

## Selected trends in Mexico-United States migration

Since the early 1970s, the traditional Mexico-United States migration pattern has been transformed in magnitude, intensity, modalities, and characteristics, introducing a new dynamic to the migration pattern.

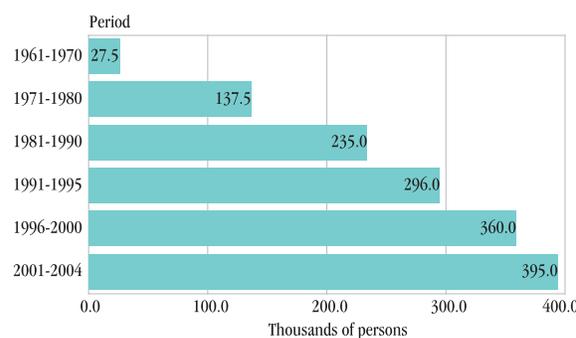
### Magnitude and dynamism

**The primary recent trend in Mexico-United States migration is the notable increase in its magnitude and intensity.**

- The annual net flow of Mexican migration to the United States increased notably during the final three decades of the 20th century, from an annual average of just under 30 000 people between 1961 and 1970 to close to 400 000 between 2001 and 2004.
- This continuously growing migratory flow has resulted in a large Mexican-origin community in the United States. In 1970, Mexicans who were born in Mexico and living in the United States numbered 879 000; by 2004 the number was 10.2 million. If we include the descendents of immigrants, the Mexican-origin population in the U.S. grew from 5.4 million to 26.8 million in the same period. Of those, 16.6 million were born in the United States.
- Mexicans living in the United States represent 3.7% of the total U.S. population and approximately 29% of the country's immi-

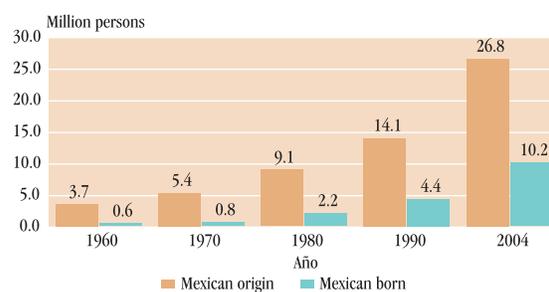
grant population. These figures make Mexico the largest contemporary source of immigrants to the United States.

Net annual population loss due to international migration, 1961-2004



Source: 1961-1995: Reform Commission USA, and Ministry of Foreign Relations (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores-SRE) Mexico, 1997, *Estudio Binacional México-Estados Unidos sobre Migración*; 1995-2004: CONAPO, *Proyecciones de Población 2000-2050*, Mexico 2002.

Population of Mexican origin resident in the United States, 1960-2004



Mexican born 2004: 10.2 million  
First and second generation 2004: 16.6 million

Source: 1960-1990: CONAPO, data from Corona Vázquez, Rodolfo, *Estimación de la población de origen mexicano que reside en Estados Unidos*, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (EL COLEF), November 1992; 2004: CONAPO, data from *Proyecciones de Población 2000-2050*, Mexico 2002, and U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, March 2004.

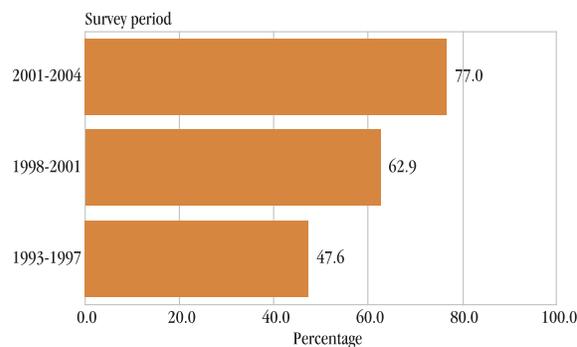
## Undocumented migration and erosion of circulatory migration mechanisms

The new profile of Mexican migration to the United States includes increased numbers of undocumented Mexicans, the erosion of mechanisms that allowed for circulatory migration, and a greater propensity for permanent migration.

The Survey on Migration along the Northern Mexican Border (Encuesta sobre Migración en la Frontera Norte de México, or EMIF)<sup>1</sup> provides some understanding of the labor flows taking place by land from Mexico to the United States, estimated at approximately 440 000 people per year in 2001-2004.

- Migration of workers from Mexico has increasingly included undocumented migrants. In 2001-2004, three-quarters of migrants lacked authorization to cross the border, compared with just under half in 1993-1997.

