

BACKSTAGE GUIDE

A publication of **COMMUNITY SERVICE** at
AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

BACKSTAGE CALLBOARD

ALMA

By Benjamin Benne

Directed by Ana Velazquez

FEATURING



Jazmín Corona



Bryanna Ciera Colón

Alma crossed the border 17 years ago in search of the American Dream. Now, on the eve of her U.S.-born daughter Angel's SAT, Alma believes all their sacrifices and hard work will pay off. There's one problem – Angel has very different plans for her future. Told in real time, *Alma* is a heartfelt and complex exploration of the immigrant generation and their first-generation children.

Presented in association with Chicago Latino Theater Alliance as part of 5th Annual Destinos Festival.

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

American Blues Theater is located in Chicago, the traditional homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi Nations. City of Chicago was founded by the son of an enslaved African woman who was regarded as the first non-Indigenous settler. His name was Jean Baptiste Point du Sable.

Many other nations including the Myaamia, Wea, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Thakiwaki, Meskwaki, Kiikaapoi, and Mascouten peoples also call this region home. This land has long been a center for Indigenous people to gather, trade, and maintain kinship ties.

Today, Chicago is home to one of the largest urban American Indian communities in the United States, and the country's oldest urban-based Native membership community center, the American Indian Center Chicago.

American Blues Theater makes this acknowledgment as part of our commitment to dismantling the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism.

To learn more about land acknowledgments visit nativegov.org.

To learn more about & engage with the American Indian Center Chicago (AIC), visit aicchicago.org.

NOTE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **GWENDOLYN WHITESIDE**



Benjamin Benne submitted his unproduced play in the summer of 2018.

It arrived quietly and unassumingly—as so many of our contest’s entries. You only needed to read a few pages to feel the power of this story. His script rolled down the submission pile in an avalanche of “yes” from **all** our readers. Not only is this piece relevant to our mission—to *tell stories of the American identity*—but it illuminates humankind:

Parents want more for their children than they have experienced. They will sacrifice anything and everything to give opportunity.

His stunning work *Alma* won our **2019 Blue Ink Award** for playwriting. We celebrated with a staged reading and reception during that summer’s *Blue Ink Festival*. Our Ensemble unanimously programmed

the World Premiere into that upcoming season.

Then, an unexpected series of events delayed its fully-realized production. Covid-19 brought the 1st postponement. We pivoted with a 2020 live, virtual reading, promising to reschedule shortly. (Surely, this virus would clear in a couple of months, we thought.) Alas, C-19 brought a 2nd postponement too. Finally as things began to reopen, scheduling venues, dates, and artist availability became the next challenge. Chicago Theater experienced a producing traffic jam caused by too few venues for a city of gigantic talent roaring back to the boards.

Meanwhile, Center Theatre Group—a \$50MM organization in Los Angeles, asked if we’d share World Premiere rights in 2022. They had an available, open slot in one of their many venues. Playwright Benjamin Benne’s express support for our decision—whatever it may be—only deepened our love for this writer. Our resounding answer was YES because it would allow him an incredible opportunity. Artistic cooperation strengthens our industry and should never to be underestimated.

We’re thrilled to share Ana Velazquez’s deeply-felt vision and the profound performances by Jazmín Corona and Bryanna Ciera Colón. The design process and collaboration has been a creative dream.

We are honored to present this story.

We are humbled by the artists’ patience as we navigated past the ghost light.

You’ll find this play is as relevant today as it was years ago.

- Gwendolyn Whiteside

INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT **BENJAMIN BENNE**

We asked playwright Benjamin Benne about *Alma* and his upcoming projects.

WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION FOR WRITING ALMA?

I actually first began working on this play around 2015 leading up to the 2016 election. Trump's campaign to build a wall to keep out Mexican immigrants was a violent attack that made me deeply reflect on my own family's immigration story. My mother's side of the family emigrated from Guatemala to the U.S. and I was born in Southern California, as a first generation U.S. citizen. My family came to the U.S. at a unique moment in time where they qualified for Amnesty--my mother later became a citizen, when I was in elementary school, and I still remember that day. So the question of "Who gets to be a citizen and why?" was central to the writing, as well as the question of "How could my story be different had my family come to the U.S. at a different time?." As the play has developed, the generational differences between the immigrant generation and their first gen children took more focus, as well as reflections on the long history of who has lived on/occupied/claimed the land that I grew up on (I was raised in Hacienda Heights which borders the city of La Puente, where this play is set).



WHAT DO YOU HOPE AUDIENCES TAKE AWAY FROM THIS PIECE?

The heart of this play is a relationship between a parent and child. They are so very close and intimate with each other — but are also discovering the ways in which they've grown apart; namely, they have very different visions for the future and ideas around the American Dream. My hope is that audiences will take away a sense of how their experiences feel similar and different than what they're seeing in *Alma* and Angel's relationship. Maybe they'll reflect on questions like: Do they feel the love between these characters? Can they empathize with (or at least have compassion for) these characters' struggles? Where are our areas of privilege and how can we use our power to advocate for others? Finally, after seeing this show, maybe the audience will feel moved to call their mother and/or someone who is a source of nurture to them and tell that person what they mean to them.

