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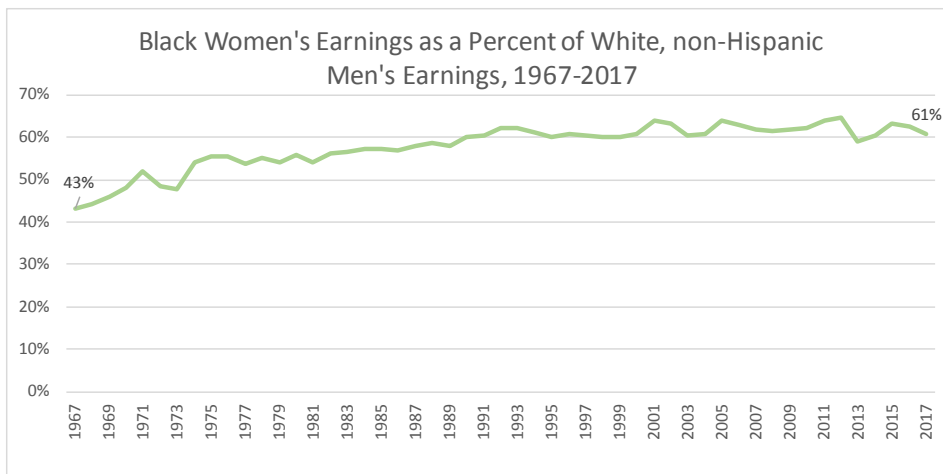
The Wage Gap for Black Women: Working Longer and Making Less

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When comparing all men and women who work full time, year round in the United States, women are typically paid 80 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts.¹ But the wage gap is even larger for Black women who work full time, year round compared to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts: they are typically paid only 61 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.² This gap, which amounts to a loss of \$23,653 a year, means that Black women have to work more than a year and a half (nearly 20 months) to be paid as much as white, non-Hispanic men in the previous 12-month calendar year alone.³ The wage gap also plays a pivotal role in contributing to the wealth gap, and is an obstacle to Black women's economic security over the course of their lifetimes—and the economic security of their families. ***Black women working full time, year-round are typically paid only 61 cents for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts – leading to a lifetime loss of \$946,120.***

Black women's wage gap has persisted for 50 years.

- In 1967, the earliest year for which data are available, a Black woman working full time, year round typically made less than half what a white man made (43 cents for every dollar).⁴
- Fifty years later, in 2017, the most recent year for which data are available, that gap had narrowed by just 18 cents. Black women working full time, year round still face a steep wage gap and are typically only paid 61 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.⁵



Black foreign-born women experience an even more dramatic wage gap – typically making only half of what their white, non-Hispanic, foreign-born male counterparts make.

- In 2017, nearly 1 in 7 (14 percent) Black women in the workforce were foreign born; those women working full time, year-round made 50 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic foreign-born men.
- This wage gap amounts to a loss of \$35,000 annually for Black foreign-born women; Black foreign-born women who work full time, year-round have a median income of \$35,000, compared to \$70,000 paid to white, non-Hispanic foreign-born men.⁶

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

- While Black women nationally are paid just 61 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men, they face even steeper wage gaps in some areas of the country. In Louisiana, the worst state for Black women’s wage equality, Black women are typically paid slightly less than half of what white, non-Hispanic men are paid (47 cents for every dollar).⁷
- Despite having the second smallest wage gap in the nation for women overall compared to men overall, the wage gap between Black women and white, non-Hispanic men in Washington, D.C., is larger than that in 49 states: Black women in D.C. typically make just 51 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make.⁸

TEN WORST STATES FOR BLACK WOMEN’S WAGE EQUALITY

	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
	United States	\$36,735	\$60,388	61¢	39¢
10	Texas	\$36,741	\$62,775	59¢	41¢
9	Alabama	\$30,003	\$51,283	59¢	41¢
8	South Carolina	\$29,096	\$50,605	57¢	43¢
7	Connecticut	\$40,977	\$72,356	57¢	43¢
6	Mississippi	\$27,328	\$48,565	56¢	44¢
5	New Jersey	\$42,373	\$76,180	56¢	44¢
4	South Dakota	\$24,789	\$46,715	53¢	47¢
3	Utah	\$29,795	\$56,726	53¢	47¢
2	District of Columbia	\$50,206	\$97,683	51¢	49¢
1	Louisiana	\$27,058	\$56,979	47¢	53¢

State wage gaps calculated by National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) are based on 2013-2017 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>). National wage gap calculated by NWLC is based on 2017 Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement. Earnings are in 2017 dollars. Figures are for full time, year-round workers. “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.

