

HISPANIC FORUM FINDINGS REPORT

Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester

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2014

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Hispanic Forum

Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Findings Report August 2014

The South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs is the official state government agency responsible for working with the many diverse communities of color present in South Carolina. The African American population is the largest minority group in the State of South Carolina. The remaining groups, in terms of total and percentage of population are respectively: (1) Hispanic/Latino, (2) Asian and (3) the indigenous or Native American Indian/Alaska Native people. Additionally, other ethnic groups have made South Carolina their home, changing the population landscape of our State.

South Carolina is ranked number one among all states in Hispanic growth (according to the most recent US Census 2010). The numbers show over 300 percent increase from the Census in 2000. According to the US Census Bureau, the Hispanic/Latino population comprises 5.3% of the State's population (South Carolina is home to 248,542 Hispanics). However, more accurate numbers reflect that we have three times the number of those stated in the last Census (Reported by SC Consortium for Immigration Studies). **This is due to the fact that not all Hispanics fill out the Census or share information.** The latest Census information based on the American Community Survey is listed below for the State of South Carolina, Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties.

Source: U. S. Census Bureau – 2011-2013 3-Year Estimates. Released November 2014.		South Carolina	
Subject	Number	Pct.	
POPULATION BY HISPANIC OR LATINO (ANY RACE)			
Universe: Total Population			
Total population	4,723,923	100.0	
Hispanic Or Latino Of Any Race	248,542	5.3	
Not Hispanic or Latino	4,475,381	94.7	
White alone	3,019,208	63.9	
Black or African American alone	1,295,771	27.4	
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	14,284	0.3	
Asian alone	62,879	1.3	
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	1,992	0.04	

POPULATION BY HISPANIC OR LATINO (ANY RACE) – Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties in South Carolina.						
Universe: Total Population - Source: U. S. Census Bureau – 2011-2013 3-Year Estimates. Released November 2014.						
	Berkeley County		Charleston County		Dorchester County	
Total population	189,319	100.0	365,198	100.0	142,599	100.0
Hispanic Or Latino Of Any Race	11,465	6.1	19,047	5.2	6,634	4.7
Not Hispanic or Latino	177,854	93.9	346,151	94.8	135,965	95.3
White alone	121,398	64.1	229,437	62.8	92,880	65.1
Black or African American alone	46,737	24.7	104,784	28.7	36,359	25.5
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	959	0.5	814	0.2	762	0.5
Asian alone	4,391	2.3	4,978	1.4	2,289	1.6
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	113	0.1	146	0.03	95	0.1

The Commission's Hispanic Affairs Initiative seeks to find ways to help reduce poverty and deprivation among Hispanics in our State. Our goal is to help the Hispanic/Latino community break the cycle of poverty.

As part of this year's Hispanic Affairs strategic plan, forums will be conducted in selected counties to help us better understand the needs and challenges of the community, and Hispanic non-profit organizations seeking to serve the Hispanic/Latino community.

The Commission's statute and regulations provide that an advisory committee should be established, for each program area, to advise the Executive Director and the Board of Commissioners regarding solutions to reduce poverty among each minority group. To that end, the Commission has established advisory committees to represent the State's Native American, African American, and Hispanic/Latino populations.

The Hispanic Advisory Committee was formed in 2004. Members serve a two year term and, if they so desire, may extend their participation to a second term. The Hispanic Advisory Committee currently has 15 active members from different backgrounds and regions from across our State. The committee provides insight and advice in finding the best solutions to help our community, organizations, and interested parties in accordance with the overall mission of the organization.

In addition to the support and advice of its advisory committees, the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs relies upon members of its Board of Commissioners to help facilitate the process of reaching out to our communities in their respective regions of service.

In June 2014, the Program Coordinator for the Hispanic Initiative along with Ms. Nilsy Rapalo, a member of the Hispanic Advisory Committee from the Charleston area, began the planning process to hold a forum for Hispanic Community Leaders from Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties. During this planning period, key leaders and non-profit organizations were identified and invited to attend the event. The event was held in North Charleston at the DoubleTree Hotel on August 14, 2014. Ms. Rapalo, a member of the Hispanic Advisory Committee and Community Liaison, was instrumental in identifying and ensuring that all those community leaders took part in the event.

A list of Hispanic organizations, other organizations that serve the Hispanic community and community leaders was compiled and invitations were sent via email and US postal service delivery. Space was limited to 50 participants. However, many more individuals expressed their desire to attend the event. Although we could not accommodate more than 50 individuals, we made every effort to schedule times during our stay in Charleston to personally meet with individuals who could not attend the event and to assist them as possible.

The Hispanic Forum was very well attended and very successful.

