

While [Latino enrollment decreased in 2020](#), we continue to see an increase in Latino college completion. This brief provides an overview of past and current context of Latino college completion through the first months of the pandemic, including the top institutions where Latinos earn degrees, and progress towards the goal of Ensuring America's Future through 6.2 million more Latino undergraduate degrees by 2030.

Educational Attainment: Overall

- **Latino adults had lower degree attainment than all adults.** In 2021, 21% of Latino adults (25 and older) had earned a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 38% of all adults in the U.S. In addition, almost one-third (30%) of Latino adults had earned an associate degree or higher compared to 48% of all adults.¹

Degrees Earned: 2019-2020

- **Latinos represented the second largest group earning certificates or degrees.** Latinos represented 17% of all students earning degrees, compared to White (51%), Black (11%), Asian (6%), and other (14%) students.
- **Of degrees earned by Latinos, the majority were at the baccalaureate level.** Over one-third (34%) of Latinos earned a bachelor's, 28% an associate, 26% a certificate, and 11% a graduate degree.
- **Latinos represented a small share of all graduate degree earners.** Of all graduate degrees earned, Latinos represented 10%.

By Sector

- **The majority of Latinos earned their degrees at a public institution.** Over 70% of Latinos that earned a certificate or degree did so at a public four-year (42%) or public two-year (29%).

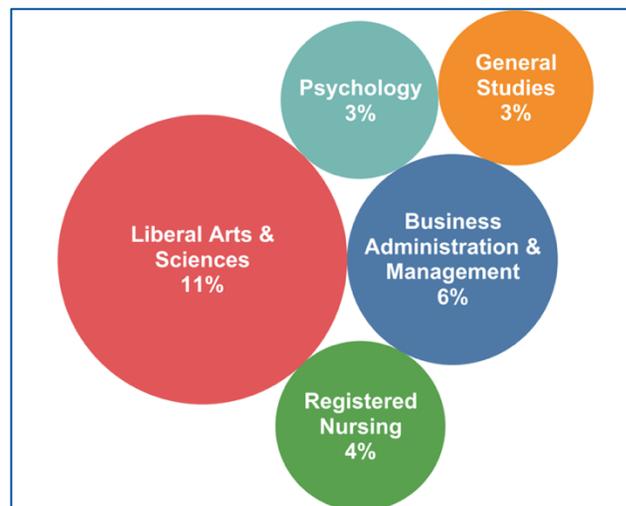
By Location

- **The top 5 locations where Latinos enroll are also where they graduate.** Almost two-thirds (65%) of Latinos earned a degree in California (29%), Texas (15%), Florida (10%), New York (6%), and Puerto Rico (5%), and these five locations enrolled 63% of Latinos.

By Field of Study

- **Latinos earned degrees in concentrated fields.** About 1 in 4 (27%) of Latinos earned certificates or degrees in these five fields of study: 1) Liberal Arts and Sciences, 2) Business Administration and Management, 3) Registered Nursing, 4) Psychology, and, 5) General Studies.

Figure 1. Degrees Latinos Earn by Top 5 Fields of Study



¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2021 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC).

Source: *Excelencia in Education* analysis using U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2015 through 2020 Completions and Institutional Characteristics Surveys.

Top Institutions Where Latinos Earn Certificates and Degrees

- **Over half of Latinos who earned a degree did so at a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI).** HSIs awarded 55% of the degrees Latinos earned in 2019-20.²
- **The majority of institutions in the top 25 awarding degrees to Latinos were HSIs.** Almost all institutions in the top 25 awarding degrees to Latinos at the undergraduate level were HSIs. Further, half of the institutions in the top 25 awarding degrees at the graduate level were HSIs.
- **A concentrated number of institutions are awarding degrees to Latinos at all award levels.** The top 25 institutions awarded between 20% and 33% of all certificates and degrees earned by Latinos.

Figure 2. Concentrated Latino Completion Among Top 25 Institutions



- **Seal of *Excelencia* certified³ institutions graduate a large number of Latino students.** At every award level, Seal certified institutions are among the top 25 institutions awarding degrees to Latinos.
- **Half of all Seal certified institutions are in the top 25 awarding baccalaureate degrees to Latinos.** Of the 24 Seal certified institutions, 12 are among the top 25 institutions awarding degrees to Latinos at the baccalaureate level.

