



CALIFORNIA

The following educational profile of Latinos in California provides context for reviewing public policy related to accessing and completing postsecondary education in the state:

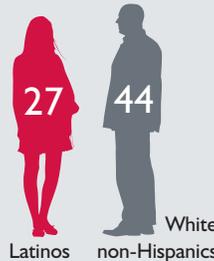
Excelencia in Education has partnered with the Campaign for College Opportunity to address Latino student success in California. The Campaign's mission is to ensure that the next generation of California students has the chance to attend college and succeed in order to keep California's workforce and economy strong.

California has **the largest Latino population** in the nation.⁸

Latinos are the fastest-growing segment of the population, accounting for **65%** of the state's **population growth**, and are projected to become the state's **majority ethnic group by 2020**.

Approximately **40%** of California residents are projected to be of **Hispanic origin in 2020**, up from 25 percent in 1990.⁹

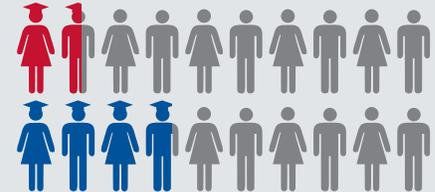
As is the case nationally, Latinos in California are a young population with the median age of **27**, compared to 44 for White non-Hispanics.¹⁰



Over half (51%) of the K-12 population is **Latino**, second nationally only to New Mexico.

Of degree attainment, 16 percent of Latino adults (25 and older) had earned an associate degree or higher, compared to 38 percent of all adults in California.¹¹

Latino Adults = 1.6 of 10



All Adults = 3.8 of 10

In terms of equity gaps in college completion, California has a **10% equity gap** between **Latinos and Whites** when considering graduation rates;¹² the largest of the three states in this analysis.

The following sections provide a primer of state policies with a Latino lens that may help, hinder, or be worth reconsidering to increase access and completion of postsecondary education in California.

POLICIES THAT MAY HELP

California has state policies that span the higher education pipeline to help increase Latinos' higher education access and completion. While all of these policies have the potential to help, the participation, implementation, outreach, or funding of these policies may limit how state policy is helping. For the purposes of this primer, the following three public policy strategies may be helping increase Latino college completion:

- **College preparation activities** — Curriculum and school-based college

readiness counseling ensures students receive individualized review of their education and career goals.

- **Student support services funds for community colleges** — Services to support completion include student orientation, education planning services, and success scorecards.
- **Transfer reform** — Simplifying the transfer pathway between community colleges and colleges/universities helps advance education.

COLLEGE PREPARATION ACTIVITIES —

college preparation includes academic support through curriculum as well as knowledge of opportunities and options through counseling.

Curriculum

POLICY CONTEXT: Too few students in California are graduating from high school academically prepared for college. In 2011-12, only 28 percent of Latino students completed a college prep curriculum, compared to 62 percent of Asian students, 45 percent of White students, and 29 percent of Black students.¹³ This completion means about two-thirds of high school graduates in California are not eligible to apply to a university in California.

STATE POLICY: The California Education Code (EC) establishes a minimum set of requirements for graduation from California high schools, generally known as the college prep (A-G) curriculum to be eligible for the state’s public universities. The intent of the curriculum is to ensure students have a body of general knowledge to prepare for more advanced study in college. This was a critical attempt to create a clear default curriculum for all students to be academically college ready.

Counseling

POLICY CONTEXT: School-based college readiness counseling ensures students receive individualized review of their education and career goals. The high school counselor ratio in California is 945 to 1, compared to the national average of 477 to 1.¹⁴ This places California last in the nation in terms of the student/counselor ratio. Given this high ratio, counselors are too often limited to mitigating personal and social issues rather than providing college preparation and selection options. Considering over half of the K-12 population in California is Latino, there is a need for increased focus on college advising.

STATE POLICY: The Schools Curriculum: Opportunities for Pupils (Chapter 732, Statutes of 2007) reforms middle and high school counseling programs to ensure that students receive individ-

ualized review of their career goals, and that they are informed about high school graduation requirements and career technical opportunities in their schools. Further, the California Department of Education and California’s P-16 Council launched “Achieving Success for All Students,” a multiagency initiative focused on closing the achievement gap between recognized subgroups in the state and federal accountability systems by providing school-based college readiness counseling.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES —

At community colleges, support services to completion include orientation and education planning services and reporting progress in student completion.

