

**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
Plainfield Correctional Facility
August 30, 2006**

Commissioners Present:

Frances Vega-Senate Lay Member, Commission Vice-Chair
Samuel Ruiz – House Lay Member
Carmen Quintana-Designee, Indiana Department of Health
Myrna Maldonado-House Lay Member-Commission Secretary
Rita Cano-House Lay Member
Mary Llu Altman-Senate Lay Member
Adolfo Solis-House Lay Member
Angel Velez-Designee, Indiana Department of Correction
Christine Cde. Baca- Indiana Civil Rights Commission
Juana Watson-Senate Lay Member

Staff:

Amy Mendoza, Executive Director
Laura Barrett, Staff
Ryan C. Marques, Staff

Audience:

Juan Gonzalez, Community Activist
Colleen Kliever, Indianapolis Public Schools
Fabricio Perez, Century 21 Realtor

I. Call to Order

A. Establish Quorum

A Quorum was not established at the beginning of the meeting.

II. Guest Speaker Presentations

A. La Tasha Jordan, Market Development Unit, Indiana Workforce Development

Ms. Jordan introduced herself as the Director for the Market Development Unit for the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. She proceeded on to explain her duties for the Department and began her Power Point presentation covering “Major Opportunities.”

Ms. Jordan communicated to the Commissioners that the RFP process has concluded for those bidders wishing to contract with the State of Indiana. Ms. Jordan stated that the RFP process was a competitive bid process.

Ms. Jordan explained that her main duty for this project is to place more minorities into the apprenticeship program offered by provider companies. Ms. Jordan mentioned that minorities comprise substantial portions of the total U.S. workforce: African American – 11% and Hispanic – 13%, but hold much smaller percentages of construction jobs: African Americans - 4% and Hispanics - 8%.

Ms. Jordan cited Indiana statistics concerning minorities in Indiana construction apprenticeships. For example, Ms. Jordan explained that African Americans hold 7.9% and Hispanics hold 3.5% of Union apprenticeships. In addition, Ms. Jordan stated that African-Americans hold 7.1% and Hispanics hold 4% of “Merit Shop” apprenticeships.

Ms. Jordan explained that one of the main reasons minorities, especially Hispanics, are underrepresented in construction apprenticeship programs is due to the inability of passing the math portion of the entrance exam. She also mentioned that many Hispanics applying for apprenticeship programs are hindered due to their inability to produce legal citizenship documents.

Ms. Jordan proceeded on to explain the objectives of “Major Opportunities,” which are to increase the employment of well qualified minority Hoosiers in the construction trades by: placing more Hoosiers into construction apprenticeships by preparing more minority Hoosiers for construction apprenticeship programs.

Ms. Jordan mentioned that the goals of the pre-apprenticeship program are: successful placement and persistence of graduates in construction apprenticeships, successful placement of pre-apprenticeship candidates into entry-level jobs that will lead to better jobs in the future, and the elevation of educational and skill levels of program participants.

Ms. Jordan stated the major counties in which she has targeted to find apprenticeship programs that will cater to the minority market are of the following: Lake Co., St. Joseph Co., Allen Co., Marion Co., Vanderburgh Co. Ms. Jordan mentioned that proposed programs must offer facilities and worksites in or nearby one or more of the major cities of these counties. In addition, Ms. Jordan stated that the proposed programs in multiple sites must submit separate learning plans and budgets for each city.

Ms. Jordan explained the partners involved with the “Major Opportunities” project. The required partners are construction contractors, C/FBOs, and Support services providers. Optional partners may be owners of construction companies, post-secondary educational institutions, regional workforce boards, industry associations and construction trade unions.

Ms. Jordan mentioned that the major components of this project are recruitment, training, placement and retention. Ms. Jordan proceeded on to explain the recruitment plan which consists of networks with community and faith-based organizations (by each regional provider) will be incorporated into the plan. Ms. Jordan mentioned that the Indiana Department of Workforce Development has engaged *Infinite, Inc.* as the marketing and public relations partner for recruitment statewide. *Infinite, Inc.* has established links to Hispanic and African-American communities around the state.

Ms. Jordan explained the pre-apprenticeship training which is a blended and integrated delivery of classroom instruction and construction work experience. The classroom instruction will place a large emphasis on math, life/work skills and an introduction to trades. The “On-the-job” experience will consist of: actual paid work with partnered construction contractors, and the requirement of significant and experimental learning which will be supervised by construction professionals.

