



# **Survey of Cooperative Extension Educators in the Midwest: On Serving Latino Populations**

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**RESEARCH REPORT NO. 55**

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### ABSTRACT

A survey of Cooperative Extension educators in the Midwest conducted in the summer of 2015 yielded 724 completed questionnaires. Results show that the majority of respondents have little contact with Latinos but they are interested in learning more about these communities and recognize that more could be done by local Extension units to provide services to them. This includes training for educators so they can better serve Latino communities. A majority of respondents hold positive views of Latinos and believe they contribute to their communities. Further a majority believe that more resources should be allocated by Extension units to better serve Latino communities, including hiring more bilingual, bicultural educators.

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## Executive Summary

- Among 724 Extension educators in ten of the twelve Midwestern states, a majority of respondents does not regularly interact with Latino communities and is not fluent in Spanish, but they are highly interested in serving the Latino population in their communities. A majority already interacts regularly with people from cultural backgrounds different from their own.
- The desire to work with Latino populations is prevalent among Extension educators in the Midwest. Extension educators want both the competence and the resources to serve Latino communities.
- Approximately two-thirds of respondents indicated that they are interested or very interested in collaborating with Latino-serving organizations in their area in order to reach the Latino population.
- Just over one-fourth of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they regularly interact with the Latino community, whereas more than half of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, implying that they do not interact regularly with the Latino community.
- Slightly more than three out of ten respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they are actively involved in reaching out to the Latino community in their own county (or state).
- According to respondents, there is a general lack of Extension programs tailored for and with the capacity to serve Latino populations.
- Only 17 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their programs have been translated into Spanish in order to facilitate outreach to the Latino community.
- Approximately 36 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they involved members of their community, including Latinos, in developing their programs. About 39 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have worked with public and private agencies to address a range of services needed for Latinos.
- Only seven percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have been trained to adopt new strategies for dealing with mental illness, addiction, HIV/AIDS, or incarceration in culturally competent ways that strengthen Latino communities, whereas the majority (73%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- About 23 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that their Extension units inform them of new policies, procedures, and changing state and federal laws that affect Latinos, whereas 43 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

- Overall, about 18 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that their Extension units provide ongoing and well-crafted training opportunities for all levels of staff to learn and work with Latino communities, whereas about 42 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- More than one-third of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their Extension units reach out and establish connections with Latino communities, coalitions, councils, and other collaborative boards to examine issues facing Latino communities and seek ways to reduce their problems.
- About 11 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they do not have support from their Extension leaders to focus part of their educational programs on Latinos in their county (or state), whereas 57 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- Approximately one-fourth of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that key members of the Latino community in their region are aware of the resources offered by Cooperative Extension.
- Slightly more than half of respondents (52.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that they are familiar with other organizations that offer services to the Latino community in their region.
- About 32 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they do not know how to find or approach key partners that could help them work with the Latino community. Steps are needed by Extension leaders to develop and strengthen partnerships with Latino communities.
- The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that most churches (58%), schools (83%), and businesses (55%) in their county (or state) welcome the Latino community.
- Three-fourths of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that some members of the Latino community may be poor or lack formal education, but that they are generally hard-working and resourceful.
- A robust majority of respondents (84%) believes that residents trust Latinos who live in their county (or state), and 86 percent believe that Latino workers contribute to the economic health of their county (or state).
- About 68 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that local leaders and residents are working to make Latinos feel welcome in their county (or state), and 70 percent agreed and strongly agreed that their county (or state) is working to provide needed services to members of the Latino community.

## INTRODUCTION

Latinos are the fastest growing ethnic minority population in the Midwest. As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, the Latino population was estimated at 5.1 million, representing about 7.5 percent of the total population in the Midwest. There are 87 counties in the 12 States of the Midwest in which Latinos comprise more than 10 percent of their populations. The majority of Latino newcomers to the Midwest are immigrants, and Midwestern populations and institutions are relatively unfamiliar with their cultures and generally lack the capabilities to serve them and other populations that are culturally different from the mainstream.

Leaders of Extension units across the Midwest recognize that capabilities must be increased at both individual and programmatic levels so that services can be extended to include delivery of services to Latinos and other diverse populations in the region. A starting point for enhancing the capabilities of Extension personnel and units to effectively serve Latino populations is to identify the learning needs of Extension educators. Such an assessment sheds light on the perspectives that Extension educators hold relative to their own abilities and the capacities of their units to effectively deliver services to Latino communities, and whether or not serving these communities is a priority for them and their units.

The principal objective of the survey was to assess the needs of Cooperative Extension Outreach Educators in the North Central (Midwest) region relative to their capabilities and skills to effectively serve the Latino population in their service areas.

## METHODS

Data for this report were collected through an online survey of Extension educators in the North Central Region. The Julian Samora Research Institute at Michigan State University conducted the survey on behalf of the interstate initiative “North Central Extension Research Activity (NCERA) 216: Latinos and Immigrants in Midwestern Communities.” Data were collected during the summer months of July and August, 2015 using Survey Monkey.

The questionnaire was a modified and expanded version of the questionnaire developed and used by “SERA 37: Latinos in the New South” in 2009 to assess the educational needs of Extension educators in the South to better serve Latino communities. Members of the NCERA 216 Executive Board reviewed a draft of the questionnaire and provided suggestions for improvement, as did some Extension personnel across the Midwest who were contacted by their respective directors to review the instrument. The questionnaire consisted of 25 questions covering a wide range of topics, including local and state demographics, populations served by Extension employees, opinion and attitudinal items on the populations served, community context of reception, and Extension unit services for Latinos (see Appendix A).

A convenience sampling process (i.e., not a probability sample) was used to recruit respondents. A letter was sent to the North Central Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors asking for their support in enlisting state directors to endorse the survey and promote awareness of and participation in the study among their personnel. A total of 727 Extension educators and employees in 10 of the 12 Midwestern states completed the survey questionnaire.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There were not any respondents from the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Analysis of the data proceeded in three stages: (1) descriptive analysis (means, standard deviations, frequency distributions, and graphs) of demographic and Likert-scale item variables, (2) factor analysis to reduce the number of items into composite scales, and (3) bivariate analysis of constructed factor scales and demographic characteristics (e.g., state, race/ethnicity and sex). All analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 22 (IBM Corporation).

## RESULTS

### LATINO POPULATION PROFILE OF MIDWESTERN STATES

As of July 1, 2014, the Latino population in the Midwest was estimated at 5.1 million, representing 7.5 percent of the total population in the region. Midwestern states include: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The largest percentage of Latinos in the Midwest is concentrated in the state of Illinois (42.2%). Michigan has 9.3 percent of Latinos in the Midwest, followed by Indiana (8.5%), Ohio (7.9%), Wisconsin (7.3%), Kansas (6.5%), and Minnesota (5.4%). The remaining states (Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota) each have less than 5 percent of the Latino population in the Midwest (Table 1). There are about 2.2 million Latinos in Illinois, representing about 17 percent of the state's total population. Other states in which Latinos comprise at least 10 percent of the population are Kansas (11.4%) and Nebraska (10.2%). There are 87 out of 1,055 counties in the Midwest in which Latinos comprise at least 10 percent of the population. The states of Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska each have more than 10 counties in which Latinos comprise at least 10 percent of the population (Table 1).

