

# HISPANICS IN GREENVILLE

A Community Needs Assessment evaluating the current state  
of the Hispanic/Latino community in Greenville County



# A NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY IN GREENVILLE COUNTY, SC

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to (1) determine the characteristics of the Hispanic population in Greenville County, (2) evaluate perceptions of access to services in the Hispanic Alliance's four priority areas and programmatic pillars: education, health, financial stability, and legal services, (3) discover other needs and concerns of Hispanic residents in Greenville County. This information will guide Hispanic Alliance in developing future programs and working with governmental, non-profit, and educational institutions. It will also provide a data-driven resource for use in programming and strategic planning for agencies county-wide. Using quantitative and qualitative research methods, this report offers a profile of the Hispanic population in Greenville County in 2018.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was conducted in 2017-2018 by the Hispanic Alliance in partnership with Furman University. We want to express our deep gratitude to a very special group of people and organizations that made this study possible.

We are indebted to our lead researchers, Dr. Courtney Quinn and Dr. Matt Cohen of Furman University, for their dedication and commitment to the success of this project. Special thanks to contributors Emerald Clark, Adela Mendoza, Sara Montero-Buria, Lindsey Tabor, and Lissette Treanor.

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And, to the 400 participants who gave us the generous gift of time: GRACIAS. We are humbled by your trust, inspired by your resilient journeys, and empowered by your limitless dreams.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING A STRONG, INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

BY ADELA MENDOZA AND COURTNEY QUINN, PH.D.

On both the national and local scale, we are experiencing a historic change in population demographics that has implications for all sectors of society. Nationally, the growth of the Hispanic population has remained consistent, and it is expected to reach 29 percent by 2060. In Greenville, we have seen an increase of 52 percent in the last 10 years. The average length of time that our study participants have lived in Greenville is 14 years, and almost seven out of 10 participants plan to make this area their permanent home.

The growth of this population has outpaced our local system's ability to adapt service and information delivery mechanisms to meet the complex needs of this population and facilitate its assimilation.

Nevertheless, as the Hispanic community grows, it becomes a stronger and more vibrant part of the fabric of Greenville. Hispanics work as teachers and engineers; they are raising families, buying homes, sending their children to college, and starting businesses.

It is essential that local governments, schools, businesses, and organizations are aware of these trends, the positive effects the Hispanic population has on our local community, as well as the steep barriers to opportunity and success.

Hispanics residents lag behind other groups in our county on key measurements of quality of life, such as income, educational attainment, and access to health care.



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This study shows that Hispanics in our community currently face higher levels of poverty than other races and ethnicities. The percentage of households living below the federal poverty threshold is at least 21 percent, higher than the national rate of 12.7 percent. Financial strain increases the daily struggle for families to acquire other necessary resources.

Participants also reported low levels of access to health care with 61 percent of adults lacking health insurance. Primary obstacles identified include language barriers, limited availability of interpreters or bilingual health staff, and the high cost of health care.

Hispanics meet intricate challenges when immigrating to the United States. Differences in language, culture, and value-based attitudes towards institutions such as banking, law enforcement, higher education, and legal systems, are all barriers to creating a stable home. Approximately 58 percent of Hispanics struggle with communication inequities during important interactions with the predominantly English-speaking community. However, 42 percent of participants rated their English language proficiency as "excellent" or "good."

Similar to national statistics, 36 percent of participants reported being undocumented. This poses its own set of inevitable hurdles in accessing social services and integrating into our community. Generally speaking, Hispanic community members who are undocumented are arriving to their new communities with lower levels of educational attainment, income, and utilization of medical services for both themselves and their children.



One in four participants are both undocumented and have children living in their household, creating additional concerns for these families and the organizations working to serve them.

The majority of households in our study have children. Almost half (45 - 49 percent) of Hispanic households with children in 5K through high school earn less than \$25,000 per year. On a positive note, 62 percent of Hispanic children have health insurance through Medicaid. However, 22 percent of children do not regularly see a dentist.

Early education has been shown to have long-term benefits, yet only 20 percent of participants' children attend a formal preschool. However, parents are taking the initiative to help children at home, with 92 percent reading to young children in either English, Spanish, or both.

As children enter formal school, parents encounter an entirely new set of challenges navigating the school system.



Fifty percent of parents with children ages 5-12 experience a language barrier in communicating with their child's teacher.

One major concern for Hispanic families is higher education. A full 88 percent of households with high-school-aged children feel they do not know enough about the college application process. Families want information early in their children's lives so they can plan financially and encourage their children to take necessary steps to qualify for college.

The Hispanic population in Greenville faces hurdles in accessing legal services. Again, language barriers, lack of available interpreters, and the lack of legal documents in Spanish pose significant challenges. Very few participants have done any long-term legal planning, such as creating a will or custody plan for their children if they pass away or are deported.

Greenville County is making great strides in welcoming Hispanics. Most participants would feel comfortable calling the police if they were the victim of a crime and believe the police would treat them fairly. Positively, 86 percent of participants endorsed "always" feeling welcome in Greenville County.

However, there is ample room for improvement. Over 40 percent of respondents have experienced discrimination while living here due to language differences or their racial appearance.

The Hispanic population in Greenville County is already having a profound impact on our economic, educational, and political systems and will continue to influence all aspects of Greenville moving forward. Therefore, it will benefit everyone, from businesses to local schools, to work collectively to build a strong, connected, and inclusive community that recognizes the important role of our Hispanic neighbors in our shared future.

The following report offers unprecedented insight into the needs and aspirations of Hispanics in Greenville. It also highlights opportunities for systemic change, innovative partnerships, and collaboration across sectors and cultures aimed to strengthen our community.



# METHODS

Our team from Hispanic Alliance and Furman University developed a survey of 117 questions. The questions were based on academic literature and government research regarding Hispanics in the United States and the four focus areas of Hispanic Alliance. Existing validated scales were employed to analyze acculturation and perceived social mobility.

In 2017-2018, trained bilingual interviewers attended community events (e.g., financial stability classes, healthy cooking classes, back-to-school promotions), made themselves available after church services, and canvassed Hispanic-owned businesses to collect data. Participants received a small monetary compensation for participating in the study.

Interviewers were organized to target major geographic centers with concentrated Hispanic populations. There was also a concerted effort to hear from groups representing a wide range of socioeconomic and occupational backgrounds.

Participants were 18 years or older, lived in Greenville County, and identified as Hispanic/Latino(a). Interviews were conducted verbally, with the option of English or Spanish. Names, addresses, and other identifying information were not collected to ensure anonymity. A total of 400 in-depth interviews were completed.



In addition, 25 individuals involved with Hispanic Alliance Community Teams completed a separate survey regarding their experiences working with the Hispanic community.

Data on Hispanics in the United States were gathered from the United States Census Bureau, and student data were gathered from Greenville County Schools.

All data were collected using Qualtrics, a specialized software for survey data. Qualitative data were analyzed with MaxQDA for mixed method data, and quantitative data were analyzed with R software.





# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



# HISPANIC POPULATION



56.5 MILLION



272,791



44,655

The Hispanic population of the United States has grown nine-fold since 1960, from 6.3 million to over 55 million today. Currently, Hispanics comprise 17.8 percent of the total population of the United States and are expected to reach 28.6 percent by 2060.

States in the South have accounted for the largest share of the nation's Hispanic population growth since 2000. The top southern metropolitan areas for Hispanic populations are in Texas; though Atlanta, GA, and Tampa, FL, have significant populations as well.

During the last major survey of the Hispanic population of South Carolina, conducted by the University of South Carolina (2007), Hispanics made up 3.3 percent of South Carolina's population. In the past 10 years, the Hispanic population of South Carolina has increased by 350 percent.

Greenville continues to see a growth in our Hispanic population, affording us the opportunities and civic challenges that come with diversity.

Hispanics comprise approximately nine percent of the population in Greenville County, significantly less than the 17.8 percent of the overall United States population. However, the county has seen a consistent upward trend in the number of Hispanics in the area.

The 2007 United States Census listed the Hispanic population of Greenville County at 29,263. The most recent figure lists 44,655 Hispanic residents. This is a 52 percent increase in less than 10 years.

HISPANICS COMPRISE **9%** OF GREENVILLE'S POPULATION

# AGE, GENDER & LEVEL OF EDUCATION

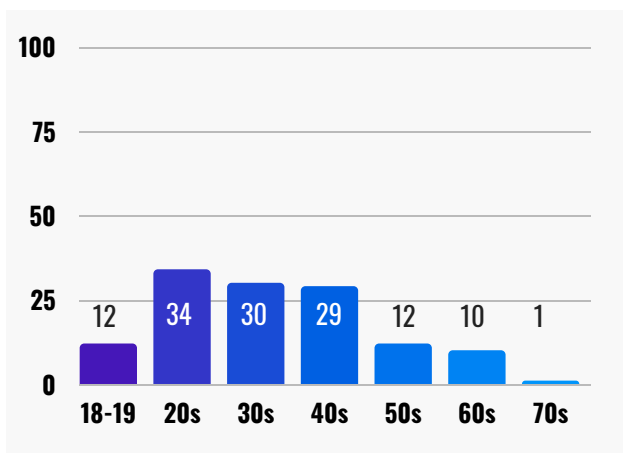
Gender: 128 of 400 participants identify as male, 269 as female, one as other, and one participant did not share their gender identification.

Age Range: participants range from 18 (the lowest accepted) to 77. The average age of participants is 37. For both male and female respondents, a higher number of people in their 20s and 30s were interviewed. This follows national statistics, as the Hispanic population of the United States skews young.

