

***U.S. Business and Hispanic Integration:  
Expanding the Economic Contributions  
of Immigrants***

**A PRODUCT OF THE AMERICAS SOCIETY  
AND COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAS  
SUPPORTED BY THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION**

## **AMERICAS SOCIETY AND COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAS**

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The Americas Society (AS) is the premier forum dedicated to education, debate and dialogue in the Americas. Its mission is to foster an understanding of the contemporary political, social and economic issues confronting Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada, and to increase public awareness and appreciation of the diverse cultural heritage of the Americas and the importance of the inter-American relationship.<sup>1</sup>

The Council of the Americas (COA) is the premier international business organization whose members share a common commitment to economic and social development, open markets, the rule of law, and democracy throughout the Western Hemisphere. The Council's membership consists of leading international companies representing a broad spectrum of sectors including banking and finance, consulting services, consumer products, energy and mining, manufacturing, media, technology, and transportation.<sup>2</sup>

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## FOREWORD

Working on the integration of Hispanic immigrants in the United States is a bit of a departure from the traditional work of the Americas Society and Council of the Americas (AS/COA). In our mission to promote understanding and cooperation in the hemisphere, in the past we have tended to focus beyond the U.S. borders, on Canada and Latin America. But today there is no issue that will affect inter-American relations more than immigration and the integration of Hispanic immigrants in the United States. How immigrants are welcomed and treated, the enforcement of immigration laws and the integration of current and future generations of Hispanic immigrants will shape not only the economic future of the U.S. and domestic politics, they will also play a determining role in our relations with our neighbors and our mutual understanding and integration as trade partners.

For this reason, with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Americas Society and Council of the Americas brought together U.S. private sector leaders to build support for the expansion of workforce and community integration programs and promote overall Hispanic integration. In doing so, we also hope to recast the discussion away from the polarized debate over immigration and immigration reform. Today, there is no denying the importance of economically, socially and even culturally integrating the documented Hispanic-American immigrants living and working in our borders. Their economic opportunity and our country's ability to absorb and adapt to the economic and social pressures of globalization depend upon their learning English, gaining the skills and education to realize the American dream and becoming economic citizens.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This white paper and our on-going work would not have been possible without a number of institutions and people. First among these is the Rockefeller Foundation which provided the seed grant to establish the National Business Council and convene site meetings in New York, Atlanta and New Orleans. Without their interest and initial vision—particularly that of Marta Tienda of Princeton University—the AS/COA would not have been able to launch this initiative. Within the AS/COA, Susan Segal, the President and CEO, provided support and enthusiasm for its goals, and Eric Farnsworth, the COA Vice President, worked to link the project to Washington realities.

The AS/COA team that managed the project was led by Christopher Sabatini, the Senior Director of Policy and Jason Marczak, the Director of Policy. It also included: Danielle Renwick, Policy Associate; Nicole Spencer, Director of Energy Policy and North American Affairs; and Evianna Cruz and Kjirsten Alexander, policy interns. Alexandra Delano, the researcher and scholar for the project, conducted the background research, the local case studies, and the business case studies and wrote the first draft of this white paper and the individual background documents presented in New York, Atlanta and New Orleans. Michele Manatt, our Washington-based senior consultant, provided support in reaching out to businesses and organizations. Donald Partyka designed the cover and executive summary.

Our success in convening local business leaders, community organizations and public sector officials is due in part to the invaluable assistance and collaboration of our local partners. In Atlanta, the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Sandra Font, then-Interim President, devoted countless hours to putting us in touch with key leaders in the metropolitan area. The same is true for the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana and Darlene Kattan, the Executive Director. The World Trade Center of New Orleans and Gene Schreiber, the Managing Director, have worked with us throughout the project and opened the doors of this resurging city.

Members of the National Business Council (listed on the back cover) and Advisory Board and prominent public sector speakers have helped to steer this initiative. Among the Advisory Board members, Peter Johnson, Jorge Pinto and Gerry Fernandez provided critical, nuanced perspectives on patterns of integration and key issues to consider. As well, Andy Lorenzen of Chick-fil-A, Inc. shared lessons learned on workforce development practices. Commissioner Guillermo Linares of the New York City Office of Immigrant Affairs offered key insight from his experience and traveled with us to New Orleans to dialogue with officials there. Other prominent speakers at our roundtable meetings included: Mexican Ambassador to the United States Arturo Sarukhan; New York Secretary of State Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez; Georgia Department of Labor Commissioner Michael Thurmond; New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin; and Louisiana Economic Development Department Assistant Secretary Don Pierson.

Last, at various points in the process, we benefited from the advice and comments of a number of experts and scholars in the field. While not a comprehensive list, among them were: Richard Alba, Ana Avendaño, Katharine

Donato, Ludovico Feoli, Elizabeth Fussell, Jennifer Gordon, Jeffrey Humphreys, Elaine Lacy, Helen Marrow, Mary Odem, Cristina Rodriguez, Audrey Singer, and Robert C. Smith. Any errors in this white paper are the responsibility of the project leaders.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As of mid-2007, an estimated 45.5 million Hispanics live in the United States, approximately 15 percent of the total population. Hispanics are the fastest growing minority group in the nation and the largest one in 22 of the 50 states. Their collective purchasing power surpassed \$800 billion in 2007 and the nearly 2.2 million Hispanic-owned businesses are expected to generate an estimated \$388.7 billion in revenues in 2008. But many Hispanic immigrants face obstacles such as limited English proficiency, modest financial literacy and a lack of cultural familiarity that create impediments to their advancement in the workplace and in their communities. The findings shared in this white paper document private sector best practices in workforce and community integration and serve as an opportunity to build support for their expansion.

Achieving greater integration of Hispanics into the fabric of American society is a public policy imperative with obvious benefits for the corporate bottom line. For employers, more effective integration increases worker loyalty, reduces employee turnover and absenteeism and boosts worker productivity and motivation, thereby increasing businesses' efficiency and competitiveness. Other benefits of a more integrated Hispanic population include strengthened social capital, greater opportunities for upward mobility, and increased income and purchasing power that is injected back into the economy. A better-integrated Hispanic population would facilitate greater multicultural communication and civic engagement and reduce social tensions, as well as minimize some of the costs associated with the arrival of new immigrants. Today, the private sector plays a key role in integrating this country's largest pool of immigrants. In fact, workplace programs provide some of the necessary tools for integration into the wider community.

"When Latinos are given opportunities for employment and advancement, companies benefit from the individuals' strong work ethic and the chance to boost their customer base."

- Patty Smitherman,  
*Atlanta Woman*, May  
2004.

"Through access to credit and financial services, Hispanic businesses grow, the local community grows and the financial market grows. By helping Hispanics develop a credit history we also increase their opportunities to buy homes and live the American Dream."

-Jorge L. Forment, President & CEO,  
United Americas Bank, May 2008.

Funded by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Americas Society and Council of the Americas (AS/COA) Hispanic Integration Initiative is engaging the U.S. and international business communities and mobilizing a new generation of private-sector leaders in support of initiatives that promote the integration of the Hispanic population. Through meetings held in New York, NY, Atlanta, GA, and New Orleans, LA, we have brought nationally and locally-operating businesses together with public sector officials and

community groups to exchange lessons learned and best practices. A National

Business Council—companies at the forefront of integration efforts—anchors and provides guidance to the initiative. Our work has allowed business leaders to assess the feasibility of implementing national-level programs in cities such as Atlanta and New Orleans, while addressing the extent to which local programs can be carried out across the country. This initiative focused on these two new gateway cities due to their unique characteristics. Atlanta’s Hispanic population grew significantly in the mid-1990s due to the demand for labor in preparation for the 1996 Olympic Games while the New Orleans Hispanic population has doubled in the context of reconstruction after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

This white paper documents the many major U.S. corporations that already offer (or sponsor) programs that promote the integration of Hispanic immigrants. Their initiatives include training for **skills development**, **financial literacy** programs, **English language** courses, **scholarships** for higher education, information about access to **health care**, and campaigns for **civic participation**. The Hispanic Integration Initiative analyzed and benchmarked experiences in each of these areas. By showcasing existing best practices and strengthening synergies between the public and private sectors, the AS/COA is promoting the development of initiatives that support the full economic, social and political integration of Hispanics in the United States.

“...good management requires a strategy for dealing with a diverse workforce, including a wide range of ethnic groups and nationalities. Such policies go beyond ensuring that each member of the workforce is treated equally, striving to ensure that every employee has the opportunity to develop professionally in a positive work environment.”

-European Policy Center, “Making migration work: the role of employers in migrant integration,” May 2008.

With limited funding available for federal programs supporting immigrant integration and without a comprehensive strategy to address this issue, public-private initiatives are an economic and social imperative for the future of the country.

- Increasing immigrants’ **access to education, skills development** and improving **English proficiency** strengthens their position in the community and promotes **participation**, diminishing isolation and discrimination. Moreover, it increases opportunities for **upward mobility** in the second and third generations.
- Improving immigrants’ financial literacy opens the door for **access to banking services, credit, mortgages and loans**, which eventually allow for the support of their children’s college education or the ability to make investments or purchase a home—a sign of stability and long-term commitment to both communities and jobs.
- Facilitating **access to health care** increases productivity, encourages preventive care and reduces the high costs associated with emergency room use by the uninsured. At the same time, the country’s overall quality

of health is improved.

- Providing information about **naturalization** and **civic participation** can encourage political participation, promote civic values and reinforce immigrants' desire and commitment to become English-language proficient and root themselves in the fabric of communities.

## **BUSINESS BEST PRACTICES**

The *AS/COA Hispanic Integration Initiative* has identified examples of corporations in key sectors of the U.S. economy that promote the integration of Hispanic immigrants. Best practices are catalogued by type of activity:

- Companies such as **Miller & Long Concrete Construction, Norsan Group, Tecta America Corporation, Sodexo, Inc., American Apparel, and UPS (United Parcel Service of America, Inc.)** offer **English-language classes** as a way to foster a better work environment, reduce social tensions at the workplace and in the community, and enable the company to provide better services while increasing productivity. Others, such as **Capital One** sponsor English language programs offered by community-based organizations in cities with a significant Hispanic population such as New Orleans.

"We believe in the holistic approach to workforce training—not only what construction entails, but also offering programs such English and Spanish language training for more effective communication between Hispanic and non-Hispanic employees and to improve personal management skills."

-Romina Byrd, Director of Education and Training, Miller & Long Concrete Construction, June 2008.

- Major corporations such as **The Coca-Cola Company, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., State Farm Insurance, AT&T Inc., Google, Inc., Marriott, Verizon, Kaiser Permanente, Citigroup, FedEx Corporation, Time Warner, Inc., Bank of America, ExxonMobil, Hewlett Packard Company, The Procter & Gamble Company, Target, and Toyota Motor Sales**, among many others, support scholarship programs for Hispanics as a means to promote upward mobility and provide this population with better opportunities in the future.

"**Georgia Power's** Hispanic initiatives stem from our belief in giving back to the community. We realized early on that the Hispanic population was growing and that we needed to respond—both as a company and as part of the community—in order to help Hispanics integrate."

-Del Clark, Community Development Project Manager, Georgia Power, June 2008.

- **Washington Mutual, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Citizens Home Loan, Inc., Wachovia Corporation, and The Western Union Company** are among many financial institutions working to improve Hispanics' financial literacy. **United Americas Bank** (Atlanta, GA) and **ASI Federal Credit Union** (New Orleans, LA) are examples of local financial institutions that promote these types of initiatives. By facilitating **access to banking services, credit, mortgages and loans**, these companies provide the Hispanic population with increased opportunities for economic and social integration.
- **Skills development** provides Hispanics with increased opportunities to perform well and have access to better jobs and wages. **Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding Gulf Coast Operations, The Western Union Company, Georgia Power, the Hispanic Contractors Association of Georgia, the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (GHCC), the Hispanic Chamber Of Commerce Of Louisiana (HCCL), Harrah's Casino Hotels and Aetna** are among some of the companies and organizations that provide or sponsor programs to offer specialized training and strengthen entrepreneurship among this population.
- Through bilingual health care materials and the sharing of information about health issues among Hispanics, **Ochsner Health Systems** (New Orleans, LA), **Johnson & Johnson** and **Pfizer Inc.** are addressing some of the limitations in **access to health care** resulting from language and cultural barriers.
- **Telemundo, mun2 and Univision** provide information about **citizenship** and voting rights as a way to encourage Hispanics' political participation, promote civic values, and reinforce immigrants' desire and commitment to become English-language proficient and root themselves in the fabric of communities. **Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.** has supported voting rights initiatives and **State Farm Insurance** has sponsored voter registration efforts. Local media such as **Mundo Hispanico** in Georgia, **Radio Tropical, The Times Picayune, Cox Communications** and a local **Telemundo** channel in New Orleans have supported efforts to provide information in Spanish to the Hispanic community about health, employment and other relevant issues.

“...in an increasingly socially-conscious business environment, providing the workforce with support services forms part of a Corporate Social Responsibility agenda. It not only contributes to a more harmonious (and arguably more productive) workplace, but the improved public image of companies which are known to do more for their employees can also be a commercial advantage...”

-European Policy Center, “Making migration work: the role of employers in migrant integration,” May 2008.

## I. INTRODUCTION

As a nation of immigrants, the United States has been defined by the contributions of different ethnic groups to building culturally diverse communities and enriching American society through complementary abilities. The integration of immigrants, defined as their full participation in and commitment to the host society and their exercise of corresponding rights and obligations, can be measured by socioeconomic and political participation, upward mobility and ability to communicate in English. However, integration is not an automatic process; it is developed through generations and shaped by many factors including the characteristics of the immigrants as well as the contexts of the country and communities where they settle. Both immigrant groups and the host society participate in the process of integration, which involves institutions at the federal and state levels, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and individuals.

Civil society has historically played a key role in the integration of immigrants in the absence of a formal federal policy. The U.S. Government offers just a few programs that provide health services, education or English-language training. Educators, health providers, librarians, immigrant advocates, civil rights organizations, NGOs, religious leaders, unions, employers, and philanthropic institutions have created mechanisms to accommodate recent immigrants and facilitate their adaptation. At the same time, they enable the native population (including ethnic groups from previous waves of immigration) to understand and accept new immigrants by creating spaces for positive interaction. As part of a two-way process, immigrants seek to integrate, as most want to, but they also should be afforded feasible ways to accomplish this. The private sector can help create such channels and become an institution of integration, just as it did during the last major wave of immigration in the early twentieth century.

“We must recognize that the United States is a nation of immigrants, and that over the course of America's history our ability to assimilate new immigrants has been a tremendous national strength. In an era of global competition, this national strength can be an enormous competitive advantage – but assimilation to American ideals and values won't happen on its own. We must harness this national strength by actively promoting the assimilation of new immigrants.”

-Carlos M. Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce, Testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, February 28, 2007.

In this context, the Americas Society and Council of the Americas believe that the public and private sectors can do more to promote dialogue and address

the challenge of integrating the Hispanic\* population in the United States—a reality that will remain regardless of the political debate over immigration reform. We recognize the key role that businesses and employers play in promoting cohesion and integration among the Hispanic workforce. Most immigrants spend

“Employers, whether in the private, non-profit or public sector, are in a good position to provide integration services for migrant workers, as they interact regularly with their employees. They not only have an interest in promoting a harmonious workplace, but also possess many of the resources to achieve this.”

-European Policy Center, “Making migration work: the role of employers in migrant integration”, May 2008.

a great portion of their time at the workplace. This is one of the main arenas where they interact with other native or immigrant groups, use English and have the opportunity to learn and take advantage of potential opportunities for upward mobility. Successful integration at the workplace benefits immigrants, fellow workers, employers, communities, and the overall economy and society. Hispanic immigrants make significant

contributions now, but these could be increased by facilitating their further integration into American society.

In light of this fact, the *Hispanic Integration Initiative* draws attention to the practices developed by a number of businesses across the country to promote the integration of their Hispanic workforces or of the Hispanic consumer base and seeks to expand them. **Independently, or in partnership with community organizations, some major U.S. corporations offer (or sponsor) services such as English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, skills development, information about naturalization processes and civic participation, tools to build financial literacy and access to credit and the housing market, scholarships for adult or child education programs, health care workshops, and other types of training.** These businesses aim to encourage and facilitate the integration of their foreign-born employees and their families into the communities they live and work in. Their initiatives demonstrate the importance of joint public and private sector efforts to effectively address the challenge of integration, both by aiding immigrants in adapting to their new context and by facilitating the native population’s adjustment to interacting with multiethnically and culturally diverse groups.

“...leading companies [...] have realized that reaching out to the Latino community and workforce results in higher customer loyalty and increased revenue.”

-Patty Smitherman, “¿Habla Success?”, *Atlanta Woman*, May 2004.

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\* The U.S. Census Bureau uses the terms Hispanic and Latino interchangeably to identify persons who indicate that their origin is Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central or South American, or some other Spanish origin, regardless of race.

## II. INTEGRATION AS AN ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE

Hispanic immigrants make important contributions to the U.S. economy by raising productivity levels, enlarging the taxpayer base and augmenting the number of consumers. Promoting their economic, social and political integration is imperative to maximizing the benefits of immigration and supporting future generations of Hispanic Americans. The private sector plays an important role in promoting a better understanding of immigrants' contributions to the United States, and facilitating their integration.<sup>1</sup>

“Immigration has touched every facet of the U.S. economy and America is a stronger and better nation for it. A comprehensive accounting of the benefits and costs of immigration shows that the benefits of immigration exceed the costs.”

-Economic Report of the President, 2005.

- Hispanics comprise nearly 14 percent of the U.S. labor force.<sup>2</sup> As a result of changing demographics and high demand for workers with skills different from those of the native population, U.S. employers increasingly rely on workers from Latin America, the Caribbean and other regions.
- By 2010, it is expected that 24.7 million jobs will be created for people with low levels of education, representing 43 percent of job openings. With rising education levels in the native-born population, this means that low-skilled immigrant workers will be needed to fill gaps in the labor force.<sup>3</sup>
- In addition, the fertility rate in the United States is expected to fall below “replacement” level by 2015, which will create a divide between the working-age population and those of retirement age. It is projected that the number of workers older than 55 will increase by about 49.3 percent while the working population aged 25 to 54 is only projected to increase by 5.1 percent, and 9 percent in the case of those between the ages of 16 and 24.<sup>4</sup> **In the context of our social security deficit, immigrant workers will be the ones who pay for the retirement of those working today.**
- The high number of Hispanic immigrants in occupations such as construction, hospitality and agriculture contributes to maintaining lower prices for goods and services, which has a multiplying effect on native workers' and employers' productivity and income.<sup>5</sup>
- The fiscal effect of immigrants varies at the federal, state and local levels and is affected by education level. It is estimated that the average immigrant's lifetime tax payments exceed the cost of services he or she will use by \$88,000.<sup>6</sup> Over the next 50 years, new immigrants entering the United States with legal status are expected to contribute approximately \$407 billion-net to the Social Security system.<sup>7</sup>

- As consumers, Hispanics make a significant contribution to the economy. In 2006, Hispanics' spending power was estimated to be about \$798 billion (compared to \$491 billion in 2000); this represents a 3.4 percent increase of buying power (from 5 percent to 8.4 percent) between 1990 and 2006.<sup>8</sup> Hispanic buying power is expected to grow faster than any other group. By 2011, it is estimated to increase by 458 percent, compared to Asians (434 percent), Native Americans (270 percent) and African Americans (237 percent).<sup>9</sup> This is explained both by the demographic growth of the Hispanic population (through immigration and high fertility rates) and by their gradual access to better employment opportunities.

**Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.**, one of the largest private employers of Hispanics, works with more than 50 Hispanic-serving organizations nationwide in an effort to support initiatives—voting rights, education, health care reform and economic development—that impact the local communities they serve.

- There are nearly 2.2 million Hispanic-owned businesses. They are one of the fastest growing segments of the U.S. economy and are expected to generate an estimated \$388.7 billion in revenues in 2008.<sup>10</sup> By some estimates, in 2010 there will be 3.2 million Hispanic firms generating a total of \$465 billion.<sup>11</sup>

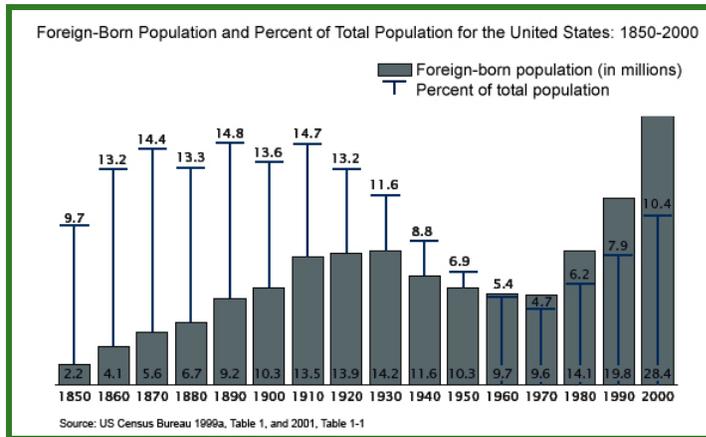
Historically, labor unions, employers, philanthropic groups, political parties, and community organizations have played a key role in facilitating integration. In the first half of the twentieth century the Americanization movement—led by the government but supported by businesses like the Ford Motor Company—emphasized the need to incorporate ethnic groups into social, economic and political aspects of American life. The establishment of public schools, adult education programs and the public-library system, sponsored by Andrew Carnegie, are other examples of initiatives geared toward promoting immigrant integration. Today, the role of these institutions in integrating recent immigrants has been attenuated and public opinion is generally ambivalent about immigrants, their economic, social and political contributions to the United States, and the measures that can be implemented to facilitate their integration.<sup>12</sup> The initiatives highlighted in this white paper exemplify the commitment of various members of the private sector to address this issue. Their efforts set a standard that should be further developed both by U.S. companies and through partnerships with the public sector and civil society.

As part of **Miller & Long Concrete Construction's** efforts to fully integrate foreign-born employees, bilingual staff is available at the workplace to offer help with medical and legal services. In addition, the company offers English and Spanish language classes during off hours.

### III. THE CHALLENGE OF INTEGRATION

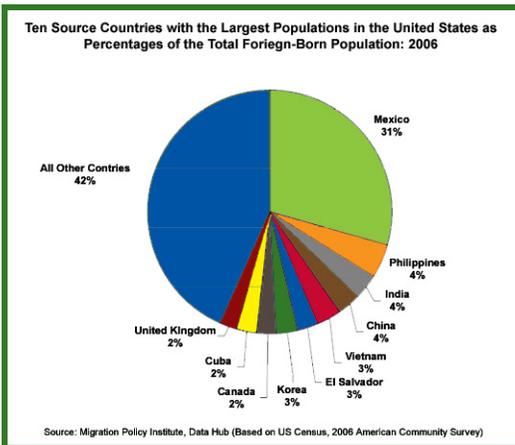
According to the American Community Survey, the U.S. foreign-born population was 37.5 million in 2006, representing 12.5 percent of the country's total population. An estimated 16.3 million immigrants (56 percent) were legal residents in the country (including permanent residents, refugees and asylees), 11.6 million (about 40 percent) were undocumented immigrants, and 1.3 million (4 percent) had temporary or other immigrant status.<sup>13</sup> About 54 percent of all foreign born were from Latin America.<sup>14</sup>

The current volume of immigration is not unprecedented. The high levels of European immigration, particularly between 1850 and 1920, are comparable to current immigration trends—particularly from Latin America and the Caribbean—since 1970. Between 1850 and 1870 the foreign



born population increased from 9.7 percent to 14.4 percent.<sup>15</sup> Between 1970 and 2000 the immigrant population grew from 4.7 percent to 10.4 percent.

**Place of Origin.** One of the main differences between the early waves of immigration (1850 to 1920) and the current ones (post-1965) is the place of origin of the foreign-born. While Europeans previously made up the majority of immigrants, currently more than half of the foreign-born population is from Latin America and the Caribbean:



more than half of the foreign-born population is from Latin America and the Caribbean: 9.8 million from Central America (including Mexico), 2.8 million from the Caribbean and 1.9 million from South America.<sup>16</sup>

Mexicans account for 30.7 percent of all foreign born in the United States. El Salvador and Cuba are among other major source countries for Hispanics, with 2.8 percent and 2.5 percent respectively. The number of ethnic groups in the United States has significantly increased since 1965,

which represents a great challenge for integration given the diversity of languages, cultures and religions.<sup>17</sup>

**Occupations.** The successful integration of the first waves of European and Asian immigrants was partly a result of the availability of opportunities for social mobility. The periods of economic expansion and industrialization in the first half of the twentieth century allowed immigrants with low skills and limited experience in industrial work to obtain employment in this sector, providing them with job stability, better salaries and opportunities for advancement. Currently, opportunities for upward mobility in the United States are contingent on advanced education degrees and high skills. Low-skilled jobs—the main openings for new immigrants with limited education—pay minimum wage, are more unstable than in the past and offer limited possibilities for transition into better paid jobs. However, there is evidence that social mobility increases within these groups as a result of higher levels of education, particularly in the second and third generations.<sup>18</sup>

The mission of the *Sodexo Organization of Latinos*—an employee network within the company—is to promote **Sodexo's** success and support its mission and diversity strategy by enhancing the quality of life at **Sodexo** for Hispanics, facilitating interaction and communications among employees and with community organizations.

**Legal Status.** A key difference between current and past waves of immigration is the large proportion of the foreign-born population that lives and works in the United States without a valid visa status. One-third of the immigrant population is undocumented, as compared to 15 percent one decade ago.<sup>19</sup> Undocumented immigrants have far more limited socioeconomic mobility and access to public services, both of which are integral to successful adaptation to their new place of residency. Moreover, fear of being deported inhibits many immigrants' motivations to fully participate in society.<sup>20</sup> This has a profound impact on the children of undocumented immigrants who are native-born U.S. citizens but lack the support required at home to advance their social and economic opportunities. Children who arrive with their parents as undocumented immigrants have even more limited access to education and other opportunities for social mobility. This is a matter of concern, as we look toward the future composition of the U.S. working-age population, which will include a large percentage of Hispanic children.

**United Americas Bank** is the only bank in Georgia that is marketed specifically to the Hispanic community. Its board members are Hispanic, it is 48 percent Hispanic owned and the staff speaks Spanish. It has reached out successfully to this population, offering bilingual services and facilitating access to mortgages and credit.

**New Destinations.** While past waves of immigration concentrated in traditional gateway states and cities, since the 1990s there has been a significant increase in the immigrant population throughout the United States, particularly in the Southeast. Between 1990 and 2000, the states with the greatest increase were North Carolina (288 percent), Georgia (247 percent), Nevada (206 percent),

Arkansas (198 percent), and Nebraska (183 percent).<sup>21</sup> Between 2000 and 2006, the states that experienced the largest percent growth in their foreign-born population were Delaware (53 percent), South Carolina (52 percent), Nevada (50 percent), Georgia (49 percent), and Tennessee (49 percent).<sup>22</sup> The presence of new immigrants is particularly evident in suburban areas where, according to U.S. Census data, 4 in 10 immigrants are now moving.<sup>23</sup>

These trends have an impact on the process of integration given that many new gateway states and cities have limited experience, infrastructure and resources (e.g., bilingual training, legal support, health services, community organizations) for accommodating a culturally and ethnically diverse population.<sup>24</sup> In many cases, this has generated social and political tensions that affect both the immigrants and their communities.

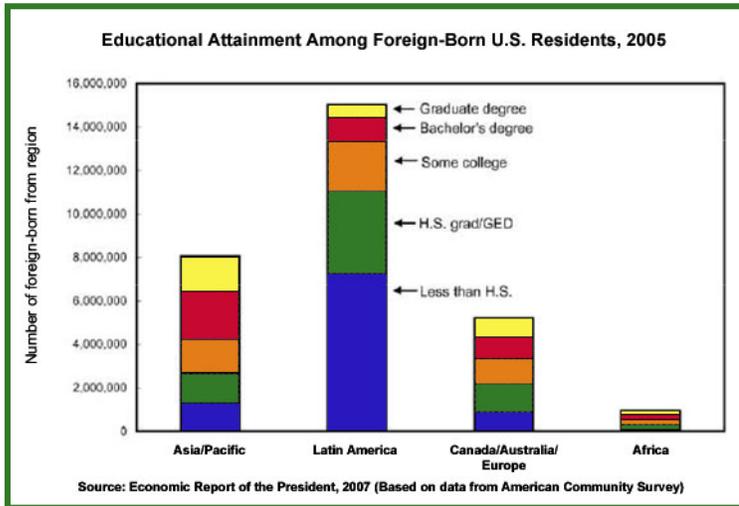
**Transnationalism.** Contemporary developments in communications and travel have facilitated contact between the immigrant population and their communities of origin. This results in greater social, economic and political ties both with their country of residence and their home country. Previous waves of immigrants also had transnational experiences, but an important difference today is the greater speed and the lower cost of international travel and communications. There is an ongoing debate about whether this constant communication limits the process of integration, given that immigrants use their native language more often and maintain close contact with their traditions and culture. However, recent studies conclude that maintaining ties back home does not limit immigrants' motivation to fully integrate or loyalty toward their new place of residence. The strength of transnational ties usually diminishes in the second and third generations,<sup>25</sup> and in some cases, such ties are associated with greater levels of integration and civic participation.

By offering Spanish classes, **The Norsan Group** encourages a mutual effort between English and Spanish-speaking employees to understand and interact with each other, building acceptance, respect and workforce cohesion.

### **ARE HISPANIC IMMIGRANTS INTEGRATING?**

Based on levels of educational attainment, language acquisition, socioeconomic advancement and naturalization, studies of integration conclude that new immigrants are integrating along similar patterns as previous generations. However, there is variation among ethnic groups given the differences in skills, educational levels, legal status, and the context of their communities.<sup>26</sup> For the majority of Hispanic immigrants, the main challenges in the process of integration are low levels of education and their limited upward mobility, a result of their access to certain types of jobs and wages.

**Education.** Immigrants of Hispanic origin tend to have the lowest levels of education and the highest high-school dropout rates. While only 14 percent of immigrants from Europe lack a high school diploma and 50 percent of immigrants from Asia have a bachelor's degree or higher, 47 percent of immigrants from Latin America lack a high school diploma and only 11 percent have college degrees or higher.<sup>27</sup> Among Hispanics, Mexican immigrants are the least educated, with eight out of ten Mexican adults lacking a high school degree; this is explained partly by family characteristics such as low income and the parents' low levels of schooling, and also varies by generation.<sup>28</sup>



However, similar to European and Asian immigrants from previous waves of immigration, education trends among the Hispanic population are changing in the second and third generations. From 1994 to 2005, the percentage of Hispanics with a high school diploma (or equivalent) rose from 56 percent to about 66 percent. An estimated 25 percent are now enrolled in college, compared to 19 percent in 1994.<sup>29</sup>

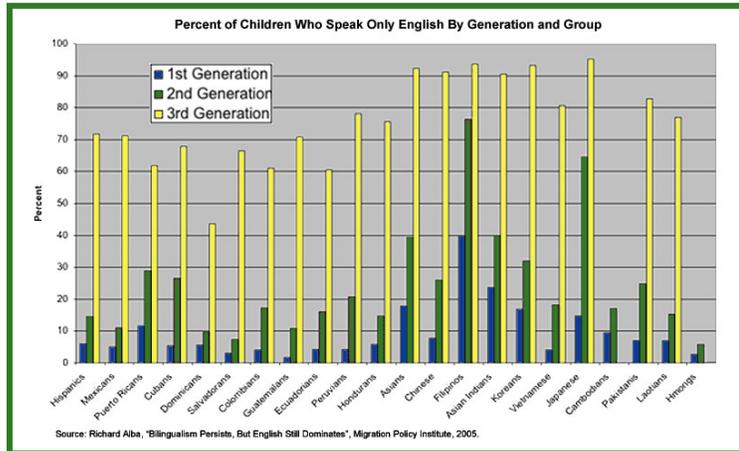
In 2004, the proportion of Mexican immigrants lacking a high school diploma fell to six in ten.<sup>30</sup> These changes have had a positive impact on the economic progress of Hispanics overall, as they have increased access to more stable jobs with higher wages, which, in turn, has led to a drop in poverty rates.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, children of Latin American immigrants still have the lowest GPAs and the highest dropout rates among immigrant groups.

“We are honored to play a small part in helping today's Latino youth become tomorrow's world leaders.”

-Susan Santana, Assistant Vice President, External Affairs AT&T, July 2008.

**English Acquisition.** A 2007 report by the Pew Hispanic Center concluded that fluency in English among Hispanics increases across generations, as does their regular use of English at home and at work.<sup>32</sup> According to this survey, fewer than one in four (23 percent) first generation Hispanic immigrants are able to speak English very well. Meanwhile, 88 percent of their U.S.-born, adult-aged children report that they speak English very well, with a similar trend for reading in English. Among later generations of Hispanic adults, the figure rises to 94 percent.

Data from the U.S. Census shows that by 2006, one in five people (19.7



percent) over age five spoke a language other than English at home.<sup>33</sup> More than half (52.1 percent) of the foreign-born population has limited English proficiency, according to the 2005 American Community Survey.<sup>34</sup> Nationally, 4.8 percent of households are linguistically isolated,

with Spanish-speaking households representing the highest proportion (27.6 percent of the total).<sup>35</sup> Yet, the proportion of Hispanic adults that speak only Spanish at home drops to 11 percent among the second generation and 6 percent among the third and higher generations.<sup>36</sup> This increase in English reading and speaking proficiency is consistent with the patterns of integration of past waves of European and Asian immigrants.

**Citizenship and Naturalization.** Levels of naturalization are an indicator of immigrants' integration as it represents commitment to civic participation and loyalty to the adopted country. Although the number of naturalized immigrants in the United States is relatively low (42 percent of the total foreign-born population), over the past decade there has been a rise in naturalization rates. According to the American Community Survey, of the 35.7 million total foreign born in the United States in 2006, 15.1 million (42 percent) were naturalized citizens. Of those naturalized between 2004 and 2006, almost one-third were Hispanic (12 percent were born in Mexico, 3.2 percent in the Dominican Republic, 3.1 percent in Cuba, 2.2 percent in Colombia, 1.4 percent in Peru, and 1.9 percent in El Salvador).<sup>37</sup>

**Telemundo, mun2 and Univison** have launched national voter registration campaigns. Their objectives are to educate Hispanics about their voting rights and motivate them to register and vote in the 2008 election.

The naturalization of Hispanic immigrants explains, in part, the increasing number of Hispanic voters. By 2006, of the 15.1 million naturalized citizens age 18 and older, 31.2 percent (4.7 million) were of Hispanic origin; they accounted for 26.4 percent of all Hispanic citizens eligible to vote (17.9 million).<sup>38</sup> Hispanic voting rates remain relatively low but have increased consistently in the past decade. By 2008, it is expected that Hispanic voters will reach about 9.3 million, a 23 percent increase from 2004.<sup>39</sup>

## THE CHALLENGE OF INTEGRATION

Although there is evidence of integration among immigrants of Hispanic origin, particularly among the second and third generations, a great number of first generation immigrants have lower levels of English proficiency and education than the rest of the population. Not only does this limit their access to information and public services, which is a key factor for their full participation in social, economic and political processes, but it also impedes their ability to obtain jobs with better wages and health benefits. This represents a greater challenge given the current characteristics of the United States economy where those with higher education and skills are rewarded while wages are declining for workers in the lowest-skilled jobs.<sup>40</sup>

**Western Union** has focused on issues of immigrant integration for many years and one of its primary goals is to promote education as a tool for economic empowerment. Programs center on scholarships, skills development and financial literacy.

***Skill Levels and Wages as a Limitation.*** While the foreign-born population fills jobs in a variety of sectors—mostly in the bottom and top layers of the labor market—the majority of recent immigrants from Latin America occupy low-wage jobs. Nearly half earn less than 200 percent of the minimum wage, compared to one-third of native workers.<sup>41</sup> In 2005, first generation Hispanic immigrants accounted for 36 percent of low-wage workers earning less than \$8.50 an hour.<sup>42</sup> Their concentration in these types of occupations is due in part to low levels of education, skill sets and work experience, limited English proficiency, and in some cases, immigration status.<sup>43</sup> Nonetheless, in the past decade the percentage of Hispanic foreign-born in low-wage occupations decreased from 42 percent in 1995 to 36 percent in 2005.<sup>44</sup>

**Median Weekly Earnings by Educational Attainment, 2006**

Educational Attainment	Native-born earnings	Foreign-born earnings	Foreign earnings as % of native earnings	Foreign-born unemployment rate
All	\$743	\$575	77	3.6
Less than a high school diploma	462	396	86	5.1
High school graduates, no college	607	507	84	3.5
Some college, no degree	701	613	87	3.4
College graduates	1042	1024	98	2.3

Note: Wage data relate to full-time wage and salary workers aged 25 years and older. Unemployment data relate to those in the labor force aged 25 years and over.

