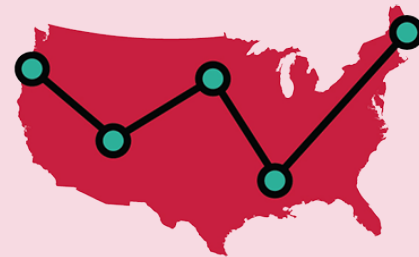


STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE STATES



www.statusofwomendata.org

Fact Sheet, IWPR #R523, March 2018

The Economic Status of Women in Tennessee

Women in Tennessee have made considerable advances in recent years but still face inequities that often prevent them from reaching their full potential. Since the 2004 *Status of Women in the States* report was published, the gender wage gap in Tennessee has narrowed, a higher percentage of women have bachelor's degrees, and a larger share of women live in poverty. Tennessee still ranks in the worst third in the nation for both women's Employment & Earnings and Poverty & Opportunity.



If current trends continue,
women in Tennessee will not see
equal pay until the year
2054.¹



The difference between women's and men's
median annual earnings, \$8,000,
would pay for **2.0 years**
of community college tuition in Tennessee.²

Key Findings

- Tennessee's grade for women's Employment & Earnings, **D+**, has remained the same since the 2004 *Status of Women in the States* report (Table 1). Its grade for women's Poverty & Opportunity, **D**, has remained unchanged since 2004.
- Women in Tennessee aged 16 and older who work full-time, year-round have median annual earnings of \$35,000, which is 81.4 cents on the dollar compared with men who work full-time, year-round (Table 1). Hispanic women earn just 53 cents for every dollar earned by White men (Table 2).
- If employed women in Tennessee were paid the same as comparable men, their poverty rate would be reduced by more than half and poverty among employed single mothers would drop by nearly half (Figure 1).³
- 55.9 percent of women in Tennessee aged 16 and older are in the labor force, compared with 66.1 percent of men (Table 1). Among women, Black women have the highest labor force participation rate, at 63.5 percent (Table 2).
- A growing share of employed women in Tennessee are in managerial or professional occupations. About 40 percent of women hold these positions, which tend to require a four-year degree and often have higher wages and employment benefits.
- In Tennessee, 35.6 percent of businesses in 2012 were owned by women, up from 25.9 percent in 2007.
- Approximately 27 percent of women aged 25 and older in Tennessee have a bachelor's degree or higher, an increase of about 9 percentage points since 2000 (Table 1).
- 88.7 percent of Tennessee's women aged 18 to 64 have health insurance coverage, which is below the national average for women of 89.4 percent (Table 1).
- Tennessee ranks 36th nationally for the share of women in poverty; 17.2 percent of women in the state aged 18 and older are in poverty, compared with 14.4 percent of Tennessee's men (Table 1).

Table 1.

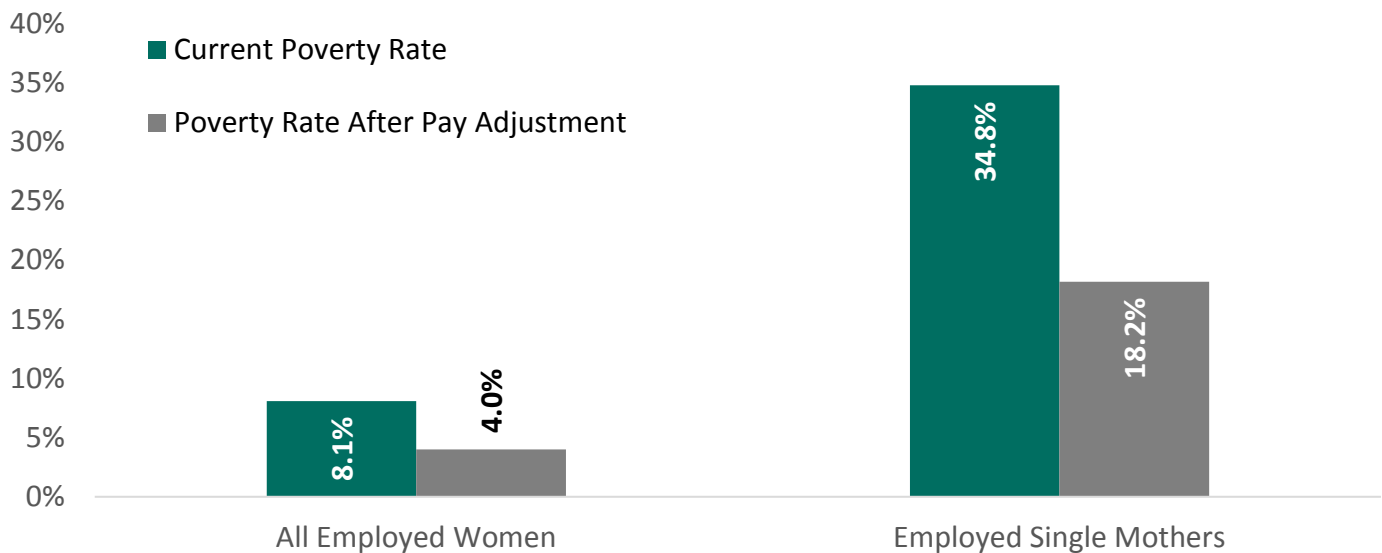
Trends and Rankings on Key Indicators of the Economic Status of Women in Tennessee

