



**Stage One Report #7**

# **SPANISH LANGUAGE OUTREACH PROJECT**

**2022-2023**

*Understanding the National and Regional Context*

*Great Plains ADA Center – Region 7*

**ADA Knowledge Translation Center**

**Authors**

**Mariana Garcia Torres**

**Oscar Gonzalez**

**Sarah Parker Harris**

**Robert Gould**

**Alejandra Herrera**

**Olivia Condon**

**Mark Harniss**

**University of Illinois at Chicago and University of Washington**

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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 for the Great Plains ADA Center, Region 7; 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.**

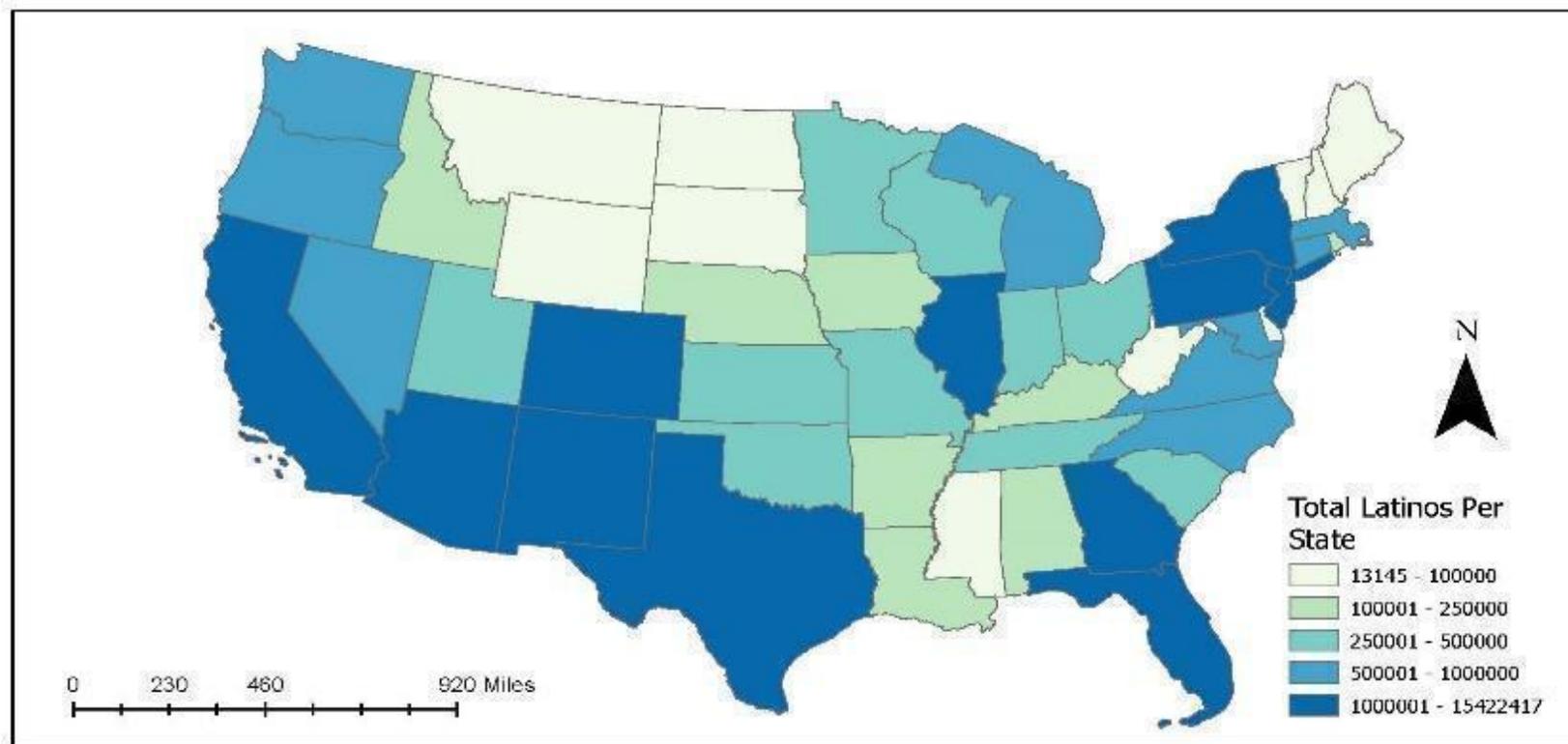
As of 2020, there were 62.1 million Hispanic, Latino, or Latina people in the United States. This population includes people of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, and Spanish descent. Of all groups, Mexicans are the largest group at 61.4 percent. States with the largest Hispanic/Latino 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

