
THE LATINO **MIGRATION** PROJECT



Hispanic Community Needs Assessment for El Vínculo Hispano/The Hispanic Liaison

Summary of Results

The Latino Migration Project

University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill

October 2016

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OVERVIEW

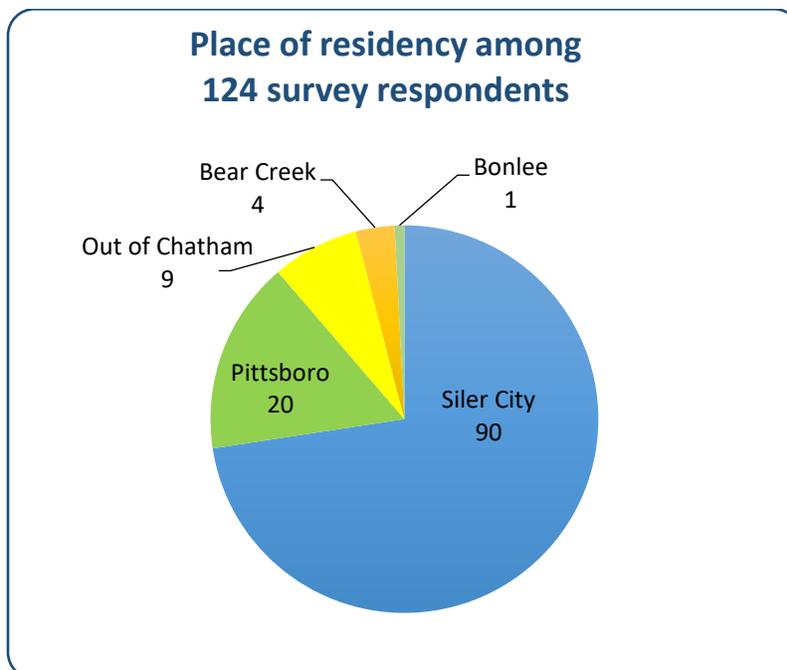
In the summer of 2016, staff from the Latino Migration Project (LMP) at UNC Chapel Hill worked with El Vínculo Hispano/The Hispanic Liaison (EVH) to conduct a Hispanic Community Assessment in Chatham County, North Carolina. The purpose of the assessment was to identify important issues and concerns facing Hispanic residents and obtain feedback from stakeholders, such as community members, local non-profit organizations, government agencies, and law enforcement, about the future programs and services of EVH.

