

## Summary

Although Hispanics made up just 5.5 percent of the nonmetropolitan U.S. population in 2000, they accounted for over 25 percent of nonmetro population growth during the 1990s. As Hispanics increasingly populate communities in nonmetro counties outside of the Southwest, they have become a visible presence in many different regions of the Nation.

This report uses 1990 and 2000 Census data and a typology of county types—based upon their Hispanic population growth and composition—to examine recent Hispanic settlement patterns, compare characteristics of Hispanics with non-Hispanic Whites, and analyze residential separation between those two groups at the county, place, and neighborhood levels.

**Nonmetro Hispanic growth in the 1990s was much greater than in previous decades and spread throughout the Southeast, Midwest, and Northwest.** Hispanics remain among the most urbanized ethnic/racial groups in America, with over 90 percent living in metro areas in the year 2000. Moreover, they continue to be concentrated in the Southwest. But, by 2000, for the first time, half of all nonmetro Hispanics lived outside the Southwest, increasingly in areas of the Midwest and Southeast. While almost all 2,289 nonmetro counties experienced Hispanic population growth, 30 percent of this growth occurred in 149 “high-growth Hispanic” counties.

**Hispanic newcomers have forged communities in nonmetro areas unaccustomed to seeing large numbers of foreign-born, particularly in the Southeast and Midwest.** Hispanics in these counties include disproportionate numbers of undocumented young men from rural communities in economically depressed regions of Mexico. Such recent migrants typically have relatively less formal education and often speak little English. Despite these disadvantages, employment rates among Hispanics in nonmetro, high-growth Hispanic counties exceed those of all other nonmetro Hispanics and non-Hispanic Whites.

**Across all nonmetro counties nationally, residential separation between Hispanics and non-Hispanic Whites decreased.** Hispanic communities grew in many nontraditional destinations throughout the country, particularly in counties in the Southeast and Midwest previously unaccustomed to large numbers of foreign-born residents.

**Among places (small cities, towns, etc.) within nonmetro counties, residential separation between Hispanics and non-Hispanic Whites increased slightly.** On average, Hispanic population growth was concentrated within incorporated places, while non-Hispanic White population growth was higher outside of them. While high-growth Hispanic counties experienced an especially large growth in residential separation between Hispanics and non-Hispanic Whites, there was little or no increase in other county types.

**At the neighborhood level within nonmetro places, residential separation between Hispanics and non-Hispanic Whites increased noticeably.** Residential separation increased the most in high-growth Hispanic counties, despite the rapid growth of both the Hispanic population and non-Hispanic White population. While neighborhood separation was greater in metro areas than nonmetro areas in 2000, nonmetro levels increased at a higher rate during the 1990s.