



# A ROADMAP TO EMPOWERMENT

October 2021

The Future of Latinos in a  
Digital Economy



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# INTRODUCTION

The Aspen Institute Latinos and Society Program and Aspen Digital are collaborating on a new initiative focused on the challenges and opportunities for Latino communities in today's modern digital economy. The purpose is to draw attention to and elevate the needs of these communities, specifically examining recruitment, hiring, and retention of Latinos within tech-related employment. The following reflects on a series of robust dialogues among leading cross-sector experts centered on the imperative to focus on holistic, inclusive, and equitable solutions to increase Latino participation across the tech spectrum.

## Why focus on Latinos?

The Hispanic population, representing one of every five people in the U.S., provides untapped potential for any organization in search for talent. Research suggests that inclusion of Latinos in the workforce fuels innovation and revenue,<sup>1</sup> and that they “are estimated to drive nearly 25% of the country’s GDP growth.”<sup>2</sup> Latinos are also young with one-third, or 17.9 million of the nation’s Hispanic population, to be under 18 years-old.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, Latinos currently make up a disproportionate 25% of low wage jobs,<sup>4</sup> demonstrating a clear need for improved pathways to economic mobility and empowerment. More notably, data projections see the Latino

## *Latinos*

Drive  
**~25%**  
of GDP  
Growth

Comprise  
**18%**  
of Total  
Workforce  
(2019)

Hold  
**25%**  
of Low-Wage  
Jobs

Comprise  
**8%**  
of STEM  
Workforce  
(2019)



population surpassing the majority population within the next few decades.<sup>5</sup>

However, when it comes to tech, despite explosive population growth and genuine progress in the penetration of Blacks and Latinos in the industry, job numbers remain far below their white and Asian counterparts. According to Brookings, Latinos only increased their representation in overall tech employment from 5.5% of workers in 2002 to 6.8% of workers in 2016.<sup>6</sup>

But there is hope. The digitalization and diffusion of technologies in the workplace has drastically transformed how work is defined. Now more than ever, the workers in most demand must have the cognitive knowledge, skills, and abilities to adapt to a digital environment. One of the key questions then is how can we better reframe and realign skill sets and talents of the Latino workforce to better map onto the needs of modern-day businesses.

To address this, we offer the following roadmap, which is a synthesis of seven one-on-one interviews and three roundtable conversations with over 30 participants from leading tech companies, nonprofits, and educational institutions.

The following is divided into three sections:

→ **MYTH BUSTING**

*Questions with a critical lens the dominant discourse around Latino representation in the digital workforce*

→ **PATHWAYS**

*Moves to a reframing of the necessary pathways for empowering Latino communities to engage in the digital economy*

→ **ACTIVATION**

*Presents case-studies, recommendations, and executable next steps for stakeholders interested in supporting the holistic empowerment of Latinos across tech*

## Acknowledgements

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We would also like to thank the authors, Zaki Barzinji, Pamela De La Rosa, Diego Deleersnyder, and Kristine Gloria, who wove together content from sources and formats generated during the convenings to articulate the key issues and recommendations. Finally, we extend a special thank you to Mary Castillo and Carner Derron, who worked on the design and communication of this report. ○

# MYTH BUSTING

The Latino population is highly dynamic and encompasses a wide variety of cultures, regions, and demographics. To bucket the Latino perspective into one broad category dismisses a vibrant, rapidly changing set of communities that, by the numbers, will outpace the growth of every non-Hispanic group within the next five years.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Latinos hold a GDP of \$2.6 trillion, up 35% from 2010 and growing.<sup>8</sup> This translates to substantial purchasing power across a wide range of industries. Specific to technology use and habits, 86% of U.S. Latinos report having internet connection with smartphones dominating as a first screen for many in the community. Since 2014, the data points to Latinos as early digital adopters, above U.S. averages on mobile and video consumption.<sup>9</sup>

