

Children

AN
OCSE GUIDE
FOR
HISPANIC / LATINO
CUSTOMER
SERVICE



US DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

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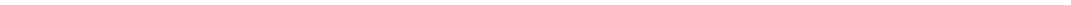
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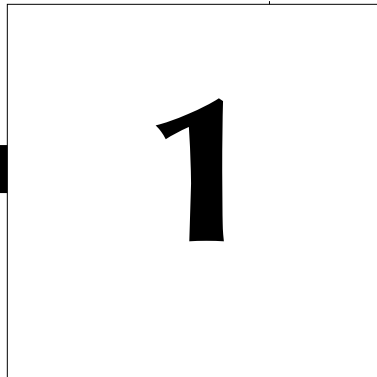
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“In as few as 50 years, there may be no majority race in our nation. This rich and growing diversity should be a source of great pride and strength as we enter the new millennium.... We must make sure that our federal, state and local governments, our public schools, our health care system, and our courts deal fairly with all people and provide equal opportunities for every American to participate fully in our society. We must also reach out to our neighbors and co-workers of other races or ethnicities, for it is only in getting to know one another that we will realize that what unites us is far stronger than what divides us.”

Council of Economic Advisors for the President’s Initiative on Race. Preface to Changing America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being by Race and Hispanic Origin. 1998: pp. iii



EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE

A New Communications Guide

This technical assistance Guide is designed to meet the Office of Child Support Enforcement’s (OCSE) mission to improve the lives of children, their parents and their caretakers, while respecting the diversity that enriches the United States. It provides to the nation’s child support community new information about Hispanic/Latino customers and child support enforcement.

This Guide also introduces new management approaches to providing effective customer service to, and information dissemination strategies for, Hispanic/Latino families—one of the fastest growing segments of the US population. Recently reported Census population patterns show that Hispanics/Latinos are concentrated in 10 States and many metropolitan areas, rather than constituting a fixed population pattern of 10 percent across the country.

With US Census data indicating that there are over 1.2 million custodial parents of Hispanic/Latino origin—and that child support collection rates are 35 percent for Hispanic/Latino mothers in contrast to 64 percent for White mothers¹—the national Office of Child Support Enforcement is employing a marketing approach to Hispanic/Latino customer service and customer satisfaction. Effective marketing means knowing about Hispanic/Latino child support customers—where they live across the country and how to communicate with them.

1. The Internet. *Minority Women’s Health Publication*. US Census Bureau Report, 1996

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Each section of the Guide provides decisionmakers with current and reliable information which they can use to develop formal policies and procedures for serving Hispanic/Latino customers. For example, partnering with valuable local sources of knowledge and expertise—Hispanic/Latino national and community-based organizations (CBOs)—to plan outreach and services is a direction proposed for child support enforcement (CSE) agencies.

Information for assessing where targeted child support outreach and services may be needed in key Hispanic/Latino communities is provided. Demographic and other data are included so child support agencies can ascertain where bilingual communications and services may be needed at key points of contact with this important part of the CSE customer base.

The information presented here is a basis for informed discussion about Hispanic/Latino customer service. A comprehensive picture of the US Hispanic/Latino population, in 22 states and metropolitan areas with larger percentages of Hispanic/Latino residents than the national average, is featured in an at-a-glance section entitled Key State Profiles: Hispanics/Latinos in 50 Metropolitan Areas. Other sections take a look at Hispanic/Latino child support collections, and at Best Practices, in States such as Texas, New Mexico and New York, as well as strategies for outreach and service to Hispanic/Latino customers. Reference materials and guidelines for selecting which media (print, radio, television) to use and how to structure culturally appropriate messages are discussed.

In summary, this is a tool to help key States and localities plan for:

- ❖ What might be expected in terms of Hispanic/Latino case loads based on State and local demographics on Hispanics/Latinos.



