



Reflecting Back, Pushing Ahead: Wrapping Up a Year of Growth WINTER 2011 NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

On October 18, Ray Suarez, a respected journalist and long-time friend, captivated an audience of 350 people at our first annual breakfast fundraiser with these words: "[The Latino community is too big for the US to try to succeed without it.](#)"



PHOTO CREDIT:
Olga Lopez

LIFTING THE LATINO VOICE

In October, staffer Martin Torres was appointed to the [Illinois Early Learning Council](#) by Gov. Pat Quinn. Sylvia Puente's appointment was also renewed.

On Oct. 11, staffer Juliana Gonzalez-Crussi provided testimony on the [lack of affordable housing available for farmworkers](#) at a hearing in Springfield.

On Nov. 7, Martin Torres served as a panelist at

He's right. The Latino community has grown dramatically over the last decade, a fact that anyone reading this newsletter has most certainly heard--and embraced--by now.

We've made it our business to share this news with the public: We've talked about the Latino numbers. We've advocated for increased investment in the community. We've preached the proverbial gospel of a shared future, of intertwined fates.

But growth has had internal implications, too. Over the past year, the Latino Policy Forum has also grown. We've added staff ([and we're adding more!](#)). We've grown our network (thanks for being a part of it). And, as you'll read below, we've widened our mission and focus (we are [expanding our work in education](#), with details to be announced in detail at a summit in 2012 -- stay tuned!).

[Family Focus' 35th Anniversary Symposium](#), speaking on "Why Should We Put Families First: Family Support in the 21st Century."

On Dec. 8, Sylvia Puente shared her perspective on the [economic value of the Spanish language in the US](#) as part of a two-day series of panel discussions held at Instituto Cervantes.

Sylvia Puente will be honored by her alma mater, the [University of Chicago](#), with a Diversity Leadership Award on Jan. 12.

For being a year of growth, 2011 has also been a year of setbacks, with the economy continuing to spiral downward and Latinos bearing the weight of increasing rates of poverty, foreclosure, and unemployment -- along with finger-pointing from folks looking for a scapegoat for tough times. [Today we're releasing new research](#) that shows how Chicago's economic future will depend on the extent that its Latino workers are able to break through a "blue-collar ceiling."

Latinos must succeed. Our community is too big for the US to succeed without them. The work of the Latino Policy Forum has never been more critical -- if you agree, we hope you'll support our [first-ever annual appeal](#).

Wishing you and yours *felices fiestas* and a wonderful holiday season.

¡Adelante!

Sylvia Puente
Executive Director
Latino Policy Forum

December 2011

HOUSING INITIATIVES

Help for Homeowners (and renters and landlords, too): As economic recovery remains stagnant at best, and [homes continue to lose value](#) and fall into foreclosure, particularly in Latino communities, the Latino Policy Forum has been hard at work at staffing and coordinating a series of end-of-year events and workshops to inform homeowners, renters, and landlords on their housing-related rights and responsibilities. As housing traditionally paves the way toward the American Dream for many Latino families, such workshops are vital in Latino communities.

On October 22, the Latino Policy Forum teamed with the [City of Chicago's Department of Housing and Economic Development](#) on the 8th Annual [Rents Rights Regional Housing Expo](#) at [West Side Technical Institute](#). The following month, on November 19, the Forum teamed with [Enlace Chicago](#) and the [John Marshall Law](#)

[School Predatory Lending Project](#) to inform a 40-person audience at [La Villita Community Church](#) about their housing-related options as owners or renters during uncertain economic times. Presenters included the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Chicago Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity](#), and the [Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing](#). And on December 5, in cooperation with the [Community Investment Corporation](#), the Forum offered training for 25 landlords -- current and future -- on professional property management.



