

THE LATINA PATHWAY TO EXCELLENCE IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

MARCH

2022



A CAREER
AND PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT



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Forward

Many years ago, I had the privilege of being the keynote speaker at the first Latinas & Power annual conference. I distinctly remember the energy in the packed room, the rich exchanges throughout the day, Latinas and their supporters full of hope, drive and commitment to have expanded impact and success.

It has been an honor to watch and support Marilyn Alverio’s visionary leadership in action, creating and growing Latinas & Power to impact the careers and lives of thousands of women and their families throughout the years.

This report is an expansion of that vision, adding a vital voice to the many efforts looking to provide practical interventions for addressing the “Latina Leadership Gap.” And while the data, documentation and recommendations are specific to Latinas, the work provides an important guide with relevant insights for supporting women of all origins as they continue to adapt to a new world of work.

As I review my own career as a successful entrepreneur, *Fortune* 50 senior executive, author, and in my work today as a transformational leadership consultant for some of the world’s best companies and organizations, what I know is that opportunities often serve as a magnet to help people and organizations discover who they can be and what they can accomplish.

My request is that you accept the call to action that this study contributes, challenging us to rethink and reimagine what’s possible — not only for Latinas and women — but for our organizations and society as a whole.

In partnership,

Deborah Rosado Shaw
Principal, Rosado Shaw Group, LLC.

**Only through
action can
power be
expressed.**

Latinas & Power has now grown to become a *global* platform offering multiple hybrid virtual and in-person learning experiences.





About **Latinas & Power**



Latinas & Power is a global network created to inspire, motivate and enable Latinas to succeed as influential leaders and advocates. It reaches Latinas through multiple platforms: an in-person annual conference, virtual webinars and social media platforms. The programming it offers includes inspirational speakers, skills-based workshops, and a vendor showcase, as well as strategic social media outreach featuring Latina success

A mission of empowering women to become leaders and advocates.

stories and promoting the numerous accomplishments of Latinas in today's world. Latinas & Power was founded in 2004 by Marilyn Alverio, a corporate marketing strategist and community advocate who has spent decades dedicated to empowering women. Over the course of the past 19 years, the network has reached upwards of 10,000 women throughout the United States and in several countries around the world. ■

Overview

New England's first Latina Symposium was held in May 2004. The sold-out event was attended by like-minded Latinas who sought a forum where they could connect with each other in a spirit of camaraderie and support. Latinas & Power has now grown to become a *global* platform offering multiple hybrid virtual and in-person learning experiences and has attracted such notable Latina speakers as actresses Rita Moreno, Rosie Perez,



Latinas moving up the career ladder are placed under disproportionate scrutiny. It's understood that Latinas need to be ready to present because mistakes are amplified.


A demographic snapshot of the U.S. Latino population:

2010:
50,477,594

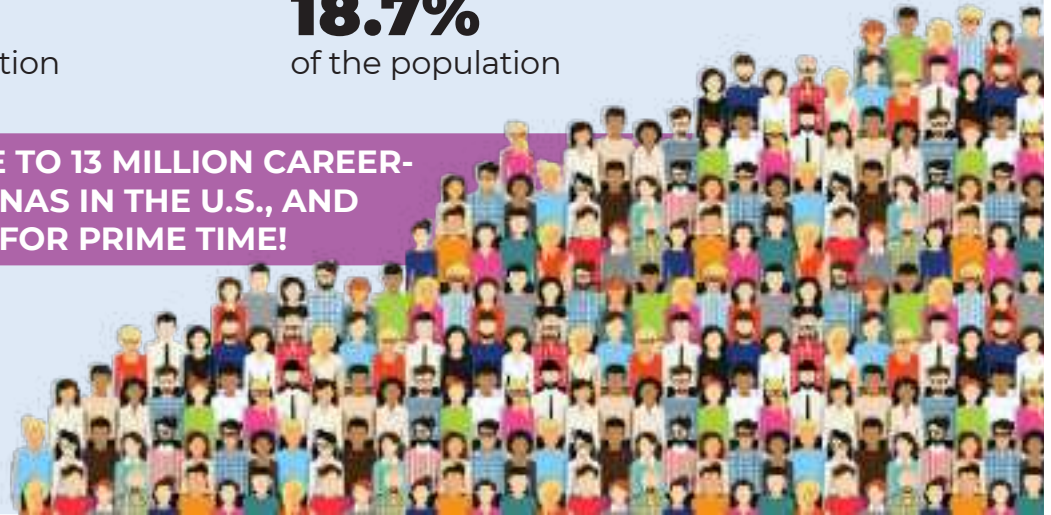
16.3%
of the population

2020:
62,080,044

18.7%
of the population

 **23%**
INCREASE

THERE ARE CLOSE TO 13 MILLION CAREER-AGED (25-65) LATINAS IN THE U.S., AND THEY ARE READY FOR PRIME TIME!



SOURCE: U.S. Census. Chart courtesy of Horowitz Research.

