



## HISPANIC METROPOLITAN UNEMPLOYMENT IN 2011 Providence, RI, again tops the list

BY ALGERNON AUSTIN

In 2011, the nationwide Hispanic unemployment rate stood at 11.5 percent—and in several of the country's large metropolitan areas, the Hispanic unemployment rate was significantly higher.

This issue brief examines Hispanic unemployment rates of the 25 large metropolitan areas for which we could derive reliable estimates.<sup>1</sup> The key findings of this brief are:

- With a Hispanic unemployment rate of 23.3 percent, the Providence, R.I., metro area had the highest rate in 2011 of all metro areas examined. This rate was 2.5 times Providence's white rate.
- Providence was followed by the Orlando, Fla., Riverside, Calif., and Las Vegas metro areas, which had Hispanic unemployment rates of 16.6 percent, 15.4 percent, and 14.7 percent, respectively.

- The lowest Hispanic unemployment rate, 5.9 percent, was in the Washington, D.C., metro area.

### Hispanic metro unemployment rates in 2011

In 2011, as in 2010, the Providence metropolitan area had the highest Hispanic unemployment rate among the large metro areas examined. For the past three years, the Latino unemployment rate in the Providence metro area has surpassed 20 percent—comparable to the highest overall national rates during the Great Depression (Carter et al. 2006).

The unemployment rate of Latinos in the Providence metropolitan area was 23.3 percent in 2011, significantly higher than the rates of the Orlando (16.6 percent), Riverside (15.4 percent), and Las Vegas (14.7 percent) metros, which ranked second, third, and fourth, respectively (**Table 1**).

TABLE 1

## Hispanic unemployment rates of selected metropolitan areas, 2010 and 2011

2011 rank*	Metropolitan area	2011	2010	2010-2011 percentage-point change
1	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, R.I.-Mass.	23.3%	25.2%	-1.9
2	Orlando, Fla.	16.6%	16.1%	0.5
3	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, Calif.	15.4%	18.1%	-2.7
4	Las Vegas-Paradise, Nev.	14.7%	18.0%	-3.4
5	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, Pa.-N.J.-Del.-Md.	14.3%	12.1%	2.2
6	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, Calif.	13.8%	14.3%	-0.5
7	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, Calif.	12.9%	12.0%	1.0
8	McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr, Texas	12.8%	11.5%	1.3
8	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, Calif.	12.8%	13.3%	-0.5
10	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, Calif.	11.4%	12.8%	-1.4
11	Albuquerque, N.M.	11.3%	9.3%	2.0
11	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, Ill.-Ind.-Wis.	11.3%	12.9%	-1.6
13	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, Calif.	11.0%	10.9%	0.1
14	Denver-Aurora, Colo.	10.7%	12.1%	-1.4
14	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach, Fla.	10.7%	12.6%	-1.9
16	El Paso, Texas	10.6%	9.4%	1.2
17	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-Pa.	10.3%	11.1%	-0.8
18	Austin-Round Rock, Texas	9.8%	8.8%	0.9
19	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, Texas	9.7%	10.1%	-0.4
20	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, Ariz.	9.5%	12.3%	-2.8
21	San Antonio, Texas	8.7%	9.4%	-0.7
22	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, Ga.	7.9%	9.5%	-1.6
23	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, Mass.-N.H.	7.7%	9.3%	-1.6
24	Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, Texas	7.3%	8.9%	-1.6
25	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va.	5.9%	7.0%	-1.1
<b>National Hispanic unemployment rate</b>		<b>11.5%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>-1.0</b>

\* The table uses "standard competition ranking," wherein items that tie for a position in the ranking receive the same ranking number, and the ranking numbers of all those below them reflect how many competitors rank above them.

**Notes:** 2010 estimates may differ from those in Austin 2011 because of revisions to the Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Percentage-point changes may not sum properly due to rounding.

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)

**Sources:** Author's analysis of basic monthly Current Population Survey microdata and Local Area Unemployment Statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

In 2011, the Providence metropolitan area was the only metro with a Hispanic unemployment rate above 20 percent. Sixteen additional metros had Hispanic unemployment rates greater than 10 percent. The lowest rate was in the Washington, D.C., metro area, which had a rate of 5.9 percent. In 2010, the D.C. metro area also had the lowest rate.

The Hispanic unemployment rates in the Las Vegas, Phoenix, and Riverside metropolitan areas declined significantly from 2010 to 2011. In contrast, the Philadelphia and Albuquerque, N.M., metropolitan areas had significant increases over the same period.

