

# Survey Summary: Latino Attitudes On Sugary Drinks and Tax Campaigns



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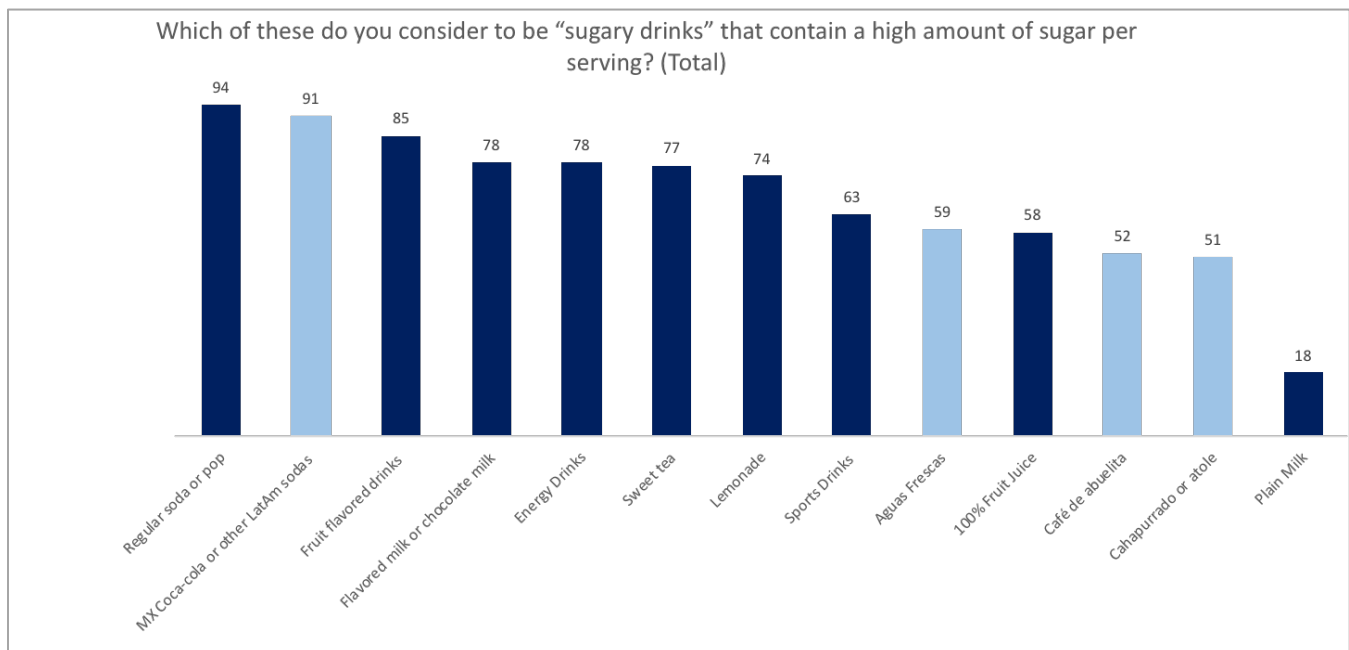


Voices for Healthy Kids, an initiative of the American Heart Association, conducted a national survey in the spring of 2021 to learn more about Latino adults' attitudes about sugary drinks and campaigns to reduce the consumption of those drinks. This summary highlights the main findings that can help engage the Latino community in advocacy efforts to increase access to healthy beverages and to reduce consumption of sugary drinks.

The research included a survey of 1,500 Latino adults and included oversamples of mothers and grandparents to allow for analysis of these two key sub-groups. (More information about the methodology below.)

## DEFINING SUGARY DRINKS

Nearly all respondents (94%) view soda as a sugary drink, with a slightly smaller percentage (91%) defining Mexican colas or other Latin American sodas as high in sugar. Most Latinos also view fruit-flavored drinks and flavored milk as sugary drinks. In addition, the survey tested some Latino specific beverages including aguas frescas, café de abuelita and atole. These are viewed as high in sugar by a smaller percentage of Latinos than more traditional beverages like lemonade or sports drinks often considered in sugary drink tax policies.



