

Demographic Characteristics of the Latino Population in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area



Introduction

This is the first installment of three fact sheets about the Latino population in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Statistical Area. Together, these fact sheets will provide the context for a forthcoming report on the economic and fiscal impacts of this population in the metro area. Special emphasis will be placed on the characteristics and impact of the Latino population in the city of Council Bluffs, Iowa, about which little has been written. The project is funded by the Iowa West Foundation, in collaboration with the Mammel Foundation, anonymous donors and the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Data for this fact sheet are based on OLLAS tabulations taken from the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census and the 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS). The report also includes data from Iowa's Bureau of Vital Statistics and from Nebraska's Department of Health and Human Services. A Spanish version of this fact sheet is forthcoming.

The Hispanic¹ population in Iowa and Nebraska grew at a somewhat slower pace from 2000 to 2010 than it had during the previous decade. Nonetheless, these two

“new immigrant destination” states were among the top ten states in the nation with the highest Latino population growth rate. Table 1 shows Iowa's Latino population growing at almost 84% while Nebraska's grew at slightly more than 77%. In contrast, the total population of Iowa and Nebraska grew by roughly four percent and seven percent respectively. Hispanics accounted for more than two-thirds of the two states' growth in the latest decade. In dramatic contrast, the white population experienced near zero or less-than-zero growth. The Pew Hispanic Center has recalculated some of the data from the 2010 census and the American Community Survey which reveals even higher rates of growth for both states' Hispanic population.² According to the Pew Hispanic calculations, the Latino population in Iowa and Nebraska increased 109.8% and 109.7% respectively. The 2010 census established that there were 151,544 Latinos in Iowa and 167,405 Latinos in Nebraska. In reality, the figures are likely higher, and the significance of the Latino and minority populations for the future of the metro area cannot be underestimated.

TABLE 1. POPULATION CHANGE BY RACE AND ETHNICITY FOR IOWA AND NEBRASKA

	Iowa			Nebraska		
	2000	2010	% Population Change	2000	2010	% Population Change
Total Population	2,926,324	3,046,355	4.10	1,711,263	1,826,341	6.72
Latinos	82,473	151,544	83.75	94,425	167,405	77.29
Whites	2,710,344	2,701,123	-0.34	1,494,494	1,499,753	0.35
Blacks	60,744	86,906	43.07	67,537	80,959	19.87

Source: OLLAS calculations based on the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census.

Latino Population Growth in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area

About a quarter of the combined Latino population in these two states, or 77,508 Latinos, live in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Statistical Metropolitan Area.³ This statistical area is made up of five counties in Nebraska (Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, Saunders and Washington) plus three counties in Iowa (Harrison, Mills and Pottawattamie). Table 2 details the population count and growth for this metro area and each of its counties in the last decade. The Hispanic growth rate in new destination metro areas slowed considerably across the country by the end of the decade, when traditional immigrant niche labor markets such as construction and manufacturing were hit hard by the economic recession that began at the end of 2007. The impact of the recession was not as severe in the region, and in the Omaha-Council

Bluffs metro area, the dip was less pronounced. The Latino population in the metro area experienced a 5.2% increase in 2009-2010 compared to 6.6% in 2005-2006.⁴ Latinos seem to have largely remained in place, and the area even attracted new Latino workers from states such as Nevada, which endured a much more severe housing crisis.⁵

Also of interest is the fact that, according to the 2000 and 2010 censuses, Douglas County, Nebraska, which had grown at a much faster rate than Pottawattamie County, Iowa in the 1990s, grew at less than half the earlier rate, or 87% compared to 192%. In contrast, the Latino population in Pottawattamie County grew at a slightly higher rate during the 2000-2010 decade, compared to the previous one (about 113% versus 105%).

