

WORKPLACE JUSTICE

WOMEN IN LOW-WAGE JOBS MAY NOT BE WHO YOU EXPECT

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Women make up nearly six in ten (58 percent) workers in low-wage jobs that typically pay less than \$11 per hour.¹ Women are even more overrepresented in the lowest-wage jobs: close to seven in ten (69 percent) of those holding jobs that typically pay less than \$10 per hour are women. And a disproportionate number of women in low-wage jobs are women of color.

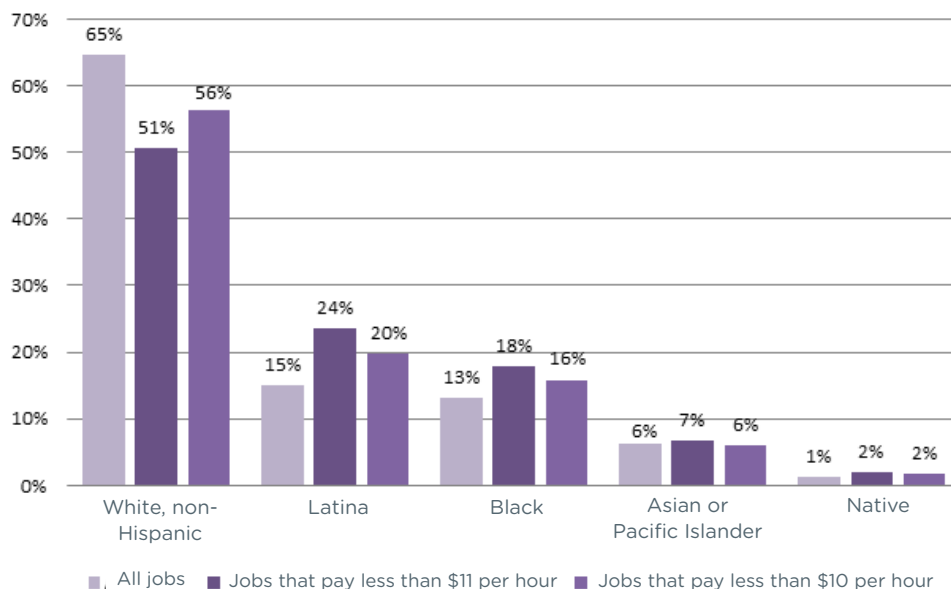
Women in low-wage jobs work hard serving food, cleaning homes and offices, caring for children and elderly adults, and more—and while many assume that those working for such low wages are primarily people who haven't completed high school, or teens holding their first jobs, or women who are working part-time to supplement a primary breadwinner's earnings, that is not the case. The vast majority of women

in low-wage jobs are not teenagers, nor do they lack high school diplomas. Most don't have a spouse's income to rely on, and many are supporting children. Many are working full time and/or year round.

Many women in the low-wage workforce are women of color.

- Black women and Latinas are overrepresented in the low-wage workforce, while white, non-Hispanic women are underrepresented compared to their share of the overall workforce.²
 - Latinas make up 15 percent of women in the overall workforce but 24 percent of women in the low-wage workforce and 20 percent of women in the lowest-wage jobs.
 - Black women make up 13 percent of women in the overall workforce but 18 percent of women in the low-wage workforce and 16 percent of women in the lowest-wage jobs.

