

UPWARD MOBILITY

*Assessing the Characteristics of Greater Milwaukee's
Growing Hispanic Workforce*



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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

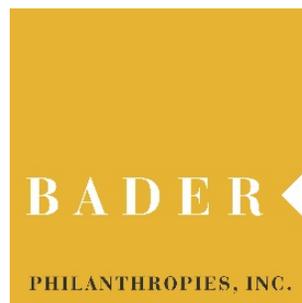
This report was undertaken to provide policymakers, educators, workforce development leaders, and citizens with a snapshot of metro Milwaukee's Hispanic workforce and pipeline of young Hispanic talent. We hope community leaders will use the report's findings to inform discussions and develop strategies to improve college and career outcomes among the Hispanic population.

Report authors would like to thank Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) and its departments of Research, Assessment, and Data and College and Career Readiness for providing us with data on the college pursuits of its graduates, which MPS obtained from the National Student Clearinghouse. We would also like to thank the leadership of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Milwaukee Area Technical College for providing information on their students and patiently answering our questions.

In addition, we would like to thank HPGM for commissioning this study and Bader Philanthropies and Rockwell Automation for their grants that helped make this report possible.



Building Community,
Advancing Hispanics





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Assessing the Characteristics of Greater Milwaukee's Growing Hispanic Workforce

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Executive Summary 3
- Introduction 7
- Current Population & Workforce 8
 - Population Growth 8
 - Educational Attainment 10
 - Employment & Unemployment..... 12
 - Occupational Distribution 12
 - Business Ownership 16
 - Summary 17
- Recent High School Graduates 18
 - High School Completion 18
 - College Enrollment & Completion 19
 - College Location..... 21
 - College Majors & Credentials 22
 - Summary 24
- Area Colleges & Universities 26
 - Summary 31
- Observations / Conclusion 32
- Appendix 33



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The rapid growth of metro Milwaukee’s Hispanic population could not have come at a more opportune time, providing the region with an increasing supply of new workers to offset retirements from the massive baby boom generation.¹ Yet, despite this good fortune, there is much that local policymakers and business leaders do not know about the role of Hispanic workers in the regional economy.

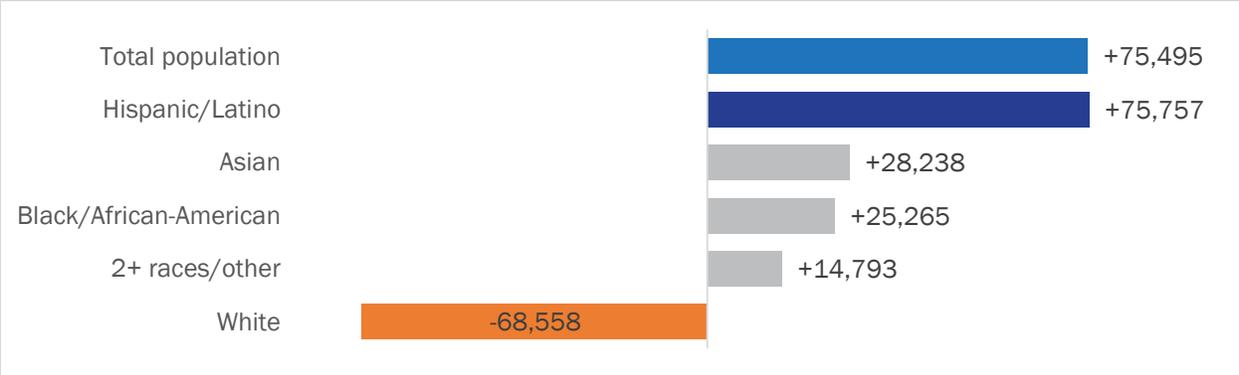
For example, how does the region’s Hispanic workforce compare with the general workforce with regard to educational attainment, occupational concentrations, and wages? How do the college choices and outcomes of young Hispanic adults in Milwaukee compare with trends in the regional economy?

This report – commissioned by the Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee – seeks to answer those and related questions to assist regional leaders in their efforts to craft effective workforce development strategies. Overall, our analysis reveals two overarching findings:

1) The Hispanic population is growing quickly and becoming an increasingly important part of the regional workforce, but Hispanics are currently underrepresented in high-wage occupations.

Since 2000, the Hispanic population has grown by over 75,000 in the four-county Milwaukee metro area, accounting for all of the region’s net growth. While the populations of other groups also have increased, their combined growth was offset by a decline in the non-Hispanic white population of over 68,000. Thus, without the Hispanic population surge, the region’s overall population would have remained flat. These dynamics illustrate the rising importance of the Hispanic population to the regional workforce and economy.

Milwaukee metropolitan area demographic changes, 2000-2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Decennial Census and ACS 1-year estimates

Labor force data show the number of Hispanic workers is increasing in almost every occupation in metro Milwaukee, including those that are losing jobs overall. For example, between 2005 and 2017, the number of individuals employed in production occupations (primarily manufacturing and

¹ The Milwaukee metropolitan area includes Milwaukee, Waukesha, Washington, and Ozaukee counties. We use the term Hispanic throughout this report to refer to people of Latin American descent, though Latino/a and Latinx are also widely used for the same population.

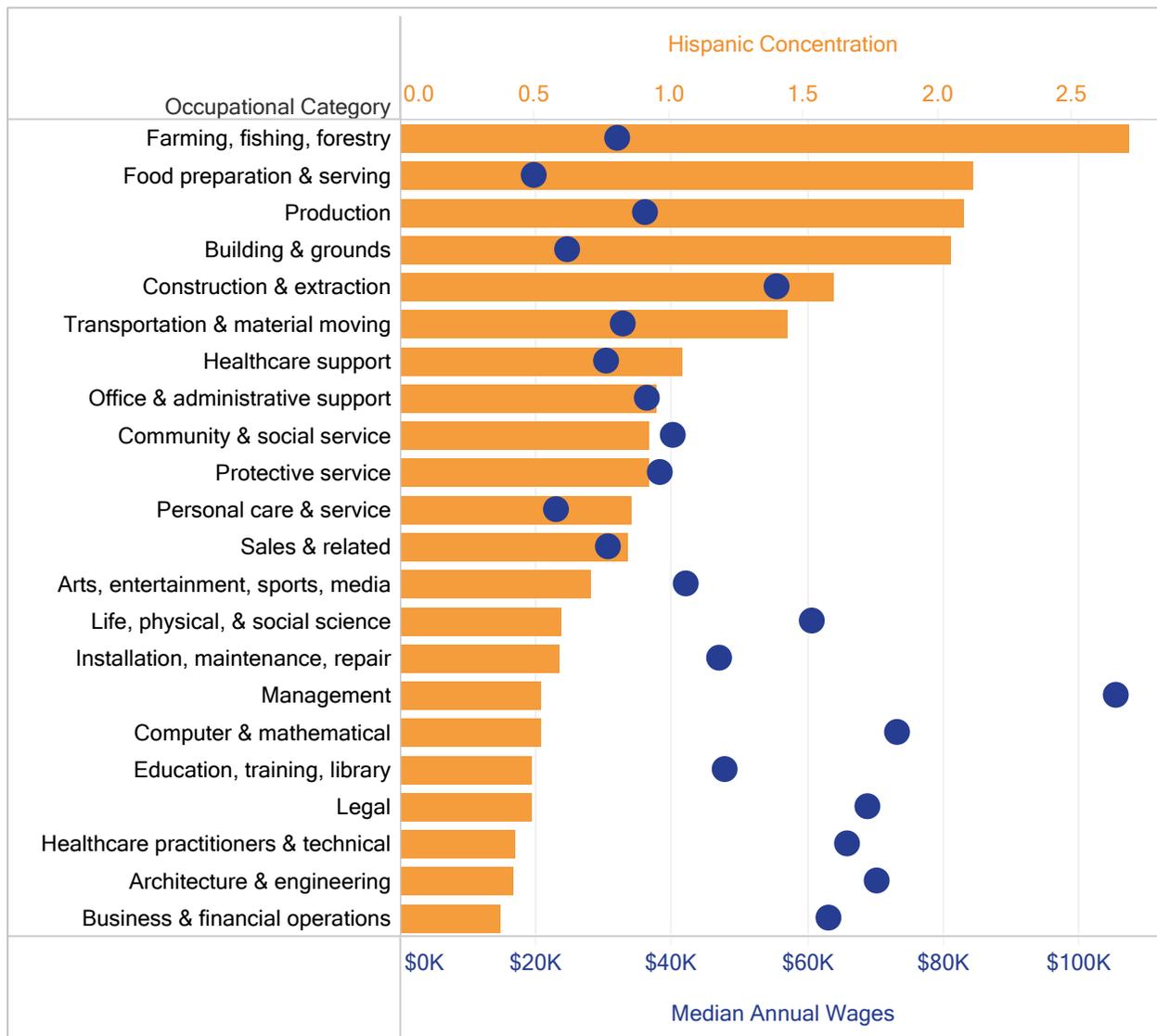


assembly work) has declined by almost 7,600 in the region, while the number of Hispanics employed in production has increased by over 3,800.

Yet, Hispanics are highly underrepresented in every occupational category that pays a median annual wage of \$60,000 or higher, including several that are among the fastest-growing in the region. Those include management, business and financial operations, healthcare practitioners, and computer and mathematical occupations. Hispanics are also underrepresented as business owners.

For each occupational category in the chart below, the orange bar represents the concentration of Hispanic workers relative to workers overall, while the blue circle represents median annual wages for all workers in metro Milwaukee. Among the occupations in which Hispanic workers are employed at an equal or higher rate than the workforce overall (a concentration of 1.0 or higher), construction is the only one that pays a median annual wage of at least \$40,000.

Hispanic concentration vs. median wages by occupation, 2017 (Milwaukee metro area)



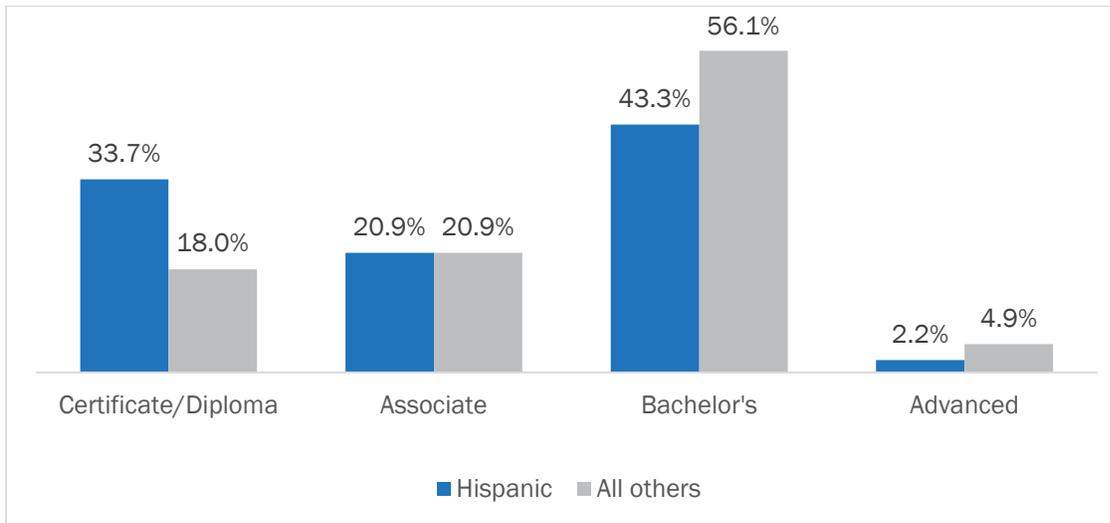
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (ACS 1-yr estimates) & U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Occupational Employment Statistics)



2) On most measures, the educational attainment of young Hispanics in Milwaukee is not putting them on track to remedy the problem.

Our analysis of 2007-2017 Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) graduates shows Hispanic students have enrolled in college at lower rates than African-American, Asian, and white students. Among those MPS graduates who have completed college, Hispanics are less likely than non-Hispanics to have earned a bachelor's or advanced degree (45.4% vs. 61.1%), which are often needed to qualify for positions in higher-wage occupations. This analysis included 45,319 graduates of MPS traditional and charter high schools, including 8,477 Hispanic graduates.

Most recent credential earned by 2007-2017 MPS graduates who have completed college



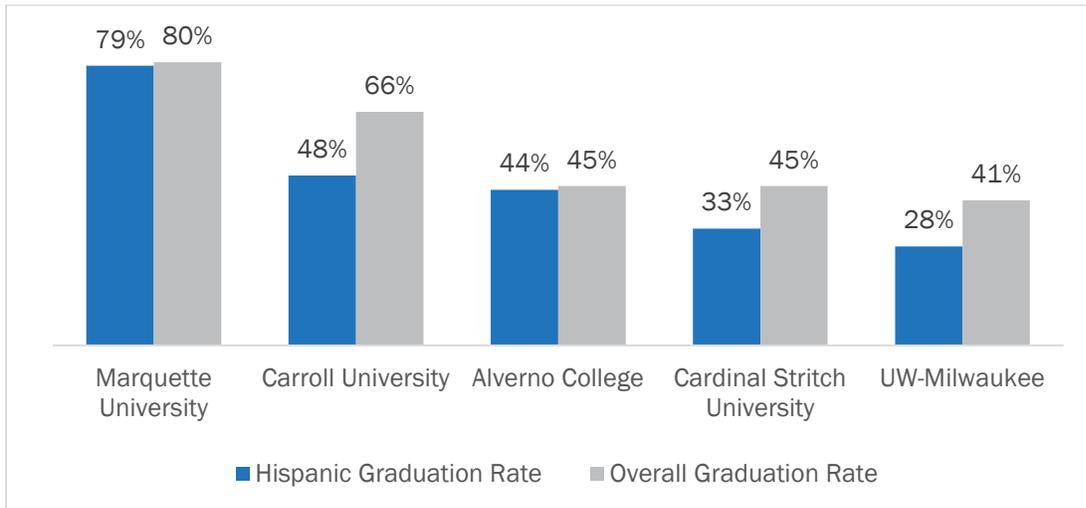
Source: WPF analysis of National Student Clearinghouse and MPS data

Hispanic college graduation rates are also considerably lower than overall graduation rates at several area institutions, including UWM, which serves the highest numbers of Hispanic students in the area.² (See chart on the following page.) They are also low compared with Hispanic graduation rates at each of those institutions' national peers. University leaders have acknowledged this challenge and are making a number of efforts to address it. Nevertheless, we believe this issue merits their close attention, and potentially, additional actions.

