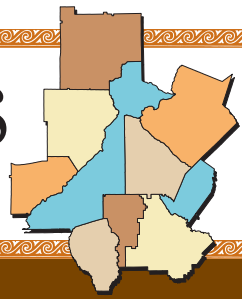


GLOBAL ATLANTA SnapSHOTS

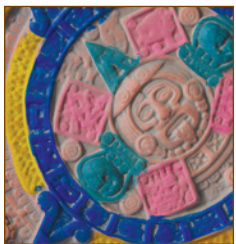
A LOOK AT ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN THE ATLANTA REGION



M E X I C A N S

The Global Atlanta Snapshots were created to foster understanding among all people of the Atlanta region. The Snapshots show the rich ethnic and cultural diversity that our region now enjoys. The residents of Atlanta's ethnic communities may have lived in the region for a long time or may have recently arrived. They may come from cultures and have customs significantly different from each other's, and from those of the general population of the Atlanta region. What they have in common with the rest of the region is that they make it their home, and they share in and contribute to its success. The Snapshots introduce and portray selected communities in terms of their backgrounds, their customs and cultures, their roles in the regional economy, and specific local resources available throughout the region.

Mexicans in the Atlanta Economy



One of the great magnets drawing Mexicans to metropolitan Atlanta was the region's development boom during the 1980s and 1990s. Accelerated by the selection of Atlanta to host the 1996 summer Olympic Games, the large expansion in construction activity drew many Mexican workers to the area. This is still evident in the workforce data for 2000. First, it should be noted, Atlanta's Mexican workers are predominantly male. Of some 77,100 workers in the region, 60,650 or 79 percent are men. Of those men, more than half – 30,600 – are employed in construction occupations. The largest grouping is that of construction workers (9,100). Other large concentrations include carpenters, painters and paperhangers, construction specialty trades and construction supervisors.

Outside of the construction occupations, Mexican men now account for 2,300 positions in management, business and financial occupations. An increasing number are operating their own businesses, as professionals and owners of restaurants and other retail establishments. Others are concentrated in food preparation, building and grounds maintenance, a variety of sales and office occupations, as well as production and materials handling jobs.

Mexican women, while having a smaller role in the Atlanta economy and being less concentrated in their occupations, contribute to the local economy in their roles in food preparation and serving, building and grounds work and in production jobs. Their prominence in carpet production is reflected in the number (nearly 700) in textile and apparel jobs. Almost 2,200 Mexican women hold management and professional jobs, including about 450 as teachers and librarians.

Because of language barriers and, for some, an uncertain immigration status, life in Atlanta presents many challenges for Mexicans. For undocumented immigrants, access to a driver's license is denied, limiting the range of employment opportunities. Consular ID cards, the Mexican Matricula, are now being accepted as valid identification by the City of Atlanta, DeKalb County and several banks for the provision of services and financial transactions. Immigrants recognize that mastery of the English language will be necessary for their advancement. However, access to language classes is uneven and finding the time and money, along with the fact that some may not even have Spanish literacy, remain as obstacles. Anti-immigrant sentiments, heightened by concerns related to the war on terrorism and the sluggish economic climate in the early years of this decade, have added to the challenges faced by newer immigrants.

Nevertheless, the Mexican community has been overcoming these challenges. With their growing numbers, Mexicans and the larger Latino community have been asserting their political strength. In 2004, three Latinos were serving in the Georgia State Legislature; another was an elected DeKalb County Court Judge.

Where is the Mexican Community?

There is a growing presence of Mexican-Americans throughout the 10-county Atlanta region. But concentrations along the Buford Highway and I-85 corridor, first noted in the 1990 census, have expanded and now extend well into Gwinnett County.

CONTENTS

Who are the Mexican-Americans? • Mexicans in the Atlanta Economy • A Personal Story • Where is the Mexican Community? • Traditional Mexican Names • Customs and Culture • Hispanic or Latino? • Holidays Celebrated • Resources



A PERSONAL STORY

The election of Sam Zamarripa to the Georgia State Senate in 2002 gave tangible proof of the growing political strength of the Atlanta Hispanic community. The son of a Mexican father and an Irish-American mother, Sen. Zamarripa is the first Hispanic senator and one of three Hispanics now serving in the state legislature. Protecting rights for undocumented immigrants became one of the priorities of the senator's first legislative session. He is also well known for his work in regional transportation and economic development.

