

As *Excelencia* has worked to meet its mission, institutions serving Latinos have been critical. The institutions serving students with the highest need are also some of the most under-resourced. We must acknowledge and support these institutions—community colleges, open access, and public institutions. Latinos are heavily concentrated at these institutions and ensuring Latino student success requires financial resources for wraparound services or increased financial aid. Policy should focus on increasing institutional capacity to improve access and completion of Latino students in higher education.

## What We Know

### Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) are defined in the Title V of the Higher Education Act (HEA), as accredited and degree-granting public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education with 25 percent or more total undergraduate Hispanic full-time equivalent enrollment.<sup>1</sup> Consider the following data on HSIs:

- When the program began over 20 years ago, 189 institutions met the definition of an HSI. Today, there are 492 HSIs.<sup>2</sup>
- Although HSIs represent only 15% of higher education institutions, they enroll 65% of all Latino undergraduate students.<sup>3</sup>
- HSIs are geographically concentrated. HSIs (492) are located in 21 states and Puerto Rico.<sup>4</sup>

Emerging HSIs are an important part of the postsecondary landscape. Emerging HSIs are institutions that enroll 15-24% Hispanic student enrollment and have the potential to become HSIs in the next few years.<sup>5</sup> Currently, there are 333 Emerging HSIs.<sup>6</sup>

### Title V: Developing HSIs Program

The HEA Title V: Developing HSIs program is a federal competitive grant to expand and enhance the academic offerings, program quality, and institutional stability of colleges and universities that are educating the majority of Hispanic college students and helping large numbers of Hispanic and other low-income students complete a postsecondary degree.

- To be eligible for a grant, institutions must meet the HSI enrollment threshold, enroll a high concentration of low-income students, and have low core expenses.
- In 2015, the Department of Education awarded about \$100 million in Title V grants.<sup>7</sup>
- Over 700 Title V grants have been distributed since the program began in 1995. The average annual grant is around \$510,000, which represents just 1-2% of an institution's overall annual budget, but provides the necessary resources to innovate.<sup>8</sup>
- There are 16 allowable activities for Title V funding. According to *Excelencia's* analysis of the last 20 years of Title V grant abstracts, over 70% of Title V grantees used their funding to support faculty development (18%) and student support services (29%).
  - Grantees were less likely (less than 1%) to use Title V funds to improve the following: 1) joint use of facilities, 2) expansion of courses and institutional resources, and, 3) strengthening funds management.
  - Only 2% of grantees invested in establishing or improving an endowment fund. In general, HSIs do not have endowments or unrestricted resources from which to draw for financial aid or new programming even as they seek to serve this growing and evolving population of Hispanic, low-income, and post-traditional students.

### **Additional Institutional Capacity Programs**

The Strengthening Institutions program provides funding for institutions where at least half of their population is receiving need-based aid.<sup>9</sup> The program works to help institutions of higher education become self-sufficient and expand their capacity to serve low-income students. Latino students are also concentrated at institutions that receive these funding. In Fiscal Year 2016, the Department of Education awarded about \$86 million in Title III, Part A grants.<sup>10</sup>

Latino students also benefit from the Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO), which provide services to individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.<sup>11</sup> While TRIO funds are distributed as grants, they are an additional source of financial support that institutions can use to support Latino students in their path to graduation. About 19% of TRIO program participants are Latino.<sup>12</sup>

### **What We Can Do**

#### **Consolidate the number of allowable activities in Title V grants to strengthen services.**

While there are currently 16 allowable activities, the majority fall within three broad buckets, such as student support. Decision makers should consider having fewer allowable activities and reconsider the allowable activities currently in place.

**Focus on the post-traditional student profile.** Latino students are less likely to be reflected in graduation rates because they're more likely to transfer and attend part-time. Completion rates, on the other hand, better reflect Latino student patterns. Additionally, few current allowable activities specifically address the post-traditional profile. Activities should address persistence and completion for Latinos.

**Link financial support to degree attainment.** Based on our analysis of current Title V grants, few are directly linked to student success. However, Title III Part A, Title V, and TRIO grants are all with the purpose of improving student outcomes. Activities should align to that purpose so institutions can focus on helping students complete college.

**Support and expand funding for Title III and Title V programs.** The number of HSIs has grown rapidly with hundreds of additional institutions on the cusp of becoming HSIs. Policy must be able to address the growth of Title III and Title V eligible institutions.

<sup>1</sup> Title V, Part A of Higher Education Act (HEA), as amended (20 U.S.C. 1101-1101d; 1103-1103g)

<sup>2</sup> Santiago, D., Taylor, M., Calderón Galdeano, E. (May 2016). From Capacity to Success: HSIs, Title V, and Latino Students. Washington, D.C.: Excelencia in Education. Retrieved from <https://www.edexcelencia.org/media/57>

<sup>3</sup> Excelencia in Education analysis using U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, 2016-17. Retrieved from <https://www.edexcelencia.org/research/infographics/hispanic-serving-institutions-hsis-2016-17>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Santiago, D. (2010). *Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): Serving Latino Students*. Washington, D.C. Excelencia in Education. Retrieved from <https://www.edexcelencia.org/research/issue-briefs/emerging-hispanic-serving-institutions-hsis-serving-latino-students>

<sup>6</sup> Excelencia in Education's analysis of U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, 2016-17 fall institutional characteristics and enrollment surveys. Retrieved from <https://www.edexcelencia.org/media/699>

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (2016). Funding Status. Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program- Title V. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/eduhsis/funding.html>

<sup>8</sup> Santiago et al. (2016).

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (2014). Eligibility. Title III Part A Programs- Strengthening Institutions. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/iduestitle3a/eligibility.html>

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (2016). Funding Status.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (2018). Federal TRIO Programs. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html>

<sup>12</sup> Council for Opportunity in Education. (n.d.). TRIO. Retrieved from <http://www.coenet.org/trio.shtml>