



hispanic**federation**

CLOSING THE LATINO DIGITAL DIVIDE

Lessons Learned from Community-Based
Approaches to Latino Digital Skilling

Fall 2022

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This white paper was developed by Hispanic Federation's Workforce Initiatives Team: Brent Wilkes, Diana Caba, and Peter Michelen — in consultation with Google.org, HF's Latino Digital Accelerator grantees and community partners. Many Federation staff provided advice and support, among them Frankie Miranda, Jessica Orozco Guttlein, Stephen Calenzani, Jessica Guzmán Mejía, Mario Colón, Ingrid Alvarez-DiMarzo, Tydie Abreu and Francesca Perrone. Emily Gantz McKay and Hila Berl of EGM Consulting LLC worked with the team to analyze data collected from the Latino Digital Accelerator grantees, conduct further research, and draft the white paper. Initial support was provided by John A. Gutiérrez, Ph.D., John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and Miguel Pacheco. Graphic Design provided by Amy Thesing.

ABOUT hispanicfederation

Founded in 1990, the [Hispanic Federation](#) (HF) works to empower and advance the Latino community and its institutions through programs, capacity building, advocacy, grantmaking, and direct community services. The largest Latino umbrella organization in the nation, the Federation collaborates with a network of 500 nonprofits in 41 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Headquartered in New York City, HF has regional offices in seven states and territories, and programs and services that span more than three-quarters of the U.S. HF's greatest strength lies in its deep roots and relationships in Latino communities, through grassroots leaders and nonprofits, public officials, policymakers, media, small business owners, and private sector leaders.

ABOUT Google.org

[Google.org](#), Google's philanthropy, brings the best of Google to help solve some of humanity's biggest challenges combining funding, innovation, and technical expertise to support underserved communities and provide opportunity for everyone. We engage nonprofits and social enterprises who make a significant impact on the communities they represent, and whose work has the potential to produce meaningful change. We want a better world, faster — and we believe in leveraging technology and applying scalable data-driven innovation to move the needle.

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LETTER FROM PRESIDENT & CEO, HISPANIC FEDERATION AND FUNDER, GOOGLE.ORG

Dear Friends,

In 2019, Hispanic Federation (HF) and Google.org, embarked on a national Latino Digital Accelerator initiative designed to support Latino community-based organizations teaching essential digital skills to prepare Latinos for the workforce of tomorrow. We could not have anticipated how timely this collaboration would be as the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the significant digital divide Latinos face in these unprecedented times. This white paper details our innovative Latino Digital Accelerator initiative combining HF's mission of strengthening Latino nonprofits and Google.org's deep commitment to closing the digital divide to accelerate economic success for the Latino community.

We know that technological advancements are changing the requirements for our workforce and Latino-led and -serving nonprofits engaged in workforce training must respond to the shifting labor market demands to best prepare Latino workers for the digital economy. Today, well over 70% of jobs require technology skills. Yet more than half of Latino workers have limited or no digital skills, and one-fourth of Latinos have access to the internet only through smartphones. Latinos make up 18% of the overall U.S. labor market and will continue to account for one out of every two new workers that join the workforce by 2025. However, Latinos also hold jobs that are at the highest risk of elimination due to automation of any identity group at close to 60%. The forecast is clear: without digital skills, Latinos will be disproportionately excluded from jobs that will advance their economic mobility.

We understand the urgency of this reality, which is why we've been working closely with leading organizations to leverage this moment in time as an opportunity to build a digital economy that is within reach for the Latino community.

This work is firmly founded on the acknowledgment that Latino-led, Latino-serving nonprofits are central for educating and training the workforce of tomorrow. This report describes the importance of this initiative, its development, and the accomplishments and lessons of its first year and beyond. We are proud that this initiative has served over 10,000 participants, 85% of them Latino and 58% of them women, and helped 1,100 people obtain jobs, leading to increased incomes.

We hope that you find this report informative and that it serves as a signal for us to gather our collective voices and determination to ensure that Latinos are equitably included in the digital economy of tomorrow, and that as we continue to rebuild in a post pandemic world, we will be able to design an economy that works for everyone.

Sincerely,



Frankie Miranda
President and CEO
Hispanic Federation



Hector Mujica
Head of Economic Opportunity, Americas
Google.org



*Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders
Bridgeport, CT*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The Hispanic Federation (HF) Latino Digital Accelerator Program helps build the digital skills training capacity of Latino-led and -serving nonprofits engaged in workforce development, and, through them, increases Latino community access to digital skills training to improve their lives and economic prospects. The initiative combines organizational capacity building, support for digital career centers housed in diverse partner nonprofits, and a long-term online Latino Digital Center of Excellence to share knowledge and resources through research, curriculum development and access, and dissemination of lessons learned.

With funding from Google.org, HF selected 24 partner sites in early 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic was forcing businesses, schools, and nonprofits to close or operate remotely. Despite numerous challenges the sites received their initial grants from HF and began providing training in July 2020, serving more than 10,000 people in its first 18 months. HF provided many types of assistance including but not limited to technical assistance, physical and virtual site visits, and a national Latino Encuentro Digital Symposium highlighting the program's work.

This White Paper summarizes the development and first implementation year of the Latino Digital Accelerator, including accomplishments, challenges, and lessons learned. It also explains the myriad reasons the Latino Digital Accelerator Program is so important. The early experience of the Latino Digital Accelerator Program, as presented below, highlights the extremely significant future role for Latino led and serving nonprofits in digital skills development.

Hispanic Federation

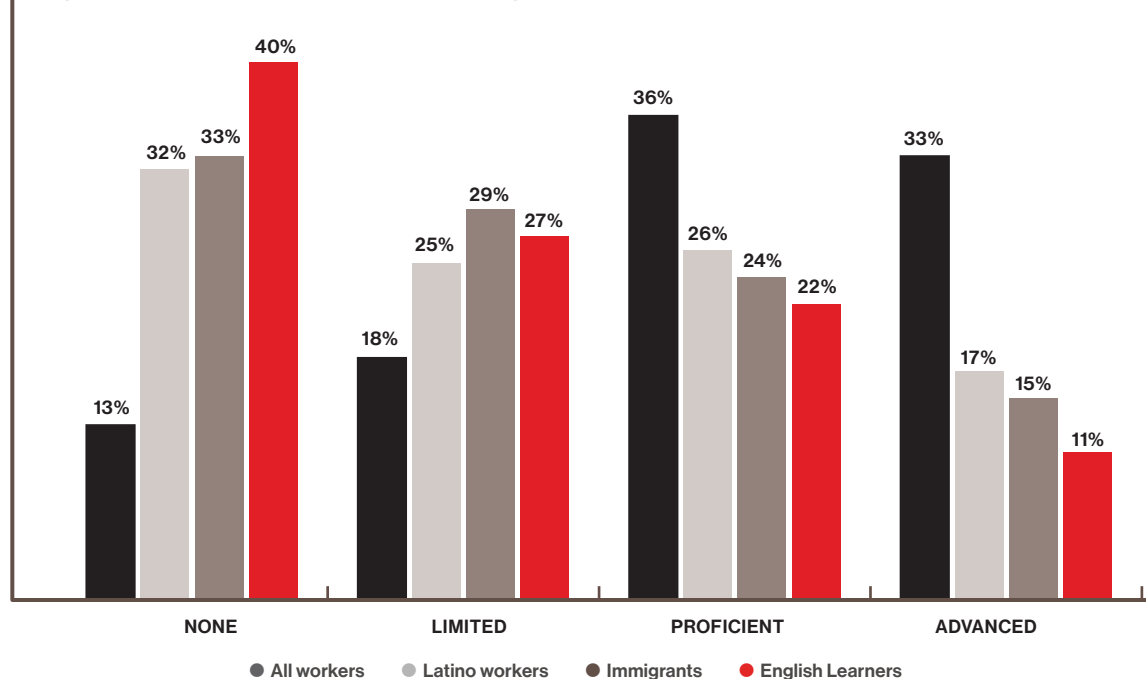
The Hispanic Federation (HF) works to empower and advance the Latino community and its institutions through programs, capacity building, advocacy, grantmaking, direct community services, and disaster relief. Since its inception, HF has worked to build the capacity of Latino nonprofits to serve their communities, through innovative projects, grants, and training and technical assistance. The Latino Digital Accelerator combines these capacity-building strategies.

Digital Skilling and Latinos

Digital Revolution of the U.S.: The U.S. has become a digital, technology-driven economy, and the impacts on daily life are similarly profound. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) predicted in 2012 that by 2020, more than three-fourths (77%) of jobs would require some kind of technology skills.¹

The Latino Digital Divide: Digital skills can open new avenues for employment and protect against job loss due to automation — and the lack of such skills exacerbates economic disparities. Latinos face special challenges due to a wide digital divide. According to the Pew Research Center, a quarter of Latinos have access to the internet only through smartphones; they are far less likely than non-Hispanic White Americans to have a desktop or laptop computer or access to broadband at home.² Immigrants and English-language learners face even greater challenges, as shown below:³

○ Digital Proficiency of U.S. Workers Aged 16-64, 2020



Source: National Skills Coalition, 2020

- 1 "Computer skills a must in today's workforce," The Courier, May 30, 2017, updated June 1, 2017; https://wfcourier.com/computer-skills-a-must-in-todays-workforce/article_df9f77ca-e91c-5bc8-a7a3-f4d319c8df74.html.
- 2 Sara Atske and Andrew Perrin, "Home broadband adoption, computer ownership vary by race, ethnicity in the U.S.," Pew Research Center, July 16, 2021; <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/07/16/home-broadband-adoption-computer-ownership-vary-by-race-ethnicity-in-the-u-s/>.
- 3 Amanda Bergson-Shilcock, "Applying a Racial Equity Lens to Digital Literacy," National Skills Coalition, April 21, 2020; <https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Digital-Skills-Racial-Equity-Final.pdf>.

Impact of the Digital Divide: Latinos are a large and growing proportion of the U.S. workforce and are increasingly important to overall economic progress. They represent a \$2.6 trillion market and the fastest growing group of small business owners,⁴ and are expected to account for almost four out of five net new workers between 2020 and 2030.⁵ However, Latinos are concentrated in occupations that make less use of technology, like farming, maintenance, construction, food preparation and serving.

Impact of the Pandemic on Digitalization: The COVID-19 pandemic heightened the impact of the digital divide. It accelerated the importance of internet access and technology skills. Accelerated digitalization has negatively affected many Latinos, who lack both connectivity and basic digital skills. The pandemic put Latino economic progress at risk, but also increased public awareness of the need to improve digital access for communities of color. Latinos must have digital skills, for daily life and for employment and career opportunities.

Levels of Digital Skills: Digital skills include a range of different abilities, both “hard” technical skills and “soft” interpersonal and communication skills. Job-related digital skills are often categorized by proficiency level. The Hispanic Federation uses three categories:

- **Beginner/basic skills** for job preparation and access, which enable people to use digital tools like laptops and tablets and access the internet.
- **Intermediate skills** include administrative skills involving proficiency in programs like word processing and spreadsheets, IT networking, and digital skills for specific professions, which enable people to communicate with others and access and create digital content.
- **Advanced skills** needed for work in the technology sector.

Workers need not only “hard skills” to carry out specific tasks, but also “soft skills” that involve how they complete them — how they communicate, collaborate, and problem-solve. When the Digital Skill Gaps Index international survey asked about the most important 21st Century workplace skills, problem solving, decision making, and commitment to “continuously upskill and reskilling” were considered the most important.⁶

Workforce Training System: Workforce training to meet these needs — which increasingly includes technology or digital skill development training — takes many forms, including but not limited to high school vocational courses, nonprofit and for-profit postsecondary vocational schools, and workforce development centers. The federal government has long supported workforce education and training by funding a workforce system implemented by state and local government, nonprofits, and other grantees. The current Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 focuses on individuals facing employment barriers.

Role of Latino Nonprofits in Digital Skills Development: Latino-led and -serving community-based organizations (CBOs) can play a special and pivotal role in workforce development and digital skilling for Latinos and immigrant communities. Interwoven into their communities, they reduce service barriers by operating within Latino neighborhoods, providing education and training bilingually or in Spanish, and earning residents’ trust over years of service. Their leaders understand community needs and culture and are committed to serving those with the greatest need. Many are multi-service agencies, and either offer or refer for wraparound services, from literacy and GED classes to childcare, housing, and food assistance. They survive and thrive because they are adaptable and innovative, able to pivot quickly to meet changing needs. Some belong to national networks like that of the Hispanic Federation. Often, Latino CBOs serve as the entry point for digital education and training, providing an “on-ramp” to additional digital skilling.

4 Sean Salas, “The \$2.6 Trillion U.S. Latino Market: The Largest And Fastest Growing Blindspot Of The American Economy,” Forbes, September 27, 2020; <https://www.forbes.com/sites/seansalas/2020/09/27/the-26-trillion-us-latino-market-the-largest-and-fastest-growing-blindspot-of-the-american-economy/?sh=3deaacef9e62>.

5 Kevin Dubina, “Hispanics in the Labor Force: 5 Facts,” U.S. Department of Labor Blog, September 15, 2021; <https://blog.dol.gov/2021/09/15/hispanics-in-the-labor-force-5-facts>.

6 “Digital Skills Gap Index 2021, John Wiley & Sons, 2021; <https://dsgi.wiley.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/DSGI-whitepaper.pdf>.

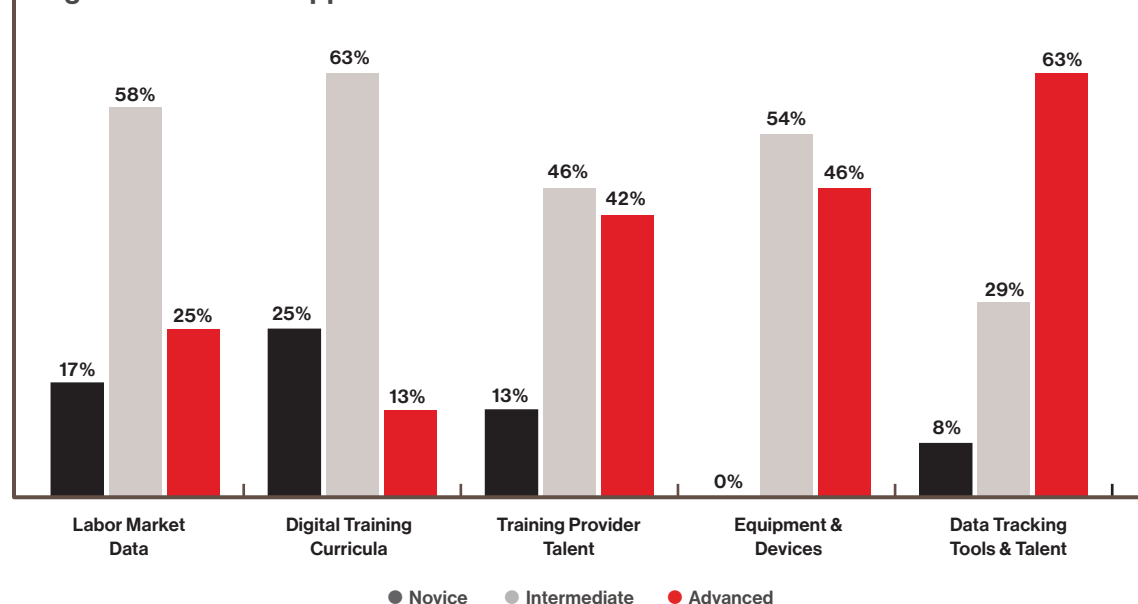
Latino Digital Accelerator

Project Components: Hispanic Federation realized that while some Latino CBOs were deeply involved in digital training and related education and support services, many lacked the resources or capacity for digital skilling or reskilling. This recognition led to a plan to build the capacity of Latino-led and -serving nonprofits and, through them, increase access to digital skills training in Latino communities. In August 2019, HF received two-year funding from Google.org for a project with three major components:

- **Latino Digital Accelerator** – A unique training program to strengthen the organizational capacity, programmatic offerings, and reach of Latino-focused nonprofit organizations involved in technology workforce development
- **Digital Career Centers** – Support for a network of at least 20 technology centers housed in Latino-led and -serving nonprofits, including use of customized curriculum to help support digital skills training for at least 10,000 Latinos
- **Latino Digital Center of Excellence** – A long-term center to build capability and share resources for digital skilling among nonprofits providing digital workforce development for Latinos, through research, curriculum development, and dissemination of lessons learned

Site Identification and Recruitment: HF issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in January 2020 seeking community-based Latino-led and -serving nonprofit applicants for \$50,000 in grant funds over two years, along with help in “accelerating” their own digital skilling capacity and operating a digital career center to train community members. A review of applications by an independent researcher found that their greatest need was for agency capacity building (e.g., capital, staffing, system upgrade needs), followed by development or enhancement of digital computer training (e.g., office-focused applications and software training, basic computer skills, or medium to advanced skills), and other, non-digital-specific activities or strategies (e.g., helping participants obtain employment or providing educational support and training).⁷

Digital Accelerator Applicant Self-Assessment



⁷ Stephen Manuel Calenzani, “Plans for Digital Skilling Training Among Latinx Workforce Programs: Initial Findings Using a Grounded Theory Approach,” unpublished master’s thesis, City University of New York, School of Labor and Urban Studies, December 2020.

Description of Local Partners: Twenty-four diverse sites were selected by a committee based on clearly defined criteria and numerical ratings. The percentage of organizational clients who were Latino ranged from 50-100%, with an average of 79%. The percentage of organizational clients who identified as women ranged from 10-70%, with a mean of 40%, and the percent of English-language learners (ELLs) ranged from 5-92%, with a mean of 33%.

Projected enrollment: The project planned for more than 10,000 participants over 18 months, with 80% completing their training, almost half earning a credential, and 40% obtaining employment. The projection was that one-quarter (26%) of individuals who enrolled would obtain employment and be retained for at least 90 days.

Implementation: COVID-19 Disruptions and Adjustments

The Accelerator was poised for site-level implementation in March 2020, when much of the country shut down due to the pandemic. HF's Digital Accelerator team consulted funder Google.org, checked in with sites individually, and polled them to learn how they were being affected and whether and how the project should launch. The decision was to implement, with training partly or entirely remote until conditions changed.

Early Impact of COVID-19 on the Latino Community: COVID-19 had immediate, devastating health and economic impacts on Latinos. They were often among the first to be infected and have remained far more likely than White Americans to become infected, be hospitalized, and die from the disease. Age-adjusted data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that only Native Americans have faced comparable impact. Data through early October 2021 show that Hispanics were 1.9 times as likely to be infected, 2.8 times as likely to be hospitalized, and 2.3 times as likely to die from COVID-19 as White non-Hispanics.

