



SEPTEMBER 2012

National Hispanic Heritage Month

National Hispanic Heritage Month began in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week. The celebration expanded in 1988 to span a month-long period beginning on September 15 and ending on October 15. The independence anniversaries of Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua all occur during this time period.

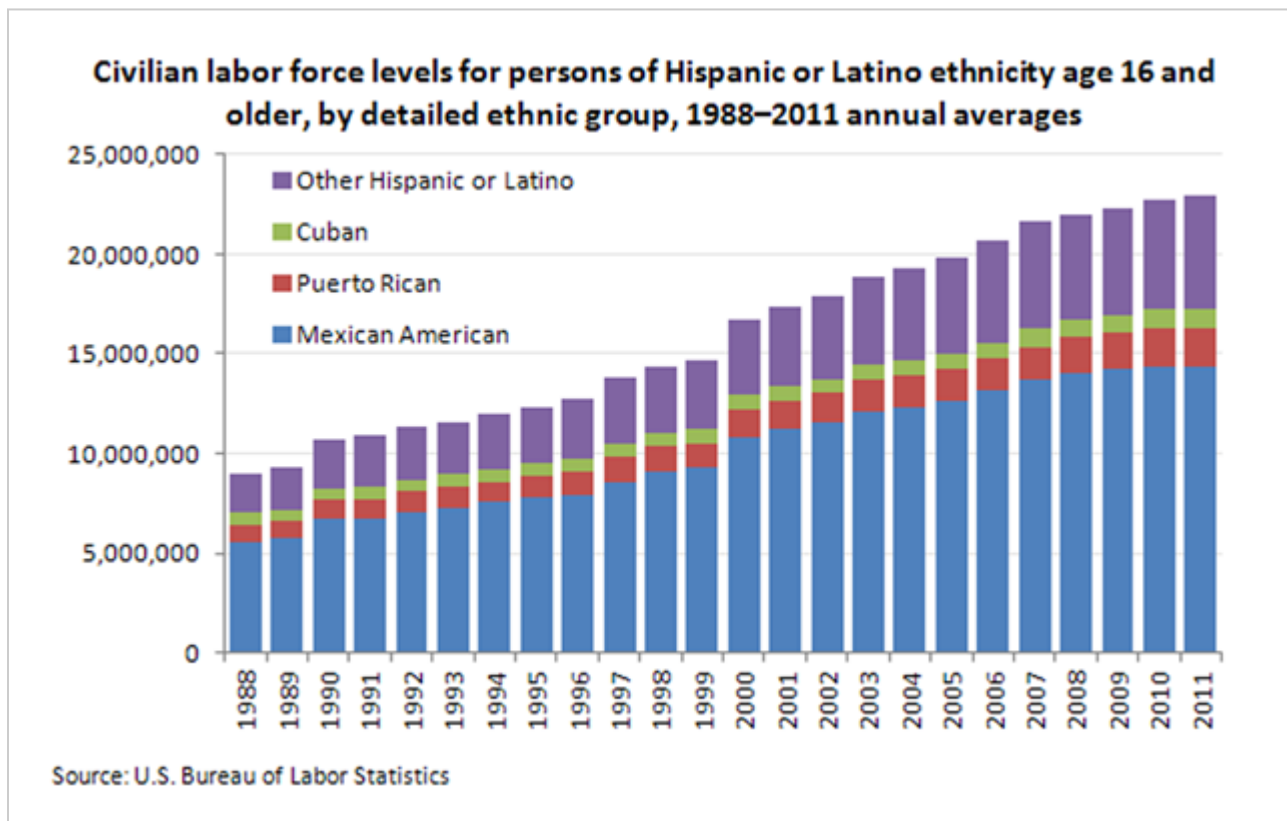
National Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates the cultures, histories, and accomplishments of Americans of Hispanic or Latino ancestry. Across the United States, many communities, businesses, and schools take time to recognize and honor this heritage.

The U.S. Hispanic or Latino population exceeded 50 million in 2010, constituting more than 16 percent of the total U.S. population. In this Spotlight, we take a look at the Hispanic labor force—including labor force participation, employment and unemployment, educational attainment, geographic location, country of birth, earnings, consumer expenditures, time use, workplace injuries, and employment projections.

Men and Women in the Labor Force

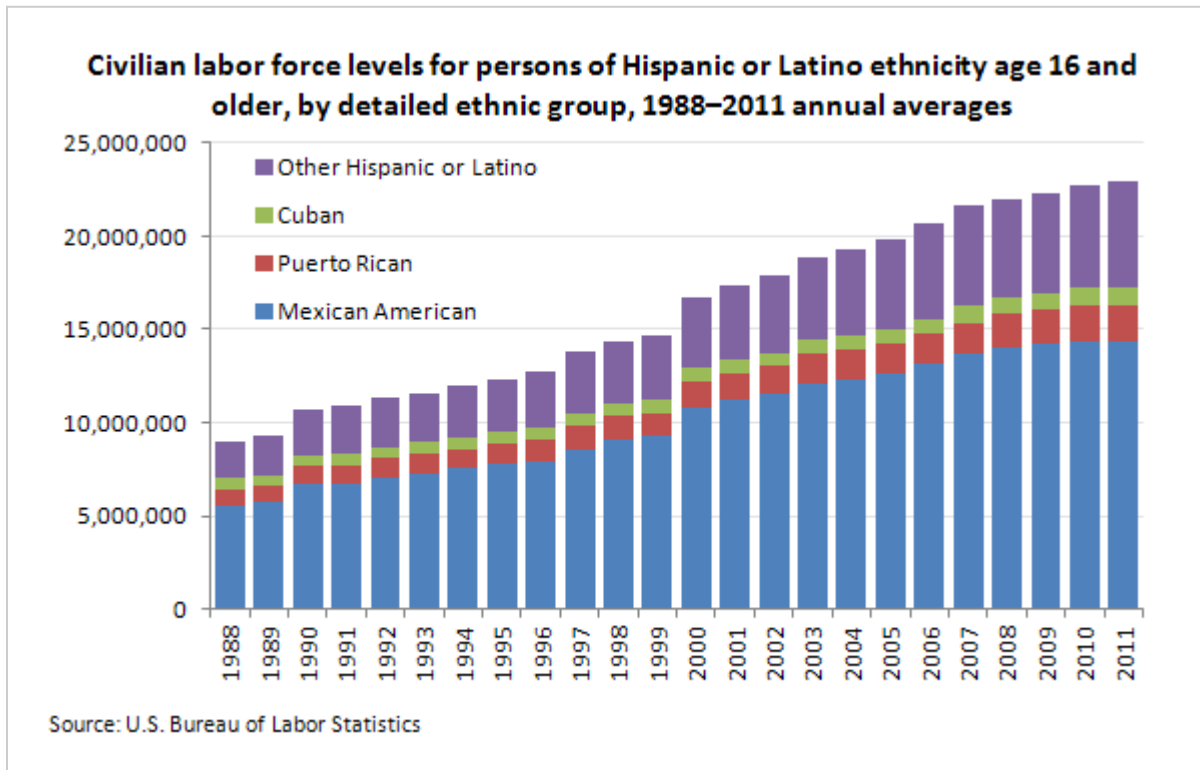
In 2011, across all age groups, men of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity had higher labor force participation rates than their female counterparts. (The labor force participation rate is the number of people employed or actively seeking jobs as a percent of the civilian population.) The difference in labor force participation rates for Hispanic men and women was greatest for persons ages 25 to 34; the rate for men was 92 percent, compared with 65 percent for women.

Among women, the highest labor force participation rates occurred in the 45 to 54 age group; the labor force participation rate for all women in this age group (75 percent) was higher than the rate for Hispanic women (70 percent).



