

Engaging with Low-Income Latinx Communities in California:
Best Practices in Response to Wildfires and COVID-19

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Executive Summary

It is critical for California's government agencies and nonprofits to understand how to engage effectively with Latinx communities during crises such as wildfires and COVID-19. In addition to comprising almost 40% of the California population, Latinxs are disproportionately represented in essential services including farmwork. Thus, the health of California hinges on the health of Latinxs.

The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Latinx communities has been well-documented. Nationally, the age-adjusted death rate from COVID-19 for Latinxs is 3.3 times higher than that for non-Latinx Whites. In California, the COVID-19 death rate for Latinxs is 4 times higher than for non-Latinx Whites.

The prevalence of low socioeconomic status, crowded housing, and limited English proficiency within Latinx communities increases their vulnerability. Additionally, fear of government often prevents Latinxs from accessing critical services during a crisis. Farmworkers are an especially vulnerable subset of California's Latinx communities, due to limited English proficiency, non-traditional work hours, and frequent residence in rural areas without access to adequate transportation. In California, 92% of farmworkers are Latinx. Farmworkers are also more likely to experience crowded living arrangements and excessive exposure to wildfire smoke during outdoor physical labor. Farmworkers rarely have access to the supplies – such as N95 masks or mask-respirators – necessary to protect themselves when the air quality is unhealthy. Additionally, many farmworkers do not know their rights, or are afraid to exert their rights, to ask not to work on days when doing so jeopardizes their health.

This report explores two main questions: Which factors make Latinx communities vulnerable to crises such as wildfires and COVID-19? And what can be done to increase the resilience of Latinx communities during these crises? The report focuses on California, and in particular on Sonoma and Napa counties' strategies for improving service to Latinx communities. These two counties have experienced multiple wildfires during the past decade, allowing for the development and refinement of crisis response strategies over time. A main goal of this report is to document these strategies, as well as other effective practices from around the state, so that other regions can learn how to better serve Latinx communities during disasters and crises. Initiatives described range from the *promotores* model, to renter's insurance education, to the coalition of Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD).

This report synthesizes findings from a literature review that incorporated over 160 sources, primarily newspaper articles and documents by nonprofits and think tanks. Additionally, over 15 interviews were conducted with individuals who work for Latinx-serving community-based organizations (CBOs), as well as with government officials and leaders of nonprofits and coalitions focused on disaster preparedness and response. The best practices collected in the report fall into three main categories: (1) communication, (2) addressing fear of government, and (3) coordinating across nonprofits and local governments.

Communication – The most foundational component of effective communication is using a language well understood by the target audience. Especially during emergencies, translation of English content is critical. Although most translation involves creating Spanish versions of English content, it's also important to remember that not all Latinxs speak Spanish – some speak indigenous languages such as Mixteco, Zapoteco, and Triqui. There is also a very wide range of reading levels within the Latinx community: while some low-income Latinx immigrants have graduate degrees, others may have only a 2nd or 3rd grade education. Applicants for various services often must navigate complicated legal systems or fill out paperwork with dense text that can be difficult to comprehend even for native English speakers. Thus by reducing the textual/legal burden¹ required to apply for various programs, government bodies can more clearly and concisely convey information about an emergency. Audiovisual methods of communication are effective because they can accommodate a wide range of languages and reading levels. In Latinx communities, combining digital and in-person communication methods is key because of differing levels of digital connectedness and varying access to transportation. During the COVID-19 pandemic it can be dangerous to organize community meetings, so in-person contact is often best at places where people are already gathered, such as food distribution sites. Another effective approach to reaching Latinx communities involves using *promotores*: community health workers who are from the same community they are serving. The *promotores* model is built around community members serving other community members; *promotores* are trained and compensated for disseminating information and materials within the Latinx communities they belong to. Ideally, *promotores* are also involved in building these information campaigns around issues they see in their community – issues that could range from food insecurity, to the threat of eviction, to a lack of emergency preparedness.

Fear of Government – Nearly half of Latinx US citizens fear deportation for themselves, a family member, or a close friend. Distrust of government can have dire consequences when it prevents Latinxs from accessing resources that could benefit them. Hesitancy to share personal information with government-affiliated organizations excludes Latinxs from using services and support mechanisms such as hospitals, food subsidies, and Red Cross shelters. Fear of

¹ For elaboration on 'textual/legal burden' see the first paragraph of "Textual/Legal Burden," beginning on page 19.

government can be overcome by delivering information and services through trusted sources within the Latinx community. Government agencies have successfully collaborated with CBOs to carry out information campaigns on topics such as the U.S. Census and disaster preparedness. CBOs and community stakeholders can also help residents of Latinx communities to understand their eligibility for various programs. In particular, these organizations can clarify which government services will cause one to be considered a "public charge," which can make a person ineligible for lawful permanent residence.

Collaboration – Collaboration across government agencies and CBOs elevates the quality of services provided to Latinx communities and facilitates communication and program implementation during times of crisis. By creating a coalition, CBOs serving the same population can communicate about residents' needs and coordinate so as to provide more comprehensive services. The *Sí Se Puede* collective – which brings together five CBOs that serve the predominantly-Latinx Mayfair neighborhood of San Jose – provides an excellent example of this kind of coordination. Larger-scale forms of collaboration across nonprofits and government agencies are demonstrated by the Tulare County Community Care Coalition and the Napa Valley Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD). This kind of formalized collaboration prevents duplicated efforts and promotes knowledge-sharing. Through collaborating with community stakeholders and CBOs, government agencies gain access to the cultural competency and on-the-ground expertise of these community-based actors. By facilitating communication between community members, CBOs, and local governments, collaboration enables the development of more informed and better-resourced programs.

The report contains three sets of recommendations:

Reaching Latinx Communities Through Trusted Sources – As trusted sources of information, CBOs, community stakeholders, and *promotores* are excellent partners for serving Latinx communities. These actors thoroughly understand the communities where they are based, and can thus design tailored programs around issue areas that are highly relevant to the populations they serve. They also play an important role as guides that inform residents about various services, their eligibility for these programs, and the associated risks. Governments and national nonprofits may need to relinquish some visibility in Latinx communities in order to create space for trusted community stakeholders to be highly visible on the front lines.

Multi-pronged approach for information dissemination – Communicating important information within Latinx communities requires a multi-pronged approach, such that content is shared in multiple languages and modalities (text, audio, video), both online and in-person, and at various locations and times of day. Using multiple tools and approaches is helpful because the Latinx community is so diverse. By consulting with people who know the community well,

organizations and agencies can identify frequented places and trusted messengers that can become effective vehicles to convey information clearly and competently.

Communication and Coordination Across Organizations – Finally, coordination across organizations and agencies is critical to efficiently serve Latinx communities during times of crisis. By building a coalition, multiple organizations serving the same population are afforded the opportunity to delegate responsibilities, form contingency plans, and stay in contact with one another throughout a crisis. Coordination also enables service providers to “layer” relevant services for vulnerable populations. For instance, if someone is in line for food distribution, one could also provide them with information pamphlets about government food service programs or distribute N95 masks.

Introduction

As wildfires and other climate-based disasters become more prevalent, California nonprofits, government agencies, and community stakeholders must find ways to coordinate and communicate effectively around preparedness, recovery, and response. Latinx communities face a unique set of circumstances and accompanying challenges which policymakers and nonprofits ought to keep in mind as they attempt to better serve all Californians. This report outlines some best practices for serving Latinxs during times of crisis, particularly those crises associated with wildfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many, though certainly not all, Latinx communities in California are low-income with a high percentage of families with mixed immigration status. This report focuses on low-income Latinx immigrant communities, which are often referred to herein with the shorthand of “Latinx communities.”

Disproportionate Impacts of COVID-19 on Latinx Communities

A June 2020 analysis by staff at the Brookings Institution found that the age-adjusted death rate for Latinxs is 2.5 times higher than for Whites.² Identifying and remedying the sources of this disparity in COVID-19 cases is critical to ensuring the health of Latinx and non-Latinx communities alike.

The magnitude of California’s Latinx population makes addressing COVID-19’s disproportionate impact on Latinxs a top priority. As of June 24, 2020, Latinxs comprised 38.9% of the California population, but constituted 56.2% of cases.³ In virus hotspots throughout the state, COVID-19 cases have clustered in low-income Latinx communities. Over a third of the first 100 COVID-19 deaths in Santa Clara County occurred in Latinx neighborhoods, and the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on Latinxs have continued past the first set of cases, and across the entire state. A June 17, 2020 report found that in San Diego County, Latinxs accounted for 67% of the nearly ten thousand COVID-19 cases with known race or ethnicity, despite comprising only 34% of the County’s population.⁴ In the Bay Area as well as Southern

² Reeves, T. F., Sarah Reber, and Richard V. (2020, June 16). Race gaps in COVID-19 deaths are even bigger than they appear. *Brookings*.
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/06/16/race-gaps-in-COVID-19-deaths-are-even-bigger-than-they-appear/>

³ *Race ethnicity*. (2020, June 24). California Department of Public Health.
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Race-Ethnicity.aspx>

⁴ Álvarez, J. A., & Office, C. of S. D. C. (2020, June 17). Latinos More Impacted by COVID-19. *San Diego County News Center*. <https://www.countynewscenter.com/latinos-more-impacted-by-COVID-19/>

California, Latinxs are one of the largest and most at-risk racial groups. A study conducted between April 25 and 28, 2020 at a COVID-19 testing site in the Mission district of San Francisco, found that while Latinxs made up 44% of those tested, they comprised over 99% of positive test results for COVID-19.⁵ In San Mateo County, Latinxs account for 46% of confirmed cases as of June 16, 2020,⁶ but only 24.3% of the County population.⁷

Disproportionate Impacts of Wildfires on Latinx Communities

The difficulty of evacuating and recovering from a fire is often much greater for Latinx families, due to higher rates of limited English proficiency (LEP), less access to bureaucratic and legal systems, and frequent financial insecurity. In California, Latinxs have the highest poverty rate of the major ethnic groups,⁸ and a survey conducted in 2019 found that 43% of Bay Area Latinxs had less than 400 dollars in savings.⁹ The financial burden from COVID-19 and wildfire damage is much greater for low-income families, which are disproportionately Latinx. Additionally, Latinxs have very high rates of LEP: they comprise 63% of the LEP population in the US and only 12% of the English proficient population.¹⁰ Linguistically and culturally appropriate communication is of utmost importance during wildfires, as these disasters can be life-threatening. In order to help the state's most vulnerable populations survive crisis-induced income shocks, emergency service providers must be well equipped to anticipate challenges facing low-income Latinx communities and to support residents during preparedness, response, and recovery phases.

Wildfire smoke threatens the health of predominantly-Latinx farmworkers across the state. California authorities have repeatedly granted growers exceptions to evacuation orders, allowing farmworkers to continue harvesting through dangerous wildfire-smoke conditions. Few farmworkers receive N95 masks from their employers. Even when PPE is provided, the fact that farmworkers are paid using a piece-rate system disincentivizes workers from wearing a mask that may slow them down, and can lead farmworkers to continue harvesting through

⁵ "S.F. Latinos Account for 99% in a Corona Virus Testing at Mission District." *LatinBayArea.Com*, 9 May 2020, <http://latinbayarea.com/2020/05/08/s-f-latinos-account-for-99-in-a-corona-virus-testing-inside-mission-district/>.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ *U. S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: San Mateo County, California*. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2020, from [https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sanmateocountycalifornia?](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sanmateocountycalifornia?_lang=en)

⁸ Poverty in California. (n.d.). *Public Policy Institute of California*. Retrieved August 2, 2020, from <https://www.ppic.org/publication/poverty-in-california/>

⁹ Huge number of Bay Area residents couldn't afford a \$400 emergency before coronavirus. (2020, May 14). *The Mercury News*. <https://www.mercurynews.com/huge-number-of-bay-area-residents-couldnt-afford-a-400-emergency-before-corona-virus>

¹⁰ Batalova, Jeanne, and Jie Zong. "The Limited English Proficient Population in the United States in 2013." *Migrationpolicy.org*, 7 July 2015, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/limited-english-proficient-population-united-states-2013>.

legally-mandated lunch and rest breaks. The result is that farmworkers are often breathing heavily under very hazardous atmospheric conditions. Inhaling high levels of PM2.5 associated with wildfire smoke is incredibly hazardous for workers' long-term health,¹¹ as it increases long-term risks of respiratory and cardiovascular illness.¹²

Latinx farmworkers in grape-growing regions can also lose income due to crop damage from wildfire smoke. In Sonoma and Napa Counties, wildfire smoke releases phenols which leave a "smoke taint" on grapes that can threaten a season's crop.¹³ Some vintners choose not to harvest at all from vineyards that have been exposed to heavy, prolonged smoke.¹⁴ The greatest risk of smoke taint occurs when grapes are exposed to wildfire smoke between ripening and harvest; the timing of the August 2020 California fires posed a threat to the majority of grapes which were harvested in September.¹⁵ When vintners choose not to harvest due to smoke tint, farmworkers can end up with little to no income during a harvest season that would otherwise be the most lucrative time of year.

Economic Implications of Disproportionate Impacts

Given the critical role that Latinxs play in providing essential services, the health of Latinxs will influence the health of Californians as a whole. Latinxs' most prominent role in the California economy is in the agricultural sector, where 92% of farmworkers are Latinx.¹⁶ California's Central Valley supplies 8% of the nation's agricultural output (by value), despite accounting for less than 1% of American farmland.¹⁷ The state produces 13% of the nation's food, and around

¹¹ "Pandemic, Wildfires & Heat Wave: Undocumented Farmworkers Face 'Triple Threat' as West Coast Burns." *Democracy Now!*, https://www.democracynow.org/2020/9/14/us_wildfires_farmworkers. Accessed 29 Sep. 2020.

¹² *Fine particles (PM 2.5) questions and answers*. (n.d.). Retrieved September 20, 2020, from https://health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/air/pmq_a.htm#:~:text=Particles%20in%20the%20PM2.5%20size%20range%20are%20able%20to,nose%20and%20shortness%20of%20breath.

¹³ "Winemakers worry wildfires will leave whiff of ashtray in their wine." *National Public Radio*. (2017, December 13). <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/12/13/570188980/winemakers-worry-wildfires-will-leave-whiff-of-ashtray-in-their-wine>

¹⁴ *Wine country grape growers fear significant damage from wildfire smoke*. (2020, September 12). <https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2020/09/12/wine-country-grape-growers-fear-significant-damage-wildfire-smoke/>

¹⁵ Weed, Augustus. "How Will Weeks of Wildfire Smoke on the West Coast Impact the 2020 Vintage?" *Wine Spectator*, <https://www.winespectator.com/articles/how-will-weeks-of-wildfire-smoke-on-the-west-coast-impact-the-2020-vintage>. Accessed 20 Sep. 2020.

¹⁶ *Farmworkers in California: A Brief Introduction*. (2013). CRB Short Subjects. <https://latinocaucus.legislature.ca.gov/sites/latinocaucus.legislature.ca.gov/files/CRB%20Report%20on%20Farmworkers%20in%20CA%20S-13-017.pdf>

¹⁷ *California's Central Valley | USGS California Water Science Center*. (n.d.). Retrieved September 13, 2020, from <https://ca.water.usgs.gov/projects/central-valley/about-central-valley.html>

two-thirds of the country's domestic production of fruits and nuts.¹⁸ To name just a few vegetables grown almost exclusively in California, the state produces 99% of artichokes and walnuts grown in the U.S., 95% of celery and garlic, 91% of strawberries¹⁹, 71 percent of spinach and 69% of carrots.²⁰ California accounts for 84.3% of wine produced in the United States.²¹ To preserve the state's predominantly-Latinx agricultural workforce and to sustain the flow of agricultural products, government agencies and emergency service providers must address COVID-19's spread in Latinx communities in California.

As of June 30, 2020, farmworkers in Monterey County, CA had three times as many confirmed cases of COVID-19 as non-agricultural workers.²² And as of September 13, 2020, six out of seven of the counties in California with the most COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people were in the Central Valley.²³ Andy Slavitt, acting administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services under President Obama, wrote on Twitter on July 23, 2020 that "If you don't know many people who have Coronavirus, its [sic] because you don't know the people who pick the food you eat."²⁴

The critical role that Latinxs play in the economy extends beyond the agricultural sectors, to nearly all other essential services. While Latinxs comprise 16.1% of the American workforce as of 2014, they are disproportionately represented in certain occupations. Many of the industries that rely most heavily on Latinxs have been deemed essential during the COVID-19 pandemic: nationwide as of 2014, Latinxs comprised 32% of workers in construction and extraction, 22.3% of workers in leisure and hospitality, 36.7% of workers in building and grounds cleaning and

¹⁸ "California farms produce a lot of food – but what and how much might surprise you." (2017, July 27). *Orange County Register*.
<https://www.ocregister.com/2017/07/27/california-farms-produce-a-lot-of-food-but-what-and-how-much-might-surprise-you/>

¹⁹ *Strawberries | agricultural marketing resource center*. April 2019.

<https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/strawberries>

²⁰ Palmer, Brian. "What Would We Eat If It Weren't for California?" *Slate Magazine*, 10 July 2013,
<https://slate.com/technology/2013/07/california-grows-all-of-our-fruits-and-vegetables-what-would-we-eat-without-the-state.html>.

²¹ Alston, J. M., Lapsley, J. T., & Sambucci, O. (2018). *Grape and Wine Production in California*. University of California, Davis.

https://s.giannini.ucop.edu/uploads/giannini_public/a1/1e/a11eb90f-af2a-4deb-ae58-9af60ce6aa40/grape_and_wine_production.pdf

²² Villarejo, D. (July 25, 2020). *Increased Risks and Fewer Jobs: Evidence of California Farmworker Vulnerability During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. California Institute for Rural Studies.

https://www.cirsinc.org/phocadownload/farmworker_vulnerability_covid-19_research-report_final_villarejo_07-26-2020.pdf

²³ California Covid Map and Case Count. (2020, September 13). *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/california-coronavirus-cases.html>

²⁴ Tweet by Andy Slavitt. (2020, July 23). *Twitter*. <https://twitter.com/aslavitt/status/1286470764208758784>

maintenance, and 24.9% of workers in food preparation and serving.²⁵ Protecting the health and safety of all who use these essential services requires ensuring the health and safety of Latinx communities.

Organization of the Report

The goal of this report is to identify strategies and best practices implemented by community-based organizations (CBOs) and local governments throughout California, in an effort to increase knowledge and build capacity across multiple stakeholders – including CBOs, community leaders, national nonprofits, and local governments. In particular, this report draws attention to ways in which government agencies and nonprofits can collaborate with community stakeholders to address unmet needs and increase resiliency within Latinx communities. The first two sections of the report focus on specific strategies and techniques to improve communication and to address fear of government. The final section suggests ways to institutionalize these strategies through coalition-building and through government collaboration with community stakeholders.

