



Young, single, childless women out-earn male counterparts

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By **Paul Wiseman**, USA TODAY

Single, childless women in their twenties are finding success in the city: They're out-earning their male counterparts in the USA's biggest metropolitan areas.

Women ages 22 to 30 with no husband and no kids earn a median \$27,000 a year, 8% more than comparable men in the top 366 metropolitan areas, according to 2008 U.S. Census Bureau data crunched by the [New York](#) research firm Reach Advisors and released Wednesday. The women out-earn men in 39 of the 50 biggest cities and match them in another eight. The disparity is greatest in Atlanta, where young, childless single women earn 21% more than male counterparts.

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The shift in earnings power started showing up in a few big cities a few years ago and has become widespread. It isn't true for all women in their 20s working full time — overall, they earn 90% of what all men in their 20s make — just for those who don't marry or have kids.

Education is the key: "Young women are going to college in droves," Reach Advisors reports. "Nearly three-quarters of girls who graduate from high school head to college, vs. two-thirds of the boys. But they don't stop there. Women are now 1.5 times more likely than men to graduate from college or earn advanced degrees." Armed with degrees, young women command higher salaries.

The trend is especially apparent in cities where minority groups make up more than half the

population. Among blacks and Hispanics, women are more than twice as likely as men to earn college degrees. Contributing to the shift: the "decimation of the manufacturing employment base," which has wiped out good-paying jobs for young men who didn't go to college, Reach Advisors notes.

The increase in twentysomething women earning decent paychecks while skipping or delaying marriage and motherhood has big implications for society and for the economy. Reach Advisors says twentysomethings who put off marriage increasingly live at home with their parents, dashing the hopes of builders who had expected [Generation Y](#) to drive demand for apartments.

Male-oriented businesses such as automakers and sporting goods companies will increasingly target women with cash to spend.

"They don't need marriage as much," says [Stephanie Coontz](#), who teaches history and family studies at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash. "They're likely to be pickier, and they're likely to delay marriage." Coontz dismisses the notion that successful single women intimidate men and can't find husbands. They just marry later in life, she says.

"One day, I'll get married and have kids. But I'm in no rush," says Rebecca Loveridge, 27, a Washington, D.C., magazine marketing director who also writes a restaurant blog. She likes dining out, attending concerts and checking out art galleries with her friends. "Now is the time to be single," she

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