

# Where in the US Are There Museums in Latino Neighborhoods?

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## Highlights

Of museums in the United States, **16 percent** are located in neighborhoods with Latino population shares of 25 percent or higher.

**Two-thirds of museums** in neighborhoods with Latino population shares of 25 percent or higher are located in one of five states.

**This is one of a series of products from Urban’s research to inform development** of the new American Latino History and Culture program to be administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. This grantmaking program aims to strengthen the capacity of American Latino museums at promoting and preserving the study of Latino life, art, history, and culture. For more, see <https://www.urban.org/projects/planning-american-latino-history-and-culture-program>.

Note: We use the term “Latino” throughout to remain consistent with legislation authorizing this new program (Public Law 116-260), and intend for it to reference all diverse people of Spanish and/or Latin American origin in the US.

Museums exist, for the most part, in actual physical locations (even if virtual collections and accessibility strategies complicate this). However, physical presence alone does not necessarily result in a museum having strong ties with people living in the surrounding neighborhoods. There has been extensive debate and work in the past few decades to push museums to engage more directly with the local communities within which they exist (Allison 2019; Dawson 2014; Farrell and Medvedeva 2010).

As a part of Urban’s project to inform the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) as it develops a new grantmaking program aimed at supporting American Latino museums, Urban’s research team identified museums in the US that promote and preserve Latino life, art, history, and culture, and identified museums located in neighborhoods where significant shares of the population are Latino.

This summary focuses on the second group: museums identified not by their mission or content, but by their location. We identify how many of these museums there are and where they are located, and we examine these data by museum type. Though this summary’s focus is on museums in Latino neighborhoods, it also includes some discussion of museums in Black neighborhoods.

## HOW MANY MUSEUMS ARE LOCATED IN LATINO NEIGHBORHOODS?

According to data from the National Center for Charitable Statistics database of nonprofits, there were 9,378 museums in the United States in 2022. This number is based on institutions that filed IRS forms and are classified as “museums” under IRS activity codes. These data may miss newer and smaller museums and organizations that may be classified as things other than museums. Nonetheless, these data provide a sense of the size of the field.

Of these museums, 1,472 (or 16 percent) are in census tracts where 25 percent or more of the population is Latino, and 532 (6 percent) are in tracts where 50 percent or more of the population is Latino (table 1). The numbers of museums in tracts with sizeable Black population shares are similar, although slightly smaller.

Of the 106 museums we identified as having missions focusing on issues of Latino life, art, history, and culture or had hosted recent exhibits on these topics, 77 (73 percent) are in tracts where 25 percent or more of the population is Latino, and 57 (54 percent) are in tracts where 50 percent or more of the population is Latino. This means that these museums are considerably more likely than museums overall to be in neighborhoods with large Latino population shares, even if they are by no means only located in these neighborhoods.

**TABLE 1**  
**Museums in Neighborhoods with Large Latino and Black Population Shares**

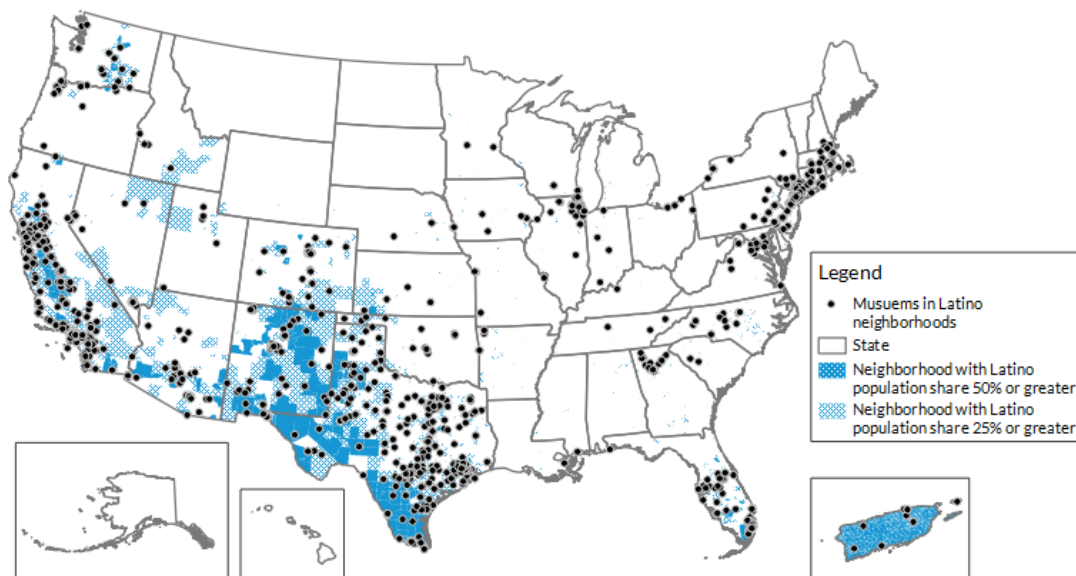
Neighborhoods' Latino or Black population share	Number of museums	Share of US museums
25 percent or more Latino population	1,472	16%
50 percent or more Latino population	532	6%
25 percent or more Black population	1,216	13%
50 percent or more Black population	503	5%
Totals	9,378	100%

