



CALIFORNIA'S FAST-GROWING LATINO ELECTORATE

AN ELECTION 2024 PORTRAIT



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INTRODUCTION

California's Latinos play an integral role in the state's civic, social and economic life. The vitality of the state's democracy and its future prosperity depend on robust Latino political participation and the Latino community's well-being. California's 15.7 million Latinos are the state's largest population group, accounting for 40% of all Californians.

In addition, California's Latino eligible electorate (generally, its voting-age citizens) has grown significantly, and this report provides an overview of it, and of the state's Latino registered voters. Between 2012 and 2022, the Latino eligible electorate increased from 6.4 million to 8.5 million, a rate of 32.5%. This increase accounted for almost all—92.3%—of the state's eligible electorate growth. Each year, nearly 240,000 Latino citizens turn 18, fueling growth even further.

The size and rapid growth of the Latino eligible electorate leave the state's stakeholders no choice but to understand its characteristics: politically, socially and economically. California's elected and appointed officials must ensure that their policies advance the well-being of the Latino eligible electorate. Community, civic and business leaders must know this electorate to plan their operations and provide effective services. All these stakeholders must understand how to reach and engage the Latino eligible electorate in California's electoral system, its civic life and its economy. Moreover, this report's portrait is extremely salient because it also provides an opportunity for these stakeholders to better understand that California's Latino eligible electorate has a distinct profile which may differ from the California Latino population overall.

This portrait is also particularly significant as the November 2024 presidential election nears. The political environment has evolved markedly over the last decade, with polarization widening across a broad range of issues. In California, several Congressional districts will see hotly contested races in Election 2024, for seats both parties view as crucial for control of the U.S. House of Representatives. Disinformation will likely intensify, heightening concerns about the risks of artificial intelligence for ensuring that Latinos and all voters obtain truthful information about the electoral process.

In addition, parties and analysts have frequently elevated a narrative about the role of the Latino eligible electorate that overlooks its rich variety or focuses primarily on Latinos in presidential battleground states. For several decades, NALEO Educational Fund has consistently advocated for a more

nuanced public dialogue about the Latino electorate that recognizes its remarkable diversity, and the organization has seen some improvement during Election 2024. However, there is still more progress to be made, particularly since analysts and observers tend to ignore California's Latino eligible electorate and focus on Latinos in battleground states.

This report examines several aspects of the California Latino eligible electorate and its registered voters. It provides information about the growth of the California Latino eligible electorate between 2012 and 2022, including how that growth compares to other population groups. It also highlights some important differences between the Latino eligible electorate and the non-Latino eligible electorate, including:

Age The California Latino eligible electorate tends to be younger than the non-Latino eligible electorate, with 18–24-year-olds comprising 19.3% of these Latinos, compared to 9.5% of non-Latinos. In contrast, 51.2% of the non-Latino eligible electorate is 50 and older, compared to 31.9% of Latinos.

Household size California's Latino eligible electorate tends to live in larger households than non-Latinos, with slightly over half (54.3%) of these Latinos living households of four or more, compared with 29.8% of non-Latinos.

Educational attainment California's Latino eligible electorate tends to have lower levels of education than non-Latinos. Nearly half (49.2%) of these Latinos have a high school education or less, compared to 24.7% of non-Latinos. In contrast, only 17.8% of these Latinos have a bachelor's or advanced degree, compared to nearly half (44.4%) of non-Latinos.

Housing California's Latino eligible electorate is less likely to be homeowners and more likely to be renters than non-Latinos. Slightly over half (55.6%) of these Latinos are homeowners, compared to 64.0% of non-Latinos. In contrast, 40.7% of these Latinos are renters, compared to 31.5% of non-Latinos.

Health insurance coverage California's Latino eligible electorate is more likely to lack health insurance coverage than non-Latinos, with 8.0% of these Latinos lacking coverage compared to 3.6% of non-Latinos.

English-language proficiency California's Latino eligible electorate is less likely to be fully proficient in English than non-Latinos. Nearly one of every five (18.7%) of these Latinos speak English "less than very well," the standard which is also used in part under the federal Voting Rights Act to determine which states and localities must provide U.S. citizens

language assistance in the electoral process. In contrast, only 8.8% of non-Latinos have low English-language proficiency.

Employment California's Latino eligible electorate is somewhat more likely to be employed than non-Latinos, with 65.8% of these Latinos being employed compared to 59.7% of non-Latinos.

The report also presents information about some similarities between California's Latino and non-Latino eligible electorate, including the gender composition, annual household income, and the share of income that renters pay for housing. When making decisions about policies, programs, and engagement strategies for the Latino eligible electorate, stakeholders must take into account both the differences and similarities between this electorate and non-Latinos.

The report also provides a comparison of the low-income Latino eligible electorate (those with annual household incomes of less than \$40,000) with their higher-income counterparts. Generally, these lower-income Latinos have lower levels of education. Moreover, the oldest segment of California's Latino eligible electorate (age 65 and older) is far more likely to live in low-income households than the higher-income segment. One of every four of these elderly Latinos live in low-income households, compared to only 9.9% of the higher-income Latinos. Additionally, Latinas in California's eligible electorate tend to have slightly lower household incomes than male Latinos.

Finally, this report examines California's Latino registered voters, who comprise 30% of the state's registered voters. The report includes information about their age, party affiliation, and voter turnout in Presidential elections.

