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PRESS RELEASE  
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## **Survey: Hispanic and Black Floridians Most Likely to See a Bachelor's Degree as Necessary for Future Workforce Success**

*But Many Challenges Deter Education Attainment for Minorities*

A new survey conducted on behalf of Helios Education Foundation and the Florida College Access Network found that most Floridians believe a Bachelor's degree or higher is necessary for economic and workforce success — a view most strongly held by Hispanics and Blacks, who trail white Floridians by double digits in degree attainment.

Sixty-five percent of Hispanics, and 58% of Blacks surveyed said they believe that a Bachelor's degree is needed for success in the future workforce, compared to 50% of white Floridians. And while most Floridians surveyed (58%) believe that all students can achieve a postsecondary degree regardless of race and socioeconomic status, Hispanic and Black Floridians were more likely to strongly disagree.

Those surveyed cited a number of barriers to access a college education, especially cost, and said they don't believe that high schoolers are adequately prepared for college. Blacks and Hispanics were least likely to view a college education as affordable and most likely to cite cost as a barrier to attaining a credential beyond high school.

"Hispanic and Black Floridians will make up a majority of the workforce by 2030, so it's critical for Florida that we close the attainment gap among these groups," said Paul J. Luna, President and CEO of Helios Education Foundation. "By helping more students overcome barriers to degree completion we strive to ensure educational equity for all students, ensuring Florida benefits from a richly diverse workforce."

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Sixty percent of those surveyed said they believe that any student who wants to pursue a college degree or credential beyond high school should have access to that education. And half of those surveyed agreed that equity is a top issue when it comes to ensuring that Florida has a strong workforce for the future. An overwhelming majority of parents (94%) across all races and ethnicities believe at least one of their children will go to college, with the percentage going up as parents have more education themselves.

Most Florida college students (53%) are from lower-income households and qualify for the Pell grant and other forms of need-based financial aid. But many, especially those who might come from families where college is not the norm, may not know how to navigate the system to overcome barriers and gain access.

“Research has suggested time and again that paying for college is the biggest barrier keeping students from attaining a degree, yet every year Florida students leave millions of dollars in Pell Grants on the table,” said Charleita M. Richardson, Executive Director of Florida College Access Network. “These survey results show that, now more than ever, Florida students and families need the supports to successfully move through the college application and financial aid processes.”

The survey of 1,688 Florida voters was conducted for Helios by Sachs Media Group July 27-August 3 with a 2.5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level.

### **About Helios Education Foundation**

Helios Education Foundation is dedicated to creating opportunities for individuals in Arizona and Florida to achieve a postsecondary education. The Foundation’s work is driven by four fundamental beliefs in Community, Investment, Equity, and Partnership. Helios invests in programs and initiatives across the full education continuum – from early grade success through postsecondary education. In Arizona, where Latino students comprise the largest percentage of the K-12 public school population, the Foundation is implementing its Arizona Latino Student Success initiative focused on preparing all students – especially students in high poverty, underserved Latino communities – for success. Through Helios’ Florida Regional Student Success Initiative, the Foundation is helping first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students from the state’s large population centers of Miami, Orlando and Tampa Bay achieve a postsecondary education. Since 2006, the Foundation has invested more than \$243 million in education programs and initiatives in both states. To learn more about Helios, visit <http://www.helios.org/>.

### **About Florida College Access Network**

Florida College Access Network (FCAN) is Florida’s first collaborative network committed to ensuring all Floridians have the opportunity to achieve an education beyond high school and prosper in Florida’s dynamic economy. We envision a Florida working together where education is the pathway to economic mobility for all. For more information, visit [floridacollegeaccess.org](http://floridacollegeaccess.org).

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