Women’s Earnings and Income

Earnings and Income of U.S. Women and Men

- The median annual earnings for full-time, year-round women workers in 2010 was $36,931 compared to men’s $47,715.1
- In 2011, the median weekly earnings for full-time working women was $684, compared to $832 for men.2
- In 2011, the median weekly earnings for women in full-time management, professional, and related occupations was $941, compared to $1,269 for men.3
- In 2009, of the 32,280,000 dual-career couples, wives earned more than their husbands 28.9% of the time, up from 17.8% in 1987.4
- In 2010, full-time working married women with spouses present had median usual weekly earnings of $727, somewhat higher than never married women ($591) or women of other marital status (divorced, separated, or widowed - $653).5
- In 2010, married men with spouses present had median usual weekly earnings of $939, significantly higher than never married men ($608) or men of other marital status ($774).6
- In 2011, Asian women who were full-time wage and salary workers had higher median weekly earnings than women of all other races/ethnicities as well as African-American and Latino men.7

Women and Men’s Median Weekly Earnings, by Sex and Race/Ethnicity, 20118
Education is a factor in income – statistics show that higher degrees lead to higher median salaries. For full-time workers data below, men earn more than women in each category.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Median weekly earnings, women</th>
<th>Median weekly earnings, men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>$1,352</td>
<td>$1,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>$1,362</td>
<td>$1,881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>$1,127</td>
<td>$1,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>$909</td>
<td>$1,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s</td>
<td>$677</td>
<td>$886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate, no college</td>
<td>$543</td>
<td>$710</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Earnings for women with college degrees have increased by 33.4% since 1979 (on an inflation-adjusted basis) compared to a 19.9% increase for male college graduates.10

Between 1969-70 and 2009-2010, the percent of bachelor’s degrees earned by women rose from 43.1% to 57.2%, and by 2020-2021, they are projected to increase to 58.0%.11

Between 1969-70 and 2009-2010, the percent of master’s degrees earned by women rose from 39.7% to 60.3%, and by 2020-2021, they are projected to increase to 60.7%.12

Between 1969-70 and 2009-2010, the percent of doctoral degrees earned by women rose from 13.3% to 51.7%, and by 2020-2021, they are projected to increase to 53.8%.13

Between 1980 and 2011, the percent of women 25 and over with four or more years of college rose from 13.6% to 30.1%.14

**Economics of Marriage**

The Pew Research Center looked at marriage and earnings data for women and men in the U.S. ages 30-44 in 2007. The study found that in recent decades, the economic gains usually associated with marriage have been greater for men.
than for women. Women outpaced men in education and earnings growth, leading to “gender role reversals” in marriage’s economic benefits.15

- In 2007, median household incomes married women, married men, and unmarried women were about 60% higher than those of their counterparts in 1970. For unmarried men, however, the rise in median household income was 16%.16

- Women’s earnings grew 44% from 1970 to 2007, compared with 6% growth for men.17

- The percentage of women earning more than their husbands increased to 22% in 2007 from 4% in 1970.18

**Wage Gap**

- Based on median annual earnings for full-time, year-round workers, women earned 77.4% of men’s earnings in 2010.19

- Based on the median weekly earnings for full-time workers, (which excludes self-employed and full-time workers who work only part of the year), in 2011 women earned 82.2% as much as men.20
  - In 1979, women earned 62.3% as much as men.21

- The earnings difference between women and men varies with age, with younger women more closely approaching pay equity than older women (2010, median weekly earnings), for full-time wage and salary workers.22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>Women’s % of Men’s Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>79.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>75.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The gender wage gap also varies by industry. The biggest wage gap in the U.S. is in the Financial Activities industry, with women earning 70.5 cents for every dollar men make.24
The wage gap between women and men was widest for whites and Asians in 2011. 

Women’s Earnings as a Percentage of Men’s, by Race/Ethnicity

- White Women: 82.1%
- African-American Women: 91.1%
- Asian Women: 77.4%
- Latinas: 90.7%
Wage Gap Theories and Research

Although Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that women’s median earnings are less than men’s, the reasons behind the gap are highly debated. Some studies state that the gap can be explained to a large extent by non-discriminatory factors and are based in a division of labor in the home that relies more heavily on women than on men. Women are more likely than men to have interrupted careers, taking time off for family reasons (i.e., child care or elder care), and are more likely to work part-time. Women tend to be employed in “helping” and support professions, positions that are not considered comparable in pay to men’s work. Women also tend to be clustered in lower-paying positions. Women also have fewer incentives to invest in market-based formal education and on-the-job training and may avoid jobs that demand large investment in skills.

Meanwhile, further studies have found that a significant wage gap exists between women and men even when expected factors like family and labor force experience were eliminated and look toward systemic discrimination as one of the explanations.

Catalyst research has found that women MBA were being paid, on average, $4,600 less in their first job than men. This is after taking into account number of years prior experience, time since MBA, job level, global region, industry, and even parenthood.

The Institute for Women’s Policy Research finds that women earn far less than what men earn when measured over many years instead of over one year. Using what they see as a more inclusive 15-year time frame and taking into account women’s lower work hours and their years with zero earnings due to family care, the report that women workers in their prime earning years earned 62% less than men, or only $0.38 for every dollar men earned. During that 15-year period, the average woman earned only $273,592 (in 1999 dollars) while the average man earned $722,693 (in 1999 dollars). During that 15-year period, the more likely women are to be married and have children under 18, the more likely it is that they will be low earners and have fewer hours in the labor market. The opposite is true for men: Men who are married and have dependent children are more likely to have higher earnings and work longer hours.
Women’s Earnings and Income

Earnings and Income of Canadian Women and Men

- For full-time workers in 2011, women earned 82.6% of men’s earnings, based on average weekly wages. In 1997, the wage gap was 77.2% for full-time workers.33

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women % of Men’s Earnings for Full-Time Workers34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- For all workers, including full- and part-time, women earned 75.6% of men’s earnings in 2011, based on average weekly wages.35

- In Canada, 18% of dual-earner wives are now their families’ primary breadwinners when measured in hourly earnings, bringing in more than 55% of the household income.36
  - This is up from 14% in 1997.37

Gender Pay Gap Globally

- Gaps in earnings of women and men vary from country to country. Korea and Japan have the highest gender wage gap, at 39% difference and 28% difference between women and men’s salaries. Hungary is the lowest with 4%.38
Updated on May 22, 2012

SOURCES

http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032011/perinc/new05_000.htm

http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.htm

http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.htm


Women’s Earnings and Income

http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat37.htm
http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat37.htm
14 Digest of Education Statistics, "Table 8: Percentage of persons age 25 and over and of persons 25 to 29 years old with high school completion or higher and a bachelor’s or higher degree, by race/ethnicity and sex: Selected years, 1910 through 2011," Digest of Education Statistics 2011 (2012).  
http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstable/032011/perinc/new05_000.htm
http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.htm


Women’s Earnings and Income

ve+y+estimates+%28LFS%29+wages+of+employees+by+type+of+work%2C+North+American+Industry+Classification+System+sex+and+age+group&csid=


