

The  
Economic  
Status of  
Wyoming's  
Working  
Women

2011

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Wyoming, the "Equality State", proudly boasts its place in history as the first state that granted women the right to vote. Today, however, Wyoming's women are not faring as well. With low salaries and the largest wage gap between men and women in the nation, much is needed to live up to our state motto. This working paper outlines the economic data and provides suggestions for change.

WORKING  
PAPER  
prepared for  
the Wyoming  
Women's  
Foundation  
by  
Dr. Catherine  
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The Wyoming Women's Foundation is a statewide fund dedicated to supporting the economic self-sufficiency of women and opportunities for girls. Donations are leveraged through an endowment, and initiatives and grant-making are focused on systems change for Wyoming communities. Contact: The Wyoming Women's Foundation, 313 S. 2nd St., Laramie, WY 82070. Phone: (307) 721-8300. Facsimile: (307) 721-8333. Email: [info@WYWF.org](mailto:info@WYWF.org). Website: <http://www.WYWF.org>. Richelle Keinath is the Executive Director and Dr. Sandy Caldwell is the chair of the Board of Directors.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*“When women and girls prosper, communities thrive.”<sup>1</sup>*

Wyoming ranks last in the nation for the wage gap between men and women. The wage gap is a measure of the difference in wages between men and women who work full-time, year-round. It is typically reported as a proportion, ratio, or “cents on the dollar.”<sup>2</sup> Nationally, women earn 73 cents for every dollar earned by men.<sup>3</sup> In Wyoming our reoccurring ranking as the state with the worst wage gap in the nation is currently 0.65 (or 65 cents on the dollar).<sup>4</sup>

In a fact sheet produced by the National Partnership for Women and Families, this wage gap results in a total loss of \$1,232,200,203 each year to Wyoming’s women who work full-time, enough money for

- 124 more weeks of food,
- 13 more months of mortgage and utilities payments,
- 24 more months of rent,
- 5 more years of family health insurance premiums, or more than
- 5,000 additional gallons of gas.<sup>5</sup>

The Center for American Progress reports that the typical Wyoming woman will lose \$678,000 over the course of her work life due to the wage gap.<sup>6</sup> This overall lifetime impact of depressed economic status includes not only the loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost income but also retirement security. Decreased earnings also affect the

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<sup>1</sup> Wyoming Women’s Foundation. Retrieved from, <http://www.wywf.org/>

<sup>2</sup> Getz, David (2010). Men’s and Women’s Earnings for States and Metropolitan Statistical Areas: 2009. US Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce. Retrieved from, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/acsbr09-3.pdf>. Calculation of the wage gap is accomplished through use of data collected and reported by the US Census, the Current Population Survey, the Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Employment and Earnings division. The wage gap is calculated by subtracting women’s median earnings from men’s median earnings, and then dividing by men’s median earnings. The earnings ratio (which can be reported as “cents on the dollar”) is calculated by dividing women’s median earnings by men’s median earnings. Other measures of the wage gap, such as those that take into account part-time wages or wages calculated based on hourly or weekly earnings, may rank states differently. Regardless of the method, Wyoming is always in the bottom few states.

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) (2011). The Gender Wage Gap:2010, retrieved from: <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/the-gender-wage-gap-2010-updated-march-2011>

<sup>4</sup> In 2009, the median earnings for men was Wyoming was \$47,828 and \$31,308 for women (a ratio of 0.65 or “65 cents on the dollar”), for a difference of \$16,520 and a wage gap of 0.35. AAUW (2011, pp. 6-7), The Simple Truth About the Gender Pay Gap. Retrieved from <http://www.aauw.org/learn/research/simpleTruth.cfm>.

<sup>5</sup> Fact sheet produced by the AAUW and National Partnership for Families and Children. Wyoming: Working Women and the State’s Wage Gap. For cites to calculations see notes in document. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/site/DocServer/wf.epd.factsheet.WY.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Retrieved from [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/04/gender\\_wage\\_gap.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/04/gender_wage_gap.html)

ability of a woman and her family to make decisions regarding career changes, child care, the pursuit of additional education or training, and the ability to leave an abusive relationship. Thus, a pro-active approach to understanding and addressing the wage gap is paramount.

Wyoming's working families, especially in rough economic times, rely on the wages of all working members to make ends meet on a weekly basis, as well as to plan for the future. Equal pay is therefore not simply a woman's issue; it is a family issue. Nationally, women's incomes account for 36 percent of total family income. About one-third of employed mothers nationally are the sole breadwinners for their families.<sup>7</sup> In Wyoming, 57 percent of working mothers bring in more than a quarter of their families' income, and 17,473 households are headed by women. Twenty-six percent of women-headed households in Wyoming live below the poverty level. Eliminating the wage gap would provide critical income to these 4,456 families living in poverty.<sup>8</sup>

In the midst of a national recession, Wyoming's economy is booming in some industrial sectors such as minerals and natural resources, sectors with occupations that hire largely men. Occupations and economic sectors that are female dominated such as health care and services are not faring as well. At the rate of progress achieved between 1995 and 2005, women in the U.S. will not achieve wage parity with men for nearly 50 years.<sup>9</sup> In Wyoming, the time will be significantly longer unless steps are taken to address the problem.<sup>10</sup>

This paper highlights what is most promising and challenging about women's economic progress in Wyoming and outlines recommendations for policy change. It is a living document, one that should be updated regularly as new data becomes available and with regular attention to strategies for change.

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<sup>7</sup> AAUW (2011), *The Simple Truth About the Gender Pay Gap*, citing U.S. Senate Joint Economic Committee (2010) *Invest in Women, Invest in America, A Comprehensive Review of Women in the US Economy*,. A report by the majority Staff of the Joint Economic Committee, Representative Carolyn B. Maloney, Chair. <http://www.aauw.org/learn/research/simpleTruth.cfm>

<sup>8</sup> Wyoming: Working Women and the State's Wage Gap. Fact sheet produced by the AAUW and National Partnership for Families and Children. For cites to calculations see notes in document. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/site/DocServer/wf.epd.factsheet.WY.pdf>. See also, U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, Table S1702.

<sup>9</sup> Hartmann, H., Sorokina, O., & Williams, E. (2006). The best and worst state economies for women. *Institute for Women's Policy Research, R334*. Retrieved from <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/the-best-and-worst-state-economies-for-women-1>

<sup>10</sup> "Panel: Wyoming trails country in gender wage gap." reported that the gender wage gap in Wyoming is not projected to close until 2075 or later. Retrieved from: <http://www.kulr8.com/news/wyoming/121830384.html> quoting Casper Star Tribune, May 15, 2011.

*For man's work ends at the setting sun  
Yet woman's work is never done.*

## INTRODUCTION

In 2009, the median earnings for men working full-time, year-round in Wyoming was \$47,828, for women \$31,308.<sup>11</sup> Thus, women who work full-time, year round earned 65.5 percent of men working full-time. According to data compiled and released in 2006 by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), Wyoming ranked 44<sup>th</sup> in the nation for how well women were doing in each state's economy, and 39<sup>th</sup> for the "women friendliness" of the state's economic policy (see Figure 1):<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 1 Wyoming's Indicators of Social and Economic Autonomy (2003-2005)**

		Wyoming's National Ranking <sup>13</sup>
<b>Women and the Economy:</b>		
Women's median annual earnings,	\$25,800	47
Ratio of women's to men's earnings	0.607	51
Women's labor force participation	65.3%	9
Percent employed women in managerial/ professional occupations	32.3%	29
<b>Women and State Economic Policy:</b>		
Percent of women with health insurance	79.9%	35
Percent of women 25+ with a four-year college degree or more	21.0%	46
Percent of business ownership by women	24.4%	44
Percent of women above the poverty line	88.8%	18

As the previous chart indicates, while Wyoming's rankings for women's median earnings and the wage gap are among the worst in the nation, the state also fared badly for percentage of women-owned businesses (44<sup>th</sup> in the nation) and women with four or more years of college (46<sup>th</sup> in the nation). These and other economic inequities have a

<sup>11</sup> Getz, David (2010). Men's and Women's Earnings for States and Metropolitan Statistical Areas: 2009. US Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce. Retrieved from, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/acsbr09-3.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Hartmann, H., Sorokina, O., & Williams, E. (2006). The best and worst state economies for women. *Institute for Women's Policy Research, R334*. Retrieved from: <http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/the-best-and-worst-state-economies-for-women-1> Data reported in this chart is from 2003-05. Note -- Some data in this report, such as median annual earnings (and therefore the ability to calculate the wage gap), is accessible yearly (with a minimum of a year lag period), other data is less readily available.

<sup>13</sup> National rankings are out of a possible 51, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

ripple effect impacting not only individual women, but also their families and communities, as well as our state and nation.