PHOTO: Enlace Chicago

Later this month, Forum staff will provide testimony in support of the proposed [Cook County Vacant Building ordinance](#). And if all that weren't enough, the Forum's team of volunteer *Promotores de Vivienda Justa* (Fair Housing Education Promoters) has been hard at work throughout the quarter, coordinating workshops and distributing literature on housing rights at the [Mexican Consulate](#) on 12 occasions this quarter.

The Forum has set the bar high as we move into the new year, but there's plenty to come in 2012. For information on upcoming housing-related training, events, and workshops, please contact [Juliana Gonzalez-Crussi](#).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Busting the Myth of Latinos as "Drains:" A study released last month by the [University of Notre Dame's Institute for Latino Studies](#) confirmed a message that Latino community advocates have been promoting for years: Latinos are great contributors to their local communities, culturally, politically, and--as research now officially confirms--economically. The report, "The State of Latino Chicago 2010: The New Equation," illustrated how Chicago-area Latinos contributed \$1.2 billion more in tax revenues -- \$1 per 77 cents -- than they cost in the delivery of public services like education, health care, and public safety. Sylvia Puente was interviewed as part of the release of the study, which generated coverage in the [Chicago Sun-Times](#), [Hoy](#), [Crain's Chicago Business](#), and the [Huffington Post](#).



Shifting Demographics, City Maps: While 2010 Census data reveals a relatively small Latino population increase of just 3 percent over the past decade in Chicago, it represents some of the *only* growth in a city that otherwise lost nearly 200,000 residents. As Chicago's aldermen have been engaged in the months-long, once-in-a-decade activity of redrawing city ward boundaries to reflect population shifts, the

Latino Policy Forum, collaborating with the [Illinois Campaign for Accountable Redistricting](#), helped shape and supported the passage of a [resolution](#) at the November 2 City Council meeting. The resolution pushes to increase accessibility and transparency in the traditionally closed-door process and calls for the creation of a map that ensures the fair representation of racial and language minority groups.

Efforts to increase transparency and public engagement have yielded positive results: City Hall agreed to host a series of public hearings on the maps, both prior to and post-release. And the proposed map, released on December 1, pleased Latino community advocates with provisions for three new Latino seats in the 50-seat City Council, for a total of 13 Latino-majority wards. The new ward count approaches representational parity in a city that is nearly 30 percent Latino. Details are available [here](#).

The Latino Policy Forum and members of the *Illinois Latino Agenda* will continue to monitor remap developments, and encourage community members to attend public hearings scheduled in the coming weeks. For more information, contact [Isabel Anadon](#) or [Martin Torres](#).

Budgeting for Results 101: In a climate of fiscal belt-tightening, Illinois is striving to maximize its return on investment by building a stronger connection between the outcomes achieved by state-funded programs and the distribution of resources. The framework for achieving that end is [Budgeting for Results \(BFR\)](#).

While elements of BFR are being integrated into the state's Fiscal Year 2013 budget process, much work remains to be done in rolling out this new fiscal framework. In order to further inform this process, Governor Quinn has appointed a [BFR Commission](#) consisting of nonprofit leaders, business executives, elected officials, and academics. They are charged with making recommendations on the Governor's priority areas and proposed outcomes, proposing a percentage of the overall budget to be assigned to each results area, and reviewing current spending mandates. The Commission's first report can be found [here](#).

The Latino Policy Forum has been monitoring the rollout of BFR in Illinois. In October, Forum staff testified at a BFR hearing, stressing:

- The importance of drafting the state's policy goals and sub-goals in a manner that accounts for the state's increasing diversity;
- The significance of disaggregating program outcome data (e.g. reporting results by ethnic/racial group) in order to ensure all residents are appropriately served; and
- The value of making technical assistance available to nonprofit human service providers in order to help them adjust to more stringent data collection and reporting requirements.

In an effort to support the latter, the Latino Policy Forum partnered with the Illinois

Latino Family Commission to host a BFR workshop for nearly 60 representatives from Latino-serving nonprofits on December 14. The event included a panel session featuring Dan Kotowski, State Senator; John Kamis, Senior Advisor to the Governor; and Layla Suleiman Gonzalez, DHS Director of the Office of Strategic Planning, Preparedness and Performance. For more information, please contact [Martin Torres](#).

