



STATE OF LATINOS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Population / Economic Status / Housing / Neighborhood Change / Employment



District of Columbia
Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor



Office on Latino Affairs



The Urban
Institute

State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

Jennifer Comey
Peter A. Tatian
Rosa Maria Castaneda
Michel Grosz
Lesley Freiman

State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

November 2009

Prepared By:

Jennifer Comey
Peter A. Tatian
Rosa Maria Castaneda
Michel Grosz
Lesley Freiman

The Urban Institute
Metropolitan Housing and Communities
Policy Center
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Submitted To:

Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs
2000 14th St NW
Washington, DC 20009-4484

UI No. 07080-016-00

The nonpartisan Urban Institute publishes studies, reports, and books on timely topics worthy of public consideration. The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors thank the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs for providing us the opportunity to examine the state of Latinos living in the District of Columbia. In particular, we thank Mercedes Lemp and George Escobar.

We also thank the organizations that we interviewed to understand the trends, challenges, and expectations of the District's workforce development efforts, particularly in regard to Latinos living in the District. We interviewed stakeholders in the following organizations (listed in alphabetical order):

- DC Employment Justice Center
- DC Department of Employment Services (DOES)
- DC Jobs with Justice
- Greater Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Jubilee Jobs
- Latin American Youth Center
- Latino Economic Development Corporation (LEDC)
- Spanish Catholic Center
- Washington Lawyer's Committee



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

People of Hispanic or Latino origin are now the largest ethnic and racial minority in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Latinos made up 15 percent of the U.S. population in 2008. The Latino population has been steadily increasing in the District of Columbia as well, and the city's Latino population has many unique and important qualities that distinguish it from other racial and ethnic groups. This report attempts to describe the current state of the Latino population in the District of Columbia and paint as complete a picture as possible of the opportunities and challenges Latinos face today. Our hope is that this information will be valuable to city agencies and nonprofit organizations that are working to improve the status of Latinos in the nation's capital.

In this report, we describe how Latinos are faring in three domains: population and demographics, housing and neighborhood change, and economics and the workforce. We use the most recent data available to compare Latinos with non-Latinos living in the District and to describe trends over time. To supplement the available data, this study also draws on information and findings from one-on-one interviews with officials, community leaders, and service providers conducted between August and October 2009.

The District's Latino population has been growing steadily since the 1980s, even as the city's total population was declining. The increases in the number of Latinos living in the District can be partially explained by more immigrants from Latin American countries settling in the Washington region, but also by the more recent large growth in births to Latina mothers, who have experienced the greatest increase compared with other racial/ethnic groups in the District.

Latinos living in the District are more likely to be immigrants than non-Latinos. Latino immigrants in the city are predominantly from El Salvador, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. Latino households are more likely to consist of a married-couple family than non-Latino households and include more children and extended relatives. These family structures are consistent with the national characteristics of immigrant households.

The District's Latino population has historically lived in the northwest quadrant of the city, primarily in Wards 1, 2, and 3, although in recent years, changes in the city's neighborhoods and housing market have resulted in a shift in the areas where Latinos live. Most recently, the Latino population has increased in Ward 4 along Ward 4's southern border and declined in Wards 2 and 3. Few Latinos have ever lived east of the Anacostia River in Wards 7 and 8.

The District's housing boom, which started in 2001 and peaked in 2006, particularly affected Latino neighborhoods. The number of home sales, driven by condominiums, increased by 54 percent between 2001 and 2005 in neighborhoods where the majority of Latinos live, greater than the citywide increase of 33 percent. The median price for condos similarly exploded in Latino neighborhoods reaching \$371,000, an increase of 130 percent between 2001 and



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

2005. Latino neighborhoods have also weathered the housing downturn better than non-Latino neighborhoods, with fewer price declines than in many other parts of the city.

Despite the increase in homeownership that accompanied the housing boom, the vast majority of Latinos rent, rather than own, their homes. The American Community Survey (2005–2007) estimates for the District indicated that Latino-headed households had the highest rental rate of any race or ethnic group, at 65 percent, compared with 55 percent of households headed by African Americans and 38 percent of white-headed households.

Latino homeownership, while remaining small, did increase between 2000 and 2006, even in some of the hottest market neighborhoods. While 31 percent of District Latino households owned their home in 2000, that share increased to 35 percent by 2005–2007. Citywide, the number of home purchase loans Latinos took out increased at a rate higher than for African Americans or whites, and the share of home purchase loans that went to Latinos went from 4 percent of all home purchase loans in 2000 to 10 percent by 2006, slightly higher than the estimated share of Latinos living in the District (9 percent). It is worrisome, however, that the share of high-cost loans to Latino borrowers was also greater than the rate for the District as a whole. This suggests that Latinos may be more susceptible to losing their homes through foreclosures, since many foreclosures have been associated with high-cost subprime mortgages.

The housing boom in Latino neighborhoods has also disproportionately increased Latino's rent burdens. By 2005–2007, almost half of all Latino renters spent more than 30 percent of their household income on rent, a level considered unaffordable by many housing experts, surpassing the overall citywide share of 43 percent. Average rents between 2000 and 2005–2007 increased more for Latinos than for other racial/ethnic groups, possibly due to the fact that Latinos tended to live in the neighborhoods experiencing the hottest housing boom.

As was the case for many during the District's housing boom, Latino's housing costs have increased but their incomes have not kept pace. Latinos are most often employed in a few low-paying occupations, such as construction, cleaning, and food services. Cleaning and food service jobs, in particular, are among the lowest-paying occupations in the District. Two of the greatest barriers for Latinos trying to gain higher-paid employment are relatively low education levels and poor English proficiency. Almost one-third of District Latinos had less than a 9th grade education, and another 11 percent had only a 9th to 12th grade education and did not graduate high school. In comparison, almost one-quarter of African Americans had less than a high school education and very few (6 percent) had less than a 9th grade education. And nearly one-third (29 percent) of the District's Latinos age 16 and older did not speak English well or at all, and 38 percent of foreign-born Latinos were not proficient in English either.

As a result of their low employment status, Latinos have been particularly vulnerable to the current recession and have suffered substantial losses in employment, wages, and hours



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

worked as the recession has progressed. For this report, we interviewed several key Latino stakeholders in the District, who gave us additional perspectives on the current status of the city's Latinos, particularly during the ongoing recession. These key informants told us that there has been a significant decline in employment among their clients in the service industries between 2008 and 2009, particularly for construction, nanny, and cleaning jobs. Our informants said that many Latinos were either working less or had lost their jobs and were having a harder time finding new employment that paid as much or provided as many working hours as the jobs they had before. One informant from a nonprofit that provides workforce training said that construction jobs pay relatively well without requiring English proficiency, so non-English-speaking Latinos often feel that they can live relatively comfortably without English skills, until they lose their jobs. The lack of good English skills or other training makes finding new employment in other fields very difficult for these workers.

Although Latino families rely on income from some of the lowest-paid jobs available, Latino poverty rates remain relatively low. Almost one in five (19 percent) of all District residents, regardless of race or ethnicity, lived below the federal poverty level in 2005–2007. For Latinos in the District, the poverty rate was 15 percent. Latino households managed to stay above the poverty line by having larger households with multiple wage earners (unemployment among Latinos remained low until the recession hit). In addition, many workers in Latino families are making ends meet, particularly in light of the current recession, by holding multiple jobs simultaneously. A prominent community advocate we spoke to said, “A lot of workers that work two or three part-time jobs to maintain a full-time schedule still do not make enough money to make ends meet. They are working but are living over capacity and no one in the house is making enough to really feel above water.”

Many nonprofit service providers are struggling to meet the increasing needs of the unemployed and out-of-work Latino population. Several providers of basic health and social services and employment assistance in the District cited a steep increase over the past year in the need for medical assistance, food supplies, legal services, job services, and even clothes and toys for children. Our key informants emphasized the need for more comprehensive employment and training programs, designed to address the economic situation and the multiple barriers to advancement that many of the District's low-income Latinos face.

To better meet Latinos' financial and occupational needs, particularly in light of the recession, the key informants we spoke to suggested the following strategies be implemented:

- Examine opportunities for increasing incumbent worker training for workers with multiple barriers, including English language learners, low-skilled workers, and workers with low education.
- Explore ways of supporting existing Latino service providers to help them cope with increasing numbers of clients since the recession.



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

- Explore ways that federal stimulus or other funds can be used to help Latinos move into new growth sectors and careers.
- Expand the availability of “know your rights” classes, information on employment rights, and public services for workers whose rights may have been violated.
- Encourage greater collaboration and closer coordination of employment services between Latino-serving community-based organizations, employers, and the public employment system.



INTRODUCTION

People of Hispanic or Latino origin are now the largest ethnic or racial minority in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Latinos made up 15 percent of the U.S. population in 2008. The Latino population in the District of Columbia has been steadily increasing as well. For that reason, it is particularly important to have the most up-to-date information available on the city's growing Latino population and its characteristics.

The nation is in the midst of a serious recession, which has threatened the economic security and prosperity of individuals and families throughout the country and the Washington region. Latinos in the District are no less affected and, in fact, may be more vulnerable than others because of their dependency on jobs in the housing and construction industries, which have been particularly hard hit. Many District Latinos do not have a high school diploma or a college degree, while others lack English skills, making transitioning to new jobs more difficult. Because of their unique circumstances, Latinos may need specific help and services in these difficult times.

The purpose of this report is to provide up-to-date baseline information regarding Latinos in the District for the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs (OLA), as well as its partners inside and outside of city government, in three areas: population and demographics, housing and neighborhood change, and economics and workforce. In this report we describe how Latinos are faring in these three domains, compare them to non-Latinos living in the District, and examine the trends over time. Because of the importance of the national recession, we paid particular attention to ensure that we had the most recent data describing occupations, income, and unemployment. We have also included an overview of the types of workforce development services available to the Latino community from government agencies and nonprofit organizations, as well as the trends in jobs and workforce development for District Latino residents in light of the economic slowdown.

Organization of the report

The report begins by describing the population and demographics of the District's Latino residents, including the growth of the Latino population, the distribution of the population by age, type of family structure, and country of origin. The housing and neighborhood change section identifies the neighborhoods with sizable Latino populations, as well as changes in the owner-occupied and rental housing markets in these neighborhoods. The third section of the report describes unemployment and poverty rates for Latinos, their most common occupations, and their wages and income. In addition, we discuss workforce development efforts and challenges facing all District residents and Latinos in particular in light of the economic recession. Finally, we conclude by summarizing the current state of Latinos in the District and highlighting



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

possible strategies to improve their economic situation, particularly in light of the national recession.

Through this report, we used the term *Latino* to describe District residents who self-identify as Latino or Hispanic. The term “Latino” has more recently come into common use for native Spanish speakers or people who have roots in Spanish-speaking or Latin American countries, and is now preferred by many over the older terms “Hispanic” or “Spanish origin.”¹ The Latino population, as defined in this report, includes persons born in the United States as well as those who emigrated from another country; it includes U.S. citizens as well as District residents of foreign nationality.

In most cases, we compared the characteristics and outcomes of Latino District residents to non-Latino District residents. Most of the national and local administrative data sources used in this report allowed individuals to self-identify their ethnicity or origin as Latino or Hispanic. Wherever possible, we also disaggregated data into mutually exclusive racial/ethnic categories, that is, non-Latino white, non-Latino African American, non-Latino Asian, non-Latino persons of another race, and Latino. When we had mutually exclusive racial/ethnic categories, the Latino category included people of different races (i.e., black, white, Asian). While mutually exclusive categories were our goal, some data were collected or pre-tabulated in such a way that separating race from Latino origin was impossible. For these data sources, we compared Latino residents with non-Latino residents, regardless of race.²

Data Sources

To have the most recent, up-to-date information, we relied primarily on the 2005–2007 American Community Survey (ACS) micro-level data provided by the Integrated Public-Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) from the Minnesota Population Center.³ The ACS is a national survey of U.S. households conducted on an ongoing basis by the U.S. Census Bureau. The ACS questions are very similar to those asked on the Census 2000 long form, and include many details on household and person-level characteristics, such as demographics, educational attainment, economic status, and housing conditions. The 2005–2007 data were the most recent available at the time this report was prepared. As recommended by the Census Bureau, we averaged the 2005, 2006, and 2007 annual ACS survey samples to provide more reliable estimates for smaller subpopulations. Another benefit of using the ACS is that the data can be broken down into five public-use microdata areas (PUMAs). While the PUMAs do not conform to wards or other more familiar geographic areas, they do provide the ability to look at more recent data for different parts of the city. For reference, appendix map 1 shows the boundaries of the District’s eight wards in relation to the five PUMA boundaries.

Other national data sources that we use in the report were the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics wage and unemployment data and the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data on the characteristics of home purchase loans. In addition, we used District administrative data provided through NeighborhoodInfo DC. NeighborhoodInfo



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

DC, operated in partnership by the Urban Institute and the DC Local Initiatives Support Corporation, has assembled a data warehouse of District administrative and federal survey data that provide a variety of indicators over time, by race/ethnicity, and at small neighborhood geographies, such as wards. Two examples of local administrative data available through NeighborhoodInfo DC are birth data and real property data (which provide home prices).

To supplement the available data, this study also draws on findings from one-on-one interviews with officials, community leaders, and service providers conducted between August and October 2009. Information from key informants was intended to provide a more nuanced understanding of the trends observed in the quantitative data, as well as to obtain more up-to-date information on the labor market experiences of Latinos in the current recession. We also sought to explore the perspectives of local service providers and community leaders on what untapped opportunities exist to advance the job prospects and economic mobility of the District's low- and moderate-income Latino population.

The interviews were conducted by phone or in person using a semi-structured discussion guide and lasted approximately one hour each. Fourteen key informants represented 10 public and private organizations based in the District that provide social, economic, and legal services or advocate on behalf of District residents. In two cases, group interviews were conducted with several key informants from one organization. Key informants held leadership and direct service roles at the organizations, and included directors, case managers, managers of outreach and advocacy efforts, staff responsible for employment training, and managers and staff responsible for specific employment projects. The information collected from key informants was taken down as it was provided and was not independently evaluated by the report authors. Differences of opinion or perspective among the key informants are noted. A list of the organizations interviewed is included in the acknowledgments.

Undercounting

Undercounting is a long-standing problem with household surveys, including the ACS and the U.S. decennial census. The problem of undercounting certain groups (such as racial and ethnic minorities and the homeless), in both national and local-level data, has existed for a long time. The total undercount for the 1990 Census was about 4 million people, about 1.6 percent of the population.⁴ However, about 5.2 percent of the Latino population was estimated to have been missed by the census count, compared with 4.8 percent of the non-Latino African American population and 1.7 percent of the non-Latino white population. Although an accurate estimate of the undercount was not produced for the 2000 Census, researchers believe it decreased, possibly to only 2 percent of the Latino population, though a relatively high share (5 percent) of Latino children were undercounted.⁵



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

Those who are most likely to be undercounted in the Latino population include agricultural workers and renters in urban areas.⁶ While the exact reasons for undercounting are unknown, researchers have presented some ideas, including survey respondents choosing not to report all members of multiple Latino families living in a single rented unit and the language barrier.⁷ A third major issue is fear of interaction with government, especially for the undocumented population. Although the census is confidential, and Census workers are legally barred from providing information to law enforcement or other government agencies, many respondents may fear that the Census Bureau, or other data-collection agencies, would use the information in a detrimental manner, such as for deportation.⁸ Similar issues may be present in local administrative data. For instance, immigrants enrolling in health or welfare services such as Medicaid or food stamps may fear that the agencies will report their undocumented status, which has resulted in underreporting and underenrollment.⁹

Unfortunately, adjusting for undercounting in a reliable and accurate way is not feasible. Therefore, we have presented the data in this report, “as is,” without any adjustment. The reader should bear in mind the data presented here likely underrepresent the true size of the Latino population. Although this is a problem, we feel that the data provided are still of great value in better understanding the conditions and needs of the District’s Latino community.

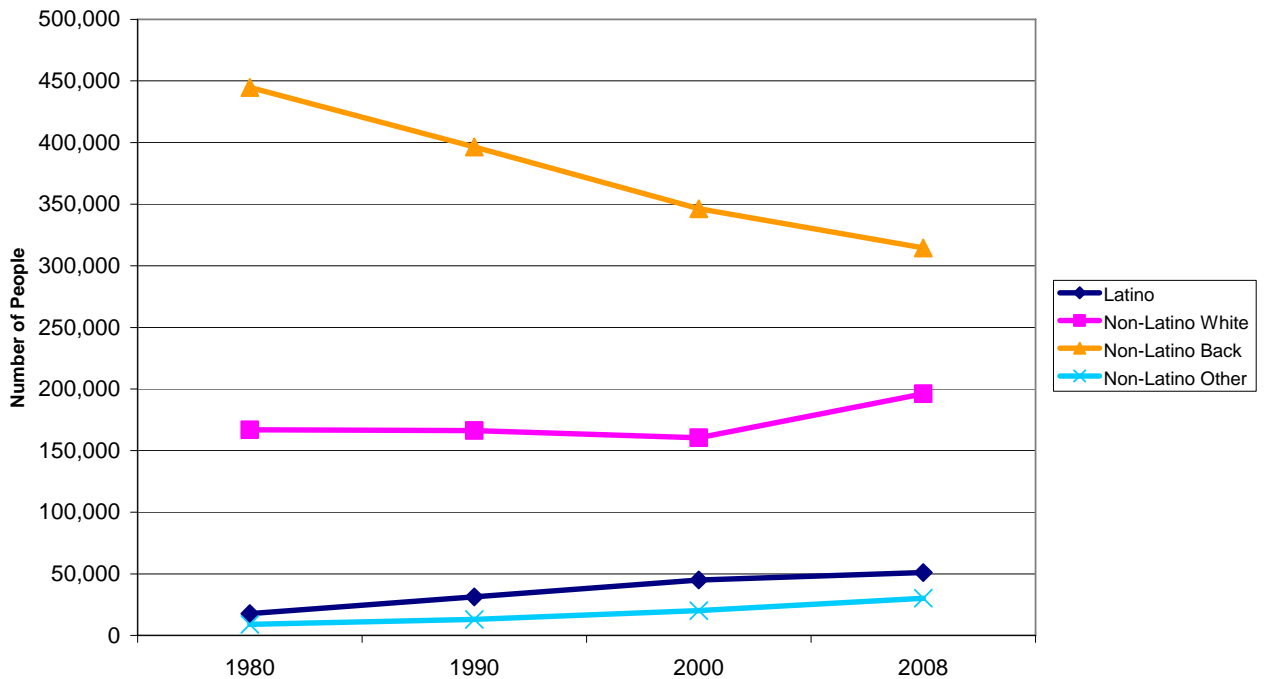


CHAPTER 1: POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Between 1950 and 2000, Washington, D.C., like many older, eastern cities, lost population due to the increase in suburbanization in the nation’s metropolitan areas. Between 1960 and 2000, the District’s population fell 25 percent, from 763,956 residents in 1960 to 572,059 residents in 2000. During the past decade, however, the District began attracting new residents in greater numbers. As a result, the most recent data indicate that the population of the city is beginning to grow again. Between 2000 and 2008 (the latest data), the District’s population was estimated to have increased by 3 percent, reaching 591,833 residents. The increase has been driven primarily by non-elderly adults: the number of 18- to 64-year-olds increased by 7 percent between 2000 and 2008, while the number of children (age 0 to 17) was estimated to have decreased by 3 percent during the same time period. The number of adults older than 64 stayed relatively steady, increasing by only 1 percent between 2000 and 2008.¹⁰

In contrast to overall city trends, the District’s Latino population has been steadily increasing since 1980 (figure 1.1). There were 17,777 Latinos living in the District in 1980, but that number rose to 45,015 in 2000, a 153 percent increase. In 2008, there are estimated to be 51,124 Latinos living in the District, an increase of 14 percent since 2000 and almost triple the size of the population in 1980.¹¹

Figure 1.1. Population by Race/Ethnicity for the District, 1980–2008



Sources: Decennial Census and 2008 Population Estimates



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

The District has been a majority African American city since about 1960, following the white exodus to the suburbs that started in the 1950s. African Americans have remained the majority since then, despite a similar outmigration of black residents following the urban riots in the 1960s. However, with the steady increases in the Latino population over the past three decades, and the more recent rebounding of the white population, the Latino and white shares of the District's population have risen, while the African American share has fallen. In 1980, 3 percent of the District's population was estimated to be Latino, but that share grew to 8 percent in 2000 and is estimated to have increased slightly to 9 percent in 2008. Similarly, the share of the non-Latino white population was 26 percent in 1980 and increased to 33 percent by 2008. The non-Latino African American population declined from 70 percent of the population in 1980 to 53 percent in 2008.¹²

Number of Latino children increasing in the District

Along with the overall loss in population over the past fifty years, the total number of children living in the District has decreased. Between 2000 and 2008, the city became home to more single adults and childless couples than families with children.¹³ There were approximately 117,092 children under 18 years old living in the District in 1990, a number that declined to approximately 114,992 children in 2000 and is estimated to have further dropped to 112,016 by 2008. The continuing decline in the child population since 2000 is notable since, as mentioned above, the city's overall population grew during this period.

