

The Latina Economic Power Agenda

Turning Latina Economic Contributions Into Real Wealth

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Introduction

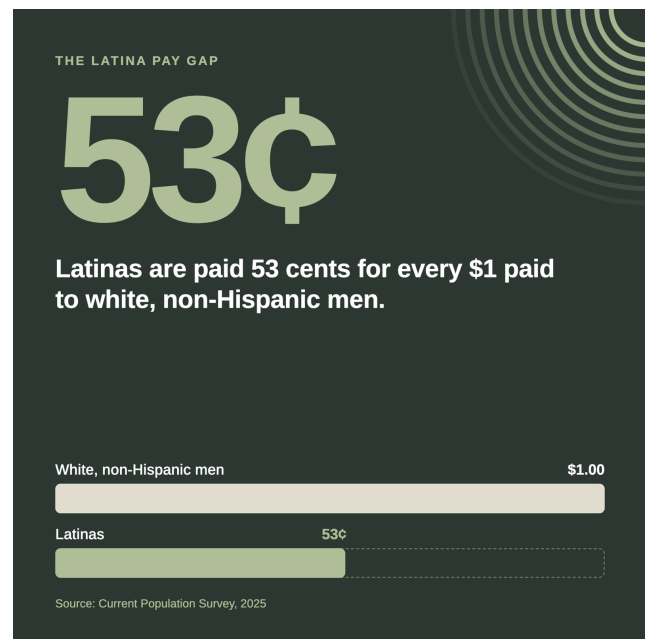
This policy agenda is a direct follow-up to LatinoProsperity's landmark 2025 report, *Latina Wealth in America: Breaking Barriers, Building Futures*.¹ That report documented a central contradiction: Latinas are helping power America's economic future through their labor, entrepreneurship, caregiving, and educational attainment, yet they remain among the most under-resourced and under-invested groups when it comes to building wealth. It also showed that Latina wealth is shaped not by any single factor, but by interconnected systems of work, caregiving, opportunity, housing, financial security, and structural barriers.

This agenda asks the next question: **What should we do about it?**

One in five American women is Latina, rising to one in four among girls under 18. Latinas contribute \$1.3 trillion to the U.S. economy, start businesses at extraordinary rates, sustain essential industries, raise families, care for communities, and are earning more college degrees than ever.²

But economic contribution without economic ownership is not prosperity. Too much of the wealth Latinas help create is absorbed by high costs, low wages, caregiving burdens, medical debt, discriminatory lending, limited access to capital, immigration barriers, and systems that do not consistently recognize their work or potential. New technologies, including artificial intelligence, add another layer of risk and opportunity.

At its core, this is a working-class economic agenda. If *Latina Wealth in America* documented the barriers, this agenda begins to identify the strongest levers for changing the conditions that produce them. Closing the Latina wealth gap requires making it easier for families to keep more of what they earn, gain access to higher incomes and ownership, protect the assets they build, and have greater influence over the institutions and decisions that shape economic opportunity.



¹Orozco, M., Diaz, S., Chinchilla, M., & Aguilar, O. (2025). *Latina Wealth in America: Breaking Barriers, Building Futures—What the Numbers Say and What Communities Know*. LatinoProsperity. Available: <https://latinoprosperity.org/research-report-latina-wealth-in-america/>

²Hamilton, D., Fienup, M., Hayes-Bautista, D., & Hsu, P. (2024). *2024 U.S. Latina GDP report: Dando vida a la economía*. Center for Economic Research & Forecasting, California Lutheran University; Center for the Study of Latino Health & Culture, UCLA. <https://latinagdp.us>

This is a discussion draft. It is a start, not a finish. In the months ahead, we will engage leaders, advocates, researchers, and practitioners across the country to test these ideas, tighten what is here, add what is missing, and revise what needs to change. The final agenda will be stronger because of their input. Send comments and suggestions to info@latinoprosperty.org with the subject line: Latina Economic Power Agenda.

Building on Strong Foundations

This agenda does not start from scratch. For decades, Latina leaders and organizations have advanced Latina economic power, long before this discussion draft was written. They have produced research, trained leaders, opened doors, and won many of the policy changes that make an agenda like this possible.

