

Hispanics in the 2008 Election: California

California's Hispanic population is the largest of any state in the nation. More than 13 million Hispanics reside in California, 30% of all Hispanics in the United States. There are over 5 million eligible Hispanic voters in California, 28% of all U.S. Hispanic eligible voters.¹ This fact sheet provides key demographic information on Latino eligible voters.² It also contains data on other major groups of eligible voters in California, with comparative data for the U.S. All data are from the Census Bureau's 2006 American Community Survey.³

Hispanics in California's Eligible Voter Population

- California's population is 36% Hispanic, the second-highest Hispanic population share nationally behind New Mexico with 45%.
- 23% of eligible voters in California are Latinos, the third-largest Hispanic eligible voter population share nationally behind New Mexico with 38% and Texas with 25%.
- 38% of Latinos in California are eligible to vote, ranking California 26th nationwide in the share of the Hispanic population that is eligible to vote.

	U.S.	California	California State Rank
Total population (thousands)	299,398	36,458	1
Percent of the population (all ages) that is Hispanic	14.8	35.9	2
Percent of all eligible voters (citizens ages 18 and older) who are Hispanic	8.7	22.9	3
Percent of the Hispanic population (all ages) that is eligible to vote	40.6	38.3	26

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations from the 2006 American Community Survey (IPUMS 1% sample)

Characteristics of Eligible Voters

- 34% of Hispanic eligible voters in California are ages 18 to 29. By contrast, only 23% of all California eligible voters, 31% of Latino eligible voters nationwide, and 22% of all U.S. eligible voters are in that age range.
- 30% of Hispanic eligible voters in California are naturalized U.S. citizens compared with 19% of all California eligible voters. Nationwide, 93% of all eligible voters are citizens by birth, as are 74% of all Hispanic voters compared with 70% of California Hispanic eligible voters.
- 28% of Latino eligible voters in California have not completed high school, similar to the share of all Latino eligible voters nationwide. Only 13% of all California eligible voters and 14% of all eligible voters nationwide have not completed high school.
- 61% of Hispanic eligible voters in California live in owner-occupied homes compared with 64% of all California eligible voters. A greater share of all eligible voters nationwide (71%) live in owner-occupied homes.

Table 2
 Characteristics of Eligible Voters
 in California and the United States

	CALIFORNIA		UNITED STATES	
	Hispanics	All	Hispanics	All
Population (in thousands)				
Total population	13,088	36,458	44,299	299,398
Eligible voters (citizens ages 18 and older)	5,011	21,843	17,975	206,329
Percent of Eligible Voters				
Age				
18-29	33.9	23.1	31.1	21.5
30-44	30.6	27.3	31.6	26.8
45-59	21.9	27.4	22.5	28.0
60 and older	13.6	22.2	14.9	23.8
Gender				
Female	50.3	51.0	50.8	51.8
Male	49.7	49.0	49.2	48.2
Type of citizen				
Citizen by birth	70.3	81.0	73.6	92.7
Naturalized citizen	29.7	19.0	26.4	7.3
English-speaking ability				
Does not speak English "very well"	23.1	10.9	24.3	4.3
Speaks only English or English "very well"	76.9	89.1	75.7	95.7
Educational attainment				
Did not complete high school	27.8	13.4	27.3	14.0
Completed high school	31.8	25.1	31.6	31.2
Some college	29.3	33.2	27.8	29.8
Bachelor's degree or more	11.2	28.3	13.3	25.0
Marital Status				
Married	46.8	49.8	47.8	52.7
Never Married	36.9	30.3	33.5	26.3
Other	16.3	19.9	18.7	20.9
With child(ren) younger than 18 in home				
	33.2	26.5	33.4	26.8
In owner-occupied homes				
	60.8	64.4	60.2	70.8
Household income*				
Less than \$30,000	19.6	17.7	26.1	22.9
\$30,000-\$49,999	20.2	16.2	21.7	19.4
\$50,000-\$74,999	22.1	19.1	21.5	20.7
\$75,000-\$99,999	15.9	15.0	13.5	14.1
\$100,000 or more	22.2	32.0	17.1	22.9

