



# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LATINOS IN THE U.S.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"**The Impact of COVID-19 on Latinos in the U.S.**" is the result of a joint effort between **Mijente Support Committee**, a national organization dedicated to organizing and mobilizing Latino people across broader movements for racial, economic, climate and gender justice, and **The Labor Council for Latin American Advancement**, the leading national organization for Latino(a) workers and their families, focused on organizing Latinos in the labor movement in order to impact workers' rights and expand their influence in the political process.

This report encapsulates the quality of life of Latinos in the United States prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 in order to depict the importance of this segment of our nation's population and draw attention to the increased uncertainties they now face. We have used statistics to profile Latino communities, thus highlighting median salaries, job trends, unemployment and poverty rates, educational attainment levels, retirement opportunities, foreclosure challenges, and access to health care, and Latinos in the criminal and immigration system, among others.

Before the global pandemic, Latino people in the United States represented an overwhelming majority of workers in low-wage jobs and were subject to the highest number of workplace fatalities; only 38.2% of this segment of the population had access to health coverage. Given that existing dire situation and the lack of official statistics to accurately portray their immediate situation as a result of the virus, it is crucial to emphasize the disproportionate impacts that have resulted and will only deepen because of COVID-19.

This report focuses on the repercussions of COVID-19 on Latino families who have thus far been on the frontlines. Farmworkers, grocery personnel, and caretakers, to name a few, are waging a war against an invisible enemy in the context of systemic failures that have abandoned, neglected, and discriminated against this population. This report also provides readers with names and faces—stories of real human impact that show the realities of Latino people. It is imperative to center Latino and other vulnerable populations in the country's fight against COVID-19, particularly as many are workers who continue to keep our supply chain moving forward, representing the lifeblood of our nation and of our economy.

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***The coronavirus does not discriminate, but they [the government] do. A family recently told me that they are not afraid of the virus, what they fear is hunger.***

”

”

Leticia is Honduran Garifuna, 42 years old. She lives with her family — her husband and three kids. Her siblings and parents reside in an indigenous zone of Honduras. She was taking care of an elderly person for 11 years until they passed away seven months ago. She currently lives and organizes in New Orleans with Familias Unidas en Accion, providing food and other services to undocumented families full time and without pay.

***“The coronavirus does not discriminate, but they [the government] do. A family recently told me that they are not afraid of the virus, what they fear is hunger. Not being able to feed our families, not having access to medical attention, having to live in fear of being separated from our loved ones, these are all things that our immigrant community is suffering in this moment of crisis; this fuels my fire to keep fighting because no one will save us, we have to save ourselves.”***



# COVID-19

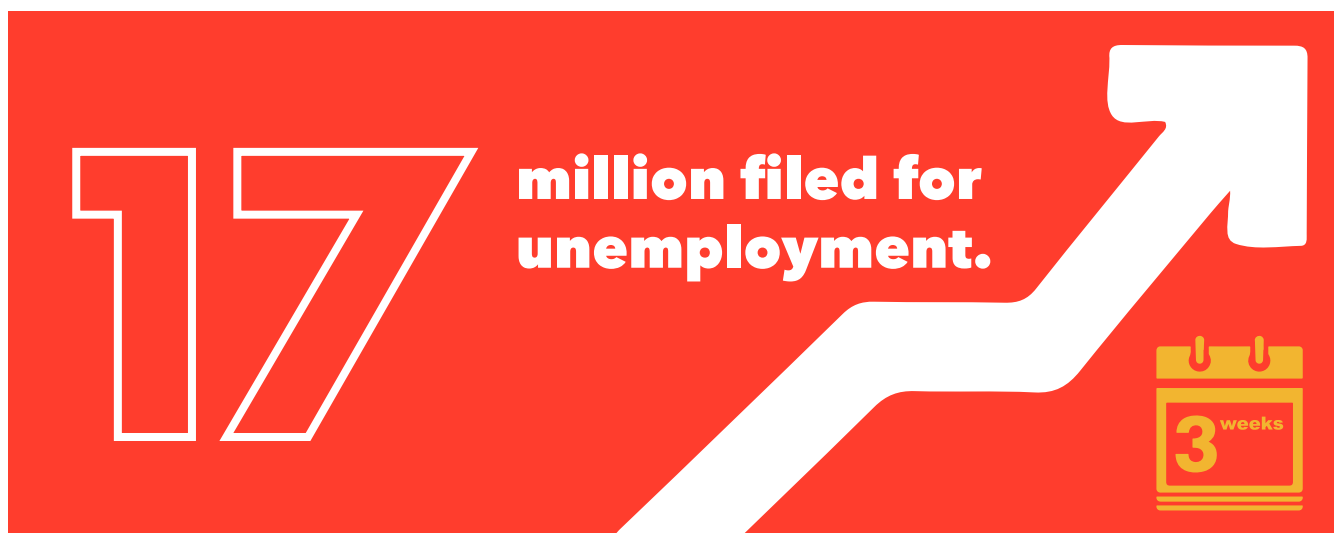
The COVID-19 virus is at once a public health crisis and an economic one, with the U.S. Latino population suffering devastating blows. Latino people are on the frontlines of this pandemic as casualties and as “essential” workers with no protections, benefits, or social safety net to help weather the storm. Still reeling from the 2008 recession, Latino people are bracing themselves for unprecedented loss on multiple levels. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, the Latino community was already facing crises that are only worsening in this moment.

We are seeing Latino people die from the COVID-19 virus at the highest rates in the country.<sup>1</sup> In New York City alone, newly-released data shows that while Latino people make up 29% of the population, they make up 34% of the deaths attributable to the COVID-19 virus. On average, Latino people suffer from many of the underlying medical conditions — such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and asthma — that experts have said are contributing factors in COVID-19 complications. Yet, the high death rate tells a far more complex story about historic lack of access to health care and concentration in high-risk and low-paying jobs.

