



*Winning the Future:*  
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S AGENDA  
AND THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY

MARCH 2011







In his State of the Union address, the President laid out his vision for America to win the future. The President made it clear that the most important contest we face today is not between Democrats and Republicans, but rather America's contest with competitors across the globe for the jobs and industries of our time. To win that contest and secure prosperity for Hispanics and all Americans, we have to out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the rest of the world and the Hispanic and Latino community plays an integral part of that plan to win the future.

We can win the future through innovation, creating the jobs and industries of the future by doing what America does best—investing in the creativity and imagination of the American people. We must win the race to educate our kids in order to meet the demand over the next 5 years when nearly 90% of new jobs will require more than a high school degree. And we must rebuild America, attracting new businesses to our shores by having the fastest and most reliable ways to move people, goods, and information—from roads and airports, to high-speed rail and high-speed Internet.

In the last two years since taking office, the President and his Administration have worked to lay the groundwork for America to win the future, stopping the freefall of the economy and begin to set the foundation for growth and prosperity. Every issue has been of vital importance to the Latino community, from promoting job creation to making sure that every American has access to quality health care, to reforms that strengthen education for all Americans, to fighting for comprehensive immigration reform while standing up for the civil rights of all Americans.

**Strengthening Our Economy:** Job and economic security are central to Hispanic families. President Obama has focused on taking strong and necessary steps on behalf of Latinos and all Americans to pull our economy back from the brink of a second great depression, jumpstart job creation and strengthen the middle class. The President is also directing investment toward one of the most promising job-creating, life-changing, world-saving technologies of our time: clean energy. The President is also calling for out-building the rest of the world, by investing in the infrastructure America needs to attract businesses, and jobs, to our shores.

**Revitalizing Education:** In order to win the future we must win the race to educate our kids. Restoring the United States to its role as the global leader in education will require that we invest in strengthening and expanding educational opportunities for Latino students – from cradle to career. The President is calling for an expansion of the “Race to the Top” program to further achieve meaningful reforms in public education, recruiting and training 100,000 new teachers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, upgrading and revitalizing America’s community colleges, and expanding college affordability by making permanent the President’s American Opportunity Tax Credit, and reforming immigration laws so that we stop expelling talented, responsible graduates who want to contribute to our country where they grew up and know as home.

**Fixing Our Broken Immigration System:** In December of 2010 the President expressed his deep disappointment that Congress failed to pass the DREAM Act, and in his State of the Union Address in January 2011 he reiterated his commitment to immigration reform. Recognizing that this will require action in the Congress, the President will continue to press for partners in the Congress to get this critical reform enacted at the earliest possible opportunity.

**Ensuring Affordable and Secure Homeownership:** The Administration has worked to address the foreclosure crisis and revitalize the communities hardest hit by foreclosures while supplementing programs that help Latinos work toward buying their own home.

**Ensuring Access to Affordable Health Care:** The Obama Administration has made great strides in giving Latinos and all Americans greater control over their health care. Latinos, who have the highest rates of un-insurance in the nation are one of the groups that benefit most from the passage of the Affordable Care Act and the Children’s Health Insurance programs.

**Securing a Clean, Renewable Energy Future:** The transition to clean and renewable energy has the potential to grow our economy and create millions of jobs. The Hispanic community stands to benefit from the growth of this new and be a critical part of our nation’s clean energy future.

**Honoring and serving our Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families:** Hispanics have served in every war since the founding of our country. Today, nearly 11 percent of soldiers serving in the U.S. Armed Forces are of Hispanic origin—that is over 1.33 million Hispanics currently serving in our armed forces. And, according to the U.S. Census there are more than one million Hispanic veterans that have bravely served our nation. The Administration is committed to the care of all of its service members, veterans, and their families, and is making important strides in delivering vital services in a culturally sensitive way.

**Protecting Our Air, Water and Cleaning Up Our Communities:** There are too many places in America today where the environmental, health, and economic burdens of pollution fall disproportionately on poor and minority communities. This administration has proposed far reaching changes that will positively impact the health of Latinos and their communities.

**Embracing Puerto Rico’s Self Determination and Economic Development:** President Obama signed Executive Order 13517, directing the President’s Task Force on Puerto Rico to maintain its focus on the question of Puerto Rico’s status, but also added to the Task Force’s responsibilities to seek advice and provide recommendations on Administration policies that promote job creation, education, health care, clean energy, and economic development on the Island.

**Strengthening Our Economy:** President Obama has focused on taking strong and necessary steps on behalf of Latinos and all Americans to pull our economy back from the brink of a second great depression, jumpstart job creation and strengthen the middle class. The President is also directing investment toward one of the most promising job-creating, life-changing, world-saving technologies of our time: clean energy. The President is also calling for out-building the rest of the world, by investing in the infrastructure America needs to attract businesses, and jobs, to our shores.

