

Public Policy

Equal Pay Day: Frustrating News

By Jeanne Delp

Each year, this **symbolic day** is used to raise awareness around and combat impact of pay inequities. Equal Pay Day in 2024 was held on March 12. In the past, the date was meant to mark the day that a woman would have to work into the next year to “catch up” with what a man had made in one 12-month cycle, with the acknowledgment that a lot of women *never* “catch up.” Now the date is largely symbolic. Instead, it represents a day to hold space for the current state of the gender pay gap for women, who make 84% of what men do, for full-time, year-round work.

The pay gap differs significantly across different kinds of work and among different communities. To reflect this reality, AAUW National presents pay gap statistics that reflect more accurate and relevant demography. . . . For instance, we can get a better sense of disparities when we can compare Native American women who work full-time, year-round (59 cents for every dollar paid to non-Hispanic white men), and Native American women who do not work full-time, year-round (55 cents for every dollar paid to non-Hispanic white men). AAUW National also includes LGBTQIA+ people in the pay gap model to point out the absence of data, as the U.S. Census Bureau does not currently collect the necessary information to actually track disparities within the community.

The AAUW Equal Pay Day Calendar encompasses a cross-section of women, including those who work part-time or seasonally, to represent a more accurate picture of how the gender pay gap impacts diverse communities. Taking a more inclusive approach ensures that we can advocate on behalf of all women in the workforce.

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AAUW EQUAL PAY DAY CALENDAR Symbolic Pay Days

- All Women’s Equal Pay Day – **March 12**
- Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Women’s Equal Pay Day – **April 3**
- LGBTQIA+ Equal Pay Awareness Day – **June 13**
- Black Women’s Equal Pay Day – **July 9**
- Moms’ Equal Pay Day – **August 7**
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) Women’s Equal Pay Day – **August 28**
- Latina Equal Pay Day – **October 3**
- Native Women’s Equal Pay Day – **November 21**

SHORT HISTORY LESSON: In 1963, when the Equal Pay Act was signed by Congress, women made 59 cents on average for every dollar earned by men (based on Census figures of median wages of full-time, year-round workers). By 2012, women earned 77 cents to men's dollar, a narrowing of the wage gap by less than half a cent a year. Over a working lifetime, this wage disparity costs the average American woman and her family an estimated \$700,000 to \$2 million, impacting Social Security benefits and pensions.

The National Committee on Pay Equity (NCPE), founded in 1979, is a coalition of women's and civil rights organizations, labor unions, religious, professional, legal, and educational associations, commissions on women, state and local pay equity coalitions and individuals working to eliminate sex- and race-based wage discrimination and to achieve pay equity.

Sources: AAUW Board to Board newsletter for March 2024, National AAUW Pay Equity program, and the National Committee on Pay Equity.

Want more information?

- [AAUW Equal Pay Calendar](#)
- [National Committee on Pay Equity](#)