Source: "Immigration's Economic Impact", Council of Economic Advisers, June 2007  
(Based on Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics)

***Correlation between Language Acquisition, Education, Health Care and Wages.*** Data from the Migration Policy Institute indicate that English proficiency is a determining factor of wages in immigrant families. English-speaking immigrants earn 17 percent more than non-English speaking immigrants; those

who are fluent in oral and written English earn about 24 percent more than those who lack fluency, regardless of qualifications.<sup>45</sup> Nationally, 11.3 percent of those who spoke only English lived in poverty, compared to 21.6 percent of those who spoke Spanish at home.<sup>46</sup> Children from English deficient homes usually have low academic performance, which limits opportunities for advancement in the future.

Individuals with a bachelor's degree earn nearly twice as much, on average, as those with a high school diploma. In addition, holding a college degree affects the likelihood of unemployment. In 2006, high school graduates had a 4.3 percent unemployment rate, compared to 2.3 percent for college graduates.<sup>47</sup> Thus, low levels of education among the immigrant population limit their access to higher paying jobs.

More than half of non-citizen immigrants in low-wage occupations are uninsured (56 percent, compared to 23 percent of low-income natives). This is due, in part, to the type of jobs they take. This situation can affect the performance of workers facing health problems and puts them at risk for potential financial insolvency in situations of severe illness.<sup>48</sup>

In order to address the needs of Hispanic employees with limited English proficiency, **Tecta America Corporation** provides ESL teaching modules based on interactive books and other materials. The emphasis is on safety and vocabulary essential in the construction industry.

**Community Reactions.** Beyond the language, skill and educational challenges immigrants face, their social context often influences their ability and willingness to participate fully as residents or citizens of the United States. The changing patterns of immigration and the growing presence of the foreign-born population throughout the United States have social and political implications that in some cases result in anti-immigrant positions and restrictive legislation at the state and municipal levels. In 2007, 1,562 immigration-related bills were introduced in the 50 states. At least 240 of these bills became law in 46 states, which is more than double the total number of bills passed in 2006.<sup>49</sup>

“A distinctive characteristic of the Hispanic immigrant community is its ethic of hard work and entrepreneurial spirit. There are currently 2 million Hispanic-owned firms in the U.S. and they are the fastest-growing business community in the country. This is evidence of their motivation to improve their position in the United States. Through their businesses and entrepreneurship they are also making significant contributions to economic growth in the country.”

-Salvador Gomez, Chairman/CEO, Source One Management, Inc. and Founder of the National Hispanic Business Information Clearing House (NHBIC), May 2008.

Some states and cities have adopted measures to facilitate the foreign-born population's access to health and education.<sup>50</sup> However, most

state and local legislation introduced in 2007 was directed toward limiting

undocumented immigrants' access to public services, implementing stricter housing codes and establishing employer sanctions to dissuade undocumented immigrants from settling in these communities. While this white paper focuses on the integration of documented immigrants, the reality is that most of them have a friend or family member without papers.

Although law enforcement is part of the much-needed solution to the current challenges of immigration, most of these policies are based on negative and misleading assumptions about immigrants. The discourse surrounding them generates mistrust and tensions between immigrants (including those who are in the country legally, many of whom are American citizens), the community and the authorities. When immigrants move, businesses face losses in their consumer base and labor force. As well, productivity in the U.S. economy suffers in the absence of immigrant labor.

In addition to addressing the language barrier, **Ochsner Health System** has emphasized the need for preventive health care within the Hispanic community. These initiatives diminish the frequency of expensive visits to emergency rooms, lower overall hospital expenditures, and maintain a better standard of health for the larger community.

At the same time, a great number of community organizations, municipal and state governments, business groups, and NGOs have recognized the importance of immigrants for the U.S. economy and society and adopted policies or programs to facilitate the integration of this population through access to information, public services, English-language training, education, and health care. However, these activities must be complemented by collaborative initiatives between the public and private sectors.

#### IV. ON BALANCE

Immigration presents costs and benefits both for receiving and sending countries. In the case of the United States, each new wave of immigration has implied competition for native workers and increased demand for welfare and education services. At the same time, immigrants offer new capabilities, ideas and talent that bring social, cultural and economic benefits. Current debates pose the question of whether recent waves of documented Hispanic immigrants represent higher costs than benefits. It is recognized that generally lower levels of education and access to low-paying jobs can make immigrants more prone to using welfare services for their children. The growing Hispanic population, not unlike other immigrant groups, also increases the demand for education and health services. In some sectors of employment, the arrival of new immigrants represents job competition for native workers.

“As the new immigrants grow older and utilize more health services, and as more wives join their husbands, evening out the current gender imbalance and leading to more children, the demands they make on public services will increase but so too may their contributions to the tax bases supporting those services.”

- Rakesh Kochar, Roberto Suro and Sonya Tafoya, “The New Latino South: The Context and Consequences of Rapid Population Growth,” *Pew Hispanic Center*, 2005.

However, when these costs are measured against Hispanic immigrants’ economic and social contributions the final balance is positive. Given current demographic and economic characteristics in the United States, Hispanic immigrants are essential for filling gaps in the labor force and maintaining productivity levels. In addition, their presence signifies an increasing number of consumers and an enlarged tax-paying base. The full integration of Hispanics into American society can contribute to maximizing these gains and minimizing the costs. For example, by providing the skills necessary for upward mobility—through educational attainment, language acquisition or specialized training—immigrants gain access to better jobs while the likely need for welfare services is reduced.

***Immigrants in the Labor Force.*** In 2006, foreign-born workers represented 15 percent of the U.S. labor force. Over the past decade, half of the growth in the labor force has been due to immigrant labor.<sup>51</sup> In 2005, foreign-born men had higher labor force participation rates than natives (81 percent compared to 72 percent) and lower unemployment rates (4.1 percent compared to 5.3 percent).<sup>52</sup> Hispanic males have the highest labor-force participation rates of any group in the country.<sup>53</sup>

Occupation	Proportion of Foreign Born (%)	Proportion of Native Born (%)
Construction labor .....	2.8	0.9
Maids and housekeepers .....	2.8	0.6
Janitors .....	2.7	1.4
Cooks .....	2.7	1.1
Cashiers .....	2.2	2.1
Drivers/sales workers and truck drivers.....	2.1	2.3
Grounds maintenance .....	2.1	0.6
Carpenters .....	2.0	1.0
Retail salesperson.....	1.8	2.5
Supervisors, retail sales .....	1.8	2.3

Source: Economic Report of the President, 2007 (Based on American Community Survey)

**Employers of Immigrant Labor by Sector.** According to the Current Population Survey, the greater percentage of foreign-born workers are employed in low-wage jobs in the agricultural sector (including farming and fishing), followed by construction, leisure, hospitality and service industries. However, in recent years, the percentage of Hispanics in skilled, blue-collar jobs such as precision production, craft and repair has increased from 11 percent in 1994 to 25 percent in 2006—an indicator of upward mobility.<sup>54</sup> These changes did not have a significant effect on the earnings profile of native-born workers between 1995 and 2005.<sup>55</sup>

In addition, Hispanic entrepreneurs have established an estimated 2.2 million businesses in the United States, generating \$388.7 billion annually.<sup>56</sup> The number of Hispanic households earning more than \$100,000 annually has grown 126 percent between 1991 and 2001, compared with 77 percent for the general population.<sup>57</sup>

**Impact of Immigration on Employment and Wages.** There is a long-standing debate about whether immigrants “take away” jobs from Americans or lower their wages. Given current demographic, educational and economic trends in the United States, immigrants actually tend to complement native-born citizens in the labor market. Most of the native labor force is employed in sectors that require high school and college-level education, while the greatest proportion of the foreign born is employed in lower-skilled jobs. This is partly because the number of native workers without a high school diploma has declined over time, leaving job openings in sectors that require fewer skills. Immigrants are two to four times more likely than the native born to work in lower-skilled jobs such as maintenance, farming or construction.<sup>58</sup> Although some low-skilled native

**"Georgia Power's** Hispanic initiatives stem from our belief in giving back to the community. We realized early on that the Hispanic population was growing and that we needed to respond—both as a company and as part of the community—in order to help Hispanics integrate."

-Del Clark, Community Development Project Manager, Georgia Power, 2008.

workers in particular sectors and regions are affected by competition from immigrant workers, the proportion is relatively small.

There is mixed evidence on whether immigration has negative effects on native workers' wages, particularly for those in low-skilled jobs. Some studies argue that 90 percent of native-born workers experience annual wage gains due to immigration,<sup>59</sup> although it is true that some native-born workers experience losses in wages and increased competition.<sup>60</sup> However, this depends on workers' skills and occupations as well as the timeframe considered. For example, Orrenius and Zavodny (2006) find that "an increase in the fraction of foreign-born workers tends to lower the wages of natives in blue collar occupations but does not have a statistically significant negative effect among natives in skilled occupations."<sup>61</sup>

According to Borjas, (2003), between 1980 and 2000, workers lost, on average, about 3 percent of the real value of their wages due to immigration.

"...good management requires a strategy for dealing with a diverse workforce, including a wide range of ethnic groups and nationalities. Such policies go beyond ensuring that each member of the workforce is treated equally, striving to ensure that every employee has the opportunity to develop professionally in a positive work environment."

-European Policy Center, "Making migration work: the role of employers in migrant integration," May 2008.

Native workers without a high school degree suffered a loss of about 9 percent.<sup>62</sup> Ottaviano and Peri (2006) argue that the wage loss for the latter group is even smaller given that "uneducated foreign born do not fully and directly substitute for (compete with) uneducated natives, but partly complement their skills."<sup>63</sup> According to their estimates, the average wage of U.S.-born workers significantly increased (rather than decreased) as a consequence of immigration. In contrast, previous immigrants experience more significant wage losses as they compete

for similar jobs and occupations with new immigrants.

## V. NEW GATEWAY CITIES: ATLANTA AND NEW ORLEANS

The Hispanic Integration Initiative has worked with local business leaders, public sector officials and community organizations in Atlanta and New Orleans—two cities that have experienced recent waves of Hispanic immigration—to analyze and benchmark experiences. The situation in these two cities illustrates the need for collaborative initiatives between the public and private sectors that encourage integration and therefore contribute to maximizing the gains and minimizing the costs of immigration. By showcasing existing best practices and strengthening synergies between the public and private sectors, the AS/COA seeks to promote the development of initiatives that support the full economic, social and political integration of Hispanics in the United States.

### ***ATLANTA AS A NEW GATEWAY FOR HISPANIC IMMIGRANTS***

Between 1990 and 2007, the Southeast experienced the highest growth of immigration in the country. In this period, six of the states in the region—North Carolina, South Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama—experienced the nation’s highest increases in their Hispanic populations (between 200 percent and 350 percent) compared to all other states in the country, except Nevada.<sup>64</sup> While Hispanics had traditionally been a small minority in these areas, they are the fastest-growing immigrant group in the region.

“...in an increasingly socially-conscious business environment, providing the workforce with support services forms part of a Corporate Social Responsibility agenda. It not only contributes to a more harmonious (and arguably more productive) workplace, but the improved public image of companies which are known to do more for their employees can also be a commercial advantage...”

-European Policy Center, “Making migration work: the role of employers in migrant integration,” May 2008.

While Hispanics had traditionally been a small minority in these areas, they are the fastest-growing immigrant group in the region.

The growth of immigration during the past decade and a half is partly a result of economic growth in the region and the need for low-wage labor to fill new job opportunities in diverse sectors (primarily manufacturing, service industries, construction, landscaping, and transportation).<sup>\*</sup> It is estimated that in the 1990s, 410,000 jobs were created in the region for Hispanic workers and 1.9 million for non-Hispanic workers.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, traditional host states such as California and Texas were experiencing an economic recession, and high unemployment rates, leading Hispanic

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<sup>\*</sup> It is worth noting the Pew Hispanic Center’s findings that the growth of the Hispanic population was “accompanied by continued growth in the black and white populations,” 21 percent and 11 percent respectively, and that the “region added jobs for both Hispanic and non-Hispanic workers at rates well in excess of the national average.”

immigrant workers to seek new destinations.

The growing presence of immigrants, mostly Hispanic, in the Southeast, has implied profound changes in the economic, social, cultural and political landscape, transforming conceptions of regional identity and biracial relations, settlement patterns, demographics, and demands on infrastructure and services. Atlanta, known as the “capital” of the South, was one of the first cities in the region to experience the effects of large-scale Hispanic immigration in the mid-1990s, particularly during the construction for the 1996 Olympics, which increased the demand for low-wage labor in the construction, service and hospitality industries.<sup>66</sup> Economic expansion created new employment opportunities for skilled and unskilled labor.<sup>67</sup> According to Mary Odem, the Atlanta metro area (defined as the six core counties around the central city) added more jobs than any other U.S. metropolitan area (except Dallas) during the 1990s.<sup>68</sup> While emerging gateway cities such as Atlanta experienced significant growth of their Hispanic and other immigrant populations in the period between 1990 and 2005, growth of the foreign born slowed in traditional gateway cities such as Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Miami.<sup>69</sup>

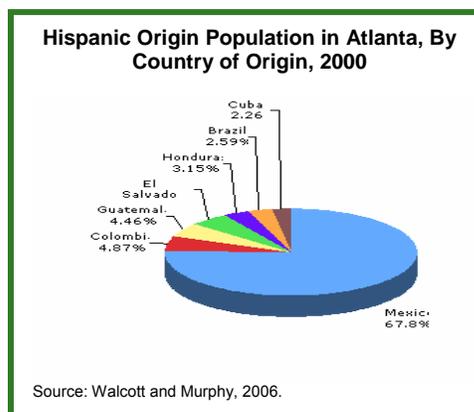
Between 1980 and 2000, the immigrant population in Atlanta quadrupled. Some counties in the Atlanta metro area experienced increases of 206 percent to 340 percent in their Hispanic population between 1990 and 1999, and the two counties with the largest proportion of Hispanics experienced increases of 83.4 percent to 206.9 percent.<sup>70</sup>

### ***Characteristics of the Hispanic Population in Atlanta***

**Size.** Between 1990 and 2006, the immigrant population in Georgia increased by 281.9 percent. Currently, the foreign born represent 9.2 percent (859,590 persons) of Georgia’s total population. Of the 50 states, Georgia is ranked ninth in the size of its foreign-born population, and ranked fourth based on the percentage change in the foreign-born population between 2000 and 2006.<sup>71</sup> According to U.S. Census 2006 estimates, Georgia's Hispanic population represents 7.5 percent of the total population of the state, an estimated 702,295 persons.<sup>72</sup>

Between 1980 and 2005 the total population of the Atlanta metro area grew from 2.3 million to 4.8 million. As in the rest of the state, the recent influx of immigrants to Atlanta coincided with a general growth of the population in the metro area. In 1980 there were 24,550 Hispanics in Atlanta, representing 1 percent of the metro population. By 2005, Atlanta’s Hispanic population reached over 300,000, representing 7 percent of the total metro population. This represents more than 1,000 percent growth in 25 years.<sup>73</sup>

**Place of origin.** In 2006, the largest share of the foreign-born population in



Georgia was from Latin America (including South America, Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean), representing 55.8 percent of the total state population. Mexico is the top sending country with about 32.2 percent of the total.<sup>74</sup>

The pattern is very similar for Atlanta, where Hispanics constitute 52 percent of the foreign-born population. Of that total, according to the 2000 Census, 67.8 percent are from Mexico, followed by Colombia (4.8 percent), Guatemala (4.5 percent), El Salvador (4.4 percent), Honduras (3.2 percent), Brazil (2.6 percent), and Cuba (2.2 percent).<sup>75</sup>

**Settlement Patterns.** A noteworthy characteristic of this new immigrant population is its settlement patterns. For most of U.S. history, immigrants have concentrated in central cities, close to their jobs and ethnic enclaves, and gradually moved to the suburbs as the opportunities for upward mobility increased through their process of integration, particularly in the second and third generations. However, by 2000 more than half of the immigrants in traditional gateways lived in central cities, while 75 percent of immigrants in new gateways resided outside the central cities. By 2000, 54 percent of all Hispanics lived in suburban areas. Another significant development in settlement patterns is that Hispanics in the Southeast are increasingly moving into non-Hispanic neighborhoods, and also to rural areas—a characteristic unique to the region.<sup>76</sup> This has implications in terms of integration. Access to programs, institutions and ethnic enclaves that can provide support and services is difficult when the population is dispersed in suburban and rural areas.

In Georgia, immigrants are greatly dispersed among different counties. Many of them move directly into the suburbs and bypass the city. The suburbs offer most of the job opportunities (particularly in construction and landscaping jobs), more affordable housing, accessible transportation routes, and the support of existing commercial and family networks. While 55 percent of immigrants lived in the Atlanta metropolitan area in 1970, nearly 96 percent currently live in the suburbs.<sup>77</sup>

### ***The Challenge of Hispanic Integration in Atlanta***

Hispanics in new settlement areas such as the Southeast are particularly in need of support in terms of integration. Most of these immigrants (62 percent) lack a high school diploma, and 57 percent do not speak English well or do not speak it at all. More than half entered the U.S. between 1995 and 2000, and many lack legal status.<sup>78</sup> In 2000, it was estimated that between 40 percent and 49 percent of all immigrants in Georgia were undocumented, most of them from Latin America.<sup>79</sup> The total population of undocumented immigrants was calculated between 200,000 and 250,000, which represents 2.6 percent of the state's total population.<sup>80</sup>

Considering immigrants' characteristics in terms of age, education and English proficiency, the process of integration of Hispanics in new settlement areas, particularly the most recently arrived, is at an early stage and represents great challenges both for immigrants and for the host community. However, there

is already evidence of their economic integration, which demonstrates the willingness and capacity of Hispanic immigrants to actively participate and contribute to society. As has been the case with previous waves of immigrants, and Hispanic immigrants in traditional settlement areas, the second and third generations of Hispanics in the Southeast will likely follow similar patterns of integration. The role of civil society and the public and private sectors is key in supporting this process.

**English Acquisition.** About a third of Georgia’s immigrants arrived in the United States between 2000 and 2004. Because of their short history in the country, citizenship rates and English language fluency tend to be low, which limits access to education and better employment opportunities. Nearly 63 percent of all immigrants report not speaking English very well. Overall, 11 percent of Georgia’s population over the age of five speaks a language at home other than English, and more than half a million state residents speak Spanish at home.<sup>81</sup> Of both native and foreign-born persons in Georgia in 2005, 13.5 percent of those who spoke only English lived in poverty, compared to 19.1 percent of those who spoke Spanish at home.<sup>82</sup> Among the foreign-born persons older than five in Georgia in 2006, 75.5 percent of those who spoke Spanish at home were LEP (Limited English Proficient).

