

Addressing the Latina Wage Gap: A Necessary Step for Our Nation's Economic Prosperity

A persistent gender-based wage gap continues to harm women, their families, and the economy. And it is particularly damaging for Latinas.*

In the last few decades, the U.S. Latino population has exploded, and Latinos' economic power has grown with it. In 2020, the Latino population reached 62.1 million—outpacing the overall national population growth.¹ Latinos consistently hold the highest labor force participation rate out of all other demographics.² Relatedly, Latinos are projected to hold \$2.6 trillion in purchasing power over the next three years.³ Still, the Latina wage gap plays a detrimental role in Latinas reach their full economic potential.

Even as Latinas have entered the workforce in record numbers totaling some 12.6 million, they continue to face the largest wage gap among women. Latinas in the United States are typically paid just 54 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.⁴ Among people working full time, year-round, Latinas are still typically paid just 57 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.⁵ Overall, all women are typically paid 77 cents for every dollar paid to men.⁶

Latinas face a myriad of obstacles in the labor force that both contribute to and exacerbate the detrimental effects of a gender wage gap, including: overrepresentation in low-wage service occupations, limited access to benefits—such as paid sick days, paid family and medical leave, and retirement plan access—and discrimination.⁷ However, the Latina pay gap extends beyond low-wage workers to affect Latinas at every level, including Latinas in executive and other professional roles.

* The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau and throughout this document to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race. This document may also refer to this population as “Latinx” to represent the diversity of gender identities and expressions that are present in the community.

Altogether, these factors leave Latinas, many of whom are single heads of households, with a diminished ability to make ends meet, save for the future, and access traditional credit. In turn, Latinas are more vulnerable to experiencing poverty. In our survey in August 2022, nearly half of Latinas (46%) reported not having a savings account. One in six (17%) have no bank account of any kind: not having enough money for minimum balance requirements is the most common reason for remaining unbanked. Four in ten Latinas (41%) indicated that they have no emergency fund. And more than four in ten of the Latinas we surveyed (43%) said that loans or debt had affected their ability to afford healthcare.⁸ Achieving pay parity is the first step to ensuring that working Latinas now and, in the future, can achieve economic security and find an opportunity to build and maintain wealth.

The wage gap harms Latinas, their families, and the U.S. economy.

- Median wages for Latinas in the United States are \$30,551 per year, compared to the median wage of \$57,005 for white, non-Hispanic men—meaning the wage gap costs Latinas \$26,454 each per year.⁹ These lost wages mean Latinas have less money to support themselves and their families, save and invest for the future, and spend on goods and services.
- In the states with the largest numbers of full-time, year-round working Latinas, pay for Latinas ranges from 44 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men in California to 79 cents in Puerto Rico.¹⁰ (See Appendix I for a full listing of wage gaps by state).
- In the occupations in where the largest numbers of Latinas are employed, Latinas are paid less than white, non-Hispanic men. Specifically, in manufacturing and transportation, Latinas are typically paid just 63 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men; in service jobs, 68 cents; in management, 60 cents; and in office and administrative support roles, they are paid 76 cents on the dollar.¹¹
- The wage gap persists, even within the highest-paid occupations for Latinas. The median pay for Latinas in computer and mathematical occupations is \$60,648 per year, compared to a median pay of \$91,452 for white, non-Hispanic men. Latinas in legal occupations are typically paid \$50,102 per year, compared to \$141,465 for white, non-Hispanic men. Latina nurses are paid on average \$52,198 per year compared to \$80,563 for white, non-Hispanic men.¹²



Eliminating the wage gap would provide much-needed income to Latinas, including many heads of households.

- Around half of Latina mothers are key breadwinners for their families, which means their households rely heavily on their wages to make ends meet and get ahead.¹³
- Latinas head nearly 3.5 million family households in the United States,¹⁴ and 29.7% of these households live below the poverty level, compared to 9.1% of all U.S. households.¹⁵ This means that more than one million Latina-headed family households live in poverty.

If the wage gap were eliminated, on average, a Latina woman would have enough money to afford one of the following major investments in her well-being and financial stability.

A Latina could pay for the following:

- Nearly 33 more months of childcare.¹⁶
- Nearly 16 additional months of mortgage payments.¹⁷
- More than two additional years of rent.¹⁸
- More than 17 additional months of premiums for employer-provided health insurance.¹⁹
- Eliminating her student loans in just over one year.²⁰

Latina workers overwhelmingly support fair pay and paid leave.