We want to specifically acknowledge HOPE (Hispanas Organized for Political Equality), Latinas in Tech, MANA, Equis Institute, SUMA Wealth, Lean In Latinas, the Latina Coalition of Silicon Valley, NALCAB, UnidosUS, and many others at the national, state, and local levels. We also remain ever grateful to The Eva Longoria Foundation for their early investment in LatinoProsperity's Latina Wealth Campaign.

We owe special recognition to Mónica Ramírez, founder and president of Justice for Migrant Women. For years she has organized and led the national Latina Equal Pay Day campaign, turning a single date on the calendar into a sustained movement that brings together workers, advocates, employers, and members of Congress. Much of the country's understanding of the Latina pay gap, and the urgency to close it, traces back to her leadership.

We also recognize the robust network of organizations delivering quality programs at the grassroots level. Every day they help Latinas start businesses, buy homes, build credit, train for better jobs, and navigate systems that were not built with them in mind. Policy is not only about laws and budgets. It is also about programs that work, and these organizations show what is possible when good ideas reach families directly.

We thank them all for their leadership. Our goal is to add to their work, and we look forward to learning from them as we test and revise this draft in the months ahead.



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The Latina Economic Power Agenda is organized around four goals.

Together they describe what it takes for Latinas to move from getting by to building wealth: families need breathing room in their budgets, real pathways to higher income and ownership, protection from the forces that drain what they earn, and institutions that can be held accountable for results. Each recommendation in this agenda advances at least one of these goals.



Four Overarching Goals for Latina Economic Power

- 1 Lower the cost of economic survival**
Families need enough room in their budgets to save, invest, buy homes, start businesses, and plan for the future.
- 2 Increase Latina income and ownership**
Economic mobility requires better wages, career advancement, entrepreneurship, homeownership, capital, and a stake in the industries creating tomorrow's wealth.
- 3 Protect wealth from extraction and loss**
Fraud, predatory fees, discriminatory lending, medical debt, wage theft, climate risk, and other shocks should not continually erase family gains.
- 4 Build systems that recognize and respond to Latinas**
Institutions should measure outcomes, enforce rights, include Latina voices in decisions, and be accountable for whether opportunity is actually reaching families.

Priority 1: Make Life More Affordable

Primary economic goal: Lower the cost of economic survival

Outcome: Working families have enough room in their budgets to save, invest, and build assets rather than spending nearly everything on basic necessities.

What needs to change

- Make caregiving affordable and compatible with work.
- Strengthen family income and reduce major drains on household finances.
- Stop public-benefit rules from penalizing families for earning more or building savings.

Selected policy levers

- Cap what families pay for child care at 7% of income, pay providers based on the real cost of care including a living wage, and fund the gap publicly.
- Guarantee 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave with strong wage replacement for low-paid workers and coverage for gig, part-time, and self-employed workers.
- Expand refundable family tax credits, including the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit.
- Keep medical debt from damaging credit and require screening for financial assistance before collection.
- Congress and state governments should establish bipartisan commissions to examine and solve our cost-of-living crisis.
- Reform benefit cliffs and unnecessary asset limits that punish families for advancement or savings.

Measures of progress

- Share of income spent on child care and other essentials
- Labor-force participation and earnings among Latina mothers
- Medical-debt burden and credit impacts
- Household savings and asset growth

Priority 2: Make AI Work for Latinas

Primary economic goal: Increase income and ownership + protect wealth

Outcome: Latina workers, families, and entrepreneurs are protected from discriminatory or destabilizing uses of AI and can share in the economic opportunities AI creates.

What needs to change

- Create accountability when AI influences consequential economic decisions.
- Make worker transitions practical when technology changes or eliminates jobs.
- Ensure Latinas are represented in the institutions setting AI rules and benefit from AI-driven growth.

Selected policy levers

- Require independent impact assessments for AI used in consequential employment, lending, and related economic decisions, with enforcement for discriminatory outcomes.
- Provide notice, meaningful human review, and appeal when AI influences consequential decisions about employment, credit, or economic opportunity.
- Require transparency and advance warning for major automation decisions expected to eliminate substantial numbers of jobs.
- Provide transition support, including wage or income support and paid pathways into new employment, when technology displaces workers.
- Ensure Latinas have the training and tools needed to compete in an ever-growing AI economy.
- Include Latina workers, parents, entrepreneurs, and community leaders on AI advisory bodies, workforce commissions, and standards-setting processes.

