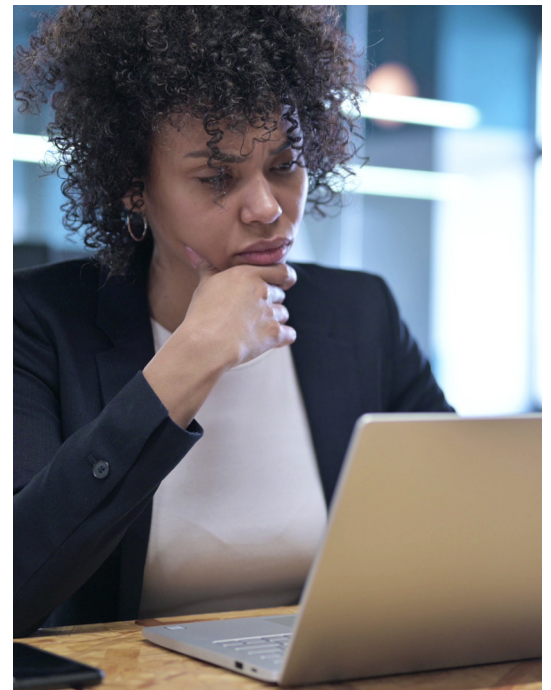


# Gender Wage Gaps Remain Wide in Year Two of the Pandemic

## THE 2021 WEEKLY GENDER WAGE GAP BY RACE, ETHNICITY, AND OCCUPATION

### RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- **In 2021, women earned just 83.1 percent of what men earned, based on IWPR's analysis of median weekly earnings for full-time workers.** When women and men working both part- and full-time are included, women made only 77.3 cents for every dollar a man made in 2021.
- **Wage gaps across gender, race, and ethnicity in 2021 were profound.** Compared to the median weekly earnings of White men working full-time, Hispanic women's full-time earnings were just 58.4 percent, Black women's 63.1 percent, and White women's 79.6 percent.
- **The wage gap widened slightly for women of color.** While the wage gap narrowed for all women compared to all men, the wage gap widened for Asian, Black, and Hispanic women compared to White men, and stayed the same for White women.
- **Occupational segregation contributes strongly to gender and racial wage gaps.** Almost one in four Hispanic women and more than one in five Black women work in services, the broad occupation group with the lowest earnings, compared to just slightly over one in ten White women, and one in 11 White men.
- **Women earn less than men in almost all occupations.** Women's full-time earnings are less than men's in almost all of the top 20 most common occupations for women and all of the top 20 most common occupations for men.



## In 2021, the Gender Wage Gap Remained Sizeable—and Was Widest for Black and Hispanic Women

As the economy recovered from the depths of the COVID-19–related “she-cession,” and many women and men returned to paid employment, deep gender and racial/ethnic gaps in both employment and pay persisted. The median weekly earnings for full-time work were \$912 for women and \$1,097 for men. **This makes for a gender earnings ratio of 83.1 percent—or a gender wage gap of 16.9 cents on the dollar (Table A1).**

While the gender wage gap—based on the median weekly full-time earnings for all women compared to all men—improved slightly from 17.7 cents on the dollar in 2020 (a gender earnings ratio of 82.3 percent), it worsened marginally for Asian, Black, and Hispanic women compared to White men, and remained the same for White women (Table 1).<sup>1</sup>

In 2021, Hispanic women’s median weekly earnings were the lowest, at \$718 for full-time work. They earned just 58.4 percent of White<sup>2</sup> men’s median weekly earnings, and 87.6 percent of the median weekly earnings of Hispanic men (who also have relatively low earnings). The gender earnings ratio for Hispanic women compared to White men fell marginally from 58.7 in 2020 (Table 1).

The median weekly earnings for Black women were \$776 for full-time work. They earned only 63.1 percent of White men’s earnings, but 94.1 percent of Black men’s median weekly earnings—again because of Black men’s relatively low full-time year-round earnings. The gender earnings ratio for Black women compared to White men fell, from 63.6 percent in 2020 (Table 1).

White women earned 79.6 percent of what White men earned, closer to the ratio for all women to all men, because White workers remain the largest group in the labor force. White women saw no change in their wage gap between 2020 and 2021 (Table 1).

Asian workers had higher median weekly earnings than White, Black, or Hispanic workers (the highest of any group shown in Table 1), primarily because of higher rates of educational attainment for both women and men.<sup>3</sup> Asian women’s full-time weekly earnings were 92.8 percent of White men’s earnings. If Asian women earned the same as White men at the same level of education, their earnings would be substantially higher.<sup>4</sup> The gender earnings ratio for Asian women compared to White men fell by 2.3 percentage points<sup>5</sup> (from 95.2 percent in 2020 to 92.8 percent in 2021). In 2021, Asian women’s earnings were 78.5 percent of Asian men’s.

