Stage One Regional Report #3

SPANISH LANGUAGE OUTREACH PROJECT

2022-2023

Understanding the National and Regional Context

Mid-Atlantic ADA Center – Region 3

ADA Knowledge Translation Center

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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 regional results from the first stage of the project in Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, Region 3; 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 in the region, 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

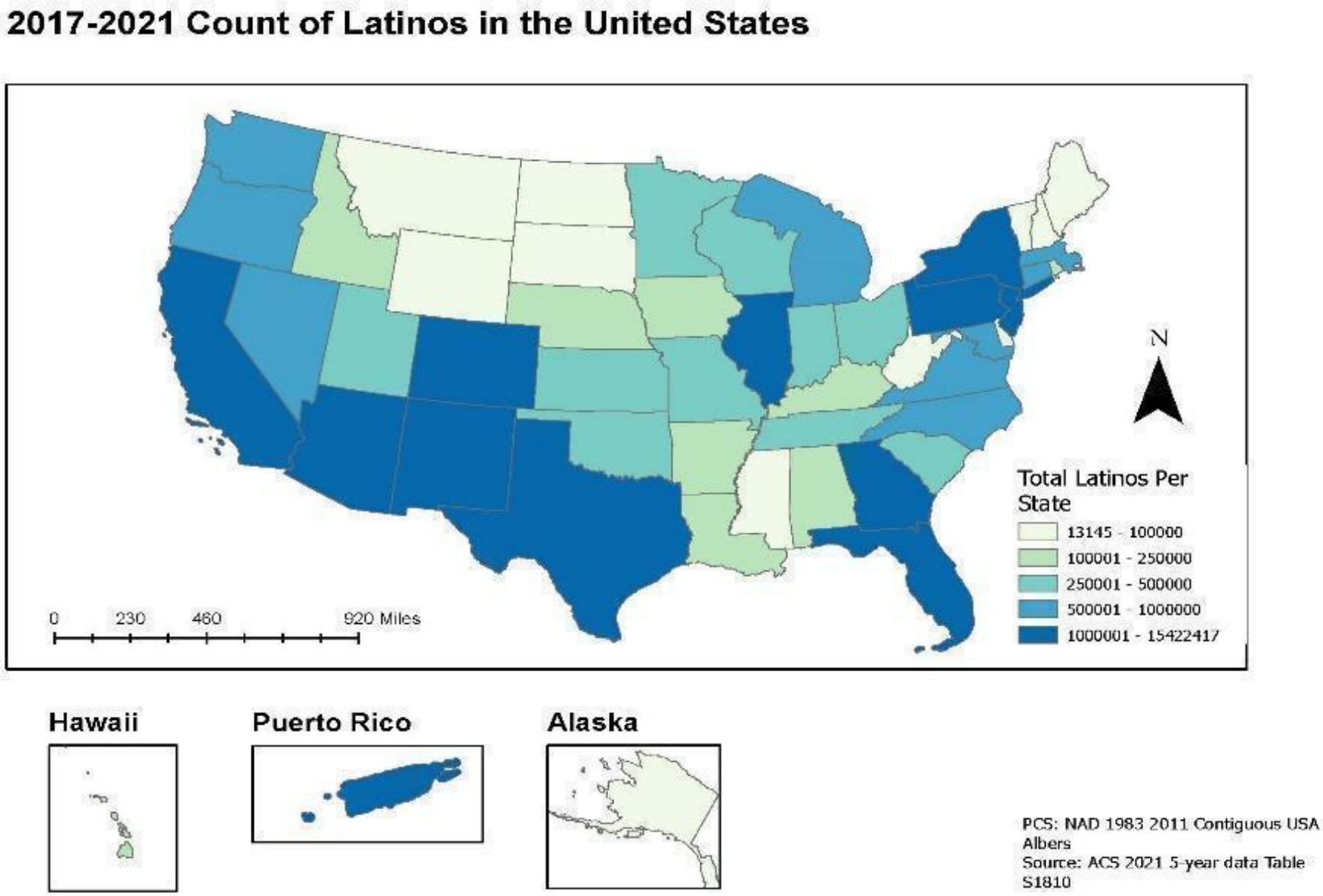
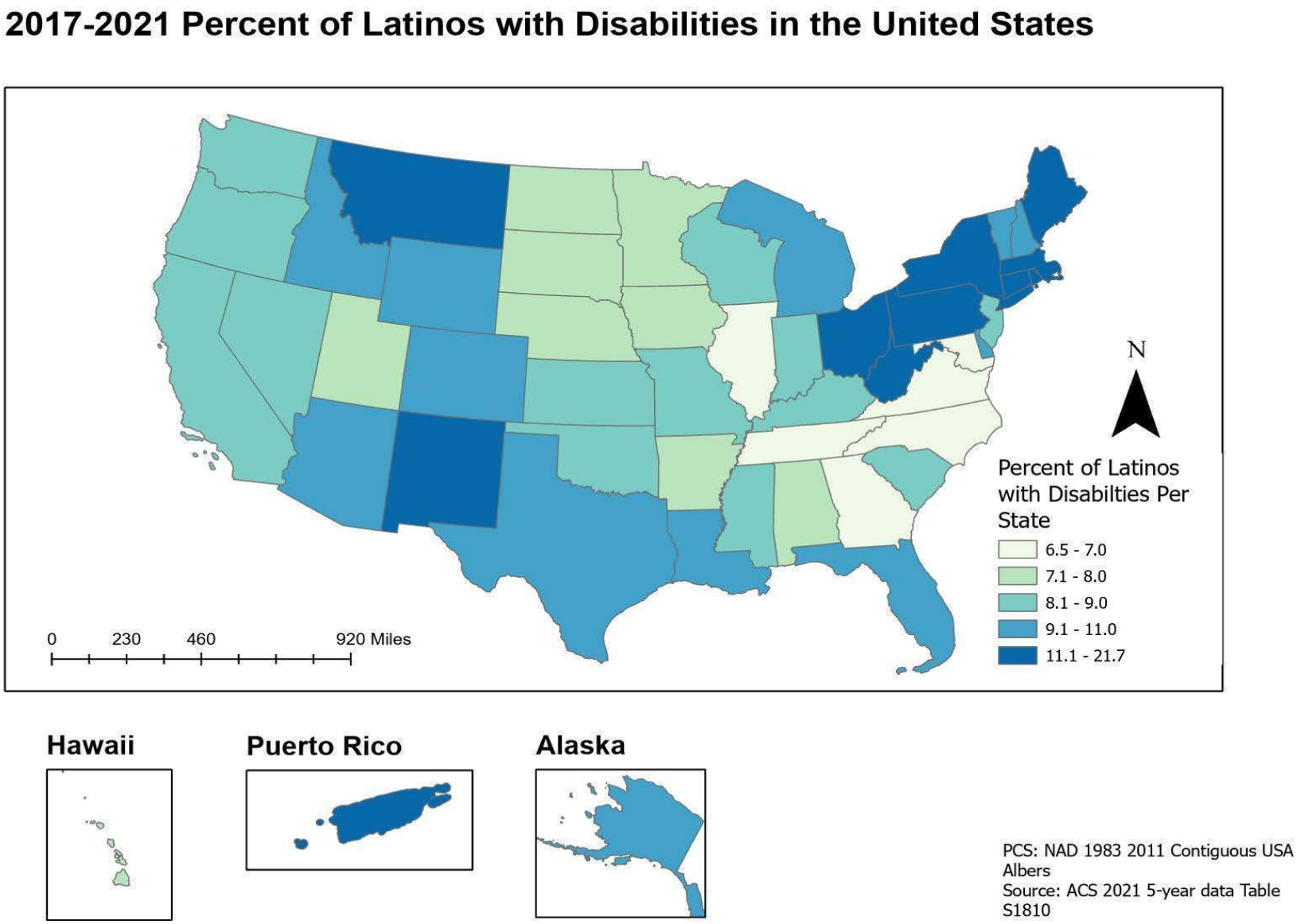


