



Fact Sheet

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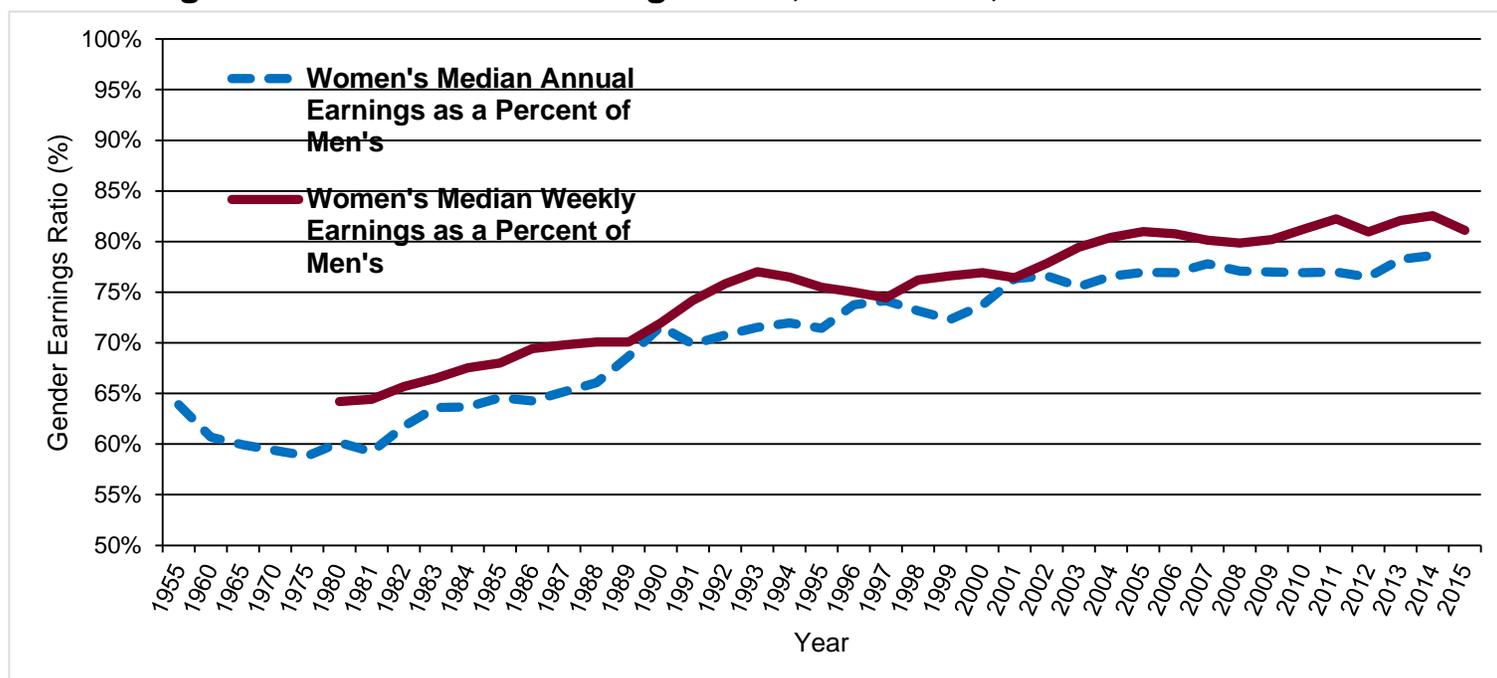
The Gender Wage Gap: 2015 Earnings Differences by Race and Ethnicity

The gender wage gap for weekly full-time workers in the United States widened between 2014 and 2015. The median weekly earnings for full-time work increased for both women and men during 2015, but the increase was more substantial for men than women. In 2015, the ratio of women's to men's median weekly full-time earnings was 81.1 percent, a decrease of 1.4 percentage points since 2014, when the ratio was 82.5 percent. Women's median weekly earnings for full-time work were \$726 in 2015 compared with \$895 for men. Controlling for inflation, women's earnings increased by 0.9 percent, while men's earnings increased by 2.6 percent since 2014.¹

Another measure of the wage gap, the ratio of women's and men's median annual earnings for full-time year-round workers was 78.6 percent in 2014 (data for 2015 are not yet available). An earnings ratio of 78.6 percent means that the annual gender wage gap for full-time year-round workers is 21.4 percent.

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). Both earnings ratios are for full-time workers only; if part-time and part-year workers were included, the ratios of women's to men's earnings would be even lower, as women are more likely than men to work reduced schedules, often in order to manage childrearing and other caregiving work.

