

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISPANIC/LATINO AFFAIRS OF NORTH CAROLINA

2022-2023 RECOMMENDATIONS





CONTENTS

Letter from GACHLA’s Chair1

Background2

Governor’s Advisory Council for4
Hispanic and Latino Affairs Members

Executive Summary.....5

2022-2023 Recommendations7

 Education7

 Leadership9

 Health..... 13

 Legislative & Advocacy 17

 Economic Development..... 21

 Public Safety 23

 Acknowledgments.....27



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Esteemed Governor Cooper:

Your continued support of the Governor’s Advisory Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs (GACHLA) has been appreciated since its reestablishment in 2017. Your commitment to promoting cooperation and understanding of the Hispanic/Latino contributions and needs across North Carolina continues to demonstrate your forward thinking and support of the charge given to GACHLA’s members.

The strength of our great state is grounded in the devotion of people such as yourself as the Governor of North Carolina and the individuals that integrate advisory groups such as the GACHLA’s members. You have unequivocally appointed servant community leaders as members and ex-officio that do not hesitate to answer to the call to give of their time and talents to improve the lives of the Hispanic/Latino community and North Carolinians as a whole.

With your unconditional support and the support of the designated staff members from the Office of Public Engagement, and Inclusion, the GATCHLA has successfully coordinated and provided a forum that allowed for community members, community-based organizations, local and state government agencies to share and highlight the contributions of Hispanic/Latinos in NC, as well as to share and highlight current social determinants that inhibit the community from performing to its maximum potential.

GATCHLA members and its subcommittees have drafted a set of recommendations that speak to information, facts, resources, and needs to be established by guest speakers and community collaborators. The Education, Public Safety, Leadership, Advocacy, Economic Development, and Health and Wellbeing Subcommittees are confident these set of recommendations will serve as a guide to improve the lives of Hispanic/Latino North Carolinians and to enhance the current diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts embedded in local and state departments and resources.

The GACHLA acknowledges their work and charges to be an ever important and evolving task and we are committed to engaging with you and partners at all local and state department levels to support the implementation of the recommendations provided. The outcomes from these recommendations will serve as a testament to the GACHLA efforts and impact on the well-being of Hispanics/Latinos of North Carolina. Please find the detailed recommendations document attached to this correspondence.

On behalf of your GACHLA, thank you for your leadership and commitment to improving the lives of the North Carolina Hispanic/Latino Community.

Sincerely Yours,

Dr. MariaRosa Rangel
Governor’s Advisory Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs Chair



BACKGROUND

The Hispanic/Latino community in North Carolina continues to grow exponentially, with more people of Hispanic origin relocating to the state, more people of Hispanic descent being born in North Carolina, and the growing economic impact and contributions of the community.

In North Carolina, the Hispanic/Latino population has grown 40 percent over the past decade, outpacing the national Hispanic/Latino population growth rate of 23 percent (Tippet 2021). As the community continues to grow, it becomes more urgent for us to meet the needs of this population. The Hispanic/Latinx population accounts for more than 1.1 million, 10.7 % of the population. This number continues to rise steadily, and the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management predicts that by 2050 Hispanic/Latinos will represent 14% of the total population. In North Carolina, 6 out of 10 Hispanics people are US-born and 4 out of 10 are immigrants (United States Census Bureau, 2020).

According to a 2020 study by the NC Bankers Association study, Hispanic/Latino spending power in North Carolina exceeds \$25 billion in economic impact annually. The demographic is spread out and embedded at all levels of entrepreneurship and business ownership, especially small businesses that help sustain local economies at the city and

county levels. The growing workforce population is concentrated in three top industries: Construction (21.1%), Manufacturing (13.8%), and Accommodation & Food Services (10.4%), which was especially notable during the COVID pandemic outbreak. Additionally, based on an analysis published by the NC Department of Commerce, the U.S.-born Hispanic/Latino labor force (16 years and older) almost quadrupled between 2010 and 2020.

The steady growth of the population and forecasted number of Hispanic/Latino families, youth, and children in North Carolina by 2050 provides the opportunity for the state to ensure the needs of every member of the family are thoroughly considered as programs and policies are developed and implemented in the upcoming years. Equitable policies, strategies, and implementation are necessary to meet the needs of North Carolina’s Hispanic/Latino community. Keys to this are including community leaders and business owners in the economic development of Hispanic/Latino communities, expanding Medicaid to improve the health and wellness outcomes for children, youth, adults, and the aging, and following through on recommendations developed and contributed by Governor Roy Cooper’s Advisory Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs.

Governor’s Advisory Council for Hispanic and Latino Affairs Members

Council Members

Education Subcommittee

- Dr. MaríaRosa Rangel, Chair, Governor’s Advisory Council for Hispanic and Latino Affairs, and Chair of the Education Subcommittee
- Maria del Pilar Salvat
- Marilyn Graham
- Oscar Hernandez

Leadership Subcommittee

- Oscar Alirio Hernandez, Chair
- Natalie Scarlett Marles

Health Subcommittee

- Rocío Anderson, Chair, and Vice Chair of the Governor’s Advisory Council for Hispanic and Latino Affairs
- Adriana Chavela
- Andrés F. Henao
- Carmen Ivelisse Canales
- Daniel Montoya

