Forging the Tools for Unity
A Report on Metro Chicago’s Mayors Roundtables on Latino Integration

by
Berenice Alejo
Sylvia Puente
November, 2007
The mission of the Center for Metropolitan Chicago Initiatives of the Institute for Latino Studies is to aid in the development of socially just communities and respond to pastoral and social concerns by conducting policy-relevant research, strengthening leaders, cultivating partnerships, and expanding knowledge of Chicagoland Latinos.

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus unites mayors from the six-county region in a common cause—to push beyond the boundaries of local interests in order to serve the greater interests of us all. In 1997 Mayor Daley invited mayors from nine suburban municipal associations to talk about this vision. The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus was formed out of that discussion. Today it is an active collaboration between Chicago and the suburban associations. It is a forum for independent thinking and discussion regarding important public policy issues. And, when there is consensus, it is also a powerful voice and force for change, creating programs and supporting legislation that improves our well-being and overall quality of life. Much has been accomplished to date. More will be done tomorrow, not just for a few, but for the 8 million people in 273 municipalities that the Caucus proudly serves.
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with thanks to
Victor Ortiz and Beth Dever
for their contributions
and insights
Foreword

Last winter the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus partnered with the Center for Metropolitan Chicago Initiatives of the Institute for Latinos Studies at the University of Notre Dame to host four Suburban Latino Roundtables. These roundtables focused on the issue of the incorporation of the Latino community in the Chicago metropolitan area. As chair of the Caucus’s Diversity Issues Task Force, I cochaired these events along with Sylvia Puente of the Center for Metropolitan Chicago Initiatives.

We partnered with the Institute because the organization has been at the forefront of studying Latinos in the region and could bring a strong academic background to the roundtables. We recognize that as the Latino population has grown, Latino suburbanization has posed a unique set of challenges to municipalities and the region. Local governments face a problematic situation today as economic reality brings Latinos to the United States and many longer-term residents pressure municipal officials to “do something” about the influx of new residents. Several recent reports, such as the Institute’s State of Latino Chicago: This Is Home Now, have promoted a wider understanding that the future of the Latino community and metropolitan Chicago are intertwined. The economic success of the Latino population will have a significant effect on the economic vitality of the entire region.

Central to convening the roundtables was the idea that many municipalities face similar challenges in the process of incorporating their growing Latino populations. However, they often face these challenges in isolation, without benefit or knowledge of concrete activities undertaken by other municipalities, and with limited understanding of the context of Latino migration, culture, and norms. In addition, there are few opportunities to bring together municipal officials and local Latino leaders to engage in shared discussion to forge a common future. The roundtables offered us the opportunity to engage in dialogue across communities and bring together municipal, school, community, Latino, and faith leaders. The discussions held at the end of each roundtable generated a number of suggested strategies and actions regarding how to increase Latino incorporation in our region. These strategies are included in the summary document that follows. While neither the Caucus nor its member Councils of Governments have endorsed these suggested strategies, they comprise a synopsis of the varied perspectives of the many roundtable participants. In addition, they provide a framework to promote the integration of the Latino community that I know will help to continue the conversation and that I hope many of my colleagues will consider implementing where appropriate.

The Suburban Latino Roundtables provided the participants with a terrific forum for dialogue. On behalf of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, I would like to thank all of the roundtable participants and contributors.

Larry Hartwig
Mayor, Village of Addison
Chair, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Diversity Issues Task Force
November 2007

Gilberto Cárdenas
Assistant Provost, University of Notre Dame
Director, Institute for Latino Studies
November 2007

This publication summarizes the collective wisdom of a diverse group of the metropolitan Chicago region’s stakeholders, including municipal officials, educators, mayors, civic, community and faith leaders, and foundation representatives. While no process can comprehensively engage the entire region, these conversations brought together a diverse set of individuals who do not usually have the opportunity to engage in dialogue with each other. Their common denominator was an investment in their municipality, the region, and our common future.

We are indebted to all of the roundtable participants and presenters for their wisdom and insight and for engaging in this frank dialogue about the region’s future. We are also indebted to those who came back for an additional conversation to distill the major themes and recommendations of each roundtable. We would especially like to thank the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC) for their partnership on this endeavor and Mayor Larry Hartwig, chair of the MMC Diversity Issues Task Force and cochair of the Latino Suburban Roundtable proceedings. This unique collaboration opened new doors for the Institute to carry out its mission of advancing knowledge of the region’s Latino population.

We hope that the suggested strategies provide guidance to municipal, community, and faith leaders, as well as to policymakers and philanthropic institutions, on how Latinos and non-Latinos alike can live together as neighbors to ensure that the Chicago region remains competitive in an increasingly global world.
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Preface

The leading factor in the demographic shift occurring throughout the Chicago metropolitan area is the continued growth of the Latino population.\(^1\) In a now familiar story, the Latino population, at 20 percent of the total population, is the region’s largest racial/ethnic group, with the majority of Latinos (55 percent) now living in the suburbs. This influx of Latinos, mostly from Mexico, into the region’s municipalities has not always been an easy transition. At best, some municipalities have welcomed the assets that Latinos bring and embraced the creation of a diverse society. At worst, the region has seen episodes of outright hostility. Overall, there is an uneasy acknowledgment that the local community has changed, resulting in varying degrees of both ethnic tension and acceptance of the new neighbors.

There is a chorus of recent reports that sound the theme that it is critical to address the opportunities and the challenges of this demographic shift (Ready and Brown-Gort 2005; Gainkar 2006, Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2006). These reports all indicate that the future of the Latino community and the prosperity of the region are intertwined. Vital to the transition is the recognition that society must offer equal opportunity and promote diversity if the region is to maintain its global competitiveness.

In recognition of the importance of integrating US-born and immigrant Latinos, the Institute for Latino Studies of the University of Notre Dame partnered with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to convene the Latino Suburban Roundtables, a series of conversations on the impact of the growing Latino population on local municipalities. The Latino Suburban Roundtables were held between March and June of 2007. Their stated objectives were to:

- Expand and share the base of knowledge on the growing Chicago-area Latino population among a wide variety of municipal officials, civic and community leaders, faith leaders, policymakers, and philanthropic representatives.
- Promote an understanding of the assets and challenges represented by the Chicago-area Latino community in suburban municipalities.
- Begin to produce policy-relevant research to impact public policy decision-making.
- Strengthen relationships among key stakeholders across the region.

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus assisted the Institute in identifying local leaders in the targeted communities of Addison, Aurora, Berwyn, Blue Island, Carpentersville, Cicero, Elgin, Joliet, and Waukegan. Of the 273 municipalities of the region, these communities were chosen because they have large Latino populations. From each of these municipalities, the mayor, a city council or board of trustee member, school personnel, a local Latino leader, and local faith leader were invited to participate, as were all of the mayors of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus’ Diversity Issues Task Force. In addition, representatives of Arlington Heights, Des Plaines, Libertyville, Midlothian, Mount Prospect, Northlake, Palatine, Roselle, Schaumburg, and Woodridge attended the sessions. Also contributing to the roundtables were at-large representatives of ConFeMex (the Confederation of Mexican States), the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), the Metropolitan Planning Council, Chicago Metropolis 2020, and representatives of a select number of foundations and social service organizations. In all, between 60 and 80 individuals attended each of the roundtable sessions.

Each of the four roundtable meetings was dedicated to a specific topic:

- **Setting the context:** The importance of the Latino community to the Chicago region and the local economy
- **Housing:** The “solution” to the shortage of affordable housing is often overcrowding. How does this phenomenon intersect with municipal housing standards?
- **Education:** What are the educational assets and challenges that Latino children bring to schools?
- **Where do we go from here?** What is the difference between federal immigration policy and immigrant integration policy? What strategies are there for local implementation in social services? What are various models of immigrant incorporation?

These topics were identified in consultation with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, many pressing issues such as criminal justice, racial profiling, citizenship acquisition, postsecondary education, and health care were not explicitly addressed.

This publication is divided into four sections corresponding to the topics discussed at each of the four roundtable sessions. Each section is subdivided into an introduction, a discussion of findings, and a listing of potential strategies pertaining to each topic.

*Forging the Tools for Unity: A Report on Metro Chicago’s Mayors Roundtables* on Latino Integration condenses the conversations of nearly 150 civic, community, faith, and municipal leaders. It brings into focus the kaleidoscope of assets and challenges that Latino population growth has presented in municipalities around the region and plants the seeds for a regional agenda to address the Latino population’s integration in the suburbs. It presents potential strategies for what municipalities, community, and civic leaders— Latino and non-Latino alike—can do to ensure a prosperous collective future, one that cannot be lived in “silos” with limited interaction. Our shared destiny is dependent upon our ability to live side-by-side peacefully and harmoniously. Our collective prosperity is dependent upon all members of our society being able to fully contribute to their local communities and live together as neighbors.

