

# FHWA NHTS BRIEF

2016



## Hispanics and Transportation

2009 National Household Travel Survey

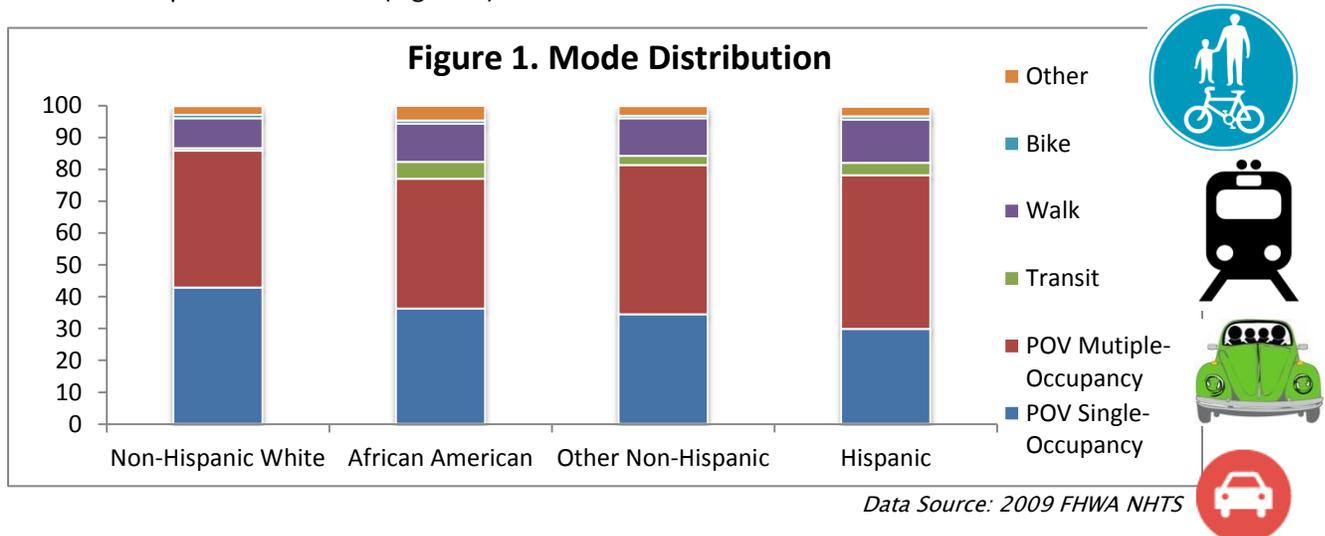
According to the 2010 Census, about 16 percent of the U.S. population were of Hispanic or Latino origin, up from 13 percent in 2000, which accounted for more than half of the growth of the total U.S. population from 2000 to 2010.

As the Hispanic population grows, it is important to better understand their mobility needs. The 2009 NHTS examines the issue from several angles as illustrated in Table 1. Based on average daily trips, Hispanics have both the highest person trips and vehicle trips per household than any other group. From a person miles traveled per household standpoint, Hispanics travel more than African Americans but less than non-Hispanic whites and other non-Hispanics. This same pattern holds for vehicle miles traveled. Also, Hispanics average the shortest person trip length and vehicle trip length compared to non-Hispanics. As a whole, Hispanics and African-Americans have the lowest levels of mobility and also the highest levels of poverty. DOT's Ladders of Opportunity asks that transportation projects include ways to improve connectivity and mobility to marginalized groups like these.

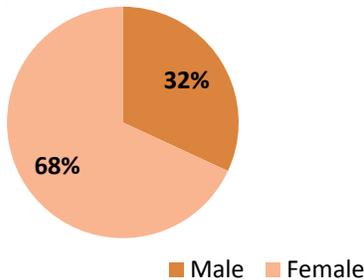
Table 1. Measures of Mobility	Non-Hispanic White	African American	Other Non-Hispanic	Hispanic
Daily Person Trips/Household	9.13	9.46	10.26	11.72
Daily Vehicle Trips/Household	5.74	5.09	5.65	5.92
Person Miles Traveled/Household	92.34	81.37	94.16	87.63
Vehicle Miles Traveled/Household	55.81	47.65	55.23	52.31
Average Person Trip Length (miles)	10.22	8.97	9.43	8.06
Average Vehicle Trip Length (miles)	9.79	9.59	9.89	9.23