- ❖ The cultural considerations that may need to be taken into account.
- ❖ The Spanish-language needs in a particular metropolitan area.
- ❖ Assisting CSE staff to serve Hispanic/Latino families.
- ❖ Who to call to get questions answered and where to get advice about outreach and services to Hispanics/Latinos.
- ❖ Outreach, developing effective communication strategies, when to provide information in Spanish and to whom.
- ❖ Providing resources to CSE staff such as Spanish-language materials and videos, interpreters, etc.
- ❖ Use of Hispanic/Latino media to effectively achieve CSE goals.

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Planned Customer Service

Through National Performance Review directives Federally-funded agencies are being encouraged to move toward planned customer service. Customer service is an important part of the Child Support Enforcement Strategic Plan.

Employing basic principles for effective customer service—planning for communications with and information for Hispanics/Latinos, and providing basic CSE services—will help their children and will also achieve child support enforcement goals.

The emphasis is to structure Hispanic/Latino customer service using the current data provided in this Guide for child support program management in States with large numbers of Hispanic/Latino residents.

Formalizing policies and procedures for serving Hispanic/Latino customers will also help to support agencies' compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act requirement for serving limited English proficiency persons.²

2. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. *Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination—Persons with Limited English Proficiency.* 1998

OCSE Hispanic/Latino Plan Objectives

The HHS Office of Child Support Enforcement initiated three multi-year Hispanic/Latino customer service objectives in 1996:³

❖ **To Inform OCSE Policymakers About Hispanic/Latino Customers**

This Guide is one of the outcomes of this objective. It provides information about Hispanic/Latino child support enforcement customers. It presents current market data and qualitative research undertaken with Hispanic/Latino community leaders and custodial and non-custodial parents in key States. Its purpose is to assist in developing child support customer service policy and operational decisions for serving Hispanic/Latino customers based on reliable and local information.

The information in this Guide supports CSE agencies that receive financial assistance to meet Federal requirements for communicating with, ensuring access to, and serving, limited English proficiency persons. It proposes formalizing Hispanic/Latino customer service policies and procedures at key points of contact with Hispanic/Latino families, to support CSE staff and to achieve CSE goals.

❖ **To Support Effective OCSE Services Information Dissemination to Hispanic/Latino Families**

OCSE qualitative studies, conducted in 1997 and 1998, corroborate that there are information and service gaps, in key Hispanic/Latino communities, for custodial parents. They need basic information about

3. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Secretary's Hispanic Agenda for Action*. 1996

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child support enforcement laws and provisions; new child support Welfare Reform requirements and services; and how to access CSE services.

Non-custodial Hispanic/Latino parents need information about access and visitation. Hispanic/Latino community leaders believe that some non-custodial parents who are legal residents, and want to meet their financial obligations hesitate to, because they fear that child support enforcement will create immigration issues.⁴

Latino community leaders zeroed in on the need for culturally relevant Spanish and English-language child support enforcement materials. Their availability is considered critical in light of new CSE requirements. Bilingual staff or interpreters are also needed in some localities. To ensure that child support messages for Hispanics/Latinos are understood, an understanding of language and cultural factors by CSE principals is important and needs to be taken into account.

This Guide provides the national child support community with an overview of the Hispanic/Latino population nationally and pinpoints key States and localities where they live. It discusses approaches to consider to develop culturally competent customer service to meet child support needs in Hispanic/Latino communities. It describes misperceptions that may be barriers to effective Hispanic/Latino customer service, and proposes information dissemination using the Hispanic/Latino media.

❖ **To Partner with Hispanic/Latino National and Community-Based Organizations**

Latino community leaders who participated in focus groups across the country confirmed that they would welcome forming partnerships

4. HMA Associates. *Communicating with Latino Customers: A Qualitative Study Among Hispanic/Latino Community Leaders in Washington DC, New York NY, Miami FL, Los Angeles CA, San Antonio TX About Child Support Enforcement.* 1998



around child support goals. In key areas, this would assist the nation’s child support community to know local Hispanic/Latino customer child support services needs, and ascertain how best to disseminate child support enforcement information. Hispanic/Latino CBO leaders report that they do not receive child support information in English or Spanish.⁵

Joint outreach and information planning with Hispanic/Latino experts who are with Hispanic/Latino National and Community-based organizations can be very effective. In Hispanic/Latino communities, child support agencies need to increase community awareness about their offices, child support services, and how they help communities.

