

AMERICA'S TOMORROW: A PROFILE OF LATINO YOUTH

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INTRODUCTION

The Latino[†] population is one of the youngest and fastest-growing populations in the United States. While the share of all Latinos ages 15–24 has remained fairly constant over the past decade, the Latino population under the age of 14 grew by 3.2 million people between 2000 and 2008 and now constitutes 22.4% of all children age 14 and younger, compared to 17.4% in 2000.¹ As the data below reflect, Latino youth experience high levels of poverty, high dropout rates, low graduation rates, and high unemployment rates. Given demographic projections which estimate that Latinos will compose about 30% of the U.S. population by 2050, these challenges are significant and pressing for the nation as a whole.[‡]

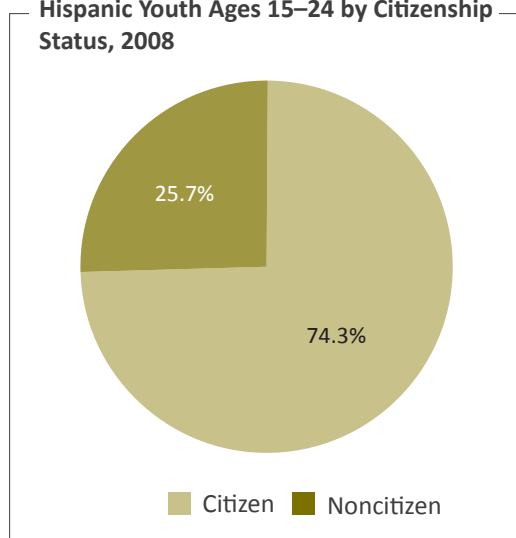
LATINOS WILL SOON COMPOSE 20% OF ALL YOUTH IN THE UNITED STATES.

Hispanics made up 15.4% of the total population of the United States in 2008.² Of the nearly 47 million Hispanics in the United States that year, 7.6 million (16.3%) were between the ages of 15 and 24,³ a share of the population that was slightly greater than the share of Whites (15.3%)⁴ and slightly less than the share of Blacks (17.4%) of the same age.⁵ Latino youth are also a significant part of the overall youth population in the United States. In 2008, there were about 43 million youth ages 15–24;⁶ more than one in six (17.8%) were Latino.⁷

THE VAST MAJORITY OF LATINO YOUTH ARE UNITED STATES CITIZENS.

The majority of Latinos ages 15–24 are United States citizens. In 2008, 70.4% of Latinos in this age group were born in the United States and an additional 3.9% were naturalized citizens. In total, nearly three out of four (74.3%) Latinos ages 15–24 were United States citizens in 2008 (see Figure 1).⁸

Figure 1:
Hispanic Youth Ages 15–24 by Citizenship Status, 2008



Source: Steven Ruggles et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 4.0 (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Population Center, 2009).

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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.

‡ Though in this statistical brief every effort was made to highlight data for youth ages 15–24, not all salient topics have data available specifically for that age range; in those cases, the available age ranges are used.

THE SHARE OF LATINO YOUTH GREW IN 45 STATES SINCE 2000.

Latinos ages 15–24 are concentrated in several states. In 2008, more than two out of three (67.4%) Latinos ages 15–24 lived in California, Texas, Florida, New York, or Illinois.⁹ Furthermore, in that same year they made up nearly one-third (33%) of a state's youth population in four states: New Mexico (50.4%), California (42.4%), Texas (40.1%), and Arizona (36.3%) (see Table 1).¹⁰ Though concentrated in several states, Latino youth ages 15–24 are developing an increasingly

visible presence in states with historically low numbers of Latino youth. The size of the Latino youth population grew in nearly every state between 2000 and 2008, with the greatest growth rates occurring in West Virginia (96%) and Alaska (77.5%)* (see Table 2),¹¹ and the share of youth who are Hispanic grew in 45 states between 2000 and 2008. The states in which this growth rate was greatest were West Virginia (106.4%), Maine (46.5%), Arkansas (42.8%), Alaska (41.9%), Louisiana (35.7%), Mississippi (35.6%), New Hampshire (34.2%), Missouri (27.6%), Idaho (25.7%), and Iowa (23.7%)¹² (see Appendix A).

