



# INEQUALITY IN BOSTON

October 2024

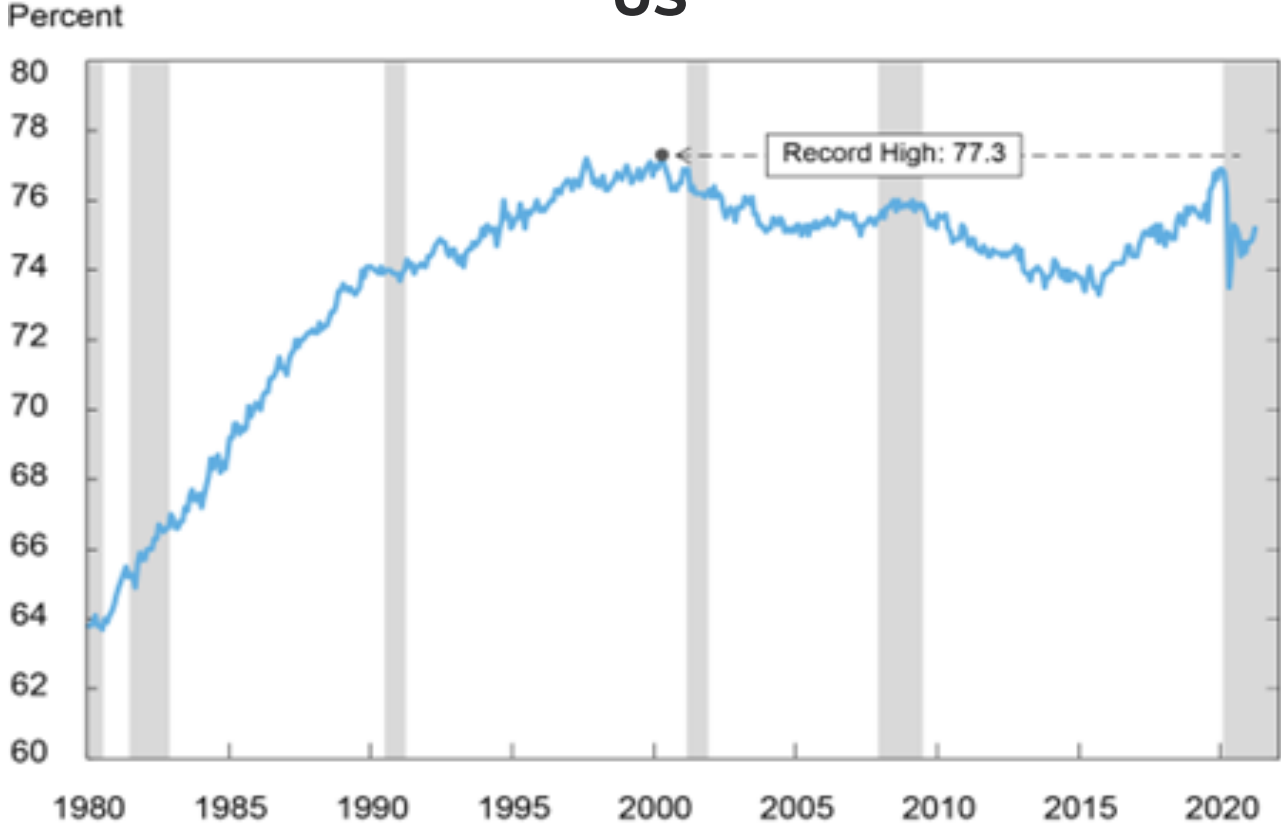
RESEARCH DIVISION



City of Boston  
Planning Department

# WOMEN'S LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION HAS GROWN RAPIDLY IN THE PAST FEW DECADES

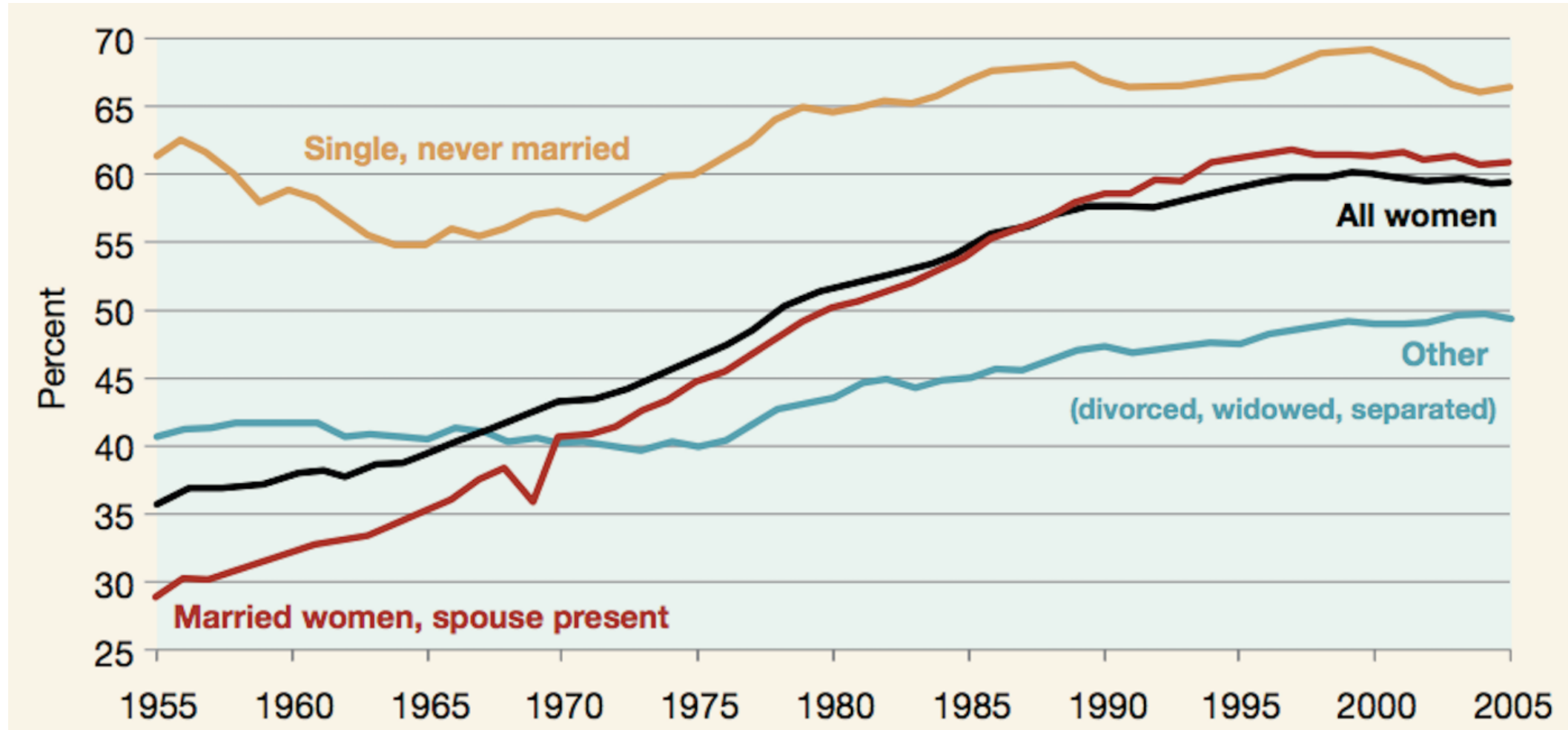
## Women's Labor Force Participation in US



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Source: Jaison R. Abel and Richard Deitz, "Women's Labor Force Participation Was Rising to Record Highs – Until the Pandemic Hit," Feder Reserve Banks of Liberty Street Economics, May 10, 2021

## Labor force participation among married women doubled 1950-1990



Source: Data from 1955 to 1975 come from the US Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2003. Data from 1976 to 2005 come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Source: Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, Sandra Tzvetkova and Max Roser (2018) - "Women's Employment" Published online at OurWorldinData.org. Retrieved from: <https://ourworldindata.org/female-labor-supply> [Online Resource]

# DEMOGRAPHICS BY SEX

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- 1 POPULATION
- 2 AGE DISTRIBUTION
- 3 RACE/ETHNICITY
- 4 EDUCATION
- 5 MARITAL STATUS

# PAY RATIO BY SEX

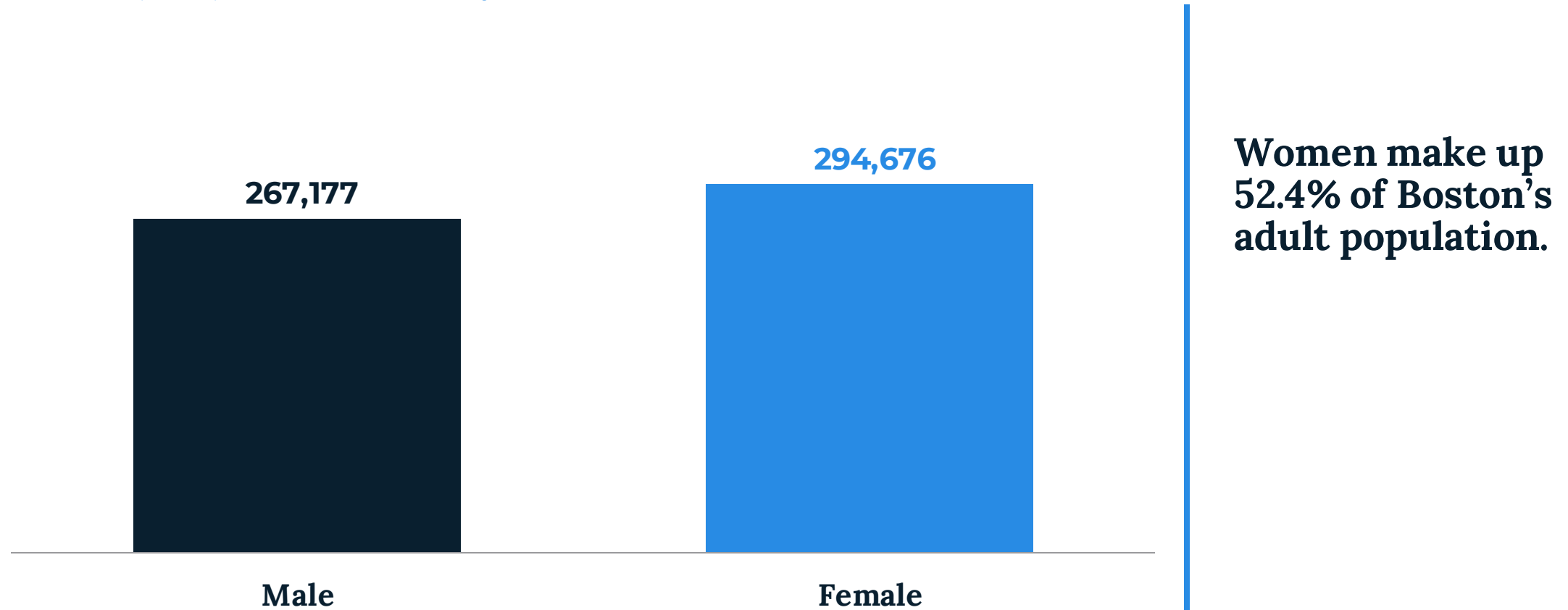
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- 1 PAY INEQUALITY OVERVIEW**
- 2 THE PAY RATIO WAS SIMILAR IN 2000 & 2022**
- 3 IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN SPECIFIC GROUPS**