Notably, it is difficult and potentially misleading to compare graduation rates of area colleges and universities due to the many differences between institutions. For example, as a public access university, UWM accepts a very high percentage of its applicants (86%), which results in more UWM students needing assistance to be successful than at more selective institutions. Rather than comparing area institutions with one another, our analysis focuses on the graduation rate of Hispanic students versus all students at each institution.

² Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data>

Graduation rate for 4-year institutions in the Milwaukee area³
 (6-year rate for full-time, first-time degree-seeking undergraduate students, 2011 cohort)



Source: IPEDS Data Center

There are some bright spots in the data. For example, the share of metro Milwaukee’s Hispanic adults who have at least a high school diploma (or equivalent) increased from 59.7% in 2007 to 71.4% in 2017.⁴ Those with at least a bachelor’s degree increased by four percentage points during the same period.

Yet, overall, our findings raise concerns about the likelihood that Hispanic representation in high-wage occupations in metro Milwaukee will increase greatly in the near future. This is problematic given that the Hispanic population continues to fuel growth in metro Milwaukee and that its success is critical to the region’s long-term economic destiny.

Civic and educational leaders and policymakers are working to prepare metro Milwaukee's workforce for the increasingly knowledge-based 21st century economy. To do so effectively, those efforts must ensure that the region's fastest-growing demographic – the Hispanic population – is achieving at the same rate or better than the overall population. We hope this research will inform area leaders as they deliberate education and workforce development strategies to achieve that objective.

³ We only include the institutions with the highest Hispanic student enrollment numbers in this chart because the Hispanic graduation rates for institutions serving smaller numbers of Hispanic students are volatile from year to year.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 1-Year estimates.

INTRODUCTION

The Hispanic population is growing rapidly in the Milwaukee area, amplifying its importance to the regional workforce.⁵ In fact, since 2000, the Hispanic population has grown faster than any other racial or ethnic group in the four-county Milwaukee metro area.⁶ That has infused the regional economy with thousands of new Hispanic workers at a time when the massive baby boom generation is retiring.

With the Hispanic labor force playing an increasingly large role in metro Milwaukee's economy, it is important to understand their educational and occupational characteristics and how they compare with the general population. It is also valuable to examine the college and career choices and outcomes of young Hispanic adults in the Milwaukee area given the prominent role those choices will play in shaping the region's economic health.

This report strives to do so and is guided by the following research questions:

- How does the current Hispanic workforce compare with the general workforce in the Milwaukee metro area with regard to educational attainment, occupational concentrations, and wages?
- At what rate are Hispanic students enrolling in and graduating from 2- and 4-year colleges and universities? Among those pursuing higher education, how many are doing so at local institutions versus outside of the region or state?
- What are the most common majors chosen and degrees earned by recent Hispanic college graduates? How well do they align with current and projected workforce trends?

For our analysis of metro Milwaukee's current workforce, we look at population and occupational data and compare the wages of occupations in which Hispanics are employed at particularly high and low rates relative to the general population. We use data from a variety of sources to examine the current workforce, including the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, and UW-Madison Applied Population Lab.

Our analysis of the Hispanic talent pipeline focuses on recent graduates of both traditional and charter high schools administered by Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). We examine college enrollment and completion information for nearly 8,500 Hispanic students who graduated from high school between 2007 and 2017. For this analysis, we used data from MPS, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and the National Student Clearinghouse, which tracks the college outcomes of individual students nationwide.

Civic and educational leaders and policymakers are working to prepare metro Milwaukee's workforce for the increasingly knowledge-based 21st century economy. To do so effectively, those efforts must ensure that the region's fastest-growing demographic – the Hispanic population – is achieving at the same rate or better than the overall population. We hope this research will inform area leaders as they deliberate education and workforce development strategies to achieve that objective.

⁵ We use the term Hispanic throughout this report to refer to people of Latin American descent, though Latino/a and Latinx are also widely used for the same population.

⁶ The Milwaukee metropolitan area includes Milwaukee, Waukesha, Washington, and Ozaukee counties. Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Decennial Census 2000 and American Community Survey 2017 1-year estimates.

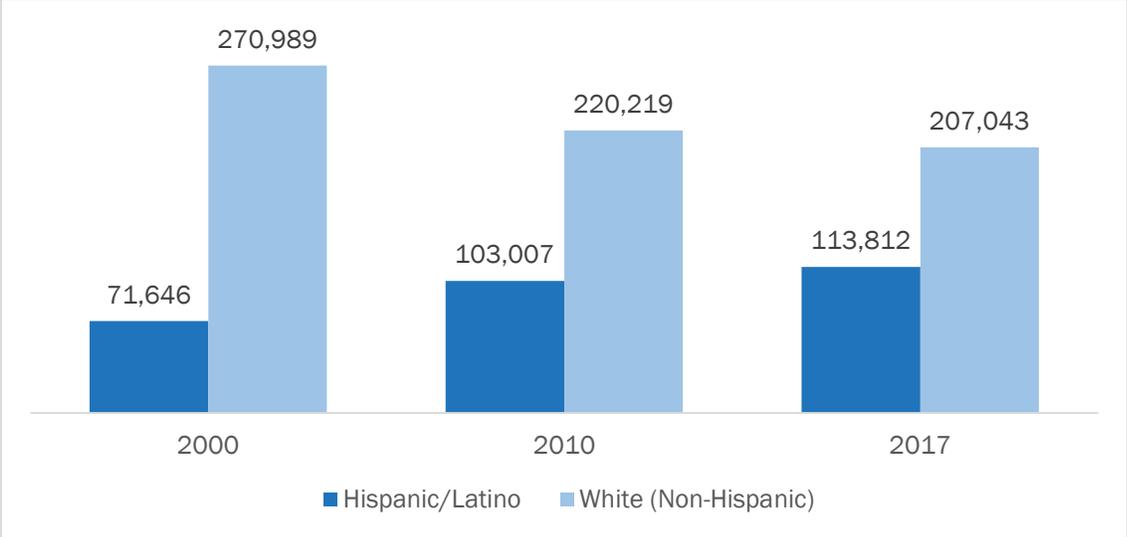
CURRENT POPULATION & WORKFORCE

The first step of our analysis reviews recent trends in metro Milwaukee’s demographic makeup and looks at current characteristics of the region’s Hispanic workforce. This includes examining how the educational attainment, occupational distribution, and wages of Hispanics in the area compare with those of the general population. These metrics bring the Hispanic population’s role in the region’s changing workforce into focus.

POPULATION GROWTH

Since 2000, the city of Milwaukee’s Hispanic population has grown by more than 42,000, or 59%, while the city’s total population remained virtually flat, declining by 0.3%. Growth in the Hispanic population made up for a majority of the losses that took place in the city’s non-Hispanic white population, which declined by over 63,000 during the same period (**Chart 1**).

Chart 1: City of Milwaukee demographic changes, 2000-2017

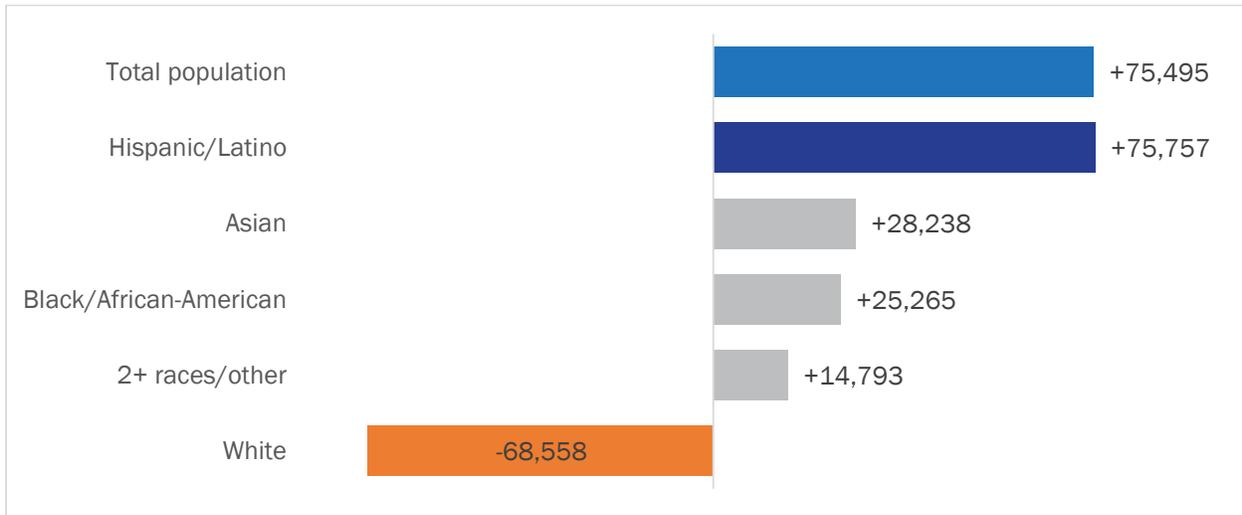


Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Decennial Census and ACS 1-year estimates

At the regional level, the Hispanic population grew by just over 80% between 2000 and 2017, accounting for *all* of the Milwaukee metro area’s net population growth. The population of the metro area, which includes Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha counties, grew by just over 75,000, while the area’s Hispanic population increased by roughly the same number (**Chart 2**). Meanwhile, the combined smaller increases in the Asian, African-American, and mixed race populations were enough to offset a 68,000 decline in non-Hispanic whites.



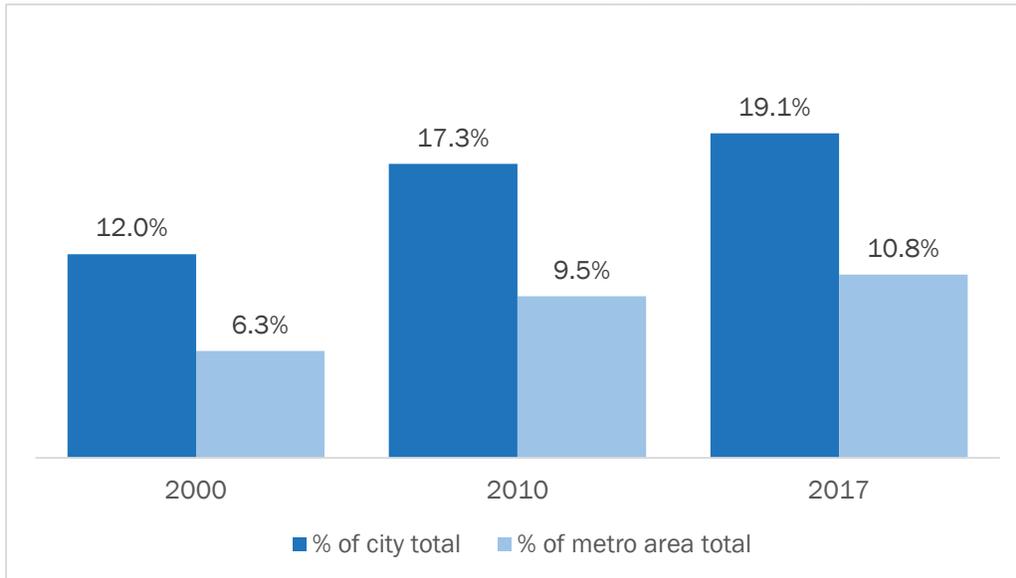
Chart 2: Milwaukee metropolitan area demographic changes, 2000-2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Decennial Census and ACS 1-year estimates

In 2017, the Hispanic population accounted for over 19% of the city of Milwaukee’s population and almost 11% of the four-county metro area population (**Chart 3**). Both of those figures are on the rise.

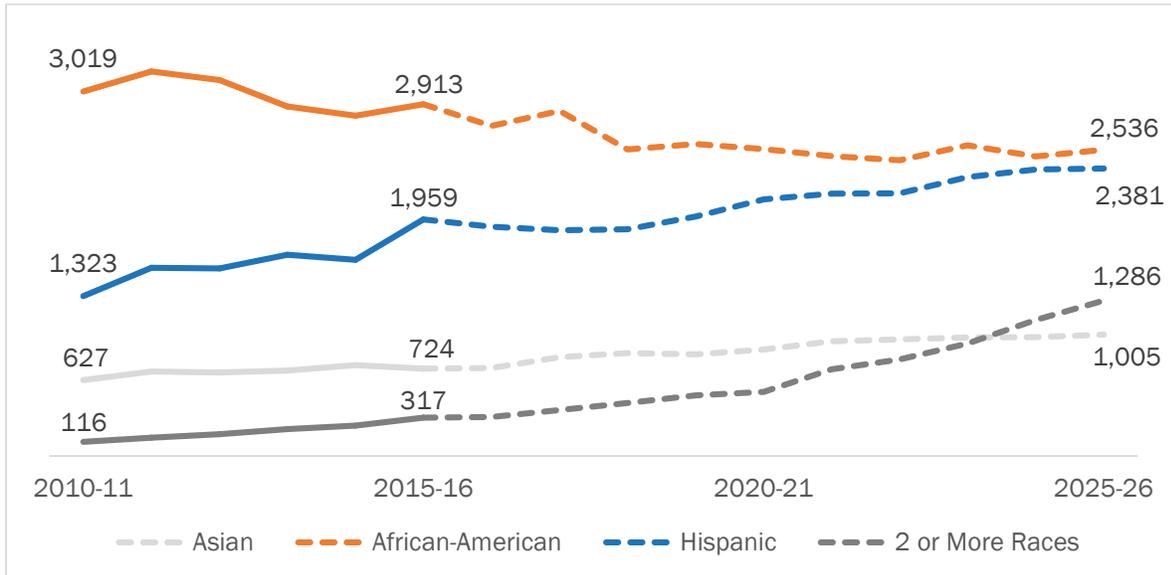
Chart 3: Hispanics as a share of total population (city and metro area), 2000-2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Decennial Census & ACS 1-year estimates

Hispanic students make up a large and growing share of high school graduates in metro Milwaukee. As shown in **Chart 4**, 1,949 Hispanic students graduated from public high schools in the region in 2016, and that number is projected to grow to nearly 2,400 by 2026. It appears likely Hispanics will overtake African Americans on this measure within a decade. Meanwhile, the number of non-Hispanic white high school graduates is projected to decline from 9,646 in 2016 to roughly 8,300 in 2026. High school graduates identifying as being of two or more races have increased in recent years, as well, and are projected to grow substantially in the near future.

