

Washington Women and the Wage Gap

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In Washington, median annual pay for a woman who holds a full-time, year-round job is \$44,422 while median annual pay for a man who holds a full-time, year-round job is \$56,215. **This means that women in Washington are paid 79 cents for every dollar paid to men, amounting to an annual wage gap of \$11,793.¹**

The wage gap can be even larger for women of color. **Among Washington women who hold full-time, year-round jobs, Black women are paid 61 cents, Latinas are paid 46 cents and Asian women are paid 74 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.²**

Washington's gender wage gap spans the state. **In all 10 of Washington's congressional districts, the median yearly pay for women who work full time, year-round is less than the median yearly pay for men who do.³**

What Does the Wage Gap Mean for Washington's Women?

On average, Washington women who are employed full time lose a combined total of **nearly \$18 billion every year** due to the wage gap.⁴ These lost wages mean women and their families have less money to support themselves, save and invest for the future, and spend on goods and services. Families, businesses and the economy suffer as a result.

If the annual wage gap were eliminated, on average, a working woman in Washington would have enough money for:

- ▶ More than 14 additional months of child care;⁵
- ▶ 1.3 additional years of tuition and fees for a four-year public university, or the full cost of tuition and fees at a two-year community college;⁶
- ▶ Approximately 79 more weeks of food for her family (one and a half years' worth);⁷
- ▶ Nearly seven more months of mortgage and utilities payments;⁸ or
- ▶ Nearly 11 more months of rent.⁹

Washington Women and Families Cannot Afford Discrimination and Lower Wages

- ▶ In the United States, mothers are breadwinners in half of families with children under 18, including half of white mothers, 53 percent of Latina mothers, 81 percent of

Black mothers and 44 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander mothers.¹⁰ Yet the wage gap for mothers is larger than for women overall. Mothers with full-time, year-round jobs are paid 71 cents for every dollar paid to fathers.¹¹

- ▶ **In Washington, more than 274,000 family households are headed by women.¹² About 26 percent of those families, or 71,272 family households, have incomes that fall below the poverty level.¹³** Eliminating the wage gap would provide much-needed income to women whose wages sustain their households.

Nationally, the Wage Gap Cannot Be Explained By Choices

- ▶ **The wage gap persists regardless of industry.** In the civilian industries that employ the most full-time employees – health care and social assistance, manufacturing, retail trade and educational services – women are paid less than men. In the health care and social assistance industry, women are paid just 72 cents for every dollar paid to men. In manufacturing, just 76 cents. In retail trade, 79 cents. And in educational services, 87 cents. Across all industries, women are paid lower salaries than men.¹⁴
- ▶ **The wage gap is present within occupations.** Among the occupations with the most people working full time, year-round – sales, production, management, and office and administrative support – women are paid less than men. In sales, women are paid just 63 cents for every dollar paid to men. In production, just 72 cents. In management, 80 cents. And in office and administrative support occupations, 87 cents.¹⁵
- ▶ **The wage gap exists regardless of education level.** Women with master’s degrees working full time, year-round are paid just 72 cents for every dollar paid to men with master’s degrees. Further, among full-time, year-round workers, women with doctoral degrees are paid less than men with master’s degrees, and women with master’s degrees are paid less than men with bachelor’s degrees.¹⁶
- ▶ **Discrimination and bias still contribute to the wage gap.** Statistical analysis shows that 62 percent of the wage gap can be attributed to occupational and industry differences; differences in experience and education; and factors such as race, region and unionization. That leaves 38 percent of the gap unaccounted for, leading researchers to conclude that factors such as discrimination and unconscious bias continue to affect women’s wages.¹⁷

