



Family Voices Amplified



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reclaiming Their Time: Race, Power, the Pandemic, and the Demands of Black & Latinx Families

After the initial 2020 COVID-19 lockdowns, systemic inequities continue to harm women and families of color. These combine with rollbacks in reproductive rights, an ongoing fight for racial justice, persistent gun and police violence, and Congressional barriers to progress.

Families of color are determined to survive and pass on something to their families; they demand more of their workplaces and the care economy. However, to do so it is vitally important to transform structures that do not serve their communities and to reinvest in core values, community needs, and bold policy solutions.

To remain grounded in the needs of these communities, Equal Rights Advocates listened to Black and Latinx families' experiences with childcare,

job, income security, debt, and asset-building in 16 cities across the country through an in-depth survey and regional focus groups. Their voices, as workers, caregivers, and voters, should be at the center of any plan to build back better.

“You have to pick which quality of life you want, but you just can’t have a quality life overall.”

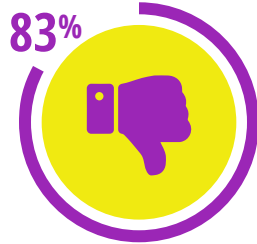
— ANGELA, ATLANTA

Families Under Pressure and Underwater

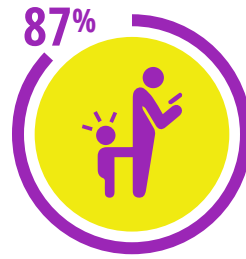
The themes from the survey are compelling: The inadequacy of work, the pressures of childcare, the burden of debt, and scant avenues to building assets for families.



have childcare responsibilities



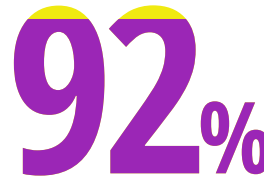
said their current or most recent work experience came with: Inadequate pay and benefits, unreliable hours and poor working conditions



of those with childcare responsibilities said childcare disruptions led to disruptions at work



say they experience racial discrimination



delayed a career change/advancement or obtaining healthcare due to changes in economic circumstances

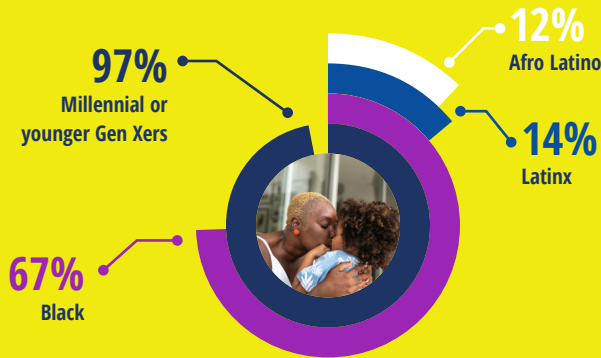


experienced one or more of the following forms of discrimination at work: racial, gender, parenting and immigration status

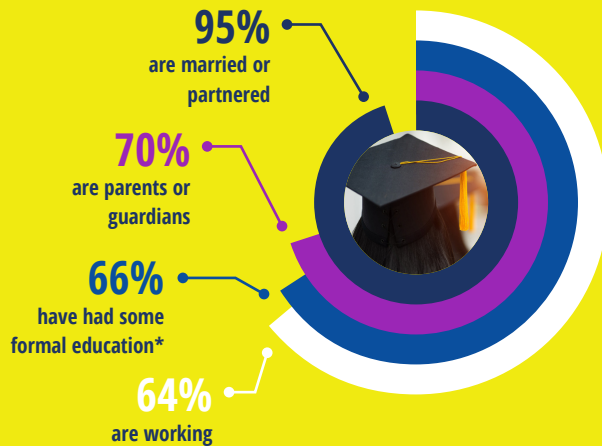
BLACK AND LATINX FAMILIES...

A PROFILE OF WANING RESILIENCE

The Families We Spoke with



Grabbing a Piece of the American Dream



*Associate, bachelor, or graduate degrees



TAKE ACTION

This project was made possible with the partnership of The Insight Center and the National Black Child Development Institute.

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Childcare



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Black & Latinx Moms Doing It For Themselves: The Cost of Childcare Disruption

As Black and brown families continue to jump through bureaucratic hoops without a financial safety net, childcare is a factor in their capacity to get and stay ahead. Quality and affordable childcare are crucial to working parents, particularly women, returning to the workforce as the pandemic ends, and they safely return back to work.