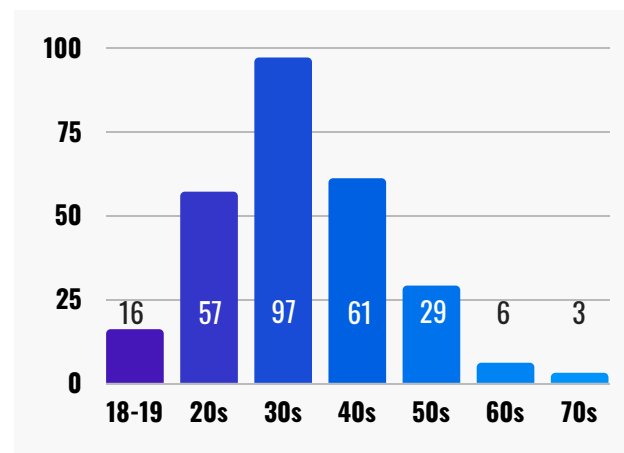
One-third of Hispanics in the U.S. are younger than 18 and one-quarter of them are millennials (ages 22-37 in 2018). Given we did not interview those under 18, a large share of respondents in their 20s and 30s reflects U.S. trends.

Education Level: This varied considerably among respondents, ranging from never having attended school to attaining graduate degrees. Thirty-five percent of respondents have received less than a full high school education.

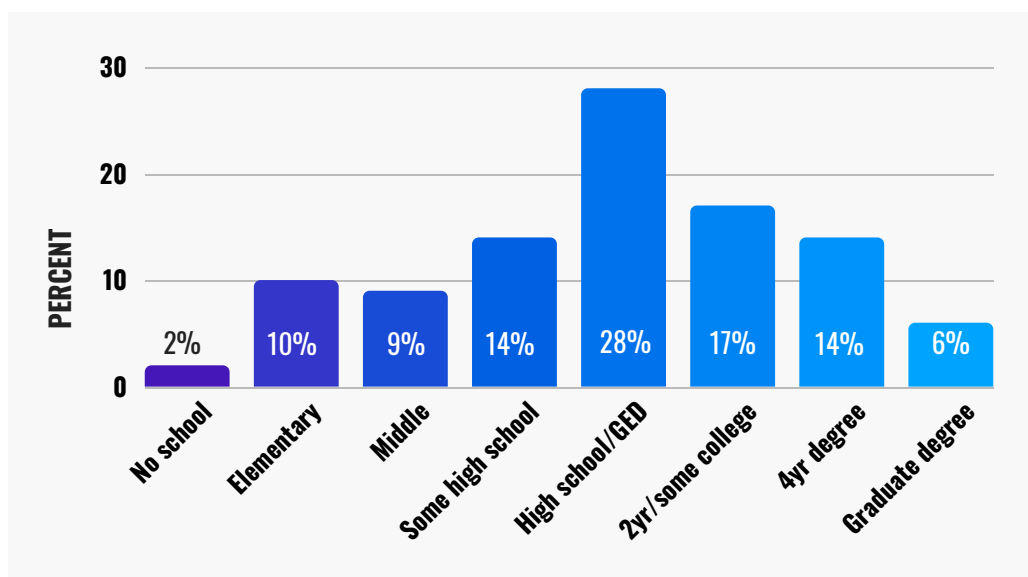
## NUMBER OF MALE RESPONDENTS BY AGE



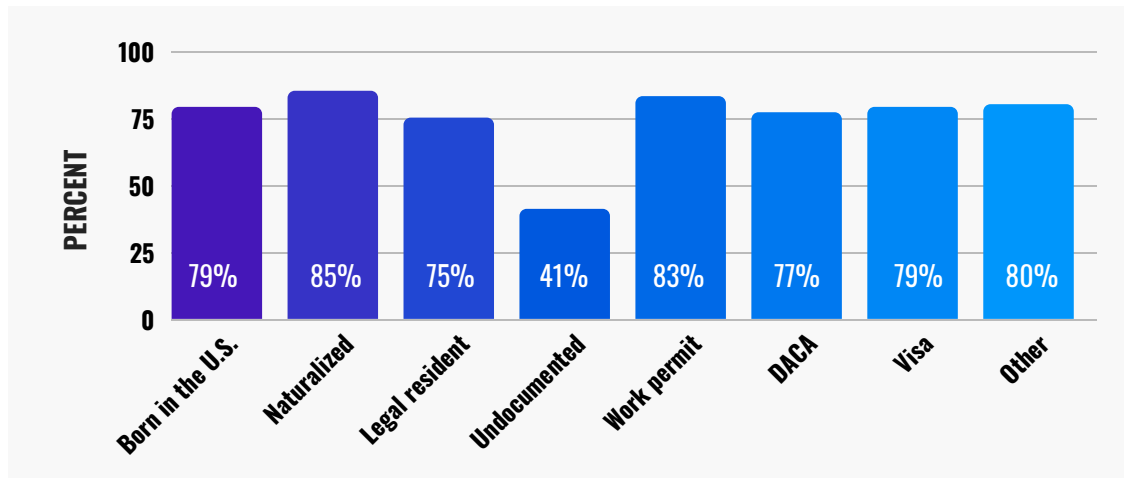
## NUMBER OF FEMALE RESPONDENTS BY AGE



## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF RESPONDENTS



## RESPONDENTS WITH HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE OR GREATER BY IMMIGRATION STATUS



Hispanics have lagged behind other groups in educational attainment in the United States. In 2015, while 90 percent of all adults had a high school degree or higher, only 67 percent of Hispanics had the same level of education. The percentage of participants in our study with a high school degree or higher is 66 percent, mirroring national statistics. This is true for both men and women. A greater percentage of men had earned a graduate degree, though a greater percentage of women had earned a 4-year degree.

When comparing educational attainment to immigration status, almost all groups exceed the national statistic of 67 percent high school graduation rate for Hispanics.

Only undocumented participants have a lower percentage of high school graduates (41 percent) than the national average.

Educational attainment influences many aspects of quality of life including access to health care. The participant's level of educational attainment is related to whether or not they have health insurance. Eight of ten participants with less than a high school education have no health insurance, compared to 50 percent of those with a high school degree or more. Children whose parents have earned a 4-year college degree or graduate degree are more likely to regularly see a dentist, with or without insurance, than children whose parents have less education.



## A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Although one's level of education influences many aspects of life for individuals and their families, it does not necessarily dictate their hope for the future. Over 90 percent of all participants, regardless of educational attainment, believe their children will be better off financially in the future than they are today.



# NATION OF ORIGIN



People from 17 countries participated in the Needs Assessment. Similar to national statistics, Mexico is the predominant nation of origin for Hispanics in Greenville County (42 percent). The next two most represented nations were Colombia (20 percent) and Honduras (9 percent) followed by Guatemala (6 percent), Puerto Rico (5 percent), and El Salvador (4 percent).

Most participants immigrated here themselves (73 percent), while 22 percent of participants' parents moved to the U.S. and they were born here, as U.S. citizens. Only 4 percent of participants were third-generation or greater. Of those, most families' nation of origin was Mexico or Puerto Rico.

# NATIONALITY & IMMIGRATION STATUS

When asked how they identify their nationality or ethnicity, 61 percent of participants included Hispanic, either alone or in combination with another identifier such as Colombian or Cuban. Seven percent of people consider themselves both Hispanic and Latino(a) and 13 percent stated only Latino(a). Just 10 percent of respondents listed some sort of "American" as an identifying factor for their nationality, for example, Mexican-American or Hispanic-American.

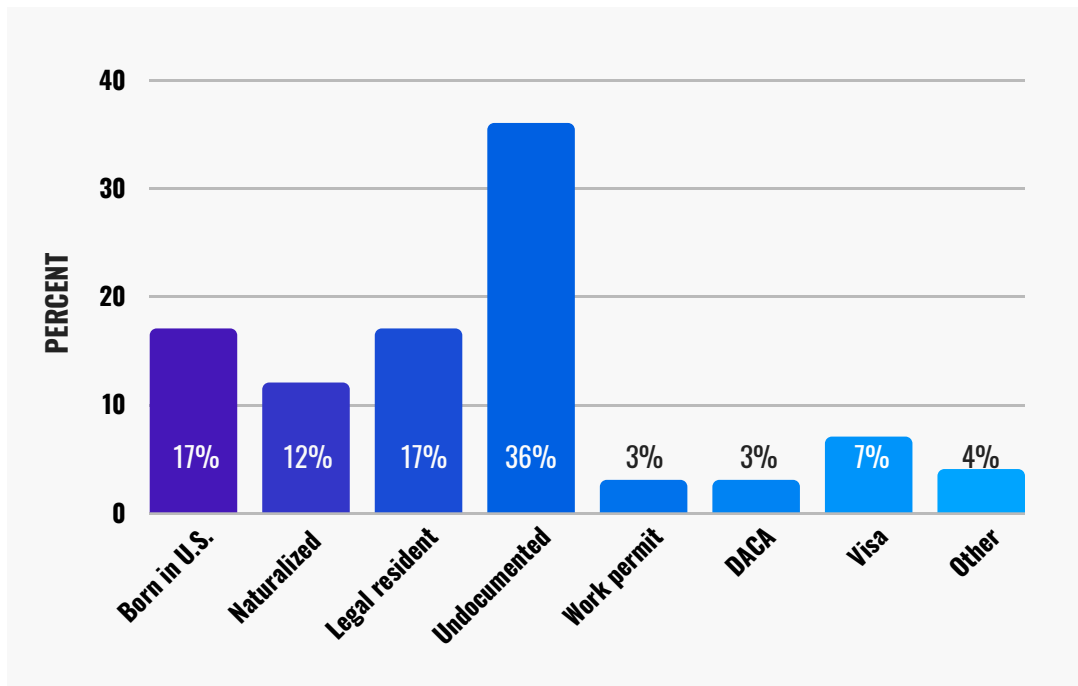
Twenty-one percent consider themselves a nationality relating solely to their nation of origin; for example, Puerto Rican or Brazilian.

