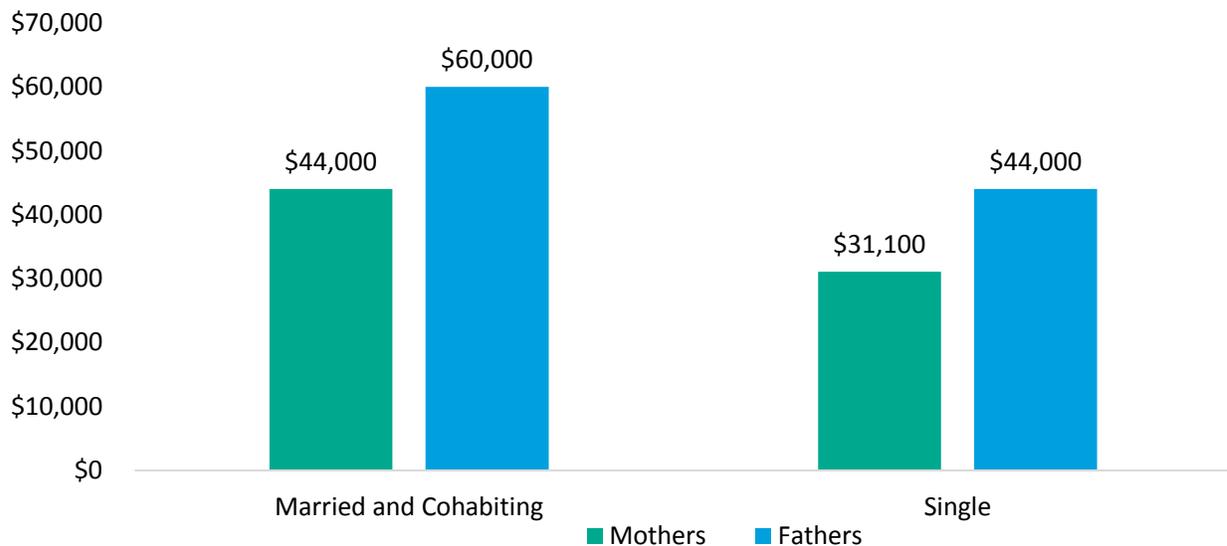


Mothers Earn Just 71 Percent of What Fathers Earn

Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) analysis of data from the American Community Survey finds that in 2015, mothers' median annual earnings for full-time, year-round work (\$40,000) were just 71.4 percent of fathers' earnings (\$56,000). Mothers have substantially lower earnings than fathers whether they are married/cohabitating or single. Married or cohabitating mothers' median annual earnings for full-time, year-round work were just 73.3 percent of married or cohabitating fathers' earnings (\$44,000 compared with \$60,000, respectively; Figure 1). Single mothers' full-time, year-round median annual earnings were just \$31,100, compared with \$44,000 for single fathers, a wage ratio of 70.7 percent (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Parents' Median Annual Earnings by Gender and Marital Status, Full-Time, Year-Round, 2015



Notes: Parents are of own children (biological, adopted, or stepchildren) under 18. 'Married and cohabiting' include same- and opposite-sex parents and are defined as 'married, spouse present,' 'married, spouse absent,' and 'unmarried partners.' Cohabiting or 'unmarried partners' are 12.9 percent of 'married and cohabiting' mothers and 13.1 percent of fathers. Full-time, year-round status is at least 50 weeks of at least 35 hours per week worked during the previous 12 months. Earnings are non-zero earnings from wages or a person's own business or farm in the past 12 months.

Source: IWPR analysis of 2015 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Version 6.0).

The Large Majority of Households with Children Include a Working Mother

When all working parents with earnings are included—whether they were working full-time, year-round, part-time, or part-year—mothers’ median annual earnings (\$30,000) were only 58.8 percent of fathers’ (\$51,000) in 2015. More than seven in 10 (70.9 percent) of the 33 million households with children under age 18 included an employed mother. The most common household type with children was a dual-earner married or cohabiting couple (51.0 percent). Single mother households with children made up 16.6 percent, and married or cohabiting couples in which only the mother had earnings accounted for 3.2 percent of all households with children.

Households in which only the father had earnings were less common (23.7 percent). Nearly 20 percent (19.7 percent) of all households with children had a married or cohabiting father with earnings while his spouse did not, and 4.1 percent were headed by a single father with earnings. In one in twenty (5.4 percent) households with children, none of the parents were employed.

Table 1. Distribution of Households with Children under 18 by Type of Earner, 2015

	Households with children under age 18	
	Number	As Share of Households with Children Under Age 18
Married or cohabiting couple, both spouses have earnings	16,865,638	51.0%
Married or cohabiting couple, father has earnings and spouse does not	6,498,883	19.7%
Single mothers with earnings	5,500,026	16.6%
Single fathers with earnings	1,350,255	4.1%
Married or cohabiting couple, mother has earnings and spouse does not	1,056,717	3.2%
Married or cohabiting couple, single mothers, or single fathers without earnings	1,778,545	5.3%
Total	33,050,064	100%

Notes: Earners are those with non-zero, non-negative earnings from wages or a person’s own business or farm in the past 12 months. Parents are of own children (biological, adopted, or stepchildren) under 18. ‘Married and cohabiting’ households include same- and opposite-sex ‘married, spouse present,’ ‘married, spouse absent,’ and ‘unmarried partners’ households; 13.0 percent of these groups are cohabiting partners.

Source: IWPR analysis of 2015 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Version 6.0).

The effects of earnings inequity compound and accumulate over the lifetime, with each year’s disparities continuing to affect women’s future economic security into retirement.

This Quick Figures was prepared by Emma Williams-Baron, Julie Anderson, and Ariane Hegewisch.

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