To date, **17 million people have filed for unemployment in the last three weeks.**<sup>2</sup> Half of all Latino people living in the United States right now report that they or someone they know has either lost their job or has taken a pay cut.<sup>3</sup> Yet, the numbers are certainly higher, as the official unemployment count does not include the people across the country who, as it has been widely reported, are facing problems when trying to file claims, taxing a system not set up to process an unprecedented number of applications. Additionally, the unemployment numbers do not account for undocumented workers who have lost their jobs and are denied such coverage.

Latino people are the fastest growing population in the United States, and it is estimated that by 2050, they will comprise nearly 30% of the total U.S. population. Latino people are a critical and ongoing driver of the United States economy, given the top industries in which we are largely concentrated, and yet Latino and immigrant workers continue to be America’s most vulnerable workers. They are the farmworkers, grocery workers, medical workers, and caretakers in communities across the United States.

Undocumented Latino people are also among the “essential workers” who are in jobs at high risk of



1. <https://thecity.nyc/2020/04/nyc-blacks-and-hispanics-dying-of-covid-19-at-twice-the-rate.html>

2. <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/04/09/830216099/6-6-million-more-file-for-unemployment-as-coronavirus-keeps-economy-shut>

3. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/03/u-s-Latinx-people-among-hardest-hit-by-pay-cuts-job-losses-due-to-coronavirus/>

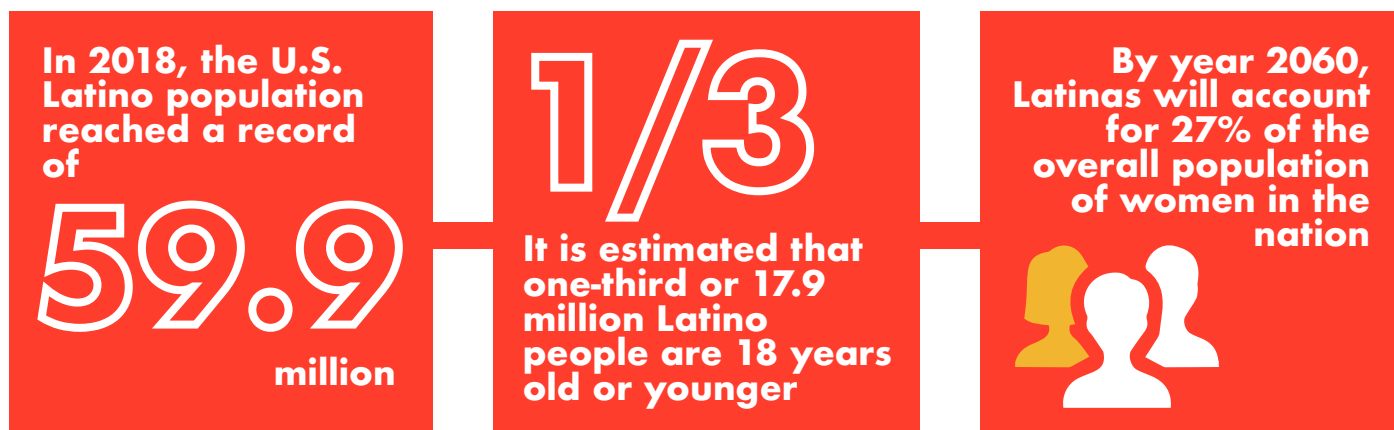
COVID-19 exposure. Yet, this segment of Latino people was excluded from receiving any benefits under the CARES Act. They cannot get access to health care or financial assistance at this moment. The disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the U.S. Latino population as a whole demands attention in any further federal, local, and state government relief and stimulus response.

This report outlines the various ways in which the U.S. Latino population is positioned to be among the hardest hit by the pandemic. It does so through the stories of those on the frontlines. It also provides an overview of where the community stands across a range of issues, including health care and the economy. We expect this crisis to have a long-term and damaging impact on the economic fortunes and the health and well-being of a whole generation of the community.

## LATINO POPULATION

In 2018, the **U.S. Latino population reached a record 59.9 million**, representing a sizable segment of our nation's demographics. Between 2008 and 2018, the Latino share of the total population in the United States increased from 16% to 18%.<sup>4</sup>

Latino people constitute the youngest racial or ethnic group in the United States, with a median age of 28.<sup>5</sup> It is estimated that **one-third or 17.9 million Latino people are 18 years old or younger**. About 14.6 million Latino people are between the ages of 18 and 33, thus falling under the category of millennials.<sup>6</sup>



In 2018, an estimated 17.8% of women in the United States were Latinas. According to these projections, **by the year 2060, Latinas will account for 27% of the overall population of women in the nation.**<sup>7</sup>

## LATINO PEOPLE & THE ECONOMY

Latino people make up 16% of the entire U.S. employed workforce. Some of the top industries and sectors in which Latinos are more than 15% of the workforce are: construction, agriculture, hospitality, services, warehouse and retail.<sup>8</sup> **Latino people are also business owners, generating \$470 billion in revenue and employing about 3.2 million people.**<sup>9</sup>



4. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/07/08/u-s-hispanic-population-reached-new-high-in-2018-but-growth-has-slowed/>

5. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/13/key-facts-about-young-Latinx-people/>

6. <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2016/04/20/the-nations-Latinx-population-is-defined-by-its-youth/>

7. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/13/key-facts-about-young-Latinx-people/>

8. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2015/hispanics-and-Latinx-people-in-industries-and-occupations.htm>

9. <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/sites/gsb/files/publication-pdf/report-slei-state-Latinx-entrepreneurship-2019.pdf>

## LATINX PEOPLE & THE ECONOMY

**Christian** is a Chicano-Zacatecano who grew up in a small town in the middle of the cornfields of northern Illinois. He has been an Amazon DCH1 Sortation Associate for almost three years and is organizing with his coworkers to challenge Amazon's greed and exploitation. He is a proud member of DCH1 Amazonians United and has been involved in several workplace actions alongside thousands of workers around the world.