*Persons in households with zero or negative income excluded (less than 1% of all eligible voters in the U.S.)
 Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations from the 2006 American Community Survey (IPUMS 1% sample)

Characteristics of Eligible Voters in California, by Race and Ethnicity

- Latino eligible voters outnumber black eligible voters in California by more than 3 to 1.
- Twice as many Hispanics as Asians are eligible to vote in California—5 million versus 2.5 million.
- Latino eligible voters are younger than white, black and Asian eligible voters in California. 34% of Latinos are ages 18 to 29 compared with 18% of white, 25% of black and 21% of Asian eligible voters.
- Asian eligible voters in California are more than twice as likely as Latino eligible voters to be naturalized citizens—70% versus 30%.
- California Latino eligible voters (61%) are less likely to live in owner-occupied homes than white (68%) and Asian (71%) eligible voters in California.

Table 3
Characteristics of Eligible Voters in California, by Race and Ethnicity

	Hispanics	NON-HISPANIC		
		White	Black	Asian
Population (in thousands)				
Total population	13,088	15,585	2,209	4,419
Eligible voters (citizens ages 18 and older)	5,011	12,165	1,542	2,468
Percent of Eligible Voters				
Age				
18-29	33.9	18.2	25.0	21.0
30-44	30.6	24.9	30.8	29.4
45-59	21.9	29.8	26.9	28.2
60 and older	13.6	27.1	17.3	21.5
Gender				
Female	50.3	50.9	51.8	52.1
Male	49.7	49.1	48.2	47.9
Type of citizen				
Citizen by birth	70.3	93.2	96.3	30.3
Naturalized citizen	29.7	6.8	3.7	69.7
English-speaking ability				
Does not speak English "very well"	23.1	2.4	0.8	36.0
Speaks only English or English "very well"	76.9	97.6	99.2	64.0
Educational attainment				
Did not complete high school	27.8	7.6	14.6	12.0
Completed high school	31.8	23.3	29.7	16.8
Some college	29.3	34.9	37.5	27.9
Bachelor's degree or more	11.2	34.1	18.1	43.3
Marital Status				
Married	46.8	52.1	30.6	59.2
Never Married	36.9	25.8	43.4	28.2
Other	16.3	22.1	26.0	12.7
With child(ren) younger than 18 in home				
	33.2	23.5	25.0	28.8
In owner-occupied homes				
	60.8	67.8	43.2	70.7
Household income*				
Less than \$30,000	19.6	16.3	28.5	14.3
\$30,000-\$49,999	20.2	15.0	19.2	12.6
\$50,000-\$74,999	22.1	18.1	19.4	17.2
\$75,000-\$99,999	15.9	14.7	13.6	15.2
\$100,000 or more	22.2	35.9	19.4	40.7

*Persons in households with zero or negative income excluded (less than 1% of all eligible voters in the U.S.)
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations from the 2006 American Community Survey (IPUMS 1% sample)

Endnotes

- ¹ In this fact sheet, eligible voters are defined as U.S. citizens ages 18 and older. Eligible voters are not the same as registered voters. To cast a vote, in all states except North Dakota, an eligible voter must first register to vote.
- ² The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably. References to “whites,” “blacks,” and “Asians” are to the non-Hispanic components of those populations.
- ³ The specific data set used to derive estimates contained in this fact sheet are from the University of Minnesota’s Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) for the 2006 American Community Survey (1% sample). Information can be found on the following Website: <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. The estimates in this fact sheet are subject to sampling error. Also, estimates in this fact sheet will differ from estimates that may be published by the Census Bureau because of differences between the data used by the Census Bureau and the data it has released for public use. Further information on Census data and on sampling error in the data is available at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2006/AccuracyPUMS.pdf>.