Legislative & Advocacy Subcommittee

- Yahel Humberto Flores, Chair
- Nancy Garcia Villa
- Ricardo Nazario Colón

Economic Development Subcommittee

- Francisco Rivas-Díaz, Chair
- Erik Valera
- Marilyn Muyschondt Graham

Public Safety Subcommittee

- Anabel Rosa, Chair
- Cuauhtemoc Herrejon

Ex-Officio Members

Designees Cabinet Agencies

- Cristina España, Office of the Governor
- Evin Grant, Department of Administration
- Mary Elizabeth Wilson, Department of Commerce
- Tracey Burns, Department of Cultural and Natural Resources
- Carolina Jimenez, Department of Environmental Quality
- Yazmin Rico, Department of Health and Human Services
- Maggie Woods, Department of Information Technology
- Sherry Hunter, Department of Public Safety
- Cheryl Benedetto, Department of Revenue
- Burt Tasaico, Department of Transportation
- Kristin Siemek, Office of State Human Resources

Designees Council of State

- Carmina Hanson, Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
- Mercedes Restucha, Department of Justice
- Jill Cramer, Department of Labor
- Xatli Stox, Department of Public Instruction



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education

- Recommendation I: To provide effective communication with the Hispanic/Latino Community.
- Recommendation II: To provide services to address the socio-emotional needs of Hispanic/Latino families.
- Recommendation III: To provide post-pandemic technology & digital literacy to Hispanic/Latino families.

Leadership

- Recommendation I: To cultivate the Latinx leadership pipeline by engaging Latinx youth and young adults in civic participation and education.
- Recommendation II: To assist and support in the creation and expansion of Hispanic/Latinx task forces, councils, and/or committees within each municipality.
- Recommendation III: For the Governor’s Office to promote Latino leadership recognition at the state and local level to increase Latino visibility, commitment, and participation.

Health

- Recommendation I: To address current and imminent behavioral and mental health needs in the Hispanic/ Latinx population.
- Recommendation II: To address healthcare access.
- Recommendation III: To diversify the workforce and communications.

Legislative & Advocacy

- Recommendation I: To provide access to policy and information through community lead organizations.
- Recommendation II: To intentionally connect state government with the community and involve the community in decision-making.
- Recommendation III: To address current inequalities facing the Latino community administratively and legislatively.

Economic Development

- Recommendation I: To support and develop the Latino digital workforce.
- Recommendation II: To strengthen resources for community-based organizations that provide access to financial literacy programs and support and equitable access to capital and opportunities.
- Recommendation III: To increase the equitable representation of Latinos at the state and county level Economic Development Commission boards and commissions, including the community college board of trustees.

Public Safety

- Recommendation I: For the NC DPS Office of Victim Services, NCDOJ, NCDOL, NCDMV, and the NCDHHS to make regular visits and maintain regular contact with the Mexican, Honduran, El Salvadorian, and Guatemalan consulates to provide information, answer questions, and participate in collaboration with them.
- Recommendation II: To, in collaboration with N.C. Justice Center, design, promote and institute a program to train DMV personnel (with particular attention to rural counties) on how to recognize, read and understand the various documents involved in the USA citizenship process.
- Recommendation III: To encourage the State Reentry Collaborative Councils to expand their outreach to the Latinx community to improve services for Spanish-speaking individuals re-entering their communities. Furthermore, for the Governor to include in his future budget specific funding for the SRCC to expand its outreach to Latinx communities.



EDUCATION

The Educational Subcommittee is submitting three focus areas of concern with suggested recommendations that will help our Hispanic/Latino community gain the resources needed to continue flourishing within North Carolina.

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Subcommittee Chair and
Council Chair

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RECOMMENDATION I

To provide effective communication with the Hispanic/Latino Community

Background:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (CRA) of 1964 requires agencies that receive federal funding to ensure their programs, services, and activities are accessible to individuals with limited English proficiency (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2022).

Strategies:

- ➔ For the Governor’s Office to promote awareness of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 compliance language access requirements within all NC state government agencies, including by increasing the number of personnel working in state agencies that represent the community they serve.
- ➔ For the Governor to require all state government agencies to provide bilingual and bicultural interpretation services and to include Google Translate on their websites. This could increase outreach to the Hispanic/Latino community and engagement with the community. For example, environmental education information could be offered in English and Spanish, raising awareness about green job skills and opportunities, and providing families with environmental education that is specific to the areas where they live.
- ➔ For the Governor’s Office to advocate for school districts to increase Dual Language Immersion (DL/I) programs within NC to create a bilingual/bicultural workforce pipeline.

RECOMMENDATION II

To provide services to address the socio-emotional needs of Hispanic/Latino families

Background:

Hispanic/Latino communities show similar vulnerability to mental illness as the general population but face disparities in access to and quality of treatment. According to the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, more than half of Hispanic/Latino young adults ages 18-25 with serious mental illness may not receive treatment. This inequality puts these communities at a higher risk for more severe and persistent forms of mental health conditions because, without treatment, mental health conditions often worsen. Additionally, according to the 2020 National Survey of Drug Use and Health, approximately 34% of Hispanic/Latino adults with mental illness receive treatment yearly compared to the U.S. average of 45%. This access is due to many unique barriers to care.

Strategies:

- ➔ For the Governor to advocate for school districts and institutions of higher education to increase their fully bilingual/bicultural counseling personnel and provide mental health assistance to Hispanic/Latino families.
- ➔ For the Governor to advocate for school districts and institutions of higher education to provide bilingual audiovisual resources to families about mental health to normalize discussions about this topic and help break the stigma about it.
- ➔ For the Governor to advocate for school districts and institutions of higher education to collaborate with healthcare services providers that have bilingual/bicultural personnel to offer treatment and support for mental illness, substance use disorders, and intellectual/developmental disabilities to Hispanic/Latino families.

