STATUS OF WOMEN

Investing in Economic Opportunity for Women in North Carolina

August 2025

NC DOA Department of Administration
Council for Women & Youth Involvement

INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S POLICY RESEARCH

STATE POLICY ACTION LAB
A project of IWPR

About the North Carolina Council for Women and Youth Involvement

The North Carolina Council for Women and Youth Involvement (CFWYI) was established in 1963. This state office seeks to improve the state's response to domestic violence, family violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking. The division administers federal- and state-appropriated grant funding and receipts; approves domestic violence intervention programs for offenders ordered by the court system; provides anti-human trafficking training and technical assistance; and administers youth involvement programs that offer experiential education and foster leadership opportunities and civic engagement. CFWYI also provides staff support to multiple boards and commissions, including the statewide Domestic Violence Commission and the Council.

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About State Policy Action Lab

The State Policy Action Lab (State PAL) is a reinvention of IWPR's signature Status of Women in the States dashboard, with a renewed focus on connecting evidence to policy solutions for state policymakers and advocates.

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About This Report

This report was commissioned by the North Carolina Council for Women and Youth Involvement (CFWYI), an advocacy division housed in the North Carolina Department of Administration, and the North Carolina Council for Women (the Council), a group of 20 gubernatorial appointees who advise the governor, General Assembly, and state agencies on the status of women and recommend efforts to improve life for women in North Carolina.

The report was compiled by expert economists, researchers, and policy analysts at the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), a longtime partner of the Council. The report builds on IWPR's long-standing report series, *The Status of Women in the States*, which has provided data on the status of women nationally and for all 50 states plus the District of Columbia since 1996, including *Status of Women in North Carolina* reports in 2013, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2022, as well as a series of briefing papers for specific geographic areas within the state. *The Status of Women in the States* publications use data from the US government and other sources to analyze women's status across multiple issue areas. These reports have been used to highlight women's progress and the obstacles they continue to face and to encourage policy and programmatic changes that can improve women's opportunities.

This report also draws on state-level data, policy recommendations, and state legislative tracking featured in IWPR's State Policy Action Lab, or State PAL. State PAL is the reinvention of IWPR's signature Status of Women in the States dashboard, with a renewed focus on connecting evidence to policy solutions for state policymakers and advocates. Learn more at www.statepal.org.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Since the publication of IWPR's 2018 report, *Status of Women in North Carolina: Employment & Earnings*, women in North Carolina and the United States have continued to make economic progress overall. For instance, in 2016, North Carolina's wage gap was 80.9 percent,[1] ranking the state 31st in the nation (which had an 80.0 percent national average). By 2023, the wage gap in North Carolina had narrowed to 83.4 percent for women's median earnings compared to men's, and the state climbed to ninth place, with a gender wage gap even better than the national average (80.6 percent).

Despite these gains, women in North Carolina experience earnings and employment disparities by race and ethnicity, which indicate that there is still a need for improvement. Furthermore, child care and early education access and cost constraints pose challenges for women and families across the state. With just 7 percent of three-year-old toddlers enrolled in state pre-K, preschool special education, and state and federal Head Start, North Carolina is tied for last place in the nation and currently well below the national enrollment average of 17 percent.

This report presents data and analysis on the status of women in North Carolina compared with seven regional peers—Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Recognizing the critical role that access to affordable, reliable child care plays in supporting women's labor force participation and economic security, it includes child care indicators in addition to key labor market indicators such as earnings, employment, labor force participation, and occupational distributions. To offer a fuller understanding of disparities and enable examination of the intersections between gender and race in shaping economic and workforce outcomes, the data are disaggregated by race and ethnicity. For further context, spotlights of North Carolina's national ranking are also included throughout the report.

This report highlights the intersections of child care, education, earnings and employment, and opportunities to enable data-driven decisions to prioritize investments, set programmatic goals and strategies, and shape public and private policies to improve the lives of women and families. The current and future governors, state lawmakers and other policymakers, employers, advocates, and stakeholders can use this report as a resource to continue to address the factors that contribute to determining the overall economic security and well-being of women and their families in North Carolina.

Child Care and Families

- While more than two-thirds (68.9 percent) of mothers of young children (under age six) participated in North Carolina's labor force, fathers of young children were able to participate at a much higher rate—93.8 percent.
- Among parents of young children in the state, mothers were more than four times as likely (23.4 percent) as fathers (5.6 percent) to work part-time.
- North Carolina has the third-highest child care costs of the eight states analyzed for this report, for both center- and home-based child care.
- Among women in North Carolina, the cost of child care posed the greatest burden for Latina and Native American women, considering their earnings, with the cost of center-based infant care representing more than a third and home-based care more than a quarter of their median annual earnings.
- North Carolina ranks lowest in preschool enrollment of three-year-olds (7 percent) and the second lowest in enrollment of four-year-olds (30 percent) among the eight peer states included in this report.

Earnings and Employment

- In North Carolina, women working full-time year-round earned a median annual income of $46,856 compared to $56,000 earned by men—just 83.7 cents for every dollar men earned.
- Latina women had the lowest earnings relative to White men in the state at just 54.0 cents for every dollar, while Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) women had the highest, earning 94.2 cents for every dollar paid to White men. Native American women and Black women earned 57.2 cents and 65.5 cents, respectively, whereas White women earned 80.4 percent of what White men were paid in the state.
- Women in North Carolina were more likely than men to be among the "working poor," with incomes below the federal poverty threshold despite working at least half the year; 19.3 percent of women fell into this category when using 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold, compared to 16.7 percent of men.
- In North Carolina, women with a bachelor's degree earned 72.0 cents for every dollar earned by equally educated men. The state ranks sixth out of the eight states analyzed in pay equity for women with bachelor's degrees.
- Women were less likely overall (7.8 percent) to be self-employed compared to men (11.7 percent) in North Carolina, though the rate varied by race and ethnicity among women. AANHPI women had the highest rate at 11.7 percent, and Black women had the lowest at 4.6 percent.
- Although women in North Carolina were well-represented in managerial and professional roles—nearly half of all employed women (46.7 percent) occupied these jobs—they still earned less than men in the same positions, $60,174 at the median compared to $87,000 paid to men.
- Women aged 62 and older in North Carolina had far less income in retirement than men, with only 62.8 percent of the median annual retirement income and 76.2 percent of the median annual Social Security benefit that men their age received.

Policy Overview

North Carolina has taken significant steps since 2017 to advance supports for women, their families, and their economic opportunities.

This report identifies nine recommendations for the current and future governors, state lawmakers and other policymakers, and employers in North Carolina to consider across three key areas that could further reduce gender inequities and advance economic opportunities for women in the state and make North Carolina a national economic and equity leader.

Expand Access to Paid Family and Medical Leave and Child Care and Early Education

1. Create a task force to explore a statewide comprehensive paid family and medical leave program. The governor could make progress toward the goal of a statewide comprehensive paid family and medical leave program by establishing a task force to explore how such a program, which also engages private employers and employees, could be a powerful tool for workforce retention.

2. Guarantee workers across the state access to paid sick days. The governor and General Assembly should work together to enact a law requiring employers to provide workers with paid time off for short-term illness, injury, or medical treatment or to care for the health of a loved one.

3. Increase North Carolina families' access to child care by investing in the child care subsidy program. To help more families afford child care across North Carolina and keep more child care programs open, the administration and the General Assembly should work together to prioritize expanding the availability of affordable, accessible child care programs in the state by increasing child care subsidy rates.

4. Invest in and expand eligibility for free pre-K for families. Through a partnership between the administration and the General Assembly, state policymakers should remove income-related eligibility restrictions and extend free pre-K programs to three-year-olds, which would not only help more children enroll in early education and improve their kindergarten readiness, but also further advance workforce and economic opportunity for women, particularly mothers, across North Carolina.

Support Pay Equity, Livable Wages, and Better Workplaces

5. Enact pay equity policies across state agencies to model opportunities for statewide expansion and regional leadership. The administration should expand the salary history ban in place for cabinet-level agency employees statewide. In addition, the administration and the General Assembly should work together to prioritize requiring salary transparency for workers across the state, with requirements for private employers to disclose the salary ranges and compensation for roles, including for remote roles performed in the state. Cabinet agencies should further lead by example for private employers by conducting pay equity audits and providing guidance to reconcile discrepancies in employee compensation.

6. Increase the minimum wage to promote access to livable wages for North Carolinians. The governor and General Assembly should work together to raise the minimum wage above the federal level, indexed for the increased cost of living over time, to make North Carolina a more attractive state for workers.

7. Extend workplace antidiscrimination protections to cover sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and marital status. While North Carolina's laws protect workers from discrimination based on sex, the administration and the General Assembly should partner to further expand such protections to cover additional identities and statuses, thus strengthening antidiscrimination protections for more workers.

Invest in Women's Education, Career Pathways, and Small-Business Ownership

8. Expand opportunities for student loan forgiveness for care workers and STEM-related professions. State lawmakers should extend the Forgivable Education Loans for Service program to include care workers, such as for children, elders, and people with disabilities, as well as STEM-related professions—including those who pivoted their careers to enter the care and/or STEM-related workforce. Further, lawmakers should expand loan forgiveness programs and eliminate or reduce student debt among such workforce sectors, supporting women who continue working, living, and raising families in North Carolina.

9. Promote collaboration that advances workforce strategies to support women. Governor Stein's Council on Workforce and Apprenticeships is positioned to further women in the workforce, including in the trades and other nontraditional occupations. A shared interest in strengthening North Carolina's workforce creates an opportunity for collaboration between the Council for Women and the Council on Workforce Apprenticeships, the results of which should be amplified to the administration and the General Assembly.

Child Care and Families

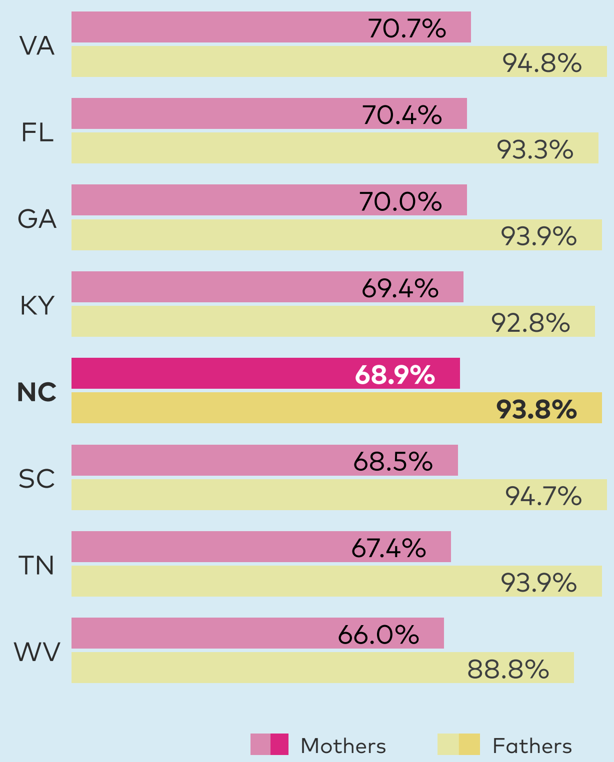
A strong early childhood education system supports children's development and school readiness, allows parents to remain in the workforce, and keeps businesses running. In contrast, the lack of affordable, high-quality child care has stark consequences for North Carolina's children, families, employers, and the overall economy.

Insufficient child care availability costs the state of North Carolina $5.65 billion each year in lost economic activity.[2] This striking number is driven largely by the turnover cost to employers when a parent voluntarily leaves the workforce due to a significant change in child care arrangements or life events, or when a parent is involuntarily let go due to difficulties balancing work and child care concerns. The North Carolina Early Education Coalition classifies North Carolina as a "child care desert," with an average of five families competing for every one available licensed child care slot statewide. This compels parents to consider other types of child care, often informal arrangements that may compromise their employment or education.[3]

Labor Force Participation and Part-Time Work Among Parents

Parents typically have higher labor force participation rates than the general population to help supplement household earnings and offset the increased costs associated with raising children. However, a lack of affordable child care across the state and gendered social norms around household division of labor can mean that women are more likely than men to reduce their working hours or leave their jobs altogether to take care of a child or children at home.[4]

Figure 1. Labor Force Participation of Parents (Ages 16+) with Children Under Age 6, Across States (2019–2023)

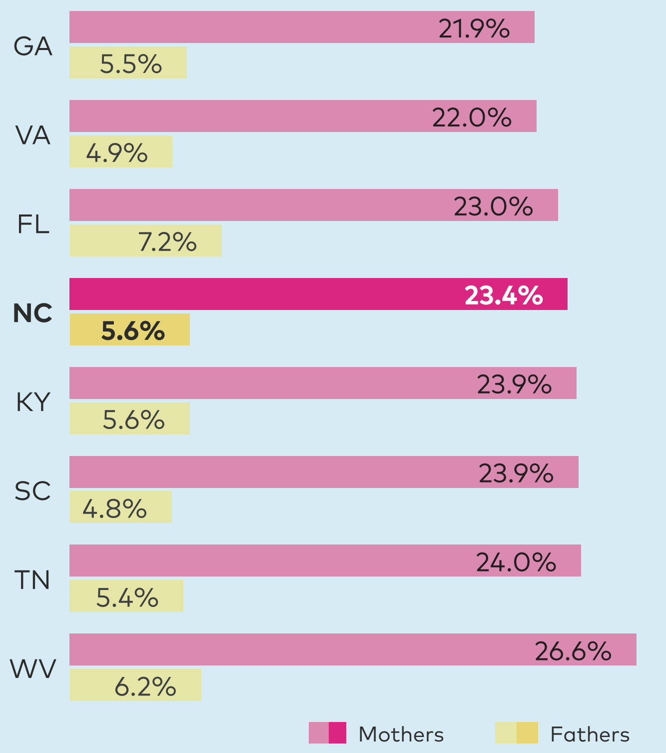


Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Labor force participation of parents of young children measures the percentages of women and men aged 16 and above with a child under age 6 in the household, who are in the labor force (defined as employed full-time, employed part-time, or unemployed but looking for work). All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

We find this reflected in our analysis. Although parents of young children had higher rates of labor force participation than the general population (Tables A1 and A12), the gender gap in labor force participation was also higher among parents of young children than for the general population. In North Carolina, 68.9 percent of women with children under the age of six were in the labor force, compared to 93.8 percent of their male counterparts, translating to a gender gap of 24.9 percentage points (Figure 1).

NC ranked 35th in the nation for labor force participation among mothers with children under six[5] and 35th for part-time work among mothers of children under six.[6]

Figure 2. Percent of Employed Parents (Ages 16+) with Children Under Age 6 Working Part-Time, Across States (2019–2023)



Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Part-time employment of parents of young children is the proportion of women and men aged 16 and above with a child under age 6 in the household who are employed but usually work less than 35 hours a week, as a share of all employed parents of young children of that sex. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

Out of the eight states in our analysis, North Carolina ranks fifth in labor force participation of mothers with young children, greater than South Carolina (68.5 percent), Tennessee (67.4 percent), and West Virginia (66.0 percent; see Figure 1). Black mothers had the highest labor force participation rates in North Carolina at 80.5 percent, while Latina and Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) mothers had the lowest, at 52.1 and 58.1 percent, respectively (Table A1).

Working part-time is another way parents, particularly mothers of young children, can adjust their work schedules to accommodate child care responsibilities while still contributing to a larger family income. Mothers of young children are more likely than fathers to work part-time, and this gap is often exacerbated by a lack of affordable child care and preschool alternatives.[7] In North Carolina, the gender gap in part-time work nearly doubles when comparing parents of young children to the general population, going from 10.4 percentage points when comparing all workers to 17.8 percentage points when comparing mothers to fathers with children under age six. Mothers of children under six worked part-time at more than four times the rate (23.4 percent) of fathers with children under six (5.6 percent; see Table A2). Compared to regional peer states, North Carolina ranks fourth in the proportion of mothers of young children working part-time, after Florida, Georgia, and Virginia (Figure 2).

