

The Wage Gap in Wyoming

2022: *How Gender, Race and Ethnicity Affect Pay Inequity*



WYOMING
WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION

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Data assistance provided by the Wyoming Survey
& Analysis Center



College of Agriculture, Life Sciences
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This report was prepared for the Wyoming Women's Foundation in partnership with the Equality State Policy Center and the Wyoming Council for Women.



The Wyoming Women's Foundation's mission is to invest in the economic self-sufficiency of women and opportunities for girls. WYWF is a priority fund of the Wyoming Community Foundation. Learn more at wywf.org.



The Equality State Policy Center's mission is to improve the lives of all Wyoming's people through transparent government, fair elections, and thriving communities. Learn more at equalitystate.org.



The Wyoming Council for Women is a council with representation from each of the nine judicial districts, four at-large members and an additional ex-officio member from the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. The Women's Council focuses on issues that improve the status of women in Wyoming. Members are appointed by the governor and work is funded by the Wyoming State Legislature. More at wyomingwomenscouncil.org.

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Introduction and Executive Summary

Wyoming's working families rely on the wages of every household wage-earner to make ends meet every week, especially during tough economic times. This is especially the case in 2022 when increases in the cost of living outpace increases in wages. Worrying about paying the monthly bills leaves families little time to plan for the future. Wage equity is therefore not simply a woman's issue – it is a family issue. According to 2019 data, nearly 70% of mothers nationally work outside of the home, 41% are the primary or sole breadwinner, and more than 25% are married mothers whose wages comprise at least a quarter of their total household earnings.¹

In Wyoming from 2015-2019, 33% of women were the primary breadwinner, and another 27% were co-breadwinners.² Further, 23% of Wyoming households were headed by women in 2021,³ and 31% of these households lived below the poverty level.⁴ Eliminating the gender wage gap (GWG) would provide critical income to families living in poverty and to all households where women are the primary or co-breadwinner. Aiming to eliminate the GWG would also likely increase retirement security, reduce reliance on public assistance, and improve food security and community health for Wyomingites.⁵

The Gender Wage Gap

As outlined in the methodology section below, the GWG refers to the difference between the average earnings of working men and women. The GWG has broad-reaching impacts, but is especially concerning when there are persistent and pronounced gaps between equally qualified, equally credentialed, and equally experienced men and women in the same profession, occupation, and industry.

METHODOLOGY

When people read headlines or skim articles about the GWG, there is often confusion about why different data sources provide different estimates of the gap. This can lead to mistrust of reports that provide analysis of the gap. To help explain this, we provide a short explanation of three methods for calculating the gap in Wyoming.

The wage gap is typically reported based on the proportion, ratio, or “cents earned to a dollar.”⁶ In 2020, nationally, women earned 81 cents, on average, for every dollar earned by men,⁷ generating a wage gap of 19 percent, or 0.19, or 19 cents on the dollar.

Method 1: The Institute for Women's Policy Research uses Current Population Survey data to calculate the Wyoming GWG by dividing the median (midpoint) of the annual earnings of women aged 16 years or older who worked full time, year-round, by those of similarly situated men. Working full time is defined as working 35 or more hours per week year-round. Based on this methodology, in Wyoming, the median earnings for men working full time, year-round was \$60,000, and \$40,000 for women. Thus, Wyoming women earn \$0.80 for every \$1 dollar a man earns, generating a 0.20 GWG.

Method 2: The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services collects employers' quarterly wage reports to the Unemployment Insurance tax section, or “wage records.” Any person who earned wages in Wyoming between 2000 and 2020 is represented, including part-time workers, or those who worked less than 35 hours

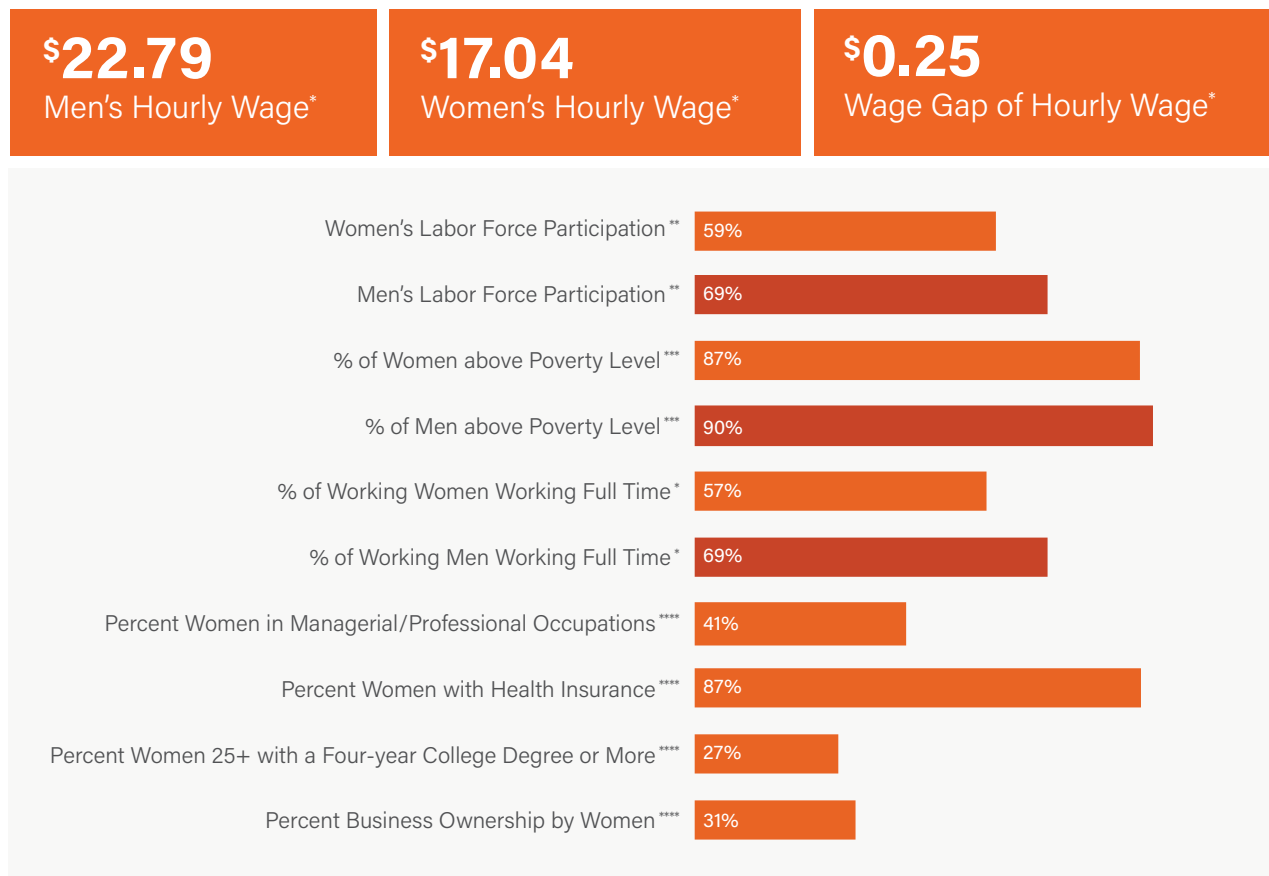
per week. To calculate the wage gap, the average annual earning for Wyoming women was divided by the average earned by Wyoming men in 2020. The Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center found that Wyoming women earn \$0.69 for every \$1 dollar a man earns, leading to a 0.31 GWG.

Wyoming consistently ranks last or near last in the gender wage gap

Method 3: The data used for the analyses in this report are the 5-year American Community Survey microdata. We have calculated the average hourly wage based on the individual's stated yearly income, weeks worked in the year, and the typical hours worked in a week. This method allows us to include both full- and part-time workers and does not conflate the wage gap with hours worked since men, on average, work more hours (34.4 per week) than women (32.3 hour per week) in Wyoming. This method, it is hoped, is the most unbiased measure of the GWG. It also provides a GWG that is in between the two methods described above. Using this methodology, women in Wyoming earn \$0.75 to every dollar earned by men, generating a 0.25 wage gap (Figure 1).