Purpose of the Forum

The overall goal for the Hispanic Forum and Networking Breakfast was threefold: 1) Inform community leaders and organizations of the mission of the SC Commission for Minority Affairs and to share information regarding programs we have to offer; 2) Meet and network with the leaders of the area to discuss the services they provide; and 3) Assess the needs and challenges of the Hispanic Community and its service providers.

Data Collection and Analysis Methodology

1. Data was collected and analyzed from the forms given to the attendees.
2. The target group for the Findings Report consisted of Hispanic Community organizations and various community leaders.
3. A Forum was facilitated by the Hispanic Program Coordinator, a member of the Hispanic Advisory Committee, and the Commission's Executive Director and staff.

4. All attendees were given a folder with the following: Event Agenda, Forum Form, Agency brochure, Hispanic Program brochure, and Community Based Services Program brochure.
5. An Interpreter was utilized for Non-Spanish speaking guests.
6. Attendees were asked to complete a two-part Forum Form (blue sheet) labeled Part 1 and Part 2.
7. Attendees shared the following information:
 - PART 1
 - a. Identifying information
 - b. Mission of their organization
 - c. Other roles they serve within the community
 - PART 2
 - d. Needs of their community
 - e. Needs of their organizations
 - f. Challenges faced by the community
 - g. Challenges faced by their organization
8. Attendees submitted their forms at the conclusion of the event.
9. Notes were taken and input received.
10. Information was gathered and analyzed from Hispanic Form (Blue sheet) as well as from notes taken at the event.
11. The Findings Report includes action steps and recommendations.

Forum Participants

Information was obtained during the Forum which included the following: Part 1: Name of the organization and identifying information such as address, phone number, email, and website. We also asked participants to share briefly their organizations’ missions and roles. Information obtained in Part 2 of the form included needs and challenges faced by the Hispanic community and Hispanic organizations.

Organizations represented at the forum included, but were not limited to, grassroots organizations, faith based organizations, law enforcement, higher education, health care organizations, Hispanic media, the arts and more. Listed below are the organizations which were in attendance:

Name of Organization	Representative
Dame La Mano	Lydia Cotton
MAG ART	Maribel Acosta
Trident Technical College	Allan Barboza

Desfile Hispano	Maria Cuecha
Iglesia Catolica	Gilgardo Garcia
Military	Luis Class
Saillant Language	Diana Saillant
Carolina One	Fernando De la Cruz
Grupo Ladson	Diana Montes, Beatriz Vivanco, Veronica Castro
Iglesia Bautista Northside	Alex Millan
Charleston Sheriffs Department	Deputy Gustavo Chaves
Iglesia de Dios Johns Island	Tina Diaz, Lisandra Collins
Universal News	Marcela Rubens
MUSC	Judith Rundbaken
PASOs	Romina McCandles
Tribunal	Jackie Niederman
Circulo Hispano de Charleston	Paula Tejeda
MUSC	Vanessa Diaz
HECHO	Josephine Rivera
Charleston County 9-1-1	Sasha Vargas Rimini
SC CMA Commissioner	Fred Lincoln
SC CMA Commissioner	Tia Brewer-Footman
Charleston County School District	Stephen Boags
North Charleston Police Department	Maria Leahy
Trident Technical College-Veterans Program	Yiraliz Beltran
MUSC Children's Clinic	Martha Gomez
ESOL- Charleston County School District	Christina Vivas
Franklyn C. Fetter Clinic	Salvadora Velasquez, Antonio Garcia

Community Visit

Members of the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs staff, with the assistance of Officer Maria Leahy, North Charleston Police Department, were able to tour various communities in the North Charleston Area where Latinos reside and/or own businesses. During the tour, we learned about the personal and business challenges Hispanics faced in those residential communities on a daily basis.

We also toured the area in which Midlands Park Elementary is located. More than 60% of its students are of Hispanic heritage.

The needs varied in each residential area. However, common to the communities were very bad road conditions within some of the Mobile Home Parks, poor lighting, safety issues, and high crime rates. It was apparent that community maintenance was a high priority for residents.

Community and Organizational Needs and Challenges

The following organizations expressed the needs and challenges listed in the chart below. The questions posed in the Hispanic Forum Form were: “How can we help you?” and “What are the needs and challenges of the community?”

