NYC'S LATINX IMMIGRANT POPULATION

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had a disproportionate impact to Hispanic/Latino ("Latinx")[1] and Black communities in New York City and beyond. An analysis completed by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) at the height of the pandemic found that Black New Yorkers had died from COVID-19 at twice the rate of White New Yorkers (245.0 vs. 122.6 per 100,000 people) and Latinx New Yorkers at 2.1 times the rate (260.0 vs. 122.6 per 100,000).[2]

This is consistent with past public health emergencies where New Yorkers who already experience the adverse impacts of persistent structural and institutional racism have experienced a higher burden from COVID-19.[3] And despite the City's vaccine mandate, there are still disparities among those who have received vaccines and who remain at increased risk of COVID-19 and new variants: Black and Latinx people remain less likely than the rest of the city to be fully vaccinated, leaving them at increased risk. Sixty-two percent of all New Yorkers have been fully vaccinated compared to just 51 percent and 38 percent of the Latinx and Black NYC population, respectively.[4]

Due to these disparities and existing barriers, the City launched the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity (TRIE) in April 2020 to address the outsized health disparities and economic devastation faced by racial minorities during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we aim to better address long-standing racial and economic disparities as part of the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, it is important to understand demographic diversity within New York City's Latinx communities and their unique needs.

This fact sheet describes key demographic and economic characteristics of Latinx immigrants in NYC. (Immigrants and foreign-born are used interchangeably throughout this fact sheet.) The key findings include:

2010-2020 Population Growth

While the total Latinx population in New York City has grown over the last ten years, the foreign-born Latinx population has declined. This means that more and more, immigration is less of a driver in Latinx population growth and that the rise of second generation, native-born Latinx New Yorkers are behind this growth.[5]
- o Since 2010, the overall Latinx population grew by 154,274 people (6.6 percent) to 2,490,350.[6]

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1   MOIA uses the term "Latinx" throughout this brief to refer to people who self-identify as being of Hispanic, Latino, and Spanish descent.

2   Age-adjusted rates of lab confirmed COVID-19. https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/covid-19-deaths-race-ethnicity04242020-1.pdf. Accessed July 29, 2020.

3   Chokshi DA, Katz MH. Emerging Lessons From COVID-19 Response in New York City. *JAMA Forum.* 2020

4   Administrative DOHMH data as of September 21, 2021 9:30am available: https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data-vaccines.page.

5   Brown, Anna. U.S. Hispanic and Asian populations growing, but for different reasons. Pew Research center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/06/26/u-s-hispanic-and-asian-populations-growing-but-for-different-reasons/

6   NYC Department of City Planning. 2020 Census: Results for New York City. https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/planning-level/nyc-population/census2020/dcp_2020-census-briefing-booklet-1.pdf?r=3. August 2021.

