



# RAÍCES 2025



**Illinois  
Legislative Latino  
Caucus Foundation  
(ILLCF)**



**Great Cities  
Institute**

**University of Illinois Chicago**

# Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation

## Great Cities Institute

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The ILLCF Public Policy Committee members - Representative Norma Hernández, Senator Celina Villanueva, Senator Karina Villa, and Representative Dagmara Avelar – were central to the development of both the Raíces Conference and the formation of this document. Their continued efforts and insights made this year's Raíces Conference and Report an enriching experience for all those involved.

Thank you to the team at the Great Cities Institute for their role in both the Raíces Conference and this Report. Thank you for the specific guidance of Thea Crum, GCI's Associate Director of Neighborhoods Initiative, for providing the facilitator training and the direction for the qualitative data coding process. Thank you to Elham Pilegar and José Miguel Acosta-Córdova for their contributions in bringing this Raíces document to life. We especially wish to note the essential guidance from Associate Director Matt Wilson.

Lastly, we would like to thank the facilitators and notetakers, primarily from the Great Cities Institute, for their excellent job facilitating and recording the breakout sessions during the 2024 Raíces Public Policy Conference. It was through the collective efforts of our ILLCF Team, the ILLCF Public Policy Committee, and the GCI Team that the Raíces Public Policy Conference was such a success.





# ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

Raíces serves as a moral beacon, through which the ILLC and the ILLCF hold themselves accountable and pledge to uphold and address the shared values of the communities they serve. The 2025 Raíces Report is a collaborative effort between the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation (ILLCF) and the Great Cities Institute (GCI), designed to help members of the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus (ILLC) expand their understanding of community needs and serve their constituents even more effectively.

In the Summer of 2024, the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus and the Foundation held a retreat, during which time they moved from their previous 5 pillars that were issue areas, to 3 pillars that are core values. They did so with the understanding that issue areas, specific populations (such as LGBTQ or elderly), and geographic locations (such as suburbs, etc.) are vast. The further exploration of these core values became the focus of the Raíces Conference in September 2024. The purpose of the annual Raíces Conference, therefore, was to gather community input to help ILLC and ILLCF define and set parameters on these three new pillars, thus establishing value statements that are defined by the community itself.

The report's findings are drawn from the 2024 Raíces Public Policy Conference, where participants offered insights on Equity, Justice, and Community Development - the three core values, or "Raíces" (Spanish for "roots"), that guide the ILLCF's work. Attendees were asked to define each of these values, identify the most pressing issues within them, and suggest how challenges can be overcome. The community input summarized here, supplemented by relevant data, will shape the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus's legislative priorities in 2025.

Findings across the three Raíces include:



## **Equity**

Equity issues that were most important to Raíces Conference participants:

1. Access: language, housing, and economic opportunities
2. Education
3. Representation of Community Voice/Needs

Attendees identified wide-ranging language support, stable housing options, and equitable economic opportunities as core pillars of equity. They also underscored the importance of robust, high-quality education, highlighting the need for early childhood programs, advanced academic pathways, and inclusive school environments. Finally, participants stressed greater representation in decision-making spaces to ensure that Latino voices and needs are heard, valued, and addressed.

## Justice

Justice Issues that were most important to Raíces Conference participants:

1. Immigration Justice
2. Criminal Justice Reform
3. Environmental Justice For Latinos

Attendees emphasized the urgent need for humane immigration policies that uphold the dignity of all individuals, including undocumented community members. They also called for criminal justice reform to address racial profiling and disproportionate sentencing, advocating for alternative programs to reduce incarceration and recidivism rates. Finally, participants underscored environmental justice, noting that many Latino communities bear a disproportionate burden of pollution and limited green spaces. They called for policies that safeguard both public health and neighborhood well-being.

## Community Development

Community Development Issues that were most important to Raíces Conference participants:

1. Community Infrastructure and Support Services
2. Youth Programs and Services
3. Health

Participants stressed the importance of comprehensive infrastructure and support services—from safer pedestrian pathways to improved public transit connections. They also highlighted youth programs and services as vital to fostering leadership and closing opportunity gaps, recommending mentorship, early-childhood education, and community-based learning. Lastly, they underscored health and mental health as essential for thriving neighborhoods, advocating for more accessible healthcare, mental health resources, and sustained investment in local clinics and wellness initiatives.

## The Power Latinos Have

The second session of the conference explored Latino contributions in Illinois. Conference participants answered key questions about the impact and future role of Latinos in Illinois, revealing how Latino communities bolster economic growth, shape policy decisions, and enrich cultural life across the state. Their insights are supplemented with data that shows the numerous, vital, and far-reaching contributions that Latinos make in the state of Illinois. Key highlights include:

- **Population Strength:** There are over 2.3 million Latinos living throughout Illinois, with significant potential to influence local politics, shape the state's cultural fabric, and provide vitality to the state's economy (See Map 17).
- **Growing Influence:** Recent rapid Latino population growth has led to large shares of Latinos in counties including Kane (33.1%), Lake (24.4%), and Will (19.3%). As the Latino community expands, so does its voice in state and local decisions (See Map 18).

## Executive Summary

- **Diverse and Multicultural:** The Mexican population makes up 76.8% of Latinos in Illinois, with Puerto Rican (9%) and Guatemalan (2%) populations also having sizable shares of the population. Each group making up less than 2% of the Latino population, individuals from Ecuador (1.5%), Colombia (1.4%), and Cuba (1.3%) show the state's broad appeal and cultural richness (See Table 24).
- **Entrepreneurial Success:** Latino-owned businesses in the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin Metro Area generated over \$4.1 billion in revenue in 2021, employing more than 80,000 workers. Latinos were also responsible for \$3.6 billion in payroll in the Chicago Metro Area, underscoring their pivotal role in fueling local economies, both urban and suburban (See Table 25).
- **Vital Labor Force:** With over 1 million workers across Illinois, Latino workers filled essential roles across multiple industries, with 30% employed in production, transportation, and material moving; 26.5% in natural resources, construction, and maintenance; nearly 25% in service occupations such as healthcare and hospitality; and 10.9% in sales and office positions. This wide-ranging participation underscores Latinos' indispensable contribution to Illinois' economic vitality and workforce strength (See Table 27).
- **Robust Consumer Spending:** In 2018 alone, Latinos in Illinois spent \$74 billion in personal consumption. This spending power reinforces the importance of tailoring consumer offerings to meet Latino community needs and preferences (See Table 28).
- **Large Income, Sales, and Property Tax Contributions:** Latinos collectively contributed \$6.5 billion in income taxes and \$98 million in sales taxes statewide in 2021, reinforcing their indispensable role in funding public services and infrastructure. Additionally, \$1.3 billion in property tax contributions showcases their impact on sustaining local schools, healthcare, and community resources throughout Illinois (See Maps 19-21).
- **Large Contributions to GDP:** Latinos contribute more than \$100 billion to Illinois' GDP. Their diverse participation across high-value and foundational industries underscores their critical role in driving the state's economic strength (See Table 29).



## Conclusion

By centering on Equity, Justice, and Community Development, the findings spotlight tangible ways to address systemic barriers and uplift Latino communities across Illinois. Backed by both quantitative data and the lived experiences shared at the Raíces Conference, the 2025 Raíces Report provides lawmakers and community leaders with a clear roadmap for action. Conference participants repeatedly emphasized that Latinos are a driving force behind the state's cultural vitality, economic growth, and policy innovation. Their perspectives, coupled with data, underscore the expansive role Latinos are playing in shaping Illinois' future. By adopting the priorities identified here and crafting legislation that both harnesses Latino strengths and addresses the challenges raised, legislators can build a future that brings meaningful progress for all.



# ***INTRODUCTION***

Raíces serves as a moral beacon, through which the ILLC and the ILLCF hold themselves accountable and pledge to uphold and address the shared values of the communities they serve. The 2025 Raíces Report is a collaborative report by the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation (ILLCF) and Great Cities Institute (GCI) to guide legislative priorities for the Illinois Latino Caucus in 2025. The report presents community perspectives shared during the 2024 Raíces Conference, supplemented with data, to guide legislative priorities in Illinois around three core values: Equity, Justice, and Community Development.

## **What is Raíces?**

Raíces represents the foundational values guiding policy priorities of the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus. “Raíces” was chosen because it symbolizes the deep roots that the Latino community has in Illinois and the Latino Caucus’s commitment to fighting for and serving its needs.

In 2021, the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation (ILLCF) established “Raíces,” to unify the caucus’s legislative agenda around key policy priorities, initially focusing on five pillars or “Raíces” including (1) Latino Representation (2) Immigration & Language Access (3) Education, (4) Health Equity, and (5) Economic & Business Development for Latinos. Once established, these policy priorities became the organizing framework for the ILLCF, allowing the Latino Caucus board members to show a united front in their policy efforts.



Through the last several years, the ILLCF determined there were other issues outside of the original five Raíces. This began the reframing of the original Raíces, and led to the articulation of three core values that are all encompassing and represent the commitment of the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus: Equity, Justice, & Community Development.

### The Raíces Conference

Since 2021, the ILLCF has organized an annual event that convenes policymakers, stakeholders, and community members to delve into the Raíces platform. The 2024 Raíces Public Policy Conference was held on September 19th, 2024, at the Rosemont Convention Center. Its main focus was to gather community feedback as the Caucus unveiled its three new Raíces: Equity, Justice, and Community Development.

The morning panel discussion featured leadership from both ILLC and ILLCF: Illinois State Senators Omar Aquino, Karina Villa, Celina Villanueva and State Representatives Dagmara Avelar and Norma Hernández, moderated by Dr. Teresa Córdova, Director of the Great Cities Institute (GCI). The panelists collectively stressed the importance of community engagement and feedback in shaping the Caucus's legislative agenda, urging attendees to participate in the breakout sessions and share their perspectives. They highlighted the need for increased Latino representation in elected office at all levels of government, as well as in leadership positions across various sectors.



### The Raíces Report

This document, The 2025 Raíces Report, provides a synthesis of community perspectives shared during the 2024 Raíces Conference and supplements stakeholder voices with quantitative data. The purpose of this report is twofold: to provide the Illinois Latino Caucus with information and analysis to inform policy directions to enhance their dedicated service to their communities, and to serve as a guiding and living document that unites Latino members of the Illinois General Assembly under a single banner.

It was essential to the Latino Caucus board members that they have a community driven process to inform their policy priorities. The over one thousand attendees of the 2024 Raíces Public Policy Conference had the opportunity to participate in six breakout sessions. In these breakout rooms, participants were asked to define equity, justice and community development; specify what issues were most important to them with respect to these three Raíces; and suggest ways to attain the three Raíces.

In each session, responses were collected through facilitated group discussion. Participants shared their ideas aloud, through the usage of a digital board known as Menti, and through the use of notecards. These responses were collected, coded, and are synthesized in this document.

On the basis of this feedback from the 2024 Raíces Conference, we compiled a list of the top three responses for each set of questions. This became the basis for the Equity, Justice and Community Development sections of this report. Economic Empowerment was a recurring theme across all Raíces definitions. The insights shared on economic empowerment by participants was used to guide the quantitative data that is in the section, the Power Latinos Have.

# PURPOSE OF RAÍCES REPORT

## WHAT THE RAÍCES REPORT MEANS TO MEMBERS OF THE ILLINOIS LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

Members of the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus have consistently underscored that meaningful legislative progress begins with authentic community engagement. The 2025 Raíces Report is a product of that ongoing dialogue, shaped by the lived experiences and feedback of Latinos across Illinois. The 2024 Raíces conference began with a plenary discussion that featured the leadership of the Caucus, during which time they shared their personal reflections on how the current Raíces framework and 2025 report along with past Raíces reports guide their advocacy, keeps them accountable, and ensures that equity, justice, and community development remain front and center in their legislative work.

For Senator Karina Villa, the 2025 Raíces Report provides a tangible record of work that the Latino Caucus has done and continues to do on behalf of the Latino community in Illinois.

Representative Dagmara Avelar echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing the importance of building on the legacy of those who came before them and ensuring that the Latino Community thrives. She also focused on the importance of intersectionality and addressing the diverse needs within the Latino community, further emphasizing the significance of securing funding and resources for the community through the budget process.

Senator Omar Aquino described the document as a tool for accountability, both for the ILLC and for the community explaining that the Raíces document helps the ILLC track its progress on key issues and ensures that they are meeting the needs of the community. He also notes that it allows for the ILLC to demonstrate shared values to other caucuses and individuals regardless of their party affiliation. He highlights the document's ability to counter attempts to pigeonhole the Caucus and its ability to address a broader range of issues that impact all Illinois residents.



*It's our receipt to you all. It's our commitment to you all that we're going to keep fighting and we're going to keep working, and now this conference is going to take us to the next level. (Senator Villa, 2024).*

*It is a moral document, and a mandate from the community to do what's right for them. (Representative Avelar, 2024).*

*It's also about being able to put something on paper, to say ... Here are our values written down. And where can we reach across and, you know, to different folks and work together on accomplishing these things for everyone. (Senator Aquino, 2024).*

## Purpose of Raíces Report



Senator Celina Villanueva discussed the transformative changes that the ILLC has undergone in recent years, noting that it is now one of the youngest caucuses in the Illinois legislature. She emphasizes the importance of the Raíces document reflecting the values of this young and diverse community.

Representative Norma Hernández described the Raíces document as a “symbol” of the ILLC’s commitment to organizing and working in a strategic and intentional way to address the needs of the Latino community. She explained that the document helps the ILLC to prioritize its efforts and to ensure that it is working on those issues most important to the community.

The Raíces Document is a dynamic and evolving representation of the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus’s commitment to serving the Latino community. By prioritizing Equity, Justice, and Community Development, the Caucus aims to create lasting positive change for all Illinois residents. The panelists’ perspectives and insights demonstrate their dedication to collaborating with the community and advocating for a more equitable and just future.

*And so Raíces is getting to the heart of the conversations today, to the heart of this. We’re not experts in every single field... but the reality is the best policy comes from you all. It comes from your lived experiences. It comes from what it is that you’re doing every single day, and our responsibility to listen to you all... (Senator Villanueva, 2024).*

*The Raíces document, to me was, you know, that’s the best way for me to get acclimated into being a legislator, right? Having a document that’s organized, a document that’s based on issues, based on research and facts for me to understand and get the full scope of what are the issues that are needed in the Latino community... And that’s what I’m trying to say, is that this document, to me, is a symbol of how we’re organizing in the legislature, but including all of you in that conversation... (Representative N. Hernández, 2024).*

# EQUITY

- *How Participants at the Raíces Conference Defined Equity*
- *What Equity Issues Were Most Important To Raíces Conference Participants?*
- *What Raíces Conference Participants Believe It Will Take To Attain Equity?*

## ***How Participants at the Raíces Conference Defined Equity***

At the Illinois Latino Caucus Foundation's Raíces Conference, participants overwhelmingly emphasized Access as a crucial component of equity. When asked "How do you define equity?" attendees focused on the importance of ensuring Latino communities had access to institutions, resources, opportunities, services, and education.

The focus on access reflects an understanding that equity begins by breaking down barriers and creating pathways for everyone to thrive, especially historically marginalized communities. For Latinos, it is about leveling the playing field so that individuals and families have the tools they need to achieve their goals and live with dignity. Common responses in the dialogue revealed that without access to critical support, "fairness and justice," "representation," or "accountability" remain out of reach. This vision from the conference serves as a reminder that equity is built on the principle of inclusion and the promise of opportunity for all.

### The Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus and Foundation Community-Informed Definition of Equity

Based on insights gathered from participants at the Raíces conference, the Legislative Latino Caucus and Foundation define equity as ensuring that Latino communities have meaningful and sustained access to the range of institutions, opportunities, services and educational resources needed to thrive.

## ***What Equity Issues Were Most Important To Raíces Conference Participants?***

1. Access: language, housing, and economic opportunities
2. Education
3. Representation of Community Voice/Needs



### *Access: language, housing, and economic opportunities*

When asked about the most pressing equity issues, participants overwhelmingly identified Access as a critical concern, specifically in areas such as language, housing, and economic opportunities. This theme reflects a broad recognition that equitable access is foundational to creating fair opportunities and fostering well-being for all, especially in historically underserved communities.

A prominent issue was access to healthcare, with an emphasis on making services—especially mental and behavioral health—available to people across all income brackets, regardless of insurance status. Opportunities for mental health services for vulnerable populations were highlighted as a need in the community. Since healthcare was also raised in the community development section, more detail and data are contained within that section.

The need for equitable language access was repeatedly mentioned, underscoring the importance of removing linguistic barriers that limit access to essential services, resources, and opportunities. Whether in healthcare, education, or employment, the inability to navigate systems due to language constraints perpetuates inequities that disproportionately affect non-English-speaking populations.

To further illustrate these challenges, data on limited English proficiency and access to services is provided below, with maps showing the distribution of Hispanic or Latino populations facing language barriers across Illinois counties (See Maps 1 & 2).

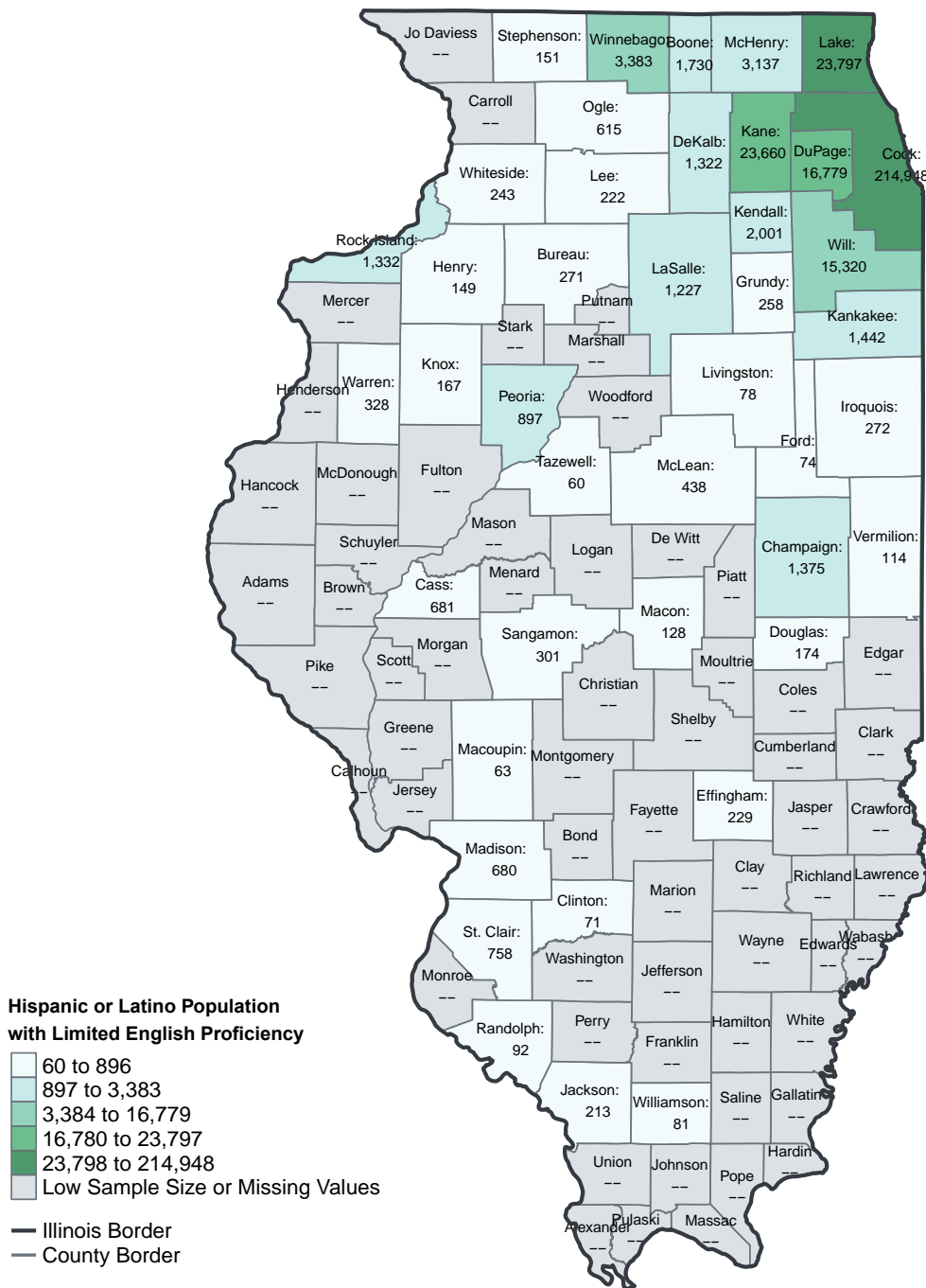
Counties in Illinois exhibited a wide range of limited English proficiency rates in 2019-2023, with some areas experiencing significantly higher rates than others (See Map 2).

- Cook County had the highest number of individuals with limited English proficiency, totaling 214,948, at a rate of 16.8%.
- Smaller counties like Ford and LaSalle showed lower proficiency rates, with 13.5% and 11.4%, respectively.
- Limited English proficiency rates varied widely across the state, ranging from 9.7% in Peoria County to 27.2% in Cass County.