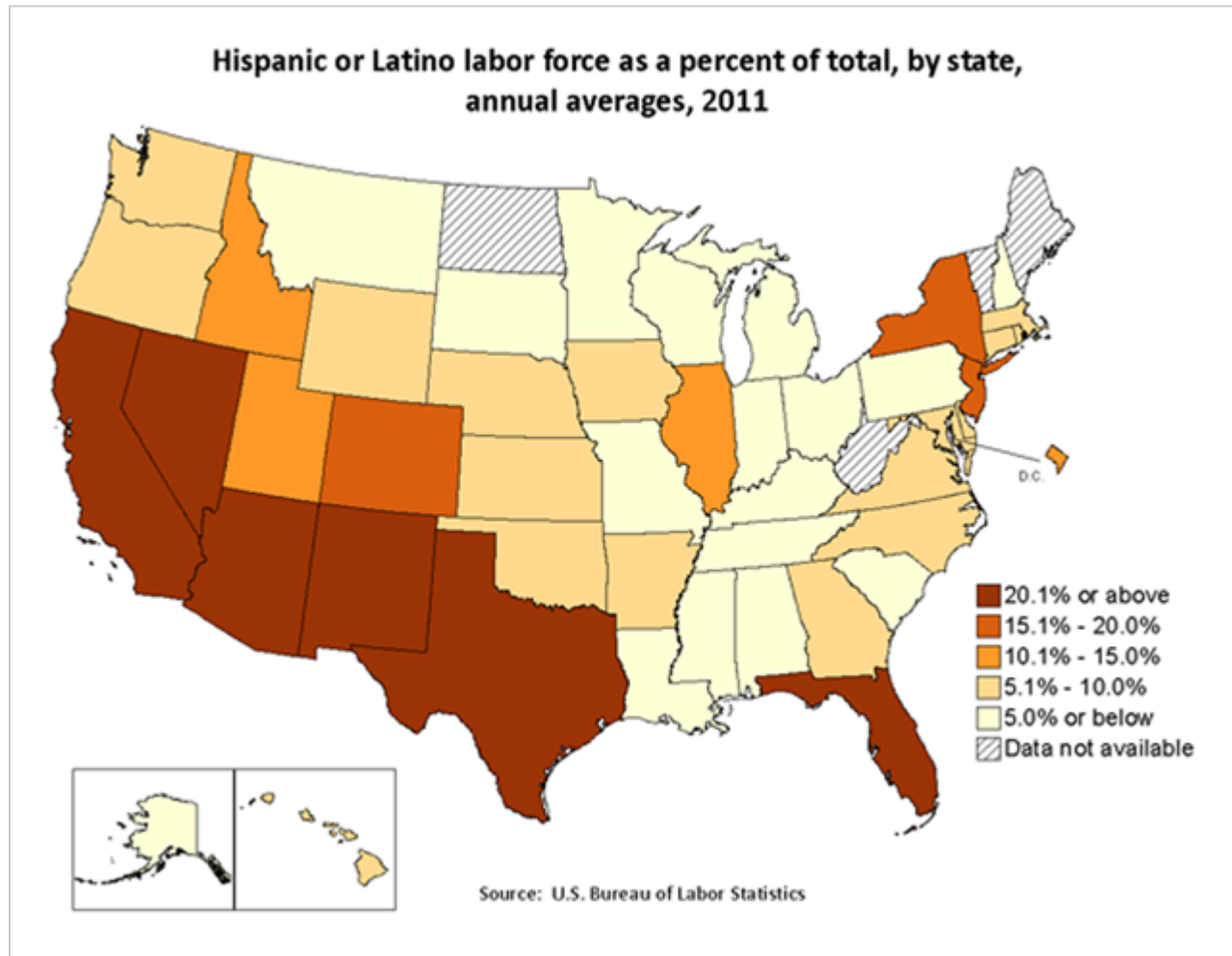
Growth in the Hispanic Labor Force

The Hispanic labor force has grown significantly in recent decades—increasing from 9 million in 1988 to 23 million in 2011. Among detailed Hispanic or Latino ethnic groups identified in the BLS Current Population Survey, Mexican Americans comprised 63 percent of the total Hispanic labor force in 2011. Cubans are the smallest detailed ethnic group among Hispanics or Latinos, accounting for about 4 percent of the total Hispanic labor force in 2011.



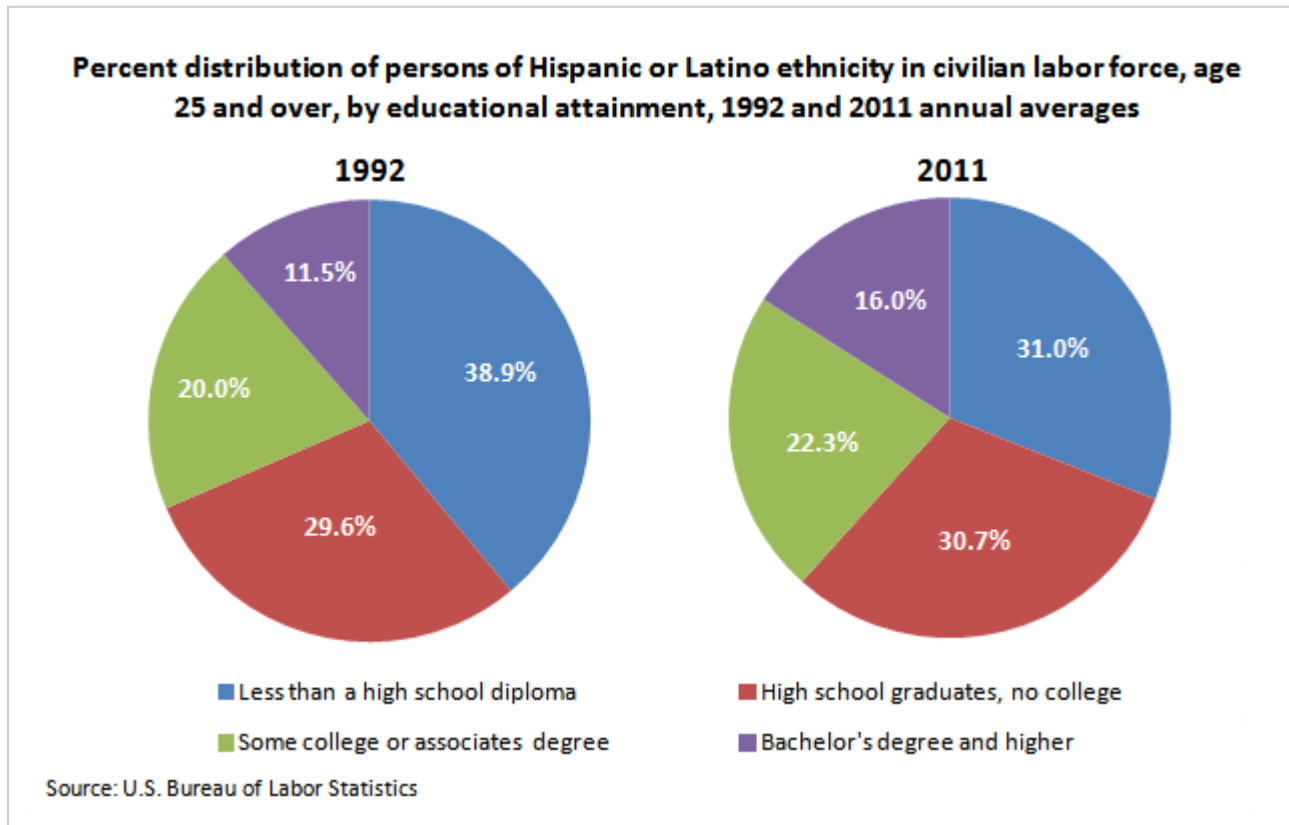
Hispanic Labor Force by State

In New Mexico, Hispanics or Latinos represented 42 percent of the total labor force in 2011, the highest share of all states and the District of Columbia. Two of New Mexico's bordering states—Arizona and Texas—also had high percentages of Hispanics in the labor force, 29 and 36 percent, respectively. Illinois was the only state along the Mississippi River in which Hispanics composed more than 10 percent of the labor force. Among all states, New Hampshire had the smallest share of Hispanics in the labor force (2 percent).



