

# BLACK WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE

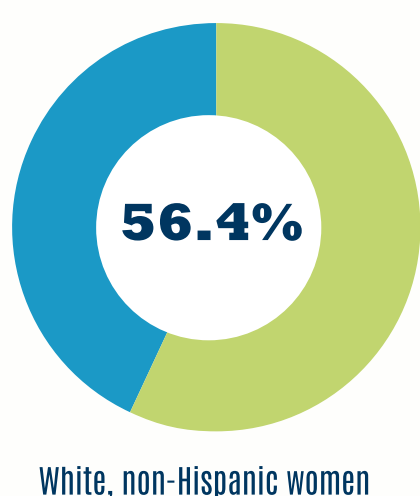
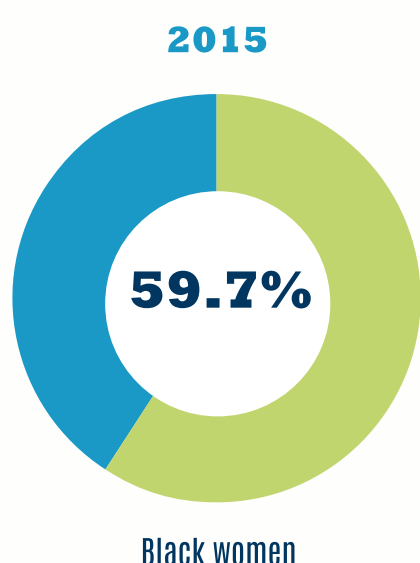
There were about 10.2 million Black women in the civilian labor force in 2015, representing 1 in 7 women in the labor force. Of those, 9.3 million were employed.

On average, Black women tend to have less favorable outcomes than their White, non-Hispanic counterparts. Black women still face a stark wage gap and are less likely to work in higher-paid occupations. Raising the minimum wage, closing the wage gap, ensuring adequate working conditions and expanding opportunities for higher wage occupations would greatly impact the lives of Black women and their families.

The data below highlight the outcomes of Black women, and compare them to their White, non-Hispanic counterparts as a reference group.

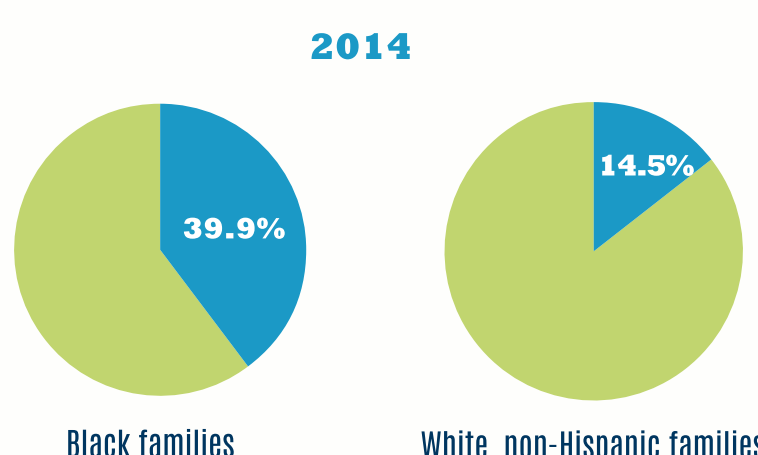
## LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

Historically, Black women have had high labor force participation rates compared to other women. In 2015, they were still more likely to be employed or actively looking for work.



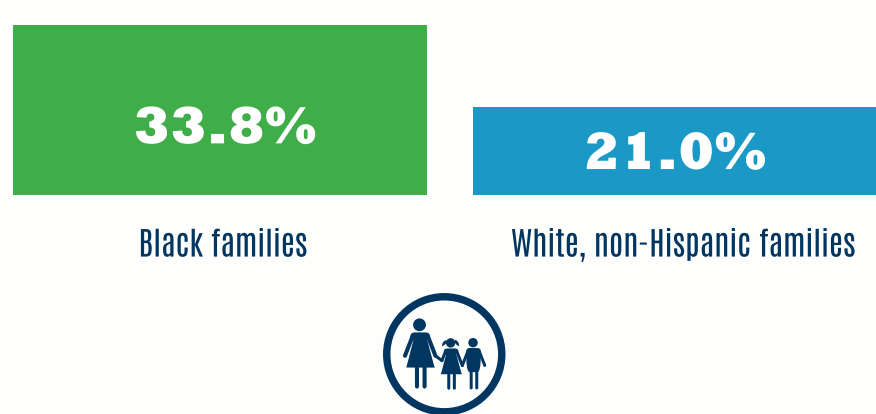
## FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN HEADED BY SINGLE WORKING MOTHERS\*

In 2014, 4 in 10 Black families with children under 18 were headed by a single working mother.



