

September

# Hispanic Broadband Access

**Making the Most of the Mobile,  
Connected Future**



**The Hispanic Institute &  
Mobile Future**

## **Hispanic Broadband Access: Making the Most of the Mobile, Connected Future**

*Hispanic Broadband Access: Making the Most of the Mobile, Connected Future is a joint research project of The Hispanic Institute and Mobile Future.*

The Hispanic Institute is a 501 (c) 3 designated nonprofit organization. The Hispanic Institute's mission is sharply focused: THI provides an effective education forum for an informed and empowered Hispanic America. The Hispanic Institute has managed a number of projects including:

- Study of Hispanic economic contributions
- 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.

[thehispanicinstitute.net](http://thehispanicinstitute.net)

Mobile Future is a broad-based coalition of businesses, non-profit organizations and individuals interested in and dedicated to advocating for an environment in which innovations in wireless technology and services are enabled and encouraged. Our mission is to educate the public and key decision makers on innovations in the wireless industry that have transformed the way Americans work and play and to advocate continued investment in wireless technologies.

[www.mobilefuture.org](http://www.mobilefuture.org)



# Hispanic Broadband Access: Making the Most of the Mobile, Connected Future

## Executive Summary

### Overview

As the U.S. develops a national broadband strategy, much is at stake for American consumers, our country's economy, as well as future innovation and its many social benefits. Complex issues from infrastructure deployment to digital literacy to consumer-friendly tax reform all play into U.S. efforts to close the digital divide and usher in a new era of innovation and opportunity. Equally important to ensuring these benefits are shared throughout our society is a deeper understanding of the unique needs, challenges and connected behavior of diverse Americans.

This paper explores the broadband behavior, challenges and opportunities of the nation's 48 million Hispanics. A better understanding of this community and its connectivity—increasingly defined by a strong preference for mobile broadband access—can help shape a successful national broadband strategy that spurs substantial new opportunities at the intersection of broadband, mobility and the Hispanic community.

### Key Findings

- While Hispanics trail other U.S. populations in overall Internet access, they are among the most avid users of mobile broadband. In fact, Hispanics and African Americans lead mobile broadband use (53% and 58% respectively), with both communities far ahead of Whites (33%).
- Hispanics are more mobile than the general U.S. population and, thus, rely more on cell phones. In fact, compared to Americans generally, Hispanics account for more minutes used and for a higher percentage of cell-phone ownership despite their relatively low incomes.

- Given that roughly 40% of U.S. Hispanics are born abroad<sup>1</sup>, in countries where wireless service often is more common than landline phones, the American Hispanic community is more open to mobile broadband than many other population groups. This familiarity makes the leap to smartphones and other connected mobile devices a more intuitive step for many than turning to wired, home broadband adoption and computer usage.
- In 2008, Hispanics outpaced the general population in accessing and downloading digital media (music, video, audio, movies, television programs, video games and podcasts), 42% to 35%<sup>2</sup>.

Broadband access is closely aligned with economic opportunities and a wide array of social benefits—from health care to public safety to education to government services. Thus, it is critical that Hispanics have a seat at the table in the development of a national broadband strategy. Broadband service—and particularly wireless broadband—affords Hispanics greater access to the diversity of benefits that modern connectivity brings into our lives. A few examples:

- **Education:** Parents are able to keep in close contact with their children’s teachers regarding assignments, behavior and academic progress while on the go thanks to texting, email and mobile connectivity.
- **Health Care:** Hispanics are more likely than other population groups to suffer from diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease. Personalized and immediate care, medication reminders and other timely interventions on their mobile devices can enhance their health while also reducing the costs of their medical care.

---

<sup>1</sup> Statistical Portrait of the Foreign-Born Population of the United States, Table 6: Population by Race, Nativity and Ethnicity, 2007, PEW Hispanic Center, 3/2009

<sup>2</sup> The Power of the Hispanic Consumer Online, Scarborough Research, 2009

- **Economy:** Expanded mobile banking options could greatly boost Hispanic economic opportunities, making core banking services more accessible to Hispanics, who are among the most entrepreneurial and mobile Americans.

Hispanic consumers are helping to lead the way for wireless broadband use. As we look to strategies to boost both infrastructure deployment and investment as well as consumer broadband adoption, we must not forget the pivotal role that wireless broadband infrastructure, innovation, services and applications play for millions of Americans.