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1. Due to the different ways in which data are made available, operational definitions of ‘metropolitan Chicago’ vary slightly. The six-county area, the definition used most often in this report, refers to Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will. Some data sets differentiate between suburban Cook County and the City of Chicago; others may include, for example, Kendall County.
Executive Summary

A. Setting the Context

The impact of the growing Latino population on the Chicago-area economy should not be underestimated:
• Without the growth of the Latino population, Illinois would have lost a Congressional seat.
• Most Latino growth is accounted for by births rather than migration. Between 2004 and 2006, 72 percent of the Latino population growth in the region was due to an increase in the number of children.
• Chicago’s Mexican community is a robust economic catalyst for the region.
• Latinos are responsible for 15 percent of the region’s labor force and half of the growth in owner-occupied homes.
• In an increasingly global economy, Mexico is Illinois’s second largest trading partner at $3.41 billion.
• Bilingual Latinos offer a unique opportunity to tap the $2.4 trillion market of the world’s 21 Spanish-speaking countries.
• Latinos have regional household income in excess of $20 billion.

Promoting the integration of the Latino population in the region capitalizes on these economic contributions. A major theme that emerged during the roundtables was the need to create opportunities for dialogue to promote understanding between the Latino and non-Latino communities. Another prominent theme to emerge was the call for Latino leadership and civic engagement in local municipalities. It is just as critical for members of the Latino community to step up to leadership and civic involvement as it is for the local community to foster inclusion. Participants acknowledged that each setting is unique. The regional economy, local labor needs, attitudes of native population, and perceived strain of the undocumented population on local resources all require that each community consider its own way of developing a plan for local immigrant integration.

Potential Strategies:

Demographic and Economic Impact
• Develop a public education campaign to highlight the history of immigration in the United States and the economic contributions of the Latino community.
• Support mayors in areas of high Latino concentration with resources, information, and economic data.

Immigrant Integration
• Link state-endorsed immigrant initiatives with local municipal agendas on immigrant integration.
• Develop immigrant integration plans with attainable goals and objectives at the municipal level for communities with large immigrant populations. Ensure that there is a component to evaluate any immigrant integration initiative.
• Develop a media campaign in both English and Spanish in the Chicago metro region that highlights the diversity of the region.
• Create opportunities to promote dialogue and understanding, such as community events and festivals, cultural competency training, conflict resolution, and education.
• Build the capacity to get more Latinos involved in public and civic life on municipal boards and in leadership positions.
• Develop relationships between local municipalities and the towns/cities from which current immigrant residents come.
• Ensure that opportunities are available for Spanish-speaking residents to learn English.
• Provide training on cultural competency to employees who serve the public and ensure that bilingual staff are available in municipal institutions.

Federal Immigration Reform
• Identify a credible source to provide updates on federal immigration reform.
• Disseminate this information to municipal officials, community, and faith leaders.
• Support federal immigration reform initiatives.
B. HOUSING

The discussion of housing focused on two issues: affordability and overcrowding. For US families earning between $20,000 and $30,000 annually, the total cost of housing and transportation exceeds 60 percent of their income. Given current projections of housing supply and demand over the next two decades, it is evident that current planning practices must change to accommodate the needs of a changing population. This is especially important for Latinos since they represent virtually all the net population increase over the next 20 years.

The theme of community education permeated the discussion on overcrowding. Partnerships between the public and the private sector to provide training and outreach were also highlighted.

Potential Strategies for Housing:

- In communities where property inspections currently occur after the sale of a home, consider requiring inspections to take place before the sale to safeguard the buyer and ensure proper zoning compliance and safety.
- Develop and/or expand model education programs for tenants and buyers.
- Develop flexible housing ordinances that would address the economic, cultural, and life-cycle factors involved in "overcrowding."
- Provide locally-based community mediation services to allow people to resolve conflicts with their neighbors, using a language interpreter if needed.
- Partner or consult with developers who are experienced in working with the Latino community in order to properly build for their lifestyle and cultural norms.
- Develop diverse housing that includes smaller homes and affordable rental housing to accommodate increased Latino housing demand.
- Reinforce affordable housing initiatives such as employer-assisted housing, community housing programs, housing trust funds, and workforce development.

C. EDUCATION

The educational gap between Latinos and non-Latino whites is wide. Two major strategies emerged from the roundtable discussions that could positively influence the educational attainment of Latinos: understanding language acquisition and proficiency and parental involvement. Many school districts are adapting to the influx of English-language learners in their schools. Their educational achievement is critical to the success of the region since they represent an increasing portion of the future workforce. In the long run, the most effective model in preparing English-language learners for long-term academic success is two-way developmental bilingual education or dual-language programs. A variety of studies confirm that parental involvement has an enormous impact on students’ attitudes, attendance, and academic achievement. For Latino parents, particularly foreign-born adults, the most effective parent involvement programs focus on personal formation and civic engagement.

Potential Strategies for Education: Improving Language Acquisition

- Increase resources to expand the Illinois Resource Center’s Dual-Language Network to provide a clearinghouse of data and research that would broaden the base of knowledge regarding best practices for English-language learners.
- Provide planning dollars from the Illinois State Board of Education for schools and school districts to develop dual-language programs, which have proven to be the most effective in preparing English-language learners and benefit native English speakers as well. For Spanish-speaking children entering the US school system, dual-language programs build on their existing knowledge. In today’s world economy mastering more than one language is critical to future success.
- Review and amend current state standards to ensure that proper assessments are used to measure English-language learners’ academic progress as well as their language acquisition. Allow English-language learners to remain in the subgroup until they have reached the proficient level on the ISAT language arts test.
- Increase the pool of bilingual/bicultural teachers in suburban school districts.
- Offer local school district teachers and staff opportunities to achieve cultural competency.
Encouraging Parental Involvement

- Identify a local school district staff person to serve as a liaison between parents and the school.
- Facilitate a welcoming environment for immigrant parents by providing communication material in their native language and bilingual assistance.
- Develop a consistent parent program that focuses on personal formation and civic engagement. Examples of personal formation activities include workshops on computer or financial literacy, GED, understanding the American school system, and ESL courses. Examples of civic engagement activities include meaningful volunteer opportunities and consistent parent-teacher communication.

D. Social Services

Participants discussed four models of service provision that would facilitate immigrant incorporation in the region: 1) a community-based organization, 2) a one-stop social service collaborative, 3) a school-community partnership, and 4) a faith-based initiative. The key issue to emerge from this discussion was that there is a dearth of organizations that provide social services in the suburbs, particularly to immigrants. The lack of services has been exacerbated by the growth of the Latino population and an accompanying increased need for basic human services.

Potential Strategies for Social Services

- Municipalities can benefit from the existing knowledge of social service organizations experienced in working with immigrant populations. Encourage partnerships among established organizations, many of which are located in the City of Chicago, and emerging organizations in the suburbs.
- Provide funding and resources to build new organizations and expand capacity of those that already exist to meet demand.
- Build a network of social service providers working on immigrant integration to learn from and share with each other.
- Compile and disseminate best practices on immigrant integration models, particularly in the areas of social service delivery, life and safety issues and police protection.
- Wherever possible, municipalities can align services on crosscutting issues to have a unified process for translation and interpretation services.
- Provide a comprehensive array of social services in one location to facilitate access and use.
- Provide cultural competency training to community organization staff.
Section One: Setting the Context

A. INTRODUCTION

It is often said that the United States is a country of immigrants. Following the years after America’s independence and continuing through today, people from all over the world have come to this country fleeing economic hardship and religious and political persecution.

The Ellis Island Foundation describes immigration during the period between 1820 and 1880 as follows:

The Irish weren’t the only newcomers. Rapid population growth, changes in land distribution, and industrialization had stripped many European peasants and artisans of their livelihoods. Departing from Liverpool and Hamburg, they came in through the major Eastern ports and New Orleans. Chinese immigrants began to arrive in the 1850s, entering through San Francisco.

As in the past, the immigrants of this period were welcome neighbors while the economy was strong. During the Civil War both the Union and Confederate armies relied on their strength. But during hard times, the immigrants were cast out and accused of stealing jobs from American workers. Some of the loudest protests came from the Know-Nothings—a political party of the 1850s famous for its anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic leanings.

But it was the pro-immigrant voices of this era that would be most influential. The Republican platform of 1864 stated, “Foreign immigration which in the past has added so much to the wealth, resources, and increase of power to the nation ... should be fostered and encouraged.” (Ellis Island Foundation)

It is now widely recognized that to facilitate our collective future, the Latino population, particularly those who are immigrants, like their predecessors in the 1800s, must integrate and become participating members in the social, civic, and economic life of their local communities and region.

