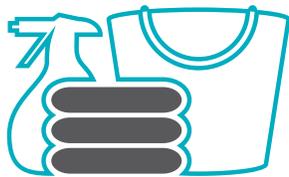


# Latino Unemployment Rate Remains High at 8.8%



**THE LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IS STILL ADDING JOBS EACH MONTH, BUT HAS NOT COME CLOSE TO MEETING PRE-PANDEMIC EMPLOYMENT LEVELS.**

With 271,000 jobs added in October, the leisure and hospitality industry is slowly recovering. Nearly 70% of the jobs added this month were in the food services and drinking places category—a sector consisting of 25% Latino workers. While this growth is good for Latinos and shows signs of recovery, 3.5 million jobs in the industry have not returned since February.

INDICATORS	National	Latinos
<b>Employed</b> • Working people over the age of 16, including those temporarily absent from their jobs	149.8 million	26.6 million
<b>Unemployed</b> • Those who are available to work, trying to find a job, or expect to be called back from a layoff but are not working	11 million	2.6 million
<b>Civilian Labor Force</b> • The sum of employed and unemployed people	160.8 million	29.2 million
<b>Unemployment Rate</b> • Share of the labor force that is unemployed	6.9%	8.8%
<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b> • Share of the population over the age of 16 that is in the labor force	61.7%	65.6%
<b>Employment-Population Ratio</b> • Share of the population over the age of 16 that is working	57.4%	60%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Status of the Hispanic or Latino Population by Sex and Age," *Current Population Survey*, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf> (accessed November 6, 2020), Table A and A-3.

## Employment in October 2020

Latinos saw a slight decrease in unemployment among U.S workers, with a decline of 1.5% from 10.3% in September to 8.8% in October. The unemployment rate for Latinos remains at double the pre-pandemic average of 4%, but continues to trend down from its historic high of 18.5% in April 2020—when closures and shutdowns due to COVID-19 were first initiated.<sup>1</sup>

Overall, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) reported that employers added 638,000 jobs in October, which is a decrease from the 661,000 jobs added in September and the high for the year of 4.8 million added in July. This number is certainly impacted by the 147,000 drops in temporary Census workers, but still shows slow signs that recovery is happening. While it indicates that economic growth is happening, the decrease from September remains concerning for Latino workers, who disproportionately work in industries that have been slow to reopen and hire back all furloughed staff because of continued protective shutdown measures. As time goes on, the economic recovery appears to be most stagnant than many economists predicted early on. Based on these numbers from the last three months, despite this economic crisis beginning as a temporary response to health concerns, it will now mean long-term structural damage and with that slow recovery.

Latinos highlight the potential long-term impacts of this economic crisis. Eight months in, millions of Latinos are now battling permanent job loss. For many, it is simply that their jobs have not returned, such as leisure and hospitality workers—24% of whom are Latino—where nearly one in four jobs that disappeared in March have yet to return.<sup>2</sup> This is also true for the informal gig-economy where Latinos account for 18.6% of all workers. According to an UnidosUS poll from July, nearly 50% of Latino gig-workers in Texas, Florida, and Arizona had lost gig work as a result of COVID-19. The lack of access to benefits, uncertainty about eligibility for social economic safety nets, as well as widespread job and income loss in this industry alone, has disproportionately impacted Latino workers and their families, who will likely suffer the economic consequences in the long-term. The data is clear that Latinos have had their jobs and income disproportionately impacted by coronavirus closures due to the industries where they are heavily or overrepresented in the workforce. In March, during the first weeks of COVID-19-related shutdowns, nearly half of all Latino workers lost their jobs or took pay cuts—their industries were hit hard.<sup>3</sup> It is clear that Latinos have fared worse based on industries when you look at industries with low-Latino participation such as finance, where only one in nine workers are Latino and the industry has experienced no job loss.<sup>4</sup>

This month, the number of permanent jobs lost totaled 3.7 million.<sup>5</sup> UnidosUS has highlighted in past months the change that employment data has undergone since April when millions of workers were being classified by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as temporarily furloughed. As closures have continued through the year, the number of unemployed workers who will return to their jobs has become less, with the share of previously employed workers whose jobs have been permanently lost rising from 10% in April to nearly 40% in September.<sup>6</sup> While these changes can be attributed to restructuring within businesses or adjustments to match new restrictions on capacity, we also know that many previously employed workers have decided to drop out of the workforce due to increased caregiving responsibilities or challenges at home. Regardless of why these jobs have disappeared, this change will have a lasting impact on employment. Workers whose jobs are permanently lost take longer and face additional barriers to transitioning back into the workforce. Without new jobs for them to step into, there is a stall in recovery. The permanent job loss number staying constant suggests that the labor market will take time to return, and that millions of workers will have to wait for it before moving forward.

## The COVID-19 Economic Crisis Helped Drive Latino Voter Turnout

As UnidosUS has documented over the past eight months, Latinos have been among the most impacted population by COVID-19. They have faced widespread job and income loss due to shutdowns and closures, but at the same time remain among the top represented populations in the essential workforce where they are unable to work from home and are at greater risk of exposure to the coronavirus. This likely explains why Latinos are facing some of the highest infection rates, which not only places individuals and their families at health risk, but can have a lasting economic impact, especially for low-wage workers. Compounding these issues, Latinos have faced significant barriers in accessing government support. Many in the community are unable to receive the Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits or health care they need, and millions of workers never received economic impact payments because they, or someone in their family, files taxes using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). Any future economic relief from the government needs to address these failures in order to secure economic recovery for the country and the Latino community.

