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Some Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Women Lose \$1 Million or More Over a Lifetime to the Racist and Sexist Wage Gap

BY ASHIR COILLBERG

Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) women¹ who worked full time, year-round in 2023 were typically paid just 97 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.² This wage gap widens when part-year and part-time workers are included: AANHPI women were typically paid just 83 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.³ In addition, the wage gap between AANHPI women and AANHPI men was even wider; AANHPI women working full time, year-round were paid only 80 cents for every dollar paid to AANHPI men.⁴

We need public investments and economic policies that support economic opportunity and address the problematic inequities failing AANHPI women every day, robbing many of them of hundreds of thousands of dollars, and in some cases \$1 million or more, over their lifetimes, and preventing them and their families from building wealth.

The wage gap varies widely among Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander women

As a group, AANHPI women working full time, year round typically lose \$81,560 to the wage gap over a 40-year career, but those figures can be substantially larger for women in certain AANHPI communities. Compared to white, non-Hispanic men, for example, Bhutanese women stand to lose nearly \$1.4 million, Burmese women stand to lose nearly \$1.2 million, and Nepalese and Native Hawaiian women each stand to lose \$1 million over the course of a 40-year career.⁵

Losses due to the wage gap result in AANHPI women not only having less money in their pocket right now—but also being denied key opportunities throughout their lifetimes to build wealth and future economic security for themselves and their families.

HOW MUCH INDIGENOUS WOMEN WORKING FULL TIME, YEAR-ROUND LOSE TO THE WAGE GAP BY NATION IN THE UNITED STATES (2019–2023)

Community	AANHPI Women's Median Wage	What AANHPI Women Were Paid for Every Dollar Paid to white, Non-Hispanic Men	AANHPI Women's Typical Annual Loss	AANHPI Women's Typical Losses Over a 40-Year Career
Bangladeshi	\$47,000	\$0.72	\$18,000	\$720,000
Bhutanese	\$31,000	\$0.48	\$34,000	\$1,360,000
Burmese	\$35,400	\$0.54	\$29,600	\$1,184,000
Cambodian	\$42,000	\$0.65	\$23,000	\$920,000
Chinese	\$70,000	\$1.08	--	--
Fijian	\$50,000	\$0.77	\$15,000	\$600,000
Filipino	\$55,000	\$0.85	\$10,000	\$400,000
Chamorro	\$45,000	\$0.69	\$20,000	\$800,000
Native Hawaiian	\$40,000	\$0.62	\$25,000	\$1,000,000
Hmong	\$41,000	\$0.63	\$24,000	\$960,000
Indian	\$83,000	\$1.28	--	--
Indonesian	\$50,000	\$0.77	\$15,000	\$600,000
Japanese	\$63,000	\$0.97	\$2,000	\$80,000
Korean	\$63,000	\$0.97	\$2,000	\$80,000
Laotian	\$41,000	\$0.63	\$24,000	\$960,000
Malaysian	\$68,000	\$1.05	--	--
Mongolian	\$48,000	\$0.74	\$17,000	\$680,000
Nepalese	\$40,000	\$0.62	\$25,000	\$1,000,000
Pakistani	\$55,000	\$0.85	\$10,000	\$400,000
Samoan	\$41,600	\$0.64	\$23,400	\$936,000
Sri Lankan	\$65,000	\$1.00	\$0	\$0
Taiwanese	\$81,000	\$1.25	--	--
Thai	\$45,000	\$0.69	\$20,000	\$800,000
Tongan	\$45,000	\$0.69	\$20,000	\$800,000
Vietnamese	\$45,000	\$0.69	\$20,000	\$800,000

Source: NWLC calculations based on 2019–2023 American Community Survey five-year estimates microdata available at [Index of /programs-surveys/acs/data/pums/2023/5-Year](https://nces.ed/ipeds/data/acs/data/pums/2023/5-Year). Figures are based on women's and men's median earnings for full time, year-round workers. White, non-Hispanic men typically made \$64,738. Chinese women, Indian women, Malaysian women, and Taiwanese women make more than white, non-Hispanic men and therefore have no lifetime losses. Respondents to the American Community Survey self-identify their sex as either male or female and self-identify their race or whether they are of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.