Overall, this report's portrait of California's Latino eligible electorate and registered voters serves as a resource for stakeholders and other parties who are making decisions which are vital to the state's future. These stakeholders include California's policymakers, as well as advocates, and community, business, and civic leaders. The report's portrait is particularly salient because it also provides an opportunity for these decision-makers to better understand that California's Latino eligible electorate has a distinct profile which may differ from the California Latino population overall. NALEO Educational Fund believes this resource can guide these decision-makers, with a view to enhancing the strength of the state's democracy and the well-being of all Californians.

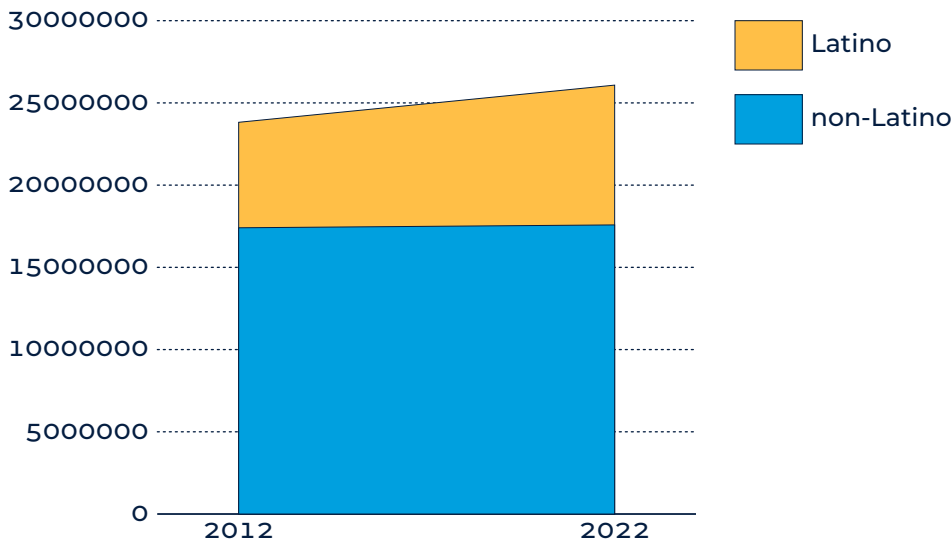
CALIFORNIA'S LATINO POPULATION AND ELECTORATE

Except where otherwise noted, all data are from 2022. See [Sources and methodology](#) for more information.

As of 2022, Latinos comprise slightly more than one-third (36%) of California's total eligible electorate (generally, U.S. citizens at least 18 years old). Notably, though, only about half (54.0%) of Latinos are eligible to vote, compared to three quarters (75.5%) of non-Latinos.

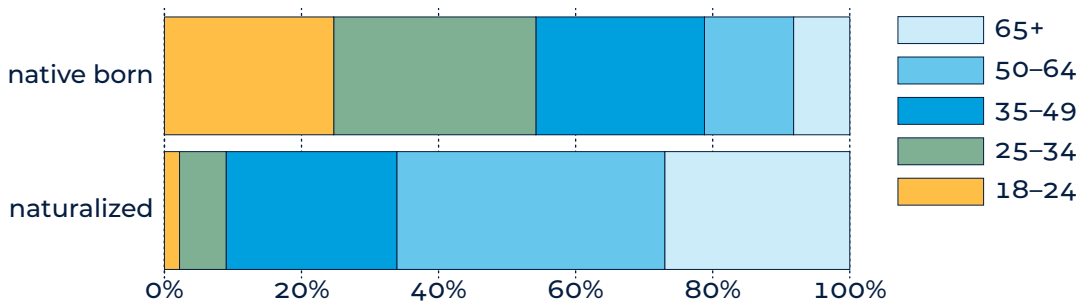
	Latino	non-Latino
total population	15,733,533	23,295,809
electorate	8,501,475	17,580,544

Growth of eligible electorate: 2012–2022



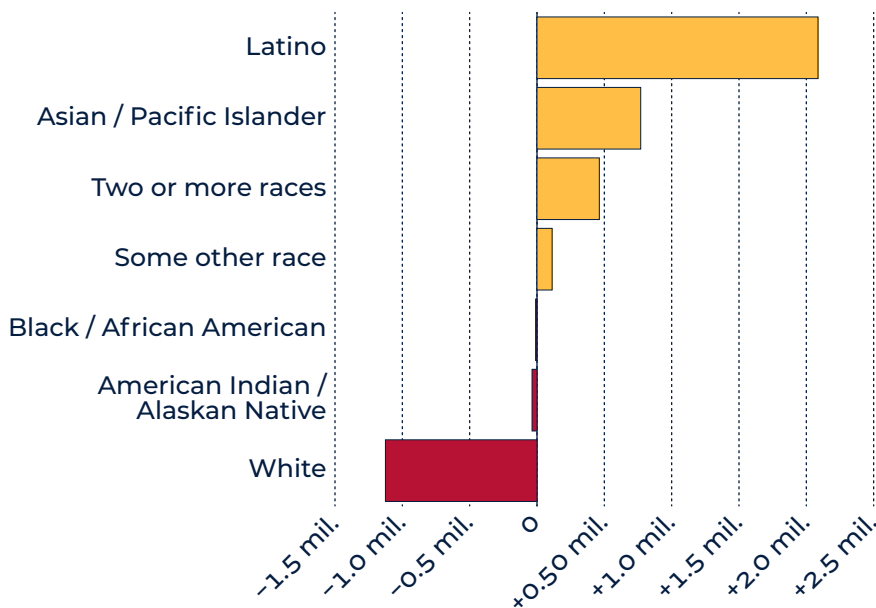
Between 2012 and 2022, California's electorate grew from 23.8 million to 26.1 million. The increase in the Latino eligible electorate—from 6.4 million to 8.5 million—accounted for 92.3% of the state's electorate growth.

