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**Latino Policy &
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A MULTI-STATE ANALYSIS OF LATINOS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAMS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Latinos have long been significantly underrepresented in bachelor's degree attainment across the United States. This is especially concerning because Latinos are one of the country's fastest-growing demographic groups. Community college baccalaureate (CCB) programs—offered in 24 states—present a promising pathway to expand access to affordable, workforce-aligned bachelor's degrees at community colleges—institutions that often enroll large numbers of Latino students.

This policy brief provides the most updated and comprehensive analysis to date of Latino enrollment, completion, and post-graduation wage outcomes in CCB programs, with a focus on four states—California, Florida, Texas, and Washington—that have large Latino populations and robust CCB infrastructures. Drawing on local, state, and national datasets, the findings reveal that:

- **Latino students are enrolling and graduating from CCB programs at promising rates**, with representation in some states exceeding their share of the general population. However, disparities in completion rates and wage outcomes persist across states and regions.
- **CCB programs offer a cost-effective alternative to traditional four-year institutions**, with tuition often less than one third the cost, making them more accessible to low-income and working Latino students.
- **Post-graduation wage outcomes for Latino CCB graduates are encouraging**, especially in Washington where annualized earnings were comparable to or exceeded those of their peers from traditional universities. Yet, wage gains are uneven and influenced by factors such as geography, program type, and prior work experience.
- **Data infrastructure remains fragmented**, limiting the ability to track Latino student outcomes consistently across states and over time.

To ensure CCB programs fulfill their potential to close equity gaps in bachelor's degree attainment, we offer the following policy recommendations:

- **Invest in Latino-serving community colleges and CCB programs**, with targeted funding, capacity-building, and policy support to expand high-demand degrees and student support services.
- **Build and sustain comprehensive, standardized data systems at the local, state, and national levels** to monitor Latino student access, success, and post-graduation outcomes in CCB programs.
- **Ensure equitable access and outcomes for Latino students by embedding racial equity in program design, implementation, and evaluation**—including work-based learning opportunities, internships, career support services, and employer partnerships.

As CCB programs continue to grow, policymakers must act to ensure these degrees serve as a meaningful lever for Latino educational and economic mobility.

INTRODUCTION

Bachelor's degree attainment remains one of the most effective tools for advancing intergenerational economic mobility.¹ Yet, stark disparities persist in who can access, afford, and complete a bachelor's degree—and who ultimately benefits from its economic and social returns.² These disparities reflect structural and systemic barriers embedded in U.S. higher education.

In the United States, there is a 19-percentage point difference in bachelor's degree attainment between Latino and white adults aged 25 to 64.³ Only 19% of Latino adults have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 38% of white adults. Additionally, Latinas trail white women by 18-percentage points, and Latinos trail white men by 21-percentage points.⁴ These persistent gaps call for targeted policy solutions that address structural inequities and expand access to high-quality, affordable degree pathways. One such strategy is the community college baccalaureate (CCB) model, which offers workforce-aligned bachelor's degrees through community colleges—institutions that often enroll large numbers of Latino students.

Community colleges play a critical role in Latino postsecondary education. Given their proximity to home and affordability, community colleges are the most accessible and popular postsecondary education option among Latinos.⁵ In fall 2023, over one million Latinos enrolled in community colleges, comprising nearly one quarter of all community college students nationwide. Due to these substantial numbers, these institutions are not only shaped by Latino students, but also have the potential to shape Latino educational, economic, social, and other life outcomes.

Over the past two decades, CCB degree programs have expanded across the country, which has implications for Latinos' postsecondary education prospects.⁶ As of 2024, 24 states authorized community colleges to confer bachelor's degrees.⁷ Nearly all these states approve CCB degree programs based on evidence of high-demand workforce needs, coupled with strong student interest.⁸ However, only 15 states have policies well-suited to support scaling these degrees in additional community colleges or program areas. A recent analysis found that CCB programs in many states face more rigorous approval processes than similar programs at traditional four-year universities, requiring detailed evidence of student interest, strong workforce demand, and program non-duplication from community colleges.

The CCB national inventory from 2024 reported that, across 24 states, 187 community colleges offer at least one bachelor's degree.⁹ Nearly half (46%) of the 187 colleges in 2024 were federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institutions, meaning at least 25% of their full-time equivalent students identified as Hispanic.¹⁰ Of these 87 Hispanic-Serving Institutions, 13 (15%) were designated as "rural distant or fringe" or "town distant or remote," while 74 (85%) identified with a "city" or "suburb," according to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).¹¹ In other words, most CCB colleges

that primarily serve Latino students are located in more densely populated urban or suburban areas. However, this can quickly change as CCB programs continue to expand, particularly in states with large Latino populations, such as California.