However, while Latinos comprise 18% of the U.S. workforce,<sup>10</sup> they only represent 8% of all Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) workers.<sup>11</sup> Why? One key and well-established contributor is the educational gap in access to STEM-related courses among Latinos, although numbers are steadily improving.<sup>12</sup> Inequities in STEM education have long existed and continue to run along racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, gender, disability, and geographic lines. According to a report published by the Student Research Foundation in 2020, Latino high school students are not enrolling in as many STEM courses and are reporting lower levels of confidence in success within STEM.<sup>13</sup> This comes in contrast to data that “clearly indicates that Hispanic and White/ Asian students like STEM subjects at similar rates (86% vs. 89%, resp.) and aspire to

careers at similar rates (47% vs. 50%, resp.).”<sup>14</sup>

While there has been an increase in industry efforts focused on diversity and inclusion, Latinos are continuously underrepresented in the digital workforce. According to Alejandro Roark, Executive Director of Hispanic Technology and Telecommunications Partnership (HTTP), the last six years have only seen less than a 1% fluctuation in Latino representation in the top four tech companies with the largest market valuations (e.g., Apple, Microsoft, Google, and Facebook), hovering around 5-6%. The data is even more striking when disaggregated by gender, showing that Latinas only represent 2% of the tech workforce within these companies.

The data points above illustrate a unique tension that finds Latinos, who skew younger and are generally early digital adopters, are not engaged in the development of their own technological experience. In other words, the Latino tech consumer is rarely a Latino tech creator, and such discrepancies can manifest in real world harms, like the use of surveillance technologies on immigrant populations.<sup>15, 16</sup> To solve this, we ask: how can we reframe the conversation so that companies move from a practice of exclusion to inclusion while centering on efforts on the needs of Latinos? The first step, informed by Roark’s work, is to name, address, and debunk commonly presented

*Myth:* There aren’t enough qualified Latinos.

*Fact:* There are a litany of pathway barriers that hinder the retention of Latino talent.

*Myth:* Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are enough.

*Fact:* Largely volunteer-led, ERGs place the burden back on the employee and/or marginalized group.

*Myth:* Diversity is “nice to have,” not a business imperative.

*Fact:* Without a diverse set of perspectives, products and services may not reflect the needs of marginalized communities.



narratives on the lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in organizations. We highlight three below:

### MYTH 1

#### **“There are not enough qualified Latinos.”**

One of the most prominent and perpetuated myths is the idea of a pipeline problem. This metaphor and its associated justification exacerbate the challenges faced by Latinos (or any person of color) in entering and remaining in tech jobs as a failure of the education system. Yet, the National Science Foundation notes that the share of science and engineering bachelor’s degrees awarded to Hispanics and Latinos has increased over the past 20 years. In 2016, approximately 10% of Latinos graduated with either a computer science or engineering bachelor’s degree.<sup>17</sup> In addition, professional organizations such as Techqueria or TechLatino serve communities of over 10,000 Latino tech professionals. Yet, Latinos remain at 5% of the traditional tech industry workforce. Why? Because it is more than just a pipeline leak or problem. It is a broken pathway. This includes a litany of barriers, ranging from a lack of access to Advanced Placement STEM courses to cultural misalignment in the workplace that hinders the retention of Latino talent.

### MYTH 2

#### **“Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are enough.”**

Since the 1970s, organizations have used ERGs as an organizational tool to help cultivate and improve company culture. They were initially designed to help facilitate a sense of belonging and to foster relationships between people with similar interests and

internal leadership by empowering so-called “out groups” through a dedicated network.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, this vision has yet to come to fruition. Recent critiques of ERGs, particularly when used to support internal DEI efforts, point to a lack of financial resources and executive leadership support. Instead, ERGs, which are largely volunteer-led, place the burden back onto the employee and/or marginalized group. However, to achieve DEI requires everyone’s attention, proper funding and compensation, as well as full institutional support.<sup>19</sup>

### MYTH 3

#### **“Diversity is a ‘nice to have,’ not a business imperative.”**

This manifests in a variety of forms, from marketing materials to hiring practices to the physical safety of employees. Similar to critiques of ERGs, a lack of full institutional support and capital for diversity leads to real-world consequences beyond exclusionary company culture. Without a diverse set of perspectives and voices throughout a company, products and services may not fully reflect the needs and concerns of marginalized communities. We see this unfolding specifically in the tech space with issues of algorithmic bias, as a less diverse team is more prone to design and set up systems with sexist or racist biases, and less likely to identify them through control checks.<sup>20</sup> For instance, there has been evidence of systems that systematically discriminated against Black people when allocating healthcare to patients.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, countless research studies have underscored various benefits of employing more diverse teams, such as an overall increase in productivity and revenue.<sup>22</sup>

## **The digital economy runs on more than just code.**

Identifying and challenging these myths, which propagate across

DEI discussions, is helpful in understanding why progress has been hindered. As we learned through multiple roundtable dialogues, these myths are also dangerous as they create a negative reinforcement loop that can be internalized by communities of color, preventing any attempt to engage in the digital workforce. Language and context matter significantly. For example, the current notion of a “tech job” is limited to those with STEM education or programming skills. The digital economy runs on more than just code. Instead, there are numerous skill-sets that are necessary components of the digital economy and that are also higher-wage (e.g., technical writing, communication, marketing, business development).