Wyoming does have several factors to be encouraged by: we were ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the nation for the labor force participation rate of women<sup>14</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> for women living above the federal poverty line. Of particular note is that our ranking of 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation for median earnings with data from 2003-05 has increased to 35<sup>th</sup> in 2009.<sup>15</sup> However, several of our rankings—women-owned businesses, women with four or more years of college, percentage of women with health insurance—all *dropped* between 1996 and 2006, indicating that the situation for women was getting worse, not better, in comparison with women in other states on these important indicators of economic well-being. And though median wages for Wyoming's women rose significantly in relation to women nation-wide, the wage gap between men and women remained the worst in the nation.

While Wyoming's female labor force participation rate is relatively high and women's poverty rate is better than many other states, women's labor is often poorly paid, as illustrated by our ranking of 35<sup>th</sup> in the nation for median earnings. In comparison, Wyoming's men are paid 19<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation.<sup>16</sup> Thus, merely moving more women into the labor market, without attention to job quality, could result in maintaining the wage gap. This is of particular concern as Wyoming's employment is projected to grow by 25.5 percent during the next decade (a growth rate far greater than the national rate of 13.7 percent).<sup>17</sup> Doing "more of the same" as our economy grows will not help women improve their economic or social autonomy.

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<sup>14</sup> Defined as the percent of women employed for wages at some point during the year.

<sup>15</sup> AAUW (2011). The Simple Truth About the Gender Pay Gap." Retrieved from <http://www.aauw.org/learn/research/simpleTruth.cfm>

<sup>16</sup> Getz, David (2010). Men's and Women's Earnings for States and Metropolitan Statistical Areas: 2009. US Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce. Retrieved from, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/acsbr09-3.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Wyoming Department of Employment, Research & Planning. (2008). *2008 Projections for research and planning industries and occupations in Wyoming: 2008-214*. Retrieved from [http://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections\\_08\\_14.pdf](http://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections_08_14.pdf)

## DATA BY COUNTY

Figure 2 indicates there are significant economic differences among Wyoming's counties. Note that in this Figure, the data is for all workers including those who work part-time, thus the wage and wage gap figures are different than when only full-time, year round workers are included. An examination of the Figure shows that wages for men vary far more among Wyoming counties than for women. Median wages for men range from a low of \$25,535 in Goshen County to a high of \$52,437 in Sweetwater County (a difference of almost \$27,000). In contrast, women's median earnings range from a low of \$19,446 in Lincoln County to a high of only \$28,797 in Teton County (a difference of less than \$10,000). While men in all but three small counties (Big Horn, Johnson, and Niobrara) earn, on average over \$30,000 per year, median wages for women do not reach that level in any county.

For several years, a self-sufficiency measure was calculated for each Wyoming county that illustrated how much income was needed for families to live and work without public or private assistance or subsidies. This measure went beyond the simple standard poverty index and included the cost of necessities such as housing, child care, food, transportation and health care for a variety of family configurations. For example, a family consisting of one adult, an infant and a preschooler in Albany County needed \$38,755 to meet basic needs in 2007. Similarly, an adult with an infant, school age child and a teenager needed \$34,800 in Platte County. While the self-sufficiency index has not been updated in several years, it is clear that women's median earnings were not sufficient to meet basic family needs for many family configurations in most Wyoming counties.<sup>18</sup>

While low median wages for women are often correlated with a high wage gap, this pattern is not seen in all counties. For example, the low median wages in Lincoln County correlates with a wage gap of 0.48 (or women earning only 48 cents on the dollar earned by men). However, Campbell County which boasts high median wages for both men and women, also has a high wage gap (0.55), thus illustrating that it is the ratio of the median wages of women to men that is most relevant in assessing the gap. Thus, it is not surprising that counties with the lowest wage gap, Goshen and Teton, are counties where men and women's median wages are the closest. In Goshen County, these wages for both men and women are among the worst in the state, in Teton County, the best.

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<sup>18</sup> The self-sufficiency calculator was last updated using 2007 data and can be accessed through the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. See, [http://wyomingworkforce.org/resources/tools\\_sscalc.aspx](http://wyomingworkforce.org/resources/tools_sscalc.aspx)

**Figure 2: Wyoming County Data<sup>19</sup>**

	# Workers	Median Earnings Men (County Ranking)	Median Earnings Women (County Ranking)	Wage Ratio	% Indiv. Below Poverty	% Over Age 65	% 25yr+ with BA/BS Degree
<b>Wyoming</b>	<b>354,226</b>	<b>\$40,840</b>	<b>\$25,016</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>23.2</b>
Albany	17,799	\$36,293 (12)	\$25,863 (5)	0.71	21.4	8.3	48.8
Big Horn	4,838	\$32,533 (21)	\$21,603 (16)	0.66	8.1	17.3	19.0
Campbell	43,152	\$51,912 (2)	\$28,703 (2)	0.55	6.0	5.6	16.9
Carbon	8,756	\$39,334 (8)	\$22,374 (11)	0.57	19.6	12.0	18.4
Converse	6,235	\$40,092 (7)	\$23,099 (10)	0.58	6.8	12.1	17.0
Crook	3,295	\$35,100 (15)	\$20,998 (19)	0.60	10.1	16.8	18.1
Fremont	20,486	\$33,178 (20)	\$23,722 (9)	0.71	14.1	14.3	22.2
Goshen	5,901	\$25,535 (24)	\$19,807 (22)	0.78	12.8	19.0	19.9
Hot Springs	2,438	\$32,686 (19)	\$22,308 (12)	0.68	8.6	26.6	18.7
Johnson	4,259	\$29,301 (22)	\$20,163 (20)	0.69	8.5	17.7	25.6
Laramie	52,728	\$36,458 (10)	\$27,489 (4)	0.75	9.5	12.1	22.7
Lincoln	7,780	\$40,633 (6)	\$19,446 (23)	0.48	6.9	12.5	17.4
Natrona	49,053	\$42,850 (4)	\$25,836 (6)	0.60	9.6	12.5	21.5
Niobrara	1,093	\$26,449 (23)	\$21,721 (15)	0.82	10.7	13.6	18.8
Park	18,244	\$34,100 (19)	\$21,732 (14)	0.64	7.8	16.4	25.7
Platte	4,273	\$35,733 (13)	\$21,042 (18)	0.59	11.0	19.0	16.9
Sheridan	15,172	\$35,611 (14)	\$24,083 (8)	0.68	8.4	15.4	22.7
Sublette	6,492	\$47,894 (5)	\$27,741 (3)	0.58	3.4	9.7	26.2
Sweetwater	30,010	\$52,437 (1)	\$25,685 (7)	0.49	7.4	8.3	16.9
Teton	22,708	\$36,904 (9)	\$28,797 (1)	0.78	7.7	8.1	49.5
Uinta	11,757	\$40,875 (5)	\$21,998 (13)	0.54	10.4	7.8	17.3
Washakie	4,819	\$34,762 (16)	\$21,233 (17)	0.61	4.8	17.0	24.5
Weston	5,278	\$34,248 (17)	\$19,911 (21)	0.58	7.3	16.7	19.3
Unknown <sup>20</sup>	7,760	\$36,438 (11)	\$17,194 (24)	0.47	X	X	X

<sup>19</sup> Table constructed by author. Data for the number of workers, and median income for both men and women is for 2009 and was retrieved from Glover, T., WYDOE Research and Planning, [http://wydoe.state.wy.us/lmi/earnings\\_tables/2010/WR\\_Demo\\_by\\_County/demo\\_by\\_county456.html](http://wydoe.state.wy.us/lmi/earnings_tables/2010/WR_Demo_by_County/demo_by_county456.html). Data for the percent of individuals below poverty, over age 65 and those with college degrees was retrieved from US Bureau of the Census, American Fact Finder (2005-09), retrieved from [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts?\\_event=Search&geo\\_id=05000US56045&geoContext=01000US%7C04000US56%7C05000US56045&street=&county=&cityTown=&state=04000US56&zip=&lang=en&sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=050&submenuId=factsheet1&ds\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_5YR\\_SAFF&ci\\_nbr=null&qtr\\_name=null&reg=null%3Anull&keyword=&industry=](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=05000US56045&geoContext=01000US%7C04000US56%7C05000US56045&street=&county=&cityTown=&state=04000US56&zip=&lang=en&sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=050&submenuId=factsheet1&ds_name=ACS_2009_5YR_SAFF&ci_nbr=null&qtr_name=null&reg=null%3Anull&keyword=&industry=)

<sup>20</sup> Not all demographic data, including county of work and gender of the worker, is collected for all workers. Due to the state's relatively small population, county-level data has the possibility of violating the confidentiality of individuals and/or firms, and therefore the Wyoming Department of Employment, as well as national reporting agencies, publishes little data on the county level for Wyoming. Thus, the unknown category. Typically, workers in this category are more transitory than those with full identifying characteristics.