Chart 4: Annual public high school graduates in metro Milwaukee by race/ethnicity
Actuals (solid line) and projected (dashed line)

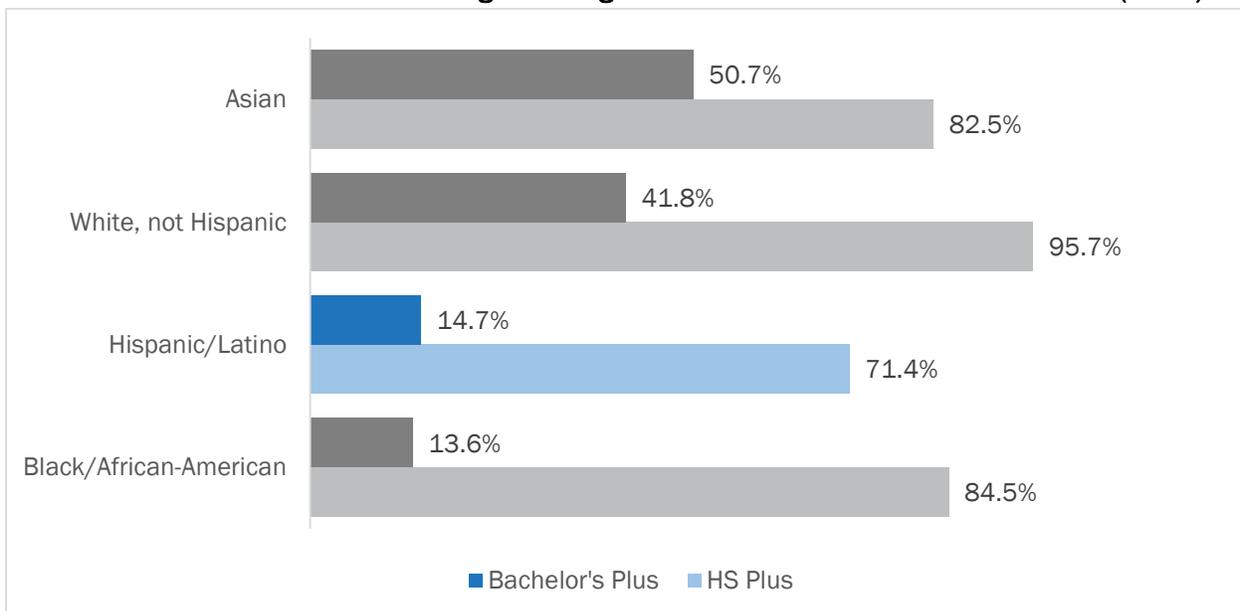


Source: UW-Madison Applied Population Laboratory

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Hispanic population trails most other racial/ethnic groups in the Milwaukee metro area in educational attainment among adults, as shown in **Chart 5**. The share of Hispanics with at least a bachelor's degree is slightly higher than among African Americans but much lower than among Asians and non-Hispanic whites. The share of Hispanics with at least a high school diploma or GED is lowest among the four groups.

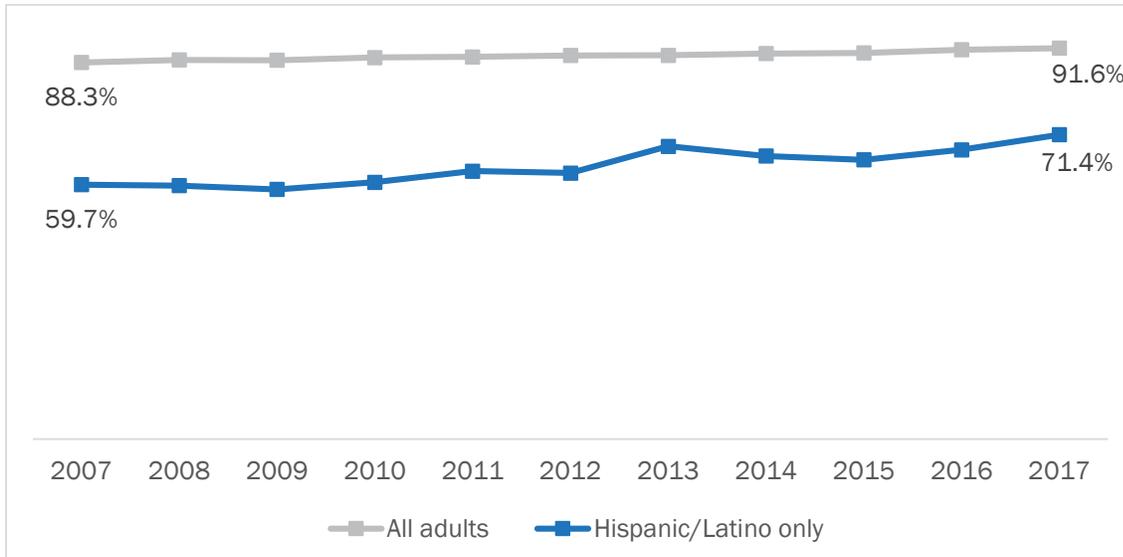
Chart 5: Educational attainment among adults ages 25 and over in Milwaukee metro area (2017)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey 1-Year estimates

The good news is that over the last decade, the share of Hispanics with at least a high school diploma or GED has increased substantially, from under 60% to over 71% (**Chart 6**). Hispanics have started to catch up with the general population but still have a significant gap to close.

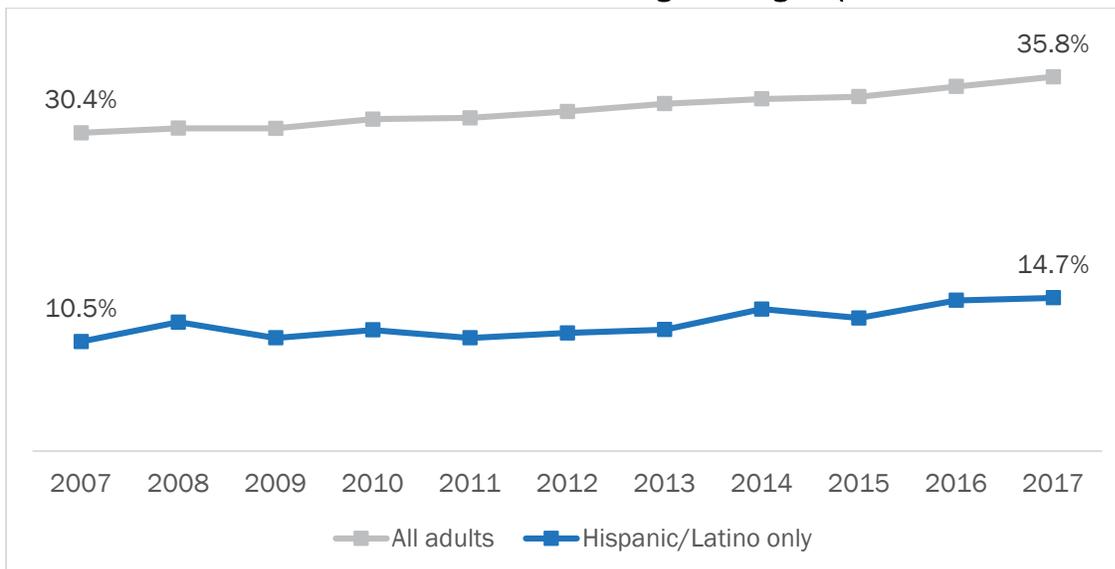
Chart 6: Share of adults over 25 with a high school diploma or GED (Milwaukee metro area)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey 1-Year estimates

More concerning, however, is that while there has been a modest increase in the share of Hispanics who have completed a bachelor’s degree or higher (**Chart 7**), the achievement gap between Hispanics and the overall population remains greater than 20 percentage points. A more optimistic way to look at these numbers is to focus on the *rate* of recent change; since 2007, there has been a 40% increase in the percentage of Hispanic adults with at least a bachelor’s degree, compared with an 18% increase in that percentage among all adults.

Chart 7: Share of adults over 25 with a bachelor’s degree or higher (Milwaukee metro area)

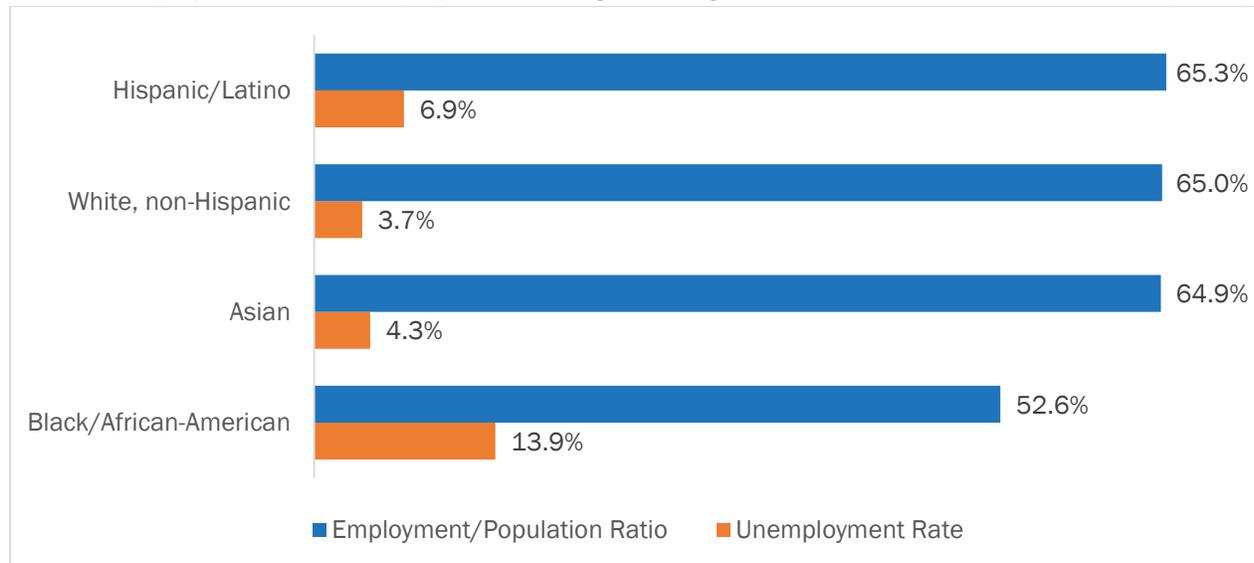


Source: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey 1-Year estimates

EMPLOYMENT & UNEMPLOYMENT

Metro Milwaukee’s Hispanic population is employed at nearly the same rate as the area’s Asian and white populations, despite a somewhat higher *unemployment* rate (**Chart 8**). This is due to strong labor force participation among Hispanics. In fact, 70.1% of Hispanics ages 16 and over in metro Milwaukee are participating in the labor force (meaning they are working or seeking employment), which is higher than any other racial or ethnic group. The employment rate for African Americans is considerably lower – and the unemployment rate much higher – than for any other group.

Chart 8: Employment and unemployment among those ages 16 and over in metro Milwaukee (2017)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau show the occupations of workers in the Milwaukee metro area by race and ethnicity. These data allow us to identify industries that employ Hispanics at higher and lower concentrations than the general population. We do this by comparing the number of Hispanics employed in each occupational category with the number that would be expected if the distribution of Hispanics mirrored that of the general population.

Table 1 shows the number of Hispanic workers and total workers who are employed in each of 22 occupational categories in the Milwaukee metro area. The “Hispanic concentration” is the number of Hispanics employed in each category for every one that would be expected based on the relative size of the Hispanic workforce. For example, 2.72 Hispanics are employed in farming, fishing and forestry occupations per one in the regional workforce overall.

Clearly, Hispanics are highly concentrated in production, food preparation and serving, and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations, where they are employed at more than double the rate of the population overall. Together, those three occupational categories employ 27,336 Hispanic workers, which comprises more than 35% of the region’s Hispanic workforce.