While research on CCB programs is growing, most studies focus on individual states—such as California,¹² Florida,¹³ Texas,¹⁴ and Washington.¹⁵ Moreover, few studies examine Latino-specific outcomes.¹⁶

This brief builds on prior research to better understand Latino students' enrollment, completion, and annualized wage outcomes in CCB programs. The brief provides a national perspective with more in-depth research on California, Florida, Texas, and Washington—states with large Latino populations, robust community college systems, and available CCB data. To our knowledge, this brief provides the most comprehensive findings on CCB programs and Latino students at the local, state, and national levels to date. This project was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the educational, economic, and social conditions of Latinos nationally and in the four selected states?
2. What are the enrollment, completion, and annualized post-graduate wage outcomes for Latino students who enroll and complete CCB degrees in the four selected states?
3. What types of data and information are collected to understand Latino students in CCB programs in four selected states?

DATA AND METHODS

National

Our two primary national sources for data and information on CCB programs are: (1) the CCBA and Bragg & Associates' national CCB program inventory, and (2) IPEDS. The national program inventory was conducted by the CCBA and its research partner, Bragg & Associates.¹⁷ This inventory lists all CCB programs nationally as of January 2024, providing descriptive information about each CCB program, including program title, state and community college of each program, year of program approval, bachelor's degree type, classification of instructional program designation, program graduates by race and gender, and many more variables. The research team for this project had access to the full dataset of Latino students in CCB programs, which also provided some insight into the social contexts and characteristics of Latino students of CCB programs.

Additionally, to contextualize and situate this brief's analysis of enrollment, completion, and annualized wage outcomes of Latino students in CCB programs, we also use UCLA's Latino Data Hub, which relies on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2022 five-year American Community Survey (ACS), to examine the educational, economic, and social conditions for Latinos in California, Florida, Texas, and Washington.¹⁸

State and Local

State agencies and individual colleges collect CCB data in California, Florida, Texas, and Washington. State-level agencies including the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), Florida Department of Education, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and Washington State Board Community and Technical Colleges, publish reports and some states make publicly accessible data dashboards on CCB programs and students. In California, some data are collected locally through alumni surveys and aggregated by the California Community Colleges Bachelor's Degree Program Steering Committee. While this brief may not capture all available data, it reflects the most comprehensive publicly accessible information, using definitions and methods consistent with prior CCB research.¹⁹

From these sources, we identified common metrics across at least two states to analyze Latino student enrollment, completion, and employment outcomes. Where available, we also incorporated qualitative data from student interviews and case studies to provide deeper insight into the lived experiences of Latino students in CCB programs.²⁰

FINDINGS

Educational, Economic, and Social Conditions for Latino Communities and Populations

The educational, economic, and social conditions for Latinos vary across different states, and there are notable disparities. Nationwide, the share of white adults with a bachelor's degree is 19 percentage points higher than that of Latino adults (see Table 1). This Latino-white gap in bachelor's completion varies considerably by state, ranging from a low of 9% in Florida to a high of 31% in California.

To understand why Latino college completion rates vary so dramatically between states, we examined the backgrounds of Latino residents in each state (see Table 1). We found that California, Texas, and Washington have Latino populations that are overwhelmingly Mexican in origin—81%, 83%, and 77% respectively. Florida presents a strikingly different picture: its Latino population is much more diverse in origin group, including people of Mexican (13%), Puerto Rican (21%), Cuban (27%), Central American (11%), and South American (19%) heritage. This diversity matters for educational outcomes because different Latino groups arrive with varying levels of educational experiences and preparation—Cuban and South American immigrants, who make up nearly half of Florida's Latino population, typically have higher educational attainment than other Latino groups.²¹ This compositional difference may help explain why Florida's Latino college completion rates exceed those in states with predominantly Mexican-origin populations. However, we found similarities among Latinos across the four states in economic experiences and outcomes, such as hourly wages, median household income, poverty rates, employment rates, and occupations (see Appendix A).²²