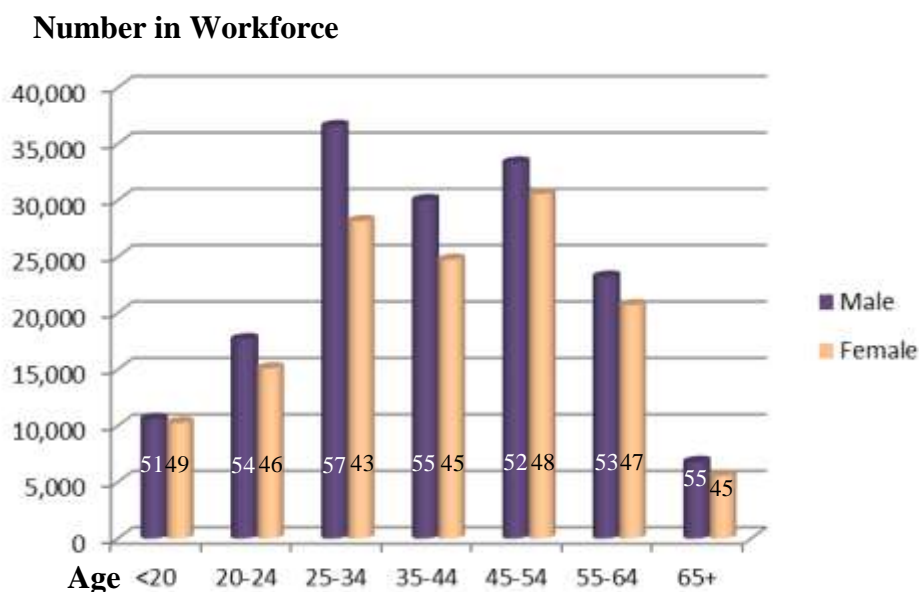
## FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH WAGES AND THE WAGE GAP

The previous discussion has illustrated the extent of the discrepancy in wages between Wyoming's men and women. In this section, factors associated with wages and the wage gap, including age, race, educational achievement, occupation and economic sector, and discrimination are further discussed.

### *Age*

In general, men comprise about 54 percent of Wyoming's workforce, women 46 percent. As Figure 3 illustrates, these figures are consistent across the age bracket categories (with the exception of the youngest age category where approximately equal numbers of men and women are employed). Wyoming's women and men generally maintain their attachment to the workforce in a stable pattern throughout their lives. Of course, individual men and women may enter and leave the workforce at different times, but the overall rate of labor force attachment by both men and women remains stable, including during the child-bearing years of 25-44, where women's labor force participation only drops slightly.

**Figure 3: Gender Distribution by Age Category and Percent<sup>21</sup>**

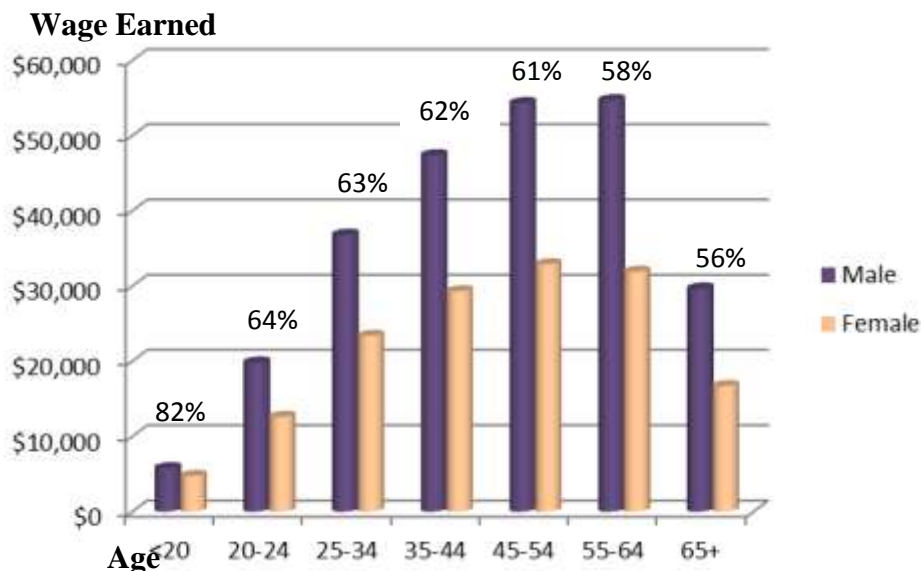


<b>Total individuals in workforce:</b>	<b>293,210 (100%)</b>
<b>Total Females:</b>	<b>135,030 (46%)</b>
<b>Total Males:</b>	<b>158,180 (54%)</b>

<sup>21</sup> Compiled by author from, Wyoming Department of Employment, Research & Planning. (2010). *Earnings in Wyoming, 1992-2009 by County, industry, Age and Gender*. [These tables represent data for about 92 percent of all Wyoming workers. The ages of the remainder are unknown.] Retrieved from, [http://wydoe.state.wy.us/lmi/earnings\\_tables/2010/WR\\_Demo\\_by\\_County/demo\\_by\\_county456.html](http://wydoe.state.wy.us/lmi/earnings_tables/2010/WR_Demo_by_County/demo_by_county456.html)

Figure 4<sup>22</sup> illustrates that within each age bracket a significant wage gap exists. Using data for all workers, including those working part-time, the overall wage gap is 0.61. The smallest gap exists for workers under 20 years of age, at 0.82. Here, we can imagine, teens working at fast-food restaurants who are paid similar wages. However, we still find a wage discrepancy, which could be due to differences in occupational opportunities afforded to young men and women. For example, boys and young men (much more frequently than young women) could be working in construction jobs at much higher wages than retail services, a sector that employs numerous younger workers. Beginning with the 20-24 year old age category, the wage ratio drops to 0.64 and remains at about the same level throughout the life-span (and then drops again at the 65+ age group to 0.56). This illustrates that the wage differential from early years is carried over throughout the lifespan.

**Figure 4: Wyoming Wage Gap by Age Bracket<sup>23</sup>**



**Combined Earnings of Women: \$151,453**

**Combined Earnings of Men: \$248,426**

**Combined Earnings of Female vs. Men: 61%**

<sup>22</sup> This chart includes all wage workers not only those working full-time, year-round. The wage gap is bolded. Chart compiled by author using the same data for Figure 6.

<sup>23</sup> Compiled by author from, Wyoming Department of Employment, Research & Planning. (2010). *Earnings in Wyoming, 1992-2009 by County, industry, Age and Gender*. [These tables represent data for about 92 percent of all Wyoming workers. The ages of the remainder are unknown.] Retrieved from, [http://wydoe.state.wy.us/lmi/earnings\\_tables/2010/WR\\_Demo\\_by\\_County/demo\\_by\\_county456.html](http://wydoe.state.wy.us/lmi/earnings_tables/2010/WR_Demo_by_County/demo_by_county456.html)

## *Aging*

Another element to consider is that Wyoming's population is aging. The county data in Figure 2 illustrated that while 12.1 percent of the Wyoming population is over the age of 65, this percentage is not consistent across counties. Not surprisingly, counties such as Campbell and Sweetwater which are attracting younger workers, have lower percentages of those over 65. However counties, such as Hot Springs, Goshen and Platte each have high numbers of residents in the retirement years, indicating both a lack of possible workers for increased economic activity as well as the need for services that cater to an aging population.

A recent report by the National Women's Law Center indicates that 95 percent of Wyoming residents 65 and older receive Social Security benefits (in addition to 6,200 children who receive benefits due to the death of a parent, 13,000 disabled workers, and 7,200 widowed spouses).<sup>24</sup> The average Social Security benefit for women 65 and older is about \$11,800 per year, compared to about \$16,000 for men 65 and older. Median income for women 65 and older living alone is \$17,300 per year and Social Security represents 72 percent of that amount. Median income for comparable men is \$19,700 of which 65 percent comes from Social Security. These figures illustrate that women's depressed earnings throughout her life translate to less Social Security in retirement years.

