

ICHLA Tax Issues Committee  
6/20/06

Attendees:

ICHLA Commissioner Claudia Ontiveros-Fuentes, IEDC  
Joe Vandevender, IDOR  
Veronica Guerrero, Community Leader/Activist  
Amy Mendoza, ICHLA Executive Director  
Ryan C. Marques, ICHLA Staff

Items Discussed:

- Director Mendoza welcomed everyone in attendance and presented a brief overview of the Commission and the Tax Issues Committee.
- Commissioner Ontiveros-Fuentes addressed the Committee's goals and asked the attendees if they would like to express their thoughts concerning the goals and the Indiana Latino tax issue.
- Mr. Vandevender pointed out that it would be very imperative to include the participation of the IRS with this Committee.
- Mr. Vandevender stated that the largest responsibility of every tax payer is the federal tax imposed by the IRS.
- Ms. Guerrero pointed out that many Latinos (construction workers) are filing their taxes through the 1099 form.
- Ms. Guerrero stated that those individuals who file a 1099 form are acting as if they own their own business due to how the majority of taxes are withheld throughout the year, thus placing a strain on these individuals who must pay a lump sum to the IRS and IDOR when taxes are due.
- Mr. Vandevender stated that many of these individuals filing the 1099 form are unaware of the many tax deductions that could be filed in contrast to the W9 form.
- Ms. Guerrero stated that it is important to educate the Latino community through the means of media (radio) regarding the many ways to file one's taxes through the use of the ITIN number.
- Ms. Guerrero mentioned that a monthly seminar presented by the Commission, IDOR, IRS and tax professionals regarding tax filing and tax issues would be very beneficial for the Latino community.
- Mr. Vandevender stated that he knows the two directors of H&R Block that facilitate Indiana's entire H&R Block's business and franchises.
- Mr. Vandevender stated that it would be worthwhile to meet with these two individuals and designate at least two offices in Indianapolis where Latinos can have their taxes prepared in a culturally competent environment.
- Mr. Vandevender also stated that it is important to include as many tax preparer businesses into this plan, not solely H&R Block.

- Ms. Guerrero stated that many Latinos have not experienced quality service from places such as H&R Block.
- Ms. Guerrero also mentioned that those Latinos without documentation have a difficult time accessing federal buildings in Indianapolis due to lack of identification. This impedes the opportunity for Latinos to receive help.
- Mr. Vandevender stated it is important to first educate the individuals who would be working with the Latino community regarding tax issues.
- Mr. Vandevender mentioned that by creating a system where everyone is on the same page regarding the policies of the IDOR, IRS and tax professionals would be the most efficient and effective way to tackle this problem.
- Mr. Vandevender stated that a large fear factor still exists between Latinos and the U.S. government. This fear factor is the main deterrent that inhibits more Latinos in paying taxes or taking the time to ask questions.
- Mr. Vandevender expressed that he has a wealth of contacts that took interest in helping Latinos with Indiana's new amnesty tax program.
- Director Mendoza stated that it would be worthwhile to contact those individuals in order to see if they would be interested in joining this committee and helping the IDOR, IRS and tax professionals in the creation of the Latino tax system.
- Ms. Guerrero stated that it is important to educate the IDOR front desk clerks and others about the Individual Tax Identification Number and its use on preparing tax returns for people who do not maintain a Social Security number.
- Mr. Vandevender stated that it is important that we create a system where we will be able to identify who needs help, establish a trust between the Latino community and the Federal government and locate those resources which are most effective.
- Mr. Vandevender also stated that it would be very beneficial to promote to the general public and legislators how much the Latino community pays in taxes when considering immigration legislation.
- Director Mendoza mentioned that it would be worthwhile to research if other State Latino Commissions have implemented a Latino Tax friendly service.
- Director Mendoza stated that we need to contact a representative from the IRS in Indianapolis. (Star)
- Mr. Vandevender expressed that we should have these ideas, contacts and commitments by at least the first of October 2006.
- Mr. Vandevender also mentioned that once a system has been created, it would be beneficial to implement the system into IDOR's 11 offices throughout the state in order to create more opportunities for Latinos to pay their taxes in a friendlier and culturally competent environment.
- Commissioner Ontiveros-Fuentes read through the rest of the goals in the strategic plan and mentioned that we need to revise the plan in order to mirror what has been stated in this meeting.