

Hispanic Workers in Construction and Other Industries

Hispanic¹ workers' share of the labor force has increased significantly since 1990, particularly in the construction industry. From 1990 to 2010, the proportion of workers who identified themselves as Hispanic doubled for all industries from 7% to 14% (to 19.9 million workers), but almost tripled for construction from 9% or 705,000 workers in 1990 to 24% or 2.2 million in 2010 (charts 17a and 17b). However, Hispanic employment in construction was significantly affected by the recent economic downturn (*see* pages 21 and 22). The number of Hispanic construction workers dropped by 25.3% in 2010 from its peak at nearly 3 million in 2007. Following U.S. demographic trends, most of the increases in Hispanic employment are attributable to immigration (*see* page 16). About 75% of the 2.2 million Hispanic construction workers were born outside the United States, and nearly 1.4 million (62%) were not U.S. citizens in 2010.

Many Hispanic workers are employed in *production* (*see* Glossary), or blue-collar, occupations (*see* pages 11 and 18). In 2010, 30% of production workers in construction were Hispanic, higher than in any other industry, except agriculture (chart 17c).

Hispanic workers are also more likely to reside in the South and West, and less likely to live in the Midwest (*see regions* in Glossary).² In 2010, 50% of Hispanic construction workers resided in the South, 34% in the West, 10% in the Northeast, and 6% in the Midwest. At the state level, the percentage of Hispanic construction workers varied significantly.

For example, Hispanic construction workers accounted for less than 5% in some states such as Maine and West Virginia, but as much as 57% in New Mexico, 55% in Texas, 48% in California, 39% in the District of Columbia and Arizona, and 37% in Nevada (chart 17d).

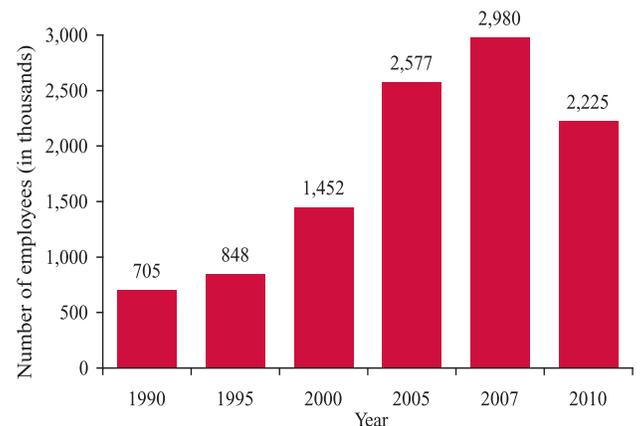
In this book, detailed demographic information for subgroups (such as language spoken among foreign-born workers) and state-level data are from the American Community Survey (ACS; *see* page 16), while historical data, occupational data, and data on unionization are from the Current Population Survey (CPS; *see* page 10). Both ACS and CPS surveys provide a Spanish-language version and identify people as Hispanic only if self-reported by the respondent. These household surveys are believed to undercount the population of Hispanic origin, as new immigrants tend to be mobile and thus difficult to locate for an interview.^{3,4}

The ACS sample size is much larger than that of the CPS, but the CPS has more detailed labor force questions. For example, the CPS collects information on union status, while the ACS does not. The CPS sample is designed to achieve a high degree of reliability for monthly estimates nationwide, but its sample is spread too thin geographically to provide reliable computations for state-level estimates within the construction industry. Thus, the two surveys were used for unique purposes in this chart book.

17a. Hispanic workers as a percentage of construction and all industries, selected years, 1990-2010 (All employment)



17b. Number of Hispanic workers in construction, selected years, 1990-2010 (All employment)