### **Policy Implications**

New policies need to reflect and encourage increasing demand for mobile broadband access. More coherent and consumer-friendly tax policies are needed to help ensure that low-income Hispanics can continue to afford wireless broadband services. Lifeline/Link-up programs should continue to offer discounts to qualified low-income wireless customers. Policies should support the health and growth of the industry, so it can continue to create high-wage, high-tech jobs for a growing Hispanic population.

Expanding broadband connectivity is essential to current efforts to enhance our nation's economy and quality of life through broadband and wireless-fueled innovation. With rising connectivity, Hispanics will be able to enhance their many contributions to our nation's economic renewal and global competitiveness. Pending and future policies and investments must keep the unique needs of this community in perspective, and Hispanics must play a major role in the debate about their mobile and connected future.

## Introduction

As the largest minority group in the United States, Hispanics are a critical and growing population. Yet, in a country where the national economy and individual success are increasingly dependent on utilization of broadband technologies that are dramatically changing how Americans work and live, Hispanics have been among the last to embrace high-speed Internet connections. Encouragingly, however, Hispanics today are among those leading the global trend of using *mobile* wireless to access the Internet.

In fact, mobile broadband access has become a key resource to help many Hispanics succeed and thrive in today's economy. From improving health care to increasing educational

opportunities and access to government resources, wireless devices, services and applications offer Hispanics a new route to take full advantage of many life-enhancing resources.

...mobile broadband access has become a key resource to help many Hispanics succeed and thrive in today's economy...

A better understanding of how Hispanics utilize broadband can help illuminate efforts to close the digital divide and advance broadband-fueled opportunities for millions of Americans. Federal, state and local policies that spur investment, innovation and adoption are critical to continuing this trend to ensure that all Americans benefit from the broadband revolution.

## Demographics

There are more than 48 million Hispanics in the United States<sup>3</sup>. As a group, Hispanics are a diverse population made up of a number of distinct cultures and demographics. Among Hispanics, Mexicans are the largest group by far, with a population of 28,165,623; followed by Puerto Ricans at 3,998,264; Central Americans at 3,361,269; South Americans at 2,395,914; Cubans at 1,535,236; Dominicans (Dominican Republic) at 1,183,365; and Spaniards at 369,214<sup>4</sup>. Mexicans comprise almost two-thirds (63.98%) of the Hispanic population in the United States.

Although 81% of Hispanics are concentrated in 10 states (California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, Colorado, New Mexico and Georgia), Hispanics live

in all 50 states. As a percentage of their respective state populations, Hispanics are most concentrated in New Mexico (44%), followed by California (36%), Texas (36%), Arizona (29%), Nevada (24%), Florida (20%) and Colorado (20%)<sup>5</sup>. Whether as a total population or as a percentage of the

population, Hispanics are largely located in the Southwest and the East Coast.

Hispanics currently represent a significant segment of the American population, and they are expected to become an even larger community in the future. U.S. Census Bureau projections indicate that there will be 132 million Hispanics in the U.S. by 2050, accounting for more than 30 percent of the total U.S. population.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau 2008 Population Estimates

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census, 2005-2007 American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census, 2005-2007 American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates

## Projections of the U.S. Population: 2010 to 2050\*

(Numbers in thousands)

	2010		2050	
	Population	Percent	Population	Percent
Total	320,233	100.00%	439,010	100.00%
White	200,853	62.72%	203,347	46.32%
Hispanic	49,726	15.53%	132,792	30.25%
Black	37,985	11.86%	51,949	11.83%
Asian	14,083	4.40%	33,418	7.61%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 Population Projections

\*Numbers and percentages do not add up since numbers have been rounded.

As a group, Hispanics are younger than the overall United States population. The median age for Hispanics is 27.3 years of age, compared to 36.4 years for the overall U.S. population and 39 years for non-Hispanic Whites. Hispanics lag in educational attainment. More than 40% of Hispanics have less than a high school diploma, while 27.8% have only a high school diploma. A mere 8.4% of Hispanics have earned a bachelor's degree, compared with 17% for the country at large. The low high school and college graduation rates for Hispanics are reflected in earning power. The per capita income for Hispanics is just \$15,190, compared to \$17,123 for African Americans, \$26,178 for the U.S. population as a whole, \$28,637 for Asian Americans, and \$28,953 for Whites<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census, 2005-2007 American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates

## Hispanics' Mobile Broadband Use Trends

There are certain common traits among groups that do not quickly adopt new technologies; they tend to be older, poorer and less educated than the rest of the population, while those who do adopt technology tend to be younger, wealthier and more educated<sup>7</sup>. This trend has been evident since the start of the technology boom in the late 1990s and early 2000s<sup>8</sup>. Although Hispanics are younger than the overall population, they are also poorer and less

...from 2004 to 2008, Hispanic Internet users with home broadband connections grew from 28% to 68%, while overall Internet users with home broadband connections grew from 31% to 71%...

educated. Many Hispanics have been latecomers to adopting home broadband connections, yet Hispanics have become among the most avid users of wireless services.

Looking more generally at overall Internet adoption, Hispanics have historically lagged behind the general population. But in recent years, Internet adoption among Hispanics has increased faster than for the general population. From 2004 to 2008, Hispanic Internet adoption increased from 48% to 54%, a 13% increase (on a relative basis), while overall U.S. Internet access increased from 64% to 69% during the same period, an 8% increase<sup>9</sup>. However, looking specifically at home broadband use, both groups grew at a substantial and more comparable pace. From 2004 to 2008, Hispanic Internet users with home broadband connections grew from 28% to 68%, while overall U.S.

<sup>7</sup> The Ever-Shifting Internet Population: A new look at Internet access and the digital divide, Pew Internet & American Life Project, April 2003

<sup>8</sup> The UCLA Internet Report, Surveying the Digital Future, Year Three, UCLA Center for Communication Policy, February 2003

<sup>9</sup> The Power of the Hispanic Consumer Online, Scarborough Research, 2009

Internet users with home broadband connections grew from 31% to 71%<sup>10</sup>. This demonstrates that—among the online population—connected Hispanics closely mirror the overall trend of connected Americans who are rapidly migrating from dial-up to high-speed Internet services. This is likely due in part to the fact that in 2008 Hispanics outpaced the general population in accessing and downloading digital media (music, video, audio, movies, television programs, video games and podcasts), 42% to 35%<sup>11</sup>. As digital content increasingly requires broadband speeds for downloading, Hispanic online use reflects how quickly Hispanics are adapting to more robust broadband offerings.

By 2009, Hispanics appear to have made a significant – yet incomplete – leap toward closing the digital divide. Hispanics are second only to African Americans (53% compared to 58%) in the use of mobile wireless devices to go online, well ahead of Whites (33%)<sup>12</sup>. At the same time, Hispanics use mobile devices more often than the general population, accounting for more minutes used and for a higher percentage of wireless device ownership<sup>13</sup>. Mobile adoption and usage among the Hispanic population has been bolstered by the proliferation of diverse offerings aimed at putting more mobile products and services within reach of lower-income customers. These options range from pre-paid calling options, to heavily subsidized smartphone offerings, to unlimited mobile text, phone and data plans as low as \$40 a month.

The greater diffusion of mobile broadband among Hispanics is largely driven by the younger segment of this population. As noted previously, the median age for Hispanics is lower

---

<sup>10</sup> The Power of the Hispanic Consumer Online, Scarborough Research, 2009

<sup>11</sup> The Power of the Hispanic Consumer Online, Scarborough Research, 2009

<sup>12</sup> Wireless Internet Use, Pew Internet & American Life Project, July 2009

<sup>13</sup> Customer Value Metrics Report, Telephia Press Release, January 2006,

than that of other ethnic groups in the United States. Younger people, under the age of 35, are the most active users of broadband technology, particularly for wireless access<sup>14</sup>.

---

<sup>14</sup> Wireless Internet Use, Pew Internet & American Life Project, July 2009

## A Mobile World and Hispanic Immigrants

In many developing countries, there are relatively few traditional telephone landlines due to infrastructure limitations. As a result, cell phone use often eclipses landline usage in many parts of the world. In Mexico, mobile phones have a 36% penetration rate, compared to only 16% for land lines, and in Chile penetration rates are 60% and 22%, respectively<sup>15</sup>, with similar rates in most Central and South American countries. As a result, many immigrants arrive in the United States with a propensity for mobile use. Transition to smartphones and other similar devices seems an easy step, which may partly explain why immigrants are more likely to have cell phones even if they have relatively lower incomes than the average U.S. resident.

...many immigrants arrive in the United States with a propensity for mobile phone use....