Comparing mothers of young children from different racial/ethnic backgrounds within the state, we see that Latina mothers were most likely to work part-time (26.0 percent), while AANHPI mothers were least likely (15.8 percent), followed by Black mothers (18.8 percent; see Table A2).

Child Care Costs and Preschool Enrollment

Affordable child care and early education options help mothers of young children to work full-time, improve their long-term career outcomes, and boost household incomes.

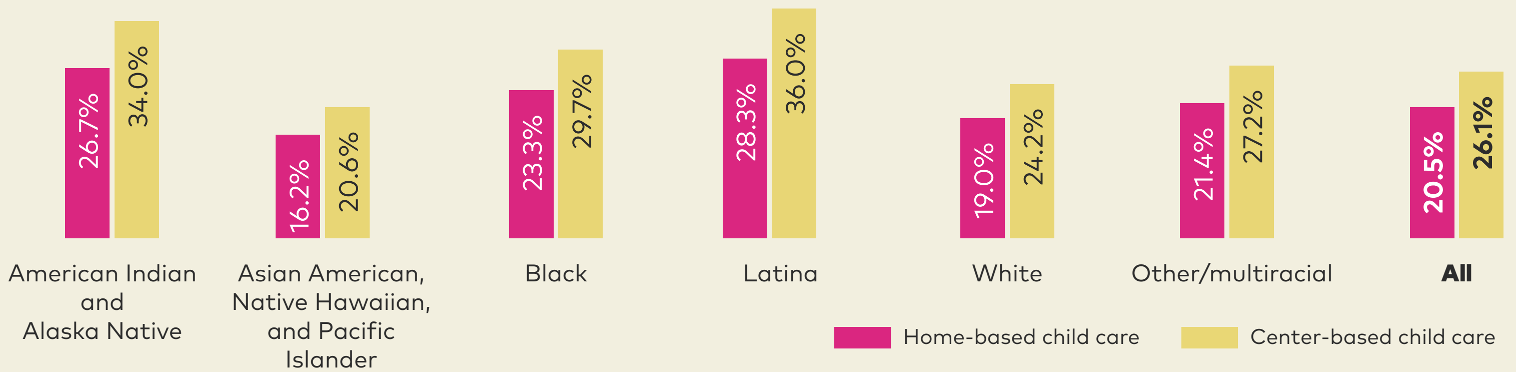
> ***NC ranked 26th in the nation for the cost of home-based infant child care[8] and 21st for the cost of center-based infant child care[9]***

Child care in North Carolina is among the least affordable compared to other states in this report, averaging $12,251 annually per child for center-based infant care and $9,617 annually per child for home-based infant care.[10] For women working full-time year-round, the cost of home-based infant care exceeded 20 percent of their median annual income. Only in Florida and Virginia was this cost more burdensome for women, representing 24.2 percent and 21.7 percent of women's median incomes, respectively (Table A3). The average cost of center-based infant care was even higher, exceeding 25 percent of the median annual income for women working full-time year-round in North Carolina (26.1 percent), ranking the state in the middle—above Virginia (29.3 percent), Florida (28.1 percent), and Tennessee (26.8 percent)—for affordability (Table A4).

The child care cost burden was not uniformly experienced by women across racial and ethnic backgrounds. In North Carolina, Latina and Native American[11] women—the two groups who earned the least—faced paying 28.3 percent and 26.7 percent of their incomes, respectively, for home-based infant care. Again, this cost burden rose when looking at center-based infant care, which made up more than a third of Latina (36.0 percent) and Native American (34.0 percent) women's incomes at the median, respectively. In comparison, White and AANHPI women earned higher incomes and paid less than 20 percent of those incomes on home-based infant care and less than 25 percent on center-based infant care (Figure 3).

The cost of child care is even more prohibitive for families with more than one child. In North Carolina, a family would have to spend $22,457 per year to send an infant

Figure 3. Infant Child Care Costs as a Share of the Annual Earnings of North Carolina Women, by Race/Ethnicity, Ages 16+ (2019–2023)



Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0; and child care affordability analysis extracted from *Price of Care 2023*, Child Care Aware of America, 2023, https://info.childcareaware.org/hubfs/2023_Affordability_Analysis.pdf.
Notes: Annual earnings are computed as the median annual earnings of full-time year-round workers using the population of positive income earners aged 16 and above. Full-time year-round workers are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as those who work 35 or more hours a week for at least 50 weeks a year. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

and a four-year-old to center-based child care, which is nearly half the median income of a woman working full-time year-round in the state.[12] This translates to a monthly child care cost of $1,187, which is higher than the state's median monthly housing cost of $1,153.[13]

Early childhood education in preschool not only fosters the development of skills in children, which has been shown to improve labor-market outcomes later in life, but also eases the burden on parents—particularly mothers—by enabling them to work full-time.[14] North Carolina fares poorly in terms of enrollment in state-funded preschool programs. Just 7 percent of three-year-olds in the state were enrolled in state pre-K, state pre-K special education, or state/federal Head Start programs—the lowest of all the states analyzed in this report. While enrollment rates were higher among four-year-olds in North Carolina, at 30 percent, this was the second-lowest rate among states in our analysis, just ahead of Tennessee (29 percent). In contrast, states like Florida (74 percent), West Virginia (70 percent), and Georgia (60 percent) saw a strong majority of four-year-olds enrolled in state and federal preschool programs (Table 1).

NC ranked 32nd in the nation for preschool program enrollment among four-year-olds, but tied for 50th place for enrollment of three-year-olds.[15]

Table 1. Child Care Costs and Preschool Enrollment of 3- and 4-Year-Old Children, Across States, 2023

	Average costs for full-time infant child care		Preschool enrollment	
State	**Center-based costs**	**Home-based costs**	**3-year-olds, as part of the state population**	**4-year-olds, as part of the state population**
FL*	$12,639	$10,881	10.0%	74.0%
GA	$11,066	$8,407	10.0%	60.0%
KY	$9,685	$7,345	18.0%	39.0%
NC	**$12,251**	**$9,617**	**7.0%**	**30.0%**
SC	$9,048	$7,150	11.3%	51.0%
TN*	$11,985	$8,024	12.0%	29.0%
VA	$16,397	$12,158	11.0%	31.0%
WV	$10,140	$8,320	18.0%	70.0%

Source: Child care affordability analysis extracted from *Price of Care 2023*, Child Care Aware of America, 2023, https://info.childcareaware.org/hubfs/2023_Affordability_Analysis.pdf; and *The State of Preschool 2023: State Preschool Yearbook*, https://nieer.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/2023_nieer_yearbook_8-9-24.pdf.
Note: *State did not report prices on the 2024 survey; data reported from the state's most recent Market Rate Survey.

Poverty Among Single Heads of Households

Single-person-headed households, often reliant on one income, are more vulnerable to financial stress than two-person households. This burden is particularly acute for households headed by women, who face additional challenges due to the persistent gender wage gap. Women headed more than 60 percent of all single-headed households and more than 80 percent of all single-headed households with a child in North Carolina.[16]

Households headed by single women were far more likely to live in poverty than those headed by single men in every state analyzed for this report. In North Carolina, 28.8 percent of all households—more than 1.2 million—were headed by single women.[17] Of these, one quarter (25.7 percent) lived at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty threshold, more than double the proportion of households in poverty headed by single men (12.3 percent). When examining households at or under 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold, these figures more than doubled to 53.3 percent of households headed by single women and 34.7 percent headed by single men (Table 2).

Table 2. Percent of Households Headed by Single Householders Living in Poverty Across States, Ages 16+ (2019–2023)

	100% poverty threshold				200% poverty threshold			
	All households		Households with children under 18		All households		Households with children under 18	
State	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**
FL	20.8%	11.6%	32.2%	16.4%	48.0%	32.3%	65.7%	42.4%
GA	25.0%	12.1%	36.1%	16.5%	51.8%	32.6%	66.8%	39.7%
KY	31.9%	16.3%	44.1%	20.5%	58.8%	40.5%	72.9%	48.4%
NC	**25.7%**	**12.3%**	**36.9%**	**16.1%**	**53.3%**	**34.7%**	**68.8%**	**41.2%**
SC	27.2%	14.8%	39.4%	19.3%	55.5%	38.2%	70.8%	46.8%
TN	26.7%	14.2%	38.4%	17.4%	54.3%	36.2%	69.7%	45.5%
VA	20.8%	10.1%	31.3%	14.2%	43.7%	27.2%	58.7%	35.3%
WV	32.6%	17.8%	49.5%	24.7%	59.5%	41.9%	75.9%	48.7%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.

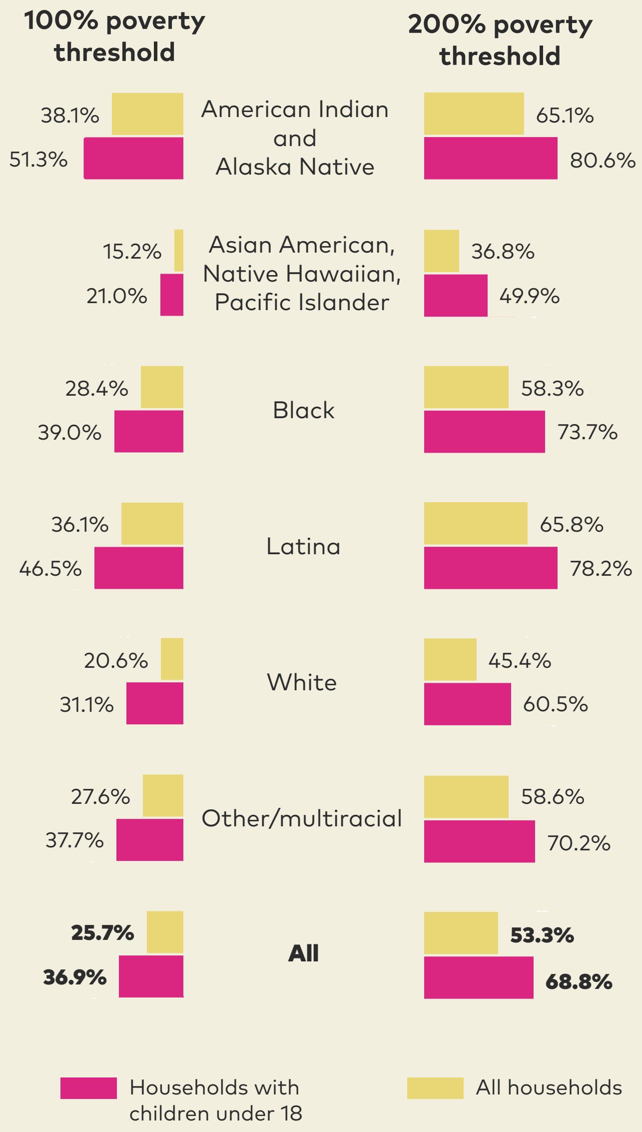
Notes: Single householders are male or female householders aged 16 and above living in family households, without a spouse present. According to IPUMS, a family household consists of a household head and one or more persons who are related to the household head by birth, marriage, or adoption, and who are living together in the same household. Individuals are considered to be living in poverty if their total family income is below 100 percent (or 200 percent) of the Census poverty threshold. The Census poverty variable is calculated only for individuals aged 15 and above who are not in institutions or other group quarters. The Census uses the family's size, number of related children, and age of the primary householder to determine the federal poverty threshold.

Breaking this data down by race and/or ethnicity reveals sizable disparities between women. In North Carolina, more than one in three households headed by single Latina (36.1 percent) and Native American women (38.1 percent) had incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty threshold, compared to 15.2 percent of those headed by single AANHPI women. At the 200 percent threshold, nearly two-thirds of households headed by single Latina women (65.8 percent) and single Native American women (65.1 percent) lived in poverty (Table A6).

Households led by a single mother with dependent children have their resources stretched much thinner. These households are substantially more likely to live in poverty compared to households headed by single fathers with children across all states in this report. In North Carolina, 5.1 percent of all households—nearly 222,000—were headed by single mothers.[18] More than one-third of these households (36.9 percent) lived at or below the federal poverty threshold—more than twice the rate for single fathers (16.1 percent). When using a broader measure of economic hardship, 68.8 percent of single-mother households in North Carolina lived at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold, compared to 41.2 percent of single-father households (Table A7).

Single mothers of color face both racial and gender inequities in the labor market while trying to provide for their households and thus are disproportionately more likely to live in poverty. In North Carolina, a little over half of households headed by Native American single mothers with children under 18 lived at or under 100 percent of the federal poverty threshold (51.3 percent), followed by 46.5 percent of households headed by Latina single mothers. Widening the lens to the 200 percent threshold, a staggering 80.6 percent of households headed by Native American single mothers and 78.2 percent of households headed by Latina single mothers lived in poverty (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Percent of North Carolina Households Headed by Single Women Living in Poverty, by Race/Ethnicity, Ages 16+ (2019–2023)



Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Single householders are male or female householders aged 16 and above living in family households, without a spouse present. According to IPUMS, a family household consists of a household head and one or more persons who are related to the household head by birth, marriage, or adoption and who are living together in the same household. Individuals are considered to be living in poverty if their total family income is below 100 percent (or 200 percent) of the Census poverty threshold. The Census poverty variable is calculated only for individuals aged 15 and above who are not in institutions or other group quarters. The Census uses the family's size, number of related children, and age of the primary householder to determine the federal poverty threshold.

ANALYSIS

Earnings and Employment

Earnings and the Gender Wage Gap

Women often adjust their work hours—or leave the workforce entirely—to manage child care or other care responsibilities. These decisions are often made in response to a lack of supportive policies or systems, such as paid leave and affordable child care, and can mean fewer hours on the job and more part-time employment, both of which contribute to lower overall earnings. Combined with the persistent effects of gender discrimination in the labor market, the result is a wage gap that continues to disadvantage women.[19]

Even when comparing only full-time year-round workers, men still earned more than women in every state.[20] This pattern held true across all eight states and every racial and ethnic group covered in this report.

In North Carolina, women who worked full-time year-round earned a median annual income of $46,856—placing the state third among the eight analyzed, behind Georgia ($47,195) and Virginia ($56,000) for women's earnings (Table A8).

While North Carolina has one of the smaller gender wage gaps in the group, it remains sizable. Women working full-time year-round in the state earned 83.7 cents for every dollar earned by men, second to Florida, where the gap is slightly narrower at 84.9 cents (Figure 5).

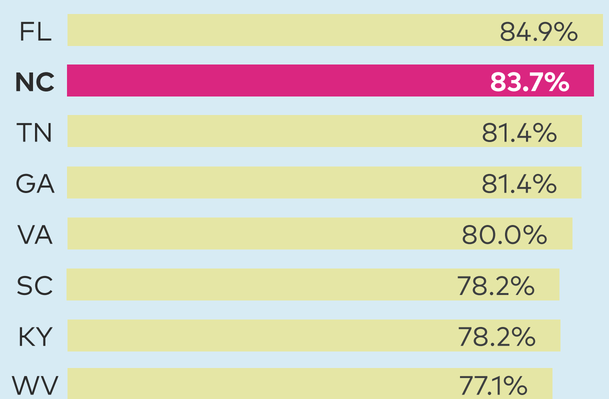
NC ranked 14th in the nation for women's earnings compared to men's for full-time year-round work (gender earnings ratio).[21]

Earnings by Race and Ethnicity

Women of color often face unique and compounded challenges in the labor force due to the intersecting impacts of racism and sexism. These overlapping barriers can make it harder to access well-paying jobs, advance professionally, and earn equitable wages, all of which contribute to persistent pay gaps.[22]

In North Carolina, what women earned in a year varied widely by race and ethnicity. Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) women working full-time year-round had the highest

Figure 5. Gender Earnings Ratio Across States, Ages 16+ (2019–2023)



Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: The gender earnings ratio for a state measures the median annual earnings of women in the state working full-time year-round as a share of the median annual earnings of men in the state working full-time year-round for all workers aged 16 and above who earn a positive income in that state. Full-time year-round workers are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as those who work 35 or more hours a week for at least 50 weeks in the year. The median is the midpoint in the earnings distribution at which approximately half the population earns less and half earns more. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

earnings—$59,351 at the median—followed by White women at $50,648. Black women ($41,296), Native American women ($36,016), and Latina women ($34,000) had the lowest earnings of any racial or ethnic group in the state (Table 3).

