

**MEETING IN A BOX**



# Hispanic Heritage Month

From Sept. 15 – Oct. 15, we celebrate the culture of the diverse community of people whose ancestors come from Spanish-speaking countries as part of Hispanic Heritage Month. This Meeting in a Box is a valuable tool to share with employees as part of your organization's cultural competence education. This month, we will highlight the contributions of the Hispanic/Latinx community to the U.S. and the working world.

**DiversityInc**

# The Complexity of Afro-Latino Identity in the United States

**Guesnerth Josué Perea has always connected with his Afro-Latino roots. While his mother would be considered a white Latina, his father who was a pastor and lawyer in Colombia, was of African descent.**

When Perea moved with his family to the United States, he barely spoke two words of English. About one year after arriving in America, he was first called the “N-word” by a white boy in his school. Though Perea didn’t know what the word meant at the time, he would understand it later. He was 11 years old.

“Most of us who are Black Latinos, our first experience of discrimination is because of our blackness,” he says.

Afro-Latino identity is multidimensional and complex. How some people choose to identify is shaped by several factors like their country of origin, racial background, skin color or hair texture. Perea is one of the millions of people in the United States that identifies as an Afro-Latino person.

## What Does It Mean To Be Afro-Latino?

People who identify as Afro-Latino typically have one parent of African descent and the other one with Latino roots.

Afro-Latino identity is rooted in Spanish and Portuguese colonization and the mixing of enslaved Africans, white Europeans, Indigenous Americans and Asians. During the Middle Passage, millions of Africans were transported to Latin America, the Caribbean and South America, dwarfing the estimated 450,000 people that were brought to the United States.

“People don’t understand that most of the enslaved Africans that went to the New World, we landed in what is today Latin America. There were more just in numbers alone,” says Perea,

Director of the [AfroLatin@ Forum](#), a non-profit organization that works to build, strengthen and advance the visibility of Latinos of African descent.





Haas, who is an African American female, has encountered many Afro-Latinos who say they feel forced to choose between being Black or Latino.

“I’m a woman, I’m a mother, I’m a wife, I’m African-American, I’m a daughter,” she says. “We can be more than one thing. You can be of African descent and be Latino. This goes back to the idea of what it means to be Latino. The idea that we’ve been given is to be Latino is to be European and we’ve got to change that.”

Perea notes that anti-Black sentiment amongst Latinos could be the reason more people don’t identify as Afro-Latino in the Census.

“The pigmentocracy that was created by Spain, Portugal, France and the different nations that conquered the different countries of Latin America – blackness was always relegated to the bottom, the lowest that you could be,” he says. “Most people don’t want to identify themselves as Black.”

Studies have shown that Latinos with darker skin are more likely to experience bias from Hispanic people and others who are not Latino. Perea points to what some experts have called the “triple consciousness” or “triple double” dilemma for Afro-Latinos in the United States.



“We have to deal with the fact that we’re Latino and we’re from whatever country that is,” he says. “We are also here in the U.S., and we have to deal with our blackness.”

Add to that the struggle Afro-Latino individuals often face with being accepted by both communities and accusations of not being Black enough or Latino enough.

## Education and Awareness

Perea says education is a key component in unlocking the complexity of Afro-Latino identity. He says enlightenment can start by improving Black education in schools beyond the usual topics like slavery and the Civil Rights Movement.

“We need to talk about the rich varied history of different Black people in the U.S.,” Perea says. “Then add to that the reality of Afro-Latinidad and different blackness. I don’t think that we teach the nuances of blackness as much.”

Haas points to the Jamaicans that helped build the Costa Rican railroad in the 19th century. She highlights the Black people that were instrumental in the construction of the Panama Canal and the rich cultural influence of the Afro-Brazilian painters and Peruvian dance troupes.

“I want to be part of this movement to help bring greater awareness to the incredible contributions of people of African descent in Latin America,” Haas says. “To change people’s ideas and perceptions and hopefully opinions about the history, the great significance and history of people of African descent – because it’s tremendous.”

Haas says people of African descent have been instrumental in every aspect of Latin American history and culture and she’s encouraged by the Afro-Latino people that are now expressing pride in their identity.

“You see Black Lives Matter in Brazil and Colombia,” she says. “There seems to be a movement now, a recognition of being Black and proud and being Black in Latin America, which is phenomenal.”

