

HHMI GRANTEE IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION

UNDERSTANDING HISPANIC DIVERSITY: A “ONE SIZE APPROACH” TO SERVICE DELIVERY MAY NOT FIT ALL

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Understanding Hispanic Diversity: A “One Size Approach” to Service Delivery May Not Fit All

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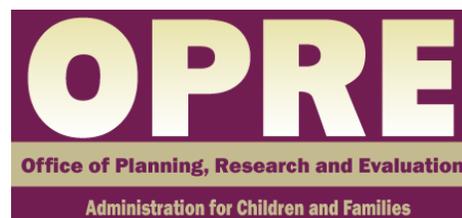
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together, and help unmarried couples decide on their future relationship trajectory, among other things. Approximately 40 percent of Hispanic children do not live with both of their parents.⁵ Additionally, some Hispanic subgroups, particularly Puerto Ricans, have nonmarital birth rates above 50 percent.⁶

Finally, Hispanic children are nearly three times as likely as non-Hispanic white¹ children to live in poverty.⁷ As such, Hispanic families and youth are a growing part of the target service population for a range of social service programs, including those aimed at strengthening families. Given the primacy of the family for many members of the Hispanic community, the relevance of the Hispanic Healthy Marriage Implementation Evaluation goes beyond the strengthening of relationships and has broader implications for many other areas of service delivery.

Hispanic Diversity

There is growing recognition that Hispanics are not a homogeneous group. In fact, there is significant variation among the Hispanic population.

Country of Origin/Nationality

In the 2010 Census, more than 75 percent of individuals living in the United States and identifying as Hispanic indicated they were of Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban origin.⁸ Mexican-Americans alone are more than 63 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population.⁹ However, the recent growth (in percentage change) of individuals identifying as Hispanic was largest among those who indicated their country of origin was located in Central or South America.¹⁰ The ten largest Hispanic populations in the United States by area of origin are Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Guatemalan, Colombian, Ecuadorian, Honduran and Peruvian (See Figure 2).¹¹

¹ Throughout this report, white refers to non-Hispanic whites.

Nativity/Generational Status

Hispanics can be first-generation (immigrants), second-generation (U.S.-born children of immigrants), or third generation (children of U.S.-born Hispanics) and higher. Approximately 63 percent of Hispanics are U.S.-born while 37 percent are foreign-born.¹² In the past decade, growth in the U.S.-born Hispanic population has outpaced growth of the foreign-born Hispanic population.¹³ This growth has been driven primarily by the native-born Mexican-American population.¹⁴

Figure 2. 2010 Hispanic Populations in the U.S. by Country of Origin

Area of Origin	Percentage of US Hispanic Population	Number
México	63.0%	31,798,258
Puerto Rico	9.2%	4,623,716
Cuba	3.5%	1,785,547
El Salvador	3.3%	1,648,968
Dominican Republic	2.8%	1,414,703
Guatemala	2.1%	1,044,209
Columbia	1.8%	908,734
Ecuador	1.3%	633,401
Honduras	1.1%	564,631
Peru	1.1%	531,358

Migration History

Hispanics may vary regarding when they or their family came to the United States, the reason for coming, and the context of that migration. For instance, some escaped political persecution (e.g., Cubans), some were war refugees (e.g., Salvadorans), and some sought economic advancement. Some came with work, student, or tourist visas, and others crossed the border illegally. Some never “came” but are descended from residents of areas of México that were annexed by the United States or are from the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico.

Acculturation

Acculturation is the process of adjusting to a non-native culture by participating in the cultural traditions, values, and practices of the dominant society.¹⁵ This differs from assimilation, which focuses on immigrants letting go of their natal heritage and becoming indistinguishable from mainstream society. Hispanics vary considerably in the degree to which they remain attached to their cultures of origin versus the degree to which they embrace more mainstream U.S. values, beliefs, and practices. One proxy for acculturation is the extent to which one identifies as an American. Almost 40 percent of Hispanic immigrants say that the United States is their “real homeland” and another third sometimes describe themselves as “American,” as opposed to Hispanic/Latino or their country of origin (e.g., Dominican).¹⁶

