

THE STATE OF LATINOS IN THE INTERMOUNTAIN WEST

Building the Infrastructure
of Opportunity
for Latinos





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I. The Demographic Landscape

A. The Demographic Landscape Executive Summary

The Latino population has grown throughout the Intermountain West in recent decades, which has also changed the demographics of public schools. This population growth lies against the backdrop of the lingering effects of the Great Recession, which was more severe in Nevada than in neighboring states. Throughout the region, Latinos have continued to shoulder a heavier burden from the recession than non-whites in the areas of unemployment, income, increased demand for social services, and health. Nevada's Latinos also often fare more poorly on these indicators than Latinos in the Intermountain West region. Key findings include:

- **A Changing Population**

- Latinos represent the fastest growing segment of the population throughout the Intermountain West and Nevada's Latino population has been growing faster than other states in the region.
- While overall population growth in Nevada is expected to slow in coming years, the Latinos population is projected to grow at a faster rate than other racial and ethnic groups.
- While most of the Latinos in the Intermountain West are citizens, Nevada has the highest Latino non-citizen rate in the region.
- In 2010, Nevada had the highest percentage of undocumented immigrants in the region and the highest percentage of undocumented immigrants in the labor force.
- A majority of Latinos throughout the region speak Spanish at home, but this percentage has been declining, as has the percentage of Latinos that speak English less than "very well."
- Throughout the region, the Latino population is younger than the non-Latino population. The states with the highest percentage of Latinos under age 18 are Utah, Arizona, and Nevada.

- **Changing Classrooms**

- From 2000 to 2010, the percentage of Latinos enrolled in K-12 schools increased in each state while the percentage of white students fell.
- In Nevada, Latinos became the largest ethnic group in public schools in 2011-12, with the largest percentages of Latinos in Clark County, Carson City, and Washoe County.
- From 2006-07 to 2010-11, the percentage of students who are English Learners increased in California, Nevada, and Texas, but decreased in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah.
- In Nevada, the largest percentages of English Learners are in Carson City, Clark County, Esmeralda County, and Washoe County.

- **The Impact of the Great Recession**

- Nevada had the largest decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the recession and has not returned to pre-recession levels. In contrast, Texas was least affected by the recession.
- Before the recession in 2006, unemployment rates were slightly higher for Latinos than whites throughout the region. This gap widened after the recession (2012).
- Nevada's unemployment rates for Latinos and whites were the highest in the region after the recession (2012). Nevada's unemployment rate for African-Americans was the second highest in the region
- Colorado and California had the highest levels of Latino youth unemployment after the recession in 2012.

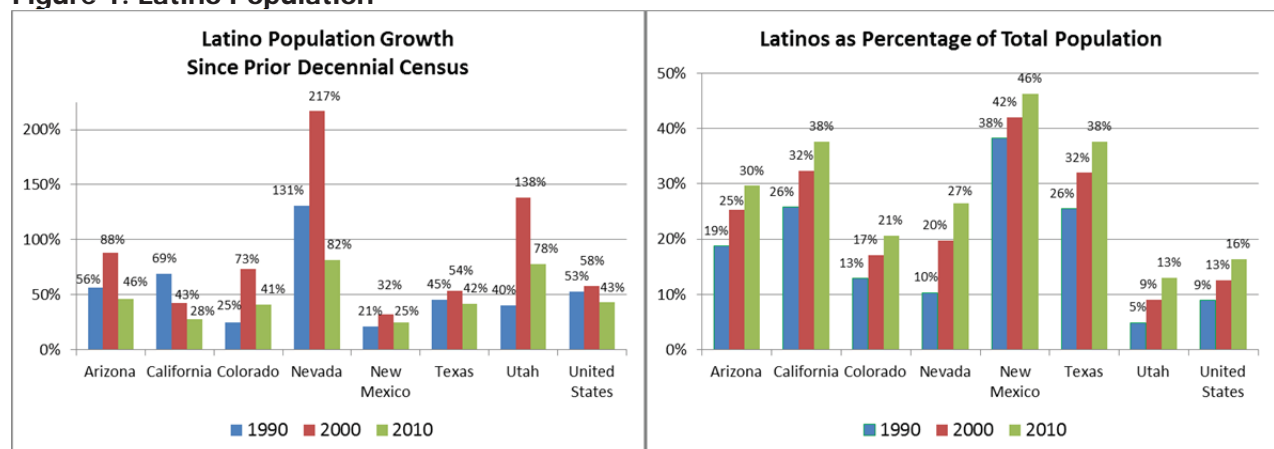
- Throughout the region, Latinos represented a larger share of the workforce than of the general population in 2012.
- The income gap between Latinos and non-Latinos widened from 2006 to 2012.
- Nevada was the only state where per capita income was lower in 2012 than in 2006.
- Poverty rates for families with children under age 18 increased throughout the region after the recession for Latinos, African Americans, and non-Latinos. Nevada had the lowest poverty rates before the recession and had the largest increases in poverty after the recession.
- After the recession, demand increased throughout the region for social services such as Supplemental Assistance for Needy Families (food stamps) and cash assistance, with greater impacts on Latinos than non-Latinos. Nevada's Latinos faced the largest increases.
- In 2012, Latinos throughout the region had lower health insurance rates than non-Latinos, with the lowest rates in Utah and Nevada.

B. The Changing Population in Nevada and the Intermountain West

Nevada's population has grown tremendously over the past few decades. The state's population more than tripled from 800,493 in 1980 to 2,700,551 in 2010. Latinos have contributed greatly to this growth, increasing from 53,879 in 1980 to 716,501 in 2010. For purposes of this report, the term "Latino" is used to refer to persons of Hispanic origin.¹

The Latino population has also grown in the Intermountain West states, reflecting national trends. The left panel in Figure 1 shows the growth rate of Latinos in each state since the prior decennial census, while the right panel in Figure 1 shows how Latinos have been growing as a percentage of the population in each state in the region. Nevada had the highest growth rate for Latinos in the region during each period. Nationally, Nevada had the fifth largest percentage of Latinos in its population in 2010, ranking behind Arizona, California, Texas and New Mexico. In raw population terms, Nevada ranked 14th in 2010 in the number of Latino residents, behind more populous states such as Florida, New York, Illinois, and New Jersey.

Figure 1. Latino Population



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, 2000, 2010)

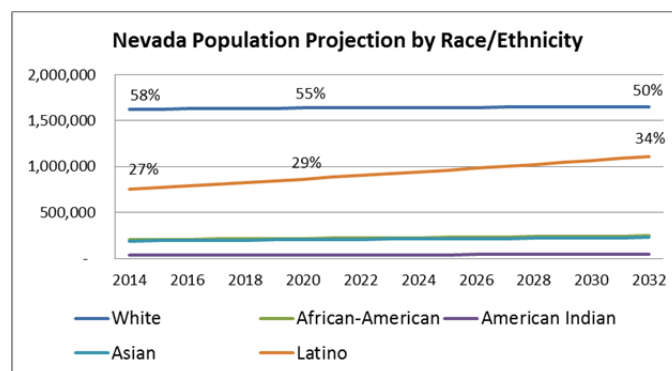
Table 1 presents more detailed information about the Latino population and total population in Nevada in 2000 and 2010. As of 2010, the largest numbers of Latinos reside in Clark County and Washoe County. In contrast, the counties with the largest percentage of Latinos in the population were Clark, Humboldt, and Elko.