Measures of progress

- Disparities in AI-assisted hiring, lending, pay, and promotion
- Number and quality of workers receiving transition support
- Latina representation in AI governance bodies
- Latina participation in AI-related jobs, training, and entrepreneurship

Priority 3: Help Latina Businesses Grow and Scale

Primary economic goal: Increase Latina income and ownership

Outcome: More Latina-owned firms move from startup and self-employment into durable businesses that generate jobs, revenue, contracts, equity, and intergenerational wealth.

What needs to change

- Increase access to patient and affordable growth capital.
- Open procurement and market opportunities.
- Build the operating capacity needed to scale.

Selected policy levers

- Create or expand growth capital delivered through SBA programs, CDFIs, and other mission-driven intermediaries, including grants, forgivable loans, low-interest financing, and non-dilutive capital.
- Require greater transparency in small-business lending, including reasons for denials and public reporting of outcomes by race, ethnicity, and gender.
- Expand government procurement opportunities through clear goals, streamlined certification, prompt payment, technical assistance, and transparent reporting.
- Fund hands-on scale-up support tied to measurable outcomes such as revenue, jobs, contracts, exports, technology adoption, and capital raised.
- Expand affordable legal assistance for business formation, intellectual property, estate planning, succession, employee ownership, and family-business transfers.

Measures of progress

- Business revenue and employment growth
- Approval and pricing of small-business credit
- Government contracting dollars reaching Latina-owned firms
- Capital raised and business survival over time

Priority 4: Open the Door to Homeownership

Primary economic goal: Increase Latina income and ownership + protect wealth

Outcome: Families without inherited wealth have a realistic path to sustainable homeownership and can preserve the equity they build.

What needs to change

- Reduce the upfront barriers to buying a first home.
- Make mortgage underwriting and valuation fairer for today's workforce.
- Protect home equity from avoidable loss.

Selected policy levers

- Provide meaningful down-payment and closing-cost assistance for first-time or first-generation buyers who lack family wealth.
- Increase the supply of starter homes, including condominiums, townhomes, accessory dwelling units, smaller homes, and other lower-cost ownership options.
- Modernize mortgage underwriting so legitimate self-employment, gig, and other nontraditional income is evaluated fairly.
- Strengthen enforcement against discrimination in mortgage approval, pricing, steering, and appraisals.
- States should develop renter-to-homeownership programs similar to Colorado's Tenant Equity Vehicle that allow renters to accumulate assets while they rent.
- Expand foreclosure prevention, estate planning, probate assistance, and protections for inherited property.

Measures of progress

- Latina/Latino homeownership rate
- Mortgage denial and pricing disparities
- Average borrower charges and down-payment burden
- Home equity retention and intergenerational transfer

Priority 5: Build Pathways to Better Jobs and Careers

Primary economic goal: Increase Latina income and ownership

Outcome: Public workforce systems lead Latinas into jobs and careers that produce higher wages, advancement, stability, and resilience to technological change.

What needs to change

- Align training with real labor-market demand and high-growth sectors.
- Make training accessible to working adults and parents.
- Build advancement ladders, not just entry points.

Selected policy levers

- Condition public workforce funding on demonstrated labor-market demand and publish completion, placement, wage, retention, and advancement outcomes disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender.
- Expand registered apprenticeships and direct pathways into high-demand, high-wage sectors such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, clean energy, biotech, AI infrastructure, and related fields.
- Remove unnecessary degree requirements where skills and experience can demonstrate readiness.
- Expand paid training and earn-while-you-learn models so workers do not have to sacrifice income to advance.
- Create career ladders that move Latinas from lower-wage support roles into higher-paying clinical, technical, administrative, and leadership positions.

Measures of progress

- Placement into high-wage, high-growth occupations
- Earnings gains after training
- Retention and advancement
- Latina participation in apprenticeships and high-growth sectors

Priority 6: Protect and Grow Family Finances

Primary economic goal: Protect wealth from extraction and loss

Outcome: Financial systems recognize responsible behavior, expand safe access to credit and wealth-building products, and protect families from discriminatory practices, fraud, and abusive fees.