Regardless of methodology, Wyoming consistently ranks last or near last in wage gap analyses, even when adjusted for cost of living and regional prices.⁸ Over the course of a year, this wage gap results in an estimated loss of \$1.5 billion⁹ to the Wyoming economy. The average working woman in Wyoming loses enough money during a year from the GWG to buy a total of 108 more weeks of food;¹⁰ 12 more months of mortgage and utilities payments¹¹; 21 more months of rent¹²; or 8,402 additional gallons of gas.¹³

FIGURE 1: WYOMING'S INDICATORS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SECURITY



* Author's analysis of 2019 5-year Estimates, American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS

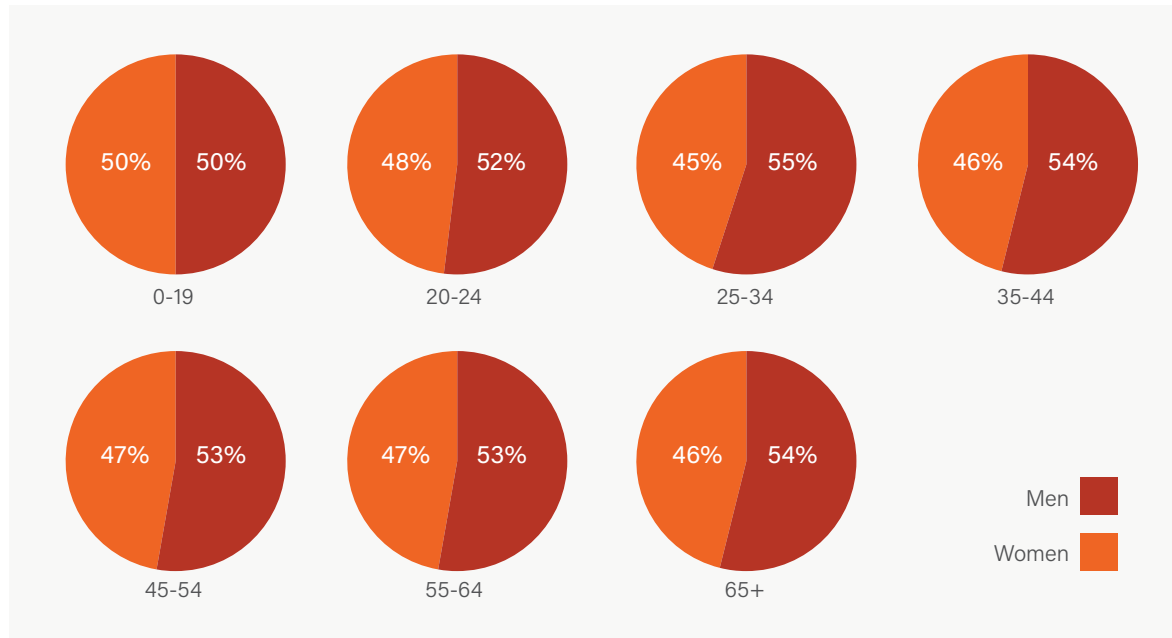
** 2021 Labor Force Data

*** American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates

**** Institute for Women's Policy Research, Status of Women in the States

The labor force, commonly called the workforce, is simply the number of people who either are currently working or actively looking for work. In 2021, 60% of women in Wyoming participated in the labor force, compared to 69% of men. Out of the total of 284,614 individuals in Wyoming's workforce in 2021, about 53% were men and 47% women.¹⁴ As seen in Figure 2, Wyoming's women and men participate in the labor force in similar proportions and maintain their labor force attachment in a stable pattern throughout their lives. The overall rate of labor force attachment by both men and women in Wyoming remains stable, including during the childbearing and childrearing years of 25-44, where women's labor force participation drops only slightly. Nationally, women's earnings do not rebound with age, though labor force participation stabilizes after childbearing and rearing.¹⁵

FIGURE 2: WYOMING'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION BY GENDER AND AGE, 2020



Source: Wyoming Department of Workforce Services

Women in Wyoming earn
\$0.75
to every dollar earned by men

According to the American Time Use Survey, time spent on caring for household children under age 18 in 2021 was nearly 1 hour per day for men and 1.7 hours per day for women.¹⁶ For those who cared for children under 13 as a secondary activity (working outside the home is their primary activity), men spent 4.4 hours per day, while women spent 6.5 hours per day caring for children.¹⁷ This demonstrates that, on average, women spend more time on child and family care, and those who work outside the home experience a "second shift" off-work hours caring for children. As a result, Wyoming's working mothers may have to reduce their hours in paid work to meet the needs of their family.

Wyoming's Gender Wage Gap

Working Wyoming women earn only \$0.75 to every \$1 earned by men, per hour worked (Figure 1). The resulting GWG exists for women of almost any age and county in Wyoming.

FIGURE 3: WYOMING'S GENDER WAGE GAP BY AGE

\$17.04

Women earn on average (all ages)

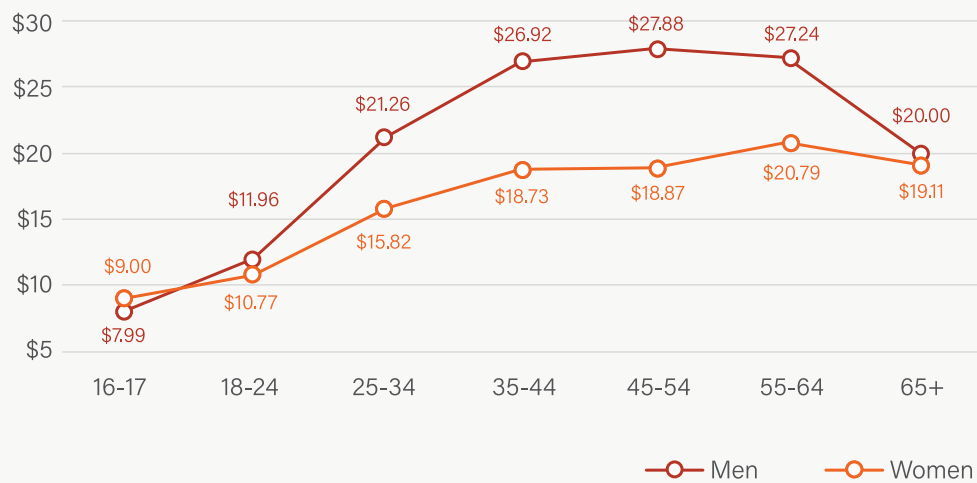
\$22.79

Men earn on average (all ages)

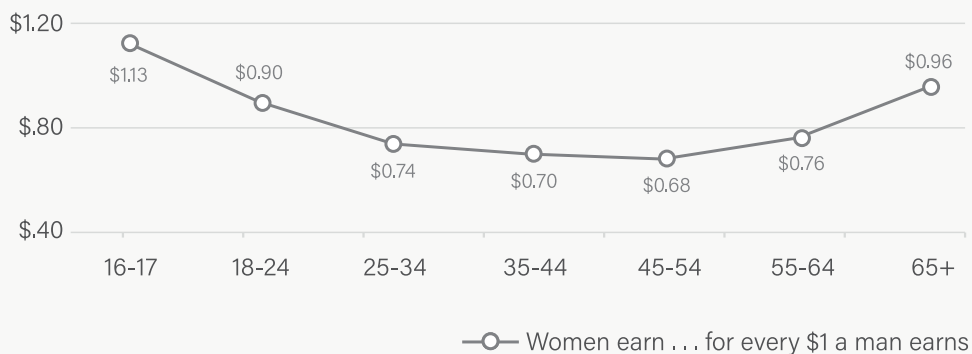
\$0.75

Women earn . . . for every \$1 a man earns (all ages)

MEN & WOMEN EARN ON AVERAGE...



AND WOMEN EARN . . . FOR EVERY \$1 A MAN EARNS

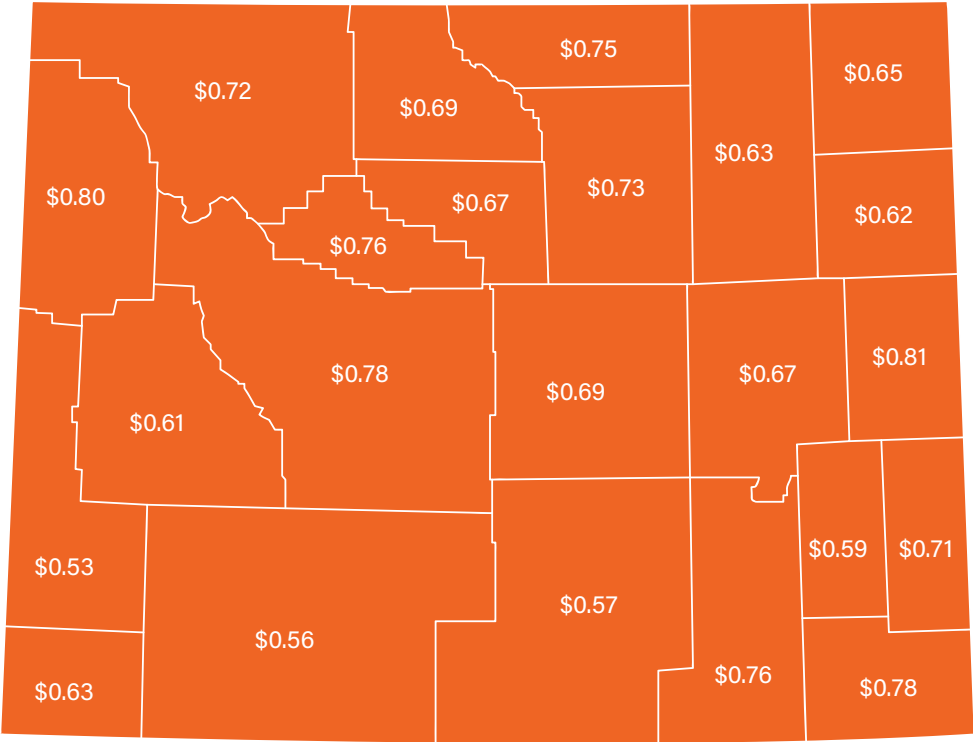


Source: Author's analysis of 2019 5-year Estimates, American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org

Figure 3 shows that among 16-17 year-old workers, women earn slightly more than men, but adult women earn less than adult men in every age group. Further, the GWG is the largest during the ages when earnings tend to peak (ages 45-54). Yet, despite maintaining one of the largest gender wage gaps in the country, Wyoming's wage gap for those 55 and older becomes smaller with age, defying national trends.¹⁸

Women also earn less than men in each county in Wyoming (Figure 4 and Table A1).