The percentage of immigrants to the U.S. who returned to Mexico who entered the U.S. without legal immigration documents, 1993-2004

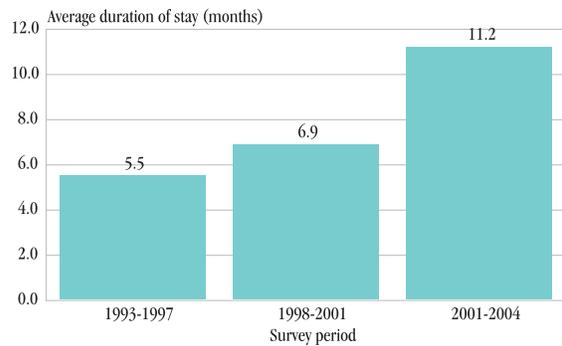


Source: CONAPO, data from STyPS, CONAPO, INM and EL COLEF, *Encuesta sobre Migración en la Frontera Norte de México* (EMIF), 1993-2004.

<sup>1</sup> The *Survey on Migration along the Mexican Border* serves to estimate and characterize the migratory flows between Mexico and the United States, and between border cities and the rest of Mexico. The EMIF implemented since 1993, is a joint project of the Mexican Ministry of Labor (Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social-STyPS), the National Population Council (Consejo Nacional de Población-CONAPO), and the Colegio de la Frontera Norte (EL COLEF). The National Migration Institute (Instituto Nacional de Migración-INM) joined the project in 1998 and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores-SRE) in 2004.

- The increasing barriers and difficulties surrounding entry into the United States, coupled with insufficient stimuli to return to Mexico offered by the Mexican economy, have resulted in the erosion of circulatory migration mechanisms, increasing the tendency toward more permanent settlement in the United States.
- Temporary migrants, most of them undocumented, tend to extend their stays in the United States to the point at which many establish permanent residences. According to information produced by the EMIF, the average length of stay in the United States of temporary migrants has increased from 5.5 to 11.2 months over the past 10 years.

Average duration of stay in the United States of temporary migrants who return from that country, 1993-2004



Source: CONAPO, data from STyPS, CONAPO, INM and EL COLEF, *Encuesta sobre Migración en la Frontera Norte de México* (EMIF), 1993-2004.

### *Increasing territorial scope*

**Another novel trait of the Mexico-United States migratory dynamic is its expanding geographic reach in both countries.**

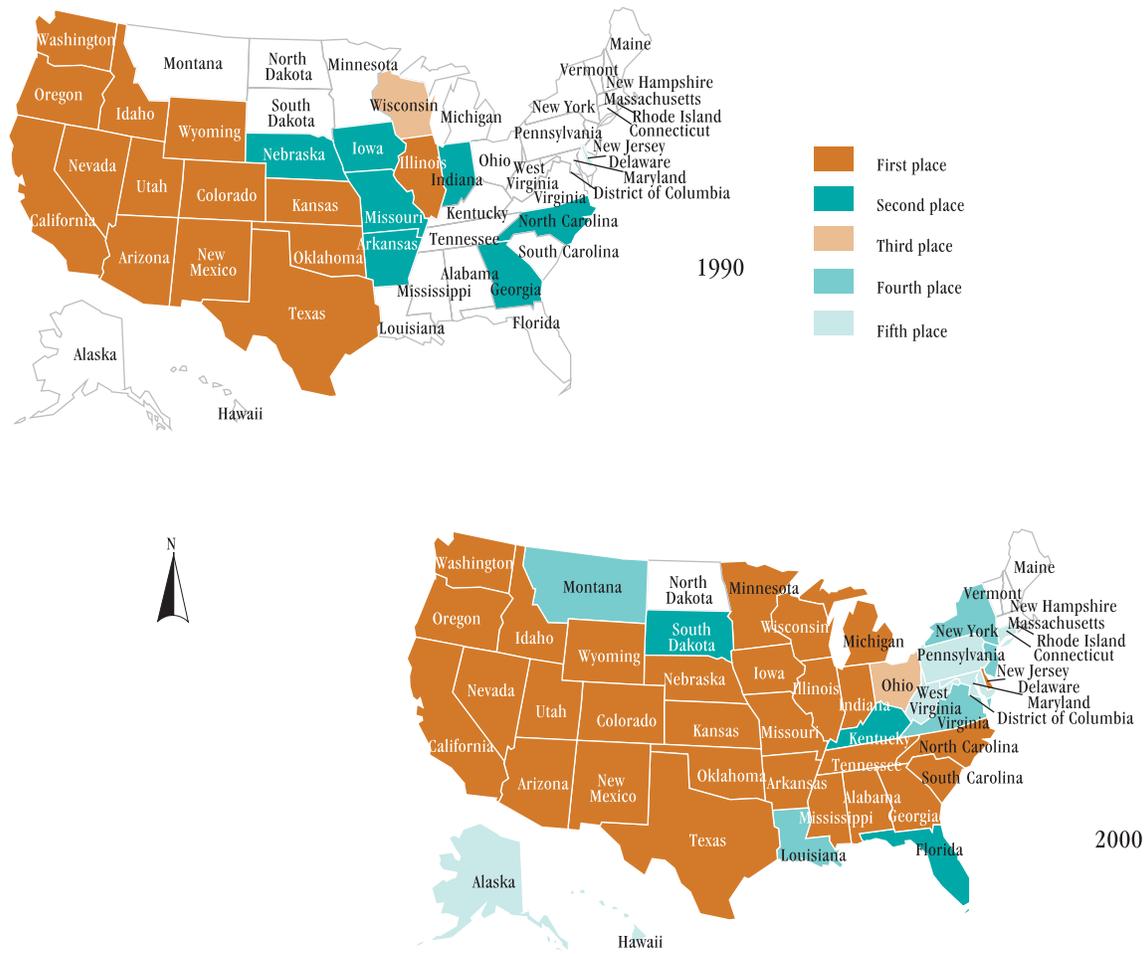
All Mexican states and the Federal District (Mexico City) contribute to the migratory flow, to different extents.

