INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S POLICY RESEARCH

Fact Sheet

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The Gender Wage Gap by Occupation 2013
and by Race and Ethnicity

Women's median earnings are lower than men's in nearly all occupations, whether they work in occupations predominantly done by women, occupations predominantly done by men, or occupations with a more even mix of men and women. Data for both women's and men's median weekly earnings for full-time work are available for 112 occupations[1]; there are only three occupations in which women have higher median weekly earnings than men. In 101 of the 112 occupations, the gender earnings ratio of women's median weekly earnings to men's is 0.95 or lower (that is, a wage gap of at least 5 cents per dollar earned by men); in 17 of these occupations the gender earnings ratio is lower than 0.75 (that is, a wage gap of more than 25 cents per dollar earned by men).

During 2013, median weekly earnings for female full-time workers were $706, compared with $860 per week for men, a gender wage ratio of 82.1 percent (Table 1; a gender wage gap of 17.9 percent).[2]

Added to the gender wage gap within occupations is the gender wage gap between occupations. Male-dominated occupations tend to pay more than female-dominated occupations at similar skill levels, particularly in jobs that require higher educational levels.[3] For example, among high-skilled workers, males in 'software developers, applications and systems software' occupations, a male-dominated field, earn $1,737 per week on average (compared with $1,370 for women), while female workers in the 'registered nurses' occupation, a female-dominated field, earn $1,086 (compared with $1,236 for men). Thus, tackling occupational segregation is an important part of eliminating the gender wage gap.

The gender wage gap and occupational segregation—men primarily working in occupations done by men, and women primarily working with other women—are persistent features of the U.S. labor market. Only four of the 20 most common occupations for men and the 20 most common occupations for women overlap. Of all women, four of ten (39.1 percent) work in female-dominated occupations (those in which at least three of four workers are women) and slightly more than four of ten male workers (42.2 percent) work in male-dominated occupations (those in which at least three of four workers are men). Only 5.4 percent of women work in male-dominated occupations and only 4.8 percent of men work in female-dominated occupations.[4]

Women Earn Less than Men in All of the Most Common Occupations for Women

Table 1 shows the median weekly earnings and the gender earnings ratio in the 20 most common occupations for full-time working women. The occupations together employ 42.1 percent of women and 15.4 percent of men. The three largest occupations—'elementary and middle school teachers,' 'secretaries and administrative assistants,' and 'registered nurses'—together employ close to 14 percent of all women. Ten of these 20 occupations are traditionally female.

Table 1: The Wage Gap in the 20 Most Common Occupations for Women (Full-Time Workers Only), 2013

	Women's Median weekly earnings	Women's Earnings as percent of Men's	Men's Median weekly earnings	Share of female workers in occupation (percent)	Share of male workers in occupation as percent of all male workers	Share of female workers in occupation as percent of all female workers
All Full-time Workers	$706	91.0%	$860	44.4%	100% 57,994,000	100% 46,268,000
20 Most Common Occupations for Women						
Elementary and middle school teachers	$937	91.4%	$1,025	80.1%	0.9%	4.6%
Secretaries and administrative assistants	$677	87.7%	$772	94.7%	0.2%	4.6%
Registered nurses	$1,086	87.9%	$1,236	88.8%	0.4%	4.4%
Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides	$450	90.2%	$499	86.7%	0.3%	2.6%
Customer service representatives	$616	96.4%	$639	66.1%	0.9%	2.3%
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	$612	78.7%	$778	42.3%	2.3%	2.1%
Accountants and auditors	$1,029	81.2%	$1,268	62.3%	1.0%	2.0%
Cashiers	$379	89.0%	$426	69.0%	0.7%	2.0%
Managers, all other	$1,105	79.0%	$1,399	37.2%	2.6%	2.0%
First-line supervisors of office & administrative support workers	$748	88.4%	$846	67.7%	0.7%	1.8%
Receptionists and information clerks	$527	87.8%	$600	91.9%	0.1%	1.8%
Retail salespersons	$485	67.5%	$719	40.3%	1.9%	1.6%
Office clerks, general	$596	96.1%	$620	86.2%	0.2%	1.6%
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks	$670	89.2%	$751	87.3%	0.2%	1.5%
Financial managers	$1,064	70.1%	$1,518	54.4%	0.9%	1.3%
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	$406	86.9%	$467	82.5%	0.2%	1.3%
Waiters and waitresses	$400	89.1%	$449	63.2%	0.6%	1.2%
Personal care aides	$445	94.7%	$470	82.0%	0.2%	1.2%
Secondary school teachers	$986	90.2%	$1,093	55.3%	0.7%	1.1%
Social workers	$818	83.6%	$978	79.7%	0.2%	1.1%
Percent of all women and men:					*15.4%*	*42.1%*

Note: * Earnings data are published only for occupations with an estimated minimum of 50,000 workers.
Source: IWPR calculation of data from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013. "Household Data, Annual Averages. Table 39" <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.htm> (retrieved March 2014).