Age	Latinx New Yorkers comprise the largest share of the city's population under 18 (34 percent). This is important as we consider the city's education and youth development policies and programs.[7]
Demographic Diversity (2019 1-year ACS)	Latinx immigrants are a diverse group in the city representing more than 20 different ethnic groups with Dominicans making up the largest share (41 percent). [8]
Settlement Pattern (2019 1-year ACS)	The majority of Latinx immigrants reside in Queens (33 percent), and the Bronx (30 percent), while the share of NYC immigrants overall reside in Queens and Brooklyn (36 percent and 30 percent respectively).
Immigration Status (2019 1-year ACS)	The Latinx population makes up the largest share of foreign-born in NYC (31 percent) and undocumented immigrants in NYC (53 percent).
Mixed-Status Households (2019 1-year ACS)	Latinx individuals in NYC are more likely to live in mixed-status households (20 percent), compared to all New Yorkers (11 percent). Mexican New Yorkers have the highest share living in mixed-status households (56 percent) followed by Salvadoran (44 percent) and then Guatemalans (40 percent).[9]
Workforce (2019 5-year ACS)	Latinx immigrants participate in the labor force at a higher rate than all immigrants (67 percent and 65 percent respectively). Specifically, Mexican immigrants and Guatemalan have the highest rates of labor force participation at 76 and 75 percent respectively.
Essential Workers (2019 1-year ACS)	Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of the Latinx foreign-born workforce are essential workers. Guatemalans and Mexicans had the highest share of essential workers among Latinx immigrant groups (84 and 78 percent respectively).[10]
Average Earnings (2019 5-year ACS)	Overall, average earnings for Latinx immigrants are $34,800, which is lower than for all NYC immigrants ($51,200). Latinx immigrants who identify as Columbians have the highest average earnings ($42,400) compared to the foreign-born from the Dominican Republic, the group with the lowest earnings ($29,700).
Poverty Rate (2019 1-year ACS)	Latinx, along with Asian Pacific Islander (API) immigrants, have the highest poverty rates of all immigrant groups (24 percent). Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Honduran immigrants have the highest poverty rates (over 25 percent) compared to those groups with the lowest poverty rate; Costa Rican (12 percent) and Venezuelan and Chileans (about 16 percent each).

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7   Ibid.

8   This analysis uses the Census Bureau's self-reported data and analyzes persons who identify their ethnicity as Hispanic.

9   Mixed-status households are defined as households with at least one undocumented immigrant and one person with legal status. This data point is based on 2019 1-year ACS PUMS as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

10   Defined by NY State Executive Order 202.6 for all persons 16 and older in the labor force.

Note about Hispanic Origin and Race data

In the American Community Survey (ACS), race and Hispanic origin are asked as two separate questions on the survey form. Data from these questions are used to create mutually exclusive race/Hispanic origin categories. Those who report Hispanic origin are included in the "Latinx" population in this report, regardless of race reported. In fact, many respondents who self-identify as Hispanic in the ACS go on to report other race(s): within the Latinx foreign-born population in NYC, about one-third (33 percent) identify as White and about 9 percent identify as Black or African American.

MOIA uses the term "Latinx" throughout this brief to refer to people who self-identify as being of Hispanic, Latino, and Spanish descent.

This fact sheet is intended as a point-in-time snapshot of the Latinx population in New York City. Further context into how different migration histories of each group is beyond the scope of this fact sheet. For example, while Puerto Ricans are Latinx, they are also native-born; Cubans have a different migration history than others from the Carribean. Overall, these differences generate diverse outcomes in health insurance, housing, mixed status families, etc. but are beyond the scope of this document.

Latinx immigrants are a diverse group in NYC representing over 20 different ethnic groups

Latinx immigrants are a diverse group in NYC representing over 20 different ethnic groups: the Dominican immigrant population, the largest Latinx ethnic group, accounts for approximately 41 percent of the Latinx immigrant population. The Dominican immigrant population has long held the title as the largest foreign-born group in New York City. In fact, the U.S. is home to the largest number of Dominicans abroad – about half of whom have come to reside in New York City.[11]

While immigrants from Mexico represent the second largest group (16 percent), the Mexican immigrant population has declined by 16 percent since 2010 (-30,200). This overall decline of the Latinx foreign-born population in NYC (-4 percent since 2010) is driven largely by the drop in Mexican foreign-born as well as Central America. The shrinking of the Mexican foreign-born population in the city mirrors demographic trends seen nationwide as well.[12]

At the same time, some of the fastest growing ethnic groups among Latinx immigrants are from Guatemala and Venezuela. Between 2010 and 2019, the Guatemalan foreign-born population increased by nearly half.

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11   Zong, Jie and Batalova, Jeanne. Dominican Immigrants in the United States. Migration Policy Institute. April 2018. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/dominican-immigrants-united-states-2016.