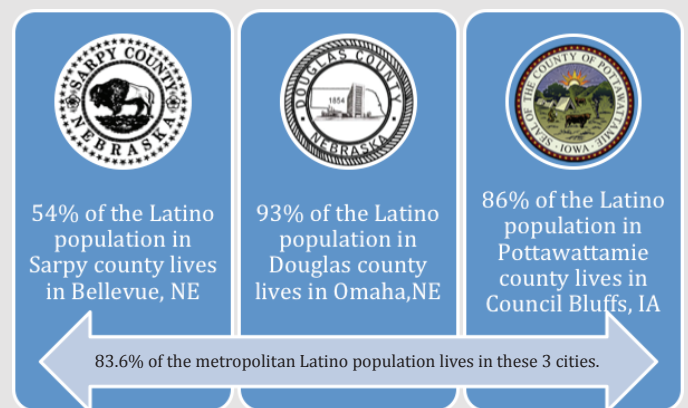
TABLE 2. LATINO POPULATION GROWTH IN THE OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA BY COUNTY

County	Latinos			White			Black		
	2000	2010	% change 2000-2010	2000	2010	% change 2000-2010	2000	2010	% change 2000-2010
Cass County, NE	355	608	71.30	23,571	24,083	2.20	43	82	90.70
Douglas County, NE	30,928	57,804	86.90	362,528	372,029	2.60	52,821	59,176	12.00
Sarpy County, NE	5,358	11,569	115.90	106,823	133,132	24.60	5,231	6,119	17.00
Saunders County, NE	205	415	102.40	19,410	19,992	3.00	21	69	228.60
Washington County, NE	202	419	107.40	18,313	19,405	6.00	62	120	93.50
Harrison County, IA	113	183	61.90	15,384	14,532	-5.50	13	25	92.30
Mills County, IA	179	359	100.60	14,134	14,390	1.80	41	57	39.00
Pottawattamie County, IA	2,892	6,151	112.70	82,667	83,609	1.10	658	1,216	84.80
Total Metro	40,232	77,508	92.70	642,830	681,172	6.00	58,890	66,864	13.50

Source: OLLAS calculations based on the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census.

The largest concentration of Latinos in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area, or 83.6%, is found in just three cities: Council Bluffs in Iowa, and Bellevue and Omaha in Nebraska (Figure 1). Despite Latino population growth on the Iowa side of the metro area, the majority, or nearly 75%, of Latinos in the area live in Douglas County, Nebraska (Figure 2).

FIGURE 1. CONCENTRATION OF LATINOS IN THE OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA IN 2010



Source: Graph produced by OLLAS based on the 2010 U.S. Census.

Latino Population Growth in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area

The Latino population living in the metro area grew by 93% between 2000 and 2010, increasing from 40,232 in 2000 to 77,508 in 2010. In contrast, the non-Latino White population growth rate was only 6%, while the Black population grew moderately at almost 14% during the same decade. Latinos accounted for nearly nine percent of the total metro area population, which stood at 865,350 in 2010 according to the census. Figure 3 again highlights these different growth rates by county shown previously in Table 2. While in many cases the numbers of new Latino and Black residents are small, as in the case of Harrison County, Iowa, or Cass County, Nebraska, the viability of these rapidly depopulating counties may well depend on continuous minority growth. Even in a larger county, such as Pottawattamie County, Iowa, the non-Latino White population grew at rate of 1.1%, well below replacement levels.

The 2010 census counted 5,277 Latinos in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Nearly three-fourths (72%) of those Latinos, or about 4,000 live within just one of the city's two zip codes: 51501. On the Omaha side, despite a perceptible geographic dispersion of Latinos across the city, more than 50% (31,000) of the city's 53,553 Latinos remain concentrated in the three zip codes that make up the core of South Omaha: 68105, 68107 and 68108 (See Figure 4). Council Bluff's total population is 62,230 and Latinos make up 8% of that total. Omaha's total population is 408,958 and Latinos make up 13% of that total.

FIGURE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF LATINOS IN THE OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA, 2010

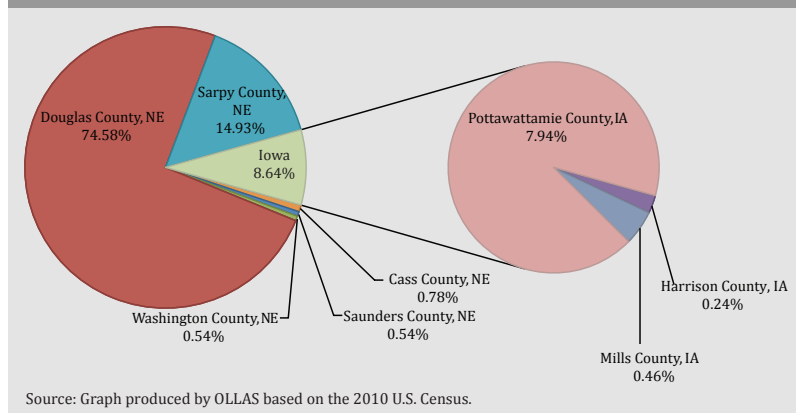


FIGURE 3. 2000-2010 POPULATION CHANGE IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA BY COUNTY AND RACE AND ETHNICITY

