

Hispanics in the 2008 Election: Puerto Rico

On Sunday June 1, 2008, Puerto Rico will hold an open Democratic presidential primary contest. More than 3.9 million people reside in Puerto Rico and 2.8 million of them are eligible to vote.¹ As of May 2, 2008, according to the Government of Puerto Rico, 2.37 million Puerto Rican residents were registered to vote. This fact sheet provides key demographic information on eligible voters in Puerto Rico and compares them with Latino eligible voters and all eligible voters in the United States.² All data are from the Census Bureau's 2006 Puerto Rico Community Survey.³

Election Facts About Puerto Rico

- Residents of Puerto Rico nominate delegates to the Democratic and Republican presidential conventions but they cannot vote for president in the general election.
- Puerto Rico has one non-voting U.S. Congressional Representative.
- The Republican Party's presidential caucus in Puerto Rico was on February 24, 2008. It drew a small number of participants – fewer than a thousand, according to unofficial tallies.
- The major political parties in Puerto Rico are the New Progressive Party (PNP), which supports U.S. statehood for Puerto Rico, the Popular Democratic Party (PPD), which supports enhanced commonwealth status, the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), which supports Puerto Rican independence from the U.S., the National Democratic Party, and the National Republican Party of Puerto Rico.
- The last day to register to vote for the June 1, 2008 election in Puerto Rico was May 2, 2008. According to the State Electoral Commission of Puerto Rico, there were 2,366,674 registered voters by May 2.⁴

- Voter participation in Puerto Rican elections has traditionally been high. In 2004, according to the State Electoral Commission, 82% of registered voters cast a vote in the November Puerto Rican general election for state and local offices as well as the non-voting representative to the U.S. Congress.⁵
- For more information on Puerto Rico’s government and political system, see <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rq.html#Govt>.

Characteristics of Puerto Rico’s Eligible Voter Population

- Puerto Rican eligible voters are older than U.S. Hispanic eligible voters, but similar in their age distribution to all eligible voters in the U.S.
- 23% of Puerto Rican eligible voters are ages 18 to 29. In contrast, 31% of U.S. Latino eligible voters, and 22% of all U.S. eligible voters are in that age range.
- 25% of Puerto Rican eligible voters are ages 60 and older. In comparison, 15% of U.S. Latino eligible voters and 24% of all U.S. eligible voters are ages 60 and older.

Table 1
Age and Gender of Eligible Voters
in Puerto Rico and the United States

	PUERTO RICO		UNITED STATES ¹	
	All	Hispanics	All	
Population (in thousands)				
Total population	3,928	44,299	299,398	
Eligible voters (citizens ages 18 and older)	2,845	17,975	206,329	
Percent of Eligible Voters				
Age				
18-29	23.4	31.1	21.5	
30-44	27.4	31.6	26.8	
45-59	24.5	22.5	28.0	
60 and older	24.7	14.9	23.8	
Gender				
Female	53.2	50.8	51.8	
Male	46.8	49.2	48.2	

Note: ¹Data for the U.S. includes the 50 states and the District of Columbia.
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations from the 2006 American Community Survey (IPUMS 1% sample)

- Puerto Rican eligible voters are less likely to have completed high school than are U.S. Latino eligible voters. 32% of Puerto Rican eligible voters have not completed high school, a larger share than the 27% of all U.S. Latino and 14% of all U.S. eligible voters who have not completed high school.
- Puerto Rican eligible voters are more likely to have a Bachelor’s degree or graduate education than are U.S. Hispanic eligible voters. 19% of Puerto Rican eligible voters have completed a bachelor’s degree or more, a larger share than the 13% of U.S. Latino eligible voters who have completed a bachelor’s degree or more.
- Puerto Rican eligible voters are less likely than U.S. Latino and all U.S. eligible voters to have children younger than 18 living in their home. 25% of Puerto Rican eligible voters have children in their home, compared with 33% of U.S. Hispanic and 27% of all U.S. eligible voters.
- 78% of Puerto Rican eligible voters live in owner-occupied homes compared with 60% of U.S. Latino eligible voters and 71% of all U.S. eligible voters nationwide.
- Puerto Rican eligible voters have much less income than U.S. Latino and all U.S. eligible voters. More than six in ten (61%) Puerto Rican eligible voters report a household income below \$30,000. However, Puerto Rico’s economy, income levels and cost of living are different from that of the United States, so direct comparisons of these economic indicators may be somewhat misleading. For more information on the Puerto Rican economy, see <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rq.html#Econ>.

Table 2
Characteristics of Eligible Voters
in Puerto Rico and the United States

	PUERTO RICO All	UNITED STATES ¹ Hispanics	All
Population (in thousands)			
Total population	3,928	44,299	299,398
Eligible voters (citizens ages 18 and older)	2,845	17,975	206,329
Percent of Eligible Voters			
Educational attainment			
Did not complete high school	32.1	27.3	14.0
Completed high school	26.3	31.6	31.2
Some college	23.0	27.8	29.8
Bachelor's degree or more	18.6	13.3	25.0
Marital Status			
Married	45.6	47.8	52.7
Never Married	30.5	33.5	26.3
Other	23.9	18.7	20.9
With child(ren) younger than 18 in home			
	24.5	33.4	26.8
In owner-occupied homes			
	78.4	60.2	70.8
Household income²			
Less than \$30,000	61.4	26.1	22.9
\$30,000-\$49,999	19.8	21.7	19.4
\$50,000-\$74,999	10.7	21.5	20.7
\$75,000-\$99,999	3.2	13.5	14.1
\$100,000 or more	4.8	17.1	22.9

Notes: ¹Data for the U.S. includes the 50 states and the District of Columbia. ²Persons 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. Since over 98% of Puerto Rico’s population is of Hispanic origin, statistics for Puerto Rico’s combined Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations are shown.
- 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 Puerto Rico 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>.
- ⁴ For current precinct voter registration counts published by Puerto Rico’s State Electoral Commission, see [http://www.ceepur.org/estadisticas/feb08/sumarias/sum_dist%20\(2.5.08\).html](http://www.ceepur.org/estadisticas/feb08/sumarias/sum_dist%20(2.5.08).html).
- ⁵ For information on voter participation in the 2004 Puerto Rican General Election, see: <http://www.ceepur.org/historia/eventosElectores/index.htm>.