POLICY CONTEXT: Community colleges are generally open admission institutions (enroll all who apply). In California, 70 percent of postsecondary students are enrolled in community colleges. Similarly, 68 percent of Latinos enrolled in college in California are at a community college.¹⁵ However, completion rates for community college students continue to be low. Per 100 overall undergraduate students enrolled, there are only 9 degrees awarded. For Latinos, the numbers are even lower with only 7 degrees awarded per 100 students enrolled.¹⁶

STATE POLICY: In recognition of this disconnect between those who enroll and graduate, the California Community Colleges Student Success Act of 2012 (SB1456) restructured the way student support services were delivered to improve the assistance that students receive at the beginning of their educational experience, specifically student orientation, assessment and education planning services. It also requires colleges receiving student support service funds to post a student success scorecard to clearly communicate progress in improving completion rates for all students and closing the achievement gap among historically under-represented students.¹⁷

TRANSFER REFORM — Simplifies the transfer pathway between community colleges and colleges/universities.

POLICY CONTEXT: Community colleges are seen as a gateway to higher education for the vast majority (70 percent) of students in California. While enrollment has increased, the numbers of transfers to four-year colleges and universities has not seen the same growth. Many Latinos start their college education at a community college (68 percent); yet, for students who are interested in continuing their education at a four-year institution, the overall transfer rate is low. Currently, California has an overall community college transfer rate of 23 percent overall¹⁸ and just four out of ten Latino community college students either completed their associate degree

or transferred to a four-year institution after six years, with rates continuing to decline.¹⁹

STATE POLICY: California passed higher education transfer reform in 2010 (SB 1440) to simplify the transfer pathway between community college and colleges/universities. The policy created a transfer path for all California community college students, regardless of which college they originally attend. According to SB 1440, students who successfully complete 60 units of transferable coursework at a community college will receive an associate degree and guaranteed admission with upper-division junior standing to a California State University system institution. However, as of 2012, those tracking the policy have seen implementation throughout the state has been uneven.

POLICIES THAT MAY HINDER

Along with policies that might help increase Latino college completion in California, there are also public policies that may hinder their access to and success in higher education. For the purposes of this primer, the following three public policy strategies may be hindering Latino college completion:

- **Lack of a centralized postsecondary education database** — As Latino representation in higher education is increasing, these data can inform policy to improve student outcomes.
- **“Master Plan” eligibility/capacity limits** — Student access has been reduced at a time when student applications are increasing, resulting in a buildup of students at institutions unable to enroll all eligible students due to lack of space and resources.
- **Lack of support for race-conscious efforts** — Limitation of using race/ethnicity has led to a perception that institutions cannot be inclusive and intentional about serving Latino students.

LACK OF A CENTRALIZED POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION DATABASE

and easy access for institutions and the public limits the data and information that can inform policy to improve student outcomes.

POLICY CONTEXT: Without a central location for student data and benchmarks for college-going completion, monitors towards these benchmarks cannot be tracked. Lack of data on access and completion rates by race/ethnicity will hinder the state’s progress in improving student outcomes and meeting workforce needs. These data can also help inform legislative policies and budget strategies to achieve these goals. At a time when Latinos are the majority in K-12 having access to a centralized location for data is important to inform public policy about what is or is not working, as these data can help inform policy discussions.

STATE POLICY: The California Legislature initially created the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) in 1973 to coordinate and develop plans for public higher education. It was later expanded to include private colleges and universities within the planning process. CPEC was closed in November 2011 due to perceived ineffectiveness and state budget cuts. The data housed at CPEC has now been transferred to the Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges.²⁰ However, much of that data has not been updated since CPEC’s closure and is not as easily accessible. In 2013, the California Assembly passed SB 195, which created goals for California higher education policy; however, it did not establish metrics to monitor goals.

“MASTER PLAN” ELIGIBILITY/

CAPACITY LIMITS — The limited growth of college campuses and “seats” has decreased capacity, with eligible students being turned away or unable to enroll in any classes they need, or the raising of admissions standards to constrain eligibility.

POLICY CONTEXT: Due to decreases in state funding for higher education, institutions have needed to make large cuts in expenditures, which have impacted institutional capacity and reduced student access to higher education, at a time when student applications are increasing. The University of California (UC) system has limited the number of students enrolled, resulting in increased numbers of students staying within the California State University (CSU) system. With 70 percent of California postsecondary students attending community colleges, the CSU schools are also unable to enroll all eligible community college students due to lack of space and resources. Combined with increased tuition and fees at all three school systems, higher education completion is becoming more difficult for students who have to bear the burden of these costs and strategize how to complete their education. As a result of these budget cuts, enrollment at all three California systems has decreased by more than half a million students.²²

Latinos are going to college at higher rates than ever before, and this trend is likely to continue.²³ However, the majority of Latinos (68 percent) are enrolled at California community colleges, followed by 14 percent at the CSU institutions.²⁴ For high school students who graduated in 2010, 34 percent went straight to a California community college, 10 percent to a CSU school and just 4 percent to a UC school.²⁵ These “master plan” eligibility limits will negatively impact students’ college completion goals, which will also have an impact on the both the students’ and the state’s bottom line. Students will either have to enroll at multiple institutions, transfer to private institutions that have higher tuition costs, or put their education plans on hold until there is space at the institution they want to attend. The state will lose out on the opportunity to have a more educated populace.