**TABLE 1. The Gender Wage Gap across Racial and Ethnic Groups Remains Profound**

Median Weekly Earnings and Gender Earnings Ratio for Full-Time Workers, by Race/Ethnicity, 2021

	2021				2020 (in 2021 dollars)			
	Women	Men	Women's Earnings as % of Men's Earnings of Same Group	Women's Earnings as % of White Men's Earnings	Women	Men	Women's Earnings as % of Men's Earnings (of Same Group)	Women's Earnings as % of White Men's Earnings
<b>All Races/Ethnicities</b>	\$912	\$1,097	83.1%	N/A	\$933	\$1,133	82.3%	N/A
<b>Asian</b>	\$1,141	\$1,453	78.5%	92.8%	\$1,197	\$1,515	79.0%	95.2%
<b>Black</b>	\$776	\$825	94.1%	63.1%	\$800	\$869	92.0%	63.6%
<b>Hispanic</b>	\$718	\$820	87.6%	58.4%	\$738	\$834	88.5%	58.7%
<b>White</b>	\$978	\$1,229	79.6%	79.6%	\$1,001	\$1,257	79.6%	79.6%

**Notes:** White workers are White non-Hispanic; Black and Asian workers may include Hispanic workers. Hispanic workers may be of any race. Annual averages of median weekly earnings. Full-time work is defined as 35 or more hours per week. Earnings data for 2020 were adjusted for inflation based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index Database <<https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/inflation/consumer-price-index-and-annual-percent-changes-from-1913-to-2008/>>.

**Source:** IWPR analysis of U.S. Bureau of Labor Current Population Survey unpublished tables on intermediate occupations.

While the number of all women full-time workers increased by 3.9 percent<sup>6</sup> between 2021 and 2020, women's jobs are still 1.2 million below pre-COVID levels.<sup>7</sup> Women are less likely than men to work full-time, both because full-time work is often harder to find in the jobs predominantly done by women, and because they are more likely than men to provide unpaid care for family and loved ones.<sup>8</sup> Care burdens and the impact of the pandemic-related "she-cession" have been particularly hard on women of color.<sup>9</sup> When all women and men with earnings are included in the calculation, irrespective of whether they work full-time or part-time, the gender earnings ratio is even lower at 77.3 percent.<sup>10</sup>

## Occupational Segregation Is a Strong Contributor to Gender and Racial Wage Gaps

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the extent of "occupational segregation" in the United States—that is, women and men often tend to work in different occupations, and the occupations that are predominantly held by women pay less and are undervalued, compared to those predominantly held by men at the same level of skill or education.<sup>11</sup> Previous research suggests that these differences in the gender composition of occupations and industries account for half of the wage gap.<sup>12</sup>

Job losses were particularly concentrated in service occupations, which have the lowest median weekly earnings for women and men of each of the largest racial and ethnic groups. The reduced number of women working full-time in low-wage occupations during the pandemic increased the median weekly earnings for all women in 2020. And, as some low-wage jobs returned in 2021, this marginally reduced median weekly earnings in 2021.<sup>13</sup> Close to one in four (23.9 percent) of Hispanic/Latina women and over one in five (21.0 percent) of Black women full-time workers work in these occupations. Women earn substantially less than White men who work in service occupations (Table 2).<sup>14</sup> The median weekly earnings of Hispanic/Latina women in service occupations, for example, are

just 88.7 percent of Latinos', and just 69.5 percent of White men's (IWPR calculations based on Table 2).

The median weekly earnings for women of each of the largest racial and ethnic groups in service occupations would leave a family of an adult and two children near poverty (less than 125% of the poverty level, or \$660.56 per week for year-round workers).<sup>15</sup> The same is true for Latinos, and Black men are just barely over the threshold (Table 1).

White and Asian women and White men are substantially more likely to work in the broader occupational group with the highest earnings—management, business, and financial operations occupations—than Black or Hispanic/Latino women and men (Table 2). More than one in five White and Asian women (22.4 and 22.2 percent, respectively) work in these occupations compared with one in six (16.4 percent) Black women and one in seven (13.4 percent) Hispanic/Latina women full-time workers. Yet, women who are working in these occupations also face steep gender and racial earnings gaps, with Black women earning just 87.6 percent of Black men's earnings and only 64.9 percent of White men's (IWPR calculations based on Table 2). Indeed, in each broad occupational group, White men have higher median weekly earnings than women of any group, and women's earnings are lower than the earnings of men of the same racial/ethnic group.

