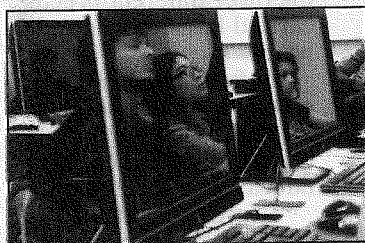


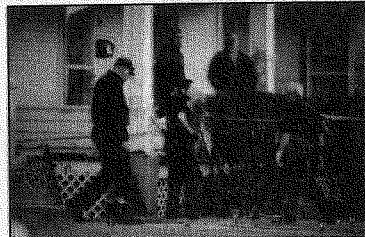
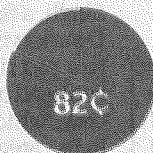
Work demands rise for moms, but pay doesn't follow

Gender differences across occupations

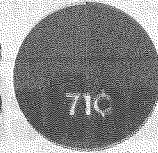
While women are 57% of workers in professional and service jobs, a closer look reveals disparities among high and low-paying types of employment. The percentage of women's earnings on the dollar earned by men.



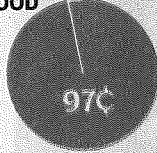
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\$ amounts: Median weekly earnings (both sexes)
%: Women's share of the workforce
Source: Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor

STEVE LOPEZ / STAFF

Clark County agency executive calls disparity 'frustrating,' 'discouraging,' 'definitely not right.'

By **Randy Tucker**
Staff Writer

The old adage that says a mother's work is never done rings truer today than ever as mothers now represent the sole or primary breadwinner for a record 1 in 4 households, according to the latest U.S. Census figures.

But the women who work hardest to care for their families also lag furthest behind when it comes to the wages they earn compared to their male counterparts, even other women.

Of the approximately 31 million mothers with children under 18, more than 70 percent participate in the labor force — a signifi-

cantly higher labor force participation rate than for women overall, about 57 percent, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics.

But working mothers earn only about 75 cents for every dollar made by a father with children, based on 2013 median annual earnings of workers 15 years and older who worked full-time. By comparison, women in general earn about 78 cents for every dollar a man earns.

"Lower earnings have real economic consequences for women in terms of their ability to meet basic expenses, save for the future

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and maintain a strong economic position for themselves and their families," said Vicki Shabo, vice president at the National Partnership for Women & Families, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that promotes fair and family friendly workplaces.

Gap narrowing

The gender wage gap has certainly narrowed compared to past generations when, for example, women only earned about 58 cents to a man's dollar in 1967. But progress has stalled in recent years while the challenges and responsibilities of being a working mother have not relented.

"The challenges of being a working mom are ever-present," said Katie Kenney, mother of two young boys.

"For me, it's having little ones, and trying to be at the soccer field, and trying to be at the plays at school, but also trying to be where I need to be for my job, which is super demanding."

Kelli Dixon, executive director of the Miami Valley division of the American Heart Association, said assuming the role of working mother is like having two jobs.

"There are a lot of expectations for working moms," said Dixon, who has 13-year-old daughter and 23-year-old stepson. "We go to work, but we still have to maintain the household. It's like working a full-time job, then coming home and working a second job. It's harder for us."

In addition, as one of the growing number of bread-winning moms, Dixon has added financial responsibilities. "As the breadwinner in the household, there's the added expectation of provid-

ing for the bills," she said. "So when you talk about the gender gap in pay ... it almost seems like we are working just as hard, if not harder, than men, and I truly believe that the pay should be equal."

The financial burden can be even more onerous for single mothers, who account for more than half of all working moms.

"Sometimes, I feel like I'm working to pay for day care," said 32-year-old Marquita Rice, one of Dixon's colleagues who is raising two young boys, ages 4 and 7. "As a single mother, you have expenses other people don't have, and you're doing everything on your own, trying to provide as if you had a two-parent household. You have double the expenses with just one income, so that income should be equal to, or more than, that of men, if I had my say."

Why the gap?

There are a variety of reasons to explain the gender wage gap – including the prevalence of women in low-paying jobs, like housekeeping and food service, and the tendency of mothers to opt out of the workforce on family leave for longer periods of time than men.

But evidence suggests that gender bias and discrimination continue to play a significant role.

According to Shabo, a statistical analysis by researchers at Harvard University found that 62 percent of the gender wage gap can be attributed to occupational and industry differences; differences in experience and education; and factors such as race, region and unionization. **r² = .62**

"That leaves 38 percent that really can't be attributable to any other identifiable factor, which leads researchers to believe that discrimi-

nation and unconscious bias continue to affect women's wages," Shabo said.

Research also shows, ironically, that the gender pay gap widens as women move up the occupational ladder.

Top paying jobs

For example, female maids and housekeepers and food-service workers earn from 97 cents to 99 cents for every dollar a man earns in the same low-wage professions, achieving virtual parity in pay.

But the pay gap for women in high-paying management, professional and related occupations is nearly 10 times as wide, with women earning a little more than 80 cents for every dollar a man earns in architecture, engineering and math and science fields.

"There is a huge disparity in the pay gap for men and women professionals," said Kerry Pedraza, director

of the United Way of Clark, Champaign and Madison Counties and mother of two. "For a woman who is trying to balance a career and family, having the additional burden of not making as much money in the workplace is extremely frustrating and discouraging, and definitely not right."

Although not excusing discriminatory practices in the workplace, Pedraza places at least some of the blame on women themselves.

"Traditionally, mothers and women have put themselves last," she said. "They're not at ease with advocating for themselves, so the whole idea of negotiating a starting salary is something that women are not as comfortable with. We need to continue to fight to break that glass ceiling, and let women know that it's OK to advocate for themselves."

Better Stats at freakonomics.com/podcast/the-true-story-of-the-gender-pay-gap-a-new-freakonomics-radio-podcast