

Women of Color in the United States: Quick Take

Mar 19, 2020

POPULATION

Women of Color Will Be the Majority of All Women in the United States by 2060 ¹

	Percentage of Total Women in US Population (2018)	Percentage of Total Women in US Population (2060)
White (not Hispanic or Latina)	60.3%	44.3%
Hispanic or Latina	17.8%	27.0%
Black or African American	13.7%	15.2%
Asian	6.1%	9.5%

EDUCATION

The College Graduation Rate Continues to Rise for Most Women of Color ²

Of total bachelor's degrees earned by US citizen women and permanent residents in 2017-2018, the percentage of those earned by women of color: ³

Hispanic women: 14.9%.

Black women: 11.4% (this percentage has decreased since its high of 12.3% in 2011-12).

Asian/Pacific Islander women: 7.6%.

Of total bachelor's degrees in business earned by women in 2017-2018, the percentage of those earned by women of color: ⁴

Black women: 11.5%.
Hispanic women: 13.7%.
Asian/Pacific Islander women: 8.1%.

LABOR FORCE

Latinas and Asian Women Will Make Up a Larger Percentage of the US Labor Force ⁵

Between 2018-2028 the projected percentage increase in the labor force of women by race or ethnicity: ⁶

Hispanic women: 28.7%.
Asian women: 24.9%.
Black women: 9.7%.
White women: 4.1%.

LEADERSHIP

From Entry Level Positions to the C-Suite, the Share of Women of Color Remains Small

In 2019, women of color represented 18% of entry-level positions. Few advanced to leadership positions: managers (12%), senior managers/directors (9%), VPs (7%), SVPs (5%), and C-suite positions 4%. ⁷

In 2019, Black and Hispanic women made up a smaller percentage of total women employed in management, business, and financial operations occupations than white or Asian women. ⁸

Women of color among the total US employees in 2019:

Hispanic or Latinas: 10.3%.
Black women: 12.3 %.
Asian women: 18.3%.
White women: 16.7%.

Black Women Aim High, But Emotional Tax Can be a Barrier to Success ⁹

Black employees experience a heightened awareness of their difference in the workplace which manifests itself in disruption of sleep patterns, reduction of their sense of "psychological safety," and diminishment of their ability to contribute fully at work. ¹⁰

Despite this feeling of exclusion black women report wanting to:

Remain in the same organization (88%).
Be an influential leader (87%).
Work toward a high-ranking position (81%).

PAY GAP

Women of Color Have a Greater Wage Gap

In 2019:¹¹

Black women working full-time earned 62 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men earned.

Latinas working full-time earned only 54 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men earned.

Asian women working full-time earned 90 cents for every dollar white, non-Hispanic men earned.¹²

However, the wage gap is substantially larger for some subgroups of Asian women. For example, Nepalese women (50%), Burmese women (52%), Fijian women (55%), and Cambodian women (57%) are paid well below the earnings of white, non-Hispanic men.¹³

Women of Color Represent Almost Half of the Low-Wage Workforce¹⁴

Among the low-wage workforce in 2016:¹⁵

Black women: 18%.

Latinas: 24%.

Asian, Hawaiian and/or Pacific Islander women: 7%.

In the same year, women of color accounted for nearly half (46%) of three occupations that are low-wage, female-dominated, but **are considered among the fastest-growing jobs for the next decade**: personal care aides, home health aides, and combined food preparation and serving workers (including fast food workers).¹⁶

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Alliance for Board Diversity/Deloitte, *Missing Pieces Report: The 2018 Board Diversity Census of Women and Minorities on Fortune 500 Boards* <<https://catalyst.org/research/missing-pieces-report-the-2018-board-diversity-census-of-women-and-minorities-on-fortune-500-boards/>> (January 16, 2019).

Catalyst, *Flip the Script: Race & Ethnicity in the Workplace* <<https://catalyst.org/research/flip-the-script-race-ethnicity-in-the-workplace/>> (May 7, 2018).

Catalyst, *Quick Take: People of Colour in Canada* <<https://www.catalyst.org/research/people-of-colour-in-canada/>>.

Catalyst, *Too Few Women of Color on Boards: Statistics and Solutions* <<https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-minorities-corporate-boards/>> (January 31, 2020).

Dnika J. Travis and Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, *Day-to-Day Experiences Of Emotional Tax Among Women And Men Of Color In The Workplace* <<https://catalyst.org/research/day-to-day-experiences-of-emotional-tax-among-women-and-men-of-color-in-the-workplace/>> (Catalyst, 2018).

Dnika J. Travis, Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, and Courtney McCluney, *Emotional Tax: How Black Women and Men Pay More at Work and How Leaders Can Take Action* <<https://www.catalyst.org/research/emotional-tax-how-black-women-and-men-pay-more-at-work-and-how-leaders-can-take-action/>> (Catalyst, October 11, 2016).

Black Women Connect, "Black Women Connect" <<http://blackwomenconnect.com/>>."

Zuhairah Washington and Laura Morgan Roberts, "Women of Color Get Less Support at Work. Here's How Managers Can Change That" <<https://hbr.org/2019/03/women-of-color-get-less-support-at-work-heres-how-managers-can-change-that>>," *Harvard Business Review* (March 4, 2019).

DEFINITION: *The U.S. Office of Management and Budget*

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/fedreg_1997standards> (OMB) requires federal agencies to use a minimum of five race categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Note that Hispanic is defined as an ethnic heritage and people who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race.¹⁷

NOTE: Hispanic or Latino refers to persons of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. In accordance with OMB and NCES standards, Brazilians are not categorized as Hispanic (but may identify as Latino). Therefore for accuracy, this Quick Take follows the race/ethnicity label used by each government agency to ensure we represent their specific data collection.¹⁸

How to cite this product: Catalyst, *Quick Take: Women of Color in the United States* (March 19, 2020).

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9. Emotional Tax is the heightened experience of being different from peers at work because of your gender and/or race/ethnicity and the associated detrimental effects on health, well-being, and the ability to thrive at work. Dnika J. Travis, Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, and Courtney McCluney, *Emotional Tax: How Black Women And Men Pay More At Work And How Leaders Can Take Action* <<https://catalyst.org/research/emotional-tax-how-black-women-and-men-pay-more-at-work-and-how-leaders-can-take-action/>> (Catalyst, 2016).
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Topics: **Business Case** <<https://www.catalyst.org/topics/business-case/>>

Gender, Race, And Ethnicity <<https://www.catalyst.org/topics/gender-race-ethnicity/>>

Top Resources <<https://www.catalyst.org/tag/top-resources/>>

Women Of Color <<https://www.catalyst.org/tag/women-of-color/>>

Related Content

Infographic: Still Too Few: Women of Color on Boards <<https://www.catalyst.org/research/infographic-still-too-few-women-of-color-on-boards/>>

Women of color are woefully underrepresented on boards. Find out how to change that.

Report: Emotional Tax: How Black Women and Men Pay More at Work and How Leaders Can Take Action <<https://www.catalyst.org/research/emotional-tax-how-black-women-and-men-pay-more-at-work-and-how-leaders-can-take-action/>>

Emotional Tax is the experience of being different from peers because of your gender/race/ethnicity and the associated detrimental effects

Report: Day-to-Day Experiences of Emotional Tax Among Women and Men of Color in the Workplace <<https://www.catalyst.org/research/day-to-day-experiences-of-emotional-tax-among-women-and-men-of-color-in-the-workplace/>>

Learn what Emotional Tax is and how it affects both employees of color and organizations.

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