Economic Empowerment for NHPI Women
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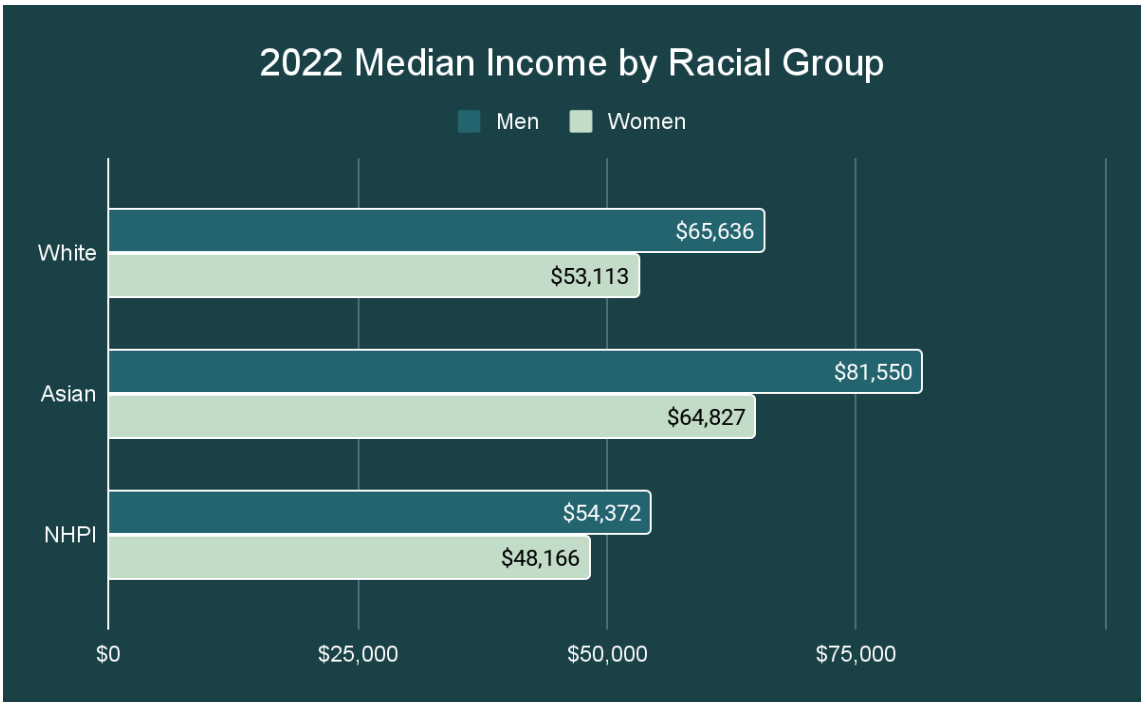
This summer, August 28, 2024, will mark Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Equal Pay Day. Equal Pay Day is a day set to represent how far into the calendar year women need to work to earn the same income as the average male the year prior. Based on the 2022 American Community Survey, women, on average, make 82% of what men make when working in the same industries. When considering gender as the only factor of income inequality, Equal Pay Day was March 12, 2024. However, Equal Pay Day for NHPI women comes 169 days later and only 125 from the end of the next calendar year, when the cycle of income tracking begins again.

NHPI women are often analyzed under the broader AANHPI umbrella, but this can cause important differences in data to be ignored. For example, April 3 is AANHPI Women's Equal Pay Day. The average AANHPI woman earns 80 cents to the white non-Hispanic male dollar and an average of 93 to the dollar for those working full-time. However, when looking at NHPI women alone, on average NHPI female earners make 60 cents to the white non-Hispanic male dollar and 66 cents to the dollar for full-time earners.



Data: 2022 American Community Survey

These discrepancies highlight the importance of using disaggregated data and intersectional analysis to understand the needs of specific minority groups. Both methods are essential when examining economic gender equality for the NHPI community. Following the height of the COVID-19 pandemic gendered division in employment increased, and women became increasingly vulnerable to gender and sexual-based violence. Economic empowerment is essential to closing the gender gap and increasing overall rights for women. Economic

empowerment has multiple benefits including pathways to employment, social protections, access to markets, and increased agency and decision-making at home and in broader institutions. Financial mobility is connected to broader issues of equality including education, health, and housing and is a concern both for NHPI women living in the United States and those abroad in the Pacific.

Again referencing the 2022 American Community Survey, the median annual income for NHPI women working full-time is $48,166 compared to $54,372 for NHPI men, $53,113 for white women, and $65,636 for white men. To combat income discrepancies among minority women, including NHPIs, local and national government officials should focus on the following key issue areas.

These issue areas are not siloed, but rather intersectional in nature:

- Educational attainment for BIPOC women
- Economic justice for BIPOC women
- Rights for immigrants and foreign-born community members
- Protections from gender and sexual-based violence
- Reproductive rights for women
- Gender as a pillar of national security