Effective communication is at the core of serving Latinx communities well. The first section of the report suggests ways to improve communication by considering the language and medium of information transmission and by employing culturally-competent messengers. Appendix A offers some concrete examples of strategies that can be used to reach Latinxs via social media, while Appendix B describes “cultural competence” in more depth for readers who may want a more complete explanation of this term.

The second section examines Latinx communities’ fear of government, which is prevalent among citizens and noncitizens alike. This fear can prevent residents from accessing critical services including hospitals, disaster shelters, and COVID-19 testing. This section describes strategies to overcome these fears, especially in the context of disaster preparedness and response. Fear of government is often most easily overcome by placing trusted CBOs and community stakeholders on the frontlines of information campaigns and of disaster shelters.

The strategies outlined in the first two sections serve as a basis for the institution-building measures recommended in the third section. This third section explores ways to more efficiently allocate resources to Latinx communities through coalition-building and by improving partnerships and communication among government and nonprofit actors. The section details two particular coalitions which have helped to streamline communication and service delivery:

²⁵ “Hispanics and Latinos in Industries and Occupations : The Economics Daily.” *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 9 Oct. 2015, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2015/hispanics-and-latinos-in-industries-and-occupations.htm>.

Tulare County’s Community Care Coalition and Napa Valley’s Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD).

The main body of this report centers on short-term measures, however improving the resiliency of Latinx communities also requires addressing long-term challenges and inequities within these communities. Information on long-term areas of focus is provided in Appendix C, which may be useful for readers who would benefit from more context on major challenges facing Latinx communities. Appendix C addresses three key areas of focus: food security, affordable child care, and digital inclusion. By working to address these issues, nonprofits and government agencies can increase the resilience of Latinx communities in the long run.

Effective Communication

During times of crisis, effective communication of important information is critical. Cultural competence is used herein to mean the ability to engage with individuals and communities in ways that are sensitive to cultural heritage, socioeconomic status, and language, among other diversity factors.²⁶ This form of competence is at the core of effective communication with Latinxs. In order to ensure that information is conveyed in a culturally-competent way, it is important to consider the language being used, as well as the means through which the message is transmitted (flyer, radio, social media, in person.) Oftentimes, placing community members in charge of conveying information to other community members is the best way to ensure that information is communicated in a culturally-competent way.

Translation

One of the most fundamental elements of effective communication is conveying relevant content in a language understood by the target audience. For information to be communicated effectively to Latinx communities, bilingual Spanish and English content is key. Yet merely translating information into Spanish is rarely enough to ensure that critical information is communicated effectively. The type of Spanish that one translates to can be difficult to understand if it contains regionalisms that the predominantly Mexican and Central American Latinxs in California would not understand. Given the demographics of California's Latinx immigrant population, the type of Spanish used in translation should be from Mexico rather than Spain. Additionally, terminology can vary by culture and region. For example, messaging about social distancing might include terms such as "household" and "six feet." Ever Rodriguez, chair of the North Fair Oaks Community Council in San Mateo County,²⁷ notes the term "household" may need to be broken down and explained to immigrant families so that they understand what a "household" really means, or what "6 feet" is in the metric system utilized by most Latin American countries.

Moreover, when seeking to improve communication with Latinx communities it is important to remember that not all Latinxs speak Spanish. This is true of US-born Latinxs who may have grown up in English-speaking environments, as well as Mexican and other Latinx immigrants who speak indigenous languages. While nearly 93% of people in Mexico speak Spanish, most of the remaining population speaks an indigenous language as their mother tongue.²⁸ This indigenous language-speaking population includes many Mexicans who have chosen to move

²⁶ More information on cultural competence is provided in Appendix B

²⁷ North Fair Oaks is an unincorporated area in the County.

²⁸ Pletcher, H. "Mexico: Distribution of Languages in 2005." *Statista*. 15 Sept. 2020, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/275440/languages-in-mexico/>.

north in search of work. Some of the most common indigenous languages spoken by Mexican immigrants working in the US include Mixteco, Zapoteco, and Triqui.²⁹ Some efforts to better serve Latinxs who speak indigenous languages are already under way, including efforts at a hospital in Salinas to translate COVID-19 information for Latinxs.³⁰

In addition to translating content into the right language and dialect, it is critical to ensure that one is using a level of Spanish well-understood by the target audience. Within Latinx communities, levels of education vary substantially. Lack of literacy is a large communication barrier in addition to having English as a Second Language (ESL), as more than one-fourth of Latinx adults in the US have less than a ninth-grade education.³¹ Thus, translating messages directly from English to Spanish without adjusting the Spanish message to a range of reading levels can leave many people unable to understand the content one wishes to convey. Alma Bowen, founder of the nonprofit *Nuestra Comunidad* in Sonoma County, tends to target translations to a 2nd or 3rd grade reading level, which she says is around average for the farmworkers she engages with.³²

Audiovisual Methods

Due to variance in preferred languages and reading levels, audiovisual methods are sometimes the most effective way to communicate important public health and disaster preparedness information. To reach an audience with low levels of literacy, Spanish-language radio can be particularly effective. The CDC's Spanish language series on COVID-19 provides useful examples of how to communicate effectively through audiovisual media: their videos include a 16-second definition of social distancing,³³ an informational interview with an epidemiologist,³⁴

²⁹ "Indigenous Languages." *Indigenous Mexicans in California Agriculture*, indigenousfarmworkers.org, http://www.indigenousfarmworkers.org/indigenous_languages.shtml#:~:text=found%20in%20California-,In%20all%2C%20in%20the%20Indigenous%20Farmworker%20Study%2C%20we%20found%2023,below%20they%20appear%20in%20bold. Accessed 16 Nov. 2020.

³⁰ *A California hospital is translating coronavirus information for immigrants*. (n.d.). The World from PRX. Retrieved August 4, 2020, from

<https://www.pri.org/stories/2020-03-27/california-hospital-translating-coronavirus-information-immigrants>

³¹ Schneider, B., Martinez, S., & Ownes, A. (2006). *Barriers to educational opportunities for hispanics in the united states*. National Academies Press (US). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK19909/>

³² Interview with Alma Bowen on August 6, 2020

³³ CDC. (2020, June 4). *El distanciamiento social*. Youtube. Accessed on July 12th, 2020.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWOWP-11aQo&list=PLvrp9iOILTQZdKZTcAaYdyu4wKmhGCJNc&index=7>

³⁴ CDC. (2020, June 4). *En los tiempos del COVID-19*. Youtube. Accessed on July 12th, 2020.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6Dq09stmd8&list=PLvrp9iOILTQZdKZTcAaYdyu4wKmhGCJNc&index=4>

and a tutorial about how to disinfect a home.³⁵ On Facebook, the nonprofit *Nuestra Comunidad* has shared videos about social distancing³⁶ and about using a mask.³⁷

Audiovisual messaging can convey a significant amount of information even to those who can't read well. In addition to making important messages accessible to those who may not speak English or be able to read well, audiovisual material can express implicit messages that appeal to cultural values. In Figure 1, the heart symbol implicitly communicates that social distancing is a sign of love and care for others. The bright colors also convey a sense of hopefulness and positivity that, in combination with the illustrated characters, makes the messaging more interesting and engaging for the target audience. Appendix A outlines helpful strategies to adopt when posting text-based or audiovisual content on social media with the goal of reaching Latinx communities.



Figure 1: Audiovisual communication³⁸

Digital and In-Person Contact

After choosing how to display the information, one must consider the best mechanism to bring the message to the target audience – whether digitally or in-person. Ideally, both digital and in-person mechanisms can be used to accommodate varying preferences within the Latinx community. Social media is a powerful mechanism for information dissemination, although less accessible to the elderly and those who can't reliably access WiFi or a device (i.e. cell phone or computer). A 2014 survey by the Pew Research Center found that among social media networks, Latinxs are most active on Facebook, followed by Instagram.³⁹ Spanish language radio stations

³⁵ CDC. (2020, August 24). *Cómo limpiar y desinfectar su casa si alguien tiene COVID-19*. YouTube. Accessed on January 2, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSX8zpus-tl>

³⁶ NC707 “Prepculture” *Nuestra Comunidad* on Facebook Watch. [www.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/NC707/videos/signa-luchando-contra-la-propagacion-de-covid-19-1%C3%A1ves-e-las-manos-utiliza-cubiert/718988115589005/) (2020, July 6). <https://www.facebook.com/NC707/videos/signa-luchando-contra-la-propagacion-de-covid-19-1%C3%A1ves-e-las-manos-utiliza-cubiert/718988115589005/>

³⁷ NC707 “Prepculture” *Nuestra Comunidad* on Facebook Watch. [www.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/NC707/videos/el-coronavirus-se-propaga-cuando-una-persona-infectada-habla-estornuda-o-tose-a-/735497320618532/) (2020, July 15). <https://www.facebook.com/NC707/videos/el-coronavirus-se-propaga-cuando-una-persona-infectada-habla-estornuda-o-tose-a-/735497320618532/>

³⁸ NC707 “Prepculture” *Nuestra Comunidad* on Facebook Watch. [www.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/NC707/videos/signa-luchando-contra-la-propagacion-de-covid-19-1%C3%A1ves-e-las-manos-utiliza-cubiert/718988115589005/) (2020, July 6). <https://www.facebook.com/NC707/videos/signa-luchando-contra-la-propagacion-de-covid-19-1%C3%A1ves-e-las-manos-utiliza-cubiert/718988115589005/>

³⁹ Krogstad, Jens Manuel. (2015, Feb 3). “Social media preferences vary by race and ethnicity.” *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved August 4, 2020, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/02/03/social-media-preferences-vary-by-race-and-ethnicity/>

can be another great way to reach a wide Latinx audience, including those who may not be active on social media such as the elderly.

As an example, the organization Ayudando Latinos a Soñar (ALAS) has combined in-person and digital methods of outreach in order to serve the Latinx community in Half Moon Bay, CA. Joaquin Jimenez, director of farmworker outreach at ALAS, believes that reaching the most vulnerable community members requires going out into the community every day. He knocks on doors to bring groceries, water, and information. He asks how things are going, if everyone in the household is healthy, if people have work, and what their needs are. The groceries he delivers are provided by organizations such as Peninsula Food Runners, Coastside Hope, and the Second Harvest Food Bank. Mr. Jimenez complements in-person outreach with digital forms of communication. On Sundays, he drives his truck, filled with masks, to three different common locations – including a Safeway parking lot – and uses social media to keep the community posted on where the truck is.⁴⁰

Digital communication methods also serve to inform donors about ALAS’s work. ALAS staff share what they’re doing by posting on Facebook and gaining coverage on local stations of ABC and Fox News. ALAS’s Facebook feed shows gratitude to farmworkers, donors, and partnering organizations. Their posts elevate the voices of those who they serve, for instance through a video of Yessenia, a local farmworker who has benefitted from ALAS’s masks.⁴¹

Perhaps most importantly, ALAS’s strong social media presence keeps community members apprised of resources that are available to them, and informed about what’s going on in the community. Mr. Jimenez explains how ALAS’s social media posts allow community members to see others experiencing their same jobs or struggles, creating a sense of community and comradery. Community members can also use social media to leave comments describing their needs, either in response to a post, or through Facebook’s direct messaging system.

Preserving in-person information transmission mechanisms is especially important in Latinx communities because many Latinx households lack full digital connectivity.⁴² Alma Bowen offers in-person disaster-preparedness training through *Nuestra Comunidad*, in order to reach elderly populations and those without WiFi or a device. While in-person training poses risks during the COVID-19 pandemic, failure to communicate important information to the community is potentially even more dangerous. One best practice that Ms. Bowen employs is to

⁴⁰ Interview with Joaquin Jimenez on July 3rd, 2020.

⁴¹ *Ayudando Latinos A Soñar - ALAS on Facebook Watch*. [www.facebook.com, https://www.facebook.com/alasdreams/videos/and-here-is-a-coastside-shero-meet-yessenia-she-wakes-up-every-day-to-make-a-dif/1786935221449594/](https://www.facebook.com/alasdreams/videos/and-here-is-a-coastside-shero-meet-yessenia-she-wakes-up-every-day-to-make-a-dif/1786935221449594/) Accessed 30 Oct. 2020.

⁴² For more information on the digital divide, see “Digital Inclusion,” beginning on page 64.

conduct outreach where gatherings are already happening, rather than creating new gatherings. For instance, Ms. Bowen often passes out information about disaster preparedness to people waiting in line at food distribution or COVID-19 testing sites. This strategy is effective because people are already gathered, and because the nature of the gathering is likely to attract a particularly vulnerable population.

SOMOS Mayfair, a CBO in the predominantly-Latinx Mayfair neighborhood of San Jose, uses phone calls to reach community members who have less digital access. During the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, SOMOS Mayfair called over 300 families to check in about the health of household members and whether basic needs were being met. The organization has also explored creative forms of information transmission, such as using a car caravan to promote the 2020 U.S. Census.⁴³

Angie Sanchez, head of programs at *Corazón Healdsburg* in Sonoma County, emphasizes the importance of reaching people with the least digital access, for instance homeless men and families living in cars. In order to contact hard-to-reach populations, *Corazón Healdsburg* prioritizes going to locations such as low-income housing units, day laborer centers, and laundromats. If it's not possible to visit people in person through the *promotores* model, posting flyers outside of these locations can help spread information to those who need it. Ms. Sanchez has found that people in Sonoma County's Latinx community commonly receive information from three places: schools, churches, and outdoor public spaces. Her organization reaches out to all denominations of churches, not just the Catholic ones. She knows pastors who will announce relevant information during mass, for instance that there is a food delivery site at a certain location on a particular day. An alternative is to create a pop-up outside of a church, for people to stop by after mass.

Ms. Sanchez grew up in a low-income Latinx community in Sonoma County, so she knows the communities she serves well. People like Ms. Sanchez, who deeply understand the Latinx communities they serve, will be aware of the best locations and mechanisms to communicate important information. For instance, Ms. Sanchez knows that a good site for outdoor information dissemination is the soccer fields where community members often play soccer on weekends.

Farmworkers are a specific vulnerable population that is often best reached through in-person trainings. They are essential workers who often live on low wages in rural areas. Because farmworkers frequently live in very close quarters, they are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 transmission. Ms. Bowen of *Nuestra Comunidad* has offered "tailgate trainings" to reach these particularly vulnerable members of the Latinx community. These on-site sessions at the farms

⁴³ Interview with Amelia Post on September 11, 2020.

provide an opportunity for her to offer information in Spanish about COVID-19 and disaster preparedness. Ms. Bowen schedules the training sessions during farmworkers' lunch breaks or at the end of their workday. During trainings, Ms. Bowen distributes masks and shows farmworkers how to use them and how to take off and dispose of latex gloves properly. Ms. Bowen leads by example, wearing a mask and gloves and staying at least six feet away from the farmworkers she speaks to. She emphasizes the importance of wearing a mask, including while working in the fields. Oftentimes, even farmworkers who are given masks for free fail to use them because the mask makes it difficult to breathe in hot outdoor working conditions. Ms. Bowen explains that it is acceptable to put the mask on one's chin when six feet away from someone, but when in close contact the mask is critical to ensuring everyone's safety.

While many vineyard managers were responsive to Ms. Bowen's requests to conduct outreach to their workers on site, others were not responsive. Ms. Bowen eventually realized that she could reach this latter set of farmworkers through their families rather than their employers. So, when vineyard workers or their wives showed up to food distribution sites, Ms. Bowen gave them a box of masks to bring to the farm to share with the other workers. This is one example of effective grassroots dissemination of information and necessary materials through networks in the community.

Reducing Textual/Legal Burden

Applicants for various social services often must navigate complicated legal systems, or fill out paperwork with dense text that can be difficult to comprehend even for native English speakers. Thus enrollment into social services and other assistance programs is complex, particularly for those who have limited English proficiency, limited literacy, or don't know how a certain system works. Being undocumented can add additional barriers to accessing the legal system. Furthermore, Latinos often are not equipped with the necessary knowledge or competency to navigate these systems – for instance, someone may not know about options for fire insurance, or they may struggle to apply for resources that they do know about. Technology is another barrier to access, as businesses and government services increasingly only have an online presence.

By reducing the textual/legal burden required to apply for various programs, government bodies can more clearly and concisely convey information during an emergency situation – whether fire, smoke, heat wave, earthquake, or pandemic. Quite often, government entities – such as the local county health department in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic – are responsible for providing emergency guidelines. However, such guidelines are sometimes difficult for lay people to understand. This often leaves CBOs or community stakeholders to interpret, translate and convey the same information in a more intelligible manner – yet these efforts often come at the expense of timeliness and concision, and they can easily cause information overload for community

members. Government entities can improve communication to Latinx communities by reducing the legal/textual burden of the applications they create and the information they disseminate. Governments can use discussion meetings with CBOs to evaluate and adjust the language and level of their messaging before this information is shared with Latinx communities.

For wildfires, earthquakes, and other natural disasters, high textual/legal burden often prevents Latinxs from buying insurance that could greatly improve their resilience. With respect to wildfires in particular, renter's insurance is a valuable safeguard that few Latinxs make use of. In Sonoma County as a whole, 41% of residents are renters, but among Sonoma County's Latinx population, 65% are renters. Nationally, 30% of Whites rent their homes, compared to 52% of Latinxs.⁴⁴ Many campaigns focused on wildfire prevention, such as the national Firewise Communities effort, are geared toward homeowners: these campaigns include recommendations for landscaping changes and vegetation pruning, which often are not possible for renters to follow. Strategies to improve wildfire prevention and recovery in Latinx communities must address the challenges faced by renters, because many Latinxs are renters. Buying renter's insurance is often a highly effective preventative measure that can increase renters' resiliency post-crisis.

Significantly, many Latinxs don't know that they can buy renter's insurance, and that it's not very expensive.⁴⁵ This lack of knowledge, combined with hesitancy to share personal information, often prevents Latinxs from applying for renter's insurance. While homeowners are responsible for covering the costs of burnt structures, renters without insurance must replace all lost or destroyed items in a fire. This can be a huge financial burden on low-income families, and it can be prevented with renter's insurance that costs as little as \$12 a month.⁴⁶ A survey conducted by State Farm found that 66% of Latinx renters did not have renter's insurance, and among this group, 34% had not ever heard of it.⁴⁷ Government agencies and CBOs can often effectively support Latinx communities by disseminating information on renter's insurance and helping residents apply. The CBO *Corazón Healdsburg* in Sonoma County has incorporated renter's insurance education into their disaster preparedness curriculum. *Corazón Healdsburg* has also implemented a program to proactively subsidize renter's insurance for low-income Latinxs who reside in areas vulnerable to wildfires; it is far less effective to wait for disaster to strike and subsidize much larger costs for replacing lost items.

