



**NATIONAL  
WOMEN'S  
LAW CENTER**

Justice for Her. Justice for All.

**MARCH 2023 | FACT SHEET**

# **Nearly 21 Million Women Benefit from Pay Range Transparency Laws Another 18.5 Million Could Soon**

**BROOKE LEPAGE**

Pay range transparency—when employers provide salary information to job applicants and/or employees—helps ensure women have the information they need to decide what jobs to apply for and negotiate their pay. Research consistently links pay range transparency to narrowed gender wage gaps.<sup>1</sup> Eight states—California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, New York, Nevada, Rhode Island, and Washington—have already passed pay range transparency laws. Another 16 states and the District of Columbia have been considering pay range transparency bills this year.<sup>2</sup>

## **Millions of workers are already benefiting from laws ensuring pay range transparency**

Nearly 44.8 million people in the labor force, or 26.6% of the U.S. labor force, are covered by the eight new state pay range transparency laws.<sup>3</sup> The labor force includes people ages 16 and older who are working or looking for work, many of whom are applying for jobs and able to actively benefit from pay range transparency laws in their job search.<sup>4</sup> Nearly 21 million of the people in the labor force in these states are women, meaning 26.4% of women in the entire U.S. labor force are covered by the eight new state pay range transparency laws. This includes over 9.9 million white, non-Hispanic women, over 5.4 million Latinas, over 2.5 million Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander women, over 2.1 million Black women, and over 200,000 Native women. It also includes nearly 6.5 million mothers, over 2.2 million single mothers, over 1.5 million women in poverty, and over 13,000 women with disabilities.

## LABOR FORCE IN THE EIGHT STATES WITH PAY RANGE TRANSPARENCY LAWS

	People in the Labor Force in Active Bill States (In thousands)	Percentage of Group's Total U.S. Labor Force in Proposed Pay Range Transparency States
Women	20,994	26.4%
Black women	2,120	20.3%
Latinas	5,439	39.6%
Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander women	2,562	49.4%
Native women	202	29.5%
White, non-Hispanic women	9,918	21.4%
Women with disabilities	13	25.9%
Women in poverty	1,512	24.1%
Mothers	6,472	25.1%
Single mothers	2,250	24.7%

Source: NWLC calculations using 2021 American Community Survey 1-year sample using IPUMS-USA available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. Respondents self-identify their race, ethnicity, and gender. Women with disabilities are those who indicated having self-care, vision, hearing, independent living, ambulatory or cognitive difficulty. Women in poverty are those below 100% of the Federal Poverty Line. Mothers are women with children ages 17 and under. Single mothers are women with children ages 17 and under and who are either married with an absent spouse, separated, divorced, widowed, or who have never been married and are single. Figures are for the labor force in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, New York, Nevada, Rhode Island, and Washington. New York's pay transparency law goes into effect in September. Groups are not mutually exclusive, and figures are rounded.

## Many more could soon be benefiting from pay range transparency laws

An additional 16 states and D.C. have considered pay range transparency laws in the 2023 state legislative session:<sup>5</sup> Alaska, D.C., Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, Oregon, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. If these bills were to become laws, nearly 38.8 million additional people or an additional 23% of the U.S. labor force, would benefit. Nearly 18.5 million of these people are women, including over 11.7 million white, non-Hispanic women, over 2.6 million Black women, nearly 2 million Latinas, nearly 1.2 million Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander women, and over 120,000 Native women. They also include over 6 million mothers, over 2 million single mothers, over 1.4 million women in poverty, and nearly 12,000 women with disabilities. With the addition of these women, 49.7% of women in the U.S. labor force would be covered by state pay range transparency laws.

## LABOR FORCE IN THE 16 STATES AND D.C. WITH ACTIVE PAY RANGE TRANSPARENCY BILLS

	People in the Labor Force in Active Bill States (In thousands)	Percentage of Group's Total U.S. Labor Force in Proposed Pay Range Transparency States
Women	18,493	23.3%
Black women	2,647	25.3%
Latinas	1,994	14.5%
Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander women	1,198	23.1%
Native women	124	18.1%
White, non-Hispanic women	11,755	25.3%
Women with disabilities	12	22.6%
Women in poverty	1,409	22.5%
Mothers	6,036	23.4%
Single mothers	2,034	22.4%

Source: NWLC calculations using 2021 American Community Survey 1-year sample using IPUMS-USA available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. Respondents self-identify their race, ethnicity, and gender. Women with disabilities are those who indicated having self-care, vision, hearing, independent living, ambulatory or cognitive difficulty. Women in poverty are those below 100% of the Federal Poverty Line. Mothers are women with children ages 17 and under. Single mothers are women with children ages 17 and under and who are either married with an absent spouse, separated, divorced, widowed, or who have never been married and are single. Figures are for the labor force in Alaska, D.C., Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, Oregon, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. Groups are not mutually exclusive, and figures are rounded.

## Women can't wait

Pay range transparency laws can be a meaningful step toward dismantling the racist and sexist wage gaps that rob women of their livelihoods. Many women are already reaping the benefits of a level negotiating playing field and the ability to detect and remedy unjustified pay disparities.<sup>6</sup> If these bills become law, nearly half (49.7%) of the U.S. labor force would benefit from pay range transparency, including nearly 39.5 million women.

\*\*\*

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank May Amoyaw, Gaylynn Burroughs, Andrea Johnson, Da Hae Kim, Emily Martin, Marissa Moore, Maria Patrick, Shengwei Sun, and Jasmine Tucker for their factchecking, review, editing, design, and dissemination of this brief.

### FOOTNOTES

- 1 Baker, Michael, Yosh Halberstam, Kory Kroft, Alexandre Ma, and Derek Messacar. 2019. "Pay Transparency and the Gender Gap." NBER Working Paper Series, No. 25834. [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w25834/w25834.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w25834/w25834.pdf), Bennedsen, Morten, Elena Simintzi, Margarita Tsoutsoura, and Daniel Wolfenzon. 2019. "Do Firms Respond to Gender Pay Gap Transparency?" NBER Working Paper Series, No. 25435. [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w25435/w25435.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w25435/w25435.pdf), Duchini, Emma, Stefania Simion, Arthur Turrell, and Jack Blundell. 2022. "Pay Transparency and Gender Equality." Available at SSRN: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3584259](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3584259), Gamage, Danula K., Georgios Kavetsos, Sushanta Mallick, and Almudena Sevilla. 2020. "Pay Transparency Initiative and Gender Pay Gap: Evidence from Research-Intensive Universities in the UK." IZA Discussion Paper No. 13635. <https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/13635/pay-transparency-initiative-and-gender-pay-gap-evidence-from-research-intensive-universities-in-the-uk>, and Obloj, Tomasz, and Todd Zenger. 2020. "The Influence of Pay Transparency on Inequity, Inequality, and the Performance-Basis of Pay." *Nature Human Behaviour*, 6: 646–655. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01288-9>.
- 2 Figures are as of March 6, 2023.
- 3 NWLC calculations build on those done by Sam Kuhn "It Pays to be Transparent" (Recruiteconomics, November 2022), <https://recruiteconomics.com/it-pays-to-be-transparent/>.
- 4 Notably, not all workers will be applying for jobs. Figures also exclude those applying from other states or who are working remotely.
- 5 States that have already passed pay transparency laws but who are actively considering additional laws are not included.
- 6 "Salary Range Transparency Reduces Gender Wage Gaps," (National Women's Law Center, January 2023), <https://nwlc.org/resource/salary-range-transparency-reduces-gender-wage-gaps/>.