Pay gaps for women by race and ethnicity are typically measured using White[23] men as the benchmark because they have historically had the highest incomes and faced the fewest barriers to full participation in the labor market.[24] In North Carolina, women of every racial and ethnic background earned less than White men. Latina women experienced the widest pay gap, earning just 54.0 cents for every dollar paid to White men. Native American women and Black women earned slightly more at 57.2 cents and 65.5 cents, respectively, whereas White women earned 80.4 percent of what White men are paid in the state. AANHPI women made the most progress in closing the gender wage gap, earning 94.2 cents for each dollar paid to White men (Table 3).

North Carolina's performance on this measure compared to the other seven states covered in this report varied significantly by racial and ethnic group. The state ranks seventh for Latina women and fourth for Black women when it comes to median earnings compared to White men. But it did better for other groups, ranking second best for AANHPI women and tying with Florida for the highest gender earnings ratio among White women (Table 4).

Table 3. Annual Earnings of Full-Time Year-Round Workers in North Carolina, by Race/Ethnicity, Ages 16+ (2019–2023)

	Women	Men	Gender earnings ratio for women compared to White men
Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	$59,351	$91,000	94.2%
White	$50,648	$63,000	80.4%
Other/Multiracial	$45,020	$53,095	71.5%
Black	$41,296	$43,733	65.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native	$36,016	$44,836	57.2%
Latina/o	$34,000	$40,000	54.0%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Annual earnings are computed as the median annual earnings of full-time year-round workers aged 16 and above who earn a positive income. Gender earnings ratios measure the median annual earnings of women working full-time year-round as a share of the median annual earnings of men working full-time year-round, for workers aged 16 and above who earn a positive income. Full-time year-round workers are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as those who work 35 or more hours a week for at least 50 weeks a year. The median is the midpoint in the earnings distribution at which approximately half the population earns less and half earns more. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

Earnings by Educational Attainment

Higher educational attainment usually means better job opportunities and higher pay.[25] In North Carolina, women who worked full-time year-round and had a bachelor's degree earned about 1.6 times more than those with a high school diploma or equivalent—$61,000 compared to $37,500 annually.[26] But education alone does not eliminate gender pay disparities. In fact, the gap persists across every educational level and gets wider at higher levels of attainment.

Women without a high school degree earned 78.6 cents for every dollar earned by equally educated men in North Carolina, but that dropped to 72.0 cents for those with a bachelor's degree, and to just 69.2 cents for those with a graduate degree (Figure 6).

Compared to the other states covered in this report, except for Florida, North Carolina had smaller gender pay disparities among workers with lower levels of education. But at higher levels, the state fell farther behind, ranking sixth out of the eight states included

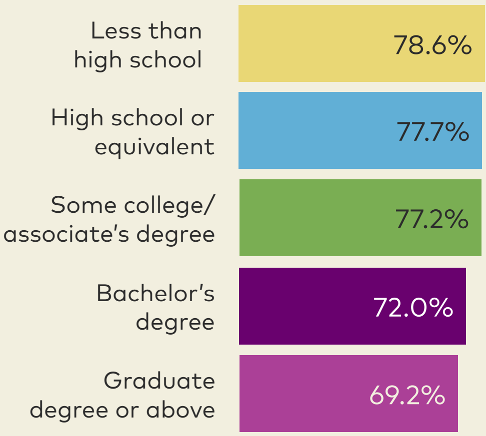
Table 4. **Women's Annual Earnings as a Share of Men's Annual Earnings, by Race/Ethnicity, Across States, Ages 16+ (2019–2023)**

	Compared to White men						
State	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina	White	Other/multiracial	All women, compared to all men
FL	79.3%	79.4%	62.1%	61.0%	80.4%	71.4%	84.9%
GA	58.9%	85.7%	63.2%	51.7%	76.9%	70.9%	81.4%
KY	n/a	85.5%	67.1%	62.5%	79.2%	65.6%	78.2%
NC	**57.2%**	**94.2%**	**65.5%**	**54.0%**	**80.4%**	**71.5%**	**83.7%**
SC	63.1%	81.6%	57.6%	56.0%	77.5%	67.2%	78.2%
TN	n/a	90.0%	67.8%	59.3%	78.0%	75.9%	81.4%
VA	62.2%	95.0%	59.8%	58.2%	77.8%	73.1%	80.0%
WV	n/a	86.1%	68.8%	82.0%	75.9%	82.0%	77.1%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Annual earnings are computed as the median annual earnings of full-time year-round workers aged 16 and above who earn a positive income. Full-time year-round workers are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as those who work 35 or more hours a week for at least 50 weeks a year. The median is the midpoint in the earnings distribution at which approximately half the population earns less and half earns more. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Values marked "n/a" indicate the underlying sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

in this report in pay equity for women with bachelor's degrees—ahead of only Tennessee (71.7 percent) and South Carolina (71.2 percent). For those with graduate degrees or higher, North Carolina ranks ahead of only South Carolina (66.0 percent) and Virginia (68.1 percent; see Table A9).

Figure 6. **Women's Annual Earnings as a Share of Men's Annual Earnings, by Educational Attainment, in North Carolina, Ages 25+ (2019–2023)**



Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.

Notes: Annual earnings are computed as the median annual earnings of full-time year-round workers aged 16 and above who earn a positive income. Full-time year-round workers are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as those who work 35 or more hours a week for at least 50 weeks a year. The median is the midpoint in the earnings distribution at which approximately half the population earns less and half earns more. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

NC ranked 38th in the nation for median annual earnings among women who have attained some college education or an associate's degree and work full-time year-round.[27]

Retirement and Social Security Income

National trends show that women typically earn less than men over the course of their careers, which means they have less to save for retirement and end up with smaller Social Security benefits, so gender disparities in income often follow them even after they stop working.[28] And since women tend to live longer than men, they also often need to stretch their smaller retirement savings over more years.[29]

In North Carolina, retired women had far less income than men. Women aged 62 and older had just 62.8 percent of the retirement income and 76.2 percent of the Social Security income that men their age received (Tables A10 and A11). That puts the state at sixth out of the eight states included in this report for the size of the gender gap in retirement income. Only Florida, where women aged 62 and over had 57.3 percent of the retirement income that men their age did, and Virginia, at 58.3 percent, rank worse. But when it comes to Social Security income, North Carolina ranks best, with the smallest relative gap between women and men.

These gender pay gaps in retirement and Social Security income also varied widely by race and ethnicity in the state. Latina women aged 62 and over had the lowest retirement income compared to White men their age—just 45.0 cents on the dollar—whereas AANHPI women and White women were tied for the highest relative earnings, each with 62.5 cents for every dollar White men had, which still reflects a significant gap (Figure 7).

When it comes to Social Security income, White women aged 62 and over in North Carolina received the most compared to White men their age—74.5 cents for every dollar. AANHPI women received the least, at just 58.3 cents to the dollar received by White men (Figure 7).

Labor Force Participation, Employment, and Part-Time Work

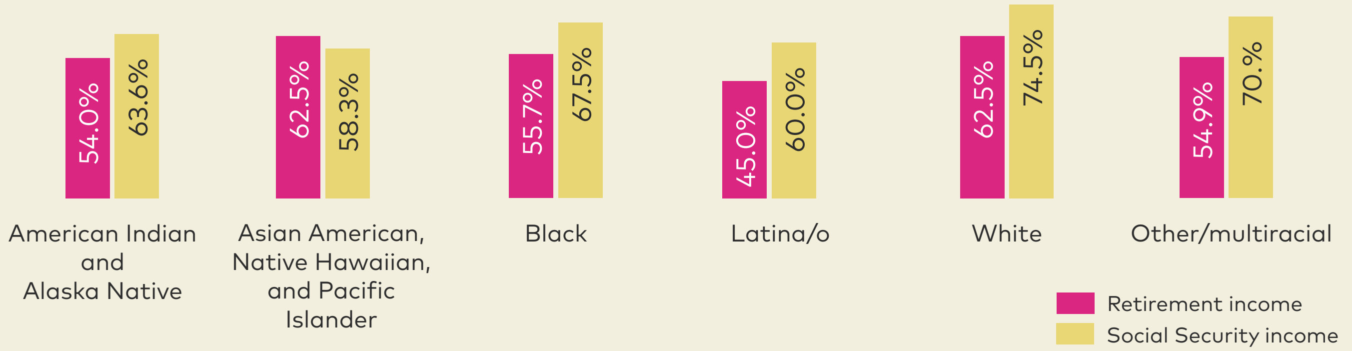
The labor force participation rate measures the percentage of people age 16 and older who are either working or actively looking for work. Nationally, 59.3 percent of women participate in the labor force, compared to 68.2 percent of men.[30] This gap is partly due to the fact that women are more likely to take on child care and other care responsibilities, which can make it harder to stay employed, work full-time, or search for a job.[31]

In each state covered in this report, women's labor force participation rates were lower than men's, and—except in Virginia—both male and female labor force participation rates were lower than the national average. That includes North Carolina, where 57.7 percent of women and 66.9 percent of men were in the labor force. Even so, North Carolina had the third-highest women's labor force participation rate among the eight states analyzed, just behind Georgia (58.9 percent) and Virginia (60.7 percent; see Figure 8).

Women across every racial and ethnic group in North Carolina were less likely than men to be in the labor force, except Black women (63.6 percent), who were slightly more likely to be in the labor force than Black men (62.5 percent). Among women in the state, those who identify as multiracial or another race were most likely to be in the labor force, at 64.6 percent, followed by Black women at 63.6 percent. Native American and White women had the lowest labor force participation rates in North Carolina, at 50.8 and 55.1 percent, respectively (Table A12).

Women are still more likely than men to work part-time, often because of gender norms at home and in society, as well as perverse economic incentives shaped by the gender wage gap.[32] This pattern held in each state analyzed, including North Carolina, where 24.9 percent of employed women worked part-time compared to 14.5

Figure 7. **Women's Incomes as a Share of Men's, for Annual Retirement and Social Security Income in North Carolina, by Race/Ethnicity, Ages 62+ (2019–2023)**



Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Retirement income measures the median annual retirement earnings (annual pre-tax retirement, survivor, and disability pension income, other than Social Security). Social Security Income measures the median annual pre-tax income received from Social Security pensions, survivors' benefits, or permanent disability insurance, as well as US government Railroad Retirement insurance payments. Median earnings are measured using only the population of positive income earners aged 62 and above. The median is the midpoint in the earnings distribution at which approximately half the population earns less and half earns more. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

percent of employed men. Kentucky and West Virginia tied for the highest share of employed women working part-time, at 25.7 percent; Georgia had the lowest at 23.5 percent (Figure 9).

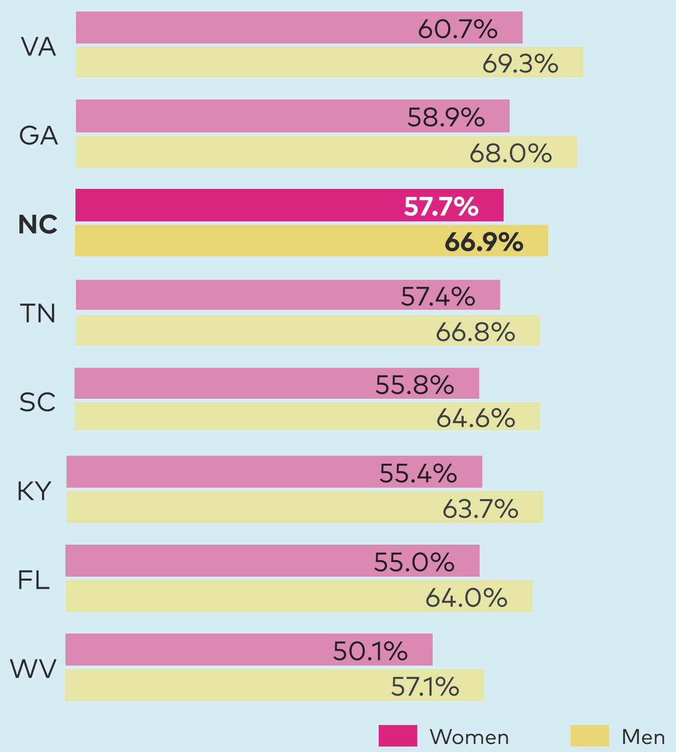
A greater share of employed Latina women (27.7 percent) worked part-time than women of any other racial or ethnic background in North Carolina. In contrast, employed AANHPI women were least likely to work part-time, at 20.4 percent (Table A13).

In North Carolina, 4.9 percent of both women and men were unemployed, and women of color had higher unemployment rates than White women (3.8 percent). Black women and women who identify as multiracial or another race had the highest rates of unemployment at 6.9 percent and 6.8 percent, respectively, followed by Native American women (6.3 percent) and Latina women (6.2 percent). AANHPI women had an unemployment rate of 4.3 percent (Figure 10).

Among the states covered in this report, North Carolina is tied with Florida for the third-lowest unemployment rate (4.9 percent) for women, following Kentucky (4.8 percent) and Virginia (4.3 percent).

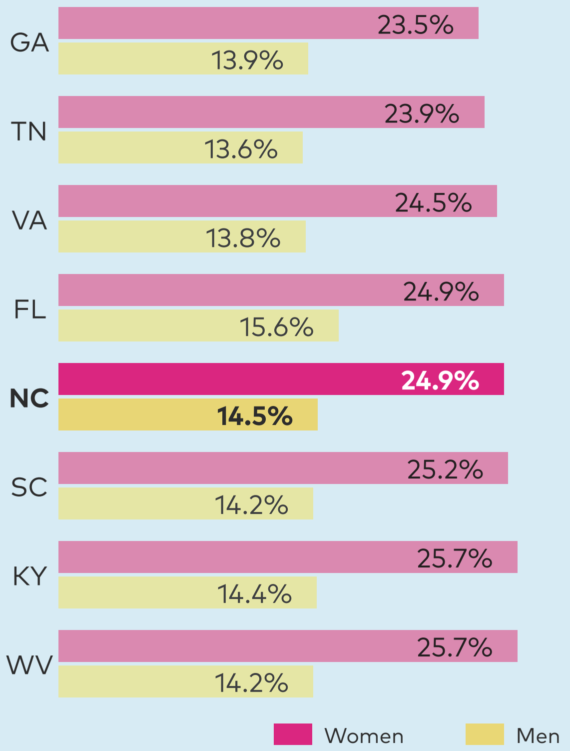
Black women had the highest unemployment rate of any racial and ethnic group in every state analyzed, except Tennessee and South Carolina, where Native American women experienced the highest rates of unemployment. In North Carolina, 6.9 percent of Black women were unemployed, tying Florida for the second-lowest rate for this group, just behind Virginia at 6.2 percent (Table A14).

