

Rhode Island State Data Center

Census Data Bulletin

RHODE ISLAND
STATEWIDE
PLANNING
PROGRAM



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Latinos in Rhode Island

The U.S. Hispanic Heritage Month runs from September 15-October 15, and in Rhode Island, Hispanic and Latino* populations are a fast-growing minority group that has been leading the state's growth for a decade. The Census estimates that in 2012, there were 138,549 people of Hispanic or Latino origin in the state, or 13.2% of the state's population. Because Latinos are leading population growth in the state, it's important for planners to consider their housing, transportation, and economic development needs. This month's Census Data Bulletin looks at some of these dimensions of the Latino population in Rhode Island.

The Census estimates that the state's Latino population has grown by approximately 8,000 people since Census 2010, even as the overall population has declined by 2,300. The growth of the Ocean State's Latino population has been occurring for 30 years, marked by an increase in the share of the total population of 3-4 percentage points for each decennial censuses during that period. According to the report *An Equity Profile of Rhode Island*, of the growth in Latino residents in the past decade, just over half of the increase comes from people who were born in the United States or Puerto Rico. While 124,239 or 89.7% of Latinos in Rhode Island live in Providence County, several thousand Latinos live in Kent, Newport, Washington, and Bristol Counties.

A Variety of Backgrounds

"Latino" and "Hispanic" are considered by the U.S. Census to be ethnicities, not racial identities, and people

BY THE NUMBERS

- 13%** of Rhode Island residents are of Latino or Hispanic ethnicity
- 58%** of those residents were born in the U.S.
- 26 years old** Median age of Latino or Hispanic residents
- 37,177** Households headed by a Latino or Hispanic householder
- 30.9%** of Latino or Hispanic Rhode Islanders carpool, walk, or take transit to work, compared with 15.3% of state as a whole

Source: American Community Survey 2009-2011 3-yr data.

of Hispanic or Latino origin may be of any race. Rhode Island Latinos reflect a variety of backgrounds. In the 2010 Census, 61,442 Rhode Island residents of Hispanic or Latino origin identified their race as white (alone or in combination, like all counts by racial group reported in this Bulletin), while 12,864 identified their race as black. However, reflecting the sometimes blurry distinction between race and ethnicity, 62,866 Hispanic or Latino Rhode Islanders identified themselves as "some other race" than the five major race identification options provided by the Census. The U.S. Census Bureau is currently looking at alternative ways to ask about race and ethnicity in the future that might better capture the way that people identify themselves.

In our state, 57.9% of Latinos were born in the

ABOUT THE DATA

Data in this Bulletin are drawn primarily from the American Community Survey's 2009-2011 3-year dataset, except where noted. A 3-Year dataset is used because populations discussed are small and margins of error for 1-year datasets are high, but some of the timeliness or currency of the data are preserved by using the 3-year dataset instead of the 5-year dataset.

* *Hispanic versus Latino.* The Census uses the phrase "Hispanic or Latino origin," and these words are not necessarily considered synonyms. *Hispanic* refers to people of a wide variety of origins and backgrounds that are tied to a Spanish-speaking country, while *Latino* is often seen as a more broad term that could include additional people of Central and South American backgrounds like Brazilians. *Latino* is used in this Bulletin because it is the broader of the two terms.

United States (which includes Puerto Rico) while 42.1% were born abroad, according to 2011 3-year ACS data. For those Latinos who identified a specific country/territory of origin, the Dominican Republic topped the Rhode Island list at 40,074, followed closely by Puerto Rico at 32,435. Guatemala, Mexico, and Columbia are also among the top five places of origin.

Children and Adults

Taken as a whole, the Latino population of Rhode Island is younger than the population at large. Median age for Latinos is just 25.8 years old, compared with 39.4 in the entire state population. Census 2010 reported that 20.5% of children under 18 are Hispanic or Latino. According to the Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project, Latinos make up 20% of the school enrollment in the state, and 27% of the births in the state are to Latino women.

Census 2010 counted 5,301 people 65 years and over who are Hispanic or Latino, which accounts for 3.5% of senior citizens in Rhode Island. As Rhode Island's senior citizen population grows over the next thirty years, we are likely to see a much greater share of Latino seniors.

Work Life

Of the five major occupation groupings provided by the Census, one-third of Latino men identify their occupation within the "production, transportation, and material moving occupations" groups, while 36.3% of Latino women work in service occupations. According to 2009-2011 ACS estimates, the unemployment rate for Latinos was 18.4%, significantly higher than for the state as a whole.

Occupations of Latinos in Rhode Island		
	Men	Women
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	13.3%	19.3%
Service occupation	25.5%	36.3%
Sales and office occupations	16.7%	26.9%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	10.8%	0.8%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	33.7%	16.7%

Nearly 40 percent of Latinos who are 25 years and older lack a high school diploma, while 23.2% have some college or an associate's degree and 11.2% have a Bachelor's degree. However, half the Latinos in the state are under 25 (and thus not included in these particular statistics), and so access to educational opportunities will

be critical as new generations enter the workforce.

Home Life

In Rhode Island, 37,177 households are headed by someone who is of Latino or Hispanic origin, which includes 28,492 family households and 8,685 nonfamily households. Of occupied housing units in which the householder is Latino, 10,469, or 28.2%, are owner-occupied, while 26,708 or 71.8% are renter-occupied. This figure illustrates a significant disparity; statewide 61.3% of occupied housing units are owner-occupied and 38.7% are renter-occupied.

In Rhode Island, 82.1% of households with Latino householders have access to at least one vehicle, compared with 90.5% in the overall population. Latinos have lower rates of commuting in single-occupancy vehicles than the population as a whole, as only 62.5% drive to work alone, while 19.5% carpool, 6.5% take public transportation, and 4.9% walk to work. This information is important for transportation planners as a reliable and equitable public transportation system and walkable communities are essential for access to jobs and overall quality of life.

TO LEARN MORE...

To explore Census and ACS data on the population of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, visit the U.S. Census website, [American FactFinder](#).

The Latino Policy Institute (LPI) at Roger Williams University publishes a wealth of data and analysis focused on Latinos in Rhode Island. Their website is <http://www.rwu.edu/about/partnerships-initiatives/lpi>. LPI and HousingWorks RI produced an excellent infographic, [A Look at Latinos + Housing in Rhode Island](#).

The Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project publishes data on a wide variety of topics related to Hispanic and Latino populations in the United States, available at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/>, including a [geographic portrayal of the Latino population](#) in the United States.

[An Equity Profile of Rhode Island](#), produced through RhodeMap RI, offers detailed statistical information about disparities that affect Latinos and other racial and ethnic groups in Rhode Island.

For further information about RI State Data Center resources, contact Vincent Flood at vincent.flood@doa.ri.gov or Amanda Martin at amanda.martin@doa.ri.gov and visit the website at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/geodeminfo/data/index.php>.