## Timeline

### 1859

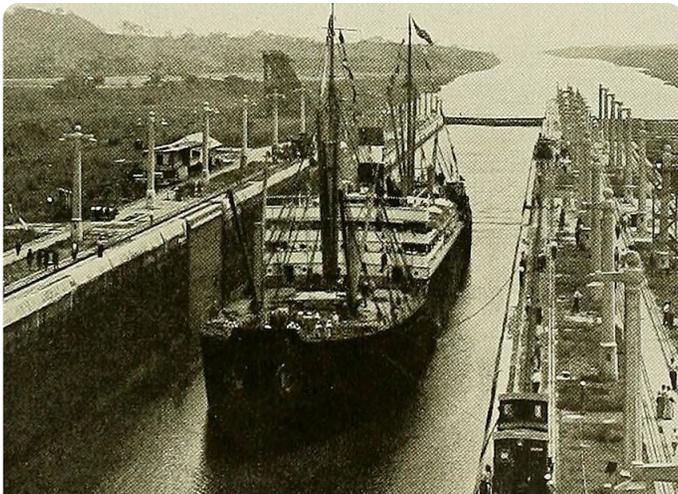
Cigar factories built in Florida, Louisiana and New York bring an influx of working-class Cubans to the growing industry in the United States.

### 1865

U.S. Navy Seaman **Philip Bazaar** became the first Hispanic Congressional Medal of Honor recipient for his service carrying dispatch communications between soldiers on shore and the USS Santiago de Cuba during the assault on Fort Fisher off the coast of North Carolina.

### 1867

Following the defeat of the French monarchy, Mexico entered an era known as the Restored Republic under President **Benito Juárez**, the first Mexican president of Indigenous origin. Among his achievements was the secularization of the country to limit the Catholic church's power in Mexico, the recognition of his government by the United States and the advancement of equal rights for indigenous peoples.



1914 - The Panama Canal officially opened on Aug. 15

### 1880-1900

The 1880 census counted 333,000 people who could be identified as Hispanic, rising to 496,000 in 1900, roughly three-quarters of them born in the United States.

### 1910

The Mexican Revolution begins as a revolt against President Porfirio Díaz. The railroads that had once served as a means for trade and development now serve as the main escape from the violence of the revolution.

### 1914

The Panama Canal officially opened on Aug. 15, completed at the cost of more than \$350 million. It was an event that would reshape global trade and helped establish the U.S. as a global power but had a tremendous cost in the century to come, changing the landscape and demographics of Panama permanently.

### 1918

The Hispanic American Historical Review printed its first issue. Latin American historians who felt the American Historical Association had marginalized their cultures sought to create an institutional structure that would provide a scholarly journal to examine Latin American history.

### 1928

**Octaviano Larrazolo** became the first Mexican American to serve in the U.S. Senate. The former governor of New Mexico had been serving in the New Mexico State House of Representatives when U.S. Senator Andrieus Jones died. Larrazolo won the election that would see him serve for the remainder of Jones' term.

### 1929-1939

With backing from the U.S. Federal Government, cities and states began mass deportations of Mexican and Mexican American residents to Mexico. Estimates of how many people were deported range from 355,000 to as many as 2 million, with 60% of those being first-generation U.S. citizens of Mexican descent, predominantly children.

### 1942

World War II drastically changed the U.S. views and policies toward Mexican immigration. The governments of the U.S. and Mexico jointly created the bracero (laborer) program, which encouraged Mexicans to come to the U.S. as contract workers to support wartime industries.

**1952**

Puerto Rico proclaimed its constitution and was approved by the United States Congress, officially establishing a formal government structure to include a legislative branch, an elected governor and a judicial system based on civil liberties.

**1954**

President Dwight D. Eisenhower institutes a controversial program known as “Operation Wetback” in which the U.S. government detained and deported more than 1 million people. Rhetoric blaming immigrants for low wages led to the policy, which would only last a few months due to funding and a lack of support after agriculture was severely disrupted.

**1962**

Civil rights activists **César Chávez** and **Dolores Huerta** establish the **National Farm Workers Association** to advocate for migrant workers’ rights. In the 1960s, it became the United Farm Workers of America.

**1963**

The last baseball game ever played at New York’s historic Polo Grounds was the first and only Hispanic All-Star Game. Hall of Famers such as **Roberto Clemente**, **Orlando Cepeda**, **Luis Aparicio** and **Juan Marichal** were all featured in the game.

**1965**

President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, better known as the **Hart-Celler Act**. The reform bill ended the quota system that allotted immigration opportunities based on country of origin. The act gave priority to highly skilled immigrants and those with families already living in America.

**1968**

Under the guidance of East L.A. high school teacher Sal Castro, approximately 10,000 students peacefully walk out of four schools and are joined by parents and supporters. Police are sent to maintain order causing a riot. Walkouts continue for two weeks until the demands are met. Just days after the opening of the HemisFair in San Antonio, Chicano high school students stage walkouts—first in San Antonio, then in 39 towns across Texas, eventually spreading to nearly 100 high schools in 10 states.

**1973**

As the U.S. government officially recognized the word “Hispanic,” the Dade County Commission unanimously passed a resolution from Miami’s mayor making Spanish the city’s second official language and creating a department of bilingual and bicultural affairs. Later that year, **Maurice A. Ferré** was elected Miami’s first Hispanic mayor and the first Puerto Rican to lead a major U.S. mainland city.

