

What We Build Next: Moving from Hispanic+ Leadership Representation to Developing Lasting Influence



The Hispanic+ community has made extraordinary progress over the past generation. More Hispanic+ leaders are reaching positions of influence across business, government, media and culture than ever before.

That progress raises an important question: **How do we ensure that this generation's leadership achievements becomes the foundation for the next?**

For decades, expanding Latino representation was a central goal. Today, the results of that work are increasingly visible. What once felt exceptional is becoming more common, and that progress should be celebrated. A generation ago, the idea that a Puerto Rican artist could headline the Super Bowl halftime show and perform in Spanish might have seemed improbable. Moments like that are powerful symbols of progress and evidence that barriers once considered immovable can, in fact, move.

Yet progress raises a new set of questions. As Hispanic+ leaders increasingly enter positions of influence, will the progress achieved by this generation endure? Will future leaders inherit stronger networks, broader opportunities and deeper pools of capital than those available today? Or will they face many of the same obstacles previous generations worked so hard to overcome?

History suggests that representation alone rarely guarantees lasting progress. Many communities produce successful individuals. Far fewer build systems that create opportunity across generations. Lasting progress happens when communities build the networks, institutions, leadership pipelines and access to capital that allow one generation's success to create opportunities for the next.

Research supports this idea. A [landmark study](#) from Harvard University's Opportunity Insights, led by economist Raj Chetty and analyzing more than 21 billion social connections, found that relationships across socioeconomic lines are among the strongest predictors of upward mobility. In other words, who we know and the networks we access can materially shape opportunity.

Looking across history, groups that have sustained influence over long periods have generally shared one characteristic: They invested in structures that outlasted individual leaders.

The Jewish community built extensive educational, philanthropic and civic institutions that helped preserve continuity and leadership across generations. The Black community created enduring organizations despite enormous barriers. Historically, Black colleges and universities comprise only a small fraction of U.S. higher education institutions, yet they produce a disproportionate share of Black leaders across business, government, law and medicine. More recently, parts of the Asian American community have deliberately built networks around entrepreneurship, leadership and access to capital.

Take organizations like Gold House: their work goes beyond just improving representation, and instead focuses on creating the relationships, platforms and investment needed to open doors for the next generation.

While each community is different, the lesson is clear: **For Hispanic+ leaders, now is the moment to transition beyond representation and into institution-building.**

The economic influence of the Hispanic+ community has grown dramatically. Latino GDP now represents one of the largest economic forces in the world, fueled by extraordinary rates of entrepreneurship and consumer power. Across sectors, more Hispanic leaders occupy positions of real authority.

Yet economic relevance and institutional influence don't always advance at the same pace. Communities can become economically significant long before they develop the institutions and networks necessary to sustain influence across generations. Closing that gap may represent one of the most important opportunities for the Hispanic+ community.

Achieving that long-lasting influence will require each of us to act. If you serve on a board, who are you helping bring into the room? If you lead a company, who are you sponsoring and developing? If you allocate capital, where are you investing to create opportunities? If you work in academia, how are you helping develop the next generation of leaders? If you serve in government, the nonprofit sector or civic institutions, how are you strengthening the systems that shape long-term outcomes?

The next chapter of Hispanic+ leadership will be defined by what we do once we get there. The question for each of us is simple: **What legacy will my leadership leave behind?**

Building a lasting community ultimately comes down to what each of us chooses to do with the influence we have. It means opening doors for others, investing in the next generation and making sure the opportunities we have earned don't stop with us.





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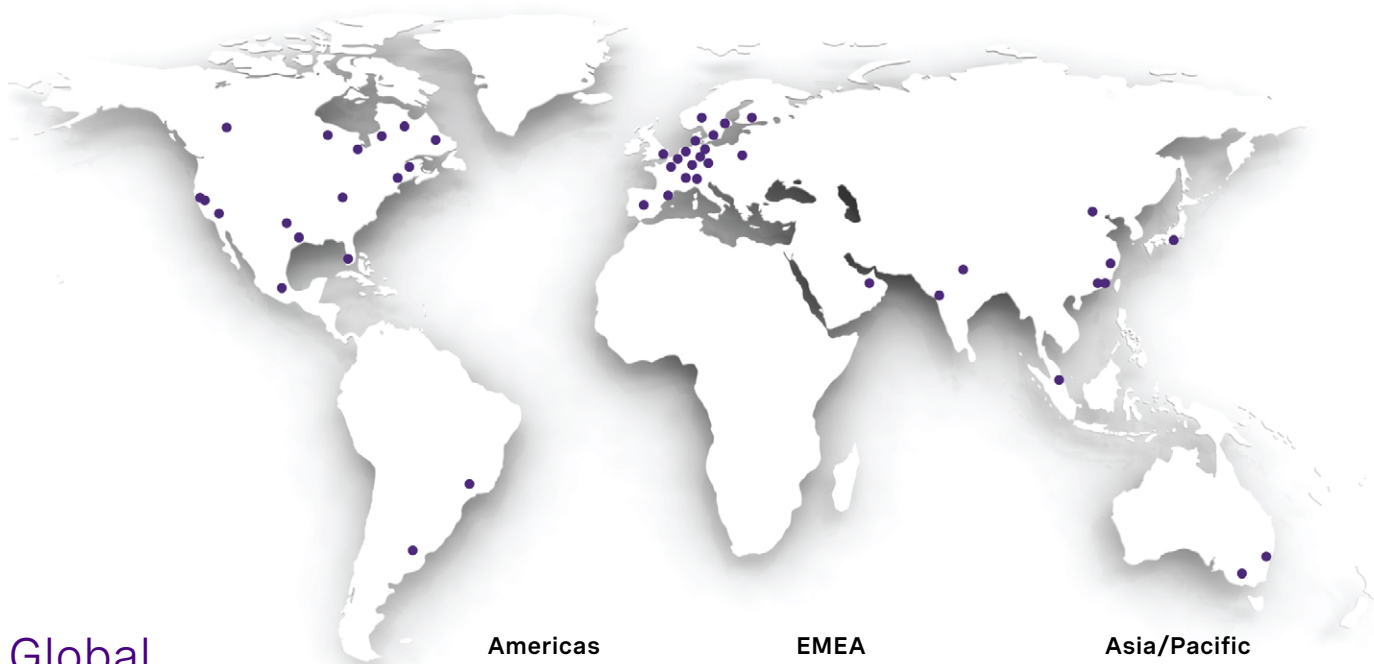
Footnote

The term Hispanic+ was coined by Russell Reynolds Associates and Clearlake Capital to signify inclusiveness within this broadly defined under-represented minority group. The terms Hispanic, Latino and/or US Latino can be sometimes used interchangeably; hence, this new term focuses on being inclusive of all existing definitions.

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