Participants also emphasized the importance of economic opportunities that are accessible and inclusive. Equitable access to tools, training, and resources is critical for enabling individuals and families to achieve financial stability. Respondents pointed out the need for systemic changes that address disparities in employment and housing, ensuring that all members of the community have the chance to thrive.



**Map 1: Hispanic or Latino Population with Limited English Proficiency in Illinois Counties, 2019–2023**

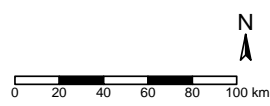


**Hispanic or Latino Population with Limited English Proficiency**

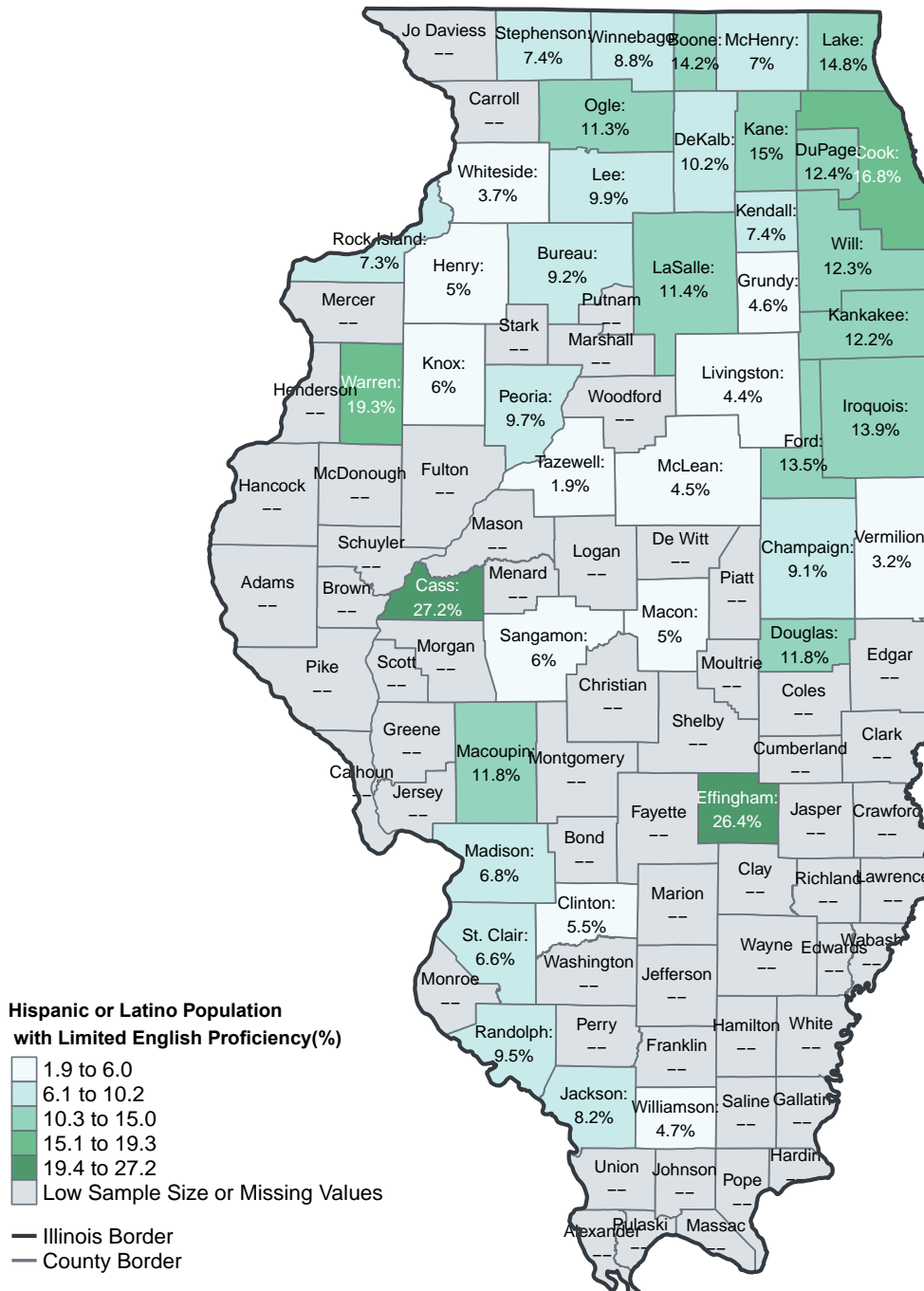
- 60 to 896
- 897 to 3,383
- 3,384 to 16,779
- 16,780 to 23,797
- 23,798 to 214,948
- Low Sample Size or Missing Values

— Illinois Border  
— County Border

Data Source: 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5–year Estimates.  
Map Generated by Great Cities Institute.



**Map 2: Rate of Hispanic or Latino Population with Limited English Proficiency in Illinois Counties, 2019–2023**

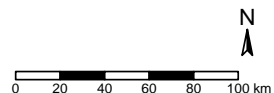


**Hispanic or Latino Population with Limited English Proficiency(%)**

- 1.9 to 6.0
- 6.1 to 10.2
- 10.3 to 15.0
- 15.1 to 19.3
- 19.4 to 27.2
- Low Sample Size or Missing Values

— Illinois Border  
— County Border

Data Source: 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5–year Estimates.  
Map Generated by Great Cities Institute.





### Hispanic or Latino Home Ownership Rates in Illinois Show a Substantial Gap (See Table 1).

- In Illinois, the overall homeownership rate was 66.8% in 2019-2023, while the homeownership rate for the Hispanic or Latino population is 57.5%, indicating a notable difference in housing access for Latinos.

**Table 1: Hispanic or Latino Home Ownership Rate in Illinois, 2019-2023**

	Number	Percent
Total	3,343,034	66.8%
Hispanic or Latino	387,542	57.5%

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

### Higher Unemployment Rate for Hispanic or Latino Population in Illinois Compared to the Total Population (See Table 2).

**Table 2: Unemployment Rate for Hispanic or Latino Population in Illinois, 2019-2023**

	Unemployed Population	Population In Labor Force	Unemployment Rate
Total	355,883	6,658,874	5.3 %
Hispanic or Latino	74,509	1,222,170	6.1 %

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

- The 2019-2023 unemployment rate for the Hispanic or Latino population in Illinois (6.1%) was higher than the overall population's unemployment rate (5.3%).

### Housing Tenure Rates for Latinos Across Illinois Counties Varied Significantly in 2019-2023 (See Map 3).

- Latino homeownership varied widely across counties, from a low of 21.5% in Coles County to a high of 96.4% in Crawford County.
- This variation highlights the influence of local economic, social, and demographic factors on housing tenure stability within Latino communities.
- Urban and rural counties alike showed both high and low tenure rates, reflecting diverse regional challenges and opportunities.



### Unemployment Rates Varied Across Counties with Higher Rates for Hispanic or Latino Populations in 2019-2023 (See Table 3).

- Cook County had the highest Hispanic or Latino population and had an unemployment rate of 6.4%, highlighting the ongoing challenges faced by this demographic group in large urban areas.
- Winnebago and Rock Island counties showed the highest unemployment rates for Hispanics or Latinos in the top ten counties, both at 6.6%, which may suggest specific regional economic factors affecting these populations.
- Smaller counties like Kendall and McHenry exhibited lower unemployment rates for their Hispanic or Latino populations, at 4.2% and 4.5%, respectively, indicating more favorable labor market conditions in these areas.

**Table 3: Unemployment Rate For the Top Ten Counties in Illinois with the Highest Hispanic or Latino Labor Force, 2019-2023**

County	Total Population			Hispanic or Latino Population		
	Unemployed	Total in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate	Unemployed	Total in Labor Force	Unemployment Rate
Cook	176,597	2,783,460	6.3 %	45,105	<b>709,178</b>	6.4 %
Lake	17,540	387,586	4.5 %	5,364	<b>93,341</b>	5.7 %
Kane	13,152	282,434	4.7 %	5,856	<b>92,314</b>	6.3 %
DuPage	22,464	509,891	4.4 %	4,121	<b>81,075</b>	5.1 %
Will	17,042	378,516	4.5 %	3,534	<b>71,874</b>	4.9 %
McHenry	7,344	174,227	4.2 %	1,226	<b>27,074</b>	4.5 %
Winnebago	9,208	138,729	6.6 %	1,332	<b>20,267</b>	6.6 %
Kendall	2,346	74,638	3.1 %	676	<b>16,022</b>	4.2 %
Rock Island	3,681	70,473	5.2 %	585	<b>9,603</b>	6.1 %
Champaign	4,551	104,826	4.3 %	434	<b>7,755</b>	5.6 %

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

### The Hispanic or Latino population in Illinois experienced varying levels of overcrowding across counties in 2019-2023, with some areas facing particularly high rates (See Map 4).

- Jackson County had the highest overcrowded rate for the Hispanic or Latino population at 11.6%, suggesting significant housing challenges in this area.
- Peoria and Kane counties also experienced relatively high overcrowded rates at 10.4%, pointing to regional housing pressures.
- Cook County, with its large Hispanic or Latino population, showed a lower overcrowded rate of 7.5%, but it still reflects notable overcrowding challenges compared to other counties.

The call for access was not limited to specific sectors but extended to creating an environment where resources are available to all Latinos across the city. This included a vision for comprehensive support systems that empower individuals to succeed while promoting community-wide equity. The data highlights the disparities in access to critical resources, such as healthcare, housing, and economic opportunities, with varying rates of limited English proficiency, homeownership, unemployment, and overcrowded housing across Illinois counties. From equitable language access, healthcare equity to economic opportunity, the theme of access reflects an urgent need for systemic changes that dismantle barriers and enable true inclusion.



## Education

Participants at the Raíces Conference overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of Education as an equity issue. This focus highlights the critical role education plays in addressing systemic inequities and creating pathways to opportunity for underserved communities. It is worth noting that Latino students represent a growing segment of the U.S. education system, making it vital to prioritize equitable education solutions that reflect their needs and aspirations.

Individuals' responses revealed a broad spectrum of priorities, from achieving education equity to ensuring access to early childhood programs and high-quality instruction for all students. Equally important was addressing graduation parity at both high school and college levels to close persistent gaps in educational attainment.

Hispanic or Latino adults in Illinois had lower levels of higher educational attainment in 2019-2023 compared to the total population (See Table 4 and Figure 1).

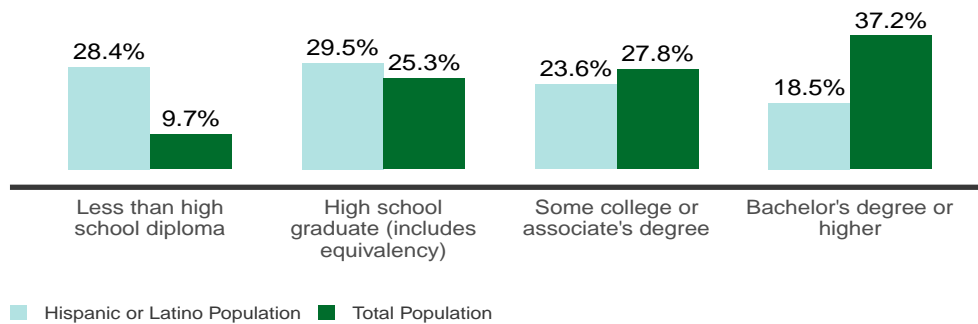
**Table 4: Educational Attainment for the Adult Hispanic or Latino Population (Age 25 and Over) in Illinois, 2019-2023**

Education Level	Population	Percent
<b>Total</b>		
Less than high school diploma	851,323	9.7 %
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	2,207,546	25.3 %
Some college or associate's degree	2,430,244	27.8 %
Bachelor's degree or higher	3,249,494	37.2 %
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>		
Less than high school diploma	385,492	28.4 %
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	400,406	29.5 %
Some college or associate's degree	320,224	23.6 %
Bachelor's degree or higher	250,851	18.5 %

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023).  
Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

- 28.4% of Hispanic or Latino adults (age 25 and over) did not have a high school diploma, significantly higher than the 9.7% among the total population.
- Only 18.5% of Hispanic or Latino adults had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 37.2% of the total population.
- Hispanic or Latino adults had a larger share of high school graduates and some college/associate's degree holders.

Figure 1: Educational Attainment for the Adult Hispanic or Latino Population (Age 25 and Over) in Illinois, 2019–2023



Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

The data reveals significant disparities in bachelor’s degree attainment for Hispanic or Latino residents across Illinois counties, emphasizing the need for targeted educational support in areas with lower rates in 2019-2023 (See Map 5).

- Low-attainment regions: Counties like Livingston (8.4%) and LaSalle (8.4%) showed alarmingly low bachelor’s degree rates, highlighting gaps in access to higher education.
- Notable improvements: Cook County, with a 19.2% rate, reflected progress but still lagged behind the state average of 37.2% for the general population.
- High-achieving counties: Sangamon County (39.5%) and Piatt County (45.3%) represented outliers with significantly higher rates, suggesting best practices that could inform statewide initiatives.





Cook County had the largest Hispanic or Latino population over age 25 without a high school diploma, with 230,923 individuals, representing 27.9% of this demographic in 2019-2023 (See Table 5 and Figure 2).

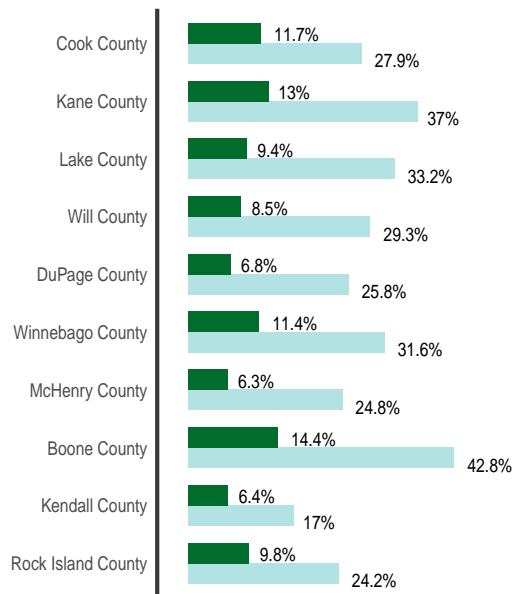
**Table 5: Top 10 Illinois Counties with the Highest Hispanic or Latino Population Aged 25 Years and Over Holding Less than a High School Diploma, 2019-2023**

County	Total Population Aged 25 Years and Over			Hispanic or Latino Population Aged 25 Years and Over		
	Total Population	Less than Highschool Diploma	Percentage	Total Population	Less than Highschool Diploma	Percentage
Cook	3,631,086	423,440	11.7 %	827,824	230,923	27.9 %
Kane	343,837	44,681	13 %	94,405	34,937	37 %
Lake	471,460	44,377	9.4 %	93,892	31,162	33.2 %
Will	467,561	39,727	8.5 %	74,746	21,928	29.3 %
DuPage	642,776	43,772	6.8 %	82,792	21,332	25.8 %
Winnebago	193,089	21,922	11.4 %	21,530	6,805	31.6 %
McHenry	214,389	13,465	6.3 %	26,145	6,477	24.8 %
Boone	35,429	5,100	14.4 %	6,909	2,956	42.8 %
Kendall	86,748	5,545	6.4 %	16,142	2,743	17 %
Rock Island	98,209	9,599	9.8 %	10,801	2,618	24.2 %

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute..

**Figure 2: Top 10 Illinois Counties with the Highest Hispanic or Latino Population Aged 25 and Over Holding Less than a High School Diploma, 2019-2023**

- Cook County also accounted for the highest total population over 25 without a high school diploma, with 423,440 individuals (11.7%).
- Boone County had the highest percentage of Hispanic or Latino individuals over age 25 without a high school diploma, at 42.8%.
- Kane, Lake, and Will Counties showed both significant Hispanic or Latino populations and notably higher percentages of individuals without a high school diploma compared to the total population.



Legend: ■ Hispanic or Latino Population ■ Total Population

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.





Additionally, providing quality education for English Language Learners (ELLs) was identified as a priority to overcome linguistic barriers and promote full participation in academic and professional opportunities. The responses reflect a belief that education is both a right and a lever for systemic change. From investing in early learning to promoting inclusive decision-making and expanding access to advanced academic pathways, participants emphasized that educational equity is foundational to empowering individuals and strengthening communities.

Science and Engineering is the most common field of study among Hispanic or Latino individuals in Illinois with a bachelor's degree, representing 35.2% of this demographic in 2019-2023 (See Table 6).

- The percentage of Hispanic or Latino individuals with a degree in Science and Engineering (35.2%) slightly exceeded that of the total population (33.9%).
- Business was the second most common field among Hispanic or Latino graduates, accounting for 22.4%, closely aligning with the total population's 21%.

The message from the conference was clear: education is not only an equity issue but also a transformative force for change. Participants expressed that through addressing barriers, ensuring better representation, and creating intentional opportunities for success, they believe we can work toward building a future where every student has the necessary tools to thrive. Data underscores the urgent need for action, as disparities in educational attainment persist among Hispanic or Latino populations. From early learning initiatives to expanding access to advanced academic pathways, participants emphasized that educational equity is foundational to empowering individuals and strengthening communities, ensuring that all students are equipped to contribute to the collective progress of their communities.

**Table 6: Field Of Bachelor's Degree For First Major For Hispanic or Latino Population in Illinois, 2019-2023**

Field of Bachelor's Degree	Population with Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Percentage
<b>Total</b>		
Arts, Humanities and Other	756,509	23.3 %
Business	683,272	21 %
Education	383,565	11.8 %
Science and Engineering	1,100,370	33.9 %
Science and Engineering Related Fields	325,778	10 %
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>		
Arts, Humanities and Other	58,464	23.3 %
Business	56,142	22.4 %
Education	24,557	9.8 %
Science and Engineering	88,188	35.2 %
Science and Engineering Related Fields	23,500	9.4 %

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

### Representation of Community Voice/Needs

The importance of Representation of Community Voice/Needs was a key issue highlighted by participants during the Raíces Conference. Participants noted the critical role of ensuring Latino communities are authentically represented in decision-making processes and leadership positions across sectors.

Despite being one of the fastest-growing populations in the United States, Latinos remain underrepresented in many areas of power and influence.

Latino individuals comprise only 5.5% of school board representatives in DuPage County, despite their growing presence in the population as of 2024 (See Table 7).

**Table 7: Hispanic or Latino Representation in DuPage County School Boards, 2024**

County	Total of School Board Representatives	Total of Hispanic or Latino School Board Representatives	% of Hispanic or Latino School Board Representatives
DuPage County	614	34	5.5%

Data Source: DuPage County School Board Websites. Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

- Out of 614 total school board representatives, only 34 were Latino.
- The low representation highlighted a disparity between population demographics and school board leadership in Dupage County.

Hispanic or Latino workers had slightly higher national union membership rates (9.5%) compared to the overall employed population (9.2%) in 2024 (See Table 8).

**Table 8: Hispanic or Latino Union Membership in the U.S., 2024**

Total Population			Hispanic or Latino Population		
Member of labor union	Estimate Employed Population	% of Employed Population	Member of labor union	Estimate Employed Population	% of Employed Population
14,798,346	161,356,416	9.2 %	2,965,841	31,159,248	9.5 %

Data Source: IPUMS CPS, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org. (2024 Current Population Survey). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

- Approximately 2.97 million Hispanic or Latino workers were union members out of a total employed population of 31.16 million.
- Hispanic or Latino union membership aligned closely with the national average, indicating parity in union representation.

Hispanic or Latino individuals constituted 10.2% of the Illinois Senate and House members as of 2024 (See Table 9).

- The Senate had 6 Hispanic or Latino members out of 59 total, and the House had 12 out of 118 total.
- Representation mirrored the demographic presence of Hispanic or Latino individuals in Illinois.

**Table 9: Hispanic or Latino Representation in the Illinois Legislature, 2024**

Body	Members	Hispanic or Latino	Percent Hispanic or Latino
Senate	59	6	10.2%
House	118	12	10.2%

Data Source: Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation (2024). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

Participants called for greater access to leadership roles for people of color (POC) and women, as well as intentional efforts to include community voices in shaping policies and programs. They emphasized the need for honest engagement between elected officials and Latino communities, partnerships with allies, and visibility in fields such as education and STEM careers.

Hispanic or Latino individuals represented just 4.7% of corporate board members in Illinois, compared to 73.2% for White (non-Hispanic or Latino) members (See Table 10).

- Only 35 Hispanic or Latino individuals hold board positions out of 746 total members. The stark contrast underscores the underrepresentation of Hispanic or Latino individuals in corporate leadership roles.