**Table 1. Number and Percent of Latino Population by State in the Midwest, 2014**

State	Total Population	Latino Population	Percent Latino within State	Share of the Latino Population in the Midwest	Number of Counties with more than 10% Latinos	Total Number of Counties
Illinois	12,880,580	2,152,974	16.71	42.19	13	102
Indiana	6,596,855	432,305	6.55	8.47	5	92
Iowa	3,107,126	173,594	5.59	3.40	11	99
Kansas	2,904,021	329,627	11.35	6.46	28	105
Michigan	9,909,877	476,285	4.81	9.33	3	83
Minnesota	5,457,173	277,009	5.08	5.43	4	87
Missouri	6,063,589	240,222	3.96	4.71	3	115
Nebraska	1,881,503	191,325	10.17	3.75	15	93
North Dakota	739,482	23,439	3.17	0.46	1	53
Ohio	11,594,163	403,190	3.48	7.90	0	88
South Dakota	853,175	30,537	3.58	0.60	0	66
Wisconsin	5,757,564	372,248	6.47	7.30	4	72
<b>Total</b>	<b>67,745,108</b>	<b>5,102,755</b>	<b>7.53</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>1,055</b>

Source: U.S. Census, Population Division: Annual County Resident Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2014.

## PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

### Frequency Distribution of Respondents by State

The largest percent of survey respondents is from the state of Missouri (46.5%). With 337 respondents, the sample from Missouri must include employees beyond the category of “Extension educator.” In order to ascertain the extent to which Missouri respondents influenced the overall results patterns, a comparison was conducted between them and respondents from the other states as a group. The patterns were remarkably similar, and it was decided that analysis of the overall sample would shed the best light on perspectives and attitudes among respondents. Continuing with the representation of respondents in the sample from other states, about 11 percent are from Iowa, 11 percent are from Michigan, six percent from Kansas, six percent from Illinois, three percent from the two Dakotas (combined), two percent from Indiana, and one percent from Ohio (Table 2). There were no respondents from the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin.

**Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Respondents by State**

State	Number	Percent
Illinois	44	6.1
Indiana	23	2.4
Ohio	8	1.1
Iowa	81	11.2
Kansas	46	6.4
Michigan	80	11.0
Missouri	337	46.5
Nebraska	92	12.7
North Dakota/South Dakota*	21	2.9
Total	724	100.0

\*South Dakota had only two respondents and therefore its cases were combined with those from North Dakota.

### Race/Ethnicity and Sex

A majority of survey respondents are female (71.5%) (Table 3). In terms of race/ethnicity, 86.7 percent of respondents indicated that they are White or European Americans. About six percent of respondents are Latinos/Hispanics, and three percent are Blacks or African Americans. Two-thirds of Latino respondents are females, whereas 72 percent and 78 percent of White and African American respondents are females, respectively (Table 3).

**Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Race/Ethnicity and Sex**

Race/Ethnicity	Male		Female		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
White or European American	132	28.2	336	71.8	468	86.7
African American	4	22.2*	14	77.8	18	3.3
Latino	11	33.3	22	66.7	33	6.1
Other	7	33.3	14	66.7	21	3.9
Total	154	28.5	386	71.5	540	100.0

\* cells < 5.

## Number of Years of Experience

Table 4 displays respondents' years of experience in Extension. About 35 percent of respondents have worked in Extension for 16 or more years, 26.5 percent between 6 and 15 years, and 38.2 percent for five years or less, reflecting a relatively even distribution across these time categories (Table 4). At a more detailed level, the largest proportion (17%) has worked in Extension for 26 or more years, followed by those between 6 and 10 years (15%), and those with less than one year (13%) (Table 4).

**Table 4. Number and Percent of Years of Experience in Extension**

<b>Years in Extension</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 1 year	96	13.3
About 2 years	77	10.7
3-5 years	102	14.2
6-10 years	108	15.0
11-15 years	83	11.5
16-20 years	67	9.3
21-25 years	65	9.0
26 years or more	122	16.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Fluency in Spanish Language

Table 5 presents respondents' self-reported fluency with the Spanish language. The majority of respondents indicated that they are not fluent in Spanish. About 76, 81, and 85 percent of respondents indicated that their reading, speaking, and writing skills in the Spanish language are poor, respectively. Only seven to about eight percent of respondents indicated that they are fluent in reading, speaking, and writing (Table 5), and more than likely are comprised of Latino and Latina employees.

**Table 5. Percent Indicating Spanish Language Fluency in Key Areas**

<b>Language Areas</b>	<b>Percent (%) indicating Spanish language fluency</b>			<b>Mean ranking score*</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>	<b>N</b>
	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Fluent</b>			
Reading	76.4	16.1	7.6	1.62	1.21	554
Writing	84.9	8.0	7.1	1.44	1.12	551
Speaking	80.6	12.2	7.3	1.53	1.17	551

\* Scale: 1 = Poor, 3 = Average, 5 = Fluent.

Table 6 displays the percentages of respondents who believe that language is a barrier when serving Spanish-only speakers. About 24 percent of respondents indicated that they, individually or collectively in their Extension units, often or very often experience a language barrier in meeting the needs of Spanish-speaking clients. Approximately 31.1 percent reported that language is sometimes a barrier when serving Latinos and 37.1 percent indicated that it is a problem for their unit. Interestingly, 45.4 percent indicated that language is rarely or never a barrier when serving Latinos, and 39.2 percent indicated that it is rarely or never a barrier for their unit (Table 6). To some extent, this distribution implicitly reflects the proportion of Latinos who speak English with whom Extension personnel have contact.

**Table 6. Frequency of Lack of Spanish Language Fluency as a Barrier to Serving Latinos**

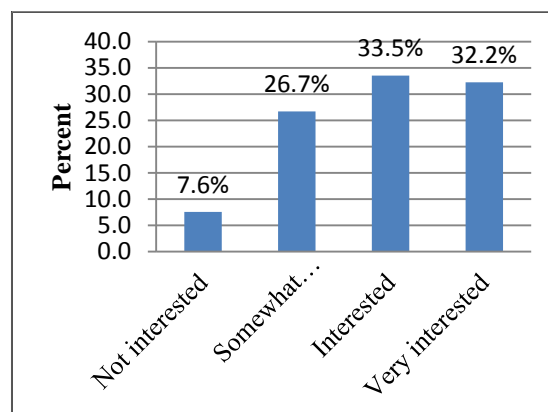
Spanish Language Barrier	Percent indicating Spanish that Language is a Barrier					Mean ranking score*	St. Dev.	N
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often			
Meeting the needs of Spanish speakers	19.0	26.4	31.1	15.4	8.1	2.67	1.18	546
Extension unit faces in meeting the needs of Spanish speakers	12.3	26.9	37.1	14.8	8.9	2.81	1.11	528

\*Scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Very often.

### Serving the Latino Population

Figure 1 shows that approximately two-thirds of respondents (65.7%) are interested or very interested in collaborating with Latino-serving organizations in their area to more effectively reach out to Latino communities. Approximately 26.7 percent are somewhat interested, and 7.6 percent are not interested (Figure 1). This distribution most likely reflects the relative percent of Latinos in their respective service areas. As the relative proportion of the Latino population continues to grow in their respective service areas one can expect that interest in collaborating with Latino-serving organizations will increase among Extension educators.

**Figure 1. Proportion of Respondents Interested in Collaborating with Latino-Serving Organizations in their Area to Reach Out to Latinos**



## Respondents Areas of Work

Figure 2 displays the top 15 focused areas of work from the survey. Respondents were asked to indicate up to three areas of work in which they focus their efforts. About 31 percent of respondents indicated 4-H clubs, followed by nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle programming (24.5%), child educational support and school programs (17.6%), community development and leadership programming (14.7%), child-centered nutrition programming (14.2%), and summer camps or summer programming (12.5%).

