

# **LATINOS IN CENTRAL OREGON**

**A COMMUNITY PROFILE IN STATISTICS & STORIES**



**LATINO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
OCTOBER 2020**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>2</b>	AGRADECIMIENTOS
<b>3</b>	INTRODUCTION
<b>4</b>	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<b>9</b>	<i>AMIGA/VECINA PROFILE - ELISA</i>
<b>10</b>	POPULATION
<b>18</b>	<i>AMIGO/VECINO PROFILE - LUIS ALBERTO ROBLES</i>
<b>19</b>	INCOME AND OTHER ECONOMIC INDICATORS
<b>24</b>	<i>AMIGA/VECINA PROFILE - LORENA BARRERA</i>
<b>25</b>	<i>AMIGO/VECINO PROFILE - ANTONIO</i>
<b>26</b>	HEALTH
<b>36</b>	<i>AMIGA/VECINA PROFILE - BLANCA REYNOSO</i>
<b>37</b>	EDUCATION
<b>44</b>	<i>AMIGO/VECINO PROFILE - ROBERTO IRICHE</i>
<b>45</b>	<i>AMIGA/VECINA PROFILE - MARIA TERESA MENDOZA</i>
<b>46</b>	HOUSING
<b>51</b>	<i>AMIGA/VECINA PROFILE - DELIA FELICIANO</i>
<b>52</b>	CONCLUSION AND INVITATION
<b>53</b>	APPENDIX
<b>54</b>	SOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

# AGRADECIMIENTOS

For their generous assistance and advice in reviewing early drafts of this document, we want to say ¡Muchas gracias! to:

Gerardo Sandoval, University of Oregon - Planning, Public Policy & Management

Jennifer Faith, Deschutes County Health Services

Jessica Fitzpatrick, East Cascades Works

Oregon Employment Department

Caitlin Ruffenach, Oregon Community Foundation

Katie Condit, Better Together Coalition

Miguel Angel Herrada, PacificSource

Rebeckah Berry, Central Oregon Health Council

Scott Aycock and Janel Ruehl, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council

Susan Thurman and Peter Necarsulmer, PBN Hill+Knowlton Strategies

Whitney Swander, High Desert Educational Service District

Latino Community Association Board of Directors and Staff

## RESEARCH & WRITING

Denise Holley (lead)

Brad Porterfield

## EDITORIAL & DATA REVIEW

Jeffrey Richardson

Ron Oliveira

## REPORT DESIGN

Jessica Amascual

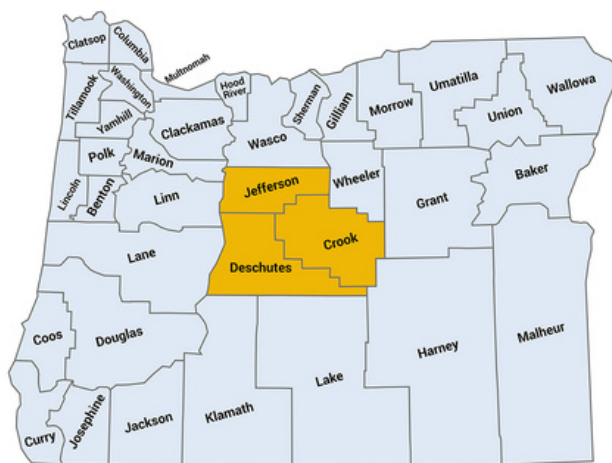
*Funding provided by the Central Oregon Latino Partnership Program of the Oregon Community Foundation and the Better Together Coalition*

# INTRODUCTION

Webster’s Dictionary describes a baseline as “an initial set of critical observations or data used for comparison; a starting point.” This report is a beginning. It is our attempt to establish a baseline to understand where we are today and measure our progress moving forward. We want to know in which areas our Latino families in Central Oregon are doing well. But we also want to see where opportunities exist to achieve more. We want this report to be a catalyst for change: a tool to measure progress and guide our collective efforts to lower barriers that keep our Latino families from reaching their full potential.

Staff members and volunteers of the Latino Community Association (LCA), a nonprofit organization serving Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties in Central Oregon, assembled this report. We received research and review assistance from multiple community partners, to whom we are forever grateful.

We modeled our efforts on the 2016 report, *Latinos in Oregon: Trends and Opportunities in a Changing State*, produced by the Oregon Community Foundation in 2016. We have added the additional subject area of housing and included interviews with families in Bend, Redmond, Madras, Prineville, and surrounding areas. We hope readers find this profile of our Latino community to be informative, insightful and useful for considering programmatic and policy alternatives. Our priority is to ensure that our Latino families have equitable access to opportunities to advance and fully participate in the civic and cultural life that makes Central Oregon a desirable place to call home.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oregon has a place in the broad sweep of Latino history in the Americas, as it was part of territorial claims asserted by Spain dating back hundreds of years. The migration of Latinos to Oregon in the modern era began in the late 1800s when Mexican *vaqueros* rode and roped on cattle ranches, according to the report *Latinos in Oregon* by Jerry Garcia (Oregon Historical Society, 2014). In the early 1900s, Mexican immigrants arrived to build the railroads and tend crops. As the state grew, so did our Latino community, reaching 523,956 in 2018 (13 percent) in a state of 4,081,943 people, according to the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2014-2018.

In Central Oregon, the experience of Latinos tracks closely with the history of Latinos across the state. Our footprint is smaller in this arid and more sparsely populated region compared to communities in the fertile Willamette Valley and Columbia Gorge. But we have long made substantial contributions to industries connected with the land: ranching, farming and wood products, as well as the construction, service and hospitality sectors. Many Central Oregon Latinos still feel strong connections to our countries of origin, but speak with equal pride of the years, often decades, spent making our homes in Bend, Redmond, Sisters, Culver, Madras and Prineville. Latinos bring a strong work ethic and close family ties to these Central Oregon communities. We are a youthful population who fill essential jobs, run businesses, contribute to the local, state and national tax bases, and help shore up the Social Security system.



Dancers at Latino Fest in Madras, 2018. Photo by Jason Blackman



*“In 2015, Hispanic households contributed almost \$215 billion to U.S. tax revenues as a whole, including nearly \$76 billion in state and local tax payments . . . Hispanic households contributed \$101.8 billion to Social Security and \$25.3 billion to Medicare’s core trust fund.”*

*Power of the Purse: How Hispanics Contribute to the U.S. Economy, a report by the Partnership for a New American Economy Research Fund, December 2017.*

The history of Latinos in Central Oregon continues to unfold. The full extent of the contributions Latinos make to the economy and social fabric of our region is considerable, but has not been fully measured or appreciated. In this report, we bring to light the challenges that Latino families face in achieving equity in education, employment, health care and housing. We continue working in earnest to make sure our Latino families are empowered to thrive in an environment where we experience both warm hospitality and racial discrimination.

Barriers to civic engagement are particularly problematic. Given the current national political climate, we must ensure that Latinos vote and feel represented at all levels of government and civic leadership. Our full participation in the 2020 Census is a good example, as our success in achieving a full count will benefit the entire region.

Here are some highlights from each section of the report:

## POPULATION

- The Latino community in Central Oregon grew from 3,267 in 1990 to an estimated 20,512 in 2018, which equates to 9 percent of the region’s population.
- In 2018, Latinos comprised 7.9 percent of the population in Deschutes County, 7.6 percent in Crook County and 20 percent in Jefferson County, according to the U.S. Census.
- The vast majority of Latinos in our region, as in the state and nation as a whole, were born in the United States (native-born). Statewide, 67 percent of Latinos were born in the U.S. In Central Oregon, approximately three-fourths were born in the U.S. This data refutes the assumption that most Central Oregon Latinos are immigrants.
- Latinos in Central Oregon are much younger than the overall population in our region. The median age of Latinos ranges from 22 to 28 years, compared to 43 to 51 years for the white population. The youthfulness of the Latino population accounts for our higher rates of labor force participation and a higher proportion among school-age children.
- The vast majority of Central Oregon Latinos trace their family origins to Mexico, but many come from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Colombia, and Peru. The biggest surprise to us is that approximately 555 residents of Puerto Rican decent live in our region.

## INCOME AND OTHER ECONOMIC INDICATORS

- White households in Central Oregon earn significantly more than Latino households and per capita income among Latinos is significantly lower.
- Poverty rates for Latinos in Central Oregon are higher than for white residents, but the rate for Latinos in Deschutes County is lower than the rate for Latinos in neighboring counties.

## EMPLOYMENT

- In 2018, Latinos filled an estimated 8,412 jobs in Central Oregon, primarily in accommodation and food services, retail trade, health care and social assistance, construction, agriculture and forestry.
- Latinos have higher rates of workforce participation than white residents in all three Central Oregon counties. This is due, in part, to the lower median age of Latinos in the region.
- In 2018, unemployment among Latinos was slightly higher than among white workers in Crook and Deschutes counties, but slightly lower in Jefferson County.



Latino Community Association's Christmas Taquiza (Taco Dinner) in Redmond 2018. Photo by Denise Holley

## HEALTH

- Significantly more Latinos than white residents lack health insurance in Central Oregon.
- Life expectancy for Latinos in Central Oregon is 84.6 years, compared to 81.1 years for white residents.
- The cancer mortality rate for Central Oregon Latinos is lower than the rate for white residents, but slightly higher than for Latinos statewide.
- Teen pregnancy among Latinas (15-17 years) occurs at almost double the rate for white teens in Deschutes and Jefferson counties, and at almost three times the rate in Crook County.
- In an emotional health survey of LCA clients, 48% said their children told them that they feel bad because of the attitudes or comments of classmates.

## EDUCATION

- Latino children who begin kindergarten in Central Oregon are as ready to learn as their white counterparts by most measures, but recognize fewer English letters and letter sounds.
- The percentage of Latino students who meet the state proficiency standards in third grade English and eighth grade math falls far below the percentage for their white classmates.
- Data on Central Oregon graduation rates in 2019 indicates an achievement gap between Latino and white students in the Bend-LaPine School District, and a narrower gap in the Redmond district. In other districts, Latino graduation rates actually exceed those of white students.
- The statewide percentage of white residents with a high school diploma or a bachelor's degree is significantly higher than Latinos, regardless of gender.
- In Central Oregon, the percentage of Latinos living in Deschutes County who have a high school diploma or a bachelor's degree exceeds the statewide average for Latinos.

## HOUSING

- Latino households in Central Oregon have a significantly higher degree of housing need (defined as paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing) and severe housing need (paying more than 50 percent) than white households.
- Out of 4,942 Latino households surveyed, 46.1 percent (2,277) have housing need, while nearly 30 percent (1,461) have severe housing need.

We hope you find this profile of our Latino community in Central Oregon informative and useful. We believe it provides some important baselines and brings to light both the assets our Latino families bring to the region and some of the gaps and challenges our families face. We look forward to talking with our Latino families, community partners, businesses and local, state and federal entities about how we can utilize these findings to ensure Latino members of our communities receive equitable levels of assistance and enjoy the same access to opportunities as everyone else.



