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55 Cents on the Dollar Isn't Enough for Latinas

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Latinas¹ are typically paid just 55 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.² This gap in pay, which typically amounts to a loss of \$2,425 every month, \$29,098 every year, and \$1,163,920 over a 40-year career, means that Latinas have to work 22 months to make as much as white, non-Hispanic white men were paid in the previous calendar year alone. This pay disparity has closed very little in the past thirty years: Latinas in 1989 were paid just 52 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men. That gap has only narrowed by a penny a decade since.³

As workers, Latinas are on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis, and as a result are disproportionately affected by the pandemic's health and economic impacts. The pandemic has exposed how the work performed primarily by women, and particularly by Latinas, has long been and continues to be undervalued, even as the rest of the country is depending on it as never before. Women are the majority of workers risking their lives to provide health care, child care, and other essential services, and Latinas are overrepresented in a variety of these occupations. They are also overrepresented in many of the occupations feeling the brunt of COVID-related job loss. Lost earnings due to the gender wage gap are exacerbating the effects of COVID-19 for Latinas — and for the families who depend on their income. These lost earnings not only leave Latinas without a financial cushion to weather the current crisis, they also make it harder for them to build wealth, contributing to the racial wealth gap and barriers to Latinx families' economic prosperity.

Latinas are a large percentage of COVID-19 front-line workers, but they are being paid less than their white male peers and are experiencing high unemployment.

Latinas are overrepresented in front-line jobs providing essential public services during COVID-19, making up 10.0 percent of the front-line workforce despite making up only 7.3 percent of the workforce overall. Nearly 3 in 10 (28.3 percent) Latinas are in a front-line job.⁴ But Latinas are still paid less than white, non-Hispanic men in the same jobs. For example, Latinas are 22.0 percent of child care workers, and among

those working full-time, year-round in these jobs, Latinas are typically paid just 88 cents for every dollar typically paid to white, non-Hispanic men in the same occupation. Similarly, Latinas make up 14.4 percent of cashiers and retail salespeople in grocery stores but among full-time, year-round workers, they typically make just 76 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men typically make in the same jobs.

Latinas are also overrepresented in industries like restaurants, retail, and hotels that have seen massive job losses as pandemic-related restrictions closed businesses. And in these jobs, too, Latinas are paid less than their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts. For example, Latinas make up 23.6 percent of people working as janitors, building cleaners, maids and housekeepers. And among those working full-time, year-round, Latinas are typically paid just 61 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men working in these jobs are typically paid.

