Latinos in California Snapshot

Two out of every five Californians are Latino.* The Latino community contributes to the state’s economy as well as social, cultural, and political development. Yet Latinos continue to face unequal challenges in education and wealth-building.

- Latino families earn $0.50 for every $1 that white families earn.¹
- By 2040 a 13% homeownership gap is projected between Latino and white homeowners.²
- Latino students make up the majority of K-12 students but are the racial/ethnic group with the lowest high school graduation rates.³
- Latinos make up only 14% of Californians with a bachelor’s degree or higher according to the 2020 Census.

Population

Latinos are the largest ethnic group in the state at 40% according to 2021 U.S. Census Bureau data. The Latino population grew by 11.2% between 2010 and 2020.

By 2030, it is projected to increase to almost 17 million, making up 41% of the state’s overall population.⁴

Ages

2021 U.S. Census Bureau data indicates that 29% of the population in California account for Latinos over the age of 18.

* The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau and throughout our materials to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race. Our materials may also refer to this population as “Latinx” to represent the diversity of gender identities and expressions that are present in the community.
**Voting Power**

Three in ten (30%) registered voters are Latino (4,565,900).\(^5\)

More than 3.2 million Latinos are expected to vote in 2022.\(^6\) However, the power of the Latino vote has not been fully activated because only 52% of eligible Latino voters are registered to vote.\(^7\)

**Where Latinos Live**

Latinos make up the majority of the population in the following counties: Imperial (85.2%), Tulare (65.5%), Merced (61.8%), Colusa (61.7%), San Benito (61.1%), and Monterey (60.4%).\(^8\)

The counties with the largest Latino populations include Los Angeles (4.8 million), Riverside (1.2 million), San Bernardino (1.16 million), San Diego (1.12 million), and Orange (1.07 million).

**Economic Contributions**

**Labor Force Participation**\(^9\)

Despite Latinos having the highest labor force participation rate of any racial or ethnic group in the state (58.6% compared to 57.1% for white workers), Latinos continue to face inequities and hardships and as a result are more vulnerable to economic downturns. Some inequities are reflected in the median household income reported in 2021 U.S. Census Bureau data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDIAN INCOME</th>
<th>State Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>State Overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,081</td>
<td>$84,907</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Latinos make up 55% of frontline essential workers compared to 35% of white workers. Additionally, Latinos are overrepresented in those occupations—such as farmworkers and janitors—with the highest percentages of low-wage work.\(^10\)

**Economic Power**

The size, growth, and age of the Latino community translates to significant contributions to the state's economy:

- $83 billion in taxes with $92 billion spending power\(^11\)
- 650,000 jobs through Latino-owned businesses\(^12\)
- $100 billion to the economy annually\(^13\)
Wealth

As of 2016, in California the typical Hispanic family had only 6% of the wealth of a typical white family. Wealth is an important indicator of financial security and stability. Homeownership, income, and retirement savings plans are three of the primary avenues by which Americans build wealth.

Home equity makes up the majority of wealth for low- and middle-income families, so gaps in homeownership rates magnify wealth inequality. Without significant interventions, projections show a 13% homeownership gap by 2040 between Latino and white homeowners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2040</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education

California’s education system must adequately and equitably support the needs of Latino students, who make up the majority of K-12 students and nearly half of all college students.

- In the 2021–2022 school year, 82% of the 1.1 million English learners in California public schools were Spanish speakers.
- In the 2020–2021 school year, 80.5% of Latino students graduated from high school.
- Latino students are the most socioeconomically disadvantaged ethnic group in the state.
- According to the 2020 Census, 66% of all Latinos in the state graduated from high school. Overall, Latinos are the racial/ethnic group with the lowest high school graduation rates compared to 95% of whites, 90% of Blacks, and 88% of Asians.
Higher Education

Latinos make up only 14% of Californians with had a bachelor’s degree or higher according to the 2020 Census.\(^{20}\)

A 2021 report revealed that in California:

- 1.39 million Latinos were enrolled in college.\(^{21}\)
- 43% of all undergraduate students are Latino.\(^{22}\)

Immigrants

- Nearly half (49%) of the 10.5 million immigrants who live in California are of Hispanic or Latino origin according to the 2020 Census.
- According to the Center for Migration, in 2019 about 22% (2,251,756) of immigrants in California were undocumented.\(^{23}\)
- Of the undocumented immigrants, 81.7% were Hispanic in 2019.\(^{24}\)
- Nearly 30% of all Latinos in California are undocumented or living with someone who is undocumented.
Endnotes


12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.


22 Ibid.


24 Ibid.