Table 1. HSIs and Seal Certified Institutions Among Top 25 Awarding Degrees to Latinos

Award Level	HSIs in Top 25	Seal Certified in Top 25
Certificates	23	3
Associate	25	3
Baccalaureate	22	12
Master's	14	5
Doctoral	11	5
First Professional	13	4

² There were 559 HSIs in Fall 2020 based on the latest year of data available. HSIs are accredited, degree-granting public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education with 25% or more total undergraduate Hispanic full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment as defined in Title V of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, amended in 2008. To see this list of HSIs and learn more visit: <https://www.EdExcelencia.org/research/series/hsi-2020-2021>

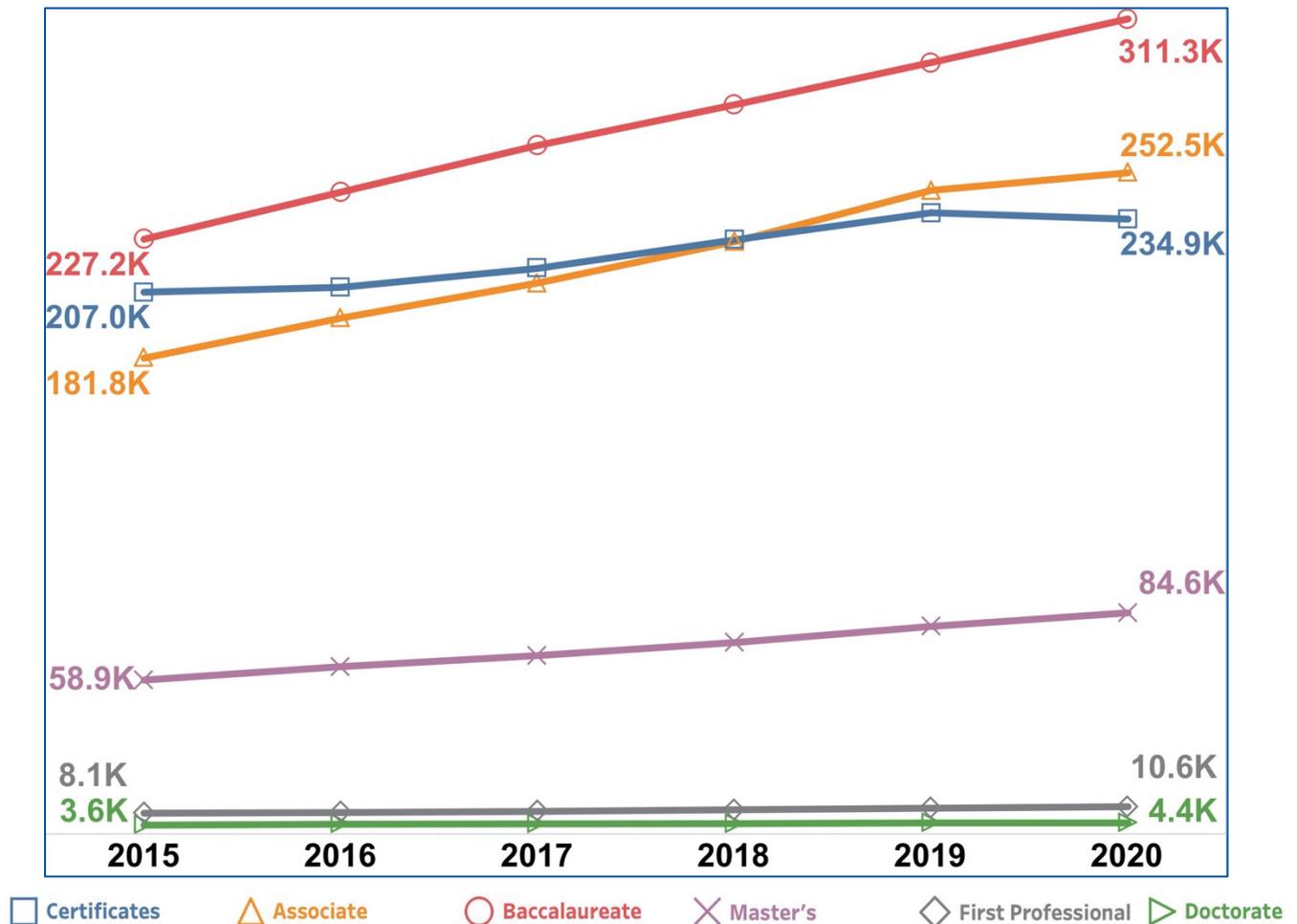
³ The Seal of *Excelencia* is a national certification of institutions that strive to go beyond enrollment to intentionally SERVE Latino students. To learn more visit: www.EdExcelencia.org/Seal-Excelencia

Source: *Excelencia* in Education analysis using U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2015 through 2020 Completions and Institutional Characteristics Surveys.

Trends Over Time: 2014-2015 to 2019-2020

- **Latino degree completion has increased in the last five years.** Latinos have earned over 215,000 more certificates and degrees, an increase of 31%.
- **While Latino degree completion has grown over the last five years, it did so at a slower pace in 2020.** Latinos' degree completion has increased steadily by 6% each year from 2015 until 2020 when it increased only by 3%.
- **Latino degree earners accounted for the majority of the increase in degree completion overall.** Of the 250,000 increase in certificates and degrees earned overall in the last five years, Latinos accounted for 85% of this increase.
- **Latinos have made significant gains at the associate, baccalaureate, and master's degree level.** Latinos' highest growth was at the master's (44%), associate (39%), and baccalaureate (37%) degree level.