Educational Attainment

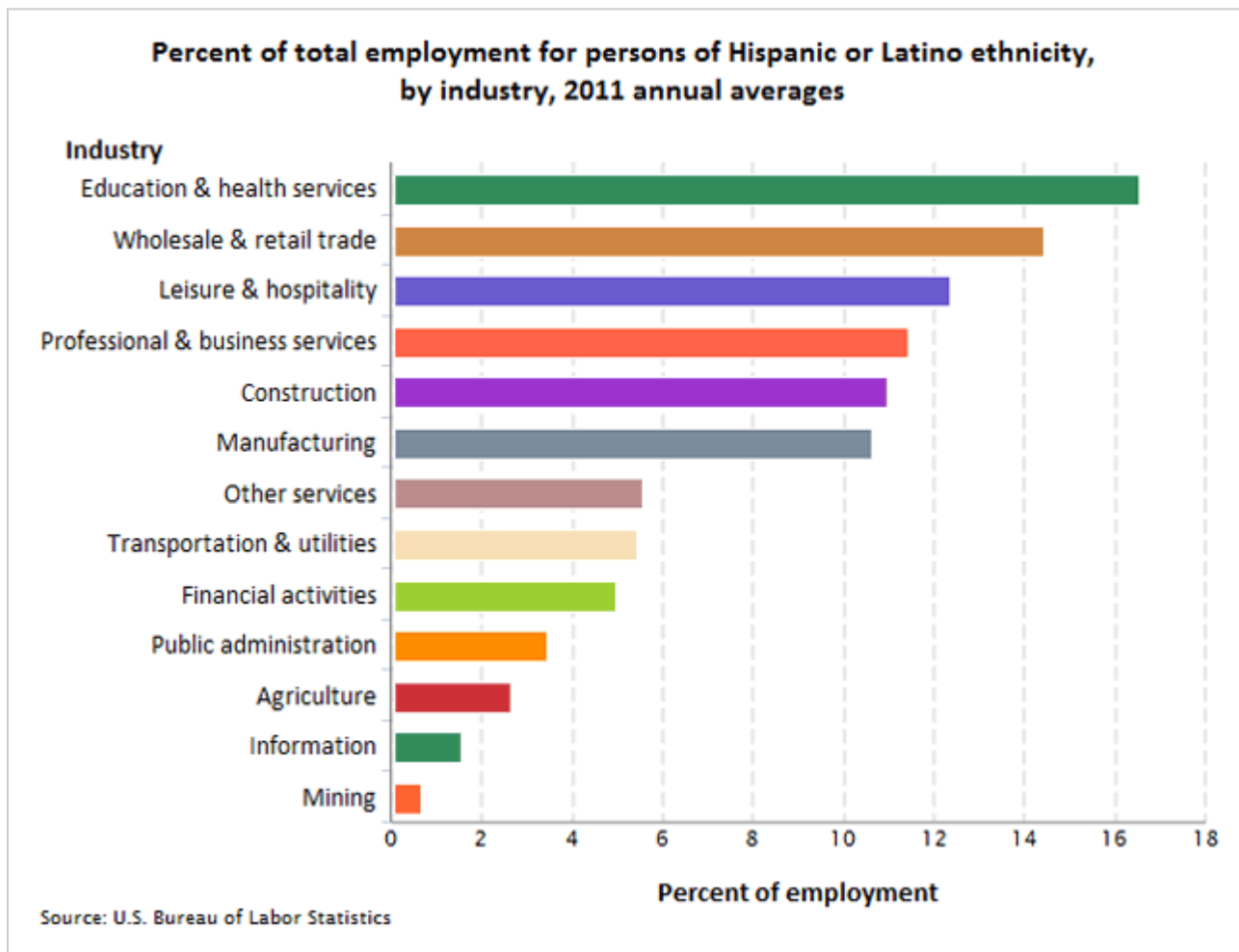
In 1992, thirty-nine percent of Hispanics or Latinos age 25 and over in the labor force had not graduated from high school. By 2011, that share had declined to 31 percent. About 12 percent of Hispanics or Latinos in the labor force had at least a bachelor's degree or more education in 1992; college graduates accounted for 16 percent of the Hispanic or Latino labor force in 2011.



Industry Employment

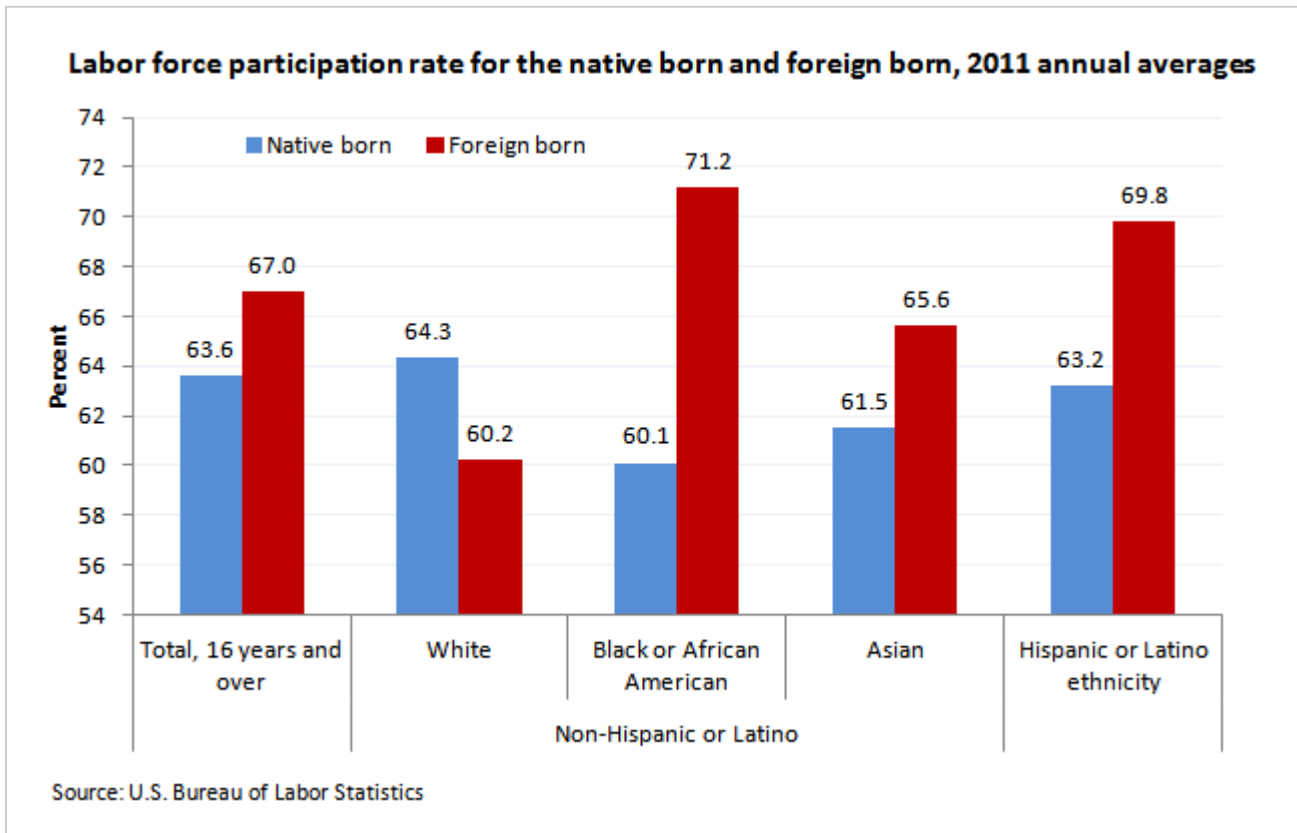
The education and health services industry employed the largest percentage of Hispanics or Latinos in 2011. Within this industry, 6 percent were employed in educational services and 10 percent were employed in health care and social assistance. Twelve percent of employed Hispanics or Latinos worked in the retail trade industry, and 3 percent worked in wholesale trade.

Eleven percent of employed Hispanics or Latinos worked in accommodation and food services (part of the leisure and hospitality industry). Construction and manufacturing also each employed 11 percent of Hispanic or Latino workers. Agriculture, information, and mining each employed less than three percent of Hispanics in 2011.



