

City of Evanston: Latinx Community

Needs Assessment & Recommendations

Building an authentic relationship with the Latinx community is essential and a common denominator in the expressed comments at the June 29, 2021 town hall event. The highly engaged and larger- than average number of families that attended the program are requesting a door for engagement, feel underutilized, underserved and fear the to-date efforts to be performative.

Listed here are best practice initiatives to address some of the more pressing concerns expressed by the Latinx townhall participants, additional resources for city administration and an appendix with translated and typed notes from break-out group participants:

1. **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training** for all city employees, beginning with constituent-facing services. This training is to include culturally conscious approaches to service and culturally centered approaches to marketing and outreach. DEI training will also provide guides in learning when to leverage bilingual/bicultural staff and when it is best to hire an interpreter. Second tier to this training is a packaging of tracking, assessment, and long-term initiatives to ensure sustainable growth.
2. **Develop a Latino section on the City of Evanston page.** This webpage should include overview in Spanish and easily accessible documents with email and phone information to reach a Spanish speaking City informational person. It should also include a directory in Spanish with contact guides for common concerns. City youtube meetings should be linked to this page with instructions on how to translate video captioning into Spanish.

- 3. Latinx City Liaison.** Position for a full-time, bilingual and bicultural city staff reporting directly to the Mayor. This person will have a unique opportunity to build and create a space for connecting the Latinx community to established City, State and Federal resources as well as building additional frameworks for Latinx outreach, equitable and inclusive services.

This position shall;

- Establish relationships with state agencies that provide direct service to immigrant families such as the Illinois Welcome Center and initial funnel for city grants
 - House and chair trainings and calls for active citizenship opportunities such as committees, boards, service and applications
 - Liaison with Oakton Community College and Northwestern University to create satellite sites for ESL courses and Certificate programs that provide entry into careers and WIOA grants for displaced workers
 - Identify opportunities to leverage Evanston's human capital in supporting service-based projects for community organizations
 - Search for and secure a physical space to build authentic relationships with the Latinx community and deliver above initiatives
 - Example: City of Kankakee & United Way's Neighborhood House (2021)
 - Example: Inaugural Illinois Welcome Center in Melrose Park (2007)
- 4. Mayor's Latinx Committee** To be composed by leaders of the Latinx serving community organizations, Evanston Latinx families with subcommittee groups that can best liaison communication, services and advocacy.
- Serve as a consortium of Latinx organizations and community leaders with a third of members appointed by the Mayor, a third by community organizations that serve Latinx community and a third by Latinx identifying community members
 - Develop a Strategic Plan to address and record longitudinal deliverables around community established goals
 - This committee should host their monthly meetings in spaces that are of access, best-services and near Latinx neighborhoods.
 - The committee can guide in distribution of city resources that exist but are unknown to Latinx leaders.

- Examples:
 - City of Bloomington in Indiana
<https://bloomington.in.gov/boards/hispanic-latino-affairs>
 - City of Durham in North Carolina
<https://durhamnc.gov/3212/Mayors-HispanicLatino-Committee>

5. Expansion of the Citizens Police Academy to be led In Spanish. A national template for Police Departments to establish relationships with the Latinx community that is most successful in spaces where administration is yet representative of the community it serves is the Citizen's Police Academy. This allows an introductory understanding of how the department works and allows for a conversation to begin.

Some cities that have successfully implemented a Spanish version:

- Kankakee
- Elgin
- St. Charles
- Lake Forest

Additional Resources for City Administration:

National League of Cities

<https://www.nlc.org/initiative/mayors-institute-on-job-creation-and-economic-opportunity-to-improve-health-and-equity/>

Latino Policy Forum

<https://www.latinopolicyforum.org/>

Metropolitan Mayors Caucus

<https://mayorscaucus.org/>

Appendix

Translated and Typed Notes From 6.29.21 Evanston Latinx Town Hall

GROUP A

- Adult education that includes:
 - English classes
 - Reading workshops
 - Conversational English
 - Computer classes
- Reestablish trust with the police and residents
- Access to broadband internet and provide equipment to connect to the internet
- A Latino Community Center where people that can provide classes and social service programs such as:
 - Mental health services
 - Exercise classes (Zumba)
 - Reading club
 - Programs for senior citizens
- A shopping center that provides Latino services and products in order *to increase tax revenue*
- Funding to support Latinos en Evanston North Shore (LENS) in order to reach more people especially those affected by COVID-19
LatinosEnEvanston.ns@gmail.com