“...Migration is a selective process —it is those with the most ambition who leave the security of home to pursue a new life elsewhere. Though drive and ambition are hard to measure in population surveys, they are nevertheless critical factors in successful economic integration and can make up for some of the deficits found in communities...”

-Anita I. Drever, “New Neighbors in Dixie: The Community Impacts of Latino Migration to Tennessee,” 2006.

**Education.** The number of foreign born in Georgia with less than a high-school diploma increased by 397 percent between 1990 and 2006. By 2006, 30.7 percent of all foreign born in Georgia had not completed high school.<sup>83</sup> According to the Georgia Department of Education, the high school dropout rate of 7 percent for Hispanic students exceeds the all-student average of 5.1 percent.<sup>84</sup> Dropout rates among this population are explained in part by cultural and family pressures to drop out of school early and join the workforce. Undocumented status is also related

The **Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education** projects that by 2008 Hispanics will make up 10 percent of the primary and secondary school students in the six new settlement states of the South. Increasing Hispanic children’s opportunities to learn English and complete their education successfully is a key challenge for their integration.

to early conclusion of schooling.

The level of education is related to the language spoken at home. While 16.2 percent of those who spoke only English lacked a high school diploma, 43.5 percent of the Spanish-speaking population had not completed high school.

Looking at higher education, 26.4 percent of the total population (native and foreign born) age 25 and older had a college degree in contrast to the 14.5 percent of those who spoke Spanish.<sup>85</sup> Given their generally low levels of education, most Hispanics who recently arrived in Georgia take jobs that require lower skills. These jobs offer limited opportunities for upward mobility since they generally pay low wages and offer few possibilities for skills development and growth within the company.

At the same time, the increase in the Hispanic school-age population poses a key challenge for schools in the area. Most of these children speak Spanish at home and require ESL training in order to advance at the same pace as their English-speaking classmates. The Hispanic preschool (age 4 or younger) and school-age population (ages 5 through 17) in the new settlement areas of the South grew by more than 300 percent between 1990 and 2000. Hispanic school enrollment in the six southern states is projected to increase by 210 percent while the number of all non-Hispanic students increases by a mere 2 percent.<sup>86</sup> **Increasing Hispanic children's opportunities to learn English and complete their education successfully is a key challenge for integration.**

**Employment and Wages.** The foreign born are an increasingly large component of the Georgian workforce. In 2005, the foreign born represented 11.9 percent of Georgia's civilian employed workforce. Between 1900 and 2005, the number of foreign-born workers age 16 and older increased by 273.9 percent, reaching 496,810. In 2006, the largest share of foreign-born workers in Georgia was Hispanic (56.1 percent).<sup>87</sup>

Most Hispanics take jobs at the bottom of the labor ladder, many of which are poorly paid and performed under unhealthy, unsafe and unpleasant conditions, such as poultry and meat processing. Although the majority of Hispanic immigrants work as low-wage laborers in various industries (mainly construction and services such as hotels, restaurants, landscaping, among others), a small number work in well-paid professional and technical fields. In 2005, the median annual income of Hispanic male workers in Georgia was about \$23,178 in 2005 and \$22,871 for Hispanic women.<sup>88</sup>

"What would happen if we changed the law so drastically that it would drive every immigrant out of the state of Georgia? Who's going to build those new houses? Who's going to work in the chicken farms? Who's going to work these mills?"

-Hunter Hopkins, Vice President of Governmental Affairs for the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, "Illegal immigration: Businesses fear impact of crackdown," *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, January 6, 2006.

The Hispanic participation in the construction industry is significant, particularly in DeKalb County, where they account for 45 percent of the workforce, and in Gwinnett and Fulton counties, where they represent 25 percent of the workforce.<sup>89</sup> By 2004, 31.5 percent of Mexican workers in Georgia were employed in the construction industry.<sup>90</sup>

From 1996 onwards, with the construction boom following the Olympics, at least 10,000 Mexicans arrived each year to Georgia. Between 1996 and 2004,

an average of 71,414 homes were built in Georgia, as the Atlanta area became a hub for real estate and construction.<sup>91</sup> Restaurants and food establishments also grew significantly. Although employment growth in Georgia and in the Southeast has also been significant for African Americans and non-Hispanic whites, there are tensions between these groups and Hispanics. In some sectors, employers report labor shortages claiming that non-Hispanic whites and African Americans are unwilling to perform the jobs available. Yet, in many industries, particularly in construction and day labor, various ethnic and racial groups work alongside each other and compete for the same jobs, especially in metro areas such as Atlanta.<sup>92</sup> For example, although U.S.-born workers make up 7 percent of the day-labor workforce nationally, in the South, one in five day laborers is native born. This means that competition with immigrants for these jobs is higher than the national average.<sup>93</sup>

### ***The Economic Contributions of Hispanics in Georgia***

Although immigration to Atlanta and Georgia is relatively recent and Hispanic immigrants are at a disadvantage in terms of education, English-language proficiency, the types of occupations and income levels, they do make significant contributions to the state and local economies.

- Most Georgians recognize that they have a stimulating effect on the economy. In 2006, the Peach State Poll reported that 52 percent of Georgians believed that immigrants take jobs that nobody else wants, compared with 29 percent who believed that immigrants take jobs from native workers.<sup>94</sup>
- In the South, Hispanic immigrants have played a critical role in stabilizing the tax-paying population. Without new Hispanic immigrants, large areas would be experiencing a population decline, and a corresponding increase in local taxes.<sup>95</sup> Georgia's Mexican residents reported \$4.7 billion in personal income in 2004—2.4 percent of the state's total income. Based on income figures and data from the Georgia Department of Revenue, the Selig Center for Economic Growth estimates that Mexican taxpayers contributed \$316,942,153 in personal income tax to the state in 2004—2.4 percent of the state's total income tax collections (excluding corporate income tax).<sup>96</sup>

Through the **Hispanic American Center for Economic Development (HAECD)** the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has helped open 161 businesses that injected \$44 million dollars into the state economy.

\$252.5 million in state and local taxes.<sup>97</sup>

- In 2007, Georgia was among the ten states with the largest Hispanic markets, totaling about \$14 billion. It was also among the ten states with the highest rate of Hispanic buying power growth over a period of 17 years (1990 to 2007), with a growth of 924 percent.<sup>98</sup> Based on estimates by the Selig Center, on July 31, 2007, the *Atlanta Business Chronicle* reported that “Hispanic buying power in the metro area from 1990 to 2007 skyrocketed almost 1,100 percent to \$9.8 billion.”<sup>99</sup>
- U.S. Census figures report that in 2002, 2.7 percent (or 18,212) of firms in Georgia were owned by Hispanics.<sup>100</sup> According to the *Atlanta Business Chronicle’s Book of Lists*, 10 of Atlanta’s top 25 minority-owned firms are owned by Hispanics.<sup>101</sup>
- Given labor shortages in poultry processing plants faced with greater demand for chicken products, Hispanics are providing the necessary labor for the industry’s expansion in the South. Half of all poultry plant jobs are now in the rural South, compared with one-third in the 1960s.<sup>102</sup>

Although immigrant contributions are generally recognized, a slowdown in economic growth and rising unemployment can shift public attitudes toward immigrants and generate concerns about their costs and the transformation of communities. This leads to social division and an unwelcome environment for Hispanics, including those who are legal residents or citizens. In the past few years, state and local officials in Georgia and nationwide have faced increasing pressures to act. While some of the measures focus on integration, others aim to exclude and dissuade immigrants from settling, particularly undocumented Hispanics. The results yield consequences in terms of social cohesion as well as economic development.<sup>103</sup> At the same time, community-based groups, public institutions, philanthropists and the private sector are promoting initiatives that aid Hispanics in the integration process. These will be explained in detail in the next chapter.

### ***The Role of Community Groups and the Public Sector***

As documented above, the majority of recent arrivals to new gateway

“Studies have demonstrated that immigrants who are marginalized and face discrimination become acculturated at a slower rate and in a different manner than do those who are more accepted.”

-Elaine C. Lacy, “Immigrants in the Southeast: Public Perceptions and Integration,” *News and Views*, 2008.

cities such as Atlanta are poorer than the native population and have lower levels of English proficiency and naturalization rates. In particular, undocumented immigrants are more likely to be less educated and concentrated in low-wage, low-skill jobs. Although, as Mary Odem notes, Hispanic immigrants are well integrated into

the economy of Atlanta and Georgia “their integration into the region's social and civic life has been more complex and contested.”<sup>104</sup>

Areas with recent Hispanic settlement have little experience in accommodating diversity and offer limited infrastructure, both government and community-based. Furthermore, immigrant communities are dispersed and have difficulty in assisting newcomers. Limited resources to deal with the needs of immigrants (both Hispanic and other groups) can exacerbate tensions between the native population and new arrivals.

Strong local and regional identities in the South play a significant role in shaping attitudes toward immigrants. Although tensions between Hispanics and African Americans exist throughout the country, the number of African Americans is larger in the Southeast, and they perceive great costs from Hispanic immigration. This has created inter-ethnic conflicts that differentiate the region's response to immigration.<sup>105</sup>

At the county level, perceptions of the costs of immigrants are exacerbated, particularly in areas with the most recent and fastest growth of immigration; there, the fiscal implications of providing services to immigrants are more significant.<sup>106</sup> These anxieties usually ignore the fact that immigrants pay taxes, help maintain productivity levels and fuel the local economy through their purchasing power. Smaller percentages of immigrants use public schools, health care and other public benefits.

### ***Community-Based Initiatives***

Since the 1970s, social service agencies in Atlanta, including churches, NGOs, mutual assistance associations, and voluntary groups have helped manage the large and diverse immigrant population. As the largest city in the Southeast, Atlanta serves as the regional headquarters for large organizations including CARE, World Relief, Save the Children, Georgia Mutual Assistance Association, World Catholic Relief, Lutheran Ministries, Asian Community Services, the Latin American Association, and the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights (GLAHR).<sup>107</sup>

**State Farm Insurance** is contributing \$1 million to NALEO's efforts to provide voter registration materials to unregistered Latinos and U.S. citizenship information to documented workers. State Farm agents in various locations across the country also will be assisting NALEO with voter registration drives and citizenship information sessions.

The **Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta** is one of the largest service providers for the Hispanic community. Of the 103 churches in this field, 60 percent maintain active ministries for the Hispanic population, with a central office in Atlanta that coordinates activities. Their services include full- or part-time social workers and priests that offer bilingual assistance. The Hispanic Youth Association is a section of the Archdiocese that develops youth associations and activities targeted at Hispanic young adults and adolescents. An important concern for the diocese is the creation of strong family units in the community and promoting cultural integration.<sup>108</sup>

The **Latin American Association** (LAA) has served the Hispanic community in the Atlanta metro area for over 35 years. The LAA supports Hispanic's academic, social and economic advancement through English-language training, parenting services, employment placement and referrals, housing assistance, education services, legal assistance, translation services, after school and summer youth programs, and the Annual Youth Leadership Conference. Among the top priorities of the organization are youth academic achievement, education and prevention, and services for families with urgent needs. Through its programs, the LAA seeks to improve Hispanic youth's performance in middle schools and be a leading provider of language and life skills development for Hispanics. In 2007, the LAA served over 60,000 individuals and their families. LAA services are developed and delivered through a system of grassroots community outreach centers located in metro-Atlanta neighborhoods with high concentrations of Hispanic residents.

The **Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials (GALEO)** promotes civic engagement, voter education and leadership development for Hispanics. Its most recent campaign "*Su Voto Es Su Voz!*" seeks to promote voter registration among the Hispanic population. Through the "*Es La Hora*" website, they provide information in English and in Spanish about voter registration and naturalization. Hispanics are fewer than 2 percent of Georgia's voters, but their strength at the polls is estimated to grow considerably in the future. From February 2001 to January 2008, the number of Hispanic voters grew from less than 100 to more than 22,000 in Gwinnett, Cobb, Fulton and DeKalb counties, while the number of Hispanic voters statewide rose over fifty-fold.<sup>109</sup> Local media have also responded to the growth of the Hispanic population. In November 2006, **Clear Channel Radio** renamed its hard rock station "The Buzz" 105.3 as "*Radio Patrón*" with a Spanish-language format.<sup>110</sup> The **Atlanta Journal-Constitution** provides a weekly special feature section titled "Atlanta and the World" with frequent articles related to Hispanics. Two telephone directories and radio stations publicize Hispanic businesses and events.

Many academic institutions in Georgia have created special programs dedicated to the Hispanic community, focused both on research and on education services for Hispanics. **Dalton State College** has organized seminars to teach social workers how to better serve Hispanic residents. The Social Work School at Dalton State also offers a bilingual social work program.<sup>111</sup> **University of Georgia** hosts the Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education (CLASE), a research and educational center that provides professional development and resources for educators, mentors and tutors working with Hispanics. **Georgia Southern University** has a Center for Latino Outreach and participates in the program "*Plazas Comunitarias*" in partnership with the Mexican Consulate in Atlanta, which offers education materials and online courses for Hispanics. Beulah University in Atlanta, the Cobb County School District, the Southern Regional Library, the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and the Savannah Learning Center also participate in this program, as do many churches in the state and community groups like the Latin American Association and the Grass Roots Empowerment Alliance.

## State and Local Initiatives

Policy responses to the arrival of new immigrants since the 1990s have lagged while demands in education, health care, law enforcement, housing, and transportation have considerably increased.<sup>112</sup> In general, municipal and county governments and state organizations have generally reacted more quickly than the state government, whose policies have only been ramped up since 2000.<sup>113</sup> However, the tone of these policies varies. For example, Cherokee and Cobb counties have enacted restrictive measures against immigrants (particularly undocumented Hispanic immigrants) such as anti-loitering, housing, zoning, and “English only” ordinances to discourage settlement.<sup>114</sup>

In contrast, other counties have enacted policies such as establishing day-labor centers and providing English language classes to encourage immigrant integration and the protection of their rights. The city of Dalton is an example of employers and schools working together to provide Hispanic children with Spanish-speaking teachers in order to help their development. The Dalton Police Department requires officers seeking a promotion to take 80 hours of Spanish classes. In 2005, Chatham County created the Savannah-Chatham Latino Officer Outreach program—a team of Hispanic police officers that seek to develop a better relationship between the police and the Hispanic community. DeKalb County also has responded to immigrants in a very welcoming manner by offering a special center for foreign-born students and parents to introduce them to the education system.<sup>115</sup>

At the state level, the Cooperative Extension Service has created programs to help immigrants understand Georgia laws and have access to information about purchasing a home and childcare. The Georgia Municipal Association and the Georgia Association of Defense Lawyers have provided training for their members to learn about the unmet needs of immigrants. Since the 1990s, many state agencies have provided interpreters and translated documents related to housing, employment and family services.

In 2003, Governor Sonny Perdue created the Latino Commission for a New Georgia to work with community organizations, local governments and private businesses to provide recommendations in areas such as health care, economic opportunity and education. However, its role has been limited to issues such as the effects of laws and ordinances affecting the Hispanic community and many members resigned in 2006 with the passage of the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act (SB529).

Despite limited prior experience, Atlanta public schools have developed innovative programs to accommodate the fastest-growing immigrant student population of any metropolitan area in the country.<sup>116</sup> Some schools in DeKalb, Cobb and Gwinnett Counties have hired specialized teachers and expanded ESL and migrant education

“When Latinos are given opportunities for employment and advancement, companies benefit from the individuals' strong work ethic and the chance to boost their customer base. This is why major companies in Atlanta are taking steps to make life better for Latino employees.”

-Patty Smitherman, “Habla Success?” *Atlanta Woman*, May 2004.

programs. They have also created newcomer centers that help enroll students, assess their language skills and provide information about the school system for students and parents. Kennesaw State University is the primary provider of ESL certification. One challenge is the large pool of elementary and middle-school teachers with ESL certification in some areas and the general shortage of high school content teachers.<sup>117</sup>

One of the most innovative integration efforts in public school education in metropolitan Atlanta, as documented by Mary Odem, is the International Community School in DeKalb County. Its objective is to provide international education in a multiethnic environment to immigrant, refugee and native-born children.<sup>118</sup> DeKalb County (in the Atlanta metro area) also created an international center where foreign-born students and parents must first report before attending county schools.<sup>119</sup>

These two competing pressures—the need for labor and the social and political immigrant-related tensions—highlight the importance of private-sector engagement and the need to support Hispanic employees through initiatives that promote their integration.

A growing challenge in Georgia is that immigrants have limited financial literacy and mistrust the banking system. Fearing the security of local banks, many immigrants keep their money at home or carry it with them. As a consequence, Georgia has seen an increase in home invasions and muggings.<sup>120</sup> In Gwinnett County, Representative Pedro Marin developed the program “Don’t be a Victim” with the Police Department. Through this initiative, the police distributed 10,000 brochures to the local immigrant community that focused on using banks, avoiding home invasions and robberies.<sup>121</sup>

Growing pressures from groups demanding a decisive response to undocumented immigration in Georgia led Governor Sonny Perdue to sign the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act (SB529) on April 17, 2006. This is considered the most sweeping legislation ever passed by any state to control undocumented immigration. Entered into effect on July 1, 2007, the bill requires employer use of the Basic Pilot Program to verify legal status of employees, denies tax-supported benefits to unauthorized immigrants, enables local law enforcement personnel to deport such immigrants, and penalizes employers who hire unauthorized immigrants.

As Stephanie Bohon points out, the growing demands on social services that SB529 responded to did not only come from the state’s estimated 250,000 undocumented immigrants. Nearly two million authorized newcomers entered Georgia in the past ten years, almost a million of whom are U.S. natives. These native newcomers have also put great pressure on state resources, since many of them are disadvantaged racial minorities that demand state entitlement

**The Coca-Cola Company** supports Hispanic higher education through long-standing partnerships with organizations such as the Hispanic Scholarship Fund. The Coca-Cola Company has provided over \$3 million for HSF scholarships and their Advancing to Universities program.

programs.<sup>122</sup>

Many Hispanics (including legal residents and citizens) are experiencing discrimination as a result of increased public attention to the debate over undocumented immigration and stepped-up enforcement measures. In 2007, a national Pew Hispanic Center survey documented that as a result of the current climate, 41 percent of Hispanics reported that they, a family member or a close friend had experienced discrimination in the past five years. Between 10 percent and 25 percent of Hispanics report having more trouble securing a job and finding or keeping housing. More than half of Hispanics (54 percent) say discrimination is keeping them from succeeding in the United States.<sup>123</sup> **These two competing pressures—the need for labor and the state’s rising social and political immigrant-related tensions—highlight the importance of private-sector engagement and the need to support Hispanic employees through initiatives that promote their integration.**

In the 1990s, as the demand for labor grew in shipbuilding yards and in the oil industry in the southern coastal areas, Mexican immigrants began to arrive in larger numbers in Louisiana and New Orleans. After Katrina, Hispanic workers have contributed to supplying the much-needed labor force in New Orleans. Half of the construction workers in New Orleans are Hispanic. Given that about 30 percent of residents remain displaced or have not returned to New Orleans the presence of new migrant workers is key for the success of existing businesses and new businesses opening in New Orleans.