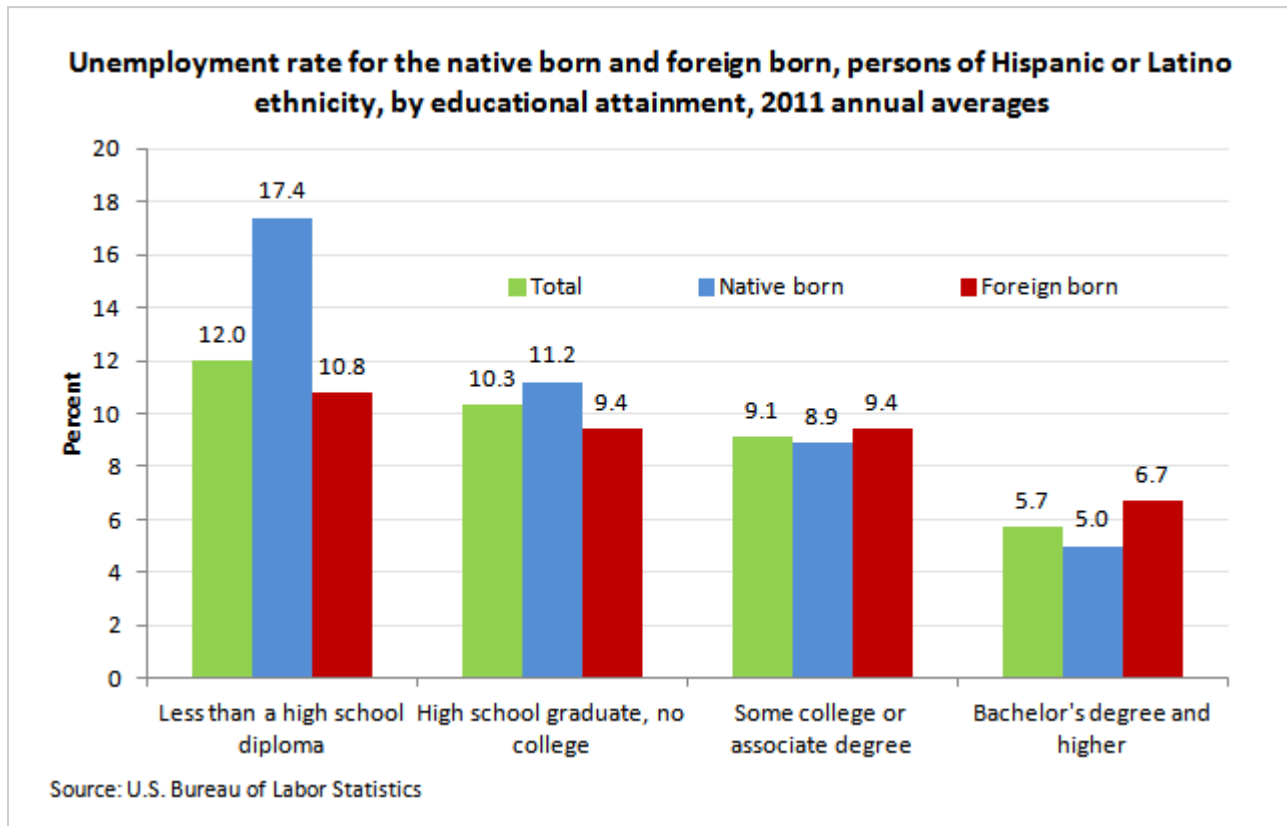
Foreign Born - Labor Participation

In 2011, foreign-born Hispanics or Latinos had a higher labor force participation rate (70 percent) than the native born (63 percent). Among non-Hispanics, foreign-born Asians and Blacks or African Americans also had higher labor force participation than their native-born counterparts. The labor force participation rate for Whites, however, was higher for the native born (64 percent) than the foreign born (60 percent).



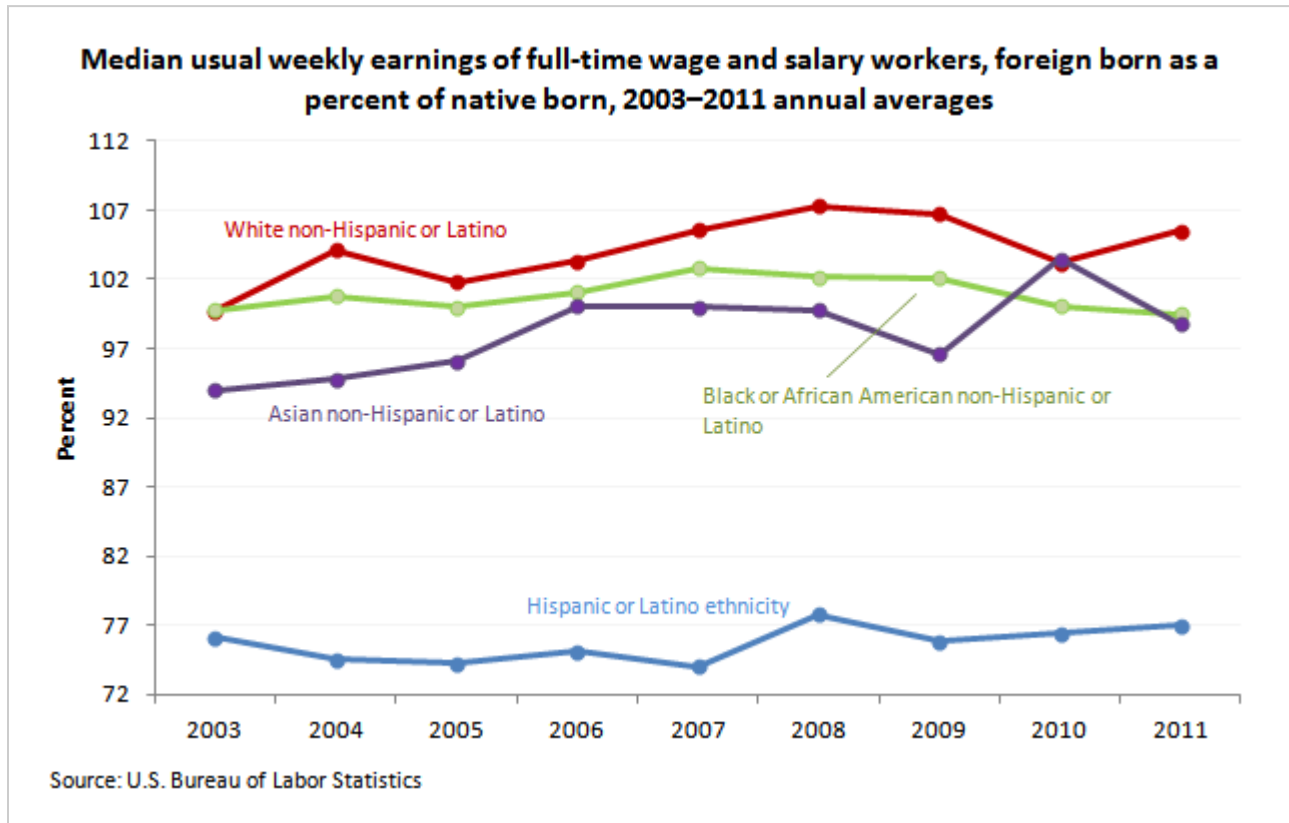
Foreign Born - Unemployment

Unemployment varied among the foreign- and native-born Hispanic labor force in 2011. For those who had not graduated high school, the unemployment rate for the native born (17.4 percent) was much higher than the rate for the foreign born (10.8 percent). In contrast, native-born Hispanics with a bachelor's degree or more had a lower unemployment rate (5.0 percent) than their foreign-born counterparts (6.7 percent). The unemployment rate for Hispanics or Latinos with some college experience but not a bachelor's degree was about the same for the native and foreign born.



