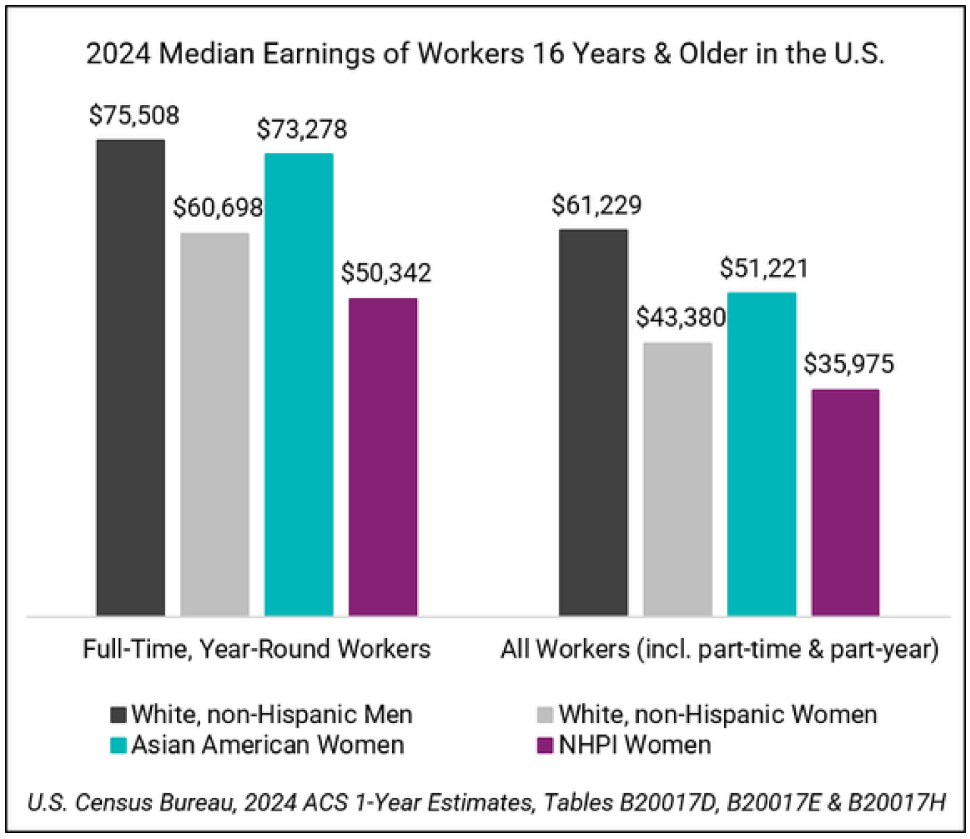
Pay Equity

Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Women's Equal Pay Day

WNY WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Women's Equal Pay Day marks how far into the current year NHPI women must work to be paid what White, non-Hispanic men were paid in the previous year. This year, that date falls on September 15, meaning more than 9 additional months. This highlights the intersection of gender, racial, and ethnic biases and discrimination, as well as barriers including immigration status and language access, that contribute to the broader economic inequities NHPI women face in the workforce.

In 2024, NHPI women in the U.S. working full-time, year-round were paid **67 cents** for every dollar paid to White, non-Hispanic men, up from 65 cents in 2023. This 33 cent wage gap translates to an **annual loss of just over $25,000**. When part-time and part-year workers are included, the gap widens to 41 cents *(U.S. Census Bureau, 2025)*. For NHPI women, the long-term economic consequences of the wage gap are staggering. Over a 40-year career, NHPI women working full-time, year-round lose **approximately $1 million**.



U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 ACS 1-Year Estimates, Tables B20017D, B20017E & B20017H

Wage disparities vary across Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities and are influenced by factors like immigration history, access to education, and discrimination. A key driver is occupational segregation, and many AANHPI women work in lower-wage jobs, with fewer benefits and limited opportunities for advancement. Approximately 55% of AANHPI women have a Bachelor's degree or higher and are employed in higher-paying professions, compared to 20% of NHPI women, who disproportionately work in service occupations such as cashiers, waitresses, and health care aides *(CAP, 2025)*.