- In early 2009, the President signed the [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act \(ARRA\)](#) to create jobs, spur economic growth and invest in communities. Latinos are experiencing higher rates of unemployment than the national average, so the Recovery Act and its implementation have been vital to the community and the country. A recent report from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office showed that the Recovery Act was responsible for increasing the number of people employed by as many as 3.3 million. According to a study released last year by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, seven policies included in the Recovery Act have kept 1.9 million Latinos above the poverty line.
- In December 2010, the President and the Administration built on this strong record to pass a bipartisan tax cut package agreement that not only secured vital tax relief and investments in our workers—something that will create jobs and accelerate economic growth—but also provides specific support for Hispanic families. Building off the gains made in the Recovery Act, the tax agreement extends key provisions including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) that directly benefit Hispanic parents and children. These provisions of the new law will benefit an estimated 3.7 million Hispanic families—including 8 million Hispanic children. And nearly one million Hispanics looking for work weren't forced to lose their unemployment benefits at the end of last year.
- The President signed the Small Business Jobs Act into law, which created a \$30 billion small business lending fund, added new small business administration capital, contracting and counseling programs, and provided targeted tax incentives for small businesses. In 2010—3,218 7(a) and 504 loans were made to Hispanic/Latino small businesses—totaling \$808,493,000. (SBA)
- The President [signed the Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment \(HIRE\) Act](#) into law, providing tax incentives for small businesses and non-profits—both with significant track records in hiring Latino workers—to start hiring as soon as possible.
- The President [signed the Credit Card Accountability, Responsibility, and Disclosure \(CARD\) Act](#) to protect Latinos and all Americans from unfair and deceptive credit card practices and to ensure that Latinos have access to credit and basic financial services so they have the information they need to make the decisions that work best for them.
- The President [signed the Wall Street Reform bill](#) that will protect consumers and our entire economy from the recklessness and irresponsibility that led to the worst recession since the Great Depression. Latino leaders have called this a “Major Victory for Latino Families” by protecting against abusive financial products and services, and creating greater access to safe and affordable bank accounts and credit. It will guard consumers from predatory practices by banks, mortgage brokers, payday lenders, remittance providers, and other financial institutions.

**Creating Job Opportunities and Protecting Workers:** This Administration remains committed to improving the lives of Latino workers and their families, and to ensuring that all communities, including Latinos, have access to good jobs. For the first time in U.S. history we have a Latina spearheading the Labor Department, Secretary Hilda L. Solis.



President Obama visits Barela's Restaurant in Albuquerque, New Mexico

- The Department of Labor supports more than 3,000 career centers across the nation, they are called "One-Stop Centers" and there are 124 Job Corps centers for young people in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.
- Between 2009 and June 2010, more than 3.2 million Latinos were served by the Labor Department's Wagner Peyser program, just one of many worker training initiatives.
- Ensuring Latinos are trained to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century clean energy economy is critical. That's why this Administration provided \$150 million in grants to create "Pathways Out of Poverty." The program helps disadvantaged populations gain economic self-sufficiency through employment in renewable energy.
- Latino workers suffer and die on the job at a greater rate while doing some of the hardest and most dangerous jobs in the U.S. For the first time in history, the Labor Department held a National Action Summit for Latino workers bringing together nearly 1,000 employers and employees at a bilingual conference to educate them on workers' safety and rights.
- The U.S. Department of Labor has hired 710 investigators, many are bilingual. More than 100 of the new staff are investigators with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and another 300 are with the Wage and Hour Division, helping to empower workers with information about their rights while leveling the playing field for employers who follow the rules.

**Winning the Race to Educate Our Kids:** In order to win the future we must win the race to educate our kids. Restoring the United States to its role as the global leader in education will require that we invest in strengthening and expanding educational opportunities for Hispanic students—from cradle to career.



- Over the next 5 years, nearly 90% of new jobs will require more than a high school degree, yet one quarter of our kids are not even finishing high school. The quality of our math and science education lags behind other countries, and America has fallen from 1st to 9th in college graduation. To compete in the 21st century, and to give our children the best possible chance to succeed, we must win the race to educate our kids.
- In a speech at the [U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce conference in March 2009](#), President Obama laid out his education agenda and the importance of education to the Latino community and all Americans. President Obama's vision on education includes higher standards, quality teachers, and innovation that builds on what works in America's classrooms. It also means providing support to turn around low-performing schools, reduce dropout rates and reform higher education to increase college graduation rates so that every student can realize their full potential.

- On October 19, 2010, President Obama signed Executive Order 13555 renewing the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, whose mission is to help restore the United States to its role as the global leader in education and to strengthen the nation by expanding educational opportunities and improving education outcomes for Hispanics of all ages by helping to ensure that all Hispanics receive a complete and competitive education that prepares them for college, a career, and productive and satisfying lives. The Initiative also convened more than 300 national leaders at its National Education Summit and Call to Action on October 19, 2010.
- Between June 2009 and January 2010, the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics convened more than 100 community conversations in 30 states, including Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. with over 10,000 participants. These community conversations served to reintroduce the Initiative to the community, hear key challenges and priorities on the frontlines of the education system with respect to the Hispanic community, enlist individuals and organizations to join the Initiative's National Network and partner with others across the country to work on these issues.
- The President's budget [has made key investments in early learning programs](#), such as Head Start and child care so that children enter school ready to learn. Approximately 19 percent of the nation's child care subsidy recipients are Hispanic and Latino, and 33 percent of participants in Head Start also are Hispanic and Latino. The Administration has made critical investments in reforms to strengthen elementary and secondary education, such as dedicating more than \$4 billion in School Improvement grants to challenge states and districts to implement bold reforms that will transform the 5,000 lowest-performing schools in America so that every American student has a complete education, from cradle to career, so that they can compete in the global economy.
- By signing the [Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act](#), the President ensured increased affordability of and access to student loans for American students. The Department of Education estimates that some 150,000 additional Pell Grant awards will be made to Hispanic students by 2020 under this new law, and that 143,000 Latino student borrowers will avail themselves of new protections for student loan repayment which ensure affordability.
- The Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act also strengthens Hispanic-Serving Institutions—that is, a public or private nonprofit college or university with a student body that is at least 25 percent Latino—by investing more than \$1 billion in these institutions over the next decade. More than half of America's Hispanic and Latino undergraduates attend a Hispanic-Serving



President Obama speaks to Javier Garcia, class of 2020, prior to signing the Executive Order on the White House Initiative for Educational Excellence for Hispanics

Institution. Hispanic-Serving Institutions serve a higher proportion of low- and middle-income students than their peers.

