Hispanics are the largest minority population in Idaho. Hispanic population growth has outpaced non-Hispanic population growth in Idaho for the last three decades. From 2010 to 2017, Hispanics accounted for 26% of Idaho’s growth. This Hispanic growth will continue to have a role in shaping the cultural and economic future of Idaho. This report offers a wide-ranging overview of Hispanics in Idaho.

In 2017:

- Idaho Hispanics made up 13% of the state’s population, 12% of the labor force and 18% of students enrolled in Idaho K-12 public schools (2018-2019 data).

- Approximately three-quarters (73%) of Idaho Hispanics were born in the US. Of those not native-born, 50% came to the US before 2000.

- Eighty-one percent of Idaho Hispanics were US citizens (both native and naturalized), which is similar to the US in which 79% of Hispanics are citizens.

- Almost half of Idaho’s Hispanics (43%) were born in Idaho, which is comparable to the percentage of Idaho non-Hispanics born in the state (48%).

SOURCE: US Census Bureau

IDAHO AT A GLANCE

Hispanics: An Overview

March 2019, Vol. 10, No. 1

Author: Crystal Callahan, M.S.*
Idaho's Hispanic population is not evenly distributed throughout the state. Most (77%) Hispanics live in southwestern and southeastern Idaho along the Snake River Plain, where agricultural lands and major metropolitan centers exist. In recent years, Hispanic growth rates in counties in northern and central Idaho have outpaced growth rates in counties in southwestern and southcentral Idaho.  

In 2017:

- Hispanics accounted for over 215,000 people in Idaho.  
- Canyon County had the largest number of Hispanics. Nearly 55,000 Hispanics called Canyon County home.  
- Clark County had the largest percentage of Hispanic residents; 42% of residents in Clark County were Hispanic.  

From 2010 to 2017:

- Idaho's Hispanic population grew 22%. Idaho's non-Hispanic population grew about 8% during this time.  
- Hispanic population growth was at or above 30% in 16 counties: Ada, Adams, Bannock, Benewah, Boise, Bonner, Boundary, Idaho, Kootenai, Lemhi, Lewis, Madison, Nez Perce, Oneida, Twin Falls and Valley.  
- Seven of those 16 counties with growth rates above 30% are in north Idaho.  
- Without Hispanic population growth, Bingham, Cassia, Idaho, Jerome, Minidoka and Payette counties would have lost residents.  
- The Hispanic population declined in three Idaho counties. Butte, Clark and Fremont counties lost both Hispanics and non-Hispanic residents.
Idaho's Hispanic population tends to be younger than the non-Hispanic population. Compared to Idaho's non-Hispanic population, there are more Idaho Hispanics under the age of 20, more school-aged children and fewer adults over the age of 65. The percentage of Idaho's non-Hispanic residents is more evenly distributed across all age categories.

In 2017, the US Census Bureau estimated that:

- **School-age children** (age 5 to 17) accounted for **28%** of Hispanic and **18%** of non-Hispanic Idahoans.²
- **Forty-two percent** of Idaho’s Hispanics were under the age of 20, whereas only **27%** of Idaho’s non-Hispanics were under the age of 20.²

In the 2018-2019 school year, the Idaho State Department of Education reported:

- **Hispanic** students accounted for **18%** of enrollment in Idaho K-12 public schools.⁴
- **Nine public and charter school districts** reported that **50%** or more of enrolled students identified as Hispanic. These districts included Aberdeen, American Falls Joint, Caldwell, Clark County, Heritage Community Charter School, Jerome Joint, Shoshone Joint, Wendell and Wilder.⁴
- **Wilder School District** had the highest percentage of Hispanic students. The district reported that **70%** of enrolled students identified as Hispanic.⁴
In Idaho, Hispanics participate in the labor force at a higher rate than non-Hispanics. However, the Hispanic unemployment rate is still higher than the non-Hispanic rate, both in Idaho and the US. In Idaho, Hispanic median income is lower than for non-Hispanics, and a higher percent of Hispanics are living below the poverty level compared to non-Hispanics. In recent years, the gaps between Hispanic and non-Hispanics in these categories have been shrinking.

