

# Beyond Wages: Effects of the Latina Wage Gap

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

Even as Latinas have entered the workforce in record numbers and now number more than 11 million workers, they nonetheless face the largest wage gaps among women. Latinas in the United States are typically paid just 54 cents for every dollar paid to White, non-Hispanic men.<sup>1</sup> Overall, women employed full time, year-round are typically paid 82 cents for every dollar paid to men employed full time, year-round.<sup>2</sup>

Latinas face a myriad of obstacles in the labor force, including overrepresentation in low-wage service occupations, limited access to benefits—including paid leave and retirement plans—and discrimination, among others.<sup>3</sup> However, the Latina pay gap extends beyond just low-wage workers, affecting Latinas at every level—including executives and other professionals.

The nature of low-wage work and a persistent gender wage gap hurt Latinas and their families, making Latinas—many of whom are single heads of households—especially vulnerable to experiencing poverty. Worryingly, Latinas are the least likely group of women workers to live with economic security or have access to paid sick time.<sup>4</sup> 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.

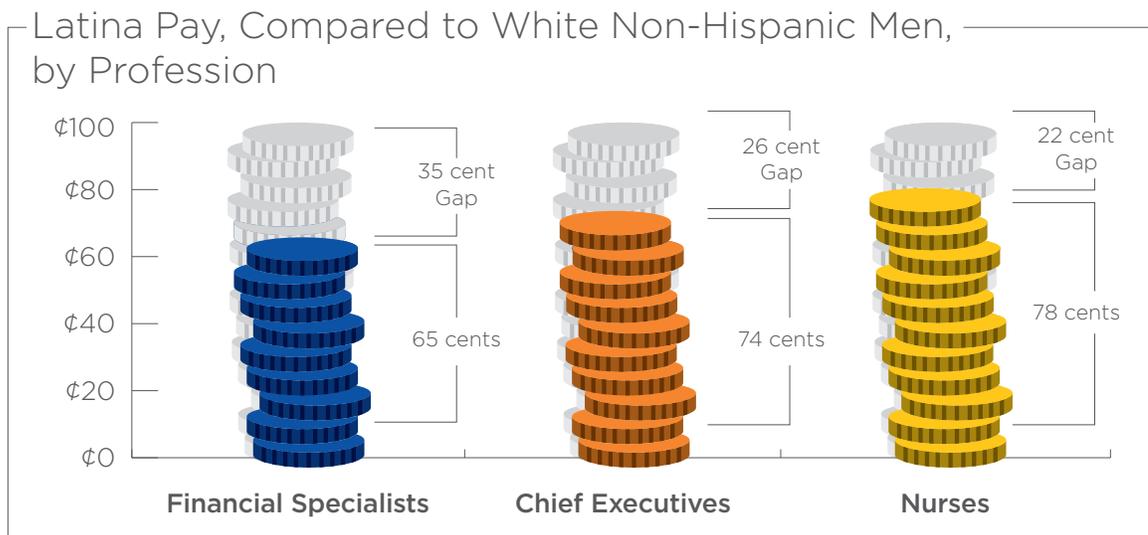
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\* The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau and throughout this document to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent; they 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.

**Rampant wage disparities persist across states and occupations, with potentially devastating consequences for Latinas and their families.**

- In the 25 states, plus Puerto Rico, with the largest numbers of Latinas working full-time, year-round; pay for Latinas ranges from 39 cents for every dollar paid to White, non-Hispanic men in California, to 59 cents in Ohio and Florida<sup>5</sup> (See Appendix I for a full listing of wage gaps by state).
- In the occupations in which 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 57 cents for every dollar paid to White, non-Hispanic men; in service jobs, 63 cents; in management, 62 cents; and in office and administrative support, 82 cents.<sup>6</sup>

The wage gap persists, even within the highest-paid occupations for Latinas. The median pay for Latina chief executives is \$86,732 per year, compared to median pay of \$116,538 for White, non-Hispanic men. Latina financial specialists are typically paid \$52,500 per year, compared to \$80,235 for White, non-Hispanic men. Latina nurses are paid on average \$52,259 per year compared to \$67,259 for White, non-Hispanic men.<sup>7</sup>