Over her career, a Black woman stands to lose over \$946,000 due to the wage gap.

- If the current wage gap does not close, a Black woman entering the workforce today stands to lose a staggering \$946,120 to the wage gap over the course of a 40-year career. Assuming she and her white, non-Hispanic male counterpart begin work at age 20, this tremendous wage gap means a Black woman would have to work until she is 86 years old to catch up to what a white, non-Hispanic man has been paid by age 60.⁹
- In many states, a Black woman faces lifetime gaps that exceed the typical lifetime wage gap for Black women nationwide. In eight states (Virginia, Texas, Utah, Massachusetts, California, Louisiana, Connecticut, and New Jersey) and the District of Columbia) Black women stand to lose more than \$1 million over a 40-year career compared to white, non-Hispanic men based on the wage gap today. These women would have to work decades longer than white, non-Hispanic men to catch up – well beyond their life expectancy.¹⁰

TEN WORST STATES FOR BLACK WOMEN'S LIFETIME LOSSES DUE TO WAGE GAP

	State	What Black women make for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make	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
	United States	61¢	\$946,120	86
10	Rhode Island	59¢	\$973,120	87
9	Virginia	60¢	\$1,005,280	87
8	Texas	59¢	\$1,041,360	88
7	Utah	53¢	\$1,077,240	96
6	Massachusetts	59¢	\$1,144,040	88
5	California	61¢	\$1,155,480	86
4	Louisiana	47¢	\$1,196,840	104
3	Connecticut	57¢	\$1,255,160	91
2	New Jersey	56¢	\$1,352,280	92
1	District of Columbia	51¢	\$1,899,080	98

State wage gaps calculated by National Women's Law Center (NWLC) are based on 2013-2017 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>). National wage gap calculated by NWLC is based on 2017 Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement. Earnings are in 2017 dollars. Figures are for full time, year-round workers. "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.

Black women experience a wage gap compared to white, non-Hispanic men at every education level, even when they have earned a graduate degree.¹¹

- Black women working full time, year-round who have a high school diploma are typically paid 64 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men with the same diploma.
- Pursuing higher education does little to close the wage gap. Black women with a bachelor’s degree are typically paid \$53,552, which is about what white, non-Hispanic men with only some college –but no degree – are typically paid (\$53,496).
- Black women typically have to earn a Master’s degree to make more (\$61,642) than white, non-Hispanic men with just an Associate’s degree (\$57,586).
- Also striking is the typical difference in wages between the most educated Black women and their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts – those with professional degrees and those with doctorate degrees. Among doctorate degree holders, Black women typically make 60 percent of what white, non-Hispanic men make – an annual loss of nearly \$49,000, or more than \$1.9 million over the course of a 40-year career. Black women with professional degrees are typically paid 61 percent of what their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts are paid (leading to a lifetime loss of more than \$2 million).
- Pursuing higher education is a costly endeavor for Black women, who have the highest student loan debt of any racial or ethnic group. For an undergraduate degree, the average Black woman accrues nearly \$30,400 in debt, compared to \$19,500 for white men.¹² The wage gap lessens Black women’s ability to pay off educational debt, creating an additional barrier to saving money that could be used to buy a home, start a business, or for emergencies.