Table 1. U.S. Census Bureau Socioeconomic Data about Latinos by State

2022 Census Data Point	California	Florida	Texas	Washington	U.S.
Latino Share of Population	40%	27%	40%	14%	19%
Latino Population by Descent Group					
<i>Mexican</i>	81%	13%	83%	77%	60%
<i>Puerto Rican</i>	1%	21%	2%	4%	9%
<i>Cuban</i>	0.7%	27%	1%	1%	4%
<i>Dominican</i>	0.1%	5%	0.3%	0.4%	4%
<i>Central American</i>	10%	11%	6%	7%	10%
<i>South American</i>	2%	19%	2%	4%	7%
<i>Not Listed Above</i>	4%	5%	5%	7%	6%
Share of Latino Adults (25+) with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	15%	27%	17%	19%	19%
Latino-White Bachelor's Degree Gap	-31%	-9%	-24%	-20%	-19%
Latino Hourly Wage	\$19	\$18	\$17	\$20	\$19
Latino Median Household Income	\$72,500	\$60,500	\$58,500	\$69,200	\$63,400
Latino Poverty Rate	13%	13%	17%	13%	15%
Latino Employment Rate	93%	95%	95%	94%	94%

Source: UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Institute: [Latino Data Hub](#) (2024).

For Latino students balancing educational goals with household and work responsibilities, the geographic proximity of many CCB programs makes them a particularly accessible option. Latino students often face educational and economic challenges²³ and the ability to attend college close to home can reduce logistical and financial burdens. In the four states examined, community colleges are widely distributed, providing access for Latino populations across urban and rural areas. For example, Washington has 34 community and technical colleges offering at least one bachelor's degree, compared to only seven state universities. This broader geographic reach of CCB programs may help close bachelor's degree attainment gaps among Latinos in these states—and potentially across the country.

In addition, tuition at community colleges, including those offering CCB degrees, is significantly lower than at traditional public and private four-year institutions (see Table 2).²⁴ In California and Texas, for example, upper-division tuition at community colleges averages just over \$3,000 annually, while public university tuition in the same states averages slightly over \$10,000. These cost differences are substantial and likely influence students' decisions to pursue CCB programs.

Interviews with CCB students in Washington suggest that affordability was a key factor in their decision-making. One Latino student shared that he chose a CCB program in nursing because the lower tuition allowed him to attend full-time without needing to work. He also saw long-term benefits in the program's affordability, stating: "Apart from a good wage and possibly benefits, I saw a lot of room to grow [in nursing]. There are so many nursing branches, and you don't have to do nursing at all. It's a good stepping stone."²⁵

Table 2. Number of Public Colleges and Universities and Tuition Costs by State

	California	Florida	Texas	Washington	U.S.
Number of Public Colleges and Universities					
<i>Total Traditional Four-Year Sector</i>	31	12	38	6	700+
<i>Number of Community College Baccalaureate (CCB)-conferring Colleges</i>	42	28	21	34	187+
<i>Total Community Colleges*</i>	116	28	50	34	900+
Tuition Costs					
<i>Lower Division Community College</i>	\$1,627	\$2,765	\$2,957	\$4,205	\$3,990
<i>Upper Division CCB</i>	\$3,366	\$3,153	\$2,957	\$7,620	\$5,176
<i>Public Traditional Four-Year</i>	\$10,287	\$6,442	\$10,235	\$11,265	\$9,943
<i>Private Four-Year For-Profit</i>	\$21,053	\$17,298	\$19,512	\$28,511	\$19,072

Note: In Texas, 50 represents the number of community college districts, which may have multiple campuses.

Sources: For numbers of public colleges and universities, see Community College Baccalaureate Association, & Bragg & Associates, *Watch Them Grow*, [available online](#) (2024). For tuition costs, see Meza, "CCB Data Points, January 2025: Community College Baccalaureate Tuition and Fees in 13 States," [available online](#) (2025).

Enrollment, Completion, and Annualized Wages for Latino CCB Students

CCB Enrollment and Completion Among Latinos

National-Level Overview

In the 2021-22 academic year, 15,297 students graduated from CCB programs nationwide.²⁶ Of these students, 3,717 were Latino, accounting for 24% of all CCB graduates compared to 17% of graduates in bachelor's degree programs at traditional four-year universities nationally.²⁷ This higher proportion of Latino graduates in CCB programs compared to traditional universities seems to underscore the appeal of these local, workforce-oriented, and affordable degrees for Latino students.

State-Level Overview

The total number of CCB students varies significantly across states for several reasons, particularly the timing of policy adoption and how quickly states expanded their programs (see Table 3). Florida and Washington were early adopters—all community colleges

in these states offer at least one CCB program, and most have operated for about two decades. In contrast, California and Texas did not expand their CCB programs until 2017. This timing difference is reflected in the enrollment numbers: in the 2021-22 academic year, Florida enrolled 36,433 CCB students and Washington enrolled 6,201, while California had only 830 and Texas had 2,477. California's recent expansion has shown rapid growth, with CCB enrollment increasing from 427 students in 2017-18 to 1,056 in 2022-23. Unfortunately, comparable recent enrollment data for Florida and Texas were not available to assess whether similar growth patterns occurred in those states.

