



**Stage One Regional Report #2**

# **SPANISH LANGUAGE OUTREACH PROJECT**

**2022-2023**

*Understanding the Regional Context*

*Northeast ADA National Network Regional Center - Region 2*

**ADA Knowledge Translation Center**

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# Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PROJECT</b> .....	3
<b>SECTION ONE: CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND</b> .....	4
<b>SPANISH-LANGUAGE SPEAKERS IN THE UNITED STATES</b> .....	5
<b>HISPANIC AND LATINO PEOPLE IN THE U.S.</b> .....	6
<b>HISPANIC AND LATINO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE U.S.</b> .....	6
<b>BARRIERS TO SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT RIGHTS IN SPANISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES</b> .....	9
<b>THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT</b> .....	11
<b>OUTREACH STRATEGIES TO REACH SPANISH-SPEAKING DISABILITY COMMUNITIES</b> .....	12
<b>REGION 2: NORTHEAST ADA CENTER</b> .....	15
<b>REGION 2 BACKGROUND</b> .....	16
<b>OBSERVATIONS FROM THE INTERVIEWS</b> .....	19
<i>Participants</i> .....	19
<i>What Did We Find?</i> .....	20
<i>Barriers</i> .....	20
<i>Access to Information</i> .....	22
<i>Recommendations</i> .....	23
<b>SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS FOR REGION 2</b> .....	24
<b>SECTION THREE: KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	25
<b>OBSERVATIONS FROM NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INTERVIEWS</b> .....	26
<b>WHAT WE FOUND IN RELATION TO THE ADA</b> .....	27
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, FUNDING, AND CONTACT</b> .....	28
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	29
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	32
<b>APPENDIX: REGION 2 ORGANIZATIONS FOR OUTREACH EFFORTS</b> .....	33

# Executive Summary of National and Regional Project

## Project Goals

The Spanish Language Outreach Project (SLO) is a five-year collaborative national initiative of the ADA National Network (ADANN), 10 regional ADA centers, and the ADA Knowledge Translation Center. The overarching goals of the SLO are to: 1) develop a deeper understanding of the context of Spanish-speaking communities through research and expert consultation, 2) assess the diverse regional and national community needs of Spanish-language speakers in the U.S., 3) develop plans to reduce barriers to language access, 4) identify and develop knowledge translation interventions, products, and resources targeted to Spanish-language communities, and 5) develop connections to new outreach partners and trusted community leaders to better support dissemination, training, and technical assistance. This report addresses goal #1.

## Approach

Individuals at a national level and across 10 ADA regions reported on barriers that Spanish-speaking communities face, how they access and share information, and suggestions to improve outreach efforts. At the national level, participants were 14 leaders working directly with Spanish-speaking and/or disability communities from nine national organizations. Regional participants included 46 community members that are a part of, work with, or are involved with members of the Spanish-speaking community living with or without disabilities. Most regional participants identified as parents of someone with a disability, people with disabilities, community resource managers, or directors of programs at their organizations.

## National Findings

Participants report language to be the number one barrier for the Spanish-speaking communities they serve at a national level. This includes insufficient or ineffective translation and interpretation services, bilingual staff, and resources in plain language. Other common barriers are lack of information about rights and disability, fear and lack of trust related to immigration status, and the stigma attached to disability and mental health in the community.

## Regional Findings

Like national findings, language was the most discussed barrier for the Spanish-speaking community across ADA regions. Participants report that many people in this community do not know what resources and programs are available to them. Further, fear or lack of trust based on immigration status impacts access to services. Other common barriers are stigma, lack of education on disability, technology, discrimination, low literacy, and survival mode.

## Recommendations

Participants gave recommendations for ADANN to improve outreach to Spanish-language communities. At national and regional levels, in-person trainings and partnering with local organizations were most frequently recommended. Nationally, members suggested utilizing social media, valuing representation, and understanding the needs of the community. At regional levels, community members suggested making information culturally accessible and relevant and tailoring information based on specific state needs. These recommendations reflect the Spanish-speaking community's barriers to accessing ADA information and emphasize the need for specific training and materials related to ADA so the community can be informed and more aware of their rights.

# **SECTION ONE: CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

## **SECTION 1: CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

This report presents the results from the first stage of the project for the Northeast ADA Center – Region 2; and includes the following main sections: 1) background and national context, 2) individual regional findings outlining the context and qualitative interviews conducted with community members of Spanish-speaking communities, and 3) a summary of the overall key findings and recommendations of the first stage of the project. The appendix includes a list of organizations for outreach in the region.

This section describes the national context and background of Spanish-speaking communities in the United States (U.S.). It first considers the complexity of conducting outreach to Spanish-speaking people and then provides key demographic information about the communities.

### **Spanish-Language Speakers in the United States**

Spanish-speaking communities are extremely diverse. Hispanic, Latino, and Latina are the most common terms used to describe or count people within Spanish-speaking communities in the U.S. The Hispanic or Latino category used by the federal government includes individuals of Spanish origin. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau reports and collects data on the ethnicity of Americans and defines “Hispanic or Latino” as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race. The census questionnaire allows individuals to write in answers to specify their Hispanic origin or other ethnicity related to their Spanish-speaking identity. Some surveys, including the census, separate the question about Latino, Hispanic, and Spanish origin from race. Individuals who fit into this category may identify with any one or a combination of many different races.

While the categories of Hispanic and Latino and Spanish-speaking are sometimes used synonymously, the category of Hispanic or Latino does not perfectly match the totality of the Spanish-speaking population in the U.S. Most Latino or Hispanic people speak Spanish, and Latino refers to the identity of people who are native to or have cultural ties to Latin American countries. It does not necessarily indicate one’s preferred language. Individuals from non-Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America where Portuguese, French, Creole, or other languages are more commonly spoken may also have a Latino or Latina identity. Hispanic generally refers to family origin in Spanish-speaking countries, including Spain. It is important to recognize that not all Spanish-speaking individuals embrace or use the term Latino or Hispanic to describe themselves. For example, some individuals prefer to identify by their country of origin. Others are critical of the Spanish language and its gendered noun structure, and terms that maintain a gender-neutral tone, such as Latin/x, are now in use.

To match the federal categorization and the most common terminology used in reporting efforts, Latino or Hispanic are the terms most used in this report. As the Spanish-speaking population in the U.S. is extremely diverse, it is necessary at times to switch terms in this report, such as when referring to personal accounts or data sources where other terms are used.