FIGURE 4: WOMEN EARN ... FOR EVERY \$1 A MAN EARNS BY COUNTY



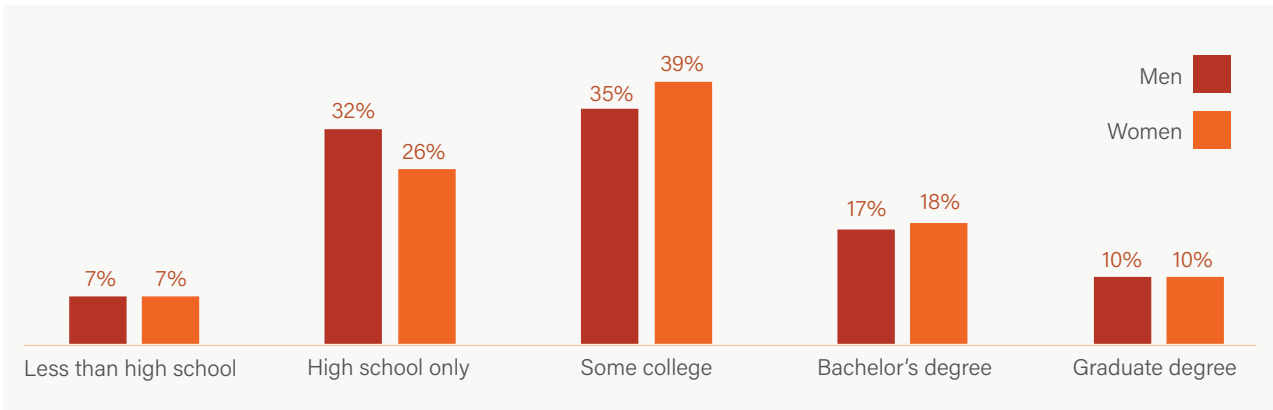
Factors Associated with Wages and the Wage Gap

There are multiple factors that contribute to persistent wage gaps. Among these are educational attainment, major in college, occupation, and industry, full-time vs. part-time work, and discrimination. We address each in turn below.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Wages and earnings are generally expected to increase as educational attainment increases.¹⁹ Figure 5 shows that Wyoming women, on average, have higher levels of educational attainment than Wyoming men.

FIGURE 5: EDUCATION BY GENDER

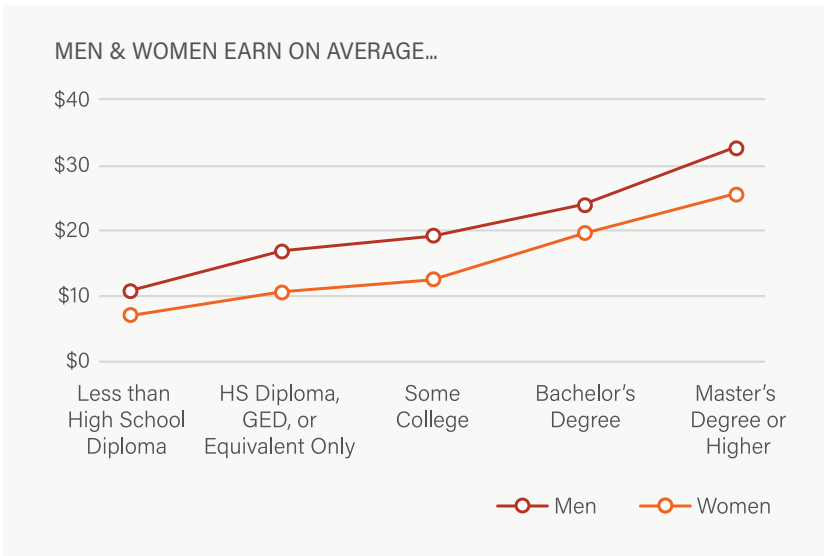


Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates

Figure 6 shows that wages do increase with education, and yet, women still earn less than men at every educational level. This also mirrors national trends – compensation rises for both women and men with higher educational attainment, yet the wage gap persists.²⁰

FIGURE 6: GENDER WAGE DIFFERENCES BY EDUCATION

Source: Author's analysis of 2019 5-year Estimates, American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org





Although educational attainment varies across Wyoming counties, at the state level women on average, have higher levels of education than men (Table 1).

TABLE 1: EDUCATIONAL GENDER DIFFERENCES BY COUNTY

	WOMEN			MEN		
	Less than HS Diploma	HS Diploma	Bachelor's or Higher	Less than HS Diploma	HS Diploma	Bachelor's or Higher
Wyoming	6%	65%	29%	7%	66%	27%
Albany	5%	39%	57%	4%	43%	54%
Big Horn	8%	70%	22%	12%	69%	19%
Campbell	6%	70%	24%	7%	77%	16%
Carbon	9%	70%	21%	10%	71%	20%
Converse	7%	74%	20%	10%	71%	20%
Crook	4%	70%	25%	9%	68%	23%
Fremont	7%	68%	26%	10%	66%	24%
Goshen	8%	64%	29%	9%	68%	23%
Hot Springs	9%	71%	21%	3%	71%	26%
Johnson	3%	57%	40%	7%	67%	26%
Laramie	6%	62%	32%	6%	66%	28%
Lincoln	8%	71%	20%	6%	70%	24%
Natrona	6%	68%	26%	6%	72%	21%
Niobrara	11%	74%	16%	6%	75%	19%
Park	4%	62%	34%	4%	60%	36%
Platte	10%	69%	21%	6%	77%	17%
Sheridan	4%	68%	28%	5%	62%	33%
Sublette	6%	74%	20%	3%	61%	36%
Sweetwater	7%	70%	24%	8%	73%	19%

Teton	4%	39%	57%	7%	40%	53%
Uinta	6%	74%	20%	8%	75%	18%
Washakie	7%	72%	21%	9%	64%	27%
Weston	6%	75%	19%	7%	77%	15%

Source: American Community Survey, 2020 5-Year Estimates

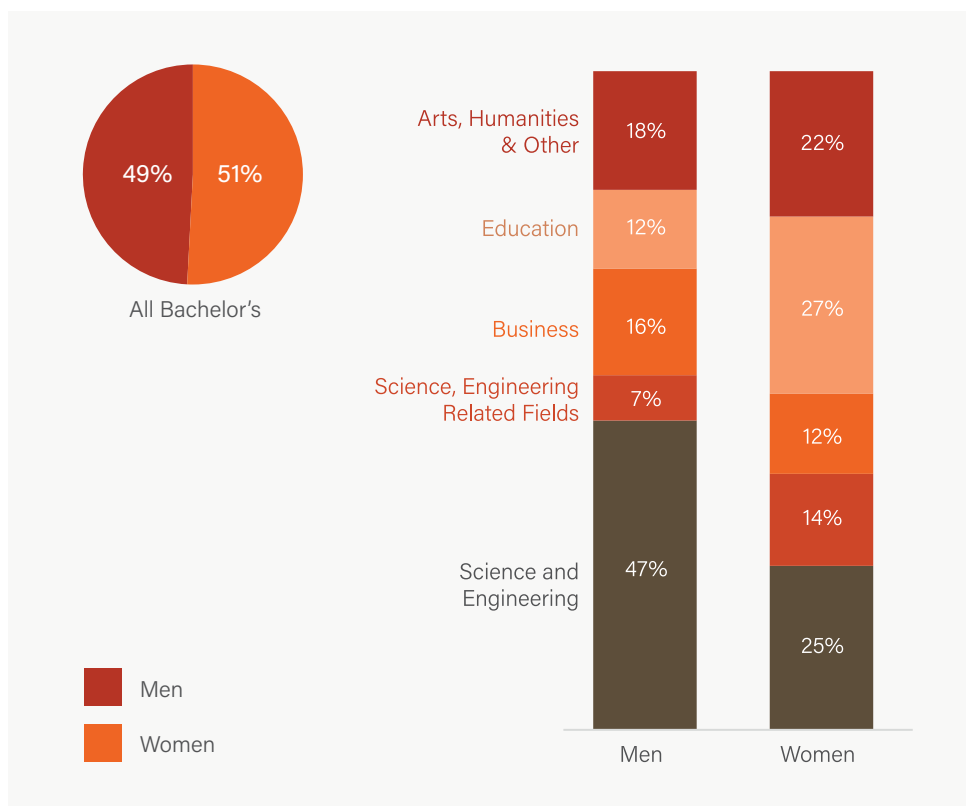
Based on educational attainment alone, since Wyoming women tend to be more educated than Wyoming men, one could expect that women's wages would be higher than men's wages. Since women in Wyoming still earn less than men, even though women have more education, the persistent GWG becomes even more concerning.

COLLEGE MAJOR

Wages do not only depend on educational attainment, but also on the type of degree and major completed in post-secondary education.

Figure 7 shows that while both men and women earn degrees in all five major fields, men are more likely to earn a degree in a major that has a higher average pay, and women are more likely to earn a degree in a lower paying major. Almost half of Wyoming's men have earned degrees in science and engineering, while the largest degree field for Wyoming's women is education²¹. This gender difference in major may help explain some of the GWG in Wyoming. For example, the average pay for engineers is above \$83,000 in Wyoming, which requires a college major dominated by men. On the other hand, the average pay is much lower, at around \$63,000, for Wyoming K-12 teachers, which typically requires a college major dominated by women.²²

FIGURE 7: GENDER COMPOSITION OF BACHELOR'S MAJOR



Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates

In addition, according to a study by the American Association of University Women (using data from 2017), one year out of college, women working full time earn only 81% as much as their male colleagues.²³

OCCUPATION

Wages are also in part determined by the occupation and industry one works in. Table 2 shows that in most occupations, men make significantly more than women. The only occupations where women make more than men are occupations that pay the least, such as in food preparation and serving-related occupations, which have the lowest pay of all occupations.