NEEDS	COMMUNITY CHALLENGES
Access to Education	Transportation, language barriers and lack of information
Medical Services	
Education for healthcare providers	
Mental Health services for victims	
Education for Parents	
Hispanic media wished to be kept informed of community events, etc to help and assist with publicity	Hispanic community is not informed of all the resources available to them that specifically assist the Hispanic community
Clothing, toiletries and financial assistance to help migrant families and seasonal workers	Language barriers, transportation and access to legal rights
Additional support for students dropping out	
Scholarships for DACA students (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals)	
Assistance to establish new program for newly arrived students and families	
Trash container to help keep our community clean, pave our roads, road signs and signs for our streets	Language, lack of drivers license, information on police in Spanish, health care and education
Educational Support for Migrant students	
Volunteers to work across the State	
Educational retention, stimulate our students to obtain higher education, Educate on higher education opportunities and scholarships available	Not knowing what resources are available to them, limited financial income, undocumented or unauthorized status limits them from furthering their education
	Lack of resources on healthcare, Need resources to learn basic English, Information and resources on nutrition, diabetes, obesity, education on mental health illness, alcoholism,

	child abuse education and prevention and assistance for students currently in college
Funding and State Support, Champions for Latino Community	Organizations lack capacity, interest or policies to work with Latino communities effectively. Community is not familiar with resources, absence of Political will to support community, involve community to learn form them
Protection for renters and the conditions in which they live	Learn to read and write in Spanish, literacy
Promote scouting in the Community	Hispanic attorneys, representation to protect the rights of business owners, law officers to help the Hispanic community and free services related to these areas
Grants/Scholarships for DACA students	More locations to teach English as a Second Language
Provide Free education and classes for those interested in the ARTS Become a non-profit 501c3 organization	Language barriers, Resources, united front-Communication Center with integrated services for the Hispanic Community
Information on educational opportunities, recreational opportunities, and healthcare for adults and children	Language and to be able to work without fear and a fair salary
Spread the word of their companies services to help people who need assistance	Help counties understand the need to have materials and information in Spanish
Legislation and Policies that assist undocumented to obtain drivers license	Legislative representation is lacking for the Hispanic Community
ESL (English as a Second Language) Classes Business Start-up Immigration Lawyers	
Drivers License Assistance for Dream Act Students Special Needs Children	Language Barriers, Some Hispanic communities have individuals that do not know how to read, Drivers license, Assistance for DACA students
Food bank, Toys for Tots, Teach them the importance of doing Income Tax, Clinics- How to get to clinics, High School Diploma, GED classes, Drivers	Teach them English

License

Help with obtaining 501c3 status for programs such as Art, theatre. Need a system of communication which is simple and clear Create a coalition of parents and members in the community

The charts listed above indicate that there are several common themes among the needs and challenges in the community. Among these commonalities are:

- Educational support and resources
- Lack of sufficient resources and lack of knowledge of available resources
- Language barriers
- Non-profit need for capacity building assistance
- Spanish speakers' need to learn English
- Lack of available health services
- The need to obtain drivers licenses

Another component of the Forum was informing participants of services available through the Community Based Services Program at the Commission for Minority Affairs. Ms. Cynthia Haddad was available to speak with representatives of nonprofit organizations who requested assistance and provided one-on-one technical assistance. As a result of making our resources available, subsequent meetings have been scheduled to help nonprofit organizations that requested further assistance.

Recommended Next Action Steps

The SC Commission for Minority Affairs will be tasked to follow through with the concerns of those attending the meeting. We recommend the following action steps:

1. Meet with non-profit organizations that requested assistance;
2. Actively participate in events and special meetings that address the needs of the community in the Low Country area;
3. Link community leaders and grass roots organizations to resources that will help move their communities forward;
4. Continue conducting research in the service area and finding ways to help the Hispanic community find resources needed to foster its wellbeing and break the cycle of poverty;
5. Continue to work with the Hispanic community to build its capacity.

Summary

The South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs, in collaboration with Ms. Nilsy Rapalo, North Charleston-Dorchester Hispanic community leader and Hispanic Advisory Committee Member, hosted a forum for the Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties. The forum served as a tool to obtain valuable information on the challenges faced by the Hispanic community. Time was taken to meet program officials and leaders who serve the Hispanic community. More than 45 community leaders participated in the event.

The various challenges shared included the following:

- The need for more educational support and resources;
- The lack of resources and the lack of knowledge of available resources;
- Language barriers, in particular, the lack of available materials written in Spanish;
- Nonprofit organizations need for capacity building assistance;
- The need for Spanish speakers to learn to speak English;
- The need to link the Hispanic population with available health services; and
- The need for more Hispanics to obtain valid state drivers licenses.

The SC Commission for Minority Affairs will be working with the Hispanic population in the Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester area in implementing the recommended action steps. The findings reports will be shared with various leaders and other interested parties in hopes that this information will stir up the need to work collaboratively. It is through collaboration that solutions to bring about change can be developed. This in turn will better enable the Commission to work closely with the Hispanic leadership. The leadership can in turn assist with the development of needed programs and resources for the community at large.