

*Emerging Issues in Education*

## Latino Population Boom Impacts Indianapolis

*Although Latinos are now a majority group in some cities, the population in Indianapolis is relatively small. However, that may be changing rapidly because Latinos are the fastest growing population group in Marion County. For this reason, Central Indiana leaders would be wise to take steps to better understand the culture and the needs of this distinctive group.*

*In this issue brief, we provide information about Latinos in Marion County with a special focus on education, a crucial component of quality of life and a factor that often determines future success.*



*The information presented here is taken largely from a study that the Center for Urban Policy and the Environment completed in partnership with Johnson, Grossnickle and Associates for La Plaza, a key Latino nonprofit organization whose mission is to serve, empower, and integrate the Latino community of Central Indi-*

*ana. In addition to educational issues, the larger report discusses health and social services, economic development, and arts and culture. It is available from La Plaza. We are grateful to La Plaza for their willingness to share this research with our audience of policymakers and leaders.*

### **Background of the Latino Community in Marion County**

Census estimates indicate that Latino families in Marion County are more likely to live below the poverty level (17 percent compared to 9 percent of the entire population). But on the plus side, they are more likely to have two parents in the household. Among all families with children under 18 and living under the poverty level, only 16 percent consisted of married couple families, while among Latino families in this group, 40 percent were married couple families. Many Latinos are immigrants (61 percent) and many have recently arrived (37 percent have been here five years or less). Estimates of the proportion who speak only Spanish range from 23 percent to 44 percent.

In the 1930 Census, while Gary and East Chicago's Latino population numbered in the thousands, the records still showed fewer than 100 Latinos in Indianapolis. But by 1970, the Indianapolis Latino population had officially increased to more than 6,700. This growth led to the first regular radio program aimed at a Latino audience in the area in 1969. St. Mary's Catholic Church began offering masses in Spanish in 1967, and the Hispanic Center (originally known as the Hispano-American Center and now merged along with several other organizations into LaPlaza) was founded in 1971.

The Latino community in Indianapolis has distinctive characteristics compared with populations in other cities and



throughout the state of Indiana. While the majority of immigrants are from Mexico, Indianapolis has a higher proportion of immigrants from Central and South America than does the state as a whole.

Also, Indianapolis' Latino population is widely dispersed and the city has no "barrio" (an identifiable Latino neighborhood with more than 50 percent Latino inhabitants). The low levels of immigration spread over several decades and the range of diverse origins discouraged concentration in one geographical area (Guthrie, Briere, and Moore, 1995). The 2000 Census shows census tracts with concentrations of up to 30 percent Latino, still not a majority, but a higher concentration than in the past.

Figure 1 shows how rapidly Marion County's Latino population is growing. Factors that may have contributed to this rapid growth include affordable housing, a demand for workers in certain sectors, and the view of Indiana as a good place to raise a family. As the population continues to increase, the Latino newcomers are making an even greater contribution to the local economy—without their labor, many industries (such as light manufacturing, hospitality, maintenance, construction, landscaping, and farming) would face labor shortages (Subcommittee on the Driver's License Issue, 2005).

Latinos are the fastest growing group in Marion County, currently with 5.6 percent of the population. In 2004 in Marion

County, 10.1 percent of children age 4 and under were Latino, as were 11.5 percent of people age 25–29. In contrast, less than 1.0 percent of the people older than 65 in Marion County were Latino (fewer than 1,000 people) in 2004.

## Education

According to a national survey, Latinos hold generally positive views of their local schools, teachers, and educational institutions, and Latino parents say they are active in their child's school and involved in their education. But the survey also reveals their concerns that the educational system does not always treat Latino students fairly. Many of them worry, for example, that Latino students lag behind other children because teachers are unable to bridge the cultural divides in their classrooms.

There are substantial differences between immigrant and native Latinos (who do better than immigrants, with one factor being better language skills) in high school completion rates and in college attendance, but both groups are below the national averages (Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation, 2004).

## Early Childhood

As Figure 2 illustrates, Latino births in Marion County increased from 468 in 1997 to 1,977 in 2004, an increase of 422 percent. This increase in the Latino birth rate impacts childcare providers, preschools, and eventually, schools and primary education providers.