TABLE 2: WAGE DIFFERENCE ACROSS OCCUPATIONS BY GENDER

Occupation	Men's Wage	Women's Wage	Women Earn . . . for Every \$1 a Man Earns	% of Women of All Workers
Management	\$26.77	\$22.34	\$0.83	40%
Business and Financial Operations	\$38.84	\$21.90	\$0.56	61%
Computer, Mathematical, Architecture, and Engineering	\$34.07	\$23.56	\$0.69	18%
Life, Physical, and Social Sciences	\$29.81	\$25.48	\$0.85	36%
Community and Social Services	\$18.41	\$20.56	\$1.12	66%
Education and Library	\$24.52	\$20.80	\$0.85	72%
Healthcare	\$32.69	\$24.32	\$0.74	81%
Protective Service	\$22.94	\$15.24	\$0.66	26%
Food Preparation and Serving Related	\$10.83	\$11.00	\$1.02	58%
Building, Ground Cleaning, and Maintenance	\$15.19	\$12.50	\$0.82	48%
Sales and Related	\$17.52	\$12.17	\$0.69	53%
Office and Administrative Support	\$20.62	\$16.83	\$0.82	85%
Farming, Fishing, Forestry, Construction,	\$20.74	\$19.47	\$0.94	7%
Installation, Maintenance, Repair, Production	\$26.04	\$14.71	\$0.56	9%
Transportation and Material Moving	\$19.23	\$13.46	\$0.70	21%

Source: Author's analysis of 2019 5-year Estimates, American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org

HOURS WORKED

The number of hours worked, and whether a person works full or part time, also affects wages. Part-time jobs usually pay less than full-time jobs, including when pay is measured on an hourly basis (Table 3). Further, the GWG is significantly higher for full-time workers than part-time workers (Table 3). Additionally, the GWG tends to get larger as pay increases.

TABLE 3: WAGES FOR FULL- AND PART-TIME WORKERS

Gender	Status	Wage	Women Earn ... for Every \$1 a Man Earns
Men	Part Time	\$15.63	\$0.93
Men	Full Time	\$24.34	\$0.77
Women	Part Time	\$14.57	
Women	Full Time	\$18.75	

Source: Author's analysis of 2019 5-year Estimates, American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org

Figure 8 shows that a higher percentage of Wyoming women work part time than men. On average for all part- and full-time workers, Wyoming working women reported working an average of 35 hours per week, while working men reported working 43 hours per week.

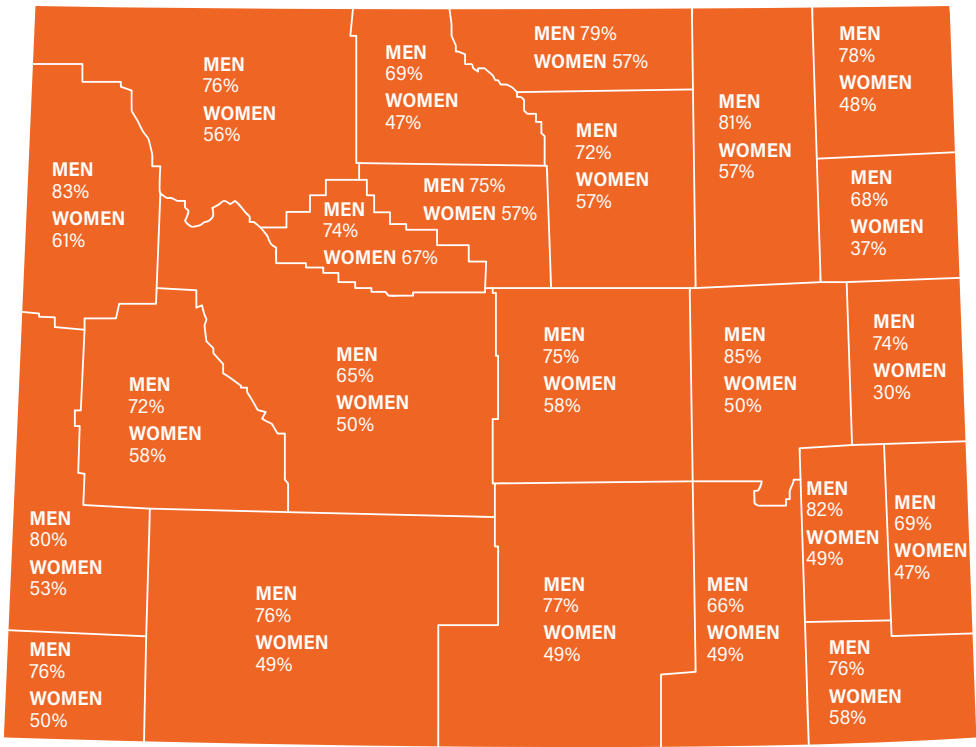
FIGURE 8: PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS WORKING FULL TIME BY GENDER



Source: Author's analysis of 2019 5-year Estimates, American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org

The phenomenon of women participating in part-time work more than men extends to all counties in Wyoming (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9: GENDER DIFFERENCES IN FULL-TIME WORK BY COUNTY



Source: American Community Survey, 2020 5-Year Estimates

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination in pay based on gender, race, or ethnicity has been illegal since 1964 with the passage of the Civil Rights Act. However, evidence suggests that discrimination in pay still exists.²⁴ Employers may rely on past pay history in hiring and compensation, meaning long-standing gaps in pay based on gender, race, and ethnicity will persist.²⁵

A common way to estimate the influence of discrimination on wages is to determine how much of the GWG is due to women and men having different qualifications (e.g., different levels of educational attainment and experience) and how much of it is due to women and men being paid differently based on the same levels of those qualifications.²⁶ This method allows us to estimate how much less a woman is paid compared to an equally qualified man. Then we can determine how much of the GWG is due to women being paid less with the same qualifications as men.

Although there are many types of qualifications, data limitations only allow for educational attainment, years of experience, hours worked per week, and current occupation and industry to be considered. Based on these data, over 90% of the GWG is potentially due to discrimination (see appendix and Table A2 for more detail). Thus, of the \$0.25 less women earn for every \$1 earned by men in Wyoming, over \$0.22 is potentially due to discrimination. Extrapolating the influence of discrimination suggests that women in Wyoming earn \$5 less per hour than men, over \$200 less per week, over \$800 less per month, and nearly \$10,000 less per year due to possible discrimination.

Consequences of the Wyoming Gender Wage Gap

There are several long-term consequences to families, and to the Wyoming economy, of the GWG beyond women having lower annual earnings than men. Below we discuss the retirement savings gap, wealth gap, and poverty gaps that result from the lifetime impact of the GWG. Each of these demonstrate that over the course of a woman's life, the wage gap reduces her ability to save for the long-term needs of her family and herself. As we have seen above, women are more likely to work in part-time jobs and be paid lower hourly wages (Figures 1, 8, and 9). This makes women less likely to be able to save for retirement or to have access to employer-sponsored retirement plans.²⁷ Social Security benefits for retirement are indexed to monthly earnings.²⁸ It also means that Wyoming women are more likely to experience persistent poverty.²⁹ The continuing wage gap for Wyoming women has real and enduring consequences for them and their families in lost long-term wealth and income.

SOCIAL SECURITY, RETIREMENT SAVINGS, AND WEALTH GAPS

Nationally, social security provided \$941.3 billion to 61 million beneficiaries in 2017: 19% of Americans received some type of benefit.³⁰ Beneficiaries include not only the retired, but children, the disabled, widow(er)s, spouses, and historically disadvantaged groups.³¹ In the United States, 51% of the people receiving Social Security benefits are women.³² Women comprise about 55% of all Social Security beneficiaries aged 62 and older, and about 64% of those aged 85 and older.³³

In Wyoming, the nonprofit organization Social Security Works found that in 2017, 19% of Wyoming residents, and 19% of Wyoming women, received Social Security benefits.³⁴ Social Security also provided direct benefits to 6,612 Wyoming children, and is an important source of income for the 5,147 children living in households headed by a grandparent or other relative.³⁵ The average Social Security benefit in 2017 for Wyoming recipients was \$15,507, which provided a strong safety net to Wyoming families.³⁶

Nevertheless, since Social Security retirement benefits accrue to a wage earner based on their average monthly earnings³⁷, the reduced lifetime earnings of women directly impact their Social Security benefits in the long term, causing women in Wyoming to earn lower retirement benefits and reducing their retirement security. In 2019, women aged 65 and over received, on average, \$13,505 in yearly Social Security income, compared to \$17,374 for similarly situated men.³⁸

Exacerbating this gender gap in Social Security benefits is the fact that about 45% of U.S. households do not have a retirement account.³⁹ About 48% of private-sector workers do not have a retirement account, especially those who are self employed or work for small

