

HISPANIC PARTICIPATION IN SELECTED FEDERAL ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMS ISSUE BRIEF

July 1997

Contact: Eric Rodriguez

Overview

The Hispanic population is currently 10.7% of the entire U.S. population and is projected to become the nation's largest ethnic minority group within the next decade. In fact, Hispanics are projected to constitute one-quarter of the U.S. labor force by 2050, and have now surpassed African Americans as the poorest U.S. population (with 30.3% and 29.3% poverty rates respectively). Most troubling about these data is that many young Latinos, who represent a large proportion of the future U.S. labor force, are now growing up poor; two out of every five Hispanic children today live below the poverty line (40%). Despite this situation federal policies have failed to focus on, or even recognize, Hispanic poverty as a growing and important national problem. Moreover, federal programs designed to address and alleviate poverty and open up opportunities for all disadvantaged Americans continue to underserve and neglect Hispanics.

Representation

Given that Hispanics in 1995 constituted more than 22% of poor American families and about 28% of American children who are poor, Hispanics should constitute at least 22% of families and 28% of children served by the major federal anti-poverty programs. Most programs listed below are means-tested, i.e., weigh individual and household income and poverty status as the most important criteria in determining eligibility for programs.

Children and Youth

Head Start. In 1993, Latinos constituted slightly more than one in six (15%) non-migrant, Head Start participants on the U.S. mainland, while almost two-fifths (36%) of enrollees were Black, and one-third (33%) were White.

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Youth Programs. In 1994, Latino youth accounted for one in five (19%) young persons served by JTPA title III employment and training programs for disadvantaged youth (which include Summer Youth employment services). In comparison, in 1994, Black and White youth accounted for more than one-third (35%) and more than two-fifths (41%), respectively, of participants served by JTPA youth programs.

Job Corps Youth Programs. In program year 1995, Job Corps, the nation's largest residential education and training program for disadvantaged youth, served more than 68,000 youth. Of those served Latinos constituted fewer than one in six (15.8%) Job Corps participants, while more than one-quarter were White (28.7%) and half were Black (49.4%).

TRIO Higher Education Programs. In the 1993-94 school year, Hispanics accounted for slightly more than one in seven (15%) of those served in TRIO higher educational opportunity programs (which include programs like Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement awards), a decrease from almost one-quarter of participants served by TRIO in 1978.

Medicaid. In 1995, more than three in five (61.8%) children receiving Medicaid were classified as White (including Hispanics), while fewer than one in three (31.7%) children receiving Medicaid were Black. When data are disaggregated, fewer than one-quarter (23.3%) of all poor children receiving Medicaid benefits in 1995 were Hispanic.

Apprenticeship/School-to-Work. In 1994, just one in fifteen (6.6%) newly registered apprentices in the U.S. were Hispanic, while one in ten (10.7%) were Black, and nearly four out of five (79.2%) were White.

Families and Adults

Job Training Partnership Act Adult Programs. In 1994, Latinos comprised slightly more than one in eight (13%) participants of Title II-A adult JTPA employment and training programs. In contrast, White participants constituted half (50.8%), while Black participants made up fewer than one-third (30.6%) of all JTPA adult participants.

Medicaid. In 1995, Latinos constituted slightly more than one in six (17.4%) of all Medicaid recipients, compared to White and Black participants, who constituted more than four in nine (45.5%) and one-quarter (24.8%), respectively, of all Medicaid recipients.

Food Stamps. In 1995, while fewer than one in five participant households (19%) receiving Food Stamps were Latino, more than two in five (41%) participant households receiving Food Stamp were White and one-third (33%) were Black.

Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training program (JOBS). In 1992, Hispanics constituted slightly more than one in eight (12.8%) participants in JOBS -- the employment and training program for welfare recipients -- while they accounted for about one in six (17%) welfare recipients that year. In comparison, White and Black participants were 47.2 percent 32.4 percent, respectively, of JOBS participants, while they constituted 38.9 and 37.2 percent, respectively, of AFDC recipients in 1992.¹

¹ Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (welfare reform act of 1996) the JOBS program was abolished and funding for work programs was consolidated into the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant.

Housing Assistance. Latinos constitute about 12% of households receiving federal housing assistance (which includes Public Housing, Section 8, and Housing Voucher programs), even though they account for nearly 20% of poor households and 18% of households with “worst case” needs.

