

Hispanics of Salvadoran Origin in the United States, 2008

A total of 1.6 million Hispanics of Salvadoran origin resided in the United States in 2008, according to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Salvadorans in this statistical profile are people who self-identified as Hispanics of Salvadoran origin; this means either they themselves are Salvadoran immigrants or they trace their family ancestry to El Salvador. Salvadorans are the fourth-largest population of Hispanic origin living in the United States, accounting for 3.3% of the U.S. Hispanic population in 2008. Mexicans constituted 30.7 million, or 65.7%, of the Hispanic population.¹

This statistical profile compares the demographic, income and economic characteristics of the Salvadoran population with the characteristics of all Hispanics and the U.S. population overall. It is based on Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2008 American Community Survey. Key facts include:

- **Immigration status.** Nearly two-thirds of Salvadorans (64.7%) in the United States are foreign born, compared with 38.1% of Hispanics and 12.5% of the U.S. population overall. Most immigrants from El Salvador (58.4%) arrived in the U.S. in 1990 or later. Three-in-ten of Salvadoran immigrants (29.2%) are U.S. citizens.
- **Language.** Less than half of Salvadorans (44.2%) speak English proficiently.² Some 55.8% of Salvadorans ages 5 and older report speaking English less than very well, compared with 37.3% of all Hispanics.
- **Age.** Salvadorans are younger than the U.S. population and older than Hispanics overall. The median age of Salvadorans is 29; the median ages of the U.S. population and all Hispanics are 36 and 27, respectively.

¹ Percentages are computed before numbers are rounded.

² Salvadorans ages 5 and older who report speaking only English at home or speaking English very well.

- **Marital status.** Less than half of Salvadorans (44.6%) and Hispanics overall (46.5%) are married.
- **Fertility.** Four-in-ten (37.9%) of Salvadoran women ages 15 to 44 who gave birth in the 12 months prior to the survey were unmarried. That was similar to the rate for all Hispanic women—38.8%—but greater than the rate for U.S. women—34.5%.
- **Regional dispersion.** Nearly four-in-ten Salvadorans (37.5%) live in California, and one-in-seven (14.3%) live in Texas.
- **Educational attainment.** Salvadorans have lower levels of education than the Hispanic population overall. Fifty-three percent of Salvadorans ages 25 and older—compared with 39.2% of all U.S. Hispanics—have not obtained at least a high school diploma.
- **Income.** The median annual personal earnings for Salvadorans ages 16 and older were \$20,368 in 2008; the median earnings for all U.S. Hispanics were \$21,488.
- **Poverty status.** The share of Salvadorans who live in poverty, 15.4%, is higher than the rate for the general U.S. population (12.7%) and below the 20.7% share among all Hispanics.
- **Health Insurance.** Four-in-ten Salvadorans (38.9%) do not have health insurance compared with 31.7% of all Hispanics and 15.4% of the general U.S. population. Additionally, 21.7% of Salvadorans younger than 18 are uninsured.
- **Homeownership.** The rate of Salvadoran homeownership (46.0%) is lower than the rate for all Hispanics (49.1%) and the U.S. population (66.6%) as a whole.

About the Data

This statistical profile of Hispanics of Salvadoran origin is based on the Census Bureau's 2008 [American Community Survey](#) (ACS). The ACS is the largest household survey in the United States, with a sample of about 3 million addresses. The data used for this statistical profile come from 2008 ACS Integrated Public Use Microdata Series ([IPUMS](#)), representing a 1% sample of the U.S. population.

Like any survey, estimates from the ACS are subject to sampling error and (potentially) measurement error. Information on the ACS sampling strategy and associated error is available at www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS/accuracy2008.pdf. An example of measurement error is that citizenship rates for the foreign born are estimated to be overstated in the Decennial Census and other official surveys, such as the ACS (see Jeffrey Passel, “[Growing Share of Immigrants Choosing Naturalization](#),” Pew Hispanic Center, Washington, D.C. (March 28, 2008)). Finally, estimates from the ACS may differ from the Decennial Census or other Census Bureau surveys due to differences in methodology and data collection procedures (see, for example, <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/Report10.pdf> and http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS/ASA_nelson.pdf).

