



Five Takeaways

from

The Hispanic Collaborative/UWMCED Index of Hispanic Well-Being in the Nation's Largest Metropolitan Areas

2024 Edition

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The Hispanic Collaborative/UWMCED *Index of Hispanic Well-Being* synthesizes the latest available data on employment, income, poverty, homeownership, educational attainment, business leadership, and health outcomes into a composite index ranking each of the 50 metro areas on the well-being of their Hispanic communities. The purpose is to benchmark how well Hispanics are faring in Milwaukee compared to each of the nation's largest 50 metropolitan areas, as a crucial gauge of Milwaukee's progress towards the Collaborative's goal of redefining Milwaukee as a top-ten city for Hispanics. The report contains a rich trove of data documenting the state of Hispanic Milwaukee and Hispanic communities across the country. Here are five big takeaways:

1. **The Leaders and Laggards:** The five top performing metropolitan areas for Hispanic well-being on the 2024 edition of the index were: Seattle (1), Virginia Beach (2), Portland (3), Austin (4), and Minneapolis (5). The five worst were: Memphis (46), Providence (47), Hartford (48), Cleveland (49), and Philadelphia (50). The most notable improvements on the *Index* from the 2020 edition were Portland, which jumped from 15th to 3rd, Minneapolis, which surged from 16th to 5th, and Indianapolis, which climbed from 42nd to 25th.
2. **Hispanic Milwaukee has remained relatively stable over the three versions of the *Index*, remaining in a tight range near the bottom ten of the nation's 50 largest metros.** Milwaukee's ranking among the metros was best on employment indicators (30th), and on business ownership and executive positions (36th of 47 metros). But on all other categories of indicators, Milwaukee ranks in the bottom ten among the 50 metros: health outcomes (40th); income and poverty (44th); educational attainment (40th); and Hispanic-White (non-Hispanic) disparities (47th).
3. **Although Hispanic Milwaukee's rank did not improve from the previous edition of the *Index*, conditions on the ground did.** The focus on rankings should not obscure the actual trends on various indicators, and there is much encouraging data in this report. Income, educational attainment, employment, and health insurance coverage are up; poverty and a wide range of Hispanic-White NH disparities are down (even though Milwaukee still ranks among the worst metros for such disparities); and several health outcomes seem improved or, at the very least, stable (although a new indicator in the index, mortality from "deaths of despair," showed a disturbingly high level, most likely connected to pandemic-related dislocations). Hispanic Milwaukee has a long way to go, but for the first time in many years there are important positive trends, even if they are not reflected yet in the composite index of well-being.
4. **The most startling and encouraging finding of the report was the surge in Hispanic household income in Milwaukee.** After years of precipitous decline, Hispanic median household income in Milwaukee, adjusted for inflation, surged by almost 20 percent between 2017-2022, almost *four times greater* than the White NH rate. This unprecedented development rippled through several other indicators: the fraction of Hispanic households with annual income above \$100,000 jumped by over one-third, and the Hispanic-White NH income gap closed by eight full percentage points. Although real Hispanic income in Milwaukee remains below where it was 25 years ago, this is an historic improvement.
5. **Hispanics remain underrepresented at the highest echelons of Milwaukee private sector leadership,** and that situation has worsened over the past 15 years. In 2021, Hispanics were represented in executive or senior management positions at only a little more than one-quarter their weight in Milwaukee's working-age population. Milwaukee is hardly unique in this Hispanic underrepresentation – indeed, it ranks 33rd of the 50 largest metros on this metric. But it is a troubling sign that amidst Hispanic progress on multiple indicators over past several decades in Milwaukee, top tiers of the region's economic decision-making remain largely out of reach. Hispanic Milwaukee also lags in measures of business ownership.

Chart 1: 2024 Composite Index of Hispanic Well-Being in the Nation's 50 Largest Metropolitan Areas

