



Spanish in the USA ~ Spanish in the World

From Capitol Hill to the campaign trail and at all levels of public service and business, leaders around the nation are engaging Spanish-speaking constituents, voters, and consumers in their dominant or preferred language...*ESPAÑOL*.

In the United States of America, according to 2018 US Census data:

- There are nearly 60 million Hispanics/Latinos, both Spanish-speaking and non-Spanish-speaking.
- About 41 million, or 13.5% of the population over age five, speak Spanish at home.
- Twelve million others speak Spanish as a heritage or second language.

The US has the second largest number of Spanish speakers globally after Mexico. The number of native Spanish speakers has doubled since 1990 and projections suggest that by 2060 the US will have the highest number of Spanish speakers in the world (2019 Instituto Cervantes).

Spanish is the official language of 19 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, Uruguay, Venezuela; the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and is the national and co-official language of Equatorial Guinea.

In 2019 Instituto Cervantes published a report on Spanish in the world that notes:

- Five hundred eighty million people speak Spanish (7.6% of the world's population).
- Spanish is the native language of 483 million people.
- Spanish is the second most spoken native language after Chinese; English is the third.
- Nearly 22 million people study Spanish in 110 countries.
- Spanish is the third most used language on the internet.

Spanish is also an official language of the most eminent international organizations: United Nations, European Union, World Health Organization, International Labour Organization, World Trade Organization, and International Criminal Court, among others.

According to market research firms and analyses of electoral results in the US, engaging Spanish-speakers in their preferred language in culturally competent ways increases civic engagement and voting, displays respect, builds trust and loyalty, and influences voter and purchasing decisions.

Spanish is here to stay.



Nancy Zarenda is a specialist in Spanish language access and language policy advancement. She can be reached by email at slainternational@aol.com or on [LinkedIn](#).