

Financing The Future

Fast Company | Michael Grothaus | September 29, 2023

Single Generation X women are earning more than their male counterparts in 15 cities

The gender pay gap persists in most metro areas, but single Gen X women have a notable edge when compared to other cohorts.



[Photo: Mango Productions/Corbis/Getty Images]

Pay equality still has some ways to go in the United States. In 2022, the U.S. Department of Labor found that women working full-time earned just 83.7% of what their male counterparts did.

However, a recent study from LendingTree shows that there are areas of the country where single women are out-earning single men of the same generation.

For its study, LendingTree examined how much single people earn on average in the top 100 metro areas in the United States and broke the findings down by three generation: baby boomers, Gen X, and millennials.

When you look at the average earnings by generation, it's clear that one is doing better than the others. The LendingTree study found that single Gen X women (ages 41 to 56 in 2021)

came in tops at besting their male counterparts by earning more than them in 15 metro areas—the most on the list.

When you look at the top metro areas where single Gen X women earn more, single Gen X women in the top three metros are making significantly more than their male counterparts:

In Portland, Maine, the average single Gen X woman makes \$40,233 versus \$27,874 for her male counterpart. That's an earnings difference of \$12,359.

Palm Bay, Florida, the average single Gen X woman makes \$44,056 versus \$33,287 for her male counterpart. That's an earnings difference of \$10,769.

In Oxnard, California, the average single Gen X woman makes \$55,420 versus \$46,206 for her male counterpart. That's an earnings difference of \$9,214.

Here's how single Gen X women stack up to their baby boomer and millennial counterparts:

- Single Gen X women out-earn their male counterparts in 15 metros.
- Single boomer women out-earn their male counterparts in 12 metros.
- Single millennial women out-earn their male counterparts in 6 metros.

One of the reasons the report suggests that single Gen X women could be outdoing their boomer and millennial counterparts is because Gen X is currently in the age range that places them in their peak earning years, whereas many millennials haven't had the time yet to advance as far in the careers as possible, and boomers are past their peak earning years.

Of course, LendingTree's study also reveals just how far apart the pay equity gap remains. When generations are removed, single women out-earned single men in just 1 of the 100 metros studied in the survey. And the average amount of money a single man makes versus a single woman in the 100 metro areas is significant, with men earning \$8,717 more on average.

For its study, LendingTree analyzed the U.S. Census Bureau 2021 American Community Survey microdata via Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) to calculate the average earnings of single people across the 100 largest U.S. metro areas. A single person was defined as someone aged 22 or older who has never been married or is widowed, divorced, or separated.