

# Latinos in California Snapshot

Two out of every five Californians are Latino.\* The Latino community contributes to the state’s economy as well as social, cultural, and political development. Yet Latinos continue to face unequal challenges in education and wealth-building.

- Latino families earn \$0.50 for every \$1 that white families earn.<sup>1</sup>
- By 2040 a 13% homeownership gap is projected between Latino and white homeowners.<sup>2</sup>
- Latino students make up the majority of K-12 students but are the racial/ethnic group with the lowest high school graduation rates.<sup>3</sup>
- Latinos make up only 14% of Californians with a bachelor’s degree or higher according to the 2020 Census.

## Population

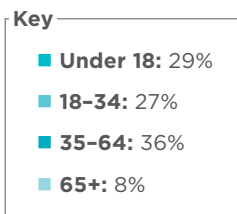
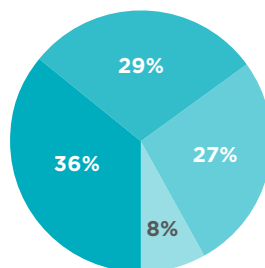
Latinos are the largest ethnic group in the state at 40% according to 2021 U.S. Census Bureau data. The Latino population grew by 11.2% between 2010 and 2020.



**By 2030, it is projected to increase to almost 17 million**, making up 41% of the state’s overall population.<sup>4</sup>

## Ages

2021 U.S. Census Bureau data indicates that 29% of the population in California account for Latinos over the age of 18.



\* The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau and throughout our materials 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. Our materials may also refer to this population as “Latinx” to represent the diversity of gender identities and expressions that are present in the community.



**Voting Power**

**Three in ten (30%) registered voters are Latino (4,565,900).<sup>5</sup>**

More than 3.2 million Latinos are expected to vote in 2022.<sup>6</sup> However, the power of the Latino vote has not been fully activated because only 52% of eligible Latino voters are registered to vote.<sup>7</sup>

**Where Latinos Live**

**Latinos make up the majority of the population in the following counties:** Imperial (85.2%), Tulare (65.5%), Merced (61.8%), Colusa (61.7%), San Benito (61.1%), and Monterey (60.4%).<sup>8</sup>

The counties with the largest Latino populations include Los Angeles (4.8 million), Riverside (1.2 million), San Bernardino (1.16 million), San Diego (1.12 million), and Orange (1.07 million).



**Economic Contributions**

**Labor Force Participation<sup>9</sup>**

Despite Latinos having the highest labor force participation rate of any racial or ethnic group in the state (58.6% compared to 57.1 % for white workers), Latinos continue to face inequities and hardships and as a result are more vulnerable to economic downturns. Some inequities are reflected in the median household income reported in 2021 U.S. Census Bureau data.

MEDIAN INCOME	
Latino	State Overall
\$70,081	\$84,907

- Latinos make up 55% of frontline essential workers compared to 35% of white workers. Additionally, Latinos are overrepresented in those occupations—such as farmworkers and janitors—with the highest percentages of low-wage work.<sup>10</sup>

**Economic Power**

**The size, growth, and age of the Latino community translates to significant contributions to the state’s economy:**

- \$83 billion in taxes with \$92 billion spending power<sup>11</sup>
- 650,000 jobs through Latino-owned businesses<sup>12</sup>
- \$100 billion to the economy annually<sup>13</sup>



## Wealth

As of 2016, in California the typical Hispanic family had only 6% of the wealth of a typical white family.<sup>14</sup> Wealth is an important indicator of financial security and stability. Homeownership, income, and retirement savings plans are three of the primary avenues by which Americans build wealth.

Home equity makes up the majority of wealth for low- and middle-income families, so gaps in homeownership rates magnify wealth inequality. Without significant interventions, projections show a 13% homeownership gap by 2040 between Latino and white homeowners.<sup>15</sup>

CALIFORNIA HOMEOWNERSHIP RATE			
Ethnicity	2020	2030	2040
Latino	45.9%	47.3%	48%
white	64%	63%	61.9%

## Education

California’s education system must adequately and equitably support the needs of Latino students, who make up the majority of K-12 students and nearly half of all college students.



### K-12

**In the 2020–2021 school year, 55.3% of all students in K-12 were Latino.<sup>16</sup>**

- In the 2021–2022 school year, 82% of the 1.1 million English learners in California public schools were Spanish speakers.<sup>17</sup>
- In the 2020–2021 school year, 80.5% of Latino students graduated from high school.<sup>18</sup>
- Latino students are the most socioeconomically disadvantaged ethnic group in the state.<sup>19</sup>
- According to the 2020 Census, 66% of all Latinos in the state graduated from high school. Overall, Latinos are the racial/ethnic group with the lowest high school graduation rates compared to 95% of whites, 90% of Blacks, and 88% of Asians.