Looking at the change in the number of children by race and ethnicity, however, we find that the number of Latino and white non-Latino children have increased over the past decade. For instance, the number of Latino children grew by 9 percent between 2000 and 2008 (from 11,463 to 12,499 children) and the number of white children rose even more, by 35 percent, during the same time period. The overall decline in the number of children during the past decade has largely been driven by a decrease in the number of African American children. Between 2000 and 2008, the number of black children under 18 years old fell from 87,814 to 74,462, a 15 percent decrease.¹⁴

Births to Latino mothers have increased

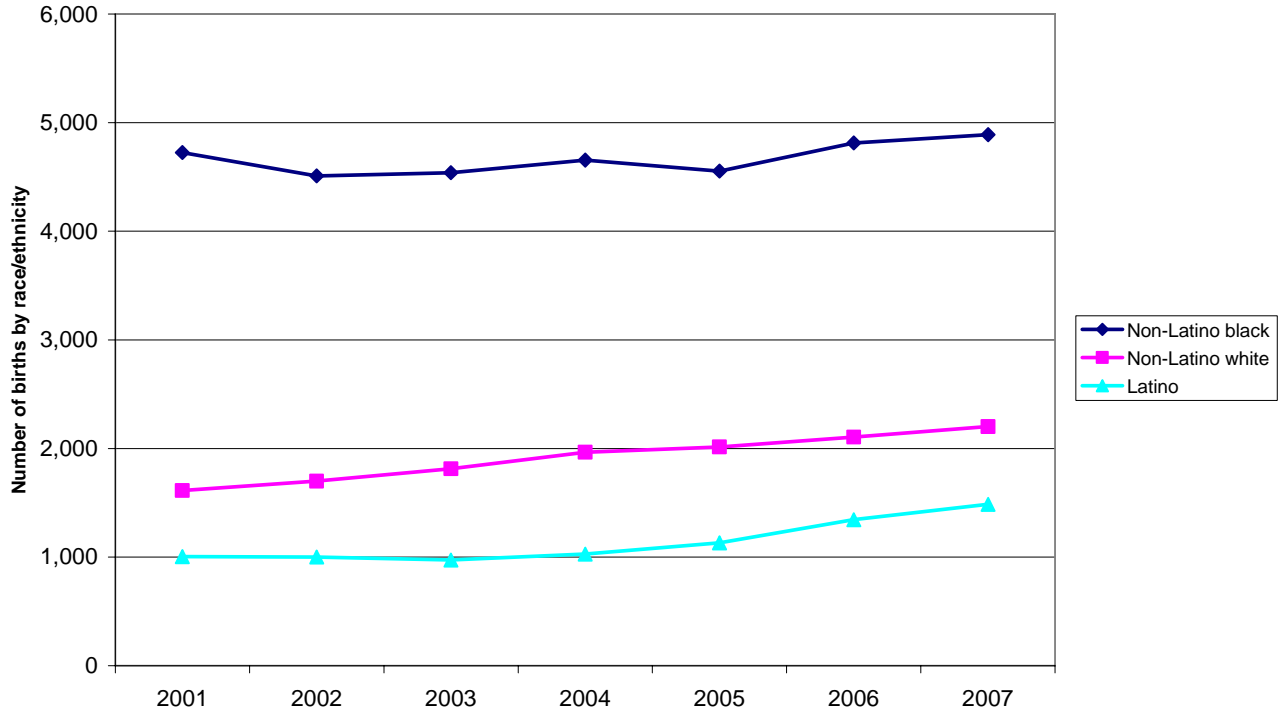
Although the migration of Latino families to the District partly fueled the increase in the number and share of Latino children, a bigger factor has been the recent increase in births to Latina mothers living in the city. Births to District mothers of all races had steadily declined during the 1990s (the earliest available data) but began inching upward during the 2000s, even while the city's overall child population declined. In 1990, there were 11,806 births to all District mothers, which dropped to 7,666 births in 2000, a decrease of 35 percent. However, between 2001 and 2007, the total number of births increased from 7,621 to 8,870 births, an increase of 16 percent. As a result, the proportion of infants and toddlers under 5 years old increased in the District, from 29 percent of all children under 18 in 2000 to 33 percent in 2008.¹⁵



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

Birth rates for Latina mothers followed these trends, but grew even faster than the city average. The number of births to Latina mothers increased from 1,005 births in 2001 to 1,487 births in 2007, a net increase of 482 births. This 48 percent growth in Latino births was much greater than the rise for births to all mothers during the same period (figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Number of Births by Race/Ethnicity of Mother in the District, 2001–2007



Source: D.C. Department of Health, State Center for Health Statistics

In addition to the number of births, Latina mothers increased their share of all births in the District. Births to Latina mothers made up 13 percent of all births in 2001 but rose to 17 percent of all births in 2007. The share of births to Latina mothers also grew because births to African-American mothers (the racial/ethnic group with the greatest number of births) increased only slightly between 2001 and 2007: from 4,724 births in 2001 to 4,890 births in 2007, an increase of 4 percent. Births to white mothers rose dramatically but less so compared with Latina mothers: from 1,613 births in 2001 to 2,203 in 2006, a 37 percent increase.¹⁶

Births to teenage mothers (under 20 years old) is a concern because women who have children too early in life may hurt their chances of finishing high school, going to college, and, consequently, obtaining a job that pays a good wage and has needed benefits. While the share of births to teenage mothers in the District had been steadily declining between 1996 and 2005, the share of births to teenage Latina mothers has

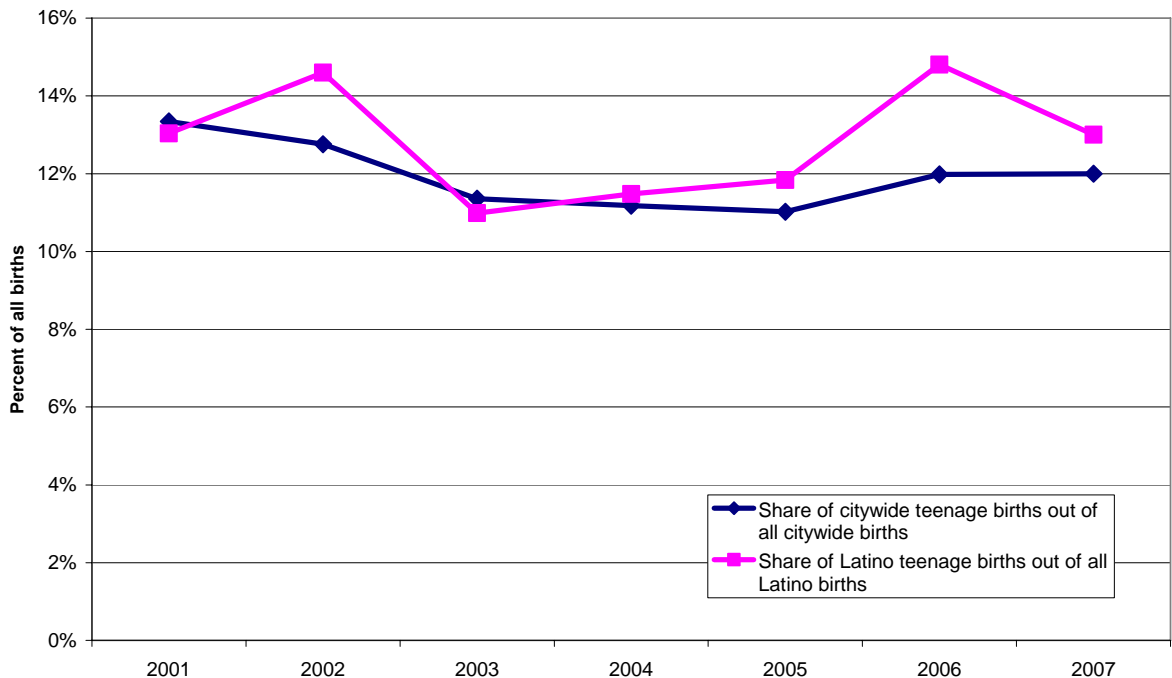


State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

been higher than the city average for the past three years. In 1996, the share of all births to teenage mothers was 17 percent, but by 2005, the share had dropped to 11 percent. Following this decline, however, the share of births to teenage mothers grew for the first time in 11 years, rising to 12 percent of all births in 2006 and remaining at 12 percent of all births in 2007.¹⁷

While African American teenage mothers have made up the greatest proportion of teenage births, births to teenage Latina mothers had been increasing in recent years (figure 1.3). In 2005, 12 percent of all Latina births were to a Latina mother under 20 years old, compared with 11 percent for the District overall. In 2006, the difference was even more stark, with 15 of Latina births to a teenage mother, compared with 12 percent for the District overall. In 2007, the share of all Latina births to a teenage mother dropped back down to 13 percent, a welcome decline but a share still higher than the city average.¹⁸

Figure 1.3. Share of Births to Teenage Mothers in the District, 2001-2007



Source: D.C. Department of Health, State Center for Health Statistics

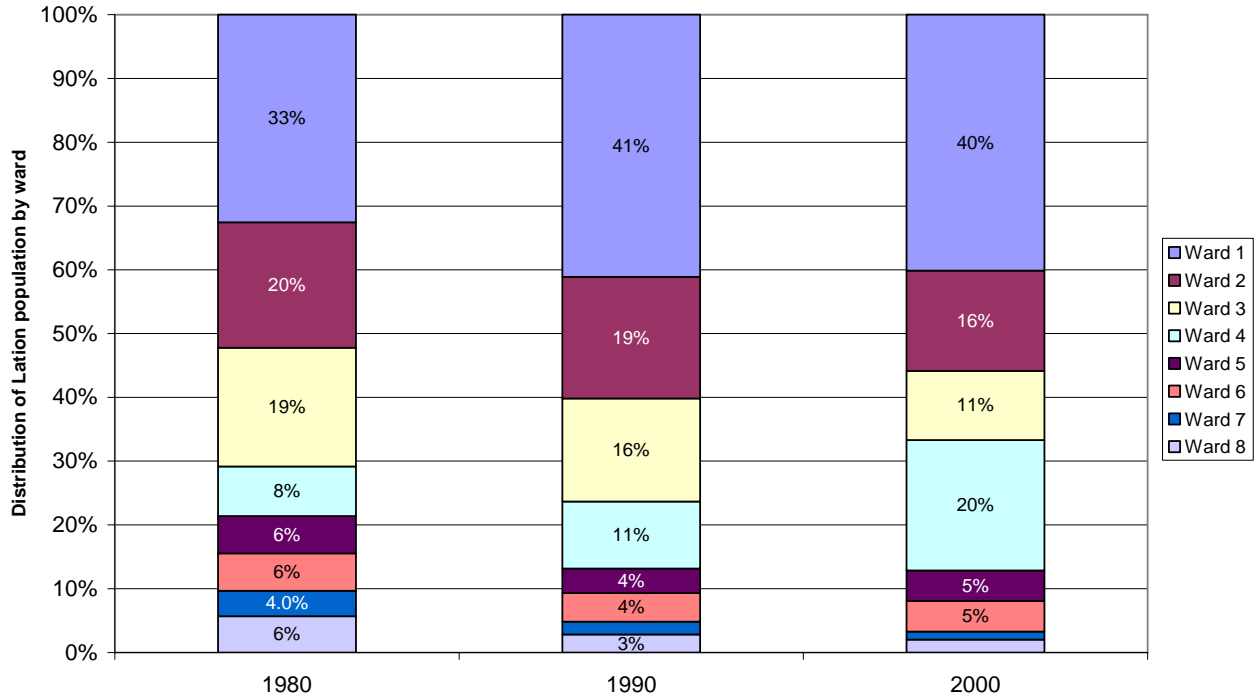
Latinos concentrated in Wards 1 and 4

The District's Latino population has primarily settled in the northwest quadrant of the city, mostly in Wards 1, 2, and 3, although in recent years, changes in the city's neighborhoods and housing market have shifted where Latinos live. In 1990, 41 percent of the city's Latinos lived in Ward 1, up from 33 percent in 1980. The share of Latinos in



Ward 1 held relatively steady by 2000, decreasing by only one percentage point to 40 percent (figure 1.4).

**Figure 1.4. Distribution of Latinos by Ward in the District
1980-2000**



Sources: 1980, 1990 and 2000 Decennial Censuses

One of the areas to see the largest growth in Latino population was Ward 4. The share of Latinos living in Ward 4 increased from 8 to 11 percent between 1980 and 1990, and then almost doubled to 20 percent of the entire Latino population by 2000.

In contrast, the share of Latinos in Wards 2 and 3 decreased over these three decades. Between 1980 and 1990, the share of Latinos living in Ward 2 dropped slightly, from 20 to 19 percent, but then fell to 16 percent in 2000. Similarly, while 19 percent of Latinos lived in Ward 3 in 1980, the share dropped to 16 percent in 1990 and to 11 percent in 2000.

The most recent population data available for small geographic areas are from the 2000 Census. We have summarized these data by neighborhood cluster to examine areas where Latinos have concentrated in the city. Neighborhood clusters, shown in appendix map 1, are groups of three to four neighborhoods that were defined by the D.C. Office of Planning for developing small area plans. There are 39 neighborhood clusters defined for the entire city.



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

In 2000, 31 percent of the Latino population was concentrated in one neighborhood cluster of Ward 1, which included the Columbia Heights, Park View, and Mt. Pleasant neighborhoods (cluster 2 in appendix map 1). The increases in Ward 4 that occurred between 1990 and 2000 were mainly in the neighborhoods along the southern border of Ward 1. Specifically, in 2000 more than 14 percent of the District's Latinos resided in the neighborhood cluster that included Brightwood Park, Crestwood, and Petworth (cluster 18). The neighborhoods of Dupont Circle (cluster 6) and Glover Park (cluster 14) in Wards 2 and 3, respectively, experienced declines in their Latino populations between 1990 and 2000.

Few Latinos have lived east of the Anacostia River in Wards 7 and 8. In 1980, only 4 percent of the Latino population lived in Ward 7 and only 6 percent in Ward 8. Those shares decreased even further by 1990 to only 2 and 3 percent, respectively, and fell even more by 2000, to only 1 percent in Ward 7 and 2 percent in Ward 8 (figure 1.4).

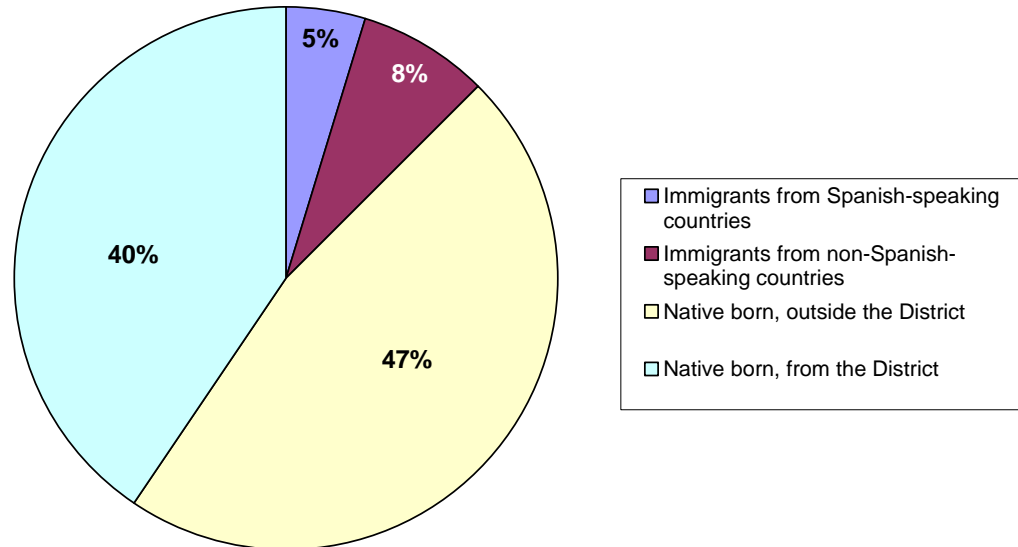
More recent data at the ward and neighborhood levels will not be available until after the 2010 Census. However, the American Community Survey provides data for public-use microdata areas (PUMAs) (see appendix map 2 for a comparison of PUMA and ward boundaries). The most recent data from the 2005–2007 American Community Survey suggests that the greatest concentration of Latinos continues to be in PUMA 105, which approximates Ward 1 and the southern portion of Ward 4. The 2005–2007 American Community Survey also shows that Latinos continue to make up a small share of the population east of the Anacostia River; less than 2 percent of the population was Latino in PUMA 104, which encompasses both Ward 7 and Ward 8.

Salvadorians are the largest immigrant group in the District

According to the 2005–2007 American Community Survey, 5 percent of the District's population was born in a Spanish-speaking country and 8 percent was born in a non-Spanish speaking country (outside of the United States), totaling an immigrant population of 69,676 persons, or 13 percent, of the District's population. The remaining 47 percent of the District's population was born in the United States but outside of the District, while 40 percent was born in the District itself (figure 1.5).



Figure 1.5. Share of District's Population by Place of Birth, 2005–2007

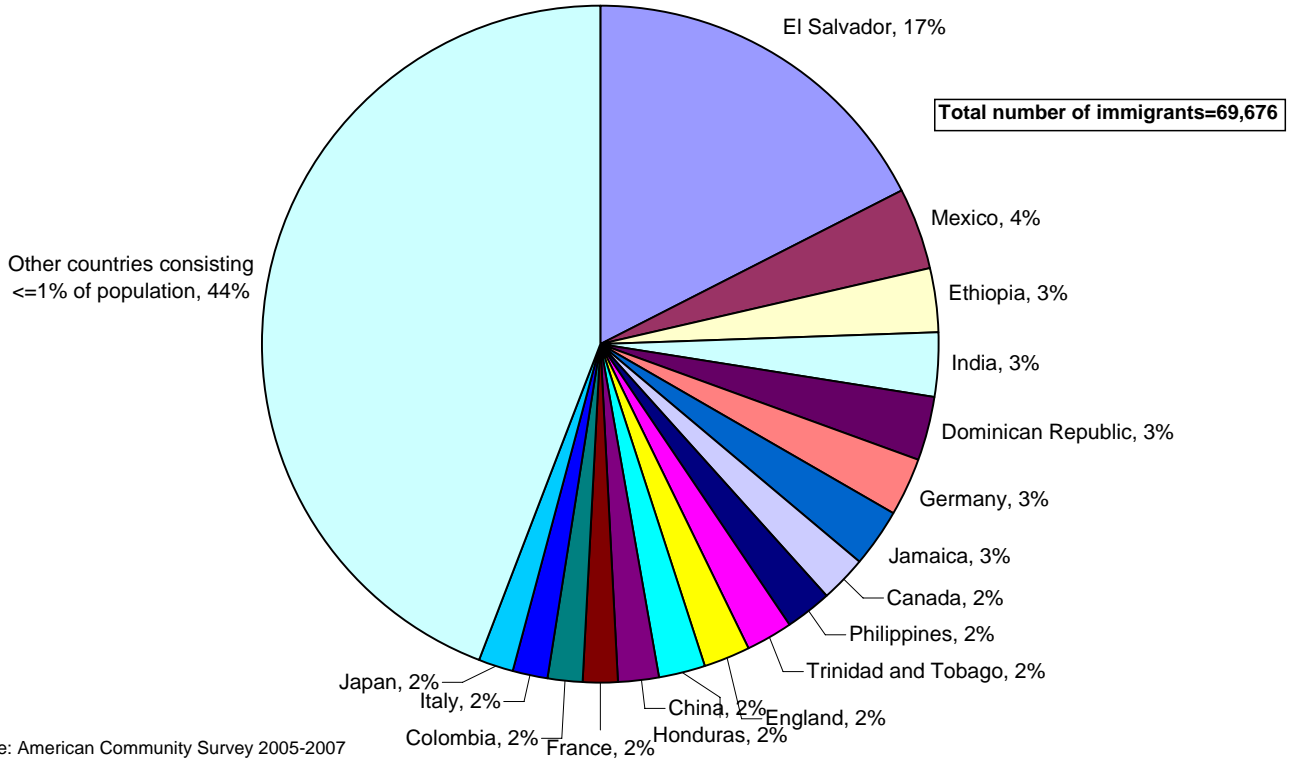


Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

El Salvador stands out as the predominant country of origin for District residents not born in the United States. In fact, 17 percent of the city's immigrant population, or about 12,155 people, were born in El Salvador, followed by Mexico with only 4 percent, or 2,734 people (figure 1.6).¹⁹ Other Latino countries with larger shares of District immigrants include the Dominican Republic (3 percent of the immigrant population or 2,074 people) and Honduras (2 percent or 1,453 people).



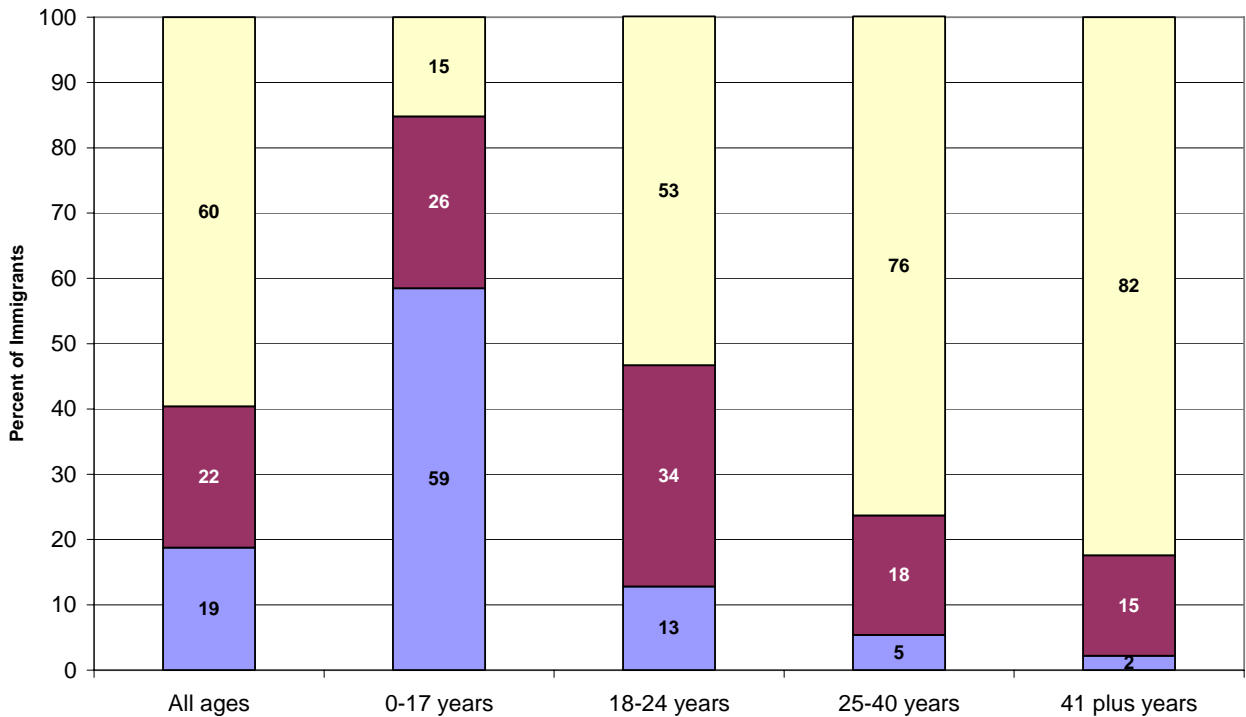
Figure 1.6. Share of Immigrant Population by Country of Origin, 2005–2007



More than half (60 percent) of the District’s Latino population in 2005–2007 was born outside of the United States, compared with only 9 percent of the non-Latino population. Latino children, however, were more likely to have been born in the United States, while Latino adults were more likely to be immigrants. As figure 1.7 shows, the share of the Latinos who were immigrants grew consistently larger for older age groups: 14 percent of children under 18 years old were born outside of the United States, compared with 64 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds, 82 percent of 25- to 40-year-olds, and 82 percent of Latinos 41 years and older.



