

Gender and Racial Wage Gaps Worsened in 2023 and Pay Equity Still Decades Away

Annual Gender Wage Gap by Race and Ethnicity, 2023

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- **In 2023, women working full-time year-round made 82.7 cents per dollar earned by men (a wage gap of 17.3 percent), a significant worsening of the earnings ratio compared to 84.0 cents per dollar in 2022 (a wage gap of 16.0 percent).** While the ratio fell, it is still higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic (82.3 percent in 2019).
- **The gender wage gap for all with earnings (including full-time, part-time, full-year, and part-year workers) also worsened.** In 2023, a typical woman was paid 74.8 cents per dollar that a man was paid (a wage gap of 25.2 percent) compared with 78.3 cents on the dollar in 2022 (a wage gap of 21.7 percent).
- **Both women's and men's typical earnings increased in 2023, but women's increased less than men's.** Adjusted for inflation, the earnings of a typical full-time year-round working woman increased by 1.5 percent in 2023, compared to a 3.0 percent annual increase for a typical man.¹
- **Racial and gender wage gaps widened and are profound.** In 2023, for every dollar earned by a White² man, a typical Latina³ woman working full-time year-round earned 57.8 cents per dollar, adding up to \$32,070 less per year. A Black woman working full-time year-round earned 66.5 cents (\$25,480 less), a White woman earned 79.6 cents (\$15,500 less), and an Asian⁴ woman earned 94.2 cents (\$4,430 less). Gender racial wage gaps widened compared to White men's earnings across race and ethnicity for all with earnings, and—with the exception of Latinas, who saw a small increase—for full-time year-round workers.
- **If progress continues at the same rate as it has for the last two decades, it will still take until 2088 for all women workers to reach pay equity with men.** Pay equity between all full-time year-round workers will take over three decades, until 2066. Policy changes are needed to ensure that women and their families see equity in their lifetimes.