Michael Fix of the Migration Policy Institute defines immigrant integration as a process of economic mobility and the social inclusion of newcomers. Integration implies a two-way process that involves change on the part of not just immigrants but of members of the receiving community. (Fix 2007, vii)

Others characterize immigrant integration as a dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant and cohesive communities. As an intentional effort, integration engages and transforms all community members, reaping shared benefits and creating a new whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. (Cainkar 2006, 2)

Central to each of these definitions is that change occurs on the part of both the immigrant population and the local community in which they reside. Along the way there is increased understanding and acceptance. This process of transformation changes both groups, ideally creating stronger, cohesive, dynamic communities.

At the same time we recognize that it is all too comfortable for many Latino immigrants to remain in ethnic enclaves, living their lives with immigrants who are like them and conducting most of their day-to-day life in the Spanish language. However, as Professor Christina Gómez pointed out in her presentation to the roundtable participants, “In the past, immigrants gave up their identity in the process of becoming ‘American.’ Currently, acculturation means that Latinos do not need to lose their language or food or give up their culture. This might have been the case in the past but is no longer so.”

The unprecedented levels of immigration to the United States and the Chicago region since the mid-1990s complicate this process. This migration peaked in 2000 at over 40,000 new immigrants.2 Living in the midst of this constant influx of new immigrants makes it difficult at times to see how the new population is integrating.

Gómez further described how history demonstrates that integration does happen over time. The only home that the children of immigrants know is the United States and they have certainly mastered the English-language. Like the Irish and Italians before them, many Latinos have become “ethnic Americans,” yet the constant influx of new immigrants makes them less visible.

Consider the following as further evidence that Latinos in the Chicago metropolitan region, are both becoming “American” and retaining a strong ethnic identity:

2 Source: US Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey.
Two-thirds of Latinos in the Chicago region are citizens (Ready and Brown-Gort 2005, 21).
Over three-quarters (76 percent) of all Latino households in the region are bilingual in English and Spanish (Ready and Brown-Gort 2005, 22).
Most Latino growth is accounted for by births rather than migration. Between 2004 and 2006, 72 percent of the Latino population growth in the region was due to an increase in the number of children.3

How then do we reconcile this duality: that change is inevitable on the part of the immigrant and receiving communities, but that Latino immigrants can retain their language and culture and still be “American”? As a society, how do we foster diverse yet cohesive communities that allow all members to contribute to their fullest potential, thereby fostering the region’s economic competitiveness? Eighty people gathered in the city of Chicago on March 7, 2007, to address these questions.

B. FINDINGS

1. Demographic and Economic Impact of Latinos in the Chicago Region

Why is the economic and civic integration of Latinos important to Chicago? Roundtable presentations by Frank Beal of Chicago Metropolis 2020 and Paul O’Connor of World Business Chicago discussed the economic impact that Latinos have on the region against the backdrop of the demographic shift that has been occurring in the Chicago area. The Latino population, at 1.7 million,4 comprising 20 percent of the total population, is the region’s largest racial/ethnic minority and continues to grow (Figure 1).

The Latino population in each of the region’s counties has grown (Figure 2) such that a majority (55 percent) of the region’s Latino population now lives in municipalities outside of the City of Chicago, and Figure 3 (page 8) shows that this proportion has grown significantly over time.

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3 Calculated from US Census Bureau, 2004 and 2006 American Community Surveys.
4 Source: US Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey.

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Figure 1
Metro Chicago* Region Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2006
(N=8,496,884)

- Hispanic or Latino 20% (1,720,504)
- Asian 6% (475,853)
- Black or African American 18% (1,545,054)
- White 55% (4,645,820)
- Other 1% (109,653)

*Metro Chicago here includes the seven-county area: Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will.
Source: US Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

Figure 2
Latino Population by County, 2000–2006

- Cook: 23% (1,200,957) in 2006, 20% (1,071,740) in 2000
- Du Page: 12% (110,889) in 2006, 9% (81,368) in 2000
- Kane: 28% (137,344) in 2006, 24% (95,924) in 2000
- Kendall: 14% (12,694) in 2006, 14% (9,602) in 2000
- Lake: 19% (133,422) in 2006, 14% (92,718) in 2000
- McHenry: 10% (32,664) in 2006, 8% (9,602) in 2000
- Will: 14% (92,514) in 2006, 9% (43,768) in 2000

Source: US Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey
By 2030 the Chicago region will probably grow from 8.4 million people to 10 million, increasing by 1.6 million people. Latinos are projected to be one-third of this total population, growing by 1.6 million to 3.3 million, representing virtually all of the region’s growth (see Figure 4). This is consistent with reports on population trends indicating that 96 percent of the region’s growth between 1970 and 2004 was also due to the growth of the Latino population (Ready and Brown-Gort 2005).

This demographic transformation is already evident in the racial/ethnic composition of those under age 30 in the region, nearly half of whom are Latinos or other people of color (see Figure 5).

In the context of this demographic change Beal (2007) and O’Connor (2007) indicated that:

- Without the growth of the Latino population, Illinois would have lost a Congressional seat.
- Chicago’s Mexican community is a robust economic catalyst for the region.
- Latinos are responsible for 15 percent of the region’s labor force and half of the growth in owner-occupied homes.
- In an increasingly global economy, Mexico is Illinois’s second largest trading partner at $3.41 billion (Illinois Department of Commerce).
- Bilingual Latinos offer a unique opportunity to tap the $2.4 trillion market of the world’s 21 Spanish-speaking countries.
- Latinos have regional household income in excess of $20 billion (Ready and Brown-Gort 2005).

Promoting the integration of the Latino population in the region capitalizes on these economic contributions. It is clear that as the population continues to grow it will be of increasing importance to the region’s economy. Building on Latinos’ bilingual capabilities fosters the region’s global competitiveness. Some roundtable participants expressed surprise at the economic contributions of the Latino population, and many expressed the need to educate municipal and community leaders on this topic.

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5 Source: US Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey.
6 Beal 2007, updated with 2006 data by the Institute for Latino Studies.
Being politically correct keeps people from talking about their differences. Forget about political correctness. Just be respectful.

– Roundtable Participant

2. Promoting Understanding of Immigrant Integration

So how do we promote an environment that will foster the integration of new communities? It starts with basic steps. While public policy and philanthropic initiatives on immigrant integration are emerging, they do not overshadow the need for getting to know each other on an individual basis. As one roundtable participant said, “Being politically correct keeps people from talking about their differences. Forget about political correctness. Just be respectful.”

Roundtable participants also indicated that the resources and groups that do exist to work on issues of immigrant integration are often fragmented and isolated. The roundtables were organized to bring together across municipalities individuals who were unaware of the good work that is occurring throughout the region. The dialogue and sharing of strategies need to continue.

A major theme that emerged during the roundtables was the need to create opportunities for dialogue to promote understanding between the Latino and non-Latino community. Participants indicated the need to change the “us versus them” mentality, to provide education on stereotypes and myths, and to create safe spaces to explicitly discuss the racism, fear, and prejudice that exist. The many suggestions on how to encourage this dialogue included:

• Develop and implement diversity and cultural competency training for educators, community members, and municipal employees.
• Identify and train residents who can provide mediation and conflict resolution.
• Engage churches, businesses, schools, and municipalities to host events such as culture nights and community festivals with a planning committee of Latinos and non-Latinos.
• Host diversity dinners.
• Provide opportunities for mentorship within the Latino community and identify Latino role models.

For example, the Hispanic Heritage Coalition of Elgin hosts a “Fiesta Salsa” every fall, at which the whole community is welcome. The organizers make a point of ensuring that both Latino and non-Latinos participate in the planning committee.

Region-Wide Initiatives

We are fortunate that Illinois is a national leader in defining a new paradigm of immigrant integration. Lisa Thakkar, of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and other presenters discussed some of Illinois’s innovations in this area. For instance:

• The Chicago Community Trust has awarded immigrant integration grants to municipalities and local organizations.
• Recognition of foreign government-issued identification by financial institutions and government has facilitated access to financial services and home ownership.
• The New Americans Initiative assists legal immigrants to pursue US citizenship.
• The Illinois governor established the Office of New Americans Advocacy and Policy and signed the New Americans Executive Order.

Sister Cities

As Latinos have settled throughout the region, many have established themselves in communities that have witnessed settlement from a particular town or region in Mexico. For example, the Town of Cicero is known to have large settlements of families from the State of Guanajuato. One strategy for promoting understanding is for civic and municipal leaders to get to know the towns from which many of their residents come.