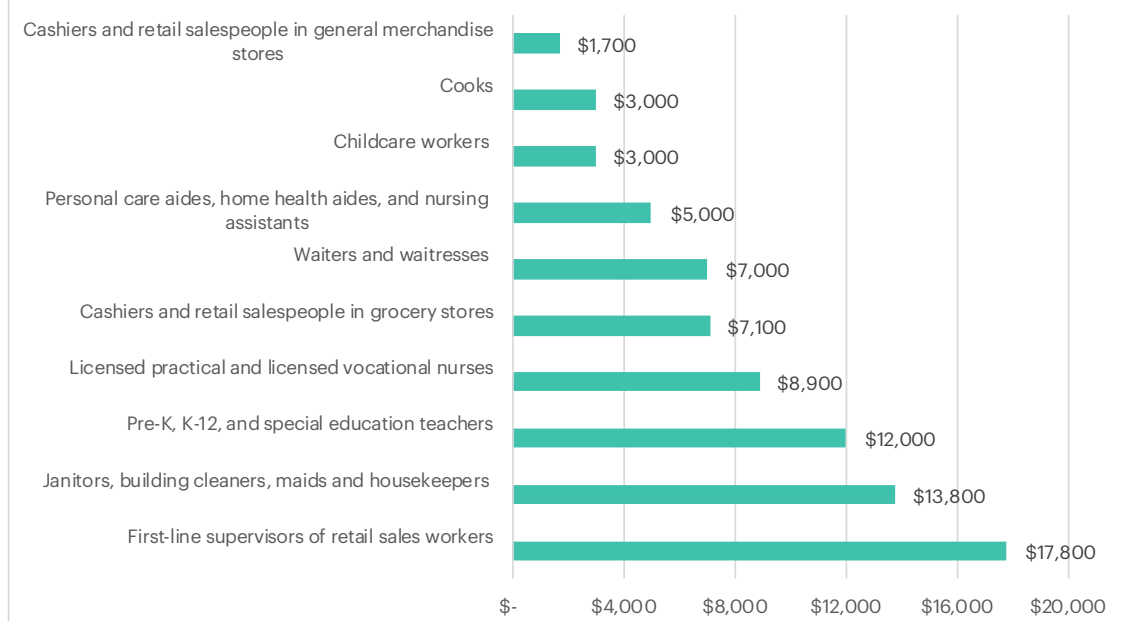
THE WAGE GAP FOR LATINAS IN SELECTED FRONT-LINE OCCUPATIONS

Occupation	Percent of workers who are Latinas	Median hourly wage for Latinas in occupation	Median hourly wage for white, non-Hispanic men in occupation	What a Latina makes for every dollar a white, non-Hispanic man makes
Janitors, building cleaners, maids and housekeepers	23.6%	\$10.19	\$16.83	\$0.61
Childcare workers	22.0%	\$10.58	\$12.02	\$0.88
Personal care aides, home health aides, and nursing assistants	16.0%	\$12.02	\$14.42	\$0.83
Cashiers and retail salespeople in grocery stores	14.4%	\$10.58	\$13.99	\$0.76
Waiters and waitresses	13.9%	\$10.10	\$13.46	\$0.75
Cooks	13.0%	\$9.62	\$11.06	\$0.87
Cashiers and retail salespeople in general merchandise stores	12.5%	\$11.54	\$12.36	\$0.93
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	11.5%	\$17.36	\$21.63	\$0.80
Pre-K, K-12, and special education teachers	8.2%	\$21.63	\$27.40	\$0.79
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	6.9%	\$15.48	\$24.04	\$0.64

Source: NWLC calculations based on 2018 American Community Survey using IPUMS. Figures are in 2018 dollars. Median hourly wages are for full-time, year-round workers. Hourly wages are derived by dividing median annual earnings by 2,080 hours, which assumes a 40-hour work week for 52 weeks.

This difference in wages results in an annual loss that can be devastating for Latinas and their families that were already struggling to make ends meet before this crisis.⁵ For example, Latinas in a low-paid front-line occupation such as waiters and waitresses typically lost \$7,000 due to the wage gap in 2018. Latinas working as supervisors of retail sales workers lost a staggering \$17,800 due to the wage gap in 2018.

Annual Losses Due to the Wage Gap for Latinas in Selected Front-Line Occupations in 2018



These wage gaps leave Latinas less able than their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts to successfully weather COVID-related income loss. And many Latinas are experiencing such income loss: nearly one in nine Latinas was unemployed in September 2020 while hundreds of thousands of others left the labor force altogether⁶ and nearly six in ten Latinas live in a household where someone has lost employment income since March.⁷

Over their career, Latinas typically lose over \$1.1 million to the wage gap.⁸

A loss of forty-five cents on the dollar adds up over a month, a year, and a lifetime, especially for Latinas, more than 1 in 7 of whom live below the poverty line.⁹ If today's median wage gap does not close, Latinas stand to lose \$2,425 each month, \$29,098 a year, and a staggering \$1,163,920 over the course of a 40-year career. Assuming a Latina and her white, non-Hispanic male counterpart both begin work at age 20, the wage gap means a Latina would have to work until she is 92 years old to be paid what a white, non-Hispanic man has been paid by age 60.¹⁰

In thirteen states and the District of Columbia, Latinas' lifetime losses exceed the national figure of \$1,163,920: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington. Latinas would have to work decades past retirement age – and in many cases to age 100 and beyond – in order to make up these lifetime losses.¹¹

Some Latinas¹² experience substantially wider wage gaps than the wage gap for Latinas overall.¹³

- Honduran women experience the steepest wage gap among Latinas living in the U.S., typically making less than half – 41.7 percent – of what white, non-Hispanic men make. Guatemalan women and Salvadoran women also typically make less than half – 45.0 percent and 46.7 percent, respectively – of what white, non-Hispanic men make.
- Argentinian women in the U.S. fare the best compared to white, non-Hispanic men, typically making 83.3 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men make.
- Except for Paraguayan women, Latinas of every origin are also typically paid less than their Latino counterparts in the U.S., although the disparity in pay is usually less than that between Latinas and white, non-Hispanic men.

LATINAS' WAGE EQUALITY BY SUBGROUP

	Latinas' Earnings	Latinas' Earnings/White, non-Hispanic Men's Earnings	Latinas' Earnings/Latinos' Earnings (within community)
Argentinian	\$50,000	83.3%	83.3%
Bolivian	\$37,000	61.7%	82.2%
Chilean	\$40,000	66.7%	72.7%
Colombian	\$39,000	65.0%	86.7%
Costa Rican	\$40,000	66.7%	88.9%
Cuban	\$35,000	58.3%	87.5%
Dominican	\$30,000	50.0%	81.1%
Ecuadorian	\$34,000	56.7%	85.0%
Guatemalan	\$27,000	45.0%	90.0%
Honduran	\$25,000	41.7%	78.9%
Mexican	\$30,000	50.0%	83.3%
Nicaraguan	\$35,000	58.3%	87.5%
Panamanian	\$40,900	68.2%	87.0%
Paraguayan	\$45,000	75.0%	128.6%
Peruvian	\$35,000	58.3%	81.4%
Puerto Rican	\$37,000	61.7%	86.9%
Salvadoran	\$28,000	46.7%	80.0%
Spaniard	\$47,000	78.3%	78.3%
Uruguayan	\$42,000	70.0%	76.4%
Venezuelan	\$37,700	62.8%	83.8%

NWLC calculations based on 2018 American Community Survey 1-year sample using IPUMS-USA available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/> (IPUMS). Figures are based on women's and men's median earnings for full-time, year-round workers. Using the 2018 ACS, the median income for white, non-Hispanic men in 2018 was \$57,700. Earnings are in 2018 dollars. Respondents self-identified their specific Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.

