

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH INFO FROM WE-SIDE

In 2021, Hispanic Heritage month begins on September 15 and ends October 15, as it has every year since 1989. It's divided across two months because it is believed that September 15 is a key date in the history of several Latin American countries: It's when Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua declared their independence from Spain in 1821. Much like Black History Month in February and Asian American and Pacific Islander Month in May, Hispanic Heritage Month is a time for Americans who identify as Hispanic to celebrate the traditions and history unique to their cultural background.

Some important highlights and facts:

- The U.S. Hispanic population reached 60.6 million in 2019, according to the Pew Research Center. Hispanic and Latino Americans are the nation's second-fastest growing racial or ethnic group after Asian Americans.
- When working with families and staff, please know the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are often used interchangeably, but many believe they mean two different things. Hispanic refers to people who speak Spanish or are descended from Spanish-speaking populations, while Latino refers to people who are from or descended from people from Latin America. While the term Hispanic may have utility, the term has also been criticized for highlighting Spain, which colonized most of Latin America. Some have offered and many recognize "Latino" as an alternative. This term refers to those from Latin America, meaning it includes Brazil but not Spain. Though "Latino" de-emphasizes the connection to those who colonized Latin America (the Spanish), some still reject the term as it attempts to group several distinct cultures into one. In some cases, those who don't want to identify as Hispanic or Latino choose to name their nationality. It is important to honor and support any way in which a person chooses to identify.
- Chicano is another term some individuals utilize to describe their heritage. Those who prefer to be termed Chicanos and Mexicanos often do not want to be labeled as Hispanic/European or Latino. Chicanos are most often people of Mexican descent born in the United States. Some Central Americans identify with or (see themselves) as Chicano. Mexicanos are Mexicans and born in Mexico. Mexicano comes from the word *Mexica* (*Meh-chi-ca*), which is what the original people of Mexico called themselves. Chicano comes from the word *Mechicano*. Chicanos and

Mexicanos have a heritage that includes the long and proud history of the Olmec, Teotihuacano, Maya, Zapotec, Toltec, Aztec and the dozens of other native cultures and civilizations of Mexico, Central America and the Southwestern United States.

- Where does *Latinx* come from? Spanish is a gendered language. If there is a group made up of women, they can be described as “ellas.” If there is a group with men and women, it defaults to the masculine (ellos instead of ellas). The word “Latino” follows this convention, labeling nouns as either masculine or feminine. For those who fall outside the gender binary, this word fails to represent them, which is where the gender neutral “Latinx” comes into play.
- Hispanic Heritage month is celebrated nationwide through festivals, parades, art shows, conferences, community gatherings, and much more.
- Anyone can celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month and show their appreciation for Hispanic and Latino Americans by reading books by Hispanic and Latino authors, watching movies about Hispanic and Latino culture, supporting local Hispanic and Latino organizations, and going to local events that celebrate the contributions of Hispanic, Latino, and Chicano people have made to U.S. society.

RESOURCES FOR CLASSROOMS OF ALL AGES

<https://www.hispanicheritagemonth.gov/for-teachers/>

https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=2176771242595731&_rdr