Table 1. Latino Population in Nevada, by County

	2000 Census			2010 Census			Growth in Total Pop.	Growth in Latino Pop.
	Total Population	Latino Population	Percent of Population	Total Population	Latino Population	Percent of Population		
Carson City	52,457	7,466	14%	55,274	11,777	21%	5%	58%
Churchill County	23,982	2,076	9%	24,877	3,009	12%	4%	45%
Clark County	1,375,765	302,143	22%	1,951,269	568,644	29%	42%	88%
Douglas County	41,259	3,057	7%	46,997	5,103	11%	14%	67%
Elko County	45,291	8,935	20%	48,818	11,158	23%	8%	25%
Esmeralda County	971	99	10%	783	120	15%	-19%	21%
Eureka County	1,651	158	10%	1,987	238	12%	20%	51%
Humboldt County	16,106	3,040	19%	16,528	4,038	24%	3%	33%
Lander County	5,794	1,073	19%	5,775	1,219	21%	0%	14%
Lincoln County	4,165	221	5%	5,345	332	6%	28%	50%
Lyon County	34,501	3,784	11%	51,980	7,674	15%	51%	103%
Mineral County	5,071	428	8%	4,772	436	9%	-6%	2%
Nye County	32,485	2,713	8%	43,946	5,967	14%	35%	120%
Pershing County	6,693	1,294	19%	6,753	1,508	22%	1%	17%
Storey County	3,399	174	5%	4,010	228	6%	18%	31%
Washoe County	339,486	56,301	17%	421,407	93,724	22%	24%	66%
White Pine County	9,181	1,008	11%	10,030	1,326	13%	9%	32%
TOTAL	1,998,257	393,970	20%	2,700,551	716,501	27%	35%	82%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Decennial Census (2000, 2010)

Figure 2. Nevada Population Projection by Race/Ethnicity

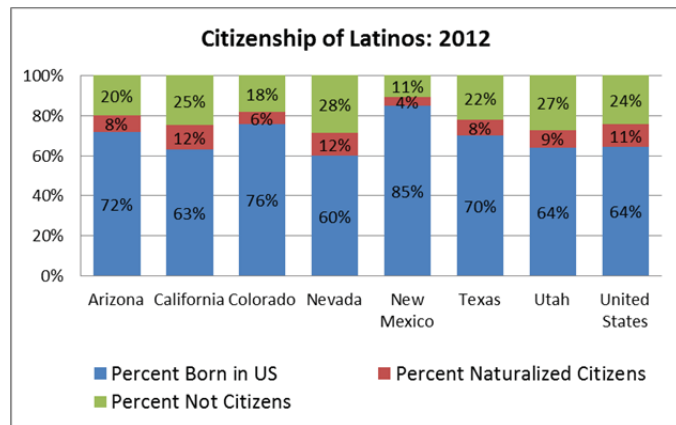


Source: Nevada State Demographer: Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin Estimates and Projections October 2013

The Nevada State Demographer projects that Nevada's population will not grow as quickly as it has in the past. However, the Latino population is projected to continue to grow more quickly than the general population. Figure 2 shows that the Latino population is projected to grow from 27 percent of the population in 2014 to 34 percent in 2032. During the same time period, the white population is projected to decrease from 58 percent to 50 percent of the population.

Most of the Latinos in Nevada are of Mexican origin, growing from 61 percent of Latinos in 1980 to 78 percent in 2010. Central Americans are the second largest group of Latinos in Nevada, representing 7 percent in 2010.

Figure 3. Citizenship of Latinos

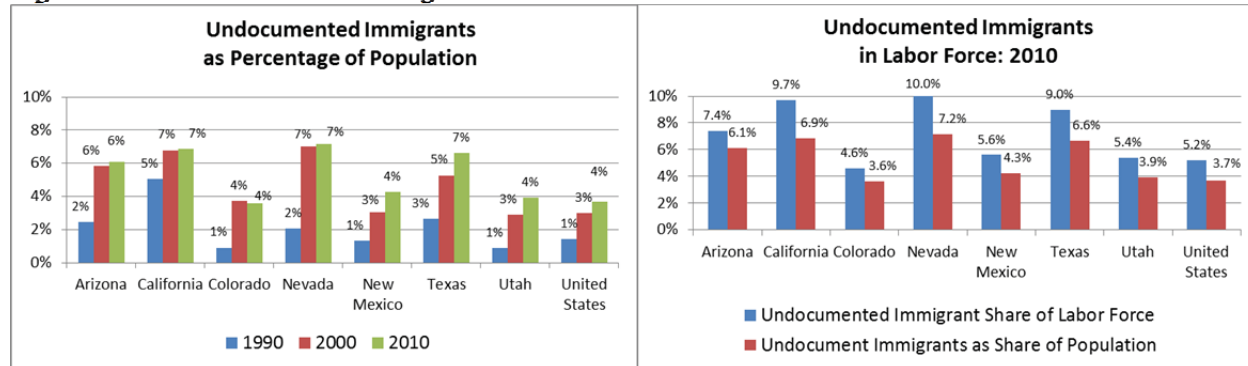


As of 2012, 72 percent of Nevada's Latinos were either born in the United States or have become naturalized citizens. This is the lowest percentage in the region, as shown in Figure 3. The states with the highest Latino citizenship rates are New Mexico at 89 percent and Colorado at 82 percent, while the states with the lowest citizenship rates are Nevada at 72 percent and California at 75 percent.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey

While some of the non-citizens in Nevada are legal residents, others are undocumented. The Pew Hispanic Center has developed estimates of the undocumented immigrant population in each state, which includes Latinos as well as undocumented immigrants from other parts of the world.² The left panel of Figure 4 shows undocumented immigrants as a percentage of the total state population in 1990, 2000, and 2010. In 1990, Arizona had the highest percentage of undocumented immigrants in the population (a mere 2.5 percent) and Nevada ranked second (2.1 percent). In 2000 and 2010, Nevada had the highest percentage of undocumented immigrants (7.0 percent), followed by California with 6.8 percent and Texas with 5.3 percent. The right panel of Figure 4 shows that the share of undocumented immigrants in the labor force was higher than the percentage of undocumented immigrants in the total population in 2010 in each state in the region. Nevada had the highest percentage of undocumented immigrants in the labor force at 10 percent. The second highest state was California at 9.7 percent.