**TABLE 2. Across Occupational Groups and Racial and Ethnic Groups, Women Earn Less than Men**  
Median Weekly Earnings for Women and Men Workers, by Race and Ethnicity for Intermediate Occupations (Full-Time Workers), 2021

Women Workers	White Women		Black Women		Hispanic Women		Asian Women	
Occupations	Median Weekly Earnings	White Women in Occupation as % of All White Women Workers	Median Weekly Earnings	Black Women in Occupation as % of All Black Women Workers	Median Weekly Earnings	Hispanic Women in Occupation as % of All Hispanic Women Workers	Median Weekly Earnings	Asian Women in Occupation as % of All Asian Women Workers
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>\$978</b>	<b>100% (31,010,000)</b>	<b>\$776</b>	<b>100% (7,641,000)</b>	<b>\$718</b>	<b>100% (8,372,000)</b>	<b>\$1,141</b>	<b>100% (3,520,000)</b>
Management, business, and financial operations	\$1,352	22.4%	\$1,142	16.4%	\$1,126	13.4%	\$1,548	22.2%
Professional and related	\$1,177	34.9%	\$1,049	27.5%	\$1,098	20.6%	\$1,525	39.4%
Service	\$614	11.1%	\$594	21.0%	\$571	23.9%	\$614	14.2%
Sales and related	\$785	8.3%	\$585	7.5%	\$645	9.2%	\$777	6.1%
Office and administrative support	\$799	17.5%	\$736	18.1%	\$725	18.4%	\$838	11.1%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	\$804	0.9%	\$776	0.8%	\$608	2.4%	—	0.5%
Production, transportation, and material moving	\$683	5.0%	\$620	8.7%	\$601	12.2%	\$667	6.5%

Men Workers	White Men		Black Men		Hispanic Men		Asian Men	
Occupations	Median Weekly Earnings	White Men in Occupations as % of All White Men Workers	Median Weekly Earnings	Black Men in Occupation as % of All Black Men Workers	Median Weekly Earnings	Hispanic Men in Occupation as % of All Hispanic Men Workers	Median Weekly Earnings	Asian Men in Occupation as % of All Asian Men Workers
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>\$1,229</b>	<b>100% (38,239,000)</b>	<b>\$825</b>	<b>100% (825,000)</b>	<b>\$820</b>	<b>100% (12,469,000)</b>	<b>\$1,453</b>	<b>100% (4,259,000)</b>
Management, business, and financial operations	\$1,760	21.4%	\$1,304	12.4%	\$1,394	9.5%	\$1,923	19.3%
Professional and related	\$1,570	23.0%	\$1,263	16.5%	\$1,326	10.7%	\$1,897	43.0%
Service	\$822	8.9%	\$665	15.9%	\$644	16.0%	\$773	9.1%
Sales and related	\$1,163	9.0%	\$750	7.3%	\$789	6.4%	\$1,161	6.0%
Office and administrative support	\$954	5.2%	\$823	8.2%	\$805	6.0%	\$924	5.0%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	\$1,022	15.5%	\$806	11.2%	\$790	28.4%	\$1,018	5.6%
Production, transportation, and material moving	\$909	16.9%	\$716	28.6%	\$761	23.1%	\$754	12.0%

**Note:** Data for White workers is for Whites alone, non-Hispanic; data for Black and Asian workers may include Hispanics. Hispanics may be of any race; “—” indicates sample size too small to provide median earnings.

**Source:** IWPR calculation of unpublished 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 2021,” (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022).

## Women Earn Less than Men in 19 of the 20 Most Common Occupations for Women

Women also earn less than men in all but one of the largest detailed occupations for women: teaching assistants (Table 3).<sup>16</sup> These occupations together employ 37.9 percent of women and 14.4 percent of men working full-time. Within the 20 most common occupations for women, median full-time weekly earnings for women range from \$1,411 per week for education and child care administrators to \$513 per week for cashiers (Table 3). 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 72.8 percent (a wage gap of 27.2 percent, \$513 less per week for women than men) and the second-largest gap is for first-line supervisors of retail sales workers with a ratio of 73.9 percent (a wage gap of 26.1 percent, \$259 less per week for women than men).