- In July 2009, the President issued a challenge to the country to reform our schools by announcing the [“Race to the Top” fund](#), a \$4.35 billion fund that is rewarding eligible states to create incentives for future improvement in four areas of enormous importance to Latino students: adopting rigorous standards and assessments, recruiting and retaining high quality teachers, turning around low-performing schools, and establishing data systems to track student achievement and teacher effectiveness. The 11 states and one district that have been selected as Race to the Top winners—including Tennessee, Delaware, Rhode Island, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and the District of Columbia—reach approximately 22 percent of the nation’s Latino student population.
- Latino organizations and communities successfully competed on the Administration’s \$650 million Invest in Innovation Fund and Promise Neighborhood Program. The purpose of these programs in to develop and scale up innovative educational models and solutions that improve educational outcomes for high need students and support a cradle-through-college pipeline.
- President Obama also announced the American Graduation Initiative, a historic initiative to strengthen our nation’s community colleges, and called for five million additional graduates by 2020. This initiative provides \$2 billion for Community College Challenge Grants for two-year schools where many Hispanic students earn their first college degree, receive job training to increase their skills, or prepare to attend a four-year institution. We cannot achieve the President’s goal without success among Hispanic students.
- The Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division and the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights reached a settlement agreement with the Boston School Committee that ensures that English Language Learner(ELL) students will no longer be denied language support services based on a system that did not accurately assess or provide for their language needs. As a result of the agreement, more than 4,000 students who were inappropriately characterized as having “opted out” of ELL services will now have ELL and compensatory services made available to them. In addition, approximately 4,300 students who were improperly identified as non-ELL students, will, for the first time, be offered ELL services.
- The Peace Corps has developed formal partnerships with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and the Hispanic Scholarship Fund to help inform the Hispanic community about all of the volunteer, career, and education opportunities available through the Peace Corps.



President Obama speaks at the National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast

**Fixing Our Nation's Broken Immigration System:** Winning the future demands that our economy be built on top of an immigration system that works, and that we stop expelling talented young people who want to contribute to the country they grew up in and know as their own. In December of 2010 the President expressed his deep disappointment that Congress failed to pass the DREAM Act, and in his State of the Union Address in January of 2011, the President reiterated his commitment to immigration reform. Recognizing that this will require action in the Congress, the President will continue to work toward building the bipartisan consensus necessary so that this critical reform can be enacted at the earliest possible opportunity.



President Obama makes calls to Members of Congress in support of the DREAM Act

- As the immigration debate proceeds, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) continues to improve its responsiveness to the individuals and families who rely on it for information and services. In 2009 USCIS launched an [updated website](#), including a new Spanish version and [an online tool](#) that allows legal immigrants for the first time ever to get updates on their applications on line or via text message and improving processing times and clearing backlogs of pending applications. USCIS has also fully eliminated the FBI National Name Check Program's backlog. In 2010, USCIS launched quarterly public engagements in Spanish, focusing on specific immigration and citizenship topics and including live question-and-answer sessions with USCIS officials.
- The President has devoted critical funding to support citizenship preparation and integration programs in communities throughout the country. In 2010, USCIS awarded close to \$8 million in new grant funding to organizations in 27 states, and expects to [award grant funding](#) to additional communities in 2011. In addition, USCIS launched a new [Citizenship Resource Center](#) that centralizes citizenship resources for immigrants, educators, and organizations to help users better understand the naturalization process.

- Since January 2009, USCIS has also worked with the Armed Forces to naturalize nearly 20,000 military personnel. DHS is working to ensure that the [military community](#) has accurate and up-to-date information about immigration services and benefits, and USCIS has established a military assistance team to carry out this goal.



- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has also invested in implementing critical reforms to the detention system, enhancing the security and efficiency of the detention system while prioritizing the health and safety of detainees. A concrete example is the [Online Detainee Locator System](#), a public, Internet-based tool designed to assist family members, attorneys, and other interested parties in locating detain individuals in DHS custody.
- The Obama Administration has dedicated [unprecedented resources](#) to securing our Southwest border, which is important for the safety and security of our nation, as well as for legitimate trade and tourism across the border. The Administration has worked together with the Government of Mexico to disrupt the transnational criminal organizations that traffic in illicit drugs, weapons, and bulk cash, and the interdiction of illicit weapons and bulk cash not just from south to north but also north to south. This Administration has also engaged in an unprecedented effort to bring focus and intensity to border security, coupled with a reinvigorated, smart and effective approach to enforcing immigration laws in the interior of our country.
  - The number of Border Patrol agents has increased from approximately 10,000 in 2004 to more than 20,700 in 2010.
  - The number of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel assigned to Border Enforcement Security Task Forces has doubled.
  - The number of intelligence analysts working along the U.S.-Mexico border has increased.
  - Deployments of Border Liaison Officers have quintupled.
  - Have begun screening of southbound rail and vehicle traffic for the illegal weapons and cash that are helping to fuel the cartel violence in Mexico.
- The unprecedented efforts have yielded real results.
  - Border Patrol apprehensions—a key indicator of illegal immigration—have decreased 36 percent in the last two years and are less than half of what they were at their peak.
  - Violent crime in border communities has remained flat or fallen in the past decade
  - Statistics have shown that some of the safest communities in America are along the border.
  - Additionally, the administration has [taken critical steps](#) to make interior and worksite enforcement smarter, more effective, and more consistent with our country's best values, prioritizing the removal of immigrants convicted of crimes and employers who abuse or exploit workers. The deportation of aliens with criminal records increased by more than 70% in 2010. In 2010, DHS has conducted more audits and levied more fines against employers who violated immigration laws than in any year by any previous Administration.

