Snapshot:

Hispanic/Latine Community in Washington State

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WERC
Work Equity Research Center

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Executive Summary

While the Hispanic/Latines presence in Washington can be traced back to around 1774 when Spanish exploration of the Olympic Peninsula began,[1] Hispanic/Latines in Washington State are still very much a community of immigrants, and this aspect is critical to understanding their occupational safety and health needs as well as the overall well-being of Hispanic/Latine workers and their families. The state's Hispanic/Latine population continues to grow increasing from about 120,000 (2.9% of the state population) in 1980 to 1,143,900 (14.2% of the state population) in 2024.[2] The increase in Hispanic/Latine population in Washington was predominantly due to economic and labor developments,[1] as well as due to changes in reporting and coding of race and ethnicity that started in the 2020 Decennial and ACS surveys.[3]

Although Hispanic/Latine persons come from at least 23 countries of origin, the majority in Washington State come from Mexico (75%), and most identify as either White or "Other race" (about 70% combined). Hispanic/Latine workers are overrepresented in lower wage jobs (64%). The most common industries of employment being : 1) Agriculture, 2) Accommodation & Food Services, 3) Health Care & Social Assistance, 4) Retail Trade, and, 5) Construction, and the top 5 most common jobs were in: 1) Service Occupations, 2) Management, Business, Science, and Arts Occupations, 3) Transportation and Material Moving, 4) Farming, Fishing, and Forestry, and 5) Construction and Extraction Occupations.

Examining social determinants of health using an intersectional lens, we found significant differences in health insurance and wages, foreign born, US citizenship status, and English proficiency – with Hispanic/Latine making considerably less wages than non-Hispanic/Latine foreign born, non-US citizens and those who don't speak English well. If education is the key to improving a person's economic outlook and subsequently working in 'safer' jobs, it is not realized for Hispanic/Latine, this is an area of concern that requires further research. While all jobs should be safe, it is imperative for Hispanic/Latine workers in Washington State to make typically high hazard jobs safer.

To address these inequities, our research and prevention efforts will seek to enable these general recommendations:

- **Make jobs that Hispanic/Latines work in safer**– Hispanic/Latines are predominantly working lower wage and higher hazard jobs. Ensuring Hispanic/Latines and all workers have safe jobs contributes to improving the overall health and well-being of our state. The Work Equity Research Center (WERC) will seek to examine and understand the high hazard and low wage

industries where Hispanic/Latine workers are employed and develop prevention approaches focused on those industries.

- **Create educational and training opportunities to improve career trajectories and address occupational segregation among Hispanic/Latines –** Although the investment in educational and training opportunities will not solve occupational segregation and thus, eliminate economic inequities, it can increase the opportunities for underrepresented individuals to choose a career and job they want to work in. WERC will seek to research and evaluate those factors that diminish the career trajectories and promote occupational segregation; such evaluations may facilitate continuous improvement of programs designed to diminish inequities.
- **Collect multiple social indicators to more fully capture Hispanic/Latine experiences** - The collection of self-report race and ethnicity is vital. It is also helpful to collect data on one's "street race" (a term coined by Dr. Nancy López, describing how you think others would define your race), which provides insight in how Hispanic/Latines are racialized and therefore captures how factors such as, racism, colorism, and colonialism may impact their health. WERC will continue to develop research methods to impute race and ethnicity to supplement datasets without such data. Additional actions will be to promote best practices in collecting race and ethnicity and other social indicators in all governmental datasets.

- **Use data to understand how organizations can better reach Hispanic/Latines and provide better training materials –** WERC will continue to explore industries and occupations where Hispanic/Latine work and where there is significant need for Spanish (or other) language training materials, will improve our ability to share important safety and health training, rules, and workplace rights.
- **Collaborate and partner with non-profits and community-based organizations** – Working together to build on each other's efforts and share resources and information will allow us to better serve communities. Community collaboration is a core element of WERCs mission to co-create and conduct research to address inequities. Community collaborations will involve industries with high proportions of Hispanic/Latine workers, community groups assisting Hispanic/Latines with navigating social insurance benefits, including workers compensation.

- **Work closely with state and local government agencies** – There are many state and local agencies that have similar commitments to improving the health and safety of Hispanic/Latine in Washington State. Collaborating with these agencies, can improve the collective health and

safety of Hispanic/Latine workers, without duplicating efforts. WERC intends to collaborate with other governmental organizations on projects that improve worker safety and health and lessen the societal and personal impact of occupational injuries and illnesses.

The data presented in this snapshot provides us an entry point to understanding potential inequities Hispanic/Latines experience. Important and vital next steps are to collaborate with community organizations and workers, to fully understand the concerns and solutions that Hispanic/Latine workers want to see to improve their occupational health and well-being.

Key Findings

- In Washington, 14.2% of the population identify as Hispanic/Latine and Washington is the 12th highest among states in total Hispanic population (count) and 16th in percentage share across the US.
- Hispanic/Latines were most employed in 1) Agriculture, 2) Accommodations & Food Services and 3) Health Care & Social Assistance.
- Most Hispanic/Latines in Washington were working in low wage jobs, even when considering education level and US citizenship status, highlighting important inequities in wages.

Introduction

The purpose of this community snapshot is to provide an overview of the data available about Hispanic/Latine communities in Washington State, specifically related to worker health and well-being. The Work Equity Research Center's goals are to work with communities to co-create research projects and develop and test solutions to improve work-related outcomes for historically underserved communities. This community snapshot serves to help us understand the context in which Hispanic/Latines live and work in Washington. This includes, understanding the history and demographics of Hispanic/Latines in Washington, as well as work related topics and additional social determinants of health. We end the report with recommendations for further research to address the gaps in equity that Hispanic/Latine workers in Washington face.

We hope this report can help inform future directions for researchers, policymakers, community and government organizations, and other entities, in efforts to improve the workplace conditions and well-being of Hispanic/Latines in Washington State.

About the Work Equity Research Center (WERC)

The purpose of the Work Equity Research Center (WERC) is to foster collaborative partnerships with agency programs and impacted communities to address systemic occupational safety and health inequities with an emphasis on supporting businesses to create a work environment that prioritizes employee safety and well-being.

WERC is a diverse center, housed within the Safety & Health Assessment & Research for Prevention (SHARP) research program, at the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I). While WERC's mission is to focus on and work with historically and currently marginalized workers, their employers, and community

organizations, WERC's multidisciplinary team also collaborates with SHARP researchers on multiple projects, and benefits from the extensive research capacity within SHARP.

Land acknowledgement

We want to start this report by acknowledging the First People of the land that we now call Washington State (WA). There are 29 tribes that are federally recognized and three tribes not federally recognized that have a long history in present-day Washington.[4] These Native tribes are: Chehalis, Colville, Cowlitz, Hoh, Jamestown S'Klallam, Kalispel, Lower Elwha Klallam, Lummi, Makah, Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Nooksack, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Puyallup, Quileute, Quinault, Samish, Sauk-Suiattle, Shoalwater Bay, Skokomish, Snoqualmie, Spokane, Squaxin Island, Stillaguamish, Suquamish, Swinomish, Tulalip, Upper Skagit, Yakama, Duwamish, Wanapum, and Chinook.[4,5]

The Yakama Nation in Eastern Washington is home to over 10,000 Yakama Nation Tribal Members on a 1.3 million acre reservation.[6] With the increase of Hispanic/Latines in Eastern Washington over the last few decades due to agricultural work opportunities, the Yakama Nation and Hispanic/Latines have coexisted with complicated history.[7] Over the years, intermarriage has led to increased merging of Native and Hispanic/Latine cultures, this is not without tension.[7]

In 1855, the Yakama people signed a treaty with the federal government so the Yakama people could have dedicated land to live on.[7] Shortly after, Congress passed the Allotment Act and they took land that belonged to the Yakama Nation, broke it up into parcels, and gave the parcels to individual tribal members.[7] This was meant to encourage tribal members to assimilate and become citizens of the US.[7] Any parcels not given in allotments to tribal member could be sold to non-tribal members.[7] The Yakama Nation lost much of their land this way, and the Allotment Act had a similar effect with other tribes across the US, with many losing up to 30% of their land.[7] Today, the Yakama Nation is described as a checkerboard reservation, where some areas are owned by tribal members and other areas are owned by non-tribal members.[7]

Mathew Tomaskin, who is part of the tribal government, of the Yakama Nation, shared in a recent podcast that while he was aware of the assumptions and connotations about Mexicans and Hispanic/Latine in general, it wasn't until he started learning about the shared history and indigeneity between Hispanic/Latine and the Yakama Nation, that his perspective changed, "*they're from the South and we're from the North and we need to understand that the border was created by the White people*." Although, some resistance continues to exist, education and awareness in this shared history and

commonality is starting to create a brotherhood and sisterhood within the Native and Hispanic/Latine communities in the Yakama Nation. There has been a shift among younger generations and youth in the community allowing for appreciation and respect for one another's Native and Hispanic/Latine cultures. Yesenia Navarete Hunter, a Mexican American woman with indigenous roots, highlighted the similar cultural elements between Hispanic/Latine indigenous people and Yakama people, including "*the desires we have for family, mothers being central and grandmothers being key to maintaining culture and tradition and in needing to be grounded in the earth and to our language*."[7]

This example of Native and Hispanic/Latine people living together demonstrates the tension, intersectionality, and complexity of people and the history and injustice that leads to disenfranchisement and marginalization. It is important to acknowledge that many families and communities in Washington State and across the US, whether intentional or not, have displaced indigenous families and the First People of this land. It is important to seek out the truth, including stories and examples, in the way that indigenous communities are impacted by displacement and colonialization, and to find ways to rectify these injustices. Learn more about the land you reside at native-land.ca.[8]

Suggested citation

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"Race is about power, including the power to decide when and how to classify people into this or that racial category and what those very categories are."

— Laura Gómez,
Inventing Latinos: A New Story of American Racism

Brief history of Hispanic/Latines[1] in Washington

People with Spanish ancestry have been present for centuries in Washington State. Spanish exploration of the Olympic Peninsula began around 1774 and Spain formally claimed the Pacific Northwest in 1775.[1] Some of the first Spanish/Latine presence included expeditions to Washington that resulted in colonization and two settlements, Neah Bay and Vancouver Island, in the 1790's.[1] Remnants of Spanish colonization are depicted in names like, Strait of Juan de Fuca, the San Juan Islands, and Rosario Strait.[1] Conflicts in Europe and Latin America forced Spain to abandon the Pacific Northwest region and in 1819, the United States and Spain signed the Adams-Onis Treaty which resulted in Spain giving up its claim to this region.[1] In 1853, the Washington region became Washington Territory and then a state in 1889.[1]

Prior to statehood, during the late 19th century, Hispanic/Latines contributed to the early economic development of the region.[1] Hispanic/Latines contributed significantly to the fur trapping business and also helped create the Mexican mule-pack system which was the foundation of transportation for the mining economy.[1] The Mexican mule-pack system provided overland transportation supporting the California mining industry during the mid-eighteenth century and also later supported the early growth of the mining industry in Washington State, especially in the region of Walla Walla.[1] By 1870 there was a large Mexican population in Walla Walla, centered in mining.[1] In the late 1870's Mexican mule packers decreased in demand through the use of railroads in Washington.[1] Additional industries supported during this time by Hispanic/Latines, predominantly Mexican, were ranching, and fur trapping, but many didn't settle permanently in the state and instead traveled through for work opportunities.[1] It wasn't until the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917) that many Hispanic/Latines immigrated permanently to Washington where agricultural development of the state led to high demand for labor.[1] However in 1929, during the Great Depression, many Mexican and Mexican Americans were often wrongly and unjustly deported or repatriated to Mexico.[12,13] During World War II, the demand for agricultural labor was high when the unjust and racist Executive Order 9066 placed people of Japanese ancestry, many of

[1] For this report, we decided to use the term Hispanic/Latine to refer to this community for several reasons. First, ethnicity (Hispanic) is what is used in the main data source (ACS) in this report, and second, we used Latine because we strive to use gender inclusive language.9. Noe-Bustamante L, Mora L, Lopez MH. About One-in-Four U.S. Hispanics Have Heard of Latinx, but Just 3% Use It. Pew Research Center,. Accessed May 13, 2025. https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/2020/08/11/about-one-in-four-u-s-hispanics-have-heard-of-latinx-but-just-3-use-it/, 9.Ibid., 9. Ibid., 10.Franco ME. Latine is the new Latinx. Axios. Accessed May 13, 2025. https://www.axios.com/2024/04/11/latino-latinx-latine-hispanic-term-explainer, 11. Mendez L. A Brief Explainer on Latine and Latinx. Hispanic Executive,. Accessed May 13, 2025. https://hispanicexecutive.com/latinx-latine-explainer/ To learn more about our decision to use Latine, please see Authors' Notes section at the end of this report.

whom worked in agriculture, into internment camps.[12,14] This led to the creation of the Bracero Program, which contracted Mexican workers from 1942-1947 in Washington, but ended in the US in 1964.[1,12] Due to the Bracero Program, many Hispanic/Latine agricultural workers settled in Washington, at first in Eastern Washington in the Yakima Valley.[1] By the 1950s, Hispanic/Latines began moving to the Puget Sound and Skagit Valley areas.[1] During this time, "Operation Wetback," (sic) the largest deportation of undocumented workers in the US, was occurring.[14] This operation used military-style tactics to deport Mexican immigrants, some of whom were American citizens, from the US.[14] Despite the increase of Hispanic/Latine workers providing work and labor to the Washington region and the US, Hispanic/Latines faced discrimination and mistreatment during this time.[1]

Through the 1960's and 1970's, Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta led civil rights movements for farmworkers in the Southwest regions of the US.[1] Hispanic/Latine farmworkers in Washington followed by launching strikes in the Yakima Valley from 1969-1970 to improve pay and working conditions for farmworkers in the Pacific Northwest.[1] Chicano students in Seattle also became active during this time and founding, in 1969, the United Mexican American Students (UMAS) student organization at the University of Washington, now known as MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan).[1] Chicano refers to an identity of Hispanic/Latines with Mexican heritage or ancestry.[15] During this time, El Centro de la Raza (1972) and Sea Mar Community Health Centers (1979) were also established.[1,16,17] El Centro de la Raza in Beacon Hill is a multi-ethnic community center that provides social services, educational and cultural programs and events like Cinco de Mayo and Dia de los Muertos celebrations.[18,19] Sea Mar Community Health Center was created to provide health care and social services to Hispanic/Latine and diverse communities in Washington.[20] As the Hispanic/Latine Civil Rights movement progressed in Washington there was an increase of Hispanic/Latine migration to Washington.[1] The Immigration Act of 1965 eliminated racial quotas that favored northern and western Europeans in the US immigration system.[21] Up to 1965, much of the Hispanic/Latine population in Washington was Mexican or Mexican American. In the 1970s and 1980s, political instability in Central and South American led to an increase in Hispanic/Latine folks from Guatemala, El Salvador, Chile, Nicaragua, and other countries to Washington, adding to the rich diversity in Washington.[18]

During the late 1980's and early 1990s, revitalization of the Farmworkers Movement was centered in Washington and in 1986 Cesar Chavez led a march in the Yakima Valley to improve the working conditions of farmworkers.[1] This was the year that the United Farm Workers of Washington was founded and later led to the first union contract for farmworkers in 1995.[1] It was through the efforts of

Tomas Villanueva and Rosalinda Guillen with the United Farmworkers of Washington that the union was able to secure its first contract at Chateau Ste. Michelle winery.[22]