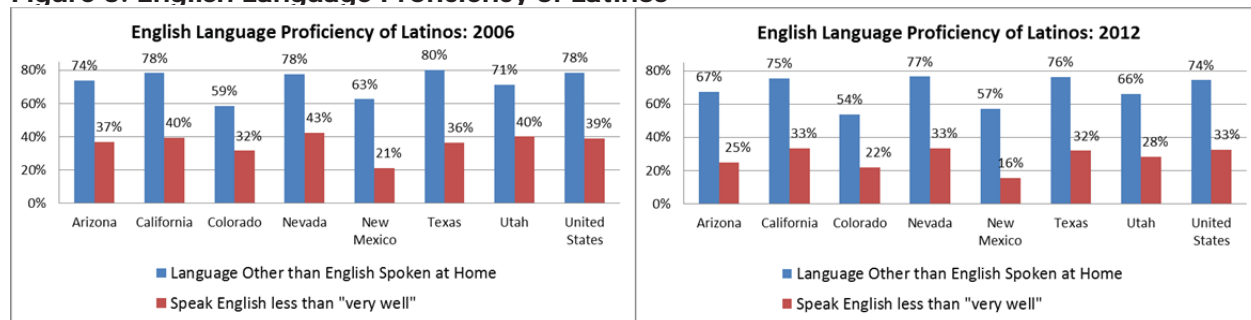
Figure 4. Undocumented Immigrants



Source: Pew Hispanic Center (2011)

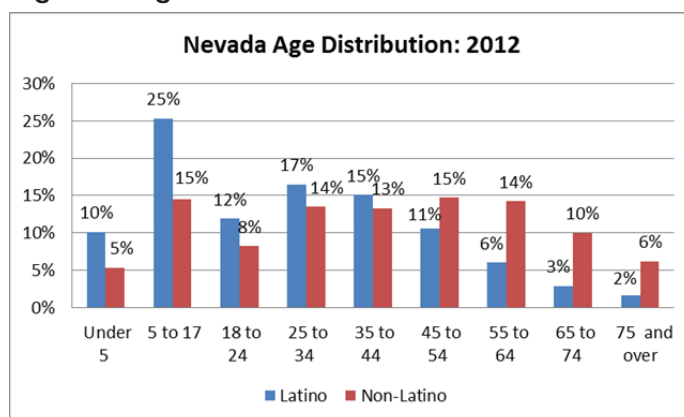
While many Latinos speak Spanish at home, this rate has decreased from 2006 to 2012 in all states in the region (see Figure 5). In addition, the percentage of Latinos that speak English less than "very well" has decreased in each state over the same time period. In Nevada, the percentage of Latinos that do not speak English very well decreased from 43 percent to 33 percent from 2006 to 2012.

Figure 5. English Language Proficiency of Latinos



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey

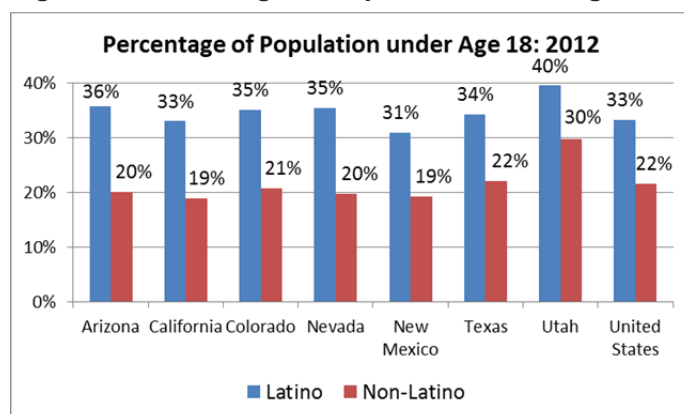
Figure 6. Age Distribution of Latinos



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Latinos are younger than the non-Latino population in Nevada. In 2012, around 35 percent of Nevada's Latino population was younger than 18, compared to 20 percent of the non-Latino population (see Figure 6). In contrast, 16 percent of the non-Latino population was age 65 or over, while only 5 percent of the Latino population fell in that age range.

Figure 7. Percentage of Population under Age 18



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Other states in the Intermountain West have similar trends. Figure 7 shows that the percentage of the population under age 18 was higher for Latinos than for non-Latinos throughout the Intermountain West in 2012. Nevada had the third highest percentage of Latinos under age 18, behind Arizona (36 percent) and Utah (40 percent).

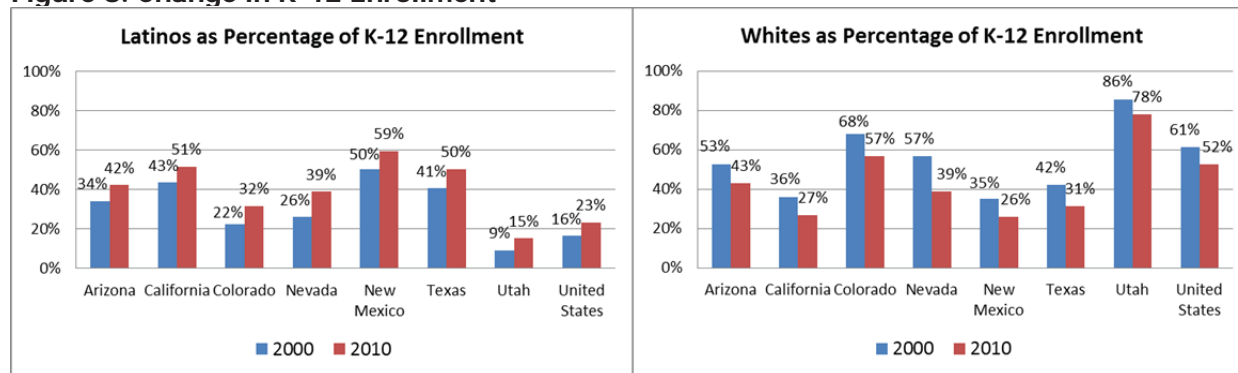
C. Changing Classrooms

Throughout the Intermountain West region, Latinos represent a growing portion of the K-12 student population. The left panel in Figure 8 presents data on Latinos as a percentage of student enrollment in 2000 and 2010. In 2010, Latinos were the majority of the student population in California, New Mexico, and Texas. Nevada and Arizona had similar rates of 39 percent and 42 percent, respectively. In contrast, Utah has the smallest percentage of Latino enrollment. Over the ten year period, Colorado and Nevada

experienced the largest increases in Latinos as a percentage of student enrollment, with a 10 percentage point increase in Colorado and a 13 percentage point increase in Nevada.

In contrast, the right panel in Figure 8 shows that the percentage of white students decreased throughout the region from 2000 to 2010. Nevada had the largest decline, with an 18 percentage point decrease. The other states in the region had decreases of 8 to 11 percentage points.