Andrea Navedo, vocalist Vikki Carr, and numerous trailblazing Latina executives and successful entrepreneurs.

In 2019 the group filed for and received 501(c)(3) status after recognizing a need for programmatic initiatives that could address the existing Latina leadership gap in all aspects of society (but particularly in health care, financial literacy, career development and community advocacy) by offering a deeper level of skills set outcomes.

To meet this need, Latinas & Power Corp. is creating a new initiative that will offer a hybrid learning experience called **Latinas in Leadership Institute™ (LiLI)** geared toward addressing this gap. The platform will offer two tracks during a 3½-month certification program on leadership and community advocacy. The leadership track will target entry to mid-

level Latinas in corporate, government and non-profit sectors. The advocacy track rotates through a focus on social justice and public policy, that will provide participants with skills needed by policy and health advocates.

The certification program through LiLI is a direct response to our findings in this report as well as feedback from participants in our numerous program initiatives. Latinas tell us they are consistently taking courses to improve themselves, but at times face formidable work/life balance challenges. They are interested in engaging in short-duration, high-impact opportunities to increase their knowledge base and marketability thereby expanding their access to getting promoted and having their voices heard. ■

Mission & Vision

of “The Latina Pathway to Excellence in a Post-Pandemic World”

This report aims to inform, educate, empower and provide practical solutions that can be immediately implemented not only by Latinas, but also by any private or public institution seeking to better understand and arm women with practical leadership skills to open and pursue opportunities for success.

To have a holistic overview of the state of Latinas, it is equally important that we frame the Latinas & Power report around existing literature and research studies. A study published in 2020 by the Network of Executive Women (NEW) titled *Latinarrific*, “Latinas in Corporate America – A Foot in Two Worlds,” reviewed the current situation of Latinas in the workforce and provided corporations with data and information about Latinas and how they should attract this growing segment into their workforce. With these insights, companies can gain understanding of how to recruit Latina talent and develop paths and ladders that promote Latinas

to executive leadership positions. The study’s most important findings were:

- Senior-level Latina talent was heading for the exits of corporate America at an alarming rate because they felt they didn’t fit into the typical corporate culture of the United States.

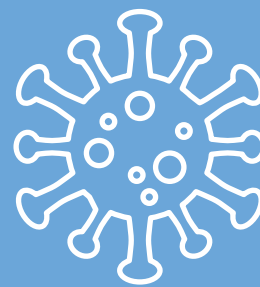


- ▣ Participants felt that many companies are not doing anything to promote Latinas or to bring their ideas or recommendations to the company in structured ways.

For the full report, visit nextupisnow.org/research/latinas-corporate-america

The harsh reality is that most studies regarding Latinas continue to be narrowly focused on their consumer and media consumption. While it is important to recognize the power of consumerism

This report provides practical interventions for addressing the “Latina Leadership Gap.”



The Pandemic Factor

The pandemic exacerbated a deep-seated inequity for communities of color. However, it has also given many women a different perspective on their careers and work life. Latinas & Power’s findings while conducting the focus groups for this report tapped into **how** the pandemic has in many ways changed the views and needs of many Latinas. Conducting research during the pandemic allowed us to report in real-time the sentiments of Latinas and report on their hopes, fears, and dreams.

that has crowned Latinas as “Chief Household Officer” and how they influence or control the household spending to take care of their family, it is equally as critical to understand Latina workplace issues.

A quickly growing segment of the labor force in the U.S., Latinas are now the largest group of women workers in the U.S. behind non-Hispanic whites. Numbering more than 12 million, Latinas account for 16% of the female labor force, a figure the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects will grow dramatically (10/20/21 <https://blog.dol.gov>). ■

Methodology

The concept for this report was conceived by Marilyn Alverio, who also participated as a contributor. Ms. Alverio engaged the research services of Latin2Latin Marketing, a Florida-based multiple award-winning engagement solutions agency. Latin2Latin founder Arminda “Mindy” Figueroa is a recognized leader in the traditional, multicultural, direct and digital marketing fields. Principal researcher Steve Garcia has extensive experience working with *Fortune* 100 clients, among them, Johnson & Johnson, Nestlé Purina and Coca-Cola. Latinas & Power volunteer and advocate Adriana Sánchez Dominicci led the data analytics for this research report.

A multi-pronged method of participant recruitment and data gathering was used to conduct research for this report. Ms. Alverio and her team first developed a recruitment questionnaire targeted to entry-level and mid-level career Latinas.

Their preliminary answers provided valuable insights that were found to correlate with final research findings.

Of the 122 recruitment questionnaire respondents, 16 were selected to move forward to the “Listen2Learn” tour, a series of virtual focus-group style interviews. The remaining 106

questionnaire responses were included in the overall insights we obtained. Additionally a group of eight executive-level Latinas were invited to the “Listen2Learn” research pool for one-on-one interviews. The result was a sampling of women representing a broad range of career levels, geographic locations and industries.