Figure 2: Map of Latino population percentages across the U.S. from 2017 to 2021



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 3: Mid-Atlantic ADA Center

Region 3 Background

What Is Unique About the Population in Region 3?

Region 3 includes the states of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia

Overall, the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center is a diverse area with a significant minority population. The region had an estimated population of 30 million in 2021 based on U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey estimates, with 35% being minorities.

African Americans are the largest minority group in the region, with significant populations in Maryland, Delaware, and the District of Columbia. In Maryland, African Americans make up approximately 30% of the state's population, while in Delaware and the District of Columbia, they represent around 20% and 43% of the population, respectively. The region also has a significant Hispanic/Latino population, with the District of Columbia and Maryland having the highest percentages at 11.3% and 11%, respectively. Additionally, Asian Americans represent a growing minority group in the region, with Pennsylvania and Maryland having the highest populations.

English is the most spoken language in the region (84.4% of the population), followed by Spanish (6.4%), Indo-European (2.2%), French, Haitian, Creole (0.8%), and Chinese (0.8%). There are more languages identified but these are the most common languages for the region.

Region 3 States

Pennsylvania has the largest group of Spanish speakers, with approximately one million individuals identifying as Hispanic or Latino, making them 8.2% of the state's population and 7.5% of the state's labor force. Within the last decade, there has been a growth of over 21.6% percent in their population. Philadelphia, with 1.5 million Latinos, and Allentown and Reading have generally been cities in Pennsylvania with the most concentrated Latino/Hispanic populations, but figures were not available in the ACS 2021 one-year estimates. Culturally, the Spanish-speaking population is predominantly from Puerto Rico, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic.

Virginia has the second largest group of Spanish speakers. Approximately 851,000 individuals identify as Hispanic or Latino, making them 10% of the state's population and 9.4% of the state's labor force. Within the last decade, there has been a growth of over 18.5% percent in their population. Virginia Beach (40,524), Arlington (36,284), and Alexandria (25,586) are the most cities in Virginia with the most concentrated Latino/Hispanic populations. Culturally, the Spanish-speaking population is predominantly from El Salvador, Mexico, and Puerto Rico.

Maryland has the next largest group of Spanish speakers. Approximately 678,000 individuals identify as Hispanic or Latino, making them 11% of the state's population and 10.3% of the state's labor force. Within the last decade, there has been a growth of over 22.3% percent in their population. Baltimore City (34,810) along with Silver Spring, Gaithersburg, and Hyattsville are the cities in Maryland with the most concentrated Latino/Hispanic populations. Culturally, the Spanish-speaking population is predominantly from El Salvador, Mexico, and Guatemala.

Delaware has the next largest group of Spanish speakers. Approximately 100,000 individuals identify as Hispanic or Latino, making them 10% of the state's population and 9.4% of the state's labor force. Within the last decade, there has been a growth of over 38.9% percent in their population. Wilmington (7,436), Bear (4,925), and Newark (3,486) are the cities in Delaware with the most concentrated Latino/Hispanic populations. Culturally, the Spanish-speaking population is predominantly from Mexico, Guatemala, and Puerto Rico.

The District of Columbia has the next largest group of Spanish speakers. Approximately 76,000 individuals identify as Hispanic or Latino, making them 11% of the district's population and 12.8% of the state's labor force. Within the last decade, there has been a growth of over 19.1% percent in their population. Culturally, the Spanish-speaking population is predominantly from El Salvador, Mexico, and Puerto Rico.

West Virginia has the smallest group of Spanish speakers. Approximately 29,000 individuals identify as Hispanic or Latino, making them 1.7% of the state's population and 1.3% of the state's labor force. Within the last decade, there has been a growth of over 48.5% percent in their population. Morgantown (1,065), Martinsburg (900), and Huntington (865) are the cities in West Virginia with the most concentrated Latino/Hispanic populations. Culturally, the Spanish-speaking population is predominantly from Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Disability Statistics Per State in the Region 3 Latino/Hispanic Community

