



# The Changing U.S. Workforce: The Growing Hispanic Demographic and the Workplace

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A Research Report by the Society for Human Resource Management and  
the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute



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## About the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

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The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world's largest HR professional society, representing 285,000 members in more than 165 countries. For nearly seven decades, the Society has been the leading provider of resources serving the needs of HR professionals and advancing the practice of human resource management. SHRM has more than 575 affiliated chapters within the United States and subsidiary offices in China, India and United Arab Emirates. Visit us at [shrm.org](http://shrm.org).

## About the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI)

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CHCI is the premier Hispanic nonprofit and nonpartisan 501(c)(3) leadership development organization in the country that educates, empowers, and connects Latino youth by providing leadership development programs and educational services. CHCI directly impacts the lives of more than 1,600 students and young professionals each year through its fellowships, congressional internships, scholar-intern programs, Ready to Lead (R2L<sup>®</sup>) college readiness program, and R2L NextGen program. CHCI NextOpp is its latest resource allowing young Latinos to share life-changing opportunities for Latinos across the United States.

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# Contents

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- Executive Summary .....4**
- The Changing U.S. Workforce: The Growing Hispanic Demographic and the Workplace .....6**
  - Unprecedented Demographic Shifts Occurring in the Labor Market.....7
  - The Current Job Market and the Skills Gap .....9
- The Impact of Educational Attainment .....11**
  - Barriers and Challenges to Educational Attainment ..... 11
  - Strategies to Support and Improve Educational and Career Outcomes..... 14
  - Employers: Promising Practices to Leverage the Hispanic Demographic ..... 15
- Case Studies .....16**
  - Mentoring: A Spotlight on the Hispanic Women’s Network of Texas.....16
  - Structured Pathways: A Spotlight on Northern Virginia Community College’s Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program ..... 16
  - Meeting Industry Needs: A Spotlight on the South Mountain Community College’s Bilingual Nursing Fellows Program.....17
  - Internship & Fellowship Programs: A Spotlight on the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute’s Internship and Fellowship Program .....17
- Conclusion .....19**
- Endnotes.....20**



## Executive Summary

Changing workforces and demographics will intersect in the second half of this century. As Baby Boomers—once the largest workforce in America—enter retirement in record numbers, an employee vacuum will reverberate across the entire workforce. At the same time, over 80 million people born between 1982 and 2000, also known as Millennials, will surpass Baby Boomers in numbers and transform the workforce.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) present this report on the changing U.S. workforce, with special focus on the growing Hispanic demographic. This report provides the latest research and high-level insights from experts on the challenges and opportunities presented by the massive influx of Hispanics into the workforce to ensure that this new generation of employees will enter the U.S. labor market not only career-ready, but with marketable skills and hands-on experiences that match up with the needs of the economy. The following are highlights from the report:

### Unprecedented demographic shifts in the labor market:

- Real economic issues, such as the recovering economy and global competitiveness, are driving the need for companies to effectively tap into the burgeoning growth of the Hispanic population.
- By 2060, the workforce participation rate will decline to nearly 60 percent; that decline is largely due to the number of Baby Boomers retiring.
- Hispanics currently make up 16 percent of the overall U.S. labor market and will account for one out of every two new workers entering the workforce by 2025 and 66,000 are turning 18 every month.

### Current job market and skills gap:

- The U.S. labor market is facing an overall problem related to skills shortages. The challenge is twofold.

- Many jobs go vacant because employers are unable to find workers with the appropriate skills to fill them.
- There is a disconnect between the skills that employers are looking for and the skills that Millennials possess when they enter the labor market.

### Educational attainment:

- Raising the educational attainment of Hispanics is perhaps the best way to ensure that Hispanic students are prepared to fill the jobs of the future.
- Many of the fastest-growing occupations of the future will require more than a high school education and also will pay significantly more.
- By 2020, 65 percent of an estimated 165 million jobs in the U.S. economy will require some postsecondary education or training beyond high school.
- Hispanics are enrolling in college in record numbers, on par with rates of white students and outpacing the rates of enrollment for black students.

### Barriers to education attainment:

While high college enrollment numbers are encouraging, ultimately it is college completion that will prove to be the vehicle to provide an economic lift to Hispanics eager to move up the economic ladder. Hispanics must also address some unique challenges not encountered by other groups. Areas in which challenges and opportunities exist for Hispanic youth include:



- **College readiness.** Students entering college find they may need one or two years of remedial courses before they can fully embark on their degree program. College readiness among Hispanic high school students is low with 38 percent of Hispanic undergraduate students reporting taking at least one remedial course during their first or second year of college.
- **College application process.** Many Hispanic students are uninformed or confused about the college application and/or financing process with only 44 percent of Hispanic parents aware of the Federal Pell Grant program, compared with 81 percent of white parents and 82 percent of black parents.
- **College affordability.** With the exponential increase in the price of college, financial aid has dwindled. 77 percent of Hispanic students reported often feeling lost when researching financial aid options. Additionally, 70 percent of Hispanic students have unmet financial need, the highest of any group.

### Strategies to increase college participation and career readiness:

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Innovative practices aimed at engaging students and ensuring that their talents and abilities are cultivated can be a key component in making sure that Hispanic students complete college and ultimately achieve successful placement in the workforce. These include:

- **Structured pathways.** Increasingly, colleges across the United States are partnering with high schools to make it clearer to prospective college students the path they have to follow to obtain certain jobs and degrees.
- **Stackable credentials.** Students can earn a variety of certificates in order to build a knowledge base that allows them to further their career. Some stackable credentials can take the place of traditional degree programs and may even be timelier, offering up-to-date training in emerging technologies and modalities.
- **Tailoring programs to industry needs.** Innovative partnerships between colleges and local industries can create specific, technical training to meet local employer needs.
- **Mentoring programs.** Colleges and businesses are ramping up their mentorship programs to ensure Hispanics have support and guidance as they navigate all phases of their careers.

### Promising practices for employers:

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Employers are uniquely positioned to not only experience this changing demographic in the workplace, but to offer promising practices that leverage this change to achieve organizational success. These practices include:

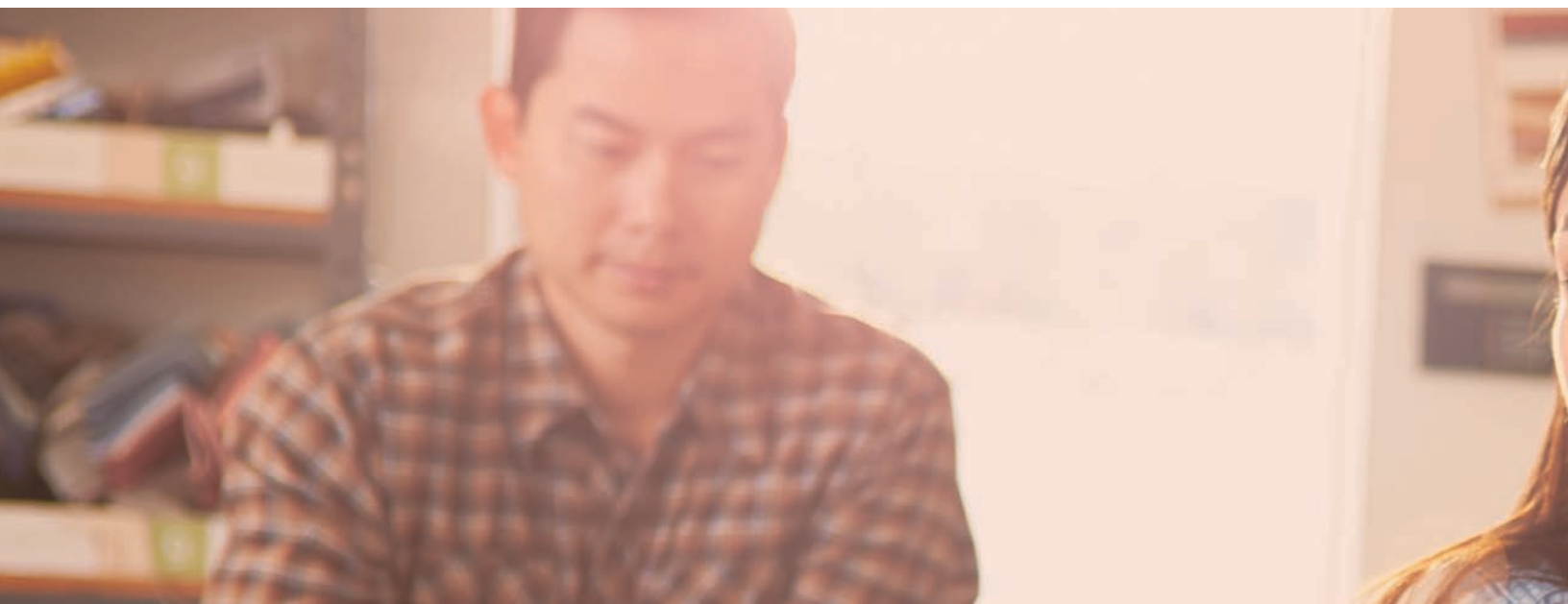
- **Harness the power of diversity.** When organizations understand and value diversity, they are better positioned to solve problems creatively and capitalize on new opportunities. To increase diversity, companies can implement diversity training programs, create diversity councils, and establish top-down diversity targets for recruitment and retention.
- **Engage Hispanic Millennials.** Hispanic Millennials are more likely than other Millennials to search for a workplace where they feel comfortable and could see themselves staying for a long time. Companies should develop and implement creative benefit designs that take into account the extended family make-up of Hispanic Millennials.
- **Facilitate training programs.** Training programs and apprenticeships for entry-level workers are important anchors for success at many companies and are a way to address skills gap issues while cultivating talent for specific trade or skill areas.