## CONSIDERATIONS ON DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

While we have made every effort to provide the most accurate and current information on community indicators of well-being with available data, we encountered a number of challenges that we believe are worth sharing:

- Agencies and organizations collect data for their own programmatic purposes, sometimes for a limited window of time. Because of this, often we cannot analyze their data from a historical perspective.
- Data on some important topics is available at the state level by ethnic group, but not at the county or city levels. Readers should be slow to draw conclusions when data is unavailable, incomplete, or comes from different sources using mismatched metrics.
- In some areas, data is available for African Americans, Native Americans, and Asian/Pacific Islanders. However, because the Latino community in Central Oregon is the specific focus of our report, we have limited our scope to include only data for Latinos and the largest group categorized as white. It is not our intent to ignore or discount other groups of people whose members contribute to the cultural, social and economic life of our region. Rather, our objective is to focus sharply on how our Latino, and particularly our immigrant Latino, families are doing here in our tri-county region.
- We have attempted to strike a balance between providing an authoritative, data-driven report and one that is less academic and more accessible to the general reader.
- Much of our data comes from census information in the American Community Survey (ACS). The U.S. Census Bureau conducts a complete count of the population every 10 years. Less well-known is that each year it also surveys a sample of the overall population and generates interim data and reports. These provide estimates of changes that occur between each decennial census. The most recent ACS data available at this time is from 2018.
- Additional state, local, and private sources of information are cited directly in the text. Direct links to some data sources are available near the end of the report.
- We also interviewed a small number of Latinos in all three of our counties to listen to their experiences and views of life in Central Oregon. Their stories add depth and voice to the statistics.

If you represent or work within an agency or organization that collects data based on ethnicity and you believe it would make our report even richer, please reach out to us at the Latino Community Association. And if you are ready to engage in conversation about this report, please do the same. Enjoy!

# ELISA

## BUSINESS OWNER, REDMOND

For Elisa (not her real name) and her family, moving to Bend in 2008 opened new opportunities for work, and ultimately, a family-run business. When they arrived in Deschutes County, the family, originally from Mexico, found jobs, sold food at a swap meet, and saved money to rent a commercial property. But rents were too high in Bend, so the family opened their business in Redmond about three years ago.



But they miss the lively vibe in Bend, where they lived for seven years, Elisa said. Redmond is quieter with fewer places for entertainment.

“People are friendlier here,” she said, compared with the southern California community where the family used to live. Personally, she has not experienced discrimination in Central Oregon, but knows other Latinos who have gotten a cold shoulder from white residents.

Elisa enjoys the natural setting in Redmond, but thinks the school system that educated her three children should be more rigorous. “There’s a lot of freedom here, but not as much focus on studying,” she said.

Only one of her children has pursued a college education and all three young adults work with their parents, Elisa said. The high cost of college is frustrating and so is the cost of medical care.

Because she is a business owner, Elisa can’t qualify for lower cost care and can’t afford private health insurance.

Her dream for her family is to someday gain legal status for everyone and the opportunity to buy a home.



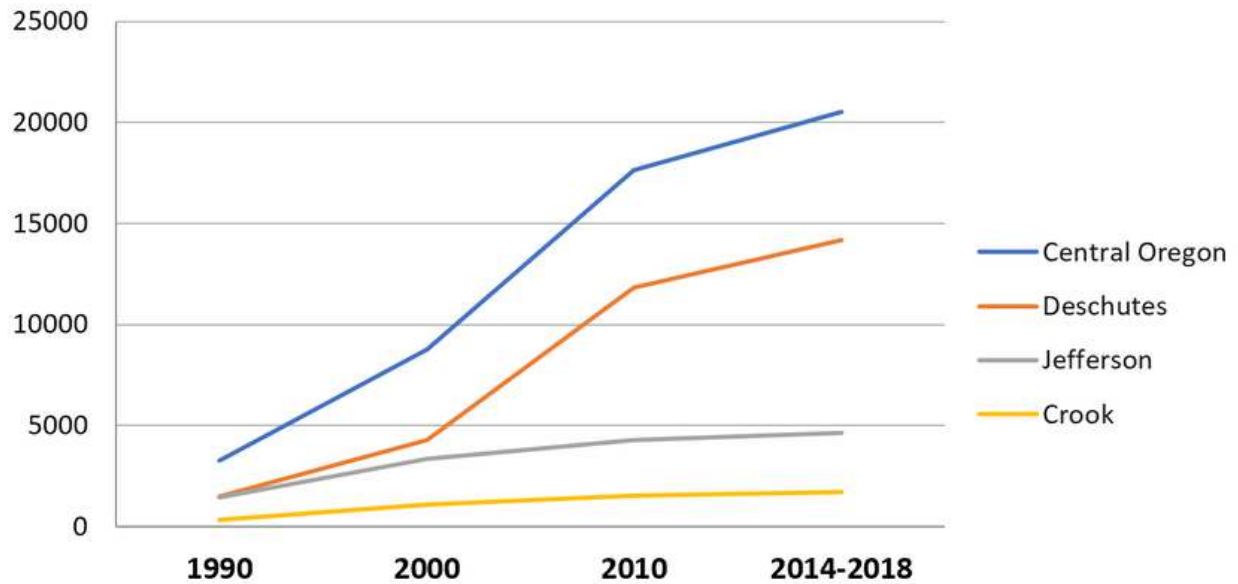
2019 Fourth of July Parade in Madras. Photo by Emily Chavez

## POPULATION PROFILE

Our Latino population in Central Oregon has grown dramatically over the past few decades from 3,267 in 1990 to an estimated 20,512 in 2018. As Chart 1 illustrates, most of the growth has happened in Deschutes County. It illustrates clearly that whereas there was once a similar number of Latinos in Jefferson and Deschutes counties back in 1990, today the number of Latinos living in Deschutes County exceeds the number in other counties. The continued growth in our Latino population, even during the national recession (2007-2009), strongly suggests a vital and stable community.

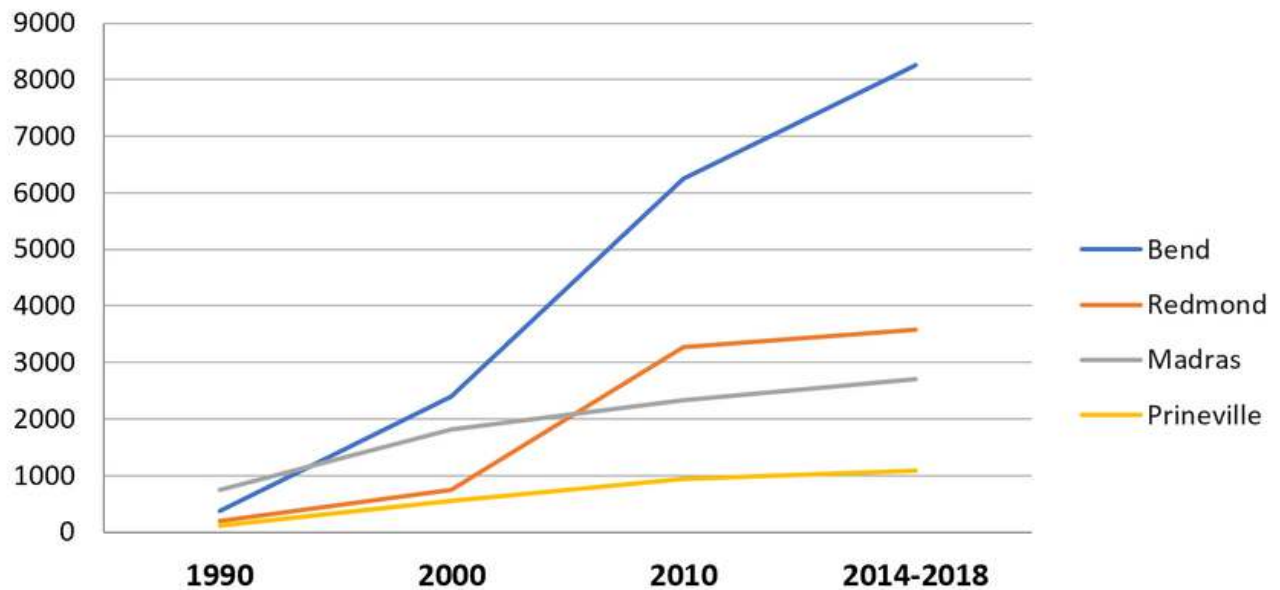
Chart 2 looks at the city level within each of our counties and clearly shows that a significantly greater number of Latinos have been settling in Bend than any other Central Oregon community.

**Chart 1**  
**Change in Central Oregon Latino Population by County**  
**from 1990 to 2018**



Source: US Census 1990, 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, Table DP-1; American Community Survey 2014-2018, Table DP05

**Chart 2**  
**Change in Central Oregon Latino Population by City**  
**from 1990 to 2018**



Source: US Census 1990, 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, Table DP-1; American Community Survey 2014-2018, Table DP05



According to the most recent estimates, (ACS 2014-2018), Latinos make up 9 percent of the population of Central Oregon. Nearly 85 percent of the region’s population is white. In contrast, ACS data from the same period shows that Latinos make up 12.8 percent of Oregon’s total population.

While Central Oregon functions as a cohesive region based on social, economic and environmental factors, each city and county differs in significant ways. For this reason, it is always useful to look at data on a county-by-county and city-by-city basis. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that in 2018, Latinos comprised 7.9 percent of the population of Deschutes County, 7.6 percent of Crook County, and 20 percent of Jefferson County.

Table 1, which aligns with Chart 1 above, shows the growth in the Latino population since the year 1990 for all three counties in real numbers and as a percentage of the overall population:

**Table 1**  
**Change in Central Oregon Latino Population by County 1990-2018**

	<u>1990</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2014-2018</u>	<u>%</u>
Deschutes	1,476	2.0	4,304	3.7	11,827	7.5	14,199	7.9
Jefferson	1,433	10.5	3,372	17.7	4,286	19.7	4,622	20
Crook	358	2.5	1,082	5.6	1,544	7.4	1,691	7.6
<b>Central Oregon</b>	<b>3,267</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>8,758</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>17,657</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>20,512</b>	<b>9.1</b>

*Source: US Census 1990 (Table CP-2-39) and 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, Table DP-1  
American Community Survey 2014-2018, Table DP05*

The data shows significant growth in the Latino community and our share of the overall population of Deschutes County between 1990 and the present. More modest growth occurred in Jefferson and Crook counties over the same period. Table 2, which aligns with Chart 2 above, shows the growth of the Latino population in Central Oregon’s larger cities.

These findings back up the conclusions of an unpublished analysis of population data that the Latino Community Association conducted in 2014. That analysis looked at the effect of the national recession on the Latino community in Central Oregon, and stated in part:

*“Most recent data available indicates that the Latino population in Central Oregon has remained constant despite recession-era contractions in key economic sectors in which large numbers of Latinos participate. In fact, as a percentage of the overall population, Latinos increased their share; however, this appears to be due more to drops in the overall population than to an influx of new Latino arrivals.”*



**Table 2**  
**Change in Latino Population by City 1990-2018**

	<u>1990</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2014-2018</u>	<u>%</u>
Bend	377	1.8	2,396	4.6	6,256	8.2	8,257	9.1
Redmond	188	2.6	739	5.5	3,275	12.5	3,577	12.2
Madras	740	21.5	1,815	35.7	2,330	38.5	2,700	40.5
Prineville	108	2.0	546	7.4	934	10.1	1,087	11.2

*Source: US Census 1990 (Table CP-2-39) and 2000 and 2010, Table DP-1  
American Community Survey 2014-2018, Table DP05*

Recent birth statistics show that Latinos will likely continue to increase in number and as a percentage of the regional population even without immigration. The percentages of births to Latina mothers exceed the proportion of Latinos in the overall population in all three counties. According to the Oregon Health Authority Center for Health Statistics (2015-2017):

- Crook County's Latino population is 7.6 percent and births to Latinas represent 10.7 percent of all births in the county.
- Deschutes County's Latino population is 7.9 percent and births to Latinas represent 13 percent of all births in the county.
- Jefferson County's Latino population is 19.8 percent and births to Latinas represent 25 percent of all births in the county.



