



Fact Sheet: The State of Latinas in the United States

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November 7, 2013

Latinas are a growing and influential constituency in the United States. The Latina share of the female population in the United States will increase from 16.4 percent¹ today to 25.7 percent in 2050.² Latinas are making significant strides in education, participation, health, and other areas, but there is a long way to go to fully close racial and ethnic disparities. New policies such as the Affordable Care Act, or ACA, and other proposed policies such as immigration reform can greatly improve the lives of Latina women and their families. For example, under the ACA, around 4.9 million Latinas are receiving expanded preventive service coverage,³ and an estimated 4.6 million Latinas will gain access to affordable or subsidized health insurance, which may help close some of the health disparities Latina women face.⁴

This fact sheet provides a snapshot of statistics about health, education, entrepreneurship, economic security, and political leadership that should guide our choices to enact sensible policies to unleash the potential of this growing demographic and benefit our economy.

Health

Latinas are more likely to lack health coverage among America's uninsured women, with more than 38 percent being uninsured.⁵ And while Latina women face significant health challenges, there have been a number of notable improvements.

- Latina teens experienced historic lows for teen pregnancy in 2012, at 39 percent.⁶
- Hypertension is slightly less prevalent among Latina women, at 29 percent, than among white women, at 31 percent.⁷
- 17 percent of Latina women receive Medicaid, compared to 9 percent for white women.⁸
- Latina women experienced higher rates of human papillomavirus, or HPV, than white women as of 2010 and twice the death rate from cervical cancer.⁹

- Latina women represent 17 percent of new AIDS diagnoses among women.¹⁰
- Latina women experience unintended pregnancy at twice the rate experienced by white women.¹¹
- Latinas are 17 times more likely to die from diabetes than non-Hispanic white women. Latinas also have higher rates of gestational diabetes, which puts them at greater risk for type 2 diabetes later in life.¹²
- Latinas have higher rates of lupus than non-Hispanic white women.¹³

Educational attainment

The level of educational attainment for Latinas has risen in the past few years, yet it still sits at a level significantly lower than that of white women.¹⁴

- College graduation rates for Latinas have increased faster than any other group of women.¹⁵
- Graduation rates for Latinas were at 31.3 percent in 2008, still significantly lower than graduation rates for white women, at 45.8 percent.¹⁶
- Latinas hold only 7.4 percent of the degrees earned by women, though they constituted 16 percent of the female population in 2012.¹⁷
- Only 3 percent of Latina women are represented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, or STEM, fields,¹⁸ while women in total make up 24 percent of the STEM workforce.¹⁹
- Latina women represented 49 percent of all Latinos who matriculated into medical school in 2004. From 1980 to 2004, the number of Latina medical school graduates per year jumped from 93 to 485.²⁰

Entrepreneurship

Latinas are underrepresented as business owners, especially among the Fortune 500 companies. However, ownership among Latina entrepreneurs has grown immensely over the past 15 years.

- As of 2013, Latinas owned about 1 out of every 10 women-owned businesses.²¹

- In 2012, data showed that the receipts of Latina-owned businesses totaled \$65.7 billion; this is an increase of 180 percent from 1997 to 2013.²²
- In 2011, 788,000 Latinas ran their own businesses—a 46 percent increase over five years. In comparison, female business owners as a whole only experienced a 20 percent increase over the same period.²³
- The increase in revenue has been even greater, with Latina-owned businesses earning 57 percent more from 2002 to 2007, when compared with a mere 5 percent increase among all women’s businesses over the same period. Revenue for Latina-owned businesses grows at about 9.5 percent per year.²⁴
- Latina women own 36 percent of all companies owned by minority women in America.²⁵
- Latina-owned businesses are concentrated in the industries of health care at 20 percent, administrative services at 18 percent, retail at 10 percent, professional at 9 percent, and real estate at 6 percent.²⁶

Economic security

Latina women make disproportionately less than their male and non-Hispanic white counterparts. These disparities are leaving a growing portion of our population more vulnerable to poverty and its implications.

- Latina women make 55 cents to the dollar when compared to white, non-Hispanic males. In comparison, white women make 78.1 cents to the same dollar.²⁷
- Latina women make 88 percent of their male counterparts’ annual full-time earnings.²⁸
- Latina women earn \$549 per week, compared with white women’s median earnings of \$718.²⁹
- 32.2 percent of Latina women work in the service sector, compared with only 20 percent of white women,³⁰ and service workers are almost 20 percent less likely to have either paid sick leave or retirement benefits.³¹
- According to a 2010 study, the median household wealth of single Latina women is \$120, compared with single white women’s median household wealth of \$41,500.³² Latina women with children have zero median wealth.³³
- From 2007 to 2012, the share of Latina women earning at or below minimum wage more than tripled.³⁴

- The number of working-poor Latina women is more than double that of white women, at 13.58 percent, compared with 6.69 percent.³⁵
- Poverty rates for Latina women, at 27.9 percent, are close to triple those of white women, at 10.8 percent.³⁶
- In 2012, the poverty rate for Latina women overall was 27.9 percent, compared with the rate for non-Hispanic white women at 10.8 percent.³⁷
- In Latina households, about 4 in 10 working wives were the primary breadwinners for their families, according to a 2010 CAP report. This doubles the rate from 1975.³⁸
- Latina women are 69 percent more likely to be incarcerated than white women, according to a 2007 report.³⁹ In 2011, the American Civil Liberties Union asserted that incarceration particularly affects Latinas and black women as they are often the primary caregivers for their children and are also disproportionately victimized.⁴⁰
- Latinas saw a 14 percent increase in labor-force participation from 1970 to 2007, a notable rise.⁴¹

Political leadership

While Latinas have a rich history of leadership in their communities, they are underrepresented in all levels of government.

- Today, only 9 of the 98 women in Congress are Latina; all serve in the House of Representatives.⁴² Five of those nine women represent California.⁴³
- Only one Latina has ever served as mayor of one of the nation's 100 largest cities.⁴⁴
- From 1996 to 2010, the number of Latina elected officials increased by 105 percent.⁴⁵
- In 2010, there were 1,858 Latina elected officials.⁴⁶
- Latinas comprised 32.9 percent of all Latino state senators in 2010; women as a whole only represented 22 percent of state senate seats.⁴⁷
- Of 1,789 female state legislators, 62 are Latina. Latinas in this position represent 22 states.⁴⁸
- Of the 73 women serving in statewide elective executive offices, six are Latina.⁴⁹ Five of those six represent New Mexico.⁵⁰

Endnotes

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