### Conclusion:

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As the working world continues to evolve, employers must capitalize on their most precious resource—their people—in order to be competitive in a global marketplace. As members of the Baby Boomer generation exit the workforce, the business community must apply creative approaches to ease this departure. Hispanics have the capacity to address expected workforce skills shortages; however, they will need support that propels them to higher levels of educational achievement.

Employers will ensure the success of their organizations if they are able to harness the talents and creativity of the fast-growing Hispanic population and use it as a catalyst to power American competitiveness for decades to come.



## The Changing U.S. Workforce: The Growing Hispanic Demographic and the Workplace

**T**he workforce of the second half of this century will be dramatically different from that of the past few decades. Baby Boomers, once the largest group of workers in the U.S. labor market, are retiring in record numbers. The massive generation of people born after World War II has been surpassed in size by Millennials, also known as Generation Y. Those Millennials promise to transform the U.S. economy in ways never before experienced.

Millennials are now the largest living generation, representing more than a quarter of the U.S. population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau,<sup>1</sup> and they are already causing massive changes in corporate America. Millennials are part of a tech-savvy, social media generation that live at home longer, drive less and are shifting where they spend their dollars. In the workforce, they are demanding more interaction with their managers, seeking constant feedback from their bosses, juggling more fluid work schedules, and enjoying greater opportunities for workplace flexibility and better work/life integration.

The more than 83 million young people born between 1982 and 2000 are more diverse than any other generation of Americans, and about one-quarter of all Millennials are Hispanic, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>2</sup>

The number of Hispanic Millennials and the projected rapid growth for the overall Hispanic demographic are expected to be catalysts for significant changes to the U.S. workforce. Hispanics are poised to transform the U.S. economy and, by extension, thousands of workplaces in this country in the next three decades. Concerns regarding English proficiency are being mitigated as the use of English becomes more frequent and the use of Spanish in the home declines (see Figure 1).<sup>3</sup>

U.S. businesses of all sizes and across the country are grappling with the changing demographics of their talent pool and the steps that they must use to identify and develop the skill sets within their organizations. Millennials entering postsecondary educational insti-

tutions will need to be especially aware of the skill sets necessary to be successful in the workplace across all sectors and industries. Possessing this knowledge is imperative when choosing a career path and coursework, as it will allow students to better prepare themselves for the workforce upon the completion of their education.

In this report, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) delve into the latest research and high-level insights from experts on the Hispanic demographic and lay out for human resource professionals, public-policy makers, business owners and others both the challenges and opportunities presented by the massive influx of Hispanic Millennials into the workforce. This report also presents some of the most promising practices that can be replicated across sectors and that are currently being adopted by both businesses and institutions of higher education to ensure that this new generation of employees will enter the U.S. labor market not only career-ready, but with marketable skills and hands-on experiences that match up with the needs of the economy. The report aims to provide a road map for diverse stakeholders as they navigate the cross-currents of change that will accompany the shifting demographics of the U.S. labor market.



### Unprecedented Demographic Shifts Occurring in the Labor Market

Real economic issues, such as the recovering economy and global competitiveness, are driving the need for companies to effectively tap into the burgeoning growth of the Hispanic population. Hispanics represent the second-largest and second-fastest-growing racial/ethnic group in the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that Hispanics represented 17.4 percent (55 million) of the U.S. population in 2014 and projects that Hispanics will represent 28.6 percent of the population by 2060.<sup>4</sup>

Hispanic representation is even larger within younger segments of the population. According to the *Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics*, Hispanics now represent more than 25 percent of all children under the age of 5 and are projected to represent 39 percent of the population under the age of 5 by 2060.<sup>5</sup> Among high school students, Hispanics represent 22 percent of all

students, the second-highest representation behind white students.<sup>6</sup> Between 2008 and 2019, the number of Hispanic public high school graduates is projected to increase 41 percent. In higher education, Hispanics represent 16 percent of college undergraduates, and the U.S. Department of Education projects that Latino postsecondary enrollment will grow by 34 percent between 2012 and 2023—the largest rate of increase of all racial and ethnic groups.<sup>7</sup>

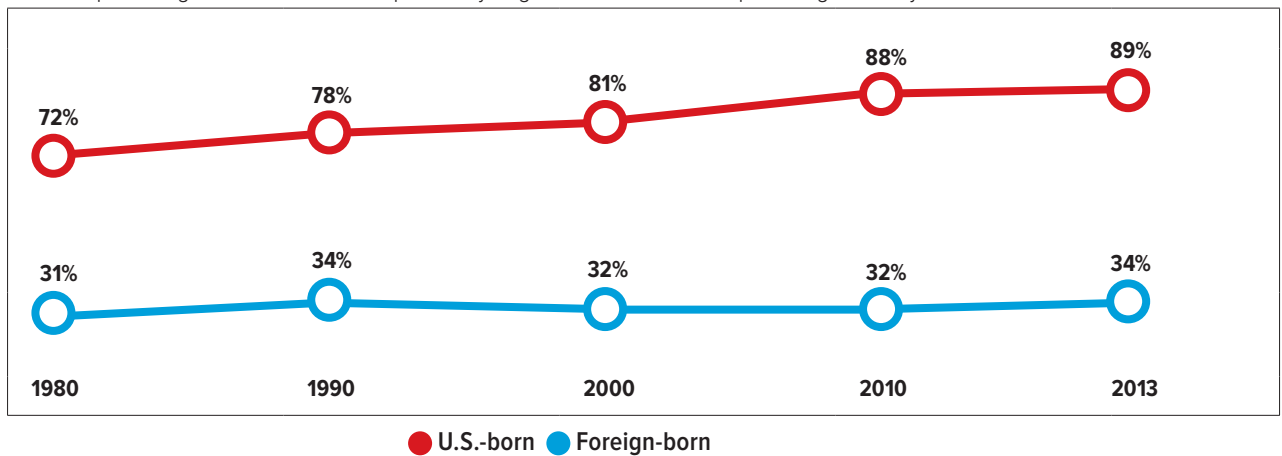
Reflective of this burgeoning segment is that by 2060, 56 percent of the U.S. population will be a member of a minority group. That’s up from 38 percent in 2014, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>8</sup> Minorities account for the majority of the population in California, Texas, New Mexico and Hawaii, and Hispanics are leading the way.