Civil Rights

Federal Civil Rights Monitoring and Enforcement. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) continues to fail to serve Hispanics adequately; for example, in 1996, Hispanic charges alleging discrimination based on national origin accounted for only 8.6% of the EEOC’s combined charge caseload, while charges alleging discrimination based on race (Black), gender (female), and age, made up 33.8%, 30.6% , and 20.1%, respectively, of the total charge caseload. In addition, cases involving Latinos typically constitute almost 10% of the caseload of HUD’s Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity division’s caseload of housing discrimination complaints.

Employment

Federal Employment. Hispanics constitute 6% of federal employees, although they were more than 9.5% of the civilian labor force in 1996. Moreover, data suggest that Hispanics are even more severely under-represented at the state-local level. As a result, one traditional “career ladder” for minorities to escape poverty has been effectively blocked for Latinos.

Conclusions

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Latinos are severely underrepresented by federal programs and services. Overall, these data show that, literally from "cradle to grave," poor and near-poor Hispanics are denied access to programs designed to alleviate poverty and improve economic opportunity. NCLR is far less concerned about underrepresentation in, say, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programs (welfare), which some have argued persuasively does not effectively promote opportunity. However, given the growing importance of Latinos to the nation's future economic well-being, all Americans should share NCLR's concern that Hispanics are denied fair access to education (Head Start, TRIO), job training (JTPA, School-to-Work), and similar programs designed specifically to improve long-term economic opportunities for disadvantaged Americans.

It has become fashionable in some quarters to suggest that federal government involvement decreases opportunity and worsens poverty. Whether or not this is true for other populations, it simply does not apply to Hispanic Americans, who have the dubious distinction of having the highest poverty rates of any major population group, despite having been ignored or neglected by federal anti-poverty initiatives for decades. In fact, the absence of fair treatment of Hispanics in the distribution of government benefits and services -- particularly those that build human capital

skills and support or encourage work -- appears to be a more persuasive explanation of the high and growing incidence of Latino poverty.

NCLR will provide citations for the data used in this Issue Brief. For more information contact Eric Rodriguez at (202) 776-1786.

Sources

Published and unpublished data were provided by the following agencies: Health Care Financing Administration (Medicaid); the Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services; the Department of Labor (JTPA, Apprenticeships); the Department of Agriculture (Food Stamps); the Department of Education (Head Start, Bilingual Education, TRIO); and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (civil rights data). The following publications were used as source material: *Poverty in the United States: 1995*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, October 1996 (poverty data); "Underrepresentation in Housing Assistance Programs", National Council of La Raza, 1997; and an Annual Report to Congress, Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program, 1996 (federal employment data).



HISPANIC PARTICIPATION IN FEDERAL TRIO PROGRAMS ISSUE BRIEF

April 1998

Contact: Raul González
(202) 776-1734

Overview

The Hispanic population is rapidly growing; it is projected to be one-fourth of the total U.S. population by the year 2050. Even though Hispanics constitute more than 40% of net, new labor force entrants, our education system is not meeting the challenge of adequately preparing Latinos for the 21st century workplace. Hispanics continue to face some of the most daunting challenges to completing high school and going on to college. For example:

- **Latino children have a higher poverty rate than any group of children.** Between 1993 and 1995, the number of Latino children living at the poverty level nearly doubled from 21% to 40%. Today, Hispanics constitute 10% of the total U.S. population, but nearly 30% of low-income children, according to Census data.
- **Latino students are more likely to be retained in grade.** According to the *U.S. Census Current Population Survey (CPS)*, among 15- to 17-year-olds, 39.9% of Latinos were retained in grade, compared to only 29.6% of White students.
- **The Latino dropout rate of 30% exceeds that of all other groups.** The CPS data also show that students who are retained in grade are at higher risk of dropping out of school. Of the 13.3% of 16- to 24-year-olds who repeated one or more grades by 1995, approximately one-quarter had dropped out by 1995. Thus, Latinos are doubly disadvantaged.