Figure 1: The Gender Earnings Ratio, 1955-2015, Full-Time Workers



Notes: See Table 2

Since 1980, when weekly earnings data were first collected, the weekly gender earnings ratio has risen from just 64.2 percent to 81.1 percent now. Yet most of the progress towards gender equality took place in the 1980s and 1990s. In the past ten years (2006 to 2015), the weekly gender wage gap narrowed by just 0.3 percentage points, compared with 6.0 percentage points in the previous ten years (1996 to 2005), and with 6.1 percentage points in the ten years prior to that (1986 to 1995). Progress in closing the gender earnings gap based on median annual earnings has also slowed considerably. If the pace of change in the annual earnings ratio were to continue at the same rate as it has since 1960, it would take until 2059 for women and men to reach earnings parity.²

Earnings Differences by Gender, Race and Ethnicity

Women of all major racial and ethnic groups earn less than men of the same group, and also earn less than white men, as illustrated by Table 1. Hispanic workers have lower median weekly earnings than white, black, and Asian workers. Hispanic women's median earnings in 2015 were \$566 per week of full-time work, only 61.5 percent of white men's median weekly earnings, but 89.7 percent of the median weekly earnings of Hispanic men (because Hispanic men also have low earnings). The median weekly earnings of black women were \$615, only 66.8 percent of white men's earnings, but 90.4 percent of black men's median weekly earnings, which are also fairly low (Table 1). Primarily because of higher rates of educational attainment for both genders, Asian workers have higher median weekly earnings than white, black or Hispanic workers (the highest of any group shown in Table 1). Asian women's earnings are 95.3 percent of white men's earnings, but only 77.7 percent of Asian men's earnings. White women earn 80.8 percent of what white men earn, very close to the ratio for all women to all men, because whites remain the largest group in the labor force.

With the exception of black men, whose real wages failed to grow, women and men of the largest race and ethnic groups saw increases in median weekly earnings between 2014 and 2015. Asian women's real earnings increased by 4.2 percent, Hispanic women by 3.2 percent and white women by 1.1 percent. Black women experienced the smallest increase in median weekly earnings among women (0.5 percent). Asian, Hispanic, and white men's earnings all increased by over 2 percent. Earnings for a full-time week of work leave Hispanic women well below, and Hispanic men and black women not much above, the qualifying income threshold for receipt of food stamps of \$606 per week for a family of four.³

Table 1: Median Weekly Earnings and Gender Earnings Ratio for Full-Time Workers, 16 Years and Older by Race/Ethnic Background, 2014 and 2015

Racial/ Ethnic Background	2015				2014 (in 2015 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	\$726	\$895	81.1%	N/A	\$720	\$872	82.5%	N/A
White	\$743	\$920	80.8%	80.8%	\$735	\$898	81.8%	81.8%
Black	\$615	\$680	90.4%	66.8%	\$612	\$681	89.9%	68.1%
Hispanic	\$566	\$631	89.7%	61.5%	\$549	\$617	89.0%	61.1%
Asians	\$877	\$1,129	77.7%	95.3%	\$842	\$1,081	77.9%	93.8%

Notes: Hispanics may be of any race. White, black and Asian workers include Hispanics. Annual average of median weekly earnings.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, Annual Averages* <<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat37.pdf>> (retrieved February 2016).

Women's lower earnings are due to a number of factors, including lower earnings in occupations done mainly by women; lack of paid family leave and subsidized child care; and discrimination in compensation, recruitment and hiring.⁴ Measures to improve the quality of jobs held mainly by women, tackle occupational segregation, enforce equal pay and employment opportunities, and improve work family benefits for all workers, will help family income grow and strengthen the economy.⁵