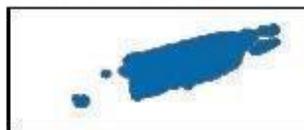
## 2017-2021 Count of Latinos in the United States



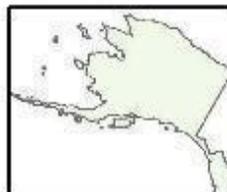
**Hawaii**



**Puerto Rico**



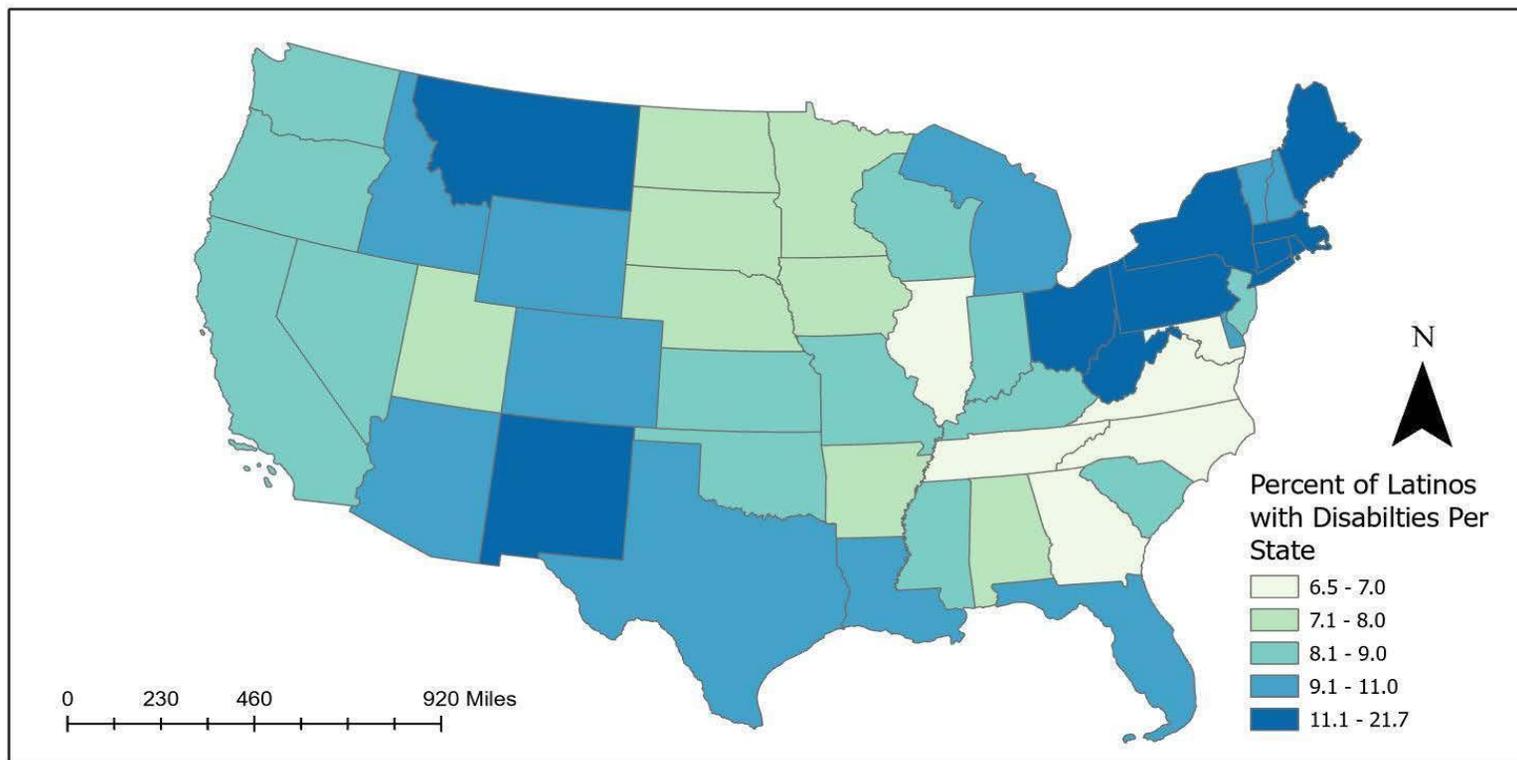
**Alaska**



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

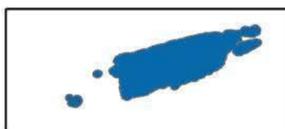
## 2017-2021 Percent of Latinos with Disabilities in the United States



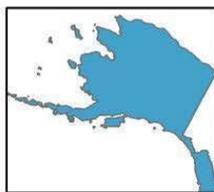
Hawaii



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 7: Great Plains ADA Center**

## Region 7 Background

### **What Is Unique About the Population in Region 7?**

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Region 7 includes the states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska.

Overall, Region 7 is home to a diverse population with a significant minority population that makes up approximately 21% of the total population.

The largest minority group in this region is Hispanic and Latino, with a population of approximately 1 million people. This group is concentrated in Kansas and Missouri. African Americans are the second-largest minority group in the region, with a population of approximately 1 million people. The African American population is concentrated in Missouri.

Native Americans and Asian Americans also contribute to the region's diverse population. Native Americans have a significant presence in Nebraska and Iowa, while Asian Americans are concentrated in Missouri and Kansas.

English is the most spoken language in the region (90% of the population), followed by Spanish (4.7%), Pacific Islander (0.7%), Indo-European (0.63%), and German (0.58%). There are more languages identified but these are the most common languages for the region.

