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# Latinos and the Economic Downturn in Nebraska: Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends 2005-2013/2014

Lisette Aliaga-Linares

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# LATINOS AND THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN IN NEBRASKA

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DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC  
TRENDS 2005-2013/2014

July 2016



Office of Latino/Latin  
American Studies (OLLAS)





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LATINO/LATIN  
AMERICAN STUDIES

# LATINOS AND THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN IN NEBRASKA:

DEMOGRAPHIC AND  
SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS  
2005-2013/2014

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July 2016

UNIVERSITY OF  
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Omaha



# ABOUT THE OFFICE OF LATINO/LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES | OLLAS

The Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) is a leading center in the region focusing on research, teaching, and engagement with the Latino population in the United States and throughout the Americas. This report is intended to generate policy discussions and actions that advance the incorporation of Latinos in Nebraska and the nation at large. For more information, visit our website: [www.unomaha.edu/ollas](http://www.unomaha.edu/ollas).

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

National studies have documented that the recent economic crisis has severely affected prospects for Latinos across the United States (Lopez, Livingston, and Kochhar 2009). Although the financial crisis did not have as strong an impact in Nebraska (Nebraska Department of Labor 2014), local studies have discussed the rise of Latino poverty particularly in metro areas (Drozd 2014).

In an effort to recognize the complex challenges that lie ahead for Latinos in Nebraska, this report seeks to contribute to the ongoing conversations among policymakers and community leaders. It provides both an analysis of the demographic factors driving Latino population growth for the period of 2005-2014 and an overview of the socioeconomic trends for the period of 2005-2013. By breaking down the socioeconomic estimates into three periods of time: pre-economic crisis (2005-2007), during the economic crisis (2008-2010), and post-economic crisis (2011-2013), we analyze how the Latino population in Nebraska has responded to the economic downturn.

Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this report comes from the U.S. Census Bureau. Socioeconomic indicators were either extracted from the 3-year or 5-year estimates published by the American Community Survey (ACS) or calculated from the corresponding ACS-Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS-PUMS) files. The authors hope that this report serves as a useful reference tool for community organizations, policy-makers, students, and scholars seeking to understand the experiences of the Latino population in Nebraska.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## I. KEY DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS: AN OVERVIEW

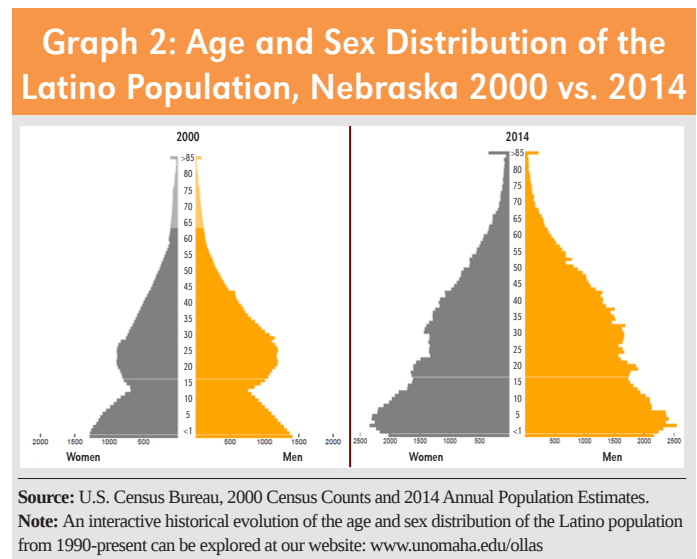
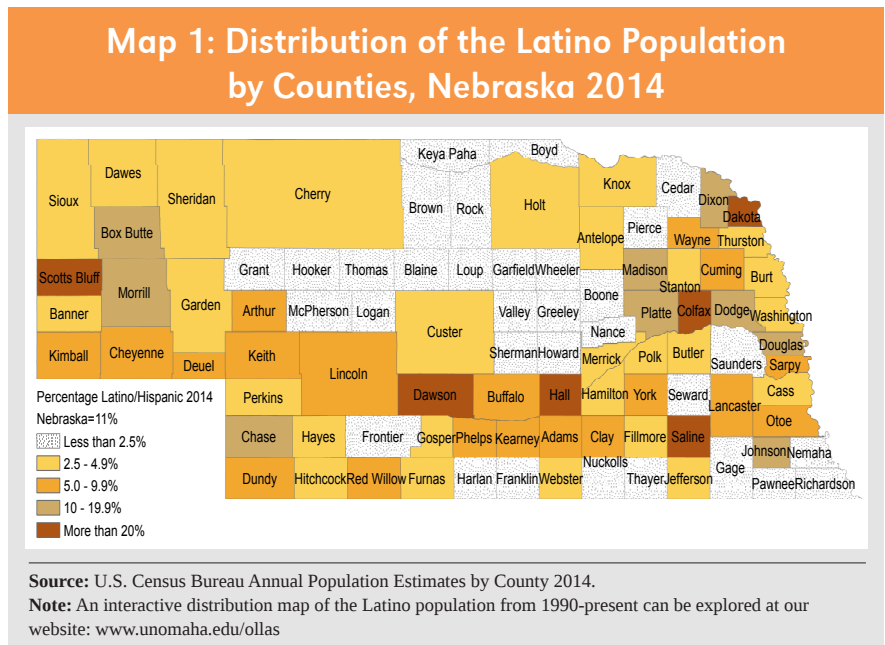
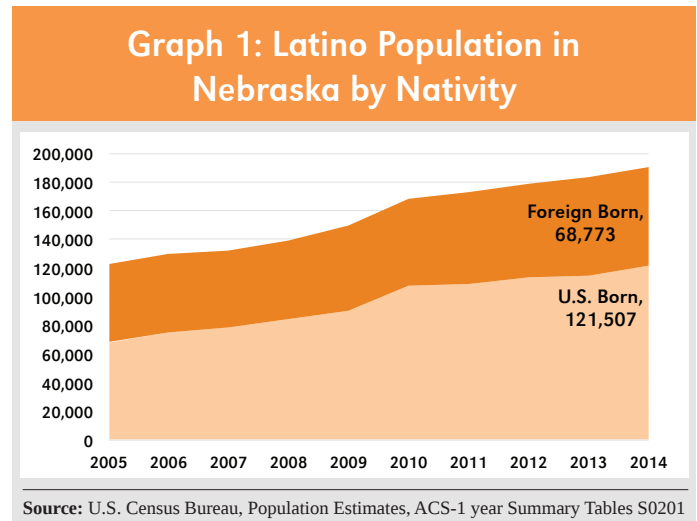
In 2014, approximately 190,000 Latinos resided in Nebraska, comprising the largest minority group in the state. Between 2005 and 2014, the Latino population growth rate was more than five times higher than the overall population growth rate in Nebraska (55% vs. 10%).

