

2007

Latinos in Hennepin County



Hennepin County, Minnesota
Research, Planning & Development



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Executive Summary

The Latino population in Hennepin County is expected to double by 2030, playing an increasingly important role in the county's future. This community will help determine the county's economic competitiveness, contribute to the level, type, location and composition of county caseloads, and change the cultural face of the county.

Currently, less than one quarter of Latino adults are citizens. However, about three-quarters of Latino children are citizens, and as citizens and second generation residents, they may aspire to be more integrated into society and to increase their standard of living.

Latinos have lower participation rates and perform well in the Minnesota Family Investment Program, yet economic advancement for Latinos will be difficult. Latino youth are having children and/or dropping out of high school at the highest rate of any racial or ethnic group, and Latinos are competing against both previous immigrants and a highly educated native work force struggling to maintain their economic positions. If the younger generation of Latinos is to escape a poverty trap — where poverty leads individuals to underinvest in education, which perpetuates poverty — Latino students need to finish high school and college.

It is in both the Latino community's and Hennepin County's interests to prepare for the continued growth in this population by working to promote successes in this community. Taking the necessary steps will result in increased economic returns to both individuals and the community. While this responsibility ultimately rests at the individual and family level, building on Latino community assets will help improve the life chances of Latino individuals and families.

Introduction

The Latino community is a vital part of Hennepin County and will play a large role in determining the county's future competitiveness. Because this community will constitute a growing share of the county's students and work force, it is important that people in Hennepin County—policy makers, educators, employers, citizens—are aware of and understand the Latino community's basic demographics, strengths and barriers to success.

In 2003, Hennepin County produced the initial *Latinos in Hennepin County* report, which provided a brief overview of the Latino community. That report found that between 1990 and 2000, Latinos primarily came to Hennepin County from Mexico and arrived in search of better work and educational opportunities, a better quality of life, and a safer, healthier environment in which to raise their families.¹

The 2007 report updates the 2003 edition, highlighting and expanding on areas of significant interest. Certain facts from the 2003 report, such as some detailed census demographics, cannot be updated due to data limitations. This report used the most recent data available, often from 2006, but earlier in some cases.

While the data reported here references all Latinos in the county, it cannot recognize the wide diversity of the population in areas such as: socioeconomic status, immigration status, time spent in the country, English speaking ability, and education level.

Terminology

In this report, the term “Latino” refers to U.S. residents from Latin American countries whose language is Spanish. Where data was taken from another source and that source used the term “Hispanic,” this report uses the term “Hispanic/Latino.”

The term “African American/black” refers to U.S. residents from Africa or of African descent, and to African Americans. Many of the data sources used in this report do not separate these two groups.

Throughout this report Latinos are compared with African Americans/blacks and with whites. African Americans are a more established community of color, although more recently-arrived residents of African descent represent about one quarter of this community. Whites, as the majority population in the county, form a “baseline” group.

Limitations

This report compiled data from a number of sources, and the limitations to the data are important to address at the outset. First, data from the U.S. Census Bureau is likely to underreport immigrant and minority groups, including Latinos. Consequently, rates calculated using an underreported population are artificially high.

In addition to underreporting, there are differences in how individuals were classified into racial and ethnic categories, depending on the data source. In some of the measures the “white” and “black” categories include Latinos, and in other measures Latinos are excluded from these categories.

Finally, the data presented did not control for factors such as income, age, or education level. These factors are connected with race/ethnicity and may also influence the measure being compared. This one-dimensional view of the data has the potential to overstate disparities among white, black, and Latino populations.

Population and Growth

Recent national trends show the Latino population growing rapidly, and Hennepin County is no exception. In Minnesota, immigration from Mexico and other Latin American countries, a high birth rate, and migration from other states all contribute to the Latino growth.² These are also likely reasons for the rapid growth in Hennepin County.

- In 2006, approximately one-third, or 66,000, of Minnesota's estimated 195,000 residents of Hispanic/Latino origin lived in Hennepin County.²
- Latinos account for 5.9 percent of the overall Hennepin County 2006 population, up from 4.1 percent in 2000.
- Latino children (under 18) represent 8.5 percent of Hennepin County's 2006 under-18 population; Latino adults (18 and over) represent 5.1 percent of Hennepin County's adult population.
- Hennepin County's Latino population is projected to increase from 45,000 in 2000 to 135,000 by 2030 (11.3 percent of the population). This is a 200 percent increase — significantly faster growth than the expected growth for blacks (70%) and whites (1%) during this interval.³

Education

School Enrollment

While the overall Latino population has grown rapidly in Hennepin County, enrollment in public school districts in Hennepin County grew faster. According to census data, the Latino population in Hennepin County grew 46 percent between 2000 and 2006, while the number of enrolled Hispanic/Latino children (across all grades) in Hennepin County increased 82 percent.

The enrollment increases occurred both in Minneapolis and in several suburban school districts. School enrollment data from 2006 shows significant increases from 2000 in the percent of Latino enrollment, especially in Richfield (from 6.7% to 23.3%), Minneapolis (from 7.7% to 15.4%), Brooklyn Center (from 2.6% to 11.7%), Osseo, Robbinsdale, and Bloomington. Richfield surpassed Minneapolis as the school district with the highest proportion of Latinos.