Figure 3. Increase in Latinos Earning Certificates/Degrees by Award Level (2015-2020)



Source: Excelexencia in Education analysis using U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2015 through 2020 Completions and Institutional Characteristics Surveys.

Degree Completion Projections to 2030

- **The United States needs more Latinos with degrees.** In order to close the equity gap in degree completion, Latinos will need to earn an additional 6.2 million undergraduate degrees by 2030.⁴
- **Latinos are earning more degrees every year.** Between 2017 and 2020, Latinos earned almost half a million (491,321) additional degrees toward the goal of 6.2 million degrees by 2030.
- **Faster acceleration in Latino degree attainment will be needed to close the gap.** In 2017 and 2018, the additional degrees Latinos earned exceeded projections. However, in 2019 and 2020, Latino degree completion did not stay on this accelerated pace.

Figure 4. Additional Undergraduate Latino Degrees Needed to Close Equity Gap, Projected vs. Actual

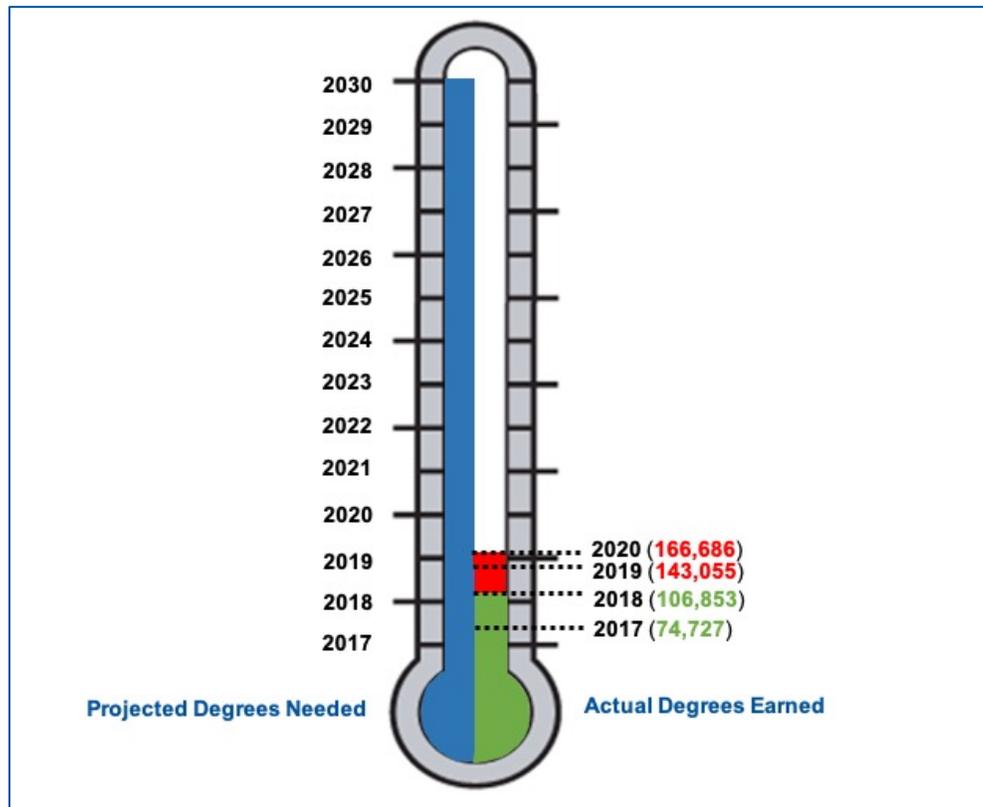


Table 2. Projected Additional Latino Undergraduate Degrees Needed to Close Equity Gap

Year	Projected Latino Degrees Needed	Year	Projected Latino Degrees Needed
2017	51,728	2024	460,926
2018	105,093	2025	526,441
2019	160,229	2026	594,120
2020	216,796	2027	663,162
2021	275,073	2028	734,088
2022	335,133	2029	806,911
2023	397,130	2030	881,882

Source: *Excelencia in Education*. (2020). Ensuring America's Future: Benchmarking Latino College Completion to 2030. *Excelencia in Education*. Washington, D.C.

⁴ *Excelencia in Education* projections. Additional degrees are over and above a baseline of the annual average degrees earned from 2014 to 2016.

Source: *Excelencia in Education* analysis using U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2015 through 2020 Completions and Institutional Characteristics Surveys.