



The State of Black Women & Reproductive Justice

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey has a population of 9.5 million people.

About thirteen percent (13.1%) of the population is Black (compared to 14.4% nationally); 55% of the population is white; 23% is Hispanic; 10% is Asian; and .5% is American Indians and/or Alaska Native.¹

Legislative profile²

- Governor of New Jersey, Mikie Sherill (D) does support reproductive autonomy.
- The New Jersey State House supports reproductive autonomy.
- The New Jersey State Senate opposes reproductive autonomy.

Policy profile

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Affordable Health Care³⁻⁵

- New Jersey adopted Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Medicaid enrollment increased by 78%, and 1.7 million people are covered by Medicaid/CHIP.
- The uninsured rate for Black people in New Jersey is 7.7%. 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 205% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Abortion Rights^{6,7}

- New Jersey enacted a statutory protection for abortion as a fundamental right, so abortion remains legal. New Jersey allows advance practice clinicians to provide abortion care up to 14 weeks.
- The New Jersey legislature has not repealed a requirement that a parent or legal guardian be notified about a minor's abortion.

- New Jersey provides public funding for abortion care and requires private insurance coverage of abortion.

- There were 23,540 abortions in New Jersey in 2024.

Family Planning Services^{8,9}

- Anyone in New Jersey can buy over-the-counter emergency contraception (EC) without a prescription.
- New Jersey requires emergency rooms to provide EC or information about EC to rape survivors.
- New Jersey has secured a waiver or state plan amendment from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to cover family planning services under Medicaid, based solely on income criteria of 205% of the FPL.

Sexual Health Education⁸

- New Jersey state law requires public schools to provide sexual health education. Health education must address a wide variety of topics including the reproductive system, pregnancy HIV/AIDS, abstinence, gender assumptions, sexual orientation, and more.
- Materials must be age-appropriate and 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 Mortality¹⁰⁻¹³

- The maternal mortality rate in New Jersey was 28.0 deaths for every 100,000 live births, 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 125 pregnancy-associated deaths in New Jersey between 2016 and 2018. The majority of those deaths (more than 80%) were deemed to be preventable. Black women in New Jersey face a maternal mortality rate nearly 7 times higher than white women; Hispanic women face a rate 3.5 times higher than white women
- The Black infant mortality rate in New Jersey is 8.9 deaths for every 1,000 live births; the U.S. rate is 10.9/1,000 live births. For Hispanics, the infant mortality rate is 4.1/1000. For whites, the rate is 2.2/1,000, lower than the national rate.

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NEW JERSEY'S WAGE GAP



BLACK WOMEN MAKE **58 CENTS**
FOR EVERY \$1.00 A WHITE MAN MAKES,
A WAGE GAP OF **42 CENTS.**

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

\$1,618,160

A BLACK WOMAN'S
CAREER EARNINGS
CATCH UP TO A WHITE MAN'S AT
AGE 89.

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

STDs, Including HIV/AIDS ¹⁴

- Of the total new diagnoses of STD/STIs in 2023 for which race/ethnicity was reported in New Jersey:
 - » There were 131 new diagnoses of Syphilis: 54% were among Black women, 24% were among Hispanic women, and 21% were among white women.
 - » There were 22,583 new diagnoses of Chlamydia: 33% were among Black women, 28% were among Hispanic women, 19% were among white women, and 2% were among Asian women.
 - » There were 3,450 new diagnoses of Gonorrhea: 51% were among Black women, 20% were among Black women, 21% were among white women, and 1% were among Asian women.
- Among women who received an HIV diagnosis in New Jersey in 2023 for whom race/ethnicity was known, 49% were Black women, 37% were Hispanic women, and 8% were white women.
- In 2023, of the AIDS-related deaths among women in New Jersey, 56% were Black women, 21% were Hispanic women, and 13% were white women.

Reproductive Cancers¹⁵

- In New Jersey, the age-adjusted rate of new breast cancer cases is 143.6 cancers for every 100,000 women. The rate for Black women is 132.8 for every 100,000 women; for Hispanic women, the rate is 109.5; for white women, the rate is 155.2
- The breast cancer mortality rate for Black women in New Jersey is 28.6 deaths for every 100,000 women, and for Hispanic women is 12.5 deaths per 100,000, compared to the overall state rate of 18.4 per 100,000.
- The age-adjusted cervical cancer rate is 6.8 cases for every 100,000 women in New Jersey. The rate for Black women is 7.2 per 100,000 women and the rate for Hispanic women is 9.9, compared to 6.1 for white women.
- The cervical cancer mortality rate for Black women is 3.9 deaths for every 100,000 women and the rate for Hispanic women is 1.6, compared to 1.3 per 100,000 for white women.

Economic Justice ^{16,17}

- In New Jersey, Black women make 58 cents for every dollar that a white man makes, creating a wage gap of 42 cents.
- The lifetime wage gap for Black women in New Jersey is \$1,618,160; a Black woman has to work until age 89 to make what a white man does by age 60.

In New Jersey 29.3% of women-headed households live in poverty. Among Black women, 16.3% live in poverty, compared to 10.4% of all women aged 18 and older, and 7.4% white women in the state.

LGBTQIA+ Liberation ^{18,19}

- New Jersey does not ban best practice medical care for transgender youth.
- New Jersey has 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 laws protects LGBTQIA+ parents with respect to adoption or foster care; state family leave laws include LGBTQIA+-inclusive definitions of "spouse" or "partner," or "children/parents."
- New Jersey explicitly defines "sex" throughout state law to exclude transgender people.

Criminal Justice ²⁰⁻²³

- Black individuals comprise 61% of the prison population in New Jersey, compared to just 13% of the overall state population.
- Black individuals are 12.5 times more likely than white individuals in New Jersey to be incarcerated.
- New Jersey denies the right to vote to more than 8,500 citizens due to imprisonment for a felony conviction.
- New Jersey has anti-shackling legislation that protects pregnant inmates.

In 2023, of the AIDS-related deaths among women in New Jersey, 56% were Black women and 13% were white women.

Violence Against Women ²⁴⁻²⁶

- Almost half (48%) of women in New Jersey and 31.6% of men have experienced some form of domestic violence in their lifetimes.
- In 2022, 54 people were killed in domestic violence homicides in New Jersey; 30% were committed with a firearm.
- New Jersey does have Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) laws in place.
- Since 2015, 3 women have been killed by police in New Jersey; 2 of those were Black women.

Environmental Justice ^{27,28}

- Black women in Pennsylvania have a higher rate of asthma (14.5%) than the state rate for women (12.2%).
- 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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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
202.545.7660 • www.blackrj.org

Strategic Partners



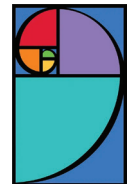
New Voices for
Reproductive Justice



SPARK RJ Now!



SisterReach



SisterLove



Black Women for
Wellness



Black Women's
Health Imperative



Wisdom Institute



The Afiya Center



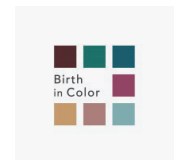
New Jersey Black
Women Physicians
Association



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.