Ms. Jordan touched upon the support services from the pre-apprenticeship providers in which these providers either through their own staff or community partners will supply support including, but not limited to: Academic support – Tutoring, ESL, GED prep, and Practical support – Child care, transportation assistance, ongoing counseling and apprenticeship application help.

Commissioner Watson asked if the Indiana Department of Workforce Development has contracted with any Hispanic pre-apprenticeship providers.

Ms. Jordan stated no, but one firm in particular is an African-American held firm which has Spanish speaking people on staff.

Commissioner Watson explained that the language is not the problem, but the cultural incompetence of staff proves to be the main problem.

Ms. Jordan assured Commissioner Watson that these pre-apprenticeship providers must go through a strenuous process where the Indiana Department of Workforce Development screens each and every provider plan specifically looking for how the provider will accommodate the Hispanic population. If the provider does not fulfill the exact requirements, then the Indiana Department of Workforce Development will not accept the bid.

Commissioner Cde. Baca asked if the wages stated on the first page of the Power Point handout were the wages associated with the apprenticeship wages or the state wages for those occupations listed.

Ms. Jordan responded by stating she would check into this question.

Ms. Jordan explained another reason for low minority participation with the apprenticeship program in the past is due to unpaid apprenticeship programs. Ms.

Jordan stated that those minorities would rather not waste time with an unpaid apprenticeship when they could work for actual pay. Therefore, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development requires paid apprenticeships by all providers.

Ms. Jordan explained the transition and placement portion of her presentation. Ms. Jordan touched upon the completion and placement stage, and then proceeded on to the retention phase.

Ms. Jordan also mentioned that another barrier which minority apprenticeship graduates encounter is during the interview stage for a permanent position. Many of the minority apprenticeship graduates find themselves before a board of predominately white Caucasian males when interviewing for a position with a particular company. Some of these minority graduates are not given a fair chance when competing against other applicants for an occupation.

Commissioner Watson asked what the requirements are for those persons who would like to enroll into an apprenticeship program but lack the proper documentation.

Ms. Jordan explained that those predicaments are for the individual providers to handle and decide.

Commissioner Watson stated that if there is not a strong commitment from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development and those apprenticeship providers in accepting undocumented Hispanics, all hope will be lost for those who wish to work and those who have already started the program.

Commissioner Cde. Baca agreed with Commissioner Watson's comment for the need to implement certainty regarding approval or non-approval for those individuals without proper documentation.

Ms. Jordan stated that placement of those, documented or undocumented, into a job or apprenticeship is the key factor, otherwise the Indiana Department of Workforce Development will not distribute dollars to those providers. In addition, Ms. Jordan stated that providers are awarded on the recruitment level that they maintain throughout the year.

Commissioner Altman asked the strategy behind targeting certain counties and cities.

Ms. Jordan explained again the counties which were selected to be targeted: high concentration of minority population. In addition, Ms. Jordan stated that the largest cities within those counties will be targeted in finding providers and offering recruitment.

Commissioner Watson stated that it is important to target those counties (rural) where many Latinos do not have proper documentation. Commissioner Watson also

mentioned that it is important to communicate to providers the importance of cultural competence among the staff.

Ms. Jordan stated that the Indiana Department of Workforce Development is not placing a mandate on only requiring citizens.

Commissioner Altman asked about the time frame for this project.

Ms. Jordan explained that the RFP process is completed and the whole initiative will take six years to complete. The Indiana Department of Administration must now approve the RFPs and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development will announce the winners within a month. In addition, the providers have the option to establish a time frame for the pre-apprenticeship programs. Ms. Jordan also mentioned that the pre-apprenticeship programs will start in October of this year.

Commissioner Velez asked how this project will address the ex-offender population.

Ms. Jordan explained that the Indiana Department of Workforce Development has hired a marketing firm to handle this matter as well as providers teaming up with local groups to address this issue: faith based centers.

Commissioner Ruiz also encouraged the Indiana Department of Workforce Development to work with the ex-offender population in regards to this project.

Commissioner Altman asked if there were any funds directed towards language training.

Ms. Jordan explained that Work key assessments are now in Spanish along with the tests. In addition, there will be translators located at WorkOne offices in order to assist Latinos with Work key assessments.

Commissioner Altman asked if this will be a statewide effort.

Ms. Jordan stated that this will be a statewide effort in each WorkOne office.

Commissioner Altman mentioned that there is a lack of advertisement for the Work key assessments at the WorkOne offices around the State.

Commissioner Watson mentioned that there are four Latinos stationed at the WorkOne office in Lake County. She also explained that she has been talking to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development Commissioner, Ron Stiver, in trying to place more Latinos into the executive levels of office for the Indiana Department of Workforce Development and the WorkOne offices throughout the State.