BLACK WOMEN’S WAGE EQUALITY BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

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 diploma	\$25,231	\$37,438	67¢	33¢
High school diploma	\$30,309	\$47,264	64¢	36¢
Some college, no degree	\$35,084	\$53,496	66¢	34¢
Associate's degree	\$37,994	\$57,586	66¢	34¢
Bachelor's degree or more	\$53,552	\$85,020	63¢	37¢
Bachelor's degree	\$47,544	\$76,868	62¢	38¢
Master's degree	\$61,642	\$92,386	67¢	33¢
Professional degree	\$80,039	\$130,242	61¢	39¢
Doctorate degree	\$72,051	\$120,945	60¢	40¢

NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2018 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table PINC-03. Educational Attainment, People 25 years old and over, by total money earnings in 2016, 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 female and white, non-Hispanic male median earnings for full time, year-round workers. Earnings are in 2017 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 exclude those who have not completed at least 9th grade.

The wage gap exists for Black women of all ages and is widest for working women nearing retirement.¹³

- Among young people 15 to 24 years of age, working full time, year-round, Black women make 79 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men of the same age make.
- This wage gap widens as Black women grow older. Black women working full time year-round in their prime earning years, 25 to 44 years of age, are paid 63 cents for every dollar that white, non-Hispanic men age 25 to 44 are paid.
- Among workers between 45 to 64 years of age who work full time, year-round, Black women are paid 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 ensure a secure retirement.



Black women living in cities experience a larger wage gap compared to white, non-Hispanic men than Black women living in the suburbs.¹⁴

- Black women living in cities are paid 54 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men living in cities. This amounts to a loss of \$31,000 annually.¹⁵
- Black women living in suburban areas experience a somewhat smaller wage gap, making 62 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men living in suburban areas.

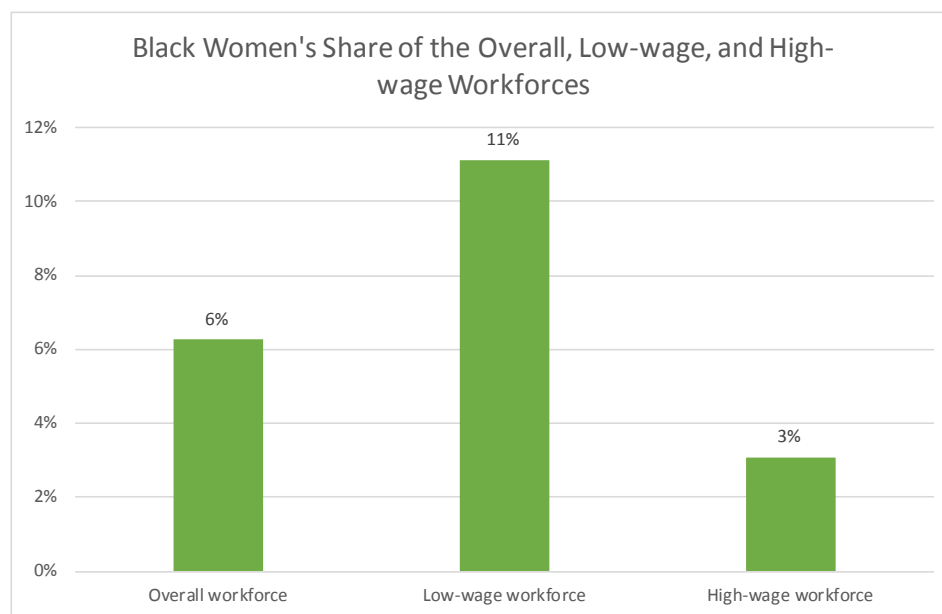
BLACK WOMEN'S WAGE EQUALITY BY METROPOLITAN STATUS

	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
Rural	\$26,000	\$45,000	58¢	42¢
City	\$37,000	\$68,000	54¢	46¢
Suburban Areas	\$40,100	\$65,000	62¢	38¢

NWLC calculations based on 2017 American Community survey using IPUMS. Figures are in 2017 dollars. Median earnings are for full time, year round workers. Rural is defined as those whose households were located outside of a metro area. City is defined as those whose households were located inside a metro area and in a central/principal city. Suburban is defined as those whose households were located inside a metro area, but outside of a central/principal city.

