

# “Barriers to Employment”

## Central Iowa Latino Laborforce Survey

Conducted by Iowa Workforce Development  
Workforce Resource Bureau  
March 2001

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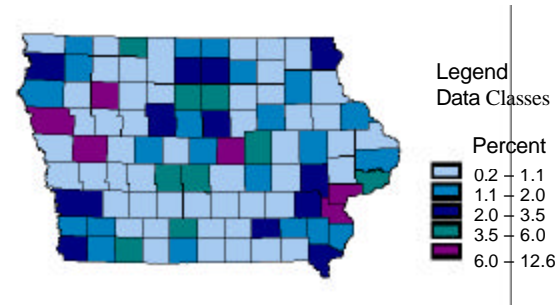
# Executive Summary

## BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

During the last five years, Iowa has experienced a shortage of workers and will continue to feel the impact of a short labor supply. As the state prepares to reverse this trend of a declining population, attracting immigrants and refugees has great potential. In addition, released preliminary reports from the 2000 Census are reporting growth of the Latino population in several Iowa counties.

This survey was conducted as a way to supplement the information collected about the Latino population by the State Public Policy Group in 1999, Snapshot in Time: A clear view of the importance, value and impacts of the Latino population in central Iowa. (*Una Foto Actual de la Comunicad Latina: Un panoramaclaro de la importancia, del valor, y de los impactos de la población Latina en el área central de Iowa.*) Although this survey was enlightening, it was broad in scope. It was the goal of the agency to collect more specific data regarding workforce needs and barriers that the Latino population encounter in the State of Iowa. Although it was the desire to broaden the scope of the previous survey, it should be noted that the survey samples were not identical. But it is recognized that because the Latino population within the state is small, some of the respondents could have participated in both surveys. We were also hoping to benefit from the extensive work conducted by SPPG within the community as a way to increase the response rate for this survey.

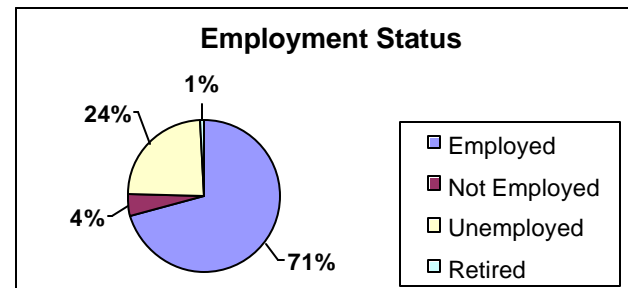
This executive summary highlights some of the most significant findings from the survey of Latinos residing in Central Iowa. This analysis centers on the impact the Latino population can have in filling the labor shortages and how Iowa can best embrace the new Iowan. In addition, some of the key findings could offer insight into removing unnecessary barriers that prevent immigrants from utilizing valuable work skills as they integrate into the workforce. This information may be insightful to community leaders and employers who want to welcome new immigrants into their community. The following diagram collected from the 2000 Census illustrates the percentage of Latinos residing in the state.



The majority of the respondents indicated that their country of origin is Mexico (74 percent).

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS

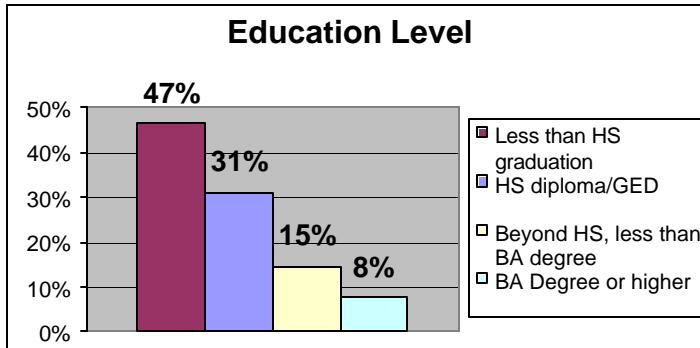
Compared to the general population in the state (2.8 percent, March 2001) Latinos have a much higher unemployment rate at 24 percent. Although the majority of the survey respondents indicated that they were employed, a small number reported that their family culture dictates that a spouse or family member stay at home to raise the children. Those individuals were designated as not employed in this survey.



## EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

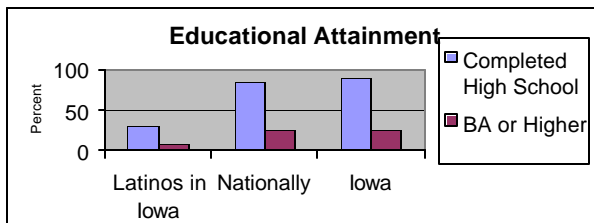
The survey respondents reported a lower level of education compared to the general population in the state and nation. The following figure illustrates that almost half of the survey respondents reported that they do not have a high school education (46.5 percent).





In contrast, results from the March 2000 Current Population Survey (CPS) reported that nationally 84 percent of all adults ages 25 and older had completed high school and 26 percent had completed a bachelor's degree or higher. The statistics in Iowa show slightly higher education levels with 89.7 percent completing high school and 25.5 percent completing a bachelor's degree or higher. The figure below clearly illustrates the differences between the education level of the general population nationally and in Iowa compared to the education level of the Latino population throughout Iowa.

Source: CPS, March 2000



## EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS

Less than one third of the survey respondents identified barriers to their employment (21 percent). Proficiency in the English language was the most frequently identified barrier to employment (9.8 percent). From comments the respondents made during interviews, it is clear that some

