

# MEN OF COLOR

Ensuring the Academic Success  
of Latino Males in Higher Education

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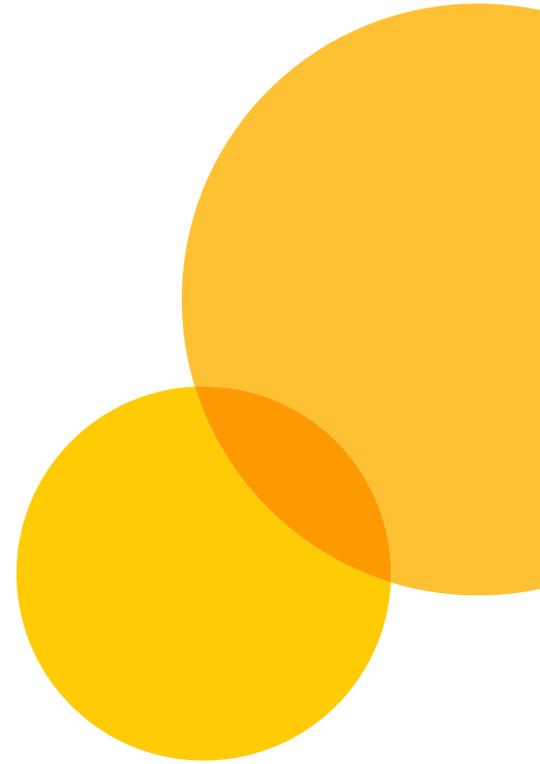
Latino males in higher education. Finally, we are grateful for the grant support from TG for our ongoing research study on Latino males called “Boys in Peril.”

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The U.S. Census data are clear: In the coming years, America's Latina/o community will continue to drive population and labor force growth. Therefore, federal and state policymakers, higher education leaders, and communities small and large across the pre-K to college continuum would be wise to seize this sizeable demographic shift to help propel the United States into a position of economic and social prosperity. Yet, as advocates have articulated, improving the proportion of Latinas/os that access and complete college armed with the knowledge and skills to compete in the 21st century will require much work. The pressing reality is that men of color, and Latino males in particular, lag significantly behind their female peers in terms of both college access and degree attainment. This situation weakens the nation's ability to utilize its great human capital and ensure the success of its diverse families and communities.

This brief seeks to elevate the grave statistics and realities of the growing gender gap in educational attainment among Latinas/os and provides recommendations for education practitioners, institutional leaders, and federal and state policymakers on how to support Latino males on the road to and through college and into the workforce. A first step in ensuring the success of Latino males is to provide information and strategies for stakeholders at the federal, state, regional, and local levels to both embrace and implement a comprehensive agenda that spans early childhood through college. This agenda should emphasize family and community engagement; college and career-ready curricula; linked academic and social supports; and affordability, transparency, and financial literacy. To that end, the authors provide (1) a review of

recent census and educational attainment data and related transition points in early childhood, secondary, and postsecondary education for Latinas/os; (2) a promising blueprint to help develop and implement education programs and initiatives to increase the success of Latino male students; and (3) policy and programmatic implications for stakeholders seeking to enact change at the pre-college and college levels and within national, state, and local contexts. Such a comprehensive approach must prioritize the needs of Latino males and value their cultural contexts. Missing this opportunity to provide economic and social advancement for this community will have a profound impact on the future of U.S. citizens and the nation's economy.

# INTRODUCTION

More than three in five degrees earned by Hispanics in 2009 were earned by females, a ratio that appears to be growing (National Center for Education Statistics 2010).

The future of our nation's Latino male student population is in peril. Even as the total number of Latinas/os attending college<sup>1</sup> and attaining degrees has increased steadily in recent decades, the proportional representation of Latino males continues to decline relative to their female peers (Saenz and Ponjuan 2009). This growing gender gap is not unique to Latino male students, but it has largely gone unnoticed and underexamined by policymakers and education leaders. Such an unacknowledged crisis has untold implications for the future economic prosperity of our country and the well-being of our rapidly growing Latina/o communities.

The issues of how and why Latino<sup>2</sup> males are struggling to access and succeed in college are complex. Yet if we are to make significant progress on the ambitious college completion goals that continue to shape the national higher education policy agenda, these questions must be answered and their attendant challenges mitigated. In pursuit of President Obama's 2020 Goal—that America will once again have the highest share of college graduates of any nation in the world—and in light of the prodigious growth of the Latino population over the past decade and into the foreseeable future, national, state, and local stakeholders must focus their efforts at closing the gender and achievement gaps for Latinos and all other underrepresented student populations (Executive Order 13555 2010).

## Purpose

This three-part brief has been written to bring needed clarity to the growing gender gap in educational attainment among Latinas/os and to provide recommendations for education practitioners, institutional

leaders, and federal and state policymakers on how to support Latino males at the national and regional levels. To that end, this brief contains:

- I. A review of recent census and educational attainment data, identifying critical transition points in early childhood, secondary, and postsecondary education between Latina/o boys and girls that affect college readiness and completion;
- II. The introduction of a promising blueprint that outlines key factors to help develop and implement education programs and initiatives to increase the success of Latino male students; and
- III. Policy and programmatic implications for stakeholders seeking to enact change at the pre-college and college levels and within national, state, and local contexts.

Ultimately, the sobering statistics for Latino males discussed in this brief are a clarion call for action among policymakers, the philanthropic community, educators, families, and communities large and small. Simply stated, if we do not act strategically and collaboratively, Latino males may continue to vanish from the American higher education landscape.

<sup>1</sup> Colleges reflect public and private two- and four-year postsecondary educational institutions.

<sup>2</sup> This brief uses the words Latino and Hispanic interchangeably (along with the terms Black and African American). Unless noted, all references to Whites and African-Americans refer to non-Hispanics.