And while four groups of AANHPI women working full time, year-round make more than white, non-Hispanic men (Chinese women, Indian women, Malaysian women, and Taiwanese women), these women still make less than men in their respective communities. For example, among full time year-round workers, while Chinese women make \$1.08 for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men, they make just 82 cents for every dollar paid to Chinese men and while Indian women make \$1.28 for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men, they make just 75 cents for every dollar paid to Indian men.⁶

AANHPI women experience a wage gap at every education level, including those who have earned a graduate degree

Women account for more than half of college-educated adults in the U.S. labor force.⁷ However, AANHPI women are still typically paid less than white, non-Hispanic men with lower educational attainment:

- AANHPI women working full time who have a high school diploma are typically paid just 78 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men with the same diploma.

- AANHPI women working full time, year-round who have attended at least some college are typically paid \$45,000, which is less than what white, non-Hispanic men working full time, year-round with less than a 9th grade education are typically paid (\$49,000).
- AANHPI women working full time, year-round must earn a bachelor’s degree (\$77,000) to make more than white, non-Hispanic men with some college but no degree (\$60,000).
- Also striking is the typical difference in wages between the most educated AANHPI women—those with professional degrees, such as juris doctorate degrees or medical doctor degrees—and their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts. Among professional degree holders, an AANHPI woman working full time, year-round typically makes 81 cents for every dollar made by a white, non-Hispanic man with the same education working full time—an annual loss of \$29,000, or nearly \$1.2 million over the course of a 40-year career.⁸

AANHPI WOMEN’S WAGE GAP BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AMONG FULL TIME, YEAR-ROUND WORKERS

Educational attainment	AANHPI Women’s Median Wages	White Non-Hispanic Men’s Median Wages	Typical Annual Loss	What AANHPI Women Were Paid for Every Dollar Paid to White, Non-Hispanic Men
Less than 9th Grade	\$34,000	\$49,000	\$15,000	\$0.69
No high school diploma (at Least 9th Grade)	\$34,600	\$48,000	\$13,400	\$0.72
High school diploma	\$39,000	\$50,000	\$11,000	\$0.78
Some college, no degree	\$45,000	\$60,000	\$15,000	\$0.75
Associate's degree	\$50,000	\$66,000	\$16,000	\$0.76
Bachelor's degree or more	\$90,000	\$100,000	\$10,000	\$0.90
Bachelor's degree	\$77,000	\$90,000	\$13,000	\$0.86
Master's degree	\$100,000	\$110,000	\$10,000	\$0.91
Professional degree	\$126,000	\$155,000	\$29,000	\$0.81
Doctorate degree	\$110,000	\$125,000	\$15,000	\$0.88

Source: National Women’s Law Center (NWLCC) calculations using U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey (ACS), using IPUMS-USA, available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/sda/>. Respondents self-identify their sex as either male or female and self-identify their race, whether they are of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.

We can’t wait to close the wage gap for AANHPI women

Racism, sexism, and structural inequalities rob AANHPI women and their families of tens of thousands of dollars every single year. We need public investments and public policies that allow Indigenous women to succeed and thrive.

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FOOTNOTES

- 1 Data in this analysis comes from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey (ACS). Respondents to this survey self-identify their sex as either male or female and their race and ethnicity.
- 2 National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) calculations using 2023 ACS microdata available at Index of /programs-surveys/acs/data/pums/2023/1-Year. Figure is the ratio between median earnings for AANHPI women working full time, year-round (\$69,327) and white, non-Hispanic men working full time, year-round (\$71,366).
- 3 NWLC calculations using 2023 ACS microdata available at Index of /programs-surveys/acs/data/pums/2023/1-Year. Figure is the ratio between median earnings including part-time workers for AANHPI women (\$48,937) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$59,178).
- 4 NWLC calculations using 2023 ACS microdata available at Index of /programs-surveys/acs/data/pums/2023/1-Year. Figure is the ratio between median earnings of full time, year-round workers for AANHPI women (\$69,327) and AANHPI men (\$85,639).
- 5 NWLC calculations based on 2019–2023 ACS, five-year estimates microdata available at Index of /programs-surveys/acs/data/pums/2023/5-Year
- 6 NWLC calculations based on 2019–2023 ACS, five-year estimates microdata available at Index of /programs-surveys/acs/data/pums/2023/5-Year
- 7 “Women Now Outnumber Men in the U.S. College-Educated Labor Force” (Pew Research Center, September 2022), <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/09/26/women-now-outnumber-men-in-the-u-s-college-educated-labor-force/#:~:text=Women%20now%20outnumber%20men%20in%20the%20U.S.%20college%20educated%20labor%20force&text=Women%20have%20overtaken%20men%20and,Center%20analysis%20of%20government%20data>.
- 8 NWLC calculations using 2023 ACS, using IPUMS-USA, available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/sda/>.