# 1. DEMOGRAPHICS

# THERE ARE MORE WOMEN THAN MEN IN BOSTON

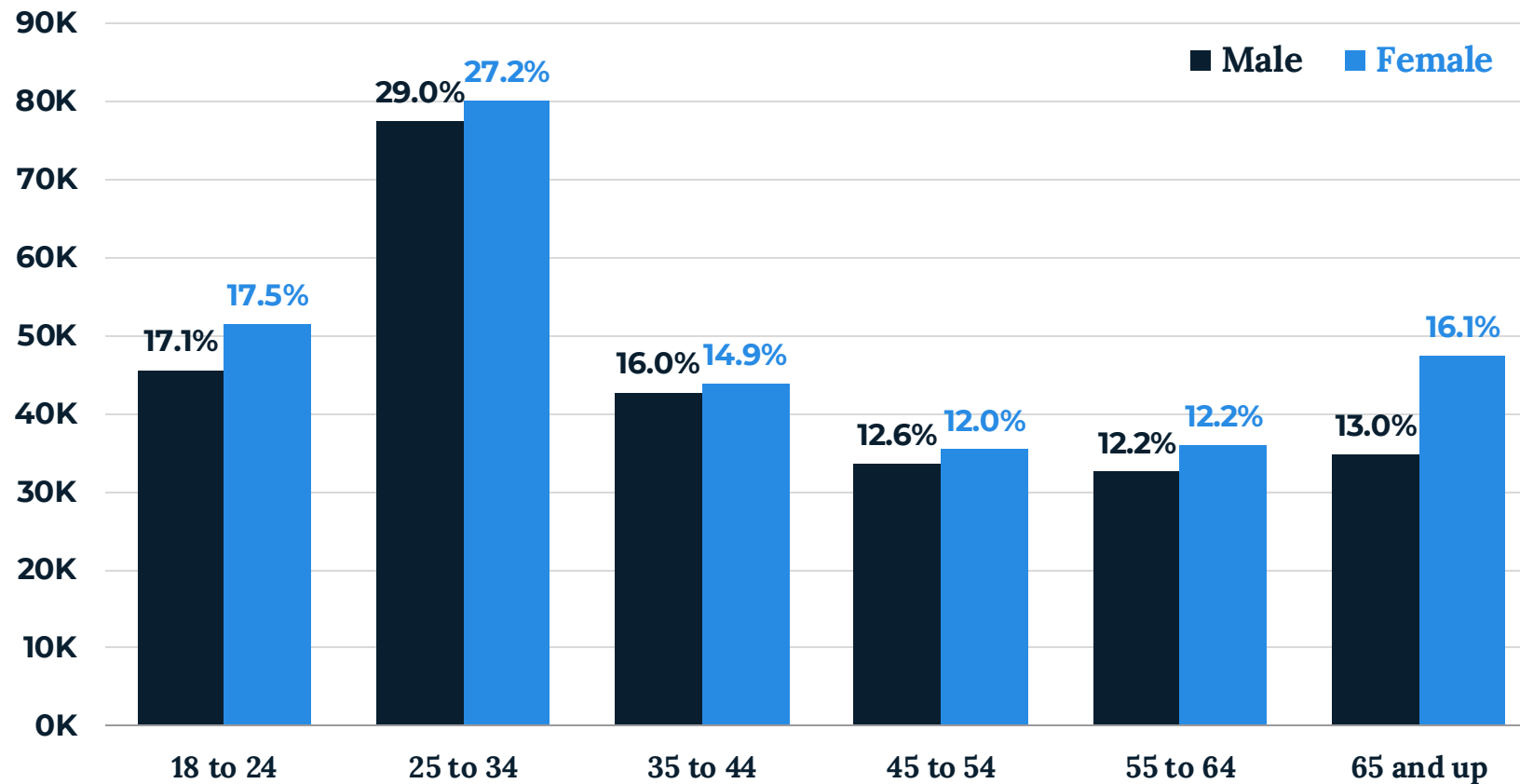
*Adults (18+) in Boston by sex*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# WOMEN OUTNUMBER MEN IN ALL AGE GROUPS

*Adults (18+) in Boston by age group and sex*



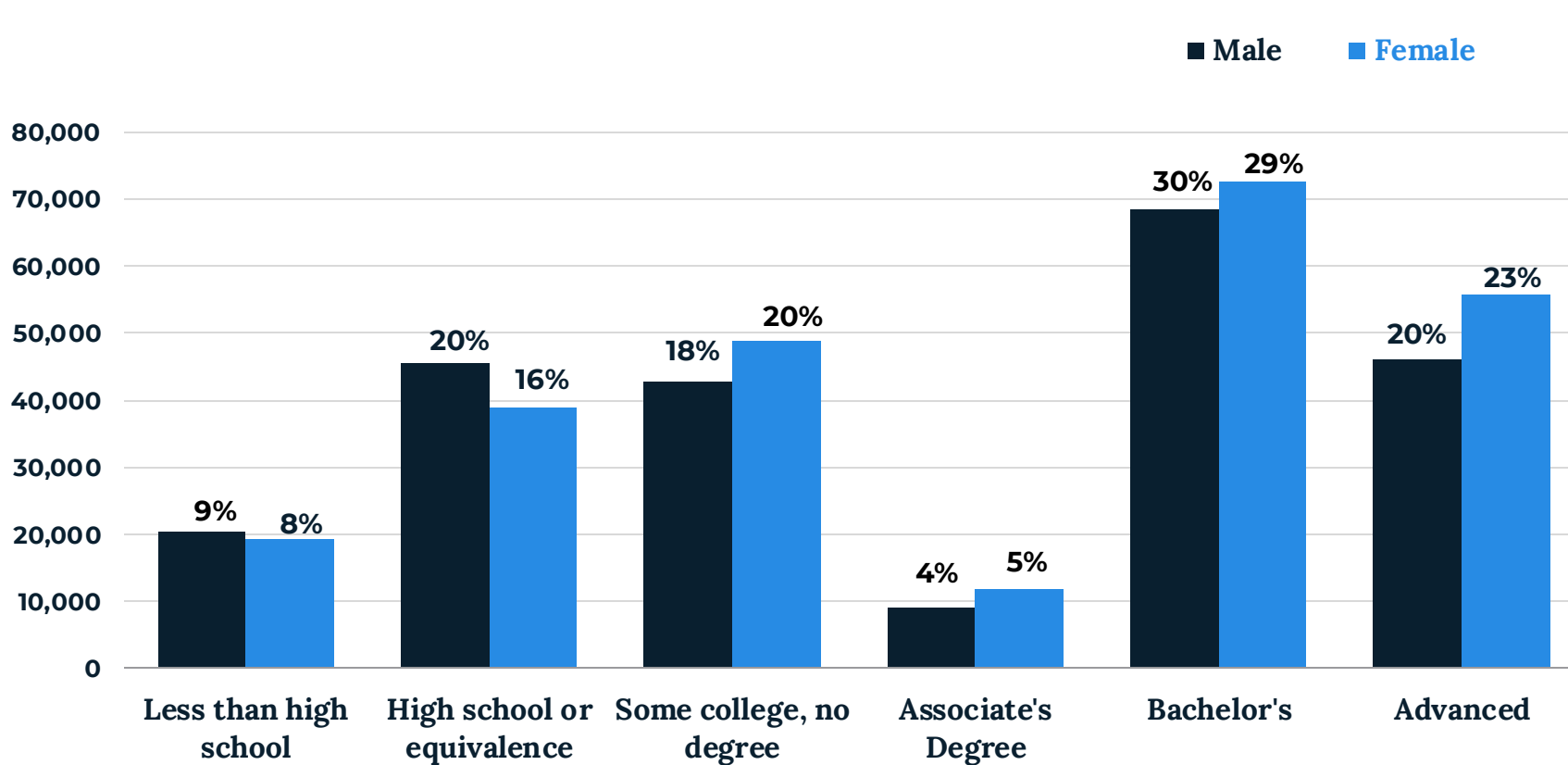
**Women outnumber men in all age groups, but especially in the age 65+ group; 16.1% of women and 13% of men are 65 and over.**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.



# WOMEN ARE SLIGHTLY MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER DEGREE

Adults (18-64) in Boston by educational attainment and sex

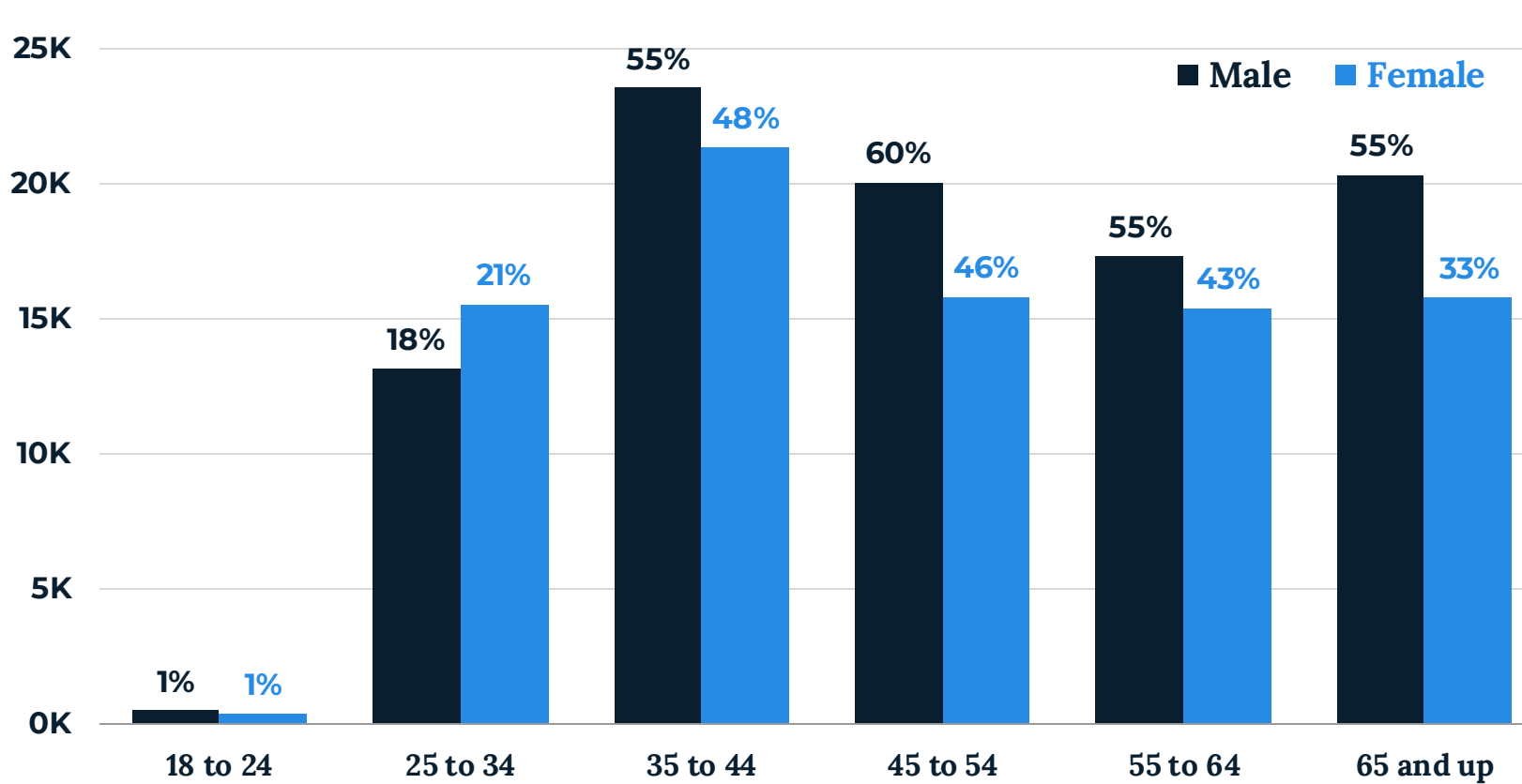


About 52% of adult women have a Bachelor's or higher degree, compared to 50% of men.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# 25-34 IS THE ONLY AGE RANGE WITH HIGHER RATES OF MARRIAGE FOR WOMEN

