



Population Resource Center

*Providing the Demographic
Dimension of Public Policy*

Hispanic Heritage Month 2006

September 15- October 15

History

- National Hispanic Heritage Week was first authorized by Congress in 1968 to be the week including September 15 and 16. In 1988, Congress amended this resolution to establish Hispanic Heritage Month as the period from September 15 – October 15.
- September 15 marks the anniversary of the independence of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico gained independence on September 16 and Chile on September 18.

Population Profile

- The term "Hispanic" designates persons from Spanish-speaking countries and their descendants. Unlike those of other minority classifications in the United States, Hispanics do not belong to a specific racial category. A separate question on Hispanic origin first appeared in the census questionnaire in 1970.
- As of July 2005, there were an estimated 42.7 million Hispanics in the United States (not including the 3.9 million residents of Puerto Rico), making them the largest ethnic or racial minority, constituting 14 percent of the nation's total population. By comparison, African Americans constitute about 12 percent of the population and number approximately 35 million, while Asian-Americans represent about 4.5 percent of the population and total nearly 12.8 million.
- If current demographic trends continue, the Census Bureau projects that the Hispanic population of the United States will more than double to 102.6 million by 2050, or about 24 percent of the total population in that year.
- Hispanics are from a wide range of countries, but the largest group is from Mexico. In 2005, there were approximately 26.7 million Mexican Americans, representing about 62.5 percent of the total Hispanic population. The next largest groups were Hispanics from Puerto Rico, about 9 percent, Cuba, 3.5 percent, and El Salvador, 3 percent.
- The Hispanic population in 2005 was much younger with a median age of 27.2 years compared to the population as a whole at 36.2 years. About a third of the Hispanic population was under 18, compared with one-fourth of the total population. Additionally, about 22 percent of the population under age 5 was Hispanic.
- There were approximately 107 Hispanic males per every 100 females in 2005, compared to 97 males per every 100 females in the overall population.
- After English, Spanish is the most commonly spoken language in the United States. In 2005, about 31 million people over the age of five, a ratio of more than 1-in-10 US household residents, spoke Spanish at home.

Geographic Concentration

- Hispanics are largely concentrated in the South and West, and in a few large metropolitan regions (especially New York City and Chicago). California and Texas are home to nearly half, 49 percent, of the Hispanic population with 12.4 and 7.8 million residents, respectively.
- Five more states have Hispanic populations of one million or more: New York (3.1 million), Florida (3.0 million), Illinois (1.7 million), Arizona (1.5 million) and New Jersey (1.2 million).
- New Mexico has the highest percentage of Hispanics at 43 percent, followed by California and Texas at 35 percent each. Starr County, in Texas's Rio Grande Valley, is 97.5 percent Hispanic, the highest percentage of any county. The largest Hispanic population in a county is in Los Angeles County, CA (4.6 million). Miami-Dade, Harris (Houston) and Cook (Chicago) counties also boast Hispanic populations of over one million.
- Hispanics are more likely than the general population to live in metropolitan areas. In 2000, 91 percent of Hispanics lived in metropolitan areas, compared with 78 percent of non-Hispanic whites; 46 percent of Hispanics lived in central cities, compared with 22 percent of non-Hispanic whites. Of the ten largest cities in the U.S. in 2000, only two (Detroit and Philadelphia) were less than one-quarter Hispanic.
- The various Hispanic groups tend to be regionally concentrated. Mexican populations tend to be concentrated in the Southwest and Illinois, Puerto Rican populations in New York and Illinois, and Cuban populations in Florida.

Population Growth

- Hispanic Americans are the fastest growing minority group in the United States. The Hispanic population increased by 37 percent, from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000, compared with an increase of 13.2 percent for the total U.S. population. Between 2000 and 2005, the Hispanic population increased by 17 percent, adding another 7.4 million persons.
- Between July 1, 2004, and July 1, 2005 about 1 of every two people added to the nation's population were Hispanic, accounting for almost half (1.3 million, or 49 percent) of the national population growth of 2.8 million in that period. Of the increase of 1.3 million, 800,000 was because of natural increase (births minus deaths) and 500,000 was because of immigration.
- The Hispanic population grew by over 100 percent in 22 states between 1990 and 2000, including North Carolina (394 percent), Arkansas (337 percent), Georgia (300 percent), and Tennessee (278 percent). However, these large percentage increases represent only modest numerical gains, as the Hispanic populations in these areas had been small. The largest numerical increases occurred in California, Texas and Florida, which gained 3.3 million, 2.3 million and 1.1 million Hispanics respectively.
- Of the 72 cities with populations over 100,000 that grew by at least two percent between 1990 and 2000, 19 would have lost population if not for Hispanic growth, including Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, Miami and Boston.

Foreign-Born

- In March 2005, there were approximately 35 million foreign-born persons in the civilian non-institutionalized population in the United States, representing nearly 12 percent of the US population. Of these, nearly 53 percent, over 18 million people, were born in Latin America; Mexico alone is the country of birth for over 10 million of the foreign born.
- California, Florida, New York, and Texas were home to about 2 of every 3 foreign-born persons born in Latin America.
- Among the Latin American foreign-born, one in four are naturalized citizens.