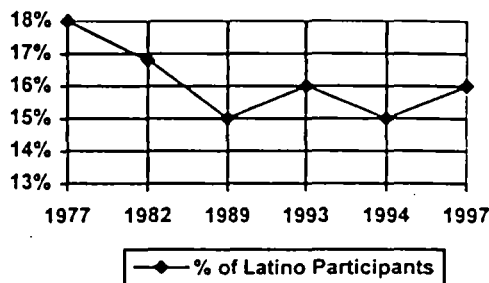
Hispanic Participation in TRIO Programs

Given that in 1997 Hispanics constituted approximately 30% of poor children in the United States, Hispanics should constitute about 30% of children served by federal education programs. Unfortunately, despite the alarming statistics cited above, Hispanic students are under served by federal education programs designed to serve the neediest of our children, including the so-called "TRIO" programs. TRIO programs were created to serve disadvantaged children and youth by providing intervention services, such as outreach to school dropouts, to increase secondary school completion rates. In addition, support services, including financial and personal counseling, are provided to help disadvantaged students complete postsecondary education. The most important of these programs for Latinos are Talent Search and Upward Bound. Unfortunately, Latino youth are underrepresented in these programs, as the data below clearly show.



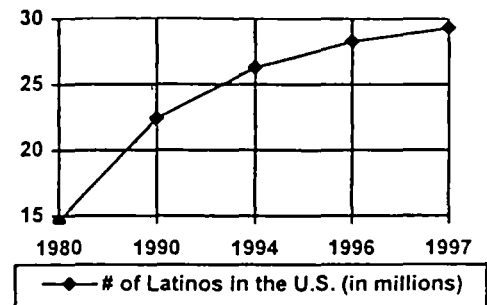
- While Latinos constitute approximately 30% of all poor children. In 1997, *only 16% of students participating in TRIO programs were Hispanic.*
- The percentage of Latinos served by TRIO has decreased over time. In 1977, for example, 18% of students participating in TRIO programs were Latino, compared to 16% in 1997 (see chart A below). This decrease occurred during a period in which the Hispanic population increased from nearly 15 million of the total population in the 1980 Census to more than 29 million in 1997 (see chart B below).

Chart A - Latino Participation Rate Has Decreased



Source: US Dept. of Education

Chart B - While Population Has Increased



Source: US Census

Misleading Participation Data

Because some published data includes Puerto Rican participants, but excludes Puerto Rico poverty statistics, it may appear that TRIO programs are reaching disadvantaged children from all backgrounds proportionately. Some have inaccurately claimed that about 20% of TRIO participants are Latino. This percentage is based on U.S. Department of Education data which include students from Puerto Rico participating in TRIO programs. *However, these numbers are measured against population eligibility data that do not include Puerto Rico.*

In order to achieve “apples to apples” comparisons, one must either delete Puerto Ricans from the participant category, or add Puerto Rican poverty statistics to the eligibility category.

- If Puerto Rican participants are eliminated from the participant category, the percentage of Hispanics served by TRIO drops from 20% to 16% in 1997.
- If Puerto Rico poverty statistics are added to the eligibility category, then the proportion of Hispanics within all persons eligible for TRIO increases from 28% to approximately 33%.
- By either standard, Hispanics are under-served by 12 to 13 percentage points.

If Latinos were equitably served by TRIO, which according to the U.S. Department of Education included approximately 671,102 participants in the 1996-97 program year, by either method of comparison, Hispanic TRIO program participation would be dramatically higher.

- In the 1996-97 program year, there were about 107,376 Hispanic participants (16% of 671,102).
- If, in 1996-97, Hispanics were equitably served, then Latino participation would have been approximately 187,909 (28% of 671,102).

Thus, more than 80,000 eligible Latinos should be, but are not, served by TRIO programs. Moreover, these data understate the degree of underrepresentation in TRIO. In addition to poverty status, TRIO eligibility is based on first-generation college attendance. Since Hispanics have the lowest rates of college attendance of any major population group, the actual proportion of Latinos within the total pool of TRIO-eligible students is higher than the 28% (excluding Puerto Rico data) or 33% (including Puerto Rico data) figures cited above.

Latino Participation in Selected TRIO Programs

Talent Search

Talent Search programs reach students in grades six through 12 to identify, encourage, and assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds in completing high school and entering college. Additionally, the program serves high school dropouts by encouraging them to complete their education. Program services include counseling, information on college admissions, financial aid and scholarships, and trips to college campuses.

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| • Total number of students served in FY 1993: | 300,981 |
| • Percentage of Latino students who are eligible: | 28% |
| • Number of Latino students served: | 49,248 |
| • Percentage of all participants who are Latino: | 16% |
| • Number of eligible Latino students who would be served if equitably represented: | 84,275 |

Upward Bound

Through special instruction, Upward Bound programs provide participants ages 13 to 19 with skills to succeed in postsecondary education. In addition to instruction in basic skills, participants receive academic and financial counseling to enhance their chances of completing high school and entering and graduating from college.

