

RIO GRANDE VALLEY

In Texas, **11%** of the total Latino population is located in the Rio Grande Valley.²

K-12 POPULATION

In the Rio Grande Valley, **95%** of the K-12 population is Latino.³

LATINO POPULATION

In the Rio Grande Valley, **90%** of the population is Latino.⁴ Projections show a **98%** increase over the next 30 years.⁵

MEDIAN AGE

The median age of Latinos in the Rio Grande Valley is **28**, compared to **48** for White non-Hispanics.⁶

DEGREE ATTAINMENT

In the Rio Grande Valley, **16%** of Latino adults (25 to 64 years old) had earned an associate degree or higher, compared to **37%** of White non-Hispanics.⁷

For the U.S. to regain the top ranking in the world for college degree attainment, Latinos will need to earn 5.5 million degrees by 2020.

To reach the degree attainment goal by 2020, the Rio Grande Valley can: 1) close the equity gap in college completion; 2) increase the number of degrees conferred; and, 3) scale up programs and initiatives that work for Latino and other students. The following is a framework for tracking Latino degree attainment in the Rio Grande Valley.

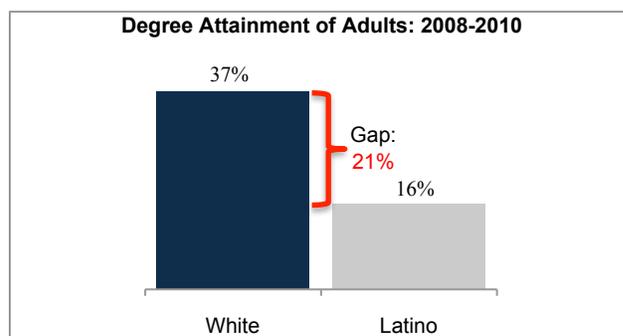
Equity Gap in Degree Completion

Closing the equity gap in college completion can be tracked by the 2 measures provided below. Alone, neither of these measures capture the entire “story” of equity in degree completion. However, in combination, they provide a useful picture of the equity gap in degree attainment between Latino and white cohorts in the Rio Grande Valley.

One measure to track the equity gap is the graduation rate of Latino and White cohorts in the Rio Grande Valley in a single year (2007-08). Graduation rates represent the total graduation within 150 percent of program time for first-time, full-time freshman. However, this metric does not include part-time, transfer, or returning students.

Rio Grande Valley	2007-08		
	Latinos	Whites	Equity Gap
Graduation rates	26.1	27.8	1.7

Another measure that can be used to track the equity gap in degree attainment between Latinos and Whites is the percent of the total adult (25 to 64 years old) population that has earned an associate degree or higher in the Rio Grande Valley over a three year period (2008-10).



¹ Rio Grande Valley includes the following counties: Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey. www.census.gov/acs; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Demographic Profile: Texas <http://www.census.gov>

³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2010 American Community Survey. www.census.gov/acs

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey. www.census.gov/acs

⁵ Texas State Department Populations Projection Data, Tables for Texas Population Projections.

<http://txsdc.utsa.edu/data/TPEPP/Projections/2008/Index.aspx>

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2010 American Community Survey. www.census.gov/acs

⁷ Ibid; There is insufficient data for White non-Hispanics in Starr County.

Degrees Conferred

Another metric to benchmark college completion is to track the progress of total degrees awarded over time. This measure may be the result of an increase in overall enrollment numbers rather than an increase in rates of completion. From 2005-06 to 2007-08,

- the number of Hispanics who earned an undergraduate degree in the Rio Grande Valley increased 4%, the same as other race/ethnic groups.
- the Rio Grande Valley increased degrees conferred to Latinos over 3 years (324).

Source: NCES, IPEDS 2005-06 and 2007-08: Completions Final Release Data File

Examples of What Works for Latino Students

There are institutions in the Rio Grande Valley showing success in preparing, enrolling, retaining, and graduating Latino students. The following are examples of institutional programs with evidence of effectiveness in serving Latino students nominated for Examples of *Excelencia*.

UNIV 1301- Learning Framework – University of Texas- Pan American Since Fall 2008, UTPA requires entering freshman students with an ACT score of 18 or less, or not in the top 25% of their high school graduating class, to enroll in the UNIV 1301- Learning Framework course during their first year of college. The course is designed to help students understand the principles of learning and motivation, and then apply them to their own university experience. Approximately 77% of entering freshman eventually take the course during their first year. The retention rate for first-time, full-time entering freshman at UTPA has increased by 12 percentage points since Fall 2000, the greatest increase of all institutions of higher education in Texas. (<http://www.utpa.edu>)

Valley Scholars Program – South Texas College The Valley Scholars Program was established to provide financial support, encouragement, mentoring, and campus-based work that helps academically talented and highly motivated students be successful in college. The purpose of the Valley Scholars Program is to help STC students navigate the college-going process while building their aptitude, confidence-level, and experience. The retention rate in 2003 was 73%, in 2005 it was 77%, and in 2006 it was 97%. These rates reflect a high level of success among an underserved and highly underrepresented Latino student population. (<http://academicaffairs.southtexascollege.edu/academicexcellence/valleyscholars/>)

Dual Enrollment Program - The University of Texas Brownsville The University of Texas Brownsville offers a dual enrollment program that enables high school students who meet institutional and course-based admissions requirements to receive simultaneous credit for high school level and college level classes. In fall 2007, dual enrollment population accounted for approximately one-third of the UTB total enrollment of 17,215 and represented 18 South Texas high schools. Further, these students had higher retention rates than other students at the University. The one-year retention rate for college students who were former dual enrollment students was 73 percent, compared to 59 percent for non-dual enrollment students. (<http://www.utb.edu/vpaa/dual/Pages>)

For information on institutional programs improving Latino student success in higher education, access *Excelencia* in Education's Growing What Works database at <http://www.edexcelencia.org/examples>

Ensuring America's Future partners in the Rio Grande Valley:

Educate Texas: www.edtx.org

The University of Texas at Brownsville: www.utb.edu

TG: www.TGSLC.org

Jobs for the Future: www.jff.org