

WOMEN'S  
ECONOMIC  
OPPORTUNITY

PIERCE  
COUNTY  
WA

# 2017 STATUS REPORT

US, WASHINGTON STATE  
& PIERCE COUNTY



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Since 1999, the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation's Fund for Women and Girls has been investing in self-esteem, self-reliance, and empowerment programs for women and girls in Pierce County. More than \$610,500 has been invested through 176 grants to 64 organizations over the past twelve years. These partnerships have reached more than 5,000 individuals.

The positive impact of the Fund for Women and Girls led the Foundation to a more in-depth look at how a focus on women's opportunities could strengthen all of Pierce County. The issue of economic disparity stands out as a critical factor:

In 2014, women held 52% of the jobs in Pierce County.<sup>(1)</sup> In 2016, though, income for women in Pierce County was 22% less than men.<sup>(2)</sup> These two statistics reveal both challenges and opportunities for Pierce County's continued economic growth.

Pierce County's present income disparity is not unique, nor is it new. Women have received lower pay than men for generations. In 1960, the average pay for women working full-time in the United States was 39% less than what men earned.<sup>(3)</sup> As of 2015, the average pay for women working full-time in the United States was 20% less than what men were paid.<sup>(4)</sup>

At the current rate of progress, women might expect to reach pay equity by 2059.<sup>(5)</sup> That means all of the young girls currently attending kindergarten in Pierce County schools might not see gender equity in their careers until they are 47 years old.

This income disparity affects more than just women. Forty percent of working mothers with children under the age of 18 are their families' primary breadwinners. When women make lower wages, men and children feel that pay gap as well.<sup>(6)</sup>



**The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation's research identified three key indicators of women's economic opportunity:**

- 1 Income for Full-Time, Year-Round Work
- 2 Income Based on Education Level
- 3 Women in Leadership Positions

In 2017, the Foundation will build on the legacy of the Fund for Women and Girls by expanding its commitment to women in Pierce County. This status report is the first publication. Next, a landscape scan will explore resources available for improving women's economic opportunity. Then, a survey will ask for the public's perspective of the issue.

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# Income for Full-Time, Year-Round Work

Income is an indicator of a community's economic strength.

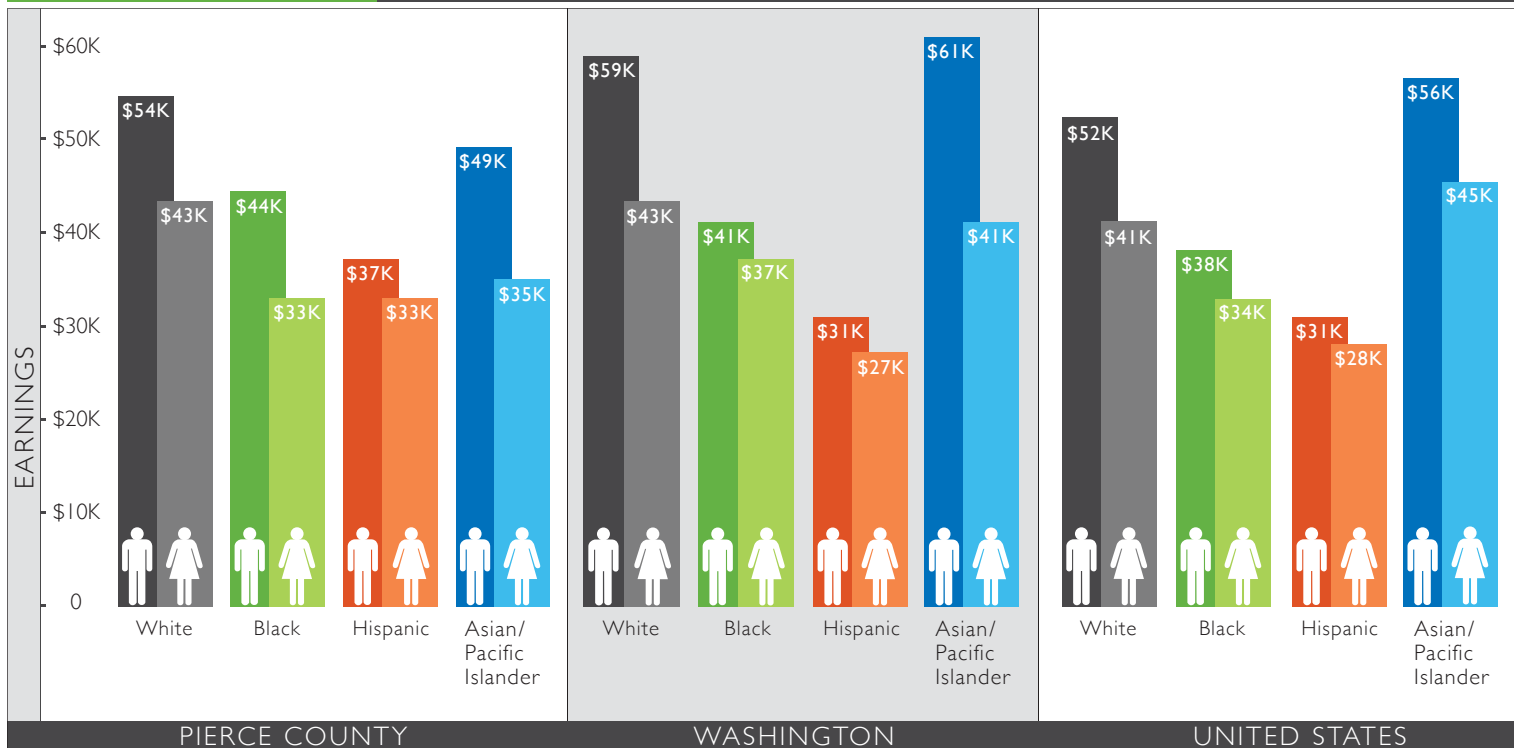
Pierce County's median annual income for women is \$42,000. That's more than the nationwide median income for women, which is \$38,000. However, Pierce County women's median annual income is considerably lower than the median income for men in Washington, which is \$53,000.<sup>(7)</sup>