*Adults (18+) by marriage rate and sex*

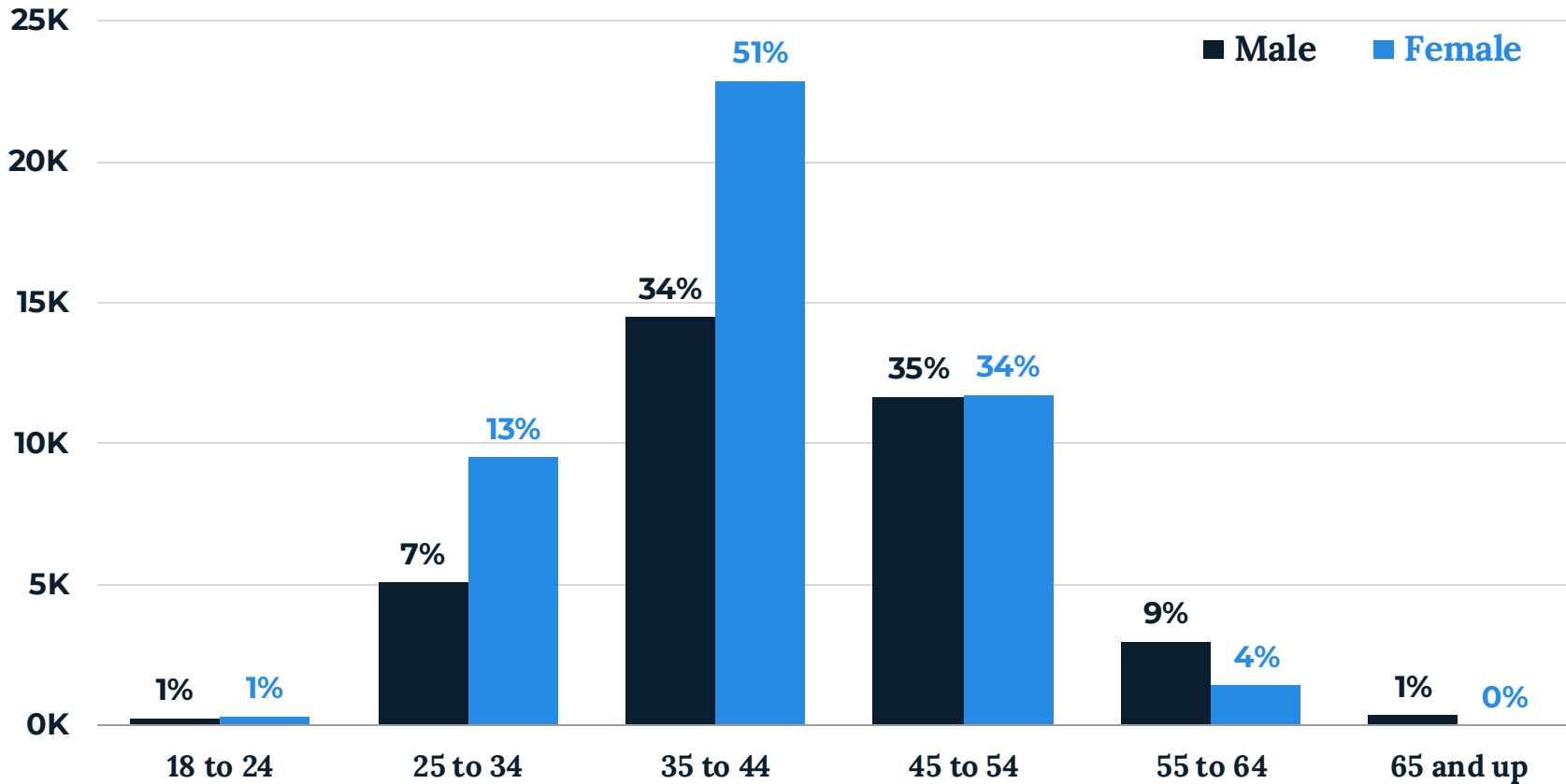


**Boston women have a lower marriage rate than Boston men, 29.2% and 36.4% respectively.**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# WOMEN 25-44 ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO LIVE WITH THEIR OWN CHILDREN

Adults (18+) living with own children by age and sex



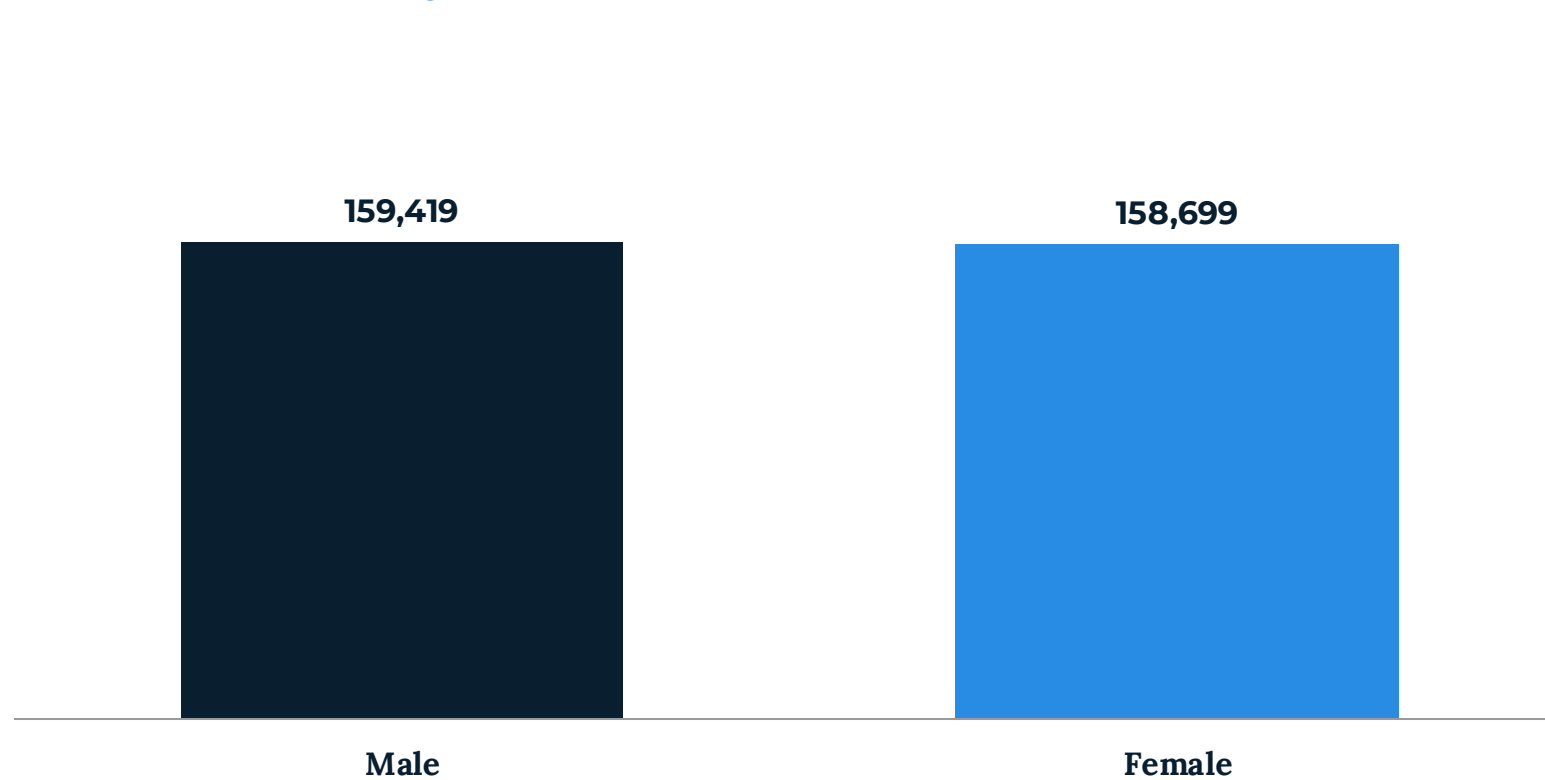
51% of women aged 35-44 have a child living with them, compared to 34% of men.

22% of women aged 35-44 and 15% of women aged 45-54 are single mothers with children at home.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# WOMEN COMPRISE ALMOST HALF OF BOSTON'S WORKFORCE

*In civilian labor force, 18-64, workers not enrolled in school*



**Women make up 49.9% of Boston's workforce.**

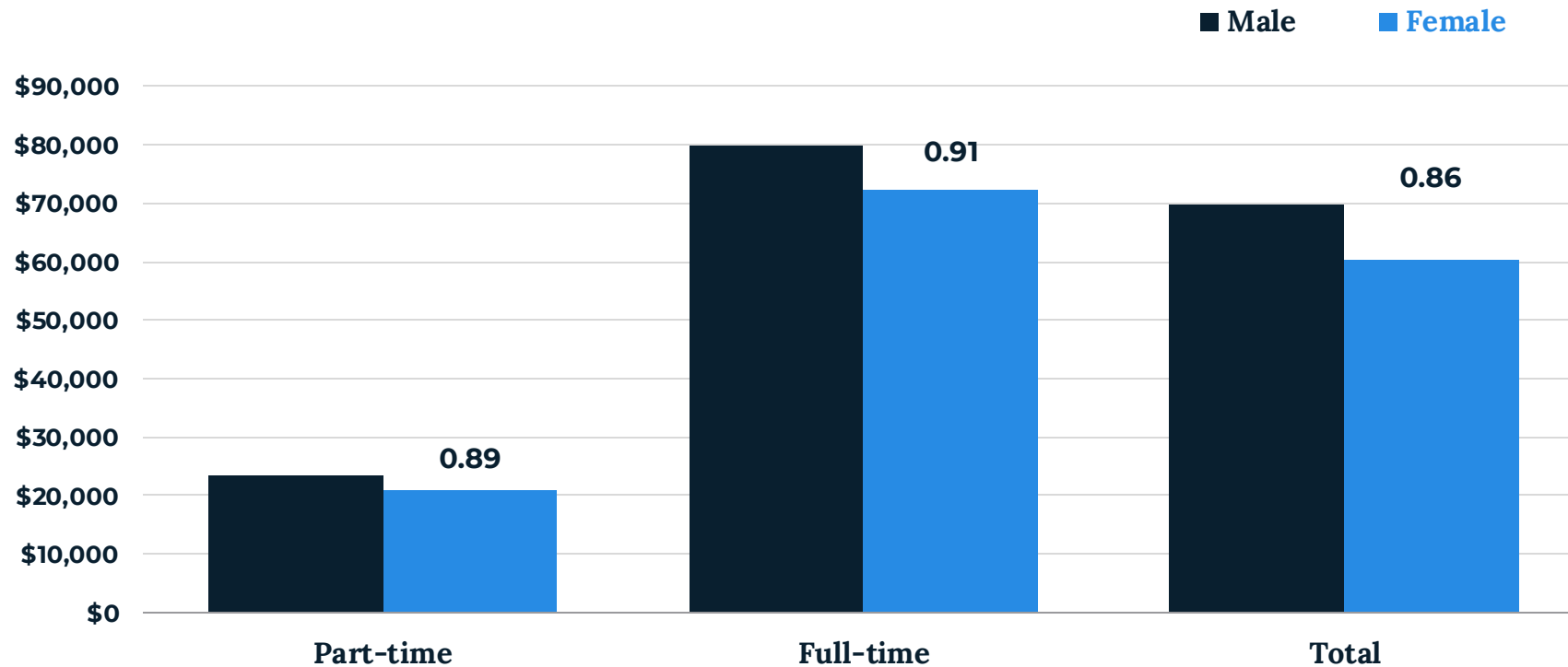
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# 2. PAY RATIO



# THE MEDIAN EARNINGS OF WOMEN ARE LOWER THAN THE MEDIAN EARNINGS OF MEN

*Median earnings by employment status and sex, 18-64, workers not enrolled in school*



