



WORKPLACE JUSTICE

EQUAL PAY FOR BLACK WOMEN

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When comparing all men and women who work full time, year round in the United States, women are paid just 80 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts.¹ But the wage gap is even larger when looking specifically at Black women who work full time, year round—they are paid only 63 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.² This gap, which amounts to a loss of \$21,001 a year, means that Black women have to work more than 19 months—until the very last day of July—to make as much as white, non-Hispanic men did in the previous 12-month calendar year.³

Black women working full time, year round are typically paid only 63 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts.

Black women experience a wage gap at every education level—even when they have earned graduate degrees.⁴

- Black women working full time, year round who have a high school degree, are typically paid only 63 cents for every dollar typically paid to white, non-Hispanic men with the same degree.
- Black women without a high school diploma fare even worse, making just 60 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men without a high school diploma.
- Pursuing higher education does little close to the wage gap. Black women with a bachelor’s degree are typically paid \$46,694—just under what white, non-Hispanic men with only a high school degree are paid (\$46,729).
- Black women have to earn a Master’s degree to make slightly more (\$56,072) than white, non-Hispanic men with just an Associate’s degree (\$54,620).

Black Women’s Wage Equality by Education

Educational Attainment	Black Women’s Earnings	White, non-Hispanic Men’s Earnings	What Black Women Are Paid for Every Dollar Paid to White, non-Hispanic Men	Wage Gap
No high school degree	\$21,847	\$36,480	60¢	40¢
High school degree	\$29,468	\$46,729	63¢	37¢
Some college, no degree	\$34,323	\$51,546	67¢	33¢
Associate’s degree	\$36,409	\$54,620	67¢	33¢
Bachelor’s degree or more	\$50,569	\$80,974	62¢	38¢
Bachelor’s degree	\$46,694	\$75,080	62¢	38¢
Master’s degree	\$56,072	\$87,051	64¢	36¢

NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2016 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table PINC-03. Educational Attainment, People 25 years old and over, by total money earnings in 2015, available at <http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-03.html>. “What Black Women Are Paid for Every Dollar Paid to White, non-Hispanic Men” is the ratio of Black women’s and white, non-Hispanic men’s median earnings for full time, year round workers. Earnings are in 2015 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. Workers without a high school diploma excludes those who have not completed at least 9th grade.

Black women’s wage gap is wider among older women.⁵

- Among young people ages 15–24, working full time, year round, Black women typically make 81 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make—but the wage gap widens as Black women grow older. Among people working full time, year round in their prime working years—ages 25–44—Black women are paid just 65 cents.
- Among older workers ages 45–64, Black women are paid just 61 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men. These larger gaps mean that Black women are falling behind at the very time they need additional resources to invest in their families and save for a secure retirement.

Black women’s wage gap is substantially wider in certain states.

- While Black women nationally are paid just 63 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men, they can face even steeper wage gaps depending where they live. In Louisiana, the worst state for Black women’s wage equality, Black women typically are paid slightly less than half of what white, non-Hispanic men are paid.⁶
- Black women in Washington, D.C. have the third worst wage gap in the country, paid 53 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men, even though Washington, D.C., has the smallest wage gap at just 14 cents when comparing the earnings of all women to the earnings of all men.⁷

Ten Worst States for Black Women’s Wage Equality

Rank	State	Black Women’s Earnings	White, Non-Hispanic Men’s Earnings	What Black Women Are Paid for Every Dollar Paid to White, non-Hispanic Men	Wage Gap
10	Connecticut	\$40,723	\$69,740	58¢	42¢
9	Texas	\$35,335	\$60,705	58¢	42¢
8	New Jersey	\$42,411	\$73,546	58¢	42¢
7	Rhode Island	\$32,500	\$56,468	58¢	42¢
6	South Carolina	\$27,826	\$48,690	57¢	43¢
5	Alabama	\$28,645	\$50,218	57¢	43¢
4	Mississippi	\$26,212	\$46,636	56¢	44¢
3	District of Columbia	\$49,349	\$92,679	53¢	47¢
2	Utah	\$27,834	\$53,846	52¢	48¢
1	Louisiana	\$26,488	\$55,386	48¢	52¢

State wage gaps calculated by National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) are based on 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>). “What Black Women Are Paid for Every Dollar Paid to White, non-Hispanic Men” is the ratio of women’s and men’s median earnings for full time, year round workers. Earnings are in 2015 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. Ranks based on unrounded data.



