

Hispanic, Latino Latinx Pew August 11 2020

## **The emergence of Hispanic, Latino and Latinx**

Throughout the last half-century in the U.S., different pan-ethnic terms have arisen to describe Americans who trace their roots to Latin America and Spain.

The term Hispanic was first used by the U.S. government in the [1970s](#) after Mexican American and other Hispanic organizations lobbied the federal government to collect data on the population. Subsequently, the U.S Congress passed [Public Law 94-311](#) in 1976, mandating the collection of information about U.S. residents of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American, South American and other Spanish-speaking country origins. The law called for the U.S. Census Bureau to create a broader category that encompassed all people who identified having roots from these countries. The term Hispanic was first used in a full census in 1980.

The 1990s brought [resistance](#) to the term Hispanic, as it embraced a strong connection with Spain, and an alternative term emerged: Latino. By 1997, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget issued a directive adding the term Latino to government publications. The two terms are used interchangeably, with Latino first appearing on the U.S. census in 2000, alongside Hispanic.

More recently, Latinx has emerged as an alternative to Hispanic and Latino. Online searches for the term among the general U.S. population appeared online in the early 2000s. But the [first substantial rise](#) in searches (relative to all online searches) appeared in June 2016 following a [shooting at Pulse nightclub](#), an LGBTQ dance club in Orlando, Florida, that was hosting its Latin Night on the [date of the attack](#). In subsequent years, the term's use on social media by [celebrities](#), [politicians](#) and grassroots [organizations](#) has grown. In addition, some academic centers at [community colleges](#), [public universities](#) and [Ivy League](#) universities are replacing Latino program names that were established in previous decades with new Latinx-focused names.

In more than 15 years of polling by [Pew Research Center](#), half of Americans who trace their roots to Spanish-speaking Latin America and Spain have consistently said they have no preference for either Hispanic or Latino as a term to describe the group. And when one term is chosen over another, the term Hispanic has been preferred to Latino. Importantly, the same surveys show, country of origin labels (such as Mexican or Cuban or Ecuadorian) are preferred to these pan-ethnic terms among the population they are meant to describe.

*Rita Rodriguez, Cuban. I asked what Hispanic was when the White House in 1980 asked me to speak to a Mexican American group, as they would identify with me. No. The only thing most Hispanics have in common is a history of colonial exploitation as indigenous peoples by Spain. The Spanish language is the common link. Ethnicity, culture, let alone race is not a strong link.*

Hispanic Population Pew 071120

[https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/07/u-s-hispanic-population-surpassed-60-million-in-2019-but-growth-has-slowed/?utm\\_source=Pew+Research+Center&utm\\_campaign=fa7990cd19-Weekly+2020+07+10&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_3e953b9b70-fa7990cd19-399872153](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/07/u-s-hispanic-population-surpassed-60-million-in-2019-but-growth-has-slowed/?utm_source=Pew+Research+Center&utm_campaign=fa7990cd19-Weekly+2020+07+10&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3e953b9b70-fa7990cd19-399872153)

## U.S. Hispanic population surpassed 60 million in 2019, but growth has slowed

*The U.S. Hispanic population reached a record 60.6 million in 2019, up 930,000 over the previous year and up from 50.7 million in 2010, according to newly released U.S. Census Bureau [population estimates](#). Over the past decade, however, population growth among Hispanics has slowed as the annual [number of births](#) to Hispanic women has declined and immigration has decreased, particularly from [Mexico](#).*

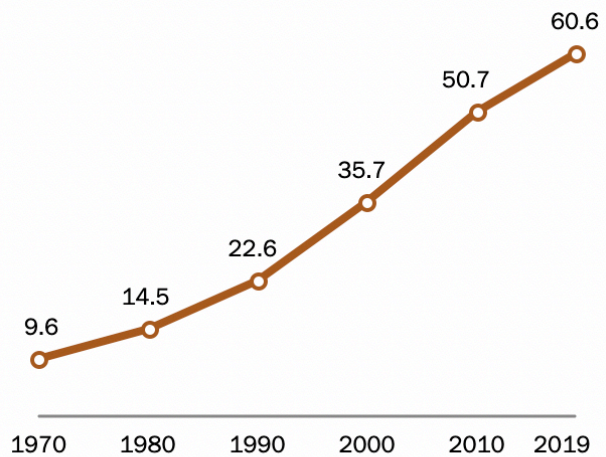
Even so, Latinos remain an important part of the nation's overall demographic story. ***Between 2010 and 2019, the Latino share of the total U.S. population increased from 16% to 18%. Latinos accounted for about half (52%) of all U.S. population growth over this period. They are the country's second largest racial or ethnic group, behind white non-Hispanics.***

Here are some key facts about how the nation's Latino population has changed over the past decade.

**1 Population growth among U.S. Hispanics has slowed since the start of the decade.** From 2015 to 2019, the nation's Hispanic population grew by an average of 1.9% per year – similar to the 2.1% annual growth between 2010 and 2015, but down from annual growth of more than 3% in earlier years.