- In 2000, only 93 of Mexico's 2 443 municipalities registered no migratory population destined to the United States. These 93 municipalities are located primarily in southeastern Mexico.
- To greater or lesser degrees, the 2 443 municipalities register some type of contact with the United States, via recent migrations, immigrants returning to Mexico, and monetary transfers to relatives in Mexico from family members in the United States. 492 of them register high or very high migratory intensity; 392, moderate intensity; and 1 466, low or very low migratory intensity.

In the United States, the notable increase of U.S.-born Mexicans is no longer restricted to traditionally receiving states (California and Texas) but rather has expanded throughout the entire country.

- In 1970, California and Texas were home to 79% of U.S.-born Mexicans in the United States. This proportion held more or less constant until 1990; by 2000 it had decreased to 63%.
- The Mexican population is among the five largest immigrant groups in practically every U.S. state. In 2000, Mexicans were one of the five most common immigrant populations in 42 states, while 10 years earlier this was the case in only 23.

**U.S. states in which Mexican immigrants were one of the top five immigrant groups, 1990 and 2000.**



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 5-percent sample, 1990 y 2000.

## Medical insurance coverage

Health is a central element of well-being and an indispensable condition for the development of a person’s productive potential. The degree of access to health services experienced by immigrants is shaped by their social and economic integration in the receiving society.

This section analyzes differences in access to private and public health services among Mexican immigrants to the United States (recent immigrants and those of longer residence) and key native population groups in the United States (Mexican Americans and whites). The 2004 U.S. Bureau of the Census *Current Population Survey* (CPS) is the source of the information provided.<sup>2</sup>

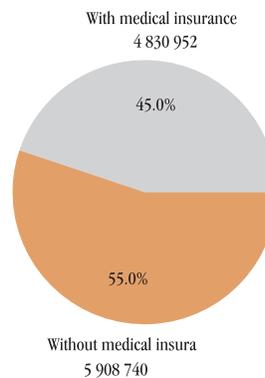
### Population without access to medical insurance coverage<sup>3</sup>

**The Mexican population in the United States has limited access to health services.**

- 5.9 million Mexican immigrants in the United States (55%) do not have medical insurance.

- This lack of access to medical coverage is more acute among recent immigrants (those with 10 years or less in the United States), with almost seven out of every 10 lacking this social benefit. Among long-stay immigrants (10 years or longer in the United States), the situation is more favorable (45% without insurance), although the uninsured population remains very numerous (2.7 million).
- Compared with U.S.-born groups, the disparity in medical coverage among Mexican immigrants (recent and long-stay) becomes more evident. Health insurance coverage

Medical insurance coverage among Mexican-born population resident in the United States, 2004



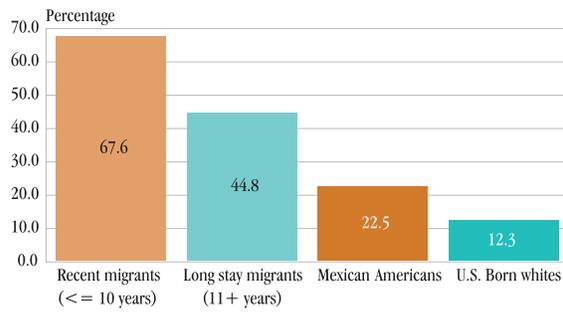
Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

<sup>2</sup> The specified populations are defined as follows: a) *mexican immigrants*: born in Mexico, resident in the United States; b) *mexican americans*: born in the United States with one or both parents born in Mexico, or population born in the U.S. who declares itself of mexican origin; c) *U.S.-born whites*: caucasian population born in the United States.

<sup>3</sup> A person is considered to have medical coverage when he or she is registered in a public medical assistance program —Medicare or Medicaid— or when he or she has a private medical insurance policy program.

is more common among U.S.-born Mexican Americans than among immigrants. Under one-fourth (22.5%) of U.S.-born Mexican Americans are uninsured, a figure 60 percent lower than that for Mexican immigrants, but still almost double that of the U.S.-born white population (12%).