Leadership Development and Civic Engagement

Another prominent theme to emerge from the roundtables was the call for Latino leadership and civic engagement in local municipalities. While some mayors have had success in engaging Latinos in civic life, more indicated that they have struggled to get Latinos involved as trustees, on school boards, in planning groups, and in other community endeavors. It is just as critical for members of the Latino community to step up to leadership and civic involvement as it is for the local community to foster inclusion. Only when this happens will we begin to understand our shared goals, fears, and aspirations in a way that will enable us to set a common agenda for a safe community, secure future for our children, and economic well-being.

There is a stereotype that Mexican equals illegal.

– Roundtable Participant
3. Challenges to Immigrant Integration

Undocumented Migration

Immigrant integration cannot be discussed without acknowledging the significant number of undocumented persons living in the Chicago region. While clearly not the majority, 200,000–250,000 of 740,000 foreign-born Latinos are estimated to be undocumented (Ready and Brown-Gort 2005, 21). Though the number of undocumented individuals is significant, they constitute a small proportion of the 1.7 million Latinos residing in the area. The challenges their circumstances pose to the overall process of immigrant integration should not overshadow the fact that the full inclusion and economic mobility of the clear majority of US-born Latinos and Latino immigrants is critical to the region’s prominence.

As a historical note, there were no visa requirements for European immigration at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Our immigrant predecessors were allowed entry into the United States with minimal requirements. And prior to 1965 there was no formal restriction on the size of Mexican migration to the United States, since the Western Hemisphere was exempted from quotas. Since the immigration reform law of 1965, the same quota has been applied to all countries and now limits the formal entry of Mexican immigrants into the United States to about 25,000 annually. Thus, the countries from which immigrants have been allowed to enter the United States and the ease with which they have been allowed entry have changed significantly over time.7

Federal Immigration Reform

To date, the debate on federal immigration reform remains unresolved. Unfortunately, the voices most often heard on this issue are those who are at the extremes, either fervently anti- or pro-immigrant. Regardless of one’s perspective, it is clear that the US immigration system is broken. Given the large number of undocumented persons in the United States who play a significant role in the labor market, there is “an increasing disconnect between law and reality” and some “immigration policies hamper rather than encourage economic growth” (Chicago Council on Foreign Relations 2004, 2).

The national immigration debate largely focuses on the need to secure US borders, often not acknowledging that globalization has allowed for a redistribution of corporate capital without making allowances for the movement of people. Economic reality has prevailed to adjust the supply and demand for labor. As a result we have witnessed a shift in the labor market, irrespective of public policy. As one roundtable participant indicated, “It is sometimes difficult to understand how macroeconomic shifts impact local communities.”

The roundtable discussions occurred in the midst of the national immigration debate and the historic immigration marches calling for comprehensive immigration reform. While this debate clearly has an impact at the local level, this report distinguishes between the creation and implementation of federal immigration policy, which is a federal responsibility, and immigrant integration policy, which is local in nature.

There is no silver bullet to deal with immigrant integration. — Margaret McHugh

The next sections of this report offer additional guidance on how to facilitate this process of immigrant integration in the areas of education, housing, and social services. In offering potential strategies, we are reminded of the presentation of Margaret McHugh, codirector of the Immigrant Integration Office of the Migration Policy Institute: “There is no silver bullet to deal with immigrant integration.”

Each setting is unique. The regional economy, local labor needs, attitudes of native population, and perceived strain of the undocumented population on local resources all require that each community consider its own way of developing a plan for local immigrant integration. Each community is its own best judge on how to foster the inclusion of its immigrant members.

7 Xochitl Bada, Susan Szesh, Rob Paral, email correspondence with Sylvia Puente October 1 and 2, 2007; conversation with Allert Brown-Gort, October 2, 2007. Mexicans have always been treated differently, being brought in and sent back in cycles since the 1880s. They were encouraged to come after the beginning of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, after the 1917 entry into US in WWI, after the imposition of quotas in the 1924 Immigration act, during WWII, and again in the 1960s. They (and their American-born children) were also encouraged to leave during tough economic times, particularly during the Great Depression, when up to one million people were forcibly deported or pressured to go to Mexico, and the economic slowdown after the Korean War in the 1950s, which gave us “Operation Wetback.” This is evidence of the US government’s preference for Mexican labor to be temporarily documented or undocumented, making it easier to control the flow of labor across the border and discouraging Mexicans from settling permanently. But it also eventually created the perception in many Americans’ minds that immigration from Mexico was “illegal.”
It is sometimes difficult to understand how macroeconomic shifts impact local communities.

– Roundtable Participant

C. Potential Strategies

Demographic and Economic Impact

• Develop a public education campaign to highlight the history of immigration in the United States and the economic contributions of the Latino community.
• Support mayors in areas of high Latino concentration with resources, information, and economic data.

Immigrant Integration

• Link state-endorsed immigrant initiatives with local municipal agendas on immigrant integration.
• Develop immigrant integration plans with attainable goals and objectives at the municipal level for communities with large immigrant populations. Ensure that there is a component to evaluate any immigrant integration initiative.
• Develop a media campaign in both English and Spanish in the Chicago metro region that highlights the diversity of the region.
• Create opportunities to promote dialogue and understanding, such as community events and festivals, cultural competency training, conflict resolution, and education.
• Build the capacity to get more Latinos involved in public and civic life on municipal boards and in leadership positions.
• Develop relationships between local municipalities and the towns/cities abroad from which current immigrant residents come.
• Ensure that opportunities are available for Spanish-speaking residents to learn English.
• Provide training on cultural competency to employees who serve the public and ensure that bilingual staff are available in municipal institutions.

Federal Immigration Reform

• Identify a credible source to provide updates on federal immigration reform.
• Disseminate this information to municipal officials, community, and faith leaders.
• Support federal immigration reform initiatives.
Section Two: Housing

A. Introduction

Since Latinos are responsible for 50 percent of the total increase in owner-occupied homes in the six-county Chicago Metropolitan Region (Ready 2007c), it was fitting that the second roundtable session focused on housing. Figures 6 and 7 highlight the growing impact that Latinos are having on housing in the region.

Latinos living in the suburbs are more likely than city residents to be homeowners. Sixty percent of suburban Latino households are owner-occupied, compared to 43 percent of Latino households in the City of Chicago (Ready 2007c). Figure 7 illustrates that increase over a thirteen-year period.

In order to discuss these changes and what they mean for the region overall, 60 representatives from the communities of Addison, Aurora, Berwyn, Carpentersville, Cicero, City of Chicago, Des Plaines, Elgin, Joliet, Midlothian, Mount Prospect, Northlake, Palatine, Warrenville, and Waukegan participated in the second roundtable, hosted by the Village of Addison on April 11, 2007. The key issue to emerge from the conversation was the intersection of affordability and overcrowding.

B. Findings

1. Affordability

Housing affordability impacts the entire region, not just the Latino population. Across the Chicago metropolitan market, land values, development patterns, and resident demands are driving up the cost of housing. It has become increasingly difficult for some segments of the population—low- and moderate-income members of the workforce as well as seniors—to find housing they can afford. Often in the very communities in which they work or have lived for years. While this is the case across racial and ethnic lines, Latinos are particularly affected by the lack of affordable housing because they make up a large proportion of the lower end of the labor market. As a result, many Latinos cannot afford to live near their jobs and choose to live with others—family members or unrelated persons—out of economic necessity.

As more people move into the outlying counties of the six-county region, rental opportunities, like job opportunities, are slow to follow. For US families earning between $20,000 and $30,000 annually, the total cost of housing and transportation exceeds 60 percent of their income. In 2005 nearly half of all renters in the State of Illinois and the Chicago metropolitan area were using more than 30 percent of income on housing. This surge was observed in every county in the region (Snyderman 2007), making housing affordability an issue affecting everyone.

Table 1 illustrates the challenge a typical worker faces in finding an affordable home in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and Will counties. Only in Joliet can a two-income household earning $56,938 afford to either buy or rent a home.

Housing experts across the region have endorsed initiatives such as workforce development, community housing programs, housing trust funds and employer-assisted housing as ways to address the affordability crisis.

