

The Hispanic Population in the United States

Population Characteristics

March
1999

Issued February 2000

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This report provides statistics on the civilian noninstitutional Hispanic population of the United States, based on the March 1999 Current Population Survey (CPS).¹ Data are presented for the total Latino population and for specific ethnicities, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban origin.² Comparable data for the overall population and the non-Hispanic White population are also included. The social and economic characteristics presented are educational attainment, employment status, marital and family composition, and poverty status.³

Population Size and Composition

One of nine people in the United States is of Hispanic Origin.

The March 1999 estimate of the Hispanic population in the United States was 31.7 million or 11.7 percent of the total

population.⁴ Nearly two-thirds of all Hispanics were of Mexican origin (65.2 percent). People of Puerto Rican origin accounted for 9.6 percent of the total Hispanic population, while people of Cuban origin, Central and South American origin, and Other Hispanics each accounted for 4.3 percent, 14.3 percent, and 6.6 percent, respectively (see Figure 1).

Educational Attainment

Hispanics are less likely to have a high school diploma than non-Hispanic Whites.

In March 1999, 27.8 percent of Hispanics 25 years of age and older had less than a 9th grade education, 56.1 percent had a high school diploma or more, and about 10.9 percent had graduated from college

⁴Puerto Rico is not included in the Current Population Survey.

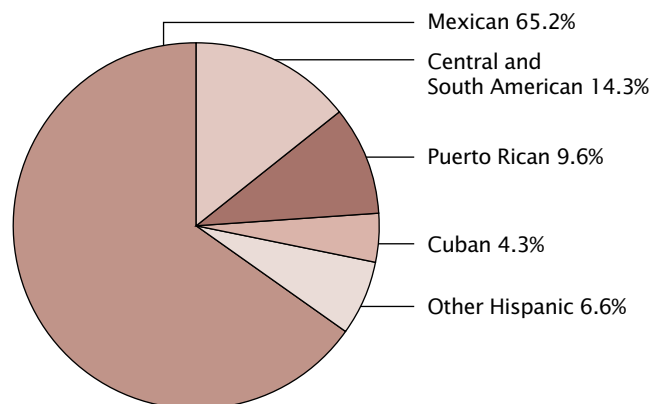
¹The population universe in the March 1999 CPS is the civilian noninstitutional population of the United States and members of the Armed Forces in the United States living off post or with their families on post, but excludes all other members of the Armed Forces.

²Hispanics may be of any race. In addition, being of a particular origin (such as Mexican) is determined by the respondent; some were born in Mexico, while others are of that heritage. Finally, the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably in this report to reflect the new terminology in the standards issued by the Office of Management and Budget in 1997 that are to be implemented by January 1, 2003.

(For more information, please refer to "Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity," Federal Register, Vol. 62, No. 280, October 30, 1997, pp. 58782-58790).

³Data on poverty in this report refers to the calendar year before the survey. For example, income information collected in March 1999 refers to calendar year 1998.

Figure 1.
Hispanics, by Type of Origin: 1999



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

Current Population Reports

By
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with a bachelor's degree or more. In comparison, about 4.5 percent of non-Hispanic Whites had less than a 9th grade education, 87.7 percent had a high school diploma or more, and 27.7 percent had a bachelor's degree or more.

Among Latino groups, people of Mexican origin had the lowest proportion with a high school diploma or more (49.7 percent), compared with Puerto Ricans (63.9 percent), Cubans (70.3 percent), Central and South Americans (64.0 percent), and Other Hispanics (71.1 percent). On the other hand, Cubans had the highest proportion of people with a bachelor's degree or more (24.8 percent), compared with 7.1 percent for Mexicans, 11.1 percent for Puerto Ricans, 18.0 percent for Central and South Americans, and finally, 15.0 percent for Other Hispanics (see Figure 2).⁵

Employment Characteristics

Over seven in ten Latino men are in the Civilian Labor Force.