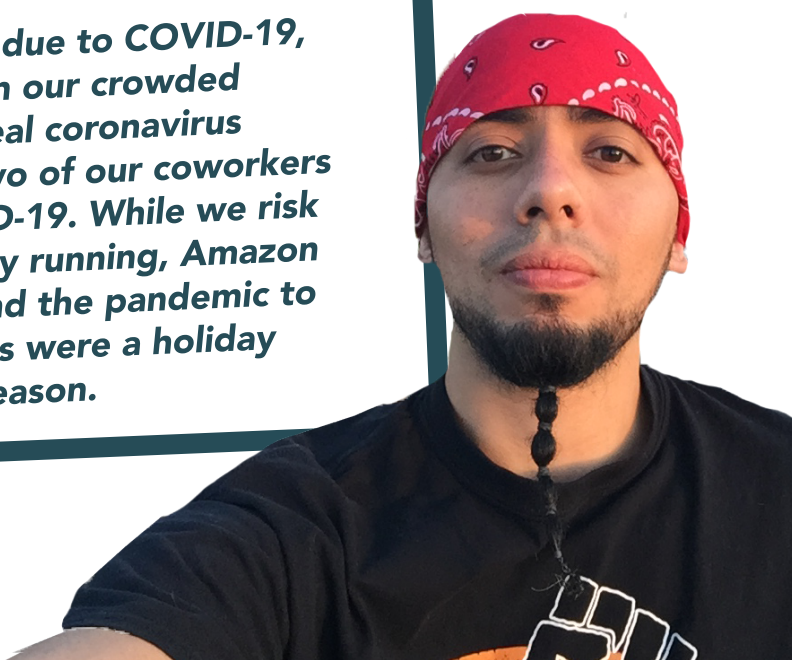
For over a decade, Latino people in the United States faced a slow economic recovery process triggered by the Great Recession of 2007-2009. On the cusp of this economic crisis, in 2007, the incomes of Latino workers fell to \$28,400. Then, in 2013, Latino workers saw yet another median income decrease to \$26,400, a 7% drop. It was not until 2017 that this segment of the population was able to see an increase, with a 14% gain in their median personal income to \$30,000.<sup>10</sup>

The slow recovery rates for the Latino population significantly impede their ability to ascend into the middle class. The U.S. Census Bureau figures indicate that as our middle class erodes, the income disparity between the richest and poorest Americans widens. Households in the highest quintile with incomes of \$100,001 or more receive 50.1% of the total share of the nation's income compared to the lowest quintile — those making \$20,453 or less — who received 3.5%.<sup>11</sup>

It is estimated that about 10.5 million undocumented people lived in the United States as of 2017 and about 9 million of those undocumented people are Latino people. Of all undocumented people, about two-thirds of them have lived in the United States for more than a decade. The majority of all undocumented people are poor working class individuals in the agricultural, service, retail, and informal sectors of the economy.

**"I work as a Sortation Associate at Amazon. Before this pandemic, we already faced dehumanizing conditions: a year ago, due to lack of access to water, my coworkers and I started a petition, turned it in collectively, got water lines installed, and realized that we had power. As cities go on lockdown due to COVID-19, we are still working in our crowded workplaces lacking real coronavirus protections. Last week, two of our coworkers tested positive for COVID-19. While we risk our health to keep society running, Amazon takes advantage of us and the pandemic to rake in money as if this were a holiday shopping season. In response to Amazon's disregard for our lives, we've organized four safety strikes at DCH1, demanding that Amazon shut down for two weeks with quarantine pay for everyone. Amazon responded with threats of termination and called the cops on us for striking. We are united in demanding that Amazon stop shipping non-essential items and provide for society's needs rather than Bezos's greed. With capitalism in crisis and fascism on the rise, we continue fighting and inviting our fellow Amazon workers to join us in creating a better workplace and a better world."**

***As cities go on lockdown due to COVID-19, we are still working in our crowded workplaces lacking real coronavirus protections. Last week, two of our coworkers tested positive for COVID-19. While we risk our health to keep society running, Amazon takes advantage of us and the pandemic to rake in money as if this were a holiday shopping season.***



<sup>10</sup>. <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2019/03/07/Latinx-people-incomes-higher-than-before-great-recession-but-u-s-born-Latinx-people-yet-to-recover/>  
<sup>11</sup>. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2018/demo/income-poverty/p60-263.html>

**I'm considered an essential worker but, because I don't have papers, if I get sick I have nowhere to go because I don't have health insurance. If I get laid off I have no access to resources from the government. I pay my taxes, I risk my life and that of my children to keep everyone fed and what help do we get?**

**Isabel Morales** is a farmworker in Homestead, Florida. She is currently working with reduced hours. She is originally from Mexico and has been in the United States for 20 years. She has been a farmworker for 18 years in the same fields of Florida. She became a widow six months ago and is a single mother to a 15-year-old, a 16-year-old, and a 20-year-old.

**"I work in the fields picking pumpkins and okra in Homestead, Florida. During this time of coronavirus, I and many others continue working to put food on the tables of families across the country. While we're managing to maintain some distance from each other while working, we aren't provided with any protective gear and what we do have we've bought ourselves with our own money; and now many things are sold out. I live 20 minutes away from the fields where I work, which means that my only time for buying food and supplies for my own family is after work and by then most things are gone. I'm considered an essential worker but, because I don't have papers, if I get sick I have nowhere to go because I don't have health insurance. If I get laid off I have no access to resources from the government. I pay my taxes, I risk my life and that of my children to keep everyone fed and what help do we get? We all deserve to be valued. What will the government do to help people like me?"**