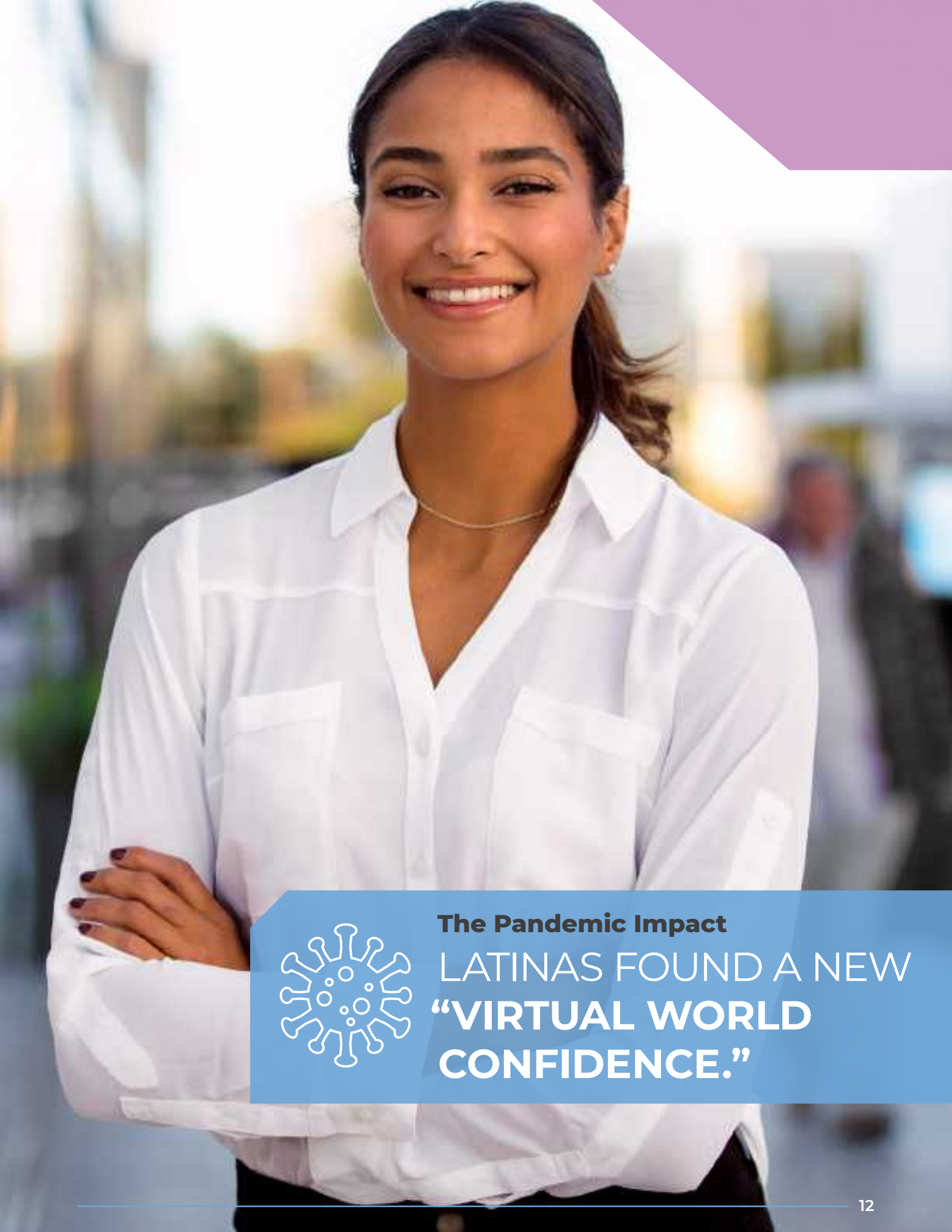
Together, the questionnaire and interview responses provided insight into the sentiments of Latinas.

While a small sample size, the sentiments collected here validated what we have heard from thousands and thousands of Latinas & Power participants throughout the years.

The interviews were conducted to obtain information that could guide us in developing a curriculum that addressed the many challenges, barriers and opportunities Latinas face today in the workplace, and to determine the appetite and time commitment for a certification program.

Raw interview files were transcribed by Ms. Sánchez-Dominicci and examined using the open-source data clustering tool Carrot2. Researchers extracted key themes from 24 transcripts, eight executive-level and 16 entry/mid-level, which were clustered for key themes. ■

(MassMutual donated volunteer hours for Ms. Sánchez-Dominicci’s contributions to this report.)



