drawing
upon language
& cultural assets:

a toolkit for strengthening low-income rural latino communities

language & cultural assets

california tomorrow

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Designer
guillermo prado, 8 point 2 design

Web-based Development
Garo Hussenjian, Xapnet Productions

Advisors
Silvia Alvarez, *HACER*
Amalia Anderson, *Main Street Project*
Alyssa Banks, *HACER*
Joshua Becerra, *Neighborhood House*
Angelica Cardenas
John-Paul Chaisson-Cárdenas
Gloria Contreras Edin, *Centro Legal, Inc.*
Felice DuBois
Humberto Fuentes, *Northwest Area Foundation*
Margie Gonzalez, *Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs*
Carol Gregory, *BuRSST for Prosperity*
Rodolfo Gutierrez, *HACER*
Kate Hamilton, *CEO Women*
Eric Idehen, *Wells Fargo Bank, Community Development*
Ramon Leon, *Latino Economic Development Center*
Ann Morris, New Iowan Centers, *Iowa Workforce Development*
David Muñoz, *Muñoz Productions*
Margie Muñoz, *Muñoz Productions*
Rogelio L. Muñoz, Jr., *Chicano Latino Affairs Council, State of Minnesotta*
Samuel Orozco, *Radio Bilingue*
Carlos Rios, *Immigrant Rights Network*
Roxana Rodriguez, *HACER*
Sherrilynn Rawson, *Woodburn School District*
Venus Vendoures Walsh, *New Iowan Centers, Iowa Workforce Development*

* Organizations listed for identifiation purposes only.

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F or many individuals and communities, finding a way to alleviate the impacts of poverty is a daily fact of life. The causes of poverty are complex, and usually will require a number of solutions. Too often, however, one possible solution has been overlooked: the rich cultural strengths and language resources of low-income Latino communities.

This toolkit is designed to assist people living in rural Latino communities to create public programs and policies that will enable you to draw upon your language and culture as social, political and economic resources. It is meant to be used by community groups (large or small) to help you explore the dynamics around bilingualism in your community, to reframe bilingualism from a "problem" into the asset it can be, and to mobilize for action.

background

This is an amazing time! The United States has become the most ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse society ever. Though we hear all the time that the United States is (or should be) a country of English speakers only, in most places you can turn on the television and watch programs in Spanish, walk into a store and hear conversations in Chinese, or pass by a church and hear a sermon being delivered in Korean. More than four hundred languages are spoken in the homes of this nation. And though each community is somewhat different, nationwide, Spanish speakers are the largest and fastest growing population of speakers of a language other than English. In this toolkit, speakers of Spanish will be called Latinos.

The United States does not have an "official" language. However, English is the dominant language. English is the language of government, the language of the schools, and the language of business. People who may speak other languages in their home know they have to master English if they want economic success. As difficult as it can be to find the time and circumstances to learn a new language, many people find a way. English as a Second Language classes for adults often have waiting lists, public schools are expanding English Language Development curriculum, and English language programs for young children are increasing. Although immigrants struggle to learn English, almost all the children of immigrants are English speakers.

Being able to speak English is not enough, though, to guarantee economic success for a recent immigrant. The language a person speaks at home, "home language," is central to a person's identity. The home language provides the main way people can connect with their heritage, the way most immigrants communicate with family and community, especially with family and friends who live outside the United States. Using the home language is the way parents hand down to their children the family wisdom they have been able to preserve through the generations. The home language—your mother tongue—provides a unique way to look at and understand the world.

The culture and language of the home can be a key force for building community – the foundation that helps individuals and communities know who they are and appreciate what they bring to this diverse world. The home language and culture also give immigrants a way to communicate with other parts of the world, a unique asset in a globalized economy. The home language is a resource to protect. And yet, in the United States, as children become English speakers, they tend to leave behind their home language. We are, as a nation, experiencing the fastest ever rates of language loss among the children of immigrants compared to any other country. The message immigrants get is this: Learn English, lose the mother tongue.

There are those in this nation who applaud that process, and who look at languages other than English as a problem to overcome. At various times in U.S. history, there have been movements seeking to prevent other languages from being spoken or to restrict where they are spoken. There have been campaigns against Native American languages, African languages (brought over by slaves), Italian, Polish, German, Japanese, Chinese, and Spanish, to name just a few of the languages that have come under attack. Most of these battles have focused on language, but they have been

stirred up by concerns about immigration, race relations, civil rights, national security and foreign policy. Waves of language oppression and anti-immigration policies have alternated with periods of policies aimed at inclusion. Eras in which the public was convinced that immigrants could not be sufficiently assimilated into "American" ways of life featured policies to limit and control immigration. Eras when the economy was strong, the nation was not at war, gave rise to attitudes welcoming language and cultural diversity.

A modern-day "English Only" or "U.S. English" movement became active about 20 years ago, in 1983. This movement has tirelessly sought to establish English as the only "official" language of the United States. English-only supporters want to prevent most government services from being provided in any language other than English, forbid employees from speaking any language other than English in the workplace, and restrict government funding for bilingual education. They have tried to pass an English-only amendment to the U.S. Constitution and have supported states and cities that attempt to pass their own "English Only" policies.

The English-only movement feeds on fears that immigrants are not learning English and a deeper fear that one day the United States will not share a common language. However, the movement actually has very little research to support its claims. The fact is, most research shows that bilingualism, the ability to speak fluently in two languages, is an asset – to individuals, and to society overall. Bilingualism and language diversity can be part of the solution to the challenges facing many communities in this nation – particularly rural communities. People who are bilingual, and can draw upon the powers of both languages, have the wonderful ability to participate in two different language and cultural worlds – and to bridge across them.

In many rural areas of this nation, the population has declined, young people move away to pursue

opportunities elsewhere, and communities are in need of economic revitalization. Immigrant populations can provide the labor and energy to strengthen the economic fabric of a rural region. Those with bilingual skills provide the glue between the old and new communities, and the bridge that makes economic development thrive and increase the societal quality of life.

Knitting together the social fabric of a newly diverse community requires bilingual skills. It is impossible for people to come to know each other as neighbors if they cannot talk with each other. Similarly, in diverse communities, a bilingual workforce can provide outreach and translation services to new communities, especially important for ensuring that everyone has access to vital health and social services. They aid economic development by understanding the culture of the new community, thus enabling the development of new culturally-specific businesses and an understanding of the needs of newcomers by existing businesses.

So what can be done to ensure that newcomers have the opportunity to master English proficiently, and, at the same time, to develop and maintain their home language? What would it look like if schools, communities, and local and state governments set bilingualism as a goal, and made it possible for individuals and communities to benefit from the power of two languages? How do we get there?

All over the nation (and internationally) we see examples of how bilingualism is supported and developed, in order to be drawn upon as an asset. Organizations, townships, city government and agencies, schools, states, and nations have passed laws and built programs to help people become bilingual, to protect language rights, and to put bilingual people to work. They have also provided the needed translation and services for a diverse population, to protect language rights, to maintain native languages at threat of being lost, encouraging people to learn two or more languages. These laws came into being because people in the community worked together to make change happen. Change can happen in your community, too, if you work together to take action.

OTHER FACTS TO KNOW…

- There are over 38.8 million Latinos in the United States.

- Latinos wield $580 billion in buying power according to the 2002 U.S. Census and Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia. And projections note that Hispanics will have $1 trillion in annual purchasing power by the end of this decade. (ASSOCIATED PRESS, FEBRUARY 2005)

- Mexican immigrants contribute far more in taxes than they receive back in services. They pay $25 - $30 billion in taxes each year, but only 5% of them receive any public assistance.

- When executives of the USA's 1,000 largest companies are asked about the second most valuable language (after English) in business, 63% (almost two out of three) say Spanish, followed by 16% for Japanese, 11% for Chinese. (ACCOUNTEMPS, REPORTED IN USA TODAY, APRIL 3, 1997)

- Immigrants contributed more than 50% of the overall growth in the labor force in the United States in the last decade.

- Between 1990 and 2009, both Asian-American and Latino buying power will grow 347%, compared to 158% increase in total U.S. buying power. And by 2009, Asians Americans and Latinos are projected to total 20% of the population and command almost 14% of U.S. buying power. (SELIG CENTER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, 2004)

THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to help rural Latino communities, in particular. Even though rural Latinos are the primary audience for this toolkit, it can be used by Latino city-dwellers and by other bilingual communities. Its aim is to support people in thinking deeply about language and cultural strengths, and then moving toward community action to promote policies that reframe bilingualism as an asset that can be drawn upon to move communities out of poverty.

The toolkit has several sections. Each section contains tools to guide you through a process of reflection, dialogue, investigation, and moving toward action. The sections are inter-related, and together can help inform and shape powerful cases and action.

Looking at the Numbers: Using Demographic Information

This section provides templates, resources and activities for putting together data and demographic information on language minority and Latino populations. Actual data from several of the Northwest area states provide illustration.

> Action Tools:
> *Reading Data Charts*
> *Finding Out More*
> *Moving to Action – Putting Together Data Statements*

Myths and Facts

Commonly believed "myths" that are the framework for English Only efforts and are used to undermine bilingualism are countered with facts and key arguments.

> Action Tools:
> *Discussing the Myths and Facts*

Assessing Your Community

It is important to conduct a community assessment to find resources that are in place and resources that are missing to support bilingualism as well as political and social climates and trends.

> Action Tools:
> *Find Out What Resources Exist In Your Community To Support*
> *Spanish Speakers*
> *Assess the Climate for Bilingualism*
> *Community Survey: Assessing Our Community Climate for*
> *Bilingualism*
> *Checking Out the Need for Bilingual Workers in Your Community*

Profiles of Bilingual Latinas/os

The included profiles tell the stories of four bilingual Latinos, and how and why they became bilingual, how it impacts upon their lives, and their perspectives on the benefits of being bilingual to the community.

Action Tools:
Talking About the Profiles
Sharing Your Stories

Case Studies of Specific Strategies That Build on Bilingualism As an Asset

Three stories illustrate community efforts in different sectors and different states that position bilingualism as an asset for the Latino community and others.

Action Tools:
Making a Case for Dual Language Education in Your District
Making a Case for Bilingual Economic Development Services
Survey — Is There a Need for Additional Bilingual Workers and Services in Our Community?
Making a Case for More Government Resources for Spanish- Speaking Newcomers

Policy Examples

For inspiration and as models, this section shares actual policies and resolution passed in the United States and internationally that support language diversity, language rights, and that build upon language as an asset.

Action Tools:
Mapping Our Community for Potential Resolutions
Checking on Policies in Our Community
Writing a Vision Statement

Resource List:

Each of the sections of the toolkit suggests possible next steps to learn more or to take action. This resource section lists organizations that can be contacted, key readings or videos to augment understanding and dialogue, and websites for more information.

LOOKING AT THE NUMBERS: USING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Demographics are a type of statistical information that describes the characteristics of a population of people in a particular community, region or state. Demographics include several types of data, including age, ethnicity, and languages spoken.

Every ten years, the United States government conducts a census that collects information on people throughout the country. Many nonprofits, universities, schools, and local governments collect this kind of information as well.

Demographic information from these sources is readily available. It is your right to access this information and to use it.

Why are demographics valuable? Demographic statistics are one way to understand how a particular language, racial, or cultural group fits into a larger context. Demographic data can be used to point out differences in how groups are treated or funded, to fight stereotypes, and to make a case for why politicians should pay more attention to a particular group. Data also can be useful in building alliances with other groups.

Demographic information is readily available. It is easy to access. It's your right to have this information and to use it.

This section of the toolkit provides templates to help you put together data about the Latino population in your state. Sample charts for five of the states served by the Northwest Area Foundation illustrate how you might look at demographic data about the ethnic make-up of the population, the languages spoken, Latino representation, diversity within the Latino population, and growth of the Latino population.

Each template lists the sources that were used to find the data. If you want to get information on other states, you can go directly to those sources. Once you find the information, you can use the templates to fill in your own data.

ACTION TOOL

Reading Data Charts

Data is only a set of numbers until someone interprets it. This section will help you learn the first questions to ask when you look at a set of data.

The templates in this section are arranged by state. Choose your state, or, if your state is not listed, pick a state to look at. For each state, there are six different charts. Look over these charts yourself, and then use the following questions to guide your discussion of this data.

Chart #1: Ethnic Composition of the State

Other than Whites, what is the largest ethnic group in your state? What percent of the total population of the state are Latinos? Are there other groups that are the same size—that is, that have approximately the same proportion of the population-- as Latinos? Are you surprised that the percentage of Latinos is as large or as small as it is? How similar does the statewide ethnic composition listed in this chart seem to you compared to your community?

Chart #2: Language Diversity

This chart lists the top five non-English languages spoken in the state. Most demographers refer to languages other than English as "foreign languages," even if a large percentage of the state's population is bilingual.

Is Spanish the most common language other than English spoken in your state? Other than Spanish, what are the top language groups in the state? Are you surprised? Do you have speakers of those languages in your community? Do you think they have similar experiences to Spanish-speakers? How could you find out?

Chart #3: Representation and Proportionality

This chart gives us a look at how many Latinos are represented in different areas of public life as compared to the rest of the population. It asks; How many Latinos out of the general population are enrolled in public schools? How many work (in legal occupations)? How many Latinos as a percentage of the general population are below poverty level? And so on. This template includes just a few key areas of Latino life— the chart could be expanded upon.

This data is very important because it looks at representation and proportionality. How many Latinos are represented in these areas of life, and is their representation proportional to their numbers? From a civil rights perspective, "proportionality" is a key concept when looking at data. It is based on the assumption that if there were no inequities, biases or societal barriers facing a particular group, then the percentage of the groups' involvement in a particular category (their representation) should be the same as the group's overall percentage in the state (i.e. it should be proportional).

How many Latinos are represented in these areas of life, and is their representation proportional to their numbers? For example, assuming there were no biases or social barriers, if Latinos are 20% of the population, then 20% of the legislators for a state

should be Latino, 20% of people with full-time jobs should be Latino, 20% of people in poverty should be Latino, etc. But if Latinos make up 20% of the population, and only represent 5% of those in college, we would say they are "underrepresented" in the college population. If they are 20% of the population, but 40% of those in poverty are Latino, we would say Latinos are "overrepresented" among those in poverty.

Look at the percent Latinos comprise of the total state population, and then compare that to the percentages in the other categories in this chart. Where are Latinos overrepresented? Underrepresented? Does this chart suggest some possible areas for action?

Chart #4: Description of the Latino Population

There can be tremendous diversity within the Latino population. Chart #4 describes some of this diversity.

Are the majority of Latinos in your state high school graduates? Immigrants/foreign-born? Are the majority living below the poverty level? Does this state-level description match your own assumptions about the Latino community? Do you think it matches what others assume about Latinos? Does it match the profile of Latinos in your own community?

Chart #5 Latino Population by Country of Origin

Another way to understand the diversity of the Latino population is to look at the country or region of origin of a Latino population. We use "Latino" as an umbrella term for Spanish speakers from Central and South America, but immigrants from Colombia or Venezuela might have a very different experience and set of needs from immigrants from Mexico. This chart helps you look at the Latino population in your state in terms of national origin.

Throughout the Northwest, Mexicans are the single largest national-origin group of Latinos, but the degree to which this is so, and the particular mix of other national-origin groups, differs from state to state. Other than Mexico, what are the nations from which more Latinos trace their heritage? How aware do you think people are about this diversity? What are the implications of this diversity?

Chart #6: Growth of the Latino Population

This chart shows the growth of the Latino population since 2000, and projects it further into the year 2015. The chart also enables you to compare the growth of Latinos to the growth of the state's population overall, giving you a picture of whether Latinos are becoming an increasingly larger proportion of the state's population.

Is the Latino population in your state growing? Is it growing at about the same rate (or faster? or slower?) than the population overall?

ACTION TOOL

Finding Out More

Look Up Data for Your Own State:

If your state is not one of those with a set of charts, use the sources listed below to fill in the templates with data from your own state. Then go through the list of questions and steps suggested above to develop a picture of your demographic profile.

Look for Updated Statistics:

Statistics can get old, fast. New immigrant groups come, and other groups leave. Some groups are growing at a fast rate, others are declining. There are shifts in the economy. All of these result in a demographic profile from one year looking different from the next.

Much of the key demographic data in the United States is collected through the Federal Census, which occurs by law every ten years. In 2010, a new Census will be conducted. The initial data set will be available April 1, 2011 while more detailed data packets will be released on a flow basis until September 2013. This toolkit provides data as current as we could find when the toolkit was published, but you will need to seek updated data every so often and especially after each Census.

Look for Local Data:

Federal and state-level statistics don't necessarily describe your community. To get a good picture of how your community may be different from the overall state picture, seek local sources of data, as well as state-wide ones The Chamber of Commerce, the school district, and the local office of the state Employment Department are all good sources of local data.

What Else Do You Want to Know?

This toolkit only provides a brief look at demographic data from your state. What other kinds of data might you want to find? What questions came up as you looked at the charts?

To help with your quest for additional data, we provide the following Web-based sources of data:

U.S. Census
http://www.census.gov/

National Conference of State Legislatures, 2007 Latino Legislatures
http://www.ncsl.org/programs/legismgt/about/Latino2007.htm

Migration Policy Institute
http://www.migrationpolicy.org/

Pew Hispanic Center
http://pewhispanic.org/

The following states have websites that include demographic and statistical information for each state:

IOWA

State Data Center for Iowa
http://www.iowadatacenter.org/

2010 report:
http://www.state.ia.us/government/governor/y2010/news/status_report.pdf

OREGON

Oregon Employment Department
http://www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj/OlmisZine?zineid=00000001

MINNESOTA

Minnesota State Demographic Center
http://www.demography.state.mn.us/

WASHINGTON

The Office of Financial Management
http://www.ofm.wa.gov/default.asp

ACTION TOOL	**Moving To Action**

Data can help inform you about issues you may want to raise in your community, and it can also play a powerful role in building alliances. Data can also be used to support issues that you already want to raise.

Data can be powerful when you use it to focus attention on your issues. To do that, first ask: Who do you think needs to become aware of the statistics about Latinos? Who needs to be convinced to pay attention to your needs?

Once you have identified the people who you want to influence, prepare a data statement that will demonstrate your importance to the state.

Latinos are now _____ % of the state, and are a growing proportion of the state. Our numbers have grown from _____ to _____ over the past 15 years. We are projected to grow to _____% of the state by 2015.

Example: Latinos are now 9.1% of Washington, and are a growing proportion of the state. Our numbers have grown from 441,509 in 2000 to 580,027 in 2006 — and are projected to grow to 605,000 by 2015. This is about a 40% growth, compared to just about a 20% growth in the overall population.

Along with that statement of your representation in the state, you should provide a data statement about the issue you want to address. Often, issues concern overrepresentation or underrepresentation.

Latinos are overrepresented among the _____ of our state. We are ____% of the state overall, but ____% of those _____.

Example: Latinos in Oregon are overrepresented among the individuals living below poverty level in our state. We are 10.2% of the state overall, but 19.79% of those living below the poverty level

Latinos are underrepresented among the _____ of our state. We are ____% of the state overall, but only _____ of those _____.

Example: Latinos are underrepresented among the legislators of our state. We are 10.2% of the state overall, but only have one state level elected legislator representing us.

Data can also be used to build alliances with other groups. For example, Latinos are not the only population in the United States who speak a language other than English in their homes. Other language groups may be struggling with similar issues, such as a need for translation services, a desire for ESL programs, or an interest in maintaining their heritage language and culture in the midst of English Only attitudes. If you are trying to push for better translation services, bilingual programs, ESL programs, or attention to language diversity, you may want to reach out to those groups, and put together statements such as the following:

There are many different languages spoken in the homes of this state. Next to Spanish, the top language groups are: _____, _____, _____, and _____. Altogether, there are _____ people in this state who speak a language other than English at home.

Example: There are many different languages spoken in the homes of Minnesota. Next to Spanish, the top language groups are Hmong, German, Vietnamese and Chinese. Altogether, there are 277,309 people in this state who speak a language other than English at home.
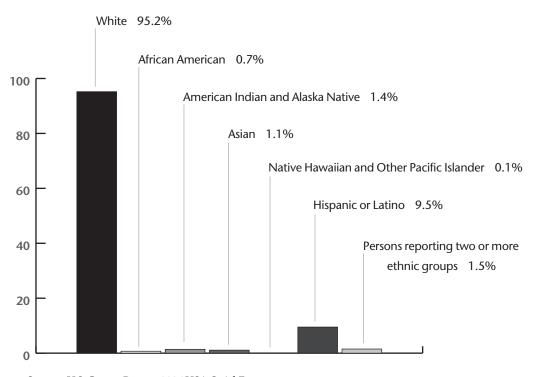
Brainstorm about the kind of experiences as "language minority" communities you may share in common with others whose home languages are not English. Where in your community might you be able to make contact with them? What community organizations, religious institutions, or civic groups might be a good contact? Consider using the community survey in the Profiles section of this toolkit to do some action research to better understand the common experiences between Spanish speakers and speakers of other languages in your community.