## **Hispanic and Latino People in the U.S.**

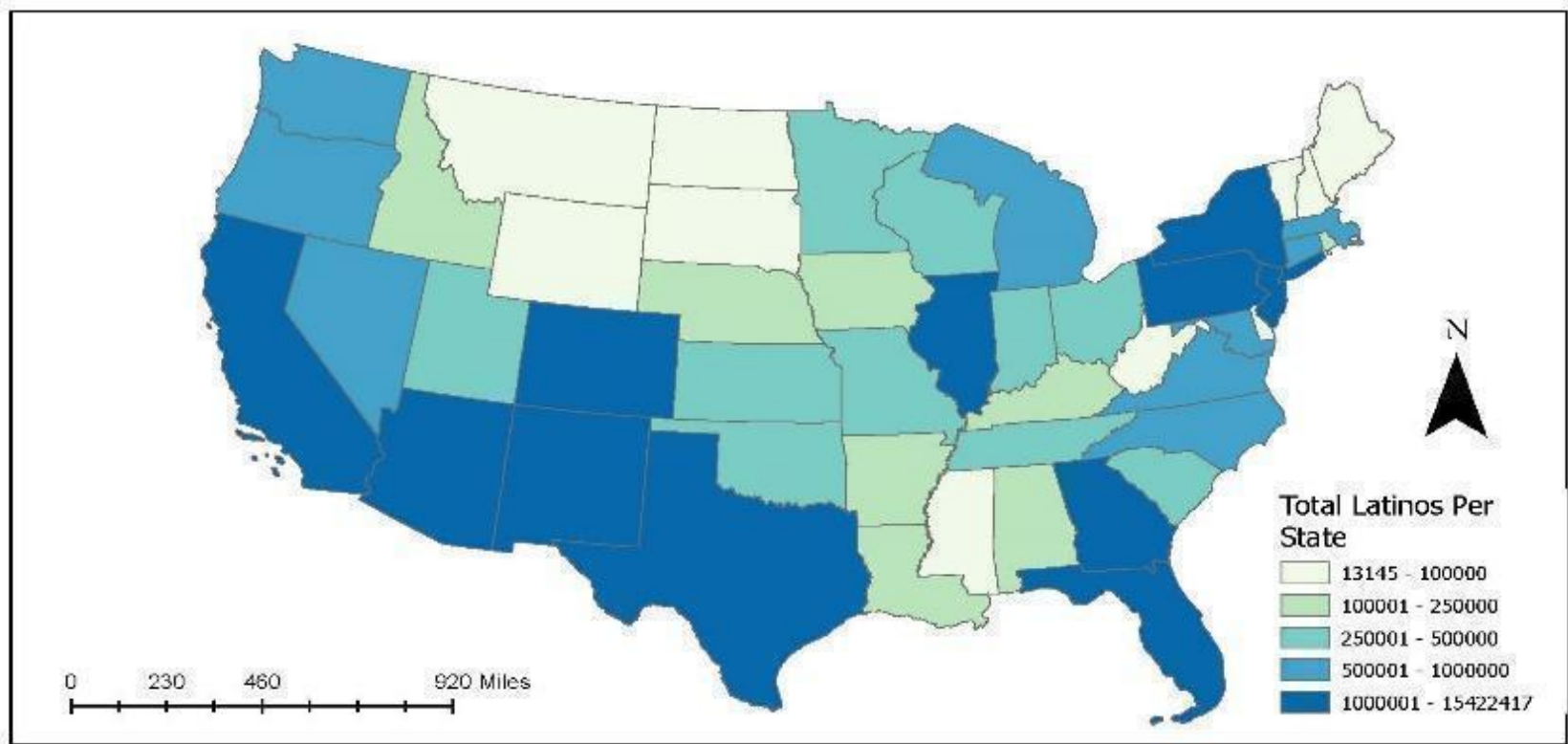
As of 2020, there were 62.1 million Hispanic, Latino, or Latina people in the United States. This population includes people of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, and Spanish descent. Of all groups, Mexicans are the largest group at 61.4 percent. States with the largest Hispanic/Latino population include California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Arizona (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, 2022). Hispanics and Latinos are also one of the fastest-growing populations in the country. In the last decade, the Hispanic population increased by 23 percent (Pew Research Center, 2022). Figure 1 on page 7 shows the number of Latinos/Hispanics by state from 2017-2021 in the U.S.

## **Hispanic and Latino People with Disabilities in the U.S.**

Additionally, as the Hispanic/Latino population continues to grow in the United States, the number of people with disabilities in these communities has also increased. In 2018, there were 5.3 million Hispanic or Latinos with disabilities in the United States. Figure 2 on page 8 shows the percentage of Latinos/Hispanics with disabilities per state from 2017-2021. Despite the growth of the population across the country, Hispanics continue to face underrepresentation and access disparities in areas such as education, health care, employment, and civil rights. For Hispanics with disabilities, there are additional barriers as they simultaneously navigate cultural and health-related differences. These barriers include language barriers, lack of access to information, immigration status, discrimination, and fear, among many others. These barriers impact access to information.

Figure 1: Map of Latino population count across the U.S. from 2017 to 2021

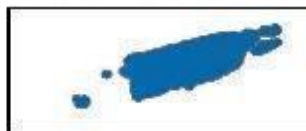
## 2017-2021 Count of Latinos in the United States