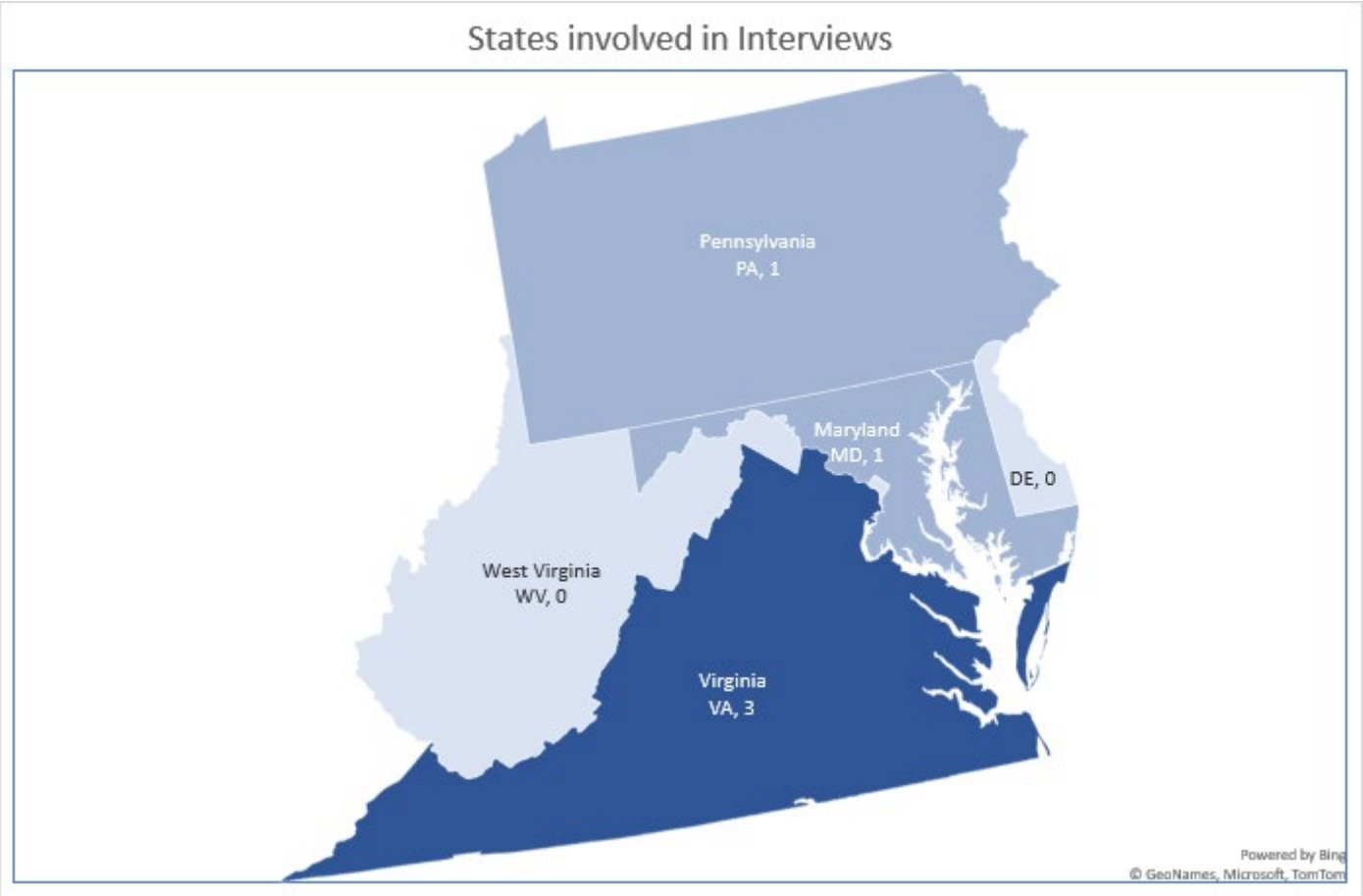
Based on the most recent census data, it is estimated that:

- Pennsylvania has almost one million Latinos, and 14.7% of have a disability.
- Maryland has almost 678,000 Latinos, and an estimated 7% have a disability.
- Virginia has 851,000 Latinos, and 8% have a disability.
- West Virginia has 29,000 Latinos, and 9% have a disability.
- Delaware has 100,000 Latinos, and 9.2% have a disability.
- District of Columbia has 76,000 Latinos, and 7.2% have a disability.

Which States From Region 3 Participated in the Interviews?

As shown on the map, all interviews were conducted with community members from Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. No interviews were conducted with community members from West Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia.

Figure 3: Maps of states involved from Region 3



Observations From the Interviews

Participants

Five community members participated in the interviews. Most of the participants were female and had minimal knowledge about the ADA. Most of the interviews were conducted in English. Community members were associated with faith-based organizations, community resource centers, or disability organizations. Finally, community members had a variety of roles within the Spanish-speaking community. Figures 4 and 5, and Table 1, show specific data about these characteristics of participants.