The good news is that Latino babies are getting off to a good start in life in some ways, which is important for future educational outcomes. According to the Indiana Department of Health in 2003, Latino babies were more likely to be normal gestational age (93 percent) when compared with white babies (89 percent) and black babies (86 percent). Correspondingly, Latino babies are more likely to be normal birth weight (95 percent) when compared with white babies (92 percent) and black babies (88 percent). This is important because when compared with children born full term, children born prematurely or with low birth weight are more likely to have lower cognitive scores and significant learning and behavior problems such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. (Bhutta, Cleves, Casey, Craddock, & Anand, 2002).

Figure 1: Hispanics in Marion County, 1990–2004

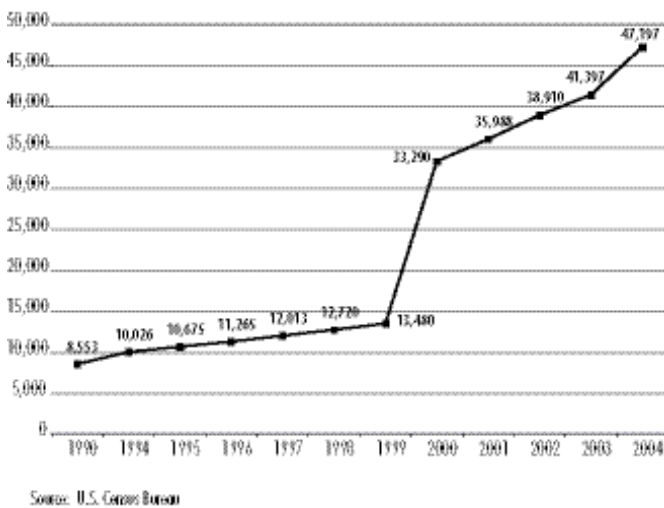
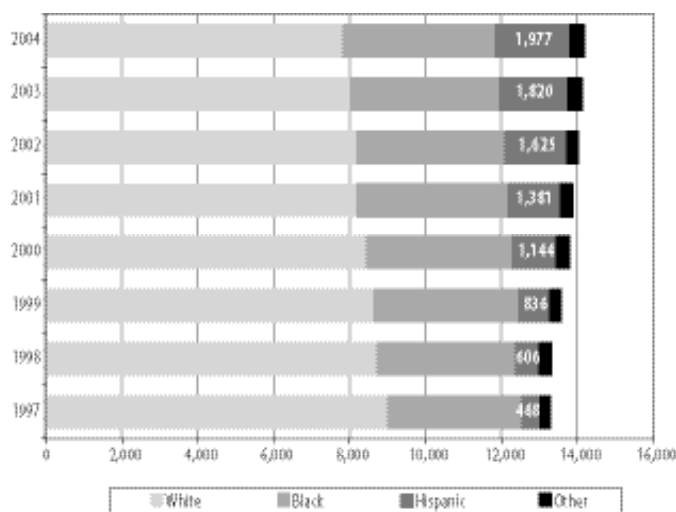




Figure 2: Births in Marion County per Major Groups, 1997–2004



Source: Marion County Department of Health

Latino mothers in Marion County were much more likely to breastfeed their infants (87 percent) than white mothers (64 percent) or black mothers (46 percent). While Latino mothers are less likely (59.4 percent compared to 77 percent for all races) to receive prenatal care in the first trimester, they are also less likely to smoke during pregnancy (12.6 percent compared to 18.2 percent), or abuse chemicals (0.3 percent compared to 2.4 percent).

### Primary and Secondary Education

According to the Indiana Department of Education, in school year 2004–2005, there were 9,900 Latino children in Marion County schools, 7 percent of the county’s total enrollment. Because some schools did not disaggregate multi-racial enrollment data, this estimate is considered conservative. The percent of Latino children per school varied from less than one percent to more than 50 percent in two schools.

