

ICHLA INversión 2010
Statewide Virtual Strategy Summit
Friday, September 24, 2010, 9am–2pm
Ivy Tech Community College

INTRODUCTION

The ICHLA INversión 2010 Statewide Virtual Strategy Summit brought together more than 240 community leaders from throughout the state to five regions, people from a variety of personal and professional backgrounds committed to finding comprehensive and collaborative solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing Latinos in Indiana. This was no ordinary conference. Instead, this was an opportunity for problem-solvers to share their experiences and strategies, explore new relationships with other stakeholders, and develop innovative ways to more efficiently and effectively address these obstacles. With the help of Ivy Tech Community College, each of our regions was connected via video technology, and participants were able to engage each other from all across the state.

This strategy plan is an attempt to synthesize the large amounts of information that were collected at each of our regions and across Indiana. The conversations were expansive, and these in no way are the only problems and challenges being faced by our communities in the state. Far more information was provided than can be captured here, and we encourage readers to contact partners on the participant list provided at www.in.gov/ichla to learn more about these and other initiatives. Moreover, we understand that not all strategies make sense for all communities. This plan, then, simply outlines what consensus issues were constant across regions, briefly outlines a small number of the programs already in existence, and provides suggestions for new strategies that might be tailored to fit communities in some iteration.

In all cases, we are encouraging collaboration, not duplication. Amazing programs exist throughout the state, and this Strategy Summit and this plan hopefully provide readers with some insight into what is already being done. The hope is that partnerships fostered through this process will continue to grow and give rise to more effective programming rather than more of the same. We want to identify what is truly working and put it to use throughout the state, all the while weeding out those programs that don't achieve these ends and redirecting energy and resources to new approaches.

Again, you'll note that not every piece of information, strategy, or experience was included. Rather, as much information as could be digested was broken down into relevant topics, and this will hopefully initiate a process that will yield further community conversations and yield some tangible, practical, and impactful results.

Education

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT AND A FAMILY-CENTRIC APPROACH TO EDUCATION

Developing strategies meant to engage Latino parents and enhance their understanding of and participation in the formal educational process of Indiana's public school system is a critical element to addressing the growing educational achievement gap. It is significant that in study after study, Latino parents consistently indicate that the educational success of their children is one of their most important issues, yet those same studies often highlight the need for greater engagement between Latino parents and the schools that service their families.

All regions noted in this discussion that school districts should be using family-centric strategies, focusing resources and attention on bringing parents to the schools and helping them develop the comfort with and understanding of the system. This will allow them not only to remain informed and become active partners in the educational development of their children, but it will give them the tools necessary to become passionate advocates for their children's rights.

Existing Programming

Several existing programs and initiatives aimed at bridging this existing gap between Latino parents and schools were mentioned in the different regions of the state during this discussion. The New Neighbors program in New Albany, for example, has created a framework for community joint ownership of the responsibility of reaching Latino families. By pooling the resources and human capital available through the New Albany schools, Indiana University-Southeast, and the greater community, a structure is now in place that allows for true direct communication with parents and creates the cultural competency so critical to the long-term success of any such program. Perhaps most interestingly, IU-Southeast's Education faculty has received similar training and is now building competency into their own syllabi, ensuring that students graduating from that program – essentially, Indiana's education leadership of tomorrow – will have received the training they'll need to effectively service the local Latino population.

Other models of engagement that have been successfully implemented include the one initiated by North Township in Lake County, whereby parents of school-aged children receiving public assistance are required to sign contracts indicating their commitment to participation, attend all mandatory parent-teacher meetings, and personally pick up their children's report cards. Collaborating with the East Chicago and Hammond school districts, this policy has created a greater sense of involvement and accountability on the part of Latino parents and has fused the educational and municipal efforts to generate collaborative success.

Other programs throughout the state have had similar success. Latino parent liaisons in Bloomington, South Bend, Lake County, and Indianapolis have made strides in accessing and educating growing Latino communities. Additionally, the existence of intake centers throughout the state was noted as an important component to being able to fully engage Latino parents and develop important awareness about ancillary and tangential programs available through the schools and local colleges and universities.