**1975**

The **Voting Rights Act of 1975** makes bilingual ballots a requirement in many areas.

**1980**

Fidel Castro announces that any Cuban who wishes to leave may do so. Shortly after, Cuban Americans sailed from South Florida to the port of Mariel in droves to help those who wanted to leave, an event often referred to as the Mariel Boatlift. Over a period of five months, more than 125,000 Cubans arrive in South Florida.

**1986**

The **Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities** was founded to champion higher education for Hispanic students. The **Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility** (HACR) was founded to advance the inclusion of Hispanic professionals in corporate America.



1952 - Puerto Rico proclaimed its constitution and was approved by the United States Congress

**1987**

The **National Hispanic Leadership Institute** addresses the lack of representation of Latinas in corporations, politics and nonprofits.

**1989**

**Ileana Ros-Lehtinen** becomes the first Hispanic woman elected to Congress.

**1990**

**Antonia C. Novello** becomes the first woman and Hispanic surgeon general of the U.S.

**1995**

Dreaming of You, the posthumous album by **Selena**, becomes the first predominantly Spanish-language album to debut at No. 1 on the Billboard 200.

**1993**

**Ellen Ochoa** becomes the first Hispanic woman to go to space.

**1999**

California's controversial 1994 ballot measure called **Prop 187**, which sought to stop illegal immigrants from receiving benefits or public services in the state, was struck down by a federal court mediation. Judges labeled most of it as unconstitutional, declaring that the state cannot regulate immigration and that no child will be deprived of education or healthcare due to their place of birth.

**2001**

Representative **Luis Gutiérrez** proposes the first version of the **Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act**, granting citizenship to those who entered the U.S. undocumented as children.

**2003**

Hispanics have become the nation's largest minority group yet remain underrepresented in workforce leadership.

**2007**

**America Ferrera** becomes the first Latina to win Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series for her role in "Ugly Betty."



1990 - Antonia C. Novello becomes the first woman and Hispanic surgeon general of the U.S.

**2008**

**Lin-Manuel Miranda's** "In the Heights" wins the Tony Award for Best Musical and goes on to produce the equally successful "Hamilton."

**2009**

Puerto Rican **Sonia Sotomayor** becomes the first Latina Supreme Court Justice.

**Richard Gonzalez** becomes the CEO of AbbVie, achieving status as one of the highest-paid CEOs without completing a college degree.

**2012**

The **Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** begins under President Obama. It allows those who entered the U.S. undocumented as children to have eligibility for a work permit and a two-year deferred action from deportation.

**2017**

"**Day Without Immigrants**" protests take place across the nation to show the government how valuable immigrants are to the economy. These protests get widespread media attention and raise awareness about immigration issues.

**Geisha Williams**, a Cuban American businesswoman, becomes the first Latina Fortune 500 CEO when she takes over PG&E.



2019 - Cardi B becomes the first solo female rapper to win the Grammy for Best Rap Album

## 2018

**Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** beats out Joe Crowley, a longtime representative of New York's 14th congressional district.

**Antonio Neri** becomes CEO of HP.

## 2019

**Cardi B** becomes the first solo female rapper to win the Grammy for Best Rap Album.

## 2020

The **Supreme Court blocks efforts to end DACA**, ensuring that 700,000 young immigrants can work and study in the U.S. without fear of deportation.

18.7 million voters (around 1 in every 10 voters nationwide) were of Latin American descent in 2020, with a historic **53.7%** of the Hispanic population eligible to vote. For the first time in the history of U.S. presidential elections, Latinos born in the U.S. voted at the same rate as naturalized citizens.

## 2021

U.S. Census Data revealed that the Hispanic population of Texas is now equal to the white population of the state before

accounting for undocumented immigrants, signaling a shift in the state's demographic makeup in the coming years as Hispanic voters and consumers will become the majority.

## 2022

California Governor Gavin Newsom nominated state Supreme Court justice Patricia Guerrero to become the Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court. If confirmed, she would be the court's first Latina chief justice after becoming the high court's first Latina justice in March of 2022.

Nicaraguan-born political commentator Anna Navarro officially became the co-host of the popular morning talk show *The View*. She celebrated the designation by delivering an impassioned speech about representation on screen, an issue that persists for the Latinx community in America.

Former WNBA player Niesha Butler launches the first Afro-Latina-owned STEM center in New York City. With the grand opening of S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) CHAMPS, a new STEM Education Center, Butler is continuing her work to engage and inspire New York City youths by making STEM education more accessible.