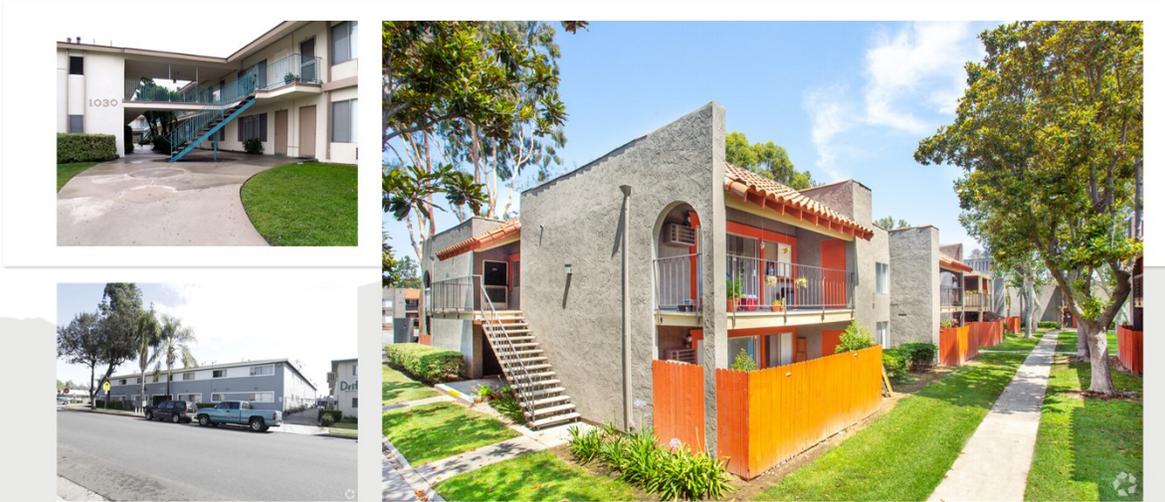
WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON NEXT?

I count *Alma* as the 6th play I've written and, most recently, I've completed my 10th play, which is a commission for South Coast Repertory called *Fantasma*. It's a play that has some thematic overlap with *Alma* and is an intergenerational story about family cooking lessons, how memory is archived and/or lives in our bodies, and the cost of assimilation. It's probably my most ambitious piece of writing to date: its timeline spans two decades and features the largest cast I've ever written: 6 characters. I'm scheduled to do my very first workshop of the play right around the time that rehearsals begin for *Alma* at American Blues. Also, in 2023, two more productions of *Alma* are scheduled in Denver CO (at Curious Theatre) and Cambridge MA (at Central Square). Lots to look forward to!

SCENIC DESIGN: SKETCHES AND RESEARCH

Below are scenic research images and a preliminary model of the scenic design, courtesy of Scenic Designer Tara Houston.

APARTMENTS



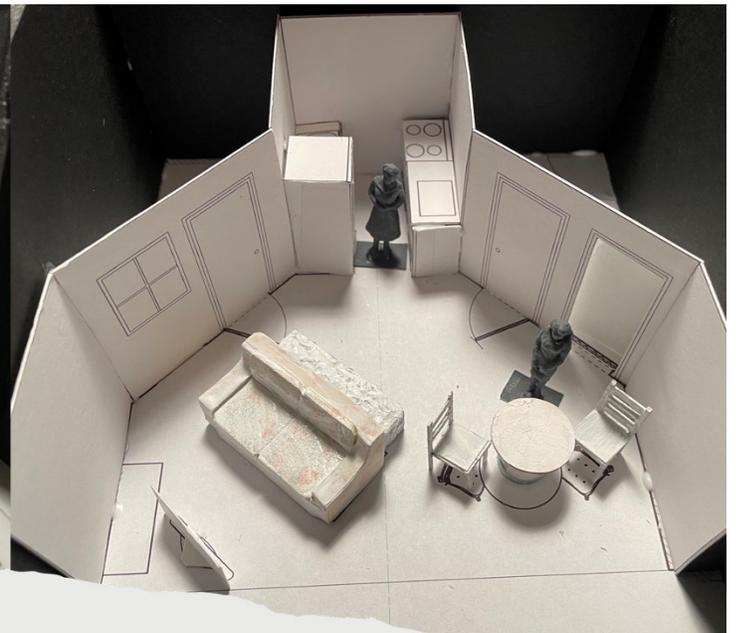
INTERIORS



SCENIC DESIGN: SKETCHES AND RESEARCH



STARS



MODEL PHOTOS

THE HIDDEN STRESS OF GROWING UP A CHILD OF IMMIGRANTS

The below article, which originally appeared on *Vice* in September 2019, explores some of the stressors that U.S.-born children of immigrants—like Angel in *Alma*—have in common. It has been edited here for length. Read the full article on [Vice.com](https://www.vice.com).

“I’ve been struggling with my mental health since I was 10 or so,” said Sara, a petite 22-year-old who works as a teacher at a junior high school. Sara lives with her parents in a midsize city just southwest of Phoenix, where she was born and raised. Her mother came to the United States as a Cambodian refugee in the 70s—a process that forced her to “grow up faster than anyone should have to,” in Sara’s words. “She still has a lot of trauma to unpack.”... “I think a lot about the quote, ‘You inherit your parents’ trauma but you will never fully understand it,’” Sara said.

It’s an experience that’s often overlooked in broader conversations about immigrant mental health, despite more than 18 million people under age 18 living with at least one immigrant parent as of 2017, according to the Migration Policy Institute—a figure that represented 26 percent of the 70 million kids in the U.S. at that time. While there’s no way to catalog the specific stressors that affect such a wide swath of cultures and countries—and it would be disrespectful to consider the category of “immigrant” itself as a monolith—there are fairly universal cultural barriers. Having U.S. citizenship doesn’t render children immune to immigration-related stressors. They must learn to be flexible, able to withstand constantly straddling the culture their parents came from and the culture they’re currently growing up in.

The majority of new immigrants to the U.S. are people of color, meaning both parents and children must navigate the realities of racism, but each generation experiences discrimination differently. While U.S.-born children of immigrants don’t have to weather the traumas of migration itself, they may have a harder time enduring discrimination, thanks to having a “singular frame of reference,” said Tomás R. Jiménez, a professor of sociology at Stanford. Parents instead have a “dual frame of reference,” which means “parents are judging life in the United States based on their comparison to the place that they left,” Jiménez added. “Kids only know the kinds of discrimination they face in the United States. And that often leads them to conclude things are a lot worse [than what their parents faced] or that they’re pretty bad.”

“Children of immigrants who are shouted at and told ‘Go

back to your home country,’ don’t have that country to go back to—this is the only country they have,” said Yoonsun Choi, an associate professor at the University of Chicago school of social service administration. “But for parents being told ‘Go back to your country,’ they at least know what that means. They have a country they can identify with.”