Likely due to differences in the size of the Latino population in specific regions and states, there is wide variation in the Latino proportion of students enrolled in CCB programs, as well as the total number of Latino CCB students (see Table 3). For example, in Washington, Latino students have accounted for between 8 and 9% of CCB enrollment in recent years²⁸ compared to between 78 and 85% in Texas.²⁹ In California, Latino students have composed between 32 and 42% of CCB students, with this percentage growing over the five years studied.³⁰ We were unable to find comparable data for Florida.

In Texas, Latino students are overrepresented in CCB programs compared to their proportion of the state population and of postsecondary students overall. However, the opposite is true in Washington, where Latino students are underrepresented in CCB programs (see Appendix B).³¹ In California, Latino representation in CCB programs varies by year, and in Florida, these calculations were not possible due to lack of data.

Table 3. Latino Share and Total Number of Students Enrolled in Community College Baccalaureate (CCB) Programs by State and Academic Year

Year	California	Florida	Texas	Washington
2022-23	42% (1,056)	- (-)	78% (-)	9% (6,510)
2021-22	35% (830)	- (36,433)	79% (2,477)	8% (6,201)
2020-21	36% (886)	- (-)	85% (-)	9% (6,343)
2019-20	33% (899)	- (-)	85% (-)	9% (6,527)
2018-19	32% (427)	- (-)	- (-)	8% (5,866)

Notes: Instances where data were unavailable or could not be found are indicated with a "-" sign. The percentages displayed reflect the proportion of Latino students enrolled in CCB programs in a given academic year. The number in parentheses represents the total number of students in a given academic year (Latino and non-Latino).

Sources: Authors analysis of California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart, "Special Population/Group Student Count," accessed January 12, 2025, [available online](#); Thai and Love, "Community College Bachelor's Degrees in Florida: An Update on Enrollment and Labor Market Outcomes," [available online](#) (2024); Love et al., "Community College Bachelor's Degrees in Texas," [available online](#) (2024); Meza and Bragg, *Washington's Community College Baccalaureate Degrees: Growth and Outcomes*, 2024 Update, [available online](#) (2025).

The Latino share of students earning CCB degrees³² varied widely across the four states. In Texas, Latino students received 65% of CCB degrees in the 2021-22 academic year. In California, Texas, and Washington, this proportion was much smaller (34%, 25%, and 14%, respectively) likely due to the smaller Latino share of students enrolled in CCB programs. In terms of counts, Latino students in Florida earned 9,767 CCB degrees during the 2021-22 academic year, much more than in Washington (1,539), Texas (939), and California (281).

Table 4. Latino Share of Students Earning Community College Baccalaureate (CCB) Degrees by State, 2021-22

Latino Share	California	Florida	Texas	Washington
CCBs Earned	34% (281)	25% (9,767)	65% (939)	14% (1,539)

Note: The percentages displayed reflect the Latino proportion of the total number of CCB degrees earned in the 2021-22 academic year. The number in parentheses represents the total number of Latino students in the 2021-22 academic year who earned a CCB degree.

Sources: The data provided are based on a full dataset of Latino students in CCB programs from the Community College Baccalaureate Association and Bragg & Associates national CCB program inventory, and IPEDS that were internally accessed by the authors of this brief.

Annualized Wages at One or Three Years Post-Graduation Among Latino CCB Graduates

The analysis of annualized wages among Latino CCB graduates highlights both the potential economic value of CCB degrees and the need for consistent data collection across states.³³ Latino CCB graduates earn significantly different wages across states, with California reporting the highest average wage, Florida and Washington showing strong post-graduation earnings, and Texas lagging behind, with notable differences in data collection methods.³⁴ Three years after graduation, Latino CCB graduates in Florida, Washington, and Texas earned median wages of approximately \$74,000, \$72,000, and \$52,000, respectively.³⁵ In California, the average wage one year after graduation was \$75,000,³⁶ though this figure is based on self-reported survey data rather than verified wage records. These numbers are comparable to national median annual earnings in 2022 for adult Latinos with a bachelor's degree (\$69,000).³⁷

Table 5. Annualized Wages of Community College Baccalaureate (CCB) Graduates After One or Three Years, by Race and Ethnicity and State

