



Job Corps: Promoting Success for Hispanic Youth

Job Corps: Promoting Success for Hispanic Youth

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Management & Training Corporation (MTC) is an international corporation dedicated to helping people realize their learning potential. MTC creates nurturing environments in which education is encouraged and recognized. MTC manages and operates 24 Job Corps centers in 19 states for the U.S. Department of Labor, preparing disadvantaged youth for meaningful careers. MTC also operates privatized correctional facilities around the world with approximately 9,700 beds under contract. The MTC Institute is the research division of MTC, which is dedicated to promoting innovations, exemplary practices, and projecting trends that are relevant to job training and corrections. The work of the Institute is geared towards a broad audience including policy makers, educators, researchers, practitioners, state and federal officials, workforce development entities, correctional agencies and Job Corps centers.

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INTRODUCTION

The U.S. labor force is growing more diverse. Major demographic shifts are redefining who America is and what is required to compete and ultimately succeed. In 2004 the U.S. Hispanic population reached 41.3 million, and it continues to grow.¹ The social, economic, and political implications of this trend are significant.

A sizeable portion of Hispanic youth, 27.4 percent, lives in poverty.² Every year the Job Corps program serves close to 65,000 youth. In light of the demographic shift taking place in the United States, programs that are targeting disadvantaged youth must reexamine their efforts to recruit Hispanic youth and work to identify the needs of this often underserved and underrepresented group.

The Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of the 21st Century Workforce is working to ensure that all Hispanic

Programs often miss opportunities to make the most of the positive aspects of ethnic and immigrant culture. In the Hispanic community in particular, these attributes include:

- Strength of family
- Valuing education
- Strong work ethic
- Determination to succeed

Many cultural attitudes and beliefs regarding education, training, family, and work are affected by circumstance. Hispanics as a group are younger, more likely to be employed, and have larger families than the average U.S. resident. Poverty rates are high, particularly for families headed by single Hispanic women. In 2001, poverty rates for Hispanic families headed by a woman exceeded 35 percent.³

An overwhelming number of Hispanic youth leave school inadequately prepared to meet the demands of a changing labor market.

American workers have the opportunity to equip themselves with the necessary tools to succeed in their careers in whatever field they choose. The changing and dynamic global economy requires America's 21st Century workforce adjust to these changes to remain competitive in the 21st Century economy.

Job Corps, as a leader in workforce development, must incorporate strategies to actively engage Hispanic youth and their families, embrace their cultural uniqueness, and create a common understanding of center experience and expectations. Understanding the Hispanic perspective is critical to delivering effective education and training programs and improving long-term job placement. Hispanic students entering Job Corps programs face many challenges including:

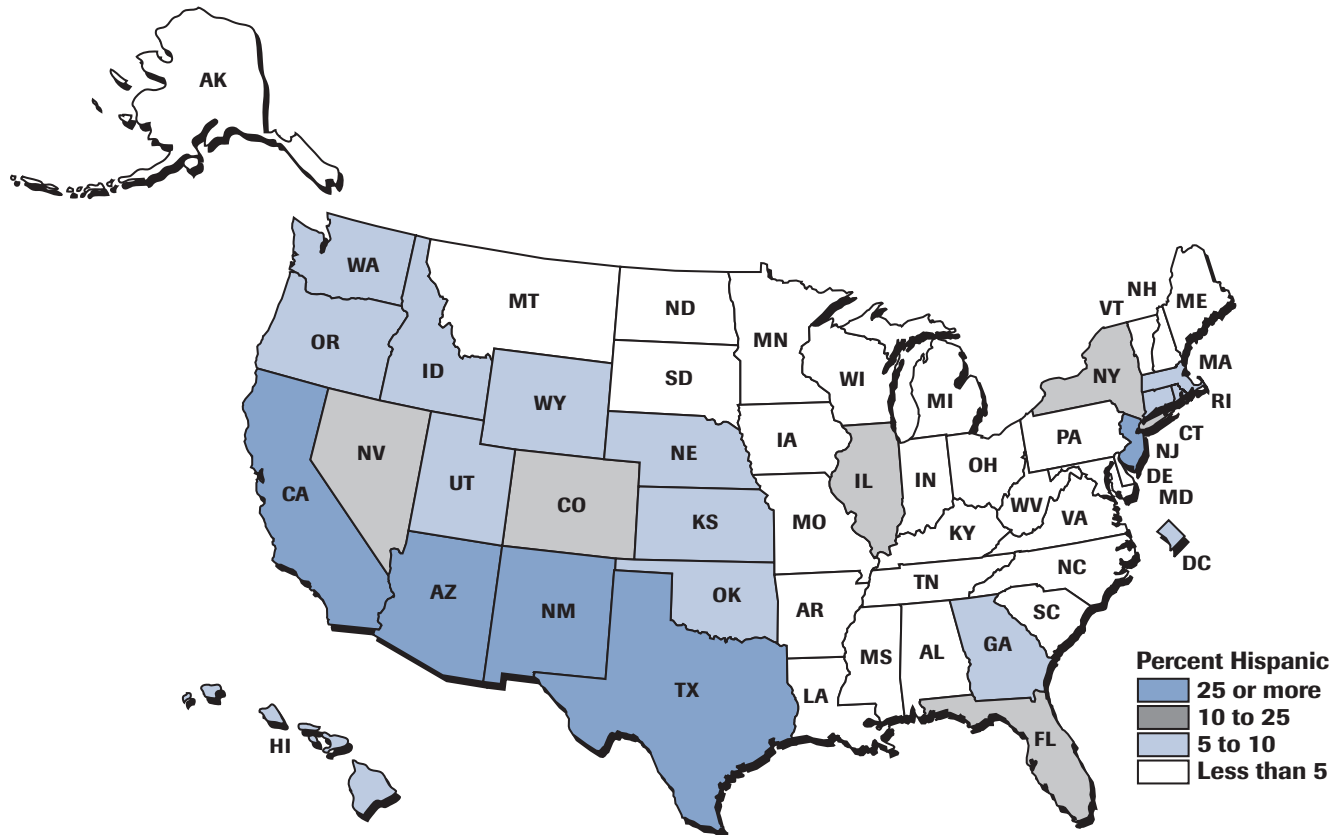
- Competing obligations
- English language difficulties
- Early entry into the workforce
- Low expectations and standards
- Low educational attainment

An overwhelming number of Hispanic youth leave school inadequately prepared to meet the demands of a changing labor market. Hispanic students are notably behind their counterparts in core academic skills. Hispanic youth drop out of school at rates much higher than those of either blacks or non-Hispanic whites. For those students that do graduate from high school on time only 53 percent are considered "minimally qualified" to attend college compared to 70 percent of non-Hispanic white high school graduates.⁴

To attract students, Job Corps must develop a better understanding of Hispanic youth and their needs and improve the opportunities for their education and life success. It must identify strategies to recruit and effectively serve Hispanic youth and their families if it is to meet its full service objective. Many Hispanic students come from small communities and are likely to return to those communities after their Job Corps training is complete. For some there will be jobs for them to return to but for many there will not. Involving parents and families in a discussion can help to better clarify needs, expectations, and student goals. Job Corps' strength is in its leadership in education and training and its ability

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Figure 1. Percent Hispanic By State, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Population, 2000.

to adapt given changing workforce, education, and training requirements.