12   Robert Warren, Center for Migration Studies, U.S. Undocumented Population Continued to Fall from 2016 to 2017, and Visa Overstays Significantly Exceeded Illegal Crossings for the Seventh Consecutive Year (2019), available at http://cmsny.org/ publications/ essay-2017-undocumented-and-overstays/; Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, Pew Research Center, U.S. Unauthorized Immigrant Total Dips to Lowest Level in a Decade, (2018), available at https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2331502419830339.

Latinx Group	Number in 2019	Percent in 2019	Number in 2010	Percent in 2010	Number Change	Percent Change
Total, Latinx F-Born	947,871	100%	984,881	100%	-37,010	-3.80%
Dominican	388,103	40.9%	369,887	37.6%	18,216	4.9%
Mexican	155,628	16.4%	185,843	18.9%	(30,215)	-16.3%
Ecuadorian	108,741	11.5%	133,425	13.5%	(24,684)	-18.5%
Colombian	62,397	6.6%	64,904	6.6%	(2,507)	-3.9%
Guatemalan	32,459	3.4%	21,686	2.2%	10,773	49.7%
Honduran	27,765	2.9%	34,749	3.5%	(6,984)	-20.1%
Salvadoran	26,855	2.8%	31,436	3.2%	(4,581)	-14.6%
Peruvian	24,247	2.6%	31,293	3.2%	(7,046)	-22.5%
Puerto Rican	12,941	1.4%	10,279	1.0%	2,662	25.9%
Argentinean	11,578	1.2%	8,887	0.9%	2,691	30.3%
Venezuelan	10,947	1.2%	8,004	0.8%	2,943	36.8%
Cuban	10,117	1.1%	15,951	1.6%	(5,834)	-36.6%
Spaniard	8,504	0.9%	7,707	0.8%	797	10.3%
Nicaraguan	8,113	0.9%	6,410	0.7%	1,703	26.6%
Panamanian	7,663	0.8%	14,520	1.5%	(6,857)	-47.2%
Chilean	5,258	0.6%	4,744	0.5%	514	10.8%
Costa Rican	4,902	0.5%	2,662	0.3%	2,240	84.1%
Paraguayan	4,259	0.4%	1,674	0.2%	2,585	154.4%
All Other Spanish/ Hispanic/Latino	37,394	3.9%	30,820	3.1%	6,574	21.3%

Source: 2010 and 2019 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata

The total Latinx population is growing while the Latinx foreign-born population is shrinking

This first chart shows the overall growth of total Latinx population from 1990 to 2020. Data from the 2020 Decennial Census shows that over the last decade, the city's Latinx population grew at a slightly lower rate compared to the rest of New York City. The fastest growing population are API, while White and Black populations have been on the decline. Nonetheless, people of Latinx origin make up the second largest racial/ethnic group in the country and in New York City (19 and 29 percent respectively).