Table 1: Occupational comparison for the four-county Milwaukee metro area, 2017

	Hispanic workers	All workers	Hispanic concentration
Farming, fishing, and forestry	411	1,540	2.72
Food preparation and serving related	9,719	46,396	2.13
Production	12,525	60,650	2.10
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	5,092	25,271	2.05
Construction and extraction	4,522	28,500	1.61
Transportation and material moving	6,156	43,457	1.44
Healthcare support	2,005	19,431	1.05
Office and administrative support	9,936	105,787	0.96
Community and social service	1,416	15,604	0.92
Protective service	1,329	14,659	0.92
Personal care and service	2,586	30,427	0.86
Sales and related	6,434	77,248	0.85
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1,062	15,224	0.71
Life, physical, and social science	404	6,831	0.60
Installation, maintenance, and repair	1,147	19,553	0.60
Management	4,246	81,912	0.53
Computer and mathematical	1,334	25,792	0.53
Education, training, and library	2,302	47,479	0.49
Legal	448	9,257	0.49
Healthcare practitioners and technical	2,139	50,500	0.43
Architecture and engineering	803	19,482	0.42
Business and financial operations	1,686	45,676	0.38
Total:	77,702	790,676	

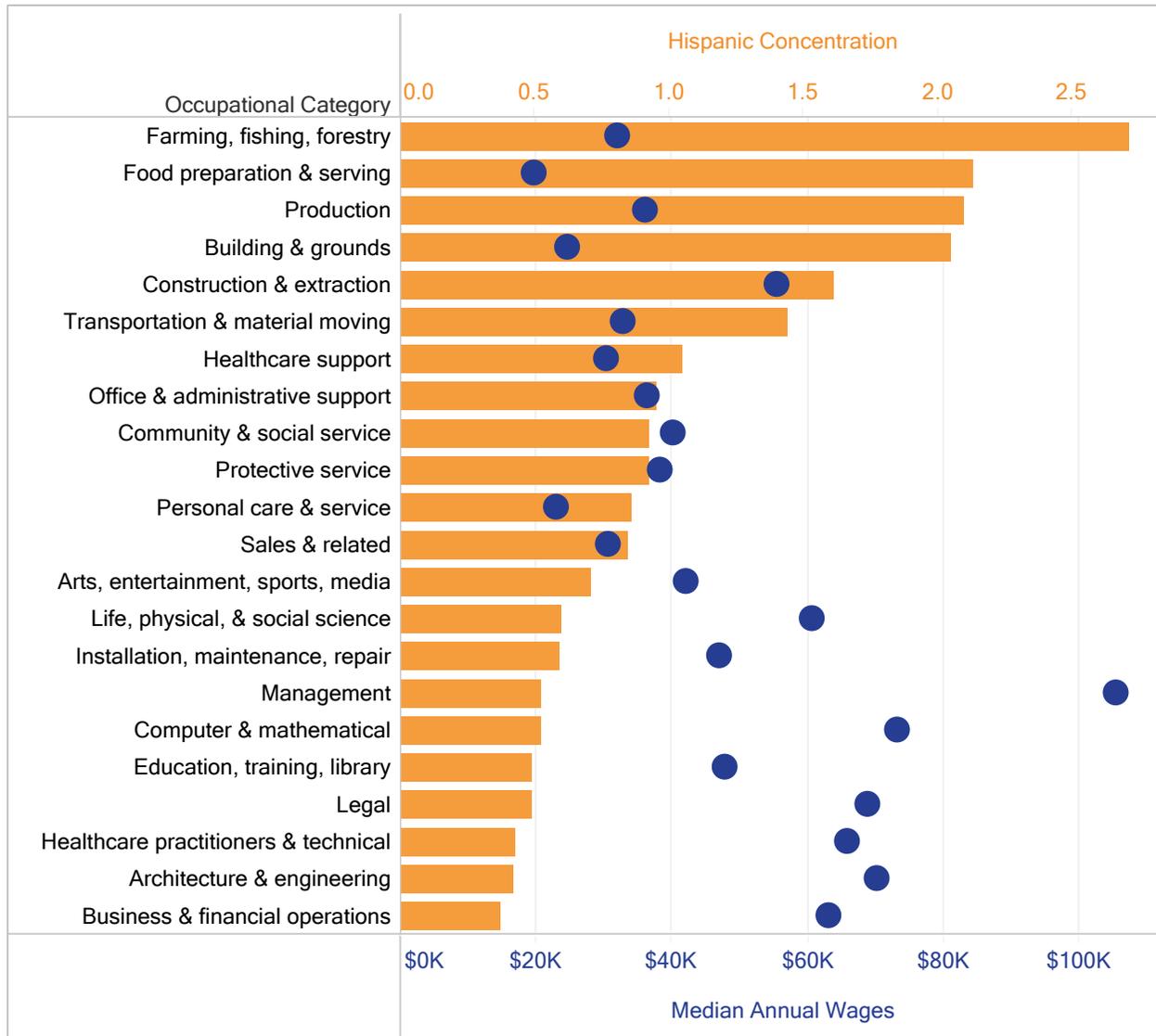
Note: Shading reflects Hispanic concentration. Dark green 2+; Light green 1-1.99; Light orange 0.5-0.99; Dark orange < 0.5. Source: U.S. Census Bureau – ACS 1-year estimates 2017

Perhaps more important, Hispanics are highly *underrepresented* in a number of relatively high-paying professional occupations that employ large numbers of individuals in the region. For example, Hispanics are employed at roughly half the rate of the general population or lower in business and finance, healthcare practitioner, education, computer and mathematical, and legal occupations.

In fact, the occupational categories with the highest median wages in the Milwaukee metro area tend to be the occupations where Hispanics are most underrepresented, as shown in **Chart 9**. For each occupational category in the chart, the orange bar represents the concentration of Hispanic workers relative to workers overall, while the blue circle represents median annual wages for all workers in metro Milwaukee.

Hispanics are highly underrepresented in every category that pays a median annual wage of \$60,000 or higher. Among the occupations in which Hispanic workers are employed at an equal or higher rate than the workforce overall (a concentration of 1.0 or higher), construction is the only one that pays a median annual wage of at least \$40,000.

Chart 9: Hispanic concentration vs. median wages by occupation, 2017 (Milwaukee metro area)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (ACS 1-yr estimates) & U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Occupational Employment Statistics)

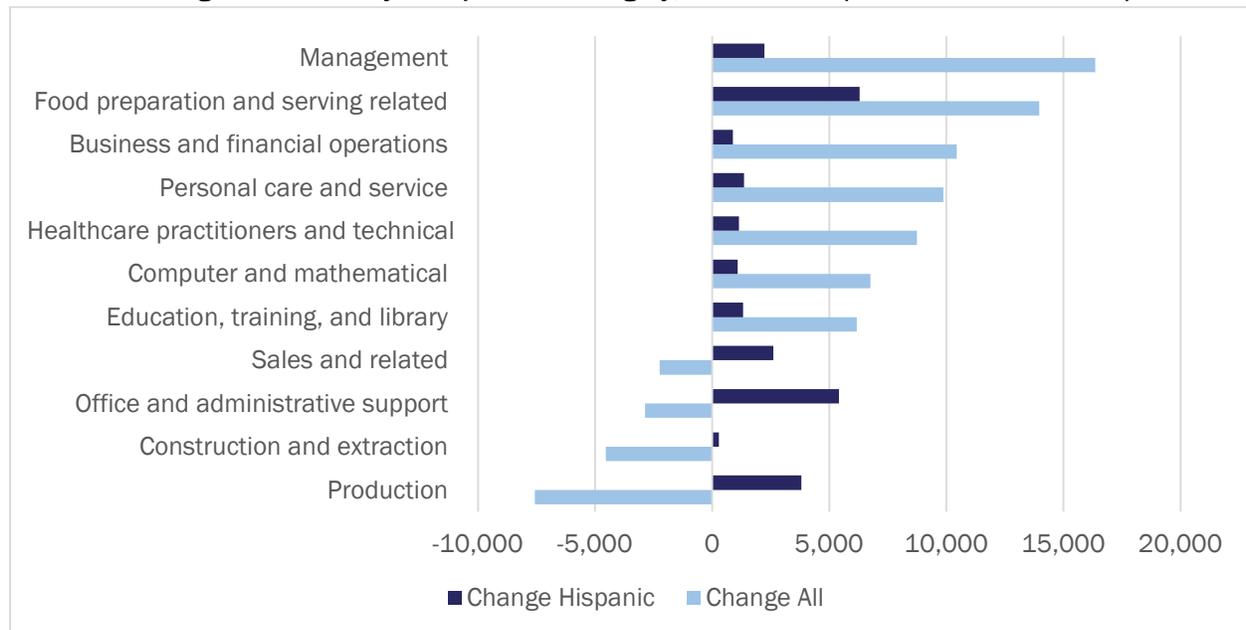
Longer-term trend data show that since 2005, the number of Hispanic workers has increased in almost every occupational category in the Milwaukee metro area. That is true regardless of whether the occupations added or shed jobs overall, which reflects the overall growth of the Hispanic population. This is illustrated in **Chart 10**, which shows the occupations that added at least 5,000 jobs or lost at least 1,000 jobs between 2005 and 2017. Among those that grew the fastest, Hispanic workers accounted for almost half of the new workers in food preparation and serving occupations but much smaller shares of new workers in the other fields, many of which are professional, high-paying occupations.

More Hispanic workers are employed in production jobs than in any other occupational category (see **Table 1** on p. 6), but the number of production jobs in the region has been declining, which could be viewed as a reason to encourage young Hispanic individuals to pursue work in other growing fields. Production, which includes metal and plastic fabrication, printing, food processing, and other

manufacturing and assembly work, has declined by 7,575 jobs in the Milwaukee metro area since 2005, which was the largest decrease among the 22 occupational categories (**Chart 10**).

On the other hand, the number of production jobs remains fourth highest among the 22 occupational categories at 60,650 (**Table 1** on p. 6), and the number of Hispanic workers in production occupations has increased by roughly 3,800 since 2005 (**Chart 10**). That may reflect, in part, younger Hispanic workers replacing retiring older workers.

Chart 10: Change in workers by occupational category, 2005-2017 (Milwaukee metro area)

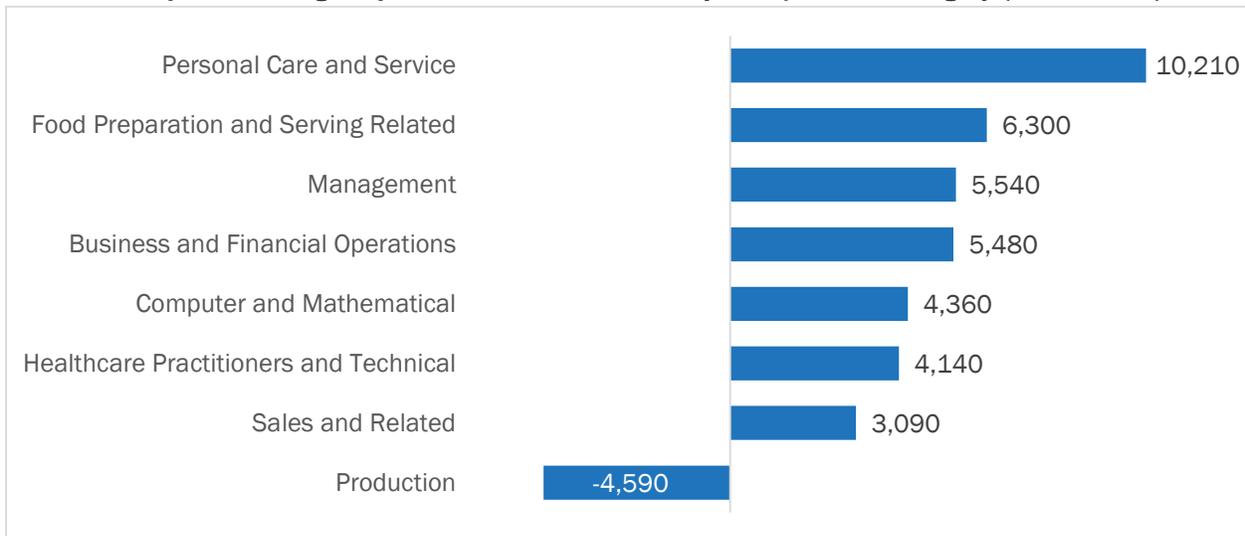


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics – Current Employment Statistics

Many of these recent trends appear likely to continue in the near future. The latest Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) projections suggest most of the occupations that have grown the fastest since 2005 will remain among the fastest-growing through 2026 (**Chart 11**). Meanwhile, production jobs are expected to continue to decline faster than any other category.

Overall, our analysis of these occupational data reveals strong recent and projected job growth in several high-paying occupations in which Hispanics are currently underrepresented. Among the important questions raised by this finding are whether young Hispanic workers will pursue those jobs – including management, business, finance, healthcare practitioner, computer and mathematical occupations – at high enough rates to begin to close the existing gaps, and what strategies might be developed and implemented to encourage them to do so.

Chart 11: Projected change in jobs in metro Milwaukee by occupational category (2016-2026)

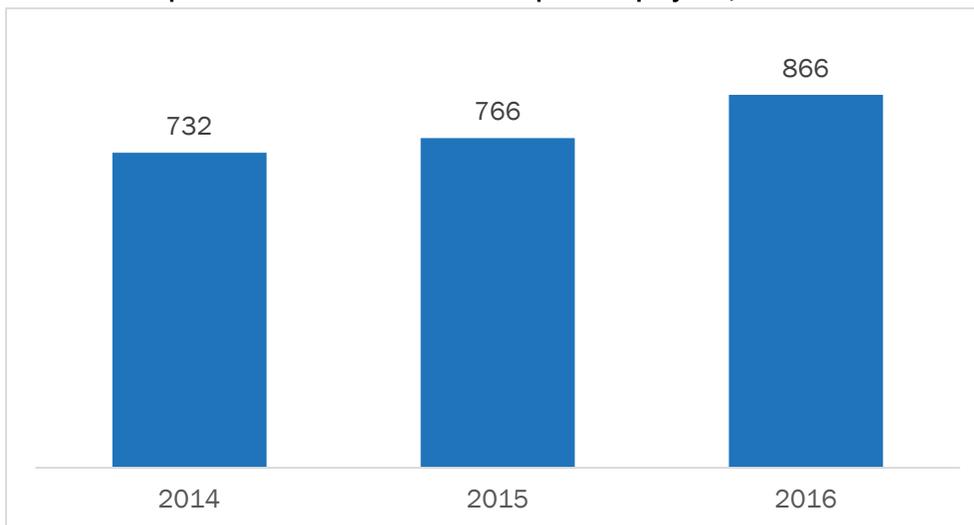


Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Occupational Employment Projections

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

While the number of Hispanic-owned businesses is rising in the Milwaukee area (**Chart 12**), Hispanics remain highly underrepresented as employers or business owners.⁷ As shown in **Chart 13**, Hispanics accounted for 10.6% of the metro area's population in 2016 but owned just 3.4% of the area's businesses with paid employees. This gap was slightly smaller than in the previous two years, but remains large.

