

Latinas Have Been Undervalued and Underpaid for Far Too Long

BY ASHIR COILLBERG

Latinas face racist and sexist barriers at every turn in our economy, leaving them systemically undervalued and underpaid. In 2023, the most recent data available, Latinas' working full time, year-round were typically paid just 58 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.² Moreover, the wage gap widens when part-time and part-year workers are included: Latinas were typically paid only 51 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men in 2023.³

We must address our longstanding underinvestment in economic and social infrastructure and the inadequate protections that leave Latinas stranded at the intersection of racial, ethnic, and gender inequities, robbing them of hundreds of thousands of dollars over their lifetimes, making it more difficult to make ends meet, and preventing them and their families from building wealth.

The wage gap means Latinas will lose out on nearly \$1.3 million dollars over their lifetimes

Latinas working full time, year-round lose 42 cents on the dollar to the racist and sexist wage gap, which adds up over time. Latinas working full time, year-round lose \$2,673 each month—or \$32,070 each year.⁴ This annual loss could have paid for more than 11 months of a family's groceries,⁵ seven months of child care,⁶ and 10 months of rent.⁷ And a Latina worker starting her career today stands to lose \$1,282,800 over the course of a 40-year career if we don't close the gap. This money could be life-changing for Latinas and their families, making it easier to make ends meet, and offering them opportunities to invest in their education or their children's, purchase a home, or save for retirement.

Some Latina communities face a dramatically wider wage gap than Latinas overall

While Latinas working full time, year-round in the United States were typically paid 58 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men, the wage gap varies widely by community. For example, in the United States, Honduran women typically made 46 cents, Guatemalan women typically made 49 cents, and Salvadoran women typically made 52 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.⁸

HOW MUCH LATINAS WORKING FULL TIME, YEAR-ROUND IN THE UNITED STATES LOSE TO THE WAGE GAP BY COMMUNITY

Community	Latinas' Median Wages	What Latinas Were Paid for Every Dollar Paid to white, non-Hispanic Men	Latinas' Typical Annual Loss	Latinas' Typical Losses Over a 40-Year Career
Argentinean women	\$55,000	\$0.85	\$10,000	\$400,000
Bolivian women	\$45,000	\$0.69	\$20,000	\$800,000
Chilean women	\$50,000	\$0.77	\$15,000	\$600,000
Colombian women	\$43,000	\$0.66	\$22,000	\$880,000
Costa Rican women	\$48,000	\$0.74	\$17,000	\$680,000
Cuban women	\$40,000	\$0.62	\$25,000	\$1,000,000
Dominican women	\$38,200	\$0.59	\$26,800	\$1,072,000
Ecuadorian women	\$40,000	\$0.62	\$25,000	\$1,000,000
Guatemalan women	\$32,000	\$0.49	\$33,000	\$1,320,000
Honduran women	\$30,000	\$0.46	\$35,000	\$1,400,000
Mexican women	\$35,700	\$0.55	\$29,300	\$1,172,000
Nicaraguan women	\$38,500	\$0.59	\$26,500	\$1,060,000
Panamanian women	\$48,000	\$0.74	\$17,000	\$680,000
Paraguayan women	\$40,000	\$0.62	\$25,000	\$1,000,000
Peruvian women	\$42,000	\$0.65	\$23,000	\$920,000
Puerto Rican women	\$42,000	\$0.65	\$23,000	\$920,000
Salvadoran women	\$34,000	\$0.52	\$31,000	\$1,240,000
Spanish women	\$52,000	\$0.80	\$13,000	\$520,000
Uruguayan women	\$44,200	\$0.68	\$20,800	\$832,000
Venezuelan women	\$36,000	\$0.55	\$29,000	\$1,160,000

Source: NWLC calculations using 2019–2023 American Community Survey (ACS) five-year sample. Between 2019–2023, white, non-Hispanic men typically made \$65,000. Figures are based on women's and men's median earnings for full time, year-round workers. Figures are not adjusted for inflation. Respondents to the American Community Survey self-identify their sex as either male or female and self-identify their race and Hispanic origins.

Latinas experience a wage gap at every education level, including those who have earned a graduate degree

Women account for more than half of college-educated adults in the U.S. labor force.⁹ However, Latina women are still typically paid less than white, non-Hispanic men with the same or even lower educational attainment:

- Latinas working full time, year-round with no high school diploma are typically paid just 63 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men with no diploma.
- Latinas working full time, year-round with a bachelor's degree are typically paid \$57,000, which is less than what white, non-Hispanic men working full time, year-round with some college but no degree are typically paid (\$60,000).