Amiguitos summer youth program at Smith Rock 2018. Photo by Yalid Fuentes

## MEDIAN AGE OF LATINOS

The differences in median age between the white and Latino populations, both statewide and in Central Oregon, are striking. As Table 3 shows, statewide, the median age for Latinos is 25.6, compared to 43.6 for the white population. It shows an even greater difference in median age here in our region, especially in Jefferson County.

**Table 3**  
**Median Age by Ethnicity and County 2018**

<b>County</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Latino</b>
Crook	50.6	28.2
Deschutes	44.7	26.4
Jefferson	51.5	22.9
<b>Oregon</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>25.6</b>

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2018 5-year estimates  
Tables B01002H and B010021

*“A young and growing Latino population means that Latinos ... have the potential to make an impact on the next presidential election.”*

*Latinos in Oregon: Trends and Opportunities in a Changing State, Oregon Community Foundation, 2016*

Table 4 breaks down this same data based on gender. Here we see that our youngest group is Latina women in Jefferson County, which is also the community with the oldest white population with a median age of 53 for white women. No matter how you look at this data, it is crystal clear that our Latinos in Central Oregon, on average, are much younger than our white neighbors.

The youthfulness of our Latino population is a huge asset in terms of supplying prime-working-age people to a regional and state economy that currently struggles to fill hundreds of job openings. The youthfulness and higher birth rates predict that Latinos will comprise a growing share of the students enrolled in our schools.

**Table 4**  
**Median Age by Ethnicity, Gender and County 2018**

	<b>White Men</b>	<b>Latino Men</b>	<b>White Women</b>	<b>Latina Women</b>
Crook	50.1	27.8	50.9	28.3
Deschutes	43.6	26.2	45.7	26.5
Jefferson	50.1	23.4	53	22.4

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2014-2018  
Tables B01002H and B010021

The Oregon Community Foundation report referenced earlier states: “A young and growing Latino population means that Latinos play an increasingly important role in Oregon’s future. Most immediately, they have the potential to make an impact on the next presidential election (2016), and more long term, today’s Latino youth are tomorrow’s community members, workers and leaders.” (Latinos in Oregon: Trends and Opportunities in a Changing State, 2016, p. 27)

Table 5 illustrates another aspect of our youthfulness. Within our Latino community in Central Oregon, individuals under 18 years of age make up a significantly larger proportion of Latinos overall (36%-41%) than the youth under 18 in the overall population (20%-24%).

**Table 5**  
**Population under 18 in Central Oregon by Ethnicity and County 2018**

	<u>Crook County</u>	<u>Deschutes Co.</u>	<u>Jefferson Co.</u>
<b>Total population</b>	22,337	180,640	23,143
Under 18 population	4,438	37,537	5,463
Share of under 18 population	20%	21%	24%
<b>Latino population</b>	1,691	14,199	4,622
Under 18 Latino population	606	5,181	1,876
Share of under 18 Latino population	36%	36%	41%

*Source: US Census American Community Survey 2018 5-year estimates  
Tables DP05 and B05003*

## LATINOS BY NATIVITY AND COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Because immigration shapes our Latino community in Central Oregon, it is valuable to take a look at where our families came from—for most, just one or two generations ago. It might surprise some people that a significant majority of Oregon Latinos were born in the United States.

As seen in Table 6, Census estimates from 2014-2018 show that approximately three-fourths of Central Oregon Latino residents were born in the United States. Many of our families have mixed nativity within our households. In many cases, young or adult children were born in the U.S. to immigrant parents. The other common scenario is second-generation children born to first generation U.S.-born adult children of immigrant parents. It is typically our parents and grandparents who have roots in, or most strongly identify culturally with, their countries of origin.





**Table 6**  
**Place of Birth (Nativity) for Central Oregon Latinos by County**  
**2014-2018**

	<b>Crook Co.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Deschutes</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Jefferson</b>	<b>%</b>
Born in the US	1,295	77	10,718	75	3,401	74
Foreign-born	396	23	3,481	25	1,221	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,691</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,199</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,622</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: US Census, American Community Survey 2014-2018, Table B06004I*

While most of our Latino immigrants here in Central Oregon were born in Mexico, smaller percentages of Latinos living here were born in, or identify with, Central America, Puerto Rico, and South America, as shown in Table 7 below. These numbers include people born in Latin American countries, as well as people born in the U.S. who may or may not identify culturally with their family's country and/or culture of origin. We were unable to locate estimates for the undocumented population in Central Oregon, but the Pew Research Center provides a report for the whole state of Oregon. See Appendix.

A number of foreign-born Latinos have become U.S. citizens through the naturalization process. Others remain non-citizens, in large part because our current immigration laws do not allow them to adjust their status. These non-citizens are unable to cast a vote to choose their representatives or weigh in on local or state bond measures and referendums that impact their lives. There is also ample evidence generally that non-citizens are more likely to be uninsured, earn less income, achieve lower levels of education and experience less economic mobility. It is in the best interest of our communities to work to help all immigrants achieve citizenship.

**Table 7**  
**Family Origin of Central Oregon Latinos by County 2018**  
 (estimates by major regions)

	<b>Crook</b>	<b>Deschutes</b>	<b>Jefferson</b>
<b>All Latinos</b>	<b>1,691</b>	<b>14,199</b>	<b>4,622</b>
Mexico	1,441 (85%)	11,466 (81%)	4,175 (90%)
Puerto Rico	54	400	101
Cuba	6	207	0
Dominican Republic	0	12	0
Central America	78	1,040	58
South America	0	476	64
Other	112	598	224

*Source: U.S. Census ACS 2014-2018, Table B03001*

**Table 8**  
**Central Oregonians born in Latin America by Citizenship 2014-2018**

	<b>Crook</b>	<b>Deschutes</b>	<b>Jefferson</b>
Foreign-born	396	3,707	1,223
Naturalized U.S. citizen	11%	30%	38%
Not a U.S. citizen	89%	70%	62%

Source: U.S. Census, ACS 2014-2018, Table B05002

\*These figures include non-Latinos born in Latin America

*The figures in Tables 8 and 9 come from a small sample of the foreign-born population and have wide margins of error. Please interpret as estimates, not exact figures. Latinos represent the largest group of foreign-born residents in Central Oregon, but immigrants from other continents also live in Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties.*

**Table 9**  
**Foreign-born Residents of Central Oregon by Continent of Origin 2018**  
 (estimates by major regions)

	<b>Crook Co.</b>		<b>Deschutes</b>		<b>Jefferson</b>	
<b>Total population</b>	<b>22,337</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>180,640</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>23,143</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Total foreign-born</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>8,120</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>1,483</b>	<b>6.4</b>
Latin America	396	64.6	3,707	45.7	1,223	82.5
Europe	44	7.2	1,667	20.5	65	4.4
Asia	82	13.4	1,833	22.6	115	7.8
North America	41	6.7	673	8.3	71	4.8
Oceania	35	5.7	143	1.8	2	0.1
Africa	15	2.4	97	0.2	7	0.5

Source: U.S. Census, ACS 2014-2018, Table B05002

\*Continent % is share of all foreign-born living in each county from that continent.

## POPULATION SUMMARY

- Latinos make up about 9 percent of the total population in Central Oregon
- Latinos are a much younger population than the white population
- Our Latino population has a higher proportion of youth under 18
- Three-fourths of Central Oregon Latinos were born in the United States
- The majority of Central Oregon Latinos trace their family heritage to Mexico



El Salvador booth at Latino Fest 2018. Photo: Jason Blackman



# ***LUIS ALBERTO ROBLES***

## ***WAITER, REDMOND***

Luis Alberto Robles is an attorney and high school teacher from Mexico who served as mayor of his home town of Cuautla, Jalisco, from 2012 to 2015.

But because the town of some 2,500 people has few opportunities, most of his family has relocated to Redmond and Bend to work in the restaurant business, he said.



In 2014, Luis helped negotiate a sister city relationship between Cuautla and Redmond, “because I want to help my community,” he said.

Luis visited Central Oregon frequently, but since he moved to Redmond in 2017, the language barrier makes it difficult to pursue a career in community service, he said. For two semesters, he taught a Spanish-language GED preparation class for High Desert Educational Service District and enjoyed helping Latinos advance their education.

Now that class has moved to Central Oregon Community College. Luis enrolled in English classes through the Latino Community Association and waits on tables at Mazatlan Restaurant.

As a city, Redmond is “well-organized and secure, and has a vision for its growth,” Luis said. “People are friendly and there are jobs here.”

Because he lives with family members, Luis did not experience the frustration of finding housing in Redmond’s tight market, and he earns enough to live on, he said. But the culture in Central Oregon is a huge change for him.

“I have to face the problem of language and adapt to the rhythm of life here,” he said.

Luis hopes to study more about North American laws, language, culture, and social development, and perhaps teach Spanish to English speakers.

## INCOME AND OTHER ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Because of important differences in the type and level of economic activity across Central Oregon, data on economic indicators is more useful at a county level. We have summarized data in the two tables below, contrasting ACS data for the period straddling the national recession and recovery, 2008-2012, and the most recent period, 2014-2018.

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND POVERTY

In 2018, the median household income for Latinos in Oregon was \$48,447, compared to \$61,206 for white households, based on estimates from the 2014-2018 ACS. Approximately 22 percent earned an income below the poverty level, an improvement over 28 percent in 2014.

In Central Oregon, median household income for our Latino families exceeds that for Latinos statewide in Deschutes County. With the exception of Crook County, the poverty rate in our other counties has dropped significantly to well below that for Latinos statewide. However, the rates of poverty among Latinos across our region are still well above those of our white counterparts. Crook County is a clear area of concern with flat growth in median household income and an alarming 30 percent poverty rate.

**Table 10**  
**Income and Other Economic Indicators by County 2008-2018**

	Crook		Deschutes		Jefferson	
	2008-2012	2014-2018	2008-2012	2014-2018	2008-2012	2014-2018
<b>Median Household Income</b>						
White	\$40,364	\$45,418	\$51,708	\$64,526	\$43,982	\$53,853
Latino	\$39,904	\$40,859	\$40,833	\$53,189	\$37,196	\$48,750
<b>Per Capita Income</b>						
White	\$21,072	\$26,451	\$28,557	\$36,078	\$23,760	\$27,552
Latino	\$12,879	\$15,053	\$13,969	\$17,267	\$11,639	\$15,795
<b>Poverty Rates</b>						
White	17%	13%	13%	10%	15%	15%
Latino	20%	30%	31%	15%	27%	19%

Source: US Census, American Community Survey 2008-2012 and 2014-2018

## EMPLOYMENT

Central Oregon data on labor force participation is shown in Table 11 below. Latinos comprise a relatively small share of the population, but they participate in the workforce at higher percentages than white residents. One reason is the drastic difference in median age: a higher percentage of Latinos are of typical working age than white residents. Data compares the Great Recession and recovery years (2008-2012) with the most recent ACS period (2014-2018).

The labor force participation rate includes both employed individuals and those currently looking for work. The unemployment rate describes those without a job who sought work within the last four weeks.

**Table 11**  
**Key Employment Indicators by County 2008-2018**

	Crook		Deschutes		Jefferson	
	2008-2012	2014-2018	2008-2012	2014-2018	2008-2012	2014-2018
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>						
White	54%	52%	63%	62%	54%	45%
Latino	63%	66%	78%	78%	70%	73%
<b>Unemployment</b>						
White	17%	9%	12%	5%	15%	7%
Latino	17%	10%	12%	7%	15%	6%

*Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2008-2012 and 2014-2018, Table S2301*

In a 2019 snapshot of Central Oregon employment by sector, the Oregon Employment Department (OED) reports that Latinos filled an annual average of 8,412 jobs covered by the state's unemployment insurance system in Central Oregon. Some individuals in this count may have worked more than one job. Many Latinos in the workforce, but not all, were employed in the fields shown in Table 12.