⁴⁴ Ramirez, Amelie. "Research: Latino Families Burdened by Housing Costs, Eviction." *Salud America*, 10 May 2019, <https://salud-america.org/research-latino-families-burdened-by-housing-costs-eviction/>.

⁴⁵ Interview with Alma Bowen on July 16, 2020

⁴⁶ *Awareness and Understanding of Renter's Insurance Among Hispanic Renters*. (2014). State Farm. <https://www.multivu.com/players/English/72928515-state-farm-hispanic-renters-survey/links/72928515-renterssurveyreport-english.pdf>

⁴⁷ Ibid

The *Promotores* Model

The *promotores*, or community health workers, model was popularized in Latin America before gaining traction in the United States. Several organizations, especially in Southern California, make use of this model. A best practices policy brief titled *Integrating the Promotores Model to Strengthen Community Partnerships* notes that *promotores* “typically have deep roots or strong social connections in the communities they serve. Often, they share similar life experiences, values, language, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status with community members. The use of *promotores* improves Latinxs’ access to services by building trust between service providers and community members.

The Orange County-based nonprofit *Latino Health Access* uses *promotores* to promote healthy habits and reduce rates of Type II Diabetes. The organization’s *promotores* are stationed in various locations – including laundromats, churches, supermarkets, parking lots, bus stops, and schools – to share information about nutrition, diabetes, mental health, and accessing doctors. This model spreads important health information to residents who may not otherwise reach out for help.⁴⁸

As the leader of the *promotores* training program at SOMOS Mayfair in San Jose, Amelia Post relies on *promotores* to identify issues of central importance to the community. In addition to the more traditional *promotores*’ topics surrounding health, SOMOS Mayfair’s *promotores* have taken a lead in disseminating information about displacement and housing. Sessions with *promotores* are designed to help community members consider which aspects of Mayfair they want to protect and preserve, as well as those structural changes they want to demand. *Promotores* at SOMOS Mayfair conduct one-on-one check-ins with neighborhood residents to learn about any challenges they are encountering, and to receive feedback from the community.⁴⁹

SOMOS Mayfair has also expanded the *promotores* model during the COVID-19 pandemic to include “pods” of community members, which are each led by a *promotor*. Some of these small groups are built around themes such as housing, school issues, or early childhood education. Others arise out of informal networks, for instance one pod is comprised of single mothers, and another of English speakers. During the COVID-19 pandemic especially, these pods have communicated through group chats in Whatsapp or Facebook Messenger. For example, one

⁴⁸ “The Promotora Model” *Latino Health Access*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 28, 2020, from <https://www.latinohealthaccess.org/the-promotora-model/>

⁴⁹ Interview with Amelia Post on September 11, 2020. The woman who needed the ride to the dentist was able to ride safely in the back seat wearing a mask.

group member was able to arrange a ride to a dentist to deal with an emergency and another was able to arrange for someone to pick up food from the local food distribution site.

Promotores at Somos Mayfair are paid, and the position can evolve into full-time work with funding via contracts from outside organizations. Many women begin working as *promotores* while holding another job. The level of commitment varies person-to-person, with some women taking only one contract at a time, and others managing multiple contracts at once as the work evolves into a full-time position. SOMOS Mayfair created the *Universidad Popular de Mayfair* (People's College of Mayfair) as an in-house, community-based training institute with various training activities offered throughout the year. There are certain training requirements to become certified as a *promotor*, but beyond those requirements, *promotores* who enroll can select which additional sessions to attend.⁵⁰

For a message to be internalized effectively, it must be clearly communicated by a trusted source. This section has described how to ensure clear communication of information. The next section will outline ways to navigate distrust of government within Latinx communities and to identify and utilize trusted sources of information.

⁵⁰ Interview with Amelia Post on September 11, 2020.

Fear of Government

Trusted sources of public health and safety information can be hard to find within Latinx communities due to heightened fear of government among Latinxs: a 2018 study found that 48% of Latinxs fear deportation for themselves, a family member, or a close friend.⁵¹ As a result of these fears, Latinxs often treat messages from government agencies with more skepticism than the general public.

Sources and Impacts of Fear

Based on 50 interviews, Stanford sociology professor Asad L. Asad documents Latinxs' fears of sharing personal information with a government that combines beneficial services and punitive measures. One of Professor Asad's interviewees notes: "As a Mexican, you feel more suspicious about everything. Maybe because that has been our fate in this life. I don't know. At least that's my opinion."⁵² Another interviewee is afraid that he will be deported if he goes to a hospital where he owes \$20,000 for an emergency gallstone surgery: "Thank God I haven't had to go again...but I think the hospital won't even take me back. Your name comes up in their computers or something." Yet another interviewee has chosen not to sign up for DACA despite being eligible: "They only give you more privileges, but they can take them away whenever they want. [...] Just letting the government know where we are, who we are? It's a different way of keeping us in control and all together." These interviews illustrate the frequent suspicion of government services within Latinx immigrant communities, and the ways in which that skepticism prevents individuals from taking advantage of important resources.

An added layer to fear of government is widespread fear of being deemed a "public charge." The so-called public charge rule has existed since 1882, allowing the US to reject immigrants who are likely to depend heavily on government resources. Since World War II, very few immigrants have been turned away under that criteria, and in 1999 the Clinton's administration released guidelines to consider only cash benefits when determining whether someone is likely to become a public charge.

When the Trump administration proposed an expansion of the public charge rule in October of 2018, the proposed changes would consider immigrants' usage of non-cash benefit programs

⁵¹Asad, Asad L. "Almost Half of Latino Americans Fear Deportation, despite Their Status as Legal Citizens. Their Fear Has a Very Real Precedent." *Business Insider*, <https://www.businessinsider.com/why-latino-us-citizens-live-in-fear-of-being-deported-2020-4>. Accessed 31 Oct. 2020.

⁵² Asad, Asad L. (2020). On the radar: System embeddedness and latin american immigrants' perceived risk of deportation. *Law & Society Review*, 54(1), 133–167. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lasr.12460>

such as SNAP and Medicaid, as well as their overall health and income. This proposed expansion of the public charge rule created a chilling effect on immigrant communities, leading many people to drop out of programs for which they are still perfectly eligible. A May 2019 analysis by the Urban Institute found that 20.6% of Hispanic adults in immigrant families who were eligible reported that they or a family member dropped out of or did not apply for a non-cash benefit program in 2018 due to fear of risking future green card status.⁵³

Fears of invoking the public charge rule have led eligible Latinxs to avoid using social services, calling 911, and visiting hospitals.⁵⁴ A primary care doctor at the Massachusetts General Hospital's branch in Chelsea notes that "Most of the patients I have that have talked about disenrolling are not even actually affected by the rule; they just think they are. Part of its power is [that] it affects many, many more people than it's actually written to affect." Fears of the public charge rule have also led many immigrants to avoid seeking medical care for COVID-19, even after the administration announced that the rule would not apply to those who seek treatment or testing for the virus.⁵⁵

As a result of these policies, Latinx communities often distrust government at all levels (federal, state, and local.) Rosemary Caso, executive director of United Way Tulare County, notes that "Whenever you have a county entity, [Latinxs will] totally turn off." This skepticism about government can have dire consequences when it prevents Latinxs from accessing resources that could benefit them. From failing to apply for social services such as food stamps to being undercounted in the U.S. Census, hesitancy to share personal information with any organization that might be affiliated with the government can exclude Latinxs from services and support mechanisms that seek to improve their quality of life. For example, many Latinxs choose not to sign up for benefit programs such as SNAP even when they are eligible, or will avoid calling 911 or going to the hospital during an emergency.

Addressing Fear

Angie Sanchez from *Corazón Healdsburg* finds that the best way to combat fears of government in the Latinx community is by educating community members about the public charge regulation and how it affects them. "It's like the game of telephone from *vecino* [neighbor] to *vecino*" she

⁵³ Bernstein, Hamutal, et al. "With Public Charge Rule Looming, One in Seven Adults in Immigrant Families Reported Avoiding Public Benefit Programs in 2018." *Urban Institute*, 21 May 2019, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/public-charge-rule-looming-one-seven-adults-immigrant-families-reported-avoiding-public-benefit-programs-2018>.

⁵⁴ Interviews with Alma Bowen, 2020.

⁵⁵ McFarling, Usha Lee. "'We'll Be Deported': Immigrants Fear Seeking Covid-19 Tests or Care." *STAT*, 15 Apr. 2020, <https://www.statnews.com/2020/04/15/fearing-deportation-many-immigrants-at-higher-risk-of-covid-19-are-afraid-to-see-testing-or-care/>.

says. She's seen community members debating whether to reenroll in a variety of beneficial government programs, including DACA. Amelia Post from SOMOS Mayfair notes that Trump's changing policies around public charge "created a huge amount of concern and confusion for families." One of the most common questions the organization receives is about whether enrollment in a certain program will impact one's public charge determination.⁵⁶

Ms. Sanchez explained how fears of ICE raids have increased since two community members were detained in early August, 2020. *Corazón Healdsburg* tried to calm worries by explaining that these detentions were targeted and specific – they were not part of a raid on the entire community. She also educated community members on their rights, providing them with "red cards," which are a set of instructions which remind people of their rights not to open the door, not to answer any questions, and not to sign anything in the event that ICE comes to their home.⁵⁷ For parents who fear what deportation might mean for their children, Ms. Sanchez has helped them to write custody letters that outline a plan for who will take care of their child in the event that they are deported. With census outreach as well, Ms. Sanchez aims to dispel beliefs that personal information will be shared with ICE.

One strategy that county officials have employed to address fear of government is to partner with *promotores*.⁵⁸ Tulare County's Department of Public Health has a contract with a *promotor* group in the area; these *promotores* mainly serve to advise and educate the Latinx community on the importance of COVID-19 testing, to make residents aware of testing sites and hours, and to help with registration for COVID-19 testing and other public health programs. Karen Elliott, director of public health at Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA), describes how "today we have a mobile [COVID-19] testing site – but it's open from 8am-12pm, which are difficult hours for working families...so we have enlisted *promotores* to visit the neighborhood door to door, share information about the testing site, and help people register. We use *promotores* because they are a trusted group that understands [the Latinx community]." The registration process is often a major barrier preventing Latinxs from accessing beneficial programs and resources. This is because registration often requires online access and sharing of personal information, and it may also present language barriers. *Promotores* can help address these challenges while also encouraging Latinx community members to take advantage of government initiatives that can benefit them.

While Tulare County's Department of Public Health has a formal contract with a *promotor* group, the County's Human Services Branch within HHSA works with *promotores* on a volunteer basis. Francena Martinez, division manager at the Human Services Branch, works with

⁵⁶ Interview with Amelia Post on September 11, 2020.

⁵⁷ *Red Cards* | Immigrant Legal Resource Center | ILRC. <https://www.ilrc.org/red-cards>. Accessed 20 Oct. 2020.

⁵⁸ For more information on *promotores*, see "The *Promotores* Model," beginning on page 21.

promotores at Altura Health. She provides *promotores* with information about the department's resources, and they share this information along with promotional materials from other organizations, companies, and agencies.

Ms. Martinez emphasizes the value of partnering with trusted individuals and organizations in Latinx communities. For example, officials from Tulare County government have attended "*cuadrilla*" (work crew) events run by Proteus, a farmworker-focused CBO. At these events, Proteus staff visit farms to pass out breakfast burritos during the workers' 10-minute break, and use that time to share information with farmworkers. At one *cuadrilla* event, a small number of government officials attended in order to help pass out masks and resource guides. One of these officials was Tom Tucker, assistant agricultural commissioner of Tulare County. Ms. Martinez described how "at our first [*cuadrilla* event] that we took Tom Tucker to, they wanted to cancel as soon as they found out he was there. They called us and they said, 'no, we don't want you guys back here,' and it took some work on Proteus's behalf to say, 'no, you guys, he's not here to review you, he just wants to be part of the information [sharing]." At the first event that Mr. Tucker attended, staff from Proteus advised him to stay at the table and not move around too much, so that the farmworkers wouldn't become afraid that he was reviewing them. "We had that open communication, where it's not about telling someone else what to do, it's about using your experience to make sure that things go well," says Ms. Martinez. She continues, "It was really heartwarming to see how right before we left, [someone from Proteus] was able to take that farm crew leader and introduce them to the ag commissioner. And at first that conversation was rough – they're working through a translator, and you could tell there was some uneasiness with 'what are you going to ask me? ...what are you going to talk about?', but by the end of that conversation they were laughing, they were touching elbows because they couldn't shake hands. It was really good watching some of those boundaries being broken." Ultimately, Ms. Martinez emphasizes the importance of Latinxs "seeing people that they trust working hand in hand with people that they normally don't trust" as a powerful way to build bridges.

Open communication between government agencies and CBOs ensures that local government is serving the community in effective ways that build trust over the long term. Tim Lutz, director of Tulare County's HHSA, describes, "I think so often there's this perception that because it's a government program, we've got to have the central role – and instead we want to create an environment where we can say [to nonprofits and community stakeholders] 'Tell us where we're failing... I want to know more about where we're not doing well so we can improve.' ... It's the boots on the ground, the CBOs, those volunteers in the field, that see everyday [the things] that we don't always see."

Governments can also improve outcomes by acknowledging their past failures to serve Latinx communities and by highlighting changes that have been made to improve service provision

moving forward. When it comes to building trust with CBOs and community members alike, Mr. Lutz notes that government is “not always a trusted resource – and in the political climate we’re in right now, it’s that much harder.” He adds, “We have our good [solid] partners, but also areas where we need to mend fences and recognize that a lot of the leadership in Health and Human Services is new – new being in the last few years. So it’s important to recognize there might have been old feuds and old disagreements, but it’s time to extend that olive branch.” Ms. Martinez adds, “Some people have a bad taste in their mouths from whatever they’ve experienced before. So we have to be cognizant of that and not call it out but work through that in a soft way to say ‘that’s not what we’re about, let’s do this together.’”

Accounting for Fear of Government when Designing Emergency Preparedness Campaigns and Disaster Recovery Programs

Fear of sharing personal information and of being deemed a public charge often prevents Latinxs from accessing beneficial crisis-related services such as disaster shelters or renter’s insurance. Additionally, uncertainty as to whether government will protect their rights can discourage Latinxs from standing up for their rights during hazardous working conditions – such as wildfire smoke or virus exposure – that are often magnified during crises. To improve resilience in Latinx communities, CBOs and local governments can make culturally-competent training and information more accessible during the preparedness and recovery phases of a crisis. Joint efforts between governments and CBOs have the potential to increase the reach of culturally-competent information campaigns, and to improve uptake of post-crisis resources.

Governments can increase receptivity of their disaster preparedness campaigns by communicating information to Latinxs through faith leaders, CBOs, and *promotores*.⁵⁹ With wildfires in California projected to become increasingly common over the next 20 years, ensuring that all residents are informed about disaster preparedness is critical. The Listos program is an excellent example of a partnership between government and CBOs to make materials on disaster preparedness accessible to Latinx communities:⁶⁰ this statewide grass-roots disaster preparedness program develops curricula and offers 50 million dollars⁶¹ worth of grants for nonprofits to carry out programming in vulnerable Spanish-speaking communities. These grants allow partner organizations to provide 8-hour weekend training sessions and disseminate

⁵⁹ For more information on effective communication mechanisms, see “Effective Communication,” beginning on page 14.

⁶⁰ For more information, see the Listos website at: listoscalifornia.org

⁶¹ “Governor Newsom Announces Launch of \$50 Million ‘Listos California’ Campaign to Help Build Community Resilience to Wildfires.” *California Governor*, 20 Aug. 2019, <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2019/08/20/governor-newsom-announces-launch-of-50-million-listos-california-campaign-to-help-build-community-resilience-to-wildfires/>.

pamphlets and disaster kits within these communities. However, funding for the Listos program may not last beyond 2020.

Sometimes, misinformation combined with fear of government leads Latinxs to avoid taking advantage of resources that could benefit them. For example, during the 2017 Tubbs fire, fear of being identified by the US government led some Latinxs in Sonoma County to avoid Red Cross shelters. This fear of using Red Cross shelters stemmed from concerns about the Red Cross's partnership with FEMA, a government agency. A form provided to guests at Red Cross shelters includes a question which asks: "are you willing to allow the Red Cross to share information with partners?" This question seems to have sparked concerns that spread throughout the Latinx community in Sonoma County – residents were afraid that their information could be passed on to FEMA, where it might enter a government database accessible to ICE. As a result of the rumors, a group of families avoided shelters during the fire – fleeing instead to Bodega Bay on the California coast, where some slept overnight despite cold winds and a lack of blankets.⁶²

Yet according to Luke Beckman, Division Disaster State Relations Director at the American Red Cross, the question that sparked concern is optional, and its purpose is to allow collaborating organizations to continue supporting families in the weeks and months after a disaster.⁶³ These partnering organizations offer recovery assistance in the form of grants, gift cards and supplies. Mr. Beckman also explained that the American Red Cross has no intentions of sharing personal information with ICE.

CBOs can help Latinxs make informed decisions about the risks and benefits of sharing personal information. More specifically, CBOs can communicate whether personal information is required, why it is requested, and where it will end up. As trusted sources of information, CBOs and community leaders can prevent misconceptions from driving community members away from useful resources.

Having learned from this experience with the 2017 wildfires, community organizations in Sonoma County set up shelters during the 2019 Kincaid fire at the Healdsburg community center, a trusted location where the CBO *Corazón Healdsburg* is located. Staff from *Corazón Healdsburg* as well as *Nuestra Comunidad* assisted at the shelters, and record numbers of Latinxs showed up.⁶⁴ If government and nonprofit service providers place trusted individuals and organizations at the front lines of interactions with intended service recipients, Latinxs will be in

⁶² Bizjak, T. (2017, October 17). Wine country fires flush undocumented workers to Sonoma Coast, fearful of deportation. *The Sacramento Bee*. <https://www.sacbee.com/news/california/fires/article178502386.html>

⁶³ Interview with Luke Beckman on July 1, 2020.

⁶⁴ Interview with Alma Bowen on August 8, 2020

a better position to make informed choices about whether to use resources that can improve their health and safety.