To be fair, all children wrangle with the disparities in their and their parents’ worldviews in regard to age—every generation feels their parents just don’t understand them. But children of immigrants deal with a generational and cultural gap. And this gap is exacerbated by distance and time: Immigrant parents may have a more conservative view of their culture than the people currently living in their country of origin do. “If they came 30 years ago, then the culture is 30 years old,” Choi explained.

This is all compounded by the challenges of assimilating to Western culture, a process called acculturation, which encompasses learning new governmental infrastructure—vital procedures related to education and voting can be confusing to understand—social classes and gender roles, and social rituals like how close you stand to another person while conversing or what clothing you’re supposed to wear in different contexts. Even grocery shopping can be completely disorienting.

“I never knew what was normal,” said Michaela, a 35-year-old who works as a graphic designer in San Francisco, about her childhood in North Carolina. Michaela’s parents emigrated from Venezuela to the United States in the 70s to pursue higher education. She recalled navigating the culture shock and uncertainty of coming of age in an immigrant household, even as someone who physically grew up in the United States. It was an accumulation of little things. “I would notice friends sending Christmas cards—and I’d be like, *Can I send Christmas cards? Can I do that thing that seems like a normal thing that my friends are doing, that you’re supposed to do?*”

While acculturation builds “resilience”—a term that reflects the tendency of children of immigrants to be

THE HIDDEN STRESS OF GROWING UP A CHILD OF IMMIGRANTS

unflappable or have “grit,” according to Jiménez—it can also create an incredibly stressful home environment, in which the child has to juggle parents’ expectations and behaviors in a world that doesn’t quite fit. Because U.S. born immigrant children tend to be more adept than their parents at picking up Western culture and language—which makes sense, given that they grow up in it—the gulf between parent and child only grows larger.

This is especially true when it comes to American ideologies of “find[ing] your passion,” which may be fundamentally incompatible with an immigrant parent’s extremely high expectations for how their children can and should succeed, according to Jiménez.

“It’s more explicit for parents who are immigrants. They want their kids to make good on the sacrifices their parents made. In this case, the sacrifices are picking up their entire life and moving to a different part of the world,” Jiménez said. “Sometimes that can be implied and kids just know the deal—they know what their parents went through and they know why they came, and think, I’ve got to keep the bargain.”

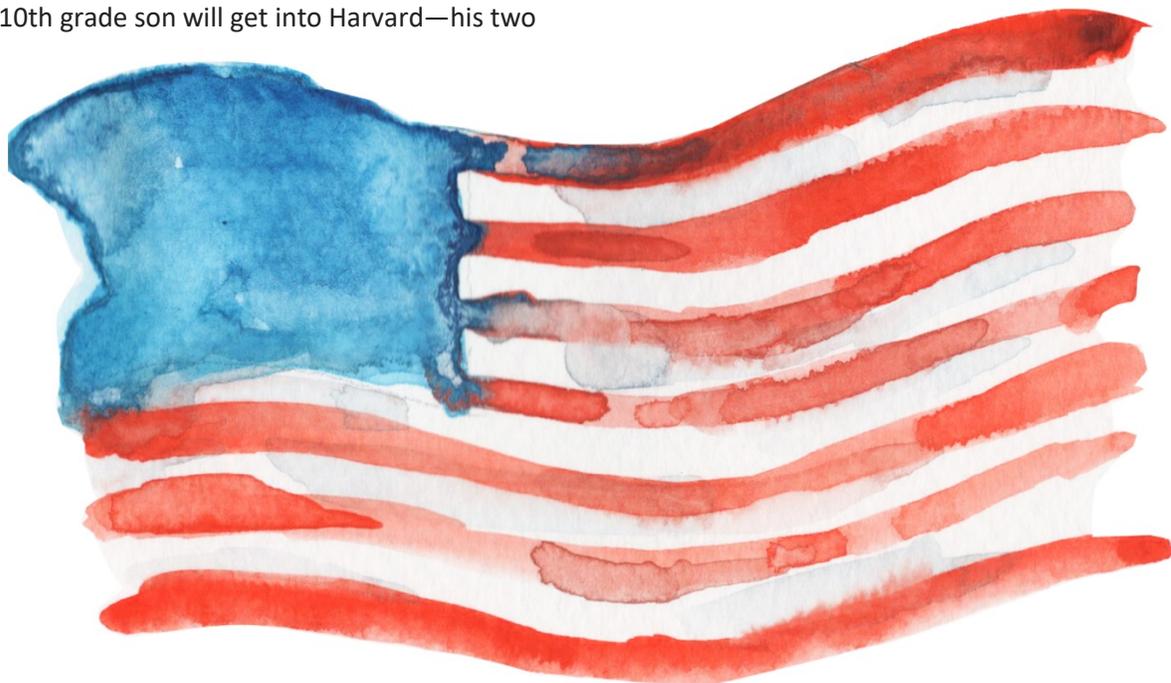
It’s a lot of pressure. In the book *Children of Immigration*, Carola and Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco interview a Ghanaian taxi driver in New York City who hopes his 10th grade son will get into Harvard—his two

eldest are already attending Duke and Brown. “I make sure I know my children’s friends, and if they want to come to my house they have to follow my rules,” he said.

Sara felt a very similar kind of force throughout her childhood from her mother. “She wants better for my sister and I, and wants us to be better than her, but she has very defined expectations of success, which affect us,” Sara said. “If we aren’t surgeon-lawyers in space, we aren’t successful and she can’t brag about us to her friends.”

This invalidation eventually becomes internalized and turns into guilt. “Whenever I searched for stories like [mine], I stumbled across stories of people who had the ‘right’ to be depressed,” Sara continued. “My experiences seem small compared to what my mother went through. But I now understand they are valid in their own way.”

Growing into adulthood, however, means having the opportunity to build your own support system—as in every coming of age story, it means being able to advocate for yourself and your needs. This can hold special value for children of immigrants, who must work harder to establish their ethnic identity after living in the liminal space of “never truly belong[ing] ‘here’ or ‘there,’” as the Suárez-Orozcos wrote in their book. It means finding a community that can empathize.



QUIZ: COULD YOU PASS THE U.S. CITIZENSHIP TEST?