	2004 Report	New 2016 Data	Progress since 2004?	2016 Rankings and Grades	
				National Rank	Grade
Employment & Earnings Composite Rank					
Women's Median Annual Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers	\$35,888	\$35,000	No	38	D+
Ratio of Women's to Men's Earnings	75.1%	81.4%	Yes	38	
Women's Labor Force Participation	58.3%	55.9%	No	41	
Percent of All Employed Women in Managerial/Professional Occupations	31.0%	40.0%	Yes	35	
Poverty & Opportunity Composite Rank					
Percent of Nonelderly Women with Health Insurance	87.6%	88.7%	Yes	36	D
Percent of Women with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	18.3%	26.8%	Yes	41	
Percent of Businesses Owned by Women	24.0%	35.6%	Yes	20	
Percent of Women Above Poverty	85.5%	82.8%	No	36	

Notes: Except for data on women's business ownership, which are from the 2012 Survey of Business Owners, data are from the 2016 American Community Survey. Go to <https://statusofwomensdata.org/explore-the-data/methodology/> for composite methodology. Earnings from the 2004 report are inflation-adjusted to 2016 dollars. All indicators are defined so that a higher rate translates into higher rankings and better letter grades. Calculated by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

Figure 1.

Impact of Equal Pay on Working Women's Poverty in Tennessee, 2016: Current Values and Estimates if Working Women Earned the Same as Comparable Men



Notes: IWPR calculations based on the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic supplements 2014-2016 (for calendar years 2013-2015). Comparable men and women are of the same age, have the same level of education, work the same number of hours, and have the same urban/rural status. For analysis methodology, see IWPR briefing paper #C455, [The Impact of Equal Pay on Poverty and the Economy](https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/C455.pdf) <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/C455.pdf>, by Jessica Milli, Yixuan Huang, Heidi Hartmann, and Jeff Hayes.

Table 2.

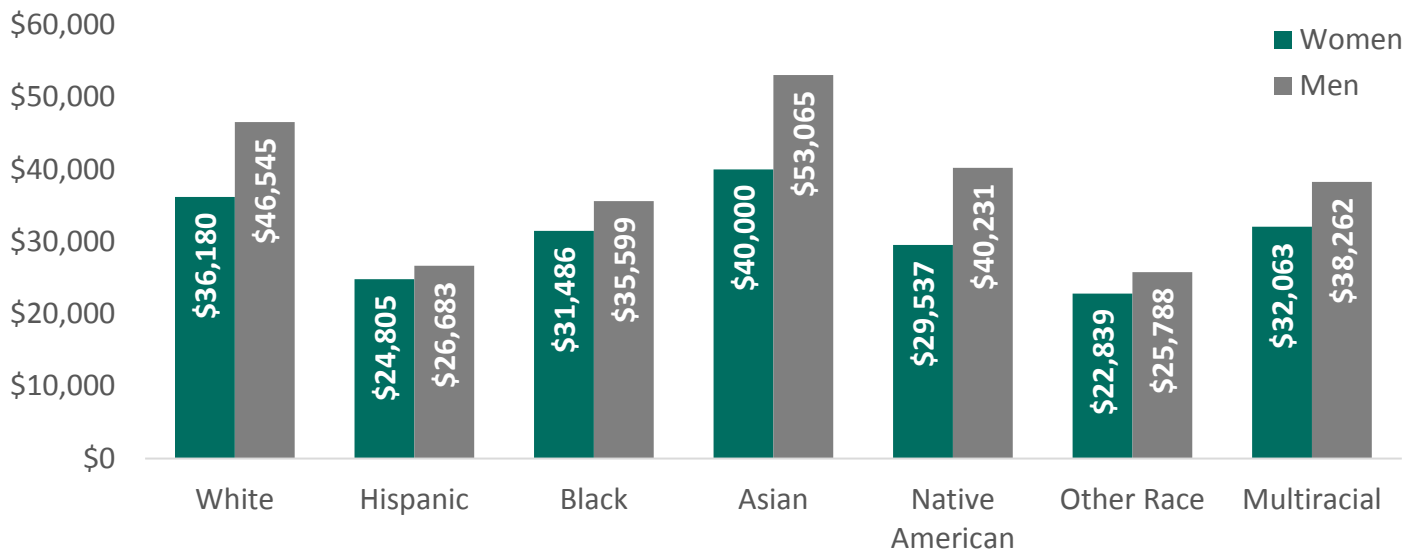
Overview of the Economic Status of Women of Color in Tennessee, 2016

