

6 Hispanic/Latinx People Making a Difference

In any group of people, there will be stars, influencers, leaders and philanthropists. But once in a while, those special few people prove to be the complete package. Let's take a look at some of the Hispanic community's most influential difference-makers doing their part to lift marginalized communities.



Chef José Andrés

The famous chef and restaurateur is also the founder of World Central Kitchen, a nonprofit devoted to providing meals in areas where natural disasters have occurred. He was awarded the National Humanities Medal for 2015 and is considered an influential figure best known for bringing "tapas"-style dishes to America. In 2021, Jeff Bezos announced that Andrés would be one of the first two recipients of the Courage and Civility Award, which comes with a \$100 million donation from Bezos. Andrés has pledged the award toward doubling food aid efforts at World Central Kitchen in a continued effort to fight hunger and food insecurity.



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

The representative from New York's 14th congressional district has too many legislative and political accomplishments to list in a paragraph. She couldn't even fit them neatly into two minutes of rapid dialogue for her YouTube channel and the list will continue to grow following her re-election in 2020 with 72% of the vote. She's become a target for right-wing attacks and rhetoric but has stood tall in the face of everything to co-sign 78 pieces of legislation, 14 of which were signed into law. She's not been short on charity work either. In late 2020, the 31-year-old congresswoman live-streamed the game *Among Us* on Twitch on numerous occasions to encourage everyone to vote in the 2020 election and also to raise \$200,000 for food banks, eviction defense legal funds and community organizations.

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Indya Moore

The model/actor of Puerto Rican and Dominican roots has become a star on screen and off it due to their work as an activist for transgender causes and advocacy of showcasing realistic representations of trans people on screen. In 2020, the star of FX's *Pose* raised funds to help Black and trans people navigate the uncertainty of COVID-19. In 2021, Moore teamed up with Tommy Hilfiger to launch the TommyxIndya collection to create gender-fluid fashion options.



Carmen Maria Machado

Look at a list of the most influential sci-fi or horror fiction writers of all time and you're likely going to see a collection of mostly white male faces. That may be changing with the arrival of Machado, however. The 35-year-old author from Pennsylvania has established herself as one of the most influential voices in sci-fi, fantasy and horror writing of the last decade. She's a regular contributor of short stories and essays published in *The New Yorker* and other literary magazines, breaking boundaries for LGBTQ authors through her explorative, genre-bending work.



Mj Rodriguez

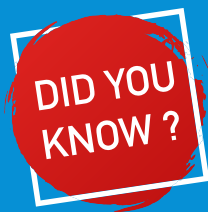
Another star of FX's *Pose*, Rodriguez has gone beyond film and stage to kickstart a music career under Michaela Jaé. The breakout star has also moved into trans activism, particularly the Black Trans Lives Matter movement. The winner of the 2018 Hispanic Heritage Trailblazer Award, Rodriguez has supported and helped fundraise for the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), which works to ensure safe schools for all students, and The Trevor Project, an advocacy group focused on suicide prevention among LGBTQ youth.

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Belcalis Almánzar, aka “Cardi B”

A controversial figure to some because of her song lyrics or spending habits, the rapper known as Cardi B has done her share to lift people up in the past year. After donating more than \$1 million to coronavirus relief funds, she gave another million to fans via Cash app and 20,000 meal supplements for New York area hospitals to distribute to medical staff. She followed that by challenging her detractors on Instagram to post their receipts of what they’d donated to charity and offered to match them in giving to those same charities.



More than 20 million Latinos identified with more than one race on the 2020 census, up from 3 million in 2010.



Discussion Questions for Employees

- How should companies look to highlight the achievements and contributions of Hispanic/Latin American citizens more?
- Many of the people mentioned here showcase how intersectionality makes people and their experiences complex. How do you think that intersectionality changes their experience as Hispanic/Latin/Latinx citizens?