

PERUVIAN COMMUNITY IN NORTH TEXAS

QUICK OBSERVATIONS

Country/region of origin	Peru
Population (community leaders)	
Population (Census 2000)	3,529
Main reasons for migration	Economic hardship
Years in this region	10-20-years
Primary areas of residence	Arlington, Carrollton, Fort Worth
General level of education	Some high school and graduate degrees
Employment	Management, industrial work, technical clerical/office, health care
Principal religions	Catholicism
Languages	Spanish
Media (newspaper or radio)	
Community newsletter	
Cultural organizations	3, none is active

Peruvians come from a rich and culturally diverse country. They are proud of their history and heritage but battered by corrupt governments. One of the main reasons they leave their native country has been the experience of continued economic hardship. The downturn in the world's economy today doesn't help their plight.

Many of them have migrated to North Texas after being in other areas of the United States and come from all over Peru. Peruvians stand out for migrating with their entire families—parents and children stay together. This pattern has made the Peruvian community to have an even age and gender distribution. When settling, like many other communities, they look for affordable housing, good schools and good neighborhoods.

Peruvians generally remain in strong contact with fellow immigrants and belong to associations that bring them together. Many of them work as computer technicians and programmers, medical doctors and mechanics that offer their expertise to the communities in which they reside. One of the biggest needs for this community is the attainment of legal status for many of its members.

Like most other Latino immigrants, Peruvians fled to Dallas as a result of poor economic conditions, corrupt government and political instability in their country. They have reached the Metroplex by a variety of methods. Usually the integral family unit is maintained, with wife and children either traveling with the head of family, or joining him soon afterwards. Although North Texas was the destination for some, including a few who traveled on tourist visas to Mexico, and paid *coyotes* thousands of dollars to pass them across the boarder, most arrived in this region as a result of secondary immigration. Some came on tourist visas, hoping to regular their status, but have found it impossible to do so.

The local Peruvian community is relatively well educated, with most having finished high school and some with higher degrees. There are a few Peruvian-American lawyers and physicians.

The first South American cultural arts group in the region was Peruvian, Agrupacion Cultural Expresiones established in 1987. At the present time, several Peruvian musical groups give high quality but intermittent performances. Strong community associations have thrived in the past, but unfortunately, due to internal discord and power struggles, the community is currently divided and there are no organized Peruvian cultural activities. Occasionally, a religious feast or a natural disaster affecting Peru brings together the Peruvian immigrants for a brief period of time.

OTHER SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Age Distribution	Evenly distributed
Percentage of men and women	50% men and 50% women
Ties to Native Country	Many have close relatives which they phone every week and send money back regularly
Frequency of travel to native country	One a year
Estimate of undocumented	

Material Source: DFW International
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OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Children and Youth activities in Spanish
Sponsor immigrations seminars by recruiting attorneys to help with the immigration issue
Attend Peruvian cultural events
Begin neighborhood Bible studies
Medical and Dental Clinics

HOW DO YOU OPEN THE DOOR TO CONVERSATIONS ABOUT FAITH?

Share your everyday relationship with God...answered prayers, Scriptures that comfort
Ask about how needs are met through their faith...loneliness, courage, direction
Offer to pray for their needs
Give books/videos that tell a faith story
Discover their interests and find Christians in that field to share their story
Look for Bible stories or principles that teach a value they respect.