Many factors made Latinos especially vulnerable, among them employment in “essential” but poorly paid frontline jobs, residence in multigenerational households, concentration in crowded inner-city neighborhoods, and low rates of health insurance. Being uninsured limits access to healthcare, including testing and vaccinations, and contributes to poor health status and underlying conditions. Economic impacts have also been devastating, with 60% of Latino workers reporting job loss or pay cuts in the spring of 2020, and unemployment peaking in May at 18.9%, the highest for any racial or ethnic group. In September 2020, about 40% of both Latino and Black households with children reported food insecurity in the prior 30 days. In May 2021, a similar percentage reported housing insecurity.

Impact on Latino CBOs: Latino CBOs have been the primary lifeline for many Latino families during COVID-19, maintaining badly needed services remotely and in some cases face-to-face, expanding activities and initiating new services to meet critical needs like food assistance. They also helped people access services, helping clients without internet access apply for emergency benefits and services, providing interpretation and sometimes smartphones. An HF survey found that while about one-fifth (21%) of nonprofits providing employment services reported being forced to reduce or suspend those services, over half (52%) maintained them at pre-COVID-19 levels. Recognizing the critical need for resources, HF immediately began to provide emergency grants to CBOs, awarding \$20.6 million to more than 350 nonprofits between March 2020 and September 2021. Nine Accelerator sites received such grants.

Early Impact on the Accelerator Sites: A poll completed by 18 Accelerator sites in May 2020 found immediate and extensive impact from the COVID-19 epidemic:

- **Pivot to online training:** Two-thirds (67%) of the sites had already moved their workforce training entirely online; the others delayed training due to resource limitations.
- **Curriculum changes:** Almost all sites reported curriculum changes for remote or hybrid use.

- **Impact on number of Latino participants:** Most sites (61%) said there had been no reduction in the number of Latinos participating in their workforce development programs, while the rest reported reduction ranging from less than 25% to more than 50%.
- **Organizational cash flow:** All organizations reported at least moderate negative impact on their cash flow.

○ **Priorities for HF Assistance to Launch the Latino Digital Accelerator Program During the COVID-19 Crisis, May 2020 [N = 18]**



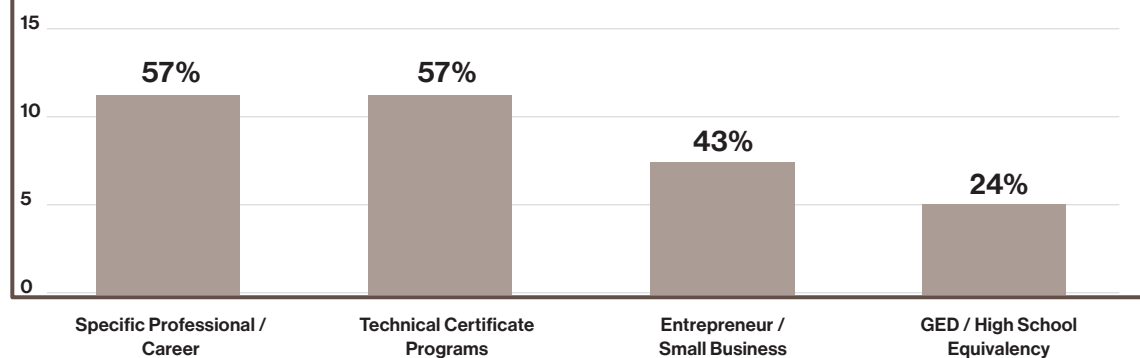
- **Payroll Protection Program:** Most sites (89%) said they had applied for the Payroll Protection Program.
- **Priority assistance needs:** Sites were asked which of five types of assistance they needed, using a 5-point scale where 5 = most needed. As the figure shows, most needed was access to more funding opportunities, followed by technical resources (e.g., equipment) for participants.
- **Other challenges:** Thirteen sites provided additional information, citing challenges but also emphasizing how the pandemic highlighted the importance of the project and digital skilling; most expressed confidence about moving forward.

First Year of Implementation: The program became fully operational in July 2020. Ongoing communications, data reporting, and a poll of 21 sites conducted in June 2021, at the end of the first year, provided perspectives on experiences, plans, and priorities:

- **Program participation rates:** Asked about participation levels, three-fourths said they operated at 100% capacity or at 75-99% capacity.
- **Language used for training:** Nearly three-fourths of sites did training in both Spanish and English; about one-fourth used only English, and one partner used only Spanish.
- **How programs were delivered during the pandemic:** Most sites (57%) said their programs during the first year were entirely remote, 38% used a hybrid model, and 5% reported in-person services with limited capacity.
- **Pros and cons of remote training:** Reported benefits include a broader geographic reach, a process that builds digital skills and increases participant comfort with technology, elimination of transportation issues, reduced childcare needs, and greater flexibility in training schedules. Disadvantages include lack of access to technology and internet connectivity, the need for basic digital literacy to access training, challenges in building trust and a sense of community, and, for some participants, no private or quiet space.

- **Impact of remote training on capacity and staff:** Sites often said that use of remote training has increased training capacity. However, meeting increased demand and managing large classes remotely can be challenging, and some staff need professional development.
- **Maintaining participant engagement in a remote training environment:** Sites reported a variety of participant engagement strategies, from focusing on discussion rather than lectures, using the Chat function and breakout rooms, asking students to share their screens, using quizzes to assess progress and provide “friendly competition,” and limiting group size. Some said they alternate instructors and/or integrate support services teams.
- **Plans for delivering programs once offices begin to reopen:** A large majority of sites (71%) said they planned to use a hybrid model — with limited capacity in a physical space and other participants connecting remotely.
- **Biggest program challenge:** 38% said job placement, 24% said equipment distribution, 24% said internet access, and 14% said curriculum development and execution.
- **Curriculum to add:** Asked which types of digital skilling curriculum they would most like to add, many sites said they wanted to add more than one. A Technical Certificate Program and Specific Professional/ Career Curriculum were named most often.
- **Partnerships:** The sites reported a wide range of partnerships to help students obtain laptops and internet access, among them public schools for computer access, public libraries for internet access, local community colleges and universities for equipment loans, and national organizations for laptops. Local business owners, banks, and credit unions provided job placements, mock job interviews, and other employment assistance. Many sites reported relationships with providers of wraparound services.

○ **Types of Digital Skills Curricula Sites Would Most Like to Add:
Number and Percent of Sites (N=21)**



Digital Skilling Participants: During its first 18 months of operations, during the pandemic, the Accelerator served 10,598 people, providing an average of 33.5 hours of digital training. More than 1,100 obtained jobs. Over 85% of participants were Latino, and nearly 60% were women.

A challenging but successful year: The pandemic created great challenges for the project and the partner organizations, but they were able to pivot, adjust, innovate, and operate successfully. Shifting to remote and hybrid training presented difficulties, but also enabled thousands of people to learn digital skills during a very difficult period — and probably increased participation by Latinas.

Accelerating CBO Capacity and Resources: Hispanic Federation Assistance to the Sites

During the crucial first year, HF used multiple strategies to accelerate Latino nonprofit capacity for digital skilling, most of them remote.

Technical Assistance: Accelerator staff reached out to individual sites early in the project, to become acquainted, learn more about the organizations, and understand how they were coping early in the pandemic, then continued to be available throughout the year.

Site visits: Though the pandemic prevented many planned visits to partner organizations, staff were able to visit sites in California and Washington and held quarterly virtual meetings with the cohort throughout the first year.

Encuentro Digital: HF's Encuentro Digital: Latino Digital Skilling Symposium, held July 14, 2021, was an online national convening with more than 400 registrants that highlighted the Accelerator's work in building training pathways to close the Latino digital gap.

Partner meetings: The Accelerator held regular remote meetings with the cohort to provide project information and guidance and maintain a forum for sharing and discussing progress and challenges, with topics ranging from lessons learned from remote training to use of labor market data and reports.

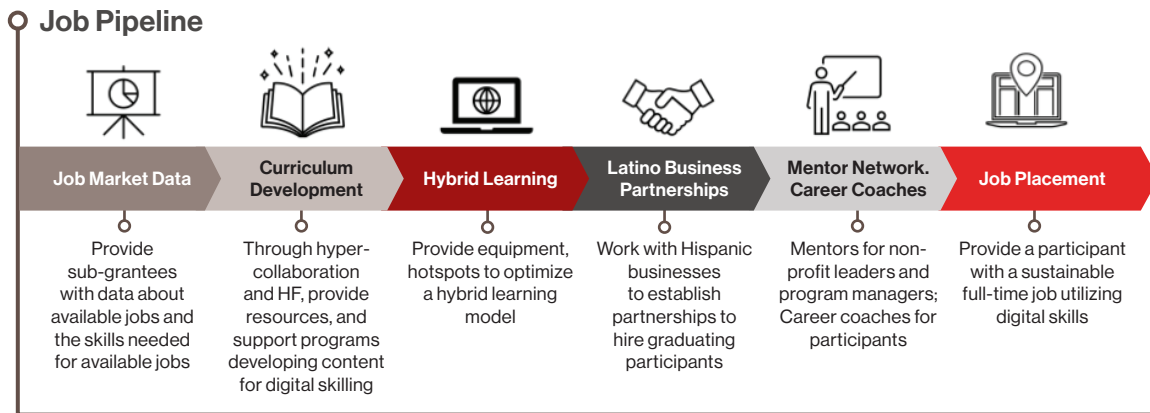
Technology grants: HF awarded each site a special technology grant of \$10,000 in July 2021 to help meet technology needs related to remote training. Funds were used to purchase equipment needed by the nonprofits and by digital skilling participants.

Assistance in obtaining and using labor market data: Lightcast is a leading labor market analysis and workforce development insight provider that has partnered with Hispanic Federation to provide several local labor market insight reports to each of the programs participating in the Latino Digital Accelerator. These insights have been used to inform program sites on what skills are in demand in their local job market based off job posting and census data.



Center of Excellence: The website for the Center of Excellence, scheduled for completion by end of 2022, targets the Latino community but is designed to serve HF grantees, other Latino-led and -serving nonprofits, and any individual or entity seeking resources and sound practices on digital skilling for Latinos and immigrants. The long-term intent is to support recognition of Latino CBOs as legitimate, respected workforce development and digital education centers.

Curriculum development: During the first year, the Accelerator prepared and provided to the sites an 8-unit, 16-hour online Digital Skilling and Job Preparedness curriculum, designed to provide participants with foundational digital literacy and skills in job readiness and job-seeking. Some sites use this curriculum as developed, while others have modified it for integration into existing training. This is the first of multiple planned curricula at different skilling levels.



Supporting a Job Pipeline: The ultimate intent of the Accelerator is to ensure that Latino-led and -serving nonprofits have the resources and expertise they need to grow their digital skilling capacity and use it to eliminate the Latino digital divide, so Latinos are equitably represented in the technological workforce of the future. The figure shows the Accelerator's job pipeline; Accelerator assistance has focused on the critical first three stages. The Center of Excellence will address each part of the pipeline.

Future Directions for the Accelerator

The Accelerator is expanding and further developing several components.

Program Funding and Expansion: At the end of 2021, the Latino Digital Accelerator had funding from Google.org, Comcast NBCUniversal Telemundo, and the New York Digital Inclusion Fund/Schmidt Futures. Charter Spectrum, Macy's, and Toyota also became funders. HF expects to submit competitive applications for funding through several new and ongoing federal programs, including the Digital Equity Act, a part of the infrastructure legislation passed by Congress in November 2021.

Support for Certificate Programs: A new focus for the Accelerator is providing scholarships for Google Career Certificate programs that prepare graduates for jobs in the technology sector. The courses, offered on the Coursera platform, take 5-8 months to complete and require about ten hours of study a week. Through the partnership with Google.org, the Accelerator is providing scholarships for participants identified by the sites. The goal is to assist at least 150 participants from 12-15 sites.

Curriculum Development: HF plans to hire personnel to develop additional curriculum packages for intermediate and advanced courses, which sites can use as stand-alone courses or modify as desired.

Center of Excellence: The Center of Excellence website should become active by the end of 2022.

Apprenticeships: The Apprenticeship pilot program will further support digital skilling participants to secure employment utilizing the skills obtained and provide stipends and technical assistance to increase job retention.

Lessons Learned

The staff and partner sites of the Latino Digital Accelerator have learned many practical lessons, and are using them to refine and expand the Accelerator:

Latino-led and -serving nonprofits play an essential role in digital skilling for Latinos — a role that must be expanded if their digital employment gap is to be closed. They offer some very specific added value to digital skilling:

- **They understand and use appropriate workforce development strategies.** Most Accelerator partners were engaged in providing at least foundational technology training before participation in the Accelerator.
- **They target and are committed to meeting the needs of Latinos who face special barriers to employment and upward mobility:** Partners typically offer and/or are working to expand bilingual staff and training, English language classes, and wraparound services.
- **They recognize the need to increase their digital skilling capacity and resources,** as an essential strategy for Latino economic empowerment and progress.
- **Their adaptability, competence, and commitment under extremely difficult conditions make them reliable digital skilling providers.** Project start-up during the pandemic created huge challenges and in-person workforce development classes and digital skilling were transformed into remote or hybrid training.
- **Latino demand for digital skilling is high.** Despite operating in the middle of the pandemic, most sites operated at or near maximum capacity during their first year.

Latinas want digital skills and benefit from access to remote training. Almost 60% of first-year Accelerator participants identify as women. The Accelerator showed that they will take advantage of digital skilling opportunities they can access from home.

The structure of the Accelerator — a national entity partnering with local CBOs — encourages innovation, facilitates resource development, and supports a learning community. HF brings a wealth of experience and contacts and a deep commitment to building the capacity of Latino CBOs. The partner sites bring workforce development experience, strong community ties and cultural understanding, and a willingness to share curriculum, knowledge, and challenges.

Private funding contributes to program adaptability and innovation. Because of its private funding, both HF and the local sites had great design flexibility and could test varied and innovative models and strategies.

Remote and hybrid training work and should be a continuing strategy for Latino-focused digital skilling. Nearly all sites expect to provide remote or hybrid training. Successful remote training will require both training for instructors and access to remote platforms that support interactive technology, plus devices and connectivity for participants.

Remote training highlighted the extent and importance of the Latino digital divide — and the need to address the lack of digital equipment as well as the need for digital skills. Sites struggled to get participants access to devices and broadband for remote training. It is essential that national initiatives for expansion of broadband access equitably include Latinos.

Job placement is likely to be both a continuing priority and an ongoing challenge for Latino nonprofits that offer digital skilling. At the end of the first year, 38% of sites identified job placement as their greatest challenge. Curriculum needs to reflect accurate, comprehensive, current labor market data for the region, which the Accelerator has helped participating sites access and use.

The planned Center of Excellence is badly needed to help advance Latino digital skilling. Partner sites indicated a need for additional curriculum and other information.

The core assumption of the Accelerator is valid. The acceleration of digital skilling capacity among Latino CBOs is a sound strategy for increasing Latino access to the digital skills needed for the future job market.



1. INTRODUCTION

Hispanic Federation (HF) established its Latino Digital Accelerator Program because as HF staff worked with partners and community on the ground, they recognized several realities:

- At a time when technology has become an integral part of both work and daily life, a digital divide prevents many Latinos⁸ from accessing and using technology, with potentially profound negative impact on their lives and on Latino economic progress.
- Latino-led and -serving nonprofits can play a crucial role in bridging that digital divide and preparing Latinos for the jobs of the future, given their unique bond with their communities and — for many — a history of effective workforce development and adult education services.
- If Latino nonprofits are to play this role, their own ability, and resources to provide digital workforce development training must be accelerated.

GROWING IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY IN WORK AND DAILY LIFE

The U.S. has become a digital, technology-driven economy. The “digitalization of everything” has remade the world of work,⁹ and the impacts on daily life are no less profound. The latest technology has changed how we make purchases, apply for public benefits, access the news and sporting events, and communicate both personally and professionally. As journalist Oliver Burkeman wrote in 2009, “Without most of us quite noticing when it happened, the web went from being a strange new curiosity to a background condition of

8 Throughout this paper, the terms *Latino/a*, *Latinx*, and *Hispanic* are used interchangeably.

9 Mark Munro, Sifan Liu, Jacob Shiton, and Suddharth Kulkarni, “Digitalization and the American workforce,” The Brookings Institution, November 2017; <https://www.brookings.edu/research/digitalization-and-the-american-workforce/>.

everyday life.”¹⁰ It is now both “technically and professionally possible to work remotely from just about any address in the U.S. — as long as you have good internet service.”¹¹

Today, digitalization goes far beyond the web. “The digital economy is the worldwide network of economic activities, commercial transactions and professional interactions that are enabled by information and communications technologies.”¹²

More and more jobs require the use of technology. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) predicted in 2012 that by 2020, more than three-fourths (77%) of jobs would require some kind of technology skills.¹³ In 2016, a national analysis found that 70% of jobs required high or medium technology skills.¹⁴ In 2021, BLS projected that employment in computer and information technology occupations will grow by 13.4% between 2020 and 2030¹⁵ — a growth rate 74% higher than the 7.7% projected for all occupations, heavily driven by “great emphasis on cloud computing, the collection and storage of big data, and information security.”¹⁶

Digital skills can open new avenues for employment and protect against job loss due to automation. “While nearly 60 percent of tasks performed in low-digital occupations appear susceptible to automation, only around 30 percent of tasks in highly digital occupations appear susceptible to automation.”¹⁷ For three decades, computer skills have meant higher wages — a 1993 study found that “workers who used a computer on the job earned 17.6% higher wages” than those who did not.¹⁸

Digitalization also creates challenges and can exacerbate economic disparities. Workers without digital skills may lose their positions or be stuck in dead-end jobs with low and stagnant wages and reduced opportunities for mobility. Industries that are local and labor intensive — e.g., construction, leisure, and hospitality — are less digitized, and include many low-wage, low-opportunity occupations.

The nation faces a digital skills gap, according to the 2021 Digital Skills Gap Index, “which ranks 134 economies based on a battery of global indicators reflecting how advanced and prepared an economy is with the digital skills needed for sustained growth, recovery, and prosperity.” The U.S. ranked 26th; it ranked first in digital competitiveness, 2nd in years of school completed, 12th in digital skills in the population, but 31st in importance of information and communications technology (ICT) to the government’s long-term vision, viewed as “a proxy indicator of government support for closing the digital skills gap.” In summarizing U.S. findings, the report noted that, “Workers with the most sophisticated digital skills are in such high demand that they command wages far above the national average. Meanwhile, there is a growing opportunity cost for the organizations and individuals that fall behind.” The U.S. scored low in both the government’s understanding of the digital skills gap and in its commitment to closing it.¹⁹

10 Oliver Burkeman, “Forty years of the internet: how the world changed for ever,” *The Guardian*, October 23, 2009; <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2009/oct/23/internet-40-history-arpanet>.

