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Economic Status of Latinas in New York State: HOPE Releases New Study Showing Education Gaps, Economic Barriers, and Opportunities

Report highlights how Latinas in New York State are faring, and the conditions that impact their ability to thrive economically as the COVID-19 pandemic emergency comes to a close while its effects linger and the nation hovers on the brink of a recession.

NEW YORK, NY – May 4, 2023 – Today, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) released its study *Economic Status of Latinas Report: New York State*, the first report of its kind focusing on the State of New York and the fourth installment of a series of studies highlighting Latinas’ economic impact. As the COVID-19 emergency comes to a close and the nation hovers on the brink of a recession, this report lays out how Latinas in New York State are faring, and the conditions that impact their ability to thrive economically.

Despite Latinas representing 10% of the population in New York and nearly 20% of the population of women, they continue to face systematic discrimination limiting their economic potential. The purpose for this research is to provide policymakers with platform recommendations positioned to give Latinas an equal opportunity and access to economic prosperity that can financially benefit all New York.

“Latino communities make our state a stronger, more prosperous place, and the contributions and success of Latina women is key to the success of New York,” said Governor Kathy Hochul. “HOPE’s new report provides invaluable insights into the status of Latina economic prosperity, entrepreneurship, leadership representation, and educational outcomes – and where Latinas are leading the path forward for our state.”

The report examines national, state, and regional indicators of Latina and Hispanic economic, leadership and educational progress and draws from a series of focus groups conducted with a cross-section of Latina professionals in the corporate sector, in nonprofit and government organizations, and with small business entrepreneurs. The findings aim to ignite a dialogue with policymakers and stakeholders on the corporate and public policies that can be implemented to foster the economic health of Latinas to benefit all communities, the state of New York, and the nation.

“Understanding the economic challenges and opportunities Latinas face in the State of New York are key to charting a path forward for the state and the nation as we traverse an economically uncertain time,” said CEO of HOPE, Helen Torres. “While Latinas remain resilient, policymakers must implement policies and support programs to advance Latinas’ prosperity and eliminate inequalities, including the persistent pay gap across sectors and opportunity gaps in education.”

“We will not ignore the fact that Latinas are facing a pay gap and educational opportunity gaps. We must come together to address this head on,” said former New York City Councilmember Julissa Ferreras-Copeland. “We can chart a path forward for our community to thrive in New York but it requires us to forcefully advocate for policy changes, funding increases, and expanding support programs.”

The findings illustrate how deeply Latinas suffered and adapted during the early parts of the pandemic. Latina professionals who participated in the focus groups offer a more intimate look into how they are overcoming barriers to their success and their hopes for their future as they deal with inflation in the post-pandemic recovery. Despite population shifts, uneven educational outcomes, ongoing wage and leadership inequities and persistent reports of burnout, Latinas reveal that their enduring optimism reported in previous HOPE and other research remains one of their greatest assets to overcoming adversity.

“The report backs up the lived experiences of systemic barriers and economic challenges that have kept Latinas from flourishing. HOPE has given us a glimpse of the many hurdles Latinas are still facing and a roadmap to ensure a more equitable future,” said research author, Dr. Elsa Macias.

Key research findings include:

A Growing Population

- Latinas in the state of New York were 10% of the total population and nearly 20% of the population of women in 2021. One in every four women in New York City is a Latina.
- While New York experienced a slight population decline, the Hispanic population continues to increase. The Bronx has a majority Hispanic population (56.4%) that increased 8% since 2010.

Persistent Pay Gap with regional disparities

- Latinas in New York were paid only 58 cents for every dollar earned by a White, non-Hispanic man in 2021, compared to 82 cents for White women. Latinas in New York City earned only 45 cents for every dollar earned by a White man, down 2 cents from 2010. In Manhattan (New York County) Latinas earn only 36 cents— a wage gap of 64 cents with White men.

Some progress for Latina high-income earners and employment rates

- In New York, the percentage of Latinas earning more than \$100,000 doubled from 2% to 4% between 2019 and 2021. The figure rose at the national level from 1% to 3%.
- The unemployment rate for Latinas in New York dropped to 5.5% in 2022, an improvement from 14.4% in 2020.

Entrepreneurship thrives among Latinas

- Latina-owned employer businesses in New York generated nearly 34,000 jobs with an annual payroll of \$1.2 billion, demonstrating their notable rates of entrepreneurial participation.
- The number of Latina-owned employer businesses in New York grew 11% between 2018 and 2020.

Educational attainment and barriers

- The Latina public high school graduation rate in New York has steadily increased to 86% in 2022, narrowing the gap with the graduation rate for White women (94%) to its lowest level ever.
- The percentage of Hispanic students (24.7%) who took at least one AP course was almost half that of White students (43.5%).
- In New York 25.7% of all Latinas have a bachelor’s or post-graduate degree, higher than the national rate of 21.6%.

To foster the positive economic trends experienced by Latinas and to remedy areas where persistent gaps in success exist, HOPE's report provides recommendations to be used as a roadmap for policymakers and corporate leaders.

Key policy recommendations include:

- **Close the Pay Gap:** The New York State Legislature should fund a third-party public study of the Latina Pay Gap to present recommendations to the Legislature and relevant stakeholders. Create more incentives for companies and organizations to take the “Equal Pay Pledge.”
- **Diversity in Leadership:** Encourage business and civic sectors to prioritize representation within their leadership ranks and support Latina leadership in civil society by providing time, money, and trainings. Promote leadership and management programs, internship and mentorship opportunities throughout government, corporate, nonprofit, and educational sectors to ensure that Latinas are positioned to maximize career opportunities.
- **Prioritize Microbusiness Loans:** Support Latinas' economic recovery by urging banks to make loans to microbusiness owners and urge New York's local and state governments to support and fund organizations that provide microbusiness grants and loans.
- **College-readiness:** Increase access to AP courses and Concurrent Enrollment programs to improve Latino students' access to college, bolster earlier college credit attainment, and lessen financial considerations of college-level courses.
- **Faculty Diversification:** Diversify faculty in higher education institutions to reflect the growing number of Latina students.
- **Expand Education Programs and Resources:** Statewide and local education agencies should expand access to student support services such as academic counseling.
- **Expand career pathways:** Explore state and federal policies that advocate for student loan cancellation and forgiveness as a tool to incentivize Latinas to enter higher education and STEM career pathways, supporting the workforce needs of the future and addressing the low numbers of Latinas in these professions.

Data from various government sources—including the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. and New York Departments of Education and others—were analyzed to provide demographic and economic metrics comparing Latinas with other major demographic groups at the national and state levels, and at local levels where data were available. A series of three focus groups with 18 women who self-identify as Latinas representing the corporate sector, the government and nongovernmental sectors, and self-employed entrepreneurs were conducted in February 2023 to better understand how to support their economic advancement and career trajectories. Additional data and background materials come from various reports, briefs and polls citing primary and secondary data.

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About Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE)

HOPE® is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that has focused on empowering our communities through advocacy, Latina leadership training, and increasing knowledge on the contributions Latinas have made to advance the status of women for the past 33 years. To date, HOPE's innovative programming has served 65,000 Latinas nationwide and touched the lives of several thousand more through advocacy and research efforts. For more information on HOPE, please visit www.Latinas.org.

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