Workers at McPheeters Nursery in Culver. Photo by Denise Holley

**Table 12**  
**Annual Average Employment for Latinos in Central Oregon by Sector 2019**

<u>Economic Sector</u>	<u># Employed</u>
Accommodation and Food Services	1,765
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,226
Retail Trade	1,116
Manufacturing	1,038
Construction	751
Administrative, Support, Waste Management & Remediation Svcs	673
Other Services (except Public Administration)	318
Public Administration	293
Educational Services	272
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	234
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	224
Wholesale Trade	195
Finance and Insurance	152
Information	133
Utilities	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,412</b>

*\*Excludes jobs not covered by unemployment insurance*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2019*

*(Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties)*

Many jobs in agriculture are seasonal and not covered by unemployment insurance, and would not be counted in Table 12. OED produces estimates of people employed in agriculture, but these figures do not designate ethnic background and include workers in offices and plants. So we are showing estimates of migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFW) from a 2018 survey by the Oregon State University Extension Service. Since the overwhelming majority of Oregon farm workers are Latinos, these figures estimate the number who work in seasonal agriculture.

**Table 13**  
**Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers**  
**in Central Oregon by County 2018**

<u>County</u>	<u>Workers</u>
Deschutes	87
Jefferson	469
Crook	146

*Source: Estimates of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in Agriculture 2018, Oregon State University Extension Service*

Both sets of employment-by-sector figures in Tables 12 and 13 reflect the areas of our regional economy where Latino workers have historically contributed, and in which they still predominantly work.



However, we must shine a light on the fact that many more Latinos are working in administrative and technical positions at government agencies, nonprofits, schools, and health centers now than 10 years ago. Though anecdotal, this is an important and necessary evolution in our communities that we ought to document and raise up.

## GROWTH OF LATINO EMPLOYMENT IN CENTRAL OREGON

Table 14 below shows that, from 1993 to 2018, Latino employment in Central Oregon (in jobs covered by unemployment insurance) grew by nearly five times, as reported by the Oregon Employment Department in August 2019. The number of jobs held by Latinos increased by 397 percent, while the number of jobs held by non-Latinos increased by 103 percent. Across our region, Deschutes County experienced the most profound growth in Latino employment (602%) over the 25-year period.

**Table 14**  
**Growth of Latino Employment in Central Oregon 1993-2018**  
(employed in jobs covered by unemployment insurance)

	1993			2018			1993-2018	
	Total Employment	Latino Employment	Latino % of Total	Total Employment	Latino Employment	Latino % of Total	Total % Increase	Latino % Increase
Oregon	1,262,945	58,720	4.6	1,875,003	224,596	12.0	48%	282%
Central Oregon	45,081	1,718	3.8	91,334	8,533	9.3	103%	397%
Crook	5,304	169	3.2	5,324	441	8.3	0%	161%
Deschutes	34,418	969	2.8	79,696	6,807	8.5	132%	602%
Jefferson	5,359	580	10.8	6,314	1,285	20.4	18%	122%

Source: Oregon Employment Department, U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators, compiled August 2019

## LATINO-OWNED BUSINESSES

Missing from these figures are Latinos who work in their own small businesses, such as shops, food trucks, and landscaping, often with family members. Since cities and counties do not ask business license applicants for their ethnic background, the number of these businesses is difficult to estimate.

This year, the Census Bureau released the American Business Survey for 2017. It estimates that Deschutes County has 170 Latino-owned businesses that employ other people, out of 6,651 employer businesses in Deschutes County. This does not include figures for non-employer businesses (sole proprietorships), according to Michael Meyers, an economist with the state agency Business Oregon. The report contains no estimates for Crook or Jefferson counties. The link for the report is: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs/data/tables.html>





Isabel Castillo owns El Amigazo food truck in Redmond. Photo by Denise Holley

## ECONOMIC SUMMARY

- Latinos in Central Oregon participate in the workforce at higher rates than white residents
- Latino employment as a share of all employment has nearly tripled in the past 25 years
- Latinos are moving into professional and technical jobs at an increasing rate
- Latinos earn less, on average, than white residents
- Latinos experience higher rates of poverty
- Most Central Oregon farm workers are Latinos and many do not receive unemployment benefits

# LORENA BARRERA

## FARM WORKER, CULVER

Lorena Barrera enjoys working outdoors, even though her work in the fields is physically demanding, she said. “I like to see the plants growing.”

In late September, Lorena was harvesting potatoes and expected to finish her work season in October. Fortunately, her husband works most of the year, but the family is on a tighter budget through the winter, she said.



The couple bought a modest home in Culver for their family with three children, Lorena said. “We are trying to improve ourselves and have a better life.”

But they don’t earn enough to pay for the college education their daughter, Andrea, desires, Lorena said. The high school graduate excels in drama and wants to study theater at a college in southern California.

In 2019, the family visited the school. “It’s very expensive,” Lorena said.

Andrea volunteers with the Latino Community Association and helped with the food distribution in Madras this summer. She has applied for federal student aid. Currently she is working in the fields with her mother and saving her earnings.

“She is striving for her dream,” Lorena said.

A native of Michoacán, Mexico, she came to Los Angeles in 1996, but soon moved to Culver where her seven brothers worked in agriculture, she said. At first, she cared for their children, but then joined them in the carrot fields in 2000.

More Central Oregon growers are cultivating hemp, a lucrative crop, but Lorena doesn’t like the smell and the changes she thinks the crop will bring, she said. “It’s sad because the garlic is going away. Soon we won’t see vegetables, only hemp.”

Lorena treasures her family and likes to set up karaoke and sing her heart out with her family members.

# ANTONIO

## CONSTRUCTION & LANDSCAPE WORKER, REDMOND

Antonio (not his real name) has seen both the beautiful and ugly sides of Central Oregon. A native of Mexico, he lived in Los Angeles and then came to Redmond more than 10 years ago to join his brother, he said.



With his skills in construction and landscaping, Antonio finds short-term work with homeowners. He also volunteers with a nonprofit organization.

***“The city is very clean. There are no problems with gangs.”***

***Antonio, Redmond resident***

But he doesn't have a car and relies on a bicycle, so sometimes it's a challenge to get to the jobs, he said. He speaks with pride about the landscaping work he did on the playfields at Ridgeview High School and the trees he helped plant in Centennial Park.

“The city is very clean,” Antonio said about Redmond. “There are no problems with gangs.”

Once in a while he encounters an angry person who shouts at him, “Go back to Mexico!” But most white residents he meets treat him well, he said. His goals for the future include starting a family of his own.

## HEALTH

In this section, we examine access to health care for Latinos in Central Oregon and how Latinos appear to be doing based on key indicators for physical and mental/emotional health. Gaps in both statewide and regional data on health indicators make it difficult to compare the health issues facing our Latinos in Central Oregon with Latinos statewide.

### ACCESSING HEALTH CARE

Statewide, nearly one third of Oregon Latino adults lacked health insurance in 2014, according to the Oregon Community Foundation (2016) citing census data from 2014. In Central Oregon at that time, the estimated number of uninsured Latinos ranged from 8.7 percent in Crook County to 39.6 percent in Deschutes County. Fortunately, the Affordable Care Act was passed in 2014. As a result, in 2018, the picture looked better in Central Oregon, although the number of uninsured Latinos is still too high and there was a pronounced gap in coverage between Latino and white residents.



Kemple Clinic dental hygienist with boy at LCA clinic in Bend.

Paying for health care can be difficult for many Latinos in Central Oregon. If they work in jobs that do not offer health insurance or are self-employed, they may earn too much to qualify for Medicaid (Oregon Health Plan or OHP). Some may be able to buy insurance on the marketplace created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA). However, those who lack citizenship or permanent residency do not qualify for the ACA program or for OHP (except on an emergency basis).

Latinos who do not qualify for state or federal insurance programs turn to non-profit clinics for their health care. Mosaic Medical in all three Central Oregon counties will see patients on a sliding-scale fee basis. Latinos currently make up nearly 20 percent of Mosaic Medical's 21,000+ patients across all three counties.

**Table 15**  
**Percentage of Central Oregonians Lacking Health Insurance**  
**by Ethnicity and County 2014-2018**

<b>County</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Latino</b>
Crook	7.9%	13.2%
Deschutes	8.3%	20.3%
Jefferson	8.3%	16.5%

*Source: U.S. Census ACS 2014-2018, accessed from Communities Reporter Tool, Jan. 29, 2020.*

In Bend, a non-profit clinic operated by Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) provides mostly free care to uninsured adults from throughout the tri-county area. More than 80 percent of VIM's 1,000+ patients are Latino immigrants. To access VIM's services, patients in Crook and Jefferson counties must drive to Bend. This limits access to care and comes at a significant cost in transportation and time, including lost wages for some.

## PHYSICAL HEALTH INDICATORS: LIFE EXPECTANCY

Life expectancy statewide for Latinos averages 85.1 years, while white residents have an average life expectancy of 79.6 years. The average life expectancy for Central Oregon Latinos is slightly less, at 84.6 years (Oregon Public Health Assessment Tool, OPHAT).

**Table 16**

Life expectancy (in years) at birth by race and ethnicity, OPHAT, 2017					
	Oregon	Crook	Deschutes	Jefferson	Central Oregon
<b>Total</b>	79.6	78.9	81.3	78.7	80.7
<b>American Indian/Alaska Native</b>	77.4	--	76.0	69.8	72.0
<b>Non-Hispanic</b>					
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	85.1	--	84.6	81.9	84.6
<b>White Non-Hispanic</b>	79.6	79.3	81.5	80.0	81.1
	Significantly lower than geography-specific total life expectancy				
	Significantly higher than geography-specific total life expectancy				

## CANCER MORTALITY RATE

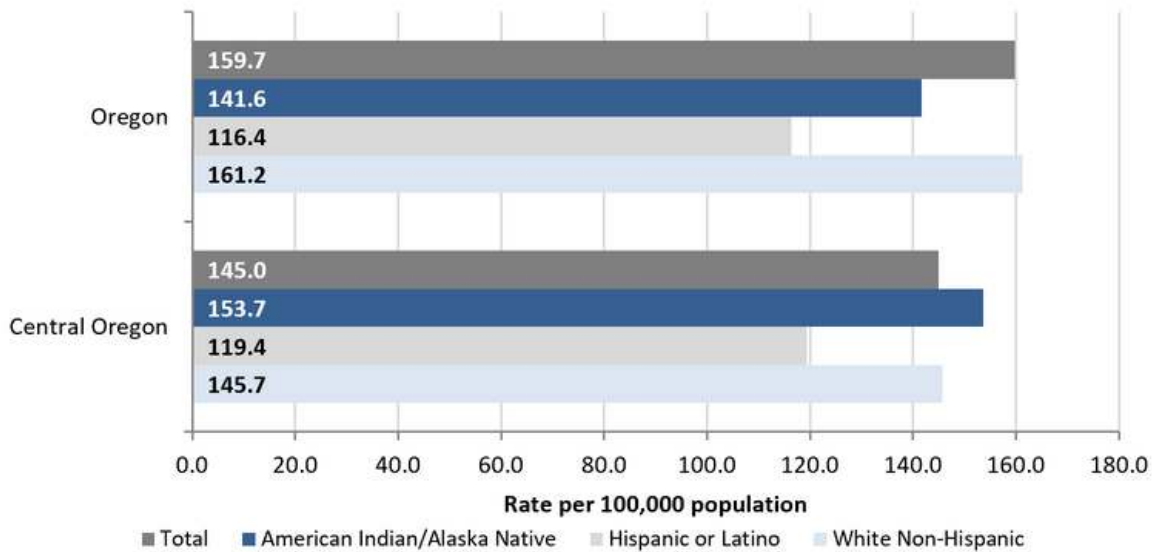
The statewide average (for the total population) for cancer mortality is 159.7 per 100,000 residents. Latinos fare better in this metric, posting 116.4 cancer deaths per 100,000 population in Oregon, and 119.4 in Central Oregon. The lower rate for Latinos statewide could reflect more health care resources in the larger population centers of the Willamette Valley.

## PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

Significantly fewer Latinos in Oregon, and in Central Oregon, live with disabilities than white residents. While 15.9 percent of white Oregonians have disabilities, only 8.7 percent of Latinos experience this challenge. On a county-by-county basis, the pattern is similar.



**Table 17**  
**Age-adjusted cancer mortality rate per 100,000 population by race and ethnicity,**  
**OPHAT, 2013-2017**



\*\*Significantly lower than total rate

**Table 18**

Percent of the population in Oregon and Central Oregon counties living with a disability, ACS 5-year estimates, 2011-2015				
	Oregon	Crook	Deschutes	Jefferson
Percent of total, non-institutionalized population with a disability	14.7%	21.6%	12.8%	16.5%
Percent with a disability, by ethnicity/race				
White, non-Hispanic	15.9%	22.6%	13.5%	20.9%
Hispanic (of any race)	8.7%	9.8%	6.3%	7.5%

## FERTILITY AND BIRTH STATISTICS

When higher fertility rates, and particularly births among teen mothers, are recorded among people of color, this information can become the impetus for stereotyping and judgment by the majority culture. We certainly do not see it this way. However, it is an important indicator to track. As America's rate of fertility levels off or declines, and the population ages and retires, communities with higher fertility rates can replace the workers who are leaving the labor market. This can make a community stronger if we embrace and care for young mothers and their children. But higher fertility rates might, to some degree, reflect a higher number of unintended pregnancies. This might point to limitations on reproductive freedom or less access to health care for Latina women. The table below contrasts fertility rates between white and Latina women statewide and in Central Oregon.

Table 19

**Fertility rate per 1,000 women aged 15-44 by race and ethnicity, Central Oregon and Oregon, OPHAT, 2016-2017.**

	American Indian or Alaska Native, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic or Latino	White, Non-Hispanic
Crook	Unreliable estimate	79.1	71.1
Deschutes	32.1	69.6	52.7
Jefferson	77.4	70.4	65.4
Oregon	49.9	66.7	52.6

Crook County estimate for American Indian or Alaska Natives is statistically unreliable due to a small number of individuals in this category

Significantly higher than Oregon race- or ethnicity-specific rate

Significantly lower than Oregon race- or ethnicity-specific rate

Teen pregnancy, as well as actual births to teen and adult mothers, provides additional perspective. Among Latinas statewide, teen pregnancy (for ages 15-17) is more than double the rate for white teens. In Central Oregon, teen pregnancy in Deschutes County among Latinas is slightly below the statewide average for Latinas. In Crook and Jefferson counties, however, the rate is significantly higher than the statewide average for Latinas.

Table 20

**Pregnancy rates for teens age 15-17 years and young adults 18-19 years per 1,000 females, by race/ethnicity, Central Oregon and Oregon, OPHAT (2015-2017)**

	Age 15-17			Age 18-19		
	American Indian or Alaska Native, NH	Hispanic	White NH	American Indian or Alaska Native, NH	Hispanic	White NH
Crook	-	38.7	13.9	-	98.8	78.4
Deschutes	10.1	15.1	7.1	0.0	59.8	39.5
Jefferson	9.4	21.4	10.7	99.4	92.1	53.0
Oregon	13.5	16.7	7.7	56.0	65.1	38.6

Significantly higher than Oregon rate for the specified age group and race/ethnicity group

Although births to Latina mothers in Central Oregon represented only a fraction of the total births between 2015 and 2017, Latinas had higher birth rates than white women during this three-year period. Latinas appeared to get adequate prenatal care at rates similar to white women: more than 90 percent of mothers in both groups visited a medical provider during pregnancy.

**Table 21**  
**Births by Mother's Ethnicity 2015-2017**

	<b>Crook</b>		<b>Deschutes</b>		<b>Jefferson</b>	
<b>Total births</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>5,380</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>%</b>
White mothers	613	85	4,350	81	372	45
Latina mothers	77	11	706	13	206	25
					Native Amer 24%	
<b>Teen births, ages 15-19</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>%</b>
White mothers	46	79	125	66	16	25
Latina mothers	10	17	48	25	24	38
<b>Adequate prenatal care</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>5,174</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>%</b>
White mothers	576	94	4,190	96	345	93
Latina mothers	74	96	679	96	187	91

Source: Oregon Health Authority Center for Health Statistics for 3-year period 2015-2017

## OTHER PHYSICAL HEALTH INDICATORS

Although it represents a small data set, figures collected by Mosaic Medical clinics and Volunteers in Medicine add useful elements to the overall health picture for Latinos in Central Oregon.

In 2017, Mosaic reported:

- Spanish-speaking Latinos access team-based care (nutritionist, psychologist or pharmacist) less often than other groups.
- Spanish-speakers are more often diagnosed with obesity (18%) and diabetes (14%) than with depression (8.4%) and anxiety (5%). Non-Latinos are diagnosed more often with behavioral health issues.
- Among all Latino patients, adult females are most often diagnosed with depression (15.7%)
- Top diagnoses among Mosaic Medical's Latino patients in 2017 included:
- Hypertension – 28.21 percent of patients, up from 24.73 percent in 2015
- Diabetes – 12.11 percent of patients, up from 9.98 percent in 2015
- Asthma – 7.3 percent

At Volunteers in Medicine Clinic of the Cascades, where in 2017-2018 eighty-three percent of their patients were Latino immigrants, the top diagnoses were:

- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- High cholesterol

## EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH INDICATORS

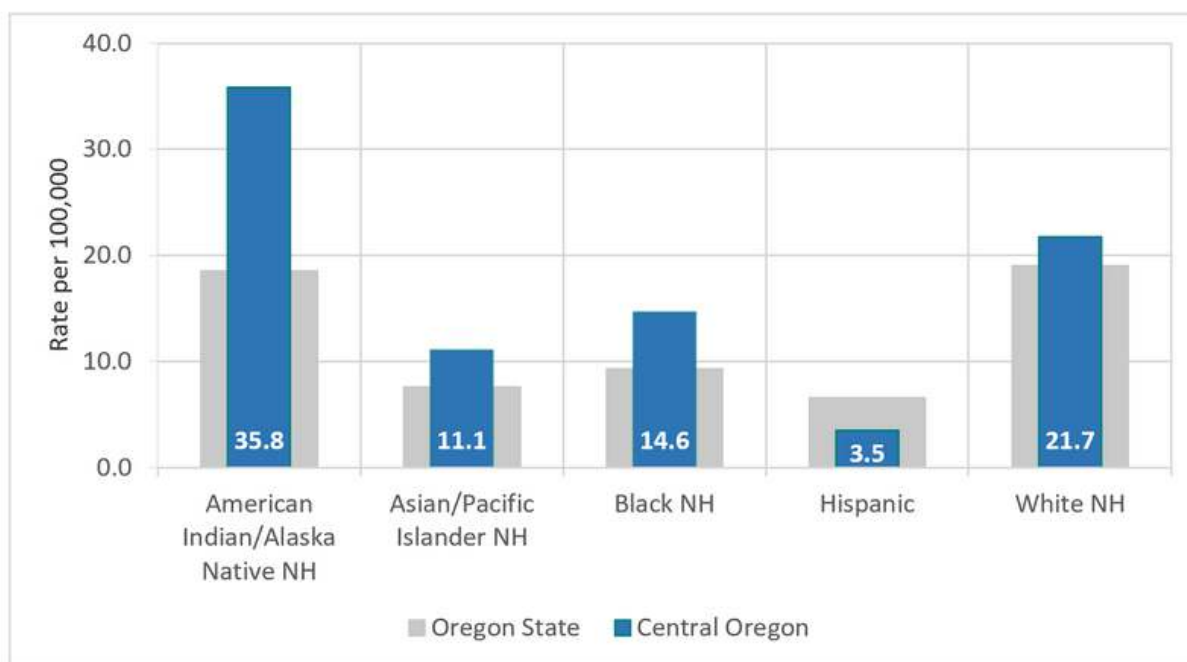
Metrics on emotional and mental health for the Latino community, at the statewide and regional scale, are not as plentiful as physical health indicators. Given the social and economic stresses Latinos experience, especially immigrants, it is critical to gather and analyze additional data in this area. Cultural norms in the Latino community might result in significant under-reporting of emotional and mental health problems.

## SUICIDE MORTALITY

According to available statewide information (OPHAT 2008-2017), the suicide rate among Latinos is dramatically lower than that of any other group, including whites, African-Americans, Native Americans and Asians/Pacific Islanders.

Table 22 shows the age-adjusted suicide mortality rate per 100,000 people is 3.5 among Latinos. This is significantly lower than the 21.7 per 100,000 people recorded for white residents.

**Table 22**  
**Age-adjusted suicide mortality rate per 100,000 population by race/ethnicity,**  
**Central Oregon and Oregon, OPHAT, 2008-2017**





## LATINO EMOTIONAL HEALTH WORK GROUP

In fall 2017, the Latino Community Association, together with multiple community partners, formed a Latino Emotional Health Work Group. They gathered data and circulated a brief report of their review of emotional health among Latinos living in Central Oregon, especially among Latino youth. The group analyzed three primary data sets and co-developed a survey to help gauge how our Latino parents are feeling following the 2016 presidential campaign and election. Here are some of the findings from this work group:

### ***Deschutes County School Wellness/Behavioral Risk Factors (2014 Student Wellness Survey)***

- The percent of Hispanic students surveyed who had seriously considered suicide in the past year was 5% higher (at 17.6%) than that of non-Hispanics.
- The percent of Hispanic students surveyed who had attempted suicide in the past year was 5% higher (at 10.5%) than that of non-Hispanics.
- The percent of Hispanic students in Deschutes County who reported being harassed at school in the past 30 days because of their race or ethnicity was almost 17% higher (at 23.6%) than non-Hispanics.



Zavier Borja founded a Central Oregon chapter of Latino Outdoors. Photo by Denise Holley

Although rates of actual suicide are lower among Latinos statewide, according to OPHAT, this survey points to a higher rate of thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts among this group of students in Deschutes County. We find that alarming.

One of the Work Group participants, Katie Hayden-Lewis, PhD, a licensed mental health professional in Bend, summarized this aspect of the group's findings:

"We clearly have a problem." She noted that Latino students experience more thoughts of death by suicide or attempts, and higher rates of bullying or harassment than their non-Latino counterparts. "This suggests there needs to be an assertive public health strategy to reduce these incidents and increase access to help. The bullying/harassment has got to be addressed in the school system."

