Equal Pay for African American Women

Women overall working full time, year round in the United States are paid only 77 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts. But the wage gap is even larger for African American women who work full time, year round—they are paid only 64 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men. This gap, which amounts to a loss of $18,650 a year, means that African American women have to work nearly 19 months—until almost the end of July—to make as much as white, non-Hispanic men did in the previous year alone.

African American women experience a wage gap at every education level—and it is widest among those with the least education.

- Among individuals working full time, year round who have a high school degree or less, African American women typically make only 62 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make.
- African American women with a bachelor’s degree or more typically make $50,200—about the same as white, non-Hispanic men who have some college but lack a degree (99 cents for every dollar). African American women with only a bachelor’s degree typically make $46,000—about $3,500 more than white, non-Hispanic men with only a high school degree ($1.08 for every dollar).

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**Educational Attainment** | **African American Female Earnings** | **White, non-Hispanic Male Earnings** | **What a woman makes for every dollar a man makes** | **Wage Gap**
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
No high school degree | $20,909 | $33,949 | 61.6¢ | 38.4¢
High school degree | $26,557 | $42,558 | 62.4¢ | 37.6¢
Some college, no degree | $32,276 | $50,570 | 63.8¢ | 36.2¢
Associate’s degree | $34,467 | $52,014 | 66.3¢ | 33.7¢
Bachelor’s degree or more | $50,207 | $76,708 | 65.5¢ | 34.5¢
- Bachelor’s Degree | $46,007 | $70,021 | 65.7¢ | 34.3¢
- Master’s Degree | $55,843 | $86,330 | 64.7¢ | 35.3¢

*What a woman makes for every dollar a man makes* is the ratio of female and male median earnings for full-time, year-round workers. Earnings are in 2012 dollars. The “wage gap” is the additional money a woman would have to make for every dollar made by a man in order to have equal annual earnings. NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table PINC-03. Educational Attainment, People 25 years old and over, by total money earnings in 2012, available at http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032013/perinc/pinc03_000.htm.
African American women’s wage gap is wider among older women.

- Among full-time, year-round workers ages 15-24, African American women typically make 82 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make—but this figure is far worse for older women. Among workers 25-44 it is 67 cents and among those 45-64 it is 59 cents. These larger gaps mean that African American women are falling behind at the very time they need additional resources to invest in their families and save for retirement.

- Over the course of a 40-year career, African American women would typically lose $746,000 to the wage gap—this means African American women would have to work 62 years to earn what white, non-Hispanic men earned in 40 years.

African American women experience a wage gap across occupations.

- In a wide variety of occupations—those that are well-paid and poorly paid, those that are female-dominated and those that are non-traditional for women—African American women working full time, year round make less than white, non-Hispanic men.

- African American women working as physicians and surgeons—a traditionally male, high-wage occupation—make 52 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.

- African American women working as personal care aides—a heavily female, low-wage occupation—make 85 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.

- African American women are overrepresented in some of the most poorly paid jobs in the nation. African American women’s share of the 10 largest low-wage jobs (14 percent) is 2.3 times larger than their share of the overall workforce (6 percent). Even in these low-wage occupations that typically pay $10.10 per hour or less, African American women working full time, year round experience a wage gap, making only 84 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make.

African American Women’s Share of Low-Wage and Overall Workforces

![Chart showing African American women’s share of low-wage and overall workforces.]

Source: NWLC calculations based on IPUMS-CPS (2013). Figures are for employed workers. The low-wage workforce is defined here as the 10 largest occupations with median wages of less than $10.10 per hour per BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics.
African American women’s wage gap has persisted over decades.

• In 1967, the earliest year for which data are available, an African American woman working full time, year round typically made only 43 cents for every dollar paid to her white, non-Hispanic male counterpart.

• By 2012, the most recent year for which data are available, that gap had narrowed by 21 cents, but African American women working full time, year round were still only paid 64 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.

African American women’s wage gap is substantially wider in some states.

• In Louisiana and Wyoming African American Women typically make less than half of what white, non-Hispanic men make.

• African American women in Washington, D.C. have the fourth worst wage gap in the country at 44 cents, even though women overall in Washington, D.C. have the smallest wage gap at just 10 cents.

Ten Worst States for African American Women’s Wage Equality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>African American Female Earnings</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic Male Earnings</th>
<th>What a woman makes for every dollar a man makes</th>
<th>Wage Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>$26,030</td>
<td>$53,334</td>
<td>48.8¢</td>
<td>51.2¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>$26,398</td>
<td>$53,845</td>
<td>49.0¢</td>
<td>51.0¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>$24,930</td>
<td>$45,807</td>
<td>54.4¢</td>
<td>45.6¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>$48,390</td>
<td>$86,831</td>
<td>55.7¢</td>
<td>44.3¢</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>$27,876</td>
<td>$49,653</td>
<td>56.1¢</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>$27,103</td>
<td>$47,917</td>
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<td>43.4¢</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>$42,109</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>$30,245</td>
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<td>58.3¢</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>$25,988</td>
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<td>41.2¢</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>$35,398</td>
<td>$60,222</td>
<td>58.8¢</td>
<td>41.2¢</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“What a woman makes for every dollar a man makes” is the ratio of female and male median earnings for full-time, year-round workers. Earnings are in 2012 dollars. The “wage gap” is the additional money a woman would have to make for every dollar made by a man in order to have equal annual earnings. Calculations are based on 2010-2012 American Community Survey Three-Year Estimates (http://www.census.gov/acs/www/).

2 Id. This fact sheet only addresses the wage gap for African American women, but the wage gaps for Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian women compared to white, non-Hispanic men are also substantial. Among full-time, year-round workers Hispanic women make only 54 cents for every dollar made by white, non-Hispanic men, Asian American women, 87 cents and American Indian women, 60 cents. Data on pay inequality for American Indian women compared to white, non-Hispanic men are from the American Community Survey 2012, Tables B20017H and B20017C, available at http://www.census.gov/acs/www/.


4 NWLC calculations based on CPS-ASEC 2013, supra note 1, Table PINC-05.

5 Figure assumes a wage gap of $18,650—the gap in median earnings between full-time, year-round working African American women ($33,885) and white, non-Hispanic men ($52,535) in 2012—each year for 40 years. Figures are not adjusted for inflation.

6 NWLC calculations based on American Community Survey 2008-2012 (5-year average) using Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010 available at https://usa.ipums.org/usa/. Figures are for full-time, year-round workers. Female-dominated occupations are more than 60 percent female. Male-dominated occupations are more than 60 percent male.

7 NWLC, Women are 76 percent of workers in the 10 largest low-wage jobs and suffer a 10 percent wage gap (Apr. 2014), available at http://www.nwlc.org/resource/women-are-76-percent-workers-10-largest-low-wage-jobs-and-suffer-10-percent-wage-gap. Figures are for occupations that typically pay $10.10 per hour or less.

8 NWLC calculations based on 10 largest low-wage occupations (see NWLC, 76 percent, supra note 7 for details).
