

The Foreign Born From Latin America and the Caribbean: 2010

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INTRODUCTION

During the last 50 years, the number of foreign born from Latin America and the Caribbean has increased rapidly, from less than 1 million in 1960 to 21.2 million in 2010.¹ Currently, the foreign born from Latin America represent over half of the total foreign-born population. This brief will discuss the size, place of birth, citizenship status, and geographic distribution of the foreign born from Latin America in the United States. It presents data on the foreign born from Latin America at the national and state levels based on the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS).

¹ The term *Latin America and the Caribbean* includes countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean. *Central America* includes Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. *South America* includes Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Falkland Islands, French Guiana, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela. *Caribbean* includes Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, the former country of Guadeloupe (including St. Barthélemy and Saint-Martin), Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Montserrat, the former country of the Netherlands Antilles (including Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius, and Sint Maarten), St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands. Note that people born in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are native born to the United States and are not included in the list of countries in the Caribbean. Throughout the remainder of this report, the term *Latin America* refers to all of these areas.

Defining Nativity Status: Who Is Foreign Born?

Nativity status refers to whether a person is native or foreign born. The native-born population includes anyone who was a U.S. citizen at birth. Respondents who were born in the United States, Puerto Rico, a U.S. Island Area (U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands), or abroad of a U.S. citizen parent or parents, are defined as native born. The foreign-born population includes anyone who was not a U.S. citizen at birth, including those who have become U.S. citizens through naturalization.

In 2010, 309.3 million people lived in the United States, including 40.0 million foreign born (13 percent of the total population). In 2000, 31.1 million of the 281.4 million U.S. residents were foreign born—11 percent of the total population.² Over the decade, the foreign-born population increased by 8.8 million.

Over half (53 percent) of all foreign-born U.S. residents in 2010 were from Latin America (Table 1). Another 28 percent were from Asia. The next largest world region-of-birth group, the foreign born

² Gibson, Campbell and Kay Jung. 2006. "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 1850 to 2000." U.S. Census Bureau: Population Division Working Paper, Number 81 available on the Census Bureau's Web site at <www.census.gov/population/www/techpap.html>.

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from Europe, represented 12 percent of all foreign born—less than half the size of the foreign born from Asia. About 4 percent of the foreign born were born in Africa and 3 percent were from other regions, including Oceania and Northern America. The single largest country-of-birth group was from Mexico (29 percent of all foreign born).

FINDINGS

In 2000, 16.1 million foreign born from Latin America lived in the United States. Over the last 10 years, the foreign-born population from Latin America increased by 5.1 million, reaching 21.2 million in 2010.

The majority of the foreign born from Latin America were from Central America (70 percent), followed by the Caribbean (18 percent), and South America (13 percent) (Table 2). Mexico accounted for more than half (55 percent) of the foreign born from Latin America. El Salvador and Cuba each represented more than 5 percent. Among the foreign born from the Caribbean, those born in Cuba (30 percent) and the Dominican Republic (24 percent) represented the largest proportion of all foreign born. Over three-fourths of all foreign born from Central America were born in Mexico (79 percent). Colombia represented the largest share of the foreign born from South America (23 percent).

Although the foreign born from Latin America were found across the country, most were concentrated in only a few states. In 2010, 26 percent (or 5.5 million) of the foreign born from Latin America lived in California, 14 percent (or 3.0 million) in Texas, 13 percent (or 2.8 million)

Table 1.

Foreign-Born Population by Region of Birth: 2010

(Numbers in thousands. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www)

Region of birth	Number		Percent	
	Estimate	Margin of error (±) ¹	Estimate	Margin of error (±) ¹
Total	39,956	115	100.0	(X)
Africa	1,607	33	4.0	0.1
Asia	11,284	47	28.2	0.1
Europe	4,817	44	12.1	0.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	21,224	90	53.1	0.1
Caribbean	3,731	42	9.3	0.1
Central America	14,764	90	36.9	0.2
Mexico	11,711	83	29.3	0.2
Other Central America ²	3,053	46	7.6	0.1
South America	2,730	42	6.8	0.1
Other regions ³	1,024	19	2.6	—

— Represents or rounds to zero.

(X) Not applicable.