Percentage of population without medical insurance, 2004



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

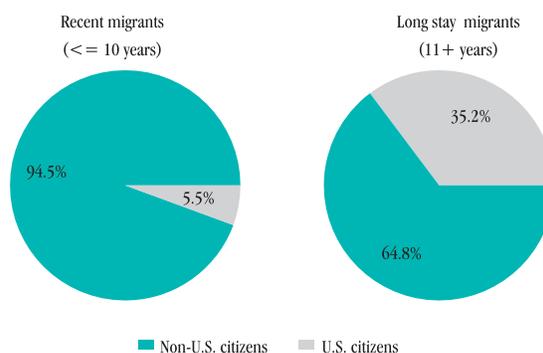
**The undocumented status of a large percentage of Mexican immigrants contributes to their disadvantaged situation.**

The high rate of undocumented<sup>4</sup> status and the low levels of citizenship via naturalization among the Mexican population resident in the United States have a negative impact on their social and economic integration, and to a large degree explain their lack of access to medical insurance.

- Mexican immigrants exhibit very low citizenship rates compared to other immigrants, even considering similar dates of arrival. Overall, only about one out of five Mexican immigrants, ages 18 and over, has been naturalized as a U.S. citizen. This figure jumps to more than one out of three among long-stay immigrants, and drops to barely one out of 18 (5.5%) among those who arrived 10 years ago or less.
- The proportions of naturalized Mexicans, long-stay immigrants, and Mexican Americans with health insurance are similar in many ways. However, while the naturalized immigrant population coverage rate (70%) is only slightly lower than that of Mexican Americans (73%), coverage for both groups is far behind that of the U.S. born-white population (87%).
- For naturalized immigrants, a longer length of residence in the country is associated with higher rates of health insurance coverage.
- The situation for Mexican immigrants without United States citizenship, which includes a significant proportion of un-

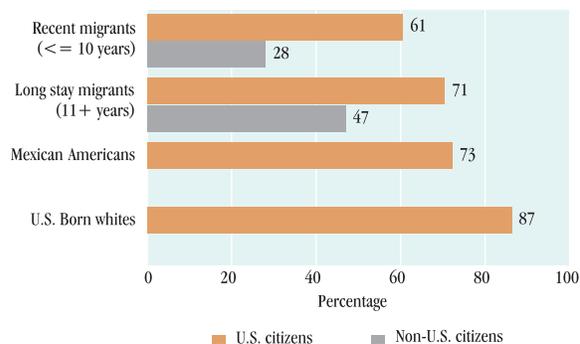
documented immigrants, is very different than for the above- mentioned groups. Access to medical coverage, public or private, is significantly lower, around 28% among those who arrived 10 years ago or less, and 47% among those with longer stays in the United States.

**Distribution of adults ages 18 and over, according to citizenship status, 2004**



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, March 2004.

**Medical insurance rate of adults ages 18 and over, according to citizenship status, 2004**



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, March 2004.

<sup>4</sup> In 2004, an estimated 5.9 million undocumented Mexicans lived in the United States (see Passel, Jeffrey (2005), *Estimates of the size and characteristics of the undocumented population*. WEB PAGE: [www.pewhispanic.org](http://www.pewhispanic.org)).

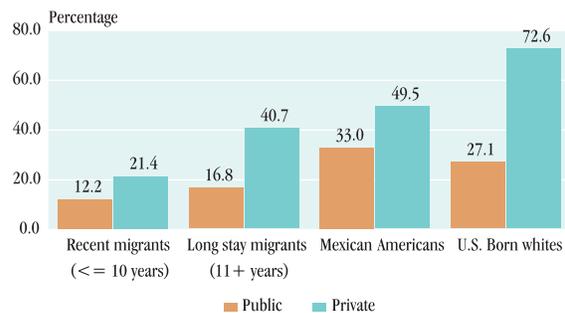
### Types of medical insurance coverage

U.S. health care is fundamentally based on both private medical insurance (acquired primarily through one’s employment and income) and the public medical assistance systems, Medicaid and Medicare. For Medicaid, access to health services depends primarily on poverty status, immigration status, and duration of residence in the country. Medicare is provided to all elderly and disabled people with 10 or more years of eligible employment in the United States, and their spouses.

- Health insurance coverage for the Mexican immigrant population is most commonly obtained through private insurance (32%). Almost 15% of this population participates in governmental health insurance programs, and these 1.6 million people represent 3% of the U.S. population using these programs.
- Length of residence for Mexican immigrants in the United States does not significantly influence their use of public health insurance. There are, however, increased disparities in the availability of private insurance for recent Mexican immigrants who have resided 10 years or less in the U.S., only 21% of whom are covered by private insurance. This figure is about half of that found among immigrants with longer residence periods (41%), which suggests better social integration among the population with longer stays in the United States.
- Although long-stay immigrants (those in the U.S. over 10 years) are able to improve their situation in comparison with recent immigrants, significant disparities persist in comparison with Mexican Americans as well as U.S.-born whites.