The United States is becoming more ethnically diverse, and Hispanics are the largest and fastest growing minority segment of the U.S. population. This growth is due largely to the rising birth rate. Roughly 14.7 percent of the U.S. population is Hispanic.⁵ The Hispanic popula-

tion is second in adding to this growing population, particularly in the southern and western United States. (See Figure 1.) The rate of Hispanic growth since the 1990 census in states like Arkansas, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee ranges from 300 to 500 percent. Hispanics are no longer regionally concentrated in traditionally Hispanic states like California, Texas or Florida.

Hispanics accounted for about one-half of the national population growth of 2.9 million between July 2003 and July 2004.

tion in the past year alone grew at a rate that was three times that of the total population.

In 23 of 50 states Hispanics are the largest ethnic minority.⁶ Hispanics surpass African-Americans in their share of the U.S. population. Following the rising Hispanic birthrate,

As noted above, these major demographic shifts continue to transform the U.S. economy. The supply of qualified workers in the United States is dwindling as large segments of skilled and educated workers steadily move into retirement. Today six out of every

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ten jobs require education and training beyond high school.⁷ Workforce training and education professionals are the frontline responders to this growing workforce development crisis. They must understand the dynamics of a changing population and their needs, as well as the needs of employers to be successful in educating, training, and placing students in high wage jobs.

Given these rapidly changing demographics and workforce projections, Job Corps must increase the number of well-prepared students entering the labor market. In working with the growing population of Hispanic students, Job Corps must understand that the U.S. Hispanic identity is complex and blends multiple countries, cultures, and generations. As a whole, the Hispanic population holds an array of attitudes, beliefs, and values that are distinct from other segments of the population, but it also contains many subgroups, each unique. Differences within the Hispanic population are most pronounced between native and foreign-born Hispanics.

As a leader in workforce development, Job Corps must incorporate strategies to actively engage and embrace Hispanic families in the Job Corps process. Including families in the process will improve the recruitment of Hispanic youth and implementing ef-

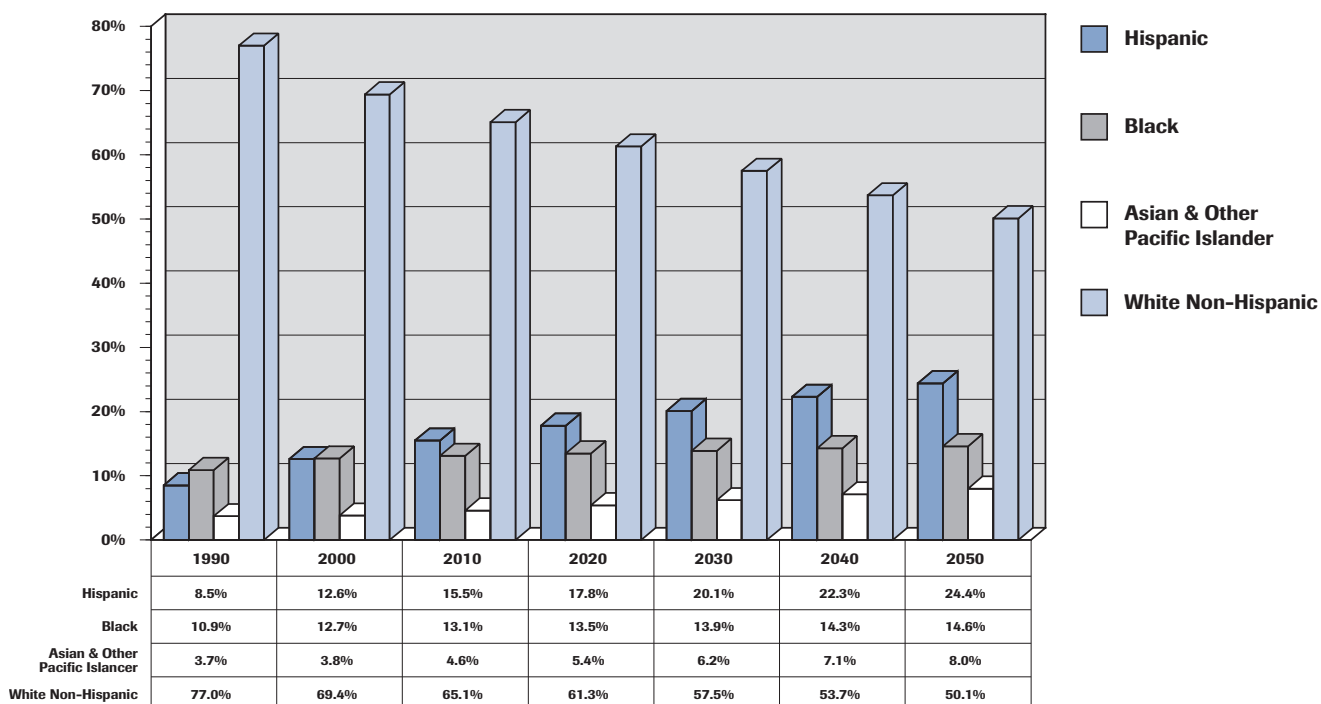
fective strategies to retain them will prepare the youth to take advantage of career opportunities in a high growth and rapidly changing demand-driven market. Demographic changes make it essential that Job Corps reexamine its programs and services to better serve this segment of the population that today constitutes the largest minority group in the country.

ETHNIC TRENDS IN A SHIFTING WORKFORCE

By the year 2050, minorities will make up a sizeable share of the U.S. labor force. Birth, immigration and death rates, and the proportion of people seeking employment all are factors that affect the size of the U.S. labor force. One in eight people in the United States is of Hispanic origin. One in five children under the age of 18 is Hispanic.

Between 2002 and 2012, the number of Hispanic workers is projected to increase by nearly 6 million—a growth rate that is three times that of non-Hispanic workers.⁸ The Hispanic share of the workforce will continue to grow, reaching an estimated one fourth of the entire workforce by 2050.⁹ (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2. U.S. Labor Force by Race & Ethnicity, 1990-2050



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Population, 2000.

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Hispanics will have an important impact on public policy over the next 20 years. Civilian labor force participation rates and employment-population ratios evidence steady growth in the Hispanic population. (The employment-population ratio measures persons employed as a percent of the population.) Recent figures indicate that the employment-population ratio for Hispanics (63.9 percent) is comparable to that for whites (63.2 percent), and higher than that for blacks (57 percent).¹⁰

A significant proportion of the growth in the U.S. Hispanic population over the previous decades was due to immigration. Today's growth is the result of the birthrate: the number of U.S.-born Hispanic babies outnumbers new Hispanic immigrants.¹¹ The immigrating profile of the Hispanic population is one that is dominated by the young. Most Hispanic immigrants are young adults in their child-bearing years, which contributes to the relative youth of the Hispanic population overall.