Homes for a Changing Region, a partnership between the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and Chicago Metropolis 2020, provided an analysis of the housing supply and demand mismatch for the region using two scenarios. In the first, the trend scenario, the forecast was based on the types of housing that would be built through 2030 if current housing patterns continue as they are today. In the
Figure 7

Table 1
Where can the typical worker afford the typical home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/Town</th>
<th>Approximate Average Home Price</th>
<th>Annual Wage Needed to Buy</th>
<th>Annual Wage Needed to Month Rent</th>
<th>All Jobs</th>
<th>Welder</th>
<th>Retail Salesperson</th>
<th>Landscaping Supervisor</th>
<th>Middle School Teacher</th>
<th>Welder Married to a Retail Salesperson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addison (DuPage)</td>
<td>$306,924</td>
<td>$92,606</td>
<td>$752</td>
<td>$30,064</td>
<td>$33,732</td>
<td>$31,383</td>
<td>$21,121</td>
<td>$27,532</td>
<td>$51,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurora (DuPage)</td>
<td>$282,587</td>
<td>$85,263</td>
<td>$791</td>
<td>$31,599</td>
<td>$33,732</td>
<td>$31,383</td>
<td>$21,121</td>
<td>$27,532</td>
<td>$51,318</td>
</tr>
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<td>Berwyn (Cook)</td>
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<td>$77,563</td>
<td>$813</td>
<td>$32,509</td>
<td>$33,653</td>
<td>$33,179</td>
<td>$20,006</td>
<td>$44,272</td>
<td>$50,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Island (Cook)</td>
<td>$179,825</td>
<td>$54,258</td>
<td>$778</td>
<td>$30,064</td>
<td>$33,653</td>
<td>$33,179</td>
<td>$20,006</td>
<td>$44,272</td>
<td>$50,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpentersville (Kane)</td>
<td>$218,513</td>
<td>$65,931</td>
<td>$934</td>
<td>$37,321</td>
<td>$29,089</td>
<td>$39,062</td>
<td>$17,834</td>
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<td>Cicero (Cook)</td>
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<td>$74,477</td>
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<td>$30,064</td>
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<td>$80,311</td>
<td>$875</td>
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<td>$39,062</td>
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<td>$43,568</td>
<td>$48,403</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hoffman Estates (Cook)</td>
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<td>$95,612</td>
<td>$1,218</td>
<td>$45,090</td>
<td>$33,653</td>
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<td>$50,309</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joliet (Will)</td>
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<td>$26,293</td>
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<td>$38,721</td>
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<td>Lincolnwood (Cook)</td>
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<td>$44,272</td>
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<td>Mt. Prospect (Cook)</td>
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<td>$100,019</td>
<td>$926</td>
<td>$37,023</td>
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<td>Midlothian (Cook)</td>
<td>$284,022</td>
<td>$58,541</td>
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<td>Northlake (Cook)</td>
<td>$237,547</td>
<td>$71,673</td>
<td>$1,022</td>
<td>$40,856</td>
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<td>$33,179</td>
<td>$20,006</td>
<td>$44,272</td>
<td>$50,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palatine (Cook)</td>
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<td>$89,940</td>
<td>$1,058</td>
<td>$42,293</td>
<td>$33,653</td>
<td>$33,179</td>
<td>$20,006</td>
<td>$44,272</td>
<td>$50,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schaumberg (Cook)</td>
<td>$247,496</td>
<td>$74,675</td>
<td>$1,150</td>
<td>$45,976</td>
<td>$33,653</td>
<td>$33,179</td>
<td>$20,006</td>
<td>$44,272</td>
<td>$50,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waukegan (Lake)</td>
<td>$188,198</td>
<td>$56,784</td>
<td>$728</td>
<td>$29,081</td>
<td>$34,425</td>
<td>$28,257</td>
<td>$21,753</td>
<td>$36,970</td>
<td>$40,441</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Metropolitan Planning Council

- Home prices adjusted using rates from Chicago Tribune series, 10/22/06–11/19/06
- Affordability assumptions: 30 percent of income is allocated to housing. For buying a house, additional assumptions include a 5 percent down-payment, 6.5 percent interest rate at 30-years fixed, plus allocation of 21 percent of the monthly payments to property taxes, insurance and other costs such as PMI.
- County averages, from Illinois Workforce Information Center: BLS Occupational Employment Statistics Survey Data for 2005. For municipalities straddling county borders, county with more homes used.
- Source: Ready and Brown-Gort (2005)
second, the projected demand scenario, the forecast was based on the types of housing most likely to be demanded by the region’s changing population, taking into account the residents’ age, income, and ethnicity.

The bar graph in Figure 8 compares the trend forecast (the business-as-usual forecast) with the projected demand forecast (based on the new population). The scenarios show that the number of large-lot houses being built today may not best meet the needs and demands of the changing population. Instead, smaller-lot single-family homes and attached units may better represent the types of housing that will be demanded as the year 2030 approaches.

Given these projections, it is evident that current planning practices must change to accommodate the needs of a changing population. This is especially important for Latinos since they represent virtually all the net population increase over the next 20 years and tend to purchase smaller single-family residences (noted as “SFR Small” in Figure 8), a market sector where there is a clear mismatch between projected demand and supply.

The forecasted mismatch relates to more than housing type. It is also reflected in projections for affordability. Estimates indicate that an additional 140,000 families—over and above the 730,000 families currently stressed by excessive housing costs—will pay more than they can afford for housing because of the shortfall of available affordable housing (Metropolitan Mayors Caucus 2007). Nationally, nearly half (46 percent) of Latino households are cost-burdened, paying more than 30 percent of their income in housing expenses (Ready 2006, 18).

2. Overcrowding

Following the Census definition, a household is categorized as crowded when there is more than one person per room in the unit. Overcrowding is a result of economic and cultural issues and life-cycle factors such as having children.

Nationally, 26 percent of Latino households are classified as crowded, compared to 8 percent of black and 4 percent of white households. Foreign-born Latinos are more likely to live in crowded housing than their US- or Puerto Rican-born peers. In Chicago 37 percent of foreign-born Latino households lived in crowded conditions compared to 12 percent of their US-born counterparts (McConnell and Ready 2005, 18).
Figure 9 shows that 36 percent of Latino households consist of 5 people or more, compared to 9 percent of non-Latino whites (Ready 2007b). This difference, coupled with distinct cultural norms, can lead to misunderstandings among neighbors. Roundtable participants indicated that lots of foot-traffic and many cars in the driveway were common concerns associated with overcrowding. Locally-based community mediation with trained bilingual staff could help to assuage any tensions that might arise.

In order to address overcrowding, community education and government regulations must work in tandem. Many Latino residents have never been exposed to the concept of a housing ordinance, as they are not common in Mexico. Therefore, initiating an education program prior to enacting fines and punitive measures would be beneficial.

An innovative inspection program in Mount Prospect found that “systematizing inspections and providing a landlord-tenant ordinance ensures that all parties are prepared to participate in the code enforcement process. Coupled with a landlord-tenant ordinance, this allows the village, property owners and managers, and tenants to avoid problems that can be expensive to resolve” (Metropolitan Planning Council).

Model housing ordinances, then, must achieve a balance between public safety and the rights of individuals. They should avoid:

- Selective enforcement of codes
- Midnight raids
- Defining what constitutes a family
- Codes that are stricter than International Code Council standards
- Solely punitive responses

It is important to give people an opportunity to remedy violations. Inspectors who are adequately trained and bilingual can provide nonthreatening information to the community (Martinez 2007b).

The theme of community education permeated the discussion on overcrowding. Information regarding tenant and landlord rules and responsibilities were seen as crucial in addressing the issue. Partnerships between the public and the private sector to provide training and outreach were also highlighted. Examples of effective outreach included: inspection prior to home ownership, bilingual pamphlets, housing fairs, user-friendly websites, and a review of current inspection processes to ensure that staff are properly trained and have appropriate material to distribute.

C. POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- In communities where property inspections currently occur after the sale of a home, consider requiring inspections to take place before the sale to safeguard the buyer and ensure proper zoning compliance and safety.
- Develop and/or expand model education programs for tenants and buyers.
- Develop flexible housing ordinances that would address the economic, cultural, and life-cycle factors involved in “overcrowding.”
- Provide locally-based community mediation services to allow people to resolve conflicts with their neighbors, using a language interpreter if needed.
- Partner or consult with developers who are experienced in working with the Latino community in order to properly build for their lifestyle and cultural norms.
- Develop diverse housing that includes smaller homes and affordable rental housing to accommodate increased Latino housing demand.
- Reinforce affordable housing initiatives such as employer-assisted housing, community housing programs, housing trust funds, and workforce development.
A. Introduction

The educational gap between Latinos and non-Latino whites is wide (see Figure 10). In 2006 only 60 percent of Latino adults 25 and older in Illinois had graduated from high school, compared to 92 percent of non-Latino whites. Eleven percent of Illinois Latino adults have college degrees, compared to 32 percent of non-Latino whites (Ready 2007a).

Data for very recent high school students tell a dishearteningly similar story (see Figure 11). The number of Latino high school graduates in 2006 was only 56 percent of the number of Latino 9th graders enrolled four years earlier. In contrast, the number of non-Latino white graduates in 2006 equaled 83 percent of 9th graders enrolled four years earlier. (Ready 2007a; EPE Research Center, using Cumulative Promotion Index for the 2006 academic year).

In 2005 Latinos accounted for 25 percent of all school age children (5–17 years of age) in the Chicago metropolitan area (see Figure 12).

