

Black Women and the Wage Gap

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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.¹ Overall, women employed full time, year-round are typically paid 80 cents for every dollar paid to men.²

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.³
- ▶ 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.⁴ 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.⁵
- ▶ 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.⁶
- ▶ 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.⁷

Wage Gap for Black Women by State					
An analysis of the wage gap in the 20 states with the largest number of Black women who work full time, year-round					
State	Number of Black Women Working Full Time, Year-Round	Median Wages for Black Women	Median Wages for White, Non-Hispanic Men	Annual Wage Gap	Cents on the Dollar
Louisiana	210,864	\$26,488	\$55,386	\$28,898	0.48
Mississippi	151,674	\$26,212	\$46,636	\$20,424	0.56

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

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2015, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20017B: 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 (Black or African American Alone); Table B20017H: 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 (White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino); and Table B20005B: 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 (Black or African American Alone).

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.⁸ 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;⁹
- ▶ 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;¹⁰

- ▶ 155 more weeks of food for her family (three years' worth);¹¹
- ▶ 14 more months of mortgage and utilities payments;¹² or
- ▶ Nearly 22 more months of rent.¹³

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.¹⁴
- ▶ More than four million family households in the United States are headed by Black women.¹⁵ And 35 percent of all family households headed by Black women live below the poverty level.¹⁶ 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.**¹⁷
- ▶ **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.¹⁸
- ▶ **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.¹⁹

1 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 7 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 earnings for all women and men who worked full time, year-round in 2015; full time is defined as 35 hours a week or more)

2 Ibid.

3 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2015, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20017B: 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 (Black or African American Alone)*. Retrieved 7 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_B20017B&prodType=table; U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community*

Survey 5-Year Estimates 2015, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20017H: 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 (White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino). Retrieved 7 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_B20017H&prodType=table (This calculation is based on a comparison of the median earnings of white, non-Hispanic men working full time, year-round with that of Black women working full time, year-round.); U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2015, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20005B: 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 (Black or African American Alone)*. Retrieved 7 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_B20005B&prodType=table

4 Ibid. U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2015, Geographies: All States within United States, 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 7 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_B20005&prodType=table (Black women comprise 15.5 percent of the full-time, year-round workforce in Maryland and 17.2 percent of the full-time, year-round workforce in Mississippi.)

5 See note 3.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 See note 1.

9 Tercha, J. (2017, February). Personal communication. (Research Analyst, Child Care Aware of America). Unpublished calculation of \$8,468.63 based on the average cost of center-based child care for a four-year-old. This average is not representative of the mean and is an approximation based off an unweighted average of averages and is not to be considered a "national average."

10 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *Digest of Education Statistics: 2015* (Table 330.10, Average undergraduate tuition and fees and room and board rates charged for full-time students in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level and control of institution: 1963-64 through 2014-15), Chapter 3. Retrieved 7 March 2017, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_330.10.asp?current=yes (The average total cost of undergraduate tuition and required fees is \$8,543 for a four-year public college or university or \$2,955 for a two-year college.)

11 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 7 March 2017, from <http://www.bls.gov/cex/2015/combined/region.pdf> (Calculation uses overall average "food" cost.)

12 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)*. Retrieved 7 March 2017, from http://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)

13 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2015, Table GCT2514: Median Monthly Housing Costs for Renter-Occupied Housing Units (Dollars)*. Retrieved 7 March 2017, from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_GCT2514.US01PR&prodType=table (Calculation uses median gross rent)

14 Anderson, J. (2016, September 8). *Breadwinner Mothers by Race/Ethnicity and State*. Institute for Women's Policy Research Publication. Retrieved 7 March 2017, from <https://iwpr.org/publications/breadwinner-mothers-by-raceethnicity-and-state/>

15 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2015, Table B11001B: Household Type (Including Living Alone) (Black or African American Alone)*. Retrieved 7 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_B11001B&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.)

16 U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2015, Table S0201: Selected Population Profile in the United States (Black or African American alone)*. Retrieved 7 March 2017, from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_S0201&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.)

17 Anzalone Liszt Grove Research and The Feldman Group, Inc. conducted a national survey among 1,000 likely 2014 voters. Interviews were conducted Jan. 24-29, 2014. The margin of error for the sample as a whole is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points at the 95-percent level of confidence. The survey also included an oversample of N=200 Latino likely voters. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher. Interviews for the oversample were conducted in both English and Spanish. Retrieved 7 March 2017, from <http://www.americanwomen.org/research/document/PUBLIC-RELEASE-AW-FEB-5-RELEASE.pdf>

18 Ibid.

19 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.

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