Documentation Status

Hispanics can have varied types of legal status. Hispanics born in the United States are automatically U.S. citizens (63% of Hispanics are American-born – see Nativity above). The majority of foreign-born Hispanics are naturalized citizens¹⁷, legal residents (through green cards), or in the United States legally through work or student visas.¹⁸ In 2010, there were an estimated 11.2 million unauthorized individuals in the United States, with individuals from México accounting for almost 60 percent of the unauthorized population.¹⁹

Additionally, some families are of mixed status, meaning some members are citizens and others are not. The most common form of mixed status families is when undocumented immigrants give birth in the United States, making the children citizens.²⁰ About 40 percent of first-generation Hispanic children have at least one undocumented parent.²¹

Age and Gender

As a group, Hispanics are young, with a median age of 27 years.²² In contrast, the median age of the overall population in the United States is 37.²³

Approximately one quarter of all children under age five in the United States are Hispanic.²⁴ Over half (52%) of Hispanics are male and 48 percent are female. This is an approximate reverse of U.S. national gender statistics, where 51 percent of the U.S. population overall is female.²⁵

Fertility

Data from 2008 show that, generally, fertility rates are higher for Hispanic women (2.91) than white (2.07) or black women (2.13)²⁶

Data from 2000 indicate family formation differs widely within Hispanic subgroups, specifically by generational status and country of ancestry.²⁷ Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans have a higher total fertility rate than Whites (3.3 and 2.6 versus 1.9) while Cuban Americans have the same fertility rate as Whites. Non-marital births follow a similar pattern. Almost 58.9 percent of births to Puerto Rican mothers are non-marital, while the rates for Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans and Whites are 40.8 percent, 27.3 percent and 22.5 percent, respectively. While three quarters (76.8%) of white children live with both of their parents, 67.2 percent of Mexican American, 42.4 percent of Puerto Rican and 69.5 percent of Cuban American children do.

Relationship Status

Forty-five percent of Hispanic women are married, while 51 percent of white and 26 percent of black women are.²⁸ Many Hispanics marry people of other Hispanic ancestries or of different ethnicities. Most Mexican Americans (84%), Puerto Ricans (62%), and Cuban Americans (74%) marry members of their respective ancestries. After 10 years of marriage, 68 percent of Hispanic women are still married, while only 64 percent of white women and 51 percent of black women are. Overall, Hispanic women have the highest cohabitation rates at 13 percent, compared to 10 percent for African Americans and 8 percent for Whites. Hispanic family stability is affected by immigration. While only 2 percent of Whites live apart from their spouses, 7 percent of native born and 13 percent of immigrant Hispanics do.²⁹

Language

Hispanics vary in their levels of English proficiency, from monolingual English-speakers to monolingual Spanish-speakers and varying degrees of bilingualism in between. There are also Hispanic subpopulations, specifically among recent immigrants from México and Central America, who speak indigenous languages. These individuals may not be proficient in English or Spanish. In 2009, among Hispanic school-aged children, approximately 66 percent primarily spoke a language other than English at home.³⁰ Among foreign-born Hispanics, approximately 96 percent of those aged 18 and older speak a language other than English at home.³¹

Four percent of foreign-born Hispanic individuals aged 18 and older speak only English at home, and 24 percent of those speaking a language other than English at home also reported speaking English very well.³² Spanish use declines over generations. While 91 percent of first generation (immigrant) Hispanics speak Spanish, this number drops to 82 percent for second generation Hispanics (i.e., children of immigrants), and 47 percent for third generation Hispanics.³³

Educational Attainment

Hispanics are, on average, the least educated racial group in the United States. Approximately 13 percent of adult Hispanics in the United States are college graduates, and an additional 22 percent have attended some college.³⁴ Another 39 percent, however, dropped out of high school.³⁵ In comparison, 18 percent of African-Americans are high school dropouts and 17 percent are college graduates.³⁶ Some adult immigrants arrive in the United States with advanced degrees and professional licenses from their countries of origin, but are unable to continue in the same field, initially at least, due to language challenges or difficulties getting their credentials accepted. A recent study found that only 24 percent of Mexicans and 27 percent of Cubans with college degrees were in skilled occupations, and 36 percent of Mexicans and 44

percent of Cubans with professional degrees were in a skilled or professional job.³⁷