Fifty-six percent of Latino school-age children and adolescents now attend school in the suburbs. Table 2 illustrates the increase of Latinos as a percentage of total enrollment in 13 suburban school districts and in the city of Chicago over a seven-year period (Ready 2007a).
Table 2
Latinos as a Percentage of Total School Enrollment, 1999–2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addison 4</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addison HS 88</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurora 131</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurora 129</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwyn North 98</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwyn South 100</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Island 138</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpentersville 300</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cicero 99</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwyn–Cicero Morton HS 201</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elgin U-46</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joliet 86</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waukegan 60</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago 99</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given these facts, the educational assets and challenges that Latino children bring to schools were the subject of the third suburban roundtable held on May 9, 2007. More than 60 representatives from metropolitan Chicago gathered in the City of Blue Island to discuss the educational status of the Latino community, best practices in educating English-language learners, parent involvement, and the legal requirements that impact enrollment of immigrant children in schools.
Two major strategies emerged from the roundtable discussions that could positively influence the educational attainment of Latinos in Illinois: understanding language acquisition and proficiency and encouraging parental involvement.

1. Understanding Language Acquisition and Proficiency

The English-language-learner population has grown significantly in recent years. Although 88 percent of all Latino school-age children in the Chicago area are US born, 74 percent report speaking a language other than English at home. According to the Illinois State Board of Education (2006), a total of 135,771 Illinois students have limited proficiency in English, of whom 131,016, or 81 percent, are Spanish speakers. Figure 13 shows that in 2006 the majority (54 percent) of students in the Chicago area who were Spanish-speaking with limited English proficiency were in the suburbs (Ready 2007a). Many school districts are still adapting to the influx of English-language-learner students in their schools. It remains clear that the educational achievement of English-language learners is critical to the success of the region since they represent an increasing portion of the region’s future workforce.

Language acquisition and proficiency is a complex process. In 1979 Dr. Jim Cummins introduced a distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), now referred to as social language, and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), referred to simply as academic language.

The distinction was intended to draw attention to the very different time periods typically required by immigrant children to acquire conversational fluency in their second language as compared to grade-appropriate academic proficiency in that language. Conversational fluency or social language is often acquired to a functional level within about two years of initial exposure to the second language, whereas at least five to seven years is usually required to catch up to native speakers in academic aspects of the second language (Cummins).

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**Figure 13**

Spanish-Speaking Limited-English-Proficient Students in Chicago and the Suburbs, 2006
Academic language is associated with the language of text, including the organization of paragraphs, the function of transitions such as “therefore” and “in contrast,” and a wide range of academic vocabulary that appears far more often in text than in oral conversation (Beeman 2007). Mastering academic language is crucial to any student’s success in school.

For English-language learners extensive research has shown that the strongest predictor for success in a second language is proficiency in the speaker’s native language. Parents, therefore, will give their children a greater advantage if they speak to them solely in the language they themselves have mastered. That is to say, if the parents’ native language is Spanish and they have only acquired “broken” English, their child would benefit more by listening and speaking in Spanish. Exposing their child to “broken” English would hamper that child’s social and academic language acquisition.

Figure 14 presents the results of a longitudinal study of seven well-implemented mature English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in five school districts. Although the traditional ESL Pullout method is the most effective in early grades, after the third grade gains disappear. This is due to the reality that in the upper elementary, middle, and high school years academic vocabulary plays an especially prominent role as students read to learn about facts, concepts, and theories in content-area classrooms (Beeman 2007).

The basic differences among the programs listed in Figure 14 relate to the amount of support offered to students in their first language, the support given in the second language, the variance in teaching styles, and sociocultural support provided and students’ integration into the curricular mainstream.

Briefly, “bilingual education” is academic instruction in two languages for grades K–12. “Transitional bilingual education” is academic instruction half a day in each language, with gradual transition to all-majority language instruction in approximately 2–3 years. “English as a second language” provides no academic instruction through the minority language (Thomas and Collier 1997).

In the long run, the most effective model in preparing English-language learners for long-term academic success is two-way developmental bilingual education or dual-language programs.

As Figure 14 demonstrates, students in dual-language programs exceed the average performance of native English speakers making one year’s progress in consecutive grades.

In addition to encouraging the use of the native language at home and in the community, English-language learners benefit greatly from proper assessment. Research shows that the language demands of tests negatively influence accurate measurement of English-language learners’ performance. For this reason, state tests should be modified and adapted to meet English-language learners’ needs in order to accurately assess academic performance independently from language acquisition.

The No Child Left Behind Act requires schools with subgroups of disadvantaged students to reduce the achievement gap. Subgroups include African American, Latino, limited-English-proficient, special education, and low-income students.

The challenge for schools with English-language learners is that the subgroup is transient. Students with the most English fluency are “redesignated”

Figure 14
Data Aggregated from a Series of 3–7 Year Longitudinal Studies from Well-Implemented, Mature Programs in Five School Districts

Program 1: Two-way developmental bilingual education (BD)
Program 2: Late-exit bilingual education and ESL taught through academic content
Program 3: Early-exit bilingual education and ESL taught through academic content
Program 4: Early-exit bilingual education and ESL taught traditionally
Program 5: ESL taught through academic content using current approaches
Program 6: ESL Pullout taught traditionally

Average performance of native-English speakers making one year’s progress in each consecutive grade.

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out of the subgroup. New students entering the subgroup tend to be less fluent and so affect a school’s progress toward reducing the achievement gap. English-language learners should be allowed to remain in the subgroup until they have reached the proficient level on the ISAT language arts test (Marler 2007).

### 2. Encouraging Parental Involvement

A variety of studies confirm that parental involvement has an enormous impact on students’ attitude, attendance, and academic achievement. Parents who receive frequent and positive messages from teachers tend to become more involved in their children’s education than do other parents, and many parents respond to encouragement from educators. A national study of 2,317 inner city elementary and middle school students shows that the best predictor of parent involvement was what the school did to promote it. School attitudes and actions were more important than the parents’ income, educational level, race, or previous school-volunteering experience in predicting whether the parent would be involved in the school (Epstein 1995, 705–707).

The roundtable discussion echoed this finding. Among the challenges cited by participants on Latino parent involvement were:

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### BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- Does a greeter welcome parents?
- Are you accepting alternative forms of identification to enter the building such as the *matrícula* or electoral card from another country?
- Has someone (staff/teacher) been identified to be the liaison between the parents and the school?
- Is there someone who speaks the parents’ native language?
- Are bulletins multilingual?
- Is there a room where parents can meet with each other (Parent Resource Room)?
- Is there a consistent parent program?
- Is there a formal process to include parents in the planning of events, such as a mentoring or volunteer program?
- Have all teachers had training to help them use a student’s family, language, and culture as a foundation for learning?
- Is there a parent calendar that meets the state/federal requirements but also includes the needs and interests of the parents?
- Does a baseline survey exist to capture the interest of the parents, their skills, and their potential for volunteering or becoming mentors?
- Can your program serve the whole family?

Source: Villa 2007
• Language and cultural barriers that make parents feel unwelcome at the school
• Lack of understanding of the US education system
• Low levels of formal education
• Economic hardship with parents often working more than one job

Given this, for Latino parents, particularly foreign-born adults, the most effective parent involvement programs focus on personal formation and civic engagement.

Personal formation activities center on parents’ individual needs to boost self-confidence and establish a formal and direct relationship with their child’s school. Examples include workshops on computer or financial literacy, GED, understanding the American school system, and ESL courses.

Civic engagement fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility toward a school through meaningful volunteer opportunities and consistent parent-teacher communication. Personal invitations to participate and providing a welcoming environment are crucial in engaging parents in their child’s education.

3. Legal Facts Regarding Enrollment of Immigrant Children

Finally, roundtable participants also discussed the enrollment of immigrant children in public schools. What follows are some relevant legal facts:

• In Plyler v. Doe, a 1982 decision, the US Supreme Court held that undocumented children have the same right as citizens and legal permanent residents to receive a free public education.
• Any action by a school or district that has the effect of denying access to a free public education to an undocumented student can be deemed unconstitutional.
• Districts must implement effective policies that limit school enrollment only to students who live within their boundaries but do not limit access to immigrant populations residing in those districts.
• A child’s residence for school purposes is the residence of the person who has legal custody of that child.
• To ensure compliance with federal and state law, a district’s enrollment policy should be flexible in allowing caretakers to prove legal custody and residency through various means.

An enrollment policy is unlawful if:

• The caretaker is required to obtain legal guardianship
• The caretaker or student is required to disclose his or her immigration status
• Services or benefits are conditioned upon obtaining the social security number of the student or adult caretaker
• The parent or caretaker is required to prove residency through documents that only a citizen or legal permanent resident could obtain, such as a driver’s license, state identification card, or voter registration card (Martinez 2007a).