Additionally, immigrants tend to be more mobile<sup>16</sup> and have greater need for wireless services. Given that roughly 40% of Hispanics are foreign-born,<sup>17</sup> it adds to the facility with which Hispanics have migrated to wireless and broadband devices and services.

Citizens around the world have embraced the availability of numerous services through wireless broadband technologies, including educational, health, finance, business and news services<sup>18</sup>. Demographic differences among various Hispanic subgroups point to some potential insights into mobile broadband adoption and usage. For example, the median age differences

<sup>15</sup> Mariscal, Judith and Bonina, Carla, "Mobile Phone Usage in Mexico: Policy and Popular Dimensions," Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, Mexico, D. F., Mexico, 2006

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey, Selected Population Profiles

<sup>17</sup> Statistical Portrait of the Foreign-Born Population of the United States, Table 6: Population by Race, Nativity and Ethnicity, 2007, PEW Hispanic Center, 3/2009

<sup>18</sup> Education Possibilities With Mobile Broadband, Presentation by Qualcomm, Mobile Learning Conference 2009

among the groups (Mexicans the youngest at 27.3 years and Cubans the oldest at 40.1 years) would suggest that Mexicans might be more likely to use cell phones, laptops and other wireless devices to access services.

Additionally, lower rates of English spoken in the home could also help determine how extensively Hispanics make use of broadband-based resources. Overall, 61% of Hispanics feel that they speak English well, compared to 79% of Puerto Ricans, 59% of Mexicans, 57% of Cubans, 55% of South Americans and only 44% of Central Americans.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Census, 2005-2007 American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates

## **The Mobile Opportunity**

Mobile broadband access provides a vast array of options and new uses for technology that could enhance Hispanics' ability not just to connect, but to utilize their connections in ways that allow them to function more fully in society. Wireless broadband technology is helping many Hispanics overcome challenges, such as limited education and lower incomes that have presented significant obstacles in the past. In this respect, Hispanics' experience with wireless broadband technology is similar to the ways in which earlier technological advances, such as the telephone, the automobile

...wireless broadband technology is helping many Hispanics overcome challenges, such as limited education and lower incomes that have presented significant obstacles in the past...

and rural electrification, helped to improve the opportunities available to many Americans in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Broadband connectivity – and wireless Internet in particular – affords Hispanics greater access to educational, health, government and business opportunities.

### ***Educational Tools***

In addition to offering students new educational resources and tools, wireless access can help Hispanic parents keep in close contact with their children's teachers to check on assignments, behavior and classroom progress. Through the growing use of email and text messaging, parents and teachers can communicate whenever it is most convenient, and parents can maintain regular contact with teachers without repeatedly taking off time from work to attend parent-teacher meetings. Today, school web sites routinely allow teachers to post assignments, downloadable documents and links to education sites that can help students expand

their studies beyond the school day and are increasingly accessible to students and parents on the go from their smartphones and other broadband wireless devices.

The growing array of mobile education tools and lesson plans range from having students develop short mobile texting translations of classic literature to demonstrate reading comprehension to playing video games that teach age-appropriate math and vocabulary lessons

...a focus on mobile education innovation also helps ensure new academic efforts reach children from disadvantaged families, many of whom cannot afford the cost of a personal computer in the home...

in a fun and interactive way. Each of these pioneering efforts engages with our connected kids using a tool (their cell phone) that is far more robust and familiar to their everyday lives than a chalkboard. These innovative approaches also allow educators, parents and students to break down the walls between school, home and after-school environments. A focus on mobile education innovation also helps ensure new academic efforts reach children from disadvantaged families, many of whom

cannot afford the cost of a personal computer in the home.

Innovation in educational curriculum, online learning tools and wireless Internet access is creating a revolution in how we educate the next generation. Project K-Nect, in North Carolina, has developed a program to improve middle school math scores by providing students with smartphones to allow them to access educational tools in and out of the classroom. The smartphones allow the students to use Internet resources, such as [www.algebra.com](http://www.algebra.com), to use supplemental content that ties into what the teachers are covering in the classroom. Additionally,

the students can collaborate with other students after school hours and make regular contact with tutors who can help them with problems, strategies and specific skills<sup>20</sup>.

The mobile mindset of the younger Hispanic population thus offers a prime opportunity to take advantage of these fast-emerging innovations to improve educational attainment for Hispanics.