¹ Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error is in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to and subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

² Other Central America includes Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

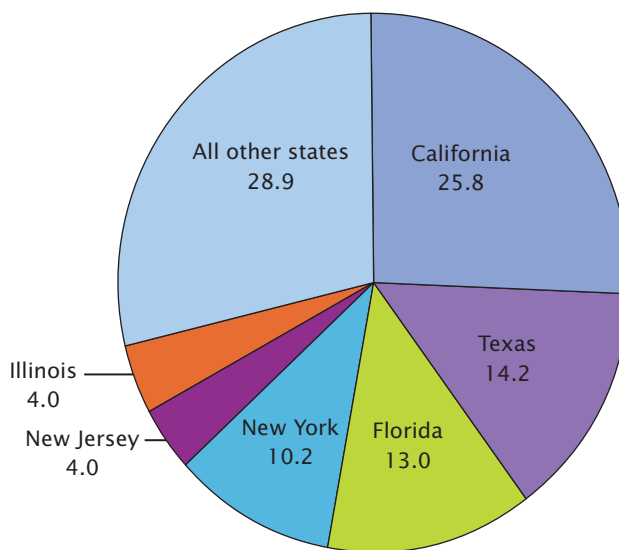
³ Other regions includes Oceania and Northern America.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey.

Figure 1.

Distribution of the Latin American and Caribbean Foreign Born by State: 2010

(Percent distribution. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey.

Table 2.

Foreign-Born Population From Latin America and the Caribbean by Country of Birth: 2010

(Numbers in thousands. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www)

Region and country of birth	Number		Percent of total		Percent of region	
	Estimate	Margin of error (±) ¹	Estimate	Margin of error (±) ¹	Estimate	Margin of error (±) ¹
Total	21,224	90	100.0	(X)	(X)	(X)
Caribbean	3,731	42	17.6	0.2	100.0	(X)
Cuba	1,105	27	5.2	0.1	29.6	0.6
Dominican Republic	879	24	4.1	0.1	23.6	0.6
Haiti	587	21	2.8	0.1	15.7	0.6
Jamaica	660	20	3.1	0.1	17.7	0.5
Other Caribbean ²	500	17	2.4	0.1	13.4	0.4
Central America	14,764	90	69.6	0.2	100.0	(X)
Mexico	11,711	83	55.2	0.3	79.3	0.3
El Salvador	1,214	34	5.7	0.2	8.2	0.2
Guatemala	831	29	3.9	0.1	5.6	0.2
Honduras	523	24	2.5	0.1	3.5	0.2
Other Central America ³	485	17	2.3	0.1	3.3	0.1
South America	2,730	42	12.9	0.2	100.0	(X)
Brazil	340	15	1.6	0.1	12.4	0.5
Colombia	637	19	3.0	0.1	23.3	0.6
Ecuador	443	20	2.1	0.1	16.2	0.6
Peru	429	18	2.0	0.1	15.7	0.6
Other South America ⁴	882	23	4.2	0.1	32.3	0.7

(X) Not applicable.

¹ Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error is in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to and subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

² Other Caribbean includes Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, the former country of Guadeloupe (including St. Barthélemy and Saint-Martin), Martinique, Montserrat, the former country of the Netherlands Antilles (including Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius, and Sint Maarten), St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

³ Other Central America includes Belize, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama.

⁴ Other South America includes Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Falkland Islands, French Guiana, Guyana, Paraguay, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey.

in Florida, and 10 percent (or 2.2 million) in New York (Figure 1). When combined, these four states accounted for 63 percent (or 13.4 million) of the total Latin American foreign born.

In 19 states, the foreign-born population from Latin America composed over half of the state's foreign-born population (Figure 2). In the South and West, the foreign-born population from Latin America represented 65 percent or more of the total foreign-born population in Arizona, Arkansas,

Florida, New Mexico, and Texas.

In Florida and New Mexico, approximately 75 percent of the foreign-born population were born in Latin America. In just nine states, the foreign-born population from Latin America represented less than 25 percent of the foreign-born population. In Maine and North Dakota, they were approximately 10 percent. In Hawaii, they were less than 10 percent.

In over three-fourths of all states and the District of Columbia, the foreign-born populations from

