

## Introduction

One of the noteworthy trends from the U.S. Census Bureau is significant racial and ethnic diversification across the United States. In Pennsylvania, a significant portion of that diversification over recent years has been due to individuals and families of Hispanic origin. To better understand the changes in Hispanic populations in Pennsylvania, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania evaluated data from the American Community Survey 5-year estimates for 2007-2011 and 2017-2021.

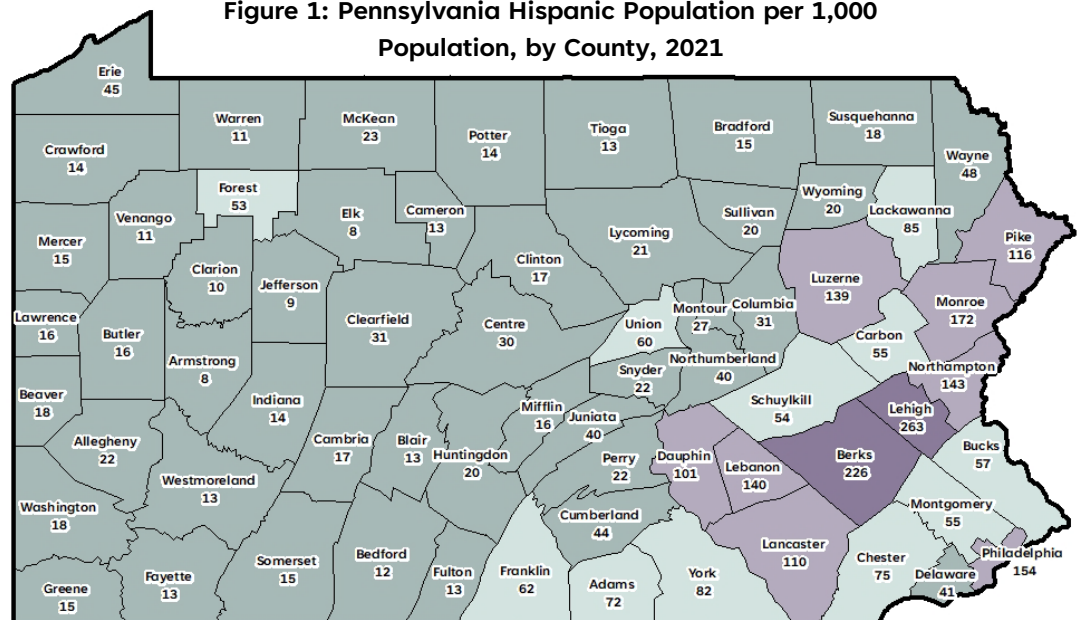
## Population Change

From 2011 to 2021, the number of rural Hispanic Pennsylvanians grew by nearly 35,900 individuals, from 82,964 to 118,858. This represents a 43 percent growth in the Hispanic population in rural Pennsylvania over 10 years. Overall, the portion of the total rural Hispanic population grew from 2.4 percent of the rural population in 2011 to 3.5 percent in 2021. Over that same time, the non-Hispanic population in rural areas fell by more than 3 percent. Except for those of multiple races or ethnicities (whose increase is in part due to methodology changes in the Census survey), the rural Hispanic Pennsylvania population increased more than any other racial or ethnic group.

The urban Hispanic Pennsylvania population increased by nearly 300,000, from 607,164 in 2011 to 904,197 in 2021. This 49 percent increase represented a change in the total urban Hispanic population from 6.6 percent in 2011 to 9.4 percent in 2021. Non-Hispanic populations overall grew about 1 percent between 2011 and 2021. Again, apart from people identifying as two or more races, the Hispanic population was the fast-growing racial or ethnic population in urban counties.

While there was some variation in the degree of growth, Hispanic populations grew across every county in the Commonwealth. Nearly half of Pennsylvania counties experienced a 50 percent or greater increase of their Hispanic population between 2011 and 2021. Three counties in Pennsylvania (Sullivan, Luzerne, and Schuylkill) saw their Hispanic population

**Figure 1: Pennsylvania Hispanic Population per 1,000 Population, by County, 2021**



**Total Hispanic Residents in Pennsylvania: 1,023,055**

- <50 per 1,000 people
- 50 - 99 per 1,000 people
- 100 - 199 per 1,000 people
- 200+ per 1,000 people

more than double over the same period. The slowest growth was in Venango County, which still experienced a 9 percent increase in its Hispanic population. While every county saw significant growth, Hispanic populations remain a relatively small portion of total population throughout most of the Commonwealth. Only four counties (Lehigh, Berks, Monroe, and Philadelphia) had Hispanic residents account for more than 15 percent of the total population.