**Source:** Analysis using National Center for Charitable Statistics IRS Business Master Files and IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System data based on American Community Survey 2017–2021 five-year estimates.  
**Note:** Neighborhoods = US census tracts for the purpose of this analysis.

**WHERE IN THE US ARE MUSEUMS IN LATINO NEIGHBORHOODS LOCATED?**

Neighborhoods with large Latino population shares are found throughout the United States, but are particularly concentrated in the Southwest and West: from California through Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Other areas with large concentrations include Florida, Puerto Rico, and New York, large metropolitan areas, and some more rural communities, particularly in the West (figure 1). This means that museums selected based on population patterns are also concentrated in these regions. Conversely, it means there are fewer museums in less populated regions, such as northern Nevada and southern Idaho.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Where Museums in Neighborhoods with Large Latino Population Shares Are Located**

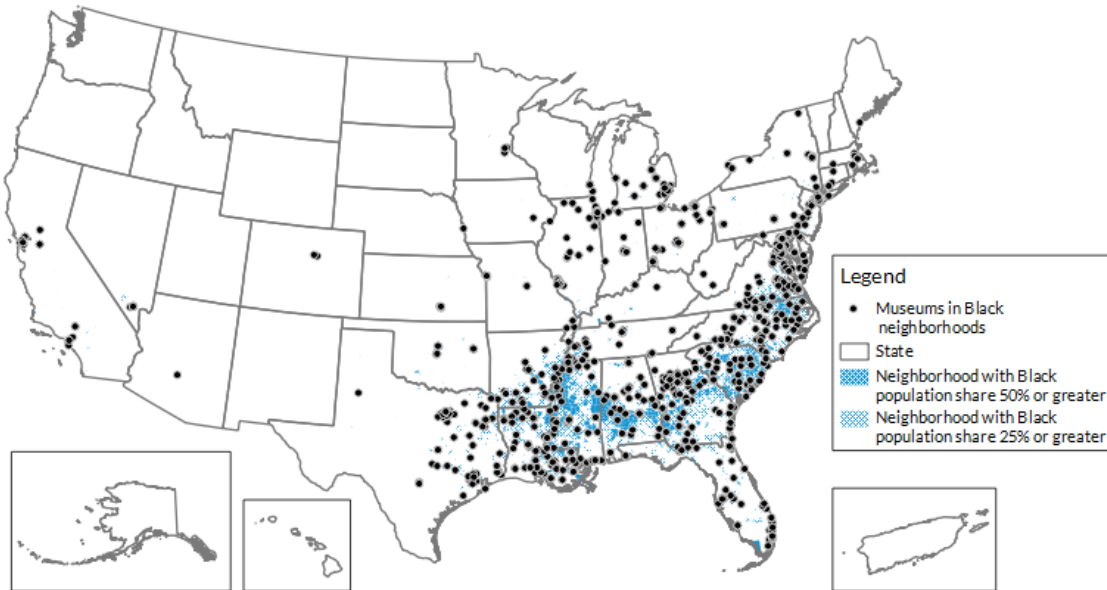


**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of the 2022 National Center for Charitable Statistics Internal Revenue Service Business Master Files, accessed April 4, 2023, <https://nccs-data.urban.org/data.php?ds=bmf>; and IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System data based on American Community Survey 2017–2021 five-year estimates, accessed April 4, 2023, <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.  
**Note:** Neighborhoods = US census tracts for the purpose of this analysis.

The patterning of neighborhoods with large Black population shares across the United States has similarities and differences with those for Latino neighborhoods: though they are also located in many large metropolitan areas, the largest geographical concentration is in the South, particularly Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, South and North Carolina, and Virginia (figure 2).

FIGURE 2

**Where Museums in Neighborhoods with Large Black Population Shares Are Located**



Source: Urban Institute analysis of the 2022 National Center for Charitable Statistics Internal Revenue Service Business Master Files, accessed April 4, 2023, <https://nccs-data.urban.org/data.php?ds=bmf>; and IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System data based on American Community Survey 2017–2021 five-year estimates, accessed April 4, 2023, <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.  
 Note: Neighborhoods = US census tracts for the purpose of this analysis.

