

Black Women, the Wage Gap, and Evictions: An Urgent Call for Equitable Housing Solutions

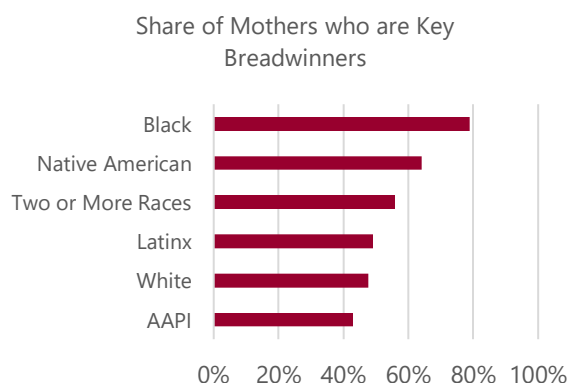
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August 3, 2021 is Black Women’s Equal Pay Day, marking the date in 2021 when Black women would earn as much as white non-Hispanic men did in 2020 because of the wage gap.¹

Beyond the injustice of unequal pay, this means that Black women, many of whom are key breadwinners for their families, spend a larger percentage of their income on critical household expenses like rent and utilities.² This housing crisis existed for Black women before the pandemic, but the massive economic upheaval of COVID-19 has made it even harder for Black women to make rent throughout more than a year of reduced hours, layoffs, lost income and slower job recovery compared to all men and most women.³ Moreover, the temporary nature of the federal eviction moratorium and lagging disbursement of emergency rental assistance signal an urgent need for housing solutions that directly address the unique barriers to housing stability and economic justice for Black women.

**Black women earn
\$0.63
for every dollar that white
men earn**

When we talk about Black families, we’re talking about Black women



Almost 80 percent of Black mothers are key breadwinners for their families, which means their households rely heavily on their wages to make ends meet and get ahead.⁴ As the timing of their Equal Pay Day indicates, Black women, especially Black mothers, have to work harder just to make ends meet. Furthermore, median hourly earnings for Black women fall well below the hourly wage needed to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent in every single state.⁵

The threat of eviction disproportionately impacts Black women renters

Black women have higher pre-pandemic labor force participation rates compared to other women, but greater employment comes at a cost: their names are more likely to be listed as leaseholders.⁶ Any interruptions in their ability to pay rent, particularly for single, breadwinning Black mothers, can catapult their families into a cycle of eviction – a cycle in which having a prior eviction record jeopardizes your ability to secure rental housing in the future.⁷ The Princeton University Eviction Lab’s models validate this impact, indicating that while race and gender independently increase the likelihood of eviction, Black women are facing *compounded* risk of eviction compared to Black men and women of other races. Their research shows that 36.3 percent more Black women get evicted than Black men.⁸

1 in 5
renters likely to face
eviction are Black women⁹

The compounding impact of race and gender rings true as the pandemic lingers on. The latest Household Pulse Survey Data from the Census Bureau indicates that even though Black women represent less than one in 10 renters, they account for nearly one in five renters both behind on rent and likely to face eviction in the next two months.¹⁰ If Black women were able to recover some of the \$24,000 lost annually due to the wage gap between them and non-Hispanic white men, they may have been able to keep up with rent, maintain their families’ housing stability, and weather the economic recession better in general.

Temporary fixes need to evolve into more inclusive, permanent solutions

Addressing the eviction crisis for Black women requires policies that improve access to affordable rental housing, while also creating economic justice for the pillars of the Black community. Evictions disproportionately impact Black women renters who already must grapple with a gender and racial wage gap. Housing is a gender justice and racial justice issue, and more needs to be done so that Black women can maintain a home and economic security for themselves and for their families.

¹ Equal Rights Advocates (2021) *Black Women’s Equal Pay Day 2021*. Retrieved 21 July 2021 from <https://www.equalrights.org/events/black-womens-equal-pay-day-2021/> U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement: Table PINC-05: Work Experience in 2019 – People 15 Years Old and Over by Total Money Earnings in 2019, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, and Disability Status*. Retrieved 21 July 2021, from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html> (Unpublished calculation based on the median earnings for all women and men who worked full time, year-round in 2019; full time is defined as 35 hours a week or more)

² National Partnership for Women and Families (2021, March) *Black Women and the Wage Gap*. Retrieved 21 July 2021 from <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/fair-pay/african-american-women-wage-gap.pdf>

³ Smialek, J. New York Times (2021, June) *Black and Hispanic women are still behind as jobs rebound*. Retrieved 21 July 2021 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/04/business/economy/black-hispanic-women-jobs.html>

⁴ Shaw, E., Mason, C., Lacarte, V., & Jauregui, E. (2020, May). *Holding Up Half the Sky: Mothers as Workers, Primary Caregivers, &*

Breadwinners During COVID-19. Retrieved 20 July 2021 from <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Holding-Up-Half-the-Sky-Mothers-as-Breadwinners.pdf>

⁵ National Low Income Housing Coalition (2021) Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing. Retrieved 20 July 2021 from https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/2021/Out-of-Reach_2021.pdf

⁶ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020, September) *Table 3.3 Civilian labor force participation rates by age, sex, race, and ethnicity, 1999, 2009, 2019, and project 2029*. Retrieved 21 July 2021 from <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/civilian-labor-force-participation-rate.htm>. Hepburn, P., Louis, R., Desmond, M., (2020) *Racial and Gender Disparities among Evicted Americans*, *Sociological Science* 7:649-662. Retrieved 2 March 2021 from https://sociologicalscience.com/download/vol-7/december/SocSci_v7_649to662.pdf

⁷ Beiers, S., Park, S., Morris, L., ACLU Analytics (2020, January) *Clearing the Record: How Eviction Sealing Laws Can Advance Housing Access for Women of Color*. Retrieved 20 February 2021 from <https://www.aclu.org/news/racial-justice/clearing-the-record-how-eviction-sealing-laws-can-advance-housing-access-for-women-of-color/>

⁸ See note 4, (Hepburn et. Al.).

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau (2021, July) *Week 33 Household Pulse Survey June 23 – July 5 Public Use File*. Retrieved 19 July 2021 from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/datasets.html> (Unpublished calculation of the demographic share of renters behind on rent and renters very or somewhat likely to face eviction in the next two months.

¹⁰ Ibid.