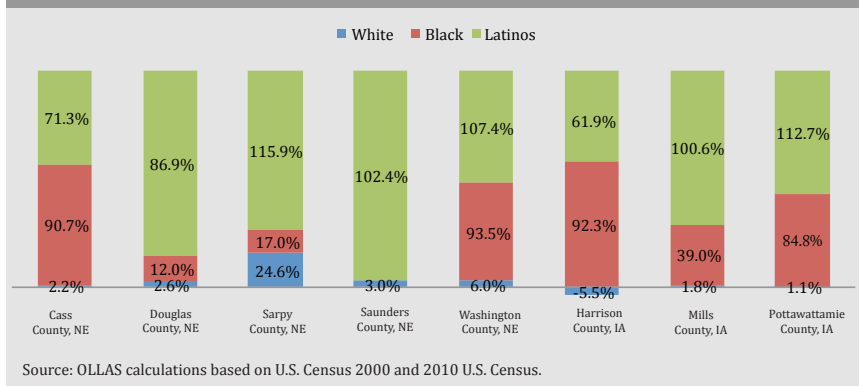
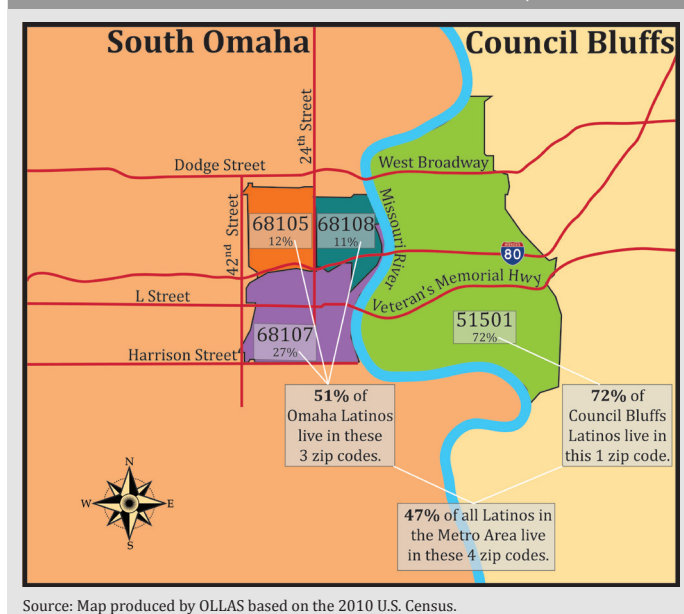


FIGURE 4. ZIP CODES WITH HIGH LATINO POPULATION IN COUNCIL BLUFFS AND SOUTH OMAHA, 2010



Age, Natural Increase and Immigration

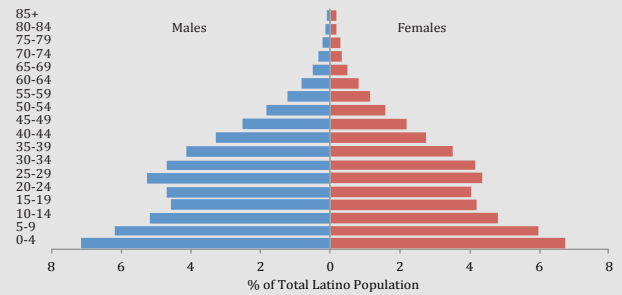
TABLE 3. AGE BREAKDOWNS OF LATINOS, WHITES AND AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA, 2010

	Latino	White	Black
Age	Total %	Total%	Total%
0-4	13.85	6.37	9.49
5-9	12.13	6.53	8.85
10-14	9.93	6.35	8.55
15-19	8.75	6.38	9.11
20-24	8.70	6.44	7.78
25-29	9.57	7.47	7.74
30-34	8.80	6.66	6.96
35-39	7.62	6.43	6.50
40-44	6.03	6.63	6.20
45-49	4.66	7.77	6.71
50-54	3.39	7.61	6.29
55-59	2.32	6.90	4.90
60-64	1.63	5.60	3.63
65-69	0.96	3.86	2.44
70-74	0.65	2.89	1.91
75-79	0.50	2.40	1.40
80-84	0.28	1.85	0.90
85+	0.23	1.87	0.65
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: OLLAS calculations based on the 2010 U.S. Census.