As Figure 3 illustrates, in Marion County in 2000, a high proportion of Latinos did not complete high school. Almost half of Latino males and 42 percent of Latino females over 25 did not have a high school degree. It is not surprising therefore that the proportions of those who acquire higher education are also smaller: 16 percent of Latino males and 22 percent of Latino females had at least an associate’s degree, compared with 36 percent of white males and 32 percent of white females.

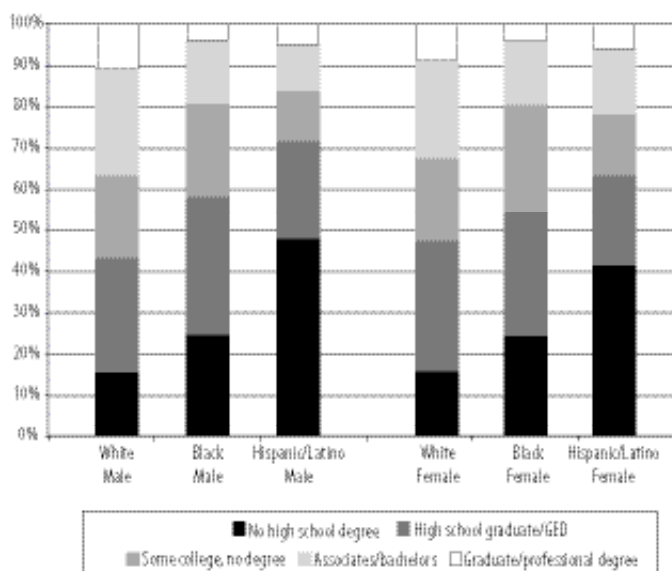
### SAT Scores

The average SAT score for Latino students is lower than for white students (1030 in 2004), but higher than for black students (865 in 2004). These numbers have stayed consistent from 2002 to 2004 (at a score of approximately 960). For comparisons sake, entrance into IUPUI for students who have completed the CORE 40 requirements with a C or better average requires at least a 900 total score. If students have not completed CORE 40 requirements, then a combined score of at least 990 is required.

### Higher Education

A quest for higher education brings special problems for Latino students. Each year, hundreds of qualified but undocumented students may be prevented from attending college after graduation from Central Indiana high schools. Brought here by their parents as young children, many have grown up here, attended school here since grade school, and share most elements of Hoosier culture and values, including a desire for higher education. However, because of their immigration status, they are typically barred from many of the opportunities that make a college education affordable, including in-state tuition rates (at some schools), state and federal grants and loans, private scholarships, and the opportunity to work legally to earn their way through college.

Figure 3: Educational Attainment by Gender and Race/Ethnicity in Marion County, 2000, People over 25 years of Age



Source: U.S. Census Bureau



In response to this national situation, Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Richard Durbin (D-IL) sponsored the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. This bill would allow immigrant youth who have long resided in the United States the chance to adjust their status, allowing them to pursue higher education. Currently, the DREAM Act is awaiting reintroduction to Congress.

As Table 1 shows, local colleges and universities vary in their Latino student enrollment. Undergraduate students have increased from 1.2 percent of the enrollment at IUPUI in 1995 to 2 percent in 2005.

**Table 1: Current Latino Enrollment at Universities in Indianapolis, 2005**

| Name  | Undergraduate students | Percent of enrollment | Graduate students | Percent of enrollment |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| University of Indianapolis                        | 59                     | 2%                    | 19                | 2%                    |
| Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis | 511                    | 2%                    | 217               | 5%                    |
| Marian College                                    | 30                     | 2%                    | n/a               | n/a                   |
| Ivy Tech Community College                        | 398                    | 4%                    | n/a               | n/a                   |
| Butler University                                 | 76                     | 2%                    | 11                | 2%                    |

### Organizations Offering Educational Programs for Latinos

La Plaza’s current education programs include:

- **El Puente Project**, which educates teachers and administrators about Latino culture. It also educates Latino students and parents about American culture and the American educational system, including orienting students to the college admissions process and actively mentoring them as they seek college admission.
- **The Mother/Daughter Project**, which mentors middle school-age Latino girls in setting personal and scholastic goals and in developing strong relationships with their mothers.
- **Summer Discovery**, where bilingual, licensed teachers work with elementary school-age children to stay academically connected so that learning is not lost over the summer. Core subjects of math, science, and English are studied in the morning; afternoons are devoted to arts, culture, and field trips to enrich the educational experience. The students served are predominantly Latino.

