



Fact Sheet

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The Gender Wage Gap: 2008

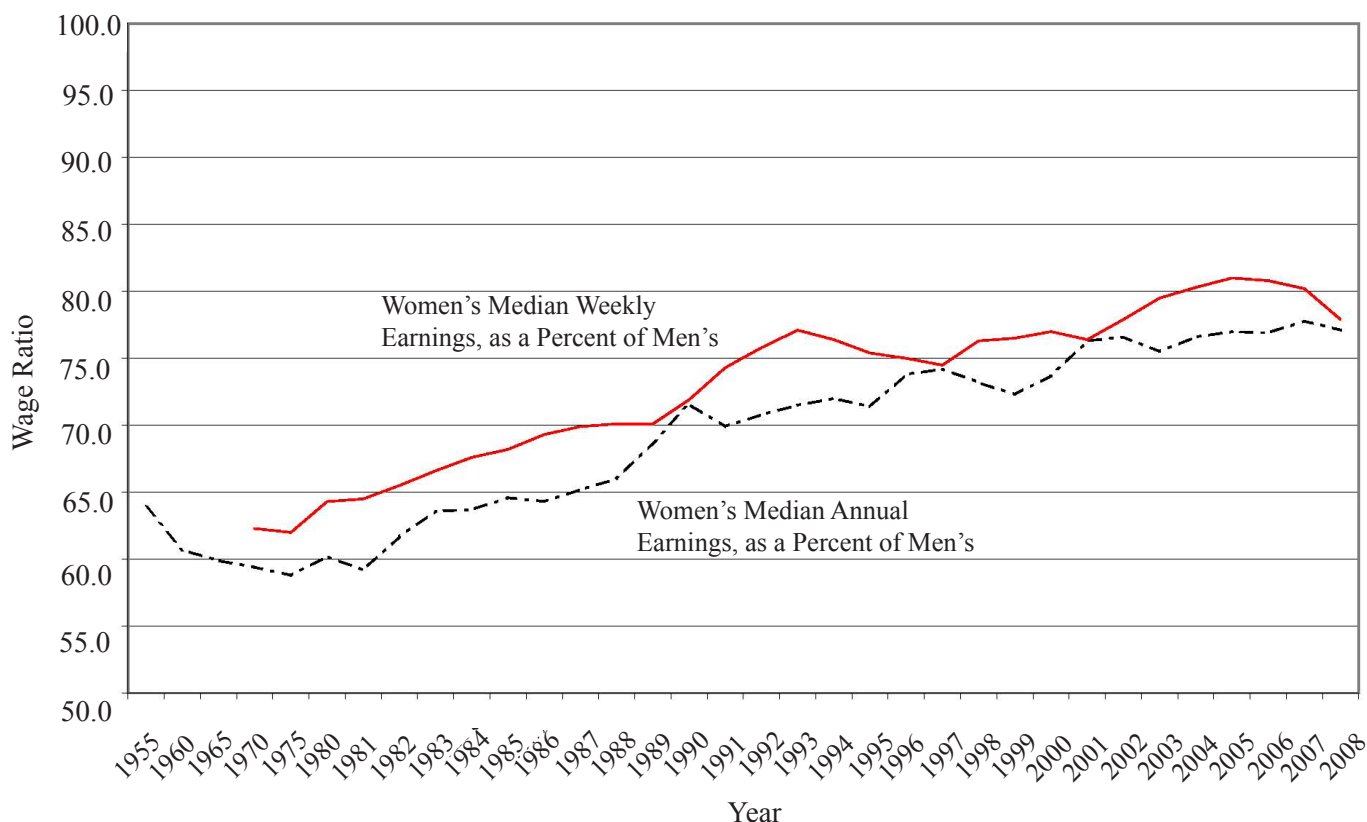
The ratio of women's and men's median annual earnings in 2008 was 77.1 for full-time, year-round workers, down from 77.8 in 2007. (This means the gender wage gap is now 22.9 percent.) The annual earnings figure reflects gender differences in both hourly wages and the number of hours worked each year by full-time workers. If part-time and part-year workers were included, the ratio would be much lower, as women are more likely than men to work reduced schedules in order to manage child-rearing and other caregiving work.

Women's real (inflation-adjusted) annual earnings fell 2.0 percent from 2007 to 2008, to \$35,745, while men's fell 1.0 percent, to \$46,367. With the exception of an uptick in 2007, this continues the multi-year decline in real wages experienced by both men and women.

Another measure of women's earning ability – the ratio of women's to men's median weekly earnings, for full-time workers – was 79.9 in 2008, down from the historic high of 81.0 in 2005. The annual ratio, which includes self-employed workers, tends to be slightly lower than the weekly ratio (which includes full-time workers who work only part of the year and excludes the self-employed), although the two series exhibit the same general trend over the long term.

Progress in closing the gender earnings gap has slowed considerably since 1990, as measured by both data series. While the gender earnings ratio for annual earnings increased by 11.4 percentage points from 1980 to 1990, it grew by only 5.5 percentage points over the next 18 years.

The Gender Earning Ratio, 1955-2008, Full-Time Workers



Information about gender wage ratios by race and ethnicity is available in IWPR's Economic Status of Women of Color in the United States web page, <http://www.iwpr.org/femstats/wocdata.htm> (Table 1); U.S. Census Bureau, Historical Income Tables, Table P-40; and Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009): Highlights of Women's Earnings 2008 (<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpswom2008.pdf>)

The Gender Wage Ratio, 1955-2009, Full-Time Workers

Year	Median Annual Earnings Ratio, Full-Year Workers	Median Weekly Earnings Ratio
1955	63.9	
1960	60.7	
1965	59.9	
1970	59.4	62.3
1975	58.8	62.0
1980	60.2	64.3
1981	59.2	64.5
1982	61.7	65.5
1983	63.6	66.6
1984	63.7	67.6
1985	64.6	68.2
1986	64.3	69.3
1987	65.2	69.9
1988	66.0	70.1
1989	68.7	70.1
1990	71.6	71.9
1991	69.9	74.3
1992	70.8	75.8
1993	71.5	77.1
1994	72.0	76.4
1995	71.4	75.4
1996	73.8	75.0
1997	74.2	74.5
1998	73.2	76.3
1999	72.3	76.5
2000	73.7	77.0
2001	76.3	76.4
2002	76.6	77.9
2003	75.5	79.5
2004	76.6	80.3
2005	77.0	81.0
2006	76.9	80.8
2007	77.8	80.2
2008	77.1	79.9

Notes: Annual earnings data include self-employed workers; weekly data are for wage and salary workers only. Annual earnings are for workers aged 14 and older through 1979 and workers 15 and older from 1980 through 2008; weekly earnings are for full-time workers aged 16 and older and are not restricted to full-year workers. Annual data are typically released in late summer or early fall by the U.S. Census Bureau; the annual average of weekly median earnings is usually released in January by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Both data series are derived from the Current Population Survey.

Sources: Annual data: 1955: Francine D. Blau and Marianne A. Ferber, *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1992), Table 5.6; 1960 through 2008: U.S. Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2008*, Table A-2. Weekly data: 1970 and 1975: Blau and Ferber (1992), Table 5.6; 1980 through 2005: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Highlights of Women's Earnings in 2005*, Table 13; 2006 and 2007: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Usual Weekly Earnings Summary*, January 2009, Table 6; 2008: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, January 2009, Table 39.

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