GROUP B

- Funding to increase the use of solar energy
- Increase funding for mental health services and resources for the well-being of families
- Provide support to students that are struggling academically and socially due to *isolation of the pandemic*
- Hire more local *bilingual* Latino staff
- Assistance with medical expenses *for those that cannot afford to pay their bills*
- Fine waivers/forgiveness *for those that are not able to pay any fines issued by the city*
- Internet access *for those that cannot afford it*
- Financial assistance for those that are unemployed to help pay rent and utility bills
- Publish a breakdown of the city budget online and in Spanish with a description of all the specific line items
- Provide universal basic income (\$400 to \$500 a month) to all adult residents
- Don't provide financial support to corporations instead give priority to local small businesses
- Defund the police
- Make it a priority to replace the water pipes that contains lead especially in homes in the 5th Ward
- More surveillance by the police and address drug dealing/sales which increased during the pandemic
- Provide translation for Spanish speaking residents *during City Council meetings*
- More accountability to landlords so they can address unsafe conditions in their properties
- More regulation and control of firearms

GROUP C

- Infrastructure
 - Internet access for all residents
 - Street lighting especially in Wards 5 and 8
 - Trash
 - A place to deposit construction waste and electronic equipment
 - Bulk trash pick-up should be more than just two times per year
 - Don't charge for yard waste
 - Replace trash cut cans that are damaged or broken
- More funding to the public libraries to provide services in Spanish
- Public Health
 - Social workers that can provide therapy and services to people of all ages
 - Rental assistance and financial assistance to pay for utility bills for those that are behind
- Hire more bicultural and bilingual city employees
- Provide English classes at community centers
- City employees should come to people's houses to speak with people individually
- “We have a voice? I didn't know ... This is the first time I hear this in 35 years”
- Economy
 - Provide financial assistance to Black/Brown owned small businesses
 - Create a business development center
 - Essential workers are also those that work at grocery stores and need the most financial assistance
- More Civic engagement
 - Hire a community liaison that can help disseminate information about City programs to the Latino community

- Have free beach access
- Lower the cost of the city sticker
- Make parking free in shopping malls/business

Group D

- Child care
- Essential workers low income
- Violence prevention around schools
- Eliminate gang activity by youth
- The city needs to collaborate with community organizations that provide Youth Services
- Support nonprofits that were hit by COVID and are responding to community needs
- Support EPL that provides programs for Latinx communities
- Concern about fines and fees for those that don't have the capacity to pay
- Ensure assessment and communication of Latinx needs
 - Provide assistance to Latino and other POC families who experienced the loss of life, jobs, and housing
- Infrastructure - Provide permanent broadband services
- Go to public meeting areas of hard-to-reach communities
 - City council needs to come to us
 - Many of our community members can't come to City Council meetings
 - Make City Council meetings more linguistically accessible
- Provide funding not geographically but based on need
 - Single parents, working-class families
 - So many waiting lists for program services for family and Youth
 - City programs for teens

- Unemployed
- Small businesses that closed down
- No new programs. Support nonprofit organizations that have been serving the community
- Invest in health services that are expensive such as dental and encourage future use of the services

GROUP E

- Clean the bike lane
- Evaluate and fix the sidewalks in each ward
- More funding for schools
 - To support children with special needs
 - More extracurricular activities
 - Bilingual summer camps
 - other programs
- Funding for Mental Health
 - Affordable therapy for parents, families, and children (sliding scale)
 - Substance abuse
 - Social workers
- Send City staff directly to the neighborhoods - similar to what the city of Chicago is doing *to speak with residents and learn about the needs*
- Financial assistance to families that experienced loss of income due to covid-19
 - Increase pay to essential workers (hazard pay)
- Priorities should be:
 - Public Health
 - Economic impact
 - Infrastructure

- Create a public water park
- Offer English classes
- Offer classes on food safety
- Make Robert Crown field accessible/free
- Support small businesses
- Establish rent control
- Create a resource database the provides information about affordable housing
- Fix sidewalks
- Clean bike lanes

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