

Latinos in Nevada: Protecting and Defending Progress in the Silver State

Hit particularly hard by the Great Recession, Hispanic* Nevadans have seen commonsense policies put in place and their hard work begin to pay off. Gains across several economic indicators point to improved economic security for Latinos, despite ongoing inequities where Latinos lag behind other Nevada residents.

Since the Great Recession, the Latino population in Nevada grew by 17.3%, to 864,663. Given the Latino community's size, work ethic, and resilience, they have contributed to Silver state's economic resurgence. Examining Latinos' status across a range of indicators in Nevada can help lawmakers and advocates better understand how far the Latino community has come since the beginning of the Great Recession and what more can be done to ensure that Latinos and all Nevadans continue to advance their economic security.

* The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau and throughout this document to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race.

Nevada Snapshot

	Latinos in Nevada		All of Nevada	
	2007	2017	2007	2017
 Population	644,485	864,663	2,565,382	2,998,039
 Foreign-Born	298,919	323,769	497,821	596,019
 Labor Force Participation Rate	72.3%	71.7%	67.5%	63.7%
 Unemployment Rate	4.4%	5.4%	8.2%	5.9%
 Median Household Income	\$46,059	\$51,866	\$55,062	\$58,003
 Poverty Rate	13.7%	13.4%	7.5%	9.1%
 Renters Facing High Rental Costs	50.2%	47.3%	47.7%	47.9%
 Homeownership	49.9%	45.9%	60.4%	56.6%

At the height of the Great Recession, Hispanic families were in severe financial distress. Latinos faced a national unemployment rate of 7.2%, and a rate of 9.9% in Nevada.¹ Additionally in 2007, more than half of Latinos’ assets were invested in housing—an investment viewed by many Latinos as the pathway to the middle class. Following the Great Recession, millions of Latino families lost their homes to foreclosure, decreasing their median wealth by 48% between 2007 and 2013.²

To help the American economy recover from the crisis, a series of critical pieces of legislation were put in place to bolster Latino economic security and reward hard work. Additionally, three tax credits had a significant effect on providing financial support to Latino families during the recession: the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), and the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC). The expansion of these tax credits benefited about five million Latino working families each year and helped keep them out of poverty.

Federal anti-poverty programs like SNAP, TANF, and rental assistance programs also lifted almost two million Latinos out of poverty and helped to address the effects of the recession. Finally, enforcement of federal laws like the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA), and the Fair Housing Act helped support new policies to prevent another financial crisis and economic recession, while increasing Latinos' wealth.

These and other actions to strengthen our economy have led to improved economic footing for Nevada's Latinos.

- **Increase in the Median Household Income:** Between 2007 and 2017, the median household income for Latinos in Nevada increased by \$5,807, from \$46,059 to \$51,866. However, household income continues to be significantly higher than for Nevadans overall.
- **Less Latinos are Facing Higher Rental Costs:** The number of Hispanics who were paying more than 30% of their income on rent in 2007 was 50.2%. This number has decreased to 47.3% in 2017, a decrease of 2.9 percentage points. However, the Latino homeownership rate has decreased four percentage points, from 49.9% to 45.9% between 2007 and 2017.
- **Decrease in Latino Poverty:** The Latino poverty rate slightly decreased between 2007 and 2017, from 13.7% to 13.4%. However, Latino poverty continues to be significantly higher than for Nevadans overall.

Conclusion

The Great Recession beginning in 2007 was a huge financial shock for Latinos and resulted in the loss of jobs, homes, and wealth. Many families and households fought hard to hold on to the little savings or assets that they had accumulated prior to 2007. The recovery that followed was uneven, and though Latinos in Nevada have made considerable gains since the recession, Hispanic Nevadans still lag behind Nevadans overall. It is critical that Nevadan policymakers embrace the lessons learned from the recession to guide state policies. The key takeaway is clear: where policymakers create targeted policies and programs that help working Americans succeed, Latinos succeed.

Endnotes

- 1 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "*TED: The Economic Daily: Racial and ethnic characteristics of the U.S. labor force, 2011.*" 2012. Accessed on July 18, 2019. https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2012/ted_20120905.htm
- 2 Federal Reserve. "*Recent Trends in Wealth-Holdings by Race and Ethnicity: Evidence from the Survey of Consumer Finances, Accessible Data.*" September 27, 2017. Accessed on July 18, 2019. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/recent-trends-in-wealth-holding-by-race-and-ethnicity-evidence-from-the-survey-of-consumer-finances-20170927.htm>