## *Educational Achievement*

Education is an important factor in wages. As Figures 5 and 6 illustrate,<sup>25</sup> wages typically increase for each degree earned. While Wyoming's women and men have earned bachelor's degrees or higher at the same rate, women are more likely than men to have both finished high school and have some college training. However, women in Wyoming consistently earn less than men with comparable education.<sup>26</sup> Of particular concern is that women with a Bachelor's degree in Wyoming earn less than men with a high school diploma; that is, women with a college degree earn on average \$35,634 compared with men with a high school diploma who earn on average \$38,153 and those with a bachelors degree who earn \$50,842. While these numbers are discouraging, we do see that the wage gap decreases with increasing education, indicating the important role that educational attainment can play in leveling the field for wage equity.<sup>27</sup>

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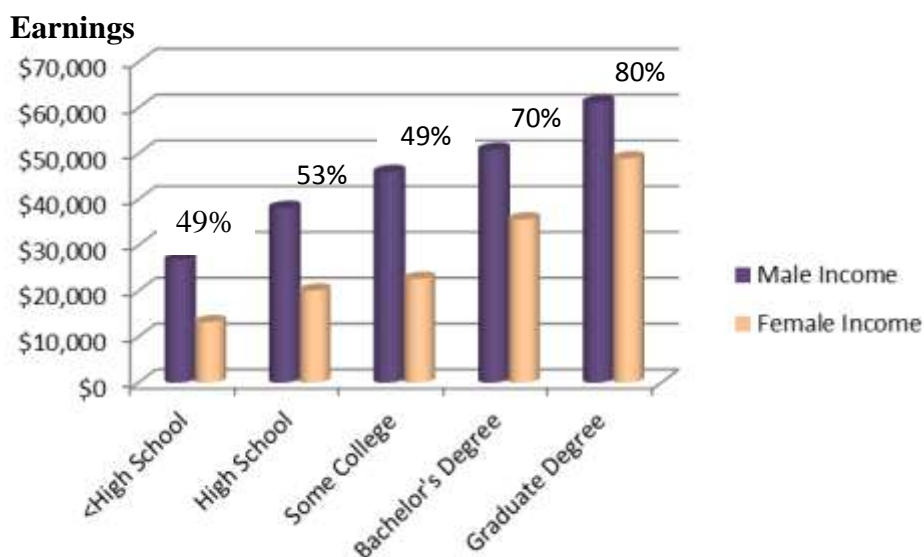
<sup>24</sup> National Women Law's Center (2011). *Social Security: Vital to Wyoming Women and Families*. Retrieved from <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/state-state-factsheets-social-security-vital-women-and-families>

<sup>25</sup> Figures 5 and 6, compiled by author from, US Census Bureau, S1501, Educational Attainment, retrieved from: [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?\\_bm=y&-context=st&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_3YR\\_G00\\_S1501&-ds\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_3YR\\_G00\\_&-CONTEXT=st&-tree\\_id=3307&-redoLog=false&-geo\\_id=04000US56&-format=&-lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?_bm=y&-context=st&-qr_name=ACS_2009_3YR_G00_S1501&-ds_name=ACS_2009_3YR_G00_&-CONTEXT=st&-tree_id=3307&-redoLog=false&-geo_id=04000US56&-format=&-lang=en).

<sup>26</sup> See also Goldberg Dey, J., & Hill, C. (2007, April). *Behind the Pay Gap*. (S. Dyer, Ed.) Retrieved from <http://www.aauw.org/learn/research/behindPayGap.cfm>

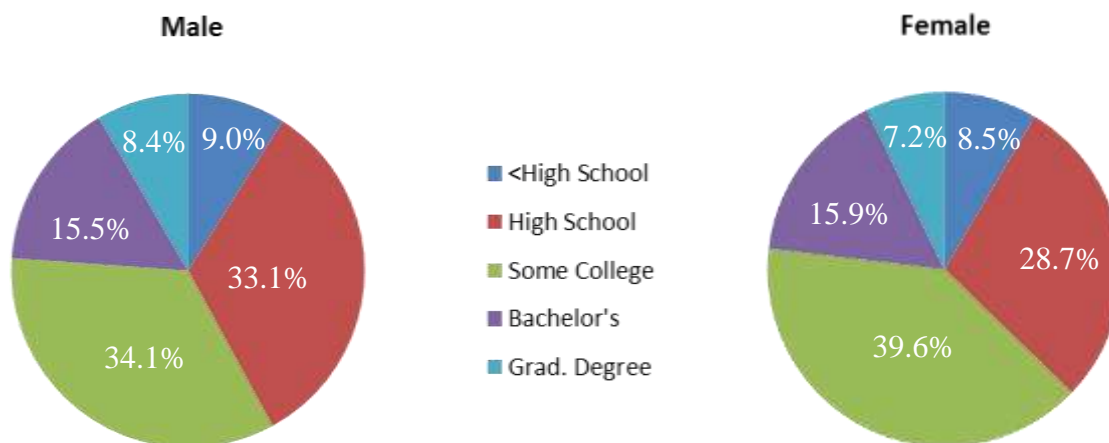
<sup>27</sup> However, note that there is an anomaly. The "Some College" category indicates a greater gap (0.49) than 'High School' (0.53). It is possible for example, that men earn credentials from community colleges that

**Figure 5. Wyoming Educational Attainment & Income by Sex (2007-2009)**



**Combined Earnings of All Ages:**  
**Female Earnings: \$140,529 (63%)**  
**Male Earnings: \$223,019**

**Figure 6: Educational Attainment by Sex**



translate into higher wages, while women do not see comparable returns on educational investment until a bachelor's degree is earned. More research is needed to test this hypothesis.

Referring back to the county data illustrated on Figure 2, in counties with low median earnings for women, including Lincoln, Goshen, Weston, Johnson, and Crook all but Johnson fall below the state average of 23.2 percent college graduates for percentage of residents with a college degree. In contrast, in those counties with high median earnings for women including Teton, Campbell, Sublette, Laramie and Albany all but Campbell have higher rates of college graduates than the state average. Moreover, higher education closes the wage gap in several counties that experience the largest gaps. For example, in Uinta County, the wage gap is reduced to 0.66 when comparing men and women with bachelor's degrees, and 0.83 when comparing men and women with advanced degrees. Compare this to an overall county wage gap of 0.54 which indicates the large gap among men and women who have not earned a high school degree (0.23), those with high school degrees (0.47), and those with some college completed (0.37).<sup>28</sup>

### *College Majors*

College educated men and women are earning degrees in different fields, a factor that explains some of the occupational segregation and wage discrepancy indicated by the data previously discussed. Women and men have earned approximately the same number of Bachelor's degrees (women have earned 48 percent, men 52 percent). However, according to a study by the American Association of University Women, one year out of college, women working full time earn only 80 percent as much as their male colleagues. Ten years after graduation, women fall farther behind, earning only 69 percent of men's earnings. Much of this discrepancy can be attributed to differences in career choices and occupational opportunities post-graduation.

Figure 7 shows that while both men and women are earning degrees in science, engineering and related fields, these high-paying degree fields are dominated by men, with over half of men with college degrees in these fields and over 60 percent of the field occupied by men. In contrast, over 30 percent of all women with college degrees in Wyoming majored in education, a field that is dominated by women.

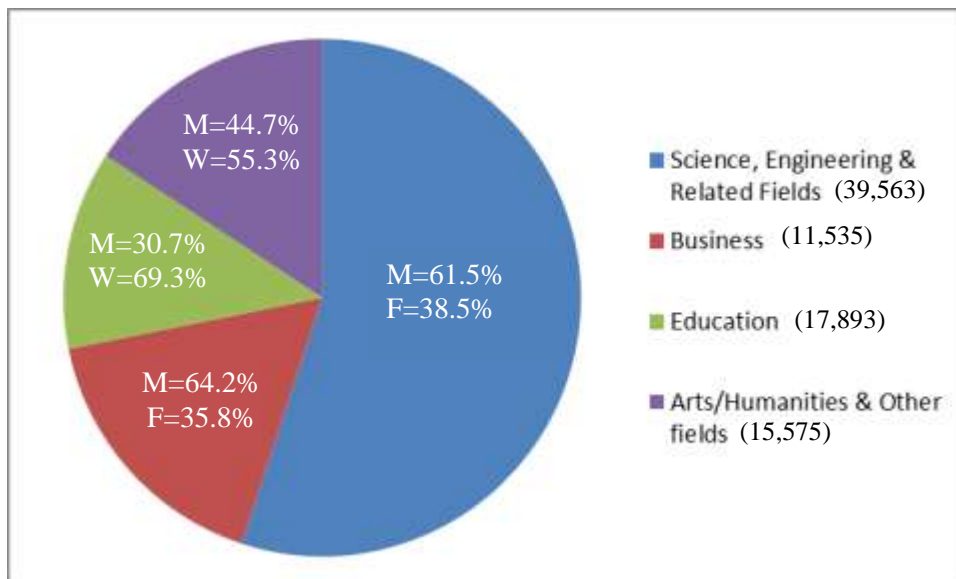
In addition, college-educated women are more likely than men to be employed in the lower-paying non-profit sector including government and education. This is overviewed in more detail in Figure 10.

Ultimately, decreasing the wage gap will mean working toward both encouraging women to consider careers that are typically male-dominated, as well as compensating careers that women dominate such as health care and education, equitably.