Hispanic/Latino community leaders recommended that community Advisory Groups be considered to launch Hispanic/Latino outreach efforts. Advisory groups and Hispanic/Latino CBOs could help organize meetings for Hispanics/Latinos parents about the child support offices and the services they provide to the community.

5. *ibid*

Hispanic/Latino Customer Needs

Customers are the people we are paid to help and the reason we exist.⁶ There is an encouraging shift to formalizing customer service in the Child Support Enforcement network. Important program outcomes can be achieved by structuring customer service.

Within such a structure, the policies and procedures for providing information to and serving Hispanic/Latino customers at key points of contact, need to be well articulated in an agency's customer service plan. Articulating such policies and procedures assists managers, caseworkers, intake workers, child support field staff, and outreach staff to know, or learn, how to communicate with, and help Hispanic/Latino clients that may need information in Spanish.

Designing Spanish and English-language child support materials for Hispanic/Latino customers is a challenge that must be met. Adapting English-language materials into Spanish is more effective than literal translations that do not impart intended information. At key points of contact with Hispanic/Latino customers in certain localities, bilingual staff or interpreters may also be needed. Agencies must assess the need and plan for this type of assistance to Hispanic/Latino parents.

Agency training for caseworkers and other staff about policies and procedures for serving Hispanic/Latino customers is very important. Research indicates that child support information that can be understood is needed by Hispanic/Latino parents, that dissemination of this information is crucial, that key points of contact need to be identified, and that procedures for providing services to Spanish-speaking persons need to be established.⁷ The basic plan for providing effective Hispanic/Latino customer service must articulate the types of technical assistance available to CSE staff who work with Hispanic/Latino customers.

6. Norma Warner. 8th National Child Support Enforcement Training Conference. *Employer Relations Solutions*. 1998

7. HMA Associates. *Communicating with Latino Customers...*, 1998

Hispanic/Latino Child Support Collections

There are an estimated two million Hispanic/Latino child support cases in the nation, more or less 10 percent of the national case load.

Demographics indicate however, that 72 percent of Hispanics/Latinos (77 percent of the children) are concentrated in five states, and almost 90 percent reside in just 10 states.⁸ Using these percentages to calculate the number of Hispanic/Latino caseloads in these States (72 percent x 2 million), there may be roughly 1.44 million Hispanic/Latino cases in just five States, and approximately 1.8 million cases (90 percent x 2 million) in 10 States.

With Hispanics/Latinos as the fastest growing segment of the population, customer service planning must be based on current Hispanic/Latino population data. The national average of 10 percent does not provide an accurate basis for planning in all States.

Current Hispanic/Latino population and other data are provided in Section 2, The CSE Hispanic/Latino Customer Base of this Guide.

In certain key States, population data indicate that Hispanic/Latino customer service should be approached as a significant part of child support local program operations.

In States and cities with large numbers of Hispanic/Latino residents, the total number of child support cases contrasted with the number of Hispanic/Latino households in the State or metropolitan areas can provide useful planning figures.

With the US Census projecting a substantial increase in the Hispanic/Latino population over the next few years and even further into the future,

8. The University of Michigan School of Social Work and the National Latino Child Welfare Advocacy Group. *Latinos and Child Welfare/Latinos y el Bienestar del Niño—Voces de la Comunidad*. 1996

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key States and cities need to evaluate and articulate in customer service plans, the child support information needs of this population, and policy and procedures for informing and serving Hispanics/Latinos.