11 Alex Lockie, “I’ve tried just about everything to get fast, quality internet in the sticks. Here’s my ultimate guide to scoring a work-from-homeable connection from anywhere,” *Business Insider*, May 15, 2021; <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-work-remotely-find-internet-connection-from-anywhere-2021-5>.

12 Mary K Pratt, Definition: Digital Economy; <https://searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/digital-economy>.

13 “Computer skills a must in today’s workforce,” *The Courier*, May 30, 2017, updated June 1, 2017; https://wfcourier.com/computer-skills-a-must-in-todays-workforce/article_df9f77ca-e91c-5bc8-a7a3-f4d319c8df74.html.

14 Mark Muro, Sifan Liu, Jacob Whiton, and Siddharth Kulkarni, “Digitalization and the American Workforce,” Brookings Institution, November 2017; <https://www.brookings.edu/research/digitalization-and-the-american-workforce/>.

15 “IT Jobs Projected to Continue Strong Growth Over the Next Decade,” Staffing Industry Analysts, IT Staffing Report, November 4, 2021; <https://www2.staffingindustry.com/Editorial/IT-Staffing-Report/Nov.-4-2021/IT-jobs-projected-to-continue-strong-growth-over-the-next-decade>.

16 “Computer and Information Technology Occupations,” Occupational Outlook Handbook, Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 8, 2021; <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/home.htm>.

17 <https://www.brookings.edu/research/digitalization-and-the-american-workforce/>.

18 Alan B. Krueger, “How Computers Have Changed the Wage Structure,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 108, No. 1, February 1993; <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2118494>.

19 “Digital Skills Gap Index 2021, John Wiley & Sons, 2021; <https://dsgi.wiley.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/DSGI-whitepaper.pdf>.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE FOR LATINOS AND IMMIGRANTS

Latinos face special challenges due to a severe digital divide. The Pew Research Center regularly monitors Latino use of technology. Its 2021 survey found that while Latinos are as likely as White non-Hispanics to have a smartphone (85%) or tablet (53%), they are far less likely to have a desktop or laptop computer (80% vs. 67%) or home broadband (80% vs. 65%). A quarter of Latinos reported access to the internet only through smartphones, compared to only 12% of White non-Latino adults.²⁰ In a study of Latino parent needs conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, 53% reported not having “enough computers, tablets, or laptops to support distance learning,” 37% had internet access only from their cellphones, and 33% had no regular internet access.²¹

A 2020 study in California by the Greenlining Institute described the racial and ethnic underpinnings of differential access to high-speed internet: “Areas that were redlined by banks in the past are digitally redlined today. Internet service providers in California invest millions deploying next generation high-speed internet networks in wealthy neighborhoods while ignoring low-income communities of color.”²²

Along with less access to devices and broadband, Latinos, immigrants, and English-language learners often have limited digital skills. The National Skills Coalition provides assessments based on the following levels of digital skills among workers:

- **No digital skills:** no past computer use, or inability to complete very basic computer tasks like “using a mouse or highlighting text on screen”
- **Limited digital skills:** ability to “complete only very simple digital tasks that have a generic interface and just a few steps”; for example, they would have trouble sorting email responses to an event invitation into separate folders for those who plan to attend and those who do not
- **Proficient digital skills:** some digital skills but “typically struggle with tasks that require both generic and specific technology applications; for example, using a new type of online form requiring navigation across multiple pages, multiple steps, and “use of tools (like the ‘sort’ function)”
- **Advanced digital skills:** skills needed to complete tasks that require them “to define for themselves the problem they are solving and use inferential reasoning in solving” it, often navigating across different online pages and applications, completing tasks with multiple steps, and “evaluate the relevance of a set of items to discard distractors”²³

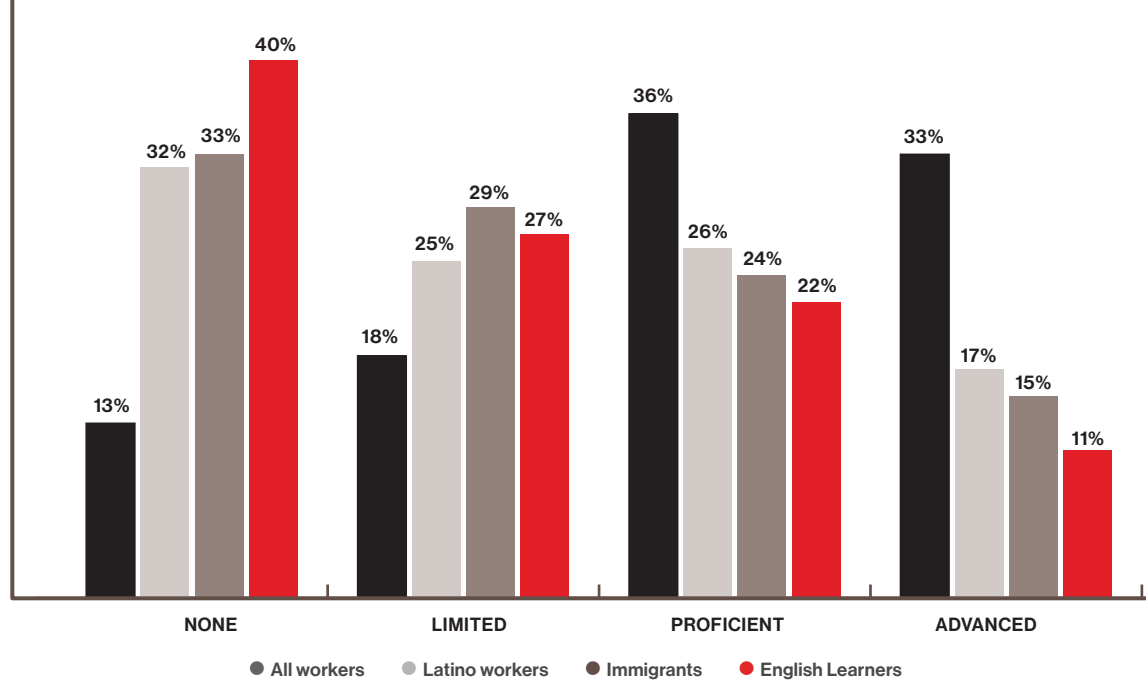
20 Sara Atske and Andrew Perrin, “Home broadband adoption, computer ownership vary by race, ethnicity in the U.S.,” Pew Research Center, July 16, 2021; <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/07/16/home-broadband-adoption-computer-ownership-vary-by-race-ethnicity-in-the-u-s/>.

21 “Latino Parent Voices; What Our Families Need Now,” Abrienda Puertas, 2020; https://nationalsurvey.ap-od.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/LatinoParentVoices_Report.pdf.

22 “On the Wrong Side of the Digital Divide: Life without Internet Access, and Why We Must Fix It in the Age of COVID-19,” Greenlining Institute, June 2, 2020; <https://greenlining.org/publications/online-resources/2020/on-the-wrong-side-of-the-digital-divide/>.

23 Amanda Bergson-Shilcock, “The New Landscape of Digital Literacy,” National Skills Coalition, May 2020; <https://nationalskillscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/05-20-2020-NSC-New-Landscape-of-Digital-Literacy.pdf>.

FIGURE 1
○ Digital Proficiency of U.S. Workers Aged 16-64, 2020



As Figure 1 shows, Latino workers aged 16-64 are far more likely than all workers to have *no* digital skills and far less likely to have *advanced* skills. Immigrants and English-language learners (who are often immigrants), including Latinos, have even more limited digital skills. Categorization of English learners may, however, be negatively affected because digital skills assessments are typically done in English.²⁴ This is important, since immigrants made up about 17% of the total civilian labor force as of 2020, and 46% of these immigrant workers were Latino.²⁵

Limited digital skills are often associated with less formal education. People with limited literacy are especially likely to have attended under-resourced schools, live in low-income households, and be people of color. They are less likely to qualify for digital skills training — which further limits their opportunities. These characteristics describe many Latino workers and reflect a long history of inequitable public and private sector policies and practices.

24 Amanda Bergson-Shilcock, "Applying a Racial Equity Lens to Digital Literacy," National Skills Coalition, April 21, 2020; <https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Digital-Skills-Racial-Equity-Final.pdf>.

25 "Foreign-Born Workers: Labor Force Characteristics—2020," News Release, Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 18, 2021; <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/forbrn.pdf>.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LATINO WORKFORCE AND U.S. ECONOMIC PROGRESS

The digital divide negatively affects both Latinos and the overall U.S. economy, while Latino economic success contributes to overall U.S. economic success.

Latinos made considerable economic progress during the past decade but before the pandemic. The U.S. Latino market totals \$2.6 trillion as of 2020²⁶ and has doubled since 2015.²⁷ Latinos are especially entrepreneurial; they have become the fastest-growing group of small business owners. The number of Latino businesses grew by 34% during the past decade, compared to 1% for all other small businesses, and start-up rates were higher across most industry sectors.²⁸

Latinos represent a large and growing proportion of the U.S. workforce, which makes them increasingly important to overall economic progress. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Latinos were 18% of the labor force in 2020 and are projected to be 21% in 2030, increasing from 29.0 to 35.9 million workers. Latinos are expected to account for 78% of net new workers between 2020 and 2030. Latinos have a higher labor force participation rate than the overall population because they are younger, with a mean age of 38.5 vs. 42.0 for all workers, and are more likely to be between 25-54, the prime age range for workers.²⁹

However, Latinos are concentrated in occupations that make less use of technology — which both reflects and contributes to their limited digital skills. Some sectors that are “both local and labor-intensive (construction, leisure, hospitality) tend to have low digital usage, especially in their customer transactions,” and other sectors like health care include both highly digitized occupations and “a large workforce that uses only basic — or sometimes no — digital technology.”³⁰

“I don’t think we’re going to see the full genius of this country make its way into civic and commercial life without making sure that the Latino population is fully participating in that creation and fully connected.”

– Jessica Rosenworcel, Chairwoman,
Federal Communications Commission,
Hispanic Federation’s Encuentro Digital:
Latino Digital Skilling Symposium, July 14, 2021

26 Sean Salas, “The \$2.6 Trillion U.S. Latino Market: The Largest And Fastest Growing Blindspot Of The American Economy,” *Forbes*, September 27, 2020; <https://www.forbes.com/sites/seansalas/2020/09/27/the-26-trillion-us-latino-market-the-largest-and-fastest-growing-blindspot-of-the-american-economy/?sh=3deaacef9e62>.

27 “Buying Power of the U.S. Hispanic Population 1990-2020,” Statista Research Department, December 6, 2016; <https://www.statista.com/statistics/251438/hispanics-buying-power-in-the-us/>.

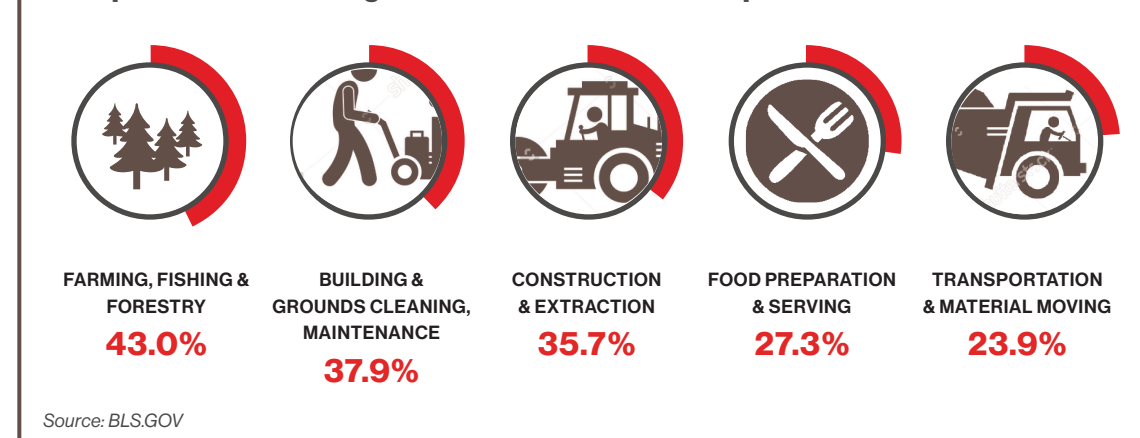
28 Marlene Orozco, Inara Sunan Tareque, Paul Oyer, and Jerry I. Porras, “2020 State of Latino Entrepreneurship,” Stanford Latino Entrepreneurship Initiative, Stanford Graduate School of Business, January 2021; <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publication-pdf/report-2020-state-of-latino-entrepreneurship.pdf>.

29 Kevin Dubina, “Hispanics in the Labor Force: 5 Facts,” U.S. Department of Labor Blog, September 15, 2021; <https://blog.dol.gov/2021/09/15/hispanics-in-the-labor-force-5-facts>.

30 Shelly Kramer, “Which Industries are the Most Digital,” in “Digital Transformation,” Converge, May 18, 2016; <https://convergetechmedia.com/industries-digital-report/>.

FIGURE 2

Occupations with the Highest Concentrations of Hispanic Workers



As Figure 2 shows, Bureau of Labor Statistics data indicate that, although Latinos are 10.7% of workers in management jobs (up almost 100% since 2000), they remain overrepresented in service occupations, and make up high proportions of workers in many occupations with little digitalization.”³¹

IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON DIGITALIZATION AND THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

The pandemic has accelerated the importance of internet access and technology skills and the impact of the digital divide, since “Experience tells us that digitally under-served populations—typically, individuals with less formal education, people of color, women, younger workers, and people with disabilities—are disproportionately burdened by an economic crisis.”³² As the Greenlining Institute explains, “Even in normal times, completing homework, finding a job, working from home, starting a business, making appointments, and accessing government services all require an internet connection.”³³ The COVID-19 pandemic has made both internet access and technology skills even more important — for children expected to connect to school remotely; anyone needing healthcare when most clinics and doctor’s offices were closed; business owners applying for the Payroll Protection Program or other emergency assistance; and adults job hunting, applying for public benefits, or looking for needed services.

Remote work was increasing before the pandemic, but the percent of remote workers increased from 3.4% of the population in 2020³⁴ to roughly 35% in May 2020. However, “most Americans were still going to work in person, risking their life and the health of their families.”³⁵

According to the Economic Policy Institute, Black, Latino, and non-citizen workers are less likely to telework. As of 2021, “only one in six Hispanic workers (15.2%) and one in five Black workers (20.4%) are able to telework due to COVID-19, compared with one in four white workers (25.9%) and two in five Asian American Pacific Islander workers (39.2%).” In addition, “employment fell by 21% in occupations where

31 Kevin Dubina, *op. cit.*

32 John Wiley & Sons, *op. cit.*

33 Greenlining Institute, *op. cit.*

34 Kellie Wong, “25 Key Remote Work Statistics for 2020,” Business 2 Community, April 7, 2020; <https://www.business2community.com/human-resources/25-key-remote-work-statistics-for-2020-02299342>.

35 Elaine Godfrey, “Another Truth about Remote Work,” *The Atlantic*, September 20, 2021; <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/09/work-from-home-numbers/620107/>.

telework was not feasible and only 8% in occupations where telework was feasible,” and only about one in 20 workers with a high school diploma or less was still teleworking in June 2021, compared to one in three workers with at least a bachelor’s degree.³⁶

Both individuals and companies are now more dependent on technology than before the epidemic. E-commerce was accelerated by an estimated two years, according to Digital Commerce 360, due largely to store closures and fear of COVID-19 exposure.³⁷ A 2020 McKinsey Global Survey of business executives found that the pandemic has led companies in North America to accelerate “the digitization of their customer and supply-chain interactions and of their internal operations” by three years and the share of “digital or digitally enabled products in their portfolios” by six years. Many of the changes were expected to be permanent.³⁸ A record number of U.S. bank branches — 3,324 — closed in 2020, as more and more people banked and transferred money online. Communities with “a high concentration of Black and brown residents have been hardest hit,” according to research by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, and people who can’t bank online have been driven to more costly and less regulated financial service providers, like check-cashing stores and payday lenders.³⁹

This accelerated digitalization has negatively affected many Latinos, who lack both connectivity and basic digital skills — and the pandemic has also called attention to the digital divide. Hispanic Federation’s October 2020 survey of how COVID-19 was affecting Latinos found that 46% of Latino respondents who applied for unemployment benefits experienced difficulty, including trouble navigating websites and obtaining assistance over the phone. Written materials and telephone assistance were typically English only. One of the resulting report’s cross-cutting recommendations was to “Bridge the digital divide,” which should include “universal broadband access, access to equipment, and digital skills training.” Another was to “provide hands-on assistance in both Spanish and English to enable eligible Latinos to successfully obtain benefits and services with complex, usually online, eligibility and application procedures.”⁴⁰

Latino entrepreneurs also face a digital divide made more serious by the pandemic, with digital skills needed not only for sound fiscal management and operations, but also for marketing on social media and managing online sales. A survey by the Stanford Graduate School of Business found that Latino-owned businesses have been severely damaged by the pandemic, with 85% reporting large negative effects. It also found a gender gap, with Latina-led companies experiencing higher rates of layoffs and closures than Latino-owned businesses.⁴¹

The pandemic has thus accelerated digitalization and put Latino economic progress at risk, and at the same time increased public awareness of the need to improve digital access for communities of color. It has become essential to increase digital skills among Latinos, for use in daily life and for improving employment and career opportunities.

36 Elise Gould and Jori Kandra, “Only one in five workers are working from home due to COVID: Black and Hispanic workers are less likely to be able to telework,” Economic Policy Institute, June 2, 2021; <https://www.epi.org/blog/only-one-in-five-workers-are-working-from-home-due-to-covid-black-and-hispanic-workers-are-less-likely-to-be-able-to-telework/>.

37 “Coronavirus adds \$105 billion to US e-commerce in 2020,” Digital 360, June 16, 2021; <https://www.digitalcommerce360.com/article/coronavirus-impact-online-retail/>.

38 “How CoVID-19 has pushed companies over the technology tipping point — and transformed business forever,” McKinsey & Company, October 5, 2020; <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how-covid-19-has-pushed-companies-over-the-technology-tipping-point-and-transformed-business-forever>.

39 Scott Horsley, “What Are We Going to Do?: Towns Reel as Banks Close Branches at Record Pace,” NPR, March 26, 2021; <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/26/979284513/what-are-we-going-to-do-towns-reel-as-banks-close-branches-at-record-pace>.