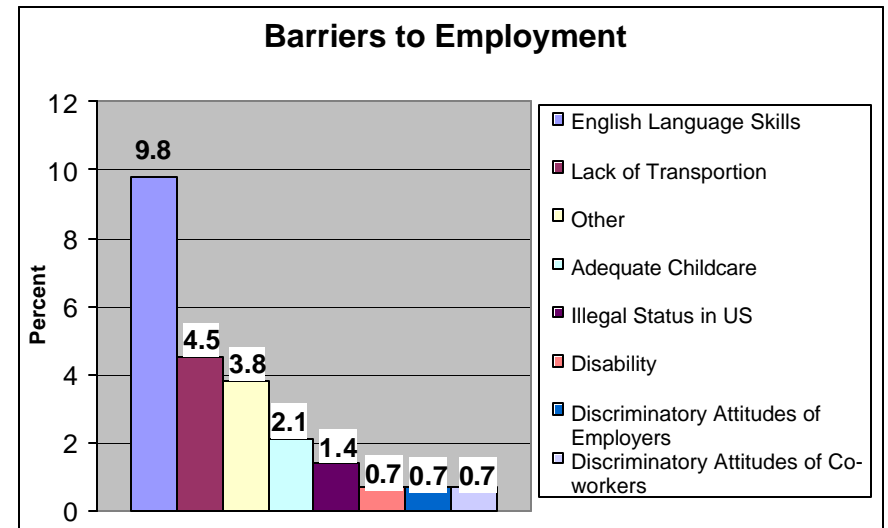
Central Iowa Latino Laborforce Survey  
Iowa Workforce Development, March 2001



barriers derive from individuals' status as undocumented immigrants. For example, one person who cited transportation as a barrier noted that he is unable to obtain a drivers license due to his undocumented status.

One of the most significant findings of this study relates to discriminatory behavior in the workplace. Anyone who has followed the issue of immigration recently is aware that it is an extremely emotional and controversial issue. For a variety of reasons, many Iowans oppose efforts to increase immigration to meet workforce shortages, and Latinos have frequently reported incidents of negative and discriminatory treatment. In the course of being interviewed for this study, respondents cited specific examples of discrimination in social and other settings.

It is surprising that only a small proportion of the people surveyed reported discriminatory behavior and attitudes as a problem in their work setting. When asked if they experienced discriminatory behavior or attitudes viewed as a barrier to employment, only 0.7 percent reported such behavior from employers and the same percent from employees (0.7 percent).



## Introduction

During the last five years, Iowa has experienced a shortage of workers, and will continue to feel the impact of a short labor supply until action is taken to change. As Iowa prepares to meet the challenge of reversing a trend toward a declining population, the attraction of immigrants and refugees has great potential. As the preliminary reports from the census are released, Iowa has seen a significant increase in the population of Latinos and other minorities. This analysis focuses on employment-related issues of one cultural group, the Latino population in central Iowa. The analysis centers on the impact the Latino population can have in filling the labor shortages, and how Iowa can best embrace the new Iowan.

During the period from 1990 to 1998, 51 Iowa counties increased in population and forty-eight experienced a decrease in population. Only eight states had smaller population increases than Iowa during this same time period. In order to shape Iowa's future, the Governor's Strategic Planning Council developed a report, *Iowa 2010 - the New Face of Iowa*. The first goal listed is to increase the state's workforce population by 310,000 people.

*By 2010: Iowa's population will increase by 310,000 working people by retaining Iowans of all ages and welcoming diverse new residents, including immigrants, who perceive Iowa as providing economic, political, cultural and social opportunities.*

Iowa Workforce Development's Workforce Research Bureau took the initiative to interview Latinos in central Iowa in order to better understand the issues and concerns related to obtaining employment in Iowa and assimilating into the workforce. This population was

selected because it is one of the larger established ethnic groups in the state.

Iowa has historically provided opportunities for people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Many communities still celebrate the traditions of their ancestors with annual community festivals. Iowa continues to offer many opportunities to newcomers and the new Iowans certainly have much to contribute to the state.

The ancestors of all Iowans, except for Native Americans, were immigrants who faced challenges of adapting to a new country, a new culture and often a new language. Awareness of these challenges, accepted and overcome by our ancestors as they assimilated into Iowa's history, should remind us to be compassionate as Iowa encourages new immigrants.

This invitation to immigrants is not a new concept. In 1869, a board of immigration was created by the Iowa legislature to attract immigrants to the state. A book, *Iowa: The Home for Immigrants Being a Treatise on the Resources of Iowa, and Giving Useful Information with regards to the State, for the Benefit of Immigrants and Others*, was printed in five languages. 65,000 copies were distributed to encourage immigrants to come to Iowa. Immigrants today are still attracted by the opportunities promoted in *Iowa: The Home for Immigrants* more than 100 years ago. The invitation was extended:

*To all Working Men, who live by honest toil, and would thereby contribute their part toward the development of a free and prosperous state;  
To all Landless Men and Women, of both the Old World and the New, who desire beautiful homes in the fairest portion of the green earth;  
To all Good Men and Women, who aspire to independence, either for themselves or their children after them, and who will contribute, either of mind or muscle, to carry Iowa forward to her grand and glorious destiny. . .*



Today's Iowans take pride in their independence, strong work ethic and high levels of motivation. These admirable qualities are also characteristic of those new Iowans who would uproot their lives and travel to relocate to Iowa in search of better opportunities for employment and a better life for themselves and their families.

The State Public Policy Group (SPPG) completed a study in 1999, *Snapshot in Time: A clear view of the importance, value and impacts of the Latino population in Central Iowa*. (Una Foto Actual de la Comunidad Latina: Un panorama claro de la importancia, del valor, y de los impactos de la población Latina en el área central de Iowa). *Snapshot* took a global look at issues accommodating newcomers, including an overview of issues relating to education, religion, housing, health care, public safety and workforce issues. The *Snapshot in Time* study considered the broad picture of many issues involved in integrating into a new community. However, the current study completed by Iowa Workforce Development in 2001, focuses concentrated solely on workforce issues.

The survey focused on a segment of the existing Central Iowa population with a Latino heritage. Questions were asked about employment experiences and barriers they may have encountered in obtaining and retaining employment in Iowa.

The results will help guide the development and enhancement of services offered to facilitate the entry of new Iowans into employment.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## All Respondents

Survey administrators posed questions to determine the respondents' gender, age, education level, county of residence and length of time living in the United States and Iowa. Additional information was gathered based on their employment status, (whether employed, not employed or retired) current wages and benefits, as well as preferred wages and benefits in order to change jobs. Respondents were given the opportunity to conduct the interview in either English or Spanish. Employed respondents were then asked if they held licenses or credentials in other countries or states, and if they experience barriers in fulfilling their job requirements.