Figure 1.7. Share of Immigrants by Age Group in the District, 2005-2007



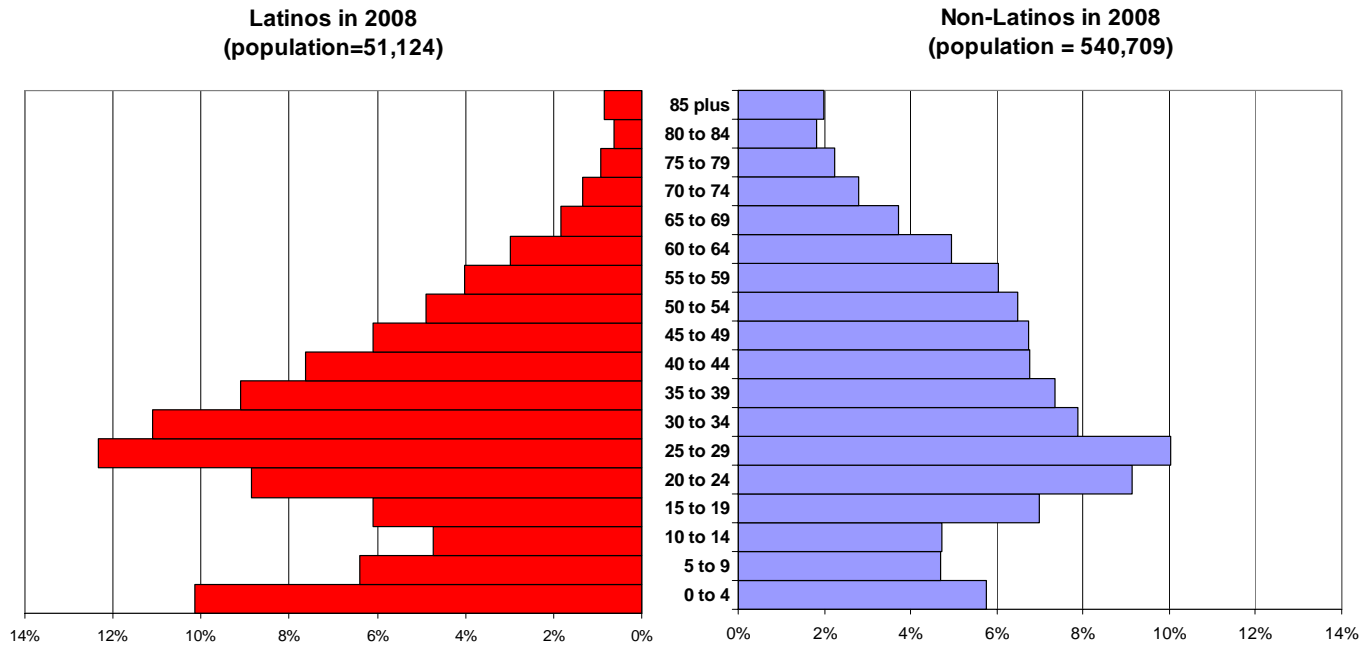
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

Latinos are younger than non-Latinos and more likely to be male

According to the 2005–2007 American Community Survey, the average age of Latinos in the District was 31.3 years old while the average age of non-Latinos was 37.2 years old. The population pyramids shown in figure 1.8 display the age distributions, in five-year increments, of Latinos and non-Latinos in the District. The pyramids show the bigger “bump” of Latinos at the youngest age category and the 20 to 44 year range, which is the most productive group for working and having children (figure 1.8). About half (52 percent) of the Latino population was 20 to 44 years old in 2008, while this age group made up only 41 percent of the non-Latino population. In addition, 10 percent of the Latino population was made up of children under age 5, compared with only 6 percent of the non-Latino population.²⁰



Figure 1.8. Population Distribution by Age, 2008



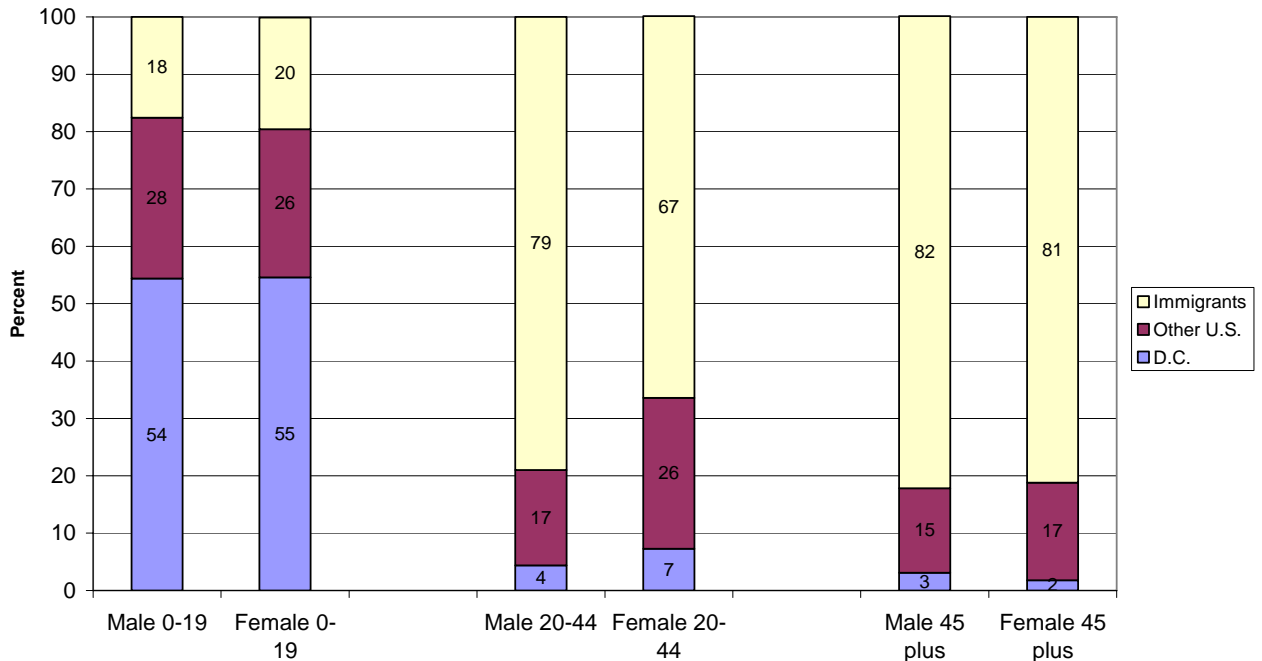
Source: Population Estimates 2008

The Latino population was also more likely to be male than the non-Latino population in the District, according to the 2005–2007 American Community Survey. About half (51 percent) of the Latino population of all ages was male, compared with 47 percent of the non-Latino population. The difference was particularly striking when restricting the population to the largest age cohort of Latinos: 55 percent of Latinos 20 to 44 years old were male, compared with 48 percent of non-Latinos 20 to 44 years old.

Looking at gender and immigration status for 20- to 44-year-olds, Latino females in the District were more likely to have been born in the United States, while Latino males were more likely to be immigrants (figure 1.9). For instance, 73 percent of Latino males 20 to 44 years old were immigrants in 2005–2007, compared with only 67 percent of Latino females in the same age group.²¹



Figure 1.9. Share of Latino Population by Place of Birth, Age and Gender in the District, 2005–2007



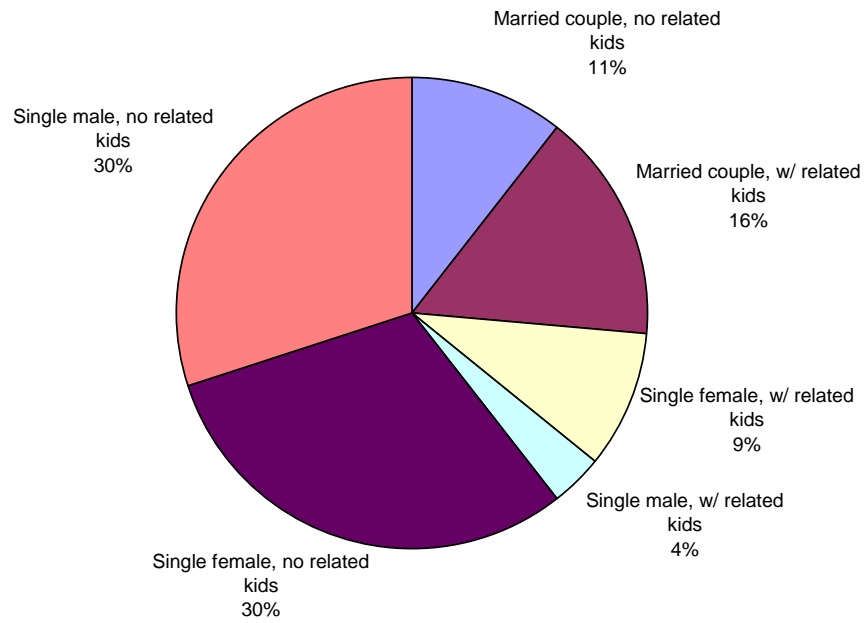
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

Latinos are more likely to live with other family members than non-Latinos

Latinos were more likely to live in households with family members than non-Latino persons, mirroring the national characteristics of immigrants. Latino households were more likely to consist of a married-couple family with children than non-Latino households: 16 percent of all Latino households were married-couple families with related children versus 6 percent of all non-Latino households (figures 1.10a and 1.10b).²² Latino households also included more children and extended relatives than non-Latino households: 10 percent of Latino households had two or more children of their own living with them versus only 7 percent of non-Latino families; 5 percent of Latino heads of household had their sibling living with them versus 2 percent for non-Latinos; 2 percent of Latino heads of household had a parent living with them versus 1 percent for non-Latinos; and 5 percent of Latino heads of household had other relatives living with them versus 2 percent for non-Latinos.²³ Latino heads of household were also more likely to live with unrelated persons. For example, 3 percent of Latino heads of household lived with roomers, boarders, and lodgers compared with 1 percent of non-Latino heads of households. This may be driven by immigrant households, who tended to room together to share the costs of housing.²⁴



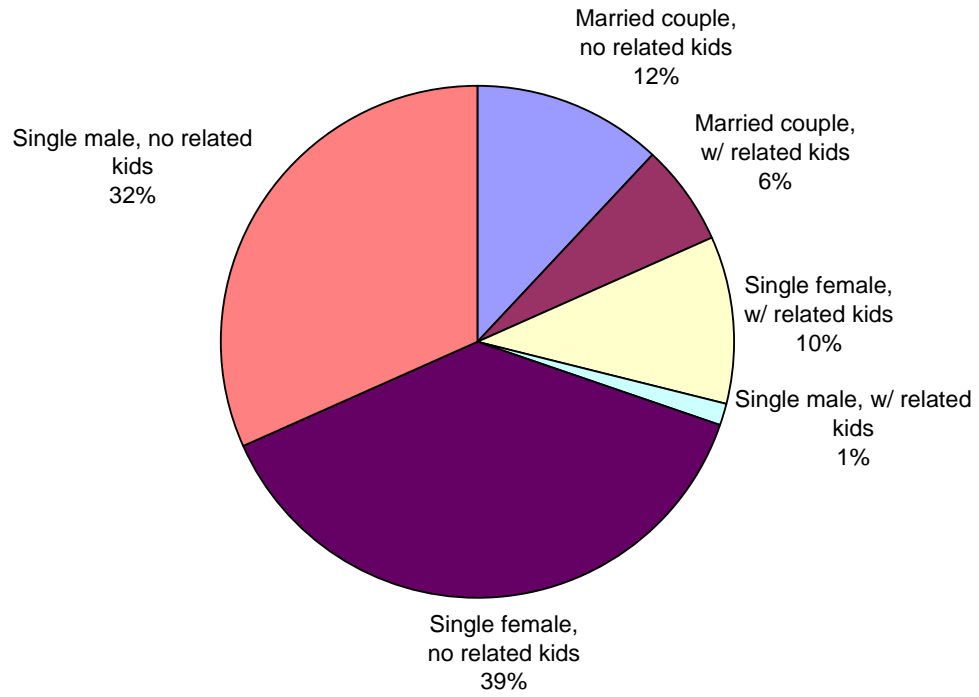
Figure 1.10a: Household Type for Latinos in the District, 2005-2007



Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007



Figure 1.10b: Household Type for Non-Latinos in the District, 2005-2007



Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007



CHAPTER 2: HOUSING MARKET AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

This chapter focuses on the neighborhoods in the District of Columbia that have a substantial share of Latinos living in them. As discussed in chapter 1, the District's Latino community has predominantly lived in Columbia Heights, Park View, and Mt. Pleasant in Ward 1 and more recently in Brightwood Park, Crestwood, and Petworth in Ward 4. In this chapter, we narrow our focus to 16 individual census tracts that were home to a concentration of Latinos in 2000, the most recent year that tract-level data are available.

Neighborhoods with significant Latino populations are mostly clustered in Columbia Heights

We designated census tracts as neighborhoods with concentrations of Latinos if they had at least 20 percent of the population who identified themselves as Latino in the 2000 Census. Map 2.1 shows the only census tract, out of 188 in the city, that was majority Latino in 2000—tract 28.02 in the center of Columbia Heights, which was 51 percent Latino.ⁱ Five other census tracts clustered around the center of Columbia Heights at 14th and Irving Streets (tracts 27.02, 28.01, 25.02, and 37) had at least 30 percent Latino population in 2000. An additional six census tracts in that area were more than 20 percent Latino (tracts 25.01, 27.01, 30, 31, 36, 38).

Four tracts had at least 20 percent Latino population outside the area surrounding Columbia Heights. According to the 2000 Census, tract 50 in Ward 2's Logan Circle was 30 percent Latino while tracts 18.03 and 18.04 in the Brightwood neighborhood of Ward 4 and tract 49.02 in Logan Circle were between 20 and 30 percent Latino.

We refer to these 16 census tracts with at least 20 percent Latino population as neighborhoods with Latino concentrations throughout this chapter. Collectively, these neighborhoods were home to 68,200 people or 12 percent of the city's total population in 2000. A total of 21,600 Latinos lived in these neighborhoods, about 48 percent of the city's Latino population.

District housing boom in neighborhoods with a sizeable Latino population

In the last decade, the District underwent a significant housing boom, which started building in 2001 and peaked in 2006. This boom was followed by a national housing market bust that has substantially slowed home sales in the city. The number of citywide housing sales increased by 33 percent between 2001 and 2005. Between 2005 and 2007, however, the number of housing sales fell 22 percent.

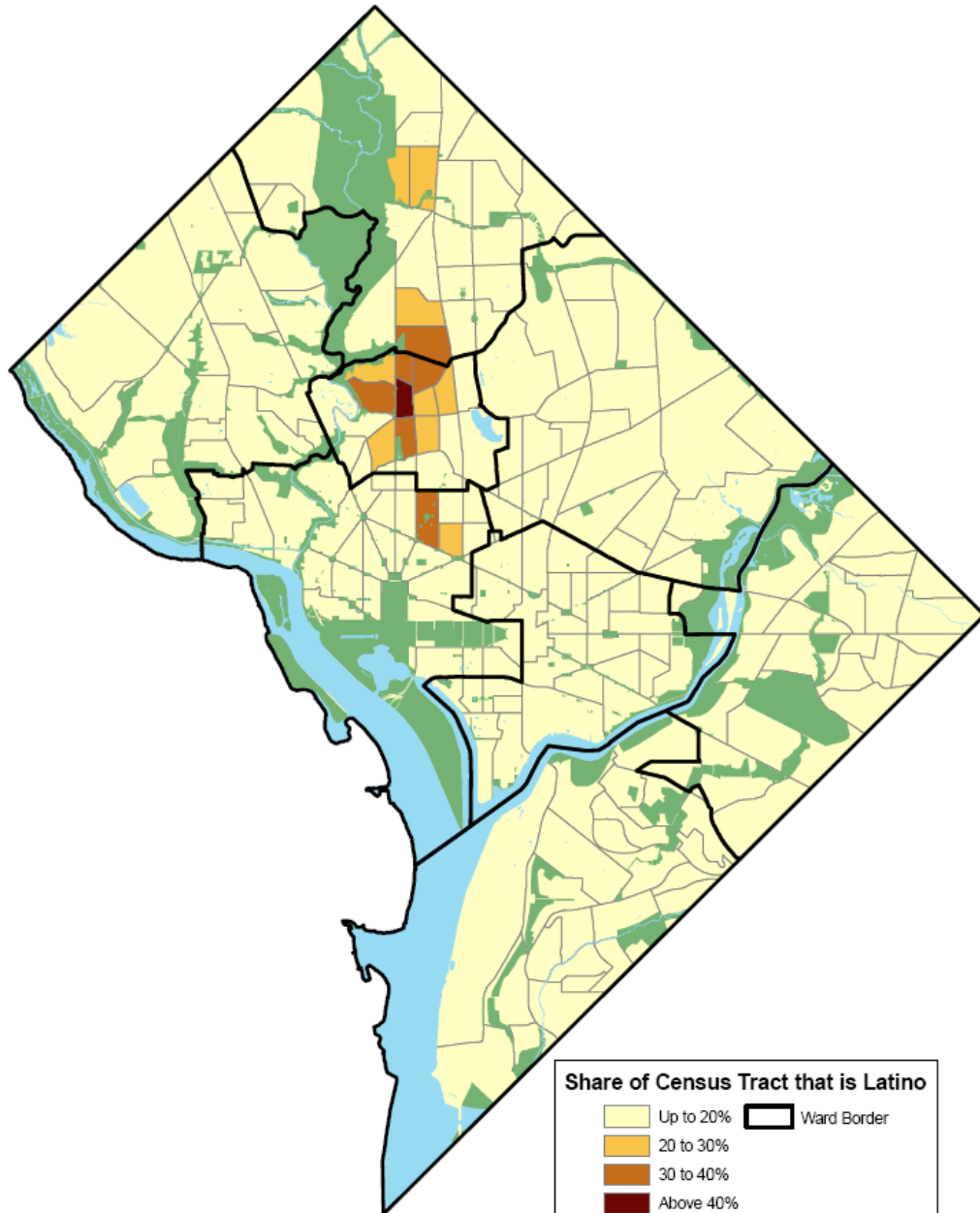
ⁱ Census tract 28.02 north-south boundaries include Newton Street and Harvard Street, and its east-west boundaries include 13th Street and 16th Street.



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

Neighborhoods with a sizeable Latino population (the 16 census tracts described earlier), which were especially hot markets for home buyers during the boom, have not yet suffered the housing market downturn as dramatically as other parts of the city.

Map 2.1. The District's Latino Neighborhoods by Census Tract, 2000



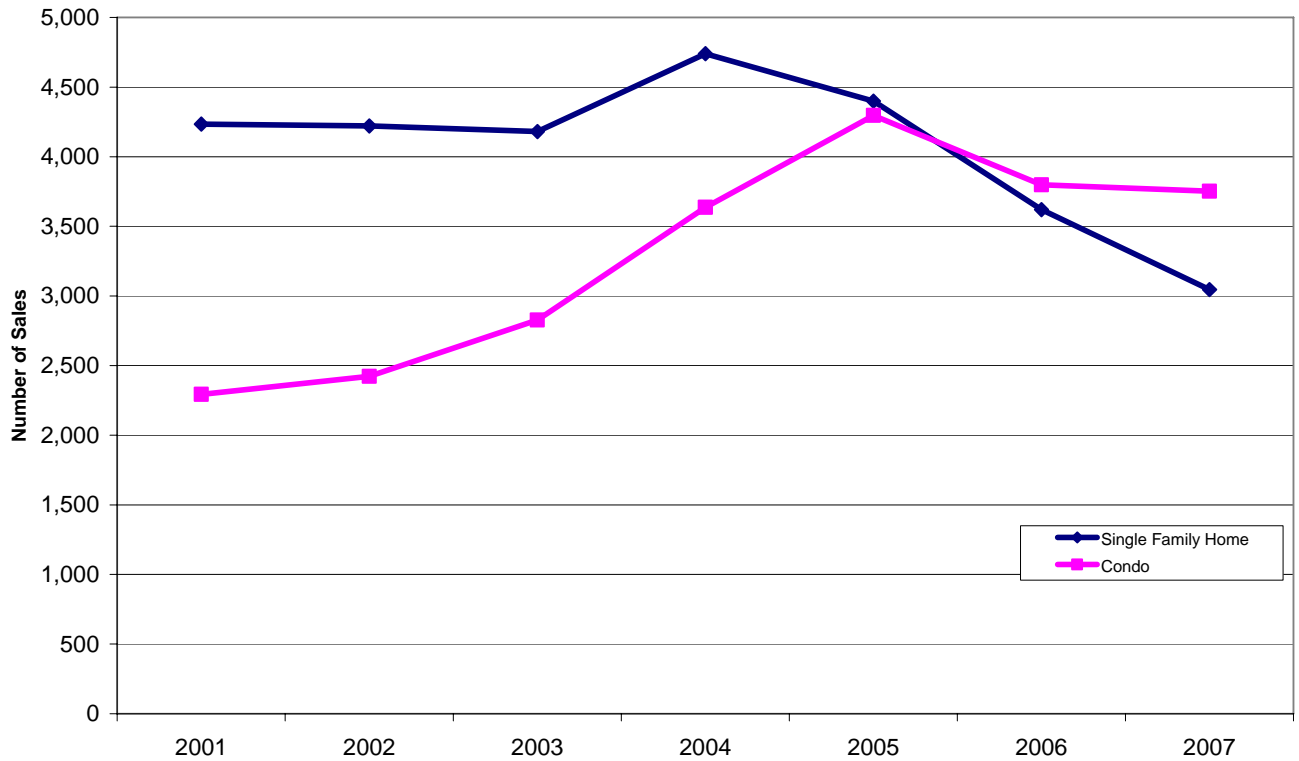
Sources: Census 2000 and DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

Sales of homes in Latino neighborhoods increased by 54 percent between 2001 and 2005, and fell only 3 percent in the following two years (figures 2.1 and 2.2).