For Latinos, this reframing and re-education of what comprises a technology job may offer more pathways to the digital economy. Instead of focusing solely on STEM-related skills, we argue that there is room for advancement and economic growth in jobs adjacent to and in support of more technical roles. While machines and automation are usurping rote, low-skill work, there is a growing need for human-skills that are yet unmatched by machines. Additionally, taking a holistic approach towards gaining more digital skills needed for the wide range of tech jobs can help secure the inclusivity of Latinos in the ever-expanding digital economy.

While the challenges brought on by automation are disproportionately affecting Latinos, there is cause for hope. One helpful way to understand this shift is captured in Figure 1, which shows the change in skill demand due to emerging technologies.

Here is where the distinction between what constitutes a technology job versus any other job of the future converges. What we're witnessing is not just but, rather, a demand for tech-, digital-, and media-literacies that also promote more human skill sets, such as critical thinking, communication, and emotional intelligence. These competencies are inextricably related, and jobs of the future will rely on a workforce that can adapt and exercise all of them. In other words, to define a "tech job" as STEM-only is too narrow and dismisses a number of other positions and skills required to fuel a digital economy. An increasing number of positions require key competencies and digital literacies regardless of the job title. From supermarket workers using tablets to bring more speed and efficiency to inventory processes, to physicians using software to improve the accuracy of diagnostic services, digitalization is changing the workplace in a wide range of industries. ○

FIGURE 1. **Comparing Skills Demand, 2018 vs. 2022, Top 10**

2018	INCREASING, 2022	DECREASING, 2022
Analytical thinking and innovation	Analytical thinking and innovation	Manual dexterity, endurance and precision
Complex problem-solving	Active learning and learning strategies	Memory, verbal, auditory and spatial abilities
Critical thinking and analysis	Creativity, originality and initiative	Management of financial and material resources
Active learning and learning strategies	Technology design and programming	Technology installation and maintenance
Creativity, originality and initiative	Critical thinking and analysis	Reading, writing, math and active listening
Attention to detail and trustworthiness	Complex problem-solving	Management of personnel
Emotional intelligence	Leadership and social influence	Quality control and safety awareness
Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation	Emotional intelligence	Coordination and time management
Leadership and social influence	Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation	Visual, auditory and speech abilities
Coordination and time management	Systems analysis and evaluation	Technology use, monitoring and control

Source: World Economic Forum, [Future of Jobs Report](#) (2018)



# FROM PIPELINE TO EMPOWERING PATHWAYS

Over the course of our discovery process, we arrived at a resounding conclusion: when it comes to the intersection of Latino communities and tech, the challenges are far greater than simply numerical representation. If we are to work towards true justice and equity in a digital economy, we must expand our focus from the recruitment of more diverse talent towards the holistic empowerment of entire Latino communities.

With this thesis as our guide, we organized the many different challenges and opportunities into a more expansive framework, called *Pathways to Empowerment*. By committing to the improvement of all these pathways, the digital economy can better center on, serve, and ultimately empower Latino communities, while beginning to dismantle deeply entrenched systemic inequities.

## PATHWAY 1

### Empowering Educational Opportunities

Addressing the lack of proportional representation of Latinos in tech requires taking a hard look at both the equitability of educational opportunities available to Latino students and the extent to which the industry itself embraces alternative educational pathways. Stakeholders consistently emphasize

*Pathways to  
Empowerment*

#### **Educational Opportunities**

- Localize industry and community needs
- Embrace alternative schooling journeys

#### **Economic Independence**

- Level the playing field for Latino innovators
- Prevent a second class of Latino tech workers

#### **Community- Informed Social Responsibility**

that a cookie-cutter approach to equipping underrepresented communities with generalized tech skills is not effective.