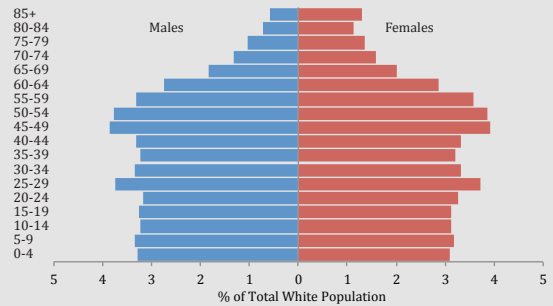
Hispanics are a particularly young population when compared to other ethnic and racial groups. According to the 2010 census, the median age of Latinos in Iowa and Nebraska was less than 23 (22 in Iowa and 23 in Nebraska and the metro area), while that of Whites was almost twice as high (41 in Iowa, 40 in Nebraska and 39 in the metro area). The respective median age for African-Americans was about 26 in Iowa and 29 in both Nebraska and the metro area. Moreover, as Table 3 shows, nearly 14% of Latinos in the metro area were less than five years old in 2010, while less than half that number, or about 6%, of White children were under age five. At the other end of the scale there are more than twice as many African Americans (7%) in the metro area who are over the age of 65 as there are Latinos (2.6%). And there are more than four times as many Whites over the age of 65 (13%) as there are Latinos.

FIGURE 5. AGE-GENDER PYRAMID OF LATINOS IN THE OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA, 2010



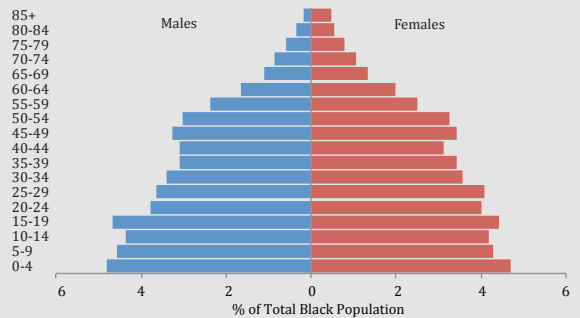
Source: Graph produced by OLLAS based on the 2010 U.S. Census.

FIGURE 6. AGE-GENDER PYRAMID OF WHITES IN THE OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA, 2010



Source: Graph produced by OLLAS based on the 2010 U.S. Census.

FIGURE 7. AGE-GENDER PYRAMID OF BLACKS IN THE OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA, 2010



Source: Graph produced by OLLAS based on the 2010 U.S. Census.

The three age pyramids above, Figures 5, 6 and 7 illustrate the differences in the stages of demographic transitions being experienced by these three groups. The White population pyramid is top heavy, with the majority of its population concentrated among the older years, while the opposite is true of the Latino population. The Black population stands somewhere in the middle of both groups.

Age, Natural Increase and Immigration

TABLE 4. LATINO POPULATION CHANGE IN IOWA AND NEBRASKA DUE TO NATURAL INCREASE, 2000-2010

	Latino Natural Increase from 2000 to 2010	Total Latino Population Change Between 2000-2010	Share of Latino Population Change due to Natural Increase
Iowa	31,847	69,071	46.11
Nebraska	41,181	72,980	56.43

Source: OLLAS calculations based on the Iowa Bureau of Vital Statistics: Reports 2000-2010; the Nebraska Vital Records Reports: 2000-2010; and the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census.

