

# Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Women and the Wage Gap

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Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) women are often held up as “model minorities” who overcome racism and sexism through education and hard work – an inaccurate stereotype rooted in white supremacy and patriarchy, especially as the gender wage gap still exists for these women. In 2024, all AANHPI women workers were paid just 83 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.<sup>1</sup> But AANHPI women are not a monolith. They encompass more than 50 ethnic groups speaking more than 100 languages. A lack of disaggregated economic data obscures intra-group disparities and the unique challenges this community faces.<sup>2</sup> This fact sheet sheds light on this reality by examining wage gaps for AANHPI women by ethnicity. More than half of the 27 subgroups included in this analysis make less than 70 cents for every dollar made by white, non-Hispanic men, including Kazakh and Bangladeshi women who were paid as little as 47 cents and 50 cents, respectively.<sup>3</sup>

Individual accomplishments cannot overcome systemic discrimination. The root of pay disparities and the exploitation of workers based on race, class, gender and immigration status can be traced back to this country’s horrific past of enslaving Africans and their descendants and the colonial dispossession of and genocide against Native communities, including indigenous Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. For AANHPI Americans, this foundation also includes a long history of racist and discriminatory immigration policies including the Page Act of 1875, the first restrictive federal immigration law in U.S. history, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Immigration Act of 1924.<sup>4</sup> The current administration has re-ignited anti-AANHPI sentiments via immigration bans targeting Muslim countries, misinformation blaming Asian communities for the COVID-19 pandemic, and enabling racial profiling and harassment by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The wages of AANHPI women are driven down by a number of current factors including gender and racial discrimination, workplace harassment, job segregation and the devaluing of jobs dominated by women, as well as the lack of support for family caregiving, which Asian women spend more time on than any other group of women.<sup>5</sup>

Discrimination can manifest as sexual harassment based on racist stereotypes that AANHPI women are meek, hypersexual or the “perpetual foreigner.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Disaggregated data for Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women show gender and racial wage gaps persist.**

- Among 27 select subgroups of AANHPI women, women are paid between 47 cents to 117 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men for all women workers including part-time and seasonal workers.<sup>7</sup> When comparing men and women within the same ethnic subgroup, there is a gender wage gap within every group except Mien and Marshallese Americans.
- The largest wage gaps among these groups are for Kazakh women (47 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men), Bangladeshi women (50 cents), and Burmese women (51 cents).<sup>8</sup>
- Of the 27 subgroups of AANHPI women, only Indian and Taiwanese women are typically paid more than white, non-Hispanic men. However, both these groups are paid less than men of the same ethnicity. Taiwanese women typically make 68 cents compared to Taiwanese men, while Indian women make 65 cents compared to Indian men.<sup>9</sup>
- The largest groups of AANHPI women workers in the United States are Chinese, Indian, Filipina, Vietnamese and Korean.<sup>10</sup> Women are paid less than white, non-Hispanic men in 4 out of 5 of these groups; Chinese women are paid 89 cents, Filipina women 81 cents, Vietnamese women 60 cents and Korean women 83 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.<sup>11</sup>
- The gender wage gap between women and men full-time, year-round workers persists across the top occupations for AANHPI women. This includes occupations that require advanced skills and training.<sup>12</sup>
  - Among physicians and surgeons, women are typically paid \$35,000 less than their male counterparts,
  - \$15,800 less than men in software developers, applications and systems software occupations and
  - \$14,000 less than men as postsecondary teachers.
- They are also paid less in low-wage occupations.<sup>13</sup>
  - Women cashiers typically make \$2,700 less a year than men cashiers,
  - \$4,100 less than men as hand packers and packagers, and
  - \$7,700 less than men as teaching assistants.