These changing demographics are being driven by U.S.-born Hispanics. Nine out of 10 Hispanic children in the United States are native-born. In fact, since the Great Recession of 2007-2009, more Hispanics have left the United States for Mexico than have immigrat-

**FIGURE 1**

#### U.S.-born Hispanics drive gains in English proficiency

% of Hispanics ages 5 and older who speak only English at home or who speak English “very well”



Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 1980, 1990, and 2000 censuses (5% IPUMS) and 2010 and 2013 American Community Surveys (1% IPUMS)

ed to this country, a reversal of a long-standing trend, according to a recent analysis of data from Mexico and the United States by the Pew Research Center on Hispanic Trends.<sup>9</sup>

While Asians are the fastest-growing immigrant population in the U.S., Hispanics are the fastest-growing U.S.-born segment and are expected to grow by 115 percent from 2010 to 2060.<sup>10</sup> Currently one out of every four Americans under 18 is Hispanic, and already 66,000 Hispanics turn 18 every month.<sup>11</sup> Not only is the Hispanic population in the United States growing at a fast clip, Hispanics are also younger (see Figure 2). The median age for Hispanics in the workforce is 27 versus a median age of 37 for the U.S. workforce overall, according to Di Ann Sanchez, Ph.D., SHRM-SCP, of DAS HR consulting, an expert on Hispanic Millennials.

As Ron Brownstein, editorial Director for Atlantic Media, has stated, “With Latino youth being such a large percentage of the next generation, access to opportunity for these youth is now a matter of national competitiveness. We are more interdependent than we realize. This minority population is the generation that will have to pay into Social Security and Medicare for the aging white population.”

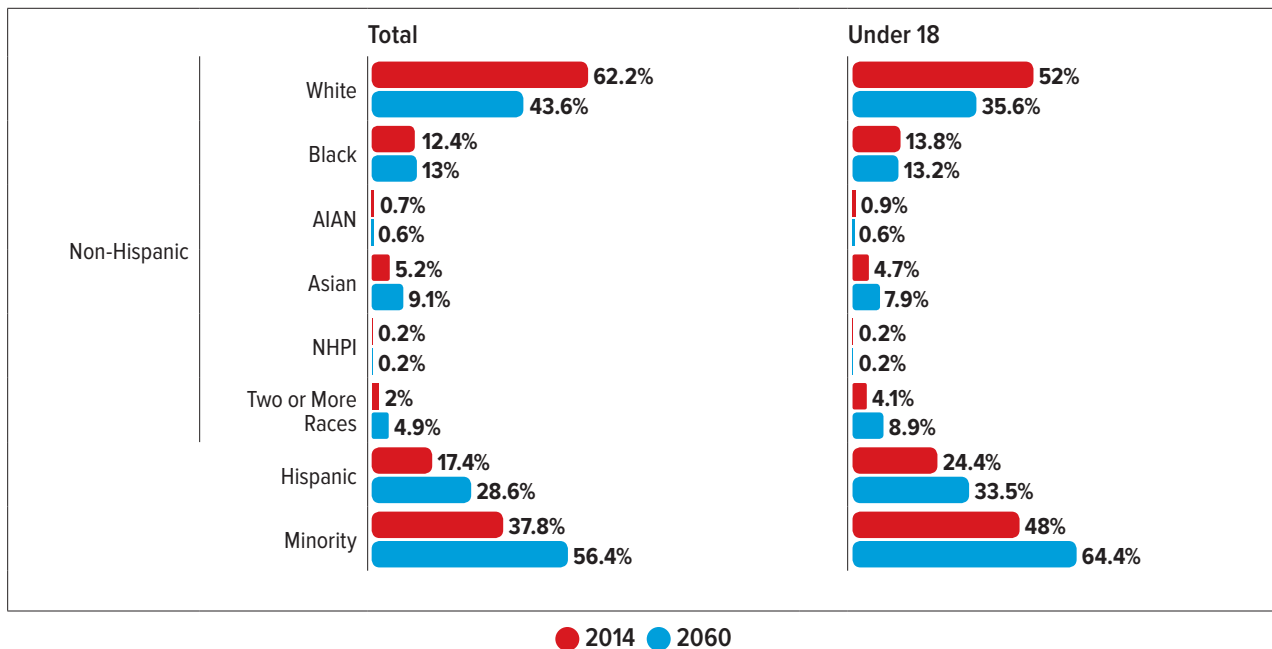
As these demographic changes occur, it's important to examine how that coincides with labor market trends. Since 2000, the U.S. Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics has been tracking a decline in the workforce participation rate from nearly 70 percent to an estimated 60 percent by 2050.<sup>12</sup> That decline is largely driven by the number of Baby Boomers (individuals born between 1946 and 1964) reaching retirement age and choosing not to work, fewer women who are working, and more students delaying work in order to attend college.

The mass exodus of Baby Boomers from the workforce has proven to be a slower process than anticipated, largely due to the 2007-2009 economic recession. According to the Insured Retirement Institute, over the past year, 30 percent of Baby Boomers postponed their plans to retire and 59 percent now plan to retire at age 65 or later.<sup>13</sup> While it is still anticipated that the departure of this segment of the population will have significant implications for the workforce, the effects are being tempered by their slower departure.

As the Baby Boomer generation phases into retirement, there is an opportunity for them to share their institutional knowledge with their colleagues and entering generations into the workforce. Additionally, organizations will need to continue to engage their mature workforce and possibly utilize these employees past their retirement. Arrangements like phased retirement, where individuals gradually retire while still contributing to their organization, can benefit both parties involved. Considering Hispanics currently make up 16 percent of the overall U.S. labor market and will account for one out of every two new workers entering the workforce by 2025,<sup>14</sup> this segment is uniquely positioned to fill that void that will occur with the departure of the Baby Boomers if they possess the appropriate skills.

FIGURE 2

Distribution of the population by race and Hispanic origin for the total population and population under 18: 2014 and 2060



Note: The percentages for the total population or the population under 18 may not add to 100.0 due to rounding. Unless otherwise specified, race categories represent race alone. NHPI = Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, AIAN = Indian and Alaska Native. Minority refers to everyone other than the non-Hispanic white alone population. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 National Projections



## The Current Job Market and the Skills Gap

According to the Pew Research Center on Hispanic Trends, more than half of all working Hispanics are employed in the industries where they have traditionally worked in this country: retail, hospitality and food, construction, and service occupations in the professional and business sectors (see Figure 4).<sup>15</sup>

While construction jobs are projected to increase over the next seven years, they will be outpaced by jobs related to health care, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.<sup>16</sup> Hospitals and the medical industry overall are expected to benefit in part from the aging of the U.S. population. The outlook is positive for certain other industries as well, with accounting, IT, human resources and software development all high in employment growth, according to research firm IBISWorld.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, the U.S. labor market is facing an overall problem related to skills shortages, and the challenge is twofold. First, many jobs go vacant because employers are unable to find workers with the appropriate skills to fill them. As a generation of skilled workers retire, not enough new workers with required skills are prepared to take their place, according to the National Association for Business Economics' quarterly business conditions survey.<sup>18</sup>

A skills shortage is occurring in the manufacturing, information technology, engineering and healthcare fields. There are also shortages of skilled workers in typical blue-collar jobs like plumbers, carpenters and electricians. In all, more than one-third of National Association for Business Economics' quarterly business conditions survey respondents said their company experienced a shortage of skilled labor. Even finance, insurance and real estate firms are struggling.<sup>19</sup>

Secondly, there is a disconnect between the skills that employers are looking for and the skills that Millennials possess when they enter the labor market. According to a Society for Human Resource Management report, half of human resource professionals reported some level of basic skills/knowledge deficits among job applicants,

