



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** David Englin, 703-505-6045, [denclin@edexcelencia.org](mailto:denclin@edexcelencia.org)

**Partnership between *Excelencia* in Education and Single Stop USA shows how to improve Community College success for Latinos**

**WASHINGTON, June 4, 2013** – *Excelencia* in Education and **Single Stop USA** today released a new report revealing how innovative community colleges across the country are making smart changes in their financial aid and student services that help thousands of Latino students gain access to millions of dollars to stay in and complete college. The report, “Supporting Latino Community College Students: An Investment in Our Economic Future,” includes a series of policy recommendations for federal, state, and institutional leaders to expand these successful practices across the country.

Latinos represent over 20 percent of students in K-12 education and are projected to increase their representation more than other demographic groups. However, in 2012, 21.3 percent of Latino adults had earned an associate degree or higher compared to 40.1 percent of all adults.

As America’s premier thought leader on accelerating Latino student success in higher education, *Excelencia* in Education was honored to collaborate with Single Stop USA to examine national data and institutional practices to better understand how Latino students pay for college and the factors that inform their college choices. As the report details, limited degree attainment among Latinos is the result of several challenges, including college cost, limited college knowledge, increased family responsibilities, and the need to work while enrolled. For example, many Latino students are the first in their family to attend college and make choices to contain costs by enrolling at community colleges, attending part-time, and working more than 20 hours per week while enrolled. Unfortunately, data show all these practical choices by students hinder their college completion.

Too few Latino students know there are resources available to assist with college costs. They are also less likely to access financial resources like tax credits, food assistance, and public health insurance that can enable them to maintain a stable family budget while enrolled. Single Stop USA and its community college partners connect thousands of students to millions of dollars in existing benefits and services that immediately reduce the financial strain faced by Latino students.

At 17 community colleges across America, including eight with more than 25 percent Latino enrollment, Single Stop sites are helping students to file their taxes, apply for government benefits, and receive financial and legal counseling from organizations in their communities. Thirty-eight percent of students served by Single Stop in 2012 were Latino, and more than 9,000 Latino community college students received pre-existing benefits and services to keep them enrolled.

Single Stop USA is part of Ensuring America's Future by Increasing Latino College Completion, *Excelencia* in Education's national initiative working to address the role of Latinos in making the U.S. the world leader in college degree completion. One of 65 partners from across seven sectors engaged in the, Single Stop USA employs a "one-stop" model in various contexts – in this case, community colleges – to connect low-income individuals with services for which they are already eligible. Other Ensuring America's Future partners focused on community college include the American Association of Community Colleges, California Community Colleges Miami Dade College, and Maricopa Community College District..

"Community colleges have long been the gateway to higher education for first-generation college students," said Dr. Walter G. Bumphus, president and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges, whose research was cited in the report. "With more than half of Latino college students enrolled in community colleges, supporting these students and connecting them with the services they need to ensure they graduate will be vital to the future strength and competitiveness of America's workforce."

"The data make it very clear that America's future economic success is deeply connected to Latino college completion," said Eduardo J. Padrón, president of Miami Dade College and chairman of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. "This collaboration between *Excelencia* in Education and Single Stop USA has provided important insight for institutions and policy makers working to accelerate college completion among Latinos

The report notes that, while the research, partnership, and services provided by *Excelencia* in Education and Single Stop provide a valuable starting place, it is necessary to bring these concepts to scale in order to deliver the necessary national improvements in degree completion. Therefore, the report makes the following recommendations for federal, state, and community college leaders:

- Federal policy makers can utilize Higher Education Act reauthorization to incentivize colleges to implement student services that are well aligned with retention, completion and employment outcomes, such as the models being developed by Single Stop.
- Complement investments in financial aid by providing student support services that address multiple barriers that can thwart Latino student completion.
- Improve targeting of information regarding financial aid by intentionally developing dissemination strategies that will more effectively reach Latino, low-income and other post-traditional students.
- Address antiquated eligibility rules that disqualify needy students from receiving aid that can help them complete college and attain self-sufficiency.

"As the largest community college district in America, we are on the front lines of serving these students," said Rufus Glasper, chancellor of Maricopa Community Colleges, which includes 10 community colleges serving more than 260,000 students around Phoenix, Ariz. "The analysis and recommendations in this paper will be incredibly helpful as we work to ensure all of our students have the support and tools they need to complete their degrees."

The report was made possible with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

"The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is proud to support this joint effort between *Excelencia* in Education and Single Stop USA," said Arelis Diaz, W.K. Kellogg Foundation program officer.

"As this latest paper demonstrates, strengthening the partnership between *Excelencia* in Education and Single Stop USA leverages the unique roles and expertise of both organizations to accelerate college completion among Latinos."

*Excelencia* in Education is a national non-profit organization that accelerates Latino student success in higher education by linking research, policy, and practice. Based in Washington, DC, *Excelencia* is building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers to address the need for a highly educated workforce and engaged civic leadership. For more information, visit [www.EdExcelencia.org](http://www.EdExcelencia.org).

Single Stop USA is a national non-profit organization dedicated to helping low-income individuals achieve financial self-sufficiency and economic mobility by combining access to existing resources and services with opportunities for education, training and support. For more information, visit [www.singlestopusa.org](http://www.singlestopusa.org).

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Mich., and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti.

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