social and Economic Supplement [hereinafter CPS, 2016 ASEC], Table PINC-05, available at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html>.
2. NWLC calculations based on CPS, 2016 ASEC, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-05. The gap in median earnings between full time, year round working women (\$41,554) and men (\$51,640) is \$10,086. Earnings losses over a 40-year career or the “Lifetime Wage Gap” is what a woman would lose, based on today’s wage gap, over a 40-year career. The figure assumes an annual wage gap of \$10,086 each year for 40 years. Figures are not adjusted for inflation. Earnings are in 2016 dollars.
3. NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Table Packages, (2016), Table 1, Full-Time, Year-Round Workers and Median Earnings, available at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/industry-occupation/median-earnings.html>.
4. NWLC calculations based on American Community Survey 2016 1-year averages using Steven Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 7.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2017, available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. Data are for 2016. Figures are for employed workers. “Low-wage jobs” or the “low-wage workforce” could be defined in many different ways. This analysis defines low-wage jobs as those that paid a median hourly wage of less than \$11 in 2016. Median hourly wages for occupations were determined using U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2016 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, available at https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm. Similarly, “very low-wage jobs” are those that pay a median hourly wage of less than \$10 and “high-wage jobs” are those that pay a median hourly wage of \$48 – or \$100,000 annually.
5. *Id.*
6. *Id.*
7. *Id.*
8. *Id.* Median gross rent for U.S. is \$981 per month and comes from U. S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) Table B25064, 1-year estimate, available at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Gross rent is the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, and water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.) if these are paid by the renter (or paid for the renter by someone else). Average costs for child care in a center in Arizona for a four-year-old (\$8,275 annually in 2016 or about \$690 per month). Arizona’s cost for this type of child care falls at the median of all state averages (including the District of Columbia). Estimates come from Child Care Aware of America, Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2017 Report, (2017), Appendix 1, available at <http://www.usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/reports-and-research/costofcare/>.
9. *Id.*
10. *Id.* 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. Earnings losses over a 40-year career or the “Lifetime Wage Gap” is what a woman would lose, based on today’s wage gap, over a 40-year career. Figures are not adjusted for inflation. Earnings are in 2016 dollars.
11. *Id.*
12. *Id.* Figures are in 2016 dollars. Median hourly wages are for full time, year round workers. Hourly wages are derived by dividing median annual earnings by 2,080 hours, which assumes a 40-hour work week for 52 weeks.