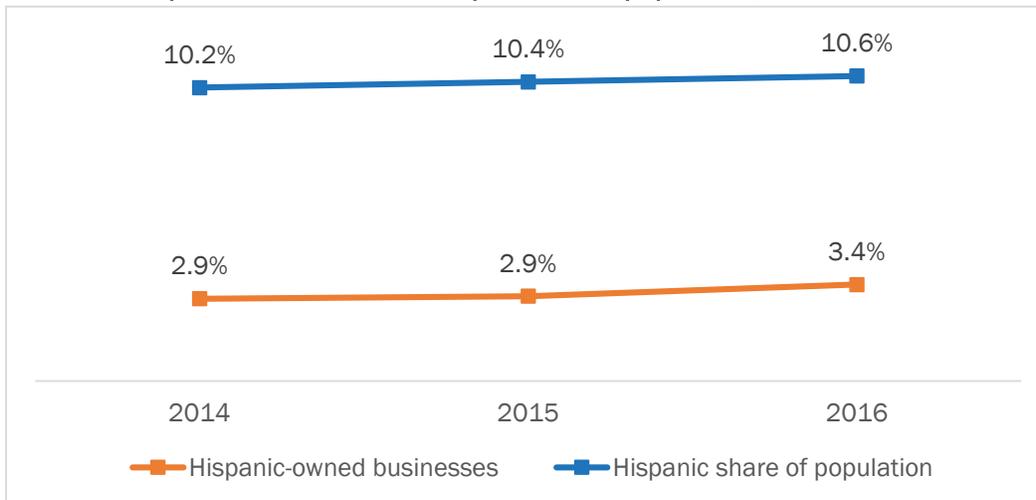
Chart 12: Hispanic-owned businesses with paid employees, Milwaukee metro area



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs

⁷ We include businesses as "Hispanic-owned" here if they are entirely Hispanic-owned or equally owned by Hispanic and non-Hispanic individuals. These figures only represent firms with paid employees.

Chart 13: Hispanic business ownership relative to population, Milwaukee metro area



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs & ACS 1-Year Estimates

SUMMARY

Our analysis of metro Milwaukee’s Hispanic population and workforce reveals the following insights:

Rapid population growth – The Hispanic population has grown by over 75,000 since 2000. Without that increase, the metro area’s total population would have remained flat during that period. This finding illustrates the growing importance of the Hispanic population for the regional economy.

Educational attainment relatively low but rising – Compared with the metro area’s population overall, a lower percentage of Hispanic adults have earned high school diplomas (or equivalent) and bachelor’s degrees. On the bright side, the numbers are improving. The share of Hispanics in the region with at least a high school diploma increased from 59.7% in 2007 to 71.4% in 2017. The share with at least a bachelor’s degree increased from 10.5% to 14.7% during the same period.

Underrepresentation in high-wage occupations. There is a reverse relationship in the Milwaukee metro area between the occupations that pay the highest wages versus those in which Hispanics are most concentrated relative to the workforce overall. Hispanics are highly underrepresented in every occupational category that pays a median annual wage of \$60,000 or higher. Many of those are among the fastest-growing in the region, including management, business and financial operations, healthcare practitioners, and computer and mathematical occupations. Hispanics are also highly underrepresented as business owners.

RECENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

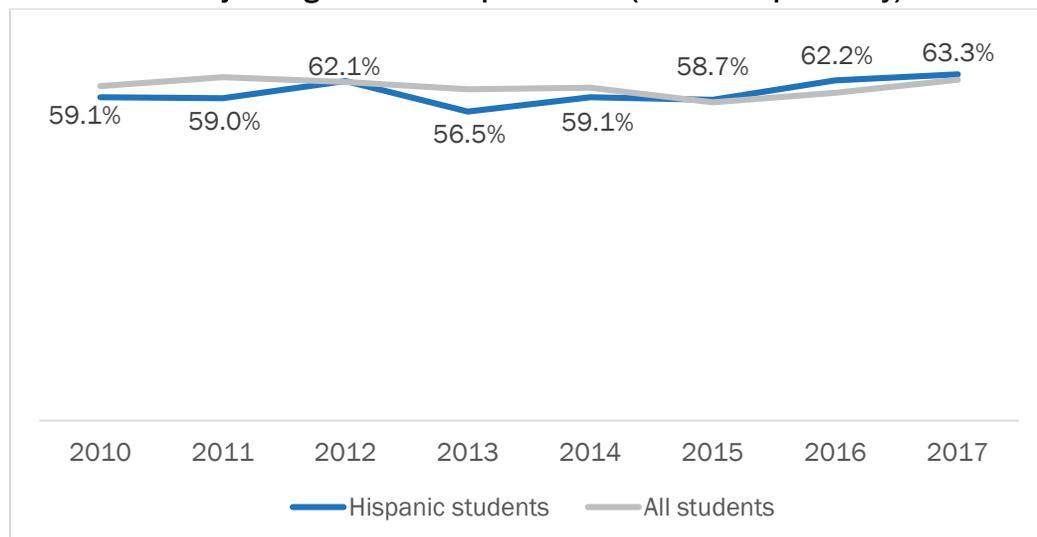
One way to improve Hispanic representation in higher-paying fields is through increased educational achievement among young adults. To understand the college and career pathways of young Hispanic adults in the Milwaukee area, we collected and analyzed data on 45,319 individuals who graduated from **MPS traditional and charter high schools** between 2007 and 2017, including 8,477 Hispanic graduates. In this section, we present information on their higher education pursuits, including whether and where they have enrolled in and completed college, their chosen majors, degrees earned, and more. Most of the data used in this section are from the National Student Clearinghouse, which tracks the college pursuits of individual high school graduates nationwide.⁸

Although our analysis does not cover every recent Hispanic high school graduate in the four-county metro area (namely, those who attended suburban or private high schools), MPS is the largest public school district in the region and state and the one that educates the largest number of Hispanic youth. For the 2017-2018 school year, Hispanic students enrolled in MPS traditional and charter high schools accounted for close to half (47.1%) of the total Hispanic public high school students in the four-county metro area.

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

The four-year high school graduation rate for Hispanic MPS students has varied somewhat over the last eight years but has remained very similar to the districtwide rate for all students (**Chart 14**). The Hispanic graduation rate increased for two consecutive years and was at its highest in 2017, but it is too soon to know whether this trend is likely to continue.

Chart 14: MPS 4-year high school completion rate (includes equivalency)⁹



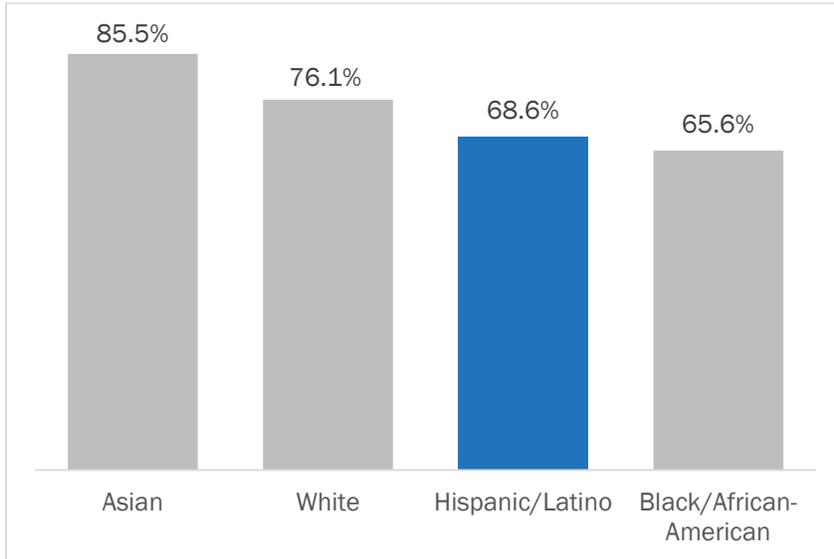
Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

⁸ National Student Clearinghouse. <https://studentclearinghouse.org/>

⁹ These data include students who graduated with a high school equivalency degree (HSED) or other completion credential within the four-year timeframe.

Because some students take longer than the traditional four years to complete high school, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) also publishes five-, six-, and seven-year graduation rates. Looking at the most recent cohort of students for whom the six-year graduation rate is available, we see the percentage of Hispanic students who graduated within six years was higher than among African-American students but lower than among Asian and white students (**Chart 15**). Statewide, 84.6% of Hispanic public high school students graduated within six years.¹⁰

Chart 15: MPS 6-year high school completion rate by race/ethnicity (freshman entering in 2011)



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

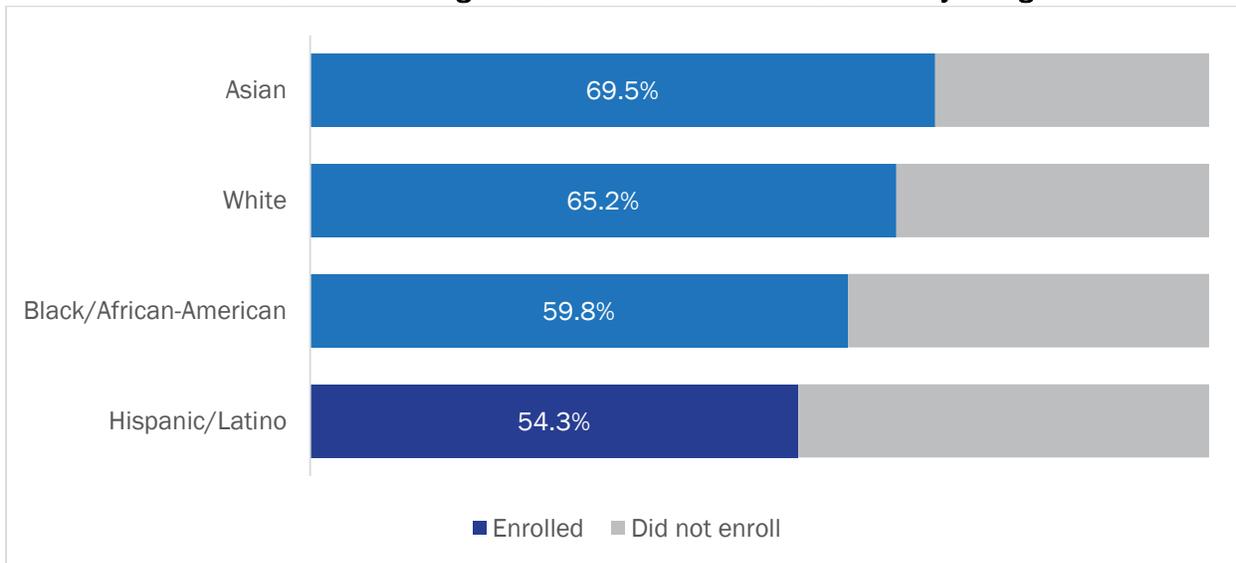
COLLEGE ENROLLMENT & COMPLETION

After completing high school, the next step toward a career in many fields is to enroll in college. Focusing on our pool of MPS graduates who completed high school between 2007 and 2017, we see approximately 60% have enrolled in a U.S. college at some point since graduating.¹¹ That includes students pursuing certificates or associate degrees at 2-year colleges, and those pursuing bachelor's or advanced degrees at 4-year colleges and universities. As shown in **Chart 16**, a majority of Hispanic MPS graduates have enrolled in college, but that rate is lower than among the other racial or ethnic groups.

¹⁰ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. <https://dpi.wi.gov/wisedash/download-files>

¹¹ This calculation provides a big picture look at college enrollment. It includes all 2007-2017 high school graduates, regardless of the specific year in which they graduated and the amount of time they have had to enroll in college.

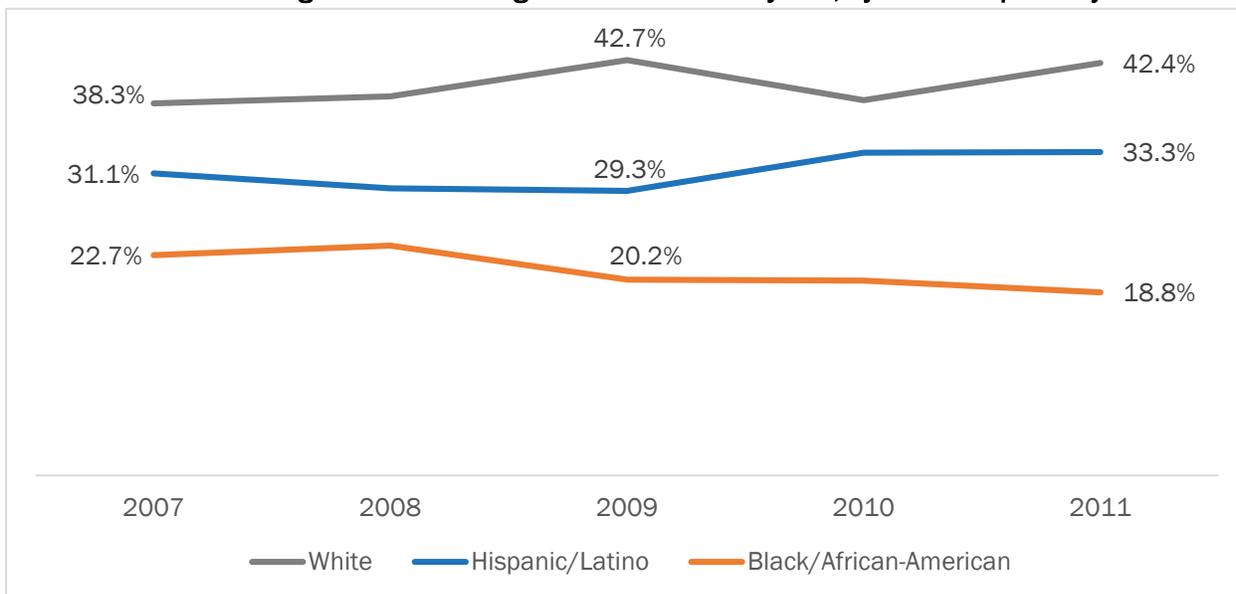
Chart 16: Share of 2007-2017 MPS graduates who have ever enrolled in any college



Source: WPF analysis of National Student Clearinghouse and MPS data

Among Hispanic students who have taken the important step of enrolling in college, roughly one-third have completed a degree or certificate within six years (**Chart 17**).¹² That is much higher than the share of African-American students who have done so but lower than the share of white students.