## AANHPI Women's Median Earnings and Wage Gap by Ancestry or Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number of Women		Wage Gap	Cents on the Dollar
	Workers	Median Earnings		
Kazakh	2,400	\$28,205	\$31,795	\$0.47
Bangladeshi	53,300	\$30,123	\$29,877	\$0.50
Burmese	44,900	\$30,881	\$29,119	\$0.51
Bhutanese	4,500	\$32,793	\$27,207	\$0.55
Nepalese	56,200	\$34,300	\$25,700	\$0.57
Pakistani	117,800	\$34,999	\$25,001	\$0.58
Tongan	11,500	\$35,514	\$24,486	\$0.59
Vietnamese	567,100	\$36,028	\$23,972	\$0.60
Samoan	29,900	\$36,436	\$23,564	\$0.61
Native Hawaiian	43,800	\$36,436	\$23,564	\$0.61
Mongolian	7,900	\$36,436	\$23,564	\$0.61
Indonesian	30,200	\$37,074	\$22,926	\$0.62
Thai	73,200	\$37,651	\$22,349	\$0.63
Laotian	53,600	\$40,000	\$20,000	\$0.67
Hmong	81,700	\$40,000	\$20,000	\$0.67
Cambodian	79,100	\$40,000	\$20,000	\$0.67
Guamanian/Chamorro	19,400	\$42,205	\$17,795	\$0.70
Fijian	10,300	\$44,026	\$15,974	\$0.73
Malaysian	8,100	\$46,343	\$13,657	\$0.77
Filipina	1,027,900	\$48,582	\$11,418	\$0.81
Mien	2,000	\$50,000	\$10,000	\$0.83
Sri Lankan	18,300	\$50,000	\$10,000	\$0.83
Korean	440,300	\$50,000	\$10,000	\$0.83
Japanese	202,300	\$52,520	\$7,480	\$0.88
Chinese	1,245,300	\$53,528	\$6,472	\$0.89

Indian	1,112,700	\$69,514	-\$9,514	\$1.16
Taiwanese	74,600	\$70,000	-\$10,000	\$1.17

Sources: Author's calculations using 2020-2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via IPUMS. Figures are for all AANHPI women workers ages 16 and older with earnings in the prior year who identify one major Asian or Pacific Islander race and ethnic subgroup. This includes those who also identify as Hispanic. The wage gap is calculated based on national median earnings for white, non-Hispanic men, about \$60,000 in this period.

Multiracial AANHPI women also experience large wage gaps. The gap is especially wide for American Indian/Alaskan Native AANHPI women, who are paid 53 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men. AANHPI Latinas also face a large gap, at 58 cents, as do Black AANHPI women, who are paid 65 cents. The gap persists for white AANHPI women workers, who are paid 69 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men, and for multiethnic AANHPI women workers, who are paid 79 cents.<sup>14</sup>

Multiracial AANHPI Women's Median Earnings				
Race/Ethnicity	Number of Women Workers	Median Earnings	Wage Gap	Cents on the Dollar
American Indian/Alaskan Native AANHPI	6,000	\$31,727	\$28,273	\$0.53
AANHPI Latinas	36,800	\$35,000	\$25,000	\$0.58
Black AANHPI	75,000	\$39,116	\$20,884	\$0.65
White AANHPI	654,400	\$41,175	\$18,825	\$0.69
Multiethnic AANHPI	153,400	\$47,161	\$12,839	\$0.79

Sources: Author's calculations using 2020-2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via IPUMS. Figures are for multiracial women aged 16 and older with earnings in the past 12 months who report two major races or ethnicities. Categories exclude Hispanic respondents unless explicitly stated. The wage gap is calculated based on national median earnings for white non-Hispanic men, about \$60,000 in this period. Multiethnic AANHPI women workers includes respondents who report multiple Asian American and/or Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander ethnicities. AANHPI Latinas includes women are both AANHPI and Latina.

## AANHPI Women at the Margins Are Hurt the Most

Eliminating the wage gap would provide much-needed income to AANHPI women whose wages sustain their households.

