



STATE OF INDIANA

**INDIANA COMMISSION ON
HISPANIC/LATINO AFFAIRS**
Mitchell E Daniels, Jr., Governor

ICHLA

**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 25, 2011
3:00pm – 4:30pm
Conference Center Room 18
Indiana Government Center South
Indianapolis, IN**

Commissioners Present:

Richard Espinosa, Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne (Vice-Chair)
Guadalupe 'Herb' Hernandez, Senate Lay member, Fort Wayne (Treasurer)
Alfredo Gonzalez, Governor Appointee, Indianapolis
Freddie Thon, House Lay Member, South Bend
Virginia Hernandez, Designee, Civil Rights Commission
Shanida Sharp-Byrnes, Designee, Dept of Education
Ralph Flores, House Lay Member, Munster
Tina Little, Designee, Dept of Correction
Christian Gallo, Senate Lay Member, Lafayette (Chair)

Commissioners Not Present:

Michelle Stein-Ordóñez, Designee, Family and Social Services Administration
Andrea Perez, Designee, Department of Health
Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon
Pat Rios, House Lay Member, Indianapolis
Rep. Rich McClain
Senator Greg Walker
Pedro Ledo, Senate Lay Member, Ft. Wayne
Lisa Kusiak, House Lay Member, Munster
Senator Frank Mrvan

Visitors:

Staff Present:

Danny Lopez, Executive Director

Opening

Chairman Christian Gallo called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

He noted the lack of quorum, with nine members in attendance at the start of the meeting.

Commissioners were asked to introduce themselves for the benefit of the guest in attendance.

Commissioner Freddie Thon then introduced the guest, Charlie Asher. Mr. Asher, a guest of Thon, has constructed and operates a program for parents in the divorce process that has been translated to Spanish. Thon said that he and Executive Director Lopez had discussed previously the chance to partnering with ICHLA on an initiative.

Approval of Minutes

With no quorum, the minutes could not be approved.

Approval of Financials

Lopez told commissioners that he had provided a budget narrative, though no ending balance had been provided. He said that the current balance is roughly \$71,000, though a number of charges had already been obligated and were not reflected in the budget narrative. Lopez said that the purpose of the narrative was to demonstrate that, because a number of initiatives had come in under budget due to sound planning and partnerships, the commission would need to reexamine the remaining funds for the year in an effort to set a new cadre of goals on which to focus.

One example, Lopez said, was the INversión Summit, for which ICHLA had allocated \$6,900 but spent only \$3,000. Thon asked for clarification on the fact that the commission is 58% through the year but has spent only 32% of the budget. Lopez confirmed. Thon then asked if the expenses were pending, and Lopez reiterated that while some expenses were pending, the commission would need to reprioritize in order to ensure that dollars were spent responsibly through the remainder of the year.

Gallo asked for input from commissioners on priorities. Lopez reminded commissioners that he had sent out a priority survey in December to establish commissioner feedback on future projects, but that only 4 commissioners had replied. Thon asked that Director Lopez summarize ideas and bring them to the commission. Lopez said that without input from the commissioners, the summary would not accurately represent the goals of the commission, but rather the goals of the director. Lopez reiterated that this is not the role of the director.

Commissioner Richard Espinosa mentioned that in Ft. Wayne, as an example, there is a program that provides computer literacy training. This would be an example of a potential partnership. Thon expressed concern that initiatives be spread around the different regions of the state, rather than focused in one area or another. Gallo reiterated this idea and said that the role of the commissioners was to identify these types of potential partnerships in their areas. Lopez also

reminded commissioners that all partners would need to demonstrate true impacts and metrics in order to ensure that ICHLA is gaining return on investment.

Lopez asked commissioners where they would want to focus. Commissioner Ralph Flores said early education is critical, and Parents As Teachers of Lake County would be an ideal partner for ICHLA. Flores said that he would arrange a meeting for Lopez on his next trip to Lake County. Thon said again that similar programs are going on all over the state.

Commissioner Herb Hernandez suggested that we provide the Executive Director Lopez with some feedback as to what projects they would like to see initiated, and he would then piece together a draft plan for approval. Hernandez reminded commissioners that this role belongs to the commissioners, not the director.

Chairman's Report

Gallo said that one important thing that was taking place over the course of the previous month was the process of informing policy-makers relative to Senate Bill 590, currently before the House. He said that while he and Lopez had been passing letters and other information along to legislators, the commission would not be talking a position on the issue and would not be speaking out in favor or in opposition. Gallo reminded commissioners to clarify that any comments they make in public would be made from their own personal standpoint, not that of the commission, and that phone calls and inquiries should be directed to Lopez.

Lopez said that commissioners should send him whatever information they would like to see passed along to legislators or the Governor's office.

Executive Director's Report

Lopez said that he had met the previous week with several media outlets in Ft. Wayne to promote ICHLA initiatives and taped segments for radio and print. Additionally, he said he had met with the directors of Community Action of Northeast Indiana, which serves as ICHLA's partner for the micro-lending initiative in that area. Lopez said that they have used funds to advertise in English and Spanish and as a result have had almost 30 current or aspiring entrepreneurs begin the loan process. Additionally, the remainder of the loans have been used for direct credit building micro-loans, four of the six having already been obligated.

Lopez said that this is an example of what can be accomplished if ICHLA commissioners are engaged and the right community partners are identified. Lopez said that the challenge is that most communities did not apply for the larger funding necessary to establish the program through the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority. For the next iteration of lending, Lopez said that IHCD had suggested Logansport as a suitable partner. He said that there remains an additional allotment of \$6,000 in the current budget for the program.

Business Subcommittee report

No report.

Civil Rights Subcommittee report

Gallo said that had nothing new to report.

Education Subcommittee report

No report.

Health Subcommittee report

No report

New Business

Lopez asked commissioners their opinion as to whether they would want to replicate the INversión Summit and when. He said that some funds remain from coming in under budget in September, but that follow up meetings would be helpful in helping to clarify some of the ideas discussed. Commissioners said that late spring would work better for this year's meeting. Commissioner Flores asked if the venue could be moved to East Chicago from Gary, since that would allow for greater participation from the Latino community in the area. Thon said that outcomes would need to be determined or demonstrated, as opposed to simply discussed again.

Lopez also said that the commission would need to recruit new members for the subcommittees. The subcommittees have lost considerable participation and no longer have clear leadership, something that would need to change if things are to be accomplished by the greater commission.

Guest Presentation

Mr. Asher said that this project had come about due to his family's foundation. He said that in South Bend, the courts are using this program for parents who are in the process of divorce or are considering divorce. The program is geared at alleviating some of the stress placed upon children in these types of situations and refocusing the attentions of parents on their children through the divorce process.

Asher invited commissioners to try the program online and provide feedback. He provided a breakdown of what the online module looks like and said that they were open to any suggestions. The program is available in both English and Spanish and said that many Latino families have taken advantage of it as a resource.

Adjournment

At 4:40pm, the meeting was adjourned by the Chair.