The below quiz and text originally appeared in *The New York Times* on July 3, 2019. It has been edited here for length. You can take the interactive quiz on the *New York Times* website [here](#).

Before taking the oath of allegiance, would-be citizens must pass a civics examination, covering America's history, principles and system of government. For the test, a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services officer randomly selects a set of 10 questions from a list of 100, and reads them in English to the applicant, who must orally answer at least six correctly.

Some, like "Name the president" or "What is the U.S. capital?" are easier than others, raising concerns about whether all applicants have the same shot at passing.

Here we're testing you on some of the questions that the volunteer test-takers most often flubbed.

1. HOW MANY AMENDMENTS DOES THE CONSTITUTION HAVE?

- A) 14
- B) 21
- C) 25
- D) 27

2. WHICH OF THESE IS SOMETHING BENJAMIN FRANKLIN IS KNOWN FOR?

- A) He was the first person to sign the Constitution
- B) He discovered electricity
- C) He was the nation's first postmaster general
- D) He was the nation's second president

3. WHO WAS PRESIDENT DURING WORLD WAR I?

- A) Woodrow Wilson
- B) Warren Harding
- C) Calvin Coolidge
- D) Franklin D. Roosevelt

4. WHICH STATEMENT CORRECTLY DESCRIBES THE "RULE OF LAW"?

- A) The law is what the president says it is
- B) The people who enforce the laws do not have to follow them
- C) No one is above the law
- D) Judges can rewrite laws they disagree with

5. UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, WHICH OF THESE POWERS DOES NOT BELONG TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT?

- A) Ratify amendments to the Constitution
- B) Print money
- C) Make treaties with foreign powers
- D) Declare war

QUIZ: COULD YOU PASS THE U.S. CITIZENSHIP TEST?

6. WE ELECT A U.S. SENATOR FOR HOW MANY YEARS?

- A) Four years
- B) Six years
- C) Eight years
- D) Twelve years

7. WHO IS THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES NOW?

- A) John G. Roberts Jr.
- B) Elena Kagan
- C) William P. Barr
- D) Brett M. Kavanaugh

8. THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HAS HOW MANY VOTING MEMBERS?

- A) 100
- B) 435
- C) 535
- D) 538

9. THE FEDERALIST PAPERS SUPPORTED THE PASSAGE OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION. WHICH OF THESE MEN WAS NOT ONE OF THE AUTHORS?

- A) James Madison
- B) Alexander Hamilton
- C) John Jay
- D) John Adams

10. WHEN WAS THE CONSTITUTION WRITTEN?

- A) 1492
- B) 1776
- C) 1787
- D) 1865

Answer key: 1) D. 2) C. 3) A. 4) C. 5) A. 6) B. 7) A. 8) B. 9) D. 10) C.

How did you do? One survey found that 64 percent of American citizens would fail the test, even when given the questions in multiple-choice format, as we have here. Immigrants taking the exam as part of their citizenship application tend to fare much better. The combined pass rate for the civics exam and an English evaluation performed in the same interview is 91 percent, U.S.C.I.S. reported in December. Of course, immigrants generally study for the test before taking it, while the survey respondents may not have cracked a history or civics book in decades.

For prospective citizens, one tough question can make all the difference. Paula Winke, a professor at Michigan State University who studies language and language testing, found that the difference between a failing score of five and a passing score of six may have more to do with the choice of questions than with knowledge of the answers.

In the 2011 study, nearly all test-takers knew why the American flag has 50 stars, but fewer than one in 10 knew the date when the Constitution was written, and only about one in 8 could name one of the writers of the Federalist Papers.

Immigrants applying for citizenship are given only two chances to pass the test before they must restart the application process from scratch — and pay the filing fee of at least \$640 again. If they fail at their first interview, they must retake the civics exam at another interview between 60 and 90 days later.

GROWTH & IMPACT OF THE U.S. LATINX POPULATION

The below shows just a small sample of the growing economic and political impact that the Latinx population has on the United States. For more information on these statistics, visit Pew Research Center's [FactTank](#) and the U.S. Senate Joint Economic Committee's [report on the subject](#).

- **THE U.S. LATINX POPULATION REACHED 62.1 MILLION IN 2020, UP FROM 50.5 MILLION IN 2010.** This makes Latinx the nation's second-fastest-growing racial or ethnic group after Asian Americans. Latinx made up 19% of the U.S. population in 2020, up from 16% in 2010 and just 5% in 1970.

- **THE SHARE OF U.S. LATINX POPULATION WITH COLLEGE EXPERIENCE HAS INCREASED.** About 42% of U.S. Latinx adults ages 25 and older had at least some college experience in 2019, up from 36% in 2010. The share who have a bachelor's degree or more education also increased during this period, from 13% to 18%.

- **4 IN 5 LATINX INDIVIDUALS ARE U.S. CITIZENS.** As of 2019, about 80% of Latinx individuals living in the country are U.S. citizens, up from 74% in 2010. This includes people born in the U.S. and its territories (including Puerto Rico), people born abroad to American parents and immigrants who have become naturalized citizens.

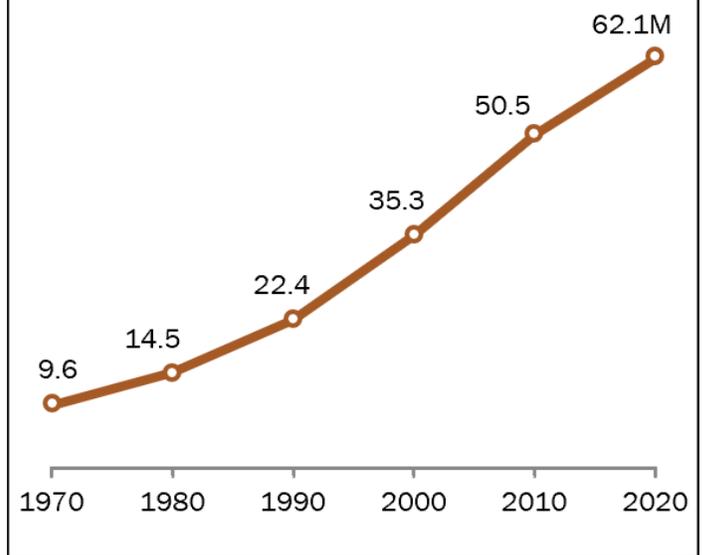
- **THREE STATES SAW THEIR LATINX POPULATIONS INCREASE BY MORE THAN 1 MILLION FROM 2010 TO 2020.** Texas (+2.0 million), California (+1.6 million) and Florida (+1.5 million) together accounted for 43% of the nation's Latinx population growth over the past decade. New York (+531,000) and New Jersey (+447,000) had the next-biggest increases. All 50 states and the District of Columbia have seen growth in their Latinx populations since 2010.

