The State of Latinas in Corporate America
About the report

The State of Latinas in Corporate America draws heavily on Lean In and McKinsey & Company’s annual Women in the Workplace study. Since 2015, more than 590 companies employing more than 22 million people, along with a quarter of a million individual employees, have participated in Women in the Workplace. To our knowledge, this makes it the largest study on the state of women—and Latinas in particular—in corporate America. This report primarily highlights data from the 2019–2023 Women in the Workplace studies. It also draws on an analysis of in-depth interviews conducted between 2021 and 2024 with more than two dozen Latinas; the findings from this analysis are featured in the “Beyond the Numbers” report sections. A brain trust of external experts on Latinas’ workplace experiences—in addition to an internal team of Lean In employees who identify as Latina—were consulted in the writing of the report.
INTRODUCTION

Latinas lose the most ground across the corporate pipeline

The last five years of Lean In’s research on the state of women at work reveal a disturbing trend: Latinas face the steepest climb up the corporate ladder and end up the most underrepresented of all groups of employees in the C-suite. Despite this reality, they remain highly ambitious and increasingly committed to advancing.

This report offers an in-depth look at the distinct, compounding obstacles Latinas face at work. It also provides specific actions companies should take to ensure Latinas are given equal opportunities to grow, develop, and lead their organizations into the future.
PART 1

Latinas face the biggest drop in representation from entry level to the C-suite
Latinas start—and end—their careers significantly underrepresented

Latinas enter the corporate workforce at a disadvantage. There are roughly half as many Latinas at the entry level as in the general population: Latinas make up over 9 percent of the population but just under 5 percent of entry-level workers. This scarcity of Latinas at the entry level makes them the most underrepresented of any group of women at the beginning of their careers.

From there, Latinas face the steepest climb up the corporate ladder—or the biggest drop in representation from entry level to the C-suite. As a result, they end up the least represented at the top: only 1 percent of C-suite executives are Latina.

If this trend continues, Latinas will not be able to catch up to other groups of women—let alone men—in leadership roles and will remain the most underrepresented group at the highest levels of corporate America.
Latinas lose the most ground from the beginning to the end of the pipeline

Between the entry level and the C-suite, white men’s representation increases by 64 percent while Latinas’ decreases by 78 percent—the most of any group.

Proportional difference in representation from entry level to C-suite at the start of 2023:

- White Men: +64%
- Asian Men: +15%
- Black Men: -12%
- Latinos: -47%
- White Women: -24%
- Asian Women: -69%
- Black Women: -48%
- Latinas: -78%
Latinas experience a broken rung at the initial step up to manager

As Latinas move through a challenging corporate pipeline, they are particularly overlooked at two points. Alongside Black women, they experience the most significant “broken rung” at the critical initial step up to management. For every 100 men promoted from entry level to manager, only 74 Latinas are promoted. As a result, there are far fewer Latinas to promote at every subsequent level and their representation dwindles from there.

Latinas are not to blame for the broken rung. Entry-level Latinas ask for promotions as often as men do. They are also no more likely to leave their companies: in 2023, 16% of entry-level Latinas chose to leave, compared to 17% of men at the same level.7

LATINAS ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE PROMOTED TO MANAGER THAN MOST OTHER GROUPS

Ratio of promotions to manager for men vs. white women, Asian women, Black women, and Latinas, 2019–2023, assuming equal numbers of each group8

For every 100 men promoted to manager, fewer Latinas are promoted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Men Overall</th>
<th>White Women</th>
<th>Asian Women</th>
<th>Black Women</th>
<th>Latinas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5-year average: 89 for Men Overall, 91 for White Women, 89 for Asian Women, and 54 for Black Women; 76 for Latinas.
A second hurdle stands in Latinas’ way just when the C-suite is within reach

Later, at the critical step into senior leadership, Latinas face another barrier: alongside Asian women, Latinas have the lowest promotion rates of any group of women from director to VP. For every 100 men promoted to VP, 90 Latinas are promoted. This holds Latinas back at a key moment when the C-suite is finally in view.