Hispanics have gained a national presence. One half of the national population growth between July 2003 and July 2004 is from the growth in the Hispanic population alone. In July 2004 Hispanics numbered 41.3 million out of a population of 293.7 million, not including the 3.9 million Hispanics in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.¹²

The slow overall U.S. population growth rate has many calling attention to the potential burden the future holds for the economic dependency of many on few. A large segment of the U.S. workforce is entering retirement and preparing to exit the workforce, taking with them education, skill, and qualifications that are not readily restorable. By 2050, for every 100 people working, an estimated 111 people will not be working. It is expected that 44 of the 111 nonworkers will be children under the age of 16.¹³

Just as the workforce is shrinking, however, the need for skilled and qualified workers is growing. By 2012, the number of jobs requiring advanced skills will grow at twice the rate of those requiring basic skills.¹⁴ Job opportunity varies greatly depending on one's level of education and training. While basic education is the essential foundation for the skills and knowledge needed to secure a high paying job, a high school degree does not translate into financial stability in today's labor market. Given the current economic and demographic trends, more minority students will require postsecondary education and increased skill to compete successfully in the technically demanding labor market.

OUR VALUES

Maybe Our Origins Impact Them... Maybe Not.

Differences exist between people with different backgrounds. Hispanic peoples in general respond to a different set of values. The concept of family extends beyond the nucleus of the mother, father, siblings to include grandparent, uncles, aunts, and cousins many times over. Obligations to family members is expected and accepted. Self sufficiency is often interpreted as arrogance, distant and cold. In "Think and Grow Rich: A Latino Choice," Lionel Sosa points to characteristics that differentiate the values of the Latino's.

LATINO VALUES Based on Catholicism, Spanish Colonialism and respect for tradition	ANGLO VALUES Based on Puritan, Protestant, and Calvinist thinking of a new and free America
INTER-DEPENDENCE	INDEPENDENCE
Family First	Me First
Family helps family	Helping self helps family
Faith In God	Faith in self and in God
Humility	Self expression
Work hard	Work smart
Sacrifice	Pay your dues
Stability	What's new? What's next?
Respect for authority	Challenge authority
Modesty	Toot your horn
God loves the poor	God loves the rich
I accept life's problems	I solve life's problems
Small success is good	Big success is better
Whatever God wants	What I want, too!
I hope to achieve	I believe I will achieve
Verguenza Sacrificio Sufrimiento Sudor Responsabilidad Respeto	What's that? To a point Avoid at all costs O.K., But not forever Of course Earn it first

HISPANICS WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

The United States adopted the term "Hispanic" in 1973 to identify all persons of Latin descent from various

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countries and ancestral origins. The intent was to identify a single group, yet the result is a very rich and diverse mixture of race, countries, and cultures. Findings from a national study of Latinos in 2002 indicate that the Hispanic population in the United States is diverse and that within this population there is a distinct departure in attitudes between native and foreign-born Hispanics (see Table 1). When the Hispanics in the study were asked whether they as a whole share one “Hispanic” culture, an overwhelming 85 percent reported having distinct cultures based on country of origin. Though cultural identification may vary, many Hispanics find it important to become an active part of the social and economic fabric of “America.”

Table 1.
Hispanic Self-Identification by Generation

Which do you use to identify yourself?	Total	Generation in the United States		
		1st	2nd	3rd
Country of Ancestry/Origin	54%	54%	54%	54%
Latino/Hispanic	24%	24%	24%	20%
American	21%	6%	35%	57%
Doesn't identify as any of these	1%	1%	1%	1%

Source: Suro, R., Brodie, M., Stefferson, A., Valdez, J., & Levin, R. (2002). *National Survey of Latinos*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation.

Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values

Many of the concerns of the Hispanic community are unique to their circumstances.

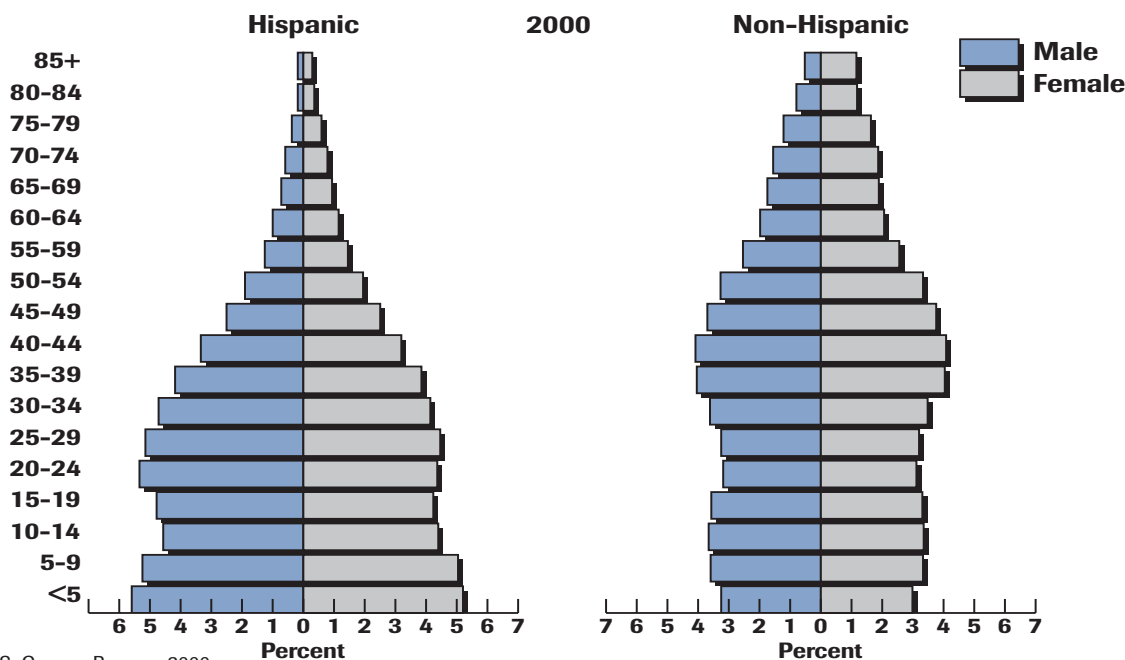
- One third of Hispanics are under the age of 18; half are under age 27.
- About half of Hispanics age 15 and older are married.
- Over one quarter of Hispanic children under the age of 18 live in poverty.

A larger proportion of the Hispanic population is young compared to the general U.S. population. (See Figure 3.) Youths aged 5 to 24 comprise 37 percent of the Hispanic population. This compares to only 27 percent of the non-Hispanic population. The number of Hispanic youth will grow dramatically over the next 25 years, increasing an estimated 82 percent.¹⁵

Hispanics' views and opinions are different from those of non-Hispanic whites and blacks on several key issues. Most relevant to this report, Hispanics express stronger family attachment and are more likely to underscore the importance of family issues. In addition, they are overwhelmingly positive about the opportunity for advancement.¹⁶

Yet, Hispanic children are now the most uneducated and undereducated minority group in the United

Figure 3. Age and Sex Distribution of the United States Population by Hispanic Origin, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

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States.¹⁷ Many youths, particularly though not exclusively, from immigrant families are highly motivated to succeed. However, their obligations to support and assist their families in any way necessary keep them close to home. For many, this results in an early entry into the labor market, often compromising the continuation of formal education. These youth face a future of low-skill jobs with severely limited career mobility.

In response to the educational crisis facing their youth, Hispanic community leaders are organizing to make education a primary concern for Hispanics in America today. There is strong support within the Hispanic community for establishing high expectations and standardized testing, and periodically assessing academic progress. Positive outcomes from this approach are evident in the 2004 ACT Assessment results.