40 “Overcoming COVID-19 Economic Barriers for Latino Communities, Hispanic Federation and New America, 2021; https://hispanicfederation.org/covid19summit/Report_-_Overcoming_COVID-19.pdf.

41 *Ibid.*



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2. DEVELOPING LATINO DIGITAL SKILLS

LEVELS OF DIGITAL SKILLS

“The term ‘digital skills’ refers to a range of different abilities, many of which are not only ‘skills’ per se, but a combination of behaviours, expertise, know-how, work habits, character traits, dispositions and critical understandings.”⁴² They include “not only technical skills but also cognitive skills as well as non-cognitive soft skills such as interpersonal skills and communication skills,” and are sometimes divided into basic, intermediate, and advanced “proficiency levels.”⁴³

The Urban Institute differentiates “foundational” and “specialized” digital skills. Foundational skills are “nonspecialized digital skills that may be important for carrying out a job but are not the job’s main substance,” just as foundational communication, literacy, and math skills are needed for most jobs. Specialized digital skills are “required for jobs that are all or mostly digital, such as a computer programmer, developer, software engineer, or IT support person.”⁴⁴

There is no consistent, agreed-upon set of definitions or categories for describing job-related digital skills, and the number of levels is extremely varied. The Federation uses three categories, as described below:

- **Beginner/basic skills for job preparedness and access:** digital skills that enable people to use digital tools like laptops and tablets. They include computer fundamentals like using a

42 “Digital Skills for Life and Work,” Working Group on Education, Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, September 2017; <https://broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/WG-Education-Report2017.pdf>.

43 “Digital Skills Assessment Guidebook,” International Telecommunication Union, Development Sector, 2020; https://academy.itu.int/sites/default/files/media2/file/20-00227_1f_Digital_Skills_assessment_Guidebook_%2028%20May%202020.pdf.

44 Ian Hecker and Pamela Loprest, “Foundational Digital Skills for Career Progress,” Urban Institute, August 2019; https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/100843/foundational_digital_skills_for_career_progress_2.pdf.

mouse, keyboard, or touchscreen, and accessing the internet. They also include use of digital tools to carry out tasks like sending and receiving e-mails, filling out an online job application, or uploading or downloading a file. They often involve use of specific platforms or software (e.g., Google Docs, Microsoft Word), and practice involving a task like an doing an internet job search and preparing and uploading a resume. These basic skills enable people to participate in additional training, in-person or online.

- **Intermediate skills:** administrative skills involving proficiency in programs like spreadsheets, word processing, IT networking, and digital skills for specific professions. The skills vary depending on the job or career goals, but often include applying basic digital skills to different platforms or software or new tasks — using a spreadsheet program like Excel or Google Sheets to develop or modify a complex, multi-sheet budget or to produce graphs or develop a budget template. They are sometimes described as “digital citizenship skills,” because in addition to their importance on the job, they enable people “to effectively use digital technologies to communicate with others, participate in society and create and consume digital content”⁴⁵ — from applying for public benefits to having a telehealth visit or making online purchases. Intermediate skills prepare people for advanced digital skilling from a variety of providers.
- **Advanced skills for the technology sector:** specialized, often occupation-specific skills like website development, coding and programming, network management, and cybersecurity, which build on digital literacy and require “soft skills” like communication and problem-solving. Specific skill areas continue to grow and evolve with technological advancements.

As noted, workers need not only “hard skills” to carry out specific tasks, but also “soft skills” that involve how they complete them — how they communicate, collaborate, and problem-solve. Often-mentioned “soft skills” include critical thinking and analysis; complex problem-solving; creativity; time management; resilience, stress tolerance, and flexibility; teamwork; and leadership and social influence.⁴⁶ When the Digital Skill Gaps Index international survey asked about the most important 21st Century workplace skills, problem solving, decision making, and “the commitment to continuously upskill and reskill” were considered the most important.⁴⁷

Fragmented digital knowledge: Many Latinos and other workers, including many younger people, already have what is sometimes referred to as “fragmented” digital knowledge. Because they use smartphones, they can navigate digital tasks like saving or texting photos, creating photo albums, or posting on social media. Because they have never owned or used a desktop or laptop computer, their skills are limited to actions carried out from a smartphone. They lack job-related digital skills like word processing or uploading and downloading files and never have used a mouse.⁴⁸ This situation is especially common for Latinos, since one in three Latino adults does not own a desktop or laptop computer or have a broadband connection at home, compared to one-in-five White non-Hispanic adults.⁴⁹ Such skills are partially transferable, since they involve experience with online platforms and applications and communications, and can make people more comfortable with digital skills development.

45 “Digital Citizenship, What is it?” Digital Technologies Hub, Education Services Australia; <https://www.digitaltechnologieshub.edu.au/teachers/topics/digital-citizenship>.

46 See, for example, World Economic Forum, “Top 10 skills of 2025,” in “The Future of Jobs Report 2020,” <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report-2020/in-full/infographics-e4e69e4de7>; and Maryna Zavyiboroda, “Hard and soft skills needed for the future jobs: an overview,” HRForecast, June 1, 2021; <https://hrforecast.com/a-complete-guide-to-top-job-skills-needed-for-the-future-jobs/>.

47 John Wiley & Sons, *op. cit.*

48 Amanda Bergson-Shilcock, “Applying a Racial Equity Lens to Digital Literacy,” *op. cit.*

49 Sara Atske and Andrew Perrin, *op. cit.*

WORKFORCE TRAINING IN THE U.S.

Workforce training in the United States — which increasingly includes technology or digital skills development training or “skilling” — takes many forms. Many people receive training provided or supported through federal, state, or local government or private philanthropy. Public high schools often offer general career development or job-specific training, as do community colleges and private job-training facilities, both for-profit and nonprofit. Apprenticeships associated with unions and employers offer a combination of classroom and on-the-job training to prepare people for high-skill careers, and many employers have their own training facilities and apprenticeships. Virtual online training has become increasingly common and has grown enormously during the pandemic. Training can provide knowledge and skills needed for employment, job retention, or mobility, with or without a certificate or degree.

The federal government has long supported workforce education and training by funding a workforce system implemented by state and local government, nonprofits, and other grantees. Beginning with the Manpower Development Training Act (MDTA) in 1962, federal programs have focused on retraining workers displaced due to technological change and have increasingly targeted low-income people. Currently, the main federal legislation is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, designed to “help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled works they need to compete in the global economy.”⁵⁰ Its focus is on individuals facing employment barriers, among them people with low incomes, limited English proficiency, limited literacy, indigenous affiliation, justice system involvement, eligible migrant and seasonal farm work, single parents, homeless people, older workers (55 and over), people with disabilities, and individuals with “substantial cultural barriers.” While “Black and Latinx people are overrepresented within many of the specified populations and face unique challenges at finding quality employment,” this is not “explicitly recognized in the law.”⁵¹ DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients are eligible for WIOA services, but immigrants without work authorization are ineligible for Title I workforce services; they are eligible for Title II adult education services.

WIOA Title I, Workforce Development Activities, is administered by the Department of Labor (DOL) and supports various national programs and grants to the states for job search, education, and training activities. Title I supports about 3,000 One-Stop centers through which state and local programs are provided and partner programs coordinated. State and local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) play a variety of roles; local WDBs analyze labor market conditions, including needed knowledge and skills for the regional economy. Title II, Adult Education and Literacy, is administered by the Department of Education (ED) and funds states and National Leadership activities. Like previous federal workforce programs, WIOA makes provision for nonprofit organizations as among the eligible training providers (ETPs) that can receive funding under both Title I and Title II to offer various adult education and training services, including literacy-based services and English language learner programs. Funding is often on a participant-by-participant basis through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), which are payment agreements established with a training provider on behalf of an eligible participant.

While large nonprofits have typically been able to obtain funding through federal workforce programs, smaller ones have found it more difficult to meet sometimes complex contracting requirements. WIOA was designed to provide “transparent career pathways so that navigating funding streams and agencies did not fall on workers.” Progress has been made in better serving both workers and employers, but the program has been described by the National Skills Coalition as continuing “to face severe underfunding relative to demand, an equity issue given that workers of color are disproportionately enrolled in WIOA programs.”⁵²

50 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Department of Labor website; <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa>.

51 Duy Pham, “Advancing Racial Equity through Career Pathways: Community-Centered Solutions,” CLASP, October 2018; <https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2018/10/2018.10.30%20Career%20Pathways%20Racial%20Equity%20.pdf>.

52 Rachel Unruh, “WIOA reauthorization is on the horizon — here’s a refresher on America’s primary workforce program,” National Skills Coalition, May 20, 2021; <https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/blog/higher-education/wioa-reauthorization-is-on-the-horizon-heres-a-refresher-on-americas-primary-workforce-program/>.

DIGITAL SKILLING PROVIDERS

Information technology training is provided through many of the same channels as other workforce training and has become an increasing focus given high and growing labor market demand for such skills. Such training is available in person and increasingly online, from a wide range of entities. Many people receive digital training from multiple sources; others — including many Latinos — have difficulty accessing such training. Among the many barriers: jobs that leave limited time for training, lack of transportation, family, and childcare responsibilities (especially for women), lack of basic digital literacy required to participate in online training, little or no access to computers and the internet, training costs, lack of information about opportunities, and sometimes limited English proficiency.

- **High schools:** Schools often use laptops or tablets as part of instruction starting in elementary school, but many do not provide formal digital training or technical support. According to a recent study by Code.org, 51% of high schools now offer access to “computer science” courses, up from 35% in the past three years, but “Rural and urban schools, and schools that serve a high percentage of kids from low-income families are less likely to offer foundational computer science.”⁵³ High schools often offer information technology courses as electives, and more intensive courses in vocation-focused programs. However, better resourced schools and school systems typically offer far more opportunities than less affluent inner-city and rural schools.
- **Community colleges:** Community colleges typically see their mission as preparing students either for jobs or continuing their education at a four-year institution, and many are job-skills-focused. Close connections to local industries can help these schools adjust courses to fit labor market trends and offer hands-on as well as classroom training. They typically offer both degrees and certificates in information technology and various types of digital training. In 2018, almost 15% of community college students went to school exclusively online, and the percent has almost certainly increased due to COVID-19.⁵⁴ Community colleges serve many students who have other jobs, family responsibilities, and/or low incomes. More than half of Latino college students attend community college. However, childcare issues, transportation, and costs create barriers for some Latinos and immigrants, and schools vary in their relationship with Latino communities, course offerings, and track records regarding certificate and degree completion. Some Latino and Black students are “funneled into noncredit-bearing, high school-level remedial classes that do not count toward graduation or transfer to a four-year university.”⁵⁵
- **Postsecondary vocational schools, nonprofit or for-profit:** Vocational trade schools provide both classroom and hands-on experience in trade and technical occupations, and usually focus on job-specific training. Today, a “skilled trade is any occupation that requires a particular skill set, knowledge, or ability,” though it is usually a “hands-on” job.⁵⁶ Such schools typically offer certificates and/or technical diplomas. Training usually takes 3-18 months. Some accredited schools do not require a GED or high school diploma. For-profit “career colleges” often charge high tuition costs, and have “a socially perceived low probability of return on investment,” with documented problems like “questionable admissions practices,

53 Alyson Klein, “More Than Half of High Schools Now Offer Computer Science, But Inequities Persist,” *Education Week*, November 3, 2021; <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/more-than-half-of-high-schools-now-offer-computer-science-but-inequities-persist/2021/11>.

54 “2020 Best Online Community Colleges,” OnlineU, updated June 22, 2021; <https://www.onlineu.com/best-online-community-colleges>.

55 Jetaun Stevens, “Community colleges are still wasting Black and Latino students’ time,” EdSource, November 17, 2021; <https://edsources.org/2021/community-colleges-are-still-wasting-black-and-latino-students-time/663838>.

56 “Skilled Trade Careers: Know All the Options,” ASVAB Career Exploration Program, website accessed December 19, 2021; <https://www.asvabprogram.com/media-center-article/135>.

high student loan default rates, and the quality of academic instruction.”⁵⁷ Yet one recent study found that they were often chosen by Latino adult learners due to the need to complete a program that “was quick and could accommodate their lifestyle at the time of enrollment.” This included “issues such as being a single-parent, parenting multiple children, domestic violence, being a military veteran, language barriers, past academic failures, unemployment, and financial strife.”⁵⁸

- **Colleges and universities:** In addition to degree programs, many schools offer individual courses or certificate programs, in person or online. Fewer provide digital basics, some offer such courses only for currently enrolled undergraduates, and they tend to be more expensive than courses at community colleges. Increasingly, basic digital skills courses are offered through continuing education classes, at night or online.⁵⁹
- **Apprenticeship programs:** While apprenticeships once focused on the skilled trades, they are now offered in digital occupations such as computer technician, software developer, network administrator, cybersecurity analyst, web developer/designer, and IT project manager. Many tech companies offer apprenticeships for “skilling, reskilling, and upskilling” people from other fields, “apprentices often come from nontraditional educational disciplines or professions,” and sometimes applicants may bring only self-taught initial skills. Some apprenticeships are open only to people who do *not* have a related bachelor’s degree. For example, Airbnb wants applicants to have “basic knowledge of computer languages and development frameworks,” but one year or less of professional tech experience; IBM does not require prior tech experience or degrees.⁶⁰
- **Employers:** Many employers provide on-the-job and classroom training for their employees, including job-related skill development for new hires and reskilling for current employees. Some pay for external courses or technical training and have ongoing relationships with educational institutions or other workforce development providers. Some have created internal pathways for employees to learn new skills that will prepare them for promotion. There is some evidence that employers are reducing spending on training for their employees. One annual study found that total training expenditures declined about half a percent in 2020. Average expenditures per employee increased by 11% in small companies (100-999 employees) but decreased by almost 30% among mid-size companies (1,000-9,999) and by 40% in large companies (10,000+).⁶¹ This followed an overall decline of 5.3% in 2019. Since 2013, funding has been greatest for profession/industry-specific training, followed by onboarding, management/supervisory training, and then IT/systems training.⁶² Another study reported that corporate spending on Learning and Development (L&D) in North America dropped by 2% in 2020, and a global workforce study by IBM “found that half of businesses have no skills development strategy in place.”⁶³

57 Tameiko Allen Grant, “The Business of Choice: Why Students Select For-Profit Career Colleges in Northeast Florida and the Implications for Community College Leaders,” 2019, Ph.D. Dissertation, Old Dominion University; https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1217&context=efl_etds.

58 *Ibid.*

59 “Expanding the Digital Curriculum: How colleges are embedding high-tech skills to prepare students for tomorrow’s jobs,” Insights Report, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2020; https://connect.chronicle.com/rs/931-EKA-218/images/ExpandingDigitalCurriculum_InsightsReport.final.pdf.

60 “7 Companies That Offer Tech Apprenticeship Programs,” Bootcamps, by BestColleges; <https://www.bestcolleges.com/bootcamps/guides/companies-offer-tech-apprenticeship-programs/>.

61 “2020 Training Industry Report,” *Training Magazine*, November/December 2020; <https://pubs.royle.com/publication/?m=20617&i=678873&p=24>.

62 Lori Freifeld, “2019 Training Industry Report,” *Training Magazine*, November 6, 2019; <https://trainingmag.com/2019-training-industry-report/>.

63 Dr. Parves Khan, “It’s Not a Skills Gap but a Training Gap That We Need to Fix,” *Training Industry*, April 15, 2021; <https://trainingindustry.com/blog/workforce-development/its-not-a-skills-gap-but-a-training-gap-that-we-need-to-fix/>.

- **Nonprofit organizations:** Nonprofit organizations, large and small, play a significant role in digital training. Many have operated programs with federal workforce funding for decades, and some were established specifically to provide job training. Some serve a general population, while others focus on serving people who face employment challenges.
- **Large workforce development nonprofits** are often broadly targeted, serve large numbers of participants, offer advanced equipment, and have ongoing relationships with employers. Many regularly update courses to fit labor market needs. They are not based in or linked to a particular geographic or cultural community. They may be less accessible to immigrants due to a lack of bilingual staff and outreach. They vary in the extent to which they provide wraparound services or individualized attention to participants. Some have very diverse staff who are welcoming to a wide range of participants. Others have personnel who tend to have low expectations for people of color with low-incomes or a native language other than English, viewing them from a “liability” perspective, rather than as untapped talent. Thus, one article demonstrated the importance of “fit” and appropriate outcome targets with the following example of low expectations based on an individual’s status, which may reflect limited past opportunities:

“Joe is 21 years old, has limited work experience, and is not a native English speaker. He is a high school dropout.”

TRAINEE PROFILE

Joe would benefit from a basic skills course, including proper attire and expected behaviors in a job setting.

OUTCOME TARGET

Skills that might prepare Joe for an entry-level service job or perhaps an apprenticeship in a trade.”⁶⁴

- **Community-based nonprofits** providing workforce development training typically target specific populations that face barriers to employment, as defined by race/ethnicity, gender or gender identity, past incarceration, community of residence, and/or other factors. Their approach is typically both flexible and comprehensive, including many wraparound services. They are typically located in — and focused on serving — BIPOC⁶⁵ communities. As noted by one study of successful workforce development programs in Chicago, many of them Latino-focused, “The literature emphasizes the provision of support services and case management— including childcare, transportation, access to housing and cash assistance, food stamps, health care services, and referrals to substance abuse and mental health services— over any other factor in helping participants overcome barriers to attendance and work.”⁶⁶ Community-based providers are often multiservice agencies that offer many human services directly; they typically collaborate with other nonprofits as well as other workforce providers, including apprenticeship programs and community colleges. They maintain ongoing relationships with employers, and tailor their training to fit area employment opportunities. Many are relatively

64 John O’Leary, Scott Malm, and Sushumna Agarwal, “Reinventing workforce development: Making job training more effective,” Deloitte Insights, August 30, 2018; <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/public-sector/workforce-innovation-government-job-training-programs.html>.

65 BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, People Of Color.

66 “Weigensberg, Schlecht, Laken, Goerge, Stagner, Ballard, and DeCoursey, “Inside the Black Box: What Makes Workforce Development Programs Successful?” Chapin Hall, University of Chicago, 2012; <https://www.atlantafed.org/-/media/documents/podcasts/economicdevelopment/InsidetheBlackBox.pdf>.

small; some studies have found that “the size of an organization, including smaller program enrollment, class size, and the staff-to-participant ratio, can lead to better outcomes.”⁶⁷ Training ranges from computer basics for daily life to digital “bootcamps” that prepare participants for jobs in large technology companies and certificate programs including advanced occupation-specific training. Some support small business development by providing digital skilling to current or aspiring entrepreneurs.⁶⁸ Programs often have both government and philanthropic funding, which means they may be either low-cost or free to participants with low incomes.