Age of native-born and naturalized Latino eligible electorate



Within California’s Latino electorate, native-born Latinos tend to be far younger than naturalized Latinos, with nearly 25% of native-born Latinos being 18–24-year-olds, compared to only 2.2% of the naturalized. Similarly, nearly 30% of the native-born Latino eligible electorate are 25–34-year-olds, compared to 6.8% of naturalized Latinos. In contrast, only 21.2% of the native-born Latino eligible electorate is 50 and older, compared to nearly two-thirds (66.1%) of naturalized Latinos.

Change in eligible electorate population groups: 2012–2022



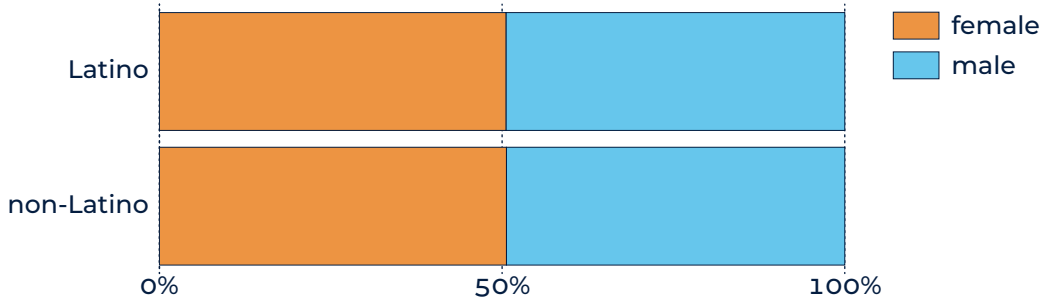
Between 2012 and 2022, the growth in the Latino electorate exceeded the combined growth of the Asian / Pacific Islander, ‘some other race’, and ‘two or more races’ eligible electorates. There were slight declines in the Black and American Indian and Alaskan Native eligible electorates, and a comparatively large decline in the non-Hispanic White eligible electorate.

CALIFORNIA'S LATINO AND NON-LATINO ELECTORATE

A COMPARISON

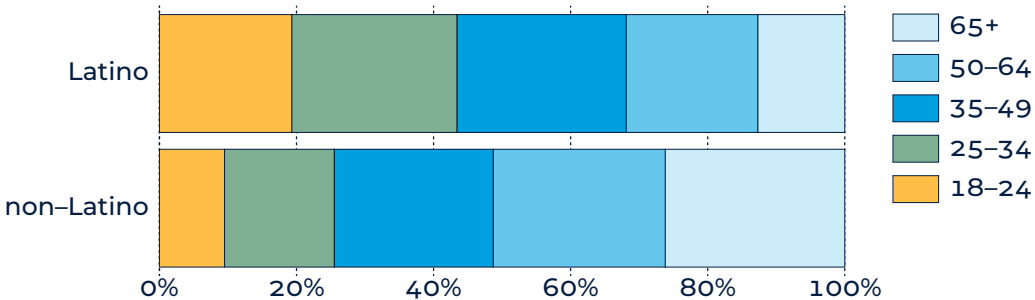
Except where otherwise noted, all data are from 2022. See [Sources and methodology](#) for more information.

Gender



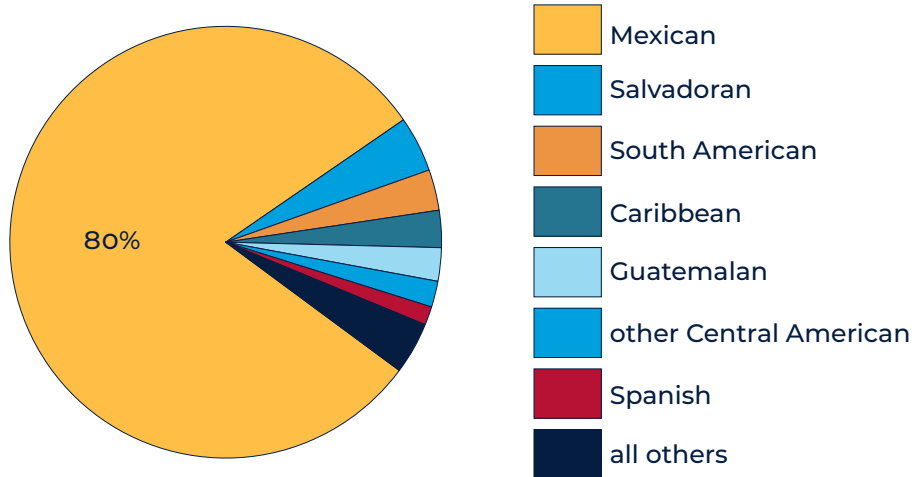
California's Latino and non-Latino eligible electorate have the same gender composition, with females comprising 50.6% of each group.

