



## Illinois Latinos: 16% of the Population, 6% of State Grants Community Engagement Initiatives: Helping Investment Keep Pace

### Who We Are

The Latino Policy Forum is the only organization in the Chicago area that facilitates the involvement of Latinos at all levels of public decision-making. The Forum engages diverse sectors of the community by conducting analysis to inform, influence and lead, all with an understanding that advancing Latinos advances a shared future for Illinois.



### The Challenge

Latinos are now the second-largest ethnic community in the state, accounting for a full 16 percent of the population. The community's growth—33 percent over the past decade—in an otherwise stagnant state means that Illinois' future economic competitiveness depends on full engagement of this population in political, social and economic activities. But Latino economic and political contributions to the state haven't translated to increases in investment in or representation for the community: In FY09, the State of Illinois awarded just 5.5 percent of all state grants through 120 Latino contracts. In FY10, that number had dropped to just 85 Latino contracts that collectively received 13 percent less in actual dollar amounts. And in 2009, just 218 Latinos were hired to fill 3,681 state-level jobs, a far cry from the additional 4,560 Latino employees that would be needed to achieve parity.

### Where We Are Headed

Latino civic participation is steadily increasing with its population numbers. The number of registered Latino voters increased 47 percent between 2000 and 2008, the largest increase of any ethnic group during the same period. Latino population gains translate to economic and political gains for the rest of the state. If it weren't for Latino population growth, Illinois would have lost two Congressional seats, instead of just one. And Illinois' Latino population will bring a staggering \$30 billion in Federal funding to the state over the next 10 years—that's nearly \$1,500 per person per year for every one of the more than two million Latinos counted in the 2010 Census.

### Our Response

The Latino Policy Forum is working to build a strong Latino community, with thriving organizations able to meet their missions and work together to accomplish larger goals. We have co-convened the *Illinois Latino Agenda*, a strategic alliance of nearly 50 Latino-serving nonprofits, along with the Illinois Latino Nonprofit Leadership Academy, which engages executive-level and emerging leadership in personal, professional and organizational development. We also bolster Latino participation in state-level decision-making by increasing placement of Latino advocates on committees and councils.

**Learn More:** To find out more about our work, visit our website at: [www.latinopolicyforum.org](http://www.latinopolicyforum.org).

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