Table 2: The Gender Wage Ratio and Real Earnings, 1955-2015, Full-Time Workers

Year	Median Annual Earnings (2015 dollars)			Median Usual Weekly Earnings (2015 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	\$22,819	\$37,610	60.7%			
1965	\$25,198	\$42,049	59.9%			
1970	\$29,006	\$48,859	59.4%			
1975	\$30,069	\$51,122	58.8%			
1980	\$30,676	\$50,990	60.2%	\$549	\$856	64.2%
1981	\$30,021	\$50,681	59.2%	\$547	\$850	64.4%
1982	\$30,702	\$49,724	61.7%	\$565	\$860	65.7%
1983	\$31,504	\$49,540	63.6%	\$570	\$857	66.5%
1984	\$32,126	\$50,467	63.7%	\$576	\$853	67.5%
1985	\$32,833	\$50,845	64.6%	\$582	\$856	68.0%
1986	\$33,505	\$52,131	64.3%	\$600	\$865	69.4%
1987	\$33,765	\$51,804	65.2%	\$604	\$866	69.8%
1988	\$33,908	\$51,338	66.0%	\$605	\$864	70.1%
1989	\$34,653	\$50,461	68.7%	\$605	\$864	70.1%
1990	\$34,877	\$48,701	71.6%	\$609	\$846	72.0%
1991	\$34,894	\$49,950	69.9%	\$621	\$836	74.2%
1992	\$35,393	\$50,000	70.8%	\$629	\$829	75.8%
1993	\$35,140	\$49,132	71.5%	\$635	\$824	77.0%
1994	\$35,146	\$48,835	72.0%	\$632	\$826	76.5%
1995	\$34,770	\$48,679	71.4%	\$627	\$830	75.5%
1996	\$35,679	\$48,370	73.8%	\$629	\$838	75.0%
1997	\$36,785	\$49,601	74.2%	\$635	\$853	74.5%
1998	\$37,586	\$51,367	73.2%	\$661	\$868	76.2%
1999	\$37,448	\$51,785	72.3%	\$674	\$879	76.6%
2000	\$37,797	\$51,271	73.7%	\$679	\$882	76.9%
2001	\$39,112	\$51,241	76.3%	\$686	\$897	76.4%
2002	\$39,792	\$51,948	76.6%	\$697	\$895	77.8%
2003	\$39,595	\$52,410	75.5%	\$711	\$895	79.4%
2004	\$39,200	\$51,192	76.6%	\$719	\$894	80.4%
2005	\$38,666	\$50,231	77.0%	\$710	\$877	81.0%
2006	\$38,224	\$49,682	76.9%	\$705	\$873	80.8%
2007	\$40,128	\$51,572	77.8%	\$702	\$876	80.1%
2008	\$39,352	\$51,046	77.1%	\$702	\$879	79.9%
2009	\$40,078	\$52,063	77.0%	\$726	\$905	80.2%
2010	\$40,103	\$52,130	76.9%	\$728	\$895	81.3%
2011	\$39,119	\$50,800	77.0%	\$720	\$876	82.2%
2012	\$39,013	\$50,996	76.5%	\$713	\$881	80.9%
2013	\$39,845	\$50,912	78.3%	\$718	\$875	82.1%
2014	\$39,668	\$50,443	78.6%	\$720	\$872	82.5%
2015				\$726	\$895	81.1%

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 for previous years. Before 1989 annual earnings are for civilian workers only. Weekly earnings are for full-time workers aged 16 and older and are not restricted to full-year workers. The annual average of weekly median earnings is usually released in February by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Annual median earnings data are typically released in late summer or early fall by the U.S. Census Bureau. Both data series are derived from the Current Population Survey. Adjustments for data from earlier years to 2015 dollars are computed on the basis of the Consumer Price Index Research Series (CPI-U) published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics <<http://www.bls.gov/cpi/cpid1601.pdf>> (accessed February 2016).

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); U.S. Census Bureau, *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014, Table A-4* <<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p60-252.pdf>> (accessed February 2016) Weekly data: 1980-2015: from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, Annual Averages* <<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat37.pdf>> (retrieved February 2016).

Notes

1. 2014 earnings were converted into 2015 dollars based on Consumer Price Index Research Series (CPI-U), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics <<http://www.bls.gov/cpi/cpid1601.pdf>> (accessed February 2016).
2. Institute for Women's Policy Research. September 2015. "Women's Median Earnings as a Percent of Men's Median Earnings, 1960-2014 (Full-time, Year-round Workers) with Projection for Pay Equity in 2059." IWPR Quick Figures #Q041 <<http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/equal-pay-projection-2059/>> (accessed February 2016).
3. To qualify for food stamps, the income of a household of four must be at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty level; in 2014/15 this earning threshold is \$2,628 per month, corresponding to \$606.46 per week (USDA Food and Nutrition Service. 2016. *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*. On the internet at <<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility>> (accessed February 29, 2016).
4. Blau, Francine D. and Lawrence Kahn. 2016. "The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations" NBER Working Paper No. 21913. <<http://www.nber.org/papers/w21913>> (accessed March 2016).
5. Council for Economic Advisors. 2015. "Gender Pay Gap: Recent Trends and Explanations." Issue Brief. The White House <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/equal_pay_issue_brief_final.pdf> (accessed March 2016); Institute for Women's Policy Research. February 2016. "The Economic Impact of Equal Pay by State." IWPR #R468 <<http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/the-economic-impact-of-equal-pay-by-state>> (accessed March 2016).

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