Another source of data on emotional and mental health came from PacificSource, an insurance provider and Central Oregon's Coordinated Care Organization (CCO), which administers Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid) benefits in our region. Here are some of their findings:

## ***PacificSource Comparison of Behavioral Health Utilization Rates Central OR CCO Medicaid Recipients, Age 0 to 64 years, 2014-2016***

Hispanic/Latino members used behavioral health services at a lower rate per member per year than non-Hispanic/Latino members, both adults and children.

- Hispanic/Latino members used behavioral health services at a lower rate per member per year than non-Hispanic/Latino members, both adults and children.
- Even when comparing only members identified as having a severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI) or substance use disorder (SUD), utilization rates were lower among Hispanics/Latinos and Spanish-speaking members.
- If the actual need for behavioral health services in the Spanish-speaking population is not any lower than the need among English speaking members, this could suggest an unmet need in the population.
- The number of Spanish-speaking adults and children flagged as having Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI) was very small (n<35)

### **SURVEYING THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR LATINO FAMILIES**

As mentioned previously, following the 2016 presidential campaign and national elections, the Latino Community Association (LCA) called together a handful of community partners, including specialists in behavioral and mental health, to form the Latino Emotional Health Work Group. We discussed how we believe our Latino families, especially immigrant families, were doing on an emotional level. The well-being of our school-age children and youth of color from immigrant households were of special interest and concern. We also explored strategies to make sure our Latino families feel welcome and supported here in Central Oregon.

We began sharing the challenges we were hearing family members express, both in client service settings and among group members, colleagues and neighbors. We then asked work group members to share what is already being done to support emotional health in our communities. We quickly realized we needed to gather whatever data was available to help us understand all that we could before talking about possible solutions. The problem was that not much data was available specific to Latinos, and even less specific to immigrants.

So, we developed a survey titled ¿Cómo le va? (How are you doing?). This instrument was culturally adapted from the well-established PHQ-9 Quick Depression Assessment and the GADQ Generalized Anxiety Disorder questionnaires for measuring depression, anxiety and worry. We kept it brief with just ten questions. The questions ranged from feelings about oneself to feelings toward others and one's sense of feeling welcome, as well as whether or not their children had expressed any negative experiences at school. Here are our findings from the 107 responses we received, primarily from LCA walk-in clients at our three offices in Bend, Redmond and Madras.

**Positive and encouraging signs:**

The first three questions ask about the respondent's emotional state and attitude toward herself/himself using a scale from "Very positive" to "Very negative."

- Between 80% and 90% of respondents said they felt positive or very positive emotionally. The highest feeling of well-being was toward their family.
- 64% said their feelings toward strangers was positive or very positive.

**Questions 5-10 ask to what degree the phrases in each question are true in terms of how s/he feels using a scale from "Very true" to "Not at all true."**

- 80% of respondents answered True or Very True to feeling welcome in Central Oregon. Only 5% said Not at all True.
- 76% said they believe their children feel welcome.
- 76% responded that they feel hopeful they will have a fabulous future here.

**Concerns:**

- 35% of respondents said their feelings toward strangers was something other than positive, but the majority selected "neutral" as opposed to negative.
- 48% said their children have commented that they feel bad because of the attitudes or comments of classmates.
- 60% said they spend a majority of their time worrying.

The main worries that respondents expressed in writing included:

- Immigration status and the possibility of deportation
- Economy, finances, work
- Driver's license (not being able to obtain one in Oregon)
- Bullying and racism
- Kids always being on their phones/electronic devices

Our Latino families, especially those headed by immigrant parents, are generally not accustomed to talking about personal or family matters with anyone outside their immediate family and closest friends. Mental health providers, as well as our Medicaid insurer, PacificSource, report very little use of their services by Latinos. We hope this is because there is not much need, but we highly recommend that our community partners and families focus attention on determining if there are barriers blocking Latinos from accessing these services.

## HEALTH SUMMARY

- Latinos have a slightly longer life expectancy than white residents
- Latinos have a lower mortality rate from cancer than white residents
- Fewer Latinos than white residents have health insurance
- Latinos are more likely to rely on community clinics such as Mosaic Medical and Volunteers in Medicine
- Those clinics report the top diagnoses among Latinos as hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol and asthma
- Latinas have higher pregnancy (and teen pregnancy) rates and birth rates than white women
- Latinos have a lower suicide mortality than other groups and have fewer diagnosed cases of mental illness



Father and son at LCA picnic in Redmond. Photo by Denise Holley



# BLANCA REYNOSO

## OWNER OF REYNOSO JEWELRY, MADRAS

The sign indicates a jewelry store, but when you step inside Reynoso Jewelry, you see frilly dresses, shirts and sweatshirts hanging from the ceiling, clothing racks, and cupboards full of shoes. The jewelry counter occupies a corner near the front and customers often stop by to pay a utility bill or wire money to Mexico.



Blanca Reynoso and her husband, Israel Reynoso, opened their business in 1997, she said. “We started with a little bit of everything.”

A native of the state of Guerrero, Mexico, Blanca came to Madras from southern California in the 1980s and started second grade, she said. Her mother had family here and found work in agriculture.

When she was older, Blanca met her husband and, over the years, gave birth to four daughters. She never finished high school, because both had to work to support their growing family, but she earned her GED.

“Sometimes life isn’t fair, because we stopped studying and ended up with low salaries,” Blanca said. “Because of our poverty, we didn’t make it to college.”

Now Israel works in his own landscaping, construction, heating and cooling business while Blanca tends the store. Their two incomes allow them to give their daughters the education they missed. The two oldest daughters earned bachelor’s degrees, the third is studying for her master’s degree in psychology, and the youngest has just started high school, Blanca said with pride.

“My major goal is to finish putting my last daughter through school, something I wasn’t able to do,” she said. But she and her husband also want to build a food cart area on their property.

Because of their business income, Blanca and her husband earn too much for care under the Oregon Health Plan, but find that private health insurance is too expensive, she said. “We’re right in that middle.”

Blanca served on the Madras Chamber of Commerce board in the past, and currently serves on the Madras Redevelopment Commission. The No. 1 problem in her city is lack of housing, and the commission is looking into building homes on the outskirts of Madras, she said. “There are so many people who don’t have a place to live.”

## EDUCATION

Education is an area where disparities between majority and minority groups are sometimes glaring and persistent. Fortunately, the State Department of Education and Central Oregon school districts provide current information to help us understand the status of Latino students in the region, their recent progress and continued challenges. The Oregon Community Foundation (2016) report stated:

*“Academic success among Oregon Latinos can be measured in several ways. For the youngest students, school readiness can determine future achievement. For students in elementary, middle and high schools, test scores, attendance and credit accumulation can help predict whether Latinos graduate from high school. Finally, among adults, high school completion and further educational attainment play large roles in successful futures. While Latino students have made some gains in these areas, the achievement gap persists, starting in early childhood and culminating in fewer Latinos receiving postsecondary degrees.”*

We will explore this achievement gap throughout this section, comparing differences between Oregon Latinos generally, and our Latinos residing in Central Oregon.



La Clase de Lectura en Español at Vern Patrick Elementary School, Redmond, 2010.



Raices after-school Spanish literacy class, Jewell Elementary, Bend 2018.

## READINESS TO LEARN

When bright-eyed kindergartners begin their new life at school, their teachers (or a testing specialist) observe each student for signs that they are ready to learn. The test, called the Oregon Kindergarten Assessment, measures early literacy, early math, and a child's approach to learning. Can the child follow directions and complete tasks without prodding from adults (self-regulation)? Does the child interact well with other children and adults and express thoughts and feelings in a considerate way (interpersonal skills)? Together, these scores represent a child's learning approach, which is measured on a scale of 1 to 5.

To gauge early math skills, the teacher or tester shows the child pictures of shapes and asks them to count and add small numbers. The test contains 16 questions. Then the teacher shows pictures of English letters and asks the child to identify the letter and its sound. This measure of early literacy is scored from 1 to 26 in each category.

In Central Oregon, Latino kindergartners closely match their white peers in self-regulation, interpersonal skills, and learning approach. Moreover, their performance roughly aligns with statewide averages. However, when it comes to recognizing letters of the English alphabet and letter sounds, Latinos trail behind white kindergartners statewide, and also score lower on early math readiness. This translates into a rougher ride through elementary school as these children strive to learn basic skills that they need to master subjects in middle and high school.



**Table 23**  
**Central Oregon Kindergarten Assessment 2018-2019**

SCHOOL DISTRICT	Bend-LaPine		Crook Co.		Culver		Jefferson Co.		Redmond		Oregon
	White	Latino	White	Latino	White	Latino	White	Latino	White	Latino	
<b>Number of students assessed</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>41,005</b>
<b>Learning approach</b>											
Self-regulation, score 1-5	3.4	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.2	3	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.3	3.5
Interpersonal skills, score 1-5	3.6	3.5	3.8	4.1	3.6	3.7	4	4.2	3.7	3.7	3.7
Learning approach, score 1-5 (combination of two previous scores)	3.5	3.3	3.6	3.7	3.3	3.4	4.7	3.8	3.6	3.5	3.6
<b>Early math, score 0-16</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>11.1</b>
<b>Early literacy</b>											
Uppercase letter recognition, score 0-26	17.4	10.3	15.8	7.8	16.6	13.2	11.2	7.4	14.5	10.1	14.3
Lowercase letter recognition, score 0-26	14.4	8.3	13	5.4	14.3	10.4	8.6	5	11.7	8.1	11.7
Eng. letter sound recognition, score 0-26	10.4	5.9	9.4	3.4	12.7	6.9	4	1.6	8.2	4.2	7.7

*Source: Kindergarten Assessment 2018-2019, Oregon Department of Education*

## TEST SCORES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) sets the metrics for third grade English proficiency and eighth grade math performance. By third grade, students should reach a comfort level in reading and writing English, because they will need a strong foundation to understand the academic content in grades 4 and higher. The scores for Language Arts for each district represent the percentage of students who achieved level 3 or above in reading, writing, and comprehension. As stated in the ODE literacy framework (2009):

***“The most important reading goal for every Oregon school should be to ensure that ALL students read at grade level or higher each academic year, no later than in grade 3.”***

In its math assessment process, Oregon sets lofty goals for eighth-graders. A student must call upon knowledge from different domains, often from earlier grade levels, to solve a mathematical problem in a real-world context. The test requires proficiency with expressions and equations, functions, and geometry and geometric measurement, according to the Smarter Balanced Mathematics Expandable Blueprints for Grade 8 on the ODE website. The scores show the percentage of students who scored at level 8 or above.



**Table 24**  
**Central Oregon Student Test Scores by District**  
Percent at proficiency 2018-2019

District	3rd Grd. Lang. Arts	8th Grd. Math
<b>Bend-La Pine</b>		
White	66	50
Latino	45	25
<b>Crook County</b>		
White	56	46
Latino	28	27
<b>Culver</b>		
White	47	21
Latino	45	15
<b>Jefferson Co.</b>		
White	56	40
Latino	42	18
<b>Redmond</b>		
White	59	44
Latino	30	33
<b>Oregon</b>		
All students	46.5	38.3

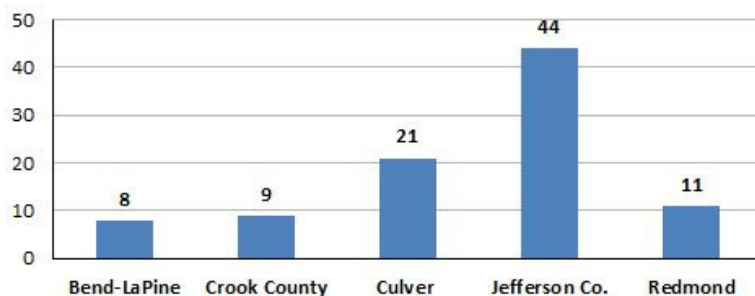
*Oregon Dept. of Education, At-A-Glance District Profiles 2018-2019*



Childcare at Bend English classes, winter 2017

Looking at the English and math indicators, the percentage of Latino students attaining these ODE objectives is far below the percentage for white students. As Table 24 shows, except for the Culver School District, where white and Latino students are roughly equal in third grade reading, the gap between the two groups in math is significant.