## POVERTY AMONG LATINO PEOPLE

The current pandemic has further highlighted the hardships faced by this growing community. Prior to the outbreak, Latino people and immigrants already faced disproportionate economic hardship. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2017 one out of four Latino families lived below the poverty line, twice as many as the national poverty rate.<sup>12</sup> In that same year, 19.2% of Latino workers earned poverty wages, compared to 8.7% of white workers.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, throughout the past decade, Latino people have been disproportionately represented in low-wage jobs. In 2018, non-union Latino workers earned just \$657 a week.<sup>14</sup>

## FORECLOSURE CHALLENGES

Economic inequality has had dire ripple effects for Latino and immigrant communities. Latino people have been most affected by the home foreclosure crisis that began in 2008. Many Latino families bought homes right before the recession, meaning they had higher debt-to-asset values than other families. The sharp decline in housing prices meant an even sharper decline in the wealth of Latino people. Thus, they were more likely to end up with negative home equity.<sup>15</sup> According to a study by the Center for Responsible Lending, the rate of completed foreclosures on loans originating between 2004 and 2008 was 11.9% for Latino people, which was more than double the rate for non-Hispanic whites (5.1%) and higher than the rate for African Americans (9.8%).<sup>16</sup>

## RETIREMENT

Although Latino people represent a vital part of the financial well-being of the United States, many of them are far too often penalized in their retirement due to their overall lower earnings. In essence, lower earnings limit their available disposable income, and therefore a majority of Latino people (69%) lack retirement accounts.<sup>17</sup> Also, four out of five Latino households have less than \$10,000 in retirement savings. While 62% of white employees work for employers that sponsor retirement plans, this is true for only 38% of Latino workers. To make matters worse, 69.2% of Latino people do not own assets in a retirement account.<sup>18</sup>

## UNEMPLOYMENT

**In 2016, nearly 27 million Latino people represented 16.8% of the labor force.<sup>19</sup>**

**By 2043, Latino people will constitute 26.6% of the total U.S. population and one third of all working-age Americans.<sup>20</sup>**

However, despite the large number of Latino people in the country's workforce, this population has also been hit hard by unemployment. As of August 2019, the Latino unemployment rate hovered at 4.2%, above the national average of 3.7%.<sup>21</sup>



12. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2018/09/poverty-rate-drops-third-consecutive-year-2017.html>

13. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/02/hispanic-poverty-rate-hit-an-all-time-low-in-2017.html>

14. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.t02.html>

15. <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412802-Less-Than-Equal-Racial-Disparities-in-Wealth-Accumulation.PDF>

16. <https://www.responsiblelending.org/mortgage-lending/research-analysis/foreclosures-by-race-and-ethnicity.pdf>

17. [https://www.nirsonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Latinxretirement\\_unidosus\\_nirs\\_report\\_112818\\_lr.pdf](https://www.nirsonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Latinxretirement_unidosus_nirs_report_112818_lr.pdf)

18. Rhee, Nari. Race and Retirement Insecurity in the United States. Publication. Washington, DC: National Institute on Retirement Security, 2013. Print.

19. <https://www.ppic.org/publication/health-coverage-and-care-for-undocumented-immigrants/>

20. <https://www.ppic.org/publication/health-coverage-and-care-for-undocumented-immigrants/>

21. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empst.pdf>



## WORKPLACE CONDITIONS

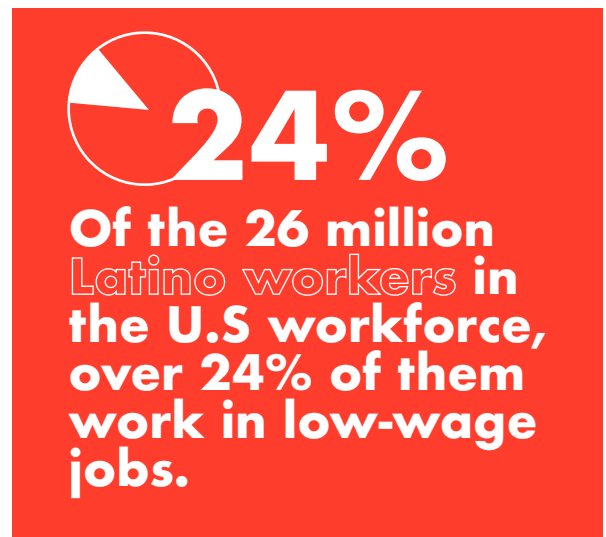
Latino workers are much more likely to work in America's growing low-wage economy. In general, workers of color are more likely to get paid poverty-level wages as compared to white workers. In 2017, 19.2% — nearly one in five — Latino workers were paid poverty wages. **Of the 26 million Latino workers in the U.S workforce, over 24% of them work in low-wage jobs.** If the federal minimum wage were raised, about 7 million Latino workers would see a dramatic increase in their earnings.<sup>22</sup>

## LATINAS IN THE WORKFORCE

In 2015, there were 11.1 million Latinas in the U.S. workforce, accounting for one-seventh of the total female workforce.<sup>23</sup> Latinas face the largest wage gap amongst women and are affected by both the gender and ethnic pay gap,<sup>24</sup> earning 54 cents for every dollar a white, non-Hispanic man makes.<sup>25</sup> In comparison, a white woman earns 79 cents for every dollar a white man earns. For Latinas to make what a white man earns in one year, they must work 306 more days into the next calendar year.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, Latinas face a larger wage gap than that of their male counterparts.

Latinas are part of the largest and fastest growing racial or ethnic group in the country. In 2017, over 25 million women in the United States identified as Latina. They make up over 7% of the workforce and are expected to comprise 8.5% of the workforce by 2024.<sup>27</sup> While Latinas are quickly changing the face of our country, they are often employed in industries that do not provide them with pathways to prosperous economic futures.

Latinas face the largest wage gap among all women, typically earning just 54 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men. This wage gap persists within all occupations and is responsible for the loss of an estimated \$1.1 million over the course of a 40-year career for Latinas.<sup>28</sup> To make matters worse, even when Latinas obtain a bachelor's degree, they are still subject to lower salaries than those earned by white, non-Hispanic men whose studies end after high school.