- Latinas working full time, year-round must earn a master’s degree (\$71,000) to make more than white, non-Hispanic men with an associate’s degree (\$66,000).
- Also striking is the typical difference in wages between the most educated Latinas—those with professional degrees such as juris doctorate degrees or medical doctor degrees—and their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts with bachelor’s or graduate degrees. Among professional degree holders, a Latina woman working full time, year-round typically makes 55 cents for every dollar made by a white, non-Hispanic man with the same education working full time—an annual loss of \$70,000, or more than \$2.8 million over the course of a 40-year career.¹⁰

LATINA’S WAGE GAP BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AMONG FULL TIME, YEAR-ROUND WORKERS

Educational attainment	Latinas Median Wages	White Non-Hispanic Men’s Median Wages	Typical Annual Loss	What Latinas Were Paid for Every Dollar Paid to White, Non-Hispanic Men
Less than 9th Grade	\$30,000	\$49,000	\$19,000	\$0.61
No high school diploma (at Least 9th Grade)	\$30,000	\$48,000	\$18,000	\$0.63
High school diploma	\$35,000	\$50,000	\$15,000	\$0.70
Some college, no degree	\$40,000	\$60,000	\$20,000	\$0.67
Associate's degree	\$44,000	\$66,000	\$22,000	\$0.67
Bachelor's degree or more	\$62,000	\$100,000	\$38,000	\$0.62
Bachelor's degree	\$57,000	\$90,000	\$33,000	\$0.63
Master's degree	\$71,000	\$110,000	\$39,000	\$0.65
Professional degree	\$85,000	\$155,000	\$70,000	\$0.55
Doctorate degree	\$92,500	\$125,000	\$32,500	\$0.74

Source: National Women’s Law Center (NWLCC) calculations using U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey (ACS), using IPUMS-USA, available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/sda/>. Respondents self-identify their sex as either male or female and self-identify their race, and whether they are of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.

We can’t wait to close the wage gap for Latinas

Racism, sexism, and structural inequalities rob Latinas and their families of tens of thousands of dollars every single year. We need public investments and public policies that allow Latina women to succeed and thrive.

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FOOTNOTES

- 1 Data for Latinas in this analysis comes from the U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2024 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS, 2024 ASEC), and the U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey (ACS). Respondents to these surveys 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 using U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2024 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS, 2024 ASEC), Table PINC-05, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html>. This figure is a ratio of the median earnings of Latinas working full time, year-round (\$43,880) and for white, non-Hispanic men (\$75,950) in 2023. Respondents to the CPS self-identify their sex as either male or female and self-identify their race and whether they are of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.
- 3 NWLC calculations using CPS, 2024 ASEC, Table PINC-05. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html>. This figure is a ratio of the median earnings including part time workers Latinas (\$32,410) and for white, non-Hispanic men (\$63,210).
- 4 NWLC calculations using CPS, 2024 ASEC, Table PINC-05, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html>. Figure assumes a median wage gap of \$32,070—the gap in median earnings between full time, year-round working Latinas (\$43,880) and white, non-Hispanic men (\$75,950) in 2023—each year for 40 years. Figures are not adjusted for inflation.
- 5 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Official USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food at Home at Three Levels, U.S. Average, October, 2024 (accessed December, 2024) Official USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food at Home at Three Levels: Low, Moderate, Liberal; October 2024. Calculation is based on the USDA low-cost food plan for a family of four (two adults ages 19 to 50 and children 6 to 8 and 9 to 11) estimated at \$1,072.8 per month.
- 6 “Child Care at a Standstill: Price and Landscape Analysis,” Child Care Aware, <https://www.childcareaware.org/thechildcarestandstill/>. Average costs for child care for a child in the United States (including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico) is \$11,582 annually in 2023, or \$965.17 per month.
- 7 NWLC calculations using 2023 ACS. Table DP04 , DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics - Census Bureau Table. Median housing costs for renters was \$1,348 per month in 2023.
- 8 NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2019–2023 American Community Survey (ACS), five-year estimates, Index of /programs-surveys/acs/data/pums/2023/5-Year.
- 9 “Women Now Outnumber Men in the U.S. College-Educated Labor Force” (Pew Research Center, September 2022), <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/09/26/women-now-outnumber-men-in-the-u-s-college-educated-labor-force/#:~:text=Women%20now%20outnumber%20men%20in%20the%20U.S.%20college%20educated%20labor%20force&text=Women%20have%20overtaken%20men%20and,Center%20analysis%20of%20government%20data>.
- 10 NWLC calculations using 2023 ACS, using IPUMS-USA, available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/sda/>.