

# Closing the Gender Pay Gap in West Virginia

In 2016, West Virginia women earned just 72 cents on the dollar compared to their male counterparts. The median earnings of full-time male workers were \$12,801 higher than the median earnings of full-time women workers – a 28 percent pay gap.<sup>i</sup> West Virginia has the largest pay gap out of all of the surrounding states and the third highest in the nation.<sup>ii</sup>

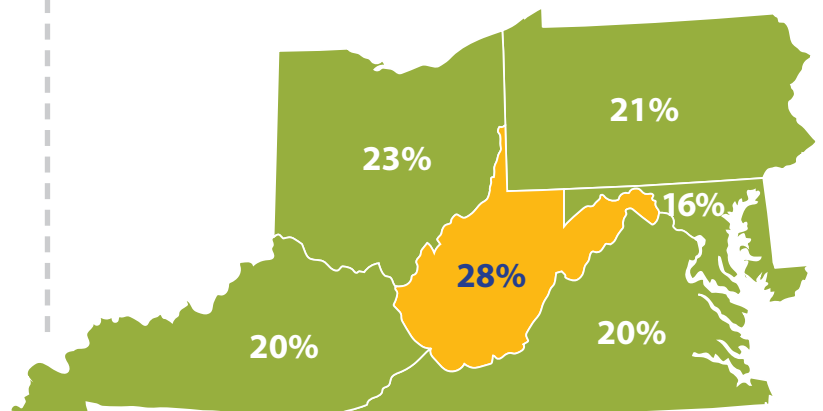
While the pay gap has been reduced over the last few decades as more women have earned bachelor's degrees and work in managerial or professional occupations,<sup>iii</sup> left unattended however, the pay gap will persist unless its causes are addressed.

## Gender Pay Gap between Women and Men in West Virginia



Source: American Association of University Women, Spring 2018

## West Virginia Has Largest Gender Pay Gap Among Surrounding States



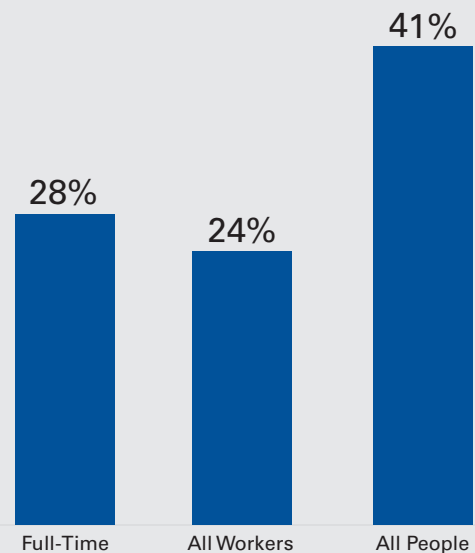
Source: American Community Survey, 2016

## The Full Pay Gap Picture Among Working-Age People

If all West Virginians are factored in, including those who work less than full time and also people who are not paid for the work they do, the pay gap is at 41 percent.<sup>iv</sup>

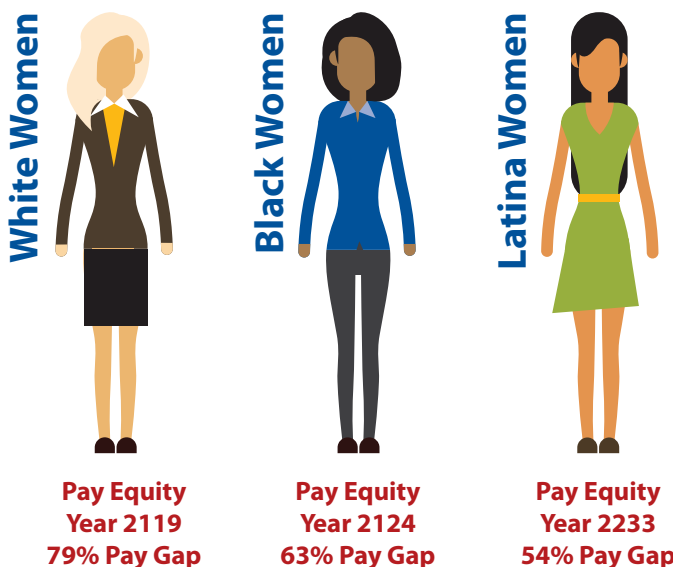
Calculating the pay gap this way provides a clearer picture of West Virginia women's reality. It takes into account women who work part-time and it also reflects that West Virginia has one of the lowest labor force participation rates of working-age<sup>v</sup> women - 69 percent - and the lowest overall women's labor force participation rate in the nation at 48.5 percent.<sup>vi</sup>