IDAHO

1 Overall State Demographics by Ethnic Background

Population, 2006 estimate: 1,466,465

White   95.2%

African American   0.7%

American Indian and Alaska Native   1.4%

Asian   1.1%

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander   0.1%

Hispanic or Latino   9.5%

Persons reporting two or more
ethnic groups   1.5%

100

80

60

40

20

0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 USA QuickFacts

2 Top Languages Spoken Other Than English
***This data is not available for Idaho
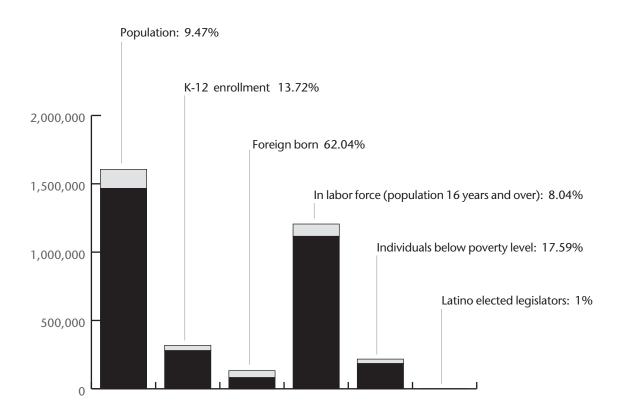
Total household population, age 5 and older: 1,289,728

Language spoken at home	Total population of people who speak this language at home	% Total population who speak a language other than English at home
1. Spanish		
2. German		
3. French		
4. Vietnamese		
5. Chinese		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey

3 Latino Representation (% of Total Population)
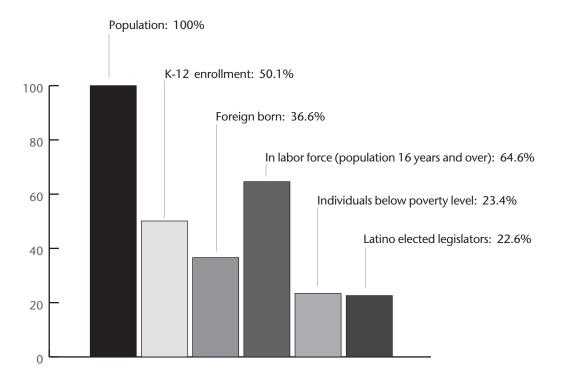
	Latino population group	Total population	% Latino population
Population	138,871	1,466,465	9.47%
K-12 enrollment	38,363	279,520	13.72%
Foreign born	50,900	82,040	62.04%
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	89,754	1,115,916	8.04%
Individuals below poverty level	32,496	184,775	17.59%
Latino elected legislators	1	105	1%

Population: 9.47%

K-12 enrollment 13.72%

Foreign born 62.04%

In labor force (population 16 years and over): 8.04%

Individuals below poverty level: 17.59%

Latino elected legislators: 1%

2,000,000

1,500,000

1,000,000

500,000

0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American FactFinder, National Conference of State Legislatures, 2007 Latino Legislatures

4 Description of the Latino Population in the State
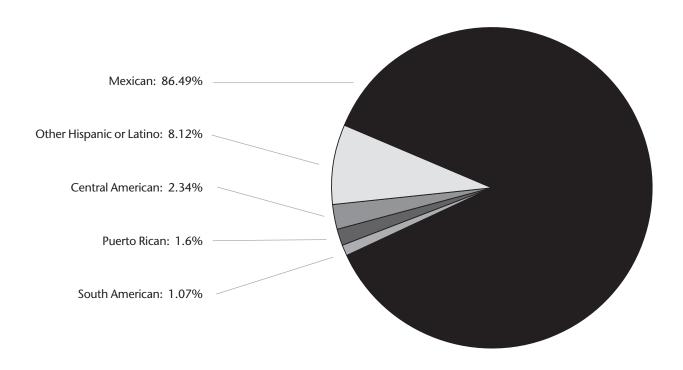
	Latino population group	% Latino population
Population	138,871	100%
K-12 enrollment	70,546	50.1%
Foreign born	50,900	36.6%
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	89,754	64.6%
Individuals below poverty level	32,496	23.4%
Latino elected legislators	31,385	22.6%

Population: 100%

K-12 enrollment: 50.1%

Foreign born: 36.6%

In labor force (population 16 years and over): 64.6%

Individuals below poverty level: 23.4%

Latino elected legislators: 22.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American FactFinder

5 Top 5 Latino Population by Country or Region of Origin

Total latino population: 138,871	Estimate	% of total latino population
Mexican	120,107	86.49%
Other Hispanic or Latino	11,272	8.12%
Central American	3,252	2.34%
Puerto Rican	1,607	1.6%
South American	1,486	1.07%

Mexican: 86.49%

Other Hispanic or Latino: 8.12%

Central American: 2.34%

Puerto Rican: 1.6%

South American: 1.07%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

6 Population Growth
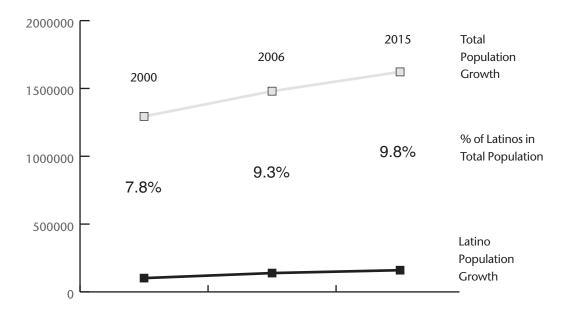
Projections of Latino Population Growth

2000	**2006**	**2015**
101,690	138,871	*160,000

Projections of Total Population Growth

2000	**2006**	**2015**
1,293,953	1,466,465	1,622,000
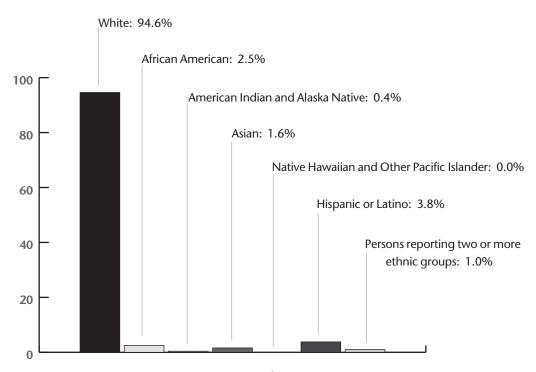
Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2000 and 2006 American FactFinder, 2015 State Population Projections

*2015 projections may surpass population numbers for 2006 because the projections were made for the 2000 census.

1 Overall State Demographics by Ethnic Background

Population, 2006 estimate: 2,982,085

White: 94.6%

African American: 2.5%

American Indian and Alaska Native: 0.4%

Asian: 1.6%

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 0.0%

Hispanic or Latino: 3.8%

Persons reporting two or more ethnic groups: 1.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 USA QuickFacts

Latino elected legislators: 1%

2 Top Languages Spoken Other Than English
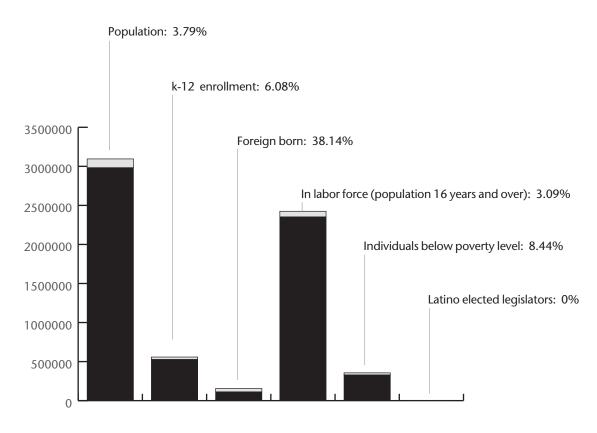
Total household population, age 5 and older: 2,790,958

Language spoken at home	Total population of people who speak this language at home	% Total population who speak a language other than English at home
1. Spanish	97,876	3.5%
2. German	14,641	0.5%
3. Serbo-Croatian	7,456	0.3%
4. Chinese	7,064	0.3%
5. Vietnames	6,318	0.2%

Source: Migration Policy Institute, 2006 Fact Sheet on the Foreign Born

3 Latino Representation (% of Total Population)
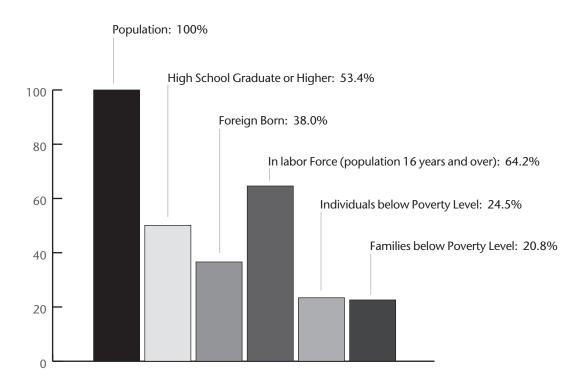
	Latino population group	Total population	% Latino population
Population	112,987	2,982,085	3.79%
K-12 enrollment	31,999	526,122	6.08%
Foreign born	42,831	112,299	38.14%
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	72,580	2,352,098	3.09%
Individuals below poverty level	27,682	328,029	8.44%
Latino elected legislators	0	150	0%

Population: 3.79%

k-12 enrollment: 6.08%

Foreign born: 38.14%

In labor force (population 16 years and over): 3.09%

Individuals below poverty level: 8.44%

Latino elected legislators: 0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American FactFinder, The Gender and Multi-Cultural Leadership Project, National Database of Non-white Elected Officials

4 Description of the Latino Population in the State
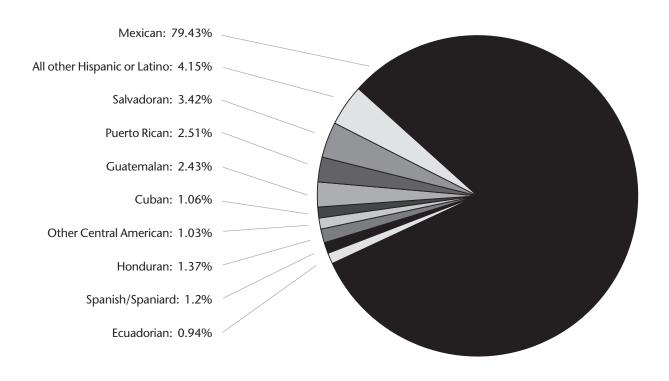
	Latino population group	**% Latino population**
Population	112,987	100%
High school graduate or higher	60,335	53.4 %
Foreign born	42,831	38.0 %
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	72,580	64.2 %
Individuals below poverty level	27,682	24.5 %
Families below poverty level	23,501	20.8 %

Population: 100%

High School Graduate or Higher: 53.4%

Foreign Born: 38.0%

In labor Force (population 16 years and over): 64.2%

Individuals below Poverty Level: 24.5%

Families below Poverty Level: 20.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American FactFinder

5 Top 10 Latino Population by Country or Region of Origin

	Estimate	% of Total Latino population
Hispanic or Latino	112,987	100%
Mexican	89,751	79.43%
All other Hispanic or Latino	4,686	4.15%
Salvadoran	3,863	3.42%
Puerto Rican	2,836	2.51%
Guatemalan	2,750	2.43%
Cuban	1,197	1.06%
Other Central American	1,169	1.03%
Honduran	1,552	1.37%
Spanish/Spaniard	1,341	1.2%
Ecuadorian	1,062	0.94%

Mexican: 79.43%

All other Hispanic or Latino: 4.15%

Salvadoran: 3.42%

Puerto Rican: 2.51%

Guatemalan: 2.43%

Cuban: 1.06%

Other Central American: 1.03%

Honduran: 1.37%

Spanish/Spaniard: 1.2%

Ecuadorian: 0.94%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

6 Population Growth
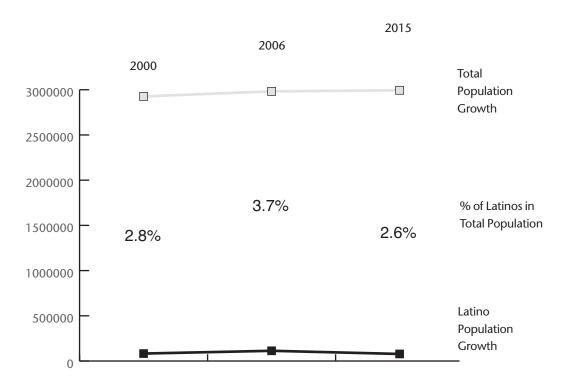
Projections of Latino Population Growth

2000	2006	2015
82,473	112,987	*78,000

Projections of Total Population Growth

2000	2006	2015
2,926,324	2,982,085	2,994,000
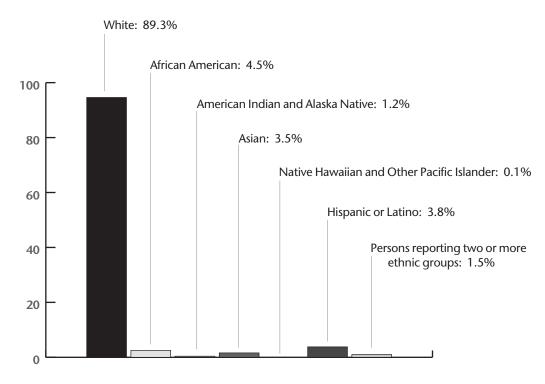
Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2000 and 2006 American FactFinder, 2015 State Population Projections
*2015 projections may surpass population numbers for 2006 because the projections were made for the 2000 census.

MINNESOTA

1 Overall State Demographics by Ethnic Background

Population, 2006 estimate: 5,167,101

White: 89.3%

African American: 4.5%

American Indian and Alaska Native: 1.2%

Asian: 3.5%

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 0.1%

Hispanic or Latino: 3.8%

Persons reporting two or more ethnic groups: 1.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 USA QuickFacts

2 Top Languages Spoken Other Than English
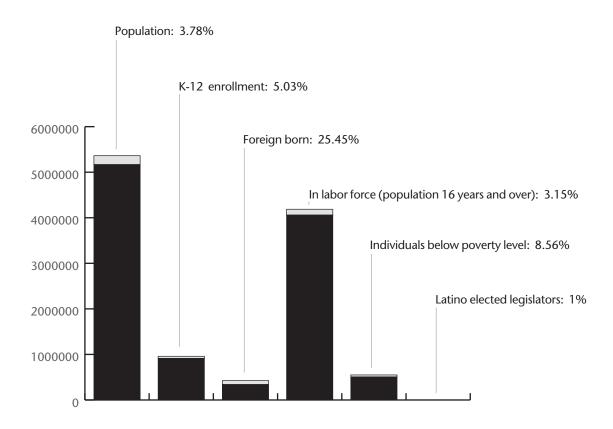
Total Household population, age 5 and older: 4,819,697

Language spoken at home	Total population of people who speak this language at home	% Total population who speak a language other than English at home
1. Spanish	171,042	3.5%
2. Hmong	44,597	0.9%
3. German	28,090	0.6%
4. Vietnames	18,284	0.4%
5. Chinese	15,296	0.3%

Source: Migration Policy Institute, 2006 Fact Sheet on the Foreign Born

3 Latino Representation (% of Total Population)
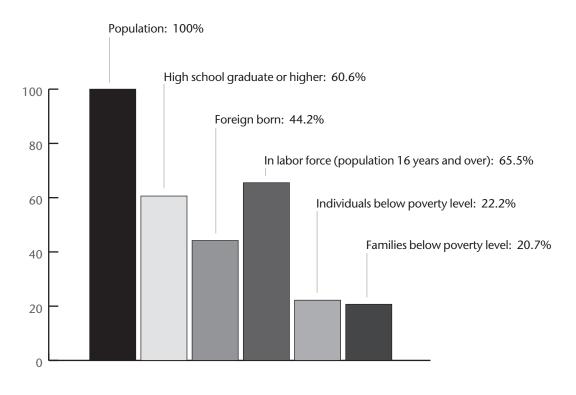
	Latino population group	Total population	% Latino population
Population	195,138	5,167,101	3.78%
K-12 enrollment	45,966	913,370	5.03%
Foreign born	86,322	339,236	25.45%
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	127,912	4,059,085	3.15%
Individuals below poverty level	43,321	506,376	8.56%
Latino elected legislators	3	201	1%

Population: 3.78%

K-12 enrollment: 5.03%

Foreign born: 25.45%

In labor force (population 16 years and over): 3.15%

Individuals below poverty level: 8.56%

Latino elected legislators: 1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American FactFinder, National Conference of State Legislatures, 2007 Latino Legislatures

4 Description of the Latino Population in the State
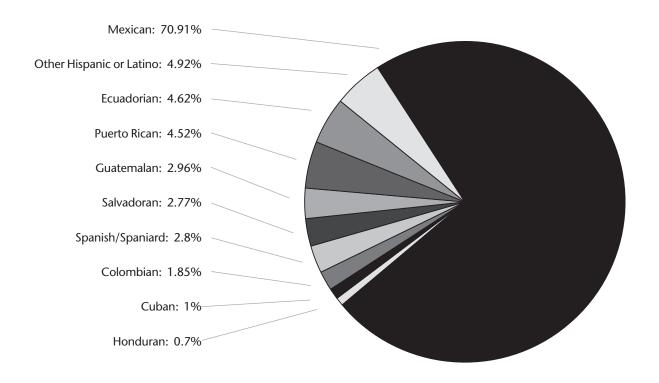
	Latino population group	% Latino population
Population	195,138	100%
High school graduate or higher	118,254	60.6 %
Foreign born	86,322	44.2 %
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	127,912	65.5 %
Individuals below poverty level	43,321	22.2 %
Families below poverty level	40,394	20.7 %

Population: 100%

High school graduate or higher: 60.6%

Foreign born: 44.2%

In labor force (population 16 years and over): 65.5%

Individuals below poverty level: 22.2%

Families below poverty level: 20.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American FactFinder

5 Top 10 Latino Population by Country or Region of Origin

	Estimate	% Total latino population
Hispanic or Latino	195,138	100%
Mexican	138,368	70.91%
Other Hispanic or Latino	9,608	4.92%
Ecuadorian	9,010	4.62%
Puerto Rican	8,813	4.52%
Guatemalan	5,768	2.96%
Salvadoran	5,396	2.77%
Spanish/Spaniard	4,627	2.8%
Colombian	3,604	1.85%
Cuban	1,902	1.0%
Honduran	1,384	0.7%

Mexican: 70.91%

Other Hispanic or Latino: 4.92%

Ecuadorian: 4.62%

Puerto Rican: 4.52%

Guatemalan: 2.96%

Salvadoran: 2.77%

Spanish/Spaniard: 2.8%

Colombian: 1.85%

Cuban: 1%

Honduran: 0.7%

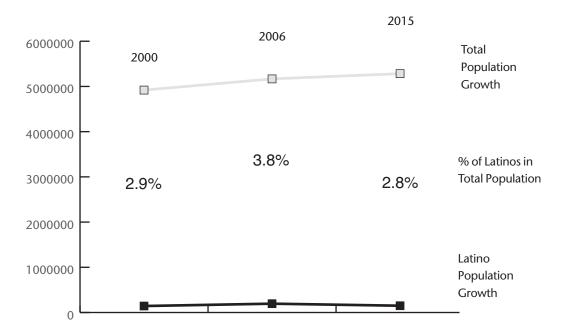**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

6 Population Growth

Projections of Latino Population Growth

2000	**2006**	**2015**
143,382	195,138	*150,000

Projections of Total Population Growth

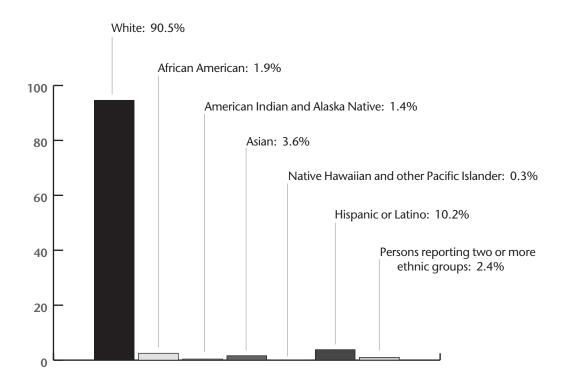| **2000**	**2006**	**2015**
4,919,479	5,167,101	5,283,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2000 and 2006 American FactFinder, 2015 State Population Projections
*2015 projections may surpass population numbers for 2006 because the projections were made for the 2000 census.