The Census Bureau reported that the child support collection rate is a little over half for Hispanic/Latino mothers, 35 percent, of the rate for White, non-Hispanic mothers, which is 64 percent.⁹

Local assessments of the factors involved in the low Hispanic/Latino collection rates, and whether the percentage is higher or lower in certain States and metropolitan areas, will yield valuable information upon which to design Hispanic/Latino customer service strategies to increase collections. The assessments may reveal that there are specific factors that can be resolved in some places to improve collection rates.

Census Bureau statistics show that Hispanic/Latino males have a higher labor force rate of participation compared to other males, and that they and Hispanic/Latino women, often have more than one job.¹⁰

Focus group findings indicate that Hispanic/Latino parents do not receive information about child support enforcement, that there are misunderstandings about child support, and that Hispanic/Latino community-based organizations do not receive CSE information, in Spanish or English.¹¹ Such factors can affect collection rates, and also locating parents, paternity establishment, and establishing and enforcing support orders.

Partnering with Hispanic/Latino community-based organizations to determine what information assistance the Hispanic/Latino community needs, and to address other CSE related issues, can provide child support agencies with a better understanding of how to serve Hispanic/Latino families.

9. Internet. *Minority Women's Health Publication...*, 1996
10. US Bureau of the Census and the National Association of Hispanic Publications. *A Special Report: Hispanics—Latinos, Diverse People in a Multicultural Society*. 1995
11. HMA Associates. *Communicating with Latino Customers...*, 1998

★ BEST PRACTICES OUTREACH IN TEXAS

In 1996, the Child Support Division in Texas set a new customer service direction. Coupled with a Federal waiver for an integrated State child support system, the new management approach was designed to effectively address legislative initiatives and customer service issues.¹²

In Texas' Region 8, El Paso has a Hispanic/Latino population of 74.5 percent. In the last fiscal year, outreach staff made 25 presentations in Spanish about child support. The audiences were Head Start and Migrant program participants, residents of the colonias, WIC program participants, and Hispanic/Latino customers of other Federal programs.

Through its Child Support Advisory Board, El Paso developed Project Care, a community network which provides financial assistance to families in emergencies, such as when child support payments were interrupted due to the implementation of the new computer system.

Eligible families that depend on their child support payments for their basic needs are referred to General Assistance for financial assistance or to Project CARE. It provides financial assistance such as utility deposits or payments, rent, rent deposits, medication, furniture, clothing and other needs.

The Child Support Volunteer Program provides bilingual volunteers. In Austin, Hispanic/Latino volunteers contributed service to two child support offices during the past year. They also learned job skills while donating help to child support staff. Seven JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act) students and six college and business school interns were placed during the 1998 State fiscal year.

During the same year, Child Support Volunteer Program staff reached out to over 16,000 Hispanics/Latinos through exhibits, conference workshops, and other presentations. The audiences varied from Hispanic/Latino parents with troubled teens, to migrant workers, young people in schools and Upward Bound programs, the Lions Club, the Hispanic/Latino Chamber of Commerce, and the Hispanic/Latino Women's Leadership Conference.

12. The Texas Attorney General's Office. Division of Child Support. *Hispanic Outreach in the Texas Child Support Volunteer Program*. 1998

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NOTES

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THE CSE HISPANIC/LATINO CUSTOMER BASE

Where Hispanics/Latinos Live

Hispanics/Latinos are the fastest growing population in the US. The US Census Bureau in [A Special Report: Hispanic-Latinos, Diverse People in a Multicultural Society](#) says that within the next decade, Hispanics/Latinos will comprise 13.6 percent of the US population. They will be the largest ethnic population.¹³

The Hispanic/Latino population has had a steady growth within the last 18 years. Since 1980, a 15.9 percent increase has occurred in the total US Hispanic/Latino population. In 1998, California alone was home to 10 million Hispanics/Latinos and Texas was home to more than five million Hispanics/Latinos. Other states with large concentration of Hispanics/Latinos are New York with 3.6 million; Florida with two million; and Arizona comprising a little over one million Hispanics/Latinos.