From 2007 to 2017:

The difference between the share of Idaho Hispanics and non-Hispanics living below the poverty level decreased. In 2011, the peak year, 31% of Idaho Hispanics were living below the poverty level compared to 16% of Idaho non-Hispanics, a difference of approximately 15 percentage points. In 2017, 20% of Idaho Hispanics were living below the poverty level compared to 12% of Idaho non-Hispanics, a difference of 8 percentage points.5

From 2015 to 2017:

Over this three year period, the unemployment rate difference between Idaho Hispanics and non-Hispanics decreased. In 2015, the Idaho Hispanic unemployment rate was 6.7% and the non-Hispanic rate was 5.2%, a difference of 1.5 percentage points. In 2017, the Hispanic unemployment rate was 4.8% and the non-Hispanic rate was 4.1%, a difference of 0.7 percentage points.5

5

SOURCE: US Census Bureau

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

In 2017:

- Idaho’s Hispanic participation in the labor force was 70%, higher than Idaho’s non-Hispanic residents (61%).3
- The median household income was lower for Idaho Hispanics, $45,231, compared to $53,280 for Idaho non-Hispanics.3

In 2017:

- Idaho’s Hispanic participation in the labor force was 70%, higher than Idaho’s non-Hispanic residents (61%).3
- The median household income was lower for Idaho Hispanics, $45,231, compared to $53,280 for Idaho non-Hispanics.3
As of 2017, 62% of Idaho Hispanics were of voting age (18 and older). Hispanics historically have lower participation at the polls than non-Hispanics. In 2016, voter registration among Idaho Hispanics increased compared to the previous presidential election.

In Idaho:

- In the 2016 US presidential election, 48% of Idaho Hispanics registered to vote, up from 30% in the 2012 US presidential election. The non-Hispanic voter registration rates for the same election years were 71%.

- In 2017, in Idaho’s 1st US Congressional District, Hispanics accounted for 11% of the population. In the 2nd US Congressional District, 14% of residents were Hispanic.

- A 2018 survey of Idaho state legislators, conducted by the Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs, found only one Idaho state representative that identified as Hispanic, more specifically as Latina. No Idaho state senators identified as Hispanic in this survey.

- At the federal level, US Representative Raul Labrador, who identifies as Hispanic, was one of the four members of Idaho’s US Congressional delegation. US Rep. Labrador served from 2011 to 2019.

### TERMS

**Hispanic:** The US Office of Management and Budget defines “‘Hispanic or Latino’ as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.” Ethnicity and race are collected based on the self-identification of US Census and survey participants.

**Latino:** Refers to those who identify as having Latin American heritage. Latino can also appear as Latina or Latinx. The “o” or “a” at the end of the word denotes gender as signified in the Spanish language. The modern English language use of “x” is intended to indicate a gender neutral and more inclusive aspect to this identity.
**SELECTED SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDAHO</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POPULATION²</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2,199,826</td>
<td>1,006,749</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4,122,263</td>
<td>1,293,953</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5,124,681</td>
<td>1,567,582</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>6,150,551</td>
<td>1,716,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population change, 1990-2000 (%)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population change, 2000-2010 (%)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population change, 2010-2017 (%)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE²</td>
<td>Children under age 18, 2017 (% of population)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adults age 65+, 2017 (% of population)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Median age, 2017 (year)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION⁶</td>
<td>High school graduate, 2017 (% of population age 25+)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree or higher, 2017 (% of population age 25+)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATIVITY AND CITIZENSHIP⁴</td>
<td>Foreign-born, 2017 (%)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Native-born, 2017 (%)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US citizen, native-born and naturalized, 2017 (%)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOME AND POVERTY⁵</td>
<td>Median household income, 2017 ($)</td>
<td>45,231</td>
<td>53,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Per capita income, 2017 ($)</td>
<td>15,389</td>
<td>27,949</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poverty rate, 2017 (%)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Households receiving food stamp benefits (SNAP, 2017) (%)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISCELLANEOUS</td>
<td>Registered to vote in 2016 US presidential election (% of citizens age 18+)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign-born - speaks English only or speaks English “very well”, 2017 (% of population age 5+)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Native-born - speaks English only or speaks English “very well”, 2017 (% of population age 5+)</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCES**

3. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Single-year Estimates 2017
5. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Single-year Estimates 2017 to 2017
7. Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs, 2018, In-person and phone survey conducted by CHA to all 2018 Idaho state legislators, no publication available
8. Collection of the US House of Representatives, 2019, Raul Labrador, retrieved from: [https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/L/LABRADOR-Ra%281984%E2%80%93%281993/](https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/L/LABRADOR-Ra%281984%E2%80%93%281993/)
10. US Census Bureau, 2018, Hispanic Origin, retrieved from: [https://www.census.gov/topics/po[/populat/hispanic-origin/about.html](https://www.census.gov/topics/po[/populat/hispanic-origin/about.html)]

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**MAPS CREATED BY:** Jared Phelps, University of Idaho undergraduate student

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**The University of Idaho’s James A. and Louise McClure Center for Public Policy Research**

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**The Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs**

The Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs was created in 1987 to identify solutions and provide recommendations to the governor, legislature, and other non-governmental organizations concerning issues relevant to the state’s Hispanic population. Margie Gonzalez, Executive Director margie.gonzalez@icha.idaho.gov

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