### Age

Hispanic residents continue to be slightly younger, on average, than non-Hispanic residents, although consistent with national population trends, the total population aged 18 or under declined over time for both groups. In 2011, 39 percent of Hispanic Pennsylvanians were 18 years old or younger, compared with 23 percent of non-Hispanics. The difference in percentage was consistent regardless of whether they lived in rural or urban counties. In 2021, 35 percent of rural Hispanic Pennsylvanians were 18 years old or younger, compared with 20 percent of non-Hispanic residents. This was consistent with urban residents, where 36 percent of Hispanic residents were 18 or younger compared with 21 percent of non-Hispanic residents in 2021.

### Place of Origin

Hispanic populations, despite often being categorized together for statistical purposes, come from many varied places and cultures. In 2021, the ACS reported that Hispanic Pennsylvanians were from nearly four dozen different countries or communities of origin. The plurality of Hispanic Pennsylvanians in both rural and urban areas identified as Puerto Rican (40 percent and 49 percent, respectively). In rural Pennsylvania, 24 percent self-identified as Mexican, 7 percent identified as Dominican, and the remaining 29 percent were split among other communities and countries of origin.

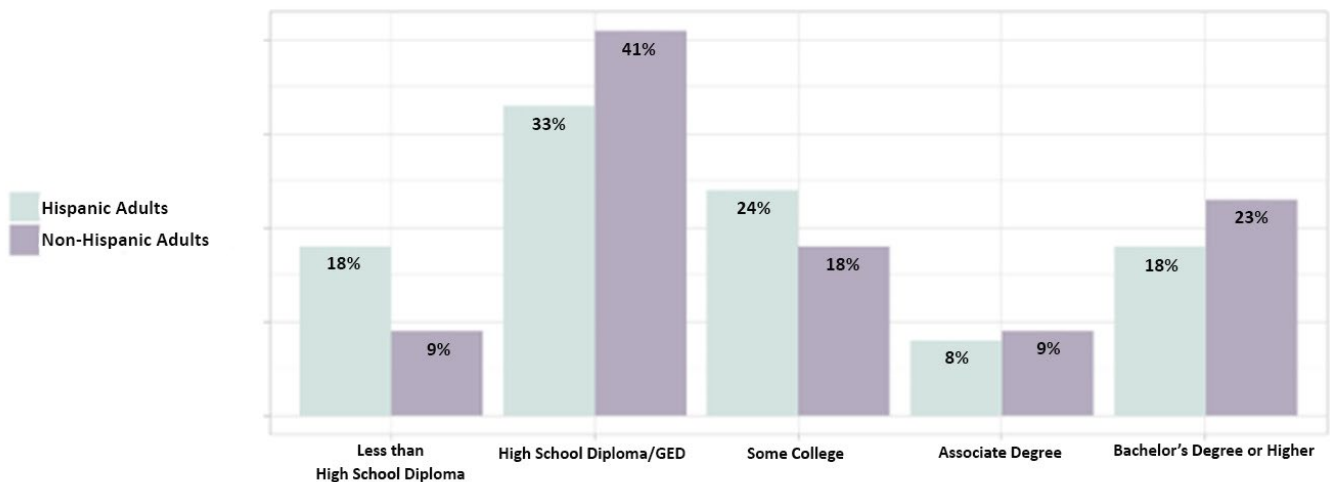
### Marital Status

In 2021, 45 percent of rural Hispanic adults in Pennsylvania were married, 41 percent were never married, 11 percent were separated or divorced, and only 3 percent were widowed. Rural non-Hispanic adults were significantly more likely to be married (55 percent) or widowed (7 percent) and less likely to never have been married (25 percent), but similarly likely to have been separated (13 percent).