- **THE LATINX POPULATION ACCOUNTS FOR \$2.3 TRILLION IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.** A 2019 report found that if the U.S. Latinx gross domestic product (GDP) were its own country, it would rank as the eighth largest GDP in the world. Latinx individuals own more than 4 million businesses in the United States. In five states, including Florida and Texas, Latinx individuals own more than 100,000 business (per state). Nationwide, businesses with majority Latinx ownership provide almost 2.7 million jobs to workers in the U.S.

- **THE NUMBER OF LATINX-OWNED BUSINESSES IN THE U.S. IS GROWING AT A RATE THAT OUTPACES JUST ABOUT EVERY OTHER ETHNIC GROUP.** The Latinx population has grown at a steady clip and now accounts for 18% of the U.S. population. However, a 2017 study from the Stanford Latino Entrepreneurship Initiative found that the rate at which new Latinx firms are being created outpaces Latinx population growth. "Latinos have been starting businesses at an incredible rate over the past decade — a million net new businesses every five years," says Jerry Porras, who is also the cofounder of the Latino Business Action Network.

- **IT IS ESTIMATED THAT BY 2060 APPROXIMATELY ONE IN FOUR PEOPLE LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES WILL BE LATINX OR OF HISPANIC HERITAGE.**

U.S. LATINX POPULATION REACHED MORE THAN 62 MILLION IN 2020



LATINX COMMUNITIES' IMPACT ON U.S. LAW

Throughout American history, Latinx communities have been actively involved in key legal developments related to education, immigration, citizenship, women's rights, and civil rights. Below are just a few of those key contributions.

- Before *Brown v. Board of Education*, there was *Mendez v. Westminster*. In the landmark case, a judge decided in 1946 that California could not segregate its school system based on national origin or language ability. During the lawsuit, the school district offered to compromise by allowing the Mendez children to attend the elementary school without any other student of Mexican-American descent. The Mendez family declined the offer and continued the lawsuit. The Mendez family believed in helping out the entire Mexican community, instead of a handful of children.
- In 1954, when the U.S. Supreme Court decided *Hernandez v. Texas* in a unanimous ruling, the court held that Mexican Americans and all other nationality groups in the United States have equal protection under the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution
- The Supreme Court decided two New York cases challenging literacy tests in 1966 pursuant to the Voting Rights Act. New Yorkers who sought to continue to exclude Latinx voters brought *Katzenbach v. Morgan* (1966). In the companion case, *Cardona v. Power* (1966), the Court discarded such tests and secured the voting rights of Puerto Ricans and other language minorities with limited English skills, a ruling that eventually led to bilingual ballots.
- In 1968 the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund opens its doors, becoming the first legal fund to pursue protection of the civil rights of Mexican Americans.
- After non-English speakers testify about the discrimination they face at the polls, Congress votes in 1975 to expand the U.S. Voting Rights Act to require language assistance at polling stations.
- In August 2009, Sonia M. Sotomayor become the first Latinx member of the Supreme Court.

THE CHICANO MOVEMENT

The Chicano Movement was a social and political movement inspired by prior acts of resistance among people of Mexican descent that worked to embrace a Chicano/a identity and worldview that combated structural racism, encouraged cultural revitalization, and achieved community empowerment by rejecting assimilation.

The Chicano Movement was heavily influenced by and entwined with the Black Power movement, and both movements held similar objectives of community empowerment and liberation while also calling for Black-Brown unity. Leaders such as César Chávez, Reies Tijerina, and Rodolfo Gonzales learned strategies of resistance and worked with leaders of the Black Power movement.

Similar to the Black Power movement, the Chicano Movement experienced heavy state surveillance, infiltration, and repression from the U.S. government, which led to the decline of the movement by the mid-1970s.



LATINX AMERICANS WHO MADE HISTORY

There isn't an industry in which Latinx Americans haven't made their mark in history. The below originally appeared on Biography.com and has been edited here for length. The full article, titled "15 Influential Hispanic Americans Who Made History", can be read [here](#).



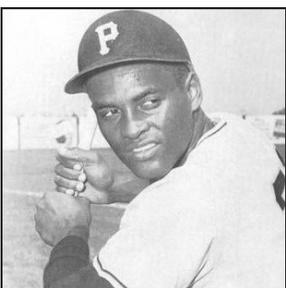
JULIA ALVAREZ

Dominican American writer Julia Alvarez has been enchanting readers with her words since the early 1990s. Alvarez was born in New York City in 1950 before her family moved to the Dominican Republic when she was a baby. They stayed there throughout Alvarez's childhood until her father's involvement in a failed attempt to overthrow the militant dictator forced the family to flee to the United States in 1960. The traumatic event has since made its way into several of Alvarez's works. She went on to become one of the most critically revered Latina writers and has published poems, novels and essays throughout her career.



CESAR CHAVEZ

Born in Arizona to a Mexican American family, Cesar Chavez grew up around the people he later helped through his activism. After receiving an honorable discharge from the Navy, Chavez worked as a lumber handler in San Jose, where he helped set up a chapter of the Community Service Organization, a pivotal civil rights organization for Latinos in California. He and fellow activist Dolores Huerta would go on to found the National Farm Workers Association, later the United Farm Workers labor union, becoming primary figures for Latin American civil rights. Though Chavez later received criticism from within for his singular control of the union, the activist is still regarded as an important civil rights leader and posthumously received the Presidential Medal of Freedom the year after his death in 1993.