**Chart 3**  
**Percent of ELL Students by School District (2019)**



*Source: Oregon Department of Education website, Reports and Data  
Oregon At-A-Glance District Profiles 2018-2019*

But far fewer than 100 percent of white students are meeting ODE benchmarks for 3rd grade English and 8th grade math. Indeed, nowhere in Central Oregon are more than 66 percent of white students (in the Bend-LaPine District) meeting English or math goals.

One reason for lower test scores among Latinos may be the numbers of those students who begin school as English language learners (ELLs). The figures in Chart 3, reported by Central Oregon school districts, include all languages, but the overwhelming majority of “ever ELLs” in our region begin school speaking Spanish.



LCA English class graduates in Bend

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES

To measure graduation rates, the Oregon Department of Education tracks a cohort, or group, of students, from the beginning of their first year to the end of their fourth year in high school. Students who entered high school in 2015 and graduated in 2019 make up the most recent four-year cohort listed on the ODE website.

Across the state, graduation rates are rising. Approximately 80 percent of all Oregon students in this cohort graduated in 2019, compared with about 72 percent in 2014, according to ODE. There is a significant gap in graduation rates between white and Latino students in the Bend-La Pine School District. But the graduation rates for Latino students in other Central Oregon school districts are encouraging.

**Table 25**  
**2019 Graduation Rates for Four-Year Cohort**

<u>School District</u>	<b>% White Students</b>	<b>% Latino Students</b>
Bend-LaPine	83	69
Crook County	71	90
Culver	92	95
Jefferson Co.	71	89
Redmond	85	80
Oregon	81	76

Source: Oregon Department of Education website, Reports and Data Students, 2019 Cohort Graduation Rates

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Table 26 provides a snapshot of educational attainment for adults. In Oregon, Latinos have graduated from high school (or obtained a GED) and earned a college degree at lower rates than white residents. However, the same data offers some encouraging signs for Latinos in Central Oregon.

**Table 26**  
**Educational Attainment 2018**  
**Percent of Adults Age 18+ with Diplomas or Degrees**

<b>High School +</b>	<b>Oregon</b>	<b>Crook</b>	<b>Deschutes</b>	<b>Jefferson</b>
Latinos	64.2	64.6	74.4	69.8
Male	62.1	65.9	62.3	71.3
Female	66.4	63.1	86.2	68.1
Whites	93.7	89.2	95.2	89.9
Male	93.1	84.9	94.8	87.3
Female	94.3	93.3	95.6	92.6
<b>Bachelor's +</b>				
Latinos	15.1	7.8	22.1	14.8
Male	13.6	10.8	18.1	11
Female	16.8	4.2	26	19
Whites	34.5	16.9	35	20.7
Male	34.4	16.8	34.5	22
Female	34.7	17.1	35.4	19.5

*Source: American Community Survey 2018 5-Year Estimates, Table S1501*

Here are some key points drawn from the table:

- Statewide, the percentage of white adults with a high school diploma or a bachelor's degree was significantly higher than Latinos, regardless of gender.
- However, in Central Oregon, the percentage of Latinos in both Deschutes and Crook counties earning high school diplomas or college degrees exceeded the statewide average for Latinos, regardless of gender.
- More Latinas in Deschutes County earned a high school diploma or better, at a rate higher than the average for Latinas statewide by a wide margin. They also had an advantage over their male counterparts in Deschutes County.
- Latinas in Jefferson and Crook counties not only lagged behind the statewide average for their gender in this category, but also behind their male counterparts in their respective counties. But Latino male students in Jefferson and Crook counties exceeded the statewide Latino average for their gender for having a high school diploma.
- For those holding a bachelor's degree or better, white students had a significant advantage over their Latino counterparts in Central Oregon. However, more Latinos in Deschutes County earned a bachelor's degree or better than Latinos statewide.



## EDUCATION SUMMARY

- Latino children start kindergarten eager to learn, but many cannot recognize English letters and sounds
- Latino third graders lag behind their white classmates in English language arts. By 8th grade, they score lower on math tests
- Latino students graduate at a lower rate than white students in Bend-LaPine schools, but at slightly higher rates in Jefferson and Crook counties
- Fewer Latino adults earn high school diplomas or college degrees than their white peers in Central Oregon



LCA English as a Second Language class in Redmond



Raices Spanish literacy class graduation, Silver Rail Elementary, Bend 2017



# ROBERTO IRICHE

## WORKING STUDENT, PRINEVILLE

During summer 2019, working student Roberto Iriche logged almost 60 hours a week at a manufacturing company in Redmond. But in late September, he returned to his studies at Central Oregon Community College, carrying a load of 16 credits at campuses in Redmond and Bend.



Now his hard work has paid off. He was accepted to the Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls and began classes this fall.

Roberto was 11 when his family left Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico, to escape gang violence, and then joined his father who was already working in Prineville. A ranch owner provided a three-bedroom house for the family with a real back yard, Roberto said. He studied hard and graduated from Crook County High School in 2008.

He started college but could not get financial aid because he lacked a green (permanent resident) card. So he left to live and work in Portland for two years, and then tried living in Chicago and Palm Springs, Calif.

In 2015, Roberto obtained temporary residency and a work permit under DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), he said. That program, created by President Obama, is now in legal limbo. When he returned to the place he calls home – Prineville – Roberto qualified for a scholarship from COCC to study applied science in manufacturing technology.

Opportunities abound in that field, but he can't land any kind of federal job with his DACA permit, Roberto said. He hopes his studies will lead to a job that pays well for work he enjoys.

Roberto is devoted to outdoor life in Central Oregon, especially hiking, kayaking and paddle boarding. He also cares deeply about the community that nurtured him.

“Since the COVID-19 outbreak, I have noticed the lack of resources for people of color in my community,” he said. “I want to give back to the community, like the way people are helping me now.”

Roberto is intrigued with 3-D printer technology, especially with its ability to produce the components to build small affordable homes, he said. “If I get accepted to OIT, that's going to be my senior project.”

**MARIA TERESA MENDOZA**  
**PARENT ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST**  
**FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER, BEND**

Maria Teresa Mendoza is a professional who helps families and their children take the first steps in their education. She has an associate's degree in Early Childhood Education. But as a child, she harvested crops along a migrant trail that took the family from Michoacán, Mexico, through California and up to Hood River and The Dalles, Oregon, each year.



As they followed tomatoes, cucumbers, strawberries and cherries, Maria Teresa enrolled in one school district after another. “It was very difficult (to stay on track in school),” she said.

Her father worked in the *bracero* program and brought his family to the U.S. legally when Maria Teresa was 5, she said. Eventually, they settled in Stockton, Calif., where they went on strike in the tomato fields for higher pay in the 1970s when she was 16. Union leader Cesar Chávez came to fast in support, she said. “We got what we wanted and two clean bathrooms (in the field).”

Maria Teresa married and moved to an avocado ranch in San Luis Obispo County, where the couple worked and raised two children. “We were in heaven,” she said about the 800-acre ranch on the central California coast that was home for 25 years.

The couple’s son graduated from college and moved to Bend to train as an ultra runner, Maria Teresa said. When they came to visit, “my husband fell in love with Bend,” she said. They moved here in 2013. He found work in RV sales and she went to work for the Family Access Network (FAN) through the High Desert Educational Service District.

Maria Teresa enjoys exploring trails, rivers and lakes, but the winter weather is difficult, she said. With their savings from the ranch, they bought a home in Bend and paid off the mortgage.

“We are so blessed,” she said. “I have found that life in Central Oregon is more difficult for Latino families and undocumented people,” harder for them to find work and housing than in California.

Schools here now have dual language programs, but struggle to recruit bilingual teachers, Maria Teresa said. She emphasized the partnership of family and school. “Parents need to be involved in education since kindergarten if they want their child to succeed.”

## HOUSING

An abundance of jobs attracts many newcomers to Central Oregon and increases the number of residents looking for a place to rent or buy. The scarcity of homes and apartments, plus the high cost of construction, drive up the cost of housing for everyone in the region.

“Housing costs are going up much faster than wages,” said Scott Aycock, Manager of Community and Economic Development for the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC).

He spoke during a public hearing on housing held Dec. 18, 2018, at Redmond City Hall. When COIC convened a group of regional economic development and community officials in 2016 and 2017, participants identified housing as the top issue in Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties.



Juan-Carlos and Anna Afre play by their home in Redmond. Photo by Carolina Afre



A Bend family celebrates a birthday in their back yard.



This means that households with a low or moderate income may be priced out of the rental market. If they find a place, they usually pay well over 30 percent of their income for rent and often 50 percent or more, said Aycock. He described this as being “cost-burdened” and it leaves a family with much less money for food, medical care, transportation, and the opportunity to save. In addition, a few families live in overcrowded units and others have incomplete facilities in their homes. When measured together, these factors comprise “housing needs” and “severe housing needs.”

Percentages can be useful to measure socio-economic gaps between groups. But when we look at the raw numbers for housing needs and severe housing needs in Central Oregon, we are struck by the sheer magnitude of the problem for all owner and renter groups.

**The tables below reveal some key findings.**

*The figures for severe housing need are a subset of total households with housing need.*

- Latino households experience a significantly higher degree of housing need and severe housing need than white households.
- Out of 4,942 Latino households surveyed, 2,277 (46.1%) have housing needs, while 1,461 (29.6 %) experience severe housing needs.
- Of that same number surveyed, 57.6 percent of Latino renter households have housing needs, while 40 percent have severe housing needs.
- The level of housing need for Latino owner households is not as high as for renters, but still exceeds levels experienced by white homeowners.

**Table 27**  
**Estimated Housing Cost Burden by Race and Ethnicity in Central Oregon - 2017**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Renters</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
White	54,738	30.9	26,904	49.5	81,642	37.0
Black	94	68.1	159	83.0	253	77.5
Asian, Pacific Islander	334	27.5	560	53.4	894	43.7
Native American	876	32.3	631	52.1	1,507	40.6
Other or multiple races	650	24.3	575	62.8	1,225	42.4
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	<b>2,396</b>	<b>33.8</b>	<b>2,546</b>	<b>57.6</b>	<b>4,942</b>	<b>46.1</b>

*Estimates based on 2011-2015 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy Data, Table 1  
Retrieved from <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html>; 2011-2015 5-yr American Community Survey Table B01003; Portland State University, College of Urban and Public Affairs: Population Research Center 2017 Certified Population Estimates*



In its Regional Housing Needs Assessment, published in April 2019, COIC states:

*“As rent and home purchase prices have increased, many rural and urban Central Oregonians are paying a greater percentage of household income towards housing costs, while others have had to relocate to less expensive areas. Nearly half of Central Oregonian renters are housing cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing expenses. Over one quarter of renter households spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing. Housing cost burden makes it difficult for households to save money or accrue assets. This financial vulnerability puts families at greater risk for bankruptcy, foreclosure, or eviction.”*

**Table 28**  
**Estimated Severe Housing Cost Burden by Ethnicity - 2017**

	<u>Owners</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Renters</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
White	54,738	15.0	26,904	28.3	81,642	19.4
Black	94	68.1	159	76.1	253	73.1
Asian, Pacific Islander	334	19.2	560	29.1	894	25.4
Native American	876	20.7	631	35.8	1,507	27.0
Other or multiple races	650	3.8	575	42.4	1,225	22.0
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	<b>2,396</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>2,546</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>4,942</b>	<b>29.6</b>

*Estimates based on 2011-2015 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy Data, Table 1  
Retrieved from <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html>; 2011-2015 5-yr American Community Survey Table B01003; Portland State University, College of Urban and Public Affairs: Population Research Center 2017 Certified Population Estimates*

## HOUSING WORKS STATISTICS ON LATINO APPLICANTS

Housing Works in Redmond runs the Central Oregon program for housing choice (formerly Section 8) vouchers and rents affordable apartments to low-income residents.

