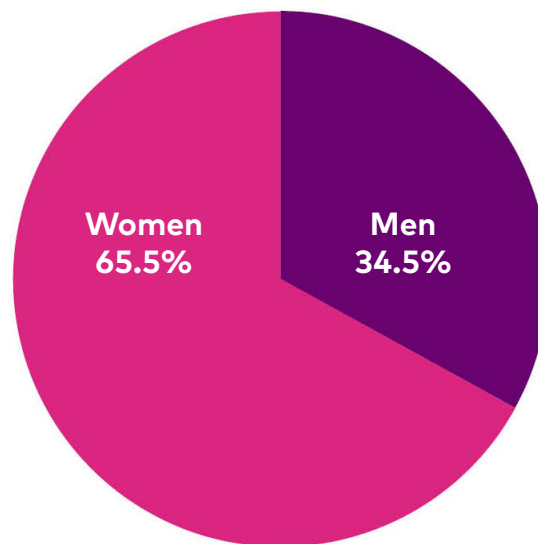


Women Servers Earn Significantly Less than Their Male Counterparts

In 2023, 2.2 million people worked as servers in the United States, of which almost two-thirds (65.5 percent) were women.¹ Additionally, most workers earning a tipped minimum wage were employed in the restaurant industry.²

Figure 1. Proportion of Servers in the United States by Gender



Source: IWPR calculations based on 2023 Detailed Occupations data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employed Persons by Detailed Occupation, Sex, Race, and Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 26, 2024, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>

Notes: The workers were 16 years and older. Servers include both waitstaff and bartenders.

Median earnings show disparities among servers across gender, race, and ethnicity.

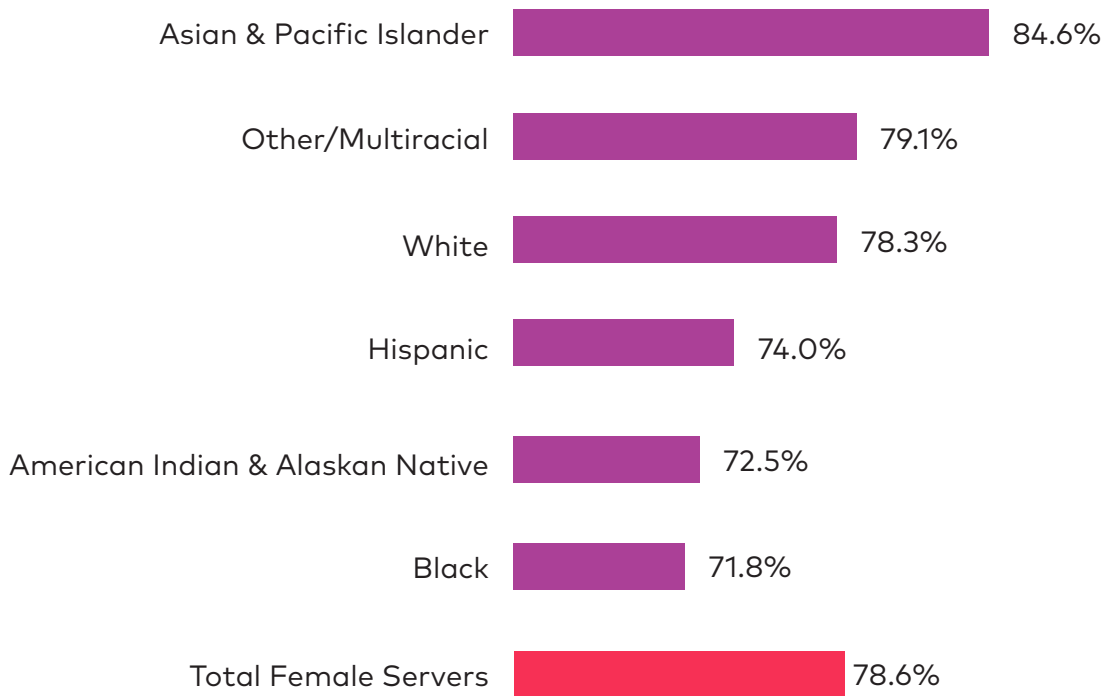
While women made up the majority of servers in 2023, they still faced lower pay than their male counterparts. Among servers, women's median earnings for full-time year-round work were only 78.6 percent of those of male servers. Compared to White male servers' earnings, Asian and Pacific Islander female servers had the highest earnings ratio at 84.6 percent, followed by multiracial women servers at 79.1 percent. Meanwhile, Black female servers had the widest wage gap, with an earnings ratio of only 71.8 percent, followed by Latina women servers, who made 74 percent of what White male servers were paid. Workers in tipped occupations, most of which are women, often lack benefits such as paid leave or health insurance³ and are hit hardest by low wages.

¹ Ariane Hegewisch and Cristy Mendoza, "Gender and Racial Wage Gaps Marginally Improve in 2022 but Pay Equity Still Decades Away," Institute for Women's Policy Research, September 2023, <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2023-National-Wage-Gap-September-Factsheet-FINAL.pdf>.

² Sylvia A. Allegretto and David Cooper, "Twenty-Three Years and Still Waiting for Change," Economic Policy Institute and UC Berkeley Center on Wage and Employment Dynamics, July 10, 2014, <https://files.epi.org/2014/EPI-CWED-BP379.pdf>.

³ Sarah Javaid, "One Fair Wage: Women Fare Better in States with Equal Treatment for Tipped Workers," National Women's Law Center, June 2024, <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Tipped-Workers-FS-2024.6.12v1.pdf#:~:text=Women%20make%20up%20nearly%20seven%20in%2010%20of,women%20compared%20to%20their%20white%2C%20non-Hispanic%20male%20counterparts.12>.

Figure 2. Female Servers Earnings Ratio by Race and Ethnicity



Source: IWPR calculation based on IWPR analysis using a 10-year sample (two 5-year samples: 2013–2017 and 2018–2022) of American Community Survey (ACS) data. Data was downloaded using IPUMS, Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Annie Chen, Grace Cooper, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rogers, and Megan Schouweiler, IPUMS USA: Version 14.0 2013–2017 and 2018–2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V14.0>.

Notes: Workers are 16 years and older. They are White alone, not Hispanic; Black alone; Asian alone; and Hispanic (may be of any race). The median earnings were counted for servers who worked full-time year-round, defined as working at least 35 hours per week and at least 50 weeks per year. Earnings adjusted to 2022 dollars using R-CPI-U-RS, All items, 1977–2022 (XLSX) from <https://www.bls.gov/cpi/research-series/r-cpi-u-rs-home.htm>. The earnings ratios are calculated using the median earnings of female servers by race and ethnicity as a proportion of the median earnings of White male servers.

This quick figure was prepared by Noura Hassouna, Martha Susana Jaimes, and Kendal Lowrey (IWPR). It was made possible with the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.