**Table 10: Estimated Number of Hispanic/Latino Board Members in Illinois Corporations, 2024**

Total Population	Hispanic or Latino Population		White (Non Hispanic or Latino)	
	Board Members	Rate	Board Members	Rate
746	35	4.7%	546	73.2%

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

The conference made it clear that authentic representation is vital for equity and progress. Participants expressed that centering Latino voices and addressing their needs in decision-making processes is key to building a more inclusive and just society. The data underscores the significant underrepresentation of Latinos in leadership roles, from school boards to corporate boards. By fostering diverse leadership, amplifying community voices, and ensuring the inclusion of Latinos, participants believe that Latinos can create a future where everyone has the opportunity to succeed and contribute to a more equitable society.

# ***What Raíces Conference Participants Believe It Will Take to Attain Equity?***

When the question, “What will it take to attain equity?” was posed, it sparked an engaging and thought-provoking discussion, yielding several key themes that outline the steps necessary to achieve a more just and equitable society. At the forefront of these insights was Policy and Structural Change. This reflects a belief that transformative progress requires addressing the systemic barriers that perpetuate inequities.

Participants stressed the importance of implementing policies that dismantle structural inequities in areas such as housing, education, employment, and healthcare. They also made calls for accountability measures to ensure these policies translate into meaningful action. The need for reforms that challenge entrenched systems of power, while creating equitable frameworks for decision-making, was seen as foundational to achieving lasting change.



While Policy and Structural Change stood out as a central focus, several other themes contributed critical perspectives to the dialogue included:

- Community Engagement & Empowerment
- Access & Opportunity
- Health & Well-being
- Equity & Inclusion
- Leadership & Organizational Efforts
- Education & Awareness

The conversations during facilitated sessions at the Raíces Conference underscored that achieving equity demands a multifaceted approach. It calls for bold policy interventions, structural reforms, inclusive leadership, and active community engagement. To participants, these elements form a roadmap for creating a society where equity is not just an ideal, but a lived reality for all.

# JUSTICE

- *How Participants at the Raíces Conference Defined Justice*
- *What Justice Issues Were Most Important To Raíces Conference Participants?*
- *What Raíces Conference Participants Believe It Will Take To Attain Justice?*

## ***How Participants at the Raíces Conference Defined Justice***

At the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation's Raíces Public Policy Conference, participants were asked "How do you define Justice?" Among the wide-ranging responses, a common theme shared by these responses that overwhelmingly stood out amongst the rest was: Equality in the application of the law, in opportunities, in our rights, privileges, and treatment. The themes of "Equity & Fairness," "Freedom & Liberation," and "Accountability" emerged overwhelmingly as the cornerstones of what individuals envisioned for a just society. Racial discrimination, economic disparity, access to education, and healthcare were commonly cited during discussions of how participants conceptualized justice. Other responses touched on the interconnected themes of "Human Rights & Dignity," "Social Inclusion & Participation," and "Restorative Justice."

Community voices expressed that true justice begins with the assurance of no one being left behind without the rights or opportunities they need to not only survive but thrive in their communities.

The Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus and Foundation  
Community-Informed Definition of  
Justice

Based on insights gathered from participants at the Raíces conference, the Latino Caucus defines Justice as ensuring equality in the application of the law, in opportunities, in our rights, privileges and treatment.

## ***What Justice Issues Were Most Important To Raíces Conference Participants?***

1. Immigration Justice
2. Criminal Justice Reform
3. Environmental Justice For Latinos



### Immigration Justice

When asked about the most pressing issues of Justice, community members wanted to address facets of immigration law and barriers to obtaining work permits for the undocumented. Justice in this context meant creating a humane and fair immigration system that respects the dignity and rights of all individuals.

A prominent issue was the need for humane immigration policies, with an emphasis on ensuring individuals are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their immigration status. Participants expressed that addressing the systemic injustices faced by immigrants is foundational to create fair opportunities and foster a well-being for all. Opportunities for legal protections and support for vulnerable immigrant populations was highlighted as a barrier that undermines both individual and community stability.



Data shows that many Latinos are affected by immigration policies that intersect with the criminal justice system. Reform efforts also focus on ensuring that immigrants are treated fairly and that minor offenses do not lead to disproportionate consequences like deportation.

Hispanic or Latino foreign-born individuals in Illinois represent 34.4% of the total Hispanic or Latino population, significantly higher than the 14.4% of the total population that is foreign-born in 2019-2023 (See Table 11).

**Table 11: Hispanic or Latino Foreign-Born Population in Illinois, 2019-2023**

	Population	Foreign Born Population	Foreign Born (%)
Total	12,692,653	1,833,810	14.4%
Hispanic or Latino	2,348,118	807,573	34.4%

Data Source: Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation (2024). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

- Illinois’ total foreign-born population was 1.83 million, or 14.4% of the state’s total population.
- Among the Hispanic or Latino population, 807,573 individuals were foreign-born, making up 34.4% of this demographic.
- The foreign-born percentage of the Hispanic or Latino population was more than double that of the general population in Illinois.

Wayne County, Illinois had the highest Latino non-citizen rate at 55.2%, significantly higher than the state’s average (See Maps 6 & Map 7).



- Wayne County topped the list with 55.2% of its Latino population being non-citizens, followed by Hancock County (36.4%) and Clinton County (35.0%).
- Cook County, the most populous, had 285,896 Latino non-citizens, representing 20.8% of its Latino population, which was among the lower rates in the top counties.
- Lake County had 39,113 Latino non-citizens, with a rate of 22.5%, highlighting a significant Latino non-citizen presence in suburban areas.

Hispanic or Latino individuals make up 54% of the state’s total foreign-born non-citizen population in 2019-2023 (See Table 12).



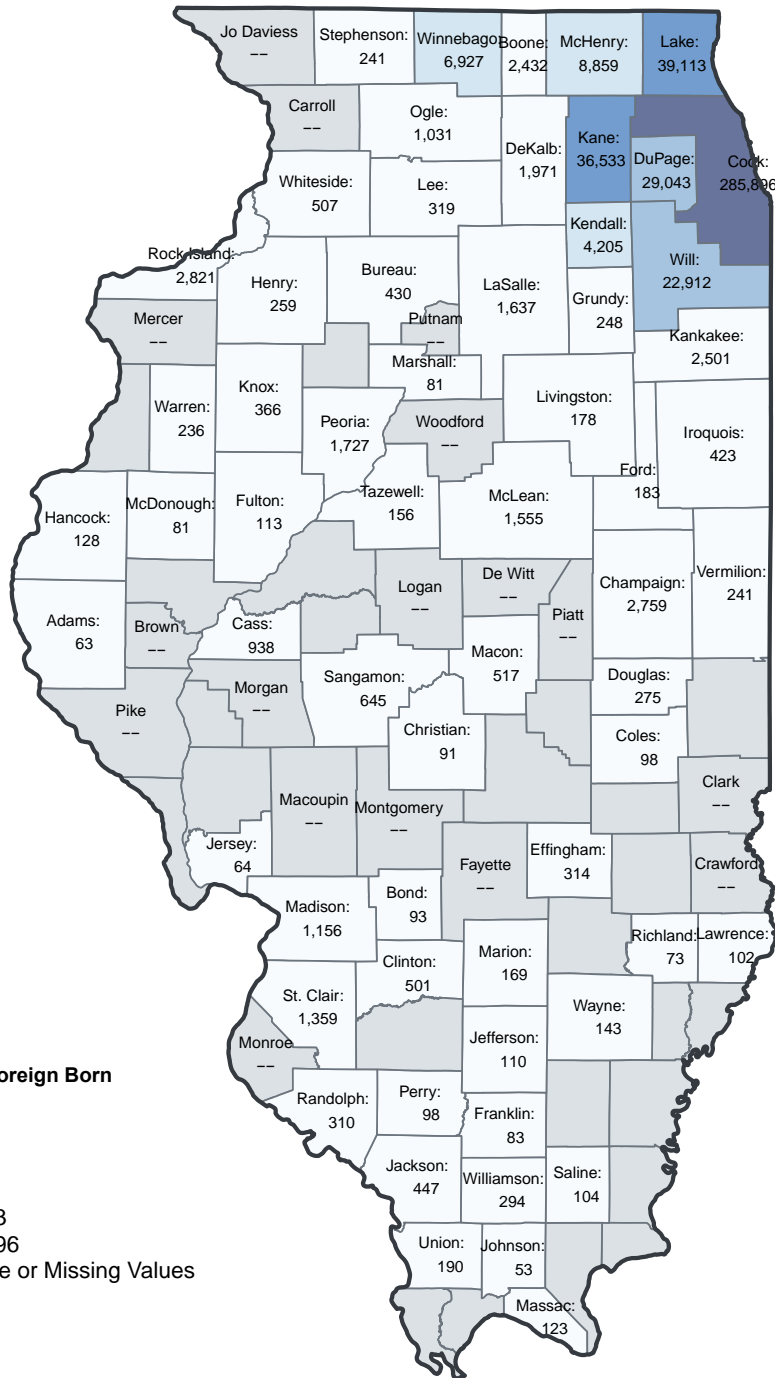
- Illinois had a total foreign-born noncitizen population of 862,040, with 6.8% of the state’s population being foreign-born non-citizens.
- Among this, 465,402 were Hispanic or Latino, comprising 19.8% of the state’s Hispanic or Latino total population.
- The high proportion of Hispanic or Latino non-citizens underscored the significant immigrant presence within this demographic in Illinois.

**Table 12: Hispanic or Latino Population that were Foreign Born and Non-Citizens in Illinois, 2019-2023**

	Number	Percent
Total	862,040	6.8%
Hispanic or Latino	465,402	19.8%

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

Map 6: Hispanic or Latino Foreign Born Non-Citizen Count in Illinois Counties, 2019–2023



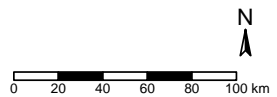
Hispanic or Latino Foreign Born  
Non-Citizen Count

- 53 to 2,821
- 2,822 to 8,859
- 8,860 to 29,043
- 29,044 to 39,113
- 39,114 to 285,896
- Low Sample Size or Missing Values

— Illinois Border  
— County Border

Data Source: 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

Map Generated by Great Cities Institute.







Hispanic or Latino individuals represented nearly half of all deportees, with 49.5% of those deported being from this group from 2003 to 2024 (See Table 13).

- A total of 28,046 individuals were deported by ICE between 2003 and 2024, with 13,894 of them (49.5%) being Hispanic or Latino. This high proportion of Hispanic or Latino deportees highlighted the significant impact of immigration policies on this demographic.
- According to data compiled by Syracuse University, the vast majority of individuals deported by ICE between 2003 and 2024 were convicted of minor, non-violent offenses. Over 75% of deportees faced either Level 3 charges (misdemeanors) or had no conviction at all.
- Specifically, out of 28,046 deportations, 17,732 (63.2%) had no conviction. Of those with convictions, 4,552 (16.2%) were convicted of Level 3 crimes (misdemeanors), which are typically minor violations.
- This distribution underscored that the majority of deportations were related to minor non-violent crimes or individuals with no conviction, highlighting the disproportionate impact of immigration enforcement on this population.

**Table 13: Immigration and Customs Enforcement Removals, 2003-2024**

	Number	Percent
Total	28,046	-
Hispanic or Latino	13,894	49.5%

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.



The data in unison with our participants’ voices both underscore the perceived critical need for immigration justice as a pillar of broader justice efforts. The data reveals the disproportionate representation of Latinos in immigration statistics, from foreign-born populations to deportations, highlighting the systemic barriers they face. By advocating for humane immigration policies, expanding legal protections, and addressing the intersection of immigration and criminal justice, participants believed a future where all individuals are treated with dignity, fairness, and respect can be achieved.

### *Criminal Justice Reform*

Criminal Justice Reform was another critical aspect of justice for Latino communities expressed by participants. This involved addressing systemic biases and discriminatory practices that disproportionately affect Latinos within the criminal justice system. Key issues including ending racial profiling (racial justice), reducing mandatory minimum sentencing, and reforming policing practices were recognized by participants. Participants suggested advocating for alternatives to incarceration, such as rehabilitation programs and restorative justice practices to create a more equitable and effective system. Common themes amongst participants included the need for fair treatment, reducing incarceration rates, improving police-community relations, and access to affordable quality legal resources.

Between the fiscal years of 2014 and 2019, the recidivism rate for Latino individuals dropped from 30.8% to 28.9%, representing a 6.3% decrease. When compared to other groups, the rate at which Latino recidivism is dropping is significantly lower, falling behind both the White and Black group (See Table 14).

- Black individuals experienced the highest recidivism rates, which dropped from 47.0% in 2014 to 39.1% in 2019 - a significant 16.8% decrease in their recidivism rates, yet remaining the highest among all groups.
- White individuals saw a reduction from 39.8% to 35.1% during the same period, an 11.7% decrease.
- Latino individuals saw a reduction from 30.8% to 28.9%, which is reflected as a 6.3% decrease; the lowest percentage of the data collected.
- Other racial groups demonstrated rates slightly higher than Hispanics, decreasing from 33.1% to 30.4%, and reflecting an 8.1% decrease in their recidivism rates.

**Table 14: 3-Year Recidivism Rates by Race/Ethnicity in Illinois, 2014-2019**

Race	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Percent Change
Black	47%	43.2%	45.2%	44.6%	40.7%	39.1%	-16.8%
White	39.8%	37.3%	38.9%	38.6%	37.3%	35.1%	-11.7%
Hispanic	30.8%	29%	30.5%	31.7%	31.1%	28.9%	-6.3%
Other	33.1%	31%	30.8%	34.4%	29%	30.4%	-8.1%

Data Source: Illinois Department of Corrections: 3-Year Recidivism Rates (2014-2019).

These figures suggest that while progress is being made across all racial groups, systemic inequities persist. Although the Latino group is demonstrating the smallest rate of recidivism, the rate at which its recidivism is decreasing is the weakest out of all the racial groups demonstrated in the data.

The relatively lower recidivism rates among Latinos may reflect factors such as stronger community or familial support, targeted re-entry programs, or differing parole practices. However, this does not negate the need for ongoing reform to address broader disparities and challenges. The downward trends for all groups indicate progress, but the racial disparities highlight systemic issues that require further investigation and policy action.

When it comes to accessing quality and affordable legal services, the community notes access to legal representation and resources as another key aspect of criminal justice reform. This includes providing legal services, and educational programs about legal rights and processes. Participants noted that we need to be educated on our rights for our sake and for the sake of our communities.

Participants also discussed wanting to feel safe in their communities, they called for justice for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors, justice from gun violence and safety in public schools.

Hispanic or Latino residents in Chicago reported a higher perceived level of neighborhood violence compared to the general population in 2022-2023, based on survey data (See Table 15 and Map 8).

- 30.7% of Hispanic or Latino adults in Chicago reported experiencing neighborhood violence either daily or weekly.
- In comparison, 25.0% of the total adult population in Chicago reported similar experiences.
- Latino communities in Chicago perceived a lower rate of neighborhood safety, with substantial variation across different neighborhoods.
- South Lawndale, a community area with a high concentration of Latino population, had a significantly lower perceived safety rate at 30.9%, compared to other neighborhoods.

**Table 15: Hispanic or Latino Perceived Neighborhood Violence in Chicago, 2022-2023**

	Number	Percent
Total	648,000	25.0%
Latino	199,000	30.7%

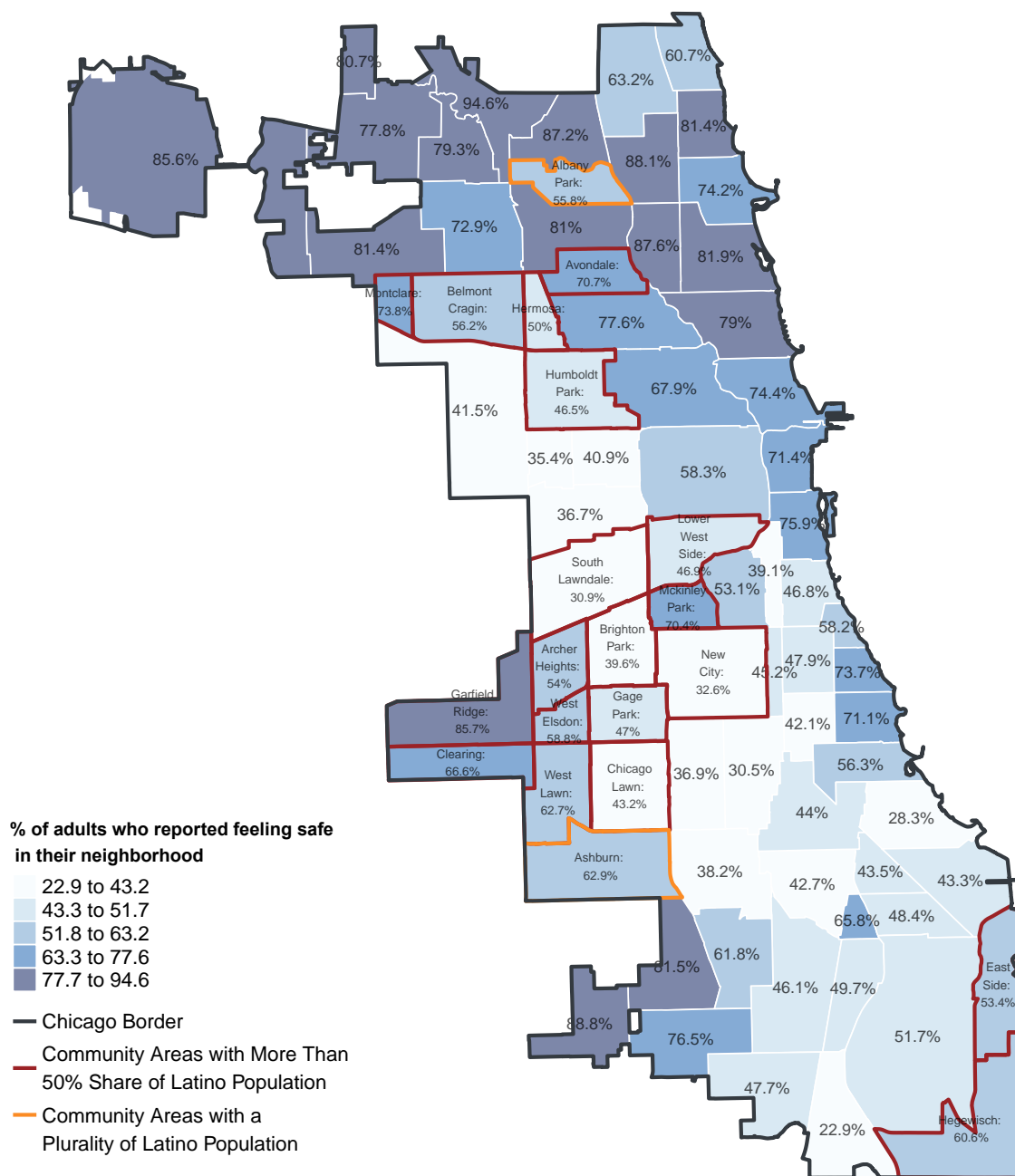
Note: Estimated number of adults aged 18 years and older who reported violence occurs all of the time or most of the time divided by the estimated number of adults.

Data Source: Chicago Department of Public Health, Healthy Chicago Survey (2022-2023).

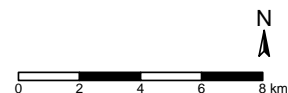
In sum, criminal justice reform is a critical aspect of justice for Latino communities, with both data and community voices highlighting the need to address systemic biases and discriminatory practices that disproportionately affect Latinos. Key issues such as racial profiling, reducing mandatory minimum sentencing, and reforming policing practices were expressed as central to creating a fairer system. Although recidivism rates for Latinos are relatively lower compared to other racial groups, the data shows that progress in reducing these rates has been slower, indicating the persistence of inequities. Access to quality legal representation and the need for community safety also emerged as pressing concerns, with Latinos reporting higher levels of perceived neighborhood violence.



**Map 8: Perceived Neighborhood Safety Rate (%) in Chicago's Latino Community Areas, 2022–2023**



**Data Source: Chicago Department of Public Health, Healthy Chicago Survey(2022–2023).  
Map Generated by Great Cities Institute.**



### *Environmental Justice For Latinos*

Environmental Justice for Latinos, to participants, meant ensuring that all communities, especially marginalized and underserved ones, have equitable opportunities to achieve a healthy quality of life. Participants' concerns included advocating for policies that protect them from environmental harms.