- Thirty-five percent of Asian American and Pacific Islander mothers bring in half or more of their families' income, which means their households rely heavily on their wages to make ends meet and get ahead.<sup>15</sup>

- The poverty rate for Asian American households is 6.9 percent, and for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households it is 13.8 percent; for female-headed households, these rates jump to 14.1 percent and 25.1 percent respectively.<sup>16</sup> Many subgroups experience much higher rates of poverty. For example, 21 percent of Burmese people and 18 percent of Mongolians live in poverty.<sup>17</sup> Women in these families are already struggling to pay for essentials and can't afford to continue to be paid unfairly because of their gender and race.
- More than one in four Asian Americans (28 percent) live in multigenerational households, compared to 21 percent of U.S. households overall. Bhutanese people (46 percent), Laotians (43 percent), Cambodians (44 percent) and Hmong (36 percent) are particularly likely to live in multigenerational families, which means family incomes, including women's wages, support more people.<sup>18</sup>

### **How Does the Wage Gap Harm AANHPI Women?**

In 2024, median wages for AANHPI women in the United States were an estimated \$50,000 per year, compared to \$60,000 annually for white, non-Hispanic men. This amounts to a difference of about \$10,000 each year.<sup>19</sup> These lost wages mean AANHPI women have a harder time affording the basics for themselves and their families and may struggle save and invest for the future. Families, businesses and the economy suffer as a result.

For example, if the wage gap were eliminated, on average, an AANHPI woman would have enough money for approximately:

- Twelve months of food.<sup>20</sup>
- Nine months of child care.<sup>21</sup>
- Ten months of tuition and fees for a four-year public university, or the full cost of tuition and fees at a two-year community college.<sup>22</sup>
- Six months of premiums for employer-provided health insurance.<sup>23</sup>
- Five months of mortgage and utilities payments.<sup>24</sup>
- Seven months of rent.<sup>25</sup>
- Paying off their entire student loan debt in 48 months.<sup>26</sup>

## IF THE WAGE GAP CLOSED FOR ONE YEAR, AANHPI WOMEN COULD AFFORD:



### AANHPI Women Are Demanding Change

- AANHPI women experience workplace harassment and discrimination at high rates. In a survey conducted by the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum, 74 percent of AANHPI women report they have experienced racism or discrimination in the last year, with 17 percent reporting that discrimination occurred at work. More than seven in 10 AANHPI women, or 71 percent, report feeling stressed and/or anxious due to fear of gender and/or race-based discrimination, harassment, or violence, with more than one in 20 (6 percent) feeling scared to return to work as a result.<sup>27</sup>
- Economic pressures are also shaping how AANHPI women view their stability and future. According to a recent study by Intersection of Our Lives:<sup>28</sup>
  - AANHPI women list the high cost of living, inflation, and rising prices of groceries, gas, housing, and healthcare as their top concern.
  - Only 8 percent believe the government makes it affordable to raise children.
  - 52 percent no longer believe the American Dream is accessible to them.

### Congress Must Act

It is past time for Congress to enact policies that promote fair pay, address workplace discrimination and harassment, and ensure economic security for AANHPI women and their families.

- **Fair pay protections and practices.** The Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 17) would protect workers from discriminatory pay based on sex (including sex characteristics, gender identity, sexual orientation and pregnancy). It would also prohibit employers from retaliating against employees who discuss their wages

and make it easier to demonstrate that discrimination has occurred. It would also prohibit screening of job applicants based on their salary histories.