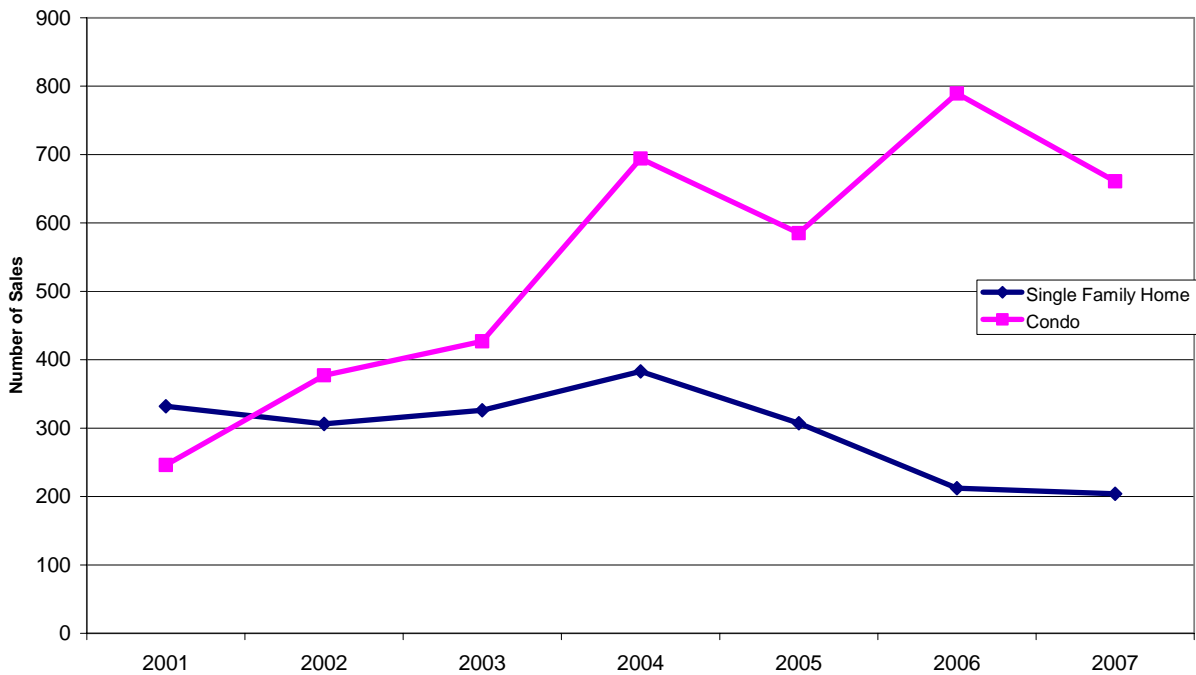
Figure 2.1. Home Sales in the District, 2001–2007



Sources: DC Office of Tax and Revenue and 2000 US Decennial Census



Figure 2.2. Home Sales in Latino Neighborhoods

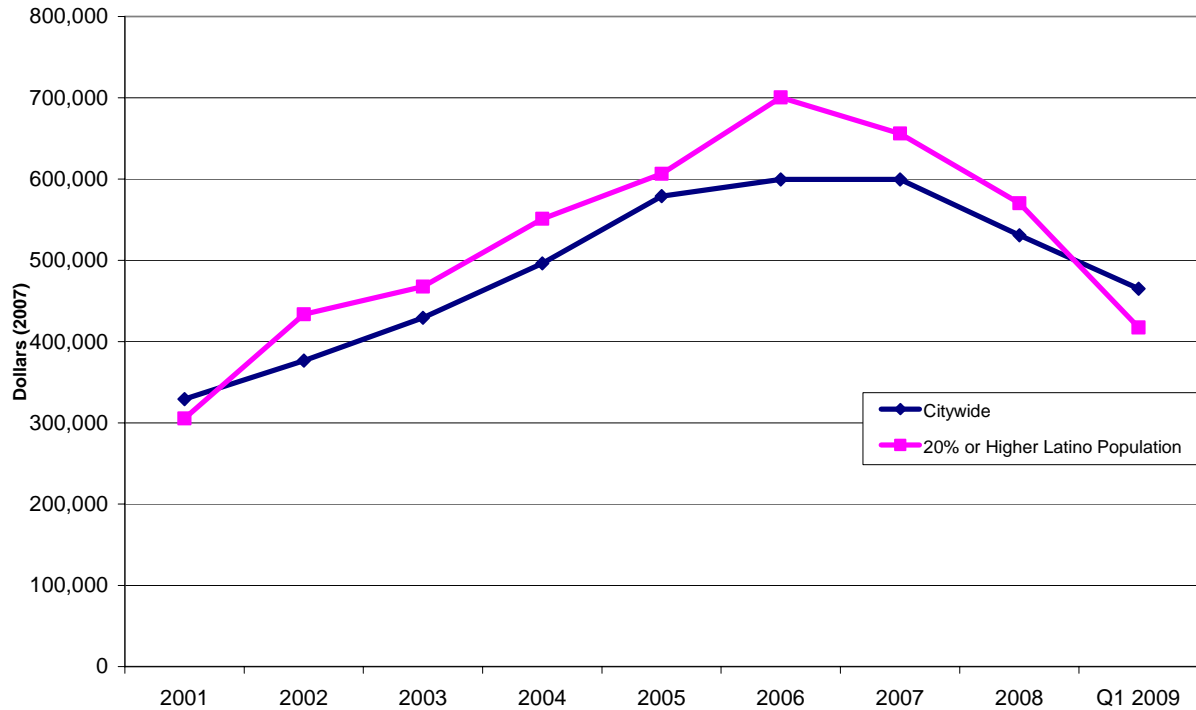


Sources: DC Office of Tax and Revenue and 2000 US Census
Note: Census tracts more than 20 percent Latino from the 2000 Census.

Not only did Latino neighborhoods experience a significantly greater increase in the volume of sales, but the sales prices of homes in these neighborhoods rose much faster than in the city as a whole. In 2001, the median price for a single-family home in Latino neighborhoods was \$290,800, 12 percent lower than the District median of \$329,100. Prices in these neighborhoods rose to a high of \$700,300 in 2006, before dropping 40 percent to end at \$417,400 by the first quarter of 2009. Compared to the citywide median price for a single family home of \$464,900, this stark drop in prices marked the first time Latino neighborhoods had a median price below the citywide median since 2001 (figure 2.3).²⁵



Figure 2.3: Median Price of Sale for Single Family Homes, 2001-2009

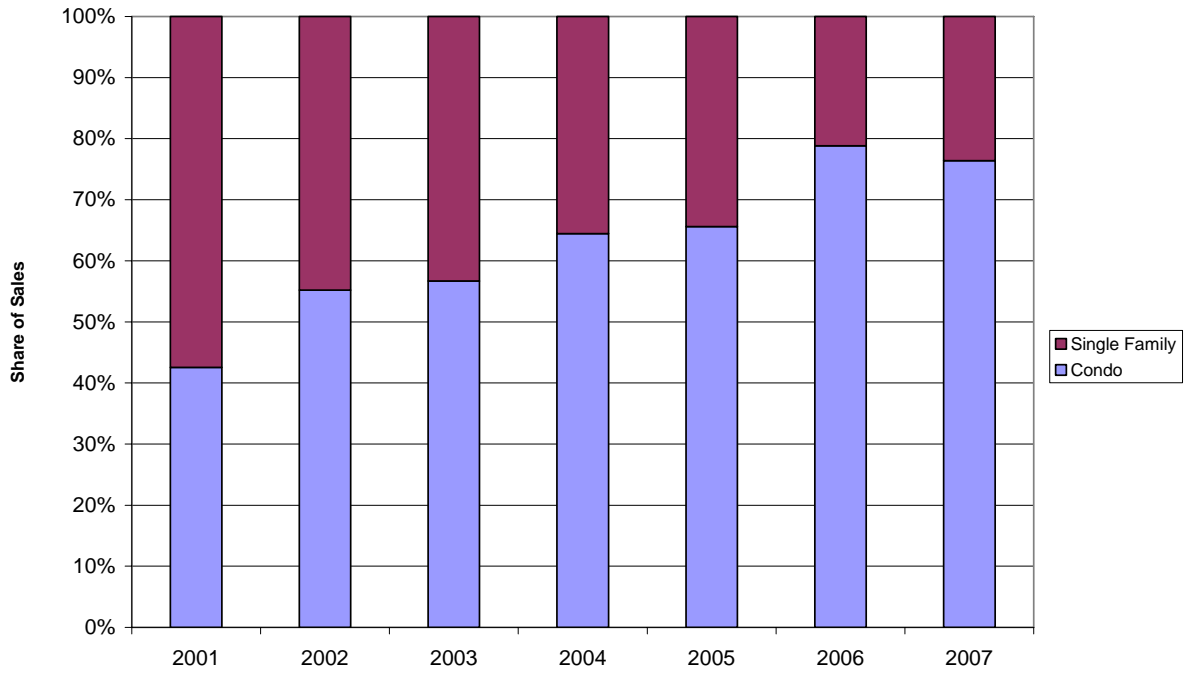


Sources: DC Office of Tax and Revenue and United States Sample 2000

Many of the Latino neighborhoods have a disproportionately larger share of condominium units than other parts of the city and, over the past decade, the number of new condominiums built or converted from apartment buildings in neighborhoods where many Latinos live have increased dramatically. According to the District's Office of Tax and Revenue, 59 percent of residential properties in Latino neighborhoods were condos in January 2009, compared with 30 percent in the District as a whole (figure 2.4). In Latino neighborhoods, sales of condos exploded, from 43 percent of all housing sales in these areas in 2001 to 76 percent by 2007. This was much higher than the city average of 55 percent condominium sales in 2007 (figures 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6).



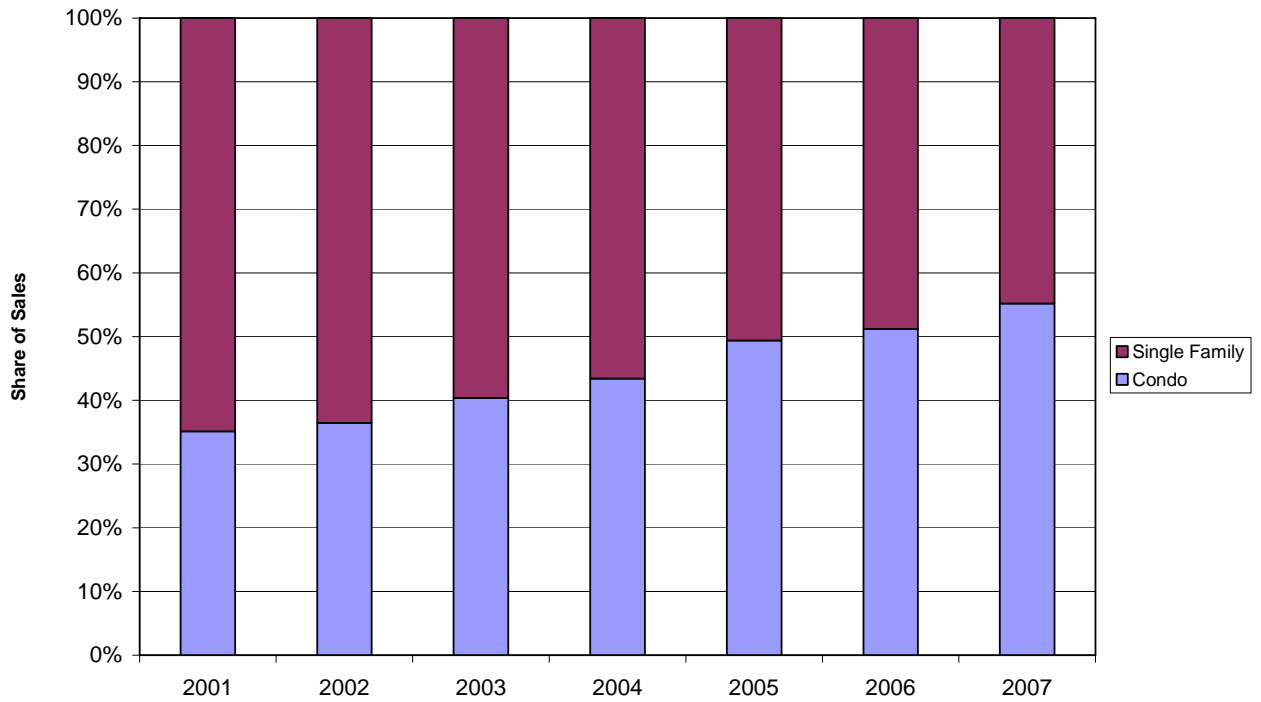
Figure 2.4: Home Sales in Latino Neighborhoods by Type, 2001–2007



Sources: DC Office of Tax and Revenue and United States Sample 2000



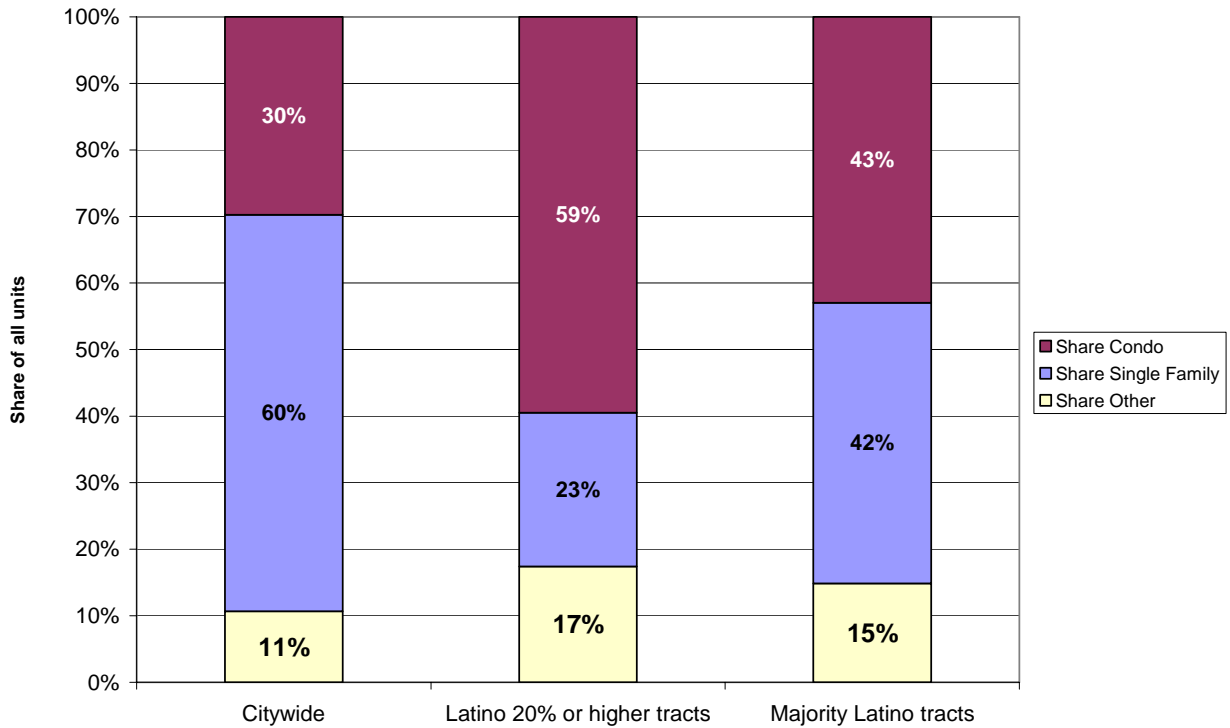
Figure 2.5. Home Sales in the District by Type, 2001–2007



Sources: DC Office of Tax and Revenue and United States Sample 2000



Figure 2.6: Division of Housing Supply in the District, January 2009

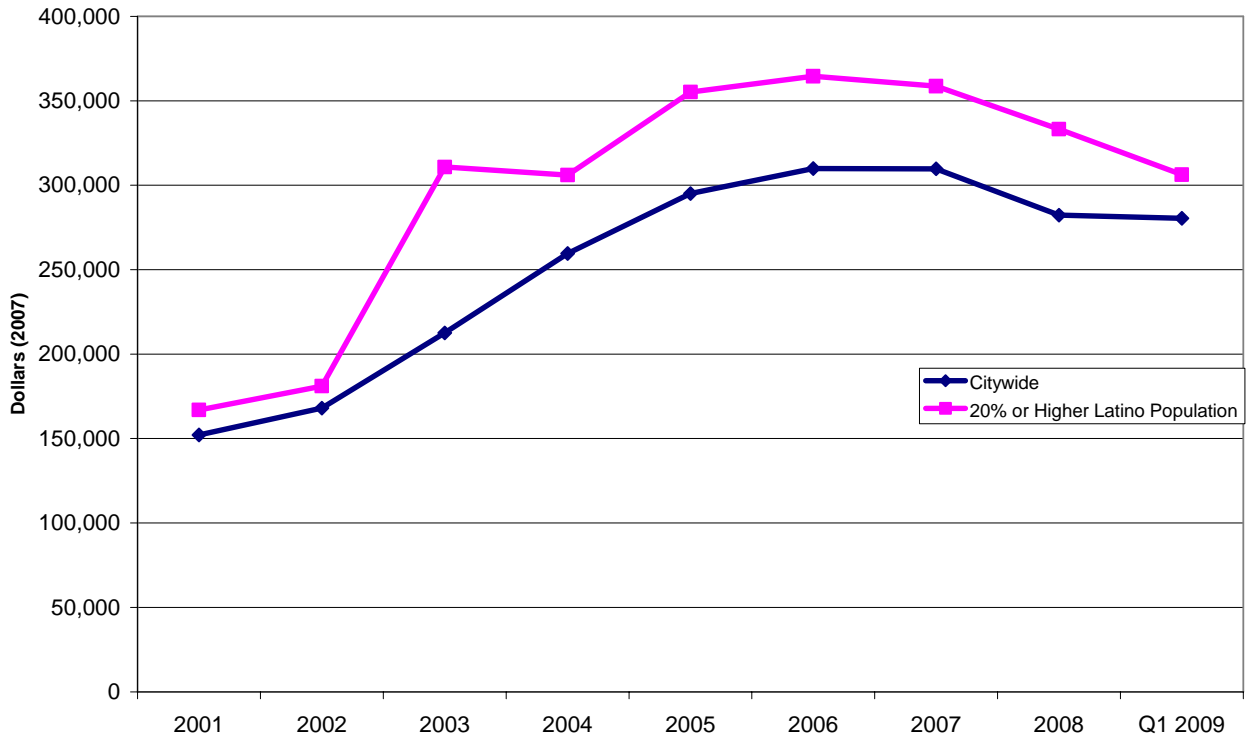


Sources: DC Office of Tax and Revenue and United States Sample 2000

Condominium prices in concentrated-Latino neighborhoods also rose more sharply than in other neighborhoods. In 2001, the median price for a condo in these neighborhoods was \$160,600, just 6 percent higher than the city median of \$152,200. By 2005, at the height of the housing boom, the median condo price in these neighborhoods had more than doubled to \$371,000, and the difference had increased almost tenfold to \$76,100. Following this peak, condo prices began to drop across the city, although not at the same rate as single-family homes. By early 2009, condos in Latino neighborhoods had dropped to \$306,300, compared with \$280,400 citywide (figure 2.7).²⁶



Figure 2.7: Median Sale Price for Condos in the District, 2001–2009



Sources: DC Office of Tax and Revenue and United States Sample 2000

Latinos are more likely to rent than own their homes, although Latino homeownership grew

As the concentrated-Latino neighborhoods became more expensive and sought-after, the vast majority of Latinos continued to rent, as opposed to own, their homes. In the most recent American Community Survey (2005–2007) estimates for the District, the citywide rental rate was 49 percent. Latino-headed households, however, had the highest rental rate of any race or ethnic group, at 65 percent, compared with 55 percent of households headed by African Americans and 38 percent of white-headed households.

However, Latino rental rates decreased, and homeownership rates increased during the housing boom. While 31 percent of District Latino households owned their home in 2000, that share increased to 35 percent by 2005–2007. Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data provide the race/ethnicity and income of mortgage borrowers. Citywide, the number of home purchase loans taken out by Latinos increased at a rate higher than for African Americans or whites, from 300 loans in 2000 to 1,013 loans in 2006. While the numbers of loans to Latino homebuyers increased substantially, the *share* of home purchase loans that went to Latinos remained flat, at 4 percent of all home purchase loans, from 2000 to 2003, and then increased more significantly to 10

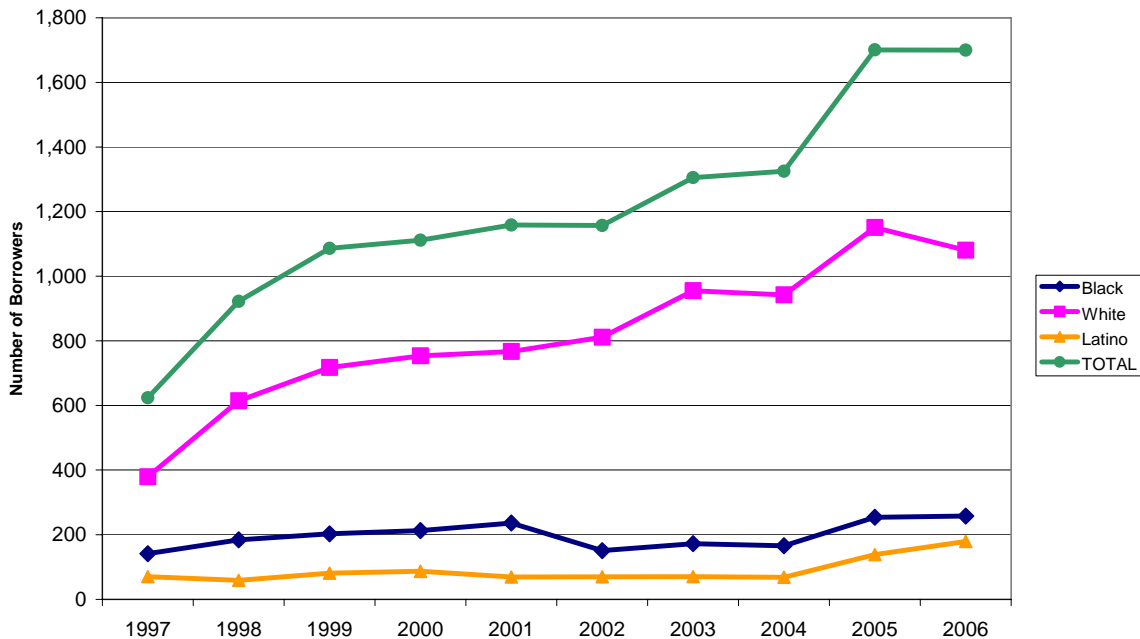


State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

percent by 2006, slightly higher than the estimated share of Latinos living in the District (9 percent).

In Ward 1, Latinos received 8 percent of the new home purchase mortgages issued in 2000, even though Latinos represent approximately one-quarter (24 percent) of the Ward's population. However, by 2006, Latinos represented 11 percent of all mortgages, doubling the share of mortgages originated since 2000 (figure 2.8). The increases in other Latino neighborhoods were not as high.

Figure 2.8: Race of Home Purchase Mortgage Loan Borrowers in the District's Ward 1, 1997-2006



Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act dataset

Housing boom in neighborhoods with a significant Latino population increases rent burden

Among Latinos who rented, the burden of housing costs increased considerably as the housing market heated up. Spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent, utilities, and other housing costs is considered unaffordable by housing policy experts. In 2000, 36 percent of all renters in the District were paying unaffordable housing costs. In comparison, only 32 percent of renting Latino families did the same. By 2005–2007, however, the share of Latino renters who spent more than 30 percent of their household income on housing had grown to 48 percent, surpassing the overall citywide share of 43 percent.²⁷ The share of Latino renters who spent more than half of their household income on housing, a level considered severely unaffordable, also increased in the same time period, from 20 to 23 percent. These severely burdened

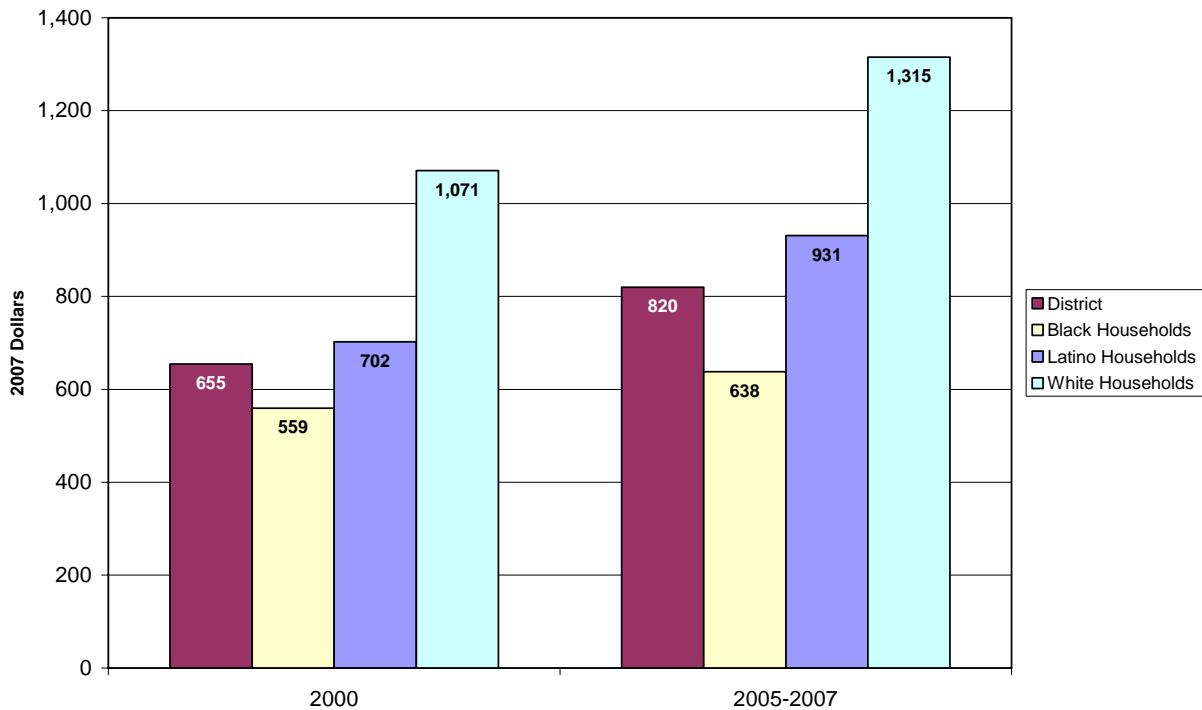


State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

renter households were just as likely to be Latino as African American, while just 20 percent of white households spent at least half their income on rent.

