



# *The State of Black Women & Reproductive Justice*

## LOUISIANA

Louisiana has a population of 4.6 million people.

Thirty-two percent (32%) of the population is Black (compared to 14.4% nationally); 58% of the population is white; 7% is Hispanic; 1.9% is Asian; and .6% is American Indians and/or Alaska Native.<sup>1</sup>

### Legislative profile<sup>2</sup>

- Governor Jeff Landry (R) opposes reproductive autonomy.
- The Louisiana State House opposes reproductive autonomy.
- The Louisiana State Senate opposes reproductive autonomy.

### Policy profile

#### ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

##### Affordable Health Care<sup>3-5</sup>

- Louisiana adopted Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). As a result, 1.5 million people in Louisiana are covered by Medicaid/CHIP, a 56% increase since 2013.
- The uninsured rate for Black people in Louisiana is 10.2%; the national average uninsured rate for Black people is 9.7%.
- The state Medicaid program includes expanded coverage of services for 12 months post-partum for those making less than 214% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

##### Abortion Rights<sup>6,7</sup>

- Louisiana state law prohibits abortion at all stages of pregnancy. State law prohibits medication abortion and abortions after 20 weeks gestational age sought for reasons of disability.
- Louisiana requires a pregnant person to get biased counseling information, an ultrasound, and then wait 72 hours before getting abortion care.

- Louisiana law requires that a parent or legal guardian consent to a minor's abortion.
- Public funding and private insurance coverage of abortion care is limited.
- The state's abortion rate in 2022 was 5 procedures for every 1,000 women.

##### Family Planning Services<sup>8,9</sup>

- Anyone in Louisiana can buy over-the-counter emergency contraception (EC) without a prescription.
- Louisiana does not require emergency rooms to provide EC or information about EC to rape survivors.
- Louisiana has secured a waiver or state plan amendment from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to cover family planning services under Medicaid based on income criteria of 138% FPL.

##### Sexual Health Education<sup>8</sup>

- Louisiana state law does not require sex ed to be taught in the schools, but students are required to take a half-credit of health education.
- If they provide sexual health education, the materials must stress the benefits of abstaining from sex.

- Students do not need permission of parents or guardians to participate in classes, but parents or guardians can opt their child out.

#### SYSTEMIC DISPARITIES

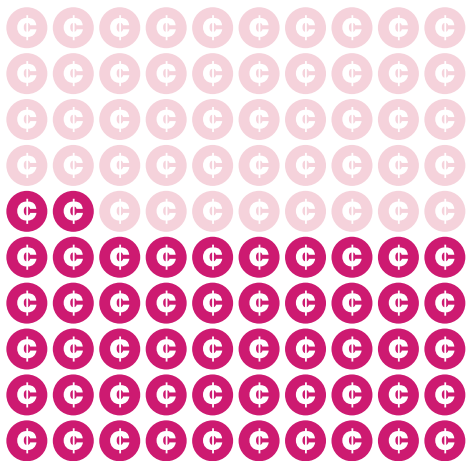
##### Maternal and Infant Mortality<sup>10-13</sup>

- The maternal mortality rate in Louisiana was 37.3 deaths for every 100,000 live births, making it the 5<sup>th</sup> highest in the country and notably higher than the national rate of 19 deaths/100,000 births. The gap between the mortality rate for Black women and white women in the US continues to grow, with Black women dying at a rate nearly 3.5 times higher.
- There were 82 pregnancy-associated deaths in Louisiana in 2020. The majority (81%) of those deaths were deemed to be preventable. Black women accounted for 62% of all pregnancy-associated deaths.
- The Black infant mortality rate in Louisiana is 10.6 deaths for every 1,000 live births; the U.S. rate is 10.4/1,000 live births. For Hispanic infants in Louisiana, the rate is 4.0/1,000. For whites, the rate is 5.6/1,000, which is slightly higher than the national rate.

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## LOUISIANA'S WAGE GAP



BLACK WOMEN MAKE **52 CENTS**  
FOR EVERY \$1.00 A WHITE MAN MAKES,  
A WAGE GAP OF **48 CENTS**.