Black women are overrepresented in low-wage jobs, underrepresented in high-wage jobs, and experience a wage gap in both.¹⁶

- Black women make up 11 percent of the low-wage workforce (defined as the 40 lowest-paying jobs) although they make up just 6 percent of the overall workforce.¹⁷
- Black women make up only 3 percent of the high-wage workforce – defined as the 40 highest-paying jobs. White, non-Hispanic men’s share of the high-wage workforce is 47 percent, but they make up only a third (33 percent) of the overall workforce.¹⁸
- Among workers in low-wage jobs, Black women make just 79 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.¹⁹ Black women who work full time, year-round in the 40 lowest-paying jobs typically make about \$23,600 annually, compared to the \$30,000 paid to white, non-Hispanic men in these occupations. This gap translates to a loss of \$6,400 each year due to the wage gap or \$256,000 over a 40-year career.²⁰
- Among workers in high-wage occupations—such as lawyers, engineers, and physicians or surgeons—Black women are typically paid 67 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 paid about \$70,000, compared to the \$105,000 paid to white, non-Hispanic men in these same jobs. This amounts to an annual loss of \$35,000 each year, or \$1.4 million over a 40-year career.²¹



Source: NWLC calculations based on 2017 American Community survey using IPUMS. Figures are for employed workers in 2017. The low-wage and high-wage workforces can be defined in a variety of ways. Here, low-wage workforce is defined as the 40 occupations that have the lowest median hourly wages based on BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics. The high-wage workforce is defined as the 40 occupations that have the highest median hourly wages.

Black women are concentrated in ten occupations, many of which are low wage.

- More than two in five Black women (43 percent) are employed in one of ten occupations; in every one of those occupations, Black women are paid less than white, non-Hispanic men.²²
- Among the ten most common occupations for Black women, three of those occupations –cashiers and retail salespeople; janitors, building cleaners, maids, and housekeepers; and childcare workers – pay Black women a low wage (\$11.15 per hour or less) while they pay white, non-Hispanic men more – sometimes substantially more.²³

- In better-paying jobs, such as pre-K, K-12, and special education teachers, and counselors and social workers, Black women are also paid less than their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts. However, Black women who work as Registered Nurses (RNs) or Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)—where women overall hold nearly 90 percent of jobs²⁴—fare better and make much closer to what white, non-Hispanic men in these same jobs make (though Black women still make less).

COMMON OCCUPATIONS FOR BLACK WOMEN

	Occupation	Percent of Black Women Employed in Occupation	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	9.2%	\$12.02	\$12.98	93¢
2	Cashiers and retail salespeople	6.9%	\$10.96	\$19.23	57¢
3	Secretaries, administrative assistants, office clerks, receptionists, and information clerks	5.6%	\$16.35	\$19.23	85¢
4	Pre-K, K-12, and special education teachers	4.3%	\$20.67	\$26.44	78¢
5	Customer service representatives	3.7%	\$14.42	\$19.23	75¢
6	Janitors, building cleaners, maids, and housekeepers	3.4%	\$10.10	\$16.83	60¢
7	Registered nurses	3.2%	\$28.85	\$33.65	86¢
8	Counselors and social workers	2.7%	\$20.19	\$23.08	88¢
9	Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	2.0%	\$18.27	\$20.00	91¢
10	Childcare workers	1.9%	\$11.15	\$11.54	97¢

Source: NWLC calculations based on 2017 American Community Survey using IPUMS. Figures are in 2017 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 improving Black women’s earnings.

- Among full time workers, Black women who are union members make 23 percent more (\$147 per week) than Black women who are non-union workers.²⁵
- Black women who are members of a union make just 68 cents for every dollar paid to their white male counterparts who are also union members. But the situation is slightly worse for Black women who are not members of a union – they make 65 cents for every dollar white men who are not members of a union make.²⁶
- Black women are the most likely group of women to be union members and yet in 2018, just 13 percent of employed Black women were members of unions.²⁷