The “block captains” system is a successful model that makes use of trusted sources to support residents through the recovery phase of a disaster. For Sonoma County residents who lost homes in the Tubbs fire, there was much uncertainty and lack of knowledge about next steps for recovery.⁶⁵ To address this problem, block captains were designated for each affected block, as a point person for residents to turn to in addressing problems they encountered, and as a leader disseminating information about how to rebuild and file application forms to obtain government support. These self-selected block captains met together every Tuesday: Sonoma County District 4 Supervisor James Gore brought in people such as California State Senator Mike McGuire and insurance officials to share information with block captains and answer questions. This information was then disseminated via the block captains to residents of each affected block. The system was very robust: the block captains had a website run by two organizers with paid positions.

After the incredibly destructive 2018 Camp Fire, volunteer resident leaders in the town of Paradise adapted Sonoma County's block captains model for post-fire recovery to create a “zone captains” system, called the Camp Fire Zone Project. Under this model, a piece of information typically flows from the municipality to the zone leadership, and then through zone captains to the zone residents. Residents can also submit questions to their zone captains; these questions are pooled – as zones 1 and 12 might have the same questions – before being submitted to government officials to solicit responses.⁶⁶ Charles Brooks, Paradise resident and founder of the Rebuild Paradise Foundation, describes how the role of the captain is tailored to the particular needs of each zone. The block/zone captains system, like the *promotores* model, is valuable because it involves delivering information and resources to people at the individual level, which increases attentiveness and receptivity. The captain is in charge of ensuring that critical information reaches each neighbor, and that the mode of information dissemination is tailored to the needs of each resident; for instance, messaging is personalized for residents who only communicate by phone or email. Overall, Mr. Brooks feels that the system has “been fantastic for our community” and he is grateful to the leaders who stepped up to implement and run the organization.⁶⁷ The block/zone captains model can help address fear of government by mediating communication between residents and government officials through a trusted source.

Fear of government can prevent Latinxs from enforcing their rights in the event that they are evicted from their home following a wildfire in the area. Renters are often displaced by the

⁶⁵ Interview with Alma Bowen on July 7, 2020.

⁶⁶ Interview with Charles Brooks on September 9, 2020

⁶⁷ Interview with Charles Brooks on September 9, 2020

owner of their home if a wildfire destroys the homeowner's primary residence and the homeowner seeks to move into their secondary residence. On aggregate, this can lead to displacement of many renters whose homes may not have been impacted by the fires. Additionally, a fire's sudden destruction of a large number of homes in one area often produces a housing shortage, which can increase prices in all surrounding areas. Governments can help Latinx communities by allocating funding to create support systems for low-income renters who need to relocate in the wake of a disaster.

Fear of turning to government or law enforcement can leave Latinx workers vulnerable to having their rights abused. Thus, it is important to ensure that Latinx workers receive accurate information about how to protect themselves from health risks that often increase during crises. Estella Cisneros of California Rural Legal Assistance notes that, in the context of excessive smoke from wildfires, “Unfortunately, there are a lot of farmworkers who face the very real risk of losing their jobs if they speak up about unsafe working conditions or if they refuse to work before being provided an N95 mask respirator.”⁶⁸ Ms. Cisneros describes how many workers do not know their rights, or fear losing their job if they exercise their rights. At a dairy farm in Sonoma County that is isolated off a country road, predominantly-Latinx workers and their families live on site. In late September 2020, there was an outbreak of COVID-19, and when public health officials visited, they realized that there was a lack of understanding about asymptomatic transmission – kids from different families had been playing with one another, and families were not aware of the associated risks.⁶⁹ Farmworkers on the dairy farm did not receive accurate information in Spanish from their employer, and did not have access to the necessary transportation to visit a COVID-19 testing site. In situations such as these, on-site testing and information dissemination from bilingual service providers is critical to ensure that farmworkers are informed about their rights and about how to protect their health.⁷⁰

While *promotores* and CBOs are excellent at reaching out to help the most vulnerable community members, employers should be the first party responsible for encouraging and adopting safety measures that protect employees. Employers have the power to make safety a priority or even a requirement, but too often that responsibility is handed over to CBOs or government entities. Using CBOs as the first line of action on COVID-19 safety for farmworkers is a band-aid solution that will not be adequate due to CBOs' limited resources. Safety measures need to be consistent, and to come from a responsible government agency to the employer for implementation.

⁶⁸ *Pandemic, Wildfires & Heat Wave: Undocumented Farmworkers Face “Triple Threat” as West Coast Burns*. (2020, September 14). Democracy Now! https://www.democracynow.org/2020/9/14/us_wildfires_farmworkers

⁶⁹ Interview with Alma Bowen on September 18, 2020

⁷⁰ Ibid

The strategies outlined in this section and the previous one are often most impactful when embedded within formalized partnerships and institutional procedures. The next and final section includes examples of such formalization, with a particular emphasis on the power of coalition-building.

Strengthening Relationships between Governments and CBOs

In order to serve Latinx communities well in the long run, local governments must formalize and institutionalize the kinds of practices and partnerships outlined in the previous two sections. This institutionalization increases the efficiency of partnerships by allowing for information-sharing and collaboration. Additionally, institutionalization embeds cultural competence into government agencies' service delivery model, such that effective strategies for serving minority communities are preserved even as specific government officials rotate out of office.

Including Community Stakeholders in the Creation of Government Programs and Campaigns

Ever Rodriguez notes that in North Fair Oaks, CA, (an unincorporated area of San Mateo County), there is often a disconnect between the county government agencies and the minority communities they are in charge of serving. In particular, government agencies often do not consult with community stakeholders when implementing programs – or if they do, it is generally a last step to seek approval before rolling out an initiative, rather than a form of consistent consultation throughout a program's development. He says that many government efforts are well-intentioned, but are ultimately inefficient or ineffective. When the County enters discussions with community stakeholders, it can be difficult for these stakeholders to place their topics of greatest concern on the agenda. The County often controls the agenda, and fits the stakeholders into their plans, rather than creating a space for joint planning and decision-making where the local community's thoughts are fully taken into account.

A long-term solution to the problems described by Mr. Rodriguez is for government agencies to routinely include community stakeholders as equals at the discussion table throughout the development of an initiative. This is especially important when the area being served is unincorporated: ineffective policymaking in places such as North Fair Oaks (NFO) can largely be attributed to the absence of elected officials who represent unincorporated areas. To address this issue, NFO has created a council of community members who convey the community's interests to the county government. Representatives on the NFO Community Council are able to advocate for the needs of the NFO community – however, these representatives are limited in their ability to further the community's interests because they are not paid and have no vote to shape public policy.

Government agencies and the community could both benefit from further delegating certain tasks to community stakeholders. For instance, previously in North Fair Oaks, the County itself

selected new members of the NFO Community Council. Now the County has allowed the council itself to select candidates with the necessary qualities, vision and commitment to serve North Fair Oaks. This has reduced the County's workload while ensuring that the council truly represents the community and is able to advocate for its needs.

The case of North Fair Oaks provides an opportunity to illustrate how a lack of cultural competence can impede communication. County staff often believe that they can use their website as the main portal to communicate with the public. Yet many residents in Latinx communities don't have electronic devices, or if they do, they may only have a cell phone.

The lack of devices or internet access in Latinx communities such as North Fair Oaks means that when governments solicit online applications for grant money, Latinxs are often the last to apply. In the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were federal, state, and local grants available to small business owners. Yet grant applications had to be filled out online on a computer, and many of the grant funds ran out early on. By the time residents of predominantly-Latinx North Fair Oaks were able to find someone to help them with the grant application, little to no funding was left in these programs. Mr. Rodriguez suggests that if these government programs truly wish to help those most impacted by economic crises, there should be a phone number to call for help filling out the application, as well as options to submit the application via email and US mail rather than only through an online portal.⁷¹ He also recommends a county intervention whereby *promotores* visit businesses to guide business owners through the application process for grants such as the Paycheck Protection Program. He says, "Early on during the pandemic we attempted to have one *promotor* who went around contacting businesses, however, lack of resources and lack of county support didn't allow us to make this happen."

Mr. Rodriguez has also described instances in which the County's priorities for outreach are not aligned with the community's. During the year leading up to the 2020 U.S. Census, San Mateo County government focused on increasing response rates among North Fair Oaks residents and other hard-to-reach populations. In order to do this, they partnered with a variety of CBOs and faith-based organizations to spread the message that the Census is important and that one's personal information will not be shared with ICE. Thus far, the County's heavy allocation of resources towards the Census initiative aligned well with the community's needs – after all, a higher Census count would bring more resources into the community down the line. Yet once the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the County's focus on outreach for the 2020 U.S. Census began to come at the expense of more pressing public health outreach.

⁷¹ For more information on bridging the digital divide, see "Digital Inclusion," beginning on page 64.

Despite Mr. Rodriguez’s suggestion that Census outreach should take second priority during the first few weeks of the pandemic, the County decided to continue with their emphasis on outreach work for Census 2020. This came at the expense of making Latinxs aware of some basic facts about COVID-19. While the County thoroughly informed NFO’s Latinx community about the Census, residents got their information about the importance of face coverings only when they tried to walk into a popular grocery store (Chavez Supermarket) and the security guard told them they needed to wear a facemask in order to get in. It wasn’t until August that the County began outreach campaigns for COVID-19 that were comparable in scale to the Census outreach.⁷² By prioritizing Census outreach over COVID-19 information campaigns during the first weeks of the pandemic, the County made it appear as though they cared more about the funding from the Census than about the health of North Fair Oaks residents.

The cultural competence of government leadership often can be improved by hiring officials that understand the minority communities they’re serving – yet this goes beyond merely choosing someone of the same race as these communities. One county in northern California attempted to focus more government efforts on serving minority communities through the formation of an Office of Community Engagement. Their first step was to hire a director for the office, who while Latinx, didn’t understand the intricacies and needs of those communities well. This official had worked in government for over a decade, and in this new role “effectively served as a gatekeeper who has not been creative about finding ways to best help low-income Latinx communities,” according to a member of the community.⁷³ Thus it is important to identify government leadership that not only looks like members of the community, but who can understand, empathize and advocate for the community’s needs, and who is able to work creatively and collaboratively in order to meet these needs. Recruitment can be crucial for such government positions, and including community stakeholders in the hiring decision process can help in selecting competent candidates who will not propagate systemic errors that may have prevailed in the past.

County-Based Coalitions: Tulare County’s Approach

Tulare County’s Community Care Coalition was founded in order to address COVID-19-related problems facing the County’s majority-Latinx residents. As the Coalition moved forward, its members discovered an efficient approach to help those in need. The approach – wrap-around services facilitated by what they call a multidisciplinary team (MDT) process – is characterized as follows: instead of requiring a community member in need to independently contact each agency or nonprofit that offers relevant forms of assistance, the MDT process allows for swift

⁷² For an example of County COVID-19 outreach, see: *¿Por Que Usamos Máscara? - Why do we Wear Masks?* - Youtube. (2020, August 7). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-SVP95DEwU&feature=emb_logo

⁷³ The community member is not identified out of concern that it would reveal the county and official referred to.

action initiated by the service providers rather than by the person in need, who may be overwhelmed and unable to independently find the best resources to address their situation. Coalition members believe they would not have been able to deliver these wrap-around services without having had a foundation of prior collaboration across governments and nonprofits in the County. By institutionalizing prior cross-sector collaboration in the form of the Coalition, service providers can pool resources and cover each other's blind spots so as to better serve Latinx communities. As one Coalition member put it, "One of the tenets of disaster preparedness is that the time to build partnerships is not during a crisis but before a crisis."⁷⁴ The discussion below elaborates on recent Coalition actions, describes how prior collaborations between local governments and nonprofits were created, and details the MDT approach to delivering wrap-around services.

Tulare County is a largely agricultural county in California's Central Valley, and 65.6% of its population is Latinx.⁷⁵ When COVID-19 cases spiked in March of 2020, the County decided to form a cross-sector team of individuals from organizations that could collaborate to better address the problems caused by the virus. The Community Care Coalition consists of around 40 organizations, and is co-led by Francena Martinez, a Division Manager in Tulare County's Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), and Rosemary Caso, the executive director of United Way Tulare County. The Coalition has benefitted from having leadership from both the public and nonprofit sectors. According to Ms. Caso, from the outset the Coalition recruited a wide variety of member organizations, including various county agencies, the Mexican consulate of Fresno, and both large and grassroots nonprofit organizations.⁷⁶

Frequent communication and collaboration between members is a hallmark of the Coalition. Representatives of member organizations meet every Thursday at 9 am for an hour. Each meeting has an agenda, and all Coalition members are invited to submit items to the agenda. Ms. Caso notes that "because we meet weekly, it's on everyone's radar...you're gonna be ready to report because next week we're meeting again. I think that holds us accountable." The Coalition also has a group email list that serves as a central hub for members to make time-sensitive announcements or to share more detailed information about something mentioned at a previous meeting. The email list also helps member organizations tap into each other's networks when disseminating information about their programming. For instance, an organization might use the email list to share a flyer about an upcoming event, which other coalition members can then publicize through their respective networks.

⁷⁴ Interview with Tim Lutz, director of Tulare County's HHS, on October 16, 2020.

⁷⁵ U.S. Census Bureau *QuickFacts: Tulare County, California*.

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/tularecountycalifornia>. Accessed 20 Oct. 2020.

⁷⁶ Interview with Rosemary Caso on October 16, 2020.

The Coalition benefits nonprofit and government actors alike. Hernan Hernandez, Executive Director of The California Farmworker Foundation, says: “One thing I like about this coalition is how effective and efficient it is. I’ve been in different coalitions in different counties, and this one has been – I don’t know if it’s the weekly [meeting] thing – but communication among CBOs and the County has just been outstanding.” He continues, “I really like...how efficient they are. We had a [COVID-19] testing site just this week at a work site, and I remember calling Staci [Deputy Director of Public Health Operations at Tulare County’s HHSA] and giving her like a week's notice, and they made it happen...as a CBO I really enjoy collaborating with every single entity that sits in the Coalition.” From the perspective of the county government, Mr. Lutz appreciates the insight that the Coalition offers into the experiences and challenges facing his constituents. “It is a good venue for us [government officials] to understand how we’re doing, but it is also that venue for coordinating services and looking at the needs of the individual.” The Coalition furthers the individual goals of nonprofit and government actors, while also working towards the shared goal of better meeting the community’s needs.

The Coalition’s success is attributable in large part to its focus on serving the community first and foremost. While organizations often battle each other for funding and resources, Ms. Caso describes how that has not been the case with the Community Care Coalition – instead “it has been: what do we need to do, who can step up, and who can volunteer.” Ms. Martinez concurs: “Our biggest goal is to identify the service gaps within [the Latinx] community, and to see what comes to us in our different avenues [in order to bridge those gaps.]” Mr. Lutz agrees: “This isn’t about any one organization, it's really about outcomes and serving the community.”

The Coalition collaborates to connect directly with community members, most recently by hosting large community events called “testing and outreach events.” For these events, the Coalition works with COVID-19 testing partners such as *Family Health Network*, *United Health*, and *Street Medicine*. The events are scheduled in communities within the County that are asking for things like household cleaning supplies and food – the aim is to provide a larger COVID-19 testing event that offers multiple services, including a food giveaway and a household cleaning supplies giveaway. Members of the Coalition attend the event to share information about their organization and the services they provide. All coalition members’ general information is compiled in a packet which is distributed at these types of events.

The Community Care Coalition tailors its programs to the needs of the County’s Latinx community. For instance, *Housing for the Harvest* is a program created by the California government that allows farmworkers who have tested positive for COVID-19 or been exposed to

the virus to self-isolate in a motel or hotel for 14 days.⁷⁷ As the County rolled out the program, the Coalition considered potential barriers to participating in *Housing for the Harvest*. In particular, they considered how a farmworker, especially if they're a breadwinner, likely would not want to abandon their family in order to self-isolate. To help address this barrier, the Coalition ensures that families in need receive wraparound services while their family member is self-isolating: whether rent/mortgage/utility assistance, food or food vouchers, or anything else that would help the family to be secure. According to Ms. Caso, the Coalition approaches their work from a place of empathy for those they serve: "that's really how we've done all of our programs: what would I need if I was in the situation? What would I need to protect my family?"

Ms. Martinez emphasizes how the pre-existing partnerships in Tulare County provided the foundation for the Coalition's success. When counties are not successful at starting a coalition-style model, it is often due to a lack of pre-existing relationships with community stakeholders. Without first laying this foundation, counties often struggle to create a coalition, build new relationships, and establish trust all at the same time. Ms. Martinez describes how: "We were pretty fortunate as a county where we had a lot of good partnerships beforehand. It was just bringing people together and seeing that flourish and hearing people say 'Hey, we want to join.'"

By focusing on providing "whole person care," the Coalition is able to overcome the challenges of siloed funding and duplicated efforts. Mr. Lutz explains: "It's really about some of the convoluted ways in which funds come to both governments but also to nonprofit organizations... [Funding is] siloed, so [one organization or agency] might serve this individual for senior services or income tax preparation, but we're serving that same individual for meals..." Mr. Lutz describes the value of the Coalition from this perspective: "When we look at 'how do we serve the whole person?', there's really no one organization that's equipped to do that." Thus, to serve the whole person, Mr. Lutz sees collaboration across organizations as key: "we're all serving the same person, but we're serving different parts of their life." He describes how, by bringing together these siloed forms of funding, the Coalition is able to offer the "most wrapped-around type of services to address whatever stressors are in their life – whether it's health-related, whether it's safety/security related, etc."

For cases that are particularly difficult or urgent, Tulare County's Community Care Coalition uses a multidisciplinary team process that expedites use of the whole person care model. In Tulare County, there are various avenues through which residents typically seek county services – for instance the crisis hotline, the WARM line, the TulareWORKS line through the call center,

⁷⁷ *Housing for Agricultural Workers*. <https://covid19.ca.gov/housing-for-agricultural-workers/>. Accessed 26 Oct. 2020.

and various email addresses within the public health department. Yet Ms. Martinez describes how, “if one of our partners, say United Way, experiences a contact with someone where they’re like ‘no this person needs help now, and we need multiple entities to wrap services around them at this point because of what’s going on in their life,’ then we can send that through the email address we have for MDT.”

Ms. Martinez describes how the multidisciplinary team process works: “We have teams of people sitting behind a group email box that pool [requests] within the hour of getting them. And then they work together behind the scenes to make sure that person gets a phone call that wraps multiple services around them or focuses on the one – if that’s it – to where they’re not being cold transferred to someone else.” Ms. Martinez describes a recent use of the MDT process, where a partner organization identified someone in need, and sent the request through the MDT email address. “Within the hour, that partner and five county people were on the phone, trying to figure out the best way to approach that situation. They made a decision, they moved on it, and that person was contacted within the hour.” By identifying relevant partner organizations and informing them about the client’s situation, the client receives a warm handoff rather than a cold transfer, and can access the assistance they need more quickly and efficiently.

