

The Economic Security of Women of Color

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that, among women in the United States, there are 103,453,880 White women, 20,356,689 African American women, 22,689,216 Hispanic women, 7,676,570 Asian women, 1,953,395 American Indian and Alaskan Native women, and 448,982 Pacific Islander women.¹ This fact sheet will focus on African American women, Hispanic women, Asian women, and, where information was available, Native American women, as women of color.

Many of the barriers to economic security faced by women in the United States, such as a gender wage gap and workplace discrimination, are compounded for women of color.

Women of Color & Poverty

Women of color have a higher risk of entering poverty than corresponding men of color or White women.²

- Poverty rates among women:
 - White women: 7.7 percent
 - Asian American women: 11.7 percent
 - Hispanic women: 22.7 percent
 - African American women: 24.9 percent
 - Native American women: 25.3 percent³

Women who are African American, Native American, and Hispanic have the lowest earnings and the largest wage gap with white men.⁴

- Median Weekly Earnings
 - Asian women: \$753 (Asian men: \$966)
 - White women: \$654 (White men: \$825)
 - African American women: \$554 (African American men: \$620)
 - Hispanic women: \$501 (Hispanic men: \$559)⁵

Women of Color & the Workforce

While women of color (with the exception of Asian American women) are less likely to hold managerial and professional occupations than white women or white and Asian American men, they are much more likely to hold managerial and professional occupations than men of color (again, with the exception of Asian American women).⁶

- Percentage in managerial and professional occupations:
 - Asian American women: 44.5 percent
 - White women: 40.4 percent
 - Native American women: 31.6 percent
 - African American women: 30.6 percent



Women of Color, cont.

- Hispanic women: 22.6 percent⁷

Businesses owned by women of color are increasingly contributing to the U.S. workforce.⁸

- Businesses owned by women of color are growing three times faster than all U.S. firms. Women of color represent 26 percent of all women business owners.⁹

Women of Color & Educational Attainment

Women of color, with the exception of Asian American women, are less likely to attain a bachelor's degree or higher than white women.¹⁰

- Rates of attaining a bachelor's degree or higher:
 - Asian American women: 45 percent
 - White women: 28.3 percent
 - African American women: 17.8 percent
 - Native American women: 13.7 percent
 - Hispanic women: 12.7 percent¹¹

Sources

1. Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008 (NC-EST2008-03)
2. Institute for Women's Policy Research, *Data Tables on the Economic Status of Women of Color in the United States: Key Data Points*. 2008. Available at <http://www.iwpr.org/femstats/wocdata.htm>
3. Ibid.
4. Supra Note 2.
5. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings, Annual Averages*. 2008 and U.S. Dept. of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States*. 2007.
6. Supra Note 2,
7. Supra Note 2.
8. Center for Women's Business Research. *Businesses Owned By Women of Color Growing Faster Than All U.S. Firms*. 2008. Available at: http://www.nfwbo.org/assets/1058_biennialupdatewoc111808.doc.
9. Ibid.
10. Supra Note 2.
11. Supra Note 2.

Visit womenwork.org for more information on women's economic justice and equality

Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that advances economic justice and equality for women through education, advocacy and organizing. Since 1978, the Network has assisted more than 10 million women to successfully enter, re-enter and advance in the workforce. Through supporting, advocating and increasing women's economic self-sufficiency, Women Work! members strengthen families and communities.