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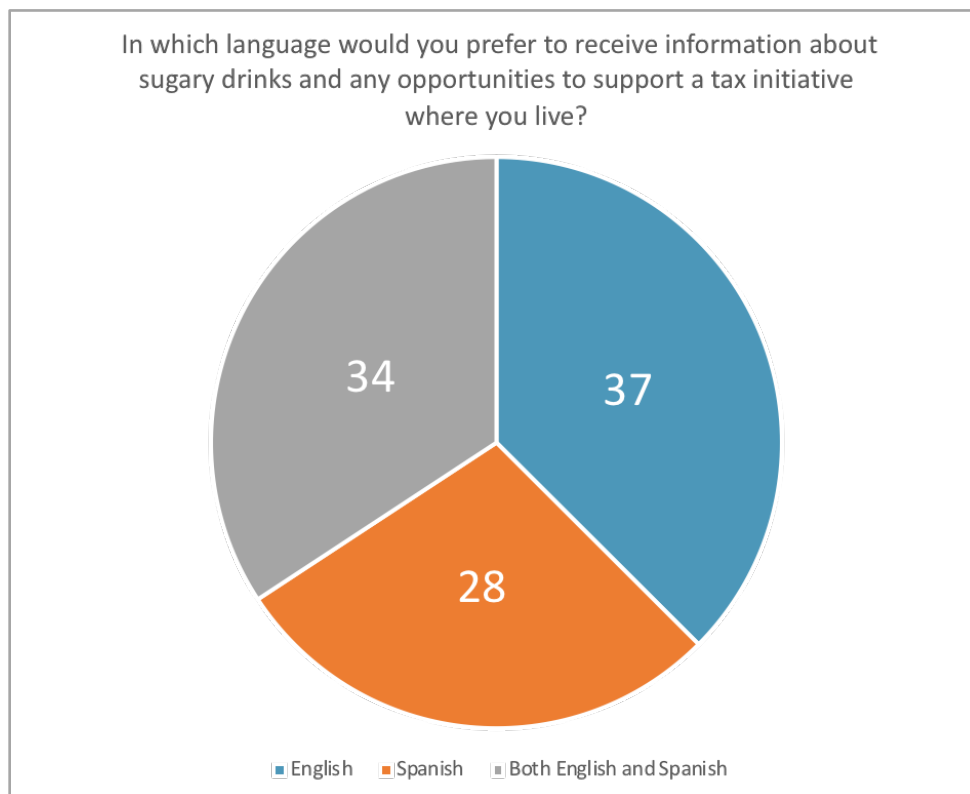
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## LANGUAGE PREFERENCES

There is high support for sugary drink taxes among Spanish-speaking Latinos. When asked which language respondents prefer to receive information about sugary drinks, the majority (62%) reported that they prefer to get information about sugary beverages in Spanish (28%) or in both English and Spanish (34%).

This is an important consideration, as 45% of the respondents reported that they speak Spanish daily.



## OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD SUPPORT FOR SUGARY DRINK TAXES

Initial support for sugary drink taxes was mixed at 35%, but support jumped to 61% after respondents received more information.

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- Support for a sugary beverage tax was 14% higher among respondents who took the survey in Spanish.
- 65% of moms and grandparents support sugary drink taxes in the post-test. Latina moms and grandparents are key sub-groups that expressed higher support for sugary beverage taxes than Latinos overall.
  - Moms' support in the pre-test is 39%.
  - Grandparents' support in the pre-test is 36%.
- 71% of Latino immigrants supported a tax, 17% more than U.S.-born Latinos in the post-test.

### GRANDPARENTS AND MOMS NEED TO BE ENGAGED IN HEALTHY DRINK EFFORTS

Our research identified mothers and grandparents as important audiences in the Latino community when it comes to healthy drink efforts and reducing sugary drink consumption.