Consensus Strategies

- Encouraging school districts to realign priorities to make intake centers for Latino parents a reality; or, work with private sector partners to create an annual funding source. Efforts have been made in several school corporations to fund these centers. Collaborations between multiple school corporations to form one intake center for the region could be an adequate start, make it easier to garner private dollars, and demonstrate their effectiveness and need through tangible and metric-based data collection.
- Partnerships between local faith-based organizations, social service agencies, and the individual schools will allow access to Latino parents in places more greatly identified as “comfort zones.” Multiple regions identified lack of bilingual staff at schools and overall intimidation as reasons that Latino parents hesitate to engage the schools of their children. By partnering with churches and community centers, school personnel can still have communication with Latino parents, encourage their participation, and help them take advantage of existing programming.
- Wherever possible, school corporations should be looking to hire bilingual educators and staff in an effort to facilitate a sense of comfort for Indiana’s growing minority population, be it with respect to Latinos or those of other backgrounds. While many school corporations and individual schools do have bilingual Latinos in the classrooms and on staff, other regions have fallen behind. Similarly, universities and colleges should be investing a portion of their recruitment dollars toward identifying high-achieving Latinos for careers in education.
- A number of the regions indicated that many Latino parents could not participate due to demands with other children, transportation, and work. Providing information on public transportation to parents as they register their children for school could help alleviate travel issues. Many schools currently do provide this information, but again the need for a “friendly face,” liaisons, and intake centers are accentuated. Additionally, schools could tap into churches or local colleges to find volunteers to watch younger siblings of children whose parents attend parent-teacher conferences or PTA meetings. This is something currently being done in many places throughout the state and could be made to be essentially budget-neutral by leaning on colleges or community volunteer groups.

- Communities should bring together municipal and faith-based leaders, community organizations, public and private schools, and local colleges and universities to provide parental awareness sessions to local Latino parents. By pooling resources, facilities could be made available – preferable at “comfort zone” locations for parents – and instructors from the community could be identified. Several communities have or currently have iterations of this initiative, however in order for it to truly thrive it must be owned by all key community stakeholders. By having comprehensive and collaborative conversations, each unit can identify those resources they can provide and a community-wide effort to provide Latino parents with a better understanding of all that is available to them and their children can be executed.

Additional Important Strategies and Recommendations Discussed

- Use PTAs to build programming through which Latino parents “educate” ESL teachers about cultural competency. Education is a two-way street.
- Build coalitions. Models that work incorporate all aspects of life important to Latinos, from churches to community centers to schools to volunteer networks.
- Materials sent home to parents should be bilingual for Spanish-speaking parents, which will allow them access to the important information being distributed through the schools. Whenever possible, partner with colleges or volunteer groups to translate materials.
- Communities and surrounding areas should develop comprehensive surveys of the educational resources available to be translated into Spanish and provided to Latino parents.
- Volunteer interpreters – perhaps Spanish students from local colleges – should be recruited to attend PTA meetings so that Latino parents can feel comfortable attending.

TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCY FOR LATINO PARENTS

A major component to increasing all-around access to information and enhancing understanding and educational participation for Latino parents involves closing the technology gap. As more and more information becomes available electronically, Latino parents who lack basic technology and computer skills are often left without a time-effective way of

communicating with their children's schools. Having access to email and the internet will inevitably allow parents to communicate with teachers and administrators on their own time.

Of course, other challenges exist that could potentially serve as barriers to this enhanced communication. Clearly, the language barrier is a concern. Linguistically-isolated Latino parents who gain basic technological skills might still find it difficult to communicate to education personnel who are not themselves bilingual. However, these basic skills are essential as individuals also develop the language skills necessary to communicate and as schools increase the number of bilingual personnel servicing this population.