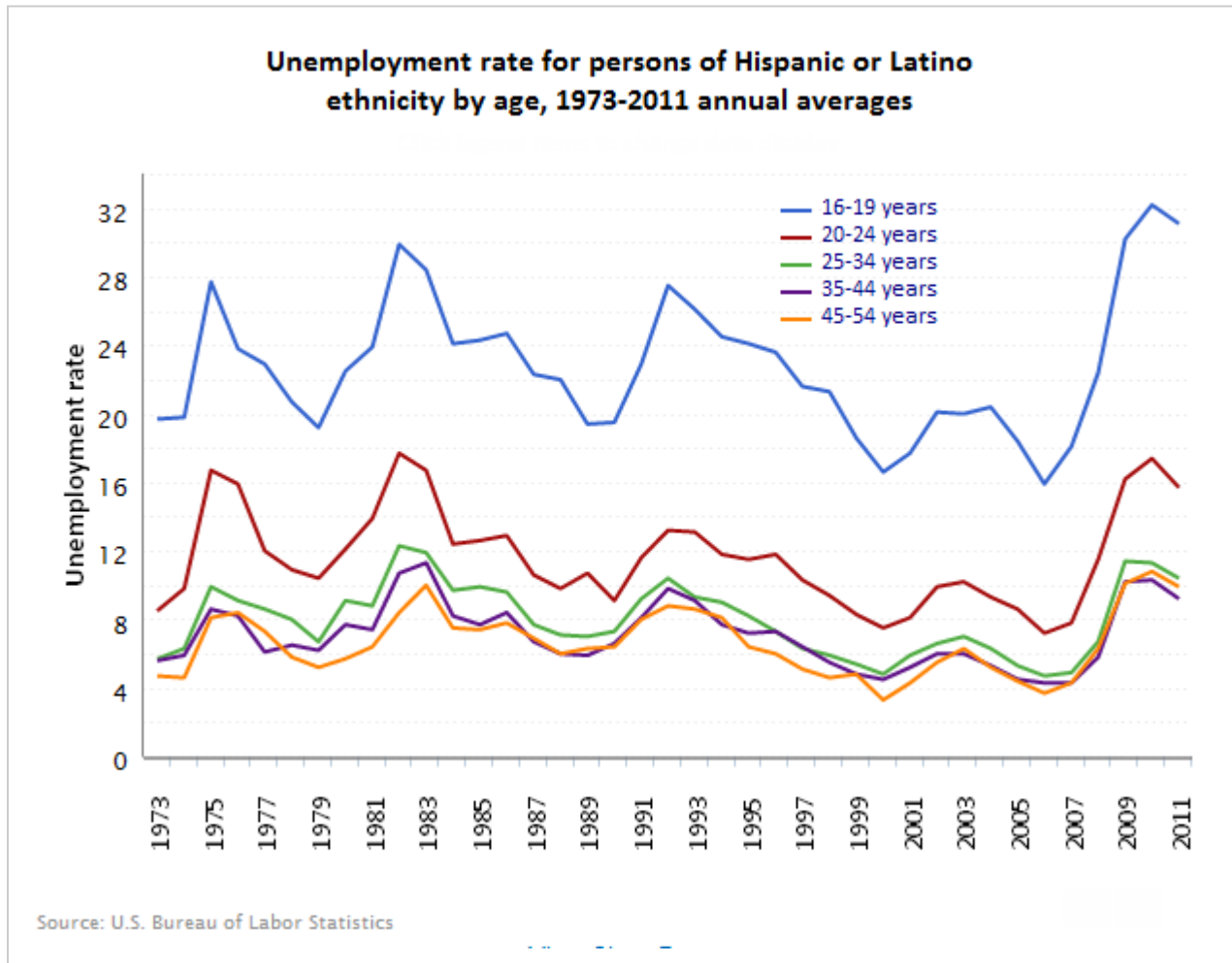
Foreign Born - Earnings

In 2011, foreign-born Hispanics or Latinos who were full-time wage and salary workers earned 77 percent as much as their native-born counterparts. Among Whites, Blacks or African Americans, and Asians, foreign-born and native born workers had similar median weekly earnings.



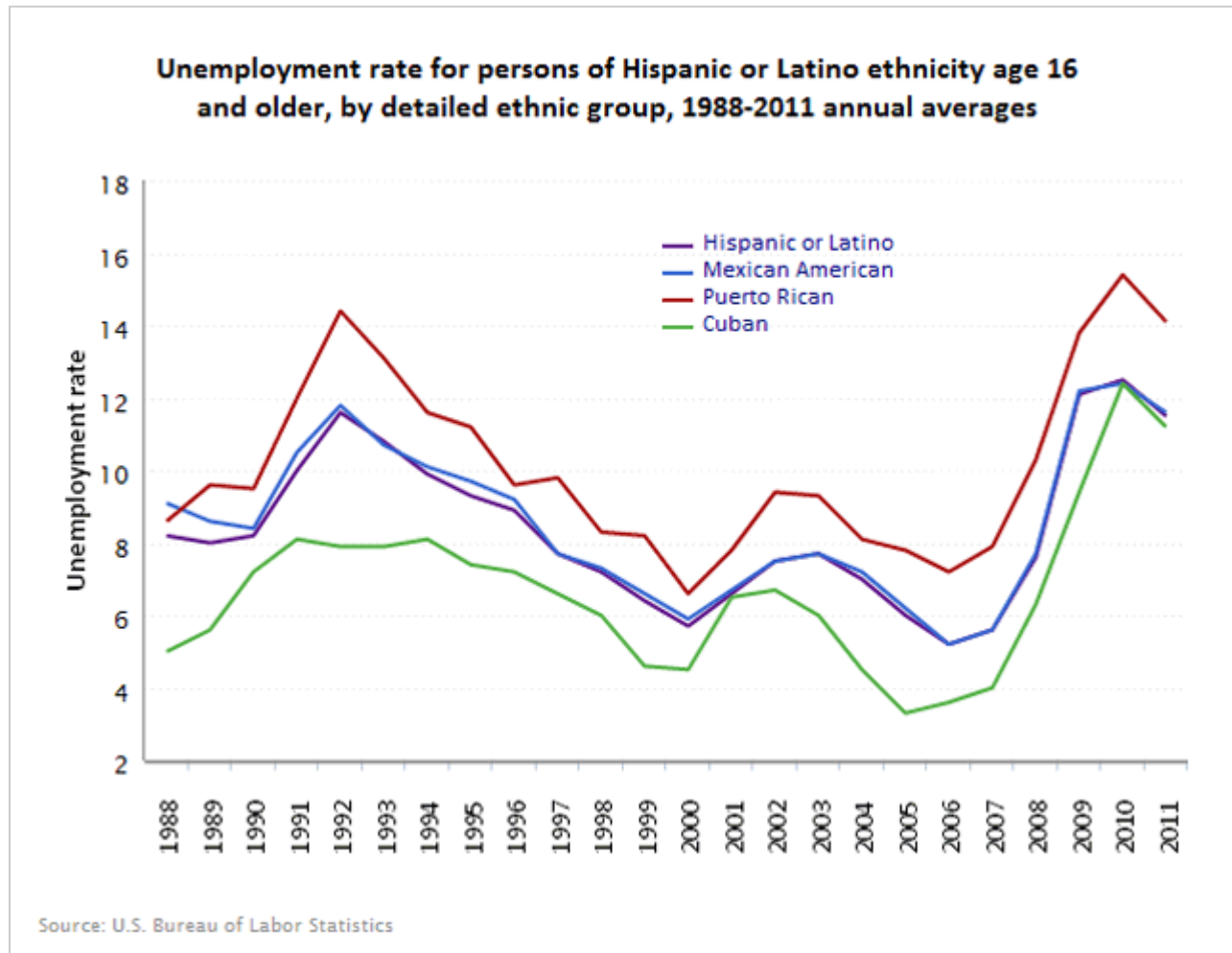
Unemployment Rates by Age

Unemployment rates are historically highest for those ages 16 to 19. In 2006, the unemployment rate for Hispanic or Latino teens reached a historic low of 15.9 percent (the series began in 1973). Four years later, in 2010, the unemployment rate had doubled to 32.2 percent, the highest rate since the series began. Unemployment rates for other age groups have remained below those of teenagers, but Hispanics or Latinos ages 20 to 24 have higher unemployment rates than those in older age groups.



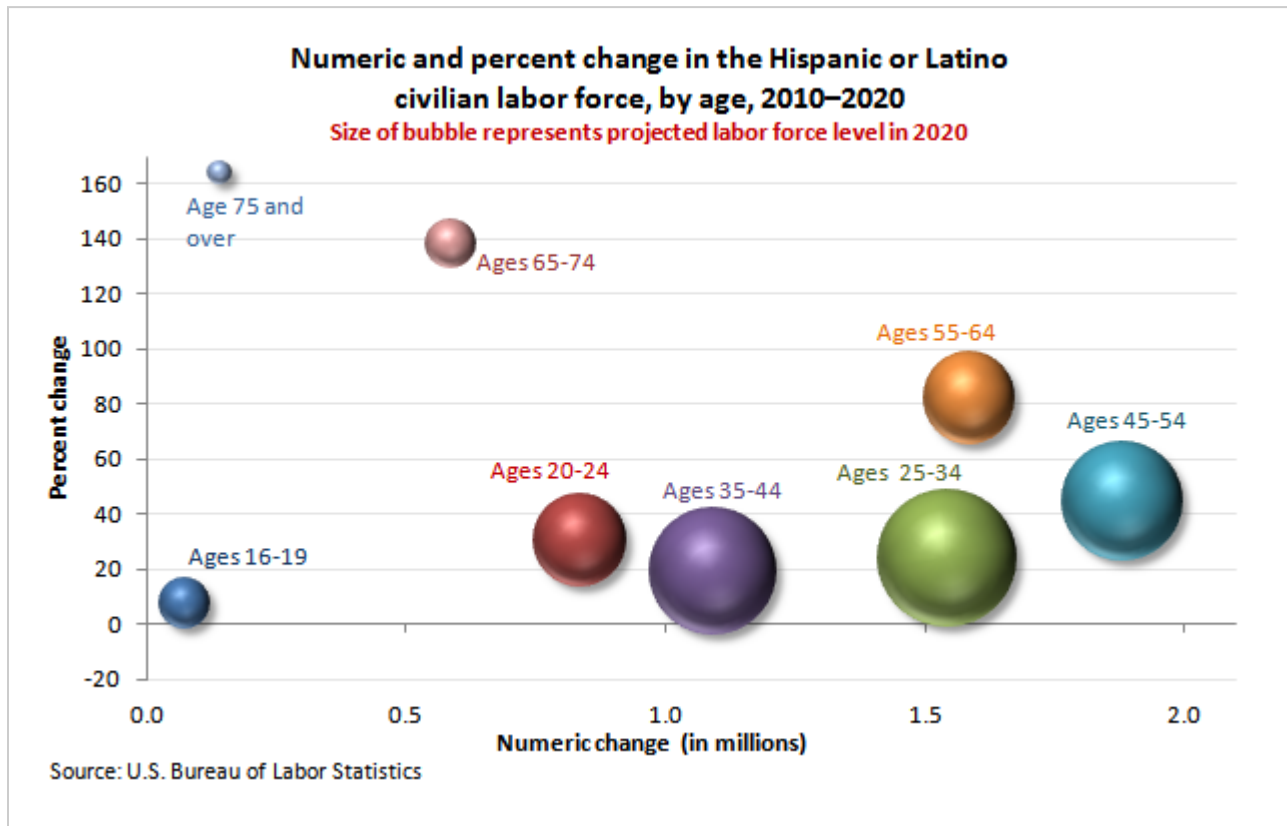
Unemployment Rates by Ethnic Group

Since 1989, the unemployment rate for Puerto Ricans (those living in the 50 states or the District of Columbia) has remained above the rates for Mexican Americans and Cubans. In 2005, the unemployment rate for Cubans reached a low of 3.3 percent; in 2011, the unemployment rate for Cubans was 11.2 percent, about the same as that of Mexican Americans and the overall rate for Hispanics or Latinos.