AVERAGE ANNUAL 2019 SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME FOR WYOMINGITES AGED 65 AND OVER

WOMEN RECEIVED

\$13,505

MEN RECEIVED

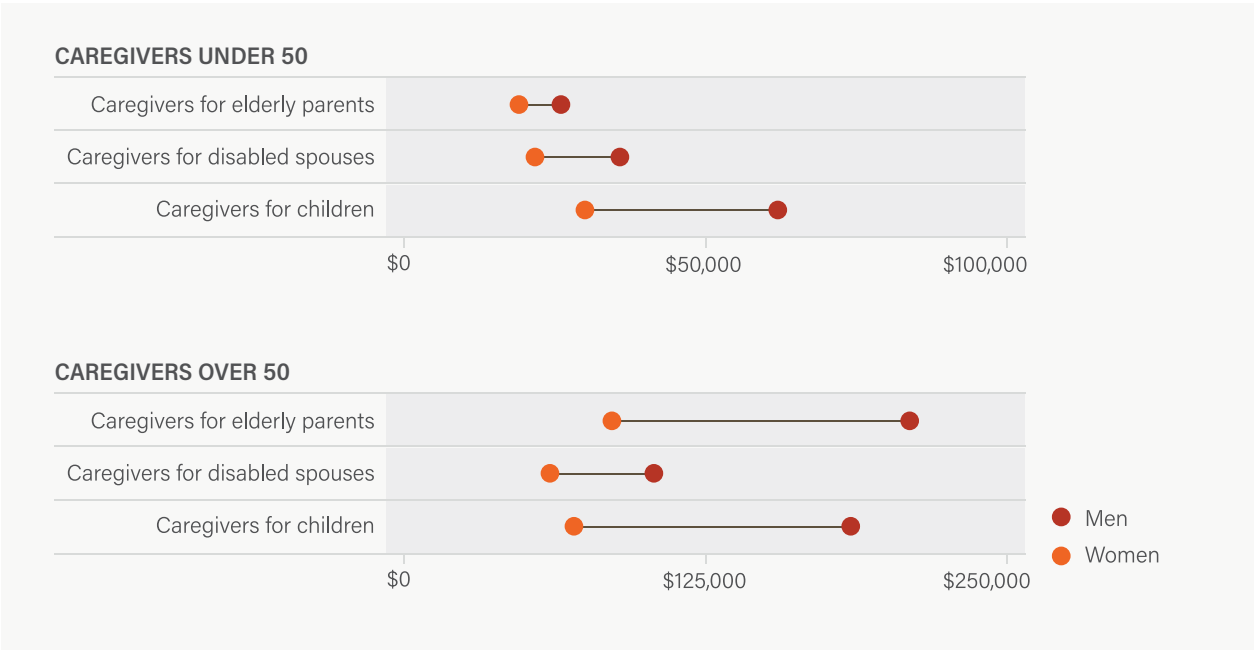
\$17,374

businesses.⁴⁰ For those, the retirement savings gap is even more significant and larger in magnitude. Indeed, many women across the nation and in Wyoming will likely have to continue to work and will not be able to rely solely for income on retirement accounts, Social Security, savings, or other wealth accumulation.

According to the American Association of University Women, the average American women has a net worth of \$5,541, whereas their male counterparts have an average net worth of \$12,188.⁴¹ Further, single women have just \$0.32 in wealth and assets for every \$1 in wealth and assets that a single man has.⁴²

Women who are caregivers for their parents, disabled spouses, or children have less money saved for retirement than their male counterparts.⁴³ Caring for children, grandchildren, older parents, and ailing spouses, and the need or desire to care for someone can happen at any age. Caregiving is often unexpected, for instance, when a parent or spouse falls ill. Women are more likely than men to provide care (66% of caregivers are women⁴⁴). As a result, there is a stark difference between women and men’s retirement savings based on various caregiving roles (Figure 10). Note the disproportionate impact on women’s wealth accumulation versus their male caregiving counterparts in Figure 10.

FIGURE 10: GENDER DIFFERENCES IN RETIREMENT SAVINGS FOR CAREGIVERS



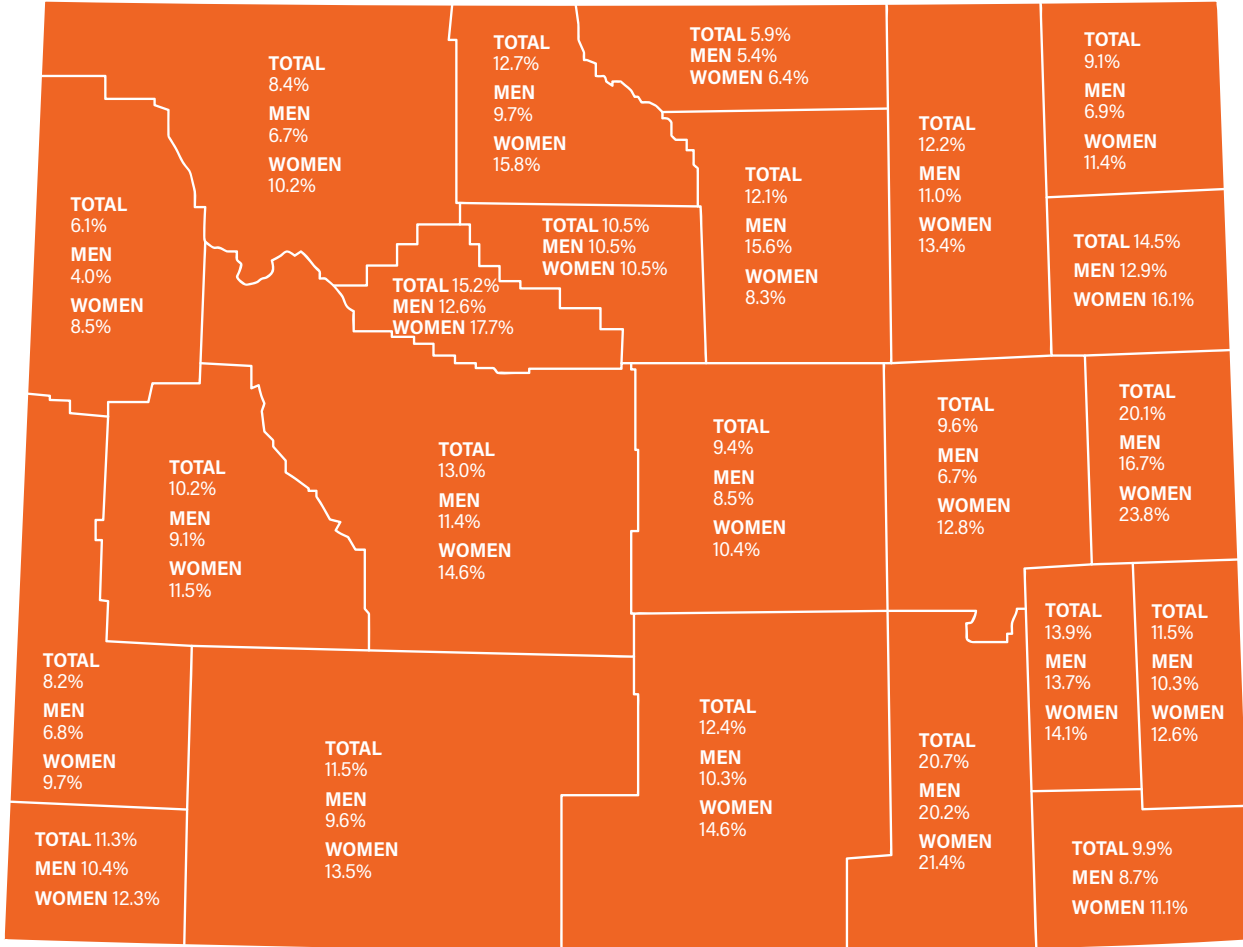
Source: National Institute on Retirement Security

It is important to reiterate here that the impacts on wealth and retirement security highlighted in this section impact not just women, but their families. Wyoming family wealth and retirement security is at stake in addressing the continuing GWG.

GENDER POVERTY GAP

Since women have lower earnings, are more likely to work part time, and have slightly lower attachment to the labor force than men, Wyoming women are more likely than Wyoming men to be in poverty across Wyoming (Figure 11).

FIGURE 11: POVERTY RATES BY COUNTY



Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates

When focusing on Wyoming households in poverty, gender differences become much more evident. In general, 7% of all families in Wyoming fall below the official poverty level.⁴⁵ However, 25% of households headed by women are below the poverty level.⁴⁶

Race and Ethnicity Wage Gaps

The 2020 ACS indicates that 90% of the Wyoming population denote their race as White alone, followed by 4% who identify as two or more races, 2% identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, 2% as other, 1% as Black or African American, and 1% as Asian or Pacific Islander.⁴⁷ Among those who denote an ethnicity, 10% of the Wyoming population identifies as Latinx.⁴⁸

Similar to general U.S. trends, Wyoming workers who identify as White have higher wages than most people of color (where a comparison can be made, Table 4). These racial and ethnic wage gaps are consistent with national trends.⁴⁹

TABLE 4: RACE AND ETHNIC WAGE GAPS

Race/Ethnicity	Wage	People Who Identify as ... Earn ... for Every \$1 Earned by those Identifying as White
White	\$20.01	
Black or African American	\$20.19	—
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$18.00	\$0.90
Asian or Pacific Islander	\$20.01	—
Other race	\$16.09	\$0.80
Two or more major races	\$18.82	\$0.94
Latinx	\$16.04	\$0.80

*Note: Not enough data to determine a wage gap for Black or African American and Asian or Pacific Islander
Source: Author’s analysis of 2019 5-year Estimates, American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org

There is also a pronounced joint effect on wages of women of color – the intersection of “woman” and “non-White” leads to very divergent wage outcomes. Table 5 (Column 4) shows that men have higher wages than women in all racial and ethnic groups (when measurable). When focusing on the GWG within specific racial and ethnic groups, the largest GWG exists for those identifying as either White or as “other race.” On the other hand, the GWG is the smallest for those identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native or being of two or more races.