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RECOMMENDATION III

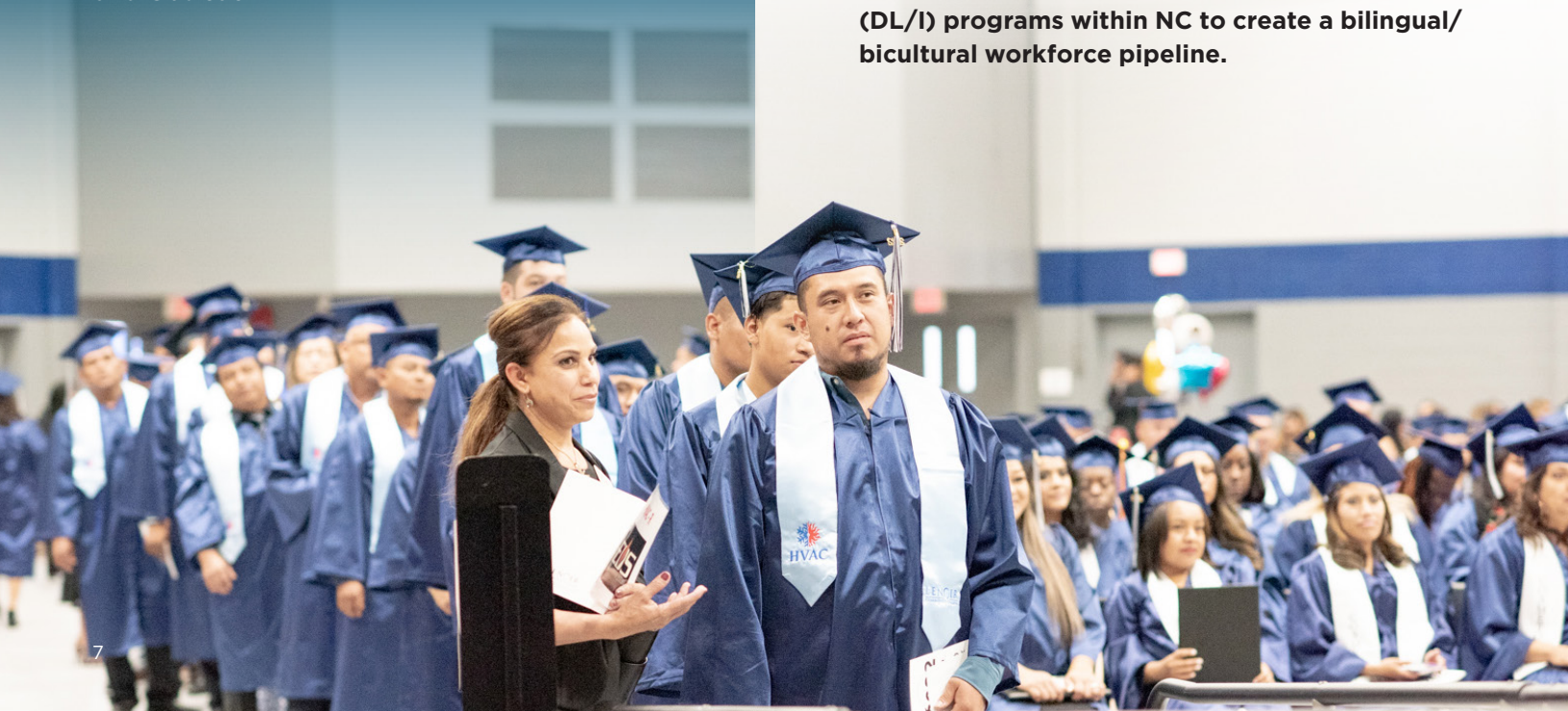
To provide post-pandemic technology & digital literacy to Hispanic/Latino families

Background:

The digital divide is not new but has been exacerbated by the pandemic (“Bridging the Gap: The Digital Divide in Times of COVID-19,” n.d.). It’s essential to pursue digital inclusion and equity. It is vital to enhance digital and media literacy in unprivileged parts of North Carolina to decrease the digital divide. It’s especially important to increase digital literacy and digital access for all school students, specifically Hispanic/Latino students, older adults, and persons with disabilities.

Strategies:

- ➔ For the Governor to advocate for school districts to increase student access to technology by extending the current one-to-one plan with intentional training for Hispanic/Latino students and parents to teach them how to utilize technology and the available online resources.
- ➔ For the Governor’s Office to advocate for school districts to partner with state agencies to create outreach programs to engage families in technology workshops and courses in community colleges or similar institutions (e.g., NCDIT could partner with nonprofits that provide free computers and training to communities).
- ➔ For the Governor to advocate for school districts to partner with the N.C. Kramden Institute provides parents and students with technology workshops and free computers.



LEADERSHIP

The Latino population is the fastest-growing group in the United States. The 2020 Census revealed a 40% increase in the Latino population in North Carolina from 2010 to 2020 (NALEO Educational Fund, 2022). North Carolina added a congressional seat and has 14 congressional districts due to its population growth. Despite this shift, Latinos still need to be fully represented in leadership at local, state, or federal levels.

The Leadership Subcommittee believes there is growing civic, political, and economic importance for Latinos to engage their civic and leadership potential. Hence, future generations have a pathway for leadership and decision-making that impacts their everyday life. This subcommittee explores various sources, data, and models to provide recommendations that seek to cultivate civic engagement, youth leadership, and Latino capacity within communities.

The Leadership Subcommittee wants to emphasize that the recommendations outlined need to be approached through a cultural lens and engagement strategies to utilize Latino communities’ assets and values appropriately.