- Hispanic youth taking core curriculum consistently score higher on college entrance exams than students who take less than the core curriculum. Yet only 54 percent of Hispanic youth are enrolled in a core curriculum.¹⁸
- Additionally, Hispanic youth gain from taking more rigorous coursework.
- Higher-level course work is necessary for students to improve academically as well as professionally.

Many Hispanic youth are relied upon to help with the support of the family. Attitudes of obligation to family are stronger for immigrant adolescent youth than for

Hispanics are overwhelmingly positive about their opportunities within the United States, though less positive about the U.S. familial and societal values. (See Table 2.) Families are central to the Hispanic culture and identity. Hispanic immigrants have larger families, with 3.51 births on average compared to black families (2.53) and non-Hispanic white families (1.84).²¹

Table 2.
United States Compared to Country of Origin Among Hispanics

Would you say the following is better in the United States than the country you or your parents or ancestors came from?	
	Better in the United States
Opportunity to get ahead	89%
The strength of family ties	21%
The moral values of the society	28%

Source: Suro, R., Brodie, M., Stefferson, A., Valdez, J., & Levin, R. (2002). *National Survey of Latinos*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation.

Immigration will add 25 to 32 million Hispanic people to the U.S. population by 2020.²² This rapid increase underscores the need to understand the uniqueness of the Hispanic experiences and the potential interaction with various aspects of the Job Corps program and identify strategies that embrace the Hispanic culture and diversity. Understanding both native and foreign-born Hispanic youth is essential for any programs that

Hispanic children are now the most uneducated and undereducated minority group in the United States.

their U.S.-born peers. Young adults from immigrant families believe it is their responsibility to support and assist their families and spend more time meeting their families' caretaking, household, and financial needs than do youth whose parents were U.S.-born.¹⁹ Youths from immigrant families are relied on to assist their families in making ends meet and in navigating many of the daily institutions like schools, work, hospitals, and stores. Often Hispanic immigrant youth are responsible for the viability of the family.²⁰

strive to provide services that result in positive outcomes. Taking a closer look at the Hispanic perspective and experience is critical to understanding the existing gaps in service and developing strategies that meet the needs of Hispanic youth and their family.

CHALLENGES FACING HISPANIC YOUTH

Today's Hispanic youth face many hurdles. It is clear that the gap in wages paid to those with high

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levels of education and skill and those with lower levels of education and skill continues to widen. Younger workers with low levels of skill, education, and wages are more likely to be jobless.²³ Hispanic youth in particular face multiple challenges:

- English language difficulties
- Early entry into the workforce
- Low expectations and standards
- High rate of school dropout

Almost half of all foreign-born Hispanics are limited in their English proficiency, 30 percent of Hispanic children in the United States live in single-parent households, and 27.4 percent of Hispanic youth age

speak English. The number of people unable to speak English at a proficient level grew by 52 percent, to 21 million nationwide, between 1990 and 2000. A significant portion of these are Hispanic.

Early Entry Into the Workforce

Hispanic youth enter the workforce full time at an earlier age than their non-Hispanic peers to help with the financial stability of their family. For many, this is the end of their formal education, which is disconcerting given that the link between education and success factors such as employment, income, and housing are well documented. Additionally, many foreign-born Hispanics enter the U.S. “choosing” to work instead of going to school.²⁶ These youth must maneuver in their

More Hispanics students are leaving high school than any other group and they are more likely to drop out for employment and family reasons than students of other racial groups.

24 and under are living in poverty.²⁴ Further, program administrators must be sensitive to the fact that many parents face the same education and training hurdles that their programs are intending to remedy for the coming generation. Additionally, many disadvantaged Hispanic youth face choosing between obligations to their family and dreams of their future. Though Hispanic youth come from diverse cultural backgrounds, the end result for many is the same:

Hispanic youth are ill-prepared to enter the competitive, demand-driven workplace.

How to address many of these challenges is the subject of debate in both research and policy. However, as part of the largest ethnic minority, Hispanic youth clearly are the most underserved and disadvantaged segment of the U.S. population.

English Proficiency

English language proficiency is related to positive U.S. school experience.²⁵ While nearly all native Hispanics speak English, most foreign-born, unless educated in the United States since kindergarten, are less skilled in the English language and require additional education. Nearly 80 percent of Hispanic immigrant youth aged 16-19 never enroll in U.S. schools and do not

new world with significant language and cultural barriers and in many cases with little formal education.

High Rate of High School Dropout

Many Hispanic students face difficulties succeeding in school. The individual factors that lead to high dropout rates for Hispanic youth are similar to those of other groups:

- Low achievement
- Dissatisfaction
- Early entry into the workforce
- Teen pregnancy (for girls).

In addition, Hispanics as a group face systemic problems that place them at greater risk for dropping out:

- High rate of poverty
- Language barriers
- Immigration difficulties
- Institutional barriers (i.e., factors located within the environment itself)

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Students who fail to graduate high school adequately prepared to enter the competitive labor market or continue their education are much less likely to gain full access to our country's economic, political, and social opportunities. More Hispanic students are leaving high school than any other group and they are more likely to drop out for employment and family reasons than students of other racial groups. (See Figure 4.)²⁷ The needs of many Hispanic youth are unmet. The high school dropout rate for Hispanics is as high as nearly 60 percent in some states.²⁸ The result remains: fewer Hispanic students have the skill and education they need to enter the workforce and compete successfully in a demand-driven market.

education it is appropriate to step back. Schools often misinterpret this as a disengaged or absent family. In fact, education is highly valued among the majority of Hispanics across the United States.²⁹

Programs should seek ways to communicate across cultures and build on the strengths and assets of those they are trying to help. For Hispanic students, cultural strengths include the family, placing value on education, a strong work ethic, and determination.

Strength of Family

Family and parenting play a large role in Hispanic youths' adjustment to academic and social settings.

Hispanic culture brings positive attributes that many programs fail to recognize.