Figure 8. Labor Force Participation Rate by Gender, Across States, Ages 16+ (2019–2023)



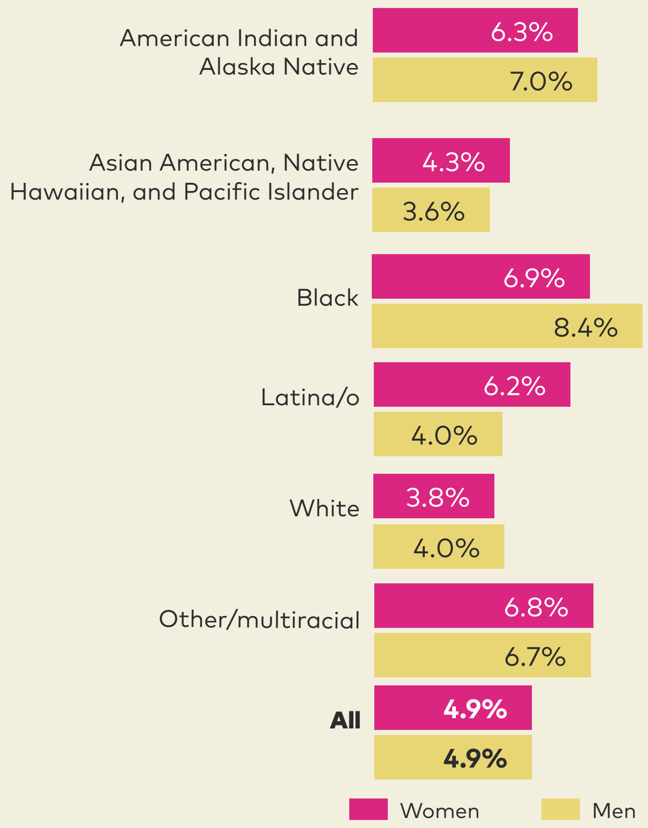
Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Labor force participation measures the percentages of women and men aged 16 and above who are in the labor force (defined as employed full-time, part-time, or unemployed but looking for work). All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

Figure 9. **Percent of Employed Workers Working Part-Time by Gender, Across States, Ages 16+ (2019–2023)**



Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Part-time employment is the proportion of women and men aged 16 and above who are employed but usually work less than 35 hours a week, as a share of all employed workers of that sex. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

Figure 10. **Unemployment Rates in North Carolina for Women and Men, by Race/ Ethnicity, Ages 16+ (2019–2023)**



Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: The unemployment rate shows the number of unemployed women and men aged 16 and above as percentages of everyone in the labor force (defined as employed full-time, part-time, or unemployed but looking for work) of that sex. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

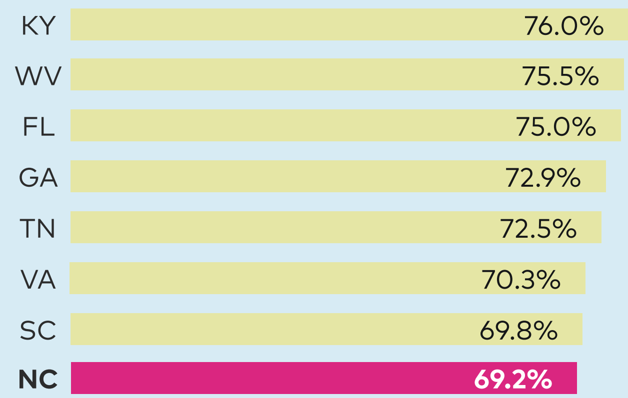
Professional and Managerial, STEM, and STEM-Related Occupations

In North Carolina, nearly half of all employed women—46.7 percent—held managerial or professional roles, including jobs like financial analysts, computer programmers, engineers, scientists, lawyers, teachers, and health care professionals. These positions often come with higher pay and benefits, like paid medical leave and health insurance,[33] and typically require at least a bachelor's degree. By comparison, just over a third of men in North Carolina—36.8 percent—were in professional and managerial roles (Table A15).

Even though women were well represented in these jobs, they still earned less than men doing the same work in every state covered in this report. In North Carolina, women working full-time year-round in managerial and professional jobs earned $60,174 at the median, compared to $87,000 for men—or 69.2 cents on the dollar. That's the largest pay gap between men and women in these roles of all the states covered (Figure 11).

NC ranked 19th in the nation for women's employment in managerial and professional jobs,[34] but 48th for gender earnings ratio for people in these roles.[35]

Figure 11. Women's Annual Earnings as a Share of Men's Annual Earnings in Managerial and Professional Jobs, Across States, Ages 16+ (2019–2023)



Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Managerial and professional workers are those in Management, Professional, and Related Occupations, per the Census 2018 Occupation Classification Code List. For a full list of occupations included in this category, visit: https://usa.ipums.org/usa/volii/occ2018.shtml. Annual earnings are computed as the median annual earnings of full-time year-round workers aged 16 and above who earn a positive income. Full-time year-round workers are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as those who work 35 or more hours a week for at least 50 weeks a year. The median is the midpoint in the earnings distribution at which approximately half the population earns less and half earns more. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

Among women in North Carolina, AANHPI women were the most likely to hold managerial and professional jobs (58.3 percent), followed by White women (52.0 percent). Latina and Native American women were the least represented in these jobs, at 29.1 percent and 37.7 percent, respectively, followed closely by Black women at 37.9 percent.

AANHPI women working managerial and professional jobs in North Carolina had the smallest pay gap compared to White men in these roles. At the median, they earned $84,413 annually, compared to $90,000 paid to White men—a gender earnings ratio of 93.8 percent. Women from every other racial and ethnic background working these jobs in North Carolina earned less than 70 percent of what White men were paid for doing the same work (Table A16).

STEM—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—fields (like computer science, engineering, and statistics), and STEM-related occupations[36] (such as health care practitioners and technicians), often require advanced technical skills and training. While women tend to be underrepresented in STEM jobs,[37] they are often overrepresented in STEM-related jobs, especially in health care.[38] As a result, when we look at the combined category of STEM and STEM-related jobs, women make up a larger share than you might expect—and this held true in every state covered in this report except Virginia. In North Carolina, 15.7 percent of employed women were in these combined job categories compared to 13.3 percent of employed men. In terms of the percentage of women in STEM and STEM-related occupations, North Carolina ranks third, just behind Virginia (16.2 percent) and West Virginia (16.6 percent; see Table A17).

AANHPI women were more represented in STEM and STEM-related roles—32.8 percent—than employed women of any other racial or ethnic background in North Carolina, nearly double the share of White women in these roles (17.2 percent). Latina and Black women were least likely to work at these jobs in the state, at 7.9 percent and 12.2 percent, respectively (Figure 12).

Self-Employment and Small Business Ownership

Some women choose self-employment—including running their own small businesses—because it can offer greater independence, flexibility, and a better balance between paid work and caregiving than traditional jobs.[39] It can also be a response to structural barriers in traditional employment, like gender discrimination and fewer advancement opportunities, that disadvantage women, especially when workplace supports like paid leave and affordable child care are lacking.[40]

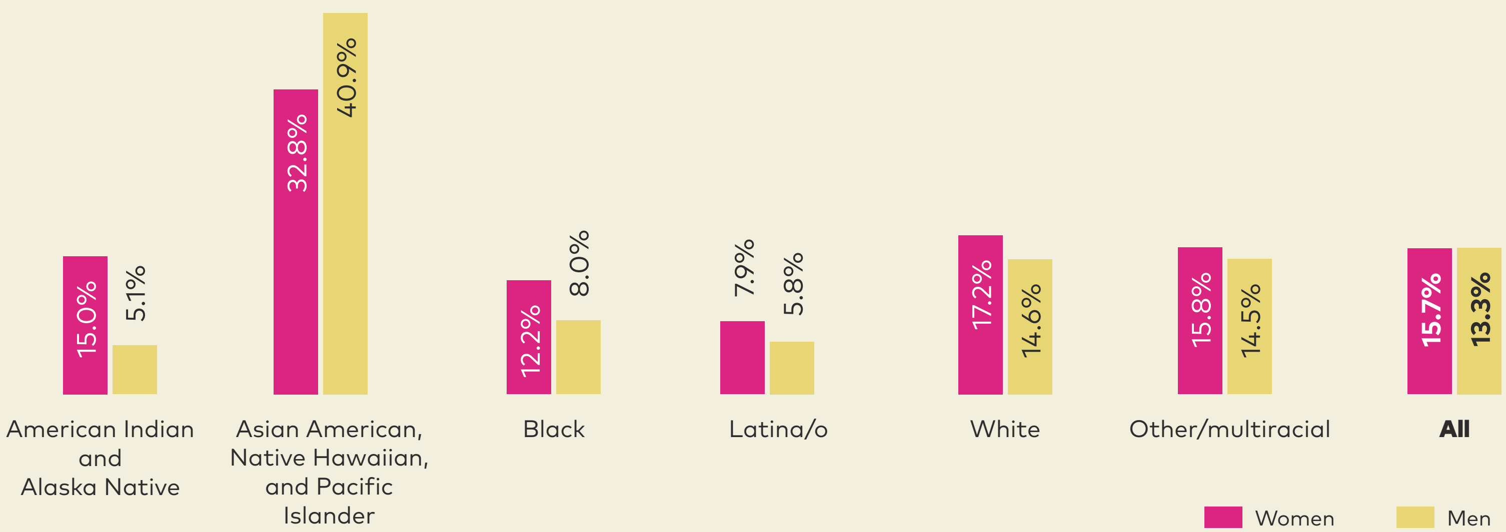
> ***NC ranked 23rd in the nation for women's self-employment.***[41]

Even so, in every state in this report, women were less likely to be self-employed than men. In North Carolina, 7.8 percent of women were self-employed compared to 11.7 percent of men. That ranks North Carolina third for women's self-employment—behind Georgia (7.9 percent) and Florida (10.1 percent; see Table A18). In North Carolina, 10.1 percent of AANHPI women were self-employed. This rate is considerably higher than that of women belonging to any other racial or ethnic group in the state. By contrast, Black women had the lowest rate of self-employment in North Carolina, at 4.6 percent (Figure 13).

Women owned about 46 percent of small businesses in North Carolina as of 2021, tying with Florida for second behind Georgia, where women owned 47.7 percent of small businesses.[42] However, small businesses owned by women tend to be smaller than those owned by men because they often don't have employees apart from the owner—only 27.4 percent of small businesses with employees in North Carolina were owned by women.[43]

Among the eight states analyzed, Kentucky had the smallest share of small businesses owned by women at 42.0 percent, while

Figure 12. Share of North Carolina Workers Employed in STEM and STEM-Related Occupations, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity, Ages 16+ (2019–2023)



Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Share of workers in STEM and STEM-Related Occupations measures the percent of all employed workers aged 16 and above of that sex working in STEM and STEM-related jobs. STEM and STEM-related jobs are defined per "STEM and STEM-Related Occupations" from the 2018 Census STEM, STEM-Related, and Non-STEM-Related Code List. For a full list of occupations defined as "STEM" and "STEM-Related," visit: https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/guidance/industry-occupation/2018-census-stem-related-and-non-stem-occupation-code-list.xlsx. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

Georgia had the largest at 47.7 percent. When looking specifically at small businesses with employees, the share owned by women ranged from 21.6 percent in West Virginia to 28.6 percent in Florida. North Carolina ranks third, just behind Virginia (28.1 percent) and Florida (28.6 percent).

Poverty and Working Poor

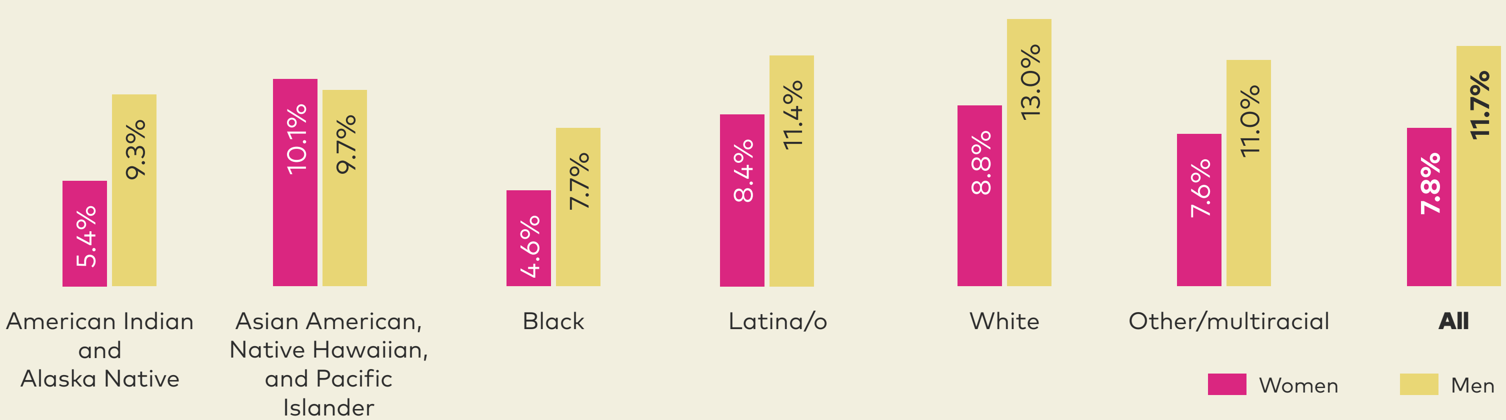
Given the gender pay gap, unequal job opportunities, and the fact that women take on more unpaid caregiving responsibilities, it is not surprising that women were more likely than men to live in poverty in every state we analyzed. In North Carolina, 12.7 percent of women lived in poverty while 9.7 percent of men did. That ranks the state the third-lowest for poverty among both women and men out of the eight covered, behind Virginia, where 9.7 percent of women and 7.4 percent of men lived in poverty, and Florida, where 11.6 percent of women and 9.4 percent of men did. West Virginia had the highest poverty rates for both women and men in our sample—17.5 percent and 14.4 percent, respectively (Figure 14).

Among women in North Carolina, Native American women had the highest poverty rate at 23.5 percent, followed by Black women (18.8 percent), Latina women (18.1 percent), and women who identified as multiracial or of another race (14.6 percent). AANHPI women had the lowest poverty rate in the state at 7.8 percent, followed by White women at 9.5 percent (Table A19).

Labor market inequities and high poverty rates create an unjust system where some people are considered "working poor"—meaning they live in poverty even though they are working for at least half the year.[44] We examined two groups within the working poor: those with incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty threshold and those with incomes at or below 200 percent.[45]

Women are more likely than men to be among the working poor, including in North Carolina, where, at the 100 percent federal poverty threshold, 5.5 percent of women fell into this category, compared to 3.9 percent of men. When using the 200 percent threshold—a broader measure of economic hardship—these shares increased sharply to 19.3 percent of women and 16.7 percent of men being working poor (Table A20). Among the eight states analyzed, North Carolina had the second-lowest percentage

Figure 13. Percent of Workers Self-Employed in North Carolina, by Gender and Race/ Ethnicity, Ages 16+ (2019–2023)



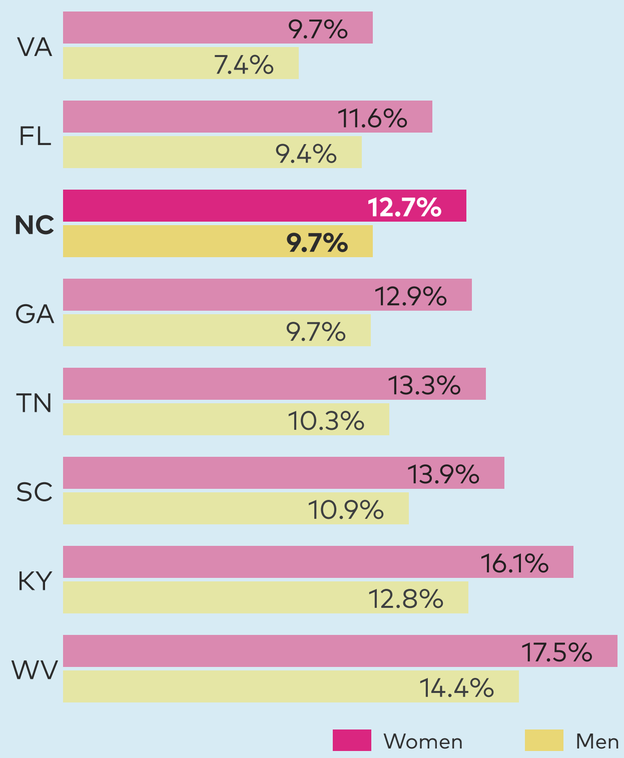
Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Self-employment measures the percent of women and men aged 16 and above who report being self-employed, as a share of all actively employed workers of that sex. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

of women who are among the working poor at the 200 percent threshold, trailing Virginia (14.3 percent). At the 100 percent threshold, North Carolina ranks fourth-lowest, behind Virginia (4.2 percent), Florida (4.9 percent), and Tennessee (5.4 percent).