**Figure 2 Top 15 Extension Work Areas of Focus from the Survey**

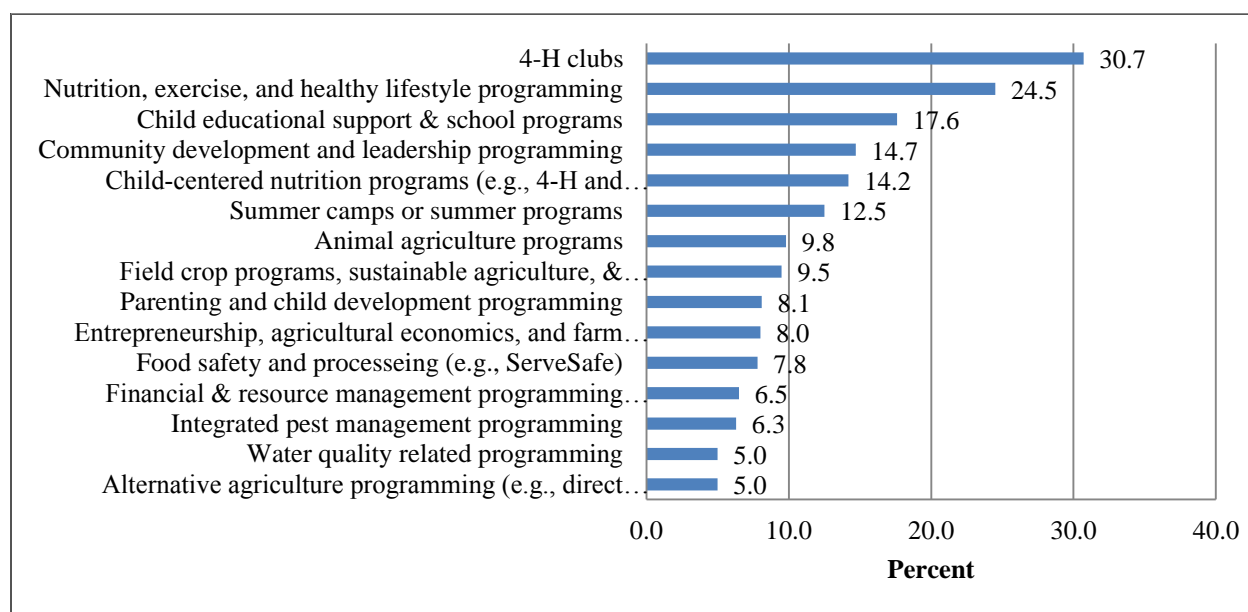


Table 7 presents respondents' views about serving the Latino population. About five percent of respondents indicated that their position specifically focuses serving Latino or Spanish-speaking populations. About 21 percent indicated that they have volunteers working with Latinos or Spanish-speaking populations. Among those who use volunteers to work with Latinos or Spanish-speaking populations, 47 percent have volunteers who speak the Spanish language.

**Table 7. Capacity to Serve the Latino Population by Percent**

	Yes	No	N
The position specifically focuses on Latinos or Spanish-speaking populations	4.7	95.3	721
Have volunteers working with Latinos or Spanish-speaking populations	20.6	79.4	719
Most of volunteers speak Spanish	47.2	52.8	193



## CAPACITY TO SERVE LATINO COMMUNITIES

The descriptive statistics of selected items are displayed in tables 8 through 16. Table 8 presents responses to item survey questions regarding Extension outreach to the Latino community. Respondents were asked to indicate on a scale ranging from “1 = strongly disagree” to “5 = strongly agree” if they interact with or are actively involved in reaching out to the Latino community, translated their programs into Spanish, or collaborated with members of their community, including the Latino community in developing their programs. About 26 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they regularly interact with the Latino community, whereas 52 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed (Table 8). About 31 percent of respondents indicated they are actively involved in reaching out to the Latino community in their respective county or state. Only 17 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have program materials translated into Spanish to facilitate use by the local Latino population, whereas 55 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. About 36 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they have worked with members of the community, including Latinos, in developing their program to make sure that it meets targeted population needs and interests. About 39 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have worked with public and private agencies to address the range of services needed by Latinos (Table 8).

**Table 8. Extension Outreach to the Latino Community**

	Percent of Respondents that			Mean ranking score*	St. Dev.	N
	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree or disagree			
I regularly interact with the Latino community	26.3	22.0	51.7	2.65	1.19	559
I am actively involved in reaching out to the Latino community in my county (state)	31.4	38.8	29.8	3.01	1.04	554
When I develop a program, I usually have it translated into Spanish to facilitate use by the local Latino population	17.2	28.2	54.7	2.48	1.09	554
When I develop a program, I work with members of the community, including the Latino community, to make sure it meets their needs and interests	35.9	46.7	17.4	3.26	0.92	546
As an Extension employee I have worked with public and private agency partnerships to address the range of service needs among Latinos	38.8	29.9	31.3	3.08	1.04	546

\*Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 9 displays responses to specific questions regarding Extension units and the extent to which those units serve the Latino community. Only 23 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their Extension unit helps them stay informed of new policies and procedures and changing state and federal laws that impact Latinos in their region, whereas about 43 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. About 18 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their Extension unit provides ongoing and well-crafted training opportunities for staff at all levels to learn about and work with Latino communities, whereas about 42 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Only seven percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were trained in adopting new strategies for dealing with mental illness, addiction, HIV/AIDS or incarceration in culturally competent ways that strengthen Latino communities, whereas 73 percent disagree or strongly disagree (Table 9).

More than one-third of respondents (36.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that their Extension unit reaches out to and establishes connections with Latino communities, as well as coalitions, councils, and other collaborative boards, to examine issues facing Latino communities and seek ways to address their needs. About 11 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they do not have support from their Extension leaders to focus part of their educational programs on Latinos in their county (or state), whereas 57 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. This may reflect the proportion that Latinos comprise of the population in their region, or lack of prioritization among Extension leaders (Table 9).

**Table 9. Perceptions of Extension Unit Support for Latinos**

	Percent of Respondents that			Mean ranking score*	St. Dev.	Valid N
	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree or disagree			
My Extension unit helps me to stay informed of new policies and procedures and changing state and federal laws that affect Latinos in my region	22.6	34.6	42.8	2.74	0.97	
I have been trained in adopting new strategies for dealing with mental illness, addiction, HIV/AIDS or incarceration in culturally competent ways that strengthen Latino communities	6.9	19.8	73.3	2.06	0.90	546
My Extension unit reaches out to and establishes connections with Latino communities as well as coalitions, councils, and other collaborative boards to examine issues facing Latino communities and seeks ways to reduce problems	36.3	40.4	23.3	3.14	0.92	545
My Extension unit provides ongoing and well-crafted training opportunities for all levels of staff to learn and work with Latino communities	18.3	40.1	41.6	2.69	0.92	546

	Percent of Respondents that			Mean ranking score*	St. Dev.	Valid N
	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree or disagree			
I feel that I don't have support from Extension leaders in my state to focus part of my educational programs to Latinos in my county (or state)	10.6	32.5	56.9	2.38	0.93	548

\*Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 10 presents responses to survey questions regarding awareness of community resources/services that could help the Latino community. About 26 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that key members of the Latino community are aware of the resources offered by Cooperative Extension, whereas about 30 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that such is the case. More than one half of the number of respondents (52.5%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they are familiar with other organizations that offer services to the Latino community in their region. By contrast, about 32 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they do not know how to find or approach key partners that could help them work with the Latino community. This is an area in which a programmatic effort could easily lead to important outcomes.