Chart 17: Share of college enrollees who graduated within six years, by MPS completion year



Source: WPF analysis of National Student Clearinghouse and MPS data

¹² Asians are not included in this chart because the number of Asian students is relatively small, which introduces a great deal of volatility in the data.

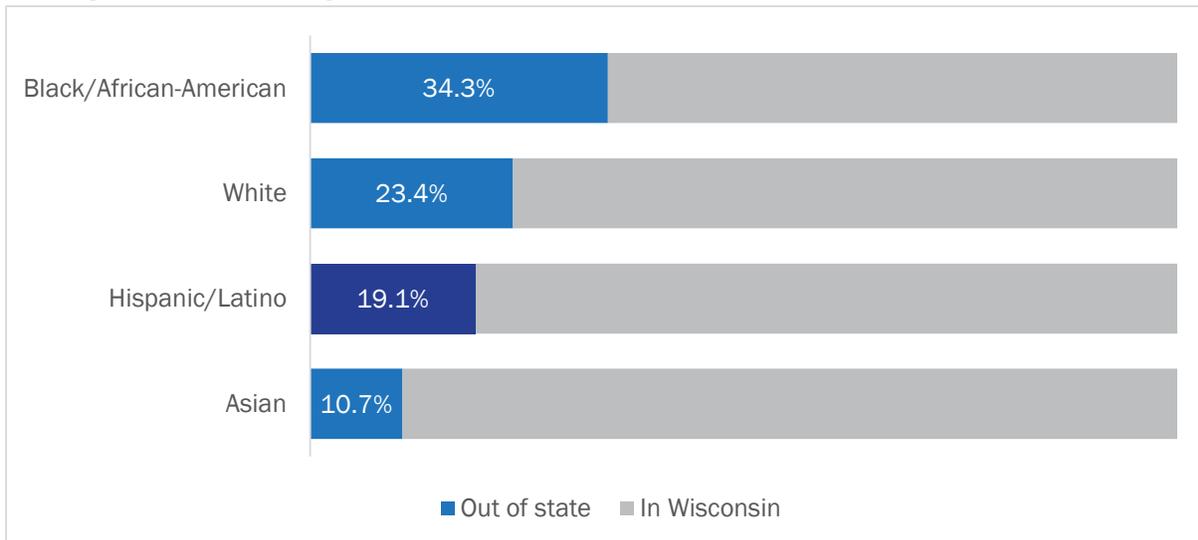
COLLEGE LOCATION

A common concern raised by community leaders and policymakers in Milwaukee – which we cannot independently verify – is that many college-bound African Americans leave Wisconsin to pursue higher education and do not return after graduating. Some local leaders have wondered whether the same may be true of young Hispanic adults.

While we are not able to determine whether students who leave the Milwaukee area for college eventually come back, National Student Clearinghouse data allow us to see where students enroll and graduate from college. One might assume that students who attend college out-of-state often make professional connections and complete internships in those places, which lays the groundwork for post-graduate employment. In some fields, data show that students are more likely to stay where they complete their education. For example, the Wisconsin Council on Medical Education and Workforce has found a “strong correlation between location of a physician’s education and training and where they ultimately practice.”¹³

Our analysis of the higher education records of 2007-2017 MPS graduates confirms the anecdotes that African Americans go out of state for college at higher rates than other groups. However, we find that is not the case for Hispanic students. As shown in **Chart 18**, more than one of three African-American college graduates completed their most recent degree or certificate outside of Wisconsin, while the same was true for less than one in five Hispanic college graduates.

Chart 18: Share of college graduates who earned their most recent degree outside of Wisconsin
(Among 2007-2017 MPS graduates)



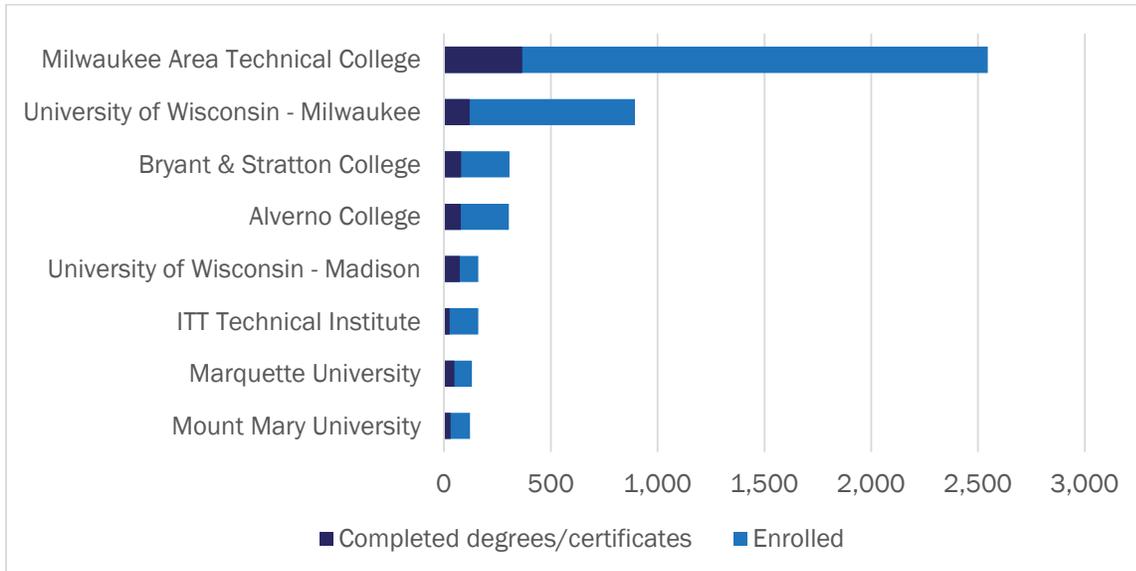
Source: WPF analysis of National Student Clearinghouse and MPS data

As shown in **Chart 19**, more Hispanic MPS graduates have enrolled at Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) than any other institution by far, followed by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). In fact, roughly 30% of the 8,477 Hispanic MPS graduates in our pool have enrolled at some point at MATC, whether to take one course or pursue a certificate or degree. All of the institutions

¹³ Wisconsin Council on Medical Education & Workforce. “Mapping Our Way to Success: Wisconsin’s Physician Workforce.” July 2018. <https://www.wcmew.org/publications/>.pdf

that have enrolled at least 100 recent Hispanic MPS graduates are in Wisconsin, and only UW-Madison is outside of the Milwaukee metro area.

Chart 19: Colleges where the highest number of Hispanic students have enrolled
(Among 2007-2017 MPS graduates)



Source: WPF analysis of National Student Clearinghouse and MPS data

Chart 19 also shows the number of recent MPS graduates who have completed degrees or certificates at each college or university. More students have completed programs at MATC than any other institution, followed again by UWM. However, the *share* of enrolled students who have graduated is highest at UW-Madison and Marquette. In interpreting these numbers, it is important to note that they include students who graduated from high school as recently as 2017, so not all students who have enrolled in college have had enough time to graduate.

COLLEGE MAJORS & CREDENTIALS

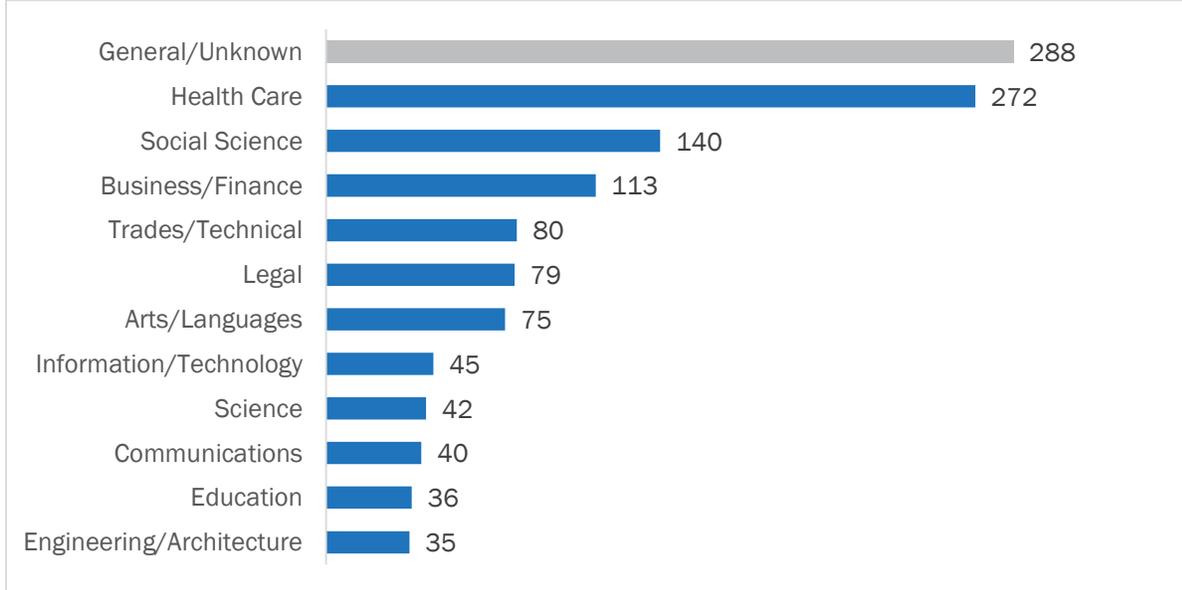
To understand which fields our pool of Hispanic MPS graduates are pursuing, we analyzed the college majors of those who have completed a degree or certificate program at any college or university, organizing them into 12 categories.¹⁴ As **Chart 20** shows, a higher number of Hispanic college graduates have completed programs in health care fields than any other category. Social science majors (e.g. history, psychology, sociology, etc.) ranked second and business/finance third.

Overall, the college majors of Hispanic students are similar in many ways to those of non-Hispanic students. For example, the top three categories are the same for both groups.¹⁵ One small difference is that a larger share of Hispanic students have completed college programs in the trades and technical fields, which range from carpentry to cosmetology to culinary arts. That category ranks fourth among Hispanic graduates but eighth among non-Hispanics.

¹⁴ See Appendix for more information on which majors are included in each category.

¹⁵ Majors that are unknown or in general studies are excluded in this discussion.

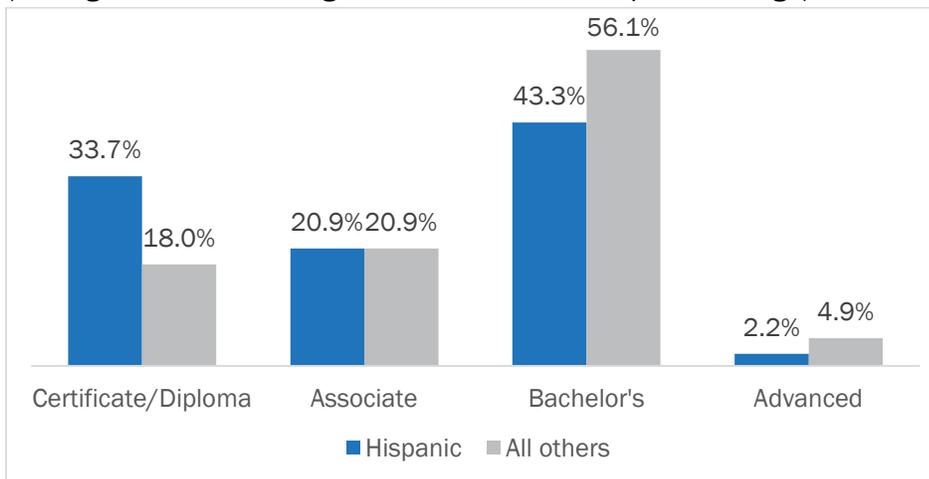
Chart 20: Number of Hispanic students completing college degrees or certificates, by major
(Among 2007-2017 MPS graduates who have completed college)



Source: WPF analysis of National Student Clearinghouse and MPS data

Where Hispanic and non-Hispanic students differ more strikingly, however, is in the level of credentials earned. As shown in **Chart 21**, Hispanic college students are more likely to have earned a technical certificate or diploma than non-Hispanic students, and less likely to have earned a bachelor's or advanced degree. Technical diplomas and certificates typically take one year or less to complete.