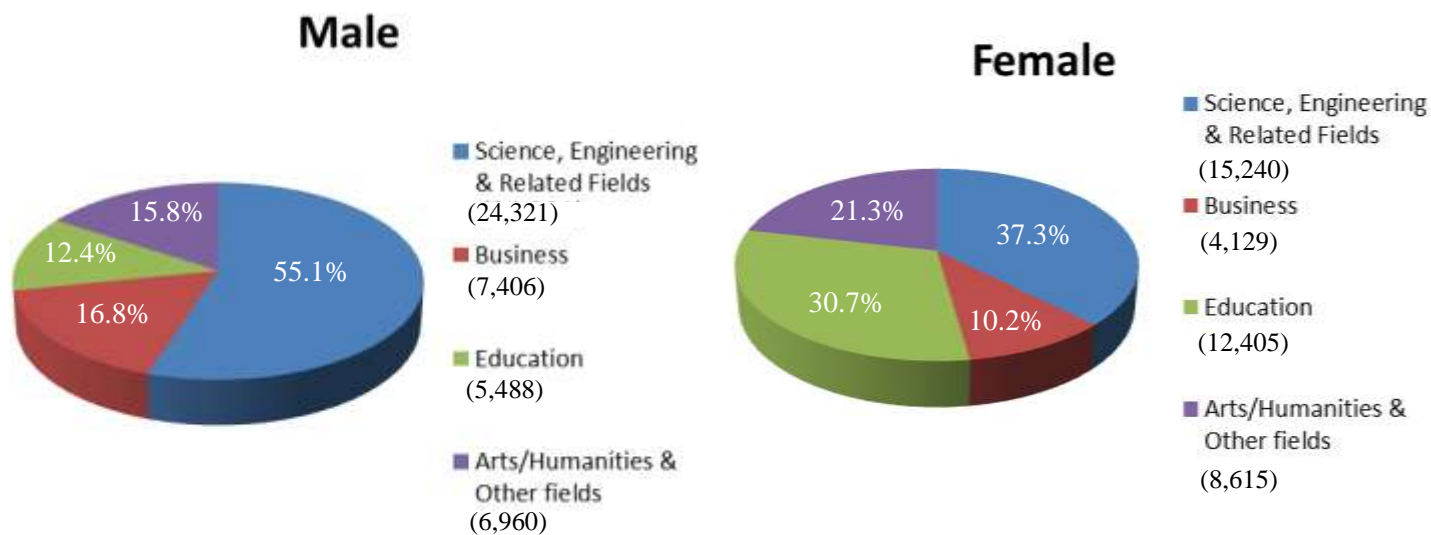
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<sup>28</sup> Calculated by author using data from Glover, T., WYDOE Research and Planning, [http://wydoe.state.wy.us/lmi/earnings\\_tables/2010/WR\\_Demo\\_by\\_County/demo\\_by\\_county456.html](http://wydoe.state.wy.us/lmi/earnings_tables/2010/WR_Demo_by_County/demo_by_county456.html)

**Figure 7a: Sex by Field of Bachelor's Degree (2009)** <sup>29</sup>



**Figure 7b: Distribution of jobs within each sex.**



<sup>29</sup> Figures compiled by author from US Census, American Fact Finder, Table B15011; Sex by Age by Field of Bachelor's Degree for first Major for the Population 25 years and over. Retrieved from: [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTTable?\\_bm=y&-context=dt&-ds\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_1YR\\_G00\\_&-mt\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_1YR\\_G2000\\_B15011&-CONTEXT=dt&-tree\\_id=309&-geo\\_id=04000US56&-search\\_results=01000US&-format=&-lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTTable?_bm=y&-context=dt&-ds_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_&-mt_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G2000_B15011&-CONTEXT=dt&-tree_id=309&-geo_id=04000US56&-search_results=01000US&-format=&-lang=en)

## *Race/Ethnicity*

The 2010 Census indicated that 91.5 percent of the Wyoming population denoted their race as “white only,” followed by 2.5 percent of the population indicating “two or more races,” 2.2 percent as American Indian, 2.1 percent as Other, 0.9 percent as African American, and 0.7 percent as Asian.<sup>30</sup> While those who are Hispanic/Latino are included in the racial categories indicated above, some limited data exists that includes Hispanic/Latino as a comparator ethnic group.

It is too early for much detailed racial/ethnic/sex breakdowns of the 2010 census. However, some information exists regarding poverty status and educational attainment based on earlier data. There are 135,497 families in Wyoming (that is, households of two or more related individuals); 5.5 percent fall below the official poverty level. One-quarter (24.7 percent) of households headed by women are below the poverty level.<sup>31</sup> This increases to 28.5 percent of American Indian families headed by women and 29.0 percent for female-headed Latino/Hispanic families. This data indicates that both sex and race are important factors in understanding and addressing poverty in the state.

Some limited data is available regarding educational achievement by race and sex that is summarized in Figure 8. These figures illustrate Wyoming's white-only population is both graduating from high school and earning college degrees at rates higher than its African-American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian population. While almost one-quarter of Wyoming's white population of both men and women over 25 has earned a college degree, only 8.7 percent of African American women (and 19.5 percent of men), 9.8 percent of Hispanic/Latino women (and 10.5 percent of Latino men), and 8.2 percent of American Indian women (and 7.4 percent of American Indian men) has earned a degree. On the flip side, while only 7.0 percent of white women in Wyoming and 7.3 percent of Wyoming men have not earned a high school diploma, these numbers increase to 28.7 percent of Hispanic/Latino women and 27.5 percent of men, and 12.1 percent of American Indian women and 17.9 percent of American Indian men. As previous figures illustrated, wages for Wyoming's women are correlated with educational achievement. Thus, these numbers illustrate that Wyoming's non-white women are likely to be employed in jobs that do not require higher education, and therefore receive low pay.

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<sup>30</sup> US Census, American Fact Finder, retrieved from [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFPeople?\\_submenuId=people\\_10&\\_sse=on](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFPeople?_submenuId=people_10&_sse=on). Note that these figures do not include a category of “Hispanic/Latino.”

<sup>31</sup> All figures related to poverty come from U.S. Census Bureau, Table 1702, Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months of Families (2009). Retrieved from: [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?\\_bm=y&-context=st&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2008\\_3YR\\_G00\\_S1702&-ds\\_name=ACS\\_2008\\_3YR\\_G00\\_&-tree\\_id=3308&-redoLog=false&-caller=geoselect&-geo\\_id=04000US56&-format=&-lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?_bm=y&-context=st&-qr_name=ACS_2008_3YR_G00_S1702&-ds_name=ACS_2008_3YR_G00_&-tree_id=3308&-redoLog=false&-caller=geoselect&-geo_id=04000US56&-format=&-lang=en)

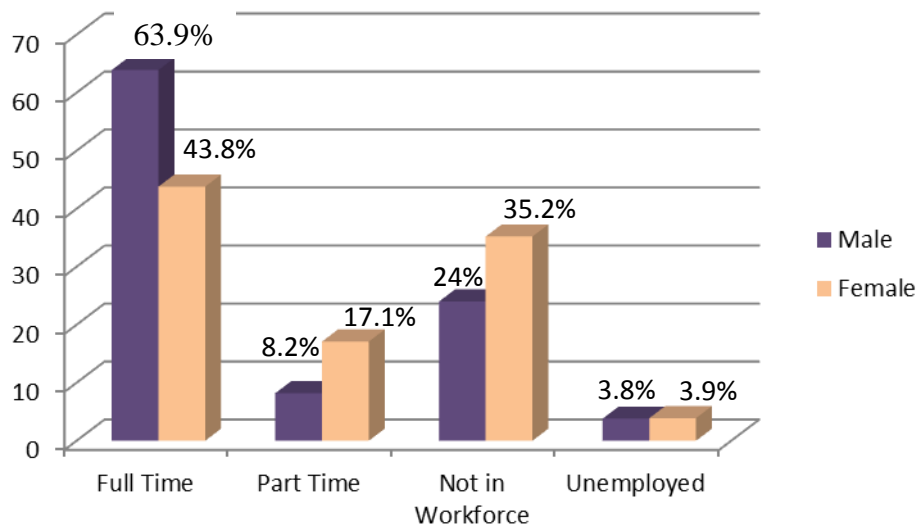
Figure 8: Educational Level by Sex and Race/Ethnicity