## Region 7 States

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**Kansas** has the largest group of Spanish speakers, with approximately 370,000 individuals identifying as Hispanic or Latino, making them 12.6% of the state's population and 13.7% of the state's labor force. Within the last decade, there has been a growth of over 11.4% percent in their population. Wichita (69,557), Kansas City (48,576), and Springdale (33,539) are the cities in Kansas with the most concentrated Latino/Hispanic populations. Culturally, the Spanish-speaking population is predominantly from Mexico, Guatemala, and Puerto Rico.

**Missouri** has the second-largest group of Spanish speakers. Approximately 274,000 individuals identify as Hispanic or Latino, making them 4.5% of the state's population and 4.2% of the state's labor force. Within the last decade, there has been a growth of over 2.8% percent in their population. Kansas City (56,483) is the city in Missouri with the most concentrated Latino/Hispanic population. Culturally, the Spanish-speaking population is predominantly from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Guatemala.

**Nebraska** has the next largest group of Spanish speakers. Approximately 231,000 individuals identify as Hispanic or Latino, making them 11.7% of the state's population and 10.4% of the state's labor force. Within the last decade, there has been a growth of over 7.4% percent in their population. Omaha (70,731), Lincoln (23,365), and Grand Island (17,423) are the cities in Nebraska with the most concentrated Latino/Hispanic populations. Culturally, the Spanish-speaking population is predominantly from Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

**Iowa** has the next largest group of Spanish speakers. Approximately 211,000 individuals identify as Hispanic or Latino, making them 6.6% of the state's population and 6.3% of the state's labor force. Within the last decade, there has been a growth of over 5.0% percent in their population. Des Moines (31,100), Sioux City (17,824), and Davenport (9,043) are the cities in Iowa with the most concentrated Latino/Hispanic populations. Culturally, the Spanish-speaking population is predominantly from Mexico, Guatemala, and Puerto Rico.