Within the 20 most common occupations for women, median full-time weekly earnings for women range from $1,086 per week for 'registered nurses' to $379 per week for 'cashiers' (Table 1). Women earn less than men in each of the most common occupations for women (these calculations include full-time workers only). The gender wage gap is largest for 'retail salespersons,' with a gender earnings ratio for full-time work of 67.5 percent (corresponding to $234 dollars less per week for women) and for 'financial managers,' with a ratio of 70.1 percent (corresponding to $454 less per week for women).[5]

Women Earn Less Than Men in All of the Most Common Occupations for Men

Table 2 shows the median weekly earnings and the gender earnings ratios in the 20 most common occupations for full-time working men. These occupations employ 28 percent of male workers and 16 percent of female full-time workers; eight of the occupations are non-traditional for women, and in five of the 20—'construction laborers,' 'grounds maintenance workers,' 'carpenters,' 'automotive service technicians and mechanics,' and 'electricians,'—there are too few women workers to estimate their median weekly earnings.

Without exception, women's median earnings are lower than men's in the 20 most common male occupations for which data are available. Median full-time weekly earnings for men range from $2,266 for 'chief executives' to $411 for 'cooks' (Table 2). Seven of the 20 most common occupations for men have male weekly earnings above $1,000, including one, 'chief executives,' with median earnings above $2,000 per week, compared with only four of the most common occupations for women with female weekly earnings above $1,000.

Nearly Twice as Many Women as Men Work in Occupations with Poverty Wages

Five of the most common occupations for women—'nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides,' 'cashiers,' 'maids and household cleaners,' 'waiters and waitresses,' and 'personal care aides,' have female median earnings for a full week of work that provide less than 100 percent of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' federal poverty level for a family of four, compared with only two of the most common occupations for men—'cooks' and 'grounds maintenance workers.'[6] The poverty levels refer to annual earnings, and translating them into weekly earnings assumes that a worker would be able to get full-time work for 52 weeks a year; this may not always be possible in occupations characterized by considerable fluctuations in demand for labor and, hence, unstable earning opportunities.

A further seven of the most common female, and six of the most common male, occupations provide median earnings of less than 150 percent of the poverty threshold for a family of four. Workers in these occupations are potentially placed among the working poor, with earnings that are often too high to qualify for public supports, but too low to attain economic security. These include occupations such as 'retail salesperson,' 'receptionists and information clerks,' and 'office clerks, general.' Low earnings are a significant problem for both male and female full-time workers. Yet, within the 20 most common occupations for women, 6.8 million women work in occupations that have median earnings for full-time work below the federal poverty threshold for a family of four, compared with 3.7 million men who work in such low-wage occupations among the twenty most common occupations for men.

Table 2: The Wage Gap in the 20 Most Common Occupations for Men (Full-Time Workers Only), 2013

	Men's median weekly earnings	Women's earnings as percent of men's	Women's Median weekly earnings	Share of female workers in occupation (percent)	Share of male workers in occupation as percent of all male workers	Share of female workers in occupation as percent of all female workers
All Full-time Workers	$860	82.1%	$706	44.4%	100% 57,994,000	100% 46,268,000
20 Most Common Occupations for Men						
Managers, all other	$1,399	79.0%	$1,105	37.2%	2.6%	2.0%
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	$ 778	78.7%	$ 612	42.3%	2.3%	2.1%
Janitors and building cleaners	$ 517	80.9%	$ 418	27.4%	1.9%	0.9%
Retail salespersons	$ 719	67.5%	$ 485	40.3%	1.9%	1.6%
Construction laborers	$ 592	-	-	2.7%	1.8%	0.1%
Software developers, applications and systems software	$1,737	78.9%	$1,370	19.8%	1.5%	0.5%
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing	$1,131	76.0%	$ 859	22.7%	1.4%	0.5%
Cooks	$ 411	92.9%	$ 382	34.7%	1.4%	0.9%
Grounds maintenance workers	$ 441	-	-	3.9%	1.3%	0.1%
Chief executives	$2,266	79.9%	$1,811	27.2%	1.3%	0.6%
Carpenters	$ 659	-	-	1.4%	1.2%	0.0%
General and operations managers	$1,444	80.4%	$1,161	26.4%	1.2%	0.5%
Automotive service technicians and mechanics	$ 714	-	-	1.9%	1.1%	0.0%
Electricians	$ 952	-	-	1.7%	1.1%	0.0%
Stock clerks and order fillers	$ 503	96.2%	$ 484	35.0%	1.0%	0.7%
Police and sheriff's patrol officers	$1,032	85.4%	$ 881	13.0%	1.0%	0.2%
Accountants and auditors	$1,268	81.2%	$1,029	62.3%	1.0%	2.0%
Miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators	$ 610	80.8%	$ 493	37.2%	1.0%	0.7%
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	$ 952	71.6%	$ 682	18.5%	0.9%	0.3%
Customer service representatives	$ 639	96.4%	$ 616	66.1%	0.9%	2.3%
Percent of all women and men:					*28.0%*	*16.1%*