OVERLOOKED ADVANTAGES

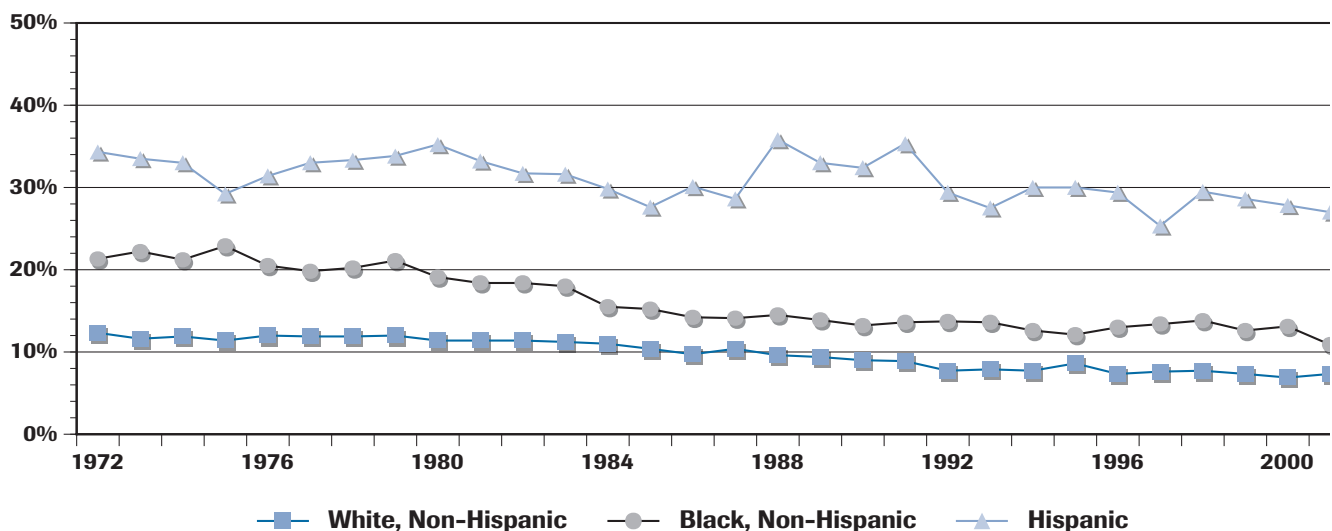
Hispanic culture brings positive attributes that many programs fail to recognize. This failure may be due in part to a cultural miscommunication. For example, Hispanic families differ from other cultures in their engagement with schools. Families often defer to schools as the experts and do not want to "interfere," believing that as a supporter of their child's

Studies show that Hispanic families with stronger internal bonds or protective factors (e.g., respect, pride, cohesion, parental support) were less likely to see youth involved in high-risk behaviors.³⁰

Value on Education

Engaging parents in the education process works to the advantage of Hispanic youth. Many families

Figure 4. Percent of 16 to 24-year-olds who were high school dropouts, by race/ethnicity: 1972-2000



Source: Dropout Rates in the U.S., 2002. U.S. Department of Education.

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IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Academic success is one of the most important outcomes for youth. Identifying positive aspects of Hispanic student experiences and activities provides Job Corps with an opportunity to address unmet needs. A study of the Latino experiences in Oregon schools showed that institutional barriers (e.g., discriminatory experiences, school satisfaction, and unwelcoming experiences) significantly predicted lower student grade point average and consequently greater likelihood of dropping out of school. Positive academic encouragement at school outside of the classroom and parental encouragement at home as well as frequency of completed work assignments are significant predictors of success for Hispanic youth. The Oregon study underscores the importance of the family-school relationship to the success of Hispanic youth. - Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004.

emphasize strong support for education, and students benefit when schools establish relationships with families based on trust and mutual respect.³¹

- The majority of Hispanics value education and feel positive about their youths' school environment.
- Parental experiences are positive in the majority of cases, with 80 percent experiencing positive teacher interaction and more than half (53

youth are employed compared to just over one third of their U.S.-born peers.

- Immigrant youth (age 16-19) work on average 38 hours per week compared to an average 25 hours per week for white youth.

Determination to Succeed

The difficulties encountered by many minority families can result in the formation of many positive characteristics that are to be applauded and, hopefully, channeled into positive actions.

- In fact, "the struggles and hardships of migrant families give children strengths such as perseverance, focus, motivation, discipline, attention to detail, teamwork, resiliency, initiative, priority-setting skills, resourcefulness, and bilingual/bicultural abilities."³³

In the face of difficult circumstances, parents and family play a particularly important role in protecting Hispanic youth from negative experiences. Academic encouragement, school support and the ability to discuss difficult life issues with family members leads to better outcomes for Hispanic youth. To enhance families' abilities to promote the success of their children, Job Corps must develop strategies that focus on the

Improving long-term outcomes for Hispanic youth requires that Job Corps identify meaningful methods to recruit and engage youth and their families in education, training, and center life.

percent) having a positive interaction with school administrators.

- Nearly two thirds of Latino parents help students with homework and almost half meet with their children's teacher.

Strong Work Ethic

- Hispanic youth, particularly immigrant youth, tend to be the most successful youth in the U.S. labor market.³² While these youth face language barriers and other obstacles, such as losing the opportunity for an education, their success reflects Hispanics' strong orientation to work and sense of responsibility. About half of all immigrant

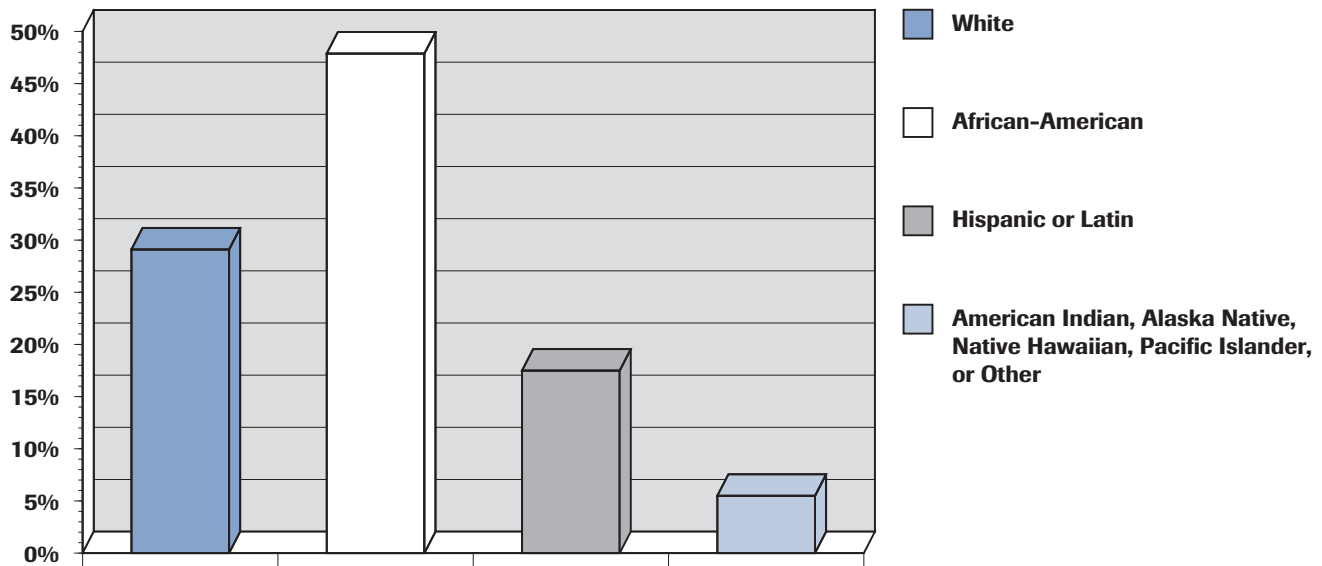
particular strengths of Hispanic culture as well as the challenges faced by Hispanics in the United States.

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF HISPANIC YOUTH

To continue as a leader in the education and training of disadvantaged youth, Job Corps must begin to raise its awareness of the Hispanic culture and understand how its similarities to American culture and its uniqueness influence the daily lives of Hispanic youth. The number of the Hispanics living in poverty in the United States increased from 8.6 million in 2002 to 9.1 million in 2003. This growing disadvantaged segment of the U. S. population faces multiple barriers

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Figure 5. Job Corps Students by Race & Ethnicity, 2003



Source: Job Corps Data Center, 2005.

to service. Improving outcomes for these youth requires that Job Corps identify meaningful methods to recruit and engage youth in education, training, and center life.