Together, these two obstacles—the first preventing Latinas from entering management and the second preventing them from entering senior leadership—make it nearly impossible for Latinas to gain ground at the highest levels of corporate America.

LATINAS ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE PROMOTED TO VP

Ratio of promotions to VP for men vs. white women, Asian women, Black women, and Latinas, 2019–2023, assuming equal numbers of each group

For every 100 men promoted to VP, fewer Latinas are promoted
Latinas in the U.S. experience the widest pay gap

Across the entire U.S. workforce, Latinas experience the largest pay gap of any group of women: they earn a mere 52 cents for every dollar a non-Hispanic white man earns.\(^{10}\)

This pay gap is often largely attributed to Latinas working in jobs and industries that pay less.\(^{11}\) But even within corporate America, there are signs that the pay gap remains the widest for Latinas: an analysis of U.S. census data shows that Latinas working in business and finance earn 36 percent less than white men—the least of any group of employees.\(^{12}\)

Our Women in the Workplace data also reveal inequalities in pay. Despite historically asking for raises just as often as other women, Latinas are less likely to receive them. For example, only 1 in 4 reported receiving a raise in 2023, compared to 1 in 3 women overall.\(^{13}\)

**THE PAY GAP IN MANAGEMENT, BUSINESS, AND FINANCE ROLES IS WIDEST FOR LATINAS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Men Overall</th>
<th>Asian Women</th>
<th>White Women</th>
<th>Black Women</th>
<th>Latinas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$0.83</td>
<td>$0.78</td>
<td>$0.66</td>
<td>$0.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pay gap has a devastating, cumulative impact on Latinas’ earnings and wealth: Latinas miss out on nearly $1.2 million in lifetime earnings and have an average net worth that is less than 1% of the average white man’s.\(^{15}\)
Performance bias harms Latinas’ advancement

HOW IT CAN SHOW UP AT WORK

In a meeting about promotions, a colleague questions whether a Latina employee has the skills for a manager role.

THE BIAS BEHIND IT

Performance bias is based on deeply rooted—and incorrect—assumptions about people’s abilities. For example, women are often stereotyped as less competent than men, and Latino/a people tend to be stereotyped as less skilled than white people. Latinas face a compounding version of these biases, which makes it harder for them to get hired and promoted.16

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Start by asking your colleague for concrete examples of why they don’t think your Latina coworker has the right skills. If your colleague doesn’t offer enough evidence, you can say something like, “It sounds as though she has the skills that she needs to me.” You can also check her skill set against the list of criteria for the promotion. If she meets all or most of those listed, that can help settle the matter. And if there aren’t clear criteria in place, you can recommend the team spends time establishing specific requirements for the role, which will help minimize subjective judgments about who should be promoted.

Go to Lean In's 50 Ways to Fight Bias Program to learn more.
IN THEIR WORDS

“
It’s disheartening to be part of an organization for as many years as I have and still not see another person who looks like me. I won’t feel like I belong until I see somebody like me in the C-suite.”

—LATINA, MANAGER

“I have an undergrad in finance, two master’s degrees, and an MBA. And I’m still only at the analyst level. It’s hard. They don’t see my value.”

—LATINA, ENTRY LEVEL

“I realized that I needed to become the change I wanted to see. If I don’t get to the top, then who knows how many women, and in particular Latinas, behind me will never see themselves in leadership.”

—LATINA, MANAGER

“If all your senior leaders are men, it tells me there is an unspoken ceiling.”

—LATINA, ENTRY LEVEL
Latinas remain highly ambitious despite getting less support to advance
Latinas are motivated to reach the top

Latinas remain ambitious despite their low representation across the pipeline. In fact, Latinas remain deeply motivated to ascend the corporate ranks: they are more interested in being promoted to the next level and in becoming senior leaders than white women and women overall. These ambitions are also growing at an outsized rate: Latinas are more likely to say that advancement has increased in importance to them in recent years.