While Tulare County’s Community Care Coalition was founded in order to address the problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Lutz of HHSA says: “I would hope that this coalition continues to evolve as our critical service delivery model well beyond COVID, because it really is about the community partnerships and how we work together.” Ms. Caso, co-chair of the Coalition, agrees: “I think that even after COVID and all of this, keeping this Coalition alive will really allow us to do bigger and better things.” She adds that the Coalition helps with “efficiency, as well as making sure that there’s trust within the community members and that all the different organizations and the county entities are working together and not in their silos.”

The COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster) Model for Disaster Response

An important way in which CBOs can augment government’s responsiveness and efficiency during times of crisis is through the Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) model. In the United States, COADs exist at national, state and local levels. The focus herein is the counties in California. At the county level, a COAD is a regional coalition of nonprofits committed to helping in the event of a disaster by working alongside representatives from government units to coordinate responses to emergencies. The COAD model is a way for nonprofits to network, communicate, and coordinate with each other and with government actors around disaster response. In California county governments, the government units central to

disaster response are commonly called Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) or Offices of Emergency Management (OEM).

Through a COAD, members organizations meet on a regular basis to learn about each others' initiatives and resources, and to develop contingency plans for various disaster scenarios. By meeting frequently and coordinating disaster response efforts, nonprofits can avoid duplicating each other's efforts and pool their resources towards helping the county more effectively respond to crises.

Sonoma County's COAD is an example of a COAD with a relatively short history, but one that is expanding quickly. The COAD includes CBOs such as Sonoma Valley Community Health Center; First Responders Inc, which supports the mental health and emotional wellbeing of first responders and their families; and La Plaza: Nuestra Cultura Cura, an organization that promotes cultural activities and celebrations for Latin American immigrants in the area. The COAD also includes local branches of national nonprofits, such as First 5 Sonoma County, and United Way of the Wine Country.

Sonoma County's COAD had existed before 2017 and then gone dormant; it was reactivated in the wake of the 2017 Sonoma complex wildfires. Through monthly meetings, the Sonoma County COAD allows organizations to build relationships with each other before a disaster happens. The main focus of Sonoma County's COAD is on helping its members coordinate so as to promote efficient use of resources during disaster response. In addition to relationship-building, Sonoma's COAD is working towards creating an "activation plan," which delegates tasks and responsibilities during a disaster. In service of creating an effective activation plan, the COAD contributes to the County's "after action report" in the wake of every fire. These after action reports help the County and the COAD identify strengths and lessons learned as they prepare for future crises.

Because Sonoma County's COAD is built around community organizations, only the member nonprofit organizations have voting power. However, the COAD's meetings include two representatives from the Sonoma EOC. These county representatives are also on the executive committee, and their participation in COAD meetings allows them to connect with nonprofits that may be able to augment their efforts during times of crisis.

In particular, if the EOC identifies a need in the community that it cannot fill, county representatives on the COAD can use their participation to find CBOs to fill in gaps. For instance, through participating in COAD meetings, the county EOC was able to learn of United Way's 211 line, which has on-call phone interpretation in 150 different languages and serves to connect residents to resources and services they might need. After learning from the disastrous

lack of translation capabilities during the 2017 fires, the County made use of United Way's 211 line in order to offer residents translation services during the 2019 Kincaid fire and other times of crisis.⁷⁸

A major role of the COAD is to reduce redundancy in disaster response; given the need for speed and the scarcity of resources during a disaster, maximizing efficiency is key. When CBOs and government agencies are not aware of each other or are not communicating effectively, two different actors may each attempt to singlehandedly address the same problem, while leaving other problems unaddressed. For instance, Sonoma County COAD member Jennifer O'Donnell describes how there is often redundancy in donations: "Multiple donors may offer dog food, when diapers are what's really needed." Communication through the COAD network can help nonprofits complement, rather than duplicate, each other's efforts to solve the problems that arise during a crisis.

Sonoma County's COAD is working to develop a shared intake process for disaster case management. Such a process would allow individuals who need help after a disaster to report that need to the COAD rather than to any one particular organization. This shared intake process allows the COAD to assign each case to member organizations that are best positioned to meet an individual's specific needs. This shared intake process further improves efficiency and reduces wasted resources.

The Napa Valley COAD is arguably more established than Sonoma County's. Napa's COAD started out with 35-40 member organizations in 2016, and now has more than 100. The COAD is mostly composed of secular CBOs, but around 20% of organizations are faith-based.

The Napa Valley COAD has a full-time paid director with a liaison seat in the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) during emergencies. The COAD recently signed a contract with the County formalizing their role in coordinating the response of nongovernmental agencies during emergencies, including staffing the EOC liaison role and participating in other critical organizing groups to support response and communication. The Napa Valley COAD owes its success to the dedication of local CBOs, and to finding a director with the right set of qualifications. They first hired a director whose expertise was in emergency management, but that skillset ended up being ineffective for COAD leadership. They found that, instead, the best type of leader is one whose strengths allow them to skillfully facilitate connections between and among CBOs and government agencies. The current director, Celeste Giunta, has that skillset. Ms. Giunta assumed the position with very limited experience in emergency response, and has learned quickly on the job through a series of emergencies including COVID-19, two wildfires and multiple Public

⁷⁸ Interview with Celeste Giunta, director of the Napa Valley COAD, on August 17, 2020

Safety Power Shut Offs (PSPSs). Her abilities to build community among organizations in the COAD and to facilitate communication have proved effective in expanding and strengthening the COAD.

Napa’s COAD has successfully developed a clear structure and an embedded relationship with local government. The COAD’s overall hierarchy is shown in figure 2, where their current fiscal sponsor is the Napa Valley Community Foundation. This consistent funding source allows the COAD to hire a full-time director who can coordinate response efforts and meetings, and can ensure that the COAD is meeting the needs of all stakeholders. The Napa COAD has nine subcommittees: Access & Functional Needs / Older Adults, Food Access, Child Care, Emergency, Financial

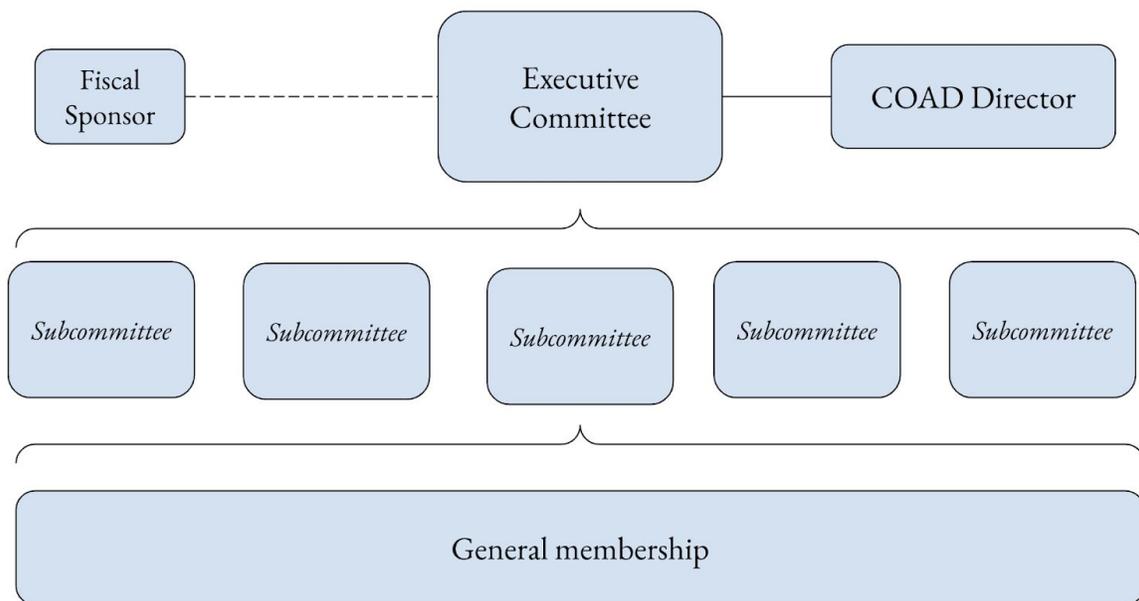


Figure 2: Hierarchy of the Napa Valley COAD⁷⁹

Assistance, Mental and Spiritual Health, Public Information & Outreach, Preparedness, Resources, Volunteers, and Animal Welfare. In Napa Valley, the paid director oversees and directs the work of the subcommittees, supporting their efforts to meet community needs through regular meetings. Subcommittees work to identify needs and gaps in services, then to meet needs and coordinate efforts to avoid duplication. The COAD aims to manage any uncertainties about how to allocate resources during times of crisis. Ms. Giunta explained that the organization’s

⁷⁹Napa Valley Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD): Three-Year Strategic Plan. Kelle Kroll Group, Jan. 2017, <http://napavalleycoad.org/wp-content/uploads/Napa-COAD-Strategic-Plan-Final-Feb-2017.pdf>.

hierarchy exists to avoid conflicting messages, and to streamline communication.⁸⁰ The COAD uses incident command system principles⁸¹ to stay organized and ensure consistent and vetted messaging. These are the same principles used by the EOC, and are very effective in managing efforts during crises and disasters.

The Napa Valley COAD's well-articulated structure has improved its ability to avoid duplicated efforts. As an example of the inefficiencies the COAD aims to prevent, consider the instance in which two different food providers offered free groceries on the same day.⁸² In an effort to help in the wake of a disaster, a small nonprofit decided to distribute free produce on one side of town. The other organization opened up their regular weekly food distribution site, which included produce along with meat, dairy and other goods. Amid confusion about where to get food, many people ended up at the wrong location. The unexpected presence of the small nonprofit led the regular food provider to miscalculate how much food to bring, and to end the day with a large surplus. Meanwhile, the small nonprofit ran out of food early in the day. The COAD aims to avoid this kind of situation by creating a structure that coordinates responsibilities and provides shared communication forums for all organizations offering a particular service, which ensures that service providers are aware of each other's schedules in advance. The COAD also shares the full range of emergency financial assistance programs in order to best leverage these resources based on eligibility requirements. The Emergency Financial Assistance subcommittee works hard at making this happen to ensure the most equitable distribution of resources.

The Napa Valley COAD also benefits from strong ties to the County's Emergency Operations Center. The director of Napa's COAD serves in a liaison role in the EOC, where she has a direct line of access to the most current information related to the emergency at hand. The opportunity to obtain information about a disaster from a vetted and informed source and to receive updated information throughout the crisis is a strong incentive for many organizations to join the COAD. From the EOC's perspective, the COAD's presence is vital, especially in instances in which the County cannot access specific emergency funding. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the County does not have funding to provide assistance for food access other than SNAP benefits. The COAD works with food safety net agencies through its Food Access Subcommittee to ensure that gaps in services are identified and addressed. During PSPSs, government emergency funding is not available because the event is considered a planned

⁸⁰ Interview with Celeste Giunta on August 17, 2020

⁸¹ These include: common terminology, consolidated action plans, and pre-designated incident facilities. For more information, see: "Emergency Management and the Incident Command System." *Public Health Emergency: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*, 14 Feb. 2012, <https://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/mscc/handbook/chapter1/Pages/emergencymanagement.aspx>.

⁸² Interview with Celeste Giunta on August 17, 2020

situation and not a disaster, so the County EOC is unable to access certain types of government funding or partnerships. In many situations the COAD provides services outside the scope of the County's ability to respond. For instance, the COAD offers various forms of Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA), including rental assistance programs for those impacted by COVID-19 or wildfires, and emergency gift card programs for wildfire evacuees to purchase essentials. Food access is another key area of focus for the COAD. When shelters open during a disaster such as a wildfire, the County contracts with the Salvation Army to provide food to evacuees. However the COAD's Food Access subcommittee provides additional support once evacuees return home and need to replenish food supplies or groceries. The Napa Valley COAD also offers child care support, specific types of access and functional needs support, mental and spiritual health programs.

The effectiveness of Napa's COAD is arguably bolstered by the fact that it is the County's only organizing group for disaster preparedness. In contrast, Sonoma County has multiple coalitions built around disaster response. In Sonoma, the presence of various disaster response coalitions can create confusion and a less coordinated, efficient response. Thus a best practice for effective coordination of CBOs may be to have one central disaster response organizer in the county, with other organizing groups as a subset of the overarching organizer.

Conclusion

Latinx communities are often underserved during times of crisis. From ineffective translation and information dissemination to underutilization of Red Cross shelters, a variety of factors must be considered in order to design systems that truly serve Latinx communities. The best systems will involve collaboration across organizations and agencies, and will include community members in the design of initiatives. This report describes strategies which have been implemented by community-based organizations (CBOs) in various Northern California counties and can be scaled throughout the state.

Effective communication is at the core of serving Latinx communities. CBOs and government agencies must communicate in culturally-competent ways, factoring in cultural heritage, socioeconomic status, reading level, transportation access, work schedules, and other diversity factors within the community. Due to the prevalence of multigenerational households and the lack of consistent internet connectivity in Latinx communities, digital communication via websites and social media must be complemented by in-person contact and phone calls. Oftentimes the most culturally competent messengers are community members themselves – either CBOs or *promotores*.⁸³ *Promotores*-based programs serve Latinx communities by improving the quality of communication to community members while also recognizing and compensating effective communicators (or *promotores*) for their added skills in linguistic and cultural competence. An effectively implemented *promotores* program – which typically involves *promotores* in the design of the initiatives they ultimately carry out – can begin a virtuous cycle that uplifts Latinx communities. *Promotores* and CBOs are key players not only for their cross-cultural skills, but also due to their ability to address Latinxs’ fear of government.

Latinxs greatly underuse government resources that could benefit them. Many eligible individuals do not access services due to concerns about sharing personal information with ICE, confusion around eligibility and the application process, or fear of being deemed a “public charge.”⁸⁴ Some of the most alarming situations occur when Latinxs refuse to call 911 or drive to an ER for fear that they might put themselves or a family member at risk of deportation. Many local governments perceive Latinxs as “unengaged;” i.e. failing to take advantage of government efforts to offer bilingual information sessions on various topics. These governments must recognize that oftentimes Latinxs are interested in government programming, but they are “afraid to engage” rather than being “unengaged.” To effectively communicate with Latinxs, government agencies must identify trusted sources of information in the Latinx community, such

⁸³ For more information on *promotores*, see “The Promotores Model,” beginning on page 21.

⁸⁴ For more information on public charge, see pages 23-24.

as *promotores*, CBOs, churches, and community leaders. These same messengers can also help clarify program eligibility and whether a request for help will count as a public charge. CBOs can support Latinx families by educating community members about personal information protections – for instance in the 911 system or in Red Cross shelters – so that community members can base their enrollment decisions on informed assessments of risks and benefits.

One group within the Latinx community that frequently underutilizes beneficial resources is farmworkers. Protecting farmworkers – who are particularly vulnerable to the damaging health impacts of hazards such as heat waves, wildfire smoke, and COVID-19 – is critical to ensuring the health and livelihoods of Latinx families. Government agencies can partner with CBOs to disseminate N95 masks and information on workers’ rights, in order to prevent workers from being forced to work through unhealthy conditions. When scheduling office hours for SNAP programs or when conducting testing or informational outreach, service providers can increase accessibility by adapting to the constraints imposed by farmworker’s nontraditional work schedules and frequent lack of transportation. Farm and vineyard managers must recognize that guarding their workers’ health is not only the right thing to do – it also protects economic profits in the long run by ensuring a healthy and able workforce. Finally, government agencies must take care to enforce OSHA standards and to enact legislation that protects workers from hazards such as heavy wildfire smoke.

Nonprofits and government agencies can improve their communication and allocation of resources within Latinx communities through formalized partnerships and collaboration. This kind of coordination is demonstrated by the *Si Se Puede* Collective, by Tulare County’s Community Care Coalition, and by the Napa Valley and Sonoma County COADs.⁸⁵ Formalized collaboration prevents duplicated efforts and promotes knowledge-sharing. Government agencies benefit by collaborating with community stakeholders and CBOs; these community-based actors have cultural competence, on-the-ground expertise, and the community’s trust – factors which make them invaluable partners when developing and implementing government initiatives.

Government agencies, nonprofits, and community stakeholders can also increase the long-term resiliency of Latinx communities by working together to address issues such as those detailed in Appendix C: food insecurity, digital inclusion, and affordable day care. Food insecurity and child care deserts in Latinx communities are often exacerbated in the wake of crises, and families’ attempts merely to meet their basic needs post-crisis can seriously decrease disposable income. The digital divide exacerbates inequities during times of crisis, and Latinx immigrant families have some of the lowest rates of connectivity in the United States. By offering their

⁸⁵ For more information on these coalitions, “Strengthening Relationships between Governments and CBOs,” beginning on page 32.

disaster-related services within the context of understanding these larger challenges, nonprofits and government agencies can better tailor their services to the needs of Latinx communities.

The above best practices are particularly important during times of crisis, when efficiency and clear communication can mean the difference between life and death. However, CBOs have shown again and again that these practices greatly improve service to Latinx communities even under non-crisis conditions. Latinxs are the largest ethnic group in California, and are disproportionately involved in the most essential sectors of the economy. Thus improving service to Latinx communities means improving service to Californians at large.

Appendix A: Audiovisual Methods and Social Media Translation

This appendix recommends specific strategies for using social media to communicate with Latinx communities. One best practice for social media translation is to make two separate posts – one in English and one in Spanish, as shown in Figure A2 – instead of creating a combined bilingual post, as shown in Figure A1. This former strategy is preferable partly because the abundant text in a combined bilingual post can easily become overwhelming. Sharing two separate posts – with one in English and the other in Spanish – is also helpful because if someone sees the post, they can share the version that’s in the language spoken by them and their network. For instance, many Latinxs have only Spanish-speaking networks, and they don’t want to read or share a bilingual post because the English text is a distraction and is not useful. During emergency situations, government agencies can facilitate effective communication to Latinx communities via social media by themselves sharing timely, clear, and concise information in social media-friendly formats. CBOs can then quickly spread this information through their networks, with minimal to no adaptation.

