Latinas were disproportionately affected by the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The progress they have been making on many issues that affect their economic well-being was curtailed for many educational and economic indicators, even as their numbers in the state continue to increase. This Fact Sheet includes updated topline findings from HOPE’s 2020 Economic Status of Latinas Report.

SNAPSHOT

Despite small progress being made, Latinas face immense inequality in pay, poverty rate, educational attainment and health outcomes in California.

- The number of Latinas in California increased to 7.8 million in 2021, or 19.9% of the state’s total population.
- In California, Latinas earned only 45 cents for every dollar earned by a White man in 2021.
- The poverty rate for Latinas in California was 16.5% in 2021, nearly double that of White women (8.5%).
- The 2021 annual unemployment rate for California’s Latinas was 8.5% and 7.1% for White women, down from 12.6% and 10.5% respectively in 2020.
- In California, 17.5% of all Latinas over the age of 25 had at least a bachelor’s degree in 2021, up from 12.9% in 2015. There is a gap of 26.8 percentage points compared to 44.3% of White women.
- The cumulative death rate for Latinos from COVID-19 in the state is 11% higher than the rate for all Californians as of November 2022, considerably reduced from 21% higher than the statewide death rate in May 2021.

POPULATION FINDINGS

- The number of Latinas in California increased to 7.8 million in 2021, or 19.9% of the state’s total population. This is up from 7.3 million in 2015, an increase of 6.1%. One out of every five people in the state is a Latina. There were 30.9 million Latinas in the U.S. in 2021, 9.3% of the total US population, and up from 27.9 million in 2015, an increase of 9.7%.[1]
ECONOMIC FINDINGS

- In California, Latinas earned only 45 cents for every dollar earned by a White man in 2021. While this figure was up from 42 cents in 2019 it only marks a recovery to the 2011 wage gap of 45 cents after widening for a decade. No progress has been made in reducing the wage gap between Latinas and White men since 2011. [2] White women earned 81 cents for every dollar, up from 77 cents in 2011.

- The poverty rate for Latinas in California was 16.5% in 2021, nearly double that of White women (8.5%) [3] and Latino families are overrepresented among the lowest income levels. [4]

- The 2021 annual unemployment rate for California’s Latinas was 8.5% and 7.1% for White women, down from 12.6% and 10.5% respectively in 2020. The statewide rate in 2021 was 7.2%. The Latina unemployment rate hit a high of 18.6% in August 2020. [5] As of October 2022, the Latina seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.7% [6] compared to the statewide rate of 4.0%. [7]

- The 2021 annual labor force participation rate for Latinas in California was 54.5%, down from 57.7% in January 2020. The 2021 statewide figure was 61.1%. [8]

- The gap between Latino and White household income narrowed significantly since 2015. The average Latino household income in California ($70,081) was only 72.6% of White household income ($96,566) in 2021, but up from 65.0% in 2015. [9]

- Latinos experienced the largest decline in nationwide homeownership rates between 2020 and 2021 of 1.7 percentage points after being the drivers of growth with the highest annual increases in homeownership rates in the previous six years. The 2021 U.S. homeownership rate for Latinos was 48.4%, down from 50.1% in 2020. This compares to the total U.S. homeownership rate of 65.5%, which also decreased from the previous years’ figure of 66.6%. [10]

- Latino-owned small businesses in the U.S. were more likely to use personal savings and home equity and to max out credit cards to survive during the pandemic than White-owned small businesses. [11]

EDUCATION FINDINGS

- The Latina 4-year high school graduation rate decreased during the pandemic while the rate for White women increased.
  - The 2020–21 Latina statewide high school graduation rate dropped to 85.3% from 86.1% in the previous year. The gap between Latinas and White women rose to 5.5 percentage points from the lowest gap of 3.8 percentage points in the previous year. The 2020–21 statewide rate also dropped to 83.6% from 84.2% in 2019–20. [12]
  - The high school graduation rate for Latina English Learners (71.2%) in 2021–22 was down from the previous year (73.0%). Graduation rates for Latina Foster Youth were declined from an even lower rate from 64.9% in the previous year to 60.5% in 2021–22. [13]
EDUCATION FINDINGS

- In the 2019–20 school year, 48.2% of Latina recent high school completers enrolled in college in the next 12 months in the midst of the pandemic, compared to 63.2% of White females.
  - The gap with White women remained the same compared to the previous pre-pandemic year, when 51.5% of Latina and 66.5% of White female recent high school completers enrolled in college.[14]
  - The rate of Latina English Learner recent high school completers who enrolled in college in the next 12 months suffered a large drop from 32.8% in 2018–19 to 27.6% in 2019–20. Only 34.9% of the 2019–20 Latina recent high school completer foster youth enrolled in college within the next 12 months.[15]

- The Latina 6-year college graduation rate from the UC system was 82.3% for the 2015 cohort that graduated in the 2021–22 academic year, through the pandemic. This represents an increase from 74.0% for the 2007 cohort. The gap in the 6-year college graduation rate from the UC system between Latinas and White women declined from 10 percentage points for the 2003 cohort to 7.8 percentage points for the 2015 cohort (82.3% compared to 90.1%) [16].

- In California, 17.5% of all Latinas over the age of 25 had at least a bachelor’s degree in 2021, up from 12.9% in 2015. There is a gap of 26.8 percentage points compared to 44.3% of White women.[17]

PANDEMIC FINDINGS

- The cumulative death rate for Latinos from COVID-19 in the state is 11% higher than the rate for all Californians as of November 2022, considerably reduced from 21% higher than the statewide death rate in May 2021.

- As of November 2022, Latinos in the state account for 45.1% of all COVID-19 cases and 42.7% of deaths, down from 56% of all COVID-19 cases and 46% of deaths in May 2021.

SOURCES:
- [13-15] Ibid.