

Young Latinos in the Workforce

Recent Facts and Figures

As the fastest-growing segment of the workforce, characterized by its youthfulness, Latinos are expected to double their share of the American labor force from 15% to 30% by the year 2050.¹ Given their importance to the nation's future prosperity and global competitiveness, young Latino workers are an important subgroup to monitor in this post-recession era. This *Monthly Latino Employment Report* is an update to the [December 2011 report](#) on young Latinos in the workforce.

Latino Employment Statistics for October 2013

The [latest report](#) from the U.S. Department of Labor shows that U.S. employment increased by 204,000 workers in October 2013, surpassing the annual average growth rate of 190,000 jobs per month. As Table 1 shows, the unemployment rate was unchanged at 7.3% overall and 9.1% for Latinos. The effects of the 16-day government shutdown, which ended on October 16, are visible in the 448,000 person increase in individuals who were unemployed due to temporary layoff. The White House Council of Economic Advisors estimates that the U.S. economy lost 120,000 jobs as a result of uncertainty, lower production and consumption, and slower job creation related to the shutdown and political brinkmanship over the federal debt limit.²

Table 1. The Employment Situation for Latino Workers in October 2013

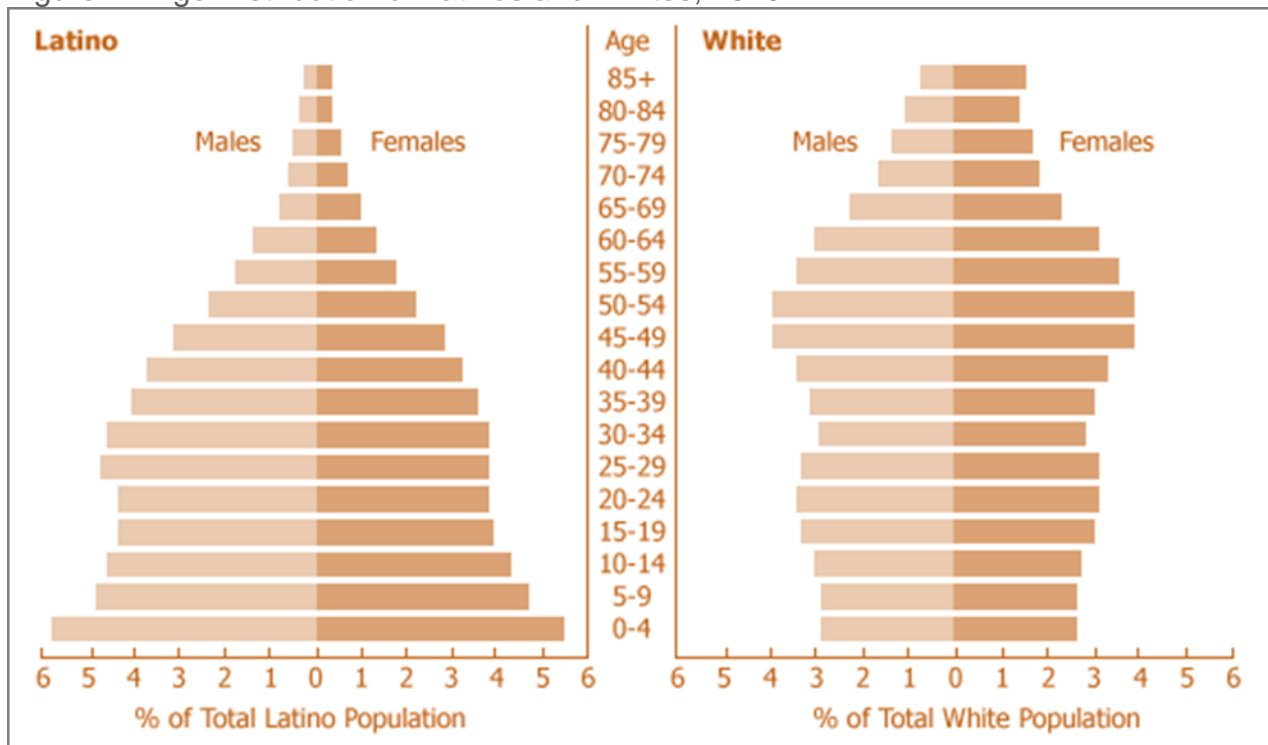
Indicators	Latinos, October 2013
Employed — <i>Working people over the age of 16, including those temporarily absent from their jobs</i>	22.6 million
Unemployed — <i>Those who are available to work, make an effort to find a job, or expect to be called back from a layoff but are not working</i>	2.3 million
Civilian Labor Force — <i>The sum of employed and unemployed people</i>	24.8 million
Not in the Labor Force — <i>People over the age of 16 classified as neither employed nor unemployed</i>	13 million
Unemployment Rate — <i>Share of the labor force that is unemployed</i>	9.1%
Labor Force Participation Rate — <i>Share of the population over the age of 16 that is in the labor force</i>	65.6%
Employment-Population Ratio — <i>Share of the population over the age of 16 that is working</i>	59.7%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Status of the Hispanic or Latino Population by Sex and Age," *Current Population Survey*. <http://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab3.htm> (accessed October 22, 2013), Table A-3.