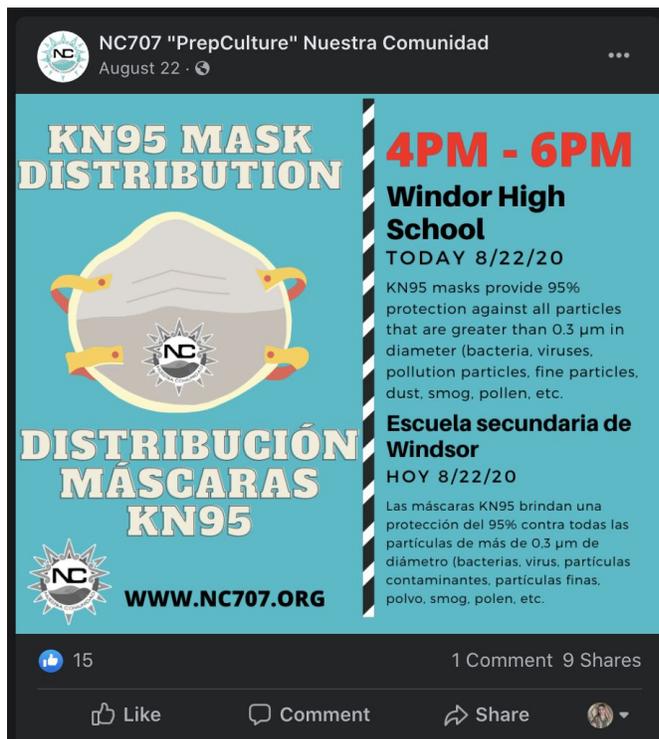


Figure A1: a bilingual post with English and Spanish



Figure A2: Two separate posts – one in English and one in Spanish

There are many effective strategies for creating audiovisual messaging. One option is to include spoken video content alongside text, as shown in Figure 3A. Another option is not to include text – one can instead simply post someone speaking straight into the camera, as in Figure 4A. Finally – and perhaps most accessibly – one can post two separate video posts, as in Figure 5A, with the first post in spoken English and the second post in spoken Spanish.



Figure 3A



Figure 4A



Figure 5A

Appendix B: Cultural Competence

The concept of “cultural competence” is useful in understanding how governments and nonprofits can improve communication to Latinx communities. A number of complex definitions have been used to define the concept. Herein cultural competence refers to the ability to engage with individuals and communities in ways that are sensitive to cultural heritage, socioeconomic status, and language, among other diversity factors.

Ever Rodriguez, chair of the North Fair Oaks Community Council, sees cultural competence as a key to effective communication. He describes how cultural competence means “personalizing the message, and having the receiver of the message receive it in a comfortable way.” Personalizing the message, as Mr. Rodriguez describes, requires adjusting the language and information-transmission mechanisms in order to best reach the specific audience with whom one wishes to communicate. When dealing with immigrant or minority populations during times of crisis, cultural competence allows for clear communication, and enables people to feel comfortable in contexts that are often stressful. Individuals and organizations equipped with cultural competence are able to offer a higher-quality service by ensuring that clients feel respected and understood. Cultural competence can be developed in three stages: it begins with valuing and respecting the client’s cultural identity, it is developed through learning about the culture of those one is working with, and it is maximized when individuals who deeply understand the community and its needs occupy leadership positions in the organizations and agencies communicating with Latinx communities.

While the best way to ensure cultural competence is to match communities in need with service providers who share similar cultural backgrounds, it is inevitable that many service providers to low-income minority communities will be cultural outsiders. As noted by Jackson and Lopez (1999), “the majority of clinicians from the mainstream dominant culture will routinely provide care for large numbers of patients of diverse ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds. Clearly, increasing the numbers of culturally diverse social workers is not sufficient. Even these professionals will need to be able to provide care for patients who are not like themselves.”⁸⁶ Given the reality of imperfect matching of the client and service provider’s cultural backgrounds, it can be beneficial for cultural outsiders to be aware of some aspects of the sociocultural context in which they are operating. In other words, local governments, emergency responders and

⁸⁶ Bonner, C. E. et al. (2015). *Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*. National Association of Social Workers. (p. 39) quoting Jackson, V. H., & López, L. (Eds.). (1999). “Cultural competency in managed behavioral healthcare.” *Manisses Communications Group Incorporated*.
<https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=PonPTDEBrn4%3D&portalid=0>

nonprofits can better serve Latinx populations by prioritizing cultural competence as individuals and institutions. Given the frequent underrepresentation of minorities in many nonprofits and government agencies, these organizations must prioritize learning about the cultures and identities of those they are serving, while actively recruiting more community members with cultural competence into leadership positions within their organizations.

An important step to building cultural competence is learning about the culture or subculture of those with whom one is working. Figure 1 employs the metaphor of a cultural iceberg, which was first articulated by Gary Weaver, a professor at American University who is a specialist on intercultural relations.⁸⁷ The iceberg metaphor describes how some aspects of culture are clearly visible, while most are less immediately apparent. Cultural competence is heavily linked to “cultural humility,” or an awareness of all that one does not know about another’s culture. Cultural humility involves a willingness to ask questions and a commitment to lifelong learning and self-reflection. This cultural humility places the service provider in a learning mindset, which allows them to become increasingly aware of the entire cultural “iceberg.” The conceptualization of the tip of the iceberg as “surface-level” culture does not seek to discredit the importance of these aspects of a culture. Rather, the distinction between surface-level and “deep” culture aims to highlight the vast amount of culture that is less visible yet vitally important to effective communication. The same report by the NASW notes that “What is assessed as behaviorally appropriate in one culture may be assessed as problematic in another...social workers must be familiar with varying cultural traditions and norms.”⁸⁸

In addition to the more familiar conceptualizations of culture, cultural competence requires an awareness of aspects of identity beyond one’s cultural heritage, such as geography, immigration history, and socioeconomic status.⁸⁹ California’s Latinx communities are often sites of intersection among shared Latin American heritage, low socioeconomic status, and mixed immigration status. For example, multigenerational households are common in Latinx communities due to both cultural and income-based factors. Thus observed values, beliefs, and expectations may be influenced by factors other than cultural heritage: for instance by income level, rural upbringing, or lack of documentation. While it is important to be aware of cultural differences that might be present in a particular subgroup, it is also critical not to make assumptions about an individual based on cultural trends in their group. Individual experiences

⁸⁷ *Honoring Gary Weaver*. (n.d.). Retrieved September 3, 2020, from <https://alumniassociation.american.edu/s/1395/rd17/interior-2col.aspx?sid=1395&gid=1&pgid=7988>

⁸⁸ Bonner, C. E. et al. (2015). *Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*. National Association of Social Workers. <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=PonPTDEBrn4%3D&portalid=0>

⁸⁹ Bonner, C. E. et al. (2015). *Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*. National Association of Social Workers. <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=PonPTDEBrn4%3D&portalid=0>

and varying levels of acculturation mean that there is a wide range of values, beliefs, and behaviors within any cultural group, and this is certainly the case for Latinx communities.



Figure 1: *The Iceberg of Culture – Surface Culture and Deep Culture*⁹⁰

Individuals and organizations can increase their cultural competence in several ways. First, organizations can build cultural competence into their hiring and promotion practices by outlining a set of standards for cultural competence and evaluating staff accordingly. Second, organizations can cultivate a workplace environment that encourages open communication, allowing colleagues to offer feedback and learn from one another. This type of milieu allows for learning and growth when someone, especially a cultural outsider, behaves in a culturally incompetent way. Third, organizations and individuals can increase their cultural sensitivity by engaging in training sessions that are grounded in self-study.⁹¹ Often, by first understanding the many ways in which one’s own culture influences one’s outlook and daily life, trainees can more easily become aware of cultural differences and how they might impact one’s values, beliefs, and behavior. Finally, individuals can take the initiative to examine their own biases and develop an appreciation for and knowledge of the culture/s of those they are serving. This process of

⁹⁰ Image obtained via Google Images, from Andonix. (2020, January 31). *Uncovering the iceberg of ignorance*. Andonix.com. <https://www.andonix.com/uncovering-the-iceberg-of-ignorance/>. Text content adapted from *How to be culturally appreciative in 2020*. (2019, December 29). Celestial Peach. <https://www.celestialpeach.com/blog/cultural-iceberg-cultural-appreciation>

⁹¹ Weigl, R. C. (2009). “Intercultural competence through cultural self-study: A strategy for adult learners.” In *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 33(4), 346–360. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2009.04.004>

learning about another culture can involve reading books, reports, and articles about a culture or subculture. Yet an often more immersive way to begin internalizing cultural differences is through reading memoirs, or learning a second language. Additionally, it is important to interact with members of the relevant culture/s not solely in the context of help-seeking or crisis response, as this can skew one's perceptions of a population and fail to offer a full picture.⁹² Service providers can become more familiar with the communities they serve by joining community events such as street fairs or festivals.

Nonprofits and government agencies can embed cultural competence into their services in the long-term by hiring Latinxs into emergency-response positions, for example as 911 dispatchers and as health providers. In the United States, only 6% of doctors are Latinx.⁹³ The Red Cross has a dearth of Spanish-speaking volunteers, and despite efforts to create "Latino engagement teams," there were not enough Spanish speakers at shelters during the 2017 Sonoma County wildfires.⁹⁴ For the nearly 17 years that she served as a 911 dispatcher, Alma Bowen of *Nuestra Comunidad* was the only Latina in the dispatching office. Because the on-call translation services were often relatively ineffective, Ms. Bowen often had to translate when her colleagues received calls from Spanish speakers. This lack of multilingual dispatchers caused delays in assisting monolingual Latinxs, especially when Ms. Bowen had to finish a call of her own before translating for a colleague. The imbalance in representation of Latinxs among those serving during times of crisis compared to those being served can perpetuate inequities in quality of assistance.

One long-term solution to the underrepresentation of Latinxs among service providers is to ensure that bilingual and bicultural service providers are not exploited, but are instead compensated for having skills that enhance the quality of service they can provide. Another is to conduct outreach in Latinx communities to inform students about relevant careers, such as staffing in the county government's office of community engagement or working as first-responders. Ms. Bowen has conducted this kind of outreach at high schools, while also educating students about the 911 system. She says that many Latinx youth do not know that these career paths are available to them; in fact they are quite interested in this line of work once exposed to it through engaging outreach programs. Latinx students are especially curious about these positions when outreach is conducted by someone who is themselves Latinx and who comes from a similar background.

⁹² *How do I become culturally competent?* (n.d.). <https://www.apa.org>. Retrieved September 3, 2020, from <https://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2010/09/culturally-competent>

⁹³ Garcia, L. (2020, February 8). *Less than 6 percent of doctors are Latino. Researcher says shortage will affect patient care.* [expressnews.com](https://www.expressnews.com).

<https://www.expressnews.com/business/health-care/article/Less-than-6-percent-of-doctors-are-Latino-15040285.php>

⁹⁴ Interview with Alma Bowen on June 30, 2020

Ultimately, putting CBOs and community members in charge of serving Latinx communities is often the best way to ensure cultural competence. During August of 2020, a COVID-19 testing site and grocery delivery site were both set up at the Healdsburg community center parking lot – the same trusted location which served as the site for wildfire shelters during 2019. CBOs were on the frontlines administering COVID-19 tests and filling trunks with groceries. Alma Bowen of *Nuestra Comunidad*, wearing gloves and a mask, passed out emergency-preparedness pamphlets through the rolled-down windows of cars waiting in line for a COVID-19 test or for the grocery pick-up. As a Latina whose father was a farmworker and who has lived in the same communities that her nonprofit serves, Ms. Bowen has skills in cultural competence that make her a trusted, key resource for the Latinx community she serves.

Appendix C: Long Term Areas of Focus with Positive Cascading Impacts

There are many challenges disproportionately facing Latinx communities – including poverty, underfunded education systems, and issues concerning environmental justice. This section will highlight three key areas of focus – food security, affordable child care, and digital inclusion. These aims, if achieved, can have cascading positive impacts that increase the uptake of crisis-response efforts and that improve the resilience of Latinx communities over the long term.

Food Security

During times of crisis, disposable income often decreases. Increased layoffs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic can greatly reduce income for many families. In the case of wildfires or other natural disasters, expenses often increase due to evacuation processes or costly post-fire rebuilding. In both cases, a sudden decrease in disposable income can push families into a state of food insecurity,⁹⁵ which is associated with suboptimal health and development in children, as well as depression and obesity among adults.⁹⁶

Joaquin Jimenez from ALAS describes how over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, lines have become longer and longer at the food distribution site for Half Moon Bay’s Latinx community. Angie Sanchez from *Corazón Healdsburg* similarly reports that at Healdsburg’s predominantly Latinx-serving food distribution sites, there were on average almost four times as many people in line by August of 2020 relative to the beginning of the pandemic. A concerning 43% of Latinx parents say they have skipped or reduced the size of their own meals due to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹⁷ During wildfire season, many Latinxs in Northern California suffer from food insecurity as a result of PG&E’s Public Safety Power Shut Offs (PSPSs). These frequent PSPSs lead most refrigerated food in a household to go bad, further contributing to food insecurity.

Low-income families often rely on relatively inexpensive high-calorie foods because these are often quicker to prepare and less expensive than healthy alternatives. Over time, poor eating habits can increase the risks of chronic diseases such as obesity, heart conditions, and Type II

⁹⁵ Food insecurity is defined as “the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food,” according to the Oxford Languages dictionary, 2020.

⁹⁶Cook, J. T., & Frank, D. A. (2008). Food security, poverty, and human development in the United States. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1136, 193–209. <https://doi.org/10.1196/annals.1425.001>

⁹⁷ California Parent Poll: COVID-19 and Early Childhood. (n.d.). *The Education Trust - West*. Retrieved September 16, 2020, from <https://west.edtrust.org/california-parent-poll-covid-19-and-early-childhood/>

Diabetes. For example, Latinxs in the US are twice as likely as non-Latinx Whites to be diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes. These preexisting conditions make an individual more likely to suffer from COVID-19 as well as wildfire smoke: diabetics face a much higher risk of experiencing severe COVID-19 symptoms, and people with pulmonary or health conditions are more likely to get sick if they breathe in wildfire smoke. These conditions increase the likelihood of health complications from a crisis, and can lead families to incur costly medical bills over time – bills that put extra strain on low-income families already struggling to make ends meet. This financial burden from medical bills can then further exacerbate food insecurity. Thus, lack of access to healthy food in low-income Latinx communities can create a reinforcing cycle of negative consequences for both health and finances.

The high poverty rates and prevalence of food deserts in Latinx communities⁹⁸ mean that even during non-crisis times, accessing sufficient healthy food can be a struggle. Research by Brower finds that minority communities have a much lower density of supermarkets with produce sections, and instead have more small convenience stores where the vast majority of goods are packaged.⁹⁹ Over 20% of Latinx families with children are food insecure, meaning they struggle to afford adequate food. These rates of food insecurity among Latinxs are twice the rates for non-Latinx White Americans.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, only 50% of eligible Latinxs enroll in SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program),¹⁰¹ and only 42% of Latinx noncitizens use the service.¹⁰² This lack of SNAP enrollment may be driven by fears of ICE and of being deemed a “public charge.” Under-usage of SNAP benefits may also derive from confusion or lack of knowledge about the lifting of restrictions on SNAP eligibility for legal immigrant non-citizens since the 1996 welfare bill.¹⁰³

Under-enrollment in SNAP seems linked to fear of government within Latinx communities. Due to the prevalence of mixed-status households in Latinx communities, individuals who are eligible for SNAP benefits may avoid applying because “applications routinely ask for the names and

⁹⁸ Spring 2014, K. B. / P. (2014, March 10). *Research shows food deserts more abundant in minority neighborhoods*. The Hub. <https://hub.jhu.edu/magazine/2014/spring/racial-food-deserts/>

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ *Facts About Latinos in the Food Stamp Program*. (2008, November 17). Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/facts-about-latinos-in-the-food-stamp-program>

¹⁰¹ For more information on SNAP, see: “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) | USDA-FNS.” *USDA Food and Nutrition Service*, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program>. Accessed 1 Sep. 2020.

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ For more information on the 1964 Welfare Bill, see: *The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996*. (2015, November 23). ASPE. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/report/personal-responsibility-and-work-opportunity-reconciliation-act-1996>

Social Security numbers of all persons in the household applying for benefits.”¹⁰⁴ Despite states’ assurances that this information will be used only to determine eligibility for SNAP and will not be shared with ICE, it seems that many Latinxs do not trust these claims enough to sign up. Research of Harvard professors Marcella Alsan and Crystal Yang found that Latinx enrollment in SNAP declined after the implementation of the Secure Communities program. This program created direct partnerships between ICE and local law enforcement agencies in communities throughout the country.¹⁰⁵ In many cities, these partnerships had a chilling effect on SNAP usage in low-income Latinx households. However in sanctuary cities, where the Secure Communities program has not been enforced, the researchers observed “almost no detectable effect” on SNAP participation among Latinxs.

There are several ways to address the food insecurity that accompanies SNAP under-enrollment. One method is to put trusted CBOs in charge of educating eligible community members about the program, and encouraging them to apply. One study found that Medicaid enrollment increased substantially among Latinxs after an intervention that involved English and Spanish advertising and bilingual assistance with the application.¹⁰⁶ Similar interventions might help close the gap of eligible SNAP recipients who are not enrolled in the program. Confusion about eligibility and the SNAP process also plays into under-enrollment.¹⁰⁷ When a parent is unsure about their eligibility or that of their child, they may choose to avoid SNAP enrollment rather than to risk signing up illegally, something which could jeopardize a path to citizenship. Additionally, homelessness and language barriers can prevent people from enrolling. One survey found that after “citizenship status,” the primary concern cited by Latinx when asked why they did not apply for SNAP was “inconvenience.”¹⁰⁸ This may be because SNAP offices are only open during regular work hours, which are less accessible to Latinxs who often have inflexible daytime hours and lower access to childcare.¹⁰⁹ Some food-insecure families may be more comfortable using a food pantry’s services, especially if the pantry is run by trusted community

¹⁰⁴ Reichel, Chloe, et al. “After New Immigration Enforcement Program, Fewer Hispanic Citizens Enroll in SNAP, ACA.” *Journalist’s Resource*, 20 June 2018,

<https://journalistsresource.org/studies/government/immigration/snap-aca-immigration-secure-communities/>.

¹⁰⁵ “Secure Communities.” *U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, 20 Mar. 2018,

<https://www.ice.gov/secure-communities>.

¹⁰⁶ Algert, Susan J., et al. “Barriers to Participation in the Food Stamp Program Among Food Pantry Clients in Los Angeles.” *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 96, no. 5, May 2006, pp. 807–09. *ajph.aphapublications.org* (Atypen), doi:10.2105/AJPH.2005.066977.

¹⁰⁷ Straut-Eppsteiner, Holly. *Trump’s Public Charge Regulation Is Hurting Immigrant Families Now*. Protecting Immigrant Families, Apr. 2020,

<https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/DocumentingHarm-update-2020-04-27.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸ *When the Pantry is Bare: Emergency Food Assistance and Hispanic Children (EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)*. (2009). Feeding America.

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/research/latino-hunger-research/latino-hunger-exec-summ.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

members. Making food pantries accessible can be especially important in communities that underuse SNAP.