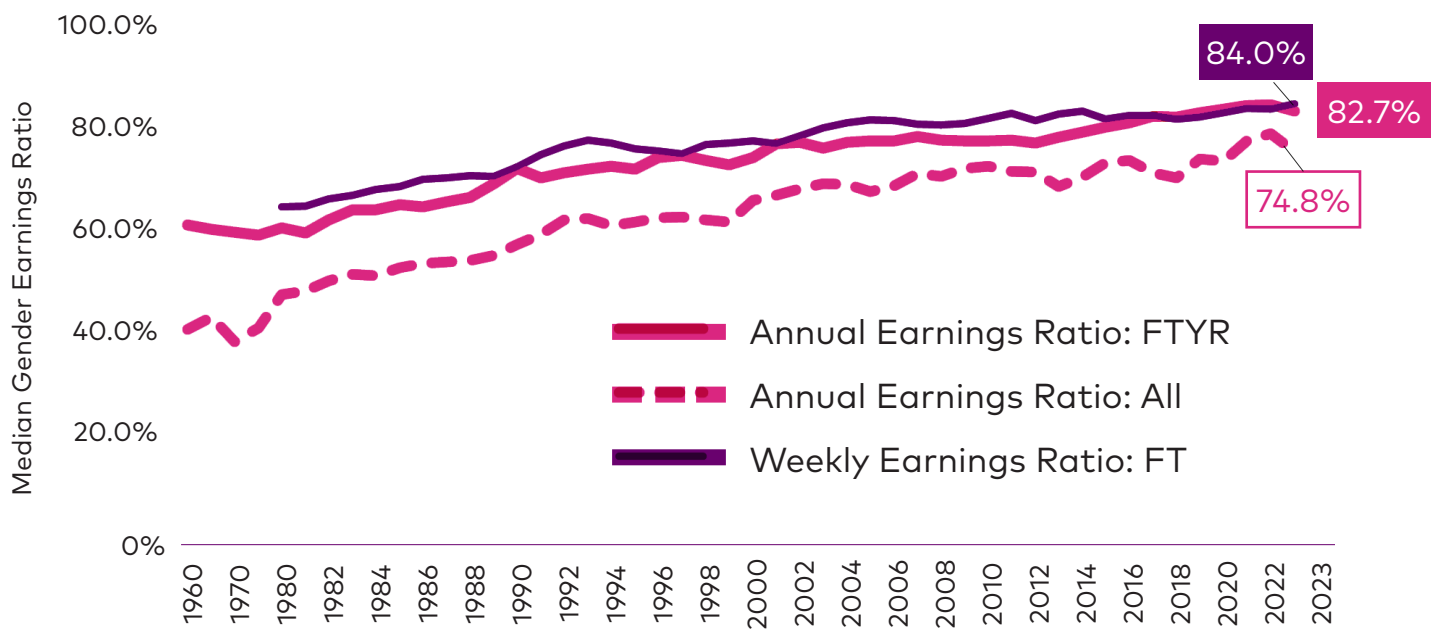


Gender Earnings Ratios Worsened in 2023 as Men Saw Stronger Earnings Growth than Women

Both women and men saw increases in real earnings for full-time year-round workers in 2023, but growth was less strong for women (1.5 percent) than men (3.0 percent). As a result, the gender earnings ratio for full-time year-round workers declined significantly between 2023 and 2022 (82.7 and 84.0 percent, respectively). Yet, it was still marginally higher than in 2019—before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic—when it was 82.3 percent (Figure 1 and Table 3).

When adjusting for inflation, typical earnings for all women with earnings (including full-time, part-time, year-round, and part-year workers) were 2.0 percent lower in 2023 than in 2022, while the earnings of a typical man were 2.6 percent higher in 2023 than in 2022. As a result, the gender earnings ratio for all workers with earnings also worsened substantially, to 74.8 percent (a gender wage gap of 25.2 percent) from 78.3 percent (a gender wage gap of 21.7 percent) in 2022 (but still higher than pre-pandemic in 2019 at 73.5 percent, see Figure 1 and Table 3).

Figure 1. The Gender Earnings Ratio for Full-Time and All Workers with Earnings, 1960–2023



Sources: Annual earnings: IWPR calculations based on Table A-7, "Number and Real Median Earnings of Total Workers and Full-Time, Year-Round Workers with Earnings by Sex and Female-to-Male Earnings Ratio: 1960 to 2023"; Gloria Guzman and Melissa Kollar, *Income in the United States: 2023*. Current Population Reports P60-282 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024), <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2024/demo/p60-282.pdf>. Weekly earnings: Table 17, "Inflation-adjusted median usual weekly earnings, by age, for full-time wage and salary workers, 1979–2023," annual averages (in constant 2023 dollars); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics "Highlights of women's earnings in 2023," BLS Reports 1110 (2024), <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-earnings/2023/home.htm>.

Notes: 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 in previous years. Before 1989, annual earnings are for civilian workers only. Weekly earnings are for full-time civilian workers aged 16 and older and are not restricted to full-year workers. Full-time is working for at least 35 hours per week, full-year is working for at least 50 weeks per year.

These differences in the year-on-year changes in the real earnings of men and women also reflect the changing composition of the labor force. These include gender, racial, and ethnic differences in the rate of retirement, the number of young (lower-paid) workers joining the workforce, differences in

average hours worked per week, and what occupations are growing and wages in those occupations. Yet, the differential increases in real earnings for women and men also point to the underlying gender inequality in the labor market as a result of women's greater responsibilities for unpaid family care work and insufficient work-family supports. Women were 43.6 percent of all full-time workers in 2023 (compared to 43.5 percent in 2022) and 47.3 percent of all workers with earnings (compared to 47.1 percent in 2023).⁵ Women are less likely than men to work full-time year-round because they do more unpaid family care work than men and because full-time year-round work is harder to find in jobs predominantly done by women, such as those in the care, retail, leisure, and hospitality sectors.⁶

Progress in eliminating the gender wage gap has slowed down substantially during recent decades (Figure 1). When projecting change in the gender earnings ratio during the last two decades, from 2002 to 2023 forward, **it will take more than three decades—until 2066—for full-time year-round women workers to reach pay equity with men with earnings. It will take even longer—until 2088—for pay equity between all workers with earnings.**⁷ This is in spite of the fact that women continue to outpace men in going to college and getting training and education.⁸