Existing Programming

The certification and non-certification programs pieced together by Monterrey Tech and delivered through various Purdue Extensions throughout the state are an important and often underutilized service to the Latino public. Coursework and general education is provided in a number of different areas, including basic tech skills and language enhancement courses for adults. There are costs associated with this programming, such as licensing and facilities, but partnering with community organizations, community colleges, or four-year colleges and universities might allow for a collaborative resource-sharing relationship. Moreover, churches or social service organizations might be willing and able to provide transportation to existing regional centers a few miles away. Grants and private funding sources could be obtained to help offset costs if organizations can demonstrate a reach beyond their immediate community, another important aspect to cross-community collaboration.

Many municipalities, such as South Bend and Fort Wayne, offer computer skills training as part of Recreation programming. Fees and the lack of bilingual instructors may serve as a barrier, however these fees are generally low and might be offset if partnerships can be reached with city governments. Bilingual or Spanish-speaking individuals could be recruited to volunteer an hour a week to provide classes in Spanish utilizing the facilities and equipment already available through the municipality. If basic classes are subsidized, cities might see increased revenue from Latinos who later choose to take more advanced courses. Moreover, this service would help Latinos better engage teachers and schools and would give them another vehicle to advocate for their children.

Consensus Strategies

- Strengthened partnerships between 2-year and 4-year colleges and the communities in which they reside would facilitate the closing of the existing technology gap. Of course, many Latinos may be wary of coming to a college

campus, as again the issue of “comfort zone” is an important one. However, college staff may be willing to volunteer their time and expertise to help provide technical training at churches, local schools, or even public libraries.

- Student groups, Latino alumni associations, and even college and university computer classes could be encouraged to volunteer their time and expertise to provide basic training in Spanish to Latino parents. Again, the issue of time – classes could be held on the weekends or evenings – and childcare – organizations such as local churches or even municipalities could provide for supervision on a volunteer basis – would have to be addressed, and community-centric approaches would have to be developed to do so. Training by students could be incorporated into their service requirements or class projects.
- Nearly all new funding proposals made available through the federal government require collaboration between communities and research organizations. If such partnerships can demonstrate a true need and impacts such trainings would have, colleges might be more receptive to collaborating with community organizations in order to replace their technology inventory. In exchange, colleges and universities could allow usage of facilities for organizations servicing Latino communities to provide training in Spanish.
- Enhancing and expanding upon programs like the ones available through Monterrey Tech would be valuable in helping Latinos gain skills needed across a variety of topics. Certificate and non-certificate programs alike provide important competency in basic computer skills. Currently, this programming is provided through Purdue Extensions throughout the state, so partnering with them and other community colleges, organizations, churches, and local schools to combine resources might allow costs to be offset and grow the reach of the information and training being provided.

Additional Important Strategies and Recommendations Discussed

- By partnering with public libraries and recruiting volunteer services, a system can be developed whereby computer literacy training is coupled with weekend reading programs to provide parents and children alike an incentive to participate. While the child is in the reading program, parents are taught computer literacy.
- By pooling community resources, identifying potential partnerships for grants, and leaning on local private funding sources, develop parent education centers whereby Latino parents who register their children for ESL programs can receive computer literacy training.

PROGRAMMATIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR LATINO STUDENTS

Across all regions, group discussions centered around the continued need for opportunities, both curricular and extracurricular, available to Latino students. Exposing Latinos to experiences outside of their norm is critical developing in them the expectations for success, the understanding of what is achievable through education, and the mentoring necessary to help prepare them for the future.

Research indicates that children only aspire to that with which they are familiar. Internships, summer scholastic programming, and work experiences are all important to developing expectations, and they can help to facilitate the lasting mentor-mentee relationships and friendships that can have positive ramifications into their professional careers. While these initiatives are often costly, many currently exist that can be enhanced or blended to provide a wider range of Latino students with these types of critical experiences.

Existing Programming

A number of these types of programs exist currently throughout the state and have already had an enormous impact on Latino students. Organizations like the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute, Project HOPE, Project Stepping Stone, and MESA service hundreds of students every year and provide them with the experiences so needed in transforming and shaping their futures. Moreover, these organizations often boast Latino leaders on their boards that can serve as exemplary models of what is achievable through hard work, discipline, and personal responsibility.