**Table 10. Awareness of Community Resources/Services for Latinos**

	Percent of Respondents that			Mean ranking score*	St. Dev.	Valid N
	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree or disagree			
Key members of the Latino community in my region are aware of the resources offered by Cooperative Extension	26.2	44.0	29.8	2.91	0.93	557
I am familiar with other organizations that offer services to the Latino community in my region	52.5	22.3	25.2	3.31	1.06	552
I don't know how to find or approach key partners that could help me work with the Latino community	31.7	30.0	38.3	2.89	1.03	546

\*Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 11 displays responses to survey questions regarding Extension's capacity to serve Latinos. Fifty nine percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Extension should invest in hiring bilingual persons to serve Latino populations. Only about 10 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that devoting funds and resources to serve Latinos through Extension may *not* be a good idea given the current economic situation, whereas 55 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with that view.

Approximately, 28 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Extension educators should learn Spanish in order to better serve Latino populations, whereas 28 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with that view. However, three-fourths of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Extension educators should learn more about Latino culture in order to more effectively serve Latino populations in their area. About 65 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Extension agents should develop programs aimed at helping the Latino community.

About 13 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that staff members in their county Extension unit are well prepared to work with the Latino community, whereas half of them disagreed or strongly disagreed. Close to one-third of respondents (32.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that the Latino community in their county (state) is reluctant to seek help from outsiders (i.e., from those outside of their ethnic community), while a majority (51.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed with that view (Table 11), implying that they do not know the needs of the Latino population very well.

**Table 11. Perceptions of Extension Capacity and Approaches to Serve Latinos**

	Percent of Respondents that			Mean ranking score*	St. Dev.	Valid N
	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree or disagree			
Extension educators should learn Spanish to better serve Latino populations	28.2	43.6	28.2	2.99	1.00	553
Extension services should invest in hiring individuals that are bilingual to serve Latino populations	59.0	29.9	11.0	3.62	0.95	551
Considering the current economic situation, devoting funds and resources to serve Latinos through Extension may not be a good idea	9.6	36.5	54.9	2.39	0.93	553
Extension educators should learn more about the Latino culture in order to more effectively serve Latino populations in their area	74.6	21.3	4.2	3.91	0.80	554
Our county Extension staff is well prepared to work with the Latino community	13.2	36.8	49.9	2.54	0.93	551
The Latino community in my county (state) is reluctant to seek help from outsiders (i.e., from those outside of their ethnic community)	32.3	51.8	15.8	3.18	0.79	550
Extension agents should develop programs aimed at helping the Latino community	64.8	32.8	2.4	3.79	0.75	548

\*Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 12 displays respondents' agreements/disagreements with how they interact or work with Latinos. A robust majority of respondents (88%) agreed or strongly agreed that they interact with peoples with cultural backgrounds different from their own. About 67 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are comfortable attending cultural celebrations held by Latino communities in their county or state. About 71 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are interested in working with the Latino community, while about one fourth are not sure that they are interested in working with Latinos or are comfortable attending their cultural celebrations.

**Table 12. Personal Receptiveness toward Latinos**

	Percent of Respondents that			Mean ranking score*	St. Dev.	Valid N
	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree or disagree			
I enjoy interacting with persons whose cultural backgrounds differ from my own	87.5	9.1	3.4	4.20	0.77	549
I am interested in working with the Latino community	71.0	25.6	3.5	3.86	0.75	544
I am comfortable attending cultural celebrations held by the Latino community in my county (state)	66.7	23.1	10.1	3.75	0.95	554

\*Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 13 displays responses to survey items that tap the context of reception with regard to how welcoming it is to the Latino community. A robust majority (83%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that schools in their county (state) welcome the Latino community. By contrast, only a slight majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that most churches (58%) and most businesses (55%) in their county (or state) welcome the Latino community. Overall, approximately 53% indicated that most of their institutions welcome Latinos in their county (or state).

**Table 13. Perceptions of Context of Reception in Welcoming the Latino Community**

	Percent of Respondents that			Mean ranking score*	St. Dev.	Valid N
	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree or disagree			
Overall, most civic groups, churches, schools and businesses in my county (state) welcome the Latino community	53.2	37.4	9.3	3.53	0.80	554
Most churches in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community	57.9	37.2	4.9	3.64	0.77	549
Most schools in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community.	83.2	28.3	4.0	3.76	0.74	552
Most businesses in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community	54.9	37.8	7.3	3.53	0.75	547

\*Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 14 presents responses to survey item questions regarding Latino socioeconomic status. About 44 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the needs of low-income Latino residents are similar to those of low-income, non-Latino populations. About 16 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that most Latinos in their county (or state) are poor, whereas 29 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that such is the case. Approximately 55% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, implying that they do not know one way or the other. On the other hand, a moderate majority (69%) agreed or strongly agreed with the view that Latinos are represented in all socioeconomic strata in their county (or state).

About 19 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that most Latinos have low levels of education. Approximately 58 percent indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with that view, again implying that they are not familiar with the Latino population in their respective counties and states. About three-fourths of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that some members of the Latino community may be poor or lack formal education, but that they are generally hard-working and resourceful.

**Table 14. Perceived Socioeconomic Status of Latinos**

	<b>Percent of Respondents that</b>			<b>Mean ranking score*</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>	<b>Valid N</b>
	<b>Strongly agree or agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree or disagree</b>			
The needs of low-income Latino residents are similar to those of low income in the general population	44.3	25.0	30.6	3.16	0.98	555
There are Latinos of all socio-economic levels living in my county (state)	69.3	22.4	8.3	3.79	0.90	553
Most Latinos in my county (or state) are poor	15.7	55.0	29.2	2.85	0.73	545
Most Latinos in my county (or state) have low levels of education	18.8	57.8	23.4	2.94	0.71	547
Some members of the Latino community may be poor or lack formal education, but they are generally hard-working and resourceful	75.4	22.9	1.6	3.94	0.72	550

\*Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 15 displays the distribution of responses by percent to survey items regarding respondents' attitudes toward Latinos and immigrants. On immigration, about 17 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that new immigrants should understand "what it takes to survive in the U.S." before deciding to move here, whereas 38 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with that view. Approximately 45 percent did not have a clear position on the matter. About 90 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that there is little that they can learn from members of the Latino community. Further, about 76 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they are reluctant to develop programs for the Latino community because immigration is controversial.

Table 16 displays responses to survey questions regarding Latino community inclusion and impact. About 84 percent believe to some or much extent that residents trust Latinos who live in their county (or state).

**Table 15. Attitudes toward Latinos and Immigrants**

	<b>Percent of Respondents that</b>			<b>Mean ranking score*</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>	<b>Valid N</b>
	<b>Agree strongly or Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree strongly or Disagree</b>			
New immigrants should understand "what it takes to survive in the U.S." before deciding to move here	17.4	44.5	38.1	2.68	0.97	546
There is very little I can learn from members of the Latino community	0.9	9.2	89.9	1.7	0.67	545
I am reluctant to develop programs for the Latino community because immigration is controversial	2.3	22.0	75.7	1.99	0.79	545

\*Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

**Table 16. Perceptions of Latino Community Inclusion**

	<b>Percent indicating</b>				<b>Mean ranking score*</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>	<b>N</b>
	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Little</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Much</b>			
Do residents in your county (or state) trust Latinos who live there?	0.4	15.9	73.5	10.2	2.94	0.52	529
Are Latinos joining or creating local civic or social organizations in your community or county (state)?	8.1	35.8	48.5	7.5	2.55	0.75	530
Are Latinos becoming actively involved in community improvement activities in your county (state)?	10.3	41.4	41.8	6.5	2.44	0.76	526
Have Latino workers contributed to the economic health of your county (state)?	0.9	13.4	53.3	32.4	3.17	0.68	531
Are local leaders and residents working to make Latinos feel welcome in your county (state)?	4.8	27.6	58.4	9.3	2.72	0.70	526
Is your county (state) working to provide needed services to members of the Latino community?	3.0	26.8	60.1	10.1	2.77	0.66	526
Has the growth of Latinos created more conflicts among local residents and/or groups?	17.6	50.0	29.5	2.9	2.18	0.75	522

\*Scale: 1 = not at all, 2 = little, 3 = some, 4 = much

Table 16 also shows that about 86 percent of respondents believe to some or much extent that Latino workers contribute to the economic health of their county (or state). About 56 percent and 48 percent of respondents believe to some or much extent that Latinos are joining or creating local civic or social organizations in their respective community or county (state), and that they are actively involved in community improvement activities in their county (or state), respectively. Of interest is the 52 percent of respondents that indicated that Latinos are not involved or little involved in community improvement activities (Table 16).