# FACTS AND FIGURES

## Hispanic Population Expected To Increase More Than 77% by 2060

2021

Population



Percentage of Population



Projected 2060

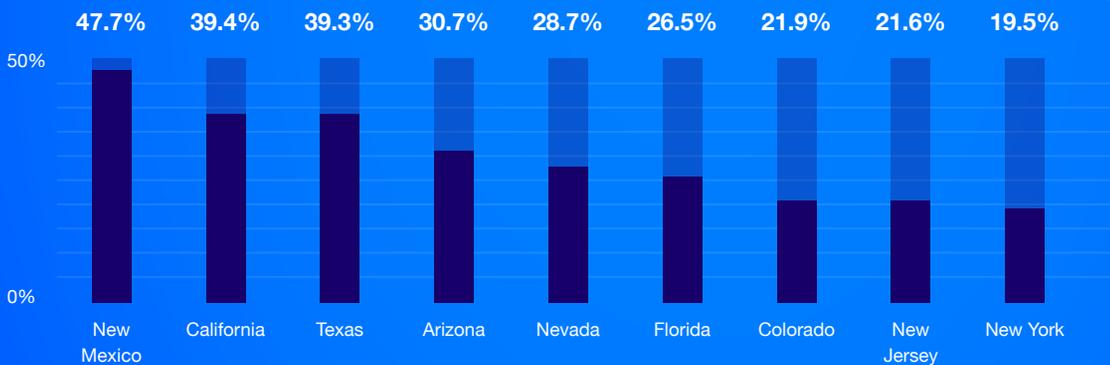
Population



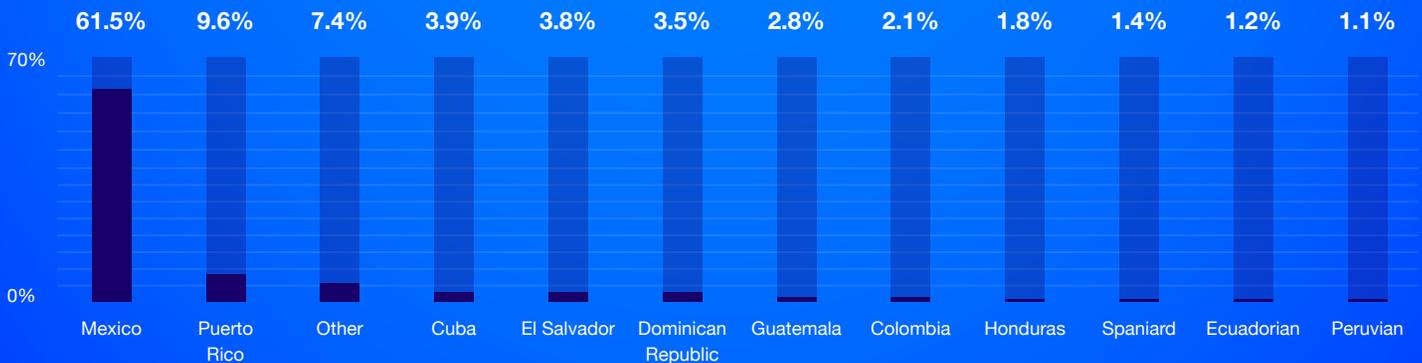
Percentage of Population



## Percentage of Hispanic Population in the United States in 2020, by State



## Hispanic Population in the United States by Origin 2019



## 2000-2025: US Buying Power by Race/Ethnicity

2000



2010



2020



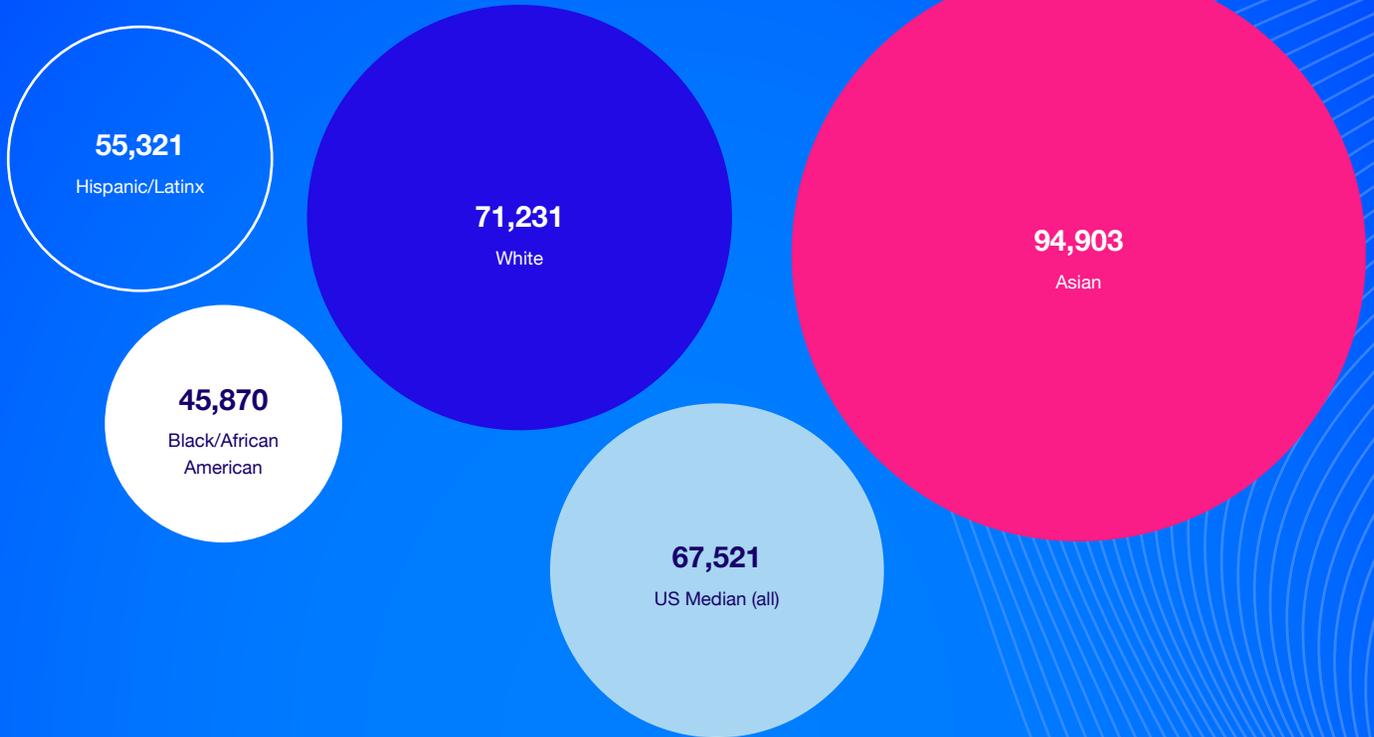
2025



Note: numbers may not add up to total due to rounding; racial group figures add up to total, while a separate breakout for non-Hispanic is not shown; \*defined as