Retreating to Lead: The 10 Latino-serving community organizations selected to participate in the third cohort of the Latino Policy Forum's [Illinois Latino Nonprofit Leadership Academy](#) once again held their second intensive workshop and retreated to the suburbs in November for the second of the three, three-day leadership retreats scheduled as part of the intensive nine-month program. [Juana Bordas](#), celebrated author of *Salsa, Soul and Spirit*, joined the group in Woodstock, Illinois to discuss Latino cultural values and how they lend themselves to leadership. The third retreat is slated for March 2012. Check out our [press release](#) for additional details on our Year 3 Academy cohort. For details on 2012 application opportunities, contact [Isabel Anadon](#).

EDUCATION INITIATIVES

An Expanded Agenda: Building on its success in advocating for increased access to quality early childhood education for Latino children, the Latino Policy Forum is expanding its education policy agenda to take a system-wide look at how to improve academic outcomes for Latino students. A diverse group of 40-plus education advocates, academics, business leadership, school leaders, teachers, and parents from both Chicago and the surrounding suburbs have agreed to serve on the Forum's newly-launched K-12 Education Advisory Committee, co-chaired by Miguel del Valle, accomplished Latino statesman, and Clare Muñana, former vice president of the Chicago Board of Education. Reflecting on the institutional, political, cultural and economic challenges that limit Latino academic achievement, the group's inaugural meeting was held in October, with a follow-up meeting in early December. Committee recommendations will be summarized in a report to be released in 2012 at a one-day Latino Education Summit. For more information on this effort, contact [Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro](#).



PHOTO: Latino Policy Forum

Join Our Team: Our expanded K-12 focus in education (see above) means that our team must expand to keep pace. The Latino Policy Forum is currently seeking two new members for its educational policy team, including a [Director of Education Policy and](#)

[Research](#) and a [Coordinator of Birth-to-Three Programming](#). Click the links for a job description and details on how to apply, and please share these links within your networks to help us find the right candidate. ¡Gracias!

Opening (500!) Doors in Metro Chicago:

Armed with research that demonstrates the profound effect that parents' involvement in a child's preschool years has on future academic success, the Latino Policy Forum launched the second year of its Chicago *Abriendo Puertas* ("Opening Doors") program in November, with the ambitious goal of equipping 500-plus local Latino parents with the tools to build solid academic foundations for their children. The "by-Latinos, for-Latinos" program follows a train-the trainer model, having prepared nearly 20 Latino-serving organizations to, in turn, deliver the program to at least 20 parents in their networks. *Abriendo Puertas* greatly improved parents' confidence in their ability to support their children's education at home, as evidenced by a Year 1 program evaluation. For details on program successes and participating organizations, read our press release (in [English](#) and [Español](#)). Contact [Liliana Martin](#) for additional information.



PHOTO: Latino Policy Forum

Hitting the "Blue-Collar Ceiling:" Though long-lauded for their work ethic, Latinos of Mexican origin have almost stagnant intergenerational mobility, according to a study released December 13 by the [New Journalism on Latino Children](#) (NJLC) project, a collaboration between the Latino Policy Forum, University of California at Berkeley and Education Writers Association. While the number of Mexican immigrant and Mexican-American workers in the regional labor force has grown a jaw-dropping 400 percent since 1980, they are failing to close stubborn education achievement gaps, and are entering the workforce without the skills needed for the hi-tech STEM careers that will guarantee Metro Chicago's economic edge in the future. Researchers pointed to an opportunity to buck stubborn mobility trends through education, noting that, with approximately 200,000 Latino children under age 5 currently living in Metro Chicago, opportunities are ripe in preschool and early education. The [press release](#) and [research brief](#) provide additional details. Check out coverage in the [Chicago Tribune](#) and [Crain's Chicago Business](#). For more information, contact [Sara McElmurry](#).