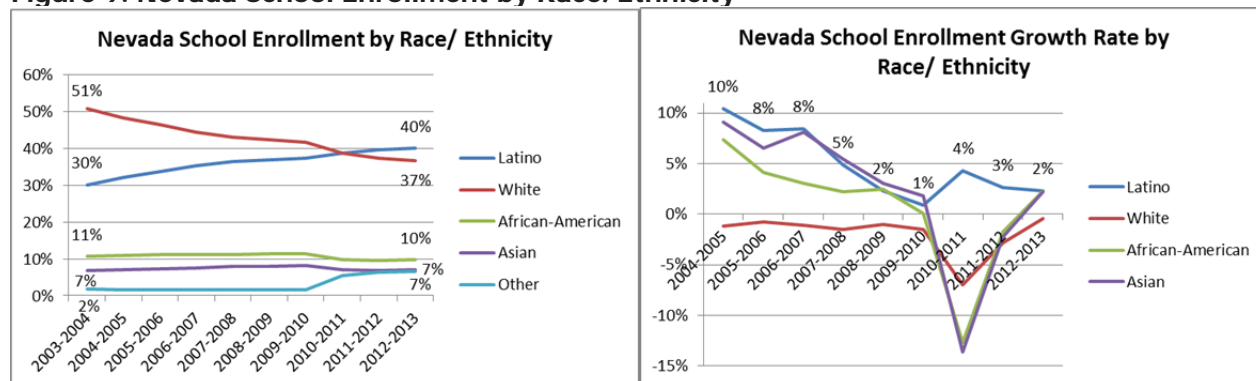
Figure 8. Change in K-12 Enrollment



Source: U.S. Department of Education: Digest of Educational Statistics

Given that Nevada's Latinos are younger than non-Latinos, it should be no surprise that Latinos now represent the largest ethnic/racial group in K-12 education. The left panel of Figure 9 shows Nevada school enrollment from 2003-04 through 2012-13. This shows that Latino enrollment grew from 30 percent of the student population in 2003-04 to 40 percent in 2012-13. Latinos became the largest ethnic/racial group in 2011-12. The right panel of Figure 9 shows that the growth rate in the Latino student population was 10 percent at its height in 2004-05. This growth rate decreased annually through 2009-10, but has stabilized in recent years.

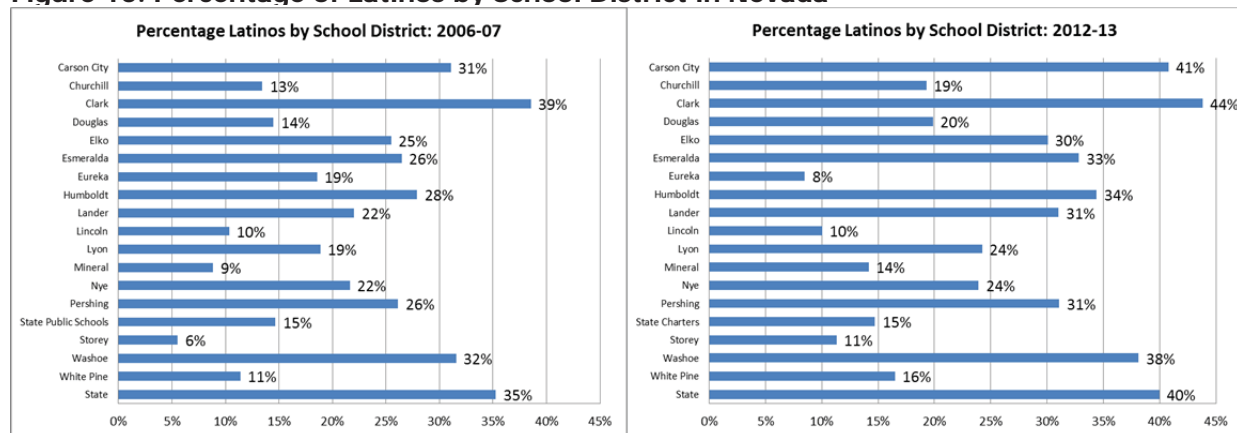
Figure 9. Nevada School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



Source: Nevada Department of Education

Figure 10 provides more detail on enrollment at the school district level, comparing 2006-07 to 2012-13. There has been growth in the Latino student population in every district except for Eureka County School District. The Clark County School District has consistently had the highest Latino enrollment percentage, growing from 39 percent in 2006-07 to 44 percent in 2012-13. The two districts with the next highest Latino enrollment percentage are Carson City School District (growing from 31 percent in 2006-2007 to 41 percent in 2012-2013) and Washoe County School District (growing from 32 percent in 2006-2007 to 38 percent in 2012-2013).

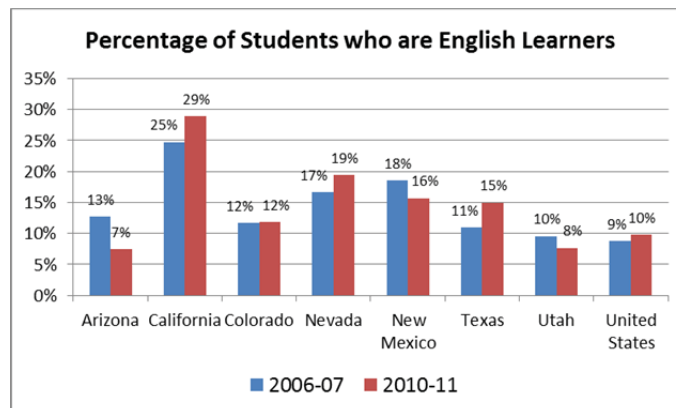
Figure 10. Percentage of Latinos by School District in Nevada



Source: Nevada Department of Education

As the Latino population has grown throughout the Intermountain West, so has the number of English Language Learners (ELLs). Nationwide, eighty percent of ELLs are born in the United States.³ In Nevada, Spanish is the dominant language of ELLs, representing approximately 84 percent of English learners age 5 to 17. However, there are a large number of languages spoken by Nevada's students, including 85 languages in the Clark County School District and 46 languages in the Washoe County School District.

Figure 11. Percentage of Students who are English Learners



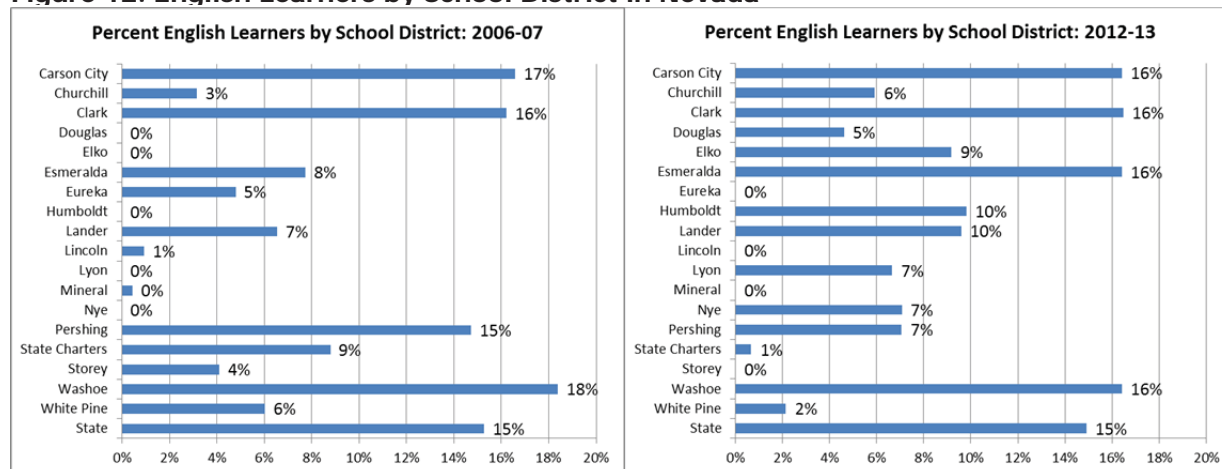
Source: U.S. Department of Education: Digest of Educational Statistics

Figure 11 provides data on the percentage of ELLs in the student population in 2006-07 and 2010-11. In 2010-11, Nevada ranked second in the region with 19 percent of its K-12 student population identified as ELLs. California ranked first, with 29 percent. While there has been an increase in the number of Latino students in the region during this time period, there has not always been a corresponding increase in the percentage of pupils who are ELLs.