As previously documented, from 1990 to 2000, a large influx of Latino immigrants added to a long-standing Latino community in Nebraska, almost tripling its size from about 37,000 to more than 94,000 (Drozd 2011). Latinos continue to account for a sizable proportion (55%) of the foreign-born population in the state. Since 2005, Latino migration to the state has continued but at a slower rate.

Different from the trend of population growth due to in-migration during the period of 1990-2000, most of the current Latino population growth can be attributed to the new generation of Hispanic Nebraskans. Since 2007, the population of U.S.-born Latinos in the state grew well over twice as fast as their foreign-born counterparts (growth rates of 77% and 28%, respectively). This trend highlights the importance of the second generation as the primary source of demographic growth. (See Graph 1.)

Similarly, the Latino presence has grown more visible in various communities in Nebraska. In 1990, only a handful of counties—namely Douglas, Scotts Bluff, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Hall counties—had a Latino population over 2,000. As of 2014, 15 counties had more than 2,000 Latino residents. Douglas and Lancaster counties had particularly large Latino populations that numbered around 65,000 and 20,000 respectively. Among all Nebraska counties with a Latino population over 2,000, the percentage of Latino residents ranged from 7% to 43%. Dawson, Dakota, and Colfax counties have the highest percentage of Latino populations (33%, 37%, and 43%, respectively).

While Nebraska continues to attract various immigrant populations, including Latinos, the Latino population as a whole is transitioning from “newcomers” to established settlers. Latino immigrants are forming families, purchasing properties, and raising new generations of Nebraskans. This evolution can be illustrated demographically. From 1990 to 2000, the largest proportion of Latinos in Nebraska was concentrated around the population at working age. As shown in Graph 2, a significant bulge can be observed between the ages of 20 and 40 for the





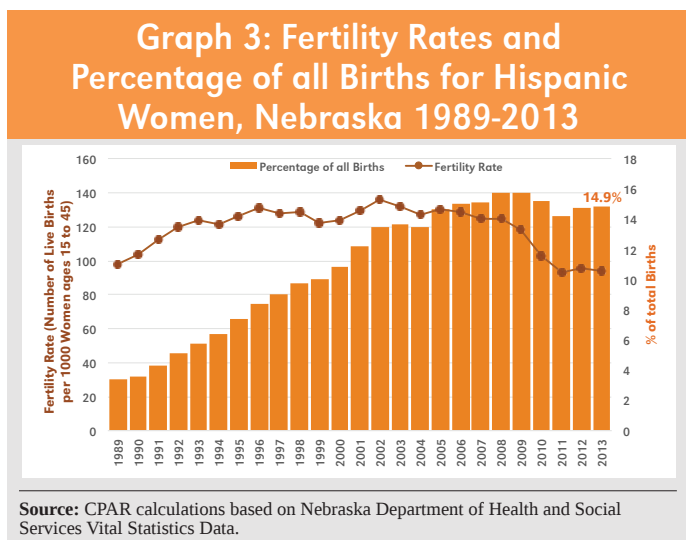
year 2000, which characterizes the renewed migration flow of working-age Latinos to Nebraska. Over time, the gradual increase of Latino children at the base of the age and sex distribution for the year 2014 makes the figure resemble a pyramid. The young character of this population, composed largely of children and adolescents, represents one of Nebraska’s greatest demographic assets. This demographic shift calls attention not only to the imperative to grant opportunities to this upcoming generation, but also to the need to create a dynamic environment in which immigrants and later generations can thrive.

In this report, we examine the drivers of Latino population growth in the late 2000s and early 2010s and analyze the socioeconomic trends regarding the impacts of the recent economic recession. Using U.S. Census Bureau data, we disentangle trends by nativity wherever possible. While many social indicators, such as language proficiency, college enrollment, and the like, show some improvement over time, the socioeconomic status of Latinos overall continues to be vulnerable to economic downturns. Given the importance of Latinos on the future demographic makeup of Nebraska, it has become evident that policies must be implemented to assure equal opportunities for all minorities. The report concludes by highlighting some of the key findings and discussing further policy implications.

## II. EXPLORING DRIVERS OF GROWTH

### 2.1. Fertility

**Despite declining fertility, Latinos continue to account for an increasing share of Nebraska’s births.** Since 1990, the number of births by Hispanic women has grown steadily. In 1990, the number of births by Hispanic women only represented a small fraction of births in Nebraska (3%). By 2013, they reached nearly 15% of the



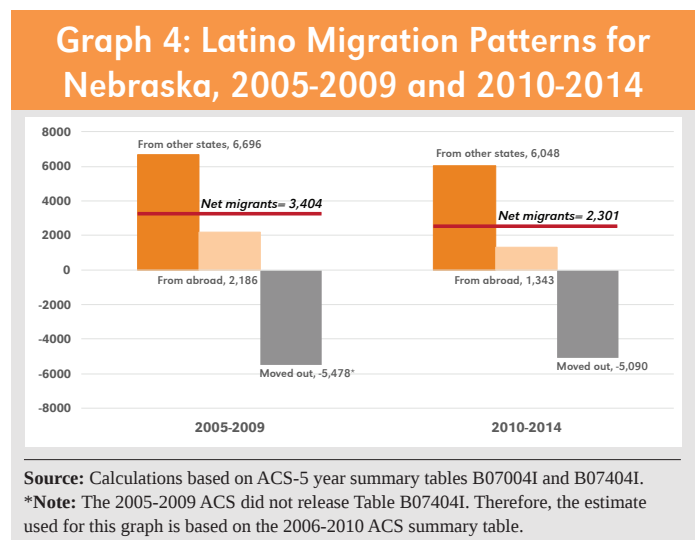
total births in Nebraska. (See Graph 3.)

