

African American Women & the Wage Gap

MARCH 2015

A persistent gender-based wage gap continues to harm women, their families and the economy. On average, women in the United States are paid 78 cents for every dollar paid to men.¹ For African American women, the gap is larger. African American women are paid, on average, just 64 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.² When women lose income, their economic security and that of their families is diminished.

Even in states with large populations of employed African American women, rampant wage disparities persist – with potentially devastating consequences for African American women and their families.

- ▶ In the 20 states with the largest number of African American women working full time, year round, pay for African American women ranges from 49 to 70 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men in those states.³
- ▶ The states with the largest populations of African American women working full time, year round are Texas and New York. In Texas, African American women are paid 59 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men. In New York, African American women are paid 66 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.⁴
- ▶ Among the states with the largest numbers of African American women working full time, year round, African American women in Louisiana and Mississippi suffer from the largest wage gaps, bringing home just 49 and 55 cents, respectively, for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men in their states.⁵
- ▶ Among the 20 states, Tennessee, Pennsylvania and Maryland have the smallest wage gaps – but African American women in those states still face substantial disparities, with African American women in Tennessee and Pennsylvania paid 69 cents and African American women in Maryland paid 70 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.⁶

Wage Gap for African American Women by State					
An analysis of the wage gap in the 20 states with the largest number of African American women who work full time, year round					
State	Number of African American Women Working Full Time, Year Round	Median Wages for African American Women	Median Wages for White, Non-Hispanic Men	Annual Wage Gap	Cents on the Dollar
Louisiana	207,277	\$26,365	\$53,734	\$27,369	0.49
Mississippi	148,368	\$25,327	\$45,801	\$20,474	0.55

State	Number of African American Women Working Full Time, Year Round	Median Wages for African American Women	Median Wages for White, Non-Hispanic Men	Annual Wage Gap	Cents on the Dollar
Alabama	181,486	\$28,319	\$49,901	\$21,582	0.57
South Carolina	185,211	\$27,348	\$47,499	\$20,151	0.58
New Jersey	188,009	\$42,128	\$72,160	\$30,032	0.58
Virginia	262,842	\$35,322	\$60,211	\$24,889	0.59
Texas	490,809	\$34,764	\$59,248	\$24,484	0.59
Florida	447,313	\$30,106	\$48,786	\$18,680	0.62
Georgia	457,531	\$32,241	\$51,434	\$19,193	0.63
North Carolina	310,251	\$30,417	\$48,502	\$18,085	0.63
Illinois	245,450	\$37,399	\$58,993	\$21,594	0.63
California	292,565	\$44,035	\$69,004	\$24,969	0.64
Ohio	184,887	\$32,250	\$49,525	\$17,275	0.65
Michigan	160,666	\$34,027	\$51,397	\$17,370	0.66
New York	486,704	\$40,395	\$60,939	\$20,544	0.66
Indiana	74,248	\$32,225	\$48,085	\$15,860	0.67
Missouri	98,632	\$31,328	\$45,930	\$14,602	0.68
Tennessee	163,996	\$31,142	\$45,234	\$14,092	0.69
Pennsylvania	183,517	\$35,595	\$51,340	\$15,745	0.69
Maryland	337,063	\$47,081	\$67,581	\$20,500	0.70

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates 2013, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20017B: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months 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 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 for the Population 16 Years and Over (Black or African American Alone).

What Does the Wage Gap Mean for African American Women?

Median wages for African American women in the United States are \$34,089 per year, compared to median wages of \$53,488 annually for white, non-Hispanic men – or a difference of \$19,399 each year.⁷ Families, businesses and the economy suffer as a result. These lost wages mean families have less money to spend on goods and services that help drive economic growth.

For example, if the wage gap were eliminated, on average, an African American woman working full time, year round would have enough money for approximately:

- ▶ 153 more weeks of food for her family (2.9 years' worth);⁸
- ▶ 13.5 more months of mortgage and utilities payments;⁹
- ▶ 21 more months of rent;¹⁰ or
- ▶ 7,915 additional gallons of gas.¹¹

African American Women and their Families Cannot Afford Discrimination and Lower Wages

Eliminating the wage gap would provide much-needed income to African American women whose wages sustain their households.