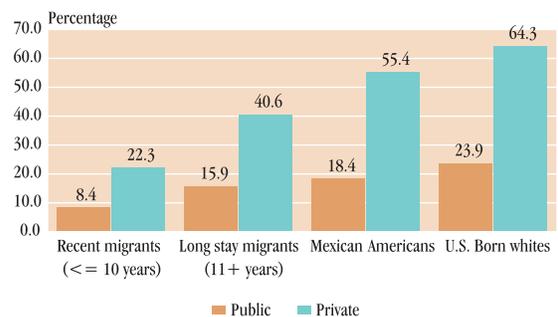
- Of the Mexican-origin groups, Mexican Americans have the greatest access to public health insurance in the U.S.: one out of three is covered. However, over half of this group (54%) is made up of children and adolescents under age 18. This situation explains, in part, their greater participation in the public medical assistance programs, as there are many programs for children. When the analysis is restricted to the population over 18, only 18% of U.S.-born Mexican Americans have public-based health insurance, while more than half (55%) have private insurance.

Percentage of population with public or private medical insurance, 2004



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

Percentage of adults ages 18 and over with public or private medical insurance, 2004



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

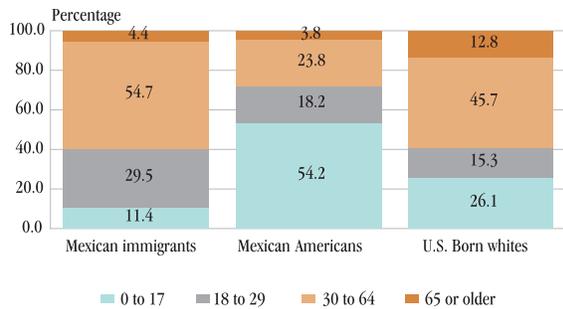
### Age and medical insurance coverage

#### Mexican immigrants are concentrated in the economically active age groups.

- Five out of six Mexican immigrants are between 18 and 64, giving the group a predominantly active economic profile. This reflects the fact that young adults are those who are most likely to participate in Mexico-United States migration, while the very young and older age groups are less likely to migrate.
- Among the Mexican American population, children and youth predominate, with just over half of this population group under the age of 18. These numbers contrast sharply with the population structure among Mexican immigrants and U.S.-born whites, whose proportions of minor populations are approximately one out of 10 and one out of four, respectively.

- U.S.-born whites have the oldest age structure, with one out of eight over the age of 64. This proportion is about triple that found among Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans (4.4% and 3.8%, respectively).
- With higher insurance coverage rates across age groups, the U.S.-born white population is relatively homogeneous when compared to others; even so, their access to medical insurance varies significantly by age. Adults over age 64 and those under 18 have the highest health insurance coverage rates (100% and 91%, respectively). In contrast, the young adult group (ages 18 to 29) exhibits the lowest coverage rate (75%), followed by that between 30 and 64 (87%).
- Mexican Americans exhibit a pattern similar to that of the U.S.-born white population but with lower coverage levels in all age groups.

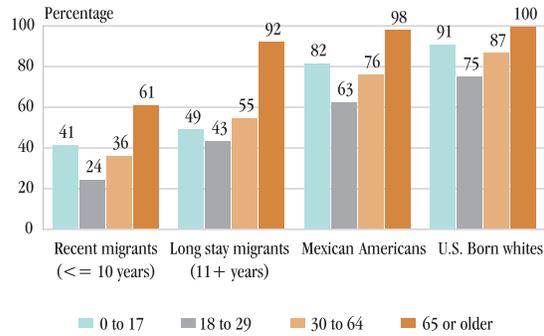
Age distribution of U.S.-resident population for selected groups, 2004



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

- In the Mexican immigrant groups, the lack of health insurance is more pronounced in all age groups compared to the coverage rates of the U.S.-born Mexican American and white populations.
- The only Mexican immigrant group with relatively high medical insurance rates is that of long-stay immigrants over 64 (92%).
- The greatest deficiencies in health insurance are found among the Mexican immigrant populations, particularly in the 18 to 29 age group. Among recent immigrants, the lowest coverage rates are found among people of working age, while among those of longer residence, children and young adults are those most unprotected by the health system.

Medical insurance rate by age groups, 2004



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

### Medical insurance coverage within households

**Social inequalities in regard to health insurance coverage are found within many Mexican-headed households in the United States, due to the fact that they are often comprised of a mixture of immigrant and Mexican American residents.**

According to the 2004 U.S. *Current Population Survey*, the United States has more than 112.1 million households, of which 3.9 million (3.5%) are headed by someone born in Mexico. Households may be classified in three types according to their health insurance coverage: those with total, partial, or no coverage.

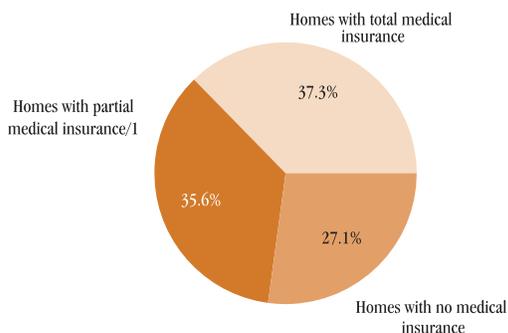
- Total medical coverage. Only 37% of Mexican-headed households in the United States have medical coverage for all household residents.
- Partial medical coverage. In close to 36% of Mexican-headed households in the U.S., only some household residents have coverage.