Respondents who identified themselves as unemployed or retired (18 to 64 years of age) were asked a series of questions to determine what job characteristics, wages and benefits were most important for them when considering employment, reasons for unemployment or obstacles to employment. Information on previous employers and individual skills were also gathered for these sectors.

- Eighty-one percent of the participants chose to be interviewed in Spanish.
- The number of people in the household ranged from 1 to 18, with average of 2.7, and a median of two.

### AGE AND GENDER

Survey respondents ranged in age from 18 to 63, with a mean age of 33, and a median of 31. Of the respondents, 48 percent were female, while 52 percent were male.

### YEARS OF RESIDENCE

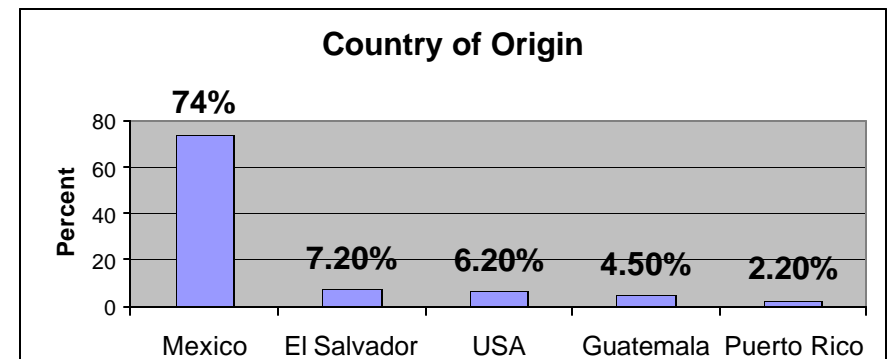
Survey respondents reported that they have lived in the United States a mean of 14.79 years, (median of 10 years) for a minimum of 3 months and 66 years. At the maximum average length of time living in Iowa was 9.07 years, (median of five years) with a range of 4 months to 63 years. The next two tables illustrate the average length of time Latinos surveyed have lived in the United States and Iowa.

	Years lived in US	Years lived in Iowa
Mean	14.79	9.07
Median	10	5

	Years lived in US	Years lived in Iowa
Dallas	10	4.5
Marshall	10	4
Polk	10	6
Story	11.5	6

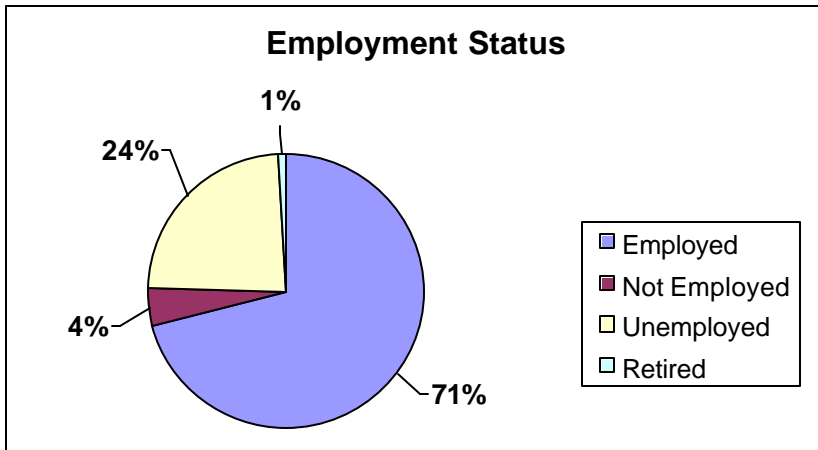
### COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Of the 404 respondents, 209 (74 percent) listed Mexico as their country of origin. The figure below shows the top five countries of origin for the respondents of the study. Less than six percent of the survey respondents reported their country of origin from various other South American countries (i.e. Ecuador, Honduras, Peru, etc.).

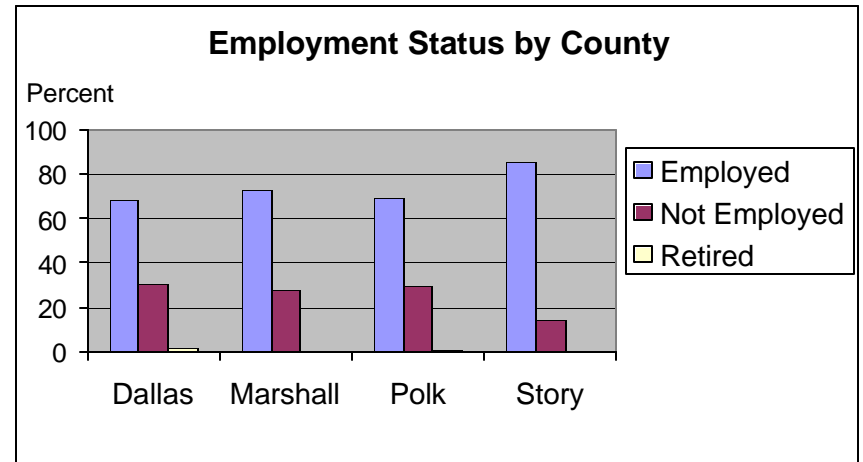


## EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Compared to the general population of unemployed in the state (2-3 percent), Latinos have a much higher unemployment rate at 24 percent. Of the survey respondents, 71 percent reported that they were employed, 24 percent were unemployed, 4 percent reported that they were not employed and less than 1 percent were retired. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) defines unemployed persons as individuals who are currently not employed but that are actively seeking employment. Those individuals who are not seeking employment are considered “not employed”. The following diagram shows that 4 percent of the respondents reported that they were not interested in seeking employment and are considered “not employed” for the purposes of this study.