Hispanic/Latinos live in every state. However, more than 60 percent of them reside in 10 metro areas: Los Angeles, New York, Miami, San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, San Antonio, McAllen/Brownsville, Dallas/Fort Worth, and San Diego. The top three metro areas alone (Los Angeles, New York and Miami) comprise 37.4 percent (11.4 million) of the total US Hispanic/Latino population.

Section 6, [Key State Profiles](#) on page 69 of this Guide, provides extensive information on the top 50 metropolitan areas. According to Strategy Research Corporation, these 50 metropolitan areas comprise approximately 92 percent of the total US Hispanic/Latino population. In several of these metropolitan areas, Hispanics/Latinos represent a large portion of the total metropolitan population.

13. Strategy Research Corporation. *1998 US Hispanic Market*. 1998

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Described as top Hispanic/Latino markets, the large percentage of Hispanics/Latinos in these cities has relevance for designing customer service strategies for outreach, for information dissemination, and for providing child support services.

Up-to-date data is provided in this Guide for State and local policymakers and customer service experts to move toward a structured and planned approach to Hispanic/Latino customer service.

A July 1998 Census Bureau Report states that there are 10.5 million Hispanic/Latino children under the age of 18. Almost three quarters of them live in five of the Big Eight Initiative States.

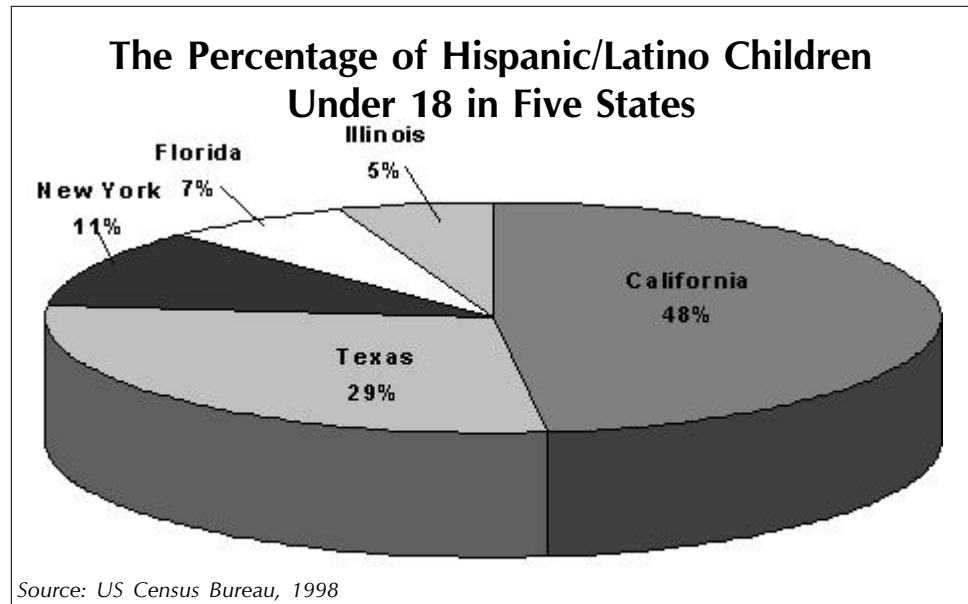


Figure 1

The six State—California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New York and Texas—Latino child population by ethnicity in KIDS COUNT “Data on Asian, Native American, and Hispanic/Latino Children: Findings from the 1990 Census” is reported in “Voces de la Comunidad” as shown in figure 2.¹⁴