	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian	Native American	Multiracial
Employment & Earnings						
Women's Median Annual Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers	\$36,180	\$24,805	\$31,486	\$40,000	\$29,537	\$32,063
Ratio of Women's to White Men's Earnings	77.7%	53.3%	67.6%	85.9%	63.5%	68.9%
Women's Labor Force Participation	54.3%	57.9%	63.5%	57.7%	51.9%	58.8%
Percent of All Employed Women in Managerial or Professional Occupations	41.8%	21.2%	29.9%	43.9%	27.4%	32.3%
Poverty & Opportunity						
Percent of Nonelderly Women with Health Insurance	89.0%	55.9%	86.6%	85.3%	79.6%	84.7%
Percent of Women with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	27.2%	15.1%	21.6%	48.5%	N/A	27.8%
Percent of Women in Poverty	14.8%	30.7%	25.0%	11.5%	N/A	25.1%

Notes: N/A=not available. Median annual earnings use five-year American Community Survey data (2011-2016) downloaded from American Fact Finder. All other indicators are calculated using three years of data (2014-2016) from the American Community Survey. Racial groups are non-Hispanic. For the earnings data, Asian does not include Pacific Islander women and multiracial does not include women of another racial category; for all other indicators, Asian includes Pacific Islander and multiracial includes women of another racial or ethnic category. Calculated by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

Figure 2.

Median Annual Earnings for Women and Men in Tennessee Working Full-Time, Year-Round, by Race and Ethnicity, 2016



Notes: Calculated using three years of data (2014-2016) from the American Community Survey. Racial groups are non-Hispanic. Calculated by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

NOTES

1. Linear projection based on rate of progress in closing the gender wage gap since 1959. Projection is based on the ratio of women's to men's earnings among full-time, year-round workers aged 16 and older. Calculations are based on the Decennial Censuses from 1960 through 2000, and 2001-2015 American Community Survey microdata.
2. The 2015-16 average undergraduate tuition and required fees for in-state, full-time students in degree-granting public two-year institutions in Tennessee is \$3,940.
3. Comparable includes women and men of the same age and level of education, who work the same number of hours, and have the same urban/rural status.

About the Institute for Women's Policy Research



The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) conducts rigorous research and disseminates its findings to address the needs of women, promote public dialogue, and strengthen families, communities, and societies. The Institute's research strives to give voice to the needs of women from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds across the income spectrum and to ensure that their perspectives enter the public debate on ending discrimination and inequality, improving opportunity, and increasing economic security for women and families. The Institute works with policymakers, scholars, and public interest groups to design, execute, and disseminate research and to build a diverse network of individuals and organizations that conduct and use women-oriented policy research. IWPR's work is supported by foundation grants, government grants and contracts, donations from individuals, and contributions from organizations and corporations. IWPR is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that also works in affiliation with the Program on Gender Analysis in Economics at American University.

About The Status of Women in the States



This Fact Sheet is a part of the Institute for Women's Policy Research's series on the status of women across the United States, begun in 1996. The Status of Women in the States project uses data from U.S. government and other sources to analyze women's status in each state and the United States overall, rank and grade states on a set of indicators for six topical areas, and provide additional data on women's status in states across the nation. The Institute for Women's Policy Research has published individual reports on the status of women since 1996 in each state and the District of Columbia. The reports have been used to highlight women's progress and the obstacles they continue to face and to encourage policy and programmatic changes that can improve women's opportunities.

Tennessee Women's Fund Alliance

Special thanks to the Tennessee Women's Fund Alliance for partnering to produce this fact sheet. The Tennessee Women's Fund Alliance (TWFA) is comprised of the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis, the Women's Fund of Greater Chattanooga, the Women's Fund of the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, and the Women's Fund of East Tennessee. The purpose of the TWFA is to work together on issues, initiatives and projects that can improve the lives of women, girls and families in TN through statewide collaborative efforts and coordination. Tennessee's women's funds share, among other things, a deep commitment to addressing issues of poverty and violence. They hold a common belief that women who are able to lift themselves from poverty benefit not only themselves, but their families, their communities, and the world.