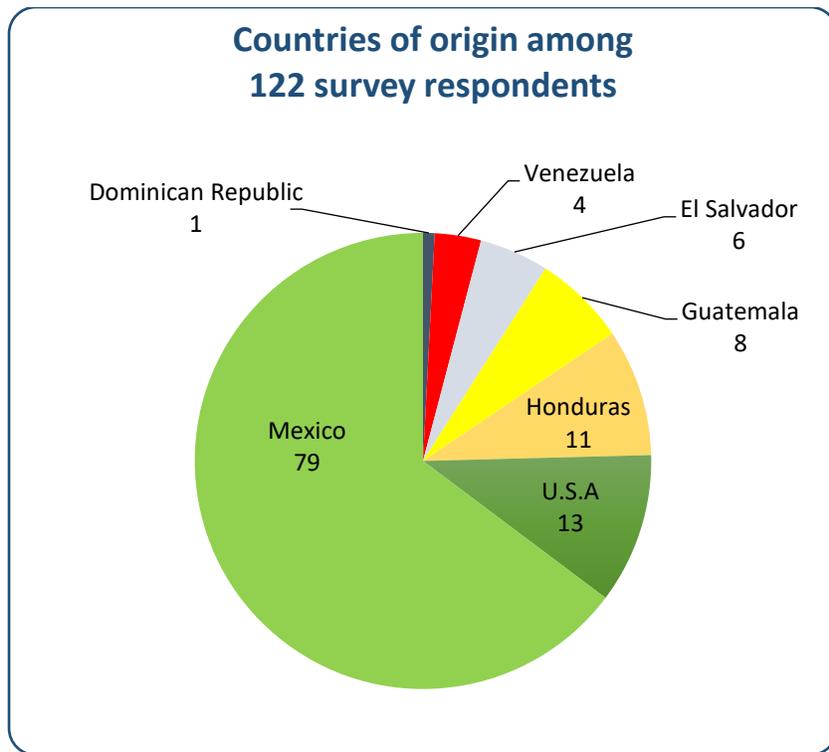
METHODS

LMP facilitated three focus groups with a total of 29 participants. These included a focus group in Pittsboro with 17 local service providers, as well as two focus groups (one in English and one in Spanish) in Siler City with a total of 11 community members and EVH volunteers ranging in age from 20 to 60 years old. EVH promoted the focus groups for community members as a *Consulta Popular* (Community Consultation) through email, flyers, press releases, Facebook, and other community organizations. LMP also created a written survey, in both English and Spanish, which was completed by 128 Hispanic/Latino community members. In order to recruit survey participants, LMP trained EVH staff in basic survey recruitment practices, and EVH staff then distributed the survey to ten local agencies who agreed to share it with their clients. EVH also led a team of seven volunteers in door-to-door outreach in Hispanic neighborhoods in Pittsboro and Siler City to help residents fill out surveys.

Characteristics of Hispanic Survey Respondents

The written survey was completed by 128 individuals ranging in age from 14 to 66 years old. Of these survey respondents, 115 were Chatham County residents, and most lived in Siler City. Nine respondents were residents of other, nearby counties. The majority of survey respondents (108 respondents) were born outside of the United States, and 82% were born in Mexico or Central America. 91 respondents were community members familiar with EVH's past programming and/or had previously volunteered with EVH; whereas 54 respondents were community members who reported that they had never used EVH services or programming.





FINDINGS & FEEDBACK FROM HISPANIC STAKEHOLDERS

The 128 survey respondents, as well as the Hispanic/Latino participants from the focus groups, described some of the most important issues facing them and their families today and identified major community concerns that EVH could help to address when it reopens. **A large number of participants identified access to public transportation, lack of driver's licenses, police checkpoints and relationship with law enforcement as priority concerns.**

Summary of Concerns Identified (in alphabetical order):

Children Issues:

- ❖ Access to health services and public benefits.
- ❖ Help to obtain U.S. or foreign documents.
- ❖ Public education.
- ❖ School disciplinary procedures.

Youth Issues:

- ❖ Access to higher education and scholarships.
- ❖ Assistance with DACA applications.
- ❖ Lack of immigration status.
- ❖ Lack of recreational and after school opportunities.
- ❖ Need for civic engagement and connection with Hispanic heritage.
- ❖ School disciplinary procedures.
- ❖ School dropouts.

Adults & Family Issues:

- ❖ **Access to Services:** Lack of trust in government agencies (particularly the police); fear of deportation if accessing public benefits (DSS, school, health services); lack of bilingual staff and materials at local agencies.
- ❖ **Driver's licenses and IDs:** Cannot obtain driver's license; fear of driving due to license check points; need for alternatives to NCID; need for driving lessons.
- ❖ **Education:** Access to English, literacy, and computer classes; access to internet and Spanish language literature.
- ❖ **Financial:** Access to bank accounts and financial literacy; financial emergencies; help with tax forms; lack of support for small business entrepreneurs.
- ❖ **General Information:** Limited information in Spanish about local resources, opportunities, events and changes in the laws.
- ❖ **Housing:** Lack of affordable housing; poor housing conditions; assistance to purchase a home.
- ❖ **Hunger and Nutrition:** Access to food (culturally appropriate); need information about nutrition.
- ❖ **Legal and Immigration:** Access to immigration and/or bilingual attorneys; fear of deportation; need information about immigration and other laws, need for better relationship and trust with law enforcement.
- ❖ **Medical and Health:** Costly medical services for the uninsured; how to access health and dental care; health centers have long wait periods; need mental health and substance abuse support; information about sexually transmitted diseases.
- ❖ **Transportation:** No reliable or affordable public transportation.
- ❖ **Jobs and Workplace:** Abuses and mistreatment; low or insufficient wages; workplace injuries; lack of jobs; need for training in skilled trades.