NC ranked 36th in the nation for proportion of women among the "working poor" with incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty threshold.[46]

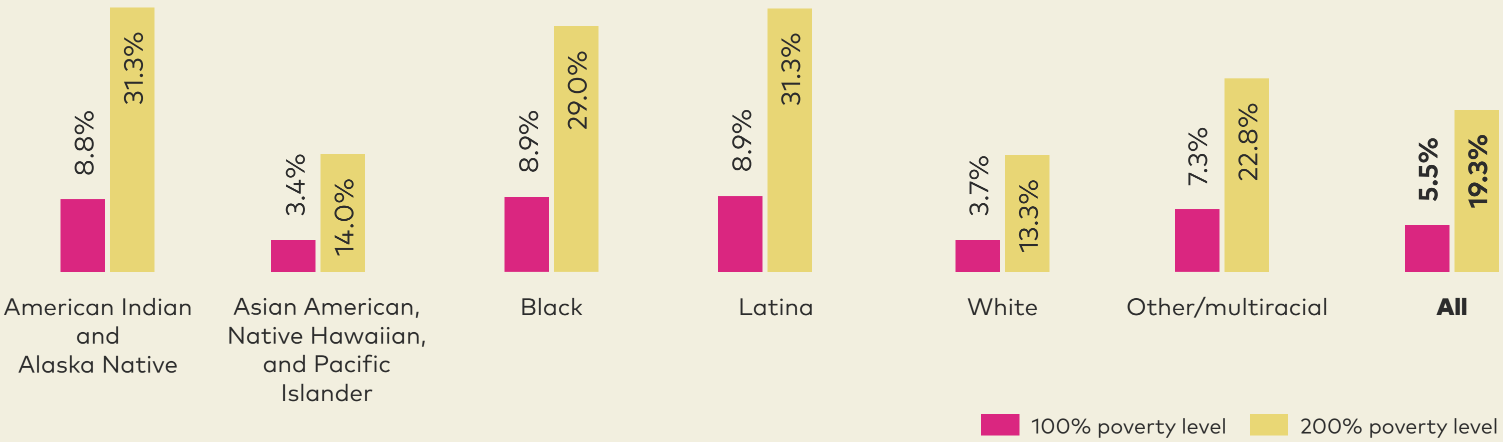
Black, Latina, and Native American women in North Carolina were more likely than women of any other racial or ethnic background to be among the working poor. At the 100 percent threshold, 8.9 percent of Black and Latina women were working poor, while 8.8 percent of Native American women were. In contrast, only 3.7 percent of White women and 3.4 percent of AANHPI women were working poor. At the 200 percent threshold, 31.3 percent of Latina and Native American women and 29.0 percent of Black women were working poor, compared to 13.9 percent of White women and 14.0 percent of AANHPI women (Figure 15).

Figure 14. Percent Living in Poverty Across States, by Gender, Ages 18–64 (2019–2023)



Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Percent living in poverty is measured as the share of all women and men aged 18–64 who have total family incomes below 100 percent of the Census poverty threshold. The Census poverty threshold is calculated only for individuals aged 15 and above who are not in institutions or other group quarters. The Census uses the family's size, number of related children, and age of the primary householder to determine the federal poverty threshold.

Figure 15. Working Poor Women in North Carolina, by Race/Ethnicity, Ages 18+ (2019–2023)



Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata, IPUMS 2025, https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.

Notes: "Working poor" women measures the number of women aged 18 and above who spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force in the past year and have total family incomes below 100 percent and 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold, divided by all women who worked 27 or more weeks in the past year. The Census poverty variable is calculated only for individuals aged 15 and above who are not in institutions or other group quarters. The Census uses the family's size, number of related children, and age of the primary householder to determine the federal poverty threshold.

Policy Recommendations

Policies that advance paid sick and family leave, affordable and high-quality child care, and economic security for women and families drive a flourishing economy and overall workforce. Since 2017, implementation of a range of efforts to uplift women in North Carolina has demonstrated the progress that is possible.

Such opportunities are a result of significant steps taken since 2017 under the administrations of former Governor Roy Cooper and current Governor Josh Stein. Former Governor Cooper, for instance, enacted a prohibition on workplace discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in 2017; instituted workplace accommodations for pregnant workers who are state employees in 2018; implemented eight weeks of paid parental leave for state employees and a salary history ban for cabinet-level agency employees in 2019; and established the Caregiving Workforce Strategic Leadership Group in 2023 to better recruit and retain workers in behavioral health, direct care, and nursing, which supports North Carolina's aging population. Earlier this year, Governor Stein announced Executive Orders No. 10—Establishing North Carolina Task Force on Child Care and Early Education and No. 11—Directing North Carolina's Progress on Workforce Development. Furthermore, the governor's 2025–2027 budget proposal seeks to invest $256 million into workforce development and free community college for those pursuing degrees in high-demand fields.

Building on these impactful policy measures, opportunities persist for additional policy solutions and investments to support child care and early education; promote economic opportunities and better workplaces; and expand education, career pathways, and small-business ownership to reduce gender inequities and continue to promote gender justice. Achieving these would position North Carolina as an economic and equity leader in the country.

The recommendations that follow are actions for the current and future governors, state lawmakers, and other policymakers, as well as employers across North Carolina, to consider that would enhance critical supports for women and their families.

1. Create a task force to explore a statewide comprehensive paid family and medical leave program.

Paid leave promotes economic security and helps workers—especially women—remain in the workforce while balancing care responsibilities and health matters. Thirteen states, including the District of Columbia, have enacted paid family and medical leave laws that guarantee workers comprehensive paid leave.[47] This group of states does not include North Carolina or the seven regional peer states also analyzed for this report. However, there have been promising efforts at the administrative level that can and should be expanded through further administrative, legislative, and private sector action. For instance, in 2019, then-Governor Cooper issued an executive order providing up to eight weeks of paid parental leave for eligible state employees. In 2023, legislation went into effect that expanded paid parental leave to cover all state employees, including public school teachers and staff. Neighboring states such as South Carolina allow up to six weeks of paid parental leave for state employees. North Carolina should continue to demonstrate its leadership in this arena by expanding the existing 8-week paid parental leave program to a statewide, comprehensive 12-week paid family and medical leave program for all employees. The governor should make a solid first step toward that goal by establishing a task force to explore how a statewide paid family and medical program, which also engages private employers and employees, could be a powerful tool for workforce retention.

2. Guarantee workers across the state access to paid sick days.

The governor and General Assembly should work together to establish paid sick days as a priority and pursue enacting a law requiring employers to provide workers with paid time off for short-term illness, injury, or medical treatment or to care for the health of a loved one. Paid sick leave programs improve public health and reduce the spread of illness, and when workers cannot access paid time off for illness, their health suffers. Evidence suggests that COVID-19-related emergency sick leave reduced the rate of infections and that paid sick time reduces flu-related absences.[48] Rigorous research from states with paid sick leave laws also shows that businesses benefit from these policies through improved recruitment and retention and increased productivity.[49] North Carolina's regional peer states have not yet adopted paid sick leave laws. While legislation was introduced in North Carolina during the 2024–2025 legislative session (H.B. 339/S.B. 326, H.B. 398/S.B. 458, H.B. 521/S.B. 622/S.B. 635), none advanced beyond referral to committee. This presents an opportunity for leadership to advance public-private support for this policy that benefits both workers and the business community.

3. Increase North Carolina families' access to child care by investing in a child care subsidy program.

North Carolina has the third-highest child care costs of the eight states analyzed for this report, for both center- and home-based child care. For women working full-time year-round, the cost of home-based infant care exceeds 20 percent of their median annual income, as shown previously in this report. In the last year alone, the number of children on North Carolina's child care subsidy waitlist increased by 270 percent, from 3,425 children in January 2024 to 12,755 in January 2025.[50] Compounding access constraints, the number of licensed child care programs in North Carolina has continued to decline; among the 100 counties statewide, 65 have had a net loss of licensed child care programs from February 2020 to February 2025.[51]

To help more families afford child care across North Carolina and keep more child care programs open, the administration and General Assembly should work together to prioritize expanding the availability of affordable, accessible child care programs in the state by increasing child care subsidy rates.

4. Invest in and expand eligibility for free pre-K for families.

North Carolina currently offers free pre-K for four-year-olds to eligible families based on income restrictions, but as noted in a previous discussion of the data, the state also ranked lowest nationally for preschool enrollment of three-year-olds (7 percent), and ranked second-lowest among the eight states analyzed for this report for enrollment of four-year-olds (30 percent). This low enrollment rate demonstrates that some families in need of early education for their children are unable to access it. Georgia and Florida provide free pre-K for four-year-old children regardless of parental income, making early education available to all residents in need.

Actions that help increase higher enrollment rates among pre-K-aged children could also help reduce critical gender gaps in workforce participation among parents of young children. As our analysis shows, mothers of young children in North Carolina were more than four times as likely as fathers to work part-time, and nearly 25 percent less likely to be in the labor force. State policymakers should remove income-related eligibility restrictions and extend free pre-K programs to three-year-olds, which would not only help more children enroll in early education and improve their kindergarten readiness but also further advance workforce and economic opportunities for women, particularly mothers, across North Carolina.

5. Enact pay equity policies across state agencies to model opportunities for statewide expansion and leadership.

Requesting or requiring prospective employees to share their salary history is a harmful hiring practice[52] that perpetuates the gender wage gap. While North Carolina has one of the smaller gender wage gaps in the group of states analyzed, it remains sizable. Women working full-time year-round in the state earned 83.7 cents for every dollar earned by men—second to Florida, where the gap is slightly narrower at 84.9 cents. The previous administration implemented a salary history ban for cabinet-level agency employees. The governor should expand this statewide, positioning North Carolina to continue to lead on equitable wages for prospective employees, especially since the other states analyzed for this report have not yet taken similar action.

Likewise, salary transparency—already modeled across state agencies—is another key policy measure that contributes to reducing the gender wage gap.[53] The administration and the General Assembly should work together to prioritize salary transparency for workers across the state by requiring private employers to disclose salary ranges, hourly rates, bonus structures, and benefits for all job postings and promotions, including for remote roles performed within the state.

Cabinet agencies should further lead by example for private employers by conducting pay equity audits and providing guidance to reconcile discrepancies in employee compensation. Such pay equity audits include a proactive analysis of pay structure, base salary, bonuses, and benefits; recommendations for unbiased pay setting; and transparency throughout the pay equity audit process.[54] Together, these pay equity best practices could attract new talent to the workforce in North Carolina.

6. Increase the minimum wage to promote access to livable wages for North Carolinians.

State minimum wage laws set the wage floor for the hourly rate that employers can compensate workers. Since women are overrepresented in low-wage jobs, they are more likely to live in poverty.[55] As previously noted, in North Carolina, women were much more likely to be working poor than men: At the 200 percent threshold, 19.3 percent of women and 16.7 percent of men were among the working poor. While North Carolina's minimum wage is set at the federal level of $7.25, aligning with some nearby states, others, including Florida, Virginia, and West Virginia, have all instituted minimum wages above the federal minimum wage—$13, $12.41, and $8.75 per hour, respectively.[56] In Florida and Virginia, the minimum wage is also indexed annually. In light of the more competitive wage floor offered by nearby states, North Carolina's governor and General Assembly should work together to raise the minimum wage above the federal level, indexed for the increased cost of living over time, to make North Carolina a more attractive state for workers.

7. Extend workplace antidiscrimination protections to cover sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and marital status.

While North Carolina's laws protecting workers from discrimination based on sex set it apart from other regional peer states, such as Georgia, states like Florida and Virginia have further expanded such protections to cover additional identities and statuses, thus strengthening antidiscrimination protections for more workers. Workplace sexual harassment, gender-based violence, and discrimination can have severe long-term consequences on women's economic security and career advancement as a result of related unemployment and job changes, increased health care costs incurred, and difficulty with full participation in education and employment.[57]

Gender-based discrimination in the workplace often compounds these negative impacts and deepens racial and gender wage gaps. For instance, the wage gap ratio for women working full-time year-round overall in North Carolina is just under 84 cents for every dollar earned by a White man. For Latina, Native American, and Black women in the state, who earned just 54.0 cents, 57.2 cents, and 65.5 cents, respectively, for every dollar paid to White men (per the findings previously cited in this report), workplace and earnings discrimination extends beyond just gender.

The merging of both gender and racial discrimination can often contribute to barriers to entry into higher-paying professions, as well as exacerbate wage gaps within these jobs for women of color. As previously identified in this report, North Carolina ranked 19th in the nation for women's employment in managerial and professional occupations. While 52.0 percent of White women workers occupied these jobs in the state, Latina, Native American, and Black women workers were the least represented in these roles, at 29.1 percent, 37.7 percent, and 37.9 percent, respectively. Stronger workplace antidiscrimination protections would create safer, better workplaces for all women, especially women of color, and workers overall.

8. Expand opportunities for student loan forgiveness for care workers and STEM-related professions.

In 2011, recognizing the burden of student loan debt, the North Carolina General Assembly established the Forgivable Education Loans for Service program, providing financial assistance to qualified students enrolled in an approved education program and committed to working in critical employment-shortage professions in North Carolina, such as education or health care. State lawmakers should extend this program to include care workers, such as for children, elders, and people with disabilities, as well as STEM-related professions—including people who pivoted their careers to enter the care and/or STEM-related workforce, particularly after the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. As noted previously, 15.7 percent of employed women worked in STEM or STEM-related roles in North Carolina, ranking it third among the analyzed states, behind Virginia (16.2 percent) and West Virginia (16.6 percent).

Expanding opportunities for student loan forgiveness is likely to strengthen women's economic security in the state, particularly among women of color. Nationally, Black women are disproportionately impacted by student debt burdens: They have the highest average student loan debt among borrowers.[58] Student loan debt has negative impacts on the short- and long-term financial stability for borrowers, and the burden of student debt on Black women is compounded by the gender and racial wage gaps.

North Carolina should expand its loan forgiveness programs and eliminate or reduce student debt among such workforce sectors, supporting women who continue working, living, and raising families in North Carolina.

9. Promote collaboration that advances workforce strategies to support women.

According to ApprenticeshipNC's FY 2023–2024 annual report, there has been significant growth in the use of apprenticeships throughout the state, and a trained and skilled workforce is essential to an economy that creates opportunities for and meets the needs of North Carolinians.[59] IWPR research shows that, nationwide, women and people of color are increasingly represented among apprentices, though many women in the trade workforce experience discrimination and harassment at work and throughout training that drives them out of the trade.[60]

Governor Stein's Council on Workforce and Apprenticeships is positioned to further women in the workforce, including in the trades and other nontraditional occupations. A shared interest in strengthening North Carolina's workforce creates an opportunity for collaboration between the Council for Women and the Council on Workforce Apprenticeships. Such a collaboration should include best practices for recruitment and retention strategies to support women in the workforce and should be amplified to the administration and the General Assembly.

Conclusion

While far from exhaustive, the policy solutions identified here are crucial actions that, if pursued and implemented, could further support women and their families in North Carolina. In reducing gender inequities and advancing economic opportunities for women across the state, North Carolina has an opportunity to serve as an economic and equity leader among its peer states in the region and nationwide.