Age



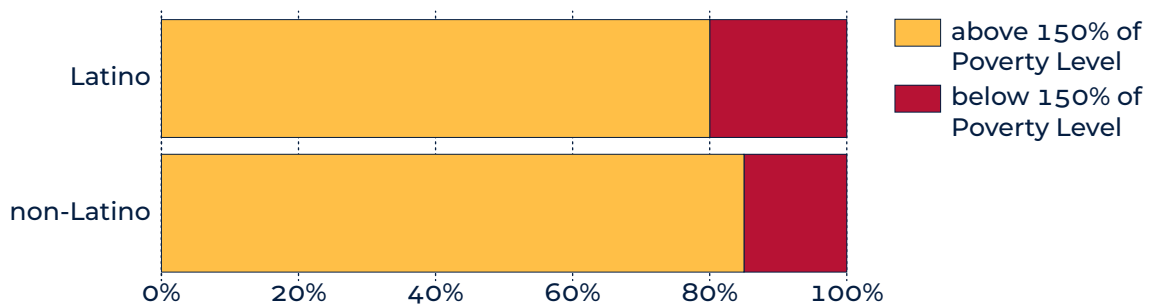
California's Latino eligible electorate tends to be younger than its non-Latino electorate, with 18-24-year-olds comprising 19.3% of these Latinos, compared to 9.5% of these non-Latinos. Similarly, 24.1% of the state's Latino electorate are 25-34-year-olds, compared to 16.1% of non-Latinos. In contrast, 51.2% of the eligible non-Latino electorate is 50 and older, compared to 31.9% of Latinos.

National origin and subgroups



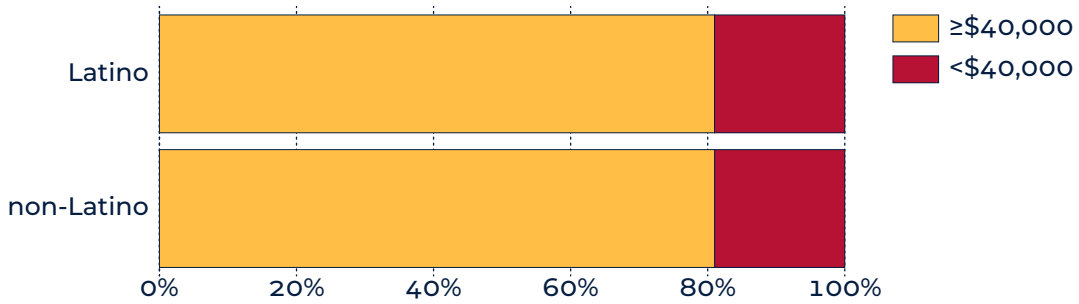
While Mexicans comprise the largest subgroup (80.0%) of California’s Latino eligible electorate, this electorate is diverse, with 20.0% coming from several different Caribbean, Central American, and South American areas.

Poverty level



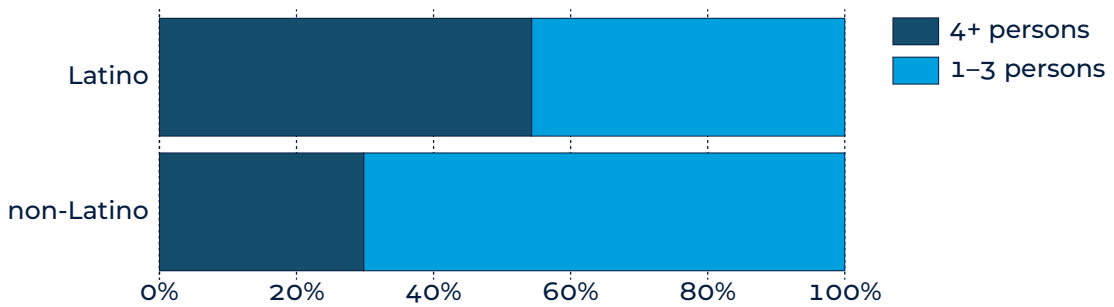
Latinos in California’s eligible electorate are more likely to live in poverty than non-Latinos. One in five (20.0%) Latinos in the electorate live below 150% of the poverty level, compared to 15.0% of non-Latinos.

Household income



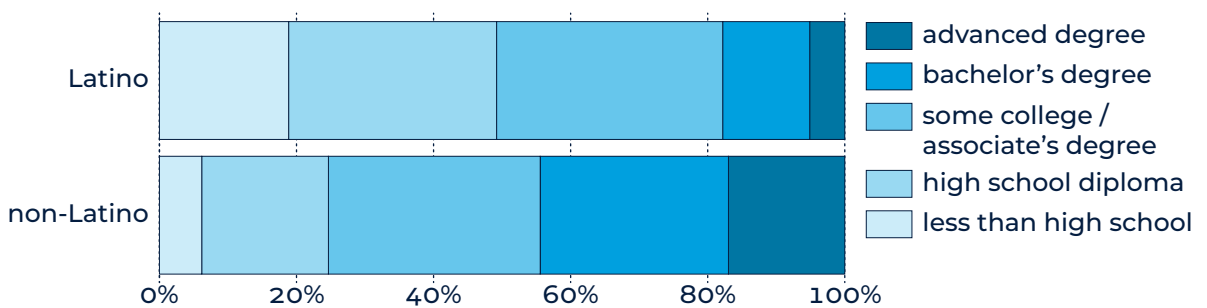
For both Latino and non-Latinos in the eligible electorate, nearly a fifth (19.0%) have annual household incomes under \$40,000, while 81.0% of both groups have annual household incomes of \$40,000 or more.

