



The Gender Wage Gap by Occupation 2014 and by Race and Ethnicity

Women's median earnings are lower than men's in nearly all occupations, whether they work in occupations predominantly done by women, occupations predominantly done by men, or occupations with a more even mix of men and women. Data for both women's and men's median weekly earnings for full-time work are available for 116 occupations;¹ these include only one occupation—'health practitioner support technologists and technicians'—in which women have exactly the same median weekly earnings as men, and one—'stock clerks and order fillers'—where women earn slightly more than men.² The occupation with the widest gap in earnings is 'personal financial advisers,' with a gender earnings ratio of just 61.3 percent.³ In 109 of the 116 occupations, the gender earnings ratio of women's median weekly earnings to men's is 0.95 or lower (that is, a wage gap of at least 5 cents per dollar earned by men); in 27 of these occupations the gender earnings ratio is lower than 0.75 (that is, a wage gap of more than 25 cents per dollar earned by men). During 2014, the median gender earnings ratio for all full-time weekly workers was 82.5 percent, reflecting median weekly earnings for all female full-time workers of \$719, compared with \$871 per week for men (Table 1).⁴

Added to the gender wage gap within occupations is the gender wage gap between occupations. Male-dominated occupations tend to pay more than female-dominated occupations at similar skill levels, particularly in jobs that require higher educational levels.⁵ For example, among high-skilled workers, men in 'software developers, applications and systems software' occupations, a male-dominated field, earn \$1,736 per week on average (compared with \$1,457 for women), while women 'elementary and middle school teachers' occupation, a female-dominated field, earn \$956 (compared with \$1,096 for men). Thus, tackling occupational segregation is an important part of eliminating the gender wage gap.

The gender wage gap and occupational segregation—men primarily working in occupations done by men, and women primarily working with other women—are persistent features of the U.S. labor market. Only three of the 20 most common occupations for men and the 20 most common occupations for women overlap (Tables 1 and 2). Of all women, four of ten (39.0 percent) work in female-dominated occupations and slightly more than four of ten men (43.3 percent) work in male-dominated occupations.⁶ Only 6.2 percent of women work in male-dominated occupations; only 3.8 percent of men work in female-dominated occupations.⁷

Women Earn Less than Men in All of the Most Common Occupations for Women

Table 1 shows the median weekly earnings and the gender earnings ratio in the 20 most common occupations for full-time working women. The occupations together employ 42.1 percent of women and 15 percent of men. The three largest occupations—'secretaries and administrative assistants,' 'elementary and middle school teachers,' and 'registered nurses'—together employ close to 14 percent of all women. Ten of these 20 occupations are female-dominated.

Table 1: The Wage Gap in the 20 Most Common Occupations for Women (Full-Time Workers Only), 2014

	Women's median weekly earnings	Women's earnings as percent of men's	Men's median weekly earnings	Share of female workers in occupation (percent)	Share of male workers in occupation as percent of all male workers	Share of female workers in occupation as percent of all female workers
All Full-time Workers	\$719	82.5%	\$871	44.2%	100% 59,450,000	100% 47,076,000
20 Most Common Occupations for Women						
Secretaries and administrative assistants	685	84.5	811	94.6	0.2	4.7
Elementary and middle school teachers	956	87.2	1,096	80.4	0.9	4.7
Registered nurses	1,076	90.4	1,190	89.4	0.4	4.4
Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides	466	88.3	528	88.0	0.3	2.5
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	595	75.0	793	44.1	2.2	2.2
Customer service representatives	606	86.8	698	65.4	0.9	2.2
Managers, all other	1,153	81.7	1,412	37.7	2.7	2.1
Cashiers	387	93.9	412	70.6	0.6	2.0
Accountants and auditors	999	80.8	1,236	63.3	0.9	1.9
Receptionists and information clerks	532	86.4	616	90.7	0.1	1.8
First-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers	763	83.0	919	65.4	0.7	1.6
Office clerks, general	626	94.6	662	84.8	0.2	1.6
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks	660	90.2	732	89.8	0.1	1.6
Retail salespersons	491	70.3	698	39.2	1.9	1.6
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	400	99.0	404	83.9	0.2	1.5
Financial managers	1,127	67.4	1,671	53.5	0.9	1.3
Social workers	839	94.1	892	81.6	0.2	1.2
Secondary school teachers	984	88.8	1,108	56.0	0.7	1.2
Waiters and waitresses	415	82.8	501	65.6	0.5	1.2
Personal care aides	425	91.4	465	80.1	0.2	1.1
<i>Percent of all women and men:</i>					<i>15.0%</i>	<i>42.1%</i>

Note: * Earnings data are published only for occupations with an estimated minimum of 50,000 workers.