1 Overall State Demographics by Ethnic Background

OREGON

Population, 2006 estimate 3,700,758

White: 90.5%

African American: 1.9%

American Indian and Alaska Native: 1.4%

Asian: 3.6%

Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander: 0.3%

Hispanic or Latino: 10.2%

Persons reporting two or more ethnic groups: 2.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 USA QuickFacts

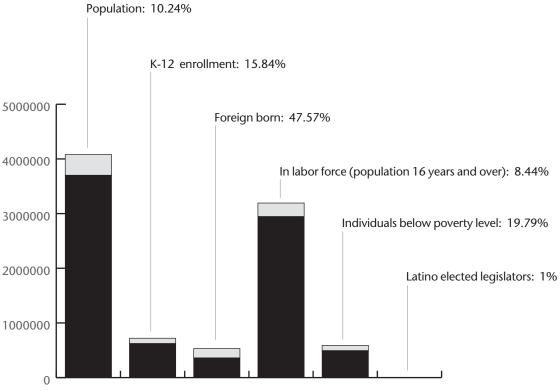**2** Top Languages Spoken Other Than English

Total Household population, age 5 and older: 3,470,802

Language spoken at home	Total population of people who speak this language at home	% of total population who speak a language other than English at home
1. Spanish	293,840	8.5%
2. Chinese	24,046	0.7%
3. Vietnamese	20,228	0.6%
4. Russian	19,875	0.6%
5. German	19,532	0.6%

Source: Migration Policy Institute, 2006 Fact Sheet on the Foreign Born
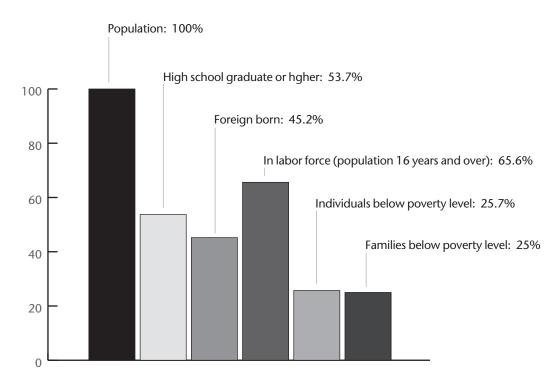
3 Latino Representation (% of Total Population)

	Latino population group	Total population	% Latino population
Population	379,034	3,700,758	10.24%
K-12 enrollment	98,446	621,684	15.84%
Foreign born	171,192	359,8676	47.57%
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	248,463	2,944,587	8.44%
Individuals below poverty level	97,412	492,201	19.79%
Latino elected legislators	1	90	1%

Population: 10.24%

K-12 enrollment: 15.84%

Foreign born: 47.57%

In labor force (population 16 years and over): 8.44%

Individuals below poverty level: 19.79%

Latino elected legislators: 1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American FactFinder, National Conference of State Legislatures, 2007 Latino Legislatures

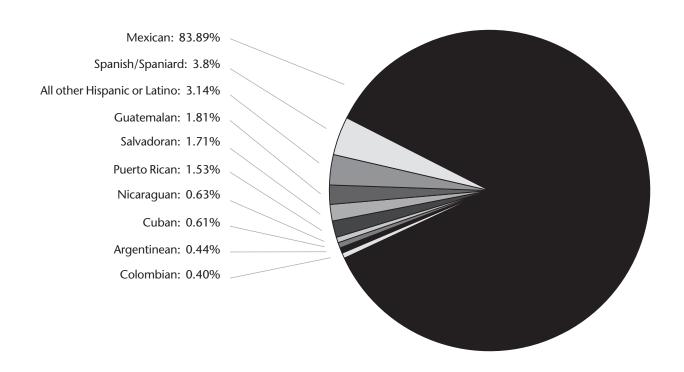## 4 Description of the Latino Population in the State

	Latino population group	% Latino population
Population	379,034	100%
High school graduate or higher	203,541	53.7 %
Foreign born	171,192	45.2 %
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	248,463	65.6 %
Individuals below poverty level	97,412	25.7 %
Latino elected legislators	94,759	25 %

Population: 100%

High school graduate or hgher: 53.7%

Foreign born: 45.2%

In labor force (population 16 years and over): 65.6%

Individuals below poverty level: 25.7%

Families below poverty level: 25%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American FactFinder

5 Top 10 Latino Population by Country or Region of Origin

	Estimate	% Total Latino population
Hispanic or Latino	379,034	100%
Mexican	317,961	83.89%
Spanish/Spaniard	14,540	3.8%
All other Hispanic or Latino	11,894	3.14%
Guatemalan	6,861	1.81%
Salvadoran	6,469	1.71%
Puerto Rican	5,811	1.53%
Nicaraguan	2,391	0.63%
Cuban	2,320	0.61%
Argentinean	1,650	0.44%
Colombian	1,530	0.40%

Mexican: 83.89%
Spanish/Spaniard: 3.8%
All other Hispanic or Latino: 3.14%
Guatemalan: 1.81%
Salvadoran: 1.71%
Puerto Rican: 1.53%
Nicaraguan: 0.63%
Cuban: 0.61%
Argentinean: 0.44%
Colombian: 0.40%

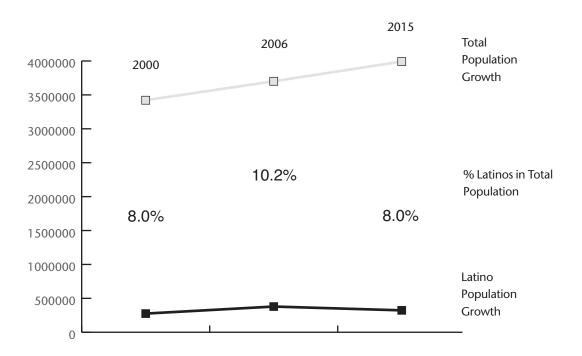**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

6 Population Growth

Projections of Latino Population Growth

2000	2006	2015
275,314	379,034	*323,000

Projections of Total Population Growth

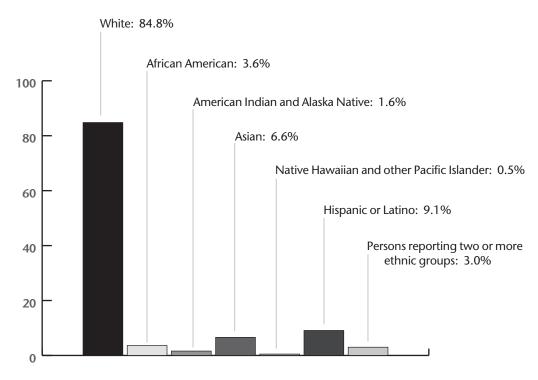| 2000	2006	2015
3,421,399	3,700,758	3,992,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2000 and 2006 American FactFinder, 2015 State Population Projections

*2015 projections may surpass population numbers for 2006 because the projections were made for the 2000 census.

WASHINGTON

1 Overall State Demographics by Ethnic Background

Population, 2006 estimate: 6,395,798

White: 84.8%

African American: 3.6%

American Indian and Alaska Native: 1.6%

Asian: 6.6%

Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander: 0.5%

Hispanic or Latino: 9.1%

Persons reporting two or more ethnic groups: 3.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 USA QuickFacts

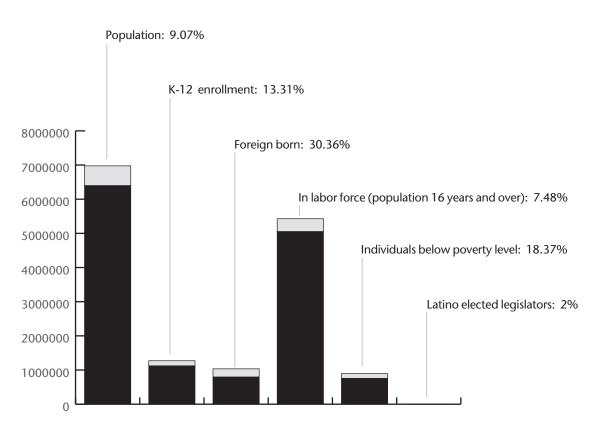## 2 Top Languages Spoken Other Than English

Total household population, age 5 and older: 5,988,982

Language spoken at home	Total population of people who speak this language at home	% Total population who speak a language other than English at home
1. Spanish	431,021	7.2%
2. Chinese	63,390	1.1%
3. Vietnamese	56,117	0.9%
4. Tagalog	49,243	0.8%
5. Russian	48,656	0.8%

Source: Migration Policy Institute, 2006 Fact Sheet on the Foreign Born

3 Latino Representation (% of Total Population)

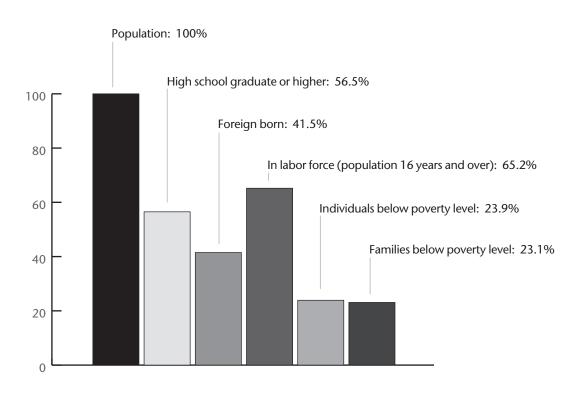|	Latino population group	Total population	% Latino population
Population	580,027	6,395,798	9.07%
K-12 enrollment	149,390	1,122,278	13.31%
Foreign born	240,990	793,789	30.36%
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	377,916	5,050,544	7.48%
Individuals below poverty level	138,626	754,704	18.37%
Latino elected legislators	3	147	2%

Population: 9.07%

K-12 enrollment: 13.31%

Foreign born: 30.36%

In labor force (population 16 years and over): 7.48%

Individuals below poverty level: 18.37%

Latino elected legislators: 2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American FactFinder, National Conference of State Legislatures, 2007 Latino Legislatures
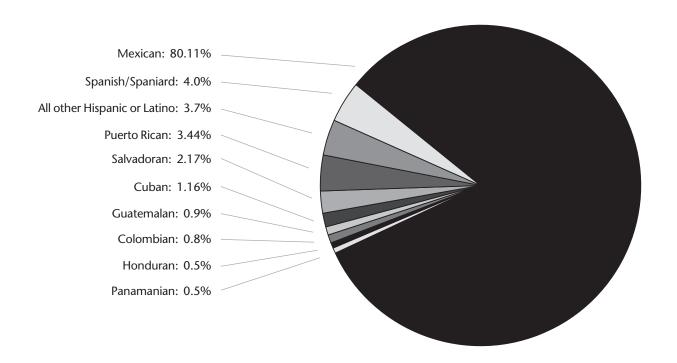
4 Description of the Latino Population in the State

	Latino population group	% Latino population
Population	580,027	100%
High school graduate or higher	327,715	56.5%
Foreign born	240,990	41.5%
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	377,916	65.2%
Individuals below poverty level	138,626	23.9%
Families below poverty level	133,986	23.1%

Population: 100%

High school graduate or higher: 56.5%

Foreign born: 41.5%

In labor force (population 16 years and over): 65.2%

Individuals below poverty level: 23.9%

Families below poverty level: 23.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American FactFinder

5 Top 10 Latino Population by Country or Region of Origin

	Estimate	% Total Latino population
Hispanic or Latino	580,027	100%
Mexican	464,652	80.11%
Spanish/Spaniard	23,411	4.0%
All other Hispanic or Latino	21,659	3.7%
Puerto Rican	19,957	3.44%
Salvadoran	12,591	2.17%
Cuban	6,746	1.16%
Guatemalan	5,150	0.9%
Colombian	4,560	0.81%
Honduran	2,866	0.5%
Panamanian	2,662	0.5%

Mexican: 80.11%
Spanish/Spaniard: 4.0%
All other Hispanic or Latino: 3.7%
Puerto Rican: 3.44%
Salvadoran: 2.17%
Cuban: 1.16%
Guatemalan: 0.9%
Colombian: 0.8%
Honduran: 0.5%
Panamanian: 0.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

6 Population Growth
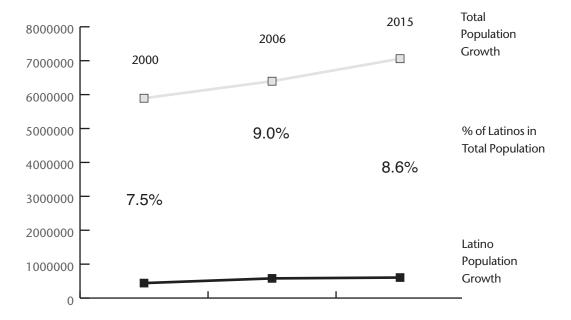
Projections of Latino Population Growth

2000	**2006**	**2015**
441,509	580,027	*605,000

Projections of Total Population Growth

2000	**2006**	**2015**
5,894,121	6,395,798	7,058,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2000 and 2006 American FactFinder, 2015 State Population Projections

*2015 projections may surpass population numbers for 2006 because the projections were made for the 2000 census.

I n most communities, the lack of programs to support Spanish-speaking immigrants in general, and to support bilingualism in particular, often stems from misconceptions about language itself, about the history of English and other languages in the United States, and about people whose home language isn't English. We hear comments all the time that justify English Only policies and that justify discriminating against people who speak languages other than English. So it's important to be able to separate myth from fact, and to educate others about what is true and what is not.

This section of the toolkit lists commonly-held myths, followed by a brief discussion of the facts. It is designed to help you respond when people try to convince you that you shouldn't speak Spanish or that it's not appropriate to be bilingual.

Unfortunately, mounting almost any kind of community action for an agenda about building on language and culture as assets involves having to confront myths, misconceptions, and stereotypes.

Myth: *Immigrants are a drain on the economy. They come to the United States to use free public services, and do not contribute to the economy.*

Fact: **Immigrants provide a source of much-needed labor in this country. They pay taxes, contributing to the overall economy, despite the fact that they often are unable to benefit from public services, either because they are undocumented or because of rules and regulations that exclude immigrants from using those services.**

In many areas of the country, immigrant families are revitalizing communities with their small businesses and family orientation. Since 1990, immigrants have contributed to job growth in the U.S. in three main ways: they take jobs in labor-scarce regions; they fill the types of jobs native workers often do not; and they are entrepreneurs — adding their energy, optimism, and hard-work to local economies.

A 2007 study by the Center for an Urban Future concluded that immigrant entrepreneurs have emerged as key engines of growth for cities. A 2006 study by Duke University and the University of California found that nationwide, immigrant-founded companies produced $52 billion in sales and employed 450,000 workers. A report of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas in 2003, reported that the recent U.S. economic growth would have been impossible without immigration.

Myth: *All immigrants are undocumented.*

Fact: **The vast majority of immigrants enter the United States through legal channels.**

Although it is difficult to get a precise count, it is estimated that less than 33% of immigrants do not have documentation. Low-wage and difficult jobs, such as those in agriculture and the service industry, tend to attract a higher percentage of undocumented immigrants than other jobs.

Myth: *In the past, most immigrant groups succeeded economically. They didn't have any special programs in schools, but they learned English quickly and didn't have any problem assimilating.*

Fact: **Throughout United States history, most non-native English speakers neither learned English very quickly nor succeeded in American schools.**

In the early twentieth century, when many European immigrants came to the United States, the drop out rate of immigrant groups among all ethnicities and cultures was very high – much, much higher than it is today.

A study of immigrant drop-out rates in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1908 found that only 2% of Polish and Italian speakers reached high school, compared to 14% of English-speaking students. Research in 1916 showed the same patterns. Among those who spoke a language other than English at home, the drop-out rate was at least 90%.*

However, education was not necessary for economic success in the 1910s and 1920s. It is now. A century ago, there was plenty of well-paying factory work that did not require a high school diploma. Today, nearly all work that pays a living wage requires at least a high school education.

*Olneck and Lazerson, 1974; Krashen, 1999.

Myth: *Spanish-speaking immigrants aren't learning English as quickly as other immigrant groups have done.*

Fact: **There is a well-established pattern for English-learning among almost all immigrant groups. Typically, first generation immigrants remain speakers of their home language. Their children, the second generation, become bilingual, speaking both English and the home language while their grandchildren, the third generation no longer speak their home language. This has been true for most Spanish-speakers in the United States as well.**

Recently, however, a study led by linguist Lily Wong Fillmore found that the second generation is showing a tendency to lose the home language even faster than in previous eras*. In research presented to Congress in May 2003, Wong Fillmore showed that even the children of immigrants now prefer to speak English by the time they are adults. According to Professor Ruben Rumbaut, the shift towards English is swift. By the third generation, the grandchild generation, knowledge of Spanish has become effectively extinct and proficiency in English has become universal.

*Lily Wong Fillmore, "Loss of Family Languages: Should Educators be Concerned?" Children and Languages at School: Theory into Practice, Autumn 2000, vol. 39:no.4

Myth: *Other immigrant groups willingly give up their home language – but Latinos won't.*

Fact: **Many immigrants in the history of the United States have given up their home languages because they believed it was necessary in order to be accepted in the United States. But many immigrant groups have and continue to value their home language, as well as English, and have sought ways to maintain their language and pass it on to their children.**

In the early 1900s, for example, Germans in the United States fought for and won the legal right to have school programs for their children taught in German whenever 75 or more parents demanded such a program. Today, communities throughout the nation have established public and private schools and programs that seek to teach and preserve heritage languages from around the globe, including: Korean, Chinese, Yiddish, Igbo, Portuguese, Russian, Navajo, and others.*

In Louisiana, a state law protects and preserves the French language. The federal government passed the Native American Languages Act to protect Native American languages and the rights of parents to have their children schooled in those languages.**

The Spanish language is valued by many Latino families as core to their culture. They are not alone in valuing their heritage language. And, luckily, no one has to choose between English and their home language. Bilingualism provides a way to be part of several different language and cultural worlds!

* For a description of the efforts by many different language communities to maintain their heritage language in addition to English, see: *And Still We Speak!* Listed in the resource section of this toolkit.

** To see these policies and other language policies, see the section of the toolkit entitled "Policies to Support Bilingualism"

Myth: *Spanish-speaking immigrants don't want to learn English and won't unless there are policies that affirm English as the official language and restrict use of Spanish in schools.*

National research conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center (in collaboration with the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation) in 2006 confirmed that Latinos in the United States believe they need to speak English to be a part of American society. This is true of Latinos of all different income levels, political affiliations, and English-language fluency. It is true, regardless of how long these immigrants have been in the United States.

By an overwhelming margin, 98% of Latinos also say that it is very important that English be taught to the children of immigrant families. They believe this in greater numbers and more strongly than any other ethnic or cultural group in the United States, including non-Hispanic Whites.

The nation does not need to create policies to insist that Latinos learn English or to restrict the use of Spanish. The nation DOES need to create the programs and opportunities that will meet the need and desire of Latino communities to learn English.

Myth: *The best thing a Spanish-speaking family can do to help their child learn English is to place them in a school program where they are learning ONLY in English.*

The best foundation for learning a new language is to build a strong foundation in a child's first language. Research on how to teach children to speak, read, and write in English confirms that children who have a large vocabulary in their home language, and who learn to read and write in their home language, actually do better in English proficiency than children who do not speak English at home but learn to read and write only in English.

Furthermore, it is difficult for a child who only speaks Spanish to learn all of their other academic subjects in English. While they are learning English, it is important that they be taught their academic subjects in Spanish so they do not fall behind academically.

A high quality bilingual program is the most efficient and strongest pathway to academic achievement and to literacy in both English and Spanish.

According to the 2007 report of the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth, literacy in the home language can facilitate literacy in English. In fact, this government panel reports that students receiving bilingual instruction (compared to English only instruction) performed better on measures of English reading proficiency than students instructed only in English.

Myth: *As you get older, it becomes harder and harder to learn a new language.*

It is true that the brains of young children are "wired" to acquire language. Developmentally, there is a period from birth until around age eight that is optimal for learning languages. However, learning a new language does not become harder as one gets older. In fact, the stronger the knowledge one has of one's home language, the easier it is learn a second language, especially if the new language is taught in a way that explicitly builds on the understanding one has of their home language. The more languages you learn, the easier it becomes to master yet another.

Myth: *Spanish speaking parents hold their children back from learning English if they talk to them too much in Spanish.*

The most important thing a parent can do to support their child's mastery of language (even a second language like English) is to read to them, and engage them in long conversations. What matters is language use, not which language is used. In fact, parents often can most effectively teach language mastery in the home language. Spanish-speaking parents should read to their children, ask their children questions, and engage their children in conversations about their world and their experiences in Spanish.

Myth: *Bilingualism confuses children, and it can be harmful to try to teach them two languages.*

Bilingualism enables children to be engaged in several different cultural and language worlds. The ability to speak two languages actually strengthens how the brain functions. Bilingualism is associated with more cognitive flexibility and better problem-solving abilities. Children who are bilingual tend to perform better on achievement tests. Furthermore, bilingual students engage in less negative cultural stereotyping and have more favorable attitudes towards people who are different from themselves.*

* Lindholm-Leary, Kathryn. *Dual Language Education*. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2001.
Lambert, W.E., F. Genesse, N. Holobow and L. Chartrand. "Bilingual Education for Majority English-Speaking Children." *European Journal of Psychology of Education 8*: 1993, 3-22.
Cloud, Nancy, Fred Genesse and Else Hamayan. *Dual Language Instruction: A Handbook for Enriched Education*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 2000.

Myth: *This country was built on English! The United States is and always has been an English-speaking nation.*

Fact: **In 1776, when the United States of America was established, the 13 original colonies included German, Dutch, French, Swedish and Polish language speakers in addition to speakers of dozens of Native American languages. The writers of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights decided not to proclaim any one language as the formal language of the new nation, because to do so would give one language group dominance over another in the multilingual colonies. John Adams called for a Language Academy to set official standards for American English, but the majority of leaders rejected the idea, believing that government had no business mandating the people's language choices.**

In 1848, when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed ending the Mexican-American War, Mexico ceded 525,000 square miles to the United States (all of which is now California, Nevada, and Utah and parts of what is now Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and Wyoming). The people in this territory were primarily speakers of Spanish and Native American languages.