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|--|--------|
| • Total number of students served in FY 1993: | 44,684 |
| • Percentage of Latino students who are eligible: | 28% |
| • Number of Latino students served: | 7,062 |
| • Percentage of all participants who are Latino: | 15% |
| • Number of eligible Latino students who would be served if equitably represented: | 12,512 |

Policy Recommendations

Representative Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX) and Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) have introduced legislation to the "Higher Education Amendments Act of 1998" (H.R. 6) that would give new applicants a chance to compete for TRIO funds. Some who oppose their efforts have argued incorrectly that Representative Hinojosa and Senator Bingaman are attempting to alter the scope of the program to focus solely on dropout prevention, and that they are making participation in the program "race based." *Their legislation would not change the way existing or new programs operate, nor would it grant preferential treatment to applicants proposing to serve specific racial or ethnic groups.* Representative Hinojosa and Senator Bingaman are attempting to create a "level playing field" for all applicants, while ensuring that current programs can continue providing services.

The amendment authored by Representative Hinojosa and Senator Bingaman would be triggered *only if the amount of funds appropriated for TRIO exceeds the fiscal year 1998 amount, \$530 million.* If future allocations exceed this figure, the excess funds would be distributed in a way that provides *equal* preference points for programs with "prior experience" and applicants serving eligible populations in geographic areas which have been underserved by TRIO, and the degree to which these applicants serve schools with high dropout rates.

Sources

"Dropout Rates in the United States: 1995," National Center for Education Statistics, July 1997.

"Federal TRIO Programs," Office of Postsecondary Education, United States Department of Education, Spring 1998.

"Digest of Education Statistics, 1997," National Center of Education Statistics, December 1997.

"Historical Poverty Tables," United States Bureau of the Census Website.

NCLR

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

Raul Yzaguirre, President

September 21, 1999
(Delivered by hand)

Hon. Bill Clinton
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

COPY

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you on an urgent matter that demands your immediate attention. You have noted the Administration's success in conceiving and then winning increased funding from Congress for the Hispanic Education Action Plan (HEAP), and deservedly so. NCLR has supported HEAP vigorously, both in its planning stages within the Administration and in our lobbying efforts with the Congress. In addition, we have given the Administration substantial credit for this first-ever, major programmatic federal education initiative targeted to the Hispanic community. We recognize that, on symbolic grounds alone, the HEAP is an important, precedent-setting, groundbreaking initiative, and we very much appreciate the personal attention you and the Vice President have given to its conception and implementation.

Having said that, we are obligated to call to your attention several serious and long-standing problems which threaten to turn the HEAP into a complete sham. Permit me to give you some background. Latinos have long been under-served by federal education programs (see attachment 1). The theory behind HEAP – to provide major increases in funding to programs for which Latinos students are disproportionately *eligible* – makes sense as a strategy only to the extent that Hispanic children are *actually served* by such programs. Thus, HEAP makes sense only if the problem of underrepresentation is addressed. The Executive Order signed by President Bush in 1990 and that you re-issued designed in part to address the underrepresentation issue. It established a structural mechanism to monitor and encourage progress toward improving the responsiveness of federal education programs to the Hispanic community.

Thus, our support for the HEAP was conditioned on "off-budget" improvements in program implementation that would make such programs, as well as other important programs like Head Start, more responsive to our community. We believed, inaccurately as it turns out, that the combination of the White House Initiative overseeing the Executive Order and a special inter-departmental team overseeing HEAP implementation together would produce the kinds of programmatic and policy changes needed to increase Hispanic access to HEAP and related programs.



Program Offices: Phoenix, Arizona • San Antonio, Texas • Los Angeles, California • Chicago, Illinois

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We have participated in numerous discussions with, and have provided specific recommendations to Administration officials to address the chronic denial of access of Hispanic students from federal education programs (see attachment 2). We had confidence in the commitment and competence of the very able public servants involved in these efforts, and expected by now to see some real, substantive changes.

Unfortunately, two related sets of documents have led us to conclude that, in the absence of your immediate personal intervention, these efforts will result in failure. First, we have reviewed an initial draft of the Department of Education's HEAP implementation plan. While the plan lists numerous ongoing actions that relate to Hispanics, it does not include a single, substantive program or policy change that will materially improve Latino access to and participation in the Department's programs. While we have not seen a counterpart document related to Head Start, we have reason to believe that no important developments have taken place with respect to that program either.