Participants stressed the need for front-line school staff to be conversant with these guidelines. Disconnects often occur between the school and the district, primarily regarding the types of documents that are requested to prove legal custody or residence.
C. Potential Strategies

Improving Language Acquisition

• Increase resources to expand the Illinois Resource Center’s Dual-Language Network to provide a clearinghouse of data and research that would broaden the base of knowledge regarding best practices for English-language learners.
• Provide planning dollars from the Illinois State Board of Education for schools and school districts to develop dual-language programs, which have proven to be the most effective in preparing English-language learners and benefit native-English speakers as well. For Spanish-speaking children entering the US school system, dual-language programs build on their existing knowledge. In today’s world economy mastering more than one language is critical to future success.
• Review and amend current state standards to ensure that proper assessments are used to measure English-language learners’ academic progress as well as their language acquisition. Allow English-language learners to remain in the subgroup until they have reached the proficient level on the ISAT language arts test.
• Increase the pool of bilingual/bicultural teachers in suburban school districts.
• Offer local school district teachers and staff opportunities to achieve cultural competency.

Encouraging Parental Involvement

• Identify a local school district staff person to serve as a liaison between parents and the school.
• Facilitate a welcoming environment for immigrant parents by providing communication material in their native language and bilingual assistance.
• Develop a consistent parent program that focuses on personal formation and civic engagement. Examples of personal formation activities include workshops on computer or financial literacy, GED, understanding the American school system, and ESL courses. Examples of civic engagement activities include meaningful volunteer opportunities and consistent parent-teacher communication.
Section Four: Social Services

A. Introduction

Social services exist to improve people’s standard of living and enhance quality of life. In the Chicago metro region there are more than 2,200 nonprofit health and human services organizations that work “to strengthen community by addressing the needs and aspirations of its most vulnerable residents” (Phillips 2007).

Participants in the fourth Latino Suburban Roundtable discussed four models of service provision that would facilitate immigrant incorporation in the region: 1) a community-based organization, 2) a one-stop social service collaborative, 3) a school-community partnership, and 4) a faith-based initiative. The key issue to emerge from this discussion was that there is a dearth of organizations that provide social services in the suburbs, particularly to immigrants. The lack of services has been exacerbated by the growth of the Latino population and an accompanying increased need for basic human services.

The final roundtable discussion was held in the City of Elgin on June 6, 2007. Participants included 72 representatives from the communities of Addison, Aurora, Berwyn, Cicero, City of Chicago, Des Plaines, Elgin, Joliet, Palatine, and Waukegan.

B. Findings

1. Community-Based Organization

Erie Neighborhood House was established in 1870 to serve new immigrants in Chicago: Dutch, Scandinavian, Irish, Ukrainian, Polish, and Italian. Although Erie predated the settlement house tradition pioneered by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in Hull House, it went on to adopt the latter’s vision.

Dismayed by what they perceived to be the isolation of immigrants from any kinds of cultural and civic institutions, Addams and Starr hoped that by establishing a social settlement they could create a new kind of urban space.

[Through its cultural and social activities, Hull House aimed to model a new kind of citizenship and patriotism. It was based on the idea that immigrants brought to America the gifts of their traditional cultures, and instead of seeing them as potentially dangerous to American institutions, Addams claimed that newcomers would become better Americans if they did not throw out the art and craft of their past experiences. (Schultz)]

Currently Erie Neighborhood House serves Latinos and African Americans. Erie believes that every human being has civil/human rights and that immigrants today face the same issues they did a century ago. The organization has evolved into one of the finest comprehensive social service agencies in Chicago and is a recognized nonprofit leader. Erie’s educational programs reach 4,500 participants annually, providing a pathway to success and strengthening communities.

Ric Estrada, the executive director of Erie, invited mayors and municipalities to foster home-grown leadership and make use of existing provider services to meet the needs of their growing immigrant populations. He offered the suggestion that experienced providers in the City of Chicago could mentor new suburban initiatives.

2. One-Stop Social Service Collaborative

Kathy Millin, executive director of the Palatine Opportunity Center, described the effectiveness of consolidating a myriad of social services in one location by relating an anecdote of a battered woman coming into the center with her young daughter and accessing a variety of desperately needed services all at once: police assistance, health care, child care, and education.

Born out of a community planning process initiated in 1998 by Mayor Rita Mullins, the Palatine Opportunity Center (POC) serves thousands of individuals living and working in northeast Palatine. Almost 100 percent of the population served is of immigrant origin. Among the languages spoken at POC are Spanish, English, and Russian.

With seven part-time staff housed in a 20,000-square-foot building provided by Northwest Community Hospital, POC coordinates a variety of social services that address health, education, and senior citizen, family, and youth needs. These include:

- Youth and family counseling
- Preschool, parenting support, adult literacy
• After-school homework program
• Recreation programs for children and adults
• Senior citizen services
• Health care
• Nonnative literacy, GED and citizenship classes
• Public library
• Neighborhood policing and court advocacy
• Adult employment assistance

Fourteen service providers work independently and lease space from Northwest Community Hospital. In this unique model, the service providers meet monthly with POC’s part-time executive director to coordinate collaborative efforts.

POC is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization with the vision “to have a community of strong citizens, healthy families, and vibrant neighborhoods.”

Among the challenges POC faces are lack of space (demand for services and programs exceeds the capacity of the current location), transportation (the majority of those accessing services walk or bike to POC), children’s activities for 6–10 year olds, and funding to expand programs and services.

3. School-Community Partnership

The Latino Parent Outreach Project began in 2003 at Addison Trail High School in direct response to the lower graduation rates among Latino students despite their increase in the high school’s student population. Although the school led the initiative, Latino community partners were intentionally sought out to facilitate the program.

The Outreach Project sought to:
• Expand the reach of education.
• Create a safe environment for families.
• Challenge parents to participate in their child’s academic success.

One hundred and fifty people attended a series of dinner meetings, held in Spanish, to uncover parent needs and concerns. Participants were personally invited via phone calls and letters, and the school provided transportation and childcare.

The outcome? Parents asked for English and computer classes. On the first day, in sub-zero temperature, 80 parents were expected and over 300 attended. On a weekly basis more than 300 parents participate in personal formation and civic engagement educational experiences.

The project has grown organically to meet the changing needs of families. As a result, parents have a stake in the school, graduation rates among Latino students have increased, and more of those students have college aspirations. A core group of leaders has formed, and the school district has hired a full-time outreach facilitator.

One of the major challenges faced by the program has been a misunderstanding of the project’s vision by non-Latino parents in the school. Leaders of the program envision a community-wide effort to facilitate discussion and find common ground to resolve the issue.

4. Faith-Based Initiative

Rev. Gerald Simonelli shared a faith-based approach to immigrant incorporation and social service by describing the work done at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Addison, Illinois.

The church responds to needs as they appear, regardless of whether or not structured programming exists. The changing population at St. Joseph presented needs and the church met them by establishing Spanish-language prayer groups. New arrivals are referred to these groups to find support, assistance, and community.

To strengthen and aid families, St. Joseph provides:
• English as a second language and citizenship classes
• A marriage and family enrichment program that helps maintain family values by recognizing the challenges that arise when families leave their home country and a three-week program for single parents
• A food pantry and assistance to families in setting up their apartments or homes in partnership with the Village of Addison
• Bilingual assistance to navigate systems and fill out documents or paperwork (free income tax service and ITIN requests)
• Interpreter services to allow Spanish-speaking parents to actively participate in their child’s education by attending parent-teacher conferences

In the upcoming months the church will hire a Latino ministry coordinator. A major challenge the parish faces by providing these services is the integration of the Latino and Anglo communities. To address this, a multicultural festival is being planned.
5. Other Social Service Issues

Among other important suggestions offered by roundtable presenters and participants, Margie McHugh of the Migration Policy Institute highlighted that in many parts of the United States, as new immigrant communities emerge, immigrant integration initiatives start by addressing life and safety issues. She said that often representatives of the fire, police, and emergency departments will meet to ensure that they have a plan in place to reach out to those who do not speak English well. In addition, a suggestion was made to share best practices among social service providers and police departments on how to work with the Latino community.