### **Health Care Access**

As the health care system faces greater demand for services, health care providers increasingly seek to achieve greater efficiencies by using telemedicine and other technological advances to help patients make use of their wireless devices to access a variety of health care

...using mobile devices, patients can receive text reminders to check blood sugar levels, take medications and exercise daily...

services, information and follow-up care<sup>21</sup>. This makes it possible for patients, such as Hispanics, who are more likely to suffer from diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease than some other groups, to receive more personalized and immediate care. Using mobile devices, patients can receive

text reminders to check blood sugar levels, take medications and exercise daily<sup>22</sup>. Mobile monitoring devices can log patient data and send it directly to health care providers. Today, insurance companies already send letters to policyholders about their use of medications. By

---

<sup>20</sup> Empowering Communities Worldwide Through 3G, Wireless Reach Initiative Report, March 2009

<sup>21</sup> Overcoming the Psychological Barriers to Telemedicine: Empowering Older Americans' to Use Remote Health Monitoring Services, New Millennium Research Council, February 2007

<sup>22</sup> Overcoming the Psychological Barriers to Telemedicine: Empowering Older Americans' to Use Remote Health Monitoring Services, New Millennium Research Council, February 2007

tracking prescription refills on diabetic medications, for example, insurers can determine when patients have stopped taking their medications, placing them at greater risk of diabetes-related complications. By using text messaging, the insurance company can shorten the time for delivering such notices to patients and speed life-enhancing interventions.

### ***Civic Engagement and Access to Government Services***

Like other groups, Hispanics recognize more and more the importance of being connected, especially if they seek to make a significant impact on how government at all levels functions and meets their needs. For example, government agencies have started using text messaging, email and social media to reach more constituents and make them part of the debate.

For example, after the November 2008 election, the Obama transition team set up [www.change.org](http://www.change.org), a web site that allowed anyone to participate in a variety of online discussions on key issues the incoming administration was trying to address. Taking part in these discussions, accessing videos and other elements of the web site required broadband access. Now, the official White House web site ([www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)) offers access to many briefing documents and videos, which also requires a broadband connection for effective access. Without broadband access, some Hispanics are missing out on critical information. As noted previously, only 54% of Hispanics are connected to the Internet. While rising numbers of Hispanics are connected, pockets of the community still do not have the ability to connect with local, state and federal government policymakers and resources in the digital world. At the same time, many of these non-online Hispanics do have wireless devices that could be used to take part in the national debate.

## **Business and Finance**

Hispanics are more likely than other groups to start their own business. Hispanics start businesses at three times the national rate<sup>23</sup>. Additionally, Hispanic-owned firms recently have had a 7.7% growth rate, compared to only 1.0% for the average U.S. firms<sup>24</sup>. At the same time, they are also among the most “unbanked” populations, meaning they do not have an on-going relationship with a bank. These two seemingly conflicting characteristics point to how mobile technology can benefit the Hispanic population. As small business owners, many Hispanics start their businesses from their homes. Mobile access to supplier and customer web sites often are essential to businesses that may be run out of a garage or even a car. Additionally, mobile banking may be more appealing to the roughly 40% of U.S. Hispanics who are foreign-born<sup>25</sup>

...Hispanics are more likely than other groups to start their own business. Hispanics start businesses at three times the national rate...

and often come to the United States from developing countries where mobile banking is more commonplace in everyday life. To fully take part in the American business mainstream, Hispanics must have access to mobile business and banking opportunities. Business and financial services firms need to continually innovate to serve this key, growing market.

<sup>23</sup> Survey of Business Owners: Hispanic-Owned Firms: 2002, U.S. Census Bureau, August 2006

<sup>24</sup> Latino-Business Barometer, RDA Global and The Latino Business Association, May 2005

<sup>25</sup> Statistical Portrait of the Foreign-Born Population of the United States, Table 6: Population by Race, Nativity and Ethnicity, 2007, PEW Hispanic Center, 3/2009

## Policy Analysis

For Hispanics to fully participate in all segments of American life, the United States will have to continue to expand its efforts to promote greater broadband access, competition and adoption for all communities. These include creating a climate that encourages continued infrastructure investment and innovation and ending regressive taxes on communications services that could make broadband service more expensive and limit or discourage broadband adoption for economically challenged communities. A recent study by former Clinton Administration economist Robert Shapiro and AEI economist Kevin Hassett, for example, shows that affordability is key to stimulating broadband adoption especially among lower-income consumers.<sup>26</sup>

Expanded broadband access is a key driver to growing the U.S. economy, and wireless will play a major role. The Obama Administration has recognized the need for increased investment in infrastructure and committed some economic stimulus funds to promote more widespread deployment and utilization of high-speed Internet. But much more investment is needed, and the Administration must continue to promote a climate that encourages more resources to flow into developing and improving wireless technologies, services and applications. Since broadband access is closely aligned with economic opportunities and a wide array of social benefits—from health care to education to government services—this issue is very real for Hispanics today. With rising connectivity, Hispanics will be able to enhance their many contributions to our nation’s economic renewal and global competitiveness.