Table 1: Top Ten States with the Greatest Share of Hispanic Youth, 2008

State	Percent of State Youth Population	Number of Youth
New Mexico	50.4	146,852
California	42.4	2,331,274
Texas	40.1	1,422,369
Arizona	36.3	316,383
Nevada	30.2	99,432
Florida	23.3	542,161
Colorado	23.0	154,088
New Jersey	18.6	210,651
New York	18.6	523,224
Illinois	17.3	323,789

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B01001I: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)," *2008 American Community Survey*. Washington, DC, 2009; and U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B01001: Sex by Age," *2008 American Community Survey*. Washington, DC, 2009.

* Due to small population size, these figures have a high margin of error.

Table 2: Top Ten States with the Greatest Percent Change in the Size of the Hispanic Youth Population between 2000 and 2008

State	Percent Change	Change in Number of Youth
West Virginia	96.0	2,201
Alaska	77.5	3,589
Maine	53.7	988
New Hampshire	52.7	2,030
Arkansas	50.6	9,588
Nevada	37.3	27,018
Idaho	35.3	7,440
Mississippi	35.0	2,979
Missouri	35.0	8,441
Pennsylvania	32.9	24,857

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B01001: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)," *2008 American Community Survey*. Washington, DC, 2009; and U.S. Census Bureau, "Table P12H: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)," *Census 2000*. Washington, DC, 2000.

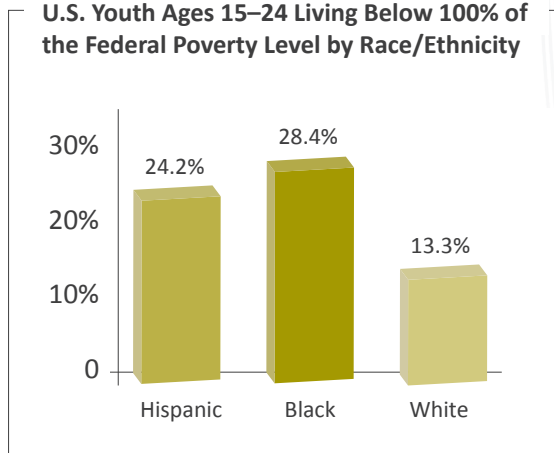
THE MAJORITY OF HISPANIC YOUTH LIVE WITH TWO PARENTS.

In 2008, about 56.5% of Hispanic youth ages 15–19 lived with two parents, compared to 63% of White youth and 32% of Black youth. Just slightly more than one in four (27.8%) Hispanic youth lived with only their mother in 2008, a greater portion than White youth (17%) but much less than Black youth (50%). Furthermore, about 8.8% of Hispanic youth ages 15–19 lived with only their father in 2008, which is slightly more than their White (6.6%) and Black (7%) peers.¹³

ONE IN FOUR U.S. YOUTH IN POVERTY IS LATINO.

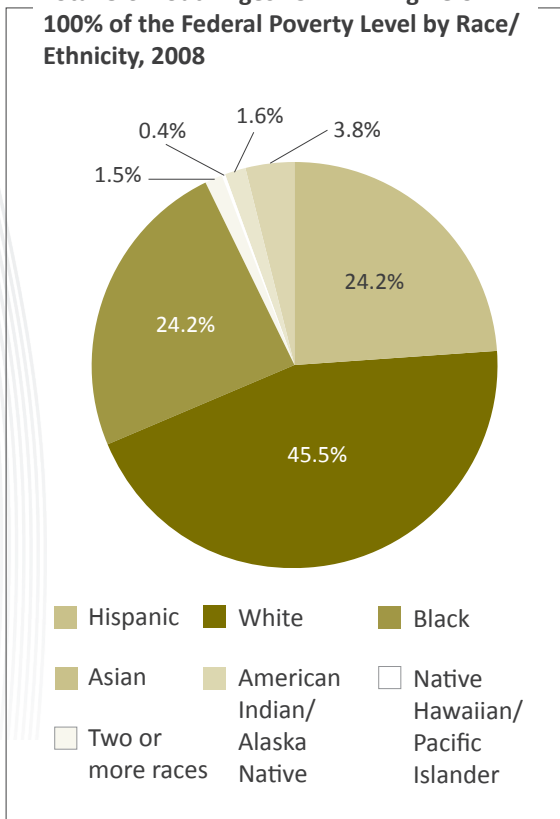
In 2008, nearly one-quarter (24.2%) of Latinos ages 15–24—nearly 1.8 million people—lived below 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL). That share is slightly lower than the 28.4% of corresponding Black youth, but it is nearly double the 13.3% of White youth (see Figure 2).¹⁴ Latino youth are also disproportionately poor compared to the wider youth population. Though Latinos ages 15–24 make up about 17.9% of the national youth population, they account for 24.2% of all youth living under 100% of the FPL (see Figure 3).¹⁵ Moreover, nearly two in five (38.8%) Latinos ages 15–24 live below 150% of the FPL, those considered to be at or near poverty.¹⁶

