



Immigrant Integration  
The Illinois Experience



## Illinois Immigrant Demographics

- Immigrants are 13.6% of population
- Immigrants and their children are 26%
- Population grows by 35,300 each year
- 1.5 million US born children of immigrants
- Suburban population (984,000) now larger than Chicago (590,000)
- 700,000 Mexican immigrants; Polish, Indian, Filipino, Chinese



## New Americans Initiative

- Executive Order issued by Governor Blagojevich—November 2005
- Public-private partnership to develop a coherent and strategic state government approach to assist in the integration of the rapidly growing immigrant population:
  - Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy
  - Statewide Interagency Task Force
  - Statewide Policy Council



## Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy

- Developing a statewide, systematic approach to serving immigrant population
- Coordinates state policy, programs and planning of immigrant and refugee integration
- Monitors federal immigration policy and advises Governor
- Acts as liaison and advocate for families affected by federal immigration policy



## Interagency Task Force

- Develops statewide recommendations
- Implements changes in the way state serves immigrant, refugee and LEP communities



## Statewide Policy Council

- Convened by Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR)
- Community groups and leaders working with business, faith, labor, philanthropic and government leaders to form public-private partnership
- Consults with state leader and national policy experts to recommend strategic directions
- Develops recommendations on effective and strategic measures



## Guiding Principles

- State services are provided to all residents in ways that are innovative, holistic, effective, and efficient
- Adequate language services are available for all residents, including the limited English proficient population, to encourage and accelerate immigrant and refugee integration



## Guiding Principles

- Meaningful access to state services are available for all residents, including the limited English proficient population, from all agencies and organizations providing services on behalf of the state
- State staff have a proficient level of cultural and linguistic competence, and are provided continued access to comprehensive cultural and linguistic competence training supports



## Guiding Principles

- All vital documents are language accessible to immigrants and refugees with limited English proficiency
- Outreach to immigrant and refugee communities is recognized as essential to responsible government
- Agency policy decisions affecting immigrants and refugees are informed by population, demographic, and language data.



## Phase One 2005-2006

- Two Statewide Interagency Task Forces convened
- Agencies represented: Departments of Aging, Children and Family Services, Employment Security, Human Services, Healthcare and Family Services, Public Health, Board of Higher Education and Community College Board
- Costs represent over 50% of state budget



## Phase One Recommendations

- Develop Welcoming Centers
- Ensure adequate language services are available
- Define standards for state subcontractors and vendors to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services
- Develop comprehensive linguistic and cultural competency training for all state staff



## Phase One Recommendations

- Make vital documents language accessible for immigrants and refugees
- Increase outreach efforts to immigrant and refugee communities
- Ensure that programmatic and policy decisions affecting immigrants and refugees are data-driven



## Phase Two 2006-2007

- Concentrated on employment and economic development, housing, and public safety
- Included Departments of Central Mgt. Services, Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Corrections, Labor, Illinois Emergency Mgt Agency, Housing Development Authority and State Police



## Phase Two Recommendations

- Establishment of a Central Language Access Office
- Implementation of an Economic Integration Project
- Standardization of a statewide bilingual pay and hiring process



## Status

- Opened pilot Welcoming Center, Melrose Park, Illinois
  - Easy access to essential services
  - Workshops (English, Citizenship)
  - Referrals to other state programs
  - Space for non-profits offer services i.e.legal clinics, job fairs
- In the process of developing standard bilingual testing process for state agency staff



## Status

- Revamped the way organizations do business with State, providing incentives to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services
- Policies and standards for how state agencies will begin translating vital documents
- Initiated development of comprehensive and standard data collection process



## Status

- Master contracts with vendors to provide interpretation and translation services
- RFP for immigrant integration experts to assist in implementing recommendations
- “Mixed Results” The Chicago Reporter
- <http://www.ChicagoReporter.com>
- <http://www.immigrants.illinois.gov>



## Latino Suburban Roundtables

- University of Notre Dame Institute for Latino Studies/Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
- Six county area
- Latinos are 20%; largest racial/ethnic group
- Majority of Latinos (55%) now living in suburbs



## Latino Suburban Roundtables--Objectives

- 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.



## Latino Suburban Roundtables--Objectives

- Begin to produce policy-relevant research to impact public policy decision-making
- Strengthen relationships among key stakeholders across the region.



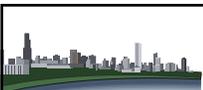
### Latino Suburban Roundtables--Process

- Four roundtable meetings, 150 civic, community, faith and municipal leaders
  - Setting the context: Importance of Latino community to region and economy
  - Housing: The solution to the shortage of affordable housing is often overcrowding. How does this phenomenon intersect with municipal housing standards?



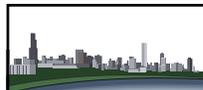
### Latino Suburban Roundtables--Process

- 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?



### Latino Suburban Roundtables—Forging the Tools for Unity

- Summary of discussions
- Research data
- Potential strategies for each topic
- [http://latinostudies.nd.edu/pubs/pubs/Roundtables\\_WEB.pdf](http://latinostudies.nd.edu/pubs/pubs/Roundtables_WEB.pdf)



### Latino Suburban Roundtables

- Pilot Project—Addison, Illinois
- Best practices
- Forum for Unity—April 24, 2008



### Illinois Latino Family Commission

- Group of practitioners interested in Latino family issues
- Organized a committee, met with a Latino legislator
- Developed legislative proposal
- Supported by the Latino Caucus



### Illinois Latino Family Commission-- Purpose

To advise the Governor and legislature, and to work directly with State agencies, to improve and expand existing policies, services, programs, and opportunities for Latino families



### Illinois Latino Family Commission-Background

- 1,750,000 Latinos in Illinois—14% of state
- Fifth largest Latino population in the nation
- 69.2% increase from 1990 Census, compared to 3.5% for non-Latinos
- Latino population accounted for 2/3 of the total population change and is visible throughout the state



### Illinois Latino Family Commission-Rationale

- Latinos lag behind in major indicators of well being relative to child welfare, health, education, and employment
- Latino children and families present unique linguistic, cultural, immigration and transnational issues



## Illinois Latino Family Commission-Rationale

- At least 10 other states have state level Latino Commissions to assist Governor
- Illinois lacks a unified and comprehensive strategy for addressing the unique needs of Latino families



## Illinois Latino Family Commission-Function

- Monitor legislation and programs addressing Latino needs
- Assist State agencies in developing programs, services, public policies, and research strategies that improve the social and economic well-being of Latino children and families



## Illinois Latino Family Commission-Function

- Facilitate Latino participation in the development and implementation of community-based services
- Promote research efforts on the impact of policies and programs on Latino families



## Illinois Latino Family Commission

- 15 Members appointed by Governor and 4 legislative leaders for 3 year terms
- Wide representation across the state and service sectors
- Budget—at least \$500,000 subject to appropriations



## Illinois Latino Family Commission

Signed into law as Public Act 95-619  
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<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/default.asp>



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