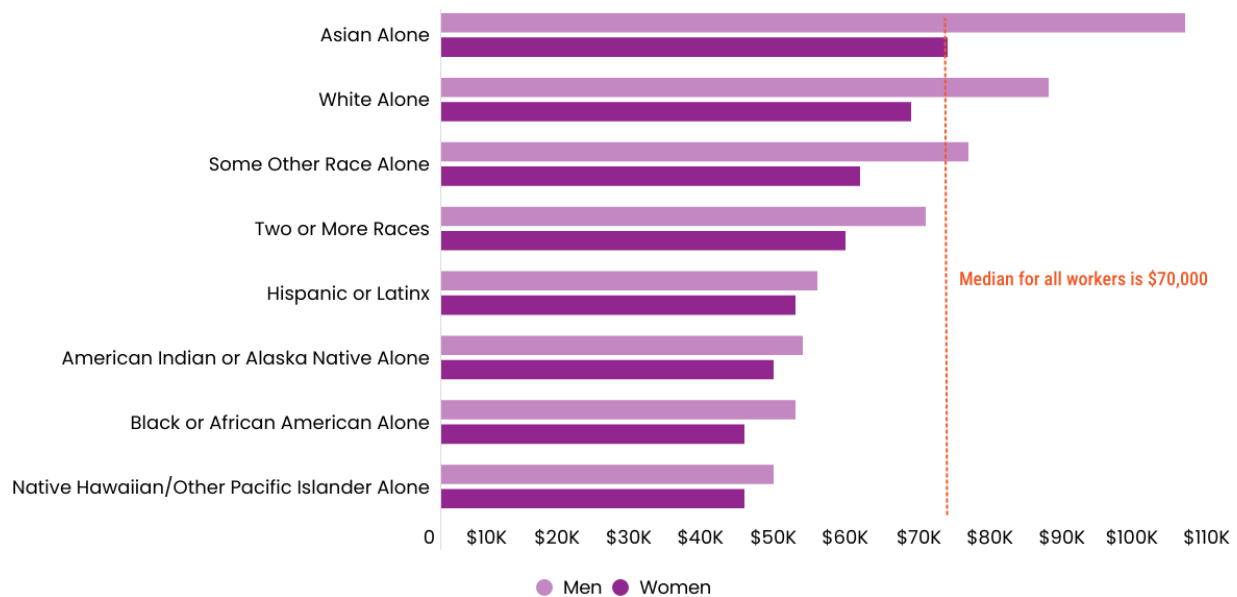# Bridging the Pay Gap for Women

PSRC looked at women's earnings in the labor force using Census data for King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties.

In this region, women represent 45% of the workforce. The median wage for all workers in 2022 was around $70,000.

Median Wages for Women Versus Men, by Race and Ethnicity

Median for all workers is $70,000

● Men   ● Women

Source: Public Use Microsample 2022 5-year data, fields SEX, RAC1P, WAGP, ESR, WKHP>30

Black, Hispanic, and Native American female workers earn less than Asian and white female workers. Asian and Pacific Islander workers experience a [wide range of median wages](#) across more detailed racial groups. Hmong, Mongolian and Marshallese female workers all have median earnings of around $40,000 annually, lower than all racial groups shown for major race groups. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Alone female workers earned the lowest median wages, a 40% lower median wage than the overall median.

Men tend to have higher-paying occupations

Unsurprisingly, a person's profession makes a big difference in their earnings.

Median Wages for the Most Common Occupations
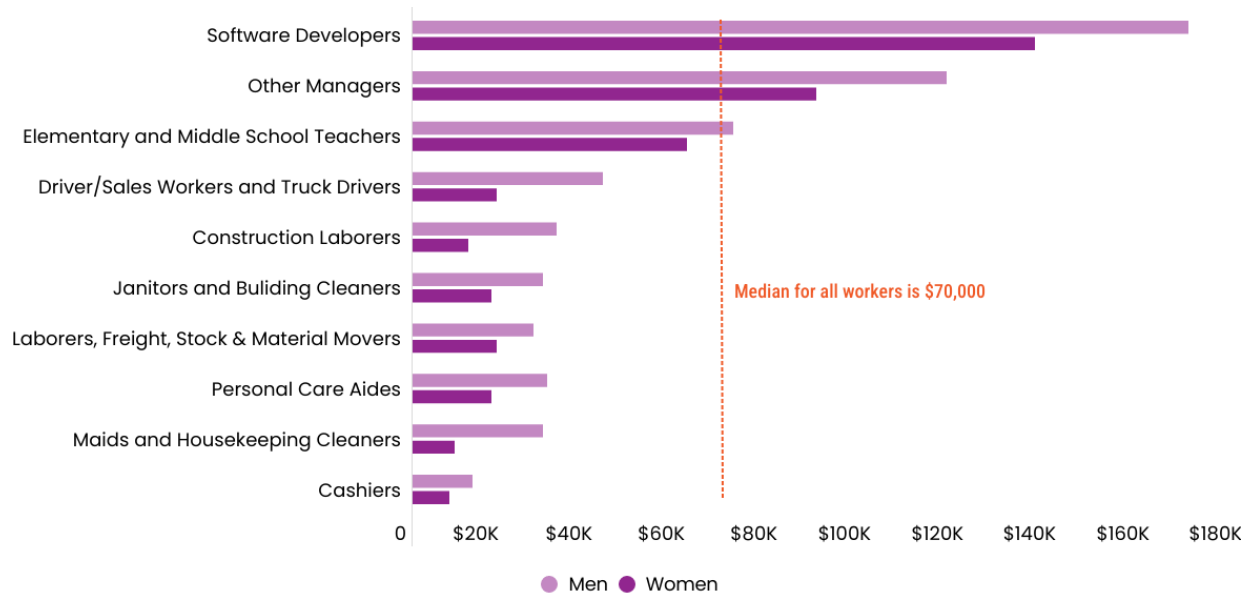
Source: PUMS 2022, 5-year data SEX, RAC1P, HISP, SOCP, WAGP

The table below shows the most common occupations by race and sex.