As shown in **Table 2**, in 2011 the Latino unemployment rate was at least twice the white rate in Albuquerque (2.5 times), Providence (2.5 times), Orlando (2.2 times), Philadelphia (2.1 times), and San Francisco (2.0 times). The white and Latino rates were nearly the same in the Sacramento, Calif., Atlanta, and Houston metro areas.

## Conclusion

Hispanics in many of the nation's large metropolitan areas continued to experience high unemployment levels in 2011. Seventeen of the 25 metros examined had Hispanic unemployment rates above 10 percent.

America's metropolitan areas need more economic stimulus programs, particularly infrastructure investments and aid to state and local governments. There is broad agreement among economists that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act worked; the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the act created over three million jobs (Montgomery 2012). Hispanics, who are overrepresented in the construction industry (Pew Hispanic Center 2012), would benefit especially from infrastructure investments that put construction workers back to work.

—*This issue brief is supported by a grant from the Open Society Foundations*

## Endnote

1. Unemployment rate estimates were created for metropolitan areas that had a sufficient Hispanic sample size in the Current Population Survey for reliable estimates. Austin 2011 included some metropolitan areas below the sample size threshold used in this issue brief.

## References

Austin, Algernon. 2011. *Hispanic Unemployment Highest in Northeast Metropolitan Areas*. Economic Policy Institute, Issue Brief #314. <http://www.epi.org/publication/hispanic-unemployment-northeast/>

Carter, Susan B., Scott Sigmund Gartner, Michael R. Haines, Alan L. Olmstead, Richard Sutch, and Gavin Wright, eds. 2006. "Table Ba470-477 Labor force, employment, and unemployment: 1890-1990," in *Historical Statistics of the United States: Earliest Times to the Present, Millennial Edition*, vol. 2, pp. 82-83. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Current Population Survey basic monthly microdata. Various years. Survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics [machine-readable microdata file]. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau. [http://thedataweb.rm.census.gov/ftp/cps\\_ftp.html](http://thedataweb.rm.census.gov/ftp/cps_ftp.html)

Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Various years. Survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor. <http://www.bls.gov/lau/lauov.htm>

TABLE 2

## Hispanic-to-white unemployment rate ratios of selected metropolitan areas, 2011

Rank*	Metropolitan area	Ratio
1	Albuquerque, N.M.	2.5
1	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, R.I.-Mass.	2.5
3	Orlando, Fla.	2.2
4	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, Pa.-N.J.-Del.-Md.	2.1
5	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, Calif.	2.0
6	Austin-Round Rock, Texas	1.9
7	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, Texas	1.7
8	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-Pa.	1.6
9	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach, Fla.	1.5
9	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, Calif.	1.5
9	Denver-Aurora, Colo.	1.5
9	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, Ill.-Ind.-Wis.	1.5
13	San Antonio, Texas	1.4
13	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va.	1.4
13	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, Calif.	1.4
13	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, Calif.	1.4
17	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, Mass.-N.H.	1.3
18	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, Ariz.	1.2
18	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, Calif.	1.2
18	Las Vegas-Paradise, Nev.	1.2
21	Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, Texas	1.1
21	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, Ga.	1.1
23	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, Calif.	1.0
-	El Paso, Texas	**
-	McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr, Texas	**
<b>National ratio</b>		<b>1.6</b>

\* The table uses "standard competition ranking," wherein items that tie for a position in the ranking receive the same ranking number, and the ranking numbers of all those below them reflect how many competitors rank above them.

\*\* El Paso, Texas, and McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr, Texas, did not have a sufficient white sample size to calculate white unemployment estimates.

**Note:** White unemployment data exclude white Hispanics.

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)

**Sources:** Author's analysis of basic monthly Current Population Survey microdata and Local Area Unemployment Statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Montgomery, Lori. 2012. "Congressional Budget Office Defends Stimulus," *Washington Post*, June 6.  
[http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/congressional-budget-office-defends-stimulus/2012/06/06/gJQAnFnjJV\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/congressional-budget-office-defends-stimulus/2012/06/06/gJQAnFnjJV_story.html)

Pew Hispanic Center. 2012. "Table 29. Industry, by Race and Ethnicity, 2010," in *Statistical Portrait of Hispanics in the United States 2010*. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/02/21/statistical-portrait-of-hispanics-in-the-united-states-2010/>