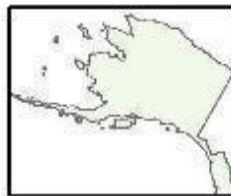
**Hawaii**



**Puerto Rico**



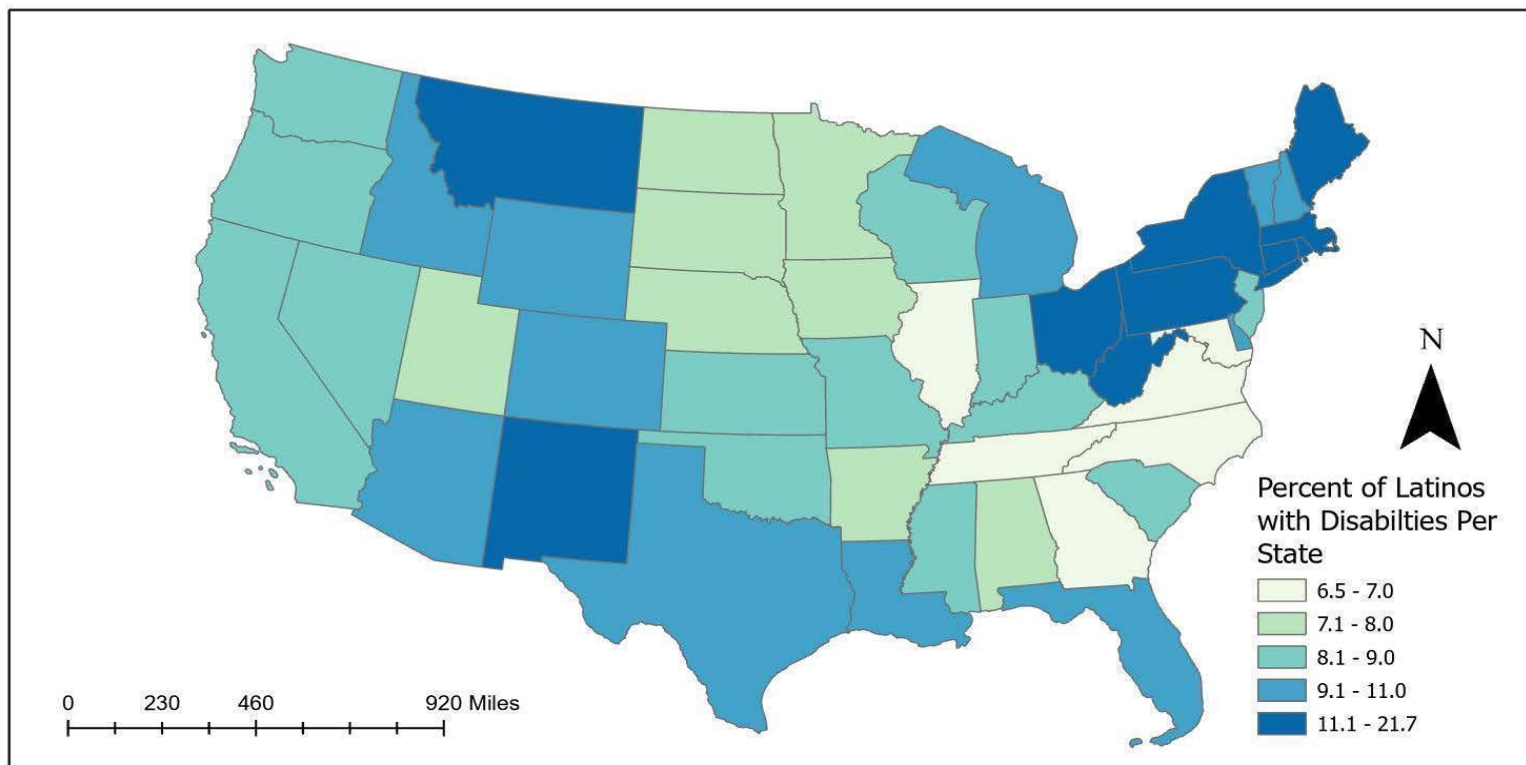
**Alaska**



PCS: NAD 1983 2011 Contiguous USA  
Albers  
Source: ACS 2021 5-year data Table  
S1810

Figure 2: Map of Latino population percentages across the U.S. from 2017 to 2021

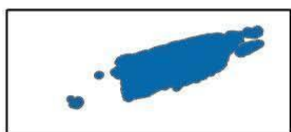
## 2017-2021 Percent of Latinos with Disabilities in the United States



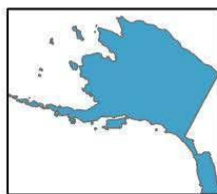
Hawaii



Puerto Rico



Alaska



PCS: NAD 1983 2011 Contiguous USA  
Albers  
Source: ACS 2021 5-year data Table  
S1810



## **Barriers to Sharing Information About Rights in Spanish-Speaking Communities**

The Hispanic and Latino population in the U.S. has rapidly grown for several decades and is one of the fastest-growing ethnic groups. Within this diverse population, many communities have historically faced substantial barriers to full inclusion in everyday life. Some of the barriers or challenges are connected to limited access to employment, education, and legal services. Outreach to educate community members about their legal rights is an essential part of removing these barriers and addressing discrimination. Hispanics and Latinos face inequalities and barriers when accessing information in various areas of life.

### **Language Barriers**

One of the main barriers to informing individuals and communities about their rights is language. While an increasing number of Hispanics and Latinos are bilingual, Spanish is often spoken in homes, communities, and with certain family groups. Many basic resources and information about rights are only provided in English and are not widely available or used by Spanish-speaking individuals (Garcia et al., 2020). Language barriers are especially troublesome when it comes to navigating legal decisions, where legal language is particularly complex. Many Spanish-speaking people have faced barriers to full and equal access to education which can impede their understanding of such information. Spanish-speaking individuals are also more likely to face barriers in accessing legal services. Language differences are an issue when it comes to accessing information and communicating with professionals and can lead to discrimination in settings such as schools, workplaces, and public places (Ell et al., 2015). This barrier goes beyond translation, as there is also a lack of culturally competent information in Spanish. Most information that is available to the Hispanic community is not translated accurately or adapted to the Spanish language, which often creates confusing and ineffective content (Khan et al., 2013).

### **Mistrust and Fear**

Hispanic and Latino populations commonly report fear or mistrust in accessing legal experiences. Even when experiences may amount to discrimination or abuse. Mistrust is commonly attributed to reports of abuse or mistreatment within the legal system, previous negative experiences, or family members' encounters with law enforcement agencies (Cedillo, 2019). Even if individuals know about their rights, they may be reluctant to exercise them. Mistrust can also be tied to xenophobia, racism, and other forms of discrimination. In a study conducted by Polek et al. (2019), participants shared they were denied interpreting services which caused them to delay seeking care until their symptoms worsened. In another study, participants had similar experiences and shared that they were discriminated against as new immigrants with limited English proficiency when physicians would hear their accents when speaking on the phone (Neary & Mahoney, 2005). Discrimination also comes up when discussing advocacy. Advocacy is important for Hispanics with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities because it gives individuals the opportunity to influence disability laws and policies (Cohen, 2013). In Cohen (2013), researchers share that discrimination is one of the barriers that put Hispanic parents at a disadvantage, leaving them with a lack of knowledge about special education and social service programs that affect their children.

## **Economic Barriers**

Financial and economic barriers pose significant challenges for the Hispanic and Latino communities. Hispanic and Latino families, especially those with disabilities, are more likely to experience poverty and unemployment compared to their counterparts (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2020). Economic barriers can lead to low literacy, low employment rates, and the underutilization of social services. Research by Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2020) shows that without sufficient economic resources, individuals cannot obtain adaptations or accommodations to participate in their community, demonstrating the impact of socioeconomic status (SES) on everyday life. Low education and health literacy are other aspects of SES that play a role in lack of access to resources. Beccera et al. (2016) discuss the impact of these barriers, which include lower utilization of healthcare services, poor patient-physician communication, and higher rates of hospitalization. Employment and income also play a role in SES as Hispanics with disabilities are underemployed, and those that are employed are underpaid and lack benefits (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2020).

## **Immigration Status**

Immigration status can be a major barrier for many Hispanic and Latino populations. Fear of deportation prevents Hispanics and Latinos that have migrated to the U.S. from reaching out to professionals for support (Ijalba, 2016). Immigrants often seek information from family members or individuals they trust, rather than professionals, which can lead to misinformation (Becerra et al., 2017). This fear can also be influenced by a lack of knowledge about their rights or legal resources. Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2020) note that unawareness of law protections, fear of deportation, and mixed household status all contribute to a family's ability to access legal or social services. This article also mentions that since undocumented immigrants are no longer eligible for services post-high school graduation, they may not receive support for housing or employment, which also contributes to low resource utilization (Neary & Mahoney, 2005). Immigration status also plays a role when it comes to relationships with professionals. In their article, Neary and Mahoney (2005) include the following quote: "Some Latinos won't speak up, they settle for what they're told, Latinos who aren't citizens may be afraid to speak up. They'll settle for anything authorities tell them." This emphasizes the experiences immigrants with disabilities face while advocating for their rights within healthcare settings in the U.S.