Figure 2: U.S. Youth Ages 15–24 Living Below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level by Race/Ethnicity



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "POV34: Single Year of Age—Poverty Status: 2008," *Current Population Survey, 2009 Annual Social and Economic Supplement*. Washington, DC, 2009.

Figure 3:
Total U.S. Youth Ages 15–24 Living Below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level by Race/Ethnicity, 2008

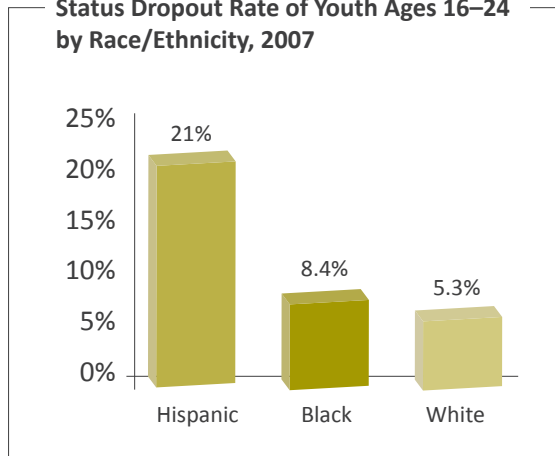


Source: NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, “Current Population Survey (CPS) Table Creator,” Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstc/cps_table_creator.html (accessed December 18, 2009).

ONE IN FIVE LATINO YOUTH HAS DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL.

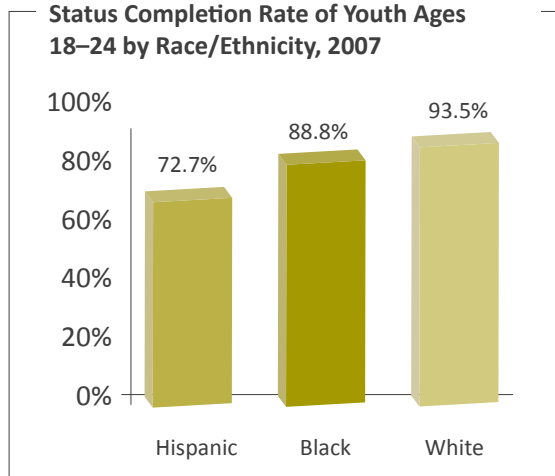
Latino youth are disproportionately disconnected from school.* In 2007, more than one in five (21.4%) Latinos ages 16–24 were status dropouts—people who lack a high school diploma and are not enrolled in high school, regardless of when they dropped out—compared to 8.4% of Blacks and 5.3% of Whites (see Figure 4).¹⁷ The status completion rate, which indicates the percent of people who have left high school and hold a high school diploma or the equivalent, was 72.7% for Hispanics ages 18–24, lower than the rate for Black (88.8%) and White (93.5%) youth (see Figure 5).¹⁸

Figure 4:
Status Dropout Rate of Youth Ages 16–24 by Race/Ethnicity, 2007



Source: E. F. Cataldi, J. Laird, and A. Kewal Ramani, *High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2007*. National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC, 2009, Table 6.

Figure 5:
Status Completion Rate of Youth Ages 18–24 by Race/Ethnicity, 2007



Source: E. F. Cataldi, J. Laird, and A. Kewal Ramani, *High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2007*. National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC, 2009, Table 9.

* For more information on Latinos and education, please read *Missing Out: Latino Students in America's Schools*, available at www.nclr.org.

THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR LATINO YOUTH IS RISING.

