



FACTS & FIGURES

From the Economic Policy Institute

Women

This fact sheet does not yet include 2005 poverty and income data, to be released in late August.

Wage trends

Wages grew more among women than men over the 2000-05 period; they rose about 2-5% for the middle 40% and just about 1% for the lowest-wage women.

The highest-wage women, those at the 95th percentile, enjoyed 8.3% wage growth in this period.

TABLE 3.6 Wages for female workers by wage percentile, 1973-2005 (2005 dollars)

Year	Wage by percentile*									
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	95
Real hourly wage										
1973	\$5.65	\$7.02	\$7.90	\$8.83	\$9.95	\$11.20	\$12.62	\$14.55	\$17.99	\$21.26
1979	7.03	7.62	8.27	9.22	10.35	11.76	13.10	15.24	18.97	22.42
1989	5.89	7.26	8.40	9.65	11.22	12.82	15.10	18.09	22.71	27.39
1995	6.16	7.35	8.59	9.88	11.35	13.07	15.53	18.98	24.39	30.31
2000	6.80	8.09	9.32	10.80	12.32	14.25	16.88	20.51	26.95	33.10
2005	6.88	8.17	9.75	11.04	12.82	14.99	17.80	21.78	28.86	35.84
Percent change										
1973-79	24.5%	8.5%	4.7%	4.4%	4.0%	5.0%	3.8%	4.8%	5.4%	5.5%
1979-89	-16.2	-4.7	1.6	4.7	8.4	9.0	15.2	18.7	19.7	22.2
1989-2000	15.4	11.5	10.9	11.9	9.8	11.1	11.8	13.4	18.7	20.9
1989-95	4.6	1.2	2.2	2.4	1.1	2.0	2.9	4.9	7.4	10.7
1995-2000	10.3	10.1	8.5	9.3	8.6	9.0	8.7	8.0	10.5	9.2
2000-05	1.2	1.0	4.7	2.2	4.0	5.2	5.5	6.2	7.1	8.3
1979-2005	-2.1	7.3	18.0	19.7	23.9	27.5	35.9	42.9	52.2	59.9

* The Xth percentile wage is the wage at which X% of the wage earners earn less and (100-X)% earn more. Source: Authors' analysis of CPS ORG.

- ❖ Over the entire 1979-2005 period the wages of the highest-earning women at the 95th percentile grew by 59.9%, more than double the 23.9% wage growth for the median woman over the same period.
- ❖ From 2000 to 2005, wage growth among women of all education groups rose comparably, from 0.6% for high school women to 0.4% or 0.5% for those with college or advanced degrees. In contrast, men's wage growth was more differentiated in recent years. The college wage premium among women has barely budged over the last 10 years.
- ❖ In 1979, the share of married couples without a wife in the labor force was about equal to that of those with a wife in the labor force (41.9% versus 40.6% of married-couple families). By 2000, married couples with two earners (assuming the husband worked) made up 47.4% of all families, while one-earner married couples were proportionately fewer in number, 29.4% of the total.
- ❖ Women are much more likely to earn low wages than men. In 2005, 29.4% of women earned poverty-level wages or less, significantly more than the share of men (19.9%).
- ❖ Minority women are even more likely than minority men to be low earners (those who receive a wage lower than that needed to sustain a family of four above the poverty threshold)—37.1% of black women and 45.7% of Hispanic women in 2005.

Low wages and poverty

Low wages and poverty

- ❖ Based on data from 1973 to 2005, a year with lower unemployment (a one-point decline) leads to a 1.5% boost in real wages for low-wage women.
- ❖ The employment rate for young (16-24-year-old) African American women with no more than a high school degree (and no longer enrolled in school) dipped 4.9 percentage points over 2000-05 to 47.2%. The rate for white women in the same category declined 6.3 percentage points to 59.5% over the same time period. These women saw a decline after employment rate gains made from 1995-2000.
- ❖ Minimum wage workers tend to be disproportionately women—59% of the total.

Inequities

Women were disproportionately represented as nonstandard workers (those whose jobs are not regular, full-time)—and they far exceed men in regular part-time employment.

TABLE 4.9 Share of workers by work arrangement and gender

Work arrangement	Percent of women employed		
	1995	2001	2005
All temporary workers	51.8%	49.7%	49.9%
Temp agency	52.8	58.9	52.8
On-call / day laborers	49.9	44.6	47.1
Direct hire temporaries	52.6	50.0	51.4
Independent contractor (wage & salary)	49.6	45.7	46.4
Independent contractor (self-employed)	29.7	33.9	33.5
Contract company employees	29.1	31.3	30.8
Regular part time	69.9	68.8	68.5
All nonstandard workers	55.9%	56.0%	54.7%
Standard workers	43.1%	44.5%	44.4%

Work arrangement	Percent of men employed		
	1995	2001	2005
All temporary workers	48.2%	50.3%	50.1%
Temp agency	47.2	41.1	47.2
On-call / day laborers	50.1	55.4	52.9
Direct hire temporaries	47.4	50.0	48.6
Independent contractor (wage & salary)	50.4	54.3	53.6
Independent contractor (self-employed)	70.3	66.1	66.5
Contract company employees	70.9	68.7	69.2
Regular part time	30.1	31.2	31.5
All nonstandard workers	44.1%	44.0%	45.3%
Standard workers	56.9%	55.5%	55.6%

Source: Fisher, Dittler, Gordon, and West (2006).

- ❖ Even though the wages of college-educated women have grown rapidly since 1979, a female college graduate in 2005 still earned \$6.76 less, or 24%, than a male college graduate in 2005.
- ❖ Women are much less likely to earn very high wages. In 2005 only 10.1% of women, but 17.6% of men, earned at least three times the poverty-level wage.
- ❖ Pension coverage eroded in the 1980s and then again between 2000 and 2004 for both men and women. In 2004, women workers were slightly less likely than men (44.3% versus 46.4%) to be covered by an employer's pension plan.

Contact

- ❖ Nancy Coleman, Karen Conner, Stephaan Harris: 202-775-8810 or news@epi.org