Data Source: 2009 FHWA NHTS

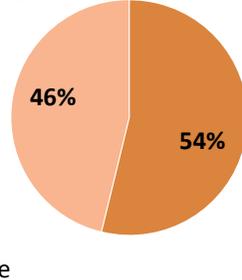
Figure 1 shows that Hispanics use multi-occupant vehicle travel (carpooling) more than any other group, especially Hispanic women. Likewise their rate of walking is also higher than other groups. In terms of transit use, Hispanics lower levels than African Americans but higher than others. NHTS data has shown a low drive alone trip rate for Hispanic females, which is likely due to the lower rate of female drivers in Hispanic households (Figure 2).



**Figure 2a.  
Hispanic Nondrivers**



**Figure 2b.  
Hispanic Drivers**

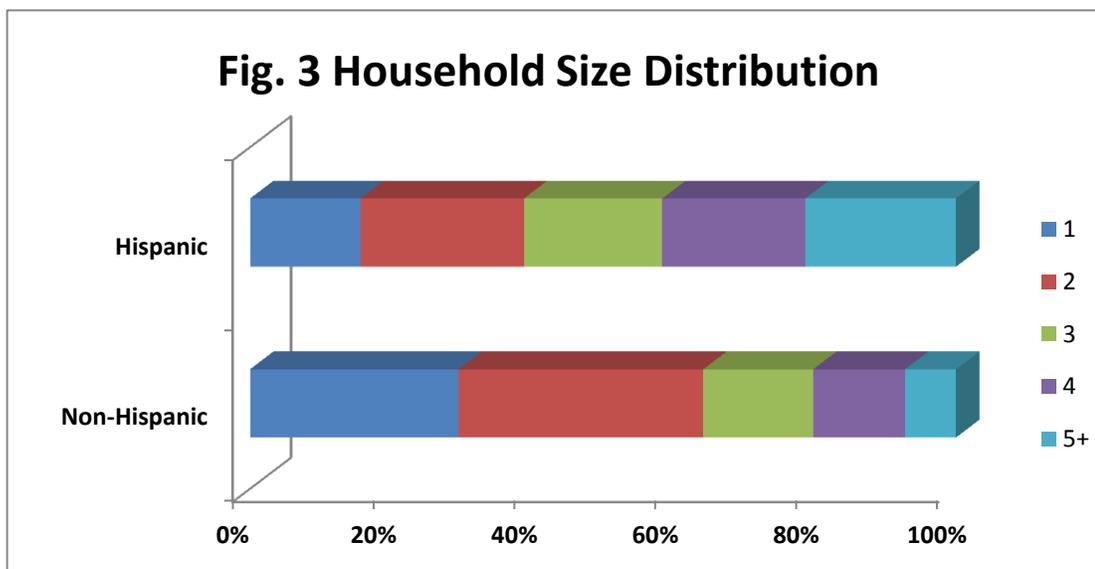


Data Source: 2009 FHWA NHTS

More than four-in-ten (44%) Hispanics live in the 10 largest metropolitan areas, by Hispanic population which include Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA; New York-Northeastern NJ; Houston-Brazoria, TX; Riverside-San Bernardino, CA; Chicago, IL; Dallas-Forth Worth, TX; Miami-Hialeah, FL; Phoenix, AZ; San Antonio, TX; and San Francisco-Oakland-Vallejo, CA. California and Texas contain the largest Hispanic populations. The larger metropolitan areas tend to have *more* transit and pedestrian options, which leads to higher rates of walking and transit use by Hispanics as shown in Figure 1.

Car sharing rates are higher in the Hispanic community than with other groups. This is likely related to larger household sizes. On average, Figure 3 shows that households with 4 or more members are twice as common in Hispanic households as Non-Hispanics. Hispanics and 'other race' families are most likely to have additional related adults living together while white families have the lowest percentage of related adults living under one roof. Despite the larger average household size, Hispanic households still have a lower average number of vehicle trip miles than Non-Hispanic households.