In 2008, there were 3.7 million Latinos between the ages of 16 and 24 who were in the U.S. labor force. That year, Latinos made up 17.4% of all youth in the labor force, compared to 64.9% of White youth and 12.2% of Black youth.¹⁹ In 2009,

the unemployment rate was 29.5% for Latino youth ages 16–19, up 4.6 percentage points from 2008, and 16.7% for Latinos ages 20–24, up 6.4 percentage points from 2008 (see Table 3).²⁰

Table 3: Unemployment and Employment Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Age, September 2008 and September 2009

	Age	Unemployment Rate, September 2008 (%)	Unemployment Rate, September 2009 (%)	Employment Rate, September 2008 (%)	Employment Rate, September 2009 (%)
Hispanic	16–19	24.9	29.5	26.7	23.2
	20–24	10.3	16.7	65.1	60.6
Black	16–19	29.1	40.7	19.3	13.8
	20–24	20.6	27.1	54.0	47.1
White	16–19	17.2	23.0	34.2	29.7
	20–24	9.4	13.1	68.9	64.3

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, “Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey,” <http://data.bls.gov:8080/PDQ/outside.jsp?survey=ln> (accessed November 4, 2009).

NEARLY TWO OUT OF FIVE LATINO YOUTH ARE UNINSURED.

Latino youth face significant health challenges.* In 2008, just 62.3% of Latino youth ages 15–24 were insured, compared to 72.9% of Black youth and 81.9% of White youth.²¹ Latino youth (36%) were also less likely to have employer-based insurance than their Black (39.8%) and White (57.9%) counterparts.²² Moreover, nearly one in four (23.1%) Latino youth was insured by Medicaid,

compared to 11.4% of White youth and 28.3% of Black youth (see Table 4).²³

Latino youth also face high rates of teen pregnancy. In 2008, 4.9% of Latinas ages 15–19 had given birth in the past 12 months. This is higher than the rates for both Black (4.6%) and White (1.8%) youth.²⁴

Table 4: Insurance Coverage of Youth Ages 15–24 by Race/Ethnicity, 2008

	Percent Insured	Percent Insured by Employer-Based Insurance	Percent Insured by Medicaid
Hispanic	62.3	36.0	23.1
Black	72.9	39.8	28.3
White	81.9	57.9	11.4

Source: NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, “Current Population Survey (CPS) Table Creator,” Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstc/cps_table_creator.html (accessed December 18, 2009).

* For more information about the health challenges that Latinos face, please see *Latinos and Health Coverage: By the Numbers, Fast Facts: Latinos and Health Care*, and *Toward a Common Future: Latino Teens and Adults Speak Out*. All publications are available at www.nclr.org.

Appendix A: Latino Population Ages 15–24 by State, 2000 and 2008

State	Latino Population, 2008	Latino Youth Ages 15–24, 2008	Latino Youth Population Growth, 2000–2008 (%)	Latino Youth as Percent of All Youth in State, 2008	Percent Change in Share of Hispanic Youth, 2000–2008
Alabama	130,164	21,032	24.7	3.2	19.9
Alaska	42,588	8,221	77.5	7.3	41.9
Arizona	1,959,197	316,383	26.6	36.3	6.0
Arkansas	157,478	28,555	50.6	7.1	42.9
California	13,457,397	2,331,274	16.0	42.4	1.9
Colorado	997,060	154,088	9.6	23.0	0.4
Connecticut	419,391	71,907	21.4	15.1	3.3
Delaware	59,093	8,795	13.8	7.3	0.8
District of Columbia	51,124	7,655	-13.8	8.0	-18.8
Florida	3,845,964	542,161	32.0	23.3	10.3
Georgia	769,982	111,332	4.3	8.1	-9.5
Hawaii	112,320	20,176	18.7	11.2	8.7
Idaho	155,831	28,536	35.3	13.0	25.7
Illinois	1,967,568	323,789	5.7	17.3	-1.7
Indiana	328,725	53,293	13.8	6.0	12.6
Iowa	123,895	21,751	26.3	5.0	23.8
Kansas	254,297	43,025	12.0	10.4	8.8
Kentucky	98,346	14,615	5.9	2.6	7.9
Louisiana	149,401	25,215	30.2	3.8	35.7
Maine	13,350	2,829	53.7	1.7	46.6
Maryland	374,011	55,575	32.4	7.0	12.1
Massachusetts	556,898	102,112	22.4	11.0	7.9
Michigan	413,286	71,044	10.8	5.0	6.0
Minnesota	215,821	35,205	14.6	4.8	8.7
Mississippi	58,385	11,480	35.0	2.6	35.7
Missouri	186,829	32,562	35.0	3.9	27.7
Montana	27,318	4,484	23.8	3.3	16.9
Nebraska	139,771	20,236	6.4	7.8	4.2
Nevada	668,532	99,432	37.3	30.2	7.2
New Hampshire	34,605	5,881	52.7	3.3	34.3
New Jersey	1,418,545	210,651	8.3	18.6	-3.8
New Mexico	891,011	146,852	12.4	50.4	3.1
New York	3,248,527	523,224	5.9	18.6	-4.8
North Carolina	682,516	98,265	-0.2	7.7	-12.2
North Dakota	12,946	2,140	15.6	2.0	12.9
Ohio	299,778	47,694	13.3	3.0	11.0
Oklahoma	278,760	46,884	18.2	8.8	15.0
Oregon	416,044	66,324	13.3	13.4	9.0
Pennsylvania	595,128	100,520	32.9	5.8	23.0
Rhode Island	122,206	21,075	19.7	13.4	12.2
South Carolina	182,194	29,348	20.0	4.6	8.0
South Dakota	18,945	2,648	20.9	2.3	19.0
Tennessee	227,897	34,234	15.5	4.2	11.1
Texas	8,870,472	1,422,369	13.7	40.1	1.8