# THE CONDITION OF LATINO MALES IN EDUCATION

Left unnoticed or unheeded, the growing gender gap in educational attainment for Latinas/os is a direct threat to our future social and economic stability.

## **Latinos and the 2010 U.S. Census**

To fully grasp the urgency of the growing gender gap in educational attainment among the Latina/o population, we need only to consider the broader demographic context. In early 2003, the U.S. Census released new data confirming that Latina/os had officially become the nation's largest racial/ethnic minority group, edging past African Americans (U.S. Census Bureau 2006) and denoting a symbolic moment in the demographic history of this country. More recent data from the 2010 Census show the Hispanic population totaling 50.5 million, or roughly one in six Americans (16.3 percent). This represents a 45 percent increase in the Hispanic population over the previous decade (Pew Hispanic Center 2011), a phenomenal growth rate. In fact, half of the country's overall population growth between 2000 and 2010 was attributable to Hispanics alone, and their percentages increased in every state of the union.

A common misperception is that immigration is the driving force of this growth in the Hispanic demography. Although immigration will continue to play a role, native-born Hispanics will be the key drivers of population growth in the coming decades (Tienda 2009), a trend that shows how increasingly young the Hispanic population is relative to other groups. In 2009, the median age for the typical American was 36, yet it was 17 for native-born Hispanics (Pew Hispanic Center 2011). More to the point, although Hispanics were 16.3 percent of the overall U.S. population in 2010, they

also represented close to one in four children under the age of 18 (23.1 percent), a proportion that jumps to one in two in states like Texas, California, and New Mexico (Pew Hispanic Center 2011). In fewer than 20 years, close to one in three students ages 5 to 24 will be Hispanic (Tienda 2009). The lesson is this: In the coming years, the perpetually young Latina/o population will continue to drive population and labor force growth. Therefore, improving the educational success of the Latina/o population is imperative to ensure America's future prosperity.

# LATINO MALE PRE-COLLEGE PATHWAYS, COLLEGE ACCESS, AND COLLEGE SUCCESS

Education research offers stark evidence of the challenges that Hispanic students face in navigating the many transitions in their postsecondary education experience. Challenges often stem from lower family income and parental education levels (Arbona and Nora 2007; Harrell and Forney 2003; Longerbeam, Sedlacek, and Alatorre 2004; Sanchez, Marder, Berry, and Ross 1992), poor academic preparation (Ramani, Gilbertson, Fox, and Provasnik 2007), and lack of access to information about the college-going process (McDonough 1997). Other scholars have focused on student success, noting that Latina/o students often rely on familial and community support as well as extended social and family networks to persist in higher education (Yosso 2005). Latina/o student retention is further influenced by how well students are provided with ongoing cultural validation and positive mentoring experiences (Rendón 1994; Nora, Barlow, and Crisp 2005). Yet even though college-success factors for Latinas/os are well documented (Padilla 2008; Zarate, Saenz, and Oseguera 2011), the extant research literature is mostly silent on the postsecondary pathways of Latino males.

The lack of reliable data on Latino males further hampers the evolution of a research agenda for this group. Few national data sources allow for an exhaustive analysis of Latino males' educational pathways, a glaring research need that must be addressed. The most consistent source of national education data available are collected through various U.S. Census data tools, and these data are further synthesized and aggregated in the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) annual *Digest of Educational Statistics*. Yet these data have flaws, including the fact that the NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System—the national source for higher education data—does not take into account part-time, re-entry, or community college transfer students, all of whom are a substantial portion of the Latino postsecondary student population.

The available data, however flawed, describe an educational attainment gap for Latino males throughout the pre-K through postsecondary continuum. There continue

to be observable differences in rates of enrollment, persistence, and completion between male and female students from early childhood, into elementary and secondary schooling, and on through postsecondary education, especially among Latina/os. As the following sections illustrate, this growing gender gap and its attendant symptoms are ultimately manifestations of inequity, and these metrics point to stunted educational opportunities for Latino males that may undermine their ability to navigate the critical transition points on their way toward and through postsecondary education.

## **Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education**

Observable differences in enrollment rates between male and female students begin to show up in early childhood education, especially among Latino and Black children. In 2009, 44.4 percent of Latina females under age five were enrolled in school on a part- or full-time basis, compared with 39.4 percent of Latino

males in this same age range (NCES 2010). This is an important statistic in that levels of participation in early childhood education significantly affect students' early academic outcomes (Alexander and Entwisle 1988). Further compounding this pattern is the emerging reality that boys are being educated within a system that does not acknowledge the potential mismatch of the male learning style in current educational practices (Gurian and Stevens 2005). By third grade, boys are an average of a year to a year and a half behind girls in reading and writing abilities (NCES 2000). Moreover, most boys in grades four through eight are twice as likely as girls to be held back a grade (NCES 2006). **TABLE 1** examines these trends across the entire public school educational pipeline (K–12); the data show that 12.4 percent of Hispanic males and 25.6 percent of Black males have repeated at least one grade. Differential rates of suspension and expulsion are also disturbing.

**TABLE 1**  
**Percentage of Public School Students Who Have Repeated a Grade, Been Suspended, or Been Expelled by Race/Ethnicity and Gender 2007**

RACE/ETHNICITY	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
<b>% in K–12 that have repeated a grade</b>			
Total <sup>1</sup>	11.5	13.9	8.9
White	8.7	11.2	6.1
Black	20.9	25.6	15.3
Hispanic	11.8	12.4	11.1
Asian	3.5	6.5	0.0
<b>% in grades 6–12 that have ever been suspended</b>			
Total <sup>1</sup>	21.6	27.9	14.9
White	15.6	21.3	9.7
Black	42.8	49.5	34.7
Hispanic	21.9	29.6	14.1
Asian	10.8	14.9	‡
<b>% in grades 6–12 that have ever been expelled</b>			
Total <sup>1</sup>	3.4	4.5	2.3
White	1.0	1.3	0.7
Black	12.8	16.6	8.2
Hispanic	3.0	3.1	2.9
Asian	‡	‡	‡