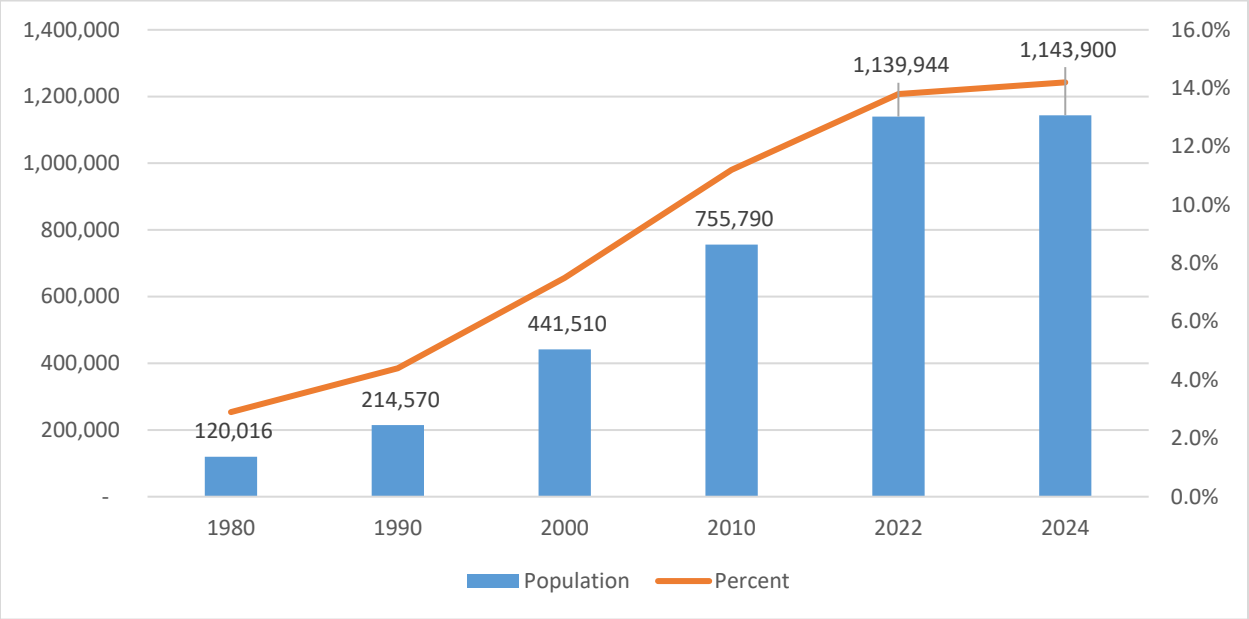
From the 1990's through the present day, there was an increased presence of Hispanic/Latine immigrants in Washington State due to Latin American countries, like Mexico and Central American countries, experiencing economic and political turmoil.[1,23] Many Hispanic/Latines settled in the Yakima Valley and Eastern Washington, where there has historically been a strong community of Hispanic/Latines. For example, in 2006, many cities in the Yakima Valley, from Wapato to Prosser, were predominantly Hispanic/Latine, with Yakima County being 39% Hispanic/Latine. Census data from 2024 gives the proportion of Hispanic/Latines in Yakima County at 53%.[1,24] In the Yakima Valley as well as Pasco, Burien, and Mount Vernon regions, there continues to be a strong presence of Hispanic/Latine culture, from panaderias or bakeries, taquerias or taco restaurants, markets, and Spanish radio stations.[1] There has also been an increase of Hispanic/Latines in urban areas, with Hispanic/Latines comprising 6.5 percent of the population in King County in 2004, to now being 11% of the King County's population (2024).[1,25] In King County and the Seattle area, the community of South Park includes many Mexican and Hispanic/Latine restaurants, markets, and businesses, as well as cultural events like Fiestas Patrias in September.[18] Today, Hispanic/Latines live throughout the state and this report offers insight about the rich diversity within this community.

Demographics

Hispanic/Latine Population in WA

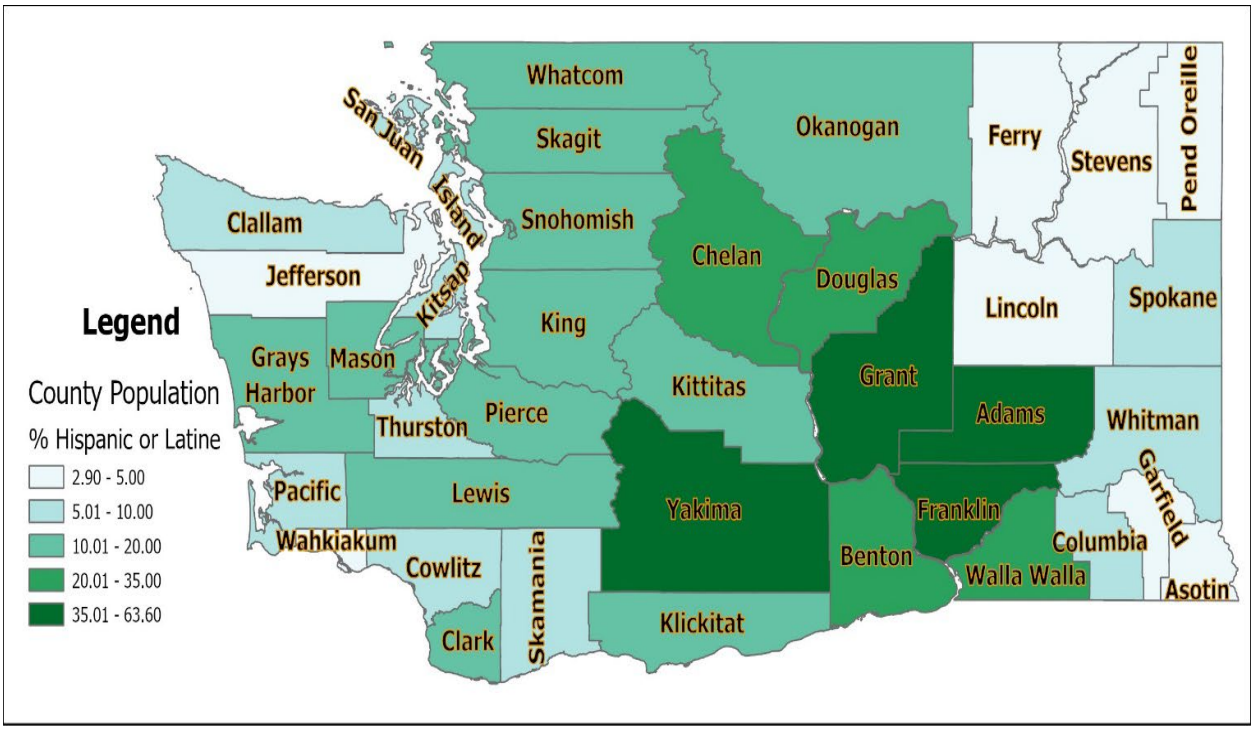
There are 39 counties and approximately 7.96 million people in Washington.[25] Hispanic/Latine presence in Washington has increased over time (Figure 1).[2] Today, the Office of Financial Management indicates that 14.2% of the Washington population identify as Hispanic/Latine and Washington is the 12th highest among states in total Hispanic population (count) and 16th in percentage share across the US.[2] The Hispanic/Latine population in Washington varies from 2.9% to 63.6% of county populations (Figure 2), with Adams, Franklin, Yakima, Grant, and Douglas having the highest percentage of Hispanic/Latines in Washington.[26,27]

Figure 1. Population of Hispanic/Latine origin in Washington over time. Data source: Office of Financial Management Population Estimates.



Note: Population is total count of Hispanic/Latines in WA and percent is the percent of total population in WA.

Figure 2. Hispanic Population in Counties of Washington. Data source: Census 2020 hosted on ArcGIS Online.



Demographics and general employment

Table 1 provides a quick glance at demographic and employment characteristics for the Hispanic/Latine and non-Hispanic/Latine workforce in Washington State, for the years 2018-2022. Subsequent sections describe the data presented here in more detail.

Table 1. Demographic and employment data for the Washington Workforce, by Hispanic/Latine ethnicity. ACS 2018-2022.

	Hispanic/Latine	Non-Hispanic/Latine
Age categories		
16-24 years old	20.9%	12.3%
25-45 years old	53.7%	47.7%
46-65 years old	23.7%	35.2%
Over 65 years old	1.7%	4.8%
Percent Female	43.2%	45.8%
Race		
American Indian/Alaska Native	2.2%	0.9%
Asian American or Pacific Islander	0.80%	12.4%
Black or African American	1.0%	4.6%
Other race	38.2%	0.0%
Two or more races	0.3%	0.1%
White	31.4%	0.8%
US Citizenship	68.6%	93.2%
Language spoken		
English	33.9%	84.4%
Spanish	65.1%	0.9%
All other languages	1.0%	14.8%
Highest level of education		
Less than high school	23.2%	4.0%
High school	38.1%	28.9%
Some college	20.8%	25.5%
Four or more years of college	17.8%	41.7%
English fluency		
Does not speak English	4.9%	0.2%
Speaks English, not well	12.3%	1.3%
Speaks English, well	82.8%	98.5%
Major Occupational groups		
Computer, Engineering, and Science Occupations	4.3%	10.6%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	8.7%	4.5%

	Hispanic/Latine	Non-Hispanic/Latine
Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, Media Occupations	7.0%	10.9%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	8.9%	0.5%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	2.4%	5.7%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	2.8%	3.1%
Managers, Business, and Financial Occupations	10.0%	18.4%
Military Occupations	1.0%	0.7%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	8.1%	9.7%
Production Occupations	6.1%	4.2%
Sales and Related Occupations	7.1%	8.9%
Service Occupations	22.8%	15.1%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	9.9%	7.2%
Unemployed	0.9%	0.6%
Major Industry groups		
Accommodation & Food Services	10.8%	6.1%
Admin Support & Waste Mgmt	5.8%	3.5%
Agriculture	10.9%	1.2%
Arts, Entertainment, & Rec	1.4%	2.3%
Construction	10.0%	6.8%
Educational Services	5.1%	8.4%
Finance and Insurance	1.8%	3.2%
Health Care & Social Assistance	10.4%	12.7%
Information	1.1%	2.5%
Manufacturing	8.3%	9.0%
Military	2.1%	1.5%
Other Services (Except Public Admin)	4.0%	4.4%
Prof, Scientific, & Tech Services	4.7%	10.7%
Public Admin	2.9%	4.8%
Real Est Rental Leasing	1.3%	2.1%
Retail Trade	10.1%	11.8%
TWU	5.2%	5.6%
Wholesale Trade	2.9%	2.3%

Age & sex

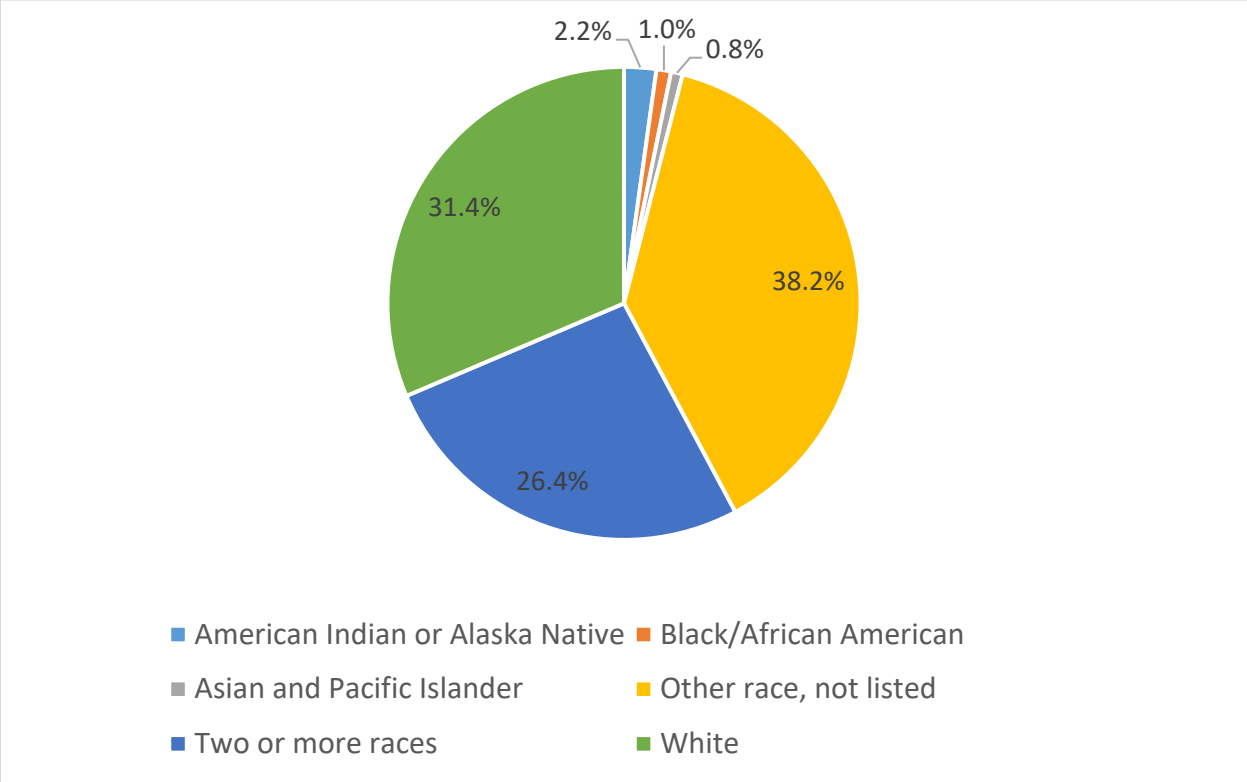
The Hispanic/Latine workforce in Washington State is younger than the non-Hispanic/Latine workers, and like the non-Hispanic/Latine population, most workers are male (Table 1).

Race Ancestry, Citizenship and Languages

Hispanic/Latines in Washington are diverse, identifying as many races, coming from many countries and speaking many languages. The most common races that Hispanic/Latines in Washington identified as another race, not listed (38.2%), White (31.4%), and two or more races (26.4%) (Figure 3). The number

of Hispanic/Latines reporting more than one race or identifying as another race (not listed) has increased over time.[3] This is likely due to changes and improvements in Census race and ethnicity questions, which led to options that are more accurate for Hispanic/Latines to self-identify.[3]

Figure 3. Race of Hispanic/Latines, Washington State. Data source: ACS 2018-2022 from IPUMS.



Ancestry & heritage

Hispanic/Latines in Washington State reported over 23 countries-of-origin, including identifying as Argentinean, Bolivian, Central American, Chilean, Columbian on the Census Bureau questionnaire. Most Hispanic/Latines in Washington identify as Mexican (75.9%), with significant populations of Puerto Rican (4.0%), Salvadoran (2.7%), Spaniard (2.6%), and Guatemalan (2.2%).

Language

While over 40 languages were reported for Hispanic/Latines in Washington State, the most common languages reported were Spanish (62.5%) and English (36.5%).[28]

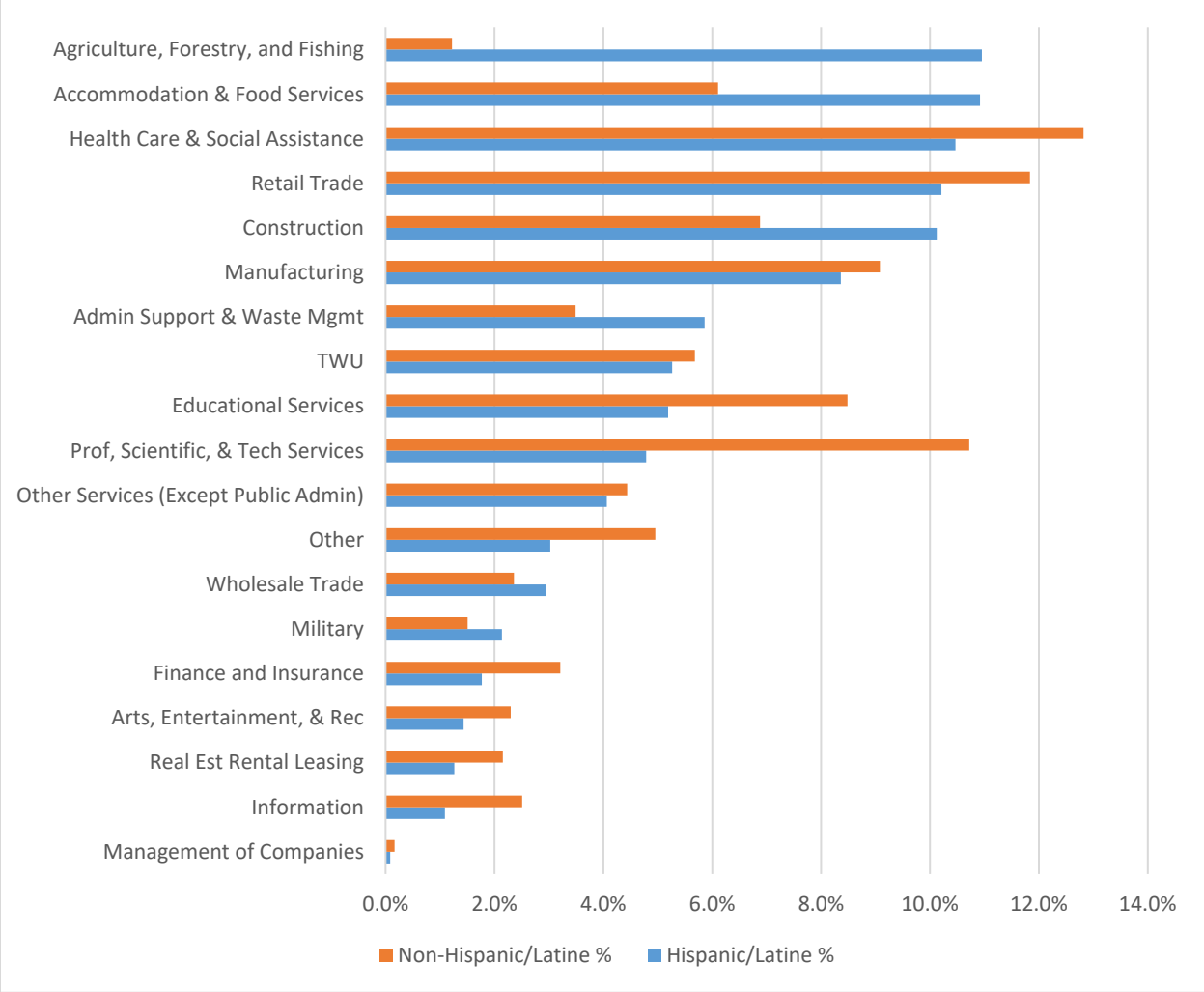
Employment & Workforce Representation

Most common industry sectors

Industry refers to the work setting and economic sector, instead of the person's specific occupation or job tasks.[29] We used the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) sector (two-digit) codes, which are used by federal agencies to classify businesses in the US.[30] In Washington, Hispanic/Latines were most commonly employed in 1) Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing (10.9%), 2) Accommodations & Food Services (10.8%), 3) Health Care & Social Assistance (10.4%), 4) Retail Trade (10.1%), and 5) Construction (10.0%) (Figure 4).