Appendix A: Tables

Table A1. Labor Force Participation Among Those with Children Under the Age of 6, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)

1a. Labor Force Participation of Mothers of Young Children

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	**All**
FL	n/a	61.6%	79.6%	66.5%	70.1%	70.1%	70.4%
GA	n/a	58.0%	79.5%	54.5%	69.1%	70.0%	70.0%
KY	n/a	52.6%	73.8%	54.9%	70.2%	73.3%	69.4%
NC	**65.7%**	**58.1%**	**80.5%**	**52.1%**	**69.6%**	**73.9%**	**68.9%**
SC	n/a	60.0%	79.7%	45.9%	68.0%	56.7%	68.5%
TN	n/a	51.2%	77.9%	50.6%	67.4%	72.2%	67.4%
VA	n/a	62.5%	80.5%	64.3%	70.8%	67.2%	70.7%
WV	n/a	n/a	*72.0%*	61.5%	66.2%	65.6%	66.0%

1b. Labor Force Participation of Fathers of Young Children

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	**All**
FL	n/a	95.1%	89.7%	93.5%	94.2%	92.4%	93.3%
GA	n/a	95.9%	90.1%	95.4%	95.0%	92.8%	93.8%
KY	n/a	97.9%	91.9%	93.2%	92.6%	93.0%	92.8%
NC	**78.5%**	**94.9%**	**90.0%**	**93.2%**	**95.1%**	**93.0%**	**93.8%**
SC	n/a	96.2%	90.3%	95.8%	95.8%	94.0%	94.7%
TN	n/a	94.9%	91.0%	95.4%	94.1%	94.4%	93.9%
VA	n/a	96.0%	93.4%	94.5%	95.2%	92.8%	94.8%
WV	n/a	n/a	*88.0%*	n/a	88.8%	96.5%	88.8%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Labor force participation measures the percentages of women and men aged 16 and above with a child under age 6 in the household, and who are in the labor force (defined as employed full-time, part-time voluntarily, or part-time involuntarily, or are unemployed but looking for work), as a share of all women and men aged 16 and above with a child under age 6 in the household. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces. Italicized values indicate that the sample size is insufficient for the reported value to be representative of the population. Estimates should be interpreted with caution.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A2. Part-Time Employment Among Those with Children Under the Age of 6, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)

2a. Part-Time Employment of Mothers of Young Children

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	All
FL	n/a	20.1%	20.1%	23.1%	24.5%	23.0%	23.0%
GA	n/a	17.7%	18.7%	24.2%	23.7%	26.4%	21.9%
KY	n/a	9.6%	25.7%	23.5%	24.1%	25.1%	23.9%
NC	**25.4%**	**15.8%**	**18.8%**	**26.0%**	**25.3%**	**21.4%**	**23.4%**
SC	n/a	13.9%	21.9%	28.7%	24.6%	28.3%	23.9%
TN	n/a	16.2%	20.9%	26.1%	25.1%	20.8%	24.0%
VA	n/a	14.4%	19.8%	26.2%	22.9%	22.7%	22.0%
WV	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	26.0%	44.1%	26.6%

2b. Part-Time Employment of Fathers of Young Children

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	All
FL	n/a	7.5%	10.4%	7.8%	5.8%	7.3%	7.2%
GA	n/a	3.9%	8.5%	6.1%	4.1%	7.8%	5.5%
KY	n/a	3.3%	9.2%	8.0%	4.9%	10.5%	5.6%
NC	**3.2%**	**5.1%**	**9.2%**	**7.2%**	**4.4%**	**6.8%**	**5.6%**
SC	n/a	4.8%	9.1%	6.1%	3.5%	3.6%	4.8%
TN	n/a	2.4%	7.0%	9.8%	4.8%	5.1%	5.4%
VA	n/a	4.1%	8.2%	7.2%	3.5%	5.7%	4.9%
WV	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.3%	13.8%	6.2%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Part-time employment measures the percent of all employed workers aged 16 and above who usually work less than 35 hours a week, per the Bureau of Labor Statistics. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A3. **Average Cost of Home-Based Child Care for Infants as a Percentage of Women's Median Annual Earnings, by Race/Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)**

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	All
FL	21.8%	21.8%	27.8%	28.3%	21.5%	24.2%	24.2%
GA	21.1%	14.5%	19.7%	24.0%	16.1%	17.5%	17.8%
KY	n/a	15.2%	19.3%	20.8%	16.4%	19.8%	17.1%
NC	**26.7%**	**16.2%**	**23.3%**	**28.3%**	**19.0%**	**21.4%**	**20.5%**
SC	18.2%	14.0%	19.9%	20.4%	14.8%	17.0%	16.3%
TN	n/a	15.1%	20.1%	22.9%	17.4%	17.9%	17.9%
VA	25.4%	16.6%	26.4%	27.1%	20.3%	21.6%	21.7%
WV	n/a	17.6%	22.0%	18.5%	20.0%	18.5%	20.0%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0; and child care affordability analysis extracted from Price of Care 2023, Child Care Aware of America, 2023, https://info.childcareaware.org/hubfs/2023_Affordability_Analysis.pdf.
Notes: Earnings are computed as the median annual earnings of full-time year-round workers aged 16 and above using the population of positive income earners. Full-time year-round workers are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as those who work 35 or more hours a week for at least 50 weeks a year. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A4. Average Cost of Center-Based Child Care for Infants, as a Percentage of Women's Median Annual Earnings, by Race/Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	**All**
FL	25.3%	25.3%	32.3%	32.9%	25.0%	28.1%	28.1%
GA	27.7%	19.1%	25.9%	31.6%	21.3%	23.1%	23.4%
KY	n/a	20.0%	25.5%	27.4%	21.6%	26.1%	22.5%
NC	**34.0%**	**20.6%**	**29.7%**	**36.0%**	**24.2%**	**27.2%**	**26.1%**
SC	23.0%	17.7%	25.1%	25.9%	18.7%	21.5%	20.7%
TN	n/a	22.6%	30.0%	34.2%	26.1%	26.8%	26.8%
VA	34.2%	22.4%	35.6%	36.6%	27.4%	29.1%	29.3%
WV	n/a	21.5%	26.9%	22.5%	24.3%	22.5%	24.3%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0; and child care affordability analysis extracted from Price of Care 2023, Child Care Aware of America, 2023, https://info.childcareaware.org/hubfs/2023_Affordability_Analysis.pdf.
Notes: Earnings are computed as the median annual earnings of full-time year-round workers aged 16 and above using the population of positive income earners. Full-time year-round workers are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as those who work 35 or more hours a week for at least 50 weeks a year. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A5. **Enrollment Rates in State Pre-K, Preschool Special Education, and State/Federal Head Start Programs for 3- and 4-Year-Old Children (2023)**

State	3-year-olds as % of state population	4-year-olds as % of state population
FL	10.0%	74.0%
GA	10.0%	60.0%
KY	18.0%	39.0%
NC	**7.0%**	**30.0%**
SC	11.3%	51.0%
TN	12.0%	29.0%
VA	11.0%	31.0%
WV	18.0%	70.0%

Source: Allison H. Friedman-Krauss, W. Steven Barnett, Katherine S. Hodges, Karin A. Garver, Tracy Merriman Jost, G.G. Weisenfeld, and Jennifer Duer, *The State of Preschool 2023: State Preschool Yearbook* (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, 2024), https://nieer.org/yearbook/2023.

Table A6. Percent of Single-Headed Households Living in Poverty, by Gender and Race/ Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)

6a. Percent of Single Female-Headed Households Living in Poverty (100% Threshold)

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	All
FL	8.8%	15.2%	27.5%	21.7%	15.4%	19.5%	20.8%
GA	n/a	21.2%	28.0%	30.2%	19.0%	23.0%	25.0%
KY	n/a	16.0%	38.1%	37.2%	30.1%	37.3%	31.9%
NC	**38.1%**	**15.2%**	**28.4%**	**36.1%**	**20.6%**	**27.6%**	**25.7%**
SC	*25.1%*	16.9%	32.4%	33.6%	20.0%	29.4%	27.2%
TN	n/a	14.0%	31.2%	36.0%	22.8%	31.7%	26.7%
VA	n/a	14.2%	25.7%	21.8%	16.7%	19.0%	20.8%
WV	n/a	n/a	47.0%	n/a	30.6%	50.0%	32.6%

6b. Percent of Single Male-Headed Households Living in Poverty (100% Threshold)

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	All
FL	n/a	13.2%	16.5%	10.3%	9.7%	19.6%	11.6%
GA	n/a	9.4%	13.5%	13.5%	10.8%	9.0%	12.1%
KY	n/a	n/a	14.9%	14.2%	16.6%	21.9%	16.3%
NC	**20.7%**	**13.7%**	**15.2%**	**9.5%**	**11.1%**	**17.2%**	**12.3%**
SC	n/a	n/a	24.5%	7.8%	10.0%	16.3%	14.8%
TN	n/a	9.4%	17.0%	10.4%	13.7%	18.2%	14.2%
VA	n/a	6.0%	14.1%	11.1%	8.0%	17.0%	10.1%
WV	n/a	n/a	22.7%	n/a	17.5%	n/a	17.8%

6c. Percent of Single Female-Headed Households Living in Poverty (200% Threshold)

FL	38.6%	39.1%	57.8%	51.8%	38.2%	48.5%	48.0%
GA	n/a	40.1%	56.0%	62.4%	43.0%	49.1%	51.8%
KY	n/a	44.1%	67.8%	66.7%	56.0%	68.9%	58.8%
NC	**65.1%**	**38.6%**	**58.3%**	**65.8%**	**45.4%**	**58.6%**	**53.3%**
SC	*69.3%*	27.3%	63.4%	65.6%	44.9%	54.3%	55.5%
TN	n/a	33.8%	60.1%	65.0%	49.7%	58.0%	54.3%
VA	n/a	31.8%	52.3%	47.3%	36.2%	41.5%	43.7%
WV	n/a	n/a	71.8%	n/a	58.4%	63.6%	59.5%

6d. Percent of Single Male-Headed Households Living in Poverty (200% Threshold)

FL	n/a	28.1%	42.5%	35.0%	25.8%	37.7%	32.3%
GA	n/a	25.9%	36.2%	37.1%	28.7%	28.6%	32.6%
KY	n/a	n/a	40.8%	37.3%	40.6%	48.2%	40.5%
NC	**53.9%**	**26.3%**	**39.6%**	**39.9%**	**30.4%**	**43.5%**	**34.7%**
SC	n/a	n/a	52.6%	41.0%	29.2%	34.8%	38.2%
TN	n/a	21.3%	41.5%	39.2%	34.1%	44.4%	36.2%
VA	n/a	17.8%	34.7%	30.6%	23.6%	34.7%	27.2%
WV	n/a	n/a	57.9%	n/a	40.8%	n/a	41.9%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: The percent of single-headed householders aged 16 and above living in poverty is the share of all single-headed householders of that sex who have total family incomes under 100% (and 200%) of the federal poverty threshold. The Census poverty variable is calculated only for individuals aged 15 and above who are not in institutions or other group quarters. The Census uses the family's size, number of related children, and age of the primary householder to determine the federal poverty threshold. Single householders are male or female householders living in family households without a spouse present. According to IPUMS, a family household consists of a household head and one or more persons who are related to the household head by birth, marriage, or adoption and who are living together in the same household. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Italicized values indicate that the sample size is insufficient for the reported value to be representative of the population. Estimates should be interpreted with caution.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A7. Percent of Single Heads of Households with Children Under Age 18 Living in Poverty, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)

American Indian and Alaska Native | Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander | Black | Latina/o | White | Other/multiracial | **All**

7a. Percent of Single Female-Headed Households with Children Under 18 Living in Poverty (100% Threshold)

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/multiracial	All
FL	n/a	23.8%	38.3%	32.9%	26.1%	28.2%	32.2%
GA	n/a	34.9%	39.3%	40.8%	28.7%	29.5%	36.1%
KY	n/a	n/a	51.1%	43.2%	42.1%	45.3%	44.1%
NC	**51.3%**	**21.0%**	**39.0%**	**46.5%**	**31.1%**	**37.7%**	**36.9%**
SC	n/a	n/a	44.3%	44.4%	31.2%	38.9%	39.4%
TN	n/a	*20.0%*	42.6%	47.2%	33.7%	39.8%	38.4%
VA	n/a	21.8%	36.9%	32.0%	26.4%	23.6%	31.3%
WV	n/a	n/a	58.2%	n/a	47.2%	*75.5%*	49.5%

7b. Percent of Single Male-Headed Households with Children Under 18 Living in Poverty (100% Threshold)

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/multiracial	All
FL	n/a	18.1%	26.8%	15.1%	11.9%	19.9%	16.4%
GA	n/a	n/a	21.1%	18.7%	11.7%	16.4%	16.5%
KY	n/a	n/a	*24.5%*	n/a	19.2%	n/a	20.5%
NC	**n/a**	**n/a**	**20.0%**	**18.8%**	**13.0%**	**20.0%**	**16.1%**
SC	n/a	n/a	33.3%	14.3%	12.1%	n/a	19.3%
TN	n/a	n/a	22.4%	16.4%	16.2%	*17.7%*	17.4%
VA	n/a	11.4%	18.7%	19.0%	10.4%	24.0%	14.2%
WV	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	23.1%	n/a	24.7%

7c. Percent of Single Female-Headed Households with Children Under 18 Living in Poverty (200% Threshold)

FL	n/a	55.3%	74.1%	68.3%	55.1%	62.3%	65.7%
GA	n/a	56.1%	70.5%	77.3%	56.8%	58.9%	66.8%
KY	n/a	n/a	82.3%	77.3%	69.4%	79.2%	72.9%
NC	**80.6%**	**49.9%**	**73.3%**	**78.2%**	**60.5%**	**70.2%**	**68.8%**
SC	n/a	n/a	76.8%	82.1%	60.7%	62.7%	70.8%
TN	n/a	*48.8%*	75.1%	78.4%	63.9%	70.9%	69.7%
VA	n/a	43.8%	69.1%	62.3%	48.3%	49.6%	58.7%
WV	n/a	n/a	*87.4%*	n/a	74.3%	*83.6%*	75.9%

7d. Percent of Single Male-Headed Households with Children Under 18 Living in Poverty (200% Threshold)

FL	n/a	29.5%	60.6%	49.7%	30.0%	46.1%	42.4%
GA	n/a	n/a	49.4%	53.0%	29.0%	29.0%	39.7%
KY	n/a	n/a	*70.7%*	n/a	45.4%	n/a	48.4%
NC	**n/a**	**n/a**	**48.7%**	**58.1%**	**32.9%**	**56.2%**	**41.2%**
SC	n/a	n/a	70.7%	58.6%	31.3%	n/a	46.8%
TN	n/a	n/a	55.3%	58.2%	41.3%	*38.9%*	45.5%
VA	n/a	27.4%	46.2%	44.3%	28.3%	45.6%	35.3%
WV	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	48.3%	n/a	48.7%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: The percent of single-headed householders with children living in poverty is the share of all single-headed householders aged 16 and above of that sex with children under age 18 who have total family incomes under 100% (and 200%) of the federal poverty threshold. The Census poverty variable is calculated only for individuals aged 15 and above who are not in institutions or other group quarters. The Census uses the family's size, number of related children, and age of the primary householder to determine the federal poverty threshold. Single householders are male or female householders living in family households, without a spouse present. According to IPUMS, a family household consists of a household head and one or more persons who are related to the household head by birth, marriage, or adoption and who are living together in the same household. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Italicized values indicate that the sample size is insufficient for the reported value to be representative of the population. Estimates should be interpreted with caution.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A8. Median Annual Earnings for Full-Time Year-Round Workers, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)

8a. Median Annual Earnings for Full-Time Year-Round Women

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/multiracial	All
FL	$49,990	$50,000	$39,100	$38,400	$50,648	$45,000	$45,000
GA	$39,880	$58,000	$42,769	$35,000	$52,063	$48,000	$47,195
KY	n/a	$48,397	$38,000	$35,397	$44,836	$37,142	$43,000
NC	**$36,016**	**$59,351**	**$41,296**	**$34,000**	**$50,648**	**$45,020**	**$46,856**
SC	$39,393	$51,000	$36,000	$35,000	$48,397	$42,000	$43,733
TN	n/a	$53,104	$40,000	$35,000	$46,000	$44,774	$44,774
VA	$47,898	$73,158	$46,015	$44,836	$59,938	$56,275	$56,000
WV	n/a	$47,271	$37,756	$45,000	$41,650	$45,000	$41,650