	Educational Level, %	White Only #	White %	African Amer. #	African Amer. %	Hispanic Latino #	Hispanic Latino %	Amer. Indian #	Amer. Indian %	Asian #	Asian %	2 or More #	2 or More %	Other #	Other %
<b>MALE TOTAL</b>	<b>173,664</b>	<b>154,431</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,859</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11,869</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,054</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,442</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,305</b>	<b>100%</b>
<High School	15,518 8.9%	11,201	7.3%	248	13.3%	3,269	27.5%	546	17.9%	67	8.5%	366	15.0%	1,106	33.5%
High School	57,422 33.1%	50,648	32.8%	488	26.3%	4,640	39.1%	1,000	32.7%	295	37.5%	660	27.0%	1,381	41.8%
Some College	59,208 34.1%	53,513	34.7%	760	40.9%	2,713	22.9%	1,282	42.0%	201	25.6%	933	38.2%	532	16.1%
BA/BS+	41,516 23.9%	39,069	25.3%	363	19.5%	1,247	10.5%	226	7.4%	223	28.4%	483	19.8%	286	8.7%
<b>FEMALE TOTAL</b>	<b>173,280</b>	<b>155,050</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,086</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10,367</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,096</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,064</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,756</b>	<b>100%</b>
<High School	14,610 8.4%	10,781	7.0%	56	5.2%	2,975	28.7%	376	12.1%	195	13.7%	395	12.9%	714	25.9%
High School	49,806 28.7%	44,658	28.8%	493	45.4%	2,967	28.6%	878	28.4%	242	17.0%	791	25.8%	940	34.1%
Some College	68,748 39.7%	61,800	39.9%	443	40.8%	3,406	32.9%	1,587	51.3%	466	32.7%	1,386	45.2%	908	32.9%
BA/BS+	40,116 23.2%	37,811	24.4%	94	8.7%	1,019	9.8%	255	8.2%	522	36.6%	492	16.0%	194	7.0%
<b>COMBINED TOTAL</b>	<b>346,944</b>	<b>309,481</b>		<b>2,945</b>		<b>22,236</b>		<b>6,150</b>		<b>2,211</b>		<b>5,506</b>		<b>6,061</b>	

## Hours Worked

Part-time work is typically defined as less than 35 hours per week by an employee for one employer.<sup>32</sup> The data below shows the breakdown of Wyoming's workers by sex and work status (full-time or part-time)<sup>33</sup>:

**Figure 9: Hours Worked by Sex and Work Status**



<sup>32</sup> However a true picture of part time workers and the part time work force is more difficult to determine as some individuals are multiple job holders, combining two or more part-time jobs. See, Wyoming Department of Employment Research and Planning. (2007, February). *Wyoming Labor Force Trends*, 44 (2). Retrieved from <http://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/0207/toc.htm>

<sup>33</sup> US Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, Table S2303 Work Status in the Past 12 Months, Data Set 2007-09. See, [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?\\_bm=y&-state=st&-context=st&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_3YR\\_G00\\_S2303&-ds\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_3YR\\_G00\\_&-CONTEXT=st&-tree\\_id=3309&-redoLog=true&-caller=geoselect&-geo\\_id=04000US56&-format=&-lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?_bm=y&-state=st&-context=st&-qr_name=ACS_2009_3YR_G00_S2303&-ds_name=ACS_2009_3YR_G00_&-CONTEXT=st&-tree_id=3309&-redoLog=true&-caller=geoselect&-geo_id=04000US56&-format=&-lang=en)

## *Occupational and Industrial Sex Segregation*

By far, the most significant factor in Wyoming's wage gap is occupational and industrial sex segregation.<sup>34</sup> Jobs typically held by men in Wyoming such as mining and construction, pay at or above national norms. In contrast, jobs that typically employ women pay significantly below the national norm, thus the gap. The combination of better than average pay for jobs held by men with the lower than average wage for jobs held by women explains a good part of the wage gap.

Like most places in the nation, Wyoming's men and women tend to work in different economic sectors and at different jobs. Nationally, women are more likely to work in professional, office and administrative support, sales and service occupations, while men are more likely to work in construction, maintenance and repair, and production and transportation occupations.<sup>35</sup> Despite the changes in the past few decades, in 2010 almost 40 percent of working women were employed in traditionally female occupations such as social work, nursing and teaching. In contrast, less than 5 percent of men worked in these jobs. Similarly, 44 percent of men worked in traditionally male occupations, such as computer programming, engineering, and firefighting compared with only 5.5 percent of women in these male-dominated occupations.

One way to examine the difference in wages and the wage gap is to examine four broad categories of work places and the respective sex ratio and wages paid to workers in these categories. With 190,990 full-time workers in Wyoming, two-thirds work in the private sector, 11.5 percent for the local, state or the federal government, six percent in non-profits, and seven percent are self employed in unincorporated businesses. As Figure 10 illustrates, women and men are employed about equally by governmental entities, and the other four categories are skewed either with significantly more men represented in the private sector and self-employed categories and significantly more women employed in the non-profit sector. In every category, men working full-time earn more than women.

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<sup>34</sup> Industries and occupations are different, and both have standardized definitions. Industries are often referred to as 'sectors of the economy' and most publications list less than twenty different economic sectors. In contrast, there are thousands of occupations, or jobs. Occupations can be performed in any of the sectors; however, some occupations are more likely to be found in some sectors than others. For example, nurses are not surprisingly in the 'educational and health services' sector but can also be found in natural resources and mining, when, for example a nurse is employed as the company health care provider. In general, much more data about the characteristics of workers are available regarding industries than occupations.

<sup>35</sup> AAUW (2011, p. 14). The Simple Truth About the Gender Pay Gap . Retrieved from <http://www.aauw.org/learn/research/simpleTruth.cfm>

**Figure 10: Broad Sector of Employment by Sex/Earnings/Wage Gap<sup>36</sup>**

Sector/#employed	Males		Females		Wage Gap
	Percent	Earnings	Percent	Earnings	
Private (126,579)	66.7	49,056	33.3	27,507	0.56
Government (38,907)	47.9	49,529	52.1	40,213	0.81
Self-employed (13,776)	65.8	39,255	34.2	20,405	0.52
Non-Profit (11,728)	32.5	50,300	67.5	33,107	0.66
ALL (190,990)	60.7	48,635	39.3	31,120	0.64

A more descriptive overview of the economic sectors is illustrated in Figure 11. Most sectors see significant sex segregation: only 11.1 percent of workers in mining and 7.7 percent of workers in the construction industry are women. In contrast, three-quarters of all health care workers are female. Only the information services, professional and business services, leisure, and public administration sectors are relatively integrated by sex (that is, have less than a 10 percent difference in the percent of men and women employed). However, together these four sectors comprise only 29 percent of the Wyoming workforce, indicating that the remaining 71 percent of Wyoming's economic sectors have a significant amount of sex segregation. About half of working women in Wyoming are employed in three sectors -- health care, education and leisure. About half of Wyoming's men are employed in mining, construction, wholesale and retail trades.

Even when men and women are working in the same sector of the economy, men, in general, earn more money. For example, while 4,069 women in Wyoming were employed in mining and natural resources, earning an average yearly salary of \$41,043 26,595 men were employed in the mining industry who earned on average \$59,587 annually for a difference of \$18,544 or 31 percent. The wage difference is most likely due to different jobs held by men and women within the industry. Many women employed in mining and natural resources are not working as miners per se, but may instead be working in office or other support positions. Similarly, while almost one-fifth of Wyoming women are employed in health care; men working in the health care field earn more than double the average female worker.

<sup>36</sup> Table constructed by author from data retrieved from US Census (2009), Table S2409, [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?\\_bm=y&-geo\\_id=01000US&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_1YR\\_G00\\_S2409&-ds\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_1YR\\_G00\\_&-lang=en&-redoLog=false&-format=&-CONTEXT=st](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-qr_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_S2409&-ds_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_&-lang=en&-redoLog=false&-format=&-CONTEXT=st). The 'Private' category includes self-employed workers in incorporated businesses.

**FIGURE 11: ECONOMIC SECTOR, GENDER AND WAGES in WYOMING (2009)<sup>37</sup>**

ECONOMIC SECTOR	MALE NUMBER/ (ROW %)	MALE WAGES(M)	FEMALE NUMBER/ (ROW %)	FEMALE WAGES(F)	WAGE RATIO (F/M)	UNKNOWN GENDER <sup>38</sup>	UNKNOWN WAGES
<b>ALL</b>	<b>158,210 (44.7)</b>	<b>\$40,840</b>	<b>135,033 (38.1)</b>	<b>\$25,016</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>60,990 (17.2)</b>	<b>\$14,329</b>
Natural Resources & Mining	26,595 (73.3)	\$59,587	4,069 (11.2)	\$41,043	0.69	5,630 (15.5)	\$32,935
Construction	24,568 (58.3)	\$33,110	3,248 (7.7)	\$25,334	0.77	14,311 (34.0)	\$14,923
Manufacturing	8,554 (71.7)	\$46,703	2,374 (19.9)	\$26,170	0.56	995 (8.3)	\$18,267
Wholesale Trade, Trans., & Utilities	16,543 (69.6)	\$49,624	4,749 (20.0)	\$29,961	0.60	2,475 (10.4)	\$22,172
Retail Trade	15,766 (38.0)	\$25,048	19,320 (46.6)	\$16,518	0.66	6,412 (15.5)	\$10,189
Information	2,358 (45.3)	\$36,257	2,342 (45.0)	\$23,884	0.66	505 (9.7)	\$17,431
Financial Activities	4,115 (32.1)	\$52,758	7,643 (59.7)	\$29,208	0.55	1,051 (8.2)	\$21,554
Professional and Business Services	10,928 (44.5)	\$39,013	8,900 (36.2)	\$24,097	0.62	4,754 (19.3)	\$14,656
Educational Services	9,828 (29.2)	\$42,108	21,333(63.3)	\$31,905	0.76	2,530 (7.5)	\$11,855
Health Care and Social Assistance	5,991 (17.2)	\$64,333	26,124 (74.8)	\$29,371	0.46	2,795 (8.0)	\$20,806
Leisure and Hospitality	15,066 (29.1)	\$14,057	19,970 (38.6)	\$10,978	0.78	16,677 (32.2)	\$6,464
Public Admin	13,094 (51.8)	\$42,266	11,010 (43.5)	\$33,698	0.80	1,195 (4.7)	\$13,768
Other (ex. Nonclassified n=22)	4,795 (46.1)	\$32,173	3,941 (37.9)	\$18,610	0.58	1,657 (15.9)	\$13,880