### Education

Rural Hispanic adults had lower academic attainment overall compared with rural non-Hispanic adults. Among rural Hispanic adults, 8 percent had an associate degree and 18 percent had a bachelor’s degree or

**Figure 2: Educational Attainment Among Pennsylvania Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Adults, 2021**



higher, 18 percent did not have a high school diploma, 33 percent had a diploma or GED, and 24 percent had attended some college but did not have a degree. Non-Hispanic adults were significantly more likely to have a high school diploma or an equivalent (41 percent). Only 9 percent had no high school diploma.

Rural and urban Hispanic adults had similar education rates. However, urban Hispanic adults were slightly more likely to not have a high school diploma (26 percent) and slightly less likely to have some college but not a degree (18 percent).

### Employment, Income, and Poverty

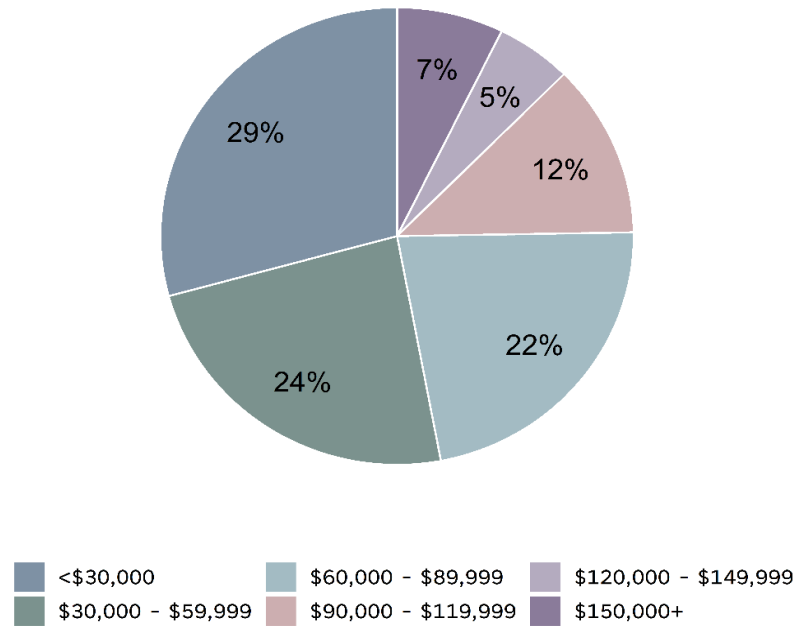
More than 62 percent of Hispanic rural Pennsylvanians were in the labor force in 2021. The non-Hispanic labor participation rate was 59 percent.

The 2021 unemployment rate among rural Hispanic adult was 4.8 percent, compared with 2.8 percent for rural non-Hispanic adults.

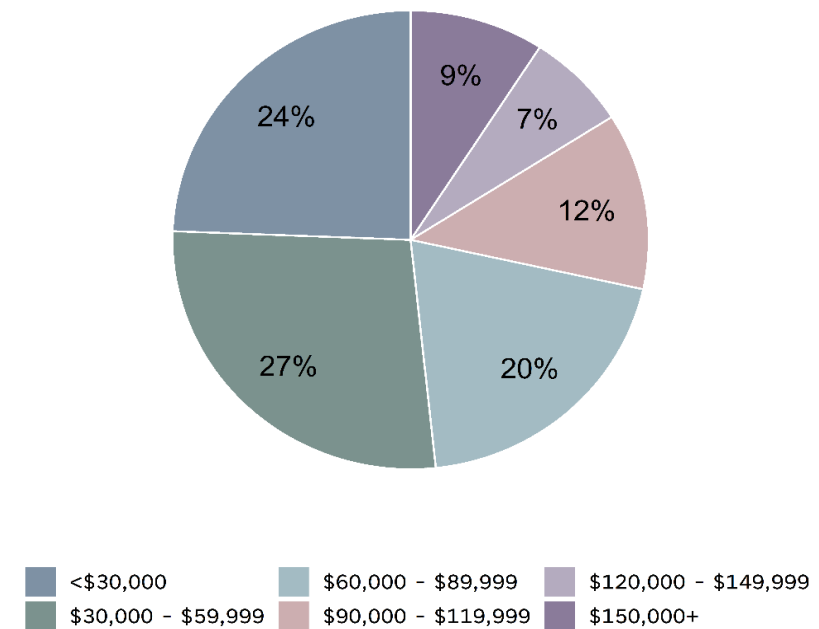
Rural Hispanic households had a median income of \$56,285. Rural non-Hispanic households had a median income of \$57,772, a small but statistically significant difference. Rural Hispanic households had a significantly higher median income than urban Hispanic households, whose median income was \$45,989 in 2021.