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

The median wage for Latinas in the United States was \$33,540 per year, compared to the median wage of \$61,576 for White, non-Hispanic men—meaning the wage gap costs Latinas \$28,036 each per year.<sup>8</sup> 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. **Eliminating the wage gap would provide much-needed income to Latinas, including many heads of households.**

- More than 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.<sup>9</sup>
- More than three million family households in the United States are headed by Latinas,<sup>10</sup> and 33.1% of these households live below the poverty level, compared to 11.8% of all U.S. households.<sup>11</sup> This means that more than one million Latina-headed family households live in poverty.

**If the wage gap were eliminated, on average, a Latina working full time, year-round would have enough money to afford one of the following:**

- More than three additional years of childcare.<sup>12</sup>
- Nearly 19 additional months of mortgage payments.<sup>13</sup>
- More than two additional years and three months of rent.<sup>14</sup>
- Almost two years of the maximum retirement contribution to her employer-sponsored 401(k) retirement account.
- Almost 20 additional months of premiums for employer-provided health insurance.<sup>15</sup>
- Pay off student loans in just over one year.<sup>16</sup>

**Latina workers have significant concerns and overwhelmingly support fair pay and paid leave.**

**In addition to low wages, Latinas report gender and racial discrimination, sexual 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.**<sup>17</sup> In a recent survey conducted by the YWCA, more than half of Latinas report having trouble meeting basic needs.<sup>18</sup> The majority of women want to see policies developed that support working family caregivers and that help build family wealth and security in retirement.

- More than half of Latinas (56%) report being very worried about having a medical expense they cannot afford, and nearly half (45%) report being very worried about being able to afford their rent or mortgage.<sup>19</sup>
- More than half of Latinas (53%) report being very worried about being able to care for their relatives as they age and 38% report being very worried about having access to paid family and medical leave.<sup>20</sup>
- More than eight in 10 Latinas (85%) strongly agree that Congress should strengthen equal pay laws and eight in 10 (80%) strongly agree that Congress should pass paid family and medical leave legislation.<sup>21</sup>

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

Latinas contribute so much to their families, communities, and the national economy. Yet, they continue to bear the brunt of unequal pay, limited access to paid sick time and paid family and medical leave, and discrimination. Latinas know what they need, and their voice is clear on the importance of strong policies that would improve their access to high quality jobs, fair and nondiscriminatory treatment, and family-friendly workplaces and supports. These policies would help close the wage gap, benefit families, and ensure retirement security for Latinas. It's time to listen to Latinas and other women, and support policies that reward hard work, expand economic security, and help bolster the national economy.

## Appendix I: Latina Wage Gap by State, 2018

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	1,674,989	31,351	80,065	\$48,714	\$0.39
Texas	1,271,777	28,030	65,965	\$37,935	\$0.42
Florida	703,760	30,756	52,493	\$21,737	\$0.59
New York	474,425	35,964	67,434	\$31,470	\$0.53
Puerto Rico	316,369	23,299	26,230	\$2,931	\$0.89
Illinois	259,995	30,502	65,350	\$34,848	\$0.47
Arizona	244,627	30,380	60,023	\$29,643	\$0.51
New Jersey	242,004	32,159	78,244	\$46,085	\$0.41
Colorado	138,882	32,151	63,706	\$31,555	\$0.50
New Mexico	123,012	30,907	52,848	\$21,941	\$0.58
Nevada	104,502	30,550	58,882	\$28,332	\$0.52
Virginia	100,313	33,373	65,294	\$31,921	\$0.51
Georgia	100,157	26,294	57,255	\$30,961	\$0.46
Pennsylvania	91,030	30,919	56,403	\$25,484	\$0.55
Washington	90,178	30,042	67,171	\$37,129	\$0.45
Massachusetts	87,659	35,727	72,354	\$36,627	\$0.49
North Carolina	86,781	25,130	52,148	\$27,018	\$0.48
Maryland	75,416	33,449	75,630	\$42,181	\$0.44
Connecticut	65,479	34,861	73,624	\$38,763	\$0.47
Oregon	51,723	27,517	56,641	\$29,124	\$0.49
Michigan	48,761	30,847	55,624	\$24,777	\$0.55
Utah	45,903	26,955	60,136	\$33,181	\$0.45
Ohio	45,524	31,737	53,532	\$21,795	\$0.59
Indiana	45,250	28,024	52,156	\$24,132	\$0.54
Wisconsin	40,707	28,435	54,014	\$25,579	\$0.53
Oregon	38,696	25,288	51,581	\$26,293	\$0.49

