

NATIONAL HISPANIC AND LATINX HERITAGE MONTH 2022

History

In 1968, former president Lynden B. Johnson proclaimed National Hispanic Heritage Week. According to the Human Rights Campaign, “the one-week event has grown into what is known by many as Hispanic Heritage Month – a commemoration from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 that is linked to the independence anniversaries of several Latin American nations and uplifts the cultural legacy of a group deeply-rooted in rich traditions.”

The U.S. Department of Education (White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics) celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month as a time to recognize and celebrate the many contributions, diverse cultures, and extensive histories of the American Latino community.”

Terminology

Is it Hispanic, Chicano/Chicana, Latino/Latina, Latinx, or Latine? According to Generating Engagement and New Initiatives for All Latinos (GENIAL) and Best Colleges:

- Hispanic is someone who is a native of, or descends from, a Spanish-speaking country.
- Chicano/a is someone who is a native of, or descends from, Mexico and who lives in the United States.
- Latino/Latina/Latinx is someone who is a native of, or descends from, a Latin American country. Latinx is a gender-neutral term to refer to a Latino/Latina person. While the term continues to hold space for younger generations, some have rejected the imposition of a colonizing letter – i.e., the "x."
- Latine is someone who is a native of, or descends from, a Latin American country. Latine is a gender-neutral term to refer to a Latino/Latina/Latinx person and represents an effort by some Spanish-speakers to adopt the letter "e" from the Spanish language as a representation of gender neutrality.

Like other ethnic groups, Hispanic communities advocate for pan-ethnic categories to be recognized individually by the U.S. Census, as it currently only identifies “Hispanic or Latino” groups or “another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.”

Lucy's Story

In the spirit of this month-long celebration of identity and culture, one of our SBCTC colleagues is graciously sharing her story with us. Lucy Peterson is a Mexican American/Chicana originally from Veracruz, Mexico. She shares that her “Coming to America” story is similar to many people who immigrate to the United States, a challenge in many aspects. In 2008 she came to the U.S. with just a few items and her beloved dog, Bruce. The steps to obtain her Green Card were long but successful with little to no support apart from immigrant support groups online and information from the internet. Later she was able to obtain citizenship while serving in the U.S. Army Reserves within three years of being in the country. She is grateful to the Army for the gift she received.

Lucy had earned her bachelor's degree in computer systems engineering and master's degree in management of telecommunications in Mexico but decided not to work in the information technology (IT) field until she was more proficient in English after being denied a position at her then workplace. After being discharged from the Army due to an injury, she decided it was time to go back to what she knew best: IT. She then secured her first IT position at Evergreen State College in 2012 and

joined SBCTC in 2016 where she is now a Data Warehouse Database Specialist in the Data Services department bringing 20+ years of experience in the field.

Lucy and her daughter stay connected to their Mexican heritage by speaking Spanish; celebrating Mexican holidays, such as the Day of The Virgin [or Our Lady] of Guadalupe; and sharing the stories, experiences, and culture of the Mexican people. Though there is a disconnect from the Hispanic communities in U.S., she keeps her culture alive through celebration, dress, language, religion, and by staying in touch with her family and close friends.



(Lucy's daughter on Cultural Heritage Day at school, 2021)

Lucy, thank you for sharing your lived experience with us! We appreciate your hard work and determination, dedication and support for SBCTC, and service to our country.

Significance & Celebration

Lucy's story is one of many that highlights challenges and triumphs for Mexican Americans and other Hispanic/Latine individuals in the United States. The Hispanic population is the second fastest growing demographic in the United States, bringing diverse cultures, languages, approaches to science and education, politics, arts, cuisine, and more that enrich and benefit our nation.

Please join us in celebrating Hispanic and Latino/a/x/e communities!

Resources to Learn More

- Visit Library of Congress: [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) and [Latinx Heritage Exhibit and Collections](#)
- Take a [virtual tour](#) of “*iPresente!* A Latino History of the United States” exhibit collection offered by the Smithsonian Museum. The Museum has also identified the [Top 8 Reasons Why and How We Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month](#).
- Attend [Fiestas Patrias](#) at Seattle Center, September 17 and 18.
- Watch this YouTube video [“Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month”](#) (4:11 minutes; captioned) offered by the Cigna Hispanic/Latino ERG
- Read this poem: [“Translation for Mamá”](#) by Richard Blanco
- See [Google Arts & Culture: Latino Cultures in the US](#) page
- You might also refer to [Pew Research Center](#) and the use of “Latinx” as their pan-ethnic label for [Hispanic Identity](#).
- View “The National Council of Hispanic Employment Program Managers (NCHEPM), 2022 Hispanic Heritage Month Observance Theme: [“Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation.”](#) The theme encourages us to ensure that all voices are represented and welcomed to help build stronger communities and a stronger nation.”