### **Localization of Both Industry and Community Needs**

A special focus on Latino communities has the potential to ignite action towards a more inclusive digital future for all because Latinos cut across different segments of American society, including diverse race groups, ethnicities, socioeconomic classes, genders, and sexual orientations. Successful efforts to bridge the skills-gap requires targeted approaches that pay close attention to unique regional ecosystems. This includes matching specific skills needed for local industries with the particular barriers facing local underrepresented communities, including Latinos.

For instance, in Florida, Cubans make up the highest concentration of Latinos (44%),<sup>23</sup> with much of the state's tech industry made up of digital media companies. Meanwhile, in northern Virginia, Salvadorans are the single largest Latino community (33%), while an explosion of commercial cloud companies dominate the region's tech scene, and the overwhelming majority of Latinos (73%) in the Houston area, where several major hardware giants are based, are Mexican. Just as each of these communities have wildly varying levels of median income and access to educational and economic opportunities (e.g., 27% of Cubans have obtained at least a Bachelor's degree, compared to 12% of Mexicans and 10% of Salvadorans<sup>24</sup>), so too do each of these subsets of the tech industry require wildly different skills.

**Accepting that neither the tech industry nor Latinos are monolithic is an important step towards building pathways to empowerment.**

Further, the intergenerational differences within communities must be taken into consideration, as well. Second-generation digital natives may not face the same barriers in adopting new technologies than their digital immigrant counterparts but both may face significant challenges breaking into the tech sector due to socio-economic barriers. In addition to geographic, age, and national origin differences, there are other layers of intersectionality to consider; for instance, Latina workers have been disproportionately impacted during COVID-19,<sup>25</sup> while Afro-Latinos often contend with additional barriers posed by systemic anti-Black racism. Accepting that neither the tech industry nor Latinos are monolithic in their needs and challenges is an important step towards building pathways to empowerment.

### **Embracing Alternative Educational Journeys**

Just as important is the diversification of programs available to Latino students who may be interested in tech-related careers. There is broad agreement that Latino youth should be engaged as early as possible in their educational journeys to foster a better understanding of the variety of jobs within the tech sector and to see positive role models within the industry. The innovative P-TECH model was highlighted as a particularly effective approach to engaging young students of color before ninth grade.<sup>26</sup> The program provides students with a viable pathway whereby they earn college credit and real-world experience while still in high school. Most end up with an associate degree and support for job placement. In addition, experts stress the need for tech companies to deemphasize four-year bachelor degrees in their recruitment practices.

In our roundtables, IBM shared that over 43% of their current job openings no longer require a college degree. In another example, Google launched its Google Career Certificates in 2020, which teach foundational skills that can help job-seekers attain the right skills within six months as opposed to the four years of college.<sup>27</sup> Programs such as bootcamps, on-the-job learning, and apprenticeships “can immediately begin to expand applicant pools.”<sup>28</sup> Moreover, activating public-private partnerships at the state and local levels can serve as a new pathway for Hispanics to develop capabilities while contributing to the local economy.<sup>29</sup>

## **No conversation about improving representation of Latinos in tech can be complete without addressing pathways toward true economic empowerment.**

### **PATHWAY 2**

## **Empowering Economic Independence**

While improved educational opportunities and diversified hiring practices are critical to ensuring greater Latino representation in the tech workforce, stakeholders repeatedly emphasize the need to address an even bigger issue. Even as the percentage of Latinos in tech gradually inches up, the wealth gap continues to widen, and at a faster rate.<sup>30</sup> Thus, no conversation about improving the representation of Latinos in tech can be complete without addressing pathways towards true economic empowerment.

### **Leveling the Playing Field for Latino Innovators**

Latino innovators face numerous barriers when it comes to accessing capital and other resources necessary to survive, let alone thrive, particularly when compared to white male entrepreneurs.



Although visionary leadership and a viable business model are certainly important in determining the success of a startup, so too are tightly knit networks of investors and mentors, which have historically left Black and Brown communities in the cold.

