

Latina Wage Gap Disparities Across California Counties

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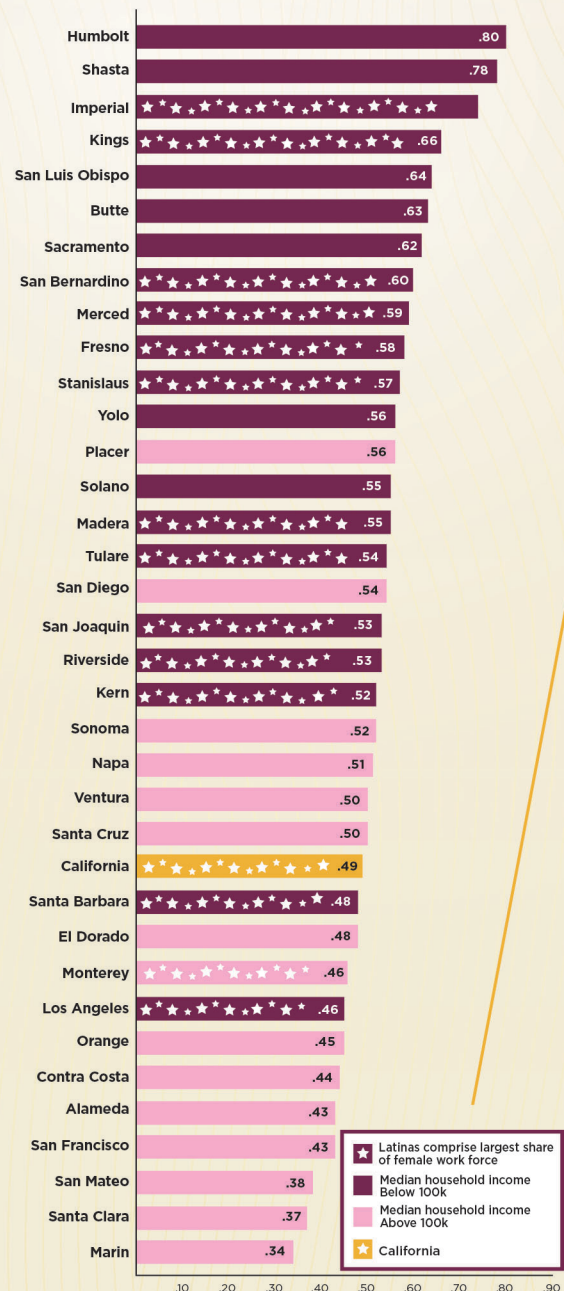
Latinas in the United States earn significantly lower hourly wages than non-Hispanic white men and, on average, less than women from other racial and ethnic groups.¹ In California overall, Latinas earn just 49 cents for every dollar earned by a non-Hispanic white man.

Importantly, this gap is not uniform. It varies across California's counties, reflecting differences in local economies, workforce composition, and the ways discrimination shapes access to educational and career opportunities. The figure to the right, based on 2019-2023 American Community Survey PUMS data, shows Latina wages relative to non-Hispanic white men's wages in counties with populations over 125,000. Darker maroon bars indicate counties where median household income is below \$100,000. Lighter pink bars identify wealthier counties with median household income above \$100,000. Stars highlight counties where Latinas make up the largest share of the female workforce relative to women of other major ethnic/racial groups.

Where the Gap is Narrower

In some counties with lower or moderate household incomes, Latinas face a somewhat smaller—though still substantial—wage gap compared to non-Hispanic white men. In Humboldt and Shasta Counties, for example, Latinas earn over 75 cents for every dollar earned by non-Hispanic white men. In Imperial and Kings Counties—where Latinas make up the largest share of the female workforce—Latinas earn 74 cents and 66 cents per dollar earned by non-Hispanic white men, respectively. Meanwhile, in San Luis Obispo, Butte, Sacramento, and San Bernardino Counties, Latinas earn between 60 and 64 cents per dollar.

LATINA WAGE GAP IN CALIFORNIA, BY COUNTY



Source: Estimates calculated from 2019-2023 ACS 5-years PUMS.
Note: Compares females in each county to non-Hispanic white males in the state.
Excludes counties with fewer than 125,000 residents.

Where the Gap is Most Severe

The largest wage gaps for Latinas occur in higher-income counties, where median household incomes exceed \$100,000 and Latinas make up a smaller share of the female workforce. In Contra Costa, Alameda, and San Francisco Counties, Latinas earn just 43 to 44 cents for every dollar earned by non-Hispanic white men. The gap is most extreme in San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Marin Counties, where Latinas earn just 38, 37, and 34 cents per dollar, respectively.

Closing California's Latina Pay Gap: Statewide Action and Local Solutions

Composing the largest share of working women of any ethnic/racial group, Latinas are a vital part of California's economy. These disparities limit economic security for Latinas and their families and weaken the broader state economy. Closing the gap requires statewide enforcement of pay equity laws, greater wage transparency, stronger support for collective bargaining, and expanded educational and training pathways to higher-paying careers. Affordable childcare, paid family leave, and supportive workplace policies are also essential to enabling full workforce participation.

Solutions must also reflect local realities. High-income counties with the largest wage gaps may be especially well positioned to expand opportunities through targeted career pipelines, as well as proactive hiring and promotion practices. In an era of heightened immigration enforcement that fuels labor market instability, local government and employer strategies that safeguard immigrant and constitutional rights are critical, especially in regions heavily targeted for enforcement. By combining statewide reforms with locally tailored approaches, California can better ensure that Latinas leverage opportunities for mobility and build a more robust economy for all.

¹ Cervantes, Alondra and Jie Zong. 2025. *Latina Equal Pay Day: Seven Key Facts on Pay and Economic Disparities*. UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute. <https://latinodatahub.org/#/research/latina-equal-pay-day-2025>.

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