## Gender Pay Gap Among West Virginians Ages, 25 - 54



Source: West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, American Community Survey, American Association of University Women analysis

## Gender Pay Gap Greater for Women of Color



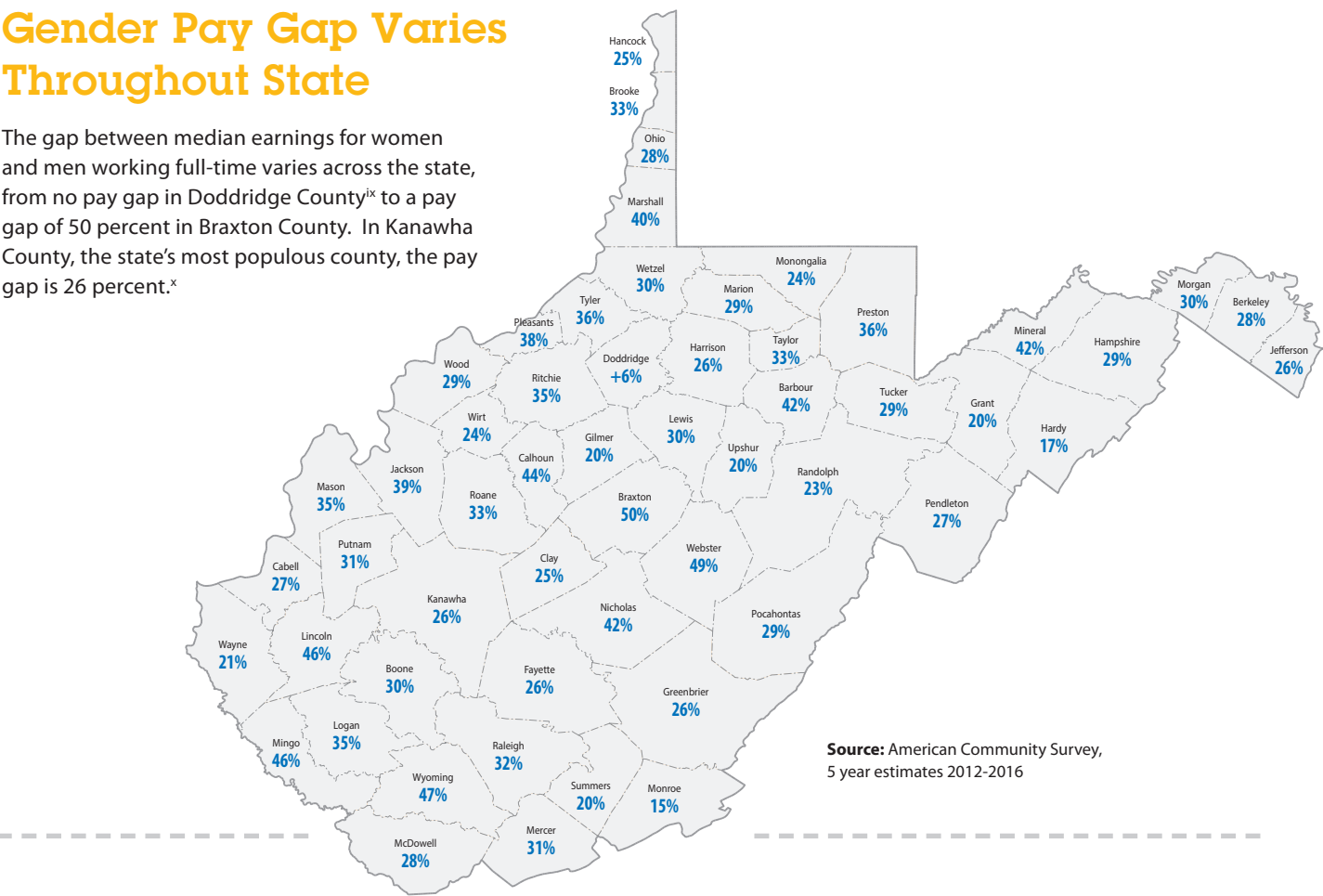
Source: National Women's Law Center, American Association of University Women

