



LATINO POLICY FORUM

BIENNIAL REPORT

2015-16

The Latino Policy Forum is the only Chicago-area organization that facilitates the involvement of Latinos at all levels of public decision-making. The Forum strives to improve education outcomes, advocate for affordable housing, promote just immigration policies, and engage diverse sectors of the community. It does this by conducting analysis to inform, influence, and lead, all with an understanding that advancing Latinos advances a shared future.

The **Acuerdo** is the Forum's instrument for building the policy-making and advocacy capacity of the Latino community. (The Spanish word acuerdo means mutual understanding or accord.) Acuerdos engage diverse sectors of the community around specific issue areas. The Forum uses the model to unite the collective leadership and influence of more than 100 Latino-serving organizations in its **Education, Housing, and Immigration** Acuerdos, which function alongside its 47-member **Illinois Latino Agenda**.

MISSION: TO BUILD THE POWER, INFLUENCE, AND LEADERSHIP OF THE LATINO COMMUNITY THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTION TO TRANSFORM PUBLIC POLICIES THAT ENSURE THE WELL-BEING OF THE COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.

VISION: THE FORUM ENVISIONS SOCIETAL PROSPERITY, UNITY, AND EQUITY IN THE NATION AND IN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY.



PHOTO © OLGA LOPEZ



PHOTO COURTESY OF LA CASA NORTE

Dear Friends,

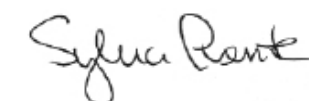
The past two years have seen the Latino Policy Forum mature into an organization that helps to make real, positive change in Latinos' lives.

The Forum's education team has worked extensively on helping develop portions of Illinois' Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan that focuses on English learners and addressing culturally competent teachers in public schools. The housing team concluded a successful multi-year initiative, Operation H.E.L.P (Housing, Education, Leadership and Policy), that benefitted thousands of families by providing housing counseling services to renters and future home owners, as well as providing information and access on foreclosure prevention to current homeowners so they can preserve their homes and rebuild community wealth. The civic engagement and leadership team continued working with lawmakers at the local and federal level to support the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that protects DREAMers, immigrants brought to the United States by their parents at a young age who are contributive members of society, from deportation. In addition, the team launched the inaugural Multicultural Leadership Academy that brings together leaders in African-American and Latino neighborhoods in Chicago to catalyze social change and bridge the cultural divide between these important communities.

As the Forum reflects on its first decade of existence, Latino communities have spoken and the organization has responded by refining its strategic direction and rebalancing its work and resources across issue areas. Although the Forum continues its work in four issue areas (Education, Immigration, Housing and Civic Engagement), there will be an increased emphasis on Education, starting from Early Childhood (pre-Kindergarten). Similarly, research synthesis and training the community will continue with advocacy and policy playing a much larger role.

Since the Forum changed its name from Latinos United in 2008, Latinos have become the largest minority group in Illinois. They also account for the largest growing segment of the state's population. Their interests need to be represented in City Halls across Chicagoland and at the state capitol, especially as the political climate becomes more tumultuous and unfriendly to vulnerable communities. A thriving and prosperous Latino community benefits society as a whole.

The Forum is one of only a handful of organizations across the nation with a comprehensive focus on Latino issues, policy and advocacy. As an umbrella group to dozens of nonprofits that provide services at the grassroots level, the Forum has emerged as a leading authority on Latino issues. The Forum will stand resolute as a guiding light for those civic and community leaders striving for positive change and will continue to build power, influence and leadership of the Latino community for many decades to come.



Sylvia Puente
Executive Director
Latino Policy Forum



Sol A. Flores
President, Board of Directors
Latino Policy Forum



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Advancing a Shared Future

The Forum conducts analysis to inform, influence and lead, with an understanding that advancing Latinos advances a shared future.

INFORM

- **Abated the mortgage foreclosure crisis** by coordinating a 16-member coalition, Operation HELP (Housing, Education, Leadership and Policy), to provide foreclosure outreach and assistance to more than 70,000 families in more than 44 community areas across Illinois.
- **Expanded knowledge of early literacy and social emotional development** by training 29 parent facilitators who empowered 400 parents from 28 partner sites through Abriendo Puertas, a parent engagement curriculum that fosters leadership and advocacy skills.
- **Fostered immigrant integration** by providing policy guidance to the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus and local municipalities in Illinois on the requirements of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), an executive action that limits deportation for some undocumented immigrants.
- **Developed and implemented DACA/DAPA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals/Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents) trainings to 10 targeted school districts** with the largest populations of English Language Learners in suburban Cook and DuPage counties.

