During this month, Iowa and the United States celebrate the cultures and traditions of U.S. residents who trace their roots to the Caribbean Islands, Central America, Mexico, and South America.

What started in 1968, when Congress authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to proclaim a week in September as National Hispanic Heritage Week, expanded in 1988 to a month-long celebration of people living in the U.S. with heritage from Spanish-speaking nations in Latin America and Spain. September 15th was chosen as the starting point for the celebration because it is the anniversary of independence from Spanish colonization in five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16th.

215,986
The population in Iowa who self-identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino origin according to the 2020 Census. This group comprises 6.8% of Iowa’s total population.

161.9% The percent change in the Latino population from 2000 to 2020. This is an increase of 133,513 for the period.

518,323 The projected Latino population of Iowa as of July 1, 2050. According to the 2022 Woods & Pool Economics Inc., Latinos will constitute 14.8 percent of the state’s total population on that date.

Families and Children

41,451
The number of Latino families in 2021 who resided in Iowa. Of these families, 70.7 percent include related children under 18 years of age.

3,023
The number of Latino grandparents in 2021 living with their own grandchildren. 22.2% of those are responsible for the own grandchildren under 18 years of age.

10.2%
Percentage of Latino population under age 5 as of July 1, 2021. Latinos have one of the highest concentration of preschoolers among the other race or ethnic groups.

23.7
The median age of Iowa’s Latino population in 2021. The median age for the state of Iowa is 38.5.
Income, poverty, & health insurance

$52,082  The median income of Latino households in 2021. The median household income for the state was $65,600.

$58,565  The median income of Latino families in 2021. The median family income for the state was $84,908.

$20,333  The per capita income of Latinos in 2021. The per capita income for the state was $35,715.

14.5%  The percent of Iowa Latino population with no health insurance coverage in 2021. The corresponding rate for all Iowa is 4.8 percent.

19.4%  The poverty rate for the Latino population in 2021. The corresponding rate for Iowa is 11.1 percent.

Education

64,567  The number Latinos enrolled in the state’s elementary and high schools during the 2021-2022 school year.

289.7%  Percent increase in Latino enrollment between the 1999-2000 school year and 2021-2022.

70.3%  The percentage of Iowa Latinos age 25 and over, who had at least a high school education in 2021. In Iowa the percentage of total population with at least a high school education was 93.3%.

13,613  The number Latinos enrolled in the state’s universities and colleges. This represents 7.6% of the total enrollment.

Source: 2021 Student & Faculty Diversity Report, Iowa College Aid

16.6%  The percentage of Iowa Latinos age 25 and over, with a bachelor’s degree or higher in 2021. In Iowa the percentage of total population with a bachelor’s degree or higher was 30.5%.

3,937  Number of Iowa Latinos 25 years and older with a graduate or advanced degree in 2021.

Language

128,039  The number of Iowa residents age 5 and older in 2021 who speak Spanish at home. Among those who speak Spanish at home, 62.9 percent say they speak English “very well.”

21,041  The number of Spanish speaking English Language Learners in Iowa’s public schools during the 2021-2022 school year. This represents a 240.1 percent increase from the 1999-2000 school year.

Source: Iowa Department of Education

Serving Our Nation

4,079  The number of Iowa Latino veterans of the U.S. armed forces in 2021.

Source: Iowa Department of Education
**Employment**

**75.0%**
The percent of Iowa Latinos age 16 and over in the labor force in 2021. The percent of Iowans age 16 and over in the labor force was 66.1%.

**6.4%**
The unemployment rate of Iowa Latinos in 2021. In comparison the state of Iowa’s unemployment rate was 3.6%.

**Earnings**

**$29,330**
The 2021 median earnings for Latinos in Iowa. The median earnings for the state of Iowa was $39,068.

**$42,363**
The median earnings for Latino males in 2021 who worked full-time, year-round.

**$35,344**
The median earnings for Latina women in Iowa. In comparison the median earning for men and women in the state of Iowa were $56,427 and $44,801 respectively.

**Occupation**

**25.2%**
The percent in 2021 of Iowa Latinos in the production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

**22,896**
Iowa Latinos in management, business, science and arts occupations in 2021. 28.5% of the Latinos in this occupation group are in management occupations.

**21.0%**
The percentage of Iowa Latinos in service occupations in 2021.

**8,081**
Latinos are working in food preparation and serving related occupations.

**14,356**
The number of Iowa Latinos in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations in 2021.
Foreign Born

36.3%
The percent of Iowa Latinos in 2021 who are foreign-born.

41,688
The number of foreign-born Iowans in 2021 who were born in Mexico, by far more than any other Latin American country or any other country in the world. Other Latin American countries of origin with a large foreign-born population are El Salvador (4,285), Brazil (888), Cuba (559), and Colombia (1,176).

Housing

56.6%
The percentage of Latinos in Iowa who own their home in 2021. The corresponding percentage for the state is 71.9%.

Latinos in Iowa Counties

45,290
The number of Latinos in Polk County in 2021, making it the largest population of Latinos in any county at 21.1% of the state-wide population.

56.5%
Over half of the total 2021 Latino population live in eight counties Polk, Woodbury, Scott, Marshall, Johnson, Linn, Pottawattamie, and Muscatine.