#### **Grandparents**

- Up to 16% of homes with children identified grandparents as the primary caregivers.
- Seven percent of adults said their parents do the grocery shopping in their home, 16% among those ages 18-34.
- 68% of grandparents said health was most important when giving their grandchildren snacks and meals.
- 92% of grandparents agree with the following statement, highest among all Latino subgroups: *"People's health is affected by where they live. We need to make sure communities have everything people need to make healthy choices — like grocery stores with healthy food and drink choices, safe water and places to exercise."*
- Grandparents are much more likely than Latinos overall to identify the following statement as a reason to support a sugary beverage tax: *"Every child deserves to grow up healthy, which means promoting healthy drinks like water and plain milk instead of sugary drinks that can lead to long-term health problems."*

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### Moms

Moms are central to decision-making in Latino communities across the country, and a growing number of Latino households are led by single moms.

- 86% of Latina moms report that they buy the groceries for their home, which is significantly higher (+14%) than Latino dads.
- The survey data suggests that although Latinas have strong concerns about their children's health, they're not convinced that sugary beverage taxes are effective.
- 42% view the major soda brands as "trustworthy," which is higher than Latinos overall.
- Respondents were asked about sugary drink tax revenues going back to the community to support healthy food access, clean and safe drinking water, and increasing healthy food options in schools. 78% of Latina moms reported that this increases their support for sugary drink taxes, the highest among demographic sub-groups.

### MESSAGES THAT RESONATE: HEALTH, USING TAX DOLLARS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS, EFFECTIVENESS OF TAXES ELSEWHERE

Messages that focus on the health outcomes associated with sugary drinks for Latino children and those that suggest sugary drink tax revenues could flow back into Latino communities are powerful.

Latinos are very concerned about the health implications of sugary beverages for children. When asked to identify the most important reason to support a sugary beverage tax, the most identified reason was: *"Every child deserves to grow up healthy, which means promoting healthy drinks like water and plain milk instead of sugary drinks that can lead to long-term health problems."*

Latinos are moved by messages focusing on health outcomes associated with sugary drink consumption for both adults and children, such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease. This is particularly persuasive among women, parents and grandparents. Fifty-three percent of respondents have diabetes or have a family member who does. Reminding Latinos of this personal connection to the health consequences of high sugar consumption through messaging will be effective.