Household size



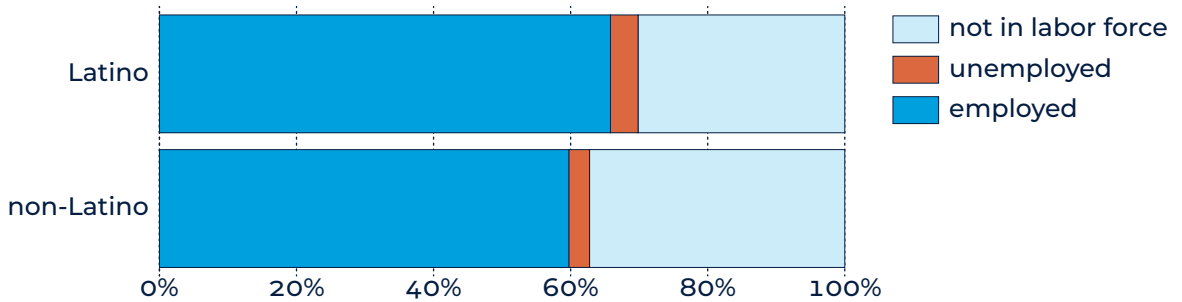
California's Latino eligible electorate tends to live in larger households than non-Latinos, with slightly over half (54.3%) of these Latinos living households of four or more, compared with just 29.8% of non-Latinos.

Educational attainment



California's Latino eligible electorate tends to have lower levels of education than non-Latinos. Nearly half of these Latinos (49.1%) have a high school education or less, compared to 24.7% of non-Latinos. By contrast, only 17.8% of these Latinos have a bachelor's or advanced degree, compared to nearly half (44.5%) of non-Latinos.

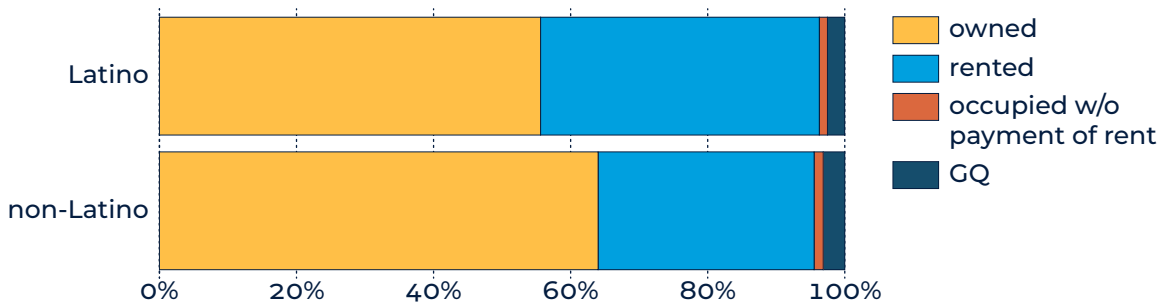
Employment



California's Latino eligible electorate has a higher employment rate than its non-Latino electorate, with 65.8% of these Latinos being employed compared to 59.7% of non-Latinos.

Not in labor force consists mainly of students, homemakers, retired workers, institutionalized persons, and certain seasonal workers.

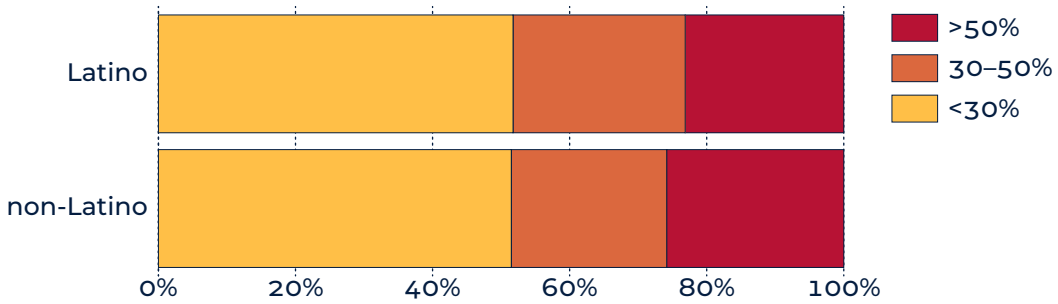
Housing



California's Latino eligible electorate has a lower home-ownership rate than its non-Latino electorate. Slightly more than half (55.6%) of these Latinos are homeowners, compared to 64.0% of non-Latinos. In contrast, 40.7% of these Latinos are renters, compared to 31.5% of non-Latinos.

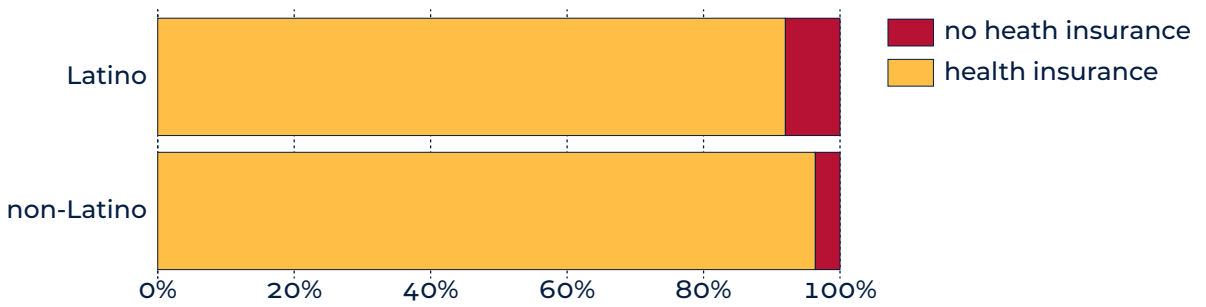
GQ refers to 'group quarters'