- No medical coverage. Among Mexican-headed households in the United States, 27% live in the extremely vulnerable position of having no household residents covered by medical insurance.

Of the 3.9 million Mexican-headed households, 2.7 million (69%) include members under 18 years of age. The lack of medical coverage is particularly worrisome in homes shared by minors. Available data on the subject indicate the following:

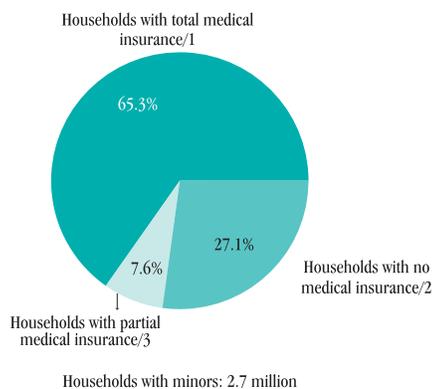
- In 27% of Mexican-headed households, none of the minors are insured.
- In one out of 12 Mexican-headed households (8%) there is medical coverage for at least one of its minors. Insured children tend to be those born in the United States, while often those without coverage were born in Mexico.

**Distribution of Mexican-headed households established in the United States, by medical insurance status, 2004**



Note: 1/At least one but not all household members are registered in a public medical assistance program or covered by contracted private medical insurance.  
 Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

**Distribution of Mexican-headed households with members under the age of 18, by medical insurance coverage of the minors, 2004**



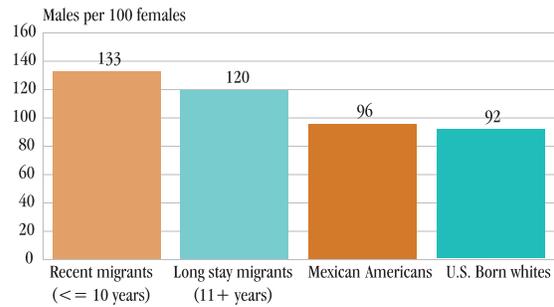
Notes: 1/All the minors are covered by some medical insurance system, private or public.  
 2/No minor is covered by any medical insurance system, private or public.  
 3/At least one minor is a beneficiary of a public medical assistance program or private medical insurance.  
 Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

### Sex composition and medical insurance coverage

#### The male population predominates among recent Mexican immigrants.

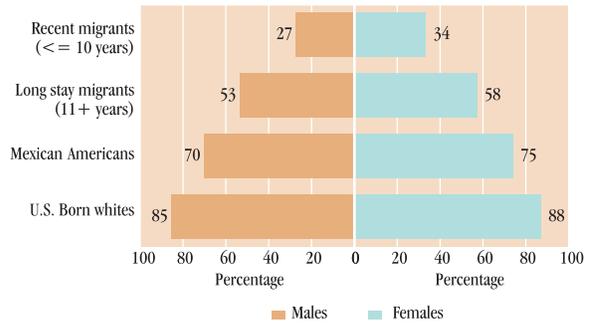
- The population of Mexican immigrants over age 18 is disproportionately masculine. There are 133 men for every 100 women among recent immigrants. As the duration of residence has increased, the proportion of women has also risen but remains lower than that of men.
- Among Mexican Americans in the United States there are more females than males. Among Mexican Americans there are 96 males for every 100 females, compared with 92 males for every 100 females in the white population. The higher number of females among U.S.-born whites is explained by females having longer life expectancies.
- In all the population groups, differences in health insurance coverage between men and women are small. In general, women exhibit higher coverage rates than men. This situation is more pronounced among Mexican Americans, and more so among recently immigrated Mexicans.

Ratio of males to females in ages 18 over, 2004



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

Percentages of medical insurance for males and females, ages 18 and over, 2004



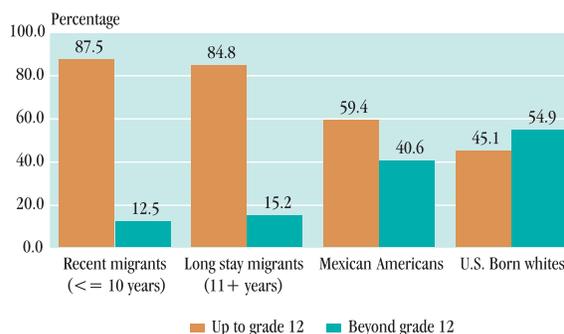
Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

### Education levels and medical insurance coverage

**Mexican immigrants lag far behind other groups in education levels, contributing to their disadvantaged situation in the U.S.**