## **Disability Statistics Per State in the Region 7 Latino/Hispanic Community**

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

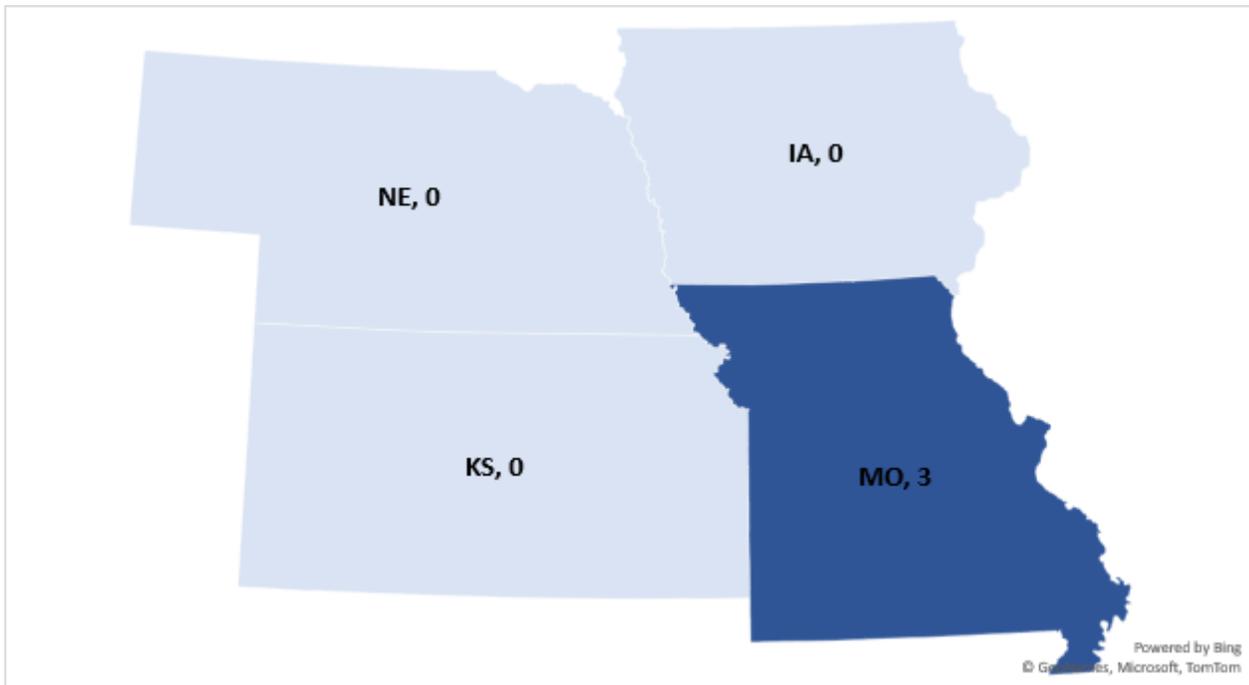
- Kansas has almost 370,000 Latinos, and approximately 9.3% have a disability.
- Missouri has almost 274,000 Latinos, and approximately 9.5% have a disability.
- Nebraska has almost 231,000 Latinos, and approximately 9.4% have a disability.
- Iowa has almost 211,000 Latinos, and approximately 9.4% have a disability.

## Which States From Region 7 Participated in the Interviews?

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As shown on the map, all the interviews were conducted with community members from Missouri. No interviews were conducted with community members from Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas.

Figure 3: Maps of states involved from Region 7



## Observations From the Interviews

### Participants

Three community members participated in the interviews. Most of the participants were male and had minimal knowledge about the ADA. All the interviews were conducted in English. Community members were associated with housing services and education. Interviewees were part of programs that offer services to the Hispanic community but were not related to or part of that community and did not speak Spanish. Figures 4 and 5 and Table 1 show specific data about these characteristics of participants.

