



Building Tomorrow's Workforce FACT SHEET

Hispanics, Immigrants, and the American Workforce:

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Hispanics will make up nearly 15% of the civilian labor force by 2014.
- By 2013 Hispanics will make up more than 20% of high school graduates, according to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.
- In 2006, 40% of the Hispanic population was foreign-born.
- During the next decade, one out of every four new workers in the United States will be an immigrant from Latin America.¹

The Changing American Workforce

- Overall, the U.S. labor force will grow from 147 million to 162 million between 2004 and 2014, due entirely to population growth, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.²
- During this period, the Hispanic workforce will increase by 7 million, from 19 million in 2004 to 26 million in 2014, and thus account for nearly 50% of the nation's workforce growth during this time.³
- Growth in the native-born workforce (25-54) in the last 20 years: 44%. In the next 20 years: 0%.⁴
- Nearly 20% of the country's adult population – 76 million people – will be leaving the workforce between 2011 and 2029.

Hispanics and Education

- Increase in the share of workers with post-high school education in the last 20 years: 19%. In the next 20 years: 4%.⁵
- The Hispanic population is growing, is relatively young, and has a very high labor force participation rate, but is undereducated:
 - 60% of 4th grade Hispanics lag behind in reading, math and science;
 - At 13, Hispanics are two years behind their peers in math and reading, and four years behind in science;
 - The high school dropout rate for Hispanics is 21%, versus 7% for whites and 12% for African Americans; and
 - Hispanic males are the only group whose postsecondary educational attainment actually declined between 1990 and 2000, according to the U.S. Census.

More . . .

¹ Calculated from U.S. Census and Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates.

² "Labor Force Projections to 2014: Retiring Boomers." Mitra Toossi, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly Labor Review. November 2005.

³ "Labor Force Projections to 2014: Retiring Boomers." Mitra Toossi, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly Labor Review. November 2005.

⁴ "Grow Faster Together, Or Grow Slowly Apart." The Aspen Institute, 1998.

⁵ "Grow Faster Together, Or Grow Slowly Apart." The Aspen Institute, 1998.

Recommendations for Practice and Policy

One core lesson learned from discussions with leaders from companies, colleges, and community groups is that there must be a reshaping of thinking in order to change the workforce. Three basic principles were common to successful programs across multiple sites and are guides for future action:

Principle #1:

Identify work as an asset to expanding access to postsecondary education, not as a barrier. The workplace must be a gateway to learning basic skills and accessing higher education, and policies should encourage this dynamic. Employers spend more on teaching basic skills to working adults than the federal government. Our policies must leverage this investment, stop ignoring it and lay the groundwork for a highly skilled future workforce.

Principle #2:

Establish partnerships at the regional, state, and national level that build on existing capacity and address the shared interests of Hispanic immigrants, employers, colleges, and people concerned with economic and educational development. Building economic vitality is a goal that must be harnessed to bring key partners to the table to find practical and sustainable solutions.

Principle #3:

Leaders from business, community colleges, government agencies and state legislatures can play a significant role in moving sustainable efforts that improve the quality of our workforce by expanding opportunities for Hispanic immigrant adults. Engage them in the following ways:

Employers can...

- Help workers overcome barriers to education and advancement in the workforce.
- Invest in community college program and community-based organization capacity.
- Reach out to and educate policymakers about the investments needed in both workers and businesses to support workforce development.

College presidents and key college leaders can...

- Make a strategic commitment to understanding the role immigrant labor plays in the community.
- Place a top priority on creating opportunities for documented immigrants to gain the skills they need for good jobs and career advancement.
- Examine and strengthen their current partnering strategies.
- Adopt innovative and student-centered practices from colleges that have demonstrated impact on improving performance.

State legislators and government policymakers can...

- Get to know their state's demographic trends for the next 10 to 30 years, workforce development challenges and the role Hispanic immigrants are playing in the success of key industries.
- Examine state funding and ensure policies and budgets align with priorities.
- Address financial and state policy related barriers for students.
- Create a big table for dialogue and action so employers, community colleges, government agencies and state legislators play a collaborative role.