

Investing in Latino Talent

LEADING THE ADVANCEMENT OF OUR WORKFORCE

The Latino population growth will have a lasting impact on the national, state, and local economy. Between 2008 and 2018, Latinos accounted for 52% of all national population growth. However, the growth in the population alone doesn't guarantee readiness to step into the rapid and aggressively changing knowledge-based economy. This growth calls for an in-depth understanding of best practices to upskill and advance Latinxs in the workplace.

The Latino Professionals Association of Greater Madison (LPA) has conducted qualitative and quantitative research to collect opinions, gather information concerning workplace and community perspectives related to the Latino community, and consider recommendations on how to advance equity and diversity throughout the region.

In the spring of 2018, LPA hosted a "State of Latino Leadership" focus group session. Observations and recommendations were collected during in-depth discussions. The LPA then conducted an electronic survey of the Latinx community in which **153 participants** responded. After the survey two additional focus group sessions were held to understand the perspective of Latinx professionals in the Greater Madison Area.

The majority of survey respondents indicated they have lived in the Madison area for more than 10 years (61 %). They live throughout Dane county and work in a wide variety of industries. Approximately 51% describe their role at their current employer as an experienced employee or first-level leader while a smaller number (31%) describe their role as unit leader, supervisor, manager or executive. The majority of survey participants (82%) reported they are somewhat satisfied or extremely satisfied in their current employment position.

The assessment paints a picture of a Latinx population positioned for professional growth with thoughtful investment in (1) opening access to career advancement, (2) increasing pathways for professional education, (3) establishing retention strategies rooted in appreciation for diverse perspectives, and (4) aligning human resources policies and practices.

To request a presentation about the assessment, the results, and next steps contact Tania Ibarra, CPA at tania@raicesconsulting.com. Tania is LPA's Co-Founder, Past-President, and Finance Committee Chair.



Key Themes and Findings

1. BARRIERS FREE ACCESS TO CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Focus group participants indicated that too often Latinx workers are hired as part of attempts at diversity but face barriers to advancement beyond the entry level. They say that many employers don't recognize that Latinx workers are actually highly qualified and skilled and can be valuable members of management teams.

- Less than half of participants strongly agree that people have equal chances to advance their careers into supervisory and executive roles regardless of race, ethnicity, color, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or socio-economics (47 %).
- Less than half of participants participate in cultural relevant career development opportunities (47 %).

2. PROFESSIONAL TALENT PIPELINES

Latinxs face significant access barriers to higher education. Nationally, Latinxs are increasingly enrolled in technical colleges, and remain significantly underrepresented in 4-year universities. A quarter of Latinxs in Dane County attained a Bachelor's Degree. Our survey highlights that education is an important aspect of economic mobility. 39% of our participants reported salaries of \$60,000 or higher. Of our participants, only those with bachelor's and advanced degrees reported income above \$100,000.

- Half of participants have bachelors degrees (51 %),
- More than half of professionals with bachelors degrees are first-generation college graduates and first-generation professionals. As first-generation professionals they do not have the organic networks necessary for long-term career growth and recognize the enormous benefits of meaningful mentorships.

3. RETENTION CHALLENGES

Most Latinxs consider themselves to be outliers and indicated that they are primarily recognized as a member of a minority. Most believe the overall community climate for minorities has been improving but remains significantly short of completely embracing diversity or providing an equitable quality of life.

- Less than half of the participants strongly agree that they can bring their full selves to work, feel welcomed, respected, valued and included (47 %).
- Less than half of participants strongly agree that their colleagues and leaders demonstrate a commitment to creating an environment where all employees feel welcomed, valued, and respected (47 %).
- Less than half of participants strongly agree that The Greater Madison Area is a great place to work. (47 %).

4. HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND PRACTICE ALIGNMENT

Latinos frequently feel that community and employer attempts at diversity and equity feel like 'checking a box' rather than an intentional, heart-felt effort. Participants also observed that attempts at diversity and equity are often relegated to the lower employment levels and don't expand to managerial levels. Less than half of respondents state their workplaces provide concrete actions to practice equity such as:

- development opportunities for diverse employees (45 %),
- demonstrate fairness in performance and compensation decisions (39 %),
- provide diversity, inclusion and equity training to managers and employees (45 %).

47%

strongly agree to have sufficient support and resources to develop their skills and progress in my career, including educational advancement opportunities.

50%

Are first generation graduates.

47%

Strongly agree that they can bring their full selves to work and feel welcomed, respected and valued.