Losses due to the wage gap add up and mean that Latinas not only have less money in their pocket right now --it also means they are denied key opportunities throughout their lifetimes to build wealth and future economic security for themselves and their families. The wage gap means many can't save enough to afford a down payment on a home, can't afford to pay for their own or a child's higher education, can't start a business or save for retirement. Not surprisingly, single Latinas own only \$100 in wealth for every \$28,900 single white men own.¹⁴

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Losses due to gender and racial wage gaps are devastating for Latinas and their families, an alarming number of whom were struggling to make ends meet even before the current crisis. This pandemic threatens to deepen these inequities. Latinas have been shortchanged and their work has been undervalued for far too long; neither they nor their families can afford to wait for change during an unprecedented public health and economic crisis that has no end in sight.

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- 1 Data for Latinas in this analysis comes from the U.S. Census Bureau. Respondents self-identify their sex as either male or female. Latinas are women of any race who self-identified that they are of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. White, non-Hispanic men self-identified their race as white and indicated that they are not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.
 - 2 National Women's Law Center (NWLC) calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2020 Annual Social and Economic Supplement [hereinafter CPS, 2020 ASEC], Table PINC-05, available at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html> (last visited Sept. 15, 2020). In 2019, the median earnings of Latinas working full time, year round were \$36,110 and for white, non-Hispanic men it was \$65,208.
 - 3 NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Historical Data, Table P-38: Full-Time, Year-Round Workers by Median Earnings and Sex, available at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-income-people.html> (last visited Sept. 15, 2020). Median earnings are in 2019 dollars. Figures may differ from those in other reports due to rounding or updated Census estimates. Data for white, non-Hispanic men are "white alone, not Hispanic" from 2002-2019, "white not Hispanic" from 1987-2001, and "white" from 1974-1986.
 - 4 NWLC calculations based on 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS), 5-year estimates, using Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas, and Matthew Sobek, IPUMS USA, Version 10.0, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org. "Front-line workforce" is defined using the methodology outlined in Hye Jin Rho, Hayley Brown, & Shawn Fremstad, Center on Economic and Policy Research, A Basic Demographic Profile of Workers in Front-line Industries (Apr. 2020), available at <https://cepr.net/a-basic-demographic-profile-of-workers-in-frontline-industries/>.
 - 5 Jasmine Tucker and Julie Vogtman, NWLC, When Hard Work is Not Enough: Women in Low-Paid Jobs (Apr. 2020), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/when-hard-work-is-not-enough-women-in-low-paid-jobs/>.
 - 6 Claire Ewing-Nelson, NWLC, Four Times More Women Than Men Dropped Out of the Labor Force in September (Oct. 2020), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/four-times-more-women-than-men-dropped-out-of-the-labor-force-in-september/>.
 - 7 Jasmine Tucker and Claire, Ewing-Nelson, NWLC, Black, non-Hispanic Women and Latinas are Facing Severe COVID-19 Impact (Oct. 2020), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/black-non-hispanic-women-and-latinas-are-facing-severe-covid-19-impact/>.
 - 8 NWLC calculations for the national wage gap for Latinas is based on U.S. CPS, 2019 ASEC, *supra* note 4, Table PINC-05. Women's and men's median earnings are for full time, year round workers. Earnings are in 2019 dollars. Figure assumes a wage gap of \$29,098—the gap in median earnings between full time, year round working Latinas (\$36,110) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$65,208) in 2019—each year for 40 years. Figures are not adjusted for inflation.
 - 9 NWLC calculations based on CPS, 2020 ASEC, Table POV-01, available at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pov/pov-01.html> (last visited Sept. 15, 2020).
 - 10 This assumes workers begin work at age 20 and work for 40 years, retiring at age 60. In order to make up the more than \$1.1 million lost to the wage gap, Latinas would need to work more than 32 more years in order to catch up.
 - 11 NWLC, The Lifetime Wage Gap by State for Latinas (Mar. 2020), available at <https://nwlc.org/resources/the-lifetime-wage-gap-by-state-for-latinas/>.
 - 12 The U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey collects data from respondents about their specific Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin. See question 5 in the 2018 ACS survey: <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaires/2018/quest18.pdf>.
 - 13 NWLC calculations based on American Community Survey 2018 1-year sample using using Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas, and Matthew Sobek, IPUMS USA, Version 10.0, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.
 - 14 Heather McCulloch, Closing the Women's Wealth Gap, What it Is, Why It Matters, and What Can Be Done About It (Jan 2017), available at <https://womenswealthgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Closing-the-Womens-Wealth-Gap-Report-Jan2017.pdf>.