- **Improving federal data collection.** Better data can help paint a clearer picture of what obstacles to economic justice remain to for AANHPI women and gender-expansive people. This is why we must protect the EEOC's EEO-1 workforce data collection and expand it to include pay data collection.
- **A higher minimum wage and elimination of the tipped minimum wage.** The Raise the Wage Act (H.R. 2743) would increase the federal minimum wage to \$17 an hour by 2030 and gradually eliminate the subminimum wage for tipped workers, teenagers and workers with disabilities. Greater access to overtime pay through consistent updates to the overtime salary threshold would also help make wages fairer for millions of working people. While the Be Heard Act (H.R. 7583) addresses harassment in the workplace, it would also gradually raise the tipped minimum wage to match the federal minimum wage.
- **Stronger protections for workers' right to organize.** Unions have been proven to provide women with higher wages and better benefits and to close gender and racial wage gaps. The Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act (H.R. 20) would strengthen workers' ability to unionize and bargain collectively, impose stronger remedies when employers interfere with those rights, and address employers' misclassification of workers as contractors which denies them the opportunity to organize. Additionally, the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act (H.R. 2736) would guarantee public service workers the right to collectively bargain, regardless of what state they live in.
- **Family-friendly workplace standards.** The Healthy Families Act (H.R. 7531) would allow workers to earn job-protected paid sick days. The FAMILY Act (H.R. 5390) would create a national paid family and medical leave program, ensuring that all workers, regardless of gender, could address serious health and caregiving needs. Both proposals would help keep women attached to the workforce and support more gender-equal involvement in caregiving, resulting in higher wages over time. The Connecting Caregivers to Medicare Act (H.R. 6735) can help family caregivers better coordinate the care for their loved ones enrolled in Medicare, which is especially important for AANHPI women who live in multigenerational homes and provide care for parents. Finally, the Health Equity and Access Under the Law (HEAL) for Immigrant Families Act (H.R. 4104) would allow immigrants to participate in health insurance programs for which they would be eligible but for their immigration status or length of stay. Many immigrants are barred from accessing publicly sponsored health insurance

programs and must navigate a complex patchwork of care and pay out-of-pocket, making it more difficult to obtain vital health care.

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<sup>1</sup> Author's calculation using U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2024 via IPUMS USA. University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org). Sample includes all workers ages 16 and older with earnings in the past 12 months. AANHPI includes individuals who also report Hispanic ethnicity. Retrieved 26 March 2026. This calculation is based on a comparison of white, non-Hispanic men and AANHPI women with earnings in 2024. The median annual earnings of white, non-Hispanic men in 2024 in this source was \$60,000.

<sup>2</sup> Due to varying categories used in underlying data sources, this fact sheet uses various terminology to describe "racial" and "ethnic" categories throughout. This fact sheet draws on data from the U.S. Census, Current Population Survey and American Community Survey and, through secondary sources, data from the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, and from national public opinion surveys. All of these are based on respondents' self-reported identity and ancestry, but details may vary across sources. In this fact sheet, we typically use the terminology from the underlying source unless otherwise noted. Where possible, we include disaggregated data for specific sub-categories based on self-reported national or ethnic ancestry.

<sup>3</sup> Author's calculations using 2019-2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org). Figures are for AANHPI women aged 16 and older who reported one major race with earnings in the prior year, including those who identify as Hispanic. The wage gap is calculated based on national median earnings for white, non-Hispanic men, about \$60,000 in this time period. Indian women represent those who self-selected "Asian Indian" as their race and Guamanian/Chamorro women include native and non-native women from Guam.

<sup>4</sup> For more information about these policies see National Archives. (n.d.) *Immigration from Asia and the Pacific, 1870s to 1950s*. Retrieved 7 April 2026, from <https://www.archives.gov/research/aapi/immigration>

<sup>5</sup> Mason, J., & Gallagher Robbins, K. (2023, March). *Women's Work is Undervalued and It's Costing Us Billions*. Retrieved 7 April 2026 from The National Partnership for Women and Families <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/womens-work-is-undervalued.pdf>; Gallagher Robbins, K., & Mason, J. (2025, June 26). *If Americans Were Paid for Their Caregiving, They Would Make More Than \$1.1 Trillion*. Retrieved 7 April 2026 from <https://nationalpartnership.org/if-americans-were-paid-for-their-caregiving-they-would-make-more-than-1-1-trillion/>

<sup>6</sup> National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF). (2022, March). *The state of safety for Asian American and Pacific Islander women in the U.S.* Retrieved 7 April 2026 from <https://www.napawf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/napawf-state-of-safety-report.pdf>; Ruiz, N. G., Im, C., & Tian, Z. (2023, November). *Asian Americans and the 'forever foreigner' stereotype*. Retrieved 7 April 2026 from Pew Research Center website: <https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/2023/11/30/asian-americans-and-the-forever-foreigner-stereotype/>

<sup>7</sup> See note 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Wardark, M., Barreto, S., & Baker, N. (2025, April). *5 Facts about the Labor Market Experiences of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Women*, Retrieved 7 April 2026 from the Center for American Progress website: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/5-facts-about-the-labor-market-experiences-of-asian-american-native-hawaiian-and-pacific-islander-women/>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> See note 3.

