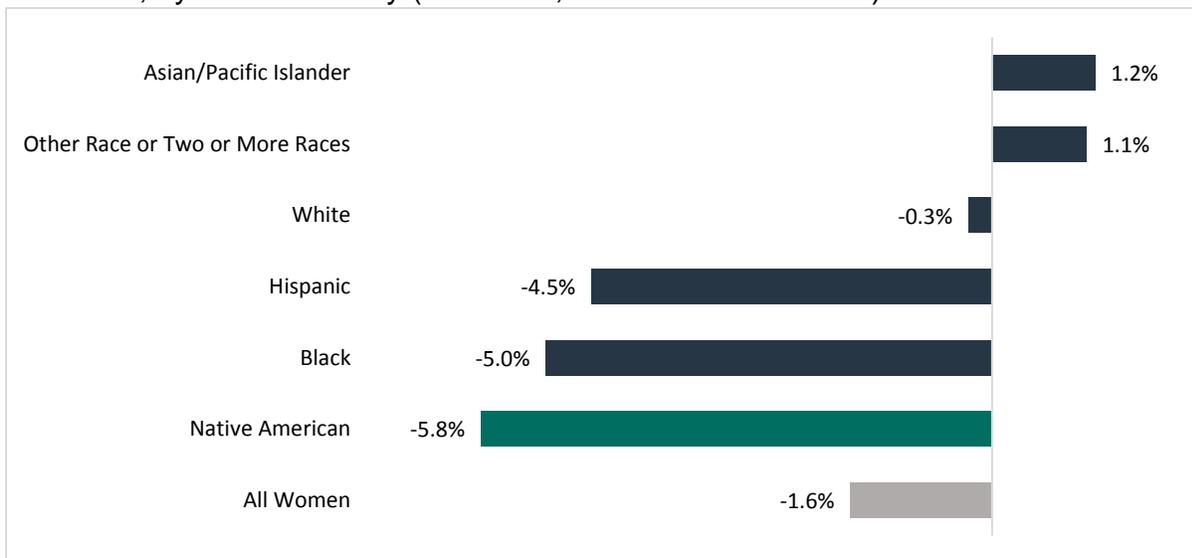


Native American Women Saw the Largest Declines in Wages over the Last Decade among All Women

Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) analysis of data from the American Community Survey finds that between 2004 and 2014, Native American women's real median annual earnings for full-time, year-round work declined by 5.8 percent—more than three times as much as women's earnings overall (Figure 1). Like Native American women, Black women and Hispanic women also saw their earnings fall substantially between 2004 and 2014, which includes the Great Recession and slow economic recovery (5.0 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively).¹ In comparison, Asian/Pacific Islander women's earnings increased by 1.2 percent during the same time period and White women's earnings declined by only 0.3 percent. Women of another race or two or more races experienced an increase in real earnings of 1.1 percent, similar to that of Asian/Pacific Islander women.

Figure 1. Percent Change in Women's Real Median Annual Earnings Between 2004 and 2014, by Race/Ethnicity (Full-Time, Year-Round Workers)



Notes: Data include women and men aged 16 and older. Racial groups are non-Hispanic. Adjustments of 2002-2004 data to 2014 dollars are computed on the basis of the Consumer Price Index Research Series (CPI-U-RS) published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015). Data are three year (2002-2004 and 2012-2014) averages.

Source: IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Version 6.0).

¹ This Quick Figures focuses on Native American women's earnings in recognition of Native American Women's Equal Pay Day on September 15th, 2016. Data on changes in Hispanic women's earnings will be released in conjunction with Latina Women's Equal Pay Day (November 1st). For previously released data on changes in Black women's earnings, see: <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/black-women-are-among-those-who-saw-the-largest-declines-in-wages-over-the-last-decade>.

Among the eight states in the country for which data are available, there were variations in the change in Native American women’s real median annual earnings between 2004 and 2014 (Table 1).

- In Oklahoma—the state with the largest growth in Native American women’s earnings between 2004 and 2014—Native American women’s median annual earnings increased by 6.4 percent, rising from \$28,200 to \$30,000 over the decade. North Dakota closely followed Oklahoma, with an increase of 5.9 percent in Native American women’s median annual earnings.
- Alaska experienced the largest decline in Native American women’s real median annual earnings, where earnings decreased by 17.9 percent, falling from \$42,613 to \$35,000 between 2004 and 2014. New Mexico followed Alaska with a decline of 10.2 percent in Native American women’s median annual earnings.

Table 1. Native American Women’s Earnings, by State (Full-Time, Year-Round Workers)

	Native American Women’s Median Annual Earnings, 2002-2004, in 2014 Dollars	Native American Women’s Median Annual Earnings, 2012-2014, in 2014 Dollars	Percent Change in Native American Women’s Real Median Annual Earnings
Alaska	\$42,613	\$35,000	-17.9%
Arizona	\$32,587	\$31,000	-4.9%
California	\$37,600	\$38,000	1.1%
Montana	\$30,707	\$29,000	-5.6%
New Mexico	\$30,080	\$27,000	-10.2%
North Carolina	\$27,573	\$28,000	1.5%
North Dakota	\$26,445	\$28,000	5.9%
Oklahoma	\$28,200	\$30,000	6.4%
United States	\$32,901	\$31,000	-5.8%

Notes: Data include women aged 16 and older. Native American women are non-Hispanic. Adjustments of 2002-2004 data to 2014 dollars are computed on the basis of the Consumer Price Index Research Series (CPI-U-RS) published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015). Data are three year (2002-2004 and 2012-2014) averages.

Source: IWPR analysis of American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Version 6.0).

A number of policy interventions can help address the low and declining wages of Native American women and improve their economic stability:

- Raise the minimum wage, and index it to inflation, to increase the earnings and economic security of Native American women working in low wage jobs. Women of color are particularly likely to be low-waged. The last time Congress approved an increase in the federal minimum wage was 2007.
- Fully enforce Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made discrimination in hiring, pay, and promotions illegal, to improve Native American women’s access to well-paid jobs. If women were paid the same hourly rate as men with the same education and experience, [poverty rates for working women would be halved](#).
- Prevent wage theft and fully enforce wage and hour laws, including the Department of Labor’s updated overtime regulations, which will benefit [3.2 million women](#).
- Tackle women’s underrepresentation in high-wage, predominantly male occupations by ensuring that career advice for Native American women and girls explicitly addresses the earnings potential and career trajectory of different occupations.

- Make college more accessible and less expensive for Native American women by increasing funding for Pell grants, growing investment in tribal colleges and universities, and by improving child care availability at colleges, which would benefit the [forty one percent of Native American women college students who are mothers](#).

This Quick Figures was prepared by Asha DuMonthier. This Quick Figures is also part of a series of IWPR research products on topics relevant to the 2016 election. Other topics include the gender wage gap, the benefits of paid sick days, and forthcoming analyses on student parents and the status of women of color in the United States.

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