About 68 percent and 70 percent of respondents believe to some or much extent that local leaders and residents are working to make Latinos feel welcome in their county (or state) and that their county (or state) is working to provide needed services to members of the Latino community, respectively. Close to one-third of respondents believe to some or much extent that the growth of Latinos created more conflicts among local residents and/or groups, whereas 50 percent indicated that little conflict was created and 18 percent indicated that there was no conflict at all (Table 16).

### Factor Analysis

Table 17 displays the results of principal components from factor analysis for selected survey items. Factor analysis was performed to reduce the number of items by combining them into composite scales (Kim and Mueller, 1978). Factor scales allow parsimonious analysis and presentation by combining multiple similar items into a single measure (Kim and Mueller, 1978). To confirm the validity and internal consistency of the scales, eigenvalues, factor loadings, and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  were evaluated. We considered only factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, factor loadings greater than 0.60, and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  greater than 0.60. All factor scales were computed as an average score of corresponding composite items.

The first factor scale represents respondents' perceptions about Latino community inclusion. Five items strongly loaded on that factor and describe the extent to which Latinos are 1) trusted, 2) join or create local civic or social organizations, 3) are actively involved in organizations, 4) are welcomed, and 5) receive needed services in their community.

**Table 17. Principal Components Factor Analysis for Selected Items from the Survey**

	<b>Factor loading</b>	<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>
<b>Latino Community Inclusion</b>		2.72	0.79
Do residents in your county (or state) trust Latinos who live there?	0.627		
Are Latinos joining or creating local civic or social organizations in your community or county (state)?	0.760		
Are Latinos becoming actively involved in community improvement activities in your county (state)?	0.805		
Are local leaders and residents working to make Latinos feel welcome in your county (state)?	0.779		
Is your county (state) working to provide needed services to members of the Latino community?	0.700		



	<b>Factor loading</b>	<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>
<b>Extension Should Capacity to Serve Latinos</b>		3.00	0.83
Extension educators should learn Spanish to better serve Latino populations.	.737		
Extension services should invest in hiring individuals that are bilingual to serve Latino populations.	.766		
Considering the current economic situation, devoting funds and resources to serve Latinos through Extension may be a good idea	.737		
Extension educators should learn more about the Latino culture in order to more effectively serve Latino populations In their area.	.824		
Extension agents should develop programs aimed at helping the Latino community.	.806		
<b>Personal Receptiveness toward Latinos</b>		1.94	.72
I enjoy interacting with persons whose cultural backgrounds differ from my own.	.828		
I am interested in working with the Latino community.	.803		
I am comfortable attending cultural celebrations held by the Latino community in my county (state).	.781		
<b>Welcoming the Latino Community</b>		2.96	0.88
Overall, most civic groups, churches, schools and businesses in my county (state) welcome the Latino community.	.866		
Most churches in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community.	.865		
Most schools in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community.	.861		
Most businesses in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community.	.849		
<b>Extension Outreach to the Latino Community</b>		2.57	0.81
I regularly interact with the Latino community.	.830		
I am actively involved in reaching out to the Latino community in my county (state).	.842		
When I develop a program, I usually have it translated into Spanish to facilitate use by the local Latino population.	.784		
When I develop a program, I work with members of the community, including the Latino community, to make sure it meets their needs and interests.	.743		
<b>Extension Unit Support for Latinos</b>		2.03	0.67
My Extension unit helps me to stay informed of new policies and procedures and changing state and federal laws that affect Latinos in my region.	.751		
I have been trained in adopting new strategies for dealing with mental illness, addiction, HIV/AIDS or incarceration in culturally	.661		

	<b>Factor loading</b>	<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>
competent ways that strengthen Latino communities.			
My Extension unit reaches out to and establishes connections with Latino communities as well as coalitions, councils, and other collaborative boards to examine issues facing Latino communities and seeks ways to reduce problems.	.624		
My Extension unit provides ongoing and well-crafted training opportunities for all levels of staff to learn and work with Latino communities.	.798		
<b>Awareness of Resources/Services for Latinos</b>		1.75	0.64
Key members of the Latino community in my region are aware of the resources offered by Cooperative Extension	.723		
I am familiar with other organizations that offer services to the Latino community in my region.	.794		
I don't know how to find or approach key partners that could help me work with the Latino community (reverse coded).	.771		
<b>Attitudes toward Latinos</b>		1.78	0.63
New immigrants should understand "what it takes to survive in the U.S." before deciding to move here	.717		
There is very little I can learn from members of the Latino community	.803		
I am reluctant to develop programs for the Latino community because immigration is controversial	.786		

The second factor scale represents Extension capacity to serve Latinos. Five items strongly loaded high on that factor: 1) Extension educators should learn Spanish; 2) Extension services should hire bilingual employees, 3) Extension should devote funds and resources to better serve the Latino community, 4) Extension educators should learn more about the Latino culture, and 5) Extension agents should develop programs aimed at helping the Latino community.

The third factor scale represents personal receptiveness toward Latinos. Three items loaded high on that factor: 1) Extension educators enjoy interacting with persons of different background than their own; 2) they are interested in working with the Latino community; and 3) they are comfortable attending cultural celebrations organized by the Latino community in their county (or state).

The fourth factor is about welcoming the Latino community. The following four items loaded high on that factor: 1) Overall most civic groups, churches, schools, and businesses in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community; 2) Most churches in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community, 3) Most schools in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community; and 4) Most businesses in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community.

The fifth factor scale is about Extension outreach to the Latino community. Four items loaded high on that factor: 1) I regularly interact with the Latino community; 2) I am actively

involved in reaching out to the Latino community; 3) When I develop a program, I usually have it translated into Spanish to facilitate use by local Latino population; and 4) When I develop a program, I work with members of the community, including the Latino community, to make sure it meets their needs and interests.

The sixth factor scale describes Extension unit support for Latinos. Four items loaded high on that factor: 1) My Extension unit helps me to stay informed of new policies and procedures and changing state and federal laws that affect Latinos in my region; 2) My Extension unit reaches out to and establishes connections with Latino communities as well as coalitions, councils, and other collaborative boards to examine issues facing Latino communities and seeks ways to reduce problems; 3) My Extension unit provides ongoing and well-crafted training opportunities for all levels of staff to learn and work with Latino communities; and 4) I have been trained in adopting new strategies for dealing with mental illness, addiction, HIV/AIDS or incarceration in culturally competent ways that strengthen Latino communities.

The seventh factor scale describes awareness of resources and services that are available for Latinos. Three items loaded high on that factor: 1) Key members of the Latino community in my region are aware of the resources offered by Cooperative Extension; 2) I am familiar with other organizations that offer services to the Latino community in my region, and 3) I don't know how to find or approach key partners that could help me work with the Latino community (reverse coded).