Every year Job Corps serves almost 70,000 students in need of a better way of life. (See Figure 5) Today an estimated 27.4 percent of Hispanic youth age 24 and under are living in poverty. Job Corps' success in improving outcomes for Hispanic youth depends on its ability to put formal structures and policies in place to support its mission of helping this underserved segment of the U.S. population. Successful programs like Job Corps help youth invest in themselves, the program, and their future. As one student stated in a recent focus group,

"Prior to Job Corps, I had given up on my dreams."

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE RECRUITMENT

The recruitment of Hispanic youth into Job Corps programs is increasingly important considering the high rate of Hispanic youth leaving school and Hispanic young adults immigrating with little education and skill. To meet adjusted recruiting goals and raise the percentage of disadvantaged Hispanic youth in the program, Job Corps must hire recruiters that understand the cultural environment of Hispanic youth.

Hispanic communities have a developed and elaborately interconnected system of family, social, and faith-based networks that can work to either help or hinder a youth's success. This interdependent system influences whether a student chooses to enter and remain at a Job Corps center. Recruiters must understand this system and readily maneuver within it to work for the success of both the youth and their family. Full support from established networks and newly developed linkages in the youth environment and community are critical to their success. In short, Job Corps should employ a number of strategies to help ensure more Hispanic students enter its programs:

- Build Linkages Within the Hispanic Community to Demonstrate Job Corps Commitment to Serving Hispanic Youth
 - Locate offices within or near locations where there is a predominant Hispanic presence to facilitate partnerships with Hispanic organizations to improve recruitment and ultimately job placement of students.
 - Identify and meet with local Hispanic community leaders.
 - Ask parents and community members their preferred language for communicating.

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MARKET JOB CORPS

In a recent visit to the Gary Job Corps Center students were asked about their recruitment into the program. Hispanic students gave the following responses when asked how they learned about Job Corps:

"I would stay up all night waiting for the Job Corps commercial just so I could write down the number."

"I would ask my mom to watch for the commercial so I could get the phone number and call."

"After seeing the commercial, I just could not believe it."

Job Corps can improve recruitment of Hispanic youth.

- Deliver a consistent message that speaks to their situation utilizing factors that motivate and influence (i.e., family, church, friends, Latino role models).
- Customize advertisements to talk to the culture and values of the people.
- Invest in advertising wisely and leverage resources to your advantage. Prioritize geographical markets for maximum and most effective reach for the fewest dollars.
- Entice networks to run public service advertisements at the right time and frequently. Drive-by advertising does not work.

—Lionel Sosa, 2005.

- Provide outreach and admissions materials and center information materials in Spanish for those who indicate a preference.
- Before students commit to Job Corps, provide clear and honest information about what life will be like at a Job Corps center, including student, staff, and center expectations, to both the student applicant and their family.

• Create Parent and School Communities

- Parents are strong advocates for students. Parents need to know who to contact (e.g., case manager, counselor) and how to navigate the Job Corps system.
- Engage parents and families in a discussion up front regarding needs, wants, expectations, and goals, including job placement and the implications for relocating the student outside the immediate family area.
- It is important that parents/family understand how the system works, what is offered, what is expected, and where to go when there is an issue that needs attention.
- Hire outreach and admissions staff from the local community.
- Create a how-to guide for parents with tips and information that makes it easier for them to understand Job Corps program offerings, services, and youth responsibilities.
- Foster relationships with families and the local and professional communities to promote student learning.
- Create a learning community and become an active participant in providing classes for residents or support services for families.
- Involve families in center activities, fund raising, center-based events, and community organizations.

• Promote Diversity Within the Center and the Community It Serves

Students develop stronger attachment to institutions and adjust better to a learning environment when they believe their family supports the decision; this is particularly true for Hispanic minorities.

- Hold informal meetings with parents and community group representatives (e.g., Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Council of La Raza, local Hispanic community advocacy groups).
- Invite parents to Job Corps centers to view programs and services firsthand.
- Ensure Hispanic community leaders and business leaders serve on Community Relations, Industry Advisory Councils, and center committees.
- Participate in Hispanic community events by hosting workshops and information and recruitment booths.

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- Hire and promote Hispanic staff to provide cultural and linguistic role models for youth.
- Celebrate important cultural events and occasions at the center and invite parents and community groups.
- Serve foods that are familiar to students.
- Extend the Center to the Community
 - Partner with community programs, service organizations, and local college and
- Administrators and educators must remain accessible to families and work to build and maintain relationships with open and continued communication.
- Provide parent(s) and families with a central point of contact for all purposes and needs regarding the student.
- Ask parents their preferred language and communicate in parents' preferred language when possible.

Identifying positive aspects of Hispanic student experiences and activities provides Job Corps with an opportunity to address unmet needs.

universities to build systems of support for students and their families, and expand the program services (e.g., interns, resident training, community advocates).

- Build a service bridge to alleviate students from any familial social strain. Connect families to service providers in their communities.
- Identify and establish community service partners to expand services for Job Corps students and their families.
- Recruit in service industry areas (e.g., restaurants, markets, churches, laundromats) making repeated visits using seasoned recruiters that are flexible, independent, and believe in the program.
- Connect parents with community-based English-as-a-Second-Language and adult basic education resources, community colleges, and work-based training opportunities.
- Increase Communication with Parents
 - Foster a parental partnership by maintaining an open dialogue with parents and families about student progress.
 - Invite parents to attend pre-orientation activities and, when possible, have the parent(s) bring the student to the Job Corps center at the time of admittance.

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE RETENTION

To retain Hispanic youth in its programs, Job Corps must create a culture of trust in establishing relationships with Hispanic youth and their families. It is important that students and their families understand Job Corps program requirements, expectations, and center life before students enter the program. If students' expectations are not met and issues cannot be resolved, the students often leave.

Students develop stronger attachment to institutions and adjust better to a learning environment when they believe their family supports the decision; this is particularly true for Hispanic minorities.³⁴ Friends, teachers, and institutional support are also important, and when combined with family support, their strength is cumulative in predicting Hispanic youths' emotional and academic adjustment.³⁵ Job Corps can increase the likelihood that students will remain in its program by using some important strategies:

- Create an Inclusive and Supportive Environment
 - Provide staff professional development in areas of instructional strategies, inclusive teaching and behavior management to maintain currency in their field, and use methods and materials conducive to students' learning in diverse environments.
 - Provide teaching staff a collaborative environment that encourages teamwork among

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teachers and sharing of information and strategies by setting aside a common preparation time.

- Incorporate technology as a tool for assisting students needing instruction in the English language (English Language Learners) and ensuring staff have the necessary skills and training to work with ELL students.
- Identify resources that are effective in classroom management.
- Provide students with a mechanism for peer and faculty support from all levels of the center.
- Increase the number of Hispanic staff at all levels of the program and students on campus.
- Hire bilingual staff.
- Provide students with practical and symbolic messages that they are valued by celebrating their cultural heritage.
- Increase communication opportunities for English learners with bilingual student mentor programs.

