



**ADVANCING WOMEN
POWERING THE ECONOMY**



2016 Status Report:

**WOMEN,
WORK
AND
WAGES IN
VERMONT**





ADVANCING WOMEN
POWERING THE ECONOMY

This brief is published by Change The Story VT (CTS), a multi-year strategy to align philanthropy, policy, and program to significantly improve women’s economic status in Vermont. CTS is fueled by three statewide organizations focused on women’s economic well-being: the Vermont Women’s Fund, Vermont Commission on Women, and Vermont Works for Women.

This is the **first in a series of briefs** we will publish on topics related to women’s economic well-being. Much of the data in the briefs is either new, or not regularly collected or published. All of the data is specific to Vermont, and all is critical - not just in what it reflects about women, but in its implications for the entire Vermont economy.

Among the findings:

- ✓ **Women are significantly more likely than men to live in poverty or economic insecurity** – in large part because they have primary responsibility for the care of minor children.
- ✓ **43% of VT women who work full-time do not make enough to cover basic living expenses** as defined by VT’s Joint Fiscal Office.
- ✓ **The poverty rate for families headed by single women is 37.5% - nine times the poverty rate of married couples.**
- ✓ Women who work full-time are **disproportionately employed in low-wage jobs – in every age group, at every level of education.**
- ✓ **VT women are especially vulnerable in their senior years**, when their median annual income from **Social Security** (\$10,000) is **half that of men** (\$20,000).

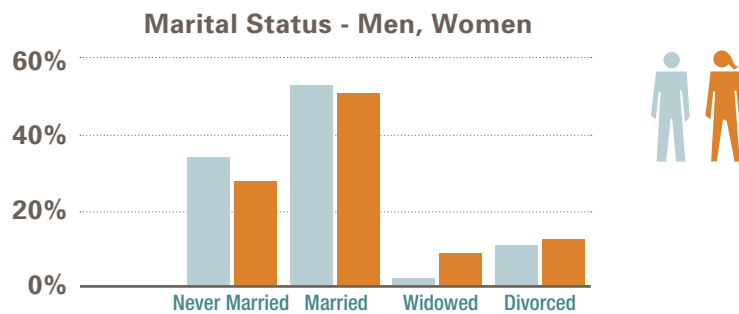
Much of the data in this report was collected and analyzed by Flint Springs Associates, a Vermont-based consulting firm. Principal researchers were Joy Livingston and Vicki Hart. Additional authors include Change The Story VT team members Tiffany Bluemle and Lindsey Lathrop. For more information, contact info@changethestoryvt.org.





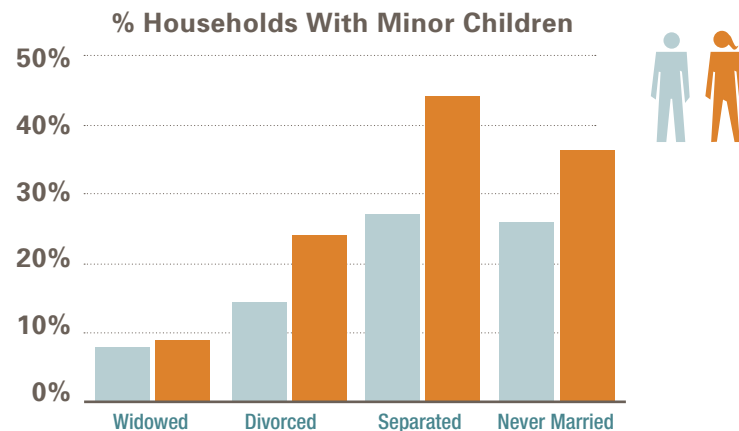
DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT OF VT WOMEN

- ✓ Women and girls comprise **51%** of Vermont's population.¹
- ✓ Their median age is **43** – 5 years older than the national median for women and 2 years older than the median for Vermont men. Women's share of Vermont elders is 3% higher than men's; its largest age group is between 45 and 64.
- ✓ Vermont women and men are overwhelmingly White (**95%**).²
- ✓ **51% of women are married.** 28% of women have never married (as compared to 34% of men). Women are more likely than men to be widowed (9% versus 2%). These numbers are on par with national statistics.