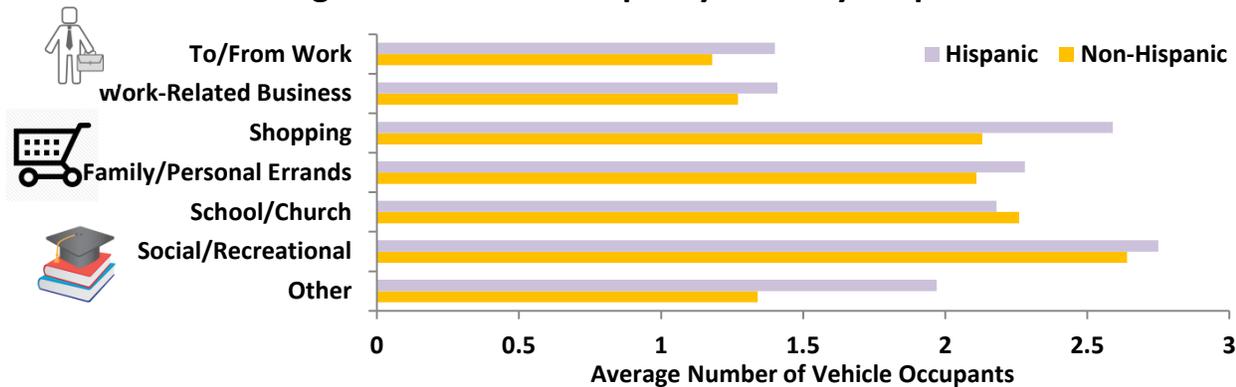
**Fig. 3 Household Size Distribution**



Data Source: 2009 FHWA NHTS

Figure 4 further emphasizes a previously mentioned characteristic of Hispanic travel: a higher car sharing rate for most trip purposes – including trips to work, for shopping, and for other family or personal business. NHTS data shows that Hispanics on average have higher vehicle occupancies than non-Hispanics across most trip purposes.

**Figure 4. Vehicle Occupancy Rates by Purpose**



*Data Source: 2009 FHWA NHTS*

Elderly (ages 65+) Hispanics are five times more likely to use public transit than their Non-Hispanic counterparts. This is likely due to the fact that elderly Hispanics are twice as likely to live in urban areas with rail than their non-Hispanic counterparts. 44% of Hispanic households with elderly members also live at/below the poverty line. The largest percentage of elderly non-Hispanics live in non-urbanized areas while the largest percentage of elderly Hispanics reside in urban areas with subway or rail. Over 50% of U.S. immigrants also live in urban areas with subway or rail, and 31.1% of immigrant households are at or below poverty level.

According to 2014 Census data almost 50% of immigrants are Hispanic. Of this group, 2009 NHTS data shows that 53% of households are at or below the poverty level. To better provide Ladders of Opportunity to these underserved groups, it is imperative that we follow their travel trends in the 2016 NHTS and use that information to affect change.



For more information, please visit our Website: <http://nhts.ornl.gov>

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## References

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i U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, 2009 National Household Travel Survey. URL: <http://nhts.ornl.gov>.

ii Urban Institute. Simms, M.; Fortuny, K. & Henderson, E. The Low-Income Working Families project- Racial and Ethnic Disparities Among Low-Income Families. August 2009 [http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411936\\_racialandethnic.pdf](http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411936_racialandethnic.pdf)

iii Motel, S. & Patten, E. "The 10 Largest Hispanic Origin Groups: Characteristics, Rankings, Top Counties" PewResearch Hispanic Trends Project. July 2012.

### *About the National Household Travel Survey*

Conducted periodically by the USDOT since 1969, the survey collects travel data from a sample of U.S. households. The information has been used to understand trends in the nation's trip making and miles of travel by mode, purpose, and time-of-day for use in policy, planning and safety. Data is collected for household members and for each day of the year, yielding a rich demographic profile linked to daily travel and vehicle characteristics.

NHTS Online Analysis tools also allow for further analysis of Hispanic travel behavior by age, gender, purpose, life cycle, trip distance, peak travel, income and many other vehicle and household characteristics.