Black women have to work longer to keep up with white men.

- Over the course of a 40-year career, the typical Black woman loses a staggering \$840,040 to the wage gap. Assuming she and her male counterpart begin work at age 20, this huge wage gap means a Black woman would typically have to work until she is 83 years old to catch up to what a white, non-Hispanic man has been paid by age 60.⁸
- Depending on what state she lives in, a Black woman can face gaps that exceed what a typical Black woman loses nationwide. In nine states, Black women would lose more than \$1 million over a 40-year career as compared to white, non-Hispanic men. These women have to work decades past white, non-Hispanic men to be paid equally.



Ten Worst States for Black Women's Lifetime Losses Due to Wage Gap

Rank	State	Black Women's Earnings	White, Non-Hispanic Men's Earnings	Lifetime Losses Due to Wage Gap	Age at Which a Black Woman's Career Earnings Catch Up to White, non-Hispanic Men's Career Earnings at Age 60
	<i>United States</i>	<i>\$36,203</i>	<i>\$57,204</i>	<i>\$840,040</i>	<i>83</i>
10	Virginia	\$36,270	\$60,967	\$987,880	87
9	Alaska	\$38,738	\$63,779	\$1,001,640	86
8	Texas	\$35,335	\$60,705	\$1,014,800	89
7	Utah	\$27,834	\$53,846	\$1,040,480	97
6	Massachusetts	\$40,345	\$66,379	\$1,041,360	86
5	California	\$44,680	\$70,805	\$1,045,000	83
4	Louisiana	\$26,488	\$55,386	\$1,155,920	104
3	Connecticut	\$40,723	\$69,740	\$1,160,680	89
2	New Jersey	\$42,411	\$73,546	\$1,245,400	89
1	District of Columbia	\$49,349	\$92,679	\$1,733,200	95

State wage gaps calculated by National Women's Law Center (NWLC) are based on 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>). National wage gap calculated by NWLC is based on 2015 Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement. Earnings are in 2015 dollars. Figures are for full time, year round work. "Lifetime Losses Due to Wage Gap" is what a Black woman would lose, based on today's wage gap, over a 40-year career. Figures are not adjusted for inflation. Ranks based on unrounded data. "Age at which a Black woman's career earnings catch up to white, non-Hispanic men's career earnings at age 60" assumes all workers begin work at age 20. Assuming white, non-Hispanic men have a 40-year career, this is the age at which Black women are able to retire with the same lifetime earnings as their male counterparts.

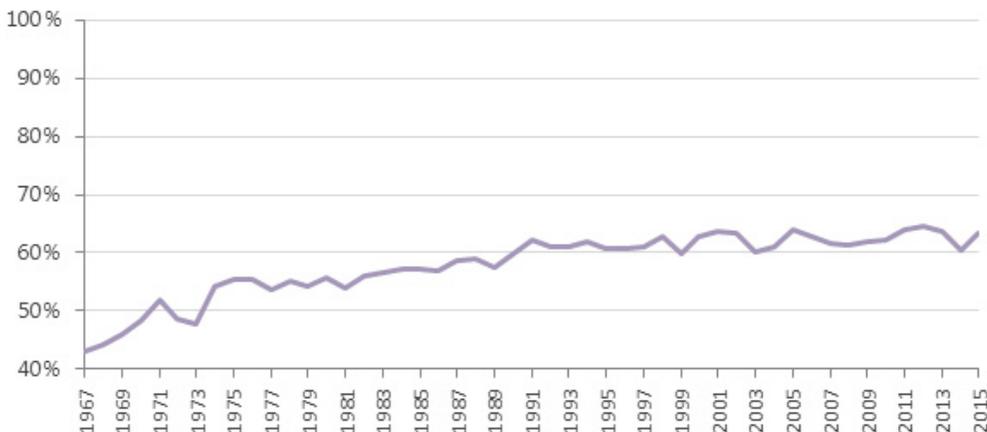
www.nwlc.org 

Black women's wage gap has persisted for decades.

