



# Racism in the Workforce

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In the workforce, black people face discrimination and are paid less. Discrimination can show up as treating employees or colleagues unfairly and paying people of color less — especially black people. For someone to feel like they're discriminated against at work is wrong. Discrimination manifests itself in many ways, such as too many black people getting fired, hardly any getting hired, or fewer opportunities (The Editors, 2020). Discrimination is not only faced by people of color but also, more particularly by women of color. It's been shown that women get paid less than men. Sadly, the discrimination has gotten to a point where there is a perspective that being "professional" is to have white features such as straight hair. To fight against this blatant discrimination, The Crown Act, or variations of it, has been passed in 16 of 50 states which means that the majority of the country lacks laws to protect employers from discriminating against how black people naturally appear (Yates, 2022). This is why we will be mainly focusing on how black people, especially black women. This article will focus on Black people and women because we are young black women.

## Hiring Discrimination:



When a job applicant is treated unfairly or unequally because of their gender or skin color throughout the employment process, it is known as discrimination. Black people have been especially impacted by discrimination. Black people are reported to have higher numbers of unemployment and work in jobs that don't provide benefits or stability compared to white people (Weller, 2019). Even though laws prohibit

discrimination, it is still an ongoing problem in the employment world. Discrimination causes a hostile and harmful work environment for everyone working in that space, especially the victims of discrimination. The laws enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) were made to prevent any type of discrimination in the workplace. The EEOC protects people against harassment, employers not allowing fair workplace change, employers asking inappropriate questions about your medical information, and retaliation (EEOC, n.d). In addition to that, there are unions to protect employees. A union is a group of workers who form a group together and use their collective voices and ideas as a form of power to have a say in their job. When workers are in unions, they have more power to negotiate with employers about things like salary, benefits, and other workplace issues (AFSCME, 2017). Due to hiring discrimination, people's mental health can be severely affected. Hiring discrimination can even deter a group of people from working in a specific work field due to discrimination.

## Racial Wealth Gap:

Due to slavery and segregation, black people in the US were once unable to obtain jobs in the workforce. Even today, black people continue to face unfair employment barriers. According to the American Association of University Women, “In 2013, the median white household had 13 times the wealth (“wealth” refers to total assets minus debts) of the median Black household” (AAUW, 2021). This is important because if black women are paid less, they won’t be able to support themselves or their families. Black people, especially black women, being paid less contributes to the racial wealth gap (AAUW, 2021).

There are many steps you can take to work toward eliminating the racial wealth gap or reducing it. Before doing this, it is crucial to know who you are and what you're fighting for. One way you can work towards eliminating the racial wealth gap is by protesting to raise awareness

and bring more resources to get rid of the issue. Those who protest want to support their community or want to support their own people. Another way to work towards ending the racial wealth gap is by joining discussions. By joining discussions, people in the community are more aware of issues in the workforce, like how Black women are paid less. You can also support organizations working on this issue, like the ACLU. The ACLU is a human rights organization that also deals with racial discrimination and is now working on making sure black people are hired equally (Children's Defense Fund, 2021). They work with legislators, communities, and people to fight against injustices that go against the rights of people (ACLU, n.d). You can also do your own research and find local organizations that you can join to help address the issue of racism in employment.

## Gender Preferences:



How do gender preferences affect work? Women, in general, get paid 79 cents for every dollar a man makes, but black women earn only 64 cents for each dollar a man makes (Wingfield, 2022). Gender roles play a huge factor in the workplace. Women are three times as likely compared to men to say gender makes it more difficult to prosper at their job (Parker, 2018). When companies make an effort to promote gender

diversity, black women often don’t benefit from it unless race and gender are clearly stated together. To some, it may seem like women are flourishing in the workforce, but women of color still experience disadvantages compared to their white counterparts (Wingfield, 2020). In professional high-status jobs, women of color are typically underrepresented (Wingfield, 2020). The unemployment rate for African Americans has been twice as much as the unemployment rate for white people (Desilver, 2013). Gender preferences affect work to the point that women are less likely to get opportunities to advance in their job compared to their male counterparts (Starmarski & Son Hing, 2015).

In conclusion, the issue of black people being discriminated against in workplaces is very real and deserves awareness. Sometimes employers use preference as an excuse to discriminate against black people but when preferences cause you to not hire people with darker skin tones, it becomes a problem. When people of color are hired, they are still paid less (Wingfield, 2020). They don't get all the benefits other workers do sometimes (Wingfield, 2020). Black people who are discriminated against by employers may end up leaving their job due to their oppressive environment. Bias in workplaces is also something that happens. It's proven that women are paid less, so imagine the difficulties black women face in the workforce due to their gender and race. It shouldn't be that way, but it's our reality. We can try to bring awareness and fight to change this perspective. This article showed us the different hardships black people face. We aren't equal yet, but we should be.

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