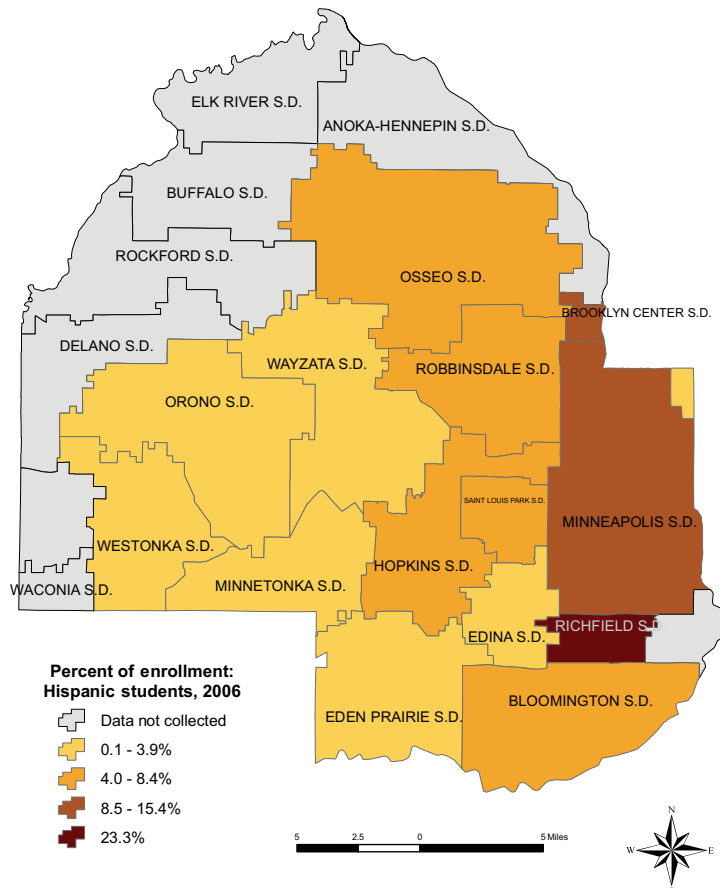
In the 2006-2007 school year, Hennepin County public school teachers are: 1.4 percent Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, 2.9 percent black, and 92.2 percent white.⁴ In the same year, 8.2 percent of all students are of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity. This does not account for teachers' Spanish-speaking ability.

Table 1. Number and percent of enrolled students that are Hispanic/Latino, 2000 and 2006

	2000		2006	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Richfield	282	6.7%	972	23.3%
Minneapolis	3,756	7.7%	5,921	15.4%
Brooklyn Center	45	2.6%	197	11.7%
Bloomington	362	3.3%	896	8.4%
Robbinsdale	482	3.5%	1,124	8.4%
St. Louis Park	146	3.4%	288	6.7%
Osseo	381	1.7%	1,046	4.8%
Hopkins	263	3.1%	371	4.6%
Eden Prairie	133	1.3%	236	2.4%
Edina	97	1.4%	168	2.2%
Orono	30	1.2%	56	2.1%
Wayzata	135	1.5%	201	2.1%
Minnetonka	95	1.2%	151	2.0%
Westonka	14	0.6%	35	1.6%
Total	6,221	4.0%	11,662	8.2%

Source: Minnesota Department of Education

Percent of enrolled students that are Hispanic/Latino, Hennepin County public school districts, 2006



Source: Minnesota Department of Education

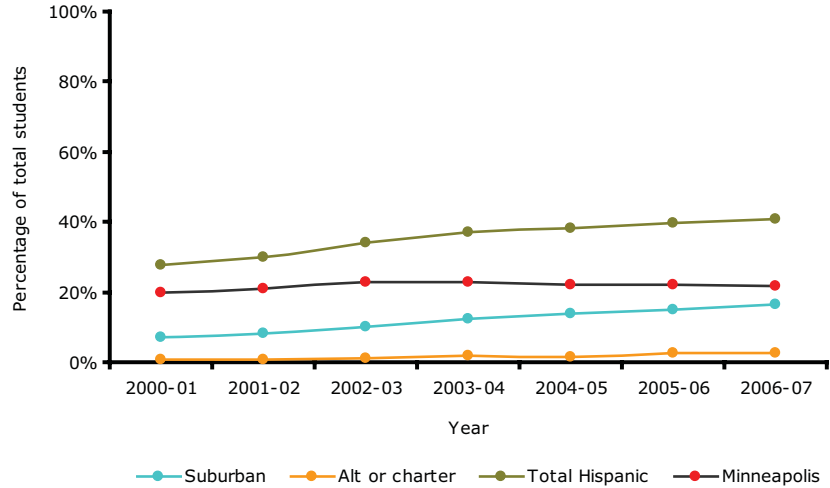
Produced by: Hennepin County Strategic Initiatives & Community Engagement, October 2007

English Language Learner Classes

Hennepin County public schools have seen a steady increase in Spanish-speaking students enrolled in English Language Learner (ELL) classes since 2000.

Latino students account for 41 percent of all Hennepin County ELL students enrolled in the 2006-2007 school year, increasing from 4,097 students in 2001 to 8,124 students in 2006.

Figure 1. Percentage of ELL students who are Latino in Hennepin County, 2001-2007



Source: Minnesota Department of Education

Academic Achievement

Results from the 2006-2007 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA-II) reveal a disparity in Hennepin County between Latinos and whites in both math and reading achievement that is similar across all grades tested.