For real systemic change within the industry to take hold, leaders must prioritize supporting Latino entrepreneurs just as much as entry-level tech workers. Pivotal Ventures serves as an example with their diverse portfolio and growing commitment to providing capital across traditionally underrepresented communities.<sup>31</sup> The Latino Community Foundation<sup>32</sup> is another concrete example of Latino innovators organizing their own networks to empower one another. In 2018, the California-based organization awarded \$2.3 million to Latino-led nonprofits “on the frontlines of organizing, mobilizing, and supporting our Latino youth and families.”<sup>33</sup> One of the recipients was Digital Nest.<sup>34</sup> This organization provides youth with “free access to computers, software, Wi-Fi, and a full range of state-of-the-art digital tools and classes... [to] transform them into professionals who can create successful careers, innovative solutions, and prosperous communities.”<sup>35</sup>

To properly address the wealth gap in tech, major companies should prioritize investing directly in Latino-led efforts and using specific and tangible metrics for measuring success. For example,



In 2018,  
California-based  
**Latino  
Community  
Foundation**

awarded \$2.3  
million to Latino-  
led nonprofits  
organizing,  
mobilizing, and  
supporting  
Latino youth  
and families.

Investment firm  
**Kapor Capital**  
employs a  
diverse team that  
is majority  
women-led from  
underrepresent-  
ed communities.  
They are able to  
successfully  
provide  
investment  
opportunities for  
minority-led tech  
start-ups.

Kapor Capital, a leading investment firm dedicated to tech start-ups, defines their impact through a “‘gap-narrowing’ framework that can take on many forms.”<sup>36</sup> They do this by employing a diverse investment team that is majority women-led from underrepresented communities. Leveraging their networks, the Kapor Capital team is able to successfully provide investment opportunities for minority-led tech start-ups and track their impact over time.

### **Preventing a Second Class of Latino Tech Workers**

In addition to ensuring Latino executives have access to capital and resources, stakeholders also stress the need to enhance protections for low-paid, so-called “blue collar” tech jobs, of which Latinos make up a sizable percentage. Many share concerns that some industry efforts to diversify the talent pipeline could actually instead funnel Latinos into a separate class of jobs for which upward mobility, job security, and essential benefits are severely limited. The increasing use within the tech industry of contractors, many of whom are Latino,<sup>37</sup> has highlighted a particularly worrisome trend, especially if companies count those positions as “DEI hires” despite them being not nearly on the same tier as full-time employees.

### **PATHWAY 3**

## **Empowering Community-Informed Social Responsibility**

Underlying all these conversations was a firm belief that tech companies have a moral responsibility to not only increase the representation and empowerment of Latinos at all levels but also ensure that the very technologies they develop are not used to actively harm underrepresented communities. These issues are inextricably linked. Even the most qualified Latino professional may

hesitate to work at a company that creates products used to surveil or exclude their community. Even the most well-intentioned company may lack awareness of how their technology could be impacting such communities because their lived experiences are not accounted for in the software's design or development.

**It is more critical than ever that industry leaders firmly acknowledge their tremendous responsibility to protect the social good, and to do so while centering the communities most directly impacted.**

One example is the increasing use of biometric data for surveillance across the U.S.-Mexico border. Author Melissa Villa-Nicholas writes, “[T]hrough bids for technology to biologically map Latinx immigrants at the border, and subsequently U.S. citizens, there is a promise of futurity in technological design to ‘fix’ the state of citizenship by removing undesired immigrants and refugees.”<sup>38</sup>

With a growing number of concerns, including the disparate impact of automated decision-making systems in sectors such as finance, it is more critical than ever that industry leaders firmly acknowledge their tremendous responsibility to protect the social good, and to do so while centering on the communities most directly impacted. ○

# ACTIVATION

As the future of work continues to become more digital, Latino communities require greater support from the tech industry, educational institutions, philanthropic organizations, and policymakers. Latinos are projected to become more than a quarter of the U.S. population by 2060.<sup>39</sup> Their empowerment across the digital economy is vital to American economic growth and sustainability. Latinos have been vocal about the gaps and challenges standing in the way of their empowerment, offering unique solutions geared towards supporting their immediate communities.

**By working together, the public and private sectors can pave the way towards a more inclusive digital ecosystem, to the advantage of generations to come.**

But they must not bear the burden alone. Support will require a concerted and energetic effort from technology companies, educational institutions, and policymakers. The following offers guidance for the roles and responsibilities key stakeholders should take on to activate each pathway. By working together, the public and private sectors can pave the way towards a more inclusive digital ecosystem, to the advantage of generations to come.