Asian or Pacific Island Women men make MORE than White women

TABLE 5: RACE/ETHNIC AND GENDER WAGE GAPS

Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Wage	Women Earn ... for Every \$1 a Man Earns for by Race/ Ethnic Group	People Who Identify as... Earn ...	
				for Every \$1 Earned by those Identifying as White by Gender	for Every \$1 Earned by White Men
Men	White	\$23.26	\$0.73		
Men	Black or African American	\$22.48	—	\$0.97	\$0.97
Men	American Indian or Alaska Native	\$18.00	\$0.93	\$0.77	\$0.77
Men	Asian or Pacific Islander	\$20.01	\$1.02	\$0.86	\$0.86
Men	Other race	\$16.78	\$0.69	\$0.72	\$0.72
Men	Two or more major races	\$18.96	\$0.99	\$0.82	\$0.82
Men	Latinx	\$17.04	\$0.86	\$0.73	\$0.73
Women	White	\$17.04			\$0.73
Women	Black or African American	\$17.31		—	—
Women	American Indian or Alaska Native	\$16.69		\$0.98	\$0.72
Women	Asian or Pacific Islander	\$20.43		\$1.20	\$0.88
Women	Other race	\$11.54		\$0.68	\$0.50
Women	Two or more major races	\$18.81		\$1.10	\$0.81
Women	Latinx	\$14.60		\$0.86	\$0.63

*Note: Not enough data to determine a wage gaps for Black or African American Women

Source: Author's analysis of 2019 5-year Estimates, American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org

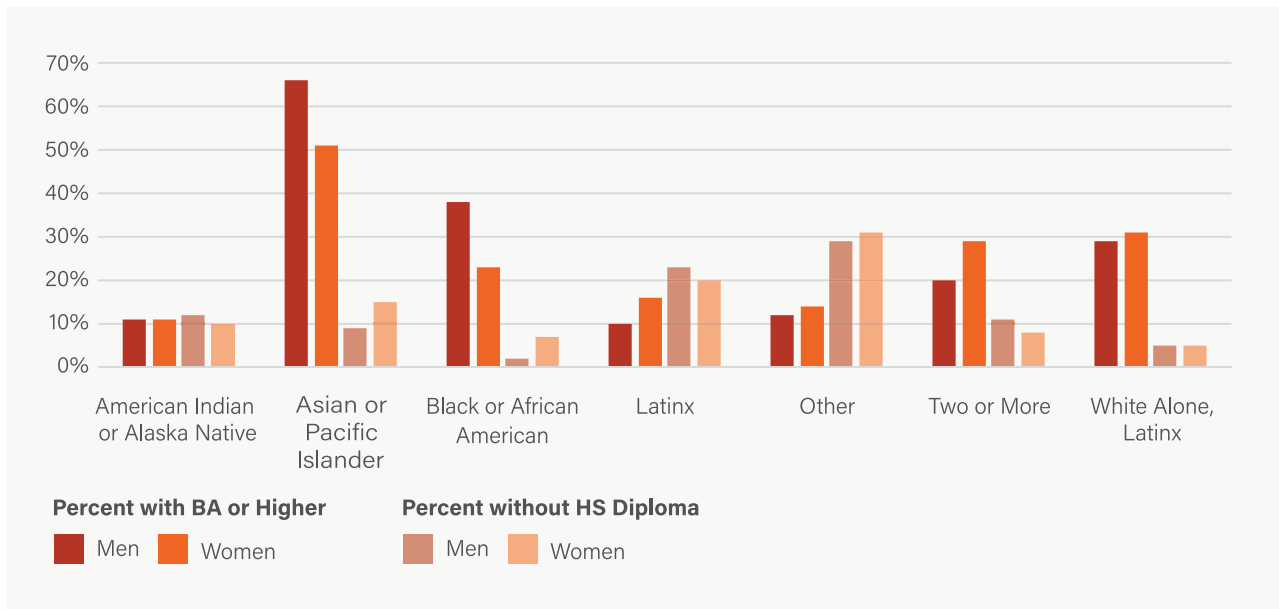
Further information is gained when looking at gender and race or ethnicity jointly. Table 5 also shows that White men have higher earnings than any other group (Column 6). This gap in earnings is the largest when comparing White men to women who identify as two or more races, or to Latinx women. Latinx women earn \$0.63 to every \$1 earned by White men, while women identifying as two or more races only earn half of what White men do per hour.

**Latinx women only earn
\$0.63 to \$1
earned by White men**

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Similar to the GWG, the racial and ethnic wage gaps may be partially explained by various factors. Figure 12 shows that people who identify as White and Asian or Pacific Islander have higher rates of earning college degrees than other racial and ethnic groups; this may help explain why White and Asian groups have higher wages on average.

FIGURE 12: EDUCATIONAL DIFFERENCES BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER

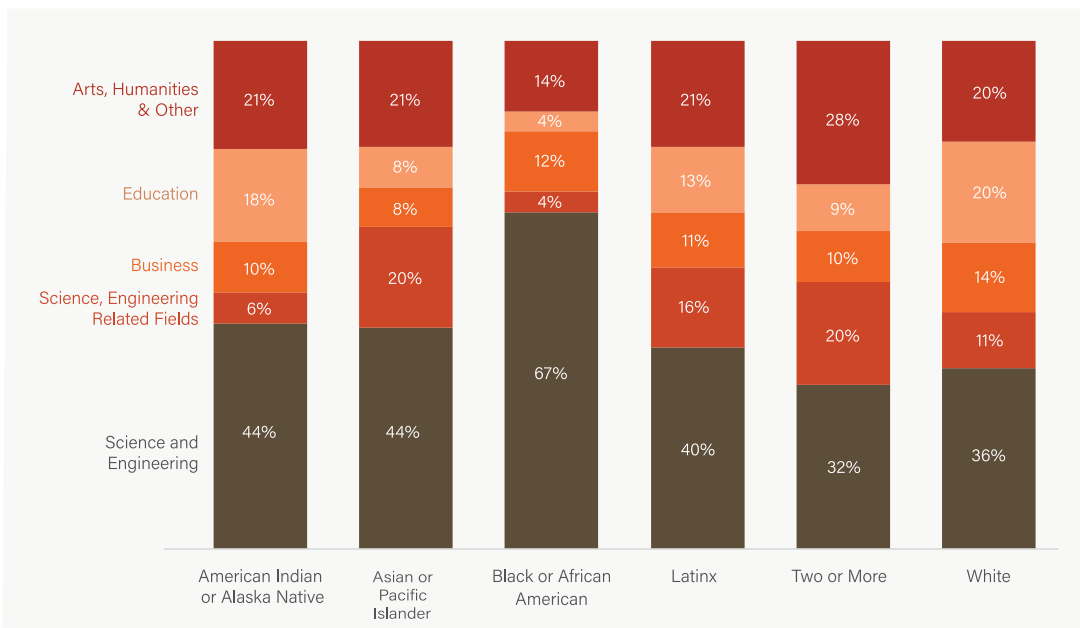


Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates

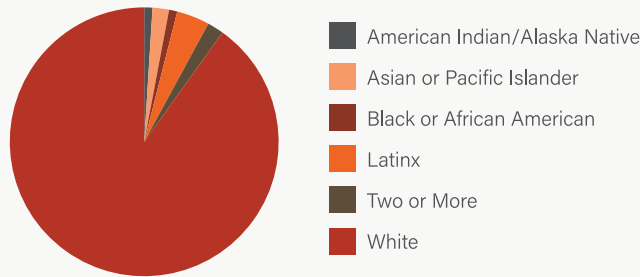
COLLEGE MAJOR

The most common college majors across races and ethnicities are in Science and Engineering fields (Figure 13). Of note, Black or African American, Asian, Latinx, and American Indian or Alaska Native students are more likely to major in these fields than White students or students of two or more races. Black or African American students and White students are less likely to major in Arts and Humanities than other races or ethnicities. White students are also more likely to major in Education or Business than others. Persons identifying as being of two or more races or Asian are more likely to major in fields supporting or related to Science and Engineering. Since people of color in Wyoming tend to major in fields with higher pay, their persistent lower pay makes racial and ethnic wage gaps in Wyoming a major concern.

FIGURE 13: COLLEGE MAJOR BY RACE AND ETHNICITY



PERCENT OF ALL
BACHELOR'S BY
RACE/ETHNICITY



Source: American Community Survey, 2020 5-Year Estimates

OCCUPATION

Due to data limitations, people of color are combined to determine the impact of occupation on the racial wage gap in Table 6. Although those who identify as White earn more in most occupational groups, people of color in Wyoming earn more than those who identify as White in several categories. Further, Table 6 shows that White Wyomingites earn more than the Latinx population in all occupations except for “transportation and material moving” occupations.

