



Hunger and Poverty Among Hispanics

In 2013, the nation saw a slight decrease in poverty, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. It was the first time since 2006 that poverty decreased. The reduction in poverty reflects the decrease in unemployment. In 2012, the annual unemployment rate was 8.1 percent, and by 2013, it had dropped to 7.4 percent. This drop is partly due to 2.8 million more people moving to full-time, year-round employment.

As millions of Americans begin to climb out of the deep hole the recession created, the federal government has to focus on further reducing unemployment as well as income inequality. Communities of color tend to suffer disproportionately from unemployment and low wages, thus experiencing higher levels of poverty and hunger. Hispanics are the largest ethnic minority group in the United States, both in native-born and foreign-born populations. However, Hispanics, as with the general population, are starting to see reductions of hunger and poverty due to a decrease in unemployment.

Hunger

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2013 annual report, Household Food Security in the United States, 23.7 percent of Hispanic households were food-insecure last year. This was a slight decline since 2011 but remains well above the rates of food insecurity recorded before the recession.

| Food Insecurity (2013) | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| | General Population | Hispanics |
| Households | 14.3 percent | 23.7 percent |
| | 17.5 million | 3.7 million |
| Individuals | 15.8 percent | 25.2 percent |
| | 49.1 million | 12.8 million |
| Children under 18 | 11.7 percent | 29.5 percent |
| | 8.6 million | 4.7 million |

Poverty

Nearly one in four Hispanics lives below the poverty line (23.5 percent), a total of 12.4 million people, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In some states like Georgia,



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that number soars to more than 30 percent (30.7 percent). States with high poverty rates for Latinos include Arizona (28.9 percent), New York (26 percent), Texas (25.5 percent), and Colorado (23 percent).

| Poverty (2013) | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| | General Population | Hispanics |
| Individuals | 14.5 percent | 24.8 percent |
| Children under 18 | 19.9 percent | 30.4 percent |

Foreign-Born Hispanics

Foreign-born Hispanics face higher rates of poverty and wage disparities than native-born Hispanics in large part due to their citizenship status. This impedes achievement of higher levels of education, which, in turn, severely limits job opportunities and wage fairness. Reforming our immigration system and creating a clear pathway to citizenship would allow many foreign-born workers the ability to earn more money for their families and make larger contributions to the U.S. economy.

Our elected officials need to make ending poverty and hunger national priorities. Reducing unemployment, creating fair-wage jobs, and reforming our immigration system are key to eliminating hunger and poverty. We must demand stronger commitments from the White House and Congress.