- **Online training:** While many digital skilling providers used to provide primarily in-person training, an increasing number now offer online courses — or pivoted to remote platforms due to COVID-19. Before the pandemic, technology education and training, including foundational digital literacy skills, were becoming increasingly available online, through colleges and universities, for-profit training institutions, nonprofits, and corporations. Many corporations such as Google, Facebook, IBM, Microsoft, and AWS have developed online certificate courses that are offered directly or through various providers and platforms. For example, the Google IT support certificate program, which takes about eight months to complete, is offered through the online platform Coursera. While online courses are sometimes offered in the same format as in-person classes — at a particular time, with all students present — they are often offered in a self-paced, flexible-schedule format. These make participation easier for people with variable schedules, childcare or family responsibilities, or a need for extra time to become familiar with digital skilling concepts. Staying engaged without a regular course schedule also requires a higher level of time management and self-discipline. Barriers of online courses discussed earlier apply, from the need for digital equipment and internet connectivity to the challenges for those without basic digital literacy and in some cases with limited English.

“...in order for low-wage workers not to be exploited, fall further into poverty, and not advance in their workplace, there is a need to develop strategies that go beyond the reach of traditional systems.”⁶⁹

ROLE OF LATINO NONPROFITS IN DIGITAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Hispanic Federation has long recognized that Latino-led and -serving community-based organizations (CBOs) can play a special and pivotal role in workforce development generally, and digital skilling specifically, for Latinos and immigrant communities. HF partner Latino nonprofit CBOs are the heart and soul of Latino communities. Deeply embedded in their neighborhoods, they provide ongoing resources and services to the most vulnerable and are the first to respond to crises and emerging needs. When COVID-19 began shutting down the economy in early 2020, Latino nonprofits responded as they have in past economic crises and natural disasters: they identified critical community needs, established new partnerships, and pivoted from their normal work to avert an even greater disaster for Latino communities.

67 Weigensberg et al., “Inside the Black Box,” *op. cit.*

68 Alexis Buchanan, “Tech Training Programs: What’s the Best Model for Success?” *Nonprofit Quarterly*, July 19, 2018; <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/tech-training-programs-whats-the-best-model-for-success/>.

69 Cordero-Guzman, Hector, “Community-Based Organizations, Immigrant Low-wage Workers, and the Workforce Development System in the United States,” Baruch College at the City University of New York, 2012; <https://paperzz.com/doc/7665311/community-based-organizations--immigrant-low-wage>.

Preparing Latinos for full participation in a digital economy requires “connectivity, devices, and skill opportunities.” As explained by the Chairperson of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), “some of these can happen at a federal level, but the skills portion has to happen at a local level and is dependent on there being trusted actors and institutions in communities.”⁷⁰ Latino nonprofit organizations are trusted community-based institutions. They “are seen as good workforce development partners by government, business, and other nonprofits,”⁷¹ and often as “the primary service delivery mechanism to disadvantaged groups such as urban Latinx and immigrant populations.”⁷² In addition to specific experience in providing education and training to Latinos and immigrants, these CBOs offer many other interrelated strengths and advantages:

- **Location:** Physically located in Latino communities, they are visible to residents and easily accessible without costly commutes.
- **Latino leadership:** Their executives, board members, and staff typically come from the community and understand community culture and resident needs.
- **Not-for-profit status:** They exist for the public benefit, and this guides their work.
- **Commitment to serving those with the greatest need:** Many have demonstrated their commitment to serving low-income people, recent immigrants (regardless of immigration status), low-wage workers and the unemployed, youth and the elderly, recently incarcerated, and other vulnerable people. They maintain services in good times and bad; most continued services during the pandemic, in person and/or remotely.⁷³
- **Language:** Latino nonprofits typically have bilingual staff, provide training in Spanish, or bilingually, and often offer English classes to speakers of other languages.
- **High expectations:** They look beyond employment barriers to recognize individual talent and potential.
- **Trust:** They have earned resident trust, often over decades of service.
- **Innovation and adaptability:** When needs change, they can pivot rapidly to address them, implementing new service models and strategies. For example, early in the pandemic, “Latino nonprofits responded as they have to past economic crises and natural disasters. They identified critical community needs, established new partnerships, and pivoted from their normal work to avert an even greater disaster for Latino communities.” Even when these were not their usual services, “Small community-based organizations kept people alive, fed and in housing.”⁷⁴
- **Wrap-around services:** While they may focus on a particular type of activity such as workforce training, they typically either provide or arrange other needed services, often including literacy and GED classes, childcare, counseling, housing, food assistance, and help in applying for public benefits — the supports widely recognized as essential to successful workforce training.

70 Jessica Rosenworcel, Chairperson of the FCC, at the Encuentro Digital: Latino Digital Skilling Symposium, July 14, 2021. Obtained from the Hispanic Federation’s record of the symposium.

71 Cordero-Guzman, *op. cit.*

72 Stephen Manuel Calenzani, “Plans for Digital Skilling Training Among Latinx Workforce Programs: Initial Findings Using a Grounded Theory Approach,” unpublished master’s thesis, City University of New York, School of Labor and Urban Studies, December 2020.

73 Hispanic Federation, “Hope & Unity, Familia y Comunidad: Latino CBOs Respond to COVID-19 – An Assessment of the Hispanic Federation’s Pandemic Grantmaking,” November 2021; <https://www.hispanicfederation.org/images/HFCOVID-19GrantAssessmentReport.pdf>.

74 *Ibid.*

- **Multiple funding sources:** Although Latino nonprofits sometimes struggle financially, many have learned to combine federal, state, and local governmental funding with earned income, philanthropic grants from foundations, corporations, and individuals, and income from fundraising events.
- **Partnerships:** Latino nonprofits recognize that “Training a global workforce equipped with the digital skills needed for the post-pandemic economy necessitates renewed collaboration between employers, nonprofits, and governments.”⁷⁵ They partner with other nonprofits inside and outside the community and with small businesses, large corporations, and public officials to make additional services and resources available to their clients and to help workforce training participants obtain jobs. Many have developed effective employer engagement strategies, and some are members of national networks like that of the Hispanic Federation.
- **Starting point:** Latino CBOs often serve as the entry point for education and training, serving as an “on-ramp” by preparing people for additional training in more traditional settings.⁷⁶ As noted in the research in a different context, “a brief digital training model can increase desirable learning behaviors and improve performance with minimal cost to learners or instructors.”⁷⁷

Latino CBOs are interwoven into their communities. They understand Latino needs, are trusted by residents, and prove their worth during natural disasters and emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. They reduce service barriers by operating within the neighborhood, providing education, and training in Spanish, and offering wraparound services. These characteristics accurately describe the Accelerator’s partner CBOs, as described in this white paper. The Hispanic Federation’s Digital Accelerator Program was designed and implemented to build upon both the unique strengths of Latino nonprofits and HF’s workforce development experience and relationships.

75 John Wiley & Sons, *op. cit.*

76 Cordero-Guzman, *op. cit.*

77 Bernacki, Vosicka & Utz, quoted in Calenzani, *op. cit.*



*Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow
Brooklyn, NY*

3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE LATINO DIGITAL ACCELERATOR

HISPANIC FEDERATION

Workforce development and economic empowerment represent both a program and an advocacy priority for the Hispanic Federation. Since its inception, Hispanic Federation has invested in Latino economic growth by supporting Latino nonprofits and educating thousands of Latinos on critical financial empowerment issues. HF's financial education programs have trained over 15,000 Latinos in budgeting, saving, credit, and other topics crucial for economic mobility. During the height of the pandemic, HF's small business relief initiative supported over 800 Latino-owned small businesses with approximately \$5.4 million in grants. HF also invested nearly \$12 million to expand hunger relief operations, collaborating with 75 organizations across the U.S. to increase services over 4,000% since the start of the pandemic. HF continuously advocates for solutions to eliminate economic barriers affecting the Latino community. In early 2021, HF and New America released *Overcoming COVID-19: Economic Barriers for Latino Communities*, a report describing how the pandemic has affected Latinos in critical aspects of life, specifically: work, food, and shelter. The report combines key survey findings and recommendations from close to 3,000 surveyed Latino community members, 90 small business owners, and 90 Latino nonprofit professionals and community advocates. As a result of the findings and recommendations, HF hosted a virtual COVID-19 Economic Impact Summit featuring discussions with 400 Latino leaders from across the country. HF has long been concerned about the Latino digital divide and need to prepare Latinos for future jobs that will require digital skills. It recognizes that Latino nonprofits are uniquely positioned to help Latinos prepare for the jobs of the future and for full "digital citizenship."

Hispanic Federation has worked with Google.org in Puerto Rico and was aware of the shared interest in increasing the capacity of nonprofit organizations. The Accelerator project was initially conceived as a means of expanding Latino nonprofit digital capacity. Discussions with Google.org and with Latino experts and member organizations confirmed HF's belief that some Latino CBOs were already deeply involved in digital training and related education and support services, but many were not yet equipped — in terms of resources or capacity — to play a major role in digital skilling or reskilling. This recognition led to an expansion of the planned scope of the Latino Digital Accelerator Program, which reflects both HF's capacity-building mission and its commitment to addressing the digital divide.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

In 2019, the Hispanic Federation requested funding from Google.org, the philanthropic arm of Google, to build the capacity of Latino-led and -serving nonprofits and, through them, increase access to digital skills training in Latino communities. HF requested initial two-year funding for the Latino Digital Accelerator Program, which includes three major components:

- **Latino Digital Accelerator** – A unique training program to strengthen the organizational capacity, programmatic offerings, and reach of Latino-focused nonprofit organizations in the technology workforce development space. It was to include a technical assistance and capacity-building program, creation of an individualized action plan for each participating nonprofit, to support enhancement of its digital skilling capabilities, and a data tracking element to monitor outputs and outcomes.
- **Digital Career Centers** – Support for a network of 20 technology centers housed in Latino-led and -serving nonprofits, including use of customized curriculum to help support digital skills training for at least 10,000 Latinos over 18 months. The original plan was to include 20 sites, but the number was expanded to 24 when additional Google-related funding was received.
- **Latino Digital Center of Excellence** – A long-term center to build capability and share resources for digital skilling among nonprofits providing digital workforce development for Latinos, through research, curriculum development, and dissemination of lessons learned. The Center was to be accessible by both Latino and non-Latino workforce development agencies across the continental U.S. and Puerto Rico.

Hispanic Federation received two-year funding for the Accelerator from Google.org in August 2019.

LOCAL PARTNER IDENTIFICATION AND RECRUITMENT

HF prepared and issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit applications from community-based Latino-led and -serving nonprofits for project participation, with the understanding that they would receive at least \$50,000 in grant funds over two years and help in “accelerating” their own digital skilling capacity and operating a digital career center to train community members.

Digital Accelerator staff identified Latino-led and -serving nonprofits through reviewing the list of HF member organizations, doing considerable online research, attending various workforce development conferences, and reviewing lists of attendees, and consulting with other HF staff and members of the network. In January 2020 the RFP was sent via email to the chief executives or workforce program directors of over 50 nonprofits engaged in workforce development. Follow up was provided via email and telephone, and applications were submitted electronically.

Applicants were expected to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Latino-led and -serving;⁷⁸
- Committed to enhancing or expanding a digital skills training program;
- 501(c)(3) tax-exempt (for agencies located in Puerto Rico, demonstration of nonprofit status was required);
- A minimum 3-year track record of providing workforce development programming and services to Latino communities;
- A fully functional board of directors; and
- Audited financial records for the last two years.

Applicants were asked to commit to meeting the following project requirements:

- Complete a self-assessment of digital skills readiness, based on five factors: labor market data, digital training curricula, training provider talent in digital skills, access to digital equipment and devices, and data tracking tools and talent
- Work with HF to develop an individualized action plan to support digital skilling capacity building, assessment of the digital skills of program participants, and reporting of project outputs and outcomes
- Provide digital skilling to an average of at least 500 participants over two years (the intent was to fund organizations of varied size)
- Provide job placement for at least 20% of participants (an average of 100 per organization)
- Track and report the number of participants who completed at least one hour of digital skilling, completed a job readiness training program, and obtained and retained full-time employment, by providing interim and final reports

The carefully crafted RFP asked for considerable information and materials to document eligibility, capacity and capacity needs, and targeted participants, and then requested a proposal narrative with scoring as follows:

- 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (5 points)**
- 2. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION (45 points)**
 - a. Description of the digital skills enhancement or expansion program for which you are seeking funding (20 points)**
 - b. Description of how this grant will help your organization address the digital skills needs indicated by the self-assessment (15 points)**
 - c. Describe in-house or outside support services linkages which enable program participants to overcome barriers re: language, GED/basic literacy, daycare, transportation, citizenship, etc. (10 points)**
- 3. EVALUATION: how program success will be measured, what tools will be used, and what evaluation measures will be adopted to track outputs and outcomes (25 points)**
- 4. PROJECT BUDGET (20 points)**
- 5. REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS (5 points)**

78 HF defines a nonprofit as "Latino" if it has (1) either a Latino Executive Director or a majority-Latino Board, (2) a majority Latino senior staff, and (3) a majority Latino clientele or target population.

Proposals were due at the end of January 2020. They were reviewed for completeness and compliance with requirements, with follow up provided to obtain any missing information. Compliant applications were then reviewed, and points awarded based on proposal content. The review committee included the three staff of the Accelerator plus two other senior HF staff.

More about the nonprofits that applied for the Accelerator:

- **Locations:** Applicants were headquartered in 9 states (CA, CT, IL, MI, NC, NY, TX, WA, and WI) and Puerto Rico; several operated in multiple states
- **Relationship to HF:** Nine applicants were HF member agencies
- **Related experience:** Prior workforce training experience ranged from 3 to 56 years, with a mean of 16 years
- **Proposed participants:** Applicants proposed to train an average of 386 participants annually, with a range of 100 to 1300

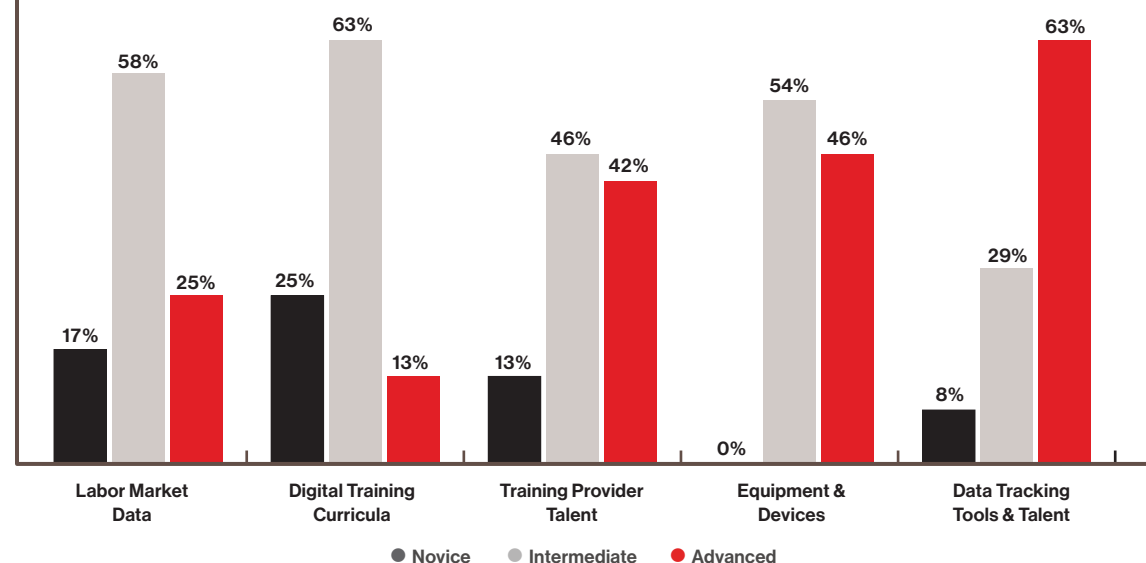
Applicants were asked to self-assess their digital skill training capacity in five areas, indicating whether they considered themselves to be Novice, Intermediate, or Advanced with regard to:

- Labor market data
- Digital training curricula
- Training provider talent in digital skills
- Access to digital equipment and devices
- Data tracking tools and talent

Accelerator staff provided clear definitions for each rating and factor. For example, for Digital Training Curricula:

- *Novice* – No digital training curriculum in place and/or beginner level digital awareness only
- *Intermediate* – Basic digital literacy curriculum established, including basic hardware and software training from beginner to intermediate levels
- *Advanced* – Full continuum of digital training curriculum in place, including established lesson plans and training materials for all levels from beginner to advanced

FIGURE 3
Digital Accelerator Applicant Self-Assessment



As Figure 3 indicates, applicants reported the highest level of capacity in two areas: Equipment & Devices, with all applicants indicating intermediate or advanced capacity, and Data Tracking Tools & Talent, where 63% reported advanced capacity, defined as follows: “Data collection process is largely automated, with consistent collection mechanisms and case management systems in place; program impact is analyzed and reported on a quarterly or bi-annual basis.” They were most likely to report novice capacity in Digital Training Curricula. One-fourth (25%) reported being at a beginning level, and only one in eight (13%) reported advanced capacity.