Women in the Low-Wage Workforce by Race/Ethnicity



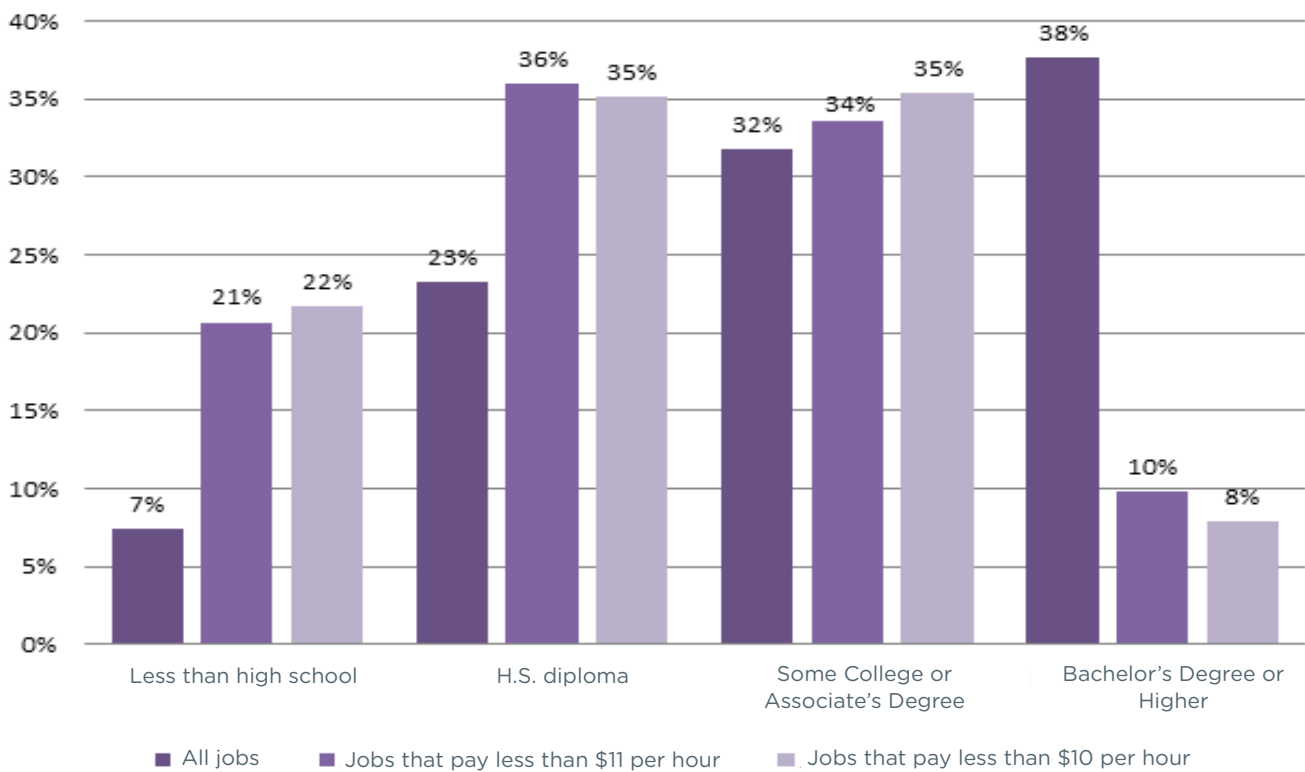
Source: NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 Current Population Survey (CPS) using IPUMS.



Most women in the low-wage workforce have a high school diploma or higher.

- While women with lower levels of education are overrepresented in the low-wage workforce, most women in jobs that pay less than \$11 or even \$10 per hour have a high school diploma or more.
 - Among women in low-wage jobs that pay less than \$11 per hour, nearly four in five (79 percent) have a high school diploma or a higher education level.
 - The same is true for women in the lowest-wage jobs that pay less than \$10 per hour, with 78 percent having a high school diploma or higher. Indeed, more than two in five (43 percent) of women in these lowest-wage jobs have at least some college education.

Women in the Low-Wage Workforce by Education Level



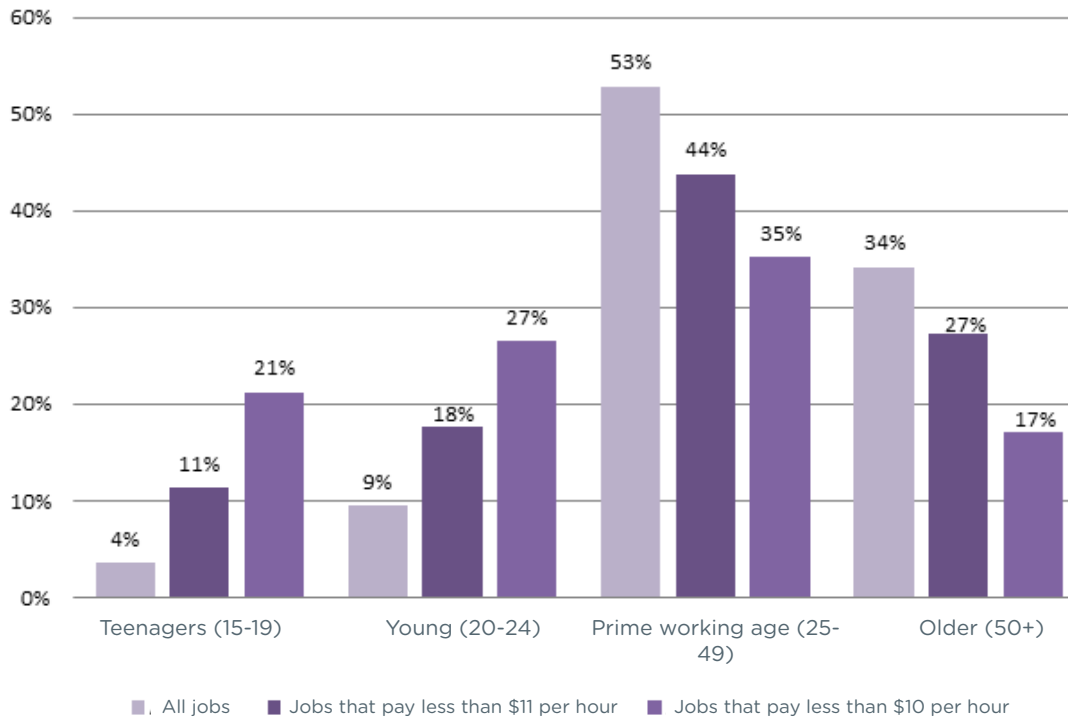
Source: NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 Current Population Survey (CPS) using IPUMS.

