

DATA SHOWS FEWER LATINOS LIVING IN POVERTY

On September 12, 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau released new data measuring poverty in the U.S. during 2011. The statistics show that poverty declined among Latinos, but was unchanged among all Americans. Latinos were the only racial or ethnic group to experience a decline in the poverty rate. The following is an analysis of the latest poverty data among Latino* families.

Latino poverty is decreasing.

- The Hispanic poverty rate showed a statistically significant decrease from 26.5% in 2010 to 25.3% in 2011; among all Americans, the rate remained unchanged compared to 2010 at 15.0% in 2011. In 2011 there were 13,244 Latinos living in poverty, a 278,000 decrease from the year before.¹ In 2010, a four-person family was considered poor if income fell below \$23,018.²

Poverty is higher among communities of color.

- In 2011, the poverty rate for Latinos was 25.3%, compared to 9.8% for Whites and 27.6% for Blacks.³

Falling unemployment among Latinos likely a key factor.

- The decrease in poverty among Hispanic families between 2010 and 2011 is likely due to the improving employment picture for Hispanic workers. The Latino unemployment rate fell from 13.1% in November 2010, to 11.5% in 2011, and has continued to drop to 10.2% as of September 2012.⁴

Hispanic family income remained unchanged.

- Latino median household income in 2011 remained statistically unchanged from its 2010 level, at \$38,624. The median household income fell by 1.4% among White families to \$55,412, and fell by 2.7% among Black families to \$32,229.⁵

Latino child poverty rate falls for the first time since the recession.

- The Latino child poverty rate was 34.1% in 2011, which is lower than the previous year when it reached 35.0%. The poverty rate of 21.1% among Latino adults was lower than its 2010 level of 22.6%. There are 16.1 million poor children overall in the United States, and six million (37.2%) of them are Latino.⁶

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

- The poverty rate among Hispanic seniors rose to 18.7% in 2011 compared to its level in 2010 of 18.0%. The 18.7% poverty rate among Latino seniors is twice that of all seniors (8.7%).⁷ Previous studies have shown that without Social Security, the poverty rate among Latino seniors would be approximately 50%.⁸

* 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

¹ Carmen DeNavas-Walt, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Jessica C. Smith, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2011*. U.S. Census Bureau. Washington, DC, 2011, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p60-243.pdf> (accessed September 2012), Table 3.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ 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 2012), Tables A-2 and A-3.

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

⁶ 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 2012), Table 3.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ 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).