Rent as a share of income



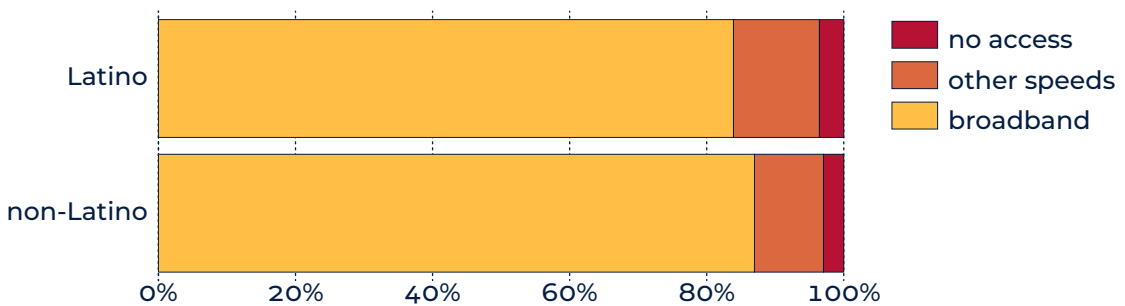
The share of income California's Latino eligible electorate pays for rent is very similar to that paid by non-Latinos, with around one-quarter of each group paying 50% or more for rent, and slightly more than half paying 30% or less.

Health insurance



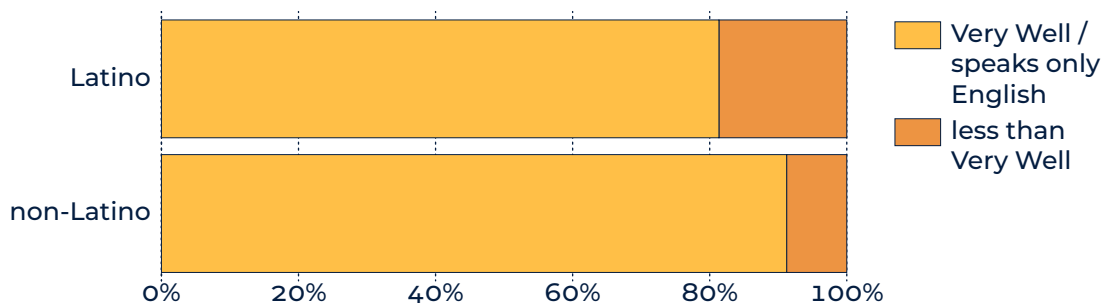
The share of California's Latino eligible electorate without health insurance (8.0%) is more than twice as large as the share of the non-Latino eligible electorate without health insurance (3.6%).

Internet access



Latino and non-Latino eligible electorates have similar rates of internet access (greater than 96.4%), but Latinos are somewhat less likely than non-Latinos to have broadband access, with 83.9% having broadband compared to 87.0% of non-Latinos.

English-language proficiency



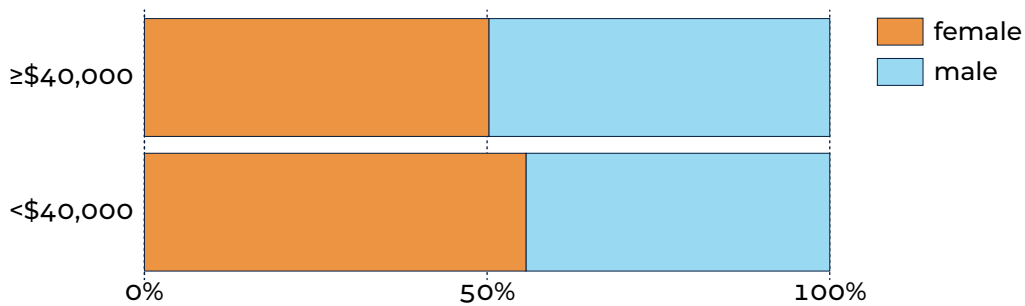
Nearly a fifth (18.7%) of California’s Latino eligible electorate speaks English ‘less than Very Well’, a threshold used by the federal Voting Rights Act to determine which localities must provide language assistance in the electoral process. By comparison, only 8.8% of non-Latinos have low English-language proficiency.

CALIFORNIA'S LOW-INCOME ELECTORATE

Except where otherwise noted, all data are from 2022. See [Sources and methodology](#) for more information.

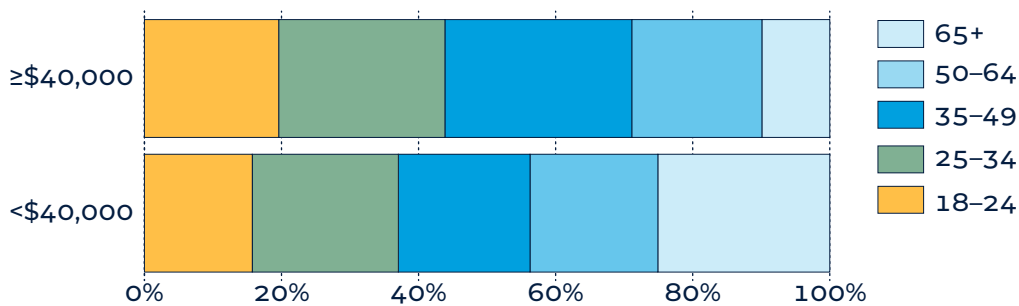
Nearly a fifth (19.0%) of Latinos in the state's eligible electorate live in households with annual incomes of less than \$40,000 ('low income'). This section of the report will examine how these Latinos compare with higher income Latinos.