Figure 5 below shows the breakdown of each industry stratified by Hispanic/Latines and non-Hispanic/Latines. This figure indicates that Hispanic/Latines are overrepresented in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing industry, making up nearly 57% of those working in this industry.

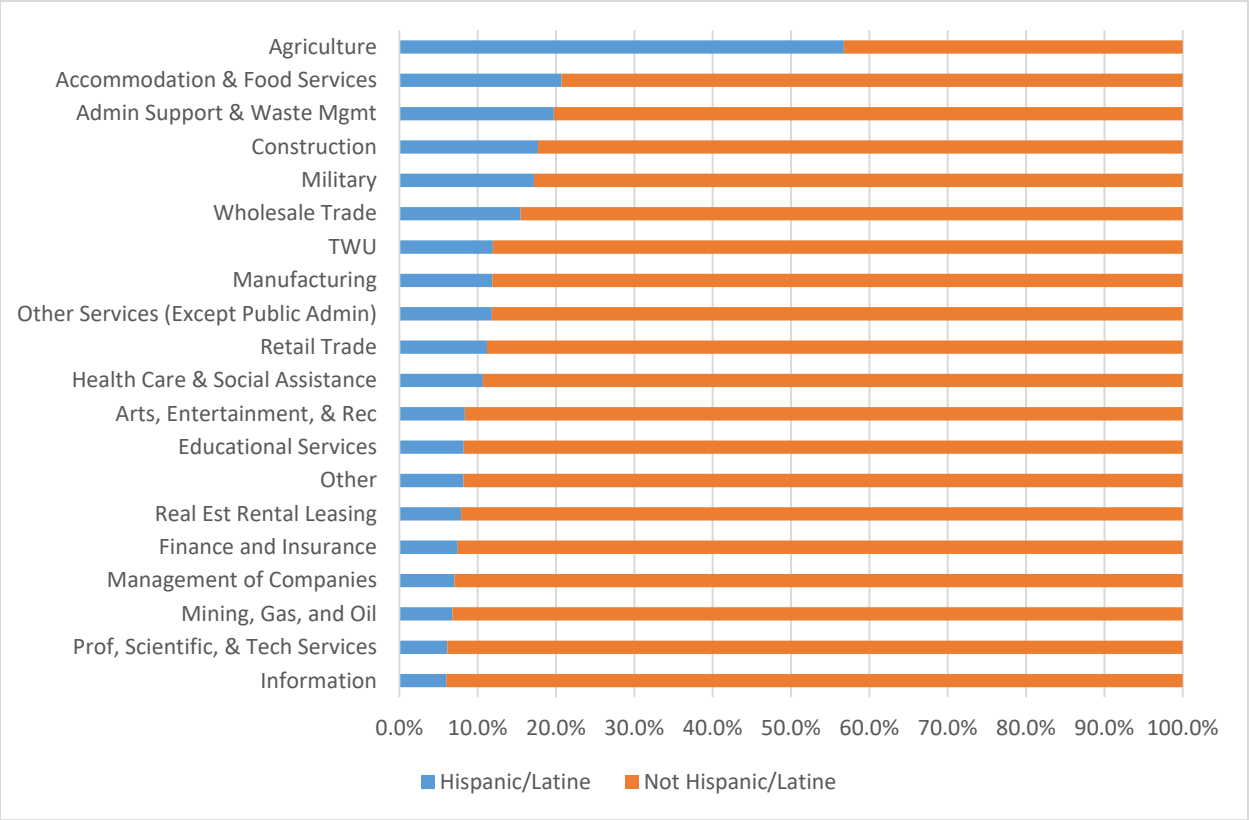
Figure 4. Industry sectors by percent Hispanic/Latines and non-Hispanic/Latines, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



*Note: excluded Mining, Gas and Oil industry due to small sample size (<0.05%).

Hispanic/Latine workers appear to be overrepresented in Agriculture, Accommodation & Food Services, Construction, and Admin Support and Waste Management, and are significantly under-represented in higher paying industries such as Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services, Finance and Insurance, and Information.

Figure 5. Percent of Hispanic/Latine and non-Hispanic/Latine by industry group, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



While Figure 4 presents the percent of Hispanic/Latine workers in each industry, Figure 5 shows how much of each industry Hispanic/Latine workers represent. For example, about 10% of Hispanic/Latines work in Agriculture (Figure 4), yet Hispanic/Latines make up nearly 57% of all workers in the Agriculture industry, and over 20% in Accommodation & Food Services, Admin and Support, and Construction, further supporting the idea of overrepresentation in higher hazard/lower wage industries.

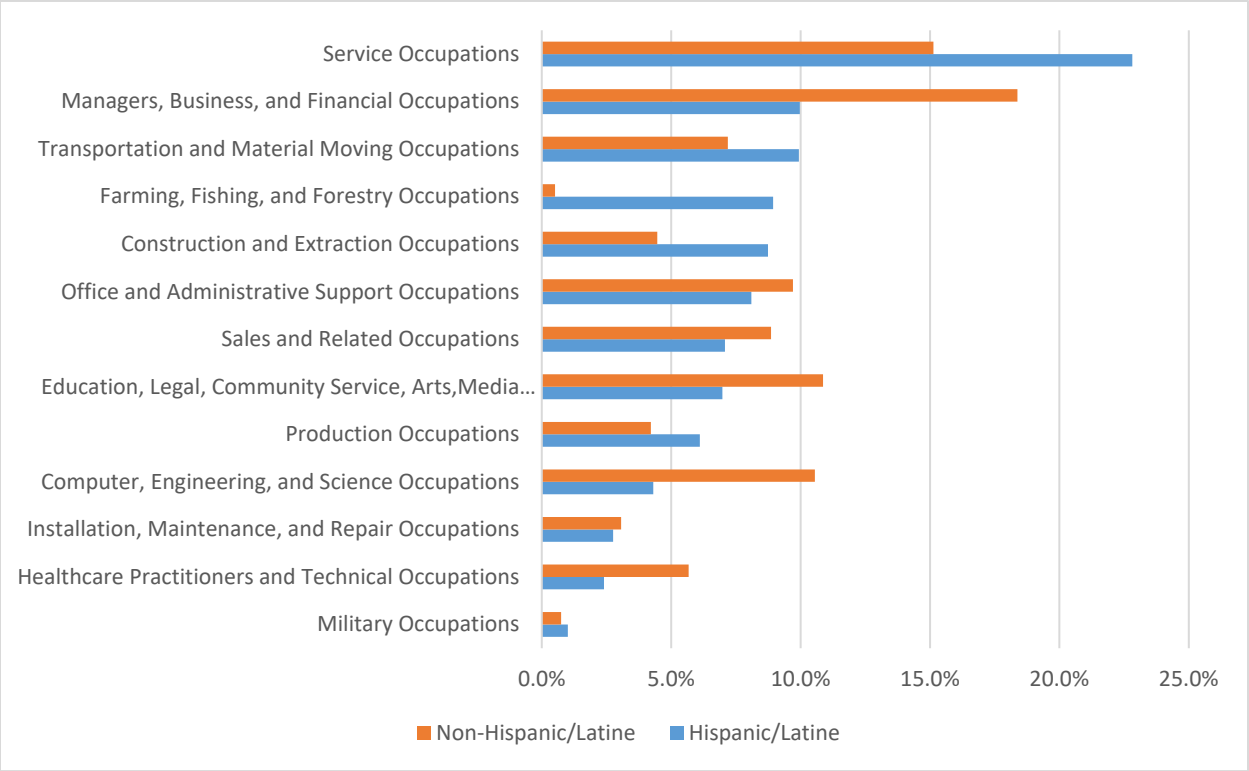
Most common occupations

Occupation is defined as what a person does for a living, or which job provides the most income.[31] For this report, we used Census Occupation codes, harmonized across years by IPUMS, and categorized into Occupational Categories (2 digit Census codes).[32] The most common occupational categories for Hispanic/Latines in Washington State were: 1) Service Occupations (24.4%), 2) Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (9.8%), 3) Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations (9.6%), 4) Construction And Extraction Occupations (9.2%), and 5) Managers, Business, and Financial Occupations (8.7%). Figure 6 displays the distribution of Hispanic/Latines and non-Hispanic/Latines by occupational category.

Examples of detailed occupations with significant Hispanic/Latine employment include:

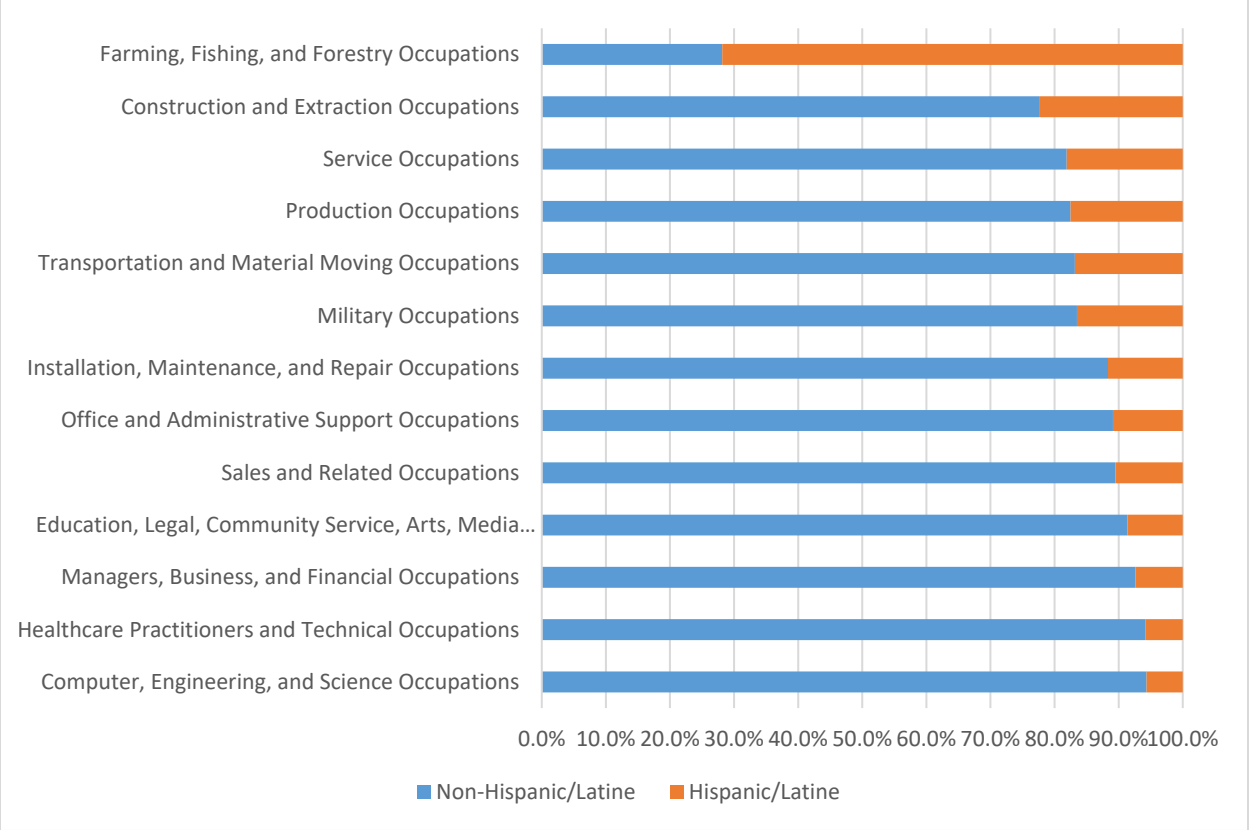
- Service Occupations: Cooks, Janitors and Building Cleaners, Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers, Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners, and Waiters and Waitresses
- Transportation and Material Moving Occupations: Driver/Sales Workers and Truck Drivers, Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Stockers and Order Fillers, and Packers and Packagers.
- Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations: Other agricultural workers, Graders and Sorters, Agricultural Products, and First-line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers
- Construction and Extraction Occupations: Construction Laborers, Carpenters, Painters and Paperhangers, Roofers, and Electricians
- Managers, Business, and Financial Occupations: Other Managers, Food Service Managers, Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers and General and Operations Managers.
- Office and Administrative Support Occupations: Customer Service Representatives, Receptionists and Information Clerks, and Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive.

Figure 6. Top occupational categories for Hispanic/Latines and non-Hispanic/Latines, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



Hispanic/Latine workers are overrepresented in Service and Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations, as well as in Construction and Extraction occupations, this is similar to the industries most aligned with these occupations (Figures 4-7). In addition, Hispanic/Latine workers are more likely to work in Transportation and Material Moving and Production occupations, compared to non-Hispanic/Latine workers.

Figure 7. Percent of Hispanic/Latine and non-Hispanic/Latine workforce by occupation, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



Employment

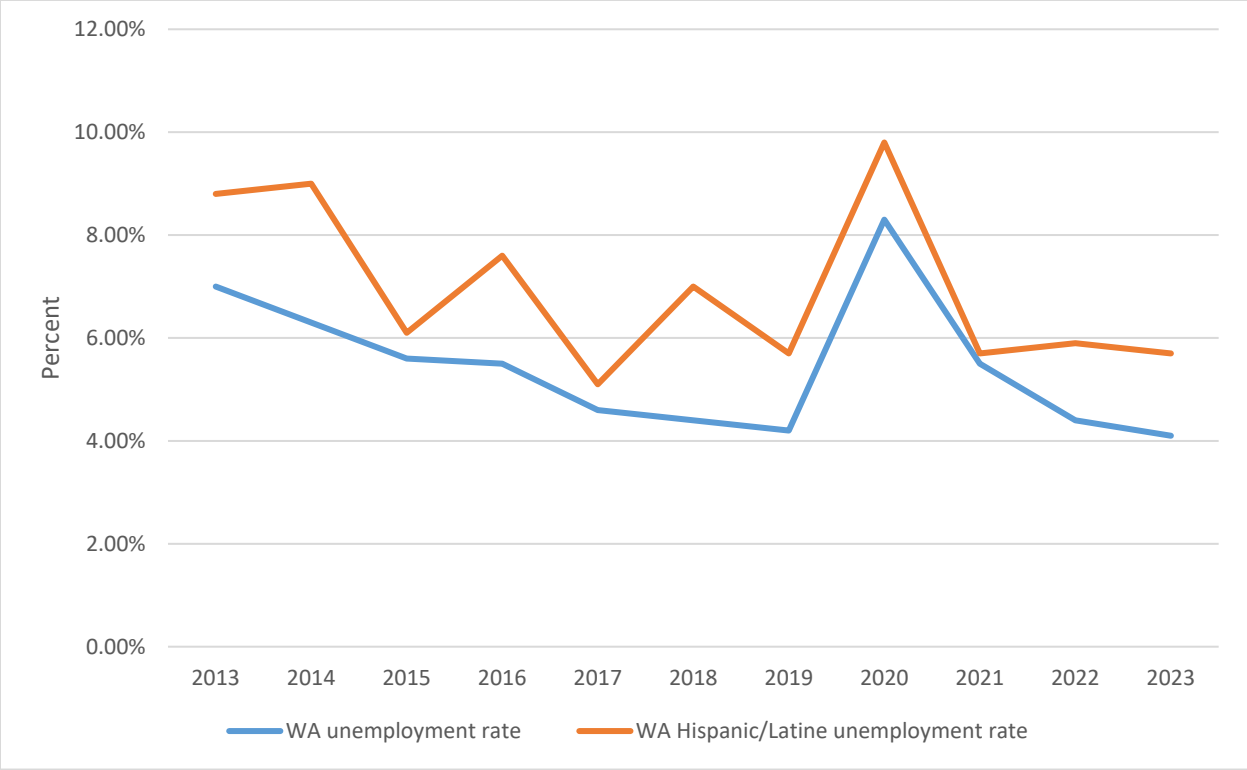
Data calculated from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics/US Census Current Population Survey (CPS) demonstrate that 68% of Washington Hispanic/Latine residents were employed.[33] This included 76.1% of Hispanic/Latine males and 58.8% of Hispanic/Latine females in 2022.[33] Non-Hispanic/Latine workers had higher employment rates than Hispanic/Latine across both sexes, and for all years.

