



The Status of Women in NC: Employment & Earnings for Women of Color



1,696,827

Total population of
Women of Color in NC



34.7%

Total percentage of
Women of Color in NC

39.7

Median age of women in NC

If the current trends continue, working women in North Carolina will not see equal pay until **2060!**

Challenges:

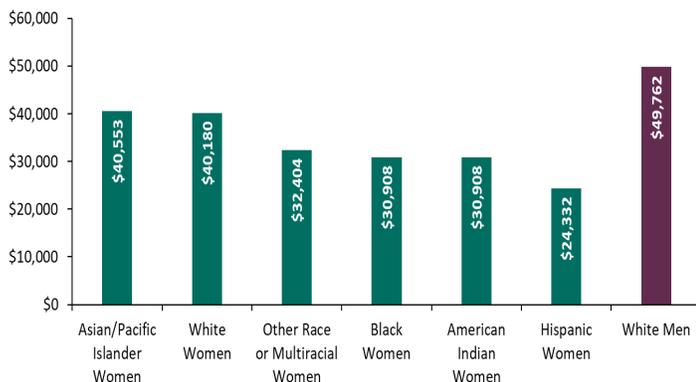
- Women of color in NC earn a **median income of \$31,821**, and an average of **\$13,179** less than men.
- The gender earnings ratio for women of color in NC is **70.7%**.

Future Impact:

- Equal pay would **cut the poverty rate** among working women in North Carolina by **more than half**.
- If working women in NC were paid the same comparable to men, the increase would amount to **\$15.6 billion**, which is equivalent to **3.0%** of the state's GDP in 2016.

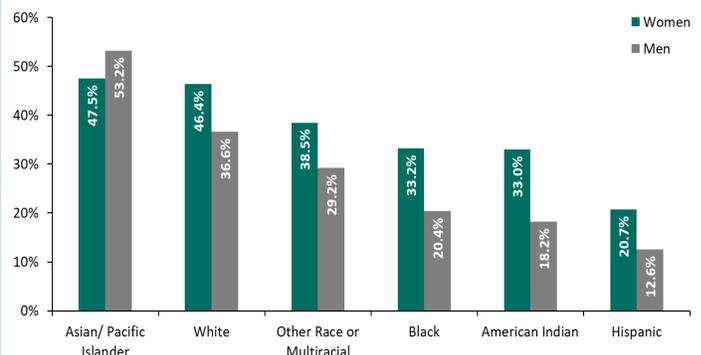
58.4%

Total percentage of
women of color in the
labor force



NC Women's Median Annual Earnings by Race/Ethnicity

In North Carolina, Hispanic women earn the least among women and less than half of the annual income of non-Hispanic males.



Share in Managerial/Professional Occupations By Gender And Race/Ethnicity

Although Asian/Pacific Islander and white women in North Carolina have lower labor force participation rates than women from most other racial or ethnic groups, they are more likely to be employed in managerial or professional occupations.

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- ◆ North Carolina employers and elected officials can take steps to **narrow the gender wage gap**, especially the very large gap experienced by some women of color:
 - ◆ Proactively enforce existing legislation regarding fair labor standards and strengthen protections against retaliation for those who discuss their pay to determine whether they are being underpaid relative to comparable employees.
 - Pass legislation that bars employers from requiring potential employees to submit previous salary history, which can perpetuate wage inequality.
 - Require employers to increase transparency in their hiring, compensation, and promotion practices by formalizing the criteria for setting wages upon hiring and the steps necessary for promotion and raises, thereby reducing the likelihood of discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, or other factors
 - Increase minimum wage in North Carolina to improve economic security for women, who are disproportionately represented among low-wage workers, and require that domestic workers receive the minimum wage, overtime pay, and other labor protections.
 - Conduct and promote audits of employee salaries to monitor and address gender pay differences.
- ◆ **Create policies to support work-life balance.** Like the vast majority of states, North Carolina has not passed paid leave legislation. Few low-wage workers in the state receive employer-provided benefits, such as paid sick and safe days, paid family and medical leave, and predictable schedules. Because women are more likely than men to have unpaid caregiving responsibilities, these benefits are vitally important to help women remain and advance in the workforce. Paid leave policies also benefit businesses in the form of higher productivity and lower employee turnover.
- ◆ **Expand publicly-funded child care and early education.** Increasing the availability of affordable, quality child care, and raising the threshold for child care subsidy eligibility could improve parents' earnings by ensuring that eligible parents receive child care whether they are employed, looking for work, or pursuing education.
- ◆ **Support women business owners.** Encourage public and private sector investment in women-owned and minority-women-owned businesses. Provide technical assistance to women to help them to identify opportunities and financing to start or to grow their business. Compared with businesses owned by men, businesses owned by women are far more likely to have no start-up or expansion capital and, among those that do, most use their own personal or family savings. Addressing the lack of access to financing options could mitigate some of the risk of business ownership and encourage women, especially low-income women, to pursue business ownership as a path to financial stability.
- ◆ **Advocate for employers to promote paid internships, training, apprenticeships, and recruitment for women in high-growth occupations with low female participation**, such as construction information technology, transportation, and engineering. To reduce occupational segregation by gender and get more women into higher-paying jobs, educators and counsellors should ensure that career advice for women and girls explicitly addresses the earnings and growth potential of different fields of study and occupation.