■ Latinas who have an associate's degree make \$36,871, as compared to their white, non-Hispanic counterparts who do not have a high school diploma and earn only slightly less: \$35,096.

■ Latinas who have acquired a bachelor's degree or higher are typically **paid almost \$30,000 less than their white, non-Hispanic male peers.**<sup>29</sup>

22. <https://aficio.org/reports/increasing-minimum-wage-Latinx-workers>

23. Hispanic Women in the Workforce. Washington D.C: United States Department of Labor, 2016. Accessed November 18, 2019. [https://www.dol.gov/wb/resources/hispanic\\_wlf\\_infographic.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/wb/resources/hispanic_wlf_infographic.pdf).

24. Gould, Elise. "Latina workers have to work 10 months into 2018 to be paid the same as white non-Hispanic men in 2017." Working Economics Blog (Blog), Economic Policy Institute, October 31, 2018. <https://www.epi.org/blog/latina-workers-have-to-work-10-months-into-2018-to-be-paid-the-same-as-white-non-hispanic-men-in-2017/>

25. "Beyond Wages: Effects of the Latina Wage Gap." UnidosUS and the National Partnership for Women & Families, Washington D.C. (November 1, 2018)

26. Zails, Shelley. "What You Need To Know About Latina Equal Pay Day." Forbes. Forbes Media LLC, November 1, 2018. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shelleyzails/2018/11/01/what-you-need-to-know-about-latina-equal-pay-day/#1ad347798b73>.

27. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/news/2017/11/02/442082/state-u-s-labor-market-latinas-pre-october-2017-jobs-release/>

28. <https://nwlc.org/press-releases/latinis-lose-more-than-1-1-million-over-a-40-year-career-due-to-wage-gap-new-nwlc-analysis-shows/>

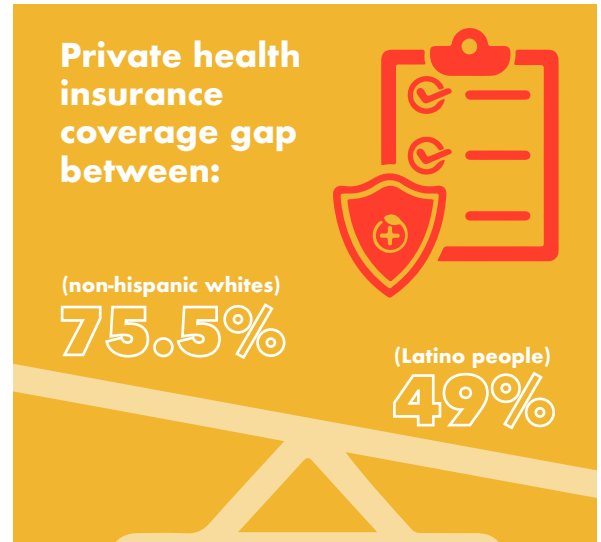
29. <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Equal-Pay-for-Latina-Women-2018-English.pdf>

## WORK RELATED FATALITIES

As previously mentioned, a disproportionate percentage of Latino workers are concentrated in low-wage jobs. To make matters worse, this same segment of the population suffers alarmingly high rates of job-related fatalities, disabling injuries, and chronic illnesses as a result of their work in high-risk occupations. In 2017, 903 Latino people died in the workplace and 568 were immigrants.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, these fatalities often go hand in hand with exploitative workplace conditions where workers are denied adequate protections and training.

## ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Latino people in the United States represent the largest racial or ethnic group within the country that lacks health insurance. **According to a 2017 Census Bureau report, 49% of Latino people had private insurance coverage, compared to 75.5% of non-Hispanic whites.** There are also significant variations regarding health coverage depending on country of origin, with 46.7% of Mexicans relying on health coverage, 54.6% of Puerto Ricans, 55.9% of Cubans, and 41.9% of Central Americans, to name a few. The report also highlights that in 2017, only an estimated 38.2% of all Latino people had access to public health insurance.



The overall health of Latino people is often determined by factors such as language and cultural barriers, lack of access to preventative care, and lack of health insurance. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the leading causes of illness and death among Latino people include heart disease, cancer, injuries, and diabetes. Latino people's health is significantly affected by asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and obesity.<sup>31</sup>

## THE IMMIGRATION AND CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM



**Latino people make up about 15% of the inmate population in the United States.**

Following disproportionately high numbers of encounters with the police, Latino people are twice as likely to be sent to jail than white people. Latino men alone are four times more likely to go to prison in comparison to white men.<sup>32</sup> Right now, incarcerated Latino people are facing some of the most inhumane and dangerous conditions during this pandemic.

30. [https://afclcio.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/DOTJ2019Fnb\\_1.pdf](https://afclcio.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/DOTJ2019Fnb_1.pdf)

31. <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=64>

32. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/sp/1051.pdf>

## THE IMMIGRATION AND CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

**We have been given a "Fresh Scent" soap to act as our only antibacterial supply. People are sick all around me; I made a makeshift tent from towels to try and isolate myself, but that is no longer allowed.**

*freshscent*

**Armando Bernal** is currently incarcerated at the ASPC-Lewis Correctional Facility in Buckeye, Arizona. He was born in Los Angeles but raised in Phoenix, Arizona. He struggled in his youth and has spent most of his life in and out of prison. He is 44 years old and wrapping up a 13-year sentence. He has survived gang violence, being shot by the police, and now his life is threatened as COVID-19 sweeps the nation and hits our most vulnerable.