Unemployment

From 2018 to 2022, the Washington State unemployment rate ranged from 4.2 to 8.3%.[34] The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) defines unemployment rate as the number of unemployed people as a percentage of the labor force, which is the sum of employed and unemployed people.[35] During the COVID-19 pandemic, as in most states in the US, there was a rise in the US unemployment rate to 11.5% in 2020 and decreased in 2021 to 5.4%, but has otherwise remained fairly consistent at around 3.8 to 4.9%.[36] Similar to national trends, unemployment peaked in 2020 as the result of the pandemic before returning to pre-pandemic levels in 2021 and 2022.[34] The unemployment rates for Hispanic/Latines in

Washington State consistently exceeds that of all other Washington workers from 2003 – 2023 (Figure 8).[34]

Figure 8. Unemployment rate of Hispanic/Latines in Washington State vs. Washington State overall unemployment rate. Data source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

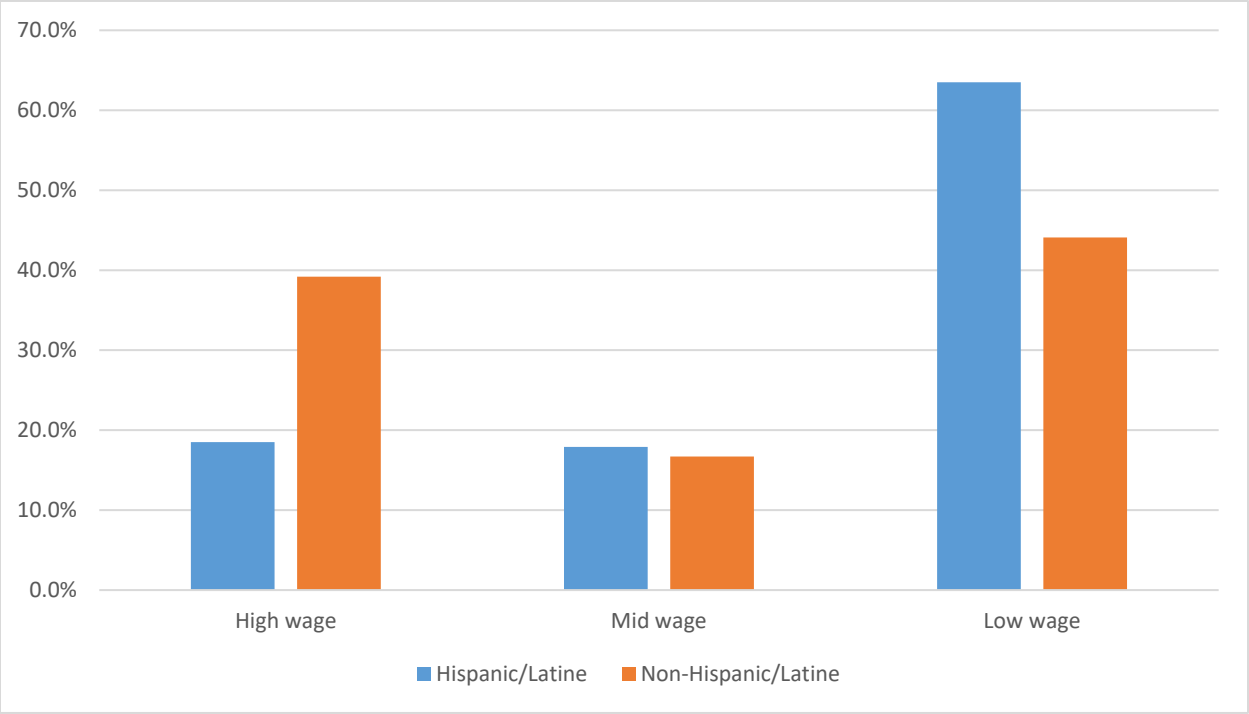


Wages[b]

Low wage workers are defined in this report by income earned from wages using data from the 2018-2022 American Community Survey Sample for Washington State. The definition used for low wage in this report are wages that are less than two-thirds of the State median wage.[37] A detailed definition of how we calculated this, is in the Authors' Notes section at the end of this report. Most Hispanic/Latines in Washington were working in low wage jobs (63.5%), 17.9% were working mid wage jobs, and 18.5% were working in high wage jobs (Figure 9).

[b] Wages differ from income in many ways. Wages refer specifically to money earned through labor or work, whereas income is a broader term and includes all forms of earnings, including investments, rental income, government benefits, etc. Wages were intentionally used because they are a direct indicator of compensation for labor and can be more predictable than income. Wages can highlight disparities in how labor in different industries and occupations are compensated.

Figure 9. Low wage worker status among Hispanic/Latines and non-Hispanic/Latines, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



Occupational segregation

Occupational segregation occurs when one demographic group is significantly overrepresented or underrepresented in a certain job category. Today, Hispanic/Latine immigrants across the US are disproportionately represented in more hazardous jobs, that lead to high injury rates and workplace fatalities.[38-40] For example, Hispanic/Latines are overrepresented in construction, which is known for its high injury rates and high numbers of work-related fatalities. In Washington State, data from ACS 2018-2022, indicates that Hispanic/Latines represent 12.6% of the Washington labor force, yet make up 22.5% of total construction workers in the state.[28,41,42] There are also differences between fatal injuries. Among US construction workers, from 2011 to 2022, the number of fatal injuries among Hispanic/Latines increased 107.1% compared to non-Hispanic/Latine fatalities increasing 16.5%.[43] Similar trends are observed for Hispanic/Latines working in agriculture. Washington is among the states with the highest number of agricultural workers.[44] In 2022, there were about 113,174 workers employed by farms, making up about 3% of total employment in the state. The Washington ACS 2018-2022 data indicates that Hispanic/Latines make up 72.8% of workers in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing. In 2019, data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed that the agricultural sector was amongst the most dangerous, with 410 work-related fatalities in private crop production, animal production, and aquacultural

industries, equal to about 17.4 deaths per 100,000 workers. [45] [46] Included in this report, are more examples of occupational segregation by sex, industry, and wages that were observed among the Latine community in WA.

Differences in Hispanic/Latines industries and occupations by sex

There are differences in industries that Hispanic/Latines work in by sex in Washington State. See Table 2 for a list of the top five industries (NAICS sectors) by sex. For Latinas – nearly 20% are employed in one of these industry sectors (Health Care & Social Assistance) and 16% of Latinos are employed in Construction. Overall, nearly 60% of Latinas and 58% of Latinos employment are in these five industry sectors in WA (Table 2).

Occupations by sex, followed similar patterns as industry sectors with the top three Latina occupations accounting for 54% of all Latina jobs and 46% of Latino jobs (Table 3). Service Occupations accounted for nearly 29% of all Latina jobs and 18% of all Latino jobs.

Table 2. Most common industries (NAICS sectors) for Hispanic/Latines by sex, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.

Female	Male
Health Care & Social Assistance	Construction
Accommodation & Food Services	Agriculture
Retail Trade	Manufacturing
Educational Services	Retail Trade
Agriculture	Accommodation & Food Service

Table 3. Most common Occupational categories for Hispanic/Latines by sex, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.

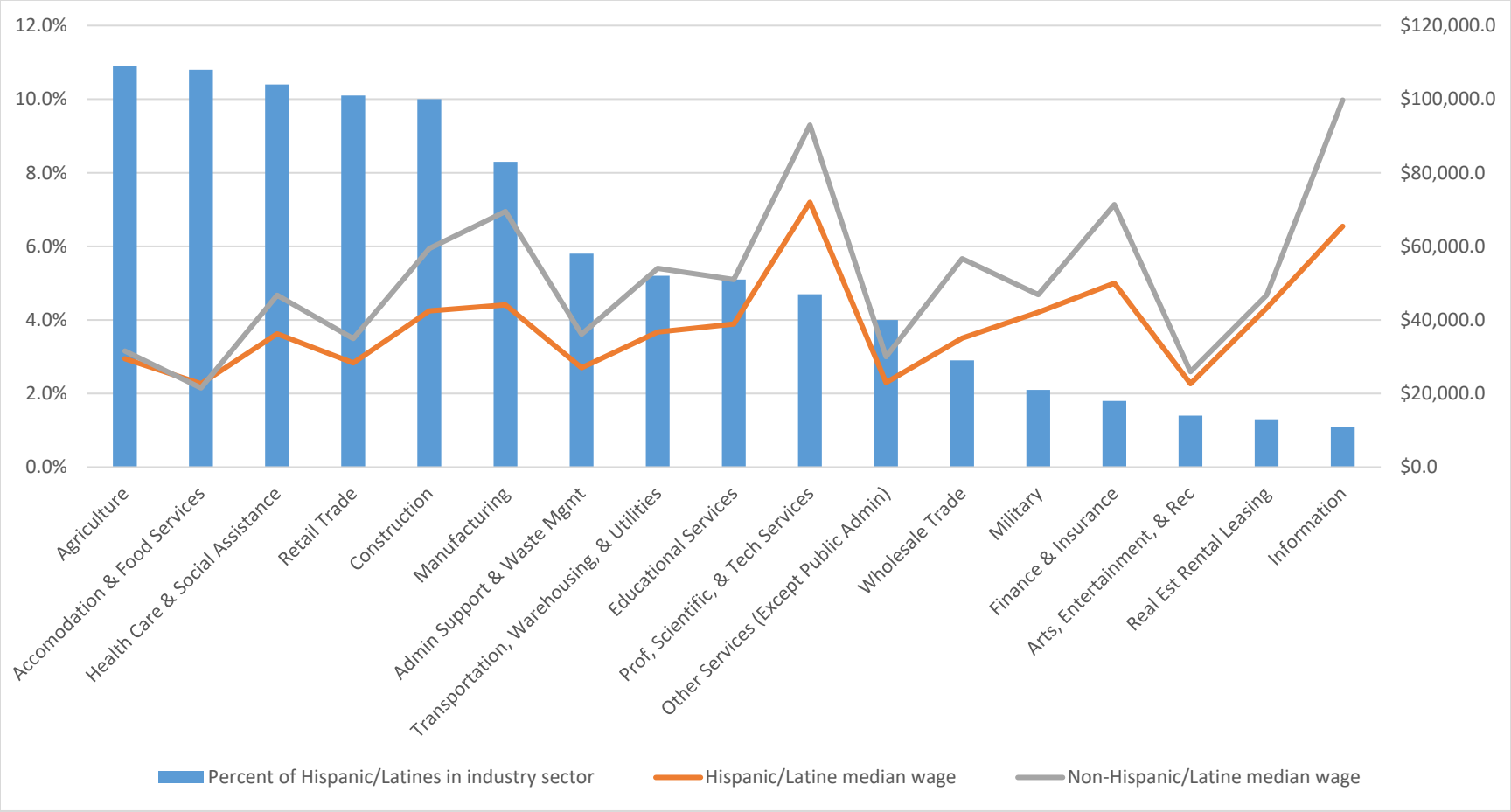
Female	Male
Service Occupations	Service Occupations
Office and Administrative Support	Construction and Extraction Occupations
Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, Media Occupations	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations

Occupational segregation and wages

Occupational segregation of Hispanic/Latines can contribute to wage disparities, as the industry sectors with the highest median wages are industries such as Professional, Scientific, & Tech Services, and Information, which are some of the industry sectors with the lowest percentage of Hispanic/Latine

workers (Figure 10). Most Hispanic/Latines are working in low wage jobs and underrepresented in high wage jobs compared to non-Hispanic/Latines in WA. Additionally, differences by sex are important, as data indicates that Latinas have the lowest median wages, and both male and female non-Hispanic/Latine workers make substantially higher wages than Hispanic/Latine (Figures 11-12).

Figure 10. Industry sectors and median wages of Hispanic/Latines and non-Hispanic/Latines, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



*Note: excluded Management of Companies, and Mining, Gas and Oil industry due to small sample sizes.

Figure 11. Wage status of Hispanic/Latines and non-Hispanic/Latines, by sex, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.

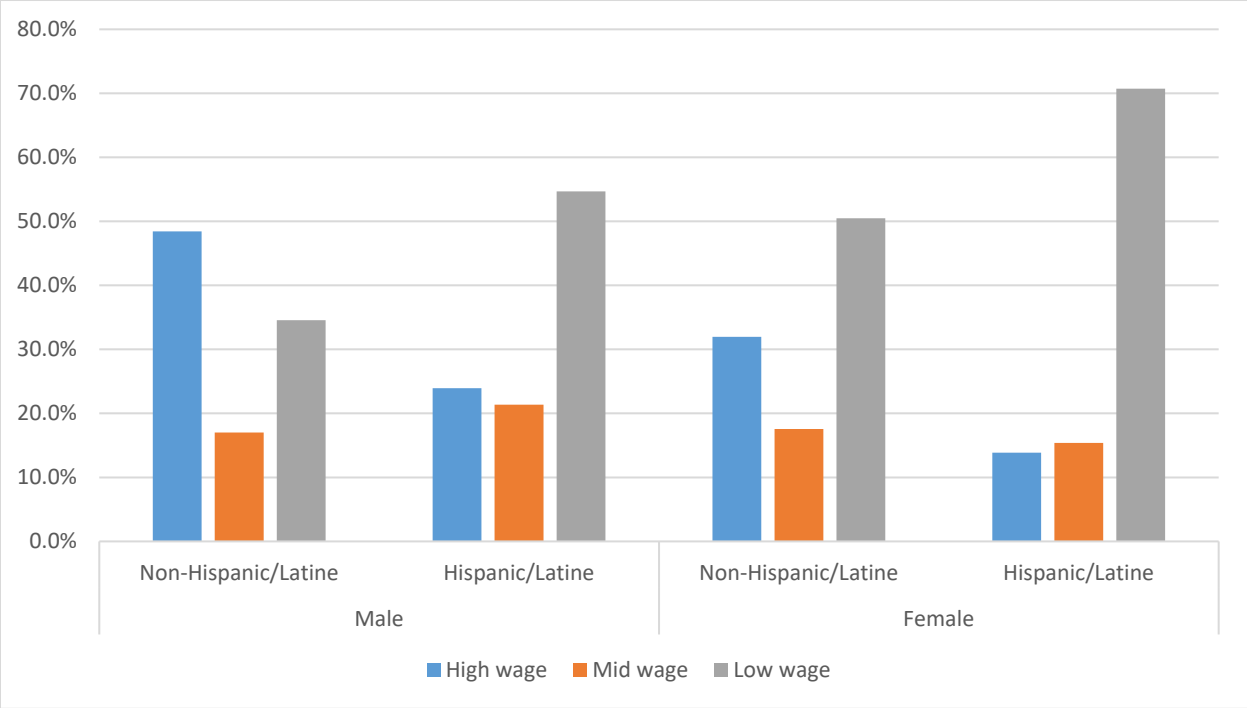
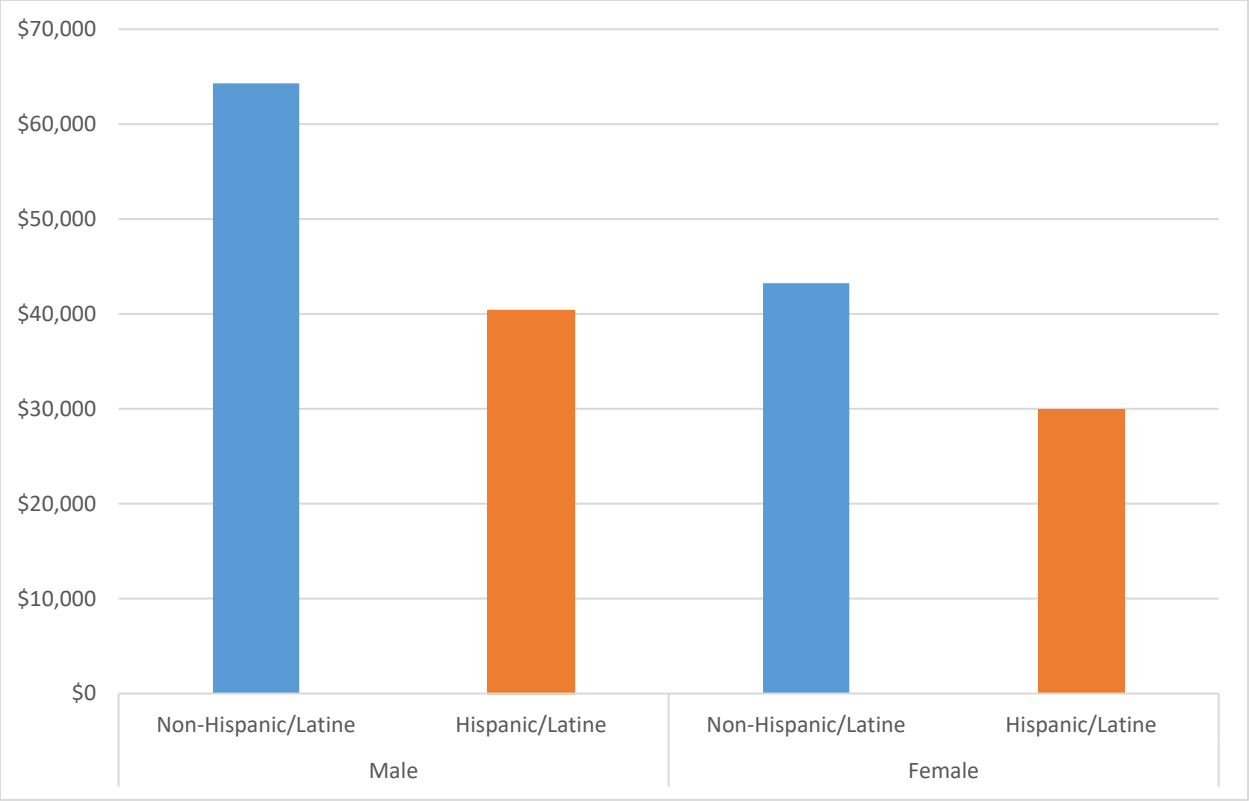