The rate increased in California, Nevada, and Texas, but decreased in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. At the school district level in Nevada, there were substantial changes in the ELL population from 2006-07 to 2012-13 as shown in Figure 12.⁴ The rate remained the same in the Clark County School District, but decreased in both Carson City School District and Washoe County School District. In contrast, there were large increases in some of the smaller counties in the Silver State.



Figure 12. English Learners by School District in Nevada



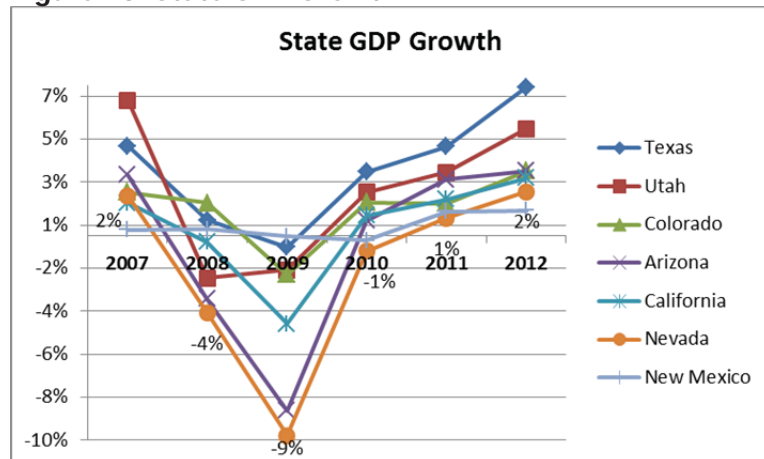
Source: Nevada Department of Education

D. The Impact of the Great Recession

According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the Great Recession officially began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009.⁵ Nevada was the most severely affected state in the nation. Job losses in Nevada began in June 2007 and continued through September 2010.⁶ During this time, Nevada's unemployment rate increased from a low of 4.6 percent in June 2007 to a high of 14 percent in September and October 2010, which was the highest rate in the nation.⁷ As of May 2014, Nevada's unemployment rate was 7.9 percent, which was still the second highest in the nation. Within the Intermountain West, Arizona was also greatly affected by the Great Recession. The state's unemployment rate increased from a low of 3.5 percent in June 2007 to a high of 10.7 percent in December 2009.⁸

The annual change in State Gross Domestic Product (GDP) provides insight on how the recession affected each of the Intermountain West states. GDP began declining throughout the region in 2008 (see Figure 13). Nevada had the largest decline, going from growth of roughly 2.0 percent in 2007 to a decline of -4.0 percent in 2008 and a decline of -9.0 percent in 2009. Arizona and California also experienced significant economic declines. Arizona's GDP growth rate of 3.0 percent in 2007 tumbled to -8.0 percent in 2009, before recovering to 3.0 percent in 2012. In contrast, Texas's GDP was least affected by the recession, increasing 15 percent from 2007 to 2012.

Figure 13. State GDP Growth



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (June 2014)

California's GDP growth rate of 2.0 percent in 2007, fell to -4.0 percent in 2009, before rebounding to 3.0 percent in 2012. Nevada has had the most difficulty in the region in recovering from the recession. In 2012, Nevada's GDP was still 11 percent lower than the height in 2007. In contrast, Texas's GDP was least affected by the recession, increasing 15 percent from 2007 to 2012.

Given the severity of the recession in Arizona and Nevada, in particular, there are continuing impacts in areas such as unemployment, income, and social services. Latinos and other minorities have been most severely affected by the recession.

The recession and economic downturn has revealed a weak or limited infrastructure of opportunity for Latinos. The infrastructure of opportunity is defined as the foundational system of high quality education, health care services, affordable housing, and access to capital that enables individuals to succeed and contribute to their communities. Because the infrastructure of opportunity for Latinos in Nevada and in other Intermountain West states is weak, it is been difficult for Latinos to rebound from the economic recession. The Great Recession revealed that Latinos are less economically resilient than many other groups. Nowhere is this more starkly revealed than in Nevada.

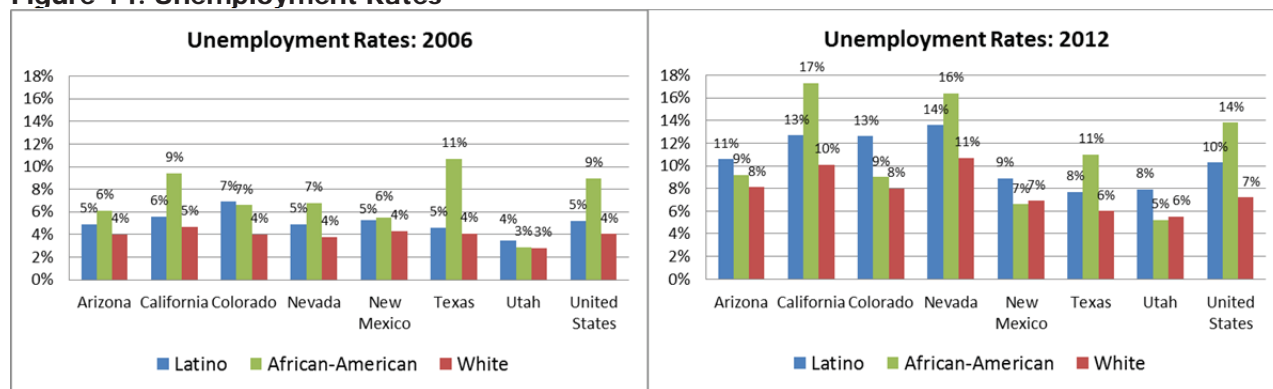
1. Latino unemployment remains high

Unemployment of Latinos remains high after the recession and is a top issue of concern for Latinos, particularly in Nevada. For example, a 2013 survey conducted by Southern Nevada Strong, a new collaborative regional planning effort funded by a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant, found that 48 percent of Latinos felt that jobs/unemployment was one of the top two most important issues in Southern Nevada.⁹

Figure 14 shows unemployment rates for Latinos, African-Americans, and whites in the Intermountain West before the recession in 2006 and after the recession in 2012. Before the recession, Nevada's Latino unemployment rate was very close to whites and was similar to other states. Across most of the Intermountain West, the unemployment rate for Latinos was within one to two percentage points of the unemployment rate for whites. Colorado stands out as the single state where this gap was greater than 2 percent, and as one of two states where the unemployment rate of Latinos was higher than that of African-Americans.