The vast majority of women in the low-wage workforce are beyond their teenage years.

- Nearly nine in ten women (89 percent) in jobs that typically pay less than \$11 per hour are age 20 or older. More than four in ten women in these jobs (44 percent) are ages 25 to 49, their prime working years.
- Among women in the lowest-wage jobs that typically pay less than \$10 per hour, nearly four in five (79 percent) are age 20 or older, with more than one in three (35 percent) in their prime working years.



Women in the Low-Wage Workforce by Age

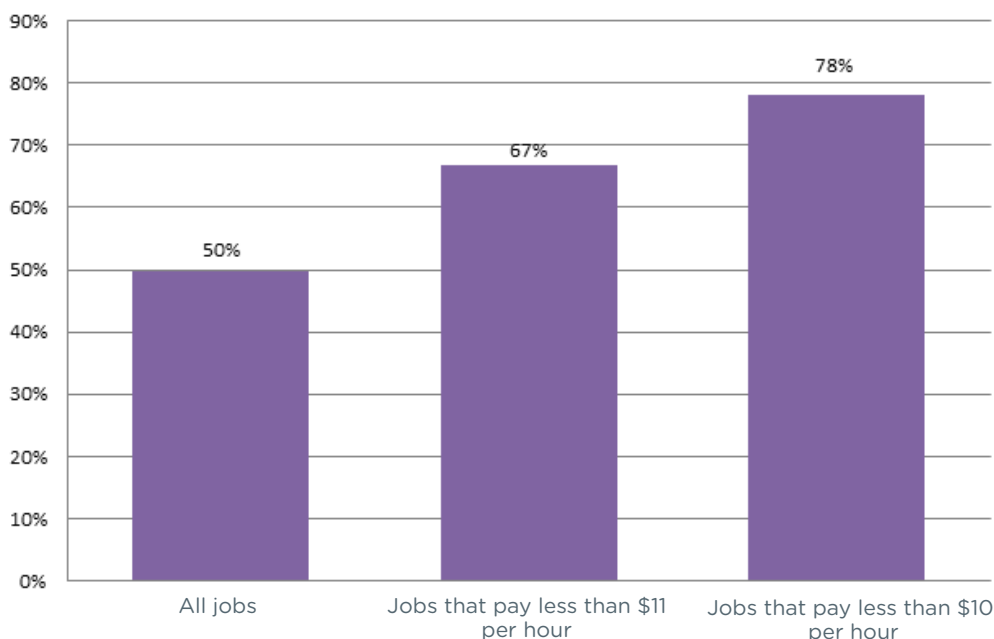


Source: NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 Current Population Survey (CPS) using IPUMS.

Most women in the low-wage workforce do not have a spouse's income to rely on.

- Half of women (50 percent) in the overall workforce are unmarried, but unmarried women are overrepresented in low-wage jobs.³
- About two-thirds of women (67 percent) in jobs that typically pay less than \$11 per hour are single.
- Among women in jobs that typically pay less than \$10 per hour, nearly four in five women (78 percent) are unmarried.