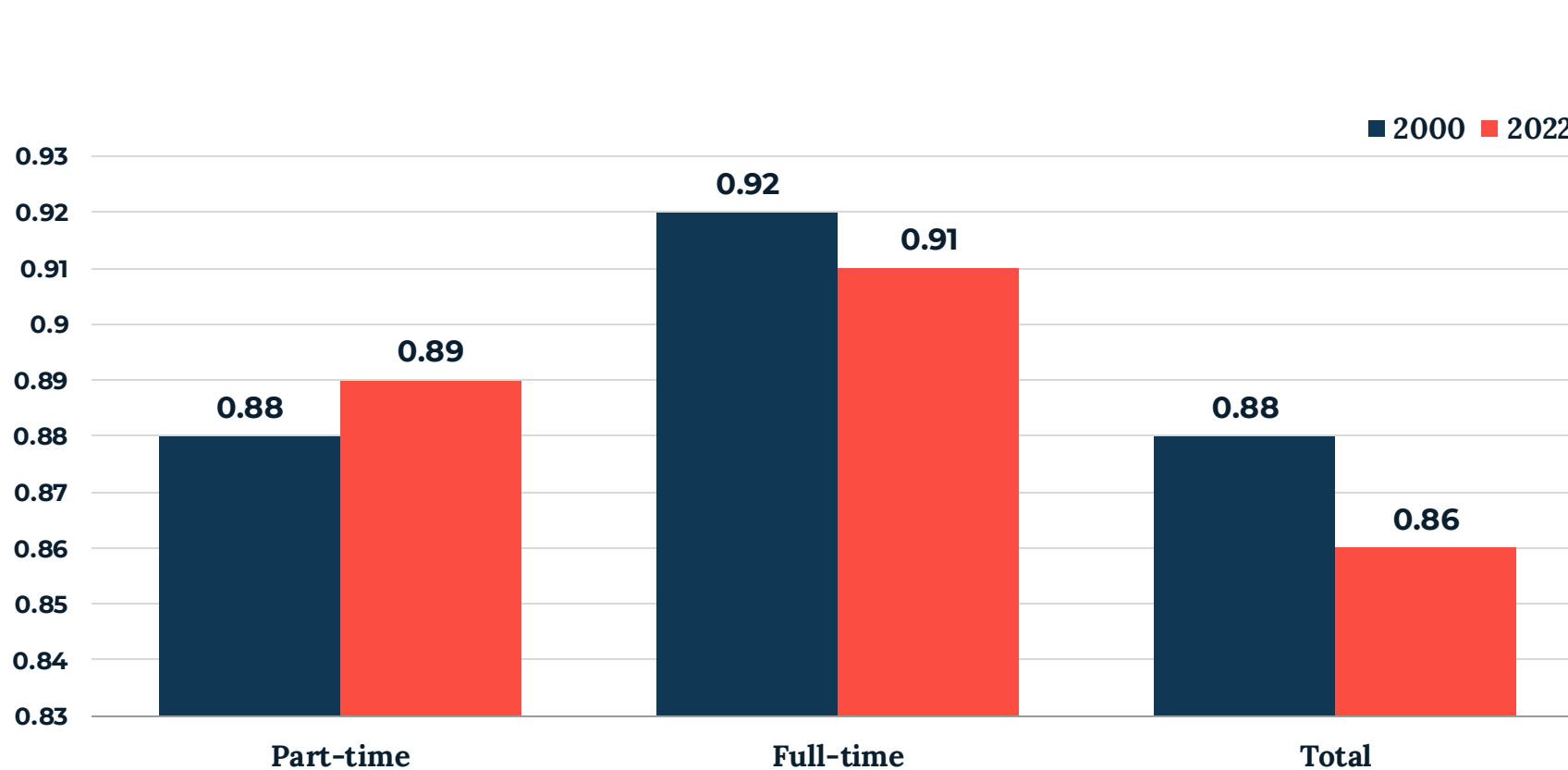
**Women earned 91% of what men earned in 2022 among full-time workers.**

**In the US, the pay ratio was 83% for full-time workers.**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

# THE PAY RATIO OVERALL HAS REMAINED SIMILAR SINCE 2000 FOR FULL TIME-WORKERS

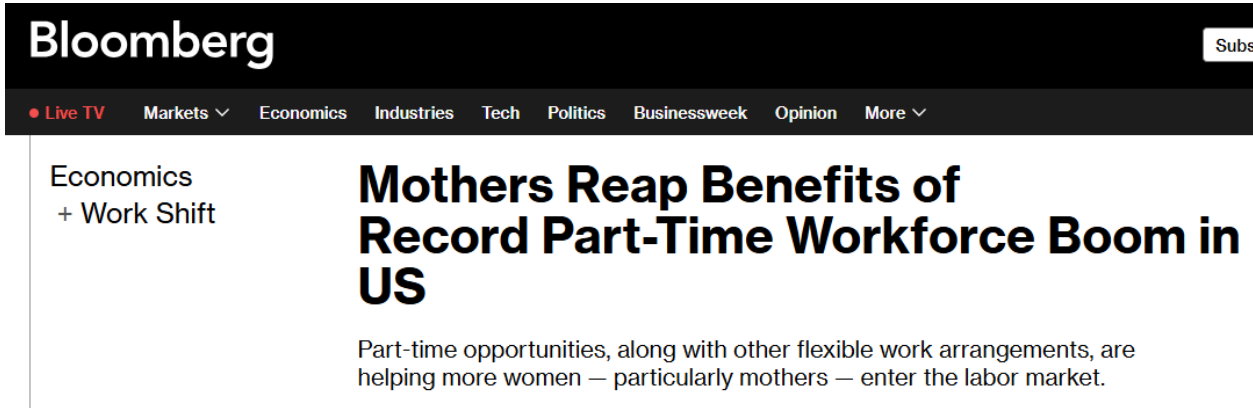
*Median earnings by employment status and sex, 18-64, workers not enrolled in school*



**The pay ratio was stable at 91-92% among full-time workers in 2000 and 2022.**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), US Census 2000, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# MOTHERS REAP BENEFITS OF PART-TIME WORK



The screenshot shows the Bloomberg website header with navigation links for Live TV, Markets, Economics, Industries, Tech, Politics, Businessweek, Opinion, and More. The main article title is "Mothers Reap Benefits of Record Part-Time Workforce Boom in US". A sub-header reads "Economics + Work Shift". The lead text states: "Part-time opportunities, along with other flexible work arrangements, are helping more women — particularly mothers — enter the labor market."



The screenshot shows the Sherwood Snacks website header. The main article title is "Part-time work hits a record in the US as more women enter the labor force". A sub-header reads "Snacks She-economy". The author information at the bottom reads "Nia Warfield / Monday, May 20, 2024".

**“The number of Americans voluntarily working part time hit a record high this year, thanks in part to women — particularly mothers — benefiting from the pandemic-driven rise in flexible work arrangements.”**

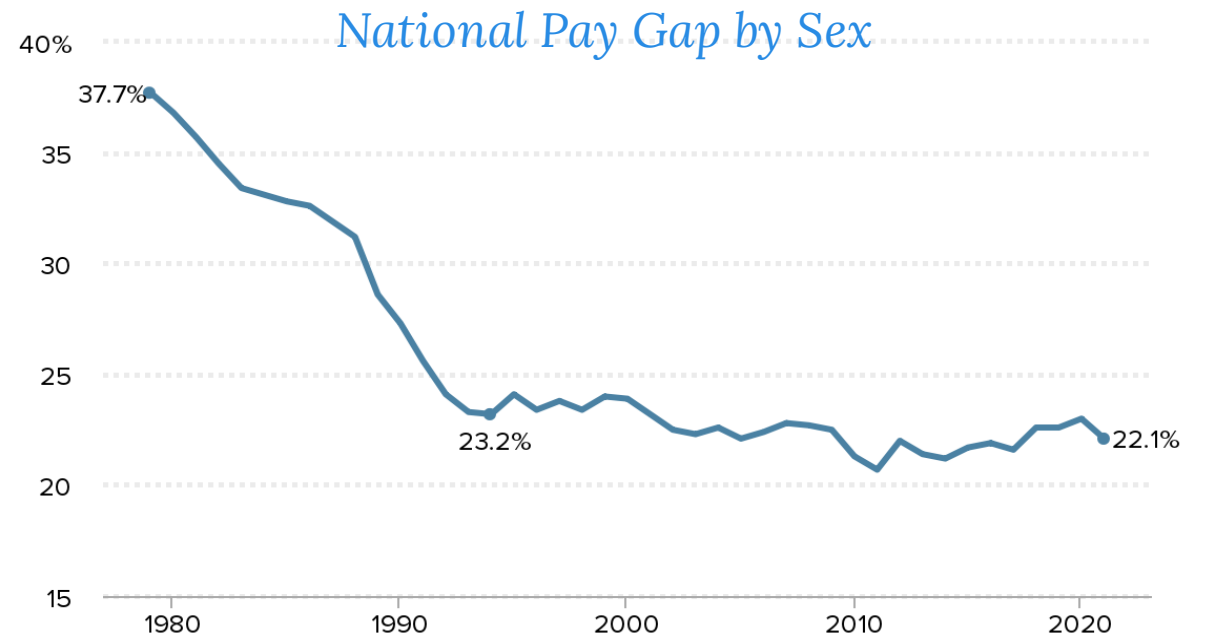
**“9 to 2 is the new 9 to 5.”**



# PAY GAP TRENDS FOR BOSTON MATCH NATIONAL TRENDS

Nationally, between 1980 and 1995 the pay gap decreased from almost 40% to 23%.

But it has remained roughly similar since then.

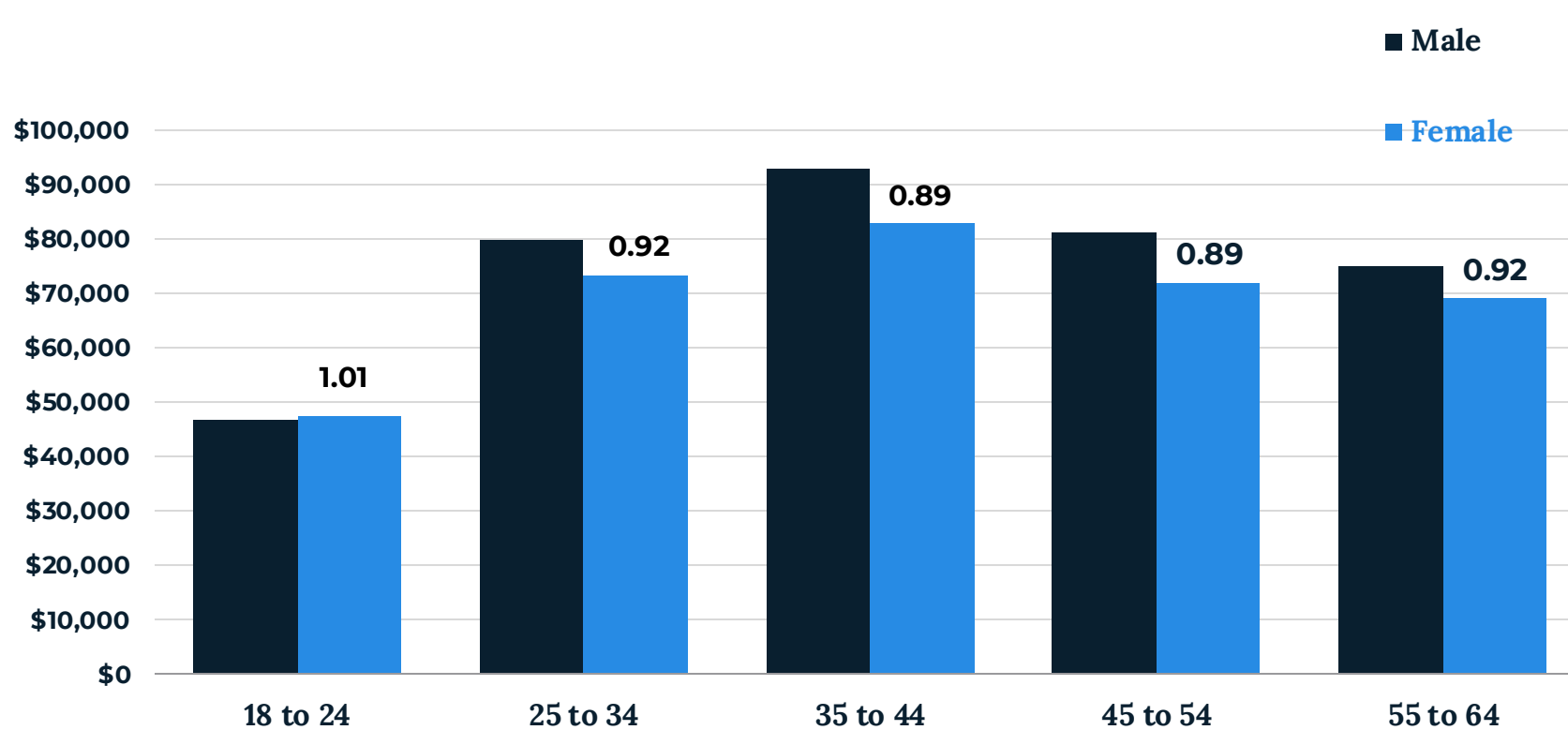


Source: Author's analysis of Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group (CPS-ORG), 1979–2021, and Economic Policy Institute, Current Population Survey Extracts, Version 1.0.26 (2022), <https://microdata.epi.org/>, 1979–2022.