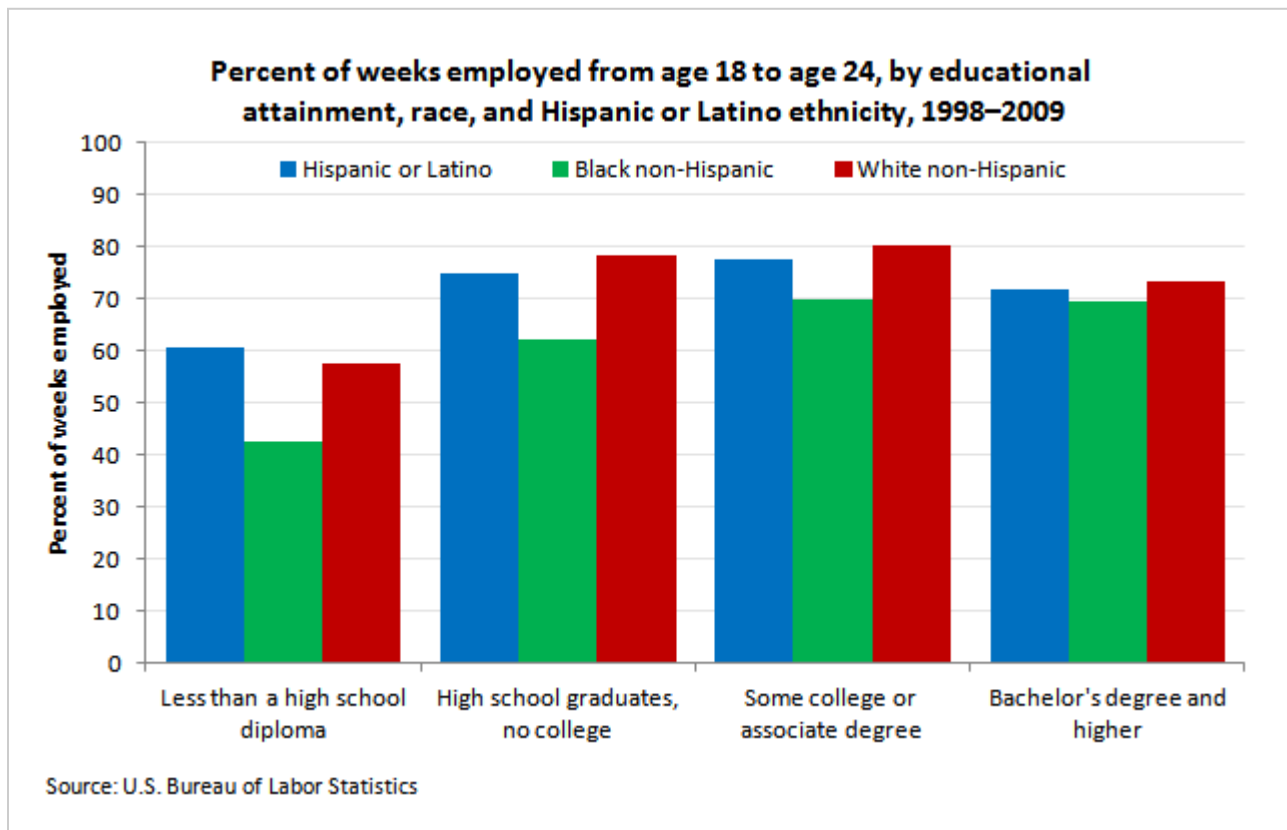
The Future of the Labor Force

The Hispanic civilian labor force is projected to reach 30.5 million in 2020. During the 2010—2020 period, the number of Hispanics ages 45 to 54 is projected to increase by 1.9 million, the largest growth in terms of number of people of any age group. Hispanics or Latinos ages 25 to 34 will remain the largest age group, with 8.1 million labor force participants by 2020. Over the 2010—2020 period, the number of workers age 75 and over is projected to increase 164 percent, or 143,000. Among Hispanics or Latinos ages 16 to 19, the labor force is projected to grow 7.4 percent, or 74,000, from 2010 to 2020, the smallest increase among the age groups.



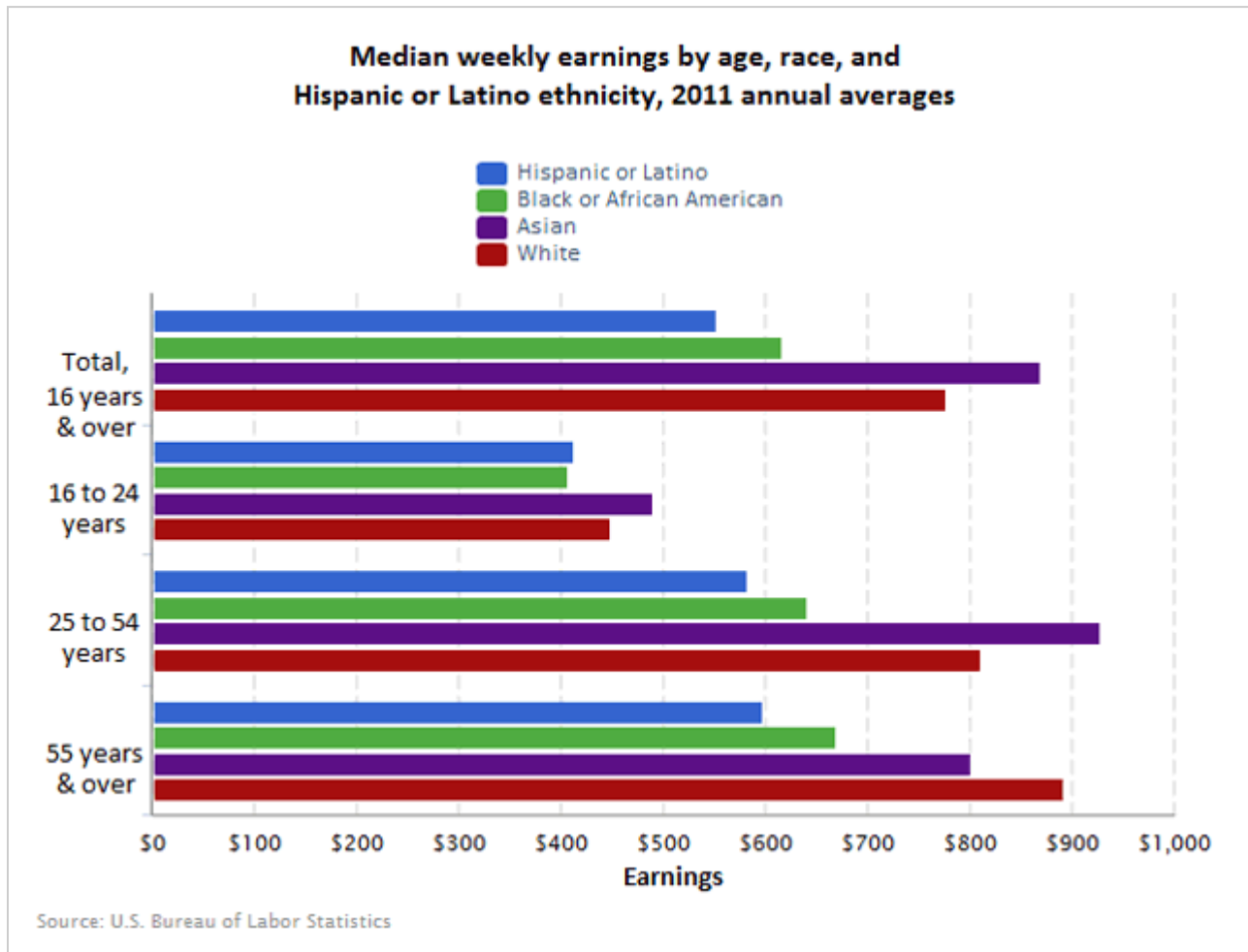
Employment Attachment among Young Workers

Among those born in the early to mid-1980s, Hispanics or Latinos with less than a high school diploma spent an average of 61 percent of all weeks employed from age 18 to age 24. That compares with 42 percent of weeks that non-Hispanic black high school dropouts spent employed and 58 percent of weeks that non-Hispanic white dropouts spent employed. Hispanics or Latinos with some college or an associate degree spent 78 percent of weeks employed, compared with 72 percent of weeks for those who earned a bachelor's degree or higher. Hispanics or Latinos, black non-Hispanics, and white non-Hispanics with a bachelor's degree or higher spent about the same percent of weeks employed.