Zamarripa has taken a difficult path in his own education, leaving school at age fourteen to work full time and attend school part time. Eventually, he completed his high school education in 1970 and joined a private group similar to the Peace Corps in Appalachia. In 1975, Mr. Zamarripa earned his undergraduate degree at New College in Sarasota, Florida. He went on to graduate school at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and received his Master's Degree in Public Administration.

Today, Sam Zamarripa is a Partner at Heritage Capital Advisors, which provides investment banking services with offices in Atlanta and Memphis. He is also Co-Founder and Director of United Americas Bank, N.A., where he serves as chairman of the marketing committee. He is also a director of Assurance America Corporation and Diaz Foods Incorporated.

In addition to these and other business activities, Mr. Zamarripa is involved in a number of volunteer and civic leadership roles. He serves as an advisory board member of The Atlanta Medical Center. Other board memberships include the Atlanta College of Art, the National Black Arts Festival and WPBA TV, Atlanta Public Television. The senator is also active with the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund and serves on the Foundation Board of Atlanta Technical College.

Sam Zamarripa lives with his wife and their twin daughters in the Inman Park community. In addition to renovating their own home, the Zamarripas are actively joining their neighbors in the revival of the historic neighborhood.

Languages Spoken

Spanish is the language of Mexico, although there are a number of indigenous languages that are also widely used. Most Mexicans come to Atlanta speaking at least a little English. For those who are not fluent, learning English is a high priority.

“¿Cómo está?” (*co-moh es-tah*)
How are you?

“¿Qué pasa?” (*kay pah-sah*)
What's happening?

“¿Habla usted inglés?” (*ah-blah oo-sted een-glase*)
Do you speak English?

Who are the Mexican-Americans?

The decade of the 1990s was marked by the phenomenal growth of Atlanta's Mexican community. Some 113,000 Mexicans called the 10-county Atlanta region home at the time of the 2000 census.

Mexico, our neighbor on America's southern border, is today a nation of over 97 million inhabitants (2000 national census). Its people have been migrating northward in significant numbers over many decades. As a country with extremes of wealth and poverty, most of the migrants have come to seek new economic opportunities in the United States. Traditionally, the newcomers settled in California and the southwestern border states of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. Only in the last 10 to 20 years have Mexicans come to settle in new “gateway” communities farther from the international border. Atlanta is a principal example of such a new gateway, along with such other non-southwestern metropolitan areas as Charlotte, Raleigh-Durham and Washington, DC.

The Mexican people have a rich history and complex cultural heritage. For centuries before European explorers and conquerors

reached the land we now know as Mexico, indigenous people had developed highly sophisticated civilizations. The native Indian populations, including the Maya and the Toltec peoples, had built great cities, produced a calendar and both counting and writing systems. In 1521, the last great Indian empire, that of the Aztecs, was conquered by Spanish invaders. For the next 300 years, Mexico was ruled as a Spanish colony. Today, the great majority of Mexicans are *mestizos*, descendants of the colonial rulers and indigenous population, with mixed Spanish and Indian ancestry. While the population includes some people of unmixed Spanish or Indian ancestry, for most Mexicans being a *mestizo* is a matter of national pride.

Mexico's official language is Spanish, spoken by over 93 percent of the population. However, some 6 million Mexicans over the age of 5 were recorded as speaking indigenous languages. Of these, Nahuatl, Maya, Zapotec, Otomi and Mixtec, used mostly in rural regions to the south, are the most important language groups. Occasionally, these ancient languages will be encountered even today in Atlanta.