### **NEW ORLEANS AS A NEW GATEWAY FOR HISPANIC IMMIGRANTS**

Before the 1990s, Louisiana had not been a traditional destination for immigrants. The foreign-born population represented about 2 percent of the total population in 1980. Hondurans, one of the main immigrant groups in the state, had settled in New Orleans since the 1940s as workers for the United Fruit Company. A relatively small number of Cubans, Costa Ricans, Guatemalans, Mexicans, and Nicaraguans also lived in New Orleans.

However, in the 1990s, as the demand for labor grew in shipbuilding yards and in the oil industry, Mexican immigrants began to arrive in larger numbers to Louisiana and New Orleans. As well, many Hondurans, Nicaraguans and migrants from other countries in Central America arrived in 1998 after the devastation left by Hurricane Mitch.<sup>124</sup> However, after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Hispanic immigrants flocked to New Orleans, pulled by the demand of labor to rebuild the city.

A significant part of the growth in the past three years has been due to the arrival of Hispanic immigrants attracted by the large demand for workers to rebuild the city. Informal estimates report the Hispanic population reached 100,000 in 2007 and 150,000 in 2008 (doubling the estimated number of Hispanics in the area before Katrina).

Political and social tensions have resulted from changes in the city’s demographic composition

following hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Given the limited number of resources and the region's recent experience with Hispanic immigration, many state, city and parish institutions as well as community-based programs working with immigrant integration face great demands on their services and resources. This situation represents a key challenge for the future of the city and the region and illustrates the need for collaborative initiatives between the public and private sectors.

**Immigration to New Orleans after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita**

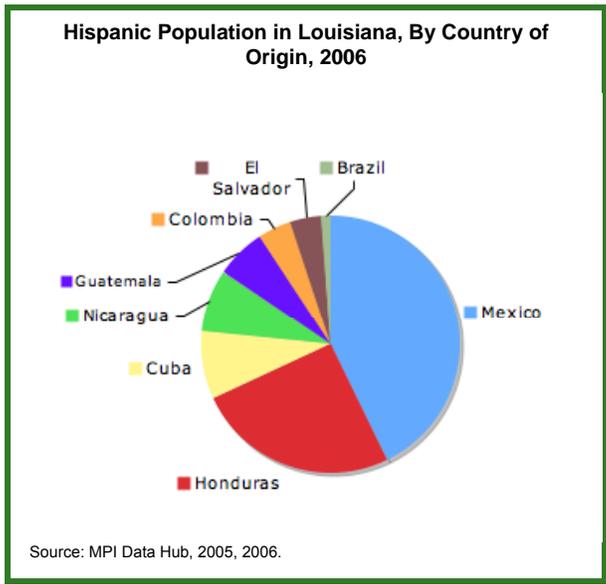
In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina (August 29, 2005) the population of New Orleans was reduced by more than half. The return of residents in the past three years has been slow. By early 2008, the New Orleans population reached the 300,000 mark, which represents about two-thirds of the pre-Katrina population.<sup>125</sup> A significant part of this growth has been due to the arrival of Hispanic immigrants attracted by the large demand for workers to rebuild the city.

“Because they are young and lack roots in the United States, many recent migrants are ideal for the explosion of construction jobs to come. Those living in the U.S. will relocate to the Gulf Coast, while others will come from south of the border. Most will not intend to stay where their new jobs are, but the longer the jobs last, the more likely they will settle permanently.”

-Gregory Rodriguez, "La Nueva Orleans," *Los Angeles Times*, September 25, 2005.

Given the irregularity in demand for workers as well as the difficulty in obtaining information about migrant workers who live in hotels, shelters, tent cities, and other temporary arrangements, large discrepancies exist in regard to the number of Hispanic workers in the New Orleans area. This poses a challenge for assessing their needs, recognizing their contributions and generating the attention of government officials, the private

sector and support groups to the issue of Hispanic integration in New Orleans.



The number of Hispanic workers in the New Orleans reconstruction zones was estimated at around 60,000 in 2006 (40,875 for Jefferson Parish and 21,319 for Orleans Parish).<sup>126</sup> Informal estimates report the Hispanic population reached 100,000 in 2007 and 150,000 in 2008 (doubling the estimated number of Hispanics in the area before Katrina).<sup>127</sup> Although most of the population had previously concentrated in Jefferson Parish, they are now

moving to other parts of the city.<sup>128</sup>

Before the hurricane, the Hispanic population in the Greater New Orleans area constituted 3.1 percent of the total population in Orleans Parish and 8.1 percent in Jefferson Parish.<sup>129</sup> By August 2006, according to a survey by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, this population had grown to 9.9 percent in Orleans Parish and 9.6 percent in Jefferson Parish, though the total population of those parishes had diminished.<sup>130</sup>

By 2006, almost half of the foreign-born population (48.3 percent) in Louisiana came from Latin America. Of this total, about 36.2 percent were from

“After the hurricane the entire city was empty, and then all of a sudden you saw these new Hispanic, Latino workers in town...There is still concern about immigrants coming in and taking jobs that could go to local individuals, but we know there is a huge demand for this type of work force, construction workers, and the local supply is not enough to meet the demand, so you do need this help.”

-Martin Gutierrez, quoted by Priscilla Greear, “New Orleans Archdiocese Increases Outreach To Hispanic Laborers”, *The Georgia Bulletin*, August 24, 2006.

Mexico and Central America (with Mexico and Honduras as the main sending countries), 7.3 percent from the Caribbean (with 3.4 percent coming from Cuba) and 4.8 percent from South America (with Colombia and Brazil as the leading sending countries).<sup>131</sup> Although a large number are undocumented, many are U.S.-born and naturalized citizens or guest workers with H-2 visas.

As Elizabeth Fussell has noted, one year after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the New Orleans population had shifted from being 67 percent African American and less than a third white, with small Asian and Hispanic minorities, “to having nearly equal proportions of blacks and whites (47.0 percent and 42.7 percent respectively) and somewhat larger Asian (3.5 percent) and particularly

Hispanic (9.6 percent) minorities.”<sup>132</sup> This represents a major shift in the ethnic and racial composition of the city. It is likely that many migrant workers will remain in the city even after the demand for low-skill work in construction declines. A survey conducted by Elizabeth Fussell in 2007 reported that 55 percent of Nicaraguans, 67 percent of Brazilians and 38.5 percent of Mexicans respectively, said they planned to stay permanently or more than a year.<sup>133</sup> The future of the city will be determined in part, by how the local community, the government and the private sector address the reality of new immigration to New Orleans and their ability to provide housing, employment, education, and health services.

A number of companies and community-based organizations in New Orleans are leading the efforts to promote the integration of Hispanic immigrants. They offer English-language programs, facilitate access to financial institutions, life and work-skills

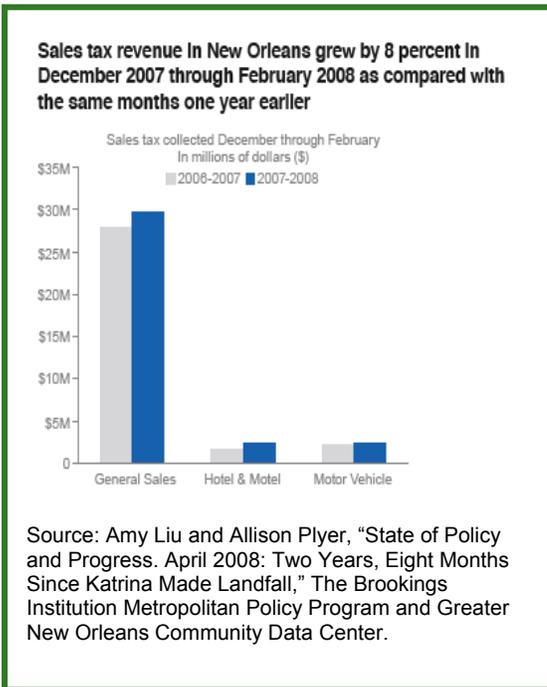
“Even after the construction work dries up, which isn't expected for a year or two, there will be a huge demand for waiters, cooks, janitors and maids—and Latinos are likely to fill many of those jobs.”

—“Immigrants rush to New Orleans as builders fight for workers,” *Workpermit.com*, October 11, 2005.

training, support business development, assist in housing and transportation, and offer access to health care. These efforts exemplify the social responsibility of the business community and demonstrate the positive results of Hispanic integration for the local community, for the companies involved and for the U.S. economy and society.

### ***The Economic Contributions of Hispanics in New Orleans***

Hispanic immigrants have led reconstruction efforts and made significant contributions to the Louisiana and New Orleans economies.



- Half of the construction workers in New Orleans are Hispanic. The Brookings Institution reports that by April 2008 New Orleans was home to 71.5 percent of the households it had before Katrina; in the six-parish area, 86.9 percent of households are functioning.<sup>134</sup> This is due in part to the work of Hispanic immigrants who have "guttered, roofed and painted houses and hauled away garbage, debris and downed trees."<sup>135</sup>

- Hispanic workers have contributed to supplying the

much-needed labor force in New Orleans. With 30 percent of residents still displaced or not yet returned, the presence of new migrant workers is essential for the success of the city's existing and new businesses.<sup>136</sup> By the last quarter of 2006, 79 percent of pre-Katrina employers had returned to New Orleans and 91 percent to the metro area (by 2007, 9,368 employers had closed or moved out since Katrina).<sup>137</sup> As of the second quarter of 2007, 6,093 firms started up or moved into the area. Meanwhile unemployment rates continue near historic lows of 3.1 percent, which makes it

"New Orleans residents appreciate the contributions of Hispanics to the city, but there are still many social walls to overcome. If we educate and embrace these people as fellow citizens, then hopefully crime rates will drop, boundaries will be forgotten and New Orleans will be recognized as a trilingual city."

-Andrea Pinto, in "Tropical New Orleans," *Neighbors Partnership Network*, December 11, 2007.

difficult for employers to fill vacancies.<sup>138</sup>

- Hispanic immigrants have helped stabilize cities and communities experiencing a population decline and decrease in tax payments.<sup>139</sup> Nationally, Hispanic immigrants' tax payments exceed the costs of services they are expected to use.<sup>140</sup> Their taxes are also a significant contribution to public revenues. The New Orleans sales tax revenue from December 2007 through February 2008 rose by 8 percent compared to the same period in 2007.<sup>141</sup>

Despite these contributions, precarious economic conditions in New Orleans have generated concerns about the potential costs of immigration and the ethnic and racial changes in communities.

The high levels of poverty, the limited access to housing and public services, and the racial tensions on New Orleans will have an impact on the integration of Hispanic newcomers.

As in other parts of the country, responses from the local population and the authorities are ambiguous. While some groups provide support to Hispanics, others focus on restricting access to services, particularly for undocumented Hispanics. This influences immigrants' integration and affects the social and economic development of the

communities involved.<sup>142</sup> The role of civil society and of the public and private sectors is key in supporting this process and drawing attention to the needs and contributions of Hispanics in New Orleans. Many of these programs and initiatives are described in this white paper.

### ***The Challenge of Hispanic Integration in New Orleans***

Integration studies across different cities and states conclude that "context matters." As Helen Marrow explains, "the size and characteristics of cities, towns and rural areas can be expected to influence how immigrants experience the United States and interact with local Americans; how local Americans react to new immigrants and receive them; and how existing institutional structures, cultures, and historical memories factor into the long-term incorporation of immigrants at the "new" destinations, versus "old" historical destinations in major cities."<sup>143</sup> The high levels of poverty, the limited access to housing and public services, and the racial tensions in New Orleans will have an impact

"While the immediate aftermath focused on the inadequacies of the relief efforts, a rising death toll, and the more than one million persons displaced by the storm (including legal and illegal immigrants), concern has now shifted to reconstruction in these areas. In fact, very soon after the hurricane, newspapers reported that Spanish-speaking, foreign-born laborers were arriving in large numbers, many lured by the promise of better earnings in the construction industry."

-Katharine Donato and Shirin Hakimazdeh, "The Changing Face of the Gulf Coast," January, 2006.

on the integration of Hispanic newcomers. As has been the case with previous waves of immigrants, and with Hispanic immigrants in traditional settlement areas, the second and third generations in new destinations such as New Orleans will likely follow similar patterns of integration if provided with adequate infrastructure and resources.

The vulnerability and high level of poverty among the population of New Orleans was made evident after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The median household income for New Orleans was \$27,133 and over 27 percent of New Orleans lived below the poverty line when Katrina hit.<sup>144</sup> After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the conditions in which the native and foreign-born live and work have worsened. Although significant strides have been made, the city is still in need of basic infrastructure and support systems such as affordable and safe housing, public schools, public transportation, child care, and public benefits.<sup>145</sup> In this context, recently arrived Hispanics are vulnerable given their limited English proficiency. This puts them at risk of employer abuse, homelessness, and health and safety problems. Support from the public and private sectors will help reduce the risks faced by this population and facilitate their integration.

**Employment and Wages.** In New Orleans, most Hispanics work in lower-wage jobs.<sup>146</sup> About 45 percent of reconstruction workers are Hispanic.<sup>147</sup> The majority arrived in New Orleans after August 2005 and many were already living in the United States (41 percent in Texas and 10 percent in Florida).<sup>148</sup> Seventy percent of construction workers are U.S. citizens or permanent residents, while 25

Recognizing the importance of skill and language development, as well as the safety and productivity of their employees, **Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding Gulf Coast Operations** has developed a pilot program in New Orleans site that provides on-site training programs in both Spanish and English.

percent are undocumented workers and five percent have a work permit.<sup>149</sup> The majority are male (93 percent) and the average age is 38 years.<sup>150</sup>

The construction jobs available (including demolition, hauling out debris, putting in drywall, etc.) are poorly paid and generally performed under unhealthy and unsafe conditions. On average, immigrants earn between \$8 and \$12 an hour.<sup>151</sup> Workers with higher skills such as flooring and tile

specialists, carpenters and roofers generally have higher wages. As reported by the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Workers Justice Center, migrant workers have also been victims of employer abuse—50 percent of them reported receiving less money than expected when paid and 41 percent said they had problems being paid.<sup>152</sup>

**English Acquisition.** Overall, the foreign-born Limited English Proficient (LEP) population in Louisiana increased by 27.3 percent between 2000 and 2006. Almost half of the foreign-born population (46.9 percent) is LEP and the majority of this group (64.6 percent) are Spanish speakers. In Louisiana, 19.6 percent of persons who spoke Spanish at home lived in poverty.<sup>153</sup>

**Education.** The number of foreign born in Louisiana with less than a high-school diploma increased by 41.8 percent between 1990 and 2000; this number decreased by 8.7 percent between 2000 and 2006.<sup>154</sup> Still, in 2006, almost 30 percent of the population in the New Orleans area had less than a high school degree and 25 percent of all foreign born in Louisiana had not completed high school.<sup>155</sup>

As seen nationwide, the level of education is related to the language spoken at home. In Louisiana, while 19.3 percent of those who spoke only English lacked a high school diploma, 28 percent of the Spanish-speaking population had not completed high school.<sup>156</sup> Given their generally low levels of education, most Hispanics who recently arrived in Louisiana take jobs that require lower skills.

The growth of the Hispanic school-age population in New Orleans will pose a key challenge for schools, as most of these children speak Spanish at

“... the New Orleans region has recovered the vast majority of its job base and labor force. The challenge is that two key sectors— health and education, and leisure and hospitality—are still missing one-quarter of their pre-Katrina workers, hurting schools, health care and tourism.”

-Amy Liu, Deputy Director, Metropolitan Policy Program, “Two Years after the Storm: Housing Needs in the Gulf Coast,” September 25, 2007.

home and require English as a Second Language (ESL) training. The fact that many public schools in New Orleans are still not open represents a challenge both for the children of immigrants and for the returning population. By December 2006, only four of New Orleans’ 117 public school schools had reopened, with charter schools filling the gap.<sup>157</sup> According to the New Orleans Index, produced by the Brookings Institute, from fall 2007 to spring 2008 public school enrollment increased by 738 students in Orleans Parish, compared to a gain of 514

students one year earlier. Enrollment in all other parishes decreased in the same period, which could indicate that some students are transferring back to Orleans Parish.<sup>158</sup>

**Health.** Few workers in New Orleans have medical insurance or seek medical care. As documented in the report, “Rebuilding After Katrina: A Population-Based Study of Labor and Human Rights in New Orleans,” less than half (43 percent) of construction workers had medical insurance in 2006. Among construction workers who reported health problems, only 27 percent sought medical treatment. Many workers lack health and safety training on the job as well as the appropriate protective gear. Only 16 percent reported having gloves, goggles and a face mask while working under unsanitary and dangerous conditions.

“Many did not realize the devastation here. They believed housing wouldn’t be a problem. They find themselves in trouble in terms of housing and health care. For regular citizens, health care is a mess; for immigrant workers it’s even worse.”

-Martin Gutierrez, quoted by Priscilla Greear, *The Georgia Bulletin*, August 24, 2006.

Many suffer serious injuries on the job and frequently report health problems.<sup>159</sup>

Although the region has recovered the majority of its job base and labor force, the health and education sectors are still missing one-quarter of their pre-Katrina population.<sup>160</sup>

### ***The Role of Community Groups and the Public Sector***

The majority of Hispanics that recently arrived in New Orleans have low incomes, low levels of English proficiency and education and moderate financial literacy. There is a growing need for English-language courses, translators in schools and health systems, and support in access to services. However, there are still limited resources and infrastructure to assist both the returning population and new immigrants (both Hispanic and other groups). Competition for housing and for placements in a limited number of schools have led to negative perceptions of immigrants and backlash.

In order to develop successful and far-reaching policies, the characteristics of Hispanic population need to be considered in the design and implementation of education and health care programs, housing and transportation infrastructure.

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immigrants (both Hispanic and other groups). Competition for housing and for placements in a limited number of schools have led to negative perceptions of immigrants and backlash.