disposable personal income, meaning the share of total personal income available for personal consumption, personal interest, payments and savings; \*\*Hispanic is an ethnicity rather than a race, and can be of any race

Source: Selig Center for Economic Growth, Terry College of Business, and the University of Georgia, "The Multicultural Economy 2021," Aug 11, 2021

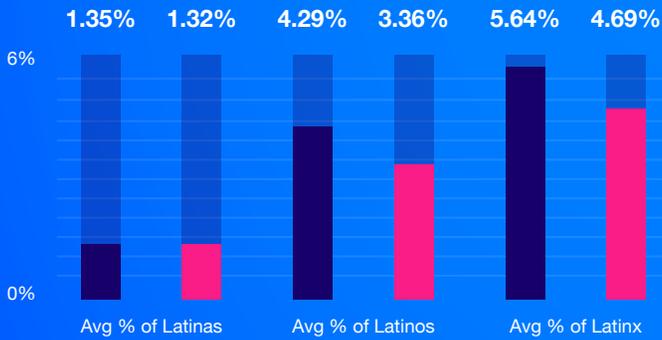
## US Median Household Income 2020



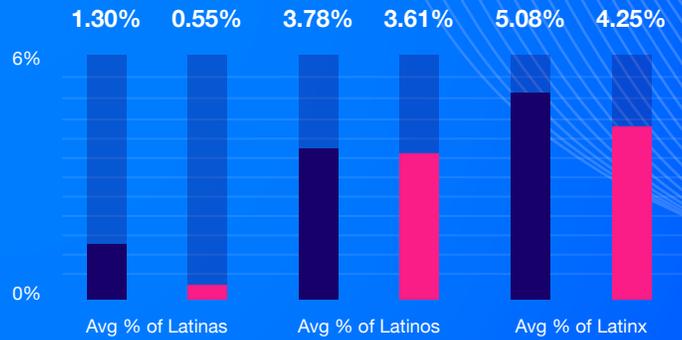
## Hispanic Representation in the Workforce

■ Top 10 ■ Top 50

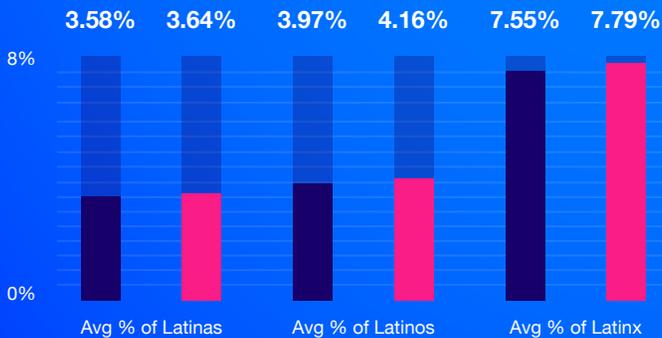
### Board of Directors



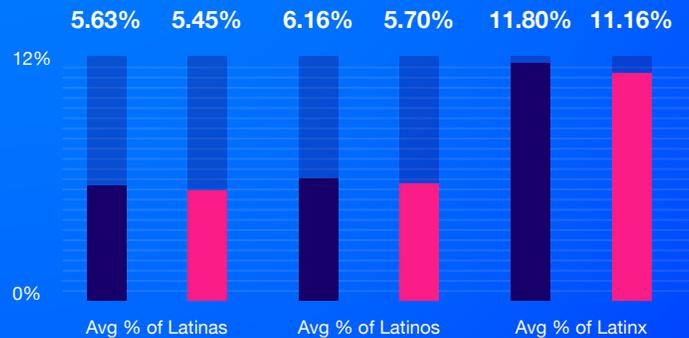
### Executives (CEO+Direct Reports)