Young age, combined with higher-than-average fertility rates, accounted for a large part of the growth of the Latino population on both sides of the metro area. Recent studies have shown that Latino immigration to the United States slowed considerably, if not stopped altogether, toward the end of the decade. That fact, along with the

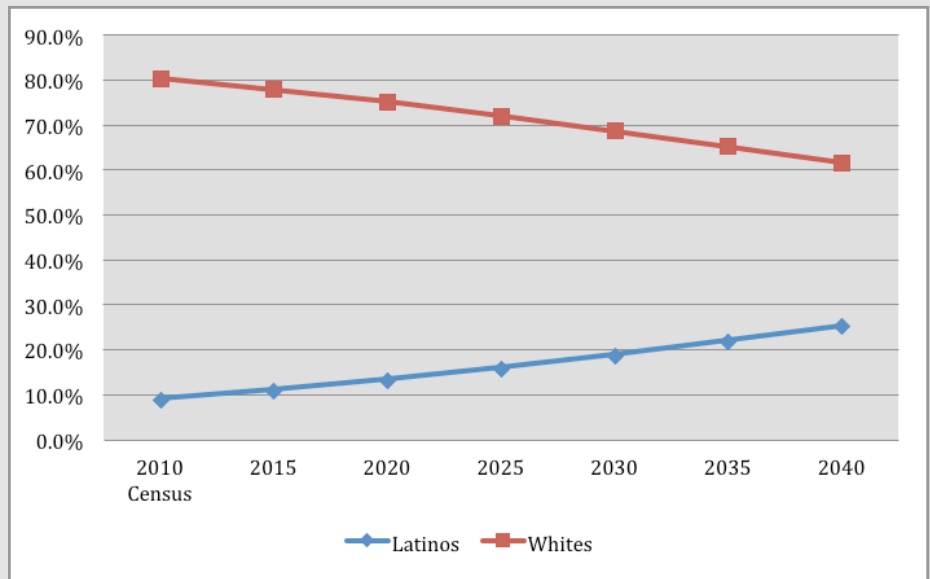
presence of a large population in its fertile years, help explain why most of the growth of the Latino population during the last decade was the result of natural increase.⁶ Nebraska certainly mirrored that trend as more than 56% of the Latino population growth during the 10-year period was due to natural increase. In Iowa, however,

less than half of the change, about 46%, was due to natural increase (Table 4). The majority of the change resulted from new Latino migration to the state. It is safe to assume that most of these immigrant Latinos were moving from neighboring Nebraska and other states, rather than arriving directly from abroad.

Latino Population Projections

Iowa’s State Data Center Program provided OLLAS with projection data for the state of Iowa and the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area.⁷ The original projections were tabulated by Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. Figure 8 shows projections for the Latino and White populations in the metro area out to the year 2040. According to those projections, in less than three years, by 2015, Latinos will have surpassed the 10% mark. By 2025 they will make up more than 15% of the metro area population and by 2040, more than a quarter of the metro population is projected to be Hispanic. In contrast, the White population will continue its decline and by 2040 will make up about 60 percent of the metro area population.

FIGURE 8. PROJECTIONS OF THE LATINO AND WHITE POPULATIONS FOR OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA, 2010 TO 2040



Source: Graph produced by OLLAS based on 2010 U.S. Census tabulations provided by the Iowa’s Data Center.

The Voting Age Population and Citizenship

As the 2012 U.S. presidential election nears, the interest in the Latino vote grows apace. This is the first presidential election when most political pundits and campaign managers tout the Latino vote as decisive, or highly influential in senatorial and/or presidential races in a number of states, including Nebraska and Iowa.⁸ OLLAS published an earlier Data Brief which showed the impact Latinos could have in local and legislative races in Nebraska.⁹ An update of that brief will be published this fall.

At this point, we thought it would be useful to offer some initial indicators of the potential significance of the Latino vote in the metro area.¹⁰ As Table 5 shows, in 2010, there were 16,881 U.S.-born Latinos in the metro area who were over the age of 18 and thus eligible to vote in the 2012 elections. In addition, 6,048 foreign-born Latinos, over the age of 18, had naturalized and became eligible voters.

According to the 2006-2010 ACS, the total Latino voting population in 2010 was 22,929; a total representing more than 50% of all Latinos over age 18.

Moreover, we can safely assume that all but a few of those Latinos who were 16 and 17 years at the time the 2010 census was taken (between March and July of 2010), will have turned 18 come November 2012. According to the 2010 census, 2,621 Latinos fell in that category;

TABLE 5. NATIVITY AND CITIZENSHIP OF LATINOS, UNDER AND OVER 18 YEARS OF AGE, IN THE OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA

	Estimate (numbers)	%of Total Latino Population
Total Latino Population	70,433	100.00
Under 18 years:	28,758	40.83
Native	25,466	88.55
Foreign born:	3,292	11.45
Naturalized U.S. citizen	369	11.21
Not a U.S. citizen	2,923	88.79
18 years and over:	41,675	59.17
Native	16,881	40.51
Foreign born:	24,794	59.49
Naturalized U.S. citizen	6,048	24.39
Not a U.S. citizen	18,746	75.61