8b. Median Annual Earnings for Full-Time Year-Round Men

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/multiracial	All
FL	$50,000	$69,764	$41,650	$45,000	$63,000	$55,000	$53,000
GA	$45,020	$83,000	$47,195	$41,296	$67,681	$58,994	$58,000
KY	n/a	$62,475	$44,836	$40,116	$56,634	$50,000	$55,000
NC	**$44,836**	**$91,000**	**$43,733**	**$40,000**	**$63,000**	**$53,095**	**$56,000**
SC	$51,000	$74,333	$42,000	$40,000	$62,475	$52,000	$55,927
TN	$54,145	$72,888	$44,836	$40,000	$58,994	$50,000	$55,000
VA	$70,793	$100,000	$52,063	$53,095	$77,000	$70,000	$70,000
WV	n/a	$67,681	$41,650	$52,063	$54,874	$45,020	$54,024

8c. Gender Earnings Ratio (Women's Median Annual Earnings as a Share of Men's Median Annual Earnings) for Full-Time Year-Round Workers, by Race/Ethnicity

FL	79.3%	79.4%	62.1%	61.0%	80.4%	71.4%	84.9%
GA	58.9%	85.7%	63.2%	51.7%	76.9%	70.9%	81.4%
KY	n/a	85.5%	67.1%	62.5%	79.2%	65.6%	78.2%
NC	**57.2%**	**94.2%**	**65.5%**	**54.0%**	**80.4%**	**71.5%**	**83.7%**
SC	63.1%	81.6%	57.6%	56.0%	77.5%	67.2%	78.2%
TN	n/a	90.0%	67.8%	59.3%	78.0%	75.9%	81.4%
VA	62.2%	95.0%	59.8%	58.2%	77.8%	73.1%	80.0%
WV	n/a	86.1%	68.8%	82.0%	75.9%	82.0%	77.1%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Full-time year-round workers are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as those who work 35 or more hours a week for at least 50 weeks a year. Median earnings are measured using only the population of positive income earners aged 16 and above. The median is the midpoint in the earnings distribution at which approximately half the population earns less and half earns more. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A9. Gender Earnings Ratio (Women's Median Annual Earnings as a Share of Men's Median Annual Earnings) for Full-Time Year-Round Workers, by Race/Ethnicity, and by Educational Attainment (Ages 25+, 2019–2023)

American Indian and Alaska Native · Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander · Black · Latina/o · White · Other/multiracial · **All**

9a. Gender Earnings Ratio for Workers with Less than High School Education

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/multiracial	All
FL	n/a	60.4%	62.8%	57.7%	69.7%	66.9%	78.7%
GA	n/a	64.0%	65.5%	60.1%	63.0%	n/a	75.9%
KY	n/a	n/a	n/a	73.7%	67.9%	n/a	72.6%
NC	**n/a**	**69.4%**	**71.8%**	**64.6%**	**71.8%**	**n/a**	**78.6%**
SC	n/a	n/a	64.4%	63.4%	71.1%	n/a	78.0%
TN	n/a	n/a	71.0%	71.9%	73.2%	n/a	76.9%
VA	n/a	62.6%	62.6%	59.1%	66.8%	n/a	70.6%
WV	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	65.6%	n/a	66.5%

9b. Gender Earnings Ratio for Workers with High School Education or Equivalent

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/multiracial	All
FL	n/a	63.0%	64.0%	62.1%	78.0%	70.0%	80.0%
GA	n/a	65.7%	65.2%	60.3%	74.4%	67.6%	77.3%
KY	n/a	n/a	60.0%	70.8%	70.0%	68.0%	71.5%
NC	**60.0%**	**63.0%**	**66.6%**	**61.4%**	**74.6%**	**70.0%**	**77.7%**
SC	n/a	81.5%	62.2%	62.2%	72.5%	75.6%	73.8%
TN	n/a	80.7%	71.2%	63.0%	72.7%	70.6%	77.0%
VA	n/a	68.8%	65.6%	65.6%	74.1%	74.1%	75.3%
WV	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	65.8%	n/a	66.0%

9c. Gender Earnings Ratio for Workers with Some College/Associate's Degree

FL	n/a	62.9%	63.3%	66.7%	78.1%	66.7%	77.8%
GA	n/a	59.8%	60.9%	60.9%	70.3%	66.8%	73.5%
KY	n/a	60.7%	63.0%	67.4%	69.6%	61.4%	69.4%
NC	**59.4%**	**64.5%**	**64.1%**	**61.1%**	**76.2%**	**66.9%**	**77.2%**
SC	n/a	72.8%	59.0%	68.0%	73.2%	68.3%	72.0%
TN	n/a	70.6%	66.4%	59.3%	71.2%	75.9%	74.3%
VA	n/a	72.0%	62.2%	68.8%	71.1%	75.3%	72.7%
WV	n/a	n/a	73.4%	n/a	67.5%	62.2%	69.1%

9d. Gender Earnings Ratio for Workers with Bachelor's Degree

FL	n/a	68.3%	57.0%	56.4%	70.0%	64.9%	73.4%
GA	n/a	67.3%	58.0%	53.7%	67.3%	61.9%	72.3%
KY	n/a	73.4%	69.2%	63.2%	74.6%	60.8%	75.0%
NC	**55.6%**	**79.8%**	**57.8%**	**58.9%**	**69.4%**	**66.7%**	**72.0%**
SC	n/a	70.6%	55.1%	52.9%	70.2%	64.7%	71.2%
TN	n/a	72.8%	61.7%	56.5%	70.7%	62.5%	71.7%
VA	n/a	80.0%	60.0%	62.5%	73.2%	72.0%	72.9%
WV	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	73.7%	n/a	73.5%

9e. Gender Earnings Ratio for Workers with Graduate Degree or Higher Education

FL	n/a	75.7%	56.7%	56.7%	67.2%	65.5%	70.0%
GA	n/a	84.8%	61.0%	60.0%	66.0%	68.7%	71.4%
KY	n/a	77.8%	66.7%	81.0%	73.3%	68.3%	73.7%
NC	**47.5%**	**85.5%**	**58.0%**	**58.9%**	**67.8%**	**68.7%**	**69.2%**
SC	n/a	76.9%	57.7%	55.1%	65.1%	60.6%	66.0%
TN	n/a	85.0%	65.0%	57.6%	67.2%	64.9%	70.0%
VA	n/a	78.8%	56.5%	59.5%	64.3%	68.3%	68.1%
WV	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	72.0%	n/a	74.0%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Full-time year-round workers are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as those who work 35 or more hours a week for at least 50 weeks a year. Median earnings are measured using only the population of positive income earners aged 25 and above. The median is the midpoint in the earnings distribution at which approximately half the population earns less and half earns more. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Italicized values indicate that the sample size is insufficient for the reported value to be representative of the population. Estimates should be interpreted with caution.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A10. Gender Earnings Ratio for Retirement Income (Women's Median Annual Retirement Income as a Share of Men's Median Retirement Income), by Race/Ethnicity (Ages 62+, 2019–2023)

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	**All**
FL	*48.0%*	42.4%	50.9%	41.5%	55.6%	48.3%	57.3%
GA	n/a	50.9%	57.6%	52.8%	66.0%	53.3%	65.7%
KY	n/a	n/a	66.7%	*83.6%*	68.9%	59.0%	68.7%
NC	**54.0%**	**62.5%**	**55.7%**	**45.0%**	**62.5%**	**54.9%**	**62.8%**
SC	n/a	35.8%	52.4%	69.4%	62.3%	40.8%	63.6%
TN	n/a	28.3%	73.3%	54.7%	62.7%	66.7%	66.2%
VA	n/a	48.5%	50.0%	57.8%	55.5%	50.0%	58.3%
WV	n/a	n/a	65.1%	n/a	68.2%	80.1%	68.8%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.

Notes: Retirement income measures the median annual retirement earnings (annual pre-tax retirement, survivor, and disability pension income, other than Social Security). Median earnings are measured using only the population of positive income earners aged 62 and above. The median is the midpoint in the earnings distribution at which approximately half the population earns less and half earns more. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.

Italicized values indicate that the sample size is insufficient for the reported value to be representative of the population. Estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A11. **Gender Earnings Ratio for Social Security Income (Women's Median Annual Social Security Income as a Share of Men's Median Annual Social Security Income), by Race/Ethnicity (Ages 62+, 2019–2023)**

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/multiracial	**All**
FL	*66.9%*	57.0%	61.8%	51.3%	72.5%	65.4%	74.0%
GA	n/a	49.4%	66.1%	60.1%	72.2%	66.7%	75.3%
KY	n/a	65.5%	73.2%	61.7%	71.1%	67.3%	72.4%
NC	**63.6%**	**58.3%**	**67.5%**	**60.0%**	**74.5%**	**70.0%**	**76.2%**
SC	*59.2%*	56.4%	60.9%	57.3%	70.6%	66.9%	72.7%
TN	n/a	58.7%	69.8%	64.7%	73.1%	67.0%	74.5%
VA	*81.6%*	58.4%	66.3%	56.2%	72.5%	67.6%	73.5%
WV	n/a	n/a	74.2%	n/a	71.9%	71.5%	72.2%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Social Security Income measures the median annual pre-tax income received from Social Security pensions, survivors' benefits, or permanent disability insurance, as well as US government Railroad Retirement insurance payments. Median earnings are measured using only the population of positive income earners aged 62 and above. The median is the midpoint in the earnings distribution at which approximately half the population earns less and half earns more. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Italicized values indicate that the sample size is insufficient for the reported value to be representative of the population. Estimates should be interpreted with caution.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A12. Labor Force Participation Rate by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)

12a. Labor Force Participation of Women

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	**All**
FL	45.4%	57.4%	63.9%	60.4%	49.6%	61.2%	55.0%
GA	56.7%	58.8%	64.2%	60.3%	55.1%	62.7%	58.9%
KY	30.3%	57.2%	62.7%	64.1%	54.2%	60.3%	55.4%
NC	**50.8%**	**61.3%**	**63.6%**	**58.9%**	**55.1%**	**64.6%**	**57.7%**
SC	51.2%	60.3%	61.3%	57.3%	53.2%	58.7%	55.8%
TN	44.2%	60.0%	64.9%	58.8%	55.4%	61.8%	57.4%
VA	58.0%	63.1%	64.6%	66.7%	58.0%	65.2%	60.7%
WV	n/a	58.4%	55.6%	57.4%	49.6%	53.0%	50.1%

12b. Labor Force Participation of Men

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	**All**
FL	51.3%	70.5%	63.6%	73.7%	58.8%	67.8%	64.0%
GA	52.2%	75.7%	64.3%	80.1%	67.0%	68.5%	68.0%
KY	47.0%	78.0%	63.6%	77.7%	62.7%	65.6%	63.7%
NC	**54.1%**	**76.6%**	**62.5%**	**80.3%**	**65.8%**	**70.0%**	**66.9%**
SC	57.9%	77.3%	60.1%	79.2%	64.3%	67.6%	64.6%
TN	50.5%	77.5%	64.7%	81.7%	65.7%	67.8%	66.8%
VA	61.5%	76.8%	65.9%	81.4%	67.4%	73.0%	69.3%
WV	*33.0%*	73.8%	45.5%	64.3%	57.3%	56.7%	57.1%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Labor force participation measures the percentages of women and men aged 16 and above who are in the labor force (defined as employed full-time, part-time, or unemployed but looking for work). All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Italicized values indicate that the sample size is insufficient for the reported value to be representative of the population. Estimates should be interpreted with caution.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A13. Part-Time Employment by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)

13a. Part-Time Employment of Women

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	**All**
FL	26.9%	23.3%	21.7%	24.4%	26.2%	27.3%	24.9%
GA	30.9%	22.7%	20.0%	27.2%	25.0%	29.0%	23.5%
KY	n/a	20.3%	25.6%	25.6%	25.8%	28.9%	25.7%
NC	**21.2%**	**20.4%**	**21.5%**	**27.7%**	**26.0%**	**27.6%**	**24.9%**
SC	24.4%	21.9%	22.5%	29.5%	26.0%	29.8%	25.2%
TN	18.4%	24.4%	19.5%	27.0%	24.6%	26.7%	23.9%
VA	25.5%	21.7%	22.6%	26.6%	24.8%	28.0%	24.5%
WV	n/a	17.3%	24.2%	34.4%	25.3%	35.6%	25.7%

13b. Part-Time Employment of Men

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	**All**
FL	13.6%	15.4%	17.5%	13.5%	16.4%	17.0%	15.6%
GA	13.1%	11.9%	15.8%	12.3%	13.3%	19.3%	13.9%
KY	14.7%	13.5%	18.5%	15.0%	13.8%	20.6%	14.4%
NC	**12.7%**	**9.1%**	**18.0%**	**12.7%**	**14.0%**	**19.4%**	**14.5%**
SC	12.5%	12.8%	16.8%	10.8%	13.7%	17.3%	14.2%
TN	17.4%	9.9%	15.5%	12.0%	13.5%	15.6%	13.6%
VA	13.3%	11.6%	17.0%	13.9%	13.0%	16.9%	13.8%
WV	n/a	14.7%	21.6%	21.3%	13.4%	27.6%	14.2%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Part-time employment measures the percentage of women and men who work part-time (defined as typically working less than 35 hours a week), as a share of all employed workers of that sex aged 16 and above. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Where “n/a” is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A14. Unemployment Rate by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)

14a. Unemployment Rate of Women

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/multiracial	All
FL	4.8%	4.2%	6.9%	4.9%	4.2%	5.8%	4.9%
GA	5.3%	4.3%	7.4%	5.2%	3.7%	6.4%	5.3%
KY	n/a	3.6%	8.2%	4.4%	4.3%	7.6%	4.8%
NC	**6.3%**	**4.3%**	**6.9%**	**6.2%**	**3.8%**	**6.8%**	**4.9%**
SC	11.4%	4.5%	7.0%	5.5%	4.1%	6.6%	5.1%
TN	14.6%	3.2%	8.1%	5.1%	4.2%	6.4%	5.0%
VA	2.6%	4.0%	6.2%	5.5%	3.4%	6.0%	4.3%
WV	n/a	1.0%	7.1%	5.9%	4.9%	7.0%	5.0%

14b. Unemployment Rate of Men

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/multiracial	All
FL	7.8%	3.9%	8.0%	4.1%	4.3%	5.8%	4.8%
GA	5.8%	2.8%	7.8%	3.9%	3.8%	7.4%	5.0%
KY	6.6%	3.6%	8.1%	4.3%	4.8%	7.3%	5.1%
NC	**7.0%**	**3.6%**	**8.4%**	**4.0%**	**4.0%**	**6.7%**	**4.9%**
SC	10.0%	2.3%	9.2%	3.6%	3.6%	7.1%	4.9%
TN	3.3%	1.9%	9.0%	4.3%	3.8%	4.8%	4.6%
VA	3.7%	3.2%	8.0%	4.3%	3.4%	5.7%	4.3%
WV	n/a	0.5%	9.4%	3.7%	6.4%	9.7%	6.5%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: The unemployment rate measures the percentage of women and men who are unemployed as a share of all workers of that sex in the labor force (defined as those employed full-time, part-time voluntarily, or part-time involuntarily, or are unemployed but looking for work) aged 16 and above. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A15. Employment in Managerial and Professional Occupations by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)

15a. Women's Employment in Managerial and Professional Occupations

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/multiracial	All
FL	43.6%	50.1%	36.4%	35.7%	48.2%	44.0%	42.7%
GA	34.4%	54.6%	40.4%	29.6%	51.0%	46.6%	45.5%
KY	n/a	47.9%	34.3%	26.2%	45.3%	36.8%	43.4%
NC	**37.7%**	**58.3%**	**37.9%**	**29.1%**	**52.0%**	**45.5%**	**46.7%**
SC	28.0%	53.7%	32.4%	28.3%	49.7%	36.5%	43.4%
TN	33.4%	50.5%	34.9%	28.0%	46.9%	41.2%	43.7%
VA	39.1%	61.3%	41.2%	36.6%	55.9%	51.3%	51.3%
WV	n/a	57.9%	37.1%	44.8%	44.7%	38.6%	44.4%