STATE POLICY: In 1960, California created a “master plan” for postsecondary education to provide access to education. This plan created three public university systems, the University of California (UC) system, the California State University (CSU) system and the California Community College (CCC) system, and aligned their missions to different segments. According to the plan, the top 12.5 percent of California high school students are eligible for admission to UC schools, which are considered the primary research universities; the top 33.3 percent are eligible for admission to CSU schools; and the community colleges are charged with providing academic and vocational instruction.²¹

LACK OF SUPPORT FOR RACE-CONSCIOUS EFFORTS — the perception has remained that institutions cannot overtly target their efforts by race/ethnicity.

POLICY CONTEXT: In recent years, the college-going rate for Latinos has increased; however, this is also due to an increase in the overall Latino population, and less so on proclivity. Almost half (47 percent) of the college-going age population (18-24 years) is Latino; yet, they continue to be underrepresented at each of the higher education systems in the state. The lack of institutional support for race conscious efforts has led to a less diverse student body that does not have parity. Latino students currently make up 20 percent of the student population in the UC system, 33 percent within the CSU system, and 39 percent in the community colleges.²⁸

STATE POLICY: In 1996, California voters approved an initiative that abolished the state’s public affirmative action program. The California Civil Rights Initiative (also known as Proposition 209) prohibits preferential treatment based on “race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin”²⁶ by the State in public employment, education and public contracting. Immediately after the passage of Proposition 209, higher education enrollment rates for Latinos and African American students dropped, with the admission rates of Latinos dropping 8 percent from 1997 to 1998.²⁷

POLICIES TO REEXAMINE

According to the Campaign, significantly improving college attendance and completion rates among Latinos is directly linked to the future economic success of California. Public policy can either improve or accept the status quo when it comes to improving college opportunity and student success. The following are public policy areas that the Campaign proposes be reexamined to accelerate college completion in California.

CREATE A STATEWIDE PLAN FOR EDUCATION: California lacks a plan that articulates how many college educated residents it needs to meet workforce demands and to grow our economic strength. California needs a plan that increases college-going rates, improves graduation rates, maintains college affordability, and closes the gap amongst underrepresented students. Without a path to improve college attainment, California will never get better results than it currently has.

EXPAND A-G COMPLETION: Successful completion of the college preparatory curriculum is a requirement for admission to the CSU and University of California (UC) systems. Two-thirds of Latino high school do not complete A-G courses in high school and are ineligible to even apply to the public four-year colleges. High Schools should increase the availability of A-G course offerings, support students to succeed in these courses, and close any gaps by race. Until more high schools see their role as graduating students prepared for college, we will not have enough Latinos able to succeed in higher education. Just as important would be an appropriate review of whether these continue to be the right requirements for students and whether or not we should be directing more students directly into our four year universities, where currently only the top third of high school graduates are expected to have a spot.

MODIFY PROPOSITION 209: The 1996 voter-approved initiative bans the use of race in college admissions at our public universities. We support modifying Proposition 209 to permit the use of race/ethnicity as one of many factors in weighing a candidate's qualifications, a position consistent with federal rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court, and essential to increasing the diversity of our student body in our four year public universities, especially at the University of California (UC).

IMPROVE REMEDIATION AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES: Remedial classes are where many Latinos start in higher education and where they are lost. Only 1 out of 5 students in pre-college level courses will earn a degree or transfer within six years. By accelerating curriculum and improving placement methods, community colleges can vastly improve the number of students who go on to receive degrees. Community colleges should expand alternative placement programs, which use high school GPA to place students in college level courses and truly enact multiple measures, not just assessment tests that may understate competency, in order to ensure that we place students properly and improve their time and success in remedial courses when they do need them.

EXPAND TRANSFER: In order to significantly increase transfer rates a streamlined transfer pathway was legislated in 2010 creating an Associate Degree for transfer pathway between community colleges and the California State University (CSU) campuses which ensures students earn a degree and are guaranteed admission with junior status into the CSU. While the transfer legislation is helping, there is still no clear pathway into the University of California that guarantees students a spot. Ensuring full implementation of this transfer pathway AND expanding this program to the UC system would be a tremendous boost for Latino students.