As described in the case of Atlanta, strong local and regional identities in the South shape attitudes toward immigrants. The tensions between Hispanics and African Americans that exist in some parts of the country have surfaced strongly in New Orleans. Those with lower incomes and limited access to institutional support to aid their return to their homes and jobs perceive great costs from Hispanic immigration. There is a need to balance the debate by highlighting immigrants' contributions to New Orleans through their labor, tax payments and purchasing power.

### ***Community-Based Initiatives***

The **Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans** is one of main religious organizations that advocates for the support of the Hispanic community and provides services for this group. Catholic Charities currently operates 51 programs in the area, two of which specifically target the Hispanic and immigrant community: Hispanic Apostolate Community Services and Immigration and Refugee Services. The Hispanic Apostolate Community Services offers emergency assistance through financial support (they have provided more than \$10 million in direct assistance), meals, counseling, and welfare and legal referral. Its services also include tax preparation services, English and citizenship classes, tutoring, workers' rights education, case assistance, and health referrals. The Immigration and Refugee Services offers immigration counseling and legal services for low-income and indigent immigrants, asylees, refugees and victims of domestic violence. They are also a partner at the St. Joseph Rebuild Center, which serves the homeless and working poor and links Spanish speakers to the services offered at the Center and in other locations. Additionally, other Catholic Charities programs have bilingual staff members that

facilitate services for Spanish speakers, including family and trauma counseling for survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

According to Martin Gutierrez, director of the Hispanic Apostolate Pastoral Office and Executive Director of Neighborhood and Community Services for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, the demand for their services has increased three-fold from 5,000 to 15,000 individuals after Katrina. In the two years following Katrina, the Job Service Office of the Catholic Charities assisted 2,674 individuals seeking employment by providing support in writing resumes and applications and preparing for interviews, as well as job training and placement.<sup>161</sup> The organization's adult ESL programs have the highest demand—more than 500 adults are enrolled at several sites around the city.<sup>162</sup>

“Thousands of workers have been lured to New Orleans to rebuild the city at the lowest cost and highest rate of profit. Migrant workers—immigrant and non-immigrant, documented and undocumented—are facing challenges similar to those of survivors. Moreover, the city’s reconstruction plan is dominated by a system of private contractors that relies upon and benefits from the vulnerability of migrant workers. Unable to vote or otherwise participate in the reconstruction of New Orleans, migrant workers similarly are unable to hold institutions accountable—even as they rebuild the city.”

-Judith Browne-Dianis, Jennifer Lai, Marielena Hincapie and Saket Soni, “And Injustice For All: Workers’ Lives in the Reconstruction of New Orleans,” July 2006.

The support from private donors, as exemplified by grants from Capital One (described in the next section), is essential in continuing these efforts.

Additionally, in partnership with **CLINIC, Loyola Law Clinic and the Southern Poverty Law Center** the Archdiocese helped establish the Workers’ Justice Center. The Center provides Hispanic workers with information about their rights and promotes their organization in order to defend against discrimination and employer abuse.<sup>163</sup> Through the **Latino Health Access Network**, the Archdiocese refers Hispanics to community organizations and health providers that offer medical care to the uninsured and underinsured.

“We truly make a big positive impact...The object of this collective effort is to make Hispanics integral, productive members of the community. Then relationships will be symbiotic; people helping each other to make New Orleans even better than what it used to be...Even if this simply means that one mother or father in the ESL program is now capable of talking to their child’s teacher, then we have made a difference.”

-Martin Gutierrez, quoted by Andrea Pinto, *Neighbors Partnership Network*, December 11, 2007.

Another religious group that has been actively involved with the Hispanic community since 1998 is the **Monte de los Olivos Lutheran Church** in Kenner, Louisiana. Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Pastor Jesus Gonzalez has provided shelter and food to local residents

affected by the hurricanes and to the new Hispanic population. The church also offers English classes and clinics in addition to religious services.<sup>164</sup>

The **New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice (NOWCRJ)**, directed by Saket Soni, seeks to empower workers and promote worker participation in the post-Katrina New Orleans. Through the development of the **Workers' Center**, the NOWCRJ organizes day laborers and migrant workers and develops leaders within the community. These leaders can then provide support in cases such as wage and discrimination claims, police harassment, immigration raids, and dangerous working and living conditions. In the medium and long term, the Center's objective is to develop the necessary infrastructure to defend and expand workers' rights at the local and state level and lead the organization of multi-racial and racial justice movements that support construction and hospitality/service workers. Members of the Worker Justice Center include the Advancement Project, Common Ground, Gillis Long Poverty Law Center, Hope House, Latino Health Outreach Project, Loyola Law Clinic, National Immigration Law Center, New Orleans Students United for Worker Justice, People's Institute, and the People's Hurricane Relief Fund's (PHRF) Economic Justice Committee.

"Should we allow New Orleans to be rebuilt on the backs of the most vulnerable workers? Is this our vision of a new New Orleans?"

-Southern Poverty Law Center, "Broken Levees, Broken Promises: New Orleans' Migrant Workers in Their Own Words," 2006.

In addition to its social work, an important contribution of the NOWCRJ, together with the **Advancement Project** and the **National Immigration Law Center**, was the publication of the report "And Injustice For All: Workers' Lives in the Reconstruction of New Orleans." Based on surveys of workers in the New Orleans area the report provides information about the challenges they face in terms of discrimination, access to housing, crime, work conditions, and health.<sup>165</sup>

The Catholic Legal Immigration Network also published the document "Employment Problems in Louisiana and Mississippi: An Advocacy Manual." Its main goal is to give workers guidance on their rights and identify situations in

"Latinos have given a lot of support to New Orleans. We didn't come here to harm anyone—we're here doing our best. We ask of you, the authorities in New Orleans and anywhere else, that you just look at us too. Look at us because we came to better your city, to better the state. We're seeking only the rights that everyone deserves."

-Hector, a Hispanic migrant worker, quoted in "Broken Levees, Broken Promises: New Orleans' Migrant Workers in Their Own Words," 2006.

which they should seek legal advice. It also refers them to government agencies and organizations that can provide legal assistance, health care, job placement, training, and education.<sup>166</sup>

**Puentes New Orleans, Inc.**, is a non-profit organization launched in 2007 that seeks to empower Hispanics and encourage, promote and advance their full integration into the New

Orleans community. Its main programs are related to housing, economic,

cultural, and educational growth, research and advocacy. Through the LatiNola website, Puentes seeks to organize and inform Hispanics about issues relevant to the community and promote civic engagement. For example, in February 2008, LatiNola launched the “LatiNola Votes!” campaign with the goal of registering 2,000 Hispanic voters before the presidential elections. Lucas Díaz, Executive Director of Puentes, also launched a newsletter for the Hispanic community (“LatiNola Speaks”) and is working on a project to facilitate access to housing. Corporations such as Deutsche Bank America, ASI Federal Credit Union, Capital One Bank and non-profit organizations including Providence Community Housing, Enterprise Community Partners, and the Hispanic Apostolate support Puentes.

In 2004, the **Southern Poverty Law Center**, a non-profit organization established in 1971 in Alabama, launched the *Immigrant Justice Project* (IJP). Led by Attorney J.J. Rosenbaum, the main goal of the IJP is to provide legal assistance to migrant workers in the South through litigation and community outreach. After Hurricane Katrina, the Center added an initiative dedicated specifically to protecting workers in New Orleans. The IJP established a toll-free number and outreach programs in the city to monitor discrimination and workplace conditions among migrant workers. It filed two lawsuits against major reconstruction contractors in New Orleans and has advocated for stronger federal enforcement of worker protection laws. The IJP has also advocated for legislative reform to improve existing wage and hour conditions. Legal assistance and representation is provided for workers in partnership with the Loyola Law School Workplace Justice Clinic and the Hispanic Apostolate. Through publications such as “Broken Levees, Broken Promises: New Orleans’ Migrant Workers in Their Own Words,” the Center seeks to bring public attention to issues of worker exploitation in New Orleans.

Various universities and public schools in New Orleans and Louisiana and neighboring states have created special programs dedicated to the Hispanic community that focus both on research and on education services. In 2006, **Tulane University** incorporated a service-learning component to the undergraduate core curriculum to foster faculty and students’ civic engagement and involvement in the city’s revival. The **Center for Public Service** at Tulane was established in 2006 to promote the engagement of faculty and students with the larger New Orleans community through public service initiatives, some of which involve the Hispanic community.<sup>167</sup> In June 2008, Tulane hosted the

“An investment by private foundations, along with other contributing sources, in developing an infrastructure consisting of Latino community-based organizations is most needed in parts of the country where Latino communities are emerging and growing at a steady pace, such as the region ravaged by Hurricane Katrina. Private foundations, which currently on average give between 0 percent and 3 percent of their grant money to Latino nonprofits, can play a pivotal role in increasing the presence and capacity of grassroots, Latino-serving organizations in these areas.”

-Brenda Muñiz, “In The Eye of the Storm: How The Government and Private Response to Hurricane Katrina Failed Latinos,” 2006.

Language Access Coalition's community leaders forum to discuss possible solutions for the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) among the Vietnamese and Hispanic communities in New Orleans.

**Southeastern Louisiana University** provides instructors for business development workshops and seminars at the Workers Justice Center and at

"The media are a site of discourse and their representation of Latinos is politically significant. It is also an important influence on racial attitudes and therefore influences Latino migrants' reception in New Orleans. Within the city, the media frame a context that can either promote or inhibit a positive reception for Latino migrants."

-Nicole Trujillo-Pagán, "From 'Gateway to the Americas' to the 'Chocolate City': The Racialization of Latinos in New Orleans," 2007.

other community group events. The university also offers management oversight and administrative support for the **Hispanic Business Resources and Technology Center (HBRTC)** (described in detail below).

The **Jefferson Parish Public Schools'** adult education programs offer ESL courses and donate classroom space for community groups that provide education and training services.

Labor unions have also helped protect and train New Orleans' workers (including Hispanic immigrants), and assist with reconstruction efforts. The **Service Employees International Union (SEIU)** and the **Laborers Union** established a new Worker Resource Center that offers free classes in job skills

such as mold remediation, demolition and basic construction, as well as training for certified nurse and home health aides. After the first class, the "OSHA 10-hour" in basic safety, a spokesman for the Center said "the thirty graduates were snapped up by employers the next day."<sup>168</sup> **AFL-CIO** provided \$700 million for construction of apartments, hotels and hospitals, as well as home mortgages.

The **National Council of La Raza (NCLR)** has been one of the leading Hispanic organizations engaged in the reconstruction of New Orleans, with a particular emphasis on the need to provide services, support and information to Hispanics.<sup>169</sup> Given the increased demand for services from community-based organizations affiliated with NCLR in Katrina-affected areas and in states that received large numbers of

"The growing Hispanic population in southeast Louisiana presents a unique and distinctive socio-economic challenge. As Hispanics move into the region seeking economic opportunities, specific needs are emerging. A variety of work and social skills must be developed and nurtured. Business skills and guidance must be offered. These needs must be recognized and addressed to facilitate a holistic assimilation of a growing Hispanic population into southeast Louisiana and develop a strong and literate workforce."

-Aristides R. Baraya, Michael Craig Budden, Luz M. Escobar, "Strategically Enhancing Business Capabilities and Social Development in the Hispanic Community," 2007.

evacuees, La Raza established the Katrina Relief Fund to support relief work and

services for the affected population. Corporate and individual donors—including McDonald’s Corporation, Coors Brewing Company, Travers Enterprises, Allstate Insurance Company, Time Warner, Inc., Citigroup, and Wal-Mart—donated more than \$200,000.<sup>170</sup>

The local media has also responded to the growth of the Hispanic population in New Orleans. *La Prensa*, a Spanish newspaper, is published twice a month<sup>171</sup> and *The Times-Picayune* runs an employment supplement in both Spanish and English.<sup>172</sup> *Radio Tropical* (1540 AM)—a Spanish-language radio station owned and managed by a Guatemalan immigrant, Ernesto Schweikert, “played a key role in disseminating news to the Hispanic community during and after Katrina.”<sup>173</sup> Only days after the hurricane, the station returned to the air to provide residents with information about family members and disaster relief assistance.<sup>174</sup> KGLA-TV Channel 42—a Spanish-language channel launched by **Telemundo**<sup>175</sup> and **WYES TV** have also promoted English-language training programs. **Cox Communications** hosts a popular TV show in Spanish, “*De Todo un Poco*,” that has dedicated various programs to information about health and safety issues in New Orleans.

The availability of data is key for evaluating the progress of reconstruction, repopulation and economic recovery in New Orleans. The **Brookings Institution** and the **Greater New Orleans Community Data Center** have made important contributions to monitoring the social and economic recovery in the Gulf Coast through the “Katrina Index” and is currently published quarterly as “The New Orleans Index.”<sup>176</sup> In 2006, the **Louisiana Public Health Institute** conducted a survey on behalf of the **Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals** with valuable information about the characteristics of the population in the areas affected by Katrina and Rita, including age, race, sex, health, income, homeownership, and education. Still, more data is needed to assess the size and characteristics of the Hispanic population in New Orleans as most of the existing estimates are informal.

### ***State and Local Initiatives***

Policy programs to support new immigrants have been a lower priority than reconstruction and rebuilding efforts. However, to develop successful and far-reaching policies, the characteristics of the Hispanic population need to be considered in the design and implementation of education and health care programs, housing and transportation infrastructure.

In addition, many Hispanics (including legal residents and citizens) report experiencing discrimination as a result of increased public attention to the debate over undocumented immigration and stepped-up enforcement measures. In the New Orleans area, the police have been accused of profiling the Hispanic population.<sup>177</sup> After Katrina, concerns about immigration among the native residents led to the revival of a law passed in 2002 that allows police to arrest people they suspect are undocumented. The police enforced this law more actively after Katrina and reportedly discriminated against Hispanics. In response to accusations from lawyers and civil rights groups, in February 2007, the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) issued a directive prohibiting officers from making arrests based on immigration status after a traffic violation.<sup>178</sup> The NOPD

has also offered Spanish-language courses to improve communication between police officers and non-English speaking Hispanics.<sup>179</sup>

The City of New Orleans has developed various initiatives to support its workforce. The Office of Workforce Development, established in 2003, provides job training and job placement services through work centers. Since Katrina, the office has increased its efforts to reach out to the Hispanic community. **In March 2007, Mayor C. Ray Nagin announced the launch of the “JOB1 Career Solutions Mobile Unit,” developed by the Office of Workforce Development and the organization Louisiana Works.** JOB1 is a “rolling career center and training facility” that travels to different areas to help citizens register for job training programs.<sup>180</sup>

In the highly sensitive context of New Orleans’ recovery, Hispanics have reported experiencing discrimination when searching for homes to rent or purchase.<sup>181</sup> This affects their ability to integrate and succeed in the United States, as reported by a 2007 Pew Hispanic Center survey.<sup>182</sup> **Private sector engagement is crucial to support Hispanic immigrants through initiatives that promote their integration, such as those described in the next chapter.**

In response to the growth of Hispanics in New Orleans, **ASI Federal Credit Union**, a nonprofit agency working in the New Orleans area, currently offers Hispanic workers “safe” savings accounts and ATM cards that can also be used by families in the home country. As Mignhon Tourne, the CEO of ASI explains, the main goal is to create economic empowerment among underserved communities such as Hispanics.

## VI. THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

By taking advantage of the opportunities available in the U.S. labor market, the 35.7 million foreign born have become a significant component of American society and a key factor in its growth and productivity. To maximize the benefits and potential of a dynamic and growing immigrant population, and minimize any costs implied, it is necessary for the public and private sectors to provide opportunities for their full economic, social and political integration.

With limited funding available for federal programs supporting immigrant integration and without a comprehensive strategy to address this issue,<sup>183</sup> public-private initiatives are even more imperative. Many state initiatives (including health, education, English acquisition, citizenship training, documentation programs, and city or state offices dedicated to immigrant affairs) are successfully implemented as a collaborative effort with community organizations and other institutions. However, projects are generally insufficient in resources and scope and are not widespread across the country. Thus, employers, community groups, religious organizations, immigrant advocates and civil society play a crucial role in supplementing integration-related services and opportunities.

For employers of Hispanics, integration of the foreign born contributes to increased worker productivity and job stability. Company-sponsored initiatives can help increase worker loyalty and minimize turnover. At the same time, a more integrated workforce can reduce social tensions, both in and outside of the workplace. Providing the tools for integration also builds social capital, opens opportunities for upward mobility and increases immigrants' income and purchasing power, which is injected back into the economy.

- Increasing immigrants' **access to education, skills development** and improving **English proficiency** strengthens their position in the community and promotes **participation**, diminishing isolation and discrimination. Moreover, it increases opportunities for **upward mobility** in the second and third generations.
- Improving immigrants' financial literacy opens the door for **access to banking services, credit, mortgages and loans**, which eventually allow for the support of their children's college education, or the ability to make investments or purchase a home—a sign of stability and long-term commitment to both communities and jobs.
- Facilitating **access to health care** increases productivity, encourages preventive care and reduces the high costs associated with emergency room use by the uninsured. At the same time, the country's overall quality of health is improved.
- Providing information about **naturalization** and **civic participation** can encourage political participation, promote civic values, and reinforce

immigrants' desire and commitment to become English-language proficient and root themselves in the fabric of communities.

## ***BUSINESS BEST PRACTICES***

The *AS/COA Hispanic Integration Initiative* has identified examples of corporations in key sectors of the U.S. economy that promote the integration of Hispanic immigrants. Best practices are catalogued by type of activity:

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS**

Many companies recognize that investing in training and promoting the social and economic integration of the Hispanic workforce is beneficial. Employer training services, such as English-language classes, foster a better work environment, allow for the provision of better services and increase productivity.

- One of the largest concrete construction companies in the U.S., **Miller & Long Concrete Construction**, has nearly 85 percent foreign-born employees from El Salvador. Due to the need to attract and retain labor in a notoriously fluid industry and the changing demographics of the mid-Atlantic region's labor market over the past 15 years, Miller & Long has developed a unique philosophy and spirit. The company sees employees as members of a big family, embracing the "whole employee" including their family members. As part of these efforts to fully integrate foreign-born employees, bilingual staff is available at the workplace to offer help with medical and legal services. In addition, the company offers English and Spanish-language classes during off-hours like Saturdays. The company's education and skill-training programs for employees offer a wide range of options such as language and math courses related specifically to construction, management training (including an immigration seminar), safety at the workplace, community and personal development seminars, technology training and apprenticeship courses. In 2008, Miller & Long organized its first annual Employee Health and Wellness Fair.

