



THE OHIO
WOMEN'S
PUBLIC POLICY NETWORK

FACT SHEET:

EQUAL PAY AND THE GENDER WAGE GAP

August 2018

While women make up nearly half of the state's labor force, increasingly take on the role of breadwinners within their families, and earn greater rates of undergraduate and postsecondary educational attainment, they continue to face pay inequalities in the workplace that hold them back from their full economic potential.

Equal pay is crucially important to the financial security of all women and their families, but the persistent gender wage gap remains a harsh reality for women - and the gap is even larger for women of color. Unfair wage disparities not only impact women's paychecks now, but also have long-term consequences for women's wealth attainment, investment, and retirement savings.

WHAT IS THE GENDER WAGE GAP?¹

- Women, whether in low-wage or high-wage jobs, experience a pay gap in nearly every occupation and sector of work. On average, Women in the United States who work full-time, year round are paid 80 cents for every dollar their male counterparts take home.
- And the wage gap is even larger for women of color: Nationally, for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men, Black women make 63 cents, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women make 59 cents, Native women make 57 cents, and Latina women make 54 cents.
- There is also a larger pay gap for moms compared to dads, known as the “motherhood penalty.” In the United States, working mothers are paid, on average, just 71 cents for every dollar a working father takes home.
- Unionized women experience a smaller wage gap than women who are not represented by a union. Overall, the gender wage gap for union members is 53 percent smaller than the wage gap for non-union workers.
- In Ohio, the gap is slightly larger than the national average with women typically earning just 75 cents for every dollar men make, totaling an annual wage gap of \$12,686. Again, the pay disparities are even larger for women of color working in Ohio: Black women are paid 64 cents and Latinas are paid 61 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.
- Wage inequality means that women have less to spend on themselves and their families, invest and save for the future, and put back into businesses and the local economy. Due to the wage gap, women in Ohio who are working full time lose a combined total of more than \$29.6 billion every year.
- According to an analysis from the National Women’s Law Center, the average woman has to work fifty years to match what a man makes over a forty year career. Based on the current gender wage gap, a 20-year old woman just starting full time work today stands to lose \$418,800 over a 40-year career compared to her male counterpart.²
- Due to the larger wage gap in Ohio, this factors out to an even larger loss of wages over a 40-year career for women working in the state. The analysis estimated that women in Ohio stand to lose \$507,440 over a 40-year career compared to male counterparts. The wage disparities for women of color mean that they will experience an even higher typical loss of lifetime earnings. The same study found that Black women stand to lose \$718,000 and Latina women typically lose \$791,400 over a lifetime.
- The wage gap cannot be explained away by women’s choices. Studies show that even when adjusting for certain variables - like age, experience, education, and location - a gap still exists for “unexplained” reasons; discrimination and bias are thought to be the main causes for the unaccounted for gap.

1. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/workplace-fairness/fair-pay/4-2017-oh-wage-gap.pdf>

2. <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/The-Wage-Gap-The-Who-How-Why-and-What-to-Do-2017-2.pdf>

THE IMPACT ON WOMEN, FAMILIES, AND THE ECONOMY:

- The wage gap has far-reaching implications beyond just an individual. It harms women's earning potential, the economic security and wealth accumulation of women and their families, and our state economy as a whole.
- In Ohio, women make up nearly half (48%) of the state's workforce, and families are increasingly dependent upon the wages of women. In fact, in nearly two-thirds of households in Ohio, women are the sole, primary, or co-breadwinner. Ensuring equal pay is critical for the economic stability of Ohio families.
- Mothers play a critical role in the economic stability of their families as they increasingly take on the role of breadwinner: 85 percent of Black mothers, 62 percent of Latina mothers, and 53 percent of White mothers are key family breadwinners. Closing the wage gap for mothers would help support the financial security of families headed by women.³
- As long as the wage gap exists, women will also continue to face a wealth gap, which remains a barrier to their ability to achieve financial security in their lifetime and something that affects their safety, health, and retirement.
- By reducing the economic potential and spending power of women, pay inequality stifles the economic growth of our country and our state. According to research, the United States economy would have produced income of \$512.6 billion more if women received equal pay.⁴