Figure 12. Median wages by Hispanic/Latines ethnicity by sex, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



Occupational segregation due to race, ethnicity, sex, and other sociodemographic factors keeps marginalized workers in jobs and positions with greater occupational risks, lower paid, and with less desirable work environments and benefits, which all impact overall health and well-being.[47,48] Occupational segregation can uphold patterns of poverty and marginalization workers of color experience and limit the economic growth and opportunities available to communities of color over time and across generations.[47,48]

Workplace safety & health

Occupational injuries & illnesses

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Survey of Occupational Injuries & Illnesses (SOII) surveys a sample of employers to collect workplace injuries and illnesses annualy.[49] While the SOII does collect data for race/ethnicity, it is often missing.[50] The SOII data for 2021 and 2022 were combined and do not provide a rate, but a percentage of both years. As such, Table 4 does not show rates, but instead the percentage of injuries and illnesses per year and there is significant missing data for race or ethnicity for every year.

Table 4. Non-fatal injuries and illnesses. Data source: BLS Survey of Occupational Injuries & Illnesses data.

Year	Percent of nonfatal occupational injuries and injuries of Hispanic/Latines	Percent of injuries and illnesses where race and ethnicity not reported
2018	13.0%	51.1%
2019	13.6%	47.5%
2020	14.3%	48.7%
2021-2022	14.1%	54.7%

In 2022, there were 24 total fatal work-related injuries among Hispanic/Latines in Washington State (Table 5).[51] Of the 24 fatal injuries, 6 injuries were associated with violence and other injuries by persons or animals and 4 were transportation-related incidents.[51] This was an increase in fatal injuries from the prior year.

Table 5. Fatal occupational injuries among Hispanic/Latines, Washington State. Data source: BLS Census of Occupational Injuries. Rates estimated using Hispanic FTE from NIOSH Employed Labor Force Query System.

Year	Fatal injuries (count)	Estimated Rate per 100,000 FTE
2018	16	3.5
2019	13	2.7
2020	24	5.5
2021	16	3.1
2022	24	4.8

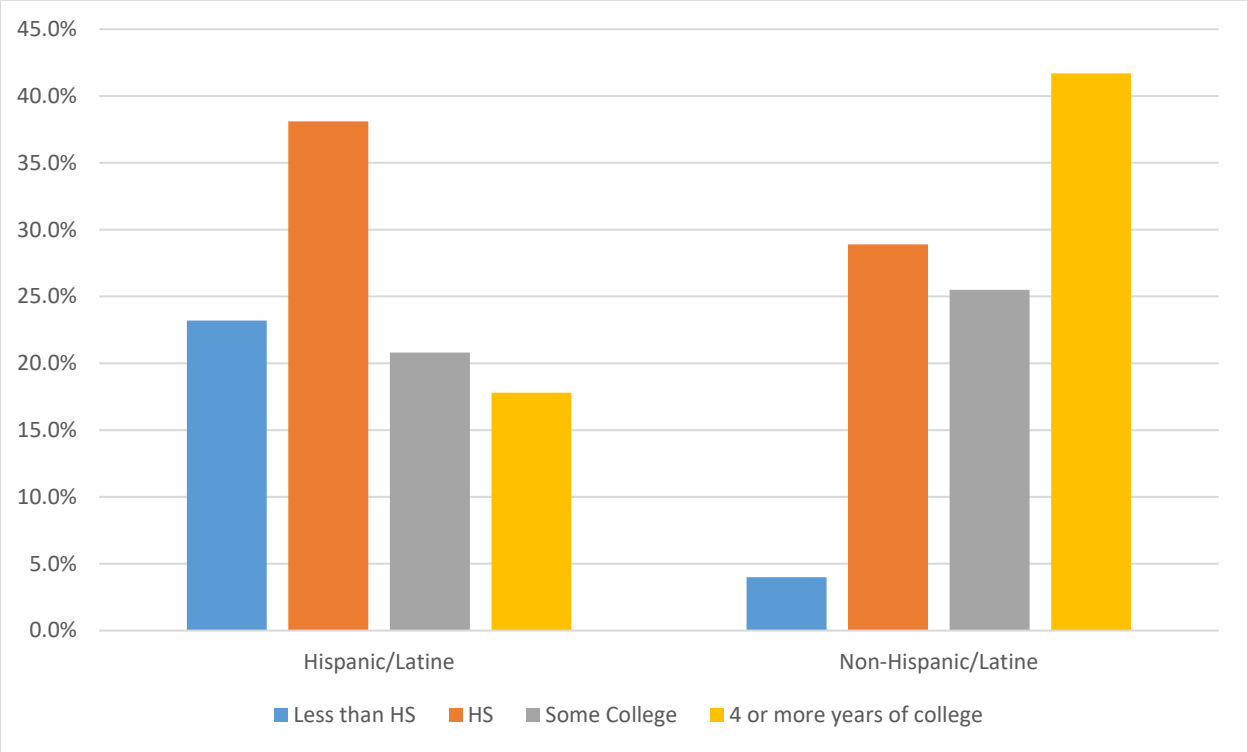
Education & Workforce Training

Completing higher levels of education often leads to work in less hazardous and higher paying occupations.[52] In Washington, about 23% of Hispanic/Latine workers had less than a high school diploma, 38% finished high school, 21% attended some college, and 18% had 4 years or more of college education (Figure 13).[28] In 2018-2022, 10% of Hispanic/Latines enrolled in community and technical college and 17% of Hispanic/Latines were enrolled in apprenticeship programs.[53]

This Washington state data show a similar distribution to national data, with 28% of Hispanic/Latines across the US, hold an associate's degree or higher. [54] Hispanic/Latines contribute meaningfully to the US economy as they make up about 20% of the total US population, however, systemic barriers continue to persist that result in lower rates of educational attainment.[54] For example, at four-year institutions, the Hispanic/Latine graduation rate is 13% lower than that of their White counterparts.[54] Research

supports that the disparity arises from a lack of culturally appropriate training for school personnel, socioeconomic-based school district segregation, low access to bilingual programs, financial instability, and lack of guardian involvement in academic support and planning.[54-56] Understanding and removing the barriers and challenges Hispanic/Latines face will ensure Hispanic/Latines have equal and equitable access and opportunities in achieving their educational goals.

Figure 13. Education level of Hispanic/Latines and non-Hispanic/Latines, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



Economic & Housing Inequities

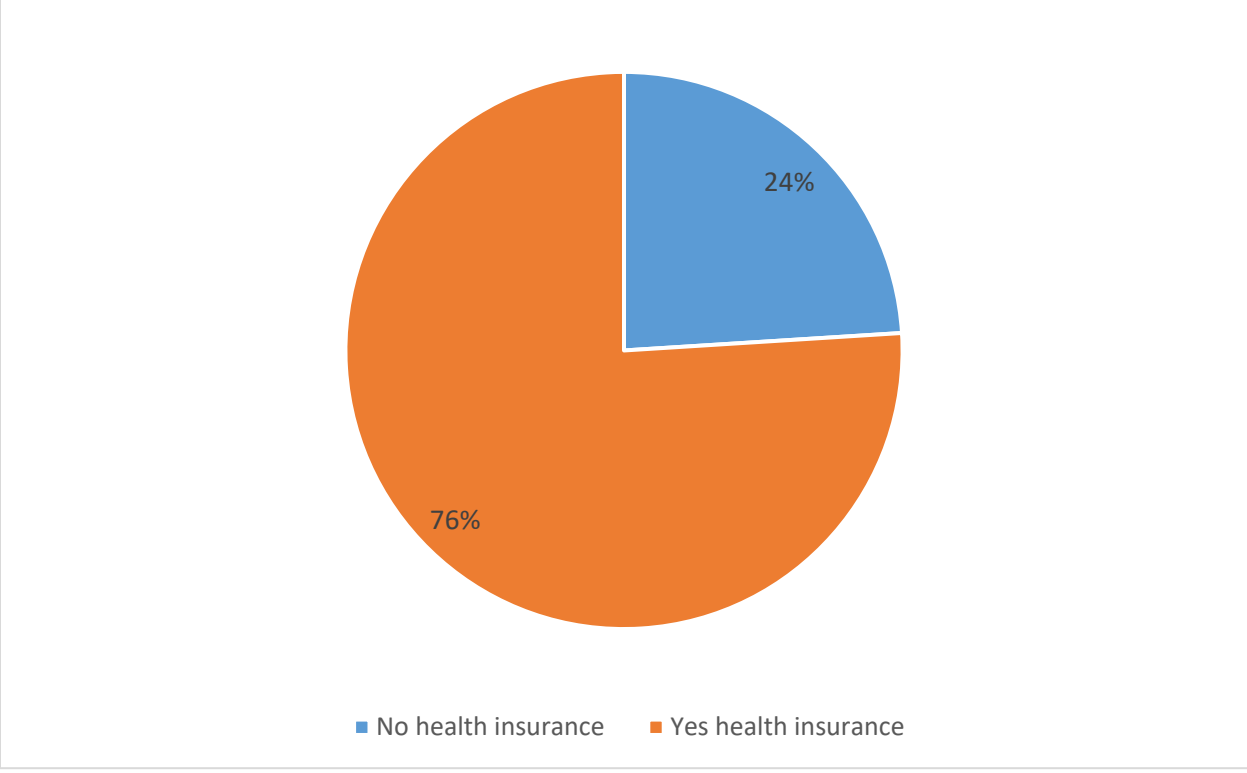
The median total family income reported for Hispanic/Latines in Washington State was $82,149, which is significantly less than the median family household income for all workers of $113,314.[28] For housing, 50% of Hispanic/Latines reported renting and 48.3% owned or were paying off a home.[28] Of those that paid rent, they reported paying an average of $1,360 per month.[28]

Health insurance

Most Hispanic/Latines (76%) had some form of health insurance (Figure 14), however the state average for uninsured is about 6% indicating that Latine are significantly less likely to have health insurance than the overall state population.[57]

Research indicates that Hispanic/Latines experience many barriers to health care including, low proportions of insurance coverage due to citizenship status or low wage employment that doesn't offer affordable employer-based health insurance options, geographical access to care, and often receiving less comprehensive care due to language barriers.[58] Not having health insurance and not being able to afford health services also leads to medical debt. In the US, 30% of Hispanic/Latines reported having medical or dental debt which caused anxiety and worry, using up their savings, cutting back on rent or food, or skipping medications.[59] Ensuring Hispanic/Latines have adequate access to health care is complex. Health insurance and access to health care services are tied to health as well as having a stable job with health care benefits and economic security.

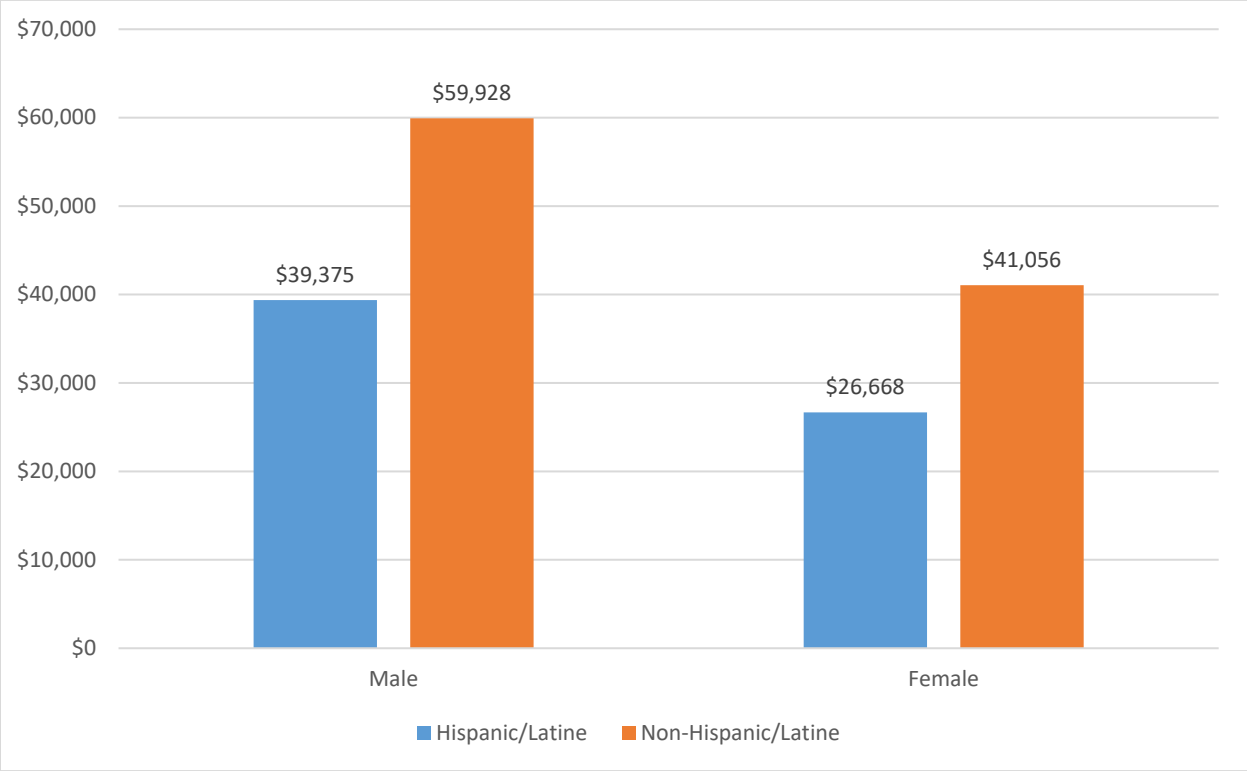
Figure 14. Health Insurance Coverage for Hispanic/Latines, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



Intersectionality of work and sociodemographic factors

Expanding our analysis through an intersectional lens, we present data for workers of Hispanic/Latine ethnicity in combination with other social identities affected by power and privilege, including sex, education, and US citizenship status.