The United States always has been a multilingual nation, with no one official language.

Myth: *Language diversity tears a society apart and leads to divisiveness.*

Fact: **Language diversity is a fact of life in most nations of the world. Many nations in the world, including Canada, have more than one official language.**

In some countries, multiple language groups co-exist peacefully. In other countries, there is tension and hostility between groups. The issue is not how many languages are spoken, but rather the dynamics of power between religious and political groups that speak different languages. Where there is respect between groups, where basic language rights are protected, language diversity enriches communities.

Myth: *In the United States, speaking languages other than English will hold you back.*

Fact: **Proficiency in English is needed in the United States for most jobs, and to succeed in school. However, as business becomes global, proficiency in another language besides English has become increasingly important.**

People who are bilingual (especially if they can read and write well in both languages) have greater job opportunities, often receive higher pay, are valued socially for their ability to navigate across language groups, and have more opportunities in the global economy.

A report compiled for the Florida Department of Education found that many U.S. companies consider knowledge of a second language essential,

and the demand for bilingual personnel has greatly increased. The need for interpreters has increased dramatically as immigration has increased in the United States. Currently, 117 languages require translation in federal courts, with Spanish leading the way. Certified interpreters are paid $355/day and $50/hour overtime.

According to a Pew Hispanic Center research released in March 2004, bilingual Latinos are more economically and educationally successful on average than their largely monolingual, Spanish-speaking counterparts. Latino bilingual speakers also enjoy higher household incomes than their largely Spanish speaking counterparts, and are about twice as likely to own homes.

Myth: *English is the international language now. People don't need another language.*

Fact: English is one of the major languages of the globe. However, it is not the only international language—others include Chinese, Spanish, and French.

Many nations across the world teach children several languages besides their home language. The Netherlands, for example, teaches all children Dutch (their home language), English, and either German or French (sometimes both).

The fact is that when many people know English in addition to other languages, knowing only English is no longer an advantage. The advantage goes to those individuals who know multiple languages.

People competing for jobs in the global marketplace are competing against others who are multilingual. As the old saying goes, "If you want to buy, you can buy in any language. But if you want to sell, you need to speak the language of your customer." Through global communication technologies and the Internet, we have the opportunity to converse with and access information from every corner of the world — but we do not necessarily have the language skills to understand that communication. With the relative ease and frequency of transnational travel, we are able to be almost any place in the world within one day, but we are not able to understand what that corner of the globe has to say without language skills in addition to English. The more languages we have, the more fully we are able to understand and find our way in the world of the twenty-first century.

DISCUSSION TOPICS/ACTION STEPS

Look over the list of "myths" about bilingualism. Which of these do you hear in your community? Who do you hear repeating these myths — members of your family? Other Latinos? Teachers? Employers? Politicians?
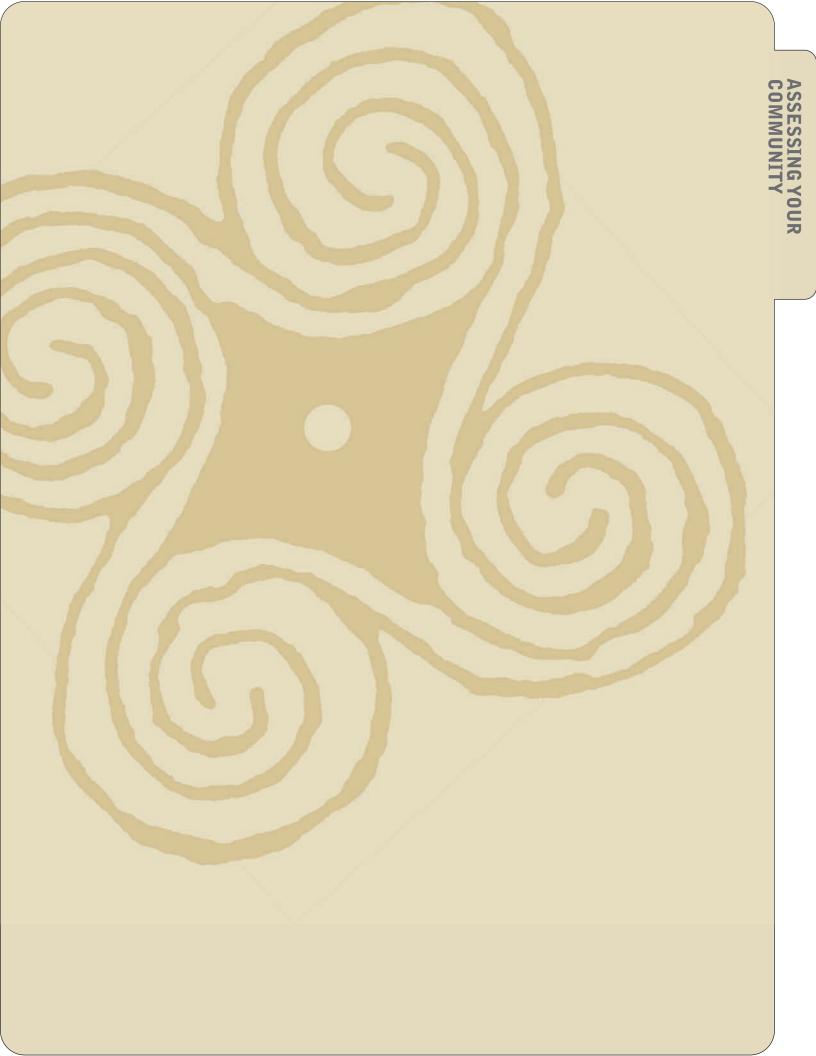
Consider Group Action!
Share your answers with each other. Do any patterns emerge? Are there a few myths that you might want to try as a group to "debunk"? Are there groups of people that you might want to target to educate them about the truth?

Be Prepared!
Each person in your group can select one of the myths that they hear often or that particularly concern them. Spend a few minutes thinking about what you might say and how you could respond next time you hear it said. Then practice a "one minute speech" in front of the group.

Conducting an assessment of the climate in your community regarding bilingualism can be a valuable step in order to identify specific needs in your community to support bilingualism. It will help to identify resources and support systems from agencies and organizations that are already working to promote bilingualism, and can help mobilize and empower your community into taking action around creating an environment where bilingualism and biculturalism are seen as assets. The following strategies are designed to help you gain an understanding of what resources already exist, what the climate is around supporting bilingualism, and what the need is for bilingual workers.

Find Out What Resources Exist in Your Community to Support Spanish Speakers

Form three small "Working Groups," each in charge of finding out what resources exist in the community to support bilingualism.

GROUP ONE should find out what programs exist in your community to help people learn English.

- Contact the Adult Education division of the public school system. What classes are available for English as a Second Language (ESL)? Are there waiting lists for these classes? How often do the classes happen? How much do they cost?

- Contact the Community College serving your area. Do they offer English as a Second Language classes? Are there waiting lists? How often are the classes offered? How much do they cost?

- Contact the Center for Applied Linguistics (www.cal.org or (202) 362-0700) to find out about adult ESL resources in your state.

- Contact your local Employment Development Department (state agency) and find out if the state provides ESL or vocationally oriented ESL courses.

- Contact immigrant-rights organizations, or community-based organizations serving Spanish speaking people. Find out if they have ESL classes.

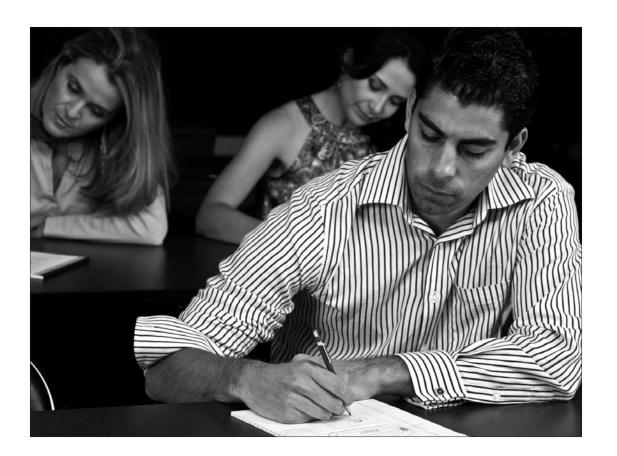*GROUP TWO is charged with finding out what resources exist in the community to promote and support bilingualism.*

- Look at the website for the National Association for Bilingual Education (www.nabe.org/about/affiliates.html) to find the contact information for your state "affiliate." Contact that office to find out about conferences, organizations, action alerts, and other resources and activities that are designed to support bilingualism in your state. They will also be able to tell you what bilingual education programs and dual-language programs are offered in your state for school children, and about employment opportunities for bilingual paraprofessionals and teachers.

GROUP THREE should find out what resources are available to help people develop literacy in their home language and/or maintain their heritage language.

- Contact the school district in your community and find out if they have dual language immersion, bilingual programs or Spanish for native speakers classes that prepare children to develop literacy in their heritage language.

- Contact the nearest community college to find out if they offer Spanish classes.

- Contact youth organizations, churches, and community-based organizations that serve the Spanish-speaking community, and ask if they offer any classes to help people develop literacy in Spanish, or programs that keep people connected to their heritage culture and language.

After doing this research, the three groups should share and compile what they have found out. Consider making a directory of these resources for your community so people can know what supports are available.

If the group could not find any resources, discuss what actions might be taken to advocate for the development of programs. You may want to look again at the Profiles and Case Studies to build your argument for why these resources are needed.

what resources exist in your community to support spanish speakers

| ACTION TOOL | **Assess the Climate for Bilingualism** |

The messages people get about the value of their home language and the value of bilingualism are powerful in determining whether people give up their home language as they become English speakers. They can also be powerful factors in discouraging people from learning English.

Each of you has some personal experience with these messages, and can piece together what is happening overall in your community. But it is also helpful to do some community action research. The "Assessing Our Community Climate for Bilingualism" survey tool can help.

This toolkit includes two versions of the survey: one version of the survey for Latinos and any other group whose home language is something other than English, and one version of the survey for people who are not Latino and who speak only English.

You need to collect at least 50 surveys to give you a picture of the climate for bilingualism in your community. The more surveys you get back, the better, because it will give you a better picture of attitudes in your community.

It is important to give the survey to a diverse group of people. Be sure you have a good representation of young people, adults and seniors. Be sure you have representation of Latinos and non-Latinos. We suggest the following as a minimum:

- 30 Latinos: try to get surveys from ten who are Spanish speakers only, ten who are bilingual and ten who are English monolingual. Of the 30 Latinos, try to get a balance of young people under age 21, adults, and elders/seniors.

- 20 non-Latinos who speak only English: try to get a balance of young people under age 21, adults, and elders/seniors.

- Ten people who are not Latino, but whose home language is other than English: try to get a balance of young people under age 21, adults, and elders/seniors.

Once you have collected all the surveys, put them into three piles (Latinos, non-Latinos who speak only English, and non-Latinos who speak a language other than English). For each of these piles, count how many surveys you collected, and how many respondents gave which answers to the questions. Chart the responses in terms of numbers of people who gave that response, and the percentage of people who gave that response. (For help in figuring out percentages, see the box below)

For example, here is a sample compilation of answers to question #1: "Check all of the feelings you have about your language(s)"

	Latinos (collected 25 surveys)	**Non-Latinos who speak only English (collected 10 surveys)**	**Non-Latinos who speak languages other than English (collected six surveys)**
Proud	6 people, 23%	9 people, 90%	4 people, 66%

After you have compiled the answers to all of the questions for all three groups in your community, look at the responses.

- What trends do you see?

- How do most (the majority, more than 50%) of Latinos respond? What are their experiences?

- How do the experiences of one group differ from another?

- What does this difference tell you about the degree of support for bilingualism in your community?

Discuss: *If you find largely positive attitudes in your community, how can you build upon those attitudes? The Case Studies section of this toolkit might offer some examples.*

If you find largely negative attitudes in your community, what can be done to turn negative attitudes around? The Myths and Facts section of this toolkit might offer information you can use as part of taking action against these attitudes.

To figure out a percentage, you need to know the TOTAL number of people in that category who answered the surveys overall, and the TOTAL number of people who answered the question with that specific number. For example, let's say you collected 25 surveys from Latinos, and six of them answered that they were "proud" about their language. The percentage is figured out by dividing the number of answers given by the number of surveys collected, and then multiplying by 100:

$$\frac{6 \text{ Latinos answered "proud"}}{25 \text{ Latino surveys collected}} = 0.24 \times 100 = 24\,\%$$

It's always important to be clear about the answer the you want. This equation compares how proud Latinos are, versus how proud non-Latino English-only speakers are, versus how proud non-Latino heritage-language speakers are. But you could also ask: What percentage of people, regardless of their identity, were proud? That equation would be:

$$\frac{6+9+4=19 \text{ people total answered "proud"}}{25+10+6 = 41 \text{ surveys collected}} = 0.46 \times 100 = 46\%$$

This equation shows that Latinos, who in this sample are only 24% proud, are much less proud on average than the population as a whole in this sample, who are 46% proud.

Community Survey: Assessing Our Community Climate for Bilingualism

(For all Latinos and other people whose home/heritage language is other than English)

"Home language" means the language you use at home.
"Heritage language" means the language your relatives or ancestors used before coming to the United States.

1 What is your ethnicity?

_____ Latino   _____ Other (please list):

2 What language(s) are spoken in your home?

_____ Spanish   _____ English   _____ Other (please list):

3 What is your age?   (check one)

_____ Under age 21   _____ 21 – 55   _____ 55+

4 Check all of the feelings that you have about using your home language.

_____ Proud   _____ Ashamed   _____ Skillful   _____ Afraid

_____ Like I'm not a good American   _____ Disloyal   _____ Lucky

Why?

5 Check all of the feelings that you have about using your heritage language.

_____ Proud   _____ Ashamed   _____ Skillful   _____ Afraid

_____ Like I'm not a good American   _____ Disloyal   _____ Lucky

Why?

6 What messages about languages other than English do you hear in your community?

Many people who speak a language other than English hear both negative and positive messages about speaking a language other than English. We have listed some of these negative messages below.

For each of the following, tell us whether you hear these messages, whether it affects how you feel about your home language, and tell us who you hear these messages from.

Negative Message	I hear this message	This message makes me feel ashamed or bad	Who I hear this from
In the United States, you should only speak English			
If you are going to speak a language other than English, you should go back to your own country			
If you don't speak English, or don't speak it well, you aren't a loyal or good American			
If you speak a language other than English, you aren't as smart as if you are English-speaking			

For each of the following, tell us whether you hear these messages, whether it affects how you feel about being a speaker of your home language, and tell us note who you hear these messages from.

Positive Message	I hear this message	This message makes me feel proud or good	Who I hear this from
Being able to speak two languages helps a person get a good job			
Being able to speak two languages shows how smart a person is			
It's important that people speak their home language and feel proud of it			
People who are bilingual are lucky and are able to communicate with people of different languages and cultures			

7   Which of these positive efforts occur in your community in support of bilingualism?

	Definitely happening – this effort has lot of public support	Happens somewhat	Isn't happening	There is active resistance to this effort
School district has a vision or goals statement affirming the importance of language diversity and bilingualism				
There are school clubs and/or community activities that encourage and celebrate bilingualism				
School district has good-quality English language development classes for students who are learning English				
School district has good quality home language programs so students learn to read and write in their home language				
Our state or city has an English Plus ordinance/policy or resolution				
The public library has a good selection of books and newspapers in my home language				
Signs on public buildings and in public spaces are in my home language				
There are some public leaders who are bilingual and who regularly use both languages in public				

Which of these efforts occur in your community?

	Definitely happening – this effort has a lot of public support	Happens somewhat	Isn't happening
City or school district has passed English Only policies			
The state has passed English Only legislation or ballot initiative			
School officials and teachers put students down for speaking their home language at school, or punish them for using their home language in the classroom			
Public figures make anti-bilingual comments			
When problems occur in the community, people who speak languages other than English are often scapegoated as the reason			
Anti-bilingual and anti-immigrant graffiti and signs appear around town			

Community Survey:
Assessing Our Community Climate for Bilingualism
(Non-Latino, English monolinguals)

"Home language" means the language you use at home.
"Heritage language" means the language your relatives or ancestors used before coming to the United States.

1   What is your ethnicity? (please list):

_____

_____

_____

2   What language(s) are spoken in your home?

____ English   ____ Other (please list):

3   What is your age? (check one)

____ Under age 21   ____ 21 – 55   ____ 55+

4   Check all of the feelings that you have about using your home language.

____ Proud   ____ Ashamed   ____ Skillful   ____ Afraid

____ Like I'm not a good American   ____ Disloyal   ____ Lucky

Why?

5   Check all of the feelings that you have about using your heritage language.

____ Proud   ____ Ashamed   ____ Skillful   ____ Afraid

____ Like I'm not a good American   ____ Disloyal   ____ Lucky

Why?

6   What messages do you hear in the community about languages other than English?

For each of the following, tell us whether you hear these messages, who you hear them from, and whether this message affects how you feel about the language attitudes in your community.

	I hear this message	Who I hear it from	I agree with this message	I do not agree with this message
In the United States, you should only speak English				
If you are going to speak a language other than English, you should go back to your own country				
If you don't speak English, or don't speak it well, you aren't a loyal or good American				
If you speak a language other than English, you aren't as smart as if you are English-speaking				
Being able to speak two languages helps a person get a good job				
Being able to speak two languages shows how smart a person is				
It's important that people speak their home language and feel proud of it				
People who are bilingual are lucky and are able to communicate with people of different languages and cultures				

7   What is happening in your community?

Which of these efforts related to bilingualism occur in your community in support of bilingualism?

	Definitely happening – it has a lot of public support	Happens somewhat	Isn't happening	There is active resistance to this effort
School district has a vision or goals statement affirming the importance of language diversity and bilingualism				
There are school clubs and/or community activities that encourage and celebrate bilingualism				
School district has good-quality English language development classes for students who are learning English				
Our state or city has an English Plus ordinance/ policy or resolution				
The public library has a good selection of books and newspapers in at least one language besides English				
Signs on public buildings and in public spaces are in Spanish and English (and other languages as needed)				
There are some public leaders who are bilingual and who regularly use both languages in public				

Which of these efforts occur in your community?

	Definitely happening – it has a lot of public support	Happens somewhat	Isn't happening
City or school district has passed English Only policies			
The state has passed English Only legislation or ballot initiative			
School officials and teachers put students down for speaking their home language (like Spanish) on campus, or punish them for using their home language in their classrooms			
Public figures make anti-bilingual comments			
When problems occur in the community, people who speak languages other than English are often scapegoated as the reason			
Anti-bilingual and anti-immigrant graffiti and signs appear around town			

Checking Out the Need for Bilingual Workers in Your Community

People in your community may not be aware that bilingualism can be an asset for employment. Schools and politicians may not be aware that bilingualism is important for the economic health of the region. For these reasons, it can be helpful to do some research on the need for bilingual workers in your community.
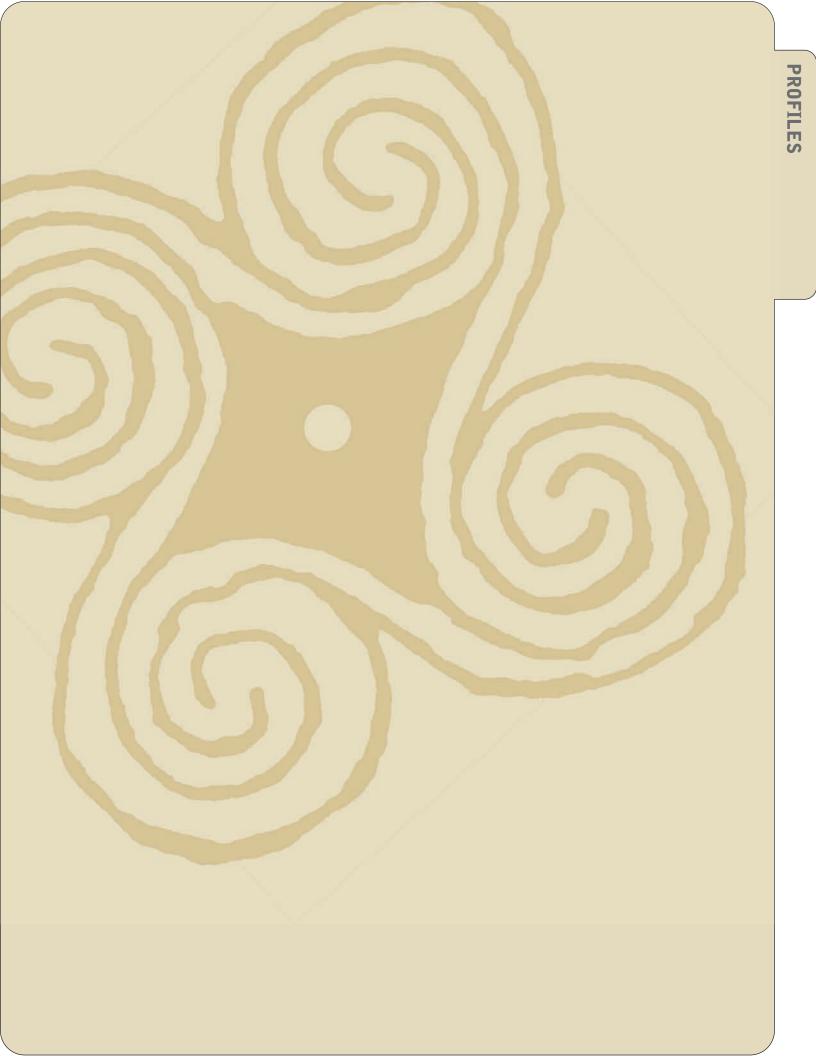
- Look at listings on the board at the local Employment Agency. Do any of them say: "Bilingual Skills Desired"? How many jobs? What kind of jobs? Talk with the staff at the Employment Agency: do employers specify that bilingual skills are desired?