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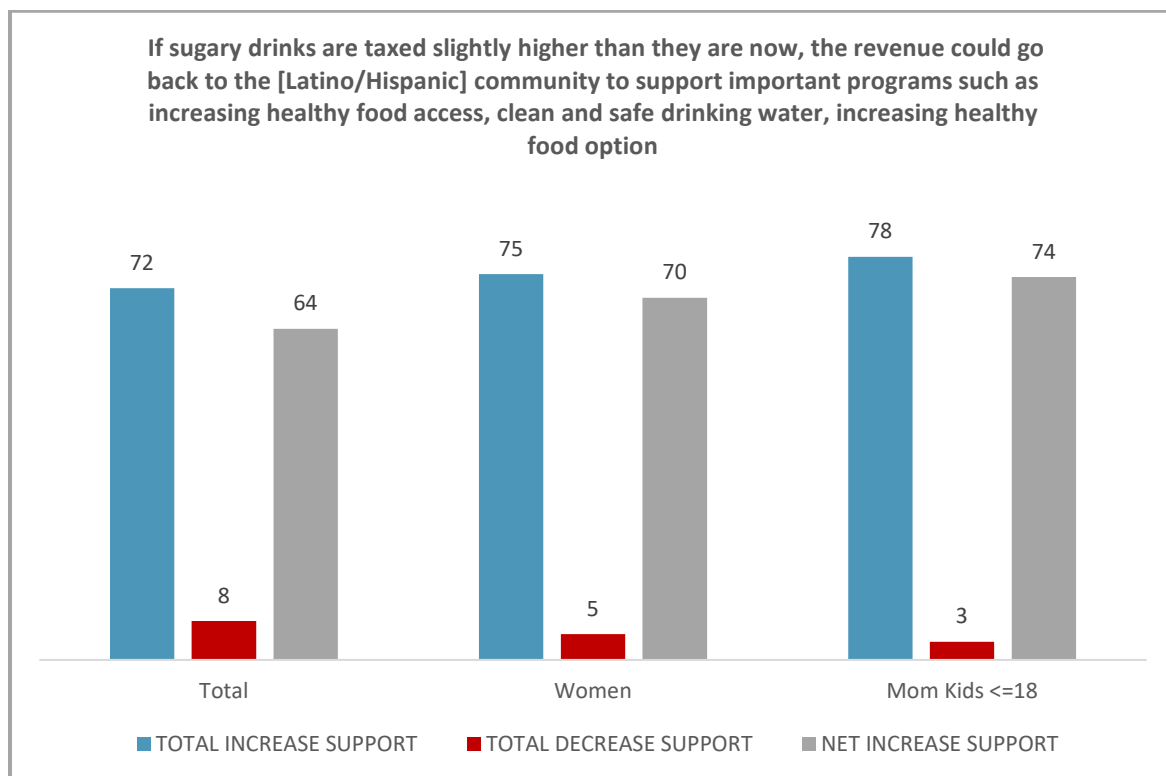
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Another effective message is focusing on tax revenue going back to the Latino community. For example, the following message would increase support for a sugary beverage tax among 72% of respondents (81% among Spanish-speaking respondents):

*“If sugary drinks are taxed, the revenue could go back to the Latino/Hispanic community to support important programs such as increasing healthy food access, clean and safe drinking water, increasing healthy food options in schools, and other programs that our communities desperately need.”*



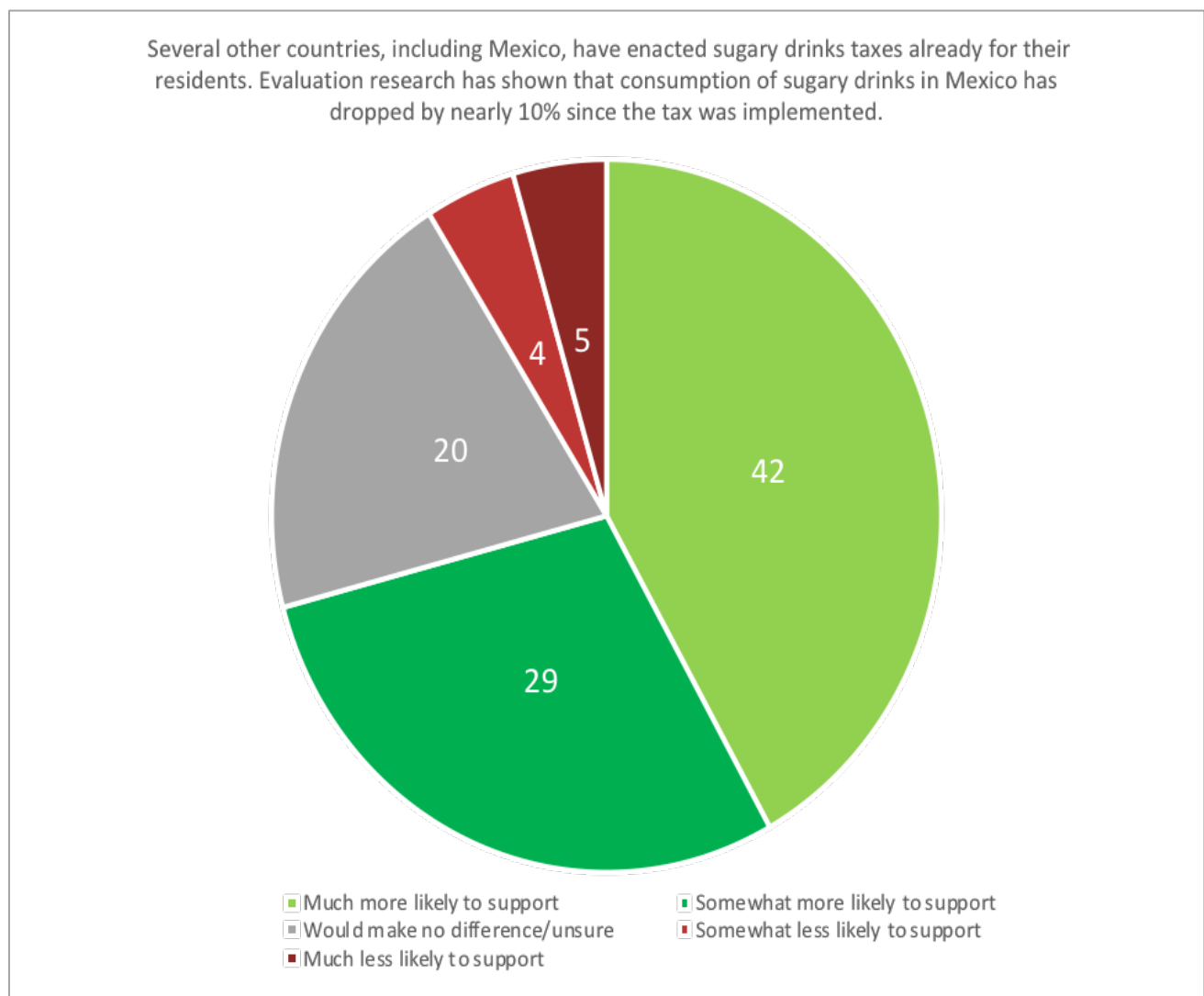
Finally, nearly half of respondents believe a tax on sugary drinks is a good idea but that it will not work because people will buy these drinks if they want them. This skepticism is particularly high among Latinos over 60 and immigrants.