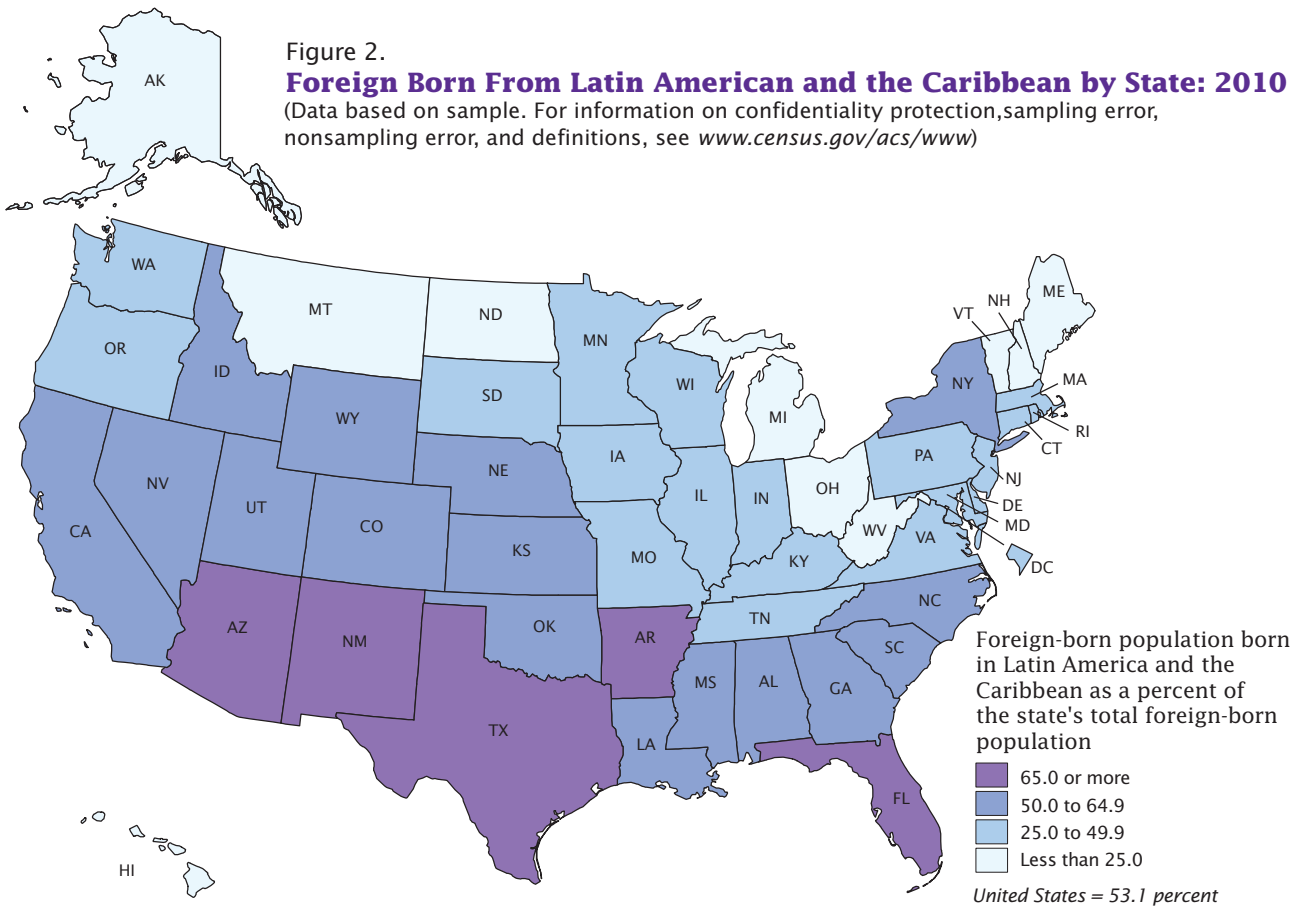
Central America represented more than half of the Latin American foreign born (Table 3). The foreign born from Mexico represented about 9 out of 10 foreign born from Latin America in New Mexico, Arizona, and Idaho. The foreign born from the Caribbean represented about one-third of the Latin American foreign born in seven states. Two of these states—Florida (55 percent) and New York (49 percent)—each have Latin American foreign-born populations of 2 million or more.

In 2010, 32 percent of the foreign-born population from Latin America were naturalized citizens (Table 4). The foreign-born population from Central America had the lowest percent naturalized of all regions of birth (24 percent). Of those born in the Caribbean, 54 percent were naturalized citizens. About 44 percent of the foreign born from South America were naturalized citizens. Among the country-of-birth groups shown, Jamaica (61 percent) and Cuba (56 percent) had the highest percent naturalized. By comparison, Mexico (23 percent) and Honduras (21 percent) were among the countries with the lowest percent naturalized.

SOURCE AND ACCURACY

Data presented in this report are based on people and households that responded to the ACS in 2010. The resulting estimates are representative of the entire population. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. Due to rounding, some details may not sum to totals. For information on sampling and estimation methods, confidentiality protection, and sampling and

Figure 2.
Foreign Born From Latin America and the Caribbean by State: 2010
 (Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey.

nonsampling errors, please see the “2010 ACS Accuracy of the Data” document located at www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2010.pdf.

