



The State of Black Women & Reproductive Justice

LOUISIANA

Louisiana has a population of 4.65 million people, making it the 25th most populous state in the U.S.^{1 2}

- One-third of the population (33%) is Black (approximately 1.5 million individuals), compared to 13% of the national population.
- 58.1% of the population is white; 5.5% is Hispanic; 1.6% are two or more races; 1.8% is Asian; and .7% is American Indian or Alaska Native.³

Legislative Profile⁴

- John Bel Edwards (D) opposes reproductive autonomy.
- The Louisiana House and Senate oppose reproductive autonomy.

Policy Profile

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE^{5 6}

- The uninsured rate for Black people in Louisiana is 9.4%, compared to the national average uninsured rate of 11.4%.
- Louisiana adopted Medicaid expansion and, as a result:
 - » 1,892,195 people are covered by Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Plan (CHIP). This is an increase of 85% people newly covered with insurance since 2013.
 - » There has been a 50% reduction in the rate of insurance in the state.

HEALTH IMPACT FROM COVID-19⁷

- Black people make up 32% percent of the population in Louisiana and 38% of COVID-related deaths. Whites are 62% of the population and 58% of deaths. Hispanics comprise 5% of the population and 3% of deaths.
- Almost one-third (31%) of the Black population has been vaccinated, compared to 58% of the white population, and 7% of Hispanic population.

ACCESS TO ABORTION CARE^{8 9 10}

- Louisiana was one of 13 U.S. states with a “trigger law,” meaning legislation was already in place that, with the fall of *Roe v. Wade*, instantly made abortion illegal throughout the state.”
- State constitution explicitly excludes abortion rights.
- The use of telemedicine to administer medication abortion is prohibited. Medication abortion must be provided in-person because the state bans the use of telehealth or mailing pills or requires an in-person visit.
- Public funding is available for abortion only in cases of life endangerment, rape, or incest.
- State Medicaid coverage of abortion care is banned except in very limited circumstances.

FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES^{11 12 13}

- The state’s ban on public funding (including Title X funding) for abortion care providers and facilities that are affiliated with abortion care providers is currently enjoined.
- The parent of a minor must consent before an abortion is provided.

SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION^{14 15}

- Louisiana does not require sexual health education or HIV/AIDS prevention education in any grade level; this content is allowed to be taught only in grades 7-12.
- When taught, educational content must stress abstinence-only-until-marriage.
- School boards decide if other topics will be included during sexual health education courses.

Systemic Disparities

STD/STIS, INCLUDING HIV/AIDS¹⁶

- Black women are 10.7 times more likely to be diagnosed with HIV and to die from AIDS than white women in Louisiana are.
- Black women were diagnosed with 73% of Louisiana’s 5,843 cases of gonorrhea; white women and Hispanic women received 27% and 2% of diagnoses, respectively.
- Louisiana has the 12th-highest Syphilis rate in the nation. Pregnant Black women were diagnosed with 65% of Louisiana’s Congenital Syphilis cases; white women received 29% of diagnosis, Hispanic women 6%.

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LOUISIANA'S WAGE GAP



BLACK WOMEN MAKE **49 CENTS** FOR EVERY \$1.00 A WHITE MAN MAKES, A WAGE GAP OF **51 CENTS**, WHICH IS THE LARGEST GAP IN THE COUNTRY.

BLACK WOMEN'S **LIFETIME LOSSES** DUE TO LOUISIANA'S WAGE GAP ARE

\$1,225,320

A BLACK WOMAN'S **CAREER EARNINGS** CATCH UP TO A WHITE MAN'S AT **AGE 102.**

Source: National Women's Law Center (NWLC), *Lifetime Wage Gap Losses for Black Women: 2020 State Rankings*, Washington, DC: NWLC, 2021.

