

## He earns, she earns

Report finds pay gap still exists between male, female workers

By Michael Schroeder, H-T Staff Writer

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Women working full-time in Bloomington and Monroe County and typically hold lower-level positions than their male counterparts, according to a recent report from the city's Commission on the Status of Women.

The median annual income for a man working full-time was about \$7,500 higher than women in Bloomington, and \$8,500 more in Monroe County, according to the report.

"Economics, Employment and the Workplace" was based on data extrapolated from 2000 U.S. Census figures. The report was produced by Jillian Kinzie, chairwoman of the Commission on the Status of Women.

"Over a lifetime of work, the average 25-year-old woman working full-time until age 65 will earn about \$500,000 less than the average working man," the report said.

Local disparity by gender reflects state trends — wherein a working woman earns 66 cents to every dollar a man earns, according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research — and national findings.

The report uses aggregate statistics, but does not address what role employer discrimination may play in the local gender gap through case-specific analysis.

Over the past 40 years, there has been a shift toward more equality in the workplace, said Suzanna Walters, chairwoman of the Indiana University Gender Studies department, regarding the study's core findings. Yet, for about a decade, Walters said, "we have sort of stalled nationally at the 75 cents to a dollar model."

"We have not got to that place of equity," she said.

The commission's eight-page report, which came out on the last day of Women's History Month, is the first in a series of five reports. It focuses on women's participation in the work force, earnings, unemployment rates, occupations and issues related to workplace quality.

The second report, examining civic participation, was released a few days ago. Three other reports, on women and education, social justice, and health and well-being, are coming. Commission members and city Community and Family Resources staff have spent about two years collecting and extrapolating statistics for the studies.

Aside from earnings and occupational status, the employment report discusses gender separation by occupation.

Just 14 percent of architecture and engineering occupations in Bloomington are held by women, for example, while men occupy only 30 percent of health-care practitioner jobs.

### Illustration:

[Women in the work force](#)

### More information

**To see the Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women reports online**, visit

[www.bloomington.in.gov/cfrd](http://www.bloomington.in.gov/cfrd) and click on "Report on the Status of Women in Bloomington and Monroe County."

**Reports on** "Economics, Employment and the Workplace" "Civic Participation and Leadership /Political Participation" are there.

**Forthcoming commission reports** on "Education," "Victimization, Rights and Justice," and "Health and Well-Being" are to be released in several weeks.

And where high-paying jobs are being snatched up most often by men, more women take low-paying and part-time positions, the report said. In addition, women make up only about one-quarter of Bloomington and Monroe County residents who are self-employed.

Not surprisingly, single mothers are disproportionately represented in local public assistance programs, according to the report. However, "women and men are at about equal proportions among the total population of individuals below poverty level," it continues.

Kinzie, who is an associate director for IU's Center for Postsecondary Research, and the commission recommend that employers conduct their own equity studies. Those that do — such as IU and the NCAA — benefit from more trust between employees and workers and a better overall working environment, she said.

Still, employers are just one piece of the puzzle, according to Kinzie, pointing to cultural pressures.

For instance, married women with children are often expected to juggle job and family responsibilities, while society does not place the same double-duty expectation on the husband, Kinzie and Walters said. Many of the jobs women choose in order to have family time — for example, elementary school teaching — are relatively low on the pay scale.

"As long as women are still expected to do double shift ... we won't have workplace equity," Walters said.

While the U.S. is better off in the category of family-oriented workplaces and family leave than it was 20 years ago, it lags behind its western counterparts, according to Bruce Jaffee, IU professor in the Business Economics and Public Policy department.

Money may not be the end-all and be-all in determining a job's worth — though it seems to be the measure society typically uses, he said. Beyond the glitz and glamour, there may be a pragmatic reason for that.

"You can't take job quality to the grocery and buy groceries," Jaffee said.

On the issue of job separation by gender, Jaffee — who has watched a "disappointing" drop in the number of women signing up for MBA programs over the last five years — stressed accessibility and freedom of choice.

"If a woman doesn't want to be a sports reporter as much as men do, so be it. Men and women are different, and to try to make them the same is crazy," he said.

But there is a balance needed to pave the way for women who are interested in male-dominated fields, he said. To that end, it's important to have female role models in all fields, Jaffee, Walters, and Kinzie agreed.

Where women may be traditionally taught to conform, and men to be independent, having few roles models in certain high-paying industries is a disadvantage, Kinzie said.

And there are lots of inherent hurdles, she said. For instance, aggressively pursuing raises is more taboo for women but is expected of men, she said.

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## Gender and politics

Proportionately, women are still underrepresented in local politics, according to a second report released recently by the Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women on "Civic Participation and Leadership/Political Participation."

In elected city positions, for example, women are less represented now than they were 20 years ago. "There has been a noticeable decline in both the percentage of women running for city elected positions, as well as the percentage winning, since the 1991 elections," according to the report, written by commissioner Cathi Crabtree.

For city elected positions, the study tracked data between 1983 and 2003, but its findings are on par with today. Currently, city clerk Regina Moore, represents the sole woman currently holding an elected city position.

In contrast to the disparity in elected city positions, women won 50 percent of Monroe County elected posts in 2004, despite the fact that less than 40 percent of all candidates vying for office last year were women.

The number of women who hold elected county posts has risen almost 40 percent since 1984. In the same period, women's representation on the Monroe County school board rose to 70 percent last year, up from 0 percent in 1990 when no woman ran for the board.

On statutory commissions —those created and regulated by state law, including the Bloomington Plan Commission — women held less than 30 percent of appointed positions in 2004.

On nonstatutory commissions, including the city's Animal Control Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women — about 45 percent of the positions were held by women.

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