The civilian labor force participation rate in March 1999 of Hispanic people 16 years and older is not significantly different from that of non-Hispanic Whites (67.0 percent compared with 67.1 percent).⁶ Hispanic men, however, were engaged in the labor force at a higher rate

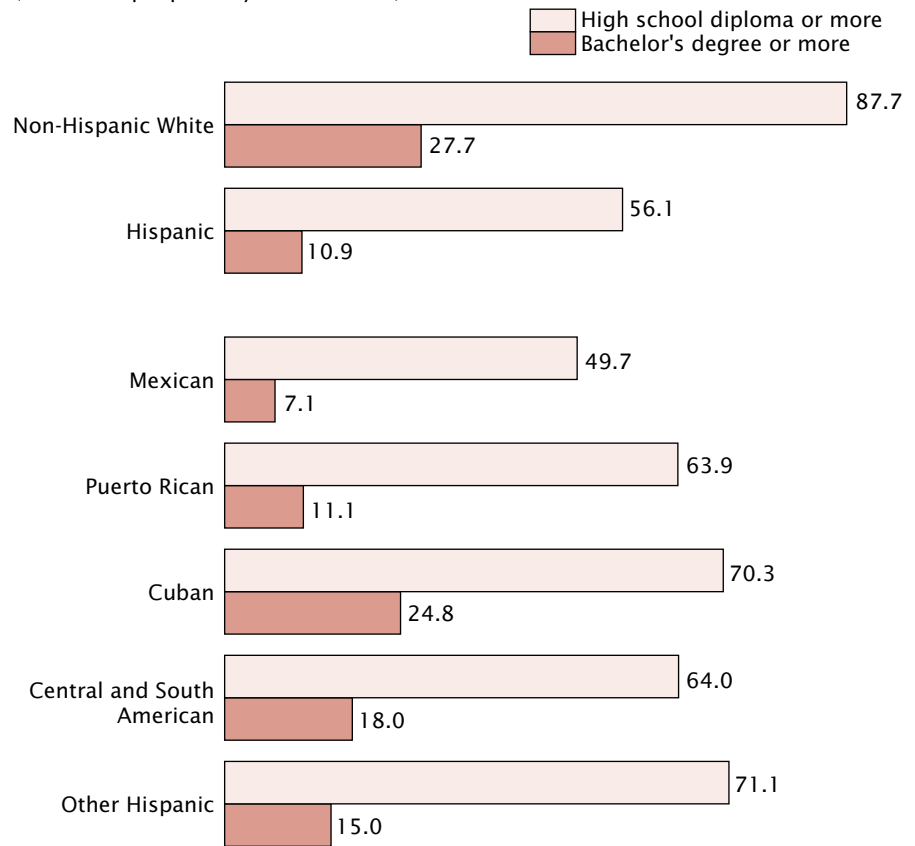
⁵The percentages of Puerto Ricans and Central and South Americans with a high school diploma or more were not significantly different from each other. In addition, the percentages of Cubans and Other Hispanics with a high school diploma or more were not significantly different from each other. Finally, the percentages of Other Hispanics and Central and South Americans with a bachelor's degree or more were not significantly different from each other.

⁶Civilian labor force data shown in this report reflect characteristics of the civilian noninstitutional population for March 1999 and are not adjusted for seasonal changes. Data released by the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, may not agree entirely with data shown in this report because of differences in methodological procedures and their seasonal adjustment of the data.

than non-Hispanic White men (78.4 percent compared with 74.3 percent). In contrast, Hispanic women participated in the labor