These trends seem to be fueled by increasingly unaffordable housing options for many lower-income households in the District, including Latinos. According to the 2005–2007 ACS, the median monthly rent in the District was \$820, up 25 percent from \$655 in 2000.²⁸ Latinos, however, have paid even higher rents. In 2000, the median monthly rent for a Latino household was \$702, and this grew 33 percent to \$931 by 2005–2007. During the same period, the median monthly rent for African American households increased 14 percent, from \$560 to \$638, and the median monthly rent for white households increased 23 percent, from \$1,071 to \$1,315. While rents for Latino households have remained significantly lower than for white households, the gap is closing, since median rents for Latinos grew faster than rents for either white and African American households (figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9: Median Rent in the District by Race, 2000 and 2005-2007



Sources: United States Census Sample 2000, American Community Survey 2005-2007

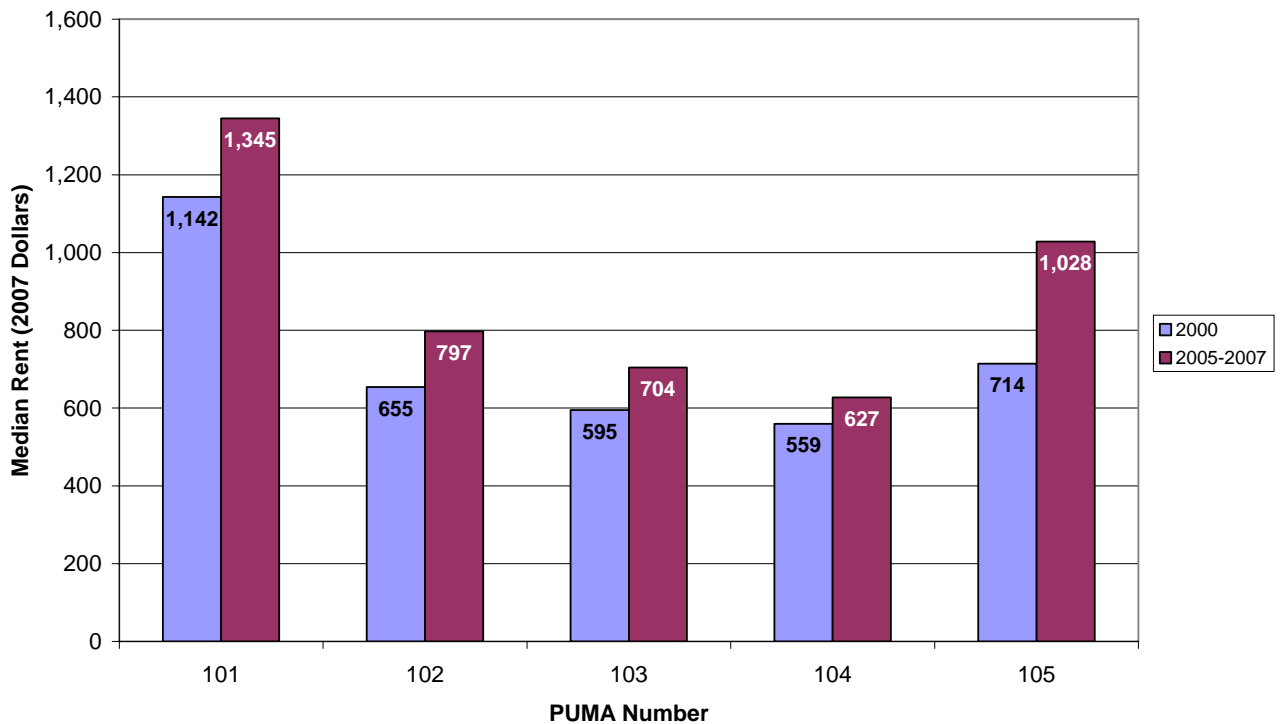
The dramatic rise in the rent paid by the average Latino household is probably linked to the overall rise in rents in the neighborhoods with predominantly Latino populations. Because tract-level information on rents is not available in the most recent American Community Survey, this analysis is limited to the two PUMAs that encompass



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

the neighborhoods we refer to as predominantly Latino. In 2000, PUMAs 102 and 105 had median rents similar to the District median of \$655, at \$655 and \$714 respectively, but rents in these two PUMAs grew the fastest of any in the District by 2005–2007.²⁹ In PUMA 102, the median rent increased 22 percent to \$797. In PUMA 105, however, rents soared, shooting up 44 percent in this period, to \$1,028. While the relatively large size of PUMA 105 makes it likely that these trends were affected by rising rents in other neighborhoods with rapidly increasing rents in the same PUMA, specifically Logan Circle and Dupont Circle, they still show that increases in the rents for Latinos themselves were a factor of the areas in which they lived (figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10. Median Rents in the District, by PUMA, 2000 and 2005-2007



Sources: United States Census 2000 and American Community Survey 2005-2007

Increased housing prices (both homeowner and renter) and the conversion of rental housing to condominiums are challenges for any low-income population and proves to be a continual challenge for the low-income, immigrant Latinos living in Columbia Heights and Mt. Pleasant. A recent fire in a large Mt. Pleasant apartment building forced out more than 200 low-income, mostly immigrant residents. Efforts by the city to renovate a nearby 32-unit vacant building that includes 9 percent of units eligible for low-income housing tax credits illustrates a step in this direction.



Commercial development in Columbia Heights and Mt. Pleasant

Mirroring the home price and rent increases in the predominantly Latino neighborhoods, commercial development has increased in some Latino neighborhoods, which brings both benefits and challenges to these communities.

One of the largest commercial developments is on 14th Street, near the new Columbia Heights Metro station, which opened in September 1999. An anchor of this development was Tivoli Square, which included the renovation of the landmark Tivoli Theater, a 2,500 seat theater that had been closed for 25 years. A local developer transformed much of the interior into space for offices, retail, and condominiums, at a cost of \$16 million in private funds and \$8 million from public funds.

While this project, which opened in 2004, highlighted the area's renaissance as a retail and business center, the Tivoli Square development was also meant to help existing local residents. A new large supermarket was part of the project, and eight of Tivoli's 40 condo units were subsidized to be affordable to working families. (Nonsubsidized units had starting prices between \$400,000 and \$600,000.) Moreover, one partner in the development effort entered into an agreement with the District's Department of Employment Services to give preference to Columbia Heights residents in hiring for construction and other jobs.

A block away from Tivoli Square, the DC-USA development featured some of the nation's large-scale retailers. The new shopping center opened in 2008 and included a Target, clothing stores, and a health club. Acknowledging that the construction of such a project would increase the value of the site and the surrounding area, the city paid for \$42 million of the overall \$149.5 million for the project through tax increment financing. As with Tivoli Square, 200 condominium units were reserved for affordable housing, while the remainder ranged in price from under \$100,000 to \$500,000.

The Tivoli Square and other commercial developments, along with the presence of larger retailers, have increased the number of visitors to the area and made the neighborhood more desirable to many as a convenient place to live and shop. This area is one of the few locations in the city with a "big box" retail store. In addition, the stores have provided some needed job opportunities for the local residents.

Tensions resulting from demographic, housing, and commercial changes

Despite the benefits, the growing commercial development in Columbia Heights has also highlighted growing tensions between Mt. Pleasant's existing Latino and African-American communities and the new residents. A recent civic dispute, which came to a climax in 2008 and focused on the issue of live music in bars and restaurants, highlighted the growing cultural tensions. A group of three Latino-owned restaurants, with the help of a neighborhood group formed specifically for this purpose, lobbied to terminate decade-old agreements with the Mt. Pleasant Neighborhood Association that limited hours for live music and prohibited cover charges and dancing. Local residents



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

saw the effort as both a way of fostering Latino culture by sustaining these businesses in the neighborhood and also as a first step towards the “Adams Morganization” of Mt. Pleasant, referring to the nearby Latino district that has become one of the District’s most popular nightlife areas.³⁰

The Mt. Pleasant commercial corridor, a stretch of Mt. Pleasant Street between Columbia and Park Roads where 10 percent of businesses are Latino-owned or Spanish-speaking, has encountered challenges from shifting neighborhood demographics (away from lower-income Latinos to upper income non-Latinos) and from competition from the large retail centers in nearby Columbia Heights that threaten to drain away business.³¹

To strengthen the economic climate of Mt. Pleasant (which has not had the level of development as Columbia Heights) and create a distinct Mt. Pleasant commercial area for the Mt. Pleasant community, the City Council approved the Office of Planning (OP), along with stakeholders and an outside marketing firm, to develop a small area plan focusing on strategies to revitalize the economic climate in mid-2009. The small area plan focused only on issues of commercial development, such as the commercial vacancy rate and competition from nearby Columbia Heights and Adams Morgan.

The Office of Planning and the market study recommended improving the quality and scope of businesses in the Mt. Pleasant corridor, as opposed to bringing in new businesses. The reasoning behind this suggestion included avoiding the social and political schism that might result from decisions about which types of businesses to actively attract. The Office of Planning and the market study, during the preliminary research for the Small Area Plan, suggested that the District lower barriers for new Latino businesses, such as ensuring that all small businesses understand regulation requirements. Many owners are not proficient in English, which is a challenge when some of the smaller policies that store owners need to know to maintain the business are described only in English. For example, common source of fines and citations include changes in requirements for waste disposal, which are not translated. The small area plan suggested providing assistance to these owners for them to be better able to communicate with authorities. The Mayor’s Office on Latino Affairs has assisted in this effort.

Another emphasis of the small area plan is to help current businesses benefit from the changing community demographics by marketing their services to the broader Mt. Pleasant area community, instead of just to Latinos, who have been historically their key market. The small area plan cites the influx of young professionals in the surrounding neighborhoods as an opportunity for Latino restaurants, many of which only have menus in Spanish. In meetings with stakeholders and citizens, local Latinos have expressed enthusiasm about reaching out to the new non-Latino residents

Increased foreclosures in Latino neighborhoods

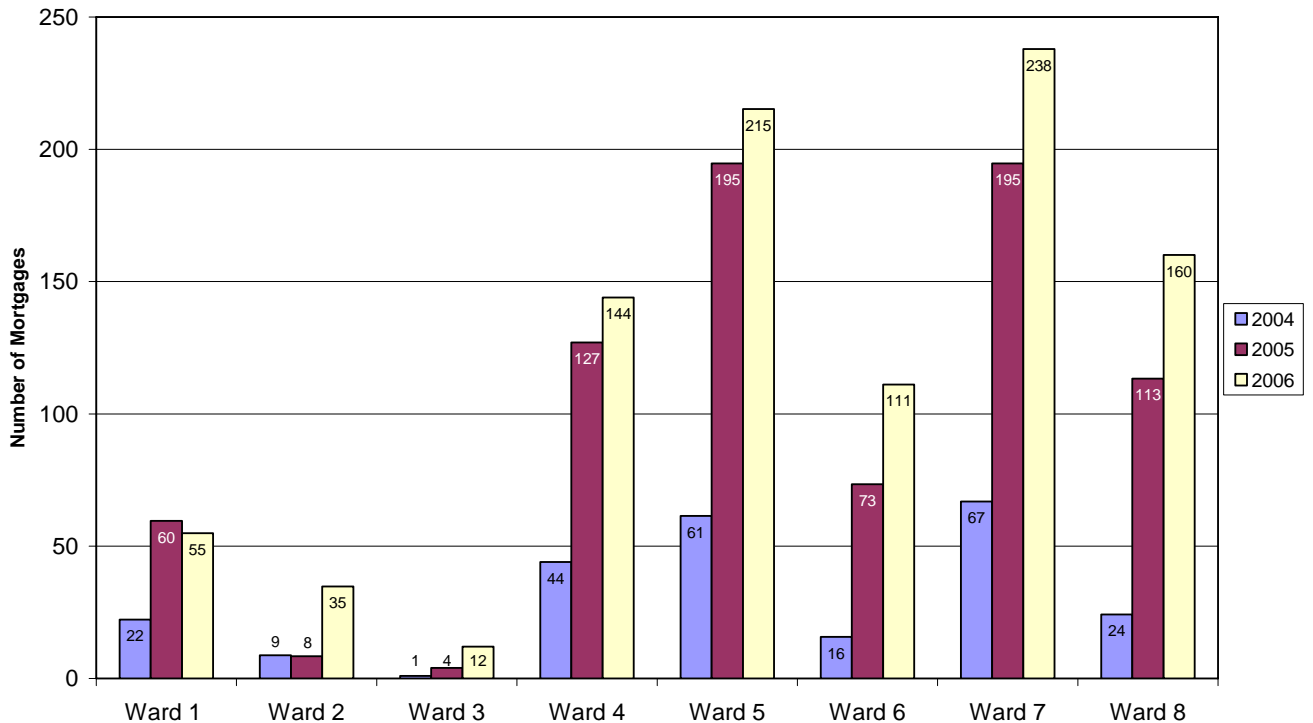


State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

The loosening of the subprime home mortgage market contributed to the housing boom that swept the nation between 2000 and 2006. Subprime loans are higher-cost loans (i.e., the interest rate is higher than standard prime loans) designed for applicants who do not qualify for traditional loans due to low income or poor credit ratings. Subprime lending had made homeownership possible for low-income households, but the unregulated status of subprime lending also provided an opportunity for predatory lending (i.e., borrowers taking on more debt than they can afford). The unregulated subprime market has also been linked to the current foreclosure crisis afflicting the nation, the Washington region, and the District.

The HMDA data identify “high-cost loans” and the race of borrowers who received risky loans. HMDA identified high-cost loans as mortgages with interest rates three points or more above the prevailing Treasury rate. Such loans are likely to be subprime. Between 2004 and 2006, the number of new high-cost loans issued in the District nearly quadrupled from 938 to 3,533. Moreover, the share of home purchase loans that were high-cost also rose, from 10 percent in 2004 to 33 percent in 2006 (figure 2.11).

Figure 2.11. Conventional Home Purchase Loans by Latino Borrowers with High Interest Rates by Ward



Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act

For Latinos, both the number and share of high-cost loans were relatively small at first, but quickly increased. In 2004, only 6 percent of home purchase loans to Latinos



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

were high-cost, compared to 9 percent for African Americans and 1 percent for whites. By 2006, this rate had increased to 19 percent for Latinos, while it remained low at 3 percent for whites. African Americans in the District, however, had a much higher share, with 27 percent of home purchase loans considered high cost in 2006. But, while the share of Latino homebuyers who received high-cost loans was not the highest in the District, it was nonetheless alarming that one out of every five home purchases made by Latinos in 2006 was financed by a riskier, high-cost loan.

The District has not been hit as hard by foreclosures as other parts of the Washington metropolitan area; however, foreclosures in the District have been growing and we expect the trend to continue (particularly in light of the recession). The number of single family homes and condominiums in foreclosure has reached the highest level in eight years. As of the first quarter of 2009, 2,116 single-family homes and condominium units were in foreclosure in the District, the highest number since the fourth quarter of 2000. Between 2001 and 2006, the number of homes in foreclosure fell by half, from 2,141 to 1,052, but the inventory of homes in foreclosure has grown steadily since the start of 2006.³²

Data on the race of those who were foreclosed upon are currently not available; however, we can identify the concentrations of foreclosed properties by neighborhood in the District. The worst neighborhoods in terms of foreclosures were in Wards 5, 7, and 8, hitting mostly African Americans and few Latinos. However, Ward 1 had a moderate level of foreclosure activity. By the end of 2008, the neighborhood cluster encompassing Mt. Pleasant and Columbia Heights (Cluster 2) had 119 residential properties in foreclosure, ranking it fourth in the District. Because of the high concentration of residential properties in this neighborhood, the rate of foreclosure activity is lower, with only 15.4 out of 1,000 residential properties in foreclosure, marginally higher than the District average of 15.1. Furthermore, the DC Housing Monitor suggests that homeowners are not the only ones directly affected, since many rental properties face foreclosure. Landlords do not necessarily inform their tenants of their rights as renters, especially that foreclosure is not a valid reason for eviction. This is a particularly important problem for the District's Latino population, given the high proportion who rent.



CHAPTER 3: LATINO ECONOMIC STATUS AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The economic picture for District Latinos over the past decade has been mixed. While Latinos overall have relatively low unemployment rates, they tend to concentrate in a few specific occupations, including construction, cleaning, and food services. While construction workers can be well-paid, jobs in cleaning and food services are some of the lowest-paying occupations in the District. As a result, Latinos have been particularly vulnerable during the current recession and have suffered substantial losses in employment, wages, and hours as the recession has progressed.

In examining the economic state of District Latinos, we have used the most recent national and local administrative data sources available by race and ethnicity, such as the 2005–2007 American Community Survey, 2000 Census sample data, and Bureau of Labor Statistics annual averages through 2008. We have also used D.C. Department of Employment Services data (available by ward but not by race/ethnicity) through the spring of 2009. Several of these data sources, therefore, only cover the period prior to the start of the national recession, which began officially in December 2007.

To add additional context and a more up-to-date perspective on the current economic situation, we conducted interviews with key community informants, including representatives of local Latino community groups and employment organizations. These respondents not only discussed how Latinos are faring during the recession, but also gave their views on how the city's available services may need to be expanded or improved to serve better the needs of Latinos in this economy. We also spoke with representatives from the District's Department of Employment Services, the agency that administers most employment-related services, to understand current programs and their capacity.

Latino unemployment rates are relatively low but have risen with the recession

Unemployment rates have been low or moderate for the average Latino and for the areas where most Latinos live, but unemployment has worsened with the deepening of the U.S. recession. Changes in the unemployment rate are strongly tied to the health of the national and regional economies. Because of the importance of the federal government as an employer, the District and the Washington region have been partially cushioned against past recessions felt by the rest of the country. But while the District has been somewhat shielded from the worst effects of the current recession, the national economic downturn has still had a profound impact on the city's residents, including the Latino community.



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

The most recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the Latino unemployment rate in the District remained relatively low in 2008, at 4.7 percent. This was substantially lower than the unemployment rate for African Americans (10 percent)³³ and somewhat higher than for whites (3 percent) (figure 3.1).³⁴ Nevertheless, the 2008 unemployment rate represented a large increase from the beginning of the decade. Between 2000 and 2005, the Latino unemployment rate rose from 4 to 5 percent and then remained fairly flat through 2008. District African Americans experienced a similar rise and leveling off of the unemployment rate.³⁵

Figure 3.1. Unemployment Rate by Race, District of Columbia, 2000-2008



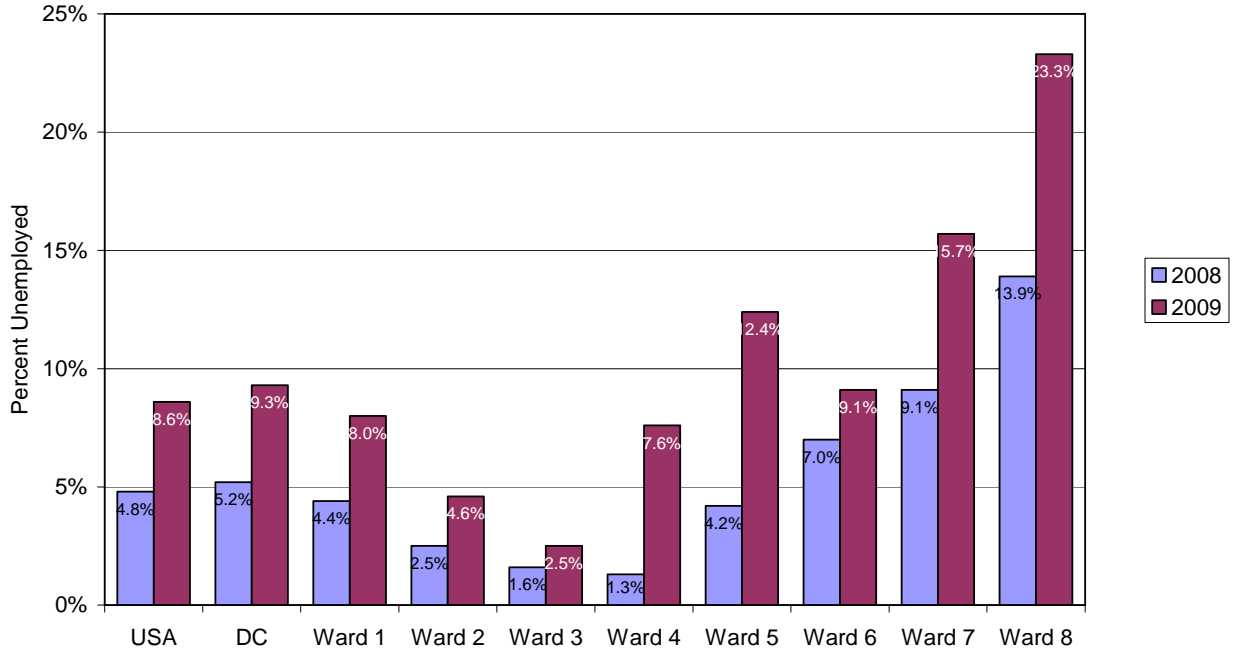
Source: Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics

The most recent DC Department of Employment Services unemployment rate data available are from April 2009. These data are disaggregated at the ward level, not by race/ethnicity. Concurrent with the deepening of the national recession, unemployment rates increased in all District wards between April 2008 and April 2009 (figure 3.2). Ward 4, one of the two wards with the largest shares of Latinos, experienced the sharpest increase in unemployment in the city. Between April 2008 and April 2009, Ward 4 unemployment grew from 1 to 8 percent. This outpaced the citywide increase of 4 percentage points during the same period. The unemployment rate in Ward 1, which also has a high share of Latino residents, increased by 4 percentage points, while Wards 2 and 3 increased by 2 and 1 percentage points, respectively. The



highest increase in unemployment in the city was in the predominantly African American Ward 8, which saw a drastic increase in unemployment, from 14 to 23 percent.³⁶

Figure 3.2. Unemployment Rate by District Ward, April 2008 and April 2009



Source: *Labor Market Trends*, District of Columbia, June

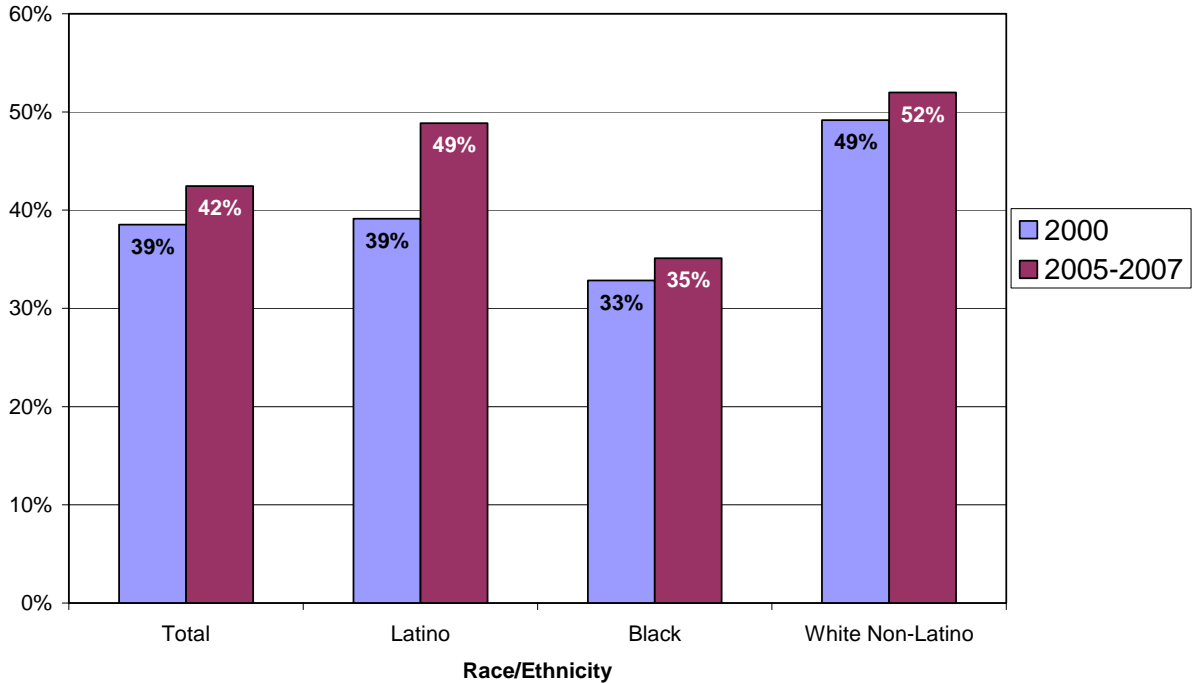
Most District Latinos were fully employed until the recession

Latinos in the District have had a very high employment rate in recent years and those who worked tended to be fully employed. Almost half (48 percent) of Latinos age 16 and over in the District worked full time and year round in 2005–2007 (figure 3.3).³⁷ This was 7 percentage points higher than for Latinos nationwide, 42 percent of whom were employed full time and year round. The share of District Latinos in full-time, year-round employment was close to that of non-Latino whites (52 percent) and far exceeded the share of African Americans (35 percent).³⁸

The percentage of District residents working full time and year round rose for every major racial/ethnic group from 2000 to 2005–2007. The overall share grew from 39 to 42 percent of workers citywide, but the increase was greater for Latinos than for blacks or non-Latino whites. Latinos saw a dramatic 10 percentage point increase, from 39 percent full-time, year-round employment in 2000 to 49 percent in 2005–2007. The increases for blacks and non-Latino whites were much more modest. District African Americans saw a 2 percentage point gain, to 35 percent, and non-Latino whites saw a 3 percentage point gain, to 52 percent.