	California (One Year)	Florida (Three Years)	Texas (Three Years)	Washington (Three Years)
Latino	\$75,000	\$74,000	\$52,000	\$72,000
Asian	\$86,000	-	-	\$75,000
Black	\$100,000	-	-	\$68,000
Two or More Races	\$65,000	-	-	\$73,000
White	\$78,000	\$73,000	\$67,000	\$72,000
Race or Ethnicity Not Listed Above	-	\$65,000	\$44,000	-
Not Reported	-	-	-	\$70,000
Overall Median	-	\$73,000	-	\$72,000
Overall Average	\$80,000	-	-	-

Notes: Instances where data were unavailable or could not be found are indicated with a "-" sign. California's data are reported using average wages one year after graduation while Florida, Texas, and Washington use median wages at three years after graduation. Florida's and Texas' wage data are for graduates from the 2018-19 academic year; Washington's wage data are for students enrolled in CCB programs in 2018 (who eventually graduated between the 2018-19 and 2020-21 academic years); California's wage data are an aggregate for CCB graduates from 2018-23. All wage data were adjusted for inflation to spending power in December 2024 to standardize wages across states.

Sources: Authors' analysis of Vo et al., *A more accessible pathway to the bachelor's degree*, (In Press); Thai and Love, "Community College Bachelor's Degrees in Florida: An Update on Enrollment and Labor Market Outcomes," [available online](#) (2024); Love et al., "Community College Bachelor's Degrees in Texas," [available online](#) (2024); Meza and Bragg, *Washington's Community College Baccalaureate Degrees: Growth and Outcomes*, 2024 Update, [available online](#) (2025).

Across three of the four states, Latino graduates experienced no or minimal disparities in annualized wages compared to white graduates (see Table 5). Annualized wages for Latino graduates in California, Florida, and Washington were similar to the overall average/median wages. However, in Texas, Latino graduates experienced equity gaps, earning lower wages than white graduates.

Additionally, it's important to note that some data are available to compare wages from the time students start to the time they finish a CCB program. For example, additional survey data in California reveal that Latino CCB graduates experienced wage gains (\$31,000) above the average (\$28,000) when comparing CCB graduates' incomes before starting and after graduating from CCB programs. This suggests that CCB programs are providing social and economic mobility for Latino communities.

Additionally, prior research supports the positive post-graduate wage outcomes of CCB programs in general and for Latinos specifically. For example, one study found that CCB completion was associated with earnings well above (77%) the living wage nationally³⁸ and with greater wage earnings relative to associate degree earners.³⁹ In

a study comparing CCB graduates with graduates in similar programs at universities in Washington, Latino CCB graduates were often earning similar or even higher wages than Latino university graduates or white peers who graduated from either the university bachelor's programs or CCB programs.⁴⁰

In student interviews in Washington state, students and graduates spoke about how CCB programs affected their career experiences. For example, one Latino graduate utilized knowledge acquired from his CCB program to run for a City Council position, winning a seat only a few years after finishing his bachelor's degree. He recognized that having this degree qualified him for civic roles that may have been inaccessible otherwise, in addition to making employment in the region more accessible.

But a few other Latino graduates who took or continued jobs in Washington said their salaries were lower than what they had hoped to attain, speculating that higher income options might be available if they leave the region. They recognized that fewer employment opportunities can dampen wages, but they chose to continue living and working in their home communities. However, some of these students speculated that they may eventually need to move away to advance in their careers, including attending graduate schools outside the region. Even so, all Latino graduates we spoke with expressed a strong desire to maintain ties to the community.

One Latina CCB graduate explained the importance of being able to get a baccalaureate in her community as follows:

I live 20 minutes away from here, just 20 minutes south of here. Being able to still participate in my community... that's really important to me, especially now, being heavily involved in the community, and still being able to function in life.

This graduate is now employed by the same community college that awarded her Bachelor of Applied Sciences (BAS) degree, where she now leverages her own life experience with homelessness as a youth to support other youth who experience homelessness.

She also provided insights into the value of a CCB degree and how it provides an accessible pathway to bachelor's degree attainment:

Aside from general life circumstances, one big reason that I did not pursue college is that, at that time, there were no four-year degrees available in the field I was interested in [college].

I think there is a clear divide that exists between those who are able to pursue four-year schools and those who are limited to their local community college. The movement to include BAS degrees in the more accessible community colleges works to bridge that gap, and opens up ongoing opportunity, especially as more programs

are added. It greatly lifts the limitations placed on the lower class and less privileged and makes personal growth so much more possible.

Data and Information on CCB Student Outcomes

Currently, there is no centralized national database that comprehensively tracks Latino students in CCB programs from enrollment through graduation and into the workforce. While national datasets such as IPEDS provide counts of CCB graduates by race and ethnicity and program, they lack detailed information on student enrollment and program-level outcomes disaggregated by race and ethnicity. For example, IPEDS reports the racial and ethnic composition of graduates but not of enrolled students, making it impossible to calculate graduation rates for CCB programs. Given the racial disparities in bachelor's degree attainment for Latinos, it is vital to track the extent to which CCB programs help close these gaps.⁴¹ Overall, gaps in public data infrastructure limit our ability to assess the scale and equity of CCB programs, particularly for Latinos.