Figure 4: Participant demographics

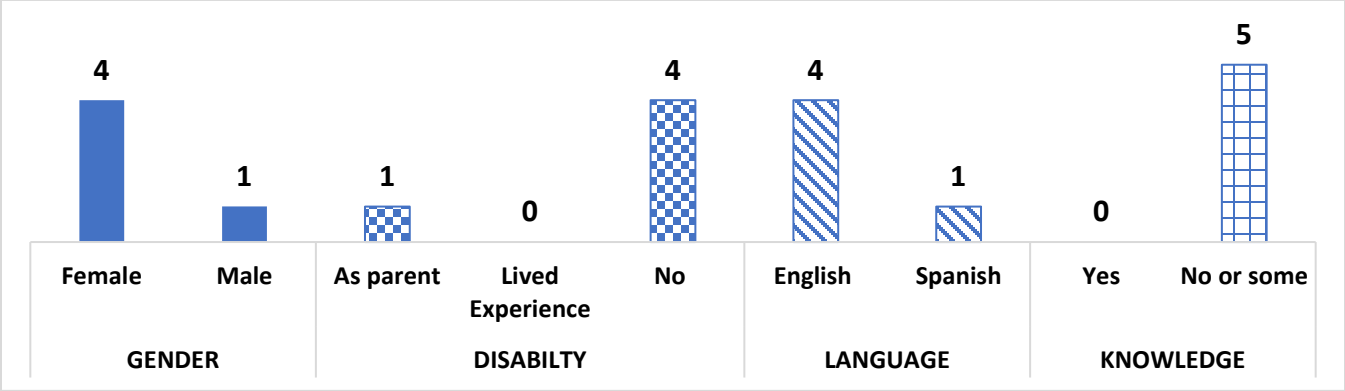
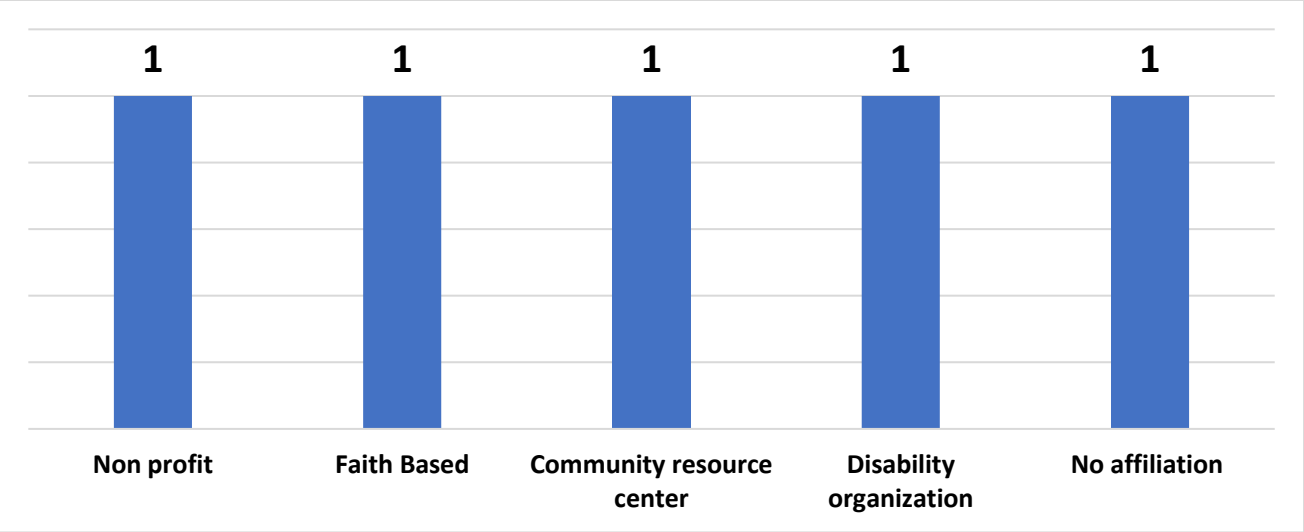


Table 1: Region 3 participant roles

Participant Role	Number of Individuals
Volunteer	1
Pastor	1
Parent	1
Consultant	1
Person With a Disability	1
Resource Manager	1
Unemployed	1

Figure 5: Participant affiliations



What Did We Find?

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

Barriers

1. Language Barriers	
In Region 3, language barriers were mentioned in all the interviews, such as lack of translation services, bilingual staff, and competency from some service providers. Also, the information provided is often too complicated to understand for community members. Language continues to be a significant barrier for the Spanish-speaking community.	
Participant Testimonies	
1.1. Translation and Interpretation Services	"Sometimes there's a lack of translation resources. The Spanish language resources that Hispanics communities can tap into are only concentrated in Spanish-speaking areas a lot of the time."
1.2. Accessibility of Information	"Having the ability to access information that they [community members] can understand both in relation to language and regularly, you know, being able to read it."
1.3. Lack of Information in Spanish	"There is a lack of Spanish information on social media, websites, and even radio presence." "We found a lot of resources, but it was a lot of me taking that on because I'm the English speaker in my household, but rarely when I made a call was there someone on the other line that spoke Spanish. Sometimes when you call these places and it says, 'for Spanish press 2' and I do . . . the call hangs up or someone that speaks English answers, so [I] don't get routed to the Spanish speaker even though it's advertised."
1.4. Practicality of Information	"People may get the information, but they don't know the next step, like they may get a flyer but they don't know what to do next."

2. Fear and Lack of Trust	
Based on the perspectives of community members from Region 3, fear of deportation is a barrier. This includes fear associated with being undocumented, having an illegal status, or feeling intimidated by federal or state entities.	
Participant Testimonies	
2.1. Fear	"I have not contacted anybody in the community because I feel I am like in a dark place, like I feel in a hole and I do not want to go out because I am afraid, because I am so ignorant about rights, I would appreciate a guide."