The eighth factor scale describes respondents' attitudes toward Latinos. Three items loaded high on that factor: 1) New immigrants should understand "what it takes to survive in the U.S.," before deciding to move here, 2) There is very little I can learn from members of the Latino community, and 3) I am reluctant to develop programs for the Latino community because immigration is controversial. Table 17 presents the item loading levels, Eigenvalues, and Cronbach's alpha for each of the 8 factors. In factor analysis, eigenvalue greater than 1 are worthy of analysis, and Cronbach's alpha level, a measure of internal consistency, of .60 or greater is deemed high enough for analysis.

### Bivariate Analysis

Tables 18, 19 and 20 present the means of factor scales by state, race/ethnicity, and sex. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the differences between means across categories of state, race/ethnicity, and sex variables were performed and significance levels were assessed using F-tests. The results in Table 18 show that there are significant differences between the means of all factor scales by state, except for welcoming the Latino community scale. Illinois (2.8) and Nebraska (2.8) are highest among the states with regard to Latino community inclusion, and North and South Dakota are lowest (2.1). The other states have a mean of 2.7, except for Ohio, which has a mean of 2.4. In general, the perceptions of inclusion are centered at the mid-point of the scale, indicating the inclusion is about "average."

Respondents in most states tend toward the view that Extension should do more to serve Latino populations, not only building capacity, but also allocating resources. Personal receptiveness has, on average, the highest means across the factors, with respondents tending to view themselves as open and receptive toward Latinos. The means for Welcoming the Latino Community are around 3.6, just over a point above the mid-point of the scale. The means for Outreach to the Latino Community range from a low of 2.5 for the Dakotas, and a high of 3.2 for Iowa, where the work of Extension educators includes the programs *Juntos para una Mejor Educaci3n* and *Familias Fuertes*.

Table 18. Means for Composite Factor Scales<sup>+</sup> by State

	Latino Community** Inclusion**		Extension should Develop Capacity to Serve Latinos***		Personal Receptiveness toward Latinos***		Welcoming the Latino Community <sup>ns</sup>		Extension Outreach to the Latino Community**		Extension Unit Support for Latinos***		Awareness of Resources/ Services for Latinos*		Attitudes toward Latinos**	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Illinois	2.8	0.4	3.8	0.5	4.1	0.6	3.6	0.5	3.0	0.8	2.6	0.6	2.8	0.8	2.1	0.6
Indiana	2.7	0.5	3.9	0.7	4.3	0.5	3.5	0.7	2.9	0.9	2.5	0.7	2.7	1.0	2.2	0.8
Iowa	2.7	0.4	3.8	0.7	4.2	0.6	3.7	0.7	3.2	0.9	2.5	0.6	2.7	0.8	1.9	0.7
Kansas	2.7	0.4	3.4	0.7	3.7	0.8	3.6	0.5	2.8	1.0	2.4	0.6	3.1	0.8	2.2	0.7
Michigan	2.7	0.6	3.9	0.7	4.1	0.6	3.6	0.7	3.0	0.9	2.6	0.8	2.7	0.9	1.9	0.6
Missouri	2.7	0.5	3.4	0.7	3.8	0.7	3.6	0.6	2.7	0.8	2.8	0.6	3.0	0.7	2.2	0.6
Nebraska	2.8	0.5	3.7	0.6	4.0	0.7	3.7	0.7	2.9	0.9	2.5	0.5	2.9	0.8	2.1	0.6
Ohio	2.4	0.5	3.8	0.7	4.1	0.6	3.5	0.6	2.7	1.3	2.3	0.8	2.9	0.8	2.1	0.8
North Dakota/ South Dakota	2.1	0.5	3.4	0.9	3.7	0.8	3.7	0.8	2.5	0.9	2.5	0.9	3.4	0.7	2.1	0.6

+ Range from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree.

\*\*\* p < 0.001; \*\* p < 0.01; \* p < 0.05; ns= not significant.

**Table 19. Means for Composite Factor Scales<sup>†</sup> by Race/Ethnicity**

	Latino Community Inclusion <sup>†</sup>		Extension Develop Capacity to Serve Latinos <sup>***</sup>		Personal Receptiveness toward Latinos <sup>***</sup>		Welcoming the Latino Community <sup>*</sup>		Extension Outreach to the Latino Community <sup>***</sup>		Extension Support for Latinos <sup>*</sup>		Awareness of Resources/ Services for Latinos <sup>***</sup>		Attitudes toward Latinos <sup>†</sup>	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
White or European American	2.7	0.5	3.5	0.6	3.9	0.6	3.6	0.6	2.7	0.8	2.6	0.6	2.9	0.7	2.1	0.6
Black or African American	2.9	0.5	4.1	0.6	4.4	0.5	3.9	0.6	3.2	0.9	2.9	1.1	2.7	1.0	1.9	0.6
Latino or Hispanic	2.9	0.6	4.3	0.6	4.7	0.5	3.8	0.9	4.3	0.9	2.8	0.9	2.1	0.8	2.0	0.9
Other Race	2.6	0.6	3.3	0.9	4.0	0.9	3.8	0.7	2.9	1.0	2.4	0.6	3.1	1.0	2.4	0.8

<sup>†</sup> Range from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree.

\*\*\* p < 0.001; \*\* p < 0.01; \* p < 0.05; † p < 0.10; ns= not significant.

**Table 20. Means for Composite Factor Scales<sup>†</sup> by Sex**

	Latino Community Inclusion <sup>ns</sup>		Extension should Develop Capacity to Serve Latinos*		Personal Receptiveness toward Latinos <sup>ns</sup>		Welcoming the Latino Community <sup>ns</sup>		Extension outreach to the Latino Community*		Extension Unit Support for Latinos <sup>ns</sup>		Awareness of Resources/ Services for Latinos <sup>ns</sup>		Attitudes toward Latinos <sup>ns</sup>	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Male	2.6	0.5	3.5	0.7	3.9	0.7	3.6	0.6	2.7	0.8	2.7	0.6	2.9	0.8	2.1	0.6
Female	2.7	0.5	3.6	0.7	4.0	0.5	3.6	0.6	2.9	0.8	2.6	0.7	2.8	0.8	2.1	0.6

+ Range from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree.

\*\*\* p < 0.001; \*\* p < 0.01; \* p < 0.05; † p < 0.10; ns= not significance.

The means for Extension Unit Support for Latinos hover around the mid-point of the scale, with a high of 2.8 for Missouri and a low of 2.5 for the Dakotas. The means for Awareness of Resources/Services for Latinos tend to cluster just above the mid-point of the scale, with 2.7 being the lowest in Indiana and Iowa and 3.4 the highest in the Dakotas, indicating that there is a need to bridge the gaps between Extension programs and Latino communities. Finally, across the states, the means for Attitudes toward Latinos are lowest among the factors, but because the items are negative, the results tend toward the positive, meaning that respondents do not agree with the items. If the items were all reverse-coded, the means would average around 4 points.

The results in Table 19 show that there are significant differences between the means of all the scales by race/ethnicity, except perhaps for Latino Community Inclusion and Attitudes toward Latinos. Interestingly, the means for Latinos (2.9) and African Americans (2.9) are slightly higher than that for White Americans (2.7) and Other Race (2.6), even as they are just above the mid-point of the scale. A similar pattern is evident with regard to Extension should Develop Capacity to Serve Latinos, with Latinos (4.3) having the highest mean, followed by African Americans (4.1), then White Americans (3.5), who are less likely to perceive the need for increasing resources to serve Latino communities. Similar patterns are evident for Personal Receptiveness toward Latinos, Welcoming the Latino Community (with African Americans having the highest mean, 3.9), Extension Outreach to Latino Community, and Extension Unit Support for Latinos (with African Americans again having the highest mean, 2.9). With regard to Awareness of Resources/Services for Latinos, Other Race has the highest mean and Latinos have the lowest (2.1), indicating that Latinos perceive a gap in the delivery of services to Latino communities by Extension programs.