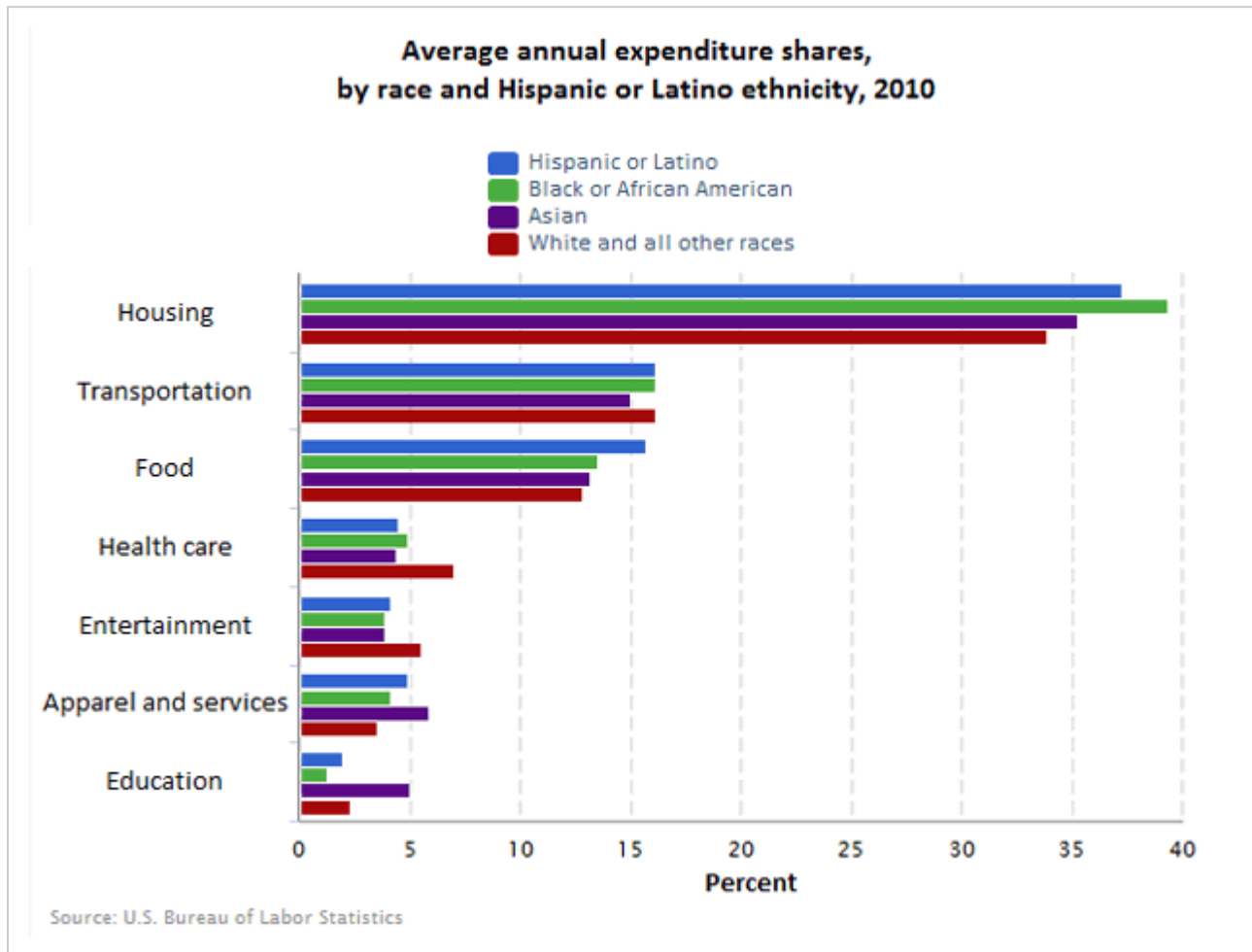
Earnings

In 2011, median weekly earnings of Hispanics who worked full time (\$549) were lower than those for Blacks or African Americans (\$615), Whites (\$775), and Asians (\$866). Blacks ages 16 to 24 had median weekly earnings of \$404, about the same as their Hispanic counterparts (\$410). For Hispanics ages 25 to 54 and age 55 and over, median weekly earnings increased slightly from one age group to the next; \$580 and \$595, respectively. In contrast, median earnings for Asians decreased between the two age groups, from \$926 for ages 25 to 54 to \$799 for workers age 55 and over.



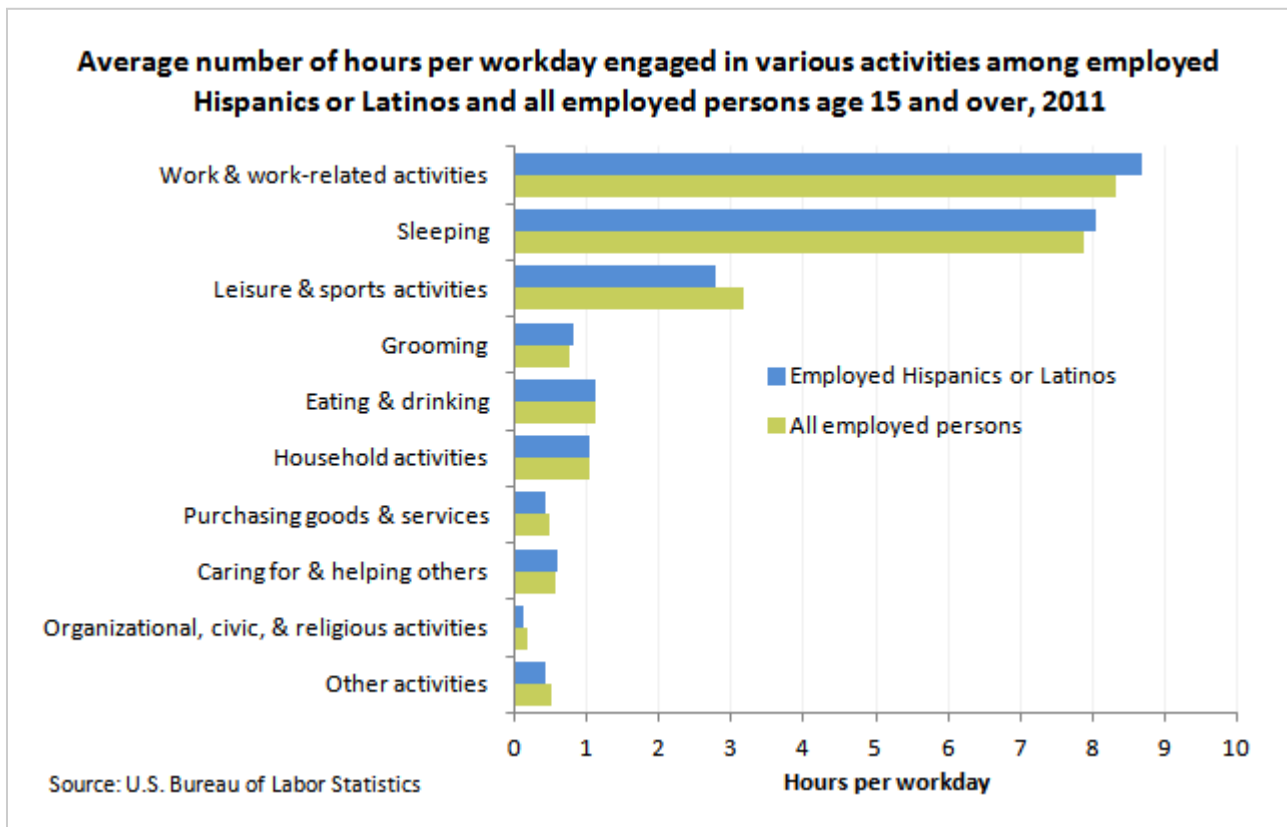
Consumer Expenditures

Most Americans spend the largest share of their annual income on housing, which includes mortgage payments, property taxes, and insurance. Hispanics or Latinos spent 37 percent of their average annual income on housing in 2010. African Americans' expenditure share was 39 percent, higher than the shares for Whites (34 percent) and Asians (35 percent). Hispanics or Latinos have lower median earnings than other race and ethnic groups, and they spent a higher portion of their income on food, 16 percent. Five percent of Hispanics' annual income was spent on apparel, more than the shares of income spent by Whites (3 percent) and Blacks or African Americans (4 percent).