Second, we have reviewed a preliminary draft of the FY 1998 Annual Performance Report on Implementing Executive Order #12900. As the draft report states, in pertinent part:

The majority of the reporting agencies have not adequately monitored and addressed Hispanic participation in educational and employment related programs since 1995.... Agency reports show a gross underrepresentation of Hispanic American participation in programs. This deficiency is increased because most reports do not provide either specific strategies to gauge Hispanic participation or design plans that address program effectiveness.

I would add that many of the agency reports seemed designed deliberately to obfuscate rather than enlighten.

We believe that three major problems underlie the failure of both the Bush and Clinton Administrations to reverse the chronic, gross underrepresentation of Latinos in federal education programs. First, all of us have underestimated the intransigence of the federal bureaucracy, a few political appointees, and other entrenched interests who have resisted change consistently and energetically. Second, the existing Executive Order has failed to be the kind of effective accountability mechanism that we had hoped it would be, in part because too many people involved, including the White House, simply have never made a serious commitment to making it work.

Third, however, I must take some personal responsibility for failing to bring greater public attention to the scope and persistence of this problem. I had hoped that by working quietly with the many able Administration officials of good will, together we would be able to reverse this situation. It is now clear to me that this has not worked.

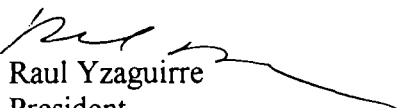
Unless we are able to come up with a solution very quickly, I must say that I face some difficult questions. As it now stands, HEAP borders on fraud. It purports to target

resources to Hispanics, but in fact many of the programs it funds actually under-serve Latino children. How can I, in good conscience, continue to ask public officials and leaders in my own community to continue to support increased appropriations for programs which deny equal opportunity to Hispanics? With respect to the Executive Order, since my resignation as Commission Chair in 1996, I have kept my commitment to the you, Secretary Riley, and other members of the Commission to refrain from publicly criticizing the initiative, and I have instructed my staff to cooperate fully with its work. In light of recent developments, don't I have an obligation to declare the effort a failure and call for its abolition?

I request immediate personal intervention by you and/or the Vice President to see if we might be able to develop an effective response to the problem, and ask for a meeting with you and/or the Vice President within the next 10 days to discuss the issue. Please have your staff contact me or my scheduling assistant Helen Coronado at (202) 776-1739 to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.

Thank you for your personal attention to this issue.

Sincerely,


Raul Yzaguirre
President

cc: Vice President Al Gore

ATTACHMENT #2



Raul Yzaguirre, President

National Office
1111 19th Street, N.W., Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 785-1670
Fax: (202) 776-1792

MEMORANDUM

TO: Barbara Chow, Associate Director, Office of Management and Budget
Janet Murguia, Deputy Director for White House Legislative Affairs
Sarita Brown, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

FROM: Charles Kamasaki, Senior Vice-President, NCLR
Cecilia Muñoz, Vice-President, NCLR
Roberto Rodríguez, School Reform Coordinator, NCLR

DATE: March 4, 1999

CC: Maria Echaveste, Deputy White House Chief of Staff
Jonathan Schnur, Associate Director for Domestic Policy, Office of the Vice-President
Mo Vela, Chief Financial Officer, Office of the Vice-President

SUBJ: Recommendations for Implementation of Hispanic Education Action Plan

BACKGROUND

Thank you for your recent meeting to discuss the implementation of the Hispanic Education Action Plan (HEAP). NCLR appreciates the seriousness of your commitment to addressing our concerns. Per your request, we have developed a substantial list of recommendations designed to improve the responsiveness of certain federal education programs to Hispanics.

Before listing specific recommendations, we would make several observations. First, reversing the long-term neglect of Latinos in federal education programs will require a major and sustained effort. Given this reality, we recognize and appreciate the significance of your leadership. Second, we believe that reversing the situation will require affirmative steps, not just passive outreach efforts. We acknowledge some of the steps taken with respect to GEAR UP— i.e. holding outreach meetings in predominantly Hispanic communities and disseminating flyers to Latino organizations. However, as experience to date has shown, outreach is not enough. This holds true given past instances of inertia, reluctance by some elements of the bureaucracy to accept new policies, and in this case, the wording of the regulations themselves, which do not explicitly clarify a *major* role for community-based organizations.