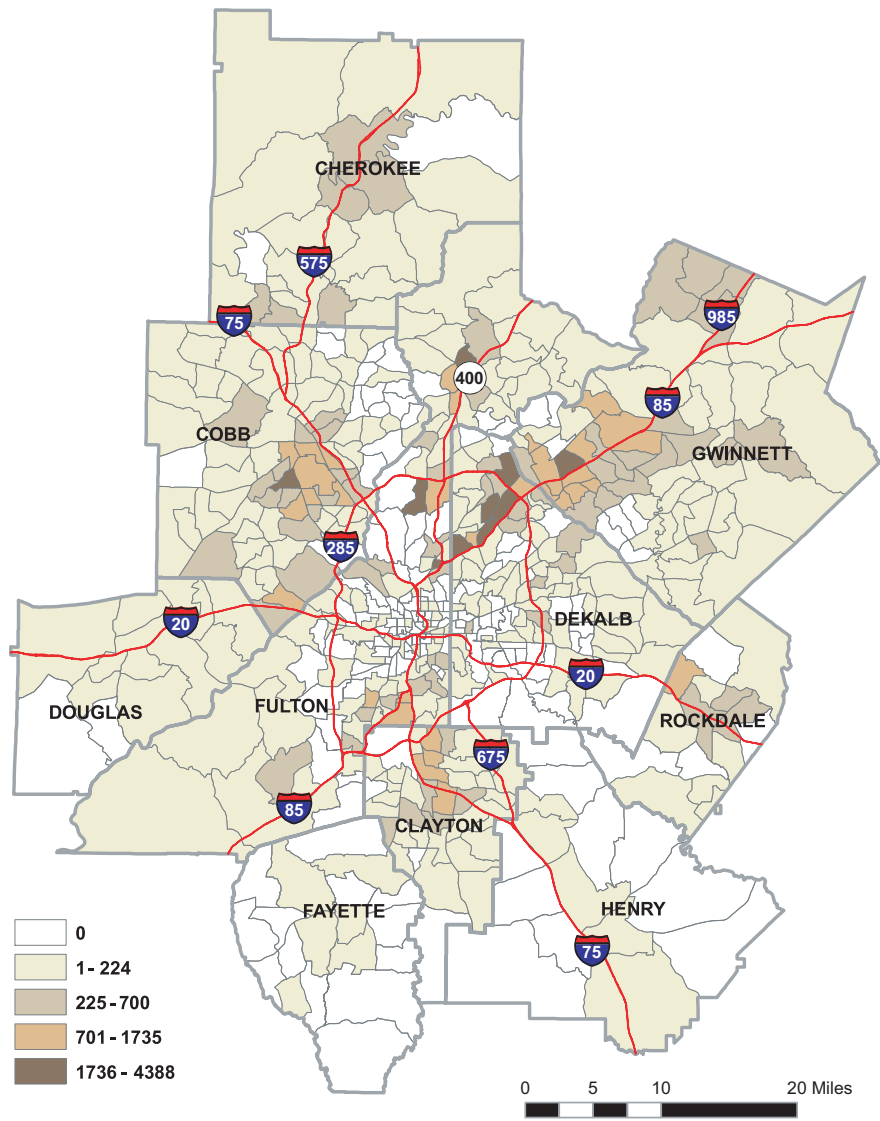
Mexicans in the Atlanta Region: By the Numbers

- Cherokee: 3,424
- Clayton: 8,974
- Cobb: 21,492
- DeKalb: 24,054
- Douglas: 824
- Fayette: 237
- Fulton: 24,219
- Gwinnett: 26,682
- Henry: 295
- Rockdale: 2,724

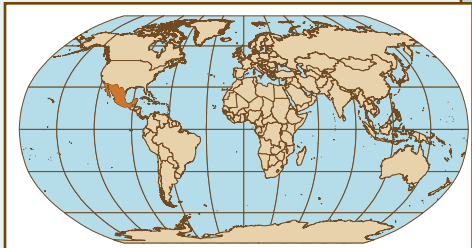
Total 10-county Region: 112,925

- **Gwinnett County** has the most persons born in Mexico in the region, numbering 26,682 as of the 2000 Census. Of Gwinnett's 99,518 foreign-born population, **27 percent** hail from Mexico.
- Approximately **42 percent** of Georgia's total population lives in the 10-county, but **59 percent** of the state's Mexican population lives in the region.
- **Gwinnett by itself** is home to **14 percent** of the state's population born in Mexico.
- The Atlanta region is home to a total of **195,934 persons born in Latin America**, which according to Census calculations, includes the Caribbean, Central and South America.
- Of the region's **401,620 foreign-born population**, **28 percent** hails from Mexico and **49 percent** hail from Latin America in general.
- The **heaviest concentrations** of Mexicans in the region can be found **along the interstates**.