Using United States Census data, in 2014 the Pew Research Center estimated that 37 percent of immigrants to South Carolina are undocumented. Our data echo these findings, with 36 percent of participants sharing that they are undocumented.

Fifteen participants indicated "other," and many of them are awaiting refugee status or have applied for political asylum.

Immigration status affects many aspects of quality of life. Undocumented immigrants experience lower levels of English proficiency, access to health care, and income.

## IMMIGRATION STATUS OF RESPONDENTS



# TIME IN THE U.S., SC, & GREENVILLE

The average length of time participants have lived in the United States is 14 years, ranging from less than one month to 65 years. The largest group of participants (43 percent) have been in the U.S. between 10 and 20 years, and 20 percent of participants have been in the United States for one year or less.

The average time participants have lived in South Carolina and in Greenville, specifically, is nine years, indicating that participants moved here from other states. The Hispanic residents of Greenville County vary widely in the amount of time they have been in the United States. This creates opportunities for more established residents to help newcomers understand and access services.

Most participants (68 percent) plan to stay in Greenville County. People want to stay in this community primarily because they have started a business or purchased a home. Many respondents also like the schools and size of the city of Greenville. Many feel the city is "calm," "comfortable," and "a good place to raise kids." Participants are also excited to see growing economic opportunities.

Of the participants who do not plan to stay in Greenville, most plan to leave for family or work-related reasons. A few noted the increasing "hostility of Federal immigration policy" and one person stated "police brutality" as their reason to leave.

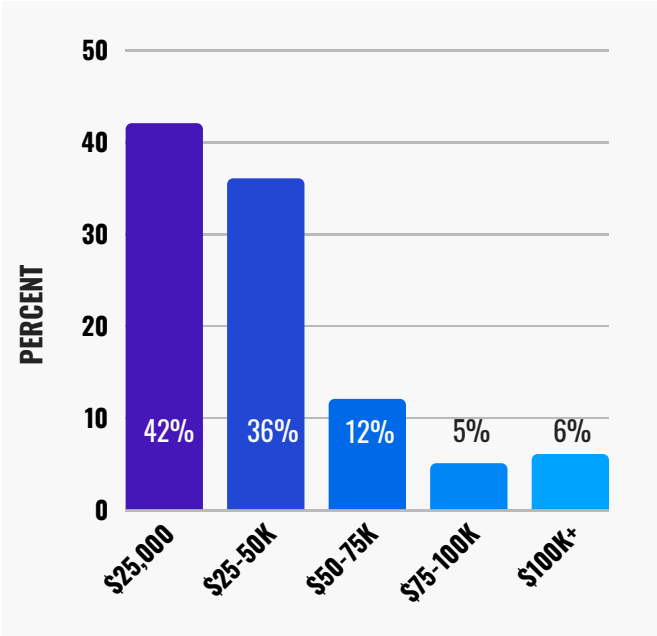


"I want to stay in Greenville because it is the best city to grow and develop a business. The landscape is beautiful, [it is] a caring community, and opportunities are always available since people are caring and willing to help."



# ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME & COMPOSITION

## ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF RESPONDENTS



The median household income in the United States in 2016 was approximately \$58,000, meaning half of households earn more and half earn less. Average income was roughly \$83,000. For Hispanics in the U.S., the 2016 median household income was \$48,000 and average income was \$67,000. The median household income for South Carolina is lower than the national average, at \$47,000.

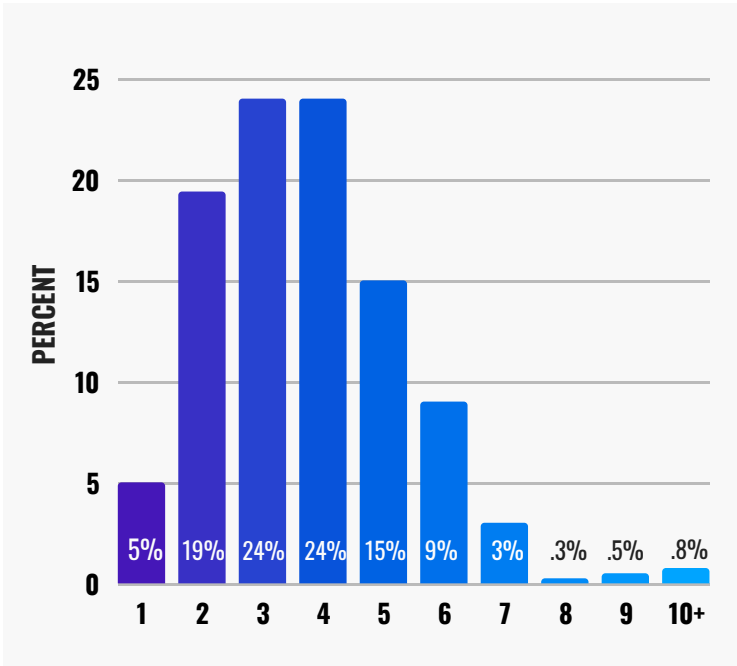
Seventy-eight percent of participants live in a household with an annual income of \$50,000 or less. Of those, 42 percent live in a household making \$25,000 or less per year. The poverty threshold for families of four is \$25,000. Given this, at least 84 households (21 percent) of participants live below the poverty threshold, compared with 12.7 percent of households nationally.

In terms of marital status, 46 percent of participants are married while 12 percent live with a domestic partner. A remaining 29 percent of participants are single, while few are separated (4 percent), divorced (7 percent) or widowed (2 percent).

The picture involving parental child-rearing is complex: 38 percent of households consist of two adults and children, while 11 percent involve one adult and children. Twenty-six percent of households consist of some arrangement of extended household members, either family or friends. This is a much lower percentage than found in 2007.

The average household size of participants is 3.7. This is larger than the national household average size of 2.5.

## RESPONDENTS' NUMBER IN HOUSEHOLD



# OCCUPATIONS

Half of all participants work full-time outside of their home. An additional 18 percent work part-time outside of the home. Ten percent of respondents work at home, delivering at-home care to children or other family members.

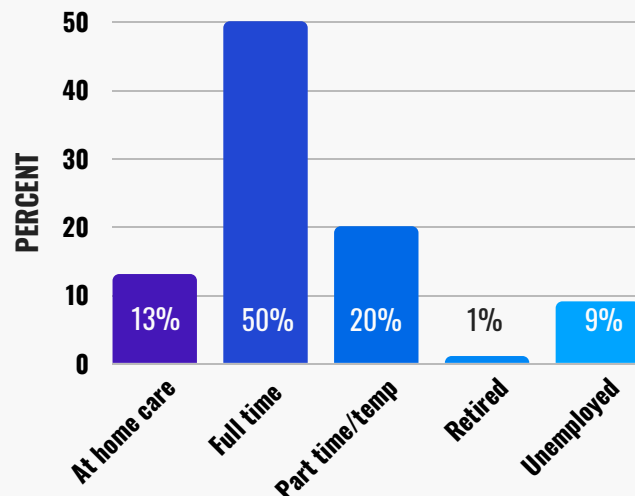
The unemployment rate of respondents rests at 9 percent. Among those, half are actively seeking employment while half would like to work but are not actively seeking employment.

#	OCCUPATION
51	Construction
36	Student
36	Cleaning Services
35	Manufacturing
29	Food Preparation or Service
20	Beauty Services
18	Business Administration or Services
15	Health Care
13	Management
11	Retail
11	Finance, Insurance, or Real Estate
10	Sales
9	Hospitality(hotels)
9	Child Care
7	Repair Services
7	Other
7	Landscaping Services
5	Public Administration
4	Information & Communication
4	Education
4	Agriculture / Mining / Forestry
3	Retired
3	Engineer
2	Transportation or Utilities
1	Security
1	Military
1	Marketing
1	Legal
1	Disability Benefits
1	Aviation



The most common occupations are construction, manufacturing, cleaning services, and food preparation / service. Employment in these occupations makes it more likely that a person is living in a household that earns less than \$25,000 per year.

WORK STATUS OF RESPONDENTS



What resources are needed by the Hispanic business community that could be provided by community organizations?

**Marketing & Publicity**  
**Networking**  
**Loans**  
**Accounting**  
**Translations**  
**Business plans**  
**Documents for Incorporation**

Fifty-three participants own their own business. Of those, 34 are fully incorporated while 18 are informal. The two most common occupational areas in which to own a business are construction and cleaning services. Other business owners are in finance/real estate, sales, and transportation and utilities.

Owning a business has financial benefits. Only 30 percent of households with a business owner earn less than \$25,000 per year, compared to 43 percent of households with no business owner. Business owners are also more likely to earn between \$50-\$75,000 per year, and to earn over \$75,000 per year, than non-business owners.

Business owners are also more likely than non-business owners to rate their finances as "excellent" or "good" and more likely to report that their financial situation has improved in the last 10 years.