**President Obama's Commitment to Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families: From the American Revolution to serving on the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan Hispanic service men and women have played a major role in defending our nation. The Obama Administration's Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs have worked to ensure that we honor the service and sacrifice of our military and their families.**



President Obama meets with Hispanic veterans at National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast

- Hispanics serve in our military in record numbers—over 1.33 million Hispanics currently serve in our armed forces and an estimated 5.8 percent of our Nation's Veterans are Latino.
- Every day, the Department of Veterans Affairs serves Hispanic veterans in a variety of ways—from service connected disability compensation to educational services, home loan guarantee programs and health care service.
- As of October 2010, VA has issued over \$5.66 billion in Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit payments to approximately 385,000 Veterans or eligible family members pursuing higher education. To encourage more Veterans to use this historic program, in February 2010 VA launched a nationwide Post-9/11 GI Bill advertising campaign through college newspapers, radio ads, outdoor posters and information handouts at 60 schools with large veteran-student populations.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues to work with organizations such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Council, the National Council of La Raza, American GI Forum, the National Alliance for Hispanic Health, and other similar organizations to inform Hispanic American Veterans about VA services and employment opportunities.

- As the nation's largest integrated health care system, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs offers the ideal setting in which to evaluate and implement patient-centered and culturally sensitive approaches to care. The VA is studying the special needs of specific minority groups. Several recent projects, for instance, have focused on Hispanic Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans. Among other results of this research, culturally sensitive, Spanish-language educational materials on reintegration have been developed specifically for Veterans and their families in Puerto Rico, and evidence-based PTSD therapy has been translated and culturally adapted for Hispanic Veterans.



President Obama meets with Hispanic veterans at National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast

- VA is also working with other federal agencies to advance research on disparities and minority health. Examples include the Federal Collaboration on Health Disparities Research (<http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/fchdr>), and partnerships with the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, and the National Institutes of Health, to improve treatment and support for recently returned Veterans and their families.

**Affordable and Secure Homeownership: Owning your own home is at the heart of American Dream. That is why the Administration has worked to address the foreclosure crisis and revitalize the communities hardest hit by foreclosures while supplementing programs that help Hispanics work toward buying their own home. The Administration has also worked to ensure that rental and affordable housing is fair and non-discriminatory.**

- Since January 2009, more than 250,000 Hispanic households have purchased a home using a Federal Housing Administration guaranteed mortgage.
- The Administration launched [Making Home Affordable](#), which includes mortgage modification and refinancing programs, a critical piece of the Administration's broad efforts to stabilize the housing market and provide relief to struggling homeowners.
- Since January 2009, almost 90,000 Hispanic households have refinanced their mortgages using FHA, in many cases dramatically reducing their monthly payment or getting out of a risky adjustable rate loan.
- President Obama established the Hardest Hit Fund in February 2010 to provide targeted aid to families in states hit hard by the economic and housing market downturn—many of those states are places where Latino families are most affected by the foreclosure crisis. The first five states to receive aid each experienced a 20 percent or greater decline in average home prices: Arizona, California, Florida, Michigan and Nevada. The program was expanded to provide support to five states with high percentages of their population living in areas of economic distress due to unemployment: North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island and South Carolina.
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development has announced over \$6.92 billion in funding to help stabilize neighborhoods hard-hit by foreclosure through Neighborhood Stabilization Grants. These grants will provide targeted emergency assistance to state and local governments to acquire, redevelop, or demolish foreclosed properties. These awards are aimed at helping reverse the effects of the foreclosure crisis – and will reduce blight, bolster neighborhood home values, create jobs and produce affordable housing and will have a large impact on minority communities.
- The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division has created a Fair Lending Unit within the Housing and Civil Enforcement Section to address discriminatory lending that contributed to the nation's housing crisis, as well as discrimination resulting from the foreclosure crisis.
- The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division obtained a \$2.725 million dollar Fair Housing Act settlement in a case that involved discrimination against African Americans and Latinos and several apartment communities in the Los Angeles area. This is the largest settlement ever in a rental discrimination case.

**Reforming Health Care:** This Administration has made great strides in giving Latinos and all Americans greater control over their health care. Latinos, who have the highest rates of uninsured in the nation, are one of the groups that stand to benefit the most from the President signing the Affordable Care Act and the Children's Health Insurance programs into law.



President Obama meets with Latino leaders

- In the first few weeks in office, the Obama Administration expanded health insurance for children through the Children's Health Insurance Program, which for the first time ever allowed states to cover legal immigrant children. This law has removed language barriers by allowing states to be reimbursed generally up to 75% for the cost of translation or interpretation services so that non-English speaking legal immigrant children and pregnant women can get necessary healthcare information and services
- The Affordable Care Act will, by 2014, make health care more accessible and affordable for approximately **9 million Latinos who currently lack coverage**. By improving access to quality health care for Latinos and all Americans, the Affordable Care Act will help reduce health disparities which affect Latinos, who have higher than average rates of illnesses like diabetes, heart disease and kidney disease. The new law will reduce health care costs, and give individuals and families more control over their own care. Starting in September of 2010, new plans are required to provide preventive care without charging a deductible, copayment or coinsurance. This will have an enormous impact on Latinos, many of whom do not have a regular doctor or source of preventive care. In addition, the Affordable Care Act helps families by allowing young adults to stay on their parent's health insurance policy up to the age of 26 years old.