The Pandemic Impact

LATINAS FOUND A NEW
**“VIRTUAL WORLD
CONFIDENCE.”**

Demographics

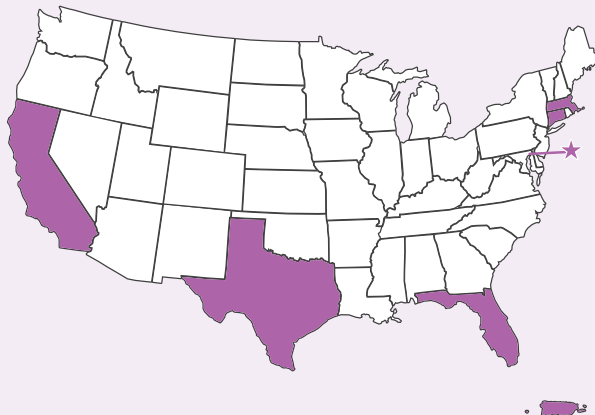
Executive-Level

Executive-level Latinas who were interview participants for our study represented the following industries:

- ▣ Communications
- ▣ Finance
- ▣ Infrastructure
- ▣ Management Consulting
- ▣ Non-Profit
- ▣ Public Policy
- ▣ Technology

Locations Represented

CA, CT, DC, FL, MA, PR, TX



Experience

All eight Latinas serving

20+
years

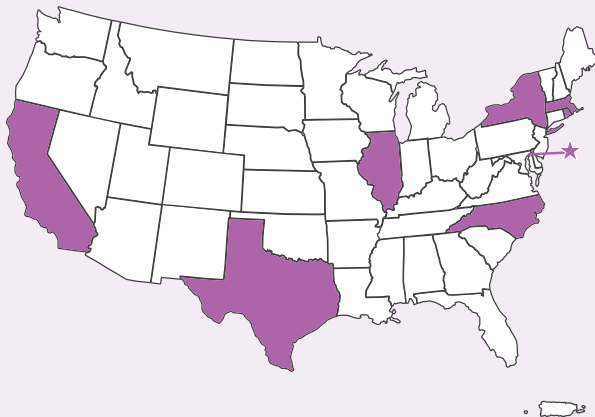
Entry-Level and Mid-Level

Entry-level and Mid-level Latinas who were interview participants for our study represented the following industries:

- ▣ Communications
- ▣ Education
- ▣ Health Care
- ▣ Hunger Relief
- ▣ Insurance
- ▣ Mental Health
- ▣ Politics
- ▣ Real Estate
- ▣ Social Service
- ▣ Technology
- ▣ Workforce Development

Locations Represented

CA, CT, DC, IL, MA, NC, NY, RI, TX



Experience

Four serving
16 years
or more

Six serving
6–15 years

Six serving
1–5 years

Findings

Entry-Level Career Latinas

Sense of Community and Connection to Latino Roots

The Latinas we identified as entry-level expressed high interest in advocating and providing a voice for other women, Latinas, and people of color. They were empathetic toward the people in their communities and felt a responsibility to do more. Wanting to help other Latinas move up the ladder, our respondents put themselves at the forefront of supporting persons of color in their respective organizations. Respondents reported continued interest in greater involvement in non-profit work and organizations.

The Pandemic Impact

Respondents said the pandemic had a generally positive impact on their careers in terms of flexibility and additional time to be creative. The entry-level group shared that they appreciated having more time to dive into personal hobbies and passions.

At the same time, work-life balance became a lost goal as personal life, family life and work responsibilities blurred together with no breaks between them. Respondents expressed having a hard time being able to keep up with the demands of the new normal. Pre-pandemic, Latinas already faced a history of limited resources, a deep-seated cultural tradition of family obligations, and a non-level playing field

compared to their white counterparts in the workplace. These inequities were only amplified in the years the pandemic reshaped American culture.

A negative identified by respondents was the loss of human touch and physical connection with co-workers and friends resulting in a sense of isolation and frustration. At the same time, with limited social life outside the home, some of the participants used the isolation to gain technical skills and pursue additional degrees online. They were also able to find time to dedicate to self-care, including taking advantage of mental health options that became more readily available while at home.

Another reported benefit was developing business projects or

building on opportunities for extra income. This resulted in respondents creating a new sense of ownership by creating their own projects and pursuing moonlighting and freelancing side jobs as a pathway to entrepreneurship.

The Latina Identity

Some of the women reported seeing themselves as the “poster child,” meaning they felt a responsibility to represent their Latino/Hispanic communities by raising issues in their respective work environments.

U.S.-born, entry-level Latinas expressed that they felt a strong connection to their roots and belonging to their Latino/Hispanic tribe. ■



Latinas are a major economic powerhouse

12.9 million Latinas are in the workforce - 16% of the female workforce

<https://blog.dol.gov/2021/09/17/celebrating-the-rise-of-hispanic-women-workers>



Mid-Level Career Latinas

Authenticity

A key component that came out of the discussions with the mid-level professionals was authenticity: understanding how to maintain their true selves while maneuvering the political waters within their organizations.

The Trust Factor

This group stated that they often felt invisible in their organizations. The lack of champions they could identify with and trust is an issue that contributed to the limited exposure they were offered.