- Organize Student Government Association work groups (e.g., tutoring, peer support, peer mentors) to promote student learning, development, and support.³⁷

- Build a Future

- Assess student language proficiency and direct resources for simultaneous language acquisition and academic and career development.
- Provide resources to address the students' need for language acquisition to reach proficiency.
- Spend time with students discussing labor market data, job opportunities, and benefits of education.
- Organize groups and clubs for students to explore similar interests (e.g., games, athletics, books).
- Work with students on developing their Personal Career Development Plan (PCDP) that include short- and long-term student personal, education, and career goals, and revisit and discuss the status of their plan frequently.

Given these rapidly changing demographics and workforce projections, Job Corps must increase the number of well-prepared Hispanic students entering the labor market.

- Build Effective Leadership

- Policy and practice must support a unified vision of success for all students.
- Determine priorities based on what is best for student learning.
- Support the development of staff expertise particularly in language acquisition.³⁶
- Establish clear expectations for students and staff.
- Post expectations in English as well as Spanish.

- Field staff and career transition specialists reach out to employers who value and compensate bicultural and bilingual employees.
- Centers bring in professional Hispanic executives to speak and facilitate workgroups.
- Make connections with Hispanic Chambers of Commerce.
- Identify paths to long-term goals and opportunities for achieving goals.

- Build Awareness

- Hire Hispanic residential staff.

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- Provide diversity training for staff.
- Respect personal space and belongings.
- Engage students in positive and supportive communication and activities outside of the classroom environment, including off-center trips.
- Spend extra time with new students or those who are spending an unusual amount of time alone.
- Support extra career exploration by making resources like labor market data, information about careers and jobs, and higher education opportunities available in the dormitories.
- Celebrate and recognize important cultural events and holidays by working the event into the curricula, daily announcement, or menu.
- Create a Home Away from Home³⁸
 - Create a safe and welcoming “sanctuary” within the dormitory setting. Pay special attention to new or quiet students. Help struggling students connect to others students on campus.

completing the program and making progress toward achieving long-term goals. For Hispanic youth, family support is important. Job Corps center environment and services are rigid and unfamiliar for the students. Students will thrive in an environment they feel is more comfortable, reflecting equity, tolerance, and respect for multiculturalism.

IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR HISPANIC YOUTH

Job Corps can meet the needs of Hispanic students by raising standards, increasing communication, and understanding that Hispanic families in addition to the students are impacted by the Job Corps program. Today’s demand-driven labor market requires a higher level of education and training than ever before. Further, Job Corps center graduates are placed in available positions that may or may not be close to family members. Student graduates in low-paying positions who live away from family are less likely to stay at that position. Increasing student education and skills improves students’ chances for higher paying jobs.

Family and parents play an important role in protecting Hispanic youth. Studies of successful Hispanic youth show that parents and families act as advocates and work with teachers to ensure the necessary services are provided to their child.³⁹ Students indicate

Believing that poor academic performance is inevitable among hispanic youth belies recent data from high-performing schools that tells otherwise.

- Allow students to humanize the dormitories by giving them the freedom to express who they are and where they are from by personalizing their room with decoration. Students can maintain clean and orderly rooms and reflect individual expression simultaneously.
- Train Hispanic students to serve as role models and mentors for entering students.

Improving the retention of Hispanic youth requires that Job Corps identify ways to ensure students are active and contributing members of the Job Corps community. Further, education and training experiences must be relevant and meaningful. Students’ investment in education and training is critical to

that their family’s determination is a strong motivator for them to work to have a better life than their parents. These factors merit consideration in assessing programs and initiatives in Job Corps if improvements in Hispanic students’ long-term attachment to the workforce are to be realized.

Encouragement and support of both parents and center staff, outside the regular classroom setting, are important factors in promoting academic success for Hispanic youth.⁴⁰ Job Corps’ ability to address significant and relevant cultural and family factors influences Hispanic youths’ decisions about entering and remaining at the center, employment, and ultimately their success.

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No More Excuses—Academic Achievement Must Go Up!

Believing that poor academic performance is inevitable among Hispanic youth belies recent data from high-performing schools that tell otherwise. Though student performance is affected by family background, the academic environment is the critical arena for promoting academic success. Positive academic environments make a difference by creating a high-performance learning culture that enables all students to connect in significant ways to adults.⁴¹

- Build a Challenging and Cohesive Environment
 - Create a strong community environment where administrators, counselors, teachers, and students create a family-like environment within the institutional setting.
 - Students should have an adult committed to nurturing a personal sense of self-worth and invested in the student's effort to succeed.
 - Smaller learning communities in which students are grouped together with the same

Job Corps' ability to address significant cultural and familial factors influences Hispanic youths' decisions about entering, remaining, and succeeding in Job Corps and after.

A review of schools and programs across the nation enrolling large numbers of Hispanic students reveals that exemplary programs share characteristics related to leadership, instruction, standards for achievement, and environment.⁴² Previous Job Corps assessments conducted in order to better understand gaps in service for Hispanic youth support these findings.⁴³

Job Corps can effectively serve Hispanic youth and work to move youth up the skill ladder toward individual economic success. Job Corps' ability to respond to Hispanic youth and help them acquire and use new knowledge will depend on integrating appropriate strategies to increase their expectations and improve outcomes, particularly in long-term attachment to the workforce.

Every child has the capacity to succeed and yet far too many are not meeting their potential. Inequalities in income, school resources, quality of programs, and quality of teachers have all been cited as the cause. Research shows that when programs and policy emphasize higher standards of achievement and provide quality support, minority youth do rise to meet the challenge.⁴⁴

Gains in literacy and numeracy are infinite scales of learning potential; unfortunately Job Corps too often caps academic expectations at a point deemed "good enough." Succeeding in today's workforce requires more than Job Corps currently expects of its students in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Job Corps must expect more from its students and provide them with the tools to succeed.

teacher team allow intimate, personal, and significant relationships to develop that are important to youth success.

- The school community must have shared priorities and invest in the success of all its students.
- Instructors must be knowledgeable about the students' backgrounds and circumstances.
- High expectations are key to motivating students to excel.
- Deliver Effective Instruction
 - Trigger learning by tapping into student strengths and interests. Instructors should be familiar with the lives of the students they teach—their words, culture, and backgrounds—to make content relevant to their daily life.
 - Provide students with high quality, relevant, and interesting curricula.
 - Use curricula, instruction, and assessments that are standards-based and employ instructional approaches and methods that reflect the needs of the students and view their culture as a resource.
 - Require instructor qualifications to include endorsements or certifications in the subject matter of instruction.

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- Train all instructors in instructional strategies.
- Compensate instructors for more challenging assignments.
- Provide students with the resources they need to succeed, such as bilingual materials to advance both the cognitive and academic development of English-language learners.
- Establish High Expectations for Students
 - Instructional material and content should challenge all students to maximize their potential.
 - Set real-life goals and coach students toward taking steps to reach those goals and achieve success.
 - Provide students with guidance and career awareness to help them set high aspirations and work to meet their goals.
 - Recruit parents and extended family members to work as partners with administrators and programs to increase understanding about student expectations and opportunities for success.

Many of the principles common to high-performing schools and institutions serving large populations of Hispanic youth provide valuable insight for service delivery approaches in Job Corps. They incorporate elements relevant to the recruitment, retention, improvement of academic and vocational training, and job placement of youth. Further, open communication with family members is key to student success—needs, wants, expectations, and goals clearly articulated by students, families and instructors. The lessons learned through research provide Job Corps with the ability to implement strategies to effect positive change.