- The Affordable Care Act as well as the Recovery Act provides new funding for community health centers, which are critical health resources in the Latino community, provide comprehensive health care for everyone no matter how much they are able to pay. The new resources will enable health centers to double the number of patients they serve. The websites, [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) and [www.cuidadodesalud.gov](http://www.cuidadodesalud.gov) are easy to understand websites available to help consumers find insurance options, learn about prevention, and access newly available programs like the new pre-existing condition insurance plan.

**Fighting Childhood Obesity:** Childhood obesity in the Hispanic population is growing faster than all other population segments with nearly two in five Hispanic children ages 2-19 being overweight or obese. First Lady Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move Initiative along with other creative initiatives throughout the Administration are working to tackle childhood obesity among Latino children.



First lady Michelle Obama greets a young girl in Las Vegas, NV

- Hispanic children are at great risk of being overweight and obese throughout all stages of their childhood and adolescence. These numbers have significant health consequences. Childhood obesity is a contributing factor to higher risks for health complications such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer and asthma. Additionally, a number of factors limit Hispanic children’s options for physical activity, as well as access to healthy foods.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture launched a new Spanish-language nutrition assistance consumer resource that will help families in need gain access to healthy food. The new online search tool is designed to help recipients find SNAP-authorized stores near their home or workplace. [USDA](#) is working to improve access to and increase participation in [SNAP](#) with a focus on underserved populations. While the participation rate among all eligible individuals was 67 percent in 2008, only 35 percent of eligible elderly and 56 percent of eligible Latinos participate. [Click here](#) to learn more about the Spanish-language SNAP Retailer Locator unveiled last May, or [here](#) for the [English version](#).
- The National Park Service is combating heart disease, diabetes, and obesity in the Latino community through physical activity, education and awareness in national parks. For example: the Gateway National Recreation Area will bring Latino college students into the park for a summer internship aimed at introducing them to heart healthy, outdoor, physical activities while also

having them create an outreach plan to bring more Latinos into the park to understand the connection between physical activity and improved overall health. Similarly, the National Park Service is working with national Latino organizations like LULAC and NCLR to bring Latino youth to national parks through community service projects and outdoor recreation activities. As part of this national outreach effort, in 2010 more than 200 young people participated in leadership building activities and community service projects in national parks.

**To Win the Future, We Must Rebuild America: Supporting our Nation's Infrastructure the U.S. Department of Transportation supports a broad infrastructure that provides transportation access for a range of individuals, including individuals from the Hispanic and Latino communities.**



The President Obama meets with students he singled out in a speech on education to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, after they submitted a video talking about their families' economic woes and asked, "Is anybody listening?"

- According to the U.S. Decennial Census, Latinos are three times as likely to use public transportation to get to work compared to other Americans. The U.S. Department of Transportation provides grants to support both urban and rural transportation services. In addition, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection Agency recently created an interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities to help promote equitable affordable housing, provide more transportation options, and lower transportation costs for homeowners and renters while protecting the environment in communities nationwide.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation has an Office of Small and Disadvantage Businesses (OSDBU) to facilitate access for under-represented groups and has developed 11 Small Business Transportation Resource Centers (SBTRCs), including two that are specifically focused on Hispanic/Latino outreach.

**Ensuring energy security and prosperity:** The mission of the Department of Energy is to ensure America's security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental, and nuclear challenges through transformative science and technology solutions. Our nation's Hispanic community plays a pivotal role.

- **The Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy** invests in clean energy technologies that strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and reduce dependence on foreign oil. **Its mission includes:** Supporting the education and training needed to give all Americans with the skills needed by these new businesses—including use of state of the art training technology. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included more than \$80 billion in the generation of renewable energy sources, expanding manufacturing capacity for clean energy technology, advancing vehicle and fuel technologies, and building a bigger, better, smarter electric grid, all while creating new, sustainable jobs.
- [The Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy](#) is designed to help create the next generation of highly-skilled professionals to support energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors, Energy Education and workforce and education activities cover the full education-to-employment pipeline, and fall into three major categories: 1) Attract students to STEM and energy education; 2) Engage students and the public; and 3) Educate and train. This office also provides a single W&ED interface to agencies like the Departments of Labor, Education and Defense and helps to address common issues areas such as environmental justice and attracting new and traditionally underserved populations to participate in EERE education and training programs.
- [The Weatherization Assistance Program \(WAP\)](#) enables low-income families to permanently reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. Funds are used to improve the energy performance of dwellings of needy families using the most advanced technologies and testing protocols available in the housing industry. During the past 33 years, WAP has provided weatherization services to more than 6.4 million low-income households. Families receiving weatherization services see their annual energy bills reduced by an average of about \$437, depending on fuel prices. Because the energy improvements that make up weatherization services are long lived, the savings add up over time to substantial benefits for weatherization clients and their communities, and the nation as a whole.



- In addition, the various agencies with the Department of Energy are offering ways to recruit and prepare talent, in particular within the Hispanic and Latino communities:
  - [National Nuclear Security Administration \(NNSA\)](#) Leadership Project offers a scholarship and mentors to prepare interns with professional and leadership skills in conjunction with the Hispanic Youth Institute and Hispanic College Fund. It provides a retention component to the program called Professional and Academic Support System with the following objectives:
    - » 90% students participate in the program through college graduation
    - » 30% students conducting research at NNSA Laboratories will present at a professional conference
    - » 90% students will join a professional organization
  - [Workforce Development for Teachers and Scientists \(WDTs\)](#):
    - » Provides sponsorship funds for several Hispanic Professional Society National Conferences including: Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), Society for Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), and Mexican American Engineers and Scientists (MAES). Additionally, DOE offers travel scholarships for Hispanic students to attend these professional meetings.
    - » Provides scholarship awards at the Annual Great Minds in STEM Convention (former known as Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation (HENAAC).
    - » In partnership with the [Office of Economic Impact & Diversity](#), provides sponsorship to Hispanic, Engineering, Science, and Technology (HESTEC) Week which promotes science, technology, engineering, and math careers among predominantly Hispanic South Texas students.
    - » Offers several internships, research grants, and professional development programs for undergraduate, graduate, K-12 students, educators, and scientists.