3. Lack of Awareness of Resources	
For participants in Region 3, many people in the Spanish-speaking community do not know what resources and programs are available. This can be due to a lack of information in Spanish or because the information is not getting to this community. In addition, Latinos/Hispanics do not know enough about their rights and what services or programs they qualify for.	
Participant Testimonies	
3.1. Lack of Awareness	"People don't really have the resources or the knowledge to be able to get these benefits or to take advantage of these programs." "First generation or immigrants are not really aware of how the process is or the program[s] that this country offers." "Americans that have been here for a long time . . . have the generational awareness that we typically don't have and since people are in that survival mode, there is not a lot of time or resources to build communities or build things for ourselves, so there is a lack there."
3.2. Lack of Information	"I know I have rights as a mother of a child with ASD, but I do not know where to ask for help." "Especially for Latino communities because there is that level of mistrust in the government, even the ADA they're like what does this mean, I don't really trust it. They will have that physical person in front of them, the person that they look up to in their community telling them this information."

4. Lack of Services	
Participants from Region 3 identified that the most common barriers in their area are a lack of resources such as health care, transition services, housing, and others. Participants also expressed that the lack of resources could be due to the lack of information about them.	
Participant Testimonies	
4.1. Lack of Services	"Having the ability to have resources available to them (Hispanics) or knowing where to look or who to call or who to reach out to find out what is available to them."

5. Immigration	
Being undocumented is one of the biggest barriers to accessing services and programs. Based on the perspective of community members, the undocumented community can receive some support, but it depends on many factors.	
Participant Testimonies	
5.1. Immigration	"They took all the support from me. I did everything they told me to do. I called a worker and she said that because I do not have a social security number, I can't get support. It was for my child with a disability." "First-generation . . . immigrants are not really aware of how the process is or the program that this country offers."

6. Discrimination	
Community members also expressed that the Hispanic and Latino communities continue to be discriminated against when looking for services or when trying to access programs and information.	
Participant Testimonies	
6.1. Discrimination	"People take advantage of Hispanics. People from big companies [and] business[es] take advantage of Latinos because they do not have documents, and because of that, they do not know how to advocate for themselves and use their rights, because they are afraid, or they do not have money for a lawyer."

7. Survival Mode	
In Region 3, participants shared that it is hard to think about Latinos' rights when their main priority is surviving. Therefore, trying to meet basic needs becomes the priority for this community, and topics of rights and other potential benefits are not sought in this situation.	
Participant Testimonies	
7.1. Survival Mode	"A lot of the times Hispanics or Latinos are in survival mode, so they're ability to care for their relatives or children with disabilities is going to be less because they're at work more or they can't afford that type of care, so it's a structural thing more than anything."

8. Technology	
When people in the Spanish-speaking community try to access some of the information on websites, or any other virtual platform, technology can become a barrier, especially for older people.	
Participant Testimonies	
8.1. Technology	"A lot of older folks or people in the Latin American community don't know how to access websites or look up phone numbers for information, so a lot of people aren't aware of some of the ADA compliances that are available to them. In our instance, if there weren't Spanish speaking people like me, it would be hard to communicate that information."

Access to Information

Information	
For participants in Region 3, there are four main ways in which the Spanish-speaking community accesses information: social media, in-person conversations, text messages or phone calls, and radio.	
Participant Testimonies	
1. Social Media	Participants highlighted that the most used platforms are Facebook and WhatsApp. Older adults might use Facebook more than other platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube.
2. In-Person Conversations	"Having conversations with people is a guarantee that you can share information." "Especially for those that speak Spanish, they're more willing to listen to that information and find it more credible."
3. Text Messages and Phone Calls	"We mostly get texts and calls; we rarely get emails from the Latino community."
4. Radio	"Using the radio stations has been the most effective tool. It's very effective in the construction side where we want to reach out to the Latino community."

Recommendations

Recommendations	
Based on the testimony of community members, there should be more training programs for the community, including leaders; increased partnerships with trusted leaders; and community dialogues.	
Participant Testimonies	
1.1. Train the Trainer Programs for Community Leaders	"Use the infrastructure that already exists [such as] community leaders that are already there. [Go] to those community and faith leaders and train them on these topics/resources and then they will use their network and spread the message across."
1.2. Partnerships With Community Leaders	"This is an approach that we have also taken in our community. We'll meet with community leaders, explain what's available to them from our organization, and we rely on them to then spread that information, answer questions we have spoken to in detail, and then they communicate with us." "When they have the trust already, the transmission of information is a lot easier. There's less hesitancy. There's more openness." "I think with Latinos, they need some sort of guide, maybe like a trusted person in the community. Maybe it's the priest, [or] someone else that can be a community leader, someone they can look up to and follow an example."
1.3. Representation	"A representative that visits this community is a very strong tool. In my line of work . . . we send representatives to pop up events. That right there [in] my experience is the most effective tool so far."
1.4. Connect With Faith-Based Organizations	"Using faith communities or local centers is probably one of the best ways we can reach Latinos, and from there word of mouth begins to spread." "I really like the idea of faith communities, community centers, schools are a great way. That is the best way in a community centered way."
1.5. Community Dialogues	"it's important for families to be able to ask questions as they're listening to things in a more interactive and dynamic way, as opposed to them trying to read something. Even if they're literate, they might still struggle with it."