Source: IWPR calculation of data from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015. "Household Data, Annual Averages. Table 39" <<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.htm>> (retrieved March 2015).

Within the 20 most common occupations for women, median full-time weekly earnings for women range from \$1,153 per week for ‘Managers, all other’ to \$387 per week for ‘cashiers’ (Table 1). Women earn less than men in each of the most common occupations for women (these calculations include full-time workers only). The gender wage gap among the 20 most common occupations is largest for ‘financial managers,’ with a gender earnings ratio for full-time work of 67.4 percent (corresponding to \$544 dollars less per week for women) and for ‘retail salespersons,’ with a ratio of 70.3 percent (corresponding to \$207 less per week for women).

Women Earn Less Than Men in All of the Most Common Occupations for Men

Table 2 shows the median weekly earnings and the gender earnings ratios in the 20 most common occupations for full-time working men. These occupations employ 32.7 percent of male full-time workers and 12.6 percent of female full-time workers. Eleven of the occupations are nontraditional for women, and in five of the 20—‘construction laborers,’ ‘grounds maintenance workers,’ ‘carpenters,’ ‘automotive service technicians and mechanics,’ and ‘electricians,’—there are too few women workers to estimate their median weekly earnings.

Without exception, women’s median earnings are lower than men’s in the 20 most common male occupations for which data are available. Median full-time weekly earnings for men range from \$2,246 for ‘chief executives’ to \$416 for ‘cooks’ (Table 2). ‘First-line supervisors of production and operating workers’ and ‘chief executives’ have the largest gender earnings gap of the 20 most common occupations for men, with gender earnings ratios for full-time work of 70.0 percent (corresponding to \$283 and \$674 dollars less per week for women, respectively). Five of the 20 most common occupations for men have male weekly earnings above \$1,000, including one, ‘chief executives,’ with median earnings above \$2,000 per week, compared with three of the most common occupations for women with female weekly earnings above \$1,000.

Nearly Twice as Many Women as Men Work in Occupations with Poverty Wages

Four of the most common occupations for women (employing 5.7 percent of all full-time working women)—‘cashiers,’ ‘maids and household cleaners,’ ‘waiters and waitresses,’ and ‘personal care aides,’ have median weekly earnings for women for a full week of work that are lower than 100 percent of the federal poverty threshold for a family of four,⁸ compared with only two of the most common occupations for men—‘cooks’ and ‘grounds maintenance workers’ (employing 2.6 percent of all full-time working men). The poverty levels refer to annual earnings, and translating them into weekly earnings assumes that a worker would be able to get full-time work for 52 weeks a year; this may not always be possible in occupations characterized by considerable fluctuations in demand for labor and, hence, unstable earning opportunities.

A further eight of the most common female, and six of the most common male, occupations provide median earnings of less than 150 percent of the poverty threshold for a family of four.⁸ Workers in these occupations are potentially placed among the working poor, with earnings that are often too high to qualify for public supports, but too low to attain economic security. These include occupations such as ‘retail salesperson,’ ‘receptionists and information clerks,’ and ‘office clerks, general.’ Low earnings are a significant problem for both male and female full-time workers. Among all occupations, 5.3 million women work in occupations that have median earnings for full-time work below the federal poverty threshold for a family of four, compared with 3.6 million men.

Table 2: The Wage Gap in the 20 Most Common Occupations for Men (Full-Time Workers Only), 2014

	Women's median weekly earnings	Women's earnings as percent of men's	Men's median weekly earnings	Share of female workers in occupation (percent)	Share of male workers in occupation as percent of all male workers	Share of female workers in occupation as percent of all female workers
All Full-time Workers	\$719	82.6%	\$871	44.2%	100% 59,450,000	100% 47,076,000
20 Most Common Occupations for Men						
Driver/sales workers and truck drivers	545	73.7	739	3.9	4.3	0.2
Managers, all other	1,153	81.7	1,412	37.7	2.7	2.1
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	595	75.0	793	44.1	2.2	2.2
Construction laborers	-	na	605	1.8	2.0	0.0
Janitors and building cleaners	415	76.9	540	27.4	2.0	0.9
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	476	87.2	546	16.3	1.9	0.5
Retail salespersons	491	70.3	698	39.2	1.9	1.6
Software developers, applications and systems software	1,457	83.9	1,736	19.6	1.5	0.5
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing	873	77.9	1,120	28.0	1.4	0.7
Grounds maintenance workers	-	na	454	5.5	1.3	0.1
Chief executives	1,572	70.0	2,246	26.3	1.3	0.6
Carpenters	-	na	699	1.9	1.3	0.0
Cooks	405	97.4	416	33.6	1.3	0.8
Automotive service technicians and mechanics	-	na	737	2.2	1.2	0.0
Production workers, all other	492	72.8	676	22.5	1.1	0.4
Stock clerks and order fillers	514	102.0	504	33.9	1.1	0.7
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	659	70.0	942	17.5	1.1	0.3
Electricians	-	na	884	2.5	1.0	0.0
Police and sheriff's patrol officers	743	71.2	1,043	11.6	1.0	0.2
Miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators	506	79.9	633	36.4	1.0	0.7
Percent of all women and men:					32.7	12.6