Even when Latinx families can access sufficient amounts of food, it is often not sufficiently nutritious. Latinx students eat fewer fruits and vegetables than their peers, and are less likely to eat breakfast every day of the week.¹¹⁰ Among women enrolled in SNAP, Latinxs eat fewer vegetables than non-Latinx Whites.¹¹¹ As of 2016, 38% of Latinx students are overweight or obese, compared to 27% of White students.¹¹² Unhealthy eating is exacerbated by targeted marketing of unhealthy items toward Latinx children. Advertisements targeted towards Spanish-speaking youth are more likely to promote unhealthy foods than advertisements targeting English-speaking youth.¹¹³ The effects of food marketing on preferences are thoroughly documented, including in a report by the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at the University of Connecticut. The report's lead author commented in an ABC interview that "[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] budget for chronic disease prevention and health promotion is \$1 billion a year; these companies are spending \$11 billion [on their ads]."¹¹⁴ Without addressing targeted advertisements for unhealthy foods, it may be difficult for any public health interventions to be effective.

Other main causes of the obesity epidemic in Latinx communities are time and money constraints – healthy food is costly to buy, and healthy meals are time consuming to make. With Latinxs working longer hours and making less money than the average Californian, many Latinx parents turn to fast food as the quick and affordable option. In a study about perceptions of healthy eating among Latinx parent-child dyads, one interviewed Latinx parent notes that "I find it a lot easier to get unhealthy foods a lot cheaper." Another interviewee described how the time required to prepare healthy food can push her to choose fast food instead: "Sometimes you are in a hurry and do not have enough time to arrive and prepare a good meal. Sometimes you arrive and . . . on the way [you] buy something and arrive, and eat, that's the truth."¹¹⁵ The challenge, then, is to make healthy meals as affordable and accessible as fast food.

¹¹⁰ Cantu-Pawlik, Stacy. "CDC: Latino Kids Have Worse Diets than Their Peers." *Salud America*, 19 June 2018, <https://salud-america.org/cdc-report-latino-youth-have-worse-diets-than-their-peers/>.

¹¹¹ Noia, J. D. (2016). Differences in fruit and vegetable intake by race/ethnicity and by hispanic origin and nativity among women in the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children, 2015. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.5888/pcd13.160130>

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Ramirez, Amelie. "Food & Latino Kids Research: Marketing of Unhealthy Food." *Salud America*, 3 Jan. 2016, <https://salud-america.org/food-latino-kids-research-marketing-of-unhealthy-food/>.

¹¹⁴ Ortiz, Robin. "Companies Disproportionately Target Black, Latino Youth in TV Ads for Unhealthy Foods." *ABC News*, 18 Jan. 2019, <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/companies-disproportionately-target-black-latino-youth-tv-ads/story?id=60418243>.

¹¹⁵ Lilo, E. A., Muñoz, M., & Cruz, T. H. (2019). "Perceptions of Healthy Eating Among Hispanic Parent–Child Dyads." *Health Promotion Practice*, 20(2), 231–238. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839918761866>

One solution is to make healthy eating habits easy and fun. UnidosUS, the largest hispanic-serving nonprofit in the nation (formerly called National Council of La Raza, NCLR) has created a program called *Comprando Rico y Sano* (Buying Delicious and Healthy). This program attempts to address food insecurity in Latinx communities by educating eligible individuals about SNAP enrollment, as well as offering cooking demonstrations and grocery store tours. It has reached more than 12,000 Latinxs.¹¹⁶

Another program with similar goals called *Eat Move Live* was implemented in Duarte, CA, a city where nearly half of the residents are Latinx (as of the 2010 U.S. Census.) The program is a participatory workshop, where instructors work with parents for two hours a week over the course of five weeks. At the beginning, a “community-needs assessment” allows parents to provide input on which topics to cover. Topics may include substituting sugary drinks, dealing with picky eaters, reading nutrition labels, and challenging the notion that you can’t eat healthy on a budget.¹¹⁷ Marya Serrano, who helped develop the program, offers some advice about serving Latinx populations: “Meal times are social events with proper rules of engagement and recipes passed down from one generation to the next. To refuse a dish is an insult; to eat everything on your plate is a compliment to the chef.” She finds that rather than attempting to radically change someone’s diet, it is most effective to focus on portion control and on preparation techniques, for instance replacing lard with olive oil and flour tortillas with corn tortillas. In addition to focusing on culturally relevant recipes, Ms. Serrano adds, “One way to change people’s habits, especially in the Hispanic community where the culture revolves around family, is to involve the entire family in the process.” If families shop for groceries and prepare meals together, new habits are more likely to last, and to spread to others in the community.

Shifting perceptions of healthy eating to align with cultural values is another step that may promote better eating. This theme has come up in the context of what some popular cookbook writers refer to as “decolonizing one’s diet,” which refers to eating traditional dishes rather than unhealthier adaptations and fast food.¹¹⁸ Many Latinxs with roots in Mexico are proud of their heritage, which is associated with family time, traditional Mexican cooking, and speaking

¹¹⁶ “Vanguards of Longevity.” *UnidosUS Blog*, <https://blog.unidosus.org/tag/healthy-eating/>. Accessed 27 Aug. 2020.

¹¹⁷ Serrano, Marya. “Breaking Bad Habits: Changing the Way Hispanics Eat, Move, Live.” *Healthy Hispanic Living*, 25 Sept. 2015, http://healthyhispanicliving.com/fitness/personalized_care/breaking_bad_habits_changing_the_way_hispanics_eat_move_live/.

¹¹⁸ *Decolonizing Foodways*. (n.d.). Berkeley Food Institute. Retrieved September 1, 2020, from <https://food.berkeley.edu/decolonizing-foodways/>

Spanish.¹¹⁹ Yet based on interviews with 24 Latinxs with roots in Mexico, University of California Merced researchers found that interviewees identified the cooking that is part of their heritage and identity as being unhealthy.¹²⁰ It is very difficult to instill healthy habits if doing so clashes with one's culture and identity. Yet flyers like [this one](#)¹²¹ show how, with a couple modifications, a traditional Mexican diet can be incredibly nutritious. Thus it may be effective to frame healthy eating as something that is in line with cultural values, for instance as something that supports the whole family.¹²² This rationale likely lies behind the rhetoric of the American Diabetes Association's Latinx-serving program "Por tu familia" or "For your Family."¹²³ Encouraging families to "decolonize their diet" might also involve educating parents about how Latinx children are targeted by American marketing campaigns that promote unhealthy foods.

One strategy for promoting healthy diets involves "food pharmacies," or food pantries stationed in health clinics. Food pharmacies are designed such that when a patient visits the doctor, they can receive a "food prescription" in addition to their regular pharmaceutical prescription. Shelves are stocked to meet the nutritional needs of various conditions: for instance, one set of shelves might be filled with high-calorie superfoods for cancer patients to keep their weight up. Another section might have low-sugar staples for people with diabetes, or low-sodium items for patients with hypertension.¹²⁴ Physicians at La Clínica de la Raza health center in Oakland offer food vouchers to patients with diabetes and high blood pressure. These vouchers can be redeemed to buy local produce at La Clínica's food pharmacy; this produce helps Latinx families to maintain a healthy diet even when they are low-income.

Variations of the food pharmacy model have been implemented in the Bay Area, including programs at five clinics in Alameda County. Alameda County is 22.9% Latinx, and Latinxs in the County are disproportionately low-income.¹²⁵ A 2019 report by the Alameda County Food Bank and the Urban Institute finds that around 1 in 5 people in the County are food insecure or at risk

¹¹⁹ Alvarez, Jason. "Study: Kitchen and Culture Clash When Promoting Healthy Eating to Latinos" *University of California Merced*, 22 Mar. 2018, <https://news.ucmerced.edu/news/2018/study-kitchen-and-culture-clash-when-promoting-healthy-eating-latinos>.

¹²⁰ Ibid

¹²¹ *Heart-Healthy Eating Latino Style*. (n.d.). National Lipid Association. https://www.lipid.org/sites/default/files/heart_healthy_eating_latino_style.pdf

¹²² Rodriguez, Cindy. "Study Says Latinos' Curves Put Them at Risk." *WTKR*, 16 Oct. 2013, <https://www.wtkr.com/2013/10/16/study-says-latinos-curves-put-them-at-risk>.

¹²³ "Latino Programs." *American Diabetes Association*, Retrieved August 29, 2020, from <https://www.diabetes.org/latino-programs>

¹²⁴ Farmer, Blake. "'Food Pharmacies' In Clinics: When The Diagnosis Is Chronic Hunger." *National Public Radio*, 28 Nov. 2019, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2019/11/28/783066219/food-pharmacies-in-clinics-when-the-diagnosis-is-chronic-hunger>.

¹²⁵ "2020 Demographics – Summary Data for County: Alameda." *Healthy Alameda County*, Jan. 2020, <http://www.healthyalamedacounty.org/demographicdata>.

of hunger. Yet nearly half of those residents make too much money to qualify for food stamps. Alameda County’s Healthy Food Healthy Families (HFHF) initiative seeks to reduce health inequities by making healthy food options more accessible in low-income Latinx communities.¹²⁶ Due to COVID-19, plans to expand the county-wide food pharmacy model were changed to a doorstep delivery model during the summer of 2020. This model has in fact made healthy food even more accessible to patients, and seems promising into the long term.¹²⁷

Food insecurity is exacerbated by systemic issues of housing insecurity and lack of medical access in Latinx communities. Food insecurity is often connected to the burdens of housing and rent payment, as rent is often the highest expense facing a minimum-wage earner. Even where rent moratoria were implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic or other crises, in many places, the renter still had to pay a small percentage and was expected to pay the accumulating rental debt following the end of the moratorium. Large housing-related payments often leave little money left over for adequate food. In addition to food insecurity, Latinxs’ nutrition and health suffer due to lack of medical insurance and inconsistent access to medical services that can help to diagnose present or future health problems. Lack of medical access increases the incidence and severity of diabetes, malnutrition, injuries, and other illnesses.

Affordable Child Care

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Latinx communities lacked sufficient access to licensed child care. A 2006 poll of Latinxs in California found that 40% of respondents did not have a high-quality, affordable child care center in their neighborhood.¹²⁸ Immigrants overall are less likely to enroll their children in child care programs.¹²⁹ The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) offers federal funding for child care subsidies,¹³⁰ yet only a small percentage of eligible children make use of these grants. While 21% of eligible Black children use CCDBG subsidies, only 8% of eligible Latinx children make use of the funding.¹³¹ Additionally, Latinx children have lower enrollment rates in early child care programs such as Head Start and State-funded preschool.

¹²⁶ *All In Alameda County*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 28, 2020, from <https://www.acgov.org/allin/>

¹²⁷ Interview with Lisa Goldman Rosas on July 13, 2020.

¹²⁸ Schmit, S., & Walker, C. (2016). *A Closer Look at Latino Access to Child Care Subsidies*. The Center for Law and Social Policy.

<https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/publication-1/CloserLookAtLatinoAccess.pdf>

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ “Office of Child Care Fact Sheet.” *U.S. Department of Health & Human Services*, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/fact-sheet>. Accessed 16 Sep. 2020.

¹³¹ Schmit, S., & Walker, C. (2016). *A Closer Look at Latino Access to Child Care Subsidies*. The Center for Law and Social Policy.

<https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/publication-1/CloserLookAtLatinoAccess.pdf>

The Center for American Progress (CAP) released an interactive map¹³² showing the density of daycare providers in different neighborhoods across the United States. The map shows that majority-Latinx neighborhoods typically have a low density of licensed child care providers.¹³³ Many people believe that Latinx households rely more on informal providers, such as neighbors or family members.¹³⁴ Yet this stereotype is harmful, because it can lead people to believe that daycare deserts in Latinx communities are less of a cause for concern than they might be in other areas. In fact, results from a national survey on early child care and education find that Latinx parents hold similar attitudes towards center-based child care as white and black parents, and that Latinxs are just as likely as other racial groups to have relatives who can provide informal child care.

A lack of safe and affordable child-care options may be driving extremely high rates of COVID-19 among Latinx children. As Latinxs are disproportionately represented in essential services which require in-person work, many Latinx parents cannot be at home to watch their young children during the COVID-19 pandemic. Price upticks for child care during the summer of 2020 and school closures during the academic year have left parents with few desirable options. In May of 2020, 95% of Sonoma County children who tested positive for COVID-19 were Latinx.¹³⁵ Since the COVID-19 pandemic, child-care deserts may be a major driver of COVID-19 transmission through children – in Sonoma County, the areas with a low density of child-care providers on the CAP map almost perfectly match those areas with the highest rates of COVID-19.¹³⁶

At a time when child care is needed more than ever, in many areas there are fewer affordable daycare programs than before the COVID-19 pandemic. State regulations in response to the pandemic have increased prices and reduced options for traditional daycare services. Typical daycare resources in Sonoma County – such as predominantly Latinx-serving summer camps run by the Boys and Girls Club in Healdsburg¹³⁷ – have become less accessible since the COVID-19 pandemic, due to increased costs from state-mandated staff-to-student ratios and requirements

¹³² “Do You Live in a Child Care Desert?” (n.d.). *Center for American Progress*. Retrieved September 10, 2020, from <https://childcaredeserts.org/>

¹³³ Malik, Rasheed, et al. “The Coronavirus Will Make Child Care Deserts Worse and Exacerbate Inequality.” *Center for American Progress*, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2020/06/22/486433/coronavirus-will-make-child-care-deserts-worse-exacerbate-inequality/>. Accessed 25 July. 2020.

¹³⁴ Ibid

¹³⁵ “95% of Sonoma County Children Who Contract Coronavirus Are Latino, Data Shows.” *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, 22 May 2020, <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/news/10980043-181/majority-of-sonoma-county-youths>.

¹³⁶ Interview with Alma Bowen on July 16, 2020

¹³⁷ Ibid

for more spacious classroom setups.¹³⁸ For instance, increased costs from extended hours have raised monthly prices for the Boys and Girls Club of Napa Valley from \$100 to \$300.¹³⁹

A lack of enriching child care options for low-income students could widen the achievement gap in the long term. Multiple studies have documented the disproportionate gains reaped from investment in early childhood education.¹⁴⁰ For low-income Latinx students, elementary and early childhood education offers an unparalleled opportunity to set a foundation for academic success. One parent of a second grader in Napa County describes in Spanish how “It’s difficult for me to help her, because I don’t know much English. She’s going to learn more at school there than she would (at home) with me.”¹⁴¹ Among Latinx children who live with two parents, 53% have one or more parents with limited English proficiency.¹⁴² While most high-income families can expose their students to English and other skills to set a foundation for academic success, low-income students often rely on academic enrichment via child care programs and school resources in order to access the same learning opportunities.

Despite the persistent dearth of effective and sustainable child care solutions for low-income families, government agencies and nonprofits can improve outcomes by working to address specific barriers to access. Lack of knowledge about child care options can prevent parents from taking advantage of affordable options at their disposal.¹⁴³ One program in Los Angeles enables essential workers with children to call a hotline where they can be matched with daycare providers who meet the parents’ requirements and have open slots.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, this [California government website](#)¹⁴⁵ allows parents to enter their zip code and see a list of nearby daycare

¹³⁸ Interviews with Angie Sanchez and Alma Bowen, on August 18th and September 10th respectively.

¹³⁹ Klearman, S. (2020, September 7). *Napa Valley’s farmworkers struggle to find child care*. Napa Valley Register. https://napavalleyregister.com/news/local/napa-valleys-farmworkers-struggle-to-find-child-care/article_05feed34-12a5-59be-b75f-82cc9b68870c.html

¹⁴⁰ Powell, A., Thomason, S., & Jacobs, K. (2019, May 8). “Investing in Early Care and Education: The Economic Benefits for California.” *Center for Labor Research and Education - UC Berkeley*. <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/investing-early-care-education-economic-benefits-california/>

¹⁴¹ Klearman, S. (2020, September 7). *Napa Valley’s farmworkers struggle to find child care*. Napa Valley Register. https://napavalleyregister.com/news/local/napa-valleys-farmworkers-struggle-to-find-child-care/article_05feed34-12a5-59be-b75f-82cc9b68870c.html

¹⁴² Schmit, S., & Walker, C. (2016). *A Closer Look at Latino Access to Child Care Subsidies*. The Center for Law and Social Policy. <https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/publication-1/CloserLookAtLatinoAccess.pdf>

¹⁴³ Adams, G., Derrick-Mills, T., & Heller, C. (2016). *Strategies to Meet the Child Care Needs of Low-Income Parents Seeking Education and Training*. The Urban Institute. [urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/84326/2000938-Strategies-to-Meet-the-Child-Care-Needs-of-Low-Income-Parents-Seeking-Education-and-Training.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/84326/2000938-Strategies-to-Meet-the-Child-Care-Needs-of-Low-Income-Parents-Seeking-Education-and-Training.pdf)

¹⁴⁴ Dale, M. (April 29, 2020). *More Than Half Of LA Child Care Centers Closed. Who is watching the kids of essential workers?* LAist. Retrieved July 22, 2020, from <https://laist.com/2020/04/29/child-care-essential-workers-newsom-coronavirus.php>

¹⁴⁵ mychildcare.ca.gov. (n.d.). Retrieved September 10, 2020, from <https://mychildcare.ca.gov/#/home>

options available to them, and whether or not each center has available seats. Transportation is another barrier for many low-income families;¹⁴⁶ offering transportation services to child-care centers may increase Latinx families' access to daycare. Child care centers can also choose to prioritize the children of essential workers rather than operating purely on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The prevalence of nontraditional work schedules among Latinx parents means that Latinx families may need more support in researching the right program for their needs. As of 2019, 63% of Latinx workers earn low wages,¹⁴⁷ a higher percentage than for any other major racial or ethnic group.¹⁴⁸ Around half of low-wage workers who are paid by the hour have schedules that fall outside of traditional Monday-Friday work hours.¹⁴⁹ Farmworker families have been especially hard hit. During the summer of 2020, the combination of heat waves, wildfire smoke, and the COVID-19 pandemic led many growers to place farmworkers on almost nocturnal schedules, so as to avoid workers' having to wear masks during the hottest part of the day.¹⁵⁰ Child care programs with extended hours, for instance beginning at 7 in the morning, may better serve Latinx families with nontraditional work hours. To accommodate nontraditional schedules, Latinxs may also need to enroll in multiple child care programs, which requires extra research that can be supported by CBOs and child-care maps and hotlines.