**Protecting Our Air, Water and Cleaning Up Our Communities:** Under this administration, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has taken critical steps toward ensuring that Latinos and all Americans are protected from air and water pollution and from toxic chemicals that harm their health. There are too many places in America today where the environmental, health, and economic burdens of pollution fall disproportionately on poor and minority communities. This administration has proposed far reaching changes that will positively impact the health of Latinos and their communities:

- With nearly 30 million Latinos—more than 70 percent of the US Latino population—living in places that don't meet U.S. air pollution standards, the EPA, under President Obama, has taken steps to correct this disparity by setting the nation's first national fuel economy and greenhouse gas standards. 20% of Puerto Rican children, and 8% of all Hispanic children, suffer from asthma—a condition that is triggered by poor air quality. In addition to cleaning up the air with these new air standards, the EPA has set a goal of reducing exposure to indoor asthma triggers and improving the quality of life for 6.5 million people by 2012.
- In March 2011, EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson announced the first national standards for mercury pollution from power plants. The proposed rules would for the first time regulate emissions from coal-fired power plants, including limiting mercury, lead, arsenic and acid gas pollution. The American Lung Association applauded the release of this sensible public health measure. When final, this will save lives, protect the health of millions of Americans and finally bring about an action that is 20 years overdue. This was a very significant announcement for Hispanic families. With nearly 30 million Latinos—more than 70 percent of the US Latino population—living in places that don't meet U.S. air pollution standards and with Hispanic children suffering disproportionately from asthma, a condition triggered by poor air quality, this and other actions being taken by EPA are victories for our communities.
- Increasing investments on programs that clean up our communities: The President's Recovery Act allowed the EPA to make major investments in cleaning polluted sites—known as brown-fields properties—including abandoned corner gas stations, old textile mills, closed smelters, and abandoned industrial and commercial properties. These investments target under-served and economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods—places where environmental cleanups and new jobs are most needed.
- The Obama Administration has taken unprecedented steps to ensure the safety of pesticides. Last year, EPA proposed a plan to better understand the risks of pesticides through a more thorough assessment of risks to workers—including farm workers and their children—as well as risks posed by pesticides that are not used on food.

**Protecting Civil Rights and Civil Liberties:** The Obama Administration has taken unprecedented steps to ensure that our laws are enforced fairly and equitably. Federal agencies—from the Departments of Justice and Education to Housing and Urban Development to the Department of Agriculture—are working to strengthen their civil rights divisions to fight discrimination and enforce equal protection under the law. The Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division has grown more over the last year than at almost any other point in history, adding more than 100 new personnel, and new energy and vigor to the vital task of enforcing our nation’s civil rights laws.



- Working with colleagues at the Department of Justice, the USDA [launched a program](#) that provides a path to justice for Latino and women farmers who believe they were discriminated against by USDA between 1981 and 2000. Many of these farmers and ranchers have waited and fought to get relief, and now the USDA is providing folks with a simpler path that enables them to file a claim for compensation. That claim will be resolved by a neutral party without the involvement of the courts. If you are a woman or Latino farmer or rancher and feel you were discriminated against by USDA between 1981 and 2000, you must request a claims package to participate in the claims process. To begin this process, you can either call 1-888-508-4429 or visit [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov) to submit your information online. For more info see our blog post in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
- The Obama Administration has made the prosecution of hate crimes a top priority. In October of 2009, President Obama signed the Mathew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act which expanded the Department of Justice’s ability to prosecute more cases of racially-motivated violence, including violence motivated by animus toward immigrants or Latinos because of their race, national origin, color, sexual orientation, gender identification or disability. (DOJ)

- The Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division obtained a conviction of two teenagers for a hate crime arising out of the fatal beating of Luis Ramirez. During the course of the beating, the defendants and their friends yelled racial epithets and told him "This is Shenandoah. This is American. Go back to Mexico." On January 27, 2011, a federal jury convicted two former Shenandoah Police Officers, Matthew Nestor and William Moyer, of falsifying information related to the investigation into the beating death of Luis Ramirez. In addition, Vincent Johnson, who went by the pseudonym "Devilfish," pleaded guilty in federal court to multiple charges related to a series of threatening communications he sent to employees of five civil rights organizations that work to improve opportunities for , and challenge discrimination against, Latinos in the United States.
- The Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division settled with Cuyahoga County, Ohio, to protect the rights of Spanish-speaking Puerto Rican voters. The agreement provides for bilingual ballots in targeted precincts for the Nov. 2, 2010, general election, and bilingual ballots county-wide thereafter.
- In his first month in office, President Obama also signed the [Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act](#) to fight pay discrimination and ensure fundamental fairness for Latinas and female workers.
- In August of 2010, the President signed a new law that will reduce the gap between federal mandatory sentences for convictions for crack cocaine and powder cocaine, which has disproportionately affected communities of color.

**The Federal Government Better Reflects Our Country:** President Obama has named more Hispanics to top posts than any of his predecessors, drawing appointees from a wide range of the nation’s Latino communities, including Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cuban-Americans, Dominican-Americans and Colombian-Americans, among others. The President appointed the first Hispanic to the Supreme Court, Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor.