Director Mendoza stated that the Commission will prepare a small action plan in order to address each Commissioner's comments towards this project.

Director Mendoza thanked Ms. Jordan for her presentation.

B. Phil Slavin, Assistant Superintendent of Plainfield Correctional Facility

Mr. Slavin first acknowledged the Commission for hosting its meeting at the Plainfield Correctional Facility and thanked everyone in attendance.

Mr. Slavin stated that this facility has a very fine educational system. For instance, an accredited high school is located within this facility.

Mr. Slavin explained that all of Indiana's sex offenders will be relocated to the Plainfield Correctional Facility, and through legislation, each sex offender will receive treatment. He also mentioned that it costs the state \$30,000 to educate each sex offender.

Mr. Slavin stated that he would like for the Commission to tell him what the Plainfield Correctional Facility needs to do in order to address the problems in which Latino offenders confront while incarcerated.

Mr. Slavin mentioned that this facility will be providing ESL training in order to better prepare Latino offenders for jobs upon release. In addition, a Bureau of Motor Vehicles branch is stationed in the facility, therefore, the Plainfield Correctional Facility staff helps Latinos and others obtain proper identification.

Mr. Slavin stated that this facility also has a Read To Me program and a long distance dad program established for those inmates who have children. Mr. Slavin explained that the main purpose of all the programs which this facility implements is to stop ex-offenders from committing the same crimes or other crimes.

Commissioner Altman asked the average length of stay for offenders in this facility.

Mr. Slavin stated the average length of stay is two years. The average age is 35 years of age.

Commissioner Altman asked if there is any access to a Chaplain or someone who can help these offenders.

Mr. Slavin stated that offenders do have access to a Chaplain and church service is provided. He also explained that it is very difficult to cure an offender, but everyone on his staff is trained to help offenders. In addition, there are 8 counselors to 1100 offenders at this facility.

Mr. Slavin mentioned that Latinos make up 5% of the population for this facility. In addition, Mr. Slavin stated that he has ordered duplicate forms of signage in Spanish for those Latinos who cannot read English. Mr. Slavin also stated that there are many classes offered at this facility that address future potential careers for these offenders: cooking, auto, barber, horticultural and landscape design.

Director Mendoza stated that she currently serves on the Indiana Department of Correction re-entry program, which is currently working on translating signs and other documents for all of Indiana's correctional facilities.

Commissioner Altman asked if there are any undocumented offenders located at this facility.

Mr. Slavin stated that there are some undocumented offenders and these matters are addressed by court hearings conducted by a deportation judge on this facility.

Director Mendoza stated that it is imperative to recruit Spanish speaking staff for every correctional facility in Indiana.

Director Mendoza thanked Mr. Slavin for his presentation and the hospitality of the Plainfield Correctional Facility.

C. Vicenta Bledsoe, The Damien Center
Not Present

III. Commission Business

A. Adoption of Minutes

6/28/06 minutes were not adopted due to the inexistence of a quorum.

B. 2006 Statewide Opening Ceremony for Hispanic/Latino Heritage month

Director Mendoza stated that the Commission staff has already started preparing for the Opening Ceremony by producing invitations which have already been sent out.

Director Mendoza mentioned that the Lt. Governor will be attending this event again and will be speaking. In addition, there will be a proclamation presented in Spanish with a report detailing 2005 Census numbers concerning Indiana's Hispanic/Latino community.

Director Mendoza expressed the need to find entertainment for this event.

Commissioner Maldonado mentioned that Central High School has a Mariachi Band comprised of students who travel around the state performing for different functions.

Director Mendoza also mentioned the need for a recipient for the Distinguished Hispanic/Latino Hoosier Award. Director Mendoza stated that a Hispanic/Latino veteran would be a great consideration for this reward.

Director Mendoza also reiterated the need for a better Commissioner attendance rate at this event. She stated that she would like to see more Commissioners at this event than last year.

C. New Census Report

Director Mendoza stated that the U.S. Census Bureau just released the 2005 Population Estimates and the 2005 American Community Survey. She stated that staff member Ryan Marques has compiled and made key concluding remarks concerning the essence of the data.