**TABLE 3. The Gender Wage Gap in the 20 Most Common Occupations for Women**

Full-Time Workers Only, 2021

	Women's Median Weekly Earnings	Women's Earnings as a Percent of Men's	Men's Median Weekly Earnings	Share of Women Workers in Occupation (percent)	Share of Men Workers in Occupation as Percent of all Men Workers	Share of Women in Occupation as Percent of all Women Workers
<b>All Full-Time Workers</b>	<b>\$912</b>	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>\$1,097</b>	<b>45.0%</b>	<b>100% (60,911,000)</b>	<b>100% (49,476,000)</b>
<b>20 Most Common Occupations for Women</b>						
Elementary and middle school teachers	\$1,138	87.5%	\$1,301	79.2%	1.0%	4.6%
Registered nurses	\$1,274	88.7%	\$1,437	85.7%	0.6%	4.4%
Secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive	\$807	80.2%	\$1,006	91.7%	0.2%	2.7%
Managers, all other	\$1,396	79.9%	\$1,747	41.3%	3.1%	2.6%
Customer service representatives	\$737	85.0%	\$867	65.4%	1.0%	2.4%
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	\$733	73.9%	\$992	45.7%	1.9%	1.9%
Cashiers	\$513	98.7%	\$520	71.9%	0.5%	1.7%
Accountants and auditors	\$1,261	84.4%	\$1,494	62.0%	0.8%	1.7%
Nursing assistants	\$615	83.1%	\$740	87.9%	0.2%	1.6%
Receptionists and information clerks	\$674	84.7%	\$796	88.9%	0.2%	1.5%
Office clerks, general	\$726	88.2%	\$823	83.1%	0.2%	1.5%
First-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers	\$913	77.1%	\$1,184	68.9%	0.5%	1.5%
Teaching assistants	\$641	100.3%	\$639	85.6%	0.2%	1.3%
Financial managers	\$1,372	72.8%	\$1,885	55.8%	0.9%	1.3%
Retail salespersons	\$635	74.3%	\$855	40.0%	1.6%	1.3%
Personal care aides	\$598	89.8%	\$666	77.4%	0.3%	1.3%
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	\$529	85.0%	\$622	85.6%	0.2%	1.2%
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks	\$802	79.5%	\$1,009	81.5%	0.2%	1.2%
Human resources workers	\$1,212	85.9%	\$1,411	72.8%	0.3%	1.1%
Education and child care administrators	\$1,411	76.0%	\$1,857	63.1%	0.5%	1.1%
Percent of all men and women					14.4%	37.9%

**Source:** IWPR calculation of data from the U.S. Department of Labor, "Table 39. Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers by Detailed Occupation and Sex," Household Data Annual Averages (Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022).

## Women Earn Less than Men in 20 Most Common Occupations for Men

One in three (32.3 percent) men and about one in seven (15.6 percent) women work in the 20 most common occupations for full-time working men (Table 4). The fact that in five of these occupations—construction laborers, carpenters, electricians, landscaping and groundskeeping workers, and automotive service technicians and mechanics—there are too few women workers to estimate their median weekly earnings highlights the extent of occupational segregation. Construction laborers, carpenters, and electricians are occupations with well-established apprenticeship schemes, providing a debt-free pathway to industry-recognized credentials and good pay.<sup>17</sup> Women's median earnings are lower than men's in each of the largest occupations for men with sufficient numbers of women to calculate their earnings. Median full-time weekly earnings for men range from \$2,721 for chief executives to \$572 for cooks (Table 4).

Four of the 20 most common occupations for men and three of the 20 most common occupations for women have median weekly earnings for men above \$1,500. None of the most common occupations for women have median weekly earnings for women at that level: education and child care administrators come closest at \$1,411 (Table 3). And women's median earnings are at that level in just two of the most common occupations for men: software developers and chief executives (Table 4).

## Women-Dominated Occupations Tend to Pay Less than Men-Dominated Occupations

Only four of the 20 most common occupations for women and the 20 most common occupations for men overlap (customer service representatives; first-line supervisors of retail workers; managers, all other; and retail salespersons) (Tables 3 and 4). Men-dominated occupations tend to pay more than women-dominated occupations at similar skill levels. For example, women elementary and middle school teachers—one of the most common occupations for women and a women-dominated field—earn \$1,138 per week, compared with \$1,301 for men (Table 3).<sup>18</sup> Men software developers—one the most common occupations for men and a men-dominated field—earn \$1,992 per week for full-time on average, compared with \$1,840 for women (Table 4). Both occupations require at least a bachelor's degree (and teachers often need a master's degree).