Despite the lack of a national system, some states and colleges have developed their own data collection efforts, which include information on Latino students (see Table 6). To the extent possible, this brief compiles enrollment, completion, and post-graduate wage data from California, Florida, Texas, and Washington. However, differences in data sources, definitions, and reporting methods create challenges for cross-state comparisons.

For instance, California relies on a graduate survey conducted one year after degree completion, while Florida, Texas, and Washington use verified employment records and wage reports for graduates up to three years later. California's survey data should be interpreted with caution due to potential issues such as low response rates and non-response bias. California is working to improve its CCB data infrastructure to ensure more consistent and accurate reporting. As CCB programs expand, the state aims to centralize data collection across the student lifecycle—from application to post-graduation outcomes.⁴² This effort is intended to support better tracking of student progress and program effectiveness, especially for Latino students.

Table 6. Overview of State Community College Baccalaureate (CCB) Data Systems

	California	Florida	Texas	Washington
Primary Data Source for this Brief	- California CCB Employment Outcomes Survey, as collected by individual California CCB colleges and aggregated by the California Community Colleges Bachelor's Degree Program Steering Committee - California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO)	Florida Department of Education	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board	Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)
Colleges in this Brief's Analysis	All approved CCB programs in the respective academic years.	All approved CCB programs in the respective academic years.	All approved CCB programs in the respective academic years.	All approved CCB programs in the respective academic years.
Availability of Data about Latino CCB Students				
<i>CCB Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity</i>	Available	N/A	Available	Available
<i>CCB Award Completions by Race and Ethnicity</i>	Available	N/A	Available	Available
<i>Annualized Wages by Race and Ethnicity</i>	Available	Available	Available	Available

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this policy brief, we take a local, state, and national perspective to examine the educational and economic landscape of CCB programs for Latinos using multiple datasets. We examine data and information systems to explore the educational, economic, and social conditions and enrollment, completion, and annualized wage outcomes relating to CCB programs and Latinos. Given their low cost and geographical accessibility, CCB programs present a public pathway toward bachelor's degree attainment in high-demand fields that did not previously exist. Results begin to tell a story of who is participating in CCB programs and provide insights into enrollment and outcomes for Latino students.

Informed by the results of our analysis and on existing research on factors that improve college completion, we provide three broad recommendations for policymakers and practitioners at the local-, state-, and national-levels to further support Latinos to attain bachelor's degrees via CCB programs:

1. Invest in Latino-serving community colleges and CCB programs with targeted funding, capacity-building, and policy support to expand high-demand degrees and student support services.

At the federal level, Pell Grant policies could be adjusted to better support the unique population that CCB programs seek to serve, such as older, working, and part-time students that are pursuing career advancement. This is different from the new Workforce Pell Grants that assume students will be non-credit and short-term students seeking job entry. Options include:

- Extending Pell Grant eligibility beyond six years for students pursuing CCB degrees;
- Adjusting award amounts to reflect regional costs of living and CCB tuition; and
- Opposing changes to Pell Grants that limit eligibility and award amounts for students who are only able to attend part time.

At the state level, policymakers can establish tuition caps for CCB programs to maintain financial affordability of CCB programs. They can also provide robust state appropriations for CCB programs that are comparable to regional public universities, to reflect enhanced per-student funding for upper-division instruction, particularly in workforce-aligned fields. Finally, state policymakers can expand CCB programs in high-wage and -demand fields.

At the local level, policymakers can establish regional workforce consortiums to build capacity so that CCB programs are aligned with local and regional labor market trends within Latino communities. In addition, they can secure employer commitments for paid internships, mentorship programs, employee tuition

reimbursement, and hiring CCB graduates. Finally, local leaders can partner with non-profit organizations to further provide and complement wraparound student support services for CCB students and alumni, such as legal resources, scholarships, and leadership opportunities.

2. Build and sustain comprehensive, standardized data systems at the local, state, and national levels to monitor Latino student access, success, and post-graduation outcomes in CCB programs.

We encourage local, state, and national leaders, in partnership with the Community College Baccalaureate Association and researchers, to ensure that data collection, definitions, metrics, and reporting are streamlined and reported appropriately, accurately, and consistently. Government agencies at federal and state levels should pursue the development of a common set of data metrics and definitions at various milestones of students' CCB journey (e.g., enrollment, retention, graduation, and post-graduation outcomes). Philanthropic funding sources, think tanks, non-profit organizations, community organizations, and academic institutions can provide technical capacity, resources, and knowledge to support this work.

