

The Hispanic Population

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The Hispanic population¹ numbered 22.8 million in 1993.

The March 1993 Current Population Survey (CPS) estimate of the Hispanic-origin population in the United States was 22.8 million or 8.9 percent of the total population. Nearly 2 of every 3 Hispanics is of Mexican origin.

The Hispanic population is “younger” than the non-Hispanic White population.

The CPS data show that 29.6 percent of Hispanics were under 15 years old, compared with 20.4 percent of non-Hispanic Whites in 1993. Conversely, about twice as many non-Hispanic Whites were 55 years old and over, compared with Hispanics (22.9 and 10.8 percent, respectively).

The median age of the Hispanic population in 1993 (26.7 years) was about 9 years less than that of the non-Hispanic White

¹Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. These data do not include the population of Puerto Rico.

population (35.5 years). Even so, the median age of Hispanics rose over the last decade — it increased from 24.3 years in 1983 to 26.7 years in 1993.

The median age among the Hispanic subgroups varied substantially in 1993. The Cuban population had the highest median age (43.6 years) while the Mexican population had the lowest (24.6 years). The median age was 26.9 years for Puerto Ricans, 28.6 years for Central and South Americans, and 32.5 years for the Other Hispanic population.

The educational attainment of Hispanics is well below that of the rest of the population despite significant progress.

One of the most notable improvements in educational attainment is the reduction in the proportion of Hispanics with very little formal education. The proportion of Hispanics 25 years old and over with less than a 5th grade education decreased from 15.6 percent in 1983 to 11.8 percent in 1993. Despite that

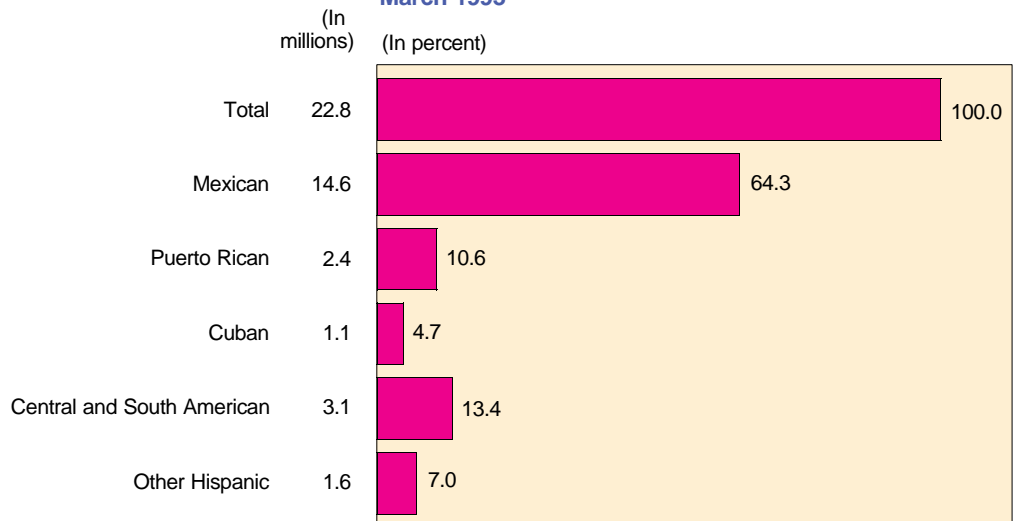
dramatic improvement, the proportion of Hispanics with low educational attainment — less than a 5th grade education — in 1993 was more than 14 times greater than that of non-Hispanic Whites (0.8 percent).

In a similar fashion, the proportion of Hispanics 25 years old and over with high school diplomas increased from 45.7 percent in 1983 to 53.1 percent in 1993. Despite that improvement, in 1993 Hispanics were still much less likely to be high school graduates than were non-Hispanic Whites (84.1 percent).

Similar differences exist among young adults 25 to 34 years old. In March 1993, 60.4 percent of Hispanic young adults reported they were high school graduates, compared with 91.2 percent of their non-Hispanic White counterparts. About 9.0 percent of Hispanic young adults reported that they had a bachelor’s degree, compared with about 26.8 percent of non-Hispanic White adults.