	U.S. Population	All Hispanics	Hispanics of Salvadoran Origin
Total	304,060	46,822	1,560
Gender			
Male	149,863	24,214	815
Female	154,196	22,608	746
Nativity			
Native Born	266,044	28,985	551
Foreign Born	38,016	17,837	1,010
Age			
Median (in years)	36	27	29
Age Groups			
Younger than 5	20,879	5,216	151
5-17	53,012	10,787	306
18-29	51,086	9,344	324
30-39	40,407	7,769	314
40-49	44,673	6,087	246
50-64	55,207	4,989	163
65 and older	38,797	2,631	56
Marital Status (ages 15 and older)			
Married	120,805	15,422	520
Never married	75,960	12,713	487
Divorced/separated/widowed	46,228	5,030	158
Fertility (women ages 15 to 44)			
Total number of women	62,005	10,543	378
Women who had a birth in the past 12 months	4,354	936	34
Unmarried women ¹ who had a birth in the past 12 months	1,503	363	13
School Enrollment (ages 5 to 18)			
K-12	52,068	10,497	300
Educational Attainment (ages 25 and older)			
Less than high school diploma	30,050	10,011	492
High school diploma or equivalent	57,016	6,637	218
Some college	57,595	5,601	145
Bachelor's degree or more	55,356	3,302	78
Median Annual Personal Earnings (in dollars)			
All (ages 16 and older with earnings)	\$29,533	\$21,488	\$20,368
Full-time, year-round workers	\$40,736	\$28,820	\$25,460
Persons in Poverty²			
Younger than 18	13,131	4,390	95
18-64	21,919	4,792	138
65 and older	3,648	491	8
Health Insurance			
Uninsured, all ages	46,729	14,852	606
Uninsured, younger than 18	7,354	2,985	99
Persons in Households by Type of Household³			
In family households	247,692	41,549	1,410
In married-couple households	181,848	27,094	877
In non-family households	48,121	4,379	134
Citizenship			
Citizen	282,374	34,097	846
Non-citizen	21,686	12,726	715
Language (ages 5 and older)			
Speaks only English at home	227,375	9,855	106
Does not speak only English at home	55,806	31,752	1,304
Speaks English very well	31,376	16,223	517
Speaks English less than very well	24,430	15,529	787
Year of Entry (foreign-born only)			
Before 1990	15,879	6,883	421
1990 to 1999	10,913	5,424	301
2000 or later	11,225	5,530	288
Regional Dispersion			
Northeast	54,925	6,405	236
New York	19,490	3,232	130
Midwest	66,561	4,252	53
South	111,719	16,441	607
Texas	24,327	8,816	224
Maryland	5,634	373	108
Virginia	7,769	528	100
West	70,855	19,724	665
California	36,757	13,435	585

¹Unmarried women includes those who were never married, divorced or widowed. ²For detailed information on how poverty status is determined, see <http://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/variableDescription.do?mnemonic=POVERTY>. Due to the way in which the IPUMS assigns poverty values, these data will differ from those that might be provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. ³The household population excludes persons living in institutions, college dormitories and other group quarters.

Note: Numbers may not sum to the total due to rounding.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2008 ACS (1% IPUMS sample). More information on the source data and sampling error is available at <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/design.shtml> and <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS/accuracy2008.pdf>.

	U.S. Population	All Hispanics	Hispanics of Salvadoran Origin
Total (in thousands)	113,101	12,612	422
Homeownership (household heads)			
In owner-occupied homes (in thousands)	75,342	6,188	194
In renter-occupied homes (in thousands)	37,760	6,424	228
Homeownership rate (%)	66.6	49.1	46.0
Household Annual Income (in dollars)			
Median	\$51,938	\$41,754	\$43,791
Household Size			
Average number of persons	2.6	3.5	3.9

Note: The household population excludes persons living in institutions, college dormitories and other group quarters. Households are classified by the ethnicity of the household head. Numbers may not sum to the total due to rounding.
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2008 ACS (1% IPUMS sample). More information on the source data and sampling error is available at <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/design.shtml> and <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS/accuracy2008.pdf>.

	U.S. Population	All Hispanics	Hispanics of Salvadoran Origin
Employment Status (civilians ages 16 and older)			
Employed	146,246	20,683	836
Unemployed	9,984	1,678	58
Not in labor force	81,350	9,885	249
Unemployment rate (%)	6.4	7.5	6.5
Industries¹			
Construction, agriculture and mining	13,429	3,229	132
Manufacturing	16,385	2,389	92
Trade and transportation	27,777	3,913	163
Information, finance and other services	88,654	11,151	449
Occupations¹			
Management, professional and related occupations	54,413	4,233	108
Services	21,669	4,614	259
Sales and office support	37,260	4,579	146
Construction, extraction and farming	9,637	2,858	119
Maintenance, production, transportation and material moving	23,268	4,399	204

¹Currently employed civilians ages 16 and older.
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