REPRODUCTIVE CANCER¹⁷

- In Louisiana, the age adjusted rate of new breast cancer cases is 128.6 cancers for every 100,000 women.
 - » The rate for Black women is 133.2/100,000 compared to 129.5 and 75.7 for white and Hispanic women, respectively.
 - » The breast cancer mortality rate for Black women is 29.4 deaths for every 100,000 women, compared to 19 for white women and 17.4 for Hispanic women.
- The rate of cervical cancer cases is 9 cancers for every 100,000 Louisiana women.
 - » The rate for Black women is 10.1/100,000, compared to 7.8 for white women (there are no data on Hispanic women).

MATERNAL AND INFANT MORTALITY^{18 19}

- The mortality rate for Black infants is more than double that of white infants: 11.3 deaths per 1000 live births, versus 5.8, respectively.
- Black women are more than twice as likely to die (2.5 times) as white mothers of pregnancy-related causes. The majority (80%) of pregnancy-related deaths are potentially preventable.

LGBTQIA+ LIBERATION^{20 21 22 23}

- Louisiana still has anti-sodomy and HIV/AIDS criminalization laws on the books.
- State law restricts inclusion of LGBTQIA+ topics in schools.
- Louisiana does not offer the ability for same-sex couples to list their gender on birth certificates (the only options are either "mother" or "father").
- Gestational surrogacy is legal only for Louisiana residents who use their own gametes (i.e., egg and sperm) same-sex couples; single people; and heterosexual couples who require an egg or sperm donor are not able to sign a surrogacy contract in Louisiana.

DISABILITY JUSTICE

- 15% of Louisianians have a disability, compared to a national average of 12.5%. Of those, 63.4% are white, 32.8% are Black, and 3% are Hispanic.

- State law prohibits employment discrimination against people with disabilities for employers with more than 19 employees.
- Fair housing laws protect those who have disabilities from unfair treatment with respect to buying or renting housing.^x

ECONOMIC JUSTICE^{24 25 26 27 28}

- Louisiana ranks last in the nation for Black woman's wage equality; Black women are paid, on average, less than half of what white men are: 49 cents for every \$1.
- Over a 40-year career, this wage gap will cost a Black woman \$1,225,320, compared to a white man's earnings.
- More than one-quarter of Black and Hispanic Louisianians live in poverty (29.4% and 25.3%, respectively), compared to just 12.7% of white people.
- The unemployment rate for Black women is twice that of white women (7.4% and 3.6%, respectively).
- Almost one-fifth (19.3%) of Black women in Louisiana lack a high school diploma, compared to 11% of white women; 17% of Black women have earned a college degree, compared to 27% of white women.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE^{29 30 31}

- Louisiana has the highest per capita incarceration rate in the United States, and the highest number of people sentenced to life without parole. It also has the highest in-custody death rate in the country.
- Black people in Louisiana are 4 times more likely to be incarcerated than whites. Black juveniles are 4.7 times more likely to be in custody than white juveniles.
- Almost two-thirds (62%) of those who have been felony disenfranchised are Black.
- Restraints are prohibited from being used in women in labor and delivery unless a physician orders them for therapeutic needs (e.g., psychiatric or medical) or if the pregnant person poses a flight risk. Use of restraints on pregnant people is limited in the 2nd and 3rd trimesters.

- Louisiana ranked fifth in the nation in the rate of women being murdered by men.
- The state's rate of women being murdered by men is 77% higher than the national average: 2.26 homicides per 100,000 women in Louisiana.
- Over one-third (35.9%) of Louisiana women have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse by an intimate partner.
- More than half of women murdered in Louisiana were killed by a partner or ex-partner.

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BLACK JUVENILES ARE
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We are a national partnership focused on lifting up the voices of Black women leaders at the national, regional, and state level in our ongoing policy fight to secure Reproductive Justice for all women and girls.



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Because the Reproductive Justice framework encompasses bodily integrity and autonomy, our use of the term "women" includes cis, femmes, trans, agender, gender non-binary, and gender non-confirming individuals.