U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey - 5 Year Average (2009-2013). Persons age 15 and older.

- ✓ Outside of married couples, **women shoulder primary responsibility for the care of minor children.**



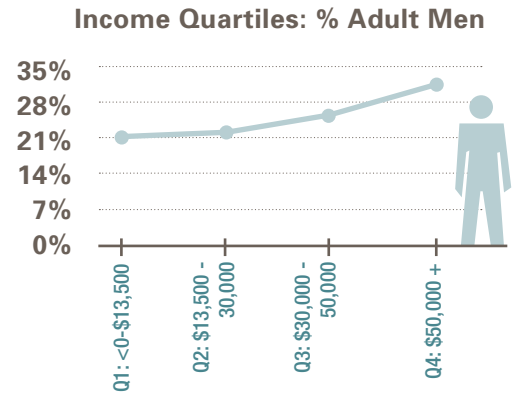
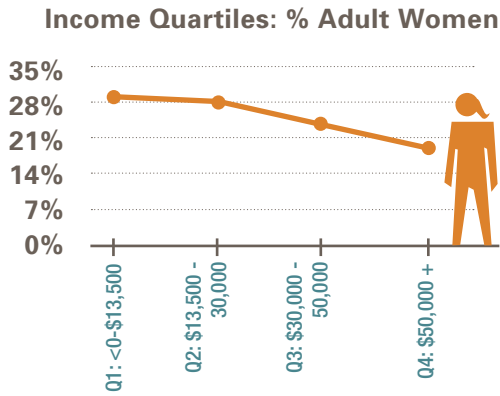
U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey - 5 Year Average (2009-2013). Persons age 15 and older.

- ✓ **Vermont women are comparatively well-educated: 33%** of adult women hold a Bachelor's degree or more – six points higher than the U.S. average of 27% and four points higher than Vermont men.

U.S. Census Current Population Survey 5 Year Average (2009-2013) analysis of microdata. Persons 18 years and older.

EDUCATION NOTWITHSTANDING, WOMEN ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO LIVE IN POVERTY OR ECONOMIC INSECURITY.

57% of women have incomes that fall below \$30,000 while 57% of men have incomes above that number.

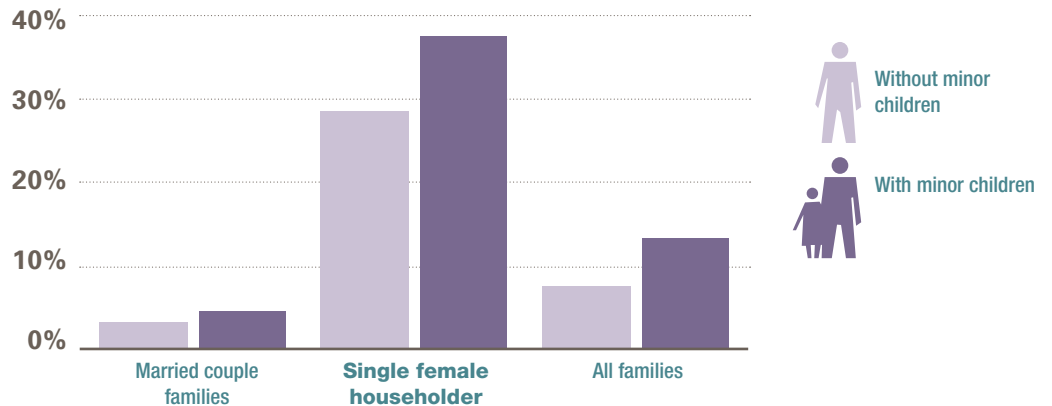


U.S. Census Bureau, Public Use Microdata Sample; American Community Survey 5 Year Data Release, 2009-2013 – restricted to persons 18 years and older, quartiles generated on total population using both genders.

Women's poverty is affected significantly by marital status and responsibility for minor children.

