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Factsheet

Latinos in the 2012 Election: California

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Latinos in the 2012 Election: California

This profile provides key demographic information on Latino eligible voters¹ and other major groups of eligible voters in California.² All demographic data are based on Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 American Community Survey.³

Hispanics in California's Eligible Voter Population

- The Hispanic population in California is the largest in the nation.⁴ About 14.1 million Hispanics reside in California, 27.8% of all Hispanics in the United States.
- California's population is 38% Hispanic, the third highest Hispanic population share nationally.
- There are 5.9 million Hispanic eligible voters in California—the largest Hispanic eligible voter population nationally. Texas ranks second with 4.2 million.

Table 1

Population and Electorate in the United States and California, 2010

	U.S.	California	California state rank
Total population (all ages)			
All (thousands)	309,350	37,349	1
Hispanics (thousands)	50,730	14,092	1
Percent Hispanic	16.4	37.7	3
Total eligible voter population (U.S. citizens ages 18 and older)			
All (thousands)	214,972	23,023	1
Hispanics (thousands)	21,509	5,899	1
Percent Hispanic	10.0	25.6	3
Eligibility of Hispanic population			
Percent of Hispanic population eligible to vote	42.4	41.9	20*

Notes: Percentages calculated before rounding. *Rankings for "Percent of Hispanic population eligible to vote" are based on the District of Columbia and the 46 states whose Hispanic samples in the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) are large enough to generate reliable estimates. All other rankings are based on the District of Columbia and the 50 states.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2010 ACS (1% IPUMS sample)

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¹ Eligible voters are defined as U.S. citizens ages 18 and older. Eligible voters are not the same as registered voters. To cast a vote, in all states except North Dakota, an eligible voter must first register to vote.

² The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably. References to other races and ethnicities are to the non-Hispanic components of those populations.

³ This statistical profile of eligible voters is based on the Census Bureau's 2010 [American Community Survey](#) (ACS). The ACS is the largest household survey in the United States, with a sample of about 3 million addresses. The data used for this statistical profile come from the 2010 ACS Integrated Public Use Microdata Series ([IPUMS](#)), representing a 1% sample of the U.S. population. Like any survey, estimates from the ACS are subject to sampling error and (potentially) measurement error. More information is available on [ACS sampling strategy](#) and [associated error](#).

⁴ Rankings for "Percent of Hispanic population eligible to vote" are based on the District of Columbia and the 46 states whose Hispanic samples in the 2010 ACS are large enough to generate reliable estimates. All other rankings are based on the District of Columbia and the 50 states.

- Some 26% of California eligible voters are Hispanic, the third largest Hispanic eligible voter share nationally. New Mexico ranks first with 39%.
- About 42% of Hispanics in California are eligible to vote, ranking California 20th nationwide in the share of the Hispanic population that is eligible to vote. By contrast, 80% of the state's white population is eligible to vote.

Characteristics of Eligible Voters

- Age.** One-third of Hispanic eligible voters in California (35%) are ages 18 to 29, similar to the share of all Latino eligible voters nationwide (33%) in that age range. By contrast, only 24% of all California eligible voters and 22% of all U.S. eligible voters are ages 18 to 29.
- Citizenship and Nativity.** Among Hispanic eligible voters in California, 28% are naturalized U.S. citizens. This compares with 25% of Hispanic eligible voters in the U.S. and 20% of all eligible voters in California, but just 8% of eligible voters in the U.S. overall.
- Hispanic Origin.** Hispanic eligible voters in California have a different Hispanic origin profile from Hispanic eligible voters nationwide. More than eight-in-ten (81%) of Hispanic eligible voters in California are of Mexican origin, 4% are of Salvadoran origin, and 15% claim other Hispanic origin. Among all Hispanic eligible voters nationwide, only six-in-ten (59%) are

Table 2

Characteristics of Eligible Voters in California and the United States, 2010

(% of eligible voters, unless otherwise noted)