NOTE: All data are based on parent reports. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.  
 ‡ Reporting standards not met.  
<sup>1</sup> Total includes other race/ethnicity categories not separately shown.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey of the National Household Education Surveys Program, 2007

These disparities in promotion and suspension rates can be associated with other forms of unhealthy behavior

or misdiagnoses that could lead to missed educational opportunities for males. For example, Latino and African-American males are overrepresented in special education tracks, referrals to juvenile justice agencies (Justice Center 2011), and high school dropout rates (Saenz and Ponjuan 2009). Some of these trends are an artifact of zero-tolerance discipline policies that have overtaken many schools, especially urban areas (Skiba 2000). In a recent study of school discipline policies in Texas, researchers found that 83 percent of African American males and 74 percent of Hispanic males reported at least one discretionary violation between seventh and 12th grades, significantly higher rates than those for their female counterparts (Justice Center 2011). The same study also reported that suspended or expelled students are almost three times more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system the following year.

Other researchers have also found patterns within the educational system that portend early obstacles for boys of color and may push them into difficult-to-break trajectories. Since the late 1960s, the U.S. Office of Civil Rights has reported the pervasive problem of overrepresentation of racial/ethnic minority children in certain disability categories (Artiles, Harry, Reschly, and Chinn 2002; Ferri and Connor 2005), and the disparities are even more pronounced for male students of color. The phenomenon of “overrepresentation” for boys of color in special education categories is well documented (Ferri and Connor 2005; Losen and Orfield 2002, Gurian and Stevens 2005; Pollack 1998). Boys are twice as likely as girls to be labeled “learning disabled,” they are seven times more likely to be diagnosed with attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, they constitute up to 67 percent of the special education population, and in some school systems they are up to 10 times more likely to be diagnosed with serious emotional and behavioral disorders. One difficulty in addressing these challenges lies in the fact that such diagnoses by school professionals are meant to be well-intentioned interventions, but the unintended consequences of such efforts must be carefully reexamined given their potentially dire effects on Latino male students.

In addition to the oft “misplacement” of boys of color in secondary schools, another structural issue affecting Latinos on their pathway to college is the lack of Latino males in the teaching workforce. In 2007, the Current Population Survey noted that only 6.7 percent of all elementary and secondary teachers were Latina/o. Of the close to four million teachers employed in K–12, only about a quarter were male, indicating that the proportion of Latino male teachers is much lower than females at all grade levels. Zapata (1988) argues that teachers of color are

critical because they may be better equipped to meet the learning and mentoring needs of an increasing proportion of the school population than teachers from other backgrounds. In addition, male teachers of color can serve as role models for Latino and African-American male students.

### High School Graduation, College Enrollment, and Degree Completion

In recent years, U.S. Census data on high school completion and college enrollment show significant differences in success rates between Hispanic male and female students (Saenz and Ponjuan 2009; Swail, Cabrera, Lee, and Williams 2005). **TABLE 2** displays Latina/o population enrollment trends in secondary to postsecondary institutions by age group over the past 30 years. At first glance it shows that Latino males and females within these age cohorts have made

great strides in enrollment over this period, and this is certainly a trend that cannot be understated.

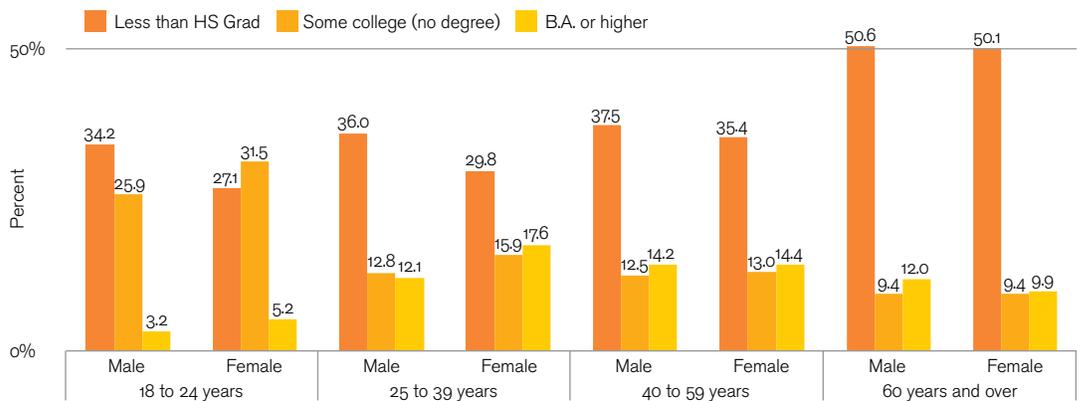
However, a closer look at 2010 census data for various age ranges of Latinas/os shows another poignant picture of high school and college completion gaps. **FIGURE 1**, which shows the highest level of educational attainment by Hispanics in terms of gender and age cohorts, indicates marked proportional differences across both dimensions. A striking difference is that among Hispanic males 18–24 years of age, 34.2 percent have less than a high school degree. Furthermore, across all age cohorts (except 60 years and over), when compared to Hispanic females, Hispanic males have earned fewer bachelor's degrees. These differences diminish for older cohorts, indicating that the growing gender gap is especially salient among contemporary age groups.