---

<sup>26</sup> Hassett, Kevin A. and Shapiro, Robert J., “Towards Universal Broadband: Flexible Broadband Pricing and the Digital Divide,” Georgetown University, August 2009

While new infrastructure remains a priority for federal and state policymakers, the traditional approach has been to focus on investment in wired broadband networks (DSL, cable, fiber optic lines, etc). However, public demand and consumption patterns are showing a clear and compelling interest in mobile access, as well. Hispanic consumers are helping to lead the way for wireless broadband use. As the country transitions to an information-based economy, our nation must take steps to help its diverse populations adapt. New policies need to reflect and encourage increasing demand for mobile broadband access. Given rapidly changing consumer

Increasingly, wireless consumers are subject to a number of regressive taxes and fees applied uniquely to cell phones and cell phone customers that could drive Hispanics to reduce or even drop their wireless access, thus marginalizing them even more.

preferences, one possibility is that future demand will be primarily for wireless access. Therefore, policies being considered now must encourage robust investment to keep pace with this demand. This is especially critical for Hispanics due to their increasing residential mobility.

Hispanics, despite their lower per capita income, have been enthusiastic wireless consumers. However, that does not mean that pricing is unimportant. Increasingly, wireless consumers are subject to a number of regressive taxes applied uniquely to cell phones and cell phone customers that could

drive Hispanics to reduce or even drop their wireless access, thus marginalizing them even more. Current tax policies at the federal, state and local levels are decades-old and were imposed at a time when access to wireless technology was considered more of a luxury than a key communications tool. Coherent and consumer-friendly tax policies are needed to ensure that Hispanics, along with other minority and lower-income populations, can continue to afford wireless broadband services.

In conjunction with streamlined tax policies that would make broadband services affordable for Hispanics, Lifeline/Link-Up programs should continue to offer discounts to qualified, low-income wireless customers. Federal Communications Commission policies in support of a wireless broadband, direct-to-consumer subsidy will provide immediate help for lower-income Hispanics to be able to afford subscriptions to wireless broadband services. These policies are essential to help Hispanics make a complete transition to mobile participation in the new American innovation economy.

Some current policies encourage investment and innovation that advance our nation's information economy. Given the current economic crisis, such policies are necessary not only to promote our nation's economic recovery, but also to ensure that we can sustain American prosperity and leadership in the decades to come. While most industries have seen job losses during the current economic crisis, the wireless sector has seen a lower unemployment rate (3.1% in August 2009), compared to the overall rate (9.7%)<sup>27</sup>. Future job growth in the wireless sector is expected once the economy recovers. Over the next 10 years, employment in wireless is expected to grow by 5%<sup>28</sup>. Some subsectors of the industry will see employment gains of up to 30% during that same period, with largely high-wage, high-tech positions. Given that Hispanics comprise the largest segment of the K-12-age population and will make up the largest segment of the college-age population by 2035, this community will be a significant share of the future U.S. workforce. It is essential that state and federal policies encourage continued growth in these and other innovative fields that will create many of the future opportunities available to Hispanics and all Americans.

---

<sup>27</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table B-1. Employees on nonfarm payrolls by industry sector and selected industry detail, September 2009

<sup>28</sup> Career Guide to Industries, 2008-09 Edition, Bureau of Labor Statistics

## **Conclusion**

In conjunction with streamlined tax policies that would make broadband services affordable for Hispanics, Lifeline/Link-Up programs should continue to offer discounts to qualified, low-income wireless customers. Proposals at the Federal Communications Commission in support of a direct-to-consumer subsidy would provide immediate help for lower-income Hispanics to be able to afford subscriptions to wireless broadband services. These policies are essential to help Hispanics make a complete transition to mobile participation in the new American innovation economy.