With nearly 700,000 parents leaving the workforce to care for children, childcare is quickly becoming a key factor determining the financial stability and futures of families of color. Childcare can make up almost one-third of a family's monthly budget. While current policies have tried to address the challenges arising from the difficulties in childcare, they have proven to be inadequate.

Without access to affordable childcare, it will be difficult for Black and Latinx families to return to the workforce stronger than when they left it. Access to childcare is fundamental to achieving milestones of the American Dream: work, education, financial stability, and home ownership. However, our Black and Latina breadwinners delayed these life goals because of increased childcare responsibilities.

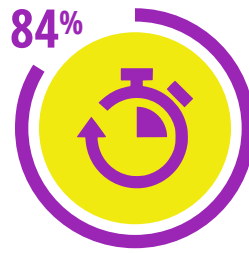
“Childcare is just too much. It’s hard to cover both rent and childcare.”

— ARIELLE, DALTON

Riding the Childcare Struggle Bus

Forced to choose between work and their livelihood and quality and affordable care for their children, Black and Latinx family breadwinners—primarily women—have had to navigate this struggle, as the pandemic continues in fits and starts across the nation.

BLACK AND LATINX FAMILIES...



84% expect childcare responsibilities will delay plans that could improve their financial security



38% said shifts in childcare led to a reduction in work hours



17% were forced to leave their jobs due to childcare responsibilities and lack of childcare



31% said childcare responsibilities will delay their return to their previous level of employment



24% said childcare responsibilities will delay their achievement of long-term financial goals



14% said they anticipate deferring childcare

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Fight for Black & Latinx Families

Reinstate and make permanent the expanded Child Tax Credit.

Increase investments in Childcare and Universal Pre-K for Black/Latinx family breadwinners.

Pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

This is vital to protecting the franchise, generally, and the interests of Black & Latinx communities, particularly.

Pass The Childcare For Working Families Act.



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Debt



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We Can't Breathe: Trying to Survive Dragged Down by Debt

Our Black and Latinx breadwinners live on a razor-thin edge between solvency and insolvency. Debt prevents them from building their savings for financial safety. While only a quarter of Americans tapped savings or borrowed money to stay afloat in the first half of the pandemic, most of our Black and Latinx respondents drew on savings. They also relied on support from their families.

Congress authorized three rounds of stimulus checks during the pandemic with the CARES Act, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, and the American Rescue Plan. While the pandemic has entered its third year, there is no more talk of additional stimulus.

Black and Latinx families used stimulus income to pay rent or mortgages rather than put it into sav-

ings. In contrast, only 12% of white recipients of stimulus used it similarly. Facing low wages, little to no savings, rising living expenses, and scarcity of childcare, debt jeopardizes labor force participation—which imperils Black & Latinx breadwinners' capacity to provide for their families.

"I have to start paying my student loans, that's like a mortgage within itself."

— CHONDRA, SACRAMENTO

DATA OVERVIEW

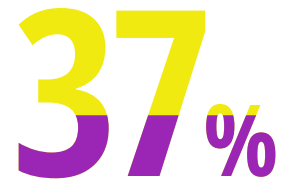
A Stone Around Their Feet

From credit card, healthcare, or student loan debt, debt has been a constant hurdle for Black and Latinx families. The debt that concerns them most is credit card debt (32%), student debt (11.5%), then back rent (10.57%).

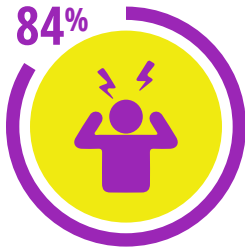
BLACK AND LATINX FAMILIES...



are holding some form of credit card debt



are behind on their mortgage



agreed debt burden is a significant source of stress in their life



said their debt was a significant source of stress and impacted their mental health



have taken on additional debt due to changes in personal financial circumstances



do not feel confident they will be able to pay off their debt with current or future income

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Fight for Black & Latinx Families

Create a direct and comprehensive asset-building strategy.

For Black/Latinx families whose capacity to build generational wealth has been deliberately stunted by over a century of racist U.S. economic policy.

Pass the John Lewis Act.

This is vital to protecting the franchise, generally, and the interests of Black & Latinx communities, particularly.

Forgive student loan debt.

Black women hold an outsized share of student loan debt. Without this debt, they could survive this pandemic from a much stronger financial position.

Reinstate rent forgiveness and mortgage moratoriums.

The economic precarity because of rising rent and pressures to carry a mortgage through job losses threatens the stability of Black & Latinx families.