<sup>15</sup> Andara, K., Estep, S., & Salas-Betsch, I. (2025, May). *Breadwinning Women are a Lifeline for Their Families and the Economy*. Retrieved 7 April 2025 from the Center for American Progress website: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/breadwinning-women-are-a-lifeline-for-their-families-and-the-economy/>

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2025). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2024 Table S1702: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months of Families*. Retrieved 26 March 2026, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2024.S1702?q=S1702>

<sup>17</sup> Im, C. (2025, May). *Facts about Asians in the United States*. Retrieved 7 April 2026, from Pew Research Center website: <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/collection/asians-in-the-united-states/>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> See note 1.

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<sup>20</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024, September 25). *Consumer Expenditures - 2023*. Retrieved 26 March 2026, from [https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/cesan\\_09252024.htm](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/cesan_09252024.htm) This analysis uses the overall average “food” expenditure which was \$9,985 in 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Child Care Aware of America. (2024). *Child Care in America: 2024 Price & Supply*. Retrieved 23 March 2026, from <https://www.childcareaware.org/price-landscape24/#PriceofCare>. The authors note that the landscape of child care varies significantly from state to state and computing a single national average is complex. This analysis uses the national average of for center-based care for a four-year-old, \$13,128.

<sup>22</sup> Ma, J., Pender M., and Oster, M. (2024). *Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2024*. New York: College Board. Retrieved 23 March 2026, from <https://research.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/Trends-in-College-Pricing-and-Student-Aid-2024-ADA.pdf>. (The average total annual cost of undergraduate tuition and required fees is \$11,610 for a four-year public college or university or \$4,050 for a two-year college)

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (n.d.) *Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) Insurance Component (IC): Average total employee contributions per enrolled employee for single coverage at private-sector establishments that offer health insurance by firm size and selected characteristics, 2024*. Retrieved 23 March 2026, from <https://datatools.ahrq.gov/meps-ic/>

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2025). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2024, Table DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics*. Retrieved 23 March 2026, from <https://data.census.gov/> (Calculation uses median monthly owner costs, housing units with a mortgage.) Monthly owner costs include the sum of payment for mortgages, real estate taxes, various insurances, utilities, fuels, mobile home costs, and condominium fees.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. (Calculation uses median gross rent for occupied units paying rent.)

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Federal Student Aid. (n.d.) *Federal Student Loan Portfolio: Federal Student Aid Portfolio Summary. National Student Loan Data System Publication*. Retrieved 7 April 2026, from <https://studentaid.gov/datacenter/student/portfolio>. (Average dollars outstanding for recipients of direct loans as of Q4 2025, \$39,614.)

<sup>27</sup> National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum (NAPAWF) (2022, March). *The state of safety for Asian American and Pacific Islander women in the US*. Retrieved 7 April 2026, from <https://www.napawf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/napawf-state-of-safety-report.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Intersections of Our Lives. (2026, March.) *Amplifying Women of Color Voices. Integrated Quantitative and Qualitative Public Report*. Retrieved 7 April 2026 from <https://intersectionsfourlives.org/reports/amplifying-women-of-color-voices/>

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The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, reproductive health and rights, access to quality, affordable health care and policies that help all people meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at [NationalPartnership.org](http://NationalPartnership.org).

National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum is the only organization dedicated to uplifting and building power with AANHPI women and girls in the US. Employing a reproductive justice framework to guide their work, they use organizing, advocacy, and communications strategies to assert full agency over our lives, our families, and our communities.

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