APPLICANT DIGITAL SKILL TRAINING NEEDS AND PLANS

Applications provided considerable information on applicant digital skill training readiness, needs, and plans. As part of his master’s thesis, HF Vice President for Development, Stephen Calenzani’s review of project applications identified and categorized their self-reported in-house capacity development needs, which are presented in priority order:

- **Agency capacity building**, including:
 - General capacity building, with details not specified
 - Capital needs, including needs for computers and other technology hardware, expansion of computer labs and classrooms, and increased high-speed internet access
 - Staffing needs, for both digital skilling instructors and training facilitators and non-digital staff like adult education instructors and job developers, as well as for staff development and training
 - System upgrade needs, including “new or enhanced digital skilling curricula, and updated systems for data gathering, assessment, and impact”⁷⁹
- **Development or enhancement of digital skills training**, including:
 - General, unspecified training needs
 - Office-focused applications and software training, most often related to Microsoft Office Suite, especially Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint
 - Non-Microsoft applications such as Google Suite, Publisher, and Adobe
 - Basic computer skills, like internet use and searches, creating and formatting files, sending email, saving documents, and using the keyboard and mouse
 - Medium to advanced skills, like computer security, digital marketing, website development, and understanding coding (identified less than half as often as basic computer skills training)
- **Other, non-digital-specific activities or strategies**, including:
 - Helping participants with employment, jobs, and careers — e.g., resume development, job placement and interviewing support, and job search skills
 - Educational support and training, such as math and language training, English as a Second Language/English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESL/ESOL) training, basic education including GED preparation, as well as expansion of education departments and assistance to clients facing educational barriers — as well as training in “soft skills” like critical thinking and collaboration, communication, and problem-solving

⁷⁹ Stephen Manuel Calenzani, *op. cit.*

- Development of holistic or comprehensive digital training or technology plans, integration of non-digital and digital skilling training, and case management services; and job readiness and other personal/skills assessments⁸⁰

The nonprofits also identified the need for increasing and enhancing outside linkages, including:

- **Workforce linkages**, including "workforce development collaborations/partnerships, employment program/network linkages, government linkages, industry credentialing, workforce educational linkages (especially to community colleges), and local sectoral partnerships"⁸¹
- **Non-workforce (social services) linkages**, encompassing a wide range of needs, most often immigrant-focused services, and more general social services (e.g., childcare, health and mental health, housing, education, hunger relief, transportation, and benefits/ entitlements)⁸²

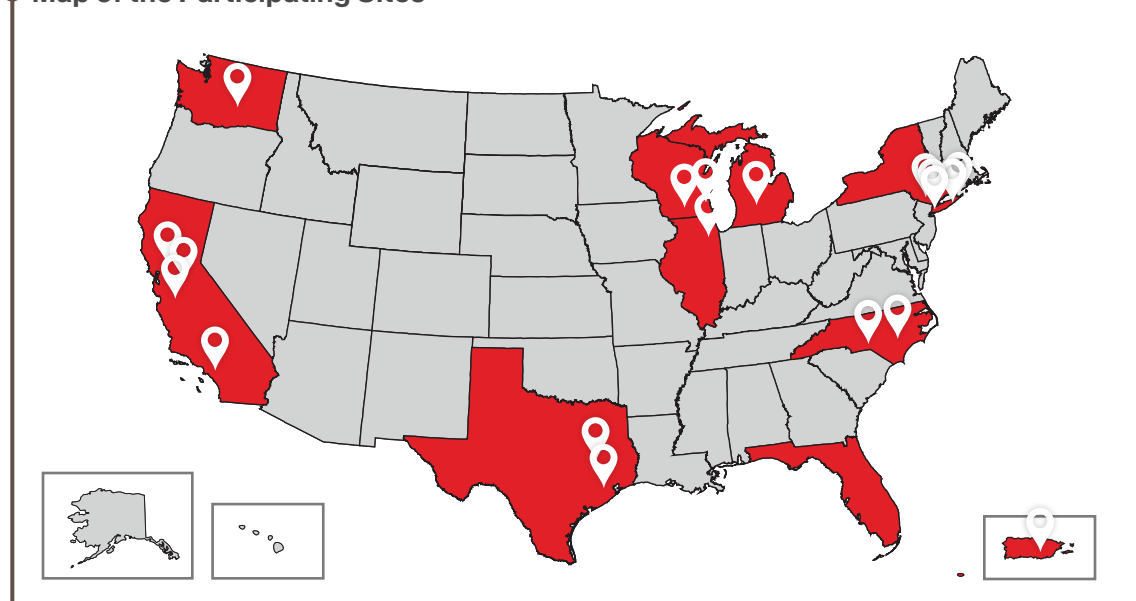
DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL PARTNERS

Nonprofits selected for participation were notified in mid-February 2020. A deliberate effort was made to include nonprofits of varying size, workforce development experience, and digital skilling expertise. Twenty organizations were selected, one a national Latino entity with affiliated programs in three sites. HF's Florida office also became a site.

One of the original local partners, a healthcare organization in Puerto Rico, left the project because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the HF office in Puerto Rico was added. Figure 4 provides a map of the participating sites. Figure 5 provides summary information about the partners.

FIGURE 4

Map of the Participating Sites



80 Stephen Manuel Calenzani, *Ibid.*

81 Stephen Manuel Calenzani, *Ibid.*

82 Stephen Manuel Calenzani, *Ibid.*

FIGURE 5

○ Summary Information on Local Partners

Characteristic	Information
Number of Sites	24
Number of Organizations	21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SER Jobs for Progress has 3 sites ● HF has 2 sites
Number that are HF Members	8 (plus 2 HF field offices)
Number that are also HF COVID-19 Grantees	8
Number of States	10 (plus Puerto Rico)
Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CA: Concord, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Jose ● CT: Bridgeport ● FL: Orlando ● IL: Chicago ● MI: Grand Rapids ● NY: Bronx, Brooklyn, Mamaroneck, Manhattan, Long Beach, and Queens ● NC: Charlotte and Durham ● TX: Fort Worth and Houston ● WA: Seattle ● WI: Madison (2) and Milwaukee ● PR: San Juan
Annual Budget*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mean: \$6.2 million ● Median: \$2.2 million ● Range: \$465,000 - \$25.9 million
Percent of Organization's Clients Who are Latino*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mean: 79% ● Range: 50% - 100%
Percent of Organization's Clients Who Identify as Women*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mean: 40% ● Range: 10% - 70%
Percent of Organization's Clients Who are English Language Learners*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mean: 32% ● Range: 5% - 92%

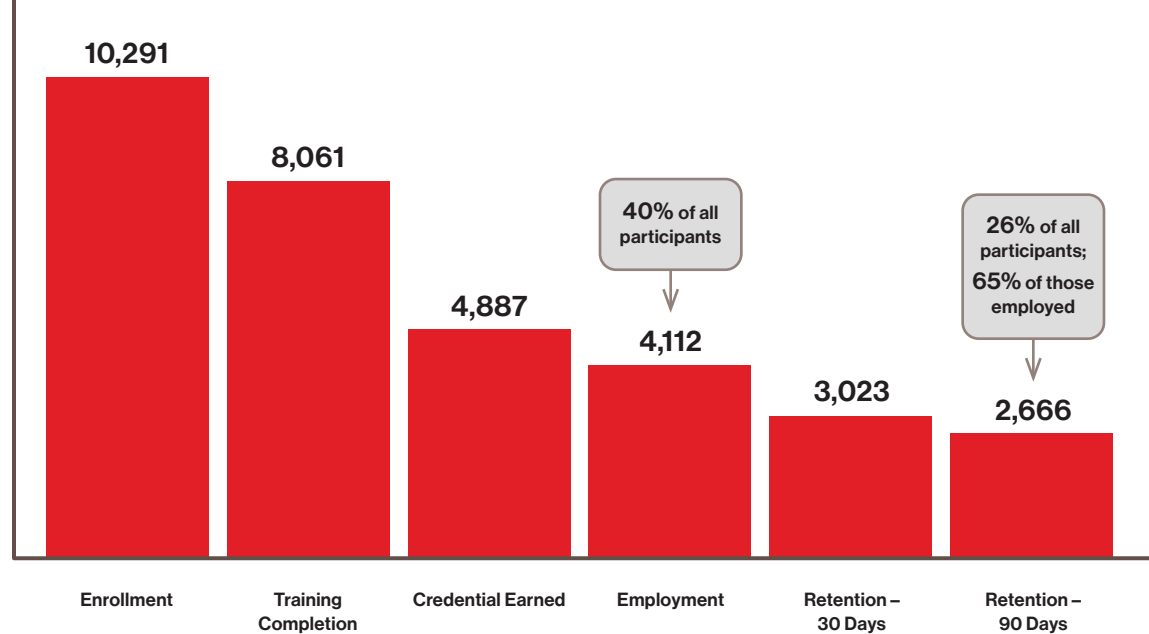
*Some sites did not provide full data.

Applicants agreed on the need for digital skills. When asked in a poll how critical the need is to their community, based on a 4-point scale where 4 = most critical, the mean rating was 3.8.

Projected enrollment and outcomes for the first year are shown in Figure 6. The project planned for more than 10,000 participants over two years, with 80% of them completing their training, almost half earning a credential, and 40% obtaining employment. Of those employed, three-fourths were expected to be on the job after 30 days and over half after 90 days. The projection was that one-quarter (26%) of individuals who enroll would not only obtain employment but be retained for at least 90 days.

The Accelerator was poised for site-level implementation in March 2020.

FIGURE 6
Pre-COVID Projected Enrollment and Outcomes, Latino Digital Accelerator





Exodus Transitional Community
New York, NY

4. IMPLEMENTATION: COVID-19 DISRUPTIONS AND ADJUSTMENTS

In mid-March 2020, government offices, businesses, and schools began to close due to the rapidly spreading COVID-19 epidemic. Hispanic Federation's Digital Accelerator team immediately began exploring how best to proceed, with funder Google.org allowing HF time to assess the situation. Staff checked in with the grantees individually and polled them to learn how they were being affected by the pandemic and whether and how the project should launch. The decision was to implement, with the understanding that training would be partly or entirely remote until conditions changed.

EARLY IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LATINO COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

When COVID-19-related closures began, Latino nonprofits faced multiple challenges. Client and community needs expanded exponentially; most organizations had to pivot suddenly to largely or entirely remote operations, often without needed platforms, equipment, or experience; and many faced a loss of program-related revenues and a corresponding cashflow crisis. While many eventually obtained Payroll Protection Program assistance, these funds often came months later.

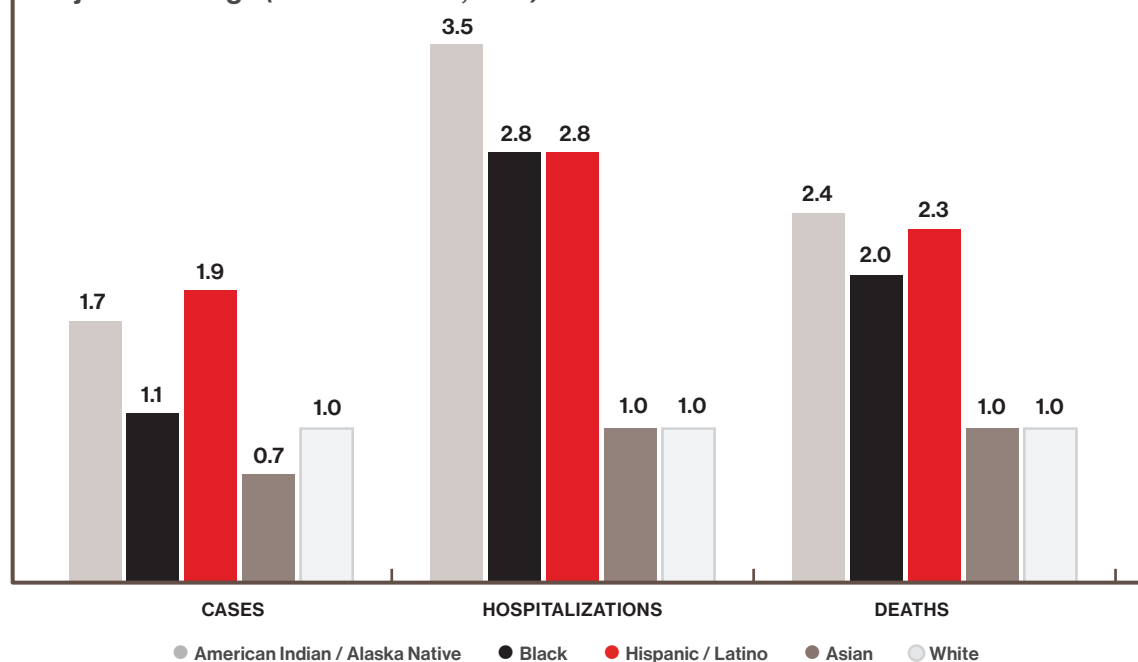
COVID-19's Impact on the Latino Community

The COVID-19 pandemic had immediate, devastating health and economic impacts on Latinos. Latinos were often among the first to be infected and remain far more likely than White Americans to become infected, be hospitalized, and die from the disease, as shown in Figure 7. Only Native Americans have faced comparable impact. (Data in the figure have been age-adjusted; Latinos are a younger population than White Americans.)

Many factors have made Latinos especially vulnerable, among them employment in “essential” but poorly paid frontline jobs that cannot be done remotely, residence in multigenerational households, concentration in crowded inner-city neighborhoods with high rates of infection, and low rates of health insurance. Being uninsured limits access to healthcare including testing and vaccinations and contributes to poor health status and more underlying conditions. COVID-19’s economic impacts on Latinos have also been devastating, with 60% of Latino workers reporting job loss or pay cuts in the spring of 2020, and unemployment peaking in May at 18.9%, the highest for any racial or ethnic group. In September 2020, about 40% of both Latino and Black households with children reported facing food insecurity in the prior 30 days. As of May 2021, a similar percentage reported housing insecurity – defined as “a household having little to no confidence in its ability to make its next mortgage or rent payment.”

FIGURE 7

○ Risk of COVID-19 Infection, Hospitalization, and Death by Race/Ethnicity, Adjusted for Age (As of October 6, 2021)



Note: Hispanics are separately categorized; other groups are non-Hispanic

Source: KFF, based on CDC, <https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-race-ethnicity.html>

IMPACT ON COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

For many Latino families, the primary lifeline during COVID-19 has been Latino nonprofits. Latino Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) have played a key role in helping their clients and communities survive the pandemic, maintaining badly needed services remotely and in some cases face-to-face, expanding activities to meet critical needs, and initiating new services to meet emerging needs. A survey of 244 Latino- and immigrant-serving nonprofits that received HF COVID-19-related funding found, for example, that almost three-fourths of nonprofits that provided food/nutrition assistance before the pandemic expanded these services, and the number of nonprofits providing such assistance increased by nearly two-thirds. They also assisted people in accessing services, helping clients with no internet access apply for emergency benefits and services, interpretation services, and sometimes smartphones. While about one-fifth (21%) of nonprofits providing employment services reported being forced to reduce or suspend those services, over half (52%) maintained them at pre-COVID-19 levels.

Recognizing that CBOs would need additional resources to survive the pandemic and meet critical community needs, Hispanic Federation immediately began to provide emergency grants. Between March 2020 and September 2021, HF awarded \$20.6 million in COVID-19-related grants to more than 350 nonprofits in 38 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Nine local partners of the Accelerator received such grants.

EARLY IMPACT ON THE ACCELERATOR SITES

A poll completed by 18 Accelerator sites in May 2020 found immediate and extensive impact from the COVID-19 epidemic:

- **Pivot to online training:** Two months after much of the country shut down, two-thirds (67%) of the sites had already moved their workforce training entirely online; the others indicated that they did not have enough resources to make that change and were not yet providing training.
- **Changes to curriculum:** Except for one large and experienced workforce development organization, all sites reported some changes to their curriculum for remote or hybrid use; most reported a moderate amount of change (3 on a 5-point scale, where 1 = no change and 5 = a great deal).
- **Impact on number of Latino participants:** Most sites (61%) said there had been no reduction in the number of Latinos being served in their workforce development programs, while the rest reported various levels of reduction: 6% reported less than 25%, 17% about 25%, and 17% more than 50%. One site noted that the number of Latino workforce program participants had not declined, but the number in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes had declined by about 25%.
- **Organizational cash flow:** All organizations reported at least moderate negative impact on their cash flow; the mean was 3.67 on a scale of 1-5, where 5 is most severe. Four very diverse organizations reported very serious impact (5); one is a large workforce development organization and the other three are smaller multiservice agencies with budgets ranging from less than \$1 million to \$4 million.
- **Payroll Protection Program:** Asked whether they had applied for the Payroll Protection Program, 89% said yes. Applications were first accepted on April 3, so the program was still in its early stages when the poll was taken in May.



FIGURE 8

○ **Priorities for HF Assistance to Launch the Latino Digital Accelerator Program During the COVID-19 Crisis, May 2020 [N = 18]**



- **Priority assistance needs:** Sites were asked to identify which of five types of assistance their organizations most needed to launch the Latino Digital Accelerator Program during the COVID-19 crisis, using a 5-point scale. As Figure 8 shows, most needed was access to additional funding opportunities (mean of 4.22), followed by technical resources for participants, many of whom did not have broadband access or a computer or tablet at home (4.06), and an online learning curriculum (3.94). The other two areas, staff training (3.72) and technology support (3.61) were also given relatively high priority.
- **Additional information:** 13 sites shared additional information, summarizing their greatest challenges and the actions they were taking to provide training and assist clients. Among the insights provided:
 - **Delays in start date:** Several sites were contemplating delays in the start date for training, with schools and many workplaces closed or operating remotely and no idea about they would resume normal operations.
 - **Funding and cash flow:** In the early months of the pandemic, four sites emphasized the importance of project grant funds and their concern about reduced organizational income.
 - **Participant barriers:** Six sites identified participant technology access as a challenge, including lack of equipment and internet connectivity. One reported lending some of their laptops to participants. In addition to devices and internet access, several sites said that participants need help learning to access the platform and participate in online training. As one described it, “For our beginning computer users, trying to learn online is not feasible. For our more advanced, Career Track students, juggling home schooling of their children and their own learning became incredibly difficult. Many of our students are taking classes for the first time in decades and have limited familiarity with technology.”
 - **Staffing issues:** Several sites wanted “more training and technology” for current staff, as well as additional staff with technology experience to provide online training and assist remote learners. Instructors accustomed to in-person classes often found remote training especially demanding. One site asked for a webinar on distance learning curriculum.

“We have been able to move our programs virtually, but the barrier is for our families who don’t have the equipment, internet and skills necessary to participate.”

– Accelerator Local Partner, May 2020

- **Importance of the project:** Two sites emphasized that the pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital skilling. As one put it, “Now that almost all job applications are online and there are more remote work from home opportunities that require digital technology skills, this grant is needed more than ever.”
- **Confidence about moving forward:** The groups expected to continue as site participants despite the challenges. Five were particularly positive about their progress and expectations. As one of the smaller organizations put it, “We are actively engaging our clients to continue to prioritize their learning even while feeling the brunt of the pandemic. This has not been easy; however, we are confident that our staff can pull this program off through distance learning.” They also emphasized that the process of moving so quickly to online learning provided a valuable learning opportunity.

Early in the pandemic period, one site, a healthcare organization in Puerto Rico, withdrew from the program. Since all its energies were focused on maintaining health services during a health emergency, it could not commit to the staff effort required to launch a new training initiative. All the other sites continued.

FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION

The Digital Accelerator program became operational in the summer 2020. Sites received their initial \$25,000 grant payment in July 2020 and the second in December.

HF polled the sites in June 2021, near the end of the first funding year, to obtain additional information and perspectives about the project, experiences during the pandemic, their plans for digital skilling, and their priorities for the project. Twenty-one sites provided responses. In addition, the Accelerator devoted its October 2021 monthly session with sites to small-group discussion of their training experiences and challenges during the pandemic, and that information is also summarized here.

Program participation rates: Sites were asked to what extent programs operated at capacity during the pandemic year. Four sites (19%) said they operated at 100% capacity and consistently had to turn people away. Most (12 or 57%) said they operated at 75-99% capacity, consistently operating at or near maximum capacity. The other five (24%) reported that they operated at 50-75% capacity, described as “good participation but could have supported more individuals.”