7% of Vermont families live below the federal poverty line, but that **statistic nearly doubles to 13.4% when minor children live at home.**

Family Poverty Rate Comparison - By Marital Status

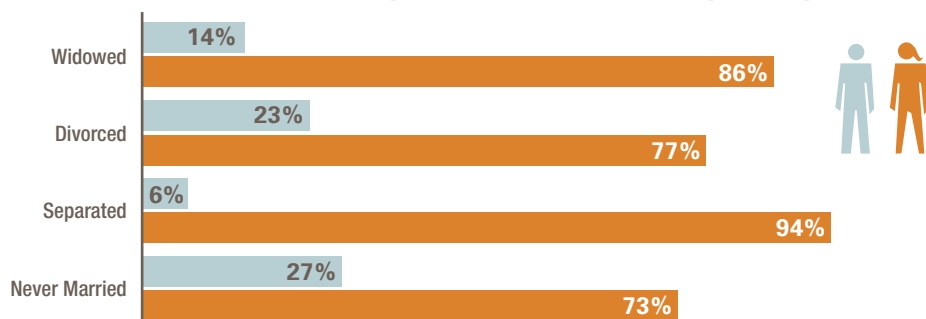


U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey.

Overall, **women in poverty are 3 to 4 times more likely to live with minor children than are men.**

The rate is **five times higher – or 37% – if a woman is head of the household.**

% Men, Women In Poverty With Minor Children By Family Status



U.S. Census CPS ASEC 5 Year Average (2010-2014) – Adult Civilian Persons Poverty Status 2009 to 2013.

A NOTE ABOUT PART-TIME WORK

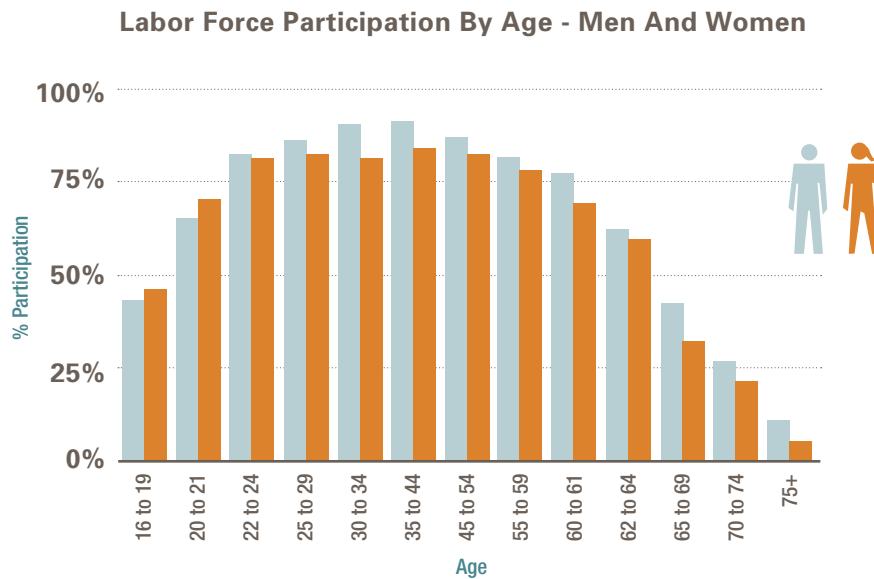
Understanding why women work part-time is critical to any discussion about women's earnings, wealth, and the wage gap. National data produced by the **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics** indicates that **just 18% of women worked part-time for economic reasons** (i.e., they cannot find full-time employment), and **82% for non-economic reasons** (which can include caring for family members, health issues, disability, or personal choice).⁵

According to an analysis released by the **Institute for Women's Policy Research**, women in the U.S. who report working part-time for non-economic reasons are **nine times more likely than men to cite family care issues for their part-time work**.⁶

THE RATE AT WHICH VT WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN THE LABOR FORCE IS SEVEN PERCENTAGE POINTS HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

The rate at which Vermont women work outside the home has climbed steadily over the past four decades. Currently, **66% of adult women and 69% of adult men participate in Vermont's labor force**,³ as compared to national averages of 58% of women and 70% of men.

Women and men participate in similar trajectories over a lifespan, peaking between the ages of 22-54, prime years also for bearing and raising children.



U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2011-2013.