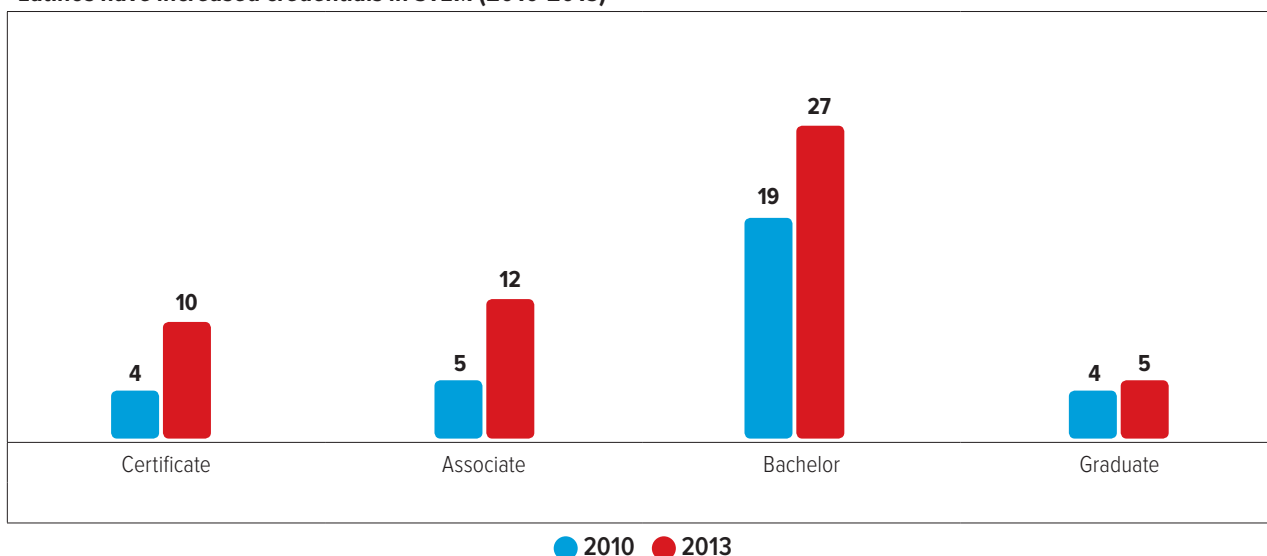
and 84 percent reported applied skills shortages in job applicants within the past year.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, respondents reported that skills shortages are concentrated in writing in English, basic computer skills, the spoken English language, reading comprehension and mathematics.

More troubling is that U.S. workers only make up 5 percent to 20 percent of all STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) field jobs, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.<sup>21</sup> Hispanic representation in STEM fields is even lower, and account for only 6.5 percent of the STEM workforce, which is struggling to find skilled workers to fill jobs. Additionally, in 2013, only 9 percent of STEM degrees were awarded to Hispanics.<sup>22</sup> As Figure 3 highlights, Hispanic STEM degrees have increased, but still not at required levels, especially as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that nearly 1 million more STEM jobs will be created by 2022. This is an area where skills among Hispanics can clearly be cultivated.

Specifically, at technology companies—where tenures tend to be short, turnover high and most training done in the field—there are relatively few Hispanics. According to major technology companies diversity reports, including Facebook, Google, Yahoo, Apple and Twitter, between 3 percent and 13 percent of the workforce is Hispanic. “We need each other and need to work together to address these very low numbers. I applaud the companies who have shared their employment figures—what gets measured gets results. We know that the tech sector is fueling job growth. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates there will be approximately 1 million newly created STEM jobs in the next 10 years. That corresponds with an increase of 16 million Latinos in the same period. Latino talent can fuel these employment ranks,” says Rep. Linda T. Sánchez (D-CA), chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. Many of these technology giants have pledged to do more. Furthermore, Hispanic community groups and the private sector have launched several programs across the country to narrow the STEM skills divide.

FIGURE 3

Latinos have increased credentials in STEM (2010-2013)

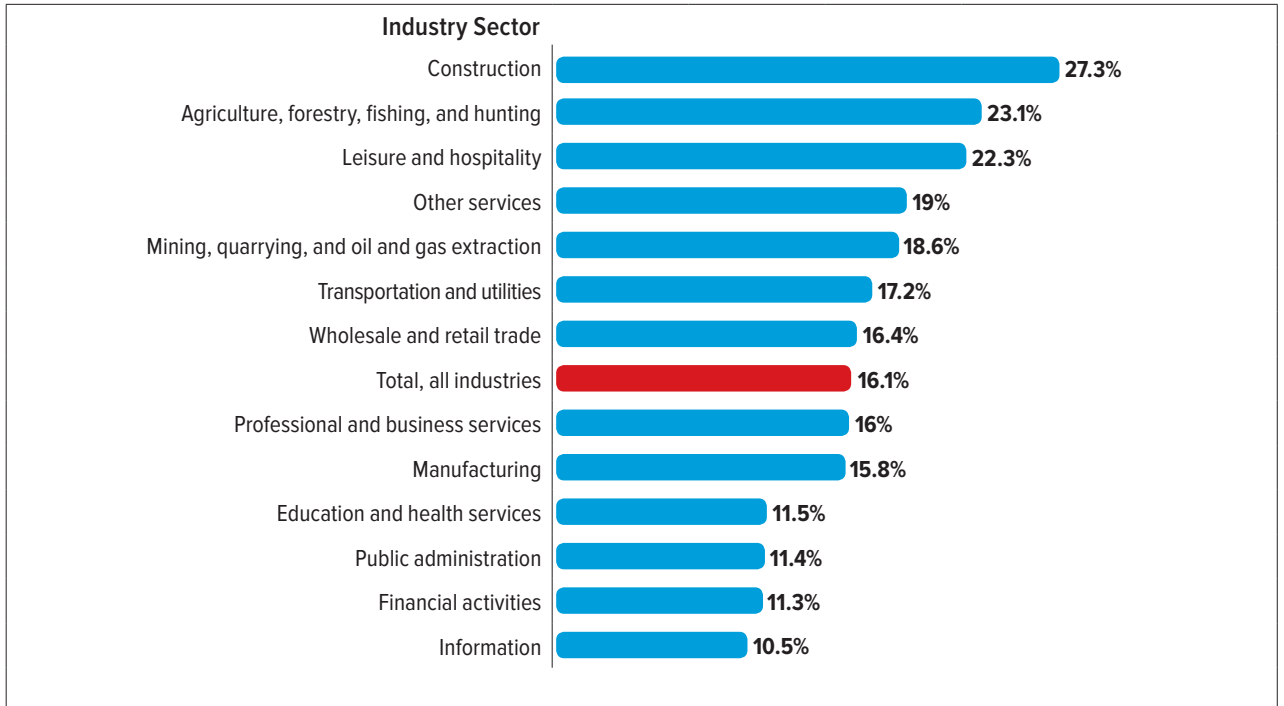


Note: Numbers in thousands.

Source: Excelencia in Education. *Finding Your Workforce: Latinos in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math*. 2015, <http://www.edexcelencia.org/media/press-releases/finding-your-workforce-stem>

FIGURE 4

## Percentage of industry employment that is of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 2014 annual averages



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



## The Impact of Educational Attainment

While increasing the number of Hispanics who obtain STEM degrees is imperative, raising the educational attainment of Hispanics in general is perhaps the best way to ensure that Hispanic students are prepared to fill the jobs of tomorrow. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 18.6 percent of Hispanics have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 27.3 percent of black, 37.7 percent of white and 60.1 percent of Asian individuals.<sup>23</sup>

Many of the fastest-growing occupations of the future will require more than a high school education and also will pay significantly more, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. For example, in 2015, jobs that required a bachelor's degree paid a median salary of \$82,260.<sup>24</sup> By contrast, jobs that required a high school diploma or less paid a median of \$41,730 (see Figure 5).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, completing a bachelor's degree increased yearly earning potential by nearly \$20,000, and a master's degree attainment increased yearly earning potential by nearly \$30,000.<sup>25</sup>

Most revealing is a recent report, *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020*, published by Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, that analyzed the seismic changes projected to take place in the nation's business hiring practices. By 2020, 65 percent of an estimated 165 million jobs in the U.S. economy will require some postsecondary education or training beyond high school, according to the center's analysis.<sup>26</sup> Yet there won't be enough workers with those credentials to fill the jobs. The analysis projects a shortfall of more than 5 million workers. Those workers who have professional degrees can expect to earn \$2.1 million more in their lifetime than will those who don't finish college, according to the center's *Separate & Unequal: How Higher Education Reinforces the Intergenerational Reproduction of White Racial Privilege* report.<sup>27</sup>

Boosting the educational attainment of Hispanics will prove critical to closing this gap. Hispanics are enrolling in college in record numbers, on par with rates of white students and outpacing the rates

of enrollment for black students by 14 percent.<sup>28</sup> In fact, the number of Hispanics ages 18 to 24 in college has more than tripled since 1993 to more than 2.2 million, The Pew Research Center on Hispanic Trends says.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, the influx of these students has led to Hispanics being the largest minority group on U.S. campuses across the country (see Figure 6).