This trend does not signify that fertility rates for Hispanic women have been increasing. As shown in Graph 3, the number of live births per 1,000 Hispanic women aged 15-44 had decreased from 136 per 1,000 women since its peak in 2002 to 94 births per 1,000 in 2013. Moreover, despite the fact that Hispanic fertility rates remain high compared to non-Hispanic whites (68 per 1,000 in 2013), the gap between these populations has narrowed considerably. Since 2011, the Latino fertility rate has become similar to that of non-Hispanic blacks (95 per 1,000 in 2013).

The reason behind Latinos’ increasing share of Nebraska births relates to the relative youthfulness of the Latino population. Even though fertility rates have declined, a larger share of Hispanic women are at reproductive ages, compared to other populations in Nebraska.

### 2.2. Migration

**Latinos living in Nebraska are no longer “newcomers.”** For the period of 2005-2014, Latino migration to the state was less dramatic than in 2000, when almost one-third of the Latino population was composed of those who had arrived in the last five years.<sup>1</sup> Today, both foreign- and U.S.-born Latinos are more likely to be “settlers” in Nebraska. For the 2005-2009 period, only 7% of the Latino population was composed of Latinos who had moved to the state in the last year. The majority (75%) of these “newcomers” came from other states, and the other 25% came directly from abroad. This trend has continued for the 2010-2014 period. From 2010 to 2014, the inflow of newly arrived Latinos represented only 4% of the total Latino population. In that period, far more Latinos came from



<sup>1</sup> Even though the ACS data is not strictly comparable to the 2000 U.S. Census. In the 2000 census, all the population was asked whether or not they moved in the last 5 years. In contrast, the ACS asks annually a sample of the population whether they moved or not in the last year. The information of each annual survey is compiled every 5 years, thereby estimating the population that moved within a five-year period. Flows are expected to be smaller as they show yearly movers instead of five-year movers.

other states (82%) than directly from abroad. The percentage that came from abroad decreased to 18% relative to 25% for the 2005-2009 period. Graph 4 shows that between the two periods, there were few changes in the number of Latinos who left the state. As a result, the number of net Latino migrants, which is the difference between those moving in and moving out of the state, had decreased from 3,404 for the 2005-2009 period to 2,301 for the 2010-2014 period.

### 2.3. Age and Sex Composition

**The key driver behind the Latino growth is its relatively young population.** As illustrated in Graph 5, the age and sex composition of Latinos shows a wider base compared to non-Hispanic whites, which signifies a larger proportion of children, adolescents, and young adults in the Latino population. For that reason, the median age for Latinos in Nebraska is 23 years old—considerably younger than the median age of 40 for the non-Hispanic white population. Those aged 65 and over make up only 3% of the total Latino population. A younger population means that Latinos have a significant proportion of women in their reproductive years, which explains the increasing share of Latino births despite declining fertility rates. Also, a large proportion of children, adolescents, and young adults represents a likely source of population growth. Therefore, the Latino population can be expected to continue to grow at a fast pace despite low migration rates.

**The younger generation of Nebraska’s Latinos was mostly born in the United States.** As shown in Graph 5, the age structure of the Latino population also varies by nativity. U.S.-born Latinos make up nearly two-thirds of the total Latino population, and they are more concentrated within the younger age groups. The vast majority (92%) of Latino children under 18 years old are U.S.-born. Foreign-born Latinos account for 37%

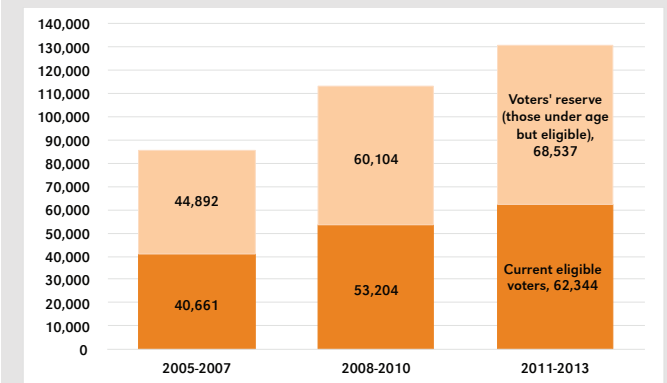
of the total Latino population, and they are mostly concentrated between ages 18 to 64, which corresponds to the adult working population. More than half (58%) of the adult Latino population of working age is foreign-born.

## III. KEY SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS

### 3.1. Voter Eligibility

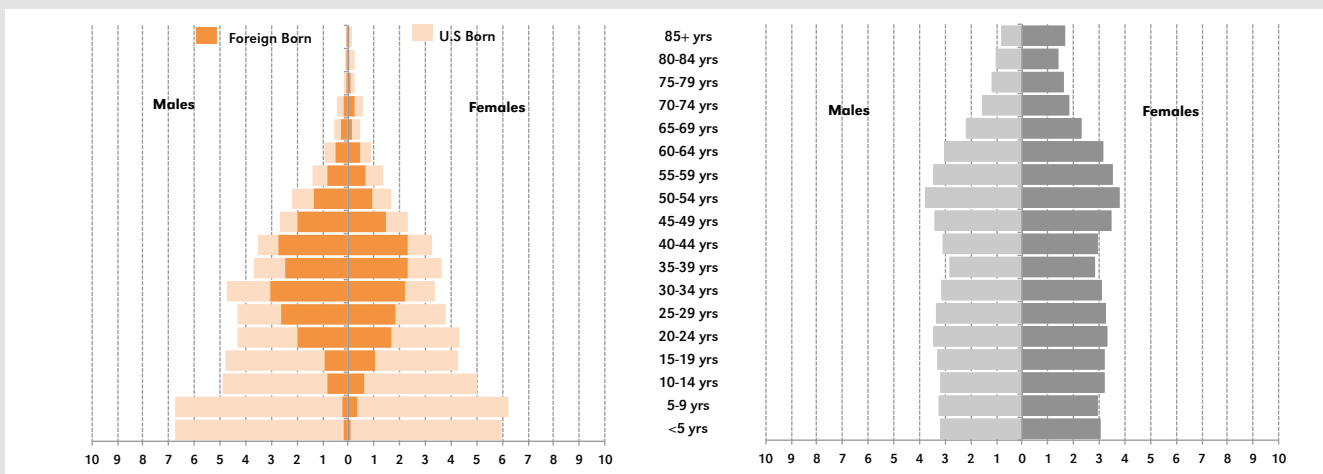
**Latinos will become a significant political force in the next few years.** A record 62,000 Latinos were eligible to vote in Nebraska in 2013, using ACS estimates for 2011-2013 (see Graph 6). Since 2005, the growth of the eligible Latino population has been steady. In fact, the number of eligible Latino voters grew by 53% from the 2005-2007 period to the 2011-2013 period. With the increasing number of Latino children, the authors estimate a significantly larger voting population in the near future under what we have termed “voters’ reserve.”