INFLUENCE

- **Captured the pulse of the Latino electorate** in one of the most high-profile mayoral elections in Chicago's history. Conducted groundbreaking poll of Latinos in Chicago in cooperation with Univision, Latino Decisions and Alianza Americas.
- **Better prepared teachers to improve the education of Latinos and English Learners** by providing recommendations in a three-part policy brief series. Recommended quality linguistic and culturally sensitive teaching standards that address the existing mismatch between teacher workforce and the growing diversity of student populations.
- **Promoted immigrant rights in Chicago** by ensuring revisions to the U-visa, which gives victims of certain crimes temporary legal status and work eligibility, in addition to the passage of Chicago's Welcoming Cities Ordinance amendment, which prohibits abusive and coercive language by city employees.
- **The Forum's recommendations for English Language Learners (ELLs) were accepted by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)** and incorporated into the overall plan that will guide the next generation of Learners in Illinois.

LEAD

- **Provided a path to hold politicians accountable to Latino community leaders** by hosting a forum with all five Mayoral candidates in the 2015 election.
- **Strengthened relationships between African American and Latino leaders to impact social, community, and policy change across both communities** by launching the inaugural class of neighborhood leaders in the Multicultural Leadership Academy.
- **Ensured Latino voices and impact in shaping recommendations for the Illinois Education Plan of "Every Student Succeeds Act"** and brought together nearly 300 parents, school administrators, teachers, philanthropic organizations and national experts.
- **Strengthened economic opportunities for immigrants to qualify for work permits and gain exemption from deportation** by training more than 600 school administrators, teachers, counselors and families to help them overcome barriers and take advantage of the federal executive order that limits deportation for eligible immigrants.



EDUCATION



The Forum was actively involved in advocating for English learners and Latino families so they have equitable access to high quality education. It convened close to 300 stakeholders, inclusive of parents, educators, philanthropic leaders, and policymakers, to inform the crafting of recommendations to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education. ESSA will determine the future of public education in America and the Forum is committed to continue extensive stakeholder engagement.

The Forum remains committed to enhancing the capacity of community-based organizations and school districts to deliver culturally and linguistically responsive parent engagement programming to Latino parents in their communities. [Abriendo Puertas](#) (Opening Doors) is the nation's first evidence-based, popular-education, parent leadership program designed primarily for Spanish-speaking parents of children age five and under.

The Forum's Early Childhood Advocacy Day continues to be crucial in getting parents to understand more about government and learn how to advocate for their children's future by meeting with lawmakers. Over the years, the Forum has seen an increase in people who want to participate in the annual trip to Springfield where they walk the hallways of the Capitol and talk with state legislators.

The Forum also sent community leaders to testify in Springfield about the importance of increasing funding for both early childhood and bilingual education. The Forum met with members of the House Elementary and Secondary Education Appropriations Committee regarding the tremendous challenges faced by school districts as they strive to meet the needs of a growing culturally diverse student population.

Thanks to the generous support of the Joyce Foundation, the Forum released a three-part brief, "Preparing All Teachers to Educate Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students".

