



# The State of Black Women & Reproductive Justice

## NEW JERSEY

New Jersey has a population of 9.3 million people, making it the 11<sup>th</sup>-most populous state in the U.S.

Fifteen percent (15.4%) of the population is Black (compared to 13.6% nationally); 53% of the population is white; 22% is Hispanic; 10.5% is Asian; and .7% is American Indian and/or Alaska Native.<sup>1</sup>

### Legislative Profile

- Governor Phil Murphy (D) supports reproductive autonomy.
- The New Jersey State House supports reproductive autonomy.
- The New Jersey State Senate supports reproductive autonomy.

### Policy Profile: Access to Health Care

#### AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE<sup>2 3 4</sup>

- New Jersey adopted Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). As a result:
  - » 2,053,575 people are covered by Medicaid/CHIP.
  - » This was an increase of 769,724 people with coverage from 2013 to 2021.
  - » There was a 40% reduction in the uninsured rate.
- The uninsured rate for Black people in New Jersey is 8.1%, compared to 4% for white residents of the state. The national average uninsured rate for Black people is 10.9%.
- New Jersey's state Medicaid program includes extended eligibility for women for 12 months postpartum, regardless of any changes in income.

#### HEALTH IMPACT FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC<sup>5 6</sup>

- The Black population accounted for 17% of all COVID-related deaths in New Jersey, a percentage that exceeds the percentage of the state's population (15%). The white population comprises 59% of deaths (slightly higher than the overall state population) and the

Hispanic population accounts for 19% of deaths, slightly less than the state population.

- Less than half of Black people in New Jersey have received a COVID-19 booster, but close to 85% have completed a primary COVID-19 vaccine series. For whites, 51.7% have received the booster and about 90% have completed the primary series. The numbers are lowest for Hispanics in New Jersey (less than 40% and a little over 80%, respectively).

#### ABORTION RIGHTS<sup>7 8</sup>

- Abortion rights are codified in New Jersey and there is no restriction based on the stage of pregnancy.
- Parental involvement is not required; a pregnant person who is under 18 can seek abortion care without parental notification.
- There are no limitations to public funding of abortion.
- The state's abortion rate in 2020 was 13.7 per 1000 women (note: reporting is not mandatory for private physicians and women's centers in New Jersey, so this number may not represent a complete count).

#### FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES<sup>9 10 11</sup>

- In January 2023, Governor Murphy signed a law allowing pharmacists in New Jersey to dispense self-administered hormonal contraception without a prescription.
- Emergency contraception is available without age restrictions.
- New Jersey has expanded state Medicaid to cover family planning services for those making less than 205% of the Federal Poverty Level.

- New Jersey requires emergency rooms to provide emergency contraception or information on emergency contraception to rape survivors.

#### SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION<sup>12</sup>

- New Jersey requires public school to provide sex education, and requires at least 150 minutes of health education during each school week in grades 1 - 12. Health education must be age-appropriate and medically accurate.
- Abstinence must be stressed as the only completely effective protection against pregnancy and STDs.
- Students do not need permission of parents or guardians to participate in classes, but parents or guardians can opt their child out of it.

### Systemic Disparities

#### MATERNAL AND INFANT MORTALITY<sup>13 14 15 16 17</sup>

- The maternal mortality rate in New Jersey in 2019 from 2018—2020 was 24.1 deaths for every 100,000 live births. The U.S. national rate during that time frame was 20.4/100,000 live births.
- There were 44 pregnancy-related deaths in New Jersey from 2016 through 2018. The vast majority (91%) of these deaths were deemed to be preventable.
- In this time period, the pregnancy-related mortality ratio for Black women was 39.2 deaths/100,000 live births, which was 6.6 times higher than for white women (5.9). The pregnancy-related mortality rate for Hispanic women was 20.6, 3.5 times higher than for white women. The U.S. mortality rate

*New Jersey requires emergency rooms to provide emergency contraception or information on emergency contraception to rape survivors.*

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## NEW JERSEY'S WAGE GAP



BLACK WOMEN MAKE **57 CENTS**  
FOR EVERY \$1.00 A WHITE MAN MAKES,  
A WAGE GAP OF **43 CENTS.**

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BLACK WOMEN'S LIFETIME LOSSES  
DUE TO NEW JERSEY'S WAGE GAP ARE

**\$1,488,880**

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A BLACK WOMAN'S  
CAREER EARNINGS  
CATCH UP TO A WHITE MAN'S AT  
**AGE 91.**

Source: National Women's Law Center (NWLC),  
*Lifetime Wage Gap Losses for Black Women:  
2015 State Rankings*, Washington, DC: NWLC,  
2017; NWLC, *Wage Gap for African American  
Women—State Rankings*, Washington, DC:  
NWLC, 2015.

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for Black women was 69.9 deaths per 100,000 live births, 2.6 times the rate of white women (26.6).