NEW JOURNALISM ON
LATINO
 CHILDREN

IMMIGRATION INITIATIVES

Inconsistent Common Sense: In a [series of administrative and policy announcements over the summer](#), the Obama administration and immigration officials announced procedural changes in the application of those individuals facing deportation. While the immigrant advocacy community was initially optimistic about the "August 18" decision, months later, the "common sense" policy has been [sporadically applied at best](#). As reported, these changes, if appropriately applied, should provide some level of relief to certain undocumented individuals (see our [fact sheet](#) for further detail.) But a November report from the [American Immigration Lawyers Association](#) (AILA) found that despite federal announcements, most ICE offices have not changed their practices. AILA is currently collecting information on the actual implementation of these changes; if you have been involved in a case where the issue of prosecutorial discretion has been raised after June 17, 2011, please support AILA's efforts by completing [this survey](#). For more information, contact [Isabel Anadon](#).



PHOTO: Latino Policy Forum

Demanding Respect from Sheriff Dart: The Latino Policy Forum was one of 35 organizations representing Latino, Muslim, and European immigrant communities that signed onto a letter criticizing Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart's [recent reversal](#) on the Cook County ICE Detainer Ordinance, [a measure that had previously earned applause from immigrant and Latino communities](#). The ordinance, poised to save Cook County \$15 million annually in detention costs, is described as "common-sense" by advocates, requiring ICE to reimburse local jails for detaining individuals for terms longer than those prescribed by local judges and prosecutors. In other words, it limits local taxpayer dollars to local law enforcement priorities, calling for federal funds to pay for federal immigration enforcement and detention.

The letter, drafted by the [Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights](#), calls on Sheriff Dart to "work with our communities and our leaders, not disparage them," citing several "acts of bad faith" that included (1) helping write the ICE Detainer Ordinance and then withdrawing his support the day it was supposed to be voted on by the Cook County Board; (2) declining requests from Cook County Commissioner Jesus Garcia to discuss his concerns; and (3) employing fear-mongering by allowing his representative to equate immigration with terrorism in the [Chicago Tribune](#). For more information on the ordinance or letter, contact [Isabel Anadon](#).

Immigration and Peace: The third International Forum on Migration and Peace, hosted by the [Scalabrini](#)

[International Migration Network](#) in Mexico City on October 20 and 21. Mexican President Felipe Calderón opened the forum with a message on safe international migration. Sylvia Puente attended the conference as part of a 15-person delegation from Chicago.



PHOTO: Office of the President of Mexico

MUCHAS GRACIAS

Thank you to the 350-plus community and business leaders who joined us at the Union League Club of Chicago on October 18 to hear how Latinos are changing the face of America -- and to support the work and mission of the Latino Policy Forum.

Keynote speaker Ray Suarez, senior correspondent at The PBS NewsHour, captivated the audience, sharing his thoughts on how the United States must embrace demographic change to maintain its economic edge: "The Latino community is too big for the United States to try to succeed without it." Check out his full keynote address [here](#). A full event wrap-up, complete with links to media coverage, is available [here](#).



PHOTO: Olga Lopez

We are incredibly grateful for the support of [our event sponsors](#), including champion-level sponsors Allstate, Ancora Associates, ComEd and Crain's; change agent-level sponsors Chicago Latino Network, Franczek Radelet, Hispanic Housing Development Corporation, Hoy Newspaper, McCormick Foundation, Midwest Generation, Pritzker Children's Initiative, Diana and Bruce Rauner, State Farm and Walgreens; and ally-level sponsors ABC7 Chicago, El Valor, Hughes Socol Piers Resnick Dym Ltd, and Jewel-Osco.



For more information on the event, or to get involved in our 2012 fundraising efforts, contact [Mary Beth LeMay](#).



All photos taken by Olga Lopez.

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