Source: Calef, Anne. "The Stubborn Persistence of the Gender Pay Gap in Massachusetts: Boston Indicators." The Stubborn Persistence of the Gender Pay Gap in Massachusetts | Boston Indicators, March 31, 2022. <https://www.bostonindicators.org/article-pages/2022/march/gender-pay-gap-20220331>.

# THE PAY RATIO WAS LOWEST AT AGES 35-54 IN 2022

*Median earnings by age and sex, 18-64, full-time workers not enrolled in school*

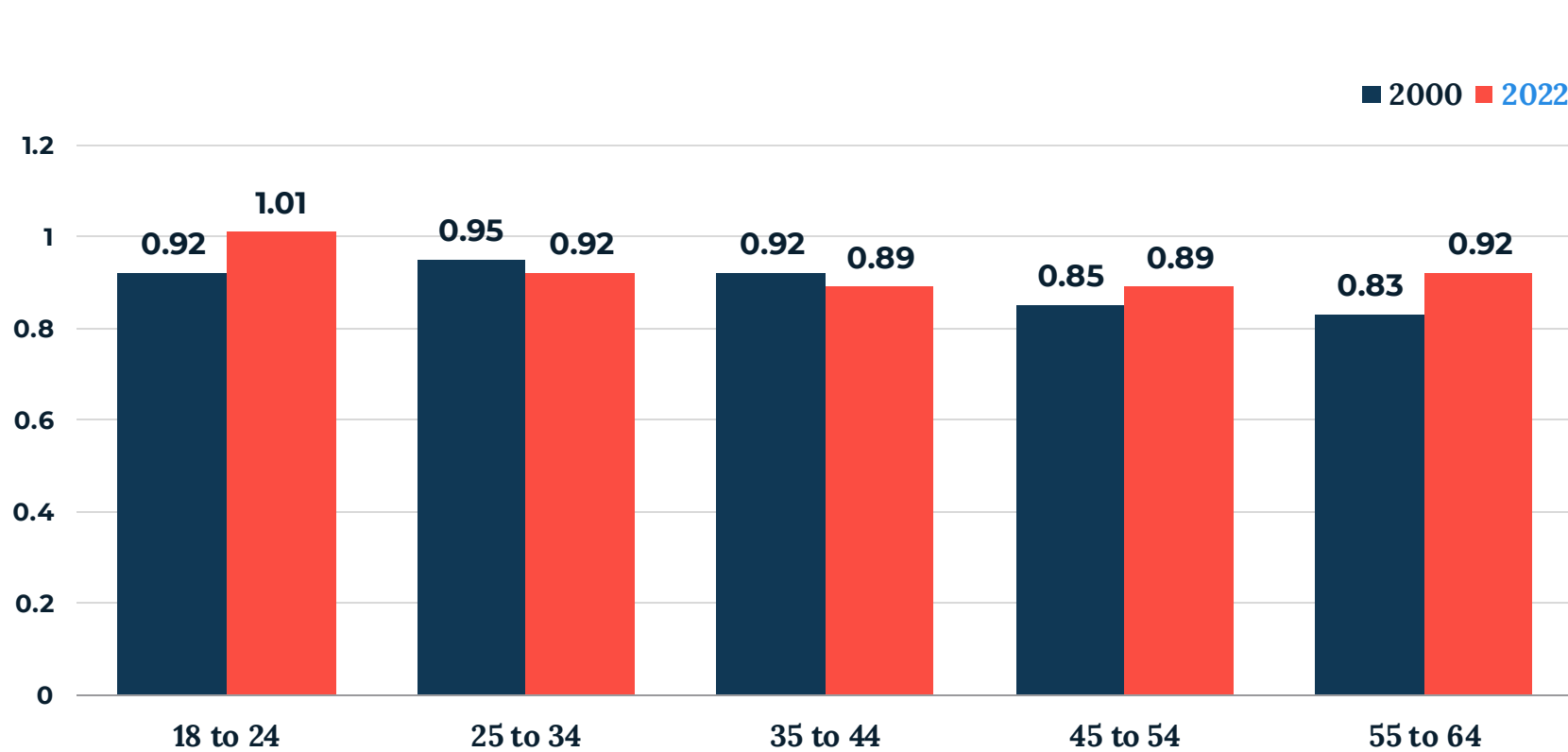


- **Women aged 18-24 earn more than men of the same age group.**
- **By age 25-34, women make 92% of men of the same age group.**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# THE PAY RATIO IMPROVED SINCE 2000 FOR ALL AGES EXCEPT PEAK CHILD-BEARING YEARS (25-44)

*Median earnings by age and sex, 18-64, full-time workers not enrolled in school*

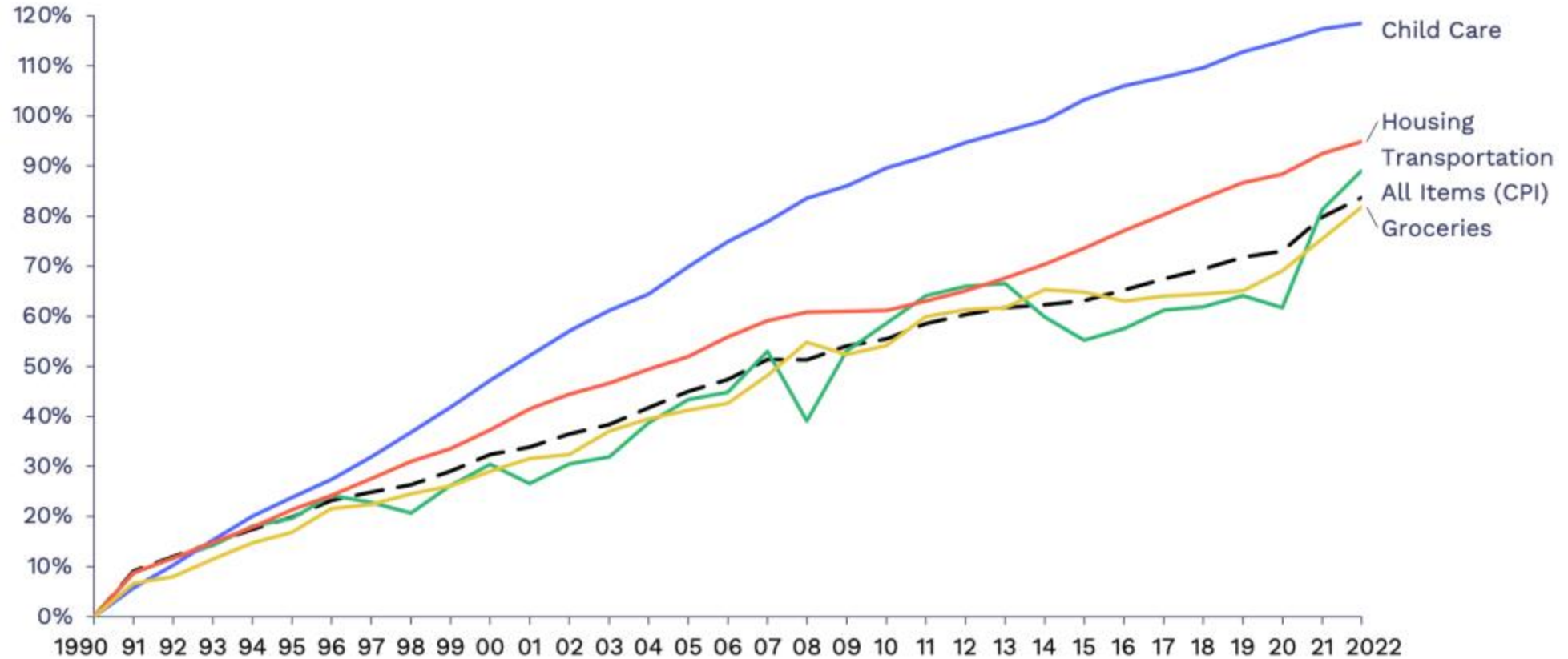


**The pay ratio improved for women aged 18-24 and 45+.**

Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), US Census 2000, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# CHILD CARE COSTS HAVE BEEN INCREASING SINCE THE 1990s

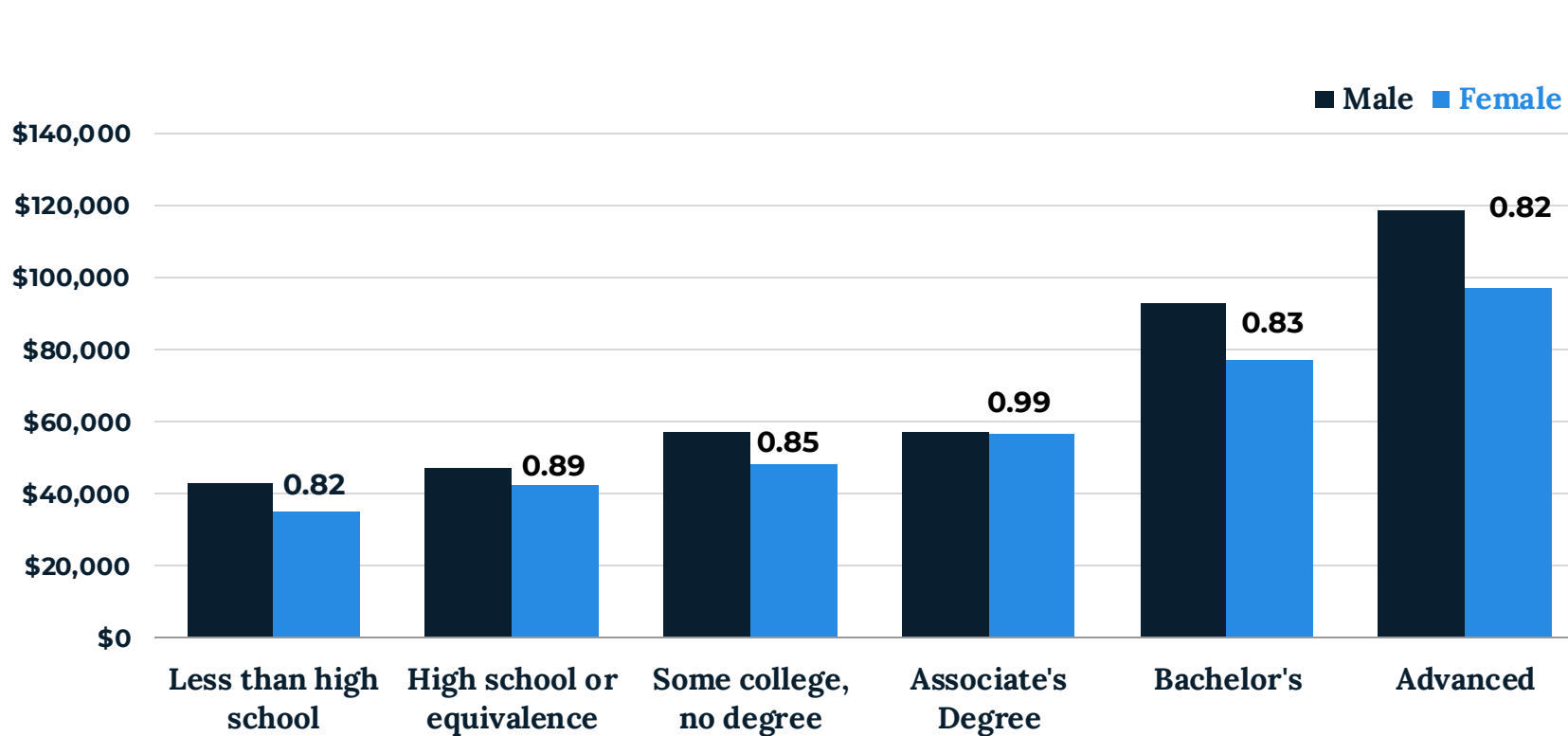
Total CPI Increase Over Time



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI), First Five Years Fund, 2022.

