

# Gender Pay Gap Improvement Slowed During the Pandemic

The pay gap is worse for minority women and for women ages 45 and older

By Stephen Miller, CEBS

March 15, 2022

**T**he pay gap between working women and men overall held steady into 2022, unchanged from a year earlier—signifying a break from the steady improvement seen since 2015, new research shows.

March 15 is Equal Pay Day (<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/stories/equal-pay-day.html>), the date that represents how far into 2022 women have to work to earn what men earned by the end of 2021.

"Because women earn less, on average, than men, they must work longer for the same amount of pay. The wage gap is even greater for most women of color," according to the National Committee on Pay Equity, a coalition of women's and civil rights organizations.

The latest data on women's pay presents a mixed picture.

Going into 2022, women earn 82 cents for every \$1 men earn when comparing all women to all men—a stat that is unchanged from 2021, according to compensation data and software firm Payscale's *2022 State of the Gender Pay Gap Report* (<https://www.payscale.com/research-and-insights/gender-pay-gap/>), released March 15.

This "uncontrolled" gender pay gap has improved by 7 cents since 2015, the firm reported, based on responses from nearly 1.6 million people surveyed through the end of last year. Those findings were compared with responses from earlier Payscale surveys.

Women earn less because they are more likely to leave the workforce as a result of social expectations placed on them as mothers and caretakers, heightened by the pandemic, the report noted. Unemployed women also face a disproportionate wage penalty compared to men when they re-enter the workforce.

However, the gender gap narrows considerably when comparing the earnings of women and men with the same or similar job level and title, education, years of experience, industry, and hours worked. Looking at this "controlled" gender pay gap, women are being paid 99 cents for every \$1 men make, up a cent from 2021, when Payscale found that women made 98 cents for every \$1 that men earned.

Feedback

## Two Pay Gaps

The gender pay gap is real but diminishes when factors such as job level, industry and experience are taken into account.

### Uncontrolled Gender Pay Gap

Comparing all working women to all working men:

Women \$0.82

Men \$1

### Controlled Gender Pay Gap

Comparing similarly qualified and experienced women and men in similar jobs:

Women \$0.99

Men \$1

Source: 2022 State of the Gender Pay Gap Report, PayScale, March 2022. • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

### Another View of the Gender Pay Gap

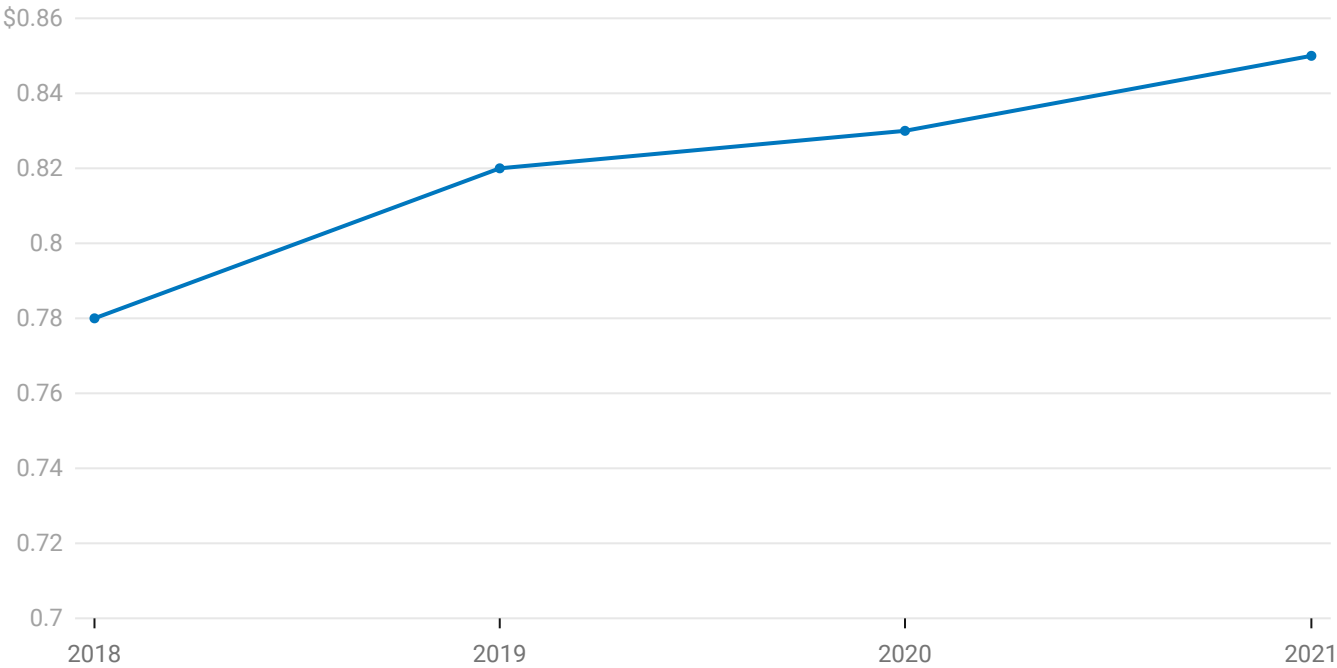
People analytics firm Visier also released new data on pay equity for Equal Pay Day, drawing on workforce data for more than 1 million U.S. employees across 86 organizations through 2021. Visier's *The State of Gender Pay Equity in 2022*