ROBERTO CLEMENTE

A pioneer of the game, Roberto Clemente paved the way for Latinx Americans in Major League Baseball. The prolific right fielder was born in 1934 in Puerto Rico. In 1954, the Pittsburgh Pirates scouted him during training in Richmond, Virginia and Clemente was called up to the majors by November of that year in the rookie draft. Clemente, wearing the iconic number 21, went on to become the first Latin American to win a World Series as a starting player in 1960. The athlete died in a plane crash in 1972 while on his way to Nicaragua to deliver aid to earthquake victims when he was 38. He was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1973, making him the first Latin American and Caribbean honoree.



GLORIA ESTEFAN

Singer Gloria Estefan is often synonymous with Latin music in the United States. Born in Cuba in 1957, Estefan's family fled to Miami during the Cuban Revolution in 1959. Her father enlisted in the military shortly after they immigrated and took part in the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion of Cuba, where he was captured by his own cousin and held prisoner for two years. While performing in a church ensemble in 1975, Estefan first met her future husband Emilio Estefan, who had recently formed a band in Miami. She and her cousin were invited to join his band and renamed it Miami Sound Machine, leading to hits like "Conga," "Anything for You," "Rhythm Is Gonna Get You," and "Hot Summer Nights." Her lengthy career has earned her three Grammy Awards and a Presidential Medal of Freedom under President Obama in 2015, as well as the Kennedy Center Honors in 2017. The musical *On Your Feet*, telling the story of her and Emilio's life, premiered on Broadway in 2015.

LATINX AMERICANS WHO MADE HISTORY



DOLORES HUERTA

At 90 years old, Dolores Huerta still stands as a giant in the fight for Latinx American labor rights. Born in 1930, the New Mexico native of Mexican descent grew up in a farm worker community. She co-founded the Agricultural Workers Association in 1960 and collaborated with Chavez to found the National Farm Workers Association in 1962. Her activism continued in California, where she made a name for herself by supporting and leading various strikes for workers' rights. She later stepped away from the union to focus on women's rights after she was badly beaten by a San Francisco police officer during a peaceful raid, resulting in a long recovery. Huerta now runs the Dolores Huerta Foundation and has received several accolades, including an inaugural Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights in 1998 under President Clinton and the Presidential Medal of Freedom under President Obama in 2012.



RITA MORENO

Rita Moreno has been a household name for decades, ever since she captivated audiences with her fierce portrayal of Anita in 1961's *West Side Story*. Moreno would go on to cement her name in history by winning the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for the role, becoming the first-ever Latinx American woman to win an Academy Award. Born Rosa Alverio on December 11, 1931 in Humacao, Puerto Rico, the actress later changed her last name to match her stepfather's after she immigrated to New York City with her mom in 1936. Moreno made her Broadway debut in *Skydrift* at age 13, with her career taking off after that. The pioneering actress went on to star in dozens of film, TV and stage shows through her decades-long career. She became only the third person ever to achieve the coveted EGOT, winning an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony Award by 1977. In 2019, she added a P to the achievement with a Peabody Award, one of only three performers to accomplish this feat.



ELLEN OCHOA

Ellen Ochoa made her mark by becoming the first Latinx American woman to go to space with a nine-day mission in 1993. Ochoa was born in 1958 in Los Angeles, California, years after her paternal grandparents immigrated from Mexico. Through her impressive research work, NASA selected Ochoa in 1991 and she became an astronaut in July of that year. Two years later, Ochoa made history on board the Space Shuttle Discovery on a mission to study the Earth's ozone layer. She later completed three more missions. Ochoa became the first Latinx American director of the Johnson Space Center in 2013, only the second woman to take the helm. After retiring with 30 years of service, Ochoa continues to advocate for women in STEM.



SYLVIA RIVERA

In addition to being an influential Latinx American, drag queen Sylvia Rivera is also an iconic figure in the gay and transgender rights movement. Rivera, born in New York City in 1951 of Puerto Rican and Venezuelan descent. Rivera was forced to leave home when she was 10, making her way through the rough streets of New York City. She often faced discrimination and violence, compelling her to begin her transgender and gay rights activism. Rivera and her friend Marsha P. Johnson, both sex workers, made an indelible mark in the advancement of LGBTQ rights. Both are credited with forming the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), later changed to Transgender, which helped house and support LGBTQ youth and sex workers in Manhattan. They also worked with the Gay Liberation Front, founded after the Stonewall Riot in 1969. Rivera died in February 2002 due to complications of liver cancer.

IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS RESOURCES

Everyone living in the U.S. has certain basic rights under the U.S. Constitution, including undocumented immigrants. If you encounter Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or other law enforcement officers at home, on the street, or anywhere else, remember that you have the rights described below. For more information, visit the National Immigration Law Center [website](#).

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT. YOU MAY REFUSE TO SPEAK TO IMMIGRATION OFFICERS.

- Don't answer any questions. You may also say that you want to remain silent.
- Don't say anything about where you were born or how you entered the U.S.

DO NOT OPEN YOUR DOOR.

- To be allowed to enter your home, ICE must have a warrant signed by a judge. Do not open your door unless an ICE agent shows you a warrant. (They almost never have one.) If an ICE agent wants to show you a warrant, they can hold it against a window or slide it under the door. To be valid, the warrant must have your correct name and address on it.
- You do not need to open the door to talk with an ICE agent. Once you open the door, it is much harder to refuse to answer questions.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

If you are stopped by immigration or the police:

- ✓ Hand this card to the officer, and remain silent.
- ✓ The card explains that you are exercising your right to refuse to answer any questions until you have talked with a lawyer.

To: Immigration or Other Officer

Right now I am choosing to exercise my legal rights.

- I will remain **silent**, and I refuse to answer your questions.
- If I am detained, I have the right to contact an attorney **immediately**.
- I refuse to sign anything without advice from an attorney.

Thank you.

CARRY A KNOW-YOUR-RIGHTS CARD AND SHOW IT IF AN IMMIGRATION OFFICER STOPS YOU.

- The card above explains that you will remain silent and that you wish to speak with an attorney.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SPEAK TO A LAWYER.