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Natalie Marles,
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RECOMMENDATION I

To cultivate the Latinx leadership pipeline by engaging Latinx youth and young adults in civic participation and education

Background:

Latinos in the U.S. are very young. According to the 2020 census reports, 1 in 6 Latinos in North Carolina are younger than 18, making them two-thirds of the Latino population in N.C. (NALEO Educational Fund, 2022). This means that this population will influence American society, politics, and cultural landscape in the coming years.

Political socialization, identity, leadership confidence, civic habits, and knowledge develop around 12 years old, and this formation follows them into adulthood (Grossman, 2016). Studies reveal that civic engagement among youth creates positive outcomes that enhance social capital, resiliency, educational attainment, and capacity to address and change oppressive conditions (McWhiter, Gomez, & Rau, 2018). Creating a system of empowerment involves creating spaces where youth can share their hopes, dreams, and opinions on community needs and changes to gear them toward leadership.

Outreach to churches, volunteer organizations, or family-centered agencies such as parent groups within the schools are avenues where a core of young Latino leaders can be found (Ramirez, 2006).

The North Carolina Department of Administration currently identifies 23 youth councils. More information about these youth councils’ outreach strategies to Latinx youth and young adults is needed. Various community-based organizations also engage Latinx youth in civic and leadership development across the state. Lack of funding often limits their reach and impact (Grossman, 2016). Findings from the Aspen Institute Latinos and Society Program 2016 report and the National Conference for Citizenship recommend that governments create tool kits, educational material, curriculum templates, and resources for any community to access, including using social media apps and networking tools to foster relationships and mentorships.

We must develop the next generations of leaders who will uphold their communities’ rights, dignity, dreams, and voices to execute true inclusion. Based on the information collected, the following is recommended:

Strategies:

- ➔ **For the Governor’s Office to expand youth councils, especially among cities with a heavy Latino presence and in rural communities.**
- ➔ **For the Governor’s Office to provide support and accessible appropriate cultural leadership training, educational toolkits, material, and funding to community-based organizations or initiatives engaging in Latinx youth leadership development.**
- ➔ **For the Governor’s Office to encourage cities to partner with local key stakeholders and proactively conduct outreach to recruit young Latinx leaders into youth councils or leadership positions. Reaching out to current Latino avenues of engagement, such as church-related organizations, charitable organizations, or other family-centered organizations, is recommended.**



RECOMMENDATION II

To assist and support in the creation and expansion of Hispanic/Latinx task forces, councils, and/or committees within each municipality

Background:

According to surveys from the U.S. Census, Latinos are less likely to speak to local public officials, volunteer, or trust public institutions (Grossman, 2016). Michener et al. (2020) state, “Trust can only be built when government and academic collaborators are themselves trustworthy and engage communities as partners in addressing what matters to them, including inequities.” The need for collaboration between local communities, government agencies, and residents has never been more evident today. Many lessons were learned during the COVID-19 pandemic that requires governments at all levels to act to improve communication, response, and aid to vulnerable groups in our community. At the state level, North Carolina responded to COVID-19 through funding initiatives, informational community tool kits, and the creation of systems like the NCCARE360, the “first statewide coordinated care network to electronically connect those with identified needs to community resources,” to coordinate and invest in access to healthy food, housing, jobs, and more (NCDHHS, 2022). However, the rapid changes to information caused delays. Additionally, they overwhelmed local administrations that lack the infrastructure and links to the Hispanic/Latino communities and leaders to engage the Latinx individuals in times of crisis and need. Finally, increased disparities and inequalities call for local governments to approach the Latinx community actively.

Various models and projects exist in N.C. that help create more integrated communities. A notable one is the Building Integrated Communities (BIC) Project, a community planning and leadership initiative that has been working with local municipalities and community stakeholders in North Carolina to create inclusive policies, improve communication, public safety, entrepreneurship, and leadership within Latinx, immigrant, and refugee residents (Latino Migration Project, n.d). Cities including Sanford, Siler City, Winston Salem, and others have created their own Hispanic equity task forces and advisory councils

to increase local civic participation and leadership and address issues and needs. For example, Siler City’s Immigrant Advisory Council helped increase the pay for bilingual police officers and established interpreting services for public city meetings. North Carolina Rural Center has a Homegrown Leaders Training program, and the Rural Economic Development Institute fosters leadership development in rural communities in N.C.

Strategies:

- ➔ For the Governor’s Office to support capacity building of local communities to address civic participation, leadership, equity, accessibility, and engagement between townships and residents. Providing funding or logistical support to help townships communicate with residents via interpreting services at public meetings and other resources is essential.
- ➔ For the Governor’s office to promote the development of a response plan that is culturally relevant and increases accessibility to local information and resources in moments of crisis to Latinx/Hispanic residents within each city in North Carolina. This response plan is critical, especially in areas with a high Hispanic/Latinx population. Outlining the bilingual communication dissemination plan and identifying key staff, leaders, responsibilities, and partners is needed within each local community.
- ➔ For the Governor’s Office to encourage strong relationships between local leadership and local Latino leaders and organizations. Identifying and supporting Latino leaders through training, mentorships, and other initiatives is vital to equip them with the necessary tools to help their communities.

RECOMMENDATION III

For the Governor’s Office to promote Latino leadership recognition at the state and local level to increase Latino visibility, commitment, and participation

Background:

Creating a competitive, exploratory and welcoming environment and a sense of accomplishment through incentives and recognition can help individuals be more involved and excited about participation (Grossman, 2016). Ramírez (2006) suggests that Latino leaders place a high value on competence and character, but what distinguishes them from other groups is their emphasis on family and community, especially the practice of compassion, respect, and community servanthood as a leader. Recognition of these values and priorities will revitalize commitment to their communities. Highlighting Latino leaders will help shine a light on their communities and the issues or needs they are working hard to address and potentially gain awareness and support to aid their efforts.