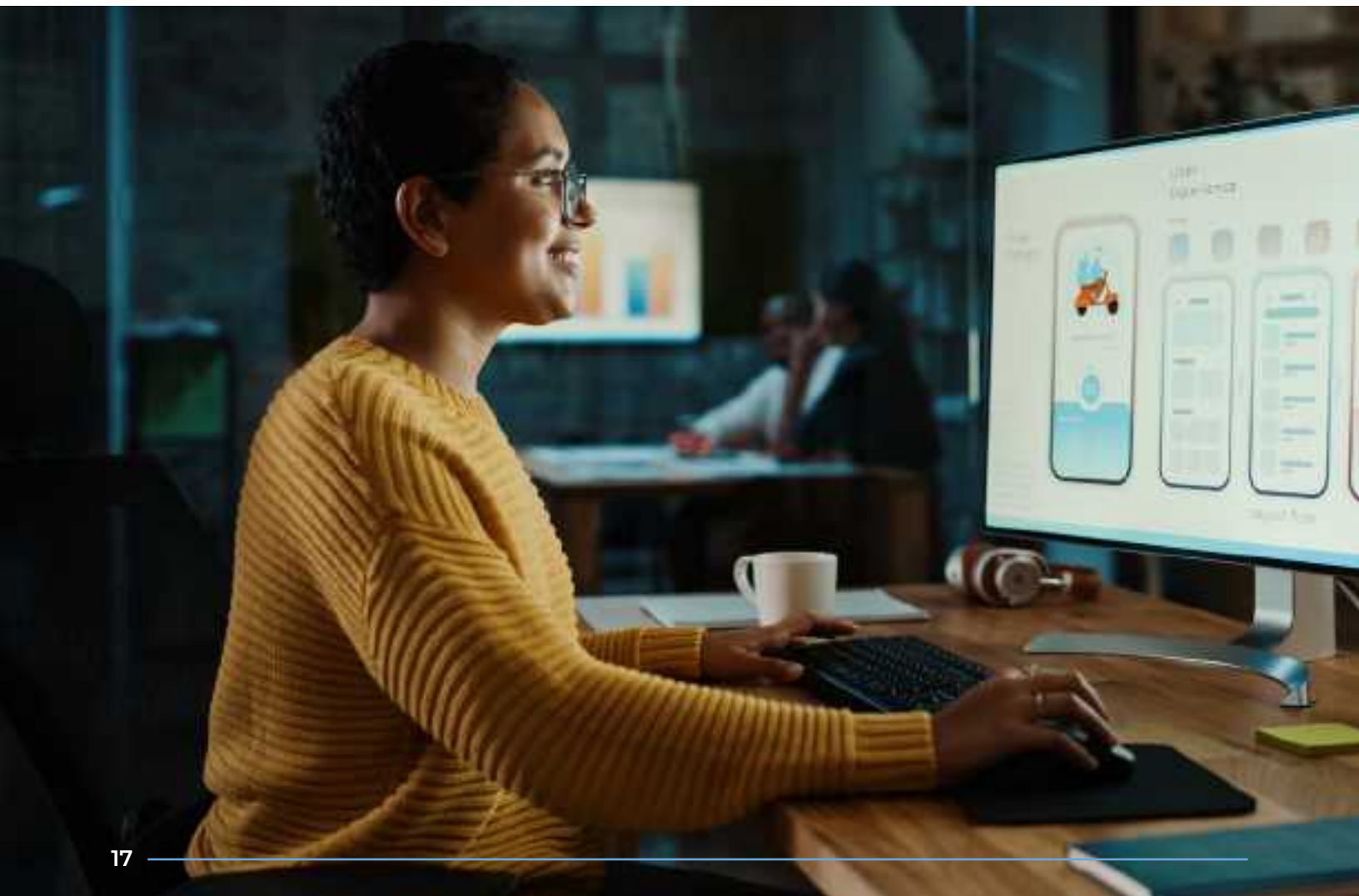
“knowing your gift”: what is unique about you, your knowledge base and your skills. They welcomed the idea of participating in certification programs where they can improve and build upon their brand while also learning more about their gifts.

Knowing Your Gift

Mid-level career Latinas value the development of their individual brand. They emphasized the concept of

Intersectionality Brings Change

Many Latinas in this group noted the concept of intersectionality: how the varying identities that they hold impact



their goals and the perspectives they bring to the table. They recounted their observations about how institutions including corporations and government agencies are interconnected in oppressive ways that hold Latinas back.

The goal is for Latinas to be a driving force to bring diversity and institutional change not just for Latinas, but for all underrepresented groups.

The pandemic served as a catalyst for many Latinas to be introspective and push to break barriers, first as a means of “seeking sanity” but also as a way to stay connected to others and consequently bring another perspective to the table. Latinas expressed their keen desire to become a conduit to represent and speak for others who may have lost their voices during the pandemic. More than ever, Latinas are committed to being inclusive, aiming high, and bringing others up with them. ■



Additional findings:

- Mid-level career Latinas also had a desire to serve their communities more and increase their involvement in social issues that hold back Latino and Latina groups. Looking at their children as the future generation, they are seeking ways to pay it forward.
- They are looking for greater access to upper management and leadership in the workplace, but reported difficulty gaining that elevated attention from their leaders to present their ideas and recommendations. They seek more intentional “check-ins” and discussions with upper management. The question became one of how to effect this change to create greater access.
- Part of their self-improvement journey examined how to find and take the time needed for introspective work. Due to time constraints with family, careers and other obligations, the preference was for self-guided learning and online courses.
- The cost of continuing education was noted as a key barrier to accessing continued self-development and professional growth.