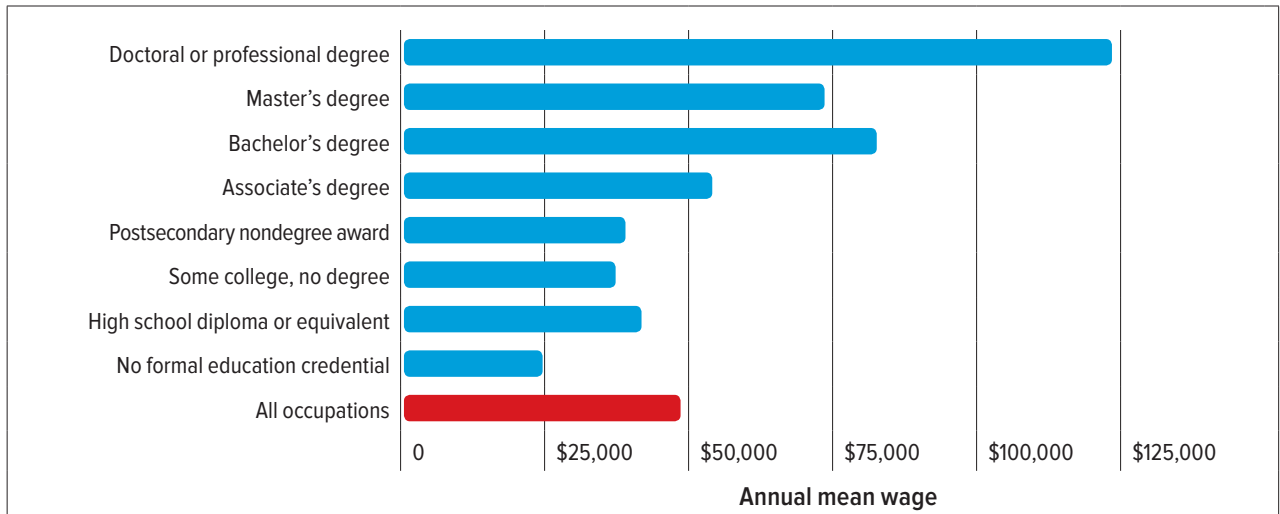
While the high enrollment numbers are encouraging, ultimately it is college completion that will prove to be the vehicle to provide an economic lift to Hispanics eager to move up the economic ladder. Educators, colleges and even the students themselves are recognizing the need for establishing retention programs and peer networks to make sure students succeed once they arrive on campus. That's especially true for those students who are the first in their families to attend college and may not have the benefit of knowing which academic programs best match their goals and academic abilities, and may not understand the intricacies of how to finance their education. They may also benefit from understanding how to build relationships with professors and how to maximize the use of campus resources such as professors' office hours, tutoring centers, libraries and laboratories.

### Barriers and Challenges to Educational Attainment

Hispanics, similar to other demographic groups, face barriers to educational attainment, which ultimately affect their earning potential later in life. But Hispanics must also address some unique challenges not encountered by other groups. Below are both challenges and opportunities that Hispanics likely experience as they navigate the educational system.

FIGURE 5

## Annual mean wages by typical entry-level education required, May 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics program

- K-12:** Census figures reflect that Hispanic children are making up increasingly larger percentages of public school enrollments. According to a Pew Research Center on Hispanic Trends analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, starting in 2011, for the first time, one in four (25 percent) public elementary school students was Hispanic, up from one-fifth (19.9 percent) in 2005 and 16.7 percent in 2000. The U.S. Census Bureau notes that by 2036, Hispanics are projected to make up one-third (33 percent) of the nation's children ages 3 to 17.3 Hispanic students tend to be educated in poorly funded schools, largely due to the economic status of their parents. These schools possess fewer resources, have overcrowded classrooms, and lack college-preparatory guidance and classes—all attributes that contribute to lower aptitude and advancement. Ensuring that Hispanic students receive a comprehensive, thorough education beginning with kindergarten is imperative to academic achievement and upward mobility when these individuals reach the workforce.
- High School Dropout Rates:** For many years, educational attainment centered on the need to decrease the Hispanic high school dropout rate. However, Hispanics have made tremendous strides in this area and are much less likely to drop out of high school today than they were in 1990. In October 1990, 32 percent of Hispanic 16- to 24-year-olds were high school dropouts, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. By 2013, 12 percent of Hispanics in this age group were dropouts.<sup>31</sup> While cutting the dropout rate by more than half has been an accomplishment, this demographic still has the largest amount of dropouts, 7 percent higher than white students.
- College Readiness:** With the reduction in the high school dropout rate for Hispanics, attention has shifted to college readiness. Graduating from high school does not necessarily mean a student is prepared to do college-level coursework. Many students entering college find they need one or two years of remedial courses before they can fully embark on their degree program. According to a report published by Excelencia in Education and ACT Inc., college readiness among Hispanic high school students is low. In 2014, 57 percent of Hispanics graduating high school took the ACT

college-readiness test; most were not academically ready. About 14 percent met the benchmarks in all four subject areas, which are English, reading, mathematics and science, compared to 26 percent of non-Hispanic students taking the test. Seventeen percent of Hispanic students met only one benchmark and 47 percent did not meet any of them. It is no surprise then that approximately 38 percent of Hispanic undergraduate students report taking at least one remedial course during their first or second year of college.<sup>32</sup> While less than one-third of students across the U.S. who took the ACT met all of the test's benchmarks, Hispanics clearly face greater proficiency challenges. Greater strides must be made to prepare all students for college, and especially Hispanic students, as these efforts will be the foundation of college attainment.

- College Application Process:** Many students—especially those who are the first in their family to attend college—may be uninformed or confused about the college application and/or financing process. According to the Pew Research Center on Hispanic Trends, in comparison to their white peers, Hispanics are more likely to be the first in their family to go to college. In 2012, only 24 percent of Hispanic children ages 6-18 had a parent who had earned an associate degree or higher, compared to 58 percent of white children.<sup>33</sup> There are clearly information gaps in the college application process for many students, but the challenge is disproportionately affecting Hispanic students. For example, understanding the importance of completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is key to determining eligibility for Federal Pell Grants and loans, scholarships, and other financial aid that can make college more affordable. However, that information is sometimes harder to communicate in underserved schools and communities. For instance, a 2010 survey by the College Board found that only 44 percent of Hispanic parents were aware of the Federal Pell Grant program, compared with 81 percent of white parents and 82 percent of black parents.<sup>34</sup> “There are approximately 80 colleges who meet at least 95 percent or more of a family's financial need—and there are many others that meet 80-85 percent—but families are unaware of this. It's a lack of communication and a lack of understanding that needs to be addressed,” says Eric Dobler, president and founder of Dobler College Consulting, LLC, a firm

## Facts About Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)

- In 2014-15, there were 435 HSIs located in 18 states and Puerto Rico. These institutions represented 13 percent of all institutions of higher education but enrolled 62 percent of Hispanic students, or 1.75 million Hispanic undergraduates
- The number of HSIs is growing. Over the last 21 years (1994-95 to 2014-15), the number of HSIs grew from 189 to 435 (130 percent).
- The majority of HSIs are public institutions, with (68 percent) being public institutions, compared to 32 percent that are private, not-for-profit institutions.
- HSIs are almost evenly split between 2-year and 4-year institutions. Just over half of all HSIs are 2-year institutions (219), and under half are 4-year institutions (216).
- More than a third of HSIs have graduate programs. Of all HSIs, 40 percent offer graduate degrees (172 of 435 institutions). Of 4-year HSIs (216), 80 percent have graduate programs.
- The majority of HSIs with graduate programs offer doctoral degrees (52 percent).

that walks students through the complex college application process. More needs to be done during K-12 education so that both Hispanic parents and students understand the college application process from start to finish.