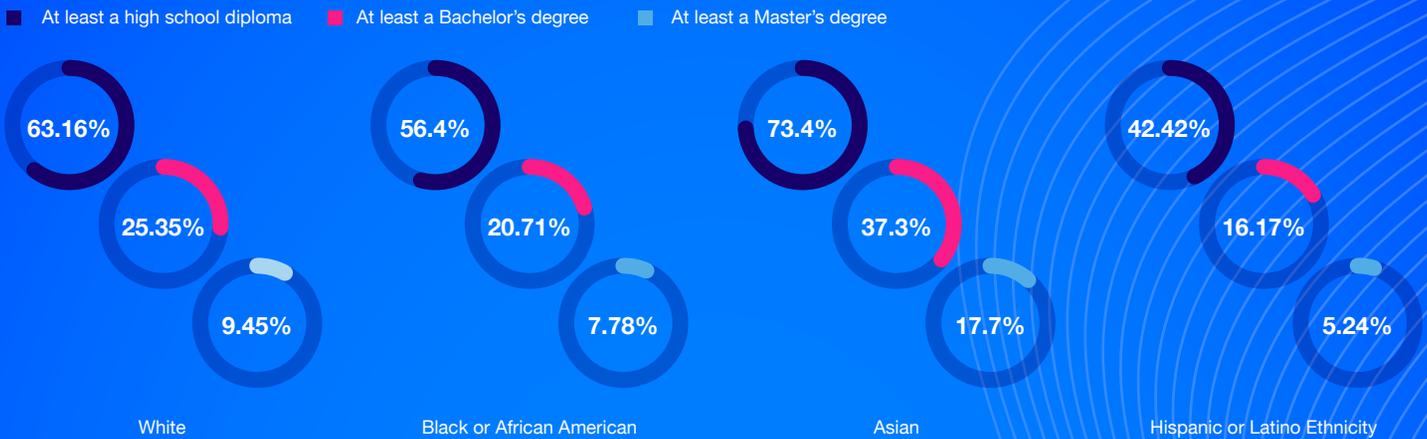
### Management



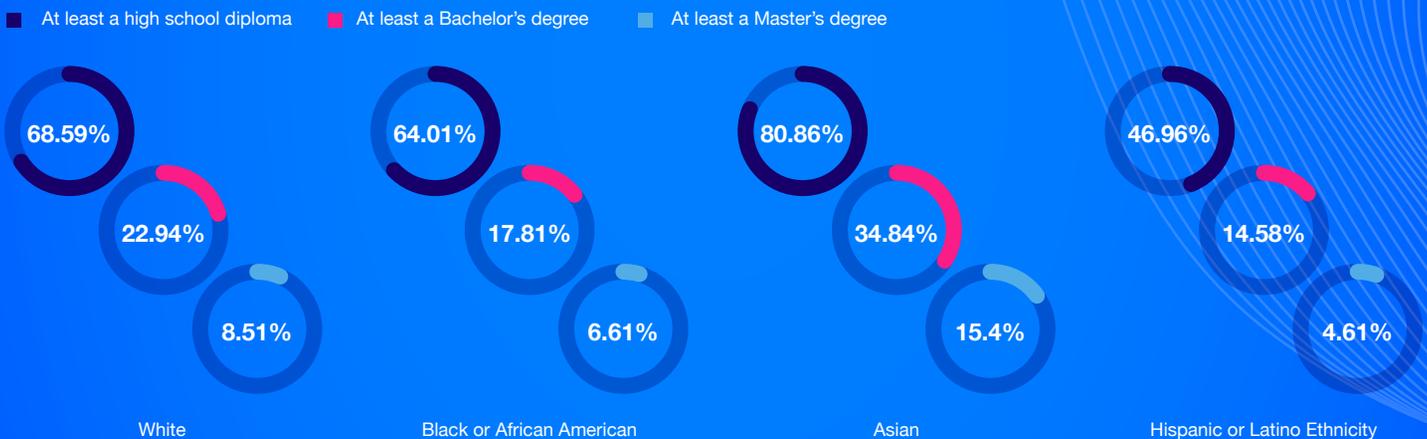
### Workforce



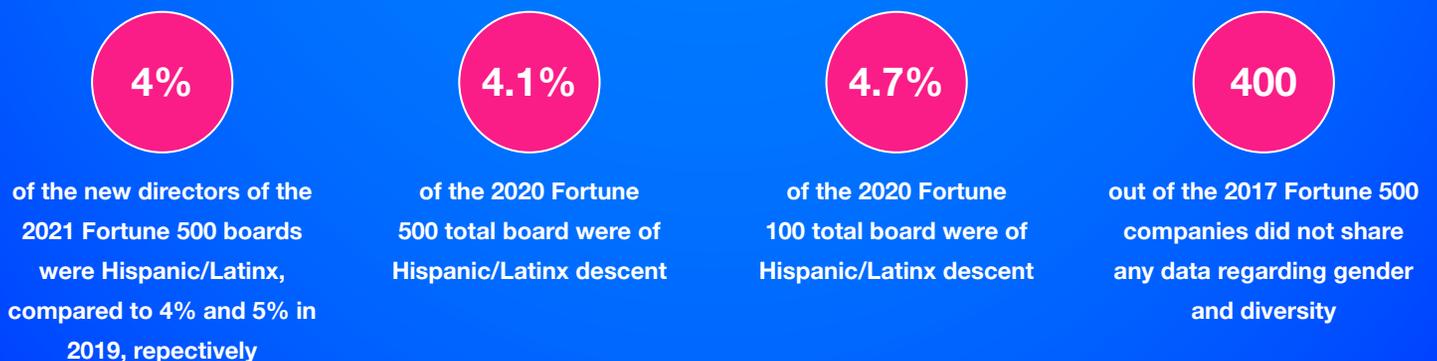
## Employment Status of the Civilian Labor Force Population +25 Years By Educational Attainment and Race in 2021



## Employment Status of the Civilian Noninstitutional Population +25 Years by Educational Attainment and Race in 2021



## How the Fortune 500 Compares to DiversityInc Survey Participants



## Examining the Rise in Latinx Entrepreneurship

No demographic has been going into business for itself quite like the Latinx community over the last decade.

In the past 10 years, Latino-owned businesses have started at a faster rate than all other groups—a 44% growth rate—compared to only 4% for non-Latino-owned firms. There are over 4.3 million Latinx-owned businesses in the U.S., according to the Latino Texas Political Action Committee.

In the last decade, 80% of all new businesses were started by Latinos and since 2002, the Latinx community has had the highest entrepreneur rate of any ethnic group in the U.S.

Stanford University's 2021 State of Latino Entrepreneurship report revealed that there are approximately 400,000 – 450,000 Latino-owned employer businesses in the U.S. generating more than \$460 billion in annual revenue and employing 2.9 million people.

In terms of where these businesses fall into different sectors of the economy, Latino-owned businesses skew toward food services and hospitality, whereas there are more white-owned professional services firms. That said, 19% of Latino-owned employer businesses are tech firms and that number is growing, compared to only 14% of white-owned employer businesses being in tech.

## Why the Steady Growth?

What is driving this consistent growth over such a long period of time? According to Veronica Vences, Director of Entrepreneurship Funds at the Latino Community Foundation (LCF) - an organization which exists to work with civically engaged philanthropic leaders and invest in Latino-owned or led organizations - it's a combination of factors, some cultural.