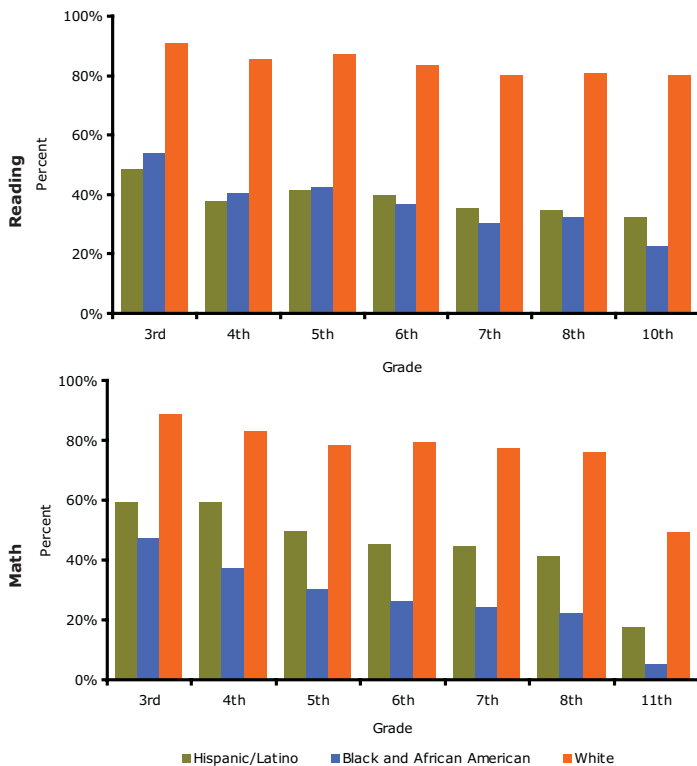
The disparity in each grade level is greater for reading than for math.

- The gap in reading achievement between Latinos and whites is comparable to the gap between blacks and whites in

each grade tested. The largest gap was in 4th grade where 37.8 percent of Latinos met or exceeded expectations compared to 85.6 percent of whites.

- In math, the disparity between Latinos and whites is less pronounced than the disparity between blacks and whites. The largest gap for math was in 8th grade where 41.4 percent of Latinos met or exceeded standards compared to 76.0 percent of whites.

Figure 2. Percent of students that met or exceeded MCA tests standards in Hennepin County public school districts, 2006-2007*,**



*The MCA-II data are from a point in time for different students in each grade. The data should not be interpreted as outcomes for individuals progressing through grades.

**Differential rates of dropping out by race and ethnicity will affect the MCA-II scores in higher grades.

Source: Minnesota Department of Education

Table 2. Hennepin County four-year completion rate*, 2006

	Percent graduated
Hispanic	41%
American Indian	47%
African American/Black	52%
Asian	78%
White	90%
Hennepin County - All students	81%

*This completion rate is computed only for students whose originating district in 9th grade is the same as their last serving district. Because the measure excludes students that move, these rates are likely higher than the rate of completion for all students in each category.

Source: Minnesota Department of Education

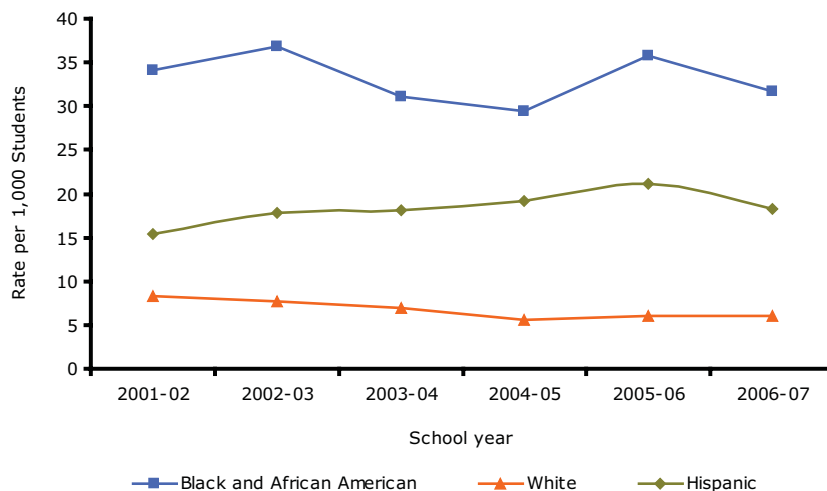
Graduation Rates

Completing high school is an achievement that results in increased earning potential, greater job stability, and greater upward mobility.⁵ Among the 14 public school districts completely within Hennepin County, Hispanic/Latino students had the lowest four-year high school completion rate of any racial/ethnic group in 2006. Out of all 9th grade Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in 2002-03, 41 percent graduated in 2006.

Truancy Petition Referrals

School attendance is necessary for keeping on track to graduate from high school. Schools often refer students to the Hennepin County Attorney's Office for truancy petition only after repeated efforts to address attendance issues. Truancy petition referrals received at Hennepin County from the county's public schools were combined with enrollment data for 5th through 12th grades in these schools to calculate truancy petition rates. In all years, the rates for Latinos were higher than whites and lower than blacks.

Figure 3. Truancy petition referral rate per 1,000 students, 2001-2007*,**

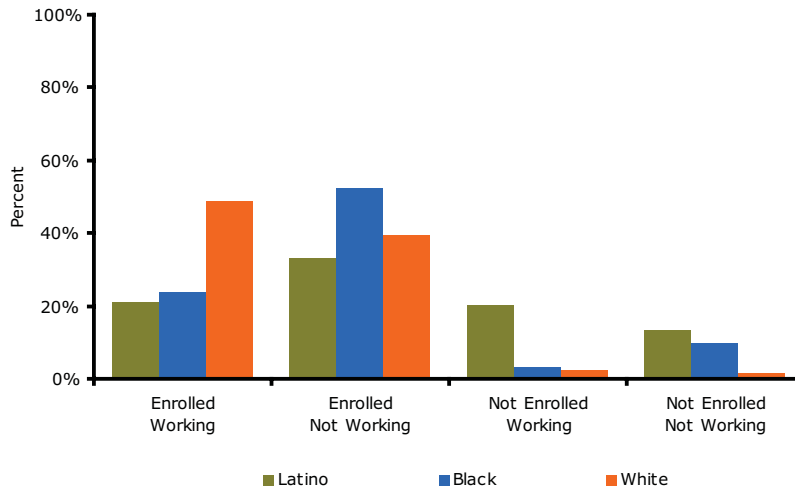


*Includes charter schools but excludes private schools in Hennepin County.