TABLE 6: GENDER, RACE, AND ETHNIC WAGE GAP BY OCCUPATION

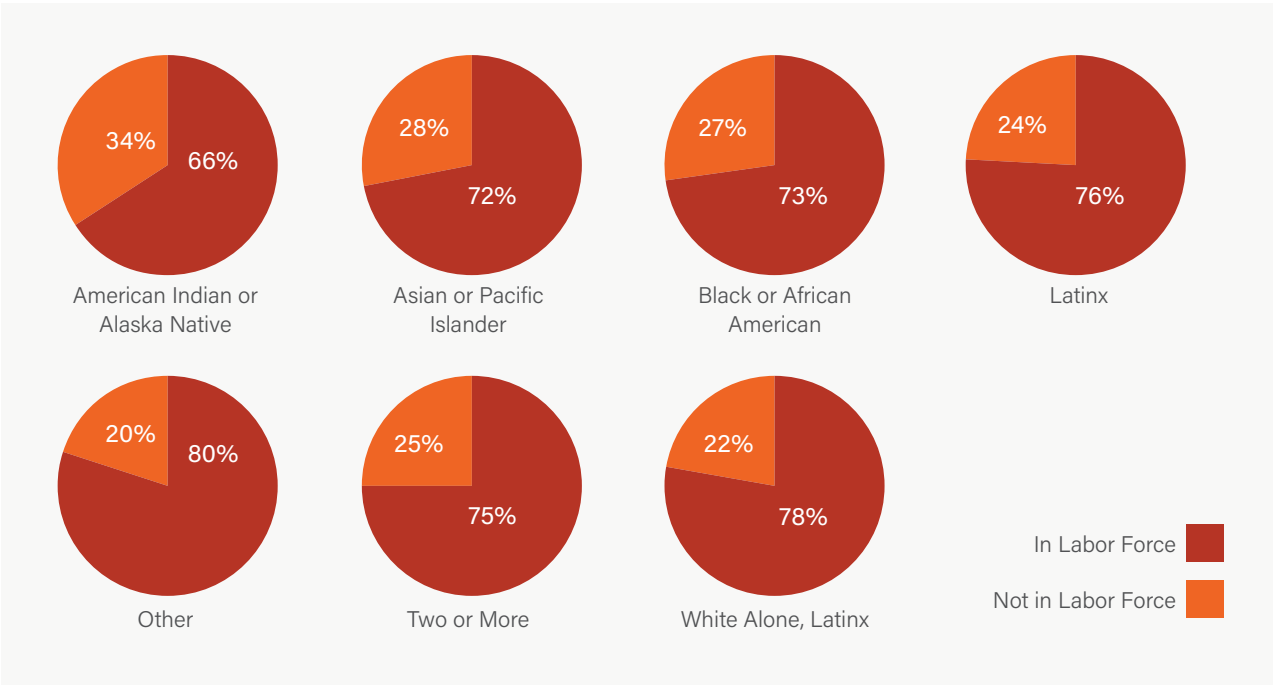
Occupation	Wage for Whites	Wage for Other Races	Wages for Latinx	Racial Minorities Earn ... for Every \$1 Earned by those Identifying as White	The Latinx Community Earn ... for Every \$1 Earned by those Identifying as White
Management, Business, Financial	\$25.12	\$21.90	\$24.52	\$0.87	\$0.98
Computer, Mathematical, Architecture, and Engineering	\$33.10	\$27.31	\$35.04	\$0.83	—
Education and Library	\$21.98	\$24.19	\$16.55	\$1.10	\$0.75
Healthcare	\$25.95	\$24.03	\$15.22	\$0.93	\$0.59
Food Preparation and Serving Related	\$10.83	\$11.58	\$9.44	\$1.07	\$0.87
Building, Ground Cleaning, and Maintenance	\$14.39	\$11.54	\$11.10	\$0.80	\$0.77
Sales and Related	\$14.59	\$15.48	\$12.35	\$1.06	\$0.85
Office and Administrative Support	\$17.04	\$17.84	\$12.50	\$1.05	\$0.73
Farming, Fishing, Forestry, and Construction	\$21.16	\$18.56	\$17.52	\$0.88	\$0.83
Installation, Maintenance, Repair, and Production	\$25.92	\$20.91	\$21.10	\$0.81	\$0.81
Transportation and Material Moving	\$18.17	\$16.21	\$18.67	\$0.89	\$1.03

Source: Author's analysis of 2019 5-year Estimates, American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org

HOURS WORKED

White Wyoming workers have a higher labor force participation rate compared to people of color (Figure 14).

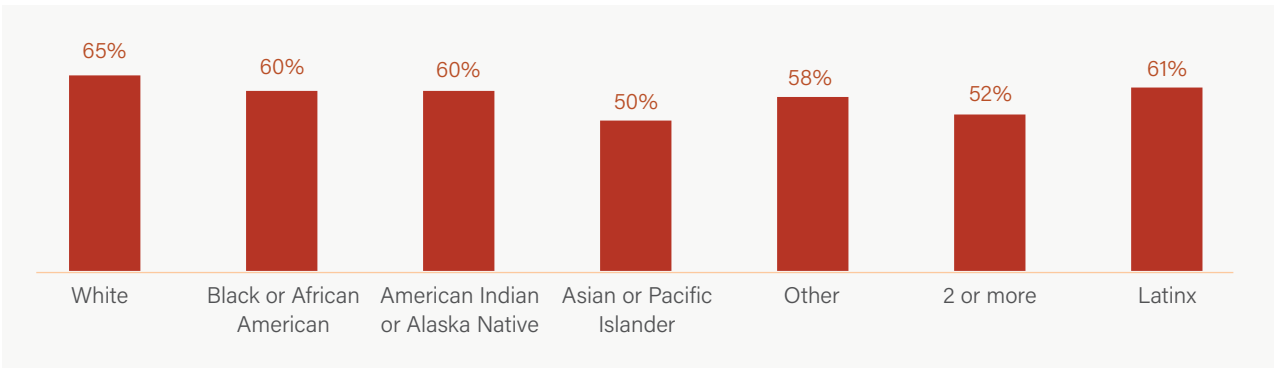
FIGURE 14: EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY (AGES 16-64)



Source: American Community Survey, 2020 5-Year Estimates

Based on Figure 15, White workers in Wyoming are more likely to work full time than any other racial or ethnic group, which may help explain why White workers tend to earn the highest wages in Wyoming.

FIGURE 15: PERCENT OF FULL-TIME WORKERS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY.



Source: American Community Survey, 2020 5-Year Estimates

DISCRIMINATION

Based on the Civil Right Act of 1964, compensation discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity is illegal. Unfortunately, data limitations do not allow for an estimate of the impact of discrimination on racial and ethnic wage gaps in Wyoming. As stated before, employers relying on past pay history, either of applicants or in their own hiring, may perpetuate long-standing gaps in pay based on race or ethnicity.

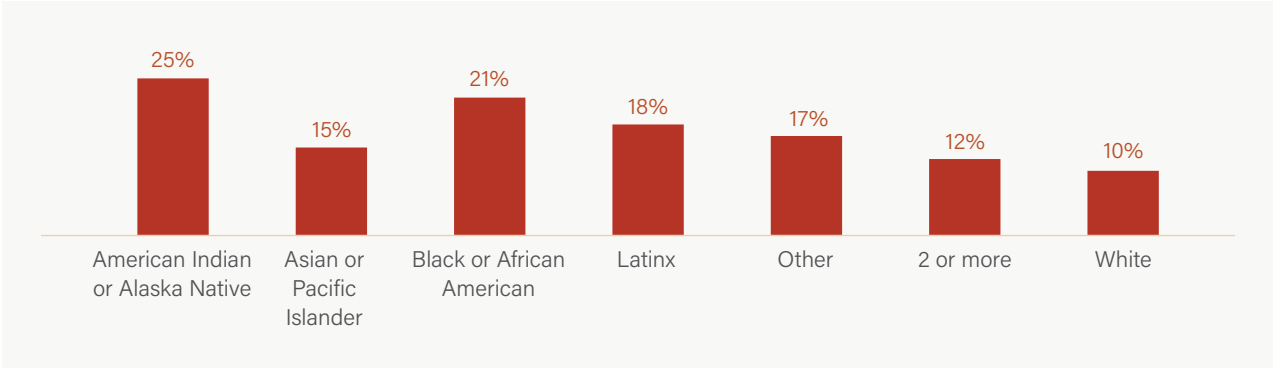
Consequences of the Race and Ethnic Wage Gaps

As with the GWG, there are significant long-term consequences of the wage gaps between races and ethnicities, exacerbated by intersectionality between gender and minoritized populations. These consequences are not just felt by those experiencing wage gaps – they impact Wyoming’s economic health. Over the course of a person’s life, wage gaps impede a person’s ability to save for the long-term needs of their family and themselves. As we have also seen above, people of color are more likely to work in part-time jobs, which is typically associated with lower hourly wages (Figure 15). This makes people of color in Wyoming less likely to be able to save for retirement or to have access to employer-sponsored retirement plans. As outlined above, Social Security benefits for retirement are indexed to monthly earnings, meaning that retirement security is at risk for these populations.

RACE AND ETHNICITY POVERTY GAP

People of color in Wyoming experience much higher rates of poverty than White Wyomingites. Figure 16 shows that while White Wyomingites have a poverty rate of less than 10%, American Indian and Alaska Native and Black or African American Wyomingites have poverty rates in excess of 20%. Persistent wage gaps for Wyomingites of color makes escaping poverty nearly impossible. As we indicated above, these continuing wage gaps have enduring consequences for Wyoming families.