	U.S.		California	
	All	Hispanics	All	Hispanics
Total population (thousands)	309,350	50,730	37,349	14,092
Total eligible voter population (thousands)	214,972	21,509	23,023	5,899
Age				
18-29	21.6	32.8	23.7	35.3
30-44	24.6	29.3	24.9	28.4
45-54	19.4	16.7	19.0	16.3
55-64	16.3	10.9	15.6	10.4
65 and older	18.2	10.4	16.9	9.6
Gender				
Male	48.2	48.3	48.8	48.4
Female	51.8	51.7	51.2	51.6
Type of citizen				
Citizen by birth	92.2	74.9	80.3	72.2
Naturalized citizen	7.8	25.1	19.7	27.8
Language				
Speaks only English at home	86.2	30.7	67.7	31.9
Does not speak only English at home	13.8	69.3	32.3	68.1
Educational attainment				
Less than high school diploma	12.3	24.7	12.7	25.6
High school diploma or equivalent	29.1	28.6	22.1	27.4
Some college	32.4	32.5	36.0	35.0
Bachelor's degree or more	26.3	14.3	29.2	12.0
Marital status				
Married	50.9	44.7	48.3	44.0
Never married	28.1	37.4	32.3	40.4
Divorced/separated/widowed	20.9	17.9	19.3	15.6
With child younger than 18 in home	25.0	31.1	24.8	30.5
Homeownership rate	68.8	58.2	61.8	56.7
Hispanic origin				
Mexican	---	59.1	---	81.1
Puerto Rican	---	14.4	---	2.3
Cuban	---	4.8	---	1.1
Salvadoran	---	2.4	---	4.1
Dominican	---	3.1	---	0.1
Other	---	16.2	---	11.3
Household income				
Less than \$30,000	22.9	25.3	18.4	20.0
\$30,000-\$49,999	18.6	20.7	15.8	19.8
\$50,000-\$74,999	19.6	21.0	18.2	22.1
\$75,000-\$99,999	13.8	13.3	14.1	14.9
\$100,000 or more	25.1	19.7	33.4	23.3

Notes: Eligible voters are citizens ages 18 and older. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2010 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS sample)

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Mexican, 2% are Salvadoran, and nearly four-in-ten (38%) are of some other Hispanic origin.

- ***Educational Attainment.*** More than one-quarter of Latino eligible voters in California (26%) have not completed high school, about double the 13% of all California eligible voters who have not completed high school.
- ***Homeownership.*** Nearly six-in-ten Hispanic eligible voters in California (57%) live in owner-occupied homes, similar to the share of all Hispanic eligible voters nationwide (58%). Somewhat greater shares of all eligible voters in California (62%) and all eligible voters nationwide (69%) live in owner-occupied homes.

Characteristics of Eligible Voters in California, by Race and Ethnicity

- Number of Eligible Voters.** White eligible voters outnumber Hispanic eligible voters in California by about 2 to 1; Hispanic eligible voters outnumber Asian eligible voters by about 2 to 1 and black eligible voters by more than 3 to 1.
- Age.** Latino eligible voters are younger than black, Asian and white eligible voters in California. Some 35% of Latinos are ages 18 to 29, compared with 24% of black eligible voters, 21% of Asian eligible voters and 18% of white eligible voters.
- Educational Attainment.** Hispanic eligible voters have lower levels of education than do white, Asian and black eligible voters in California. Some 26% of Hispanic eligible voters have not obtained at least a high school diploma, compared with 13% of black eligible voters, 12% of Asian eligible voters and 7% of white eligible voters.

Table 3

Characteristics of Eligible Voters in California, by Race and Ethnicity, 2010

(% of eligible voters, unless otherwise noted)

	Hispanic	White	Asian	Black
Total population (thousands)	14,092	14,949	4,848	2,157
Total eligible voter population (thousands)	5,899	11,945	2,822	1,598
Age				
18-29	35.3	17.9	21.3	24.2
30-44	28.4	22.0	27.5	26.9
45-54	16.3	20.1	19.3	20.8
55-64	10.4	18.5	15.8	14.7
65 and older	9.6	21.5	16.1	13.5
Gender				
Male	48.4	49.4	46.8	48.7
Female	51.6	50.6	53.2	51.3
Type of citizen				
Citizen by birth	72.2	93.2	31.4	95.9
Naturalized citizen	27.8	6.8	68.6	4.1
Language				
Speaks only English at home	31.9	91.4	24.4	94.7
Does not speak only English at home	68.1	8.6	75.6	5.3
Educational attainment				
Less than high school diploma	25.6	6.5	12.2	12.6
High school diploma or equivalent	27.4	20.7	14.8	25.1
Some college	35.0	36.9	29.0	43.4
Bachelor's degree or more	12.0	35.9	44.0	18.9
Marital Status				
Married	44.0	51.4	56.7	30.4
Never married	40.4	26.7	29.9	44.8
Divorced/separated/widowed	15.6	21.9	13.4	24.8
With child younger than 18 in home	30.5	21.6	27.5	23.2
Homeownership rate	56.7	66.3	67.5	40.0
Household income				
Less than \$30,000	20.0	16.9	14.9	29.4
\$30,000-\$49,999	19.8	14.6	11.6	18.1
\$50,000-\$74,999	22.1	16.8	15.9	17.9
\$75,000-\$99,999	14.9	13.9	13.8	13.1
\$100,000 or more	23.3	37.7	43.7	21.5

Notes: Eligible voters are citizens ages 18 and older. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Hispanics are of any race. Whites, Asians and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2010 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS sample)

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- **Homeownership.** Hispanic eligible voters (57%) are more likely to live in owner-occupied homes than black (40%) eligible voters in California, but they are less likely to do so than Asian (67%) or white (66%) eligible voters in California.