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Fact Sheet

Hunger and Poverty among Latinos

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In the United States, hunger and poverty rates among Latinos are higher than in the general population. More than one in four Latino households—26.9 percent—struggles to put food on the table, compared to 14.6 percent of all households.¹ Similarly, one in four Latinos lives in poverty, compared to one in seven for the overall population.² In the United States, 15.8 percent of the population, or 48.4 million people, identify as Latino.³

As expected, increased rates of hunger and poverty correlate with decreased economic opportunity in the Latino community. But race, hunger, and poverty also correlate with social factors such as education and family structure, weaving a web of roadblocks and reduced outcomes that reinforce racial disparity in the United States.

This analysis highlights how increased rates of hunger and poverty affect Latinos' economic, health, educational, and family lives.



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Hunger and Poverty Rates

Hunger

- Millions of U.S. families do not have the means to purchase the food they need. One in seven households—more than 49 million Americans—struggles to put food on the table.⁴
- Latino households are more than one and a half times as likely to be food insecure as all American households.

Food Insecurity, 2008 data ⁵		
	General Population	Latinos
Households	14.6%	26.9%
	17.1 million	3.6 million
People	16.4%	29.4%
	49.1 million	13.2 million
Children under 18	22.5%	33.9%
	16.7 million	5 million

Poverty

- Latinos are also disproportionately affected by poverty. Furthermore, Latino children represent a growing share of all poor children.

Poverty, 2009 data ⁶		
	General Population	Latinos
Individuals	14.3%	25.3%
	43.6 million	12.4 million
Children under 18	20.7%	33.1%
	15.5 million	5.6 million

Economic Indicators

Unemployment

Sustainable employment is the foundation for economic stability. Unemployment can have a lasting impact on a family's economic security. Even when the jobless find employment, many will continue to earn lower wages years into the future. Moreover, longer stretches of unemployment lead to a greater likelihood of hunger and poverty, which in

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turn prevents children and adults from achieving their full potential in school or in the workforce.

- Unemployment has grown significantly since the recession began in December 2007. Job losses have been felt disproportionately among Latinos, especially Latino men.

Unemployment, August 2010 data		
	General Population	Latinos
Unemployment Rate⁷	9.6%	12.0%
Men, 20 yrs and over ⁸	9.1%	10.4%
Women, 20 years and over	8.6%	11.6%

Income and Assets

- Latinos experience lower household income than the general population.

Income		
	General Population	Latinos
Median Household Income, 2009⁹	\$50,221	\$39,923
Median Weekly Earnings, 2009¹⁰	\$739	\$541
Men	\$819	\$569
Women	\$657	\$509

Nutrition Assistance Programs

Because eligibility for federal nutrition programs is income-based, participation in these programs is an indicator of both nutritional and economic need.

Federal law currently subjects adult legal immigrants to a five-year waiting period before they can participate in SNAP/food stamps. The waiting period does not apply to child immigrants or to citizen children of immigrant parents. However, the adult waiting period and confusion over eligibility rules have a negative impact on the participation rate of eligible Latinos. So while Latinos have a higher likelihood of participating in WIC (the Women, Infants and Nutrition Program) and school meal programs, they are less likely to participate in SNAP/food stamps.

Participation Rates in National School Lunch Program, 2007				
	White	African-American	Latino	Other
All schools	68.0%	78.2%	76.3%	73.6%
Elementary	76.0%	89.2%	84.0%	81.2%
Middle school	74.0%	70.5%	76.1%	71.95
High school	54.2%	63.0%	61.1%	62.6%

- In areas where the National School Lunch Program is offered, eligible Latinos typically participate at higher rates than other racial and ethnic groups:¹¹

Education

- Latinos lag behind the national average in high school completion rates.

Education, 2008 data		
	General Population	Latinos
High School Completion Rate Among 18 to 24-year-olds¹²	89.9%	75.5%

Endnotes

¹ Household Food Security in the United States, 2008. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, November 2009. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR83/ERR83.pdf>

² U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2009

³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009

⁴ Household Food Security in the United States, 2008. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, November 2009. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR83/ERR83.pdf>

⁵ Household Food Security in the United States, 2008. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, November 2009. (Table 2, Table 6). <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR83/ERR83.pdf>

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2009. http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032010/pov/new01_100.htm

⁷ Bureau of Labor Statistics, August 2010 unemployment data, Table A-1, Table A-3, seasonally adjusted <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/emp-sit.pdf>

⁸ Bureau of Labor Statistics, August 2010 unemployment data, Table A-1, Table A-3, non seasonally adjusted <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/emp-sit.pdf>

⁹ Median Income in the Past 12 months, American Community Survey, 2009 http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-ds_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_&-lang=en&-mt_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G2000_B19013&-mt_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G2000_B19013I&-format=&-CONTEXT=dt<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-ds_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_&-lang=en&-mt_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G2000_B19013&-mt_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G2000_B19013I&-format=&-CONTEXT=dt>

¹⁰ Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, by selected characteristics, 2009 annual averages <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cps-saat37.pdf>

¹¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, 2007

¹² School Enrollment Supplement to the Current Population Survey, 2007. U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. <http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/tables/ed4.asp>.



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