In addition to providing services, La Plaza often collaborates with other organizations to provide important educational services:

- La Plaza partners with the Indiana University School of Medicine, Riley Children’s Hospital, and other community agencies to provide cultural competency training to pediatricians and speakers on the Preguntale al Peditra radio show.
- La Plaza provides English as a New Language (ENL) classes at its Stevens Street location. IPS offers ENL classes at La Plaza’s 38th Street and Post Road location.

As Table 2 shows, a wide number of other nonprofit organizations provide educational services to the Latino community in Marion County.



Table 2: **Nonprofit Education Service Providers in Marion County Serving the Latino Community**

| Organization  | Description  | Number of Latinos Served in 2004 |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| MSD of Lawrence Township—Special Interest Classes         | Offers several classes for adults.   | 72                               |
| Alliance for Community Education                          | Microsoft application, certification training, computer related training, QuickBooks, FoodServ certification, and American Sign Language (ASL)   | 62                               |
| Fletcher Place Community Center-Survival Skills for Women | Empowers women to work toward self-sufficiency by participation in ten workshops offered in Spanish.   | n/a                              |
| Plaza Comunitaria   | This center offers educational services and community training in Spanish using the latest technology.   | n/a                              |
| <b>TOTAL ADULT EDUCATION</b>                              |  | <b>134+</b>                      |
| John Knox Presbyterian Church-Conversational English      | Offers 16-week courses of English training for Latino individuals wishing to learn conversational English.   | 25                               |
| Language Training Center-Classes                          | English as a new language (ENL)  | 50                               |
| Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, Inc.              | ENL classes  | 1,059                            |
| Ivy Tech Community College                                | Offers English in the Workplace for Spanish Speakers as a non-credit, 8-week course broadcast on WFYI, the ETC, and on the Web at the Apple Learning Interchange.  | 398                              |
| Vida Nueva United Methodist Church                        | Offers ENL and computer classes, and Survival Skills for Women.  | 60                               |
| J. Everett Light—Special Interest Courses                 | Offers ENL and other classes. The Career Center radio station, also broadcasts Spanish and English lessons on the radio Monday–Friday at 11 a.m. and 11 p.m.   | 330                              |
| Walker Career Center—Language Classes                     | Offers ENL classes. Discusses ways of life in American Culture.  | 700                              |
| <b>TOTAL ADULT PARTICIPANTS IN ENL CLASSES</b>            |  | <b>2,622</b>                     |
| Walker Career Center—Language Classes                     | GED (General Education Diploma)  | 40                               |
| Vida Nueva United Methodist Church                        | Offers tutoring and a GED program in Spanish.  | 60                               |
| <b>TOTAL GED</b>  |  | <b>100</b>                       |
| Central Indiana Community Foundation                      | Offers New Mexican Scholarship Fund awards of \$2,000 each to ten Indiana students.  | 10                               |
| Fund for Hoosier Excellence-Lugar Scholarships            | Each year, 10 high school African-American, Native American, and Latino seniors are awarded scholarships.  | 10                               |
| Sociedad de Amigos de Colombia - SADCO                    | Scholarship program  | n/a                              |
| <b>TOTAL SCHOLARSHIPS</b>                                 |  | <b>20+</b>                       |
| Vida Nueva United Methodist Church                        | Sponsors Discovering Indy (in the summer) for children in 1st to 6th grade, including reading, arts, sports, cultural field trips. Also offers Kids Club (computation, grammar, reading, recreational activities, cooking), and Boy and Girl Scouts. | 40                               |
| <b>TOTAL MENTORING</b>                                    |  | <b>40</b>                        |



### Issues Not Fully Addressed

Center staff analyzed the need for services by the Latinos in Marion County and compared this with the number of individuals actually served in order to determine the extent of unmet needs for the local Latino community. It should be noted that our estimates for needs are based on Census estimates of the Latino population, so if there is an undercounting, that would result in an underestimate of need. It should also be noted that incomplete information from providers may lead to an overestimate of need, because services may be provided at a higher level than estimated. The methodology for estimating need is included in the larger report available from La Plaza. This information can help focus community efforts to serve this growing population.