(<https://hello.visier.com/gender-pay-gap-2022/>) report showed a slightly smaller overall pay gap between men and women:

- **Despite initial concern that pandemic-induced job losses would slow pay equity efforts**, the gender pay gap continued to close in 2021, with average pay for women overall increasing by 2 cents to 85 cents for every \$1 paid to men.
- **In the workforce overall**, female managers in 2021 were paid 90 cents for every \$1 paid to male managers, an increase of 4 cents over 2021, when female managers were paid 86 cents for every \$1 paid to men in management.
- **If the gender pay gap continues to close at this rate**, pay equity would be achieved by 2029.

"The positive news is that the increase in pay equity in 2021 actually countered the predictions, which were calling for a potential reduction in pay equity and a widening of the pay gap in 2021 due to pandemic-related job losses and uncertainty around remote work and shifting societal norms," said Andrea Derler, Visier's head of research.

# Women to Men Salary Ratio



Source: *The State of Gender Pay Equity in 2022*, Visier, March 2022. • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Feedback

## Overlapping Pay Gaps

Many Black, indigenous and other women of color earned less than white men, both when looking at uncontrolled median earnings overall and when comparing controlled earnings of women of color in similar positions as white women and men, Payscale reported.

### Gender Pay Gap Measured by Race/Ethnicity

Sample is restricted to those with at least a bachelor's degree.