Several state data systems already provide valuable information. For example, the California Community Colleges Bachelor's Degree Program Steering Committee administers an annual graduate survey to alumni to capture both labor market experiences and outcomes. Additionally, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and University of Texas System, as well as other states and their respective agencies, partner with the U.S. Census Bureau (2025) to make their data available to the public through the Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes dataset.⁴³ Further, the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges created publicly accessible and rich data dashboards that include graduate wage outcomes for students across all public higher education systems.⁴⁴

3. Ensure equitable access and outcomes for Latino students by embedding racial equity in program design, implementation, and evaluation—including work-based learning opportunities, internships, career support services, and employer partnerships.

Colleges should successfully provide CCB students with equitable access to work-based learning opportunities, internships, career support services, and employment. Such efforts should consider the diversity of Latino communities across different characteristics, such as socioeconomic status, citizenship status, gender, age, and first-generation college student status.

Additionally, colleges can protect and expand on the federal Hispanic-Serving Institution designation to more intentionally consider the implications for

community colleges with bachelor's degree programs beyond enrollment thresholds. They can also embrace students' rich lived experiences, histories, and trajectories by taking asset-based approaches to critically understanding students and intentionally designing culturally rich curricular activities in and out of the classroom.

Locally, colleges should establish benchmarks for Latino access and success in CCB programs along with feedback and continuous improvement processes. Likewise, states should establish similar statewide goals and program review mechanisms. For example, California's new Black-Servingness Institution (BSI) framework provides a useful model in how equity and "servingness" can be integrated in program design, implementation, and evaluation in California and other states.⁴⁵ In addition, the CCBA released a thought paper called Elements of Quality for Community College Bachelor's Degree Programs that highlights equitable access and outcomes, learner-centered design, experiential learning, employer partnerships, and robust student supports.⁴⁶ The CCBA's Inventory of Promising Practices provides examples of how existing CCB programs have put the elements of quality CCB programs into practice.⁴⁷

CCB programs could also further collaborate with state agencies, local school districts, and college leaders in the design and implementation of CCB programs to strengthen educational pipelines for Latino students from K-12 education to college to the workforce. This can involve connecting community colleges' dual enrollment efforts with CCB programs to ensure college and career alignment. Washington's state legislature on policies relating to CCB programs explicitly utilizes race-conscious language to intertwine the role of CCB programs in addressing racial equity.⁴⁸

Our study of the enrollment, completion, and annualized wage outcomes of Latinos in CCB programs in California, Florida, Texas, and Washington provides a fuller picture of how CCB programs can support the educational aspirations of Latinos. **As CCB programs continue to grow, policymakers must act to ensure these degrees serve as a meaningful lever for Latino educational and economic mobility.**

NOTES

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31. Diving deeper into Latino student enrollment in Texas, we found high concentrations of CCB students in particular regions of the state. Approximately 75% of all CCB students in Texas were students enrolled at South Texas College (Love et al., 2024). The population in the two counties associated with this college, Hidalgo and Starr, have large Latino populations (93% and 96%, respectively). As such, Latino students in CCB programs in this region make up a large proportion all Latino students in Texas' CCB data.
32. Ideally, cohort data would be available to track students' time-to-degree and graduation rates from when they began and completed their CCB program. Such data would help account for any shifting demographic changes in the proportion of CCB students who are Latino as states expand their CCB programs, particularly in areas with larger Latino communities. However, such data are currently not publicly available nationally. Instead, another way to understand Latinos' success in CCB programs would be to examine the proportion of CCB degrees awarded to Latino students.
33. All wage data in this section were adjusted for inflation to spending power in December 2024 to standardize wages across states and datasets.
34. There are multiple layers of limitations in this analysis. For example, methodologies vary across the four selected states, such as the use of average versus median annualized wages, the use of annualized wage estimates one year after graduation versus three years after graduation, and the use of publicly verifiable wage data from unemployment insurance records versus a survey administered to CCB graduates

Consequently, variation in annualized wages within and between states can be explained by a multitude of intersecting factors, such as students' prior experiences in the labor market and pre-graduate income (e.g., students who have more work experience may have higher pre-graduate incomes and are likely

to have higher pre-graduate incomes), the proportion or volume of CCB graduates in areas of study with variation in wages, the geography of CCB programs and local wages in specific areas (e.g., urban areas are typically more associated with higher wages than rural areas), and labor market discrimination (e.g., racism or sexism), and the use of different measures of central tendency (e.g., median vs. mean). Additionally, racial disparities observed in the data may be the result of social stratification and self-selection of students into specific academic programs.