Full-Time vs. Part-Time Work

The majority of men and women in Vermont's labor force work full-time: ⁴

Women { 75% full-time, 25% part-time } Men { 90% full-time, 10% part-time }

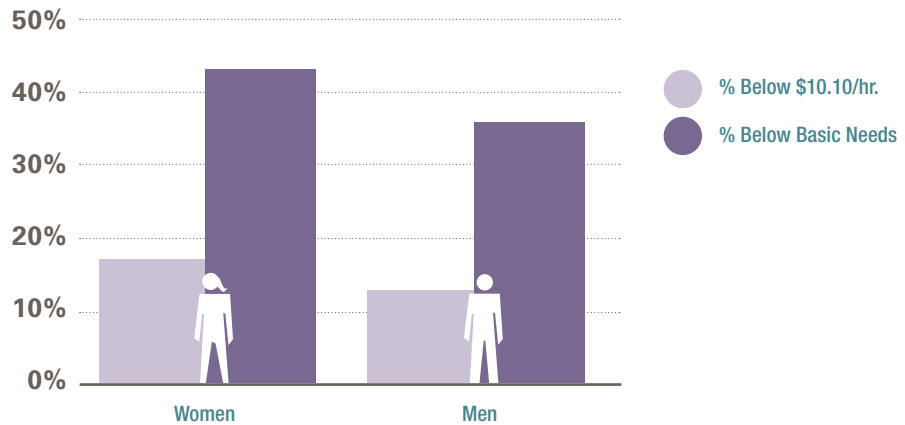
Overall, **women** make up **45%** of Vermont's full-time workforce and **71%** of its year-round, part-time workforce.

U.S. Census Current Population Survey (CPS) 5 Year Average (2011-2015) – Adult Civilian Persons.

4 OUT OF 10 WOMEN WHO WORK FULL-TIME DO NOT EARN ENOUGH TO COVER BASIC LIVING EXPENSES.

For all their work, a significant share of women working full-time - **43%** - **do not earn enough to meet basic expenses** as defined by Vermont's Joint Fiscal Office.⁷ 17% make hourly wages of less than \$10.10 an hour.⁸ **Men fare better, but not by a very wide margin:** 36% of men earn wages below the Basic Needs standard; 13% earn below \$10.10 an hour.

% Women, Men Full-Time Workers Earning Below \$10.10/hr And Below Basic Needs Budget

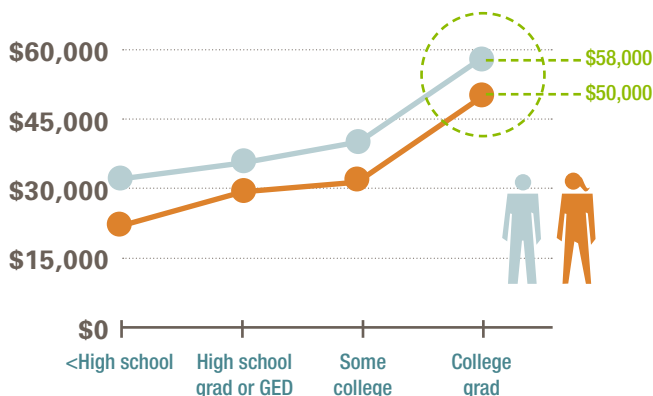


U.S. Census Bureau, Public Use Microdata Sample; American Community Survey 5 Year Data Release (2009-2013).

Median annual income for women working full-time is \$37,000, \$7,000 less than the median annual salary of men. This translates into a **wage gap of 16%** - or 16 cents on every dollar earned by a man.