Figure 3.3. Percent Working Year Round and Full Time (Age 16+), Washington DC, 2000 and 2005–2007



Sources: 2000 Census and American Community Survey 2005-2007

Many Latinos lost jobs during economic downturn

Since many of the employment statistics only cover the very beginning of the recession, we spoke with service providers and community leaders in the District to get a more current assessment of the economic situation for the city’s Latino population. These key informants painted a bleak picture of recent Latino employment trends. They have noticed a significant decline in employment among their service population and constituencies between 2008 and 2009. It is difficult to assess the severity of the impact, but there is widespread agreement that, as one informant put it, “overall it seems like compared to a year ago, [Latinos] are working less or are without jobs and having a harder time finding new jobs that give them the total they made before.” Another service provider added, “We do have a hospitality-based economy and DC has been more stable than other places, but there’s still been a pretty big drop-off in areas like construction and in nanny and cleaning jobs.” She noted that, in the population served by her organization, about 30 percent of new clients were or had been construction workers.



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

Two key informants referred to a dramatic increase in day laborers, likely fueled by rising unemployment. One advocate said that “last winter was really difficult; we saw two to four times as many people standing on the corners for day labor than we did the prior winter.” Another community leader said, “If the year before we had 20 people out there, now we see 30 to 50 all waiting for work.”

Despite the gloomier outlook, several key informants felt that “there is still opportunity out there, even with the drop-off, referring to job openings in high-growth occupations such as the health sector and the “green” economy and the potential for mobility between low-skill jobs.

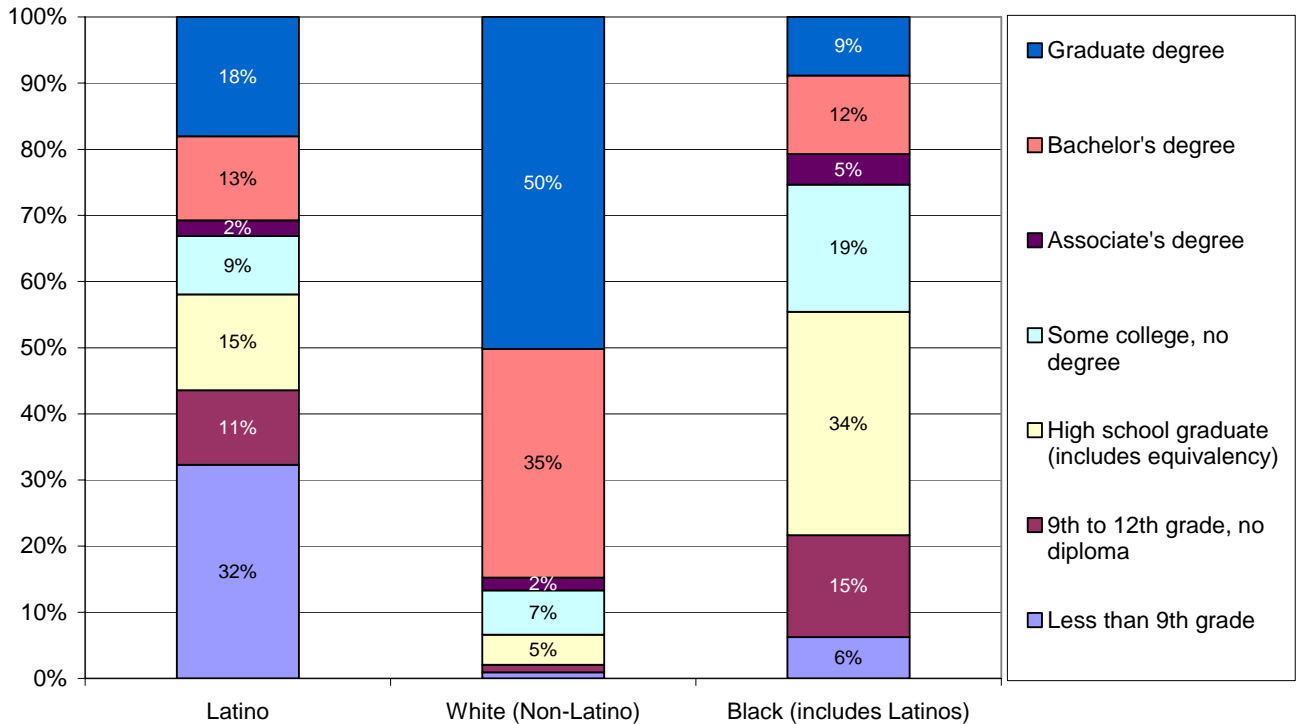
Many Latinos have extremely low education levels

Low levels of education prevent many Latinos from attaining jobs with higher status and pay. Latinos who live in the District tend to have dramatically lower education levels than African Americans and non-Latino whites. In 2005–2007, 44 percent of District Latinos 25 years and older had no high school diploma, while 32 percent had less than a 9th grade education and 11 percent had only a 9th to 12th grade education (but did not graduate high school) (figure 3.4). In comparison, African Americans were half as likely as Latinos to have no high school diploma (22 percent of African Americans had less than a high school education) and relatively few African Americans had less than a 9th grade education (6 percent). However, both Latinos and African Americans in the District were less well-educated than whites. Only 2 percent of non-Latino whites age 25 and over had less than a high school diploma.

While a large portion of District Latinos had no high school diploma or no high school education at all, the share of Latinos with a college degree was higher than for African Americans. Nearly one-third (31 percent) of District Latinos have a bachelor’s or a graduate degree, while only 21 percent of the city’s African Americans have attained this level of education. Both groups are far behind non-Latino whites, however, 85 percent of whom have a bachelor’s degree or higher.³⁹



Figure 3.4. Educational Attainment for District Residents Age 25 and Older, 2005-2007



Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

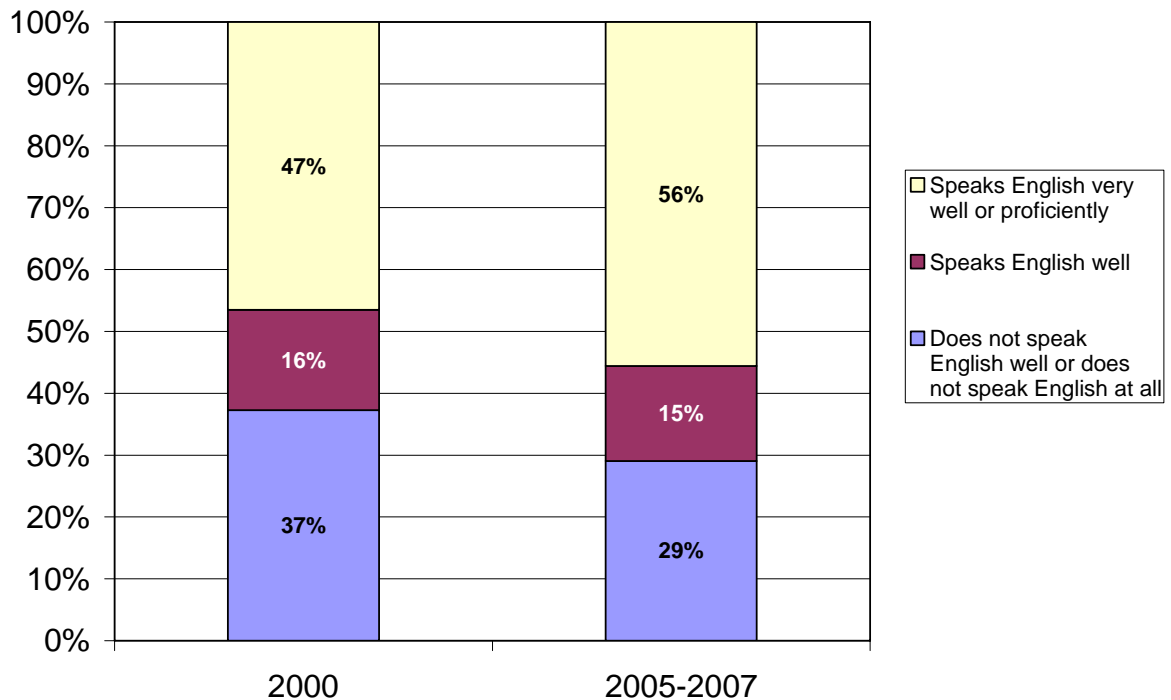
Many Latinos lack strong English skills, despite substantial improvements since 2000

In 2005–2007, 29 percent of the District’s working-age Latinos (16 years and older) spoke English “not well” or “not at all,” while only 56 percent spoke English “very well” (figure 3.5). Nevertheless, this English language ability represented a notable improvement from 2000, when 37 percent of District Latinos spoke English “not well” or “not at all” and less than half (47 percent) spoke English “very well.” From 2000 to 2005–2007, the share of District Latinos with minimal or no English fell by 8 percentage points, and the share who spoke English well rose by 9 percentage points.

This improvement in English skills was just as evident among foreign-born Latinos. In 2000, 47 percent of District Latinos born outside the U.S. spoke English not well or not at all and 34 percent spoke English very well. By 2005–2007, the share of foreign-born Latinos who spoke English not well or not at all had dropped to 38 percent, while those speaking English very well increased to 42 percent.



Figure 3.5. English Language Speaking Ability for District Latinos



Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2005-2007 American Communities Survey

Latino’s low education levels and low English fluency are key barriers to better jobs

Key informants reported that District Latino’s low education levels and lack of English language abilities were key barriers to better jobs. One informant from a nonprofit that provides workforce training said that construction jobs paid relatively well without having to know English. As a result, non-English-speaking Latinos often felt that they could exist comfortably without good English skills—that is, until they suddenly lost their jobs. She has tried to move Latinos from construction into cashier positions at pharmacies or grocery stores or into office jobs, which pay a little better than the lowest rung jobs, but these occupations require strong English skills.

The low education levels of many Latino workers also concern prospective employers. Certain businesses leaders find that bilingual employees with basic work skills are “very difficult” to find, even with considerable recruitment efforts. Employment service providers we spoke to, however, said that they have competent Latino job candidates who could succeed with some on-the-job support from employers. Two nonprofit service providers said that this disconnect results from a lack of communication between businesses and the nonprofit or employment services community.

Many Latino youth are ill prepared for job market



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

Leaders from both service providers and business groups said that the Latino youth lack basic language, literacy, and on-the-job skills as well as a high school degree. These barriers to employment are exacerbated in the current recession. One large youth service provider that serves Latinos age 16 to 24 said more “pre-GED” youth— those with such low levels of math and reading skills that they could not pass the high school equivalency exam—have sought out education and employment services over the past two years. These include a small number of recent immigrants but are primarily youth who were born in the United States or spent most of their lives here. The data support this assertion: the majority of youth under age 20 were born in the District or elsewhere in the United States, while young adults in their 20s are more likely to be immigrants.

One informant clarified the problem by explaining that many Latino youth are functionally bilingual in English and Spanish but have low English reading levels and lack adequate Spanish literacy, making them ineligible for jobs that require higher levels of reading or writing, and job openings for bilingual applicants. The organization supplemented its services in response to rising need but waiting lists are at their highest in years. Another Latino youth group is having a harder time placing clients in any job, let alone well-paying career track jobs, which is their goal.

One of the organization’s leaders said that his clients have become very concerned about their job prospects in the current economy. “There’s a ripple effect that goes down when kids don’t have the necessary skills or high school diplomas and the economy goes south,” he said. “They start to worry that they can’t get a job and that they have to do something to qualify for more jobs.”

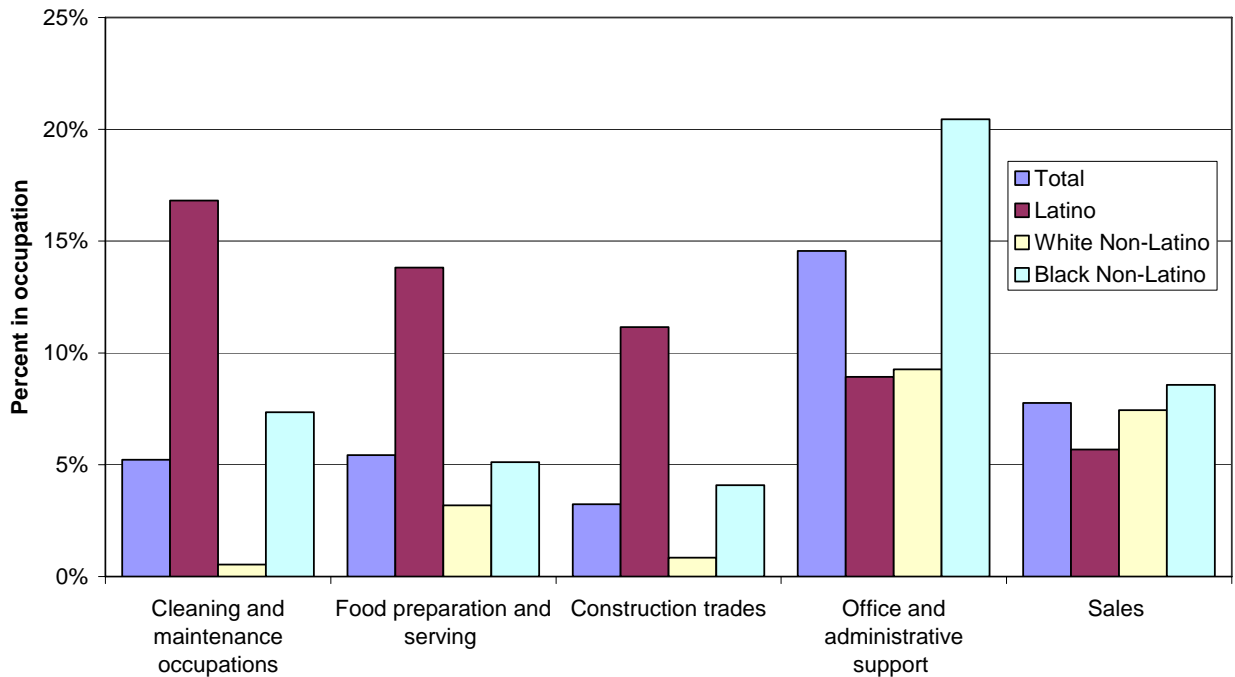
Latino jobs are concentrated in a small number of low-skill occupation categories

As the share of Latinos with full-time, year-round work rose between 2000 and 2005–2007, District Latinos continued to work relatively low-wage jobs that required little education. In 2005–2007, the most common occupations for Latinos living in the District were in building and grounds cleaning/maintenance (17 percent of employed District Latinos age 16 and older), food preparation and serving (14 percent), construction trades (11 percent), office and administrative support (9 percent), and sales (6 percent). These five occupational categories accounted for more than half (56 percent) of all jobs held by District Latinos.

Compared with other racial and ethnic groups in the District, Latinos were much more likely to work in buildings and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations than other races/ethnicities. While this was also a relatively common occupation category for African Americans, only 7 percent of District African Americans worked in this occupation in 2005–2007. District Latinos were also more likely to work in food preparation and serving occupations and construction trades than were members of any other major racial/ethnic groups (figure 3.6 and appendix table 3.1).⁴⁰



Figure 3.6. Most Common DC Latino Occupations by Race/Ethnicity, 2005–2007



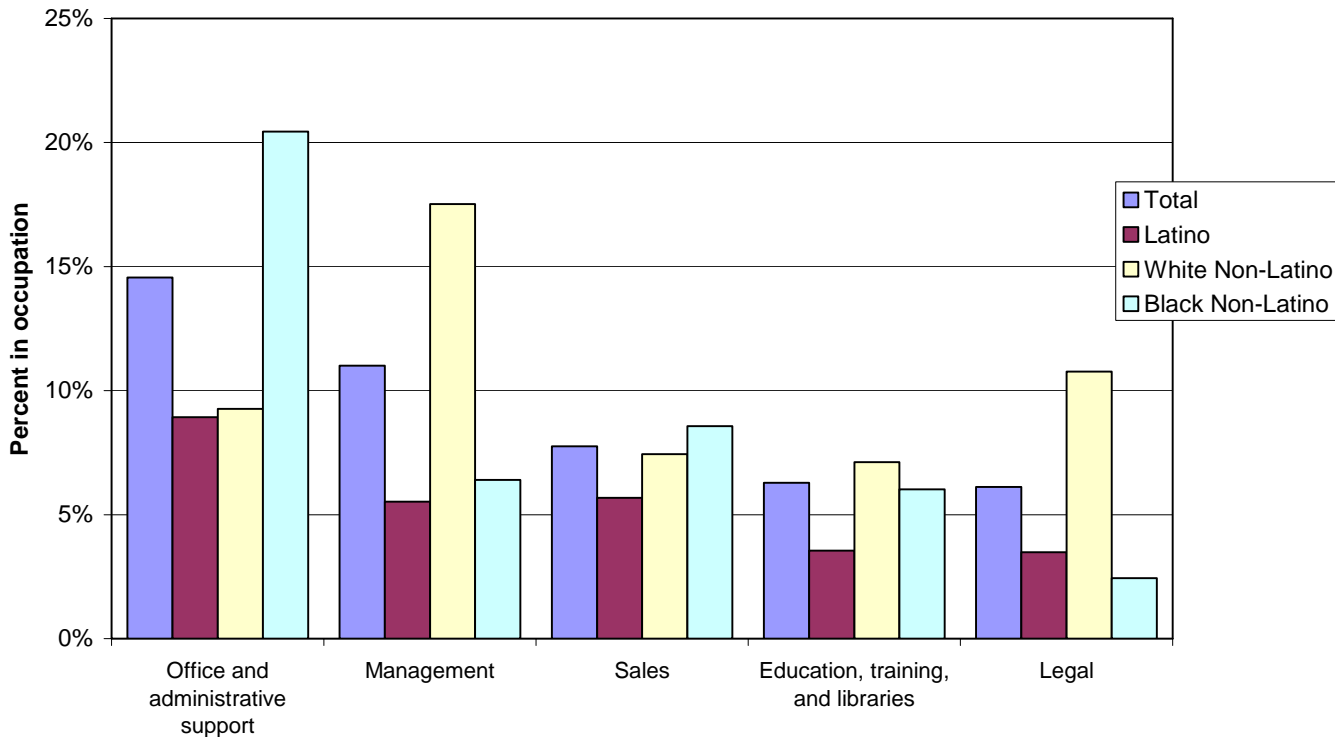
Note: Those people included are 16 years and older.
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

Office and administration occupations and sales occupations were the most common category for jobs citywide in 2005–2007 and ranked in the top five occupations for all major racial and ethnic groups in the District (figure 3.7 and appendix table 3.1). However, a smaller share of all Latinos worked in office and administration jobs compared to African Americans. Nine percent of employed Latinos worked in office and administration occupations compared with 20 percent of non-Latino African Americans. However, 9 percent of non-Latino whites also worked in office and administration occupations.

By comparison, non-Latino whites were most likely to work in management occupations (18 percent of whites in 2005–2007) and legal occupations (11 percent). Few District Latinos held these more lucrative jobs. Only 6 percent of all Latinos worked in management and only 4 percent in legal occupations. The shares of persons in these occupations were also quite low for non-Latino African Americans (6 percent in management and 2 percent in legal occupations).



Figure 3.7. Most Common District Occupations by Race/Ethnicity, 2005–2007



Note: Those people included are 16 years and older.
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

District Latinos predominate in construction, cleaning, and maintenance jobs

Not only have District Latinos been dependent on cleaning and maintenance, food preparation and serving, and construction jobs, but these occupations and their associated industries are dependent on the Latino population of the District. While Latinos accounted for only 9 percent of all employed District residents in 2005–2007, they held 30 percent of all District jobs in construction trades and 28 percent of all jobs in building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations. Latino workers also held 22 percent of all jobs in food preparation and serving occupations and 22 percent of all jobs in production occupations (which included factory assembly workers, dry cleaning workers, painting workers, and boiler operators).