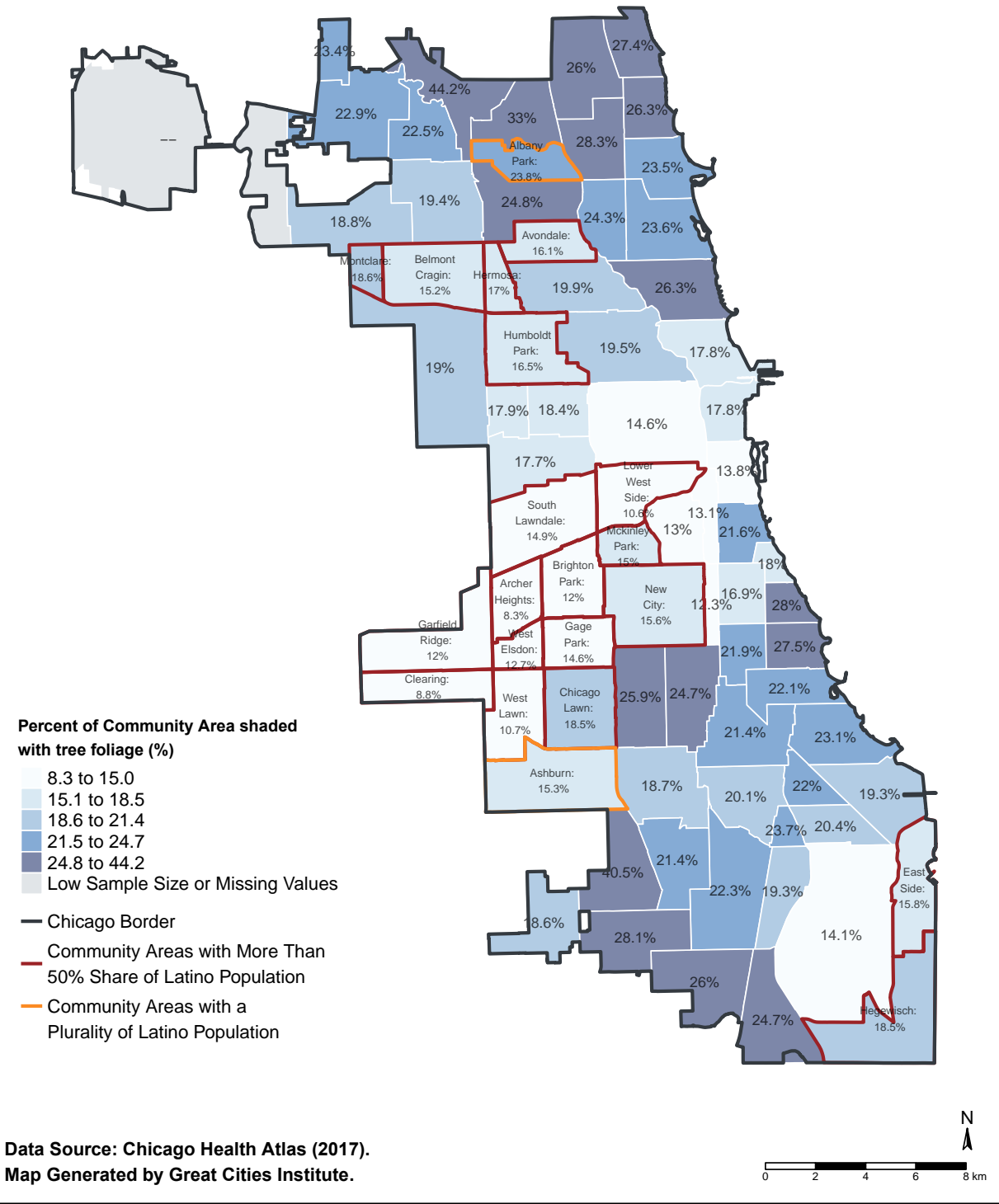
The participants noted that access to clean air, clean water, and healthy soil was crucial for community well-being. They expressed that clean water is essential for drinking, cooking, and sanitation; healthy soil is important for growing food and a contaminated soil sample can lead to unsafe food and negatively impacts nutrition; and green spaces, parks, and recreational areas free from pollution are needed to provide spaces to gather safely and enjoy cleaner air.

To better understand the environmental challenges impacting Latino communities, and to inform advocacy efforts, we derived data from the Chicago Health Atlas and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These tools provided valuable insights into patterns of environmental inequities, such as air and water quality, and tree canopy distribution, helping to identify areas most in need of intervention.

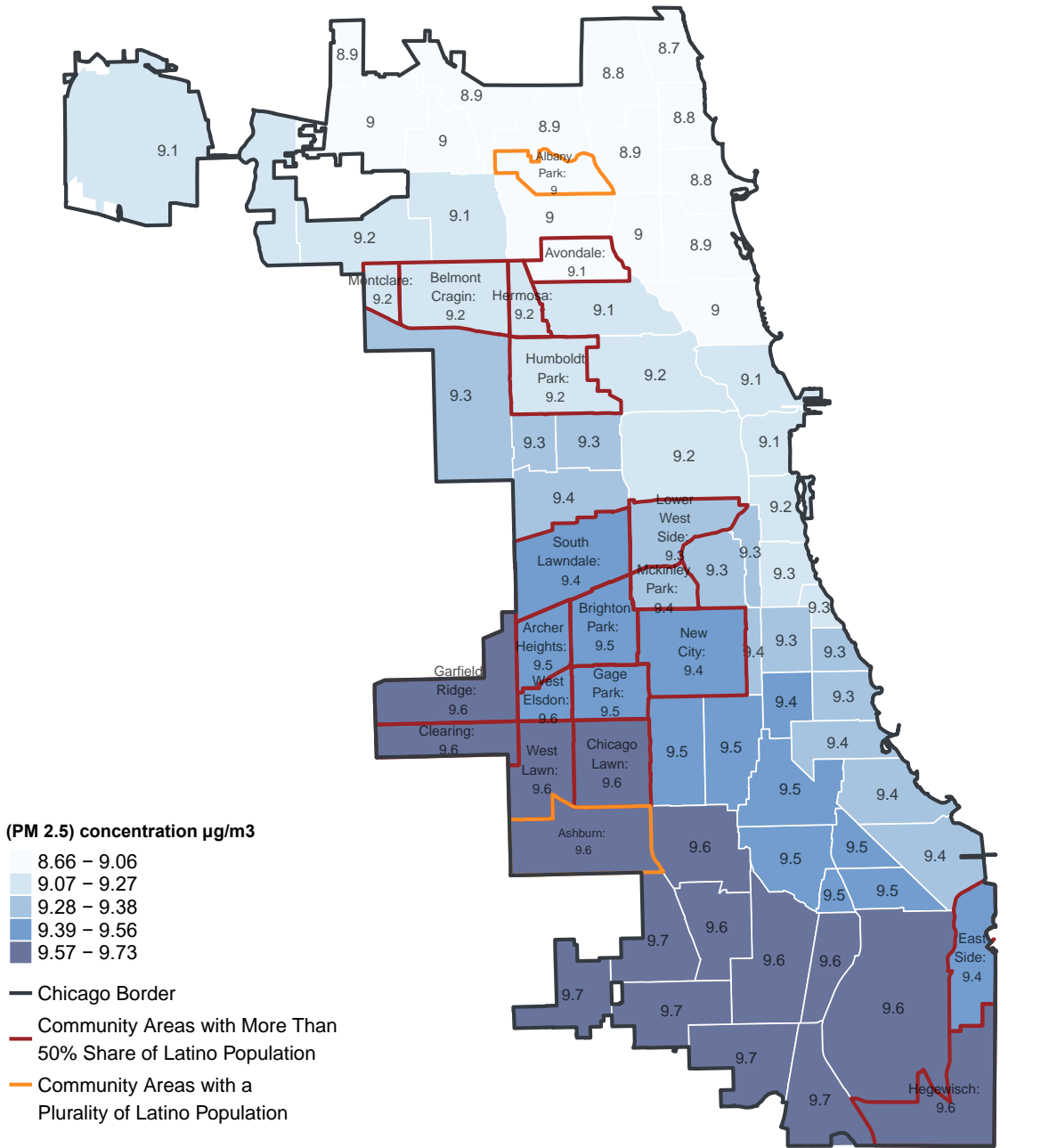
Tree canopy coverage in Latino neighborhoods across Chicago varied within a specific range, with several neighborhoods falling into lower to moderate canopy coverage brackets in 2017 (See Map 9).

- Archer Heights (8.3%) fell within the lowest range, indicating a limited tree canopy that may have contributed to higher urban heat and air quality challenges.
- West Lawn (10.7%) and Brighton Park (12.0%) also had lower canopy coverage, highlighting areas with potential environmental and public health concerns.
- South Lawndale (14.9%) and Gage Park (14.6%) fell into the 15.0% and below range, showing moderately low canopy coverage that could affect temperature regulation and local biodiversity.
- Neighborhoods like Hermosa (17.0%) and East Side (15.8%) offered slightly higher tree canopy coverage, which may have helped mitigate urban heat and improved residents' quality of life through increased greenery.

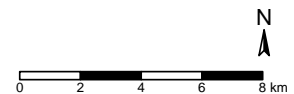
### Map 9: Tree Canopy (%) in Chicago's Latino Community Areas, 2017



**Map 10: Particulate Matter (PM 2.5) concentration in Chicago's Latino Community Areas, 2020**



Data Source: Environmental Protection Agency, EJSCREEN (2020).  
 Map Generated by Great Cities Institute.





Community areas on the Southwest Side like South Lawndale, Lower West Side, Brighton Park, Archer Heights, Gage Park, and New City are home to some of the largest industrial areas like the Pilsen, Little Village, Stockyards, Brighton Park, and Stevenson Industrial Corridors (See Map 11).

- These industrial zones contributed significantly to Chicago's economic vitality through job creation, but they also brought negative environmental impacts like air pollution and heavy truck traffic to local community members.
- Many workers in these areas did not live in the communities where they worked, and similarly, community members of these neighborhoods were often employed outside their own areas.
- As a result, local communities bore the environmental and health burdens of nearby industrial activities without benefiting from the job opportunities they provided.

In sum, Environmental Justice for Latinos was raised as a critical issue for Latino communities, underscoring the disproportionate environmental burdens they face. Latinos often live in areas which are heavily impacted by pollution, limited access to green spaces, and poor air quality, all of which contribute to health disparities. Data reveals that Latino neighborhoods, particularly those on the Southwest Side of Chicago, experience higher concentrations of particulate matter and lower tree canopy coverage, both of which are linked to negative health outcomes. Additionally, proximity to industrial corridors exacerbates environmental and health risks for these communities.

## ***What Raíces Conference Participants Believe It Will Take to Attain Justice?***

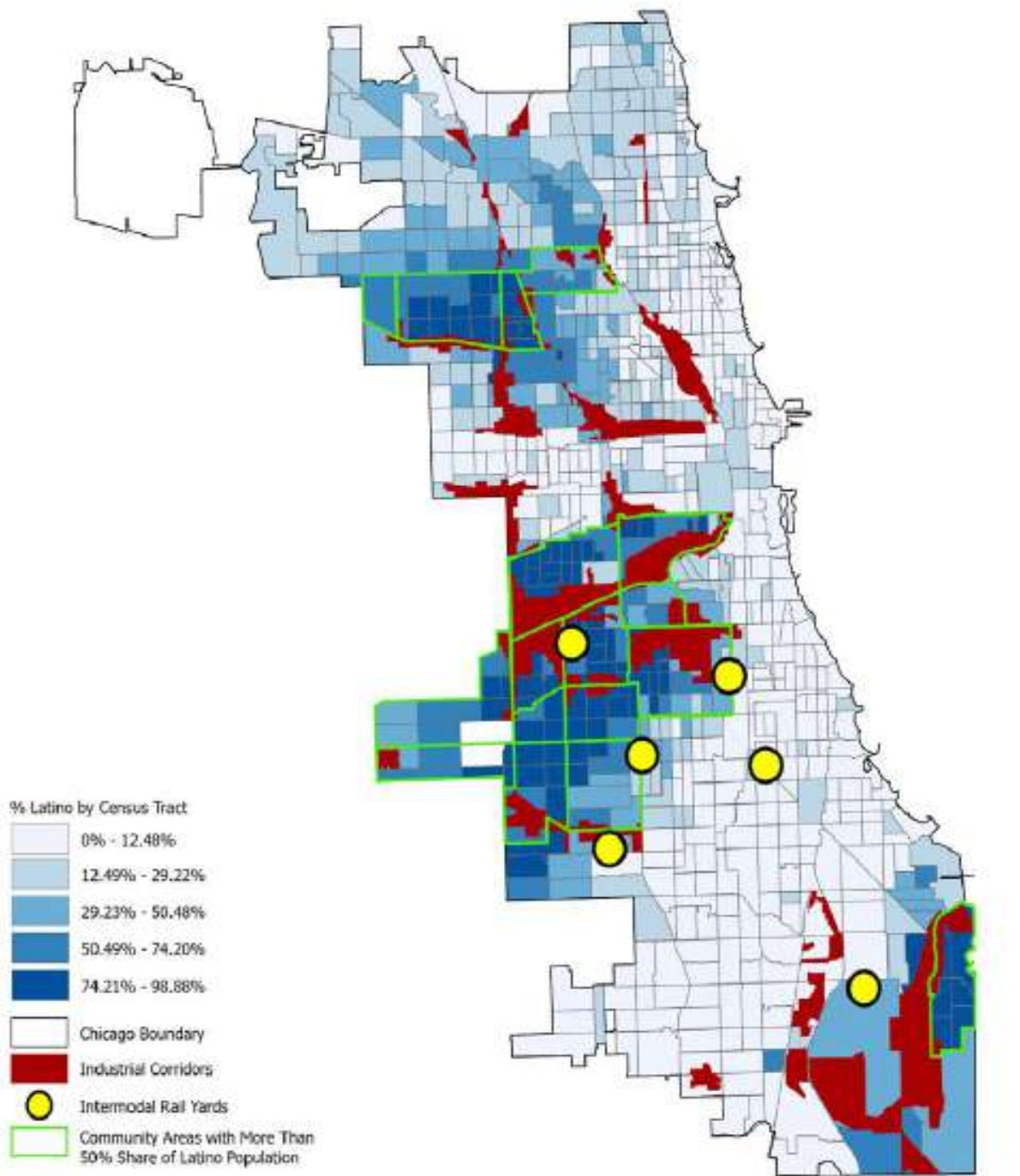
When the question, "What will it take to attain justice?" was posed, it sparked a discussion that yielded several themes illuminating a path of building towards a just and equitable society. At the forefront of these themes was Community Involvement and Mobilization. This means involving the community members in decision-making processes, ensuring their voices are heard, and building capacity to take an active role in advocating for their rights and needs. Participants expressed that when communities are engaged and empowered, they can work together to address the injustices and create a more equitable and just society.

While Community Involvement and Mobilization stood out as the central focus, attaining justice requires a multifaceted approach centered on several themes. Some other themes that contributed to the critical perspectives in the dialogue included:

- Accountability
- Representation
- Civic Engagement
- Education
- Access to Healthcare
- Access to Resources for Youth

All are critical in order to ensure that specific needs and lived experiences of all members (particularly those who are underrepresented) are being heard and addressed.

Map 11: Latinos and Industry, 2023



Data Source: 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.  
Map Created by José Miguel Acosta Córdova



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

How Participants at the Raíces Conference Defined Community Development

What Community Development Issues Were Most Important To Raíces Conference Participants?

What Raíces Conference Participants Believe It Will Take To Attain Community Development?

## How Participants at the Raíces Conference Defined Community Development

A common theme emerged from discussions at the Raíces Conference: community development centers on the collective effort to provide support and accessible resources that address the needs of the people it serves. At the Illinois Latino Caucus Foundation's Raíces Conference, participants were asked, "How do you define community development?" Among the many thoughtful responses, the theme of "Community Support/Resources" emerged overwhelmingly as the cornerstone of what individuals envision for thriving communities.

Participants highlighted the importance of addressing immediate needs—such as access to education, housing, health services, and economic opportunities. Additionally, participants emphasized the value of fostering a sense of belonging and mutual aid. Many other responses touched on interconnected themes like "Empowerment and Leadership," "Social Cohesion and Inclusivity," and "Environmental Justice for Latinos and Infrastructure."

The Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus and Foundation Community-Informed Definition of Community Development

Based on insights gathered from participants at the Raíces conference, the Legislative Latino Caucus and Foundation defines Community Development as the provision of comprehensive support and resources that enable Latino communities to thrive.

## What Community Development Issues Were Most Important to Raíces Conference Participants?

1. Community Infrastructure and Support Services
2. Youth Programs and Services
3. Health



### *Community Infrastructure and Support Services*

When asked, “What community development issues are most important to you?” participants at the Raíces Conference shared a broad range of priorities. However, one theme emerged strongly over the rest: Community Infrastructure and Support Services. This combined focus reflects a collective call to address both the physical and social foundations that sustain communities.

Responses highlighted a pressing need for investments in infrastructure, such as safer pedestrian pathways, cyclist-friendly roads, and updated facilities to serve aging or emerging needs.



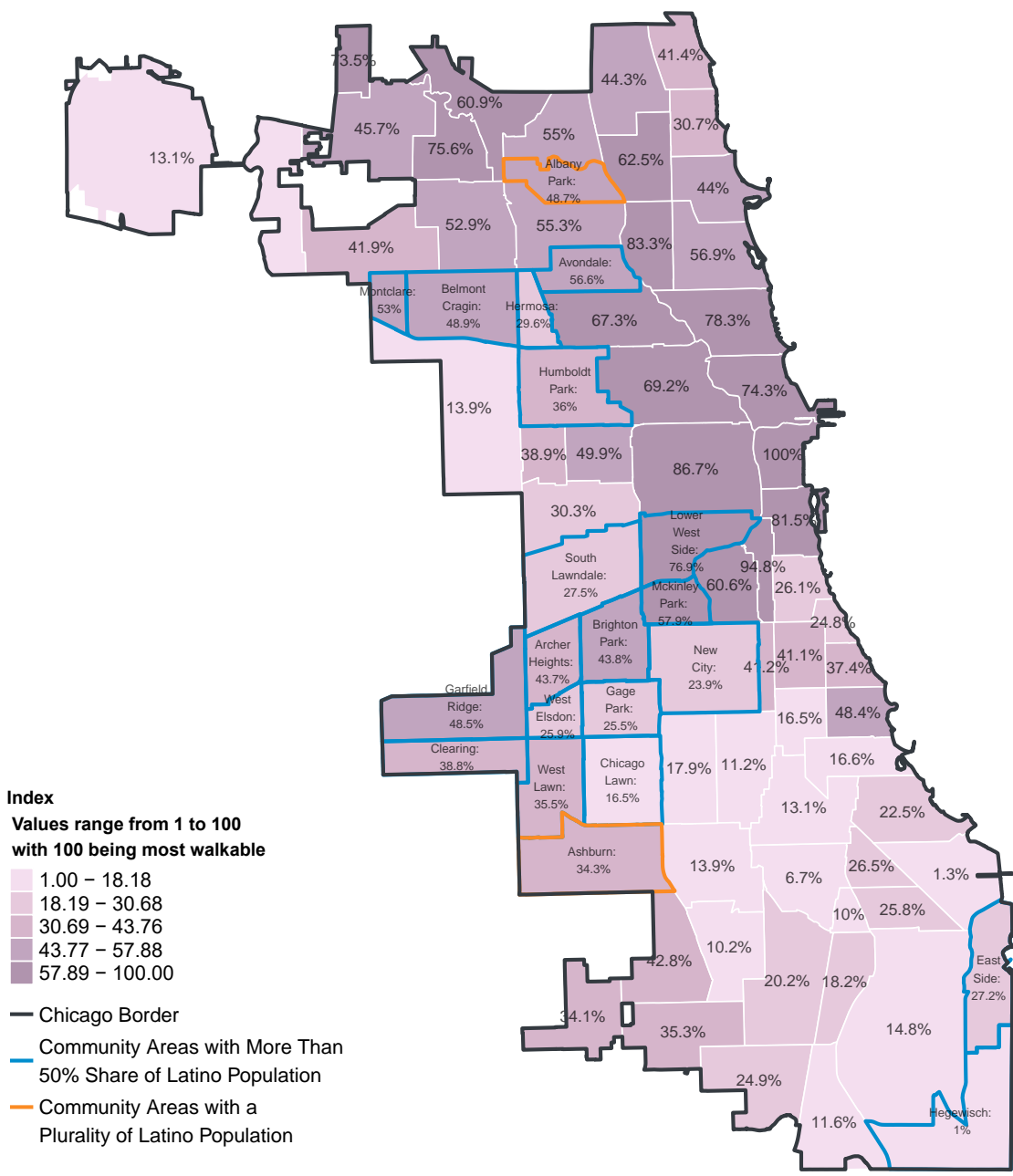
Latino-majority neighborhoods with low walkability scores can benefit from targeted infrastructure improvements that further enhance their residents' quality of life and mobility (See Map 12).

- Gage Park, with a low walkability score of 25.47 and a Latino population rate of 92.3%, is a prime candidate for improvements in pedestrian pathways and community facilities.
- Chicago Lawn and West Elsdon, with walkability scores of 16.53 and 25.91, and Latino populations of 58.2% and 81.2%, would benefit from increased cyclist-friendly infrastructure and other updates to support community needs.
- The relatively low walkability scores in these neighborhoods highlight the potential for infrastructure investments that could promote both physical and social community development.

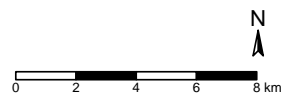
The walkability index measures an area's walkability, based on factors like intersection density, proximity to transit, diversity of businesses, and housing density. Scores range from 1 to 100, with 100 representing the highest walkability.