### Higher Education

Latinos make up only 14% of Californians with had a bachelor's degree or higher according to the 2020 Census.<sup>20</sup>

#### A 2021 report revealed that in California:

- 1.39 million Latinos were enrolled in college.<sup>21</sup>
- 43% of all undergraduate students are Latino.<sup>22</sup>

### Immigrants

- Nearly half (49%) of the 10.5 million immigrants who live in California are of Hispanic or Latino origin according to the 2020 Census.
- According to the Center for Migration, in 2019 about 22% (2,251,756) of immigrants in California were undocumented.<sup>23</sup>
- Of the undocumented immigrants, 81.7% were Hispanic in 2019.<sup>24</sup>
- Nearly 30% of all Latinos in California are undocumented or living with someone who is undocumented.

## Endnotes

- 1 Sarah Bohn, Tess Thorman, and Joseph Herrera, *Income Inequality in California* (Sacramento: Public Policy Institute of California, July 2022) <https://www.ppic.org/publication/income-inequality-in-california/#:~:text=Black%20families%20earn%20%240.60%2C%20and,discrimination%20in%20the%20labor%20market> (accessed August 1, 2022).
- 2 Urban Institute, "Forecasting State and National Trends in Household Formation and Homeownership," <https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/housing-finance-policy-center/projects/forecasting-state-and-national-trends-household-formation-and-homeownership/california> (accessed August 10, 2022).
- 3 California Department of Education, "2020–21 Data Summary," <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/datasummary.asp> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 4 Lucy Pérez et al., *The economic state of Latinos in America: The American dream deferred* (New York: McKinsey & Company, December 9, 2021), <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/sustainable-inclusive-growth/the-economic-state-of-latinos-in-america-the-american-dream-deferred> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 5 Sonja Díaz, JD, MPP, Misael Galdámez, MCP, and Michael Rios, MPP, *Opportunities and Challenges Facing California with the 2021 California Recall* (Los Angeles: University of California Los Angeles, Latino Policy & Politics Initiative, July 14, 2021), <https://latino.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2021-California-Recall-Demographics-UCLA-LPPIsmall.pdf> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 6 NALEO Educational Fund, *The Latino Vote in Election 2022: National and State Projections* (Los Angeles: NALEO Educational Fund, February 2022), <https://naleo.org/COMMS/PRA/2022/2022-Projections-Final.pdf> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 7 Latino Community Foundation, "Mobilizing the Latino Vote," <https://latinocf.org/mobilizing-latino-vote/> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 8 Misael Galdámez, MCP and Michael Rios, MPP, *Multiracial and Multiethnic Growth in California* (Los Angeles: University of California Los Angeles, Latino Policy & Politics Initiative, August 19, 2021), <https://latino.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2020-Census-CA-Counties-PBM.pdf> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 9 UnidosUS tabulation of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021 preliminary annual averages, Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and detailed age, 2021 annual averages.
- 10 Sarah Thomason and Annette Bernhardt, "Front-line Essential Jobs in California: A Profile of Job and Worker Characteristics," *UC Berkeley Labor Center blog*, May 14, 2020, <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/front-line-essential-jobs-in-california-a-profile-of-job-and-worker-characteristics/> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 11 Latino Leadership Ad Hoc Group, Latino Community Foundation, *California for All: Opportunities to Make the California Dream Possible for All* (San Francisco: Latino Community Foundation, July 2020), <https://latinocf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/California-For-All-January-2020-Latino-Community-Foundation.pdf> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 National Council of La Raza (NCLR), *Latinos in the Golden State: An Analysis of Economic and Demographic Trends*, (September 2, 2016) <https://www.unidosus.org/publications/1678-latinos-in-the-golden-state-an-analysis-of-economic-and-demographic-trends/> (accessed July 7, 2022).
- 15 Urban Institute, "Forecasting State and National Trends in Household Formation and Homeownership," <https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/housing-finance-policy-center/projects/forecasting-state-and-national-trends-household-formation-and-homeownership/california> (accessed August 10, 2022).
- 16 California Department of Education, "Fingertip Facts on Education in California," <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/ceffingertipfacts.asp> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 17 California Department of Education, "Facts about English Learners in California," <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/cefelfacts.asp> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 18 California Department of Education, "2020–21 Data Summary," <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/datasummary.asp> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 19 Kendall Evans, "Commentary: UnidosUS Endorses California Propositions 15 and 16" (Washington, DC: UnidosUS, October 22, 2020), <https://www.unidosus.org/progress-report/commentary-unidosus-endorses-california-propositions-15-and-16/> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 20 U.S. Census Bureau, "Selected Educational Attainment: Profile in California: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates" (accessed July 7, 2022), Table S1501.
- 21 The Campaign for College Opportunity, *The State of Higher Education for Latinx Californians* (San Diego: November 2021), <https://collegecampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/FINAL-SHE-Latinx-web.pdf> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Center for Migration Studies, "State and National Data Tool: Estimates of Undocumented and Eligible-to-Naturalize Populations by State," <http://data.cmsny.org/> (accessed July 17, 2022).
- 24 Ibid.