

Overview

In 1998, the number of Hispanic women totaled 14.7 million, accounting for 48.6% of the total Hispanic population, 5.4% of the total U.S. population, and 10.7% of all women in the United States. Since 1990, the number of Hispanic women has increased by about 3.6 million, or 32.4%. By 2005, the number of Hispanic women is projected to increase 22.4% to 18 million. In 1997, Mexican women represented the largest share of Hispanic women, at 9.0 million (62.1% of all Hispanic women), with Central and South American, Puerto Rican, and Cuban women following at 2.1 million (14.7%), 1.7 million (11.4%), and 0.6 million (4.0%), respectively. In general, Hispanic women tend to be younger and have lower educational levels and labor force participation rates than White and Black women. In addition, Hispanic women are more likely to have children, but less likely to be covered by private or government health insurance, than White or Black women.

Family Characteristics

- ❖ **Hispanic women are younger, and more likely than White and Black women to be under 18 years of age.** In 1997, the median age for Hispanic women was 27 years, compared to 37 years for White women and 31 years for Black women. In addition, Hispanic women under 18 years of age accounted for more than one-third (35.1%) of the Hispanic women population and one-seventh (14.8%) of the total U.S. women population under 18 years of age. By comparison, fewer than one-quarter (23.8%) of White women and fewer than one-third (29.7%) of Black women were under 18 years old.
- ❖ **Hispanic women are more likely than White women, but less likely than Black women, to be single mothers.** In 1997, 10.6% of Hispanic women were single mothers, compared to 5.7% of White women and 18.3% of Black women.
- ❖ **Hispanic young women have the highest birthrate of all adolescents.** In 1995, Hispanic teenagers 15-19 years old had a higher birthrate than African-American or White adolescents (106.7 per 1000 women, compared to 96.1 and 50.1, respectively), a figure which has steadily increased since the 1980s. Moreover, the birthrate for unmarried Hispanic, African American, and White young women ages 15-19 that same year was 78.7, 92.8, and 35.5 per 1000, respectively.

Fertility

- ❖ **The birth rate for Hispanic women is higher than that for White and Black women.** In 1996, the birth rate for Hispanic women 15-44 years old was 104.9 per 1,000 women. Data show that the birth rate for comparable White and Black women was 64.7 and 71.1 per 1,000 women, respectively.
- ❖ **Hispanic women are more likely than White women, but less likely than Black women, to give birth out of wedlock.** In 1996, two in every five (40.9%) births to Hispanic women were outside of marriage, compared to one-quarter (25.6%) and seven-tenths (69.7%) of births to White and Black women, respectively.

Education

- ❖ **High school and college completion rates for Hispanic women are lower than those for White and Black women.** In 1997, 54.6% of Hispanic women 25 years old and over had completed high school and 10.1% had completed four or more years of college. In comparison, 83.2% of White women and 76.0% of Black women had graduated from high school, while 22.3% of White women and 13.9% of Black women had completed four or more years of college.

HISPANIC WOMEN FACT SHEET

- ❖ **Young Hispanic females are more than twice as likely to drop out of high school than their White peers.** In 1996, the event dropout rate for Hispanic women was 8.3%. That same year, the dropout rate was 3.8% for White women and 8.5% for Black women.

Labor Force Status

- ❖ **The number of Hispanic women in the labor force has increased since 1990.** In 1997, the labor force participation rate for Hispanic women 16 years old and over was 56.1%, an increase of three percentage points since 1990. In comparison, 59.5% of White women and 61.7% of Black women were working or looking for work, an increase of 2.1 percentage points and 3.4 percentage points, respectively, since 1990.
- ❖ **Among Hispanic subgroups, Central and South American women have the highest labor force participation rates.** Almost three-fifths (59.7%) of Central and South American women were working or looking for work in 1997, compared to more than one-half of Cuban (53.0%) and Mexican (54.0%) women, and almost one-half (49.0%) of Puerto Rican women.
- ❖ **A smaller proportion of Hispanic women is working than either White or Black women.** In 1997, the employment-to-population ratio for Hispanic women 16 years old and over was 50.2%, compared to 57.0% for White women and 55.6% for Black women.
- ❖ **The unemployment rate for Hispanic women is higher than that for White women, but lower than that for Black women, while Puerto Rican women have the highest unemployment rate among Hispanic subgroups.** In 1997, the unemployment rate for Hispanic women 16 years old and over was 8.9%, compared to 4.2% for White women and 9.9% for Black women of the same age group. In addition, the unemployment rate for Puerto Rican women 16 years old and over was 10.1%, compared to 8.9% and 7.6% for Mexican and Cuban women, respectively.
- ❖ **Employed Hispanic women are more likely than White and Black women to be concentrated in technical, sales, and administrative support occupations, and less likely than White or Black women to be concentrated in either service occupations or managerial and professional occupations.** In 1996, almost two in five (38.4%) Hispanic women worked in technical, sales, and administrative support occupations, one-fourth (25.0%) in service occupations, and one-sixth (17.4%) in managerial and professional occupations. In comparison, 41.9% of White women and 38.4% of Black women worked in technical, sales, and administrative support occupations, 16.3% and 25.4% in service occupations, and 31.5% and 22.7% in managerial and professional occupations, respectively.
- ❖ **The economic force of Hispanic women has been growing since 1990.** The participation rate of Hispanic women in managerial and professional occupations increased 2.8 percentage points since 1990. In addition, a greater proportion of Hispanic women is employed in managerial and professional occupations in comparison to Hispanic males (17.4% compared to 12.1% in 1996).

Income and Poverty

- ❖ **Hispanic women workers have lower median earnings than White women workers and median earnings similar to those of Black women workers.** In 1997, the median earnings for Hispanic women year-round, full-time workers were \$18,973, while those of White women workers were \$25,331. Black women workers had median earnings of \$22,035 that year.
- ❖ **Hispanic women are more likely to be poor than their White and Black counterparts, and Puerto Rican women are the poorest Hispanic women subgroup.** In 1997, over one-quarter (29.8%) of Hispanic women were poor, compared to 12.4% of White women, and 28.9% of Black women. Furthermore, in 1996, 38.0% of Puerto Rican women lived below the poverty level, compared to 34.0% of Mexican women. (No such data exist for Cuban, Dominican, and Central and South American women.)

¹ The event dropout rate describes the proportion of students who leave school each year without completing a high school program.

² The employment-to-population ratio measures the proportion of the population that is employed.

Health Status

- ❖ **Hispanic women are less likely to have private or government health insurance than White or Black women, but more likely than White women to be covered by Medicaid.** In 1996, 30.4% of Hispanic women lacked health insurance, while 24.9% were covered by Medicaid. In comparison, 13.1% of White women and 19.3% of Black women had no health insurance, and 10.6% of White women and 28.0% of Black women were covered by Medicaid.
- ❖ **Hispanic women are disproportionately affected by AIDS.** In 1997, while 10.4% of the total U.S. women population was Hispanic, Hispanic women accounted for 20.3% of all AIDS cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Sources

U.S. Census Bureau, The Hispanic Population in the United States: 1996; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Historical Income and Poverty Tables: 1959 to 1997; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Poverty in the United States: 1997; U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1990 to 1998; U.S. Census Bureau, Population Projections of the United States by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1995 to 2050; U.S. Census Bureau, Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1997; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Status of the Civilian Noninstitutional Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1997; Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Characteristics of Black and Hispanic Workers: September 1997; National Center for Health Statistics, Monthly Vital Statistics Report, Volume 45, No. 10(S) 2: April 1997; and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.