



Fact Sheet

IWPR #C350

September 2011

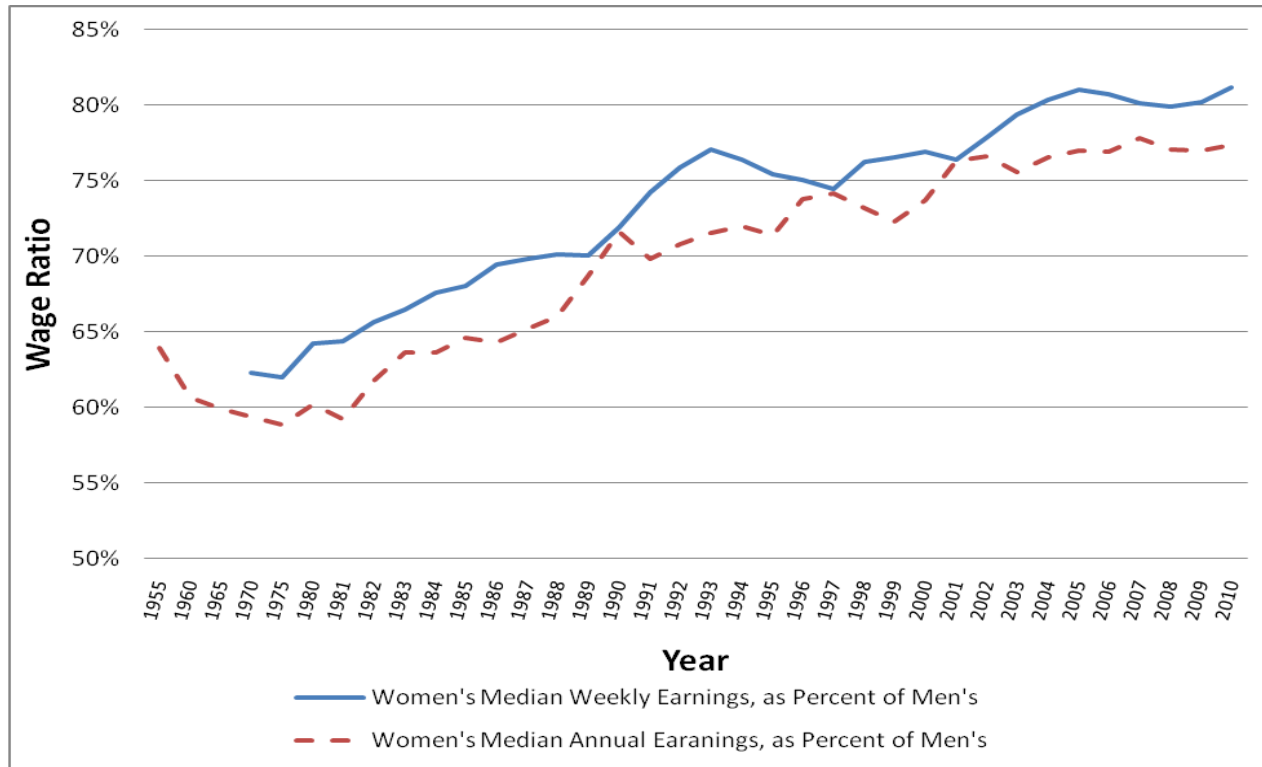
The Gender Wage Gap: 2010

The ratio of women's and men's median annual earnings was 77.4 for full-time/year-round workers in 2010, essentially unchanged from 77.0 in 2009. (This means the gender wage gap for full-time/year-round workers is now 22.6 percent.). During the last decade the wage gap narrowed by less than one percentage point. In the previous decade, between 1991 and 2000, it closed by almost four, and in the decade prior to that, 1981 and 1990, by over ten percentage points.

An alternative measure of the wage gap, the ratio of women's to men's median weekly earnings for full-time workers—was 81.2 in 2010. The two series exhibit the same general trend over the long term (even though they often move in different directions in the short-term; Figure 1).

Both earnings ratios include only full-time workers; if part-time and/or part-year workers were included, the ratios would be much lower as women are more likely than men to work reduced schedules in order to manage childrearing and other caregiving work. The annual ratio for full-time/year-round workers, including self-employed workers, tends to be slightly lower than the ratio for weekly earnings (including full-time workers who work only part of the year).

Figure 1: The Gender Earnings Ratio, 1955–2010, Full-Time Workers



Source: See Table 2.

Real annual earnings for full-time/year-round workers were almost unchanged compared with 2009, for both women and men (Table 2). Lack of change in real earnings for full-time/year-round workers does not take account of the many workers who have seen a drop in earnings as a result of recession related cutbacks in their hours of work. During 2010, 4.2 million women and 4.5 million men worked part-time involuntarily, for ‘economic reasons’ (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Household Data Annual Averages, Table 22).

Table 1. Median Weekly Earnings and Gender Wage Gap for Full-Time Workers, 16 years and Older by Race and Ethnicity, 2010*

Race and ethnicity	Male	Female	Women's earnings as % of white men's earnings**	
			2010	2009
All races	\$47,715	\$36,931	77.4%	77.0%
White alone, not Hispanic	\$51,865	\$40,270	77.6%	75.0%
Black or African American only	\$36,803	\$32,290	62.3%	61.9%
Asian only	\$51,838	\$41,309	79.6%	82.3%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	\$31,408	\$27,992	54.0%	52.9%

Notes: * For more information about historical trends in earnings by race and ethnicity see U.S. Census Bureau, *Historical Income Tables: People* at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/historical/people/index.html>. ** Except “all races”.

Source: Institute for Women's Policy Research Compilation of Current Population Survey Labor Force Statistics, 2010 http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032011/perinc/new05_000.htm (retrieved September 13 2011).

