

Economic and Health Justice for Women and Families in New Mexico

OCTOBER 2024

In New Mexico and across the country, policymakers must prioritize progressive policies that support women and families' economic security, health outcomes and overall well-being. New Mexico women need livable wages, supportive workplace policies such as paid family and medical leave, comprehensive health care access, and access to abortion – and they need a democracy that allows for their voices to be heard.

Paid Leave

- About 75 percent of working people in New Mexico do not have access to paid family leave. Sixty-six percent of New Mexicans are unable to access unpaid leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act.¹
- Nationwide, nearly one third of all adults aged 55-64 — and 41 percent of older Black women and 43 percent of older Latinas — hold a physically demanding job, which may exacerbate or cause serious medical conditions that require care, particularly in older workers and disabled workers. In New Mexico, that would mean 48,300 older workers, 600 older Black women workers and 13,500 older Latina workers.²
- If women in New Mexico participated in the labor force at the same rate as women in peer countries with paid leave, there would be an estimated 47,000 additional workers in the state and \$1.4 billion more wages earned statewide.³

**56% OF LATINA MOTHERS IN
NEW MEXICO ARE
BREADWINNERS.**

*— Paid Leave Means a Stronger
New Mexico*

Equal Pay

- Across the nation, women overall are typically paid 75 cents for every dollar paid to men.⁴ New Mexico women who were full-time, year-round workers earned only 84 cents for every dollar men in New Mexico earned in 2023.⁵ For Black women this gap is even larger – for every dollar that men earned in 2022 (the latest available data), Black women in New Mexico earned only sixty nine cents.⁶

- Women’s wages support their households. In New Mexico, 56 percent of Latina mothers are key family breadwinners.⁷

Child Care

- In New Mexico, full-time center-based infant care costs 20.5% of family median income.⁸

Student Loan Debt

- Women hold nearly two-thirds of Americans’ collective \$1.7 trillion of student loan debt. Black women are especially impacted by student loan debt – they hold more student debt than other demographics, with an average of \$38,800 in federal undergraduate loans a year after completing a bachelor’s degree.⁹ New Mexico has the 30th highest student debt per borrower, with a total student debt of \$7.9 billion owed across 232,200 borrowers across the state.¹⁰

Poverty

- In New Mexico, 17.6 percent of women 18 and over were experiencing poverty in 2022 – for Black women, that rate increased to 28.3 percent.¹¹

Health Justice

- Native women in New Mexico had a pregnancy-associated mortality rate that was 1.4 times higher than their white counterparts from 2015-2020.¹²
- New Mexico is very protective of abortion access.¹³
 - However, restrictions on reproductive health cost New Mexico more than half a billion dollars in total average annual economic loss¹⁴

A Stronger Democracy

- Less than 44 percent of New Mexico’s state legislators are women. Women of color broadly make up 24.1 percent of New Mexico’s state legislature.¹⁵
- New Mexico is ranked 18th by the Cost of Voting Index, representing a less restrictive electoral climate than other states in the country.¹⁶

Comprehensive policy solutions are necessary – and women and families in New Mexico cannot wait.

The following policy recommendations would support women and families’ economic security, health care access, and well-being in New Mexico and beyond.

- Family friendly workplace standards, including a common sense, national paid leave program
- Fair pay protections and practices
- A higher minimum wage and elimination of the tipped minimum wage
- Stronger protections for workers' rights to unionize
- Ensure access to abortions and comprehensive reproductive health care

¹ The National Partnership for Women & Families. (2024, February). *Paid Leave Means a Stronger New Mexico*. Retrieved 14 February 2024, from <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/paid-leave-means-a-stronger-New-Mexico.pdf>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Majumder, A., & Mason, J. (2024, September) *America's Women and the Wage Gap*. Retrieved 7 October 2024, from National Partnership for Women & Families website: <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/americas-women-and-the-wage-gap.pdf>

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2023, Geographies: All States within United States and Puerto Rico, Table B20017: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months (in 2023 Inflation Adjusted Dollars) for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings in the Past 12 Months. Retrieved 12 September 2024, from <https://data.census.gov/> (Unpublished calculations based on those who worked full-time, year-round).

⁶ National Women's Law Center. (2024, March) *The Wage Gap by State for Black Women Overall — March 2024*. Retrieved 7 October 2024, from <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Wage-Gap-State-by-State-Black-Women-3.1.24.pdf>

⁷ See note 2; Shaw, E., Mason, C. N., Lacarte, V., & Jauregui, E. (2020, May). Holding Up Half the Sky: Mothers as Workers, Primary Caregivers, & Breadwinners During COVID19. Retrieved 16 January 2024, from Institute for Women's Policy Research website: <http://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Holding-Up-Half-the-SkyMothers-as-Breadwinners.pdf>; "Key breadwinner" means a single mother who heads a household or a married mother who contributes 40 percent or more of the couple's joint earnings. Nationally, 79 percent of Black mothers, 64 percent of Native American mothers, 60 percent of mothers identifying as multiracial or "other" race, 49 percent of Latina mothers, 48 percent of white mothers and 43 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander mothers are key breadwinners

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- ⁸Gailey, A. (2024, October). *Study: Care for one infant costs at least 10% of a family's yearly income in 48 states*. Retrieved 29 October 2024, from <https://www.bankrate.com/banking/child-care-costs-by-state-study/#infant-care-costs-are-high>
- ⁹Jackson, V., & Williams, B. (2022, April). *How Black Women Experience Student Debt*. Retrieved 14 February 2024, from <https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/How-Black-Women-Experience-Student-Debt-April-2022.pdf>
- ¹⁰Coppock, J. (2024, March). *Student Loan Debt: What Explains the Disparities?* Retrieved 7 October 2024, from <https://www.degreechoices.com/blog/student-loan-debt-by-state/>
- ¹¹National Women's Law Center. (2023, October). *Women in Poverty, State by State*. Retrieved 7 October 2024, from <https://nwlc.org/resource/women-in-poverty-state-by-state/>
- ¹²New Mexico Department of Health. (2023, November). *The New Mexico Maternal Mortality Review Committee annual Report*. Retrieved 29 October 2024, from <https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/LHHS%20112823%20Item%2010%20MMRC.pdf>
- ¹³Guttmacher Institute. (2024, January 24). *Interactive Map: US Abortion Policies and Access After Roe*. Retrieved 14 February 2024, from <https://states.guttmacher.org/policies/new-mexico/abortion-policies>
- ¹⁴Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2024, January). *Updated Analysis of the Cost of Abortion Restrictions to States*. Retrieved 14 February 2024, from <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Updated-Analysis-of-the-Cost-of-Abortion-Restrictions-to-States-1.pdf>
- ¹⁵Frye, J., Goodman, S., & Haider A. (2023, November). *State Legislatures' Lack of Representation Threatens Freedom*. Retrieved 14 February 2024, from <https://nationalpartnership.org/report/democracy-abortion-access/>
- ¹⁶Schraufnagel, S., Pomante M., & Li Q. (2022, September). Cost of Voting in the American States: 2022. *Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy* 21(3), 220-228, from <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/elj.2022.0041>

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, reproductive health and rights, access to quality, affordable health care and policies that help all people meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at NationalPartnership.org.

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