



Achieving Pay Equity for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

fact sheet ♦ march 2017

The Asian and Pacific Islander community is the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in the United States,¹ representing over 50 different ethnic groups and speaking more than 100 different languages. Currently, there are over 10 million AAPI women, transgender, and gender non-conforming people living in the U.S.² Asian American women make up six percent of the workforce³ and Asian American immigrant women participate in the labor force at a rate of 46 percent—higher than the rate of immigrant women overall.⁴ The wage gap is detrimental to the autonomy and advancement of all women, transgender, and gender non-conforming communities. Additionally, there is widespread support for addressing pay inequity— following the 2016 election, **87 percent of AAPI people polled agreed that employers should pay women and men the equal wages for equal work.**⁵

BY THE NUMBERS

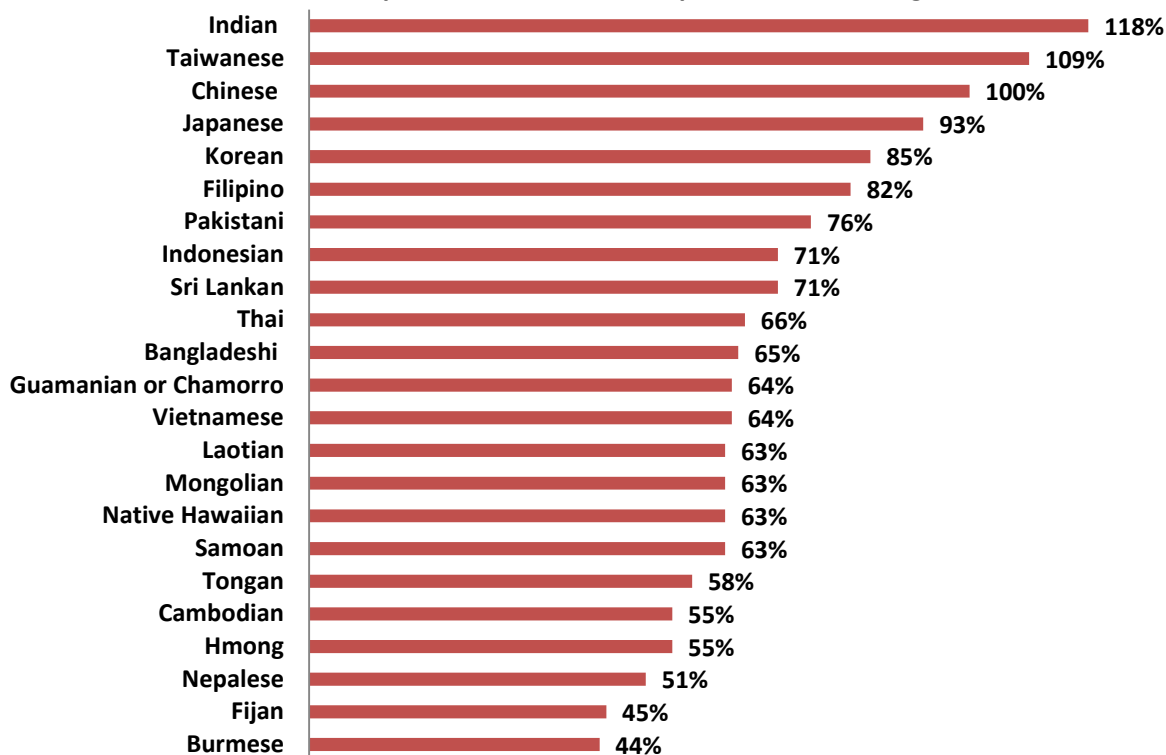
- Asian American women on average earn 85 cents for every dollar a white man earns.⁶
- **Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander women have some of the highest wage gaps compared to other racial and ethnic groups.**⁷
 - Nepalese women make only 51 cents to every dollar a white man earns,⁸ and that number is even less for Burmese (44 cents),⁹ Marshallese (44 cents),¹⁰ and Bhutanese (38 cents) women.¹¹
 - *For example, Bhutanese women experience a \$33,163 loss in wages annually—and what a white, non-Hispanic man earns in one year, a Bhutanese woman has to work more than 2.5 years to earn.*¹²
- The pay gap increases for Asian American women even more with age. The National Women's Law Center estimated that Asian American women ages 45-64 years make just 68 cents to each dollar earned by a white man, while working Asian American women 65 years and old make a mere 53 cents.¹³
 - *This inequity contributes to the higher poverty rates for Asian American women over the age of 65 (16%) compared to both white, non-Hispanic men (5.3%) and Asian American men (13.1%) of the same age.*¹⁴
- While wages earned between AAPI men and women of the same ethnic background reveal different patterns, AAPI women overall experience one of the widest within-ethnicity wage gaps compared to other racial and ethnic groups.¹⁵
 - *Asian women earn roughly 81 cents to an Asian man's dollar—lower than most other racial and ethnic groups.*¹⁶
 - *On average, Indian women only earn 73 cents to an Indian man's dollar, disproportionately less than what white women earn in comparison to white men.*¹⁷
- While pay data for transgender communities are not easily accessible, we do know that AAPI transgender communities experience high and disproportionate rates of poverty.
 - *One national survey found that 18 percent of AAPI respondents reported a household income of less than \$10,000 per year—higher than the rate of the overall transgender community and six times the poverty rate of the general AAPI population.*¹⁸