Health and Fertility

- In 2004, fertility rates for Hispanic women were about 45 percent higher than those for non-Hispanic black women and Asian women (98 births per 1,000 for Hispanic women versus 67 births per 1,000 for black and Asian women), and more than 60 percent higher than those for women in all other racial and ethnic groups.
- Among Hispanic women, Mexican women have a much higher fertility rate than Puerto Rican and Cuban women (106 births per 1,000 compared with 62 births per 1,000 and 62 births per 1,000, respectively, in 2003, the latest year for which such data are available)
- Hispanics have the highest teenage pregnancy and birth rates of any racial or ethnic group. The Hispanic teenage pregnancy rate in 2000 (the latest year for which data are available) was 137.9 pregnancies per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19, compared with 83.6 for the overall U.S. teenage population. Similarly, Hispanics had the highest teenage birth rate in 2003, with 82.2 births per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19, although this is a 20 percent decline from 105 births per 1,000 in 1991. In comparison, the birth rate for teenagers of all backgrounds was 41.7 per 1,000; 27.5 for non-Hispanic white teens; 64.8 for African American teens; and, 18 for Asian teens.
- Hispanic teen birth rates differ dramatically by country of origin. In 2000, the birth rate for all Hispanics aged 15 to 19 was 87.3, while the birth rate for Mexican teens was 95.4. Puerto Ricans teens had the second highest birth rate with 82.9 births per 1,000, while Cuban teens had the lowest birth rate of 23.5.

Households and Families

- Of the 77 million families residing in the United States in 2005, about 9.5 million were Hispanic. Of these families, 67 percent, or 6.3 million, consisted of a married couple. About 44 percent of Hispanic married-couple families had children under the age of 18.
- About one-third of Hispanic households were headed by a single parent, compared to 20 percent of households of non-Hispanic whites. Among Hispanic groups, Puerto Rican households were the most likely to be single-parent homes (46 percent) while Cuban households were the least likely (23 percent).

Education

- Educational attainment of Hispanics has increased notably in the last 30 years. In 1970, only one-in-three Hispanics had earned high school degrees, while by 2004, 58 percent of Hispanics age 25 and older had at least a high school education. Similarly, in 1970 only four percent of the Hispanic population had graduated from college, but by 2004 that rate tripled. Despite these gains, these numbers still represent the lowest rates among all major racial and ethnic groups in the United States. For example, Hispanics only represented 11 percent of all college students in October 2004.

Income and Poverty (http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/income_wealth/005647.html)

- The real median household income for Hispanics in 2004 was \$34,241, unchanged from 2003. Black households had the lowest median income, \$30,134, while Asian households had the highest, \$57,518. Median income for non-Hispanic white households was \$48,977.
- In 2004, 21.9 percent of Hispanics lived below the poverty line. Over one-fourth (26 percent) of Puerto Ricans and 24 percent of Mexicans lived in poverty, compared to a lower percentage of Central and South Americans (17 percent) and Cubans (17 percent).

Employment

- In 2004, Hispanics had the highest labor force participation rates, 68 percent for persons 16 and over, of any race. Hispanic women, however, had the lowest participation rates at 56 percent, compared with 60 percent for non-Hispanic whites and 62 percent for black women.

- In 2004, about 25 percent of employed Hispanics worked in service occupations; 21 percent in sales and office jobs; 20 percent in moving; and, 15 percent in construction. Hispanics were less likely, 17 percent, than either white non-Hispanics, 40 percent, or blacks, 24 percent, to hold managerial and professional positions.
- In 2002 there were about 1.6 million Hispanic-owned businesses. The rate of growth for Hispanic-owned business has tripled between 1997 and 2002 (31 percent) compared to the national average (10 percent) for all businesses.
- In 2005, there were about 1.1 million Hispanic veterans of the US Armed Forces.

Politics

- Between the 1996 and 2000 Presidential elections, the number of Hispanic voters increased by 20 percent, to nearly six million voters. By the 2004 Presidential elections, the number of Hispanic voters increased to 7.6 million.
- While Hispanics constituted 8 percent of all potential voters in 2004, only 6 percent actually voted. A key to voter turnout is registration, with 82 percent of Hispanics registered to vote participating.
- Citizenship is also a major factor in the consideration of Hispanic voting rates. An estimated 41 percent of Hispanics were not citizens in 2004. Thus, the voting rate of Hispanics was about 28 percent of the voting-age population, but 47 percent of the voting-age citizen population.

This Fact Sheet was updated in August 2006. It is based on information from a number of sources, including the Centers for Disease Control, the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Population Reference Bureau, and *Social and Demographic Implications of Recent Demographic Trends* by Marta Tienda of Princeton University. For more information contact the Population Resource Center at (202) 467-5030, 1725 K Street NW, Suite 1102, Washington, DC