Figure 1
Total Population by Race and Latinx Origin
NYC, 1990 to 2020
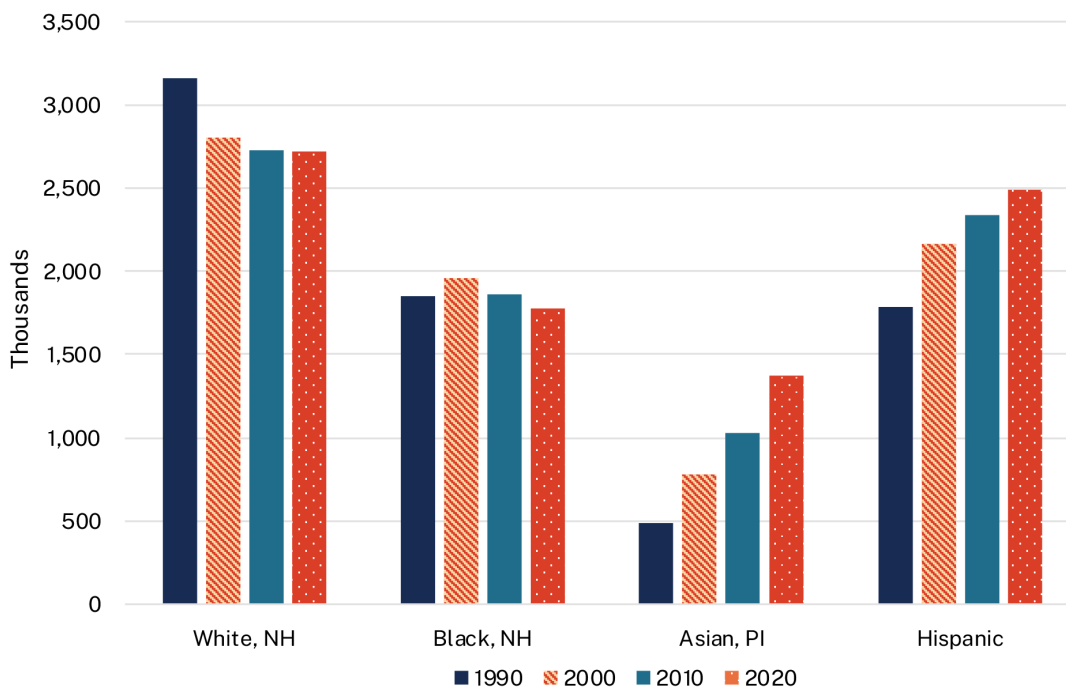
Sources: 1990 Census of Population Characteristics, New York
2000, 2010, 2020 Decennial Census PL 94-171, NYC Dept of City Planning

Based on an analysis of the 2019 ACS data (the latest data available for detailed chrematistics including nativity status), there are about 948,000 Latinx immigrants in New York City. They account for 31 percent of the total 3 million immigrants living in the City, while Black, White, and Asian immigrants each account for 28 percent and 19 percent of the foreign-born population in New York City respectively.

Foreign-born by Race and Latinx Origin
NYC, 2019

Other, NH
3%

White, NH
19%

API, NH
28%

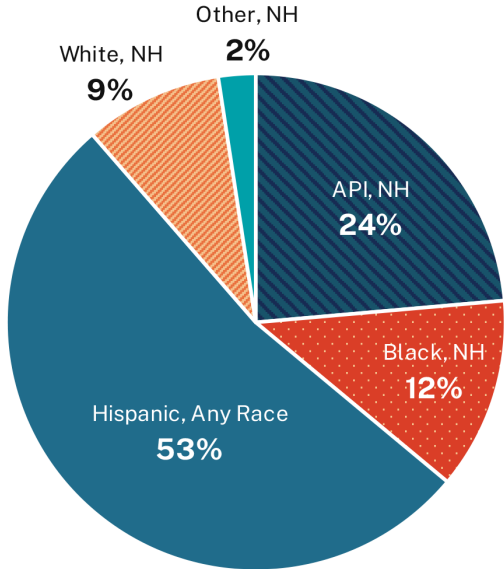Latinx
31%

Black, NH
19%
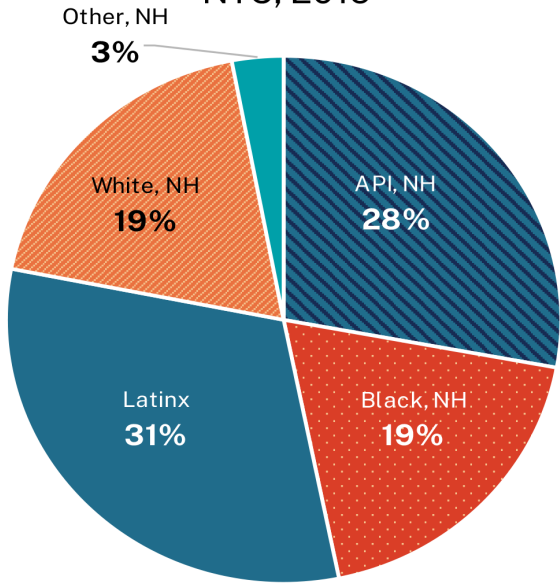
Total Foreign-born=3,030,397
Source: 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample

Latinx immigrants also make up the largest share (53 percent) of undocumented immigrants in NYC compared to other race and ethnic groups.