Note: *Earnings data are made available only where there are an estimated minimum of 50,000 workers in an occupation.

Source: See Table 1

Women Earn Less than Men of the same Race and Ethnicity in Broad Occupational Categories

The gender wage gap differs by race and ethnicity. Table 3 provides median weekly earnings for women and men for full-time work by race and ethnicity in seven broad occupational groups; the sample size in the Current Population Survey is not sufficient to provide earnings estimates by race and ethnicity at a more detailed occupational level, or for other racial or ethnic groups. The distribution of women across the occupations varies for each group. More than one third of Asian women, as well as just over three in ten white women, one quarter of black women, and almost one fifth of Hispanic women, work in ‘professional and related’ occupations; black and Hispanic women are about twice as likely to work in service occupations as white women; Asian women are considerably less likely than other women to work in ‘office and administrative support’ occupations; and Hispanic women are the most likely group of women to work in ‘production, transportation and material moving’ occupations (Table 3).

For all occupations considered together, Hispanic women have the lowest median earnings at \$548 per week (55.9 percent of the median weekly earnings of white men—\$981, Table 3). Black women have median weekly earnings of \$611 or 62.3 percent of the median weekly earnings of white men. Both Asian men and women have the highest median weekly earnings at \$1,080 and \$841, respectively. The earnings ratio for Asian women compared with Asian men, at 77.9 percent, and white women compared with white men, at 78.5 percent, are smaller than the gender earnings ratio for the whole population, and the wage gaps (22.1 percent and 21.5 percent respectively) are larger. The wage gaps between black female and male workers and Hispanic female and male workers are smaller.⁹

With the exception of ‘office and administrative support,’ where the median earnings of black women are slightly higher than black men’s, men earn more than women of the same race or ethnicity in each of the major occupational groupings (Table 3). The gender earnings gap is magnified by a race and ethnic earnings gap. For example, Hispanic women in ‘management, business, and financial operations,’ earn 80 percent of Hispanic men’s and only 57.8 percent of white men’s earnings in these occupations. The median earnings of Hispanic women are lower than the federal poverty threshold for a family of four in four occupational groups: ‘service occupations,’ ‘sales and related occupations,’ ‘production, transportation, and material moving occupations,’ and ‘natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.’ These three occupational groups employ almost one-half (48.2 percent) Hispanic full-time women workers (Table 3).

Conclusion

More than fifty years after the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 made compensation discrimination illegal, a gender earnings gap remains. Our analysis shows that women’s median earnings are lower than men’s in all of the 20 most common occupations for women, all but one of the most common occupations for men, and, indeed, in almost all occupations for which a gender wage gap can be calculated. Female-dominated occupations tend to have lower median earnings than male-dominated occupations, which has a particularly pernicious impact on the women who work in the lowest paid female occupations, including ‘cashiers,’ ‘maids and household cleaners,’ ‘waiters and waitresses,’ and ‘personal care aides,’ where even full-time work may leave them with earnings at, or only marginally above, the federal poverty threshold. Such poverty wages are particularly common for Hispanic women. To improve women’s earnings and reduce the gender earnings gap, women and their families need enhanced efforts to ensure non-discriminatory hiring and pay practices, better training and career counseling, and improved work-family supports. Such public policies as raising the minimum wage, which increase wages in the lowest-paid jobs, are especially important for women, particularly women of color.