- **College Enrollment:** Hispanic college enrollment has increased dramatically over the past 10 years. As recently as the Class of 2000, only 49 percent of Hispanic high school graduates immediately enrolled in college for the following fall; however, by October 2012, this number had increased to 70 percent, surpassing the national average of 66 percent of all recent high school graduates who enrolled in college.<sup>35</sup> While general college attendance has increased among the nation's high school graduates as a whole, it has risen the most—by 20 percentage points—among Hispanic high school graduates. In fact, in the Class of 2012, Hispanic high school graduates (69 percent) were more likely to be enrolled in college in October 2012 than either white (67 percent) or black (63 percent) students.<sup>36</sup>
- **Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs):** A critical group of institutions enrolling and graduating Hispanic students are Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). HSIs are defined in federal law as accredited and degree-granting public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education with 25 percent or more total undergraduate Hispanic full-time equivalent student enrollment. Partnerships

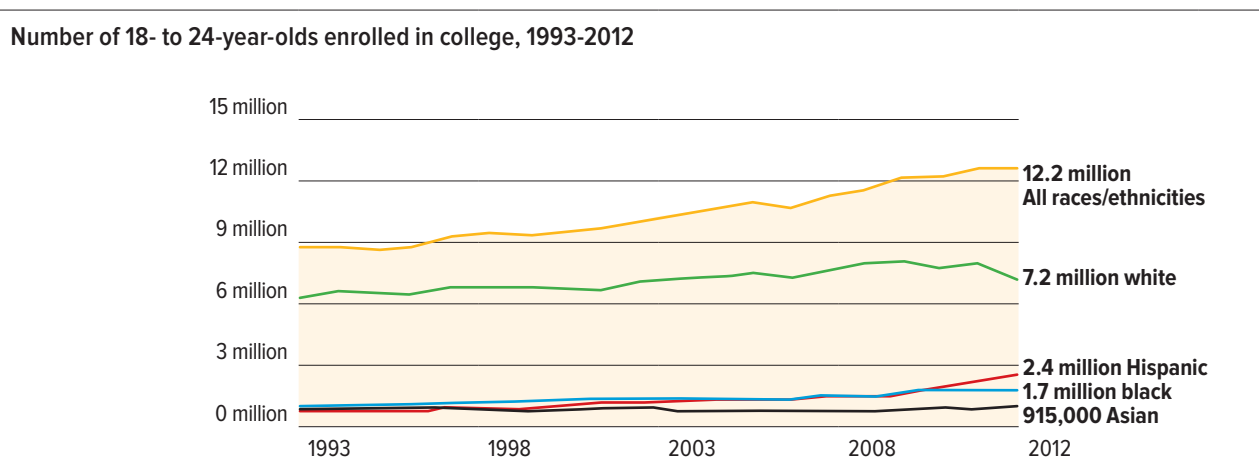
with these institutions are vitally important as they provide access, support and guidance to students throughout the college process. Additionally, they are growing: over the last 21 years (1994-95 to 2014-15), the number of HSIs grew from 189 to 435 (130 percent).<sup>37</sup>

- **College Affordability:** The United States has experienced an exponential increase in the price of college, while the pool of financial aid has dwindled. Financing college is difficult, especially for Hispanic students; significantly more Hispanic students (77 percent) reported often feeling lost when researching financial aid options, as compared to their black (52 percent) and white (60 percent) counterparts. Hispanic students are less likely than white or black students to be aware of institutional scholarships, student loans and Pell Grants, and they are less likely to report receiving or believe that they will receive financial aid (58 percent) than their white (67 percent) or black (70 percent) counterparts. Only 33 percent of Hispanic students say they expect to receive or have already received a Pell Grant, a considerably smaller number than reported by black students (48 percent).<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps because of a lack of awareness of the options available, the National Center for Education Statistics reports that during the 2011-12 academic year, 70 percent of Hispanic students had unmet financial need, the highest of any group. The average unmet need for Hispanic college students was \$7,400. In 2008, 3.5 percent of

FIGURE 6

### College enrollment by race/ethnicity



Note: Hispanics can be of any race. White includes only non-Hispanics. Black and Asian includes both Hispanics as well as non-Hispanics. Data prior to 2003 for Asians include those identifying themselves as "Asian or Pacific Islanders." The Census Bureau began reporting data for Asians in 1999.

Source: Census Bureau Historical Tables on School and College Enrollment, October Current Population Survey, Pew Research Center

Hispanic students received private scholarships, representing 9 percent of all scholarship recipients—despite the fact that Hispanics made up 14 percent of the student population. In addition, the average scholarship award (\$2,269) given to Hispanic students was the lowest for all groups.<sup>39</sup>

In 2011-12, only 34 percent of Hispanic students had direct loans—while 50 percent of Hispanics received a Pell Grant. Hispanic parents and children are reluctant to take out loans because of concerns that they will not be able to repay them.<sup>40</sup> In fact, Asian and Hispanic students are the least likely to borrow money for college. They would rather make choices based on their current finances and use a “pay as you go” model for financing their higher education. Hispanics are more likely to make a decision based on the “sticker price” of college, which means that academically gifted students can sometimes be pushed toward community college versus a more reputable school.<sup>41</sup>

- **Family Dynamics:** A recent survey by ThinkNow Research found that Hispanic college-aged students contribute more money toward household expenses than do non-Hispanic Millennials. The amount is not inconsequential, either. More than 30 percent of Hispanic Millennials said they gave half or the majority of their finances to their families to pay for expenses including mortgage and rent, versus 9 percent for other Millennials. Similarly, while 89 percent of Hispanics ages 16-25 say they understand the importance of college, less than half (48 percent) plan to get a college degree. Seventy-four percent of these students cite the need to provide financial support to their family as their primary reason for not pursuing higher education.<sup>42</sup> Attending a school that would require being away from family can be especially difficult for a Hispanic student as parents are more likely to want their children to live at home, even when their child may be a high-achieving student with the opportunity to go to a more reputable school with a good financial aid package.<sup>43</sup>

## Strategies to Support and Improve Educational and Career Outcomes

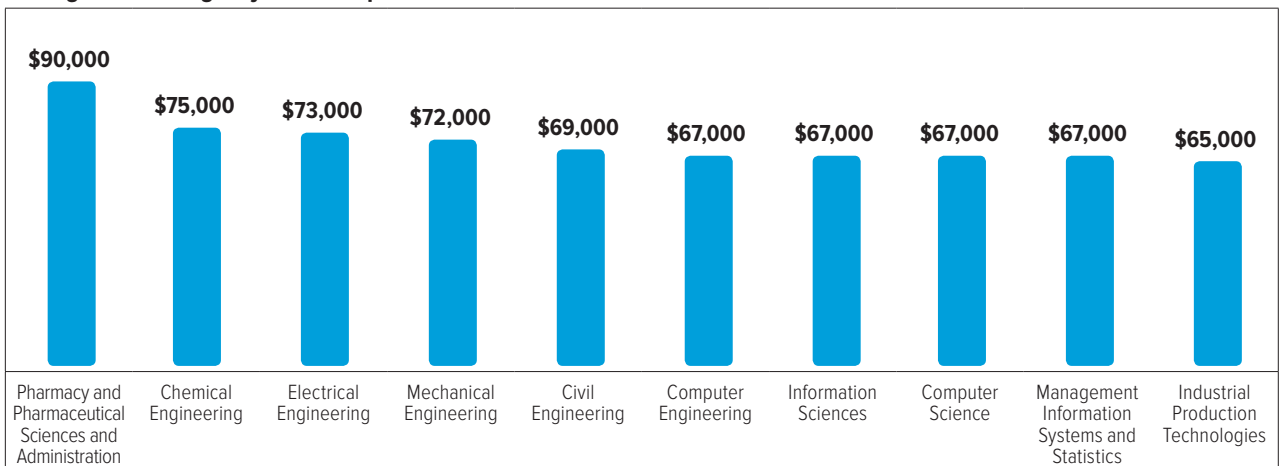
As previously stated, Hispanics are enrolling in college at record rates, but unfortunately also have higher attrition rates from college than other groups. The focus has now turned to college retention

and completion. Innovative practices aimed at engaging students and ensuring that their talents and abilities are cultivated can be a key component in making sure that Hispanic students complete college and ultimately achieve successful placement in the workforce. Tools that lead to positive outcomes at colleges include:

- **Structured pathways.** Increasingly, colleges across the United States are partnering with high schools to make it clearer to prospective college students the path they have to follow to obtain certain jobs as well as understand the transfer and articulation process between two- and four-year higher education institutions.
- **Retention programs.** Colleges and universities need to develop programs and strategies that focus on student retention and success, especially for first- and second-year college students, as this is the time when the greatest number of students withdraw from postsecondary education. College retention is critical to increasing the overall higher education attainment rates for the nation.
- **Advisory boards.** Many colleges have both internal advisory boards and advisory boards made up of representatives from local industries. The boards are charged with making sure the curriculum the college offers is up to date and that the campus has the right facilities and equipment needed to properly train students.
- **Stackable credentials.** Students can earn a variety of certificates in order to build a knowledge base that allows them to further their career. Professional development opportunities can also add knowledge and give valuable experience. Some stackable credentials can take the place of traditional degree programs and may even be timelier, offering up-to-date training in emerging technologies and modalities.
- **Tailoring programs to industry needs.** A few years ago, Miami Dade College, the nation’s largest community college with more than 170,000 students, provided specific, technical training to meet the business needs of Florida Power and Light (FPL), a major employer in the community. The program was called “Electrical Power Technology Program.” The college worked with the company to set up the program to address FPL’s retiring workforce needs and identify students interested in working in the field. Almost 100 percent of the students were hired. “It was a very successful program that received lots of accolades and served to

FIGURE 7

10 highest-earning majors for Hispanics



Source: Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce, “Hispanics: College Majors and Earnings,” October 2015

reinforce the need for workforce educational programs,” said Iliana Castillo-Frick, Vice Provost for Human Resources at Miami Dade College.

- **Mentoring programs.** Colleges and businesses are ramping up their mentorship programs to ensure Hispanics have support and guidance as they navigate all phases of their careers. Mentoring programs can help to address a lack of soft skills (workplace etiquette, interviewing skills, time management, etc.), which is pervasive across all workers entering the workforce, particularly among Millennials.

## Employers: Promising Practices to Leverage the Hispanic Demographic

Employers are uniquely positioned to not only experience changing demographics in the workplace in real time but also to offer promising practices that leverage demographic change to achieve organizational success. The following are approaches that organizations are implementing to create more inclusive, productive and successful workplaces.

**Harnessing the Power of Diversity:** When organizations understand and value diversity and inclusion, they are better positioned to solve problems creatively and capitalize on new opportunities, including the development of new products and services informed by different life experiences and worldviews. Yet, while diversity in the workplace is a common business imperative, diversity is still a challenge at the very top of some companies. Only nine chief executive officers of Fortune 500 companies—less than 2 percent—are Hispanic, according to the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility. Only 3 percent of Fortune 500 companies have a Hispanic on the board of directors.<sup>44</sup>

Cultivating diversity and inclusion helps companies attract and retain top talent. According to a Forbes report, *Fostering Innovation Through a Diverse Workforce*, most companies (65 percent) have programs to recruit diverse employees, but fewer focus on developing and retaining them after they’ve been hired (53 percent and 44 percent, respectively).<sup>45</sup> Steps companies can take to create a more diverse and inclusive workplace include implementing diversity training programs, creating diversity councils, and setting top-down diversity targets for recruitment and retention.

Additionally, for diversity efforts to be successful, “there must be support from the organization’s top leadership, and there must be alignment with business goals,” says Bettina Deynes, SHRM-SCP, vice president of human resources and diversity for the Society for Human Resource Management. “If done successfully, diversity will become incorporated into all areas of business, and this will lead to its association with an organization’s brand,” says Deynes.

**Engaging Hispanic Millennials:** The rise of the Millennial generation with its large cohort of Hispanics and other minority communities could change not only the way companies do business for the foreseeable future but everything from what brands dominate to what industries thrive. Those diversity dividends promise to only get bigger as the United States edges toward the latter half of this century when minorities will outnumber whites.

Additionally, the latest research finds that Hispanic Millennials are more likely than other Millennials to look for workplaces where they feel comfortable staying for a while, says Sanchez. “They are going to find workplaces where they feel accepted, reassured, validated and where they see people who look like them.”

Sanchez refers to that tendency as collectivism and says the desire for Hispanics to be in businesses and live in communities that embrace their culture could be a major retention tool for companies large and small. As a group, Hispanic Millennials are both very optimistic and very loyal. “Traditional companies that know the cost of employee turnover will value that loyalty,” she says.

**Facilitating Training Programs, Apprenticeships and Internships:** Training programs and apprenticeships for entry-level workers are important anchors for success at many companies. Programs geared for different segments of the workforce provide continuity throughout employees’ careers, allowing them to develop skill sets needed to not only assist their employers with the challenges of the changing economy but also to allow them to develop professionally.

Apprenticeships are another means to address skills gap issues while cultivating talent for specific trade or skill areas. Apprenticeships train individuals for a specific occupation using on-the-job training and related instruction. Apprenticeships have gained more attention recently, with the commitment by the Department of Labor, Department of Education, and the Health and Human Services Department and the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The WIOA provides for federally funded job training across the country that utilizes a variety of arrangements sponsored by individual employers, joint employers, labor groups and community associations. Registered apprenticeships with the Department of Labor provide employers with access to a nationwide network of experts, tax credits and opportunities for funding.

One of the most common and perhaps successful ways employers are engaging students who will soon be entering the workforce is through internship programs. This arrangement can open doors for students who are looking for career development and job placement. The benefit is twofold. Employers are able to provide valuable experience to students in the workplace, assist in cultivating interns’ skill sets and, in some cases, produce a candidate for an existing position. Internships also allow students to experience real-world challenges, utilize their existing educational base and, ultimately, develop solutions through critical thinking and collaboration.

**Utilizing Creative Benefit Design:** Benefits can be a powerful recruitment and retention tool, as human resource professionals know. By understanding their workforce, employers can craft a benefits package that addresses the needs and demands of their most precious asset—their people. When specifically appealing to Hispanic Millennials, for instance, they are more likely than Millennials in general to be part of large extended families and to bear some responsibility for providing financial support to relatives. Benefits such as tuition reimbursement, student loan repayment, flexible leave, job-protected maternity leave and family leave are often very appealing to Hispanic employees.

Some companies go further, offering benefits—such as scholarships—that extend to other members of the family. For example, employees at Camden, a real estate company, located in Camden, Maine, get a 20 percent discount on their monthly rent and can lease vacation suites for \$20 a night. That is a benefit that employees’ children and parents can also take advantage of separately, says Margaret Plummer, Camden’s vice president of employee development. “We are an all-inclusive employer, and all of our people feel it,” she says. “This isn’t something new for Camden. We know our employees have a life outside of work, so we make sure our benefits are family-centered, not just focused on the employee.”

## CASE STUDIES

### **Mentoring:** A Spotlight on the Hispanic Women's Network of Texas

By Anette Soto

Mentorship and peer support systems are key factors that have proven valuable to emerging Hispanic leaders and executives. If these relationships do not already exist in the workplace, this type of camaraderie could be found in the community or in professional organizations. The Hispanic Women's Network of Texas (HWNT) is one example of how a professional organization can meet this need and provide an established network of like-minded peers, informal mentorship and professional development opportunities.