**Map 12: Walkability Index in Chicago's Latino Community Areas, 2022**



Data Source: EPA's Smart Location Database (2022).  
 Map Generated by Great Cities Institute.



## Community Development

Latino-majority neighborhoods with high percentages of adults reported ease of walking, scooting, or rolling to a transit stop indicate strong community connections to transit services in 2022-2023 (See Map 13).

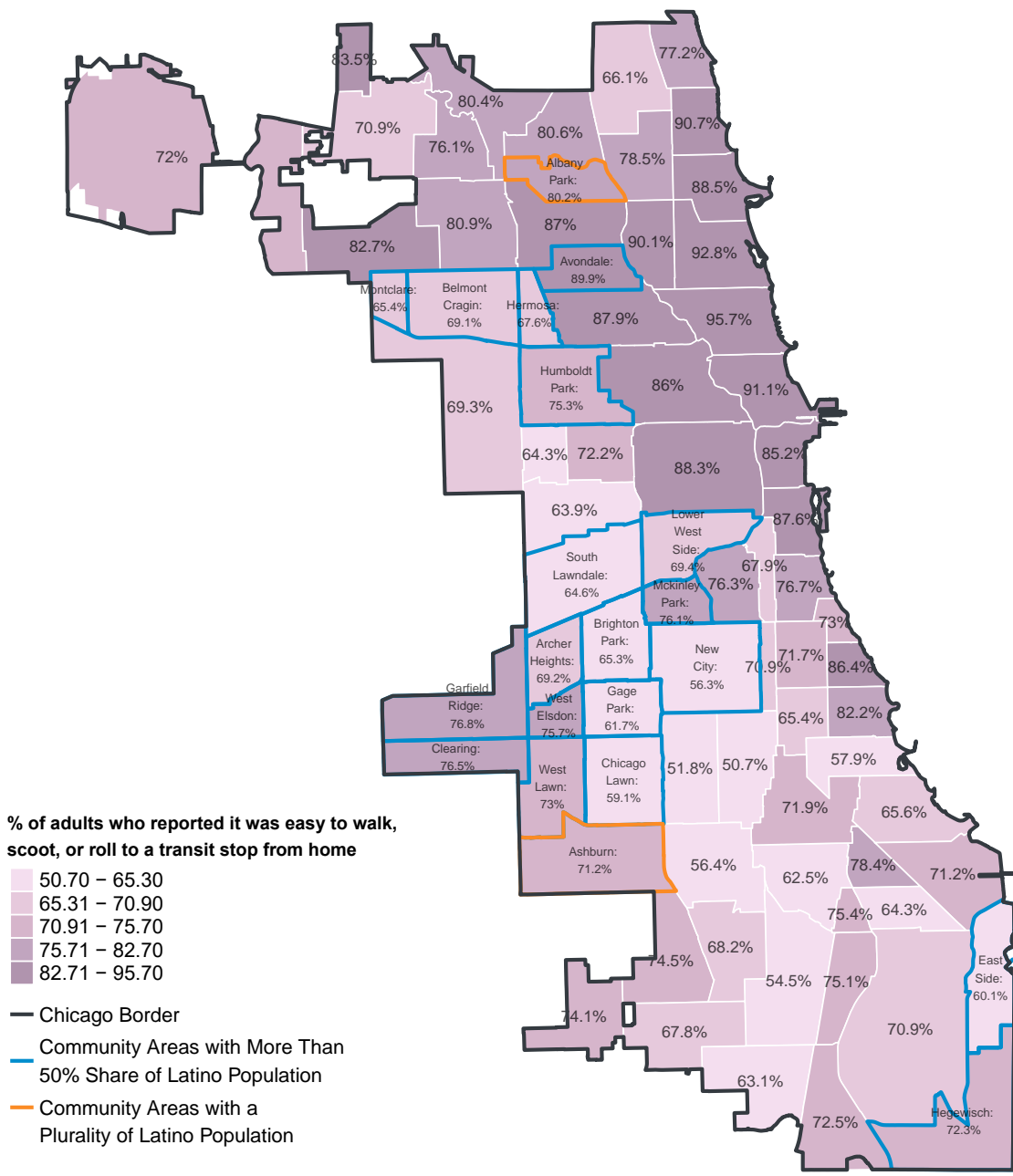
- Gage Park, with 61.7% of adults reporting ease of access to a transit stop and a Latino population rate of 92.3%, highlighted a neighborhood where improvements in transit infrastructure could have further enhanced mobility.
- Brighton Park and South Lawndale, with 65.3% and 64.6% of adults reporting ease of access to transit stops, respectively, demonstrated strong connectivity to public transportation, positioning them well for future infrastructure investments.
- Areas with large Latino populations, such as East Side, Gage Park, and Chicago Lawn, showed high percentages of adults with easy access to transit, suggesting these communities were well-served by public transportation and could have benefited from continued enhancements.

Participants also emphasized the importance of support services, including resources for families, parental information centers, and mutual aid networks. Key ideas also included ensuring budget appropriations align with community priorities, fostering grassroots leadership, and strengthening institutions to better serve their populations.

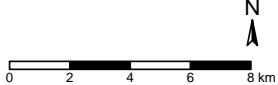
These responses speak to the critical importance of not just improving infrastructure, but also creating environments that empower individuals and families to thrive. The data on walkability and transit access highlight neighborhoods like Gage Park, Chicago Lawn, and West Elsdon as areas where infrastructure investments could significantly improve mobility and community well-being. At the same time, neighborhoods with strong transit connectivity, such as Brighton Park and South Lawndale, demonstrate the potential for further enhancements that can build on existing strengths. By prioritizing Community Infrastructure and Support Services, we can create neighborhoods that not only meet physical mobility needs but also foster social cohesion, resilience, and long-term community growth. These priorities show that infrastructure improvements, combined with robust support services, are essential for building vibrant, inclusive communities.



**Map 13: Ease of Walking to Transit Stop Rate (%) in Chicago's Latino Community Areas, 2022–2023**



**Data Source: Chicago Department of Public Health, Healthy Chicago Survey 2022–2023.**  
**Map Generated by Great Cities Institute.**



### Youth Programs and Services

Participants at the Raíces Conference overwhelmingly emphasized the significance of Youth Programs and Services. This focus underscores the vital role young people play in shaping the future of their communities and the need for intentional investment in their growth and well-being.

Individuals' responses highlighted a range of priorities, from youth development and engagement to mentorship opportunities and equality in education. Participants also stressed the importance of early childhood programs, out-of-school time initiatives, and an overall increased funding for a variety of youth services. These suggestions reflect a collective understanding that addressing the unique needs of young people requires a holistic approach and the importance of making them a priority to ensure the strength and development of the Latino community. Investing in youth programs not only fosters individual potential but also strengthens the social fabric of entire communities. By prioritizing equitable education, providing mentorship, and creating meaningful opportunities for engagement, we can empower the next generation to lead, innovate, and thrive.

The top Illinois counties with the highest Latino population show significant variation in pre-school/nursery enrollment rates for Latino children aged 3-5 in 2019-2023 (See Table 16).

**Table 16: Preschool/Nursery Enrollment and Enrollment Rate for the 10 Illinois Counties with the Largest Hispanic or Latino Population, 2019-2023**

County	Pre-School/Nursery Enrollment	Population (3-to-5-year-old)	Enrollment Rate
Cook County, Illinois	22,002	93,148	23.6%
Kane County, Illinois	3,289	13,330	24.7%
Lake County, Illinois	2,068	13,319	15.5%
DuPage County, Illinois	2,712	10,890	24.9%
Will County, Illinois	2,015	10,233	19.7%
Winnebago County, Illinois	712	4,037	17.6%
McHenry County, Illinois	743	3,913	19.0%
Kendall County, Illinois	667	2,245	29.7%
Rock Island County, Illinois	394	1,698	23.2%
Champaign County, Illinois	222	1,551	14.3%

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

- Cook County led with 22,002 Latino pre-school/nursery enrollees, representing 23.6% of the Latino population in this age group.
- Kendall County had the highest enrollment rate at 29.7%, despite a smaller Latino population.
- Champaign County had the lowest enrollment rate at 14.3%, with 222 Latino pre-school/nursery enrollees.



Preschool/nursery enrollment rates for children aged 3-5 in Illinois show a disparity between the total population and the Hispanic or Latino population in 2019-2023 (See Table 17).

The data highlights the Latino population rate and Child Opportunity Index (COI). The Child Opportunity Index is a composite index that captures neighborhood resources and conditions that matter for children's healthy development scored as Very Low (1-19), Low (20-39), Moderate (40-59), High (60-79), and Very High (80-100).

**Table 17: Preschool/Nursery Enrollment and Enrollment Rate for the 10 Illinois Counties with the Largest Hispanic or Latino Population, 2019-2023**

	Pre-School/Nursery Enrollment	Population (3-to-5-year-old)	Enrollment Rate
Total	196,996	708,630	27.8%
Hispanic or Latino	39,847	170,925	23.3%

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

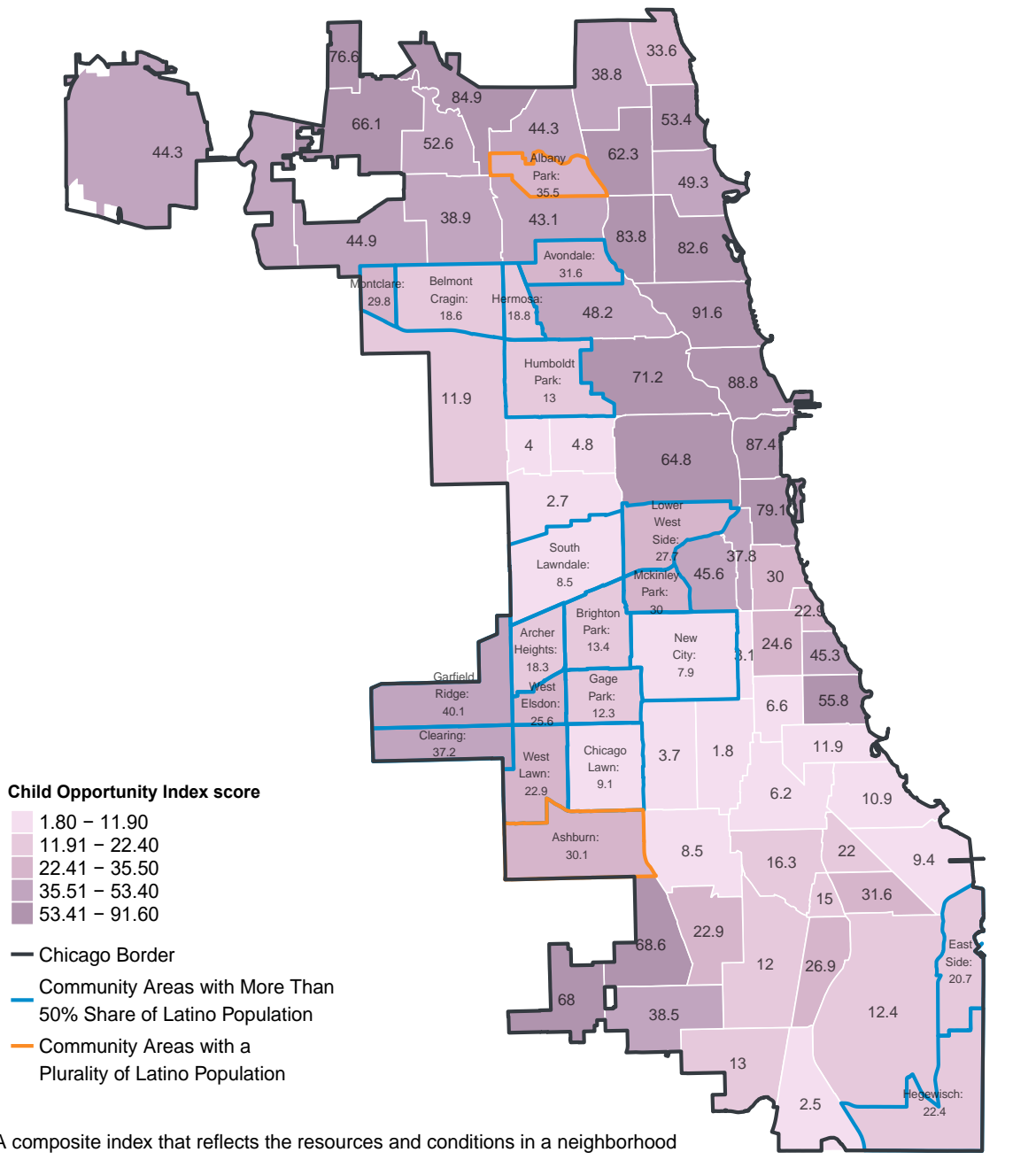
- The total population had a higher enrollment rate of 27.8%, compared to the 23.3% enrollment rate for the Hispanic or Latino population.
- A total of 196,996 children from the general population were enrolled, while 39,847 Hispanic or Latino children were enrolled in preschool or nursery programs.

Neighborhoods with a higher Latino population rate tended to experience lower COI scores, indicating challenges in providing children with equal opportunities for healthy development in 2021 (See Map 14).

- South Lawndale had a high Latino population rate but also had a relatively low COI of 8.5, suggesting that despite a large Latino presence, the community faced significant challenges related to neighborhood resources and conditions supporting child development.
- Chicago Lawn, another community with a significant Latino population, had a COI of 9.1, indicating that children in this neighborhood were likely facing considerable barriers to opportunities.

The responses from the Raíces Conference underscore the importance of investing in Youth Programs and Services, recognizing that young people are not only the future but also key contributors to community development today. The data further emphasizes the need for targeted efforts in this area. For instance, while Cook County has a significant number of Latino preschool enrollees, other areas like Champaign County exhibit lower enrollment rates, indicating that disparities still exist in access to early childhood education. The Child Opportunity Index highlights that neighborhoods with higher Latino populations, such as South Lawndale and Chicago Lawn, tend to have lower scores, reflecting challenges in providing adequate resources for children's healthy development. Prioritizing equitable access to education, mentorship, and community engagement programs is essential to ensure that youth in these communities have the tools to succeed and thrive. By empowering young people, we can build a stronger foundation for the future of Latino communities.

### Map 14: Child Opportunity Index 3.0 in Chicago's Latino Community Areas, 2021

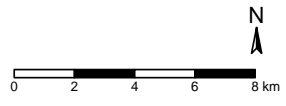


**Child Opportunity Index score**  
1.80 – 11.90  
11.91 – 22.40  
22.41 – 35.50  
35.51 – 53.40  
53.41 – 91.60

— Chicago Border  
— Community Areas with More Than 50% Share of Latino Population  
— Community Areas with a Plurality of Latino Population

A composite index that reflects the resources and conditions in a neighborhood that influence children's healthy development. A higher score indicates more favorable outcomes.

Data Source: Diversity Data Kids (2021).  
Map Generated by Great Cities Institute.



## Health/Mental Health

Health and Mental Health emerged as critical focus areas during the Raíces Conference, underscoring their importance to the community's well-being. These responses reflect a deep concern for ensuring that individuals and families have access to comprehensive care that addresses both physical and emotional well-being. Participants emphasized the importance of equitable access to medical care, with specific calls for universal medical insurance and referral systems to connect individuals with the services they need. The responses underscored that healthcare is not just a basic right but a cornerstone of community stability and resilience.

Counties in Illinois showed significant variation in uninsured rates, with some counties experiencing much higher rates than others in 2019-2023 (See Maps 15 & 16).

- Wayne County had the highest uninsured rate at 42.2%.
- The top counties (Wayne, Richland, Clinton) had uninsured rates above 30%, while counties like Union and Franklin had rates closer to 15-17%.
- Cook County, which includes Chicago, had a moderate uninsured rate of 16.5%, indicating a mid-range trend for urban areas.

The data highlighted a significant disparity in health insurance coverage, with Hispanic and Latino populations in Illinois experiencing uninsured rates more than double those of the overall population in 2019-2023 (See Table 18).

**Table 18: Rate of Hispanic or Latino Population without Health Insurance in Illinois, 2019-2023**

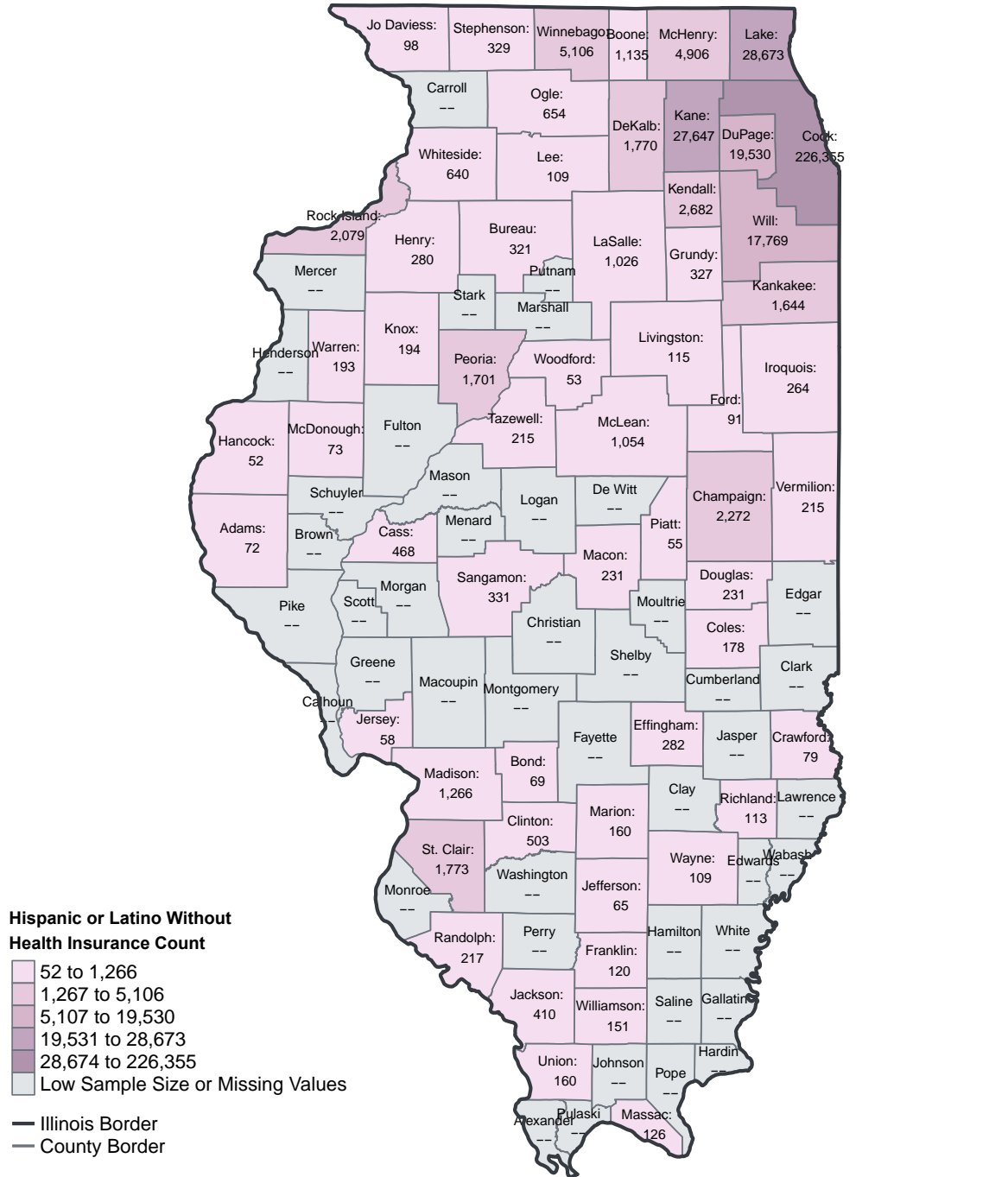
	Number	Percent
Total	870,603	7.0%
Hispanic or Latino	357,578	15.3%

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

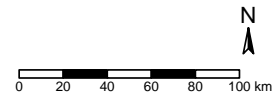
- 7.0% of the total Illinois population did not have health insurance, while 15.3% of Hispanic or Latino residents were uninsured.
- Over 357,578 Hispanic or Latino individuals were uninsured, reflecting systemic challenges such as affordability, language barriers, and limited resource awareness.
- The findings emphasized the urgent need for targeted interventions and localized strategies to ensure equitable healthcare access for Hispanic and Latino communities in Illinois.

Equally urgent was the focus on mental health, with a clear demand for investment in services that address issues such as depression, emotional health, and support for individuals with autism. Suggestions included creating dedicated mental health spaces, increasing funding for services, and addressing the social challenges tied to mental health disparities. This prioritization highlights a comprehensive understanding of health—one that recognizes the inseparable connection between physical and mental well-being.

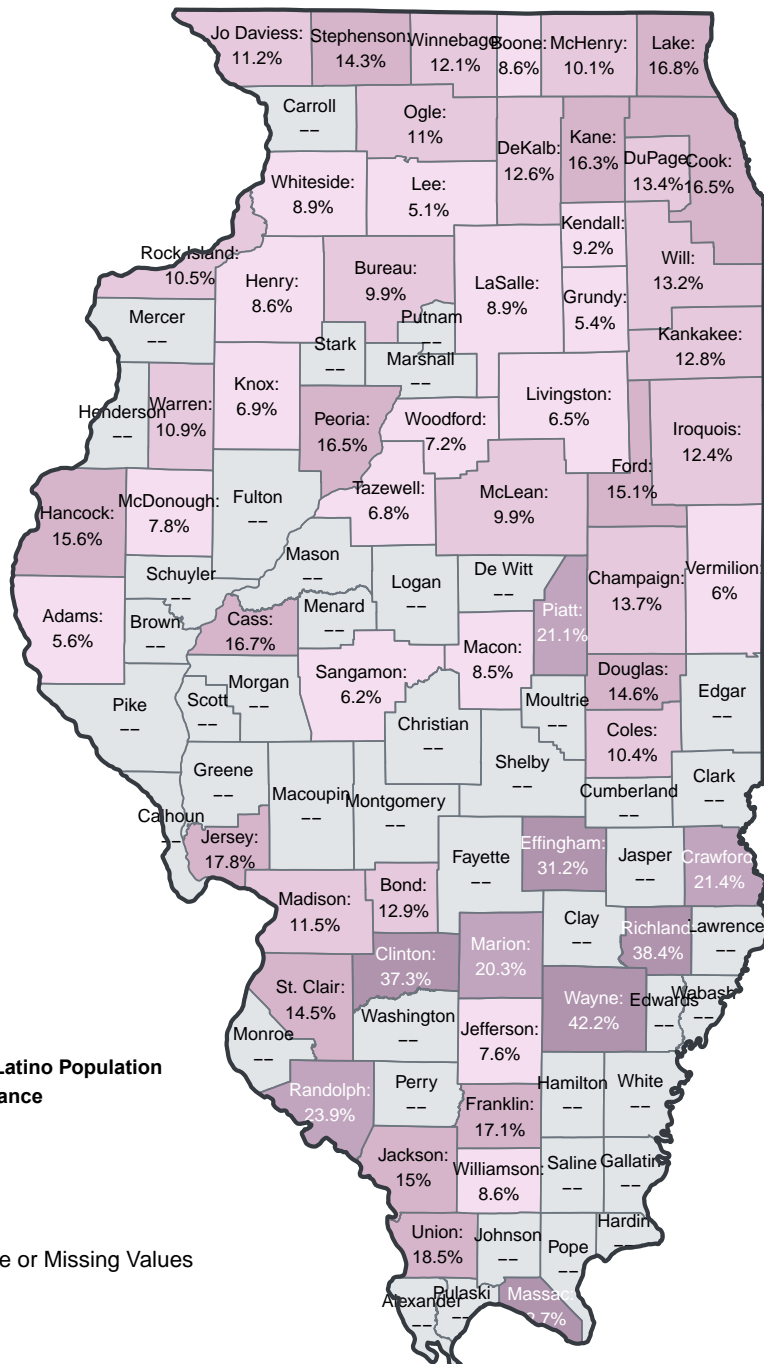
**Map 15: Hispanic or Latino Population without Health Insurance Count in Illinois Counties, 2019–2023**



Data Source: 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.  
 Map Generated by Great Cities Institute.



### Map 16: Rate of Hispanic or Latino Population without Health Insurance in Illinois Counties, 2019–2023

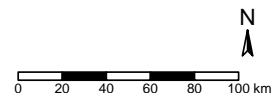


**Rate of Hispanic or Latino Population without Health Insurance**

- 5.1 to 9.2
- 9.3 to 13.7
- 13.8 to 18.5
- 18.6 to 23.9
- 24.0 to 42.2
- Low Sample Size or Missing Values

- Illinois Border
- County Border

Data Source: 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.  
Map Generated by Great Cities Institute.



## Community Development

The data revealed a significant disparity in disability rates between the general Illinois population and Hispanic or Latino residents, with Hispanic or Latino individuals showing a lower disability prevalence in 2019-2023 (See Table 19).

**Table 19: Hispanic or Latino Population Disability Rate in Illinois, 2019-2023**

	Number	Percent
Total	1,482,931	11.8%
Hispanic or Latino	184,351	7.9%

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

- 11.8% of the total Illinois population has a disability, compared to 7.9% among Hispanic or Latino residents.
- The lower disability rate among Hispanic or Latino residents may be linked to a younger median age within the community.
- 184,351 Hispanic or Latino individuals with disabilities require specialized support.
- This highlights the need for targeted services and resources for Hispanic or Latino individuals with disabilities.

The data revealed slight but notable differences in depressive symptoms between the general Illinois population and Hispanic or Latino individuals, with Hispanics or Latinos reporting slightly higher rates of daily and intermittent depression (See Table 20).

**Table 20: Frequency of Depression among Hispanics or Latinos in Illinois, 2024**

Frequency of Depression	Number	Percent
<b>Total</b>		
Every day	509,856	5.5%
More than half of the days	553,283	5.9%
Not at all	6,231,754	66.9%
Several days	2,018,643	21.7%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>		
Every day	476,358	6.2%
More than half of the days	471,754	6.2%
Not at all	5,014,563	65.5%
Several days	1,688,294	22.1%

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Household Pulse Survey, August 20-September 16, 2024. (Total Population 18 Years and Older). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

- 5.5% of the general Illinois population experiences depression every day, compared to 6.2% of Hispanics or Latinos.
- The percentage of individuals experiencing depression more than half of the days is 5.9% for the general population and 6.2% for Hispanics or Latinos.
- Despite these differences, the majority of both groups report not experiencing depression at all, with 65.5% of Hispanics or Latinos and 66.9% of the total population.

The data indicates that Hispanic or Latino households are slightly more likely to report that all children in their household require mental health treatment compared to the general population in 2024 (See Table 21).

- 84.1% of Hispanic or Latino households report that none of their children require mental health treatment, similar to 84.7% of the general population.
- 4.9% of Hispanic or Latino households report that all children need mental health treatment, compared to 4.1% in the general population.
- 11.0% of Hispanic or Latino households report that some but not all children need treatment, closely aligning with the 11.2% in the overall population.

Hispanic or Latino children were more likely to receive mental health treatment when needed compared to the general population, but significant gaps in access to care remained in 2024 (See Table 22).

- 75.2% of Hispanic or Latino children who needed mental health treatment received all necessary care, surpassing the 65.0% reported for the general population.
- 20.8% of Hispanic or Latino children did not receive any treatment despite needing it, compared to 25.6% of children overall.

**Table 21: Children Mental Health Needs among Hispanic or Latino Households in Illinois, 2024**

Children Need Mental Health Treatment	Number	Percent
<b>Total</b>		
No, none of the children needed mental health treatment	2,837,062	84.7%
Yes, all children needed mental health treatment	137,348	4.1%
Yes, some but not all children needed mental health treatment	374,791	11.2%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>		
No, none of the children needed mental health treatment	2,146,016	84.1%
Yes, all children needed mental health treatment	124,645	4.9%
Yes, some but not all children needed mental health treatment	279,619	11.0%

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Household Pulse Survey, August 20-September 16, 2024. (Total Population 18 Years and Older). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

**Table 22: Children Mental Health Treatment among Hispanic or Latino Households in Illinois, 2024**

Children Received Mental Health Treatment	Number	Percent
<b>Total</b>		
No, none of the children who needed treatment received it	131,222	25.6%
Yes, all children who needed treatment received it	333,004	65.0%
Yes, but only some children who needed treatment received it	47,912	9.4%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>		
No, none of the children who needed treatment received it	84,278	20.8%
Yes, all children who needed treatment received it	303,830	75.2%
Yes, but only some children who needed treatment received it	16,156	4.0%

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Household Pulse Survey, August 20-September 16, 2024. (Total Population 18 Years and Older). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

Hispanic or Latino communities in Illinois demonstrated better health outcomes for several chronic diseases compared to other racial and ethnic groups in 2019, despite socioeconomic disadvantages, exemplifying the Hispanic Paradox (See Table 23).

- The heart disease death rate among Hispanic or Latino individuals was significantly lower (48.5 per 100,000) than that of non-Hispanic Black (226.8 per 100,000) and non-Hispanic White (254.1 per 100,000) populations.
- Hispanic or Latino individuals had the lowest death rate from chronic lower respiratory diseases (5.1 per 100,000) compared to non-Hispanic Black (36.6 per 100,000) and non-Hispanic White populations (60.1 per 100,000).
- The diabetes death rate among Hispanic or Latino individuals (22.3 per 100,000) was lower than the non-Hispanic Black population (32.0 per 100,000) but slightly higher than the non-Hispanic White population (23.9 per 100,000).

**Table 23: Chronic Health Indicators by Race/Ethnicity in Illinois, 2019**

Cause of Death	Death Rate (per 100,000)			
	Total	Hispanic or Latino	Non-Hispanic Black	Non-Hispanic White
Diseases of heart (heart disease)	202.5	48.5	226.8	254.1
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	43.7	5.1	36.6	60.1
Diabetes mellitus (diabetes)	22.3	11.6	32.0	23.9

Data Source: Illinois Department of Public Health, Mortality Data 2019. Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

The Raíces Conference emphasized Health and Mental Health as critical areas of focus, highlighting the need for equitable access to care. Data reveals significant disparities, with Hispanic or Latino populations experiencing higher uninsured rates, such as in Wayne County (42.2%). Mental health concerns are also prevalent, with slightly higher rates of depression among Hispanics or Latinos compared to the general population. While Latino children are more likely to receive mental health treatment when needed, gaps still exist. These findings stress the urgency of investing in both healthcare and mental health services to ensure equitable access and support for thriving, resilient communities.

## ***What Raíces Conference Participants Believe It Will Take to Attain Community Development?***

At the Raíces Conference, the question, “What will it take to attain community development?” sparked a vibrant and insightful discussion, yielding several key themes that illuminate a path forward for building thriving, resilient communities. Central to this vision is Community Empowerment and Collaboration, which emerged as the most emphasized theme. This theme highlights the collective strength that can



be harnessed when individuals, organizations, and institutions unite to foster shared growth and agency. The repeated calls for ownership in action, community-centered solutions, and meeting the needs of the community reflect a demand for intentional collaboration where solutions are designed not just for, but with the community. The group emphasized the need for a statewide network to connect legislators, medical organizations, non-profits, employment agencies, schools, and financial literacy organizations. This network could amplify local efforts, foster civic engagement skills, and provide an avenue for raising awareness about community issues. Strengthening community buy-in, giving back, and nurturing civic pride were seen as key to creating sustainable change. Community empowerment, at its core, was about building capacity and investing in resources that enable residents to advocate for themselves and shape their collective futures. Participants stressed the importance of creating and maintaining venues, spaces, and places where the community can convene, strategize, and act. These spaces serve as hubs for community voices to be heard in decision-making processes, ensuring that initiatives are rooted in the lived realities of residents.



While Community Empowerment and Collaboration formed the backbone of the conversation, several other themes offered critical insights into what is needed for all encompassing community development:

- Access to Resources and Funding
- Sustainable Development and Equitable Policies
- Representation in Leadership and Advocacy
- Inclusion and Social Unity
- Education and Skill Building

All are critical in order to ensure that specific needs and lived experiences of all members (particularly those who are underrepresented) are being heard and addressed.

# ***THE STATEMENT***

January 2025

## **The Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Statement on its Three Raíces**

The Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus used our 2024 Raíces Public Policy Conference to gather perspectives, and experiences of what Equity, Justice, and Community Development means to us and what needs to be done to attain these three Raíces.



We, the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus, define Equity as our Latino communities having equitable access to resources, opportunities, services, and education. We will continue pushing for more access to language, housing, economic opportunities, and education. We strive to have more representation of our community needs at the legislative level. We will focus our efforts on policy and structural change to address our specific needs.

We, the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus define Justice as having equality in the application of the law, opportunities, rights, privileges, and in the treatment of our Latino community. We understand the community's call to address issues regarding Immigration Justice, Criminal Justice Reform, and Environmental Justice for Latinos and we commit to addressing these issues. With community involvement and mobilization, we commit to continue hearing Latino communities' concerns and finding innovative ways to address them.

The Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus defines Community Development as building support and resources for our communities to flourish. We see the issues and opportunities in our communities and strive to address community infrastructure & support services, youth programs & services, and health as critical issues that were identified by our Latino community of Illinois. As we collaborate and build power with our Latino communities, we will work towards making the necessary changes addressing their specific needs.

We the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus thank the community for their involvement in voicing the issues that mattered most to them, and we commit to working our hardest to address these issues. Understanding that systemic change takes effort, we are committed to the long battle ahead of us, and welcome the challenge. We are empowered by your stories and will continue to fight for the needs and wants of our communities.

# ***THE POWER LATINOS HAVE***

## **The Power Latinos Have**

Illinois' Latino population is central to the state's cultural and economic vitality. To better understand and amplify their contributions, the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation gathered feedback directly from participants at the 2024 Raíces Conference. The second session of the conference, which explored Latino contributions in Illinois, engaged participants in six discussion rooms—three in English and three with Spanish translation. Participants answered key questions about the impact and future role of Latinos in Illinois. In particular, participants were asked to complete the following statement, "If it were not for Latinos..." Their answers helped shape the following section, which highlights the contributions of Latinos to the state of Illinois.

The following data demonstrates the many contributions of Latinos to Illinois.

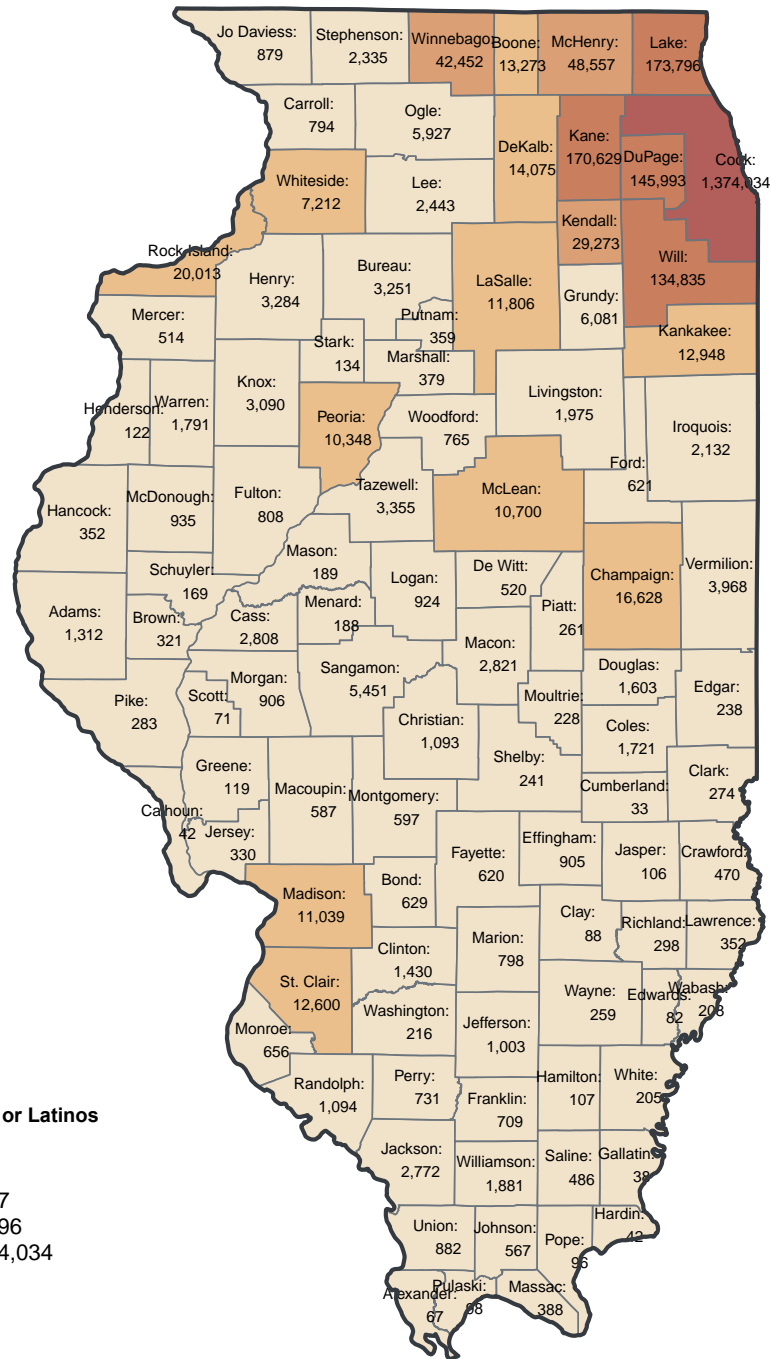


Juan González, Senior Fellow of Great Cities Institute, Co-Host of Democracy Now & author of several books including *Harvest of Empire*, giving his insightful keynote address on "Activism, Immigration, and Voter Engagement: Reimagining the Latino Narrative." Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.

If it were not for Latinos, Illinois would lose a driving force of economic growth, political power, and cultural vitality across the state. With over 2.3 million Latinos in Illinois, their absence would leave the state without the momentum reshaping its future, pushing for more inclusive policies, and reinforcing the significance of diverse communities in every sector (See Maps 17 and 18).

- 26.5% of the population in Cook County was Latino in 2019-2023, representing a population size that can massively influence local policy and economic dynamics.
- With recent rapid Latino population growth, counties such as Kane (33.1%), Lake (24.4%), and Will (19.3%) have large shares of Latino population.
- As the Latino community expands, it plays a central role in state and local elections, shaping policies that reflect its needs and priorities.
- The Latino community enhances Illinois' cultural diversity, contributing to its rich traditions, cuisine, music, and community activities.

**Map 17: Hispanic or Latino Population Count in Illinois Counties, 2019–2023**

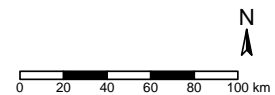


**Number of Hispanic or Latinos**

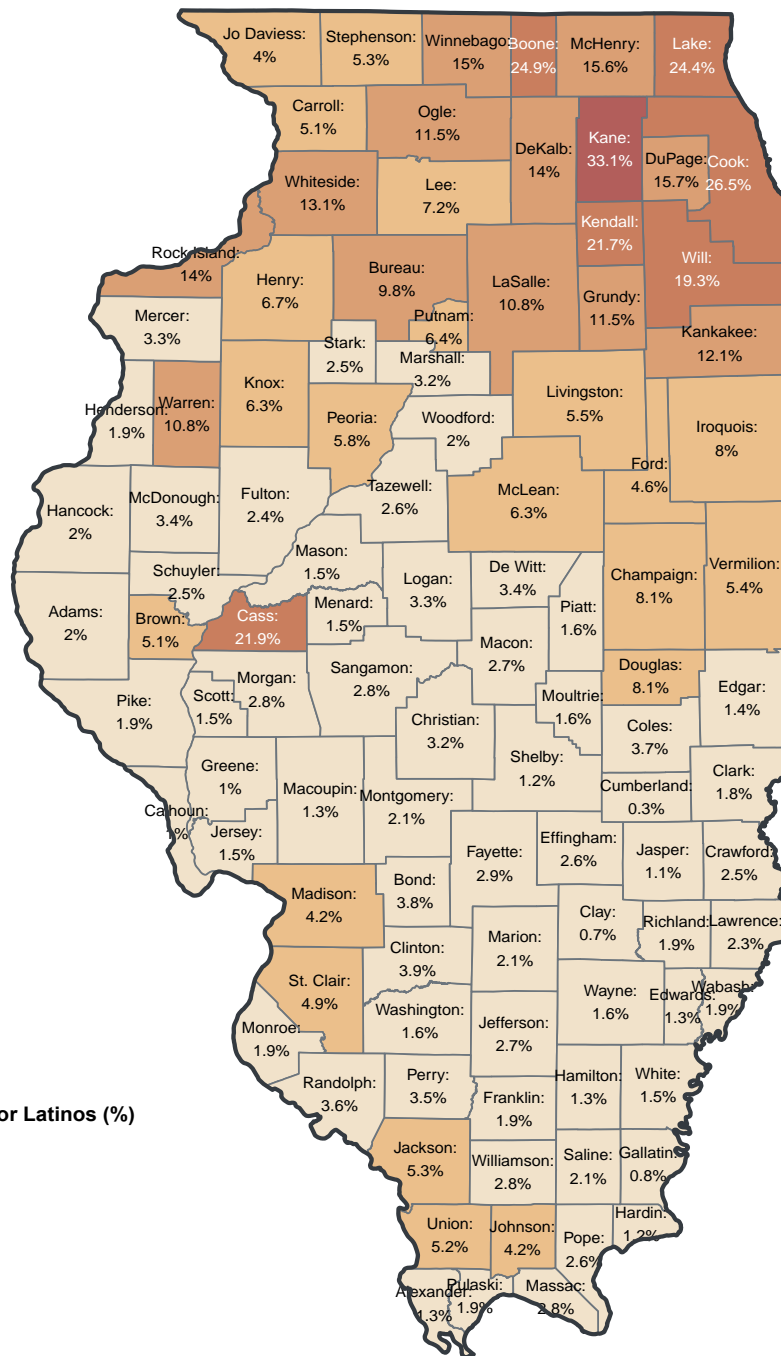
- 33 to 6,081
- 6,082 to 20,013
- 20,014 to 48,557
- 48,558 to 173,796
- 173,797 to 1,374,034

- Illinois Border
- County Border

Data Source: 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.  
 Map Generated by Great Cities Institute.



**Map 18: Percent of Hispanic or Latinos in Illinois Counties, 2019–2023**

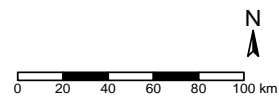


**Percent of Hispanic or Latinos (%)**

- 0.3 to 3.9
- 4.0 to 8.1
- 8.2 to 15.7
- 15.8 to 26.5
- 26.6 to 33.1

- Illinois Border
- County Border

Data Source: 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.  
 Map Generated by Great Cities Institute.



## The Power Latinos Have

If it were not for Latinos, Illinois would lose the rich diversity brought by the Hispanic or Latino population, with Mexican Americans as the largest group. This demographic plays a crucial role in shaping the state's social and cultural fabric while making immense contributions to its economy and political landscape (See Table 24).

**Table 24: Hispanic or Latino Population by Country of Origin in Illinois, 2019-2023**

Country of Origin	Number	Percent Share of the Hispanic or Latino Population
Mexican	1,804,094	76.8%
Puerto Rican	212,170	9%
Other	73,119	3.1%
Guatemalan	46,438	2%
Ecuadorian	34,227	1.5%
Colombian	33,075	1.4%
Cuban	30,886	1.3%
Honduran	21,612	0.9%
Venezuelan	15,866	0.7%
Peruvian	13,547	0.6%
Dominican	9,771	0.4%
Argentinean	7,115	0.3%
Chilean	5,437	0.2%
Nicaraguan	5,060	0.2%
Panamanian	4,206	0.2%
Bolivian	3,305	0.1%
Costa Rican	2,980	0.1%
Uruguayan	1,522	0.1%
Paraguayan	624	0%
Total Hispanic or Latino Population	2,348,118	–

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023).  
Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

- In 2019-2023, the Mexican population was the largest group within the Latino community in Illinois, making up 76.8% of the Hispanic or Latino population, highlighting their dominant cultural and economic influence.
- Puerto Rican (9%) and Guatemalan (2%) populations represented significant, though smaller, communities that contribute to the state's multicultural dynamics.
- Diversity within the Hispanic or Latino community is seen in the presence of smaller populations from countries such as Ecuador (1.5%), Colombia (1.4%), and Cuba (1.3%), showing the state's appeal to a broad range of Latin American immigrants.
- The total Hispanic or Latino population of 2,348,118 in 2019-2023 is a major driver of economic growth, cultural innovation, and demographic change in Illinois.
- As the Latino population continues to grow, especially in urban areas, their collective vote and political influence are shaping Illinois' future policies and elections.

If it were not for Latino entrepreneurs, the state would miss out on an essential driving force contributing billions in revenue, creating jobs, and boosting local economies (See Table 25).

**Table 25: Hispanic Business Ownership and Economic Contributions in Illinois Metro Areas, 2021**

Area	Hispanic Owned Businesses			
	Total Businesses	Total Revenue	Total Employees	Total Payroll
Bloomington, IL Metro Area	-	\$13,973,000	-	-
Cape Girardeau, MO-IL Metro Area	108	\$4,045,000	29	\$934,000
Carbondale-Marion, IL Metro Area	154	\$5,784,000	29	\$519,000
Champaign-Urbana, IL Metro Area	-	\$23,827,000	-	-
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI Metro Area	139,499	\$4,120,880,000	80,304	\$3,633,429,000
Danville, IL Metro Area	152	\$4,024,000	172	\$9,195,000
Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, IA-IL Metro Area	1,385	\$41,129,000	1,714	\$73,354,000
Decatur, IL Metro Area	-	\$3,743,000	100 to 249	-
Kankakee, IL Metro Area	-	\$18,890,000	-	-
Peoria, IL Metro Area	-	\$21,899,000	-	-
Rockford, IL Metro Area	2,935	\$92,385,000	-	-
St. Louis, MO-IL Metro Area	6,174	\$218,329,000	5,383	\$263,066,000
Springfield, IL Metro Area	257	\$5,663,000	74	\$3,509,000

Note: Counts include only businesses classified by owner demographic group.

Data Sources: Annual Business Survey, 2021 (Census); Nonemployer Statistics by Demographics, 2021 (Census).

Estimates labeled as '-' are suppressed due to high sampling variability, poor response quality, or other quality concerns.

- Latino-owned businesses in Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI Metro Area generated over \$4.1 billion in revenue in 2021, with more than 80,000 people employed in the metro Area alone, highlighting their critical role in the state's economy.
- Latinos were responsible for a \$3.6 billion payroll in the Chicago area in 2021, underscoring their influence on the regional economy and workforce.
- In the Davenport-Moline-Rock Island Metro Area, Latino-owned businesses brought in \$41.1 million in revenue and supported over 1,700 jobs in 2021, demonstrating their growing impact even in smaller communities.
- The St. Louis Metro Area saw \$218.3 million in revenue in 2021 from Latino-owned businesses, providing employment to over 5,300 individuals, showing that Latino entrepreneurs are key to cross-state economic prosperity.
- Even in smaller metro areas like Carbondale-Marion and Danville, Latino businesses contributed \$5.8 million and \$4.0 million in revenue respectively in 2021, creating jobs and fueling local economic dynamism.
- Latino businesses play a vital role in Illinois, both in major cities and in rural areas, driving innovation, job creation, and economic stability, despite some areas missing detailed data on their exact impact.

## The Power Latinos Have

If it were not for Latinos, Illinois' economy would be missing a vital engine of growth and innovation. Latino-owned businesses are driving billions in revenue and creating tens of thousands of jobs across the state (See Table 26).

**Table 26: Hispanic Business Ownership and Economic Contributions in Illinois Counties and State, 2021**

Area	Hispanic Owned Businesses			
	Total Businesses	Total Revenue	Total Employees	Total Payroll
Boone County, Illinois	633	\$23,773,000	-	-
Kendall County, Illinois	-	\$71,923,000	-	-
Kane County, Illinois	9,855	\$292,995,000	6,117	\$291,278,000
Will County, Illinois	8,916	\$297,113,000	4,493	\$173,234,000
Cook County, Illinois	88,226	\$2,523,814,000	47,607	\$2,138,918,000
Winnebago County, Illinois	2,403	\$68,612,000	-	-
Cass County, Illinois	-	\$2,021,000	-	-
Kankakee County, Illinois	-	\$18,890,000	-	-
Lake County, Illinois	9,444	\$277,475,000	6,356	\$190,486,000
Rock Island County, Illinois	748	\$20,416,000	1,517	\$62,479,000
Illinois	143,089	4,223,645,000	86,430	3,789,814,000

Note: Counts include only businesses classified by owner demographic group.

Data Sources: Annual Business Survey, 2021 (Census); Nonemployer Statistics by Demographics, 2021 (Census).

Estimates labeled as '-' are suppressed due to high sampling variability, poor response quality, or other quality concerns.

- Cook County leads the way, with Latino-owned businesses generating \$2.5 billion in revenue in 2021, employing 47,607 people, and contributing a \$2.1 billion payroll, making it the core engine of Latino entrepreneurship in Illinois.
- Kane County Latino businesses generated \$293 million in revenue in 2021 and employed over 6,100 people, while Will County brought in \$297 million in revenue and provided jobs for nearly 4,500 people, highlighting the growth of Latino businesses in suburban areas.
- Lake County Latino businesses contributed \$277 million in revenue in 2021 and employed over 6,300 people, further solidifying the reach of Latino entrepreneurs beyond Chicago's core.
- Winnebago and Boone counties generated \$68.6 million and \$23.8 million in revenue in 2021, respectively, demonstrating that Latino businesses are growing in less urbanized areas.
- Overall, Latino businesses in Illinois generated \$4.2 billion in revenue, employed over 86,000 people, and contributed nearly \$3.8 billion in payroll in 2021, proving that Latino entrepreneurs are not only essential to the Chicago area but to the entire state.





If it were not for Latinos, Illinois would lose more than \$6.5 billion in income tax contributions, with Cook County losing the most at \$3.8 billion. Suburban counties like DuPage, Kane, and Will also rely heavily on Latino taxpayers, contributing \$656 million, \$400 million, and \$335 million, respectively, underscoring their vital role in the state's financial health and growth (See Map 19).

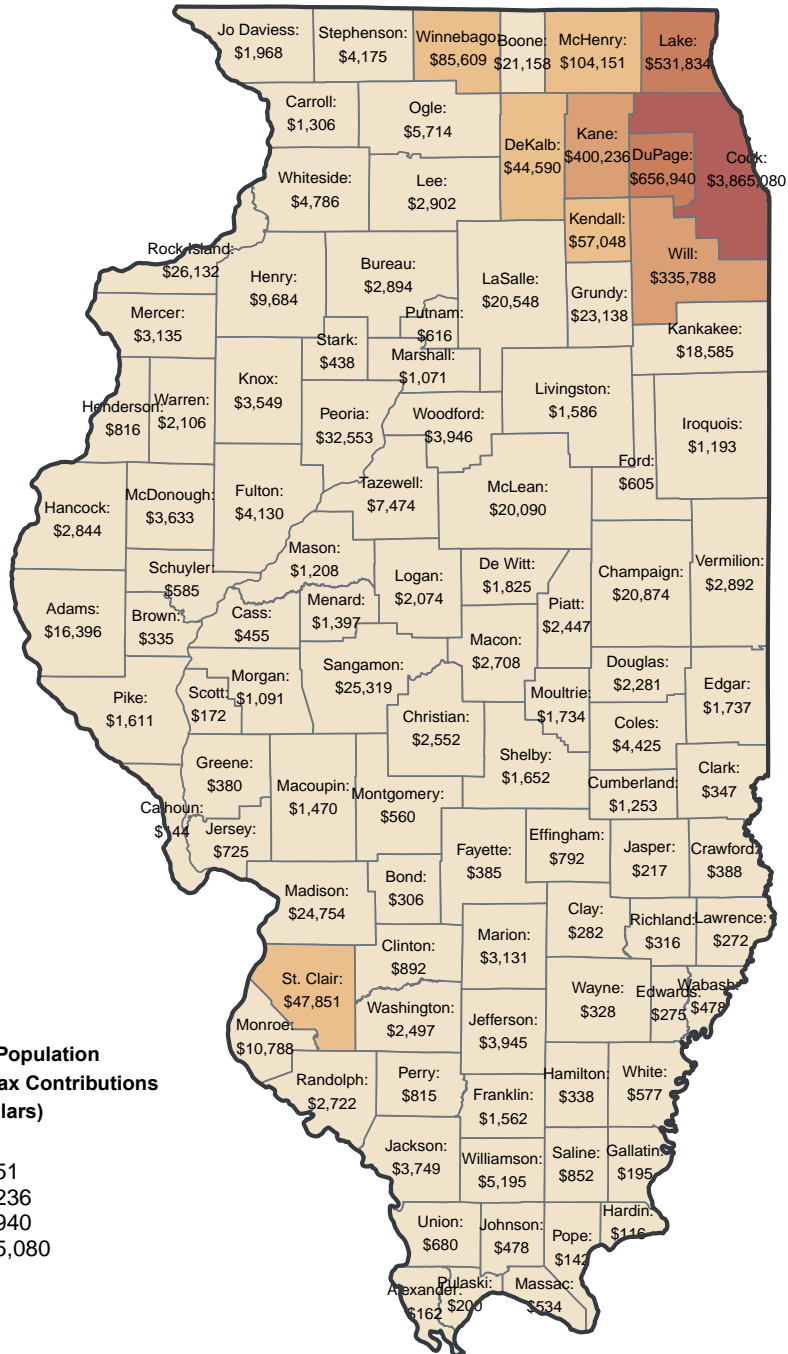
- Cook County benefits most from Latino contributions, with an estimated \$3.8 billion in income taxes in 2021, underscoring its importance as the economic and tax powerhouse of the state.
- DuPage County saw approximately \$656 million from Latino income taxes in 2021, demonstrating the financial impact Latinos have in suburban areas outside of Chicago.
- Will County saw \$335 million and Kane County saw around \$400 million in Latino income taxes in 2021, further showing the growing economic presence of Latinos in suburban regions.
- Across the entire state of Illinois, Latino income tax contributions totaled around \$6.5 billion in 2021, highlighting the essential role Latinos play in maintaining the state's financial health.
- These income tax contributions are a testament to the economic power and dedication of the Latino community, ensuring the continued development and prosperity of Illinois.



If it were not for Latinos, Illinois would lose not only roughly \$6.5 billion in income tax contributions but also substantial sales tax revenue. These contributions demonstrate how Latino consumers and businesses contribute substantially to the state's economy, providing critical funding for public services and infrastructure (See Map 20).

- Cook County leads with an estimated \$57 million in sales tax contributions from Latino residents in 2021, further emphasizing its role as the economic hub of Illinois.
- Statewide, Latinos contributed approximately \$98 million in sales taxes in 2021, demonstrating their integral role in driving consumer spending and economic activity across Illinois.
- Sales tax contributions from Latinos underscore the importance of Latino consumers in supporting local businesses and industries, from retail to services.
- The \$98 million in sales tax contributions played a crucial role in funding Illinois' infrastructure, education, healthcare, and other public services.
- Through their spending, Latinos not only support their local economies but also strengthen the financial foundation of the entire state.

### Map 19: Hispanic or Latino Estimated Income Tax Contributions (in thousands of dollars) in Illinois Counties, 2021

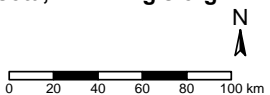


**Hispanic or Latinos Population  
Estimated Income Tax Contributions  
(in thousands of dollars)**

- 116 to 32,553
- 32,554 to 104,151
- 104,152 to 400,236
- 400,237 to 656,940
- 656,941 to 3,865,080

— Illinois Border  
— County Border

**Data Source:** GCI calculations based on data from IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, [www.nhgis.org](http://www.nhgis.org) (2018–2022 American Community Survey 5–year Estimates) and U.S. Internal Revenue Service. SOI tax stats – county data, 2021.  
**Map Generated by Great Cities Institute.**







If it were not for Latinos, Illinois would lose significant property tax contributions that bolster local economies. These revenues are essential for funding public services and infrastructure across the state (See Map 21).

- Cook County leads with an estimated \$817.5 million in property tax contributions from Latino residents in 2021, further cementing the county's economic dominance.
- Statewide, Latino residents contributed an estimated \$1.3 billion in property taxes in 2021, demonstrating their crucial role in funding local governments and public services.
- Latinos in Kane, Will, and Lake Counties contributed substantial property taxes in 2021, with estimates of \$134 million, \$127.8 million, and \$130.9 million, respectively, highlighting the broader impact of Latino homeowners in suburban areas.
- Property tax contributions support essential community services such as education, healthcare, and public safety, showcasing the direct benefit of Latino residents to their local neighborhoods.
- Even in smaller counties like DuPage, Kendall, and McHenry, Latino residents make important contributions, reflecting their growing economic presence in communities throughout Illinois.

If it were not for Latinos, Illinois would face a workforce gap in key industries that drive the state's economy. Their presence in essential sectors underscores their indispensable role in maintaining the state's economic strength (See Table 27).

**Table 27: Employment by Occupation and Percent Share of Occupation Employment for Hispanic or Latinos in Illinois, 2019-2023**

Occupation Type	Total Employment	Total Hispanic or Latino Employment	% Share of Occupation Employment
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	2,660,678	288,723	10.9%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	443,661	117,633	26.5%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	916,861	275,332	30.0%
Sales and office occupations	1,235,237	134,598	10.9%
Service occupations	996,806	247,584	24.8%

Data Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

- 30.0% of Hispanic or Latino workers were employed in production, transportation, and material moving occupations in 2019-2023, accounting for a total of 275,332 workers, showcasing their pivotal role in the state's industrial economy.
- 26.5% of Latino workers worked in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations, with 117,633 workers in 2019-2023, underlining their essential contributions to Illinois' infrastructure and growth.

## The Power Latinos Have

- In service occupations, Hispanic or Latino workers represented 24.8% of the workforce, totaling 247,584 workers in 2019-2023, highlighting their vital role in healthcare, hospitality, and food services.
- 10.9% of the workforce in sales and office occupations were Latino, totaling 134,598 workers in 2019-2023, showing their influence in retail, administrative, and office-related roles.
- 10.9% of Latino workers were employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations, with 288,723 workers in 2019-2023, highlighting a significant opportunity for greater representation in higher-level professional fields, driving potential for future growth.

If it were not for Latinos, Illinois would lose more than a \$100 billion contribution to its GDP. Their diverse participation across high-value and foundational industries underscores their critical role in driving the state's economic strength (See Tables 28 & 29).

**Table 28: Latino GDP and Personal Consumption Expenditure in Illinois, 2018**

Sector	Latino Measure (\$-billions)
Gross Domestic Product	100.1
Personal Consumption Expenditures	74.6

Source: 2024 Metro Latino GDP Report, [www.LatinoGDP.us](http://www.LatinoGDP.us) (CLU-CERF, Bank of America State and Metro Latino GDP Reports).

- \$14.5 billion to the Education/Healthcare/Social Assistance sector, illustrating the community's crucial role in vital public services.
- \$11.2 billion to Professional/Business Services, reflecting the importance of Latino workers in business, legal, and consulting sectors.
- \$9.5 billion contributed to the Finance/Insurance/Real Estate sectors, highlighting Latino participation in high-value financial industries.
- \$9.3 billion to the Leisure/Hospitality sector, showcasing their significant involvement in Illinois' thriving tourism and service industries.
- \$10.3 billion to Durable Manufacturing, alongside contributions from Construction and Non-Durable Manufacturing, reinforcing Latino impact in essential and high-demand industries.
- Smaller but impactful contributions of \$5.1 billion to Retail Trade and \$6.1 billion from Wholesale Trade, emphasizing the Latino community's role in driving commerce and logistics in Illinois.

**Table 29: Latino GDP by Sector in Illinois, 2018**

Sector	Latino Measure (\$-billions)
Agricultural/Natural Resources	0.3
Mining/Quarrying	0.1
Construction	6.0
Durables Manufacturing	10.3
Non-Durables Manufacturing	8.2
Wholesale Trade	6.1
Retail Trade	5.1
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities	7.6
Information/Technology	2.2
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	9.5
Professional/Business Services	11.2
Education/Healthcare/Social Assistance	14.5
Leisure/Hospitality	9.3
Personal/Repair/Maintenance Svcs	2.6
Government Services	7.0

Source: 2024 Metro Latino GDP Report, [www.LatinoGDP.us](http://www.LatinoGDP.us) (CLU-CERF, Bank of America State and Metro Latino GDP Reports).

If it were not for Latinos, the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin metro area would lose crucial GDP contributions (See Table 30).

- \$14.1 billion from the Education, Healthcare, and Social Assistance sector, highlighting the community's crucial role in supporting vital services.
- \$11.1 billion from Professional and Business Services, demonstrating the growing presence of Latinos in business and professional sectors.
- \$9.8 billion contributed by Durables Manufacturing, reflecting Latino involvement in high-demand industrial sectors.
- \$8.9 billion from Leisure and Hospitality, underscoring the Latino community's contribution to Illinois' tourism and service industries.
- \$7.7 billion from Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities and \$5.8 billion from Retail Trade, illustrating Latino engagement in logistics and consumer-facing industries.
- \$5.7 billion from Construction, underscoring the pivotal role Latino workers play in building and maintaining infrastructure.

If it were not for Latinos, the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin metro area would lose over \$97.5 billion in GDP contributions and \$73.0 billion in Personal Consumption Expenditures. Their role as both producers and consumers underscores their crucial impact on driving economic growth across multiple sectors (See Table 31).

**Table 30: Latino GDP by Sector in Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI Metro Area, 2018**

Sector	Latino Measure (\$-billions)
Agricultural/Natural Resources	0.2
Mining/Quarrying	0.1
Construction	5.7
Durables Manufacturing	9.8
Non-Durables Manufacturing	8.4
Wholesale Trade	5.5
Retail Trade	5.8
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities	7.7
Information/Technology	2.0
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	9.3
Professional/Business Services	11.1
Education/Healthcare/Social Assistance	14.1
Leisure/Hospitality	8.9
Personal/Repair/Maintenance Svcs	2.6
Government Services	6.5
<b>Total All Industries</b>	<b>97.5</b>

Source: 2024 Metro Latino GDP Report, [www.LatinoGDP.us](http://www.LatinoGDP.us) (CLU-CERF, Bank of America State and Metro Latino GDP Reports).

**Table 31: Latino GDP and Personal Consumption Expenditure in Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI Metro Area, 2018**

Sector	Latino Measure (\$-billions)
Gross Domestic Product	97.5
Personal Consumption Expenditures	73.0

Source: 2024 Metro Latino GDP Report, [www.LatinoGDP.us](http://www.LatinoGDP.us) (CLU-CERF, Bank of America State and Metro Latino GDP Reports).