"We believe in the holistic approach to workforce training –not only what construction entails, but also offering programs such English and Spanish language training for more effective communication between Hispanic and non-Hispanic employees and to improve personal management skills."

-Romina Byrd, Director of Education and Training, Miller & Long Concrete Construction, June 2008.

- The **Norsan Group**, an Atlanta-based restaurant and meat distribution company, offers ESL classes on Saturdays at a variety of locations convenient to its employees (70 percent of which are Hispanic). They have found that by offering Spanish classes it stimulates a mutual effort

between English and Spanish-speaking employees to understand and interact with each other, building acceptance, respect and workforce cohesion. The Norsan Group emphasizes both a “disciplined” work atmosphere and promotion from within to foster long-term job stability and employee loyalty.

- **Tecta America Corporation** is the nation's largest commercial roofing contractor, operating over 50 locations across the continental United States. Of its more than 3,500 employees, approximately 30 percent are Hispanic. In order to address the needs of Hispanic employees with limited English proficiency, Tecta America provides “*Sed de Saber*”<sup>\*</sup> ESL teaching modules based on interactive books and other materials. The emphasis is on concepts such as safety and vocabulary essential in the construction industry. Many employees use the materials at home with family members, so learning English becomes a shared experience. As of January 2008, Tecta America also provides Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) courses to managers and crew leads. In addition, the company offers a yearly scholarship fund that offers assistance for up to four years to the children of employees.

- **Sodexo, Inc.** is a leading food and facilities management services in North America. Of its 120,000 employees, 17 percent of Sodexo's total workforce is Hispanic. Sodexo understands the language challenges that many of its employees and managers face as they attempt to communicate with one another and with the company's customer base. By overcoming language barriers, employees can meet performance expectations, remain safe, and be granted the opportunity for career advancement. Sodexo provides language solutions, such as ESL and

“Sodexo understands that a tapestry of diverse backgrounds, styles, and beliefs adds value to our workforce and we work hard to ensure that inclusiveness.”

-Dr. Rohini Anand, Senior Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer for Sodexo, July 2007.

SSL programs that include customized Translator Guides and “*Sed de Saber*” materials, among others. Sodexo managers encourage employees to utilize the wide variety of materials available, and take them home to be used by the whole family. Each Sodexo site tabulates how many language kits are used and monitors progress in vocabulary acquisition and language fluidity. Managers find that it helps with retention, which is a prime concern.

Sodexo's employee network groups are a key component of its commitment to diversity. Among them is the **Sodexo Organization of**

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\* “*Sed de Saber*” is a provider of English language training for Hispanic adults. The company provides interactive materials and books that focus specifically on English language used at the workplace and at home. Their curriculums include “English for Hospitality,” “English for Construction,” “English in the Community,” and “English in Schools.”

**Latinos (SOL)**, whose mission is to support its diversity strategy by enhancing the quality of life for Hispanics, facilitating communication and interaction among its members and with community organizations.<sup>184</sup> SOL's primary strategic focus is on "developing managers to develop others." Through this targeted effort, it has produced and sponsored a number of resources and events to assist leadership in Hispanic workforce development. SOL has formed relationships with the Hispanic community through partnerships with numerous Hispanic-serving organizations. SOL also serves in an advisory capacity to Sodexo's ESL Taskforce, endorses ESL initiatives company-wide, organizes Hispanic Heritage Month events each year to promote awareness and professional networking, and is in the process of developing a mentoring program to support the professional development of its over 300 SOL members.

Additionally, Sodexo has a Supplier Diversity Program that seeks to expand its diverse vendor program as a selling point of differentiation. This program opens the door for smaller vendors, including Hispanics, to be successful.

- **American Apparel** reports that 60 percent of its workers are Hispanic. As part of the company's effort to offer proper working conditions and fair treatment of employees, workers receive paid time-off to take English-language courses on company premises.<sup>185</sup>
- In order to assist foreign-born employees struggling with English, **United Parcel Service of America, Inc. (UPS)** funds language programs and other services for immigrants offered by organizations such as Catholic Charities.<sup>186</sup>
- In Dalton, Georgia, **Shaw Industries**—one of the main carpet manufacturing companies in the area—was one of the key sponsors of the now defunct *Georgia Project*, an exchange program that brought bilingual teachers from Monterrey, Mexico to Dalton. The program included the design of a bilingual education curriculum, a Hispanic adult education and leadership initiative and a summer institute for local teachers to learn Spanish in Monterrey.<sup>187</sup> The carpet industry's "initial yet indirect sponsorship of the Georgia Project [...] provided its programs with political legitimacy and support," it also helped reduce the backlash and racist attitudes against Hispanic immigrants.<sup>188</sup>
- In 2006, **Capital One** donated \$50,000 to Catholic Charities for the reopening of *El Yo Yo Head Start*, a bilingual center in the Uptown section of New Orleans, as well as for other health care and social services for the Hispanic community.<sup>189</sup>

### **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Many major U.S. corporations support scholarship programs for Hispanics as a means to promote upward mobility. These types of programs address one of

the main obstacles for Hispanic immigrants' access to higher education—the lack of financial resources.

- **Google, Inc., Marriott, Verizon Foundation, Sodexo, Inc., Denny's, MasterCard, Inc., Ford Motor Company, Hilton, Ernst & Young, M & T Bank and Kaiser Permanente** are among the main sponsors of the Hispanic College Fund (HCF). Founded by a group of Hispanic business leaders, the HCF provides Hispanic students in financial need with an opportunity to pursue a college degree. The HCF awards over \$2 million each year to over 600 students with a view toward educating and developing the next generation of Hispanic professionals.<sup>190</sup>
- **The Coca Cola Company, Citigroup Foundation, FedEx Corporation, The UPS Foundation, Morgan Stanley Foundation, Time Warner, Inc., Bank of America, HSBC Bank USA, Nissan North America, Ford Motor Company, IDT Corporation, State Farm Mutual Automotive Insurance, Wachovia Corporation, Wells Fargo, Shell Oil Company, ExxonMobil Foundation, Hewlett Packard Company, The Procter & Gamble Company, Target, Toyota Motor Sales, General Motors Corporation, Univision Communications Inc., ING, Verizon Foundation, Mazda Foundation (USA), Inc., McDonald's, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. and Pfizer Inc.** are among the main sponsors of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSF).<sup>191</sup> HSF is the largest national program that provides funding and educational outreach for Hispanic students. With their support, in the past 32 years, the HSF has awarded more than 82,000 scholarships worth \$221 million to Hispanics from all 50 states in nearly 2,000 colleges and universities.
- **The Coca-Cola Company** supports Hispanic higher education through long-standing partnerships with organizations such as the Hispanic Scholarship Fund. The Coca-Cola Company has provided over \$3 million for HSF scholarships and their Advancing to Universities program, which encourages students to transition from two-year institutions to four-year colleges and universities. Additionally, seven years ago, The Coca-Cola Company helped start the HSF Scholarship Golf Classic in Georgia, which has raised funds for scholarships for deserving Georgia Hispanic students. The company also provides financial support for Hispanic higher education through numerous organizations such as the Mexican American Grocers Association, National Supermarket Association, League of United Latin American Citizens, National Council of La Raza, The East L.A. Community Union, Joe Baca Foundation, Cesar Chavez Foundation, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, and the National Hispanic University. They also fund internship and fellowship programs with organizations such as The National Hispana Leadership Institute, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute and the National Puerto Rican Coalition.
- Established in 1992 by **Coca-Cola's** CEO at the time, Roberto Goizueta,

the Goizueta Foundation, based in Atlanta, is one of the main sponsors of CLASE (Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education) at the University of Georgia, which provides professional development and resources for K-12 educators working with Hispanics state-wide; outreach support through mentoring/tutoring of at-risk Hispanic students; and program support in developing a pipeline to post-secondary education for Hispanic students. CLASE also provides support to Hispanic families through ESL classes, childcare, parent, and family outreach, and after-school programs. Additionally, the Center performs research aimed at informing teachers and educators on ways to reduce the achievement gap for Hispanic children and disseminate best practices on Hispanic education. Among its goals is to leverage federal, private and state funding to support relevant programs and “to create and enhance partnerships to raise the learning and social outcomes of Hispanics in Georgia and the nation.” CLASE’s first three years of operation were funded primarily by a grant from the Goizueta Foundation.<sup>192</sup>

"By improving education for Latinos and other groups who are also placed at risk of dropping out of school, researching best practices, tutoring, and other initiatives, we improve the workforce for business and industry as well as contribute to forging leadership in pursuing productive activities and businesses."

Pedro R. Portes, *The Goizueta Foundation Distinguished Chair in Latino Teacher Education and CLASE Executive Director*, May 2008.

- **State Farm Insurance** is the leading supplier of insurance for cars and homes in the Hispanic community. As part of its Hispanic community initiatives, State Farm Insurance is the primary sponsor of the *Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) Educational Handbook*, which provides information on scholarships, fellowships and internships for Hispanic students. The handbook will be available through participating State Farm agents' offices. In addition, State Farm is providing \$200,000 in educational mini-grants (\$1,000 each) to support work within Hispanic communities to close the academic achievement gap and encourage students to stay in school and earn high school diplomas. State Farm will launch an associated advertising and public relations effort called "*State Farm Es Para Mi*" (State Farm Is For Me), which will underscore the importance of culture, education and citizenship in the Hispanic community.<sup>193</sup>
- In July 2008, **AT&T Inc.** announced a \$1 million grant for LULAC's Adelante America program through the "AT&T Aspire Initiative." Through the program, an estimated 910 at-risk Hispanic students in grades eight through 10 will benefit from academic classes, mentoring and student leadership development. Program goals include: improving academic performance, reducing dropout rates among Hispanics, and achieving a

higher graduation rate. The AT&T Foundation's Aspire initiative is a \$100 million philanthropic effort that seeks to strengthen student success and workforce readiness by addressing the high number of high school dropouts, most of whom are Hispanic.<sup>194</sup>

## **FINANCIAL LITERACY**

Recognizing the growing buying power of Hispanics and the remittances sent home (Latin America and the Caribbean received more than \$68 billion in 2006<sup>195</sup>), many banks are increasingly reaching out to this population and facilitating access to services. A telling fact is that between 2002 and 2006, more than 400 financial institutions began accepting Consular IDs issued by other countries as a valid identification for bank transactions.<sup>196</sup> Beyond the interest in increasing the customer base, banks can play an important role in fostering economic and social integration by offering bilingual services, easing immigrants' access to credit and savings, and overcoming the traditional lack of confidence that Hispanics have in banking and financial institutions. When immigrants start using banks, the possibilities are increased for saving money, establishing a credit history, obtaining mortgages or loans, and investing or establishing a fund for their children's education or for retirement.<sup>197</sup> Access to banks also reduces vulnerability to crime and increases community safety, as they are able to deposit cash in an account instead of carrying it.<sup>198</sup>

"If immigrants start using banks, they could feasibly start saving money, establish credit, and eventually obtain a mortgage to buy a home... Immigrants might also invest their money, putting it toward education for a child or themselves. I don't imagine that this type of thing would happen en masse, but you can certainly imagine where one area of assimilation can affect others."

- Tomas R. Jimenez, *Christian Science Monitor*, January 26, 2006.

- A number of banks, including **Bank of America** and **Wells Fargo** also accept Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs), as valid documentation for opening interest-bearing accounts or for obtaining credit cards, loans and mortgages.<sup>199</sup>

- **Citizens Home Loan, Inc.** has originated ITIN mortgages for almost two years, with these loans making up about 20 percent of the institution's mortgage business. The default levels are almost zero. This is partly due to the fact that mortgage

applicants with ITINs undergo more scrutiny and provide more documentation than regular customers, including proof that they have been filing taxes with an ITIN for at least two years. Recently, the **Hispanic National Mortgage Association** began buying ITIN mortgages from lenders, estimating the ITIN mortgage market potential at \$85 billion. However, so far it has only generated about \$2 billion in loans overall because relatively few banks (mostly small banks) offer them.<sup>200</sup>

- **Wachovia Corporation** is the only major financial institution that offers

statements in Spanish for all its deposit accounts. It also accepts Consular IDs as a valid form of identification to open accounts and has nearly 800 designated Hispanic financial centers throughout its operating area for full in-language customer experience. Customers can always access assistance through multilingual call centers based in Miami and San Antonio, as well as via hundreds of bilingual ATMs. Finally, Wachovia offers a remittance product, Wachovia Dinero Direct Card, which allows customers to send money throughout Latin America and 160 other countries for a flat fee.

- **Wells Fargo, Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase & Co, Washington Mutual, and HSBC Bank USA** are among other banks that have developed initiatives to facilitate Hispanic immigrants' access to services. For example, **Wells Fargo, Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase & Co, and Washington Mutual** provide information about their services at foreign country consulates and help immigrants open bank accounts. Most have reduced the costs of wire transfers or offer bank accounts and ATM cards that family members can access internationally. Through the use of these services, immigrants become more familiar with financial institutions, which allows them to take advantage of opportunities to establish credit, save money and invest.

- **United Americas Bank** is the only bank in Georgia that is marketed specifically to the Hispanic community. Its board members are Hispanic, it is 48 percent Hispanic owned and the staff speak Spanish. As the leading Hispanic bank in Georgia, it has reached out successfully to this population, offering bilingual services and facilitating access to mortgages and credit. Through bilingual materials, United Americas Bank carries out campaigns to educate customers about the importance of building credit. Their "First Time Homebuyers Program," started seven years ago, emphasizes trust in the banking system and provides wide access to mortgages for first-time homebuyers lacking formal credit histories. As part of its efforts to reach out to the Hispanic population, United Americas Bank accepted Consular IDs as a valid

"United Americas Bank's mission is to serve and educate the Hispanic community and afford them the opportunity to be successful by facilitating their access to and understanding of the banking system. Through access to credit and financial services, Hispanic businesses grow, the local community grows and the financial market grows. By helping Hispanics develop a credit history we also increase their opportunities to buy homes and live the American Dream. In the past seven years, we have helped over 500 families buy a home through our First Time Homebuyers Program."

-Jorge L. Forment, President & CEO, United Americas Bank, May 2008.

formal credit histories. As part of its efforts to reach out to the Hispanic population, United Americas Bank accepted Consular IDs as a valid

identification three years before any other Georgia banks. Additionally, United Americas Bank works with the Latin American Association to provide a variety of services including financial literacy and related programs.

- In 2007, the non-profit group Louisiana Appleseed launched the Financial Access Program to provide free financial classes for immigrants and disseminate information about local banks and financial institutions such as **IberiaBank Corporation, The Greater New Orleans Federal Credit Union, Capital One Bank, Fidelity Homestead Savings Bank of New Orleans, and OMNIBANK** that offer bilingual services and easier access to bank accounts and credit for the immigrant community.<sup>201</sup> For example, **The Greater New Orleans Federal Credit Union** promotes the use of tax identification numbers as an alternative to a Social Security number for its "safe accounts" program.<sup>202</sup>

- **ASI Federal Credit Union** is a nonprofit agency working in the New Orleans area that has served low-income communities for 47 years. In response to the growth of Hispanics in New Orleans, in 2008 ASI will open a new branch that will reach out specifically to this group. This branch will have bilingual staff and all documents and materials will be available in English and in Spanish. All its branches currently offer Hispanic workers "safe" savings accounts and ATM cards that can also be used by families in the home country. The main goal is to help immigrants save money, keep it safe and build a credit history. By February 2008 ASI had opened 100 "safe" accounts.<sup>203</sup> ASI is also helping immigrants apply for federal tax ID numbers so they can start paying taxes and open interest accounts. The "all Latino" credit union in New Orleans will have an office dedicated to helping immigrants obtain ITIN numbers.

"We have targeted the Hispanic population by hiring bilingual employees at our branches and running ads on the Hispanic radio station and in the newspaper and sponsoring some of their events."

-Boyd Boudreaux, president and CEO of Fidelity, Fidelity Homestead Savings Bank of New Orleans, *The Times Picayune*, September 9, 2007.

In addition, ASI has established partnerships with Puentes, the Hispanic Apostolate and Catholic Charities, the Esperanza Charter School, and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Together with Puentes, it is working to encourage Hispanic immigrants to register to vote. ASI is also planning to offer financial education programs for young adults and their parents in partnership with the Esperanza Charter School—whose students are 50 percent Hispanic.

In early 2008, ASI opened the Clifford N. Rosenthal Community Center to promote access to local financial institutions, affordable housing, entrepreneurship, and other services for Hispanics and other underserved groups in New Orleans.<sup>204</sup> According to the vice president of the Louisiana Credit Union League, ASI has broken new ground in the

state with its “safe” accounts program and has reached out to the Hispanic community with more impact than the other 200 or more credit unions in Louisiana.<sup>205</sup>

Existing initiatives have already yielded positive results. In October 2007 *The Wall Street Journal* reported that ITIN mortgages have a delinquency rate of about 0.5 percent, compared with 1 percent for prime mortgages and 9.3 percent for subprime mortgages extended to those with bad credit histories. In October 2006, an Inter-American Development Bank survey showed that 49 percent of Latin American remittance senders had a U.S. bank account, up from 43 percent in 2004. The wider acceptance of consular ID’s by financial institutions since 2003 has significantly increased the number of immigrants that have access to banking. However, more than half of Hispanic immigrants are still unbanked; the percentage is highest among Mexicans (58 percent) and Central Americans (51 percent).<sup>206</sup> Recent immigrants are even more likely to be unbanked than the general Hispanic population. Some of the companies participating in the *AS/COA Hispanic Integration Initiative* recognize the need to encourage more consulates to issue secure versions of consular ID’s that could be accepted by financial institutions.

“We are a multicultural credit union that serves low-income communities with the goal of creating economic empowerment. Reaching out to Hispanics is part of our mission. Given the growth of Hispanic immigrants in our community, particularly after Katrina, we have increased our efforts to provide financial access and support to this underserved community.”

-Mignon Tourne, CEO, ASI Federal Credit Union, June 2008.

## **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

Another way to provide opportunities for upward mobility is to offer skills development and managerial training programs. This type of instruction provides the Hispanic workforce with increased opportunities to perform well and gain access to better jobs.

- **The Western Union Company** has focused on issues of immigrant integration for many years and one of its goals is to promote education as a tool for economic empowerment. Programs center on scholarships, skills development and financial literacy. Its most recent initiative, “Our World, Our Family,” is a \$50 million, five-year program that includes four components: “Our World Gives,” “Our World Learns,” “Our World Strives,” and “Our World Speaks”

Launched in 2007-2008, “Our World Learns” offers family scholarships that promote inter-generational learning. Each scholarship supports two or more family members such as a child and a parent. For example, the child may receive a scholarship to attend college or technical school, while the parent is offered the opportunity to enroll in ESL courses or vocational training. The idea is to provide tools for upward mobility,

promote the entire family's integration process and improve the children's learning environment at home. Between 2002 and 2007, Western Union and the Western Union Foundation donated nearly \$1 million, offering more than 900 scholarships for students, many of whom are Hispanic and are the first in their family to go to college.