The results in Table 20 show that only the means for Extension should Develop Capacity to Serve Latinos and Extension Outreach to Latino Community scales differ significantly by sex, with women having slightly higher means than men. In general, the view is that Latino Community Inclusion is limited and Extension should increase its capabilities to better serve Latino communities. Respondents see themselves as being open and receptive toward Latinos, and see local institutions as relative welcoming of them. They also see Extension Outreach and Extension Unit Support to Latino communities as moderate, consistent with the view that more can be done. They tend to see moderate awareness of programs and providers on the part of both providers and Latino clients. Finally, they tend not to hold negative views of Latino immigrants.

## **CONCLUSION**

The overall goal of the study was to assess the needs of Cooperative Extension Outreach Educators in the Midwest region as they seek to enhance their skills to work with culturally diverse populations. A majority of Extension educators in the study are not fluent in Spanish and indicate experiencing a language barrier in attempting to meet the needs of their Spanish-speaking clients. However, most are interested in developing their skills and knowledge to better serve Latinos. Further, many respondents reported being familiar with organizations that offer services to Latino communities and are interested in working with those organizations in order to reach out to their Latino clients. Finally, the overwhelming majority of respondents do not see Extension staff as adequately trained to serve Latino communities, and most perceive the need for Extension units to allocate more resources to serving Latino communities.

Most respondents believe that community institutions, especially schools, welcome the

Latino community and that the majority of residents trusts Latinos and believes that they contribute to the economic health of their county (or state). Many believe that community leaders and residents work to make Latinos feel welcome and believe their county (or state) offers needed services to members of the Latino community.

In terms of actually serving the Latino community, a small proportion of Extension educators (about one in five) regularly interacts with the Latino community and is actively involved in reaching out to the Latino community. Some have translated program materials into Spanish to facilitate outreach to the Latino community, involved members of the community, including Latinos, in developing their programs, and worked with other agencies to address the range of services needed for Latinos. While direct translation of materials is certainly helpful and is a major step in the right direction, an understanding of culture is also very important, and many see the need to learn more about Latino cultures.

According to respondents, a small proportion of Extension units inform their Extension educators about new policies, procedures, and laws that may affect Latinos, provide well-crafted training opportunities to learn and work effectively with Latino communities, and reach out to and establish connections with Latino communities, coalitions, councils, and other collaborative boards to address issues facing Latinos and ways to reduce their problems.

## LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of this study is that the data were drawn from a convenience sample and are, therefore, not representative of all Extension educators in the Midwest. Another limitation is that Extension educators from the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin did not respond to the survey. Despite these limitations, the results from this study shed light on the perceived needs of and perspectives of Extension educators relative to Latino communities. The data are also helpful in determining what Extension units could do to meet the perceived learning and support needs of Extension educators in the Midwest in order to be able to serve Latino communities.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The population of Latinos continues to grow in the Midwest; however, programs and policies are not keeping pace with the needs of the community. There is a high interest among Extension educators in partnering and developing programs that meet the needs of Latino populations. Perceived barriers include: lack of organizational support, language barriers, and limited awareness by Extension staff of Latino communities and their needs.

- 1) There is a strong interest among Extension educators to work with Latino communities.
  - a. Long-term programs should be developed to build diversity competent cadres of Extension educators in the Midwest.
  - b. Extension employees should be given diversity competence training on how to effectively and constructively engage and serve Latino communities.
    - i. Existing diversity training programs should be evaluated to see what impact they have had relative to Latinos and actions taken



accordingly.

- c. Incentives should be provided to Extension employees to build coalitions and partnerships with local Latino and Latino-focused community organizations.
- 2) Extension educators and employees believe that there is a lack of organizational support for working with Latino populations.
    - a. Extension leaders should develop diversity competent skills, stay informed of policies and directives that affect the Latino population in their state, and allocate resources to capacity to serve Latino communities.
    - b. Unit directors should take stronger leadership roles in developing and implementing programmatic approaches to enhance the capabilities of Extension educators and employees to meet the needs of the growing Latino population.
  - 3) Extension educators believe that language barriers inhibit program development and implementation.
    - a. Extension leaders should increase the number of bilingual staff and educators to more effectively meet the needs of Latino communities.
    - b. Extension leaders should promote multicultural work environments to ensure that Latino and bilingual employees feel included in the workplace, even when they speak Spanish at work.
  - 4) Extension educators feel unprepared to work with Latino populations.
    - a. Extension units should provide training for their staff members that will enhance their knowledge of Latino communities in their state.
    - b. Extension units should host and support community forums focusing on Latino community issues as a way of increasing employee understanding and to expand opportunities to better assess and meet community needs through partnerships and collaborative initiatives.
  - 5) Most Extension educators believe they can reach out to Latino community leaders and organizations, but may not have the social capital needed to do so or may not be engaged in doing so at a meaningful level.
    - a. Project-based partnerships should encourage alignment of Extension units' and educators' priorities and practices with the actual needs of Latino communities.
    - b. A compilation of best practices should be shared by Extension leaders across the Midwest to help Extension educators establish meaningful connections and sustainable relationships with Latino communities.
  - 6) Most Extension educators and employees want and perceive the need to serve Latino populations.
    - a. Communities of practice focused on serving Latino populations should be developed within and across states in the Midwest to engage and support

- Extension educators in learning about and implementing best practices.
- b. A Latino news section should be added to newsletters and internal Extension communications materials to inform educators and employees about relevant issues relating to services and needs.

## REFERENCES

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# Appendix A. Survey Questionnaire

## Extension's Role in Serving Latinos in the Midwest

### Welcome

Assessing Learning Needs among Extension Employees to serve Latino Communities in the North Central Region

You are invited to participate in a survey focusing on the Cooperative Extension Service's role in serving Latinos in the Midwest. The survey is undertaken in hopes of enhancing our understanding of the nature and extent of activities currently being delivered to this important population segment by Extension educators. Moreover, we are interested in capturing your insights on the types of new strategies that Extension might consider as it seeks to enhance its work targeted to Latino/Hispanic stakeholders.

We expect that completing the questionnaire will take less than 10 minutes. Please know that the information you provide will be anonymous and will be combined with the responses we receive from other Extension educators completing this brief questionnaire.