Executive-Level and Corporate Board Directors

Risk-Taking

Executive-level Latinas and corporate board directors reported that Latinas had “faded into the background” during the pandemic. Not being seen and not being in the public forum has been detrimental to Latinas in general. They emphasized the importance of Latinas learning to promote their distinct qualities and to take risks to pursue new projects. They reported a need for skill development as a tool for upward mobility within their organizations and as a springboard for seeking opportunities with other organizations.

The executive-level Latinas in our study, who were in many ways the pioneers in their respective industries, see a bright future for Latinas. They believe Millennial and Generation Z Latinas have innumerable opportunities to continue forward motion and be key contributors to society.

Imposter Syndrome

A common theme reported by this group and the others was an emphasis on reducing imposter syndrome to ensure that Latinas do not get stuck in patterns of self-doubt about their abilities, skills and talents. The fear of being exposed as a “fraud” is something that can hinder a Latina’s ability to move herself forward and even impact her family life with her husband/partner and children.

Mentorship and Sponsorship

Executive-level Latinas reported that access to and guidance from mentors and sponsors who helped them navigate key junctures in their career pathways impacted their level of professional achievement. Many reported that their sponsors were Latino men who took them under their wing and helped bring them to the next levels of growth. The key for them was a willingness to work hard and take risks to reach the next challenge or opportunity.

An area of opportunity for growth and visibility identified by this group was within their communities: serving on not-for-profit boards/committees. This served as a springboard to attain their executive-level positions and positions on high-profile for-profit boards. Visibility with higher level executives in their companies allowed Latinas to demonstrate the caliber of thinking and unique perspective a Latina brings to the board level.



Societal Expectations

A barrier that executive-level Latinas observe is male and female societal norms and expectations of women in the Latino culture. The traditional expectation of knowing your place and staying in it, not making noise, and letting men take control is a detriment to Latina's professional development.

The Latina 6th Sense

Executive-level Latinas emphasized the importance of developing the confidence

to trust intuition when approaching people and making decisions about career and life opportunities. The concept of the "Latina 6th Sense" was identified as a talent that Latinas should employ after having learned all the facts and consulting with trusted colleagues.

Courage and Service

Part of a Latina's growth is being courageous, meaning using her voice to be heard and to speak up for others and to support people in their community

and organization, especially other Latinas. The idea that “united we stand, divided we fall” was common among the three groups. To get the most out of what they are doing, Latinas should serve in areas that they are passionate about and in which they want to make a difference for themselves and, just as importantly, for others.

Representation in Corporate Settings

Latinas moving up the career ladder are placed under disproportionate scrutiny, and so it is understood that Latinas must be “ready to represent.” They are scrutinized at every step, and mistakes they might make may be amplified. It becomes important to be prepared and be willing to do the extra work that is

required to complete assignments better than others will.

Part of being a Latina in the white male-dominated corporate and public sectors is demonstrating ability and overcoming predetermined low expectations. Latinas are not expected by some to be in places of power, influence and decision-making, and face prejudice and microaggressions in the workplace. Resistance can be viewed by non-Latinos as confirming certain prejudices.

Technology and Data

A common theme that was prevalent in the various interviews with C-suite Latinas was that technology and data skills are critical for Latinas to succeed and grow into the executive-level positions. ■



CHALLENGES FACING LATINAS

**Latinas
currently earn**

55¢

on the dollar
relative to white
non-Latino men.

**Latinas' earnings
compared to
white men
changed only**

4%

between
1988 & 2019.

**Latinas won't achieve equal
pay until the year**

2197

at the current rate of change.

Summary

The pandemic signaled a shift for many Latinas. With the focus on social unrest and racial injustice in 2020, Latina visibility took a back seat, while at the same time Latinas have had to learn to assert themselves by developing what has been termed “virtual world confidence.”

Latina voices are being heard. Several told us that virtual meetings resulted in new connections with top leaders and that they were given new opportunities to speak about their projects and promote their actions and voice.

Latinas have had to learn to manage the “social anxiety” the pandemic has brought on all of us.

The pandemic also gave Latinas more time for reflection and introspection regarding what their role is in the U.S.

The growth of the virtual world allowed, in certain ways, for “authenticity in the business world.” It required people to find ways to be more forceful and persuasive when presenting via webcam versus in-person. Latinas have learned they need to be more organized and make sure their team and management can see that they are getting the job done while working remotely.