- In 1967, the earliest year for which data are available, a Black woman working full time, year round typically made only 43 cents for every dollar paid to white men.⁹
- By 2015, the most recent year for which data are available, that gap had narrowed by 20 cents, but Black women working full time, year round were still only paid 63 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.

The Wage Gap Over Time for Black 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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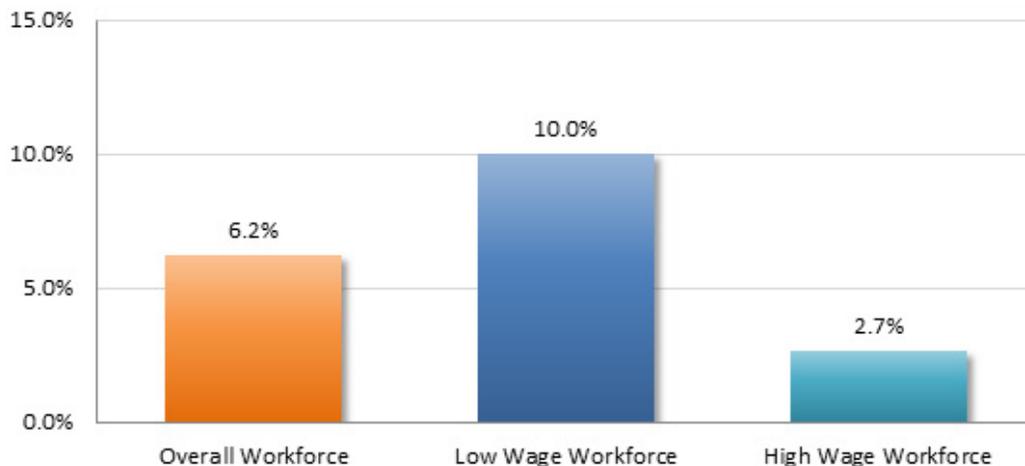
Black women are overrepresented in low wage jobs, and underrepresented in high wage jobs.

- Black women make up 10 percent of the low wage workforce, or jobs that typically pay less than \$11 per hour, or about \$22,880 annually, while they make up just 6.2 percent of the overall workforce.¹⁰
- Black women's share of the high wage workforce – jobs that pay more than \$48 per hour, or about \$100,000 annually, is less than half their representation in the overall workforce. They make up only 2.7 percent of workers in these jobs, but 6.2 percent of the overall workforce.¹¹

Whether they work in low wage or high wage occupations, Black women are typically paid less than white, non-Hispanic men in the same occupations.

- Among workers in low wage jobs, Black women make just 60 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.¹² Black women who work full time, year round in these occupations are typically paid about \$21,700 annually, compared to the \$36,000 typically paid to white, non-Hispanic men in these occupations. This gap translates to a loss of \$14,300 each year to the wage gap—more than enough to pay for an entire year's worth of rent or more than a year and a half of childcare costs.¹³
- Among workers in high wage occupations—such as lawyers, engineers, and physicians or surgeons—Black women are paid 64 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men in the same occupations. Black women who work full time, year round in these occupations are typically paid about \$70,000, compared to the \$110,000 typically paid to white, non-Hispanic men in these same jobs. This amounts to a staggering annual loss of \$40,000 each year, or \$1.6 million dollars over a 40-year career.¹⁴

Black Women's Share of Low Wage and High Wage Workforces



NWLC calculations based on I2016 American Community Survey 1-year estimates using IPUMS. Figures are for employed workers in 2015. The low wage workforce is defined as occupations with median hourly wages of \$11 or less per hour, while the high wage workforce is defined as occupations with median hourly wages of \$48 or more, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics.