- New data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate that the nation's maternal mortality rate increased in 2021, to 32.9 deaths for every 100,000 live births. The U.S. mortality rate for Black women was 69.9 deaths per 100,000 live births, 2.6 times the rate of white women (26.6).
- In 2020, the Black infant mortality rate in New Jersey was 9.1 deaths for every 1,000 live births; the U.S. rate is 10.4/1,000 live births. For whites, the state rate is 2.8/1,000, compared to 4.4/1,000 nationally; the rate for Hispanics is 3.7, compared to 4.7 nationally.

### STDs/STIS, INCLUDING HIV/AIDS<sup>18</sup>

- Of the total new diagnoses of STDs/STIs in 2021 for which race/ethnicity was reported in New Jersey:
  - » There were 150 new diagnoses of Syphilis: 51% were among Black women, 33% were among white women, and 17% were among Hispanic women.
  - » There were 15,824 new diagnoses of Chlamydia, 41% were among Black women; 24% were among white women; 33% were among Hispanic women, and 2% among Asian women.
  - » There were 3,417 new diagnoses of Gonorrhea, 60% were among Black women; 18% were among white women; and 21% were among Hispanic women.
- Among women who received an HIV diagnosis in New Jersey in 2022 for whom race/ethnicity was known, 45% were Black women, 12% were white, 39% were Hispanic, and 2% were multi-racial and Asian women.
- Of 2021 AIDS-related deaths among women in New Jersey, 53% were among Black women; 12% were among white women, 22% were among Hispanic women, and 13% were among multi-racial women.

### REPRODUCTIVE CANCERS<sup>19</sup>

- In New Jersey, the age-adjusted rate of new breast cancer cases is 127.6 cases for every 100,000 women. The rate for Black women is 124.8 for every 100,000 women; for white women, the rate is 139.5 and for Hispanic women it is 91.2.
- The breast cancer mortality rate for Black women in New Jersey is 24.5 deaths for every 100,000 women, com-

pared to 20.7 and 13.2 per 100,000 for white and Hispanic women, respectively.

- The age-adjusted cervical cancer rate is 6.4 cases for every 100,000 women in New Jersey. The rate for Black women is 10.1 per 100,000 women, compared to 5.5 and 7.8 for white and Hispanic women, respectively.
- The cervical cancer mortality rate for Black women is 2.7 deaths for every 100,000 women, compared to 1.9 per 100,000 for white women.

### ECONOMIC JUSTICE<sup>20 21 22</sup>

- In New Jersey, Black women make 57 cents for every dollar that a white man makes, creating a wage gap of 43 cents.
- The lifetime wage gap for Black women in New Jersey is \$1,488,880; a Black woman has to work until age 91 to make what a white man does by age 60.
- In New Jersey, 30.3% of women-headed households live in poverty. Among Black women, 16% live in poverty, compared to 10.5% of all women aged 18 and older and 6.8% of white women.

### LGBTQIA+ LIBERATION<sup>23 24</sup>

- New Jersey does not ban best practice medical care for transgender youth.
- New Jersey has state laws in place that explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity with respect to employment, housing, public accommodations, and in credit and lending policies.
- State law protects LGBTQIA+ parents with respect to adoption or foster care and state family leave laws include LGBTQIA+-inclusive definitions of "spouse" or "partner."

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE<sup>25 26 27</sup>

- New Jersey is one of 12 states where more than half of the incarcerated population is Black. Black individuals comprise 61% of the prison population, compared to only 15% of the overall state population. The state lowered its prison population by 38% between 2000 and 2019.
- New Jersey has the country's highest differential of Black/white incarceration; Black individuals are 12.5 times more likely to be incarcerated than white individuals are.
- New Jersey has restored the right to vote to those who are currently on probation or parole.
- New Jersey does not have anti-shackling legislation to protect pregnant inmates.

## MATERNAL MORTALITY IN NEW JERSEY

IN 2019, THE MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE IN NEW JERSEY WAS **39.2** DEATHS FOR EVERY **100,000** LIVE BIRTHS, WHICH WAS **6.6 TIMES** THE RATE OF WHITE WOMEN (5.9).

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN<sup>28 29 30</sup>

- More than one-third (35.8%) of women in New Jersey and one-quarter (27.4%) of men experience intimate partner physical violence (IPV), intimate partner rape, and/or intimate partner stalking in their lives.
- Women were the victims in 74% of the state's domestic violence cases in 2016.
- Black women in New Jersey experience higher rates than women of other racial/ethnic groups. 52.4% of Black women have reported experiencing IPV, compared to 33.2% of white women.
- People who have been convicted of domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking misdemeanor are prohibited from possessing firearms. When law enforcement officers respond to a domestic violence incident, they are required to confiscate any firearms.
- Since 2015, police have killed 2 women in New Jersey, both of whom were Black.

### Endnotes

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*Black individuals comprise 61% of the prison population, compared to only 15% of the overall state population.*

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.



**IN OUR OWN VOICE:  
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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.*