## THE BENEFITS OF BUSINESS OWNERSHIP



Increased household income



Increased financial well-being



Increased use of preventative health care services for self and children



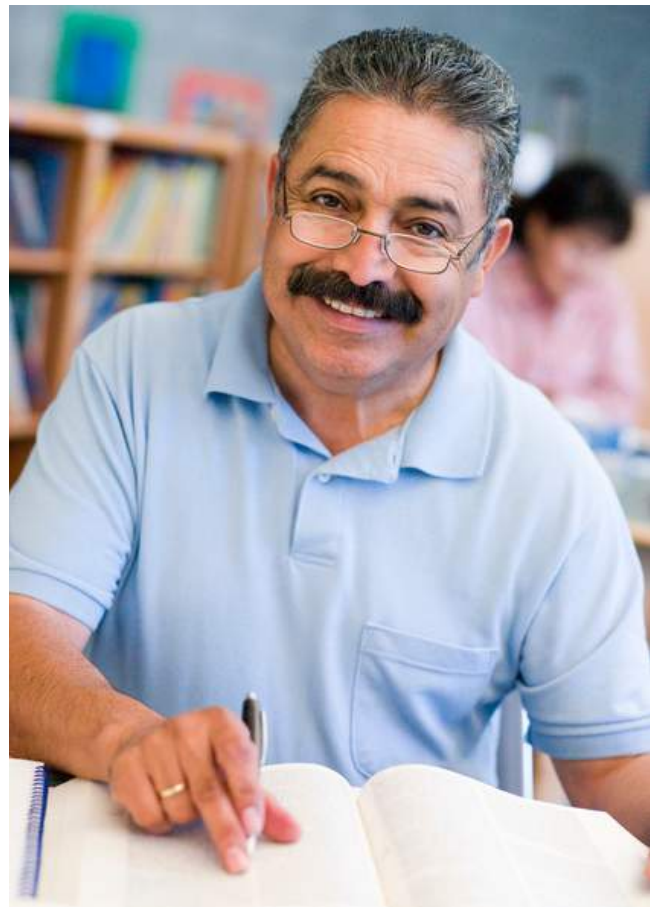


# ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

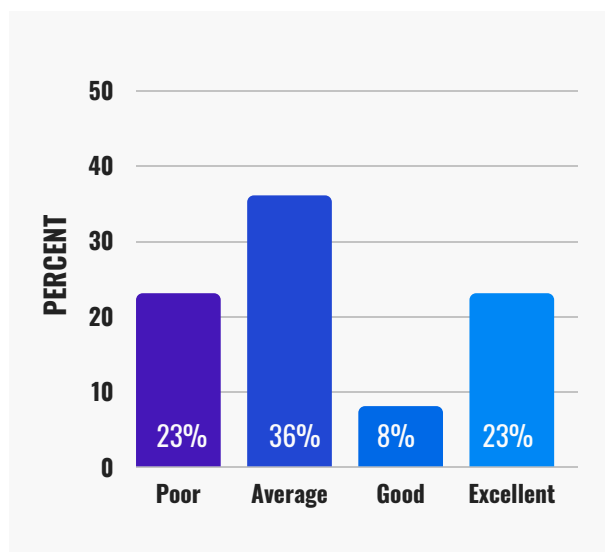
There is a clear divide in how participants rate their English language skills; 23 percent rated their English as "excellent," while 19 percent rated their skills as "good." Most participants, thirty-eight percent, rated their skills as "average," yet 20 percent feel their English language skills are "poor."

Rating oneself as an "average" English speaker did not differ by gender, while women (23 percent) were more likely than men (12 percent) to rate their English as "poor."

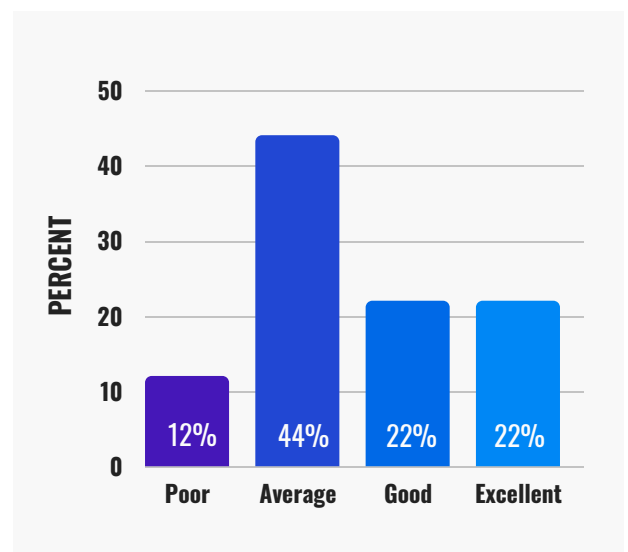
English language skills are related to quality of life. For example, 87 percent of respondents whose children have no health insurance rated their English as "poor" or "average." Of people whose children are on private insurance through a parent's job, 74 percent of respondents rated their English as "good" or "excellent." A majority (73 percent) of those with higher levels of English proficiency rated their household finances as "good" or "excellent," while only 53 percent of those with lower levels of proficiency did the same.



FEMALE RATINGS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS



MALE RATINGS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

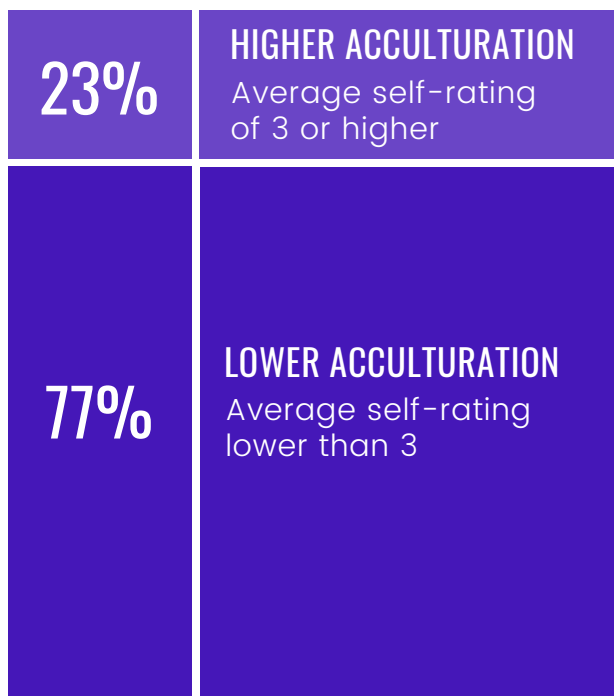


We utilized the Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (SASH), a validated four-item questionnaire that uses language as a proxy for acculturation.

The SASH provides information on the language in which participants function across four different domains: Read and Speak, Speak at Home, Speak with Friends, and Think. For each domain participants can rate themselves on a scale of 1-5 (1 - Only Spanish; 2 - Spanish better than English; 3 - Both Equally; 4 - English better than Spanish; 5 - Only English).

## SASH RESULTS

### HOW ACCULTURATED ARE PARTICIPANTS BASED ON LANGUAGE USAGE?



The SASH also uses each individual participant's average across the domains as a measure of acculturation. An average score of 3 or above is considered a higher level of acculturation, and a score below this is indicative of low acculturation.

Based on this scoring system, close to 3/4 of our participants fall into the low acculturation category and 1/4 are highly acculturated. This split can be used to correlate high and low acculturation with self-perceptions of social location, and access to social services.

Among our participants, there is a relationship between acculturation and where people rank themselves on subjective social status in Greenville. Eighty-seven percent of people who are more acculturated ranked themselves on the upper rungs of the social ladder, compared to 72 percent of people considered less acculturated.

Positively, there was no difference in how welcome participants feel in Greenville between those who are more and less acculturated. There was a small difference in willingness to call the police if someone was the victim of a crime. Ninety-three percent of more acculturated participants feel comfortable and 83 percent of less acculturated participants feel comfortable. This is primarily due to language barriers.

Acculturation does have a strong relationship with access to health care. Only 29 percent of people who are less acculturated have health insurance while 72 percent of more acculturated participants are covered. Only 44 percent of less acculturated people regularly see a dentist while 71 percent of more acculturated people do.

# LANGUAGE USAGE & BILINGUALISM

The acculturation groupings derived from the SASH provides a general picture of how comfortable our Hispanic population is with utilizing the language of the dominant culture. A more nuanced profile of language usage is available through looking at the averages that participants endorsed across their different life domains on the SASH.

For the purposes of this report, midrange scores of 2, 3, and 4 on the SASH were combined to create a "bilingual" category. These averages show that the vast majority of our participants are bilingual in their public lives, a vital and sought-after skill set in the current job market.

Twenty-eight percent of participants use "only Spanish" (or another language) when speaking and reading — a good proxy for those who do not yet have the English skills to allow easy communication with the broader culture.

The small percentage of "English only" users could be accounted for by second or third generation Hispanic immigrants to the US, and could be due to using only adult participants. Hispanic children learn and reinforce English speaking at school and with peers.

For all domains there is a trend to speak Spanish more frequently in intimate settings, such as one's thoughts and with one's family, and to progressively use more English in public settings, such as with friends. Half of participants use "Spanish only" when thinking or speaking with family members.