IMPROVING PLACEMENT AND LONG-TERM JOB RETENTION

Hispanic students, similar to other students, frequently return to the geographic locations where they were living prior to entering Job Corps. For many Hispanic Job Corps students (34%) that come from small communities with fewer than 50,000 people, long-term career opportunities do not exist. Additionally, the immediate short-term needs for family support tend to be more prominent in the lives of these students. The peers of these graduates are engaged in various occupational pursuits which generally are low

wage and require limited skills. Student ability to adequately care for family members, depends on their ability to get a better paying job, which has a long-term career potential.

Improving Hispanic students' long-term workforce attachment requires that Job Corps assess its current strategy for placing students in training programs as well as jobs to incorporate the needs and values of the Hispanic youth and their families. Long-term outcomes improve when students and families are engaged up front in an active dialogue. Identifying needs and wants, establishing goals, and clarifying expectations of both the students and family can result in more appropriate training and job placement for the student.

Relationships with staff are vital to the success of the Hispanic student. Staff that understand the culture and can communicate effectively are in a better position to develop a connection with the family and student. Increasing understanding between parents, grandparents and staff is conducive to establishing the trust staff need to have with the family to be able to assist families in tapping into an array of services in support of the family. Assisting students in understanding that they can best support the family through long-term job retention and increasing their knowledge and skill to access services that are available for care giving, translation, and/or transportation will help the student feel more comfortable pursuing employment.

For many Hispanic students, meeting familial obligations is a primary duty, which can conflict with getting and holding a high wage job. The culture, family, and language issues compound the normal obstacles to long-term attachment to the workforce for Hispanic youth. For many, there is no choice.

- Increase awareness of students' potential for career and life course opportunity.
 - Send critical information to Hispanic students and family members prior to the student leaving home.
 - Visit students in their homes prior to entering Job Corps. Admissions Counselors have an opportunity to address student and family concerns in an environment that is more conducive to open communication. Addressing concerns that families or students may have regarding the program will reduce some of the stress of leaving home for both the family and the student.
 - Discuss, plan and prepare students and families for the possibility of relocating for employment

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where a support network/system has been developed for the student.

- Identify and connect students with mentors in employment, career or industry to provide students with additional guidance and career support.
- Build student competency by providing students with opportunities to practice meeting and interacting with individuals (i.e., adults and peers) from new residential and workplace environments as well as supportive community groups. Trips to prospective job locations (using Present for Duty Off Center [PDOF]) enable the student to connect with a mentor in a new location, or link with a community and/or professional associations which can assist in the transition and support the student in the manner necessary to sustain long-term placement.
- Teach students the importance of support networks and the skill to develop support networks which is vital to their long-term success. These skills need to be included throughout the students stay with Job Corps. In addition, expand potential job sites to include locations where students have other relatives.
- Expand the focus on job placement during the Career Preparation Period.
 - Connect counselors with students early and often to develop student decision making skills to improve students' skill in balancing work/life decisions. Programs such as Sean Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* provide students with success skills.
 - Teach students how to develop and use networks of individuals who can help them upon graduation, including staff, alumni association members and other students at the center.
 - Explore options for training and job placement near a supportive family situation when creating a personal career development plan.
 - Determine if any of the students' family or extended family have ties to potential employers.
- Increase students' options for viable choices.
 - Arrange job recruitment and placement fairs that include employers from the student's home and regional areas.
- Connect families to community service groups to alleviate the stress placed on the family when the student enters the program and continues into the workforce. Provide students with information about available resources for translation such as at government, utility, and banking locations.
- Train staff about Hispanic cultural values and how they may affect student choices at critical decision points in the program.
- Focus skill development around a student's needs and priorities and expand strategies that raise academics. Research indicates that use of contextual learning experiences that integrate academic and technical training positively influences students' capacity to improve their labor market prospects, particularly for high-risk youth.
- Develop work-based learning sites near supportive family environments.
- Work with Hispanic students and their family unit in a 'holistic' manner. Movement by the student to a different location is a 'family' issue.
- Provide mentors from business/employer, church and community groups that will work with students to provide guidance and support.
- Identify alternative work opportunities for students that require flexibility. Explore with the family and employers the option of flexible work hours as an alternative. In the event that family needs supersede the need for the student to remain employed, flexible or alternative work opportunities provide students an option to arrange a schedule to continue working.
- Create workforce partnerships with Hispanic organizations and individuals.
 - Build partnerships with national and local Hispanic organizations like The ASPIRA Association, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), National Council of La Raza (NCLR), and SER—Jobs for Progress National and The Home Depot which is linking qualified candidates with open positions in The Home Depot stores.⁴⁵

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- Train Career Transition Staff (CTS) to market and promote Job Corps students with local Hispanic organizations as well as identify companies that promote a diverse workforce within their organization.⁴⁶ Establish relationships that can result in mentors, training opportunities, and long-term growth careers for students.
- Maximize students' opportunities for successful placement by CTS staff cultivating employer relationships and working in advance to develop jobs for students. A person-to-person referral ahead of time will help channel the student into places where they can link with other Hispanics in the workforce and where companies are looking for more employees.
- Participate (staff and students) in local Hispanic organizations conferences at colleges and universities. Facilitate networking and development of mentors for students as well as connecting students with higher education.
- Work with organizations such as the local WIA and Workforce Boards, as well as organizations with TANF funding where grants or funding streams specify targeted populations can be useful in locating support for students to find additional resources.

Hispanics are in demand in the business world. They represent a large and expanding portion of the buying public. However, those who are most in demand are those with career and technical credentials. It is imperative that Hispanic youth achieve higher academic and training outcomes as well as remain fully engaged in the labor force if their economic success is to be realized.

CONCLUSION

Over the years Job Corps has been highly effective in serving the disadvantaged and minority students for whom it was designed. Its success is due in large part to its unique ability to respond to the changing employment expectations of the American labor market and to changes in the demographics of those students it serves. Now Job Corps faces the challenge of the rapid growth of the Hispanic population and its emergence as America's largest minority group. Job Corps will, as it has so successfully done in the past, have to continually realign its policies, procedures, and programs with the unique needs of this growing population.

The growing Hispanic population tends to be younger, more economically challenged, have less educational preparation, and face substantial language and cultural barriers. Job Corps will need to increase the percentage of Hispanic students in its program and ensure the same high level of outcomes that have characterized its success over the years. Accordingly, for Hispanic students it will be pressed to focus time and resources on increasing 1) recruitment, 2) retention, 3) unique cultural, educational, and training program options, and 4) effective education and employment outcomes.

On the positive side, the Hispanic community has a strong attachment to family, places high value on education, and is overwhelmingly positive about the opportunity for advancement. Further, many education and training institutions have very effective programs demonstrating positive outcomes with these students. Like Job Corps, successful programs are those that place the highest priority on student achievement.

Every education and training institution in America faces the challenges and opportunities outlined in this paper. A growing Hispanic population with very specific needs is up against increasing labor market demands for employees with high skills. While this presents very significant challenges, Job Corps has the historical success and cultural commitment to make the most of this opportunity.

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