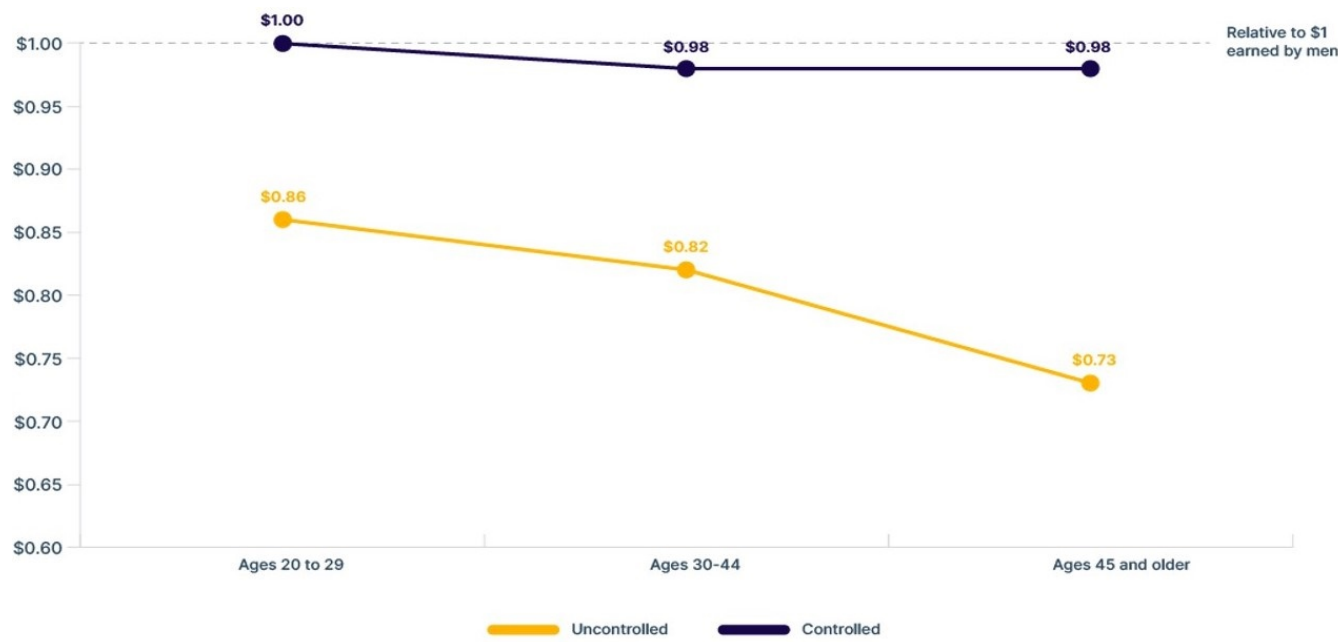
| Race or Ethnic Group                             | Median Pay | Uncontrolled Gender Pay Gap<br>Relative to White Men | Controlled Gender Pay Gap<br>Relative to White Men<br><br>(similar jobs and experience) |
|--|------------|--|---|
| American Indian and Alaska Native women          | \$54,800   | \$0.71   | \$0.99  |
| Hispanic women                                   | \$60,100   | \$0.78   | \$0.99  |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander women | \$61,100   | \$0.79   | \$1.00  |
| Black or African-American women                  | \$61,600   | \$0.79   | \$0.98  |
| White women                                      | \$63,900   | \$0.82   | \$0.99  |
| Asian women                                      | \$75,100   | \$0.97   | \$1.03  |

|           |          |        |        |
|-----------|----------|--------|--------|
| White men | \$77,500 | \$1.00 | \$1.00 |
|-----------|----------|--------|--------|

Source: 2022 State of the Gender Pay Gap Report, Payscale, March 2022.

Women also lose earning power as they age, with women at age 45 in the uncontrolled group earning only 73 cents compared to men in the same age bracket.

Gender Pay Gap by Age



Source: 2022 State of the Gender Pay Gap Report, Payscale, March 2022.

"More needs to be done to eliminate the gender pay gap, which is a direct reflection of how women are valued in the workforce compared to men," said Ruth Thomas, pay equity strategist at Payscale. "Fortunately, employers are finally starting to take pay equity seriously. What's more, they are thinking beyond just gender and focusing on all unexplainable pay gaps," such as race-based pay differences.

As salary structures are adjusted in response to rising wage inflation, minimum wage increases and strong competition for talent, employers should "continuously monitor pay equity," Thomas advised.

10 Jobs with the Widest Gender Pay Gap

Jobs in the U.S. with the widest pay gaps, with earnings lost as a result of pay inequity.

| Job                     | Median Pay—Men | Median Pay—Women | Difference in Annual Earnings |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Physicians and surgeons | \$302,000      | \$272,000        | (\$30,000)                    |
| Veterinarians           | \$102,000      | \$91,300         | (\$10,700)                    |

|   |          |          |           |
|---|----------|----------|-----------|
| Database Administrators                     | \$82,900 | \$75,600 | (\$7,300) |
| Claims adjusters                            | \$62,600 | \$56,500 | (\$6,100) |
| Directors, Religious Activities & Education | \$51,400 | \$46,700 | (\$4,700) |
| Maintenance and repair workers              | \$42,300 | \$38,200 | (\$4,100) |
| Chemical Equipment Operators                | \$40,500 | \$36,900 | (\$3,600) |
| Waiters and waitresses                      | \$20,900 | \$17,300 | (\$3,600) |
| Bartenders                                  | \$28,400 | \$24,900 | (\$3,500) |
| Sales Workers                               | \$36,500 | \$33,300 | (\$3,200) |

Source: *2022 State of the Gender Pay Gap Report*, Payscale, March 2022.