### U.S. Hispanic population reached nearly 61 million in 2019

*In millions*



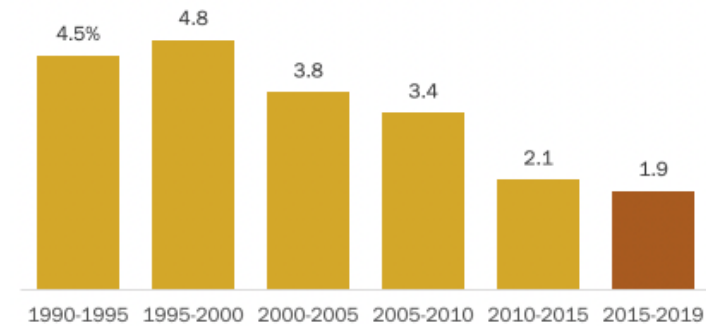
Note: Population estimates for 1990-2019 are as of July 1 for each year. Hispanics are of any race.  
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1970-1980 estimates based on decennial censuses (see 2008 report "U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050"), U.S. intercensal population estimates for 1990-1999 and 2000-2009, and U.S. Census Bureau Vintage 2019 estimates for 2010-2019.

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## U.S. Hispanic population growth has slowed

Average annual growth rate in U.S. Hispanic population



Note: Based on annual population estimates as of July 1 for each year. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. intercensal population estimates for 1990-1999 and 2000-2009, and U.S. Census Bureau Vintage 2019 estimates for 2010-2019.

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Despite the slowdown, population growth among Hispanics continues to outpace that of some other groups. The white population slightly declined, with an average growth rate that fell slightly below zero between 2015 and 2019, while the Black population grew by less than 1% per year over the same period. Only Asian Americans have seen faster population growth than Hispanics, increasing by 2.4% per year between 2015 and 2019. (All racial groups refer

to single race non-Hispanics.)

**2 The Latino population grew faster in the South than in any other U.S. region since 2010.** It increased by 26% from 2010 to 2019, rising from 18.3 million to 23.1 million. States in the Northeast (18% increase), Midwest (18%) and West (14%) also experienced growth in the number of Latinos from 2010 to 2019. Nationally, the Latino population has grown 19% since 2010, by 9.8 million people.

**3 The states with the fastest Hispanic population growth tend to have a relatively small number of Hispanics – and are *not* in the South.** North Dakota's Hispanic population reached 31,500 in 2019, a 129% increase from 2010, the fastest increase of any state. However, the state ranked 48th out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia in its overall Hispanic population in 2019. The next fastest growth came in South Dakota (66%), Montana (50%), New Hampshire (48%) and the District of Columbia (42%), all of which had Hispanic populations of less than 80,000 in 2019.

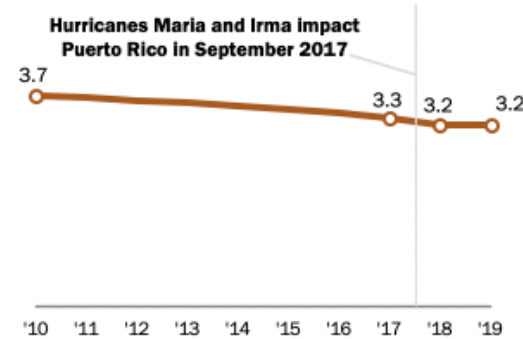
**4 Los Angeles County had more Hispanics than any other U.S. county, with 4.9 million in 2019.** The next largest Hispanic populations were in Harris County, Texas (2.1 million), and Miami-Dade County, Florida (1.9 million). Overall, 11 counties had more than a million Hispanics in 2019. These included Maricopa County, Arizona; Cook County, Illinois; and Riverside County, California. In 104 U.S. counties, Hispanics made up at least 50% of the population in 2019.

**5 Latinos are among the youngest racial or ethnic groups in the U.S. but saw one of the largest increases in median age over the past decade.** Latinos had a median age of 30 in 2019, up from 27 in 2010. Whites had the highest median age nationally – 44 in 2019, up from 42 in 2010. Asian and Black Americans had median ages of 38 and 35, respectively, and saw similar increases as whites in their median age since 2010.

**6 Puerto Rico’s population stabilized in 2019 after several years of decline.** The island’s population stood at 3.2 million in 2019, the same as in 2018. Puerto Rico’s population had steadily declined for about a decade, with its sharpest drops occurring in 2017 and 2018.

**Puerto Rico’s population held steady in 2019 after years of decline**

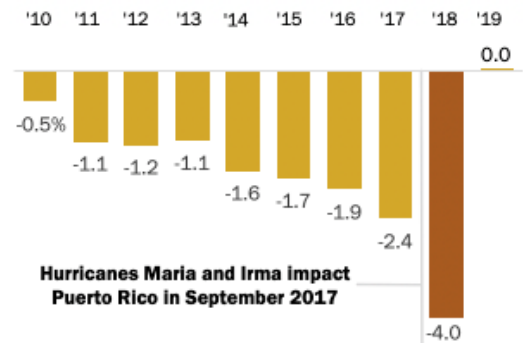
Total population of Puerto Rico, in millions



In 2017, Hurricanes Maria and Irma hit the island, leading many Puerto Ricans to leave for the 50 states and D.C., [especially Florida](#). Even before the hurricanes, however, the island’s population had experienced a [steady, long-term decline](#) due to a long-standing economic recession.

*Note: This is an update of a post originally published July 8, 2019.*

Population growth rate over previous year



Note: Population estimates as of July 1 of each year.  
 Source: Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. intercensal population estimates for 2000-2009 and U.S. Census Bureau Vintage 2019 estimates for 2010-2019.

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