WHAT IS THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY?

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to provide

communities with reliable and timely demographic, social, economic, and housing data for the nation, states, congressional districts, counties, places, and other localities every year. It has an annual sample size of about 3 million addresses across the United States and Puerto Rico and includes both housing units and group quarters (e.g., nursing facilities and prisons). The ACS is conducted in every county throughout the

nation, and every municipio in Puerto Rico, where it is called the Puerto Rico Community Survey. Beginning in 2006, ACS data for 2005 were released for geographic areas with populations 65,000 and greater. For information on the ACS sample design and other topics, visit www.census.gov/acs/www.

Table 3.

Percent Distribution of the Foreign Born From Latin America and the Caribbean by Region of Birth and State: 2010

(Numbers in thousands. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www)

Area	Latin America		Caribbean		Central America						South America	
	Number	Margin of error (±) ²	Percent of total	Margin of error (±) ²	Total		Mexico		Other Central America ¹		Percent of total	Margin of error (±) ²
					Percent of total	Margin of error (±) ²	Percent of total	Margin of error (±) ²	Percent of total	Margin of error (±) ²		
United States . . .	21,224	90	17.6	0.2	69.6	0.2	55.2	0.3	14.4	0.2	12.9	0.2
Alabama	98	5	5.4	1.6	86.8	2.6	70.0	3.8	16.7	3.5	7.8	2.1
Alaska	9	2	16.4	9.3	68.0	9.0	56.2	11.5	11.8	8.2	15.6	6.2
Arizona	572	13	2.2	0.5	94.9	0.7	90.4	1.0	4.5	0.9	2.9	0.5
Arkansas	88	5	1.7	0.9	94.4	1.6	73.4	3.6	21.0	3.6	3.9	1.5
California	5,477	43	1.3	0.1	94.4	0.2	78.8	0.5	15.6	0.4	4.4	0.2
Colorado	275	11	2.4	0.6	93.1	1.0	84.5	1.7	8.6	1.4	4.5	0.9
Connecticut	205	11	36.3	2.6	26.2	3.0	10.2	1.9	16.0	2.7	37.5	3.2
Delaware	34	3	16.5	4.1	65.9	6.3	49.7	7.9	16.2	5.6	17.6	5.4
District of Columbia	36	3	20.8	4.8	59.8	6.7	10.8	5.1	49.0	7.5	19.4	5.1
Florida	2,752	30	55.1	0.9	21.5	0.8	9.6	0.5	11.9	0.6	23.4	0.7
Georgia	515	12	16.4	1.3	72.5	1.5	56.3	2.0	16.2	1.6	11.1	1.0
Hawaii	13	3	14.7	7.9	55.6	9.0	41.0	9.1	14.6	5.8	29.7	7.9
Idaho	54	4	1.2	0.9	93.4	2.0	88.2	3.1	5.2	3.1	5.4	1.8
Illinois	842	16	3.0	0.4	90.2	0.9	84.1	1.1	6.1	0.8	6.8	0.8
Indiana	143	6	4.9	1.1	89.2	1.8	76.9	2.6	12.3	2.1	5.9	1.4
Iowa	60	4	2.1	1.2	91.0	2.6	75.0	4.4	16.0	3.8	6.9	2.5
Kansas	106	6	1.0	0.5	94.0	1.5	83.8	2.5	10.2	2.5	5.0	1.4
Kentucky	60	4	16.3	3.3	76.0	3.9	60.7	4.8	15.3	3.7	7.8	2.1
Louisiana	93	5	11.3	2.4	79.2	2.8	32.6	3.5	46.6	3.6	9.5	2.4
Maine	4	1	34.5	12.6	25.2	14.0	11.8	10.9	13.4	8.8	40.4	14.2
Maryland	312	9	16.9	1.6	63.0	1.9	11.3	1.5	51.7	2.5	20.1	1.7
Massachusetts	356	13	42.6	2.1	24.0	1.9	4.4	0.9	19.6	1.9	33.4	2.1
Michigan	118	7	11.9	2.2	78.3	2.9	67.7	3.5	10.6	2.1	9.8	1.7
Minnesota	104	5	4.7	1.4	77.5	3.1	63.4	3.7	14.1	2.7	17.8	2.8
Mississippi	32	3	8.9	4.4	78.5	5.5	64.3	6.5	14.3	5.1	12.5	4.9
Missouri	72	6	11.9	3.0	77.2	3.6	62.5	4.2	14.7	3.2	10.9	2.5
Montana	2	1	6.7	6.7	45.0	16.2	41.5	17.3	3.6	4.5	48.3	16.1
Nebraska	61	4	1.9	1.1	94.2	1.8	75.0	4.8	19.3	4.7	3.9	1.6
Nevada	291	8	6.7	1.0	88.4	1.4	75.1	1.8	13.3	1.7	5.0	0.9
New Hampshire	14	3	31.4	9.9	35.2	11.0	20.8	11.0	14.4	6.0	33.5	10.8
New Jersey	852	15	32.4	1.5	30.9	1.3	15.2	1.1	15.6	1.1	36.8	1.5
New Mexico	163	9	2.2	0.7	95.1	1.4	91.4	1.6	3.7	1.3	2.7	1.0
New York	2,155	28	49.3	0.9	23.9	0.9	11.7	0.8	12.1	0.7	26.8	0.8
North Carolina	414	11	7.1	1.2	83.2	1.5	63.5	2.3	19.7	1.8	9.7	1.1
North Dakota	1	1	25.4	17.6	63.7	18.4	50.7	18.5	13.0	13.9	10.9	8.9
Ohio	101	6	13.7	3.6	70.3	4.3	53.8	4.8	16.5	3.0	16.0	3.1
Oklahoma	121	6	1.6	0.9	93.4	1.7	83.3	2.8	10.1	2.4	5.0	1.5
Oregon	175	8	2.2	0.8	94.0	1.1	86.2	2.0	7.9	2.0	3.7	0.8
Pennsylvania	221	11	39.6	2.8	38.2	2.7	26.7	2.3	11.5	1.7	22.2	2.3
Rhode Island	60	4	45.4	5.3	36.1	4.9	6.9	2.5	29.2	4.8	18.5	4.7
South Carolina	120	6	7.6	1.8	81.6	2.8	57.8	4.0	23.8	3.8	10.7	2.1
South Dakota	6	1	1.5	1.9	87.0	6.2	64.1	15.4	22.9	14.8	11.5	6.0
Tennessee	143	7	5.3	1.4	87.4	2.4	63.3	4.7	24.1	3.8	7.3	1.7
Texas	3,013	35	2.0	0.2	94.0	0.3	82.5	0.5	11.5	0.5	4.0	0.3
Utah	139	6	1.6	0.9	82.5	2.4	73.8	2.7	8.8	1.7	15.9	2.3
Vermont	3	1	18.0	11.9	40.1	20.5	33.7	22.0	6.5	5.7	41.9	15.7
Virginia	338	9	8.5	1.1	63.7	2.1	19.1	2.3	44.6	2.6	27.8	2.1
Washington	277	8	2.0	0.5	91.5	1.1	84.2	1.6	7.4	1.1	6.4	1.0
West Virginia	5	1	21.5	9.7	57.7	11.7	22.9	8.9	34.8	13.0	20.8	10.0
Wisconsin	110	6	3.7	1.0	88.1	2.3	80.3	2.5	7.7	1.8	8.2	2.0
Wyoming	9	2	—	—	84.4	9.5	75.1	10.3	9.3	6.7	15.6	9.5

