

# The Numbers Don't Add Up: Women Continue to Earn Less, Regardless of Occupation

## The Gender Wage Gap by Occupation 2025

### Key Findings

- **In 2025, women were paid less than men for full-time work<sup>1</sup> in all 20 occupations that employ the most women and in all 20 occupations that employ the most men in the United States.** Across all detailed occupations with sufficient data, women were paid up to \$846 less per week compared to men in the same occupation.<sup>2</sup>
- **In over four-fifths of occupations, women's earnings were at least 5 percent lower than men's.** Nearly two-thirds of occupations had a gender earnings ratio ranging between 70 percent and 90 percent.
- **In 2025, women made up 44.9 percent of the total full-time workforce and earned 82.1 cents for every dollar earned by men.** This is a decrease from a gender earnings ratio of 82.7 cents on the dollar in 2024, and the second year in a row of decline, after the significant decrease in 2023 from 83.6 cents on the dollar.<sup>3</sup>

### Women Earn Less than Men in Nearly All Occupations

In 2025, women working full-time earned less than men in nearly all occupations, regardless of whether these occupations were female-dominated or male-dominated. In 112 out of 132 occupations with sufficient data to calculate the gender earnings ratio for full-time weekly workers, women earned at least 5 percent less than men (or had an earnings ratio of less than 95 percent).<sup>4</sup>



The majority of occupations, 84 of 132, had a gender earnings ratio ranging between 70 percent and 90 percent. In seven occupations, women's earnings were less than 70 percent of men's. For example, women employed as paralegals and legal assistants had the lowest gender earnings ratio among all occupations, earning 61.5 cents on the dollar compared to their male co-workers.<sup>5</sup> This means women were paid \$730 less per week at the median, leaving them with less income to cover child care expenses, medical costs, student loan payments, and retirement.



Women's median weekly earnings<sup>6</sup> were nearly equal to men's in only four occupations: industrial production managers (99 percent), fast food and counter workers (98.5 percent), pharmacists (98.1 percent), and food preparation workers (98 percent). In 7 of the 132 detailed occupations with sufficient data, women's median weekly earnings exceeded men's. The largest three occupations with gender earnings ratios above 100 percent were counselors, all other<sup>7</sup> (107.6 percent), transportation, storage, and distribution managers (116.7 percent), and educational, guidance, and career counselors and advisors (120.3 percent). However, less than 1 percent of women employed full-time work in these three occupations.<sup>8</sup>

### **Women Earn Less than Men in the 20 Largest Occupations for Women**

In each of the 20 largest occupations for women working full-time, women were paid less than men (Table 1). The gender earnings ratio in these occupations ranged from 96.9 percent for receptionists and information clerks, as well as personal care aides, to 72.4 percent for secretaries and administrative assistants (excluding legal, medical, and executive). Notably, over 91 percent of those working full-time as secretaries and administrative assistants are women; however, women in this occupation had the lowest earnings ratio compared to men among the 20 largest occupations for women (72.4 percent).

At \$617 per week, women employed as cashiers had the lowest median weekly earnings among the 20 largest occupations for women (compared to \$694 for men of the same occupation). Women employed as managers had the highest median weekly earnings at \$1,702 (compared to \$2,089 for men of the same occupation), although less than half (40.1 percent) of managers employed full-time are women. Despite cashiers having the lowest median weekly earnings among the largest occupations for women, their earnings ratio (88.9 percent) is higher than that of managers (81.5 percent). This reflects common findings that women's earnings are closer to men's earnings in low-paying occupations because conditions are often inadequate for all workers.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 1. Median Weekly Earnings for Women and Men in the 20 Most Common Occupations for Women, 2025**

Full-Time Weekly and Salaried Workers Only

Occupation	Women's median weekly earnings	Gender earnings ratio	Men's median weekly earnings	Share of female workers in occupation (%)
All full-time workers	\$1,089	82.1%	\$1,326	44.9%
Elementary and middle school teachers	\$1,259	90.8%	\$1,386	78.6%
Registered nurses	\$1,517	79.8%	\$1,900	86.1%
Managers, all other	\$1,702	81.5%	\$2,089	40.1%
Customer service representatives	\$903	85.8%	\$1,053	64.5%
Secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive	\$940	72.4%	\$1,298	91.2%
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	\$927	77.4%	\$1,197	42.6%
Nursing assistants	\$760	96.0%	\$792	86.3%
Accountants and auditors	\$1,576	81.2%	\$1,941	58.5%
Personal care aides	\$743	96.9%	\$767	79.6%
Office clerks, general	\$924	77.9%	\$1,186	80.5%
First-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers	\$1,114	81.4%	\$1,368	66.5%
Receptionists and information clerks	\$817	96.9%	\$843	89.8%
Teaching assistants	\$745	84.8%	\$879	81.0%
Financial managers	\$1,665	82.3%	\$2,023	54.0%
Bookkeeping, accounting, auditing clerks	\$1,011	84.5%	\$1,196	82.7%
Cashiers	\$617	88.9%	\$694	66.7%
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	\$671	85.0%	\$789	83.9%
Human resources workers	\$1,425	80.8%	\$1,763	78.8%
Education and child care administrators	\$1,619	84.2%	\$1,924	63.4%
Medical and health services managers	\$1,539	77.3%	\$1,992	77.2%

**Source:** IWPR analysis of data from the US 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: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2026), <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.htm>.

**Notes:** Workers ages 16 or older. Full-time is defined as working 35 hours or more per week. Annual estimates for 2025 are 11-month averages that exclude October. Data for October 2025 were not collected due to the federal government shutdown. As a result, 2026 annual estimates are not strictly comparable with annual averages for other years.