**TABLE 2**  
Percentage of the Latina/o Population Enrolled in Any Form of School\* (by age group)

Age Group	LATINO MALES (%)			LATINA FEMALES (%)		
	1980	1990	2009	1980	1990	2009
16–17 years	81.5	85.5	92.5	82.2	85.3	92.6
18–19 years	36.9	40.7	51.8	38.8	47.2	62.5
20–21 years	21.4	21.7	31.2	17.6	33.1	43.1
22–24 years	10.7	11.2	18.6	12.6	8.4	22.2

NOTE: School includes enrollment in any type of graded public, parochial, or other private schools. This also includes elementary schools, high schools, colleges, universities, and professional schools.  
SOURCE: NCES, *Digest of Educational Statistics*, 2010, Table 6

**FIGURE 1**  
Highest Level of Latina/o Educational Attainment by Sex and Specific Age Ranges

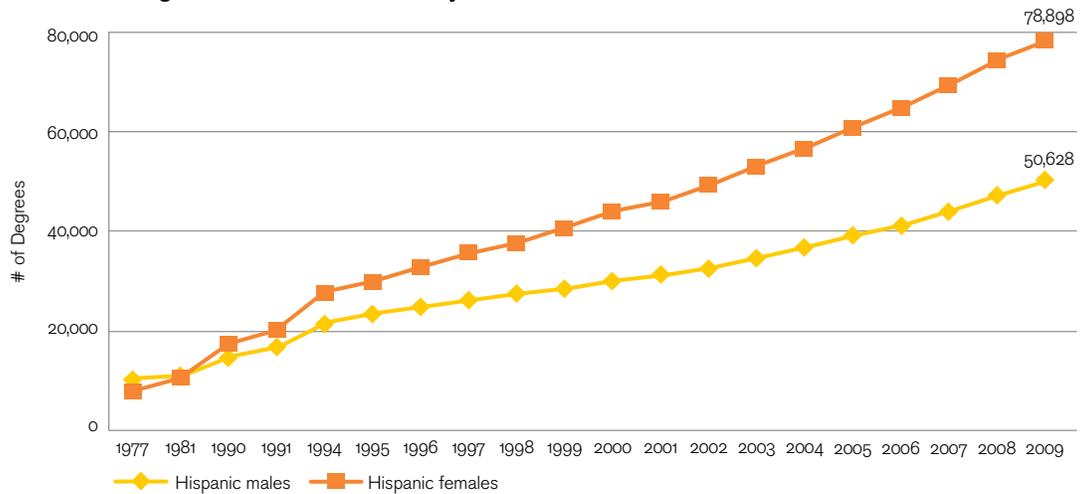


SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey*, 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement

Twenty years ago, there was little difference between Latino male and female students in their degree completion rates. Yet in 2009, 62 percent of bachelor's degrees earned by Hispanics were earned by females, up from 50 percent in 1990 (FIGURE 2). Similar gaps are evident for associate's degrees: In 2009, Latina females were awarded 62.5 percent of these degrees among all Hispanics (NCES 2010).

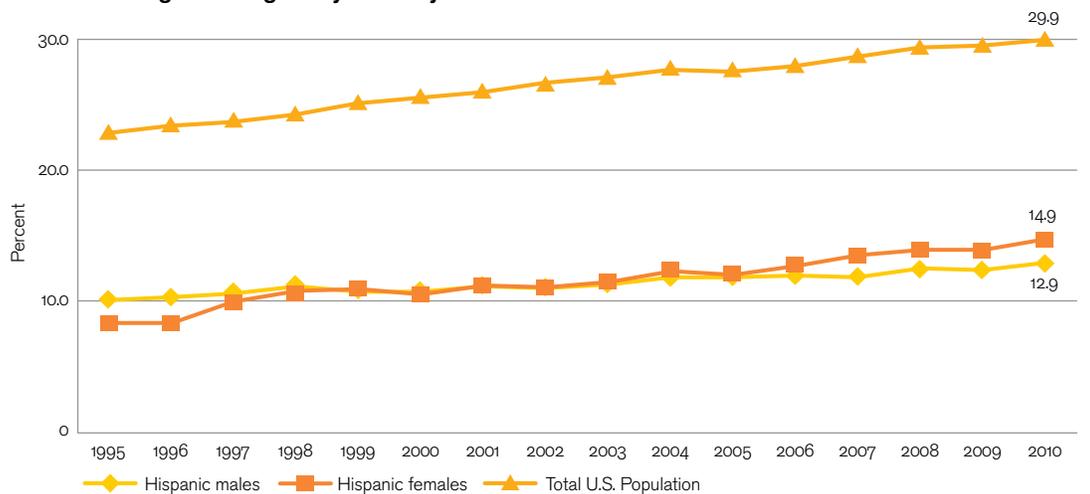
Two decades of disparity in educational attainment has manifested itself in the overall population. The percentage of Latina females with a bachelor's degree or higher has increased dramatically over the past 20 years, almost doubling from 8.4 percent in 1995 to 14.9 percent in 2010. Latino males have also seen a modest increase in this trend (from 10.1 percent to 12.9 percent), but they have been eclipsed by their female counterparts, as shown in FIGURE 3.