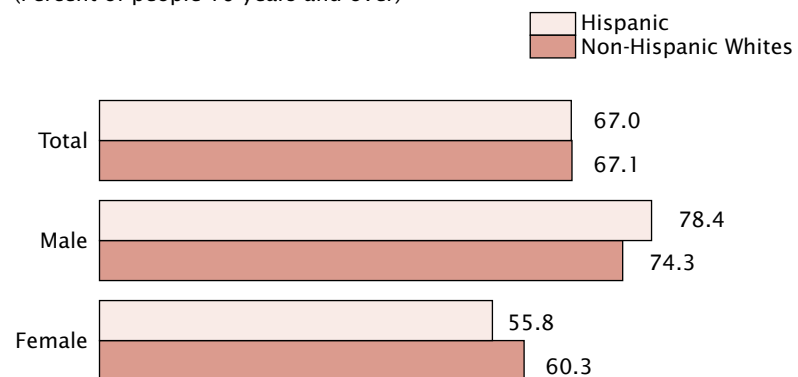
force at a rate lower than non-Hispanic White women (55.8 percent compared with 60.3 percent, as shown in Figure 3).

Figure 2.
Educational Attainment: March 1999
(Percent of people 25 years and over)



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

Figure 3.
Labor Force Participation: March 1999
(Percent of people 16 years and over)



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

Hispanics are more likely to be unemployed than non-Hispanic Whites.

In March 1999, the unemployment rate for Hispanics 16 years of age and older in the civilian labor force was 6.7 percent, compared with 3.6 percent for non-Hispanic Whites. The unemployment rates for Hispanic men and women were higher than for non-Hispanic Whites — 6.0 percent compared

with 3.8 percent for men and 7.6 percent compared with 3.3 percent for women.

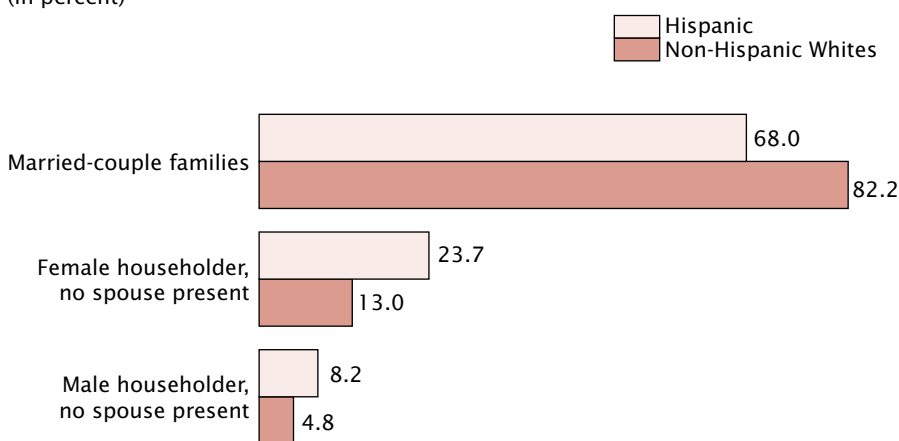
Marital Status and Family Composition

Latinos are less likely to be married than non-Hispanic Whites.

The marital status of Hispanics, 15 years of age and older in March

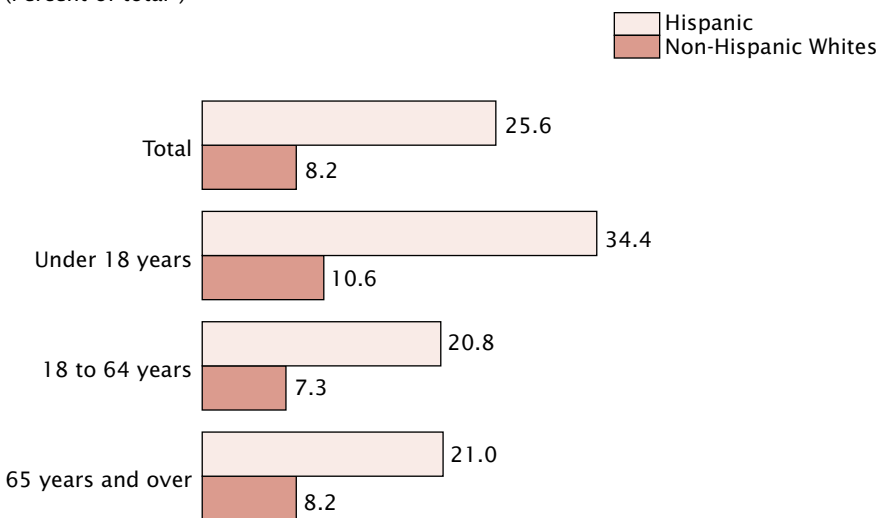
1999, differed from that of non-Hispanic Whites. Hispanics were more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to be never married (33.9 percent compared with 24.4 percent). In addition, Hispanics were less likely than non-Hispanic Whites to be married⁷ (55.3 percent compared with 59.2 percent), widowed (3.7 percent compared with 6.8 percent), or divorced (7.1 percent compared with 9.6 percent).