Source: OLLAS calculations based on the 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

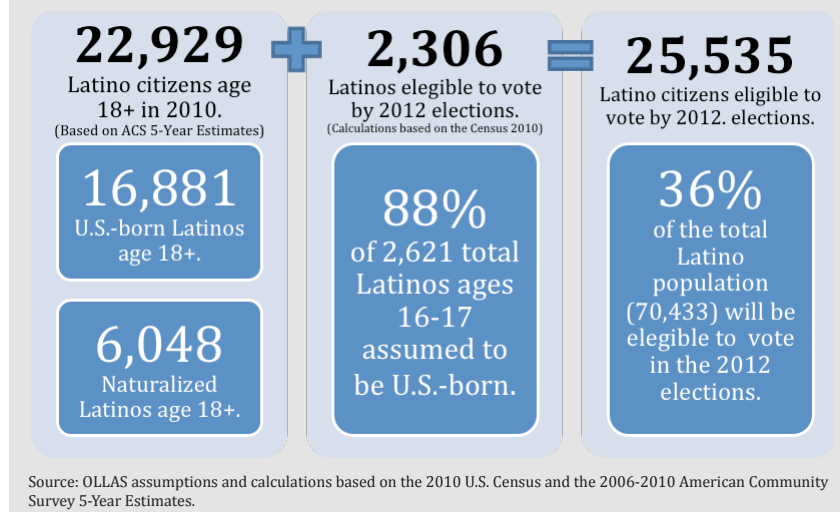
although this figure includes both U.S. citizens and the foreign-born. We can, however, estimate how many of those 16- and 17-year olds will be U.S. citizens based on 2010 census tabulations telling us that more than 88% of all Latinos under the age of 18 were born in the United States. Dozens more had surely naturalized and may also be eligible to vote. Assuming no strange aberrations in the smaller sample of 16- and 17-year-old Latinos, we can arrive at the conservative figure of an additional 2,306 who will have reached voting age by November 2012.

Adding up these different figures brings us to a conservative grand total of 25,235 Latino potential voters in the metro area by November 2012, close to 36% of the total Latino population residing in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metro Area. Figure 9 illustrates how these estimates were calculated.

Logically, the actual impact of the Latino vote in the forthcoming

elections will depend on a host of other factors, not simply the total number of eligible voters. The most important ones among them are: the proportion of Latinos that fall within newly drawn district boundaries in both states; the impact of policy actions such as the elimination of significant numbers of polling places in Nebraska; and the extent to which potential Latino voters register to vote and show up at the voting booth on election day.

FIGURE 9. POTENTIAL LATINO VOTERS IN THE OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA



Old and New Origins

The overwhelming majority, 78%, of Latinos born abroad or in the United States, and living in the metro area in 2010, traced their origin to Mexico. The proportions varied slightly in Nebraska and Iowa as a whole. Central Americans make up the next largest concentration of Latinos in the region. El Salvador and Guatemala were a distant second and third in the percentage of Latinos tracing their origin to Latin America and respectively accounted for about four and three percent of the total Latino population living in the metro area. Puerto Ricans followed closely behind, and a smattering of countries made up the rest. Despite the prevalence of Mexican-origin Latinos in the metro area, the presence of “new origin” Latinos from South American countries such as Colombia has been increasing across the entire region.

TABLE 6. LATINOS BY ORIGIN IN THE OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS METROPOLITAN AREA, 2010

	Number of Latinos in the Metro Area	Percent of Latinos in the Metro Area
Mexican	60,474	78.02
Salvadoran	3,229	4.17
Guatemalan	2,185	2.82
Puerto Rican	2,050	2.64
Honduran	717	0.93
Cuban	698	0.90
Colombian	535	0.69
Panamanian	281	0.36
Peruvian	231	0.30
Venezuelan	188	0.24
Ecuadorian	102	0.13
Other Latinos*	6,818	8.80
Total Latinos	77,508	100