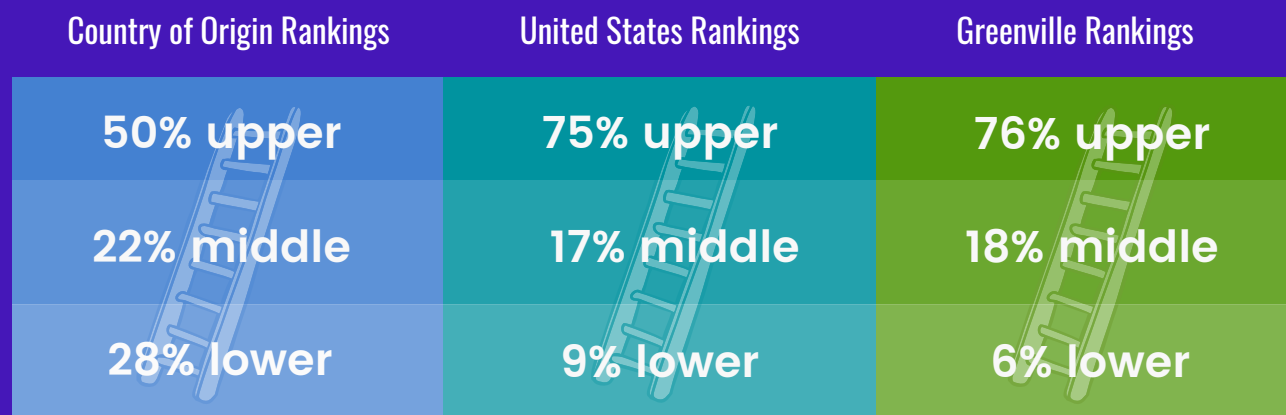
Both relative acculturation and language usage are important considerations. For our participants, low acculturation may be associated with poor outcomes in situations where English proficiency is particularly important to success.

LANGUAGE USAGE IN FOUR LIFE DOMAINS

	Read and Speak	Speak with Friends	Speak at Home	Think
ENGLISH ONLY	1%	5%	4%	5%
BILINGUAL*	71%	51%	44%	42%
SPANISH OR OTHER LANGUAGE ONLY	28%	44%	52%	53%

\*Average percentage of those endorsing scores of 2-4 on SASH

# SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL STATUS



We utilized the McArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status to assess participant views of their relative place in society regarding socioeconomic status and social position. The scale uses a picture of a ladder and asks people to rank their status regarding education, income, and prestige on a rung of the ladder, comparing themselves to others in their community. A rating of "10," the highest rung, is someone who considers themselves in the highest position, and a "1" the lowest.

There are no objective points on the ladder, it is up to each person to interpret what each rung on the ladder represents to them. For example, "best off" to one person could mean being highly educated. For another, it could mean earning more than \$50,000 in a year, and for another, it may mean people in their community look to them as a leader.

Given that many people in our survey immigrated to the United States, we asked about an individual's assessment of where they were on the ladder in their country of origin, compared to others in the United States, and compared to others in Greenville.

Our participants have a positive view of their place on the social ladder. Not all participants immigrated here, but of those who did, 50 percent considered they were on the upper ladder rungs in their country of origin, 22 percent rated themselves as average, and 28 percent placed their social standing on the lower rungs. The most common ladder rung selected for country of origin was "5," with 22 percent of people placing themselves in the middle.

Many people feel they have "climbed" the social ladder in the United States and Greenville. A full 75 percent of respondents feel they are on the upper ladder rungs when compared to others in the United States and 76 percent of respondents do when comparing to others in Greenville.

Fewer people consider themselves to be on the bottom rungs; 9 percent and 6 percent, respectively. When comparing themselves to others in the United States, the most common ladder rung chosen was "7," by almost 1/4 of people. When comparing themselves to others in Greenville, the most commonly chosen ladder rung was "8."



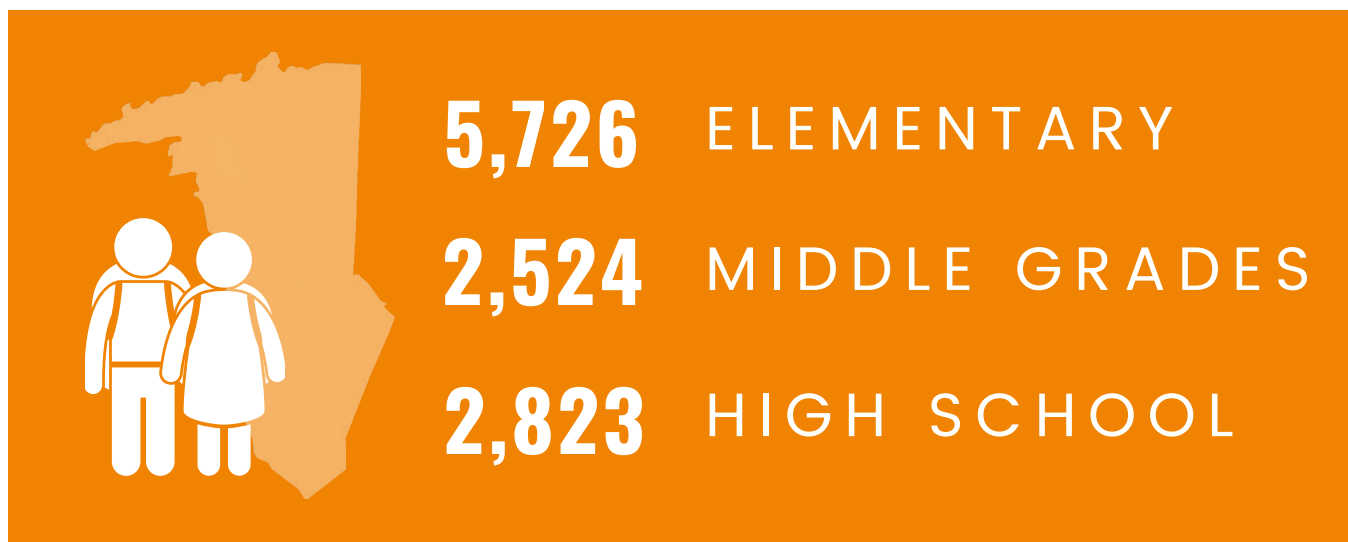


# EDUCATION

# HISPANICS IN GREENVILLE COUNTY SCHOOLS

In 2007-2008 there were a total of 6,727 Hispanic students enrolled in the Greenville County School System in K3-12th grade. By January 2018, there were 11,073 Hispanic students. This is an increase of 4,346 students in 10 years. Hispanic children comprise almost 15 percent of the Greenville County School System's students.

Hispanic children are not evenly distributed throughout county schools. Monaview Elementary is comprised of 62 percent Hispanic children while Gateway Elementary is comprised of just 3 percent Hispanic students.



# HISPANICS IN GREENVILLE COUNTY SCHOOLS

The number of Hispanics enrolled in public and private nursery schools, K-12 schools, and colleges in the United States increased 80 percent, from 9.9 million to 17.9 million, between 1999-2016. This reflects the growing Hispanic population of the U.S. More importantly, the percentage of Hispanic children of all age groups attending school has increased.

Nationally, the percentage of Hispanic 3 and 4-year-olds attending a school program increased from 36 percent in 2000 to almost 50 percent in 2016. This percentage lags behind white (55 percent) and Asian (63 percent) children, but is close to the percentage of black children in preschool (51 percent). Enrollment in preschool programs for Hispanic children is much lower in Greenville County compared with national averages.

High school graduation rates are increasing for Hispanic students across the United States. The dropout rate for Hispanics decreased from 16 percent in 2011 to 10 percent in 2016. Greenville County has seen an increase in high school graduation rates as well.

College enrollment rates have increased for Hispanic students. Nationally, 47% percent of Hispanic high school graduates were enrolled in college in 2016 for a record of 3.6 million students in higher education institutions. However, Hispanics still lag behind other groups in four-year college graduation rates. Part of this is explained because almost half of Hispanic college students attend a two-year school or community college, the highest enrollment in these institutions of any race or ethnicity.









# BIRTH TO AGE 5

One in five of our survey participants have at least one child 5 years or younger in their household.

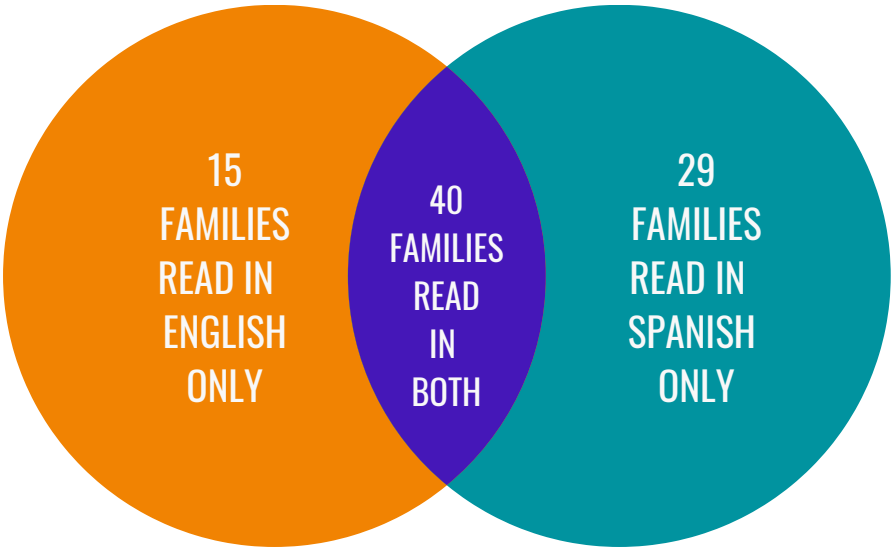
Of families with young children, only twenty percent have their children attending a formal preschool. Very few children, 8 percent, aged 5 and under attend a formal daycare, while the majority stay at home with family or a family friend. Although some children in this age group may be too young for preschool, children who could benefit from a formal program are not enrolled. Countywide, just 441 Hispanic children attended a Greenville County School K3 or K4 program in 2017-2018.