Figure 15. Median wages by Hispanic/Latine and non-Hispanic/Latine ethnicity and by sex, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



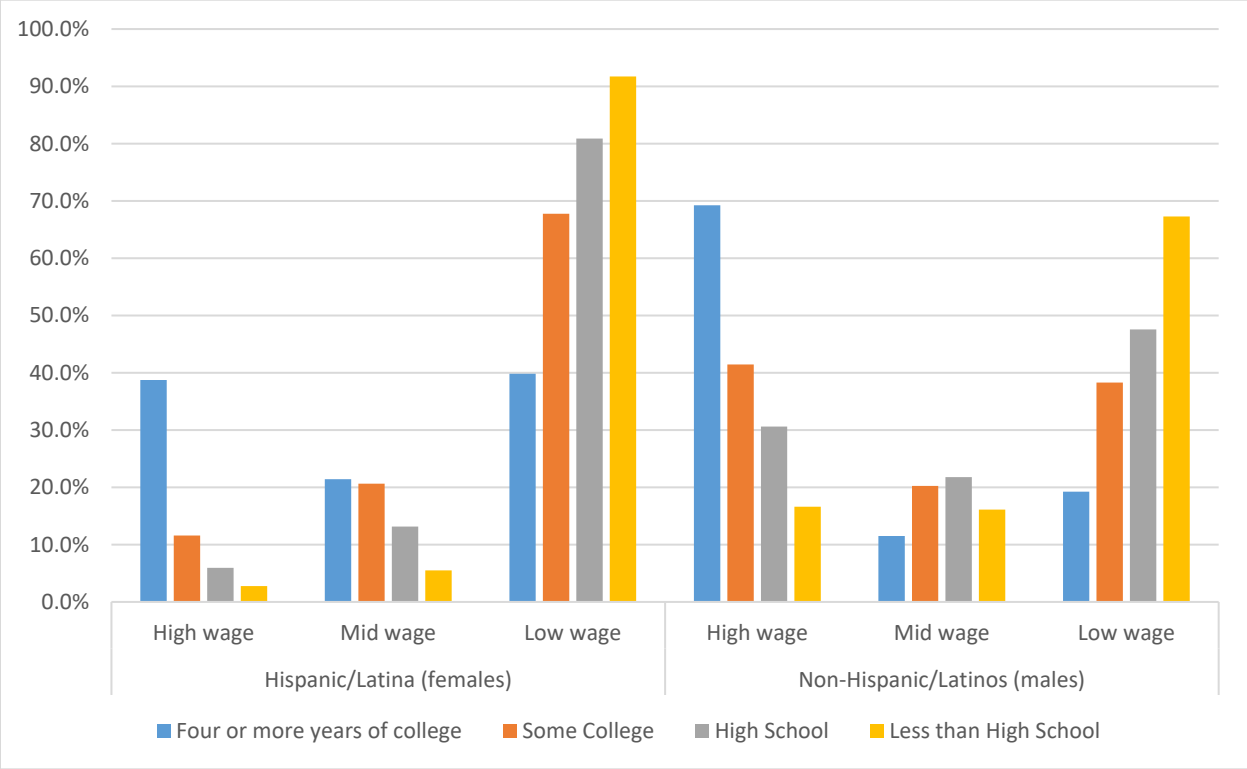
Overall, female workers make considerably less than male workers, with median wages for female workers approximately two-thirds that of male workers (Figure 15). Hispanic/Latine workers make considerably less than non-Hispanic/Latine workers, as we see in Figure 15, the median wages for Hispanic/Latine workers were about two-thirds of the median wages for non-Hispanic/Latine workers. When comparing by both sex and ethnicity, we observe a significant disparity between Hispanic/Latina workers and non-Hispanic/Latinos, with Hispanic/Latina median wages less than one half of non-Hispanic/Latinos.

Educational attainment and low wage workers

Most Hispanic/Latines in Washington were overrepresented in the low wage job category, regardless of education level.[28] Those in the 'less than HS' category had the highest percent of low wage workers at 78.1% and those in the '4 or more years of college' had the lowest proportion of low wage workers

(33.8%). Those in the '4 or more years of college' category had the highest proportion of high wage Hispanic/Latine workers (48.4%). Increasing levels of education do not provide Latinas with the same financial return, as it does for non-Hispanic Latinos see Figure 16.

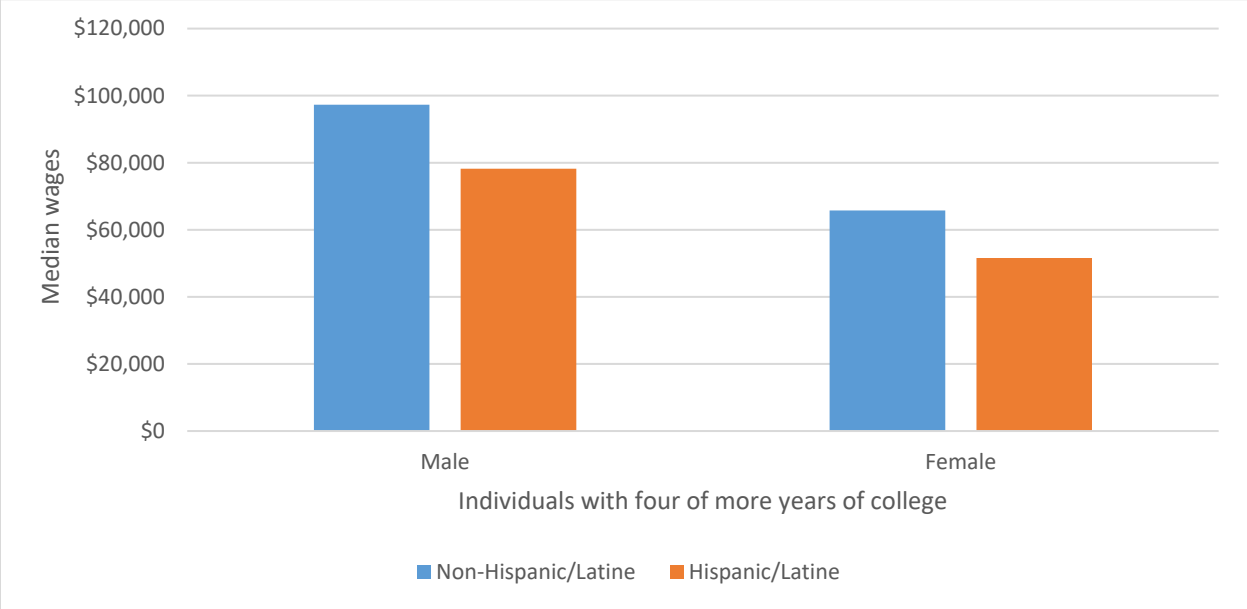
Figure 16. Comparing Hispanic/Latina (females) and non-Hispanic/Latino (males) wage categories across levels of education, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



Comparing non-Latinos level of education and subsequent job wage categories to Latinas, Latina workers were more likely to be in low wage jobs, regardless of educational attainment. Nearly 40% of Latinas with a college degree are working in low wage jobs, compared to 19% of non-Latinos with a college degree (Figure 16).

When controlling for levels of education, which might account for lower Latina wages, we find that Latina workers with a college degree make about half of what non-Latino workers make, and considerably less than Latinos, and non-Latina workers. For Latinas with a college degree, median wages were $51,593 compared to non-Latino workers with a college degree at $97,307 (Figure 17), indicating that education does not afford Latinas the same level of social mobility that it does for Latinos and non-Latinos/as. There are many factors that may contribute to these observations including whether Latina workers were working full-time, the primary caretakers of their children, or systemic and social disadvantages hindering Latina workers' advancement in their careers.

Figure 17. Comparing median income among those with four or more years of college by ethnicity and sex, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



Health insurance, sex, wages and language proficiency

Although most Hispanic/Latines in Washington reported having health insurance, there are about 20-28% of Hispanic/Latines without health insurance compared to non-Hispanic/Latines at 5-7% without health insurance (Figure 18).[28] Additionally, among Hispanic/Latines the uninsured population is greater for those in low wage jobs (30.4%), compared to Hispanic/Latines in mid or high wage jobs (19.6% and 7.7%, respectively).[28] This could be due to people not qualifying for Medicaid insurance and not working mid wage or high wage jobs that tend to include health insurance benefits.

Figure 18. Health insurance status by sex for non-Hispanic/Latines and Hispanic/Latines, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.

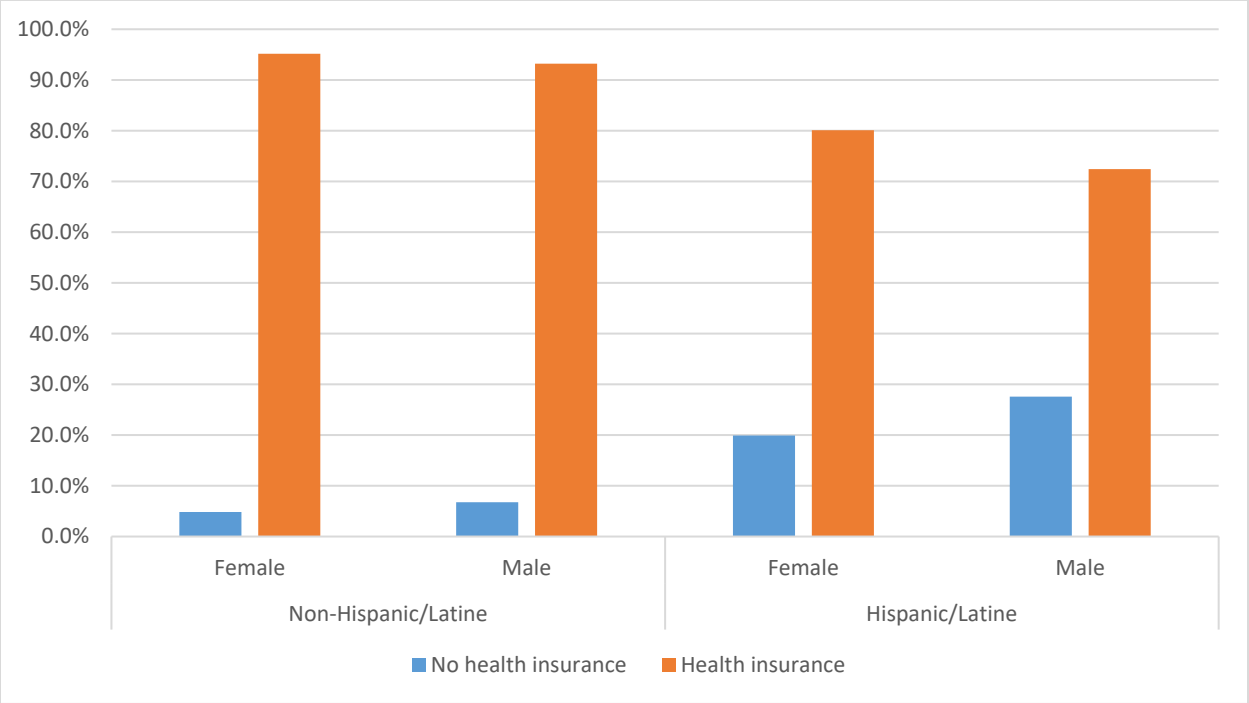
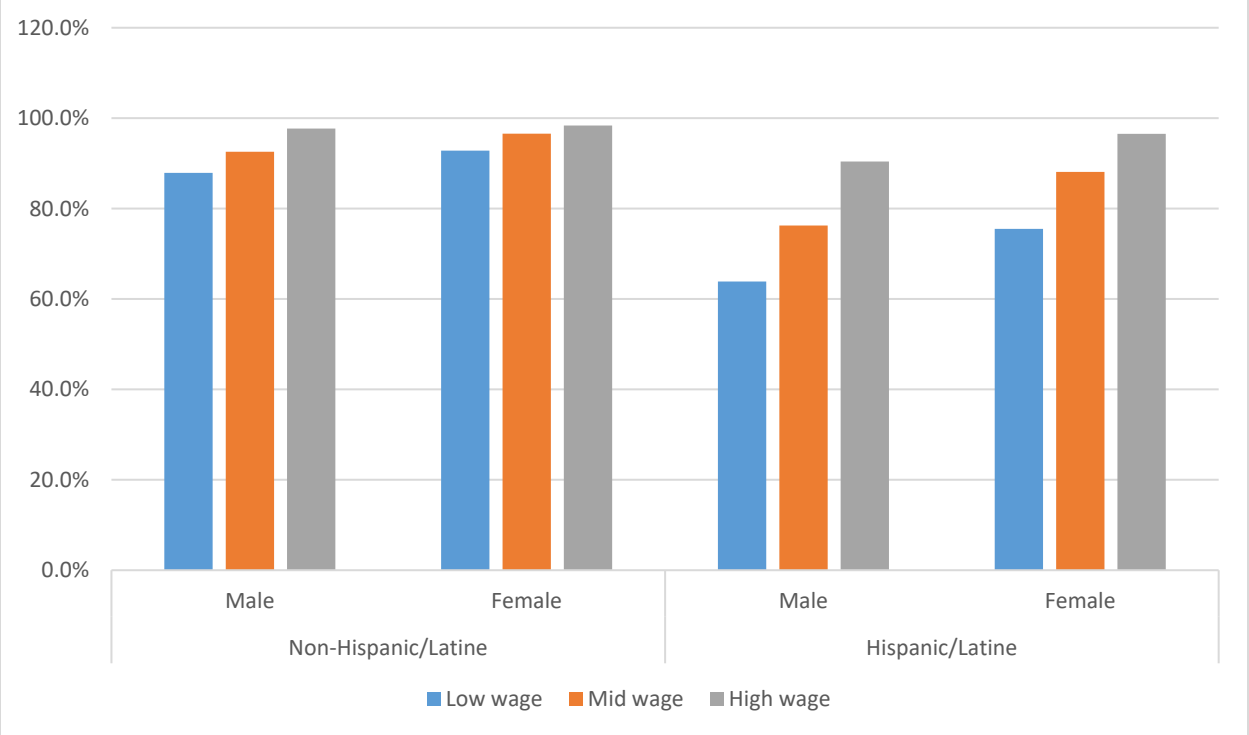


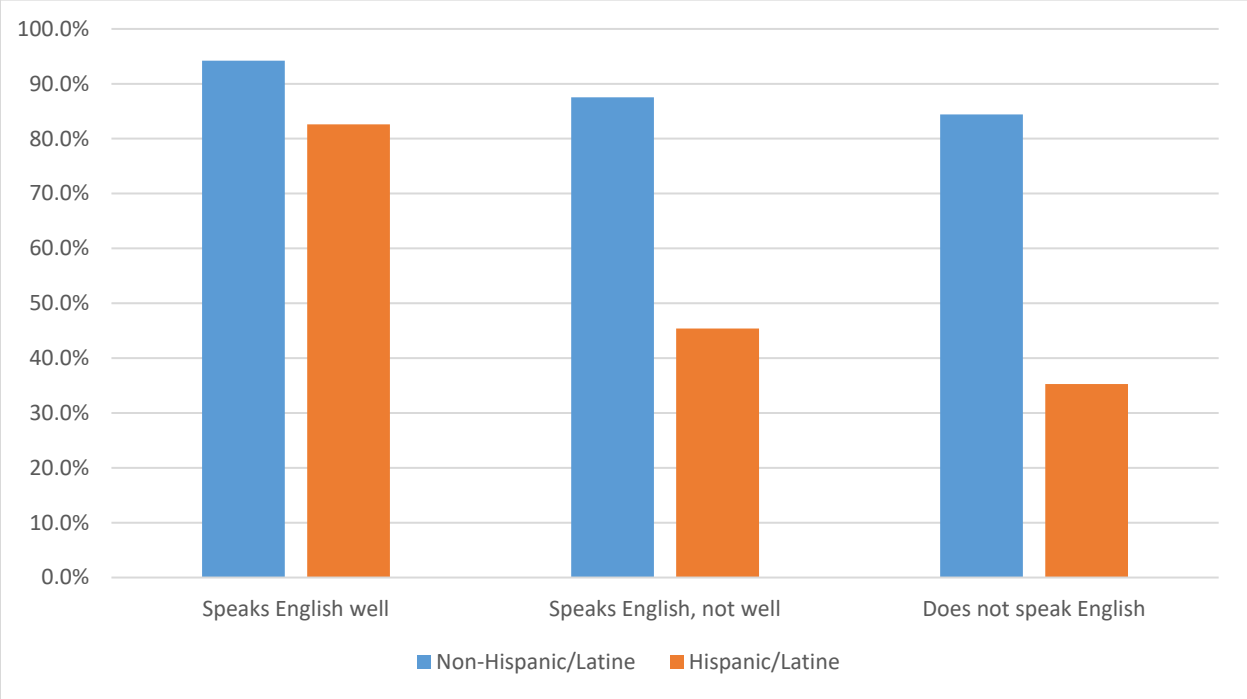
Figure 19. Wage categories for Hispanic/Latines and non-Hispanic/Latines among those with health insurance coverage, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



Non-Hispanic/Latine workers at all jobs have over 90% coverage for some form of health insurance, however this is only true for Hispanic/Latines in the highest wages jobs (Figure 19).