The pandemic has also heightened the need to clarify one’s social identity and communicate how the multiple roles in life have converged as a result of working from home or dealing with changes in jobs or career path.

It has also triggered a desperate pursuit of achieving “work-life balance.” Working and living together with life partners and remote-learning children forced Latinas to develop new ways of coping with the new normal.

It also brought up a greater desire to arm themselves with knowledge and new skills and opportunities to serve and pay it forward.

Overall, the groups each expressed optimism that **the future is bright**. Opportunities for Latinas to build their own paths can be created so they can do the work needed to succeed.

Outlook for the Future

The Latina participants in our groups all saw the need for what they expressed as a requirement—to not only be an advocate and a strong voice for Latinas, but also, in general, for women and people of color.

The self-identification as a Latina is seen as “their gift” to American society. The diversity and richness of thinking including culture and bilingualism that



Latinas bring to U.S. society is seen as making our country stronger for the future.

The key to bringing Latina experience and thinking forward is through non-profit work. They want to learn how to give back to their community and advocate and provide support for “their” people. They seek to change social injustices that are still prevalent in America.

Latinas with their growing power and awareness should also be at the forefront of supporting other Latinas and persons of color within their organizations. This aligns with corporate diversity, equity and inclusion goals. Latinas can be role models in implementing those changes.

To bring forth the needed changes within communities, Latinas want to build greater empathy for people in their community and examine how they can be of help in key areas of need by working with other Latinas and organizations that are making those changes.

Both executive-level Latinas and non-Latinos can serve as role models, be involved in developing programs for sponsors and mentors, and proactively engage up-and-coming employees to participate in mentorship programs.



The Pandemic Factor

“THE PANDEMIC SHATTERED ME WHILE IT STRENGTHENED ME.”

Suggested Curriculum

Our research indicates that most participants consistently seek courses for certification that are applicable to their careers.

The courses suggested by focus groups would cover:

- ▣ Practical training in computer programs and apps, to help them become more effective in their work assignments and job responsibilities
- ▣ Identifying the best social media platforms to develop “Your Brand and Your Latinaness” in a virtual world
- ▣ Technical skills, including data analytics, coding and cybersecurity
- ▣ Organizational and presentation skills to sell their products or promote their ideas, or gain project approval from management

- ▣ Public speaking and persuasion skills to expand their influence and impact
- ▣ Building leadership skills to grow to the next level at their organizations
- ▣ Marketing, business and financial management, including how to read financial statements, creating and interpreting profit & loss statements, and marketing to customers
- ▣ Developing managerial skills to position them to take on new reports
- ▣ Critical thinking and problem-solving
- ▣ The “art of negotiation”

Advocacy

- ▣ For Latinas in community and non-profit organizations, learning advocacy skills was important
- ▣ Course on public policy was another of high interest