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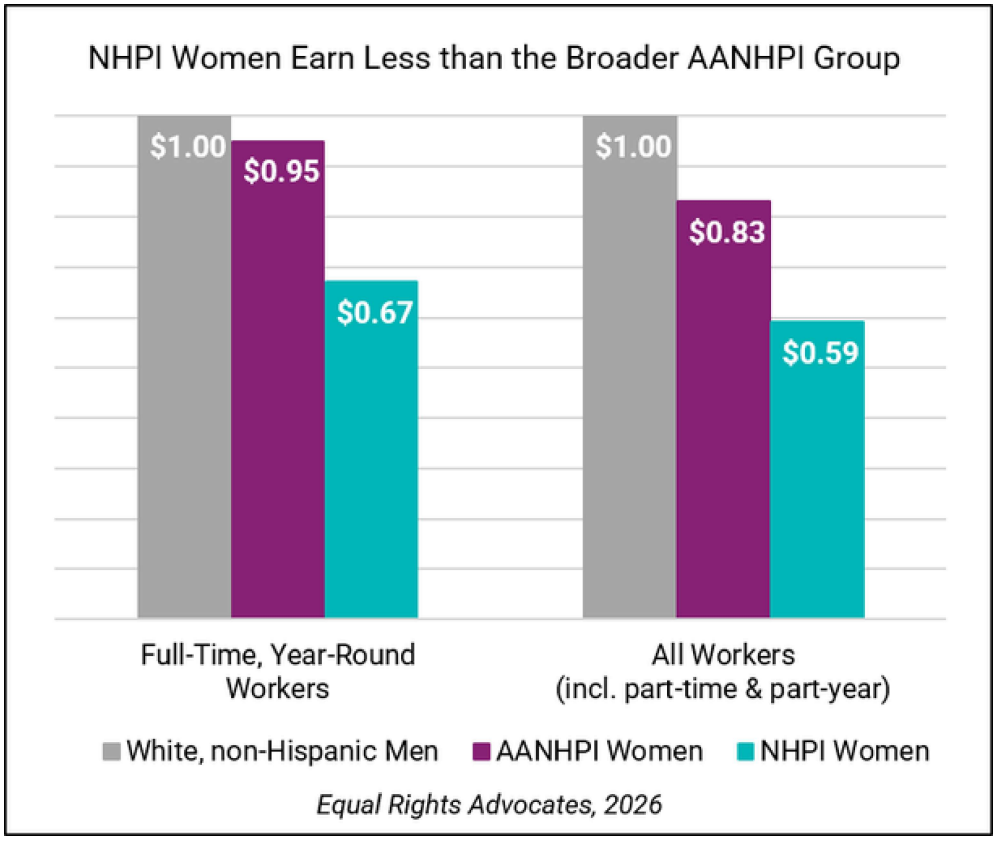
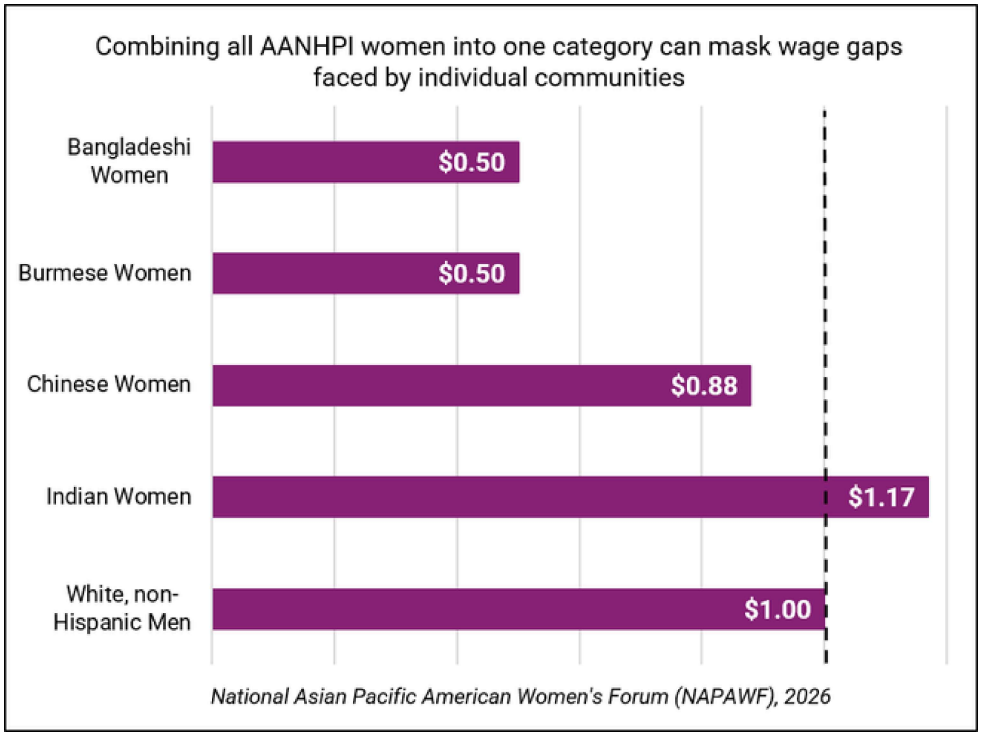
Combining data about AANHPI women, who come from diverse communities, into one broad category hides the economic inequities faced by those communities. The **pay disparities experienced by some ethnic subgroups, including NHPI women, are obscured when data for all AANHPI women is combined.** AANHPI Women's Equal Pay Day fell on April 9 this year - about 5 months earlier than NHPI Equal Pay Day - reflecting a wage gap of 5 cents for full-time, year-round workers and 17 cents when part-time and part-year workers are included. But this relatively small gap doesn't reflect the reality for NHPI women.





The same effect applies to women beyond NHPI communities. National data on AANHPI subgroups shows pay differences ranging from a 57-cent gap to a 17-cent advantage for every dollar paid to White, non-Hispanic men *(NAPAWF, 2026)*. National data for Bangladeshi, Burmese, Chinese, and Indian women - the largest Asian immigrant groups in Buffalo *(Asian American Federation, 2025)* - illustrates how widely wage gaps vary within the subgroups that make up the broad AANHPI category. Local and county-level data on the NHPI wage gap is not available due to data limitations.

Eliminating the wage gap requires action from employers, policymakers, and society. AANHPI women have the highest median earnings among full-time, year-round working women across major racial and ethnic groups, but this overall figure masks some of the largest wage gaps of any group of women. For NHPI women specifically, closing this gap is not just a matter of equity, but of economic necessity. Strengthening equal pay laws, disaggregating data by ethnicity, dismantling occupational segregation, and expanding access to education will strengthen families, communities, and the economy. The path may be challenging, but pay equity for all women is within reach.