Suggested Next Steps for Region 3

Based on the recommendations from the community members from Region 3, the region should take the following specific steps:

1. Continue outreach efforts across the region and look for connections with the Latino/Hispanic community in Pennsylvania (one of the states with the most Latinos in the region), and in other states in the region as this community continues to grow.

2. Connect with organizations such as Casa de Maryland (Various Cities, MD), a large organization within Maryland that provides policy platforms for the community and provides programming for workforce development, vocational training, financial education, and legal services; Latino Community Center (Pittsburg, PA), which works with the residents of Allegheny County to provide family services, community healthcare workers, parenting support, and youth programs; Latin American Community Center (Wilmington, DE), which has been providing programs for adult education, health advocacy, financial empowerment, and family support services; New Virginia Majority (Alexandria, VA), which does extensive policy work, and assists the community with housing and civic engagement; and Hope Center (Churchville, MD), a faith-based organization that is part of a network of other service agencies and churches that shares resources within the community.

3. Identify radio stations such as La Nueva 87.7 FM (DC Metro), La Jefa 700 AM (DC Metro), and especially El Zol 107.9 FM (DC Metro) to build connections that can spread information about the ADA.

4. Consider the possibility of implementing community dialogues in Spanish (via social media, in-person events, or partnering with the organizations above) to increase education on the ADA in the Latino community in Region 3.

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
BARRIERS	1. Language 2. Lack of information 3. Fear/Lack of Trust 4. Stigma /Lack of Education 5. Technology 6. Low Literacy 7. Discrimination 8. Survival Mode 9. Lack of Access to Resources	1. Language 2. Lack of Information 3. Fear/Lack of Trust 4. Stigma /Lack of Education 5. Technology 6. Low literacy 7. Challenge in Outreach 8. Funding
RECOMMENDATIONS	1. In-Person Trainings/Education 2. Partnering With Trusted Leaders 3. Make Information Accessible and Relevant 4. Provide State-Specific Information	1. In-Person Trainings/Education 2. Partnering With Trusted Leaders 3. Use of Social Media and Networking 4. Culturally Appropriate Outreach

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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APPENDIX

Appendix: Region 3 Organizations for Outreach Efforts

State	Sector	Name
DC	Government	Argentina Consulate
DC	Government	Bolivia Consulate
DC	Government	Chile Consulate
DC	Government	Colombia Consulate
DC	Government	Costa Rica Consulate
DC	Government	Cuba Consulate
DC	Government	Guatemala Consulate
DC	Government	Honduras Consulate
DC	Government	Mexico Consulate
DC	Government	Nicaragua Consulate
DC	Government	Panama Consulate
DC	Government	Paraguay Consulate
DC	Government	Peru Consulate
DC	Government	Uruguay Consulate
DC	Government	Venezuela Consulate
DC	Government	Dominican Republic Consulate
DC	Government	Ecuador Consulate
DC	Government	El Salvador Consulate
DC	Government	Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs
DC	Nonprofit and other organizations	Ayuda
DC	Nonprofit and other organizations	Carecen
DC	Nonprofit and other organizations	Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School
DC	Nonprofit and other organizations	CentroNia
DC	Nonprofit and other organizations	Chi BornFree
DC	Nonprofit and other organizations	La Clínica Del Pueblo
DC	Nonprofit and other organizations	LAMB PCS
DC	Nonprofit and other organizations	Latino Economic Development Center
DC	Nonprofit and other organizations	Mary's Center
DC	Nonprofit and other organizations	Neighbors Consejo
DC	Nonprofit and other organizations	Spanish Education Center
Delaware	Immigration	Catholic Charities of Wilmington
Delaware	Immigration	Claymont Community Center
Delaware	Immigration	Community Legal Aid Society
Delaware	Immigration	La Esperanza Community Center
Delaware	Nonprofit and other organizations	Hispanic American Association of Delaware
Delaware	Nonprofit and other organizations	Latin American Community Center
Delaware	Nonprofit and other organizations	West End Neighborhood House
Maryland	Government	El Salvador Consulate
Maryland	Government	Commission on Hispanic Affairs
Maryland	Government	Guatemala Consulate
Maryland	Hispanic Serving Institution	Montgomery College Latino Student Union Club
Maryland	Immigration	Briggs Center for Faith and Action
Maryland	Immigration	CASA de Maryland