- You can simply say, "I need to speak to my attorney."
- You may have your lawyer with you if ICE or other law enforcement questions you.

IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS RESOURCES

BEFORE YOU SIGN ANYTHING, TALK TO A LAWYER.

- ICE may try to get you to sign away your right to see a lawyer or a judge. Be sure you understand what a document actually says before you sign it.

IF YOU ARE WORRIED ICE WILL ARREST YOU, LET THE OFFICER KNOW IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN.

- If you are the parent or primary caregiver of a U.S. citizen or permanent resident who is under age 18, ICE may “exercise discretion” and let you go.

CARRY WITH YOU ANY VALID IMMIGRATION DOCUMENT YOU HAVE.

- If you have a valid work permit or green card, be sure to have it with you in case you need to show it for identification purposes.
- Do not carry papers from another country with you, such as a foreign passport. Such papers could be used against you in the deportation process.

CREATE A SAFETY PLAN.

- Memorize the phone number of a friend, family member, or attorney that you can call if you are arrested.
- If you take care of children or other people, make a plan to have them taken care of if you are detained.
- Keep important documents such as birth certificates and immigration documents in a safe place where a friend or family member can access them if necessary.
- Make sure your loved ones know how to find you if you are detained by ICE. They can use ICE's online detainee locator to find an adult who is in immigration custody. Or they can call the local ICE office. Make sure they have your alien registration number written down, if you have one.
- You can call the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) hotline number at 240-314-1500 or 1-800-898-7180 (toll-free) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to get information on your case's status.

VOTING RESOURCES

The voter registration, vote by mail, and early voting information below is from the [Chicago Board of Elections website](#). For voters outside of the Chicago area, visit [Vote.org](#) to find the appropriate, up-to-date information for your state.

REGISTER TO VOTE

WHEN, WHERE & HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE, FILE A NAME CHANGE, OR FILE AN ADDRESS CHANGE

- **ONLINE:** Use your IL driver's license or state ID card to register to vote or to change your name or address. Deadline: 11:59 pm, Sun., Oct. 23. *(Yes, you may register online at your new address using an IL state ID and/or IL driver's license that still has your old address.)*
- **IN PERSON AT EARLY VOTING:** You must show two (2) forms of ID. At least one (1) ID must list your current address. At all Early Voting sites through close of polls Nov. 8.
- **AT YOUR PRECINCT POLLING PLACE ON ELECTION DAY ON NOV. 8.** You must show (2) forms of ID. At least one (1) ID must list your current address.

TO REGISTER TO VOTE, YOU MUST:

- be a U.S. citizen, and
- be born on or before Nov. 8, 2004, and
- live in your precinct at least 30 days before the election, and
- not claim the right to vote elsewhere; and
- not be in prison/jail serving time for a conviction. (Note: Ex-convicts who have been released from prison/jail and who meet all other requirements listed above are eligible to register and vote in Illinois. Ex-convicts who have been released and are on parole/probation ARE eligible to vote in Illinois.)

[CLICK HERE TO CHECK THE STATUS OF YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION.](#)

VOTE BY MAIL

1. APPLY TO VOTE BY MAIL. Any Chicago voter may apply online now to vote by mail ahead. Your Vote By Mail application must be submitted by 5pm on Nov. 3, 2022. No reason or excuse is needed to vote by mail.

2. MARK YOUR BALLOT. Follow all instructions that come with your ballot and be sure to vote in secret. When marking your ballot, use a black or blue ballpoint pen or a felt-tip pen. Do NOT use a red pen, because red ink cannot be read by the ballot scanners.

3. RETURN YOUR BALLOT. The Board supplies all Vote By Mail voters with postage-paid Ballot Return Envelopes to return the ballots.

The signed and sealed Ballot Return Envelope may be returned:

- through the U.S. Postal Service or a licensed courier, OR
- in a [Secured Drop Box](#) at any Chicago Early Voting location before Election Day, OR
- by personal delivery to the Election Board at 69 W. Washington, Sixth Floor

Especially in the two weeks before Election Day, Chicago voters are encouraged to use a Secured Drop Box at any Chicago Early Voting site to return the signed and sealed Ballot Return Envelope.

VOTING RESOURCES

EARLY VOTING

Secured Drop Boxes will be available at every Early Voting site for any Chicago Vote By Mail voter to submit the signed and sealed Ballot Return Envelope.

For the 2022 General Election, Chicago voters may use any Early Voting & Registration location in the city, starting Sept. 29 through Nov. 8, 2022 (Election Day).

Any ballots that voters cast in Early Voting are final. After casting ballots in Early Voting, voters may not return to amend, change or undo a ballot for any reason. It is a felony to vote more than once—or to attempt to vote more than once—in the same election.

[VIEW LOCATIONS & HOURS FOR EARLY VOTING & SECURE DROP BOXES HERE.](#)

VOTING RIGHTS

FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF VOTING RIGHTS VISIT THE [ACLU WEBSITE.](#)

- If the polls close while you're still in line, stay in line – you have the right to vote.
- If you make a mistake on your ballot, ask for a new one.
- If the machines are down at your polling place, ask for a paper ballot.
- Under federal law, voters who have difficulty reading or writing English may receive in-person assistance at the polls from the person of their choice. This person cannot be the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, or an agent or officer of the voter's union.
- It's illegal to intimidate voters and a federal crime to “intimidate, threaten, [or] coerce ... any other person for the purpose of interfering with the right of [that] other person to vote or to vote as he may choose.”
- Under federal law, all polling places for federal elections must be fully accessible to older adults and voters with disabilities. Simply allowing curbside voting is not enough to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements.
- In federal elections, every polling place must have at least one voting system that allows voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently.
- If you have difficulty using the materials provided to make your ballot selections, review, or cast your ballot, let a poll worker know and ask for the help you need. Accessibility is the law.
- If you run into any problems or have questions on Election Day, call the Election Protection Hotline:
 - English: 1-866-OUR-VOTE / 1-866-687-8683
 - Spanish: 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA / 1-888-839-8682
 - Arabic: 1-844-YALLA-US / 1-844-925-5287
 - For Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Urdu, Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog, or Vietnamese: 1-888-274-8683

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

NAMI CHICAGO

Since 1979, NAMI Chicago has fought for families and individuals impacted by mental health conditions. They promote community wellness, break down barriers to mental health care and provide support and expertise for families, professionals and individuals in Chicago and beyond.