<sup>37</sup> Table constructed by author from data compiled by Glover, T, WYDOE Research and Planning. For 'All industry' the following link was used:

[http://wydoe.state.wy.us/lmi/earnings\\_tables/2010/WR\\_Demo\\_by\\_Industry/demo\\_by\\_industry275.html](http://wydoe.state.wy.us/lmi/earnings_tables/2010/WR_Demo_by_Industry/demo_by_industry275.html).

Use the following link to get to all other industries:

[http://wydoe.state.wy.us/lmi/earnings\\_tables/2010/industry.htm](http://wydoe.state.wy.us/lmi/earnings_tables/2010/industry.htm)

<sup>38</sup> As these columns indicate not all demographic information, including gender, is known about all workers in Wyoming. In general, wage records are linked with driver license records to obtain demographic information about workers in Wyoming. 'Unknown' workers tend to be more transitory, work only part-year, and do not have permanent homes in Wyoming. It is, therefore, not surprising to see that approximately one-third of all construction and leisure/hospitality workers fall in the 'unknown' category.

## *Discrimination*

The previous sections of this report have outlined data and factors that contribute to the disparity in wages between women and men in the state. At issue, for some, is whether these practices are discriminatory or illegal. Evelyn Murphy, in her text, *Getting Even: Why Women Don't Get Paid Like Men and What To Do About It*, argues:

You've seen that the wage gap isn't going away on its own... There's plain old discrimination, which openly bans women from hiring and advancement. There's discrimination by sexual harassment, which humiliates women and drives them out of jobs. There's discrimination by job segregation or by slotting women into job categories that are consistently underpaid. There's working while female, that everyday discrimination by which women are dismissed and paid less than their male peers. There's discrimination against mothers which forces women (and not men) to pay for parenting. All this scrapes away at women's earnings, day after day, year after year, throughout our lives.<sup>39</sup>

However, "discrimination," as defined by the U.S. legal system, is a violation of very specific laws. When a company acts illegally it will be punished. Thus, offense is sometimes taken when the wage gap or occupational segregation are referred to as discriminatory. Instead, it is argued that these are examples of choices that individuals make that are outside the purview of employers. However, even when factors that may be attributed to individual choice are accounted for, approximately one-quarter of the wage gap is unexplained. Illegal discrimination may be part, if not all, of this difference.

Several key pieces of federal legislation have been enacted to address pay inequities due to illegal discrimination. The Equal Pay Act (EPA) was passed in 1963.<sup>40</sup> It prohibits paying men and women differently who work full-time in the same establishment, doing the same job under similar working conditions. Exceptions were made when different pay existed based upon a seniority system, a merit system, a quality or quantity of production system, or "any other factor other than sex." The EPA also resulted in the establishment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), a federal administrative agency with oversight and enforcement obligations over this and other federal employment laws.

Executive Order 11246 prohibits federal contractors and federally-assisted construction contractors and subcontractors who have government contracts or subcontracts exceeding \$10,000 from discriminating in employment decisions on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. In addition, each government contractor with 50 or more employees and \$50,000 or more in government contracts is required to develop a written affirmative action program (AAP) for each of its

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<sup>39</sup> Murphy, Evelyn (2005). *Getting Even: Why Women Don't Get Paid Like Men and What to Do About It*. New York: Simon and Shuster. P. 217.

<sup>40</sup> Equal Pay Act, 29 U.S.C. Section 206(d) (1963).

establishments. The Executive Order is enforced by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), which annually recognizes “best practices” among federal contractors for diversity plans.<sup>41</sup>

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in pay, hiring, promotion, and the terms and conditions of work on the basis of race, color, sex, religion or national origin.<sup>42</sup> In 1986, the Supreme Court ruled that sexual harassment was also covered and forbidden by Title VII.<sup>43</sup> With the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1991, Congress expanded Title VII to allow successful plaintiffs in suits against discriminatory employers to collect punitive damages, and generally to allow for trial by jury, and in 2009 the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was passed which allows for the statute of limitations for filing an equal-pay lawsuit to reset with each new discriminatory paycheck. However, in 2011 the Supreme Court ruled that a class action suit against Wal-Mart, comprised of female employees alleging employment discrimination in pay, promotions and job assignments, could not go forward. While the individual plaintiffs in the case may continue with their claims against Wal-Mart, the group effort may not. Other federal legislation currently under consideration includes the Paycheck Fairness Act which seeks to strengthen the Equal Pay Act to address the wage gap. This Act contains language which outlines the harm caused by pay disparities, and calls for numerous enhancements to current laws, including increased programming, research, and technical assistance for both employers and employees, and employer recognition for efforts to reduce the wage gap.

The EEOC reports serious violations of these statutes annually. In 2010, employers were held liable for \$29.3 million for violations of sex discrimination laws and an additional \$48.4 million for sexual harassment claims.<sup>44</sup> The Wyoming Fair Employment Practices Act,<sup>45</sup> makes it illegal for an employer or labor organization to discriminate against someone on the basis of sex. The Wyoming statute covers all employers (unlike title VII which covers employers of 15 or more workers). In Wyoming, the Department of Employment, oversees claims of discrimination and assesses the merits of the claim. In FY 2008, there were 243 charges of sex discrimination, 47 of which were referred to the EEOC for further analysis. A total of \$520,633 was secured for individuals who had filed claims that year.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Executive Order 11,246. 41 C.F.R. Section 60-2.15 (1965).

<sup>42</sup> Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. 42 U.S.C. Section 1981 (1964)

<sup>43</sup> *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*, 477 U.S. 57 (1986).

<sup>44</sup> U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. (2011). *Statistics*. Retrieved from <http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/enforcement/sex.cfm> [These figures only indicate those cases that were settled by the EEOC and do not include those that were litigated, an option available after the EEOC issues a “right to sue” letter.]

<sup>45</sup> Codified in Wyoming Statutes Title 27, Chapter 9.

<sup>46</sup> This is the total for ALL claims against fair employment practices, not just sex. Approximately 70 percent of claims filed include an allegation of sex-based discrimination.

## **A CASE STUDY: New Hires in Wyoming**

Recently, the Wyoming Department of Employment's Research & Planning Division undertook a study of the occupations, wages, and demographics of those hired during the fourth quarter of 2009 and the first quarter of 2010. During this period, Wyoming employers added 39,902 workers (or about 11 percent of the total workforce). 18,431 new hires were male (46.2%), 15,362 (38.5%) were female [and the gender of 6,109 (15.3%) was unknown.] In each 10-year age category, approximately the same number of males and females were hired (for example, in the age category of 35-44, 18.5 percent of men and 17.4 percent of employed women were in this category). The median hourly wage for newly hired men was \$14.00/hour; for women \$10.25 (a wage gap of \$3.75, or 0.73, or 27%). In the top ten occupations for men, the median hourly wage was \$14.25, for women \$9.33 (a wage gap of \$4.92 or 0.65, or 35%).

Not surprisingly, men and women were employed in different occupations. As Figure 12 illustrates, the top occupations and median hourly wages for men were:

- Truck drivers (\$17.00),
- Food preparation (\$7.73),
- Retail sales (\$10.00),
- Construction (\$13.50),
- Cashiers (\$8.50),
- Electricians (\$25.00),
- Carpenters (\$18.00),
- Cooks (\$9.00),
- Extraction workers (\$15.50), and
- Roustabouts (\$15.00).