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Strategies:

- ➔ For the Governor’s Office to create a subcategory of the Governor’s Medallion Award for Volunteer Service for Latino and Hispanic leaders. By adding a new category where Latino and Hispanic Leaders can be nominated in each county for their hard work and impact on their communities to energize leaders at the local level.
- ➔ For the Governor’s Office to create a Rising Star award for young Latinos, 20 years of age or under, who show outstanding leadership within their communities. This program will help incentivize the new era of Latino youth in North Carolina, representing two-thirds of the Latino population in NC.
- ➔ For the Governor to create a Dreamer Award in recognition of the tremendous efforts of Latino pioneers leading the way for equal opportunity and access to education.

- Healthy North Carolina 2030.

13

14

RECOMMENDATION II

To address access to health care for Hispanic/Latinx North Carolinians

Background:

According to NC DHHS data, Hispanic/Latinx communities saw a disproportionately high number of COVID-19 cases across the state. They were also more likely to have negative social and economic effects due to COVID-19 and had a higher risk of dying due to COVID-19. Over the next few years, we will continue to learn about the health inequities exacerbated by COVID-19. In 2021, the Hispanic population was among the highest uninsured rates in the United States at 17.7% (Branch & Conway, 2022). Out of the 2.3 million Medicaid beneficiaries in North Carolina, only 15% of those are Hispanic/Latinx (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, 2023). This creates a barrier to accessing physical and mental health services. For over 10 years, Latinx/Hispanic community-based organizations and leaders have advocated for Medicaid Expansion in the state of North Carolina, including our Health Subcommittee of the Advisory Council for Hispanic and Latino Affairs.

In March, Governor Cooper signed House Bill 76 into law, making North Carolina the 40th state to expand Medicaid. Medicaid Expansion will improve the quality of life of our communities by increasing access to health care for more than 600,000 North Carolinians, including, mental health and substance use services across the state, as well as in rural communities.

- Medicaid expansion will provide affordable healthcare coverage to low-income parents, including thousands of parents of children with special needs.
- Medicaid expansion will also boost rural health care, giving access to healthcare to thousands of individuals living in rural communities across N.C.
- 8% to 10% (over 50,000) of the total uninsured population that will benefit from Medicaid Expansion are Hispanic. North Carolina is the 40th state to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The expansion of Medicaid is a historic moment for the health and well-being of people in our state; however, there is a lot of work that must be done to ensure the implementation of Medicaid Expansion takes into consideration the needs of the Hispanic/Latinx community. We applaud Governor Cooper and Secretary Kinsley for their hard work to pass Medicaid Expansion. This Health Subcommittee will continue to advocate for the recommendation strategies provided below and will support the implementation of Medicaid Expansion which will bring transformative access to health care in rural areas, improve access to mental health resources, and increase access to health for working adults and their families.

Strategies:

- ➔ **Incorporate the unique needs of Latinx/Hispanic populations into the design, implementation, and rollout strategies of Expand Medicaid to increase the number of Hispanic/Latinx people, who access affordable health insurance in North Carolina.**
- ➔ **Reinforce strategies to ensure Hispanics/ Latinx receive timely information and resources to access COVID-19, vaccines, testing, and treatment options.**
- ➔ **Invest in non-medical drivers of health affecting Hispanics/Latinx (access to healthy food, safe and affordable housing, well-paying jobs, transportation, interpersonal violence) through NC initiatives (e.g., NC Care 360, Healthy Opportunities, Healthier Together).**

RECOMMENDATION III

To diversify the workforce and communications

Background:

Diversity and inclusion are terms used often and loosely when ensuring that health and social services entities reflect the communities they serve. Communities feel more comfortable accessing resources when people providing the services look and sound like them. The Hispanic/Latinx community is not an exception. The NC Department of Health and Human Services programs/divisions and local health departments should work to ensure that their staff represents the populations that are historically marginalized, including their Spanish-speaking Hispanic/Latinx population.

The Importance of Diversity and Inclusion in the Healthcare manuscript (Stanford, 2020) provides evidence-based strategies that align with the ones recommended by this committee: 1) Ensure that diversity and inclusion are ingrained within the culture by making it integral to the mission and outputs within the organization; 2) Integrate stakeholders from all levels of the organization and ensure that all groups are included in discussions to enact and maintain diversity and inclusion efforts; 3) Share successes and failures with similar organizations as it is this discourse that will allow the organization to reflect on strengths

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and weaknesses in previous diversity and inclusion strategies; and 4) Start young- engage with local communities and schools to ensure that persons from underrepresented groups get early exposure to fields in medicine (Stanford, 2020). These recommendations include the imminent need to create a pipeline of Hispanic/Latinx medical and social services providers to reflect our ever-increasing population and include stakeholders from within the communities served.

Strategies:

- ➔ **To increase the number of bilingual and bicultural health and human services employees and ensure that staff members at all levels receive continuing education and training in culturally and linguistically appropriate service delivery.**
- ➔ **To include leaders, community-based organizations, and community members representing all segments of the Hispanic/Latinx community in North Carolina in developing and implementing health and human services strategies, programs, and initiatives tailored to reach.**
- ➔ **To increase outreach and access to health and human services resources for the Hispanic/Latinx in N.C.**

LEGISLATIVE & ADVOCACY

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RECOMMENDATION I

To provide access to policy and information through community lead organizations

Introduction:

Ensuring that access to information about legislation is available provides an opportunity for all community members to have agency and be more willing to be active participants in democracy. In addition, the government should also play an active role as a distributor of information concerning vital organizations, departments, and groups where community members can seek aid in various forms.

