

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

CENSUS INFORMATION CENTER

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN POPULATION FACTSHEET

OCTOBER 1993

Of the more than 22 million Hispanics in the United States, 14.0% were Central and South American.

SELECTED HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

- **Central and South American household size was larger than both the Hispanic and non-Hispanic average in 1991.** The mean household size for Central and South Americans was 3.37 persons. The mean size for the total Hispanic population was 3.45; for non-Hispanics, 2.54.
- **Central and South American households are very likely to contain families.** Over eight in ten (81.3%) Central and South American households contained families in 1992, compared to less than seven in ten (69.5%) non-Hispanic households.
- **Most Central and South Americans rent their housing.** Just under three out of four Central and South Americans (73.5%) rented their housing as of March 1992 compared to six in ten Hispanics (60.1%). The percentage renting for the non-Hispanic population was 34.2%.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

- **Central and South Americans are more likely than other Hispanic subgroups to have completed high school.** Three-fifths (61.7%) of Central and South Americans 25 years old and over completed high school in 1992. In comparison, slightly more than half (52.6%) of the total Hispanic population and eight in ten non-Hispanics (81.5%) completed high school.
- **Central and South Americans are more likely to have completed college than the total Hispanic population.** More than one in seven (14.2%) Central and South Americans completed four years of college or more compared to about one in ten (9.3%) Hispanics overall, and one in five (22.3%) non-Hispanics.

LABOR FORCE STATUS

- **Central and South Americans have the highest labor force participation rate of both the overall Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations. Seven in ten (71.2%) Central and South Americans were working or looking for work in March 1992, compared to 65.8% of the total Hispanic population and 65.7% of the non-Hispanic population.**
- **The labor force participation rate of Central and South American women is equal to that of non-Hispanic females and higher than the total Hispanic female population. More than half of Central and South American females and non-Hispanic females are in the labor force (57.1% and 57.8%, respectively), compared to slightly over half (52.2%) of the total Hispanic female population.**
- **Median earnings for both male and female Central and South Americans are among the lowest of any Hispanic subgroup and lower than those of non-Hispanics. Median earnings for male and female Central and South Americans are \$14,868 and \$10,635, respectively. Median earnings for the overall Hispanic population were \$14,503 for males and \$10,399 for females; Puerto Rican women had the highest median earnings of all women at \$14,463; and Other Hispanic origin median earnings were the highest for Hispanic males at \$20,456. For the non-Hispanic population, median earnings were \$22,628 for males and \$13,216 for females.**
- **The unemployment rate for Central and South Americans is slightly lower than the total Hispanic unemployment rate. In 1992, just over one in ten Central and South Americans (10.8%) were unemployed; this compares to one in nine (11.3%) Hispanics and one in 14 non-Hispanics (7.5%).**

POVERTY

- **Despite having higher labor force participation rates, Central and South Americans were twice as likely to live below the poverty level than the non-Hispanic population in 1991. One in four (24.6%) Central and South Americans lived below the poverty level in 1991 compared to one in eight (12.8%) of the non-Hispanic population. Of all Hispanic subgroups, Puerto Ricans are most likely to be poor; in 1991, two in five Puerto Ricans lived below the poverty level (39.4%).**
- **The proportion of Central and South American female-headed families living below the poverty level in 1991 was lower than for the total Hispanic population, but still remains disproportionately high. Almost two-fifths (42.9%) of Central and**

South American female-headed families live below the poverty level. Half of all Hispanic female-headed families (49.7%) and one-third of non-Hispanic female-headed households were poor (33.9%).

- **Reflecting a trend in the Hispanic population as a whole, children are most likely to be living in poverty among all Central and South Americans.** One-third (33.4%) of Central and South Americans who are less than 18 years old lived below the poverty level in 1991, compared to almost one in five (19.3%) non-Hispanic children. By contrast, slightly over one-fifth (20.8%) of the 18-64 age group and one in four (24.5%) Central and South Americans 65 years of age and over lived below the poverty level.

Sources: *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 1992*, Bureau of the Census.