The top occupations and median hourly wages for women:

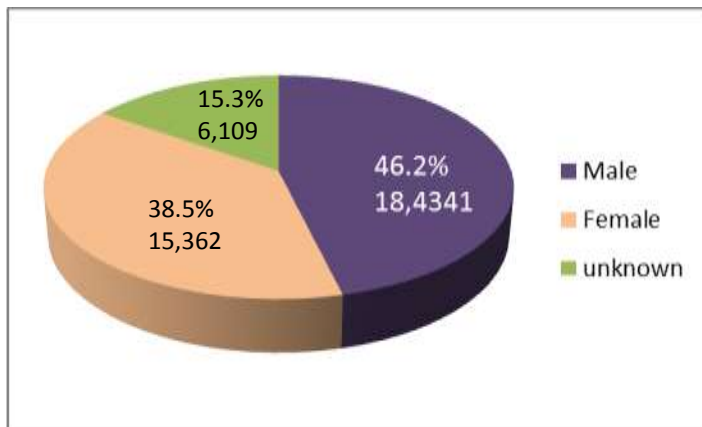
- Cashiers (\$8.25),
- Wait staff (\$7.50),
- Food preparation (\$8.00),
- Retail sales (\$9.00),
- Nursing assistants (\$10.70),
- Maids (\$9.65),
- Substitute teachers (\$11.88),
- Secretaries (\$11.00),
- Receptionists (\$11.00), and
- Child care workers (\$8.38).

When women and men were employed in similar occupations, wages were similar; for example male cashiers earned, on average, \$8.50/hour while female cashiers \$8.25 (a difference of \$0.25 and a 0.97 gap); male food prep workers earned \$7.73,

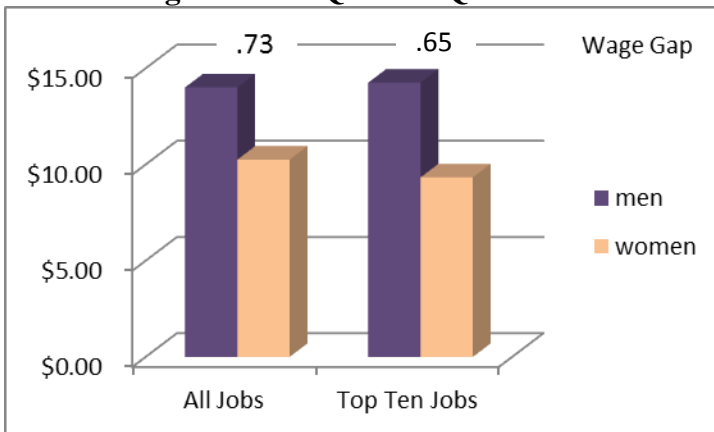
females \$8.00 (with female workers earning \$0.27 more per hour or a 1.04 gap – indicating that female workers, on average, were paid more than male workers). Newly hired men worked, on average, 40 hours per week both overall and in the top ten occupations. Newly hired women worked, on average 30 hours per week, and 25 hours per week in the top ten occupations. Male new hires were more likely to be hired into jobs that offered paid time off, health insurance and retirement. Over thirty seven percent of male new hires were offered health insurance compared with only twenty six percent of female new hires.

Together, this data paints a vivid picture of what was previously discussed: Wyoming's men and women are working in different jobs with different characteristics including hours worked and pay associated with those jobs.

**Figure 12: Employees Hired Fourth Quarter 2009- First Quarter 2010**



**Median Wage of Sexes Q4 2009-Q1 2010**



## Industry and Occupational Projections for Wyoming's Near-Term future<sup>47</sup>

The Wyoming Department of Employment (now the Department of Workforce Services) has also made projections regarding expected changes in industry and occupations for the near term future. The industrial sectors that are expected to increase their workforces by the greatest number of employees during the next half-decade are listed below:

<b>Industrial Sector</b>	<b>Projected Increase in Positions</b>	<b>Percent Increase</b>
Health care and education (with nursing and residential care facilities seeing the greatest increase)	11,435	21.2
Mining	11,219	55.8
Construction (also associated with the mining boom)	8,727	45.5
Wholesale trade, transportation, utilities	6,399	36.6
Leisure and Hospitality	6,054	18.6
Professional and Business Services	5,432	34.6
Retail	4,517	18.6

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<sup>47</sup> Wyoming Department of Employment, Research & Planning. (2008). *2008 Projections for research and planning industries and occupations in Wyoming: 2008-2014*. Retrieved from [http://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections\\_08\\_14.pdf](http://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections_08_14.pdf)

In addition, the following chart summarizes expected changes in occupations:

<p><b>In occupations that primarily employ women:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office and administrative support workers are expected to increase by 5,235 jobs. Wyoming hourly wages average \$11.72, compared with \$14.18 for the nation. (Wyoming workers are earning only \$0.83 for each dollar earned by workers elsewhere in the country).</li> <li>• Retail sales workers are expected to increase by 2,109 workers. Wyoming wages are \$8.32 per hour, compared with \$9.20 per hour nationally (\$0.90 on the \$1.00).</li> <li>• Registered nurses are expected to increase by 1,284 workers. Wyoming RN's earn \$22.68 hourly, in comparison with the national median of \$26.28 (\$0.86 on the \$1.00).</li> <li>• Community and social service occupations will add 448 jobs between 2004 and 2014 (a 35.4 percent increase). The average hourly wage for these jobs is \$9.90, compared with \$12.03 nationally (\$0.82 on the \$1.00).</li> </ul>	<p><b>In occupations that primarily employ men:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation and material moving occupations are expected to increase by 7,516 jobs. Wyoming workers earn a median hourly wage of \$16.14, compared with \$16.48 nationally. (Wyoming workers are earning \$0.97 for each dollar earned nationally).</li> <li>• Production occupations (typically associated with the mining industry) are expected to increase by 1,744 jobs. Wyoming workers earn a median hourly wage of \$15.91, compared with \$14.90 nationally (\$1.067 for each dollar earned elsewhere in the country or 6.7 percent <i>above</i> the national norm).</li> <li>• Non-specified extraction workers are expected to increase by 1,179 new jobs. These jobs average an hourly wage of \$17.90, compared with \$16.35 nationally (\$1.095 for each dollar earned elsewhere)</li> <li>• 801 new jobs are projected for maintenance and repair workers. Wyoming workers earn a median hourly wage of \$16.31, compared with \$15.01 nationally (\$1.086 for each dollar earned elsewhere).</li> </ul>
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The greatest numeric increase in jobs is expected in the southwest region of the state, with 16,797 new jobs forecast due to mineral extraction in Sublette County and surrounding areas.<sup>48</sup> The greatest percentage increase is expected in the northeast, at 42.7 percent, due to the needs of the coal and coal bed methane industries. The central

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<sup>48</sup> Wyoming Department of Employment, Research & Planning. (2008). *2008 Projections for research and planning industries and occupations in Wyoming: 2008-2014*. Retrieved from [http://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections\\_08\\_14.pdf](http://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections_08_14.pdf)

southeast area will expect the least growth, at 14.9 percent, as there is limited mining activity.<sup>49</sup> Across the state, the need for health, educational, and social services is growing significantly and those services are fairly evenly distributed throughout the counties. Slightly over 12 percent of Wyoming's residents are 65 or older. The greatest percent of older residents live in Hot Springs, Niobrara and Goshen counties. The aging of Wyoming will be relevant in terms of needs for services for our growing elderly population and workers in these services, as well as the need to replace retiring workers in the workforce.

Together this data regarding projected occupational and industrial growth shows that without attention to these disparities the wage gap between men and women in Wyoming will be reproduced over the next decade.

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<sup>49</sup> However, these projections might change if there is success in the Niobrara oil and gas play in the southeast counties of the state.

## **ADDRESSING WAGE INEQUALITY:**

We have two challenges in the state regarding the economic status of women; what can be done now to address the wage gap and how can we avoid replicating the gap in the future.

### *Wyoming Specific Strategies for Consideration*

Support the efforts to bring the WAGE project to Wyoming communities to train women to negotiate for good starting salaries.

Support the efforts of organizations like CLIMB Wyoming that train women for higher paying jobs and economic self-sufficiency.

Support the efforts of individual women and groups of women to gain degrees in higher education or specific vocational training.

Join with those that reward companies, organizations and educational institutions that promote women's economic self-sufficiency.

Promote the use of the Wyoming Economic Self-Sufficiency Standard as a method for determining living wages.

Develop strategies that begin to promote an awareness of the value of work typically done by women, and advocate for nationally market wages in health care, education, and retail trade and services.

Support systematic review of the wages of state workers and market-based salaries with regular adjustments.

Support efforts to increase awareness of anti-discrimination laws and procedures for filing claims.

Collect and disseminate data regarding women's work and indicators of well-being on a yearly basis.

Support efforts to connect issues regarding women's economic self-sufficiency with child care quality and availability.

Support Wyoming legislative efforts that address economic diversification, increased reporting of occupations and wages, minimum wages especially for tipped employees, and attention to recruitment and retention of health care workers.

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