**TABLE 4. The Gender Wage Gap in the 20 Most Common Occupations for Men**

Full-Time Workers Only, 2021

	Women's Median Weekly Earnings	Women's Earnings as a Percent of Men's	Men's Median Weekly Earnings	Share of Women Workers in Occupation (percent)	Share of Men Workers in Occupation as Percent of All Men Workers	Share of Women Workers in Occupation as Percent of All Women Workers
<b>All Full-Time Workers</b>	<b>\$912</b>	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>\$1,097</b>	<b>45.0%</b>	<b>100% (60,911,000)</b>	<b>100% (49,476,000)</b>
<b>20 Most Common Occupations for Men</b>						
Driver/sales workers and truck drivers	\$732	78.5%	\$ 933	6.8%	4.0%	0.4%
Managers, all other	\$1,396	79.9%	\$ 1,747	41.3%	3.1%	2.6%
Software developers	\$1,840	92.4%	\$ 1,992	19.7%	2.4%	0.7%
Construction laborers	—	—	\$ 771	3.0%	2.3%	0.1%
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	\$624	88.8%	\$ 703	21.5%	2.1%	0.7%
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	\$733	73.9%	\$ 992	45.7%	1.9%	1.9%
Retail salespersons	\$635	74.3%	\$ 855	40.0%	1.6%	1.3%
Janitors and building cleaners	\$561	83.1%	\$ 675	34.4%	1.5%	1.0%
Chief executives	\$1,904	70.0%	\$ 2,721	30.2%	1.3%	0.7%
Carpenters	—	—	\$ 864	3.5%	1.3%	0.1%
Stockers and order fillers	\$603	97.3%	\$ 620	34.8%	1.2%	0.8%
Cooks	\$512	89.5%	\$ 572	36.7%	1.2%	0.8%
Other production workers	\$630	77.9%	\$ 809	27.4%	1.2%	0.5%
Electricians	—	—	\$ 1,064	2.3%	1.1%	0.0%
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing	\$1,157	85.3%	\$ 1,356	29.7%	1.1%	0.6%
Landscaping and groundskeeping workers	—	—	\$ 629	6.1%	1.1%	0.1%
Customer service representatives	\$737	85.0%	\$ 867	65.4%	1.0%	2.4%
Police officers	\$1,197	96.4%	\$ 1,242	15.0%	1.0%	0.2%
General and operations managers	\$1,285	83.0%	\$ 1,548	36.1%	1.0%	0.7%
Automotive service technicians and mechanics	—	—	\$ 909	2.3%	1.0%	0.0%
<b>Percent of all men and women</b>					<b>32.3%</b>	<b>15.6%</b>

**Note:** Earnings data are published only for occupations with an estimated minimum of 50,000 workers. "—" indicates there is no data or data does not meet BLS publication criteria.

**Source:** IWPR calculation of data from the U.S. Department of Labor, "Table 39. Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers by Detailed Occupation and Sex," Household Data Annual Averages (Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022).



## Conclusion: Tackling Women's Low Earnings and the Gender Wage Gap

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the harmful effects of earnings inequality, and in its wake, Hispanic and Black women and their families, in particular, are left with even fewer resources to weather the crisis.<sup>19</sup> IWPR's analysis shows that Black and Hispanic women are more likely to work in the lowest-paid service occupations, but even in those occupations, they earn less than White men. As shown above, women's median earnings are lower than men's in nearly all of the 20 most common occupations for women and for men, and, indeed, in almost all occupations for which a gender wage gap can be calculated. Women-dominated occupations tend to pay less than men-dominated occupations, a pattern that has an especially devastating impact on women working in the lowest-paid women-dominated jobs. As the economy recovers, concrete steps must be taken to enforce and strengthen equal pay statutes, raise wages in the lowest-paid sectors, and improve the quality of occupations where women hold the majority of jobs.

More than fifty years since the Equal Pay Act, the gender earnings gap endures. In the absence of progress on legislative reform at the federal level, many state and local initiatives are making progress by updating equal pay statutes and increasing access to equal pay protections and pay transparency. California, New York City, Maryland, and Rhode Island, among others, have recently enacted legislation that improves pay transparency, limits salary history questions during the job offer stage, requires employers to provide pay ranges on job postings, increases pay reporting requirements for employers, or expands the classes that are protected under existing equal pay laws to include identities such as gender identity, race, age, sexuality, religion, and country of origin.<sup>20</sup> Research suggests that such laws are making an impact on the gender wage gap.<sup>21</sup>

With recent historic investments in America's infrastructure and efforts to build the foundations for a clean economy through the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act, there is now more momentum—and a once-in-a-generation opportunity—to tackle women's underrepresentation in well-paid occupations, like in the trades.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to these measures, though, closing the gender wage gap once and for all will require the (re)building of a care infrastructure with access to high-quality, affordable child care, elder care, and care for individuals with disabilities—along with guaranteed paid leave. Investments in a care infrastructure are investments in the workforce of today and tomorrow. When families have access to quality care, and care workers are provided with decent earnings, both women and men will benefit.

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Photo credit: RollingCamera/Getty Images.