TAKE ACTION: ADVANCE PAY EQUALITY IN OHIO

Although the Equal Pay Act and other civil rights laws enforced in our country have closed the gap and continue to combat wage discrimination, women still experience a gender and racial wage gap. Only 28 percent of U.S. working women report that they are confident they are being paid the same salaries as their male counterparts.⁵ And oftentimes, women have no way of knowing if they are receiving fair pay; fearing the loss of their job or retaliatory discipline from employers for even discussing pay with co-workers.

We need lawmakers to get serious about pay equality: If the current pace of change continues at the same rate as it has in the United States since 1960, men and women will not reach gender pay parity until the year 2059.

Closing the wage gap is not an impossible challenge. There are many legislative fixes that lawmakers can enact to promote equal pay practices and strengthen enforcement laws. Stronger family-friendly workplaces policies - like paid family leave and fair scheduling - can also address some of the underlying causes of wage inequality for women.

3. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/workplace-fairness/fair-pay/4-2017-oh-wage-gap.pdf>

4. <https://iwpr.org/publications/impact-equal-pay-poverty-economy/>

5. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/workplace-fairness/fair-pay/4-2017-oh-wage-gap.pdf>

WE NEED YOUR VOICE IN THIS FIGHT

Contact lawmakers and urge them to take action on equal pay bills:

- **HB 138** (Smith, Boyd) – Wage Discrimination: Creates an equal pay discrimination hotline where workers could anonymously report instances of alleged wage discrimination. **Contact House Economic Development, Commerce & Labor Committee Chairman Ron Young at (614) 644-6074. Urge him to hold hearings on the bill before the end of the year.**
- **HB 180** (Clyde, Howse) – Ohio Equal Pay Act: Establishes the Ohio Equal Pay Act to create protections for closing the wage gap, such as prohibiting an employer from retaliating against employees who discuss their salaries or wages. **Contact the House Government Accountability & Oversight Committee Chair Representative Louis Blessing III at (614) 466-9091. Urge him to hold hearings on the bill before the end of the year.**
- **HB 385** (West) – Wage Information: Prohibits a state agency from preventing employees from discussing their own wages or another employee’s wages and prohibits retaliation against an employee who has discussed wages. It also prohibits a state agency from seeking the wage or salary history of a job candidate. **Contact the House Economic Development, Commerce & Labor Committee Chairman Representative Ron Young at (614) 644-6074. Urge him to hold hearings on the bill.**
- **HB 403** (Howse, Kelly) – Equal Pay: Creates a Gender Pay Disparity Task Force to address pay inequality. **Contact the House Government Accountability & Oversight Committee Chair Representative Louis Blessing III at (614) 466-9091. Urge him to hold hearings on the bill before the end of the year.**
- **SB 174** (Tavares) – Wage Requirements: Enacts the Fair and Acceptable Income Required (FAIR) Act, which would update state laws to help protect against wage discrimination. **Contact the Senate Transformation, Commerce & Workforce Committee, Representative Frank LaRose at (614) 466-4823. Urge him to hold hearings on the bill before the end of the year.**

SHARE YOUR STORY

One of the most powerful ways that you can take action to help advance a piece of legislation you care about is by sharing your own personal story. Have you or someone you know been impacted by wage inequality? Share your equal pay story at www.womenspublicpolicynetwork.org/stories/

The Ohio Women’s Public Policy Network is a coalition of more than 25 advocacy organizations focused on promoting policies that create economic security for women and strengthen Ohio families. Using a collective voice that represents the women of our state, this network works to ensure that public policy reflects the true needs of women and families. For more information, visit our website at www.womenspublicpolicynetwork.org

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