**There may be inconsistencies in referral practices.

Source: Hennepin County Attorney's Office, Minnesota Department of Education Enrollment Data

Figure 4. School enrollment and employment status percentages, ages 16-19, Hennepin County, 2000*



*2006 data not available

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

Youth in the Labor Market

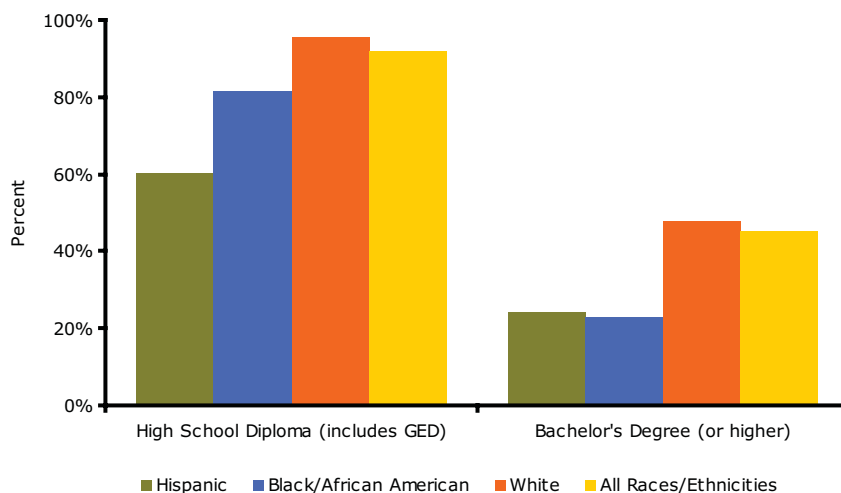
Data from the 2000 census suggests, and national studies confirm, that Latino youth may be dropping out of school to work.⁶ In 2000, while Hennepin County Latino youth age 16 to 19 were less likely than whites to be working while enrolled in school, they were eight times more likely than whites to be working while not enrolled in school.

Educational Attainment

Investment in education yields returns to the individual and the community. In addition to earning more money and paying more in taxes, high school graduates cost governments less money in criminal justice and economic assistance on average than individuals without a diploma. The U.S. Census Bureau's 2006 American Community Survey (ACS) measures of educational attainment are consistent with the graduation rates shown earlier in this report. According to the ACS:

- In 2006, Hennepin County Latino adults trail both whites and blacks in high school completion. For Latinos age 25 and older, 60.1 percent reported completing high school compared to 95.7 percent of whites and 81.7 percent of blacks.
- Hennepin County Latino adults are competing against a well-educated local population. While 45.4 percent of all Hennepin County adults age 25 and older have at least a bachelor's degree, 24.4 percent of the Hennepin County Latino population has at least a bachelor's degree.

Figure 5. Educational attainment by percent of Hennepin County residents age 25 and older, 2006



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

Employment and Income

Income and Poverty

Disparities in poverty and income between whites and Latinos in Hennepin County that were seen in 1999 continued in 2006. An individual's economic condition stems from many factors, and gaps in income can be difficult to overcome. An analysis of national data found that educational attainment and wage earnings for second-generation immigrants are related to the average earnings of the neighborhood where they were raised. In addition, this effect is

magnified for neighborhoods that are ethnically separated.⁷ Other national studies have examined the role family background plays in determining economic success, and have found that the income of the father is highly predictive of the income of the children, suggesting that wage gaps will persist across generations.⁸

- The wage gap for U.S. Hispanic/Latino men compared to white men increased between 1970 and 2002, from 26 percent to 41 percent. During the same period, the wage gap for black men compared to white men decreased from 37 percent to 33 percent.⁹

Table 3. Hennepin County poverty and income data, 1999 and 2005-2006*,**

	1999	2005-2006
Percent of individuals below poverty level	8.3%	11.2%
Hispanic	20.4%	19.1%
Black/African American	26.6%	34.6%
White (non-Hispanic)	4.5%	6.4%
Percent of families below poverty level	5%	7.3%
Hispanic	16.9%	18%
Black/African American	22.5%	30.5%
White (non-Hispanic)	2.1%	2.8%
Median family income***	\$65,985	\$63,933
Hispanic	\$35,657	\$28,324
Black/African American	\$31,029	\$27,697
White (non-Hispanic)	\$71,716	\$72,159
Per Capita income***	\$28,789	\$27,857
Hispanic	\$13,183	\$12,611
Black/African American	\$13,951	\$12,422
White (non-Hispanic)	\$32,640	\$32,580

*The 2000 Census asked about 1999 income information. The 2006 ACS income questions referred to income in the prior 12 months.

**Poverty and income are dependent on economic cycles, and communities of color tend to do better during periods of economic expansion, as occurred in the mid to late 1990's.

***CPI used to convert 2006 dollars to 1999 dollars.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2000 Census and 2006 American Community Survey

Government Assistance

For families in need of temporary support, the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) provides cash and food assistance to low-income Minnesota families with children.¹⁰ Latinos in Hennepin County have received assistance less often and for shorter times than would be expected given their poverty and population growth estimates.