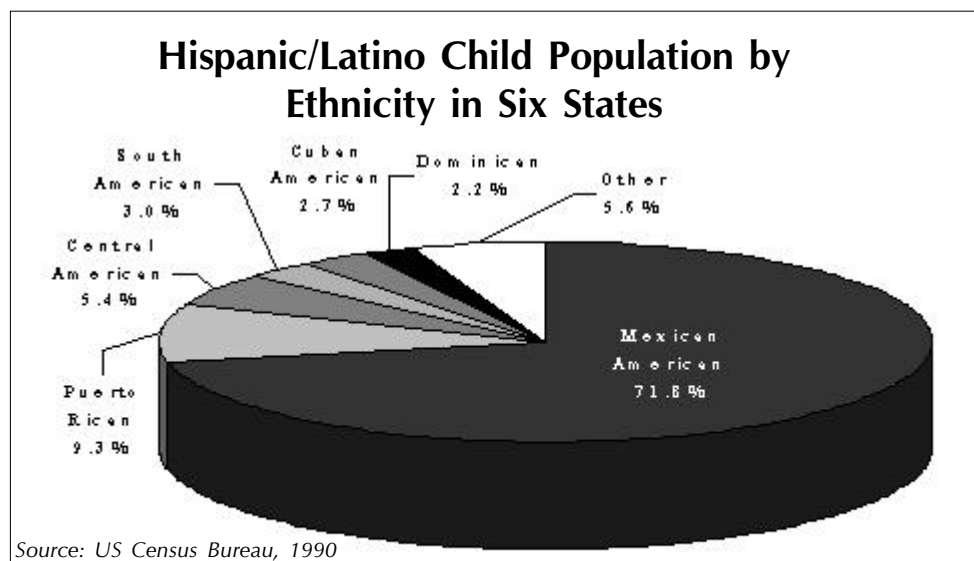


Figure 2

14. University of Michigan and the National Latino Child Welfare Advocacy Group. *Latinos and Child Welfare/Latinos y el Bienestar del Niño Voces de la Comunidad*. 1996

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New Use for Market Data

The market data in the following charts present a more comprehensive picture of where Hispanics/Latinos live in 10 States and the Washington DC area: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas.¹⁵

They are presented here as analysis data that can be used to project the impact these data may have on planning child support enforcement caseload management, what they may mean in terms of planning Hispanic/Latino outreach, and for ascertaining the need for Spanish-language materials and bilingual staff or interpreters.

These data can also be used as a basis for developing policies and procedures that may be necessary for serving Hispanic/Latino customers at key points of contact in the child support system.

Each chart shows the percentage of Hispanics/Latinos in key metropolitan areas; then the population in the metropolitan areas, the number of Hispanic/Latino households, and the national market rank in the US.

Section 2, The CSE Hispanic/Latino Customer Base, on page 21 provides other data that can be used to compute the approximate number of Hispanic/Latino child support cases in a State or city.

15. Strategy Research Corporation. *1998 US Hispanic Market*. 1998

Arizona

METROPOLITAN AREA	PERCENTAGE OF HISPANICS	HISPANIC/LATINO POPULATION	HISPANIC/LATINO HOUSEHOLDS	MARKET RANK BY POPULATION
Phoenix	18.7%	668,000	185,800	12
Tucson	30.4 %	305,400	88,600	21
El Centro-Yuma	62.6%	163,700	40,500	31

California

METROPOLITAN AREA	PERCENTAGE OF HISPANICS	HISPANIC/LATINO POPULATION	HISPANIC/LATINO HOUSEHOLDS	MARKET RANK BY POPULATION
Los Angeles	38.7%	6,325,900	1,556,900	1
San Francisco	18.4%	1,243,000	340,700	4
San Diego	25.3%	706,400	172,500	10
Fresno	41.6%	680,000	166,800	11
Sacramento	17.9%	612,300	164,400	15
Salinas	35.6%	245,900	54,600	24
Bakersfield	32.2%	196,000	47,700	26
Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-San Luis Obispo	27.0%	172,900	41,000	29
Palm Springs	32.4%	123,700	32,000	39