President Obama and Vice President Biden applaud the nomination of Justice Sotomayor to the Supreme Court

- Latinos and Latinas are serving at every level of government and in every policy arena. From Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Cabinet Secretaries Hilda Solis and Ken Salazar to others like Thelma Melendez who serves as Assistant Secretary for Elementary & Secondary Education; Mercedes Marquez who serves as Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development at HUD; Lisa Garcia who serves as Associate Administrator for Environmental Justice at the Environmental Protection Agency; Marissa Lago who serves as Assistant Secretary for International Markets at the Department of Treasury; Tom Perez who serves as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the Department of Justice; and Ignacia Moreno who serves as Assistant Attorney General for Natural Resources at the Department of Justice, among many others.
- The breadth and scope of those appointments across the government reveal this Administration’s commitment to having a government that reflects our country’s great diversity. Furthermore, each and every appointee has been selected because of the strength of their qualifications for the critical work they’re carrying out for the American people in every area of our government. Excellence and diversity are not mutually exclusive, and the strength of senior appointments in this Administration shows that we can and must do better in the civilian ranks.

- In order to ensure that we are reaching and including this Nation's diverse and talented citizens, the US Office of Personnel Management has created three new offices to lead our efforts—the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Senior Executive Service Office and the Student Programs Office. Combined, these offices will work together to develop strategies to add diversity to our permanent Federal Workforce, including Hispanics.
- In addition, a great concern is the underrepresentation of Hispanics in the Federal Workforce. We are aware of the unique issues that Hispanics face in seeking federal employment and advancing through the ranks. We recognize that we must take prompt action, and we are focusing efforts towards this situation by creating a Hispanic Advisory Council at OPM, who will give us their best guidance on how to make improvements by advising the Director of OPM, John Berry, on matters related to the recruitment, hiring, retention, and advancement of Hispanics in the Federal Workforce. The Council will be co-chaired by OPM Chief of Staff, Liz Montoya and Department of Veteran Affairs Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, John Sepulveda, and made up of Hispanic organizations and federal employees.

**Embracing Puerto Rico's Self Determination and Economic Development:** The President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status (Task Force) was created by President Clinton in 2000. President Obama signed Executive Order 13517 on October 30, 2009, which directed the Task Force to maintain its focus on the status question, but added to the Task Force's responsibilities to seek advice and provide recommendations on policies that promote job creation, education, health care, clean energy, and economic development on the Island. The current Task Force was convened in December 2009 with members from every Cabinet agency and held two public hearings in San Juan, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C.



In March 2011, after extensive discussions and deliberations, the Task Force issued its report to the President. The report provides recommendations relating to the question of Puerto Rico's status and provides concrete recommendations around the issues of economic development, education, energy and the environment and to the island of Vieques.

**A New Era of Partnerships in the Americas:** President Obama has opened up a new era of partnership with our neighbors in the Americas.

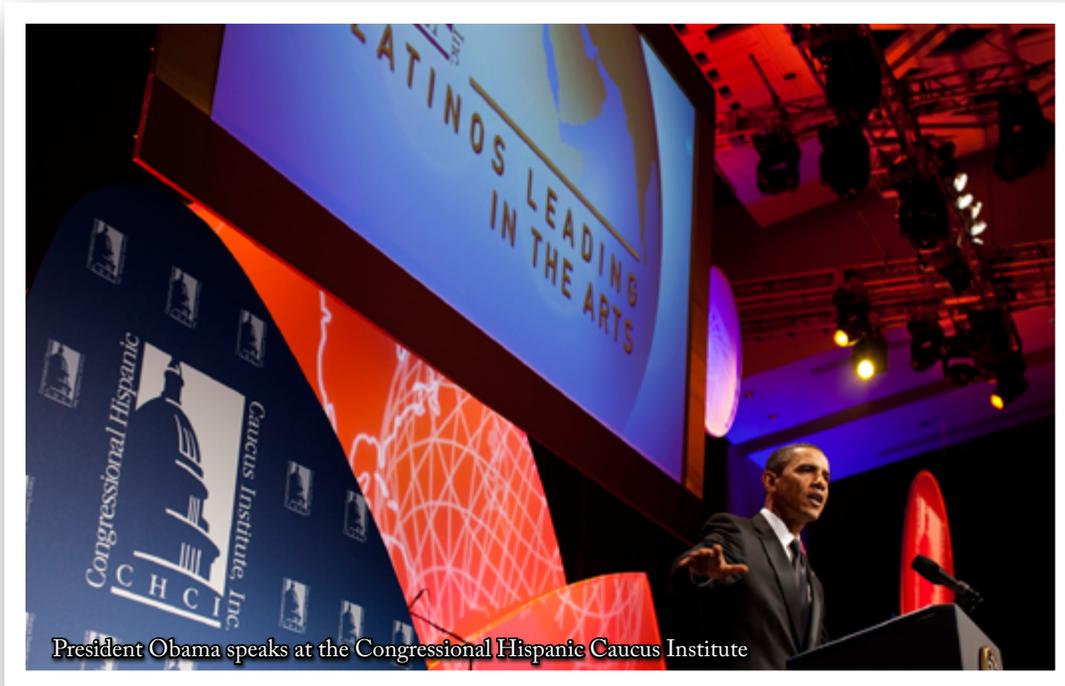


President and Mrs. Obama at arrival ceremony in San Salvador, El Salvador

- The President and his Administration have reached out to help tackle the challenges facing the people of the Americas today, including on issues of energy, citizen security, and economic and social inclusion.
- The President participated in the Summit of the Americas less than 100 days into his administration and has twice traveled to Mexico, and will visit Brazil, Chile, and El Salvador early this year. Secretary of State Clinton has traveled to 18 countries in the Americas and nearly every member of the President's Cabinet has traveled to strengthen partnerships in the Western Hemisphere. In March 2011, President and Mrs. Obama travelled to Brazil, Chile and El Salvador to highlight the important relationship the United States has with Latin America.
- The President welcomed President Calderon for a state visit in 2010, and has welcomed many other Latin American heads of state to the White House, while our team at the State Department and across the government work on a daily basis to address issues of prosperity and security in our hemisphere.
- This Administration has forged historic cross-border cooperation with the Government of Mexico to crack down on transnational criminal activity while facilitating legitimate travel and trade.