**There is a need for more Latinas
in leadership positions**

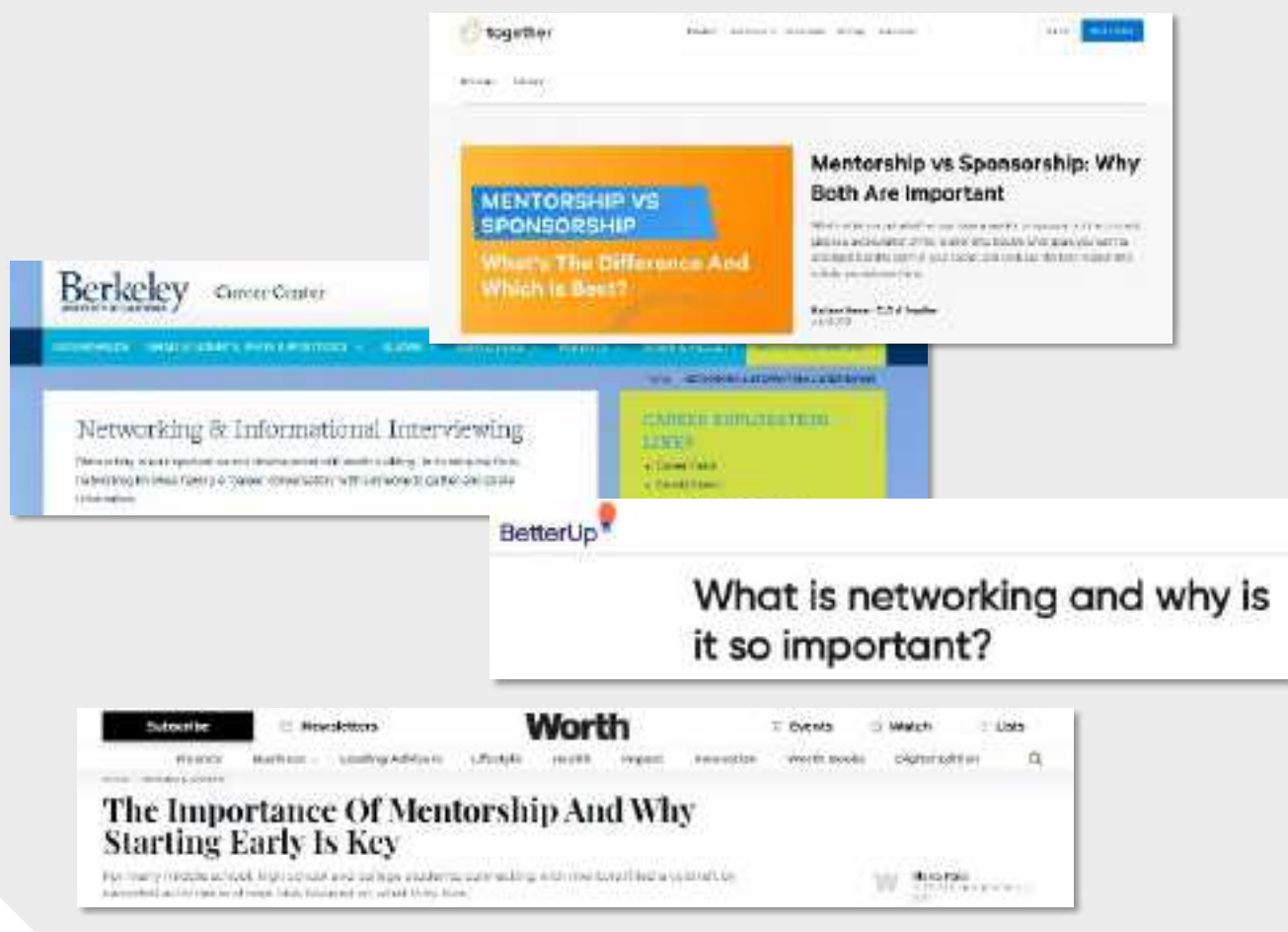
BOARDS

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

EXECUTIVE-LEVEL

Core Inequities Must Be Addressed

Importance of mentoring, networking
—and knowing how to do it.



Graphics courtesy of Horowitz Research.

Advancing Latinas

- Self-care, stress management and following passions
- Mentorship and sponsorship basics – how to identify a mentor and secure a mentorship arrangement
- Entrepreneurial skills to start a new business
- Investing and building a financial legacy for their children

Course Formats

- All respondents expressed interest in a hybrid virtual/in-person format
- Study groups were seen as a positive way for learning
- Respondents requested leaders who could provide mentorship to enhance curriculum
- A time commitment of 4-6 hours/week for the courses was considered appropriate and would allow time for homework
- Levels of certification were requested to document progress and to enhance their ability to attain higher-level positions ■



Conclusion



It is important to note that this Latinas & Power report rests on the foundation set by the 2020 pre-pandemic study commissioned and published by the Network of Executive Women (NEW) titled “Latinas in Corporate America – A Foot in Two Worlds.” To do so, Latinas & Power invited Arminda Figueroa and Steve Garcia, two of the co-authors of the study, to participate as principal investigators and co-authors of this Latinas & Power report.

In the Latinas & Power 2021 research, our approach was to examine and report what has occurred and changed during the pandemic so that we could begin to design and put forward a practical solution to the Latina leadership gap.

The insights from this study and our almost 20 years of experiential data gathered through Latinas & Power will serve as a springboard to create a curriculum that takes into consideration the information we obtained through this report. Our goal is to seek funding from grants, sponsors and additional partnerships to launch our hybrid program in early 2023. ■

Contributors

Research Team



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Thank you Deborah Rosado Shaw for contributing to and introducing this report.



Deborah Rosado Shaw

Trusted Advisor. Fortune 50 Senior Executive. Trailblazing Entrepreneur. Keynote Speaker. Author. Deborah is known as one of today's top global experts in Culture, Diversity, Engagement and Transformational Leadership.

Deborah Rosado's thought leadership and trajectory have been featured in textbook case studies and multiple media outlets including ABC, *Forbes*, Telemundo, the *Oprah Winfrey Show* and *USA Today*. She has been recognized with numerous awards, including the *Fortune* "50 Most Powerful Latinas in Corporate America," *Black Enterprise Magazine* "Top Executives in Corporate Diversity" and the *Latino Leaders Magazine* "101 Most Influential Latinos in the U.S."

Executive Interview Contributions

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Graciela Saenz, Law Office of Graciela Saenz PLLC (Texas)

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Honorable Aida M. Álvarez, Former Administrator SBA, U.S. President's Cabinet (CA)

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Under their community leadership focus, they support advocacy efforts to elevate the voices of those most affected by inequities and ensure that leaders understand the critical issues.

A special thank you to our sponsors over the years who have made it possible to build the Latinas & Power network: Liberty Bank, Eversource, Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET), VOYA, AARP, The Hartford, Webster Bank, MassMutual, TJX Corp., Aetna, Cigna, Latin Financial, YMCA of Greater Hartford, Junior Achievement of Southwest New England, Latin2Latin Marketing, Camelo Communication, La Voz, and Horowitz Research.

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