Language used for training: Asked what language was used to deliver their program, a majority (71%) said both Spanish and English, with 8 saying mostly Spanish with some English and 7 saying mostly English with some Spanish. Five programs (24%) delivered training only in English, and 1 (5%), which serves primarily immigrants, only in Spanish.

How programs were delivered during the pandemic: Sites were asked how they had delivered their training programs since the start of the pandemic. A majority (12 or 57%) said programs were entirely remote, 8 (38%) said they used a hybrid model, and 1 (5%) said in-person with limited capacity. Asked what platforms they use to deliver remote programming, they most often mentioned Zoom as preferred for its ease of use and low cost and features like breakout rooms. They also reported frequent use of Google Meet and Google Classroom, as well as Microsoft Teams. At least one site uses Facebook Live to initiate remote learning, and many use other platforms for specific tasks, e.g., Jobscan for resume building. Sites reported using MS Teams, Google Meet, and Zoom for internal staff communication. Several use Slack for work groups and team building as well as document additions, and WhatsApp for messaging and calling as well as groups including students.

Pros and cons of remote training: Sites reported several benefits of providing remote training, including a broader geographic reach, use of a process that builds digital skills and increases participant comfort with technology, elimination of transportation issues (especially valuable for participants who cannot obtain a driver's license because of their immigration status) and reduced childcare needs, and greater flexibility in

training schedules, which help make training accessible to women with children. Disadvantages include lack of participant access to technology and internet connectivity, the need for basic digital literacy to access training (a particular barrier for some older adults and for people with limited formal education), challenges in building trust and a sense of community without in-person interaction, and potential distractions and lack of private space for some participants. Several sites noted that students are often at different levels, so their learning pace varies. Breakout rooms and other individualized approaches are needed to assist those who would otherwise fall behind. Participants with limited connectivity may not have reliable video, and it is harder to maintain engagement when instructor and participants cannot see each other.

Impact of remote training on capacity and staff: Sites often said that use of remote training has increased training capacity. This has been especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic, with social distancing required for in-person training. Some organizations reported adding classes and broadening enrollment, without having to worry about physical space limitations. However, some programs noted that it can be hard to manage large classes remotely, increased demand can be hard to meet, and some staff need professional development. Use of hybrid models helps prevent burnout.

Maintaining participant engagement in a remote training environment: Sites reported a variety of strategies to keep participants actively engaged. Instructors described a need to use discussion rather than relying on lectures, use the Chat function, ask students to respond to questions and share their screens, use breakout rooms, provide quizzes to assess progress and provide “friendly competition,” and limit group size. Some sites use games and videos, have participants interact on different platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook groups, and use gift cards as prizes and incentives. Some establish sign-on agreements and review expectations at the beginning of the course, and have students keep their cameras on as much as possible. Some instructors break up courses and sessions by alternating instructors, providing breaks, and/or integrating support services teams.

Plans for delivering programs as offices begin to reopen: A large majority of sites (15 or 71%) said they expected to offer programs using a hybrid model post-pandemic — with limited capacity in a physical space and other participants connecting remotely. Four (19%) said they would be offering training programs only in-person with limited capacity, one (5%) said in-person with normal capacity, and one (5%) said they would continue offering training only remotely.

Biggest program challenge: Sites were asked which of four areas represented their program’s biggest challenge. As Figure 9 shows, job placement was named most often, followed by equipment distribution and internet access (each identified by about one-fourth of partners), with curriculum development and execution named least often. Sites described making their training accessible to more people by loaning students Chromebooks, other laptops, and hotspots. Some said they gave students without computers access to their computer labs outside of class time once facilities reopened. One site set up a hotspot in the parking lot for students without broadband at home. Some of the organizations said they teach computer literacy using many different devices, sometimes including smartphones.

FIGURE 9
○ Biggest Program Challenge [N = 21]

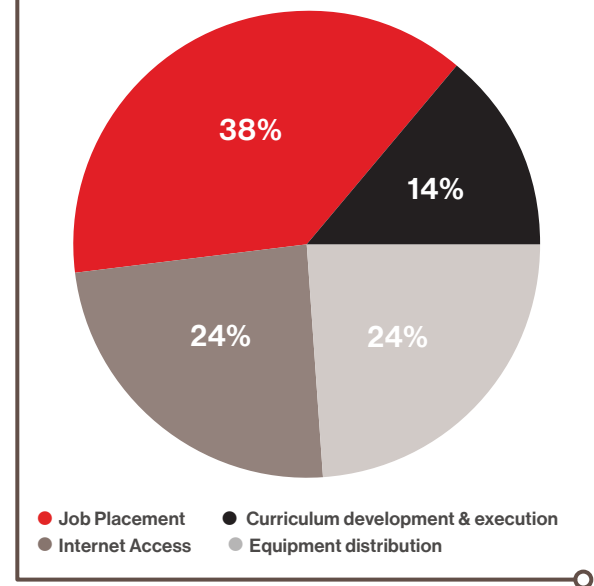
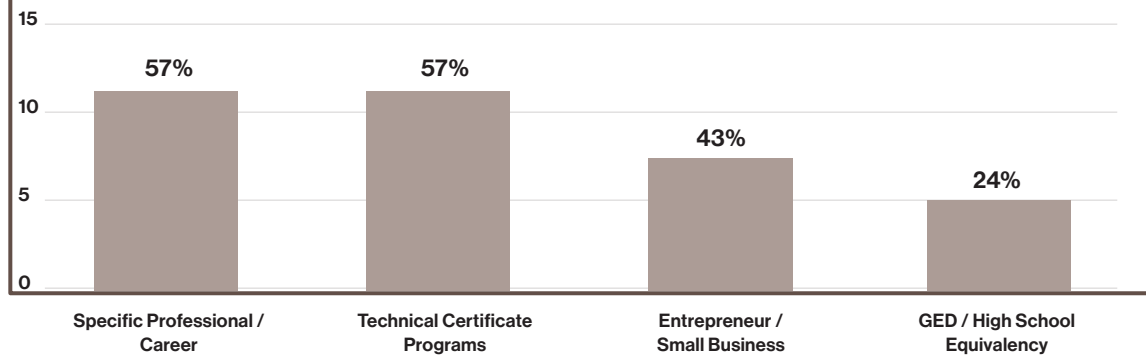


FIGURE 10

○ Types of Digital Skills Curricula Sites Would Most Like to Add:
Number and Percent of Sites (N=21)



Curriculum they would like to add: Sites were asked what types of curricula they would most like to add to their digital skilling program and given the following options: Technical Certificate Programs (e.g., Cisco, Google, Amazon Web Services, etc.), Specific Professional/Career, Entrepreneur/ Small Business, and GED/High School Equivalency. As Figure 10 shows, many sites indicated they would like to add more than one, with a Technical Certificate Program and Specific Professional/Career Curriculum both named by over half (57%) of the groups.

Partnerships: The sites reported a wide range of partnerships to help students obtain laptops and internet access, with several internet providers helping with low-cost internet plans and laptops. Other partners included public schools for computer access, public libraries for internet access, local community colleges and universities for equipment loans, and national organizations for laptops. Local business owners, banks, and credit unions provided job placements, mock job interviews, and other employment assistance. Many sites reported relationships with providers of wraparound services.

A challenging but successful year: The pandemic created enormous challenges for the project and for the partner organizations — but they were able to pivot, adjust, innovate, and operate successfully. Shifting to remote and hybrid training presented difficulties, but also enabled thousands of people to learn digital skills during a very difficult period. The project was able to move into its second implementation year with many lessons learned and applied.



Monument Impact
Concord, CA

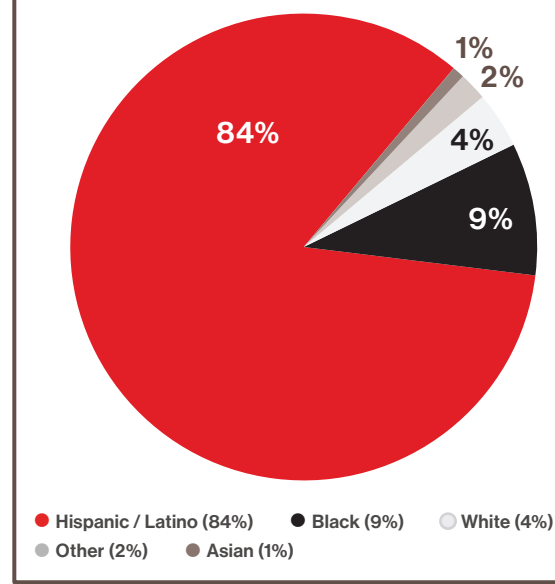
5. DIGITAL SKILLING PARTICIPANTS

SELECTION CRITERIA AND PRIORITIES

Each site established its own participant criteria, within broad parameters set by the program: it was to serve 10,000 participants, with a focus on Latinos and immigrants, individuals facing barriers to digital skills development and employment, and women.

FIGURE 11

Participant Race/Ethnicity (Percent)



PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

During its first year of operations, July 2020 through June 2021, in the middle of the pandemic, the Accelerator served over 7,600 people; in its first 18 months it served 10,000. Individuals were counted as participants if they received at least one hour of digital skills training.

Ninety percent of first-year participants were low-income based on federal poverty standards (in 2021, \$12,880 for an individual and \$26,500 for a family of four), and 58% identified as women. As shown in Figure 11,

over 84% were Latino, 9% Black, 4% White, 1% Asian, and 2% Other (Indigenous, Middle Eastern/North African, or other racial/ethnic groups).

As Figure 12 shows, nearly two-thirds had a high school education or less; almost one-third had less than a high school diploma and a similar percent had a high school diploma or equivalent. Less than one-third had some college, and 12% had at least a bachelor's degree.

Participants were very diverse in age, indicating a perceived need for digital skills among people of all ages. As Figure 13 shows, over half were under 35 — about a quarter under 25 (mostly 18-24), and 31% 25-34. About one-fifth were 35-49, and almost one-fourth were 50 or older (17%) or 65 or older (6%).

PROGRAM RESULTS

Participants received an average of 33.5 hours of digital training, and more than 1,100 obtained jobs. The most useful early data on participant results come from the second half of the year (January – June 2021), after all partner sites had several months of experience providing online training. The partners reported 4,163 participants, and 1,102 of them completed digital skills training during this period. Participants reported an 82% increase in their annual incomes, from \$21,652 pre-program to \$39,480 post-program. More than 300 found new full-time employment, 80% in jobs utilizing digital skills and knowledge.

FIGURE 12

Participant Education Level (Percent)

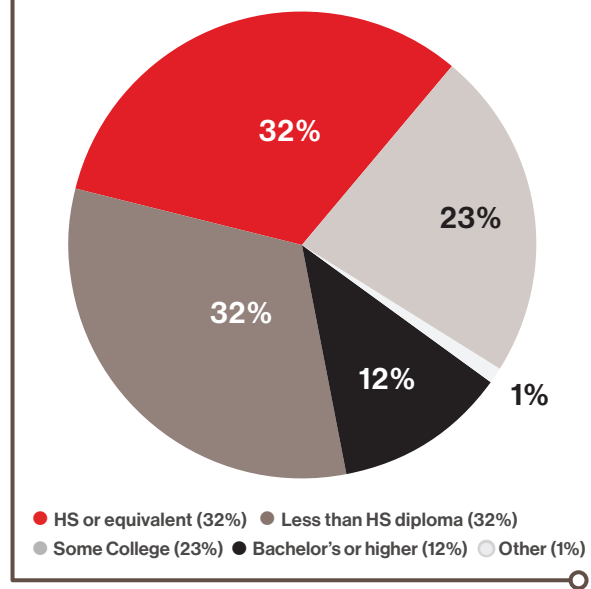
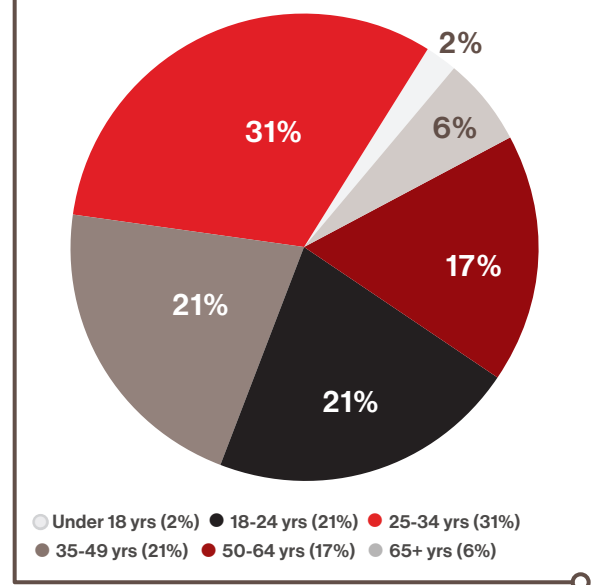


FIGURE 13

Participant Age (Percent)



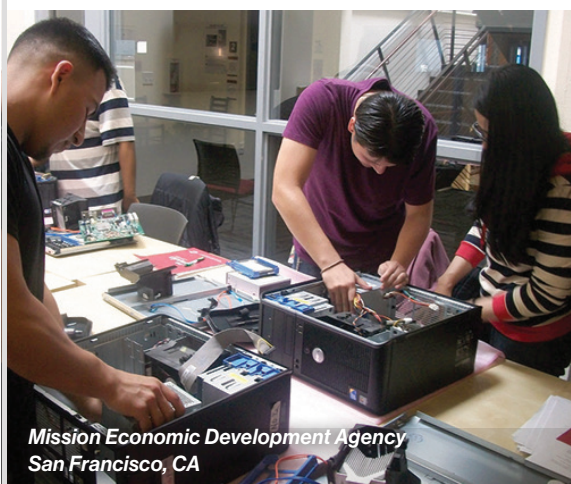
6. ACCELERATING CBO CAPACITY AND RESOURCES: HISPANIC FEDERATION ASSISTANCE TO THE SITES

Accelerating Latino nonprofit capacity for digital skilling through funding, training, and information is a primary purpose of the Latino Digital Accelerator. During the crucial first year of program implementation, Accelerator staff contacted sites individually and met with and polled them as a group, then provided information and support, developed resources, and addressed challenges identified by the sites. This assistance is described below.

Technical Assistance: HF's Accelerator staff reached out to individual sites early in the project, to become acquainted, learn more about the organizations, and understand how they were coping early in the pandemic. Staff continued to be available throughout the first implementation year and beyond.

Site visits: Though the pandemic prevented many planned visits to participating organizations, staff were able to visit sites in California and Washington and held quarterly video meetings with local partners throughout the first year.

Encuentro Digital Latino Digital Skilling Symposium: Hispanic Federation's Encuentro Digital: Latino Digital Skilling Symposium was originally planned as part of a larger in-person conference but became an online national convening because of the pandemic. Held on July 14, 2021, it highlighted the Accelerator's work in building training pathways to close the Latino digital gap. More than 400 people registered for the Encuentro, which brought together representatives of the Accelerator sites, other community leaders, HF staff, funder representatives, academicians, and other digital inclusion advocates, all committed to advancing best practices and needed reforms to support digital equity for Latinos. The Run the World platform helped provide an interactive experience that encouraged connections with speakers and among participants, who could "grab the mic" and share their perspectives on Twitter. The agenda began with remarks from Hispanic Federation's President & CEO, Google.org's Head of Economic Opportunity, Americas, and a description of the Accelerator and some of its best practices from the staff. Three panel discussions followed, presenting a plan of action for addressing the Latino digital divide, sharing of community-based approaches to digital skilling from several Accelerator sites, and discussion of best practices related to program curriculum, design, and delivery.



Mission Economic Development Agency
San Francisco, CA

Partner meetings: The Accelerator held regular remote meetings with the local partners to provide project information and guidance and maintain a forum for sharing and discussing progress and challenges. Initially the meetings were held quarterly, but the frequency was increased to monthly in 2021. Among the topics were lessons learned from remote training and use of labor market data and reports to inform program design and implementation.

Technology grants: Since sites reported a continuing need for more equipment for staff and/or participants, HF awarded each site a special technology grant of \$10,000 in July 2021 to help meet those needs. Funds were used to purchase equipment needed by the nonprofits and by digital skilling participants. Sites reported purchase of servers, desktops for their computer labs, other devices,

and subscriptions to online platforms like Zoom to enhance their own digital capacity. They also purchased loaner laptops, hotspots, and data service plans for their participants.

Assistance in obtaining and using labor market data: The Accelerator arranged for Lightcast to provide participating sites several labor market reports and training in their use during monthly site convenings. All sites received an Economic Overview that provides insights into the local economy, plus other reports appropriate to the types of training they do. Most sites run job-specific training programs, so they received appropriate Job Posting Reports that show demand for jobs in those occupations, including the number and intensity of postings (the number of places a single job is posted), hard and soft skills, and wage trends, and Skills Analysis Reports providing information on salaries by education and experience. Sites that do general digital literacy or workforce preparation training rather than skilling for a specific career path received a Hard to Fill Jobs Report, to help them identify job pathways and skills that may be especially appropriate as they enhance or expand their training.

Center of Excellence: The website for the Center of Excellence, scheduled for completion by end of 2022, targets the Latino community but is designed to serve HF grantees, other Latino-led and -serving nonprofits, and any individual or entity seeking resources and sound practices on digital skilling for Latinos and immigrants. All curricula developed by the Accelerator will be posted and available to all. The website expects to showcase the work of the Accelerator sites, providing access to their curriculum and encouraging contacts among organizations. The long-term intent is to help Latino CBOs be recognized as legitimate, respected workforce development and digital education centers.