Undocumented Immigrants by Race and Latinx Origin
NYC, 2019

Other, NH
2%

White, NH
9%

API, NH
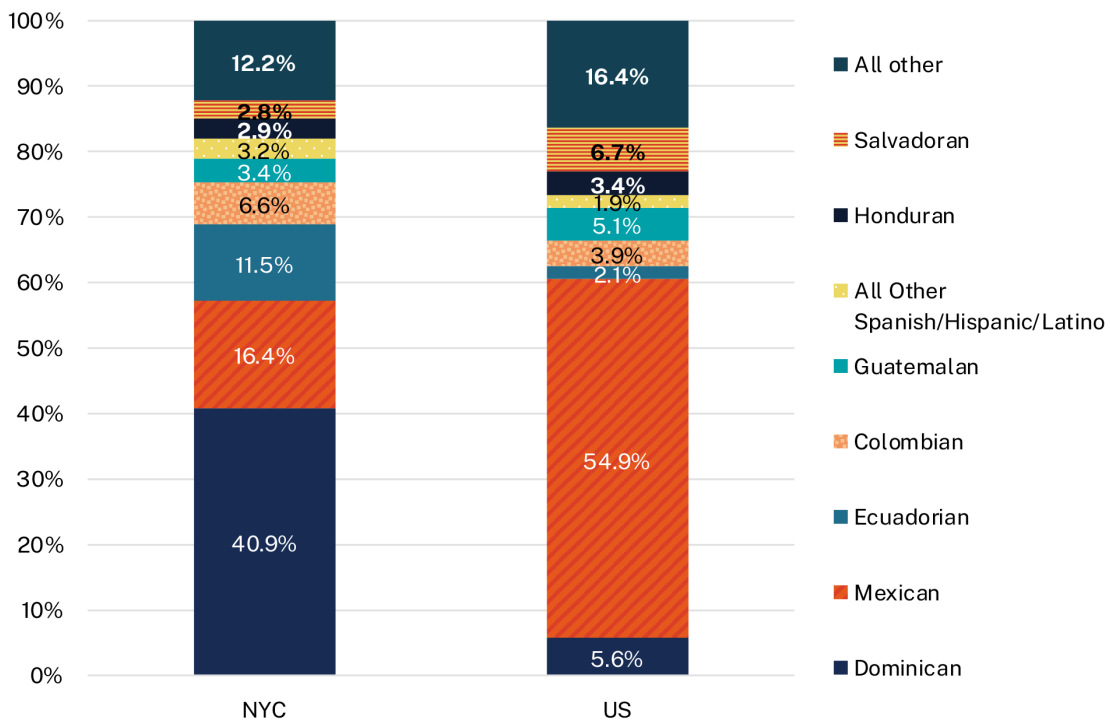**24%**

Black, NH
12%

Hispanic, Any Race
53%

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample

How the Latinx immigrant population in NYC compares to the U.S.' Latinx immigrant population overall

Mexicans comprise over half (55 percent) of the Latinx immigrant population in the U.S. while they make up just 16 percent in the city. New York City's share of Dominican immigrants is nearly seven times that for the U.S. overall (41 percent compared to 6 percent). Similarly, NYC's share of Ecuadorian immigrants is nearly six times that for the U.S. overall (12 percent in NYC compared to 2 percent nationally).