While these are some of the programs that were discussed by the regions, any number of similar programs exist here in Indiana. However, as with similar programming, knowledge of their existence as well as an understanding of how to apply is not always significant in some communities. Many schools and organizations do an excellent job of recruiting students or encouraging them to apply, but it is sometimes challenging for these organizations to reach students in certain regions. Strategies must be aimed at finding new ways to communicate with these disenfranchised students to encourage them to participate in this type of programming.

Consensus Strategies

- Many Latino students have to help provide for their families during the school year and in the summers. In Indiana, just fewer than 20% of high school students work, though more than 54% of those work more than 20 hours a week. By soliciting the help of private companies or organizations, stipends could be provided to participants to allow for greater participation among a wider demographic of Latinos in Indiana.

- A number of existing programs are limited in size because of manpower and associated costs. “Localizing” these programs would enable communities to recreate the experiences in a community-centric way and could be made feasible by partnering with local colleges and universities, churches, community centers, and schools.
- Incorporating teen mentorships into existing programming can help students develop the lasting peer relationships to serve as a support structure long-term. Some programs that currently utilize this technique bring back program graduates to help lead discussions or workshops.

Additional Important Strategies and Recommendations Discussed

- Lean on Hispanic chambers of commerce, of which there are several throughout the state, to partner for mentorship and internship opportunities. Liability and stipend payment issues must be worked out ahead of time.
- Work with university alumni associations to develop mentorship programs. These can serve to fulfill service opportunities for the associations and expose high school Latino students to existing college opportunities. These can be spear-headed by churches or existing community organizations.
- Advocate to local elected leaders about positions and internships in their offices. Every year, positions are filled for US House and Senate page programs. Latinos are drastically underrepresented.
- Civic engagement and leadership development are critical. USHLI has a variety of programs aimed at this issue, but greater participation in the political process, voter registration, and civic education from an early age is important to developing future Latino leaders into true decision-makers.

CLOSING THE COMMUNICATION GAPS

Schools, community organizations, all levels of government, and other stakeholders share the incredible responsibility of ensuring that parents of all backgrounds have access to the important information that is critical to the educational success of their children. All too often, Latino parents are not aware of their rights, of the resources available to them through the schools, and of the opportunities that exist for their sons and daughters to achieve in the classroom. Bridging this communication gap requires a realignment of resources and a realization that traditional vehicles of communication may not work for Latino families in all communities.

Strategies aimed at providing information to Latino parents are crucial if agencies and organizations are ever to reach these individuals in substantial numbers. Many schools send information home with students that never reaches parents. Too often, documents are not translated into other languages, so parents in linguistically isolated households (according to the United States Census Bureau, 24% of Latino households in Indiana are linguistically isolated) do not fully understand the nature of the materials being sent home. While many organizations language training for adults and many native Spanish speakers participate, it is important to recognize that the process of language acquisition for adults is a tedious and sometimes difficult one. Nonetheless, information about education is something all parents in Indiana should have access to.

Additionally, information specifically for Latino families about youth programming, scholarship opportunities, and family resources are rarely found in one place. A significant number of programs and resources are generally available to Latinos throughout Indiana, and yet many families have little to no knowledge of their existence. Marketing and advertising can be costly, but utilizing community partners to spread the word should simplify the process and keep costs low.

Existing Programming

Spanish-language community radio and print outlets are important tools for providing much needed information to parents about their children's schooling. Several communities throughout the state have been able to effectively utilize community radio stations, for example, to produce bilingual or Spanish-language programming. Often times, these programs can be produced at little or no costs while providing an important source of information to Latino families, provided stations are willing to donate or negotiate rates for air time. HOLA Bloomington is one example of programming that works, with a strong listenership and a variety of topics covered throughout the weeks and months that help organizations tap into Latino communities.