Table 3: Median Weekly Earnings for Male and Female Workers, by Race and Ethnicity for Broad Occupational Groups (Full-Time Workers Only), 2014

Female Workers		White Women		Black Women		Asian Women		Hispanic Women	
Occupation	Median weekly earnings	White women in occupation as % of all female white workers	Median weekly earnings	Black women in occupation as % of all female black workers	Median weekly earnings	Asian women in occupation as % of all female Asian workers	Median weekly earnings	Hispanic women in occupation as % of all female Hispanic workers	
All occupations	\$770	100% 30,141,000	\$611	100% 6,781,000	\$841	100% 2,784,000	\$548	100% 6,721,000	
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	1,100	19.4	940	12.8	1,168	19.1	851	11.6	
Professional and related occupations	968	32.7	820	26.5	1,164	34.2	839	18.9	
Service occupations	477	11.8	465	23.7	479	16.9	416	25.0	
Sales and related occupations	610	9.1	482	7.9	646	7.9	463	10.3	
Office and administrative support occupations	650	21.8	619	20.8	727	13.9	588	21.4	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	661	0.7	502	0.6	524	0.4	392	2.2	
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	545	4.6	495	7.7	520	7.6	417	10.7	
Male Workers		White Men		Black Men		Asian Men		Hispanic Men	
Occupation	Median weekly earnings	White men in occupation as % of all male white workers	Median weekly earnings	Black men in occupation as % of all male black workers	Median weekly earnings (\$)	Asian men in occupation as % of all male Asian workers	Median weekly earnings	Hispanic men in occupation as % of all male Hispanic workers	
All occupations	\$981	100% 38,337,000	\$680	100% 6,129,000	\$1,080	100% 3,488,000	\$616	100% 10,754,000	
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	1,472	19.0	1,029	9.6	1,609	16.7	1,063	7.9	
Professional and related occupations	1,315	20.9	1,001	14.6	1,481	38.8	1,129	8.9	
Service occupations	669	9.9	528	19.5	592	11.4	489	19.7	
Sales and related occupations	929	10.3	607	7.7	742	7.4	660	6.4	
Office and administrative support occupations	759	5.9	595	9.2	763	6.1	594	6.9	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	862	16.6	671	12.5	860	5.8	594	26.8	
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	755	17.4	624	26.8	627	13.7	589	23.5	

Note: Data for whites workers is for whites alone, non-Hispanic; data for black and Asian workers may include Hispanics. Hispanics may be of any race.

Source: IWPR compilation of data based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Table A-2. Usual weekly earnings of employed full-time wage and salary workers by intermediate occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity and Non-Hispanic ethnicity, Annual Average 2014*

Notes

¹ Weekly earnings data in this factsheet are based on the Current Population Survey (CPS) and refer to full-time (35 hours or more per week) wage and salaried workers ages 16 and older (excluding the self-employed). Earnings data are made available only where there are an estimated minimum of 50,000 workers in an occupation; as many occupations have fewer than 50,000 females or males working within them, there is insufficient data to calculate the earnings gap by gender for the majority of occupations; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2015. Household Data Annual Averages Table 39. Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by detailed occupation and sex. <<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.pdf>> (accessed April 2, 2015).

² ‘Health practitioner support technologists and technicians’ (79 percent female) have median weekly earnings of \$618, for both women and men (an earnings ratio of 100 percent); The median weekly full-time earnings for ‘stock clerks and order fillers’ (34 percent female) are \$514 for women and \$504 for men, an earnings ratio of 1.02 percent. The median weekly earnings of ‘maids and housekeeping cleaners’ (84 percent female) are \$400 for women and \$404 for men (an earnings ratio of 99 percent); IWPR calculation based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) as above.

³ The median weekly earnings for full-time work of women ‘personal financial advisers’ are \$1,004, compared with men’s of \$1,637; IWPR calculation based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), as above.

⁴ Another measure of the gender earnings ratio based on median annual earnings for full-time, year-round work, which includes the self-employed and annual bonus and commission payments, was 78.3 percent (a gender wage gap of 21.7 percent) in 2013; 2014 data will not be published until fall 2015.

⁵ See Ariane Hegewisch and Heidi Hartmann. 214. “Occupational Segregation and the Gender Wage Gap: A Job Half Done.” Scholar’s Paper to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the publication of the report of President Kennedy’s Commission on the Status of American Women. Institute for Women’s Policy Research: Washington, DC.

⁶ The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 defines a nontraditional occupation for women as one where women are fewer than 25 percent of workers. With reference to this definition, female dominated occupation are those in which at least three of four workers are women; male dominated occupations are those in which at least three of four workers are men.

⁷ As above.

⁸ The 2014 federal poverty threshold for a family of four was \$24,008 (\$462 per week for 52 weeks). At 150 percent of the poverty level, annual income is \$36,012 or weekly income is \$693; see U.S. Census Bureau. ‘Poverty Thresholds’ <<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/index.html>> (retrieved March 25, 2015).

⁹ For more information see “The Gender Wage Gap 2014” IWPR Fact Sheet C430 <<http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/the-gender-wage-gap-2014-earnings-differences-by-race-and-ethnicity>>.

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