BRIEF 1

BRIEF 2

BRIEF 3



IMMIGRATION

LATINO POLICY FORUM

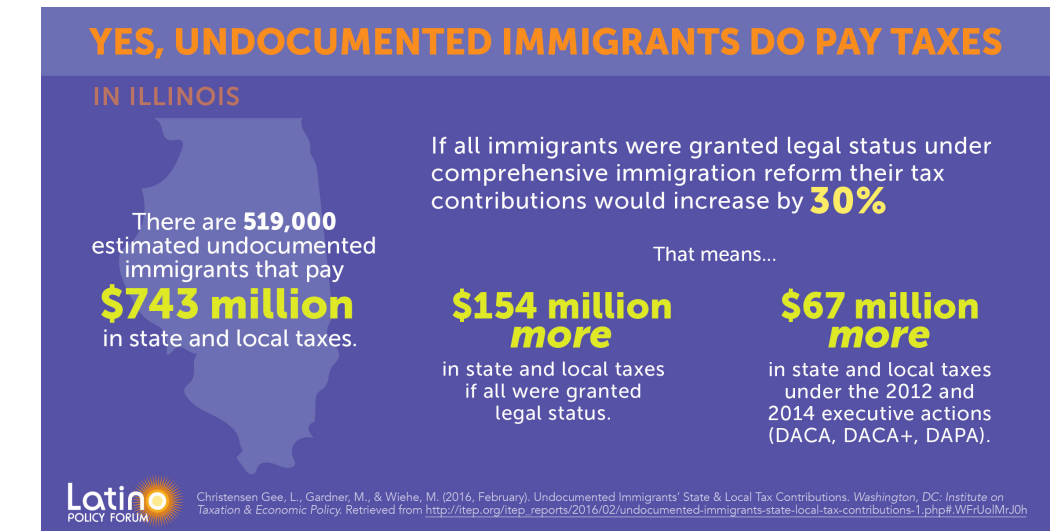
The Forum continues to work to ensure that immigrants are recognized as valuable and contributing members of society with equal access to the 'American Dream,' regardless of their country of origin or current immigration status.

Forum leaders met numerous times with lawmakers at the local and federal level to support the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, including a meeting with U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, who has been a devoted champion for preserving DACA protections. In an effort to increase easy access to a wider audience, the Forum provided DACA resource packets to immigrant communities and hosted DACA workshops, including one that took advantage of the organization's social media outreach. The Forum's first DACA Twitter chat reached more than 300,000 users.

Collaboration with the [National UnDACAmented Research Project](#) produced a [special report](#) on the economic obstacles faced by undocumented students attempting to access or remain in higher education in Illinois. The Forum also worked intensively with suburban school districts by providing professional development training on a variety of topics to strengthen school based personnel's ability to be more responsive to the needs and challenges faced by immigrant student and families. These trainings, in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), focused on immigration policy updates, Know Your Rights information and how/where to access local legal and education support.

The Forum continues to advocate to strengthen Chicago's ["Welcoming City Ordinance"](#) and engage state legislators on immigrant integration legislation such as the Student ACCESS bill, which would provide opportunities for undocumented immigrants to compete for scholarships and tuition assistance while enrolled at public universities/colleges in Illinois.

Lastly, in another effort to inform the public, the Forum developed this infographic based on The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy's 2016 report [Undocumented Immigrants' State & Local Tax Contribution](#).





CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

LATINO POLICY FORUM



In an effort to bridge the city's two largest minority communities, in 2016, the Forum launched the [Multicultural Leadership Academy](#), formerly the IL Latino Nonprofit Leadership Academy. The redesign of the academy provides Latino and African American leaders a series of workshops for those actively involved in social justice.

The academy is sponsored by organizations that are committed to social change, policy impact, and/or community improvement that serve communities of color throughout Illinois. [The first cohort](#) was made up of 23 exceptional Latino and African-American leaders, who are committed to increasing their understanding of how racial and ethnic groups can collaborate to transform their communities through social action.

This transformational leadership training is designed to contribute to a cohesive network of leaders committed to improving their communities through the establishment of intercultural relationships and trust. Additionally, the arts are employed extensively throughout this training. For the first time, the Forum established a new collaboration with 3Arts, which incorporated the work of artists of color with the goal of enriching the academy's curriculum and highlighting the importance of art as a catalyst for community change.

Academy participants continue working in affinity groups to identify a policy or social issue that its members want to address, with the key criterion of how this issue will improve society, a Chicago neighborhood, or a designated community. With the support of cultural anthropologists from the Field Museum, groups met regularly to research their topics, design projects, and further their commitment to promoting social change, policy impact, and/or community improvement.

The Forum would like to thank all of our generous sponsors for the first Multicultural Leadership Academy:

- Allstate Foundation
- American Express
- The Chicago Community Trust
- The Field Foundation of Illinois
- The Joyce Foundation
- JP Morgan Chase & Co.
- The Reva & David Logan Foundation
- Robert R. McCormick Foundation



HOUSING



More than 73,678 families in more than 44 community areas across Illinois were impacted by Operation H.E.L.P. (Housing, Education, Leadership and Policy) - the Forum's two-year collaborative project, which provided housing counseling services, case management, referrals, trainings and workshops to community leaders, landlords and tenants in foreclosure and participated in disseminating foreclosure prevention resource information in housing fairs and community events.