## APPENDIX

### TABLE A1. The Gender Wage Ratio and Real Earnings

Full-Time Workers, 1955–2021

Year	Median Annual Earnings (2020 dollars)			Median Usual Weekly Earnings (2020 dollars)		
	Women	Men	Women-to-Men Earnings Ratio	Women	Men	Women-to-Men Earnings Ratio
1960	\$27,046	\$44,575	60.7%			
1965	\$29,865	\$49,837	59.9%			
1970	\$34,379	\$57,909	59.4%			
1975	\$35,638	\$60,590	58.8%			
1980	\$36,358	\$60,435	60.2%	\$652	\$1,016	64.2%
1985	\$38,915	\$60,262	64.6%	\$690	\$1,013	68.1%
1986	\$39,734	\$61,822	64.3%	\$712	\$1,026	69.4%
1987	\$40,019	\$61,400	65.2%	\$716	\$1,026	69.9%
1988	\$40,211	\$60,881	66.0%	\$719	\$1,025	70.2%
1989	\$41,072	\$59,808	68.7%	\$718	\$1,025	70.0%
1990	\$41,338	\$57,721	71.6%	\$722	\$1,003	72.0%
1991	\$41,358	\$59,202	69.9%	\$735	\$991	74.2%
1992	\$41,968	\$59,288	70.8%	\$747	\$984	75.9%
1993	\$41,648	\$58,233	71.5%	\$752	\$977	77.0%
1994	\$41,656	\$57,880	72.0%	\$749	\$979	76.5%
1995	\$41,211	\$57,694	71.4%	\$744	\$985	75.5%
1996	\$42,305	\$57,355	73.8%	\$747	\$994	75.1%
1997	\$43,617	\$58,813	74.2%	\$752	\$1,011	74.4%
1998	\$44,565	\$60,906	73.2%	\$786	\$1,030	76.3%
1999	\$44,402	\$61,402	72.3%	\$799	\$1,043	76.6%
2000	\$44,815	\$60,791	73.7%	\$805	\$1,046	76.9%
2001	\$46,356	\$60,732	76.3%	\$812	\$1,064	76.4%
2002	\$47,180	\$61,593	76.6%	\$827	\$1,061	77.9%
2003	\$46,928	\$62,117	75.5%	\$843	\$1,061	79.4%
2004	\$46,461	\$60,673	76.6%	\$853	\$1,061	80.3%
2005	\$45,828	\$59,534	77.0%	\$841	\$1,038	81.1%
2006	\$45,304	\$58,884	76.9%	\$836	\$1,036	80.7%
2007	\$47,561	\$61,124	77.8%	\$831	\$1,038	80.1%
2008	\$46,640	\$60,500	77.1%	\$833	\$1,041	80.0%
2009	\$47,500	\$61,705	77.0%	\$860	\$1,073	80.2%
2010	\$47,516	\$61,766	76.9%	\$863	\$1,062	81.2%
2011	\$46,350	\$60,192	77.0%	\$854	\$1,039	82.2%
2012	\$46,213	\$60,405	76.5%	\$845	\$1,043	81.0%
2013*	\$47,184	\$60,289	78.3%	\$850	\$1,037	82.0%

	Median Annual Earnings (2020 dollars)			Median Usual Weekly Earnings (2020 dollars)		
2014	\$46,948	\$59,700	78.6%	\$852	\$1,032	82.5%
2015	\$48,194	\$60,578	79.6%	\$859	\$1,059	81.1%
2016	\$48,527	\$60,306	80.5%	\$874	\$1,068	81.8%
2017*	\$48,724	\$59,661	81.7%	\$881	\$1,076	81.8%
2018	\$50,330	\$61,706	81.6%	\$880	\$1,086	81.0%
2019	\$51,848	\$62,981	82.3%	\$860	\$1,054	81.5%
2020	\$53,377	\$64,302	83.0%	891	1,082	82.3%
<b>2021</b>				<b>912</b>	<b>1,097</b>	<b>83.1%</b>

**Notes:** \*Between 2013 and 2018, the Census Bureau made a series of changes in data collection and processing to improve the Current Population Survey's Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) income and earnings content; the new estimation methods lead to marginal upwards adjustments in estimates of the annual gender earnings ratio. IWPR data show the most recent data incorporating these changes. Annual earnings data include self-employed workers; weekly data are for wage and salary workers only and are not restricted to full-year workers. 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. The annual average of weekly median earnings is usually released in February by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and annual median earnings data in September by the U.S. Census Bureau. Both data series are derived from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Adjustments for data from earlier years to 2021 dollars are computed on the basis of the Consumer Price Index Series (CPI-U) published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, <<https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/inflation/consumer-price-index-and-annual-percent-changes-from-1913-to-2008/>>. Earnings data for 1981 to 1984 are available upon request.