# THE PAY RATIO BY EDUCATION DISTRIBUTION WAS BI-MODAL IN 2022

*Median earnings by educational attainment and sex, 18-64, full-time workers not enrolled in school*

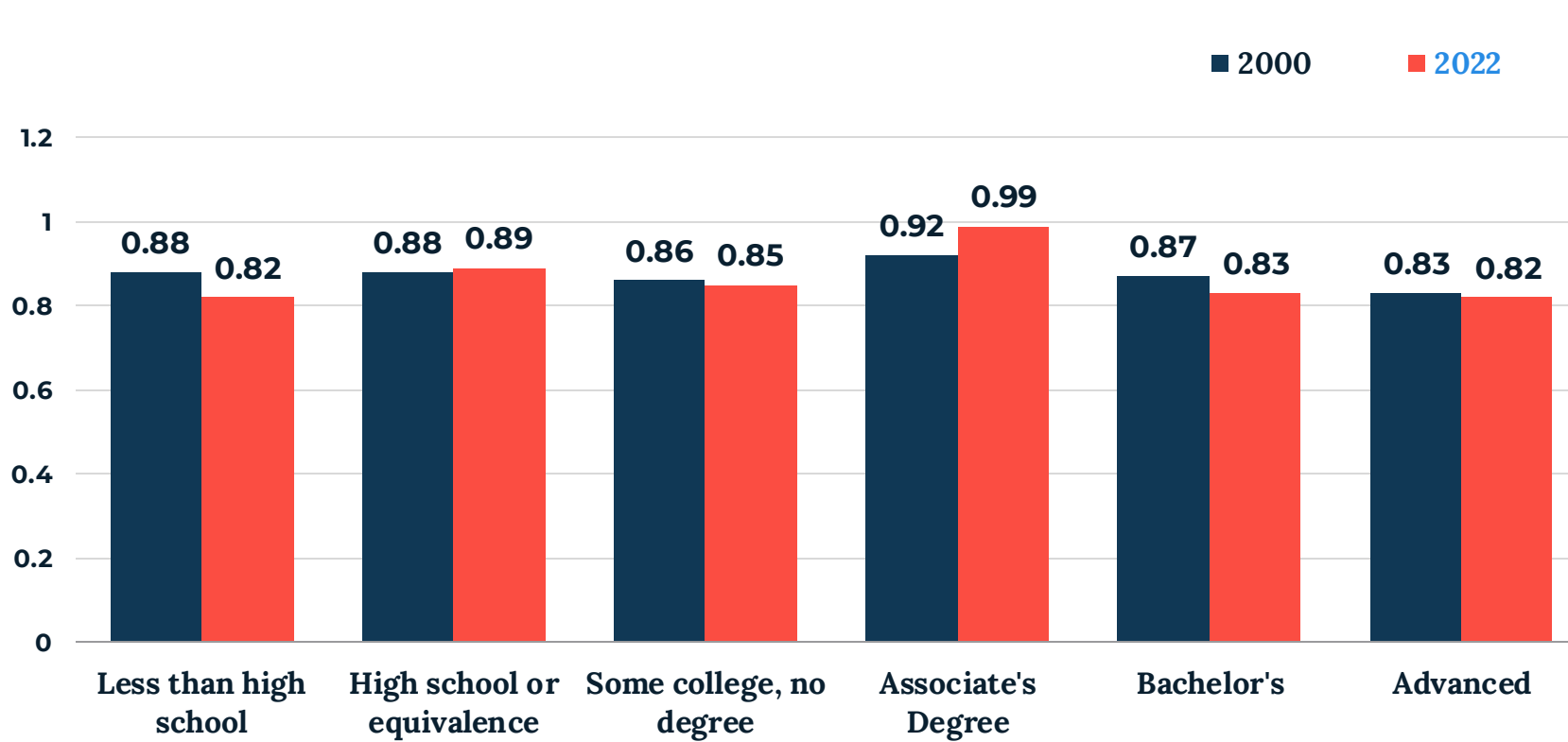


**The pay ratio is lowest at the ends of the educational distribution: about 82%.**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# THE PAY RATIO IS WORSE FOR WOMEN WITH LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL OR BA+ THAN IT WAS IN 2000

*Median earnings by educational attainment and sex, 18-64, full-time workers not enrolled in school*

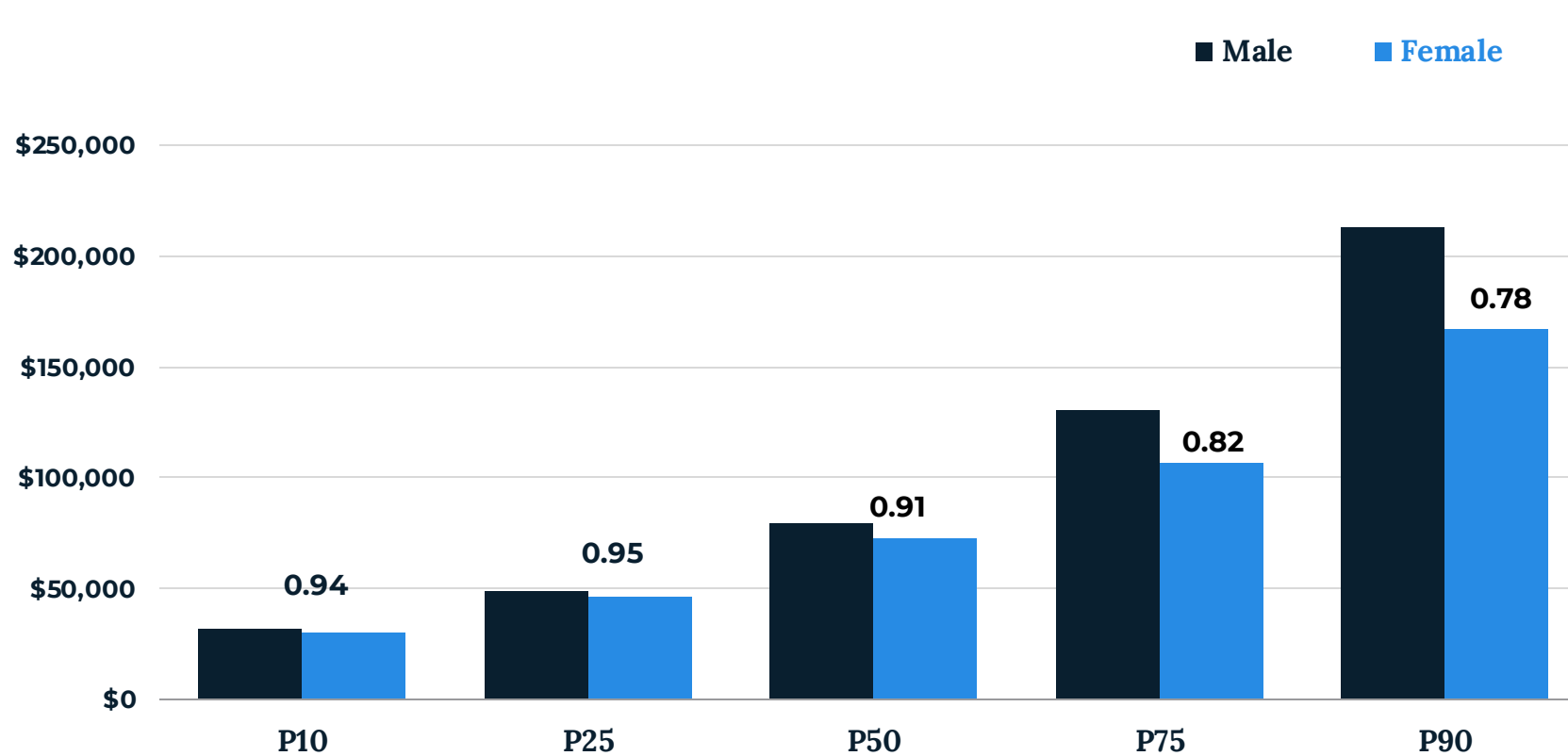


**The pay at the ends of the education distribution has worsened slightly since 2000.**

Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), US Census 2000, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# THE PAY RATIO IS LOWEST AT THE UPPER END OF THE INCOME DISTRIBUTION IN 2022

*Distribution of earnings by sex, 18-64, full-time workers not enrolled in school*

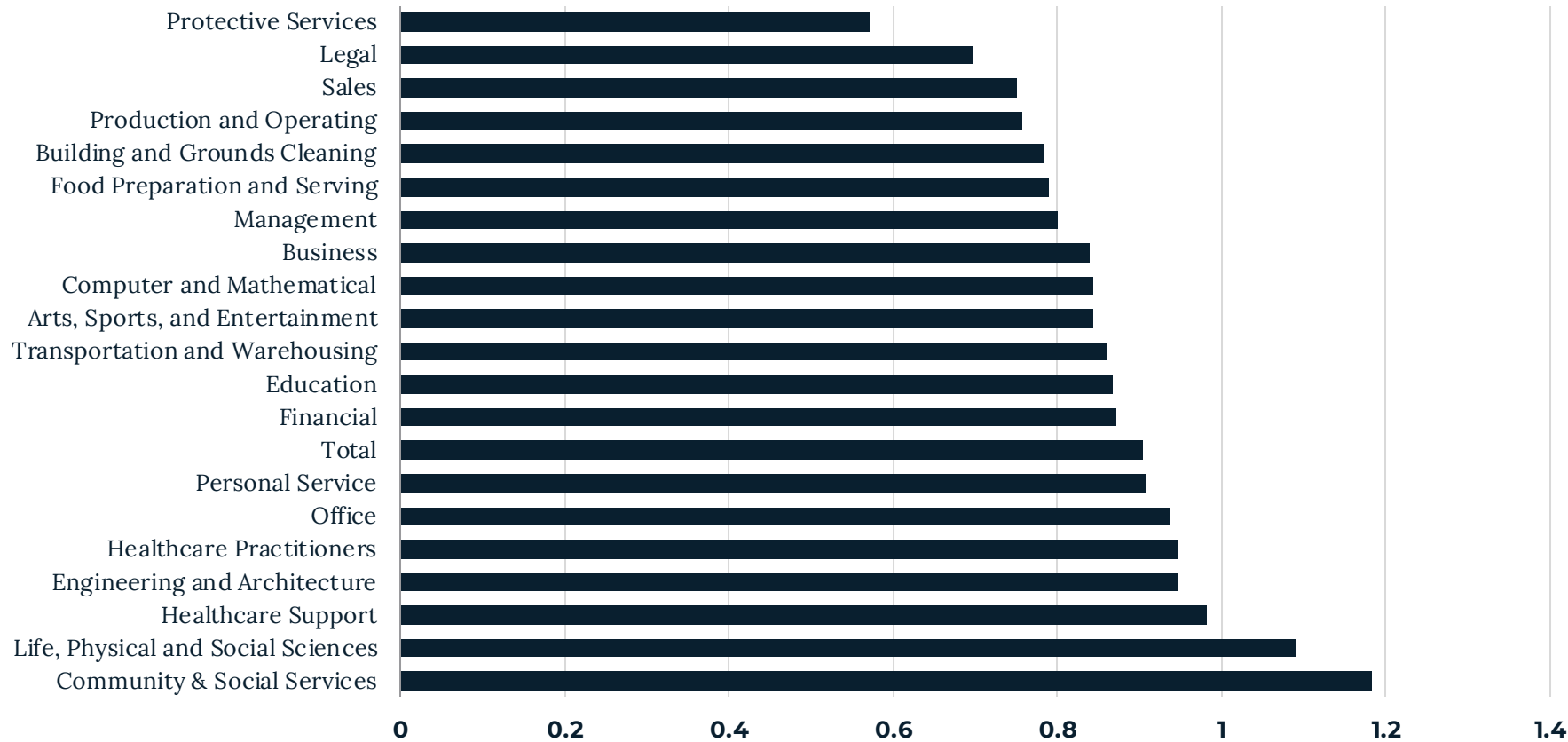


**The pay gap is highest at the top (78%), likely because high incomes are skewed.**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# WOMEN WORKING IN LEGAL OCCUPATIONS EARN 69% OF WHAT MEN EARN WORKING FULL TIME

