

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

SEPT. 15 TO OCT. 15

2008 Theme:

Getting Involved: Our Families, Our Community

PURPOSE: To celebrate the contributions of Hispanic Americans to the United States and to celebrate Hispanic heritage and culture.

BACKGROUND: In September 1968, Congress authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to proclaim National Hispanic Heritage Week during the week of September 15. In 1988, it was expanded to a month long observance by President Ronald Reagan. September 15 was chosen as the starting point because five Latin American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua) celebrate their independence on this day. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18. Public Law 100-402 authorizes and requests the President to issue an annual proclamation designating Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15.



HISPANIC FACT SHEET

Source: Census Bureau

As of July 1, 2007, there are 45.5 million Hispanics in the United States, making people of Hispanic origin the nation's largest ethnic or race minority. Hispanics constitute 15% of the nation's total population. In addition, there are approximately 3.9 million residents of Puerto Rico.

There are 16 states with at least a half-million Hispanic residents. They are: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia and Washington.

The Hispanic community is diverse: 66.8 % are of Mexican ancestry, 8.6% Puerto Rican, and 3.8% Cuban. Central and South American representation has been growing - 12.1% Central and 5.3% South American.

U.S. Hispanic purchasing power is nearly \$716 billion and is projected to reach as much as \$1 trillion by 2010 (Arbitron, 2004)

The majority of U.S. Latinos speak Spanish at home: 56% speak only Spanish, 26% speak Spanish and English equally and 18% speak only English. (2006 U.S. Census)

There are 1.1 million Hispanic veterans in the U.S. Armed Forces. (2006 American Community Survey).