**"I am currently being warehoused with 50 other men in the ASPC-Lewis Correctional Facility . We have been given a "Fresh Scent" soap to act as our only antibacterial supply. People are sick all around me; I made a makeshift tent from towels to try and isolate myself, but that is no longer allowed. The only other option for self-quarantining is to get in line for a ticket to be put in a bunk alone. The COs [correction officers] aren't wearing face masks. If they bring [the virus] in, we are all going to die. I'm afraid they are going to kill us."**

It is important to note that the statistics on incarcerated people in the U.S. do not include people in immigration detention facilities. The U.S. government does not maintain reliable data on these detainees; however, we know that the median age is 30 years old.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup>. <https://www.freedomforimmigrants.org/detention-statistics>

An outbreak of COVID-19 at immigration detention facilities is only a matter of time. People who are in immigration detention are already vulnerable to the spread of infectious disease, having been deprived of their freedom and confined in close quarters with hundreds of others. Furthermore, they are already facing deteriorating health while in Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection custody, where substandard medical care and unsanitary conditions have been widely reported.

**Alonso Flores** is currently detained at the Tacoma Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington. Alonso is from Mexico and has been detained since 2016. He is 45 years old. He is a detainee and a member of La Resistencia (an organizational hub of Mijente) is fighting to have detainees released through the #FreeThemAll campaign: [laresistencianw.org](http://laresistencianw.org).

*"We are in a difficult situation here; adrift, about to sink because if just one person is infected in our unit, given our poor nutrition of beans and potatoes everyday, we will all get sick. We are now at the mercy of divine intervention. They keep transferring new people into this place from the outside with no means to tell if anyone is already sick. We see the guards don't have the most minimum idea what safety or medical care means. Here everyone is going to pay the consequences for this level of negligence, from the managers, administrators, medical personnel, security guards, and us — the most vulnerable who are detained here. We don't even have basic safeguards like disinfectants or toilet paper."*

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*We are now at the mercy of divine intervention. They keep transferring new people into this place from the outside with no means to tell if anyone is already sick. We see the guards don't have the most minimum idea what safety or medical care means.*

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Security

## LATINO PEOPLE IN EDUCATION

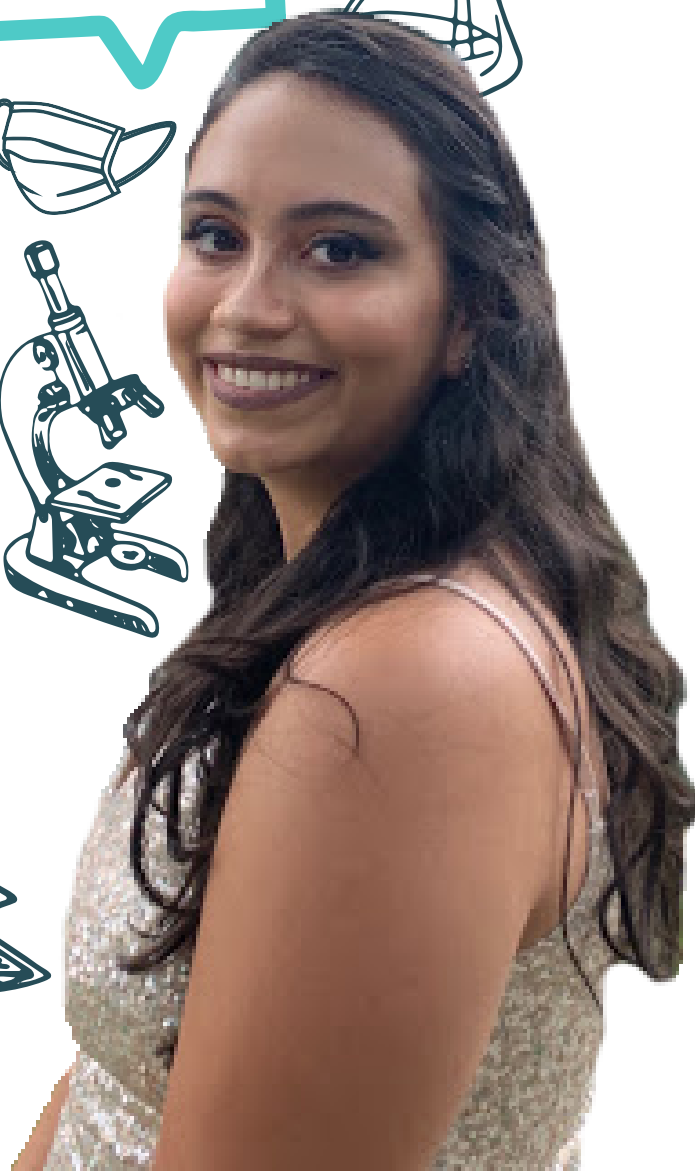
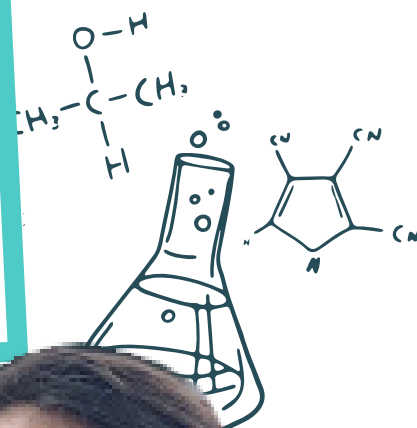
In the last quarter century, there has been a significant increase in the number of Latino students enrolled in schools, colleges, and universities. With a jump from 8.8 million to 17.9 million, Latino students now make up 22.7% of all students enrolled in school.<sup>34</sup>

This positive trend in educational attainment is seen across every school level, from nursery school to colleges and universities. Students who are Latino and attend nursery school increased from 12.7% to 22.7% between 1996 and 2016. The same is true for kindergarten students, who are part of an upward trend, going from 14.9% to 25.7% during the same period of time. The percentage of elementary school students (grades 1-8) rose from 14.1% to 25.0%; high school, from 13.2% to 23.7%; college and university, from 8% to 19.1%.<sup>35</sup>

**I am facing job uncertainty after I graduate in May. I am worried about my ability to pay back my student loans.**

**Helen Loaiza** currently lives in Greenville, South Carolina and will graduate from the University of South Carolina in May of 2020. She was born in Risaralda, Colombia, and she grew up in Greenville from a very young age. She is interested in advocacy and working to empower her community as a community organizer. She currently works remotely only a couple of hours a week, as a student worker, due to university closures.