Women Across Racial and Ethnic Groups Earned Less than White Men

Latina and Black women's median annual earnings were substantially below those of White and Asian women, as well as those of men in all the largest racial and ethnic groups (Tables 1 and 2). In 2023, the median annual earnings for a year of full-time work for Latina women were \$43,880, leaving an adult with two children near poverty.⁹ Latinas' earnings were just 57.8 percent of the median annual earnings for full-time year-round work of White men, resulting in \$32,070 less in a single year for the typical Latina woman.¹⁰ For Black women, the full-time year-round gender earnings ratio compared to White men was 66.5 percent (\$25,480 less), for White women 79.6 percent (\$15,500 less), and for Asian¹¹ women 94.2 percent (\$4,430 less). Gender racial earnings ratios for full-time year-round workers worsened in 2023 for Asian, Black, and White women; only Latinas saw a marginal improvement in their earnings ratio (Table 1).



Table 1. Median Annual Earnings and Gender Earnings Ratio for Full-Time Year-Round Workers, by Race/Ethnicity, 2023 and 2022

Race/ ethnicity	Full-time, year-round workers, 2023				Full-time, year-round workers, 2022 (inflation adjusted to 2023 \$)			
	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	\$55,240	\$66,790	82.7%	n/a	54,440	\$64,830	84.0%	73.1%
Asian*	\$71,520	\$90,830	78.7%	94.2%	\$73,390	\$90,880	80.8%	98.6%
Black	\$50,470	\$55,570	90.8%	66.5%	\$51,430	\$53,690	95.8%	69.1%
Hispanic or Latina	\$43,880	\$50,120	87.5%	57.8%	\$42,770	\$49,300	86.8%	57.5%
White	60,450	\$75,950	79.6%	79.6%	\$59,530	\$74,430	80.0%	80.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey-ASEC, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-income-people.html>.

Notes: Workers ages 15 years and older. Hispanic/Latina/o workers may be of any race; White alone, not Hispanic; Black alone; and Asian alone. Full-time is working for at least 35 hours per week, full-year is working for at least 50 weeks per year. *Data for Asian American, Hawaiian Natives, and Pacific Islanders (AAHNPI) are not yet available for 2023; in 2022, the gender earnings ratio for AAHNPI women working full-time year-round compared to White men was 92.7 percent.¹²



Women across race and ethnicity saw a widening of the gender wage gap when comparing typical earnings for all with earnings. Compared to White men's earnings, the gender racial earnings ratio for Asian¹³ women widened by 6.4 percentage points (to 82.6 percent), for Black women by 2.1 percentage points (to 64.4 percent), for White women by 1.1 percentage points (to 73.2 percent), and for Latinas by 0.7 percentage points (to 51.3 percent).¹⁴ Benefits of the strong economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic have been distributed unequally.

Table 2. Median Annual Earnings and Gender Earnings Ratio for All Workers with Earnings by Race/Ethnicity, 2023 and 2022

Race/ ethnicity	All workers with earnings, 2023				All workers with earnings, 2022 (inflation adjusted to 2023 \$)			
	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	\$42,110	\$56,280	74.8%	n/a	\$42,960	\$54,870	78.3%	67.93%
Asian*	\$52,180	\$75,170	69.4%	82.6%	\$56,270	\$74,880	75.1%	89.0%
Black	\$40,710	\$48,560	83.8%	64.4%	\$42,050	\$47,290	88.9%	66.5%
Hispanic or Latina	\$32,410	\$41,310	78.5%	51.3%	\$32,860	\$42,340	77.6%	52.0%
White	\$46,280	\$63,210	73.2%	73.2%	\$46,990	63,240	74.3%	74.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey-ASEC, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-income-people.html>.

Notes: Workers ages 15 years and older. Hispanic/Latina/o workers may be of any race; White alone, not Hispanic; Black alone; and Asian alone.