**Sources:** 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 to 2020: Emily A. Shrider, Melissa Kollar, Francis Chen and Jessica Semega, "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2020," (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

Weekly data: 2019 to 2021: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics "Table 37. Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, Annual Averages" (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021) <<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat37.pdf>> (retrieved February 2022); 1979 to 2018: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Table 17. Inflation-adjusted median usual weekly earnings, by age, for full-time wage and salary workers, 1979-2018 annual average," Highlights of Women's Earnings 2019 (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020), <<https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-earnings/2019/home.htm>>.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The uneven recovery makes direct comparisons between 2020 and 2021 difficult. Changes in median earnings reflect pandemic-related changes in the composition of the workforce as much as changes in earnings in any particular occupation. The disproportionate loss of low-wage jobs in 2020 raised the median earnings because fewer low-wage workers had earnings to be counted; and the disproportionate return of lower-wage jobs in 2021 lowered the median earnings because more lower-wage workers returned to full-time work. Controlling for inflation, the median weekly earnings for women full-time workers fell by 2.2 percent compared to 2020, and by 3.1 percent for men's median weekly earnings. As a result of the smaller real decline in earnings for women than men, the gender earnings ratio improved from 82.3 to 83.1 percent (Appendix Table A1).

<sup>2</sup> White is defined as White, non-Hispanic.

<sup>3</sup> Occupational analysis based on BLS unpublished tables, 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 2021," (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022); detail not shown.

<sup>4</sup> See Kate Bahn and Carmen Sanchez Cumming, *The Intersectional Wage Divides Faced by Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Women in the United States* (Washington, DC: Washington Center for Equitable Growth, 2021), <<https://equitablegrowth.org/the-intersectional-wage-divides-faced-by-asian-american-native-hawaiian-and-pacific-islander-women-in-the-united-states/>>; and Jennifer Ma, Matea Pender, and Meredith Welch, *Education Pays 2019: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society* (New York, NY: College Board, 2019), <<https://research.collegeboard.org/pdf/education-pays-2019-full-report.pdf>>.

<sup>5</sup> This number reflects the difference between the unrounded earnings ratios for 2020 and 2021. Table 1 shows the rounded earnings ratios for brevity.

<sup>6</sup> IWPR calculation based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Table 7. Median Usual Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers by Selected Characteristics, Annual Averages," (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022), <<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/wkyeng.t07.htm>>.

<sup>7</sup> Ariane Hegewisch, "December #JobsDay Data Show Women's Recovery, and Child Care and Elder Care, Continued to Fall Behind Recovery," In the Lead (IWPR blog), January 10, 2022, <<https://iwpr.org/media/in-the-lead/december-jobsday-data-show-womens-recovery-and-child-care-and-elder-care-continued-to-fall-behind-recovery/>>.

<sup>8</sup> Ariane Hegewisch and Valerie Lacarte, *Gender Inequality, Work Hours, and the Future of Work*, Report, IWPR #C486 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2019), <[https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/C486\\_FOW-Work-Hours-Report.pdf](https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/C486_FOW-Work-Hours-Report.pdf)>.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Household Data Annual Averages, Table 23. Persons at Work by Occupation, Sex, and Usual Full- or Part-Time Status," (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022), <<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat23.pdf>>. See also Jocelyn Frye, "On the Frontlines at Work and at Home: The Disproportionate Economic Effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Women of Color," (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2020), <<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/frontlines-work-home/>>; Shengwei Sun, *An Impossible Juggling Act: Young Parents during COVID-19 Pandemic*, Brief, IWPR #C503 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2021), <<https://iwpr.org/iwpr-publications/an-impossible-juggling-act-young-parents-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>>; Jeff Hayes and C. Nicole Mason, *All Work and Little Pay: IWPR Survey Shows Worrying Challenges for Working Mothers* (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2021), <<https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/All-Work-and-Little-Pay-Mothers-Day.pdf>>.

<sup>10</sup> IWPR calculation based on unpublished data; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Table A-5. Usual Weekly Earnings of Employed Wage and Salary Workers by Sex, Race, and Age, Annual Average 2021," (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022).

<sup>11</sup> See Ariane Hegewisch and Heidi Hartmann, *Occupational Segregation and the Gender Wage Gap: A Job Half Done, in A Paper Series to Commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of American Women: Report of President Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, 2014), <[https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/legacy/files/FINAL\\_REPORT\\_womens\\_bureau\\_50th\\_anniversary\\_paper\\_series.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/legacy/files/FINAL_REPORT_womens_bureau_50th_anniversary_paper_series.pdf)>. See also Elyse Shaw, Ariane Hegewisch, Emma Williams-Barron, and Barbara Gault, *Undervalued and Underpaid in America: Women in Low-Wage, Female-Dominated Jobs*, Report, IWPR #D508 (Washington,

DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2016), <<https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/D508-Undervalued-and-Underpaid.pdf>>.