- A statewide report on MFIP cases in December 2006 found that whites and Hispanics/Latinos receive assistance for a shorter period of time on average (less than two years) than other racial/ethnic groups. The report also found that 87.8 percent of the Hispanics/Latinos on MFIP in December of 2006 were U.S. citizens.¹¹

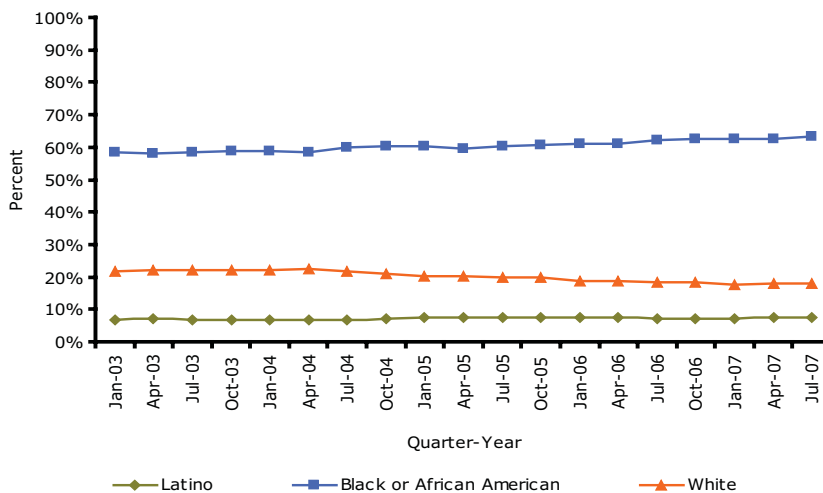
- While the Latino population in Hennepin County increased between 2003 and 2007, the percentage of MFIP cases with a Hispanic/Latino applicant remained stable, fluctuating between 6.6 percent and 7.6 percent. In 2006, 11 percent of families in poverty had a Latino head of household.

Hennepin County Latino adults who received MFIP have also done well in relation to other racial/ethnic groups on two outcome measures of the MFIP program: work participation rate and self-support.*

- For each quarter reported between 2004 and 2006, Latinos in MFIP had a slightly higher work participation rate than the overall Hennepin County average. Participation rates for Latinos ranged from 35.9 percent to 43.4 percent.¹²

- Latinos performed as well as whites on the self-support index across the same time period, with Latinos' success rates ranging from 70.2 percent to 76.0 percent.¹²
- In addition, MFIP sanctions** for August of 2007 show Latinos constitute only 3.3 percent of all adult MFIP sanctions in Hennepin County, while Latinos make up 7.3 percent of all adult MFIP cases. A similar pattern in adult MFIP sanctions was seen for all prior months in 2007.¹³

Figure 6. Percent of quarterly Hennepin County MFIP cases, 2003-2007***



***Cases include the following: single and two parent household, child only, minor parent, relative caregiver. Race and ethnicity are determined in all cases by applicant. The MFIP cases reported are those for which Hennepin County was the servicing county.

Sources: Hennepin County Department of Human Services Data Warehouse – MAXI; Hennepin County HSPHD Eligibility and Work Supports, DHS Data Warehouse – MAXIS

*The Work participation rate is the percentage of cases that are 'fully engaged' in employment or employment-related activities during a quarter. The Self-Support Index is the percent of adults in MFIP who three years later are either working 30 hours per week or more or are no longer receiving MFIP assistance.

**Sanctions may occur when an applicant does not comply with employment requirements, which can result in the reduction of the cash grant for the case. Child-only MFIP cases are excluded from sanction data.

Housing

Home Ownership

Home ownership is one measure of economic stability, and there is a potential intergenerational impact from not owning a home as less wealth is accumulated, resulting in smaller bequests. The Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University found that home ownership accounted for about 67 percent of low-income families' wealth compared to 32 percent for high-income families.¹⁴ In Hennepin County, Latinos have lower rates of home ownership and higher rates of sub-prime loans.*

- In 2006, 35.3 percent of Hennepin County Hispanic/Latino householders owned their homes, compared to 75.5 percent of whites (non-Hispanic).¹⁵

- More than half of the 2,278 residential loans originating in 2006 for Latinos in Hennepin County were sub-prime loans (52%), compared to 22 percent for whites and 61 percent for blacks.¹⁶

Homelessness

A 2006 Wilder Research report on homelessness showed that Hispanics/Latinos — and American Indians and blacks — are overrepresented in the homeless** population.¹⁷

Table 4. Percent of Minnesota population and homeless population, 2006

Race/Ethnicity	All MN adults***	Homeless adults	All MN youth (age 11-17)	Homeless youth§
American Indian	1%	11%	2%	20%
Asian American	3%	2%	4%	2%
Black	3%	38%	5%	25%
White	90%	41%	82%	34%
Other, including multi-racial	3%	8%	4%	15%
Hispanic (may be of any race)	3%	7%	4%	12%

***Columns will not sum to 100% as Hispanic and Other are included in more than one category.

§ Youth are defined as unaccompanied age 11-17

Source: A Wilder Research Report on Minnesota Homelessness, 2006

*Sub-prime loans are those with an interest rate three or more percentage points higher than the prime rate (i.e., high interest loans).

**Wilder Research uses the U.S. Congress definition of homeless: 1) lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence; 2) has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised, temporary living accommodation; or 3) has a nighttime residence in any place not meant for human habitation.

Immigration and Citizenship Status

Immigration status, especially undocumented status, is a key barrier to Latinos for health insurance access, employment, financial aid for college, and public assistance.²²

There are strong economic arguments for emigrating to the U.S. from another country. For example, an American manufacturing worker makes four times more than a factory worker in Mexico and 30 times more than an agricultural worker in Mexico.¹⁸ However, immigration has cultural, societal, and economic costs and benefits. National studies on the effect of immigration on wages of U.S. residents suggest that immigration has a negative effect on the wages of those with no high school education (both U.S. born citizens and previous immigrants).¹⁹⁻²⁰ With the number of Latinos in Hennepin County expected to increase by 90,000 in the next 23 years, increasing downward wage pressure can be expected — although not all of the 90,000 will be immigrants of working age.

Places of Birth

The top three places of birth for Hennepin County foreign-born residents in 2006 were: Mexico (22,393), India (9,109), and Laos (7,997).¹⁵ But while Mexico is still by far the most frequent place of birth for foreign-born county residents, immigration from Central and South America has increased in the last six years. Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Guyana are common places of birth for the county's foreign-born Latinos.