### POVERTY RATE

One third of Black families with children headed by a single working mother were in poverty.



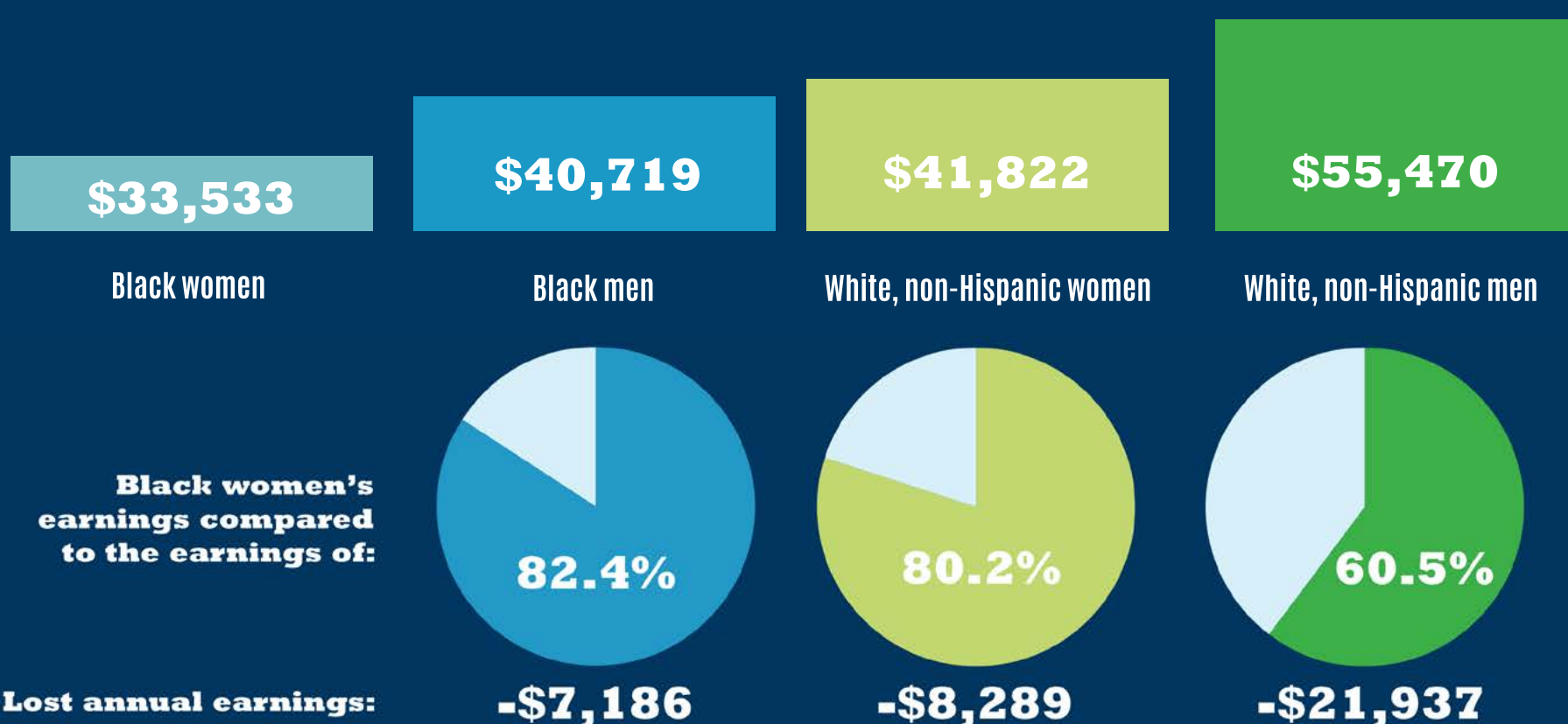
**Note:** \*Refers to families with children under 18 with a working female householder, no spouse present. Single includes people whose marital status is other than married, spouse present. Householder refers to the person (or one of the people) in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented or, if there is no such person, any adult member, excluding roomers, boarders, or paid employees.

