

## OVERVIEW

Using income as an indicator for economic well-being, U.S. Census Bureau data show that Hispanics were better off in 1998 than they were in 1997. For the third consecutive year, Hispanic households experienced a rise in median household income.<sup>1</sup> In fact, between 1997 and 1998 Latinos experienced a greater increase in median household income than either Whites or Blacks.

Although Latinos have made important income gains in recent years, overall income levels for Hispanics continue to lag behind those of non-Hispanics. For example, Hispanic households with a full-time, year-round worker are still more likely than non-Hispanics to be considered "working poor." Moreover, Hispanics continue to have the lowest per capita income among all the major racial and ethnic groups.

## Hispanic Woman

- ◆ While median income for Hispanic women increased between 1997 and 1998, real median income for Hispanic females working full-time, year-round dropped slightly over that same time period. In 1998, Hispanic women experienced an increase of 4.2% in real median income. Full-time, year-round Hispanic female workers experienced a drop of almost 1.0% in real median income to \$19,817. Median income for comparable White and Black females was \$27,304 (an increase of 1.6% over 1997) and \$23,864 (an increase of 3.2% over 1997), respectively.

## Hispanic Men

- ◆ Overall median income for Hispanic men was significantly higher than that of Hispanic females. In 1998, real median income for Hispanic men overall, increased 4.8% to \$17,257, compared to an increase of 4.2% to \$10,862 for overall Hispanic women.
- ◆ Hispanic men working full-time, year-round experienced a slight increase in median income over 1997, but still have a lower median income than their non-Hispanic counterparts. In 1998, real median income for full-time, year-round Latino male workers increased by 1.7% over the 1997 level to \$22,505. Median income for comparable White and Black male workers in 1998 was \$37,196 (an increase of 1.4% since 1997) and \$27,472 (an increase of 0.6% since 1997), respectively.
- ◆ Median income for Hispanic male part-time workers is higher than for their White or Black counterparts. In 1998, the median income for Hispanic male part-time workers was \$5,535, compared to Black and White male part-time workers' median incomes of \$4,168 and \$5,362, respectively.

## Married-Couple Families

- ◆ Median household income for Hispanic married-couple families increased since 1997, but is still significantly lower than for comparable Black and White families. In 1998, the real median income for Hispanic married-couple families was \$34,816, an increase of 1.1% from \$33,914 in 1997. By comparison, median income for Black and White married-couple families was significantly higher, at \$47,383 (increase of 2.6% over 1997) and \$54,736 (increase of 3.5% over 1997), respectively.

<sup>1</sup>All numbers are inflation-adjusted to allow for accurate comparison.

## **Hispanic Households**

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- ◆ **Hispanic households experienced their third consecutive year of rising income in 1998.** Real median income of Hispanic households increased from \$27,043 to \$28,330 between 1997 and 1998, a 4.8% increase. Meanwhile, Blacks experienced a 0.3% drop in real median household income (to \$25,351), while Whites experienced a 3.4% increase to \$40,912 (from \$38,972) over this same time period.
- ◆ **Hispanic households with full-time workers experienced little change in income over 1997, and continue to be more likely than White households to be "working poor."** In 1998, the real median income of Hispanic households with at least one year-round, full-time worker was \$37,152, a drop of 0.3% from 1997. Meanwhile, the income for comparable White and Black households in 1998 was \$55,001 (a 2.1% rise from 1997) and \$39,565 (a 5.5% rise from 1997), respectively.
- ◆ **Median income substantially increased for Hispanic female-headed households, pushing them ahead of their Black counterparts, but still remaining significantly lower than that of their White counterparts.** In 1998, median income for Hispanic female-headed households (no husband present) was \$18,452, an increase in real median income of 10.8%, from \$16,493 in 1997. By comparison, median income for comparable Black and White female-headed households was \$17,737 (a drop in real median income of 2.8% over 1997) and \$27,542 (an increase in real median income of 5.6% over 1997), respectively.

## **Hispanic Per Capita Income**

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- ◆ **Hispanics experienced the highest increase of per capita income among the major racial and ethnic groups between 1997 and 1998.** Per capita income for Hispanics increased 4.5%, from \$10,941 in 1997 to \$11,434 in 1998. In comparison, Black per capita income went up 3.3% (to \$12,957), and White per capita income went up 3.2% (to \$22,952) during this time.

## **Sources**

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- ◆ *Money Income in the United States: 1999*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.