Citizenship Status

A recent national study reports that in the coming decades births will become a more important source of growth among the Latino population than immigration, a change from the 1980s and 1990s.²¹ In Hennepin County in 2006, 74.3 percent of Hispanic/Latino children (under 18) were native U.S. citizens compared to only 23.5 percent of Hispanic/Latino adults (18 and older).*

Table 5. Places of birth for foreign-born Hennepin County residents, 2000 and 2006

Place of birth	2000		2006	
	Number (rank)			
Mexico	17,681	(1st)	22,393	(1st)
India	5,332	(4th)	9,109	(2nd)
Laos	9,206	(2nd)	7,997	(3rd)
Spanish speaking Central and South American, and Caribbean countries**	7,907		17,952	
Total foreign-born	110,496		137,882	

**Includes the following: South America excluding Brazil; All of Central America; Cuba and Dominican Republic. Data was not available for Puerto Rico.

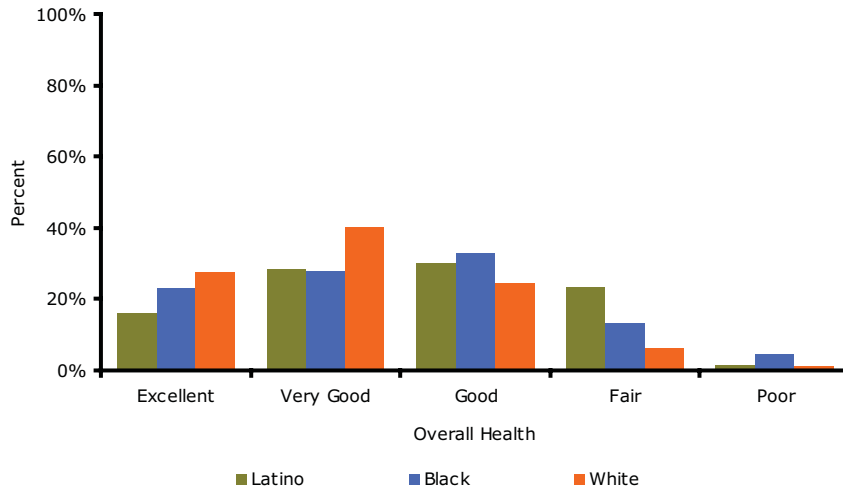
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2000 Census and 2006 American Community Survey

In 2006, there were an estimated 6,764 Ecuadorian-born residents in Hennepin County, more than three times the number in 2000.

In 2006, one-third of Latino residents in Hennepin County were born in Mexico (22,393). Of these, 42 percent report having arrived in the U.S. in or after 2000.

*A native U.S. citizen is someone born in the U.S. Foreign-born residents can either be naturalized U.S. citizens or non-citizens.

Figure 7. Overall health, Hennepin County, 2002



Source: SHAPE 2002, Hennepin County Community Health Department and Bloomington Division of Public Health

Health

Overall Health

Health affects many aspects of an individual’s potential, including his/her capacity to learn and earn, provide dependent care, and contribute to the community. Latinos in Minnesota and Hennepin County face specific challenges related to health.

- The Minnesota Department of Health reported in 2004 that Latinos in Minnesota were 1.7 times more likely to die from diabetes than whites. In addition, diabetes during pregnancy is becoming more common in Minnesota Latinas.²³
- From 1999 to 2003, Latina women in Minnesota had the highest rate of cervical cancer compared to all other races/ethnicities.* The incidence rate for Hispanic/Latina women (13.4 per 100,000) was more than twice as high

as the rate for white women (6.2 per 100,000).²⁴ This is an important indicator of health care access as well as overall health, as cervical cancer is a largely preventable disease in populations with adequate health care.

- From 1989 to 1993, the percent of Minnesota’s Latina women receiving no or inadequate prenatal care was 14.7 percent. From 2001 to 2004 this improved to 8.4 percent.²⁵
- In the Hennepin County SHAPE 2002 survey**, a higher percentage of Latinos than blacks or whites reported their overall health as “fair” or “poor.”

Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) reported 2006 uncompensated care charges in the emergency department of approximately \$3.9 million for Latinos.²⁶ This represents 5.4 percent of all uncompensated care (including non-emergency) at HCMC in 2006.

*All rates are age-adjusted to the U.S. 2000 standard population.

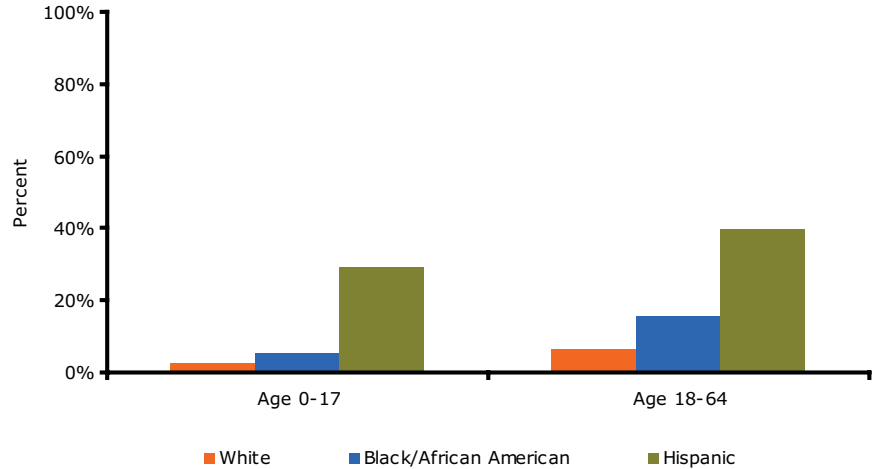
**SHAPE 2006 data for this measure was not available at time of publication.

Health Insurance

Hennepin County Latinos are the most likely racial/ethnic group to be uninsured. In addition to the negative health outcomes associated with a lack of health insurance, uncompensated care at emergency rooms is a costly expense to hospitals and communities.

