

# Fact Sheet

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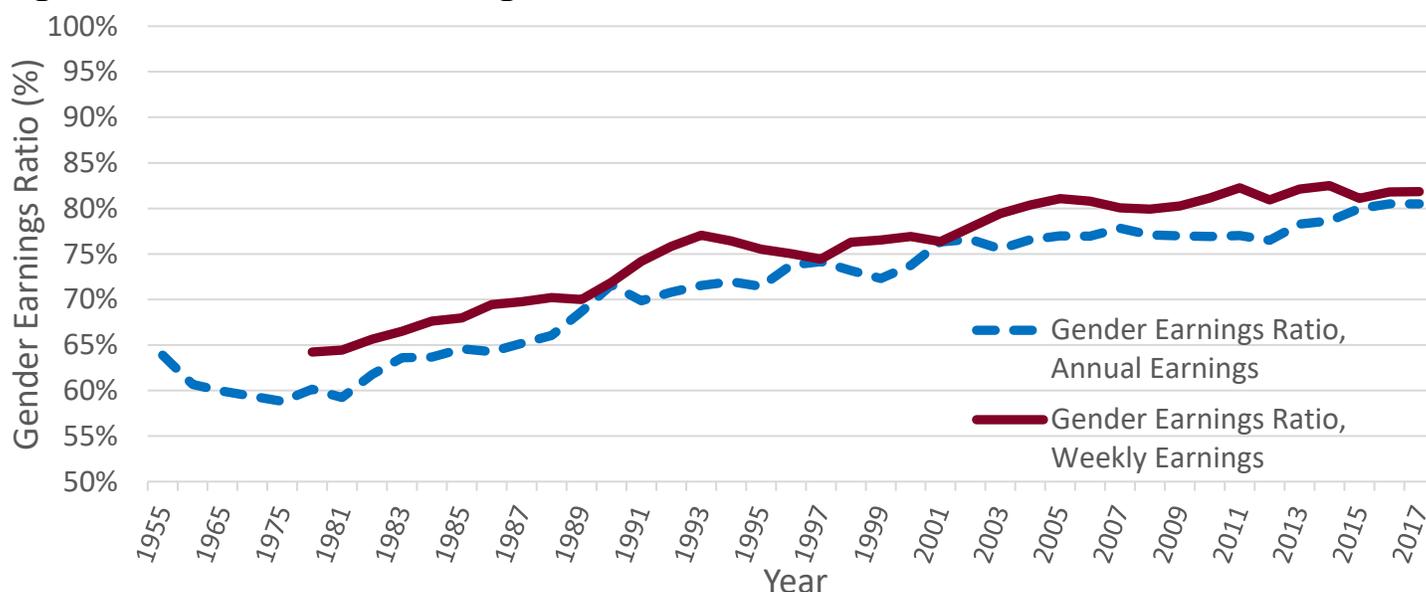
## The Gender Wage Gap: 2017 Earnings Differences by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity

The ratio of women's and men's median annual earnings was 80.5 percent for full-time/year-round workers in 2017, unchanged since 2016.<sup>1</sup> This means a gender wage gap for full-time/year-round workers of 19.5 percent. Women's median full-time, year-round earnings in 2017 were \$41,977 compared with \$52,146 for men; both women's and men's earnings were 1.1 percent lower in 2017 than in 2016.<sup>2</sup>

If the pace of change in the annual earnings ratio continues at the same rate as it has since 1960, it will take another 41 years, until 2059, for men and women to reach parity.<sup>3</sup>

An alternative measure of the wage gap is derived from the ratio of women's to men's median weekly earnings for full-time workers, which was 81.8 percent in 2017. The annual gender earnings ratio for full-time year-round workers, which includes self-employed workers, tends to be slightly lower than the ratio for weekly earnings (which excludes the self-employed and earnings from annual bonuses, and includes full-time workers who work only part of the year). The the gender earnings ratio based on weekly earnings also remained unchanged between 2016 and 2017 (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. The Gender Earnings Ratio, 1955-2017, Full-Time Workers**



Notes: See Table 2

Both earnings ratios (for weekly and annual) reflect gender differences in hourly wages and the number of hours worked (among full-time workers); 63.0 percent of women with earnings worked full-time, year-round in 2017, compared with 75.4 percent of male workers, a slight increase for both genders compared with 2016.<sup>4</sup> If part-time and part-year workers were included, the ratio of women's to men's earnings would be lower, as women are more likely than men to work reduced schedules, often in order to manage childrearing and other caregiving work. Women are also more likely than men to work in occupations where fewer jobs are offered on a full-time basis or where hours vary from week to week.<sup>5</sup>

Real median full-time, year-round earnings marginally declined for women of all of the largest racial/ethnic groups (Table 1). Earnings for Black women working full-time, year-round decreased by \$271 or 0.7 percent, Asian women's and Hispanic women's by 0.6 percent (by \$325 and \$198 respectively), and White women's by \$212 or 0.5 percent. With the exception of Black men, whose real median full-time, year-round earnings marginally declined, men of the other largest racial/ethnic groups saw a marginal increase in earnings. Women of all major racial and ethnic groups earn less than men of the same group, and saw greater declines in real earnings than men of the same race or ethnicity.