MEXICAN-BORN POPULATION IN ATLANTA Atlanta Region, 2000



Source: 2000 Census Data on Foreign-Born Population by Region, Country or Area of Birth



Tenochtitlán-ancient ruins of the Aztec Empire

What are Mexican Customs and Culture?

The Mexican community places a strong emphasis on family, not only for emotional support and companionship, but for business and professional contacts too. Saturday soccer matches are attended by entire families, and sons of physicians and waiters join to honor their homeland through sport. When the game is over, they celebrate their culture by dining on traditional Mexican food.

Another strong value is the belief in education. Many Mexican-Americans, especially those from rural backgrounds, were not able to access a good education. As a result, it is important to them that their children take advantage of every educational opportunity. It is not uncommon for schools of medicine and law to have Mexican-American students whose parents were migrant workers. These children feel a strong commitment to helping their parents and siblings once they have graduated and become established in their professions.

The most basic cultural treasure shared by Latinos is *la familia* (the family). From the time children learn how to walk they are taught to revere and respect *la familia*. Latinos' natural support system

ONE OF THE GREAT MAGNETS DRAWING MEXICANS TO METROPOLITAN ATLANTA WAS THE REGION'S DEVELOPMENT BOOM OF THE 1980S AND 1990S.

includes the immediate family, the extended family and the Church. In times of crisis, *la familia* is the primary social support and important decisions often include their advice.

Most Mexican-Americans are open and warm and consider friendship very important. A Mexican household is a gregarious place filled with family and friends. The concept of being alone or "doing your own thing" is foreign to them. They generally view life with humor and irony and can always find a reason to have a party to enjoy traditional and popular music, with a lot of people, food and noise.

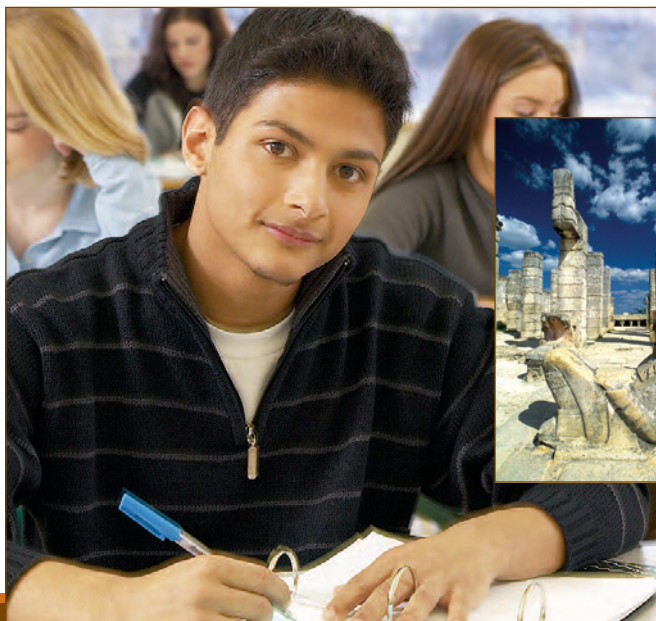
At the dinner table, everyone may be talking at once, with the same intensity and volume. Respect for the individual, especially the elderly, is valued, and older people are rarely addressed by their first name. Their opinions are respected and provide guidance for the family.

Among Mexicans from indigenous and rural backgrounds, eye contact is considered disrespectful. Mexicans tend to stand closer to each other during conversations than do Americans and arm gestures are a normal part of conversation. Open hand gestures, however, may have unwanted connotations. Shaking hands is important. At the termination of any encounter with a group of Mexicans, one should shake every individual's hand, both males and females. Pointing at an individual (especially with a finger) is considered offensive.