Figure 4: Participant demographics

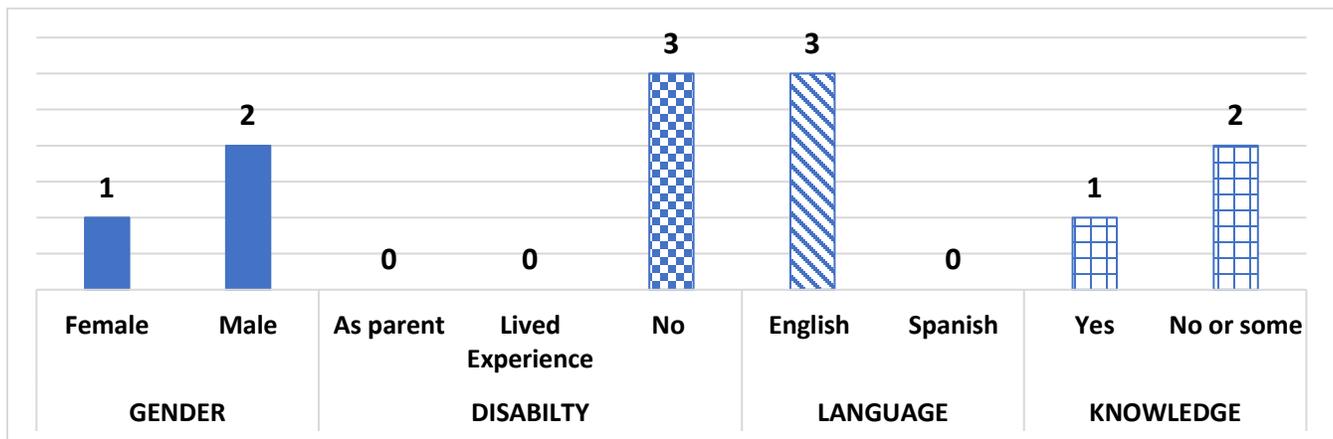
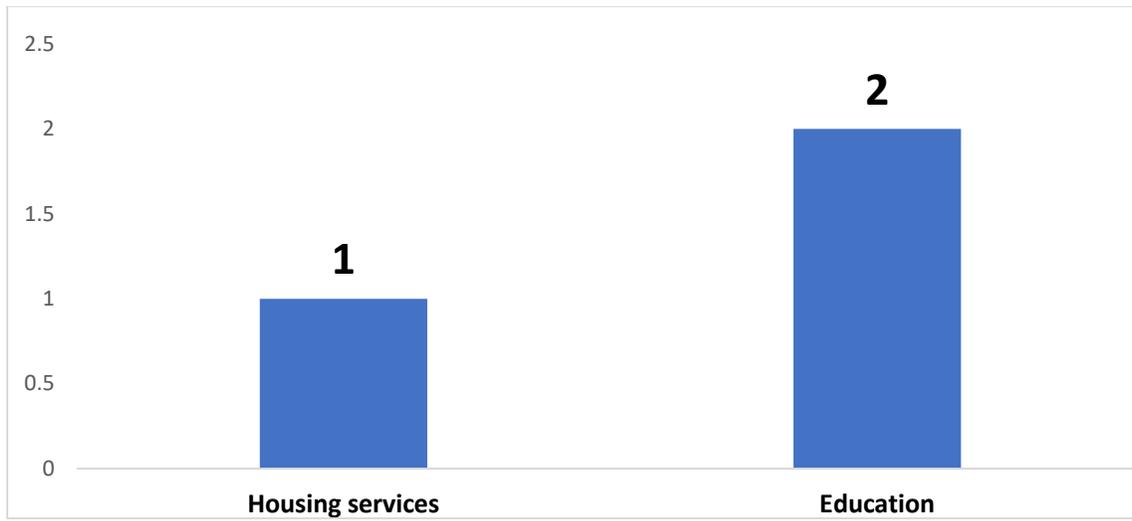


Table 1: Region 7 participant roles

| Participant Role             | Number of Individuals |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Parent Education Coordinator | 1                     |
| Union Representative         | 1                     |
| CEO                          | 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.

