



## The Need for Hispanic Parents' Education

Even though more Hispanics are getting a postsecondary education than ever before, they still lag other groups in obtaining a four-year degree. As of 2014, among Hispanics ages 25 to 29, just 15% of Hispanics had a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>1</sup> This gap is due in part to the fact that Hispanic families are less likely to see education as an investment for life.

We all know that people who complete a college degree earn more than people who have not attended college. Yet we often overlook the fact that these benefits extend beyond individual workers. The college earnings advantage also leads to higher economic activity, fueling prosperity at the regional and national levels.

The average bachelor's degree holder contributes \$278,000 more to local economies than the average high school graduate through direct spending during his or her lifetime, and an associate degree holder contributes \$81,000 more than a high school graduate.<sup>2</sup>

The evidence is overwhelming: any investment in college education pays in a big way both for individuals and for society. However, the typically emphasized financial payoff is only a small part of the story. It is no overstatement to call the effect on earnings just the tip of the college-payoff iceberg. There are more benefits to college education beneath the surface than above it.

On average, Americans with bachelor's degrees receive higher benefits in comparison to high school graduates never attending college. Among them: annual earnings, health insurance, retirement plan through employment, retirement income, and job safety.<sup>3</sup>

By far, the fastest-growing group of college-age people is Hispanic. If they do not increase the number of college graduates and university degrees, there will be too few workers to take up the slack of baby boomers retiring from essential high-salary positions, and too many in lower-paying jobs. That means less innovation, dwindling consumer spending, more poverty, and decreasing tax revenue to cover spiraling demand for services. This could drag down all America's income.<sup>4</sup>

Let's not forget that, according to the Census Bureau, from 1940 to 2010, as a percentage of the total population, the White population decreased 24.6% and the Hispanic population grew 14.8%. Most probably, by mid-century, Hispanics will become the largest population.<sup>5</sup> If their low college completion rates remain low, very likely there will be more poor people, more dependence on government subsidies, and less prosperity in the nation.

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  4. The Hechinger Report. Divided We Learn. John Marcus. <https://hechingerreport.org/failing-get-hispanics-college-drag-americans-income/>
  5. Paradigm Shift - Is America Ready for a Hispanic Majority? Jose-Pablo Fernandez. 400 Voices. [http://portaldoc.pactmovil.org/PDFs/Paradigm\\_Shift.pdf](http://portaldoc.pactmovil.org/PDFs/Paradigm_Shift.pdf)