## The Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a law that strives to ensure that individuals with disabilities are not discriminated against and have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. Knowledge of this law can support the ongoing effort to address the disparities that Hispanic and Latino individuals with disabilities and their families face. The ADA consists of the following five titles, which cover protection in employment and access to health care:

- **Title I** requires employers to provide accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities while prohibiting discrimination in all aspects of employment.
- **Title II** ensures that public services do not deny services to people with disabilities or discriminate against people with disabilities from participation in services available to those without disabilities.
- **Title III** requires that all new construction and modifications be accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- **Title IV** ensures that telecommunication companies offer relay phone service to individuals who use telecommunications devices for the deaf or similar devices.
- **Title V** prohibits individuals from coercing, threatening, or retaliating against individuals with disabilities or others attempting to help these individuals declare their rights.

Even though the ADA offers legal protection to address some of the barriers that Hispanics and Latinos face, many Spanish speakers remain unaware of its purpose, despite many reports of the need for services within this community. In Velcoff et al. (2010), Latinos with disabilities shared that services such as vocational rehabilitation (VR) played an immense role in their education but failed to provide the same support after graduation. Others shared that they were unaware of services to help understand the law or that they felt a mistrust of the services, due to the lack of connection with the Latino community, that negatively influenced their employment opportunities. Employment is only one domain where Hispanics and Latinos with disabilities are unaware of relevant resources. In fact, there is a need for additional resources across all the areas the ADA affects, including health (The National Coalition for Latinxs with Disabilities, 2020).

## Outreach Strategies to Reach Spanish-Speaking Disability Communities

There has been little research done to determine the best methods to reach Spanish-speaking people with disabilities and their families. Spanish language outreach to people with disabilities and their families is essential to improve knowledge about their rights and responsibilities, improve the quality and relevance of existing services, and meet the goals of the ADA for *all* Americans to participate in everyday commercial, economic, and social activities. Spanish-speaking communities face many barriers to accessing the different areas that the ADA covers such as places of employment, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, government services, public transportation, and places of public accommodation. Improved ADA outreach efforts can better equip individuals and communities to remove these barriers.

Unfortunately, much of the research about Spanish-speaking disability communities only provides surface-level insight due to the complications involved in collecting accurate information about Hispanics and Latinos related to the aforementioned barriers associated with language and cultural differences, SES status, and a lack of trust associated with research (Kao et al., 2012). Most of the evidence to date on outreach to Spanish-speaking disability communities relates to health promotion and sharing information or resources to address health disparities. These studies provide some useful context for how to conduct similar outreach efforts with ADA information. Successful outreach strategies have involved leveraging community partnerships, identifying family supports, and developing culturally tailored information.

### Community Partnerships

One of the most effective outreach strategies is partnering with trusted community-based organizations (CBOs). Partnering with organizations that have established relationships with community members and are trusted sources of information is vital when dealing with delicate issues such as legal rights. Successful health promotion initiatives for people with disabilities and their families often involves community partners that have close ties with family and community members. A study by Brennan et al. (2014) on effective outreach strategies to connect elderly Latinos with depression to social services discusses important aspects of conducting outreach with this community. These include in-person, in-home assessments; building rapport in a culturally appropriate manner; the involvement of family as a resource; the creation of social networks with similar experiences; and the maintenance of relationships over time. Compared to traditional outreach models, this initiative created a supportive community and increased self-esteem and self-worth in individuals with depression. An ongoing community-based project by Ravenell et al. (2015) seeks to increase stroke literacy through the distribution of resources at church. In this study, participants are either presented with an educational brochure, which represents usual care, or a short culturally tailored film. The church setting was selected due to its importance in minority communities, allowing researchers a place to reach and interact with the Hispanic population. Although the study is still underway, the hypothesis is that participants who receive the culturally adapted film will demonstrate greater stroke symptom recognition compared to the usual care participants due to the narrative approach, which has been successful when distributing cancer knowledge, HIV awareness, and substance use prevention resources to the Hispanic population in the past.

## **Family Supports**

Macias et al. (2018) conducted a comprehensive review of community outreach to people with developmental disabilities and their families. They found that efforts that directly connect individuals to resources, such as parent-to-parent support groups, are particularly effective. Leveraging existing community and family support is important for successful outreach efforts. A popular initiative to increase access to health-related information used in the Hispanic community is the *Promotora* model. Promotoras are community leaders who assist others in developing healthy lifestyles, empowerment, and community participation (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2020). In a study done by Magana et al. (2014), Promotoras were Latinx mothers of children with disabilities that empowered other mothers of children with disabilities through their advocacy and service training. Promotoras are one of the most common resources in the Hispanic population because they incorporate community values, promote a trusting relationship, and communicate through the same language (Magana et al., 2014).

In a study conducted by Gannotti et al. (2004), health communication researchers recommend that outreach materials and educational resources for culturally diverse populations be created with consideration of values about disability rather than just translated. Although the Hispanic population is diverse, many cultures share similar values such as religion, *familismo*, and community building, which many professionals fail to consider when creating resources (Magana, 2000). *Familismo* is defined as “the belief in the commitment of family members to their family relationships. Family members feel an obligation to assist fellow family members especially when they are in need” (Steidel & Contreras, 2003). *Familismo* is used to describe the unique cultural value and approach to family life shared among many Latino families. This is demonstrated in an article written by Ijalba (2016), who found that Hispanic immigrants tend to seek autism information from family members rather than professionals for various reasons, including a sense of trust. In Cohen (2013), researchers mention that cultural models such as *familismo* need to be incorporated into resources, as they can enhance the access and effectiveness of services for Hispanics.

## **Culturally Tailored Message**

There is a growing body of research about the best methods to share information in a culturally relevant way. Studies discuss ways to make premade resources such as fact sheets, brochures, and videos more accessible. In a study conducted by Steinberg et al. (2003), Hispanic parents of deaf children shared that the most helpful resources included signed or cued instructions and parent meetings while written and video content were the least beneficial. This study emphasizes the preference for face-to-face interactions since they allow the opportunity for personal connections between parents and professionals. Additionally, Lajonchere et al. (2016) address health literacy in the Hispanic population, and participants shared that plain language, briefs between 2-4 pages, definitions for medical jargon, and figures or images to accompany written language are the best ways to inform the community about these topics. Another successful strategy is developing and sharing culturally tailored outreach materials collaboratively with community members in mind. For example, *creating* (rather than translating) Spanish-language materials with local community-specific references helps to build trust with Hispanic communities and improves the likelihood of effective outreach (Flores, 2017).

Even though there is a large body of literature that discusses the barriers Hispanics encounter about healthcare outreach, or their perceptions about and experiences with disability, to the

best of our knowledge there is no specific information related to how Latinos/Hispanics interact, share, or understand the ADA and civil rights. To fill this knowledge gap and understand how ADA information can be better delivered to the Spanish-speaking community, the following sections of this report describe the perspectives of 46 community members across 10 ADA regions and the perspectives of the leaders of nine national organizations on barriers that the Spanish-speaking community faces and how it accesses and shares information, followed by some recommendations for the ADANN to improve outreach efforts to this community.