Colorado

METROPOLITAN AREA	PERCENTAGE OF HISPANICS	HISPANIC/LATINO POPULATION	HISPANIC/LATINO HOUSEHOLDS	MARKET RANK BY POPULATION
Denver	13%	398,000	120,900	16
Colorado Springs	17.5%	128,300	40,900	37

District of Columbia / Maryland / Virginia

METROPOLITAN AREA	PERCENTAGE OF HISPANICS	HISPANIC/LATINO POPULATION	HISPANIC/LATINO HOUSEHOLDS	MARKET RANK BY POPULATION
Washington DC	6.4%	360,600	104,000	18

Florida

METROPOLITAN AREA	PERCENTAGE OF HISPANICS	HISPANIC/LATINO POPULATION	HISPANIC/LATINO HOUSEHOLDS	MARKET RANK BY POPULATION
Miami	38.1%	1,422,600	491,000	3
Tampa	7.8 %	279,900	89,200	22
Orlando	8.3%	231,500	70,600	25
West Palm Beach	9.1%	132,800	38,500	36

Illinois

METROPOLITAN AREA	PERCENTAGE OF HISPANICS	HISPANIC/LATINO POPULATION	HISPANIC/LATINO HOUSEHOLDS	MARKET RANK BY POPULATION
Chicago	12.7%	1,198,300	312,400	5

Massachusetts

METROPOLITAN AREA	PERCENTAGE OF HISPANICS	HISPANIC/LATINO POPULATION	HISPANIC/LATINO HOUSEHOLDS	MARKET RANK BY POPULATION
Boston	5.3%	318,100	91,100	20
Springfield	9.7%	64,300	18,500	50

New Mexico

METROPOLITAN AREA	PERCENTAGE OF HISPANICS	HISPANIC/LATINO POPULATION	HISPANIC/LATINO HOUSEHOLDS	MARKET RANK BY POPULATION
Albuquerque	38.4%	656,300	208,300	14

New York

METROPOLITAN AREA	PERCENTAGE OF HISPANICS	HISPANIC/LATINO POPULATION	HISPANIC/LATINO HOUSEHOLDS	MARKET RANK BY POPULATION
New York City	18.1%	3,645,100	1,125,300	2

Pennsylvania

METROPOLITAN AREA	PERCENTAGE OF HISPANICS	HISPANIC/LATINO POPULATION	HISPANIC/LATINO HOUSEHOLDS	MARKET RANK BY POPULATION
Philadelphia	5%	390,200	110,100	17

Texas

METROPOLITAN AREA	PERCENTAGE OF HISPANICS	HISPANIC/LATINO POPULATION	HISPANIC/LATINO HOUSEHOLDS	MARKET RANK BY POPULATION
Houston	24.2%	1,141,000	304,700	6
San Antonio	51.6%	1,064,700	300,900	7
McAllen/ Brownsville	89.5%	823,700	202,900	8
Dallas	14.9%	786,900	211,100	9
El Paso	74.5%	667,200	177,900	13
Corpus Christi	58.7%	346,400	98,000	19
Austin	22.9%	275,700	80,700	23
Laredo	98.4%	193,400	49,600	27
Odessa- Midland	36.6%	146,400	39,500	33
Lubbock	32.6%	127,200	33,400	38
Waco-Temple	14.7%	116,300	31,300	40
Amarillo	20.6%	100,200	27,000	44

Section 2, The CSE Hispanic/Latino Customer Base, on page 21 also shows the Composition of the Hispanic/Latino Population which will assist in analyzing the need for Spanish-language or bilingual materials and interpreters.

Translating Child Support Information into Spanish

Literal translation of child support information from English into Spanish will not convey the information intended. Care must be taken to adapt English-language materials into Spanish so that they can be understood by the intended reader. This is particularly true for child support terminology.

Decisions on how CSE terminology is to be translated are a first step. The terms should be “tested” with Hispanics/Latinos. CSE acronyms should not be translated even if what they represent is translated.

The reason is that Hispanic/Latino customers would not be able to locate them. This is also true of the names of Child Support Enforcement Offices. They should also be provided in English as they do not exist in Spanish.