**FIGURE 2**  
**Bachelor's Degrees Awarded to Latinos by Gender 1977–2009**



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement*

**FIGURE 3**  
**Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Ethnicity and Gender 1995 to 2010**



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement*

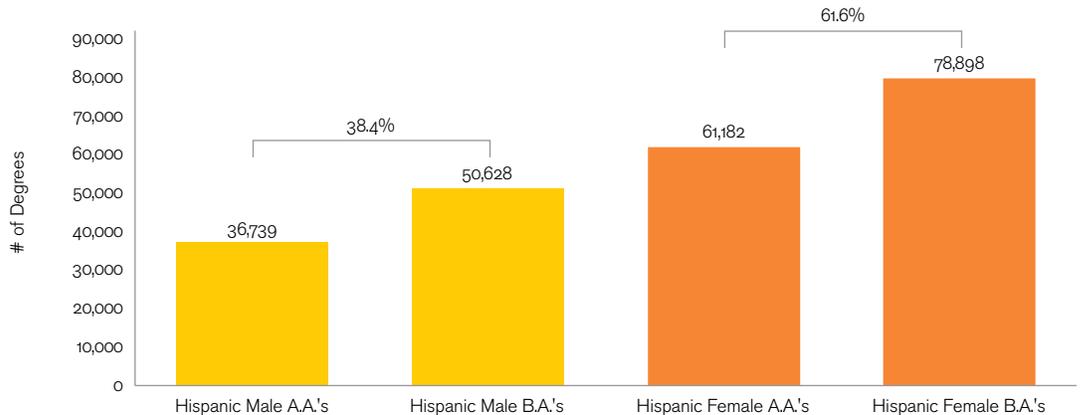
These findings depict a compelling portrait of the post-secondary degree attainment trends between Hispanic males and females, evidence that further illustrates the growing gender gap. **FIGURE 4** provides a real-time glimpse of the current gender gap in degree attainment, namely that Latinas earned better than three of five (61.6 percent) degrees earned among Hispanics in 2009. The disparity in raw numbers of degrees earned is even more compelling. Latinas earned a combined 140,080 associate's or bachelor's degrees in 2009, well over 52,700 more than their male counterparts.

The educational underperformance of Latino males is also evident when compared against all male students within a given age cohort. **FIGURE 5** compares the highest level of educational attainment for Hispanic

males versus all males across various age cohorts, and shows that Hispanic males lag behind their male peers in overall educational attainment. Indeed, dramatic differences are observed for Hispanic males in terms of earning a bachelor's degree or higher across each age cohort.

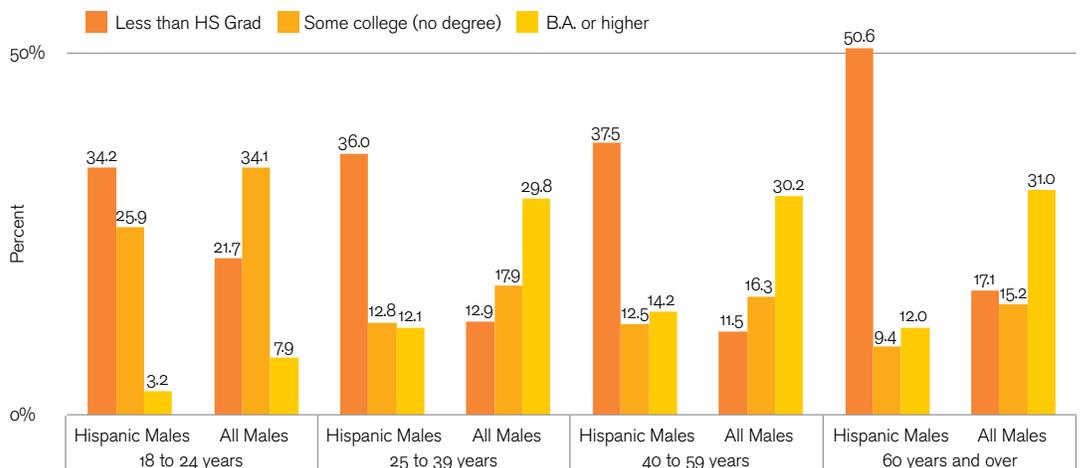
In sum, Latina females numerically and proportionately outpace their male counterparts at all critical education transition points: High school completion, college enrollment, associate and undergraduate degree completion, and overall educational attainment within the general population. Also, the gender gap in overall educational attainment appears to be growing, thus heightening the urgency for action on the part of stakeholders and policymakers at all levels.

**FIGURE 4**  
Associate's and Bachelor's Degrees Earned by Hispanic Men and Women, 2009



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey*, 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement

**FIGURE 5**  
Hispanic Educational Attainment by Sex and Specific Age Ranges



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey*, 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement

# ALTERNATIVE CAREER AND LIFE PATHWAYS FOR LATINO MALES

## Latino Males in the Workforce

Latinos have historically had among the highest participation rates in the U.S. labor force, but they tend to work in occupations that pay low wages, provide low economic mobility, provide little or no health insurance, are less stable, and are more hazardous to their health and well-being (Maldonado and Farmer 2006). Latino males are most often in these positions because of low educational attainment; limited English language proficiency; and lack of work experience, training, or other employability skills (see “Deadly Trend” 2002). Owing to their disproportionate representation within low-skill jobs, which were the first to be shed during the recent recession, Latino males were greatly affected by the recent downturn (Kochhar, Espinoza, and Hinze-Pifer 2010).

## Latino Males in the U.S. Armed Forces

Latino males compose approximately 11.5 percent of the total enlisted servicemen and women within the Department of Defense, which includes all the armed forces (U.S. Department of Defense 2009). It should be noted that not all Latino males are eligible to serve in the military: The high rates of high school dropout and then nonpermanent immigration status make many Latinos ineligible. In examining the enlistment rates by gender, Latinos are the third largest group of enlisted males, but a closer examination of the military appointments of Latino males indicates that they are still underrepresented in the military in comparison with the dramatic growth of Latinos in the general population.

## Latino Males in the U.S. Prison System

Latino males have a significant presence in the U.S. prison system. In 2009, Latinos comprised about 20 percent of the total correctional population of 2.1 million (West, Sabol, and Greenman 2010). Although Latino males are less likely than Black males to enter the judicial system, the former are approximately four times more likely than White males to enter prison during their lifetime (Bonczar and Beck 1997). Although these numbers are significant, the actual number of incarcerated Latinos may actually be higher than accounted for by reporting agencies because of inconsistencies in racial/ethnic identification. Within the context of college-age Latino males, a recent report by the U.S. Census Bureau (2006) found that the ratio of Latino males in jail dormitories versus college dormitories is 2.7 to 1.

## The Role of *Familismo* in the Lives of Latino Males

One of the more important and enduring cultural values among Latinos in the United States is *familismo*, which involves the strong identification and attachment to immediate and extended family. The value of *familismo* is embodied by strong feelings of loyalty, responsibility, and solidarity within the Latino family unit (Marin and Marin 1991; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 1995). Such loyalty and obligation is often accompanied by strong desires to provide financial and emotional support for the family, qualities that hold constant across generational lines and immigrant status (Marin and Marin 1991). This also means that Latino males are more likely to join the workforce immediately after high school instead of pursuing a college degree or credential.

