



THE OHIO
WOMEN'S
PUBLIC POLICY NETWORK

FACT SHEET:

PAY EQUITY AND THE RACIAL AND GENDER WAGE GAPS

November 2019

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.

Pay equity 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 82 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 62 cents, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women make 61 cents, Native women make 57 cents, and Latina women make 54 cents.
- There is also a larger pay gap for mothers compared to fathers (on average, \$41,000 compared to \$59,000), known as the “motherhood penalty.” In the United States, working mothers are paid, on average, just 69 cents for every dollar paid to working fathers. Mothers of every race are typically paid less than white, non-Hispanic fathers.
- 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, based on today’s wage gap, a woman who works full time, year round stands to lose more than \$400,000 over a 40-year career. This woman would have to work nine years longer than her male counterpart to make up this lifetime wage gap. These lost wages severely reduce women’s ability to save for retirement and threaten their economic security later in life.²
- The analysis estimated that women in Ohio stand to lose more than \$500,000 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 more than \$900,000 and Latina women typically lose more than \$1,000,000 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

Despite the Equal Pay Act and other civil rights laws enforced in our country, women still experience gender and racial wage gaps. 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 many times, women have no way of knowing if they are receiving fair pay, and may fear 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:

- **House Bill 221 (Boyd, Crawley) - Wage Discrimination:** To require the Ohio Civil Rights Commission to establish a system for individuals to make anonymous complaints regarding wage discrimination. Contact House Civil Justice Chairman Steve Hambley at (614) 466-8140. Urge him to hold a vote on the bill, which has received three hearings, before the end of the session.
- **Senate Bill 149 (Manharath) - Wage History:** To prohibit employers from seeking a prospective employee's wage or salary history. Contact Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workplace Chairman Rob McColley at (614) 466-8150. Urge him to hold hearings on the bill before the end of the session.
- **Senate Bill 92 (Manharath) - Wage Payments:** To enact the "fair and Acceptable Income Required (FAIR) Act" and to revise the enforcement of the prohibitions against discrimination in the payments of wages. Contact Senate General Government and Agency Review Chairman Kirk Schuring at (614) 466-0626. Urge him to hold hearings on the bill before the end of the session.
- **Senate Bill 93 (Manharath) - Domestic Workers:** Regarding wages, overtime, and other workplace factors related to the employment of domestic workers. Contact Senate General Government And Agency Review Chairman Kirk
- **House Bill 91 (Boggs, Boyd) - Family and Medical Leave:** Establishes a statewide paid family and medical leave insurance fund. Contact House Insurance Committee Chair Thomas Brinkman at (614) 644-6886. Urge him to hold more hearings on the bill before the end of session.
- **Senate Bill 91 (Maharath) - Family and Medical Leave:** Establishes a statewide paid family and medical leave insurance fund. Contact Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee Chair Bob Hackett at (614) 466-3780. Urge him to hold more hearings on the bill before the end of session.
- **House Bill 34 (Kelly) - Minimum Wage:** To increase the state minimum wage and to allow municipalities, townships and counties to establish higher minimum wage requirements. Contact House Commerce and Labor Chairwoman Gayle Manning at (614) 644-5076. Urge her to hold hearings on the bill before the end of the session.
- **House Bill 391 (Smith, Sobecki) - Minimum Wage:** To increase the state minimum wage to ten dollars and fifty-five cents per hour beginning January 1, 2021. Contact House Commerce and Labor Chairwoman Gayle Manning at (614) 644-5076. Urge her to hold a hearing before the end of the session.

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 30 advocacy organizations working collaboratively to advocate for public policies that build economic opportunity for women and their families. For more information, visit our website at www.womenspublicpolicynetwork.org

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