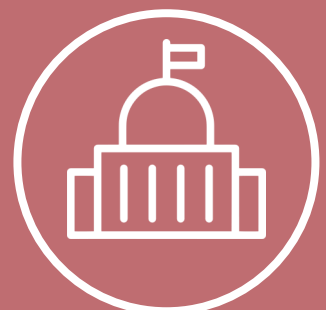
## Key Stakeholders



**Schools**



**Businesses**



**Policymakers**



## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Educational Opportunities



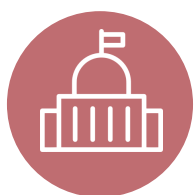
Educational institutions, such as certification and workforce development programs, community colleges, and traditional four-year degree institutions, should partner with technology firms to establish a broader and more varied pipeline. Tech companies must partner with Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) and their academic advisors by informing them of the most sought out skills within the industry and encouraging these institutions to provide the education to acquire those skills.<sup>40</sup> A promising model, currently being implemented by NBC, provides on-campus training in journalism.<sup>41</sup> It has been rolled out at major HSIs throughout the country. Additionally, tech companies must recruit talent from these institutions as they provide a network to educate Latinos within technology.



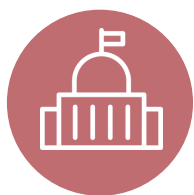
Traditional educational institutions should provide more opportunities for students to earn in-demand certifications within the tech sector. El Centro College in Dallas, Texas offers this solution. In addition to pursuing a degree, students have access to an array of Google workforce training programs, which serve as a “really nice compliment to the role community colleges play in workforce development.”<sup>42</sup> This model provides the tech skills that traditional education has not been able to fulfill but are nonetheless highly sought out by recruiters.



Tech companies can help fill vacancies for tech jobs by offering pathways, such as low-cost certifications; free access to in-demand skill classes, like computer programming; and explicit direction on how to gain the digital skills necessary to fulfill those jobs. Comcast's Internet Essentials Learning Center provides just that. With classes ranging from simple digital literacy to more advanced topics, for instance art design, the wide variety of resources available on their website is enabling those who are willing to take charge of their digital economic development to do so.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, many of these classes are offered in a variety of languages, including Spanish and Arabic, further driving their commitment to the inclusion of diverse communities.



Policymakers can work in collaboration with organizations like the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)<sup>44</sup> to promote the Latino community's access to, and adoption and full application of, technology. This can be done by supporting policy initiatives aimed at expanding broadband internet service and ensuring that children have access to the proper technologies needed for digital learning. The pandemic has made it increasingly evident that there is still much to be done. A report by Abriendo Puertas | Opening Doors found that 33% of Latino families did not have regular access to the internet, and 53% did not have enough desktop computers, tablets, or laptops to support distance learning.<sup>45</sup>



Policymakers should also address the sizable population of young people, a majority of whom are Latinos, who came to the U.S. as undocumented minors and who face unparalleled barriers to pursuing higher education and economic opportunity, despite having spent the majority of their lives in this country. The passage of the DREAM Act, and similar policies at the state level, would go a long way in ensuring that DREAMers have more equitable access to these opportunities, particularly in the ever-evolving digital economy.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Economic Independence**



Businesses should focus on expanding their internal pipeline by establishing a pathway from contracting gigs to permanent roles. As tech companies continue to outsource jobs to contracting firms, the wage gap widens.<sup>46</sup> This could be alleviated by investing in contractors who are already somewhat established within the company through extending opportunities for full-time employment.



The importance of sponsorship can help shrink the wage gap between Latino employees and their white counterparts. As stated in a report by IBM, “[S]ponsorship can be an invaluable tool as Hispanics move into more senior leadership positions.”<sup>47</sup> For example, Latina employees with sponsorship opportunities have 6.1% higher wages than those who do not have the same access.<sup>48</sup>



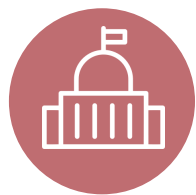
Provide tax incentives to encourage further workforce training investments from the private sector.<sup>49</sup> Tax credits can nudge firms to commit to uplifting the skillsets of their low- and middle-income employees. Such policies could benefit Small and Medium Enterprises, which tend to have fewer resources to invest in this kind of upskilling initiatives. This policy would be especially relevant to Latino-owned businesses, which “tend to be fewer, smaller and lower-paying than their non-Latino counterparts.”<sup>50</sup>

Relevant examples include New York State’s Employee Training Incentive Program (E-TIP) tax credit.<sup>51</sup> New York State employers from specific industries can benefit from the tax credit by conducting or obtaining eligible training that upgrades, reskills, or improves the productivity of their employees, or by developing approved internship programs that provide training in advanced technology, life sciences, software development, or clean energy. The credit is equal to 50% of the eligible training costs, up to \$10,000 per employee, and 50% of the stipend paid to an intern, up to \$3,000 per intern.