Maryland	Immigration	Catholic Charities Baltimore Esperanza Center
Maryland	Immigration	Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center
Maryland	Immigration	Immigrant Connections
Maryland	Immigration	International Rescue Committee Baltimore
Maryland	Immigration	International Rescue Committee Silver Spring
Maryland	Immigration	Luminus Network
Maryland	Immigration	Spanish Speaking Community of Maryland
Maryland	Immigration	Word of Life Center
Maryland	Immigration	World Relief
Maryland	Nonprofit and other organizations	Casa
Maryland	Nonprofit and other organizations	Center for Assistance to Families
Maryland	Nonprofit and other organizations	Centro Hispano de Frederick
Maryland	Nonprofit and other organizations	El Poder de Ser Mujer
Maryland	Nonprofit and other organizations	Maryland Association of Community Services
Maryland	Nonprofit and other organizations	Mi Madre
Maryland	Nonprofit and other organizations	Organization of Hispanic Latin Americans of Anne Arundel County
Maryland	Nonprofit and other organizations	Latino Providers Network
Pennsylvania	Hispanic Serving Institution	Northampton County Area Community College
Pennsylvania	Hispanic Serving Institution	Reading Area Community College
Pennsylvania	Immigration	Acculturation for Justice, Access, and Peace Outreach
Pennsylvania	Immigration	Casa San Jose
Pennsylvania	Immigration	Catholic Charities of Allentown
Pennsylvania	Immigration	Catholic Social Services of Philadelphia
Pennsylvania	Immigration	Christian Immigration Advocacy Center
Pennsylvania	Immigration	Community Justice Project
Pennsylvania	Immigration	Esperanza Immigration Legal Services
Pennsylvania	Immigration	Friends of Farmworkers/Justice at Work
Pennsylvania	Immigration	Health Care Access
Pennsylvania	Immigration	HIAS Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania	Immigration	Nationalities Service Center
Pennsylvania	Immigration	Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center
Pennsylvania	Immigration	Sisters of St. Joseph Welcome Center
Pennsylvania	Immigration	Thrive International Programs
Pennsylvania	Government	Guatemala Consulate
Pennsylvania	Government	Mexico Consulate
Pennsylvania	Government	Panama Consulate
Pennsylvania	Government	Commission on Latino Affairs
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	ACLAMO
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Amigos Community Center
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Casa Dominicana
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Ceiba
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Centro Cultural Latinos Unidos
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Centro de Apoyo Comunitario
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Centro de Cultura Arte Trabajo y Educacion
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Centro Hispano

Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Concilio
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Congreso
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Esperanza Academy Charter School
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	La Comunidad Hispana (LCH Health and Community Services)
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Latino Community Center
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Spanish American Civic Association for Equality
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Justice at Work
Pennsylvania	Nonprofit and other organizations	Latino Hispanic American Community Center
Virginia	Hispanic Serving Institution	Marymount University Avanzamos!
Virginia	Government	El Salvador Consulate
Virginia	Government	Virginia Latino Advisory Board
Virginia	Immigration	Catholic Charities of Arlington
Virginia	Immigration	Centreville Immigration Forum
Virginia	Immigration	Church World Service
Virginia	Immigration	Commonwealth Catholic Charities
Virginia	Immigration	El Puente
Virginia	Immigration	International Rescue Committee
Virginia	Immigration	Literacy Volunteers
Virginia	Immigration	LUCHA Ministries Inc
Virginia	Immigration	New Bridges Immigrant Resource Center
Virginia	Immigration	Restoration Immigration Legal Aid
Virginia	Immigration	Sacred Heart Center
Virginia	Immigration	Sin Barreras
Virginia	Immigration	Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Virginia	Nonprofit and other organizations	Asian & Latino Solidarity Alliance Central Virginia
Virginia	Nonprofit and other organizations	Casa Chirilagua
Virginia	Nonprofit and other organizations	Central Virginia Farm Workers Initiative
Virginia	Nonprofit and other organizations	Edu Futuro
Virginia	Nonprofit and other organizations	Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice
Virginia	Nonprofit and other organizations	Latinos en Virginia
Virginia	Nonprofit and other organizations	Madison House
Virginia	Nonprofit and other organizations	Northern Virginia Family Service
Virginia	Nonprofit and other organizations	Shirlington Employment and Education Center
Virginia	Nonprofit and other organizations	Una Familia Sin Fronteras Foundation
Virginia	Nonprofit and other organizations	Vecinos Unidos
Virginia	Nonprofit and other organizations	Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations