



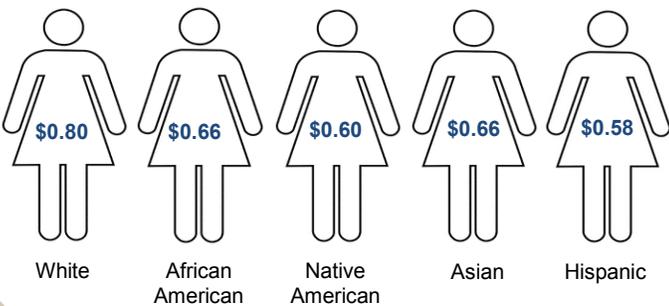
**\$0.78**

In 2011 (the most recent year for which U.S. Census Bureau data are available), women in Wisconsin working full-time, year-round, earned 78 cents on the dollar compared to men, the same as in 2010. Wisconsin ranks 28th among all states for its gender wage gap.

The average of \$0.78 for *all women* in Wisconsin masks a different economic reality for women of color. Across the board, women in racial/economic minority groups have lower median annual earnings, resulting in wider wage gaps that range from \$0.58 to \$0.66, for every \$1.00 earned by men.

**Women of Color Face Substantially Larger Gender Wage Gaps**

Median Annual Earnings, Full-Time, Year-Round Workers, WI, 2011



The Gender Wage Gap continues to be an important topic of discussion because of the increasing importance of women's earnings to family income. Nearly one-third of all households in Wisconsin are headed by women and, nationally, nearly 4 in 10 mothers serve as the primary breadwinner, bringing home the majority of their family's earnings. Based on women's 2011 median annual earnings of \$35,900, women in Wisconsin working full-time, year-round earn about \$10,000 less annually (on average) than their male counterparts.



**Understanding the Wage Gap**

Wisconsin's gender wage gap is evident irrespective of age, race, or level of education. Across occupations women earn less than men (on average), even where women are the majority of workers in an occupational field (see table). This gives rise to **controversy** over whether occupational choice is enough to fully explain the \$0.23 US wage gap.

In 2009, the US Department of Labor reported that the wage gap "may be almost entirely the result of individual **choices** being made by both male and female workers."

**Controlling for Factors that Affect Wage and Occupational Differences\***

	Aggregate Wage Gap	Adjusted Wage Gap
<b>US DOL</b> 2009 Study	\$0.23	\$0.05 to \$0.07
<b>AAUW</b> 2012 Study	\$0.17	\$0.07

The American Association of University Women (AAUW), looking at new college graduates, found a gender wage gap of \$0.83, which narrowed by more than half after controlling for factors related to wage and occupational differences.\*

Others counter that even if much of the wage gap can be explained by women's choices—e.g., leaving the workplace to raise children or choosing family-friendly jobs over jobs that may pay better but have less flexibility—such choices are not "free" but constrained by **social and cultural factors** around women, work and family. US Department of Labor researchers also found that most working mothers return to the workforce within a year after having a child.

**What is the Gender Wage Gap?**

The **Gender Wage Gap** is a simple, raw measure of the difference between total women's wages and total men's wages. The difference is described in terms of cents on the dollar—e.g., women (as a group) earn \$0.78 cents compared to every \$1.00 earned by men (as a group). This is generally calculated using the total median (average) annual earnings of women (all occupations) working full-time (35+ hours per week) and year-round (50+ weeks per year), compared to their male counterparts.

**The wage gap reflects occupational segregation by gender**—that is, that women tend to cluster in different occupational areas than men—which is a prominent feature of the labor market in Wisconsin and nationally. Understanding occupational segregation is important because women tend to cluster in occupations that are lower paying, on average, than the occupations where men tend to cluster. Moreover, across occupational areas, women earn less, even in occupations dominated by women. See below and the March 28<sup>th</sup> FAST FACTS "Where Wisconsin Women Work" to learn more.

**The wage gap does not reflect differences among workers** such as education, experience, skills, labor force attachment, age of worker, or actual hours worked—important factors affecting wages. The gap also does not directly measure workplace bias, wage discrimination or equal work for equal pay.

**Across Occupations, Women Earn Less Than Men**

Occupational Area	2011 Gender Wage Gap	Women's Median Annual Earnings	Share of Workers that are Women
<b>Highest Paying Occupations for Women (Top 5)</b>			
Computer and mathematical	\$ 0.91	\$ 61,300	30%
Health diagnosing and treating practitioners and other technical	\$ 0.50	\$ 60,600	72%
Architecture and engineering	\$ 0.87	\$ 57,100	14%
Management	\$ 0.79	\$ 52,200	37%
Legal	\$ 0.55	\$ 50,600	46%
<b>Occupations Dominated by Women (Top 5)</b>			
Health technologists/technicians	\$ 0.71	\$ 36,400	81%
Personal care and service	\$ 0.73	\$ 22,200	78%
Office and administrative support	\$ 0.82	\$ 32,900	75%
Health diagnosing and treating practitioners and other technical	\$ 0.50	\$ 60,600	72%
Education, training, and library	\$ 0.82	\$ 45,600	68%
<b>Occupations Employing the Largest Numbers of Women (Top 5)</b>			
Office and administrative support	\$ 0.82	\$ 32,900	75%
Management	\$ 0.79	\$ 52,200	37%
Sales and related	\$ 0.64	\$ 31,400	39%
Business and financial operations	\$ 0.77	\$ 46,400	59%
Education, training, and library	\$ 0.82	\$ 45,600	68%

\*Notes: Factors may include, for example, education, experience, skills, labor force attachment, age of worker, productivity, and actual hours worked. Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2011, S2402: Occupation by Sex and Median Earnings in the past 12 months for the full-time, year-round civilian employed population 16 year and over with earnings; ACS, 2011, B20017(series) Median Earnings in the past 12 months by Sex by Work Experience in the past 12 months for the population 16 years with earnings; US Dept. of Labor, "An Analysis of the Reasons for the Disparity in Wages Between Men and Women," 2009; AAUW, "Graduating to a Pay Gap: The Earnings of Women and Men One Year after College Graduation," 2012; Catalyst Knowledge Center, Women Leaving and Re-entering the Workforce, www.catalyst.org; US Dept. of Labor, *Myth Busting the Pay Gap*, social.dol.gov/blog/myth-busting-the-pay-gap.

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