Latinos hold the lowest wage and lowest skill jobs within the lowest wage occupation categories

The most common Latino occupational categories had low wages and, within these occupations, Latinos tended to hold jobs with particularly low pay and that required minimal education. The median District wage for buildings and grounds cleaning and maintenance jobs (the most common job category for District Latinos) was \$12.78 per



hour, according to the May 2008 Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates (appendix table 3.2). This was the second lowest hourly wage of the 21 major job categories recorded, with only food preparation and serving occupations (\$11.18) having lower wages. In contrast, relatively low-skilled jobs that tend to require a high school degree or more have the opportunity for higher pay. For example, office and administration jobs, the most common job category for African Americans, paid a median wage of \$19.23 per hour in May 2008.

The primary exception to the relatively low wages for Latinos was construction trades, which had a median hourly wage of \$22.64 in May 2008 (appendix table 3.2). This was also the highest median wage for occupation categories not requiring a high school degree or higher educational level.⁴¹

Unfortunately, many construction jobs have been lost in the region since the start of the recession. Occupation data for late 2008 and 2009 are not yet available, so there are limited data to confirm what informants have described; however, data from the start of the recession support the idea that a downturn in construction jobs had begun by the spring of 2008. Estimated District employment in construction dropped 5 percent from May 2007 to May 2008, falling from approximately 11,420 jobs to 10,870 jobs. While this decline is relatively modest, it occurred at the start of the recession, and may have affected Latinos substantially because they hold so many of the District construction jobs.⁴²

Latinos jobs and wages in building and grounds cleaning and maintenance. Wages for building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations (the most common Latino occupation category) are relatively low, and Latinos have a disproportionate share of the worst-paying types of jobs in this field. Most District Latinos who worked in these occupations in 2005–2007 were janitors (63 percent) and maids (29 percent). A larger percentage of Latinos held janitorial jobs than workers belonging to any other major racial/ethnic group.

There was also a pronounced gender divide between Latino workers holding jobs as janitors or buildings cleaners and maids or housekeeping cleaners. In 2005–2007, approximately 97 percent of Latinos working as maids were female, whereas 48 percent of Latino janitors were female. Across all races, a slightly less dramatic 81 percent of maids were female, and 38 percent of janitors were female. These differences are significant when we look at wages for these occupations. In May 2008, the median hourly wage for a janitorial job in the District was \$11.45, making it the lowest paying job in the buildings and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupation category. The second lowest wages were for maid and housekeeping jobs (\$13.51).⁴³

A relatively small percentage of Latinos in building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations held managerial or supervisor positions. Only 3 percent of Latinos in building and grounds jobs were managers in 2005–2007, whereas 41 percent of non-Latino whites and 5 percent of non-Latino African Americans in building and



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

grounds cleaning and maintenance held managerial jobs. Wages for supervisors tended to be somewhat higher than wages for other jobs. In 2007, the median hourly wages for cleaning supervisors and grounds supervisors were \$17.64 and \$24.01, respectively.

Latinos in food preparation and serving occupations. Latinos faced a similar situation in food preparation and serving occupations: they were more likely to hold low-wage jobs. About one third (34 percent) of Latinos in food preparation and serving occupations in 2005–2007 were cooks, 19 percent were food preparation workers, 17 percent were miscellaneous food preparation and serving-related workers, and 9 percent were dishwashers. Hardly any Latinos in this occupational category (3 percent) worked as supervisors.

African Americans in this field had a similar distribution of jobs, although they were much more likely to be line supervisors and less likely to be in food preparation and serving occupations, miscellaneous food preparation and serving-related workers, or dishwashers. Non-Latino whites in food preparation and serving occupations were much more likely to hold customer-oriented jobs, with correspondingly higher wages, such as waiters (47 percent), hosts (14 percent), or bartenders (13 percent).⁴⁴

Wages for food preparation and serving jobs tend to be very low. In May 2008, the median hourly wage for food preparation and serving occupations in the District was \$11.18, the lowest median wage of any major occupation category. While cooks were paid more than other occupations (the median wage for cooks ranged from \$11.04 to \$14.33, depending on the type of cook), dishwashers had among the worst pay (\$9.59). The median wages for bartenders (\$10.67) and waiters (\$9.52) were also relatively low but, in fact, were most likely higher as these stated wages may not include full income from tips.

Latinos in construction trades. Construction trades were the third most common Latino occupation group in the District, and tended to pay substantially higher wages than building and grounds or food preparation and serving occupations. Almost half of District Latinos who worked in a construction trade in 2005–2007 were laborers, and almost one quarter worked as painters, construction workers, and maintenance workers. While the wages for these jobs were some of the lowest within the construction trades, they were substantially higher than the median wages for high-employment Latino jobs in cleaning and food services occupations. In May 2008, District construction laborers earned a median hourly wage of \$15.37, and painters, construction workers, and maintenance workers earned a median hourly wage of \$22.02. Latinos were much less likely to hold higher-paying construction trade jobs requiring certification or extensive training, however. Less than 1 percent of Latinos in the construction trades were electricians, who had a median wage of \$29.89, and only 6 percent were carpenters, who had a median wage of \$24.10.



Latino poverty is higher than whites but lower than African Americans

Given that Latino families rely on income from some of the lowest-paid jobs available, it is not surprising that Latino poverty rates in the District remain relatively high. In 2005–2007, an estimated 16 percent of Latinos in the District lived below the federal poverty level, compared with 8 percent of non-Latino whites and 25 percent of non-Latino blacks.⁴⁵

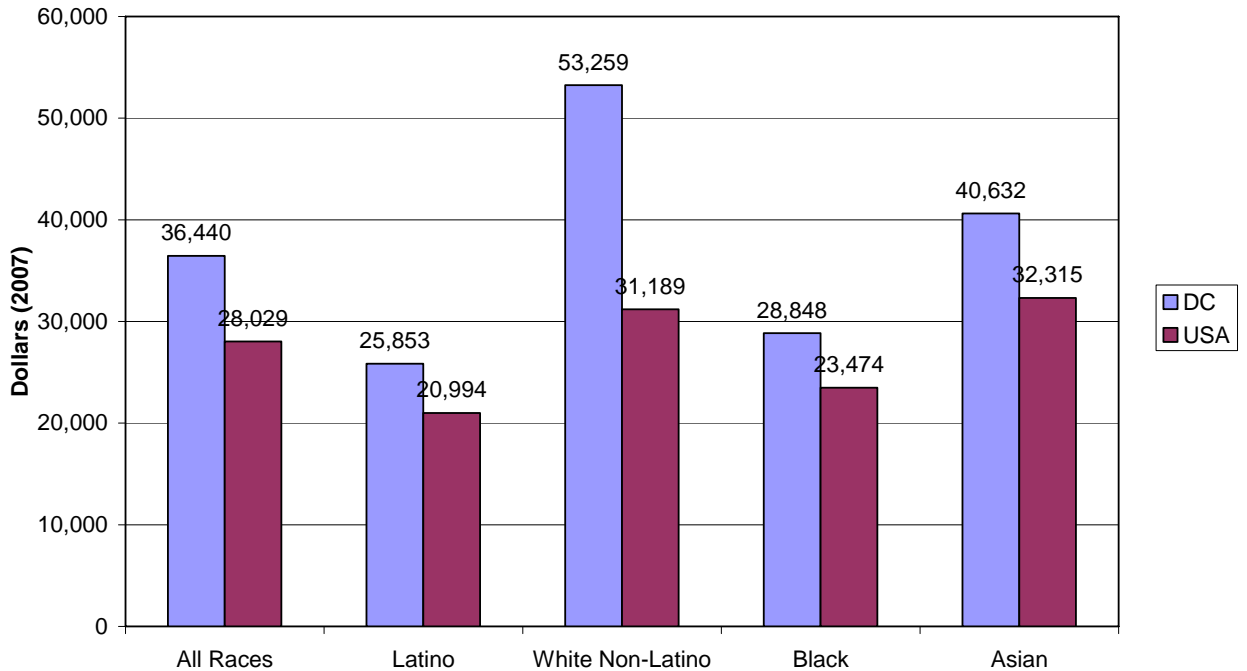
The District-wide poverty rate declined very slightly between 2000 and 2005–2007, dropping from 20 to 19 percent. Although the Latino poverty rate remained substantial in 2005–2007, it was a notable improvement from 2000, when the Latino poverty rate was 4 percentage points higher (20 percent). While more recent poverty data were not yet available at the time this report was prepared, the current recession has likely continued to drive the incomes of more District families below the federal poverty level. In addition, since the federal poverty level is not adjusted for the local cost of living, which is relatively high in the District of Columbia, poverty rates may *underrepresent* the economic hardship in the city.⁴⁶

Latino households stay afloat through large households with multiple earners

As noted previously, while the unemployment rate for District Latinos is relatively low, so are Latino wages, which results in lower individual and household incomes. The median personal incomes of Latinos were the lowest of any major racial/ethnic group in the District, and stagnated between 2000 and 2005–2007 (figure 3.8). In 2005–2007, the median annual income (from earnings, certain government benefits, and other sources) for an employed Latino resident of the District was \$25,853, slightly less than the \$28,848 median income for employed non-Latino African Americans.⁴⁷ Latino incomes were less than half that of non-Latino whites, who had a median annual income of \$53,259 per person.⁴⁸



Figure 3.8. Median Annual Earnings in Previous 12 Months by Race for the District and United States, 2005–2007

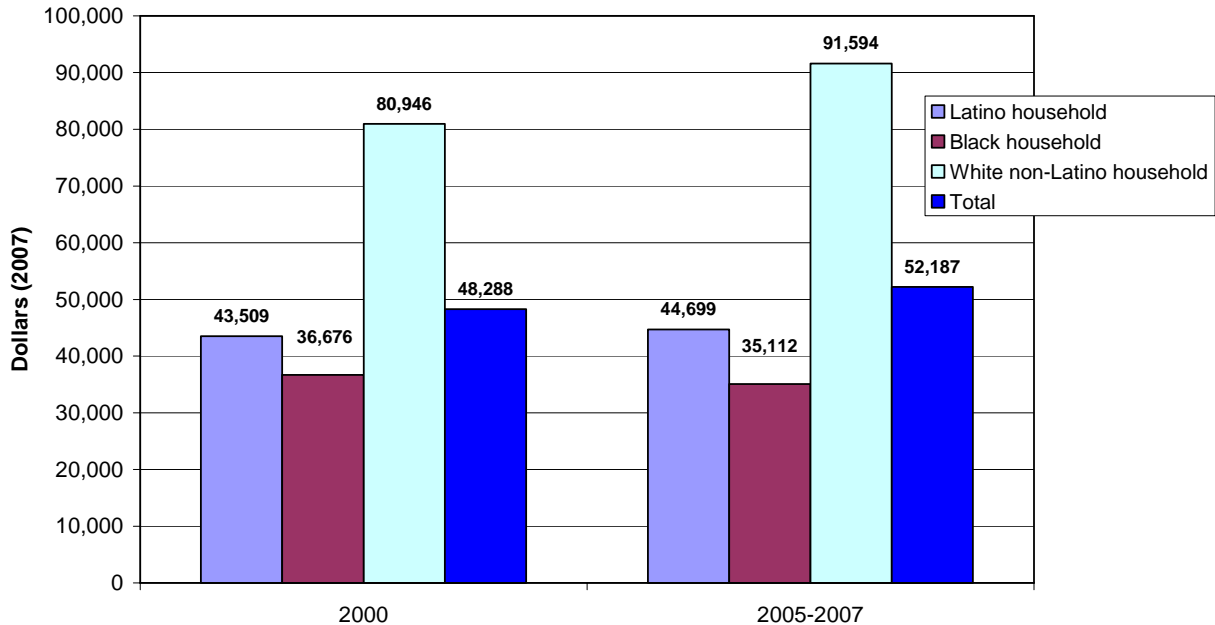


Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007

During 2005–2007, however, the median *household* income (which includes all working adults in a household) for Latinos was \$44,699, which was substantially higher than that of African Americans (\$35,112) and dramatically lower than that of non-Latino whites (\$91,594) (figure 3.9).⁴⁹ This difference between Latino *personal* and *household* income is likely attributable to the relatively larger household sizes for Latinos and the greater number of wage earners in Latino households. In 2005–2007, the average Latino-headed household had two wage earners, on average, compared with one wage earner for non-Latino households. Latino-headed households had more wage earners than households headed by non-Latino blacks (one wage earner) and non-Latino whites (one wage earner). Latino households were also more likely to consist of multiple families living together.



Figure 3.9. Median District Household Income by Race/Ethnicity in DC, 2000 and 2005–2007



Sources: United States Census Sample 2000, American Community Survey 2005-2007

Few District Latinos use social safety net programs

Despite low incomes and relatively high poverty rates, participation in social safety net programs, such as Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) and Food Stamps, has been very low among Latinos. In 2000, only 2 percent of all persons who applied for and were eligible to receive TANF benefits were Latino. By 2008, their share had only slightly increased to 3 percent. As in previous years, the vast majority of TANF recipients in the District in 2008 were African American (97 percent).⁵⁰

Food stamp use was also very low but has been increasing for Latinos. In 2000, Latinos accounted for just 2 percent of District residents using food stamps, rising to 4 percent by 2008. During this period, however, food stamp participation increased for every major racial/ethnic group in the city, with overall participation reaching 16 percent in 2008. During this period, Latino participation in the food stamp program increased steadily, from 1,767 to 3,296 individuals.⁵¹

Relatively low social safety net participation is a national concern and is likely due to language barriers, confusion about eligibility rules, and mistrust of government agencies. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has expressed concern that noncitizens and limited-English speakers find application for federal benefits such as TANF, Food Stamps, and Medicaid to be daunting, noting that many



people in immigrant communities associate the rigorous eligibility verification (which sometimes involves finger imaging and home visits) with the procedures of Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS). At the same time, HHS notes that nonrefugee immigrants and mixed-status families are more likely to apply for benefits through nonwelfare settings, such as clinics and community organizations, than through traditional benefits offices, and that assistance from community organization often allows noncitizens and limited-English speakers to move through the application process exceptionally quickly and smoothly.⁵²

District Latinos and the current national recession

As discussed above, the unemployment rate for District Latinos has been relatively low but is rising. The current recession threatens to exacerbate this problem, which may result in increasing detachment from the labor force as well as greater hardship and residential displacement in the Latino community.

Recent employment projections predict increases in some occupations that are currently common for District Latinos. The *Metropolitan Statistical Area Employment Projections by Industry and Occupation, 2006–2016*, released by the D.C. Department of Employment Services in late 2008, suggests that after a period of flat growth or modest job losses, the Washington area will experience growth in professional and related occupations (2 percent increase between 2006 and 2016), an area with few Latino workers. Food preparation and serving, an occupation group that employs many Latinos, will also increase 2 percent during this period. The construction occupations common among District Latinos will experience a slightly more modest growth rate at only 1 percent. These modest increases may not be sufficient, however, to offset job losses that have already taken place.

In the remainder of this chapter, we discuss the effects the recession is having on the District's Latino workers, based on conversations with key informants in the community. We also present informants' observations on problems with the city's current system for delivering services to the Latino community. In the conclusion, we list recommendations from our key informants on how to address the challenges faced during this critical period.

Recession affects labor market attachment, wages, and job quality. Aside from a predictable drop in employment resulting from the recession, a few community leaders have observed workforce trends that they say exacerbate Latinos' already precarious employment situation. Among these are a shift toward job contracting and job restructuring, particularly in the hospitality business, and an overall increase in workload in the housekeeping and hospitality business without a concomitant increase in wages or overtime pay. According to the community leaders we spoke with, private contract work and job restructuring has led to stagnated and depressed wages, a rise in part-time and informal work, and a decline in job benefits and increase in jobs without benefits.



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

Latinos are particularly affected by their concentration in the service sector, specifically in jobs like parking attendants, housecleaning, and the construction sector. For Latinas, especially, staff reductions have led to higher workloads for remaining staff, and one key informant said that “with the big crunch in housekeeping, we know of women who rush through their work but still can’t finish so they clock off and finish the work unpaid.” One union representative said that more women are complaining to them of workplace stress injuries and long-term pain associated with the heavy workloads.

Economic downturn spurs movement between occupation categories and job types. Since the economic downturn, there appears to be greater movement between occupations and job types among the District’s Latinos. Several of our expert respondents said that Latinos who have primarily worked in one industry have sought out and acquired new positions in another when they have faced a job loss or other circumstances that reduced their take-home pay. Depending on their situation, these workers have tried to compensate for income loss with full-time or part-time work; permanent or temporary work; or contingent employment. This fluidity is still primarily between the occupational categories and job types in which Latinos are already concentrated, and consistent with current gender segregation patterns. In particular, several informants highlighted job shifts between the restaurant and construction industry for men, and between the restaurant industry and house cleaning for women. Men in the restaurant industry who have had their hours cut are showing up at familiar corners to pick up day labor work over the weekend, and women in hospitality are moving into home cleaning.

Wages and incomes affected by recession prompt multiple part-time jobs. Community leaders and service providers reported that Latinos who have been able to find employment after losing their jobs during the past two years had to settle for jobs with lower wages and overall earnings than their prior job. Men who took “indoor jobs” as maintenance workers, for instance, may have found that those jobs were more stable but paid less than construction jobs. Several community leaders and service providers mentioned that there was “a lot more patching things together,” meaning that people had to hold multiple jobs simultaneously. A prominent community advocate said, “A lot of workers that work two or three part-time jobs to maintain a full-time schedule still do not make enough money to make ends meet. They are working but are living over capacity and no one in the house is making enough to really feel above water.”

Private service providers struggling to fill steep rise in basic needs. Several providers of basic health and social services and employment assistance in the District cited a steep increase over the past year in the need for medical assistance, food supplies, housing assistance, legal services, job services, and even clothes and toys for children. Agency staff attributed this to greater hardship, especially among the District’s Latino population. A few key informants also mentioned that several nonprofit employment service providers had closed in the last year, so clients had fewer resources to draw on. One representative from a private Latino-serving agency said,



For us, the number of people that come for services has duplicated [over the past year]. We keep statistics so it's documented. The ones who have jobs come in for food assistance. The ones that don't have health insurance come to check their blood pressure. The ones with immigration problems come for the legal clinic. The ones that have lost their income come for housing help. A lot of the recently unemployed ones sign up for our education and training programs. Our numbers [of persons seeking assistance] have gone [up] at least 50 percent.

To handle this spike, the organization absorbed large numbers of new clients across its programs— an approximately 30 to 50 percent increase per program from the previous year. Most agencies, however, do not have this kind of flexibility. Indeed, nonprofit leaders said they felt stretched across a broad range of services.

Key informants said that more needy Latino workers and families were turning to a small group of trusted, long-standing social service groups— especially as smaller or newer Latino or immigrant service groups have not survived the recession. One Latino service provider said, “What’s missing is adequate services for Latinos in this city,” a sentiment all of the study key informants shared. She added,

How many places speak Spanish or make you feel comfortable? And how many people come knocking for our services? The client numbers suggest you have to incrementally increase your service providers or capacity at the existing agencies, right? But no. The agencies are the same ones, and these agencies are the only ones that have been around for years. And we are largely on our own. We'll see whether and how we manage to keep this up.

District’s public employment services during the economic downturn.

Nonprofit legal services and employment and social service providers in the District said that the public employment service system is generally not providing the level or kinds of services that would make a meaningful difference for the economic security and advancement of the District’s Latino workers. The education and training programs that do exist are small in scale, not designed to address fundamental barriers to economic advancement, and mostly inadequately funded. There was a general consensus that Latinos, especially the foreign born and those who do not speak English, rarely access services through the D.C. Department of Employment Services’ (DOES) One-Stop service system. One representative from a leading Latino service provider said, “City services is just not part of the conversation because of capacity and lack of outreach. People find work through informal networks, hiring sites, friends and family, or the nonprofit employment and training centers and are not utilizing city resources.”



The One-Stops were widely perceived as “not set up for people who are not English speakers,” and not located in communities where Latinos predominate. (However, a satellite center is located in Columbia Heights. On the other hand, several key informants said that there has been a noticeable and welcome improvement in language access throughout the District’s many departments and within DOES, in particular.

Needed changes to public and private employment education and training programs. Key informants emphasized the need for more comprehensive employment and training programs designed to address the multiple barriers to advancement that many of the District’s low-income Latinos face. On the one hand, few programs “start where the people are [in terms of skills] and get them to operate at a higher level in an occupation.” Skills-building programs that incorporate English-language as well as basic reading and writing education would especially help the District’s Latinos.

Key informants also emphasized that longer-term employment programs to prepare young Latinos for more stable careers are needed. Long-term programs were viewed as more effective than short-term, two- to four-month summer employment programs. District investments have been targeted to these short-term summer programs. Stakeholders also suggested that youth employment programs should have a strong “soft skills” training component and highly involved case managers.

On the other hand, said others, the District’s Latino population is diverse enough that many residents could benefit from more advanced vocational training programs with a language proficiency component. As one provider said, such programs could “get them certification for the higher-level skills they already have but cannot prove” because they have acquired them through on-the-job experience or acquired them in their country of origin. Another nonprofit employment service provider noted that many of her clients are professionals and have computer skills. She had expected that they would be easier to place, but their not knowing formal English or work jargon, as well as not having a degree, stymies them. Another person added, “[employers] always put [clients] to pick up trash for the simple reason that they can’t speak English, but they have at least the equivalent of a GED even if they don’t understand the words used here.” Vocational training or sectoral training programs may work well for these clients because, she said, “the university is not for everyone, and my clients don’t qualify for those programs anyway.”



CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

The Latino population in the District is growing, both due to immigration as well as the increasing number of Latino children being born in the District. More than half of the District's Latinos are immigrants, mainly from El Salvador, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. Latino households are more likely to be married couples with children than non-Latino households, and they often include more children and extended family in the household.

Over the past twenty years, Latinos have tended to live in a relatively small set of neighborhoods located primarily in Wards 1 and 4. However, the housing boom that swept the entire city earlier in the decade was particularly intense in neighborhoods with larger shares of Latinos, and many of these areas became centers for new retail and business development. While the Latino community saw some benefits in these changes, there were also challenges. Housing costs increased more rapidly than wages, and Latinos, whose homeownership rates were low compared with other District residents, saw rents and house prices rise dramatically in their neighborhoods. As a result, the Latino population began to spread to other parts of the city, such as Ward 4, where costs were lower. Furthermore, although more Latinos became homeowners during the housing boom, these homeownership gains may now be undone by the current foreclosure crisis, which is causing many to lose their homes.

Up until the current recession, the unemployment rates for Latinos in the District have been relatively low, but so were Latinos' wages. As a result, Latino household incomes were much lower than white non-Latino households and their poverty rates were relatively high (although the average Latino household income was higher than the African American household income and their poverty rates were slightly lower). Latino households appear to make ends meet through having multiple wage earners, but their median earnings have stagnated over this decade. These issues have likely been made worse by the recession.

Many Latinos in the District, particularly Latino immigrants, have extremely low education levels. This affects the types of jobs available, which are mainly low-skilled occupations with correspondingly low wages, such as building and grounds cleaning and maintenance, food preparation and serving occupations, construction trades, office and administrative support, and sales occupations. Lack of higher education and solid English skills also has made it more difficult for many District Latinos to find new jobs during the economic downturn.