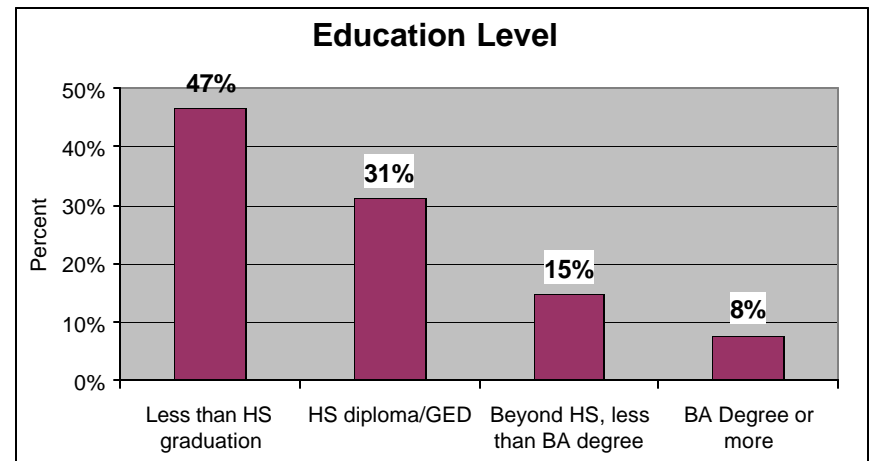


The employment status of the survey respondents by county in which they live is illustrated in the next figure.

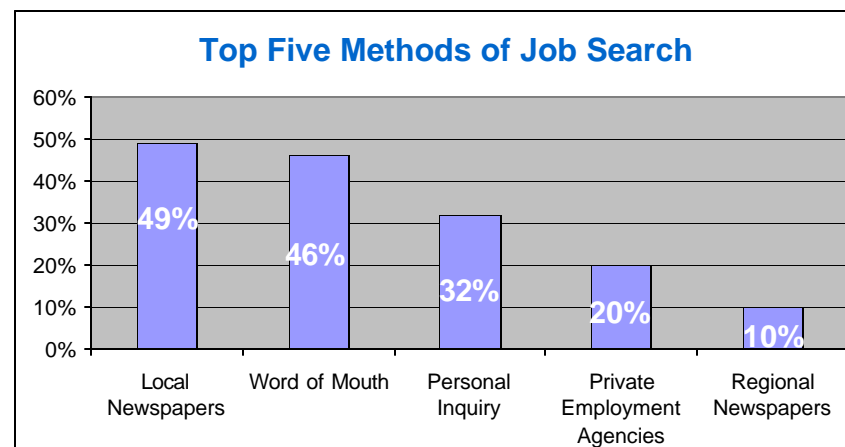
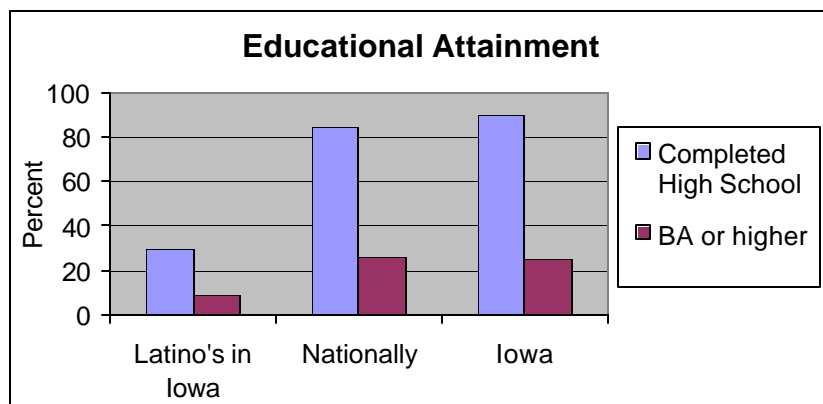


## EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

The survey respondents clearly reported a lower level of education compared to the general population in the nation. Almost half of the survey respondents reported that they do not have a high school education. (46.5 percent) The next figure illustrates the level of education reported by the survey respondents in this study.



In contrast, according to the March 2000 Current Population Survey (CPS), 84 percent of all adults nationally ages 25 and over had completed high school and 26 percent had completed a bachelor's degree or more. In Iowa, 89.7 percent completed high school and 25.5 percent completed a bachelor's degree or more. The Latino population in the State of Iowa reported that 30 percent have completed high school, while only 9 percent have completed a bachelor's degree or more. The following diagram clearly illustrates the differences between the education level of the national population and the Iowa population compared to the education level of the Latino population throughout the State of Iowa.



### METHOD OF JOB SEARCH

Survey respondents indicated that the most frequent method during a job search is the local newspaper (49 percent), with word of mouth (46 percent) being the second most frequent job search method. The next graph shows the top five methods survey respondents identified using for a job search. Other types of job search methods include IWD and the internet at 8 percent, other at 6 percent, job/career fairs and radio at 4 percent and television at 3 percent. This type of data is consistent with other labor surveys and the top methods for searching for employment.



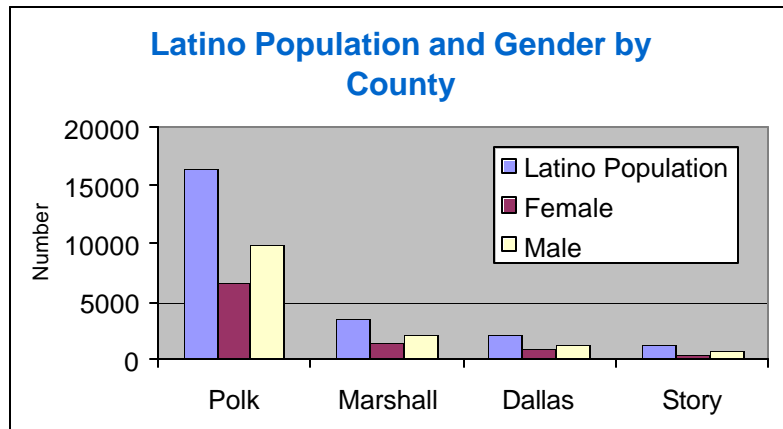


## Employed

The survey results show that 71 percent of the respondents (286/404) identified themselves as employed at the time they were contacted. The majority (87.6 percent) of this group were employed full-time (36+ hours week) and 8.5 percent were working in part-time positions. 2.8 percent of respondents identified themselves as working in temporary positions, and 1.1 percent identified themselves as self-employed. The majority of the respondents (93.3 percent) reported that they worked one job, while six percent of the respondents reported they worked two jobs and less than one percent reported they worked four jobs.

### GENDER OF THE EMPLOYED

The gender distribution of the employed respondents was 40.2 percent female and 59.8 percent male. The following graph shows a distribution of gender throughout the four county survey area compared with the total Latino population.