Gender



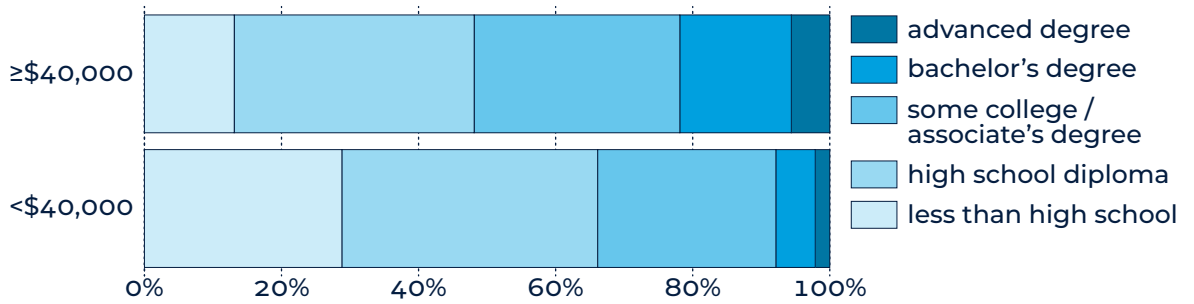
Latinas in California's eligible electorate tend to have slightly lower household incomes than male Latinos. About one of every five (20.6%) of these Latinas have annual household incomes less than \$40,000, compared to 17.3% of male Latinos.

Age



There is a significant difference in the household income of the older Latino eligible electorate, with over a third (37.3%) of those 65 and older living in a low-income household. By comparison, no other age bracket has more than 20% living in low-income households.

Educational attainment



Generally, the low-income Latino eligible electorate has lower education levels than the higher-income electorate. Two-thirds (66.1%) of these low-income Latinos have a high school education or less, and only 7.9% have a bachelor's or advanced degree.

In contrast, 48.1% of higher income Latinos have a high school education or less, with more than one of five (21.9%) having a bachelor's or advanced degree.

CALIFORNIA'S LATINO REGISTERED VOTERS AND VOTER TURNOUT

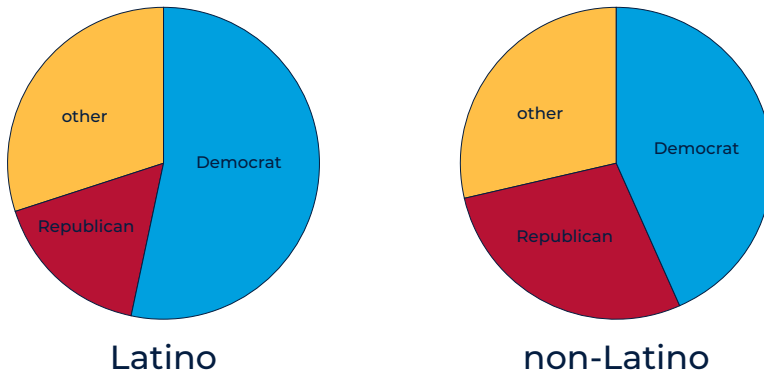
as of April 30, 2024

Nearly one of every three (29.6%) California registered voters are Latino.

21,686,720 total registered voters

6,422,501 Latino registered voters

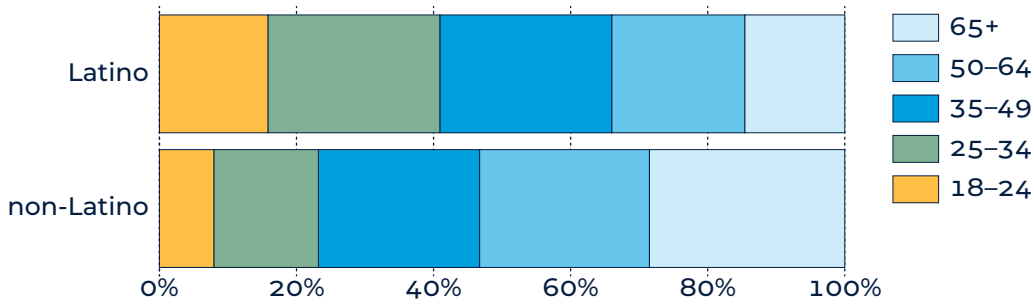
Party Affiliation



California's Latinos are more likely to be Democrats than non-Latinos, with 53.5% of Latinos affiliating with the Democratic Party, compared to 43.6% of non-Latinos. Latinos are less likely to be Republicans than the non-Latino electorate. One of every six Latino registered voters (16.7%) is Republican, compared to 27.4% of non-Latinos.