**Graph 6: Latino Eligible Voters and Voters’ Reserve Population in Nebraska 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013**



Source: Calculation based on U.S. Census Bureau, ACS-3 year summary file tables B05003 and B05003I

**Graph 5: Age and Sex Distribution of Latinos by Nativity and Non-Hispanic Whites in Nebraska, 2009-2014**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Calculations based on ACS PUMS 2010-2014

Voters’ reserve include the U.S.-born Latinos who are currently under age but will be eligible to vote in the future. For the period of 2011-2013, eligible Latino voters represented 5% of the total eligible voters in Nebraska; however, when including the voters’ reserve, it is clear that the potential electoral power of Latinos will continue to grow. In that same period, Latinos represented 15% of the total voters’ reserve in Nebraska.

### 3.2. Language Use and English Proficiency

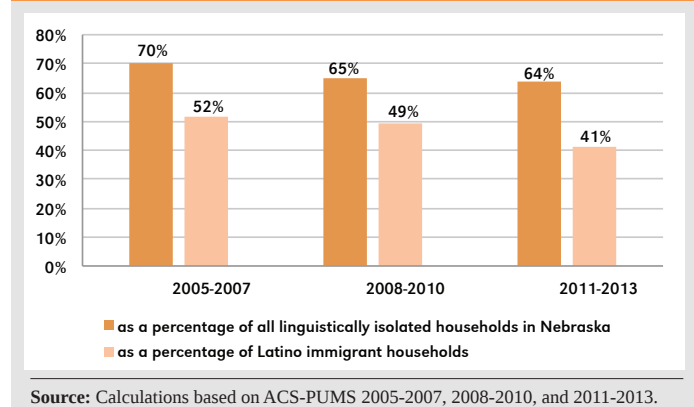
**Latino households are raising a mostly bilingual second generation.** Seven out of ten Latinos reported speaking Spanish at home for the period of 2011-2013. As expected, the majority of those who are foreign-born speak their native language at home regardless of their age. However, among the U.S.-born Latinos, there are greater differences. For the period of 2011-2013, around half (51%) of U.S.-born Latinos routinely spoke Spanish at home, which represented a slight increase from 47% for the period of 2005-2007. In contrast to the adult U.S.-born population, U.S.-born Latino children are increasingly more likely to live in households where Spanish is spoken. The proportion of U.S.-born Latino children who speak Spanish at home rose from 52% in the 2005-2007 period to 58% in the 2011-2013 period.

**English proficiency continues to increase for most Latinos, but foreign-born adults are still lagging behind.** The proportion of Latinos who speak English well to very well increased from 62% for the period of 2005-2007 to 69% for the period of 2011-2013 (see Appendix Table 1). Most of this growth is due to the improvement of English proficiency among Latino adults, which rose from 52% to 61% between the two time periods. Nonetheless, English proficiency among foreign-born Latino adults does not quite reach half of that population. From the 2005-2007 period to the 2011-2013 period, the share of those foreign-born adults who speak English well to very well rose only moderately from 42% to 49%. Predictably, children, regardless of whether they are U.S.- or foreign-born, have higher levels of English proficiency overall. For the period 2011-2013, 86% of Latino immigrant children spoke English well or very well compared to 92% of their U.S.-born counterparts.

**While fewer Latino households are linguistically isolated, they still represent the highest share of linguistically isolated households in Nebraska.** A household is defined as linguistically isolated when at least one family member age 14 years and over does not speak English or does not speak it very well. Since adult proficiency levels for the foreign-born are low, many Latino immigrant households are still vulnerable to linguistic isolation. While the proportion of Latino immigrant households that are linguistically isolated has decreased over time, they still comprise

a significant share of Nebraska’s linguistically isolated households. For the period of 2011-2013, Latino immigrant households represented nearly two-thirds (64%) of all linguistically isolated households in Nebraska (see Graph 7).

**Graph 7: Linguistically Isolated Latino Households as a Share of all Linguistically Isolated Households and of all Latino Immigrant Households in Nebraska, 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013**



Source: Calculations based on ACS-PUMS 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013.

### 3.3. Educational Attainment

**Educational attainment levels among the adult Latino population continue to be low.** For the period of 2011-2013, half of the Latino adult population (ages 25 and older) still had levels of education below a high school diploma, compared to just 9% of the total adult population in Nebraska (see Appendix Table 2). The proportion of adult Latinos with low levels of education remains high regardless of nativity. For the 2011-2013 period, the proportion of Latino adults without a high school diploma was almost triple Nebraska’s overall rate in the case of U.S.-born Latinos, and it was nine times higher for their foreign-born counterparts. Nonetheless, some indicators of the younger generation of Latinos show a more optimistic—yet still challenging—prospect.

**Latino high school dropout rates are declining, but remain high in comparison to Nebraska’s rates.** As national studies have shown (Fry 2014), the overall dropout rates for Latinos have declined, and Nebraska is no exception (see Appendix Table 2). The dropout rate is the percentage of the population aged 16-24 that is not enrolled in school and has not yet completed high school. In Nebraska, the Latino high school dropout rate decreased in significant proportions—from 25% to 16%—during the period 2005-2013 (see Graph 8). Despite such improvement, Latinos were still 3.2 times less likely to graduate from high school compared to Nebraska’s population overall.