For this analysis, Center staff first generated a list of organizations and programs serving the Latino community (shown in Table 2 on page 5). To identify service gaps, it is necessary to consider all providers and potential providers of services. We

generated the list using several steps, including searching the Information and Referral Network, Guidestar (a national database of nonprofits), on-line search engines, and asking interview and focus group participants. In addition, La Plaza staff and board members reviewed the list to evaluate its completeness. Center staff then called each organization on the list and asked them to provide an estimate of unduplicated numbers of Latinos served. These numbers were then compared to estimates of need to provide an approximation of service gaps.

Due to incomplete data available from other serving organizations and the possibility of over or underestimating, we classified each gap as high (67-100 percent of need unmet), medium (34-66 percent of need unmet) or low (0-33 percent of need unmet).

As Table 3 illustrates, using the best information currently available, there appears to be high gaps in services for GED classes, English as a New Language (ENL) classes, mentoring, and scholarships.

**Table 3: A Comparison of Needs and Individuals Served**

| Service   | Data Item   | Estimated Need in Marion County 2004* | Number of people served, La Plaza | Number of people served, other organizations | Estimated Gap** |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| General Education Diploma classes/Adult Education classes | Latinos over 25 without a H.S. diploma                      | 13,500                                | 50                                | 234+   | High            |
| English as a new language class for adults                | Average of two estimates of Latino adults with Spanish only | 10,000                                | 248                               | 2,622  | High            |
| Mentoring, summer programs                                | Estimate of total Latino youth 19 and younger undocumented  | 5,300                                 | 141                               | 40   | High            |
| Scholarships  | 75% of Latino students in Marion County high schools        | 1,200                                 |                                   | 20+  | High            |

\*Rounded to nearest hundred

\*\*Gap of 0-33% of Need is low; 34-66% is medium; 67%-100% is high.



## Thoughts for Policymakers

The data presented in this issue brief show that Latinos are now a significant group in Marion County with distinct needs. While they tend to have strong family ties, they also are more likely to live in poverty and to struggle with English language skills. There is an explicit need for programs that can help Latinos, both youth and adult, complete their high school educations and go on to college. These programs can help Latinos in Central Indiana improve their educational attainment and their prospects for success. Policymakers and service providers will need to consider these issues as they develop programs and allocate resources to address the overall needs of Central Indiana's rapidly changing population.

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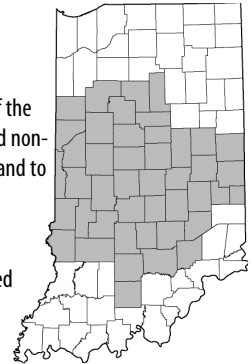


## Indiana's Future: Identifying Choices and Supporting Action to Improve Communities

This project, funded by an award of general support from Lilly Endowment, Inc., builds on the Center's research to increase understanding of the Central Indiana region. The Center's faculty and staff work to identify choices that can be made by households, governments, businesses, and non-profit organizations to improve our quality of life. Our goal is to understand the people, economics, problems, and opportunities in Indiana, and to help decisionmakers understand the impacts of policy decisions. The Center also works to mobilize energy to accomplish these goals.

Educational services are a vital component of a community's quality of life. For this reason, the Center created this issue brief with a focus on educational services as they relate to the growing and increasingly important Latino population in Central Indiana. The information presented here is taken largely from a study that the Center for Urban Policy and the Environment completed in partnership with Johnson, Grossnickle and Associates for La Plaza. For a copy of the full report, contact La Plaza at (317) 634-5022.

The Center for Urban Policy and the Environment is part of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. An electronic copy of this document and other information about community issues can be accessed via the Center Web site ([www.urbancenter.iupui.edu](http://www.urbancenter.iupui.edu)) or you may contact the Center at 317-261-3000.



*Central Indiana Region*

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