The Most Common Occupations, by Worker Race and Ethnicity

Race or Ethnicity	Women	Men
American Indian or Alaska Native Alone	Cashiers	Janitors and Building Cleaners
Asian Alone	Software Developers	Software Developers
Black or African American Alone	Personal Care Aides	Driver/Sales Workers and Truck Drivers
Hispanic or Latinx	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	Construction Laborers
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	Cashiers	Larborers and Freight, Stock Material Movers
Some Other Race Alone	Larborers and Freight, Stock Material Movers	Other Managers
Two or More Races	Cashiers	Software Developers
White Alone	Elementary and Middle School Teachers	Software Developers

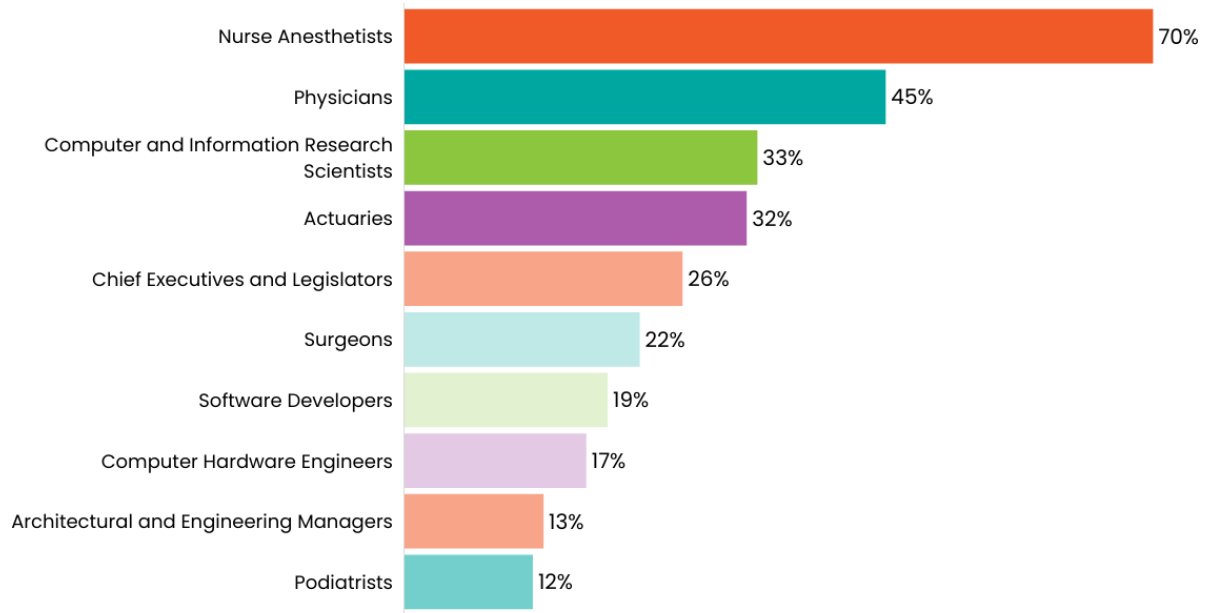*Source: PUMS 2022, 5-year data SEX, RAC1P, HISP, SOCP; arrows show median wages relative to $70K*

For Black females in the region, the most common occupation is personal care aide, with median wages of just $21,000. For Asian and white males in the region, the most common occupation is software developer, with a median wage of $160,000.

Occupational segregation arises when a group of workers is overrepresented or underrepresented in a specific job category. Occupational segregation is a major contributor to divergence in wages by race and sex in the central Puget Sound region.

The top-paying fields have fewer women, with two exceptions

The highest-paying occupations in the region include experts from the medical and computer industries.

Share of Women in the Highest-Paying Occupations

Occupation	Share
Nurse Anesthetists	70%
Physicians	45%
Computer and Information Research Scientists	33%
Actuaries	32%
Chief Executives and Legislators	26%
Surgeons	22%
Software Developers	19%
Computer Hardware Engineers	17%
Architectural and Engineering Managers	13%
Podiatrists	12%

Source: PUMS 2022, 5-year data SEX, RAC1P, HISP, SOCP, WAGP

Surgeons have the highest earnings in the region, at $290,000 per year, followed by Architectural and Engineering Managers ($203,000) and Nurse Anesthetists ($187,000).

Women are overrepresented in the high-paying occupation of nurse anesthetists. The share of female physicians matches the population share. Females are overrepresented in the broad medical job sector overall because of the number of nurses and care workers relative to higher-paid medical jobs. In 2022, 72% of medical-related jobs were held by females. The computer and mathematical industry sector has the reverse pattern, with about one out of four (23%) computer industry workers being female.

Women of color are doubly-impacted by their gender

The intersectionality of race and gender compounds the marginalization experienced by women of color and is largely responsible for their concentration in some of the lowest-paying jobs in the central Puget Sound region. For example, not only are women of color impacted by historical racist policies (such as redlining) that limit access to opportunities, but research has shown that teachers often steer women away from higher-paying career paths like science and technology.

PSRC is working to help improve the underrepresentation of women and people of color in equitably-paying jobs in a variety of ways, such as our hiring practices, our work in VISION 2050, the Regional Transportation Plan and the new Summer Planning Academy for high school students.

You can find a spreadsheet of this Trend's data online.