While effective models for affordable child care do exist, most are small in scale and rely on significant outside funding. In 2020, The Sonoma County CBO *Corazón Healdsburg* raised funds to extend daycare at the Healdsburg Community Center beyond the summer and into the fall. The program is well staffed, and includes well-spaced classroom seating and access to the internet. Most other daycare options in the area cost at least \$200 a week, a price that is not feasible for most families that *Corazón Healdsburg* serves.¹⁵¹ In Napa County, the Napa Valley Farmworker Foundation allocated \$50,000 to make day-long Boys and Girls Club child care

¹⁴⁶ Adams, G., Derrick-Mills, T., & Heller, C. (2016). *Strategies to Meet the Child Care Needs of Low-Income Parents Seeking Education and Training*. The Urban Institute. [urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/84326/2000938-Strategies-to-Meet-the-Child-Care-Needs-of-Low-Income-Parents-Seeking-Education-and-Training.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/84326/2000938-Strategies-to-Meet-the-Child-Care-Needs-of-Low-Income-Parents-Seeking-Education-and-Training.pdf)

¹⁴⁷ Where a low wage is defined as a wage below \$10.22 per hour.

¹⁴⁸ Lanham, D. (2019). *53 million U.S. workers are making low wages, despite low national unemployment*. Metropolitan Policy Program – Brookings Institute. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/201911_Brookings-Metro_Pressrelease_lowwageworkforce.pdf

¹⁴⁹ Schmit, S., & Walker, C. (2016). *A Closer Look at Latino Access to Child Care Subsidies*. The Center for Law and Social Policy. <https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/publication-1/CloserLookAtLatinoAccess.pdf>

¹⁵⁰ Klearman, S. (2020, September 7). *Napa Valley's farmworkers struggle to find child care*. Napa Valley Register. https://napavalleyregister.com/news/local/napa-valleys-farmworkers-struggle-to-find-child-care/article_05feed34-12a5-59be-b75f-82cc9b68870c.html

¹⁵¹ Interview with Angie Sanchez on August 18th, 2020

accessible to children of essential workers. This funding opened 62 more slots with the Boys and Girls Club, which will prioritize the predominantly-Latinx children of essential workers. While both of these Northern California programs have helped dozens of families, many more children are on the waitlist – and the costliness of these programs makes them difficult to scale.

The similarities between schools and daycare programs with “virtual learning labs” have prompted frustration among many low-income parents about why schools must remain closed. Parents across the country, including in California’s Latinx communities,¹⁵² are “mystified that they’re being charged for [child care programs that] look an awful lot like public school—and sometimes even take place at one.”¹⁵³ Melanie Dodson, Executive Director of Sonoma County’s Community Child Care Council notes that “You hear the teachers say, ‘No, no, no, we can’t go back to the classrooms.’ But then [teachers are] turning around and saying, ‘Hey, child care, you all need to be open.’”¹⁵⁴ Ultimately, an important step to solving the child care crisis for Latinx families may involve reopening elementary schools under safe conditions, with smaller class sizes that prioritize children whose families need child care the most.

Digital Inclusion

The “digital divide,” which refers to the income and race-based gap in internet connectivity, has become much more visible since the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed such a high percentage of activities online. Many families may have some connectivity, but are “underconnected” due to either inconsistent internet access, or mobile-only access. As of 2016, Latinx immigrant families are the most underconnected of low and middle-income families.¹⁵⁵ While providing households with fast broadband is one of the most critical components of digital inclusion, there are five components to digital inclusion as identified by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance¹⁵⁶:

1. Easy access to affordable, fast broadband internet
2. Devices that meet the needs of those using them
3. Digital literacy
4. Access to technical assistance
5. Online content designed to be inclusive of diverse groups

¹⁵² Interview with Alma Bowen on September 10, 2020.

¹⁵³ Harris, O. K., Adam. (2020, September 3). *What are parents supposed to do with their kids?* The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/09/limited-child-care-options-essential-workers/615931/>

¹⁵⁴ “Child Care System in Sonoma County ‘on the Brink of Collapse’.” *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, 27 July 2020, <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/sonoma-county-child-care-system-on-brink-of-collapse/>.

¹⁵⁵ Rideout, V. J. & Katz, V.S. (2016). *Opportunity for all? Technology and learning in lower-income families*. A report of the Families and Media Project. New York: The Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop. www.joanganzcooneycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/jgcc_opportunityforall.pdf

¹⁵⁶ “The Digital Inclusion Startup Manual.” *National Digital Inclusion Alliance*. (n.d.). Retrieved September 30, 2020, from <https://www.startup.digitalinclusion.org/>

While rates of internet usage among Latinxs are increasing, home internet access has stayed relatively constant since 2010.¹⁵⁷ As of 2016, 10% of immigrant Latinxs have no internet access, and 40% have mobile-only access.¹⁵⁸ When it comes to devices, 37% of immigrant Latinx parents report not having a desktop or laptop computer, compared to 20% of Whites, Blacks, and U.S.-born Latinxs.¹⁵⁹ Among Latinx families where parents have less than a high school education, just 33% of families are connected.¹⁶⁰ Even when Latinxs are connected to broadband, slow speeds often prevent Latinxs from accessing all that the web has to offer.

These inequities in broadband access were starkly depicted in a photo of two Latinx girls sitting on the sidewalk to do their schoolwork using Taco Bell's WiFi.¹⁶¹ These elementary school students in Salinas did not have access to the internet at home, and the August 2020 photo immediately went viral for portraying the challenging circumstances under which so many underconnected students are resuming their schoolwork. As one of the least connected demographic groups, Latinx families have been especially hard hit by the transition to a virtual environment brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these families have felt excluded from important changes, such as transitioning a small business to an online format, allowing children to continue their studies, and helping elderly family members access medical care virtually. Thus providing Latinxs with internet connectivity and with ways to develop digital literacy skills is important now more than ever.

Without knowing which of their students, if any, are experiencing underconnectedness, teachers often make assumptions that exclude certain students from educational opportunities. Increasingly popular teaching models – involving digital assignments and “flipped classrooms” – can stifle learning for underconnected students.¹⁶² When teachers are aware of

¹⁵⁷ Brown, A., López, G., & Lopez, M. H. (2016, July 20). *Digital Divide Narrows for Latinos as More Spanish Speakers and Immigrants Go Online*. Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project. <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2016/07/20/digital-divide-narrows-for-latinos-as-more-spanish-speakers-and-immigrants-go-online/>

¹⁵⁸ Rideout, V. J. & Katz, V.S. (2016). *Opportunity for all? Technology and learning in lower-income families*. A report of the Families and Media Project. New York: The Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop. www.joanganzcooneycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/jgcc_opportunityforall.pdf

¹⁵⁹ Ibid

¹⁶⁰ Brown, A., López, G., & Lopez, M. H. (2016, July 20). *Digital Divide Narrows for Latinos as More Spanish Speakers and Immigrants Go Online*. Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project. <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2016/07/20/digital-divide-narrows-for-latinos-as-more-spanish-speakers-and-immigrants-go-online/>

¹⁶¹ Copitch, J. (2020, August 28). *Photo showing 2 Salinas girls doing homework outside Taco Bell goes viral*. KSBW. <https://www.ksbw.com/article/photo-showing-2-salinas-girls-doing-homework-outside-taco-bell-goes-viral/33834659>

¹⁶² Hiefield, M. (2018, October 31). *Latino students and the digital divide: Trends, challenges, and possibilities*. Medium.

underconnectedness among their students, they can adjust their teaching strategies to be inclusive of students experiencing the digital divide. Furthermore, the limited bandwidth of school WiFi in many Latinx communities inhibits digital learning even when students are in the classroom. Stan Santos, a community activist in Fresno County, describes how “my own test of school WiFi devices [In Fresno County’s Latinx communities] shows speeds of 2.4-2.7 megs,¹⁶³ totally inadequate for online learning.”¹⁶⁴

During the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning has become the norm – sometimes deterring underconnected students from attending school at all. The Los Angeles Unified School District recorded that around a third of students did not log in to classes at all during the first few weeks of the pandemic.¹⁶⁵ Research by McKinsey found that lack of digital access and the challenges of online learning are expected to have the following impact on education outcomes: 7 months of learning loss for all students, and 9 months of learning loss for Latinxs.¹⁶⁶ Unfortunately, lack of internet access has led some students to not return to school at all. Mr. Santos describes how “it breaks my heart to hear the mother of a 15-year-old say that her son was tired of trying to get a good connection for online learning, and decided to go to work in the fields instead.” In conclusion, In Mr. Santos’ view, “broadband connection must be considered a right and not a privilege.”¹⁶⁷

Some believe that wireless may be the path to bridging the digital divide, yet mobile phone connection is not as effective for crucial activities such as applying for a job or for college. Additionally, mobile-only connection does not lend itself to applying for benefit programs.¹⁶⁸ According to Ever Rodriguez, director of the North Fair Oaks community council, when the Payment Protection Plan and county-level stimulus packages were announced at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many residents of the predominantly Latinx neighborhood of North

<https://medium.com/digital-equity/latino-students-and-the-digital-divide-trends-challenges-and-possibilities-66ba916ca01e>

¹⁶³ “Megs” refers to internet speed in megabits per second.

¹⁶⁴ Schwartz, Caitlin. “Disconnected: How Corporate Giants Are Failing to Provide Broadband and Good Jobs.”

National Digital Inclusion Alliance, 30 Sept. 2020,

<https://www.digitalinclusion.org/blog/2020/09/30/disconnected-how-corporate-giants-are-failing-to-provide-broadband-and-good-jobs/>.

¹⁶⁵ “Unraveling the Layers of the Latinx Digital Divide” *The Education Trust – Zoom*. July 27, 2020.

https://edtrust.zoom.us/rec/play/ahMCot9fm8Kj65kGMWErAzs4MAIQIB9BTnVL-vZN0Y_3xh2Ie6_M0to-Fypdbe00T3O5v_rczeyhvwF.m_cSLK_sDvByxyC?continueMode=true&_x_zm_rtaid=mT6P3StkT4CQ5JYx1ugGhg.1601077896367.93f89e383363a157815d11b776d07101&_x_zm_rtaid=573

¹⁶⁶ Ibid

¹⁶⁷ Schwartz, Caitlin. “Disconnected: How Corporate Giants Are Failing to Provide Broadband and Good Jobs.”

National Digital Inclusion Alliance, 30 Sept. 2020,

<https://www.digitalinclusion.org/blog/2020/09/30/disconnected-how-corporate-giants-are-failing-to-provide-broadband-and-good-jobs/>.

¹⁶⁸ Bernard, S. (2011, August 11). “Crossing the Digital Divide: Bridges and Barriers to Digital Inclusion.”

Edutopia. <https://www.edutopia.org/digital-divide-technology-access-inclusion>

Fair Oaks sought to apply. Yet a lack of broadband access or the ability to easily obtain and mail in a hard copy of the application form meant that by the time residents were able to apply, a large amount of funding was no longer available.¹⁶⁹

Unfortunately, it can be difficult to identify gaps in connectivity at a local level, especially in rural areas. While nation-wide estimates of connectivity can be derived from U.S. Census results, it is more difficult to identify regional gaps in connectivity. Kevin Schwartz, technology officer for Austin Independent School District, notes that “It’s really hard to get people to tell you they don’t have [an] internet connection when they can’t use the internet to respond to a survey or send an email.”¹⁷⁰ In a webinar on bridging the digital divide for Latinxs, Representative Xochitil Torres Small says that “In rural communities, we don’t exactly know where the biggest challenges in connectivity are, because our mapping is not accurate enough or specific enough to identify the most rural, least connected places.”¹⁷¹ Thus, mapping which neighborhoods and families are underconnected is an important first step to solving problems linked to the digital divide.

Cost barriers are one of the main reasons for Latinx’s lack of enrollment in robust broadband internet. This stems in part from the fact that the United States has one of the most expensive broadband services in the world, costing around \$65 per month on average.¹⁷² This price range is unaffordable for many low-income Latinx families.¹⁷³ Cost barriers can be overcome through enrollment in discount internet programs that are available to low-income families. These include affordable options for families with children in the federal school lunch program, as well as discounted broadband service for low-income veterans, public housing residents, and households enrolled in SNAP.¹⁷⁴ Mr. Santos from Fresno County describes how “AT&T’s standard home internet plan costs \$70 per month. It has a low-income offering which is not utilized because it is not publicized. And people, though I have tried to promote it, have been

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Ever Rodriguez on September 1, 2020

¹⁷⁰ “Texas Has the Widest Digital Divide in the Nation. What Does That Mean for the School Year?” *The Texas Observer*, 22 Sept. 2020, <https://www.texasobserver.org/texas-back-to-school-remote/>.

¹⁷¹ “Unraveling the Layers of the Latinx Digital Divide” *The Education Trust – Zoom*. 27 July, 2020. https://edtrust.zoom.us/rec/play/ahMCot9fm8Kj65kGMWErAzs4MAIQIB9BTnVL-vZN0Y_3xh2Ie6_M0to-Fypd-be00T3O5v_rczeyhvwF.m_cSLK_sDvByxyC?continueMode=true&_x_zm_rtaid=mT6P3StkT4CQ5JYx1ugGhg.1601077896367.93f89e383363a157815d11b776d07101&_x_zm_rtaid=573

¹⁷² Callahan, Bill, and Angela Siefer. *Tier Flattening: AT&T and Verizon Home Customers Pay a High Price for Slow Internet*. 2018, <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/NDIA-Tier-Flattening-July-2018.pdf>.

¹⁷³ “The Digital Inclusion Startup Manual.” *National Digital Inclusion Alliance*. (n.d.). Retrieved September 30, 2020, from <https://www.startup.digitalinclusion.org/>

¹⁷⁴ “The Discount Internet Guidebook.” *National Digital Inclusion Alliance*. (n.d.). Retrieved September 30, 2020, from https://www.discounts.digitalinclusion.org/1_introduction.html

reluctant to use it.”¹⁷⁵ By addressing lack of knowledge about discount internet programs, sign-up assistance can increase the number of low-income households with affordable connections.

In addition to overcoming cost barriers, it is important to emphasize to Latinx parents the importance of internet access for completing schoolwork and having a successful career. Many Latinx immigrant parents were raised in countries where technology played a less central role in the education system. Latinx parents may not recognize the value of the internet if they do not use it frequently themselves. Thus, it is important to help Latinx families understand that digital literacy is expected of students in U.S. school systems and plays a critical role in students’ ability to complete schoolwork. By becoming familiar with the many educational tools that the internet offers and with the relevance of these tools to educational and career success, Latinx parents are more likely to prioritize internet access.¹⁷⁶

Partnerships with corporations can help local governments and CBOs subsidize broadband for low-income communities and make digital literacy education accessible. Banks want customers to use their online banking tools, and hospitals have invested millions into health apps that they want their patients to use.¹⁷⁷ Thus both of these institutions stand to gain from increased digital access for their Latinx clients. Additionally, Latinx residents can save time by using these free and instantly-accessible online services. Government agencies also want eligible residents to sign up for their assistance programs online. By helping all of these institutions recognize the ways in which they benefit from digital inclusion of Latinxs, they can become partners in bridging the digital divide so as to make these online services more accessible to their clients.

Digital inclusion efforts are critical for improving Latinxs’ access to devices, connection, and digital literacy. Nicole Pinchard, founder of the Digital Youth Network, notes that literacy has always been defined by the technology of the time – and thus 21st century standards for literacy should include digital literacy.¹⁷⁸ According to this definition of literacy, many low-income Black and Latinx Americans are not literate. Her organization helps low-income students develop digital literacy by giving them access to a variety of digital tools, and allowing them to use these tools to pursue their interests and to augment their ability to express themselves. In

¹⁷⁵ Schwartz, Caitlin. “Disconnected: How Corporate Giants Are Failing to Provide Broadband and Good Jobs.” *National Digital Inclusion Alliance*, 30 Sept. 2020, <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/blog/2020/09/30/disconnected-how-corporate-giants-are-failing-to-provide-broadband-and-good-jobs/>.

¹⁷⁶ “Modifying the Flipped Classroom: The ‘In-Class’ Version” (2014, March 24). *Edutopia*. Retrieved September 26, 2020, from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/flipped-classroom-in-class-version-jennifer-gonzalez>

¹⁷⁷ *What is Digital Inclusion?* Digital Inclusion Survey. (n.d.). Retrieved September 30, 2020, from <https://digitalinclusion.umd.edu/content/what-digital-inclusion>

¹⁷⁸ “Resources for Closing the Digital Divide.” *Edutopia*, <https://www.edutopia.org/digital-divide-technology-access-resources>. Accessed 7 Oct. 2020.

their guide to digital inclusion,¹⁷⁹ The National Digital Inclusion Association notes that trust is key to helping residents gain digital literacy skills. This trust is most present in organizations that have already established themselves as providing useful services to the communities they serve.¹⁸⁰ It is also important for the location of digital literacy training to be familiar and comfortable for community members attending the training.

One successful strategy for improving parental understanding of technology was implemented in the Beaverton, Oregon, school district in the form of “Latino Parent Technology Nights.” To invite parents to these nights, teachers sent bilingual flyers home with students, explained the program at parent-student meetings, and recorded a voice invitation to send to parents through the school's auto-dialer system. At the technology nights, Latinx students were invited to facilitate technology lessons, and a professional interpreter was present to make the content accessible to monolingual parents. Child care was also provided so that parents with small children could attend the sessions.¹⁸¹

Digital literacy is most effectively built when the skills of using technology are taught in the context of achieving a particular goal. Focusing on outcomes during technology education not only provides motivation to develop digital literacy, but also increases retention of what is taught.¹⁸² For instance, digital instruction at the Latino Parent Technology Nights revolved around teaching parents how to access their students’ academic records on the Canvas online learning management platform, how to navigate the school webpage in Spanish, and how to create email accounts for parents who have never used email. Another example of outcome-focused digital inclusion is offered by the Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA), a CBO based in the San Francisco Mission District. MEDA increased digital connectedness within Latinx communities by collaborating with other Latinx-serving development agencies to offer computer centers and to provide instructions to Latinx entrepreneurs on how to promote their business online.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ For more information, see: “The Digital Inclusion Startup Manual.” *National Digital Inclusion Alliance*. (n.d.). Retrieved September 30, 2020, from <https://www.startup.digitalinclusion.org/>

¹⁸⁰ Ibid

¹⁸¹ “Modifying the Flipped Classroom: The ‘In-Class’ Version” (2014, March 24). *Edutopia*. Retrieved September 26, 2020, from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/flipped-classroom-in-class-version-jennifer-gonzalez>

¹⁸² *Digital Inclusion*. (2019, December 5). WebJunction. <https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/digital-inclusion.html>

¹⁸³ Morris, John B. “Language and Citizenship May Contribute to Low Internet Use Among Hispanics.” *National Telecommunications and Information Administration*, 17 Nov. 2015, <https://www.ntia.gov/blog/2015/language-and-citizenship-may-contribute-low-internet-use-among-hispanics>. Accessed 4 Oct. 2020.