# **REGION 2: NORTHEAST ADA CENTER**

## Region 2 Background

### **What Is Unique About the Population in Region 2?**

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Region 2 includes the states of New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Overall, the Northeast ADA Center has a diverse population, with significant minority communities. According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2021 one-year estimates, the region had a total population of over 32 million, with minorities accounting for nearly 50% of the population. Hispanics or Latinos were the largest minority group, accounting for 28% of the population, followed by African Americans at 13% and Asians at 8.2%. The region also had a significant multiracial population, accounting for 3.4% of the total population.

In New York City, the largest city in the region, minorities make up a large portion of the population. The city had a population of over 8.3 million minorities in 2021, with minorities accounting for 45% of the population. Hispanics or Latinos were the largest minority group, accounting for 19.4% of the population, followed by African Americans at 14.1%, Asians at 8.7%, and multiracial individuals at 5.2%.

In New Jersey, Hispanics or Latinos were also the largest minority group, accounting for 21.4% of the state's population. African Americans accounted for 12.9% of the population and Asians accounted for 9.9%. The state also had a significant multiracial population, accounting for 12% of the total population.

Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory with a population of over 3.2 million. Almost all the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino, accounting for 99.2% of the population, while African Americans make up 6.1% of the population. Some African Americans identify as Hispanic or mixed-race.

English is the most spoken language in the region (67.5% of the population), followed by Spanish (15.3%), Other Indo-European (4.8%), Chinese (2.7%), and Slavic languages (2.4%). There are more languages identified, but these are the most common languages for the region.



## **Region 2 States**

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**New York** has the largest group of Spanish speakers in the region, with approximately 3.8 million identifying as Hispanic or Latino, making them 19.4% of the state's population and 18.5% of the state's labor force. Within the last decade, there has been a growth of over 9% percent in their population. New York City (2.5 million), Yonkers (83,917), and Brentwood (48,548) are the cities in New York with the most concentrated Latino/Hispanic populations. Culturally, the Spanish-speaking population is predominantly from Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, and Mexico.

**New Jersey** has the second largest group of Spanish speakers in the region, with approximately 1.9 million individuals identifying as Hispanic or Latino, making them 21% of the state's population and 19.3% of the state's labor force. Within the last decade, there has been a growth of over 15.7% percent in their population. Newark (111,099), Elizabeth City (90,733), and Jersey City (78,785) are the most concentrated cities in New Jersey with Latino/Hispanic populations. Culturally, the Spanish-speaking population is predominantly from Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, and Mexico.

## **Disability Statistics Per State in the Region 2 Latino/Hispanic Community**

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Based on the most recent census data, it is estimated that:

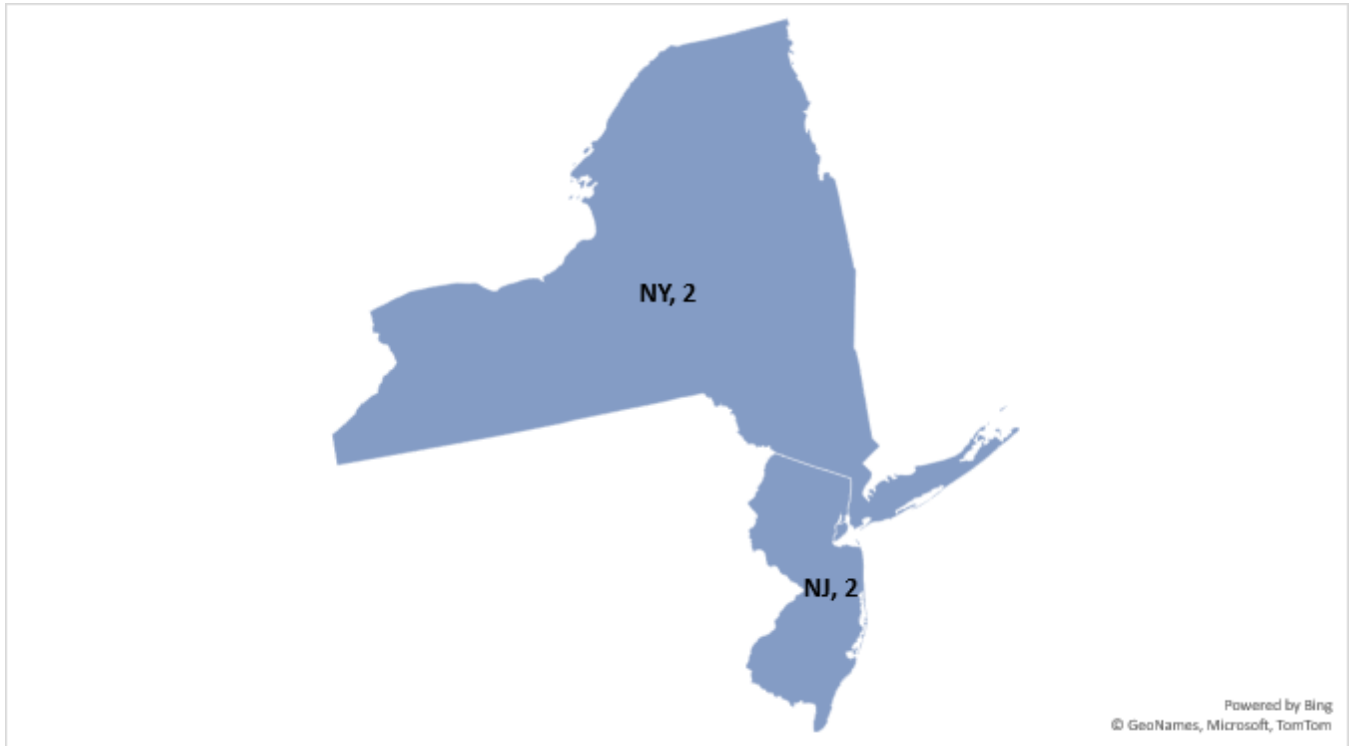
- The state of New York has almost 3.8 million Latinos and approximately 11.4% have a disability.
- The state of New Jersey has almost 1.9 million Latinos and approximately 8.8% have a disability.

## **Which States From Region 2 Participated in the Interviews?**

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As shown on the map, all interviews were conducted with community members from New Jersey and New York. No interviews were conducted with community members from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

*Figure 3: Maps of states involved from Region 2*



## Observations From the Interviews

### Participants

Four community members participated in the interviews. Most of the participants were female and they had some knowledge about the ADA. Most of the interviews were conducted in Spanish. All community members were associated with nonprofits. Finally, community members had a variety of roles within the Spanish-speaking community. Figures 4 and Table 1 show specific data about these characteristics of the participants.

