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Study Reveals Critical Shortage of Latinos in Technology
Lack of education, opportunities threaten economic development

CHICAGO – September 30, 2009 – Latinos are vastly under-engaged in technology careers nationwide, and especially in Illinois. Latinos comprise nearly 15% of Illinois' population, but less than 5% of its technology workforce, according to a [new research report](#), released by the Latino Technology Alliance (LTA).

The study reveals Latinos are largely unaware of or disconnected from opportunities in high-tech occupations. In addition, significant barriers prevent students from pursuing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers.

The groundbreaking study synthesizes state and national research on Latino employment and education performance with new analyses of Illinois data and findings from community conversations. The research report is available at www.LatinoTechnologyAlliance.org.

Some of the key findings include:

- In 2007 Latinos were employed in only 5.5% of information technology jobs nationally and only 5.8% of key non-IT high technology jobs
- Median salaries for Latinos in science and engineering are 10% lower than all science and engineering workers
- Latinos are at an educational disadvantage in pursuing technology occupations as evidenced by low scores in standardized tests in mathematics
- Knowledge about how to advance to college is low among Latino parents

“Latinos are vastly under engaged in STEM careers, where people earn about twice the median earnings of U.S. workers,” said Orlando Saez, President, Latino Technology Alliance. “A robust technical workforce will ensure the economic growth and prosperity of our communities. We need to encourage Latinos to seek these high-demand careers and create the next generation of talent through training and education.”

According to the study, Latinos can give Illinois a competitive edge in global and domestic technology and service markets where bilingual communication and cultural competence are key advantages.

As a result of the study, the LTA seeks to form alliances with individuals and organizations to implement recommendations that address specific issues brought to light in the research.

Study recommendations include:

- Increasing opportunities for Latinos to attain high-tech jobs in high-growth industries and increasing business creation and executive level positions among these industries.
- Preparing students for STEM careers through programs that engage educators, inform parents, and improve students' interest and aptitude in science and math

“Illinois’ economic development and its high-tech leadership depends on our ability to create pathways for our students to embrace science and technology studies, and for the Latino workforce to move from non-STEM occupations into scientific and professional careers,” Saez said.

About Latino Technology Alliance

The Latino Technology Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that collaborates with individuals and other organizations to achieve its mission: To advance long term economic growth in Illinois through practical education, job creation and entrepreneurship in science, mathematics, engineering and information technology. For more information, visit www.LatinoTechnologyAlliance.org.

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Queta Rodríguez Bauer
Cultural Communications, LLC
773-285-1055
qbauer@culturalcommunications.com

BUSINESS CONTACT:

David Weisberger
Latino Technology Alliance
847-370-7489
info@LatinoTechnologyAlliance.org