Black women experience a wage gap across occupations.

- Occupation does not explain away Black women's wage gap. For example, Black women working as physicians and surgeons—a traditionally male, high wage occupation—make 54 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men working as physicians and surgeons.¹⁵
- Black women working as customer service representatives—a mid-wage, female dominated occupation—make 75 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men working as customer service representatives.



- Black women working as construction laborers—a traditionally male, mid-wage occupation—make 81 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men working as construction laborers.
- Black women working as personal care aides—a heavily female, low wage occupation—make 87 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men working as personal care aides.

Black women experience a wage gap even in occupations where they are overrepresented.

- More than two in five Black women (44.8 percent) are employed in one of ten occupations; in every one of those occupations, Black women are typically paid less than white, non-Hispanic men.¹⁶
- Among the ten most common occupations for Black women, two of those occupations – cashiers and retail salespeople and janitors, building cleaners, maids, and housekeepers – typically pay Black women a very low wage – less than \$10 per hour – while they typically pay white, non-Hispanic men substantially more.¹⁷
- Four of these common occupations typically pay Black women less than \$12 per hour while none of them typically pays white, non-Hispanic men less than \$12.
- Even in better paying jobs where Black women make up a good share of the workforce, such as pre-K, K-12, and special education teachers, and counselors and social workers, Black women are paid less than their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts. However, Black women who work as Registered Nurses (RN) or Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN)—where women overall hold nearly 90 percent of jobs—fare better and make close to what men in these same jobs make.

Common Occupations for Black Women

	Occupation	Percent of Black Women Employed in Occupation	Percent of Workers in Occupation Who Are Black Women	Median Hourly Wage for Black Women in Occupation	Median Hourly Wage for White, non-Hispanic Men in Occupation	What a Black Woman Makes for Every Dollar a White, non-Hispanic Man Makes
1	Nursing, psychiatric, home health, and personal care aides	10.0%	25.6%	\$11.91	\$13.00	92¢
2	Cashiers and retail salespeople	7.6%	9.7%	\$9.78	\$18.29	53¢
3	Secretaries, administrative assistants, office clerks, receptionists, and information clerks	6.1%	9.2%	\$16.14	\$18.59	87¢
4	Pre-K, K-12, and special education teachers	4.3%	7.4%	\$20.70	\$25.81	80¢
5	Janitors, building cleaners, maids, and housekeepers	3.8%	8.2%	\$9.90	\$15.59	64¢
6	Customer service representatives	3.4%	11.8%	\$14.44	\$19.23	75¢
7	Registered nurses	3.2%	9.7%	\$29.78	\$31.80	94¢
8	Counselors and social workers	2.6%	15.3%	\$19.57	\$22.01	89¢
9	Childcare workers	2.0%	13.9%	\$10.10	\$12.02	84¢
10	Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	1.8%	21.2%	\$19.00	\$19.30	98¢

NWLC calculations based on 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year averages using IPUMS. Figures are in 2015 dollars. Median hourly wages are for full time, year round workers. Hourly wages are derived by dividing median annual earnings by 2,080 hours, which assumes a 40-hour work week for 52 weeks.



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

- Among full time workers, Black women who belong to a union are paid nearly 30 percent more than Black women who are not.¹⁸
- The wage gap between Black women and white men who work full time and who are union workers is more than 20 percent smaller than the wage gap for non-union workers (28 cents for union workers, compared to 33 cents for non-union workers).¹⁹
- Black women are the most likely group of women to be union members and yet in 2016, just 12.1 percent of employed Black women were members of unions.²⁰