- According to Hennepin County's SHAPE 2006 survey, 39.8 percent of Hispanic/Latino residents of working age (18-64) lacked health care coverage, the highest of all racial and ethnic groups surveyed.²⁷ In addition, 29.2 percent of Hispanic/Latino children surveyed lacked insurance.

Figure 8. Percent of uninsured children and adults, Hennepin County, 2006



Source: Shape 2006

Teen Pregnancy and Teen Births

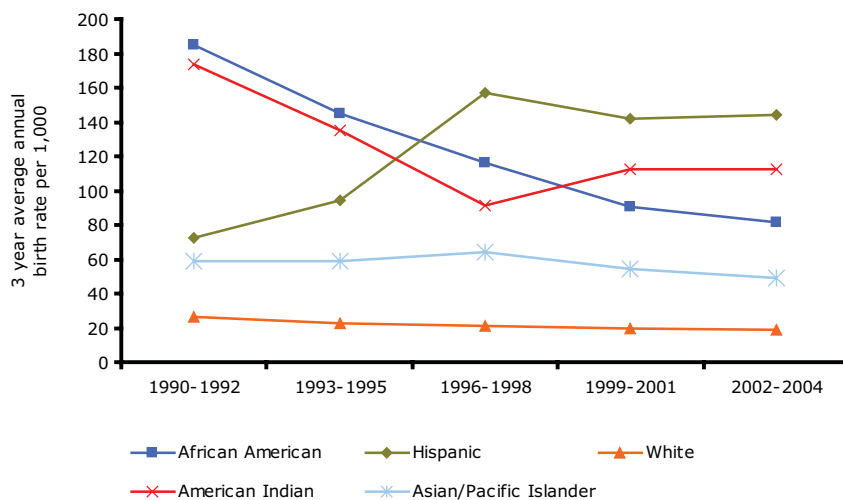
State-wide and in Hennepin County, Latina teens continue to be more likely to become pregnant than white or black teens. On an individual level, teen parenthood is associated with a decreased likelihood of graduating from high school and increased chances of

living in poverty. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy estimates that in 2004, teen childbearing by Latinas in Hennepin County had an aggregate cost* of \$7.3 million.²⁸

- Statewide, teen birth rates for 2001 to 2005 declined from the 1989 to 1993 rate for all racial/ethnic groups except for Hispanics/Latinas.²⁵

- Since 1996-1998, the teen birth rate for Hennepin County Latinas is the highest of all races/ethnicities.

Figure 9. Hennepin County teen (ages 15-19) average annual birth rates per 1,000 population**, §, †



**Changes in census reporting may have influenced the per 1,000 population rate for American Indians in 2000 and subsequent years.

§ Undercounts of Hispanic/Latino births during the early 1990s may be one explanation for the increasing birth rate.

† Individuals identifying as Hispanic may be of any race.

Source: Hennepin County Human Services Department Assessment Team, Health Protection Service Area

*The cost estimated is to the teens and their families, the public sector, and society at large. Some of the public sector cost components include: health care, foster care, public assistance, criminal justice, and lost tax revenue.

Safety and Crime

Child Protection

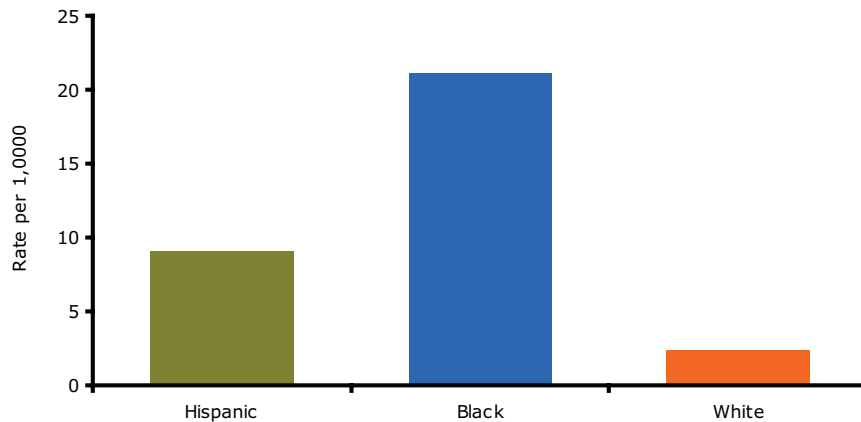
In 2006, there were 208 Latino children found to be victims of maltreatment (neglect or abuse), with a rate of 9.1 per 1,000 children. Comparatively, the rate for whites was 2.4 per 1,000 children and for blacks it was 21.1 per 1,000 children.

Probation Caseloads

A survey of Hennepin County probation cases on December 31, 2005, found that Latino adults were underrepresented in relation to the population, but Latino juveniles were overrepresented.²⁹ According to the survey:

- Latino adults (18 and older) made up 4.9 percent of the county's population, but represented only 1.2 percent of all adult felony probation cases, 3.0 percent of adult gross misdemeanor cases, and 4.3 percent of adult misdemeanor probation cases.
- Latinos made up 5.3 percent of the general county population of 10-17 year olds, but represented 8.0 percent of the juvenile probation cases.

