

FACT SHEET: Closing the Wage Gap for Young Black Women

For too long, women, especially those working in low-wage earning and physically demanding positions, have received the short end of the stick when it comes to pay equity. The realities of pay discrimination are even more egregious for Black women due to a longstanding history of racism and sexism. This is especially true for young Black women ages 16 to 24 who are neither working nor in school, otherwise known as Opportunity Youth, who may be carrying heavy financial burdens, while also battling disproportionate barriers in accessing education and employment.

The Federal Government Must Address the Wage Gap for Black Women.

- Black women are systemically excluded from full engagement with the economy as a result of discrimination, lack of access to flexible and supportive workplace policies, and occupational segregation for Black women in the workforce.
- Based on Census data from 2022, “the wage gap for Black women compared to non-Hispanic white men is 67 cents for full time, year-round workers and 64 cents for all workers (including part time).”¹ The wage gap is even larger in states, like Texas and Georgia, with the largest number of Black women working full time, year-round.²
- Black women have the highest labor force participation rates and are often the primary breadwinners and caregivers for their families,³ yet receive the least recognition for their contributions to the economy.
- As a result of being underpaid, Black women are “less able to build savings, withstand economic downturns, and achieve some measure of economic stability.”⁴
- These disparities coupled with the severe lack of investment in Black women’s economic security can lead Black women to lose an estimated \$964,400 over the course of a 40- year career.⁵
- Correcting this injustice and supporting Black women’s economic security requires federal legislative policies that address the wage gap, including flexible scheduling, paid family and medical leave, and paid sick leave so that Black women do not have to choose between their health and their job.⁶

The Pay gap especially inhibits the economic and physical prosperity of disconnected young, Black female workers.

¹ Equal Pay Today, *Black Women’s Equal Pay Day*, <http://www.equalpaytoday.org/black-womens-equal-pay-day#:~:text=The%20resulting%20injustice%20affects%20individuals,and%20higher%20pay%20is%20urgent.>

² National Partnership for Women and Families, *Black Women and the Wage Gap*, October 2022, <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/african-american-women-wage-gap.pdf>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ Robin Bleiweis, Jocelyn Frye, Rose Khattar, *Women of Color and the Wage Gap*, Nov. 17, 2021, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/women-of-color-and-the-wage-gap/>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Ben Gitis, *Paid Family Leave Can Help Close the Gender Pay Gap*, Mar. 24, 2021, <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/paid-family-leave-can-help-close-the-gender-pay-gap/>.

- Today, there are 4,599,100 disconnected youth in America, or about one in nine teens and young adults (11.5 percent).⁷
- Research has shown that between 2016 to 2017, disconnection rates increased at an alarming rate for Black teens and young adults.⁸
- It is important to pass legislation that protects Opportunity Youth and Black women because the federal government would gain an estimated \$55 billion in potential federal revenue per year for each young person who remains connected to the workforce.⁹
- If the wage gap were eliminated, on average, “a Black woman working full time, year-round would have enough money for approximately: More than two years of child care; More than two additional years of tuition and fees for a four-year public university, or the full cost of tuition and fees for a two-year community college; More than 13 additional months of premiums for employer-based health insurance; 130 more weeks of food for her family (two and a half years’ worth); One year of mortgage and utilities payments; Almost 19 more months of rent; More than 17 additional years of birth control; or Enough money to pay off the average student loan debt in under two years.”¹⁰
- Now is the time to end the wage gap and empower young Black women and youth to access more career opportunities, increase their wealth, support their families and wellbeing, and increase their overall prosperity.

⁷ Measure of America, *Youth Disconnection*, <http://measureofamerica.org/disconnected-youth/>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Lewis, Kristen, and Rebecca Gluskin. *Two Futures: The Economic Case for Keeping Youth on Track*. New York: Measure of America, Social Science Research Council, 2018. https://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/moa/PSID2018_FINAL.pdf.

¹⁰ *Black Women and the Wage Gap*, supra 2.