

Why Post-Completion Success Matters

As the Latino population grows, their educational and career success is tied to the nation's economic prosperity. Despite current discourse that calls to question the value of higher education today, research continues to show that a college degree increases lifetime earnings, job stability, and long-term well-being. For Latino students, degrees can transform life trajectories—not only for individuals but for entire families.

- **Latinos have made significant strides in higher education, with college enrollment increasing over the past two decades.** Between 2000-2023, Latino college enrollment grew from 49% to 58%.
- **During the same time, Latino college completion also grew but continues to lag behind enrollment.** While completion rose from 23% to 41%, only 29% of Latino adults hold an associate degree or higher—compared to 49% of White adults.
- **Latinos have the highest labor force participation rate of any racial/ethnic group.** In 2021, 66% of Latinos were in the labor force, compared to 64% of Asians, 62% of Whites, and 61% of African Americans.
- **Yet, Latinos are underrepresented in high-paying, professional roles that require postsecondary credentials.** Only 25% of Latinos were in management and professional jobs in 2021, compared to 58% of Asians, 43% of Whites, and 34% of African Americans.
- **Latinos will drive future workforce growth.** By 2031, it is projected that Latinos will represent 91% of new U.S. workers, making up one in five workers nationwide.

Strengthening pathways from college to career for Latino, and all, students is key to our country, future workforce, and advancing economic mobility.

Strategies & Practices for Advancing Post-Completion Success

Latinos are driving the nation's economic growth, and higher education has the responsibility to ensure that all students thrive and succeed beyond degree completion. *Excelencia* in Education identified three key post-completion strategies from engaging with institutions in the *Excelencia* in Action network—preparing Latino, and all, students for success beyond graduation, linking them to meaningful workforce opportunities, and measuring post-completion outcomes.

Strategy 1: Prepare Students for Workforce Success	Strategy 2: Link Students to Workforce Opportunities	Strategy 3: Measure and Track Outcomes
Embed career readiness into academic pathways through High-Impact Practices (HIPs) such as research, internships, and service learning.	Build partnerships with employers and community organizations to create pipelines for Latino graduates.	Use data to understand alumni outcomes, align programs with workforce needs, and strengthen accountability.
Example: University of Illinois Chicago's Crossing Latinidades Humanities Research Initiative prepares doctoral students for academic and professional career pathways.	Example: University of Texas Arlington's Spanish Community Translation Program connects Latino students to 35+ local organizations across North Texas through real-world experiences.	Example: San Francisco State University tracks alumni employment through LinkedIn and First Destination/Exit Surveys to inform institutional efforts.

Source: Santiago, D., Labandera, E., Arroyo, C. & Nour, S.R. (February 2024). *Finding Your Workforce: Latino Talent for a Global Economy*. Washington, D.C.: *Excelencia* in Education.