Ryan Marques gave a brief overview of his findings concerning the demographics of Indiana's Hispanic/Latino population. He then referred each commissioner to page 5 of his packet, which touched upon Indiana's net-international migration and unemployment figures. Ryan discussed the importance of this data regarding how Indiana has experienced a high rate of net-international migration, albeit Hispanics/Latinos, with low rates of unemployment. In Ryan's presentation, he depicted through usage of tables and graphs, how only one county from Indiana's top ten net-international migration list experienced an unemployment rate higher than the state and national unemployment rate during 2000-2003. In addition, he pointed out that only 3 counties from the top ten net-international migration list experienced unemployment rates higher than the state and national rates from 2000-2005. Ryan expressed that data from his report suggests that the common myth on immigration, legal or illegal, adding to the unemployment rate and dislocating workers is for the most part, false.

Commissioner Altman mentioned that it is imperative to look at the other variables that might affect net-international migration in Indiana and those counties listed on the top ten list.

Ryan Marques stated that he will check with the U.S. Census Bureau in order to find those variables which may affect net-international migration figures for Indiana and those counties listed.

Director Mendoza stated that this report will be sent to the Governor and Legislators in order to update them on Indiana's Hispanic/Latino community. Director Mendoza also mentioned that this report should include key

recommendations that follow the data and key findings from this report: Guest worker program and Wisconsin's Immigrant Lending Program.

Commissioner Watson mentioned that this report should be supplemented with the latest information from the Pew Hispanic Center's report and from the Sagamore Institute for Policy Research report on, "Connecting Mexico and the Hoosier Heartland."

Commissioner Watson also stated the importance of sending this report to all of Indiana's Mayors and handing it out during the opening ceremony for Hispanic/Latino heritage month.

Commissioner Altman mentioned that this report should be presented in a professional binder with the front cover depicting flags from each Latin American country.

Commissioner Ruiz mentioned the importance of displaying the U.S. flag above the Latin American flags on the cover page. He also mentioned inserting a map of the Americas on the cover page.

Director Mendoza asked for a motion to work on this report and produce a final product to distribute to the Governor, Legislature and Mayors throughout Indiana.

Motion was approved.

D. Commission Special Recognition License Plate Initiative

Ryan Marques expressed to the Commission an idea shared by his colleague, Grant William McFann, to create the first ever Hispanic/Latino recognition license plate in the State of Indiana. Ryan stated that the purpose in issuing a Special Recognition License Plate for the Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs is to create awareness, promote understanding and cooperation, and to notify Hoosiers and other individuals from across the country that this Commission is Indiana's true outlet for serving the needs of this State's Hispanic/Latino community and will continue to work together with all persons in the quest of establishing cultural competence throughout the State of Indiana.

Ryan expressed that the application is complete and only three items are left to complete: License plate design, 500 signatures and a \$6,000 bond.

Ryan stated that Commissioner Maldonado shared a good idea to him regarding the license plate design. Commissioner Maldonado suggested contacting those *Big Brother and Big Sister* organizations throughout the State in order to establish a contest for Hispanic/Latino students to design the license plate for the Commission.

Ryan stated that he will be contacting the *Big Brother and Big Sister* organizations in the near future to develop this plan/contest.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Civil Rights/Housing Committee

Director Mendoza explained that the Gang Task Force is under the Civil/Rights and Housing Committee. This task force was created in order to address the growing problem of Hispanic/Latino gang activity throughout the State of Indiana. Director Mendoza stated that staff member Laura Barrett has spent a great deal of time researching those issues pertaining to Hispanic/Latino gang activity and the effects those activities have in the State of Indiana and throughout the country.

Laura Barrett informed the Commission on who was appointed to serve on the Gang Task Force. She also mentioned that Judge Gregg Scott is the chair of the Gang Task Force.

Director Mendoza stated that one of the goals for this task force is to develop gang prevention programs in accordance to other programs already implemented in different states. In addition, this task force will also recommend to the Indiana Legislature legislation from other states which address gang activity.

Laura Barrett introduced one of the Commission's guests in the audience for her participation with the Gang Task Force - Colleen Kliewer. Ms. Kliewer works for Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) and is the only bi-lingual counselor for IPS schools.

Director Mendoza also mentioned that the Gang Task Force will look at the changing roles that Latina women play in gangs.

Laura Barrett mentioned the next meeting for the Gang Task Force will take place on September 11, 2006.

B. Executive Committee

Director Mendoza explained the items discussed during the Executive Committee meeting last month. She mentioned that this committee touched upon the Opening Ceremony and what needs to be accomplished for this event. Director Mendoza also mentioned the discussion of a possible legislative change regarding the placement of the Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs under the Indiana Civil Rights Commission. In addition, Director Mendoza explained that this committee discussed revising the Commission's code due to how general the

code is and how the code lacks specific information regarding terms of Commissioners, etc.