*Data for Asian American, Hawaiian Natives, and Pacific Islanders (AAHNPI) are not yet available for 2023; in 2022, the gender earnings ratio for AAHNPI women compared to White men was 80.1 percent.¹⁵

Women Across Racial and Ethnic Groups Earn Less than Male Counterparts

Latino and Black men earn substantially less than White men, and as a result, the overall gender gap is wider than the within-group gender gap. Nevertheless, within each group, men have higher earnings for full-time year-round work than women of the same race or ethnicity. Women of each of the largest racial and ethnic groups have lower earnings than men in the same group, and for each, the earnings differences become larger when part-time and part-year workers are included instead of focusing on full-time year-round workers (Tables 1 and 2).

Policies Are Needed to Tackle Gender and Racial Inequity in Earnings

Women's lower earnings are due to many factors; as a result, a range of policy interventions will be necessary to tackle the inequity. These factors include lower earnings in many occupations which are done mainly by women, including very low wages in care jobs; lack of paid family leave and affordable quality care that limit women's work experience and job options; and discrimination in compensation, recruitment, and hiring. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the pernicious effects of earnings inequality, leaving particularly Latina and Black women and their families with few resources to face an economic crisis. Over a lifetime, lower earnings also mean lower contributions to retirement savings. Consequently, women must live on less in retirement than men and more often rely on Social Security as their main source of income.¹⁶ Particularly for women of color, diminished opportunities to build wealth and support their families means inequality not just for current but also future generations.

Women and their families need policymakers to pursue a range of solutions to close the pay gap, including both policies to strengthen workplace protections and those to disrupt and address the inequities and socioeconomic factors that perpetuate gender pay inequity. This includes passing new legislation designed to improve protections against pay discrimination and close the wage gap, like the Paycheck Fairness Act, and investing in existing enforcement mechanisms, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) at the Department of Labor. The federal government should also reinstate efforts to collect pay data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender.

Evidence shows that unions help women earn higher salaries, and they contribute toward closing the gender pay gap.¹⁷ Policymakers should pass legislation like the PRO Act, which protects the rights of workers and supports their ability to organize and bargain collectively.

In addition, policymakers must look at solutions to the full spectrum of factors that perpetuate the gender wage gap. This includes investing in a robust federal paid leave policy that provides workers with at least 12 weeks off to care for a loved one or cope with an illness. It also includes investing in expanding access to affordable, high-quality child care. With the expiration of COVID-19-era emergency measures, this will require urgent and bold action by Congress as existing government funding for child care and other social safety net programs is discontinued.

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Table 3. The Gender Wage Ratio and Real Earnings, 1960–2023, Full-Time Workers and All Workers with Earnings (in 2023 Dollars)