CALL TO ACTION

AAPI women, transgender, and gender non-conforming workers are a vital and significant part of the U.S. workforce. The contributions of our communities deserve to be acknowledged, valued, and fairly compensated.

- Support federal legislation aimed directly at reducing pay inequity and fighting against employer retaliation—like the Paycheck Fairness Act and the Pay Equity for All Act.
- Demand that federal agencies collect and report disaggregated data on AAPI ethnicities as well as transgender and gender-nonconforming communities.
- Support federal legislation aimed at supporting caregivers—like the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act, and the Healthy Families Act.

Earnings for AAPI Women Subgroups Compared to White, Non-Hispanic Men's Earnings



Source: NAPAWF calculations based on 2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates using IPUMS-USA available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/> (IPUMS). Figures are based on women's and men's median earnings for full time, year round workers. The typical white, non-Hispanic man earned \$55,000 in 2015.

¹U.S. Census Bureau. "Table 7: Projected Change in Population Size by Race and Hispanic Origin for the United States: 2000 to 2050." Accessed July 25, 2011. <http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/summarytables.html>.

²U.S. Census Bureau. "Table PEPALL5N: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Single Year of Age, Race Alone or in Combination, and Hispanic Origin for the United States April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2015." Accessed February 15, 2017. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=PEP_2015_PEPALL5N&prodType=table.

³U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Table CPSAAT10: Household Data Annual Averages: Employed persons by occupation, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex." Accessed February 15, 2017. <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat10.pdf>.

⁴Zhou, Huiquan, and Sungkyu Lee. "Effects of US Citizenship on Wages of Asian Immigrant Women." *International Journal of Social Welfare* 22, no. 4 (2013): 420-430. Accessed February 15, 2017. doi: 10.1111/ijsw.12010.

⁵AAPI Civic Engagement Fund. "Asian American Election Eve Poll Infographic." Last modified November 9, 2016. Accessed February 15, 2017. <http://aapifund.org/588>.

⁶U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements*, Table P-38 and U.S. Census Bureau, *2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸NAPAWF calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau. "Table S0201: Selected Population Profile in the United States." *2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*. Accessed February 15, 2017. https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_1YR/S0201//popgroup~031. <http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/summarytables.html>.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰NAPAWF calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau. "Table S0201: Selected Population Profile in the United States." *2011-2013 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates*. Accessed February 15, 2017. https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/13_3YR/S0201//popgroup~080|176.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³National Women's Law Center. "Equal Pay for Asian American Women." Last modified March 2016. Accessed February 15, 2017. http://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/NEW_Equal-Pay-for-Asian-American-Women.pdf.

¹⁴Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law. "Older Women and Poverty." Last modified March 30, 2016. Accessed February 15, 2017. http://www.ncdsv.org/SSNCPL_Woman-View-Older-Women-and-Poverty_3-30-2016.pdf.

¹⁵Weller, Christian E., and Jeffrey Thompson. "Wealth Inequality Among Asian Americans Greater Than Among Whites." *Center for American Progress*, December 20, 2016. Accessed February 15, 2017. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2016/12/20/295359/wealth-inequality-among-asian-americans-greater-than-among-whites/>.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸National Center for Transgender Equality. "Injustice at Every Turn: A Look at Asian American, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander Respondents in the National Transgender Discrimination Survey." Last modified September 12, 2012. Accessed February 15, 2017. http://endtransdiscrimination.org/PDFs/ntds_asianamerican_english.pdf.