Curriculum development: Curriculum development is an important role for the Accelerator's Center of Excellence. During the first year, the Accelerator prepared and provided to the sites an 8-unit, 16-hour online Digital Skilling and Job Preparedness curriculum, designed to provide participants with foundational digital literacy and skills in job readiness and job-seeking. The units are listed in Figure 14, below. Outcomes are built around the Google Suite platform and focus on resume building, communication, and finance management. The curriculum can be taught completely virtually using Google Meet or Zoom. Some of the

○ FIGURE 14

Digital Job Readiness Training Curriculum: Instructional Units

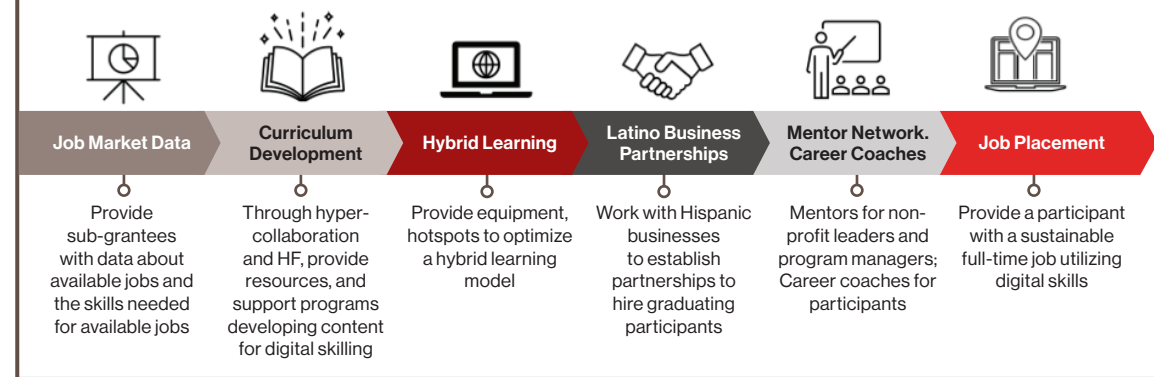
- **Unit 1:** Introduction – User Interface of Google Suite and Use of Google Docs Template for Resume Creation
- **Unit 2:** Building a Resume, Part 1 – Tailoring a Resume to a Job Posting, Use of Google Job Search and Applicant Tracking System (ATS)
- **Unit 3:** Building a Resume, Part 2 – Combining/Practicing Skills (Searching for a Job Posting, Building a Tailored Resume, and Preparing a Cover Letter)
- **Unit 4:** Google Sheets – Learning the Basics of Google Sheets (Formula Development, Basic Math Operations, Text Format, Chart Creation, Customized Tables)
- **Unit 5:** Monthly Tracking Expense Report – Combining/Practicing Skills (Creating a Monthly Expense Tracking Sheet)
- **Unit 6:** Research and Occupation Salary – Honing Skills (Job Search, Tailored Resume Building, Tailored Cover Letter) and Learning Research and Salary Requirements
- **Unit 7:** Salary Negotiation – Process of Salary Negotiations, including Research on Salary Shifts by Location
- **Unit 8:** Effective Communication – Use of Gmail and Google Meet (Personalizing Gmail, Composing and Sending Email, Sharing Attachments, Managing an Inbox, Using Google Meet)

sites use this curriculum as developed, while others have modified it for integration into existing training. This is the first of multiple planned curricula at different skilling levels.

Supporting a Job Pipeline: The ultimate intent of the Accelerator is to ensure that Latino-led and -serving nonprofits have the resources and expertise they need to grow their digital skilling capacity and use it to eliminate the Latino digital divide, so Latinos are equitably represented in the technological workforce of the future. Figure 15, below shows the Accelerator’s job pipeline, and the assistance provided by the Accelerator. Direct assistance has focused on the critical first three stages: providing in-depth, hyper-local, current job market data, developing curriculum, and supporting sites to develop and expand their own, and providing technology grants to support hybrid learning. Grants and sharing of sound practices support sites in their work with Latino businesses, mentoring and coaching, and job placement — and the Center of Excellence will address each part of the pipeline.

FIGURE 15

Job Pipeline



7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE ACCELERATOR

The Accelerator is expanding in size, further developing several components, and adding new initiatives.

Program Funding and Expansion: At the end of 2021, the Latino Digital Accelerator had funding from Google.org, Comcast NBCUniversal Telemundo, and the New York Digital Inclusion Fund/Schmidt Futures. Charter Spectrum, Macy's, and Toyota also became funders.

- **Google.org** renewed funding for an additional year, providing continued support for Accelerator activities including the Center of Excellence and other capacity building, and \$25,000 grants for the 24 existing partner sites and 6 additional sites. In addition, Google Career Certificate participation will increase, and stipends and other support for apprenticeships are being explored and piloted. The goal is for these sites to serve 6,000 more people, providing pathways to digital economy jobs.
- **Comcast NBCUniversal Telemundo** awarded one-year funding in December 2021 to support an additional 20 sites. Each will receive funding and other support from the Accelerator and will establish and report on participant metrics. Site selection will use a competitive RFP process like what was used in selecting the original Accelerator cohort of local partners. A diverse group of CBOs is expected, some in major urban centers, others in smaller cities and rural areas. Likely candidates include Latino nonprofits that currently operate Comcast Lift Zones — locations that provide free Wi-Fi hotspot connectivity in community centers so students can do their homework and participate in distance learning — as well as Federation member agencies. Accelerator staff have selected 20 organizations to participate in this program.
- The **New York Digital Inclusion Fund**, which is managed by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance and funded by Schmidt Futures, awarded HF two-year funding in late December 2021. The grant will make possible additional support to Accelerator sites in New York City, based on their individual needs.

Federal Funding: Accessing federal funds to support the Accelerator, including sites, is a 2022 priority. HF expects to submit applications through several new and ongoing federal programs, including the Digital Equity Act, a part of the infrastructure legislation passed by Congress in November 2021.

Support for Certificate Programs: A new focus for the Accelerator is providing scholarships for Google Career Certificate programs that prepare graduates for jobs in the technology sector. As of June 2021, only five of the Accelerator sites reported offering an entry-level certificate course. A majority (57%) said they would like to add technical certificate programs to their workforce training options, and all but one said such courses were important to their target community. (The exception is a nonprofit that provides basic digital skilling to a very low-income target population, most of whom have digital experience and internet access only through smartphones, so its current focus is on basic



digital skilling.) Asked what percentage of their current workforce program participants would meet the prerequisites for success in such a course, eight of the 21 sites responding (38%) said less than half, and the other 13 (62%) said half or more. Responses ranged from 10% to 100%, with a median of 60%.

Given the high level of interest and participant eligibility, the Accelerator arranged to make the five Google Career Certificate courses available and affordable. All the courses prepare participants for jobs in the technology sector. They include Project Management, Information Technology (IT) Support, Data Analytics, UX (User Experience) Design, and Android (mobile app) Development. The courses take 5-8 months to complete and require about ten hours of study a week. They are offered on the Coursera platform. Through the partnership with Google, the Accelerator is providing scholarships for participants identified by the sites. Sites must provide an implementation template describing how they will provide technical assistance at each stage to maximize completion. The goal is to assist at least 150 participants. It is expected that 12-15 sites will select students, with the number per site ranging from 2-3 to 25. Implementation began in December 2021.

Curriculum Development: Hispanic Federation plans to hire personnel to develop additional curriculum packages for use by the sites and sharing through the Center of Excellence. These will be intermediate and advanced courses for use as stand-alone offerings or modification by the sites.

Center of Excellence: The Center of Excellence website should become active by end of 2022. It will be a resource for nonprofits, digital skilling trainees/job seekers, and employers alike. The site will feature resources community-based organizations can use to build a program, curricula that organizations and instructors can utilize, and video content from Accelerator groups that will allow visitors to learn and interact across the country. Learners will be able to find programs by location, course offerings, and enroll. Additional resources will include job postings and databases and analytics on the current job market and how it relates to digital skilling programming. The Accelerator team will host a hybrid Encuentro Digital: Latino Digital Skilling Forum in Fall 2022. The Encuentro will bring together experts and leaders from the nonprofit, public, and private sectors to discuss how to use collective action to improve digital opportunities for the Latino community.

Apprenticeships: Hispanic Federation has also received funding to establish an Apprenticeship pilot program within the Latino Digital Accelerator to further support digital skilling participants to secure employment utilizing the skills obtained. The pilot program will provide stipends and technical assistance to select End Beneficiaries who complete digital skilling training, to increase job placement and retention rates.

8. LESSONS LEARNED

The staff and partner sites of the Latino Digital Accelerator have learned many practical lessons since it received initial funding during its first two years and are using them to refine and expand the Accelerator.

Latino-led and -serving nonprofits play an essential role in digital skilling for Latinos — a role that must be expanded if their digital employment gap is to be closed. In addition to all the strengths and characteristics that make them effective, trusted service providers generally, they offer some very specific added value to digital skilling:

- **They understand and use appropriate workforce development strategies.** Most Accelerator partners were engaged in providing at least foundational technology training when they applied for participation in the Accelerator. As described by HF Vice President for Development, Stephen Calenzani, as part of his master's thesis, the needs and strategies they described in their applications “mirrored the vast majority of workforce development best practices” as reported in the literature — and this was true of both large and small nonprofits.⁸³
- **They target and are committed to meeting the needs of Latinos who face special barriers to employment and upward mobility.** They reach out to low-income people, immigrants, English language learners (ELLs), women, the formerly incarcerated, and/or employees in “essential” but low-wage/low-mobility jobs. Most target Latinos with limited formal education and provide education as well as direct workforce training. Applicants typically reported offering and working to expand bilingual staff and training, English language classes, and a variety of wraparound services, either directly or through referral relationships.
- **They recognize the need to increase their digital skilling capacity and resources.** They know that technology training represents an essential strategy for Latino economic empowerment and progress, and most were already engaged in technology training when they applied to be part of the Accelerator. Needs varied by organization, but included adding curriculum, upgrading digital training skills of current staff and hiring experienced digital skilling instructors, offering more advanced training rather than referring participants elsewhere, updating their equipment, and strengthening mechanisms for accessing current labor market data. While they welcomed the grants associated with participation, they also indicated a desire to learn from each other and from Hispanic Federation.



⁸³ Calenzani, *op. cit.*

- **Their adaptability, competence, and commitment under extremely difficult conditions make them reliable digital skilling providers.** Implementation of the Accelerator during the pandemic created huge challenges for the partner sites and for HF, yet the project was implemented successfully. Most Accelerator partners faced closed offices, reduced revenues, and illness among their own staff, but they responded to urgent community needs. In-person workforce development classes and digital skilling were transformed into remote or hybrid training, but participant metrics were met. The only Accelerator site that did not continue was a healthcare provider that had to devote all its energy and resources to serving patients.

Latino demand for digital skilling is high. Despite operating in the middle of the pandemic, most sites operated at or near maximum capacity.

Latinas want digital skills and benefit from access to remote training. Almost 60% of Accelerator participants during the first year identified as women, which is especially important since Latinas were more likely to leave the workforce and had higher unemployment rates than other subpopulations during the pandemic. Among the reasons identified by recent research: Latinas were concentrated in occupations hard-hit by the pandemic, have had limited access to education and training needed for higher-wage opportunities, and had to become full-time caregivers when schools and daycare centers closed.⁸⁴ The Accelerator showed that they will take advantage of digital skilling opportunities they can access from home.

The structure of the Accelerator — a national entity partnering with local CBOs — encourages innovation, facilitates resource development, and supports a learning community. The Federation brings a wealth of experience and contacts and a deep commitment to building the capacity of Latino CBOs. The partner sites bring workforce development experience, strong community ties and cultural understanding, and a willingness to share curriculum, knowledge, and challenges. The total structure is truly more than the sum of its parts.

Private funding contributes to program adaptability and innovation. As noted by Calenzani, being funded by the philanthropic arm of a private corporation meant that “there were minimal restrictions put in place regarding program design, which might have encouraged more varied and innovative responses regarding program design by CBOs than if the funder was a government agency.”⁸⁵

Remote and hybrid training work and should be a continuing strategy for Latino-focused digital skilling. While challenges remain, their success during the pandemic means that nearly all sites expect to provide remote or hybrid training in the future — with adjustments to maintain the benefits and overcome the challenges in terms of participation and costs. Remote training can be more affordable due to the absence of transportation and childcare costs, open new opportunities for rural residents, increase flexibility in scheduling, and create safer space for women and for undocumented people. However, it reduces access for people without digital experience, computers, or internet connectivity; requires special efforts to maintain participant engagement; and can be demanding for instructors, especially those accustomed to in-person classes. Successful remote training will require both training for instructors and access to remote platforms that support breakout rooms and other interactive technology, plus devices and connectivity for participants.

84 “Latinas were more likely than other groups to drop out of workforce during pandemic, UCLA study finds,” UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative, June 16, 2021; <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/latinias-dropping-out-of-workforce-pandemic>.

85 Calenzani, *op. cit.*

Remote training highlighted the extent and importance of the Latino digital divide — and the need to address the lack of digital equipment as well as the need for digital skills. Sites struggled to get participants access to devices and broadband for remote training, often loaning them laptops and data plans for the duration of training. It is difficult to provide digital skilling to participants who have only a smartphone, but computer labs within nonprofits were often unavailable to participants during the pandemic, and public libraries and other locations with public internet access were often closed. It is unclear how well graduates of foundational digital courses will retain new skills if they are unable to practice them regularly. This situation makes it essential that national initiatives for expansion of broadband access equitably include Latinos.

Job placement is likely to be both a continuing priority and an ongoing challenge for Latino nonprofits that offer digital skilling. As of the end of June 2021, job placement was identified by 38% of sites as their greatest challenge, for many reasons. Curriculum used in digital skilling needs to reflect accurate, comprehensive, current labor market data for the region, which the Accelerator has helped participating sites access and use. The best job prospects are available to participants who complete more advanced and job-specific training, and/or earn a recognized certificate. Some Accelerator sites have provided primarily basic or intermediate digital skills, do not yet offer certificate programs, and refer their graduates elsewhere for advanced and job-specific training. Access to Google Career Certificate courses will help to change that. Similarly, the Apprenticeship pilot program will further support digital skilling End Beneficiaries, helping them secure employment utilizing the skills obtained by providing stipends and technical assistance to increase job retention rates.

The planned Center of Excellence is badly needed to help advance Latino digital skilling. Partner sites indicated a need for additional curriculum and other information, and ongoing information sharing with and among the sites was extremely valuable for addressing varied and changing site needs. Resources need to be made available to Accelerator partners but also more widely, through a wide range of strategies.

The core assumption of the Accelerator is valid. The acceleration of digital skilling capacity among Latino CBOs is a sound strategy for increasing Latino access to the digital skills needed for the future job market.

APPENDIX

PARTNER SITES

Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders, Bridgeport, CT

BCYL is an organization focused on providing the youth of Bridgeport with a portfolio of programming to empower the community through sports, tutoring, and education.

Center for Employment Training, San Jose, CA

CET is a legacy institution with 10 campuses in California, 1 in Texas and 1 in Virginia that teach skills for trade jobs (electrician, HVAC) also IT and schoolteachers. They teach thousands of adults each year with the skills to acquire jobs in high demand. They are an accredited higher education institution by the California Department of Education.

Centro Hispano of Dane County, Madison, WI

Centro serves the Latino community of the greater Madison area with a diverse portfolio of services from ACA health care navigators, immigration services, community organizing and workforce development.

Circulo de la Hispanidad, Long Beach, NY

An organization serving the Latino community with a diverse portfolio of services from immigration services, community organizing and workforce. Circulo works heavily with an undocumented community in Long Island, NY.

Community Resource Center, Mamaroneck, NY

CRC is an organization serving the Latino community with a diverse portfolio of services from ACA health care navigators, immigration services, community organizing and workforce. They work heavily with an undocumented community in Mamaroneck, NY.

El Centro de la Raza, Seattle, WA

As one of the cornerstone Latino institutions of greater Seattle, EL CDLR has a very diverse portfolio of services including asset building, youth programs, housing, and advocacy.

El Centro Hispano, Durham, NC

The largest Latino non-profit in North Carolina, El Centro serves a fast-growing Latino population in Durham and across the state with programs and services including, youth leadership development, community health, community support, economic development and education/workforce development.

Exodus Transitional Community, New York, NY

Exodus works almost exclusively with the formerly incarcerated community of New York City and Westchester County by providing a diverse range of services to help these individuals transition out of prison from housing to basic adult and digital education.

Fifth Avenue Committee, Brooklyn, NY

Their adult education program focuses heavily on high-demand trade jobs including commercial drivers and cable workers. Their umbrella organization has a large portfolio of services across Brooklyn, mostly in the Bushwick and Sunset Park communities.

Hispanic Center of Western Michigan, Grand Rapids, MI

The premier Latino institution of the Grand Rapids, they provide services including basic needs (food and health supplies), language services, workforce development, and youth services.

Hispanic Federation, Orlando, FL

HF's Florida and Southeast Regional Office

Hispanic Federation, San Juan, PR

HF's Puerto Rico Regional Office

Instituto del Progreso Latino, Chicago, IL

As an accredited educational institution in the state of Illinois, IDPL operates multiple charter high schools, has a well-developed adult education program with courses on ESL, Nursing (4 level track), and basic digital education.

Latin American Coalition, Charlotte, NC

Working heavily with the undocumented community of the greater Charlotte area, LAC operates an immigrant workers center to help empower the undocumented community, immigration legal center for citizenship and naturalization support as well as a workforce development program for youth and adult learners.

Latino Academy of Workforce Development, Madison WI

LAWD trains individuals in the greater Madison community in high-demand, trade jobs including CDL, Bilingual Construction, Customer Service, and Forklift. They also offer a Mindfulness Training program as support to individuals and families dealing with trauma.

Mission Economic Development Agency, San Francisco, CA

MEDA has an extensive economic development portfolio including housing project developments, lending programs to a workforce program support individuals as every level of digital skill (from beginning/first time access to coding and high-tech).

Monument Impact, Concord, CA

Starting out as a day-labor program for the Concord Latino community, over 20 years ago Monument Impact began offering digital skilling courses for the women who did not participate in the day labor work.

New Economics for Women, Los Angeles, CA

NEW supports the economic mobility of women in the Los Angeles community, they have a diverse portfolio of services from housing projects, financial education, family and immigration services as well as a women business where they have workforce/digital education programming.

Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow, Inc., Brooklyn & Queens, NY

OBT is a legacy workforce development organization based in Brooklyn and Queens, offering a diverse range of adult education programs including, digital marketing, nursing, high-school equivalency and ESL.

SER Jobs for Progress National, Inc., Fort Worth, TX

SER is a national organization. The Accelerator supports their SCSEP participation (Senior Community Service Employment Program), a Department of Labor program that funds apprenticeships for seniors to find employment.

SER Jobs for Progress National, Inc., Houston, TX

SER is a national organization. The Accelerator supports their SCSEP participation (Senior Community Service Employment Program), a Department of Labor program that funds apprenticeships for seniors to find employment.

SER Jobs for Progress National, Inc., Milwaukee, WI

SER is a national organization. The Accelerator supports their SCSEP participation (Senior Community Service Employment Program), a Department of Labor program that funds apprenticeships for seniors to find employment.

Vision Urbana, Inc., New York, NY

Working with the Senior Hispanic community of the Lower East Side, VU provides basic digital literacy that are more related to life skills.

The Knowledge House, Bronx, NY

TKH provides scholarships to underserved younger adults in the South Bronx and teach the skills that lead to employment in the tech sector. Programming includes, computer programming, data analysis, IT networking, etc.



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