Note: *Earnings data are made available only where there are an estimated minimum of 50,000 workers in an occupation.
Source: See Table 1

Women Earn Less than Men of the same Race and Ethnicity in Broad Occupational Categories

The gender wage gap differs by race and ethnicity. Table 3 provides median weekly earnings for women and men for full-time work by race and ethnicity in seven broad occupational groups; the sample size in the Current Population Survey is not sufficient to provide earnings estimates by race and ethnicity at a more detailed occupational level, or for other racial or ethnic groups. The distribution of women across the occupations varies for each group. More than one third of Asian women, as well as three in ten white women, one quarter of black women, and one fifth of Hispanic women, work in 'professional and related' occupations; black and Hispanic women are nearly twice as likely to work in service occupations as white women; Asian women are considerably less likely than other women to work in 'office and administrative support' occupations; and Hispanic women are the most likely group of women to work in 'production, transportation and material moving' occupations (Table 3).

For all occupations considered together, Hispanic women have the lowest median earnings at $541 per week (61.2 percent of the median weekly earnings of white men--$884, Table 3). Black women have median weekly earnings of $606 or 68.6 percent of the median weekly earnings of white men. Both Asian men and women have the highest median weekly earnings at $1,059 and $819, respectively. The wage gaps for Asian women compared with Asian men, at 77.3 percent, and white women compared with white men, at 81.7 percent, are larger than the wage gap for the whole population; the wage gaps between black female and male workers and Latino male and female workers are smaller.[7]

With the exception of 'office and administrative support,' where the median earnings of black and Hispanic women are slightly higher than those of black and Hispanic men, men earn more than women of the same race or ethnicity in each of the major occupational groupings (Table 3). The gender earnings gap is magnified by a race and ethnic earnings gap. For example, Hispanic women in 'management, business, and financial operations,' earn 83.2 percent of Hispanic men's and only 60.7 percent of white men's earnings in these occupations. The median earnings of Hispanic women are lower than the federal poverty level for a family of four in three occupational groups: 'service occupations,' 'production, transportation, and material moving occupations,' and 'natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.' These three occupational groups employ four of ten (39.9 percent) Hispanic full-time women workers (Table 3).

Conclusion

More than fifty years after the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and fifty years after Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 made compensation discrimination illegal, a gender earnings gap remains. Our analysis shows that women's median earnings are lower than men's in all of the 20 most common occupations for men and women, and, indeed, in almost all occupations for which a gender wage gap can be calculated. Female-dominated occupations tend to have lower median earnings than male-dominated occupations, which has a particularly pernicious impact on the women who work in the lowest paid female occupations, including 'nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides,' 'cashiers,' 'maids and household cleaners,' 'waiters and waitresses,' and 'personal care aides,' where even full-time work may leave them with earnings at, or only marginally above, the federal poverty threshold. Such poverty wages are particularly common for Latina women. To improve women's earnings and reduce the gender earnings gap, women and their families need enhanced efforts to ensure non-discriminatory hiring and pay practices, better training and career counseling, and improved work-family supports. Such public policies as raising the minimum wage, which increase wages in the lowest-paid jobs, are especially important for women, particularly women of color.