When the gender earnings ratio is measured using White men's earnings as the comparison, it shows marked disadvantage for Hispanic and Black women. Hispanic women earned just 53.0 percent (compared with 54.4 in 2016) and Black women earned just 60.8 percent (down from 62.5 percent in 2016) of White men's median annual earnings in 2017 (Table 1). Median earnings for a year of full-time work for Hispanic women are below the qualifying income threshold for eligibility for food stamps for a family of four; in 2017 this was \$32,315 per year, 130 percent of the federal poverty threshold for a family of four.<sup>6</sup>

Black and Hispanic workers of both sexes earn considerably less than White and Asian workers; as a result, the gender earnings ratio based on earnings of women and men of the same race or ethnicity is higher than the ratio for workers of all races considered together, meaning the within-race gaps are narrower. The gender earnings gap based on comparison with men of the same race/ethnicity widened for all groups in 2017. The gender earnings ratio for White workers decreased from 79.0 percent in 2016 to 77.0 percent in 2017, for Black workers from 87.5 to 87.3 percent, for Asian workers from 76.9 to 75.9 percent, and for Hispanic workers from 84.4 to 82.3 percent (Table 1). Asian workers as a group have the highest median annual earnings, primarily because of historically higher rates of educational attainment for both genders.

**Table 1. Median Annual Earnings and Gender Earnings Ratio for Full-Time Year-Round Workers age 15 Years and Older by Race/Ethnicity, 2016 and 2017**

Racial/Ethnic Background*	2017				2016 (in 2017 dollars)			
	Women (\$)	Men (\$)	Female Earnings as % of Male Earnings of Same Group	Female Earnings as % of White Male Earnings	Women (\$)	Men (\$)	Female Earnings as % of Male Earnings of Same Group	Female Earnings as % of White Male Earnings
All Races/Ethnicities	41,977	52,146	80.5%	-	42,448	52,751	80.5%	-
White	46,513	60,388	77.0%	77.0%	46,725	59,171	79.0%	79.0%
Black	36,735	42,076	87.3%	60.8%	37,006	42,181	87.5%	62.5%
Asian	51,378	67,673	75.9%	85.1%	51,703	67,014	76.9%	86.8%
Hispanic or Latina	32,002	38,876	82.3%	53.0%	32,200	38,157	84.4%	54.4%

**Notes:** White alone, not Hispanic; Black alone; Asian alone; and Hispanic/Latina/o (may be of any race).

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey. 2018. "Historical Income Tables: Table P-38. Full-Time, Year-Round Workers by Median Earnings and Sex." <<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-income-people.html>>

Closing the wage gap is not a zero-sum game—gains for one gender do not require losses for the other. For the gender wage gap to close, women's real wages must rise faster than men's, and as the economy becomes more productive, one would expect real wages to rise for both men and women. Yet, as can be seen from Table 2, since 1975 real annual earnings for men have remained virtually unchanged, and are lower in 2017 than they were in 1975, while women's real earnings have increased across the same time period (but are also only marginally higher than they were a decade ago, in 2007). Over the same period, women's earnings have become increasingly important to family incomes.

**Table 2: The Gender Wage Ratio and Real Earnings, 1955-2017, Full-Time Workers**

Year	Median Annual Earnings (2017 dollars)			Median Usual Weekly Earnings (2017 dollars)		
	Full-time, Year-Round Workers			Full-time Weekly Workers		
	Women	Men	Female-to-male earnings ratio (%)	Women	Men	Female-to-male earnings ratio (%)
1955			63.9%			
1960	\$23,657	\$38,991	60.7%			
1965	\$26,123	\$43,593	59.9%			
1970	\$30,072	\$50,653	59.4%			
1975	\$31,173	\$52,999	58.8%			
1980	\$31,803	\$52,863	60.2%	\$571	\$889	64.2%
1985	\$34,039	\$52,712	64.6%	\$603	\$887	68.0%
1986	\$34,755	\$54,077	64.3%	\$623	\$897	69.5%
1987	\$35,005	\$53,707	65.2%	\$627	\$899	69.7%
1988	\$35,173	\$53,253	66.0%	\$629	\$896	70.2%
1989	\$35,926	\$52,314	68.7%	\$628	\$897	70.0%
1990	\$36,158	\$50,489	71.6%	\$631	\$878	71.9%
1991	\$36,176	\$51,784	69.9%	\$644	\$868	74.2%
1992	\$36,710	\$51,861	70.8%	\$653	\$861	75.8%
1993	\$36,430	\$50,937	71.5%	\$658	\$854	77.1%
1994	\$36,436	\$50,629	72.0%	\$655	\$857	76.4%
1995	\$36,047	\$50,466	71.4%	\$651	\$862	75.5%
1996	\$37,005	\$50,169	73.8%	\$652	\$869	75.0%
1997	\$38,152	\$51,444	74.2%	\$658	\$884	74.4%
1998	\$38,982	\$53,276	73.2%	\$688	\$902	76.3%
1999	\$38,839	\$53,709	72.3%	\$698	\$912	76.5%
2000	\$39,200	53,175	73.7%	\$703	\$914	76.9%
2001	\$40,548	\$53,123	76.3%	\$711	\$931	76.4%
2002	\$41,269	\$53,875	76.6%	\$723	\$928	77.9%
2003	\$41,049	\$54,334	75.5%	\$738	\$929	79.4%
2004	\$40,640	\$53,072	76.6%	\$745	\$927	80.4%
2005	\$40,086	\$52,075	77.0%	\$736	\$908	81.1%
2006	\$39,628	\$51,506	76.9%	\$732	\$906	80.8%
2007	\$41,602	\$53,466	77.8%	\$727	\$908	80.1%
2008	\$40,797	\$52,920	77.1%	\$728	\$911	79.9%
2009	\$41,549	\$53,975	77.0%	\$753	\$938	80.3%
2010	\$41,562	\$54,027	76.9%	\$753	\$928	81.1%
2011	\$40,543	\$52,650	77.0%	\$747	\$908	82.3%
2012	\$40,422	\$52,838	76.5%	\$739	\$913	80.9%
2013	\$41,272	\$52,736	78.3%	\$744	\$906	82.1%
2014	\$41,066	\$52,220	78.6%	\$745	\$903	82.5%
2015	\$42,155	\$52,988	79.6%	\$752	\$927	81.1%
2016	\$42,448	\$52,751	80.5%	\$765	\$935	81.8%
2017	\$41,977	\$52,146	80.5%	\$770	\$941	81.8%

