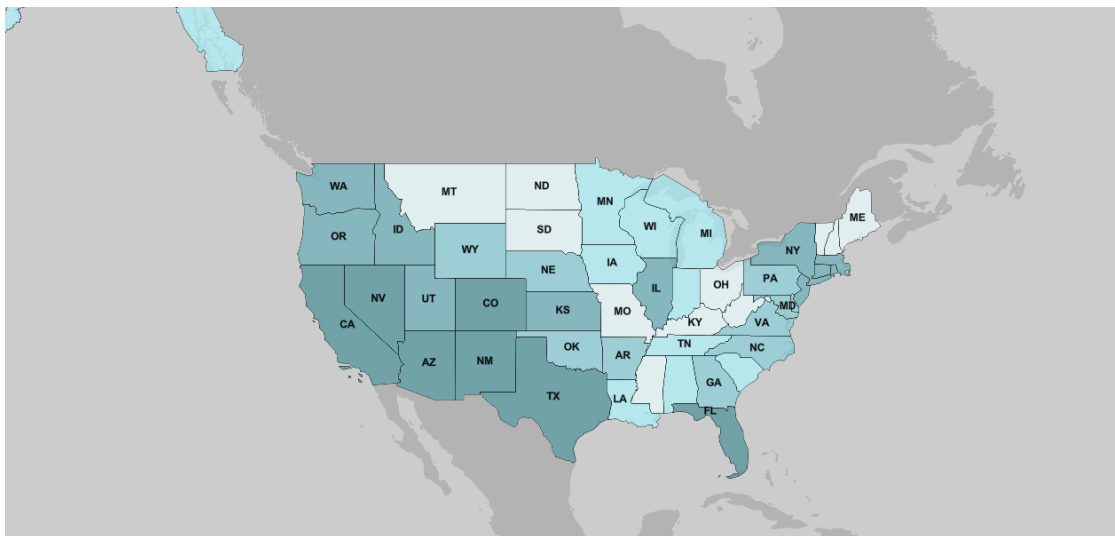


Latinos in the United States



The above is a link to the percentages of Latinos in the United States taken from Census information.

Getting to know who your patrons and potential patrons are is as important to know before asking what it is that they want or need in a collection. Alexandra Gomez (2020) informs us that there are "nearly 60 million people of Hispanic origin living in...and forty-one million people [who] speak Spanish in the United States". Those numbers show the importance of reaching the Spanish speaking community with relevant materials. Information about your communities' make up can be found in census data, city data, and the like. This data can give you a glimpse into who your potential patron base is.

Gomez (2020) states that in general, "subjects frequently in demand among Spanish speakers include popular periodicals, award winning works, and English-learning titles, as well as books on life skills, lifelong learning, immigration, citizenship, self-help, relationships, health, finance, career/job preparation, parenting, and how-to guides". One way to get to know your patrons is to ask them what they like. A development survey like one that was put together by the [Eugene Public Library](#) that is both in English and in Spanish can be helpful.



In knowing who your patron and potential patron base is would mean materials that speak to their interests. In section 1.7 of the [Guidelines for Library Services to Spanish-Speaking Library Users](#), we see how developing strong working relationships with local groups supports keeping and creating a Spanish collection. Section 1.7.1 of the RUSA (2008) states that libraries should "work with local community groups in selecting, acquiring, evaluating and weeding Spanish language collections". In developing these community relationships, accepting gifts or donations can assist in the development of the collection but as stated in Section 1.7.1 of the RUSA (2008), "materials not appropriate for the collection [can be used] in book sales, exchanges or donations to other libraries or organizations that serve Spanish-speaking communities." In addition to the gifts and donations, knowing how to choose materials that are of interest to the Spanish speakers in your community would be more than just helpful, it would avoid wasted funds. RUSA (2008) guidelines also stress the importance of libraries choosing items that are relevant to the community, in multiple formats while making them easily accessible by title and site translation.



*A 2017 Hispanic Heritage Month celebration.
Credit...Michael Ainsworth/Associated Press Photo*

Brown and Lopez (2015) report that “one reason immigrant Hispanics may find public libraries more difficult to use is their language use or skills... according to [a] recent Pew Research Center survey”. Learning what the library has to offer can open up the possibility for this community to learn and practice the English language as well as familiarize themselves with Spanish language materials available for use.

Ruhlmann (2014) explains that because of the growing number of Spanish speaking immigrants, “libraries across the country are developing new strategies... [to reach an] extremely diverse [Latino community]”. The library is a place where patrons can participate in ESL classes, bilingual storytimes, conversational english meet-ups, and citizenship classes to name a few programs. As we continue to navigate through the challenges of Covid 19, the same programs that once were held in person are now being hosted online in keeping with meeting the needs of the community.

What is being offered at libraries

It is exciting to see how public libraries are working to bring Spanish language materials and programming to its communities. As was mentioned before, there are ESL programs and storytimes that are available for the public to enjoy and participate in. Resources and materials for the community are easily accessible with a click of a mouse, opening the door to rich content for the user to explore.

Links to Ebook apps and magazines are a way to broaden the material offered to Spanish speaking patrons. A great example can be seen on the [San Francisco Public Library](#)’s web page, where a list containing lists to magazines that are available for check out are listed. In addition to magazines, patrons can access Spanish ebooks and eaudiobooks with the use of apps like Overdrive and Libby. As of 2019, [Sonoma County Library](#) has begun offering Overdrive/Libby in Spanish.



Library terms for library staff in Spanish

Knowing how to communicate effectively is essential to be able to continue or begin to offer services and materials that appeal to the Spanish speaking community. Ruhlmann (2014) states that “some Latinos have misconceptions about what a library is [since] the word “library” resembles *libreria*, the Spanish word for bookstore”. So in this case we would use the word *biblioteca* which translates to library. One can see then how important it is to have library professionals have the ability to have conversations with patrons. One way to extend this to patrons is to have library staff learn and use key Spanish words or phrases during their interaction. Below is a short list of resources that library staff can take advantage of to learn and practice their Spanish.

Survival Spanish for Library Staff is a great training resource for library staff by Niche Academy.

[Spanish in libraries](#) is a quick list of everyday words/library jargon in Spanish.

[Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Libraries: Spanish for Library Staff](#) is offered through the South Carolina State Library offers resources for library staff that helps Spanish speakers which includes links that offer staff ways to practice their language skills.

[Spanish for Library Staff](#) is a series of zoom style videos that is designed to help library staff with their Spanish found on YouTube, also created by SCSL.

Staff can also use apps like [Google Translate](#), [SpanishDict](#), and [Linguee](#) to help them translate English to Spanish when interacting in person with a patron.



MANGO This is a free to try site that is available to use by subscription that libraries can offer its staff or be used independently for language learning.

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