Black Women and the Wage Gap

MARCH 2017

A persistent gender-based wage gap continues to harm women, their families and the economy – and it is particularly damaging for Black women. Black women in the United States who work full time, year-round are typically paid just 63 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men. Overall, women employed full time, year-round are typically paid 80 cents for every dollar paid to men.

Even in states with large populations of Black women in the workforce, rampant wage disparities persist, with potentially devastating consequences for Black women and families.

- In the 20 states with the largest numbers of Black women working full time, year-round, pay for Black women ranges from 48 to 69 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men in those states.

- Of the 20 states, Maryland and Mississippi have the largest shares of Black women working full time, year-round (as a percentage of their state’s overall full-time workforce). Black women in Maryland are paid 69 cents and Black women in Mississippi are paid 56 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men. In Mississippi and Louisiana, Black women also face the largest overall cents-on-the-dollar wage gaps; Black women in Louisiana are paid just 48 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.

- Of the 20 states, Texas and New York have the largest populations of Black women working full time, year-round. Black women in Texas are paid 58 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men and Black women in New York are paid 66 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.

- Among the 20 states, Maryland and Pennsylvania have the smallest cents-on-the-dollar wage gaps, but Black women in those states still face substantial disparities. On average, Black women are paid just 69 and 68 cents, respectively, for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.

### Wage Gap for Black Women by State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of Black Women Working Full Time, Year-Round</th>
<th>Median Wages for Black Women</th>
<th>Median Wages for White, Non-Hispanic Men</th>
<th>Annual Wage Gap</th>
<th>Cents on the Dollar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>210,864</td>
<td>$26,488</td>
<td>$55,386</td>
<td>$28,898</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>151,674</td>
<td>$26,212</td>
<td>$46,636</td>
<td>$20,424</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alabama | 183,922 | $28,645 | $50,218 | $21,573 | 0.57  
South Carolina | 193,450 | $27,826 | $48,690 | $20,864 | 0.57  
New Jersey | 195,491 | $42,411 | $73,546 | $31,135 | 0.58  
Texas | 513,380 | $35,335 | $60,705 | $25,370 | 0.58  
Virginia | 268,744 | $36,270 | $60,967 | $24,697 | 0.59  
Florida | 468,674 | $30,475 | $49,707 | $19,232 | 0.61  
Illinois | 248,595 | $37,728 | $60,296 | $22,568 | 0.63  
Georgia | 477,047 | $32,707 | $51,838 | $19,131 | 0.63  
California | 297,673 | $44,680 | $70,805 | $26,125 | 0.63  
North Carolina | 320,816 | $31,189 | $48,923 | $17,734 | 0.64  
Michigan | 164,576 | $33,062 | $51,851 | $18,789 | 0.64  
Ohio | 190,678 | $32,472 | $50,422 | $17,950 | 0.64  
Indiana | 78,725 | $32,326 | $49,146 | $16,820 | 0.66  
New York | 496,766 | $40,808 | $61,751 | $20,943 | 0.66  
Missouri | 104,299 | $31,812 | $47,001 | $15,189 | 0.68  
Tennessee | 168,519 | $31,382 | $46,111 | $14,729 | 0.68  
Pennsylvania | 189,083 | $35,589 | $52,031 | $16,442 | 0.68  
Maryland | 339,468 | $47,784 | $69,360 | $21,576 | 0.69  


How Does the Wage Gap Harm Black Women?

Median wages for Black women in the United States are $36,203 per year, compared to median wages of $57,204 annually for white, non-Hispanic men. This amounts to a difference of $21,001 each year. These lost wages mean Black women and their families have less money to support themselves and their families, save and invest for the future, and spend on goods and services. Families, businesses and the economy suffer as a result.

For example, if the wage gap were eliminated, on average, a Black woman working full time, year-round would have enough money for approximately:

- Nearly 2.5 more years of child care,
- Nearly 2.5 additional years of tuition and fees for a four-year public university, or the
full cost of tuition and fees for a two-year community college;\(^9\)

- 155 more weeks of food for her family (three years’ worth);\(^{10}\)
- 14 more months of mortgage and utilities payments;\(^{11}\) or
- Nearly 22 more months of rent.\(^{12}\)

Black Women and Their Families Cannot Afford Discrimination and Lower Wages

**Eliminating the wage gap would provide much-needed income to Black women whose wages sustain their households.**

- More than 80 percent of Black mothers bring in 40 percent or more of their families’ income, which means their households rely heavily on their wages to make ends meet and get ahead.\(^{13}\)
- More than four million family households in the United States are headed by Black women.\(^{14}\) And 35 percent of all family households headed by Black women live below the poverty level.\(^{15}\) This means that more than 1.4 million family households headed by Black women live in poverty.

The Public Overwhelmingly Supports Fair Pay Policies

- **More than half of all voters (54 percent) and nearly two-thirds of Black voters (65 percent) say they believe women have a harder time getting ahead in the workplace than men.**\(^{16}\)
- **More than two-thirds of U.S. voters (68 percent) say they favor policies that would address women being paid less than men for the same work.** Less than one-quarter of voters say they oppose such a proposal. Both women (72 percent) and men (64 percent) say they are supportive.\(^{17}\)
- **Nearly two-thirds of voters support the Paycheck Fairness Act.** In a 2014 nationwide survey, 62 percent of likely voters and 78 percent of Black voters said they support the Paycheck Fairness Act, a federal proposal that would help combat wage discrimination. Support for the Paycheck Fairness Act crosses demographic and ideological lines, with 83 percent of Democrats, 58 percent of independents, and 44 percent of Republican voters saying they support the Paycheck Fairness Act.\(^{18}\)

---


2 Ibid.

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.

© 2017 National Partnership for Women & Families. All rights reserved.