

Five Latino Economic Priorities in the President's Budget

Latest Employment Figures Depict an Uncertain Job Market

This week, President Obama released his budget for fiscal year 2015. While the president's budget will not be taken up by Congress, it contains policy priorities that respond to ongoing unemployment and other economic challenges. This *Monthly Latino Employment Report* highlights five elements of the president's budget that would boost the economic security of Latino workers and families.

Latino Employment Statistics for February 2014

The [U.S. Department of Labor](#) reports that U.S. employment grew by 175,000 workers in February 2014, an increase from last month (129,000) but still below the 2013 annual average of 194,000 per month. The national unemployment rate was mostly unchanged at 6.7%. Latino unemployment declined by 0.3 percentage points to 8.1%. The departure of approximately 69,000 Latinos from the labor force likely explains this decline in unemployment. Workers could decide to exit the labor force because they've been unsuccessful in their job search or for other reasons, such as deciding to attend school or care for dependents full time.

Table 1. The Employment Situation for Latino Workers in February 2014

Indicators	Latinos, February 2014
Employed — <i>Working people over the age of 16, including those temporarily absent from their jobs</i>	23 million
Unemployed — <i>Those who are available to work, make an effort to find a job, or expect to be called back from a layoff but are not working</i>	2.0 million
Civilian Labor Force — <i>The sum of employed and unemployed people</i>	25.1 million
Not in the Labor Force — <i>People over the age of 16 classified as neither employed nor unemployed</i>	13 million
Unemployment Rate — <i>Share of the labor force that is unemployed</i>	8.1%
Labor Force Participation Rate — <i>Share of the population over the age of 16 that is in the labor force</i>	65.9%
Employment-Population Ratio — <i>Share of the population over the age of 16 that is working</i>	60.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Status of the Hispanic or Latino Population by Sex and Age," *Current Population Survey*, <http://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab3.htm> (accessed March 7, 2014), Table A-3.

Five Latino Economic Priorities in the President's 2015 Budget

After years of federal budget policies that have slashed critical programs in order to rapidly shrink the federal budget deficit, [President Obama's budget proposal](#) for fiscal year 2015 outlines several policy priorities to stimulate hiring and wages in the communities hit hardest by the lasting effects of the Great Recession. The budget comes days after the [Treasury Department announced](#) that the federal deficit is at its lowest point since 2008. The president's budget will not be debated in Congress; however, it communicates the Obama administration's priorities for the year ahead and lays out a vision that contrasts with the economic austerity of the bipartisan [two-year deal](#) that Congress enacted in December.

According to a [2013 national poll](#) conducted by NCLR and Latino Decisions, an overwhelming 96% of Latino voters support a budget that invests in infrastructure and education to stimulate the economy. Five policies in the president's budget that align with Latino voter priorities include:

1. **An increase in the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour.** Approximately 6.8 million workers, or [24%](#) of the workers who would directly benefit from an increase in the minimum wage, are Latino. The failure of wages to cover basic needs is one of the leading causes of Latino [child poverty](#).
2. **Expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for low-income workers who have no children.** Early estimates indicate that EITC expansion would double the number of Hispanic low-wage workers who benefit from the credit to approximately 3.3 million.
3. **A \$15 billion investment in Project Rebuild.** This investment would put people back to work by rebuilding neighborhoods hit hard by the [foreclosure crisis](#). [Project Rebuild](#) expands on the success of the [Neighborhood Stabilization Program](#) (NSP), a component of the Community Development Block Grant administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). According to the Shaun Donovan, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Project Rebuild would create 200,000 jobs.*
4. **A \$15 million boost to the HUD Housing Counseling program.** HUD's [Housing Counseling](#) program plays a critical role in serving low- and moderate-income homeowners and renters. Housing counselors are third parties that offer unbiased information and guidance to renters and new homebuyers, victims of predatory lending, and individuals facing financial emergencies.
5. **Comprehensive immigration reform.** The budget uses the Senate-passed bill to calculate the benefits to the federal budget of comprehensive immigration reform. According to the [Congressional Budget Office](#), if enacted, comprehensive immigration reform would reduce the federal budget deficit by \$158 billion. This net gain to the federal budget accounts for the economic benefits that immigrants bring to the American economy in the form of consumer demand, tax revenue, and entrepreneurship.

[Sign up](#) to receive NCLR's *Monthly Latino Employment Report* in your inbox.

Get the latest news and trends in the Hispanic workforce by following us on [Twitter](#).

* "Prepared Remarks of Secretary Shaun Donovan at the National Housing Conference/Center for Housing Policy 'Solutions for Sustainable Communities' 2011 Learning Conference" (speech), http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/speeches_remarks_statements/2011/Speech_09282011 (accessed March 7, 2014).