- The President and his Administration have taken a series of steps to continue efforts to reach out to the Cuban people in support of their desire to freely determine their country's future. In January 2011, the President announced that changes be made to regulations and policies governing purposeful travel; non-family remittances; and U.S. airports supporting licensed charter flights to and from Cuba. These measures will increase people-to-people contact; support civil society in Cuba; enhance the free flow of information to, from, and among the Cuban people; and help promote their independence from Cuban authorities. These steps build upon the President's April 2009 actions to help reunite divided Cuban families; to facilitate greater telecommunications with the Cuban people; and to increase humanitarian flows to Cuba. The President believes these actions, combined with the continuation of the embargo, are important steps in reaching the widely shared goal of a Cuba that respects the basic rights of all its citizens.

**Celebrating Our Nation's Latino Heritage:** From the deep rooted history in the southwest to newly arrived communities, Hispanics and Latinos have contributed greatly to the history and fabric of our nation.



President Obama speaks at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute

- The Commission created to study the potential creation of a national museum of the American Latino in Washington, DC has completed its research and analysis and is preparing to submit a report to Congress with findings and recommendations. The comprehensive study with extensive input from Americans across the country resulted in a plan for a sustainable world-class institution whose mission is to illuminate the American story, for the benefit of all, through collections and programs devoted to the presentation, interpretation, and preservation of America Latino arts, cultural expressions, and experiences.
- In 2010, The Forty Acres in Delano, California was designated as a National Historic Landmark. The site is associated with the life and career of Cesar Chavez, the farmworker movement, and a wide range of reform movements that helped define the 20th century in American history. In March 2011, Secretary Salazar officially dedicated the site a national historic landmark.
- The National Park Service seeks to encourage identification and documentation of sites that may have the potential for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or for National Historic Landmark designation. The Hispanic/Latino Heritage Resource Assessment Study is an effort to ensure that the NPS represents the full diversity of United States history.

**Making Strides:** This is just a sample of the work being done by the Administration and how it is impacting communities across the country. We have made great strides in the last two years; however we still have much more to do. The President is going to continue to work hard every single day to moving our country forward for Hispanics and all Americans.



For more information on any of these issues, please visit [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov) or any federal agency Web site and use the "search" function by entering key words to pinpoint the information you need.

[Whitehouse.gov/Hispanic](http://Whitehouse.gov/Hispanic) • [Whitehouse.gov/espanol](http://Whitehouse.gov/espanol)

## **On Jobs**

The U.S. Department of Labor - [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)

Information on local One-Stop centers – [www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)

Job Corps program - [www.dol.gov/jobcorps](http://www.dol.gov/jobcorps)

My Skills My Future Career tool - [www.myskillsmyfuture.org](http://www.myskillsmyfuture.org)

My Next Move Career Tool - [www.mynextmove.org](http://www.mynextmove.org)

## **On the Economy**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act - [www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov)

Wall Street/Financial Reform - [www.financialstability.gov](http://www.financialstability.gov)

Community Development Financial Institutions Fund - <http://www.cdfifund.gov/>

Minority Business Development Agency – [www.mbda.gov](http://www.mbda.gov)

Small Business Administration – [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

## **On Education**

Department of Education - [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

White House Initiative for Excellence in Education for Hispanic Americans –  
[www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/Hispanic-iniative/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/Hispanic-iniative/index.html)

Race to the Top - [www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html)

Information on student loans - <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/index.jsp>

## **On Health Care**

Affordable Care Act Implementation - [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov)

Affordable Care Act (en Espanol) – [www.cuidadodesalud.gov](http://www.cuidadodesalud.gov)

Department of Health and Human Services – [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)

Office of Minority Health - <http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/>

## **On Energy**

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program – [www1.eere.energy.gov/wip/eecbg.html](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/wip/eecbg.html)

Weatherization Assistance Program - <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/wip/wap.html>

Energy Education & Workforce Development - <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/education/>  
in Spanish: [http://www1.eere.energy.gov/library/pdfs/corporate\\_green\\_jobs\\_fs\\_spanish.pdf](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/library/pdfs/corporate_green_jobs_fs_spanish.pdf)  
Workforce Development for Teachers and Scientists - [www.scied.science.doe.gov/scied/sci\\_ed.htm](http://www.scied.science.doe.gov/scied/sci_ed.htm)

### **On Community Investment and Development**

White House Office of Urban Affairs - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/oua>  
Department of Housing and Urban Development – [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)  
Community Development Financial Institution Fund - [www.cdfifund.org](http://www.cdfifund.org)

### **On Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**

Department of Justice – [www.justice.gov](http://www.justice.gov)  
Department of Justice Civil Rights Division - <http://www.justice.gov/crt/>  
Federal Interagency Working Group on Limited English Proficiency <http://www.justice.gov/crt/lep>  
Housing and Urban Development Fair Housing Division – [www.hud.gov/offices/fheo](http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo)

### **On Protecting our Environment**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)  
Department of Interior – [www.doi.gov](http://www.doi.gov)

### **On Immigration**

Department of Homeland Security – [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov)  
United States Citizenship and Immigration Service – [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

### **On Puerto Rico's Self Determination and Economic Development**

White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs –  
[www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/iga/puerto-rico](http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/iga/puerto-rico)