What needs to change

- Recognize more forms of financial responsibility.
- Expand responsible access for families outside traditional credit and banking models.
- Strengthen protection from fraud, discrimination, and abusive products.

Selected policy levers

- Offer free, voluntary reporting of positive rent payments to major credit bureaus with clear consent, dispute, and correction protections.
- Expand responsible ITIN-based access to bank accounts, credit, mortgages, and business financing.
- Encourage credit systems to consider additional evidence of financial responsibility such as rent, utilities, and telecommunications.
- Strengthen enforcement against discriminatory lending, hidden or excessive fees, and abusive products.
- Invest in trusted community-based financial coaching, credit building, fraud prevention, Spanish-language warnings, reporting systems, and victim assistance.

Measures of progress

- Credit access and cost by race/ethnicity and gender
- Share of renters benefiting from positive rent reporting
- Access to mainstream products among ITIN holders
- Fraud losses and successful consumer remediation

Priority 7: Make Higher Education Pay Off

Primary economic goal: Increase Latina income and ownership

Outcome: Degrees and credentials translate into completion, stronger earnings, career mobility, and the ability to build wealth.

What needs to change

- Direct more students toward programs with strong economic outcomes.
- Reduce financial and caregiving barriers that interrupt completion.
- Hold institutions accountable for what happens after enrollment.

Selected policy levers

- Increase investment in Hispanic-Serving Institutions and other Minority Serving Institutions, especially programs connected to high-demand careers.
- Expand need-based aid and reduce unmet financial need for low- and middle-income students.
- Build dedicated pipelines into STEM, healthcare, AI, and other high-growth fields through scholarships, paid internships, research opportunities, mentorship, and employer partnerships.
- Strengthen community-college transfer pathways and support student parents with child care and basic-needs assistance.
- Require colleges receiving federal aid to publish completion, debt, earnings, and employment outcomes by race, ethnicity, gender, program, and credential.

Measures of progress

- Completion and transfer rates
- Debt at completion
- Employment and earnings by field of study
- Latina representation in high-growth degree and career pathways

Priority 8: Build Wealth That Lasts

Primary economic goal: Protect wealth from extraction and loss

Outcome: A lifetime of work results in retirement security and assets that can be preserved and passed to the next generation.

What needs to change

- Expand retirement coverage for workers excluded from employer plans.
- Recognize the long-term economic cost of unpaid caregiving.
- Help families preserve and transfer the assets they build.

Selected policy levers

- Protect core retirement and health programs that are central to economic security in older age.
- Create a universal, portable retirement savings option with automatic enrollment and worker opt-out for people without employer-sponsored plans, including gig, part-time, domestic, retail, and caregiving workers.
- Provide Social Security credits for significant periods spent providing unpaid family care.
- Expand refundable savings incentives and make it easier to direct tax refunds into retirement and long-term savings.
- Expand affordable estate-planning, beneficiary, will, trust, and probate assistance so families can preserve and transfer assets.

Measures of progress

- Retirement-plan coverage and balances
- Retirement income
- Caregiving-related gaps in lifetime earnings and benefits
- Asset retention and successful intergenerational transfer

Priority 9: Turn Legal Status Into Economic Opportunity

Primary economic goal: Increase income and ownership + protect wealth

Outcome: Immigration status is less likely to block workers and families from employment mobility, financial access, professional advancement, ownership, and asset preservation.

What needs to change

- Increase stability and labor-market mobility.
- Expand access to mainstream economic and financial systems.
- Protect family assets and economic security when immigration enforcement affects a household.

Selected policy levers

- Create pathways to legal status and citizenship for long-term undocumented immigrants who meet applicable eligibility requirements.
- Expand stable work authorization so workers can change employers and participate fully in the formal labor market.
- Expand responsible ITIN-based access to banking, credit, mortgages, entrepreneurship programs, and other wealth-building tools.
- Create faster and more affordable pathways for qualified internationally trained workers to have credentials recognized.
- Protect homes, businesses, earned wages, bank accounts, and other family assets through appropriate due-process safeguards and access to affordable legal services.