Educational attainment levels also differ substantially among

Persons of Hispanic Origin: March 1993



Hispanic subgroups. For example, Mexican young adults 25 to 34 years old were the least likely to have a high school diploma or higher level of education (52.7 percent). On the other hand, Cuban young adults were more likely to have bachelor's degrees (25.1 percent) than Mexican or Puerto Rican young adults.

Hispanics are more likely to be unemployed.

The March unemployment rate for Hispanics 16 years old and over dropped from 16.5 percent in 1983 to 7.8 percent in 1989, shortly after the end of the economic recession in 1983 and shortly before the latest economic downturn in 1989. However, the Hispanic unemployment rate increased to 11.9 percent in 1993. The unemployment rate among Hispanic females and males followed a similar pattern. Each dropped about 9 percentage points between 1983 and 1989 but increased between 1989 and 1993. About 12.4 percent of Hispanic males and 11.1 percent of Hispanic females were unemployed in 1993.

Hispanics were much more likely to be unemployed in March 1993 (11.9 percent) than were non-Hispanic Whites (6.1 percent). Among the Hispanic subgroups, Cubans had the lowest unemployment rate (7.3 percent).

Hispanics are more likely to earn less than non-Hispanic Whites, even among year-round, full-time workers.

The median earnings for year-round, full-time Hispanic males was less than that for non-Hispanic White males. The median earnings of Hispanic males in 1992 (\$20,054) was 63.1 percent that of non-Hispanic White males (\$31,765), while the median earnings of Hispanic females (\$17,124) was 78.1 percent that of non-Hispanic White females (\$21,930). The ratio of female-to-male median earnings among year-round, full-time workers showed that females received lower wages than males. However, the ratio of earnings of Hispanic females-to-males (0.85) was higher than the ratio for non-Hispanic Whites (0.69).

The differences in earnings for year-round, full-time workers were also evident in the distribution of the earnings. At the low end of the distribution, in 1992, about 12.0 percent of Hispanic males earned less than \$10,000 a year compared with 4.9 percent for non-Hispanic White males. At the high end of the distribution, about 6.7 percent of Hispanic males had earnings of \$50,000 or more, compared with about 21.6 percent of non-Hispanic White males. Among females with earnings, 16.5 percent of Hispanics and about 8.3 percent of non-Hispanic White females had earnings of less than \$10,000. About 26.9 percent of Hispanic females reported earnings of \$25,000 or more in 1992, compared with 41.4 percent of non-Hispanic White females.

Hispanics are more likely to live below the poverty level than non-Hispanics.

The poverty rate for Hispanics varied over the decade, but the rate in 1992 was not significantly different from the 1982 level. About 3 in 10 (29.9 percent) of Hispanic persons lived below the poverty

level in 1982, just after the recessionary period of 1981-82. The poverty rate of Hispanic persons declined during the recovery period to 26.2 percent in 1989 but rose to 29.3 percent in 1992, following the most recent recessionary period.

A somewhat similar pattern occurred among non-Hispanic persons. In 1982, 14.0 percent of non-Hispanics were living below the poverty level. That proportion declined to 11.6 percent in 1989 and rose to 13.1 percent in 1992, which is not statistically different from 1982. Among non-Hispanic Whites, the poverty rate was 9.6 percent in 1992. As a result, although the Hispanic population was only 8.9 percent of the total population, more than 1 in every 6 persons (18.0 percent) living in poverty in the United States was of Hispanic origin.

Hispanic children are more likely to live below the poverty level.

Hispanic children were more likely than non-Hispanic White children to be living below the poverty level. In 1992, about 39.9 percent of Hispanic children under 18 years old were living in poverty, compared with only 13.2 percent of non-Hispanic White children. Hispanic children represented 11.7 percent of all children living in the United States but were 21.3 percent of all children in poverty in 1992.

For Further Information

See: Current Population Reports, Series P20-475, *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 1993*.

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Unemployment Rates: March 1983 to 1993

(Percent of persons 16 years old and over in the civilian labor force)