Positively, 92 percent percent of people with children under the age of 5 in their household reported reading to the children. Recent studies have shown the importance of Hispanic families helping children develop language and reading skills in their native language as well as in English.\*



Many young Hispanic children in Greenville live in low-income households. Forty-five percent of families with at least one child aged 5 or younger earn less than \$25,000 per year, making it more likely that they live below the poverty threshold. In addition, 13 percent of families with very young children have no health insurance for either adults or children.

Six families of participants with children experienced food insecurity within the last year, defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that at some point there was not enough food for someone to eat when they were hungry.



\*Kremin, L.V., et al. (2016). The effects of Spanish heritage language literacy on English reading for Spanish-English bilingual children in the US. International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 1-15.

Greenville County has 58 elementary schools with 38,097 students. Eighteen of these schools have at least 100 students who identify as Hispanic. Thirteen schools have a Hispanic population of at least 25 percent.

Greenville County has 21 middle schools with 16,642 students. Ten middle schools have at least 100 students who identify as Hispanic. Five schools have a Hispanic population of at least 25 percent.

One in three participants have at least one elementary-age child (5-12) in their household. Similar to families with very young children, 50 percent of these families earn less than \$25,000 per year.

In addition, eight families experienced food insecurity in the past year. Nineteen families with children aged 5-12 were dissatisfied with the safety of their neighborhood.

One in five households with children in this age group have no health insurance and 19 participants reported that their children do not regularly see a dentist.

Half of the respondents indicated that they "sometimes" or "most of the time" experience language barriers while communicating with their child's teacher. These participants report relying on interpreters to speak to teachers.

Despite these language barriers, parents are using a variety of methods to communicate with teachers including email, texting, in-person visits, and phone calls.

Half of children ages 5-12 attend an after-school activity such as sports, art, or music. The most popular activity is soccer, followed by gymnastics. Other activities include chess club, karate, tennis, and Bible study.

**"I don't understand a lot of the information provided in English and that doesn't allow me to help them."**





## Top Concerns

### FINANCIAL COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION

### LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

### EFFECT OF UNDOCUMENTED STATUS ON COLLEGE APPLICATION AND AID

One in three participants have at least one high-school-aged child in their household.

Only 29 percent of respondents had heard of or were aware that their child had taken the ACT or SAT, and only 34 percent of respondents said that an adult had discussed college options with their child. Respondents whose children have someone discussing college with them listed school counselors, older siblings, and family friends as primary sources of information.

Over half of respondents with high-school aged children stated they knew "nothing" about the college application process and another 35 percent stated they knew "some." This leaves 88 percent of families with high-school-aged children at a disadvantage when it comes to college preparation. The biggest concern parents of high-school-aged children have is the cost of higher education. Many parents also note that they are unaware of the college application process. Another concern is the role immigration status plays for undocumented students in applying for college or financial aid.



"We don't have enough information on how school works here and how they get from high school to college. I found out with my son, that he should have taken some classes to get to college; that preparation starts early in high school or even middle school."

Participants answered the question, "What are the biggest barriers your family is currently facing in regards to education?"



## Language barriers

"I would like to see a Spanish speaking person at every school and also have an interpreter on site to help parents communicate better with teachers."

"It would be helpful to have more written communication in Spanish."



## Children with special needs

"We need more support for parents of children with special needs/disabilities. There are lots of resources and support for English-speaking but not as much in Spanish."

"Where do we go to get a diagnosis and an IEP [Individual Education Plan]?"



## Educational resources

"I would like more information on educational resources including after-school activities, leadership options, and what steps to take for my child. Sessions I could attend to learn more would be very helpful."



## The road to college

"We need to know how to apply for college, how to get loans and scholarships, and what kids should do in high school so they are qualified for higher education."





# HEALTH



61% of people lack any health insurance. 23% of respondents get health insurance through their or their spouse's employment. 8% obtain their own insurance privately (for example through the Affordable Care Act) and 8% are on Medicaid.

When people need routine care, 37 percent report going to an outpatient clinic and pay at the time of service, the most common clinic being New Horizons. Few, only 16 percent, go to an outpatient clinic where they do not have to pay, most often the Greenville Free Medical Clinic. Very few, 7 percent, rely solely on the emergency room for care. Some participants from Mexico noted that they return to their country for care, due to lower costs.

Participants were given a list of common barriers to accessing health care. Over half of respondents stated that the cost of care was the most prohibitive. Almost one in four listed problems with language and communication as a barrier.

Half of the participants regularly see a dentist while half do not. Of those who see a dentist, half do so with insurance while half pay out-of-pocket at the time of service.

Over half of participants receive health services in an office where they are aware that either a doctor or staff speaks Spanish.





# HEALTH INSURANCE & CARE – CHILDREN



Three of four parents take their child to see a regular health care provider such as a family doctor or pediatrician. For families whose children have no health insurance, most rely on out-patient clinics, both paid and free. Five families still take their children to a family physician even with no insurance and five rely on the emergency room.

A majority, 64 percent, of children receive medical services where someone at the doctor's office speaks Spanish. Yet, 45 families visit a doctor's office without a Spanish speaker and 34 families are unaware if their doctor provides such a service. When interpretation services are needed, participants rely on friends or family to attend doctor visits with them.

Children are more likely to see a dentist than their parents. Most children have regular dental checkups (78 percent). Yet, this still leaves almost one in four children who do not see a dentist.



Participants are utilizing Medicaid to ensure their children have health insurance. Only 18% of children have no health insurance (compared to 61% of adults) while 62% of children are on Medicaid. Only 20% of children are on a private insurance, either through their parents' jobs or the Affordable Care Act.



Participants answered the question, "What are the challenges your family is currently facing with regards to health?"



## Specific medical needs

People expressed the need for help with concerns such as mental health, dental, OBGYN/pregnancy, and end-of-life care.

"We need to create awareness about not being ashamed if you need access to mental health counseling. Currently, it is a big taboo in the Hispanic community."



## Care for specific groups

People mentioned specific groups that need extra care or special consideration for their situation including older adults, the LGBTQ+ community, and teenagers.

"I don't see enough programs available for the elderly."



## Locations of care

Many people mentioned the location of care can be an inconvenience.

"Hospitals should open small clinics on White Horse Road, near where people live."



## Logistics of care

People need help with transportation to and from care as well as the implications of long wait times.

"One time someone told me to go to the free clinic but I got there at 8:45 am and I left at 1:00 pm without seeing a doctor because of the wait time."





Participants answered the question, "What are the challenges your family is currently facing with regards to health?"



## Financial Concerns

"We need more access to doctors and clinics where the cost is not too high."

"I just think that health care is a luxurious thing to have in this country and none of us can do anything to change that except for the government."



## Information through schools

"I'd like to see a list of resources come home from the school system to share with parents to disseminate information."



## Help for small business owners

"I'd like to see help for small business owners obtaining health insurance. We pay our taxes and would like insurance for ourselves and employees."



## Public Health issues

"I need information about vaccinating my children. I had problems with their school but they don't have a health care provider and I don't know where to go."





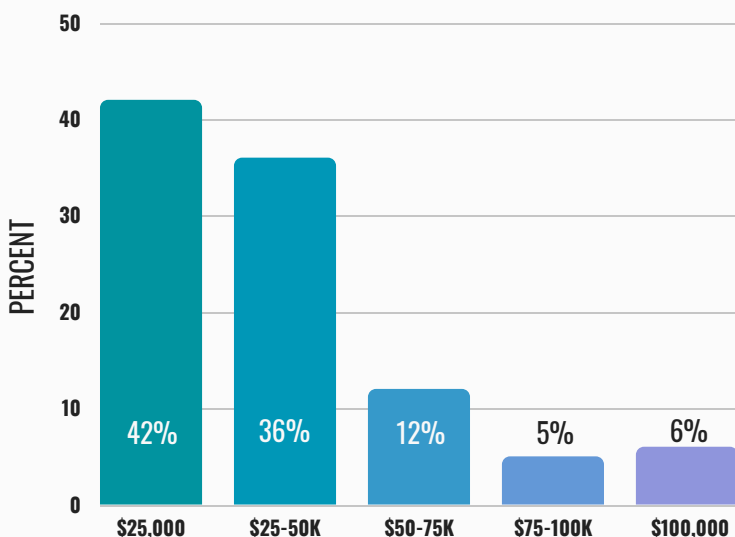
# FINANCIAL

# INCOME IN HISPANIC HOUSEHOLDS

Seventy-eight percent of participants live in a household with an annual income of \$50,000 or less, below the median household income in the United States. Of those, 42 percent live in a household making \$25,000 or less, potentially placing them in poverty, depending upon the number of people in their household. Yet, 61 percent of participants rated their financial situation as either "Excellent: I pay all my expenses, save each month and don't have debts" or "Good: I pay all my expenses, save every other month and I have few debts." One-third of all households rate their financial situation as less well-off, meaning they pay their bills but do not save and have debt.

Eighty-two percent of participant households have one or two wage earners, and 17 percent have three or more wage earners. This leaves only 1 percent of Hispanic households surveyed indicating that they did not have a wage earner. The more wage earners that are contributing to a household, the more total income it is able to generate.

