



U.S. Latinas by the Numbers

A Growing and Ambitious Population

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Latinas, or Latino women, are quickly becoming a large and influential segment of the U.S. population. Currently, 14.4 million Latinas call the United States home, and these numbers are expected to increase since Latinos are the fastest-growing minority in the country. Latinas are more likely to enroll in college than their male counterparts, and they are also increasingly choosing careers in politics. However, they face many challenges. For example, 53 percent of Latinas lived in low-income households in 2007, and in that same year over a third lacked health insurance.

The following by-the-numbers look examines the current state of Latinas in the United States, illustrating the gains they are making as well as the struggles they are encountering.

Population

14.4 M Number of Latinas in the United States in 2008.

48% Percentage of Latinas in 2007 who were born in the United States or born abroad to a U.S. citizen parent.

52% Percentage of Latinas in 2007 who were not born in the United States.

41 Median age for Latinas in 2007, which was younger than the median age of 47 for non-Latinas.

Language

55% Percentage of Latinas in the United States in 2007 who spoke only English or spoke English very well.

86% Percentage of native-born Latinas in 2007 who spoke only English or spoke English very well.

76% Percentage of immigrant Latinas in 2007 who spoke English less than very well.

Education

36.1% Percentage of Latinas who had less than a high school diploma in 2007 (5,215,000).

73% Percentage of Latinas who completed high school in 2006, versus 63 percent of Latino men.

9.1% Percentage of Latinas who had a bachelor's degree in 2007 (1,320,000).

61% Percentage of first-time, full-time Hispanic freshmen in four-year colleges and universities in 2006 who were women. In 1975, Hispanic males accounted for 57 percent of Hispanic freshmen while women represented 43 percent.

31% Percentage of college-age Latinas enrolled in college in 2008, versus 21 percent of college-age Latino men.

3% Percentage of Latinas with an advanced degree in 2007 (453,000).

Health

36% Percentage of Latinas without health insurance in 2007 (5,179,000).

39% Percentage of Latina workers who had employer-provided health insurance in 2001, versus 50 percent of white women and 53.8 percent of black women.

46% Percentage of Latinas who suffered from depression in 2003 versus 19.6 percent of Latino men.

21% Percentage of Latinas who died of AIDS out of all female AIDS deaths in the United States in 2006. Latinas are one of the fastest-growing groups of people living with HIV/AIDS, with AIDS rates over seven times higher than non-Hispanics.

Jobs and wages

12% Percentage of the employed female population represented by Latinas in 2007.

56% Percentage of Latinas who were employed in the labor force in 2007 (8,027,000).

61% Percentage of employed native-born Latinas in 2007 (4,185,000).

51% Percentage of employed immigrant Latinas in 2007 (3,843,000).

\$460 The median weekly wages for Latinas who worked full time in 2007, earning much less than non-Latinas, whose weekly wage was \$615.

55¢ Amount Latinas earn to every one dollar a man earns.

2.8 M The number of Latinas estimated to join the U.S. labor force between 2002 and 2012.

Entrepreneurship

8% Percentage of privately held firms owned by women that had Latina owners in 2002.

39% Percentage of privately held firms owned by minority women that had Latina owners in 2002.

553,618 Number of privately held firms owned by Latinas in 2002.

121.3% Percentage increase in Latina-owned businesses between 1997 and 2006.

\$44.4 B Amount in sales that Latina-owned, privately held firms generate, an increase of 64 percent between 1997 and 2004.

61% Expected percentage of Latinas in the U.S. workforce by 2020.

Poverty

53% Percentage of Latinas who lived in low-income households in 2007 (7,645,000).

20% Percentage of Latinas who lived in poverty in 2007 (2,864,000).

8.4% Percentage of Latinas who lived in extreme poverty in 2007 (income below 50 percent of the federal poverty line).

46.6% Percentage of Latina-headed families with children living in poverty in 2007.

Politics

9.1 M Number of Latinas eligible to vote in the 2008 elections.

40% Percentage of Latina U.S. citizens who were not registered to vote in 2004. Eighteen percent of those registered did not cast ballots in the 2004 election.

54% Percentage of the Latino votes cast in the 2008 general election that are expected to be made by Latinas.

31% The Latina share of all Latino elected officials in 2007, up from 24 percent in 1996.

74%

Percentage increase in the number of Latina elected officials between 1996 and 2007, versus a 25 percent increase in male Latino officials.

75

Number of Latina state legislators in the United States in 2008, which includes 20 senators and 51 representatives serving 22 states (1,741 women state legislators nationwide).

One of the most important steps Latinas can take to address these challenges is to become more engaged in the political process and vote. In the 2004 election, 40 percent of Latinas who were U.S. citizens were not registered to vote. If every one of them had voted, turnout would have increased by 4.2 million votes.

This year, 17.9 million Latinos are eligible to vote, and 9.1 million of them are women. Their sheer size, combined with the fact that many live in critical states, could have a huge effect on this election. By turning out to the polls, Latinas can have a powerful and lasting impact to create and advance an agenda to improve their health care, education, and living standards.