*Ratio of female to male median earnings by occupation, 18-64, full-time workers not enrolled in school*



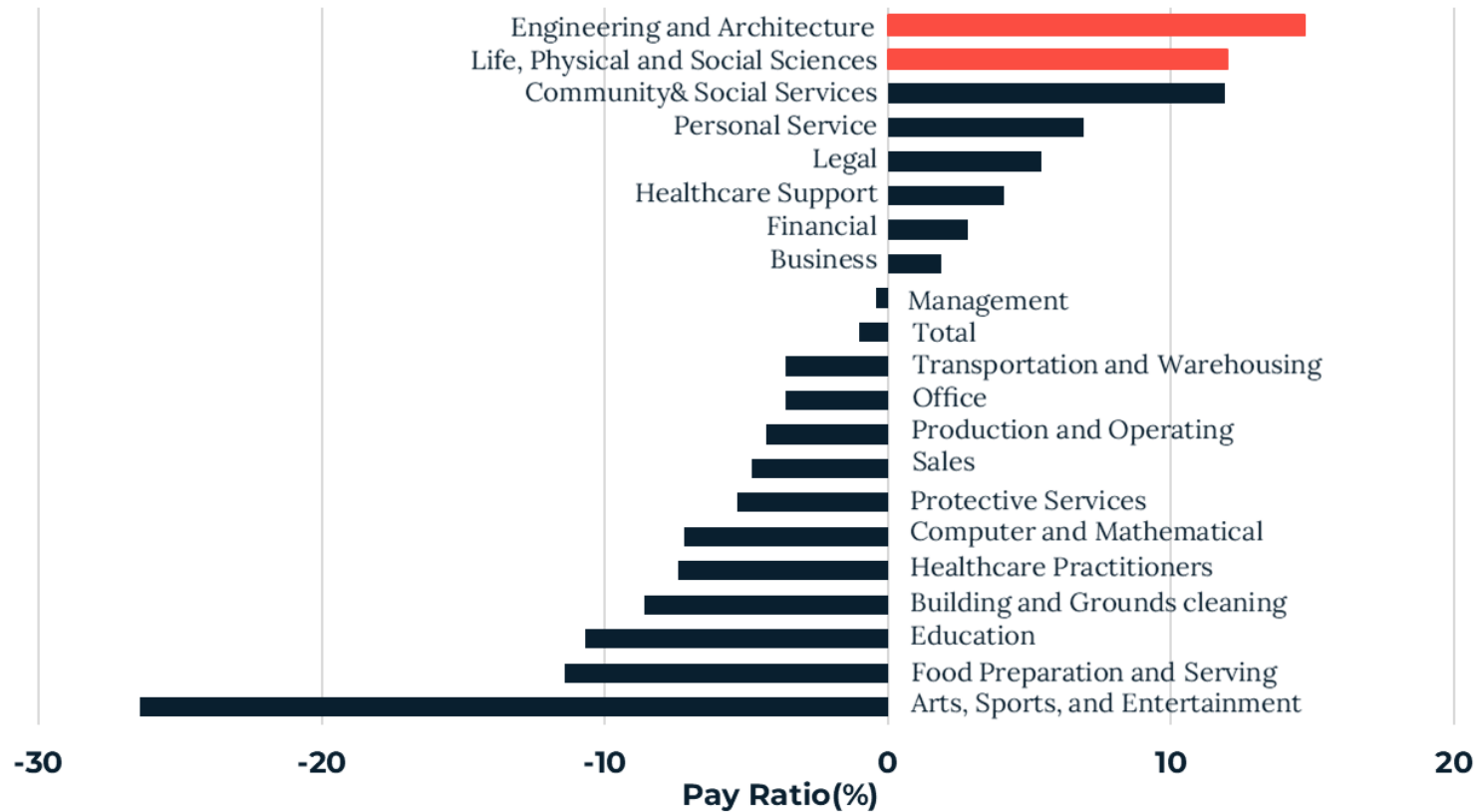
**Women in Community & Social Services and Life Sciences earn higher median earnings than men working full-time in the same occupation.**

Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.



# ENGINEERING & ARCHITECTURE, LIFE SCIENCES AND COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES SAW THE MOST IMPROVEMENT IN WOMEN'S RELATIVE EARNINGS

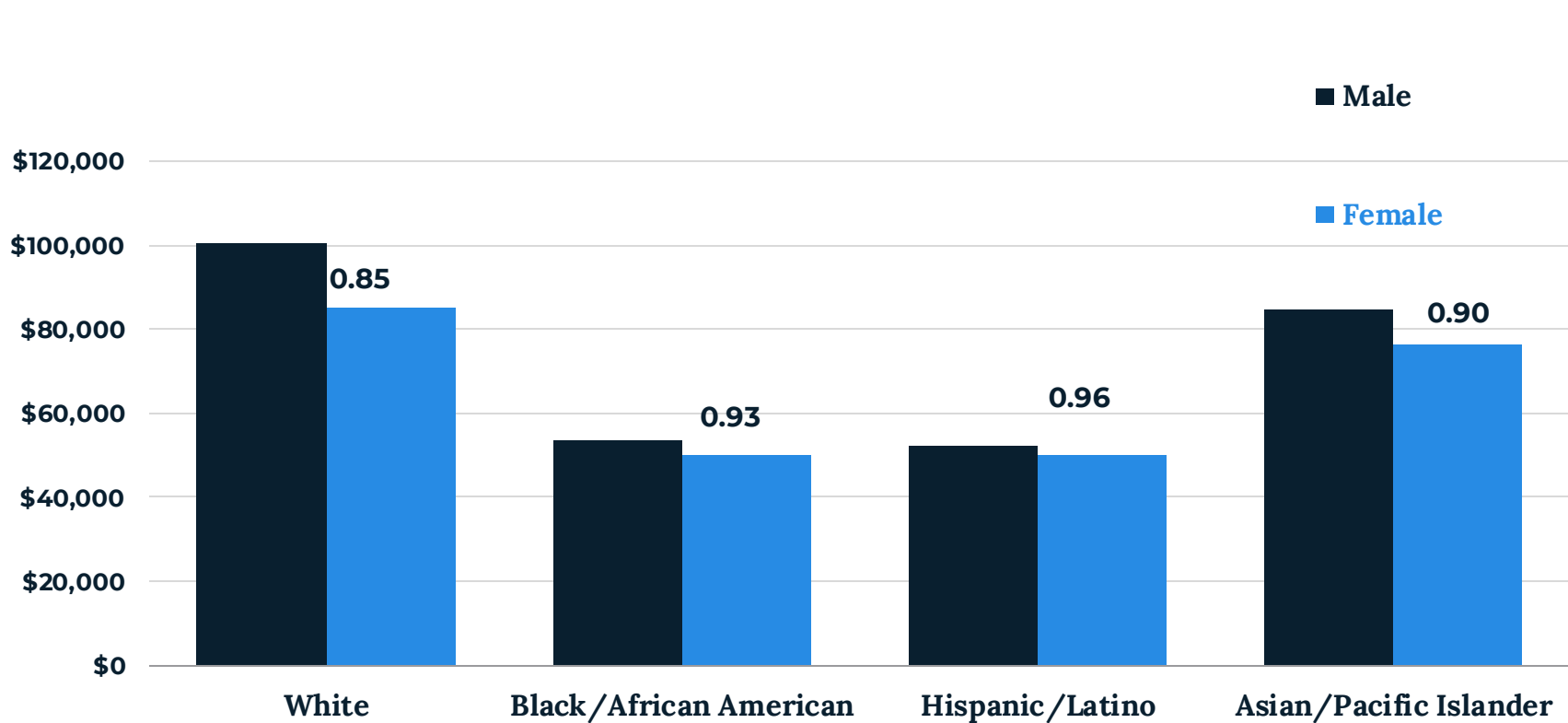
*Difference in pay ratio, 2022-2000, in %, 18-64, full-time workers not enrolled in school*



**The pay ratio improved by 14.7% in engineering and architecture, 12% in life, physical and social sciences, and 12% in community and social sciences.**

# THE PAY RATIO SHOWS LOWER EARNINGS FOR WOMEN OF ALL RACES IN 2022

*Median earnings by race/ethnicity and sex, 18-64, full-time workers not enrolled in school*

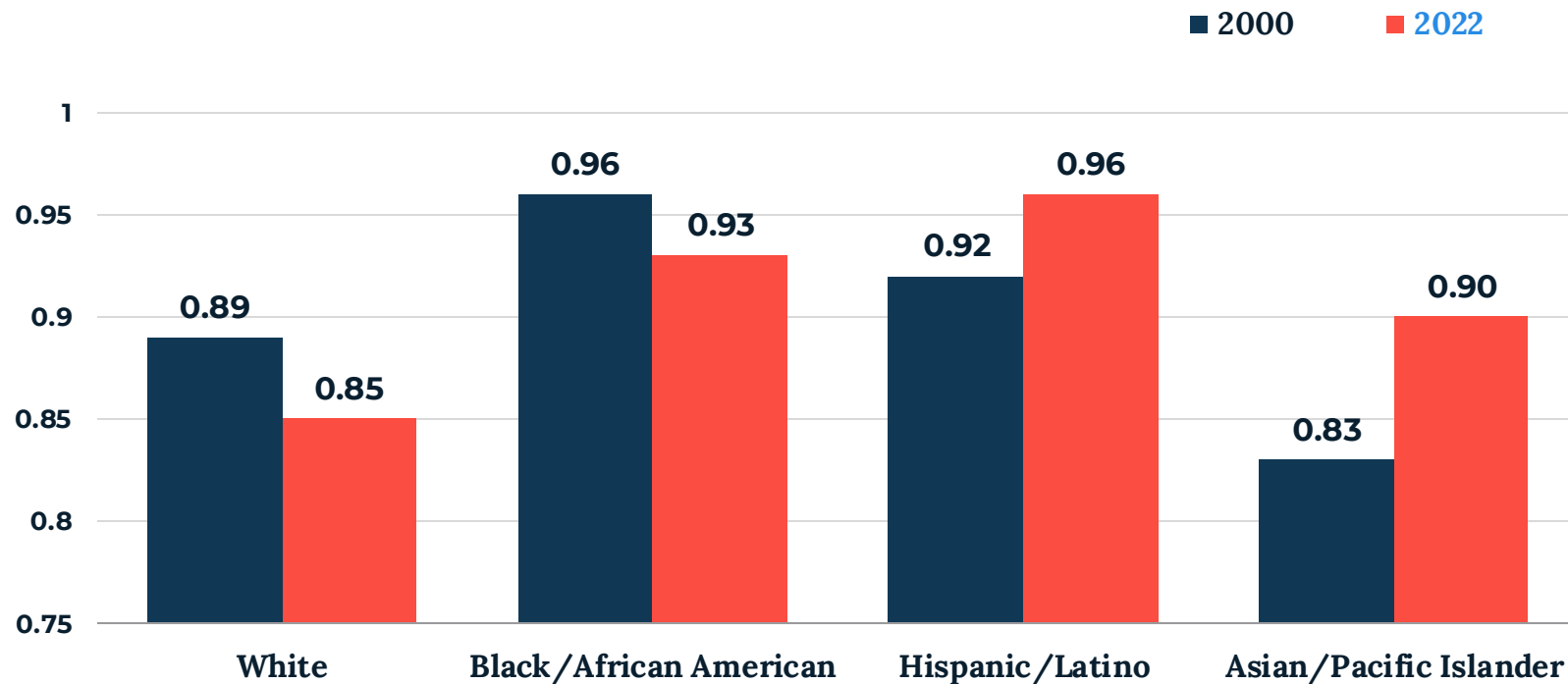


- **White women had the highest median earnings among all women, making \$85,000. However, this was 85% of what white men earned.**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# THE PAY RATIO SHOWS IMPROVEMENT SINCE 2000 FOR HISPANIC AND ASIAN WOMEN RELATIVE TO MEN