Latinx Foreign-Born by Group (%) - NYC and US, 2019

	NYC	US
All other	12.2%	16.4%
Salvadoran	2.8%	6.7%
Honduran	2.9%	3.4%
All Other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino	3.2%	1.9%
Guatemalan	3.4%	5.1%
Colombian	6.6%	3.9%
Ecuadorian	11.5%	2.1%
Mexican	16.4%	54.9%
Dominican	40.9%	5.6%

Settlement patterns of the Latinx immigrant population in NYC

33%
of Latinx immigrants live in Queens

QUEENS

21% Ecuadorian immigrants
17% Dominican immigrants
17% Mexican immigrants

BRONX

30% of Latinx immigrants, with:
- **64%** Dominican
- **14%** Mexican
- **6%** Ecuadorian

BROOKLYN

13% of all
Dominican immigrants

While the share of NYC overall immigrants resides in Queens and Brooklyn (36 percent and 30 percent respectively), the majority of Latinx immigrants reside in Queens (33 percent) and the Bronx (30 percent). Ethnic groups with the highest concentration in the Bronx are Dominican (64 percent) followed by Mexican and Ecuadorian immigrants (14 and 6 percent respectively).

Nearly half of all Dominican immigrants in NYC resides in the Bronx (47 percent), with the remainder primarily living in Manhattan (25 percent) and Queens and Brooklyn (14 and 13 percent respectively). In fact, Dominican immigrants make up over half of all foreign-born residing in the Bronx (64 percent).

Queens' foreign-born population is even greater than in the Bronx but is much more diverse. In Queens, the largest concentrations are Ecuadorian (21 percent), and Dominican and Mexican (17 percent each).

Social and Demographic characteristics of Latinx immigrants in NYC
(See Appendix Tables)

- **Age.** The median age for Latinx immigrants is 44 years, younger than the median age of all immigrants (48 years). Within the Latinx immigrant population, however, there is a large difference in median age, with Guatemalan immigrants being the youngest (37 years) and Cuban immigrants being the oldest (64 years).

  - The share of Latinx immigrants who are 65 years and older is smaller than the share of White immigrants (15 percent compared 27 percent). Among Latinx immigrants, Cubans have the largest share of those 65 years and older (50 percent).

- **Sex.[13]** A greater portion of the Latinx immigrant population reported as females (52 percent) than males (48 percent). Panamanian immigrants have the highest percent of a population that reported as female (62 percent) and Uruguayan immigrants have the smallest percent (38 percent). In general, the overall population of New York City skews female (52 percent) as does the foreign-born population (54 percent).

- **English Proficiency.[14]** Overall, the majority (72 percent) of the Latinx immigrant population has Limited English Proficiency (LEP), meaning that they self-identify as speaking English "less than very well." There is a wide ethnic group-based disparity among Latinx immigrants with LEP: Cuban immigrants have the lowest share of reported LEP (58 percent), while Guatemalan immigrants have the highest share of reported LEP (84 percent).

  - **Linguistic diversity.** Notably, nearly 100 percent of Latinx immigrants who report LEP speak Spanish at home. However, many New Yorkers of indigenous ancestry from Latin America who may report as "Hispanic" speak non-colonial languages such as Nahuatl, Mixtec, K'iche/Quiche, Mam, Kichwa, Quechua, Aymara and others. These languages are often difficult to capture in surveys.

- **Educational Attainment.[15]** Spaniard, Venezuelan, and Argentinian immigrants have the highest levels of educational attainment; about half or more of these groups are college graduates. In general, about 15 percent of the Latinx immigrants have attained a college degree or higher, which is lower than the New York City overall population (40 percent).

- **Lack of Health Insurance Coverage.** About 22 percent of Latinx immigrants reported not having health insurance. Among all immigrants in New York City, 13 percent do not have health insurance. Mexican immigrants have the highest rate of uninsurance (55 percent), while Panamanian immigrants are among the Latinx ethnic groups with the lowest share (four percent) of the population that does not have health insurance.

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13   The Census Bureau collects data only on a person's biological sex and not gender. Ambiguity of these two concepts interferes with accurately and consistently measuring what we intend to measure--the sex composition of the population. https://www.census.gov/topics/population/age-and-sex/about.html.