Figure 4.
Type of Family by Hispanic Origin: March 1999
(In percent)



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

Figure 5.
People Below the Poverty Level: 1998
(Percent of total*)



*Excludes unrelated individuals under 15 years.
Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

Hispanic families are more likely than non-Hispanic White families to have a female householder with no spouse present.

The composition of Hispanic families also differed from that of non-Hispanic White families in March 1999. About 68.0 percent of Hispanic families were married-couple families, compared with 82.2 percent of non-Hispanic White families. Families maintained by a female householder with no spouse present represented 23.7 percent of all Hispanic families, compared with 13.0 percent of non-Hispanic White families. Families maintained by a male householder with no spouse present represented about 8.2 percent of Hispanic families, compared with 4.8 percent of non-Hispanic White families (see Figure 4).

Poverty

Poverty is three times as common among Hispanics as among non-Hispanic Whites.

Based on 1998 income figures, people of Hispanic origin were three times as likely as non-Hispanic Whites to be living below the poverty level (25.6 percent compared with 8.2 percent, as shown in Figure 5). People of

⁷Includes both "spouse absent" and "separated."

Hispanic origin represented about 11.7 percent of the total population but constituted 23.4 percent of all people living in poverty. Of all Latino people in poverty, about one-half were children under 18 (47.5 percent); 48.0 percent were between the ages of 18 and 64 years, while about 4.4 percent were 65 years and over.⁸

Among Latino groups, the poverty rate ranged from 30.9 percent among Puerto Ricans to 13.6 percent among Cubans.⁹ Cubans had the lowest poverty rate among all the Hispanic groups.

Latino children are more likely to be living in poverty than non-Hispanic White children.

Based on 1998 income figures, 34.4 percent of Hispanic children under 18 years of age were living in poverty, compared with only 10.6 percent of non-Hispanic White children (see Figure 6). Hispanic children represented 15.7 percent of all children in the United States but constituted over one-fourth (28.5 percent) of all children in poverty.

Hispanic families are more likely than non-Hispanic White families to be living below the poverty level.

Based on 1998 income figures, Hispanic families were more than three times as likely to be living in poverty as non-Hispanic White families (22.7 percent compared with 6.1 percent).

⁸The poverty rates of Hispanics under 18 and of Hispanics ages 18 to 64 were not significantly different from each other.

