

Latinos 2025 – A Needs Assessment of Latino Communities in Southeast Michigan

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EAST LANSING, Mich. – In a new report released by the Julian Samora Research Institute (JSRI) at Michigan State University, the current status of Latinos in Southeast Michigan reflects their relative well-being and the challenges experienced across a range of life areas. This report represents a first step making the contemporary needs of Latino communities in Michigan more visible and tangible.

Among the key findings are the following:

- While Michigan's White and African American populations have been decreasing, the Latino population has been increasing. In the seven counties of Southeast Michigan the Latino population increased by just over 2 percent annually in recent years. According to U.S. Census data, the Latino population increased by 40 percent in Southeast Michigan between 2000 and 2013.
- Latinos in Southeast Michigan are highly diverse, including Mexican Americans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, Central Americans and South Americans.
- Despite the majority of Latinos doing relatively well in Southeast Michigan, the incorporation and inclusion of Latinos in core institutions remains a major challenge.
- In education, Latinos in Michigan and Southeast Michigan lag behind non-Hispanic Whites on all performance and attainment indicators. Latino leaders and community members are concerned about the lack of bilingual/bicultural professionals, low expectations for Latino students, and the 'prison-like climate in some schools. Given this context, Latinos have high dropout rates and low college-going rates.
- In the economy Latinos are concentrated in low-income brackets and have high poverty rates, especially among children. In Detroit, 52% of Latino children live in poverty. At the same time, Latinos have the highest labor force participation rates (67%), followed by Asians (64%). At the same time, they have a relatively higher unemployment rate (13%) than non-Hispanic Whites (9.3%).
- Occupationally, Latinos are least represented in managerial and professional and sales and office occupations. They were more likely than other groups to be in service occupations;



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in production, transportation, and material moving occupations; and in farming, fishing and hunting, and forestry occupations.

- In self-employment (or business ownership), Latinos have consistently lower rates than those for each of the counties. This is the case across five of the seven counties, with a higher rate only in Livingston County, and the same rate as the county rate in Macomb. Concerns exist about the lack of access to information about starting a business and to capital. There is also concern about the lack of a robust Latino economic sector.
- Health and wellness issues among Latinos include relatively high levels of self-reported health levels of ‘fair and poor.’ Before ACA was implemented, about 20% of Latino adults in Michigan were uninsured, compared with 13.7% of non-Hispanic Whites. High risk behaviors among teens are a critical concern in the Latino community.
- Latinos in Southeast Michigan voted in high numbers in the 2012 General Election, but they tend not be actively engaged in community organizations outside of their group and their neighborhoods.
- In terms of community well-being, Latino elders are concerned about public safety, while communities in general are concerned about poor public transportation, and poor relations with police. Young adults are concerned about peer pressures to engage in high risk behaviors.
- The lack of comprehensive immigration reform is a concern in Latino communities. Immigrants often lack information about services available in the community and aggressive enforcement by ICE keeps many families living in fear and concerned about the well-being of family members.
- In general, there is a belief that progress in Latino communities has been halted by the implementation of anti-immigration policies and practices.

According to Dr. Rubén Martínez, JSRI director, “Latinos are a core segment of Michigan’s overall population. They contribute to the state’s economic security and cultural diversity, and it is imperative that policies, initiatives and services address their needs. It will position Michigan for a brighter future”

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