Among rural Hispanic adults in Pennsylvania, the most common industries of employment were retail trade (15 percent of total employment), and healthcare and social assistance professions made up 14 percent of workers. Ten percent of Hispanic adult workers in rural areas worked in manufacturing, and an additional 10 percent worked in food services. Between 2011 and 2021, retail workers overtook both healthcare and manufacturing as the most common job for rural Hispanic adults. These data are consistent with overall employment trends over the decade, which saw manufacturing jobs decline in rural areas as retail and warehousing jobs became more prevalent.

**Figure 3: Income Brackets Among Rural Hispanic Pennsylvanians**



**Figure 4: Income Brackets Among Rural Non-Hispanic Pennsylvanians**



More rural Hispanic residents had a household income of less than \$30,000 (29 percent) than rural non-Hispanic residents (24 percent). Rural non-Hispanic Pennsylvanians were also more likely to live in households with incomes greater than \$120,000 compared with rural Hispanic residents (16 percent and 12 percent, respectively).

In rural Pennsylvania, the poverty rate (income at or below \$26,246 for a family of four) was approximately 21 percent among Hispanic adults and 28 percent among Hispanic children. In comparison, the rate among rural non-Hispanic adults was 11 percent and the rate among non-Hispanic rural children was 16 percent. Urban Hispanic residents were significantly more likely to experience poverty (28 percent of adults and 35 percent of children).

### **Health Insurance**

Ten percent of rural Hispanic Pennsylvanians under age 65 did not have health insurance, compared with 7 percent of rural non-Hispanic Pennsylvanians. Rural children were more likely to be insured, with 96 percent of Hispanic children and 94 percent of non-Hispanic children covered by insurance.

### **Housing and Households**

There are approximately 1.7 million occupied housing units in rural Pennsylvania, 2.1 percent of which were occupied by Hispanic residents. The number of Hispanic households increased 35 percent from 2011 to 2021, compared with a 2 percent decrease among non-Hispanic households. Among housing units occupied by Hispanic residents, 53 percent were owned, and 47 percent were rented in 2021. Homeownership rates increased slightly for Hispanic households from 2011, when the ownership rate was 48 percent. Non-Hispanic households were more likely to own their home, with a 76 percent ownership rate in 2021. On average, both Hispanic and non-Hispanic households had 2.8 bedrooms.

As is common in rural Pennsylvania, most rural Hispanic households (56 percent) lived in single unit, detached homes. A further 16 percent lived in attached single-family dwellings such as town houses. Approximately 23 percent of rural Hispanic residents lived in apartment buildings. The remaining 5 percent lived in mobile homes or other forms of shelter. More than 73 percent of rural non-Hispanic residents lived in detached homes, with significantly fewer households in attached single-unit structures (6 percent), small apartment buildings (8 percent), larger apartment buildings (5 percent), and mobile homes or other structures (7 percent).

Among housing units owned by rural Hispanic residents, the median home value was \$160,000, compared with \$150,000 for rural non-Hispanic homeowners. Both medians were greater than the median value of homes owned by urban Hispanic residents (\$145,000).

Hispanic renters in rural Pennsylvania paid a median monthly rent of \$755, compared with \$605 for the median among non-Hispanic renters. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development considers a household to be “rent burdened” if more than 30 percent of total income is used for rent. Data from the Census Bureau show that 45 percent of Hispanic households are burdened by rent, which is consistent across rural and urban areas. Non-Hispanic households are less likely to be rent burdened, with 32 percent of rural households and 39 percent of urban households burdened by rental costs.

## Summary

While Hispanic Pennsylvanians are still a relatively small portion of the population of rural Pennsylvania, they are the fastest growing ethnic group in the Commonwealth. Overall, they tend to be younger and to maintain high labor force participation. While 24 percent of rural Hispanic adults had attended some college, overall, they had lower educational attainment levels than rural non-Hispanic adults. They also face higher levels of poverty and rent burden than rural non-Hispanic Pennsylvanians.

These challenges have been persistent over the last decade, but these economic factors haven't seemed to limit population growth. As the Commonwealth continues to diversify, Hispanic Pennsylvanians are poised to become an increasingly important part of rural communities.