Major public holidays, Cinco de Mayo (May 5th) and Mexican Independence Day (September 16th) are happy occasions celebrated with dancing, eating and music. Many local restaurants have typically become involved with the Cinco de Mayo festivities. The Mexican Consulate and Friends of Mexico have sponsored large celebrations in Grant Park to mark Mexican Independence Day. The party, to which all are invited, includes dancing, contests for the children and an impressive display of locally available Mexican cuisine.

The Day of the Dead, when deceased relatives are remembered, is a major cultural observance which includes elaborate foods and rituals. The Cultural Center of Mexico, located on Peachtree Road, has held public observances of the day, open to all who are interested. Another holiday is Three Kings' Day, celebrated by a party at a local art gallery early each January. It includes Mexican art, music and piñatas for the children.

Most Mexicans are Catholic. There are many Spanish-language Masses held in various parts of the Atlanta region, and many local churches sponsor Hispanic congregations and even special Hispanic services.



Celebrated Holidays

In addition to other Western holidays, the Mexicans may celebrate the following:

Three Kings' Day
January

Hispanic Heritage Month
Sept. - Oct.

Easter and Holy Week
Mar./ Apr.

All Saints Day
Nov. 1

Cinco de Mayo
May 5

**Day of the Dead
(All Souls' Day)**
Nov. 2

St. John the Baptist Day
June 24

Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe
Dec. 12

Mexican Independence Day
Sept. 16

Traditional Mexican Names

Non-Latinos often have difficulty sorting out traditional Mexican and Mexican-American names. In Mexico, individuals have two last names. Examples of names for a husband and wife are:

Jose Rojas Flores

Sarah Cabrera Fernandez

Jose considers “Rojas” his primary last name and Flores his secondary last name. Sarah did not change her name when she married Jose. Because “Fernandez” is her secondary last name she might give her name as “Sarah Cabrera F.”

Jose’s and Sarah’s son will take his primary last name from Jose and his secondary last name from Sarah:

Pedro Rojas Cabrera

It is important to remember the significance of the primary last name and not treat it as a middle name.



Hispanic or Latino?

It is difficult to make assumptions about Latinos or Hispanics since they represent a mix of racial and ethnic populations from 22 different countries of origin.

Not all Latinos speak Spanish, and the diversity of origins in many countries makes for a variety of visible features such as shades of skin color. The specific populations designated under these terms have unique demographic characteristics and degrees of acculturation, in addition to differences in history and cultural backgrounds.

The terms Hispanic or Latino, used by many to attempt to designate these diverse populations under one category, continue to be a source of contention. Using “Hispanic” implies a connection to ancient Spain and its language, while “Latino” refers to the various nationalities (including the non-Spanish speaking ones) in Latin America. For example, Brazilians speak Portuguese and can be considered Latinos but not Hispanics.

First used in the 1980 US Census, the category term of Hispanic caused uproar among Latinos in the Southwest, Chicago and New York but was accepted in Texas, and Florida. Originally the term Latino was considered but then rejected because it sounded too close to Ladino, the ancient language of the Spanish Jews who exiled in the 15th century. Interestingly enough, Filipinos were colonized by Spain and speak Spanish, yet the US Census categorizes them as Asian Americans.

Throughout the decades, several terms were used

such as “Spanish speaking”, “Latin American”, “Hispanic”, but today, with the influx of Latino superstars and superheros; the most popular term is Latino, because it reflects the growing population who have migrated from Latin America.

There are various reasons Latinos prefer this term over Hispanic but if given a choice, many would still choose their country of origin, such as Puerto Rican, Mexican, Colombian, Brazilian etc.; or even emphasize their subsequent US origin with NewYorican.

It is said that those who prefer the term Hispanic are usually middle class, and educated in the United States. Linguistically, the term Latino has gender, following the Spanish rules (Latina in the feminine), while the term Hispanic follows the English rules.