Program Offices: Phoenix, Arizona • San Antonio, Texas • Los Angeles, California • Chicago, Illinois

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Finally, we would note that, in many other contexts, the federal government exercises discretion to “de-target” funds. One example of such discretion is evident in the competitive grant process and funding of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program. Although the statute explicitly targets funding to *inner city* and *rural* schools, the Department of Education has permitted all school districts to apply for this competitive grants program. This raises an issue concerning why it appears to be so difficult to do the reverse, that is, to target funds to deserving populations.

NCLR offers its recommendations below in three categories. The first notes recommendations that are applicable to a broad range of competitive programs, such as Head Start, TRIO, and GEAR UP. Following these recommendations appear sub-recommendations in italics, particularly applicable to a single program. Specific programs are identified in the context of these recommendations. The second category outlines recommendations for the implementation of Title I— a formula-driven program that warrants separate and particular attention. The third and final category lists recommendations for other programs included in the broader scope of the Hispanic Education Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. COMPETITIVE PROGRAMS

1. **PROCEDURAL IMPROVEMENTS:** These include actions that might improve the process through which policies are designed, grantees are selected, and programs are implemented. The value of such changes lies in the potential to improve the basic “infrastructure” of the program; the downside is that it is likely to be many years before any tangible changes result from these “process” improvements.
 - Increase staff expertise on education of Latino and language minority children (both career and political appointees).
 - Increase number of proposal reviewers who have expertise in serving Hispanic and language minority children, such that each set of proposal review teams includes persons with such expertise.
 - Enhance the capacity of the agencies to serve Latino and language minority children through hiring of qualified Latino staff, retaining a pool of consultants who specialize in these issues, conducting relevant staff development and training sessions, and other means.
2. **IMPROVE TARGETING OF EXISTING FUNDING:** These include actions to help immediately shift program resources to more effectively and equitably serve Hispanic and language minority children. The value of such changes lies in the potential to realign significant dollars to Latinos and other underserved communities in the short term, and to build an “infrastructure” within Hispanic and other underserved communities which will

maximize their capacity to effectively compete for funds; the downside includes likely resistance from the bureaucracy and presumably grantees.

- Revise specific Notice of Funding Alerts (NOFAs) and proposal scoring systems to require/encourage improved targeting, based on special population groups or geographic areas. For example, at least one set of NOFAs released by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in the early 1990s explicitly established priorities for serving communities in the Southwest, based on research demonstrating a shortage of community development corporations in this region. Similarly, a recent HUD NOFA for homeownership programs established priorities for applicants serving new immigrants, based on research demonstrating the importance of this population group as prospective homeowners.
- In the Head Start/TRIO context, NOFAs could be written to target funding to rapidly-growing population groups such as new immigrants, language minorities, and/or children of high school dropouts (all of which are somewhat effective proxies for Latinos); or geographic areas such as broad regions— i.e. California, the Southwest, the Northeast, and Washington, DC— that might be underserved; and/or specific neighborhoods experiencing significant Latino population growth.
 - *This should be easier to accomplish with GEAR UP, inasmuch as it is a new program. One important NOFA/regulation issue here is that community-based organizations should be explicitly authorized to play a “lead role” or “significant role” in partnerships permitted under the program. Given that the initial funding round for GEAR UP is imminent, some thought might be given to reserving a portion of this funding for a more targeted NOFA to be issued in the near future.*
- A variant of this “proxy targeting” approach that might meet less resistance may be to take some portion of “new” money— i.e. funding available due to new authority, or increases in appropriations— for such special targeting.
 - *One particularly interesting opportunity involves the potential new funding in the Head Start reauthorization’s Family Literacy Services provisions, which provide for 100 Head Start agencies to engage in collaborative partnerships with other entities. This would appear to be an ideal opportunity to draft a NOFA which targets a substantial portion of such funding to collaborations that serve Latino and language minority populations.*

3. **AGGRESSIVE TARGETING OF DISCRETIONARY FUNDING:** These include measures to maximize the use of discretionary funding to alleviate underrepresentation of Latino children, and improve the quality of services available to them. One advantage of this approach is that we might reasonably expect quick results, such as implementation in a single funding cycle; the downside is that gains could be transitory and the resource levels affected are relatively small.