Latina job seekers also prioritize career advancement. When considering moving to a new employer or leaving their current one, a third of Latinas say that the ability to get promoted matters most to them, compared to a fourth of white women.18

**LATINAS ARE MORE INTERESTED IN ADVANCING THAN WHITE WOMEN AND WOMEN OVERALL**

% of Latinas, white women, and women overall who said that they are interested in getting promoted to the next level and in being a senior leader and that advancement has become more important to them over the last two years19

- **Interested in getting promoted to the next level**
  - Latinas: 87%
  - Women Overall: 81%
  - White Women: 78%

- **Interested in being a senior leader**
  - Latinas: 71%
  - Women Overall: 59%
  - White Women: 63%

- **Advancement has become more important over the past two years**
  - Latinas: 32%
  - Women Overall: 36%
  - White Women: 44%
Latinas’ strong ambitions can go unrecognized in the workplace

Latinas’ high ambitions are underpinned by Hispanic cultural norms that emphasize a strong work ethic and company loyalty. As one Latina shared, “Latino culture really does teach you how to work hard—to come in first, stay the latest, and really accomplish more.”

But other cultural norms—particularly those around gratitude and “keeping one’s head down” at work—can make it harder for Latinas to engage in workplace behaviors important to getting ahead, including promoting their accomplishments and vocalizing their desires to advance. To get ahead at work, one Latina explained, “you have to brag about yourself. You have to sell yourself. You have to put yourself out there.” Yet these actions often feel inauthentic to many Latinas.

Understanding these cultural norms—and not mistaking them for a lack of ambition or drive—is important for companies committed to retaining and advancing Latinas.
A lack of support makes it harder for Latinas to get ahead

Despite being ambitious, Latinas receive less of the encouragement and recognition critical to getting ahead at work. Latinas are less likely to have senior colleagues advocate for them and celebrate their accomplishments.

Manager support is also crucial to advancement, yet Latinas are less likely to have their managers invest in them professionally. They are also less likely to say that their managers ensure they get credit for their work and show interest in their career advancement.

LATINAS RECEIVE LESS SUPPORT FROM MORE SENIOR COLLEAGUES AND MANAGERS THAN WHITE WOMEN AND WOMEN OVERALL

% of Latinas, white women, and women overall who have had their manager or someone in a more senior position take action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supportive actions taken by a more senior colleague</th>
<th>Supportive actions taken by a manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publicly praised them for their skills or accomplishments</td>
<td>Ensured they got credit for their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocated for a compensation increase for them</td>
<td>Showed interest in their career advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Affinity bias makes sponsorship challenging for Latinas

Sponsorship helps drive career advancement. But throughout their careers, Latinas often miss out on sponsorship opportunities. Because leaders are more likely to sponsor junior colleagues with shared identities—due to what social scientists call “affinity bias”—a scarcity of Latinas in leadership decreases Latinas’ likelihood of finding sponsors and has a negative impact on their rate of advancement. "I wanted a Latina executive who could serve as a mentor, coach, [or] sponsor to me,” shares one Latina. “I looked within my own company and couldn’t find it.”

The few Latinas who make it to the top also face increased pressure to be the sponsors they never had. “I wanted to open the door for other women, especially Latina women, who would want to climb the ladder,” shared one woman who was the first Latina at her company to become executive director. Yet such efforts are not always recognized. As a result, while serving as a sponsor can feel rewarding to Latinas, the pressure to do so can also be an additional burden for those already navigating a challenging climb up the corporate ladder.

A sponsor is a colleague who takes active steps to advance a more junior employee’s career. This can include ensuring the employee’s contributions are noticed, championing their talents to others, and helping them land high-visibility opportunities that are key to getting promoted.
IN THEIR WORDS

“
It feels like the goalposts are moving around me. The fact that I can’t say whether or not I’m going to be promoted—it’s frustrating.”

—LATINA, MANAGER

“
When I told my manager I was going to need time off to have my third child, he actually said, ‘You already have two kids. Why do you want three?’ He was trying to coach me out of taking time off and having a third kid. If he thinks that way, I’m sure there are other implications for how he thinks of my career.”

—LATINA, VICE PRESIDENT

“
I’m in the game to find my next boss, not my next job. It’s the person who will invest in me, who will be my sponsor, and who will challenge me.”