Women in Pierce County make 78 cents  
for every dollar earned by a man.<sup>(8)</sup>

Among Washington's women who hold full-time, year-round jobs, Latina women are paid 46 cents, African American women are paid 61 cents, and Asian American women are paid 71 cents for every dollar paid to a white, non-Hispanic man.<sup>(9)</sup>

## Median Annual Earnings for Women & Men 2011 - 2013\*



\*NOTE: Salaries rounded to the nearest thousand

■ White ■ Black ■ Hispanic ■ Asian/Pacific Islander

# Income Based on Education Level

Women receive higher wages when they have higher levels of education.

In Pierce County 27% of women have at least a bachelor's degree. That statistic falls below the statewide average of 32%, and it also falls below the United States average of 30%.<sup>(10)</sup>

Once education levels are factored in, however, women are still paid less than men with equivalent levels of education. In Pierce County, women make less than men who have achieved one level of education lower.

Based on the numbers below, women in Pierce County would have to work 16 – 17 additional weeks in a calendar year to make the same amount of money as their equally educated male-counterparts.



## Distribution Of Women & Men And Annual Earnings By Educational Attainment 2011-2013

	Women	Men
<b>PIERCE COUNTY EARNINGS</b>		
Less than high school diploma	\$30,000	\$40,000
High school diploma or equivalent	\$34,400	\$45,659
Some college or associates degree	\$41,000	\$53,854
Bachelor's degree or higher	\$55,806	\$73,055
<b>WASHINGTON EARNINGS</b>		
Less than high school diploma	\$23,000	\$30,947
High school diploma or equivalent	\$32,800	\$43,000
Some college or associates degree	\$39,571	\$51,782
Bachelor's degree or higher	\$60,000	\$82,127
<b>UNITED STATES EARNINGS</b>		
Less than high school diploma	\$21,000	\$28,410
High school diploma or equivalent	\$30,000	\$39,800
Some college or associates degree	\$36,000	\$48,000
Bachelor's degree or higher	\$55,000	\$76,638

## Women in Leadership Positions

Positions of leadership offer greater economic opportunity and the ability to engage with the decisions, direction, and policies of the community. When women are not equally represented in leadership positions, that limits their income as well as their input into future planning.

The mayor of Tacoma is a woman, but there is only one woman on Tacoma's City Council. In Pierce County, 29% of state senators are women and 50% of state representatives are women.<sup>{11}</sup> Among Washington State legislature members, 34% are women, which is far above the national average of 24.4%.<sup>{12}</sup>

All three United States congress members who represent Pierce County residents are men. However, both of Washington's United States Senators are women.<sup>{13}</sup>



In the academic field,  
43% of Pierce County college presidents are women.  
Nationally, only 26.4% of college presidents are women.<sup>{14}</sup>

According to a Business Examiner's 2017 publication, roughly half of the top 10 major Pierce County employers are public and half are private sector jobs. The average composition of the leadership teams for the top five public companies in Pierce County is 34% female, while the average for private institutions is just under 41% female.

Nationally, women held 4.6% CEO positions at S&P 500 companies in 2016.<sup>{15}</sup> As recently as Spring 2014, nearly 47% of the highest-earning public companies in Silicon Valley had no female executives.<sup>{16}</sup>

It has been estimated that, at the current rate of change, it will take until 2085 for women to reach parity with men in leadership positions in the United States.<sup>{17}</sup>

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We hope you  
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