## Methodology

Data for this analysis were drawn from the 2011 and 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year averages. These data report population by age and gender for each county in Pennsylvania and were used for the "Population" and "Age" sections. Rural and urban designations for these variables follow the Center for Rural Pennsylvania's county definition of rural: a county is rural when the population density is less than the statewide average of 291 people per square mile.

Additional data were used from the 2011 and 2021 ACS 5-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). The ACS collects annual data from randomly distributed residents across Pennsylvania on demographic and economic indicators ranging from education to housing. The PUMS dataset is a small sampling of collected ACS data that the Census Bureau assigns weights to be representative of the sample population. PUMS data are organized by Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), which the Center organized into rural and urban categories by population density.

A person in the sample is considered Hispanic based on their response to an ACS question: "Is Person X of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?" All "Yes" answers to this question were designated Hispanic, all "Nos" were sampled as non-Hispanic. Additionally, those within institutionalized group quarters (such as prisons and nursing homes) were removed from the sample for every PUMS-level evaluation to prevent biasing rural samples toward the conditions in group quarters.

PUMS data were collected from IPUMS-USA: Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Danika Brockman, Grace Cooper, Stephanie Richards, and Megan Schouweiler. IPUMS USA: Version 13.0. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V13.0>

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Selected Data	Rural	Rural	Urban	Urban
	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
Total Population, 2021	128,192	3,892,129	824,796	7,753,599
Adult Population, 2021	83,751	3,137,180	537,799	6,199,464
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Married (%)	44.6%	55.1%	38.4%	50.4%
Single (%)	40.7%	24.9%	45.3%	31.4%
Separated/Divorced (%)	11.4%	12.7%	13.4%	11.6%
Widowed (%)	3.4%	7.3%	3.0%	6.5%
<b>Healthcare</b>				
Insured and <65 years old (%)	89.9%	93.2%	86.6%	94.0%
Uninsured and <65 (%)	10.1%	6.8%	13.4%	6.0%
Insured Children (%)	95.8%	94.2%	94.6%	96.1%
Uninsured Children (%)	4.2%	5.8%	5.4%	3.9%
<b>Education</b>				
Adults with Associate Degree (%)	7.5%	9.0%	6.1%	7.9%
Adults with Bachelor's Degree or Higher (%)	17.8%	23.1%	16.0%	35.6%
Adults without a High School Degree (%)	17.9%	8.8%	25.8%	7.6%
Adults with High School Diploma or GED (%)	33.2%	41.2%	33.8%	30.5%
Adults with Some College Credit but no Degree (%)	23.6%	17.8%	18.2%	18.3%
<b>Employment</b>				
Labor Force Participation Rate	68.3%	61.0%	69.0%	66.2%
Unemployment Rate	5.3%	2.9%	5.4%	3.4%
<b>Income and Poverty</b>				
Median Income	\$60,025	\$65,811	\$45,000	\$82,011
Poverty Rate	21.2%	11.4%	27.6%	10.6%
Childhood Poverty Rate	28.2%	16.3%	35.1%	14.5%
<b>Adult Employment by Industry</b>				
Accommodation and Food Services	9.9%	6.7%	9.3%	6.2%
Administrative/Support/Waste Management	5.2%	3.5%	7.0%	3.9%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2.5%	1.4%	2.0%	0.5%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2.8%	1.8%	2.0%	2.3%
Construction	6.1%	7.1%	5.9%	5.6%
Educational Services	6.6%	9.4%	5.9%	10.1%
Finance and Insurance	1.8%	3.3%	2.9%	5.7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	13.7%	16.2%	14.1%	16.5%
Information	1.6%	1.2%	1.1%	1.8%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Manufacturing	9.8%	13.2%	13.6%	9.9%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.4%	1.0%	0.2%	0.2%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	4.6%	4.9%	4.7%	4.7%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3.2%	4.3%	4.0%	7.9%
Public Administration	3.9%	4.7%	2.9%	4.0%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2.0%	1.1%	1.4%	1.7%
Retail Trade	14.9%	11.7%	11.0%	10.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	7.7%	5.2%	7.7%	4.5%
Utilities	0.5%	1.1%	0.4%	0.9%
Wholesale Trade	2.5%	2.3%	3.6%	2.6%