America’s Women Are Concerned About Unfair Pay

- ▶ **Women consider equal pay a top workplace issue.** Nearly six in 10 women (58 percent) in the United States identify equal pay as one of the most important issues facing women in the workplace. When compared to women in most other leading, high-wealth countries, a substantially higher share of U.S. women list equal pay as one of the most important issues women face at work.¹⁸
- ▶ **Less than one-third of women believe they are paid fairly.** Just 28 percent of U.S. working women say they are confident they are paid the same salaries as their male counterparts. Forty-three percent say they do not believe they are paid the same – a substantially higher share than in most other leading, high-wealth countries.¹⁹

- ▶ **Women are more likely to support a candidate for office who supports pay equity.** Seventy percent of Republican women, 83 percent of independent women and 88 percent of Democratic women say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports equal pay for women.²⁰

A Path Toward Closing the Wage Gap

Despite the federal Equal Pay Act of 1963 and other federal and state workplace protections for women, experts warn that women and men will not reach pay parity until 2059²¹ – unless something changes. Fortunately, there are policies that would help, including: **protections that help identify and challenge discriminatory pay and employment practices and address gender-based occupational segregation; minimum wage increases; family friendly workplace supports like paid family and medical leave and paid sick days; affordable child care; and access to comprehensive reproductive health care.**

Several states and localities have taken steps to advance these policies, and federal proposals are before Congress. Together, these policies create a path toward closing the gap between the wages of women and men by helping to ensure that women have access to good and decent-paying jobs, the support they need to stay and advance in their careers, and fair and nondiscriminatory treatment wherever they work and in whatever jobs they hold.

Learn more about fair pay at [NationalPartnership.org/Gap](https://nationalpartnership.org/gap).

1 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2015, Geographies: All States within United States and Puerto Rico, Table B20017: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2015 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings in the Past 12 Months*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_B20017&prodType=table; Nationally, women who work full time, year-round are paid, on average, just 80 cents for every dollar paid to men: U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement: Table PINC-05: Work Experience in 2015 – People 15 Years Old and Over by Total Money Earnings in 2015, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, and Disability Status*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html> (Unpublished calculation based on the median annual pay for all women and men who worked full time, year-round in 2015)

2 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2011-2015, Geographies: All States within United States and Puerto Rico, Table B20017B, B20017D and B20017I: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2015 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_B20017&prodType=table. Nationally, Black women are typically paid 63 cents and Latinas are typically paid 54 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men, while Asian women in the United States are typically paid 85 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men: U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement: Table PINC-05: Work Experience in 2015 – People 15 Years Old and Over by Total Money Earnings in 2015, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, and Disability Status*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html> (Unpublished calculation based on the median annual pay for all women and men who worked full time, year-round in 2015); Despite an overall wage gap for Asian women in the United States that is smaller than for other groups of women, analysis by the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum shows there are substantial variations in the wage gap between particular ethnic groups of Asian women and white, non-Hispanic men, with many subpopulations of Asian women facing significantly greater wage penalties. For more information, see: https://napawf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/FIGHTING-INVISIBILITY_FINAL.pdf

3 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2015, Geographies: All Congressional Districts (114th Congress), Table B20017: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2015 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings in the Past 12 Months*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_B20017

4 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2015, Geographies: All States within United States and Puerto Rico, Table S2001: Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2015 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_S2001&prodType=table; U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2015, Table B20005: Sex By Work Experience in the Past 12 Months by Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2015 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) for the Population 16 Years and Over*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_B20005&prodType=table (Unpublished calculation based on the mean annual pay for all women and men who worked full time, year-round in 2015, multiplied by the total number of women working full time, year-round in 2015)

5 Child Care Aware of America. (2016). *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from http://usa.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CCA_High_Cost_Report_01-17-17_final.pdf