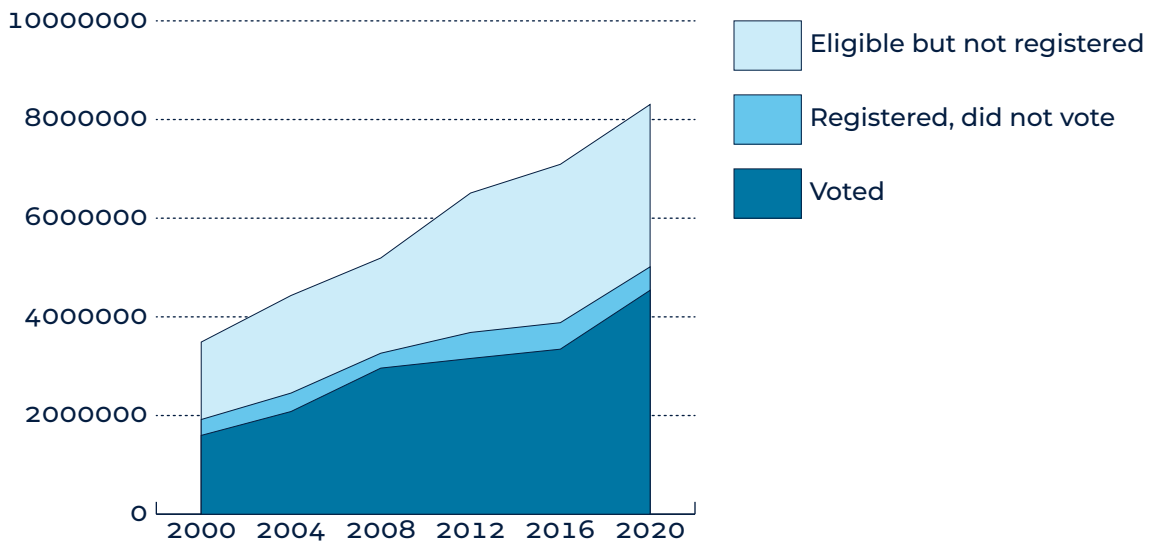
The share of registered voters unaffiliated with either major political party is very close to 30% for both Latinos and non-Latinos.

Age



California Latino registered voters tend to be younger than non-Latinos, with 18–24-year-olds comprising 15.8% of registered Latinos, compared to 7.9% of non-Latinos. Similarly, 25–34-year-olds comprise 25.1% of Latino registered voters, compared to 15.3% of non-Latinos. In contrast, over half (53.3%) of non-Latino registered voters are 50 and older, compared to just a third (34.0%) of Latinos.

Latino voter turnout



Between 2000 and 2020, the Latino vote nearly tripled, growing from 1.6 million to 4.5 million, an increase of 184%. During the same period, the Latino voting-age citizen population generally grew steadily, reaching 8.3 million in 2020. Between 2000 and 2020, the growth in the number of Latinos who cast ballots generally kept pace with the growth in Latinos registered vote, which indicates that once registered, Latinos have relatively high turnout rates.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

For ease of data collection and presentation, the “eligible electorate” in this report refers to U.S. citizens who are at least age 18, although there are some who may not be eligible to vote because of incarceration status or other reasons.

This report generally uses two sources of data for the characteristics of the California eligible electorate. The first is the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2022 American Community Survey (ACS), one-year estimates data, which we accessed through the Bureau’s ACS Public Use Microdata Sample files. The ACS is conducted every year and is an on-going survey of a sample of the population which produces estimates of various population characteristics. The report uses ACS data for the size and growth of the eligible electorate, as well as its gender composition, age, national origin composition, household size, educational attainment, employment status, housing and housing costs, health insurance coverage, internet access, and English-language proficiency. Because of the manner in which ACS data are derived from the PUMS file, some of the data in this report may differ slightly from summary data presented in the tables provided on the data.census.gov website.

This report also uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2022 Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplement, because this data source generally has more flexibility to obtain data on certain socio-economic characteristics related to income. This report uses these CPS data for household income, poverty level, as well as the comparisons between lower-income and higher-income Latino households. The CPS data used in this report and the survey from which they are derived are subject to certain limitations. The CPS is a national survey, and estimates derived for smaller sub-groups within the national population may be based on relatively small sample sizes. Consequently, the margin of error associated with estimates of different characteristics for these sub-groups is greater than the margin associated with the national population or larger population sub-groups.

For ease of data collection and presentation, this report defines “low-income” households in the Latino eligible electorate as those with annual incomes of less than \$40,000 in 2022. This definition somewhat aligns with other measures used to characterize low-income households or low-wage workers. For example, the University of California, Berkeley, Labor Center [defines ‘low-wage work’](#) as jobs which in 2022 paid less than \$19.69 per hour. For employees who work a traditional 40-hour workweek (or 2,080 hours annually), this would amount to wages of less than \$40,955 annually. We note that there are differences in measures of low-income households

or low-wage, which depend in part on assumptions about the number of hours worked annually, the amount of income families need for necessities of living, and other factors. These differences should be taken into account when comparing data in this report to data from other sources.

The source of the voting and registration data in the profile, unless indicated otherwise, is the CPS, derived from the series of CPS supplements *Voting and Registration in the Election of November [2000–2020]*. As noted above, the CPS voting data used in this profile and the survey from which they are derived are subject to certain limitations. Moreover, actual voter turnout and registration may be overestimated by the CPS because individuals may tend to over-report electoral participation.

NGP Voter Activation Network (VAN) voter file data, April 2024: VAN data are subject to some limitations regarding collecting, entering, maintaining, and analyzing voter file records. All estimates are of Registered Active Voters.

For more information about NALEO Educational Fund's publications about the Latino population or election 2024, please contact Dorian Caal at dcaal@naleo.org or +1.213.765.9450.