Percent of Women in the Low-Wage Workforce Who Are Unmarried



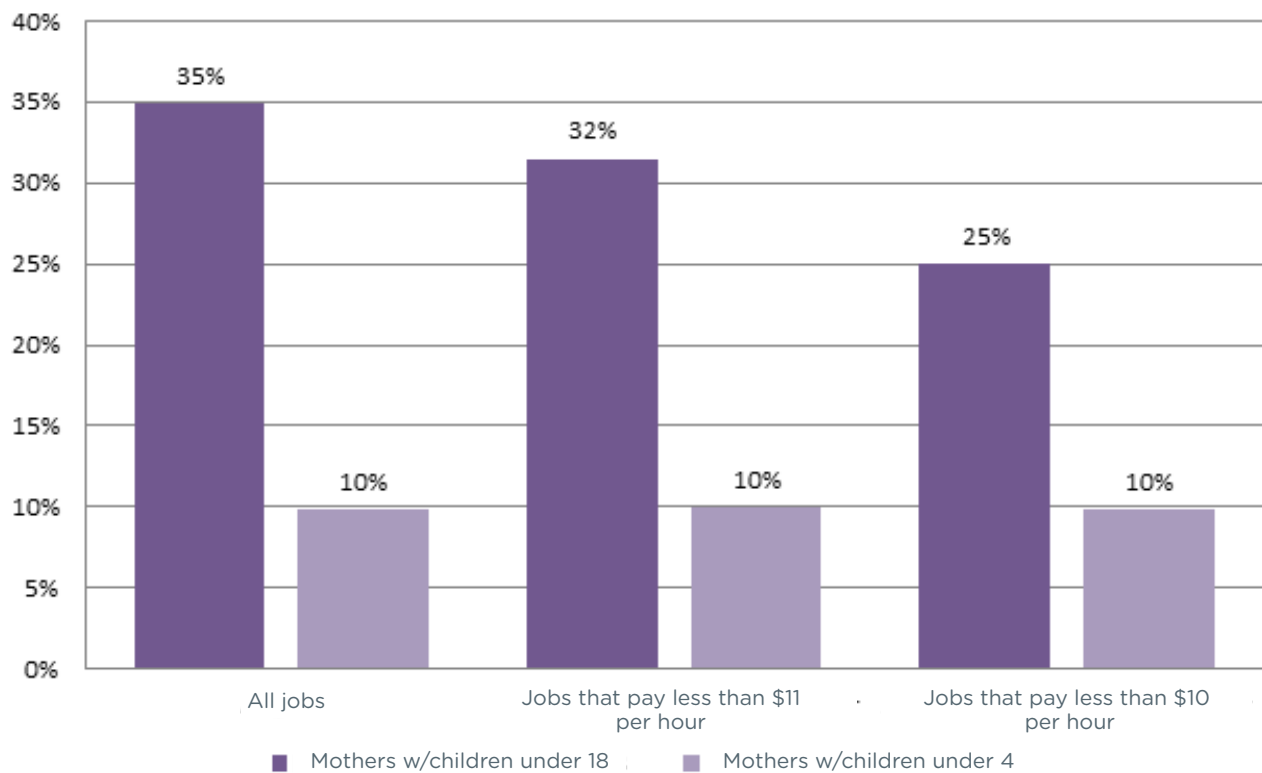
Source: NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 Current Population Survey (CPS) using IPUMS.



Many women in the low-wage workforce are supporting children.

- More than one in three women (35 percent) in the overall workforce have at least one child under 18 at home. A similar share of women (32 percent) in jobs that typically pay less than \$11 per hour have one or more children under 18 in the home, and among women in jobs that typically pay less than \$10 per hour, one in four (25 percent) are supporting children under 18.
- Among women in the overall workforce, one in ten (10 percent) has at least one child under 4 years old at home. Similarly, one in ten women working in jobs that typically pay less than \$11 per hour or less than \$10 per hour is supporting very young children.