## Race and The Gender Pay Gap

The pay gap is more pronounced for people of color and will not reach equal pay until later. The national gender pay gap for white women is 79 percent, 63 percent for Black women and 54 percent for Latinas. If the progress continues at the rate seen since 2001, white women will not achieve pay equity until 2119; Black women until 2124 and Latinas will have to wait until 2233.<sup>vii, viii</sup>

# Gender Pay Gap Varies Throughout State

The gap between median earnings for women and men working full-time varies across the state, from no pay gap in Doddridge County<sup>ix</sup> to a pay gap of 50 percent in Braxton County. In Kanawha County, the state’s most populous county, the pay gap is 26 percent.<sup>x</sup>



## Education and the Gender Pay Gap

Women’s pay is less than men’s at every level of education attainment. This pay gap in West Virginia is partially driven by the low level of education achievement among West Virginia women. In 2016, West Virginia had the lowest share of women in the country (51st) with a bachelor’s degree or higher at 21.7 percent.<sup>xi</sup>

Women workers with bachelor’s degrees or higher only earn 75 cents to every dollar a man earns.<sup>xii</sup> A woman with a bachelor’s degree is paid less than her male counterpart with an associate’s degree - \$52,032 and \$52,121 respectively.<sup>xiii</sup>

The pay gap among women and men with a doctorate degree is even larger. The median earnings for men with a doctorate degree is \$135,000 compared to \$70,000 for women.<sup>xiv</sup> This means West Virginia women with a doctorate degree only earn about half (52 percent) of what men with the same education level do.

### WV Gender Pay Gap by Education: Full-Time, Year-Round Workers Ages 16 to 64

Educational Attainment	Male	Female	Earning Ratio
Overall Median Income	\$46,000	\$35,000	76%
Less than 9th Grade	\$38,000	\$30,000	80%
9th - 12th No Diploma	\$36,000	\$20,800	58%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	\$45,000	\$28,500	63%
Some College	\$39,000	\$30,000	77%
Associate’s Degree	\$43,000	\$32,000	74%
Bachelor’s Degree	\$56,000	\$42,000	75%
Master’s Degree	\$82,000	\$50,000	61%
Professional Degree (such as JD or DDS)	\$105,000	\$57,000	54%
Doctorate Degree (such as PhD or EdD)	\$135,000	\$70,000	52%

Source: Bureau of Labor and Statistics

# Long-term Impacts of the Gender Pay Gap

If West Virginia women earned the same amount as their male counterparts, they would be able to afford many necessities that are often out of financial reach. With the \$12,801 in earnings that a woman lost in 2016, she could have paid for roughly an extra year and half of child care,<sup>xv</sup> nearly two years of food for her and her family,<sup>xvi</sup> tuition at a public, two-year institution or tuition for one year at a public four-year, in-state school.<sup>xvii</sup> The long-term impact of the pay gap is staggering for women and their families.