In addition to low wages, Latinas report gender and racial discrimination, harassment, and violence in the workplace—factors that, in addition to the lack of family-friendly workplace policies, are major drivers of the wage gap.²¹ Most Latinas want investments in policies that identify pay discrimination and support working families.

Consider:

- More than eight in ten Latinas (84%) are concerned with general costs of living and nearly three in four (73%) are concerned with affording rent and mortgage payments.²²
- Nearly three in five Latinas (58%) are concerned with access to paid sick and safe leave, while more than half (54%) have concerns about their access to paid family and medical leave.²³ More than four in five Latinas (84%) support a national paid family and medical leave program.²⁴
- Nearly half of Latinas (44%) report that they have concerns about discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Nearly eight in ten (79%) believe that ending workplace harassment and discrimination is “very important” or “one of the most important” things that Congress should address. In addition, nearly eight in ten (78%) feel that strengthening equal pay laws is very important or one of the most important actions for Congress, and three-quarters (76%) say the same about steps to end pregnancy discrimination.²⁵ Four in five (75%) support policies that would require employers to report pay data by gender, race, and ethnicity to better identify possible pay discrimination.²⁶

Latinas and their families deserve strong policies that support economic security.

Latinas and their families urgently need the following to help close the wage gap and improve their economic security and opportunity:

- Enacting the **Paycheck Fairness Act**, which would make it harder for employers to engage in sex-based wage discrimination, prohibit employers from forbidding their workers from discussing wages and institute data collection that will help inform future enforcement efforts, and fully funding federal agencies that investigate and enforce fair pay laws.
- Enacting the **Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act** to create a national paid family and medical leave program; the **Healthy Families Act** to ensure workers nationwide can earn paid sick and safe days; and the **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act** to ensure access to workplace accommodations for pregnancy.
- Centering racial and gender equity in implementing workforce investments through the **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**, the **CHIPS and Science Act**, and the **Inflation Reduction Act**.

Appendix I: Latina Wage Gap by State, 2020

An analysis of the wage gap in the 25 states with the largest number of Latinas who work full time, year-round, plus Puerto Rico

State	Number of Latinas Working Full Time, Year-Round	Median Wages for Latinas	Median Wages for White, Non-Hispanic men	Annual Wage Gap	Cents on the Dollar
California	1,863,080	\$35,617	\$81,488	\$45,871	\$0.44
Texas	1,446,033	\$31,480	\$67,944	\$36,464	\$0.46
Florida	835,662	\$33,048	\$54,473	\$21,425	\$0.61
New York	496,897	\$41,290	\$71,205	\$29,915	\$0.58
Puerto Rico	306,820	\$24,369	\$30,754	\$6,385	\$0.79
Arizona	290,297	\$33,262	\$60,564	\$27,302	\$0.55
Illinois	289,215	\$33,868	\$66,763	\$32,895	\$0.51
New Jersey	261,196	\$36,764	\$81,883	\$45,119	\$0.45
Colorado	159,529	\$36,109	\$65,674	\$29,565	\$0.55
New Mexico	132,111	\$33,592	\$58,750	\$25,158	\$0.57
Georgia	119,610	\$29,720	\$59,901	\$30,181	\$0.50
Nevada	118,060	\$32,696	\$61,145	\$28,449	\$0.53
Virginia	116,647	\$36,863	\$67,034	\$30,171	\$0.55
Pennsylvania	115,746	\$33,489	\$59,605	\$26,116	\$0.56
Washington	109,853	\$35,443	\$69,932	\$34,489	\$0.51
Massachusetts	106,498	\$40,260	\$76,628	\$36,368	\$0.53
North Carolina	105,091	\$30,007	\$54,494	\$24,487	\$0.55
Maryland	84,045	\$37,755	\$78,530	\$40,775	\$0.48
Connecticut	73,689	\$37,866	\$77,005	\$39,139	\$0.49
Oregon	67,118	\$33,001	\$59,950	\$26,949	\$0.55
Michigan	59,797	\$33,323	\$57,666	\$24,343	\$0.58
Utah	55,857	\$31,316	\$62,092	\$30,776	\$0.50
Ohio	54,009	\$36,013	\$55,127	\$19,114	\$0.65
Indiana	52,899	\$31,659	\$54,395	\$22,736	\$0.58
Wisconsin	48,458	\$32,472	\$56,055	\$23,583	\$0.58
Oklahoma	47,580	\$27,629	\$53,217	\$25,588	\$0.52

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2016-2020, Geographies: All States within United States Plus Puerto Rico, Table B20017I: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2020 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings in the Past 12 Months (Hispanic or Latino); Table B20005I: Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months by Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2020 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) for the Population 16 Years and Over (Hispanic or Latino); and American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2020, Geographies, All States within the United States Plus Puerto Rico, Table B20017H: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2020 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings in the Past 12 Months (White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino).