—LATINA, SENIOR MANAGER
PART 3

A crucial benefit remains out of reach for many Latinas: Flexibility
Working flexibly is often not an option for Latinas

Workplace flexibility can support employees’ ambitions: a majority of women and men who work flexibly point to greater productivity and feeling less tired and burned out as primary benefits.\textsuperscript{29}

Yet Latinas have less access to flexibility than most. They are less able to choose where and when they work or take time away from their job to deal with life events.

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**LATINAS HAVE LESS WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY THAN WHITE WOMEN AND WOMEN OVERALL**

\textsuperscript{30} % of Latinas, white women, and women overall who have “a lot” or “almost total” flexibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have the flexibility to ...</th>
<th>WHITE WOMEN</th>
<th>WOMEN OVERALL</th>
<th>LATINAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... work remotely</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... set their own hours</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... step away from work to deal with unexpected events</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... take time off for family or personal reasons</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Manager actions further limit Latinas’ workplace flexibility

Even when Latinas have flexibility, they don’t always feel they can use it: only 1 in 4 say it’s “no big deal” to take advantage of opportunities to work flexibly compared to 1 in 3 women overall.31

Manager actions may contribute to this sentiment. Latinas are less likely to say that their manager focuses on results rather than where and when work gets done. And fewer Latinas have managers who trust them to get their work done without micromanaging. Unsurprisingly, Latinas who are micromanaged by their managers also report having the least amount of flexibility.32

MANAGERS HAVE LESS CONFIDENCE IN LATINAS THAN IN WHITE WOMEN AND WOMEN OVERALL33

% of Latinas, white women, and women overall whose managers consistently perform these actions34

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WHITE WOMEN</th>
<th>WOMEN OVERALL</th>
<th>LATINAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager focuses on results</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instead of where and when work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gets done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager trusts work will get</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>done without micromanaging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In the face of obstacles,Latinas remain highly committed to work and family

For working Latinas, the importance of family within Hispanic culture can be both an asset and a challenge. On the one hand, family often serves as a source of professional strength. Latinas’ extended families provide critical support at home that allows them to put in the time and effort to get recognized at work. “There’s no way that I could have done this without my family,” shares one Latina director about her ascent up the corporate ladder while raising children. “My sisters dropped off my laundry and my mom dropped off food. They saved me time because they knew that’s what I didn’t have.”

On the other hand, a strong cultural focus on family can also create additional responsibilities: compared to white women, Latinas spend more daily hours on housework and caregiving and are more likely to be on “double duty”—or caring for children and an adult, such as an elderly family member. “A lot of us play really large roles in our family that we can’t necessarily drop,” one Latina explains, “but we also need to work to have a roof over our heads and put food in our mouths.” Because of this, Latinas share that workplace flexibility—and manager support for that flexibility—is critical to achieve their ambitions.
Maternal bias can hurt Latinas at work

HOW IT CAN SHOW UP AT WORK

In a meeting about hiring for a senior role that requires travel, a coworker questions whether a Latina would want to be away from her family that much.

THE BIAS BEHIND IT

Because Latinas are often perceived as highly committed to their families, coworkers can mistakenly assume that when Latinas have children, they will be less committed to their careers. This is a form of “maternal bias”—or the belief that mothers are less devoted to their jobs than non-mothers. Maternal bias can lead managers to assume a Latina isn’t up for a challenging assignment or traveling for work. This can result in Latinas getting unintentionally passed over for important advancement opportunities.38

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Ask the coworker who made the comment, “What makes you think that?” A probing question like this can help people see their biased thinking. You can also explain that Latinas often experience judgments of this kind, as they tend to be stereotyped as less career-oriented.39 Or you can recommend asking all of the candidates for the role how they feel about the travel requirements and let them speak for themselves.

Go to Lean In’s 50 Ways to Fight Bias Program to learn more.
PART 4

Microaggressions further disadvantage Latinas in the workplace
Latina Onlys face more microaggressions at work

Latinas are more likely to be “Onlys”—often the only or one of the only people with their racial identity in the room at work.\(^40\) Thirty-seven percent of Latinas say they are Onlys, compared to 13 percent of women overall.\(^41\) And Latina Onlys have profoundly more difficult workplace experiences.