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Generational Wealth



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Math Ain't Mathin': The Struggle to Create Wealth in a Pandemic

Wealth, especially generational family wealth, is the foundation for a family's livelihood. It determines how families plan, how they save, their ability to save, how they plan for retirement, and whether they can purchase a home. It also determines the level and amount of debt accrued, creditworthiness, and interest rates and is the vehicle for obtaining loans.

Generational wealth is unequally distributed, with Black and brown families having mere fractions of what their white counterparts have. A 2019 Federal Reserve Board's Survey of Consumer Finances reported that Black and Latinx families are far less likely to own different asset types, including homes, retirement assets, and financial savings. When examining family wealth, an average white family owned around \$184,000, while an average Latinx family-owned \$38,000 in family wealth, and Black families owned merely \$23,000 in family wealth.

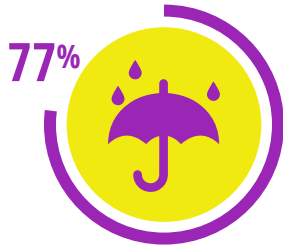
Historically, the default economic policy of this country has been to block Black and Latinx families from asset building while extracting their labor. Add a global pandemic and the medical debt and employment disruptions accompanying it, and the wealth gap immediately widens.

"I feel like there is no long term help."

— ASHLEY, NEW YORK

No Margin for Error

It is a historical truth embedded in our country and perpetuated in our policies that U.S. wealth, especially generational wealth, is unequally distributed, leaving Black and brown families with mere fractions of what their white counterparts have.



77% have less than \$30,000 in assets for a rainy day



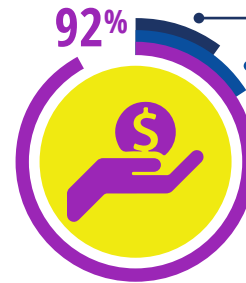
57% do not feel confident they will be able to pay off their debt with current or future income



50% say their income is barely enough to make it



10% putting off owning or purchasing a home, thus delaying their ability to build assets



92% delayed one or more actions that could increase their financial security, due to changes in economic circumstances during the pandemic, with...



16% halting a career change or stall career advancement, which would have potentially offered more income

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Quality of Work



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pushout: How a Pandemic is Reversing Workplace Gains for Black & Latinx Breadwinners

Our Black and Latinx breadwinners are doing all the 'right' things by middle-class standards. Nevertheless, it is not enough. The pandemic has slowed workplace gains for Black and Latinx women. Between March 2020 and March 2021, Latinx women had the most significant drop in labor force size. The Latinx labor force shed 336,000 Latinas.

Black women dropped from the workforce at a higher rate than other ethnic groups since schools reopened in September 2021. In the three months between September and November 2021, 181,000 Black women left the labor force. From November 2020 to November 2021, the unemployment rate for Black women left all others behind, at 7.97% - higher than Black men, Latinx women, and certainly higher than White women.

With greater economic precarity and heavier debt burdens (higher than the debt burdens of White families), no wonder these participants are seriously questioning whether it is possible to achieve the progress promised by the American myth of self-reliance.

“And even when I returned to work, I went to work in fear.”

— SHELLEY, NEW YORK

Broken Bootstraps: Work as a Place of Lost Opportunity

Told that working hard is part of the social contract in America, the majority of Black and Latinx breadwinners are working or self-employed. While these hard-working families believe in the American Dream, they feel their hard work is invisible and unrewarded.



experienced one or more of the following shifts in employment because of the pandemic: layoff, furlough, decrease in hours or wages



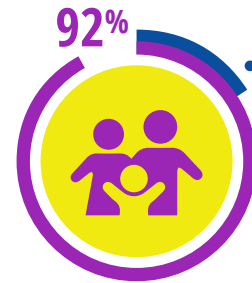
have taken on additional debt due to changes in personal financial circumstances



experienced discrimination in their current employment



experience inadequate pay



delayed significant life plans due to changes in economic circumstances during the pandemic, with...



saying they had to delay career change/career advancement

BLACK AND LATINX FAMILIES...

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Fight for Black & Latinx Families

Raise the minimum wage & eliminate the subminimum wage.

Specifically, target opportunities in the trades to Black and Latinx women workers.

Black & Latinx women are **not** finding these opportunities accessible. Community-level partners from these demographics need to be part of the outreach and strategy.

Pass the Paycheck Fairness Act.

This would begin to close the racial and gender wage gap as well as incentivize states to improve their pay equity policies directly benefiting Black & Latinx family breadwinners.

Eradicate racial and gender based occupational segregation.

Key to increasing economic stability of working women. This needs to be a focus of the Administration, unions, and advocates.



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