Income Levels & Other Economic Characteristics

Some segments of the Hispanic population are among the poorest in the United States. Approximately 46 percent of Hispanics earn less than \$20,000 per year, while only 14 percent earn \$50,000 or more.³⁸ There is significant variation in Hispanic median household income by country of origin. Among Hispanics of Ecuadorian origin the median household income in 2010 was \$50,000, \$40,000 among Cuban Americans, \$38,700 among Mexican Americans, \$36,000 among Puerto Ricans, while Hispanics of Dominican origin had the lowest median household income at \$34,000.³⁹

Homeownership. Between 2000 and 2009, the percentage of Hispanic heads of household owning their own home rose.⁴⁰ Among foreign-born Hispanic heads of household, approximately 46 percent own a home. For native-born Hispanic heads of household, the proportion of homeowners is slightly higher at 51 percent.⁴¹ In contrast, 65.9 percent of all U.S. heads of household own their homes.⁴²

Health Insurance. The percentage of Hispanics without health insurance is substantially higher than other groups in the United States. Nearly a third of all Hispanics are uninsured, and more than half of foreign-born Hispanics do not have health insurance.⁴³ The uninsured rate among Hispanics is more than twice the uninsured rate of the overall population in the United States. (31% versus 15%).⁴⁴ This difference in insurance coverage is especially large among married parent families. Seventy-seven percent of white married parent families receive full health coverage from an employer compared to 36% of Hispanic married parent families.⁴⁵

Household Wealth. The recent economic recession appears to have disproportionately affected the household wealth of Hispanics. The Pew Hispanic Center reports that median

household wealth decreased 66 percent from 2005 to 2009 for Hispanics, compared to a 53 percent drop among black households and a 16 percent decline among white households.⁴⁶

Religious Affiliation and Practices

Approximately 68 percent of Hispanics in the United States identify as Catholic, whereas nearly 20 percent are Protestant (with the majority of those identifying as Evangelical or born-again Protestants).⁴⁷ Almost one in ten Hispanics identify as non-religious (8%).⁴⁸

Service Provision to Hispanics: The Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative

Just as Hispanics in the United States are a varied and diverse group, the nine sites in this study served different populations. For some sites, there was even great diversity within their target population. The following sections provide basic demographic information on each site's program graduates. Since each site designed its own data collection forms, we do not have uniform demographic information across the sites. See Figure 3 for the location and name of our nine sites.

Figure 3. Site Names and Locations



Country of Origin

Four sites documented where participants were born. The percent of participants born in the United States varied widely from 6 percent at AVANCE in the Southwest to 48 percent at TELACU in Los Angeles. Participants born outside of the United States represent numerous locations. PRFI reported that 12 percent of their participants were born in Puerto Rico, 28 percent in South America, 18 percent in México and 18 percent are from countries in the Caribbean. About half of Creciendo Unidos participants were from México while 85 percent of AVANCE's were.

Migration History

Three grantees measured the amount of time foreign-born participants had resided in the United States. On average, AVANCE immigrant participants had been in the United States for ten years. Almost a third of Creciendo Unidos participants born outside of the United States had lived in the United States for less than five years. Conversely, over half of TELACU's immigrant participants had spent at least 16 years in the United States.

Age

Many Healthy Marriage grantees, including some in this study, served youth. Due to privacy concerns, however, the HHMI Implementation Evaluation only requested grantees provide information on people aged 18 or above. Therefore, our analysis does not reflect the number of adolescents served. Eight sites provided age information. Many of the study sites had mean ages in the 30s, ranging from 33 years at AVANCE to 38.4 years at PRFI. Other sites had participants select age categories (e.g., 18-34, 35-50). About half of participants at Meier Clinics, the Granato Group, and TELACU were age 35 or younger, as were two-thirds of participants at Holyoke Chicopee Springfield.

The sample of participants in this study is older, on average, than participants in two other large federal evaluations of marriage programs. Building Strong Families, a random assignment

evaluation of marriage education for unmarried expectant or young parents, had a mean age in the 20s (64% of participants were under 30).⁴⁹ The Supporting Healthy Marriages evaluation of marriage education for married couples had a median age of 30.5 years for women and 33.0 years for men.⁵⁰

Gender

Seven grantees had gender information. Programs that served only couples had an equal mix of male and female participants.ⁱⁱ Those that served a mix of couples and individuals had more female participants than male (58% female for Meier Clinics and 60% for TELACU). Holyoke Chicopee Springfield served only individuals (meaning that participants did not have to be members of a romantic relationship where both members attended the program) and their service population was 81 percent female.