- Interview local employers (in larger companies, you may need to speak to the person in Human Resources; in smaller companies, you may be able to speak to the manager or owner). Be sure to include the local school district, telephone company, retail stores, city government, and industry. Ask them:

  "Do you ever specifically seek workers who are bilingual and can speak both English and Spanish? If yes, why is this an asset? For what kind of jobs is it an asset?"

  "If you DO seek workers who are bilingual, does it make a difference if they can also read and write well in both languages?"

  "If you DO seek workers who are bilingual, are you finding there are adequate numbers of people available with those skills?

  "Even if you don't actually LOOK for workers who are bilingual, would you consider it an asset if an employee HAD those skills? If so, why? For what kind of jobs would it be an asset?"

Did you find there is a need for bilingual workers in your community? Did you find out that employers value bilingual skills in workers?

If YES, how can you get this information to your community? How might it be useful to encourage people to develop their bilingual skills?

If YES, how can you use that information to make a case for why schools and community organizations should institute programs to help people develop strong bilingual skills? Consider putting together this information with one of the case studies in order to advocate for dual language instruction in schools (Woodburn Oregon Case Study), support for bilingual businesses and business owners (LEDC Case Study) or support for Spanish-speaking newcomers to your community (New Iowans Center Case Study).

If NO, refer to the Looking at the Numbers section of this toolkit and see if you can build a "demographic" case for why local employers should consider seeking bilingual workers. Read the New Iowans Center and Latino Economic Development Corporation case studies, and consider whether it might be helpful to share these stories with your local Chamber of Commerce along with the demographic rationale for reaching out to bilingual workers. Look at the Policies section of the toolkit, and particularly the Oakland City Ordinance and the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce resolution, and consider sharing these with the local Chamber of Commerce. Together, you have a case!

T he first sections of this toolkit focused mainly on data. Numbers and percentages are a very important way to identify issues of importance to your community, but personal stories get people to pay attention to those issues.

This section of the toolkit offers the stories of four bilingual Latinos, how and why they became bilingual, how being bilingual impacts their lives, and their perspectives on the benefits of bilingualism to their community.

Introduction: Bilingualism As an Issue

All human beings grow up with a culture and language. Those whose home and heritage languages are different from the dominant language of the nation, in which they live, face the challenge of learning to function in two different languages and cultural worlds. It is a challenge very common in the Latino community.

How Latinos face this challenge, and how they incorporate bilingualism into their lives, will differ from person to person. Those personal journeys illustrate the larger social and political dynamics of our society. When we tell our stories and listen to the stories of others, we are able to weave together a more profound understanding of the ways in which language and culture can be assets to individuals and to communities.

María Cervantes

As a bilingual teacher in a dual language school and a parent of two, María is constantly seeking ways to ensure her children are bilingual. She is proud to be bilingual and believes that speaking two languages holds great value, but she didn't always think that way.

Growing up in Woodburn, Oregon, in the early 1980's, a time when the Latino population of Oregon was very small, María never really felt that bilingualism was valued at her predominantly White school, let alone encouraged. María recalls that speaking Spanish was looked down upon at her school—anyone who spoke Spanish was assumed to be undocumented. As a result, María remained confused and resistant about her home language.

María worked hard to make sure she wouldn't be considered one of "those kids." She enrolled in advanced academic classes, was very athletic, and became involved in extra-curricular activities. Since most of the students who were involved in extra-curricular activities were White, most of her friends were also White. "You are not like the other Mexicans," she was told. She even remembers a specific incident where she was seeking extra help from her teacher who was also Latino. "Well I can't help you, you're too White," her teacher declared. The message was clear, she remembers, "Either you were Mexican, or you weren't Mexican…Being a Mexican was negative, so that's the impression I got. I was the good one."

Meanwhile, at home she faced another circumstance, María explains:

> "*My mom only speaks Spanish - up until this day she only speaks Spanish. Her education was only second grade and she was orphaned, so she was basically working the whole time. She knows how to read and write, but it's very limited. I always spoke Spanish at home, but it was very broken Spanish. My vocabulary was so limited, because that's all my mom spoke, and that's what I spoke.*"

So, even though María entered school as a Spanish speaker, she did not feel comfortable with her Spanish. After getting messages of shame and embarrassment about her home language in school, María and her siblings began to communicate among themselves only in English. She strengthened her English skills, but in the process, created an even greater distance between herself and her home language.

María's perception about Spanish, bilingualism and her Latina identity began to change when she entered college. María never planned on being a teacher. She entered an ESL/bilingual teaching program because a friend suggested she could use her bilingualism as a way to make more money than most teachers ordinarily make. Through this program, María's eyes were opened to the value and opportunities that being bilingual could bring her. She says, "Up to that point, I didn't see the value of being bilingual. But when I started studying about it, the importance about it, I started seeing how important it was to develop those bi-literacy skills." She was inspired, for the first time, to really work on improving her Spanish. She began

reading in Spanish, writing in Spanish, and doing everything possible so that she could truly be more bilingual. Twenty years later, María is now proud of how much her Spanish has improved.

Today, as a mother of two boys, María and her husband are strongly committed to making sure their children are bilingual. They read together in Spanish as a family and speak to each other in Spanish. She also feels that it important for her children to be able to have a relationship with her mother, their grandmother, and to be able to communicate with her well. She comments on how she sees language and culture loss happening:

> "*A lot of the immigrant families that come here, they try and get their kids to speak English as soon as they can… 'No, we're in America now, we need to speak English,' they say, but I think they really haven't considered the opportunities that would be available to these kids if they maintain those languages.*"

With María's new appreciation for languages, she enrolled her sons in FLES (Foreign Language to English Speakers), a Russian and English program in her school district. Both of her children are bilingual in Spanish and English, and now one is fully tri-lingual in Spanish, English, and Russian. María explains, "As a parent, I really think the greatest thing you can ever give your child is languages. Because it not only makes them smarter, it makes them more available to the world."

These days María can't imagine not being bilingual. She has embraced her home language in a way that she never could have imagined back in her school days. María was once at the brink of completely losing not only her language, but also her culture. Today, she believes that if you lose your home language and culture, then you lose yourself. "I don't know what it is not to know both languages. I don't know what that feels like…for me, I don't think I know what it is not to be bilingual. I've never lived anything else. That is my life."

Ladislao Arriaga

At just 14 years old, Ladislao Arriaga left Mexico and came to the United States in search of work, opportunity, and a better life. His choices limited, Ladislao soon joined hundreds of other hardworking migrants in the vast Sacramento Valley in California, picking fruit, vegetables or nuts. For six months of the year, he worked in the fields, and, when the picking season was over, he traveled back to Mexico.

Spending half the year in one country and half in another made it difficult for Ladislao to further his education. As a result, he had little choice but to continue working in the fields for the next 27 years. He worked hard, long hours, but was never able to save enough of his meager earnings to live the life he dreamed of. Almost three decades later, he heard that there was work in Iowa that paid better. He left California for the middle of the country he now called home to work in the meat packing plants, yet another physically grueling job.

While working in Iowa, Ladislao fell ill. The problem was his heart, and he had to undergo surgery to get a pacemaker. His new physical condition made it impossible for Ladislao to return to the work he was doing. He needed to get a job that required less physical labor. Ladislao decided to take his illness as an opportunity to do something he always had wanted but never had the time to do – learn English.

Besides lacking time, Ladislao felt he never had enough money to pay for English classes. He says, "If you are in this country you have to know English…to get a better job and more money." Finding a way to learn English, however, was difficult: "Before, I was always working so we didn't focus, and [I didn't have] the money, not enough preparation. Now I tried to find somewhere where I can speak English and I find this and it's a very good place."

The place Ladislao refers to is the New Iowans Center, a state-sponsored welcoming center offering free services to newcomers to the state. Their services include job placement and training, citizenship classes, computer classes, and English as a Second Language classes, to name a few. Ladislao decided to go to the New Iowans Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa to begin learning English, and also took advantage of the other classes. He shares, "Before, I didn't know nothing about computers. Now I can move the mouse and make a few keyboard [strokes]. And [I] take citizenship [classes] too."

Learning English and becoming bilingual has helped Ladislao find a new, exciting career path. It also has helped him gain confidence, overcome fears, and find his voice. He explains:

"For me [life] changed a lot because I was afraid to go some places before ... because they would ask me something and I wouldn't know how to answer. [Now] I can go everywhere I want. So yes, I'm not afraid right now. I know my pronunciation is not very good now, but I understand. [When asked if] I need an interpreter, I say no, I can handle [it]. Before, when I needed an interpreter, sometimes they don't say the thing I want to say. They say it a different way."

With his newly aquired bilingual skills, Ladislao has made it his goal to become an interpreter so that he can help others around him who cannot speak English well, and maybe one day after more schooling, become a teacher. He dreams of learning two or three languages so that he can become friends with many people and help them translate things when needed. He hopes that everyone sees the value in becoming bilingual so that they can create better opportunities for themselves and their families. He says:

> *"Yes, it's hard to learn English, but if you say 'it's hard,' you want to stay there. But if you say, 'it's hard but I want to make it,' maybe one year, two years, three years, four years, you'll get it."*

Ladislao is also very clear that learning English should not come at the expense of losing his home language. His message to the new generation of Latinos growing up with two languages is this:

> *"For me, all the languages in the world are the same, there's no difference. We should tell the new generation that if they learn both languages, very good. They're going to earn more money ... and they are going to have a better job and everything. They speak very good Spanish in home, but in the school they speak very good English. It's very good. It's better to learn English and don't forget your language."*

Alma Barajas

Alma Barajas is the daughter of immigrants from a small rural town in Michoacán, México. Now an eleventh-grade student at the Academy of International Studies in Woodburn, Oregon, she was in the first kindergarten class in the Woodburn District's dual-language program. Her parents took the risk of putting Alma into the new program because they had witnessed their five older daughters struggling in school. Her sisters, like Alma, entered school speaking only Spanish. But without a strong dual-language program, the older girls struggled academically, and never developed real proficiency in English.

At first, school was difficult for Alma, as well – even in the new program. But as her bilingual skills grew, she became more and more comfortable in both languages. She recalls:

> *"When I started school, I only knew Spanish and I felt uncomfortable. Being bilingual wasn't really valued then. English was seen as far superior. But my teachers in the dual-language program helped me a lot. And since I wasn't the only one in my class who only spoke Spanish at the beginning, I began to feel a little more comfortable."*

By second grade, Alma began to feel more comfortable in both languages, though she still only spoke Spanish at home. By the time she reached high school, Alma had seen real changes in the atmosphere in the schools around bilingualism, and became more and more aware of the value of bilingualism to her, personally.

> *"It's different now. Being bilingual is seen as important. That's why I convinced my parents to enroll my younger brother in the dual language program. I see now how the program really helped me to be bilingual... I think it's important. You get a lot of benefits. You can communicate with more people with ease. Here in Woodburn, most of the people speak Spanish, so it's better for the kids to be bilingual so that everyone can communicate. And being bilingual has helped me a lot in school."*

Alma is a young woman who is proud of her bilingualism, and finds it useful in her everyday life. She translates a lot for her mother:

> *"It makes me feel good that I can translate for my mom. I am able to help her. I can help her get all kinds of services like medical help, pay bills. If I couldn't help her, then who would?"*

She is clear that bilingualism isn't just something that is useful in school and that helps her now, but is a core part of what she has to offer the world in the future.

> *"I want to be a bilingual teacher because I love little kids, and I think it's important to have a teacher like me that they can relate to. It helps them to have bilingual teachers, especially in the younger years. That's why I want to become a teacher. I want to help my community."*

Lorenzo Ariaza

Lorenzo Ariaza is a successful businessman in Minneapolis. He has been in the United States for almost 40 years, having immigrated as a young man from Mexico City with just a few years of college under his belt. He landed in Los Angeles, taking whatever jobs he could get in the restaurant and catering business. He remembers what life was like:

> *"I did everything you can think of in restaurants, from dishwasher, busboy, cook, waiter and eventually also managing restaurants. I was always a hard worker, and because of that, I earned the trust of my bosses, and they always felt that I was very responsible, so they gave me more and more responsibilities."*

Lorenzo worked hard on his jobs, and took ESL classes at the local community college to learn English, attending school after work. Despite the hard schedule, Lorenzo also took art classes, and developed a love for painting and skill as an artist. In the mid 1980s, Lorenzo had an opportunity to become a legal resident through the Amnesty program. Though he had dreamed of returning to Mexico, his three daughters were all born in the United States and he became a grandfather, so he chose to remain in the United States. A relative convinced them to move to Minnesota and join him in opening up a restaurant. Lorenzo remembers:

> *"He knew I could run the business for him because of all of my experience. My wife and I decided we had to save money for our future here, and for our daughters and grandchildren. We sold our house in Mexico and established our roots here in Minnesota."*

With the help of an economic development center (owned and run by and for Latinos), Lorenzo formulated a business plan to open the restaurant, and put together a loan package. The first attempt at getting a business loan was rejected, but he tried again, got the loan, and was finally able to open a restaurant in downtown Minneapolis. Now he is the proud owner of A La Salsa, a restaurant that specializes in preparing unique Mexican cuisine not found elsewhere. The restaurant has received awards for the best Mexican restaurant in Minneapolis for three years in a row. It also serves as a gathering place for Latino poets and artists. This year, Lorenzo opened a second restaurant.

Remaining connected to his home culture and language has been important to Lorenzo as he has made his way in the new culture of the United States. He and his wife have been very deliberate about how they raise their daughters to feel that they are part of both worlds.

> *"My wife and I always stressed being bilingual with our daughters, and now they are fully bilingual and biliterate as well. It has really helped in this country. My daughters say they feel very proud of who they are and being bilingual. They tell me that it gives them a feeling of freedom to be who they are at school and work. They don't feel shame like other immigrants feel in this country, and*

I attribute that to being able to communicate in two languages. Now my two grandchildren are in dual-language programs, because we feel it is so important."

In reflecting on his success, Lorenzo credits his bilingualism, along with his hard work.

"One of the reasons I have been successful is that I am bilingual. I am a good person, I work hard. I try to help others. I have nothing to be ashamed of. I feel good about who I am. I have never felt less than anyone else in this country, and I think it's because I am proud to be who I am, and I am proud to be bilingual."

Using the Profiles to Move Towards Action

This tool provides suggestions for how to use the four profiles to encourage others to tell their own stories. Sharing stories can be a powerful way to connect to other people and can also prompt action.

Setting Group Agreements

Before sharing stories, it is important to understand that anytime a person shares a personal story, it can raise strong feelings and emotions in them. That's why, before people begin to share their stories, the group needs to build a safe space. A safe space enables people to have constructive and respectful conversations, and ensures that these conversations are open to all participants. Setting group agreements is one way to help create a safe space for dialogue. Some examples of group agreements may include:

Speak from your own experience. Sometimes this rule is phrased as speaking in an "I" voice. The idea is that while we can speak from and about our own experiences, we should be careful not to speak for others or assume our experiences represent all those who share our respective backgrounds.

Be aware of how you are using air space; or create space for everyone to share. This rule encourages everybody to practice making space for others to share their ideas and concerns. It's a rule that gives your facilitator the group's permission to intervene and ensure that everyone has a chance to speak.

Expect and be willing to explore differences of experience and opinion. Often we do not share the same perspectives or experiences with regard to different topics and issues. This rule encourages the group to view differences as a normal, positive, and ongoing part of the process of working together. It is not necessary that everything raised or discussed in any one conversation must be resolved through that conversation.

Make a commitment to one another's development and learning. Be open to taking time at a later date to constructively follow up on what someone else has said. On a more personal note, follow up on any issue or concern that creates discomfort for you and/or interest for you. As in the previous ground rule, the idea here is not to try to convince each other of the "rightness" of either of your positions, but instead to work toward mutual understanding of your respective positions. The respect and consideration you extend to each other in such situations may assist you both in moving forward.

Respect confidentiality. Given that dialogue in diverse organizations may raise issues and concerns that are emotionally charged in some way, it is important that the group agree to keep sensitive issues confidential. That means that people will not discuss these issues outside the group without getting the permission of the story-teller and will not share these issues unless it is within the context of a dialogue guided by group agreements. Most importantly, participants who hold a position of authority must make sure that they do not use issues raised during dialogue to gain advantage over an employee or co-worker.

*Starting with a set of proposed ground rules is advised; but always expect to engage the group in modifying, clarifying, and adding to your list.

ACTION TOOL

Talking About the Profiles

Read the four profiles. Each person might want to read one and then share it with the larger group; or perhaps the profiles can be read aloud to the group.

After reading (or hearing) the stories of the four Latinos profiled in this toolkit, lead a discussion about the themes or lessons drawn from their lives about the value of bilingualism, and about what it takes to become bilingual. You may want to use these questions to guide your discussion:

- What are some of the reasons these four people give for why they value being bilingual? Do you feel similarly? Why or why not? Do you think, in general, that people in your community feel that bilingualism is a value?

- How does being bilingual contribute to the work that the four Latinos do? In what ways did being bilingual end up shaping the kind of work they chose or decided they wanted to do? If YOU are bilingual, do you use bilingualism in your work? If you are NOT bilingual, would it be helpful in your work if you developed bilingualism? In what ways?

- María Cervantes and Alma Barajas speak about negative attitudes they ran into as Spanish-speakers, and about feeling ashamed of being Spanish-speaking. Lorenzo Ariaza talks about trying to help his daughters grow up without feeling shame about their language and culture, and about how he and his wife worked hard so their daughters would be bilingual and proud of their heritage. Do you feel, or do you think the young people you know, feel ashamed of being Spanish-speaking? Why? What happens in schools, in families, and in public life that creates this sense of shame? What does it take in order for young people to grow up feeling proud of their heritage culture and language?

- It can be difficult to find the time, support, and programs to learn English. How did each of the four people in the profiles learn English? What kinds of programs did they enroll in? What kind of support did they get?

Sharing Your Stories

The profiles in this toolkit share the stories of just four people. Everyone has a language story. Every family has a language history and language journey. By reflecting on our own stories and sharing our journeys with each other, we develop a richer understanding of the issues affecting our community.
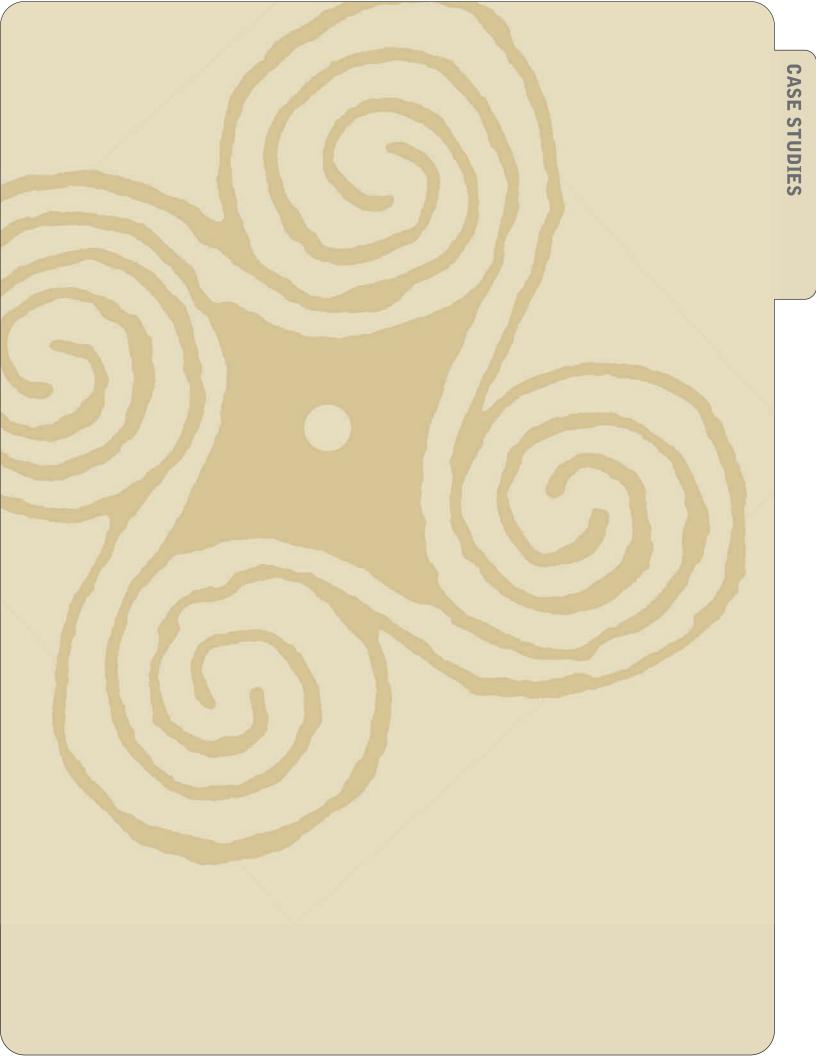
Step 1: Invite each person in the group to reflect on their own language story and their family's language journey. This can be done silently, with people jotting down notes; it can be written; or it can be done by drawing or symbols.