In addition, key informants whom we spoke to reported that unemployment is increasing for Latinos and those who had lost employment were finding it difficult to secure new jobs. A recent shift toward private contracting and job restructuring has particularly hurt Latinos by causing further stagnation of wages, a rise in part-time and



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

informal work, and a decline in job benefits. For Latinos who have jobs, stakeholders report that more Latinos are cobbling together a series of part-time jobs to make ends meet. Further exacerbating the problem, recent job projections predict modest increases in commonly-held Latino occupations and moderate increases in higher-wage occupations with few Latino workers, such as professional occupations.

Possible responses to the current economic crisis. To better meet the needs of the Latino population, particularly in light of the economic recession, our informants suggested the following strategies:

- **Examine opportunities for increasing incumbent worker training for workers with multiple barriers, including English language learners, low-skilled workers, and workers with low education.** One strategy identified as potentially promising is investing in programs that help workers upgrade their skills within their jobs so that they can advance within their current occupations. Lack of English language skills and low levels of basic education prevent many Latinos from being considered for promotion opportunities and earning higher wages. Customized training programs that incorporate basic language and education training and give participants a “diploma” certifying newly acquired skills might help address this problem. Several key informants also suggested that current programs are not easily accessible to Latinos and do not “reach down far enough” in their basic skills training.
- **Explore ways of supporting current Latino service providers to help them cope with increasing numbers of clients since the recession.** Multiservice Latino agencies noted that they are under pressure to serve many more individuals with basic social services, job searches, employment, and training, but resources are either dwindling or not growing fast enough. Latinos generally rely on a small number of trusted organizations for a broad array of services. A few are absorbing new clients but key informants said their organizations were “stretched to the limit” and in need of staff support and resources to expand capacity. Additional funding, staff support, or technical assistance could help them better serve Latino workers and families, especially for workers who have lost their jobs or have had wages or hours cut since the start of the economic downturn.
- **Explore ways that federal stimulus or other funds can be used to help Latinos move into new growth sectors and careers.** The data show that Latinos are primarily concentrated in low-skilled, low-wage occupations in which little to no English fluency and education are required. Investing in education and workforce development, as well as



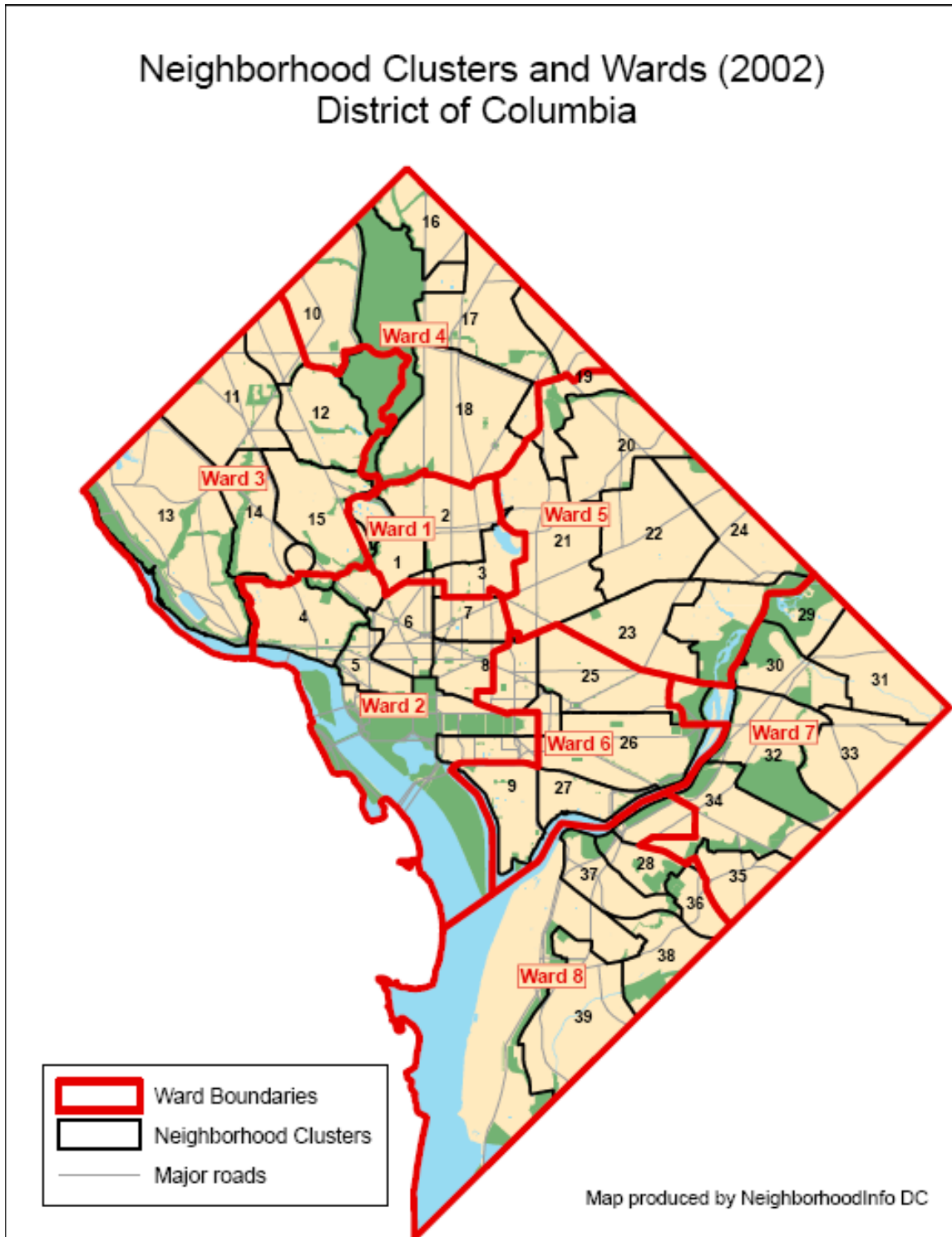
promoting access to health sector jobs and jobs in the growing “green economy,” could help prevent stagnating wages.

- **Expand the availability of “know your rights” classes, information on employment rights and public services for workers whose rights may have been violated.** Employment service providers and community leaders said that there has been an increase in worker violations of employees’ basic rights in recent years, possibly due to the economic downturn and an increasingly harsh climate around immigration, especially in the construction, hospitality, and restaurant industries. Workers have little information about how to ask for unpaid wages or other compensation, how to bring lawsuits, or where to report strenuous or dangerous working conditions. Better access to such information, as well as public and private legal services, would help individual workers and prevent future employer violations. Nonprofit agencies and private legal services are currently leading this work. A representative from the Worker Protection / Labor Standards Bureau in the Department of Employment Services articulated a strong commitment to expand its education and outreach efforts if additional funding becomes available.
- **Encourage greater collaboration and closer coordination of employment services among Latino-serving community-based organizations, employers, and the public employment system.** Study participants encouraged the concept that a successful workforce development system is one that responds to the needs of employers. Several public and private agency staff we spoke with are individually attempting to make inroads with employers; however, building such relationships, staying abreast of employers’ needs, and developing a practical referral system takes significant effort and consumes staff time. Better coordinated efforts could leverage the relationships that already exist and spread better information across multiple service providers that serve Latinos and immigrants. It would also be useful for employers to know where to look for bilingual workers with certain skill sets and experiences. This may help make inroads for Latinos in new occupations with better pay and higher quality work environments.



APPENDICES

Appendix Map 1



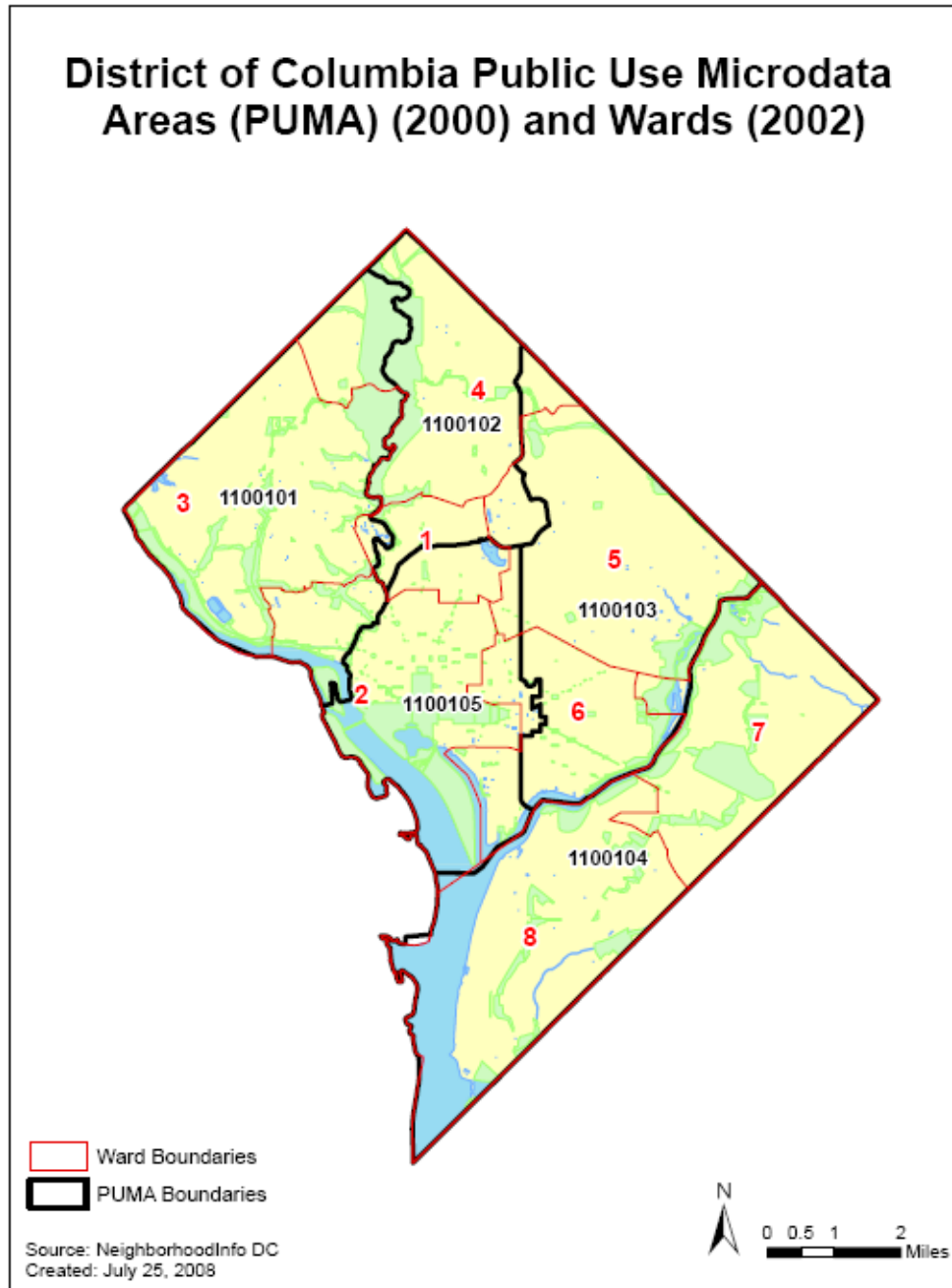


Appendix Map 1 Neighborhood Cluster Table

Ward	Cluster	Neighborhood Names
1	1	Kalorama Heights, Adams Morgan, Lanier Heights
1	2	Columbia Heights, Mt. Pleasant, Pleasant Plains, Park View
1	3	Howard University, Ledroit Park, Cardozo/Shaw
2	4	Georgetown, Burleith/Hillandale
2	5	West End, Foggy Bottom, GWU
2	6	Dupont Circle, Connecticut Avenue/K Street
2	7	Shaw, Logan Circle
2	8	Downtown, Chinatown, Penn Quarters, Mount Vernon Square, North Capitol Street
6	9	Southwest Employment Area, Southwest/Waterfront, Fort McNair, Buzzard Point
3	10	Hawthorne, Barnaby Woods, Chevy Chase
3	11	Friendship Heights, American University Park, Tenleytown
3	12	North Cleveland Park, Forest Hills, Van Ness
3	13	Spring Valley, Palisades, Wesley Heights, Foxhall Crescent, Foxhall Village, Georgetown Reservoir
3	14	Cathedral Heights, McLean Gardens, Glover Park
3	15	Cleveland Park, Woodley Park, Massachusetts Avenue Heights, Woodland-Normanstone Terrace
4	16	Colonial Village, Shepherd Park, North Portal Estates
4	17	Takoma, Brightwood, Manor Park
4	18	Brightwood Park, Crestwood, Petworth
4	19	Lamond Riggs, Queens Chapel, Fort Totten, Pleasant Hill
5	20	North Michigan Park, Michigan Park, University Heights
5	21	Edgewood, Bloomingdale, Truxton Circle, Eckington
5	22	Brookland, Brentwood, Langdon
5	23	Ivy City, Arboretum, Trinidad, Carver Langston
5	24	Woodridge, Fort Lincoln, Gateway
6	25	Union Station, Stanton Park, Kingman Park
6	26	Capitol Hill, Lincoln Park
6	27	Near Southeast, Navy Yard
8	28	Historic Anacostia
7	29	Eastland Gardens, Kenilworth
7	30	Mayfair, Hillbrook, Mahaning Heights
7	31	Deanwood, Burrville, Grant Park, Lincoln Heights, Fairmont Heights
7	32	River Terrace, Benning, Greenway, Dupont Park
7	33	Capitol View, Marshall Heights, Benning Heights
7	34	Twining, Fairlawn, Randle Highlands, Penn Branch, Fort Davis Park, Fort Dupont
7	35	Fairfax Village, Naylor Gardens, Hillcrest, Summit Park
8	36	Woodland/Fort Stanton, Garfield Heights, Knox Hill
8	37	Sheridan, Barry Farm, Buena Vista
8	38	Douglass, Shipley Terrace
8	39	Congress Heights, Bellevue, Washington Highlands



Appendix Map 2





State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

Appendix Table 3.1. Percent of Each Race and Each Group Employed in Occupational Areas (Employed People, Age 16 and Older), 2005–2007					
	All races/ ethnicities	Latino	White (non- Latino)	Black (non- Latino)	Asian (non- Latino)
Office and administrative support occupations	15	9	9	20	11
Management occupations	11	6	18	6	12
Sales occupations	8	6	7	9	6
Education, training, and library occupations	6	4	7	6	6
Legal occupations	6	3	11	2	10
Food preparation and serving occupations	5	14	3	5	13
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	5	3	10	2	7
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	5	17	1	7	3
Business operations specialists	4	2	5	3	3
Transportation and material moving occupations	4	5	1	6	1
Computer and mathematical occupations	4	1	5	2	5
Life, physical, and social science occupations	3	3	6	1	7
Construction trades	3	11	1	4	0
Personal care and service occupations	3	3	2	4	2
Health care practitioners and technical occupations	3	2	3	3	6
Protective service occupations	3	1	1	5	1
Financial specialists	3	1	3	3	1
Community and social services occupations	2	1	2	3	1
Health care support occupations	2	1	0	3	1
Production occupations	1	4	0	2	0
Architectural and engineering occupations	1	1	2	1	1
Installation, maintenance, and repair workers	1	1	0	2	0
Military specific occupations	1	1	2	0	0
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Yellow Highlight = Most Common Occupation Category					
Orange Highlight = Top 5 Occupation Categories					
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007					



State of Latinos in the District of Columbia

Appendix Table 3.2. Median 2007 Hourly Wage for Most Common Occupation Categories (2005-2007)

Rank	All races		Latino		White, non-Latino		Black, non-Latino	
1	Office and Admin Support	\$18.73	Cleaning & Maintenance	\$12.47	Management	\$52.31	Office and Admin Support	\$18.73
2	Management	\$52.31	Food Services	\$10.69	Legal	\$58.96	Sales	\$14.46
3	Sales	\$14.46	Construction Trades	\$21.89	Arts, Design, Media	\$31.58	Cleaning & Maintenance	\$12.47
4	Education, Training, and Library	\$25.15	Office and Admin Support	\$18.73	Office and Admin Support	\$18.73	Transport and Material Moving	\$13.79
5	Legal	\$58.96	Sales	\$14.46	Sales	\$14.46	Management	\$52.31
6	Food Services	\$10.69	Management	\$52.31	Education, Training, and Library	\$25.15	Education, Training, and Library	\$25.15
7	Arts, Design, Media	\$31.58	Transport and Material Moving	\$13.79	Science	\$37.91	Food Services	\$10.69
8	Cleaning & Maintenance	\$12.47	Production	\$19.61	Business	\$35.47	Protective Service	\$20.37
9	Business	\$35.47	Education, Training, and Library	\$25.15	Computer & Math	\$36.61	Personal Care and Service	\$12.32
10	Transport and Material Moving	\$13.79	Legal	\$58.96	Food Services	\$10.69	Construction Trades	\$21.89

Sources: American Community Survey and Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics



NOTES

- ¹ One of primary data sources for this report, the American Community Survey, asks all respondents if they are of "Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin." A separate question asks persons to identify their race (i.e., white, black, Asian, etc.). The 2000 Census asked respondents if they were "Spanish/Hispanic/Latino," in addition to their race; the 1990 census asked if persons were of "Spanish or Hispanic origin" and did not include the term Latino.
- ² Some census and American Communities Survey tables include some of the mutually exclusive racial and ethnic categories. For instance, some disaggregate the data by Latino; non-Latino white; and black (including Latino and non-Latino). In these instances, we include all these three categories to provide a rough comparison across race/ethnicity.
- ³ Steven Ruggles, Matthew Sobek, Trent Alexander, Catherine A. Fitch, Ronald Goeken, Patricia Kelly Hall, Miriam King, and Chad Ronnander. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 4.0*. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Population Center, 2009.
- ⁴ Hogan, H. 1993. "The 1990 Post-Enumeration Survey: Operations and Results," *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 88, 1047-1060.
- ⁵ Mendoza, M. 2008. "Latinos in Memphis and Tennessee." Center for Research on Women, University of Memphis.
- ⁶ Kissam, Ed and Eileen Jacobs. 1999. "Census Undercount and Immigrant Integration into Rural California Life." *Changing Face* 5 (4).
- ⁷ Mendoza 2008 and Sullivan, T.A. 2000. "A Demographic Portrait." In *Hispanics in the United States: An Agenda for the Twenty-First Century* edited by Pastora San Juan Cafferty, David Engstrom. 1-29. New Brunswick, N.J. : Transaction Books.
- ⁸ Vargas, Arturo. "Testimony before the United States House of Representatives Oversight and Government Reform Committee Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census and National Archives on 2010 Census responsiveness to the Latino Community." 9 July 2007.
- ⁹ Roy, Krishna. 2002. "Sociodemographic Profile." *The State of Latinos in the District of Columbia: Trends, Consequences, and Recommendations*. Council of Latino Agencies.
- ¹⁰ Data for the population decline between 1950 and 2000 is from the US Decennial Censuses. Recent population data are from the 2008 Population Estimates.
- ¹¹ Data for the Latino population increases between 1980 and 2000 is from the US Decennial Censuses. Recent population data are from the 2008 Population Estimates.
- ¹² Data for the shares of population by race/ethnicity for 1980 and 2000 are from the US Decennial Censuses. Recent race/ethnicity data are from the 2008 Population Estimates.
- ¹³ Data for the numbers of children for 1990 and 2000 are from the US Decennial Censuses. Recent population data are from the 2008 Population Estimates.
- ¹⁴ Data for the number of children by race and ethnicity between 2000 and 2008 are from Population Estimates.
- ¹⁵ Birth data are provided by the DC Department of Health, State Center for Health Statistics Administration.
- ¹⁶ Birth data by race/ethnicity of the mother are provided by the DC Department of Health, State Center for Health Statistics Administration.
- ¹⁷ Birth data by age of the mother are provided by the DC Department of Health, State Center for Health Statistics Administration.
- ¹⁸ Birth data by age and race/ethnicity of the mother are provided by the DC Department of Health, State Center for Health Statistics Administration.
- ¹⁹ Data on country of origin is provided by the 2005-2007 American Community Survey.
- ²⁰ Data for the population pyramids was provided by the Population Estimates 2008.
- ²¹ American Community Survey 2005-2007.
- ²² Data for the household type was provided by the American Community Survey 2005-2007.
- ²³ Data for size and relationship to head of household was provided by the American Community Survey 2005-2007.
- ²⁴ Data for persons related to household head was provided by the American Community Survey 2005-2007.
- ²⁵ Median amounts adjusted for 2007 dollars.
- ²⁶ Median amounts adjusted for 2007 dollars.



- ²⁷ The share of renters spending more than 30 percent of their income on rent are from the American Community Survey 2005-2007.
- ²⁸ Dollar amounts in 2007 dollars.
- ²⁹ Average rents were adjusted to 2007 dollars.
- ³⁰ Washington City Paper 2/20/08 and 4/24/08, Hear Mt. Pleasant.
- ³¹ District of Columbia Office of Planning, Public Meeting Summary on Mt. Pleasant Street Revitalization Framework Plan, June 17th, 2009.
- ³² Data on foreclosures provided by the DC Housing Monitor Spring 2009, (<http://www.neighborhoodinfodc.org/housing/>).
- ³³ The unemployment rate for African Americans includes black Latinos.
- ³⁴ The unemployment rate for whites includes white Latinos.
- ³⁵ District-wide and national unemployment data are provided by the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- ³⁶ District of Columbia Department of Employment Services, *Labor Market Trends*, June 2009.
- ³⁷ Full-time, year-round workers are all people 16 years and older who usually worked 35 hours or more per week for 50 to 52 weeks in the past 12 months.
- ³⁸ Data on full time and year round work are from the American Community Survey, 2005–2007 averages.
- ³⁹ Data on education levels are from the American Community Survey, 2005–2007 averages.
- ⁴⁰ Data on occupation categories by race are from the American Community Survey, 2005–2007 averages.
- ⁴¹ Median wage data from the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates.
- ⁴² Spring 2009 District employment data are from the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates.
- ⁴³ Median wage data from the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates.
- ⁴⁴ Data on occupation categories by race are from the 2000 Census and 2005-2007 American Community Survey.
- ⁴⁵ Poverty rate data by race are from the 2005–2007 American Community Survey average estimates.
- ⁴⁶ Poverty data are calculated from the 2000 Census sample data and the American Communities Surveys, 2005 through 2007. 2005–2007 data are averaged across years (2005 through 2007) of American Communities Survey.
- ⁴⁷ All median household incomes are in 2007 dollars.
- ⁴⁸ Median income data were compiled from the 2000 Census sample and the 2005-2007 American Communities Survey data averages.
- ⁴⁹ Household income by race are from the American Communities Survey, 2005–2007 average estimates.
- ⁵⁰ TANF eligibility and receipt by race are from the District of Columbia Income Maintenance Authority, 2009.
- ⁵¹ Food stamp eligibility and receipt by race are from the District of Columbia Income Maintenance Authority, 2009.
- ⁵² “Chapter 3. Applying for Benefits: What Families Must Do,” *The Application Process for TANF, Food Stamps, Medicaid, and SCHIP*, United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant for Planning and Evaluation.

Government of the District of Columbia
Executive Office of the Mayor
Office on Latino Affairs (OLA)
Frank Reeves Municipal Center
2000 14th Street, NW 2nd floor
Washington, DC 20009
202.671.2825