In this region, participants were not direct members of the Spanish-speaking community. Even though the race of the participants was not identified, they all stated that they were not part of the Latino/Hispanic community. However, they all work in areas that provide services to that population. Only one participant had a relative who was part of the community. The barriers identified in this report come from their perspective and their expertise while serving the Latino community.

### Barriers

| 1. Language Barriers   |  |
|--|--|
| <p>For participants in Region 7, language barriers include a lack of information in Spanish as well as translation or interpretation services.</p> |  |
| Participant Testimonies  |  |
| <p>1.1. Translation and Interpretation Services</p>  | <p>“We work with the Spanish community every day, and we are horrible at it because we do not have an onsite interpreter or someone to do home visits. One in five of the people we serve are Spanish speakers. We have to get an interpreter on the phone, and that is difficult.”</p> <p>“I love the second-generation folks that sometimes come along side to help, and I see them at my visits . . . When there is a support person with them it gives them a support and they speak more openly. In that instance, they are no longer the minority in the room, I am the minority.”</p> <p>“We . . . have seen them come to our organization and say, ‘we need something for our child for motor or language abilities’, and a lot of times they struggle to know what they need. We of course struggle to effectively communicate what we are giving them, and we do see a deficit in our services.”</p> <p>“When [one employer] realized that a good portion of her workers could not speak English super well and her biggest concern was that they weren’t reading the memos they sent. When we agreed that was an issue, we asked if we could use translations services, and she just laughed and was like, ‘absolutely not’. So, it’s not just the accessibility of information but also who is giving it.”</p> |

## 2. Fear and Lack of Trust

In Region 7, participants shared that lack of trust is something that they experience when offering services to the Spanish-speaking community. Having a representative of the community, or someone that they can trust, is an important element when offering information and services to the community.

### Participant Testimonies

#### 2.1. Lack of Trust

"There are entire families . . . who were primarily Spanish-speaking. We were able to engage a lot of them, not because of how skilled of an organizer, myself, or others are but because my mom showed up to a rally, and they recognized her and came to her and spoke to her in Spanish. She said that I was her son and that immediately created trust, not as much as I would have liked . . . we were able to engage that population because they knew that my mom would help when she could and had for 20 years."

## 3. Lack of Awareness of Resources

Participants perceived that the Spanish-speaking community will progressively lose access to information instead of increasing it. They believe that this is due to the lack of funding for education and the development of professionals who are Latino/Hispanic. Also, lack of knowledge about disability in state and local organizations is a barrier for the Spanish-speaking community, as these organizations do not have the tools to guide people in the community when their rights might be violated.

### Participant Testimonies

#### 3.1. Lack of Awareness

"With declining cuts in education, and less and less people going into being teachers, and less and less native Spanish speakers going into being teachers. It is a big fear that those communities are going to suffer from less and less resources. I think there was a lot of informal work done by an older generation that is not going to get passed on anymore."

#### 3.2. Lack of Awareness About Disability Rights

"Frankly, the ADA and FMLA do come up, folks will have injuries, and this is where I'm like woefully inadequate. Long story short, I mean, I did not receive and training for this position and when folks get injured on the job or develop chronic illnesses, there's laws or resources that I am not aware of that exist . . . I don't even know where to find it in English, much less to find Spanish translations."

## Access to Information

| <b>Information</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| For participants in Region 7, there are four main ways in which the Spanish-speaking community accesses information: social media, partnering with organizations, radio, and other sources. |  |
| <b>Participant Testimonies</b>  |  |
| 1. Social Media   | Participants identified Facebook as the main social media channel.   |
| 2. Specific Organizations   | Participants believe that Latinos mainly obtain information from refugee places, hospitals, schools, and churches.   |
| 3. Radio  | Participants mentioned a radio station from Columbia, MO. They have programs in Spanish for the Latino community, such as "Story Time" on KOPM 89.5 FM on Saturdays. |
| 4. Other  | Participants identified getting information from labor relations organizations.  |