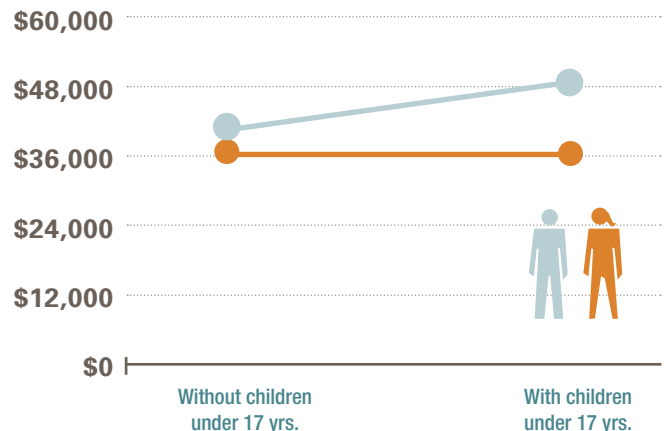
The gap narrows to 14% when a **woman has a college degree...**

Median Full-Time Annual Earnings By Education & Gender



If a woman has **dependent children, the wage gap increases to 23%...**

Wage Gap - Full-Time Annual Earnings When Minor Children In Household



U.S. Census Bureau, Public Use Microdata Sample; American Community Survey 5 Year Data Release (2009-2013).



UNDERSTANDING THE WAGE GAP

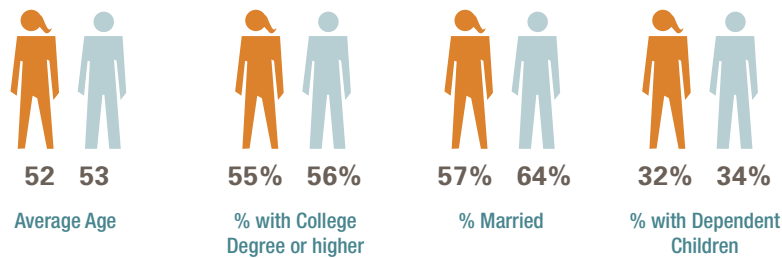
WHAT DOES A LOSS OF SIXTEEN CENTS ON EVERY DOLLAR EARNED MEAN?

For a single person, it's equivalent to seven months rent. For a family of four, \$7,000 would buy six months of childcare or groceries.⁹

What accounts for the wage gap between men and women **who work full-time**?

In demographic terms – age, education level, marital status and responsibility for dependent children -- **the profile of men and women full-time workers is strikingly similar.**

Demographic Characteristics Of Full-Time Workers – Men and Women

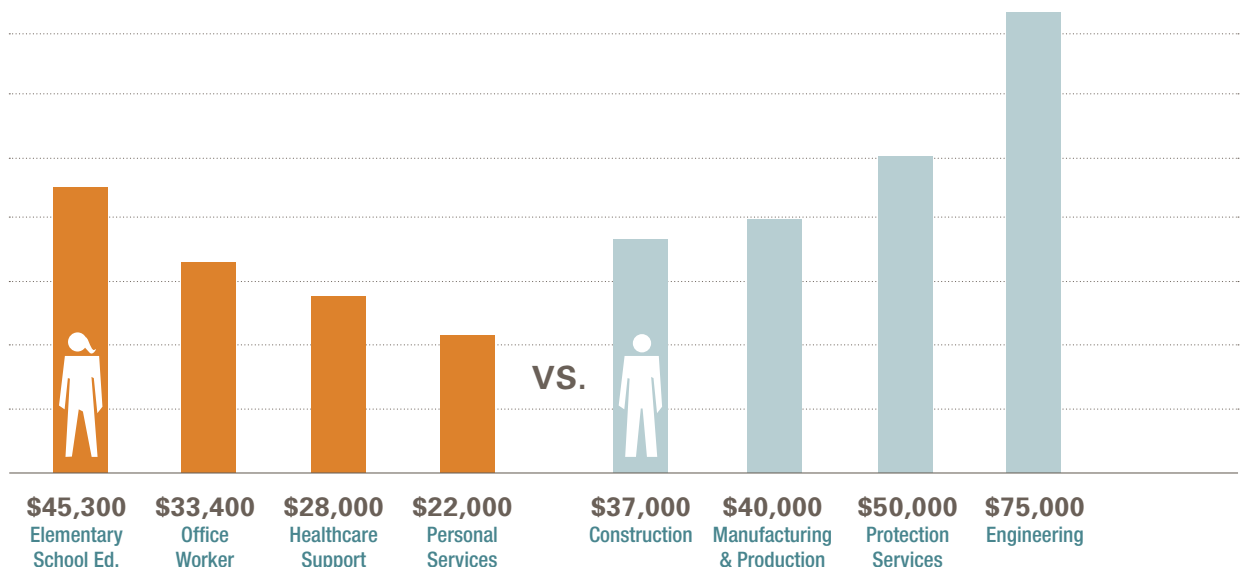


U.S. Census Bureau, Public Use Microdata Sample; American Community Survey 5 Year Data Release (2009-2013).