BLACK WOMEN'S **LIFETIME LOSSES**  
DUE TO LOUISIANA'S WAGE GAP ARE  
**\$1,367,280**

National Women's Law Center. Lifetime Wage Gap Losses by State for Black Women February 2025. Accessed August 26, 2025. <https://nwc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Lifetime-Losses-State-by-State-Black-Women-2.12.2025.pdf>

### STDS, Including HIV/AIDS <sup>14</sup>

- Of the total new diagnoses of STD/STIs in 2023 for which race/ethnicity was reported in Louisiana:
  - » There were 371 new diagnoses of Syphilis: 53% were among Black women, 40% were among white women, and 6% were among Hispanic and multiracial women.
  - » There were 24,114 new diagnoses of Chlamydia: 65% were among Black women, 24% were among white women, and 2% were among Hispanic women.
  - » There were 5,912 new diagnoses of Gonorrhea: 70% were among Black women, 21% were among white women, and 5% were among Hispanic and multiracial women.
- Among the 190 women who received an HIV diagnosis in Louisiana in 2023 for whom race/ethnicity was known, 70% were Black women, 19% were white women, and 6% were Hispanic women.
- In 2023, of the AIDS-related deaths among women in Louisiana, 80% were Black women, 16% were white women, and 1% were Hispanic women.

### Reproductive Cancers <sup>15</sup>

- In Louisiana, the age-adjusted rate of new breast cancer cases is 132.5 cancers for every 100,000 women. The rate for Black women is 140.7 for every 100,000 women; for Hispanic women, the rate is 73.7; for white women, the rate is 133.5.
- The breast cancer mortality rate for Black women in Louisiana is 27.5 deaths for every 100,000 women, compared to 18.2 per 100,000 for white women.
- The age-adjusted cervical cancer rate is 8.2 cases for every 100,000 women in Louisiana. The rate for Black women is 8.3 per 100,000 women; the rate for white women is 8.4.
- The cervical cancer mortality rate for Black women is 2.5 deaths for every 100,000 women, compared to 2.8 per 100,000 for white women.

### Economic Justice <sup>16,17</sup>

- In Louisiana, Black women make 52 cents for every dollar that a white man makes, creating a wage gap of 48 cents.
- The lifetime wage gap for Black women in Louisiana is \$1,367,280; a Black woman has to work until age 97 to make what a white man does by age 60.
- In Louisiana, 45.3% of women-headed households live in poverty. Among Black women, 28% live in poverty, compared to 19.8% of all women aged 18 and older, and 15.2% white women in the state.

### LGBTQIA+ Liberation <sup>18,19</sup>

- Louisiana bans best practice medication and surgical care for transgender youth.
- There are state laws in place that explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity with respect to employment, housing, public accommodations, and credit and lending policies.
- State law does not protect LGBTQIA+ parents with respect to adoption or foster care; state family leave laws do not include LGBTQIA+-inclusive definitions of "spouse" or "partner," or "children/parents."
- Louisiana explicitly defines "sex" throughout state law to exclude transgender people.

### Criminal Justice <sup>20-23</sup>

- Black individuals comprise 66% of the prison population, compared to just 32% of the overall state population.
- Black individuals are 3.8 times more likely than white individuals in Louisiana to be incarcerated.
- Louisiana denies the right to vote to more than 33,800 Black citizens due to imprisonment for a felony conviction.
- Louisiana has anti-shackling legislation that protects pregnant inmates.

## Violence Against Women <sup>24-27</sup>

- More than half (56.9%) of women in Louisiana and 37.3% of men have experienced some form of domestic violence in their lifetimes.
- Louisiana had the highest female gun suicide rate in the US in 2023.
- Black women were 7 times as likely to die by gun homicide than white women in Louisiana.
- In 2022, there were at least 119 domestic violence-related homicides in Louisiana; 69% were by firearm.
- Louisiana does not have ERPO (Extreme Risk Protection Order) laws.
- Since 2015, 4 women have been killed by police in Louisiana.

## Environmental Justice <sup>28,29</sup>

- Black women in Louisiana have a higher rate of asthma (12.6%) than the general state average (10.3%).
- Many of the reproductive cancers noted above have direct links to environmental pollution, and it is well-documented that racial and ethnic minorities and low-income groups often live in neighborhoods near hazardous waste and are disproportionately burdened with environmental pollution.

## Endnotes

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*Among the 190 women who received an HIV diagnosis in Louisiana in 2023 for whom race/ethnicity was known, 70% were Black women and 19% were white women.*

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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.



**IN OUR OWN VOICE:**  
**NATIONAL BLACK WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE AGENDA**  
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## Strategic Partners



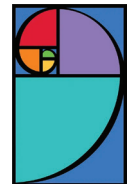
New Voices for  
Reproductive Justice



SPARK RJ Now!



SisterReach



SisterLove



Black Women for  
Wellness



Black Women's  
Health Imperative



Wisdom Institute



The Afiya Center



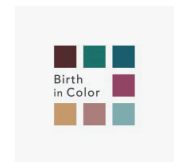
New Jersey Black  
Women Physicians  
Association



Oshun Family Center



Women With A Vision



Birth in Color RVA

*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.*