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/02/03/u-s-hispanic-population-continued-its-geographic-spread-in-the-2010s/>
- 2 [https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/race-and-ethnicity/2020/home.htm#:~:text=The%20labor%20force%20participation%20rate%20for%20Asian%20adult%20men%20\(74.0,and%20Whites%20\(56.8%20percent\)](https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/race-and-ethnicity/2020/home.htm#:~:text=The%20labor%20force%20participation%20rate%20for%20Asian%20adult%20men%20(74.0,and%20Whites%20(56.8%20percent))
- 3 <https://www.bloomberglia.com/english/purchasing-power-of-hispanics-in-the-us-has-clear-impact-on-economy/>
- 4 U.S. Census Bureau. (2020) *Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement: Table PINC-05. "Work Experience in 2019 - People 15 Years Old and Over by Total Money Earnings in 2019, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex."* Retrieved 5 March, 2021, from https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html#textimage_17 (Unpublished calculation based on the median earnings of white, non-Hispanic men and Hispanic women (any race) who worked full time, year-round in 2019; full-time is defined as 35 hours a week or more).
- 5 Ibid. (Unpublished calculation based on the number of Hispanic or Latina women with any earnings and the number who worked at full-time jobs for 50 or more weeks per year in 2021.)
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Michel, Zoe Z., & Liz Ben-Ishai. (2016, August) *Buenos Empleos: Latinos' Limited Access to Quality Jobs*. Retrieved 14 November 2022, from The Center for Law and Social Policy website: <https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/buenos-empleos-latinos-limited-access-quality-jobs>; Mason, J., & Molina Acosta, P. (2021, March). *Called to Care: A Racially Just Recovery Demands Paid Family and Medical Leave*. Retrieved 16 November 2022 from National Partnership for Women & Families website: <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/economic-justice/reports/called-to-care-a-racially-just-demands-paid-family-and-medical-leave.html>
- 8 UnidosUS and Oportun. (2022). *Latinos' Access to Credit Remains Uneven and Stratified*. Retrieved 15 November 2022, from https://www.unidosus.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/unidosus_oportun_latinosaccesstocreditremainslowandstratified.pdf. Crosstabs available at https://www.unidosus.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/unidosus_oportun_latinosandcreditservicesurvey_azcatx_crosstabs.pdf.
- 9 See note 1.
- 10 U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2019, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20017H. "Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2019 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings in the Past 12 Months (White alone, not Hispanic)."* Retrieved 14 November 2022, from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B20017H%3A%20MEDIAN%20EARNINGS%20IN%20THE%20PAST%2012%20MONTHS%20%28IN%202020%20INFLATION-ADJUSTED%20DOLLARS%29%20BY%20SEX%20BY%20WORK%20EXPERIENCE%20IN%20THE%20PAST%2012%20MONTHS%20FOR%20THE%20POPULATION%2016%20YEARS%20AND%20OVER%20WITH%20EARNINGS%20IN%20THE%20PAST%2012%20MONTHS%20%28WHITE%20ALONE,%20NOT%20HISPANIC%20OR%20LATINO%29&g=0100000US&tid=ACSDT5Y2020.B20017H> U.S. Census Bureau. *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2015-2019, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20017I. "Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2019 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings in the Past 12 Months (Hispanic or Latino)."* Retrieved 5 March 2021, from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B20017I&g=0100000US.04000.001&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B20017I&hidePreview=true> (This calculation is based on a comparison of the median earnings of white, non-Hispanic men working full time, year-round with that of Latinas working full time, year-round.); U.S. Census Bureau. *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2015-2019, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20005I. "Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months by Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2019 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) for the Population 16 Years and Over (Hispanic or Latino)."* Retrieved 5 March 2021, from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B20005I&g=0100000US.04000.001&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B20005I&hidePreview=true>.
- 11 U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). *2019 Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement: PINC-06. "Occupation of Longest Job-People 15 Years Old and Over, by Total Money Earnings, Work Experience, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex."* Retrieved 5 March 2021, from <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-06.html> (Unpublished calculation based on the median earnings of white, non-Hispanic men and Hispanic women (any race) who worked full time, year-round in 2018; full-time is defined as 35 hours a week or more).

- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Shaw, E., Mason, C., Lacarte, V., & Jauregui, E. (2020, May). *Holding Up Half the Sky: Mothers as Workers, Primary Caregivers, & Breadwinners During COVID-19*. Retrieved 5 March 2021 from the Institute for Women's Policy Research: <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Holding-Up-Half-the-Sky-Mothers-as-Breadwinners.pdf>.
- 14 U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 20218, Table B11001I. "Household Type (Including Living Alone) (Hispanic or Latino)." Retrieved 14 November 2022, from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=%20B11001I&tid=ACSDT1Y2021.B11001I> (Calculation uses family households headed by females living in a household with family and no spouse. A family household includes a householder, one or more people living in the same household who are related to the householder, and anyone else living in the same household.)*
- 15 U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 20219, Table S0201. "Selected Population Profile in the United States (Total Population and Hispanic or Latino, of any race)." Retrieved 14 November 2022, from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=S0201&t=400&g=0100000US&tid=ACSSPPIY2021.S0201&moe=false> (To determine whether a household falls below the poverty level, the U.S. Census Bureau considers the income of the householder, size of family, number of related children, and, for one- and two-person families, age of householder. The poverty threshold in 2021 was \$21,831 for a single householder and two children under 18.)*
- 16 Child Care Aware of America. (2019). *The U.S. and the High Price of Child Care: An Examination of a Broken System*. Retrieved 5 March 2021, from <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/3957809/2019%20Price%20of%20Care%20State%20Sheets/Final-TheUSandtheHighPriceofChildCare-AnExaminationofaBrokenSystem.pdf>; Estimate of \$9,254 based on the average cost of center-based child care for a four-year-old. This average is not representative of the mean and is an approximation calculated by weighting state child care cost averages by the number of programs by type reported by each state. It is not to be considered a "national average."
- 17 U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2019, Table DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics*. Retrieved 5 March 2021, from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=dp04&d=ACS%201Year%20Estimates%20Data%20Profiles&tid=ACSDPIY2019.DP04&hidePreview=true> (Calculation uses median monthly owner costs for housing units with a mortgage.)
- 18 Ibid. (Calculation uses median gross rent for occupied units paying rent.)
- 19 Kaiser Family Foundation. (n.d.) Average Annual Single Premium per Enrolled Employee For Employer-Based Health Insurance, 2018. Retrieved 5 March 2021, from <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/single-coverage/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>.
- 20 Siegel Bernard, T., & Russell, K. (2018, July 11). The New Toll of American Student Debt in 3 Charts. The New York Times. *New York Times*. Retrieved 5 March 2021, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/11/your-money/student-loan-debt-parents.html> (The average debt load at graduation for a student receiving a bachelor's degree was \$30,301 in 2015-2016.)
- 21 Glynn, Sarah Jane. (2018, April 9) *Gender Wage Inequality*. Retrieved 5 March 2021, from Washington Center for Equitable Growth website: <https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/gender-wage-inequality/?longform=true>.
- 22 YWCA. (2022, August). *YWWomenVote 2022 - Midterm Election Study*. Retrieved 14 November 2022, from <https://ywomenvote.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/20220826-YWWomenVote-Memo-MidtermElectionStudy.pdf>.
- 23 YWCA. (2022, August). *YWWomenVote 2022 - Midterm Election Study*. Retrieved 14 November 2022, from <https://ywomenvote.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/20220826-YWWomenVote-Memo-MidtermElectionStudy.pdf>.
- 24 Navigator Research (2022, September). *Americans Overwhelmingly Support Paid Family and Medical Leave*. Retrieved 14 November 2022, from <https://navigatorresearch.org/americans-overwhelmingly-support-paid-family-and-medical-leave/>.
- 25 YWCA. (2022, August). *YWWomenVote 2022 - Midterm Election Study*. Retrieved 14 November 2022, from <https://ywomenvote.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/20220826-YWWomenVote-Memo-MidtermElectionStudy.pdf>.
- 26 National Women's Law Center (n.d.) *Resilient but Not Recovered: Latinas in the COVID-19 Crisis*. Retrieved 14 November 2022, from https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Latinas_RESILIENT_FS-Final-August-2022.pdf.