Young Workforce, Aging Population

Latinos currently account for 15.7% of the American workforce and are poised to make up one in three workers by 2050.³ Meanwhile, retiring baby boomers will leave an estimated 32.4 million openings in the workforce over the next decade that will need to be filled by well-trained workers.⁴ Figure 1 illustrates the age distribution of Latinos and Whites. The highest rates of growth in the Hispanic population can be seen in children and youth under the age of 18; between 2000 and 2010, the growth rate for Latinos under age 18 was 28%, while the rate of change in the same period for non-Hispanic youth decreased by 5%.⁵

Figure 1. Age Distribution of Latinos and Whites, 2010



Source: 2009 American Community Survey sample in Rogelio Saenz, Population Bulletin Update: Latinos in the United States 2010, (Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau, 2010), www.prb.org/Publications/PopulationBulletins/2010/latinosupdate1.aspx (accessed December 2011).

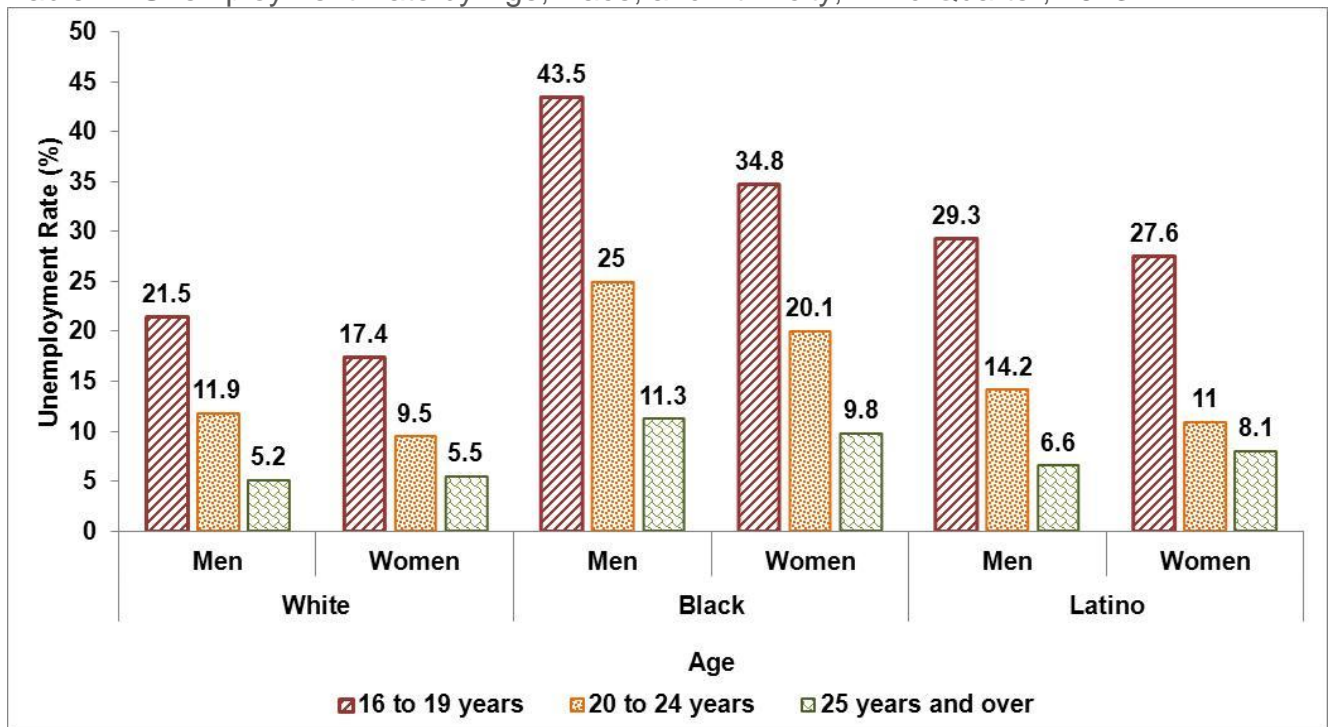
Latino Youth Face Elevated Unemployment

In addition to earning an income to provide for daily needs, work experience goes hand in hand with educational attainment as a determinant of an individual's economic security and future career prospects. For these reasons, elevated levels of unemployment for young people, especially the rapidly growing Latino population, threatens the long-term success of Latino workers and the U.S. economy.