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Outreach efforts and messaging must highlight how sugary drink taxes have worked elsewhere to decrease purchases and invest in community programs. This includes talking about Mexico’s national sugary drink tax. The survey tested this example and a combined 71% of respondents indicated this information makes them *more likely* to support a sugary beverage tax. This was particularly strong among respondents of Mexican origin, immigrants and Spanish speakers.



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## TRUSTED MESSENGERS

The survey identified Hispanic or Latino nurses, doctors and other medical professionals, teachers and educators as the most trusted sources of information/messengers about sugary drinks and sugary beverage taxes. Community organizations that work directly with the Latino community also tested well as reliable sources of information.

- 84% of respondents said Hispanic or Latino nurses, doctors and other medical professionals are trustworthy sources of information about sugary drinks.
- 77% of respondents said teachers and educators are trustworthy sources of information.

## CAMPAIGNS MUST BE AWARE OF OPPOSITION MESSAGES

The oppositions' messages will have traction. More Latinos agree (+36%) than disagree with this statement: *"Efforts to pass sugary drink taxes are just another example of progressive organizations from out of state trying to tell Latinos, Hispanics and other communities of color what they should eat and drink."*

Countering this theme with locally trusted organizations and messengers will help, as may using the message that tax revues could be used to support important community programs.

### **Methodology:**

The survey of 1,500 interviews resulted in an overall margin of error of +/- 2.5%. The survey was drawn from a random selection of targeted sampling lists of email addresses and phone numbers of high-probability Latino adult homes. Respondents were recruited with up to five contacts to improve the representativeness of the sample. The survey had oversamples of mothers and grandparents to allow for analysis of these two key sub-groups.

This was a mixed-mode survey with telephone and online surveys. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish based on the respondent's preference with fully bilingual interviewers. There were 511 surveys in Spanish. The data was weighted to ensure demographic balance of the sample based on the demographic parameters defined by the American Community Survey's Latino adult population.

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