State	Latino Population, 2008	Latino Youth Ages 15–24, 2008	Latino Youth Population Growth, 2000–2008 (%)	Latino Youth as Percent of All Youth in State, 2008	Percent Change in Share of Hispanic Youth, 2000–2008
Utah	329,068	51,374	19.7	11.2	15.4
Vermont	7,598	1,487	17.3	1.7	10.5
Virginia	529,836	84,261	25.4	7.6	9.5
Washington	643,684	106,166	18.4	11.9	8.9
West Virginia	20,398	4,493	96.0	1.9	106.5
Wisconsin	286,112	46,436	10.9	5.9	7.1
Wyoming	41,164	7,429	20.7	9.6	17.1

Sources: NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B01001I: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)" and "Table B01001: Sex by Age," *2008 American Community Survey*. Washington, DC, 2009; and U.S. Census Bureau, "Table P12H: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)" and "Table P12: Sex by Age," *Census 2000*. Washington, DC, 2000.

Endnotes

- ¹ NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B01001: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)" and "Table B01001: Sex by Age," *2008 American Community Survey*. Washington, DC, 2009; and U.S. Census Bureau, "Table P12H: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)" and "Table P12: Sex by Age," *Census 2000*. Washington, DC, 2000.
- ² U.S. Census Bureau, "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2008," *2008 American Community Survey*. Washington, DC, 2009.
- ³ NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B01001: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)."
- ⁴ NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2008"; and U.S. Census Bureau, "B01001A: Sex by Age (White Alone)," *2008 American Community Survey*. Washington, DC, 2009.
- ⁵ NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2008"; and U.S. Census Bureau, "B01001B: Sex by age (Black or African American Alone)," *2008 American Community Survey*. Washington, DC, 2009.
- ⁶ NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2008."
- ⁷ NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B01001: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)."
- ⁸ Steven Ruggles et al., *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 4.0* (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Population Center, 2009).
- ⁹ NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B01001: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)."
- ¹⁰ NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B01001: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)" and "Table B01001: Sex by Age."
- ¹¹ NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B01001: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)" and "Table P12H: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)," *Census 2000*. Washington, DC, 2000.
- ¹² NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B01001: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)" and "Table B01001: Sex by Age"; and U.S. Census Bureau, "Table P12H: Sex by Age (Hispanic or Latino)" and "Table P12: Sex by Age."
- ¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, "Characteristics of Teenagers 15 to 19 Years Old," *2008 American Community Survey*. Washington, DC, 2009.
- ¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, "POV34: Single Year of Age—Poverty Status: 2008," *Current Population Survey, 2009 Annual Social and Economic Supplement*. Washington, DC, 2009.
- ¹⁵ NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey (CPS) Table Creator," Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstc/cps_table_creator.html (accessed December 18, 2009).
- ¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, "POV24: Single Year of Age—Poverty Status: 2008."
- ¹⁷ E. F. Cataldi, J. Laird., and A. Kewal Ramani, *High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2007*. National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC, 2009, Table 6.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Table 9.
- ¹⁹ NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey (CPS) Table Creator."
- ²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey," <http://data.bls.gov:8080/PDQ/outside.jsp?survey=ln> (accessed November 4, 2009).
- ²¹ NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey (CPS) Table Creator."
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, "Characteristics of Teenagers 15 to 19 Years Old."