Think back as far in your family history as you know, and trace what has happened with regards to languages in your family since that time. As you look back on that history, here are some questions to think about:

- How was your family's language viewed by other people? Was it the dominant or "official" language used in schools and by government? Was it a respected language? If not, what was the impact on you and on your family?

- What key events had an impact on the languages, language choices and language changes in your family (e.g., family moving to a new country, marriage, wars, conquests, education, etc.)?

- When language changes occurred, were they voluntary? Forced?

- When and how were languages lost or given up?

- When and how were languages gained?

- What were the attitudes in your family and their community about language, bilingualism, holding onto their home language, and learning dominant languages?

- When you were a child, what languages did you speak at home?

- What language(s) did you use in school?

- If you learned a new language, how did you learn it? (e.g., by studying in school, living in another country, developing friends who spoke other languages, picking it up on a job, falling in love, etc.)

- If you are a parent, think about your children's attitudes about their home language and about English (if English is not their home language). What do you want for your children with regards to language and bilingualism? How have you tried to make that happen? Have you been successful?

Step 2: Ask each person to share their language history and language journey with the whole group. As you listen, think about and then lead a group discussion about how languages are added and lost, what status different languages have in your community, and what you've learned about the dynamics of bilingualism in your community. Are there any patterns? What is it like for a family or an individual to lose a language? What gets lost? What conditions allow people to maintain home language? What conditions allow and support people to learn a new language?

CASE STUDIES OF SPECIFIC STRATEGIES THAT BUILD ON BILINGUALISM AS ASSET

What does it look like when a community mobilizes around a vision of languages and cultures as assets? Throughout the nation, people have created programs and policies that recognize the value and strength of diversity. Their stories provide inspiration and models for what we might want to do in our own communities.

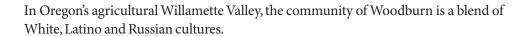This toolkit includes three case studies:

- The story of a school district in Woodburn, Oregon, in the agricultural Willamette Valley, which has set the unusual and visionary goal that every child will graduate from high school literate in English and at least one other language — and has worked to build programs that enable Spanish-speaking and Russian-speaking children to maintain their heritage languages while learning English.

- The example of a group of visionary Latino leaders in the Minneapolis/St. Paul region of Minnesota who came together to form an economic-development corporation to create economic opportunities for Latinos, including microenterprise training and financial assistance to help low-income (mostly Spanish-speaking) people to start or expand their businesses.

- A description of a statewide, government-sponsored program in Iowa, that grew out of a governor's concern about not having enough workers in the state, and his recognition that immigrants are a tremendous economic asset who bring a wealth of energy and skills to enrich communities. The New Iowans Centers are designed as a resource to help newcomers and immigrants develop their skills so they can find employment and integration into their new society.

Each of these case studies can be read separately, generating dialogue and reflection. Together, the three case studies provide a frame for groups to consider a variety of approaches to moving an action agenda for building on the language and cultural assets of their community.

Woodburn School District. Woodburn, Oregon:
Creating Schools That Build Connections Across Communities

In Oregon's agricultural Willamette Valley, the community of Woodburn is a blend of White, Latino and Russian cultures.

Russian immigrants have come to Woodburn for over a hundred years, seeking religious freedom in a region where their centuries-old cultural and farming traditions could continue – and where their way of life (clothing, industry, religion) is still largely maintained. Woodburn's White population are descendants of people who trekked across the Oregon Trail as pioneers and settled in the rich farmland of central Oregon. There also is a growing and prosperous retirement community of mostly White residents along the highway corridor near a large, new outlet mall.

Many of the Latinos in this area followed the crops and came to Woodburn for harvest, but then stayed to make the town home. Others are migrant Latinos who continue to flow through the area as work is available in the nurseries and food processing plants. The growth of Latino entrepreneurship has played a role in revitalizing the downtown area, which was largely abandoned as large chain stores opened along the highway corridor, but is now thriving with Mexican restaurants, groceries, and shops.

The city is now 52% Latino, 11% Russian, and 37% non-Russian White. In other communities, this kind of mix can often end up generating tension, inequities, and hostility. In Woodburn, these groups, in general, practice a careful and polite separation from each other. But in the schools, another story is taking place – a story of determination and passionate commitment to valuing the multiple cultures and languages of the region, closing gaps, preparing all students to be bilingual, and building relationships across cultural and language differences.

The district, with 4,700 students, has put itself on the map nationally with a robust trilingual K-12 program (Russian, English, and Spanish) and an unusual and visionary commitment that every child will graduate literate in English and at least one other language.

The cornerstone of this effort is the Woodburn School District Strategic Plan. Its mission is "engaging and inspiring all students to achieve challenging goals and aspirations and contribute to a diverse world." The motto of the district is: "Diverse in Cultures, Unified in Mission." The core values include the following:

- All people have equal inherent value
- Diversity is a strength
- A community thrives when its members recognize and value their interdependence
- And, family is the strongest influence on the growth and development of an individual.

The evidence that these values are not just empty rhetoric is strikingly visible at the entrance to school buildings where signs read (in three languages): "BELIEVE, CREO, ВЕРИТЬ." Signs on school walls are in three languages, books in all three languages fill the school library shelves, and the voices of students and teachers alike fill the classrooms and halls in multiple languages.

This linguistic diversity has not been easy to achieve. The story of how Woodburn has built this shared vision and commitment to bilingualism is a story of hard work, vision and conviction, activism, determination to do whatever it takes to make it work, and courage.

It all began with concerns about low achievement and high drop out rates among Latino students. The school system recognized that something had to be done to strengthen the program and schooling for English learners. Where other communities often just accept these patterns as "the way things are," Woodburn had parents, educators and district leadership who were willing to work to build something better.

Says Sherrilynn Rawson, one of the educators who has played a key role in developing the biliteracy programs:

> "*It was just the right people at the right time. A group of teachers who were very concerned about raising academic achievement of our English Learners, and leadership that was willing to take the risk to go and look for what works. Staff willing to put in time to figure it out and make it happen. Parents spoke out. And, together we looked for and found powerful research to indicate what would be most effective.*"

Planning teams were charged by the Superintendent to read research on language learning and to visit successful schools around the country. Their goal was to find out what practices were most effective for English learners, and what works to help all students attain high achievement in academics. Rawson explains, "*It was clear, the more we read, the more we saw, that the way to get to these goals was by building high levels of home language literacy.*"

The district began to build programs for their English learners around that research. But the focus on research didn't stop there. The district contracted with nationally-known evaluators to evaluate how the program was working once they set it in motion. They found the bilingual program had a powerful impact on their own students and in their own community. The district commitment to biliteracy for all students grew from there. It moved from using home language literacy as a pathway for English learners to English literacy, to adopting home language literacy as another goal in addition to English literacy. And then, district leaders and parents reasoned, if the children in the bilingual program were coming out biliterate, why shouldn't *all* students in the district get the opportunity to become biliterate?

The community spoke out loud and clear – Latino parents, White parents, and Russian parents. Walt Blomberg, Superintendent of Woodburn Schools, recalls

looking at the results of a survey they had sent to all parents in the district about whether they would want their children to develop biliteracy.

> "*The survey came back with overwhelmingly positive results! And that encouraged us, that's what it took for me to basically say that we are going to be a bilingual district. People wanted it! They were hungry for it! So it was my job to make it happen.*"

Woodburn adopted several models, all aimed towards biliteracy. They established two-way (dual) immersion programs which mix English Learners and English fluent students together in the same classes, so that both groups develop biliteracy together. They also created maintenance bilingual programs for English learners, heritage language programs, and an English Plus program. Through enrollment in one or another of these models, all students in the district are involved in learning two or more languages.

Making a trilingual school work required a large investment in professional development, in purchasing or creating materials in the languages of instruction, and in widespread recruitment to find teachers with high-level biliteracy. The district has a Binational Teachers Exchange, bringing teachers from Mexico to work in its summer programs. They also are "growing our own" teachers, encouraging young bilingual people in their own community to become teachers. It has taken years to build the bilingual teacher force in the district – but it has been done!

It became a community commitment to find books in all three languages. The district looked internationally and found and purchased Spanish language texts. But Russian language books that matched the Oregon standards could not be found. So, Russian-speaking parents and teachers worked to translate materials and texts from English books into Russian, and typed, cut and pasted the Russian text into what had been English only books.

All this took parent volunteers, extra work for the teachers, and leadership willing to find the resources needed to build the program in order to find teachers, train teachers, and to purchase materials. It has taken concerted effort to "sell the program" to the wider community, for the schools still face some community attitudes that students should just speak English. The superintendent takes seriously his role in educating the White community and the business community about the importance of biliteracy and why the district is so committed to the program. He explains:

> "*It's about the survival of our programs. You have to have advocates. The business community interacts with the public everyday. And they often don't have kids in school. You don't want your business folks to lose confidence in the schools, you want them to understand what you're doing and why. Most people who grew up in Oregon haven't spent a lot of time with diversity, they haven't mixed with people who are different, they haven't spent time thinking about language programs. So it's our job to be sure we include them. We educate them about bilingualism. We try to engage them in what we're doing and why.*"

Says one principal, "*those that might be skeptical look at our test scores and see that the program is successful.*" Latino students' test scores in academic subjects as well as in English have risen dramatically. As the research had promised, bilingualism pays off in higher academic achievement and in stronger English.

Don Judson, a banker and leader in the Woodburn Chamber of Commerce, doesn't have children in the schools, but recognizes the importance of what the Woodburn School District is doing.

> "W*oodburn is what the U.S. will look like in 20 years. Our schools do an incredible job, and when our kids graduate, they are biliterate. I would have killed for an opportunity like that when I was in school. It gives them a tremendous advantage in the world. Woodburn kids are far and away ahead of districts where students learn just one language.*"

Latino parents also need information and help in understanding the dual language program and how it benefits their children. The district has created Parent/Community Liaison positions with the express charge of providing that outreach and parent education. Antonio Ramos, a trilingual immigrant from Mexico, is one of these liaisons/coordinators who has seen with his own eyes the impact of dual language programs on his sons.

> "*My oldest son is in the university now. He didn't get the bilingual program, and it was hard at home. I didn't speak English, and it was hard to work with him because everything he brought home [then] was in English – and everything at home was in Spanish. He became quieter. But my middle son was in the Transitional bilingual program. He would come home really happy with his paperwork in Spanish, and the change is really big. He is now in tenth grade and is completely bilingual in both English and Spanish languages, and is taking Russian as a Second [third] language. And he doesn't have the conflict of "what language should I use." He speaks to someone who speaks Spanish the way I speak Spanish, and if someone speaks English, he speaks to them the way they speak English. I can see how different it is for him than for my older son.*"

Antonio also witnesses, however, how difficult it can be for a parent who doesn't have information to make the decision to place their child in a dual or bilingual language program. And so, through community radio, through workshops and meetings in the community, direct personal contact, the district reaches out to Latino parents. Antonio explains:

> "*One of the difficulties is that the message that the Hispanic community receives from the radio, television, newspapers, uncles, other generations that were only able to overcome the barriers they faced with only English, the message is to not put children in bilingual programs and put them into English ONLY. I tell them, you have the final word, it is your decision, your child, but I will tell you as a professional and as a parent what the result will be - what I*

have seen in my own children – and THEN you make the decision. And when they hear about my children becoming fully bilingual, they keep their children in the program."

Indeed, parents of children in the schools are deeply supportive – because they see the improvement in academic success. María Cervantes, a mother of two boys, speaks about her efforts to keep her children connected to their family language:

"It's important to encourage the bilingualism. A lot of parents say: No, we're in America now, we need to speak English: but I think they really haven't considered themselves the opportunities that would be available to their kids if they maintain their language, too. As a parent, I think it's the greatest thing you can ever give your child. It makes them smarter, and it makes them more available to the world. It's a value, you need to value your language, because that's who you are. Once you lose the language, you lose your culture and you lose yourself. And knowing your language and two or three other languages, it's a gift."

It's not just immigrant parents who see the value in their children becoming bilingual. Many second and third generation Latino families in Woodburn have lost their Spanish. They want their children to be able to reconnect to family and culture, and to reclaim their Latino heritage.

Parents and educators in Woodburn look at language learning also in terms of economic reality, with biliteracy giving their children a leg up in the labor market. They know if their children speak and read two languages, their job options will be better. In Woodburn, more and more businesses and services are recognizing the need for bilingual workers. But students are being prepared to participate in a global world as well.

Being able to speak two languages is not just about getting a better job or doing better in school, Woodburn is discovering the enormous pay-off in stronger and more respectful relationships across cultural and language groups in the schools and community. Sherrilynn Rawson, Principal of the first elementary school in the district to pilot the dual language immersion model, explains:

"It started as a commitment to English learner achievement. It became a commitment to biliteracy. But now it has become something even bigger. It's a whole different way to understand things. Knowing another language leads to viewing things differently. It gives us ways to understand each other. That's important. The world is getting to be a smaller place, and it is so important we have ways to understand each other."

Theresa Ellis, a parent of a child whose home language is English, describes the broader community impact:

"I wanted my daughter to have the opportunity to not just live side by side with

people who look different and speak different from her, but actually to really be able to interact, to not feel stopped by language and cultural barriers, to not feel intimidated about speaking to someone who is different. I just wanted her to be able to fully live in our community, comfortably… And it helps the parents, too. School is a place where communities can come together – or not. You know, you can have real divisions in your community, but when kids are put together in a kindergarten class, and I'm looking at your child and you're looking at mine, that tends to break down a lot of divisions. I knew that I wanted to know people a little bit better in our community. We might not speak the same language, but our children are in the same class. We start seeing each other as equals."

Anthony Veliz, one of the Parent and Community Liaisons, looks back on the past decade since the district began to build its emphasis on bilingualism, and what has happened with relationships between parents of different cultures:

"My daughter's classroom has Asians, Anglos, and Latinos – all growing and learning at the same [time]. And it's not just literature or academics, there is also the social part. They can connect. Be in communication. Here we have Russian non-believers and religious Russians, we have first-generation Latinos and third generation, we have Anglos who live on the golf course and also Anglos who live in cars – all in one classroom. They respect each other. They understand. And I can tell you that in Woodburn, in this period of 12 years, we can see that cultures and communities seem to be coming together. It is achieving that coalition – at least in terms of learning about each other and mutual respect."

Though it felt like a leap of faith in the beginning to go down the path of bilingual programs, and though it has taken years of work to build the programs, the children and community of Woodburn are reaping great benefits.

The Woodburn School District Approach

- Biliteracy as a goal for all students
- Student-centered curriculum
- Focus on high level academic language and higher level thinking skills
- High expectations
- Parent participation and choice
- Interactive and cooperative learning
- Culturally appropriate curriculum and school environment
- Multicultural staff that reflects the student population
- High quality and well supported staff
  (i.e., common planning time for teachers, recruitment and hiring of qualified and competent bilingual staff, and emphasis on professional development)

Making a Case for Dual Language Education

Read and discuss the Woodburn School District case study.

What interests you about it? What inspires you? Did the Woodburn model give you ideas for what you might like to see happen in your community?

Following the discussion, consider the following action steps.

Investigate Dual-language programs

Dual-language programs are spreading across the nation. There are now hundreds of programs in over a dozen languages, including Spanish, Korean, Navajo, Japanese, Chinese, and Russian. Research on program effectiveness has consistently found that students in well-implemented Dual-language programs perform equal to or better than students educated only in English, they also drop out less, and do better in school.   To get more information about the model, or research on effectiveness, or to find out where there may be programs near you, visit the following organizations' websites:

Center for Applied Linguistics
www.cal.org/twi/directory
202-362-0700

Two Way Bilingual Immersion Association
www.bilingualeducation.org
626-814-4441

National Association of Bilingual Education
www.nabe.org
202-898-1829

Investigate what is going on in the schools of your community

Are they ensuring children will learn English to high proficiency? Are your schools educating children to become biliterate? Or are they contributing to students feeling ashamed of their home language or being unable to develop bilingualism? This toolkit will help you find out!!

These are things a school should have in order to help children become bilingual in Spanish and English. Does your child's school have these?

	School HAS this	School does NOT have this
When you walk into the school, you see signs in Spanish and in English		
The school has a program so that students are learning to read and write in both Spanish and in English		
Teachers in the school are bilingual – so children see adults using both languages		
Being bilingual is seen as a positive – and children are encouraged to use both languages		
Students do academic work (homework, papers, etc.) in both languages		
Students are assessed in both English and in Spanish, and parents get regular reports on how children are progressing in BOTH languages		
There are meetings and workshops for parents on how to support children in developing literacy in two languages		
ESL classes and Spanish literacy classes for parents are offered at the school site		
Students have opportunities to use computer technology to communicate with students throughout the world in Spanish		

After finding the answers to fill in the chart above, sum up all the positive things your school is doing. Let your school know that you appreciate the things they *are* doing to support the development of bilingualism. If there are things they could be doing, but aren't, let them know that you would like the school to begin doing them. Let them know that bilingualism is important to you and your child's future.

Are negative things going on that need to be stopped?

Schools can be a negative force as well as a positive one. Here are some of the things that happen in schools that can discourage your child from becoming bilingual, and can contribute toward them rejecting Spanish and not learning English as well as they could. Be sure these are *not* happening in your child's school.

	School HAS this	School does NOT have this
Students are told (by teachers or by other students) that "we only speak English here," or they are told not to speak Spanish		
Students are teased or put-down or excluded because they speak Spanish, or because they don't speak perfectly fluent English		
There are no books in the school in Spanish		
There is a policy in the school or district that instruction should only be in English		
A bilingual program isn't provided in the school – there are no classes or lessons that help students develop literacy in both languages		
Students are placed into separate classes or programs for English Learners, but these classes don't have adequate books, teachers don't have adequate training, and even after four or five years, students don't seem to develop the English skills they need to be able to do well in classes with English fluent children		
Students are just placed into regular classes with English fluent students, and aren't given help to understand what the teacher is teaching and how they can participate.		

Make a list of all the negative things happening at your school. Take this information to the school administration and parent groups, and ask that policies be changed. Be sure to speak up and let the school know that you want the school to support bilingualism.

Make a case for dual language education in your school district

To make this case to the school or the school district leadership, put together these materials:

- The results of the survey above, "What is going on at your school?"
- A copy of the Woodburn, Oregon, case study,
- Copies of some of the school policies in the Policy section of this Toolkit

It may also be helpful to look through the Myths and Facts section to prepare to speak to any misconceptions that parents, teachers, administrators, and local politicians may have about language learning and bilingualism. You may also want to consider doing the Assessing Our Community Climate… survey, which will demonstrate whether students are getting negative messages at school.

Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC)
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Revitalizing Low-Income Communities Through Latino Entrepreneurship

Tamales, tortillas, pan dulce, dresses and favors for quinceañeras are just a few of the items for sale at the Mercado Central, located on the Lake Street commercial corridor in South Minneapolis. Created in 1999, the Mercado Central project brought together a group of visionary Latino leaders who later formed the Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC), a member-based nonprofit organization.

Incorporated in 2003 with a vision to develop a thriving multicultural community enriched by the culture and leadership of Latinos, LEDC's mission is to transform the Latino community by creating economic opportunities for Latinos in Minnesota. In its short history, LEDC has assisted hundreds of low-income people to start or expand their businesses in the state of Minnesota.

LEDC is widely recognized by the Latino community, as well as the larger population of the twin cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul, as an entity that organizes and advocates for Latino entrepreneurs. In 2006, almost 400 people (largely Spanish speakers) participated in workshops and forums sponsored by LEDC. These workshops teach the basics about how to obtain a business license, write business plans, develop bookkeeping systems, resolve legal issues, and implement marketing and sales strategies. In addition to these workshops and forums, each year, LEDC provides technical assistance to another 400 people on such topics as how to register a business, how to change the name of a business, and how to purchase a business. The LEDC staff advise and support individuals in preparing loan packages to obtain business financing. The actual funding for buiseness loans comes from The Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers, the Neighborhood Development Center, and local initiative foundations or other financial institutions that offer Small Business Administration guaranteed business loans. In 2006, LEDC members were approved for loans amounting to almost two million dollars to start or expand their businesses.

LEDC got its start when Latinos living in Minnesota in the 1980s and 1990s saw the need for having their own community-based organizations. At the time, there were 70,000 Latinos in the state, but there were no services to meet the needs of this population. In 1992, members of the Latino community approached the pastor at a local church about providing access to the sanctuary for a Latino congregation. Thus was born El Sagrado Corazón de Jesus – a space for baptisms, marriages, *quinceañeras*, confirmations, and meetings about the needs of the community. The new congregation immediately took on a social justice perspective as well as a spiritual dimension. Recent Mexican immigrants worked in teams to reduce educational, legal, and economic barriers to their full participation and success in the community. They realized that economic progress had to be their first imperative.

