



Population, Immigration, Labor and American Competitiveness Study Project Summary



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The Hispanic Institute's

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The U.S. Census Bureau reported that immigrants comprised 12.4% of the domestic workforce in 2000 and 72% of net employment growth during the 1990s was attributable to immigrants entering the labor force. The great flow of immigrants from Mexico and Central America, (the largest portion of immigrants in the 1990s), entered through the states in EDA's Austin Region; we would expect a greater proportion of immigrants in the workforce in these gateway states than in the nation as a whole.

The diversification of the economy has altered the nature of the workforce while pushing it to the breaking point. Current Bureau of Labor Statistics four-year projections anticipate the creation of 165.3 million jobs by 2012; but the BLS projects the domestic workforce will only 162.3 million individuals by that time. Due to declining birthrates in the following years some estimates foresee this gap widening to ten million workers by 2025.

The consequences of this growing labor shortage are dire; the demand for a steady, skilled workforce tops the list of prerequisites for a vibrant economy. Unable to meet its workforce needs, industry in the Region will have only one viable option for maintaining operations: relocation (either to other domestic regions experiencing labor surpluses or offshore to countries with larger and cheaper labor pools).

In December 2006 The Hispanic Institute began researching the impact of the immigrant population on the national workforce. After an initial information-gathering period, THI's research team proposed the Population, Immigration, Labor and American Competitiveness Study to the Board of Directors. The study is designed to uncover reliable data upon which to make informed policy and business decisions while fostering increased economic competitiveness. Our goal is to ensure that policymakers and businesses have an accurate description of the nation's present and future labor needs and the available resources to satisfy them. The Board authorized the Study proposal in February 2007 and in July 2007 the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration funded its first phase. Phase I of the study will be complete June 30, 2009.

While Phase I focuses on targeted areas within EDA's Austin Region, THI plans the extension of the Project into a nationally-focused effort in subsequent phases. Many of the elements of Phase I, including the extensive background research, are applicable and easily transferable to the nationally-focused study.

PROJECT

Our Study will supply the information necessary to rationalize the nation's workforce; without more complete data on the nation's industrial and business conditions, its labor needs as well as better information on the immigrant population, the task of fully-integrating the workforce shouldered by industry and economic development agencies will be inefficient and halting. Several things are lacking in the gamut of present studies and corresponding analysis. There is little substantive information on unmet labor needs throughout the nation. There is also little detail on the types of skills required to fill the vacant positions and none on the skills found within the immigrant population. Subsequently, the analysis that will correlate these disparate and unassembled data is yet to be performed.

SCOPE OF WORK

Our Study includes the eight distinct steps listed below and will rely on THI's project team coordinating and gathering input from all stakeholders (business, community and government leaders) to synthesize a report that fully describes the nation's present business and labor needs as well as accurate five-year forecasts.

I. CONDUCT BACKGROUND RESEARCH:

A. Researching information on the economic conditions based on:

1. State
2. Federal
3. Other data sources, including industry associations, chambers of commerce, and other economic development agencies

B. This will include discussing:

1. The economy
2. Population
3. Geographic flow of the workforce
4. Other pertinent national information as discovered

C. Upon concluding background research THI will have established a clearinghouse of existing research on these subjects.

II. ANALYZE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

An in-depth analysis of the economic development problems and opportunities affecting the nation; this analysis will:

1. Incorporate relevant material from other government-sponsored or supported plans and demonstrate consistency with applicable state and local workforce investment strategies
2. Identify and analyze economic clusters across the nation

III. IDENTIFY MIGRATION PATTERNS:

Utilizing U.S. Census data and other sources, THI will create a database of specific areas where:

1. Immigrant populations are experiencing significant growth and
2. Identify the specific industries and clusters where they are being employed

IV. CONDUCT QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH:

THI will develop quantitative surveys of targeted industries to identify specific labor needs over a one-to-five-year period.

V. CREATE LABOR FORECASTS:

THI will create a series of employment forecasts tied directly to the targeted regions and industries.

VI. IMPLEMENT A WEB-BASED NETWORK:

The Hispanic Institute will utilize workflow technology to communicate with stakeholders and coordinate the activities of project staff.

VII. DEVELOPMENT OF REPORT AND DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS:

THI will draft a report of key findings and disseminate it to key stakeholders for review and comment. THI will then finalize the report for publication.

PHASE I TARGETED AREAS:

While our goal is to establish the efficacy of our approach and expand the Study nationally, in Phase I (the portion of the study for which the Economic Development Administration has granted THI \$600,000), we will focus on the counties in Arkansas and Texas listed below. We began Phase I in July 2007 and our targeted completion date is June 30, 2009.

Arkansas Counties

- Calhoun
- Dallas
- Hempstead
- Lafayette
- Little River
- Nevada
- Ouachita
- Sevier

Texas Counties

- Bexar (select Census tracts)
- Cameron
- Culberson
- Dimmit
- El Paso (select Census tracts)
- Harris (Select Census tracts)
- Hidalgo
- Hudspeth
- LaSalle
- Maverick
- Presidio
- Starr
- Webb
- Willacy

- Zapata
- Zavalla

ABOUT THE HISPANIC INSTITUTE:

The Hispanic Institute is an I.R.S.-designated 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization formed to provide an effective education forum for all Americans on issues related to and effecting Hispanic America. The Hispanic Institute has managed a number of projects including:

- Studying the role of Hispanics in the nation's economy
- Media monitoring
- Consumer fraud
- Citizenship education

The Hispanic Institute's Board of Directors sets organizational policy and implements initiatives. The staff of the Institute serves at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. The Board brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in a variety of fields and areas of expertise including: public policy, research, business development and trade negotiations.