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Rural California Communities: Trends in Latino Population and Community Life

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ABSTRACT

This Statistical Brief considers the impact of permanent settlement of Chicanos and Latino immigrants in rural California communities by examining trends in population and community well-being in these areas. It then profiles eight specific communities located in a highly agricultural area. Data for these analyses are taken from the 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing (STF3 files) for the state of California. Analyses are based on all California communities of population between 1,000 and 20,000 that are completely outside of an urbanized area. The study finds that greater employment in agriculture is strongly and positively related to the percent of the population that is Latino, and the percent of the community that consists of new immigrants to the United States. Communities that have more agricultural employment also tend to have younger residents, as more agricultural employment is associated with a greater percent of the population under age 18, and a smaller percentage over age 65. Greater employment in agriculture is also associated with more poverty, greater unemployment, lower per capita income, and smaller percentages of high school and college graduates among adults in the community. Where there is higher employment in agriculture, there are more Latino residents, more recent immigrants, and fewer high school graduates. The study also finds that educational attainment, per capita income, poverty, and rent as a percentage of household income are the best indicators of economic well-being in rural communities.