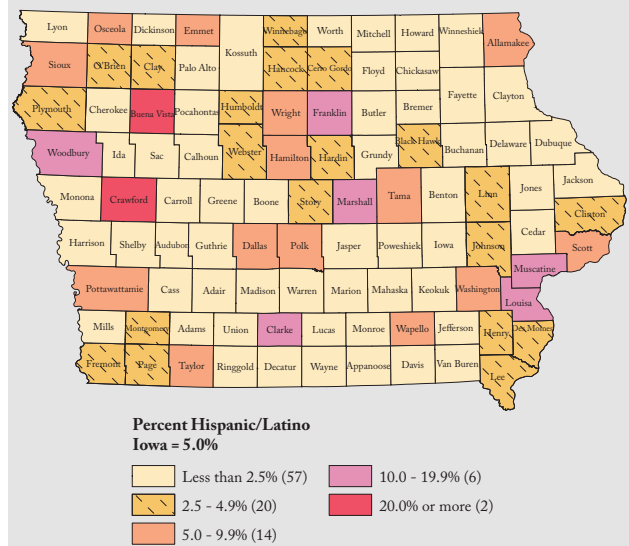
Source: OLLAS calculations based on the 2010 U.S. Census.
 *Note: Other Latinos includes people from Central and South America as well as people who identified themselves as Spanish, Spanish American and Spaniards.

Beyond the Metro: A Final Look at the Latino Presence across Iowa and Nebraska

The final figures in this fact sheet are two maps that leave no doubt that Latinos are present in virtually every county in Iowa and Nebraska. In fact, the largest concentrations of Latinos in Iowa (or 37%) are found in Polk (32,647), Woodbury (13,993) and Scott (9,197) counties. Des Moines, Sioux City and Davenport are the principal cities in each of these counties. Latinos make up 20% or more of the population in two Iowa Counties, Buena Vista and Crawford counties.

Latinos are more densely concentrated in Nebraska, and more than 40% are found in just two counties, Douglas and Sarpy. Latinos accounted for 20% or more of the population in six Nebraska counties: Colfax (4,315), Dakota (7,419), Dawson (7,746), Hall (13,653), Saline (2,870) and Scotts Bluff (7,785).

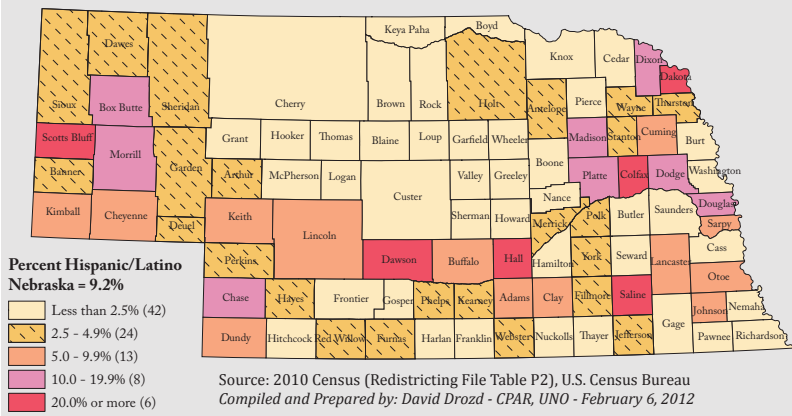
FIGURE 10. PERCENT OF COUNTY POPULATION THAT WAS HISPANIC/LATINO IN IOWA IN 2010



Source: 2010 Census (Redistricting File Table P2), U.S. Census Bureau
 Compiled and Prepared by David Drozd - CPAR, UNO - February 21, 2012

The highly aggregated data in both maps obscures some of the most striking changes occurring in individual counties in both states, as is the case with Saline County, Nebraska and Sioux County, Iowa. In Saline County, the Latino population grew from 911 in 2000 to 2,870 in 2010. In Sioux County, the Latino population grew from 808 in 2000 to 3,001 in 2010. In counties such as Colfax County, Nebraska, just north of Omaha, Latinos make up nearly half of the total population.

FIGURE 11. PERCENT OF COUNTY POPULATION THAT WAS HISPANIC/LATINO IN NEBRASKA IN 2010



Policy Implications

Hispanics made up slightly less than 10% of the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area in 2010. It is estimated that by 2040, more than 25% of the metro's population will be of Hispanic origin. Latinos are a young, primarily U.S.-born and U.S.-citizen population, which has established deep roots in the metro and two-state area for three or more generations.