Latina Onlys encounter more microaggressions: 74 percent have experienced microaggressions at work compared to 58 percent of women overall.\(^42\) In particular, Latina Onlys are more than twice as likely to have a coworker express surprise at their language skills or overhear negative comments about their culture. And they are more likely to feel pressure at work to speak on behalf of all Latinas.

**Microaggressions** are demeaning or dismissive comments and actions—rooted in bias—directed at a person because of their gender, race, or other aspects of their identity.

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**LATINA ONLYS EXPERIENCE CERTAIN MICROAGGRESSIONS MORE OFTEN THAN WHITE WOMEN AND WOMEN OVERALL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microaggression</th>
<th>% of white women</th>
<th>% of women overall</th>
<th>% of Latina Onlys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hear someone express surprise at their language skills or other abilities</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hear or overhear insults about their culture or people like them</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel like they are expected to speak on behalf of all people with their identity</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Ongoing microaggressions lead to negative outcomes for Latina Onlys

There are signs that these negative experiences take a heavy toll. Latina Onlys who experience microaggressions are more likely than Latina Onlys who do not to feel burned out at work and less likely to feel they have an equal opportunity for advancement. They are more than twice as likely to have considered leaving their organization or taking a job at another company with a different work culture.

**Comparison of negative outcomes for Latina Onlys who experience microaggressions compared to Latina Onlys who do not**

- Latina Onlys who experience microaggressions are 2.6x more likely to almost always feel burned out at work.
- 2.7x more likely to feel they don’t have an equal opportunity to advance.
- 46% more likely to consider leaving their company.
- 42% more likely to consider taking a job at a different company with a different work culture.
Colorism impacts Latinas’ workplace experiences and advancement

Latinas’ career paths are often shaped by colorism, a bias that favors people with lighter skin, straighter hair, and more European features.\(^4^6\) Colorism leads Latinas who have darker skin, look more indigenous, or identify as Afro-Latina to encounter more harmful versions of the stereotypes facing all Latinas—making it even harder for them to get ahead.\(^4^7\) For instance, they may have their competence questioned more or be perceived as more junior than they are. By contrast, Latinas who present as white can face different challenges, like colleagues questioning their Latina identity.\(^4^8\) It’s helpful for managers to look out for and address colorism on their teams. This can start with managers educating themselves on how colorism can show up in the workplace.
Latinas feel pressure to change who they are to succeed at work

For Latinas, bringing their whole selves to work doesn’t always feel like an option. Many report instances where speaking with an accent or wearing a piece of colorful clothing resulted in a microaggression, such as a colleague implying they were unprofessional or mistaking them for someone more junior. One Latina shared that unless she wore “overly professional” clothes to work, she would often be “confused for being the secretary.”

To protect themselves and get ahead, Latinas discuss intentionally changing how they present themselves—most often to “blend in” with their white colleagues. “I felt that the only way I could climb the ladder was to do everything I possibly could to assimilate,” shares a Latina executive. “I would watch how the [women] leaders would dress and communicate. I felt I needed to look and sound like that.” While these efforts can help fend off microaggressions, they can also increase burnout and decrease well-being over time.49
Microaggressions against Latinas are fueled by stereotypes

HOW IT CAN SHOW UP AT WORK

In a meeting, a colleague says to a Latina, “I can see you’re getting fired up,” when she has been speaking firmly but calmly.

THE BIAS BEHIND IT

Decades of social science research show how stereotypes make the workplace more challenging for Latinas. For example, Latinas can be inaccurately typecast as loud or feisty. This means that when they speak up at work, they may be undermined by being labeled as heated and emotional. Employees may feel additionally empowered to criticize Latinas’ demeanor because of stereotypes that link Latinas to lower-status domestic work. As a result, colleagues are more likely to mistake Latinas for someone more junior, give them unsolicited advice on how to look and act, or assign them office housework such as taking notes or making coffee.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Speak up in the moment and say you’d like to hear your colleague’s point of view. If you feel comfortable, you can also push back on the suggestion that she’s too emotional or irrational. For instance, you could say, “[Name] doesn’t seem heated to me. I think she’s making some great points.”