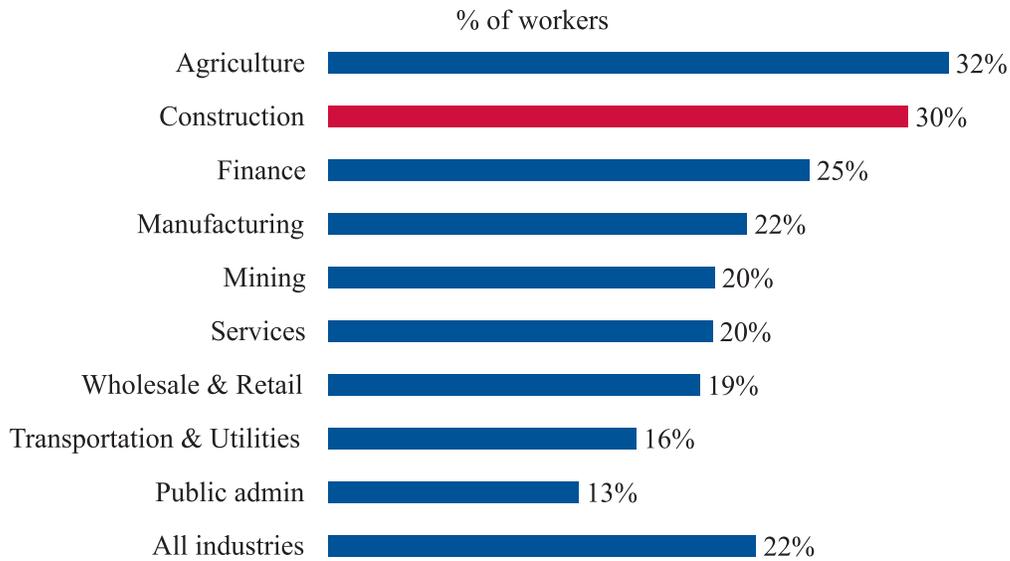
1. Hispanic refers to any individual whose origin is Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, Chicano, or other Latin American. Hispanics can be any race (*see racial minorities* in Glossary and page 19). The term *Latino* is used in place of *Hispanic* in many publications. However, to maintain consistency, *Hispanic* is used throughout this chart book, as it is used by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

2. U.S. Census Bureau. The 2012 Statistics Abstract, *The National Data Book*. (Section 1. Population -Table 18. Resident Population by Hispanic Origin and State: 2010). <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/12statab/pop.pdf> (Accessed October 2012).

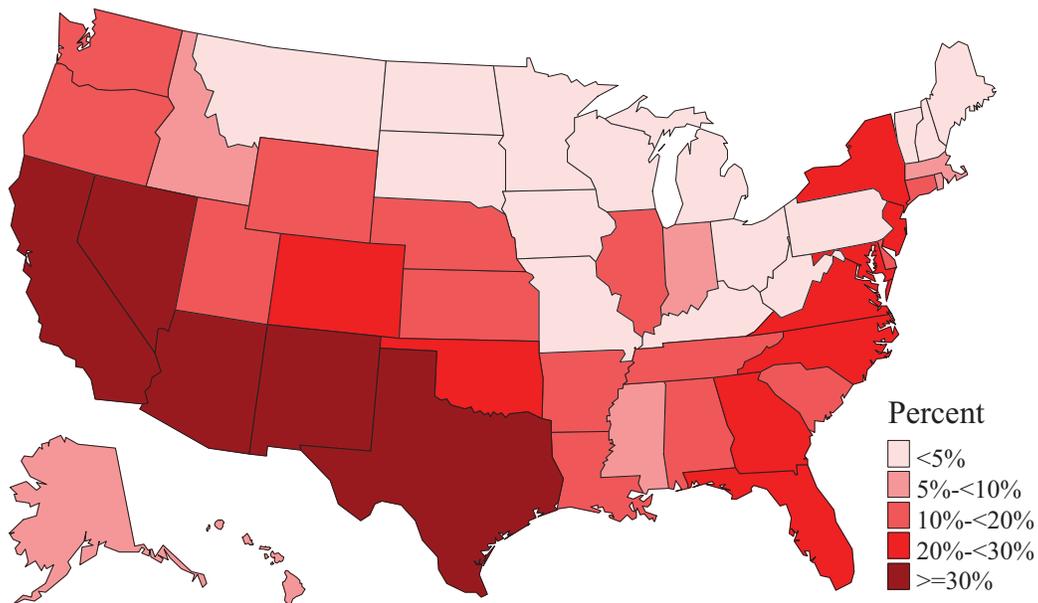
3. Congress of the United States. Congressional Budget Office. 2011. *A Description of the Immigrant Population: An Update*. <http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/ftpdocs/121xx/doc12168/06-02-foreign-bornpopulation.pdf> (Accessed August 2012).

4. Genoni M, Rubalcava L, Teruel G, & Thomas D. 2011. *Mexicans in America*. http://www.econ.yale.edu/conference/neudc11/papers/paper_296.pdf (Accessed August 2012).

17c. Percentage of Hispanic workers, by industry, 2010 (Production workers)



17d. Percentage of Hispanic construction workers, by state, 2010 (All employment)



Note: Charts 17a and 17b - The numbers of Hispanics before 2005 were adjusted by the parameters provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Source: Charts 17a and 17b - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2010 and previous years Current Population Survey. Calculations by CPWR Data Center.

Chart 17c - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2010 Current Population Survey. Calculations by CPWR Data Center.

Chart 17d - U.S. Census Bureau. 2010 American Community Survey. Calculations by CPWR Data Center.