## Recommendations

| Recommendations  |  |
|--|--|
| Based on the testimony of participants, recommendations include increased awareness, more material in Spanish, partnering with local organizations, and better accessibility to websites and phones. |  |
| Participant Testimonies  |  |
| 1. Increased Awareness   | "In our line of work, we often say that a bad boss is the best organizer, because if you go and talk to people about how important their rights are when everything is okay, they will not listen to you. But when bad stuff starts happening, they're like, oh, I have rights."   |
| 2. More Material in Spanish  | "If there was a resource for families who [have] a disability or [are] looking for resources for their child, I would love to have print material, resources that I could hand to their families . . . It would be great to have a print resource of someone we could call to get information."  |
| 3. Partnering With Local Organizations   | "Through other nonprofits . . . I guess that's probably an area where we could loop in a (local Latino nonprofit), but they also have a very focused niche of what they do, and I think they probably need more capacity."   |
| 4. Improved Accessibility  | "We are going to redo our website, so like that could be an opportunity for us to think through, how do we make our website accessible to as many people as possible? It also does not (currently) look very good on phone, or a mobile device and a lot of lower income populations do have access to the internet. I think that is a common misunderstanding. It's a service issue and it might be spotty, but it's often done through people's phones." |

## Suggested Next Steps for Region 7

Based on the recommendations from the community members in Region 7, the region should take the following specific steps:

1. Increase outreach efforts across the region and develop new connections with Latino/Hispanic organizations in the area as this community continues to grow.
2. Connect with organizations that have already created trust in the Latino community such as Guadalupe Centers (Kansas City, MO), a well-established organization that provides family and senior services, financial literacy, workforce development, and education programs; Commission on Latino Americans (Lincoln, NE), which is a state initiative that provides multiple resources in the state of Nebraska; El Centro (Kansas City, KS), which is an organization providing youth development, community health, immigration, and economic empowerment programs for its residents; Centro Latino (Columbia, MO), which provides legal services, a food pantry, health awareness, and education programs.
3. Identify radio stations such as La Grande 1340 AM (KS), La Nueva 99.5 FM (NE) and especially KOPM 89.5 FM (MO) to build connections that can spread information about 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

Website: <https://adata.org/>

Email: <https://adata.org/email>

Phone: 1-800-949-4232

Great Plains ADA Center.

Website: <https://gpadacenter.org/>

Email: [adacenter@missouri.edu](mailto:adacenter@missouri.edu)

