

Narrowing The Gap



Economic Inequality

Gender Pay Gap in The U.S.: Improving But More Progress Needed

Full-time working women in the United States earn about 78% of what their male counterparts do according to the [Census Bureau](#). While the number has improved since 1960 (the year the Census began collecting the data) when women earned 61% of what men did, there is still a long way to go in achieving equitable levels of pay between men and women.

Improvements in the pay gap are widely attributed to a dip in men's earnings since the recession so the purported progress women have made is not in line with what would be expected in a healthier economy. Men who work full-time brought home \$50,383 in 2014, about 1.5% less than they earned in 2004.

Closing the gender pay gap has been a priority of the Obama administration. In January [President Obama](#) proposed new rules: companies with 100 workers or more must provide annual data to the federal government on how much they pay employees based on gender, race, and ethnicity.

What Our Research Shows: From the NYC Equality Indicators Report 2015

In NYC we found similar evidence of a gender pay gap, but one less pronounced than at the national level: women earned 10% less than their male counterparts or roughly 90% of their salaries. The median yearly income for men employed full-time was \$42,000, compared to women employed full-time, whose median income was \$38,423.

In NY state, Governor Cuomo has also made closing the gender pay gap a priority. In 2013 he introduced the Women's Equality Agenda, a 10-point piece of legislation with measures to curtail discrimination in pay based on gender. In 2015, as part of the legislation, the [Achieve Pay Equity](#) bill was passed. Under the bill, if workers discuss their salaries amongst each other, employers cannot threaten to terminate or suspend them and it increases the amount of damages available to a worker in related litigation.

Upon passage of the bill, Democratic Senator, [Diane Savino](#), said: "Today, New York takes a big step toward recognizing women's rights in the workforce.... Pay equity is long overdue, and this common-sense bill ensures that the hardworking women of New York have the chance to earn the same wages as their male counterparts."

Justice Inequality

Low Rates of Representation in National Offices: U.S. Ranks 98th Worldwide for Women in Office

Despite accounting for half of the U.S. population, women's representation in national office is alarmingly low. [The Center for American Women and Politics](#) reports that in 2015 women held:

- **104**, or **19.4%** of the 535 seats in the 114th U.S. Congress
- **20** or **20.0%**, of the 100 seats in the Senate
- **84** or **19.3%**, of the 435 seats in the House of Representatives
- **77** of the statewide elective executive offices across the country; women hold **24.7%** of the 312 available positions

[The Nation](#) reports that worldwide the United States ranks 98th for the percentage of women in its legislative offices. Based on the current trends, "women won't achieve fair representation for nearly 500 years," says Cynthia Terrell, chair of FairVote's [Representation2020](#) project.

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In NYC women comprise a substantially smaller number of elected officials than men. Out of 166 elected local government officials, only 29.5% were women as compared to 70.5% men. Elected officials include the Mayor, Comptroller, Public Advocate, City Council members, Assembly members, district attorneys, borough presidents, State Senators, and U.S. Representatives from NYC congressional districts. Interestingly, this disparity was not found for appointed officials, such as commissioners and deputy commissioners, for which NYC had more women than men.

A strong voice in NY advocating for greater representation by women in office is NY's Democratic Senator, [Kristen Gillibrand](#). Her "Off the Sidelines PAC" is aimed at electing more women to Congress and getting women across the country to take a more active role in the political process. "I don't know if it's getting harder, but it's not getting easier," Gillibrand said. "I feel we're stalled out on our percentage."

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In this issue of *Narrowing The Gap*, we focus on one of the groups adversely affected by inequality: **Women**. Other issues will describe inequalities faced by children, immigrants, individuals currently in jail or on probation, individuals living in poverty, individuals with a physical or intellectual disability, individuals with less than a high school diploma, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, religious minorities, seniors, and single parents.

Education Inequality

Women Under-Represented Among STEM Graduates and STEM Job Holders

The [National Center for Education Statistics](#) compiles data on what types of bachelor degrees are awarded by gender to better understand national trends in degree attainment. As an increasingly large number of jobs require STEM skills, gender gaps are closely watched. According to 2012 statistics (the latest available at the national level) women obtain the following percentages of STEM degrees in each of these majors:

- Computer Science – 15%
- Math & Sciences – 40%
- Engineering – 12%

In addition to being less likely to hold these degrees as compared to men, women are also less likely to work in STEM fields. While women hold roughly 50% of all jobs in the U.S. economy, they hold just 26% of STEM positions.

What Our Research Shows: From the NYC Equality Indicators Report 2015

In NYC, the Equality Indicators looked at the ratio between the percentages of female and male CUNY degree recipients whose degrees are in STEM fields. We found 18.9% of male CUNY graduates received their degrees in STEM fields compared with 7.4% of female graduates.

Of those getting STEM degrees, women were the most likely to get their degrees in science disciplines (59.9%) followed distantly by technology (19.2%), while men were most likely to get them in technology (47.4%) followed by science (27.0%).

[CUNY](#) has made strong commitments to academically preparing girls and boys for pursuit of STEM degrees. Pre-college STEM initiatives include six Early College & Career High Schools as well as a STEM Research Academy that trains high school students in research techniques and provides them with summer internships that partner them with members of the CUNY faculty.

Health Inequality

Gender Differences in Immigrant Health

[Historically](#), researchers subscribed to the idea that immigrants of both genders are generally healthy before they move to the United States, but become less so after living here.

A [2012 study from Duke University](#) painted a more complex picture. Using data from National Institutes of Health surveys, Duke did cross-comparisons by gender of U.S.-born men and women to Middle Eastern and Mexican-born men and women.

While [the study](#) aimed to find differences between U.S.-born whites and immigrants, what emerged was data to support more differences in health status between immigrant men and immigrant women.

The researchers found Middle Eastern and Mexican immigrant women were significantly less healthy than their male counterparts. Using two measures, self-reported health and presence of hypertension, as an example, here is the breakdown by gender among these groups:

	Immigrant Health Status			
	Mexican		Middle-Eastern	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Fair/Poor Health	10.80	17.10	13.03	19.63
Hypertension	47.61	52.39	52.03	47.97

NYC Pregnancy-Related Deaths: Well-Being Indicator for Women

A 2013 study from [The Center for Research and Policy in the Public Interest and The New York Women's Foundation](#) uncovered a disturbing trend in NYC: "The maternal mortality rate has increased nearly 30% over a 10-year period in the city. When race and ethnicity are taken into consideration, Black women had a maternal mortality rate of 79 deaths per 100,000 live births compared to 10 per 100,000 live births for White women."

"Women are not dying of diseases we can't treat... They are dying because societies have yet to make the decision that their lives are worth saving."

-[Mahmoud Fathalla](#), former President of the International Federation of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, on the 350,000 women who die in childbirth globally each year (based on Amnesty International data)

The Equality Indicators is a project of [the Institute for State and Local Governance \(ISLG\)](#) of the City University of New York.

The project measures progress towards greater equality across six themes related to **Economy, Education, Health, Housing, Justice, and Services** using 96 indicators. Each indicator is scored from 1 to 100, where 1 represents the most inequality and 100 the least inequality. For more information please visit our website at equalityindicators.org and follow us on twitter [@equalityISLG](https://twitter.com/equalityISLG)