Black Women in the Labor Force (Infographic)

Women's Bureau
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**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

**Comments**

**Suggested Citation**

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BLACK WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE

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LAVOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

Historically, Black women have had higher labor force participation rates than other 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 working mother.

Note: *Refers to families with children under 18 in whose households the female householder, no spouse present, worked for pay. If the female householder worked part-time, the family is counted as a single working mother family if the household had earnings in excess of zero. If there is no pay, the mother is considered a non-working mother.


EARNINGS & THE WAGE GAP*

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

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


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.

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 nearly twice as much and their unemployment rate was 4 times lower compared to Black women with no high school diploma.

Note: In 2015 median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers ($406 no high school diploma, $961 for college graduates).