In 2007, as part of a partnership with Jobs for Americans Graduates, Western Union developed a financial literacy curriculum to train and empower students. The program addresses basic information such as how to compare bank accounts, build credit, manage savings, pay bills, and other useful tools that prepare young adults to fully engage in the financial system. Specialists use a Western Union handbook to teach the program to 40,000 high school students nationally, with a specific focus on at-risk, minority and immigrant students. An adult curriculum is being developed, supporting the Hispanic community in the United States.

"Our World Strives" focuses on asset building and entrepreneurial training through the National Hispanic Business Information Clearinghouse (NHBIC). After being started with Western Union funds, NHBIC is now an independent organization with a business development training program that helps Hispanics develop and start small businesses. Its main focus is to help Hispanics build assets and wealth by offering instruction on items such as how to build a business plan, create marketing programs, pay taxes, apply for licenses, and access local-market resources. In addition, Western Union has launched a micro-mentor program with Mercy Corps that develops partnerships between company employees and individuals that seek to develop small businesses.

Western Union's emphasis on the need to foster a better understanding of immigrants' economic contributions and promote their integration is also developed through research and working groups. As part of the "Our World Speaks" campaign, Western Union seeks to develop unbiased research and share findings on the need for and openness to immigrants in host countries, such as the United States.

In addition, Western Union promotes economic development in migrant-sending countries. Through the "Four Plus One" program, Western Union matches funds provided by migrant hometown associations in the U.S. for development projects that help create jobs in high-emigration communities in Mexico. These donations are matched as well by the Mexican government at the federal, state and local levels.

- Recognizing the importance of skill and language development, as well as the safety and productivity of their employees, **Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding Gulf Coast Operations** has developed a pilot program in New Orleans that provides on-site training programs in both Spanish and English. Their "Command Spanish" program is offered to ship construction management and focuses on shipbuilding terms in Spanish. The company also provides safety orientation materials in Spanish and recently acquired translation software for foremen's hand-held devices. Employees also receive "Spanish in a Pinch" trade-specific translation

cards, and have access to an online learning program. ESL courses are available for employees after hours. As part of Northrop Grumman's emphasis on language skills, it has developed an employee compensation model for language skills as well as language skills testing and certification. These programs are fully funded by the company and are offered as continuing education at various skill levels.

- **Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.**, the country's largest retailer and one of the largest private employers of Hispanics with more than 165,000 Hispanic associates, works with more than 50 Hispanic-serving organizations nationwide in an effort to support initiatives—voting rights, education, health care reform, and economic development—that impact the local communities they serve. With regards to voting rights, Wal-Mart was the only corporate supporter of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund Voting Rights Act reauthorization. In the area of education, Wal-Mart supports "MANA," a National Latina Organization Hermanitas signature program, which is aimed at helping Hispanic young women stay in high school and complete their education. The company has also worked closely with national organizations, such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), to improve health care for all Americans through the "Better Healthcare Together," a coalition of business, labor and public policy organizations. Lastly, Wal-Mart promotes economic development within the Hispanic community through its Supplier Diversity initiatives and the Business-to-Business (B2B) Expos. The B2B Expos engage small business owners at the local level to provide a better understanding of how to work with Wal-Mart.

"The National Hispanic Business Information Clearing House (NHBIC) and subsequent clearinghouses go to the core of helping diverse individuals and communities around the world realize their potential and improve their futures through business innovation, education and training. We share [the] goal of empowering Mexican immigrants and other populations with the tools and knowledge to succeed."

-Michael L. Barrera, president of the NHBIC and former president and CEO of the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, "National Hispanic Business Information Clearinghouse Remains Focus of Dallas Latino Community," *Reuters*, April 24, 2008.

- With a similar objective, **Aetna** provides funding for Spanish-language business courses for budding entrepreneurs, offered by the University of Houston Small Business Development Center and the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.<sup>207</sup>
- Since 1992, **Georgia Power** has realized the importance of reaching out to the growing Hispanic community in the state, both through its

employees and its customers. The company's goal in reaching out to Hispanic customers—who represented 9 percent of their customer base by December 2007—is to educate the community on issues such as electrical safety and energy efficiency, as well as providing good customer service.

Georgia Power has trained speakers to give presentations on energy savings and safety at Hispanic community organizations such as the Catholic Social Services. It has also translated into Spanish its brochures on how to save energy, precautions to take when working with electricity and how to read an electric bill. Many of these are available on the Spanish version of its website, but the information is also distributed through brochures, educational videos and commercials in Spanish. Although its share of Hispanic employees is small (174 out of a 9,385 workforce), half of the company's offices in the state have bilingual representatives. In addition, the company has a bilingual customer-service line, and a list of employees who are willing to serve as interpreters when a representative has any trouble communicating with a customer.

In 2002, given widespread interest among its English-speaking employees to learn Spanish, the company decided to facilitate Spanish-language courses through the Latin American Association. Although only a few of the company's departments paid for the courses (most employees paid their own way) Georgia Power provided the classroom facilities and offered the courses during lunch hours. Furthermore, Georgia Power's Hispanic employees embody the company's mission of "A Citizen Wherever We Serve" and are giving back to the community. Through employee affinity groups, such as the "Amigos Affinity Group," set up by the company in 2003, they have developed strong relationships with the community and participate in volunteer projects with the Latin American Association and others. In addition, Georgia Power is a partner of the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and works closely with the Hispanic Scholarship Fund.

- The **Hispanic Contractors Association of Georgia (HCAG)** has a partnership with the Latin America Association through which it offers a trade school and sponsors educational initiatives that provide skills training for construction workers. According to HCAG, 75 percent of construction workers in the state are Hispanic. The Association also helps contractors obtain permits, assists in the certification process of minority or female-headed businesses, maintains a database of property managers and offers computer skills training for contractors.
- In 2001, the **Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (GHCC)** founded the Hispanic American Center for Economic Development (HACED) to advance the formation and growth of Hispanic businesses in the state. HACED brings in experienced outsiders to conduct seminars on topics such as how to start a business and file taxes. It also established an "Entrepreneurship School" and a "Latino Law School." In addition to its

over 70 programs related to entrepreneurship, the Chamber offers subsidized office space with basic technological equipment to assist budding entrepreneurs in establishing their businesses. Through these initiatives, in 2006 the GHCC helped open 161 Hispanic businesses that injected \$44 million dollars into the state economy.

- In the aftermath of Katrina, the **Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana (HCCL)** partnered with The Hispanic Apostolate Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, The Jefferson Parish School System and Southeastern Louisiana University to address the pressing needs of Hispanic families and businesses. In March 2006, they established the **Hispanic Business Resources and Technology Center (HBRTC)** in Jefferson Parish. It is the first of its kind in Louisiana, with seed money provided by the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation and the AT&T Foundation. The HBRTC was originally designed as a business incubator and technology center for Hispanics. However, given the situation in the region and the needs of the community, the organization provides a broader range of business assistance, educational opportunities, English and Spanish-language

“The **Hispanic Business Resources and Technology Center** is expected to positively impact the local and regional community by providing resources to help the Hispanic community recover from Hurricane Katrina and provide direction and guidance for Hispanic migration to the Region. It will also provide for the assimilation needs of new Hispanic workers, as they potentially become new residents and contributors to the region’s economy. Because any entity providing services in the New Orleans area would need to consider family as well as business needs, the philosophical approach of the Hispanic Business Resources and Technology Center is holistic in nature, requiring equal components of business and educational development, technological training and social services.”

-Aristides R. Baraya, Michael Craig Budden, Luz M. Escobar, "Strategically Enhancing Business Capabilities and Social Development in the Hispanic Community," Clute Institute, 2007.

classes, computer classes, and social services to the affected Hispanic community. All programs are bilingual and culturally sensitive.

Through its partnership with the Hispanic Apostolate, the Center assists Hispanics with job placement, educational programs, emergency assistance, immigration services, counseling, workers’ rights workshops, medical assistance through the Latino Health Access Network, and citizenship classes. Meanwhile, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana offers workshops for business start-ups and business mentoring, youth mentoring, networking, and business development opportunities. It also conducts surveys to report on business needs in the area and

represents the Hispanic business community in seeking government and private cooperation. The Jefferson Parish School System (JPSS) has

provided the space for the HBRTC at the Theodore Roosevelt Middle School in Kenner, including computer labs, a business conference room, a social service room, and ESL and citizenship classrooms. Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU) provides instructors for business development workshops and seminars; it offers grant writing assistance and research support related to Hispanics in Louisiana and helps with the management of the Center.

In addition to the partners, sponsorship for the Center is provided by Toyota, the USHCC Foundation, National Council of La Raza, Entergy Corporation, Cox Communications, Bellsouth Real Yellow Pages, Inter-American Development Bank, Prudential Foundation, Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market, Verizon Wireless, New Beginnings, LLC, and State Farm Insurance. Other institutions and organizations that provide support to the center are Tulane University, the University of New Orleans, the Louisiana Small Business Development Center, Louisiana International Trade Center, American Red Cross, St. Charles Community Health Care Center, FEMA and SPA, and Mauricio Trujillo Constructions. In April 2006, the four founding partners of the Center (the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana, The Hispanic Apostolate Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, The Jefferson Parish School System, and Southeastern Louisiana University) received the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation President's Award for their successful efforts to establish a capacity building institution and leadership for Hispanic businesses.<sup>208</sup>

- **Harrah's Casino Hotels**, in New Orleans, provides its Hispanic employees with broad support beginning with the job application process, where Spanish-language interpreters are available. At the workplace, employees receive information about educational opportunities for their children, and they can apply for childcare assistance (if their salary is \$35,000 a year or less). Considering infrastructure and transportation limitations in the city, Harrah's provides half-price bus tickets for employees. It has also supported housing programs for the Hispanic community by organizing housing fairs and a housing newsletter. The casino has an on-site health clinic available to employees who participate in the health care plan (and their dependents). A small fee is charged for visits and prescriptions. In partnership with the Louisiana Minority Business Council, Harrah's supports certification of Hispanic businesses and organizations. Additionally, through the Harrah's Foundation, it donated \$50,000 in 2007 to Carnival Latino, an event celebrating Hispanic culture and heritage. Harrah's New Orleans is also a member of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana.

### **ACCESS TO HEALTH**

As documented above, a great number of Hispanics are uninsured and do not have full access to health care. Furthermore, language and cultural barriers limit immigrants' ability to obtain appropriate care. In response to this situation,

many hospitals, clinics and health centers have bilingual staff and translators. Yet, funding for these services is usually scarce.

- To help address this need, **Johnson & Johnson** provides basic health care materials in Spanish at the high-school level designed to educate Hispanics on primary and preventative health care. This is intended to reduce the number of unnecessary visits to the doctor, avoid complications resulting from delayed treatment of a health problem and decrease the burden on social welfare/emergency room costs. Johnson & Johnson produces these materials in collaboration with, and distributes them through, local community organizations.
- **Ochsner Health System** is a non-profit, academic, multi-specialty health care delivery system that has grown to be the largest in the New Orleans region. It has over 10,000 employees, including 600 physicians in 80 medical specialties and subspecialties. After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, it was the only health care organization in New Orleans still set up and running at full capacity. In the past years, it has seen the growth of Hispanic patients in the New Orleans area and the need to reach out to them. In order to better serve this group, Ochsner has developed various programs, focusing primarily on language facilitation and preventive health care. Recognizing that language barriers make patient understanding and compliance difficult, Ochsner offers Spanish-language classes for employees. Some of the courses are designed specifically for the medical staff. Ochsner also provides patient handbooks and admission papers in Spanish and has an interpreter program running 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Through the Kenner Medical Center, Ochsner runs a Spanish-language program for expectant mothers. Furthermore, Ochsner has actively recruited Spanish-speaking physicians and nurses to facilitate communication with patients.

“There is a waiting list for staff that is interested in the Spanish-language courses. I like that. It means people realize there’s a need for better communication with the Hispanic community.”

-Dr. Ana M. Hands, Director of International Health Services, Ochsner Health System.

In addition to addressing the language barrier, Ochsner has emphasized the need for preventive health care within the Hispanic community. These initiatives diminish the frequency of expensive visits to emergency rooms, lower overall hospital expenditures and maintain a better standard of health for the larger community. Through health fairs, TV programs and radio ads, Ochsner has made itself visible to the community, allowing for greater confidence in contacting the physicians and staff. For example, Ochsner partnered with **Telemundo** to develop a preventive health care TV program, and they are also planning launch a live program in Spanish where people can call in with health-related questions. In the next months, Ochsner is planning to launch its Spanish

version of the website.

- On May 18, 2006, the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) and **Pfizer Pharmaceuticals** sponsored a conference for primary health providers about common health issues among Hispanics. This is one of many examples of businesses, universities and other institutions collaborating for the benefit of Hispanics and the community.<sup>209</sup>

### **INFORMATION ON CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION**

One of the main obstacles for immigrant naturalization is the lack of accessible information about requirements and limited government assistance throughout the process. Eligible immigrants' limited English proficiency and low levels of education further complicate this process.<sup>210</sup> The cost of the application, which increased to \$675 in July 2007, serves as an additional disincentive.

- As part of their citizenship drive, in November 2007, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) and **Advance America**, a payday cash provider, started offering a no-interest loan to help immigrants cover citizenship fees.<sup>211</sup>

In terms of political participation, Hispanic immigrants have traditionally had low rates of voting. In 2004, about 16 million were eligible to vote, but only 9.3 million were registered and only 7.6 million voted.<sup>212</sup>

- Recognizing this fact, in October 2007, **Telemundo** and **mun2** launched a national non-partisan Hispanic voter registration campaign: "*Vota Por Tu Futuro*"/"Vote 4 UR Future." The objectives are to educate Hispanics about their voting rights and motivate them to register and vote in the 2008 election.
- As well, in November 2007, **Univision**, NALEO and the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) announced the creation of a coalition of organizations known as "*Ya es Hora*" (or "It's About Time") which is heading a voter-mobilization campaign. The coalition includes some of the major Spanish-language television networks and newspapers in the United States, as well as ImpreMedia LLC (the country's largest Spanish-language newspaper publisher). **State Farm Insurance** is one of the main sponsors of the campaign, with a \$1 million contribution announced in June 2008.<sup>213</sup> Additionally, the company's Spanish-speaking agents will participate directly as a resource and clearinghouse for the campaign and will assist NALEO with voter registration drives and citizenship information sessions. The first goal of the "*Ya es Hora*" campaign is to file at least one million applications for Hispanics that are eligible for citizenship. The second phase focuses on increasing voter registration among Hispanics through the campaign "*Ve y Vota!*" (or "Go and Vote!").<sup>214</sup>

- **Mundo Hispanico**, Georgia's oldest Hispanic newspaper (founded in 1979), offers a section titled "*Pasos*" that teaches readers about issues important to being a part of U.S. society. For example, "*Pasos*" publishes information on how to vote (particularly during election periods). It also reflects on life skills such as the necessary steps for opening a bank account, purchasing a home or building credit.
- The local media has also responded to the growth of the Hispanic population in New Orleans. **La Prensa**, a Spanish newspaper, is published twice a month<sup>215</sup> and **The Times-Picayune** runs an employment supplement in both Spanish and English.<sup>216</sup> **Telemundo** and **WYES TV** have also promoted English-language training programs. **Cox Communications** hosts a popular TV show in Spanish: "*De Todo un Poco*," which has dedicated various programs to information about health and safety issues in New Orleans.

## VII. MOVING FORWARD

The companies mentioned in this white paper are making headway toward facilitating the process of integration for Hispanic immigrants and other groups. Efforts to promote the integration of the immigrant workforce increase business competitiveness through better-trained, stable and loyal workers that take pride in their work and have the experience and training required to move up the professional ladder. Through these practices, employers also promote social cohesion in and outside the workplace and improve working conditions, all of which contribute to maximizing business productivity. Yet, there is much more to be done, both at the company level and through partnerships with the public sector and civil society.

Over the course of this first phase of our work, a few conclusions have emerged from our roundtable meetings, research and case study discussions. Although not a comprehensive list, our findings indicate the following:

- **English-language training** both for adults and the children of Hispanic immigrants is a powerful tool for facilitating community and workforce integration. Successful ESL programs incorporate take-home language instruction along with workplace classes that are offered at times and locations convenient for employees working to juggle multiple demands.
  - **Access to banks, credit unions and other financial institutions** allows Hispanics to financially establish themselves in communities, save for the future, purchase a home and make other important economic contributions. The first step in facilitating this is building confidence among the Hispanic community to use financial institutions and promoting access to the banking system through the acceptance of secure forms of identification such as consular IDs. In the next phase of this initiative, we will follow up with consular offices to share information on the benefits of issuing identification—similar to that used by the Mexican consulates—that can help immigrants gain access to credit and financial services.
- “Interlinking the private and public sector on sensitive social issues is not an easy task. But the reality—that immigration flows are increasingly driven by employers’ needs—means that both the public and the private sector must be involved in integrating migrant workers.”

-European Policy Center, “Making migration work: the role of employers in migrant integration,” May 2008.
- The most effective programs work with **adults and children**, focusing on the language, educational and skill needs of both to help facilitate family-oriented integration.
  - The private sector can promote integration both through **workplace and community programs**. Often times, the most successful initiatives take a

comprehensive, holistic approach that combines internal and external initiatives and partners with community groups and religious organizations. In the three case study regions, local community organizations and civil society serve as a critical means for outreach and the delivery of programs, such as education, health care and training.

- **Public sector recognition** of the contributions of Hispanics to the U.S. economy can build trust and promote goodwill within the community.
- Greater recognition of the **economic and social contributions** of immigrants would improve the current immigration debate. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge the sense of growing economic insecurity that some groups experience as a result of immigration. Efforts to support immigrant integration and workforce development should be considered as part of a larger effort to ease these costs, address those economic fears and maximize immigrants' contributions.

Through the *Hispanic Integration Initiative*, the AS/COA offers a non-partisan forum for companies to share their best practices and obtain information about successful initiatives adopted in related industries. This provides an unprecedented opportunity to bring together companies that recognize their responsibility in promoting the full integration of the country's Hispanic population. The business practices highlighted through this project not only exemplify the social responsibility of the business community but also demonstrate the positive results of Hispanic integration for companies and for the U.S. economy and society in general.

## NOTES

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