Table 2 examines quarterly unemployment rates for workers by age cohort. Several observations are apparent from the data, which merit closer examination:

- **Workers younger than 25 years old face significantly higher unemployment rates compared to their older peers.** Teenagers from 16 to 19 years old are roughly three times more likely to be unemployed than all workers older than 16 years. Among this age cohort, White women have the lowest unemployment rate (17.4%) and Black men have the highest (43.5%).
- **Latino and Black young people face much higher unemployment rates than their White peers.** This is true for teenagers ages 16–19 and for young adults ages 20–24. Men of color in each age cohort are more likely to be unemployed than women.
- **Latina women ages 20–24 are nearly on par with their White counterparts.** Compared to a disparity of nearly 10 percentage points between White and Latina teenagers, Latina women ages 20–24 are unemployed at a rate of 11%, compared to 9.5% of White women in that age group. This is the smallest disparity in the under-25 age cohorts shown below. In contrast to their older peers, young Hispanic women are less likely to be unemployed than young Hispanic men.

Table 2. Unemployment Rate by Age, Race, and Ethnicity, Third Quarter, 2013



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013 Quarterly Averages 2013, *Current Population Survey*. www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cpsee_e16.htm (accessed November 6, 2013). Data is not seasonally adjusted.

Unique Challenges for Young Latino Workers

As more Hispanic young adults enter the workforce each year, it is increasingly important for policies to address the barriers they face in accessing and maintaining employment. Low educational attainment impedes a significant number of young Latinos from accessing full-time, well-paying jobs with career paths. In 2008, only 57.6% of Latino children who entered ninth

grade completed twelfth grade with a regular diploma, compared to 78.4% of White children and 82.7% of Asian youth.⁶ Hispanics who enroll in postsecondary education often receive less financial aid, placing an even greater burden on Latino college students to work to finance their own education or to drop out of college.⁷ Other difficult life circumstances put some young Latinos at a greater disadvantage in the labor market. Prevalent issues include tenuous immigration status, language barriers, low income, discrimination,⁸ pregnancy and parenting, lack of housing, involvement in the foster care system, and an overwhelming representation in the juvenile justice system.⁹ Important differences exist between subgroups, particularly between native-born and foreign-born Latinos.¹⁰

Conclusion

This statistical snapshot raises important questions about the causes of high unemployment for young Latinos. In order to craft appropriate policy and programmatic interventions to improve employment outcomes, more quantitative and qualitative research is needed. For instance, it is important to measure and document the effects of factors such as education and parental income on young Latinos' employment status. Important differences may exist depending on sex, occupation, region, and nativity. A more comprehensive understanding of this segment of the American workforce is an economic imperative for the nation.

[Sign up](#) to receive NCLR's *Monthly Latino Employment Report* in your inbox.

Get the latest news and trends in the Hispanic workforce by following us on [Twitter](#).

Endnotes

¹ Mitra Toossi, "Projections of the labor force to 2050: a visual essay," *Monthly Labor Review*. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Washington, DC, 2012, www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2012/10/art1full.pdf (accessed October 2013).

² White House Council of Economic Advisors, "Economic Activity During the Government Shutdown and Debt Limit Brinksmanship," Washington, DC, October 2013, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/10/22/economic-activity-during-government-shutdown-and-debt-limit-brinksmanship> (accessed October 2013).

³ Mitra Toossi, "Projections of the labor force to 2050: A visual essay." *Monthly Labor Review*. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Washington, DC, 2012, www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2012/10/art1full.pdf (accessed October 2013).

⁴ Anthony P. Carnevale, Jeff Strohl, and Nicole Smith, *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2010), www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/FullReport.pdf (accessed March 1, 2011).

⁵ NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Table P2: Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino by Race," "American FactFinder," 2010 Census National Redistricting Data SF, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml> (accessed March 2011); and U.S. Census Bureau, "Table: P4 Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino by Race for the Population 18 Years and Over," "American FactFinder," 2010 Census National Redistricting Data SF, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml> (accessed March 2011); and NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Table QT-PL: Race, Hispanic or Latino, and Age, 2000," "American FactFinder," 2000 Census Redistricting Data SF (PL 94-171), <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml> (accessed April 2011).

⁶ Education Counts Research Center Database, "Graduation Rate for Hispanic Students Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI), 2008" <http://www.edcounts.org/createtable/viewtable.php> (accessed June 2011).

⁷ Sara L. Dolan, *Missing Out: Latino Students in America's Schools* (Washington, DC: National Council of La Raza, 2009).

⁸ Patricia Foxen, *Speaking Out: Latino Youth on Discrimination in the United States* (Washington, DC: National Council of La Raza, 2010), http://www.nclr.org/index.php/publications/speaking_out_latino_youth_on_discrimination_in_the_united_states/ (accessed December 2011).

⁹ Marlene Sallo, *School-to-Prison Pipeline: Zero Tolerance for Latino Youth* (Washington, DC: National Council of La Raza, 2011), http://www.nclr.org/index.php/publications/school-to-prison_pipeline_zero_tolerance_for_latino_youth/ (accessed December 2011).

¹⁰ For an in-depth demographic portrait of young Latinos and a comprehensive survey of their attitudes about education, work, and life, see *Between Two Worlds: How Young Latinos Come of Age in America* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, 2009), www.pewhispanic.org/2009/12/11/between-two-worlds-how-young-latinos-come-of-age-in-america/ (accessed December 2011).