



Contact: [Media@EdExcelencia.org](mailto:Media@EdExcelencia.org)

## **New Analysis Shows Latino Talent Is Key to U.S. Global Competitiveness as AI Changes Workforce Needs**

*Excelencia in Education Identifies Top Institutions and Strategies Cultivating Latino Talent to Meet Demands of High-Growth STEAM Fields*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 17, 2026)** – A new analysis from *Excelencia* in Education makes clear that integrating the arts into STEM is essential to heightening U.S. global competitiveness as AI reshapes industries. Latino talent will be key to building an interdisciplinary workforce equipped to guide new technologies. The brief, [\*Finding Your Workforce: Linking College Completion with U.S. Workforce Needs in Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics \(STEAM\)\*](#), examines national trends in Latinos' STEAM degree completion, identifies top colleges and universities where Latinos earn STEAM credentials, and provides strategies for institutions and employers to prepare and recruit Latino talent for fast-growing STEAM fields.

*Excelencia's* analysis shows that Latinos earned nearly one-third of all STEAM degrees in 2023. However, they are underrepresented in STEM and STEAM occupations. For example, Latinos make up only 15% of the STEM workforce, despite accounting for 18% of all U.S. workers and being projected to drive the majority of workforce growth in the next decade. With STEAM occupations growing twice as fast as others, meeting the nation's demand for a workforce that combines technical expertise, creativity, collaboration, and problem solving will take intentional investment to expand the Latino community's access to interdisciplinary, career-connected education.

The brief identifies the top 25 institutions where Latinos earn STEAM credentials — prime locations for recruiting Latino talent. Among the top 25, seven have earned the [\*Seal of Excelencia\*](#), a national certification for continuous improvement and positive impact on student success, and three are certified by *Excelencia* as Intentionally Thriving Institutions (ITIs) for delivering strong post-completion outcomes.

"The talent our country needs to strengthen and drive growth in our workforce, and especially in the evolving AI-enabled economy, is already here," said Deborah Santiago, *Excelencia* in Education Co-founder and CEO. "The institutions and employers that commit to intentionally building partnerships and pathways that connect Latino, and all, graduates to STEAM careers will shape our future."

*Excelencia* identifies and scales what works with intentionality for Latino, and all, students to ensure higher education remains a powerful engine of social mobility, workforce development, and economic vitality. To that end, the brief highlights evidence-based practices from five ITIs and a Seal of *Excelencia* certified institution that are enhancing individual outcomes and the broader STEAM workforce pipeline — Arizona State University, Austin Community College, Florida International University,

Miami Dade College, The University of Texas at El Paso, and the University of Arizona. These practices inform actionable strategies for institutions and employers to prepare and recruit Latino STEAM talent, creating sustainable ecosystems that expand opportunity and fuel innovation for the nation's economic and civic future.

Strategies for institutions include:

1. Include the arts in STEM curricula;
2. Assess and increase Latino participation in STEM and STEAM programs;
3. Expand post-completion STEAM support for graduates;
4. Evaluate and deepen industry partnerships;
5. Track how Latino alumni apply their education in the workforce and use those insights to refine programs and strengthen career readiness; and
6. Collaborate with other stakeholders to strengthen the STEAM talent pipeline.

Strategies for employers include:

1. Recruit from the top institutions graduating Latinos in STEAM.
2. Invest in interdisciplinary Latino talent ecosystems;
3. Align workforce and academic goals with institutional partners;
4. Collaborate on data and insight sharing;
5. Engage faculty as innovation partners; and
6. Connect Latino professionals as mentors to support current students' transitions into STEAM careers.

*Finding Your Workforce: Linking College Completion with U.S. Workforce Needs in STEAM* was developed in partnership with the Global HSI Equity Innovation Hub at California State University, Northridge (CSUN).

Read the full brief:

[EdExcelencia.org/research/publications/finding-your-workforce-linking-college-completion-us-workforce-needs-steam](https://edexcelencia.org/research/publications/finding-your-workforce-linking-college-completion-us-workforce-needs-steam)

###

### **About *Excelencia* in Education**

*Excelencia* in Education leads a national network of results-oriented educators and policymakers transforming higher education to tap the talents of the Latino community and address the U.S. economy's needs for a highly educated workforce and engaged civic leaders. With this network, *Excelencia* ensures access to excellence by promoting student achievement, informing educational policies, and advancing evidence-based practices to more intentionally serve Latino, and all, students. For more information, visit: [EdExcelencia.org](https://edexcelencia.org)