Percent of Women in the Low-Wage Workforce Who Are Mothers, by Age of Children



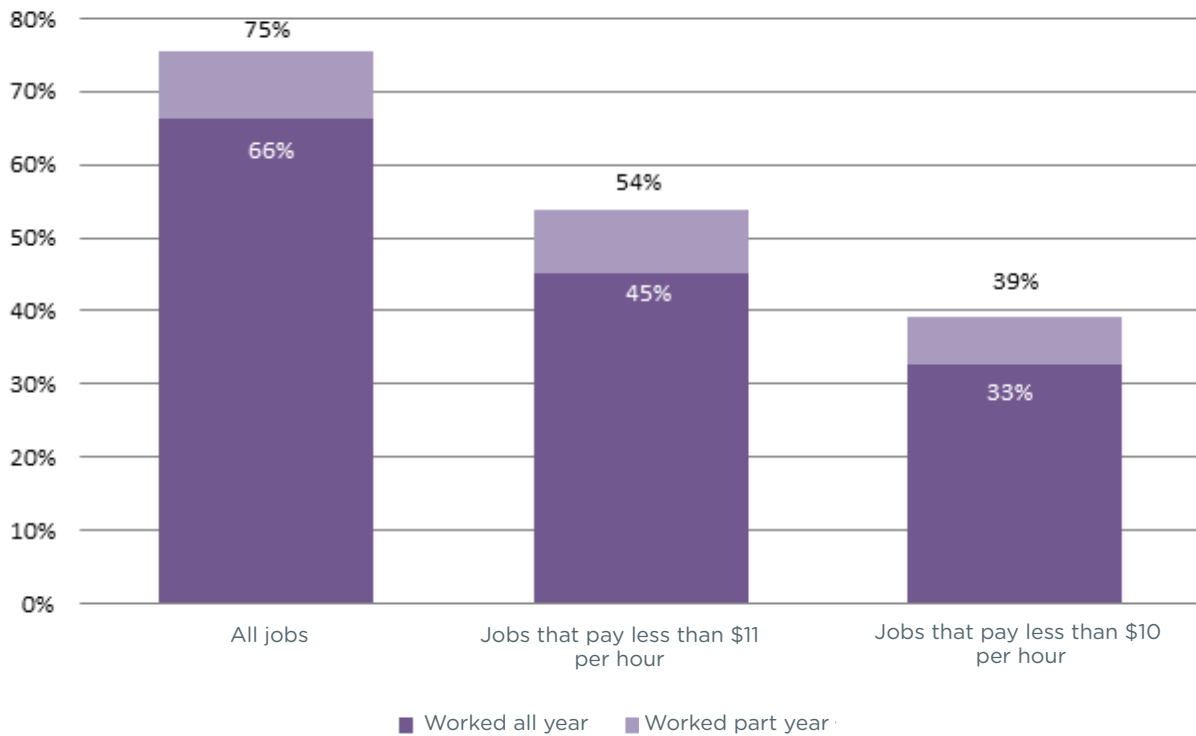
Source: NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 Current Population Survey (CPS) using IPUMS.

Many women in the low-wage workforce work full time.

- Three in four women (75 percent) in the overall workforce work full time while two-thirds (66 percent) work full time and year round.⁴
- More than half of women (54 percent) in jobs that typically pay less than \$11 per hour work full time while 45 percent work full time and year round. Of the women working part time in these jobs, about one in five are doing so involuntarily and would prefer to find full time work.⁵
- Among women in jobs that typically pay less than \$10 per hour, nearly four in ten (39 percent) work full time while one-third (33 percent) work full time and year round. About one in five women working part time in these jobs would prefer to work full time.



Percent of Women in the Low-Wage Workforce Working Full Time



Source: NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 Current Population Survey (CPS) using IPUMS.

- 1 “Low-wage jobs” and the “low-wage workforce” could be defined in many different ways. This analysis defines low-wage jobs as those that paid a median hourly wage of less than \$11 in 2016, and also provides data on the lowest-wage jobs, i.e., those that paid a median hourly wage of less than \$10 in 2016. Median hourly wages for occupations were determined using U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2016 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, available at https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm. All data are National Women’s Law Center calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 Current Population Survey (CPS) using Sarah Flood et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), Current Population Survey: Version 4.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015. Figures are for employed workers.
- 2 White, non-Hispanic workers self-identified in the CPS as white but not of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin. Latina workers may be of any race and are those who self-identified as being of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin. Black workers are those who self-identified as Black or African American. Asian or Pacific Islander workers are those who self-identified as being Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander.
- 3 Married workers are those whose spouses are present. Single workers are those who are separated, divorced, widowed, never married, or those who are married and whose spouse are absent.
- 4 Workers are considered full time if they worked 35 or more hours per week in the last year; they are considered year round if they worked 50 or more weeks in the last year.
- 5 Women working part time involuntarily are those who reported in the CPS that they worked part time for economic reasons, such as slack work, poor business conditions, or only being able to find part time work.