- ▶ More than 50 percent of married African American mothers bring in half or more than half of their families' income, which means their households rely heavily on their wages to make ends meet and get ahead.¹²
- ▶ 4,053,589 family households in the United States are headed by African American women.¹³ And 38.1 percent of all family households headed by African American women live below the poverty level.¹⁴ This means that 1,544,417 family households headed by African American women live in poverty.

The Public Overwhelmingly Supports Fair Pay Policies

- ▶ **More than half of all voters (54 percent) and nearly two-thirds of African American voters (65 percent) say they believe women have a harder time getting ahead in the workplace than men.**¹⁵
- ▶ **More than two-thirds of U.S. voters (68 percent) favor policies that would address gender discrimination, including paying women less than men for the same work.** Less than one-quarter of voters oppose such a proposal. Both women (72 percent) and men (64 percent) say they are supportive.¹⁶
- ▶ **Nearly two-thirds of voters support the Paycheck Fairness Act.** In a 2014 nationwide survey, 62 percent of likely voters and 78 percent of African American 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.¹⁷

1 U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement: 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*. Retrieved 18 March 2015, from http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032014/perinc/pinc05_000.htm

2 Ibid.

3 U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). *American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates 2013, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20017B: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months 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 18 March 2015, from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_13_3YR_B20017I&prodType=table; U.S. Census Bureau. (2014).

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- American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates 2013, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20017H: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months 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 18 March 2015, from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_13_3YR_B20017H&prodType=table (This calculation is based on a comparison of the median salary of white, non-Hispanic men working full time, year round with that of African American women working full time, year round.); U.S. Census Bureau. (2014).
- American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates 2013, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20005B: Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months by Earnings in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over (Black or African American Alone). Retrieved 18 March 2015, from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_13_3YR_B20005B&prodType=table
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 See note 1.
- 8 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2014, September). *Consumer Expenditure Survey, Table 1800. Region of Residence: Annual Expenditure Means, Shares, Standard Errors, and Coefficient of Variation, 2013*. Retrieved 18 March 2015, from <http://www.bls.gov/cex/2013/combined/region.pdf> (Unpublished calculation.)
- 9 U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2013, Table GCT2511: Median Monthly Housing Costs for Owner-Occupied Housing Units with a Mortgage (Dollars): United States – States; and Puerto Rico*. Retrieved 18 March 2015, from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_13_1YR_GCT2511.US01PR&prodType=table (Unpublished calculation.)
- 10 U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2013, Table GCT2514: Median Monthly Housing Costs for Renter-Occupied Housing Units (Dollars): United States – States; and Puerto Rico*. Retrieved 18 March 2015, from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_13_1YR_GCT2514.US01PR&prodType=table (Unpublished calculation.)
- 11 AAA. (2014). *AAA's Daily Fuel Gauge Report*. Retrieved 18 March 2015, from <http://fuelgauge.report.opisnet.com/index.asp> (Calculation uses average cost of regular quality gasoline as of March 4, 2015.)
- 12 Glynn, S. J. (2012, April). *The New Breadwinners: 2010 Update*. Center for American Progress Publication. Retrieved 18 March 2015, from <http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2012/04/pdf/breadwinners.pdf>
- 13 U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). *American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates 2013, Table S0201: Selected Population Profile in the United States (Black or African American alone)*. Retrieved 18 March 2015, from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_13_3YR_S0201&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.)
- 14 Ibid. (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 1- and 2-person families, age of householder. The poverty threshold in 2013 was \$18,498 for a single householder and two children under 18.)
- 15 Anzalone Liszt Grove Research and The Feldman Group, Inc. conducted a national survey among N=1000 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 margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher. Interviews for the oversample were conducted in both English and Spanish. Retrieved on 18 March 2013, from <http://www.americanwomen.org/research/document/PUBLIC-RELEASE-AW-FEB-5-RELEASE.pdf>
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 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 www.NationalPartnership.org.

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