Local Spanish-language newspapers, newsletters, and bulletins are another effective way to disseminate information among Latino populations. Indianapolis has several, as do other regions in the state. However, areas outside of major cities and more rural parts of the state don't always have these outlets available to them. This communication gap has made it increasingly difficult for these families, often young parents with young children, to get the information they need to advocate for their children in schools. All regions in this discussion noted the importance of enhancing the number of bilingual options available for the public, either through print or radio, as a means to provide information about local schools and businesses.

Consensus Strategies

- Support for community radio is essential. Private organizations and businesses must step up to provide the basic resources available to enhance existing programming or initiate programming where none exists. For those Latinos that lack that computer or even literacy skills to be able to garner information in other ways, radio is the least expensive and most practical vehicle to ensure that they have the information they need to be accountable for the success of their children. Moreover, grants are often available through the federal government that would allow communities to jointly provide programming.
- Print outlets are also extremely important vehicles. Several exist throughout the state, though some have closed recently, and most are local or regional in nature. Other communities take advantage of newsletters or bulletins that are distributed at Latino “comfort zones,” such as churches or local organizations. Encouraging schools to provide information in Spanish, or identifying local Latino leaders who could volunteer to translate materials, would make it possible for Latino families to obtain their information through these vehicles on a consistent basis. Dollars that are currently spent on creating materials sent home through students, which often never make it to the parents, can be diverted by schools or the Department of Education to promote a more community-centric approach.
- The development of a clearinghouse for information and resources would be important to creating the sort of one-stop-shop that would benefit Latino parents who don’t know where to search for recreational programs or have time limitations. ICHLA has begun to create such a database on its website, as well, and other organizations currently have something similar, but identifying resources through the private sector to print these materials would certainly expand their reach and give Latino families a place to turn for information on a variety of opportunities and programs. By partnering across community lines, organizations can demonstrate an impact on a wider population and distribute the materials through churches and community organizations across a wider segment of the state’s Latino population.

Additional Important Strategies and Recommendations Discussed

- Host one strategy summit per year where communities from across the state can share their experiences and forge new partnerships.

- Share resources: If one community is able to capitalize on community radio programming air time and another is not, periodically a broader range of issues can be discussed and the segment can be taped and shared with leaders from other areas for distribution.

OBESITY, DIABETES, AND HEALTHCARE

NUTRITIONAL AND LIFESTYLE AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

Similar to nearly every other obstacle facing Latinos, a lack of understanding and awareness about some of the most basic elements of nutrition and recreation is at the heart of many of our health-related problems. Of course, genetic factors are not insignificant and play a major role, particularly with respect to obesity and diabetes, in dictating the number of incidences of these health challenges faced by Latinos every year, but there is no doubt that simple modifications in diet and lifestyle can pay enormous dividends in helping to curb some of the more daunting statistics and trends.

The true challenge exists in bringing educational resources to the client, rather than relying on Latino clients to find their ways to these outlets. There are any number of reasons why this can be difficult, but finding strategic partnerships that can effectively get the word out to the maximum number of Latinos in any given community should be a central goal.

Another major challenge indicated by all the regions with respect to education and awareness deals with discrepancies between rural and urban populations. While many health networks and coalitions operate in more heavily populated areas, many of Indiana's rural Latino populations do not have a good grasp on what services exist or what proper nutrition and exercise can mean for one's health. Expanding the reach of existing educational initiatives is an important factor in bridging that existing gap.

Existing Programming

Every region highlighted the importance of enhancing current education and awareness plans aimed at Latino communities throughout the state. It is true that a number of health fairs and informational sessions take place year round in different parts of Indiana. One example is the Hispanic Health Coalition in Elkhart, which brings together a major health fair in the area each summer that draws thousands of people for free screenings and informative workshops. Additionally, the HHC tracks those tested in order to facilitate follow-up, a significant challenge for many organizations.

Memorial Latino Outreach in South Bend also provides follow-up, tracks progress, and even provides cookbooks and other materials showcasing proper nutritional alternatives in a culturally-relevant way.