*In addition to declining dropout rates, more young Latinos are enrolling in college after graduating from high school.*

For the period of 2011-2013, 32% of the Latinos in Nebraska between the ages of 16-24 had completed high school and were attending college (see Appendix Table 2). The percentage of Latinos attending college increased by 11% compared to the period of 2005-2007. Despite this dramatic improvement, it is important to note that, in Nebraska overall, only 52% of those eligible were enrolled in college for the period of 2011-2013.

It can be expected that the future levels of educational attainment for Latino adults will improve due to the gains seen in the educational attainment of the younger generations. Nevertheless, around three-quarters of eligible Latinos are not enrolled in college. This could mean that only moderate gains to the persistently low educational attainment levels among Latinos will be seen.

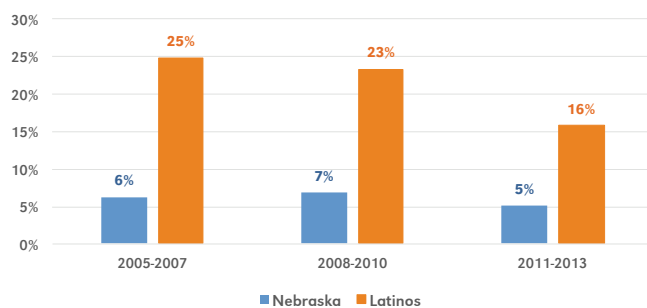
### 3.4. Employment

*Even though Nebraska’s unemployment rate was low, Latinos were still more likely to be unemployed.* The Nebraska unemployment rate has been stable, at about 5%, over the three periods of time studied. It was below the national unemployment rate, which was on average 4.8% during the pre-crisis period, rose up to an average of 8.2% during the economic downturn, and declined to 7.4% for the 2011-2013 period.

Despite the resilience of the state’s economy, unemployment among Latinos in Nebraska steadily increased. The pre-recession unemployment rate for Latinos was 7% (two percentage points over Nebraska’s average); however during the recession period it increased to 8% and continued to grow to 10% during the post-recession period.<sup>2</sup> At the end of the recession period (2011-2013), the unemployment rate of Latinos was double the rate for Nebraska. For Latino immigrants, the unemployment rate was consistently lower than the overall Latino unemployment rate during the three periods, yet it still showed the same increasing trend. The unemployment rate for foreign-born Latinos increased from 6% in the pre-crisis period to 8% during the economic crisis, and continued to increase to 9% in the post-crisis period.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Latinos as a whole and Latino immigrants in Nebraska were much more vulnerable to unemployment, despite the sheltering of Nebraska’s overall stable economic and labor market conditions.

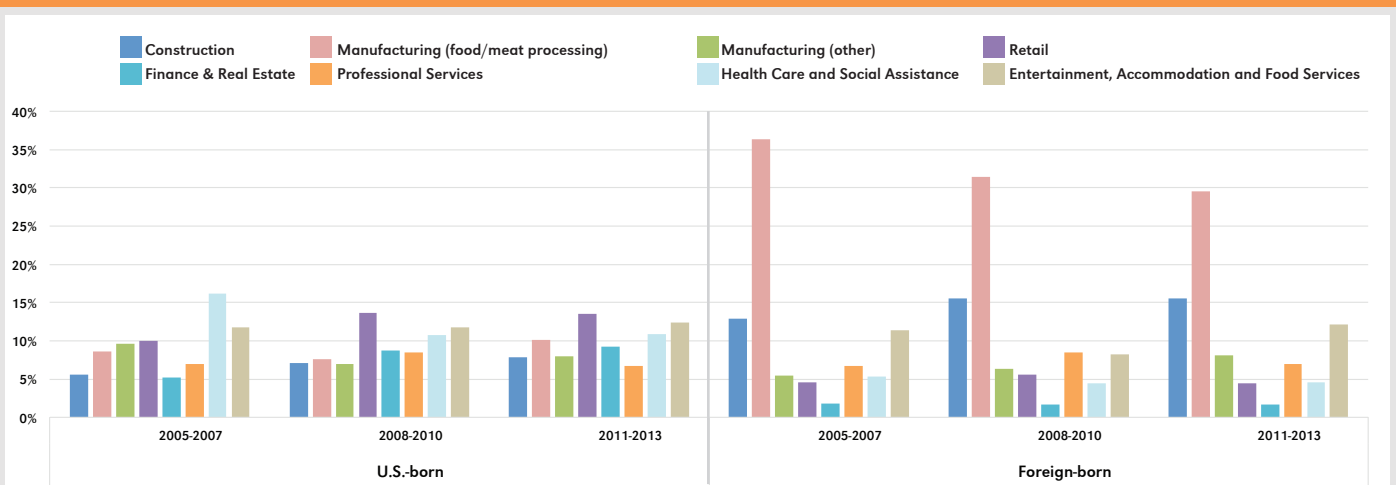
*While U.S.-born Latinos gradually entered new sectors of employment, Latino immigrants remained heavily concentrated in construction and food/meat processing.* Construction and manufacturing in food/meat processing remained the most

**Graph 8: High School Dropout Rates for the State and Latinos in Nebraska 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013**



Source: Calculations based on ACS-PUMS 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013.

**Graph 9: Latino Employment in Selected Industries by Nativity, Nebraska 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013**



Source: Calculations based on ACS-PUMS 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013.

<sup>2</sup> Estimates taken from U.S. Census Bureau ACS Table S2301

<sup>3</sup> Estimates taken from U.S. Census Bureau ACS Table S506

important sectors of employment for Latinos. For the 2011-2013 period, altogether these industries represented one-third of the jobs occupied by all Latinos (21% manufacturing and 12% construction). However, there were substantial fluctuations in sectors of employment during the economic crisis, which have lingered in the post-crisis period. Using the ACS-PUMS data, these variations become apparent when comparing employment trends between U.S.-born and foreign-born Latinos.

As Graph 9 illustrates (see page 5), for the 2011-2013 period, Latino immigrant workers were far more concentrated in the manufacturing and construction industries compared to their U.S.-born counterparts (30% versus 10% in food/meat processing, and 16% versus 8% in construction). Nonetheless, during the economic crisis, participation in food/meat processing decreased for Latino immigrants from 36% for the 2005-2007 period to 32% for the 2008-2010 period and has continued to decline. In contrast, Latino immigrants’ participation in construction increased from 13% for the period of 2005-2007 to 16% for the period of 2008-2010 and remained at that rate through 2013. As an effect of the economic downturn, the employment sector of Entertainment, Accommodation, and Food Services contracted from 11% for the 2005-2007 period to 8% for the 2008-2010 period but expanded to 12% for the 2011-2013 period.