Black and Hispanic workers of both sexes earn considerably less than white males, but the gap in earnings is particularly marked for women of color (except for Asian American women). Hispanic or Latina women’s median earnings are little more than half (54.5 percent) of white men’s earnings, and black women’s median earnings are only 62.8 cents for every dollar earned by white men (Table 1). The relatively high earnings of Asian Americans are related to historically high rates of educational attainment within this group, although even here a gender gap remains (19.6 percent). The narrowing of the gap in earnings since 2009 for Hispanic/Latina, black and white women compared with white men is due to marginally higher improvements in real earnings for these groups; however, these real earnings gains were well below half of one percent. Black men and Asian women experienced marginal decreases in real earnings (data not shown).

Closing the gender wage gap is not a zero-sum game—gains for one gender do not require losses for the other. For the gender wage gap to close, women’s real wages must rise faster than men’s but, as the economy begins to grow again, real wages should rise for both men and women. Yet (as can be seen from Table 2) since 1980, real wages for men have remained virtually unchanged while women’s real earnings increased across the same time period. Women’s earnings have become increasingly important to family incomes. The continuing gender wage gap hurts women and their families.

Table 2. The Gender Wage Ratio and Real Earnings, 1955–2010, Full-Time Workers

Year	Median annual earnings, women, adjusted to 2010 dollars	Median annual earnings, men, adjusted to 2010 dollars	Median annual earnings ratio, full-year workers	Median weekly earnings, women, adjusted to 2010 dollars	Median weekly earnings, men, adjusted to 2010 dollars	Median weekly earnings ratio
1955						
1960	\$23,994	\$39,545	60.7%			
1965	\$26,499	\$44,220	59.9%			
1970	\$29,915	\$50,389	59.4%			62.3%
1975	\$30,414	\$51,709	58.8%			62.0%
1980	\$29,631	\$49,253	60.2%	\$532	\$828	64.2%
1981	\$28,789	\$48,601	59.2%	\$525	\$816	64.4%
1982	\$29,407	\$47,627	61.7%	\$540	\$823	65.7%
1983	\$30,464	\$47,904	63.6%	\$552	\$830	66.5%
1984	\$31,019	\$48,728	63.7%	\$556	\$823	67.6%
1985	\$31,663	\$49,032	64.6%	\$561	\$825	68.1%
1986	\$32,295	\$50,248	64.3%	\$579	\$834	69.5%
1987	\$32,461	\$49,804	65.2%	\$582	\$833	69.8%
1988	\$32,452	\$49,134	66.0%	\$581	\$828	70.2%
1989	\$33,006	\$48,062	68.7%	\$577	\$823	70.1%
1990	\$33,070	\$46,177	71.6%	\$577	\$802	71.9%
1991	\$32,905	\$47,103	69.9%	\$586	\$789	74.2%
1992	\$33,221	\$46,933	70.8%	\$591	\$779	75.8%
1993	\$32,817	\$45,885	71.5%	\$593	\$770	77.1%
1994	\$32,672	\$45,397	72.0%	\$587	\$768	76.4%
1995	\$32,189	\$45,065	71.4%	\$581	\$770	75.5%
1996	\$32,952	\$44,673	73.8%	\$581	\$774	75.0%
1997	\$33,928	\$45,750	74.2%	\$586	\$787	74.4%
1998	\$34,597	\$47,283	73.2%	\$610	\$800	76.3%
1999	\$34,444	\$47,631	72.3%	\$619	\$809	76.5%
2000	\$34,775	\$47,172	73.7%	\$624	\$812	76.9%
2001	\$35,971	\$47,126	76.3%	\$630	\$825	76.4%
2002	\$36,609	\$47,792	76.6%	\$641	\$823	77.9%
2003	\$36,411	\$48,195	75.5%	\$654	\$824	79.4%
2004	\$36,062	\$47,093	76.6%	\$661	\$823	80.4%
2005	\$35,570	\$46,208	77.0%	\$653	\$806	81.0%
2006	\$35,169	\$45,711	76.9%	\$649	\$804	80.8%
2007	\$36,916	\$47,444	77.8%	\$646	\$806	80.2%
2008	\$36,202	\$46,960	77.1%	\$646	\$808	79.9%
2009	\$36,873	\$47,900	77.0%	\$668	\$832	80.2%
2010	\$36,931	\$47,715	77.4%	\$669	\$824	81.2%

Notes: Annual earnings data include self-employed workers; weekly data are for wage and salary workers only. Annual earnings are for workers aged 14 and older through 1979 and workers 15 and older from 1980 through 2010; weekly earnings are for full-time workers aged 16 and older and are not restricted to full-year workers. The annual average of weekly median earnings is usually released in January by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Annual median earnings data are typically released in late summer or early fall by the U.S. Census Bureau. Both data series are derived from the Current Population Survey. Adjustments to 2010 dollars are computed on the basis of the Consumer Price Index for all urban

consumers (CPI-U) that is published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <<ftp://fts.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/cpi/cpiiai.txt>> retrieved February 2011). .

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), Table 5.6; 1960 through 2010: U.S. Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010*, Table A-2; U.S. Census Bureau. "Table 38". <<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/histinc/incpertoc.html>> (retrieved January 2010). Weekly data: 1970 and 1975: Blau and Ferber (1992), Table 5.6; 1980 through 2010: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Household Data Annual Averages" <<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.pdf>> (retrieved February 2011); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Highlights of Women's Earnings in 2009*, Table 12, Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted. Table 2. <<http://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpswktab2.htm>> (retrieved February 2011).

This fact sheet was prepared by Ariane Hegewisch and Claudia Williams, with support provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

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