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Women still earn less than men do

Gap smaller than in 1960s

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON— The median income for a woman working full time, year-round was about \$28,000, compared with \$38,000 for a man, according to a new census report.

That means a woman earned less than 74 cents for every dollar earned by a man.

That's an improvement from the early 1960s, when women earned about 59 cents for every dollar men earned.

The report was based on 2000 census results that tracked 1999 income data for 505 job categories. However, the rankings of median earnings for women and men were based on a subset of about 400 fields that employed at least 10,000 full-time, year-round workers, including at least 1,000 men and 1,000 women.

Data from a separate census survey that didn't look at detailed occupations showed women earning 77 cents for every dollar earned by men in 2002.

Heidi Hartmann, president of the Institute for Women's Policy Research, said the disparity is in part due to women who interrupt their careers to have children at a time while men continue to climb the salary ladder. When these mothers return to work, they often can't make up the loss in earnings, she said.

Discrimination also may be a factor, specifically against mothers, said Myra Strober, a Stanford University economics professor.

"If you are a primary caretaker of children, it's very difficult to live up to the kind of work requirements that exist for professional work," she said.

Women have narrowed the disparity in time, in part because more have college degrees or better, Hartmann said.

Plus, in recent years, more professional mothers who don't want to go into the office regularly are telecommuting. In the past, such women often left the work force.

Hartmann said stronger enforcement of equal-opportunity laws and increasing access to education and training in high-paying fields in which women are underrepresented are keys to income equity. ■

JOB OPTIONS LIMITED. The Census Bureau found five,00 categories where women typically earn at least as much as men, **1A**

On the Web

Census Bureau report:
www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/censr-15.pdf