Another way of examining patterns is reviewing the states where these museums are located. Table 2 shows the states with the most museums in tracts with large Latino and Black population shares.

The five states with the most museums overall (California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Pennsylvania) account for 32 percent of all museums. This means that about two-thirds of museums are located elsewhere. American Latino museums, by comparison, are more concentrated in fewer states: 67 percent of these museums in tracts with Latino population shares of at least 25 percent are in one of five states, and 77 percent of these museums in tracts with Latino population shares of at least 50 percent are in one of five states. The states differ somewhat, too: Texas, California, New York, and Florida have high concentrations of American Latino museums, but New Mexico and Arizona stand out as well.

The concentration of museums in Black neighborhoods is overall more similar to that of museums overall: just over one-third of museums in neighborhoods with Black population shares of at least 25 percent are in one of five states, for example. However, the states differ, with the highest concentration being in states in the South (although Michigan, and the Detroit region in particular, stands out).

TABLE 2

### The Five States with the Most Museums in Neighborhoods with Large Latino and Black Population Shares

State	All neighborhoods	Latino 25% or more	Latino 50% or more	Black 25% or more	Black 50% or more
State 1	CA: 9.4%	CA: 26.1%	TX: 32.5%	GA: 8.9%	GA: 14.0%
State 2	TX: 7.8%	TX: 24.9%	CA: 26.3%	LA: 7.3%	LA: 12.5%
State 3	NY: 6.6%	FL: 6.1%	NM: 7.3%	TX: 7.2%	AL: 11.2%
State 4	FL: 4.1%	NM: 5.2%	FL: 7.0%	NC: 6.3%	MS: 11.0%
State 5	PA: 4.1%	NY: 4.4%	AZ: 4.1%	AL: 6.0%	MI: 6.7%
Share in top 5 states	32.0%	66.7%	77.3%	35.7%	55.4%

**Source:** Urban Institute Analysis using National Center for Charitable Statistics IRS Business Master Files and IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System data based on American Community Survey 2017-2021 five-year estimates.

**Notes:** State 1 = the state with the most museums in a given category, state 2 = the state with the second-most museums in that category, and so on. For example, in the “Latino 25% or more” category, state 1 is California, meaning it has the most museums in neighborhoods where 25 percent or more of the population is Latino. Neighborhoods = US census tracts for the purpose of this analysis.

### WHAT KINDS OF MUSEUMS ARE THESE?

Lastly, the NCCS IRS data enable a high-level examination of what sorts of museums are located in Latino neighborhoods. Table 3, which shows museum classification codes by census tract type, shows that when comparing all museums with museums in Latino (and Black) neighborhoods, the shares of different types of museums are roughly similar. The similarities here are themselves noteworthy in that they show that museums in Latino and Black neighborhoods reflect the same range of museum types as museums overall.

TABLE 3

### Museum Classification Codes by Neighborhood Shares of Latino and Black Populations

Museum type	All neighborhoods	Latino 25% or more	Latino 50% or more	Black 25% or more	Black 50% or more
Museums (not otherwise specified) (A50)	55.9%	54.0%	54.1%	56.6%	59.2%
Art museums (A51)	8.3%	9.4%	9.8%	9.0%	8.3%
Children's museums (A52)	3.5%	4.2%	3.8%	3.9%	3.4%
Folk arts museums (A53)	1.4%	1.9%	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%
History museums (A54)	26.3%	25.4%	25.0%	24.9%	23.9%
Natural history and natural science museums (A56)	1.7%	2.0%	2.3%	0.7%	1.2%
Science and technology museums (A57)	2.9%	3.1%	3.4%	3.3%	2.4%
Totals	9,378	1,472	532	1,216	503

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis using National Center for Charitable Statistics IRS Business Master Files and IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System data based on American Community Survey 2017-2021 five-year estimates.

**Notes:** Museum types are based on IRS activity codes A50 through A57. See “IRS Activity Codes,” National Center for Charitable Statistics, accessed December 6, 2023, <https://nccs.urban.org/publication/irs-activity-codes>.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Museums are located in different sorts of neighborhoods across the United States. The characteristics of people who live in those neighborhoods vary by region and change over time. Though their immediate communities are generally not museums’ sole audiences, they provide an obvious opportunity for museums to build stronger local ties and larger audiences, and for collaboration and cocreation. This summary, which shows that museums in Latino communities are located across the US and represent a range of museum types, illustrates that there are hundreds of museums that can engage with sizeable Latino communities in their immediate neighborhoods.

## REFERENCES

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