The need for economic support and concerns about their economic future in the wake of COVID-19 was a top priority for Latinos as they headed to the polls, not only determining what candidates they supported, but driving participation from the community overall.<sup>7</sup> In fact, in 2020, eight in ten Latinos claimed that the economy was most important for their vote.<sup>8</sup> Economic concerns were especially motivating for Latinas, only 23% of whom have a positive view of the nation's economy and 68% of whom said on election night that economic stimulus was very important as they cast their votes.<sup>9</sup>

Job loss played a large role in bringing economic issues to the forefront. According to an UnidosUS and Latino Decisions poll from July 2020, around 64% of Latinos in Texas, Arizona, and Florida were motivated to vote due to the job and income loss they had faced in 2020 as a result of COVID-19. Latinos' concerns about the economic future of their families and the community at large due to job loss were among the top reasons driving Latinos' decisions at the polls, with 42% choosing jobs and the economy as one of the top issues that politicians need to address after the election. This number was at a high in Nevada, with 51% of Latinos believing that policymakers must address the economic fallout from COVID-19. With unemployment numbers for Latinos still far above their pre-pandemic levels, Latinos went to the polls with an eye toward policymakers that would prioritize economic stimulus in the short-term, but economic recovery and improvement long-term.

Since closures began back in March, Latinos have continually supported efforts to slow down the spread of the coronavirus, including through shutdowns, and have repeatedly shown support for providing economic relief to workers.<sup>10</sup> An Election Eve poll showed that 85% of Latinos strongly or somewhat agreed that the next Congress must pass another comprehensive relief package.<sup>11</sup> However, depending on the economic impact on them or family members, Latinos prioritized economic recovery differently. Among voters, 71% of Latinos who had lost jobs due to COVID felt that an economic stimulus bill was a critical point of the election, compared to 67% for voters who had not lost income. It is evident that economic stimulus is a priority for the community, likely because of the disproportionate impact and in turn, greater exposure to family members, friends, or others in the community who are suffering from the economic crisis.

Latinos' concerns about COVID-19 infection and the economic impact of getting sick are also driving them to the polls. Even when people get sick, they must continue to make ends meet by paying rent, buying groceries, and providing for their children. With Latinos facing hospitalization due to COVID-19 at a rate three times greater than their white counterparts, Latino workers, especially those in essential roles, remain

concerned about what will happen to their families if they fall ill.<sup>12</sup> Concentrated in low-wage industries where they are more likely to lack access to paid sick leave, are unlikely to have significant savings, or will likely face barriers in accessing government support, Latino workers are concerned about the economic impact of sickness.<sup>13</sup> It is clear that Latino voters feel that the government has failed to properly protect them from the pandemic. On election night, nearly 70% of Latinos reported feeling that due to the president's mismanagement of the pandemic, millions have become ill.<sup>14</sup> Feeling that current policymakers have ignored health and economic issues facing the community has only strengthened the desire among Latinos to secure new leadership that will push for additional relief.

Latino voters largely shared that they want to see Congress pass a comprehensive piece of legislation, to address the severe economic needs of the community in response to COVID-19.<sup>15</sup>

## Policy Recommendations

With coronavirus still ravaging communities across the country, it is critical that Congress quickly pass a comprehensive proposal to address the economic crisis impacting millions of workers. Latinos have used their votes to raise awareness to the economic challenges they are facing and now policymakers—both newly elected and returning—must address those needs. Based on election eve polling, Latinos want a bill that includes \$2 trillion in relief funding for expanded unemployment insurance, another round of economic stimulus payment, additional small-business loans, and funding for state and local governments.<sup>16</sup>

With most of the relief programs and protections provided in the CARES Act, passed by Congress in March, expired, it is critical that the Senate pass the HEROES Act to address the significant economic and health challenges that Latinos continue to face. Every day that Congress does not pass a bill to protect workers and families, the lives and livelihoods of thousands continue to deteriorate. Any new proposal must meet these criteria and ensure that the Latino and other communities who are bearing the brunt of the virus, are protected and supported.

Additionally, Latinos have made it clear that they believe any economic stimulus payments or relief legislation must support all workers—regardless of immigration status. According to data from March, 85% of Latinos felt that ITIN-filers who were left out of the stimulus payments should have received the checks. Latinos looked to the election as a way of yielding their voice in support of the community and as a way of raising their concerns about recovery. To respond to those desires, Congress must correct the wrongs of the CARES Act, which left out an estimated 7–7.6 million workers in the United States and their American families. In any future COVID relief legislation, Congress must ensure that workers who file taxes using an ITIN are eligible to receive direct federal stimulus checks. The HEROES Act made this change, providing benefits to more than 3.5 million children and 4.3 million tax-paying adults, but without action, these families have not received this economic support.

## About Us

UnidosUS, previously known as NCLR (National Council of La Raza), is the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Through its unique combination of expert research, advocacy, programs, and an [Affiliate Network](#) of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico, UnidosUS simultaneously challenges the social, economic, and political barriers that affect Latinos at the national and local levels.

For more than 50 years, UnidosUS has united communities and different groups seeking common ground through collaboration, and that share a desire to make our country stronger. For more information on UnidosUS, visit [www.unidosus.org](http://www.unidosus.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

## Endnotes

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