Why, then, the difference in wages?

Part of the answer lies in **where women work**. A comparison of fields in which either women or men are the majority of workers shows that part of the wage gap can be explained by the fact that fields in which women have been traditionally clustered pay lower wages. As the chart below shows, **median annual wages in occupations where women or men constitute significant majorities (75% or higher) are strikingly different.**

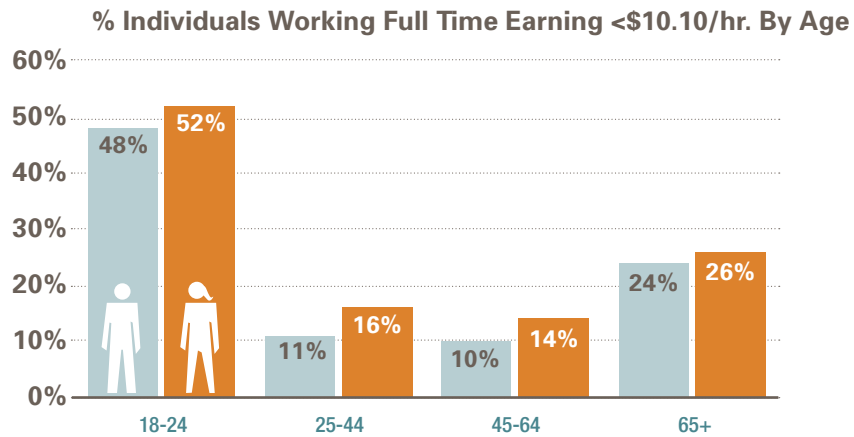
Median Annual Earnings in Predominantly Female/Male Occupations



U.S. Census Bureau, Public Use Microdata Sample; American Community Survey 5 Year Data Release (2009-2013).

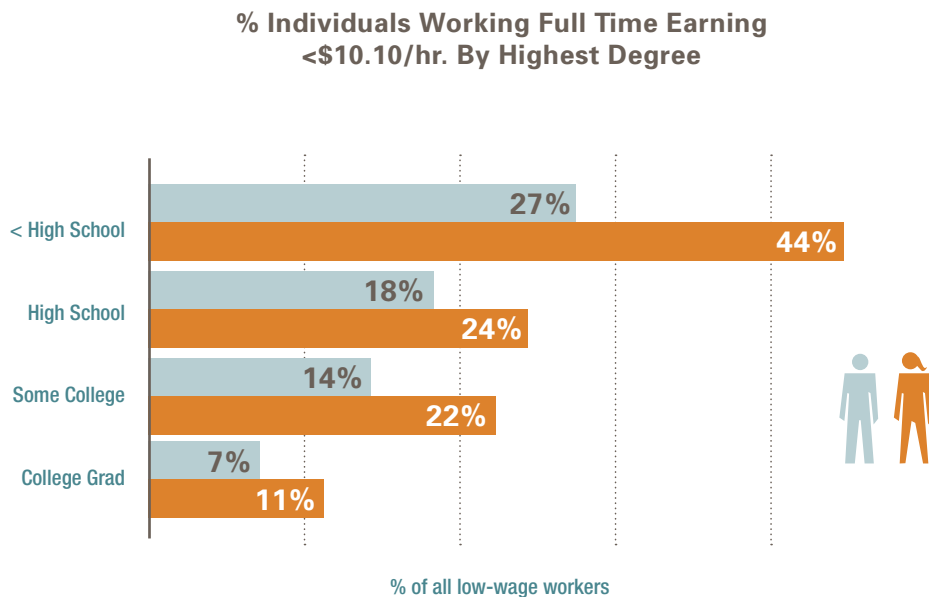
VERMONT WOMEN CONSTITUTE A DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE OF LOW-WAGE WORKERS.

