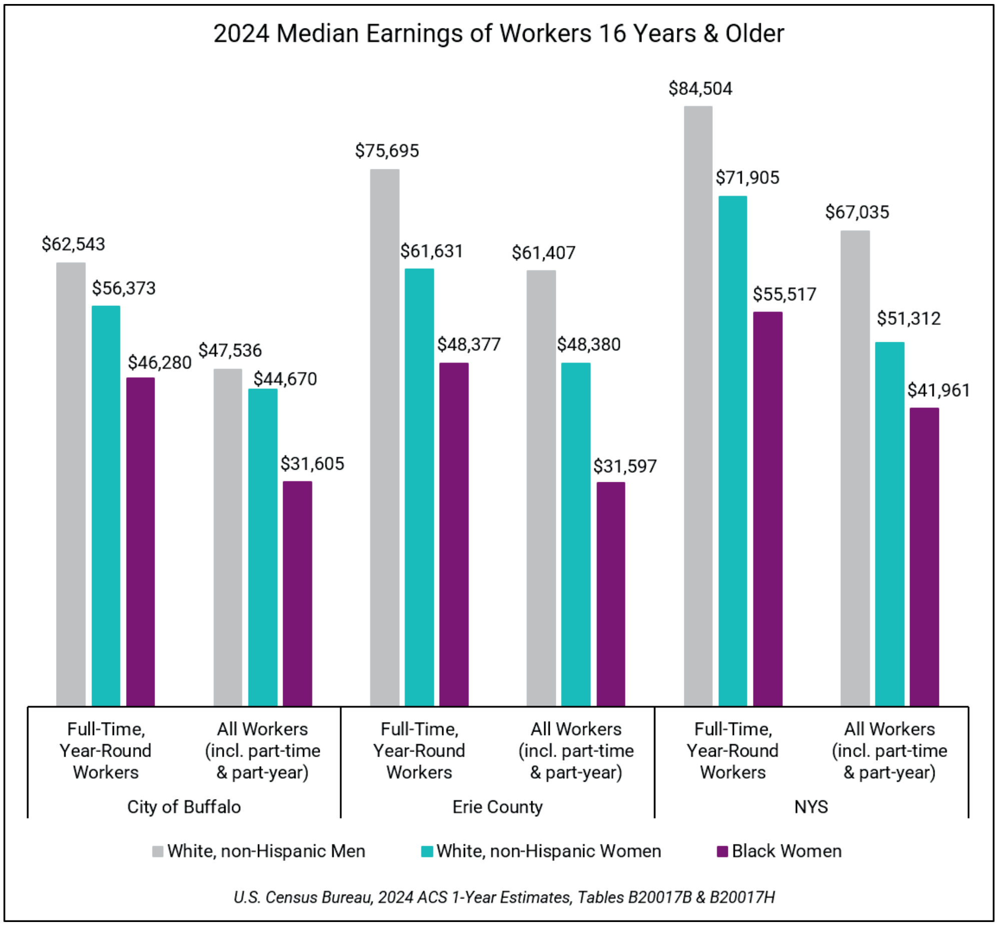
Pay Equity

Black Women's Equal Pay Day

Black Women's Equal Pay Day marks how far into the current year Black women must work to be paid what White, non-Hispanic men were paid in the previous year. This year, that date falls on July 21, meaning more than 7 additional months. This highlights the intersection of gender and racial biases and discrimination, as well as the broader economic inequalities Black women face in the workforce.

In 2024, Black women in the U.S. working full-time, year-round were paid **65 cents** for every dollar paid to White, non-Hispanic men, down from 67 cents in 2023 and 69 cents in 2022. This 35 cent wage gap translates to an annual loss of $28,340. When part-time and part-year workers are included, the gap widens to 37 cents *(U.S. Census Bureau, 2025)*.



Black women's wage gap varies by geography. In New York State (NYS), the gap for full-time, year-round workers is slightly narrower than the national figure at 66 cents, while Erie County trails behind at 64 cents. Black women in Buffalo experience the smallest gap (74 cents for every dollar paid to White non-Hispanic men), although this still translates to **an annual loss of more than $16,000.**

If the wage gap for Black women working full-time, year-round in the City of Buffalo were eliminated for one year, women could pay for:

- 32 months of groceries OR
- 15 months of housing OR
- 11 months of child care for 1 infant

(NYS DOL, Self-Sufficiency Estimator)

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Lifetime Wage Gap

For Black women, the long-term economic consequences of the wage gap are staggering. Over the course of a 40-year career, Black women in NYS working full-time, year-round lose approximately **$1.18 million** *(NWLC, 2026)*.

The wage gap has both immediate and long-term consequences for women and their families. In the short term, it can mean putting less food on the table, missing a rent payment, or struggling to pay for child care. Over a lifetime, lower earnings lead to less money saved, reduced pension benefits, and smaller Social Security payments. These effects are especially pronounced for Black women, who are more likely than other women to be their family's primary source of income. In 2023, **69% of Black mothers were sole or primary earner,** compared to 45% of Hispanic/Latina mothers and 40% of White, non-Hispanic mothers *(CAP, 2025)*. This makes the wage gap especially detrimental to the economic stability of Black women and their families.

While the causes of the wage gap are complex, occupational segregation is a significant factor. Black women are consistently overrepresented in jobs that are undervalued and undercompensated. The historical roots of occupational segregation reflect the sexism and racism embedded in the workforce. Nationally and locally, occupational segregation disproportionately concentrates Black women into lower-paying, unstable roles in the service and care economies. **For example, Black women are 4 times as likely to be nursing assistants than White, non-Hispanic women and 40 times as likely as White, non-Hispanic men** *(U.S. DOL, 2024)*. These sectors also have a high incidence of part-time employment, which often means lower wages, fewer benefits, and limited career advancement.

However, occupational segregation does not fully explain the wage gap. Even when working full-time in the same occupation, women and people of color tend to be paid less than their male counterparts. This holds true regardless of educational attainment as well - **among full-time, year-round workers with a bachelor's degree, Black women earn just 62.4% of what White men earn** *(IWPR, 2026)*. In fact, Black women need a bachelor's degree just to out-earn White, non-Hispanic men with a high school diploma. Discriminatory hiring, promotions, and workplace policies further limit Black women's earning potential, ultimately affecting not just their personal financial stability, but the overall economy as well.

In 2023, being segregated into lower-paying jobs resulted in lost potential earnings of approximately **$42.7 billion** for Black women in the U.S. *(U.S. DOL, 2024)*.

If progress continues at the same rate as the past 25 years, Black women working full-time, year-round won't reach pay parity with White, non-Hispanic men until

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(IWPR, 2025)

Eliminating the wage gap requires action from employers, policymakers, and society. Black women face some of the widest wage gaps, are disproportionately concentrated in low-paying, unstable jobs, and are more likely to be their family's primary earner. For them, closing this gap is not just a matter of equity, but of economic necessity. Expanding access to affordable child care and paid family leave, enforcing equal pay laws, holding employers accountable, and ensuring fair compensation will strengthen families, communities, and the economy. The path may be challenging, but pay equity for all women is within reach.

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