Table 3: Median Weekly Earnings for Male and Female Workers, by Race and Ethnicity for Broad Occupational Groups (Full-Time Workers Only), 2013

Female Workers	White Women (non-Hispanic only)		Black/ African American Women		Asian Women		Latina/ Hispanic Women	
Occupation	**Median weekly earnings**	**White women in occupation as % of all female White workers**	**Median weekly earnings**	**Black women in occupation as % of all female Black workers**	**Median weekly earnings**	**Asian women in occupation as % of all female Asian workers**	**Median weekly earnings**	**Latina women in occupation as % of all female Latina workers**
All occupations	$722	100.0%	$606	100.0%	$819	100.0%	$541	100.0%
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	$1,041	18.0%	$982	13.1%	$1,225	17.7%	$868	11.1%
Professional and related occupations	$946	30.2%	$837	24.0%	$1,136	34.1%	$842	18.8%
Service occupations	$453	14.4%	$442	23.7%	$490	17.3%	$406	26.6%
Sales and related occupations	$587	8.8%	$420	7.9%	$610	7.6%	$475	9.7%
Office and administrative support occupations	$632	22.1%	$609	22.1%	$687	14.6%	$589	20.5%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	$567	1.0%	$587	0.9%	$585	0.6%	$404	1.8%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	$501	5.6%	$500	8.2%	$488	8.3%	$410	11.5%
Male Workers	**White Men (non-Hispanic only)**		**Black/ African American Men**		**Asian Men**		**Latino/ Hispanic Men**	
Occupation	**Median weekly earnings**	**White men in occupation as % of all male White workers**	**Median weekly earnings**	**Black men in occupation as % of all male Black workers**	**Median weekly earnings ($)**	**Asian men in occupation as % of all male Asian workers**	**Median weekly earnings**	**Latino men in occupation as % of all male Latino workers**
All occupations	$884	100.0%	$664	100.0%	$1,059	100.0%	$594	100.0%
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	$1,429	16.7%	$998	10.2%	$1,539	17.4%	$1,043	7.7%
Professional and related occupations	$1,301	18.6%	$1,004	14.6%	$1,540	36.4%	$1,129	8.6%
Service occupations	$565	12.1%	$520	19.9%	$571	12.6%	$448	20.5%
Sales and related occupations	$867	9.7%	$666	6.8%	$795	8.2%	$628	7.0%
Office and administrative support occupations	$694	6.0%	$603	9.5%	$737	6.2%	$566	6.6%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	$771	18.4%	$668	12.1%	$794	6.4%	$586	26.1%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	$697	18.6%	$591	27.0%	$587	12.9%	$553	23.5%

Note: * Data for black or African Americans may include black Hispanics or Latinos. **Source**: IWPR compilation of 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 2013*

Notes

[1] Weekly earnings data in this factsheet are based on the Current Population Survey (CPS) and refer to full-time (35 hours or more per week) wage and salaried workers ages 16 and older (excluding the self-employed). Earnings data are made available only where there are an estimated minimum of 50,000 workers in an occupation; as many occupations have fewer than 50,000 females or males working within them, there is insufficient data to calculate the earnings gap by gender for the majority of occupations.

[2] Annual earnings data for 2013 (for workers 15 years and older as well as the self-employed, with earnings for at least 50 weeks of the year) are not available until Fall 2014; the female/male annual earnings ratio was 76.5 percent in 2012 (a gender wage gap of 23.5 percent in 2012).

[3] See Ariane Hegewisch, Hannah Liepmann, Jeffrey Hayes, and Heidi Hartmann, "Separate and Not Equal? Gender Segregation in the Labor Market and the Gender Wage Gap." IWPR Briefing Paper #C377. Institute for Women's Policy Research: Washington, DC, 2010.

[4] A nontraditional occupation for women is defined in the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 as one where women are fewer than 25 percent of workers. Occupations are defined according to the 2010 Census Standard Occupational classification system; 2013 data are not strictly comparable to data for 2010 or earlier years.

[5]The occupation with the largest measured gender earnings gap is 'Securities, commodities, and financial services sales agents' ; women had median weekly earnings for full-time work of $863, compared with men's of $1,389, for a female/male earnings ratio of 62.1 percent. There are only three occupations where women's median weekly earnings are slightly higher than men's: 'bakers' ($524 per week for women and $488 per week for men, for an earnings ratio of 107.4 percent), 'wholesale and retail buyers, except farm products" ($930 per week for women and $871 per week for men, and earnings ratio of 106.8 percent) and 'computer occupations, all other' ($1,176 per week for women and $1,136 per week for men, for an earnings ratio of 103.5 percent). In addition, 'counselors' have a wage gap of less than 1 percent (IWPR calculation based on same source as Table 1).

[6]The 2013 federal poverty level for a family of four was $23,550 ($453 per week for 52 weeks). At 150 percent of the poverty level, annual income is $35,325, or weekly income is $679; see U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 'The 2013 HHS Poverty Guidelines' < http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/13poverty.cfm> (retrieved March 21, 2014)

[7] For more information see "The Gender Wage Gap 2013" IWPR Fact Sheet C413 <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/the-gender-wage-gap-2013-differences-by-race-and-ethnicity-no-growth-in-real-wages-for-women>.

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