- 1 National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2018 Annual Social and Economic Supplement [hereinafter CPS, 2018 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 as Black or African American; the calculations here are for women who self-identified as Black alone. 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 make only 53 cents for every dollar made by white, non-Hispanic men, Asian American women, 85 cents, white, non-Hispanic women, 77 cents, and Native women, 58 cents. Data for the wage gap between Native women and white, non-Hispanic men was calculated using the 2017 American Community Survey 1-year sample. 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, 2018 ASEC, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-05. The gap in median earnings between full time, year-round working Black women (\$36,735) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$60,388) is \$23,653. Earnings are in 2017 dollars.
- 4 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 <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-income-people.html>. Median earnings are in 2017 dollars. Figures may differ from those in other reports due to rounding or updated Census estimates. Data for Black women are “Black alone” from 2002-2017 and “Black” for years prior to 2002. Data for white, non-Hispanic men are “white alone, not Hispanic” from 2002-2017, “white, not Hispanic” from 1987-2001 and “white” for years prior to 1987.
- 5 *Id.*
- 6 NWLC calculations based on CPS, 2018 ASEC, *supra* note 1, using Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Renae Rodgers, Steven Ruggles, and J. Robert Warren. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2018, *available* at <https://ipums.org/>. Foreign-born was defined using citizenship status and includes both naturalized citizens and non-citizens.
- 7 NWLC, THE WAGE GAP BY STATE FOR BLACK WOMEN (Dec. 2018), *available* at <https://nwlc.org/resources/wage-gap-state-black-women/>.
- 8 NWLC, THE WAGE GAP BY STATE FOR WOMEN OVERALL (Sept. 2018), *available* at <https://nwlc.org/resources/wage-gap-state-women-overall-2017/>.
- 9 NWLC calculations based on CPS, 2018 ASEC, *supra* note 1. Figure assumes a wage gap of \$23,653—the gap in median earnings between full time, year-round working Black women (\$36,735) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$60,388) in 2017—each year for 40 years. Figures are not adjusted for inflation.
- 10 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, United States Life Tables (June 2019), *available* at https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr68/nvsr68_07-508.pdf. At birth, Black women are expected to live 78.5 years.
- 11 CPS, 2018 ASEC, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-03: Educational Attainment, People 25 years old and over, by total money earnings in 2016, *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.
- 12 American Association of University Women, Deeper in Debt: Women and Student Loans (May 2019), *available* at https://www.aauw.org/aauw_check/pdf_download/show_pdf.php?file=deeper-in-debt-onepager.
- 13 NWLC calculations based on CPS, 2018 ASEC, *supra* note 1, Table PINC-05. All calculations are for full time, year-round (defined as 50 weeks or more) workers.
- 14 The U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey collects data from respondents about the location of their household. Rural is defined as those whose households were located outside of a metro area. City is defined as those whose households were located inside a metro area and in a central/principal city. Suburban is defined as those whose households were located inside a metro area, but outside of a central/principal city.
- 15 NWLC calculations based on American Community Survey 2017 1-year average using Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 9.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2019, *available* at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.
- 16 NWLC calculations based on American Community Survey 2017 1-year average using Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 9.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2019, *available* at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. Figures are for employed workers in 2017. The low-wage and high-wage workforces can be defined in a variety of ways. Here, the low-wage workforce is defined as the 40 detailed occupations that have the lowest median hourly wages based on U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2018 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm. All 40 low-wage jobs have median hourly wages of \$11.82 or less. The high-wage workforce is defined as the 40 detailed occupations that have the highest median hourly wages. All high-wage jobs have median hourly wages of \$51.46 or more.
- 17 *Id.*
- 18 *Id.*
- 19 *Id.*
- 20 *Id.* Figure assumes a wage gap of \$6,400—the gap in median earnings between full time, year-round working Black women (\$23,600) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$30,000) in high-wage occupations in 2017—each year for 40 years. Figures are not adjusted for inflation.
- 21 *Id.* Figure assumes a wage gap of \$33,000—the gap in median earnings between full time, year-round working Black women (\$70,000) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$105,000) in high wage occupations in 2017—each year for 40 years. Figures are not adjusted for inflation.
- 22 NWLC calculations based on American Community Survey 2017 using Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 9.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2019, *available* at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.
- 23 *Id.* Figures are in 2017 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.
- 24 *Id.*
- 25 NWLC calculations based on Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Union Members – 2018, Table 2. Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by union affiliation and selected characteristics, 2017-2018 annual averages, *available* at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.t01.htm>.
- 26 *Id.*
- 27 NWLC calculations based on Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Union Members – 2018, Table 1. Union affiliation of employed wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, *available* at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.t01.htm>.