Background:

Legislative work is abundant, with negative and positive impacts that community members are unaware of. Our intention is not to instill fear but to reach those who can vote and create an environment where more Latinos are politically active. Many great organizations in our community help bridge these gaps of information and policy, which our community could greatly benefit from. For example, organizations such as healthcare centers, immigration counseling centers, and food banks could make this information available so people can access it easily and in one central place, in Spanish and English.

Strategies

- ➔ Create a hotline where the everyday person can call and hear all policies (including, but not limited to, healthcare, immigration and taxes) that will affect the Latino community. This hotline will be automated, which will lower costs and be easier to maintain. In addition, individuals will have a dial-by-section directory, in which numbers 1-9 will direct individuals to different policy topics.
- ➔ Create a website that would include various organizations in N.C. that work with the Latino community and their website links and contact information.
 - ➔ If funding is needed, we can ask for donations on the site (to be distributed between website costs and organizations).
 - ➔ The website will also run important policy updates where national, state, and local policies can be located and updated regularly.
 - ➔ This website will also be linked to social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram). The social media pages will target different audiences and age groups. Be intentional about making this a space for advocacy and communication.
- ➔ Create an online/printed monthly newsletter with the information. Highlight one organization a month to help elevate each organization on the website and drive more traffic to the website and social media.

RECOMMENDATION II

To intentionally connect state government with the community and involve the community in decision-making

Introduction

It is important to remember that when making legislation affecting Latine communities, Latine voices should be given a platform in deciding their future along with policymakers. One of the best ways to form intentional relations with the community is by working with local organizations and community leaders.

Background

Many organizations directly involved in the Latine community report feeling frustrated at the state government for inadequately addressing issues and not connecting with our community. When we have a small voice through a committee of our own or some influence, it can seem to be held by the leaders. This leaves things stagnant and deprived of new ideas from more leaders with deeper ties to the community.

Strategies

- ➔ Have quarterly meetings with staff from all the appointed cabinets from the Governor's office, which will host leaders to speak about issues, offer solutions, and direct the action steps to the appropriate branch to handle. Set up workshops for individuals interested in joining any of these offices and agencies in order for them to understand the different councils.
- ➔ Have organizations who want to be listed on the website hub hold community outreach days to hear from the community, understand the issues, and report back findings in these quarterly meetings.
- ➔ Hold listening sessions across the state with directly impacted individuals and stakeholders with a direct relationship with the community. At the end of the year, hold a Latino town hall as the pinnacle of this activity, where the community, organizations, and state government can all speak to one another.



RECOMMENDATION III

To address current inequalities facing the Latino community administratively and legislatively

Introduction

A home is a fundamental right and foundation for being a fully functioning and successful member of society. Without it, individuals are automatically placed at a disadvantage that will inevitably create further setbacks. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are impossible to achieve when one is struggling to find a place to live. Therefore, it is the duty and responsibility of the government to create public policy regarding housing protection for those who need it most.

Background

At a time when housing and rental costs are dramatically increasing, mobile homes are often the best or only affordable housing option for low-income and working-class individuals and families. North Carolinians live in manufactured housing at higher rates than the national average (14% to 6.5%), and the Latinx community is more likely to live in mobile homes (24.9%) in North Carolina. Additionally, Latinxs in rural communities tend to live in mobile homes at higher rates than those in metropolitan areas. However, current North Carolina law prohibits individuals from registering their homes in their names if they lack a Social Security number. As a result, owners who cannot register their mobile homes under their names can experience difficulties moving their homes if their rent is increased dramatically or the land is sold. This experience is significant as out-of-state investors continue to buy mobile home parks and sell the land or raise rents exorbitantly (Hannapel, 2018).

In North Carolina, 67 percent of jobs require more than just a high school degree, while less than half of the state’s workforce has attained a postsecondary education. As a result, in 2019, North Carolina enacted a statutory postsecondary goal of having 2 million people between the ages of 25-44 obtain a postsecondary degree or certificate by 2030. Unfortunately, 3,000 undocumented high school graduates in North Carolina are required to pay out-of-state tuition to attend a community college or university each year. This out-of-state status means that these students have to pay up to three to four

times the cost of in-state tuition—an insurmountable barrier for an overwhelming majority of North Carolina’s 4.2 million workers (81%) get to work by car alone. Foreign-born individuals are integral to North Carolina’s economy, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as they make up 12 percent of the state’s essential workers. Unfortunately, North Carolina law prevents the state’s 158,600 undocumented essential workers from obtaining driver’s licenses. Addressing this barrier is vitally crucial to the Latinx community, as Latinxs make up 77% of the undocumented population in North Carolina.

Furthermore, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is erroneously denying drivers licenses or wrongfully requiring the issuance of short-term drivers licenses to immigrants who are lawfully authorized to live in the United States by the Department of Homeland Security. Specifically, the DMV incorrectly categorizes individuals as having temporary immigration status when they have permanent or indefinite immigration status, such as legal permanent residents, asylees, refugees, and applicants for legal permanent residency.

In North Carolina, an estimated one of every seven drivers is unlicensed. Beyond supporting North Carolina’s economy, providing drivers licenses to all eligible drivers, regardless of immigration status, promotes public safety by increasing the likelihood that drivers know the rules of the road, pass vision tests and have insurance (Tippett, 2015).