In contrast to Latino immigrants, U.S.-born Latinos are more diversified across various service sub-sectors (see Graph 9). Manufacturing ranked fourth as a sector of employment for U.S.-born Latinos for 2011-2013, but other sectors of employment grew notably during the economic downturn. For instance, employment in retail increased from 10% in the 2005-2007 period to 14% in the 2008-2010 period and remains the top industry of employment for U.S.-born Latinos. Entertainment, Accommodation, and Food Services—the second highest sector of employment—remained stable during the economic downturn. Healthcare and Social Assistance decreased from 16% in the 2005-2007 period to 11% in 2008-2010 period and continued at that rate for the period of 2011-2013. The Finance and Real Estate sector increased notably from 5% in the 2005-2007

period to 9% in the 2008-2010 period and ranked fifth—just below food/meat processing—among the different sectors of employment for U.S.-born Latinos in 2011-2013.

### 3.5. Earnings, Household Incomes, and Poverty

**Shrinking earnings dramatically affected Latino poverty rates.** During the period of 2005-2013, earnings in Nebraska were stagnant, and household incomes decreased slightly after adjusting for inflation (see Table 1). For Latinos, however, earnings and household incomes showed a steady decline at a higher rate. From the pre-crisis to the economic crisis period, Nebraska median earnings were reduced by 1%; meanwhile, Latinos’ median earnings decreased by 8%. The transition to a “recovery” period has only partially halted this declining trend. From the period 2008-2010 to the period 2011-2013, the reduction in median earnings for Nebraska was 1%, while the decrease for Latinos was 3%. For the period of 2011-2013, Latino median individual earnings were \$21,566, which was about \$7,000 less than the median individual earnings for Nebraska.

After adjusting for inflation, the decline in median household incomes for Nebraska and Latinos was less steep during the economic crisis. Yet, for Latinos, median household income declined more dramatically during the recovery period. From the period of 2008-2010 to the 2011-2013 period, Nebraska’s median household income was reduced by 2%, while Latinos’ median household income decreased at a rate of 7%. In the recovery period, Latino median household income was \$37,514, which represented a wider difference of about \$14,000 when compared to the median household income for Nebraskans overall (\$51,370).

Shrinking earnings and household incomes were accompanied by an increase in poverty rates for individuals and families, especially for Latinos. Latinos’ poverty rates for individuals—at 28%—was still more than double Nebraska’s rate of 13% for the period of 2011-2013. Similarly, Latinos’ poverty rate for families, at 26%, was almost triple Nebraska’s rate of 9% for that period.

**Table 1: Median Earnings, Household Incomes and Poverty Rates for all Nebraska and the Latino Population 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013**

	Nebraska			Latinos		
	2005-2007	2008-2010	2011-2013	2005-2007	2008-2010	2011-2013
Median Earnings*	\$ 28,836	\$ 28,575	\$ 28,424	\$ 24,166	\$ 22,179	\$ 21,566
Poverty Rate for Individuals	11%	12%	13%	22%	24%	28%
Median Household Income*	\$ 52,750	\$ 52,430	\$ 51,370	\$ 40,864	\$ 40,446	\$ 37,514
Poverty Rate for Families	8%	8%	9%	19%	23%	26%

\* in 2013 inflation-adjusted dollars

Source: Calculations based on ACS-3 year tables B20017 and B20017I (median earnings), S1701 and S1702 (poverty rates), and S1903 (household income).

### 3.6. Youth Indicators

**Latino youth indicators improved, but many are still growing up in adverse social contexts.** In Nebraska, the overall child poverty rate has been gradually increasing from 15% in the pre-crisis period to 18% in the post-crisis period (see Table 2). Compared to Nebraska youth overall, Latino children remained almost twice as likely to grow up in poverty during the same period.

Similarly, indicators of youth vulnerability such as youth unemployment, disconnected youth, and unmarried teen fertility rates, although decreasing, continued to be high compared to the average youth in Nebraska.

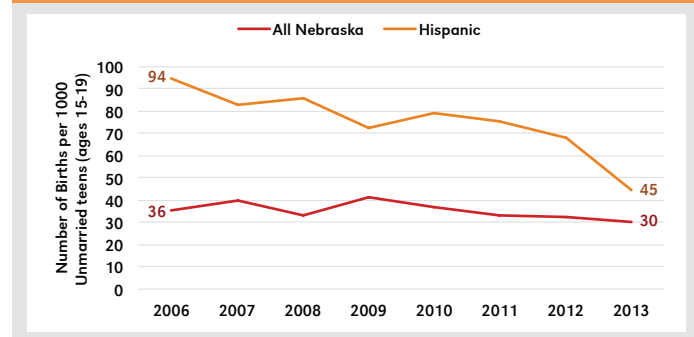
For the pre-crisis period, the Latino youth unemployment rate (8%) was lower than the general Nebraska rate (10%). During the economic crisis, the Latino youth unemployment rate more than doubled, while youth unemployment for Nebraska overall only increased 2%. The post-crisis or “recovery” period showed a slight decrease in the youth unemployment rate for Latinos to 15%. As of 2013, young Latinos were 25% more likely to be unemployed than the average young person in Nebraska.

The proportions of disconnected youth have shown a similar evolution to youth unemployment in the three periods under study. Disconnected youth refers to the proportion of the population ages 16-24 who are neither working nor studying. This indicator is usually used to identify a young population at risk. That youth are unattached to either school or work can have profound implications for future prospects in the labor market (Fernandes and Gabe 2009). For the pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis periods, the shares of disconnected youth in the overall young population in Nebraska remained almost constant at 8%. Between the pre-crisis and economic crisis periods, the disconnected youth among Latinos doubled from 9% to 19%. While this rate decreased to 15% in the recovery period, Latino youth were still almost twice as likely to be disconnected from school and work as the average young person in Nebraska.