At that time, there was just one store that catered to the needs of the Mexican community. It was located in the "Mexican" enclave in St. Paul. Members of El Sagrado Corazón de Jesus began by reviewing the community's cultural assets. They

asked themselves: What are we good at? What kind of entrepreneurial experiences do we have from the countries we come from? What would it take for us to become entrepreneurs here?

According to Ramón León, Executive Director of LEDC, the first Latino businesses began at this time. He recalls:

> *"Because we were small in number, people didn't seem to care; however, once our numbers began to grow, we were seen as the immigrant invasion. We were able to counter some of this sentiment through economic development."*

In keeping with the community-based approach, the Mercado Central project was planned and launched as a cooperative, representing 47 business owners. This project not only aimed to provide economic growth to Latino business owners and community, but also served as a way for the Latino community to reach out to the larger Minneapolis/St. Paul community. The Mercado Central project gave Latinos a chance to share who they were, why they were there, and what they could do to benefit not just themselves, but the larger community as a whole.

John Flory, one of the founders of the Mercado Central Project and LEDC, defines the asset-based approach of the organization as that of recognizing that "people, though poor, have talents. With resources they can become leaders, self-starters." Perhaps one of the most striking ways in which LEDC builds and nurtures the talent of its communities lies in its realization that language and culture are essential to incorporating Latinos into the world of entrepreneurship.

LEDC recognized very early that many Latinos had entrepreneurial skills, but what they needed was the training. Such was the case with Manuela Barraza, a woman who made favors for quinceañera celebrations. Manuela attended one of the first LEDC meetings with a grocery bag full of regalitos, gifts that she made with silk and pearls for cultural celebrations and traditions. Salvador Miranda, organizer of El Sagrado Corazón de Jesus and a LEDC board member, remembers that meeting:

> *"Manuela said, 'You think I could sell these?' And I asked, 'How much do you want for them?' She said, 'Ten bucks.' I said, 'Ask for twenty.'"*

Manuela enrolled and completed the LEDC course, wrote up her business plan, and was the first one to open a shop.

Another asset of the immigrant, low-income population is that they are risk-takers, according to Eduardo Barrera, a Mexican-born founding member and LEDC board member, whose own social and academic mobility serves as a model for others. Eduardo came to the United States in the 1980s with a basic education and little knowledge of English. In the United States, he enrolled in ESL classes, then college courses. He completed a bachelor's degree in Human Services Administration followed by a master's degree in Public Affairs with an emphasis on Housing and

Economic Development. He now uses the skills that he has developed to encourage others to be successful in this country. LEDC is formed by countless committed individuals like Eduardo. In addition to being a board member, Eduardo provides technical assistance to members of the center. He teaches classes on business-plan writing.

One of the most valuable assets Latinos have, the LEDC staff found, is their bilingualism. The LEDC staff itself is a group of bilingual and bicultural individuals who see their bilingualism/biculturalism as assets which are drawn upon in everything the organization does, whether it is classes that are taught bilingually, or the welcoming climate that greets people who enter the offices of LEDC. Roberto Valdez, of the Willmar Area Multicultural Market Project, who receives technical assistance services from LEDC, gave an example of why bilingualism matters when an economic development agency works with an entrepreneur:

> *"A couple came to us interested in starting a specialty restaurant dealing with carnitas. The guy got comfortable enough to where he was talking about the matanzas, how they prepare the pig in Michoacán... If they would have said that in another agency, people might not have had a clue as to what he was talking about. Here, we share the culture and experiences of the community"*

Valdez stresses that bilingualism does much more than helping the agency understand the business ideas that arise from the community; bilingualism also helps community members form relationships that help people pursue their dreams in a new land.

> *"We bring them in. We make sure that we follow up with them. We sit down in the initial phase and let them talk. We take a different approach than most agencies. The customers that we see are newcomers; sometimes they need a more hands-on approach. You can't just hand them a packet and expect that they'll pursue their dreams… It's all about building that relationship. That is true for any culture... Our job is to build that relationship with these business owners."*

Skilled at two languages and two cultures, LEDC staff advocate for the needs of their constituencies at city meetings, with local business people, and with politicians. This has resulted in a larger acceptance of the Latino culture in broader circles. Jim Roth of the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers sees the role of LEDC as a cultural broker of sorts:

> *"As a Twin Cities "micro lender" serving entrepreneurs who can't otherwise access traditional bank financing, we feel a strong obligation to ensure that we reach all segments of the community. Prior to LEDC joining the MCCD, we had little direct connection to the Latino community, and therefore, limited number of Latino borrowers. With LEDC's involvement, we have seen a dramatic increase in the numbers, while LEDC has been able to offer access to capital to their constituents — clearly a win-win situation for both organizations."*

The outcomes from that partnership are benefiting more than the two partners, as Jim Roth elaborates:

"LEDC is a good example of a new, emerging organization that has very quickly gained the respect of key city leaders and established community development organizations because of their ability to sit down and articulate a mission and the values contributed by their constituency. Certainly in South Minneapolis, we have seen the direct benefit of LEDC's work through the dramatic boost to the area's economy that has resulted from the increased presence of the Latino entrepreneurs. Their willingness to risk establishing businesses in what had been a very disinvested and challenged commercial corridor has now created a vibrant and active point of destination for many non-Latinos who want to experience authentic Latino and Hispanic food and culture, but would have never ventured into this area of South Minneapolis previously. For that, we owe much to Ramon Leon and LEDC."

LEDC is now looking beyond Minneapolis/St. Paul. Created as an advocate for the needs of a low-income population, LEDC's most recent endeavor is that of building capacity in rural communities. Although challenged by the scarcity of Latino organizations and Latino leadership in rural areas, they are committed to adapting the LEDC model to eliminate the barriers and support the capacity of immigrant populations who live in rural areas of the state. Through a Trainer of Trainers model, a few people from a rural area agency come to the Twin Cities to get trained by LEDC staff – and then return to their communities to provide the support and services.

LEDC is not satisfied, however, with just creating successful business people. It is important that the growing strength of Latino businesses give back to the community. They stress that business should be socially responsible and establish a scholarship fund and scholarship program for young, bilingual Latino people going to college. The scholarship fund comprises of contributions made by local businesses.

The work of LEDC has contributed to the growing numbers of businesses owned by Latinos in Minnesota. In 1996, there were only four Latino-owned businesses on Lake Street in South Minneapolis, where LEDC has its offices. As of 2007, there are 253 Latino-owned businesses on a 27-block stretch of Lake Street, according to LEDC's internal counts. Undoubtedly, those numbers will continue to grow as LEDC and other Latino leaders extend their work further.

Every year, LEDC graduates more than 50 people from its "Creating a Business Plan" classes. Those graduates are now active contributing members of the business community, individuals like José and Noemi Payan, owners of Tortillería La Perla. Jose and Noemi are members of LEDC who started out modestly at Mercado Central in 1999, but very recently opened a new production facility that employs 45 people and distributes tortillas to 114 businesses. And then there's Doña Queta, selling freshly-squeezed orange juice at her Mercado Central booth, which she appropriately named La Reyna de los Jugos, (The Juice Queen). She first learned her trade as a street vendor in Mexico. She now cheerfully greets customers and passers-by from one of the best-located booths in the entire Mercado Central. Not bad for a queen.

Making a Case for Bilingual Economic Development Services

Read and discuss the Latino Economic Development Center, Case Study

What interests you about this study? What inspires you? Did you give ideas for what you might like to see happen in your community?

Following the discussion, consider the following action steps.

Take Stock of the Talents in Your Community

The Latino Economic Development Center was founded on the belief that there were talents in the community that could be developed into lucrative small businesses that would serve the community with culturally-supportive services.

Make a list: What talents do people in your community have that others might want to make use of or be able to purchase?

Make a list: What kind of support might people in your community need in order to develop those talents into a business?

Identify and Support Latino-owned businesses

As a group, make a list of all of the Latino-owned businesses you know about in your community. Then, contact the Chamber of Commerce to see if there are additional Latino-owned businesses they know about. Finally, use the telephone book to identify businesses that cater to Spanish-speaking people. Make a directory of these businesses, and disseminate it throughout your community to encourage people to patronize those businesses.

Identify local economic development agencies

Investigate what economic development agencies and resources exist in your community and your state. Are there any agencies that have Spanish-speaking staff and materials designed specifically to reach out to the Latino community? Here are some organizations that may have chapters in your community:

- **Latino Economic Development Center**
  www.ledc-mn.org
- **National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders**
  www.nalcab.org/home.html
- **National Council of La Raza**, Community Development Programs
  www.nclr.org/content/programs/detail/893
- **Raza Development Fund**
  www.razafund.org/index.html
- **Corporation for Enterprise Development**
  www.cfed.org

Make a case for bilingual economic development services

If there are no existing bilingual economic development services in your community, consider whether such services are important to your community. The first step is determining if your community could use more economic development that would benefit the Spanish speakers in particular and the Latino population as a whole.

Use the survey below to find out what culture-specific needs your community has that there should be businesses to serve.

Survey: Is There a Need for Additional Bilingual Workers and Services in Our Community?

1   When you go to the supermarket, are you able to find the foods, spices and cooking products that you would like to have in order to cook foods from your heritage?

_____ Yes   _____ Some, but not enough   _____ No

Do you think there is a need for a market that sells Latino products?

2   When you go to the supermarket, are there cashiers and grocery workers who speak Spanish and can help people who are limited in English?

_____ Yes   _____ Some, but not enough   _____ No

Do you think there is a need for a market with Spanish-speaking employees?

3   When you are preparing to celebrate a Latino holiday or event, are there stores in the community that provide the kinds of accessories, decorations and gifts that are culturally appropriate for you?

_____ Yes   _____ Some, but not enough   _____ No

Would you like to see such a store?

4   When you need to make travel arrangements, is there an agency in the area with Spanish-speaking employees?

_____ Yes   _____ Some, but not enough   _____ No

Do they have knowledge about travel arrangements to your nation of origin?

_____ Yes   _____ Some, but not enough   _____ No

Would you like to see a travel agency that has someone specializing in serving Spanish-speaking immigrants?

5   When you need to handle financial transactions or remittances, is there a bank in town with tellers who speak Spanish?

_____ Yes   _____ Some, but not enough   _____ No

Do they have knowledge of issues facing Latino immigrants, such as sending money to your home country?

_____ Yes   _____ Some, but not enough   _____ No

Would you like to have a bank that specializes in serving Spanish speaking immigrants?

6   When you need medical care, are there doctor's offices, dentists, clinics and hospitals that have staff who speak Spanish and who understand the Latino community?

_____ Yes   _____ Some, but not enough   _____ No

Would you like to have more medical professionals and staff available to serve the Spanish speaking community?

Consider possible policies and local initiatives to propose

LEDC was an example of an economic development effort that arose from and is led by the Latino community itself. You might want to campaign for the development of a similar economic initiative in your community. That campaign might involve approaching the Mayor's office, the local Chamber of Commerce, major employers in town, and the school district. Or you might want to make a case to the Mayor's office, local banks, and the existing economic development agencies for why it might be important to bring someone onto their staff specifically to work with Spanish speakers For either of these campaigns, put together the following materials:

- Numbers of Latinos and Spanish speakers in the community, and where they spend their money. Use the Looking at the Numbers section of this toolkit.

- A statement about the growth of the Latino population in your community and your state. Use the Looking at the Numbers section of this toolkit.

- Key information about Latinos and the economy that might strengthen your case Use the Myths and Facts section of this toolkit.

- A copy of the LEDC Case Study in this toolkit.

- Put together the findings from your survey, "Is there a need for additional bilingual workers and services in our community?"

- Include economic initiative strategies you would like to see enacted (you can find some below and in the Policy Examples section of this toolkit).

Economic Initiative Strategies:

- Sponsor a regional or city-wide economic summit on the benefits of bilingualism to the economic life of your community. Focus on how to develop and utilize the language resources of the region.

- Identify and showcase existing international or multilingual businesses or multilingual services in the region that contribute to the region's economic vitality.

- Create a school business partnership to establish a high school Multilingual Career Academy where, in addition to learning the regular high school curriculum, students focus on developing bilingual language skills and preparing for bilingual careers needed in the region.

- Provide wage incentives to attract and encourage workers with bilingual skills.

- Conduct or commission a survey and report on the local and regional need for bilingual workers.

- Establish workforce preparation goals, along with blueprints, for attaining the level of workforce preparation needed in a bilingual region.

- Expand professional and technical language programs in English and other languages.

- Encourage businesses to develop English as a Second Language training tailored to local industry needs and to provide incentives and opportunities for language study for their employers.

- Develop small-business loan programs and small-business workshops designed specifically for Spanish-speaking and Latino communities.

NEW IOWANS CENTER: Des Moines, Iowa
An Effective Statewide Model to Serve Immigrants and the Entire Community

"I was living in Guatemala and having all sorts of problems with the way we were living, and I thought to myself, 'What am I doing here? What am I doing with my life? So I decided to move to the United States for opportunity - to make a better life for me and my son."

- Dayana Alfano, New Iowans Center Customer, Ottumwa, IA

Amid the endless cornfields and stretches of Iowa farmland, within the meatpacking plants and large call centers, you will find immigrants from across the globe living and working with very similar stories to Dayana Alfano. These newcomers are refugees from war-torn countries, immigrants from countries with failing economies, or immigrants who have relocated to Iowa after first arriving at a different state within the United States. They come filled with hope and desire to find good jobs and a safe place to live, and they are all searching for the opportunity to create a better life for their loved ones and themselves. To help ease the culture shock and transition, to prepare immigrants for employment, and to provide a welcoming environment to these often scared yet brave families and individuals, the state of Iowa offers the New Iowans Center: a place of refuge and an amazing resource to all newcomers to the state.

With the mission to "offer one stop services to deal with multiple issues related to immigration and employment," the New Iowans Center was founded in 1999 as the result of a bi-partisan state government report entitled, "Iowa 2010: The New Face of Iowa." Created under executive order by Governor Vilsack in early 1999, the Governor's Strategic Planning Council was given the charge to research and develop a 10-year plan to make Iowa a "more dynamic, prosperous state." The 37 member council worked together for a year, gathering input from tens of thousands of Iowans; examining current statewide, national and global strategies; and finally writing a plan to improve the state of Iowa.

The report contains eight goals, each speaking to a different and important need in the state. The first goal, "Iowa Welcomes a Diverse Population," articulates a strategy to address the large workforce deficit the state was facing. The state's population was aging and leaving the workforce. The report estimated that Iowa needed to bring in 310,000 working people by 2010 to meet the state's workforce demand. Along with retaining young Iowans within the state and encouraging former Iowans to move back, promoting immigration from other countries seemed like the likeliest way to bring people into the state. As stated in the report, "By taking bold action, Iowa can become an international leader in immigration, welcoming people from around the world to its neighborhoods and communities."

Perhaps the most ingenious part of the report lies in how the council correctly recognized that encouraging people to immigrate to the state was not all that needed to happen. As part of their recommendations, the council included the need to establish what they termed "regional Diversity Welcome Centers" to be administered through a state agency "to assist new residents with overcoming legal and cultural

obstacles resulting from their relocation to Iowa." They understood that it was crucial to give newcomers support in their transition. Sue Huff, President of the Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors in Ottumwa and Advisory Committee Member of the Ottumwa New Iowans Center, agrees with the council:

> *"To have a resource where people get to know you, they smile, they look you in the eye; they say, 'Hello. How are you doing? Welcome. It's good that you're here,' is the most important part of coming into a new community. That somebody will take an extra few minutes to say hello to you, ask how you're doing, care how you're doing, ask if you're having troubles finding an apartment, who did you choose for a doctor, have you found a good preschool or school for your kids. You know, all of that is just vital in your adjustment coming in."*

As a result of the report, legislation was written and passed, creating the New Iowans Center initiative. In 2000, two pilot sites opened in Muscatine (a rural site) and Sioux City (a more urban site.) The language stated that the purpose of the centers was to "support workers, businesses and communities with information, referrals, job placement assistance, translation, language training, resettlement, as well as technical and legal assistance on such issues as forms and documentation." It was also decided that the centers would be based out of Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) and would share office space and resources with the local chapters of the IWD – a partnership that has worked very well.

Today, there are 12 centers located all over the state in rural and urban communities, offering assistance to newcomers, as well as to businesses and employers, in facilitating relationships with this new population and also in providing a stable workforce for them. Barbara Bobb, Statewide Supervisor of the New Iowans Center, explains:

> *"For anybody coming to the state, we wanted to make sure they were welcomed and that we could do everything we could to help them increase their comfort level in their first while here, and also to work with communities and employers and businesses to make sure the difficulties they might have with non-English speakers or new transplants could be alleviated at the same time. So we were very much a multi-pronged approach."*

Sue Huff further shares:

> *"As an employer, you want stable employees, you want happy employees, you want them to come into a community and feel comfortable so that you don't have a staff turnover. So yes, you want to hire these newcomers, but you sure want to feel like they are going to find the services they need so they don't get discouraged and move away again and you have to train another new employee. You work to keep your employee base stable. So the services that the New Iowan Center provides benefits everybody in the community."*

Although the New Iowan Centers are based out of a state agency, one of the keys to

their success lies in the fact that each center is completely community-run. When a center is opened, an advisory board made up of local people from business, law enforcement, real estate, banking, education, local government chapters, and so on is immediately formed. The idea is to get a good cross section of folks from different sectors to get a solid picture of what the needs are in the community, and also to have the advisors serve as ambassadors to get community buy-in for the center. Often, it is the advisors who promote the message to the community that immigrants and newcomers make economic sense, and that diversity in a community is a positive asset.

Many small rural towns are seeing a complete economic and community revitalization due to immigration. Former ghost towns and vacant main streets are now bustling with new shops and restaurants opened by the newcomers, who offer a wonderful variety of food and merchandise choices from their heritage cultures. Abandoned buildings are renovated and filled, and towns are rejuvenated. It has been imperative that the larger community hears this message from their own trusted community members rather than the newcomers themselves, to address the deep-seeded fear and backlash that often arise when issues of immigration are discussed.

The advisory boards also serve as a resource for the larger community and the centers. Programming is largely set by the information the advisory board gives. Consequently, although each center provides a set of core services (including citizenship classes, job referrals and placement, computer classes, financing classes, and business development), individual centers also offer trainings and classes that are unique to what the people in their community need, as informed by the advisory board. As Marco Adasme, Eastern Regional Supervisor, explains:

> *"The main goal is that we adjust the service to the need of that particular community. In some places, we deal a lot with the employers because they may not know how to deal with the newcomers. So we started offering sensitivity or diversity training for them. In other places, that may not be needed. It all depends on the need."*

The creation of a community based advisory board also legitimizes the center within the community, for both employers and newcomers. As one recent immigrant and customer of the New Iowans Center proclaimed:

> *"Trying to get a job without any experience, not knowing your way around, not knowing the language, [not] having any support, it's very hard. I heard about the New Iowans Center from my stepmom who thought maybe they could help me, and they have so much – with job searching, resume help, interpretation. Everyone in the community comes here for anything and everything. This place is a stronghold for the community. In fact, the reason why I got my job is because the New Iowans Center recommended me, and that held a lot of weight with my employer. That and the fact that I was bilingual."*

The need for bilingual workers in the Iowa workforce is something that New Iowan

Center staff is increasingly seeing. Barbara McLemore, Advisory Committee Member to the Council Bluffs New Iowan Center, explains:

"Oh yes, boy when you open the paper, it's like, pow! So many employers are looking for bilingual employees. I used to work for the state of Nebraska for many years, and I know that they would say in their job descriptions that it was open to everyone, but preference was given to bilingual people. Another example is that there is a call center that will be opening up here soon that will be hiring about 60 people, and they said that they want 30% of them to be bilingual. There are some jobs that will actually pay you more if you are bilingual."

In response, bilingualism is a skill that the New Iowans Center advocates for. Aside from offering English language classes to immigrants to become bilingual, it is a requirement that all New Iowan Center employees be bilingual in Spanish and English. Spanish was chosen because Latinos currently make up the largest non-White group of new Iowans, and of the Iowans that speak a language other than English, close to half speak Spanish. Maria Benitez de Cortez, New Iowans Center Associate in Council Bluffs, explains that bilingualism is an important part of the welcoming process: "It's so comforting to people, to speak to people who can speak your same language and explain things to you in a way that you will understand."

For community members or employers who want to learn Spanish (or Vietnamese, since some communities in Iowa have a significant Vietnamese population), Rosetta Stone, a computer software language learning program, is offered for free in those languages at the centers. The centers are doing what they can to contribute to the higher demand they are seeing for bilingual people, but it has been difficult. Hugo Cividanes, New Iowans Center Coordinator in Ottumwa, explains:

"I bank with Community First Credit Union who is currently looking for two bilingual tellers. Unfortunately, we do not have them right now. There is a need for bilingual people everywhere, in different spheres of society – in mental health, the school district banking, tax industry – you name it, there is a need. We just don't have the supply to meet the needs."

A program that effectively assists both immigrants and the existing community, serving as a liaison between the two, the New Iowans Center is an excellent and inspiring example of a state-sponsored initiative that truly works for everyone. As Sue Huff concludes:

"Every town in this country ought to have a New Iowan Center. Just that whole process of helping people integrate into a new community - one or two friendly faces, somebody who's willing to the first day you come to town say "Come with me, I'll show you around town," and just spend that extra little bit of time when you're new to help you get oriented, really makes a difference!"

