



The State of Black Women & Reproductive Justice

OHIO

Ohio has a population of 11.8 million people.

About twelve percent (12.5%) of the population is Black (compared to 14.4% nationally); 77% of the population is white; 4.5% is Hispanic; 2.5% is Asian; and .3% is American Indians and/or Alaska Native.¹

Legislative profile ²

- Governor Mike DeWine (R) opposes reproductive autonomy.
- The Ohio State House opposes reproductive autonomy.
- The Ohio State Senate opposes reproductive autonomy.

Policy profile

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Affordable Health Care ^{3,4}

- Ohio adopted Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). As a result, 2.9 million Ohioans are covered by Medicaid/CHIP, a 35% increase since 2013.
- The uninsured rate for Black people in Ohio is 8.8%; 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.

Abortion Rights ^{5,6}

- Ohio state law constitutionally protects abortion but bans abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy. Exceptions after that point may include when abortion care is needed to save the pregnant person's life or to prevent serious risk to the pregnant person's physical health.

- Ohio requires a pregnant person to get counseling information from a provider and then wait 24 hours before getting abortion care.
- Public funding of abortion care is limited, and insurance plans sold on the state exchange are prohibited from covering abortion services.
- The state's abortion rate in 2022 was 8.3 procedures for every 1,000 women.

Family Planning Services ^{7,8}

- Ohioans of any age can buy over-the-counter emergency contraception (EC) without a prescription.
- Ohio has a policy in place that requires emergency rooms to provide EC or information about EC to rape survivors.
- Ohio has not secured a waiver or state plan amendment from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to cover family planning services under Medicaid.

Sexual Health Education ⁷

- Ohio state law does require public schools to provide sexual health education, but each board of education in each school district establishes the curriculum.
- If they provide sexual health education, the 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 Mortality ⁹⁻¹⁴

- The maternal mortality rate in Ohio was 24.5 deaths for every 100,000 live births, 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 130 pregnancy-associated deaths in Ohio in 2020. The majority (62%) of those deaths were deemed to be preventable. Black women were almost two times as likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women.
- The Black infant mortality rate in Ohio is 7.2 deaths for every 1,000 live births; the U.S. rate is 10.4/1,000 live births. For whites, the rate is 5.6/1,000, which is slightly higher than the national rate.

STDs, Including HIV/AIDS ¹⁵

- Of the total new diagnoses of STD/STIs in 2023 for which race/ethnicity was reported in Ohio:
 - » There were 527 new diagnoses of Syphilis: 22% were among Black women and 54% were among white women.
 - » There were 35,470 new diagnoses of Chlamydia: 41% were among Black women and 32% were among white women.
 - » There were 8,835 new diagnoses of Gonorrhea: 53% were among Black women and 27% were among white women.
- Among women who received an HIV diagnosis in Ohio in 2023 for whom race/ethnicity was known, 54% were Black women and 35% were white women.

- In 2023, of the AIDS-related deaths among women in Ohio, 45% were Black women and 43% were white women.

Reproductive Cancers ^{15,16}

- In Ohio, the age-adjusted rate of new breast cancer cases is 133.1 cancers for every 100,000 women. The rate for Black women is 128.9 for every 100,000 women; for white women, the rate is 135.3.
- The breast cancer mortality rate for Black women in Ohio is 19.9 deaths for every 100,000 women, compared to 18.8 per 100,000 for white women.
- The age-adjusted cervical cancer rate is 8.1 cases for every 100,000 women in Ohio. The rate for Black women is 8.0 per 100,000 women, compared to 8.1 for white women.
- The cervical cancer mortality rate for Black women is 2.5 deaths for every 100,000 women, compared to 2.3 per 100,000 for white women.

Economic Justice ¹⁷⁻¹⁹

- In Ohio, Black women make 65 cents for every dollar that a white man makes, creating a wage gap of 35 cents.
- The lifetime wage gap for Black women in Ohio is \$937,800; a Black woman has to work until age 82 to make what a white man does by age 60.
- In Ohio, 37.6% of women-headed households live in poverty. Among Black women, 25% live in poverty, compared to 13.8% of all women aged 18 and older and 11.5% of white women.

LGBTQIA+ Liberation ^{20,21}

- Ohio bans best practice medication and surgical care for transgender youth, although the ban may not be in effect.
- 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 protects 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.”

- Ohio explicitly defines “sex” throughout state law to exclude transgender people.

Criminal Justice ²²⁻²⁵

- Black individuals comprise 43% of the prison population, compared to just 12% of the overall state population.
- Black individuals are 5.7 times more likely than white individuals in Ohio to be incarcerated.
- Ohio denies the right to vote to more than 21,000 Black citizens due to imprisonment for a felony conviction.
- Ohio has anti-shackling legislation that protects pregnant inmates.

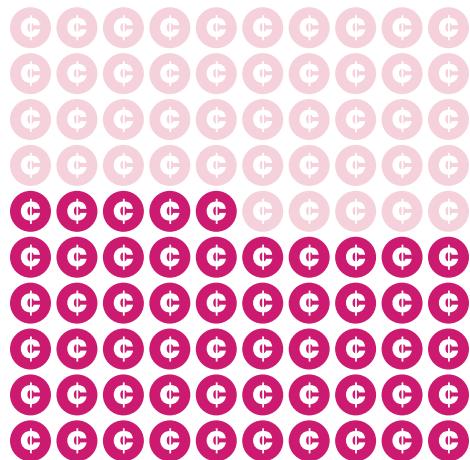
Violence Against Women ²⁶⁻²⁹

- More than half (51.9%) of women in Ohio and 36.7% of men have experienced some form of domestic violence in their lifetimes.
- Ohio had the 5th highest gun suicide rate among Black people in 2023.
- Black women were 11 times as likely to die by gun homicide than white females in Ohio.
- In 2022, there were at least 165 domestic violence-related homicides in Ohio; 55% were by firearm.
- Ohio does not have ERPO (Extreme Risk Protection Order) laws.
- Since 2015, 17 women have been killed by police in Ohio; 4 of those were Black women.

Environmental Justice ^{30,31}

- Black women in Ohio have a notably higher rate of asthma (14.1%) 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.

OHIO'S WAGE GAP



BLACK WOMEN MAKE 65 CENTS FOR EVERY \$1.00 A WHITE MAN MAKES, A WAGE GAP OF 35 CENTS.

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

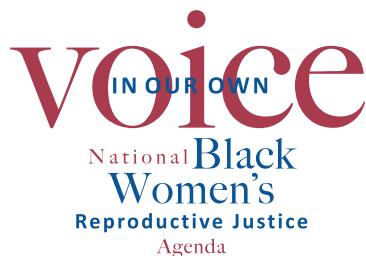
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There were 130 pregnancy-associated deaths in Ohio in 2020. The majority (62%) of those deaths were deemed to be preventable. Black women were almost two times as likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women.

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
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Strategic Partners



New Voices for
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Black Women for
Wellness



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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.