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2013-2017, Geographies: All States within United States Plus Puerto Rico, Table B20017I: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2017 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 2017 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) for the Population 16 Years and Over (Hispanic or Latino); and American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2018, Geographies, All States within the United States Plus Puerto Rico, Table B20017H: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2017 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).

## About Us

UnidosUS, previously known as NCLR (National Council of La Raza), is the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Through its unique combination of expert research, advocacy, programs, and an Affiliate Network of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico, UnidosUS simultaneously challenges the social, economic, and political barriers that affect Latinos at the national and local levels.

For more than 50 years, UnidosUS has united communities and different groups seeking common ground through collaboration, and that share a desire to make our country stronger. For more information on UnidosUS, visit [www.unidosus.org](http://www.unidosus.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

## Endnotes

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement: Table PINC-05. "Work Experience in 2018 – People 15 Years Old and Over by Total Money Earnings in 2018, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex." Accessed November 14, 2019. <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).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Michel, Zoe Z., and Liz Ben-Ishai. "Buenos Empleos: Latinos' Limited Access to Quality Jobs." August 2016. Accessed November 14, 2019. <https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/publication-1/Latinos-and-Job-Quality-FINAL.pdf>.
- 4 Suh, Jooyeoun, Jennifer Clark, and Jeff Hayes. "Basic Economic Security in the United States: How Much Income Do Working Adults Need in Each State?" Institute for Women's Policy Research. October 11, 2018. Accessed November 14, 2019. <https://iwpr.org/publications/best-us-2018/>.
- 5 U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2018, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20017H. "Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2018 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)." Accessed November 1, 2019. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B20017H&hidePreview=true&table=B20017H&tid=ACSDT1Y2018.B20017H&lastDisplayedRow=9&g=01000000US.04000.001>; U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2013-2017, Geographies: All States within United States, Table B20017I. "Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2017 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)." Accessed November 1 2019. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B20017I&g=01000000US.04000.001&lastDisplayedRow=6&table=B20017I&tid=ACSDT5Y2017.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 2013-2017, 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 2017 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) for the Population 16 Years and Over (Hispanic or Latino)." Accessed November 1, 2019. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B20005I&g=01000000US.04000.001&lastDisplayedRow=30&table=B20005I&tid=ACSDT5Y2017.B20005I&hidePreview=true>
- 6 U.S. Census Bureau. 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." Accessed November 14, 2019. <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).

- 7 Ibid.
- 8 See note 1.
- 9 Anderson, Julie. "Breadwinner Mothers by Race/ Ethnicity and State." September 8, 2016. Accessed November 14, 2019. <https://iwpr.org/publications/breadwinner-mothers-by-raceethnicity-and-state/>
- 10 U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2018, Table B11001I. "Household Type (Including Living Alone) (Hispanic or Latino)." Accessed November 14, 2019. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=%20B11001I&hidePreview=false&table=B11001I&tid=ACSDT1Y2018.B11001I&lastDisplayedRow=8> (Calculation uses family households headed by females living in a household with family and no husband. 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.)
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- 16 Siegel Bernard, T., & Russell, K. "The New Toll of American Student Debt in 3 Charts." July 11, 2018. The New York Times. Retrieved 14 November 2019, 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.)
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