Phone: 573-882-3600

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# APPENDIX

## Appendix: Region 7 Organizations for Outreach Efforts

| State    | Sector                            | Name   |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Iowa     | Government                        | Iowa Department of Human Rights  |
| Iowa     | Immigration                       | Catholic Charities Dubuque   |
| Iowa     | Immigration                       | Diocesan Immigration Program   |
| Iowa     | Immigration                       | Diversity Center of Iowa   |
| Iowa     | Immigration                       | IC Compassion  |
| Iowa     | Immigration                       | Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence   |
| Iowa     | Immigration                       | Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice  |
| Iowa     | Immigration                       | La Luz Centro Cultural   |
| Iowa     | Immigration                       | Mary J. Treglia Community House  |
| Iowa     | Immigration                       | US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants   |
| Iowa     | Nonprofit and other organizations | Centro Latino of Iowa  |
| Iowa     | Nonprofit and other organizations | Conmigo Early Education Center   |
| Iowa     | Nonprofit and other organizations | Latino Center of Iowa  |
| Iowa     | Nonprofit and other organizations | Latino Political Network   |
| Iowa     | Nonprofit and other organizations | Marion Alliance for Racial Equity  |
| Kansas   | Government                        | Kansas Hispanic & Latino American Affairs Commission                             |
| Kansas   | Hispanic Serving Institution      | Garden City Community College Hispanic American Leadership Organization (HALO)   |
| Kansas   | Hispanic Serving Institution      | Seward County Community College Hispanic American Leadership Organization (HALO) |
| Kansas   | Immigration                       | Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas   |
| Kansas   | Immigration                       | Catholic Charities of Wichita  |
| Kansas   | Immigration                       | Immigrant Connection, Inc.   |
| Kansas   | Immigration                       | International Rescue Committee   |
| Kansas   | Immigration                       | Saint Francis Ministries   |
| Kansas   | Nonprofit and other organizations | El Centro  |
| Kansas   | Nonprofit and other organizations | Kansas Hispanic Education & Development  |
| Kansas   | Nonprofit and other organizations | La Familia Senior/Community Center   |
| Kansas   | Nonprofit and other organizations | Puerto Rican Society of Greater Kansas City                                      |
| Kansas   | Nonprofit and other organizations | The Hispanic Collaborative   |
| Kansas   | Nonprofit and other organizations | Mission Adelante   |
| Missouri | Government                        | Mexico Consulate   |
| Missouri | Immigration                       | Bilingual International Assistant Service  |
| Missouri | Immigration                       | Catholic Charities Central & Northern Missouri                                   |
| Missouri | Immigration                       | Hand in Hand Multicultural Center  |
| Missouri | Immigration                       | Immigrant Service Providers Network  |
| Missouri | Immigration                       | International Institute Saint Louis  |
| Missouri | Immigration                       | InterServ  |
| Missouri | Immigration                       | Legal Services of Eastern Missouri   |
| Missouri | Immigration                       | Migrant & Immigration Community Action Project                                   |
| Missouri | Immigration                       | St. Francis Community Services   |
| Missouri | Nonprofit and other organizations | Casa De Salud  |

|          |                                   |  |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Missouri | Nonprofit and other organizations | Columbia Housing Authority                             |
| Missouri | Nonprofit and other organizations | First Chance for Children                              |
| Missouri | Nonprofit and other organizations | Guadalupe Centers                                      |
| Missouri | Nonprofit and other organizations | Hispanic Economic Development Corporation              |
| Missouri | Nonprofit and other organizations | Latino Arts Foundation                                 |
| Missouri | Nonprofit and other organizations | Mattie Rhodes Center                                   |
| Missouri | Nonprofit and other organizations | Missouri Jobs with Justice                             |
| Nebraska | Government                        | Commission on Latino-Americans                         |
| Nebraska | Government                        | Mexico Consulate                                       |
| Nebraska | Hispanic Servicing Institution    | Central Community College Focus Multicultural Club     |
| Nebraska | Immigration                       | Catholic Charities of Omaha                            |
| Nebraska | Immigration                       | Catholic Social Services                               |
| Nebraska | Immigration                       | Center for Legal Immigration Assistance                |
| Nebraska | Immigration                       | Centro Hispano Comunitario de Nebraska                 |
| Nebraska | Immigration                       | Immigrant Legal Center                                 |
| Nebraska | Immigration                       | Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska                   |
| Nebraska | Immigration                       | Multicultural Coalition                                |
| Nebraska | Immigration                       | Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence |
| Nebraska | Immigration                       | O!Language   |
| Nebraska | Immigration                       | St. Mary's Immigration Program                         |
| Nebraska | Immigration                       | Women's Center for Advancement                         |
| Nebraska | Nonprofit and other organizations | Cinco de Mayo Omaha                                    |
| Nebraska | Nonprofit and other organizations | El Centro De Las Américas                              |
| Nebraska | Nonprofit and other organizations | El Museo Latino  |
| Nebraska | Nonprofit and other organizations | Heartland Workers Center                               |
| Nebraska | Nonprofit and other organizations | Latinas Unidas   |
| Nebraska | Nonprofit and other organizations | Latino Center of the Midlands                          |
| Nebraska | Nonprofit and other organizations | Latino Peace Officers Association                      |
| Nebraska | Nonprofit and other organizations | Metro Young Latino Professionals Association           |
| Nebraska | Nonprofit and other organizations | Midlands Latino Community Development Corporation      |