### Focusing on the Problem

Organizations are doing more to address pay equity. Payscale's *2022 Compensation Best Practices Report*

(<https://www.payscale.com/research-and-insights/cbpr/>) found that 66 percent of organizations surveyed from November 2021 to January 2022 said pay equity analysis was among their planned initiatives in 2022—a 20 percent increase over the previous year. In addition, 52 percent said they plan to conduct a gender- or race-based pay equity analysis—the first time the majority of survey respondents have said they will do so in the 13-year history of Payscale's annual survey.

"Workers are more focused than ever on pay equity, with an increased number of organizations rising to the occasion to get pay right," Thomas said. "It's not just about pay raises; employees are demanding equal pay for equal work, and employers must consider this when restructuring their compensation strategies or risk employees seeking new opportunities."

Similarly, a survey ([www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/Pay%20Equity%20Full%20Report.pdf](http://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/Pay%20Equity%20Full%20Report.pdf)) of 1,094 HR professionals conducted last July for the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) found that nearly 3 in 5 of respondents' organizations (58 percent) voluntarily conduct pay equity reviews to identify possible pay differences among employees performing similar work that cannot be explained by job-related factors.

"Organizations that don't proactively address pay inequities risk employees surfacing the inequities themselves, and this can create a culture of distrust and may lead employees to search for a better environment," SHRM reported.

### Job Hopping Raises Pay for Women and Men

A new survey from The Conference Board reveals that among those who changed jobs during the pandemic:

- Slightly more women (31 percent) than men (28 percent) indicated that they now earn 30 percent or more than they did in their previous job.
- Overall, 70 percent of men saw a pay increase of more than 10 percent, compared with 64 percent of women.
- More men (13 percent) than women (9 percent) left their jobs for an essentially lateral compensation package.

The Conference Board's 2022 workforce survey captured the thoughts of more than 2,600 predominantly professional/office workers in the U.S.

#### Related SHRM Articles:

White House Announces Steps to Promote Pay Equity ([www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/compensation/Pages/white-house-announces-steps-to-promote-pay-equity.aspx](http://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/compensation/Pages/white-house-announces-steps-to-promote-pay-equity.aspx)), *SHRM Online*, March 2022

The Fight for Equal Pay: From Women's Soccer to Corporate America ([www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/global-and-cultural-effectiveness/Pages/The-Fight-for-Equal-Pay.aspx](http://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/global-and-cultural-effectiveness/Pages/The-Fight-for-Equal-Pay.aspx)), *SHRM Online*, March 2022

Gender Pay Gap for Executives Grew During Pandemic ([www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/compensation/pages/gender-pay-gap-for-executives-grew-during-pandemic.aspx](http://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/compensation/pages/gender-pay-gap-for-executives-grew-during-pandemic.aspx)), *SHRM Online*, February 2022

#### Related SHRM Report:

Bridging the Pay Gap: Why Pay Equity Pays Off ([www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/Pay%20Equity%20Full%20Report.pdf](http://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/Pay%20Equity%20Full%20Report.pdf)), SHRM Research, November 2021

#### SHRM RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

Pay Equity ([www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/Pages/pay-equity.aspx](http://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/Pages/pay-equity.aspx))

## HR DAILY NEWSLETTER

News, trends and analysis, as well as breaking news alerts, to help HR professionals do their jobs better each business day.

**CONTACT US ([WWW.SHRM.ORG/ABOUT-SHRM/PAGES/CONTACT-US.ASPX](http://WWW.SHRM.ORG/ABOUT-SHRM/PAGES/CONTACT-US.ASPX)) | 800.283.SHRM  
(7476)**

Monday - Friday 8:00 am–8:00 pm ET

© 2022 SHRM. All Rights Reserved

SHRM provides content as a service to its readers and members. It does not offer legal advice, and cannot guarantee the accuracy or suitability of its content for a particular purpose.

Disclaimer ([www.shrm.org/about-shrm/Pages/Terms-of-Use.aspx#Disclaimer](http://www.shrm.org/about-shrm/Pages/Terms-of-Use.aspx#Disclaimer))

Feedback