- 1 National Women's Law Center (NWLC) calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2016 Annual Social and Economic Supplement [hereinafter CPS, 2016 ASEC], Table PINC-05, available at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html>.
- 2 *Id.* Men and women self-identify their sex and race/ethnicity in the CPS. Black women self-identified themselves as Black or African American. White, non-Hispanic men self-identified as white and specified that they were not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. This fact sheet only addresses the wage gap for Black 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, Latina women made 54 cents for every dollar made by white, non-Hispanic men, Asian women, 85 cents, white, non-Hispanic women, 75 cents, and Native women, 58 cents. Data on pay inequality for Native women compared to white, non-Hispanic men are from the American Community Survey 2015, Tables B20017H and B20017C, available at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>. Wage gap figures are calculated by taking the median earnings of women and men working full, time year round. Median earnings describe the earnings of a worker at the 50th percentile - right in the middle.
- 3 NWLC calculations based on CPS, 2016 ASEC, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-05. The gap in median earnings between full time, year round working Black women (\$36,203) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$57,204) is \$21,001. Earnings are in 2015 dollars.
- 4 CPS, 2016 ASEC, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-03: Educational Attainment, People 25 years old and over, by total money earnings in 2015, available at <http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-03.html>. Figures are for full time, year round workers.
- 5 NWLC calculations based on CPS, 2016 ASEC, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-05.
- 6 NWLC, The Wage Gap By State for Black Women (Mar. 2017), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/wage-gap-state-black-women/>.
- 7 NWLC, The Wage Gap By State for Women Overall (Sept. 2016), available at <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/wage-gap-state-women-overall-2015>.
- 8 Figure assumes a wage gap of \$21,001—the gap in median earnings between full time, year round working Black women (\$36,203) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$57,204) in 2015—each year for 40 years. Figures are not adjusted for inflation.
- 9 NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Historical Data, Table P-38: Full-Time, Year-Round Workers by Median Earnings and Sex, available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/historical/people/>. Median earnings are in 2015 dollars. Figures may differ from those in other reports due to rounding or updated Census estimates. Data for white, non-Hispanic men are “white alone, not Hispanic” from 2002-2014, “white, not Hispanic” from 1987-2001 and “white” for years prior to 1987.
- 10 NWLC calculations based on American Community Survey 2015 1-year averages using Steven Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2016, available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. Data are for 2015. Figures are for employed workers. The low wage workforce is comprised of workers in occupations that typically pay less than \$11 per hour, and the high wage workforce is comprised of workers in occupations that typically pay \$48 or more per hour - the equivalent of about \$100,000 per year.
- 11 *Id.*
- 12 *Id.*
- 13 *Id.* Median gross rent for U.S. is \$959 per month and comes from U. S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) Table B25064, 1-year estimate. Gross rent is the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, and water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.) if these are paid by the renter (or paid for the renter by someone else). Average costs for child care in a center in Kansas for a four-year-old (\$8,065 annually in 2015 or \$672.00 per month). Kansas' cost for this type of child care falls at the median of all state averages (including the District of Columbia). Estimates come from Child Care Aware of America, Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2016 Report, (2016), Appendix 1, available at <http://www.usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/reports-and-research/costofcare/>.
- 14 *Id.* Figure assumes a wage gap of \$40,000—the gap in median earnings between full time, year round working Black women (\$70,000) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$110,000) in high wage occupations in 2015—each year for 40 years. Figures are not adjusted for inflation.
- 15 NWLC calculations based on American Community Survey 2011-2015 (5-year average) using Steven Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2016, 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.
- 16 NWLC calculations based on 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year averages using IPUMS.
- 17 *Id.* Figures are in 2015 dollars. Median hourly wages are for full time, year round workers. Hourly wages are derived by dividing median annual earnings by 2,080 hours, which assumes a 40-hour work week for 52 weeks.



18 NWLC calculations based on Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Union Members – 2015-2016, Table 2: Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers by Union Affiliation and Selected Characteristics, *available at* <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.t02.htm>. Figures include workers who are members of unions. Data is also available for workers whose jobs are covered by a union contract but are not reported here. 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.

19 *Id.*

20 NWLC calculations based on Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Union Members – 2015, Table 1: Union Affiliation of Employed Wage and Salary Workers by Selected Characteristics, 2015-2016 Annual Averages, *available at* <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.t01.htm>.