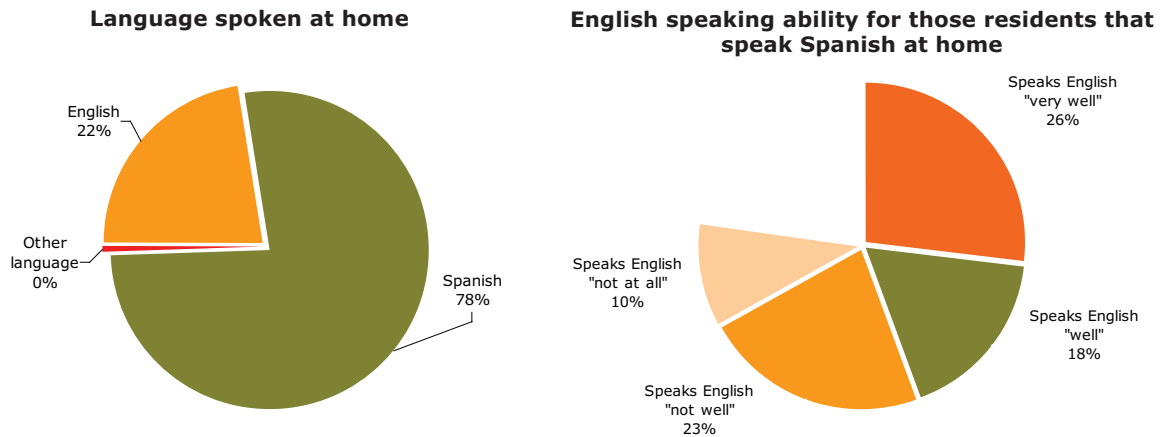
Figure 10. Children in protection cases with determined maltreatment per 1,000 children, 2006



Source: Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department, Child Protection

*All data from the Minnesota Department of Education.

Figure 11. Language: Hennepin County Latino residents age 5 and older, 2006



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

Culture and Community

The 2003 *Latinos in Hennepin County* report covered many important aspects of the Latino community and culture in Hennepin County. Following are a few updates from that report.

Language

English Speaking Ability

Difficulty speaking English and problems gaining access to Spanish interpreters are barriers to receiving health and human services, to educational achievement, and to employment.^{22, 30} A recent national study by the Pew Hispanic Center reports that 88 percent of children of Latino immigrants speak English “very well,” suggesting that language barriers are transient.³¹

- Hennepin County paid \$827,000 to vendors in 2006 for interpretive services (all languages); Spanish was the most requested language.³²
- In 2006, 78 percent of Hennepin County Hispanic/Latino residents age 5 and older reported speaking Spanish

in their home. However, 67 percent reported either speaking English at home or being able to speak English “well” or “very well.”

Community Connectedness

Hennepin County’s 2002 SHAPE survey asked a number of questions related to culture and community. While the SHAPE 2006 survey results for these measures are not yet available, results from the 2002 survey included the following:

- Among Latinos surveyed, 63.7 percent expressed that it was very important to pass along their cultural heritage or the traditions of their ancestors to the next generation. Comparatively, 32.0 percent of whites and 77.6 percent of blacks responded in the same way.
- 40.5 percent of Latino adults reported that they attended church, synagogue, mosque or other place for worship or other activities either on a daily or weekly basis, compared to 50.1 percent of blacks and 42.4 percent of whites.

- Latinos were less likely than whites or blacks to respond that they had participated in school, community, or neighborhood activities.

- 80.5 percent of Latinos “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that members of their community can depend on each other. The rates for whites was 86.2 percent and for African Americans/blacks was 66 percent.

Table 6. "How often are you involved in any school, community, or neighborhood activity?"

	Latino	Black /African American	White
	N=622	N=1197	N=7292
Weekly	19.8%	25.8%	26.5%
Monthly	13.5%	19.3%	17.5%
Several times a year	15.5%	21.4%	18.9%
Once a year	12.6%	8.8%	12.2%
Less than once a year	11.9%	5.5%	6.7%
Never	26.7%	19.1%	18.2%

Table 7. "People can depend on each other in this community"

	Latino	Black /African American	White
	N=634	N=1204	N=7309
Strongly Agree	7.2%	10.3%	16.6%
Agree	73.3%	55.7%	69.6%
Disagree	11.2%	19.1%	8.7%
Strongly Disagree	2%	4.8%	0.9%
Don't Know	6.3%	10.1%	4.2%

Source: SHAPE 2002, Hennepin County Community Health Department and Bloomington Division of Public Health

Consulates and Service Organizations

Responding to needs in the community, both a Mexican Consulate and an honorary consulate for Ecuador opened in the Twin Cities in 2005. Other honorary consulates serving Minnesota Latinos include: Bolivia, Guatemala, and Honduras.³³

A 2005 directory of nonprofits in Minnesota lists 55 organizations specifically targeted to the Latino/Latina population. Religion, art/culture, human services, and membership benefit were the most common types of Latino/Latina nonprofit organizations.³⁴

Media Outlets

Another response to the growing Latino population is the number and size of media outlets available for Spanish-speakers and Latinos. There are many Spanish-language or bilingual newspapers — with circulations as high as 30,000 — magazines and radio stations that target various segments of this population.

Conclusion

The fast-growing and young Latino community in Hennepin County will become more important to the county's economy, the community at large and, by virtue of their increased numbers in the population, Hennepin County's service caseload.

This report's data contains cause for hope and some warnings. While 18 percent of Latino families were in poverty in 2006, they were underrepresented in government supports, such as MFIP, or used MFIP only briefly and performed

well when on it. However, high teen birth rates and low high school completion rates threaten Latinos' economic advancement.

With a large wage difference between the U.S. and Mexico — the home country of the majority of Hennepin County Latino immigrants — many immigrants may find huge initial economic advantages from immigrating here. However, an increasing supply of immigrants may eventually reduce wage rates, and activity in some of the business sectors that attracted Latinos has contracted. In addition, language remains a further obstacle for some.

Given the strong relationship between fathers' and sons' earnings and the capacity of neighborhoods and their "ethnic capital" to reinforce economic disparities, some Latino families will face strong barriers to economic self-sufficiency. Because Hennepin County's future competitiveness will depend in part on these families' outcomes, it is in the interests of both Hennepin County and the Latino community to prepare for the continued Latino population growth and to promote successes in this community.

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