Similar health fairs take place constantly, as do programs aimed at educating children from an early age. Groups like Healthworks in South Bend, a children's museum, offers health education programming for children, teens, and parents. Health Visions networks throughout the state also offer direct services and educational information and have significant reach through bridges and relationships that have been built over time with the communities they serve. These groups partner with national and state agencies and organizations to provide the types of information that could be critical to developing sound nutritional habits among Latino families, but gaps still exist in linking these efforts with the greater population in need.

Consensus Strategies

- Implementing collaborative models for communities is the most effective way of creating lasting impacts. Organizations often carry out important educational programming that provides excellent information and opportunities for growth, but limited manpower, expertise, and resources can make it challenging to generate true follow-through. Health screenings, for example, do little to change communities if those who are screened never receive care or follow up on results, but tracking these individuals can help to drive real long-term impacts. By partnering with local colleges and universities or organizations with competency in analyzing statistical data and organizing communities (i.e.; churches, community centers, and volunteer groups), organizations can work together to generate measurable and tangible results in their communities.
- Work with private funding sources and corporations to expand programs to rural areas. Some initiatives of this nature exist, but often times Indiana's rural populations – both Latino and non-Latino – do not have access to the same informational resources as do their counterparts in larger metropolitan areas. Ensuring that programming has reach outside of urban concentrations can help drastically curb trends in outlying areas and create habitually good familial nutrition throughout the state.
- Many Latinos, even many with health insurance coverage, do not regularly receive check-ups or take preventative measures to ensure good health. While education about nutrition and exercise is certainly important, more basic conversations about the importance of prevention and the general cultural differences that may exist for some populations can be extremely important to long-term health. Many such initiatives exist, and partnering in regions where this is lacking would be optimal.

- Transportation barriers are many times significant obstacles. Educating the public on mass transit options and bringing local public transportation personnel to speak at churches and community centers can help dispel myths that might exist. A lack of bilingual personnel might be a challenge, but identifying potential volunteers to serve as translators can ensure that the message is received.
- Provide Latino families with healthy alternatives, such as cookbooks including healthy variations of traditional Latino foods. One version is provided through the American Diabetes Association.
- Organizations and leaders must better utilize the various radio and print media outlets that service the Latino communities to ensure that messages about existing programming are reaching the population.

Additional Important Strategies and Recommendations Discussed

- Insurance coverage, or lack thereof, is another significant obstacle to preventative and proper care. Financial literacy initiatives to help Latino families budget for needed health expenses can perhaps address some of these challenges long-term. Additionally, ensuring that all eligible Latino families are taking advantage of state and federal programs providing coverage is important. Using church or community center outlets to initiate these discussions might facilitate a broader reach.
- As with other issues, having one centralized clearinghouse or database for existing resources – such as that produced by the Hispanic Health coalition of Elkhart – would be helpful in simplifying the process of obtaining information for Latinos. By pooling resources, tabulation, creation, and printing costs can be offset.
- Encouraging organizations to provide alternative and culturally-relevant recreational and exercise programs catered specifically to Latino audiences, such as Salsa classes.
- Advocating that municipalities and counties translate their Parks and Recreation materials to Spanish for those linguistically isolated families will increase Latino participation, demonstrate goodwill, and enable Latinos to truly engage in all of the services being offered through the use of local taxpayer dollars.

OVERCOMING LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Even as non-native speakers of English seek to improve in their ability to communicate in their adopted language, the provision of services and one's access to available resources should not be made impossible due to language difficulties. Many, many programs exist throughout the state to help Latinos learn English, however approximately 24% of Latino households remain linguistically isolated. Strategies to help these families access important sources of information and assistance should focus primarily on realizing long-term outcomes, even while shorter-term efforts ensure that Latinos receive what they need.

As all regions discussed the need to address the language barriers throughout Indiana, one phrase in particular was particularly significant. "Bilingual is good. Bicultural is better." Often, documents that are translated from English into Spanish can lose meaning or important information or fail to be culturally relevant. Organizations that have staff who not only speak the language but who understand the cultural challenges associated with these issues are much better suited to be able to serve Latino populations.

