

Latino Unemployment Rate Drops Slightly to 8.5%

Latino unemployment is slightly down, and the number of Latinos in the workforce saw little changes this month.

INDICATORS	National	Latinos
Unemployment Rate Share of the labor force that is unemployed	6.2%	8.5%
Unemployed Those who are available to work, trying to find a job, or expect to be called back from a layoff but are not working	10 million	2.4 million
Employed Working people over the age of 16, including those temporarily absent from their jobs	150.2 million	26.7 million
Labor Force Participation Rate Share of the population over the age of 16 that is in the labor force	61.4%	65.4%

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 March 5, 2021), Table A and A-3.

Employment in February 2021

Overall, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that the economy added 379,000 jobs in February, representing an improvement following the significant losses in December. Additionally, BLS revised the January 2021 report to show that the economy gained 117,000 more jobs last month than was reported, putting the total number gained for January at 166,000.

Still, the labor market continues to reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with both the unemployment rate, 6.2%, and unemployed workers, 9.5 million, well above pre-pandemic levels from February 2020. This month, most of the job gains occurred in leisure and hospitality, with smaller increases in health care, retail trade, and temporary help services. This is a good sign given the devastating job losses felt in these industries since pandemic-related closures first began nearly a year ago.

- At 8.5% in February, Latino unemployment remains at more than double the pre-pandemic average of 4%. The economy remains down 9.5 million jobs from where it was in February 2020. Almost 42% of unemployed workers are experiencing long-term unemployment. Latinos accounted for 23% of the

initial job loss in 2020, and while there has been some recovery, many continue to be plagued by business closures. In fact, according to a BLS report from January 2021, at the beginning of this year Latinos continue to be among those representing the highest share of job losses. Latino employment in February 2021 remained 7.2% lower than the pre-pandemic numbers, the largest loss among racial and ethnic backgrounds.¹

- The most significant employment growth happened in leisure and hospitality, with modest gains in temporary help services, health care and social assistance, retail trade, and manufacturing. Given that Latino workers overrepresent employment in the leisure and hospitality industry, these gains are a welcome trend. Jobs in this sector increased by 355,000 as pandemic-related restrictions ease in parts of the country. Food services, another industry where Latinos overrepresent the workforce, experienced an increase of 286,000 jobs. However, employment in leisure and hospitality remains down over the year by 20.4%. Other industries that Latinos disproportionately represent continue to suffer devastating job losses. The construction industry lost an additional 61,000 jobs in February and has lost 308,000 jobs since February 2020.
- While the overall Latino unemployment rate dropped 0.1% from January 2021, there was a 0.4% increase in Latino labor force participation, signaling an uptake in labor. The increase in the Latino labor force's participation rate can be attributed to the employment of Latino male workers over 20 years of age. Latinas, however, who have been among the hardest-hit populations by employment and income loss due to COVID-19, remained at a stagnant (57.8%) participation level since January 2021. This in part, due to the overrepresentation of Latina workers in industries deeply affected by the pandemic and that are not recovering as quickly as other sectors. Pre-pandemic, Latinas were joining the workforce in large numbers for decades, helping to fuel economic growth. Today, Latinas are forced to choose between returning to work and caring for their families. To remedy this, race and gender need to be at the front and center of any economic recovery efforts.

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 or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

¹ Center for American Progress, *Latinos Face Disproportionate Health and Economic Impacts from COVID-19*, March 5, 2021, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2021/03/05/496733/latinos-face-disproportionate-health-economic-impacts-covid-19/#Ca=3#Or=1#Pr=28#IA=R> (accessed March 5, 2021).