Go to Lean In’s 50 Ways to Fight Bias Program to learn more.
IN THEIR WORDS

“I’m a woman, I have a physical disability, I’m Black and Latina. I get hit in all of these different ways. You learn to guard yourself and arm yourself so that you can get up every day, move forward, and contribute in the way you desire to your field or society.”

—LATINA, C-SUITE EXECUTIVE

“I've been told that it’s because of my ethnicity that an opportunity has come my way. I’ve been made to feel like I helped fill a quota. That was not a fun experience.”

—LATINA, MANAGER

“When I first started my career, I was told to work on diversity and inclusion. They told me the reason was because I was the only Hispanic on the team. It was an assumption that the one Latina was probably going to want to do this kind of work. That did not feel great.”

—LATINA, MANAGER

“I’ve experienced microaggressions for a long time. You become a chameleon to fit in rather than getting angry.”

—LATINA, C-SUITE EXECUTIVE
PART 5

How companies can make Latinas’ success a priority
Tackle the pipeline barriers that hold Latinas back

Companies would benefit from increasing their focus on advancing Latinas, who face an especially steep path to senior leadership. Here are three ways to get started:

1. **Track key outcomes and metrics by gender and race**

   Even today, many companies don’t take an intersectional approach to internal metrics, which means Latinas are effectively invisible in the data. To rectify this, companies should track key outcomes like hiring, promotions, and attrition rates by both gender and race, so they can see how Latinas are moving through their pipeline. The same rigor should be applied to tracking access to mentorship, sponsorship, and other professional development programs. If Latinas aren’t receiving equal access to these opportunities, companies need to figure out why and work to make them more inclusive.

2. **Widen your talent pool to include more Latinas**

   From entry level to the C-suite, Latinas are underrepresented across the pipeline. Here are three steps companies can take to recruit more Latinas at all levels:

   1. **Expand recruiting efforts** by proactively seeking candidates from Hispanic-serving colleges and professional organizations.

   2. **Think critically about the necessary qualifications for open roles.** As one example, research shows that removing education requirements that are not essential can lead to more diverse slates of qualified candidates.

   3. **Make sure the hiring process is not inadvertently deterring talented Latinas.** This can include using software that ensures job descriptions are welcoming to all groups and, when possible, including Latinas in the interview process.
Address the biases Latinas face in hiring and promotions

Latinas experience unique biases that make it harder for them to be hired and promoted. For example, they are often stereotyped as being less interested in and less well suited for managerial and leadership roles.\textsuperscript{57} To support Latinas’ advancement, companies need to prioritize debiasing these processes:

- **Make employee evaluations less subjective**—for example, by using a numeric rating system and avoiding open-ended questions on employees’ performance. Research shows that both actions are highly effective at minimizing the bias in evaluations.\textsuperscript{58}

- **Send “bias reminders” before every review cycle or hiring process** explaining how biased thinking unfairly impacts decision-making.\textsuperscript{59}

- **Include a “bias monitor” in meetings where candidates are discussed** to avoid subjective evaluations and keep conversations focused on the core criteria for the role.\textsuperscript{60}
SECTION 2

Increase the focus on sponsorship for Latinas

Sponsorship accelerates careers. But while 3 in 4 companies offer formal mentorship and sponsorship programs, only 1 in 3 Latinas have an active sponsor. This gap points to the need for employers to increase Latinas’ access to these programs. For example, companies can survey Latinas to understand what’s getting in the way of participation and then adjust programs as needed. In addition, organizations should make sure leaders and managers understand Latinas’ need for more sponsorship.

Since Latinas are less likely to have the senior-level networks that lead to sponsorship, companies should also foster informal sponsor relationships. One way to do this is to stage regular virtual and in-person networking events with the explicit goal of connecting junior- and senior-level employees.

