

Mobile: Key to Economic Empowerment

Monica Martinez, Mobile Future Advisor

Mobile is a game changer, providing endless opportunities to both consumers and entrepreneurs. Despite mobile's clear stake in *consumer empowerment*, mobile isn't always seen as a tool for *economic empowerment*.

70% of African Americans and 71% of Hispanics own a smartphone, making them “super users” of mobile technology—over indexing on social media, mobile online purchasing, and video streaming.

However, these groups lag in the annual \$548 billion that mobile innovation contributes to the U.S. economy. In a recent [Mobile Future](#) survey, “[Crossing the New Digital Divide: Connecting to Mobile Economic Empowerment](#),” 59% of African Americans viewed mobile primarily as a consumer tool and only 24% viewed it as a means of economic empowerment. And the numbers of women, Latinos, and African Americans in the field are discouraging:

- Women account for only 5% of tech engineers and start up founders
- Latinas represent less than 1% of degrees earned in computer and info sciences.
- Of students earning degrees in computer science or computer engineering, Hispanics account for just 6.5% and African Americans only 4.5%.

We must:

1. Magnify personal exposure to the technology industry. Over half of the African Americans participants in the Mobile Future survey said they did not know someone working in the technology industry. Those who did know someone, however, were 33% more likely to have an interest in a tech career and 56% more likely to be interested in being a mobile entrepreneur.

2. Boost mobile technology information for students and families. When students are well-informed about career opportunities within mobile tech, they are more likely to view it as a viable career choice.

3. Expand training for mobile entrepreneurship and mobile business training for non-tech businesses. According to a survey by the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, mobile marketing, business apps, and coding tools are key areas of need for small business.

Mobile can be a powerful tool for economic empowerment if we amplify awareness, information, and training. All communities should realize the power and promise of mobile as the great game changer it is.