

EMPLOYMENT

FACT SHEET

Equal Pay for African American Women

July 2015

Women overall working full time, year round in the United States are paid only 78 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts.¹ 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.² This gap, which amounts to a loss of \$19,399 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.³

- Among individuals working full time, year round who have a high school degree or less, African American women typically make only 63 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make.
- African American women with a bachelor's degree or more typically make \$49,541—about the same as white, non-Hispanic men who have some college but lack a degree (98 cents for every dollar). African American women with only a bachelor's degree typically make \$44,996—about \$2,630 more than white, non-Hispanic men with only a high school degree (\$1.06 for every dollar).

*African American women working full time, year round are typically paid only **64 cents** for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.*

African American Women's Wage Equality by Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	African American Female Earnings	White, non-Hispanic Male Earnings	What African American Women Make for Every Dollar White, non-Hispanic Men Make	Wage Gap
No high school degree	\$22,778	\$36,021	63.2¢	36.8¢
High school degree	\$28,572	\$42,367	67.4¢	32.6¢
Some college, no degree	\$32,175	\$50,441	63.8¢	36.2¢
Associate's degree	\$36,511	\$52,032	70.2¢	29.8¢
Bachelor's degree or more	\$49,541	\$79,161	62.6¢	37.4¢
Bachelor's degree	\$44,996	\$71,032	63.3¢	36.7¢
Master's degree	\$55,537	\$86,825	64.0¢	36.0¢

"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 2013 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, 2014 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table PINC-03. Educational Attainment, People 25 years old and over, by total money earnings in 2013, available at http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032014/perinc/pinc03_000.htm.

African American women’s wage gap is wider among older women.⁴

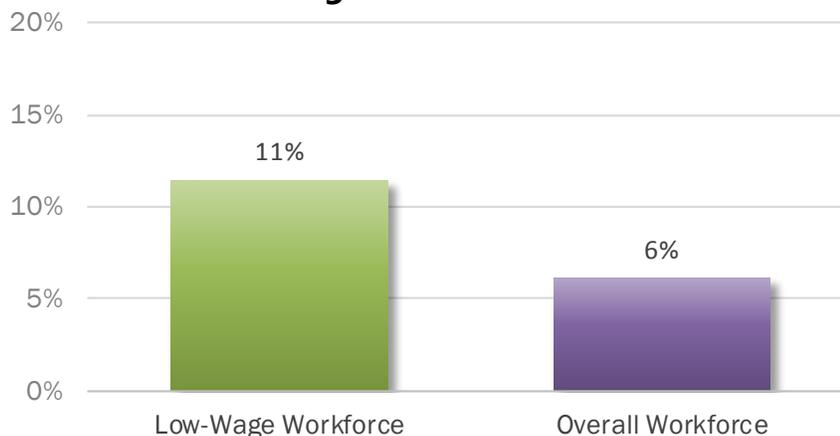
- Among full-time, year-round workers ages 15-24, African American women typically make 74 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make—but this figure is far worse for older women. Among workers 25-44 it is 68 cents and among those 45-64 it is 59 cents. These larger gaps mean that African American 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 nearly \$776,000 to the wage gap—this means African American women would have to work almost 63 years to earn what white, non-Hispanic men earn in 40 years.⁵

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.⁶
 - o 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.

- o African American women working as customer service representatives—a mid-wage, female-dominated occupation—make 79 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.
- o African American women working as construction laborers—a traditionally male, mid-wage occupation—make 86 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.
- o 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.
- In addition to wage gaps within occupations, African American women are overrepresented in the most poorly paid jobs in the nation. African American women’s share of the low-wage workforce (11.5 percent) is nearly double their share of the overall workforce (6.1 percent).⁷ Even in these low-wage occupations that typically pay \$10.50 per hour or less, African American women working full time, year round experience a wage gap, making only 73 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make.⁸

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

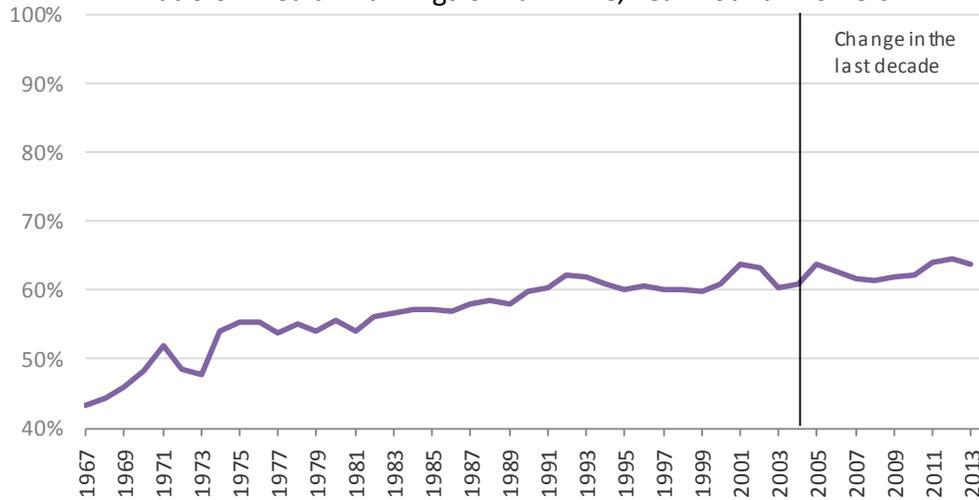


Source: NWLC calculations based on IPUMS-CPS (2014). Figures are for employed workers. The low-wage workforce is defined here as occupations with median wages of \$10.50 or less per hour based on BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics.