- Conduct pilot and demonstration programs assessing the efficacy of various approaches to serving language minorities, new immigrants, and/or children of high school dropouts. One way to make this happen would be to use existing research and/or evaluation dollars to fund programs that serve Latinos to test various innovative approaches. In effect, the existing set of grantees would serve as the “control” group against which the innovations would be compared. This also has the effect of expanding and adding program flexibility by “transferring” research funds to programs. Such efforts also have the virtue of being able to modestly improve both the quantity and quality of services to Latinos simultaneously.
 - *One particularly attractive approach, given the Administration’s literacy initiative, might be programs consistent with the National Research Council’s recent report designed to provide early intervention to children to encourage phonological awareness and literacy development.*
 - *Similarly, various “family reading” programs (such as the Family Literacy program mentioned above, to the extent the program includes any discretionary funding) to encourage greater parental involvement, or tutoring programs that use volunteers, should aggressively target Latino organizations and communities.*
- In this connection, there may be opportunities to conduct joint “research and demonstration” programs between Head Start, TRIO, and GEAR UP and various divisions in the Department of Education, particularly with the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA), various Adult Education Act programs, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and/or the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI).
- Establish a clearinghouse or center to evaluate, identify, and disseminate “best practices” for serving the target populations. One center (modeled after the Title VII bilingual education clearinghouse) or a group of centers (modeled after the regional Title I or desegregation assistance centers) could encourage existing mainstream providers to serve greater numbers of Latino and language minority kids by helping them to establish and implement special initiatives responsive to their needs.
 - *One specific application may include establishing a Head Start clearinghouse devoted principally or exclusively to identifying and disseminating early childhood development “best practices” with respect to Latino/language minority children.*
 - *A similar approach would involve a TRIO/GEAR UP clearinghouse devoted to identifying and promoting exemplary and innovative practices involving Hispanic and language minority children. We note*

parenthetically that we believe that unfounded but understandable fears and misperceptions of the college residential component of Upward Bound may deter Latino participation, particularly among immigrants. One way of addressing this might be through partnerships with trusted community groups; another angle might be to experiment with innovative, non-residential programs.

4. OUTREACH, TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

- These and other changes should be accompanied by improved outreach and technical assistance to prospective grantees— either for those replacing de-funded providers, for new competitions as service areas are re-defined, or for new programs. This could be done as part of existing Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) Cooperative agreements, or through discretionary funding, such as purchase orders or unsolicited proposals. Specific actions should be considered that would:
 - *Assure that training and technical assistance resources are targeted to providers with a commitment to and expertise in serving the target populations, a description that most observers would agree does not include the existing T&TA Head Start or TRIO providers. One variant of this idea could involve encouraging – or requiring if necessary – the principal T&TA providers to establish partnerships with organizations with greater expertise in serving Latinos and other language minority populations. A related idea would be to separately bid out T&TA contracts targeted exclusively to organizations demonstrating commitment to and expertise in serving Latino and language minority populations.*
 - *Assure that, for new programs such as GEAR UP – and for special subsets of existing programs, i.e., prospective new applicants for Head Start or TRIO – T&TA is available to help new applicants submit competitive proposals. Thus, outreach and training need not be carried out by existing T&TA providers or by Department staff (who, as we note above, may be part of the problem). Instead, an “alternative T&TA network” dedicated to reversing the historic underrepresentation of Hispanics could be established relatively quickly through purchase orders, task orders, and the funding of unsolicited proposals.*

B. TITLE I

For FY 1999, the Clinton Administration was successful in securing over \$300 million in “new” Title I funding targeted to Hispanic students. Unlike other programs that serve specific students directly, Title I dollars are more broadly disbursed to schools to serve students within a general district. Moreover, until the 1994 ESEA reauthorization, an historical statutory ambiguity led many school districts to exclude language minority students from most or all of Title I-funded services. It is also likely that some form of “Ed-Flex” will be enacted this year, further

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Raul Yzaguirre, President

September 21, 1999
(Delivered by hand)

National Office
1111 19th Street, N.W., Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 785-1670
Fax: (202) 776-1792

COPY

Hon. Bill Clinton
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you on an urgent matter that demands your immediate attention. You have noted the Administration's success in conceiving and then winning increased funding from Congress for the Hispanic Education Action Plan (HEAP), and deservedly so. NCLR has supported HEAP vigorously, both in its planning stages within the Administration and in our lobbying efforts with the Congress. In addition, we have given the Administration substantial credit for this first-ever, major programmatic federal education initiative targeted to the Hispanic community. We recognize that, on symbolic grounds alone, the HEAP is an important, precedent-setting, groundbreaking initiative, and we very much appreciate the personal attention you and the Vice President have given to its conception and implementation.