HWNT was formed in 1986 by inviting female leaders from around the state of Texas to create an organization that would address issues unique to Hispanics. Today HWNT is a statewide organization with chapters in 11 Texas cities. Members are individuals from diverse backgrounds and age groups who are united in their commitment to promote the advancement and success of women in professional and civic arenas. Members are encouraged to utilize the network as a support system and arsenal of resources to assist them in accomplishing their goals. Job opportunities, business referrals and advice for navigating workplace complexities are just a few of the intangible benefits that HWNT members enjoy. They are also provided with professional development and skills training opportunities that their employer may not provide, as well as an avenue for leadership roles that will help diversify their marketable experience.

In addition, HWNT provides members with an opportunity to make an impact in their community through various service activities and its Latinas In Progress Education Series. This program has been tailored to meet the educational needs of each city and is focused on encouraging higher education as a means to success. Members volunteer their time to host informative educational sessions and raise money for scholarships. This very important component of the organization ensures that HWNT women are not only reaching new heights as trailblazers in their own industries, they are also actively working to guide the next generation of leaders.

### **Structured Pathways:** A Spotlight on Northern Virginia Community College's Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program

Pathway to the Baccalaureate was launched in 2005 to support the growing population of traditional-age students in Northern Virginia who demonstrate substantial barriers to college access and completion. The program provides selected participants with a coordinated service network designed to address academic and navigational barriers to higher education, and to provide seamless transitions from high school diploma to associate degree to baccalaureate completion. Since the program's inception, it has served nearly 5,900 Latino students.

Pathway participants significantly exceed college and national benchmarks in college transition, retention, academic success, completion, and transfer, with measured outcomes for Latino students equivalent or better than the overall Pathway population. For example, 90 percent of Latino youth completed their first semester, and 81 percent returned for their second year of college. The completion rate for Pathway participants is more than 50 percent above the college's completion rate, and participants who transfer to partner institution George Mason University demonstrate a 93 percent retention rate, with over 80 percent completing a baccalaureate degree within three years of transfer. The Pathway to the Baccalaureate



program has demonstrated a profound impact on student success in Northern Virginia and is paving the pathway to college completion for thousands of Latino students.

## **Meeting Industry Needs: A Spotlight on the South Mountain Community College's Bilingual Nursing Fellows Program**

The Bilingual Nursing Fellowship Program (BNFP) program at South Mountain was created in 2002 to meet the critical shortfall of Spanish-speaking nurses in Arizona and to prepare students for employment as registered nurses. Through partnerships with Phoenix College and Gateway Community College, students are able to transfer directly into the Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) program at Arizona State University.

BNFP combines an innovative nursing curriculum with a system of support services to allow students to stay in their cohort by taking prerequisite nursing courses and requisite registered nurse (RN) courses simultaneously. The sequence of courses allows for the individual student to earn a certified nursing assistant (CNA) certificate, become eligible as a licensed practical nurse (LPN), and then earn licensure as an RN within a two- to three-year period.

Since the program began more than 15 years ago, over 300 students have become a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse or certified nurse assistant. To date, 240 students have received an associate degree in applied sciences with 169 total students in the 2016 fall program.

## **Internship & Fellowship Programs: A Spotlight on the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's Internship and Fellowship Program**

CHCI's nationally recognized fellowships and internships attract and benefit the brightest and best Latino youth from around the country. The fellowship and internship programs provide young Latinos with an unparalleled hands-on experience in policy-related jobs in the nation's capital. These programs combine professional experience, leadership development workshops and trainings, exclusive access to national leaders, policy briefings, and community service projects. The leadership development curriculum prepares program participants to become leaders and decision makers in our society and exposes them to the role that the government, non-profit, and private sectors play in empowering communities. Congressional Interns fulfill placements in offices within the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. Public-policy and graduate fellows choose their placement between congressional offices, as well as within federal agencies and non-governmental groups, and executive offices within the president's administration. Here are a few thoughts regarding these opportunities from interns and fellows themselves:

### Maritza Perez



2009 Summer Congressional Intern  
Currently: Soros Justice Fellow at MALDEF, Washington, DC

“Through the CHCI Summer Internship Program, I learned how to collaborate with people from various backgrounds, an important leadership skill. In addition, the writing, research, and advocacy skills I gained on the Hill prepared me for the work I do now. But it’s the relationships I formed during my internship experience that are the most valuable to me, as I gained mentors and lifelong friends who have become integral parts of my professional and personal networks.”

### Jose L. Plaza



2012-13 CHCI Graduate Fellow  
Currently: Hispanic Vote Director, Hillary For America, Tampa, FL

“Coming from a humble household of nine children, the idea that I would one day move to D.C. and walk the halls of the Capitol, work for one of the rising stars in Congress, and rub shoulders with Vice President Joe Biden has been incredible.

CHCI has empowered me to become a change agent in my community. I look forward to returning to my hometown and creating even more pathways for others from underrepresented and underserved communities.”

### Arnoldo Avalos



1989 Congressional Intern  
Currently: Founder and CEO, Avalos Foundation, Pleasanton, CA

“CHCI takes youth from the marginalized edges of America and puts them in the halls of power and influence. Participation in CHCI programs can fundamentally change the direction of someone’s life. Very few programs in our country target low-income Latino youth, which is what makes CHCI so unique.”

### Ray Mateo



2003 Congressional Intern  
Currently: Associate Attorney, Calcagni and Kanefsky, LLP, Newark, NJ

“I had the opportunity to work on issues that directly impacted my community such as education and immigration policy. This experience, along with working alongside the brightest my Latino minds in the country, is what makes this program undeniably one of the best internships in the country.”

### Mildred Otero



2003-04 Graduate Public Policy Fellow  
Currently: Vice President, Policy & Advocacy, Leadership for Education Equality, Miami, FL

“CHCI programs do more than put Latinos on a different trajectory for their lives; they create an amazing pipeline of Latino policymakers. When I first came to Washington, D.C., there were very few people of color on Capitol Hill. Today, I am grateful to see so many young men and women of color representing the important perspective of the Latino community.”

## Conclusion

As the working world continues to evolve, those entering the workforce are faced with new challenges and opportunities for personal and professional development. Employers must capitalize on their most precious resource—their people—in order to be competitive in a global marketplace. To do so, they need access to a pool of talent that not only has the skills needed for the job, but that are a good fit within the corporate culture. Likewise, employees must prepare themselves for a demanding, competitive environment.

As members of the Baby Boomer generation exit the workforce, they will leave not only a gap of experience and skills but of institutional knowledge. It will be up to employers and the next generation of workers to apply creative approaches to ease this departure. As the fastest-growing U.S.-born ethnic segment, Hispanics are a culturally rich, highly motivated demographic poised to address the void left by the Baby Boomers. Additionally, with the proper resources and tools, Hispanics have the capacity to address skills shortages, especially related to low participation in STEM careers. To do so, though, they will need support that propels them to higher levels of educational achievement. Understanding the challenges and cultural nuances of this demographic will enable educational institutions, employers and communities to craft strategies and build up resources that will serve as the conduit between education and career advancement.

While the foundation of a good education begins early, during elementary education, facilitating higher education, whether it be a two-year institution, four-year college, trade school or certificate work, is imperative for advancement. Informing students of the college process, ensuring they have the skills to succeed in college and helping them pay for it increase the odds of participation and completion.

As students progress through high school and begin looking for an institution of higher education, it is vital that they have access to individuals and support networks that can guide them in the process. Advisory boards, HSIs, structured pathways, apprenticeships and internships work to energize students and give them a foundation to build upon. These resources also offer students vital information re-

garding what career fields are in high demand and can steer individuals in order to ensure career placement once learning is complete. They also provide real-world, hands-on experience that can position a candidate for career placement, as well as help hone soft skills that are many times lacking, especially among Millennials.

Once students have entered the workforce and begin to ascend the career ladder, they will continue to need support. Continuing education and mentoring is vital in order to move Hispanics from entry- or mid-level work into management and C-suite opportunities. Such advancement increases earning potential and, ultimately, upward mobility within society.

As the workforce continues to change, employers will ensure success of their organizations if they are able to harness the talents and creativity of the fast-growing Hispanic demographic and use it as a catalyst to power American competitiveness for decades to come.





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