In 2016, West Virginia had the 46th highest lifetime pay gap with women losing an estimated \$512,040 over the course of their career, according to the National Women’s Law Center. Black women would lose \$642,440 over the course of a 40-year career and Latinas would lose \$711,680.<sup>xx</sup>

The pay gap negatively effects women after they leave the workforce. Women are 80 percent more likely than men to live in poverty after retirement.<sup>xxi</sup> In 2016, the poverty rate for women 65 and older was 11 percent, compared to eight for men.<sup>xxii</sup>

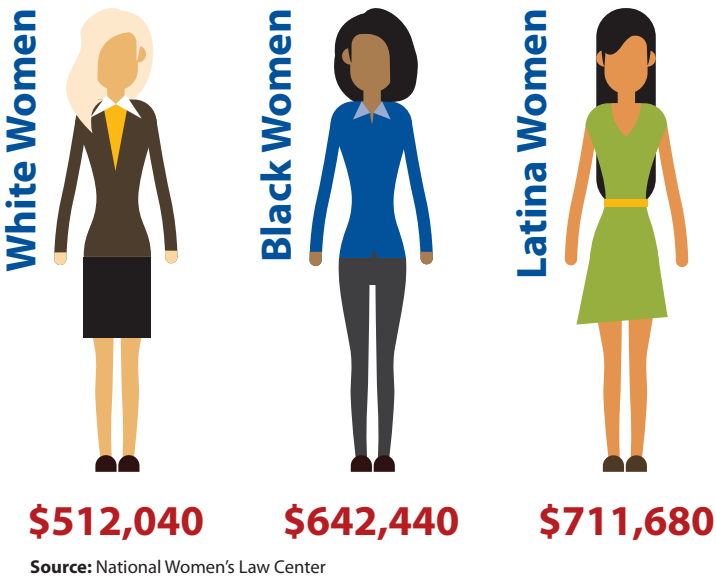
Since women are generally paid less than men during working years, they receive less money in pension and Social Security benefits.<sup>xxiii</sup> The average Social Security benefit for women 65 and older is around \$14,044 annually, compared to \$18, 713 for men of the same age.<sup>xxiv</sup>

## Closing the Gender Pay Gap

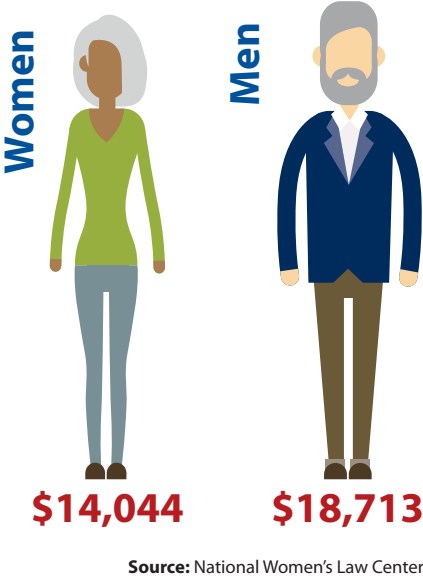
West Virginia policymakers can take steps to help close the pay gap. The following policies support women and their families and would foster an environment of pay equity in the Mountain State:

- **Paid sick days** would enable women to put their health and wellbeing first without fear of lost pay and employment. This would also reduce the potential spread of disease.
- Women still shoulder the bulk of caregiving responsibilities, **paid family medical leave** would prevent women from having to choose between work and taking care of a loved one.
- Raising the state’s **minimum wage** and eliminating the two-tiered tipped wage system would boost earnings for women throughout the state.
- Increasing access to **affordable, quality child care** would allow more women to enter the workforce and maintain a healthier work-life balance.
- Unions have been successful in uplifting its members’ wages and benefits over the years, more women joining unions and having leadership roles within unions would improve long-term outcomes for women and their families. Policymakers should reverse the state’s right-to-work policy that has failed to produce the promised growth, but has stifled the collective bargaining rights of West Virginia workers.