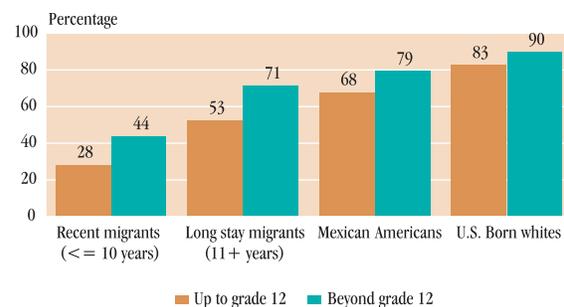
- More than 80% of Mexican immigrants ages 18 and over (both recently arrived and those of longer residence) completed 12 years of school or less.
- In contrast, among U.S.-born Mexican Americans and whites this proportion is 59% and 45%, respectively.
- Medical coverage rates rises with increased education levels. Across the population groups, the less education one has, the lower the likelihood of having medical insurance coverage, but among Mexican immigrants the differences are more pronounced. Among recent immigrants, insurance coverage for those with more education is almost 60% higher than for those with the lowest education levels. Among long-stay residents the difference is 34%, while among U.S.-born Mexican Americans and whites it is 16% and 8%, respectively.

**Distribution of the population ages 18 and over by educational level, 2004**



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

**Medical insurance rate of the population ages 18 and over by educational level, 2004**



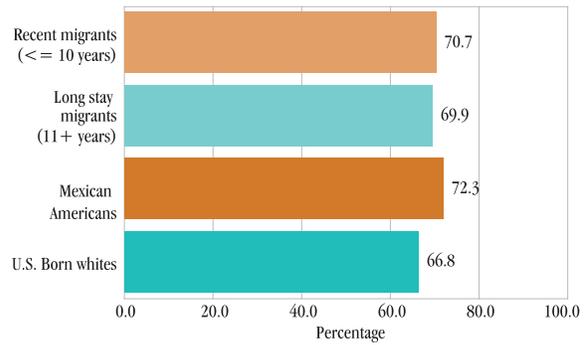
Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

### Labor-market participation and medical insurance coverage

Given that the U.S. health care system relies primarily on private insurance, which in most cases is obtained through employee benefit packages, the labor-market position of Mexican immigrants is a key factor in determining their access to medical care.

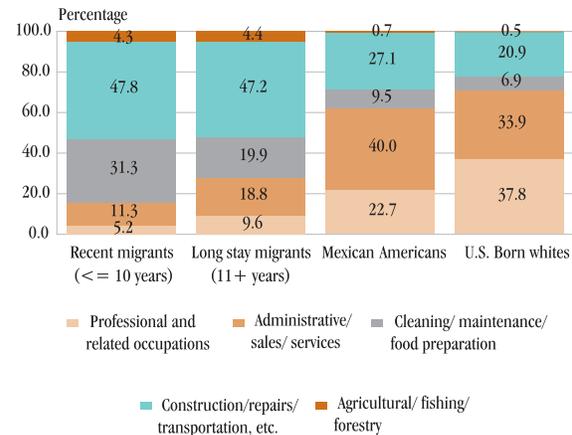
- The high rates of employment for recent arrivals and those of longer residence (71% and 70%, respectively) reveal the predominantly labor-related character of Mexican migration. These figures exceed even those for the U.S.-born white population, whose labor-force participation rate is 67%.
- The high prevalence of undocumented status (particularly among recent Mexican immigrants), the low rate of citizenship, and low educational attainment levels contribute to the concentration of Mexican workers at the bottom of the occupational pyramid. Mexican workers are highly represented in household and office cleaning and food-preparation activities, as well as construction, transportation, maintenance, repair, and production jobs.

Rate of economic participation of the population ages 18 and over, 2004



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

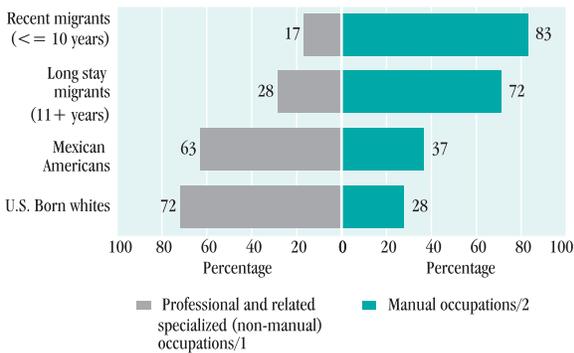
Distribution of the U.S.-resident population ages 18 and over, by labor occupation type, 2004



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

- The high concentration (76%) of Mexican immigrants in activities of low socioeconomic status —manual labor and low-paid jobs— contrasts with their low representation in the most skilled and best-compensated occupations (24%). The discrepancies sharpen among recent immigrants, with 83% working as manual laborers and only 17% working in occupations requiring specialized skills.
- Mexican Americans exhibit a substantial advantage over native Mexicans with respect to the jobs that they hold, indicating some social mobility for the generations of Mexicans born in the United States in comparison with their parents. Nevertheless, they are still at a disadvantage compared with the white native population: 37% of U.S.-born Mexican Americans are employed in manual jobs, while only 28% of the white population is similarly employed.

