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 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 some of the differences in outcomes of Black women compared to their White, non-Hispanic counterparts.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

Historically, Black women have had higher labor force participation rates compared to 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.

EARNINGS & THE WAGE GAP

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

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 over 2 times more and their unemployment rate was 4 times lower compared to Black women with no high school diploma.

Note: Data is based on people 16 years of age and over, unless otherwise noted. In this publication, the term Black refers to Black or African American. Data do not include people of two or more races.


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WOMEN’S BUREAU
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