### AGE OF THE EMPLOYED

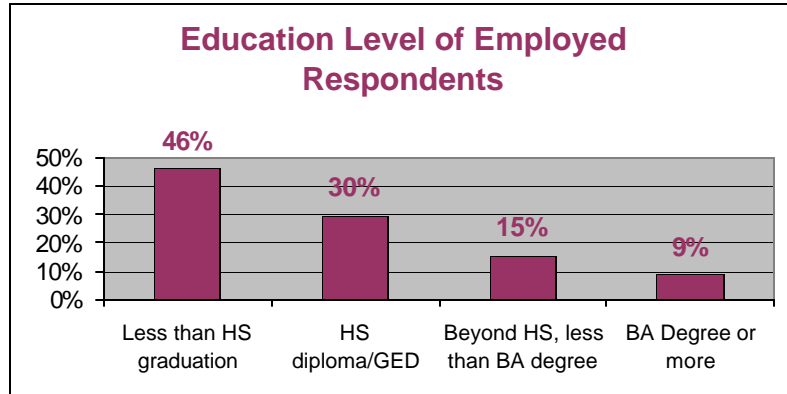
Over 84 percent of the respondents were 18 to 44 years of age, with the median age of all employed respondents as 33 years. The largest group of respondents (39.6 percent) were between 25 and 34 years of age. The smallest group was 55 to 64 years old.

Age Range	Number of Respondents Employed	Percent
18 to 24	45	16.2
25 to 34	110	39.6
35 to 44	80	28.8
45 to 54	28	10.1
55 to 64	15	5.4
TOTAL	278	100

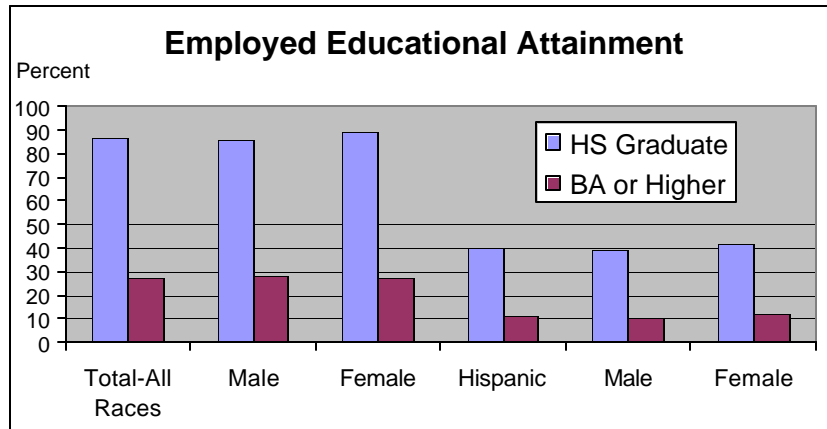
### EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE EMPLOYED

Of the employed survey respondents, 46 percent reported to have less than a high school education, and only 30 percent reported to have a high school diploma or GED. According to the CPS, the Hispanic population significantly trails the general population in educational attainment. The following diagram illustrates the education attainment differences between the total population and gender and the Latino population and gender.

**LATINO SURVEY RESPONDENTS**



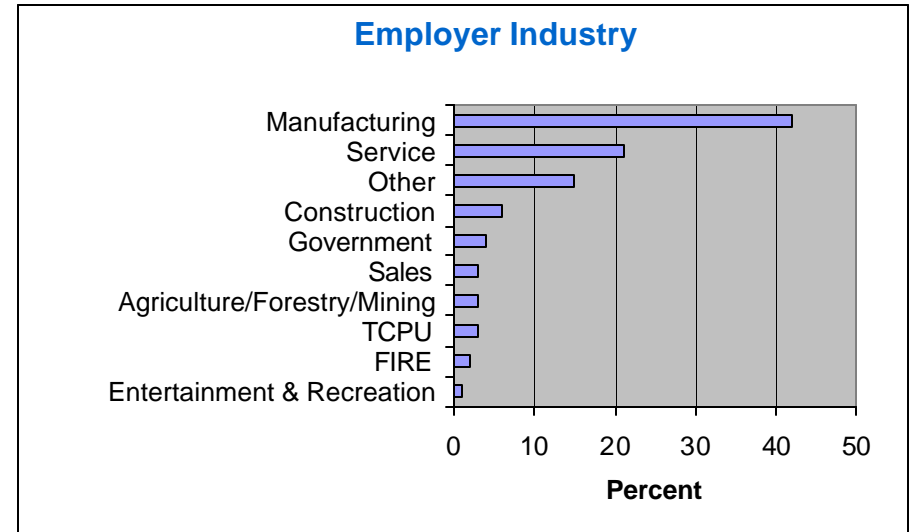
**CPS DATA, MARCH 2000**



**EMPLOYER INDUSTRY OF THE EMPLOYED**

The majority of the survey respondents indicated that they are currently working in the manufacturing industry (42 percent). The other top

industries included service industry (21 percent), other industry (15 percent) and construction (6 percent).



TCPU = Transportation, Communication, Public Utilities  
 FIRE = Finance, Insurance, Real Estate  
 Government = Public Administration, Teachers

**WAGES AND BENEFITS OF THE EMPLOYED**

The majority of currently employed respondents are hourly wage earners (87.9 percent). The median current hourly wage is \$10. The lowest desired hourly wage to change employment was a median \$11.

The current median salary of those employed is \$37,658. The median salary desired to change employment was \$45,000. The largest concentration of respondents desiring salaried positions occurred within



the \$30,000 to \$40,000 range (39 percent). The next table illustrates the current median wages for each of the four counties.

### CURRENT WAGES

Median	County				All Four Counties
	Dallas	Marshall	Polk	Story	
Hourly Wage	\$11	\$11	\$10	\$18	\$11
Annual Salary	\$35,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$40,000	\$45,000

Analysis of the salary data indicates that the salaries are skewed to the high side due to a small number of salaried individuals who live in Polk County. 10 individuals from Polk County receive salaries that range from \$20,000 to \$80,000, while Story and Marshall Counties reported a total four individuals with a salary range of \$14,500 to \$60,000. The following table illustrates the preferred average wages of those willing to change employment. Findings from further analysis of the preferred salaries are consistent with the current salaries of the survey respondents. Polk County reported 11 individuals preferring wages between \$25,000 to \$100,000; Story County reported three individuals with preferred salaries ranging from \$20,000 to \$75,000, and Marshall and Dallas Counties reported four individuals who preferred salaries between \$35,000 and \$60,000.