Making a Case for More Government Resources for Spanish-Speaking Newcomers

The New Iowans Center is a story of how a state built a government-supported infrastructure for helping immigrants adjust to life in the United States.

Read and discuss the Case Study of the New Iowans Center. What interested you about it? What inspired you? Did it give you ideas for what you might like to see happen in your state and community?

Following the discussion, consider these action steps.

Identify the services available in your state Employment Development agencies for Immigrants and Spanish-speakers.

Call or visit the Employment Development agency. Ask:

	Agency has this	**Agency does NOT have this**
When you walk into the agency, you see signs in Spanish and in English		
The agency has informational materials and outreach materials available in Spanish		
The agency has bilingual workers		
The agency provides job listings in Spanish		
The agency lists jobs that seek bilingual workers		
The agency offers training programs for people who are Spanish speakers		
The agency offers English as a Second Language workshops		

If the answers demonstrate that there are some resources designed to meet the needs of the Spanish-speaking and bilingual Latino community, speak to them about how your group might play a role in getting that information out to your community.

If the answers demonstrate that there are limited or no resources designed to meet the needs of the Spanish-speaking and bilingual Latino community, consider "making a case" to your local or state political representatives for why it is important to institute such resources.

Making a case for more government resources for Spanish-speaking newcomers

Consider approaching your local or state political representatives with a suggestion that your local or state government institute programs to integrate immigrant newcomers into the labor market, and to facilitate their social integration into communities. Put together the following materials:

- Numbers of Latinos and Spanish speakers in the community. Use the Looking at the Numbers section of this toolkit.

- A statement about the growth of the Latino population in your community and your state. Use the Looking at the Numbers section of this toolkit.

- Key information about Latinos and the economy that might strengthen your case, see the Myths and Facts section. You might also want to include a copy of the Iowa 2010 report. It's available at www.state.ia.us/government/governor/y2010/library/library.html

- A copy of the New Iowans Center Case Study in this toolkit. You can also get more information directly from the New Iowans Center staff.

One way to move toward building programs that support bilingualism as an asset and that move community attitudes toward understanding the ways in which language and culture are assets, is to pass policies. These become formal and institutional ways of guiding what happens in a community. Once passed, they also become important tools for stemming anti-bilingual behavior.

There are many different kinds of policies. Some are vision statements or goal statements that establish direction for a city or agency. Some are resolutions, which provide a way that any organization can take a stand and make their position known about an important public issue. Others are policies that actually create programs and set forth guidelines for services. Finally, some policies seek to establish or protect basic human or civil rights.

Policies exist on multiple levels:

- International bodies like the United Nations may pass resolutions. Usually, members of various national communities and non-governmental organizations lobby for these resolutions.

- The United States government or the government of any state may pass laws forbidding discrimination and entitling certain rights to specific groups. Usually, individual citizens, community groups, and community-based organizations lobby for these laws; sometimes, these laws are created by the U.S. Supreme Court, based on their understanding of the U.S. Constitution, or by state supreme courts, based on their understanding of their state constitution.

- National professional associations may pass resolutions that provide guidance to their members and make a statement to the world about what "experts" know and believe.

- A mayor can declare a proclamation. A city council can pass a resolution. Directors of major city agencies can set goals related to bilingualism, and also create policies that define city services and establish city-wide programmatic initiatives.

- In some states and cities, an initiative can be placed on the local ballot for vote, giving the public a chance to let it be known what kind of language policies they want for their communities.

- A school board can pass a resolution, a superintendent can create a blueprint, and school district leadership can set policies regarding what children will learn and what kind of programs they will put in place.

- Community groups can mobilize, and community-based organizations can pass a resolution, letting their positions be known to members and others beyond their organization.

- Business groups may take positions related to economic development and labor market needs in their community, and a Chamber of Commerce can initiate private-sector citywide initiatives.

This section of the toolkit provides many different examples of policies from around the nation and the world. They are meant to inspire you, and to give you ideas and models for policies you may wish to pursue in your community.

INTERNATIONAL DECLARATIONS

Statements of basic human rights transcend nations, cultures, and states. They have no actual authority, but set the standard for ethical human behavior.

United Nations Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (Section II, Education, Articles 23 & 28),

"Education must help to foster the capacity for linguistic and cultural self-expression of the language community of the territory where it is provided. Education must help to maintain and develop the language spoken by the language community of the territory where it is provided. Education must always be at the service of linguistic and cultural diversity and of harmonious relations between different language communities throughout the world. Within the context of the foregoing principles, everyone has the right to learn any language. All language communities are entitled to an education which will enable their members to acquire a thorough knowledge of their cultural heritage (history, geography, literature, and other manifestations of their culture), as well as the most extensive possible knowledge of any other culture they may wish to know."

FEDERAL LAWS PROTECTING LANGUAGES AND LANGUAGE RIGHTS

These laws apply to you, today.

Civil Rights Act of 1964, Public Law 82–352

The provisions of this civil rights act forbade discrimination, making it unlawful for an employer "to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin."

Lau v. Nichols Supreme Court Decision, 1974

Failure by a school district to provide instruction in a language students can understand is unlawful discrimination that violates these students' civil rights. "…there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum, for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education."

Native American Languages Act, 1992

In the Native American Languages Act, Title I of Public Law 101–477, in 1990, the United States Congress noted that "the status of the cultures and languages of Native Americans is unique and the United States had the responsibility to act together with Native Americans to ensure the survival of these unique cultures and languages." The act makes it the policy of the United States to, "preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages" and recognized "the right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies to use the Native American languages as a medium of instruction in all schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior." Furthermore, the

Act declares, "The right of Native Americans to express themselves through the use of Native American languages shall not be restricted in any public proceeding, including publicly supported education programs."

The Act established a grant program to ensure the survival and continuing vitality of Native American languages. Grants may be used for: "1) the construction of new facilities or the conversion of existing facilities into centers for the preservation and enhancement of Native American languages; 2) the establishment of community language programs to bring older and younger Native Americans together to facilitate the transfer of language skills from one generation to another; 3) the establishment of training programs to train speakers of Native American languages to teach such languages to others; 4) the development, printing, and dissemination of materials to be used for the teaching and enhancement of Native American languages; 5) the establishment or support of training programs to train Native Americans to produce or participate in television or radio programs to be broadcast in their native languages; and 6) the compilation of oral testimony to record or preserve Native American languages."

STATE LAWS
These laws apply to you if you live in the specified state.

Hawaiian Constitution (Hawaiian Education Program, Section IV)
"The state shall promote the study of Hawaiian culture, history and language. The state shall provide for a Hawaiian education program consisting of language, culture and history in the public schools. The use of community expertise shall be encouraged as a suitable and essential means in furtherance of the Hawaiian education program."

Oregon English Plus Resolution, Senate Joint Resolution 16, 1989
In response to restrictive English-only resolutions and laws passed by dozens of states seeking to make English the official and only language of government, other states and cities passed "English Plus" resolutions, declaring their respect for the multilingualism of their society. This excerpt is from Oregon's English Plus resolution.

"WHEREAS the diverse ethnic and linguistic communities have contributed to the social and economic prosperity of Oregon; and

WHEREAS it is the welcomed responsibility and opportunity of Oregon to respect and facilitate the efforts of all cultural, ethnic and linguistic segments of the population to become full participants in our community; and

WHEREAS Oregon's economic well-being depends heavily on foreign trade and international exchange and one out of five jobs is directly linked to foreign trade and international exchange; and

WHEREAS we wish to protect and promote the multilingual nature of

communication that currently exists in Oregon and to build trust and understanding…

Be it Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:

That the use of diverse languages in business, government and private affairs, and the presence of diverse cultures is welcomed, encouraged, and protected in Oregon."

Minnesota "World Languages Program," State Law, 2007
A new World Languages Pilot Program was established through Minnesota state law, calling for the development and implementation of "sustainable, high-quality world language programs" to simultaneously support both non-English language learners in maintaining their native language while mastering English, and native English speakers in learning other languages. The law reads, in part:

"The department shall assist world languages teachers and other school staff in developing and implement world languages programs that acknowledge and reinforce the language proficiency and cultural awareness that non-English language speakers already possess, and encourage students' proficiency in multiple world languages. Programs under this paragraph must encompass indigenous American Indian languages and cultures, among other world languages and cultures."

NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Resolutions passed by professional associations carry the weight of the voice of "expertise." Coming from a group of people who are experts in a field, these resolutions provide guidance to all others in the profession, and carry the weight of authority.

American Anthropological Association Statement on Language Rights, 1996
"WHEREAS there are currently before the United States Congress bills that would restrict the rights of people to use their native languages; and

WHEREAS similar bills at the state level have already been found unconstitutional by federal courts; and

WHEREAS the American Anthropological Association supports human rights, among which we include language rights;

NOW THEREFORE the American Anthropological Association supports the rights of all people to use and to develop their cultural and linguistic resources as they see fit;

AND FURTHER, urges Congress to pass legislation that will provide opportunities, not only for the mastery of English, but for the development of other languages spoken in our communities, and will respect linguistic rights among fundamental human rights, and will recognize that the

development of our diverse cultural and linguistic resources enriches our national heritage and the lives of our citizens."

Linguistic Society of America's Statement on Language Rights, 1996
The Linguistic Society of America was founded in 1924 to advance the scientific study of language. The Society's present membership of approximately 7,000 persons and institutions includes a great proportion of the leading experts on language in the United States, as well as many from abroad…In this statement, the Society addresses some of these misconceptions [in public debate about language] and urges the protection of basic linguistic rights.

1   The vast majority of the world's nations are at least bilingual, and most are multilingual, even if one ignores the impact of modern migrations…Where linguistic discord does arise, as it has with various degrees of intensity in Belgium, Canada, and Sri Lanka, it is generally the result of majority attempts to disadvantage or suppress a minority linguistic community, or it reflects underlying racial or religious conflicts. Multilingualism by itself is rarely an important cause of civil discord.

2   The territory that now constitutes the United States was home to hundreds of languages before the advent of European settlers…

3   Unfortunately, most of the indigenous languages of the United States are severely threatened. All too often their eradication was deliberate government policy…The decline of America's indigenous languages has been closely linked to the loss of much of the culture of their speakers.

4   Because of this history, the Society believes that the government and people of the United States have a special obligation to enable indigenous peoples to retain their languages and cultures…

5   The United States is also home to numerous immigrant languages other than English…

6   …to be bilingual—to speak both English and another language—should be encouraged, not stigmatized. There is no convincing evidence that bilingualism by itself impedes cognitive or educational development. On the contrary, there is evidence that it may actually enhance certain types of intelligence.

7   Multilingualism also presents our nation with many benefits and opportunities…

8   Moreover, people who speak a language in addition to English provide a role model for other Americans. Our national record on learning other languages is notoriously poor. A knowledge of foreign languages is necessary not just for immediate practical purposes, but also because it gives people the sense of international community that America requires if it is to compete successfully in a global economy…

9   To remedy our policies towards the languages of Native Americans and to encourage acquisition or retention of languages other than English by all Americans, the Linguistic Society of America urges our nation to protect and promote the linguistic rights of its people. At a minimum, all residents of the United States should be guaranteed the following linguistic rights:

   A   To be allowed to express themselves, publicly or privately, in the language of their choice.

   B   To maintain their native language and, should they so desire, to pass it on to their children.

   C   When their facility in English is inadequate, to be provided a qualified interpreter in any proceeding in which the government endeavors to deprive them of life, liberty or property…

   D   To have their children educated in a manner that affirmatively acknowledges their native language abilities as well as ensures their acquisition of English.

   E   To conduct business in the language of their choice.

   F   To use their preferred language for private conversations in the workplace.

   G   To have the opportunity to learn to speak, read and write English.

10 …All levels of government should adequately fund programs to teach English to any resident who desires to learn it. Nonetheless, promoting our common language need to, and should not, come at the cost of violating the rights of linguistic minorities.

National Association for the Education of Young Children, "Responding to Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education (A position statement)," 1995

"For young children, the language of the home is the language they have used since birth, the language they use to make and establish meaningful communicative relationships, and the language they use to begin to construct their knowledge and test their learning. The home language is tied to children's culture, and culture and language communicate traditions, values, and attitudes. Parents should be encouraged to use and develop children's home language; early childhood educators should respect children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds and their diverse learning styles. In so doing, adults will enhance children's learning and development…

NAEYC's goal is to build support for equal access to high-quality educational programs that recognize and promote all aspects of children's development

and learning…Language development is essential for learning, and the development of children's home language does not interfere with their ability to learn English. Because knowing more than one language is a cognitive asset, early education programs should encourage the development of children's home language while fostering the acquisition of English.

For the optimal development and learning of all children, educators must accept the legitimacy of children's home language, respect (hold in high regard) and value (esteem, appreciate) the home culture, and promote and encourage the active involvement and support of all families, including extended and nontraditional family units.

When early childhood educators acknowledge and respect children's home language and culture, ties between the family and programs are strengthened…

CITY RESOLUTIONS AND POLICIES

City governments can issue proclamations and resolutions that put them on record as supporting certain positions, and they can also set policies that guide programs and services provided by the city.

Mayor's Proclamation, San Bernardino City, November 5, 2001
"WHEREAS, bilingualism has enhanced communication while bringing greater economic opportunities, including trade with other nations; and

WHEREAS, bilingualism has increased scientific and cultural creativity and knowledge development; and

WHEREAS, bilingualism produces more effective international collaboration and understanding; and

WHEREAS, bilingualism has created citizens with strong identities who are more flexible and creative thinkers,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Judith Valles, mayor, do hereby proclaim the city of San Bernardino a bilingual city."

Oakland City Council: Equal Access to Services, Ordinance, April 24, 2001
"WHEREAS, the city council wishes to establish a form of government that is truly inclusive of all its residents, and…

WHEREAS, the City Council finds and determines that public safety, health, convenience, comfort, property, and general welfare will be furthered by the provisions of this Ordinance which establishes standards and procedures with respect to access to City programs and services by residents who are not fluent in English, now therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OAKLAND DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS…

SEC. 2.30.030 Equal Access to Services.
a) Utilizing sufficient Bilingual Employees in Public Contact Positions, Departments shall provide information and services to the public in each language spoken by the Substantial Number of Limited English Speaking Persons….

SEC. 2.30.040 Bilingual Staffing.
a) …Departments will hire a sufficient number of Bilingual Employees in Public Contact Positions so as to adequately serve members of the Substantial Number of Limited English Speaking Persons Group(s) in the City of Oakland…

SEC 2.30.050 Translation of Materials.
a) The City Manager shall establish an in house translation service with court certified or American Translators Association accredited translators for the purposes of translating written materials for city departments and providing translations for public meetings as needed or professional services may be contracted out to an accredited translation contractor…

SEC. 2.30.120 Recruitment.
a) …For every Public Contact Position for which bilingual capacity is necessary, the job shall be advertised as a bilingual position for which bilingual conversational proficiency will be a job requirement.

SCHOOL DISTRICT RESOLUTIONS AND GOAL STATEMENTS

School district policies, resolutions, vision statements, and goal statements can work to guide the programs and practices in the schools.

San Bernardino City Unified School District: Blueprint for Success, 2002
The Blueprint for Success was developed through an intensive community and district-wide process initiated by the Superintendent, Arturo Delgado, outlining four elements that would guide and direct district decisions. One of those four elements is the commitment to become a "bilingual/biliterate district." The plan calls for the gradual implementation of dual immersion programs across the district, so any student can enroll in a voluntary education program to become bilingual/biliterate upon graduation.

Woodburn, Oregon School District Strategic Plan
This district has dual immersion and heritage language programs in both Russian-English and Spanish-English all the way through high school. For more information, see the Woodburn, Oregon, case study in this toolkit.

Vision: We believe in a comprehensive language development program for all students. In this increasingly global age, biliteracy and interculturalism is an asset. All students, including English dominant students, should have the opportunity to learn to read, write and speak in two or more languages.

Furthermore, well implemented programs are about more than learning a

language. They should be based on a respect for diversity, social justice, multiculturalism and equity. Likewise, parents and community members must be essential partners in this endeavor. Above all, biliterate and bicultural programs must ensure that all students attain high academic level achievement.

…Strategy 3: We will design and implement a system so that all students will be literate in more than one language to achieve the strategic objectives.

Ysleta School District, El Paso, Texas, Goal Statement
This district has a network of 23 schools from elementary through high school that provide dual-immersion Spanish-English instruction.

All students who enroll in our schools will graduate from high school fluent in two or more languages and prepared and inspired to be successful in a four-year college or university.

San Francisco School Board Resolution 65-23A3 , September 12, 2006
…WHEREAS San Francisco should continue its leadership role in developing a multilingual student body and workforce for the 21st century.

THEREFORE be it resolved: That the Board of Education of the San Francisco Unified School District is fully committed to expanding and strengthening Mandarin and other language immersion programs and other language programs in our District and supporting the language needs of underserved immigrant communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the District will continue to support the education and welfare of families with children in existing elementary level immersion programs by providing adequate expansion of these programs into the upper grades…

Our vision is to prepare SFUSD students to become global citizens in a multicultural/multilingual world by providing the opportunity for all students to graduate with proficiency in English and at least one other language through participation in a well-articulated pre K-12 world language program.

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND BUSINESS GROUPS

Business leaders have become increasingly aware of the importance of languages in conducting business, particularly as international markets and domestic markets geared toward non-English speakers have expanded. Resolutions, reports, and business plans have emerged from large corporations and small business groups, calling for an increase in bilingual workers.

Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Introduction to "One Community, One Goal Blueprint" for Economic Development

"To rise above the competition, we must enhance the bilingual nature of our community to assure that our language skills are at a high proficiency for technical and professional careers…We must ensure that a substantial portion of Greater Miami's workforce is literate on a professional/technical level in English and at least one other language."

The following recommendations to the school district were called for:

- Expand professional/technical language programs in English and other languages

- Develop English and foreign language training tailored to local industry needs

- Offer intensive foreign-language programs, including language competency exams, as a graduation requirement from high school

- Increase requirements for foreign-language study, including four years of the same language

- Increase funding for foreign language instruction

The Greater Miami chapter of the Chamber of Commerce has also produced a video, *English Plus* One, highlighting the importance of biliteracy.

Find Out What Policies Exist in Your Community

Divide responsibilities for finding out what policies currently exist in your community, city, and state that might support language and culture as assets. Though there are many kinds of policies, you should probably start with the following government agencies:

1 Call your local school district. Does the school district have any graduation requirements for languages other than English? Does the school district have any vision or goal statements that speak to the issue of language or cultural diversity, or bilingualism? Does the school district have a master plan for programs that support English learners to become English-proficient and to also develop their home language also? Does the school district have guidelines about the rights of parents to receive information in languages other than English?

2 Call the Town Hall or City Hall to find out if your local government has policies regarding language services. Does the city have any regulations regarding the rights of people to translated materials or bilingual services? Are there any protections spelled out in city ordinances regarding discrimination against people who are not fluent in English? Is there any policy that specifies an official language for city government?

3 Call the State Capitol. Does your state have an English Only/official English policy? Does it have an English Plus policy? Are there state laws that specify that voting ballots and court proceedings be available in languages other than English?

Mapping the Types of Policies You May Want to Propose.

Develop a list of all the groups in your community that you can think of that have some real influence on the lives of your children and families. Then, think about which of these might be most open to considering some kind of resolution or policy related to language and culture as assets. Consider which of these groups people in your network have some relationship and contact with. Decide on one or two groups on the list that have influence, that might be open to taking a position on bilingualism, and that you have some kind of relationship with.

1 Talk about what kind of policy or resolution you think might be appropriate for that group.

2 Look through the list of sample policies in this toolkit, and consider whether any of them might be useful to share with that group as a potential model or inspiration.

3 Discuss what kind of data (see Looking at the Numbers section) you might want to bring to a conversation or meeting with the group.

4 Think about which "myths" may be held by the leadership of that group that you will need to dispel as part of your conversation (see Myths and Facts section).

5 Would any of the profiles or case studies included in this toolkit be helpful? If you have completed the assessment of your community (see the Assessing Your Community section), you might want to include your data from that as well.

6 Be strategic in considering *who* might be the best representatives to approach the group – and who *within* that group might be the most open to the first conversation.

| ACTION TOOL | **Writing Your Own Vision Statement** |

As a group, imagine and brainstorm the visions you have for your community with regard to language and culture. What do you believe about the importance of language and culture? What do you think is important about how communities respond to language diversity? What are your dreams for the young people of your community with regard to their language(s) and culture?

Have one person chart all of these ideas.

Then, as a group, put then together into a vision statement.

Our vision statement template

Begin with:

We, the people of _____, believe:

We want our children to:

We seek to build a community that:

Then, create your list of arguments for why this vision is important for your community and city. This is usually done as a series of "Whereas…" statements. See the Oregon Plus State resolution and the San Bernardino city resolution as good examples of "Whereas…." statements.

WHEREAS,

WHEREAS,

WHEREAS,

Then add your "therefore, be it resolved…" conclusion. This is where you spell out the kind of actions you are calling for.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that: