In 2013, the U.S. Congress authorized and requested President Barack Obama to designate September 15 through October 15 “National Hispanic Heritage Month,” in order to honor the achievements of Hispanics in America. During his proclamation of National Hispanic Heritage Month in 2013, the President stated two key facts: First, all Americans are bound by a love of liberty and justice and the belief that a better life should await anyone willing to work for it; secondly, Hispanic Americans represent an array of distinct and vibrant cultures, each of which enriches communities in valuable ways.

Because America is a giant home to dozens of cultures and ethnicities, we may wonder why Hispanic cultures are given this recognition. We may find some understanding in the following facts:

- At the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848, the U.S. paid Mexico to get what is today Texas, New Mexico, and California. Thus, the children growing in these areas are the descendants of Hispanic heritage, an embedded part of the United States.
- After 1877, as the U.S. gained industrial power, it developed very strong political and economic relationships with Central American and Caribbean countries. American and Hispanic cultures merged in important ways.
- Spanish colonies were in many territories around the world: North America (Mexico and the South and Southwest regions of the U.S.), Central and South America, the Caribbean, Africa (Equatorial Guinea), and Asia (Guam and The Philippines).
- With 329 million native speakers, Spanish ranks as the world’s #2 language spoken as a first language. Chinese is #1 with 1.2 billion native speakers. English is #3 with 328 million.
- The influence of the Spanish language can be seen in varying levels throughout the world. Eighteen countries list Spanish as their native language. Many other countries such as the U.S., Guam or the Philippines reflect heavy Spanish influence in their native languages as a result of earlier Spanish colonialism or intermingling with Spanish cultures. These countries are not a monolithic group. They have great differences in ethnicity, culture, origin, and race. The racial spectrum includes white, African American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American.
- The U.S. chose to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month starting Sept 15 because of the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile received their independence a few days later.
- Why Hispanic? The term Hispanic originally represented individuals from Hispania—former name for the area of Spain and Portugal. However, as stated above, Hispanic people do not represent a race or simply individuals from one specific region. The term has grown to encompass a wide-array of people who possess an equally wide variety of backgrounds.