Family Structure

As mentioned above, some sites served only couples while at others individuals could participate without a partner. The marital status statistics reflect that diversity. Three-quarters of participants were married at AVANCE, Creciendo Unidos, PRFI and the Granato Group. Conversely, Holyoke Chicopee Springfield recruited individual participants and only 16 percent of their participants reported being married. Only two sites probed specifically about cohabitation status. At both AVANCE (23%) and NMSU (20%), about one in five participants were living with their partner.

Several sites also collected information on parenting status and number of children. Over 75 percent of TELACU's participants were parents. At Holyoke Chicopee Springfield, over half of participants had one child, about a third had two or three children and almost 10 percent of participants reported being a parent to four or

ⁱⁱ Programs serving couples only served heterosexual couples. Individual programs served people of all sexual orientations.

more children. PRFI participants had a median of two children, while at NMSU, the median number of children was three.

Education

Seven sites provided information on participants' education. Schooling data was categorized as the percentage of participants who had less than a high school degree; a high school diploma or GED; or any college or post-secondary training. About half of participants at AVANCE, Creciendo Unidos and Holyoke Chicopee Springfield had less than a high school degree. On the other hand, some sites had significant segments of their population with post-high school education experience. Over a third of PRFI and NMSU participants reported some post-secondary education.

Language

Four sites collected participants' preferred language. Many participants preferred to speak Spanish—ranging from half at TELACU to 80 percent at AVANCE. Generally these numbers track closely with the percentage of participants who were immigrants. Though these participants might have preferred to communicate in Spanish, it is unclear to what extent they were comfortable with English and this measure should not be interpreted to mean that participants were monolingual Spanish speakers.

Income/Employment

Two sites measured employment status. At both NMSU and AVANCE, about 56 percent of participants were employed. At NMSU, men and women were both equally likely to be employed. AVANCE, however, showed a significant gender difference. Virtually all (95%) of AVANCE's male participants were employed, while less than 20 percent of female participants were.

Three grantees collected data on annual income.ⁱⁱⁱ The Granato Group's participants reported a

ⁱⁱⁱ Grantees used their own self-developed measures of income. They did not provide detailed instructions for calculating the various income measures, so the responses should be interpreted with caution.

median household income of \$27,000. TELACU and ESC 19 probed about personal income. About 40 percent of TELACU’s participants reported a personal annual income of under \$5,000, about a quarter reported income between \$5000 and \$19,999, another quarter reported personal income between \$20,000 and \$49,999, and less than 10 percent reported a personal annual income of \$50,000 or above. One in five of ESC 19’s participants reported earning less than \$3,000 a year, 28 percent earned between \$3,000 and \$12,000, another 20 percent earned between \$12,000 and \$15,000, and 32 percent reported an income above \$15,000.

See Figure 4 for a visual display of the diversity of these characteristics by site.

Implications of Hispanic Diversity for Program Design, Delivery, and Evaluation

The remarkable Hispanic heterogeneity coupled with the needs of the Hispanic community creates enormous challenges for service delivery.

It is important for organizations to understand the demographics of their target clientele and to adjust programming accordingly. A strategy, curriculum, or program that works with one group of Hispanics may or may not work with another community of Hispanics. Additionally, national news, issues, or trends regarding Hispanics may belie the incredible diversity of people who are of Hispanic heritage. It is essential that programs understand the trends and issues important and relevant to their service delivery area. Finally, program evaluations need to be mindful of the effects Hispanic diversity can have on their evaluation and instrument design, such as the use of different dialects or level of familiarity with scaled items. Hispanics will continue to grow as a percentage of the American population, and virtually all human service organizations will need to be familiar with the diversity of Hispanics and strategies to adapt programming to better suit a given population’s needs.

Figure 4. Visual Display of Grantees’ Participant Diversity



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Further Information

For additional information about the HHMI Grantee Implementation Evaluation and other Briefs in this project series, please visit:

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- Brief No. 1 of HHMI Project Series: *Providing Culturally Relevant Services: Programs in the Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative Implementation Evaluation*, (June, 2010).
- Brief No. 2 of HHMI Project Series: *Marketing, Recruitment and Retention Strategies*, (April, 2012).

Or, contact the Federal Task Order Officers or evaluation team.

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