Year	Median annual earnings full-time year-round (FTYR)		Female-to-male earnings ratio (FTYR)	Female-to-male earnings ratio (all with earnings)	Median weekly earnings full-time (FT)		Female-to-male earnings ratio (FT weekly)
	Women	Men	(%)	(%)	Women	Men	(%)
1960	\$27,560	\$45,430	60.7%	40.7%			-
1965	\$30,430	\$50,780	59.9%	42.9%			-
1970	\$35,090	\$59,110	59.4%	38.2%			-
1975	\$36,370	\$61,830	58.8%	40.9%			-
1980	\$37,130	\$61,710	60.2%	47.3%	\$710	\$1,106	64.2%
1985	\$39,730	\$61,520	64.6%	52.5%	\$751	\$1,103	68.1%
1986	\$40,600	\$63,180	64.3%	53.3%	\$776	\$1,117	69.5%
1987	\$40,920	\$62,780	65.2%	53.6%	\$783	\$1,121	69.9%
1988	\$41,080	\$62,200	66.0%	53.8%	\$784	\$1,117	70.2%
1989	\$41,950	\$61,090	68.7%	54.9%	\$783	\$1,117	70.0%
1990	\$42,250	\$59,000	71.6%	56.9%	\$786	\$1,093	72.0%
1991	\$42,270	\$60,510	69.9%	58.9%	\$803	\$1,081	74.2%
1992	\$42,880	\$60,570	70.8%	61.7%	\$814	\$1,073	75.8%
1993	\$42,570	\$59,520	71.5%	61.9%	\$820	\$1,065	77.0%
1994	\$42,530	\$59,100	72.0%	60.6%	\$816	\$1,067	76.6%
1995	\$42,100	\$58,940	71.4%	61.2%	\$810	\$1,074	75.5%
1996	\$43,230	\$58,600	73.8%	62.2%	\$813	\$1,084	75.1%
1997	\$44,570	\$60,100	74.2%	62.3%	\$821	\$1,103	74.4%
1998	\$45,540	\$62,240	73.2%	61.6%	\$857	\$1,124	76.2%
1999	\$45,400	\$62,780	72.3%	61.3%	\$869	\$1,136	76.6%
2000	\$45,800	\$62,120	73.7%	65.5%	\$877	\$1,141	76.9%
2001	\$47,650	\$62,420	76.3%	66.5%	\$886	\$1,159	76.4%
2002	\$48,650	\$63,510	76.6%	67.7%	\$901	\$1,157	77.9%
2003	\$48,480	\$64,170	75.5%	68.7%	\$920	\$1,158	79.4%
2004	\$48,090	\$62,800	76.6%	68.5%	\$929	\$1,156	80.3%
2005	\$47,660	\$61,920	77.0%	67.2%	\$918	\$1,133	81.0%
2006	\$47,270	\$61,440	76.9%	68.2%	\$912	\$1,129	80.8%
2007	\$49,760	\$63,950	77.8%	70.6%	\$907	\$1,131	80.1%
2008	\$48,880	\$63,400	77.1%	70.1%	\$908	\$1,135	79.9%
2009	\$49,810	\$64,700	77.0%	71.7%	\$939	\$1,170	80.2%
2010	\$49,960	\$64,940	76.9%	72.0%	\$940	\$1,157	81.2%
2011	\$48,750	\$63,310	77.0%	71.1%	\$932	\$1,134	82.2%
2012	\$48,700	\$63,660	76.5%	70.9%	\$921	\$1,139	81.0%
2013	\$49,390	\$63,680	77.6%	68.1%	\$928	\$1,130	82.0%
2014	\$49,740	\$63,250	78.6%	69.9%	\$929	\$1,125	82.5%
2015	\$51,180	\$64,340	79.5%	72.7%	\$937	\$1,155	81.1%

Year	Median annual earnings full-time year-round (FTYR)		Female-to-male earnings ratio (FTYR)	Female-to-male earnings ratio (all with earnings)	Median weekly earnings full-time (FT)		Female-to-male earnings ratio (FT weekly)
	Women	Men	(%)	(%)	Women	Men	(%)
2016	\$51,740	\$64,300	80.5%	73.2%	\$954	\$1,166	81.8%
2017	\$52,150	\$63,860	81.7%	70.8%	\$960	\$1,173	81.8%
2018	\$54,100	\$66,330	81.6%	69.9%	\$960	\$1,184	81.0%
2019	\$55,910	\$67,920	82.3%	73.5%	\$982	\$1,205	81.5%
2020	\$59,670	\$71,780	83.1%	72.9%	\$1,051	\$1,276	82.3%
2021	\$57,360	\$68,510	83.7%	76.9%	\$1,027	\$1,235	83.1%
2022	\$54,440	\$64,830	84.0%	78.3%	\$998	\$1,202	83.0%
2023	\$55,240	\$66,790	82.7%	74.8%	\$1,005	\$1,202	

Sources: Annual earnings: IWPR calculations based on Table A-7, "Number and Real Median Earnings of Total Workers and Full-Time, Year-Round Workers with Earnings by Sex and Female-to-Male Earnings Ratio: 1960 to 2023"; Gloria Guzman and Melissa Kollar, *Income in the United States: 2023*. Current Population Reports P60-282 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024), <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2024/demo/p60-282.pdf>. Weekly earnings: Table 17, "Inflation-adjusted median usual weekly earnings, by age, for full-time wage and salary workers, 1979–2023," annual averages (in constant 2023 dollars); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics "Highlights of women's earnings in 2023," BLS Reports 1110 (2024), <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-earnings/2023/home.htm>.

Notes: 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 in previous years. Before 1989, annual earnings are for civilian workers only. Weekly earnings are for full-time civilian workers aged 16 and older and are not restricted to full-year workers. Full-time is working for at least 35 hours per week, full-year is working 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.