## Women Earn Less than Men in the 20 Largest Occupations for Men

Women earned less than men in each of the 20 largest detailed occupations for men. The gender earnings ratio in these occupations ranged from 94.5 percent for software developers to 70.6 percent for retail sales workers. While the gap was narrowest for women software developers, just 20.5 percent of full-time software developers are women. In

contrast, women employed as retail sales workers had the widest wage gap, earning 70.6 cents per dollar compared to men. Three of the 20 largest occupations for men did not have a sufficient sample size of women to calculate their median weekly earnings or gender earnings ratio: electricians, carpenters, and automotive service technicians and mechanics (Table 2).

**Table 2. Median Weekly Earnings for Women and Men in the 20 Most Common Occupations for Men, 2025**

Full-Time Weekly and Salaried Workers Only

Occupation	Women's median weekly earnings	Women's earnings as a percent of men's	Men's median weekly earnings	Share of female workers in occupation (%)
All full-time workers	\$1,089	82.1%	\$1,326	44.9%
Drivers/sales workers and truck drivers	\$795	73.9%	\$1,076	6.2%
Managers, all other	\$1,702	81.5%	\$2,089	40.1%
Software developers	\$2,383	94.5%	\$2,523	20.5%
Construction laborers	\$887	93.8%	\$946	4.4%
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	\$732	85.7%	\$854	22.8%
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	\$927	77.4%	\$1,197	42.6%
Janitors and building cleaners	\$666	81.1%	\$821	30.5%
Retail salespersons	\$741	70.6%	\$1,050	37.0%
Other production workers	\$787	81.4%	\$967	28.1%
Electricians	n/a	n/a	\$1,379	3.0%
General and operations managers	\$1,558	84.4%	\$1,846	34.2%
Computer occupations, all other	\$1,507	84.1%	\$1,791	25.4%
Chief executives	\$2,325	75.1%	\$3,098	36.4%
Stockers and order fillers	\$716	94.2%	\$760	33.3%
Carpenters	n/a	n/a	\$1,023	1.9%
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing	\$1,272	83.0%	\$1,532	28.9%
Cooks	\$660	93.4%	\$707	43.6%
Elementary and middle school teachers	\$1,259	90.8%	\$1,386	78.6%
Automotive service technicians and mechanics	n/a	n/a	\$1,061	1.6%
Customer service representatives	\$903	85.8%	\$1,053	64.5%

**Source:** IWPR analysis of data from the US 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: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2026), <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.htm>.

**Notes:** Workers ages 16 or older. Full-time is defined as working 35 hours or more per week. Annual estimates for 2025 are 11-month averages that exclude October. Data for October 2025 were not collected due to the federal government shutdown. As a result, 2025 annual estimates are not strictly comparable with annual averages for other years.

## Policies to Achieve Pay Equity and Economic Security for All Women

Historic and present data reveal the truth about women's experience in the workforce: Women in the United States do not choose to earn less—they earn less even when working full-time in the same occupations as men. To begin to address the diverse factors that contribute to the gender wage gap and inequities between different groups of women, policymakers should start by pursuing the evidence-informed policy solutions that encompass an equally diverse range of actions, including:

- **Defend workers' rights from current threats and support improvements for equal pay protections.** As workers' rights and equal pay protections continue to face mounting threats, it is crucial that policymakers ensure that federal agencies, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, have sufficient resources and that oversight authorities are utilized to fully monitor, uphold, and enforce existing worker nondiscrimination protections and statutes. Rather than being undermined, such workers' rights and equal pay protections must also be further strengthened by closing loopholes and gaps in statutes.
- **Promote higher wages and better job quality in industries dominated by women.** This includes a range of policy actions at both the federal and state levels, such as increasing the minimum wage and abolishing the tipped minimum wage; providing comprehensive access to paid leave, including sick leave and family leave, and child care; and supporting the right of workers to act collectively and join or form a union.



*To learn more about related legislation and executive priorities on equitable work and wages, see IWPR's [Federal Policy Solutions to Advance Gender Equity](#) briefs on [Equal Pay](#) and [Better Workplaces](#). For state-level data on women and legislative developments, visit IWPR's [State Policy Action Lab](#).*

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## Endnotes

1. In this fact sheet, full-time refers to full-time weekly workers. Full-time is 35 hours or more per week.
2. Women employed as architects, except landscape and naval earn \$846 less per week at the median compared to men of the same occupation.
3. Ariane Hegewisch and Hannah Gartner, "Women Earn Less than Men Whether They Work in the Same or Different Occupations," IWPR fact sheet #C521 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2024), <https://iwpr.org/equal-pay-day-2024/>; Ariane Hegewisch and Cristy Mendoza, "Women Earn Less than Men Whether They Work in the Same of Different Occupations," IWPR fact sheet #C532 (Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2025), <https://iwpr.org/occupational-wage-gap-2025/>.
4. IWPR analysis of data from the US 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: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2026), <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.htm>. Median earnings for full-time work are a widely used measure to calculate the gender earnings ratio and the gender wage gap.
5. See note 4.
6. The median is the midpoint in the earning distribution at which about half of all workers earn more and half of all workers earn less.
7. Counselors, all other does not include substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors, educational, guidance, and career counselors and advisors, marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, or rehabilitation counselors.
8. See note 4.
9. Francine D. Blau and Lawrence M. Kahn, "The Gender Wage Gap, Extent, Trends, and Explanations," *Journal of Economic Literature* 55, no. 3 (2017): 789-865, <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jel.20160995>.

## 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.