Strategies:

- ➡ **Administrative: The Governor’s Office should explore ways to support residents of mobile home parks who are in danger of being evicted by providing monetary support to those who are behind on their rent due to the COVID-19 pandemic; to explore consumer protection issues related to unscrupulous landlord behavior; and to support programs that allow tenants to obtain capital to purchase parks that may be sold to out-of-state investors.**
- ➡ **Legislative: The Governor’s Office should advocate for legislation that provides statutory protections to all North Carolinians who rent or own mobile homes that include the ability to title their mobile homes regardless of whether they have a Social Security number, a good cause provision to evict tenants; provides the right of first refusal to tenants before the mobile home**

park is sold to a third party; provides capital to support tenants interested in buying the mobile home park; and a public notice requirement of any pending sale of a mobile home park.

- ➡ **Administrative: The Governor’s Office and the Department of Public Instruction should explore ways to support undocumented youth. Ensure that high school counselors and community college and university admissions offices know the current opportunities for undocumented youth to pay in-state tuition rates. Examples include nonprofit and business sponsorships and the North Carolina Promise Tuition Plan available at Elizabeth City State University, Western Carolina University, Fayetteville State University, and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Additionally, through the Office of the Attorney General, the Governor’s Office should re-assess the eligibility for in-state tuition for individuals with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status. These individuals are considered legally present under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s guidance, especially since the federal government is expected to publish federal regulations for the program sometime in August.**

- ➡ **Legislative: The Governor’s Office should support legislation allowing all students who have attended North Carolina high schools for a certain number of years and receive high school diplomas or equivalents to obtain in-state tuition.**
- ➡ **Administrative: The Governor’s Office should work with the DMV to provide appropriate training and oversight to the state’s 145 DMV offices in implementing current state law to ensure that eligible immigrants eligible for state drivers licenses are not erroneously denied those licenses. Additionally, it should ensure that the DMV properly informs individuals of currently existing appeals processes they can pursue when they believe they are erroneously denied a driver’s license or identification card.**
- ➡ **Legislative: The Office of the Governor should support legislation that allows all North Carolinians, regardless of whether they have a Social Security number, to obtain state drivers licenses and identification cards.**

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development concerns generating wealth for the overall community. It is a significant component of the social determinants of health that impact the quality and well-being of our community. For example, in North Carolina in 2022, Hispanic/Latino workers earned \$0.66 relative to every dollar earned by their white counterparts (DOL, 2023). The Hispanic/Latino community also carries a more significant financial healthcare burden; as of 2021, 27% of Hispanic/Latinx people are uninsured, compared to 5.7% of white people (KFF, 2023).

Our recommendations are intended to holistically include the Latino community in the state’s economic development and participate in the decision-making process. A more prosperous Latino community contributes to the state’s overall prosperity.

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RECOMMENDATION I

To support and develop the Latino digital workforce

Background:

Accessible and affordable digital resources allow us to leverage information and connect to the institutions and systems that we all depend on, including state and local government agencies, banking services, and education and social services. Governor Cooper has implemented a broadband plan for North Carolina. We recommend a strategy combining increasing access to high-speed internet infrastructure and structured opportunities to strengthen digital literacy in Hispanic/Latinx communities. These recommendations aim to strengthen employment opportunities, spur business innovation, and strengthen the ability of state and local governments to engage Hispanic/Latino communities.

Strategies:

- ➔ Include community-based organizations to increase the adoption of high-speed internet access to the 80% goal of digital equity for the Latinx population.
- ➔ Increase training for business owners and employees to expand the educational opportunities, availability of digital programs, and infrastructure for Latino students, the workforce, and businesses.



RECOMMENDATION II

To strengthen resources for community-based organizations that provide access to financial literacy programs and support and equitable access to capital and opportunities

Background:

North Carolina offers excellent low-cost resources to advance financial opportunities for individuals, families, and businesses. Nevertheless, our community colleges and publicly funded agencies have not done enough to make these opportunities accessible to populations with limited English proficiency as required by the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Govinfo.gov). Therefore, we recommend addressing policies and social norms preventing Hispanic/Latino communities from accessing public resources to increase financial literacy, business acumen, and equitable access to capital.

Strategies:

- ➔ Provide financial literacy about the IRS, starting a business, licenses, and access to loans in Spanish.
- ➔ Provide language access by hiring bilingual staff to increase bilingual seminars, documents and identify needs.
- ➔ Create a list of financial institutions that serve the Hispanic Community.
- ➔ For Community College small business centers to include bilingual services across the state.

References:

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PUBLIC SAFETY

The growth of the Latinx community in our state is undeniable. So is the clear fact that many in the Latinx community have strong connections to their various countries of origin. Many in the Latinx community, especially newcomers, look to their respective consulate embassy and to the many vibrant community organizations that already exist throughout our state (such as El Centro Hispano, El Puente, El Vinculo Hispano) for help with guidance regarding education, health, housing, public safety, and general issues. It is, therefore, incumbent upon our state departments to work in constant, open collaboration with these entities and institutions.

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RECOMMENDATION I

For the NC DPS Office of Victim Services, NCDOJ, NCDOL, NCDMV, and the NCDHHS to make regular visits and maintain regular contact with the Mexican, Honduran, El Salvadorian, and Guatemalan consulates to provide information, answer questions, and participate in collaboration with them

Background:

According to the NC DPS Office of Victim Services (NC Department of Public Safety, n.d.) provides various services to crime victims in North Carolina, including assistance for reimbursement of medical expenses and lost wages due to being an innocent victim of a crime committed in North Carolina.