"The Latino community is very entrepreneurial in general," Vences said. "Research shows that when people immigrate, those who are willing to take the leap of faith typically are innovative, they are willing to take risks once they get

here. Those characteristics you generally associate with entrepreneurs end up running parallel to the characteristics to that portion of the Latino community."

Additionally, the impacts of the pandemic had much the same influence on the Latino community as it did on other demographics. Entrepreneurship across the board has jumped in the last few years, with the U.S. Census Bureau recording a 24% jump in entrepreneurs filing paperwork to register new businesses in 2020 alone.

Before joining the LCF, Vences worked at a grassroots organization called La Luz Center which had a micro-lending program. She said that one of the things her team observed was that when job openings or opportunities were low, interest in entrepreneurship spiked. Whether that was refurbishing old goods, selling tamales or taking a side hustle to the next level, new businesses tend to spike around events like a pandemic.

Another factor at play are the barriers that some aspiring Latino entrepreneurs face. Vences gave the example of some of those who have emigrated not being eligible for Right to Work status and thus not being able to obtain a standard 9-5 job.

"Starting their own business allows those people to be their own boss and have more control over how they bring revenue back into the home," Vences said.



## Funding

A major hurdle for many Latinx entrepreneurs is gaining access to traditional lending sources. As a result, many of these self-starters do just that by dipping into their own funds. A study from the Stanford Graduate School of Business noted that when Latinx entrepreneurs do start a business, 70% of their funds come from personal savings, while just 6% comes from personal loans.

The reasons for this may also be partially cultural, according to Vences.