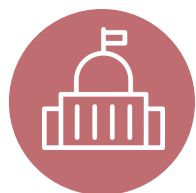
### **New York State’s Employee Training Incentive Program (E-TIP)**

New York State employers from specific industries can benefit from a tax credit by:

- Conducting or obtaining eligible training that upgrades, reskill, or improves the productivity of their Employees
- or
- Developing approved internship programs that provide training in advanced technology, life sciences, software development, or clean energy



Develop policies to increase the availability of daycare and other wraparound services. “Latinas are more than three times [sic] as likely to be a single head of household as their white non-Latinx counterparts (19.1% vs. 8.6%),”<sup>52</sup> so allocating more resources to the provision of these services is vital to addressing some of the obstacles Latinas face to progressing in their careers. The pandemic has made this gap particularly evident, as some Latinas were forced to give up their jobs to take care of children at home.



Together with other stakeholders and partners, contribute to the development of a strengthened digital safety net that households, entrepreneurs, and small and medium businesses can rely on, including sufficient and affordable broadband connectivity, affordable devices, and access to digital financial services.<sup>53</sup> The pandemic has shown the importance of these tools in allowing households to quickly adjust to new circumstances and businesses to remain resilient and competitive. The Emergency Broadband Benefit, a program recently launched by the Federal Communications Commission, is a step in this direction.<sup>54</sup> Eligible households can receive up to \$50 per month to help pay for broadband internet services and a one-time \$100 benefit towards the purchase of a computer or tablet.



## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Community-Informed Social Responsibility



Investing in DEI recruiters that intimately understand the landscape is essential if tech firms wish to increase Latino inclusion within their workforce. In addition, these employees should be experts with demonstrable methods in recruiting and hiring Latinos in tech. Hiring DEI recruiters from marginalized communities will lead to better outcomes as they will likely have networks of communities of color from which to pull.



Tech companies should work in partnership with Latino organizers and advocacy groups. Examples of leading efforts include Techqueria, which is committed to connecting professionals in tech and has a growing community of 14,000 members.<sup>55</sup> TECHNOLOchicas, another group, is focused on raising awareness among young Latinas about careers in technology through nationwide campaigns and ambassador programs in grade schools.<sup>56</sup> Partnerships with groups like these could build a bridge connecting recruiters to Latinos looking for opportunities in the technology sector.



Develop a more comprehensive, company-wide ERG environment. Upper management must be committed to working with ERGs to promote diversity among teammates and hiring. This could be done by setting up mentoring services for Latinos, scheduling company-wide events promoting diversity, and incorporating suggestions from Latino employees into the work culture. Tracking effectiveness by identifying key metrics, such as attendance and engagement levels, is essential to sustaining successful ERGs. Additionally, leaders must be fully engaged with ERGs to prevent the burden of having to drive and promote groups from being placed on minorities.<sup>57</sup>



Launch comprehensive campaigns showcasing Latino leaders and innovators within the firm to debunk myths, reframe the narrative, and inspire emerging Latino talent to start a career in tech. ○

## Creating a Comprehensive, Company-Wide ERG Environment

- Upper management must be committed to working with groups to promote diversity.
- Tracking effectiveness by identifying key metrics is essential to sustaining success.
- Leaders must be fully engaged to prevent the burden driving groups, which is often placed on minorities.

# CONCLUSION

The digital economic future for Latinos holds great promise if educators, industry leaders, and policymakers work together to address the challenges in education, economic gaps, and corporate responsibility. Adopting the priority recommendations detailed in this guide will help catalyze changes necessary to propelling Latinos in tech. As early adopters of technology, and with an ever-growing young population, Latinos represent the future of both technological and economic advancement. The key is to present Latinos with the opportunities and pathways to shape their digital future.

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