Summary of Residents' Recommendations for EVH:

- ✓ Advocate with and for the Hispanic community.
- ✓ Continue to serve as a hub to help immigrants integrate into the community.
- ✓ Offer information about resources and help increase access to services.
- ✓ Offer trainings and skill building opportunities to improve ability to communicate with, and participate in, civic institutions and government.
- ✓ Organize "know your rights" workshops and address systemic racism.
- ✓ Provide civic education and leadership development for youth and adults.
- ✓ Provide space and support for community members to meet; identify issues of common concern and define strategies to address these issues, such as driver's licenses and police check points.
- ✓ Serve as a Hispanic cultural heritage center; provide opportunities for youth and adults to remain connected to their heritage through cultural activities and events.

FEEDBACK FROM ORGANIZATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The service provider focus group was attended by 17 participants representing 16 local organizations, including non-profits, schools, community college, health providers, and social services and law enforcement agencies in Chatham County. Participants provided key perspectives about the past and future programming at EVH.

Participants described EVH as a valuable information center that connected Hispanic/Latino clients to services, built trust with the community, and provided opportunities for community engagement, particularly for first generation immigrants. Participants also shared that EVH helped to increase community awareness and had improved the lives of the children of first generation immigrants, many of whom are now adults with children of their own. It was recommended that EVH should continue to offer a “safe and trusting place” for Hispanic/Latino residents and provide opportunities for engagement, particularly for first generation immigrants who may be unfamiliar with local culture and laws.

Valuable Past Programs and Services of EVH:

- ❖ Advocacy for victims of crime.
- ❖ Assistance with documentation and filling out forms and applications.
- ❖ Connecting newcomers with local resources.
- ❖ Cultural workshops and festivals.
- ❖ Food bank.
- ❖ Improve access to services through advocacy.
- ❖ Referrals to and information about medical and mental health, education, and adult literacy services.
- ❖ Training and education for local agencies and community members.
- ❖ Translation and interpretation services.
- ❖ Trust and relationship building between Hispanics/Latinos and local institutions; reducing barriers to accessing services.
- ❖ Youth leadership development.

Summary of Service Providers' Recommendations for EVH:

- ✓ Address local concerns through system's advocacy.
- ✓ Clearly define its organizational goals and purpose.
- ✓ Collaborate with other organizations and seek funds for joint projects.
- ✓ Expand geographic reach and improve access to services for Hispanic/Latino communities who live outside of Siler City (for example, through satellite office presence at partner agencies).
- ✓ Expand outreach and sharing of information via existing inter-agency websites, listservs.
- ✓ Hire staff that is connected with and grounded in the community.
- ✓ Offer support for Latinos to access other organizations as well as build Hispanics' capacity to navigate community institutions independently and advocate for themselves.
- ✓ Serve as a community builder and two-way bridge between Hispanic/Latino residents and other communities and institutions in Chatham County.

UNC-Latino Migration Project and El Vínculo Hispano would like to thank all of the individuals and organizations who participated in the community assessment process to share their wisdom in support of the future of EVH and the wellbeing of the Hispanic community.

If you would like a copy of the full report, “Hispanic Community Assessment for El Vínculo Hispano/The Hispanic Liaison” in English, or a copy of the survey tool in English or Spanish, please contact Ilana Dubester, Executive Director, at ilana@evhnc.org or call 919-742-1448.

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