“As Latinos, we have a cultural propensity to not want to be in debt,” she said. “It’s part of our upbringing. The question then is how do we build an understanding that you have to bring in capital and investment, aka be in debt, to reach that next level with your business? There’s an education piece that has to happen. You look at startups in Silicon Valley, you’ve got people who have failed 4 or 5 times, but it’s often not their money

they’re losing, it belongs to investors. As Latinos though, we often don’t have the initial capital or the safety net that other groups have.”

More attention is now being paid to what systemic factors are preventing Latinx entrepreneurs from getting their businesses off the ground. The work of the LCF is heavily focused on this as they look to bring together funding organizations that can provide funds directly. They also are looking to maintain dialogue with top financial officials to keep them in touch with the challenges that Latinx entrepreneurs face.

“How the systems for entrepreneur backing are being built is something we want to look at,” Vences said. “Are they being built with minority cultures in mind? This doesn’t just cause an economic boom; it can help prevent significant dips. In our work, we’re looking at systems and at the lending continuum. What can we do to support these businesses through grants as small as \$500 or by helping them gain access to business loans?”



Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) are a sort of cross between an organization like the LCF and a traditional lender. They can also offer grants to help businesses survive or get off the ground, but they also can offer business loans at a much lower interest rate than traditional banks. They're capable of hand holding a bit when necessary and taking the time to understand and empathize with aspiring business owners.

"At the national level, we need to be talking more about how are we creating a pipeline of entrepreneurs?" Vences said. "What support do organizations that have that connection and reach into the Latino community need to keep operating? Because once you become a CDFI, you're being measured on your return on investment. CDFIs take on more risk that loans can default, but can we start talking about valuation not just in terms of ROI, but the impact that the investment is having on local communities? If we could do that on the national and state level, we could start creating a different economic system where small businesses can thrive."

In terms of what can be done immediately to get more funds into the hands of Latino entrepreneurs the same as they are for other entrepreneurs, a big part of it comes down to education, according to Vences. It's a part of the work the LCF does as well as connecting aspiring entrepreneurs with resources and potential lenders that can help.

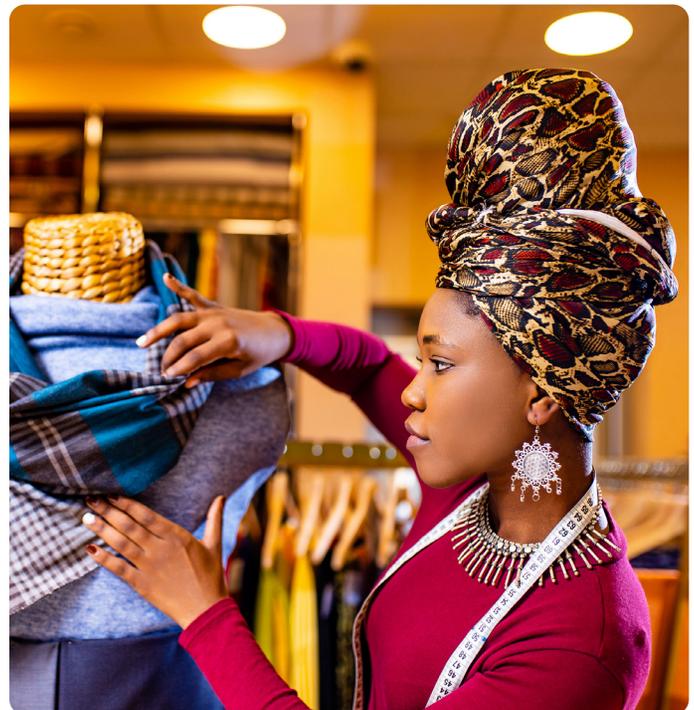
"This is where we have to focus on the familiarity of the idea that it doesn't have to be your own funds that go into your business," Vences said. "Whether that's someone who is risk averse or feeling that they have to the capital themselves, it's communicating that there's information or resources available that they may not know about."

## Change on a Macro Level

On a federal level, more connectivity between the Small Business Administration (SBA) and CDFIs, and thus local communities, is needed. That happened during the pandemic courtesy of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the \$10 billion that the Treasury Department and the SBA gave to CDFIs to participate in the PPP. An attempt to build on

that momentum was announced over the summer with the formation of the "Economic Opportunity Coalition" within the Treasury.

The coalition consists of leading private sector, philanthropic and community organizations that have committed tens of billions of dollars and other resources to strengthen community financiers such as CDFIs and Minority Depository Institutions (MDIs). The goal is to broaden financial inclusion and services in underserved communities, support small businesses and in particular, minority owned businesses.



"Increasing economic opportunity for historically marginalized communities will contribute to our nation's broader economic growth and benefits the whole country," Secretary of the Treasury Janet L. Yellen said in a public statement. "The public and private sector each have key roles to play in addressing longstanding economic disparities and these initiatives will help us each to further our impact by deploying our resources side-by-side and more collaboratively. These initiatives will enable the federal government to expand access to public and private sector capital and to build on the historic investments available under the American Rescue Plan."