

Creating Latino Community Outreach Programs: Lessons Learned

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In 2008 the University of Arkansas (UA) received a rural development grant from the USDA to:

- Examine the entrepreneurial readiness and constraints among Latino immigrants in rural and urban areas.
- Develop educational outreach materials and programs to facilitate and support entrepreneurial activity among Latinos.

A needs assessment survey for this study was completed in 2009. Latino immigrant entrepreneurs in 59 communities in 26 counties in western Arkansas were asked about:

- Specific problems that they had encountered when starting their business in Arkansas and
- Information or training that would have helped them start their business.

In 2010 the UA created an entrepreneurial development program based on the survey responses. The materials were developed in English and Spanish using a Content-Based Instruction (CBI) approach and were presented to program participants in Spanish language workshops in 2011 and 2012. Participants also chose the subject areas that were included in the workshops.

This fact sheet describes the lessons learned related to:

- **Building community partnerships**

- **Fostering meaningful participation**
- **Implementing workshops**

Building Community Partnerships

- **Build trust:** Personal relationships are more important to Latinos than institutional relationships due to their fear and mistrust of local and state government. This attitude stems from the tumultuous relationship that most Latin American citizens have had with the governments in their countries of origin. Participants generally appreciate being asked to identify and assist in recruiting other participants. Additionally, potential participants will be more trustful if a known associate introduces them to the project.
- **Provide community engagement:** Invite representatives from local government, chambers of commerce and entrepreneurial development programs to present at the workshops. The face-to-face interaction improves local officials' understanding of the issues and concerns that Latino entrepreneurs face. It also assures the Latino participants that local officials want to assist and support their efforts.
- **Expand Extension's reach/capacity:** The training sessions are a perfect opportunity for Cooperative Extension Service (CES) to inform the Latino participants about other services that we

offer including 4-H, Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) and Community and Economic Development (CED). Many of the participants were extremely pleased to learn about CES programs and resources. Some enrolled their children in 4-H and others came to the CES office for training and resource materials.

Fostering Meaningful Participation

- **Include all project stakeholders in the planning process.** Develop resource materials and workshops with significant input from Latino business owners and community key informants. Use stakeholders' responses to surveys and interviews to develop the content of resource materials and workshops.
- **Create linguistically and culturally appropriate training materials.** Develop resource materials using the Content-Based Instruction (CBI) approach, which is designed to teach a subject in the learner's second language. CBI introduces, describes and explains a subject in a way that is easy for English language learners to understand. Have the Spanish language materials reviewed and edited by native Spanish speakers from the appropriate Latin American countries to ensure intelligibility across dialects.

Implementing Workshops

- **Speak Spanish:** Conduct the survey, registration and workshops in Spanish. It is also beneficial to provide the primary workshop training manual in Spanish.
- **Personal invitation:** It is extremely beneficial to use a respected local individual who knows CES and the Latino community to recruit workshop participants. It is also important for the respected

individual to personally invite the business owners to participate in the training sessions.

- **Registration:** Personally distribute registration forms during the initial encounter and collect them a week later.
- **Workshop topics:** Let participants identify the workshop topics. Have participants rank their top workshop topics on the registration form. Select the workshop subject areas based on these rankings.
- **Reminders:** Call all registered participants a week before the workshops begin, and again on the morning of the workshops.
- **Support:** Provide child care and food for the program participants. Having food and child care on site makes it easier for participants to attend the workshops. Providing child care and activities for youth is also very important as Latinos do not like leaving their children at home. This is an excellent opportunity to utilize older 4-H members and to inform participants about the 4-H program.

Creating effective outreach programs for Latino audiences requires building trust to obtain useful information from them to develop programs that address their needs. Each location and group of Latino immigrants is unique. Taking time to understand their culture and needs while engaging them in the process will pay dividends when developing outreach programs for Latino audiences.

For Further Information

- Behnke, A.O. (February, 2013). "Engaging Latino Youth." One hour online webinar presented for the federal Administration of Children and Families. Raleigh, NC. www.slideshare.net/aobehnke/engaging-latinoyouth
- Hoorman, James. 2002. Engaging Minority and Culturally Diverse Audiences. JOE. 40 (6). 6TOT2.

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