## Lifetime Pay Loss In West Virginia



## Social Security of Women vs. Men



While the gender pay gap has lessened over the last few decades because more women earned bachelor’s degrees and found employment in managerial and professional roles, implementing the policy suggestions to the left will ensure the gap continues to close.

- i American Association of University Women. "The Simple Truth." Spring, 2018. [https://www.aauw.org/aauw\\_check/pdf\\_download/show\\_pdf.php?file=The-Simple-Truth](https://www.aauw.org/aauw_check/pdf_download/show_pdf.php?file=The-Simple-Truth). This analysis is based on full-time, year-round workers ages 16 and older
- ii Ibid.
- iii West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, 2015. <https://www.wvdhhr.org/wwwc/documents/Status%20of%20Women%202015%20West-Virginia-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
- iv Brueing, Matt. "Women Actually Earn Around 40 Percent Less Than Men." April 2018. <http://peoplespolicyproject.org/2018/04/16/women-actually-earn-around-40-percent-less-than-men/>
- v Prime working age is considered to be from the ages of 25-54. Analyzing the labor force trends in prime working ages helps separate the impact of an aging population from other demographic factors. <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/53452#section4>
- vi Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Preliminary 2017 Data on Employment Status by State and Demographic Group." 2017. <https://www.bls.gov/lau/ptable14afull2017.pdf>
- vii American Association of University Women. "The Simple Truth." Spring, 2018. [https://www.aauw.org/aauw\\_check/pdf\\_download/show\\_pdf.php?file=The-Simple-Truth](https://www.aauw.org/aauw_check/pdf_download/show_pdf.php?file=The-Simple-Truth)
- viii American Association of University Women. "The Simple Truth." Spring, 2018. <https://iwpr.org/issue/employment-education-economic-change/pay-equity-discrimination/>
- ix American Community Survey, 5-year estimates 2012-2016
- x Ibid.
- xi Institute for Women's Policy Research. "Status of Women in the States." March, 2018. <https://statusofwomendata.org/wp-content/themes/witsfull/factsheets/economics/factsheet-west-virginia.pdf>
- xii National Women's Law Center. "The Wage Gap: The Who, The How, Why, and What to Do." September, 2017. <https://nwlc.org/resources/the-wage-gap-the-who-how-why-and-what-to-do/>
- xiii Ibid.
- xiv CPS ASEC 2016, Earnings by Educational Attainment, based on full-time, year-round workers ages 16-64
- xv Estimate based on 2017 cost of child care in WV and estimated with the cost of a year of child care for an infant at a center in mind. [http://usa.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/WV\\_Facts.pdf](http://usa.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/WV_Facts.pdf)
- xvi Based on BLS.gov Table 1800: Region of Residence: Annual Expenditures and Characteristics, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2016. This estimated is based on the average annual expenditures on food in the south: \$6,727.
- xvii The College Board. "Tuition Fees by Sector and State over Time." 2017. <https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/tuition-fees-sector-state-over-time>
- xviii National Women's Law Center. "The Lifetime Wage Gap, State by State." <https://nwlc.org/resources/the-lifetime-wage-gap-state-by-state/>
- xix Ibid.
- xx Ibid.
- xxi National Institute on Retirement Security. "Women 80% More Likely to be Impoverished in Retirement." March, 2016. <https://www.nirsonline.org/2016/03/women-80-more-likely-to-be-impoverished-in-retirement/>
- xxii American Association of University Women. "The Simple Truth." Spring, 2018. [https://www.aauw.org/aauw\\_check/pdf\\_download/show\\_pdf.php?file=The-Simple-Truth](https://www.aauw.org/aauw_check/pdf_download/show_pdf.php?file=The-Simple-Truth)
- xxiii Ibid.
- xxiv National Women's Law Center. "The Wage Gap: The Who, How, Why, and What to Do." September, 2017. file:///D:/The-Wage-Gap-The-Who-How-Why-and-What-to-Do-2017-2.pdf