— Represents or rounds to zero.

¹ Other Central America includes Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

² Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error is in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to and subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey.

Table 4.

Percent of the Foreign Born From Latin America and the Caribbean Who Are Naturalized U.S. Citizens by Place of Birth: 2010

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www)

Region and country of birth	Percent	
	Estimate	Margin of error (\pm) ¹
Total	32.1	0.3
Caribbean	54.1	0.6
Cuba	55.7	1.2
Dominican Republic	47.7	1.4
Haiti	50.0	1.6
Jamaica	61.2	1.5
Other Caribbean ²	57.7	1.6
Central America	24.3	0.3
Mexico	22.9	0.3
El Salvador	27.9	1.0
Guatemala	24.1	1.3
Honduras	21.1	1.4
Other Central America ³	52.1	1.5
South America	44.4	0.6
Brazil	28.2	1.7
Colombia	48.2	1.3
Ecuador	40.7	1.8
Peru	43.2	1.7
Other South America ⁴	50.3	1.1

¹ Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error is in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to and subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

² Other Caribbean includes Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, the former country of Guadeloupe (including St. Barthélemy and Saint-Martin), Martinique, Montserrat, the former country of the Netherlands Antilles (including Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius, and Sint Maarten), St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

³ Other Central America includes Belize, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama.

⁴ Other South America includes Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Falkland Islands, French Guiana, Guyana, Paraguay, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey.