



Hispanic & Latinx

Heritage Month

Programming Guide

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the diversity movement



[National Hispanic American Heritage Month](#), also known as Hispanic Heritage Month, Latino Heritage Month, or Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month, is celebrated each year from September 15th to October 15th. During this month, we honor the “histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.” In 2021, [the United States](#) has the second largest population of Hispanic people in the world, after only Mexico.

Hispanic American communities have served the country from the Revolutionary War to the present-day armed forces and have helped shape the American economy and culture for centuries. In fact, history shows that George Washington’s call for financial help against the British at the Battle of Yorktown was answered by overwhelming support from Cuban Americans in particular, including the famous [Ladies of Havana](#): wealthy Cuban American women who gave their diamonds to support American independence.

The cultural influence of Hispanic and Latinx Americans is apparent in politics, activism, music, sports, dance, cuisine, art, and language. [Dolores Huerta](#), [J. Balvin](#), salsa dancing, and dulce de leche are a few great examples. Hispanic and Latinx communities can be found throughout every state, county, and region of the United States. Now representing [13% of voters](#) and with [41 Latino leaders](#) serving in Congress, Hispanic voices are a powerful and growing demographic.

According to [the 2020 U.S. Census](#), “the Hispanic population boomed over the decade, growing by almost a quarter to 62.1 million residents in 2020 and accounting for almost half of the overall U.S. population growth.” As Thomas Saenz, president of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund explains, this census “demonstrates that the Latino community is a huge and increasing part of our nation’s future.”

Why September 15th to October 15th?

September 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th mark a number of ceremonious days for many Central Americans. On September 15, 1821, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua won independence from Spain. In Mexico, September 16, 1810 marks the start of the Mexican War of Independence and the country's Independence Day, and two days later on September 18, 1810, Chile's people proclaimed independence from Spain — denoting Independence Day and starting the Chilean War. While Hispanic Heritage Month may officially end on October 15th, celebrating and elevating underrepresented voices should be a continued priority within any organization.

How did Hispanic Heritage Month originate?

In June 1968, George E. Brown, a California Congressman, introduced [House Joint Resolution 1299](#) to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Week starting September 15th. In 1988, under President Ronald Reagan, Senator Paul Simon introduced [S. 2200](#) to update the celebration to the month-long celebration we know today. His bill emphasized the need that “the Nation be educated and made aware of the richness and the significance of the contributions of Hispanics to our society.” He further noted that Hispanic American people are “not just a significant part of our Nation’s origin; they are essential to America’s future.”

Why should employers celebrate Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month?

Acknowledging and celebrating diverse identities is critical to building an inclusive and employee-focused culture where all people feel safe to bring their full, authentic selves to work and empowered to contribute their best effort and ideas. Research proves, time and again, that when people feel respected, welcome, and included at work -- no matter their personal background or identity -- they are more innovative, more productive, and better problem solvers.

The guide below will provide you with tips, actions, and ideas for creating your own authentic celebration of Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month.

Should I say Hispanic, Latino, or Latinx?

This is an exceptionally common question, and it's an important one for people who want to use the most respectful terms to refer to someone's identity. Here are the details you need to know. The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are not tied to race. In general, "Hispanic" means "relating to Spain or Spanish-speaking countries" while "Latino" means "from Latin America." In Brazil, where the national language is Portuguese, many people identify as Latino but not Hispanic. As another example, many people from Spain would be Hispanic but not Latino.

The Spanish language uses gendered nouns, "Latino" for men and "Latina" for women. "Latinx" (pronounced Latin-Ex) is a genderless term that acknowledges the full spectrum of sexes and genders, including non-binary people of Latin American heritage.

Although this month is officially recognized as National Hispanic American Heritage Month, we use the term Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month throughout this guide. Using the appropriate language is important, but don't let yourself get bogged down in the details. It's the work of inclusion that is most important. If you don't know how to refer to someone, the best thing to do is ask! Say "I am working on my inclusive language. May I ask what terms you use for your ethnicity?"



TALK

Start with your internal team

Start by acknowledging Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month in your internal newsletter and on social media. You might also consider asking employees of Hispanic and Latinx heritage to share stories, photos, or resources for additional learning. This sort of collaboration works well if you have many Hispanic or Latinx employees. However, it's important to make sure all sharing is voluntary and that you are not putting undue pressure on only one or a few employees by singling them out to highlight their heritage.

Feature [Hispanic and Latinx history makers](#) in monthly or weekly meetings, morning stand-ups, Slack channels, and other internal communication platforms. As you do your research, look for history makers who have impacted -- or are currently moving the needle -- in your particular industry. For instance, Hispanic and Latinx pioneers in [healthcare](#), [technology](#), or [finance](#). Share the learning resources from this guide so people can learn more about Hispanic and Latinx experiences.

Note: if you are not already actively promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at your organization, your Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month programs may appear inauthentic or performative. Make sure that your Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month programming is supplementary to your existing inclusion programming. If you don't already have DEI embedded into your organizational values, consider outlining some foundational initiatives before diving into specific and in-depth programming.

Then, share more with your clients, consumers, members, and the public

Share your recognition of Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month on social media and in your public-facing newsletter. Highlight your supplier diversity, partnerships with diverse organizations, and employees who are making a difference in multicultural communities.

As you do, be sure to avoid negative messaging or dwelling on systemic issues. Yes, those issues are important to address, but Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month is a celebration and a time for empowerment. Your goal should be to shine a light on the historical contributions of Hispanic and Latinx changemakers and events in your community. Focus on sharing inspiring stories as you push for positive change. To keep your messages authentic and relevant, look for connections that make sense for your brand. Don't force a narrative for the sake of checking a box.



..... LISTEN

Seek out Hispanic and Latinx perspectives

One of the best ways to foster inclusion is by seeking out and listening to the stories and opinions of the people you are trying to include. Reach out to Hispanic and Latinx leaders in your organization or community to gain their input on how they would like to see your organization recognize and celebrate this month.

As you move through this process, keep in mind that no community is a monolith, no one person should be asked to represent the thoughts and experiences of their entire demographic, and all people have multiple, intersecting identities. People of different ages, generations, thinking styles, genders, sexual orientations, races, ethnicities, religions, and more all exist within the Hispanic and Latinx community and may experience their Hispanic or Latinx heritage differently than other people. Make sure to seek out a variety of perspectives.

Establish groups to cultivate inclusion

Employee resource groups (ERGs) and business resource groups (BRGs) are another way to cultivate inclusion and show that your organization is dedicated to fostering an inclusive work environment. ERGs and BRGs offer a way to engage and to connect with people who have similar life experiences. They also nurture engagement and improve employee retention by helping create a sense of belonging. In fact, studies have shown an especially strong correlation between engagement and belonging for underrepresented groups. Consider hiring an objective, external consultant to help you establish these groups. Or look to other organization's ERGs, such as AT&T's HACEMOS or Johnson & Johnson's HOLA for inspiration.

..... TEACH

Consider an outside speaker or a workshop

Increase learning and engagement in your Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month programming by hiring an external speaker or organizing a panel of experts to talk about issues that are relevant to Hispanic and Latinx communities. For instance, you may consider workshops around race-related bias, civil rights, education or healthcare equity, and other critical topics.

Or, consider a workshop! Workshops improve information retention by creating a space for active learning, participation, and critical thinking. They can be especially helpful for increasing connectivity between team members. [A privilege walk](#) or empathy exercise is a great way to get started.

Play and learn

Look for local events in your community that celebrate Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, you may also consider experiential apps like [TDM Connect](#) that allow people to learn and engage virtually instead of in-person. The [Museum of Latin American Art](#) and the [Smithsonian American Art Museum](#) also offer numerous virtual options for group tours and exhibition walkthroughs.

Below, you'll find a short list of helpful resources that can broaden your perspective on Hispanic and Latinx stories. Share these resources with your team and consider ways to increase participation by organizing group events. For instance, you might partner with [Latinx-owned bookstores](#) to kick off a monthly book club, or host an organization-wide movie night (either in-person or virtually via [Teleparty](#)).

One of our top recommendations? Play a game of [loteria](#) or [dominoes](#)! Both games are important parts of Latin American culture. Dominoes, for instance, is the national game of Cuba, and loteria is a Mexican game similar to Bingo. It is available in [card packs](#) or as a [mobile app](#).

However you choose to learn and share, make it fun. Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month should be a celebration, and we always learn more when we're having fun.

Books

[Finding Latinx: In Search of the Voices Redefining Latino Identity](#)
by Paolo Ramos

[Gordo](#) by Jaime Cortez

[The House of the Spirits](#)
by Isabel Allende

[I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter](#)
by Erika L. Sanchez

[Queen of America](#)
by Luis Alberto Urrea

[Undocumented](#)
by Dan-el Padilla Peralta

Podcasts

[AHAA: The Voice of Hispanic Marketing](#)
from the Culture Marketing Council

[Alt.Latino](#) from National Public Radio

[Experience Hispanic Heritage](#)
with Ramona Martinez

[Highly Relevant with Jack Rico](#)
from Revolver Podcasts

[How to Talk to \[Mamá & Papá\] about Anything](#) by LWC Studios

[La Brega](#) from WNYC

[LatinoUSA](#) from Futuro Media Group

Documentaries, Movies & TV shows

[Cesar's Last Fast](#), documentary film

[Even the Rain](#), documentary film

[The Graduates](#),
education documentary

[I'm Leaving Now](#), documentary film

[Latino Americans](#), PBS series

[McFarland USA](#), Disney sports movie

[Roma](#), Oscar-winning art film

[Selena](#), biographic music drama

[Viva](#), Spanish-language drama





GIVE

Share time

Volunteering with local nonprofits and community service organizations is an excellent way to help create positive and lasting change. Plus, it's a chance to bond with your team members and inspire engagement in the workplace. Lending your support as an organization shows your commitment to inclusion and corporate social responsibility far beyond this month.

To get started, you may consider offering paid volunteer hours for employees to help in the community. Or, consider an organization-wide day of service. Use [Charity Navigator](#) or [VolunteerMatch](#) to find local organizations that support Hispanic and Latinx communities or causes, or poll your team to learn where they would like to contribute their time.

Donate money

Once you have found a few organizations that align with your values, interests, and objectives, consider a financial gift as well. Sometimes, money is the most impactful thing you can give to a charity, especially when it comes to education or legal funds. Again, Charity Navigator or VolunteerMatch can give you valuable options, or look to your local community to make a real difference in your own backyard.

ADVANCE

Support Hispanic and Latinx professionals

Research key [organizations that are making a difference in Hispanic and Latinx communities](#) and reach out to see how you can partner with them to further your DEI efforts and help them make a difference. Some organizations to note are the [Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement](#), the [Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility](#), the [Latino Corporate Directors Association](#), and the [Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities](#).

Promote Hispanic and Latinx-Owned Businesses

Be intentional about supporting businesses that are owned by Hispanic and Latinx people. By diverting your purchasing power to these businesses, you help strengthen Hispanic and Latinx communities, families, and economies, thereby shrinking the racial wealth gap and fostering job creation for diverse people. Not sure where to start? Use [Yelp's "Latinx-owned" tag](#) to find local businesses owned by people of Hispanic and Latinx heritage.





Commit to Supplier Diversity

Supplier diversity is one way to provide ongoing support to underrepresented communities, not just this month but all year long. A full commitment to supplier diversity also benefits your organization and its bottom line by promoting innovation through the introduction of new products, services, and solutions while driving competition (on price and service levels) between existing and potential vendors. In short, partnerships with diverse suppliers give your organization a competitive advantage to face changing customer demographics.

As you craft your programming and communications for Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month, focus on sustainable impact and real relationship building, both inside and outside of your organization. Use this month to learn about the varied experiences of Hispanic and Latinx communities and to make connections that will benefit Hispanic and Latinx people long after these 31 days.

Organizations that take time to celebrate diverse identities, experiences, and backgrounds in thoughtful and intentional ways send a clear message to their employees and customers that they care about inclusion and are invested in cultivating an employee-centered culture.

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TALK



LISTEN

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TEACH



GIVE

NOTES

ADVANCE

ADDITIONAL IDEAS