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS (CPS)

Their mission is to provide a high-quality public education for every child, in every neighborhood, that prepares each for success in college, career, and civic life

THE FAMILY INSTITUTE AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

The Family Institute brings together a diverse group of leading therapists to provide behavioral health care to children, adults, couples and families across the lifespan.

HANA CENTER

Empowers multiethnic immigrant communities through social services, education, culture, and community organizing to advance human rights.

ILLINOIS COALITION FOR IMMIGRANT REFUGEE & RIGHTS

Educates and organizes immigrant and refugee communities to assert their rights.

IMMIGRATION ADVOCATES NETWORK

An organization dedicated to expanding access to immigration legal resources and information through collaboration and technology.



ABOUT THE **BLUE INK AWARD**

Alma was the winner of the 2019 Blue Ink Award for playwriting.

The nationally-renowned Blue Ink Award was created in 2010 to support new work. Since its inception, American Blues Theater has named 12 Award winners, 112 finalists, and 171 semi-finalists. Nearly \$10,000 in cash and prizes was distributed to playwrights in 2022.

Each year American Blues Theater accepts worldwide submissions of original, unpublished full-length plays. The winning play will be selected by Artistic Director Gwendolyn Whiteside and the theater's Ensemble. The winning playwright receives a monetary prize of \$2,500. Cash prizes are awarded to finalists and semi-finalists too. All proceeds of the administrative fee are distributed for playwrights' cash prizes.

ABOUT AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

Winner of American Theatre Wing's prestigious National Theatre Company Award, American Blues Theater is a premier arts organization with an intimate environment that patrons, artists, and all Chicagoans call home. **American Blues Theater explores the American identity through the plays it produces and communities it serves.**

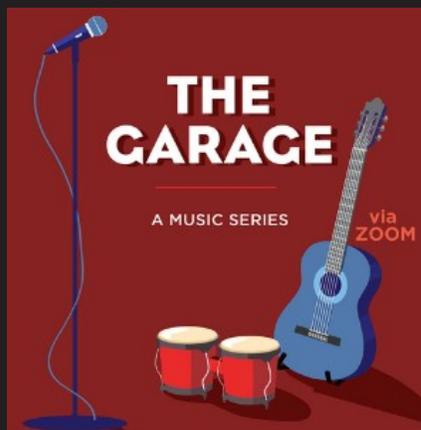
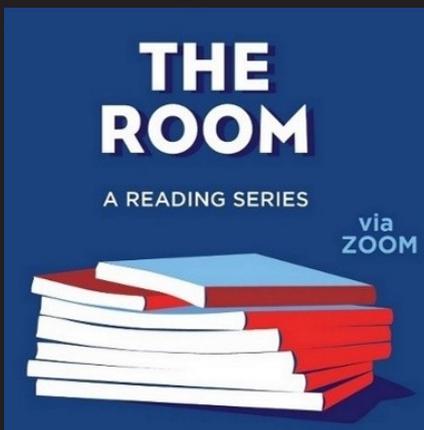
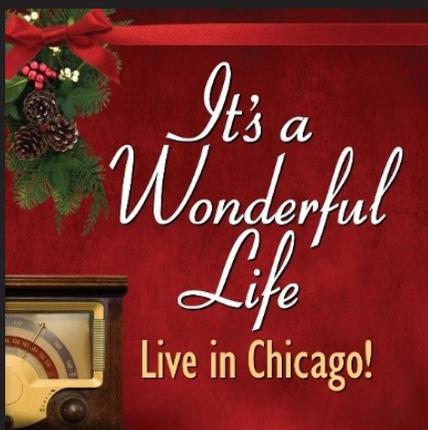
We are Chicago's **second-oldest professional Equity Ensemble theater**. As of 2022, our theater and artists received 222 Joseph Jefferson Awards and nominations that celebrate excellence in Chicago theater and 44 Black Theatre Alliance Awards. Our artists are honored with Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize nominations, Academy Awards, Golden Globe Awards, Emmy Awards, and numerous other accolades. Our artists work throughout the nation - including Broadway and regional theaters - and loyally return to our stage.

American Blues Theater is committed to developing the classic plays and musicals of tomorrow. More than half of our mainstage productions are world and Chicago premieres. Our new play development consists of a variety of programs – including world and Chicago premieres, the nationally-recognized *Blue Ink Award*, commissions, *The Room* staged readings, *The Garage* concerts, and annual *Ripped Festival* of new short-plays. Our Arts Education offerings include acclaimed programming in Chicago Public School classrooms, artist-led instruction for all ages through *Classes for the Masses*, and being a Chicago-anchor for the national *#ENOUGH: Plays to End Gun Violence* program.

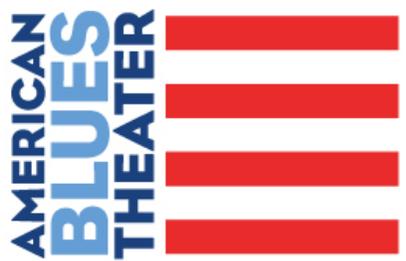
We believe it is an honor and duty to serve our community. We raise awareness of other non-profit organizations' commendable causes through creative collaborations. We hold food drives, distribute promotional materials, offer free post-show discussions, provide complimentary tickets, honor military personnel, hold exclusive performances for underserved communities, and raise awareness for children's surgeries. We donate proceeds from "Pediatric Previews" to Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago.

American Blues Theater is your Chicago home for bold, exceptional, and relevant performances. **Your ticket purchases and donations help us make Chicago *the first city* in all our hearts.**

UPCOMING EVENTS AT AMERICAN BLUES THEATER



Visit AmericanBluesTheater.com to learn more.



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
4809 N RAVENSWOOD, SUITE 221
CHICAGO, IL 60640
AMERICANBLUESTHEATER.COM