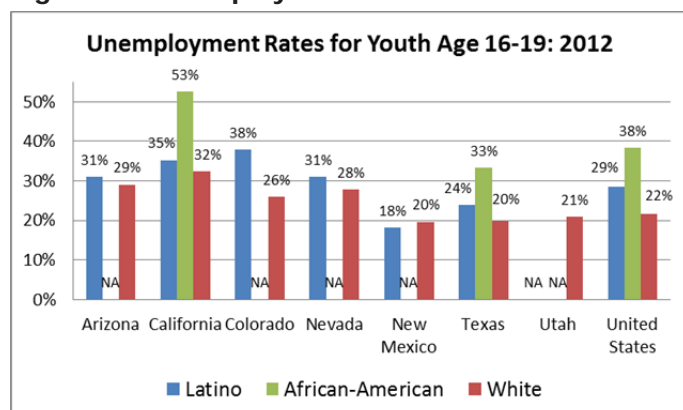
The unemployment rate in Nevada peaked in 2010 at 18.6 percent for Latinos and 20.8 percent for African-Americans. After the recession in 2012, unemployment rates were higher for all groups than before the recession. Nevada's Latino unemployment rate of 14 percent was the highest in the region and the African-American unemployment rate of 16 percent was the second highest in the region. In Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah, the unemployment rate for Latinos was higher than that of other groups. As of February 2014, the unemployment rate for whites in Nevada was 8.6 percent and 10.8 percent for Latinos.¹⁰

Figure 14. Unemployment Rates



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment status of the civilian non-institutional population in states by sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, marital status, and detailed age

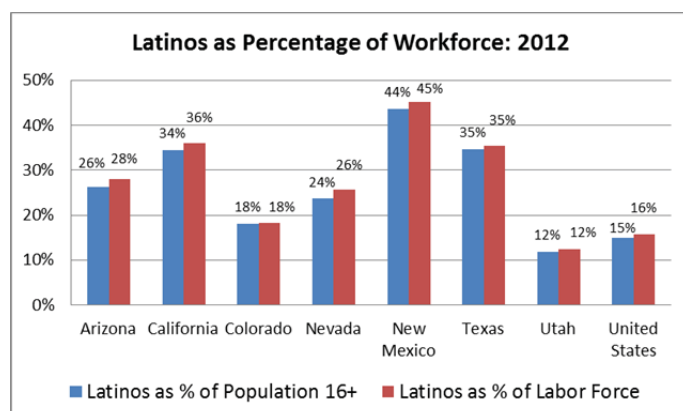
Figure 15. Unemployment Rates for Youth



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics
Employment status of the civilian non-institutional population in states by sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, marital status, and detailed age

Unemployment for youth has been particularly problematic throughout the Intermountain West after the recession. Figure 15 shows the unemployment rate for Latinos, African-Americans, and whites ages 16 to 19 in 2012. Young African-Americans in California and Texas had the highest unemployment rates in the region. For young Latinos, Colorado had the highest unemployment rate at 38 percent, followed by California with 35 percent, and Nevada and Arizona with 31 percent. Nevada's unemployment rate for Latino youth was higher than the national average.

Figure 16. Latinos as Percentage of Workforce



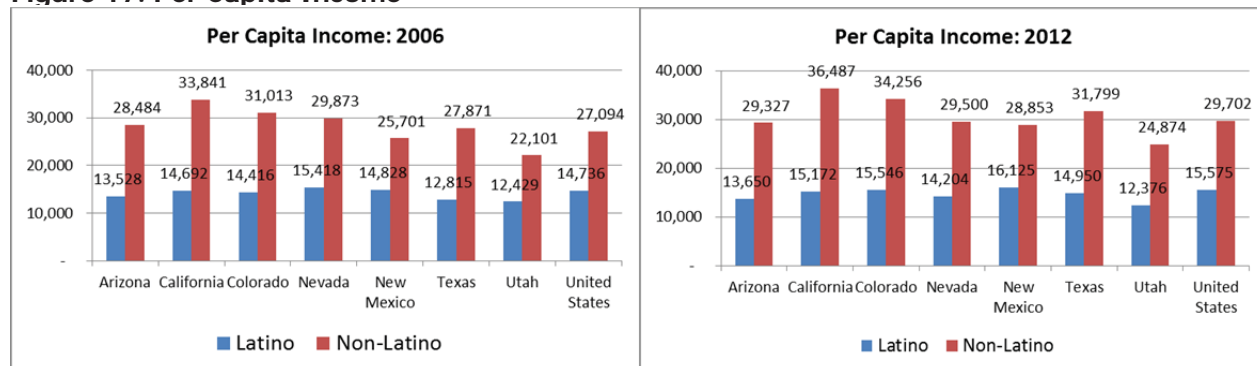
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey

While Latino unemployment is high, Latino participation rate in the workforce throughout the region was slightly higher than the Latino share of the population age 16 and over in 2012 (see Figure 16). New Mexico had the highest percentage of Latinos, comprising 44 percent of the population and 45 percent of the workforce. Nevada's Latinos represented 24 percent of the population and 26 percent of the workforce. In contrast, Utah had the smallest percentage of Latinos, comprising only 12 percent of the population and 12 percent of the workforce.

2. Income has deteriorated and poverty has increased

Per capita income data provides more insight into the income disparities between Latinos and non-Latinos before and after the Great Recession. Figure 17 shows that per capita income was lower for Latinos than for non-Latinos before and after the recession throughout the Intermountain West. Across the region, the per capita income gap between Latinos and non-Latinos increased over the period of 2006 to 2012. Per capita income for Nevada's Latinos was hit particularly hard after the recession. In 2006, Nevada's Latinos had the highest per capita income in the region, while in 2012, Nevada's Latinos ranked third from the bottom. Both prior to and following the Great Recession, Latinos in Utah had the lowest per capita income in the Intermountain West. The gap between average per capita income for Latinos and non-Latinos was highest in California and Colorado and lowest in New Mexico and Utah.