Figure 20 compares Hispanic/Latine to non-Hispanic/Latine workers, English language fluency, and health insurance coverage, and finds that Hispanic/Latine workers are less likely to have health insurance, regardless of English language fluency. Non-Hispanic/Latine workers who don't speak English are more than twice as likely as Hispanic/Latines who don't speak English to have health insurance. There are many possible reasons for this including immigration policy.

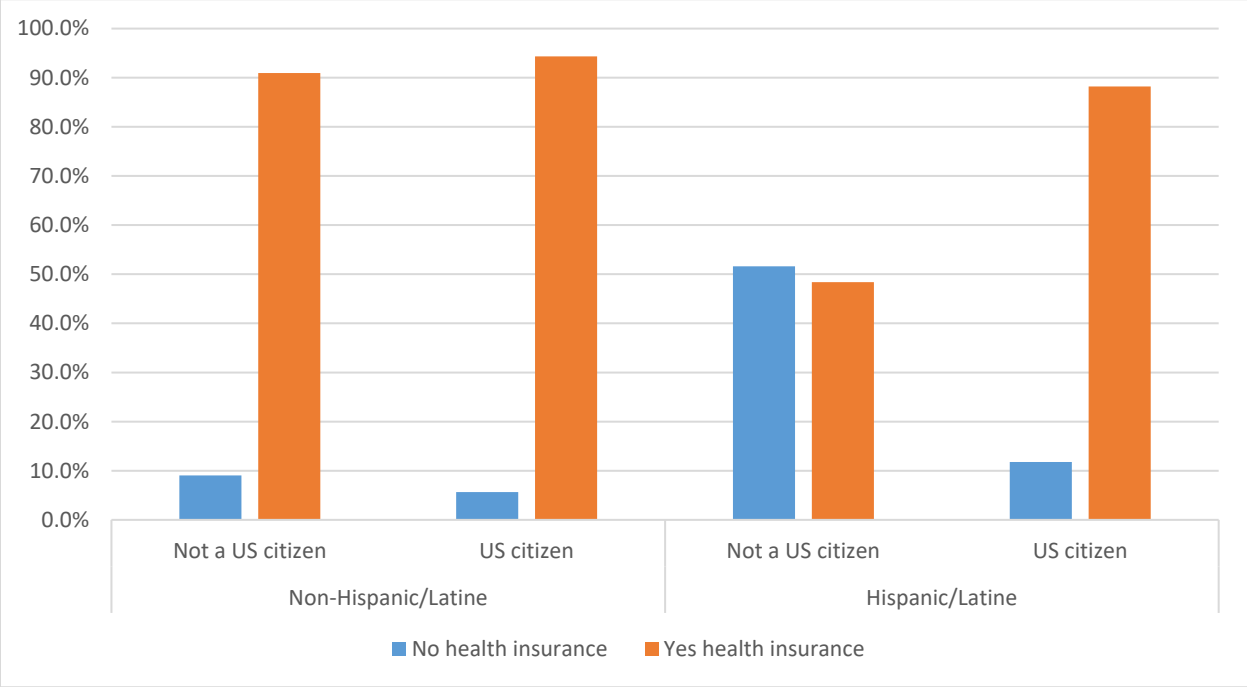
Figure 20. English language proficiency by ethnicity among those with any health insurance, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



Health insurance for foreign born and US citizenship status

Like the above section, we see differences between citizenship status and having health insurance. Most Hispanic/Latines who are citizens reported having health insurance (88.2%) and 48.4% of non-US citizens had health insurance (Figure 21).[28] In comparison, over 90% of non-Hispanic/Latines have health insurance.

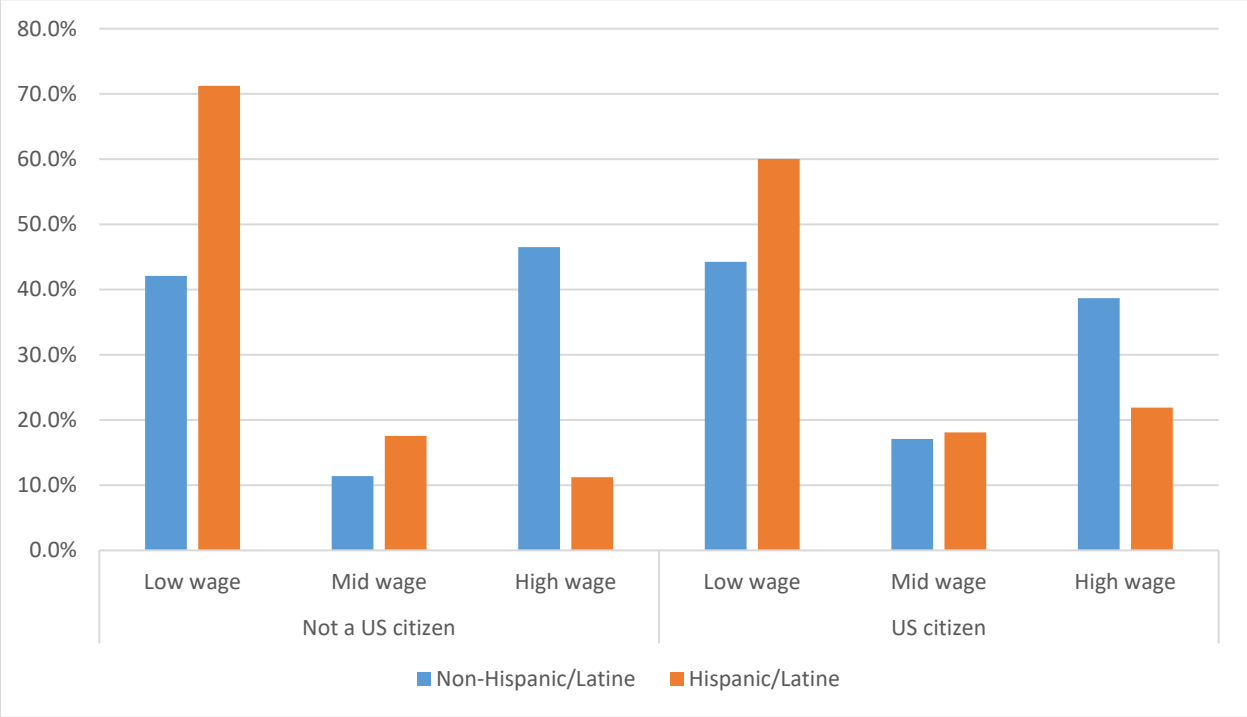
Figure 21. Health insurance and US citizenship status among non-Hispanic/Latines and Hispanic/Latines, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



US citizenship status and low wage worker status

Looking across citizenship status groups and low wage worker status, we observed the highest percentage of Hispanic/Latines in the low wage category, with 71% of non-US citizens in low wage jobs, and 60% of US citizens in low wage jobs.[28] Overall, most Hispanic/Latines were predominantly in the low wage category, regardless of citizenship status (Figure 22).

Figure 22. US citizenship status and wage status for non-Hispanic/Latines and Hispanic/Latines, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



Looking at immigrant status, non-Hispanic/Latine immigrants are more than twice as likely to be in high wage jobs compared to Hispanic/Latine immigrants (Figure 23).

Figure 23. Foreign born status and wage categories for non-Hispanic/Latines and Hispanic/Latines, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.

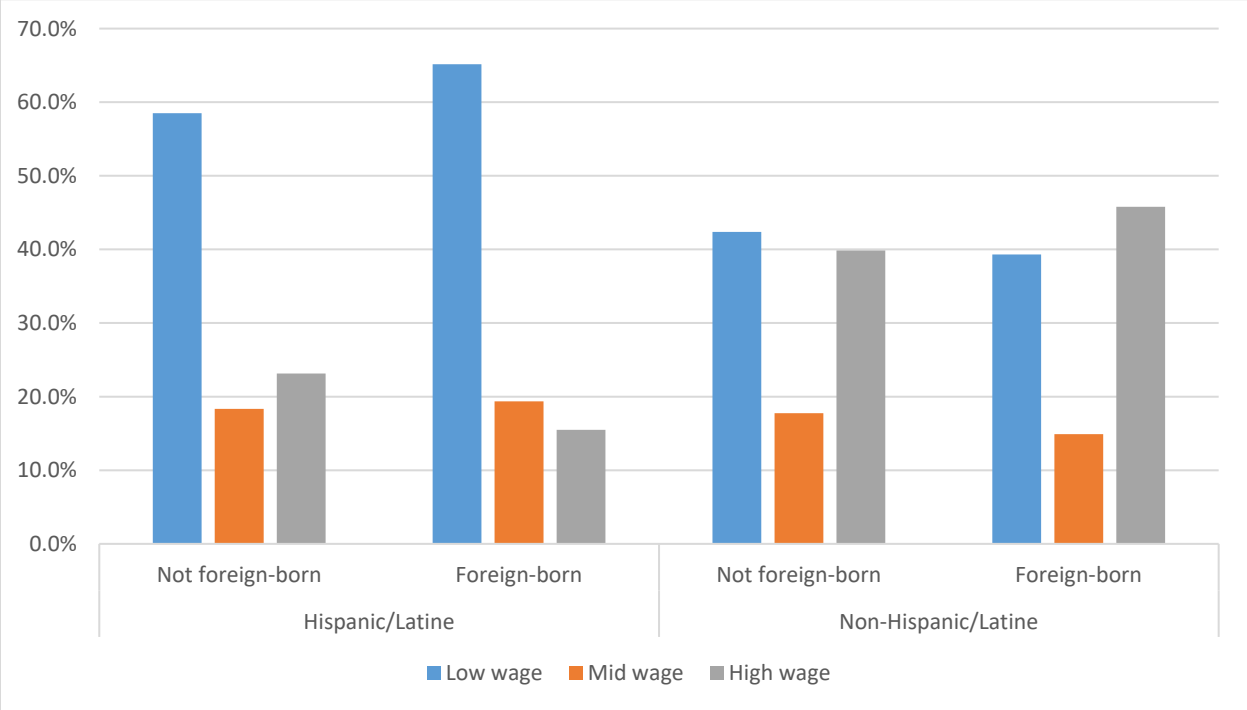
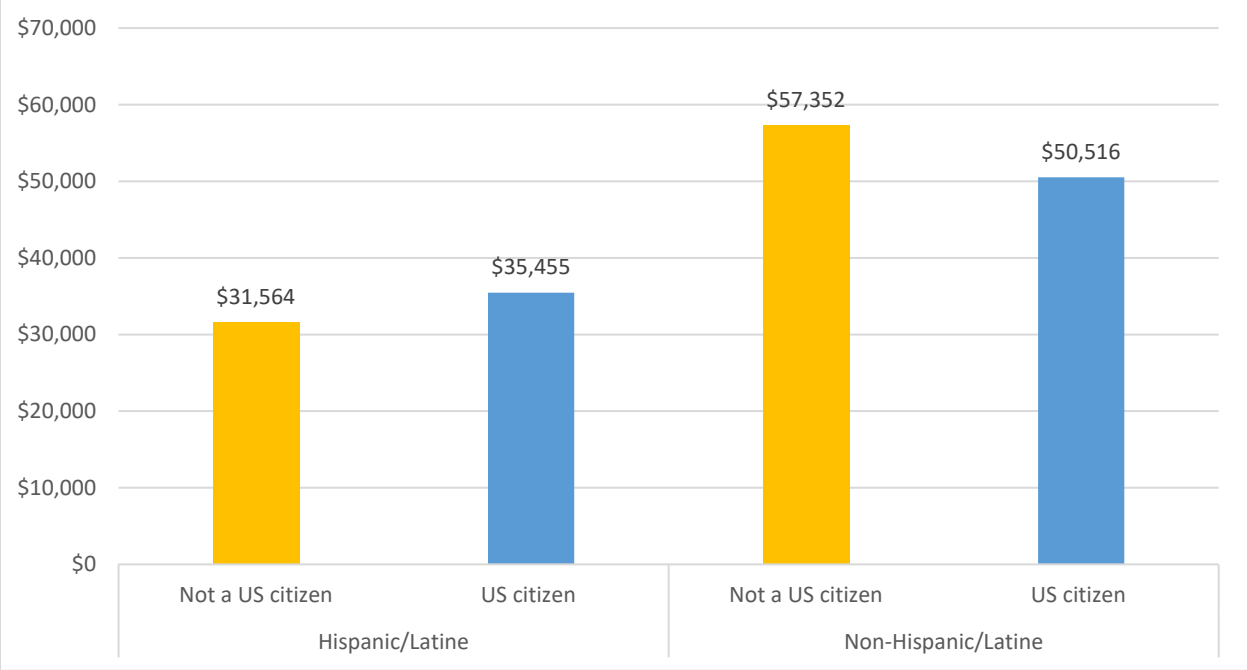


Figure 24. Median wages by ethnicity and US citizenship status for non-Hispanic/Latines and Hispanic/Latines, Washington State. ACS 2018-2022.



Median wages are very similar for Hispanic/Latine US citizens and non-US citizens, and both are significantly less than non-Hispanic/Latine US citizens (Figure 24).

Summary

This report provides an overview of the Hispanic/Latine community in Washington State. There is heterogeneity within the Washington Hispanic/Latine community in terms of self-identified race, languages spoken, geographic areas lived in, and industries and occupations where Hispanic/Latines work. Today, Hispanic/Latine immigrants across the US are disproportionately represented in more hazardous jobs, that lead to high injury rates and workplace fatalities.[38-40] We also found disparities between Hispanic/Latine and non-Hispanic/Latine workers in access to health insurance, educational attainment, wages, and citizenship status. Hispanic/Latines also predominantly worked in low wage work regardless of education level. These are all important sociodemographic factors to consider when developing solutions to not only address occupational health and safety inequities but also improve overall worker health and well-being.

This report also provides a snapshot of social, economic, and employment information that we can use to better understand the barriers facing the Hispanic/Latine community in Washington, and to bring data to the table to co-create solutions for workplace inequities with community leaders. A significant limitation of the data available to us includes the lack of detailed demographic information. Although the US Census ACS 5-year data collect information across these various demographics, not all datasets do. For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics SOII often had race and ethnicity missing from their data. Another example is the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, which does not collect race and ethnicity in the workers' compensation claim data. There were disparities observed in where Hispanic/Latines work, wages paid, and other socioeconomic factors that underscore the need to collect and be intentional about collecting race and ethnicity data. This will allow inequities among racial and ethnic groups to be identified and to ensure the health and well-being of all workers in Washington State.

Addressing equity in workplace safety and health as well as supporting work and social policies that lead to improved worker health and well-being will lead to a healthier and more economically stable workforce for Washington State.

Recommendations

Efforts to identify and diminish occupational health disparities in Washington could include:

- **Make jobs Hispanic/Latines work in safer**– Hispanic/Latines are predominantly working lower wage and higher hazard jobs. Ensuring Hispanic/Latines and all workers have safe jobs

contributes to improving the overall health and well-being of our state. This report showed that in Washington State and across the US, Hispanic/Latines are predominantly working lower wage and higher hazard jobs. Creating safer jobs and work environments can include occupational health and safety training to ensure workers feel knowledgeable and empowered to do their job safely, implementing and requiring use of engineering controls to diminish exposure to hazards, and safety leadership in management of companies. It can also include employers using state resources, like free L&I on-site safety consultations for specific recommendations to improve workplace safety and health.[60] WERC will seek to examine and understand the high hazard and low wage industries where Hispanic/Latine workers are employed and develop prevention approaches focused on those industries.