**"As a college student, this crisis has impacted many aspects of my life. I am facing job uncertainty after I graduate in May. I am worried about my ability to pay back my student loans. Due to university closures, my hours as a student worker have been significantly reduced. I've moved out of my apartment near campus and relocated to my hometown to be with family, but I still have to worry about paying rent on time. Although I have emotional and financial support from my parents, I worry about the extra financial burden they carry as they continue working and risk getting sick."**



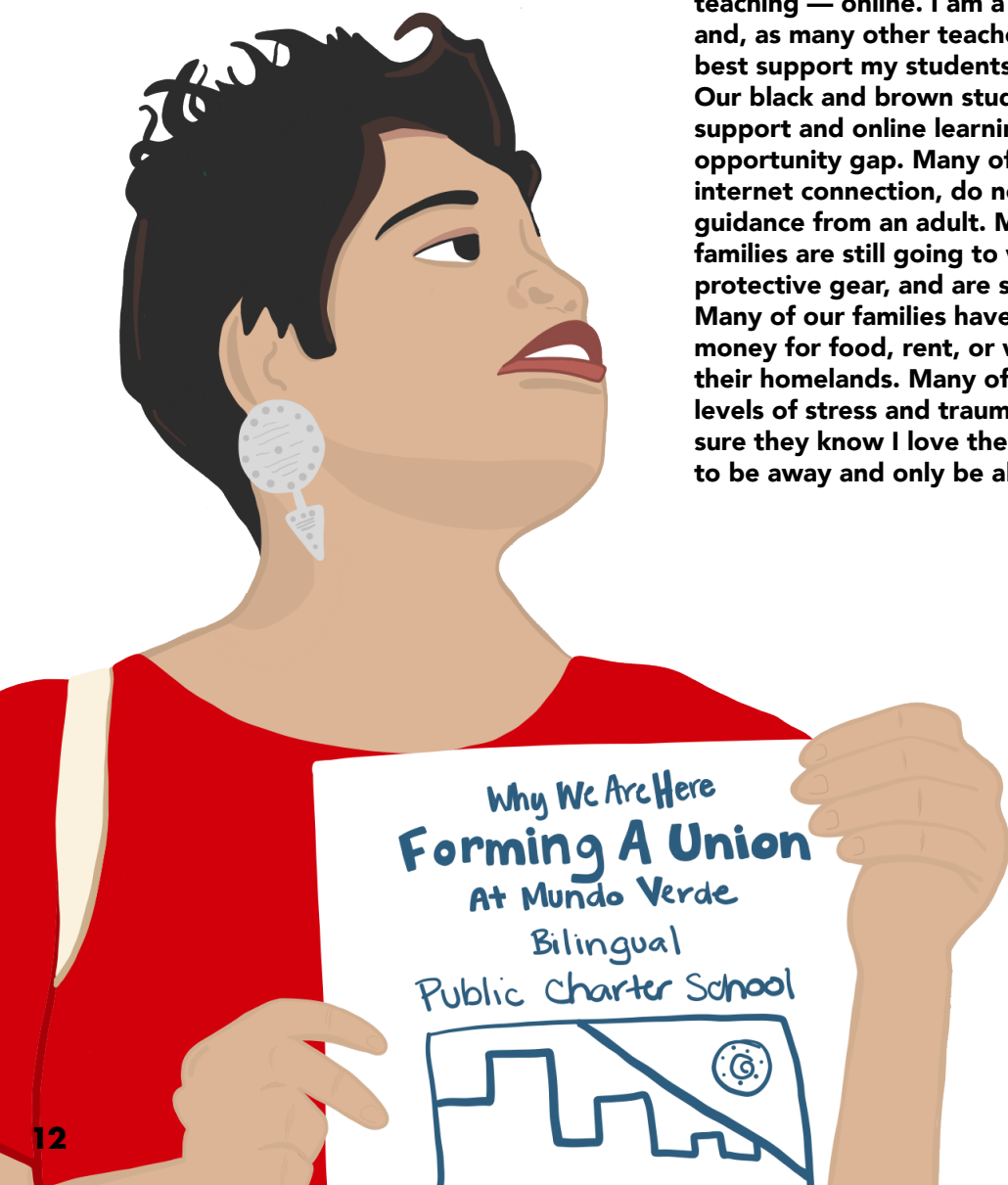
<sup>34</sup>. [https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2017/08/school\\_enrollmentof.html](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2017/08/school_enrollmentof.html)

<sup>35</sup>. [https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2017/08/school\\_enrollmentof.html](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2017/08/school_enrollmentof.html)

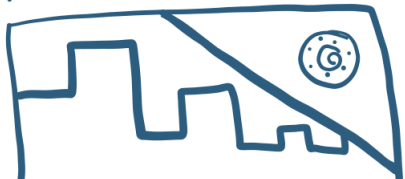
“Many of our families have been laid off and are home with no money for food, rent, or way to support their relatives back in their homelands. Many of my students are experiencing high levels of stress and trauma.”

**Andrea Molina** is currently a kindergarten teacher at Mundo Verde Charter School in Washington, D.C. She teaches in Spanish and has 23 wonderful students, whom she misses very much. She was born and raised in El Salvador and is now a member of DCACTS — District of Columbia Alliance of Charter Teachers and Staff AFT-Local 1927. Mundo Verde is the first charter school in the history of the District of Columbia with a ratified union contract on December 18, 2019.