**Notes for Figure 1 and Table 2:** Annual earnings data include self-employed workers; weekly data are for wage and salary workers only. Annual earnings are for people 15 years old and older beginning in 1980 and people 14 years old and older as of the following year for previous years. Before 1989 annual earnings are for civilian workers only. Weekly earnings are for full-time civilian workers aged 16 and older in and are not restricted to full-year workers. Full-time is work for at least 35 hours per week, full-year for at least 50 weeks per year. Annual median earnings data are typically released in September by the U.S. Census Bureau, and the annual average of weekly median earnings in February by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Both data series are derived from the Current Population Survey. Adjustments for data from earlier years to 2017 dollars are computed on the basis of the Consumer Price Index Research Series (CPI-U-RS); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics < <https://www.bls.gov/cpi/research-series-allitems.pdf> > (accessed August 2018). From 2014 onwards, the Census Bureau has used revised questions on income and earnings; in 2013, data was collected using both the old and the new questions; the gender earnings ratio under the old methodology was 78.3 percent, and the new methodology 77.6 percent.<sup>6</sup>

**Sources for Figure 1 and Tables 1 and 2:** Annual data: 1955: Francine D. Blau and Marianne A. Ferber, *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1992); 1960-2017 U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2017 *Annual Social and Economic Supplement Table P-38. Full-Time, Year-Round Workers by Median Earnings and Sex: 1960 to 2017*; <<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-income-people.html>> (retrieved September 2018). Weekly data: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2018. "Table 17. Inflation-adjusted median usual weekly earnings, by age, for full-time wage and salary workers, 1979-2017 annual average." *Highlights of Women's Earnings 2017* < <https://www.bls.gov/cps/earnings.htm> > (accessed August 2018).

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Kayla R. Fontenot, Jessica L. Semega, and Melissa A. Kollar. 2018. "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2017." *Current Population Reports* P60-263; Table A-4. U.S. Census Bureau. Please note that rounded percents are 80 percent for the wage ratio and 20 percent for the wage gap. <<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2018/demo/p60-263.pdf>> (accessed September 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Jessica L. Semega, Kayla R. Fontenot, and Melissa A. Kollar. 2017, op.cit., p.1; the changes are not statistically significant.

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Women's Policy Research. 2017. "Women's Median Earnings as a Percent of Men's Median Earnings, 1960-2017 (Full-time, Year-round Workers) with Projection for Pay Equity in 2059. IWPR Publication #Q073 <<https://iwpr.org/publications/pay-equity-projection-1960-2017/>>.

<sup>4</sup> Jessica L. Semega, Kayla R. Fontenot, and Melissa A. Kollar, op. cit. p.10.

<sup>5</sup> Elyse Shaw, Ariane Hegewisch, Emma Williams-Baron, Barbara Gault. 2016. *Undervalued and Underpaid in America: Women in Low-Wage, Female-Dominated Jobs*. IWPR Report #D508. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research <<https://iwpr.org/publications/undervalued-and-underpaid-in-america-women-in-low-wage-female-dominated-jobs/>> (accessed September 2018).

<sup>6</sup> The federal poverty threshold for a household of four in 2017 was \$ 24,858 (U.S. Census Bureau. 2018. "Poverty Thresholds: by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years." < <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html> > (Accessed August 27, 2018). At 130 percent of poverty (the threshold relevant for food stamp eligibility) this is \$32, 315 annually, or \$621 per week (assuming full-time work for 52 weeks).

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