

Excelencia in Education's mission is to accelerate Latino's degree attainment—which results in an increase in the numbers of Latinos prepared to join the U.S. workforce. Latinos have the fastest growth in post-secondary enrollment and completion, and their labor force participation is the highest of any group. However, the Latino educational attainment gap remains and labor force participation tends to be concentrated in lower paying jobs. *Excelencia* is committed to ensuring Latinos can benefit from their increased degree attainment and move into well-paying jobs since Latino labor force participation is expected to increase 3% annually while participation is expected to decrease for non-Hispanic Whites¹

What We Know

- **Latinos have the highest labor force participation compared to other groups—** 66% of Latinos 16 year or older participate in the labor force, compared to Asians (64%), Whites (63%), and African-Americans (62%).²
- **Latinos are less likely to be employed in the highest paying occupations.** Only 22% of Latinos are employed in management, professional, and related occupations, compared to Asians (52%), Whites (41%), and African-Americans (31%).
- **Latinos are significantly overrepresented in low paying service occupations.** Latinos are 17% of the labor force but represent 53% of painters, construction, and maintenance workers; 51% of agricultural workers; and 49% of maids and housekeepers.³
- **Latinos in the labor force have lower levels of degree attainment** compared to other groups. Three-quarters (75%) of Latinos over age 25 in the labor force had at least a high school diploma, compared to over 90% of Whites, African Americans, and Asians.
- **Only 20% of Latinos in the labor force had a bachelor's degree or higher,** compared to Asians (61%), Whites (40%), and African Americans (30%).⁴
- **Latino students are active in the workforce.** Almost two-thirds (62%) of students work while in school and half of those students work 30 hours or more.⁵
- **Only a third of Latino graduates worked in a job that was related to their major,** the lowest of all racial and ethnic groups.⁶
- Over 95% of the jobs created since the Great Recession went to workers with at least some postsecondary education.⁷

What We Can Do

- **Use federal policy to promote participation in experiential learning opportunities including internships.** Experiential learning opportunities are often unpaid, making it difficult for students to participate in them on top of work and school. However, by providing opportunities in class, funding internships, or ensuring more internships are paid, Latino students can have access to these important experiences.

- **Capitalize on Latinos' already high workforce participation to help them find paying jobs that provide an applied experience.** Many Latino students work to pay for their education but those jobs often do not match up to their studies. Latino students can benefit from guidance in finding an internship. These opportunities often pay more than service jobs, so students can also cut back on hours without losing pay.
- **Recognize the institutions that are graduating Latino students.** A handful of institutions graduate the majority of Latino students, making it easier to find Latino students to fill positions. As companies look to diversify their workforce and their leadership, they should look at the pipeline of students coming from institutions graduating high numbers of Latino students in high need fields.
- **Encourage engagement between employers and institutions to provide opportunities while and after students are in school.** For example, some college systems have required advisory boards for certain academic departments made up of faculty, staff, and employers. These boards provide information on current industry trends so curriculum can be updated accordingly. Additionally, faculty and staff can help their students find internships and jobs in their fields and provide valuable connections that first-generation students may not have on their own.

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2017). Employment Projections: 2016-2026, Table 3.1. Civilian labor force, by age, sex, race, and ethnicity, 1996, 2006, 2016, and projected 2026.

² Ibid.

³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity*, 2017.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2015-16 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:16).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. (2016). *America's Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots*.