Commissioner Cde. Baca mentioned that one benefit that the Commission would experience if it moved to the Indiana Civil Rights Commission is the availability of attorneys on site in order to address code change or other legal issues.

V. Reports

A. National Conference of La Raza Annual Conference Report

Director Mendoza touched upon the National Conference of La Raza in which she attended with Commissioner Watson. Director Mendoza mentioned that much valuable information was gained from this conference and the NCLR Latino Expo USA which will be beneficial to the Commission's Committees, reports, and Hispanic/Latino History Project.

Director Mendoza referred to her written report which touched upon all of the workshops that she attended including brief summaries of each. She stated that each workshop presented valuable information which can be applied to each of the Commission's committees. Director Mendoza mentioned that one of the most beneficial workshops that she attended was the Latino Juvenile Justice Network: An Opportunity for Reform. Other workshops attended: Bridging Two Worlds: A Model Latino Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program; Best Practices in Latino Early Childhood Education; Identifying Career Opportunities for Latinos in Dynamic Industries; Afro-Latina Women Speak Up: A Dialogue on Gender, Ethnicity and Community; Keeping Our Institutions Safe; Closing the Nutrition Gap for Latino Children. Director Mendoza talked about each of these workshops and briefed the Commission on the importance of her trip and attendance to this event.

Director Mendoza also mentioned that this conference included town hall meetings in which she attended. These meetings focused on the role of Labor Unions in the Latino community, upcoming young Latino leaders who have been instrumental in the recent national immigrant marches, protecting Latino families against HIV/AIDS, and how Hurricane Katrina, the Voting Rights Act and the immigration debate have impacted the nation's race relations dialogue.

Director Mendoza also mentioned a very valuable town hall meeting titled, "Leadership Across Communities: Opportunities and Challenges in the 21st Century," which was hosted by Tavis Smiley. The panelists included Rev. Jesse Jackson of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, Antonia Hernandez of the California Community Foundation, Stewart Kwoh of the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, John Mack of the Los Angeles Police Commission, Cesar Perales of the Puerto Rico Legal Defense Fund, and Janet Murguia of NCLR.

Director Mendoza stated that a similar type of presentation should be included for the Commission's conference in 2007.

B. Executive Director Report

Director Mendoza referred to the Executive Director Report for the time period June 28, 2006-July 26, 2006. She briefed the Commission on each item of the report. The report consisted of meetings and events attended, daily work, research, committee work and meetings, and reports. The Commission was satisfied with the results.

Director Mendoza referred to the Executive Director Report for the time period July 26, 2006-August 30, 2006. She briefed the Commission on each item of the report. The report consisted of meetings and events attended, daily work, research, committee work and meetings, and reports. The Commission was satisfied with the results.

C. Announcements

Director Mendoza mentioned that she met with a representative from the Indiana Fever regarding the possibility of hosting a fundraiser at Conseco Fieldhouse for the Commission.

Director Mendoza stated that she will send an email to those Commissioners serving on the conference committee regarding a possible meeting date.

Commissioner Cde. Baca stated that every Commissioner should have received a "Save the Date Card" regarding the National Human Rights Conference hosted by the Indiana Civil Rights Commission on November 5-9, 2006. Commissioner Cde. Baca mentioned that she is still looking for presenters for the conference regarding immigration.

Vice Chair Vega stated that she would love to conduct a workshop on immigration for this conference with Director Mendoza.

Director Mendoza agreed with Vice Chair Vega to conduct a workshop covering immigration for the National Human Rights Conference.

Commissioner Solis stated that he would love to have every Commissioner present for the Jay County-Casa de Portland- Opening Ceremony for Hispanic Heritage Month at 4:00 p.m.

Director Mendoza stated that the Latina Empowerment Conference in which she was a guest panelist last month was a very beneficial event.

Commissioner Ruiz stated that he will be traveling to Washington D.C. with 8 other pastors from the Indiana Hispanic/Latino community in order to talk with the Director of the Office of Faith Based Initiatives.

Juan Gonzalez mentioned the problems that many Hispanics/Latinos without proper documentation encounter when trying to apply for a title of a car or a license plate from the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV). He stated that the BMV cannot do anything to help these individuals.

Director Mendoza stated that the BMV should consult the Commission's Report, "Follow up Report on the Challenges of Obtaining an Indiana's Driver's License," in order to solve the problems which Hispanics/Latinos confront when trying to obtain a license plate, title or driver's license.

VI. Adjournment

The Commission meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:30 p.m.