Existing Programming

Currently, many organizations in Indiana are providing materials related to general health, obesity, and diabetes in Spanish. HealthVisions Midwest and the Reach/ALCANCE program in Hammond, El Campito, Inc. in South Bend, the Indiana Latino Institute, and many other agencies and groups are committed to ensuring that language challenges do not obstruct the provision of information and services. However, it can often be costly and time consuming for government agencies, smaller non-profit organizations, or local churches to translate materials that have already been produced in English. Additionally, many agencies do not have truly bilingual personnel who can provide health information to individuals in Spanish directly, either. Others may have bilinguals on staff, but they are not always culturally competent to be able to effectively provide the level of service necessary.

While the Northern Indiana Medical Interpreters Association develops standards for medical interpretation and provides trainings to interested parties, a great need still exists throughout the state. A lack of standards sometimes results in subpar service for linguistically isolated Latinos, often causing significant damage to those in most need of care. The City of Bloomington's Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs is currently working on a project to develop interpretation capacity, as well, but the adoption of national standards by Indiana would facilitate the better provision of services in both the short- and long-terms.

Consensus Strategies

- Generating materials that are at appropriate literacy levels is critical to ensuring that Latino families have true access to the resources they need. Often, materials created by agencies or organizations are technical in nature and not easily decipherable by all Latinos. Organizations should check with experts at local colleges and universities.
- Organizations in the same region should share resources available for translating of documents and educational literature concerning health-related topics. Many organizations do not have the manpower to carry out these efforts on their own, but relying on a partner agency – perhaps in exchange for a service or a very small fee – can help offset major costs and allow all organizations to provide valuable materials bilingually.
- Adult ESL classes are critical to helping close the overall communication gap for Latino families. While a number of organizations and sites do provide these services, driving up participation numbers is often challenging and a number of different factors play a role in making participation on the part of adult Latinos difficult. Fewer sites with more resources might help make this possible. Rather than having multiple organizations in a region perform this service, some can perform this service while others provide for auxiliary services, such as childcare, food, and transportation.
- Encouraging organizations to hire bilingual and multicultural staff, whenever possible.
- Adopting established national standards as a state for interpreters would ensure that Latinos are able to communicate with their medical service providers and speak for their children.

Additional Important Strategies and Recommendations Discussed

- Indiana must continue to develop the human capital necessary to be able to provide adequate services to Latinos in all regions. This begins with students, parents, and schools being accountable for and ensuring that Latino students are prepared for and exposed to opportunities in the medical professions. Colleges and universities must recruit better prepared Latinos, and we must provide them the incentives to return to their communities and provide services in a culturally competent way.
- Materials that are produced and available in Spanish must be distributed in a way that cost-effectively reaches the public. Health fairs are often a good idea, but partnering with churches and volunteer organizations, as well as with

state government agencies, public libraries, and WorkOne Centers, could provide greater reach to those disenfranchised individuals who may never attend more structured community events. Developing a community coalition model is important.

- Partnering with local colleges and universities could provide a synergy that is mutually beneficial. Finding opportunities to develop materials in Spanish or jointly apply for grants would enable the universities to establish needed community partnerships, gather data, and even identify potential subjects. Community organizations could lean on these institutions for grant-writing assistance or even funding for translating or distributing materials.

CAPITALIZING ON EXISTING PROGRAMMING

All too often, opportunities for partnerships in communities go untapped because organizations feel they lack the personnel to develop such bridges. In many instances, multiple organizations or agencies in communities are providing or attempting to provide duplicated services, and recruiting participation from the same Latino communities often results in a less efficient expenditure of resources and manpower.

Instead, organizations should be looking to capitalize on existing programming across Indiana, with potential partnerships forming even between organizations whose missions are not exactly the same. Indiana, along with the rest of the nation, has entered a new area for both public and private funding, one in which resources are limited but need continues to grow. As a result, all agencies must do what they do best and depend on partner agencies in the community to shoulder some of the burden.