Chart 21: Most recent college credential earned
(Among 2007-2017 MPS graduates who have completed college)

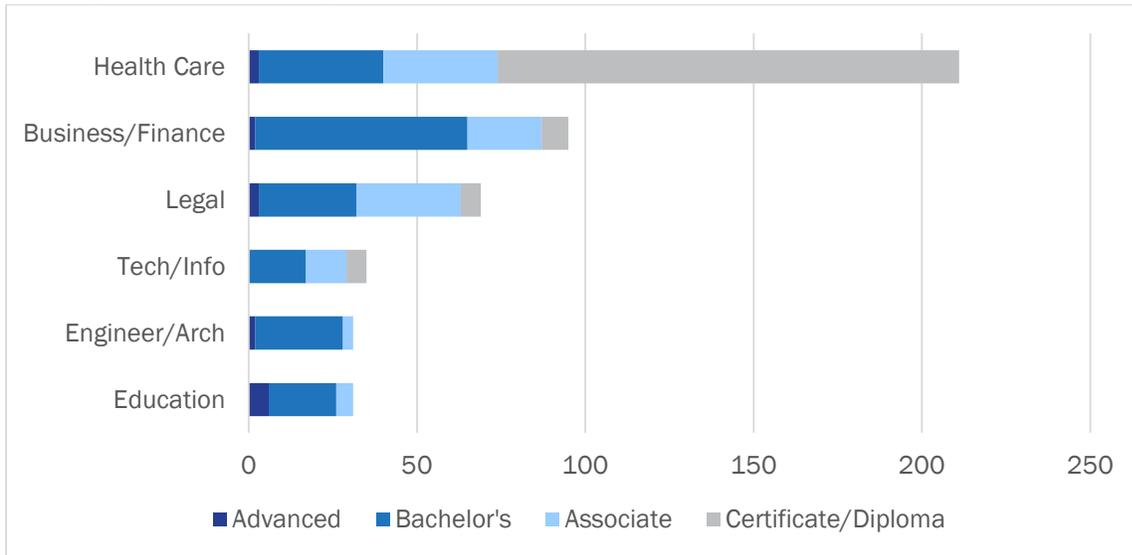


Source: WPF analysis of National Student Clearinghouse and MPS data

Chart 22 shows the college credentials earned by our pool of recent MPS graduates in professional fields in which Hispanics are currently underrepresented in metro Milwaukee. Perhaps the most striking finding is that although more individuals have completed college programs in health care

fields than any other category, nearly two-thirds (65%) have earned technical diplomas or certificates, as opposed to associate, bachelor's, or advanced degrees. Technical diplomas and certificates prepare students to work as medical assistants, nursing assistants, dental assistants, and other health care support positions, as opposed to work as nurses, physicians, and other higher-paying health care practitioner occupations in which Hispanics are currently underrepresented.

Chart 22: Most recent credential earned by Hispanic college students in selected fields
(Among 2007-2017 MPS graduates)



Source: WPF analysis of National Student Clearinghouse and MPS data

A more positive finding is that more than two-thirds (68%) of Hispanic graduates who have completed college programs in business/finance fields have earned bachelor's or advanced degrees. More Hispanic students (63) have completed bachelor's or advanced degrees in business/finance than any other category. That category also includes degrees in accounting, management, marketing, and other related fields.

SUMMARY

The following observations emerge from our analysis of the college records of recent Hispanic MPS graduates:

Achievement gap on college entrance and completion. The share of 2007-2017 Hispanic MPS graduates who have enrolled in college is the lowest among the four major racial/ethnic groups. The college graduation rate among Hispanic students is a bit more encouraging but remains lower than the rate among white students. For example, among those who enrolled in 2011, 33% of Hispanic students graduated within six years, compared with 42% of white students and 19% of African-American students.

Most Hispanic college students stay close to home. Among recent MPS graduates who have gone on to complete college, 34% of African American and 23% of white students did so out of state, while the same was true for only 19% of Hispanic students. These data are one indicator that retention of Hispanic college graduates in metro Milwaukee is relatively strong.

Low rate of bachelor's degree completion. Hispanic MPS graduates who have completed college are more likely to have earned a technical diploma or certificate than non-Hispanic MPS graduates (34% vs. 18%) and less likely to have earned a bachelor's or advanced degree (45.4% vs. 61.1%). Technical diplomas and certificates typically take one year or less to complete, but many higher-paying professional occupations require a bachelor's degree or more.

Health care support occupations a big draw. More Hispanic MPS graduates have completed college programs in health care-related fields than any other occupational category. That could be promising considering health care is one of the fastest-growing industries in metro Milwaukee and offers a ladder of opportunities at many levels. However, a majority of Hispanic students (65%) who have completed college programs in health care fields have earned technical diplomas and certificates, as opposed to associate degrees or higher, which could be cause for concern.

AREA COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

In the previous section, we showed where recent MPS graduates have gone to college, but our analysis did not include the many Hispanic college students in metro Milwaukee who attended private high schools or high schools outside of MPS. Here, we take a broad look at the overall student bodies at colleges and universities in the Milwaukee area to see which institutions enroll the highest numbers of Hispanic students and where Hispanic students are completing college at the highest rates.

Among 4-year institutions, UWM enrolls the highest number of Hispanic students in the region by far, followed by Marquette University (**Table 2**). The data in **Table 2** include all full- and part-time students at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Alverno College, Cardinal Stritch University, and Carroll University also enroll large numbers of Hispanic students.

Both of the region's 2-year colleges – Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) and Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC) – also are among the area institutions enrolling the highest numbers of Hispanic students. Hispanic enrollment at MATC exceeds all other area institutions except UWM and is growing; according to MATC, the number of Hispanic students enrolled in post-secondary courses at the college grew by almost 29% between fall 2014 and fall 2018.¹⁶

Table 2: Milwaukee-area institutions serving the most Hispanic students (Fall 2017)

	All students	% Hispanic	Hispanic Students
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee	24,988	10%	2,514
Milwaukee Area Technical College	14,012	16%	2,306
Marquette University	11,426	10%	1,187
Waukesha County Technical College	7,696	8%	642
Alverno College	1,942	21%	399
Cardinal Stritch University	2,355	13%	297
Carroll University	3,452	7%	255
Milwaukee School of Engineering	2,823	5%	153
Mount Mary University	1,399	8%	117
Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design	660	14%	91
Wisconsin Lutheran College	1,114	6%	69
Concordia University Wisconsin	7,288	1%	67

Source: IPEDS Data Center

Hispanic students make up a higher share of Alverno's student body than any other institution in the region, and Alverno was recently named the first Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in Wisconsin.¹⁷ The HSI designation allows colleges to access certain federal grants and scholarships and is available only to institutions with at least 25% Hispanic enrollment among undergraduate full-time equivalent students. Alverno crossed that 25% threshold in 2017. Marquette, MATC, and UWM have also announced goals of becoming HSIs in the near future.

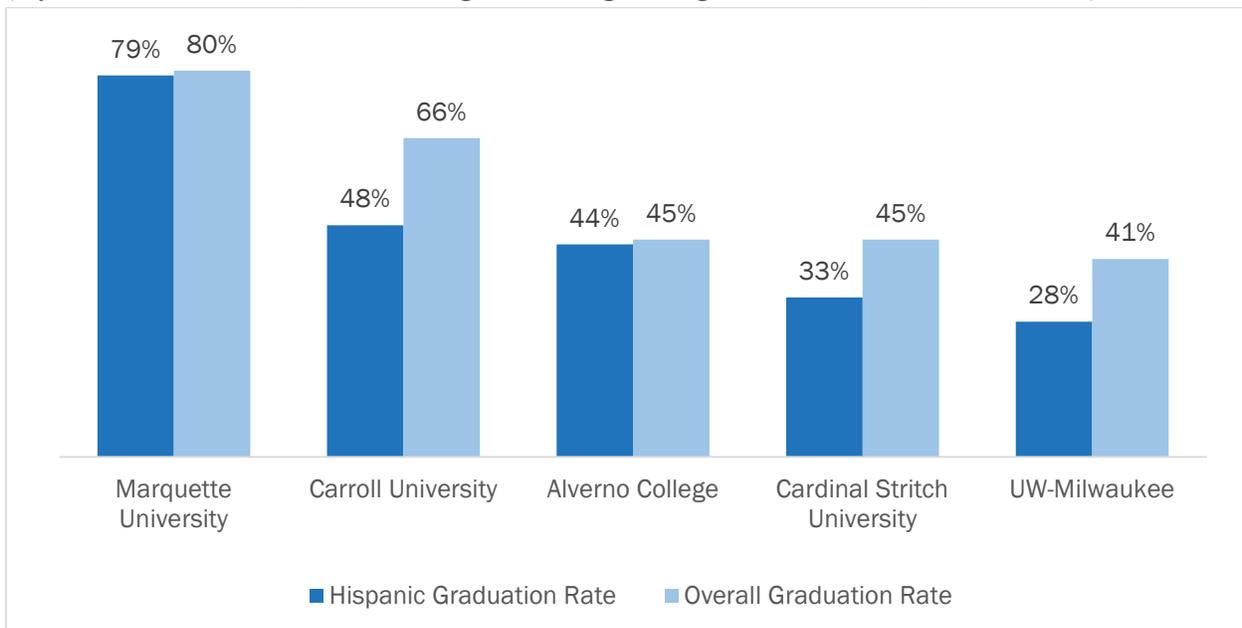
¹⁶ Data provided by MATC's Office of Institutional Research.

¹⁷ Alverno College. <https://www.alverno.edu/newsroom/press-releases/hispanic-serving-institution.php>

Comparing the graduation rates of area colleges and universities is difficult and potentially misleading due to the many differences between the student bodies and program offerings of each institution. With that major caveat, we provide information below on institutions that serve large numbers of Hispanic students in the Milwaukee metro area, focusing on the graduation rate of Hispanic students versus all students at each institution. We also compare each institution with its national peers.

Among 4-year institutions in the area that serve the largest numbers of Hispanic students, Marquette and Alverno are the only two where Hispanic students graduate at roughly the same rate as students overall (**Chart 23**).¹⁸ At UWM, Carroll, and Cardinal Stritch, the graduation rate for Hispanic students is substantially lower than for students overall.

Chart 23: Graduation rate for 4-year institutions in the Milwaukee area
(6-year rate for full-time, first-time degree-seeking undergraduate students, 2011 cohort)



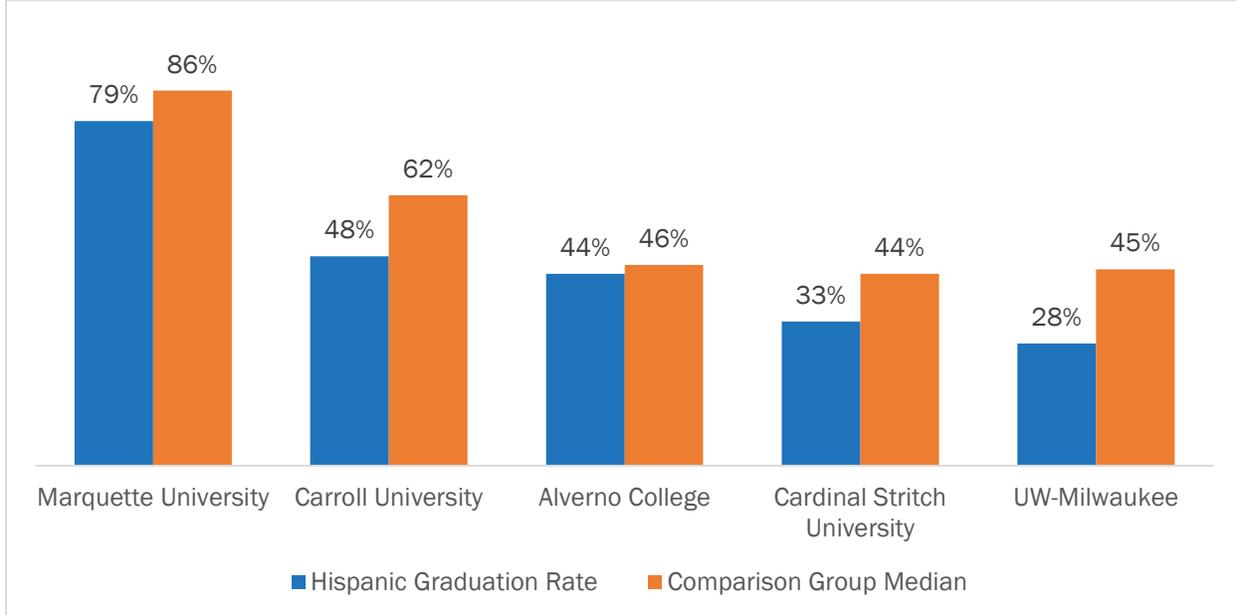
Source: IPEDS Data Center

Another way to look at graduation rates is to compare each college or university with similar institutions throughout the U.S. Data on a wide range of measures is available for each college in the U.S. through the federal Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). IPEDS also organizes colleges into groups of similar institutions nationally.

Comparing each institution with its national peers shows that Alverno’s 6-year graduation rate for Hispanic students is very similar to the median among its national peers, while Marquette’s trails its peers by a relatively small margin. The rates at UWM, Cardinal Stritch, and Carroll are lower than the medians among each of their national peer groups by double-digit margins (**Chart 24**).

¹⁸ We only include the institutions with the highest Hispanic student enrollment numbers in this chart because the Hispanic graduation rates for institutions serving smaller numbers of Hispanic students are volatile from year to year.

Chart 24: Hispanic graduation rate for 4-year institutions relative to national peers
 (6-year rate for full-time, first-time degree-seeking undergraduate students, 2011 cohort)

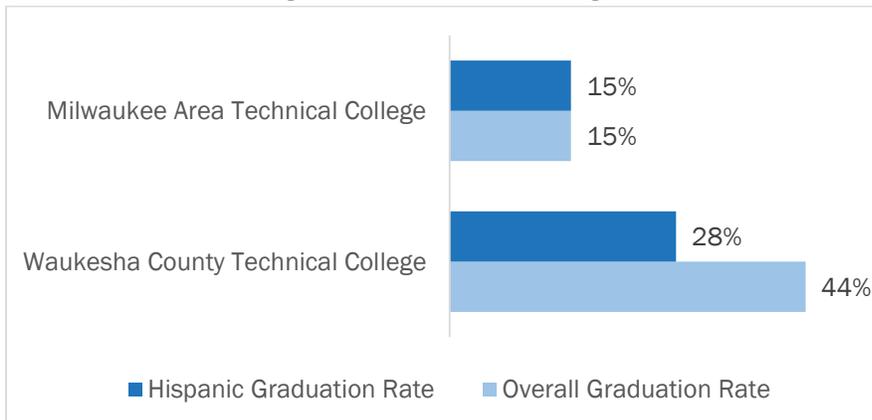


Source: IPEDS Data Center

For technical and community colleges, IPEDS provides data on the percentage of degree- or certificate-seeking students who complete their programs within 150% of the standard timeframe. So, for example, students pursuing one-year technical diplomas are counted as graduating if they completed their program within eighteen months.