- **Create educational and training opportunities to improve career trajectories and address occupational segregation among Hispanic/Latines –** Occupational segregation may be due in part to the lack of educational and vocational training to provide career advancement and opportunities in safer, better-compensated jobs. Although the investment in educational and training opportunities will not solve occupational segregation and thus, eliminate economic inequities, it can increase the opportunities for underrepresented individuals to choose a career and job they want to work in. WERC will seek to research and evaluate those factors that diminish the career trajectories and promote occupational segregation; such evaluations may facilitate continuous improvement of programs designed to diminish inequities.
- **Collect multiple social indicators to more fully capture Hispanic/Latine experiences** - The collection of self-report race and ethnicity is vital. It is also helpful to collect data on one's "street race" (a term coined by Dr. Nancy López, describing how you think others would define your race), which provides insight in how Hispanic/Latines are racialized and therefore captures how factors such as, racism, colorism, and colonialism may impact their health. By utilizing Hispanic/Latine ethnicity in this report to define our population and measure outcomes for this report, we acknowledge that this is a simplification of a complex social construction. A range of factors that include historical colonization, migration patterns, and contemporary social and political dynamics shape the inequities faced by Hispanic/Latines. These factors vary widely depending upon one's country of origin, socioeconomic status, immigration status and the specific U.S. region in which they reside. In short, while broad labels like Hispanic/Latine are helpful in organizing discussions about certain shared experiences, they also mask nuanced realities and struggles of people within the group. Therefore, while the collection of data on race

and ethnicity is necessary, it is not sufficient to characterize the Hispanic/Latine population. In the absence of self-reported race and ethnicity, using established methods to identify racial and ethnic disparities in occupational health injury and illness can advance research and understanding of disparities. WERC will continue to develop research methods to impute race and ethnicity to supplement datasets without such data. Additional actions will be to promote best practices in collecting race and ethnicity and other social indicators in all governmental datasets.

- **Use data to understand how organizations can better reach Hispanic/Latines and provide better training materials –** Communities are not hard-to-reach or to blame for inequities they experience. Instead, we need to focus on changing systems and institutions and improve access and equity in our processes and ways of reaching people. We can do this by ensuring language and geographic equity in resources and materials to increase knowledge and awareness about health programs, resources, and to provide adequate workplace safety and health training. Providing culturally appropriate training in a workers' preferred language can increase awareness and knowledge to keep workers safer at work. WERC will continue to explore industries and occupations where Hispanic/Latine work and where there is significant need for Spanish (and other) language training materials, will improve our ability to share important safety and health training, rules, and workplace rights.

- **Collaborate and partner with non-profits and community-based organizations** – Working together to build on each other's efforts and share resources and information will allow us to better serve communities. Working with other organizations and focusing on workers' insights and solutions can ensure we can expand all our efforts in ensuring the public's health. Community collaboration is a core element of WERCs mission to co-create and conduct research to address inequities. Community collaborations will involve industries with high proportions of Hispanic/Latine workers and community groups assisting Hispanic/Latines with navigating social insurance benefits, including workers compensation benefits.
- **Work closely with state and local government agencies** – There are many state and local agencies that have similar commitments to improving the health and safety of Hispanic/Latine in Washington State. Collaborating with these agencies, can improve the collective health and safety of Hispanic/Latine workers, without duplicating efforts. WERC intends to collaborate with

other state agencies on projects that improve worker safety and health, and lessen the societal and personal impact of occupational injuries and illnesses.

Efforts in Washington State[3]

There are organizations in Washington and across the US that are working towards addressing occupational health disparities and overall worker health and well-being for Hispanic/Latines.

Work Equity & Employment

- **Worker Outreach Grants Program** – Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) provides outreach grants to organizations.[61] These grants provide financial support to organizations in their outreach and education efforts for workers.[61] The organizations work to ensure that workers know about their rights, can address workers' concerns, and facilitate their connection with L&I.[61] This program works to ensure that underserved workers have equitable access to information and feel empowered to exercise their rights.[61] Through past efforts, this program has partnered with CAFÉ (Community for the Advancement of Family Education), Comunidades Sin Fronteras, Eritrean Association in Greater Seattle, Indian American Community Services, Latino Civic Alliance, Nuestras Raices Community Center, Seattle Korean Cultural Center, and West African Community Council.[61]
- **Office of Community Relations** – The Office of Community Relations at L&I helps to connect workers to services offered at L&I in their preferred language.[62] The Office of Community Relations works to make connecting with the state agency easier for workers. They visit workers at their jobs to provide education about their workplace rights, attend community events, receive customer feedback, and provide one-on-one assistance in accessing L&I services.[62] They also support workers that moved out of the country to ensure they can access resources they need.[62]
- **Pesticide Illness Prevention Program** – Washington State Department of Health Pesticide Illness Prevention Program investigates pesticide-related illnesses and suspected poisonings reported.[63] The program works with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to determine whether the illness or injury was due to pesticide exposure.[63] Through these efforts, they work to improve safety practices and remove unsafe products from the market.[63]

[3] This section is not exhaustive and is not an endorsement of any particular program or organization.

- **Community to Community Development (C2C)** – C2C is a woman led organization that aims to confront racism, empower underrepresented people to have an equal voice in decision-making, develop cross-cultural awareness, restore justice to food and cultural practice, promote community relationships, work in solidarity for human rights for all races and genders, and demonstrate the value of feminine intellect and leadership.[64] C2C organizes a Farmworker Tribunal in Olympia, WA every year that works to amplify farmworker voices and share their top priorities to highlight worker perspectives in legislative settings. They also work to empower and educate voters in efforts to create healthier and more just communities.
- **The Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (PNASH)** – PNASH is a research center that partners with workers, employers, and communities to promote the best safety and health practices or producers, employers, and workers in farming, fishing, and forestry.[65] In addition to provide accessible training to workers and employers, PNASH also funds pilot projects for emerging research and education as well as outreach mini grants that provides opportunities to expand education and training materials.
- **Fair Work Center (FWC)** – FWC is a center that works with workers across various industries to improve working conditions, especially for underrepresented groups like immigrants, women, people with disability, and LGBTQ+ workers.[66] FWC works to build power through providing information on workers' rights, speaking out and taking action to improve workplace conditions, and hold employers accountable to workplace laws and standards through providing legal services.

Housing & Community Investment

- **Temporary Worker Housing Inspections** – Washington State Department of Health conducts temporary worker housing inspections for migrant farmworkers.[67] These inspections are conducted when there is a change of ownership, when they receive a complaint, or when a follow-up inspection is required.[67] These inspections aim to ensure that migrant farmworkers are provided livable and adequate housing.[67]

Education & Training

- **The Community for the Advancement of Family Education (CAFÉ)** – CAFÉ is a non-profit that focuses on family education, community participation, promoting leadership, and environmental justice.[68] CAFÉ is based in Wenatchee, WA, a region with a large Hispanic/Latine community, and they provide support for many activities, such as, with technical computer skills

for small business, informational sessions for FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and WAFSA (WA Application for Student Financial Aid) for parents, and activities to promote physical activities and arts for teens.

Future directions

The purpose of this report was to learn about the diverse Hispanic/Latine communities living and working in Washington State. We used publicly available data to describe occupational and socioeconomics for Hispanic/Latine in Washington State. This report serves as an entry point into identifying potential inequities Hispanic/Latine workers experience. Important and vital next steps for WERC are to collaborate with community organizations and workers, to fully understand the issues facing Hispanic/Latine workers and their employers, as well as research and test solutions identified by Hispanic/Latine workers to improve their occupational health and well-being. Our intention is to partner with community organizations to understand the occupational health and safety issues Hispanic/Latine communities are experiencing and develop solutions with community partners to improve occupational safety and health for Hispanic/Latine, and therefore all workers in Washington State.

Resources

Learn more about the land you reside on

- https://native-land.ca/

Learn more about understanding Latinidad

- Racial Baggage: How Anti-Blackness Travels Across the Border
- Anti-Blackness in Latinx Communities — Melanin Base Camp
- Latinx vs. Hispanic: A History of Terms | Facing History & Ourselves
- What is "Street Race"? : Institute for the Study of "Race" and Social Justice | The University of New Mexico

Learn more about the history of Hispanic/Latines in Washington

- Latino History in Washington State - HistoryLink.org
- Population of Hispanic/Latino origin | Office of Financial Management
- The Sea Mar Museum of Chicano/a/Latino/a Culture, celebrating the rich history of Chicano/as and Latino/as in Washington

Learn more about the Latine community in Washington today

- 15 Facts about Latino Well-Being in WA | Latino Policy & Politics Institute
- Latino-Center-for-Health-Presentation_Sept2018.pdf

Learn more about resources and Latine-based organizations in Washington

- What You Need To Know — Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs
- ¡Bienvenidos! Welcome - Latino Center For Health
- Our Mission - Latino Community Fund of Washington
- Sea Mar - Community Health Centers
- Latino Civic Alliance
- Progreso: Latino Progress
- Home - El Centro de la Raza
- Home - Casa Latina
- Mi Centro WA – Un Lugar Para todos
- Community Organizations — Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs
- Home | Unidos Nueva Alianza
- CAFÉ - Community for the Advancement of Family Education
- La Voz del Campesino - Radio KDNA 91.9 FM

Learn more about labor rights, occupational safety & health, and relevant resources

- Workers' Rights
- Know Your Rights - Fair Work Center
- OSHA Worker Rights and Protections | Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- Health Hazard Evaluations (HHEs) | NIOSH | CDC
- L&I Worker Outreach Grants Program
- L&I Office of Community Relations
- L&I Division of Occupational Safety & Health
- Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center | PNASH

Learn more about why work equity matters

- The Difference Between Workplace Equity And Equality, And Why It Matters
- Why Diversity, Equity And Inclusion Matter More Than Ever — And What Leaders Can Do About It

Learn more about the Work Equity Research Center and the Safety & Health Assessment & Research for Prevention

- Work Equity Research Center (WERC)
- About SHARP

Authors' Notes

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Data sources used

Our main source of data was the 2018-2022, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year data from the US Census, all charts and tables are from this dataset unless otherwise noted. Census data for this report were downloaded from IPUMS USA, from the University of Minnesota.[28] Additional data come from the Washington State Office of Financial Management and the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. All other data sources are attributed in the text of this report.

More about this report

This report is part of a series developed by the Work Equity Research Center (WERC) to explore systemic inequities and labor-related challenges faced by various underserved communities in Washington State. Each report in the series is designed to highlight the unique experiences, contributions, and barriers encountered by specific groups.

It is important to acknowledge that no community is monolithic, and the experiences within each group are shaped by a wide range of cultural, historical, and socioeconomic factors. As such, these reports are not intended to provide one-size-fits-all solutions. Instead, they serve as snapshots that address the needs and opportunities of each population, while identifying overarching systemic barriers that impact multiple groups.

Given these differences, the reports in this series are not identical but instead reflect the nuanced realities of each community. By focusing on unique contexts of each group, the series aims to inspire targeted interventions and collaborative efforts that improve the occupational safety and health, and well-being for all Washington workers and their families.

Defining Race

While this report focuses on Hispanic/Latine communities as if they were fixed and discrete, we acknowledge that race and ethnicity are social constructions with fluid definitions shaped by historical and political context, and social dynamics that vary across time and place. The issue of race in the United States, has historically been a Black/White construct, modified only when necessary to promote supremacy of power and privilege of the dominant group over Others.[69] Where then do Latine (of all races) fit in this biracial social hierarchy? In the United States, current demographic options for ethnicity consists of one group: Hispanic or Latino or Not Hispanic or Latino. The conversation of whether Latine are racialized, or whether to view Latine/Hispanic as ethnoracial, is complex and beyond the scope of this brief report. We acknowledge the complexity and do not pretend to have the definitive answer on this issue, while still affirming that overall, even though Latine are a heterogeneous group of many nations, races, cultures and languages, for all intent and purpose, Latine are treated as racialized and marginalized in America, and issues of systemic racism apply to them, although somewhat differently based upon things like colorism, language, and citizenship status.[70] Health disparities or differences in health outcomes[d] across racial and ethnic groups are caused by socioeconomic and environmental factors such as, poverty, educational attainment, access to healthcare, and proximity to pollutants that disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and People of Color due to racism.[72] Race and ethnicity should not be used as a measure of biologic difference but instead, as a way to measure exposure to systemic racism[e] and its relation to health.[74] Thus while race and ethnicity are useful terms for analyzing how racism plays out in society, they only represent a part of the larger story about how identities are shaped and how inequities are perpetuated.

[d] Social determinant of health are nonmedical factors that can shape health. Examples of these factors include where a person lives, grows up, and works through life. Economic policies and systems impact these factors by enabling access to jobs, education, community resources, safe work environment, etc.71. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). Accessed August 27, 2025. https://www.cdc.gov/about/priorities/why-is-addressing-sdoh-important.html#:~:text=What%20to%20know,foods%20and%20physical%20health%20opportunities.

[e] Systemic racism is the way that racism is embedded within systems, laws, policies, and practices that perpetuate unfair treatment and inequities among people of color. Examples include residential segregation, unfair lending practices, and environmental injustice.73. Braveman PA, Arkin E, Proctor D, Kauh T, Holm N. Systemic And Structural Racism: Definitions, Examples, Health Damages, And Approaches To Dismantling. *Health Affairs*. 2022/02/01 2022;41(2):171-178. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01394

Defining Hispanic/Latine communities and the use of Latine

Hispanic/Latines are vastly diverse. Through time and history, colonialism, imperialism, and racism led to the mass genocide and economic disenfranchisement of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).[75,76] The way we define and understand terms like Latine and Hispanic are shaped by colonization, and this makes it difficult to disentangle history and roots of many Latine communities, including Hispanic/Latines that identify as Black and/or Indigenous. In addition to racism, there is also colorism, anti-Blackness, and anti-Indigenous sentiment that is ever pervasive among Hispanic/Latines and general society.[77,78] There may also be differences due to history, colonization, colorism, etc. that impact how Hispanic/Latines self-identify versus how they are racialized, depending on the social and political context and where they live and work. This is important to consider as the audience reviews this report to understand existing inequities that Hispanic/Latines experience.

Latino/a/x/e is used to describe individuals who are from or whose ancestors are from Latin American countries, including Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.[79] The term Hispanic describes individuals both in or descended from Spanish-speaking countries.[79] While Latine is more so defined by the geography of an individual's heritage, Hispanic is defined by the language spoken, Spanish. An individual can identify as both Latine and Hispanic, however, not all Hispanic/Latines identify as Hispanic, and not all Hispanics identify as Latine.

In this report, we decided to use the term Latine to refer to this community because we strive to use gender inclusive language and Latine, versus Latinx, tends to be more accepted among the Latine community.[9-11] The use of Latinx first emerged in the late 20th century (1990s) and early 21st century (2000s) from queer Latinx online communities.[80,81] There was increased use of 'Latinx' after the Pulse Massacre, a mass shooting at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida in 2016, to show resistance and solidarity against violence towards the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning) community.[80,81] There are many debates about the use of Latinx, including that it is an Anglicized Spanish or elitist term, or signals, 'linguistic imperialism.'[11,81,82] Other authors argue against these anti-Latinx sentiments, as the use of Latinx challenges unequitable power dynamics and history of Spanish purity and anti-indigeneity through colonization of Latin American regions.[80,82]

Acknowledging these definitions is important due to historical events that shaped Latine communities today. We strive to bring awareness, keep learning, and opt for the language that is most inclusive and respectful of the communities we are working with. This includes respecting when folks prefer either Latinx, Latine, Latino/a, Hispanic, or another term.

Gender inclusive language is used in this report for three main reasons, 1) to use inclusive language for diverse gender identities, 2) to resist homophobic and transphobic culture in the Latine and many cultures, and 3) to challenge the patriarchal nature of the Spanish language that favors men. This report is meant to be accessible to various audiences; thus, we use Latine in efforts to use a term that both challenges the gender-binary and stands in solidarity with LGBTQ+ identifying folks and is also more accepted among Hispanic/Latines in Washington State. We will use Latine to describe groups of Latino/a/x or Hispanic identifying folks. However, we may use Latino/a or Hispanic throughout the report, when referring to individuals and depending on the data source, to ensure representation of the data sources we are using.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a framework built upon Black feminist theory and coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw.[83] Intersectionality acknowledges that some groups have multiple dimensions of disadvantage that cannot be considered separately. Intersectionality is also a useful framework to understand how people can simultaneously experience privilege and oppression depending on their various identities (e.g. race, ethnicity, class, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ability, immigration and documentation status) interacting with power and structural environments embedded within society.[84] Intersectionality helps us understand how people's unique and complex identities shape their experiences and access to opportunities.[84] This is why it is important to acknowledge that as we present demographic data on Hispanic/Latines in Washington, that within and across groups, there can be underlying differences depending on other demographic characteristics or identities. Acknowledging and identifying some of these intersectional differences is important as we strive to address and reduce inequities marginalized workers experience.

Defining low wage

As mentioned previously, the definition used for low wage in this report are wages that are less than two-thirds of the State median wage.[37] This method to define low wage was used as it is not dependent on the US federal poverty guidelines, but rather provides insight to the economic context of an area, in this case, a comparison to what other Washington Hispanic/Latines are earning.[37,85] The median wage in Washington State was $65,458 in 2022. A low wage job is earning two-thirds of the median wage (in this case, $43,639), mid wage is two-thirds of the median wage ($43,639) to the median wage ($65,458), and a high wage job is anything above the median wage of $65,458.

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