

## **WEAK ECONOMY MEANS RISING POVERTY LEVELS AMONG LATINO FAMILIES**

On September 13, 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau released new data measuring poverty in the U.S. during 2010. The statistics show large increases in poverty among all Americans, which reflects the weak economic recovery and continuing unemployment crisis in the United States. The following is an analysis of growing poverty among Latino\* families.

### **Latino poverty is increasing.**

- The Hispanic poverty rate increased from 25.3% in 2009 to 26.6% in 2010; among all Americans, the rate increased from 14.3% in 2009 to 15.1% in 2010. Thirteen million Latinos were counted as poor in 2010, representing an increase of 893,000 since 2009.<sup>1</sup> In 2010, a four-person family was considered poor if income fell below \$22,314.<sup>2</sup>

### **Poverty is higher among communities of color.**

- In 2010, the poverty rate for Latinos was 26.6%, compared to 9.9% for Whites and 27.4% for Blacks.<sup>3</sup>

### **High unemployment among Latino workers is the key factor.**

- The increase in poverty among Hispanic families between 2009 and 2010 is due to continued high unemployment among Hispanic workers. The unemployment rate among Latino workers hovered over 12.5% for most of 2010, compared to approximately 8.7% for all workers.<sup>4</sup>

### **Hispanic family income fell significantly.**

- Latino median household income fell to \$37,759 in 2010, which was a statistically significant drop from its 2009 level. The median household income also fell among White families to \$54,620, among Black families to \$32,068, and among Asian families to \$64,308.<sup>5</sup>

### **Poverty is highest among Latino children.**

- The Latino child poverty rate was 35.0% in 2010, which is an increase from 33.1% in 2009. The poverty rate of 22.4% among Latino adults was higher than its 2009 level of 22.1%.<sup>6</sup> There are 15.7 million poor children overall in the United States, and 5.8 million (37.4%) of them are Latino.<sup>7</sup>

### **Social Security keeps the majority of Hispanic seniors out of poverty.**

- The poverty rate among Hispanic seniors fell to 18.0% in 2010 compared to its level in 2009 of 18.3%. The 18.0% poverty rate among Latino seniors is twice that of all seniors (9.0%). Previous studies have shown that without Social Security, the poverty rate among Latino seniors would be approximately 50%.<sup>8</sup>

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\* The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau and throughout this document 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.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Historical Poverty Tables," *Current Population Survey*. Washington, DC, 2011, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/historical/people.html> (accessed September 2011), Table 2.

<sup>2</sup> Carmen DeNavas-Walt, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Jessica C. Smith, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010*. U.S. Census Bureau. Washington, DC, 2011, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p60-239.pdf> (accessed September 2011), p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Historical Poverty Tables," Table 2.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Data Retrieval: Labor Force Statistics," *Current Population Survey*. Washington, DC, <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsatabs.htm> (accessed September 2010), Tables A-2 and A-3.

<sup>5</sup> Carmen DeNavas-Walt, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Jessica C. Smith, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage*, Table A-1.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Historical Poverty Tables," Table 3.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Historical Poverty Tables," Table 11.

<sup>8</sup> Fernando Torres-Gil, Robert Greenstein, and David Kamin, *The Importance of Social Security to the Hispanic Community* (Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2005), <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=436> (accessed September 2010).