As **Chart 25** shows, MATC’s graduation rate among Hispanic students is the same as for students overall, while at WCTC, the Hispanic graduation rate is far lower than the overall rate. Notably, these figures do not include students who transfer to 4-year institutions before completing their degrees or certificates, which is relatively common at technical colleges. For example, 21% of MATC students and 10% of WCTC students in the 2014 cohort transferred out. This may be one factor contributing to the generally low graduation rates at both institutions.

Chart 25: Graduation rate for 2-year institutions in the Milwaukee area
 (Full-time, first-time degree or certificate-seeking students, 2014 cohort)



Source: IPEDS Data Center and MATC

Mixed Outcomes and New Efforts at UWM

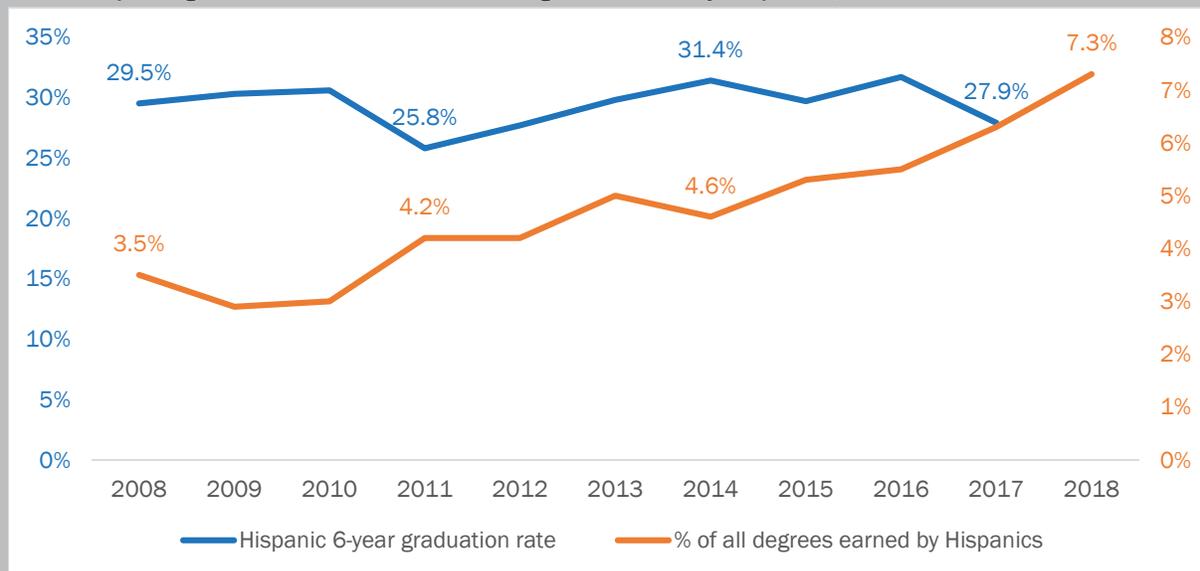
Based on our findings that UWM enrolls the largest number of Hispanic students in the area and has a Hispanic graduation rate well below its overall rate, we looked at longer-term trends at the university, underlying factors, and new efforts being made to address the disparity.

UWM's 6-year graduation rate for Hispanic students has been relatively steady over time, remaining between 26% and 32% over the last 10 years and falling in the middle of that range (28%) in 2017. (See chart below.) The lack of improvement in this rate is concerning given it represents continued disparities.

While we focus on UWM's 6-year graduation rate to correspond with the data throughout this report, UWM also provided [data](#) showing that its 4-year graduation rate for Hispanic students increased from 7.2% for its 2010 cohort of freshmen to 11.3% for the 2013 cohort. It will be important to track whether these numbers continue to rise.

Another positive trend is the increasing number of degrees UWM is conferring to Hispanic students. In the 2007-08 academic year, 172 degrees were awarded to Hispanic students, accounting for 3.5% of total degrees earned. In 2017-18, those numbers had more than doubled to 389 and 7.3% of all degrees, which reflects increasing Hispanic enrollment. Hispanic students first surpassed African Americans in 2010-11 in the number of degrees earned at UWM, and they have done so consistently since 2014-15.

UWM: Hispanic graduation rate and share of degrees earned by Hispanics, 2008-2018



Source: [University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee](#)

Underlying Factors

UWM plays a unique role among the region's 4-year institutions in being a public access university that accepts the vast majority of students who apply. In fact, UWM accepts 86% of its applicants, which results in more UWM students needing assistance to be successful than at more selective institutions.

Several factors make college success particularly challenging for Hispanic students at UWM. For example, UWM has identified financial challenges as the most common reason Hispanic students drop out. According to data compiled by the university, 54% of its Hispanic students are eligible for federal Pell Grants, which is considerably higher than the rate among students overall. Pell Grants are only available for low-income students.

An even higher share of UWM's Hispanic students (61%) are in the first generation in their families to enroll in college, which makes navigating the college experience new and potentially more difficult. A smaller percentage of Hispanic students are undocumented, which poses multiple challenges including a major barrier to employment; UWM estimates that between 200 and 300 of its students are undocumented.

New Efforts

UWM provides unique services tailored to its Hispanic students and has initiated a number of new efforts aimed at improving student retention and graduation rates among Hispanic students and the university's student body overall.

Through its Roberto Hernandez Center, UWM has provided supportive services specifically designed for Hispanic students since 1970 and is working to expand the reach of those services today. With its staff of five, the center provides bilingual support for students and their families, including academic advising, workshops and events, and direct outreach to Hispanic students and the Hispanic community. UWM is the only institution in Wisconsin with such a center dedicated to Hispanic students.

Newer UWM initiatives focused on Hispanic student success include the following:

- **Targeted academic advising** – UWM has found that most Hispanic students who drop out do so during their first two years, so the Roberto Hernandez Center provides advising services and academic success workshops for all new and first-year Hispanic students as well as other previously-assigned students.
- **Expanding best practices campus-wide** – Recognizing the limited role of the Roberto Hernandez Center, the Chancellor's Committee for Hispanic Student Initiatives is working to develop campus-wide initiatives and expand best practices for serving Hispanic students throughout the university.
- **HSI initiative** – UWM is working to become a federally-recognized Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and is developing strategies to recruit and retain more Hispanic students to reach that goal.

In addition, a number of new initiatives at UWM that are not exclusively focused on Hispanic students could help to increase the university's Hispanic graduation rate. For example, UWM has partnered with MPS and MATC for the [MCubed](#) initiative, which aims to align coursework, expand dual enrollment, and provide bridge programming to smooth transitions between the three institutions. UWM also has developed articulation agreements with MATC and WCTC, which makes it easier for students to transfer to UWM after completing their first two years at a technical college.

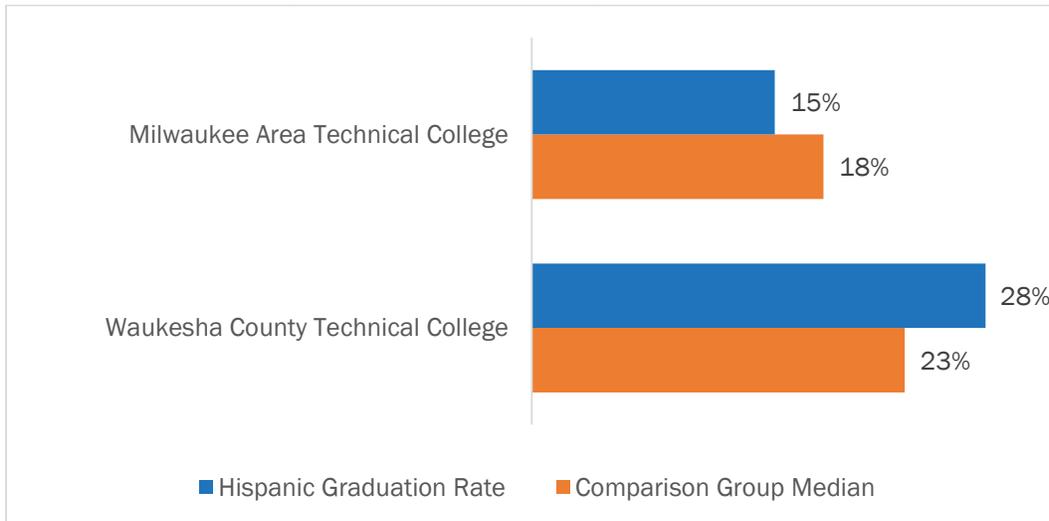
Other programs and partnerships that are showing early success in improving student retention include:

- **MKE Scholars** – Through a partnership with the Burke Foundation, qualifying low-income UWM students participate in a pre-college program and receive scholarships and ongoing support.
- **HERA** – The newly formed Higher Education Regional Alliance (HERA) brings together 18 colleges and universities and additional economic and workforce development partners in southeastern Wisconsin to foster collaboration. The alliance has set a goal of increasing the percentage of individuals in the region with a post-secondary credential to 60% by 2027.

UWM leadership is aware of its low Hispanic graduation rate and has noted that it is part of a larger disparity that exists between its white students and students of color. The university can point to the strategies described above (and others) that are underway to help eliminate existing disparities. It will be important to monitor this work over time to ensure UWM's Hispanic graduation rate rises as a result.

As shown in **Chart 26**, the Hispanic graduation rates at both MATC and WCTC are comparable with each institution’s national peers. At MATC, for example, the Hispanic graduation rate is just below the median among large, urban technical and community colleges nationally.

Chart 26: Hispanic graduation rate for 2-year institutions relative to national peers
(Full-time, first-time degree or certificate-seeking students, 2014 cohort)



Source: IPEDS Data Center and MATC

SUMMARY

Our examination of Hispanic enrollment at Milwaukee area colleges and universities shows that UWM, MATC, and Marquette enroll the highest numbers of Hispanic students, while Hispanics comprise the highest share of Alverno’s student body.

We also find that Hispanic college graduation rates trail overall graduation rates by substantial margins at several area institutions, including UWM, Carroll University, and Cardinal Stritch. The Hispanic graduation rates at those schools are also considerably lower than the medians among each institution’s national peers. Alverno, Marquette, and MATC perform better on both of those measures.

OBSERVATIONS / CONCLUSION

Our analysis of the alignment between the Hispanic workforce and jobs in metro Milwaukee reveals two overarching findings:

1) The Hispanic population is growing quickly and becoming an increasingly important part of the regional workforce, but Hispanics are currently underrepresented in high-wage occupations.

Since 2000, metro Milwaukee's Hispanic population has grown by over 75,000, accounting for all of the region's net population growth. Meanwhile, the area's non-Hispanic white population has declined by over 68,000. These dynamics illustrate the growing importance of the Hispanic population to the region's economy.

Yet, Hispanics are highly underrepresented in every occupational category that pays a median annual wage of \$60,000 or higher, including several that are among the fast-growing in the region. Those include management, business and financial operations, healthcare practitioners, and computer and mathematical occupations. Hispanics are also underrepresented as employers.

2) On most measures, the educational attainment of young Hispanics in Milwaukee is not putting them on track to remedy the problem.

Our analysis of 2007-2017 MPS graduates shows Hispanic students have enrolled in college at lower rates than African-American, Asian, and white students. Among those MPS graduates who have completed college, Hispanics are less likely than non-Hispanics to have earned a bachelor's or advanced degree (45.4% vs. 61.1%), which are often needed to qualify for positions in higher-wage occupations.

Hispanic college graduation rates also are considerably lower than overall graduation rates at several area institutions, including UWM, Carroll, and Cardinal Stritch. They are also low compared with Hispanic graduation rates at each of those institutions' national peers. University leaders acknowledge this challenge and are making a number of efforts to address it. Nevertheless, we believe this issue still merits their close attention, and potentially, additional actions, especially considering UWM is the institution that serves the highest numbers of Hispanic students in the area.

There are some bright spots in the data. For example, the share of metro Milwaukee's Hispanic adults who have at least a high school diploma (or equivalent) increased from 59.7% in 2007 to 71.4% in 2017. Those with at least a bachelor's degree increased by four percentage points during that period, as well. Achievement gaps remain on both measures, but progress is being made.

Yet, overall, our findings raise concerns about the likelihood that Hispanic representation in high-wage occupations in metro Milwaukee will increase greatly in the near future. This is problematic given that the Hispanic population continues to fuel growth in metro Milwaukee and that its success is critical to the region's economic destiny.

APPENDIX

College Major Categories

We organized the college majors of the students in our analysis into 12 categories. Examples of majors included in each category are provided below.

- Arts/Languages – English, music, theater, visual art, foreign languages
- Business/Finance – Accounting, business, finance, management, marketing
- Communications – Advertising, communications, journalism, public relations
- Education – Early childhood education, education, teaching, youth development
- Engineering/Architecture – Architecture, engineering, mechanical engineering
- General/Unknown – General studies, interdisciplinary studies, liberal studies
- Health Care – Medicine, nursing, pharmacy, pre-med, veterinary studies
- Information/Technology – Computer science, information science, software development
- Legal – Criminal justice, criminology, law, paralegal studies
- Science – Biology, botany, chemistry, environmental science, mathematics, physics, zoology
- Social Science – Anthropology, economics, history, political science, psychology, sociology
- Trades/Technical – Auto mechanic, barber/cosmetology, culinary arts, plumbing, welding

