Black Women in the Labor Force (Infographic)

Women's Bureau

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Black Women in the Labor Force (Infographic)

Abstract
There were about 10.2 million Black women in the civilian labor force in 2015, representing 1 in 7 women in the labor force. Of those, 9.3 million were employed.

On average, Black women tend to have less favorable outcomes than their White, non-Hispanic counterparts. Black women still face a stark wage gap and are less likely to work in higher-paid occupations. Raising the minimum wage, closing the wage gap, ensuring adequate working conditions and expanding opportunities for higher wage occupations would greatly impact the lives of Black women and their families.

The data below highlight the outcomes of Black women, and compare them to their White, non-Hispanic counterparts as a reference group.

Keywords
Women, work, labor force, African American

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BLACK WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE

There were about 10.2 million Black women in the civilian labor force in 2015, representing 1 in 7 women in the labor force. Of those, 9.3 million were employed. On average, Black women tend to have lower labor force participation and earnings than their White, non-Hispanic counterparts. Black women still face a stark wage gap and are less likely to work in higher-paid occupations. Raising the minimum wage, closing the wage gap, ensuring adequate working conditions and expanding opportunities for higher wage occupations would greatly impact the lives of Black women and their families.

The data below highlight the outcomes of Black women, and compare them to their White, non-Hispanic counterparts as a reference group.

**LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE**

Historically, Black women have had higher labor force participation rates than White women. In 2015, they were still more likely to be employed or actively looking for work.

**FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN HEADED BY SINGLE WORKING MOTHERS***

In 2014, 4 in 10 Black families with children under 18 were headed by a single female worker.

*Refers to families with children under 18 with a working female householder, no spouse present. Single includes people whose marital status is other than married, spouse present. Householder refers to the person (or one of the people) in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented or, if there is no such person, any adult member, excluding roomers, boarders, or paid employees.

**EARNINGS & THE WAGE GAP***

Black women and men earn well below White non-Hispanics, and Black women earn even less than their male counterparts.

*Based on 2014 median annual earnings of workers 15 years and older who worked full-time and year round, including the self-employed.

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE**

Over 9 in 10 Black women in the labor force had at least a high school diploma, and 3 in 10 were college graduates. Black women with a college degree earned over 2 times more and their unemployment rate was 4 times lower compared to Black women with no high school diploma.

**OCCUPATIONS**

Management, professional and related occupations have employed the largest share of Black women since 2009, when the share employed in this category first exceeded that of sales and office occupations. The share of Black women employed in management, professional and related occupations has continued to gradually increase over time, but is still below the share of White, non-Hispanic women employed in these occupations.