### PREFERRED WAGES

Median	County				All Four Counties
	Dallas	Marshall	Polk	Story	
Hourly Wage	\$10	\$10.20	\$9	\$14	\$10
Annual Salary	na	\$35,000	\$43,500	\$18,000	\$37,659

The following data allows an employer to compare their company's wages to those desired by potential workers, such as median wage of

respondents employed in production, construction, operating and maintenance positions.

Occupational Categories	Current Wages & Salaries of Employed Respondents		Lowest Desired Wages & Salaries of Employed Respondents to Accept Employment	
	Median Wage & Wage Range	Median Salary & Salary Range	Median Wage & Wage Range	Median Salary & Salary Range
Managerial & Professional	\$10 \$8-\$12	\$47,000 \$47,000 - \$47,000	\$10 \$10-\$10	\$77,500 \$75,000 - \$80,000
Professional, Paralegal, & Tech.	12 \$10-\$20	\$50,000 \$14,000 - \$80,000	\$15 \$12-\$21	\$60,000 \$30,000 - \$100,000
Sales	na	na	na	\$40,000 \$40,000 - \$40,000
Clerical & Administrative	\$9.75 \$6 - \$19.71	\$20,500 \$20,000 - \$21,000	\$12 \$8 - \$20	\$27,500 \$25,000 - \$30,000
Service Occupations	\$8.50 \$4.25 - \$14	na	\$10 \$7 - \$25	\$50,000 \$50,000 - \$50,000
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	\$10.75 \$7 - \$12.15	na	\$15.50 \$11 - \$20	na
Production, Construction, Operating,	\$10 \$6 - \$24	\$35,317 \$18,000 - \$55,000	\$11 \$7 - \$20	\$35,500 \$20,000 - \$50,000

The following table lists the current benefits of the employed respondents. The most frequently listed current benefits include paid vacation (75 percent), paid health insurance (66 percent) and paid holidays (60 percent).



CURRENT BENEFITS	COUNTY				AVERAGE PERCENTAGE
	Dallas	Marshall	Polk	Story	
Paid Vacation	84%	84%	69%	67%	75%
Paid Holidays	67%	66%	54%	58%	60%
Health Insurance	70%	81%	56%	75%	66%
Dental Insurance	37%	47%	40%	50%	42%
Vision Insurance	33%	44%	30%	42%	35%
Prescription Drugs	23%	45%	32%	33%	35%
Disability Insurance	26%	38%	25%	42%	29%
Life Insurance	35%	38%	31%	42%	34%
Retirement Plan	19%	26%	23%	33%	24%
Child Care	N/A	N/A	1%	N/A	1%
Other	N/A	N/A	4%	N/A	2%
None	12%	9%	23%	25%	18%
Not Sure	2%	N/A	1%	N/A	1%

The next table lists the preferred benefits the respondents indicated would be necessary for a change in employment. Paid vacation (78 percent), paid health insurance (77 percent) dental insurance (77 percent), vision insurance (76 percent), prescription drugs (74 percent) and paid holidays (74 percent) ranked as the most preferred benefits. Seven percent of the respondents preferred no benefits and childcare due to family culture dictating that a spouse or family member stay at home to care for the children.

PREFERRED BENEFITS	COUNTY				AVERAGE PERCENTAGE
	Dallas	Marshall	Polk	Story	
Paid Vacation	77%	81%	80%	75%	80%
Paid Holidays	79%	80%	80%	58%	79%
Health Insurance	79%	81%	83%	67%	81%
Dental Insurance	77%	81%	75%	75%	77%
Vision Insurance	74%	78%	75%	75%	76%
Prescription Drugs	72%	75%	73%	73%	74%
Disability Insurance	74%	73%	65%	67%	69%
Life Insurance	72%	75%	66%	67%	70%
Retirement Plan	72%	73%	62%	67%	67%
Child Care	5%	24%	15%	8%	16%
Other	2%	2%	3%	na	3%
Prefer No Benefits	7%	7%	8%	na	7%
Not Sure	5	4	4	17	5

## TRAINING

Clearly the majority of the respondents (67.3 percent) indicated that they would be interested in learning new skills. The majority of the respondents (76.7 percent) indicated that they would need additional training to change employment, but only half (48.9 percent) stated they would be interested in sharing in the cost of training with their employer. Regarding licenses, 9.4 percent indicated that they hold professional licenses in another state.

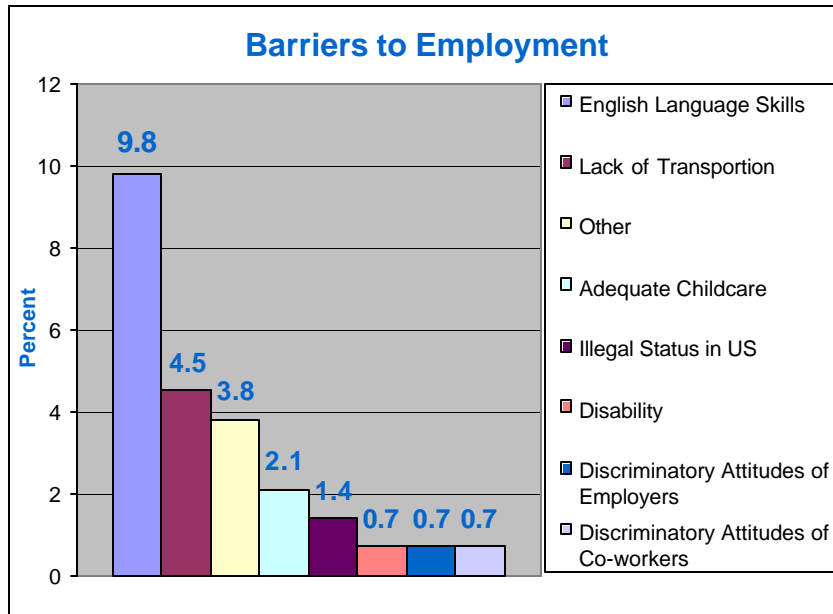
	County			
	Dallas	Marshall	Polk	Story
Willing to learn new skills	64%	71%	66%	58%
Willing to share in training costs	39%	47%	56%	67%

Type of Training Needed	Percent
ESL	41%
Undergraduate Degree	11%
Other	11%
Computer	8%
GED	7%
Vocational-Welding, Carpentry, etc.	7%
Technical	3%
Master's Degree	3%
General Business	2%
Professional-Real Estate, etc.	1%
CEU's	1%
Management	< 1%



## EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS

Less than one third of the survey respondents identified barriers to employment (21 percent). Proficiency of the English language was the most frequently identified barrier to employment (9.8 percent). Interestingly, few identified discriminatory behavior by employers or co-workers as a barrier problem.



## UNDEREMPLOYMENT

Underemployment is a subcategory of employment. Underemployment is a term that most people would agree they understand, but there is no one clear-cut universal measurement. To allow respondents to identify themselves as underemployed could result in a skewed analysis. However, IWD filtered the data supplied by respondents according to certain criteria. The resulting measures are more nearly accurate than self-

identification. Three measures include inadequate hours worked, mismatch of skills and low income.

- 1) Inadequate hours worked – individuals working less than 35 hours per week and desiring more hours.
- 2) Mismatch of skills – workers are denoted as “mismatched” if their completed years of education are above the number needed for their current occupational group, they have significant technical skills beyond those currently being utilized, or if they have held previous jobs with a higher wage or salary.
- 3) Low income – individuals working full-time but at wages insufficient enough to keep them above the poverty level.

Each of these categories of underemployment can be very difficult to estimate; however, it appears as though elements of each of these categories exist among in the Latino population in central Iowa.

Underemployed By	Percent
Low income	9%
Mismatched skills	4%
Earned more previous job	1%
Job training/education	1%

The above measures result in an estimated total underemployment rate of 1.4 percent among the Latino population in central Iowa. These underemployment percentages are only estimates. However, IWD has filtered the data to eliminate double counting of respondents within the three categories. The 1.4 percent represents employed individuals that are underemployed for more than one reason. Some explanations for this low level of underemployment are relatively low levels of education and predominant employment in the manufacturing industry. The manufacturing industry includes meat packing where wages are well above minimum wage.

## Unemployed

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) defines unemployed persons as individuals who are currently not employed, but who are actively seeking employment. Using only this definition overlooks sources of potential labor, specifically homemakers who are not employed and retirees who, though currently not employed, would consider entering or re-entering the workforce if the right opportunity arises. The survey asks the respondents to identify whether they are unemployed or retired.

Of the 404 respondents, 97 (24 percent) reported that they were unemployed, 18 (4 percent) reported that they were not employed. For purposes of the rest of this report, unemployed will only be those individuals who are currently seeking employment and not include those who are not interested in seeking employment (not employed).

### Age and Gender of the Unemployed

Women make up 67 percent of the unemployed, and while men make up 32 percent. The median age of the unemployed is 28 years with a range of 18 to 59 years.

Over half of the unemployed women were between the ages of 18 and 28 (52.4 percent). The unemployed female respondents were younger than the median age of employed females (34 years).

### Educational Levels

Of this relatively young workforce, only 35.1 percent reported achieving a high school diploma or GED, while 48.5 percent have not. Only 18.2 percent reported having some post high school education.

### Work Experience

Of those who responded to this question, 26.8 percent have been previously employed in manufacturing, 12.4 percent in construction and 9.3 percent in other industries.

Industry of Last Employer	Percent
Manufacturing	34%
Other business or industry	14%
Construction	13%
Other services	12%
Agriculture/Forestry/Mining	8%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	3%
Services	3%
Active Duty Military	3%
Retail Trade	2%
Entertainment and Recreation	2%
Professional services	2%
Public Administration/Government/Teacher	2%
Total	100%

Food processor was the job title that unemployed respondents reported most frequently as previously working. In a separate question, asking for other job titles previously held, farm worker topped the list. Among those who are looking for work, 60 percent preferred to work full-time, 14 percent wanted part-time and 10 percent are willing to accept seasonal or temporary employment.

### WAGES NEEDED TO ENTER EMPLOYMENT

#### Wage and Salary Preferences for Unemployed

	Hourly	Annual
Median	\$9	\$30,000
Minimum	\$5	\$20,000
Maximum	\$30	\$40,000



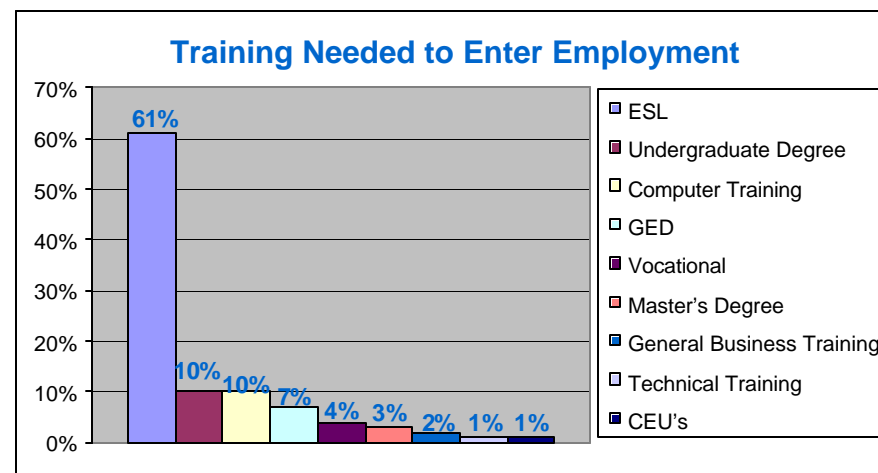
The following table illustrates the benefits listed that unemployed respondents would prefer if accepting a new job.

### Benefits Needed to Enter Employment

Benefits	Total
Paid Vacation	86%
Paid Holidays	84%
Health Insurance	90%
Dental Insurance	69%
Vision Insurance	68%
Prescription Drugs	67%
Disability Insurance	61%
Life Insurance	65%
Retirement Plan	57%
Child Care	29%
Other	na
Prefer No Benefits	2%
Not sure what benefits prefer	4%

### TRAINING NEEDED TO ENTER EMPLOYMENT

Of the non-employed respondents, 22 percent indicated they are currently a student, 69 percent indicated that they would be willing to learn new skills and 56 percent stated they would be willing to share in the training costs. Of the not employed, 89 percent indicated a need for education or training to enter employment in the following areas in order to prepare for a new job.



### BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

When asked the question, “Is there anything that makes it hard for you to do your job?” respondents who were not employed listed these barriers to employment.

Barriers to Employment	Percent
English language skills	25%
Adequate child care	24%
Other	17%
Illegal status in US	16%
Lack of transportation	6%
Disabled	2%
Discriminatory attitudes of employers	<1%
Discriminatory attitudes of co-workers	na



## OTHER BARRIERS

Other Barriers to Employment	Percent
Care of parent or young children	7%
Currently a student	4%
Climate/Seasonal Work	4%
My husband does not want me to work	2%
Not looking for work at the present	2%

Again, the care of young children may not necessarily indicate lack of adequate child care available. This response and, “my husband does not want me to work,” were given when lack of child care was already an option not selected. However, the Latino family culture dictates the care of young children be given by the mother or another family member.





## *Retired*

Retired individuals can represent an underutilized and knowledgeable pool of workers in some area. In this four county area, 67 percent of the retired respondents said they were very likely to return to work, while 33 percent said they were somewhat likely to return to work.

### **AGE AND GENDER OF THE RETIRED**

The median age of retirees is 51 years. The retirees were 66.7 percent male and 33.3 percent female. The age range of retirees is 50 to 56 years.

### **LENGTH OF TIME RETIRED**

The average length of time the respondents indicated that they had been retired was 11 years with a range of 4 to 18 years.

### **EDUCATIONAL LEVELS & WORK EXPERIENCE**

Only 33.3 percent of the retirees surveyed have a high school diploma or GED, and 66.7 percent have less than a high school education.

### **WAGES DESIRED AND WORK ENVIRONMENTS**

The respondents indicated that they would consider seasonal and temporary employment, and they would prefer part-time positions. The table below indicates the wages required to enter the workforce.

#### **Wage Preferences**

	HOURLY	ANNUAL
Median	\$10	na
Minimum	\$10	na
Maximum	\$12	na

### **TRAINING NEEDED TO RE-ENTER WORKFORCE**

English language skills and formal education continue to be areas of focus for the retired respondents when asked what they would need in order to re-enter the workforce.



## Survey Methodology

A telephone survey was conducted among a random sample of Latino households selected from a four county area in central Iowa including Dallas, Marshall, Polk and Story counties. According to the 2000 Census, Iowa's Latino population has grown significantly during the last ten years. Table 1 and Table 2 illustrate the growth of the Latino population statewide and within the survey area over the last ten years as published by the 2000 Census.

**TABLE 1**

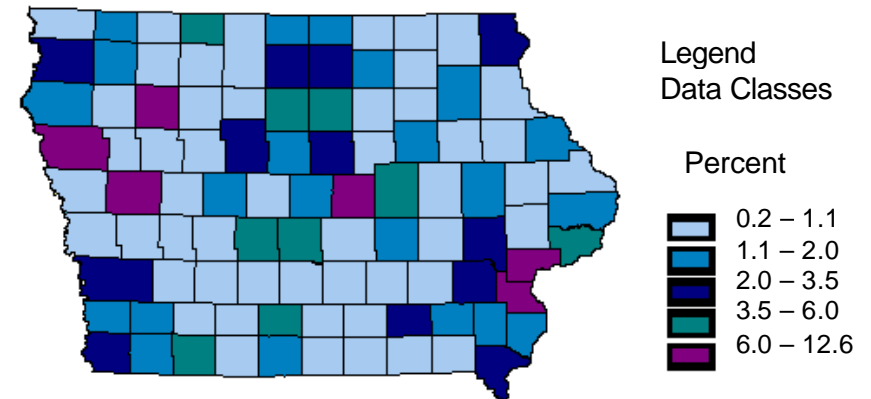
	Total Population	Hispanic or Latino	Percent of Population
Iowa - 1990	2,776,755	32,647	1%
Iowa - 2000	2,926,324	82,473	3%

**TABLE 2**

County Latino Population - 2000			
	Total Population	Hispanic or Latino	Percent of Population
Dallas	40,750	2,199	5%
Marshall	39,311	3,523	9%
Polk	374,601	16,490	4%
Story	79,981	1,238	2%

Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of persons who are Latino throughout the state.

**Figure 1**



In order to obtain current and accurate labor force information, Essman Research of Des Moines administered a telephone survey to Latinos residing in the four county area. The basic survey was designed by the Institute of Decision Making and the Center for Social and Behavioral Research at The University of Northern Iowa (UNI). The questions referring to workforce barriers were designed by Iowa Workforce Development (IWD). Respondents were given the choice of conducting the interview in English or Spanish. For this reason, wording in certain questions was changed slightly to clarify the meaning of some of the questions when translated. Over 80 percent (81.2 percent) of the respondents chose to conduct the surveys in Spanish.

The overall goal of the process was to complete 400 phone surveys by respondents that were between 18 and 64 years of age. Approximately 2,381 calls were placed to achieve the 404 valid responses. Validity of survey results is estimated at a confidence interval of +/- five percent of the 404 responses analyzed in this report. Table 3 illustrates the number of interviews that were conducted in the survey area. The number of interviews conducted in Story County were low due to the small sample.

The sample list was completely exhausted for Story County. The final sample was:

**TABLE 3**

County	Number of Interviews
Polk	210
Marshall	117
Dallas	63
Story	14
Total	404

The results of the survey were analyzed to determine the relationship between each county and the entire survey area for each category of employed, not employed and retired respondents.

This report summary highlights the results found to be the most significant in reinforcing and, in some cases, refuting certain theories related to barriers in acculturating to the workplace.

Further review of all variables can be analyzed upon specific request if it would assist in planning ways to reduce or eliminate barriers that new immigrants may find as they seek to enter the Iowa workplace.