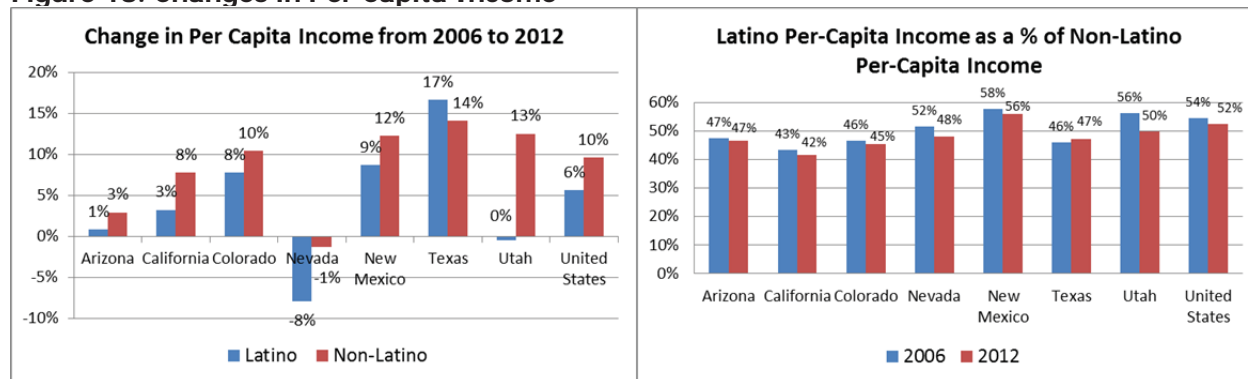
Figure 17. Per Capita Income



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Following the Great Recession, the net worth of households fell. In 2009, the median net worth of white households nationally was \$113,149, representing a 16 percent decrease from 2005 levels; \$5,677 for African-Americans, representing a 53 percent decline; and \$6,325 for Latinos, representing a 66 percent decline.¹¹ The left panel in Figure 18 shows that Latino per capita income decreased 8 percent in Nevada from 2006 to 2012 while Latino income in all other states increased or remained roughly the same. Nevada was also the only state in the region where non-Latino per capital income was less in 2012 than in 2006. The right panel in Figure 18 shows Latino per capita income as a percentage of non-Latino per capita income. This percentage decreased after the recession in all states except for Texas, where Latino per capita income grew faster than non-Latino per capita income. Nevada and Utah witnessed the biggest declines in Latino per capita income as a percentage of non-Latino per capita income.

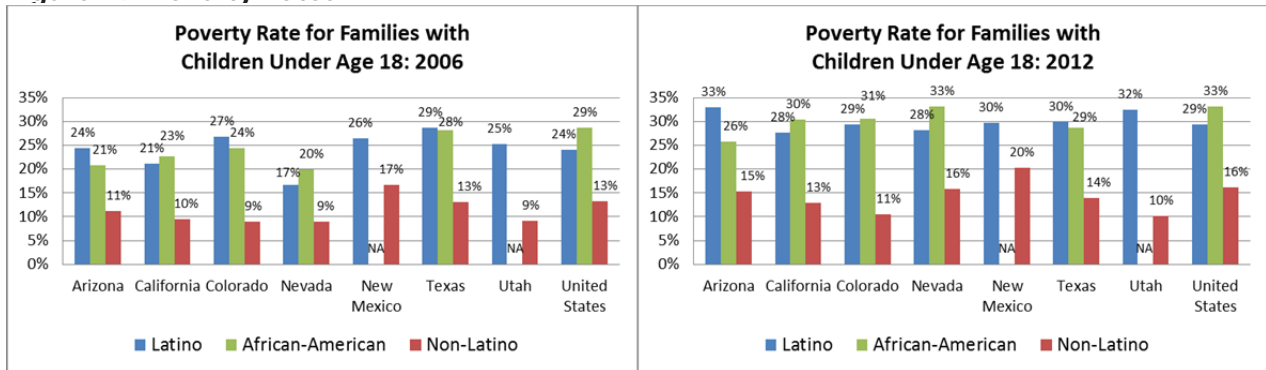
Figure 18. Changes in Per Capita Income



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Poverty rates for families with children under age 18 have increased throughout the region after the recession for Latinos, African-Americans, and non-Latinos. Nevada had the lowest poverty rates in the region for all three groups prior to the recession (see Figure 19). After the recession, Nevada had the highest increases in poverty for all three groups, with an increase of 11 percentage points for Latinos and 13 percentage points for African-Americans. Nevada's poverty rate for African-Americans in 2012 was the highest in the region, while the poverty rate for Latinos tied with California for the lowest in the region.

Figure 19. Poverty Rates

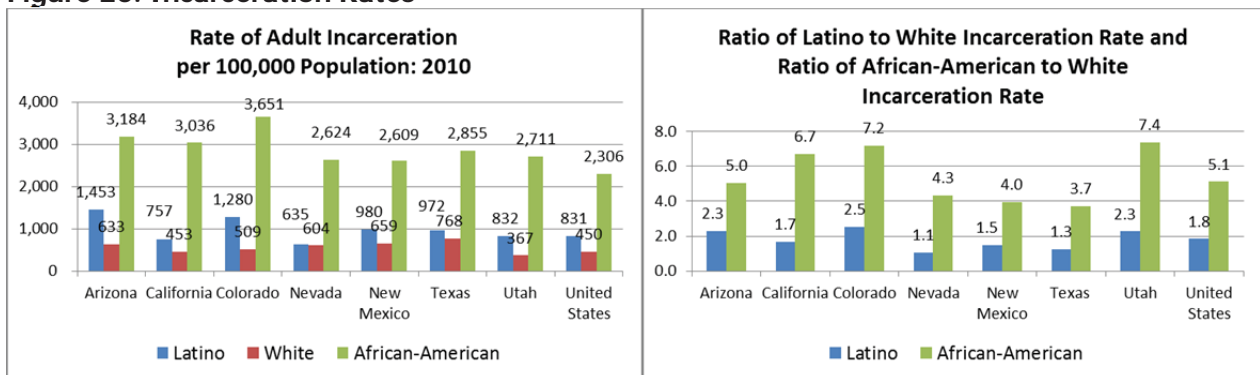


Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Recent research describes “how poverty creates prisoners and how prisons in turn fuel poverty, not just for individuals but for entire demographic groups.”¹² People who enter the criminal justice system are overwhelmingly poor. And incarceration solidifies this cycle of poverty by “creating employment barriers; reducing earnings and decreasing economic security through criminal debt, fees and fines; making access to public benefits difficult or impossible; and disrupting communities where formerly incarcerated people reside.”¹³ There are disparities between incarceration rates for whites and other minorities in the Intermountain West. As Figure 20 shows, these disparities are greater for African-Americans than for Latinos. The left panel of Figure 20 shows that in 2010, the states with the highest incarceration rates for Latinos per 100,000 people were Arizona and California. Nevada’s incarceration rate for Latinos was only slightly higher than whites and was the lowest rate in the Intermountain West.

The right panel of Figure 20 shows the ratio of the incarceration rate for minorities to whites. The ratio for African-Americans to whites was higher than the ratio for Latinos to whites throughout the Intermountain West. The highest ratios for Latinos to whites were in Colorado, Arizona, and Utah. In contrast Nevada’s ratio for Latinos to whites was the lowest in the region, reflecting that the incarceration rate for Nevada’s Latinos is almost on par with the incarceration rate for whites.