For some, including the term Latino in the denomination is a way also of honoring the culture and contributions of the native people in Latin America. Hispanics who have resided in New Mexico, Texas and Florida for generations (since the Spanish settlers) should also be included in the denomination, because they too experience specific barriers. In Georgia, the majority of new residents are Latinos, who immigrated from Latin America and experience specific challenges with acculturation. To be politically correct, it is best to use both terms, i.e. Latino-Hispanic, interchangeably. As of January 2003, all federal programs must use both terms, according to the Office of Management and Budget.

– Courtesy of Venus Gines, of Dia de la Mujer Latina, Inc., Atlanta

Mexican Organizations, Associations and Resources

Below is a listing of selected organizations who work with the Mexican Community. Additional resources are available at www.atlantaregional.com

GENERAL INFORMATION

Catholic Social Services (*Servicio Social Católico*)
680 West Peachtree, Atlanta, GA 30308
(404) 881-6571
Hispanic Hotline (404) 888-7841
(Contact main office for services and outreach center locations.)
www.cssatlanta.com

Consulate of Mexico
2600 Apple Valley Rd. NE, Atlanta, GA 30319
(404) 266-2233
www.consulmexatlanta.org

Hispanic Yellow Pages
(*Páginas Amarillas Hispanas*)
Casablanca Publishing, Inc.
P.O. Box 191033, Atlanta, GA 31119
(404) 844-0600
www.paginasamarillas-atl.com

National Image, Inc.
(employment, education, civil rights for all Hispanics)
P. O. Box 1512, Atlanta, GA 30301
Sylvia Sanchez, President
(404)266-1956

Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (*Defensa Legal y Fondo Educativo Mexico Americano*)
41 Marietta St. Suite #1000, Atlanta, GA 30303
(678) 559-1071
www.maldef.org

Our Lady of The Americas Catholic Mission
(*Misión Católica Nuestra Señora de las Américas*)
5918 New Peachtree Road, Doraville, GA 30340
(770) 454-8437

ASSOCIATIONS

Latin American Association (LAA)
(*Asociación Latinoamericana*)
www.latinamericanassoc.org

LAA - DeKalb County (Main office)
2750 Buford Highway, Atlanta, GA
30324
(404) 638-1800

LAA - Gwinnett Outreach Center
Harmony Station Outreach Center
Harmony Station Apartments
1250 Old Norcross Tucker Rd.
Tucker, GA 30084
(678) 205-1018

LAA - Cobb County Outreach Center
Hickory Lake Outreach Center
Hickory Lake Apartments
490 Windy Hill Road, Smyrna, GA
(678) 213-0500

Las Colinas Outreach Center
Las Colinas Apartments
861 Franklin Road, Marietta, GA
(678) 213-0360

Coalition for New Georgia (*political/legislative issues*)
Business Address:
1100 Peachtree Street, Suite 2800
Atlanta, GA 30309
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 29506, Atlanta, GA 30359
(404) 745-2580
e-mail: jerry@galeo.org
<http://www.galeo.org>

BUSINESS

Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
(*La Cámara de Comercio Hispana de Georgia*)
2801 Buford Hwy., Suite 500
Atlanta, GA 30329
(404) 929-9998
www.ghcc.org

Mexican-American Business Chamber of Atlanta (*Cámara de Comercio Mexico Americano de Atlanta*)
5522 New Peachtree Rd., Suite 129
Chamblee, GA 30341
(770) 441-7581
www.mexicanchamber.org

Mexican Trade Commission
233 Peachtree Street, Suite 2205
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 522-5373
www.bancomext.com

HEALTH

Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.
5755 Lawrenceville Hwy
Tucker, GA 30084-1919
(770) 717-0021
Toll-Free: 1-866-54-MUJER
e-mail: venus2004@diadelamujerlatina.org
www.diadelamujerlatina.org

Centro Médico Latinoamericano
2841 Buford Hwy., Atlanta, GA 30329
(404) 321-5151

Clinic for Education, Treatment and Prevention of Addiction (CETPA)
(*Clínica de Educación, Tratamiento y Prevención de la Adicción*)
e-mail: cetpa@cetpa.org
www.cetpa.org
Corporate address:
7740 Roswell Rd., Suite 700, Atlanta, GA 30350
(770) 452-8630

