

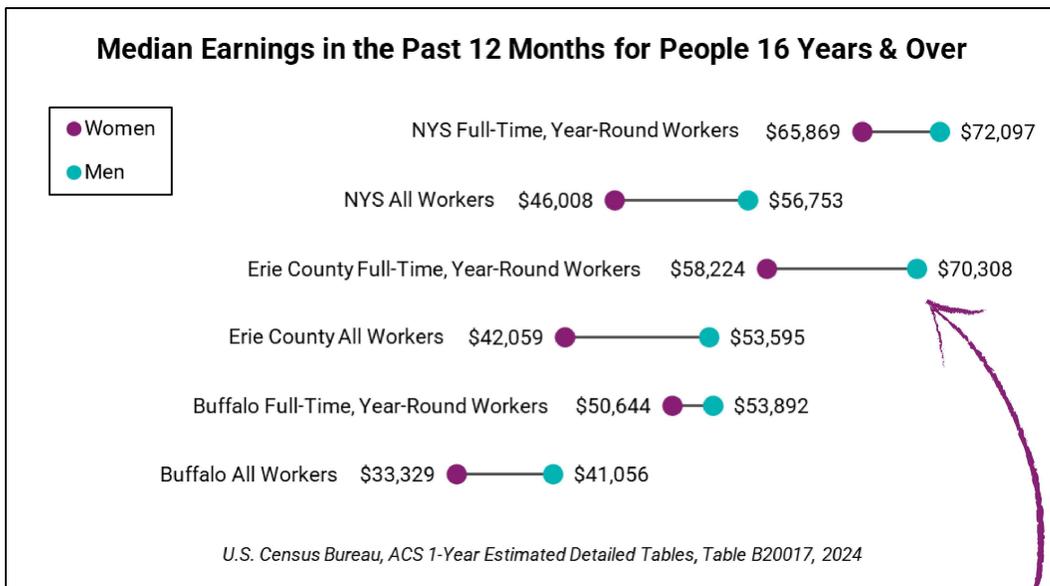
Pay Equity

Equal Pay Day



Equal Pay Day marks how far into the current year women must work to be paid what men were paid in the previous year, highlighting both the gender wage gap and broader economic inequalities women face in the workforce.

In 2024, women in the U.S. working full-time, year-round were paid 81 cents for every dollar paid to men, a 19 cent wage gap and an annual loss of \$13,570. When part-time and part-year workers are included, the gap grows to 24 cents, resulting in an annual loss of \$14,640 (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2025*). **This is the second year in a row that the gender wage gap has grown, and the widest gap since 2016.**



Focusing on full-time, year-round workers provides insight into comparable earnings, but it overlooks millions of women who work part-time or part-year, often due to family caregiving responsibilities. In 2024, women were almost twice as likely as men to work part-time (*U.S. BLS, 2026*), which often means *lower wages, fewer benefits, limited career advancement, and reduced future earnings.*

The gender 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, jeopardizing women's financial security in retirement. **On a larger scale, the U.S. gender pay gap costs women nearly \$1.9 trillion each year (NPWF, 2026),** affecting not just their personal financial stability but the overall economy as well.

What's the equivalent?

If the \$12,084 annual gender wage gap for full-time, year-round workers in Erie County were eliminated for one year, women could pay for:

- 8 months of child care for 1 infant OR
- 11 months of housing OR
- 23 months of groceries

(NYS DOL, Self-Sufficiency Estimator)

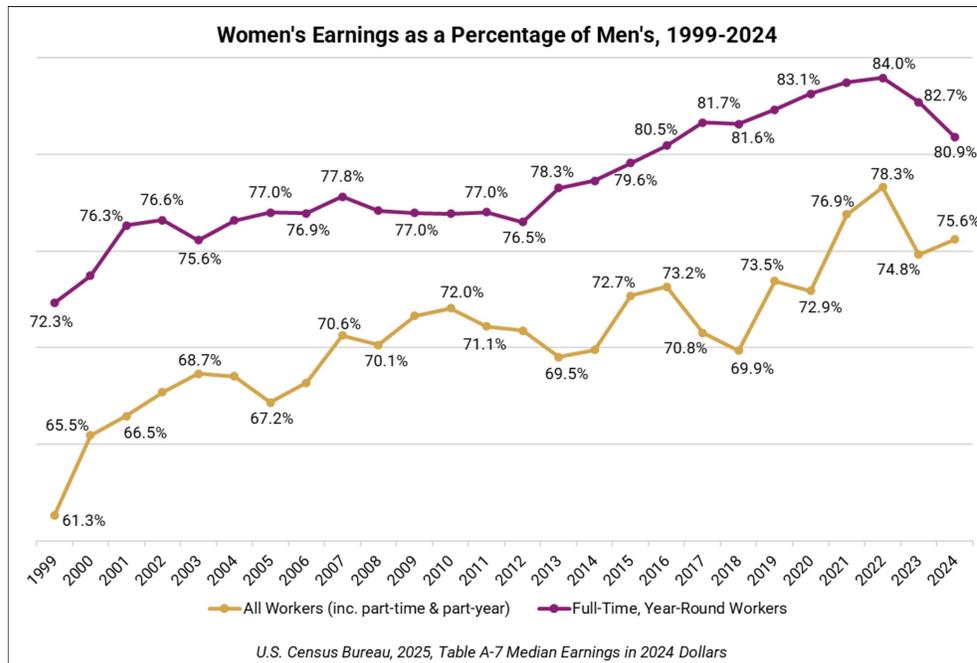
For women of color, the long-term economic consequences are even greater. In New York State, comparing all workers (full-time, year-round as well as part-time and part-year), women earn \$10,745 less per year than men, adding up to a lifetime loss of nearly \$429,800 over a 40-year career. **Lifetime wage gaps are even wider for women of color, reflecting the intersection of gender, race, and ethnic bias and discrimination.**

Lifetime Wage Gap in New York State For Women Workers (compared to non-Hispanic White Men)



While the causes of the gender pay gap are complex, unequal family caregiving responsibilities are a significant factor. Because family responsibilities disproportionately fall on women, the lack of paid leave policies and insufficient child care often force them to choose between family and career. Even when mothers remain in the workforce, they are paid just 64 cents for every dollar paid to fathers, and 74 cents among full-time, year-round workers (NPWF, 2026).

Occupational segregation, where certain groups, such as women, are overrepresented or underrepresented in specific jobs and industries, contributes to the gender wage gap. **In 2024, women made up about 48% of the overall workforce but 61% of the almost 25 million workers in the 40 lowest-paying jobs**, such as child care workers and home health aides (NWLC, 2026). Discriminatory hiring, promotions, and workplace policies further limit women’s earning potential, workforce productivity, and overall economic growth.



The pay gap has narrowed, but much too slowly. If progress continues at the same rate as the past 20 years, women working full-time, year-round won't reach pay parity with men until **2071 (IWPR, 2025)**

Achieving pay equity requires action from employers, policymakers, and society. Along with 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 is within reach.

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