14   English proficiency is for persons 5 years and older.

15   Educational attainment is for persons 25 years and older.

Employment patterns of NYC's Latinx immigrant population

- **Labor Force Participation.**
  About three-quarters of Mexican and Guatemalan (76 and 75 percent) are in the labor force. This is considerably higher than the labor force participation rate for all Latinx immigrants (67 percent) and overall immigrants (65 percent each).

- **Self-Employed.**
  12 percent of Latinx immigrants are self-employed, similar to the share of API immigrants (11 percent). White immigrants have the highest share (14 percent) compared to Black immigrants (8 percent).

  o The Latinx ethnic groups with the highest shares of self-employed workers are Guatemalan (16 percent) followed by Colombian (16 percent). The group with the lowest share are Central American immigrants (Hondurans and Dominicans at 12 and 10 percent respectively).

  o Self-employed can refer to business owners as well as gig workers, such as Uber or Lyft drivers.

- **Occupations.**
  About half (46 percent) of Latinx workers are in service and sales occupations, much higher than the share of White immigrants (26 percent). The next largest occupation group for Latinx workers is construction, production, and transportation occupations (28 percent).[16]

- **Essential Workers.**
  Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of Latinx immigrants in the workforce are essential workers, as defined by the State of New York.[17] This share is higher than for the NYC native-born population (59 percent)[18] and White immigrants (57 percent). Guatemalans and Mexicans had the highest share of essential workers among Latinx immigrant groups (84 and 78 percent respectively).

- **Average Earnings.**
  Overall, the mean earnings of Latinx immigrants are lower than the NYC average ($34,800 compared to $51,200). However, there is large disparity within the Latinx ethnic groups: Latinx immigrants who identify as Columbians have the highest average earnings ($42,400) compared to the foreign-born from the Dominican Republic, the group with the lowest earnings ($29,700).

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16   Data not shown.
17   Empire State Development (2020, October 23), *Guidance on Executive Order 202.6: Guidance for Determining Whether a Business Enterprise Is Subject to a Workforce Reduction under Recent Executive Orders,* https://esd.ny.gov/guidance-executive-order-2026
18   Data not shown.

Economic characteristics of NYC's Latinx immigrant population

- **Poverty Rate.**[19]
  Latinx and API immigrants have the highest poverty rates of all immigrant groups (24 percent). However, within the Latinx population, there is wide disparity. Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Honduran immigrants have the highest poverty rates (over 25 percent) compared to those groups with the lowest poverty rate: Cuban (20 percent) and Ecuadorian (19 percent).

- **Home Ownership.**
  Latinx immigrants are less likely to live in homes that they own (16 percent) than other immigrants (34 percent). However, there are some Latinx immigrant groups — Panamanian, Puerto Rican, and Cuban — that have much larger shares living in homes that they own; these groups range from Panamanian at 42 percent to Mexican who own at 7 percent.

- **Overcrowded Households.**[20]
  Latinx immigrants have the highest proportion living in overcrowded households (29 percent) followed by API immigrants (24 percent). Mexican and Guatemalan immigrants are more than twice as likely to live in overcrowded housing (48 percent and 43 percent respectively) as the overall rate for NYC immigrants of 22 percent. This barrier is particularly notable since higher rates of overcrowding have made social distancing for this population more difficult.

- **Rent Burdened Households.**[21]
  Regardless of immigration status, about one-half (47 percent) of all New Yorkers are rent-burdened, defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as spending 30 percent or more of their household income on rent.[22] This problem is greater for the city's foreign-born at 53 percent even greater for API and Latinx immigrants where over half (55 percent) report being rent-burdened.

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19   Based on 2015-2019 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity. The NYCgov Poverty Measure differs from the official U.S. poverty measure by accounting for the higher cost of living in New York City. It also incorporates the value of programs intended to alleviate poverty such as the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Earned Income Tax Credit. For more detailed information, see the forthcoming annual poverty report that will become available at https://www1.nyc.gov/site/opportunity/poverty-in-nyc/poverty-measure.page.