Existing Programming

YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and municipal parks departments offer a wide variety of activities aimed at developing responsible and healthy nutrition and fitness habits in young children. All too often, Latino children do not participate, as parents cite language issues, lack of awareness, costs, and transportation as major factors. However, other options exist in most communities. One example is the Latino Center for Wellness and Education in Lafayette, which has developed after school programming to ensure that Latino children remain active.

Additionally, several Urban League agencies throughout the state, such as the Fort Wayne Urban League, offer a wide variety of sports and fitness activities for young Latinos. Faith-based organizations, such as the Northwest Indiana Catholic Youth Organization, also have developed fitness and recreation programming. These and the many other similar

services being provided in every community around the state should serve as able partners for other agencies to support, be it by providing awareness and promotion, transportation services, or resources.

Consensus Strategies

- Strategic partnerships must be developed with local YMCAs or Boys and Girls Clubs to enhance participation of Latino youth in existing programs. This would allow them to do what they do well in providing the programming, while community organizations use their bridges and influence to market the value to Latino families.
- Working with local recreation organizations to provide culturally-relevant programming for Latinos, such as Zumba or Salsa lessons, will encourage Latino participation while attracting non-Latinos seeking these experiences.
- Programs that engage Latinos in their “comfort zones” are the most effective. Look to develop or expand upon programs, as has happened in Marshall County, that come to Latino homes and teach healthy cooking habits. Similarly, Kosciusko County has after school programs that work with young students on developing better cooking and nutrition skills. Perhaps such programs that already exist for the general population can be identified and enhanced to service Latinos through a collaborative community process.

Additional Important Strategies and Recommendations Discussed

- Develop bussing or transportation strategies to ensure that children and families in rural areas can have access to a wide variety of recreational and fitness opportunities. Working through local transportation agencies, such as Bloomington Transit/Rural Transit in Monroe County, grants could be obtained for this purpose, and universities who use these same bus systems on their campuses can be effective partners, as well. Additionally, private funding through local corporations could serve as an effective means of generating resources and community support.
- Encourage local hospitals to provide bilingual workshops and information sessions for Latino families on important topics, such as mental health and diabetes. Mental health is particularly critical because taboos concerning the subject persist today. Moreover, programs like the Bienvenido program are exceptional at facilitating discussions on mental health issues. Bienvenido, a national program operating throughout Indiana’s northeastern region, has done a wonderful job of creating synergies with other organizations to address behavioral health challenges.

- Identifying non-traditional partners is another way in which resources can be maximized and real impacts enhanced. Targeting Minor League Baseball or the PGA, for example, were discussed in South Bend as an effective means of developing unique programming that might attract adequate funding opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The various discussions around the state and the statewide conversation facilitated as part of the INversión 2010 Statewide Virtual Strategy Summit all brought to light a number of challenges that Latinos in Indiana face with respect to education and health. Of course, it is impossible to capture all of your hard work in one document, however the spirit of the dialogue and the momentum generated from this event cannot be overstated. We sincerely hope that you'll take the time to explore how these strategies as well as the new partnerships you may have formed can help you enhance the service you provide.

It is extremely easy to simply continue providing the same programming in the same way through the same partners, whatever the results. Eliminating wasted resources and manpower, seeking new and more efficient ways to provide even better service, and identifying strategic alliances with those in your community who can help enhance your product is much more challenging and risky because it involves the kind of self-evaluation that so many individuals and organizations would rather do without.

ICHLA has begun this process on our end. We have sought newer, better, and more cost effective ways to serve Latinos in Indiana, and we seeking to spark conversations and collaborations that help to bring about the kinds of changes that need to happen in our state. We hope you will seek to do the same with your organizations, that you'll look to engage new allies from the participant list and tailor new strategies, be they these or others, to improve your services.

Thank you for your participation, and we're looking forward to continuing the dialogue!