In addition to increasing Latinas’ access to sponsors, companies should also take steps to make these relationships as helpful and effective as possible. This can entail training sponsors so they understand the types of support Latinas most need to be successful. An effective sponsor can hold any identity—what matters is that they have influence and network to advocate for their sponsee.
Ensure Latinas have equal access to flexibility

As flexible work arrangements become more common, companies need to ensure Latinas get the same access to these options and feel they can take advantage of them. This is especially critical because Latinas may be less comfortable than other employees working in this way. Here are three steps to get started:

1. **Make sure employees know what kinds of flexibility are acceptable**
   Employers need to regularly communicate what flexible work options are available so that all employees are clear on when it's okay to use them. This could include articulating organization-wide norms related to working hours and responding to messages outside of the regular workday. Alternatively, companies can encourage managers to establish and clearly communicate policies that best suit their own teams.

2. **Create a culture that embraces flexibility**
   Companies that offer flexible work options need to normalize these arrangements. One way to do this is by adjusting the performance review process to make clear that it's the quality of work that matters, not hours worked or time spent on-site. As part of this effort, HR should make sure managers know that company leadership is focused on results, not long working hours. Managers also need to be aware that Latinas may be particularly worried about negative consequences for flexible work. That way, management can take extra steps to make sure Latinas feel supported when they work flexibly.

3. **Track performance outcomes by work arrangement**
   Companies should take steps to make sure employees are not being penalized for working flexibly. This entails regularly reviewing data on performance ratings and promotions for remote, hybrid, and on-site workers to see whether employees are being assessed fairly regardless of when and where they work. If the data show inequities, employers should take action to fix them.
Foster inclusion for Latinas

Latinas face day-to-day workplace interactions that can make them feel like outsiders. To counteract this, companies should double down on efforts to foster a true climate of belonging for all employees, Latinas included. Here are three ways to do this:

1. **Train employees to foster a climate of inclusion**
   
   For inclusive behavior to become an everyday norm, all employees need high-quality training on interrupting bias and practicing allyship.\(^6\) It can be particularly effective to pair these two kinds of programming: bias training teaches employees how to recognize and counteract bad behavior, while allyship training teaches them how to proactively support their coworkers. To be effective, trainings should be research-based and highly actionable, meaning that employees should come away from them with numerous practical tools and concrete plans to implement them. These trainings can especially benefit managers, given that they set the tone for their team and play an important role in employee development and advancement.

2. **Formalize company commitment to an inclusive culture**

   Companies need to share their vision for a positive culture with all employees so everyone can work toward it. This should be written into a code of conduct or set of corporate values and reinforced in company-wide statements by senior leadership. Whatever the format, employers need to clearly articulate expectations for respectful and inclusive behavior. To make sure employees know what this means in concrete terms, it’s also vital to provide examples of respectful and disrespectful behavior, along with clear statements that disrespect is not okay.\(^7\)

3. **Improve the Only experience for Latinas**

   To combat the isolation that Onlys can face, companies need to help Latinas build connections. For example, employers can fund mentorship programs, ERGs, and Latinas’ attendance at Latino/a-focused conferences and networking events. Research shows that when employees connect with others who share their identity over workplace experiences, it can increase job satisfaction and engagement.\(^8\)
Acknowledgments

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR COMPANIES

Lean In offers DEI programs used by thousands of organizations worldwide to support and advance women.

Lean In Circles combine a world-class leadership curriculum designed specifically for women with the power of small groups coming together to learn and support each other. Our Circles curriculum builds key skills like negotiating and getting the recognition you deserve, and it includes playlists designed for specific identity groups, such as Leadership Fundamentals for Latinas.

50 Ways to Fight Bias training takes the guesswork out of challenging bias. It includes seven in-depth explanations of the workplace biases that Latinas face and offers data-driven recommendations for what to say and do. Allyship at Work empowers all employees to show up as allies for coworkers with less privilege, including Latinas.