*Median earnings by race/ethnicity and sex, 18-64, full-time workers not enrolled in school*



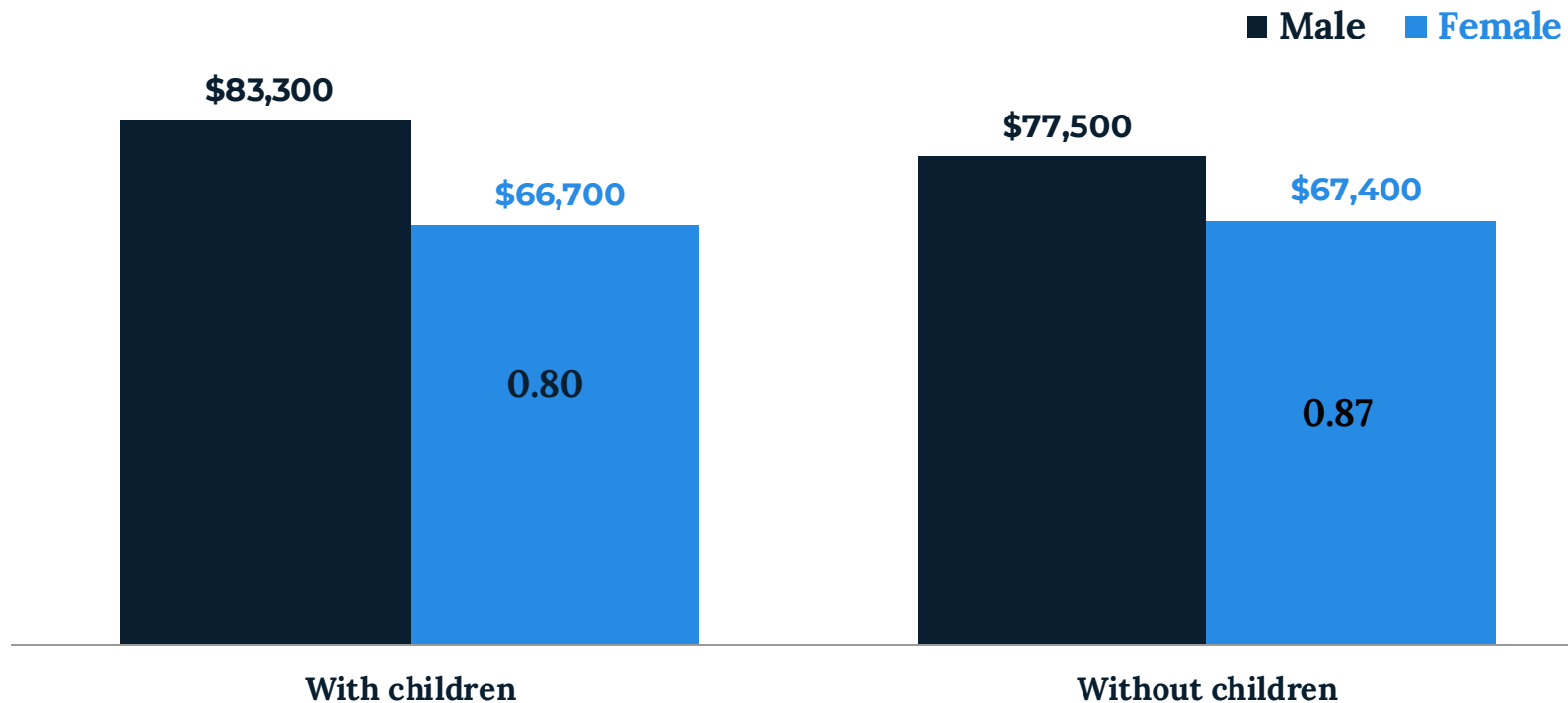
**The pay gap has worsened slightly for white and black women since 2000.**

**In contrast, it has improved for Asian and Hispanic women.**

Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), US Census 2000, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# THE PAY GAP AMONG MALE AND FEMALE FULL-TIME WORKERS INCREASES WITH THE PRESENCE OF CHILDREN

*Median earnings by presence of related children under 18 in household and sex, 18-64, full-time not enrolled in school, 2022*

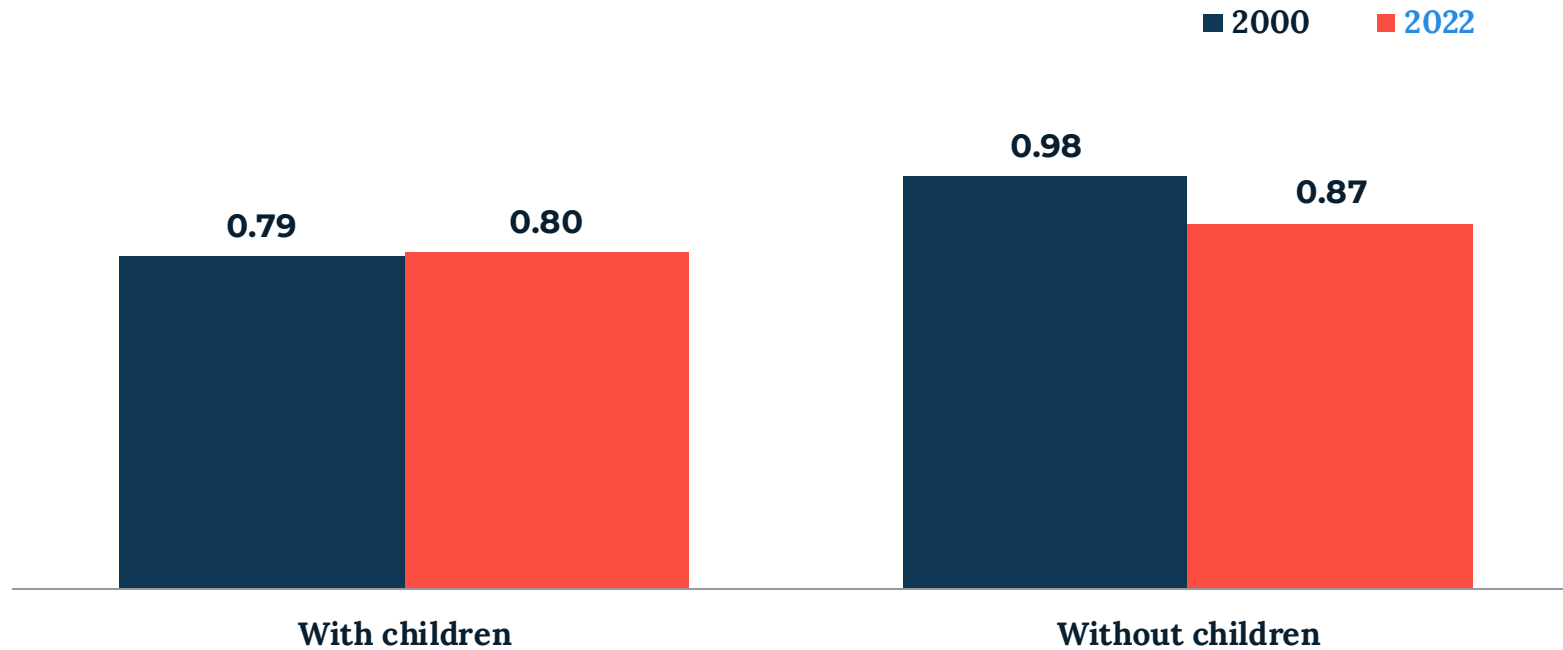


- The median income of men with children is higher than that of men without children, whereas it is lower for women.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# GENDER PAY DISPARITY FOR WOMEN WITH CHILDREN HAS REMAINED THE SAME SINCE 2000, THE DISPARITY HAS INCREASED FOR WOMEN WITHOUT CHILDREN

*Median total income by presence of related children under 18 in household and sex, 18-64, full-time not enrolled in school*



**In 2000, women with children earned 79% of what men with children did. This has remained stable in 2022.**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

# OVERALL, SOME GAINS AND SOME LOSSES IN THE PAY RATIO SINCE 2000

## Improvements in Pay Ratio

- Women outside of peak child-bearing ages (18-24, 44+)
- engineering & architecture, life sciences, community & social services
- Asian and Hispanic women
- HS and Associates' degrees

## Worsening of Pay Ratio

- Peak child-bearing age women (age 25-44)
- Women without children
- White and Black women
- At the ends of education distribution (Less than HS, Bachelors' or higher)

# DOES EDUCATION EXPLAIN GENDER PAY DISPARITIES?

Education does not explain why women earn less since women are more educated

Education has become even less of an explanatory model over time as women have become more educated

|                          | Explained Share of Pay Gap |             |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
|                          | 2000                       | 2022        |
| <b>Education</b>         | <b>-6.9%</b>               | <b>-15%</b> |
| <b>Occupation</b>        | -2.7%                      | 5%          |
| <b>Full-Time Work</b>    | 24%                        | 20%         |
| <b>Hours/Week</b>        | 41%                        | 38%         |
| <b>Explained Portion</b> | 55%                        | 46%         |

Source: ACS 2018-22, US Census 2000. Aged 18-64, not enrolled in school. Blinder, A. S. 1973. Wage discrimination: Reduced form and structural estimates. *Journal of Human Resources* 8: 436-455. Oaxaca, R. L., and M. R. Ransom. 1994. On discrimination and the decomposition of wage differentials. *Journal of Econometrics* 61: 5-21.

# DO OCCUPATIONAL DIFFERENCES EXPLAIN GENDER PAY DISPARITIES?

Men's advantage of being in high paying occupations contributed 5% to the pay gap in 2022.

Occupational sorting has become more important over time.

|                          | Explained Share of Pay Gap |            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
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# DO DIFFERENCES IN HOURS OF WORK EXPLAIN GENDER PAY DISPARITIES?

Differences in tendency to work full-time/full-year (35+ hours/48+ weeks/year) explained 20% of the gender pay gap in 2022

Accounting for the full spectrum of hours worked/week, gender differences in work hours explained 38% of the gender pay gap in 2022.

|                          | Explained Share of Pay Gap |            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
|                          | 2000                       | 2022       |
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# OTHER FACTORS ACCOUNT FOR AN INCREASING SHARE OF THE GENDER PAY GAP

In 2000, education, occupation and work hours explained 55% of the gender pay gap, but in 2022 they only explained 48%.

Other possible factors: social networks, years of experience, negotiating, discrimination, unions.

|                          | Explained Share of Pay Gap |            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
|                          | 2000                       | 2022       |
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# Conclusions and Resources

## RESOURCES:

- [Mayor's Office of Women's Advancement \(MOWA\)](#)
- [Podcast: Handbook Talk with Barbara Petrongolo and Jessica Pan: Which policies were effective in narrowing the gender gap over the last 50 years?](#)

### PAY GAP

Boston's pay gap has **persisted**, though it is **better** than the **national average**.

### SAME OR WORSENERD

It remained the **same** or **worsened** for **Bachelors'+ degrees**, and **women aged 25-44**.

### OCCUPATIONAL SORTING

**Occupational sorting** has become more important over time, and **hours worked** remains important.