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2015 Annual Social and Economic Supplements

## EARNINGS & THE WAGE GAP\*

Black women and men earn well below White non-Hispanics, and Black women earn even less than their male counterparts.

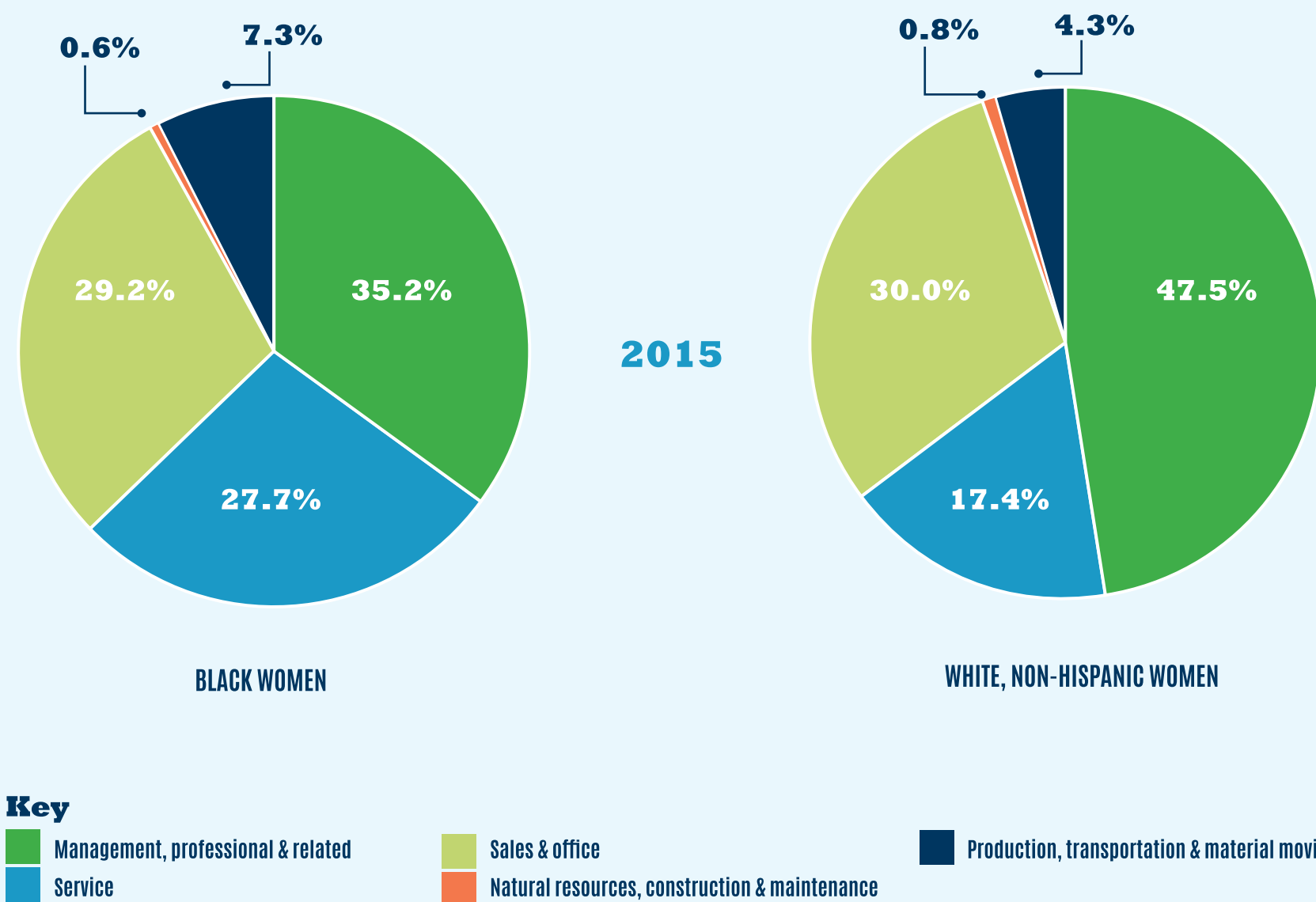
### 2014 MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS



**Note:** \* Based on 2014 median annual earnings of workers 15 years and older who worked full-time and year round, including the self-employed.  
**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 2015, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