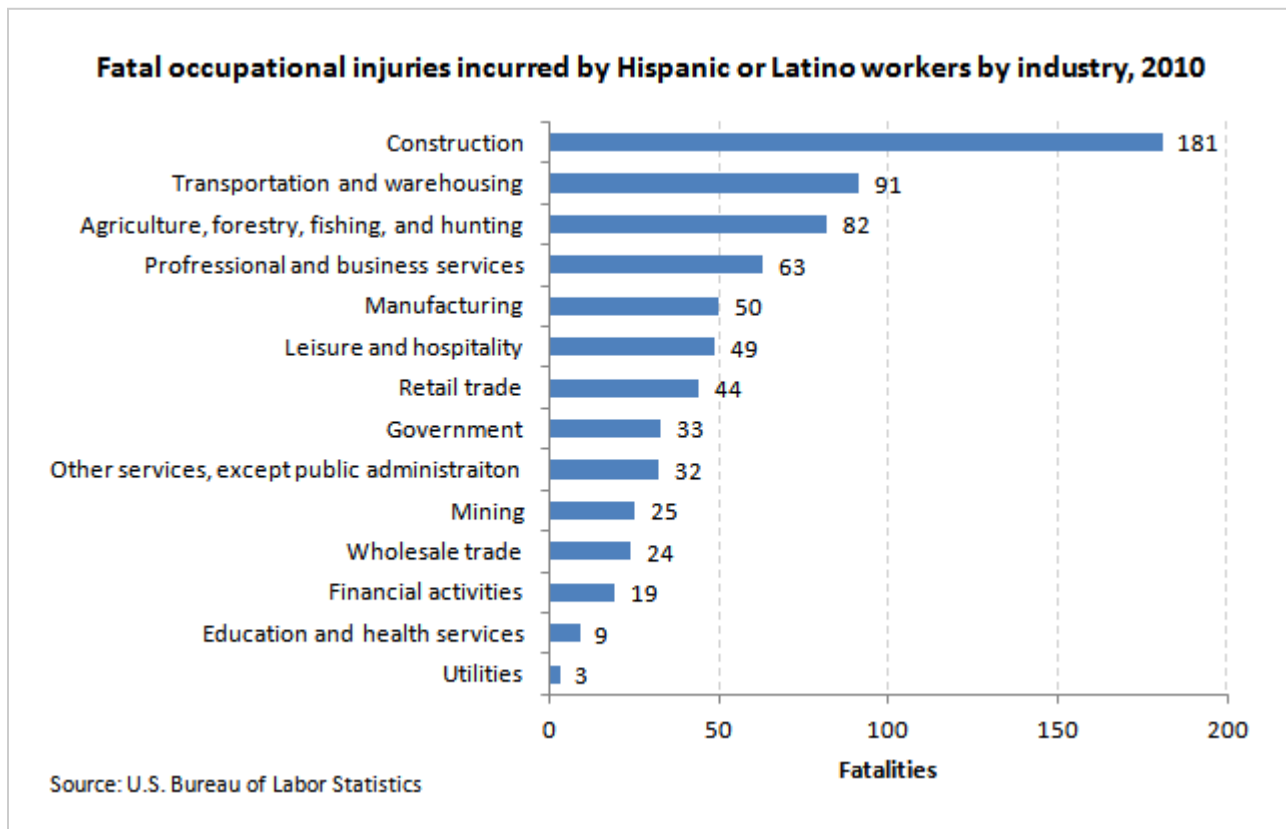
Time Use: Where did the day go?

On the days they worked, employed Hispanics or Latinos spent an average of 8.68 hours per day on work and work-related activities in 2011. That compares with 8.32 hours per day among all employed persons. Employed Hispanics or Latinos spent 2.77 hours per workday on leisure and sports activities in 2011, compared with 3.18 hours for all employed persons.



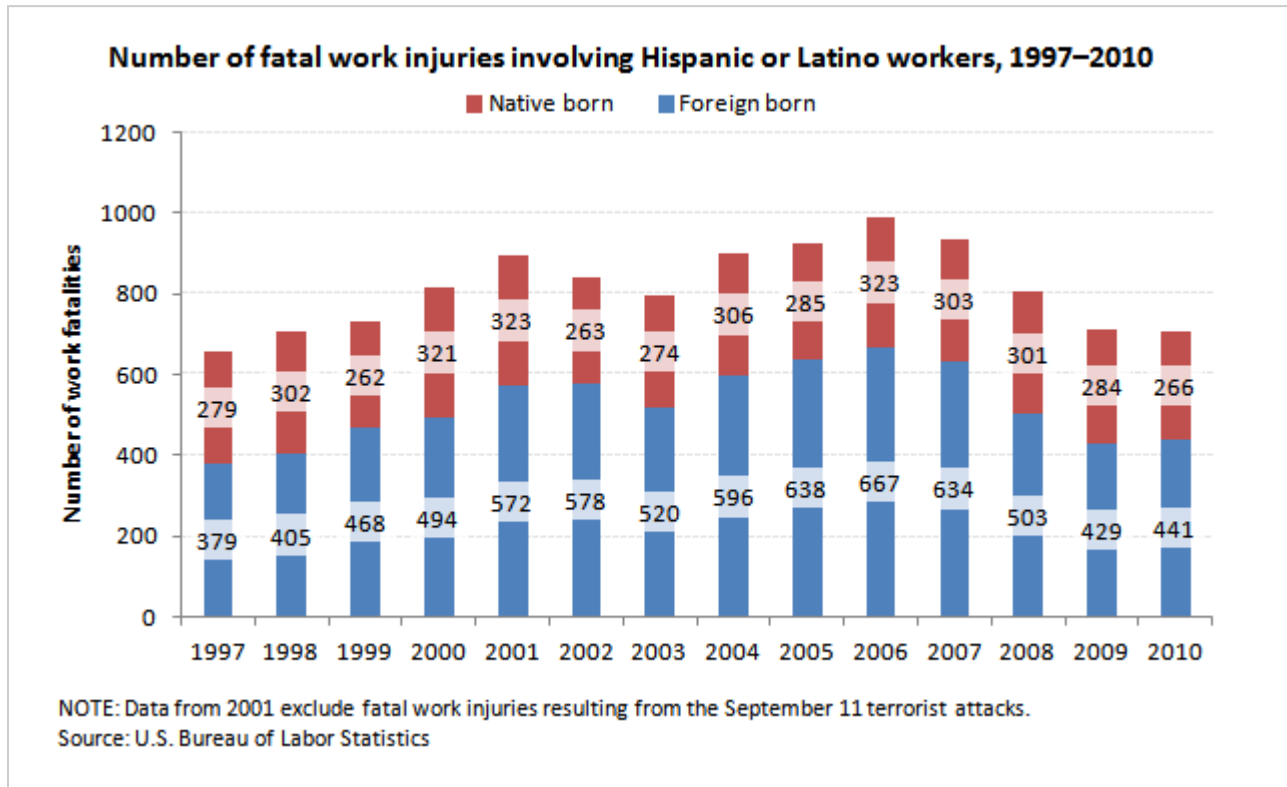
Fatal Injuries by Industry

In 2010, the construction industry accounted for the largest number of fatal occupational injuries among Hispanic or Latino workers. The 181 construction fatalities were double the number of fatalities in the transportation and warehousing industry. The utilities industry accounted for the fewest fatal work injuries among Hispanics or Latinos, with 3 in 2010.



Fatal Injuries by Foreign-born Status

Each year since 1997, Hispanics or Latinos who were born in the United States suffered fewer fatal work injuries than their foreign-born counterparts. The highest number of fatal work injuries among both native- and foreign-born Hispanics occurred in 2006.



More BLS Data

For additional data about people of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, please see the following sources:

- [Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity, 2011](#)
- [Monthly Labor Review](#) articles about Hispanic or Latino workers