Nonetheless, *familismo* among Latino families should not be seen as a negative force working to perpetuate gaps in educational attainment between males and females. Scholars have noted that *familismo* can serve as a strong social network and a form of social capital that can facilitate lifelong educational success (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 1995; Valenzuela 1999). Accordingly, *familismo* can work as a sociocultural asset to assist young Latino males and females in navigating the educational system by building on strong social and family networks, which can ultimately be accessed to support their academic achievement (Valenzuela and Dornbusch 1994).

# BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION: CREATING AND MAINTAINING SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES FOR LATINO MALES

The nascent national movement on behalf of Latino males suggests that we consider promising local and regional initiatives that target Latinos.

Despite the many challenging realities presented in this brief, there are opportunities to improve educational outcomes of Latino males, especially given a national, state, and regional focus on increasing the number of individuals with college degrees and credentials, coupled with great interest in encouraging those students who have been previously deemed “nontraditional.” Similar to the ongoing, well-established efforts to improve the educational outcomes of African-American/Black males in higher education, the nascent national movement on behalf of Latino males suggests that we consider promising regional and local initiatives that target Latinos. As such, this brief highlights several currently funded programs focused on Latino males. Although the referenced programs are not exhaustive, they offer a glimpse into promising activities focused on this critical issue. To better discuss these programs, the authors have established a blueprint based on their work with successful Latino male initiatives across the country.

## **Blueprint for Action**

The programs highlighted in the blueprint share common, fundamental practices in their work to assist communities and educational leaders in improving the success of Latino male students. On the basis of their experience in observing and working with programs, and recognizing the need to scale up successful efforts focused on increasing access and completion for Latino male students, the authors have developed a detailed blueprint to help communities and educational institutions develop new programs or augment existing programs to serve Latino males. It summarizes critical elements that can help education and community leaders develop focused strategies to increase Latino male success. Although the blueprint does not imply that these elements will guarantee policy or programmatic success, it does highlight

the importance of thoughtful and intentional planning and infrastructure development.

As shown in **FIGURE 6**, the blueprint addresses three main stages for consideration:

1. **Planning and Development:** Actions to take in the initial program development stage;
2. **Resource Development and Sustainability:** Select steps needed to create a strong financial base and sustainable resources for continued work; and
3. **Outreach and Communication:** Points of importance to sustain community buy-in and subsequent efforts to reverse the educational trends of Latino males.

**FIGURE 6**  
**Latino Male Success Blueprint for Action**

	PURPOSE	ACTION	CRITICAL STEPS
1	Create Awareness	Use (and/or collect new) education and workforce data to communicate current educational and employment trends for Latino males.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using these data, develop fact sheets, research reports, policy briefs, and/or practice guides with an emphasis on gender differences in educational access, degree attainment, and employment patterns.</li> <li>Connect specific educational outcomes by Latino males and their presence in high-demand fields (e.g., science and engineering).</li> </ul>
	Develop a Network of Support	Tap into P-20 education, political, and community leaders; business champions; and public and private organizations committed to promoting the success of Latino males.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When conducting outreach, use the above data to help each sector (e.g., business, higher education) see the importance of Latino males in achieving national and regional education and workforce goals.</li> <li>Harness the support and expertise of the network to advocate for and mobilize respective constituents in support of Latino male educational success and career opportunity.</li> </ul>
	Develop a Vision and Mission Statement or Theory of Change	Create further buy-in through a jointly constructed mission statement and/or theory of change for Latino male success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a clear and aspirational mission statement that includes the formation of research-based policy and practice to promote the success of Latino males.</li> <li>Develop a theory of change that outlines well-defined inputs, influences, assumptions, and outcomes for Latino male success.</li> </ul>
	Identify Short- and Long-Term Measurable Goals and Objectives	With your vision and mission statement as a guide, develop ambitious goals and objectives for Latino male success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share goals and corresponding objectives with faculty, staff, students, and parents to set high expectations and cultivate buy-in from multiple stakeholders.</li> <li>Use current data on Latino male outcomes to set bold goals and objectives.</li> </ul>
2	Develop Key Benchmarks and Track Progress	Develop benchmarks tied to the objectives to track progress toward meeting desired results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an evaluation plan that measures and reports on intermediate and ultimate outcomes of your initiative(s).</li> <li>Let the data that come out of such evaluation drive future efforts and build a sustained model for change as well as a base of evidence, which is vital for future and continued funding.</li> </ul>
	Design Research-Based Programmatic Activities to Meet the Designated Objectives	Reference research on effective and promising programmatic activities to guide program development and implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take advantage of leading advocates, researchers, peers, and other members of your support network to design engaging and purposeful programmatic activities.</li> </ul>
	Garner Resources	Secure the necessary human capital, financial resources, and infrastructure for programmatic planning and execution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With data in hand and a clear message to communicate (tailored for each audience), seek a diverse funding portfolio that includes gifts from individuals, local foundations, local businesses, state grants, and public and private organizations.</li> <li>Recruit and train qualified staff to lead program implementation, with a particular emphasis on recruiting men of color.</li> <li>Procure physical space and infrastructure to launch and sustain planned initiatives; housing your program within a stable entity (e.g., school, college) may be wise.</li> </ul>
	Create Financial and Nonfinancial Sustainability	Ensure the long-term viability of developed initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize the development of a sustained financial future by cultivating long-term relationships with your network and with their contacts.</li> <li>Cultivate relationships with groups that indirectly benefit from your efforts.</li> </ul>
3	Inform Stakeholders	Communicate policy and practice recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicize the findings of your evaluation, particularly to policymakers, practitioners, potential funders, and other influencers to secure champions.</li> <li>Create a diverse, broad, and strategic dissemination plan that may include Internet, social media, print, and television or radio outlets.</li> <li>Use your network for dissemination purposes.</li> </ul>