Figure 4: Participant demographics

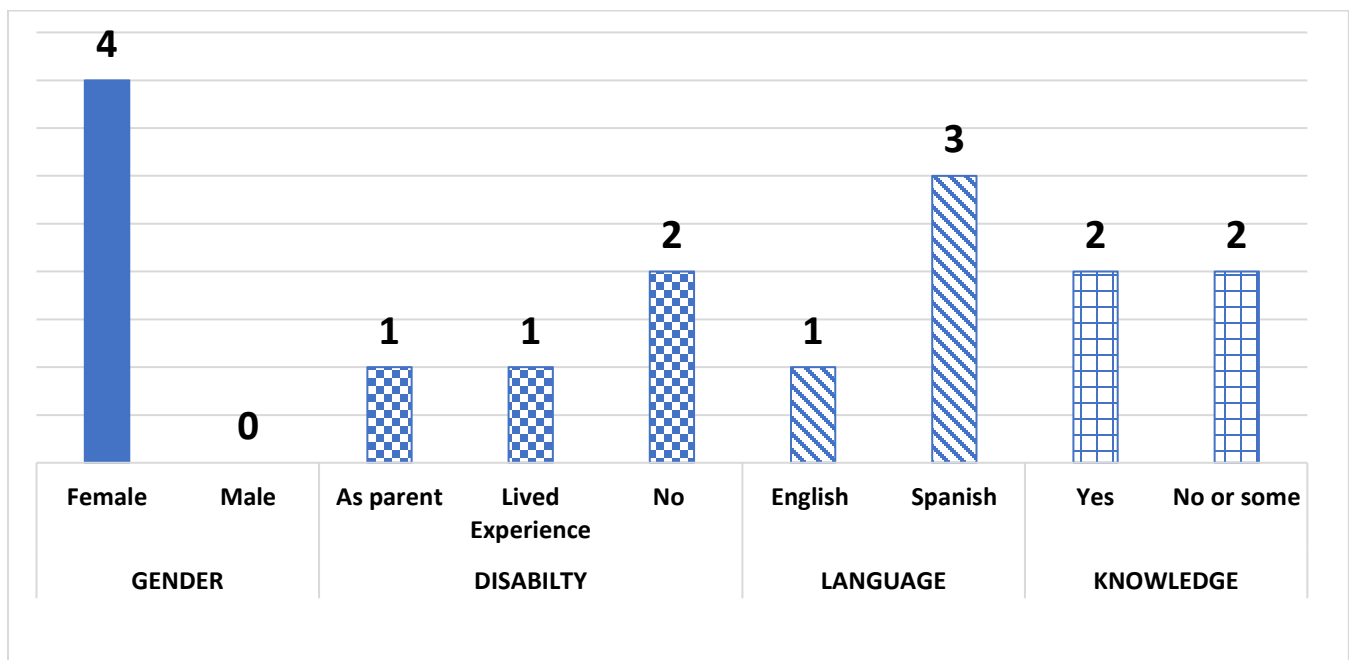


Table 1: Region 2 participant roles

Participant Role	Number of Individuals
Volunteer	2
Community Advocate	1
Parent	2
Consultant	1

## What Did We Find?

The following table organizes the three main topics of the interviews: barriers, access to information, and recommendations from the community.

### Barriers

<b>1. Language Barriers</b>	
<p>In Region 2, language continues to be a significant barrier for the Spanish-speaking community. In Region 2, participants reiterated these barriers in terms of lack of bilingual staff, lack of information in Spanish, and lack of interpretation or translation services.</p>	
<b>Participant Testimonies</b>	
<p>1.1. Language</p>	<p>“Many times, Hispanic people go to a place and there are no Hispanics [on] staff, no translators, and simply you need to wait for a telephone or someone who can call a translator. Sometimes the translator does not say exactly what we mean and does not transfer the information accurately.”</p> <p>“Information is tricky. Are you literate? Do you speak the language? If you call that number, are you able to access it? Information works for people who have the resources to access it.”</p> <p>“Here it is fundamental that you are bilingual or competent in English, you must [be]. If you aren’t, that is a huge barrier for Hispanics.”</p>
<b>2. Fear and Lack of Trust</b>	
<p>In Region 2, participants expressed that people from the Spanish-speaking community have a lot of fear related to federal or state institutions. This fear includes being deported, being discriminated against, asking questions, and not being treated with respect.</p>	
<b>Participant Testimonies</b>	
<p>2.1. Lack of Trust</p>	<p>“Although there are many free medical services, undocumented people that have American children do not want to provide any information because they are afraid of immigration issues. New York is a sanctuary city and the place I go receives undocumented people, but many times they do not want to provide information because they are scared.”</p>
<p>2.2. Fear</p>	<p>“There are many people who are afraid of asking for help and say[ing] what their needs are.”</p>

	“When a person does not express their needs [it] is because [they] are afraid. Because that person is scared of providing information, and that is very common in Hispanics.”
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**3. Lack of Awareness of Resources**

Participants also mentioned that many families and disabled people are not aware of available services because the information is not in Spanish or is difficult to find. This lack of resources also includes a lack of information about rights and disability services.

**Participant Testimonies**

3.1. Lack of Awareness	“In the last 4 years or more, a lot of Hispanics have come with disabled children. Then, many schools do not offer services for them, or they just do not know enough about the benefits for disabled people.”
3.2. Lack of Information About Rights	“If people know their rights, they will fight for [them]. I think the most important thing is that people get educated on their rights. We need education.”

**4. Lack of Services for Individuals With Disabilities**

In Region 2, participants expressed that there were not enough services for the Spanish-speaking community with disabilities. For example, healthcare services were not available, or they failed to provide support for Hispanics.

**Participant Testimonies**

4.1. Lack of Services	<p>“Many organizations do not offer services for disabled people; they offer a list of places to go to and they are not even close to the area.”</p> <p>“There are a lot of resources that [exist] in New Jersey for disabled people, but I have to say that these are not friendly for the Latino people, and it is even worse when it comes to undocumented people. It is really bad.”</p>
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## Access to Information

### Information

For participants in Region 2, there are four main ways in which the Spanish-speaking community accesses information: social media, word of mouth and in-person conversations, TV, and Radio.

### Participant Testimonies

1. Social Media	"For the older crowds (Facebook), [but] not for the younger crowd. They're TikToking and Snapchatting. They're not Facebookers anymore because they have all these other venues, but for [the older] crowd Facebook is it."
2. Word of Mouth and In-Person Conversations	"How many in the illiterate community, how many don't know how to do that [social media]. There's pockets that are missing, fully absent from digital media, which puts you back to word of mouth."  "The best way for me is face-to-face interactions because, sometimes, people have so many questions, I really need a person that can explain with details what I am looking for."
3. TV and Radio	"We're on the news a lot but that only goes so far. It's significant, it's important to throw on your website later because this is something that you did and something that you continue so the action and the movement of it is easily seen in a two-minute clip. That's pretty big."

## Recommendations

Recommendations
Based on the testimony of community members, recommendations include more training on ADA and disability, educating the community on services and benefits, increasing participation in community events, training staff members from different state and federal organizations, and providing specific information for each state.

