



Hispanic women are helping drive the recent decline in the U.S. fertility rate

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The general fertility rate of U.S. women has declined substantially: In the past decade, some of the largest declines have been among Hispanic women, whose fertility rate fell by 31 percent from 2006 to 2017, compared to 5 percent for white women and 11 percent for black women. The tables below document these trends in more detail.

The decline among Hispanic women has been driven largely by the steep decline in the fertility rate of women of Mexican heritage. From 2006 to 2015, the fertility rate for women of Mexican heritage declined by 37 percent.

A variety of factors have been proposed to explain declines in fertility more generally—factors such as increases in average levels of education, relatively high costs of living, and changing attitudes surrounding childbearing. However, the especially large declines among Hispanic women may also be due to compositional changes in the population of Hispanics in the United States. Over the past decade, the U.S. Hispanic population has become more likely to be born in the United States. (In 2006, 54.9 percent of the adult Hispanic population was foreign born, compared to 47.9 percent in 2015.) Foreign-born Hispanic women generally have higher fertility than U.S.-born Hispanic women.

If Hispanic fertility continues to decline, it may push the total fertility rate in the United States—already at [1.77 children per woman](#)—further below replacement level (a total fertility rate of 2.1 children per women, on average). In this case, we may soon see a situation in which the United States looks more like Japan, Italy, or Spain—all countries with sustained below-replacement fertility and aging populations.

Table 1. Fertility rates (births per 1,000 women) for Hispanic, non-Hispanic white, and non-Hispanic black women ages 15-44, 1989-2017*

| Year | All races and origins | Hispanic | Non-Hispanic White | Non-Hispanic Black |
|------|-----------------------|----------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 2017 | 60.3 | 67.6 | 57.2 | 63.1 |
| 2016 | 62.0 | 70.6 | 58.8 | 63.3 |
| 2015 | 62.5 | 71.7 | 59.3 | 64.1 |
| 2014 | 62.9 | 72.1 | 59.5 | 64.5 |
| 2013 | 62.5 | 72.9 | 58.7 | 64.6 |
| 2012 | 63.0 | 74.4 | 58.6 | 65.0 |
| 2011 | 63.2 | 76.2 | 58.7 | 65.4 |
| 2010 | 64.1 | 80.2 | 58.7 | 66.6 |
| 2009 | 66.2 | 86.5 | 59.6 | 68.9 |
| 2008 | 68.1 | 92.7 | 60.5 | 70.8 |
| 2007 | 69.3 | 97.4 | 61.0 | 71.4 |
| 2006 | 68.6 | 98.3 | 60.3 | 70.7 |
| 2005 | 66.7 | 96.4 | 59.0 | 67.2 |

| Year | All races and origins | Hispanic | Non-Hispanic White | Non-Hispanic Black |
|------|-----------------------|----------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 2004 | 66.4 | 95.7 | 58.9 | 67.1 |
| 2003 | 66.1 | 95.2 | 58.9 | 67.1 |
| 2002 | 65.0 | 94.7 | 57.6 | 67.5 |
| 2001 | 65.1 | 95.4 | 57.7 | 69.1 |
| 2000 | 65.9 | 95.9 | 58.5 | 71.4 |
| 1999 | 64.4 | 93.0 | 57.7 | 69.9 |
| 1998 | 64.3 | 93.2 | 57.6 | 70.9 |
| 1997 | 63.6 | 94.2 | 56.8 | 70.3 |
| 1996 | 64.1 | 97.5 | 57.1 | 70.7 |
| 1995 | 64.6 | 98.8 | 57.5 | 72.8 |
| 1994 | 65.9 | 100.7 | 58.2 | 77.5 |
| 1993 | 67.0 | 103.3 | 58.9 | 81.5 |
| 1992 | 68.4 | 106.1 | 60.0 | 84.5 |
| 1991 | 69.3 | 106.9 | 60.9 | 87.0 |
| 1990 | 71.0 | 107.7 | 62.8 | 89.0 |
| 1989 | 69.2 | 104.9 | 60.5 | 84.8 |

* Starting with the 2016 estimates, the NCHS reports use the race categories consistent with the 1997 OMB standards. Previous estimates are in accordance with the 1977 OMB standards. Non-Hispanic white and black groups are categorized slightly differently before and after this point, which may result in small differences in estimates.

Sources: Martin, J., Hamilton, B., Osterman, M., Driscoll, A., & Drake, P. (2018). Births: Final data for 2017, Table 1. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr67/nvsr67_08-508.pdf; Martin, J., Hamilton, B., Osterman, M., Driscoll, A., & Mathews, T. J. (2017). Births: Final data for 2015, Table 5. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr66/nvsr66_01.pdf

Compiled and analyzed by Marta Alvira-Hammond, Senior Research Analyst.

Table 2. Percent change in fertility rates for Hispanic, non-Hispanic white, and non-Hispanic black women ages 15-44, 1990-2017 and 2006-2017*

| Time period | Hispanic | Non-Hispanic White | Non-Hispanic Black |
|-------------|----------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1990-2017 | -37.2% | -8.9% | -29.1% |
| 2006-2017 | -31.2% | -5.1% | -10.7% |

* Starting with the 2016 estimates, the NCHS reports use the race categories consistent with the 1997 OMB standards. Previous estimates are in accordance with the 1977 OMB standards. Non-Hispanic white and black groups are categorized slightly differently before and after this point, which may result in small differences in estimates.

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