Figure 20. Incarceration Rates



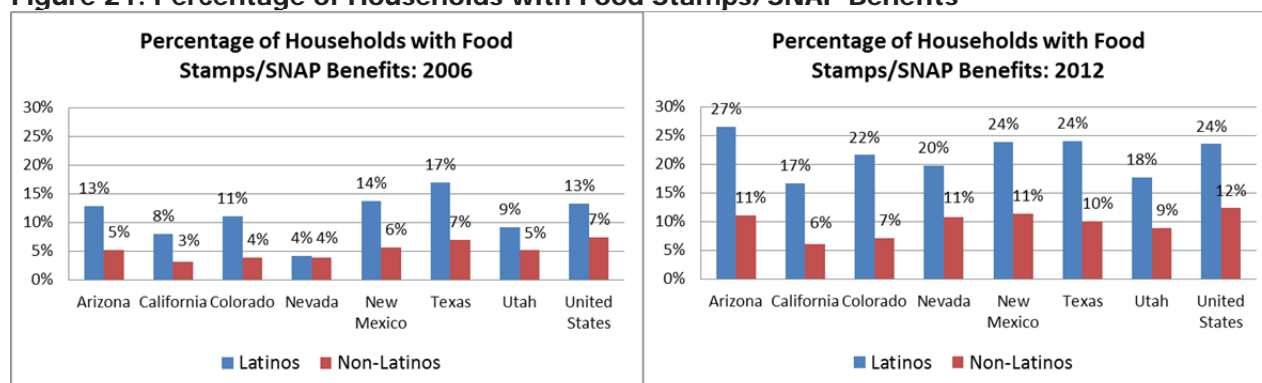
Source: Prison Policy Initiative

3. Increasing demand for social services

As employment and income outcomes have deteriorated for Latinos throughout the Intermountain West in the wake of the recession, demand for social services has increased.

The demand for food stamps, now called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), increased for Latinos and non-Latinos after the recession across the region. Before the recession in 2006, Nevada's Latino food stamp rate was 4 percent, which was the lowest in the region and was on par with the rate for non-Latinos (see Figure 21). After the recession, Nevada's Latino food stamp rate was 20 percent, which is 5 times greater than before the recession, and reflects the biggest increase among the other Intermountain West states. Arizona's Latino food stamp rate jumped from 13 percent to 27 percent, the second highest in the region.

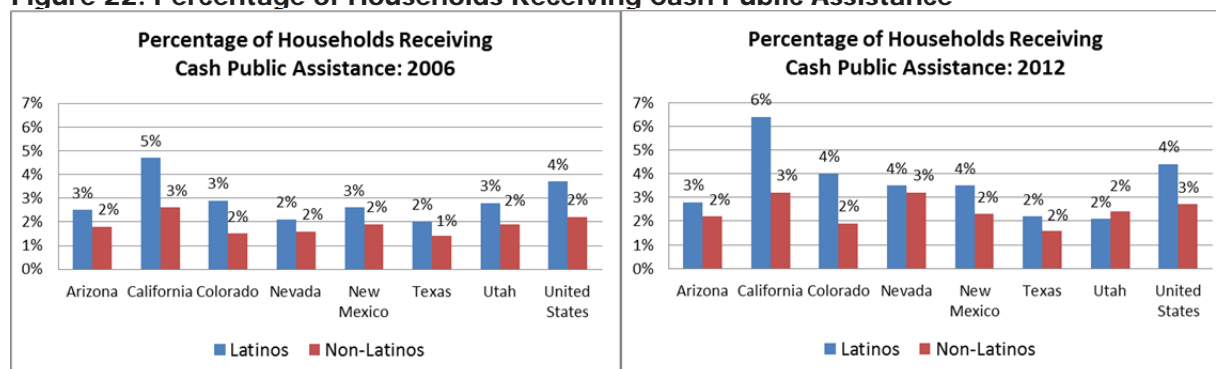
Figure 21. Percentage of Households with Food Stamps/SNAP Benefits



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey

The percentage of households receiving cash assistance has also increased throughout the region after the recession. Cash assistance includes general assistance and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). As shown in Figure 22, the percentage of people receiving cash assistance is much smaller than food stamps. Before the recession, Nevada's cash assistance rate was almost identical for Latinos and non-Latinos. After the recession, the rate for Latinos doubled (100 percent) while the rate for non-Latinos increased by 50 percent. Nevada's increase for Latinos was the highest in the region, but California had the highest usage rate before and after the recession.

Figure 22. Percentage of Households Receiving Cash Public Assistance



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey

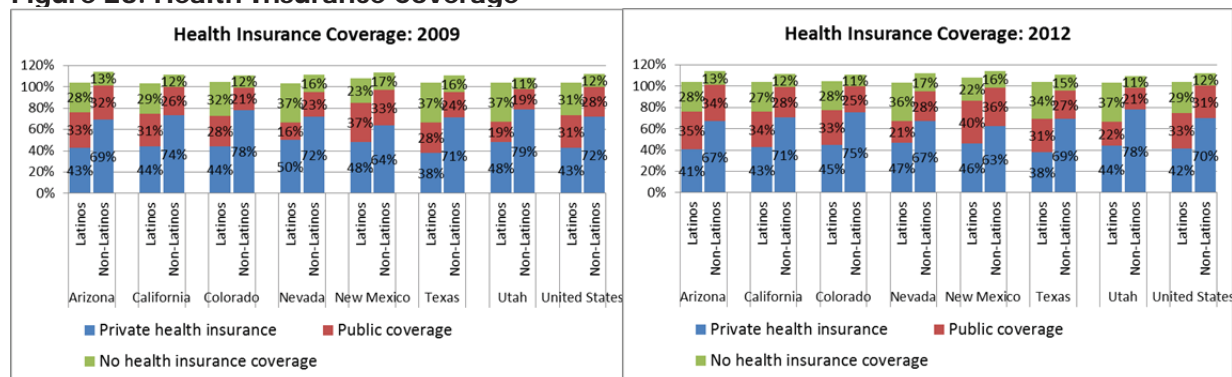
Another major impact of the recession has been the increase in the percentage of Latinos that either have no health insurance or have public health coverage. Public coverage includes Medicaid, Medicare,

and other types of government-funded health care. Figure 23 shows the percentage of Latinos and non-Latinos with private insurance, public coverage, and no health insurance throughout the Intermountain West in 2009 and 2012. (Numbers add up to more than 100 percent because people can be covered by both private and public insurance.) Latinos have consistently had higher uninsured rates than non-Latinos across the region. In 2009, a substantial number of Latinos were uninsured throughout the region, which was during the economic downturn. Nevada's percentage of uninsured Latinos (37 percent) was tied with Texas and Utah for the highest rate in the region. In 2012, Nevada's Latino uninsured rate of 36 percent decreased by only one percentage point, but was still the second highest rate in the region, trailing Utah.

Looking at public coverage, the percentage of Latinos with public coverage increased in Nevada and throughout the region from 2009 to 2012, which shows the lingering effects of lower incomes. Nevada had the lowest public coverage rate in the region in both years. This may reflect Nevada's high non-citizen population, which is not eligible for public coverage.

Private health insurance coverage decreased for both Latinos and non-Latinos over the period of 2009-2012. The only exceptions were Colorado, where private health insurance coverage for Latinos increased by one percentage point, and Texas, where coverage rates for Latinos remained flat. In 2012, Nevada had the highest rate of Latinos with private coverage (47 percent) in the region. The high level of private coverage may reflect the availability of health coverage through unions that serve workers in the accommodation and food service industry, where Latinos are concentrated.

Figure 23. Health Insurance Coverage



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey