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF RESPONDENTS



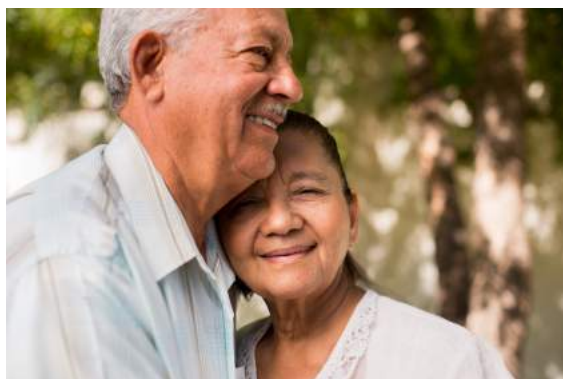
"I have been able to budget my income because I have been alone for a long time. Now that I have gotten married I hope to start saving a little."

Of households with only one wage earner, over half live on less than \$25,000 per year. However, the percentage of households living on this amount drops as the number of wage earners increases: only 34 percent of households with two wage earners and 26 percent of households with three wage earners gross \$25k or less per year.

Overall, financial trajectories are positive. Sixty-one percent of participants have seen their financial situation improve in the last 10 years. Thirty percent have stayed the same, and only 10 percent of people have seen their financial situation worsen.



# SECONDARY EFFECTS OF FINANCIAL STRESS



Financial well-being is composed of more than just household income. Accumulated wealth, in the form of property, savings, and investments is another important indicator. Hispanic net worth and home ownership lags behind whites nationally. In 2016, the average net worth of white families was \$171,000, eight times the Hispanic household average of \$20,600.

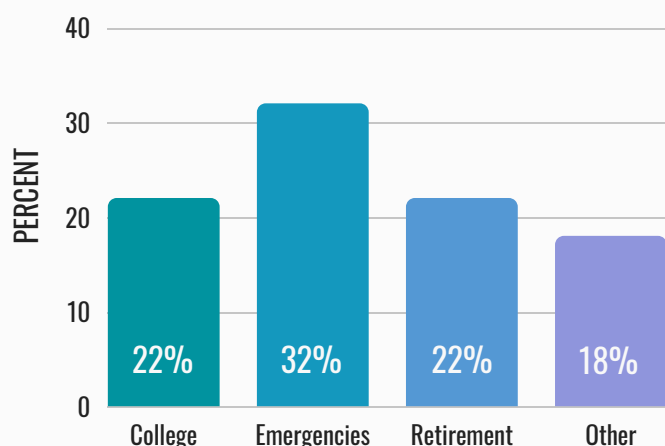
Half of participants reported actively saving money for retirement, college, emergencies, or "other." Thirty-seven percent of those households save for two or more future costs. People are also saving for vacations, a wedding, student loans, or to buy a house or start a business.

Most participants lack any form of insurance. A full 61 percent of participants have no health insurance for themselves, and 79 percent do not have life insurance. This lack, coupled with lower household net worth, leaves Hispanic families more vulnerable to financial strain due to unforeseen costs, such as health emergencies or life changes including divorce, deportation, or even college costs for their children.

Participants were asked about their use of social safety net programs. Forty-three percent of respondents use no social programs. The most utilized program is Medicaid (33 percent), followed by free school lunches (35 percent of families with children ages 5-17). Only 6 percent (26 participants) receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and 23 participants receive Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits.

Thirty-two households (8 percent) rely upon food pantries — the same number who indicated they had experienced food insecurity. Food insecurity is defined by the USDA as someone in the household not having food to eat when they were hungry in the past year.

RESPONDENTS' SAVINGS CATEGORIES



32

HOUSEHOLDS  
EXPERIENCED  
FOOD INSECURITY

Participants answered the question, "What are the challenges your family is currently facing with finances?"



## Lack of financial knowledge

"I don't know how to manage money."

"I don't know a lot about how the banking industry works in this country. I would like to learn more about it to know who to trust with our money."



## Paying basic bills

"Consistently having the money to pay for everything - we have it but it's difficult - some months harder than others."

"When the weather is really cold, the heating bill is too expensive and this has a big impact in our household."



## Cost of childcare

"Child care is a challenge since it's expensive especially when our children are younger, which is the most expensive age to pay for, and we HAVE to use it to be able to work."



## Financially supporting others

"Having enough income to help me cover my son's college."

"Making ends meet, especially taking care of family members outside of the country."

"Taking care of my parents."





Participants answered the question, "Is there anything else you would like to share about your financial needs that could help the Hispanic Alliance in their work to support the Hispanic community in Greenville?"



## Desire for more classes

"I would like to see more classes to teach us how to save money and if there are opportunities for undocumented immigrants to have a bank account and how to manage those accounts."

"I would like information on building credit and buying a home."



## Loans & Scholarships

"I'd like to see help for companies to grow and help entrepreneurs know about it."

"Provide more resources for Hispanics to receive scholarships."



## Information on taxes

"Seminars to make our community aware of how to do taxes, the importance of filing them and what are the consequences if you do not do that. I think a lot of Hispanics come to this country and they don't think about doing their taxes because of their legal status and what they don't know is that if in the future they apply to become a legal resident, that can affect them."



## Transportation

"Transportation is a big issue here. If you don't have a car it is very hard for you to obtain a job."

"My family depends on one car so I can't go out as much as I would like because my husband needs the car to work full-time."





**LEGAL**



Just over one in three participants report utilizing legal services in the United States. Of those, 80 percent of people used an attorney and 20 percent used a notary.

Half of respondents used the services of an attorney for immigration issues. Legal services for family issues, such as divorce or child custody, were needed by 18 percent. The most common reason for using notary services was family services (92 percent), followed by immigration issues (50 percent). Some reported using each service for more than one issue.

The most cited problems with attorneys were cost and language barriers. However, 62 people utilized an attorney where their representative or their staff spoke Spanish. When people did need an interpreter, eight people paid a professional, six relied upon family or friends, and four used a free interpreter provided by a community organization. When participants engaged a notary, half went to someone who spoke Spanish and just three utilized a family or friend as an interpreter.

One in four participants have been involved with the U.S. court system. The most common reasons for going to court were traffic violations and family issues such as divorce. Others applied for political asylum or had to testify as the victim of a crime. Only 9 percent of people who have gone to court (and just two percent of total participants) had gone to court on criminal proceedings.

When people were preparing for court, half did not need any language assistance. Twenty-three people relied on friends or family to interpret for them, and 30 people paid a professional. Paperwork was provided in Spanish for nine individuals who needed language assistance. Eighteen people paid an interpreter to help with paperwork, 14 relied upon friends or family, and eight relied upon free services provided by a community organization.



**"I felt like I was underrepresented because of language and being Hispanic. Since I had free legal services, I felt like they did not give me justice."**





"Maybe I would call the police. If it's something very serious, I would. But for other minor things, I fear that interaction with the police would get me deported."

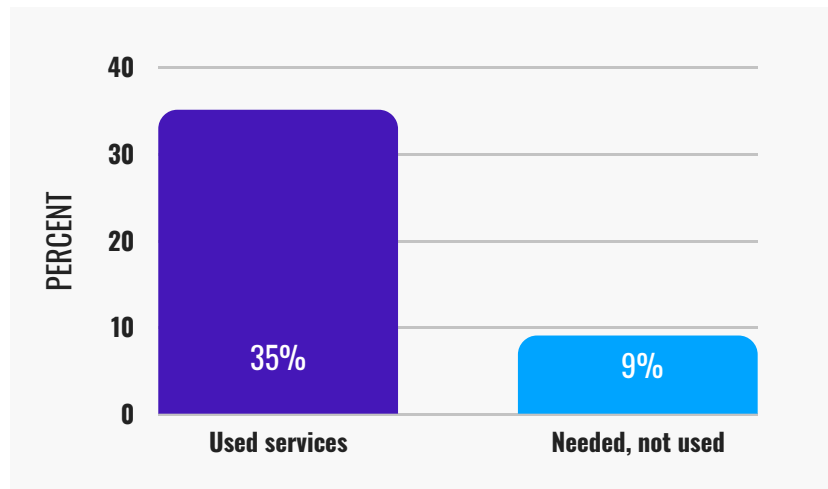
Fourteen percent of participants reported being the victim of a crime in the United States. Of those people, 84 percent reported the crime to the police. People who did not call the police stated that they were predominately afraid of the immigration repercussions.

A vast majority, 85 percent of people, feel comfortable calling the police if they become the victim of a crime, and 88 percent of people believe the police would treat them fairly. Only 8 percent of people are not sure if they feel comfortable, and 6 percent said they would definitely not call the police. People reported that the type of crime committed against them would influence whether or not they call the police. For "minor" crimes, people would not call for fear of immigration consequences or discrimination.

Of the people who said they would not feel comfortable contacting local police, 75 percent are undocumented. However, simply being undocumented does not lead people to avoid using police services. Three in four undocumented participants said they would feel safe calling the police if they were the victim of a crime.

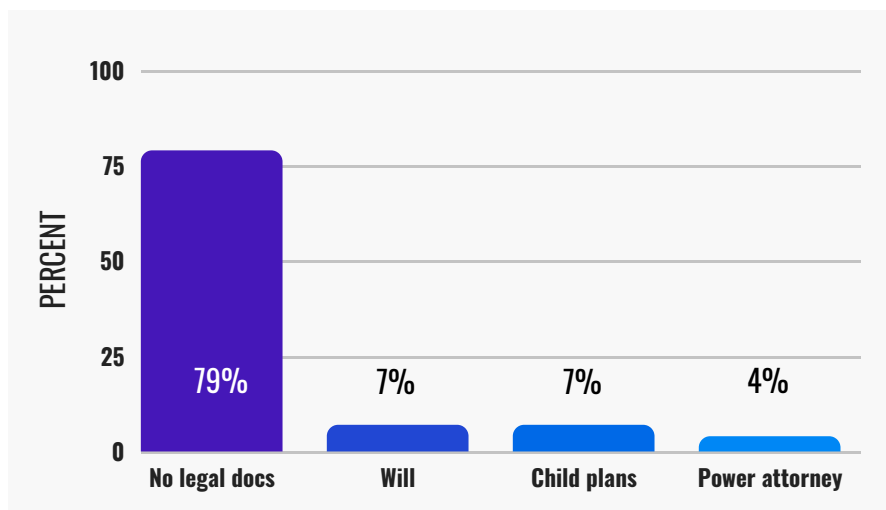
One major concern of community organizations is that Hispanic people often do not know the legal difference between an attorney and a notary. Although 80 percent of participants said they did know the difference, this left 20 percent of respondents (80 individuals) who did not know the difference, which can have negative repercussions for them receiving adequate legal help.

## RESPONDENTS' USE OF U.S. LEGAL SYSTEM



Thirty-seven participants reported needing legal services, but choosing not engaging them. Reasons for not seeking help include cost, not knowing who to call, fear of calling an attorney, and language barriers. When legal help was not obtained, the need frequently involved a car accident, child custody or welfare, or immigration issues.

## RESPONDENTS' LEGAL DOCUMENTS



Participants were asked if they had common legal documents such as a will or power of attorney. More than three out of four of respondents have no legal documents in the United States. Only 7 percent of participants have a will and the same number have made plans for their children if they are deported and/or pass away.



# IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Participants answered the question, "Is there anything else you would like to share about your legal needs that could help the Hispanic Alliance in their work to support the Hispanic community in Greenville?"



## Legal help for women

Women expressed a desire for legal help with domestic violence and divorce proceedings.

"I lived an experience where my life was in danger. I experienced problems communicating in court because no one spoke Spanish."



## Rights for undocumented

"I think that even if you are undocumented you have rights, at least when it comes to calling the police. It doesn't matter if you don't have papers. People need to know this."

"We need to know what legal rights we have here in the U.S."



## Notary vs. Attorney

"There are a lot of people in the Hispanic community that don't understand the difference between a notary and attorney. More information about where can we check if the attorneys/notaries have a good reputation."



## Relationships with police

"I would like to have a better system and train police on the different status; visas, students, etc. for them to serve us better."

"We need more native Latinos in the legal system. Our community will be more open to police when they see and communicate with one of their own."



# VOICES OF HISPANIC COMMUNITY LEADERS

Twenty-five community leaders connected to the Hispanic community completed an email interview regarding what they see as its greatest challenges and needs, as well as ways the Hispanic Alliance can support the future of our Hispanic population in Greenville County. Twenty-one of these individuals currently volunteer with one of the four service areas of the Hispanic Alliance. The other four are community leaders, such as pastors or non-profit administrators. Participants answered questions concerning their current role with the Hispanic Alliance, their professional work in the Greenville community, and their personal experiences.









## EDUCATION

Community leaders see many of the same problems that the Hispanic population is experiencing. Language barriers in conversations with teachers and school personnel are prominent for families with K-12 students. Knowledge of the college application process and how to access financial support are major concerns. Community leaders want to ensure that DACA recipients can attend institutions of higher education without fear.



As an educator, I have been in Greenville County for 14 years. Throughout this time, I have seen most of the challenges diminish such as the graduation rate and college attendance. I can truly attest that I see the Hispanic community moving in a positive direction.

## HEALTH

It is not enough to have services available in Greenville County if Hispanic residents cannot access them. Low cost or free clinics are beneficial, but challenges remain in accessing such services. In addition, leaders see a lack of knowledge of basic healthy lifestyle choices, preventative care options, and how to find help with issues such as mental health.



One challenge is the lack of documentation to be eligible for community services. Many people are paid in cash or with a personal check. Free clinics require proof of income, such as check stubs or a notarized letter from the employer, as part of the eligibility requirements. In most cases, employers refuse to write the notarized letter. The lack of interpreters in the free clinics is another challenge. Patients have to miss work to go to the clinic to find that they can not attend because of lack of an interpreter. The children have to be adults to serve as an interpreter for their parents or relatives.

**"We need more Hispanic leadership, more people of Hispanic backgrounds to be a visible part of Greenville's leadership."**

# FINANCIAL

The financial issues faced by the Hispanic community are closely tied to the other three focus areas of the Hispanic Alliance: health, education, and legal. Hispanic families are more likely to have low income than other racial or ethnic groups, especially those who are undocumented. Parents express a desire to send their children to college, and yet, many lack basic services such as health insurance.

Financial literacy is key to developing a long-term support system that has benefits for education, health, home ownership, and retirement. It is essential to inform the Hispanic community about financial decisions as well as the financial system.



# LEGAL

Many in the Hispanic community face daunting legal challenges. With 36 percent of Greenville's Hispanic community undocumented, their legal needs and ability to contact a legal professional are compromised. In addition, people who have not been in the United States for long have many questions on how the legal system operates.

The Hispanic community faces many challenges in this area including: (1) access to competent attorneys who speak Spanish or have Spanish-speaking office staff; (2) access to low-cost or pro bono legal services for indigent community members; (3) "notarios" or others posing as attorneys who take money from people for legal services that are never rendered or are done without the proper legal knowledge or background; and (4) lack of legal advocacy for the interests of the community at all levels of government.



**"As a county, we need to officially stand behind policy that embraces linguistic diversity and true service to our entire community."**

# CONCLUSION

This study assessed the current state of the Hispanic community in Greenville County in order to provide a reliable and accessible resource for partners across sectors. As our population's demographics continue to change, it is necessary for policy-makers, educators, businesses, and community service organizations to have comprehensive and accurate information about the people who call Greenville home. The data in this report provide a platform for making data-driven policy decisions and systemic changes to better meet the needs of our growing Hispanic population.

The political climate has changed since the last major study of Hispanics in South Carolina. Federal policies are leading to greater concern among Hispanic families about deportation and hostility by government entities.

This, in turn, has economic, social, and moral implications for Greenville decision-makers and residents regarding the type of community we collectively create.

The authors of this study see great potential for Hispanics to be a thriving, critical component of our growing, increasingly cosmopolitan city and county. Yet, local policies must reflect this inclusive vision, and resources must be devoted to the particular needs of the Hispanic population to ensure their ability to create stable families, purchase homes, start businesses, and send their children to college.

Hispanics bring great strengths to our community, including a strong work ethic, a family-focused mindset, a willingness to help their neighbors, a drive to start their own businesses, and a desire for participation in a full and healthy life as residents of Greenville.

There is a critical gap preventing our local Hispanic population from accessing essential resources and fully participating in the broader community. Hispanic residents face distinct obstacles including language and cultural barriers that prevent their access to insurance, health care, education, and information on available resources and how to navigate them. These challenges paired with inflexible or stalled systems increase their likelihood to live below the poverty line and remain removed from economic mobility.





This gap is being bridged by organizations such as the Hispanic Alliance through the construction of inclusive networks of support and empowerment. However, a concerted effort over many years will be required to ensure a strong, inclusive Greenville.

Our collective approach must include equitable and sustained funding, focus on both individual needs and larger policy changes, and incorporate ongoing interventions, education, and programs that provide positive feedback loops across several generations.

Furthermore, meaningful change will require cross-sector collaboration among educational institutions, non-profits, and private and public sector actors.

Pooling resources, interests, and expertise has been a hallmark of Greenville's progress over the past decades. Now, our community stands at an inflection point. Our ability to build inclusive partnerships and leadership will determine the challenges and opportunities of a new, unprecedentedly diverse generation.

The future of Greenville will rest upon the health and happiness of all its residents, and we hope this report and its findings set the stage for informed dialogue and strong partnerships. We welcome conversations and opportunities to work together to cultivate an environment of possibility and hope. And we invite you to join us in planting the seeds for a vibrant, prosperous future far beyond our imagination.





## Mission

The Hispanic Alliance fosters collaboration and connectivity among people, resources, and cultures to build thriving communities.

## Vision

We envision a vibrant and inclusive community where everyone has access to opportunities for success and prosperity.

## About the Hispanic Alliance

We convene the largest collaborative network working to advance Hispanic communities across our region.

The Hispanic Alliance is committed to generating reliable data that can inform innovation and facilitate meaningful systemic change for the benefit of our increasingly diverse community. We seek to empower and elevate the Hispanic voices advocating locally and nationally for equity, access, and opportunities for all.

We cultivate community partnerships and facilitate teams of volunteers dedicated to understanding and addressing complex issues at a systemic level in four priority areas: Education, Financial Stability, Health and Legal Access.



Education



Financial Stability



Health



Legal Access



## Coming together for sustainable change

The Hispanic Alliance Network in Greenville connects more than 2,000 individuals and businesses collaborating to meet the needs of our local Hispanic community. Monthly network meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month and are open to everyone.



## Empowered to serve and lead

Our volunteers are empowered allies and members of the Hispanic community, designing, fueling, and staffing our events and initiatives. Through Hispanic Alliance, volunteers donated over 4,200 hours of service in 2018 alone. Our Community Teams are entirely volunteer led and create exponential impact through grassroots strategies.



## Fearlessly building dreams

The Student DREAMers Alliance is our leadership accelerator for Hispanic youth, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to raise the trajectory of their educational futures, and open doors of access for generations to come. We guide youth through dialogues on identity and community, and facilitate engaged learning through service and advocacy.

To learn more, please visit [HispanicAllianceSC.com](http://HispanicAllianceSC.com)

# HISPANICS IN GREENVILLE

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