# PROMISING PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES FOR LATINO MALE EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

The Pathways to College Network's 2009 publication *Removing Roadblocks to Rigor* promotes the provision of adequate academic and social supports to ensure college readiness and success. The report outlines five key elements that programs and policies should exhibit to facilitate students' smoother transitions and educational success from high school through postsecondary institutions:

1. **Emotional Support**—Encourage caring and respect through mentoring, peer support, and individual counseling.
  2. **Instrumental Support**—Offer tangible interventions, such as workshops focused on financial literacy, study skills, and time management.
  3. **Informational Support**—Offer valuable information related to academic transitions, academic advising, and career choices.
  4. **Appraisal Support**—Offer ongoing feedback based on student progress.
  5. **Structural Support**—Provide formal and informal structures to improve the school's culture and climate.
3. *Latino College Dollars Foundation* has a singular focus on providing *instrumental* (e.g., need-based financial aid) and *informational* (e.g., financial literacy workshops) support. The organization, which is housed in the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, compiles and provides Latino families with valuable scholarship information.

Below are several innovative programs focused on Latino male education. The list is not exhaustive, but it provides information about the programs' scale and scope of work and is a starting point for many organizations focused on developing initiatives for Latino males.

## Pre-College Level Programming

1. *Fathers Active in Communities and Education* illustrates a commitment to *emotional* (e.g., group support) and *informational* (e.g., college planning workshops) support for Latino fathers. By actively encouraging Latino fathers to engage with their children in middle and high school, the program reinforces the importance of a college education.
2. *Encuentros Leadership*, *X-Y Zone*, and *Puente Project* offer *emotional* (e.g., mentoring) and *instrumental* (e.g., transitional programs) support to Latino males. These programs are specifically designed to encourage and empower Latino male students to pursue education beyond high school.

## College-Level Programming

1. Lambda Upsilon Lambda Latino at Cornell University is a male service fraternity created to provide *emotional* (e.g., mentoring) and *structural* (e.g., safe informal academic and social spaces) support to improve Latino male involvement and persistence.
2. *Project MALES* (Mentoring to Achieve Latino Educational Success) is a joint effort between the University of Texas at Austin and South Texas College in the Rio Grande Valley. This project is a newly established initiative that helps first-time enrolled Latino males with their academic transitions by providing emotional support (e.g., mentoring relationships) with older Latino male peers and role models.
3. *Doorway to Success: Latino Male Retention Initiative* at Monroe Community College, Rochester, N.Y., and *The Clave Latino Male Empowerment Program* at Union County College, Cranford, N.J., offer Latino male students emotional (e.g., counseling), *instrumental* (e.g., tutoring), *appraisal* (e.g., academic progress), and *structural* (e.g., office collaborations) supports to increase academic persistence and degree completion in career and technical programs.

# IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE: ADDRESSING THE EDUCATIONAL CRISIS FACING LATINO MALES

Along with innovative promising programs, education stakeholders must develop effective policies and employ promising practices to encourage Latino males' successful academic transitions into postsecondary institutions, followed by increased degree completion rates and promising workforce outcomes.

## **Family and Community Engagement**

Given the important role that family plays in the lives of young Latino males, it is imperative that schools and postsecondary institutions develop policies and practices that encourage Latino families and community members to become actively involved in the educational experience of their young men. Latino families should be thought of as a crucial component in creating and instilling a college-going culture. Both K–12 schools and institutions of higher education can do much to conduct outreach and offer services to families and community members. K–12 and postsecondary leaders need to be especially sensitive to the economic drivers that often push young Latinos, especially those from low-income families, to enter the workforce instead of going to and through college. Engaging family members and the community in developing a culture of college success early on will only further sustain and engrain the necessary knowledge, skills, behaviors, and supports needed to graduate more men of color.

Given the breadth of expertise that exists on college campuses—from faculty to student affairs staff (e.g., career advisors, financial aid officers, admissions counselors) to students themselves—individuals and departments have much to offer. In addition to providing direct pathways to college, institutions can help displaced youth in their local communities. For example, two-year institutions may develop programs that help Latino males in juvenile programs who are trying to transition back into society. Such programs will demonstrate the institution's commitment to helping these students transition back into education through GED or vocational education programs that have a pre-college component, providing an option for continued education. Other forms of community engagement can include encouraging current programs that draw on Latino male college students to serve as mentors and role models for Latino males in local public schools and policies that clear the path for dual-enrollment and early college high school opportunities.

## **College- and Career-Ready Curriculum**

At a time when the alignment between K–12 and higher education has never been more important, local school districts are wise to develop policies that provide equitable access to pre-college curriculum, aligned to expectations for college and career success. Policy-makers and leaders across the K–12 and postsecondary continuum should provide the necessary political will and resources to ensure the successful implementation of initiatives, such as the Common Core State Standards and Assessments, including the development of curriculum tied to the standards and assessments and corresponding in-service professional development for teachers and staff both prior to and during the implementation of the revamped curriculum. Additionally, leaders (e.g., principals, teachers) must ensure equitable access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses and other courses designed to prepare students for the rigors of college and career, including honors, dual and concurrent enrollment courses, the International Baccalaureate curriculum, and rigorous career and technical education courses. Much of the disproportionate distribution of AP courses in high schools can be traced along racial, ethnic, gender, and income lines. Leaders must pay particular attention to the gender gap in advanced course enrollment, as Latino males lag significantly behind their female peers in participation.

Local school boards are also essential change agents for rectifying the crisis facing young men of color. School boards enact many policies that influence curriculum (e.g., AP course availability), resources (e.g., funding models), and community outreach (e.g., family education seminars), and are uniquely suited to further develop or enhance policies unique to the Latino community. For example, boards should consider equipping teachers with professional development around innovative pedagogies and delivery models for diverse learners and tailored curriculum for English as a Second Language students, as well as adaptive scheduling that supports youth who work to support their families.

### **Linked Academic and Social Supports**

Although progress is being made in developing rigorous academic standards and assessments to prepare students for college and careers, less attention has been paid to the academic and social developmental supports that students may need to reach these standards. Such supports include accessible advising and counseling, mentoring, workshops that teach study skills and financial literacy, learning communities, tutoring, and college and career exploration and planning, all of which can help students reach for and meet high expectations. Leaders across the K–12 and higher education continuum should therefore provide linked academic and social supports aligned to expectations for postsecondary success. In K–12, such linked supports will help to ensure that students have developed the academic and social knowledge, behaviors, and capabilities needed to enter credit-bearing courses.

Similarly, at the postsecondary level, linked academic and nonacademic supports, including counseling and advising, first-year experience programs, and faculty and peer mentoring will help students reach graduation and move into the workforce. Just as important as providing linked academic and social supports is ensuring that Latino males have role models and mentors available at every turn. Colleges and universities must take seriously their faculty diversity efforts and enact policies that promote the recruitment, hiring, and retention of U.S.-born Latino and other men of color faculty.

### **Affordability, Transparency, and Financial Literacy**

It is important that policymakers and practitioners recognize that Latino students and families will face difficult hurdles in paying for higher education. In addition, there is a well-known disconnect between the knowledge that families have about the financial aid process and the opportunities that are available to them. Language barriers, a disparity in cultural capital (i.e., those who are first in their family to attend college), and poor information-sharing by schools and colleges are common challenges facing young men of color and their families, all of which points to the importance of greater transparency on the part of postsecondary institutions and the higher education community in providing accurate data. These data should include not only costs, but also the costs that students from different backgrounds pay to attend the institution, including net price—defined as the full cost of attendance minus any scholarships or grants. Institutions must also be transparent about the distinction between grants/scholarships and loans, as well as types of loans. Students should have information on the average financial aid package disaggregated by type of aid (Pell, institutional aid, state grants, etc.),

average student loan debt, average delinquency and default rates disaggregated by student characteristics, and information on unpublished costs, including how financial aid packages may change from year to year.

In addition to greater transparency on cost, postsecondary institutions should publish clear and reliable data on average time to degree, persistence and graduation rates disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender and income level, and job placement and graduate school admission rates within six months of graduation by individual academic program (e.g., mechanical engineering, psychology, business administration). Armed with the right information, families and practitioners will be able to compare the value of different financial aid packages across many institutional types; more informed decision-making by Latino students and their families may lead to increased college-going and completion outcomes.

Just as important, financial literacy programs and policies that support the availability of intentional information-sharing and the development of the behaviors and skills needed to make informed and financially secure decisions, particularly for traditionally underserved populations, must be a part of any college and career curriculum at both the K–12 and higher education levels. When it comes to financing higher education, Latino/as are less likely to borrow to pay for college, even if they have unmet financial need after grant aid has been taken into account. Resistance to borrowing, particularly for Latino/as, is driven in large part by cost perceptions that include perceived financial risk, concerns over the loss of short-term economic gains over an uncertain and long-term educational investment, family practices and cultural stigma around debt and borrowing, and a lack of familiarity with institutions of higher education (Cunningham and Santiago 2008). Programs and policies that target parents and students early on and provide concise and relevant information on financing higher education, preferably with individualized support from an experienced outreach provider, will go a long way to ensure that Latino/as are equipped to make sound financial decisions. At the system and state levels, loan forgiveness policies can improve educational and career success. For example, a state policy that provides loan forgiveness for the top 10 percent of new education graduates from public four-year teaching programs could encourage more students to consider teaching careers; the state could then tie such rewards to teaching positions in school districts with high populations of Latino students. These and other innovative policies encourage new ways to address Latino male educational success by Latino males themselves. That is, to see sustained educational attainment in Latino communities, we must equip Latino leaders with the tools and opportunities to help see such changes through.

# CONCLUSION



Young Latinos represent the fastest growing employment pool and yet the most underutilized talent base.

The sobering statistics and realities for Latino males are a clarion call for proactive action. From a policy and practice perspective, there is much to be done at all levels of education and by all of society's players. In order for Latino males to succeed along varied academic pathways, researchers, policymakers, public officials, private sector leaders, and Latino families and communities must embrace a comprehensive agenda. The authors are compelled to raise awareness of this issue across the field of education and with industry leaders, particularly since Latino males continue to be an untapped resource in our intellectual marketplace.

The educational and social crisis is real, yet it remains ambiguous, undefined, and unnoticed in many policy contexts, which is disconcerting given the possible economic and social consequences. From an economic perspective, the Latino gender gap in educational attainment could curtail the skilled labor force as well as decrease labor productivity. Ongoing

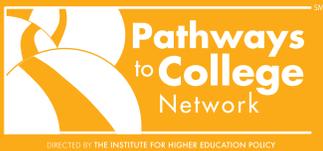
demographic shifts show an increasingly young Latino labor supply as the fastest growing employment pool and yet the most underutilized talent base. Furthermore, America's human capital capacity and global competitiveness will be increasingly dependent on this growing segment of the population (Maldonado and Farmer 2006).

From a social perspective, the role of Latino males as spouses, fathers, community leaders, and role models for young men could be usurped as a result of continual education struggles, ultimately undermining their ability to fulfill the critical economic and social roles key to securing upwardly mobile families and communities. Therefore, policies and practices that heed this call and take into account their needs and cultural contexts must be implemented across the pre-K–college continuum to capitalize on the full potential of Latino males, and in turn ensure the long-term viability of U.S. citizens and the economy.

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