In order to create more equitable access to resources and affordable housing, the Forum developed strong relationships with top decision-makers at the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). It also continued developing its relationships with city, state, and federal officials, which resulted in the involvement of the Forum and its Housing Acuerdo in the CHA Language Access Plan and elevated awareness of affordability issues with aldermen and government officials.

Lastly, The Forum and its Housing Acuerdo were recognized by the Field Foundation for contributing to the Language Access Ordinance passed by the City of Chicago in April 2015 and for their continued work with CHA to ensure that there is greater fairness in Latino access and inclusion in public housing and housing services.

OPERATION H.E.L.P. COMPLETED GOALS

September 2014 - September 2016



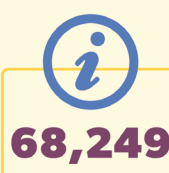
Families recieved housing counseling



Families were referred for assistance



Individuals recieved training on home-ownership and leadership topics



Families received information on housing resources & services



Operation H.E.L.P. agencies received technical assistance to become HUD approved



Families were served during the two year project across the state of Illinois

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2015

ASSETS

Cash/Cash Equivalents	\$ 835,867
Grants Receivable	\$ 136,173
Other Receivable	\$ 25,818
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 1,306
Total Current Assets	\$ 999,164

Certificate of deposit	\$ -
Property and equipment*	\$ 17,911
Security deposits	\$ 9,500

Total Assets \$1,108,110

Investments for deferred compensation plan is 81,535

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities:	
Accounts Payable	\$ 16,697
Accrued Expenses	\$ 38,970
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 121,592

Deferred Rent	\$ 14,190
Deferred compensation plan liabilities	\$ 81,535
Total Liabilities	\$ 217,317

Net Assets:	
Unrestricted	\$ 855,757
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 35,036
Total Net Assets	\$ 890,763

Total Liabilities & Net Assets \$1,108,110

**At cost, less accumulated depreciation and amortization of \$127,264*

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR

REVENUE

Individuals	\$ 1,650
Foundations & Corporations	\$ 849,195
Government	\$ 200,566
Special Events	\$ 169,890
Interest	\$ 1,581
Other	\$ 3,061
Total	\$ 1,287,622

EXPENSES

Education	\$ 715,073
Housing	\$ 287,244
Strengthening Community	\$ 177,469
Immigration	\$ 121,247
Management & General	\$ 89,956
Fundraising	\$ 78,826
Total	\$ 1,460,815

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2016

ASSETS

Cash/Cash Equivalents	\$ 744,537
Grants Receivable	\$ 208,293
Other Receivable	\$ 17,295
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 14,716
Total Current Assets	\$ 994,341

Certificate of deposit	\$ -
Property and equipment*	\$ 7,318
Security deposits	\$ -
Total Assets	\$1,099,400

Investments for deferred compensation plan is 97,741

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities:	
Accounts Payable	\$ 15,929
Accrued Expenses	\$ 37,794
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 61,557

Deferred Rent	\$ -
Deferred compensation plan liabilities	\$ 97,741
Total Liabilities	\$ 159,298

Net Assets:	
Unrestricted	\$ 719,038
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 221,064
Total Net Assets	\$ 940,102

Total Liabilities & Net Assets \$ 1,099,400

**At cost, less accumulated depreciation and amortization of \$137,85*

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR

REVENUE

Individuals	\$ 4,687
Foundations & Corporations	\$ 1,158,102
Government	\$ 158,997
Special Events	\$ 137,507
Interest	\$ 12,188
Other	\$ 5,495
Total	\$ 1,509,050

EXPENSES

Education	\$ 613,178
Housing	\$ 215,048
Strengthening Community	\$ 188,657
Immigration	\$ 145,697
Management & General	\$ 173,799
Fundraising	\$ 123,362
Total	\$ 1,459,741

The Latino Policy Forum thanks the following individuals and organizations for their generous support of our work:

\$100,000+

The Robert R. McCormick Foundation
The Joyce Foundation

\$10,000-\$99,999

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PNC
Polk Bros. Foundation
The Chicago Community Trust
The Field Foundation of Illinois
United Way of Metropolitan Chicago

\$1,000-\$9,999

ABC 7 Chicago
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\$100,000+

Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
The Chicago Community Trust
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\$10,000-\$99,999

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The Reva and David Logan Foundation
Woods Fund of Chicago

\$1,000-\$9,999

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Crain's Chicago Business
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