



Institute on  
Immigrant Integration  
Research and Policy



## The Latina Pay Gap in the Empire State: Data and Factors Highlighting Pay Inequity

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# Executive Summary

## The Latina Wage Gap in New York State

*Regional Trends in Earnings, Occupational Segregation, and Language Barriers*

Draft data brief | 2026

### At a glance

- Across New York State, full-time, year-round Latinas earn substantially less than White non-Hispanic men.
- Occupational concentration in lower-wage sectors such as home health, cleaning, childcare, and food service contributes to persistent disparities.
- Limited English proficiency intensifies wage gaps and constrains access to better-paying opportunities, especially across high-cost regions.

The economic future of New York State is inextricably linked to the labor and participation of its Latina population. As of 2026, Latinas represent approximately 20% of the state’s total female population, a figure that rises to nearly one in four women within the New York City metropolitan area (NALEO Educational Fund, 2021). With a combined Latino household income exceeding \$92 billion statewide, this demographic is a primary engine of the state’s service, healthcare, and entrepreneurial sectors (Hispanic Federation, n.d.). However, despite their pivotal role, Latinas remain the most economically undervalued workforce in the state, facing a wage gap that is compounded by regional disparities and structural language barriers.

### Latina Wage Gaps

Prior research shows that Latinas experience both gender and racial discrimination in the workforce, resulting in significantly lower earnings compared to White Non-Hispanic men and women at the national level (UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute, 2025). However, this analysis seeks to understand how these disparities manifest within New York State by focusing exclusively on full-time, year-round (FTYR) workers.

By analyzing American Community Survey (ACS) data from three key time points—2015, 2019, and 2023—this policy brief isolates the wage gap from differences in hours worked. Consistent with previous research, findings from the 2023 analysis indicate that even when working full-time and year-round, Latinas earn significantly less than their counterparts. Across all Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs), full-time Latinas earn between \$37K and \$55K, while White Non-Hispanic Men (WNHM) earn between \$55K and \$104K.

### WNHM and Latina Median Wage Gap (NY 2023)

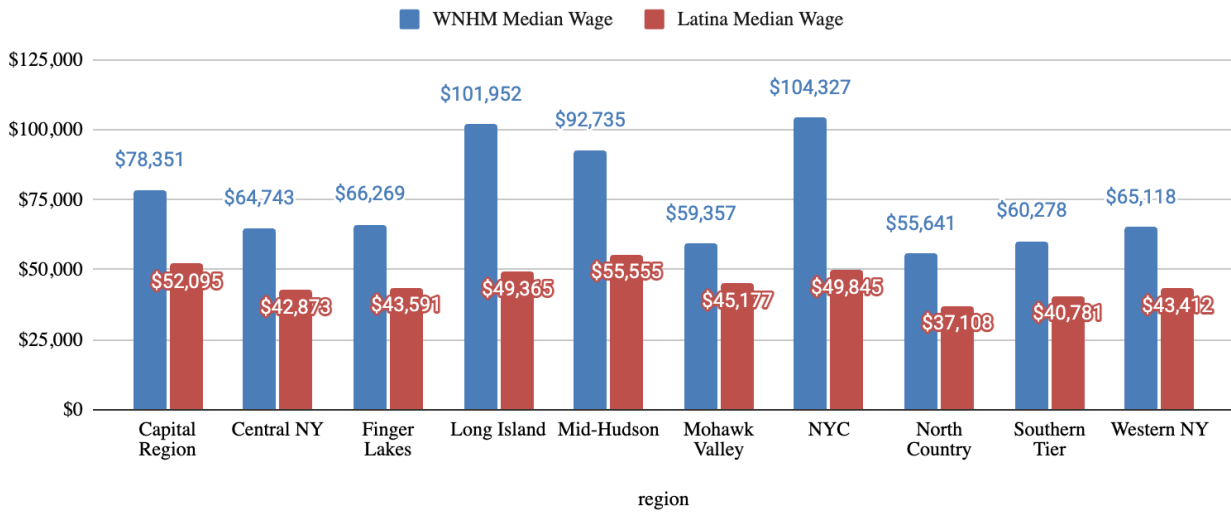


Table 1. Selected occupations and median annual earnings by worker group

Occupation	White Non-Hispanic Men	White Non-Hispanic Women	Latinas
Home Health Aides	\$35,187	\$39,192	\$33,385
Maids And Housekeeping	\$36,447	\$31,889	\$29,466
Janitors And Building Cleaners	\$45,892	\$39,725	\$33,069
Childcare Workers	\$33,180	\$23,743	\$19,824
Cooks	\$32,501	\$32,608	\$29,303

Note: Values reproduced from the draft brief and formatted to rounded whole-dollar amounts for presentation.