Here are some relevant statistics from August 2019:

### **2019 Housing Choice Voucher Waitlist:**

- 2,792 total applications received
- 301 of those were Hispanic/Latino families
- 10.78% of those who applied in 2019 were Hispanic/Latino

### **Housing Choice Voucher Program Participants:**

1,225 total vouchers currently

132 total individuals who are Hispanic/Latino

122 households that are Hispanic/Latino

9.95% of the total current vouchers are held by Hispanics/Latinos

The 2016-2019 Central Oregon Regional Health Improvement Plan included the following statement on the housing crisis (page 38):

*“The lack of safe and affordable housing has become a public health crisis in Central Oregon. Low-income families in all three counties struggle to find affordable housing. Even mid-income families, who do not normally struggle to find housing, are now finding it harder and harder to make ends meet as escalating rent and mortgage costs squeeze out room to budget for other living expenses. In Bend, Central Oregon’s largest city, affordable housing is not the only problem. Simply finding a place to live is also extremely difficult with low housing and apartment inventory and high market demand. Given all we know about the importance of housing to health, the current housing environment in this region has the potential to widen and exacerbate inequities and health disparities that impact people with fewer financial and support resources. This is particularly true for individuals and families trapped in a cycle of crisis and housing instability due to extreme poverty, trauma, violence, mental illness, addiction or other chronic health conditions.”*

## **HOUSING DISCRIMINATION**

Of particular concern to the Latino community, and other communities of color, is the occurrence of discrimination in the rental or purchase of a home. At the request of the Latino Community Association, the Fair Housing Council of Oregon (FHCO) tallied complaints about housing received on its hotline from Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes Counties from January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2018. Of 359 calls from the three counties, 33 (9 percent) came from Latinos.

Deschutes County accounted for 28 of the calls from Latinos, but only three of these people believed they had been discriminated against due to race or national origin. FHCO noted that housing discrimination is probably more widespread, but “very few come forward for a variety of reasons, including fear of retaliation or the difficulty to provide evidence.”

## **HOUSELESSNESS ~ HOMELESSNESS**

Many believe that Latinos in Central Oregon do not suffer homelessness, at least not the type that leads to sleeping in cars or in camps. However, the data tells a different story. The Homeless Leadership Coalition and volunteers fanned out across Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson counties on the night of Jan. 24, 2018 for the Point-in-Time Count, and interviewed 1,276 individuals living in shelters, vehicles, or transitional housing, or sleeping on someone’s couch. Out of this one night count, nine percent, or 119 people, identified as Hispanic or Latino.

During a Redmond City Council meeting on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, held Dec. 3, 2019, James Cook, co-chair of the Homeless Leadership Coalition, talked about why homeless Latinos are undercounted and not offered services:

“We deal with a HUD-mandated definition of homelessness when we do our Point in Time count. That definition doesn’t really address homelessness among our Hispanic or Latino communities or our Native American population. They are more likely to exist as part of larger family units, doubled up or tripled up. They are sometimes living five to a room, but they are not considered homeless.”

This last point supports the expanded notion of homelessness that we do believe to be fairly common among Latinos: that single adults often rent rooms in homes and even families sometimes share living space to economize and stretch their incomes. While communal living can be enjoyable and fits within the cultural framework of immigrant Latinos, it is not ideal for families and would not be their choice if housing costs were lower or incomes were higher.

### HOUSING SUMMARY

- **Latinos pay a large portion of their income on rent or mortgage**
- **Nearly 30 percent of Latinos in Central Oregon spend half their income on housing, which leaves much less money for food, medicine, transportation, and savings.**
- **About 9 percent of the homeless residents counted in January 2018 were Latinos**



## DELIA FELICIANO

### COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AGENT, BEND



In 2001, Principal Broker Delia Feliciano bought a one-way ticket to Portland to begin a new life. But she missed the food and culture of Puerto Rico, where she grew up, she said. Since then, she has connected with other Puerto Ricans in Oregon to cook, dance, speak Spanish, and celebrate their roots on the island.

Delia met her husband in Portland 12 years ago, where she worked as a legal assistant and later in commercial real estate investments. When he brought her to Sunriver to go snowmobiling, “I fell in love with Sunriver, and the smell of the pine trees got me,” she said. They returned frequently with his kids, and then moved to Bend in February 2015.

“I love the energy (here), a good energy from Mother Earth,” Delia said. “I find people from all different nations. They’re happy to be here and everyone is ready to step in to help the community in any way they can.”

But the cost of living is a challenge, said Delia, who owns a home in Bend.

“When the economy tanked in 2008, people were leaving because there were no jobs,” she said. Investors bought land when it was relatively cheap and produced a boom in construction. People from California discovered Central Oregon and paid cash for local homes.

“That’s driving prices up,” Delia said.

In Central Oregon, the rocky soil is hard to work, she said. “The cost of construction is going up because builders have to bring people from out of the area or pay higher wages,” Delia said. “It’s hard to find good, reliable workers willing to do the tough jobs in farming, construction and restaurants.”

When Delia’s sister moved to Central Oregon a couple of years ago, she needed health insurance, Delia said. A friend told her the Latino Community Association (LCA) offered that service. Eventually, her sister opened a food cart in Redmond called Taino, a Taste of Puerto Rico, but closed her business because she couldn’t find weekend help. Now her sister teaches Spanish classes while she prepares for her teacher license exam.

In 2019, Delia chaired the committee that organized LCA’s Gala de Oro fundraiser. Now, she is getting ready to launch a commercial real estate property management company, she said. Her other ambition is to teach health-conscious cooking to her neighbors in Central Oregon.



## CONCLUSION

Collecting and organizing data to describe our Latino community in Central Oregon, and analyzing it to gain insights about how and where our families are excelling or struggling, has opened our eyes. The data makes visible what otherwise often goes unseen by anyone not specifically focused on the well-being of our Latino families.

We want all families in Central Oregon to thrive, but experience tells us that a majority-white community can unintentionally overlook the specific needs and opportunities of our immigrant families and children when it comes to service delivery, employment practices, outreach and civic engagement. Equity requires understanding.

We hope that this report will provide a solid baseline for stakeholders to evaluate your practices to ensure that our Latino families, especially recent immigrant families, are neither excluded nor underserved. If you are currently unable to track the effectiveness of your efforts based on ethnicity and immigration status, we hope you will begin doing so for all marginalized groups. We cannot evaluate or remedy what we cannot see.

This report is a beginning. Our hope is that this report will help start discussions and inform ongoing efforts to plan for the well-being, equity and inclusion of all Central Oregonians. Our immigrant community members and our mixed-status families (U.S. citizens and non-citizens) represent an enormous resource to help fuel the economy and culture we all share. Yet, for decades, we have carried the burdens of discrimination, disdain, and invisibility.

If nothing else, this report makes perfectly clear that Latinos are needed for Central Oregon to thrive. We are young. We are motivated. But we are also stunted by the mainstream community's reluctance to fully include us and help break down the walls that slow our progress.

We call on the business leaders, faith leaders, and other decision-makers and influencers in our communities to embrace and include us, recognize our contributions and invest in our potential. Equity requires action.

We welcome you to know us, understand our diverse cultures, our challenges and dreams, and join us in working for an equitable and inclusive Central Oregon we can all be proud of.

## APPENDIX – DATA ON UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

There is no reliable statistical data on the numbers and circumstances of undocumented immigrants in Central Oregon. Many of these individuals in our region are assumed to be Latinos, based on statistics on native-born and foreign-born Latinos. However, a foreign-born Latino is not necessarily an undocumented immigrant, and many Latino immigrants with legal status live in Central Oregon.

On a statewide level, there is more reliable data. Undocumented immigrants numbered 113,000 across the whole state of Oregon in the years 2012-2016, according to the Migration Policy Institute. MPI based its estimate on the American Community Survey for that period and a 2008 survey of income and program participation. Some 82,000, or 73 percent, were born in Mexico or Central America. MPI estimated that people from Asia made up about 16 percent of Oregon's undocumented immigrants, with smaller numbers from Europe, Canada and Oceania (islands in the Pacific Ocean).

Few of the undocumented immigrants in Oregon were recent arrivals, reported MPI. Only 15 percent reported less than five years of residence in the United States, while 22 percent had lived in the U.S. for more than 20 years. Three-fourths of these immigrants were working or seeking work, and about 60 percent reported that they spoke English well.

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/OR>

## SOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

Links to data sources utilized for this report:

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<https://oregoncf.org/community-impact/research/latinos-in-oregon-report/>  
[https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/hispanics\\_in\\_oregon/#.XImRVCJKjIU](https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/hispanics_in_oregon/#.XImRVCJKjIU)  
<https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/power-of-the-purse-how-hispanics-contribute-to-the-u-s-economy/>

### POPULATION

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a survey of randomly selected households the Census Bureau conducts yearly between the official 10-year Census counts. Because it is based on a sample, rather than the entire population, the ACS produces estimates. To aid data users, the Census Bureau calculates and publishes a margin of error for every estimate. For guidance on making comparisons, please visit [data.census.gov](http://data.census.gov)

### EMPLOYMENT

Estimates of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers 2018 update  
<https://www.ohdc.org/uploads/1/1/2/4/11243168/05-24-18-awhft-oregon-msfw-enumeration-study.pdf>

### HEALTH

Data on lack of health insurance comes from the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2014-2018, accessed from the Communities Reporter Tool on Jan. 29, 2020.  
<https://oe.oregonexplorer.info/rural/CommunitiesReporter/>

Mosaic Medical:

<file:///G:/My%20Drive/Marketing/REPORT%20%20Latinos%20in%20Central%20Oregon/HEALTH/2017%20Mosaic%20Medical%20Health%20Center%20Profile.html>

Volunteers in Medicine:

[https://www.vim-cascades.org/file\\_download/inline/39f45056-9e0c-47ad-81eb-b87b5b9e821f](https://www.vim-cascades.org/file_download/inline/39f45056-9e0c-47ad-81eb-b87b5b9e821f)

## EDUCATION

<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/assessment/Pages/Kindergarten-Assessment.aspx>

To view a profile and test scores for a particular school district, visit:

<https://www.ode.state.or.us/data/reportcard/reports.aspx>

<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/students/Pages/Cohort-Graduation-Rate.aspx>  
Select School Year 2018-2019, Cohort Graduation Rate 2018-2019 Media File

## HOUSING

From the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, 2019, page 3

<https://coic2.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/housing-for-all-april-2019-materials-packet.pdf>

From the 2016-2019 Central Oregon Regional Health Improvement Plan, page 38

[https://www.deschutes.org/sites/default/files/fileattachments/health\\_services/page/1863/rhip\\_2016-2019.pdf](https://www.deschutes.org/sites/default/files/fileattachments/health_services/page/1863/rhip_2016-2019.pdf)