Both the metro area and its constitutive states, Iowa and Nebraska, will face an uphill struggle to maintain a population base able to sustain a healthy economy and a high quality of life for the foreseeable future. That future is largely tied to the area's capacity to attract and retain the segments of the immigrant and minority populations growing above replenishment levels. Just as important will be the capacity of metropolitan leaders to work in tandem in order to harness their cross-border assets.

One of the policy implications that can be deduced from this fact sheet, as well as forthcoming reports in this series, is the need to attract large numbers of decent jobs that can be filled by these young people who are still betting on their communities, rather than exiting for greener pastures. Today, many of those jobs are found in high-growth sectors, such as cyber-security, which may require communities to examine the educational needs that will allow them to benefit from these job-producing areas.

The metro area also brings together a rich diversity of urban, rural and exurban human ecologies whose potential remains largely unexplored in the face of population projections. This new, emerging reality requires innovative collaboration among local governments and organizations on both sides of the river. Important synergies could emerge, for example, around agrofood and sustainable development issues. Latino immigrants and their children have the highest rates of small-business creation and often have agricultural backgrounds.

Just as important as the question of economic integration of the Latino population is the question of civic engagement and equal representation. Laws and local ordinances that discourage such engagement, and undermine constitutional principles of equal representation, are fated to become boomerangs that eventually bounce back with unpredictable force and consequences.

In the next installments of this series we will examine the socio-economic characteristics of Latinos in the metro area and Council Bluffs in particular. Issues such as poverty, educational attainment, housing, and entrepreneurship will be examined in greater detail in these reports as well as through qualitative interviews with community stakeholders.

Endnotes

¹ For purposes of this report, the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably.

² Patten, Eileen. 2012. *Statistical Portrait of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States, 2010*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center.

³ The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines Metropolitan Statistical Areas as those areas that "have at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties."

⁴ Gonzalez, Cindy. 2012. "Latino population growth is slowing." *Omaha World Herald*. March 21.

⁵ Robb, Jeffrey. 2010. "Strong gains in Hispanic population." *Omaha World Herald*. June 11.

⁶ Fry, Richard. 2008. *Latino Settlement in the New Century*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center; Johnson, Kenneth M. and Daniel T. Lichter. 2008. *Population Growth in New Hispanic Destinations*. Carsey Institute. Policy Brief No. 8. Fall; Saenz, Rogelio. 2010. *Latinos in the United States 2010*. Population Bulletin Update. Population Reference Bureau. December; Passel, Jeffrey, D'Vera Cohn and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera. 2012. *Net Migration from Mexico Falls to Zero and Perhaps Less*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center. April.

⁷ Population projections for the state of Nebraska are not yet available.

⁸ Matt, Barreto. 2012. "Where Latino Votes Will Matter in 2012." *Latino Decisions*. Retrieved April 24.

⁹ Gouveia, Lourdes, Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado and Alejandra Toledo. 2011. *Latino Voting Eligibility in Nebraska*. Data Brief. March. Omaha, NE: Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

¹⁰ These data should be used with caution as Table 5 is based on the 2005-2010 5-year estimates from the American Community Survey and the number of 16 and 17 year old Latinos were calculated from the 2010 census. Limitations with the available data and lack of access to registered voters by ethnicity in the states and Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area does not allow us to make more definitive claims about the voter eligibility of Latinos at this time.

More complete endnote citations are available from OLLAS.

Acknowledgements

This fact sheet was produced by the Office of Latino/Latin American Studies. We are grateful for the support provided by David Drozd, Research Coordinator and Census Data Specialist, UNO's Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR), who supplied some of the raw census data and two of the maps utilized in this report. Our thanks also go to Gary Kroob, coordinator of Iowa's State Data Center Program, who provided us with population projection data for Iowa and the metro area. Many thanks to Clare Maakestad, OLLAS staff and undergraduate student in Latino/Latin American Studies, and to Robert Nurdyke, OLLAS volunteer, for designing the fact sheet. We are grateful for the generous support provided by the Iowa West Foundation, the Mammel Foundation and the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Without their support, as well as the support of anonymous donors, this fact sheet could not have been produced.

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This publication should be cited as:

Gouveia, Lourdes, Christian Espinosa and Yuriko Doku. 2012. *Demographic Characteristics of the Latino Population in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area*. April. Omaha, NE: Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS), University of Nebraska at Omaha.