Participant Testimonies	
1.1. Training and Educational Sessions for the Community	<p>"Hold some time for a forum or some informational session. That would be amazing because forums are big and they can bring a lot of topics to parents and the community, so they can be informed [and] ask questions. Sometimes they do not have someone to do so."</p> <p>"General information doesn't work. You can't cover a paraplegic with someone who is dyslexic in the same basket."</p>
1.2. Centralize the Information	"A support center that can be specific for people with disabilities and their families, so when they need information about housing, or other things, they can help."
1.3. Increase Participation in Events	"Promote community meetings [and] conferences for Spanish-speaking community members in which they can obtain more information about different services."
1.4. Training on Quality Services (Compassion and Empathy)	"I would really like for people to be treated better, especially in some organizations."
1.5. Provide State-Specific Information	"Being cognizant of the distinctions between different states. If you look at what Texas is doing to NY right now, what would a person in Texas go through compared to what a person in NY goes through, and vice versa. How are different states dealing with different things, and where is it nationally that this country can be held accountable?"

## Suggested Next Steps for Region 2

Based on the recommendations from the community members in Region 2, the region should take the following specific steps:

1. Considering the population of Hispanics in the states of New York and New Jersey, increase outreach efforts in these states.
2. Connect with Ayuda Mutua (New York City, NY) an organization that provides a food pantry with active community organizing events; Hispanic Family Center of Southern NJ (Camden, NJ), a resource center with various services that include health education and behavioral health; Latino Action Network Foundation (Freehold, NJ), which conducts research and outreach efforts on health justice, housing, and education to lower-income and immigrant communities; and Hispanic Federation (New York City, NY), which has a variety of programming for the Hispanic community around health, economic empowerment, education, and immigration.
3. Make sure products and referrals are specific for the states of NY and NJ and that they work for the Latino community.
4. Disseminate information about specific disabilities and how they connect to the ADA.



# **SECTION THREE: KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## SECTION THREE: KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides key highlights from the first stage of the project as a whole and includes consolidated findings and recommendations from the national and regional interview data.

### Observations From National and Regional Interviews

This last section of the report summarizes all the information gathered at both regional and national levels. Collectively, results from national and regional interviews have many similarities. The following comparative table shows the topics identified at both levels in terms of barriers and recommendations to address those barriers.

Table 2: Comparison of observations from national and regional interviews

	REGIONAL	NATIONAL
<b>BARRIERS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Language</li> <li>2. Lack of information</li> <li>3. Fear/Lack of Trust</li> <li>4. Stigma /Lack of Education</li> <li>5. Technology</li> <li>6. Low Literacy</li> <li>7. Discrimination</li> <li>8. Survival Mode</li> <li>9. Lack of Access to Resources</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Language</li> <li>2. Lack of Information</li> <li>3. Fear/Lack of Trust</li> <li>4. Stigma /Lack of Education</li> <li>5. Technology</li> <li>6. Low literacy</li> <li>7. Challenge in Outreach</li> <li>8. Funding</li> </ol>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In-Person Trainings/Education</li> <li>2. Partnering With Trusted Leaders</li> <li>3. Make Information Accessible and Relevant</li> <li>4. Provide State-Specific Information</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In-Person Trainings/Education</li> <li>2. Partnering With Trusted Leaders</li> <li>3. Use of Social Media and Networking</li> <li>4. Culturally Appropriate Outreach</li> </ol>

After comparing the information gathered, the following observations were made:

1. Language barriers were identified in both national and regional interviews as the primary barrier for the Spanish-speaking community.
2. Other barriers, such as lack of access to information, fear, lack of trust, stigma about disability, low literacy, and technology were identified in both national and regional interviews.
3. Barriers such as challenges in outreach and funding come from a more global perspective from national organizations.

4. The discrepancy between barriers in some of the regions does not necessarily mean that the identified barriers are not present in each region. Some regions had higher participation in the interviews, which leads to more insight into barriers.
5. In-person training and partnering with local organizations at both national and regional levels were the most frequently recommended.
6. Because the number of participants is low, observations cannot be generalized, but they provide important and deep insights into the barriers that Spanish-speaking communities face across the U.S.

## **What We Found in Relation to the ADA**

Based on the testimonies of members from the Spanish-speaking community, the following observations were made:

- From a national and regional perspective, the Spanish-speaking community is not well informed about disability and civil rights.
- 71% of the community members interviewed had never heard of the ADA or the ADANN.
- Some staff members from national organizations had not heard of the ADA before, specifically, those organizations that serve Hispanics and Latinos but not necessarily those with disabilities.
- Outreach efforts have not been successful in reaching the Spanish-speaking community, even though there are materials and information in Spanish for this community.

Based on community members' testimonies, the Spanish-speaking community requires specific training and materials related to the ADA so the community can be informed, trained, and more aware of their rights. Results from this project suggest that people in the Spanish-speaking community might not access ADA information due to some of the following reasons:

- The information is not being delivered consistently in Spanish to this community.
- The information is too difficult for people in the community to understand and apply.
- People in the community do not know how ADA information applies to their specific case or situation.
- The fear and lack of trust related to immigration status and discrimination may interfere with access to ADA knowledge and any other legal or civil rights related information.
- Dissemination of ADA information is not reaching the Spanish-speaking community.
- Information may be translated, but it is not culturally appropriate.

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### Contact

ADA National Network

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Northeast ADA Center – Region 2

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# APPENDIX



## Appendix: Region 2 Organizations for Outreach Efforts

State	Sector	Name
New Jersey	Government	Center for Hispanic Policy Research & Development
New Jersey	Government	Colombia Consulate
New Jersey	Government	Ecuador Consulate
New Jersey	Government	El Salvador Consulate
New Jersey	Government	Latino & Hispanic Heritage Commission
New Jersey	Government	Peru Consulate
New Jersey	Hispanic Serving Institution	Bergen Community College Latin American Student Association (LASA)
New Jersey	Hispanic Serving Institution	Essex County College Latino Student Union
New Jersey	Hispanic Serving Institution	Fairleigh Dickinson University Metropolitan Campus Organization of Latin Americans (OLA)
New Jersey	Hispanic Serving Institution	Hudson County Community College Latinx American Association
New Jersey	Hispanic Serving Institution	Kean University Latin American Student Organization (LASO)
New Jersey	Hispanic Serving Institution	Middlesex County College Organization of Latino Unity
New Jersey	Hispanic Serving Institution	Montclair State University Latin American Student Organization (LASO), Multicultural Center
New Jersey	Hispanic Serving Institution	New Jersey City University Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latinx studies
New Jersey	Hispanic Serving Institution	Passaic County Community College Latin American Student Club
New Jersey	Hispanic Serving Institution	Rutgers University Newark Latinos United Networking America (LUNA)
New Jersey	Hispanic Serving Institution	Saint Elizabeth University SOMOS United
New Jersey	Hispanic Serving Institution	Saint Peter's University L.A.S.O
New Jersey	Hispanic Serving Institution	William Paterson University Organization of Latin American Students
New Jersey	Immigration	Puerto Rican Action Board
New Jersey	Immigration	Servicios Latinos de Burlington County
New Jersey	Immigration	Wind of the Spirit
New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	Community Affairs & Resource Center
New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	DH Perfil Latino TV
New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	El Primer Paso
New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	Focus Hispanic Center for Community Development
New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	Hispanic Family Center of Southern NJ
New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	Juntos Por Venezuela
New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	Latin American Economic Development Association
New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	Latino Mental Health Association of New Jersey
New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	Mercer County Hispanic Organization
New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs

New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	PROCEED
New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	Puerto Rican Action Committee of Southern New Jersey
New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	Puerto Rican Association for Human Development
New Jersey	Nonprofit and other organizations	Puerto Rican Unity for Progress
New York	Government	Argentina Consulate
New York	Government	Bolivia Consulate
New York	Government	Chile Consulate
New York	Government	Colombia Consulate
New York	Government	Costa Rica Consulate
New York	Government	Dominican Republic Consulate
New York	Government	Ecuador Consulate
New York	Government	El Salvador Consulate
New York	Government	Guatemala Consulate
New York	Government	Honduras Consulate
New York	Government	Mexico Consulate
New York	Government	Nicaragua Consulate
New York	Government	Panama Consulate
New York	Government	Paraguay Consulate
New York	Government	Peru Consulate
New York	Government	Uruguay Consulate
New York	Hispanic Serving Institution	CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice Latin American Student Organization (LASO)
New York	Hispanic Serving Institution	St. Francis College Latin American Society, Office of Multicultural affairs
New York	Hispanic Serving Institution	Suffolk County Community College Association of Latin American Students (ALAS)
New York	Hispanic Serving Institution	SUNY at Purchase College Latinx Unidos, Casa Purchase
New York	Hispanic Serving Institution	SUNY Westchester Community College El Club Hispano-Americano, Latinas in Power
New York	Immigration	Catholic Charities of Onondaga County
New York	Immigration	Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga
New York	Immigration	Catholic Migration Services
New York	Immigration	Center for Family Representation
New York	Immigration	Central American Legal Assistance
New York	Immigration	Círculo de la Hispanidad
New York	Immigration	Coalition for Immigrant Freedom
New York	Immigration	Columbia County Sanctuary Movement
New York	Immigration	Community Resource Center
New York	Immigration	CUNY Citizenship Now
New York	Immigration	ECBA Volunteer Lawyers Project
New York	Immigration	HANAC
New York	Immigration	Her Justice
New York	Immigration	Human Rights First
New York	Immigration	Immigrant Hope
New York	Immigration	Immigrant Justice Corps
New York	Immigration	InterFaith Works

New York	Immigration	Juan Neumann Center
New York	Immigration	Just Cause
New York	Immigration	Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo
New York	Immigration	Legal Aid Society of Rochester
New York	Immigration	Legal Services NYC
New York	Immigration	Literacy Solutions NY Inc.
New York	Immigration	Mary's Place Refugee Outreach
New York	Immigration	Mercy Center Community & Transformation
New York	Immigration	Migration Resource Center
New York	Immigration	Mobilization for Justice
New York	Immigration	My Sisters Place
New York	Immigration	Neighborhood Defender Service Inc
New York	Immigration	Neighbors Link Corp
New York	Immigration	New Hope Free Methodist Church
New York	Immigration	New York Mennonite Immigration Program
New York	Immigration	North Eastern Expansion Development
New York	Immigration	Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation
New York	Immigration	Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow
New York	Immigration	Prisoners Legal Services of New York
New York	Immigration	Queens Community House
New York	Immigration	RISSE
New York	Immigration	RSHM Life Center
New York	Immigration	Safe Horizon
New York	Immigration	Sanctuary for Families
New York	Immigration	SCO Family of Services
New York	Immigration	South Bronx United
New York	Immigration	Takeroot Justice
New York	Immigration	The ANSOB Center for Refugees
New York	Immigration	The Bronx Defenders
New York	Immigration	The Center
New York	Immigration	The Door
New York	Immigration	The Legal Aid Society
New York	Immigration	The New York Legal Assistance Group
New York	Immigration	The Safe Center LI
New York	Immigration	UnLocal Inc
New York	Immigration	Urban Justice Center
New York	Immigration	Youth Ministries for Peace & Justice
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Acacia Network
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Amber Charter Schools
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Anti Violence Project
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Bushwick Ayuda Mutua
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Center for Cuban Studies
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Centro Civico Cultural Dominicano
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Committee for Hispanic Children and Families
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Cypress Hills
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Dominican Women's Development Center
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Dominico American Society

New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Grannies Respond/Abuelas Responden
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Hispanic Counseling Center
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Hispanic Brotherhood
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Hispanos Unidos De Buffalo
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	IBERO American Action League
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Immigration Equality
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Immigration Legal Services of Long Island
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	La Fuerza Unida
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Latino Action Network Foundation
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Latino U College Access
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Latinos Americanos Unidos
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	The Loisaida Center
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Long Island Center for Independent Living
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Make the Road New York
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Neighborhood Housing Services of Queens
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Pathstone
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	The Spanish Action League of Onondaga County
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	UpRose
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Upwardly Global
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Urban Health Plan
New York	Nonprofit and other organizations	Worker Justice Center of New York
Puerto Rico	Government	Colombia Consulate
Puerto Rico	Government	Costa Rica Consulate
Puerto Rico	Government	Dominican Republic Consulate
Puerto Rico	Government	Mexico Consulate
Puerto Rico	Hispanic Serving Institution	Universidad Ana G. Mendez Oficina de Servicios para Estudiantes con Impedimentos
Puerto Rico	Hispanic Serving Institution	Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico- Arecibo Oficina de Servicios a Personas con Impedimentos
Puerto Rico	Hispanic Serving Institution	University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez Oficina de Servicios a Personas con Impedimentos
Puerto Rico	Hispanic Serving Institution	University of Puerto Rico-Aguadilla Oficina de Servicios a Personas con Impedimentos
Puerto Rico	Hispanic Serving Institution	University of Puerto Rico-Arecibo Oficina de Servicios a Personas con Impedimentos
Puerto Rico	Hispanic Serving Institution	University of Puerto Rico-Bayamón Oficina de Servicios a Personas con Impedimentos
Puerto Rico	Hispanic Serving Institution	University of Puerto Rico-Carolina Oficina de Servicios a Personas con Impedimentos
Puerto Rico	Hispanic Serving Institution	University of Puerto Rico-Cayey Oficina de Servicios a Personas con Impedimentos
Puerto Rico	Hispanic Serving Institution	University of Puerto Rico-Humacao Oficina de Servicios a Personas con Impedimentos
Puerto Rico	Hispanic Serving Institution	University of Puerto Rico-Ponce

		Oficina de Servicios a Estudiantes con Impedimento, La Asociación Estudiantil Derribando Barreras (AEDB)
Puerto Rico	Hispanic Serving Institution	University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras Oficina de Servicios a Personas con Impedimentos
Puerto Rico	Hispanic Serving Institution	University of Puerto Rico-Utuado Oficina de Servicios a Personas con Impedimentos