FIGURE 16: POVERTY RATES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

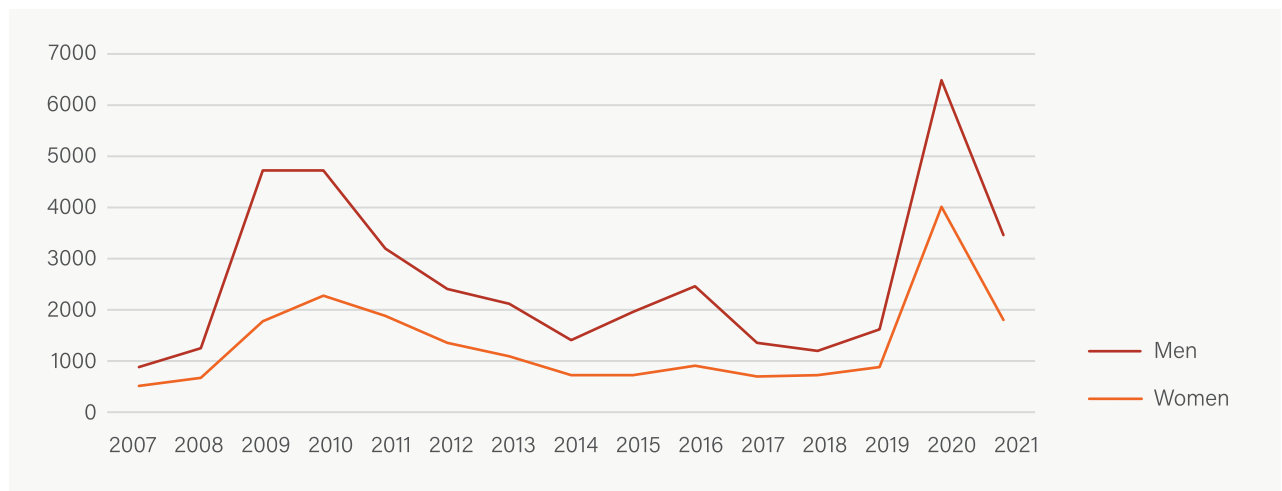


Source: ACS 5-Year 2020 Estimates — Table S1701

Impacts of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the lives of everyone in Wyoming in significant ways, including widespread employment losses. Figure 17 shows the number of unemployment claims by gender during the height of the COVID pandemic in Wyoming. The number of unemployed claims spiked in 2020-2021, even higher than during the recession in 2008-2010. Further, COVID-19 increased the number of claims for both men and women in Wyoming. By February 2021, women's labor force participation across the US was the lowest it had been since 1988.⁵⁰

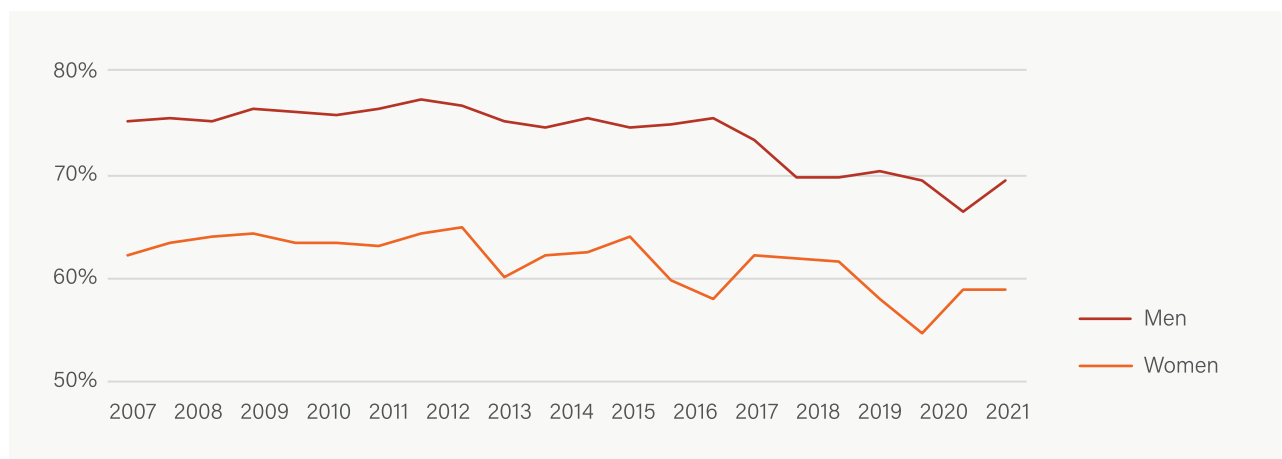
FIGURE 17: UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS BY GENDER



Source: Wyoming Department of Workforce Services

Figure 18 shows that Wyoming men decreased their labor force participation during 2020, likely in reaction to the pandemic. Yet, their labor force participation rebounded in 2021. Figure 17 also shows that, although both women and men saw an increase in unemployment claims, women in Wyoming did not experience the same decrease in labor force participation that men did during 2020 or 2021. This gender difference is potentially due to the fact that women work in many "essential worker" occupations.

FIGURE 18: LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES BY GENDER



Source: Author's analysis of 2019 5-year Estimates, Community Population Survey microdata, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.

Addressing Wage Inequality

All told, the wage gap reduces Wyoming's economic potential, reduces people's chances of escaping poverty, increases reliance on public support programs, and reduces the ability of Wyoming's families to be self-reliant, gain wealth, and have retirement security. Wyoming's women are in the labor force at rates similar to the national average, and women's poverty rate is lower than in many other states. Yet, women in Wyoming are amongst the lowest paid relative to men in the nation. While men's wages in Wyoming are the 12th highest in the nation, Wyoming's women's wages are only 42nd.⁵¹ Since women in Wyoming are dedicated to the labor market, but still earn significantly less than Wyoming men, merely moving more women into the labor market, without attention to compensation, could result in maintaining the wage gap.

WYOMING-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Continue to support efforts to train women and people of color to negotiate and advocate for market starting salaries and raises and prepare for challenging conversations with employers.
- Support Wyoming businesses that wish to conduct internal pay-equity audits and support their efforts to implement best HR practices that do not rely on an employee's salary history to make job offers. For an example see footnote 52.⁵²
- Support a systematic review of the wages of state workers with regular market-based salary adjustments.
- Encourage, incentivize or require Wyoming businesses to advertise pay ranges on job postings.
- Continue to support organizations like CLIMB Wyoming that train women for higher-paying jobs and economic self-sufficiency.
- Support the efforts of individual women and people of color to earn degrees in higher-education or to obtain specific vocational training.
- Promote the use of the Wyoming Economic Self-Sufficiency Standard⁵³ as a method for determining living wages.
- Develop strategies that promote awareness of the value of work typically done by women, and advocate for wages in health care, education, and retail trade and services that are comparable to the national market.
- Increase awareness of anti-discrimination laws and procedures for filing claims.
- Collect and disseminate data regarding women's and people of color's work and indicators of well-being on a yearly basis.
- Increase access to affordable, quality childcare so women do not have to either leave the workforce or work reduced hours.
- Support Wyoming legislative efforts that address economic diversification, increased reporting of occupations and wages, minimum wages especially for tipped employees, and the recruitment and retention of health care workers.

Appendix

TABLE A1: GENDER WAGE GAP BY COUNTY

	Men's Average Yearly Earnings	Women's Average Yearly Earnings
Albany	\$40,742	\$30,829
Big Horn	\$38,581	\$26,665
Campbell	\$50,919	\$32,085
Carbon	\$48,986	\$28,028
Converse	\$45,397	\$30,234
Crook	\$42,761	\$27,606
Fremont	\$37,774	\$29,621
Goshen	\$36,931	\$26,093
Hot Springs	\$37,302	\$28,320
Johnson	\$36,993	\$26,994
Laramie	\$41,372	\$32,283
Lincoln	\$48,961	\$26,175
Natrona	\$44,672	\$30,764
Niobrara	\$31,932	\$26,007
Park	\$38,838	\$28,117
Platte	\$43,769	\$25,657
Sheridan	\$40,856	\$30,740
Sublette	\$46,797	\$28,600
Sweetwater	\$51,468	\$29,075
Teton	\$46,042	\$36,835
Uinta	\$40,773	\$25,843
Washakie	\$39,958	\$26,691
Weston	\$42,233	\$26,129

Source: Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, 2020

TABLE A2: GENDER DECOMPOSITION RESULTS:

	Average	Percent
Men's Hourly Wage	\$30.80	
Women's Hourly Wage	\$26.81	
Gender Wage Gap	\$3.99	12.95%
Explained Portion	\$0.13	3.36%
Unexplained Portion	\$3.85	96.64%

Source: Author's analysis of 2019 5-year Estimates, American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org
Table Note that the values listed for hourly wages are different than those reported elsewhere in the report. The method used in this analysis requires average wages, while median wages are reported in the report.

To estimate the role of discrimination in Wyoming's GWG, the wage gap is decomposed into an "Explained Portion" and an "Unexplained Portion." This methods estimates the amount of the GWG that is due to women and men having different levels of labor market qualifications, known as the "Explained Portion." The resulting "Unexplained Portion" estimates the amount of the wage gap that is due to women being paid less than equally qualified men.

Due to data limitations, the factors that are used to measure qualifications are years of education, potential experience (the number of years since the last year of school), average hours worked per week, occupation, and industry. Wyoming women have higher levels of education and potential experience than men, but work fewer hours per week and tend to be in different occupations and industries. As a result, \$0.13 of the \$3.99 GWG, or just over 3%, is due to men and women having different levels of these qualification. The remaining gap of \$3.85, or over 96%, measures the pay gap between equally qualified women and men. Thus, a women in Wyoming with the same number of year of education, potential experience, working the same number of hours per week, and in the same occupation and industry as a man, will make \$3.85 less per hour. This "Unexplained Portion" is used to estimate the magnitude of discrimination in the GWG.

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