## Latina Workforce and Occupational Patterns

To better understand the context behind significant wage gaps, it is important to examine the workforce sectors in which Latinas are concentrated. In New York State, ACS data indicate that Latinas are most commonly employed in five occupations: Home Health Aides, Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners, Janitors and Building Cleaners, Childcare Workers, and Cooks. Many of these roles—particularly home health aides—are characterized by low wages and high turnover, which generally limits opportunities for upward mobility (Robinson, 2021). Interestingly, in the home health aide occupation, where Latina representation is highest, the salary disparity between Latinas and WNHM is relatively small; however, White Non-Hispanic Women (WNHW) earn the most, with an average salary of around \$39K compared to around \$34K for all other groups. These barriers are often even more pronounced for Latinas in other industries. For example, while WNHM working as janitors and building cleaners earn an average annual income of over \$45K Latinas earn roughly \$33K.

## Language Divide Among Latinas

Disparities within the Latina workforce also exist based on Limited English proficiency (LEP). Across all occupations, Latinas with LEP earn considerably less than WNHM and have more difficulties accessing public services. Consistent with national LEP trends (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2023), approximately three in ten report having LEP.

Our analysis observed that even in the cooks occupation group, where the wage gap is smaller compared to other sectors, Latina women with LEP earn less than \$30,000, while Latina women with English proficiency, as well as White Non- Hispanic women and men, earn above \$30,000.

It is critical to examine how these disparities are reflected across different regions within New York State, as they vary in median household income, occupational opportunities, and racial/ethnic composition. Broad, statewide mandates often fail to account for the unique economic ecosystems of the 10 REDCs. For instance, the wage gap is widest in New York City and Long Island, where the cost of living is considerably higher (DiNapoli, 2024). In contrast, regions such as the North Country and Mohawk Valley face challenges stemming from occupational segregation into lower-wage sectors and limited access to language-accessible job training. These factors result in LEP Latinas earning up to 70% less than WNHM in regions like NYC.

**Table 2. Median wages by industry and English proficiency**

Occupation	White Non-Hispanic Men	EP Latina	LEP Latina
Home Health Aides	\$35,187	\$32,609	\$33,644
Maids And Housekeeping Cleaners	\$36,447	\$30,586	\$27,754
Janitors And Building Cleaners	\$45,892	\$36,713	\$29,427
Childcare Workers	\$33,180	\$23,125	\$11,215
Cooks	\$32,501	\$31,301	\$26,484

Note: LEP = limited English proficiency; EP = English proficient. Values shown as rounded annual wages.

## The Case for Policy Intervention

Creating policy that prioritizes Latinas—particularly those with LEP—is not merely an issue of social equity; it is a necessity for regional GDP growth. Through our analysis of REDC data, we believe that REDC’s public and private partnership is best positioned to recommend tailored projects that will bring economic progress to the Latina community. By addressing the specific barriers found in this longitudinal analysis, such as occupational segregation and the "English-proficiency ceiling," New York can unlock the full economic potential of its fastest-growing demographic. This research aims to provide the data-driven framework necessary for the REDC boards to implement language-accessible job training, pay transparency mandates, and childcare subsidies that reflect the regional reality of the Latina experience.

## **About the Institute on Immigrant Integration Research and Policy**

[The Institute on Immigrant Integration Research and Policy](#) at the Rockefeller Institute of Government, SUNY advances the economic, social, and political integration of foreign-born New Yorkers through research, policy analysis, and community engagement. Its work supports stronger communities, informed policymaking, and a deeper understanding of the factors that shape immigrant integration across New York State. For additional information visit [NYImmigrants.org](http://NYImmigrants.org) and <https://rockinst.org/education-programs/iiirp/> .