



Latin American Fact Sheet



Population

There are over 50 million people in the U.S. today of Hispanic origin. This is the single largest ethnic group in the country, surpassing African Americans. It represents approximately 16% of the total U.S. population. The number of Hispanics in the U.S. today is greater than the entire population of Canada. Over 52% of the 2010 foreign-born population in the U.S. is from Latin America. By 2020, the U.S. Hispanic population is projected to be 70 million, or 21 percent of the U.S. population, and by 2050, it is projected to reach 128 million, or 29% of the population. Hispanics accounted for over 40% of the country's population growth between 1990 and 2000, and will account for 60% of the US population growth between 2005 and 2050. While close to 70% of the Hispanic population is concentrated in six states (California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, and Arizona), this share has been declining since 2000 as the number of Hispanics in other areas of the country has grown.

Language

Latinos in the US currently represent the fifth-largest Spanish-speaking community in the world, behind those of Mexico, Colombia, Spain and Argentina. In 1968, of Public High School students studying a foreign language, 37% studied French and 48% studied Spanish. In 2000, 19% studied French and 70% studied Spanish. In 1968, of students enrolled in US institutions of higher education 34% studied French and 32% studied Spanish. In 2002, 14% studied French and 53% studied Spanish. According to the Modern Language Association, since 1995 students enrolled in Spanish language courses at institutions of higher education have exceeded those enrolled in all other modern languages combined.

Business and Entrepreneurship

According to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce there are over 3 million Hispanic-owned businesses in the U.S., generating over \$420 billion in annual gross receipts. In 2010 the US Census Bureau reported that Hispanic-Owned businesses increased at double the national rate. About one of every ten small businesses in the country is currently estimated to be Hispanic. Hispanics account for over 13% of the documented U.S. labor force and are expected to increase to 20% by 2030. According to the Selig Center, Hispanic purchasing power surpassed \$900 billion in 2009 and is projected to reach \$1.3 trillion by 2014.

Direct Foreign Investment

The U.S. is the largest investor in Latin America after the European Union, accounting for 18% of total inflows to the region in 2011, according to ECLAC. In contrast, despite its recent growth as a regional presence, China represented 9% of the total in 2010, almost the same amount of FDI originating within the region (10%). The rising importance of intra-regional investment reflects the importance of Latin American multinationals (known as *Multilatinas* or *Translatinas*) which have consolidated and expanded internationally (including in the US). Some notable examples are CEMEX, Companhia Vale do Rio Doce, Petroleos de Venezuela, and others. Latin America and the Caribbean accounted for 10% of 2010 investment flows worldwide.

Trade

Latin America, although not the largest, is among the fastest growing U.S. regional trade partners. Between 1990 and 1999, total U.S. merchandise trade (exports plus imports) with Latin America grew by 163% compared to 82% for Asia, 70% for Western Europe, 24% for Africa, and 93% for the world. Latin America is capturing a larger share of U.S. trade, expanding from 13.3% of total U.S. trade in 1990 to 18.0% in 1999, and 20% in 2010, although this growth has not been uniform across the region. In 2010, the United States exported merchandise to Latin America and the Caribbean worth \$257 billion (22% of its world totals), with Mexico and Brazil being among the top ten US export markets. That year the United States imported merchandise from Latin America and the Caribbean worth \$358 billion (18% of its world totals), with Mexico and Venezuela among the top ten exporters (and Brazil not far behind). This means the US bought over 40% of the region's 2010 exports.

Locally, in 2011, 33% of Louisiana's merchandise exports went to Latin America and the Caribbean. Mexico is one of the state's principal export destinations accounting for 10% of all exports in 2011. Other important destinations in Latin America are Brazil and Chile (each 3%) and Guatemala and Colombia (each 2%). In 2011 Louisiana was ranked seventh in exports among all US states.

Energy

According to the US Energy Information Agency, two of the top five U.S. oil suppliers—Canada, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Mexico, and Nigeria—are in Latin America. Latin America supplies about 30% of U.S. total oil and petroleum imports (measured in annual barrels), almost doubling imports from the Persian Gulf (16%). Including Canada, imports from the Western Hemisphere represent over 75% of the US total.

Environment

More than forty percent of all tropical forest preserved on the planet is located in Brazil. These forests serve as the Earth's lungs, absorbing carbon dioxide in its atmosphere, producing oxygen, and attenuating global warming. At the same time, Latin American forests are among the vastest sources of biodiversity available in the planet. This biodiversity is essential for the preservation of the genetic integrity of our species. It is also a storehouse of potential medicines and could hold the cure for our most deadly chronic illnesses.