Having said that, we are obligated to call to your attention several serious and long-standing problems which threaten to turn the HEAP into a complete sham. Permit me to give you some background. Latinos have long been under-served by federal education programs (see attachment 1). The theory behind HEAP – to provide major increases in funding to programs for which Latinos students are disproportionately *eligible* – makes sense as a strategy only to the extent that Hispanic children are *actually served* by such programs. Thus, HEAP makes sense only if the problem of underrepresentation is addressed. The Executive Order signed by President Bush in 1990 and that you re-issued designed in part to address the underrepresentation issue. It established a structural mechanism to monitor and encourage progress toward improving the responsiveness of federal education programs to the Hispanic community.

Thus, our support for the HEAP was conditioned on "off-budget" improvements in program implementation that would make such programs, as well as other important programs like Head Start, more responsive to our community. We believed, inaccurately as it turns out, that the combination of the White House Initiative overseeing the Executive Order and a special inter-departmental team overseeing HEAP implementation together would produce the kinds of programmatic and policy changes needed to increase Hispanic access to HEAP and related programs.



We have participated in numerous discussions with, and have provided specific recommendations to Administration officials to address the chronic denial of access of Hispanic students from federal education programs (see attachment 2). We had confidence in the commitment and competence of the very able public servants involved in these efforts, and expected by now to see some real, substantive changes.

Unfortunately, two related sets of documents have led us to conclude that, in the absence of your immediate personal intervention, these efforts will result in failure. First, we have reviewed an initial draft of the Department of Education's HEAP implementation plan. While the plan lists numerous ongoing actions that relate to Hispanics, it does not include a single, substantive program or policy change that will materially improve Latino access to and participation in the Department's programs. While we have not seen a counterpart document related to Head Start, we have reason to believe that no important developments have taken place with respect to that program either.

Second, we have reviewed a preliminary draft of the FY 1998 Annual Performance Report on Implementing Executive Order #12900. As the draft report states, in pertinent part:

The majority of the reporting agencies have not adequately monitored and addressed Hispanic participation in educational and employment related programs since 1995.... Agency reports show a gross underrepresentation of Hispanic American participation in programs. This deficiency is increased because most reports do not provide either specific strategies to gauge Hispanic participation or design plans that address program effectiveness.

I would add that many of the agency reports seemed designed deliberately to obfuscate rather than enlighten.

We believe that three major problems underlie the failure of both the Bush and Clinton Administrations to reverse the chronic, gross underrepresentation of Latinos in federal education programs. First, all of us have underestimated the intransigence of the federal bureaucracy, a few political appointees, and other entrenched interests who have resisted change consistently and energetically. Second, the existing Executive Order has failed to be the kind of effective accountability mechanism that we had hoped it would be, in part because too many people involved, including the White House, simply have never made a serious commitment to making it work.

Third, however, I must take some personal responsibility for failing to bring greater public attention to the scope and persistence of this problem. I had hoped that by working quietly with the many able Administration officials of good will, together we would be able to reverse this situation. It is now clear to me that this has not worked.

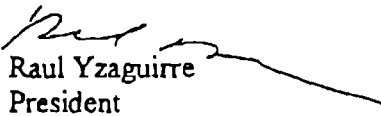
Unless we are able to come up with a solution very quickly, I must say that I face some difficult questions. As it now stands, HEAP borders on fraud. It purports to target

resources to Hispanics, but in fact many of the programs it funds actually under-serve Latino children. How can I, in good conscience, continue to ask public officials and leaders in my own community to continue to support increased appropriations for programs which deny equal opportunity to Hispanics? With respect to the Executive Order, since my resignation as Commission Chair in 1996, I have kept my commitment to the you, Secretary Riley, and other members of the Commission to refrain from publicly criticizing the initiative, and I have instructed my staff to cooperate fully with its work. In light of recent developments, don't I have an obligation to declare the effort a failure and call for its abolition?

I request immediate personal intervention by you and/or the Vice President to see if we might be able to develop an effective response to the problem, and ask for a meeting with you and/or the Vice President within the next 10 days to discuss the issue. Please have your staff contact me or my scheduling assistant Helen Coronado at (202) 776-1739 to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.

Thank you for your personal attention to this issue.

Sincerely,


Raul Yzaguirre
President

cc: Vice President Al Gore