“ I tested positive for COVID-19 and was ill and in self isolation for 14 days. It has been pretty overwhelming to get back to teaching — online. I am a full immersion Spanish kinder teacher and, as many other teachers, I am trying to figure out how to best support my students and their families as I support myself. Our black and brown students are not receiving the same support and online learning is only contributing to the opportunity gap. Many of our students cannot access steady internet connection, do not have a tech device at home, or lack guidance from an adult. Many of our immigrant and poor families are still going to work and stress for the lack of protective gear, and are scared of being fired if they get sick. Many of our families have been laid off and are home with no money for food, rent, or way to support their relatives back in their homelands. Many of my students are experiencing high levels of stress and trauma. I have been calling them and making sure they know I love them and care for them. It has been hard to be away and only be able to connect through a screen.”



Why We Are Here  
**Forming A Union**  
At Mundo Verde  
Bilingual  
Public Charter School

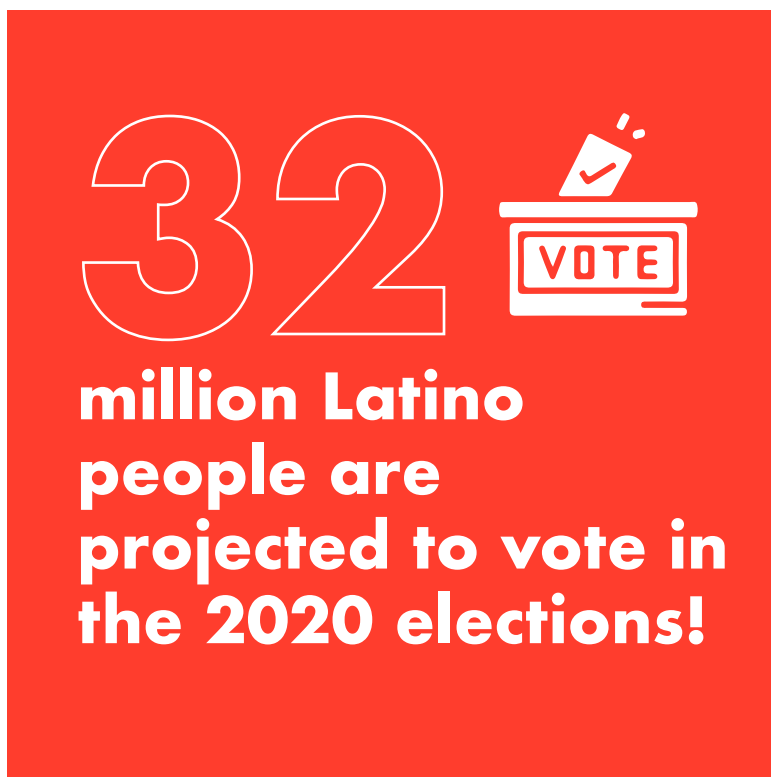


## THE LATINO ELECTORATE

In the 2018 midterm elections, over 29 million Latino people nationwide were eligible to vote, a significant increase from the 27.3 million that were eligible in 2016. It is projected that by 2020, 32 million Latino people will be eligible to vote,<sup>36</sup> accounting for an estimated 13% of the nation's electorate.

Latino people have been actively registering to vote in elections, with 259.1% growth in new registrations between 2014 and 2018. What's more, 90% of these newly registered voters are concentrated in critical or swing states: Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, New Mexico, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin.<sup>37</sup> The importance of elections in these states could change the balance of power on the federal, state, and local levels and change the roadmap to the White House.

About **32 million Latino people are projected to vote in the 2020 elections**. These voters were already facing systemic voter suppression before. The current crisis raises an additional critical question: can they vote safely? Like all other voters, Latino people are deeply concerned about being able to cast their vote safely at this moment. Latino voters are looking into candidates directly taking a stance on issues that concern them, among them the current health and economic crisis. At least 55% of Latino voters have expressed concern about the potential deportation of either themselves, a family member, or a friend.<sup>38</sup>



36. <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/essay/an-early-look-at-the-2020-electorate/>

37. <https://thehill.com/Latinx/449510-Latinx-electorate-growing-in-key-2020-states-analysis>

38. <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2018/10/25/more-Latinx-people-have-serious-concerns-about-their-place-in-america-under-trump/>

## CONCLUSION: KEY TAKE-AWAYS

This report is an attempt to shed light on the disproportionate impact of this virus on the Latino population so that any government response centers those most vulnerable in relief and stimulus efforts.

- COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting the Latino population because of deep-rooted social and economic inequities.
- Latino people are dying at high rates from COVID-19 because of underlying health conditions brought on by a lack of access to quality health care, poverty, and concentration in “high risk” jobs.
- This pandemic is not just a public health crisis but also an economic one. When the economy goes south, it is people of color who are the hardest hit. Latino people were among the groups that only recently began recovering from the last recession.
- Latino workers are on the front lines of this crisis. They are “essential workers,” concentrated in industries like care work and agriculture. They are also in industries, like restaurants and hospitality, that are experiencing massive layoffs.
- The impact of the pandemic on Latinos is still largely untold — there is no accounting yet of the extent of the damage that losing a breadwinner to this virus or getting laid off will have on entire families and communities.

At this moment, we can project that it will take Latinos a decade at minimum to recover from the effects of this pandemic. True recovery will require a longer timeline if no fundamental and permanent changes are made to the current criminal justice, immigration, and economic systems. If this country continues to choose corporations and the extremely wealthy over the well-being of its people, of which Latino people make up 20%, we will be doomed to repeat the systematic failures that led us to the depths of this public health crisis.

Despite these dire statistics, and that our nation has historically taken steps necessary to guarantee the wellbeing of corporations and the 1%, it is crucial to make the following connection: the 1%, and corporations can only enjoy the privileges that they do at the expense of workers, piggy back riding on the exploitation of Latino and immigrant working families whose incomes meet poverty levels, lack health insurance, and whose rights and protections are being denied. Nevertheless, if this crisis has proven anything, is that our nation's economic stability depends on these neglected workers who are on the frontlines. The time is now to demand those rights that have been denied for way too long.