ENDNOTES

¹ 'Typical' refers to workers with earnings at the median—the midpoint—of the earnings distribution at which approximately half earn below and half above. Full-time is defined as work for at least 35 hours per week; year-round as at least 50 weeks per year.

² In this fact sheet, White men and women are defined as White, non-Hispanic.

³ In this fact sheet, we use the term Latina to refer to Hispanic or Latina women and Latino to refer to Hispanic and Latino men.

⁴ Asian earnings data are for 'Asian alone' and do not include Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders, who tend to have much lower earnings; 2023 earnings data for Asian, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders are not available until later in 2024.

⁵ IWPR calculations based on Table A-7. "Number and Real Median Earnings of Total Workers and Full-Time, Year-Round Workers with Earnings by Sex and Female-to-Male Earnings Ratio: 1960 to 2023"; Gloria Guzman and Melissa Kollar, *Income in the United States: 2023*, Current Population Reports P60-282 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024), <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2024/demo/p60-282.pdf>.

⁶ See, for example, Cynthia Hess, Tanima Ahmed, and Jeff Hayes, *Providing Unpaid Household and Care Work in the United States: Uncovering Inequality*, IWPR Brief #C487 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2020); Daniel Schneider and Kristen Harknett, "Consequences of routine work-schedule instability for worker health and well-being," *American Sociological Review* 84, no. 1 (2019): 82-114; Ariane Hegewisch and Valerie Lacarte, *Gender Inequality, Work Hours, and the Future of Work* (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2019).

⁷ "Forecasting Pay Equity: Women Are Expected to Wait Over 50 Years to Reach Parity with Men," Quick Figure, IWPR #Q112 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2024), <https://iwpr.org/women-are-expected-to-wait-over-50-years-to-reach-parity-with-men/>; when basing the projections on trends from 1960–2023, pay equity for all workers will be reached in 2054, and for full-time year-round workers in 2058.

⁸ Anthony P. Carnevale, Jeff Strohl, Kathryn Peltier Campbell, Artem Gulish, Ban Cheah, Emma Nyhof, and Lillian Fix, *Learning and Earning by Degrees: Gains in College Degree Attainment Have Enriched the Nation and Every State, but Racial and Gender Inequality Persists* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2024), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED650252.pdf>.

⁹ In 2023, near-poverty (200 percent of the federal poverty threshold) for a family of an adult with two children was \$49,098 per year; U.S. Census Bureau, "Poverty Thresholds: by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years" (Washington, DC: United States Census Bureau, 2024), <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html>.

¹⁰ IWPR calculation based on Table 1.

¹¹ See note 4 above regarding Asian data.

¹² Ariane Hegewisch, Hannah Gartner, and Miranda Peterson, "Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Women Earn Less than White Men in All but One State: Wage Gaps and Earnings by State for All Workers and Full-Time Year-Round Workers," IWPR Fact Sheet #C523 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2024), <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Asian-Women-Wage-Gap-Fact-Sheet-2024.pdf>.

¹³ See note 4 above regarding Asian data.

¹⁴ IWPR calculation based on Table 2.

¹⁵ Ariane Hegewisch, Hannah Gartner, and Miranda Peterson, "Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Women Earn Less than White Men in All but One State."

¹⁶ See Hannah Gartner, Martha Susana Jaimes, and Siavash Radpour, "The Retirement Income Gap Leaves Women Aged 65+ at Higher Risk of Poverty than Men," Quick Figure, IWPR #110 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2024), <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/IWPR-Retirement-Income-Gap-Quick-Figure-2024-1.pdf>.

¹⁷ Chuxuan Sun, Acadia Hall, and Elyse Shaw, "Stronger Together: Union Membership Boosts Women's Earnings and Economic Security," Report, IWPR #D513 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2021), https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Stronger-Together-Union-Membership-Boosts-Womens-Earnings-and-Economic-Security_FINAL.pdf.

OUR MISSION

We win economic equity for all women and eliminate barriers to their full participation in society. As a leading national think tank, we build evidence to shape policies that grow women's power and influence, close inequality gaps, and improve the economic well-being of families.