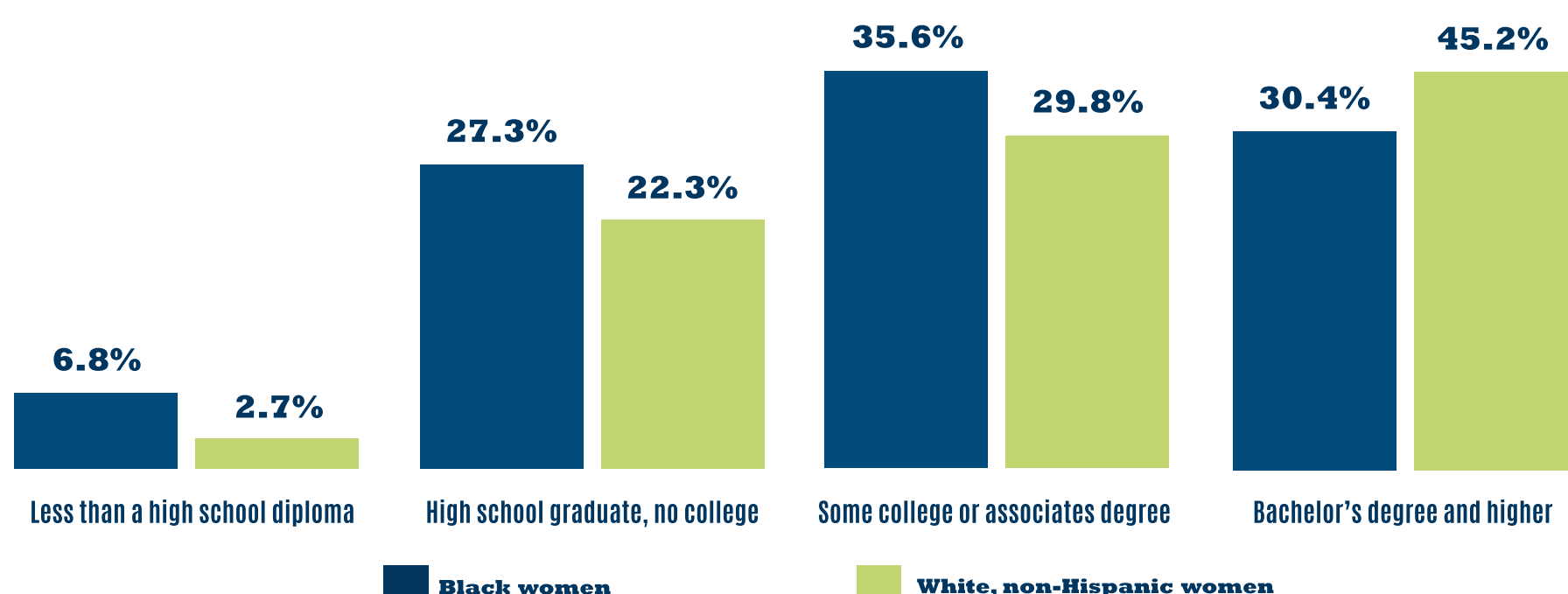
## OCCUPATIONS

Management, professional and related occupations have employed the largest share of Black women since 2009, when the share employed in this category first exceeded that of sales and office occupations. The share of Black women employed in management, professional and related occupations has continued to gradually increase overtime, but is still below the share of White, non-Hispanic women employed in these occupations.



## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE

2015



**Over 9 in 10 Black women in the labor force had at least a high school diploma, and 3 in 10 were college graduates.**

**Black women with a college degree earned over 2 times more\* and their unemployment rate was 4 times lower\*\* compared to Black women with no high school diploma.**

**Notes:** Based on people in the labor force 25 years of age and over.  
\*Based on 2015 median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary Black women workers (\$406 no high school diploma, and \$961 for college graduates).

\*\* The 2015 unemployment rates were 16.8% for Black women with no high school diploma, and 4.0% for college graduates.

[dol.gov/wb](http://dol.gov/wb)

**Note:** Data is based on people 16 years of age and over, unless otherwise noted. In this publication, the term Black refers to Black or African American. Data do not include people of two or more races.  
**Source:** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, annual averages (unless otherwise noted)



WOMEN'S BUREAU  
United States Department of Labor

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