Finally, unmarried teenage fertility for Latinas in Nebraska dramatically decreased (see Graph 10). From the pre-crisis

period to the post-crisis period, the number of live births to unmarried Latinas ages 15 to 19 decreased from 94 per 1000 teens to 45. In the same reference period, the gap between the unmarried teenage fertility rate for Latinas and for Nebraska overall has also narrowed significantly. For the period 2005-2007, the rate for teenage Latinas was three times higher than the Nebraska rate. In the period 2011-2013, the rate for teenage Latinas was only 1.5 times higher.

**Graph 10: Unmarried Teen Fertility Rates for Latinos and the State, Nebraska 2006-2013**



**Source:** Calculations based on Nebraska Department of Health and Social Services, Vital Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau Annual Population Estimates.

### 3.7. Household Indicators

**Latino households went through the crisis with slight changes in their structure and housing tenure status.** During the pre-crisis period of 2005-2007, 52% of Latino households were married couple family households and 27% were one parent-headed households (see Table 3, page 8). Compared to Latino households overall, foreign-born Latino households had a higher proportion of married couple households (58%). During the economic crisis (the period of 2008-2010), a slight increase in the proportion of one-parent headed households was registered, particularly for foreign-born headed households. Nonetheless, for the period of 2011-2013, Latino household structures largely resemble those of the pre-crisis period.

In terms of housing tenure and affordability, ownership rates slightly declined among Latino households, from 53% in the

**Table 2: Child Poverty Rate, Youth Unemployment Rate, and Percentage of Disconnected Youth for all Nebraska and the Latino Population, 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013**

	Nebraska			Latinos		
	2005-2007	2008-2010	2011-2013	2005-2007	2008-2010	2011-2013
Children in Poverty	15%	16%	18%	28%	30%	35%
Youth unemployment	10%	12%	12%	8%	19%	15%
Disconnected Youth	9%	8%	8%	18%	18%	15%

**Source:** Calculations for youth unemployment and disconnected youth based on ACS-PUMS 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013. Children in poverty calculations are based on ACS-3 year tables B17001 and B17001I. **Note:** Sample sizes for foreign-born Latino children and youth were too small to allow for comparisons by nativity.

**Table 3: Household Type, Housing Indicators, and Access to Social Services for Nebraska, Latinos, and Foreign-Born Latinos, 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013**

	All Nebraska			All Latinos			Foreign-born Latinos		
	2005-07	2008-10	2011-13	2005-07	2008-10	2011-13	2005-07	2008-10	2011-13
<b>Household Type</b>									
Married couple family	53%	52%	51%	52%	50%	53%	58%	56%	60%
One parent households	13%	13%	14%	27%	28%	29%	27%	31%	29%
Male householder, no wife present	3%	4%	4%	10%	10%	10%	10%	12%	12%
Female householder, no husband present	10%	9%	10%	17%	18%	19%	17%	19%	17%
Non-family households	34%	35%	35%	21%	22%	18%	15%	13%	11%
<b>Housing Tenure and Affordability</b>									
Owners	68%	68%	67%	53%	51%	50%	52%	50%	48%
Median owner's cost as a percentage of household income in the past 12 months	19%	19%	17%	22%	23%	20%	23%	23%	20%
Renters	32%	32%	33%	47%	49%	50%	48%	50%	52%
Median gross rent as a percentage of household income in the past 12 months	25%	25%	26%	25%	28%	28%	22%	28%	27%
<b>Food Stamp Reciprocity</b>	7%	8%	9%	11%	16%	19%	11%	16%	14%
<b>Health Care Coverage (for individuals)</b>									
Total % with no health insurance	n.a.	11%	11%	n.a.	31%	29%	n.a.	52%	53%
Children (Under 18 yrs-old)	n.a.	6%	6%	n.a.	16%	11%	n.a.	63%	62%
Adult (18-64)	n.a.	16%	16%	n.a.	44%	42%	n.a.	52%	52%
Elderly (65 and plus)	n.a.	0.4%	0.5%	n.a.	9%	13%	n.a.	24%	32%

**Sources:** For all Nebraska and all Latinos, U.S. Census Bureau, ACS-3 year table B27001; for Foreign-born Latinos, calculations based on ACS-PUMS 3-year data files.

pre-crisis period to 50% in the post-crisis period. Nonetheless, Latinos' median owner's cost as a percentage of household income decreased from 22% to 20% in the same reference period. Still, it is important to note that housing costs are slightly higher for Latinos than the average Nebraskan, for whom it currently sits around 17% of household income. As expected, renting increased among Latino households. For the period of 2011-2013, Latino households were equally likely to be owners or renters. Yet, the median gross rent for Latinos as a percentage of their household income increased from 25% to 28%. Rates for Latino immigrant households paralleled these trends with a slightly lower home ownership rate of 48% for the period of 2011-2013.

### 3.8. Access to Social Services

**Food stamp reciprocity increased among Latino households, and health care coverage lagged behind.** For Nebraska, food stamp reciprocity showed a steady increase, from 7% in the pre-crisis period to 9% for the period of 2011-2013 (see Table 3). Due to the higher vulnerability to poverty, the increase in food stamp reciprocity was higher for Latino households. In the pre-crisis period, 11% of Latino households received food

stamps; this was four percentage points higher than the average rate for all Nebraskans. Since the economic recession, Latino rates were consistently double the Nebraska rate, at 16% and 19% respectively for the 2008-2010 and 2011-2013 periods. As expected, food stamp reciprocity for Latino immigrant households was lower than for the whole Latino population (14% versus 19% in the 2011-2013 period) and decreased after the economic crisis.

The percentage of Latinos without health insurance showed a slight decrease from 31% for the period 2008-2010 to 29% for the period 2011-2013. The percentage of Latino children without health insurance declined more precipitously, from 16% to 11% for the same reference period. Yet, this rate continues to be almost twice as high as the average rate for all children in Nebraska. On the other hand, the percentage of Latino elders without health insurance increased to 13% in 2011-2013, and was more than 10 times higher than the overall rate for the elderly in Nebraska. Latino immigrants were particularly more likely to be uninsured. A Latino immigrant child, adult and elderly adult are respectively 10 times, 3 times and 64 times more likely to be uninsured than their average counterparts in Nebraska.

