

Wednesday WeBelong Monthly:

Hispanic Heritage Month



Hispanic vs. Latino

The Terms: Hispanic and Latino are often used interchangeably, but they have different meanings.

You may think of Hispanic and Latino as terms used to describe racial categories, similar to White, Black, or Asian. However, the groups that comprise Hispanics and Latinos are diverse in terms of race and refer to ethnicity, culture, and identity. They are groups based on shared culture rather than skin color, race, or other physical features.

The Difference: Hispanic refers to individuals who are Spanish-speaking or have a background in a Spanish-speaking country. Latino refers to those who are from or have a background in a Latin American country. So, a person can be both Latino and Hispanic, but this is not always the case.

Did You Know?

Before the 1970s, the US Census Bureau classified Latin American immigrants as White. In the 1960s, there was a common theme of poverty and discrimination among Mexican Americans in the southwest and Puerto Ricans on the east coast of the United States. While the government initially saw these as regional issues, the joining of the Latino communities across the nation led to a new perspective and a new method of categorization.

Through this controversy and the lack of data to prove this group was under-resourced, Latino activists lobbied for a new identity category that would encompass this community. Thus, the term Hispanic was born.

The term Hispanic, however, has been highly rejected due to its ties with Spain, which colonized much of Latin America.

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Latinx + Latine

Given their Spanish origins, Latino and Latina are subject to the rules of Spanish as a gendered language, so Latinx and Latine emerged to offer gender-neutral and gender-inclusive terms. Between the two, some prefer Latine because it can be pronounced and conjugated in Spanish, while "Latinx" cannot.

If you're wondering when to use which, when talking about an individual, use whichever word they choose to identify with, whether Latinx, Latine, Hispanic, Latino, or Latina.

So... why is it Hispanic Heritage Month? Because despite its increasingly frequent use, a Gallup poll shows only 5% prefer the term "Latinx." In contrast, 37% chose the usage of "Latino," and 57% preferred "Hispanic," hence the continuation of Hispanic Heritage Month.

About the Month

- The celebration started in 1968 as a 1-week celebration and expanded in 1988 by President Reagan. This was prompted by U.S. Representative Esteban E. Torres of California in 1987, who proposed expanding the observance to cover its current 31-day period. Torres wanted more time so that the nation could “properly observe and coordinate events and activities to celebrate Hispanic culture and achievement.”
- Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated every year from September 15 through October 15.
- The purpose is to celebrate the histories, cultures, and contributions of Americans whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.

Why September 15

September 15 is the anniversary of independence for Latin American countries Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Additionally, many other countries celebrate their independence close to September 15:

- Mexico celebrates its independence day on September 16
- Chile celebrates its independence day on September 18
- Belize celebrates its independence day on September 21

Issues Latine + Hispanic Employees Face at Work

18.7%



of Americans identify as Hispanic or Latine

76%



of Hispanic or Latine employees repress parts of their identity at work

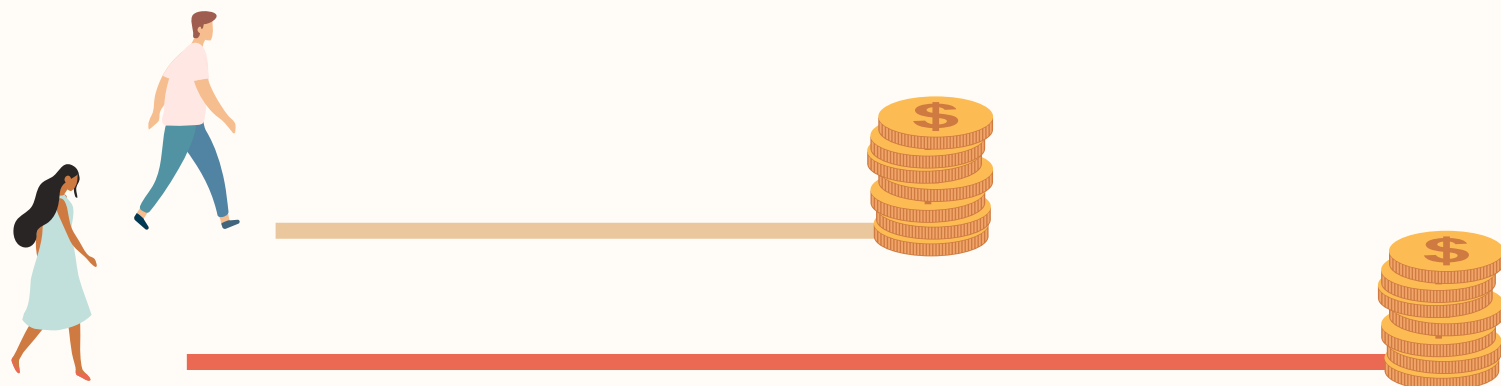
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Issues Latine + Hispanic Employees Face at Work

Hispanic and Latina women suffer from the largest **gender pay gap**, receiving the least amount of money for the same work.

Latinas typically earn only **49 cents for every dollar earned** by white, non-Hispanic men.

This means they must work more than two years to earn what their white men counterparts earn in 12 months.



Call to Action

- Continue to research and understand the differences between Hispanic and Latino and the history behind the terms.
- Watch John Leguizamo's Latin History for Morons on Netflix to learn history in a fun way!
- Share and elevate the narrative of the community by visiting the Hispanic Star Toolkit.
- Don't assume how someone identifies, listen to how they choose to identify and honor them.