Measures of progress

- Employment and earnings by immigration/status category where lawful data are available
- Professional credential recognition and licensing outcomes
- Access to banking, credit, mortgages, and business capital
- Household asset loss associated with immigration enforcement

Priority 10: Make Institutions Fair and Accountable

Primary economic goal: Build systems that recognize and respond to the lived experiences of Latinas

Outcome: Public and private institutions can demonstrate, with transparent data and enforceable standards, whether Latinas are gaining access to pay, promotion, capital, contracts, leadership, and economic opportunity.

What needs to change

- Keep disparities visible through disaggregated data.
- Strengthen enforcement of existing rights and protections.
- Measure institutional outcomes rather than relying on statements of intent.

Selected policy levers

- Strengthen civil-rights enforcement related to workplace discrimination, pay inequity, retaliation, and barriers to promotion.
- Expand pay transparency and pay-equity reviews so organizations can identify and address unjustified disparities.
- States should strengthen enforcement of pay data reporting, as California did with SB 1237, which raises penalties for large employers that repeatedly fail to report pay by race, ethnicity, and sex.³
- Protect the collection and public reporting of disaggregated data by race, ethnicity, gender, and national origin.
- Require greater transparency regarding leadership, promotion, lending, and procurement outcomes.
- Use defined outcome measures and corrective-action processes for major policies and programs with significant economic consequences.

Measures of progress

- Pay and promotion gaps
- Latina representation in leadership
- Lending and procurement outcomes
- Availability and quality of disaggregated public data

³Senate Bill 1237 (Blakespear), Chapter 1019, Statutes of 2026, amending California Government Code Section 12999. Signed September 30, 2026; effective January 1, 2027.

Who Must Act



No single institution controls economic power. Government writes rules and allocates resources; employers shape wages and advancement; financial institutions influence access to capital; colleges and workforce institutions shape career pathways; philanthropy supports ideas, organizations, and movements; and community organizations help ensure policies are informed by lived experience and implemented effectively.

Federal, state, and local governments. Use legislation, budgets, enforcement, procurement, data collection, and public programs to expand opportunity and measure whether results are reaching Latinas.

Employers and corporations. Provide family-supporting jobs, reduce unnecessary barriers to advancement, prepare workers for technological change, examine pay and promotion outcomes, and expand leadership and procurement opportunities.

Banks, lenders, investors, and fintech companies. Expand responsible access to credit, mortgages, business capital, savings, and investment products while identifying and addressing discriminatory or exclusionary outcomes.

Colleges, universities, and workforce institutions. Measure success by completion, employment, earnings, advancement, and entry into growing industries, not only enrollment or program participation.

Philanthropy. Invest in the research, policy development, organizing, advocacy, communications, legal capacity, leadership development, and community institutions needed to change systems and help individuals navigate them.

Community organizations and Latina leaders. Help shape priorities, identify implementation barriers, reach families, and participate in decision-making early enough to influence policy design and accountability.

Conclusion: From Contribution to Economic Power

Latinas are already working, studying, caregiving, starting businesses, buying homes, supporting families, paying taxes, and contributing to America's prosperity. This agenda set out to do more than document the barriers they face. It has identified the economic outcomes that should change and offered institutions a practical framework for acting on them.

No single law, program, employer practice, or financial product will close the Latina wealth gap, and the policy levers described here are not the only ones available. Different institutions and jurisdictions will use different tools. What should stay constant is the direction: lower the cost of economic survival, increase income and ownership, protect wealth from extraction and loss, and build systems that recognize and respond to Latinas.

The measure of this agenda is progress that can be shown, whether or not every recommendation is adopted. Are families keeping more of what they earn? Are more Latinas entering higher-paying careers and owning homes and businesses? Are financial systems rewarding responsible behavior? Are families retaining and transferring assets? Are new technologies expanding opportunity without reproducing old exclusions? Are institutions measuring outcomes and correcting persistent gaps?

These questions are nonpartisan, and everyone should adopt them: policymakers of any party, employers, lenders, funders, and community institutions. Replace "Latinas" with any group of working people, and the questions still hold. They are the questions we should be asking for every American, and an economy that answers them well for Latinas will work better for everyone.

The work ahead is to make sure that what Latinas contribute comes back to them as ownership, security, wealth, and economic power.

Visit us at LatinoProsperity.org to learn more about our work.