



The State of Black Women & Reproductive Justice

VIRGINIA

Virginia has a population of 8.6 million people.

About nineteen percent (18.6%) of the population is Black (compared to 14.4% nationally); 60% of the population is white; 10% is Hispanic; 7% is Asian; and .5% is American Indians and/or Alaska Native. ¹

Legislative profile ²

- Governor Abigail Spanberger (D) does support reproductive autonomy.
- The Virginia State House supports reproductive autonomy.
- The Virginia State Senate supports reproductive autonomy.

Policy profile

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Affordable Health Care ^{3,4,5}

- Virginia adopted Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). As a result, more than 1.7 million people are covered by Medicaid/CHIP, a 94% increase from 2013.
- The uninsured rate for Black people in Virginia is 7.3%. 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}

- Virginia law generally prohibits abortion after viability, unless performed by a licensed physician in a licensed hospital with 3 physicians certify that the continuation of the pregnancy will result in death of the pregnant person or impair their mental or physical health.
- If the pregnant person is under 18, a parent or legal guardian must give permission for abortion care.
- Public funding of abortion care is limited.
- The state's abortion rate in 2022 was 9.7 procedures for every 1,000 women.

Family Planning Services ^{8,9}

- Virginians of any age can buy over-the-counter emergency contraception (EC) without a prescription.
- Virginia does not require emergency rooms to provide EC or information about EC to rape survivors.
- Virginia 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 20% of the FPL.

Sexual Health Education ⁸

- Virginia state law does not require public schools to provide sexual health education.
- 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

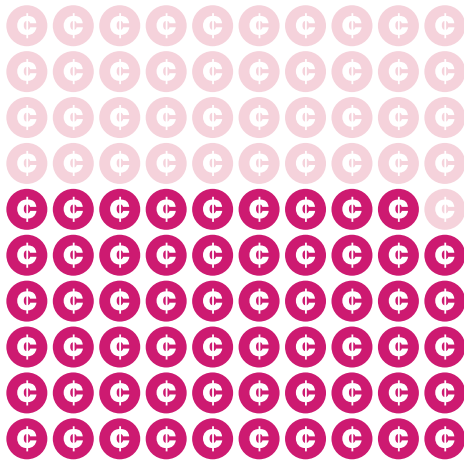
Maternal and Infant Mortality ¹⁰⁻¹³

- The maternal mortality rate in Virginia was 32.7 deaths for every 100,000 live births, the 7th highest in the US. The national rate is 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 67 pregnancy-associated deaths in Virginia in 2022. The overall pregnancy-associated mortality ratio for Black women had the highest ratio (170.6/100,000 live births), which was higher than that of white women (100/100,000 live deaths).
- The Black infant mortality rate in Virginia is 10.3 deaths for every 1,000 live births; the U.S. rate is 10.4/1,000 live births. For whites, the rate is 4.7/1,000, which equals the national rate; for Hispanic infants, the rate is 6.0/1,000, slightly higher than the national rate.

STDs, Including HIV/AIDS ¹⁴

- Of the total new diagnoses of STD/STIs in 2023 for which race/ethnicity was reported in Virginia:
 - » There were 174 new diagnoses of Syphilis: 54% were among Black women, 32% were among white women, and 5% among Hispanic women.
 - » There were 26,287 new diagnoses of Chlamydia: 36% were among Black women, 20% were among white women, and 10% among Hispanic women.
 - » There were 5,473 new diagnoses of Gonorrhea: 52% were among Black women, 19% were among white women, and 5% among Hispanic women.

VIRGINIA'S WAGE GAP



BLACK WOMEN MAKE **61 CENTS**
FOR EVERY \$1.00 A WHITE MAN MAKES,
A WAGE GAP OF **39 CENTS.**

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

\$1,267,920

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>

- Among women who received an HIV diagnosis in Virginia in 2023 for whom race/ethnicity was known, 57% were Black women, 23% were white women, 15% were Hispanic women, and 3% were multiracial women.
- In 2023, of the AIDS-related deaths among women in Virginia, 71% were Black women, 15% were white women, 6% were Hispanic women, and 8% were multiracial women.

Reproductive Cancers ¹⁵

- In Virginia, the age-adjusted rate of new breast cancer cases is 134.5 cancers for every 100,000 women. The rate for Black women is 135.6 for every 100,000 women; for white women, the rate is 137.8 and for Hispanic women the rate is 86.8.
- The breast cancer mortality rate for Black women in Virginia is 26.2 deaths for every 100,000 women, compared to 18.5 per 100,000 for white women and 9.7 for Hispanic women.
- The age-adjusted cervical cancer rate is 6.8 cases for every 100,000 women in Virginia. The rate for Black women is 5.8 per 100,000 women, compared to 7.0 for white women and 8.2 for Hispanic women.
- The cervical cancer mortality rate for Black women is 2.8 deaths for every 100,000 women, compared to 1.6 per 100,000 for white women.

Economic Justice ^{16,17}

- In Virginia, Black women make 61 cents for every dollar that a white man makes, creating a wage gap of 39 cents.
- The lifetime wage gap for Black women in Virginia is \$1,267,920; a Black woman has to work until age 86 to make what a white man does by age 60.
- In Virginia 28.3% of women-headed households live in poverty. Among Black women, 16.3% live in poverty, compared to 10.8% of all women aged 18 and older, and 9.2% white women in the state.

LGBTQIA+ Liberation ^{18,19}

- Virginia does not ban best practice medical 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.
- No 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."
- Virginia explicitly defines "sex" throughout state law to exclude transgender people.

Criminal Justice ²⁰⁻²³

- Black individuals comprise 54% of the prison population in Virginia, compared to just 19% of the overall state population.
- Black individuals are 4.4 times more likely than white individuals in Virginia to be incarcerated.
- Virginia denies the right to vote to more than 120,500 citizens due to imprisonment for a felony conviction.
- Virginia has anti-shackling legislation that protects pregnant inmates.

Violence Against Women ²⁴⁻²⁷

- More than half (59.1%) of women in Virginia and 27.7% of men have experienced some form of domestic violence in their lifetimes.
- In 2022, there were at least 120 domestic violence-related homicides in Virginia. More than half (65%) were committed with a firearm.
- Black women in Virginia had a gun homicide rate over four times as high as white women.
- Virginia does have Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) laws.
- Since 2015, 12 women have been killed by police in Virginia; 6 of those were Black women.

- Black people in Virginia have a higher rate of asthma (13.2%) than white Virginians (9.4%).
- Black women in Virginia have a lower rate of asthma (10.9%) than the U.S. rate for Black women (15.3%).
- 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.

The breast cancer mortality rate for Black women in Virginia is 26.2 deaths for every 100,000 women, compared to 18.5 per 100,000 for 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
202.545.7660 • www.blackrj.org

Strategic Partners



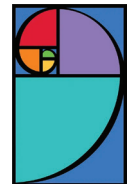
New Voices for
Reproductive Justice



SPARK RJ Now!



SisterReach



SisterLove



Black Women for
Wellness



Black Women's
Health Imperative



Wisdom Institute



The Afiya Center



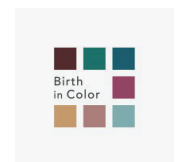
New Jersey Black
Women Physicians
Association



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.