### We first would like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

1. In what state do you currently work as part of Extension? (Please provide the two letter abbreviation for your state)

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Is the majority of your work conducted at the state or county level?
  - State level
  - County level

3. What is the name of the county in which the majority of your work is conducted? (Remember we will keep this confidential)

\_\_\_\_\_

4. In your current Extension position, are you:
  - On campus
  - Off campus

5. Which of the following best represents your current Extension position?
- County educator/agent
  - Multi-county/district/area educator / agent
  - County Extension director or equivalent
  - Multi-county/district/area Extension director or equivalent
  - County support staff or assistant
  - State specialist
  - County level program assistant or associate
  - State level program assistant or associate
  - Office Staff Personnel
  - Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
6. About how many years have you worked in Extension?
- Less than 1 year
  - About 2 years
  - 3-5 years
  - 6-10 years
  - 11-15 years
  - 16-20 years
  - 21-25 years
  - 26 years or more
  - I don't work in extension, I work for: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Does your position focus specifically on Latinos or Spanish-speaking populations?
- Yes
  - No
8. Do you have volunteers working with Latinos or Spanish-speaking populations?
- No (Skip to question 10)
  - Yes (Go to question 9)
9. If you have volunteers working with Latinos or Spanish-speaking populations, do most of those volunteers speak Spanish?
- Yes
  - No
10. In relation to extension work, on which of these areas do you focus your efforts (Indicate up to three areas)?
- 1. 4-H clubs
  - 2. alternative agriculture programming (direct marketing, ag. tourism, valued-added)
  - 3. animal agriculture programs
  - 4. bio and ag engineering
  - 5. child centered agricultural programs
  - 6. child centered nutrition programs (e.g., 4-H EFNEP)
  - 7. child educational support & school programs

- 8. commercial horticulture, nursery, & turf programs
  - 9. community development/leadership programming
  - 10. disaster preparedness/response programming
  - 11. entomology & biological sciences
  - 12. entrepreneurship / ag economics / farm business management
  - 13. farm health & safety programs
  - 14. field crop programs, sustainable agriculture, & specialty crop programming
  - 15. financial & resource management programming (e.g., banking, credit, debt)
  - 16. food safety & processing (e.g., ServeSafe)
  - 17. housing & household safety programming
  - 18. industrial extension
  - 19. integrated pest management programming
  - 20. nutrition / exercise / healthy lifestyle programming
  - 21. parenting / child development programming
  - 22. physical health programming (e.g., asthma, diabetes)
  - 23. summer camps or summer programs
  - 24. water quality related programming
  - 25. other environmental stewardship programming
  - 26. Other (please specify):
- 

11. Please indicate your experience with travel to Spanish-speaking countries in the Americas (e.g., Mexico, Central or South American countries). (Please check all that apply)

- none
  - occasional vacation travel
  - student exchange or service program
  - short-term (<1 month) professional development or community service experience
  - medium-term (2 to 6 months) professional development/service/residence
  - long-term (>6 months) assignment/service/residence
  - other (please specify):
- 

12. In terms of your service area, what is the approximate size of your county's (or state's) population?

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13. In terms of your service area, please estimate the approximate number of Hispanics/Latinos currently living in your county (or state)?

- 1-1,000
  - 1,001-2,500
  - 2,501-5,000
  - 5,001-7,500
  - 7,501-10,000
  - 10,001-15,000
  - 15,001-20,000
  - 20,001-30,000
  - 30,001-40,000
  - Other (please specify):
- 

14. Overall, in terms of your service area, about how many Latino ADULTS does Cooperative Extension staff in your county (or state) serve each year? (Your best estimate is fine);  
Latino ADULTS (19 years or older) Served through Regular Programming

- None
- 1-10
- 11-25
- 26-50
- 51-75
- 76-100
- 101-150
- more than 150

15. Overall, in terms of your service area, about how many Latino CHILDREN and YOUTH (18 and younger) does Cooperative Extension staff serve each year in your county (or state)? (Your best estimate is fine);

- None
- 1-10
- 11-25
- 26-50
- 51-75
- 76-100
- 101-150
- more than 150



16. Did you answer “None” to BOTH of the previous questions (13 and 14)?

- Yes (If yes, you don’t have to complete the remainder of the questionnaire because you don’t work with Latinos; when you hit next, you will be taken to the end to submit your responses).
- No (Please continue completing the questionnaire by hitting next).

17. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I regularly interact with the Latino community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Key members of the Latino community in my region are aware of the resources offered by Cooperative Extension.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The needs of low-income Latino residents are similar to those of low-income in the general population.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am familiar with other organizations that offer services to the Latino community in my region.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Latino community in my county is reluctant to seek help from outsiders (that is, from those outside their ethnic community).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am actively involved in reaching out to the Latino community in my county.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am comfortable attending cultural celebrations held by the Latino community in my county (or state).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I develop a program, I usually have it translated into Spanish to facilitate use by the local Latino population.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extension educators should learn Spanish to better serve Latino populations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our county extension staff is well prepared to work with the Latino community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Latino community members are more of a burden than a benefit to my county (state).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extension services should invest in hiring individuals that are bilingual to serve Latino populations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Considering the current economic situation, devoting funds and resources to serve Latinos through extension may not be a good idea.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extension educators should learn about the Latino culture in order to more effectively serve Latino populations in their area.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are Latinos of all socio-economic levels living in my county (or state).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Overall, most civic groups, churches, schools and businesses in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most churches in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most schools in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most businesses in my county (or state) welcome the Latino community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most Latinos in my county (or state) are poor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most Latinos in my county (or state) have low levels of education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New immigrants should understand "what it takes to survive in the U.S." before deciding to move here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is very little I can learn from members of the Latino community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy interacting with persons whose cultural backgrounds differ from my own.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extension agents should develop programs aimed at helping the Latino community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I develop a program, I work with members of the community, including the Latino community, to make sure it meets their needs and interests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am interested in working with the Latino community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't know how to find or approach key partners that could help me work with the Latino community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some members of the Latino community may be poor or lack formal education, but they are generally hard-working and resourceful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am reluctant to develop programs for the Latino community because immigration is controversial.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I don't have support from Extension leaders in my state to focus part of my educational programs to Latinos in my county (or state).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My Extension unit helps me to stay informed of new policies and procedures and changing state and federal laws that affect Latinos in my region.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been trained in adopting new strategies for dealing with mental illness, addiction, HIV/AIDS or incarceration in culturally competent ways that strengthen Latino communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My Extension unit reaches out to and establishes connections with Latino communities as well as coalitions, councils, and other collaborative boards to examine issues facing Latino communities and seeks ways to reduce problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

As an Extension employee I have worked with public and private agency partnerships to address the range of service needs among Latinos.

- 

My Extension unit provides ongoing and well-crafted training opportunities for all levels of staff to learn and work with Latino communities.

- 

18. We would like your opinions about the way Latinos are viewed by people living in your county (or state). Please respond to the following questions. TO WHAT EXTENT . . .

	Much	Some	Little	Not at All
Do residents in your county (or state) trust Latinos who live there?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are Latinos joining or creating local civic or social organizations in your community or county (state)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are Latinos becoming actively involved in community improvement activities in your county (state)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have Latino workers contributed to the economic health of your county (state)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are local leaders and residents working to make Latinos feel welcome In your county?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is your county (or state) working to provide needed services to members of the Latino community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has the growth of Latinos created more conflicts among local residents and/or groups?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. What specific educational resources do you most need in order to strengthen and/or expand your efforts to address the needs of Latinos in your county (or state)?

- Spanish for social service professionals
- Readily available Translation services
- Cultural competency training opportunities

Other resources (Please Specify):

\_\_\_\_\_

20. How interested are you in collaborating with Latino-serving organizations in your area to reach out to Latinos?

- Very Interested
- Interested
- Somewhat Interested
- Not Interested

21. How often is speaking and writing Spanish an obstacle that you face in meeting the needs of Spanish speakers?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

22. How often is speaking and writing Spanish an obstacle that your unit faces in meeting the needs of Spanish speakers?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

23. Which of the following categories best describes your Spanish reading, writing and speaking abilities?

	Poor	Average	Fluent
Reading:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speaking:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Please indicate your gender (sex):

- Female
- Male

25. Please indicate your primary race/ethnicity:

- White/Euro-American
- Latino/Latina
- Black or African-American
- Asian and/or Pacific Islander
- Native American and/or Alaska Native
- Other (Please Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of NCERA 216 members, we thank you for your participation in this survey of “Assessing Learning Needs among Extension Employees to serve Latino Communities in the North Central Region.”