20   Overcrowded households are defined by HUD as one or more persons per room. https://www.huduser.gov/publications/pdf/measuring_overcrowding_in_hsg.pdf.

21   Rent-burdened households are defined as paying 30 percent or more of their household income on rent. Extremely rent-burdened households are defined as paying more than 50 percent of household income on rent.

22   Based on 2019 1-year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Immigration status of the Latinx population in NYC

- **Average Years in the U.S.**
  Latinx immigrants in NYC have lived in the U.S. for 21 years on average about the same for all immigrants (22 years) and 19 years for API immigrants. Mexican and Guatemalan immigrants are the most recent arrivals, having spent 18 years on average in the U.S. Of all the Latinx ethnic groups, Cuban immigrants have been in the U.S. the longest: an average of 38 years.

- **Naturalization Rates.**
  Latinx immigrants are less likely to be naturalized at 46 percent compared to the total foreign-born population (57 percent). Panamanian (79 percent) and Cuban (75 percent) immigrants have the highest share of their foreign-born population who have become U.S. citizens, whereas Mexican (16 percent) and Guatemalan (31 percent) immigrants are the least likely to have naturalized. This could be because they are not eligible to obtain citizenship or because they chose not to do so.

- **Immigration Status.**
  26 percent of all Latinx immigrants are undocumented, higher than the share of NYC immigrants overall (16 percent). The Latinx ethnic groups with the smallest share are Cuban and Panamanian (2 and 5 percent each) while Mexican and Guatemalan immigrants have the highest share who are undocumented (63 percent and 52 percent respectively).

- **Mixed-Status Households.**[23]
  Latinx individuals in NYC are more likely to live in mixed-status households (20 percent), compared to all New Yorkers (11 percent). Mexican New Yorkers have the highest share living in mixed-status households (56 percent) followed by Salvadoran (44 percent) and then Guatemalans (40 percent).

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23   Mixed-status households are defined as households with at least one undocumented immigrant and one person with legal status.

Conclusion

Despite the growing political power and electorate of the Latinx population, there continue to be racialized images of the border and false dichotomies to public safety perpetrated by media and former presidential administrations. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has devastated these same communities that disproportionately made up our essential workers, who carried our city through this last year. Promoting deeper understanding of Latinx communities, including their diversity and complexity, must be part of the national strategy to address this systemic racism–especially as the country continues to debate the topics of comprehensive immigration reform. Through this fact sheet, we hope to help advance deeper understanding so that the City and other advocates alike may more effectively provide services that are responsive to the needs of these communities.

Data Source and Notes

American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 1-year Public User Microdata (PUMS) files are used to produce all tables and charts in this Brief unless otherwise noted. The report only features findings where the n is 10,000 or greater. To increase the sample size and therefore the reliability of detailed characteristics presented in the Appendix Tables, ACS 2015-2019 5-year PUMS were used. These data files have been augmented by NYC Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity) in order to create the NYCgov poverty rate as well as immigration legal status indicators. For more information on the methodology that creates the alternative poverty measure for NYC go to: https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/opportunity/pdf/20_poverty_measure_report.

The methodology used to created immigration legal status can be found here: https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/opportunity/pdf/immigrant-poverty-report-2017.pdf.

In the ACS, race and Hispanic origin are asked as two separate questions on the survey form. Data from these questions are used to create mutually exclusive race/Hispanic origin categories. Those who report Hispanic origin are included in the "Latinx" population in this report, regardless of race reported. In fact, many respondents who self-identify as Hispanic in the ACS go on to report other race(s): within the Latinx foreign-born population in NYC, about one-third (33 percent) identify as White and about 9 percent identify as Black or African American. MOIA uses the term "Latinx" throughout this brief to refer to people who self-identify as being of Hispanic, Latino, and Spanish descent.