CETPA Gwinnett
Watkins Office Park
660 McDonough Dr., Suite N
Norcross, GA 30093
(678) 282-0307

Clínica de la Mamá
4140 Jonesboro Road, Forest Park, GA 30297
5127 Jimmy Carter Blvd., Norcross, GA 30093
(770) 613-0070

Clínica de la Salud Hispana
3652 Chamblee-Dunwoody Rd., Suite 4
Atlanta, GA 30341
(770) 451-0662
969 Windy Hill Rd., Suite E, Smyrna, GA 30080
(678) 888-0173
www.clinicadelasaludhispana.com

Clínica de Urgencias Los Remedios
(*Emergency Clinic Los Remedios*)
275 Carpenter Dr., Suite 100, Atlanta, GA 30328
(404) 497-9739

Good Samaritan Health Center
(*Centro de Salud El Buen Samaritano*)
239 Alexander Street NW, Atlanta, GA 30313
(404) 523-6571

St. Joseph's Mercy Clinics (main office)
424 Decatur Street, Atlanta, GA 30312
(404)880-3550
Northeast Plaza
3367 Buford Hwy., Atlanta, GA 30329
(404) 880-3711

MEDIA

Atlanta Latino, Inc.
6400 Atlantic Blvd., Suite 200
Norcross, GA 30371
(770) 416-7570
www.atlantatlatino.com

1550 AM Radio La Que Buena
1800 Lake Park Drive, Suite 99
Smyrna, GA 30080
(770) 436-6171
www.radiolaquebuena.com

La Visión (*Weekly newspaper*)
2200 Norcross Pkwy, Suite 210
Norcross, GA 30071
(770) 963-7521
www.lavisiononline.com

Mundo Hispánico
P.O. Box 13808, Atlanta, GA 30324
(404) 881-1484
www.mundohispanico.com

Telemundo Network
2470 West 8th Avenue, Hialeah, FL 33010
www.telemundo.com

Univisión 34 Atlanta (*Spanish Cable TV*)
3350 Peachtree Road, Atlanta, GA 30326
(404) 926-2300

WAOS-1600 AM La Favorita
(Reaches Cobb, Clayton, Douglas, Fulton, Fayette, DeKalb and Paulding counties)
5815 Westside Rd., Austell, GA 30106
(770) 944-0900
www.radiolafavorita.com

WPBS-1040 AM Planeta X (*Spanish talk radio*)
5750 Brook Hollow Parkway, Suite 101,
Norcross, GA 30071
(770) 483-1000
www.radioplanetax.com

Contact:
E-mail: globalsnapshots@atlantaregional.com

Order printed copies from the ARC Information Center at 404-463-3102 or download free from the ARC website at www.atlantaregional.com

Atlanta Regional Commission • 40 Courtland Street, NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30303 • 404.463.3100 • www.atlantaregional.com

Charles Krautler, Executive Director

Darlene Daly, Project Coordinator

The Atlanta Regional Commission is the official planning agency for the ten-county Atlanta region including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale, as well as the City of Atlanta and 63 other cities. ARC provides a forum where leaders come together to discuss and act on issues of regionwide consequence.

The Community Foundation • 50 Hurt Plaza, Suite 449, Atlanta, Georgia 30303 • 404.688.5525 • www.atlcf.org

Global Atlanta Snapshots are the result of past and ongoing collaborative partnerships of the Atlanta Regional Commission and many other agencies. We extend our sincere appreciation Georgia State University's Department of Anthropology and Geography and to every organization, agency and individual that participated in the research and development of this publication. This series of 10 Global Atlanta Snapshots was financed in part by a grant from the William Glenn Family Fund of The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta. Recognized as one of the largest and fastest growing community foundations in the country, with more than \$400 millions in assets, The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta manages and administers the charitable funds of 650 donors and their families. It serves 22 metro area counties and awards approximately \$29 million a year to more than 1,300 nonprofit organizations. The Foundation educates donors and their families about critical issues facing the Atlanta region and connects them with nonprofit organizations and their interests.