**Distribution of economically active population ages 18 and over by occupation type, 2004**

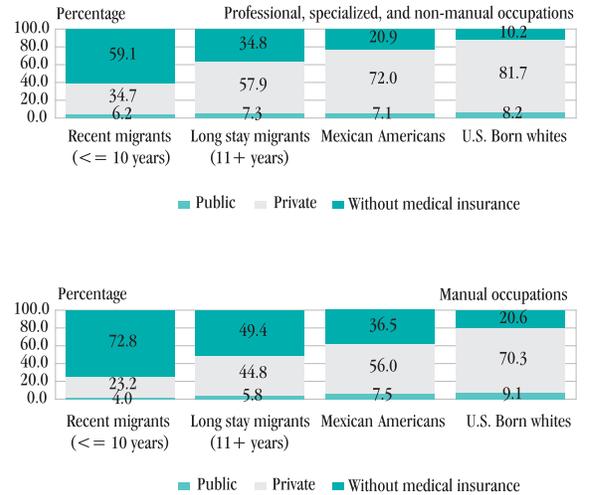


Notes: 1/Includes: Professional and related occupations, services, sales, and administrative occupations.  
 2/Includes: Household and office cleaning, maintenance, food preparation, construction, repairs, transportation, production, fieldwork, fishing, and agricultural occupations, etc.  
 Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

Working predominantly in manual and low-income occupations, both long-stay Mexican immigrants and especially recent immigrants have significantly lower medical coverage rates than those of U.S.-born Mexican Americans and whites (54%, 29%, 73%, and 86%, respectively).

- Across all these population groups, medical insurance coverage is most prevalent among those who work in higher-skill occupations, and less prevalent among those in jobs requiring fewer skills and more manual labor.

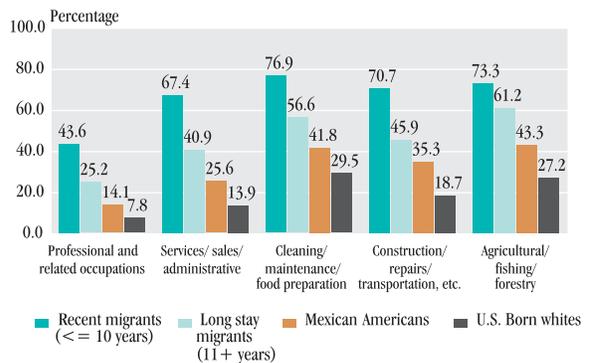
**Distribution of the population ages 18 and over according to medical insurance type, by occupation, 2004**



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

- Nevertheless, significant inequalities persist between the populations even in the same occupations. For example, in the occupations associated with the lowest prevalence of health insurance coverage, such as cleaning, maintenance, and food preparation, 77% of the recent Mexican immigrants have no health insurance, compared with only 30% of the U.S.-born white population in these occupations.
- Similarly, in professional and related occupations, 44% of recent Mexican immigrants are uninsured compared to 8% of the U.S.-born white population.

Percentage of population ages 18 and over without medical insurance, by labor occupation, 2004



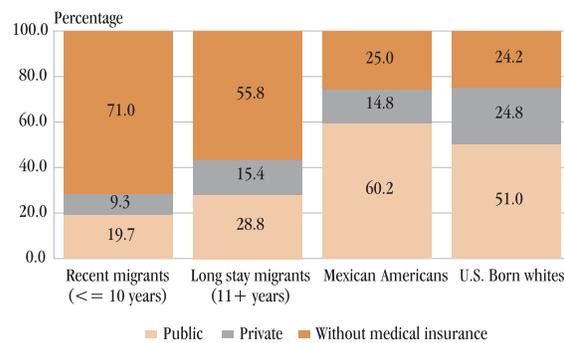
Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey* (CPS), March 2004.

### Poverty and medical insurance coverage

**Mexican immigrants living in poverty face greater obstacles than the U.S.-born populations in obtaining public health care insurance designated for low-income families.**

- Nearly 2.8 million Mexican immigrants in the U.S. live in poverty (1.5 million of them recent arrivals and 1.3 million long-stay immigrants). This represents 26% of the immigrant Mexican population and almost 8% of the country’s total impoverished population.
- The U.S.-born Mexican American population has a poverty rate (23%) very similar to the Mexican immigrant population (26%), largely as a result of the burden of minors and other dependents. The U.S.-born white population has the lowest poverty rate (11%).
- The high proportion of uninsured among poor Mexican immigrants—71% among poor recent arrivals and 56% among long-stay immigrants— illustrates their great vulnerability. The comparative rates among poor U.S.-born Mexican Americans and poor U.S.-born whites are 25% and 24%, respectively.
- For many poor immigrants, their lack of documentation concerning legal residence and employment in the United States and their short stays combine to severely restrict their eligibility to public health insurance. Only 20% of recent immigrants living in poverty and 29% of poor longer-residence immigrants have public health insurance, compared with 60% of U.S.-born Mexican Americans and 51% of whites living in poverty.

Distribution of the poor population by medical insurance type, 2004



Source: CONAPO data from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, March 2004.