



Raising the Federal Minimum Wage

Impact on LGBT Adults

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The current federal minimum wage in the United States is \$7.25 per hour. Lawmakers are considering proposals to raise the minimum wage. The Williams Institute estimates that 1,450,000 LGBT adults¹ would see an increase in earnings by 2025 if the minimum wage were increased from \$7.25 to \$15 per hour.

This estimate includes 913,000 LGBT workers who would have earned less than \$15 per hour without the proposed increase and an additional 537,000 million LGBT workers who might see ripple effects on their wages.² Those who are overrepresented among low-wage workers would benefit the most from an increase in the minimum wage.³

Prior research has indicated that increasing the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour would reduce the proportion of male same-sex couples living in poverty by one-third and female same-sex couples by almost one-half.⁴ We would expect similar reductions in poverty among LGBT people who are not in same-sex couple households, with the larger gains for those with the highest rates of poverty—Black, Latino/a, bisexual, and transgender adults⁵.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Unpublished weighted analyses of the [2017 Gallup Daily Tracking Survey](#) data conducted by The Williams Institute indicate that the percentage of employed workers (excluding those who are exclusively self-employed) ages 18 and up that identify as LGBT is 5.37%. This percentage was applied (multiplied) to the estimated 27 million workers who would benefit from raising the minimum wage to \$15 in an average week in 2025, as reported by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). See: *The Effects on Employment and Family Income of Increasing the Federal Minimum Wage*. Congressional Budget Office. July 2019. Available at: <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2019-07/CBO-55410-MinimumWage2019.pdf>. Accessed July 16, 2019.

² In the aforementioned report (<https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2019-07/CBO-55410-MinimumWage2019.pdf>), the CBO estimated that, in an average week in 2025, the \$15 per hour option would boost the wages of 17 million workers nationwide who would otherwise earn less than \$15 per hour. Another 10 million workers otherwise earning slightly more than \$15 per hour might see their wages rise as well. Applying % LGBT workers from the 2017 Gallup to the CBO's estimates of 17 and 10 million workers, respectively, and rounding to the nearest 1,000, we arrive at estimates of 913,000 and 537,000 LGBT adult workers.

³ See Cooper, D. Raising the minimum wage to \$15 by 2024 would lift wages for 41 million American workers. Economic Policy Institute. April 16, 2017. Available at: <https://www.epi.org/files/pdf/125047.pdf/> Accessed July 16, 2017.

⁴ See Badgett, MVL & Schneebaum A. *The Impact of a \$15 Minimum Wage on Poverty Among Same-Sex Couples*. The Williams Institute. September 2016. Available at <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Poverty-and-the-15-Minimum-Wage-1.pdf>. Accessed July 16, 2017.

⁵ See Badgett, M.V.L., Durso, L. E., & A., S. (2013). *New Patterns of Poverty in the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community*. Retrieved from CA: <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGB-Poverty-Update-Jun-2013.pdf>; Badgett, M. V. L. (2018). *Left Out? Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Poverty in the U.S.* *Population Research and Policy Review*, 37(5), 667–702.; Conron, K. J., Mimiaga, M. J., & Landers, S. J. (2010). *A population-based study of sexual orientation identity and gender differences in adult health.* *Am J Public Health*, 100(10), 1953-1960.; Crissman, H. P., Berger, M. B., Graham, L. F., & Dalton, V. K. (2017). *Transgender Demographics: A Household Probability Sample of US Adults, 2014.* *Am J Public Health*, 107(2), 213-215.; Dilley, J. A., Simmons, K. W., Boysun, M. J., Pizacani, B. A., & Stark, M. J. (2010). *Demonstrating the importance and feasibility of including sexual orientation in public health surveys: health disparities in the Pacific Northwest.* *Am J Public Health*, 100(3), 460-467.; Goldberg, S. K., & Conron, K. J. (2018). *Demographic characteristics of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender adults in the United States: Evidence from the 2015-2017 Gallup Daily Tracking survey.* In W. Swan (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of L.G.B.T.Q. Administration and Policy* (pp. pp. 17-50). New York: Routledge.