Despite their lower overall participation in the labor force, **women of all ages constitute a larger share of Vermont's low-wage workers.**



U.S. Census Bureau, Public Use Microdata Sample; American Community Survey 5 Year Data Release (2009-2013).

They are also more likely than men to have **earned post-secondary degrees.**



U.S. Census Bureau, Public Use Microdata Sample; American Community Survey 5 Year Data Release (2009-2013).

THE WAGE GAP IS NOT JUST A FUNCTION OF BEING CLUSTERED IN LOW-WAGE WORK.

There are significant salary differences **within** occupations.

In jobs on the **high** end of the pay scale:

	% Women in Occupation	Salaries		Wage Gap
		Women	Men	
Chief Executives	28%	\$62,000	\$90,000	31%
Management Analysts	21%	\$49,000	\$80,000	39%
Lawyers, Judges, other Judicial Workers	38%	\$53,000	\$108,000	51%

U.S. Census Bureau, Public Use Microdata Sample; American Community Survey 5 Year Data Release (2009-2013).

And in jobs in which women are **an equal share or majority** of workers:

	% Women in Occupation	Salaries		Wage Gap
		Women	Men	
Office & Administrative Support	75%	\$32,250	\$41,831	16%
Nurses, Technologists, Technicians	83%	\$50,000	\$60,000	17%
Education, Training & Library Occupations	69%	\$44,588	\$53,465	22%
Nonprofit Executives	70%	\$66,700	\$88,700	25%
Education Administrators	62%	\$60,000	\$81,000	26%
Personal Care & Service	74%	\$22,334	\$32,451	31%

U.S. Census Bureau, Public Use Microdata Sample; American Community Survey 5 Year Data Release (2009-2013).

Nonprofit information from 2014 Report on Nonprofit Wages and Benefits in Northern New England | Vermont Edition by Common Good Vermont is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution – NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

Interestingly, the wage gap appears to be **narrowest** in several occupations in which women are a distinct minority:

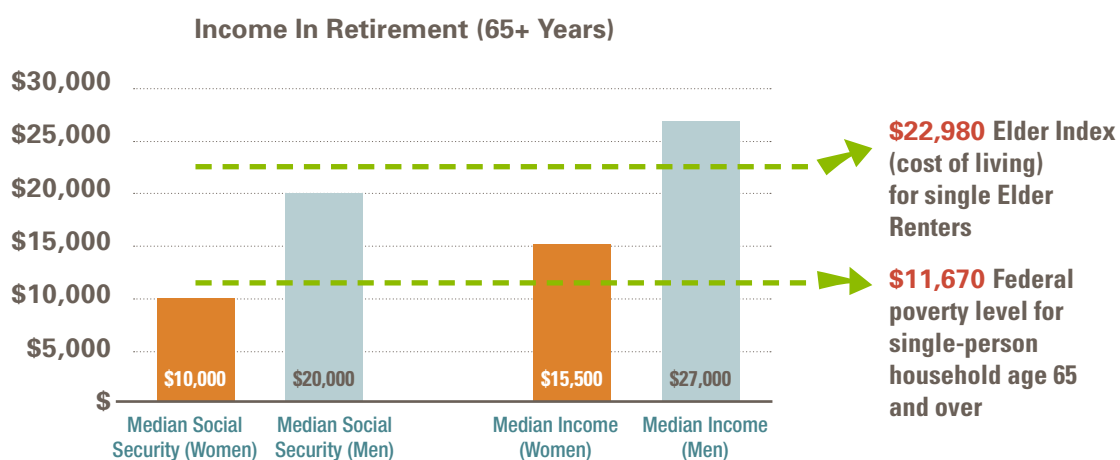
	% Women in Occupation	Salaries		Wage Gap
		Women	Men	
Construction & Extraction	3%	\$40,917	\$40,571	0%
Computers & Mathematics	26%	\$69,453	\$72,638	4%
Life, Physical & Soc. Sciences	39%	\$53,269	\$56,227	5%
Engineering	11%	\$70,000	\$75,000	5%
Protective Services	18%	\$51,250	\$55,140	7%

U.S. Census Bureau, Public Use Microdata Sample; American Community Survey 5 Year Data Release (2009-2013).