- 6 The College Board. (2017). *Tuition and Fees by Sector and State over Time: Table 5: Average Published Tuition and Fees by State in Current Dollars and in 2016 Dollars, 2004-05 to 2016-17*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from <https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/tuition-fees-sector-state-over-time>
- 7 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2016, August). *Consumer Expenditure Survey, Table 1800. Region of residence: Annual expenditure means, shares, standard errors, and coefficient of variation, 2015*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from <http://www.bls.gov/cex/2015/combined/region.pdf> (Calculation uses overall average “food” cost for the region in which the state is located)
- 8 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2015, Table GCT2511: Median Monthly Housing Costs for Owner-Occupied Housing Units with a Mortgage (Dollars) – United States – States; and Puerto Rico*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_GCT2511.US01PR&prodType=table (Calculation uses median monthly housing costs for owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage for each state)
- 9 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2015, Table GCT2514: Median Monthly Housing Costs for Renter-Occupied Housing Units (Dollars) – United States – States; and Puerto Rico*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_GCT2514.US01PR&prodType=table (Calculation uses median gross rent for state)
- 10 Anderson, J. (2016, September 8). *Breadwinner Mothers by Race/Ethnicity and State*. Institute for Women’s Policy Research Publication. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from <https://iwpr.org/publications/breadwinner-mothers-by-raceethnicity-and-state/> (Breadwinner mothers are defined as single mothers who head a household or married mothers who generate at least 40 percent of a household’s joint income)
- 11 National Women’s Law Center (2016, November). *The Wage Gap for Mothers, State by State*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Wage-Gap-for-Mothers-State-By-State-1.pdf>
- 12 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2015, Table DP02: Selected Social Characteristics in the United States*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_DP02&prodType=table (Calculation uses family households headed by females living in a household with family and no husband; a family household includes a householder, one or more people living in the same household who are related to the householder, and anyone else living in the same household)
- 13 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2015, Geographies: United States, Table DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_DP03&prodType=table (To determine whether a household falls below the poverty level, the U.S. Census Bureau considers the income of the householder, size of family, number of related children, and, for one- and two-person families, age of householder. The poverty threshold in 2015 was \$19,096 for a single householder and two children under 18.)
- 14 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2015, Table S2404: Industry by Sex and Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months for the Full-Time, Year-Round Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_S2404&prodType=table
- 15 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement: Table PINC-06 Occupation of Longest Job-People 15 Years Old and Over, by Total Money Earnings, Work Experience, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-06.html>
- 16 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *Educational Attainment-People 25 Years Old and Over, by Total Money Earnings, Work Experience, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-03.html>
- 17 Blau, F. D., & Kahn, L.M. (2016, January). *The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations*. IZA Discussion Paper No. 9656. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from <http://ftp.iza.org/dp9656.pdf> (See Table 4: *Decomposition of Gender Wage Gap, 1980 and 2010 (PSID)* for the full breakdown of explanatory variables)
- 18 Thomson Reuters Foundation. (2015). *The 5 key issues facing women working in the G20*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from <http://www.womenatworkpoll.com> (Ipsos Global @divisor conducted an international survey among 9,501 women across 19 countries. Surveys were conducted from July 24 – August 7, 2015. The margin of error between two country sample sizes of 500 is roughly 6 percent at the 95 percent confidence interval. Data are weighted to match the population profile of each country by age, region and household income.)
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research. (2016, February 17). *Winning Women in 2016: Findings from a Web Survey of American Adults*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from <http://www.americanwomen.org/research/document/American-Women-Survey-Millennial-Memo-02.18.16.pdf> (Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research conducted a national online survey of 800 registered voters, with an oversample of 200 millennial women (ages 18-35) voters, for a total sample size of 1,000 registered voters, weighted to be representative of registered voters nationally. The survey was conducted from December 7 – 10, 2015.)
- 21 Institute for Women’s Policy Research. (2016, September 13). *Women’s Median Earnings as a Percent of Men’s Median Earnings, 1960-2015 (Full-time, Year-round Workers) with Projection for Pay Equity in 2059*. Retrieved 21 March 2017, from <https://iwpr.org/publications/womens-median-earnings-as-a-percent-of-mens-median-earnings-1960-2015-full-time-year-round-workers-with-projection-for-pay-equity-in-2059/>

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, access to quality health care and policies that help women and men meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at NationalPartnership.org.

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