15b. Men's Employment in Managerial and Professional Occupations

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/multiracial	All
FL	33.3%	55.1%	23.3%	27.6%	42.2%	38.2%	35.6%
GA	41.5%	61.5%	27.1%	20.9%	42.8%	37.2%	36.7%
KY	20.4%	55.6%	21.8%	20.2%	32.4%	25.7%	31.2%
NC	**18.8%**	**65.3%**	**24.6%**	**18.7%**	**42.0%**	**37.1%**	**36.8%**
SC	21.7%	59.1%	19.4%	20.1%	38.9%	33.1%	33.5%
TN	30.5%	58.8%	21.6%	19.5%	37.1%	33.4%	34.0%
VA	37.9%	64.7%	30.1%	29.3%	49.1%	45.2%	44.7%
WV	n/a	71.1%	28.3%	31.3%	29.4%	23.2%	29.6%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Employment in managerial and professional occupations measures the share of women and men employed in managerial and professional occupations as a share of all employed workers of that sex aged 16 and above. Managerial and professional workers are defined as those in "Management, Professional, and Related Occupations" per the BLS in the Census 2018 Occupation Classification Code List. For a full list of which occupations are included in this category, please visit: https://usa.ipums.org/usa/volii/occ2018.shtml. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A16. Median Annual Earnings for Full-Time Year-Round Workers in Managerial and Professional Occupations, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)

American Indian and Alaska Native | Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander | Black | Latina/o | White | Other/ multiracial | **All**

16a. Median Annual Earnings for Women in Managerial and Professional Occupations

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	All
FL	$58,994	$72,888	$52,000	$54,275	$62,475	$60,000	$60,000
GA	n/a	$84,413	$60,000	$58,994	$66,000	$65,000	$64,558
KY	n/a	$70,000	$52,000	$53,000	$57,269	$51,000	$57,000
NC	**$49,555**	**$84,413**	**$54,000**	**$54,000**	**$62,534**	**$60,000**	**$60,174**
SC	n/a	$65,000	$48,939	$54,362	$60,000	$58,000	$57,269
TN	n/a	$72,000	$56,000	$52,063	$58,310	$55,000	$58,000
VA	n/a	$98,919	$65,000	$69,781	$73,158	$75,000	$73,153
WV	n/a	n/a	$50,735	*$58,994*	$54,865	$57,401	$55,000

16b. Median Annual Earnings for Men in Managerial and Professional Occupations

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	All
FL	$105,595	$100,000	$58,994	$70,000	$89,000	$80,000	$80,000
GA	n/a	$110,909	$70,000	$78,785	$94,300	$90,000	$88,506
KY	n/a	$90,040	$61,903	$69,000	$75,513	$67,530	$75,000
NC	**$61,903**	**$113,000**	**$64,154**	**$70,000**	**$90,000**	**$79,135**	**$87,000**
SC	n/a	$104,125	$57,000	$77,872	$85,000	$80,000	$82,000
TN	n/a	$104,125	$60,393	$73,158	$81,036	$73,158	$80,000
VA	n/a	$123,000	$80,000	$94,542	$107,000	$100,290	$104,125
WV	n/a	$87,789	*$67,530*	*$59,000*	$73,158	$66,000	$72,888

16c. Gender Earnings Ratios: Women's Median Annual Income as a Share of Men's Median Annual Income in Managerial and Professional Occupations

FL	66.3%	81.9%	58.4%	61.0%	70.2%	67.4%	75.0%
GA	n/a	89.5%	63.6%	62.6%	70.0%	68.9%	72.9%
KY	n/a	92.7%	68.9%	70.2%	75.8%	67.5%	76.0%
NC	**55.1%**	**93.8%**	**60.0%**	**60.0%**	**69.5%**	**66.7%**	**69.2%**
SC	n/a	76.5%	57.6%	64.0%	70.6%	68.2%	69.8%
TN	n/a	88.8%	69.1%	64.2%	72.0%	67.9%	72.5%
VA	n/a	92.4%	60.7%	65.2%	68.4%	70.1%	70.3%
WV	n/a	n/a	69.3%	*80.6%*	75.0%	78.5%	75.5%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.

Notes: Full-time year-round workers are defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as those who work 35 or more hours a week for at least 50 weeks a year. Median earnings are measured using only the population of positive income earners aged 16 and above. The median is the midpoint in the earnings distribution at which approximately half the population earns less and half earns more. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces. The managerial and professional workers are defined as those in "Management, Professional, and Related Occupations" per the BLS in the Census 2018 Occupation Classification Code List. For a full list of which occupations are included in this category, please visit: https://usa.ipums.org/usa/volii/occ2018.shtml.

Italicized values indicate that the sample size is insufficient for the reported value to be representative of the population. Estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A17. Employment in STEM and STEM-Related Fields by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)

17a. Women's Employment in STEM and STEM-Related Fields

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	All
FL	12.0%	26.6%	13.4%	10.6%	14.8%	15.3%	13.8%
GA	6.6%	26.5%	12.6%	8.1%	14.7%	15.1%	14.0%
KY	n/a	22.8%	9.2%	8.2%	16.2%	14.1%	15.3%
NC	**15.0%**	**32.8%**	**12.2%**	**7.9%**	**17.2%**	**15.8%**	**15.7%**
SC	5.7%	28.2%	10.1%	8.5%	16.8%	12.8%	14.6%
TN	13.0%	27.2%	11.4%	8.6%	16.2%	12.6%	15.0%
VA	13.8%	28.2%	13.1%	10.3%	16.7%	17.2%	16.2%
WV	n/a	32.2%	14.5%	15.7%	16.6%	13.6%	16.6%

17b. Men's Employment in STEM and STEM-Related Fields

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	All
FL	12.0%	32.6%	7.9%	9.2%	13.3%	14.6%	12.0%
GA	10.0%	36.2%	9.3%	6.7%	13.8%	15.6%	12.9%
KY	3.8%	32.3%	6.8%	5.6%	10.9%	9.7%	10.7%
NC	**5.1%**	**40.9%**	**8.0%**	**5.8%**	**14.6%**	**14.5%**	**13.3%**
SC	8.9%	33.1%	6.4%	7.2%	13.1%	14.0%	11.7%
TN	5.8%	32.0%	7.5%	6.6%	12.1%	11.2%	11.4%
VA	12.6%	40.4%	10.6%	10.9%	18.0%	19.0%	17.7%
WV	n/a	37.5%	9.9%	12.2%	10.4%	8.3%	10.6%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Employment in STEM and STEM-related fields measures the percent of women and men who work in "STEM and STEM-Related Occupations, as a share of all employed workers of that sex aged 16 and above. Workers are defined to be in "STEM and STEM-Related Occupations" per the BLS in the 2018 Census STEM, STEM-Related, and Non-STEM-Related Code List. For a full list of which occupations are defined as "STEM" and "STEM-Related" please visit: https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/guidance/industry-occupation/2018-census-stem-related-and-non-stem-occupation-code-list.xlsx. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces. Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A18. Self-Employment by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Ages 16+, 2019–2023)

18a. Self-Employment of Women

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	All
FL	19.8%	13.0%	4.6%	11.7%	10.7%	10.2%	10.1%
GA	5.6%	12.5%	5.4%	9.6%	8.8%	9.9%	7.9%
KY	n/a	11.5%	4.3%	7.2%	6.8%	6.3%	6.7%
NC	**5.4%**	**10.1%**	**4.6%**	**8.4%**	**8.8%**	**7.6%**	**7.8%**
SC	14.3%	10.4%	4.2%	10.6%	8.7%	6.6%	7.5%
TN	9.3%	9.5%	4.1%	8.9%	7.9%	6.1%	7.3%
VA	8.0%	9.6%	4.0%	8.4%	7.9%	7.9%	7.3%
WV	n/a	5.9%	2.9%	6.2%	6.0%	7.8%	6.0%

18b. Self-Employment of Men

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	All
FL	16.6%	14.6%	8.4%	16.2%	15.8%	14.7%	14.9%
GA	17.4%	11.7%	8.9%	14.0%	13.1%	12.9%	12.0%
KY	5.3%	9.4%	6.3%	11.3%	10.8%	9.7%	10.4%
NC	**9.3%**	**9.7%**	**7.7%**	**11.4%**	**13.0%**	**11.0%**	**11.7%**
SC	13.1%	12.6%	7.4%	15.3%	12.9%	12.9%	11.9%
TN	11.8%	11.6%	7.2%	12.7%	12.5%	11.3%	11.7%
VA	12.2%	9.9%	6.8%	10.4%	10.6%	7.2%	9.8%
WV	n/a	11.0%	6.9%	8.6%	8.1%	8.5%	8.2%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Self-Employment measures the percent of women and men who report being self-employed as a share of all employed workers of that sex aged 16 and above. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A19. Percent Living in Poverty by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (Ages 18–64, 2019–2023)

19a. Percent of Women Living in Poverty

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	All
FL	15.5%	9.0%	17.7%	12.2%	9.3%	12.3%	11.6%
GA	20.7%	8.8%	17.2%	16.1%	9.5%	13.6%	12.9%
KY	31.1%	9.0%	23.8%	19.9%	15.1%	21.0%	16.1%
NC	**23.5%**	**7.8%**	**18.8%**	**18.1%**	**9.5%**	**14.6%**	**12.7%**
SC	18.9%	8.4%	21.8%	17.9%	10.1%	15.8%	13.9%
TN	20.4%	7.3%	20.3%	18.1%	11.2%	17.0%	13.3%
VA	9.4%	6.1%	15.7%	11.7%	7.8%	10.3%	9.7%
WV	n/a	10.9%	25.5%	13.3%	17.1%	27.4%	17.5%

19b. Percent of Men Living in Poverty

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/ multiracial	All
FL	14.1%	9.0%	13.3%	10.0%	7.8%	11.0%	9.4%
GA	16.6%	8.3%	12.6%	12.3%	7.5%	9.9%	9.7%
KY	24.7%	13.3%	16.8%	17.3%	11.9%	16.9%	12.8%
NC	**20.3%**	**8.0%**	**13.4%**	**13.4%**	**7.8%**	**11.0%**	**9.7%**
SC	20.3%	9.8%	16.7%	15.2%	8.1%	11.1%	10.9%
TN	12.2%	6.3%	14.1%	14.7%	9.1%	12.7%	10.3%
VA	9.7%	6.2%	10.6%	8.7%	6.4%	7.4%	7.4%
WV	n/a	14.4%	22.9%	14.7%	13.9%	19.8%	14.4%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Percent living in poverty is measured as the share of all women and men aged 18–64 who have total family incomes below 100 percent of the Census poverty threshold. The Census poverty variable is calculated only for individuals aged 15 and above who are not in institutions or other group quarters. The Census uses the family's size, number of related children, and age of the primary householder to determine the federal poverty threshold. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Table A20. Working Poor by Gender and Race/Ethnicity (100% and 200% Poverty Threshold, Ages 18+, 2019–2023)

20a. Working Poor Women (100% Poverty Threshold)

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/multiracial	All
FL	5.8%	3.5%	8.2%	5.5%	3.6%	5.5%	4.9%
GA	5.5%	3.5%	8.1%	8.2%	4.1%	6.1%	5.9%
KY	n/a	3.2%	10.9%	9.2%	5.8%	9.9%	6.4%
NC	**8.8%**	**3.4%**	**8.9%**	**8.9%**	**3.7%**	**7.3%**	**5.5%**
SC	4.4%	4.6%	10.7%	9.0%	4.1%	5.8%	6.3%
TN	3.8%	3.5%	9.4%	8.9%	4.2%	6.8%	5.4%
VA	4.6%	2.2%	7.4%	5.6%	3.1%	4.4%	4.2%
WV	n/a	4.3%	12.5%	5.5%	6.5%	14.2%	6.9%

20b. Working Poor Men (100% Poverty Threshold)

	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander	Black	Latina/o	White	Other/multiracial	All
FL	3.6%	3.7%	5.3%	5.0%	2.6%	4.1%	3.8%
GA	4.7%	3.5%	4.2%	8.3%	2.7%	4.0%	3.9%
KY	3.7%	8.2%	6.4%	10.4%	3.9%	6.6%	4.5%
NC	**5.7%**	**3.5%**	**4.7%**	**9.4%**	**2.7%**	**5.3%**	**3.9%**
SC	1.3%	3.8%	6.0%	10.2%	2.7%	4.9%	4.1%
TN	2.3%	2.3%	4.5%	10.5%	3.2%	4.3%	3.9%
VA	2.3%	2.5%	3.9%	5.4%	2.0%	3.0%	2.8%
WV	n/a	4.5%	7.1%	6.5%	4.4%	5.8%	4.6%

20c. Working Poor Women (200% Poverty Threshold)

FL	15.8%	16.3%	30.4%	24.3%	13.9%	20.5%	19.8%
GA	18.4%	14.3%	26.9%	28.7%	13.7%	19.4%	19.8%
KY	n/a	16.9%	33.2%	28.9%	18.8%	30.1%	20.7%
NC	**31.3%**	**14.0%**	**29.0%**	**31.3%**	**13.9%**	**22.8%**	**19.3%**
SC	36.6%	15.5%	34.6%	33.2%	14.2%	24.3%	21.2%
TN	35.9%	13.7%	30.2%	31.6%	16.3%	21.2%	19.7%
VA	15.9%	8.8%	24.2%	20.8%	10.6%	16.0%	14.3%
WV	n/a	18.4%	34.7%	20.9%	21.8%	31.0%	22.4%

20d. Working Poor Men (200% Poverty Threshold)

FL	18.3%	15.6%	23.0%	23.7%	11.5%	16.3%	17.0%
GA	15.5%	14.0%	18.8%	31.5%	11.3%	15.7%	16.0%
KY	18.6%	23.8%	25.7%	32.8%	15.9%	20.9%	17.7%
NC	**21.2%**	**12.4%**	**21.1%**	**36.6%**	**12.0%**	**19.6%**	**16.7%**
SC	26.0%	13.9%	22.9%	37.0%	11.9%	21.2%	16.5%
TN	19.7%	13.8%	20.8%	38.6%	14.2%	17.4%	17.0%
VA	10.7%	9.1%	15.6%	21.4%	8.8%	12.0%	11.5%
WV	n/a	17.3%	26.4%	22.0%	17.1%	23.0%	17.7%

Source: IWPR analysis of 2019–2023 American Community Survey microdata (Integrated Public Use Microdata) as provided by Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C.W. Williams. IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS 2025), https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0.
Notes: Working poor measures the numbers of women and men aged 18 and above who have spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force in the past year and have total family incomes below 100% (and 200%) of the federal poverty threshold, divided by all individuals of that sex who worked 27 or more weeks in the past year. The Census poverty variable is calculated only for individuals aged 15 and above who are not in institutions or other group quarters. The Census uses the family's size, number of related children, and age of the primary householder to determine the federal poverty threshold. All earnings, income, employment, and labor force calculations exclude those employed in the armed forces.
Where "n/a" is listed instead of a value, the sample size is too small to compute an estimate.

Appendix B: Methodology

To analyze the status of women in North Carolina, IWPR selected indicators that research has shown reflect key aspects of women's lives and allow for meaningful comparisons across states and demographic groups. The data in this report are drawn from federal Census survey data and other reliable reports from national research institutions.

Many of the figures and tables are based on IWPR's analysis of the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), accessed through the Minnesota Population Center's Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS). The ACS is a large, annual survey that provides a representative sample of the US population. For this analysis, IWPR used five years of ACS data (2019–2023) to ensure reliable sample sizes, which is especially important when disaggregating by gender *and* race or ethnicity at the state level.

In addition, we use data from the *Price of Care 2023* report by Child Care Aware of America and the *State of Preschool 2023 Yearbook* by the National Institute for Early Education Research. Median earnings data are not reported if the unweighted sample size for a given cell is below 100. For all other indicators, data are not presented if the total unweighted sample size for a given cell is less than 35 times the number of categories (for percentages).

To generate nationally representative estimates, IWPR applied person-level weights provided in the ACS to adjust for geographic sampling rates, individual sampling probabilities, and nonresponse. Estimates based on IPUMS microdata may differ from published ACS tables due to sampling differences and periodic changes by the Census Bureau in how variables are defined and categorized.

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