



Toward a Statewide Agenda on Latino Issues in Michigan

A Summary Report on the Statewide Summit on Latino Issues in Michigan

April 2010

ABSTRACT

This is a summary of the *Summit on Latino Issues in Michigan: Toward a Statewide Agenda*, sponsored by the Julian Samora Research Institute and held at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing, Michigan, on July 31, 2009. Nearly 60 individuals representing different institutional sectors and geographical areas of Michigan came together for one day to work collaboratively on identifying and prioritizing the challenges facing Latinos in Michigan. Summit participants identified the following issues as key challenges for Latinos in Michigan and provided some suggestions for how they can be addressed. 1) Education--the Latino community must engage parents in the education of their children; 2) Immigration Rights--anti-immigration sentiments are producing hostilities against Latino communities, profiling by ICE and law enforcement officials that must be addressed; 3) Health and Healthcare--there is a high percentage of diabetes, heart disease, and obesity in the Latino population; 4) Civic Engagement--the Latino voice is needed in policy and decision-making; 5) Media Portrayal of Latinos--for the most part is negative and affects the perceptions of the general public; 6) Economic Development--is extremely important to Latino entrepreneurs striving to succeed in the US and support systems are needed that will reach Latinos and provide services; 7) Jobs and Employment--people need to obtain/provide the basic needs of life for themselves, their families, and their communities; 8) Latino-focused Statewide Network--is needed to provide a venue for working collaboratively to improve the status of Latinos in Michigan; 9) Gender relations--Latino family traditions and culture have historically proven to strengthen the community and family by following a unique set of norms and codes; and 10) Civil Rights and Discrimination--racism impacts every aspect of life, resulting in a segregated society that denies opportunities to what will soon be the largest population segments in the nation.

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