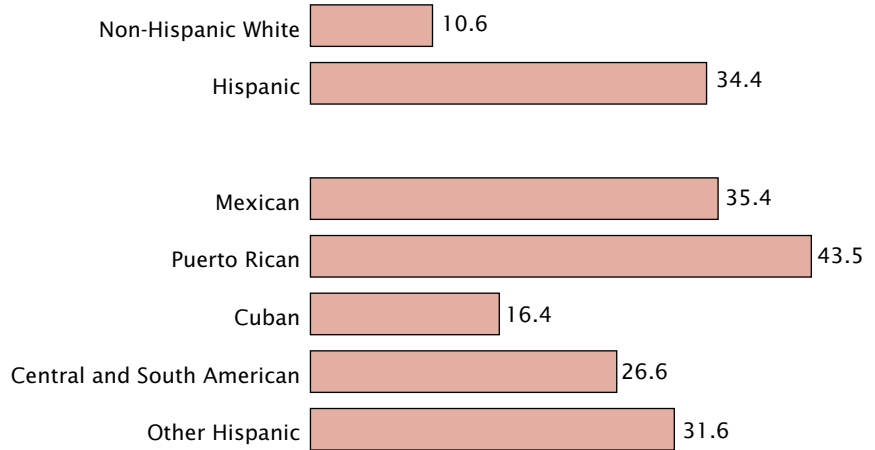
⁹The percentages of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans in poverty were not significantly different from each other.

Among Latino groups, the poverty rate ranged from 26.7 percent among Puerto Rican families to 11.0 percent among Cuban families. Still, the poverty rate of Cuban families was about twice as

high as that of non-Hispanic White families (see Figure 7).¹⁰

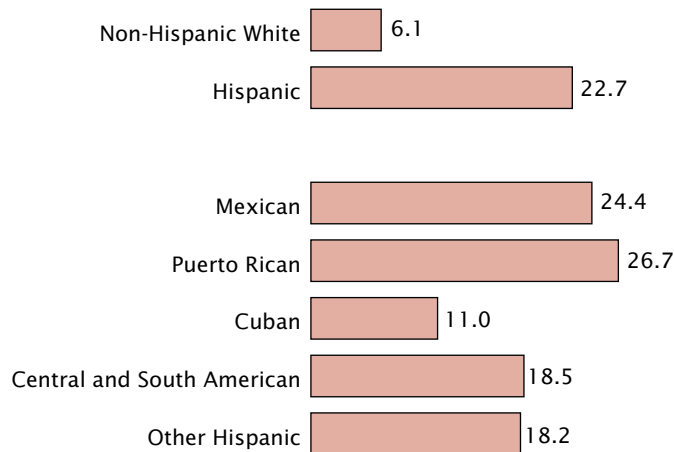
¹⁰The poverty rates for Mexican families and Puerto Rican families were not significantly different from each other. In addition, the poverty rates for Central and South American families and families of Other Hispanic origin were not significantly different from each other.

Figure 6.
Children Below the Poverty Level: 1998
(Percent of people under age 18*)



*Excludes unrelated individuals under 15 years.
Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

Figure 7.
Families Below the Poverty Level: 1998
(Percent of families*)



*Includes families in group quarters.
Source: Current Population Survey, March 1999.

Source of the Data

All of the estimates in this report come from data obtained in March 1999 by the Current Population Survey (CPS). The Census Bureau conducts the CPS every month, although these data are collected only in March.

Accuracy of the Estimates

Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the Census Bureau's standards for statistical significance. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process — including the overall design of surveys, testing the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports.

The CPS employs ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin.

This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin). All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on statistical standards and the computation and use of standard errors, contact John M. Finamore of the Demographic Statistical Methods Division on the Internet at dsmd_s&a@ccmail.census.gov.

More Information

Sixteen detailed tables from the 1999 March CPS are available on the Internet, at the Census Bureau's World Wide Web site (www.census.gov). Once on the site, click on Subjects A-Z, select 'H,' then select 'Hispanic Origin.' From the Hispanic origin page, select '1999 March CPS' and then choose from the list of options.

A paper version of these tables is available as PPL-124 for \$24.30. To receive a paper copy, send your request for "PPL-124, The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 1999," along with a check or

money order in the amount of \$24.30 payable to Commerce-Census-88-00-9010, to U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, P.O. Box 277943, Atlanta, GA 30384-7943, or call our Statistical Information Office on 301-457-2422. A copy of these tables will be made available to any existing Current Population Report P20 subscriber without charge, provided that the request is made within 3 months of the issue date of this report.

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User Comments

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of data and report users. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

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