On February 18, 2022, three Office of Victim Services members visited the Consulate of Mexico. They were invited to visit the consulate by the Hispanic outreach community organization El Centro Hispano. Their representative, Maria Sanchez, had provided an open invitation to visit the consulate to provide information to the Mexican people who were visiting the facility. Victim Services had a table near the waiting area where we had pamphlets and applications. In addition, visitors were provided a brief description of Victim Services programs by bilingual Victim Advocate Otilio Moran. He encouraged them to come to the Victim Services table if they had any questions.

Strategies:

- ➊ Provide visits by government agency personnel to these consulates and organizations to create an open line of communication and cooperation, bridging an often hard to fill gap.
- ➋ If the visits prove to be successful, expand the visits to Spanish-speaking community organizations, such as El Centro, El Puente, El Vinculo Hispano, and others. Depending on staff availability, this may be a quarterly rotating visit with two visits to the Mexican consulate and one to reach the Honduran and the Guatemalan consulates.

RECOMMENDATION II

In collaboration with N.C. Justice Center, to design, promote and institute a program to train DMV personnel (with particular attention to rural counties) on how to recognize, read and understand the various documents involved in the USA citizenship process.

Background:

During our original conversations, the public safety subcommittee’s second recommendation was for the North Carolina Governor’s office “to support legislation allowing undocumented residents to obtain drivers licenses.” Our research showed, however, that this recommendation had already been presented to the Governor as part of 2021 Public Safety Subcommittee recommendations and that the newly created Governor Hispanic Latino Council’s legislative subcommittee would also be presenting a similar recommendation in 2022. Also, based on previous statements by members of the N.C. legislature, Public Safety subcommittee members were convinced that, even if recommended, this measure would not be adopted in 2023.

Since we understood that it would be unlikely that such a measure would receive the support of a majority of the N.C. legislature, we invited NC Justice Center’s staff attorney Adriel Orozco to share information with us regarding N.C. Justice Center’s research and work-related problems encountered by permanent residents when applying for permanent licenses in N.C. We had heard about this problem through community contacts and that N.C. Justice had conducted research in trying to resolve the problem. His thorough and detailed report described instances in which permanent residents (commonly known as green card holders) were awarded denials or temporary licenses instead of the permanent licenses

they were entitled to under the law. In most cases, the wrong document or denial being awarded was the inability of DMV personnel to recognize the validity of the federal legal documentation. According to N.C. Justice Center’s findings, this problem was not consistent in all counties but appeared more prevalent in rural counties.

Strategies:

- ➡ **For the Governor to support legislation that will provide driver licenses for all residents of North Carolina, regardless of legal status. Denying driver licenses to the undocumented population jeopardizes public safety and increases insurance rates. We affirm our continued support of this recommendation.**
- ➡ **Provide a similar process as the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration’s website (MVA) which allows undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver’s license when they have an identity document such as a valid, current foreign passport, Maryland Income taxes for the preceding two years, and two residency documents.**
- ➡ **Research the following 13 states that offer drivers licenses to immigrants to learn more about how they grant a drivers license without a Social Security number: California, Colorado, Delaware, Connecticut, New York, Utah, New Mexico, Maryland, Illinois, Vermont, Washington, and Hawaii.**

The goal would be for DMV personnel to recognize the validity of official federal (USA) court judgments and decrees. Implementing this recommendation will avoid the issuance of temporary IDs and Licenses where the issuance of permanent documents is warranted. It will also avoid denials where the issuance of permanent licenses is warranted. The use of clearly drafted internal agency memos is a necessary tool in this effort.

RECOMMENDATION III

To encourage the State Reentry Collaborative Council to expand its outreach to the Latinx community to improve services for Spanish-speaking individuals re-entering their communities. Furthermore, for the Governor to include in his future budget specific funding for the SRCC to expand its outreach to Latinx communities.

Background:

We brainstormed how various correctional programs could start including or improving Spanish language services not just translation of materials but actual services. Regrettably, there appears to be a shortage of bilingual service providers primarily because of restrictions on occupational licensing (such as paralegal, legal, nursing licenses, and counseling certifications.) Ideally, we would not need an interpreter if we had bilingual staff, but that is not the current reality in N.C.

Strategies:

- ➡ **Encourage re-entry councils to improve/include services to Spanish-speaking individuals re-entering the community. This re-entry may be done simply by collaborating/involving Spanish-speaking organizations, churches, and individuals with the program.**

References:

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The N.C. College System has been an invaluable partner in facilitating our in-person meetings. Their steadfast support has played a critical role in our success, and for that, the GACHLA Council expresses our sincerest gratitude. Dr. MariaRosa Rangel, GACHLA Chair.

- **Hispanic/Latino Leaders**
The GACHLA Council would like to extend our sincere appreciation to our esteemed Hispanic/Latino leaders for their active involvement in our meetings. Their enthusiasm for comprehending and supporting the Council’s initiatives is truly motivating. Sincerely, Dr. MariaRosa Rangel, GACHLA Chair.

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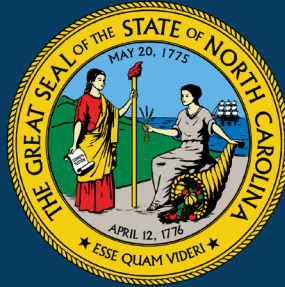
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GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISPANIC/LATINO AFFAIRS OF NORTH CAROLINA

2022-2023 RECOMMENDATIONS

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