<sup>12</sup> Differences of employment across occupations explained 32.9 percent of the gender wage gap and differences in the distribution of women's and men's employment across industries explained 17.6 percent; see Francine D. Blau and Lawrence Kahn, "The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations," *Journal of Economic Literature* 55, no. 3 (2017): 789–865.

<sup>13</sup> See note 1 above, and also Ariane Hegewisch and Eve Mefferd, "The Weekly Gender Wage Gap by Race and Ethnicity," Fact Sheet, IWPR #C494 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2021), <<https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-Weekly-Wage-Gap-Brief-1.pdf>>.

<sup>14</sup> The broad occupational group "service occupations" includes healthcare support occupations; protective service occupations; food preparation and serving-related occupations; building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations; personal care and service occupations.

<sup>15</sup> The 2021 federal poverty threshold for a family of three was \$27,479; see U.S. Census Bureau, *Poverty Thresholds* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022), <<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html>>. Assuming full-time work for 50 weeks a year, this translates into \$528 per week at 100% of federal poverty guidelines, and at \$661 at 125% of poverty. Given that earnings in an occupation are provided at the median—the midpoint in the earnings distribution—median earnings below \$661 in an occupation do not mean that everyone working in that occupation will have near-poverty earnings.

<sup>16</sup> Because of sample size restrictions, detailed occupational earnings data by gender, race, and ethnicity are not available; see Table 3 for sources of data in this section.

<sup>17</sup> See Ariane Hegewisch and Tanimah Ahmed, *Growing the Numbers of Women in the Trades* (Chicago, IL: National Center for Women's Equity in Apprenticeship and Employment at Chicago Women in the Trades, 2017), <<https://womensequitycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Growing-the-Number-in-the-Trades.pdf>>.

<sup>18</sup> Teachers at the same level are generally paid similarly, particularly when covered by union contracts; it is possible that the weekly wage differential of \$163 shown here is like due to women and men working at different job levels within this broad category for teachers, or more men than women taking on extra duties such as coaching or leading special programs.

<sup>19</sup> C. Nicole Mason, Andrea Flynn, and Shengwei Sun, *Build(ing) the Future: Bold Policies for a Gender-Equitable Recovery*, Report, IWPR #C491 (Washington DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2020), <<https://iwpr.org/iwpr-issues/esme/building-the-future-bold-policies-for-a-gender-equitable-recovery/>>.

<sup>20</sup> Eve Mefferd, "The States Making Strides to Close the Gender Wage Gap", In the Lead (IWPR blog), January 21, 2022, <<https://iwpr.org/media/in-the-lead/the-states-making-strides-to-close-the-gender-wage-gap/>>.

<sup>21</sup> See Shengwei Sun, Ariane Hegewisch, and Laura Adler, *Equal Pay Policies and the Gender Wage Gap: A Compilation of Recent Research* (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2022), <<https://iwpr.org/iwpr-publications/equal-pay-research-compilation/>>.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Congress, *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (Washington, DC: U.S. Congress), <<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3684/text>>; Ariane Hegewisch and Eve Mefferd, *A Future Worth Building: What Tradeswomen Say about the Change They Need in the Construction Industry*, Report, IWPR #C508 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2021), <<https://iwpr.org/iwpr-publications/a-future-worth-building-report/>>; National Taskforce on Tradeswomen's Issues, *Framework for Promoting Equity and Inclusion for Women and People of Color Working in the Trades on Publicly Funded Infrastructure Projects* (National Taskforce on Tradeswomen's Issues, 2020), <[https://tradeswomentaskforce.org/system/files/national\\_taskforce\\_on\\_tradeswomens\\_issues\\_infrastructure\\_framework.pdf](https://tradeswomentaskforce.org/system/files/national_taskforce_on_tradeswomens_issues_infrastructure_framework.pdf)>; National Taskforce on Tradeswomen's Issues, *National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality/ Towards Women's Equitable Access to and Retention in High-Wage, High-Skilled Apprenticeship Training, and Trades Employment* (National Taskforce on Tradeswomen's Issues, 2022), <[https://tradeswomentaskforce.org/system/files/recommendations\\_to\\_the\\_wh\\_gender\\_policy\\_council\\_from\\_the\\_taskforce\\_on\\_tradeswomens\\_issues.pdf](https://tradeswomentaskforce.org/system/files/recommendations_to_the_wh_gender_policy_council_from_the_taskforce_on_tradeswomens_issues.pdf)>.

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