



Health Policy

Fact sheet



Demographic Profile of Mexican Immigrants in the United States

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The Population

- Of the 39.9 million Latinos in the United States, 67% are of Mexican-origin.^{1,2}
- There are a total of 9 million Mexican immigrants in the United States.³
- Mexican immigrants account for 40% of the total Mexican-origin population.⁴
 - The gender distribution of the Mexican immigrant population is 46% women and 54% men.⁴
 - Half of all Mexican immigrants are under age 32.⁵
 - On average, Mexican immigrants come to the U.S. when they are 21 years old.³
 - 44% of Mexican immigrants own their own home.⁴
 - One quarter of Mexican immigrants are naturalized citizens.³
- Over half of all Latino children nationally have at least one parent who is an immigrant.⁵
 - The average Mexican immigrant household is made up of 4.5 persons.³
 - Among the almost 2 million families (with children) headed by a Mexican immigrant, 79% are in two-parent families.⁶

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Geographic Location

- The Mexican immigrant population is most heavily concentrated in the Western and Southern U.S., but the Midwest and East Coast also have sizeable populations.³
- Twelve states have 100,000 or more residents who are Mexican immigrants (Table 1).³
- Florida and Georgia, two states not traditionally associated with Mexican immigrants, have emerging Mexican immigrant populations.³
- California is home to 43% of all Mexican immigrants.³

Labor Force Participation

- 76% of Mexican immigrant males (18-64 years of age) are in the U.S. labor force.⁴
- Mexican immigrant workers are heavily represented in the following occupations: 29% in manufacturing, transportation, and material-moving occupations, 25% in service occupations, 19% in construction, extraction and maintenance occupations and 13% in sales and office occupations.⁶
- Mexican immigrants are a vital part of the U.S. agricultural workforce.⁷
 - 77% of U.S. farm workers are Mexican immigrants.⁷

Table 1. States with 100,000 or more Mexican Immigrants

Rank	States	Size
12	Oregon	105,820
11	Washington	138,195
10	Nevada	146,288
9	New York	159,560
8	North Carolina	166,125
7	Colorado	170,356
6	Georgia	184,307
5	Florida	184,715
4	Arizona	410,080
3	Illinois	596,757
2	Texas	1,766,133
1	California	3,692,294

Source: 2000 US Census, SF-4³

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. Annual Estimates of the Population by Sex, Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin for the United States: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2003 (NC-EST2003-03) <http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/NC-EST2003/NC-EST2003-03.pdf>

² Ramirez, R., and G. P. de la Cruz (2002). *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 2002*, Current Population Reports, P20-545, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington DC. Issued June 2003. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/p20-545.pdf>

³ U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF-4) Sample Data <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2003/SF4.html>

⁴ U.S. Census of Population and Housing (2000). 1% PUMS (Public Use Microdata Series), provided by Steven Ruggles, et al. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 3.0. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Population Center. <http://www.ipums.org>

⁵ U.S. Census 2000 Special Tabulations (PHC-T30) <http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/phc-t30/tab02.pdf>

⁶ U.S. Census 2000 Special Tabulations (STP-159) <http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/stp-159/STP-159-Mexico.pdf>

⁷ National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS): A Demographic and Employment Profile of United States Farmworkers. U.S. Dept. of Labor, Office of Program Economics, Research Report # 8. March 2000. http://www.dol.gov/asp/programs/agworker/report_8.pdf

Labor Force Participation (continued)

- The immigrant Mexican farm worker population is becoming more diverse. More and more Mexican immigrant farm workers are young, indigenous ethnic minorities (e.g. Zapotec, Mixtec and Maya), each having unique linguistic and cultural needs.⁸

Health Insurance Coverage

- Two-thirds of Mexican immigrant children did not have health insurance in 1998-2001.⁹
- Over half of Mexican immigrants 18-64 years of age were uninsured in 2000.¹⁰

The Health of Mexican Immigrants

Children, Under Age 18

- *Health Status:* About 1 in 4 Mexican immigrant children had fair or poor health, according to their parents (Table 2).¹¹
- *Dental Health:* Over half of Mexican immigrant children over six years of age had teeth in fair or poor condition, according to their parents (Table 2).¹¹
- *Mortality:* Overall, the top three causes of death for all Latino children ages 1-17 were accidental injuries, cancers and homicide.¹²
- The top three leading causes of death of all Latino children are:
 - Ages 1-12: accidental injuries, birth defects, and cancers.¹²
 - Ages 13-17: accidental injuries, homicide and suicide.¹²

Table 2. Percent of Mexican Immigrant Children: Perceived Health and Condition of Teeth Reported by Parents		
Age	Perceived Health Status-Fair/Poor	Condition of Teeth-Fair/Poor
< 5 yrs.	24 %	39 %
6-11 yrs.	28 %	60 %
12-16 yrs.	29 %	51 %
Source: Institute of Medicine. ¹¹		

Adults, Ages 18 through 64

- *Health Status:* 9% of Mexican immigrants report having fair or poor health.¹⁰
- *Chronic Disease:* The two most common chronic conditions Mexican immigrant adults report are hypertension (9%) and diabetes (4%).¹⁰
- *Mortality:* Cancer, accidental injuries, and heart disease are the three leading causes of death of all Latino adults.¹²

Older Adults, Age 65 and older

- *Health Status:* 44% of older Mexican immigrants report having fair or poor health.¹⁰
- *Chronic Disease:* The top three chronic conditions Mexican immigrant older adults report having are hypertension (48%), diabetes (30%), and heart problems (11%).¹⁰
- *Mortality:* The top three leading causes of death among all Latino older adults in 2001 were heart disease, cancer and cardiovascular disease. Diabetes was the fourth leading cause of death among all Latino older adults.¹²

Policy Opportunities

- The lack of health insurance and a usual source of care are key access barriers to health care for significant numbers of children and adult Mexican immigrants. Health policies must be expanded to include Mexican immigrants who are not currently eligible for public health insurance.
- Mexican immigrants' health must be recognized as a binational responsibility. Any strategy seeking to address the health needs of the Mexican immigrants in the U.S. cannot ignore Mexican immigrants' social, cultural, political, and economic ties to Mexico. To be truly effective, programs have to reinforce health-promotion and education efforts in both countries.

⁸ Cited in The Emergence of a Binational Mexico- US Workforce: Implications for Farm Labor Workforce Security by Edward Kissam, Jo Ann Intili and Anna Garcia, U.S. Department of Labor, June 26- 27, 2001 <http://wdr.doleta.gov/conference/pdf/ekissam.pdf>

⁹ Scott, G., and H. Ni, Access to Health Care Among Hispanic/Latino Children: United States, 1998-2001. Advance Data from Vital and Health Statistics. No. 344. June 24, 2004. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ad/ad344.pdf>

¹⁰ National Center for Health Statistics (2002). Data File Documentation, National Health Interview Survey, 2000 (machine readable data file and documentation). NCHS, Hyattsville, MD. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/nhis/quest_data_related_doc.htm

¹¹ Institute of Medicine. (1998). Generation to Generation: The Health and Well-Being of Children in Immigrant Families. Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. National Academies Press. <http://books.nap.edu/books/0309065615/html/index.html>

¹² National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Leading causes of death, 2001 <http://webapp.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/leadcaus10.html>