WHY THIS MATTERS

What women earn has critical implications for Vermont families – and for the Vermont economy.

- ✓ **Women’s wages aren’t supplementary – they are essential:** Women contribute at least **40%** of income in **1/3** of Vermont families.¹⁰
- ✓ **Women’s lower wages put women at risk as they age:** As the chart below shows, women’s median Social Security draw is half that of Vermont men. More importantly, women’s median total income **falls well below the \$23,000 needed to cover basic expenses** (see endnote for explanation).¹¹



U.S. Census Current Population Survey 5 Year Average (2009-2013); restricted to persons 65 years and older.

Given that Vermont’s share of elders is projected to expand to 25% of the state’s population by 2030,¹² and because women are more likely to live longer—and thus are more likely to live alone in old age,¹³ **women’s relative economic insecurity threatens to put added pressure, not just on elders and their families, but on state subsidies and benefits.**

QUESTIONS WE SHOULD ASK...

...When considering significant investments in economic development (whether in a region, industry, or corporation):

Who benefits from the jobs created?

Is there a way to ensure those economic opportunities will be available equally to both men and women?

...When weighing significant investments in workforce development:

What is the gender ratio of those receiving skills training funded by state and federal dollars?

Is this an occupation where men or women constitute a significant majority of workers?

Will this investment meet future labor demands for Vermont in terms of recruiting and training both men and women in these occupations?

...When projecting long-term state financial commitments:

What is the long-term economic impact of women's lower wages on state-funded benefits and subsidies? On Vermont families?

... When crafting or reviewing state policy decisions, priorities, and program evaluations:

Are our decisions consistently informed by data that is disaggregated by gender? If not, why not?

Is the data we need being collected? If not, why not?

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Vermont Department of Health: (2010 is Census Count as of April 1; 2009 are intercensal estimates as of July 1, based on the 2000 and 2010 Census counts (revised Oct 2012); and, 2011-2013 data are post-censal estimates as of July 1.
- ² U.S. Census Current Population Survey - 5 Year Average (2011-2015) -- All Persons.
- ³ BLS, *Women in the Labor Force: A Data Book*, Report 1049, May 2014.
- ⁴ U.S. Census Current Population Survey (CPS) 5 Year Average (2011-2015) – Adult Civilian Persons.
- ⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics: Table 22: Persons at work in nonagricultural industries by age, sex, race Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, marital status and usual full- or part-time status (2014). Note: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data related to the reasons why women work part-time is national data, and unavailable by state.
- ⁶ *The Status of Women in the States: 2015*. Cynthia Hess, Ph.D., Jessica Milli, Ph.D., Jeff Hayes, Ph.D., and Ariane Hegewisch, M. Phil. with Yana Mayayeva, Stephanie Román, Julie Anderson, M.A., and Justine Augeri IWPR, p.92.
- ⁷ As defined by the 2015 Basic Needs Budget figures developed by the VT Joint Fiscal Office and controlled for family size. Based on averaging rural and urban estimates.
- ⁸ We have defined a low-wage threshold of less than \$10.10 an hour – the average of the mandated VT state minimum wage rates for 2016-18 (rounded up from \$10.03).
- ⁹ Calculations based on estimated expenses as outlined in JFO 2015 Basic Needs Budget tables.
- ¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, Public Use Microdata Sample; American Community Survey 5 Year Data Release (2009-2013).
- ¹¹ The Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index (Elder Index) defines economic security as the income level at which either one or two fully retired seniors age 65 or older are able to cover basic and necessary living expenses without relying on public assistance programs, loans or gifts. The Index was developed by the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts. Indexed income line in the chart reflects costs of living specific to single elderly Vermonters who rent.
- ¹² U.S. Census Bureau Projections (2009).
- ¹³ *An Aging Nation: The Older Population in the United States, Population Estimates and Projections*, Orton, Velkoff, and Hogan, U.S. Census Bureau, May 2014. <https://www.census.gov/prod/2014pubs/p25-1140.pdf>.

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This report was informed by the perspectives and expertise of many.
Change The Story VT would especially like to recognize the contributions of:

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