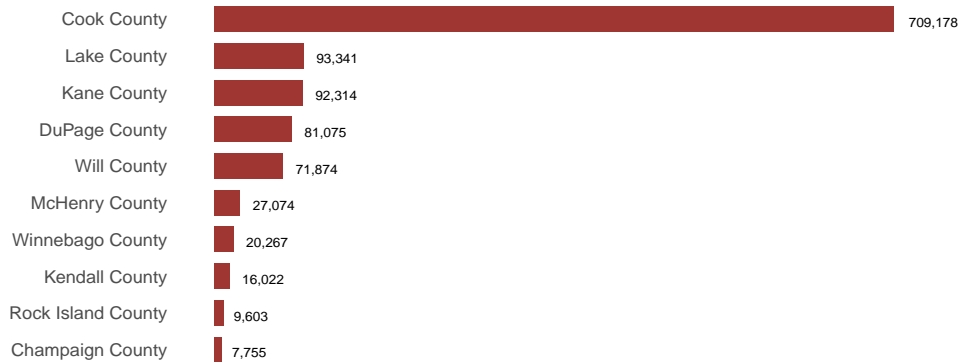
- In 2018, \$97.5 billion in GDP was contributed by Latinos, highlighting their contribution to the production of goods and services across diverse industries.
- \$73.0 billion in Latino Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE), reflecting the community's significant role in local consumer spending and demand.

## The Power Latinos Have

If it weren't for Latinos, Illinois would lose a crucial part of its workforce, with over 1 million Latino workers in 2019-2023 in counties such as Cook, Lake, Kane, DuPage, and Will, driving the state's economic vitality and supporting industries from small businesses to essential services (See Figure 3).

- With 709,178 Latinos in Cook County's workforce alone, they played a pivotal role in sustaining Illinois' economic vitality.
- Counties like Lake (93,341), Kane (92,314), DuPage (81,075), and Will (71,874) thrive thanks to the contributions of Latino workers.
- From small businesses to essential services, Latinos are indispensable to Illinois' progress and prosperity.

**Figure 3: Top Ten Counties in Illinois with the Highest Hispanic or Latino Population in Labor Force, 2019–2023**



Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimate (2019–2023).  
Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

Latinos are a vital force in shaping Illinois' cultural, economic, and political landscape. With over 1.3 million Latinos in Cook County, they represent a significant portion of the workforce and contribute billions in revenue through businesses, taxes, and consumer spending. Latino-owned businesses alone generate over \$4 billion in revenue, creating thousands of jobs across the state. Their influence spans various sectors, including manufacturing, healthcare, and professional services, and their contributions are essential for Illinois' continued economic growth and cultural diversity. Without Latinos, Illinois would lose a crucial engine of progress and prosperity.



# CONCLUSION

The 2025 Raíces Report serves as a crucial roadmap for legislators, policymakers, and community leaders, highlighting the urgent need for systemic reforms and targeted interventions. By prioritizing the three Raíces, the legislature can address longstanding disparities and promote sustainable growth, ultimately fostering a state where every individual has the chance to succeed.

The robust community engagement incorporated into this report underscores our commitment to creating lasting, positive impacts for Latinos in Illinois and in turn, for all people in the state of Illinois.

This report will be used to drive meaningful changes in equity, justice, and community development during the 2025 Illinois legislative year. Understanding that change does not happen overnight, Latino caucus will continue to work tirelessly to address the issues raised by the participants of the 2024 Raíces conference.



# ***APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY***

## **Qualitative data**

This report is based on qualitative data collected from twelve focus groups conducted during the 2024 Raíces Public Policy Conference, which had over one thousand people in attendance. The data collection occurred over two break out sessions, each comprising six rooms.

The first session focused on our three Raíces: Equity, Justice, and Community Development. Two rooms were dedicated to each of our three Raíces, one fully in English and the other with Spanish translation services. Participants in these rooms answered three specific questions related to the “Raíces.” The questions were as follows:

### **Raíces: Equity**

- Q1: How do you define equity?
- Q2: What equity issues are most important to you?
- Q3: What will it take to attain equity?

### **Raíces: Justice**

- Q1: How do you define justice?
- Q2: What justice issues are most important to you?
- Q3: What will it take to attain justice?

### **Raíces: Community Development**

- Q1: How do you define community development?
- Q2: What community development issues are most important to you?
- Q3: What will it take to attain community development?

The second session centered on the contributions and power of Latinos in Illinois. All six rooms were utilized again, with three rooms being fully in English, and three rooms offering Spanish translation services. Participants in this session answered the following seven questions:

- Q1: Finish this sentence: If it weren't for Latinos, Illinois would be...
- Q2: In what ways are Latinos essential to the state?
- Q3: What are the sectors that we (Latinos) contribute to?
- Q4: What differences are Latinos making in Illinois?
- Q5: Where are we (Latinos) showing up now where we have not been represented before?
- Q6: Where will Latinos be showing up in the next 10 years?

- Q7: What is our (Latinos) responsibility to contribute to this?

All discussions during the facilitation sessions were captured using a digital board called Menti, where participants could submit multiple responses to each question, which were then projected on a screen in real time. Additionally, participants had the option to use note cards, which were collected at the end of each session. Participants were encouraged to share out loud and participate in a dynamic conversation, as notetakers wrote down key topics being discussed between the participant and the facilitator.

At the conclusion of the sessions, all collected data was compiled and later coded to extract tags that would inform the findings included in this report.

### Quantitative data

We use the 2019–2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year data and 2018-2022 ACS public use microdata to create custom tabulations. The Census Bureau advises users to reference the full 5-year period when citing ACS data, as it represents data collected during and representing a span of years rather than a single year.

Tax contributions by Latinos were estimated using IRS data of income taxes paid and were estimated for Latinos using population statistics and income data from the ACS. Property tax estimates were calculated using housing tenure data from the ACS and property tax rates from [www.Illinoispolicy.org](http://www.Illinoispolicy.org). For details on GDP calculations, refer to the 2024 U.S. Latino GDP Report at [www.LatinoGDP.us](http://www.LatinoGDP.us).

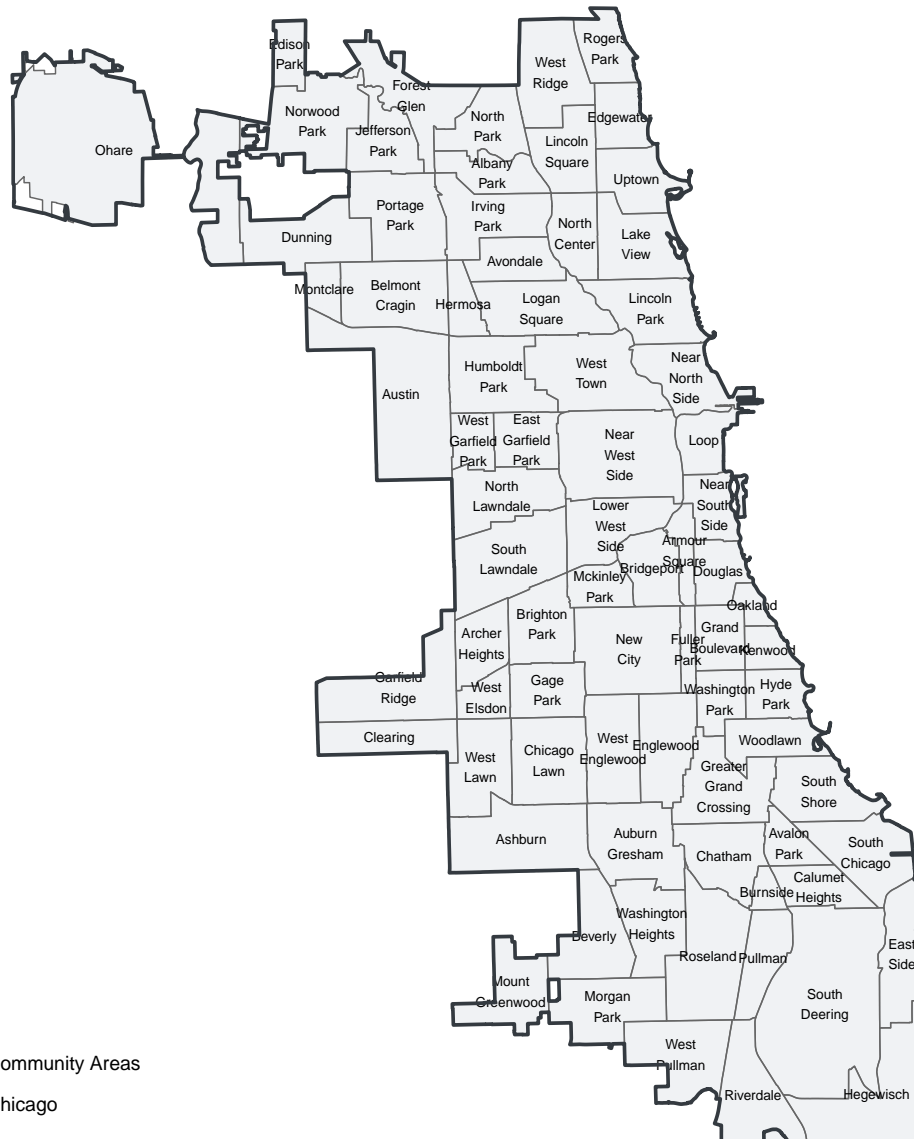


Racial and ethnic group terms used in the data compiled in this report align with the terminology of the respective data sources. For example, the ACS and Illinois Secretary of State uses “Hispanic or Latino,” while the Annual Business Survey uses “Hispanic.” However, in the writing, we often use the term “Latino” as an umbrella term that encompasses the different ethnic terms used in various data sources.

For the section on Hispanic or Latino representation in DuPage County School Boards, the report adopts the term “Hispanic or Latino,” consistent with the broader terminology. This decision required identifying individuals as Hispanic or Latino based on factors such as surname and visually examining school board members’ biographies.

# APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL DATA

Map 22: Community Areas in Chicago



Data Source: City of Chicago Data Portal.  
Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

**Table 32: Total and Hispanic or Latino Population by Community Areas with Latino Majority or Plurality, 2019-2023**

<b>Community Area</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Hispanic or Latino Population</b>	<b>% Hispanic or Latino of Total Population</b>
Gage Park	35,691	32,366	90.7%
West Lawn	32,649	28,344	86.8%
East Side	22,793	19,606	86.0%
West Elsdon	18,568	15,432	83.1%
Hermosa	22,776	18,649	81.9%
Archer Heights	14,021	11,414	81.4%
South Lawndale	68,798	55,722	81.0%
Belmont Cragin	72,918	57,695	79.1%
Brighton Park	42,062	33,094	78.7%
Lower West Side	33,279	22,778	68.4%
New City	41,869	28,513	68.1%
Clearing	24,924	16,059	64.4%
Chicago Lawn	53,460	33,000	61.7%
Garfield Ridge	36,426	21,374	58.7%
Montclare	14,084	8,093	57.5%
McKinley Park	15,443	8,595	55.7%
Hegewisch	8,971	4,757	53.0%
Humboldt Park	55,598	28,982	52.1%
Avondale	35,489	18,169	51.2%
Ashburn	42,079	19,507	46.4%
Albany Park	46,620	20,723	44.5%

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2019-2023). Tabulations by Great Cities Institute.

# ***APPENDIX C:***

## ***IMAGE CAPTIONS***

- Image on Acknowledgments Page: Students and staff from the Great Cities Institute that served as facilitators for the 2024 Raíces Conference, in order from left to right: Gathafi Gooja, Marissa G. Leal (ILLCF and GCI), David Segovia, Jack Paul Rocha, Jay Campos, Elena Oliveira, Olivia Abeyta, Mari Villa, Kabir Jain, Thea Crum, & Elham Pilegar. Photo Credit: Great Cities Institute.
- Image on Page 6: Dr. Teresa Córdova facilitating a conversation during the morning panel discussion with ILLC & ILLCF. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 7: Members of the Illinois Latino Caucus Board pictured here from left to right: Senator Aquino, State Representative B. Hernández, State Representative Ortiz, Former Senator Toro, Senator Loera-Cervantes, Senator Villanueva, State Representative Delgado, State Representative Avelar, State Representative N. Hernández, Senator Villa, & State Representative Jiménez. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- First Image on Page 8: State Representative Adam Ortiz interacting with Raíces Conference participant. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Second Image on Page 8: State Representative Norma Hernández speaking at the podium on stage during the Raíces Conference. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 9: Senator Celina Villanueva & Representative Dagmara Avelar interacting at the podium on stage during the Raíces Conference. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 10: The Morning Panel Discussion with ILLC & ILLCF. Panelist pictured from left to right – Facilitator: Dr. Teresa Córdova in conversation with State Representative Avelar, Senator Villa, Senator Villanueva, State Representative N. Hernández, & Senator Aquino. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 11: Breakout room session board for the equity facilitated discussion. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 12: Session Facilitator, Elena Oliveira, for breakout room under Equity. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 20: Panel Discussion of philanthropy's role in grassroots solutions. Panelist pictured from left to right – Facilitator: ILLCF Executive Director Oswaldo Alvarez, Cindy Camacho (JP Morgan Chase), Alberto Morales (Morales Consulting), Aimee Rodriguez (Chicago Community Trust) & Dr. Teresa Córdova (Great Cities Institute). Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 23: State Representative Lilian Jiménez participating in the breakout session discussions. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 26: Raíces Conference participant engaging in conversation during the breakout session. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 27: Breakout room session board for the justice facilitated discussion. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 28: Session facilitator, Jay Campos, for breakout room under justice. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.

- First Image on Page 29: Raíces Conference attendees seated during the morning panel discussion with ILLC & ILLCF. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Second Image on Page 29: Session facilitator, Marissa G. Leal, for breakout room under justice. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 32: Raíces conference participants actively listening during the breakout session discussions. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 34: Raíces conference participant engaging in conversation during the breakout session. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 41: Breakout room session board for the community development facilitated discussion. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- First Image on Page 42: Session facilitator, Mari Villa, & Notetaker, Kabir Jain, for breakout room under community development. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Second Image on Page 42: Session facilitator, David Segovia, for breakout room under community development. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- First Image on Page 44: Raíces Conference volunteers, wearing official pink colored Raíces conference vests. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Second Image on Page 44: State Representative Dagmara Avelar & Senator Karina Villa in conversation during the morning panel discussion with ILLC & ILLCF. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 55: Raíces conference participant engaging in conversation during the breakout session. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 56: On the main stage, pictured from left to right: ILLCF Deputy Director Elizabeth Gutiérrez, State Representative González, State Representative B. Hernández, Former Senator Toro, State Representative N. Hernández, Senator Villa, Juan González, State Representative Avelar, Senator Loera-Cervantes, Senator Villanueva, State Representative Jiménez, State Representative Ortiz, & ILLCF Executive Director Oswaldo Alvarez. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 57: Juan González, Senior Fellow of Great Cities Institute, Co-Host of Democracy Now & author of several books including Harvest of Empire, giving his insightful keynote address on “Activism, Immigration, and Voter Engagement: Reimagining the Latino Narrative.” Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 62: State Representative Edgar González pictured with Raíces Conference attendee. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 63: State Representative Barbara Hernández in conversation with Raíces Conference attendees. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- First Image on Page 71: Raíces Conference attendees in conversation during the post-conference networking event. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Second Image on Page 71: State Representative Dagmara Avelar in conversation with Raíces Conference attendees. Photo Credit: Zuno Photography.
- Image on Page 73: Senator Celina Villanueva & Juan González in conversation at the Raíces Conference.

# APPENDIX D

## ILLCF 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



40th District

**Representative  
Jaime Andrade**

Board Designee:  
**Pedro Cevallos-Candau**  
President and CEO  
PECECA Business  
Consultants



2nd District

**CO-CHAIR  
Senator  
Omar Aquino**

Board Designee:  
**Marta Cerda**  
CEO  
ASI Healthcare



85th District

**Representative  
Dagmara Avelar**

Board Designee:  
**Manuel "Manny" Rey**  
CEO  
Craft Mechanical



22nd District

**Senator  
Cristina Castro**

Board Designee:  
**Benjamin Bernal**  
Vice President of  
Operations  
KCT Credit Union



44th District

**Representative  
Fred Crespo**

Board Designee:  
**Jennifer Crespo**  
General Counsel  
Illinois Torture Inquiry &  
Relief Commission





3rd District

**Representative  
Eva-Dina Delgado**

Board Designee:  
**Lisa Duarte**  
Partner  
Croke Fairchild Duarte &  
Beres



23rd District

**Representative  
Edgar González**

Board Designee:  
**Rey Raigoza**  
Executive Director  
Urban Warriors



22nd District

**Representative  
Angelica Guerrero-  
Cuellar**

Board Designee:  
**Lizbeth Ramirez**  
President  
Zerimar Strategies



50th District

**Representative  
Barbara Hernández**

Board Designee:  
**Baldemar Lopez**  
President  
Strategem Consulting



2nd District

**Representative  
Elizabeth "Lisa"  
Hernández**

Board Designee:  
**Daniel Arce**  
President  
Tropical Optical



77th District

**CO-CHAIR  
Representative  
Norma Hernández**

Board Designee:  
**Jessica Fuentes**  
President  
Fuentes Consulting



4th District

**Representative  
Lilian Jiménez**

Board Designee:  
**Dr. Marisol Morales**  
Executive Director  
Carnegie Elective  
Classifications



1st District

**Senator  
Javier Loera-Cervantes**

Board Designee:  
**Dolores Muñoz**  
Sr. Vice President  
Loop Capital



1st District

**Representative  
Aarón Ortíz**

Board Designee:  
**Yesenia Lopez**  
Assistant Secretary  
Illinois Secretary of State



20th District

**Senator  
Natalie Toro**

Board Designee:  
**Martin Cabrera**  
CEO, Cabrera Capital



25th District

**Senator  
Karina Villa**

Board Designee:  
**David Andalco**  
CEO  
Wynndalco Enterprise



12th District

**Senator  
Celina Villanueva**

Board Designee:  
**Alex Paterakos-Figueroa**  
Gov. Relations Director  
SEIU

# APPENDIX E

## ILLCF 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



40th District

**Representative  
Jaime Andrade**

Board Designee:  
**Pedro Cevallos-Candau**  
President and CEO  
PECECA Business  
Consultants



2nd District

**Senator  
Omar Aquino**

Board Designee:  
**Martin Montes**  
Partner  
Barnes & Thornburg LLP



85th District

**Representative  
Dagmara Avelar**

Board Designee:  
**Robert Aguilar**  
President  
Cabrera Capital



22nd District

**Senator  
Cristina Castro**

Board Designee:  
**Benjamin Bernal**  
Vice President of  
Operations  
KCT Credit Union



44th District

**Representative  
Fred Crespo**

Board Designee:  
**Jennifer Crespo**  
General Counsel  
Illinois Torture Inquiry &  
Relief Commission



3rd District

**Representative  
Eva-Dina Delgado**

Board Designee:  
**Maria V. Martinez**  
Director & Counsel  
Croke Fairchild Duarte &  
Beres



23rd District

**Representative  
Edgar González**

Board Designee:  
**Rey Raigoza**  
Executive Director  
Urban Warriors



22nd District

**Representative  
Angelica  
Guerrero-Cuellar**

Board Designee:  
**Ennedy Rivera**  
Commissioner  
Illinois Commission on  
Equity & Inclusion



20th District

**Senator  
Graciela Guzman**

Board Designee:  
**Eddy Borrayo**  
CEO  
Rincon Family Services



50th District

**Representative  
Barbara Hernández**

Board Designee:  
**Baldemar Lopez**  
President  
Strategem Consulting



2nd District

**Representative  
Elizabeth "Lisa"  
Hernández**

Board Designee:  
**Daniel Arce**  
President  
Tropical Optical



77th District

**Representative  
Norma Hernández**

Board Designee:  
**Jessica Fuentes**  
President  
Fuentes Consulting



4th District

**Representative  
Lilian Jiménez**

Board Designee:  
**Dr. Marisol Morales**  
Executive Director  
Carnegie Elective  
Classifications



1st District

**Senator  
Javier Loera-Cervantes**

Board Designee:  
**Victor Reyes**  
President  
The Roosevelt Group



1st District

**CO-CHAIR  
Representative  
Aarón Ortiz**

Board Designee:  
**Yesenia Lopez**  
Assistant Secretary  
Illinois Secretary of State



25th District

**Senator  
Karina Villa**

Board Designee:  
**David Andalcio**  
CEO  
Wynndalco Enterprise



12th District

**CO-CHAIR  
Senator  
Celina Villanueva**

Board Designee:  
**Alex Paterakos-Figueroa**  
Gov. Relations Director  
SEIU





# RAÍCES 2025

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**Illinois  
Legislative Latino  
Caucus Foundation  
(ILLCF)**



**Great Cities  
Institute**

**University of Illinois Chicago**