## IV. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

For the period 2005-2014, Nebraska's Latino population has gone through significant sociodemographic and socioeconomic changes.

In terms of demographics, the trends suggest that international migration became less of a factor contributing to population growth. For the period 2005-2014, migration from Latin America as a share of the new Latino arrivals to Nebraska decreased. Nowadays, most of the foreign-born Latino population is arriving to the state after having resided in other U.S. states. While gains in the foreign-born Latino population for Nebraska are significant compared to other states (Drozd 2015), migration alone was less of a factor contributing to the Latino population growth. Instead, the young age structure of the Latino population, with a large proportion of people at reproductive ages and a smaller proportion of the elderly, became the most important source of population growth. Therefore, it is expected that natural change, which is the difference between births and deaths, will continue to play a major factor in population growth in the coming years.

Consequentially, a growing share of Nebraska's youth will be Latino. This second generation showed some promising trends, such as an increase in college enrollment rates, a progressive decline of teenage pregnancy, and lower high-school drop-out and disconnected youth rates. Yet, their achievements continued to lag behind in comparison to the average rates for the state. More importantly, Latino youth unemployment did not decline to the levels of the pre-crisis period and Latino children continued to be disproportionately exposed to poverty compared to the average child in Nebraska.

The importance of this second generation poses major challenges, as their fates are also impacted by the socioeconomic conditions of their households and to some extent by the integration of their foreign-born parents. As shown in our analyses of socioeconomic indicators in the three-year periods corresponding to the shifts in the economy, Latino households, and particularly Latino immigrant households, were vulnerable to the economic downturn. For instance, unemployment progressively increased for Latinos and neither U.S.-born Latino nor Latino immigrants' unemployment rates declined to pre-crisis levels. In part, this is due to the low educational attainment of the adult population that concentrated their employment opportunities in low-wage sectors of the economy. Nonetheless, median earnings for full-time, year-round Latino workers also declined.

Since the economic crisis, ownership rates for Latino households gradually declined and the cost of housing for renters

as a percentage of their household income increased. Also, parallel to the economic downturn, and possibly due to the greater immigration controls and the rise of deportations, an increase of single-headed households have been noted. These two trends added to the vulnerability of households to cope with the economic constraints.

Social services had an important but still small impact for the Latino population. Both food stamp reciprocity and health insurance coverage increased overall for Latinos. Yet, more than half of Latino immigrants remained uninsured, particularly the children and elderly. The fact that food stamp reciprocity did not decline to pre-crisis levels suggests that, by 2013, many Latino households were still struggling to make ends meet for their families.

As these trends unfold in the coming years, it is important to note that many of those that are part of the upcoming generation of Latinos in Nebraska are being raised in these adverse social contexts. The fact that in the next few years they will constitute an important share of the voting population in Nebraska should be envisioned as an opportunity to work towards a more inclusive social agenda not only for Latinos but also for the growing minority population in the state. ♦

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## APPENDIX TABLES

**Appendix Table 1: Language Use and English Proficiency for Nebraska and Latino Population by Nativity, 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013**

	All Nebraska			All Latinos			U.S.-Born Latinos			Foreign-Born Latinos		
	2005-07	2008-10	2011-13	2005-07	2008-10	2011-13	2005-07	2008-10	2011-13	2005-07	2008-10	2011-13
<b>All (5 years and over)</b>												
Speak only English	91%	90%	95%	30%	32%	30%	53%	53%	49%	3%	4%	4%
Speak lang. other than English	9%	10%	5%	70%	68%	70%	47%	47%	51%	97%	96%	96%
Speak English very well	51%	54%	63%	41%	45%	51%	75%	78%	81%	23%	23%	29%
Speak English well	21%	21%	20%	21%	22%	18%	16%	15%	13%	24%	26%	23%
Speak English not well	18%	17%	14%	22%	20%	21%	6%	6%	5%	31%	30%	34%
Speak English not at all	10%	8%	3%	15%	13%	9%	2%	1%	2%	22%	21%	15%
<b>All children (Under 18)</b>												
Speak only English	89%	89%	94%	40%	39%	38%	48%	43%	42%	2%	7%	3%
Speak lang. other than English	11%	11%	6%	60%	61%	62%	52%	57%	58%	98%	93%	97%
Speak English very well	68%	68%	69%	69%	70%	77%	74%	75%	79%	56%	49%	66%
Speak English well	22%	22%	19%	23%	22%	14%	19%	18%	13%	35%	38%	20%
Speak English not well	8%	8%	11%	6%	7%	7%	6%	7%	6%	7%	8%	9%
Speak English not at all	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	3%	4%	5%
<b>All Adults (over 18)</b>												
Speak only English	91%	91%	95%	25%	29%	27%	59%	62%	55%	4%	3%	5%
Speak lang. other than English	9%	9%	5%	75%	71%	73%	41%	38%	45%	96%	97%	95%
Speak English very well	45%	45%	61%	31%	35%	41%	77%	83%	82%	19%	21%	26%
Speak English well	21%	21%	20%	21%	22%	20%	13%	12%	11%	23%	25%	23%
Speak English not well	22%	22%	15%	28%	25%	27%	7%	4%	4%	34%	32%	36%
Speak English not at all	12%	12%	4%	20%	18%	12%	3%	1%	2%	24%	23%	16%

Sources: Calculations based on ACS-PUMS 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013.

**Appendix Table 2: Educational Attainment, Drop-Out Rates and College Enrollment for Nebraska and Latino Population 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013**

	NEBRASKA			LATINOS		
	2005-2007	2008-2010	2011-2013	2005-2007	2008-2010	2011-2013
<b>Population ages 25 years and older</b>						
Less than High School	10%	10%	9%	49%	48%	51%
High School diploma or equivalent	31%	29%	28%	23%	25%	21%
Some college or more	32%	34%	34%	18%	19%	19%
Bachelors, graduate or professional degree	27%	28%	29%	9%	8%	9%
<b>Population ages 16 to 24 years-old</b>						
High school dropout rate	6%	7%	5%	25%	23%	16%
College enrollment	47%	51%	52%	21%	24%	32%

Sources: Calculations based on ACS-PUMS 2005-2007, 2008-2010, and 2011-2013.



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