C. Potential Strategies

• Municipalities can benefit from the existing knowledge of social service organizations experienced in working with immigrant populations. Encourage partnerships among established organizations, many of which are located in the City of Chicago, and emerging organizations in the suburbs.
• Provide funding and resources to build new organizations and expand capacity of those that already exist to meet demand.
• Build a network of social service providers working on immigrant integration to learn from and share with each other.
• Compile and disseminate best practices on immigrant integration models, particularly in the areas of social service delivery, life and safety issues, and police protection.
• Wherever possible, municipalities can align services on crosscutting issues to have a unified process for translation and interpretation services.
• Provide a comprehensive array of social services in one location to facilitate access and use.
• Provide cultural competency training to community organization staff.
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Partners

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Agendas for the Four Roundtables

Latino Suburban Roundtable
Meeting One, March 7, 2007

Agenda

Setting the Context: The importance of the Latino community to the Chicago region and the local economy

Welcome and Introductions
Allert Brown-Gort, Associate Director, Institute for Latino Studies
Larry Hartwig, Mayor, Village of Addison, Chair, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Diversity Issues Task Force
Dave Bennett, Executive Director, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
Sylvia Puente, Director, Center for Metropolitan Chicago Initiatives, Institute for Latino Studies

Session One: Why Economic and Civic Integration of Latinos Is Important to Chicago
“Preparing Metropolitan Chicago for the 21st Century,” Frank Beal, Executive Director, Metropolis 2020
“A Shared Future: The Economic Engagement of Greater Chicago and Its Mexican Community,” Paul O’Connor, Executive Director, World Business Chicago
“Immigrant Incorporation,” Terry Mazany, President, Chicago Community Trust

Session Two: Understanding the Latino Community
“Issues of Identity, Assimilation and Integration,” Christina Gomez, Associate Professor of Sociology and Latino & Latin American Studies, Northeastern Illinois University

Dinner

Small Group Discussion: Nurturing a diverse, integrated community: Addressing assets and challenges from a local perspective.

Large Group Discussion

Readings
Roberto Suro, “Beguiling Mysteries and Known Unknowns: The Research Challenges Posed by Latino Experience” (Latino Research @ ND, vol. 3, no. 3, University of Notre Dame, Institute for Latino Studies, December 2006)

Fact Sheet
Demographics of the Latino Population

Presentation Handouts
“Why Economic and Civic Integration of Latinos Is Important to Chicago,” Frank Beal, Executive Director, Metropolis 2020
“Understanding the Latino Community,” Christina Gómez, Associate Professor of Sociology and Latino & Latin American Studies, Northeastern Illinois University
Housing: The “solution” to affordable housing is often overcrowding. How does this phenomenon interact with municipal housing standards?

Welcome and Introductions
Larry Hartwig, Mayor, Village of Addison, Chair, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Diversity Issues Task Force
Sylvia Puente, Director, Center for Metropolitan Chicago Initiatives, Institute for Latino Studies

Session One: Overview of Regional Housing Needs and Housing for Working Families
“A Roof Over Our Heads: Homeownership Patterns and Overcrowding,” Tim Ready, Research Director, Institute for Latino Studies
“Homes for a Changing Region,” Nancy Firfer, Senior Advisor, Chicago Metropolis 2020, and Beth Dever, Housing Director, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
“Housing for Working Families,” Robin Snyderman, Housing Director, Metropolitan Planning Council, and Paul Roldan, CEO, Hispanic Housing Development Corporation

Session Two: Strategies to Reduce Overcrowding and Ensure Safe Housing Options
Virginia Martinez, Legislative Staff Attorney, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund

Questions and Answers
Break
Small Group Discussion: What is the interplay between choice and economics regarding living situations?
Lunch
Large Group Discussion

Readings
Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Homes Summary

Fact Sheet
Key Housing Statistics

Presentation Handouts
“Latino Housing in Metro Chicago: National, Urban and Suburban Perspectives,” Tim Ready, Research Director, Institute for Latino Studies
“Regional Housing Needs Assessment,” Nancy Firfer, Senior Advisor, Chicago Metropolis 2020
“Strategies to Reduce Overcrowding and Ensure Safe Housing Options,” Virginia Martinez, Legislative Staff Attorney, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
“Housing for Working Families: Promising Strategies Underway,” Robin Snyderman, Housing Director, Metropolitan Planning Council
Excerpts on housing from The State of Latino Chicago: This Is Home Now (2005) and Hispanic Housing in the United States (2006)
“Accommodating the Housing Needs of Families and Workers as the Chicago Region and Illinois Grow: An Update for 2007”
“Where Can the Typical Worker Afford the Typical Home?” Metropolitan Planning Council
“Where Can the Typical Worker Find the Typical Home?” Metropolitan Planning Council
“Priorities for Legislative or Administrative Action,” Metropolitan Planning Council
“Interested in Mixed-Income Housing? Let Us Help You,” The Regional Housing Initiative, collaboration of Illinois Housing Development Authority
“REACH Illinois: Employer-Assisted Housing,” Illinois Housing Development Authority
“Community Acceptance Strategy at Work,” Joanna Trotter, Manager, Metropolitan Planning Council, Community Building Initiative Housing Associate, and Robin Snyderman, Housing Director, Metropolitan Planning Council
Latino Suburban Roundtable
Meeting Three, May 9, 2007
Agenda

Education: What are the educational assets and challenges that Latino children bring to schools?

Welcome and Introductions
Donald Peloquin, Mayor, Blue Island
Larry Hartwig, Mayor, Village of Addison, Chair, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Diversity Issues Task Force
Sylvia Puente, Director, Center for Metropolitan Chicago Initiatives, Institute for Latino Studies

Session One: Educational Status of Latino Community, Measuring the Latino Education Achievement Gap
Timothy Ready, Research Director, Institute for Latino Studies

Session Two: Best Practices for Educating Latino School Children
"Impact of No Child Left Behind on English Language Learners," Barbara Marler, Senior Education Consultant and Project READWELL Coordinator, Illinois Resource Center
"Best Practices for Parental Involvement," Silvia Villa, former Codirector Cicero Education Initiative, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago Teacher’s Center, Current Immigrant Welcoming Center Director, State of Illinois

Session Three: What are the Legal Requirements That Impact the Enrollment of Immigrant Children in Schools?
Virginia Martinez, Legislative Staff Attorney, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund

Questions and Answers

Dinner

Small Group Discussion

Large Group Discussion

Readings

Presentation Handouts
“Educational Status of Latino Community, Measuring the Latino Education Achievement Gap,” Timothy Ready, Research Director, Institute for Latino Studies
“Best Practices in Educating English Language Learners,” Karen Beeman, Senior Education Consultant, Illinois Resource Center
“Impact of No Child Left Behind on English Language Learners,” Barbara Marler, Senior Education Consultant and Project READWELL Coordinator, Illinois Resource Center
“Best Practices for Parental Involvement,” Silvia Villa, former Codirector Cicero Education Initiative, Northeastern Illinois University Chicago Teacher’s Center, Current Immigrant Welcoming Center Director, State of Illinois
“What Are the Legal Requirements That Impact the Enrollment of Immigrant Children in Schools?” Virginia Martinez, Legislative Staff Attorney, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
Latino Suburban Roundtable
Meeting Four, June 6, 2007
Agenda

Where do we go from here? What’s the difference between federal immigration policy and immigrant integration policy? What are strategies for local implementation in the area of social services. What are various models of immigrant incorporation?

Registration

Welcome and Introductions
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Session One: Federal and State Immigration Initiatives
“Update on Federal Immigration Policy,” Maricela Garcia, Executive Director, Latinos United
“Best Practices on Immigrant Integration from across the US,” Margie McHugh, Codirector, National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, Migration Policy Institute
Questions and Answers

Session Two: Local Immigrant Integration—Best Practices
“Settlement House Tradition,” Ric Estrada, Executive Director, Erie Neighborhood House.
“Palatine Opportunity Center,” Kathy Millin, Executive Director, Palatine Opportunity Center
“Schools and Community Outreach,” Marco Gasca, ATHS School Community Liaison
“Faith,” Rev. Gerald Simonelli, Pastor, St. Joseph Catholic Church, Addison
Questions and Answers

Lunch

Small Group Discussion

Large Group Discussion

Closing Remarks and Next Steps
Allert Brown-Gort, Associate Director, Institute for Latino Studies

Adjourn

Presentation Handouts
“Update on Federal Immigration Policy,” Maricela Garcia, Executive Director, Latinos United
“Annual Report Fiscal Year 2006,” Ric Estrada, Executive Director, Erie Neighborhood House (La Casa Erie)
“Palatine Opportunity Center Brochure,” Kathy Millin, Executive Director, Palatine Opportunity Center
“Faith Based Initiatives to Assist Immigrants, St. Joseph Catholic Church, Addison,” Rev. Gerald Simonelli, Pastor, St. Joseph Catholic Church, Addison
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In 2006 Puente was awarded the Sor Juana Women of Achievement Award for Community Service by the National Museum of Mexican Art, and in 2003 she was one of 25 Chicago-area women named a “Pioneer for Social Justice.” She holds an MA in public policy studies from the University of Chicago and a BA in economics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.