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.⁹
- By 2013, 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.

The Wage Gap Over Time for African American Women Compared to White, Non-Hispanic Men
Ratio of Median Earnings of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers



Source: Census Bureau, Current Population Survey

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

- In Louisiana, African American women typically make less than half of what white, non-Hispanic men make.
- African American women in Washington, D.C. have the second worst wage gap in the country at 46 cents,¹⁰ even though women overall in Washington, D.C. have the smallest wage gap at just 9 cents.¹¹

Ten Worst States for African American Women’s Wage Equality

Rank	State	African American Female Earnings	White, non-Hispanic Male Earnings	What African American Women Make for Every Dollar White-non Hispanic Men Make	Wage Gap
1	Louisiana	\$26,365	\$53,734	49.1¢	50.9¢
2	District of Columbia	\$48,773	\$90,431	53.9¢	46.1¢
3	Wyoming	\$30,121	\$54,722	55.0¢	45.0¢
4	Mississippi	\$25,327	\$45,801	55.3¢	44.7¢
5	Alabama	\$28,319	\$49,901	56.8¢	43.2¢
5	Utah	\$29,713	\$52,306	56.8¢	43.2¢
5	Rhode Island	\$31,759	\$55,866	56.8¢	43.2¢
8	South Carolina	\$27,348	\$47,499	57.6¢	42.4¢
9	Maine	\$25,849	\$44,749	57.8¢	42.2¢
10	New Jersey	\$42,128	\$72,160	58.4¢	41.6¢

“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 2013 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. State wage gaps calculated by National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) are based on 2011-2013 American Community Survey Three-Year Estimates (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>).

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Union membership is especially important for closing the wage gap for African American women.

- Among full-time workers, the wage gap between African American women and white men who are union workers is 25 percent smaller than the wage gap among non-union workers (24 cents for union workers, compared to 32 cents for non-union workers).¹²
- African American women are the most likely group of women to be union members and yet in 2014, just 12.2 percent of employed African American women were members of unions.¹³

¹ National Women's Law Center (NWLC) calculations from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2014 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, (*hereinafter* CPS-ASEC 2014) Table PINC-05: Work Experience in 2013—People 15 Years Old and Over by Total Money Earnings in 2013, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex, available at http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032014/perinc/pinc05_000.htm (last visited June 12, 2015).

² *Id.* This fact sheet only addresses the wage gap for African American women, but the wage gaps for other groups of women compared to white, non-Hispanic men are also substantial. Among full-time, year-round workers, Latinas make only 56 cents for every dollar made by white, non-Hispanic men, Asian American women, 79 cents, white, non-Hispanic women, 77 cents, and Native American women, 59 cents. Data on pay inequality for Native American women compared to white, non-Hispanic men are from the American Community Survey 2013, Tables B20017H and B20017C, available at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>.

³ CPS-ASEC 2014, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-03: Educational Attainment, People 25 years old and over, by total money earnings in 2013, available at http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032014/perinc/pinc03_000.htm. Figures are for full-time, year-round workers.

⁴ NWLC calculations based on CPS-ASEC 2014, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-05.

⁵ Figure assumes a wage gap of \$19,399—the gap in median earnings between full-time, year-round working African American women (\$34,089) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$53,488) in 2013—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, et al., *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0*, 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 calculations based on Miriam King et al., *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 3.0*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010, available at <https://cps.ipums.org/cps/>. Data are for 2013. Figures are for employed workers. The low-wage workforce is comprised of workers in occupations that typically pay \$10.50 per hour or less.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ NWLC, The Wage Gap Over Time for African American Women (Oct. 2014) available at <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/wage-gap-over-time>.

¹⁰ NWLC, The Wage Gap By State for African American Women (Oct. 2014) available at <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/wage-gap-state-african-american-women>.

¹¹ NWLC, The Wage Gap By State for Women Overall (Sept. 2014) available at <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/wage-gap-state-women-overall-2013>.

¹² Katherine Gallagher Robbins & Anne Morrison, NWLC, Union Membership is Critical for Women's Wage Equality (Feb. 2015) available at http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/women_overrepresented_in_union_membership_decline_feb_2015.pdf. The wage gap between Latinas and white men who are union workers is 27 cents, compared to 40 cents among non-union workers and for women and men overall the wage gap is 11 cents among union workers and 18 cents among non-union workers. Wage gaps are calculated based on median weekly earnings. These data differ slightly from the often-used measure of median annual earnings for full-time, year-round workers.

¹³ Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Union Members – 2014 Table 1: Union affiliation of employed wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, 2013-2014 annual averages available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf>. Data on union representation (workers represented by unions include both workers who are union members as well as those who are not members but whose jobs are covered by a union contract) are not reported here but are similar to those for union membership.