Therefore, while these data represent the most comprehensive publicly available data on CCB graduates' annualized wages in the country, we urge readers to consider these results suggestive but not definitive.

35. Understanding CCB graduates' wages can be complicated, so it is valuable to contextualize CCB graduates' wages by considering additional factors, such as regional, state, and national cost of living, or race and ethnicity. For example, in Florida, Latino CCB graduates achieved the highest median wage relative to other graduates in the state, which may reflect the fact that many Latino students are enrolled in CCB programs leading to relatively high-wage jobs in the large metropolitan area, including Miami-Dade and Broward counties. For more information, see Love et al., "Community College Bachelor's Degrees in Texas," Meza and Bragg, *Washington's Community College Baccalaureate Degrees*; Thai and Love, "Community College Bachelor's Degrees in Florida."
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40. They hypothesized that these Latino CCB graduates may already be working in a job or industry related to their degree program, therefore they obtain the bachelor's to advance rather than enter into a career. For more information, see Elizabeth Meza and Debra D. Bragg, "Scaling Up Community College Baccalaureates in Washington State: Labor Market Outcomes and Equity Implications for Higher Education," *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 30, no. 140, (2022): 1-25, [available online](#).
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APPENDIX A

U.S. Census Bureau Data Points: Latinos by Occupation, Among Latinos by State

2022 Census Data Point	California	Florida	Texas	Washington	U.S.
Latinos by Occupation					
Management, Business, and Financial	10%	14%	11%	10%	11%
Computer, Engineering, and Science	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Education, Legal, Arts, and Media	8%	8%	8%	7%	8%
Health Care and Technical	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%
Service	23%	21%	22%	23%	23%
Sales and Related	9%	11%	10%	7%	9%
Office and Administrative Support	11%	12%	11%	8%	11%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	3%	1%	0.5%	9%	2%
Construction and Extraction	8%	9%	12%	9%	10%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%
Production	7%	4%	6%	6%	7%
Transportation and Material	11%	9%	9%	10%	10%

Source: UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Institute: [Latino Data Hub](#) (2024)

APPENDIX B

Figures on Postsecondary Educational Access and Opportunities for Latinos

	California	Florida	Texas	Washington	U.S.
Latino Share of Population, 2022	40%	27%	40%	14%	19%
Latino Share of College Students, 2022-23	43%	31%	42%	16%	21%
Share of Latino Adults (25+) with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 2022	15%	27%	17%	19%	19%
Latino Share of CCB Students Enrolled, 2022-23	42%	-	78%	9%	-
Latino Share of CCB Students Enrolled, 2021-22	35%	-	79%	8%	-

Notes: Instances where data are unavailable or could not be found are indicated with a "-" sign. See Tables 1 and 3 for additional notes regarding these figures.

Sources: Authors' analysis of data from the [Latino Data Hub](#); National Center for Educational Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, "About IPEDS," accessed October 20, 2025, [available online](#); California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart, "Special Population/Group Student Count," accessed January 12, 2025, [available online](#); Thai and Love, "Community College Bachelor's Degrees in Florida: An Update on Enrollment and Labor Market Outcomes," [available online](#) (2024); Love et al., "Community College Bachelor's Degrees in Texas," [available online](#) (2024); Meza and Bragg, *Washington's Community College Baccalaureate Degrees: Growth and Outcomes*, 2024 Update, [available online](#) (2025).

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Her research is multidisciplinary and uses a variety of asset-based conceptual frameworks—funds of knowledge, community cultural wealth and the forms of capital—and of statistical approaches—econometric models, multilevel models, spatial analyses and GIS, and social network analysis—to study the educational and occupational trajectories of underserved and racially minoritized students. Currently, Dr. Rios-Aguilar is examining how community college students make decisions about majors, jobs, and careers and is also evaluating the impact of California's community college baccalaureate program on the academic and labor market outcomes of students. Her latest co-edited book, published by Routledge, *Funds of Knowledge in Higher Education: Honoring Students' Cultural Experiences and Resources as Strengths*, refines and builds on the concept of funds of knowledge in a sophisticated and multidisciplinary way to examine issues related to access and transition to college, college persistence and success, and pedagogies in higher education.

Dr. Rios-Aguilar obtained her Ph.D. in Education Theory and Policy from the University of Rochester, her M.S. in Educational Administration from the University of Rochester, and her B.A. in Economics from the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México [ITAM].



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