Find out why organizations like Adidas, Sony Music Group, and Walmart are using our free programs and how you can bring them to your company at leanin.org/partner.
1. The qualitative analysis for this report is based on in-depth interviews conducted between 2021 and 2024 with 26 Latinas working across roles, levels, and companies in the private sector.

2. Based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, “2023 Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022 (NC-EST2022-SR11h),” https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-national-detail.html. Pipeline data in comparison includes companies from both the U.S. and Canada; additional analysis of combined data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Statistique Canada was performed to confirm that findings hold when looking at combined U.S. and Canadian populations.

3. In this report, “any group of women” includes only groups making up more than 2 percent of the U.S. population: Asian women, Black women, white women, and Latinas.

4. In this report, “steepest climb” or “steepest path” are defined as the largest drop in representation from entry level to the C-suite.


9. Ibid.

10. Anwesha Majumder, National Partnership for Women and Families, personal communication, February 2024. The data for women of different races and ethnicities is calculated to include women who worked part-time or for part of the year. The number of all women is based only on women who worked all year. When you include workers who worked part-time or part of the year, you get more inclusive and accurate numbers because many of the same reasons that lead to the wage gap also lead to women being more likely to work part-time or for only part of the year.


17. This section contains findings from our qualitative analysis.

Endnotes

21. This section contains findings from our qualitative analysis.
25. Affinity bias is not the only reason for a lack of sponsors. Even if affinity bias were eliminated, Latinas would still have less access to casual sponsorship as they are less likely than other groups to have attended prestigious colleges or have family connections that offer access to more senior-level professionals. Miller McPherson, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and James M. Cook, “Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks,” Annual Review of Sociology 27 (2001): 415–44, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2678628; Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Noni Allwood, and Laura Sherbin, “U.S. Latinos Feel They Can’t Be Themselves at Work,” Harvard Business Review, October 11, 2016, https://hbr.org/2016/10/u-s-latinos-feel-they-cant-be-themselves-at-work.
26. This section contains findings from our qualitative analysis.
28. This section contains findings from our qualitative analysis.
32. Latinas with micromanaging supervisors (who don’t trust them to get their work done without micromanaging) are about 2x as likely to say they have almost no flexibility to work remotely (approximately 22 percent vs. 10 percent, 2.1x), to set their own work hours (32 percent vs. 19 percent; 1.7x), or to step away from work to deal with unexpected events (16 percent vs. 7 percent; 2.2x) compared to Latinas who do not have micromanaging managers. Multipliers are based on non-rounded data.
33. Although the finding on Latinas being micromanaged more frequently than women overall falls just within our 5 percent cutoff for notable differences, it is consistent with the broader trend of managers expressing less confidence in Latinas.
36. Forty-three percent of Latinas were spending five or more hours per day on housework and caregiving in 2021, compared to only 34 percent of women overall, and almost a third of Latinas are on “double duty”—caring for children and an adult, such as an elderly family member, LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company, Women in the Workplace 2021; Noe-Bustamante, Mukherjee, and Krogstad, “A Majority of Latinas Feel Pressure to Support Their Families or to Succeed at Work.”
Endnotes

37. This section contains findings from our qualitative analysis.


41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.


45. Respondents who noted that they don’t have an equal opportunity to advance selected “Strongly disagree” or “Somewhat disagree” in response to the question “How much do you agree with the following statements? Compared to my peers at this organization, I have an equal opportunity to advance.”

46. Margaret L. Hunter, *Race, Gender, and the Politics of Skin Tone* (New York: Routledge, 2005).


49. This section contains findings from our qualitative analysis.


52. This section contains findings from our qualitative analysis.

53. Before taking the steps recommended in this report, companies should seek legal counsel, as the law on diversity, equity, and inclusion practices is continuously evolving.


Endnotes


61. Hewlett, Forget a Mentor, Find a Sponsor.


64. This statement and related statements are based on in-depth interviews between 2021 and 2024 with 26 Latinas working in the private sector.


66. This statement and related statements are based on in-depth interviews between 2021 and 2024 with 26 Latinas working in the private sector.

67. Williams, Blair-Loy, and Berdahl, “Special Issue: The Flexibility Stigma.”

68. Ibid.


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