It is prudent to have a number of Hispanics/Latinos review draft Spanish-language materials, even when they have been professionally translated, to ensure that they are understood. Assistance in adapting information into Spanish is available through several sources — the national and community-based Hispanic/Latino organizations, professional Hispanic/Latino communications firms, and the media themselves.

Depending on the area of the country, the Northeast, the Southwest, the West or the Midwest, there may be variations in the Spanish terminology used depending on whether the customers are primarily Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban American, or Central and South American.

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The Department of Health and Human Services defines cultural competency as a set of behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or program or among individuals, enabling them to function effectively in diverse cultural interactions and settings. It promotes an understanding of cultural differences and similarities within, among and between groups. Cultural competence is a goal which all systems, agencies, programs and individuals continually aspire to achieve.

Department of Health and Human Resources. [Office of Minority Health Survey on Cultural Competence](#). 1998

Overview of the Hispanic/Latino Baseline

Today, Hispanics/Latinos are well established in American society. They have established social infrastructures through which customs and values are preserved and are transmitted to future generations.

The Challenges Faced

However, Hispanics/Latinos in the United States face a number of common challenges. As a whole, the group is younger than average, has a higher birth rate than average, and experiences higher levels of poverty than the US population as a whole.

Over 25 percent live below the poverty level. Many of the foreign-born Hispanics/Latinos face a host of cultural, economic, and linguistic barriers which make surviving and thriving in the US a challenge. These barriers do not disappear as families settle, adapt, and assimilate. United States born Hispanics/Latinos also face prejudice, discrimination, and other social problems that are connected to their minority status.¹⁶

A Diverse People

Though commonly described as a single ethnic minority group, Hispanics/Latinos in the US are extremely diverse. They represent a spectrum of ethnicities, cultural values and beliefs, and socioeconomic conditions. "This diversity makes it tremendously difficult to describe accurately the needs and concerns of Hispanics/Latinos as a whole, posing challenges to researchers, practitioners and policymakers."¹⁷

Researchers, for example, have noted many problems with emphasizing group culture, such as making inaccurate or biased assumptions, stereotyping, and precluding flexible and open-minded attitudes.¹⁸

16. Harvard Family Research Project. *Supporting Latino Families: Lessons from Exemplary Programs, Volume 1.* 1996

17. *ibid*

18. *ibid*

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The US Census and the National Association of Hispanic/Latino Publications Report, Hispanics-Latinos: Diverse People in a Multicultural Society, states that 62 percent of the Hispanics/Latinos in the country are US born. Many are multigeneration Americans, and some have ancestors that predate the nation’s birth. Others are more recent arrivals to the United States.

The other 38 percent are from Mexico and Central and South American countries, and almost all are legal immigrants. The number of undocumented immigrants in the United States is described in “Hispanics-Latinos” as a matter of conjecture and controversy leading to a wide range of estimates, and many misunderstandings.

“Hispanics-Latinos” reports the number of undocumented persons in the United States in 1994 as approximately four million. Also that about 64 to 75 percent of the undocumented persons may be of Hispanic/Latino origin. This computes to between 2.5 to three million, or about 10 percent of the total Hispanic/Latino population of 27 million. Dividing four persons per household into a three million Hispanic/Latino figure, the number of families that might be undocumented would be about 750,000.

There are no published data that indicate that undocumented Hispanic/Latino parents seek or receive child support services. Qualitative research indicates however, that legal immigrants say they are intimidated about their status when they seek services, or are asked questions about their status, and therefore become fearful of government services, or of complying with their support obligations. Almost all focus group participants could recall a time when they were perceived as if they were undocumented persons.¹⁹

19. HMA Associates. *Communicating with Latino Customers: A Qualitative Study Among Hispanic/Latino Community Leaders in Washington DC, New York NY, Miami FL, Los Angeles CA, San Antonio TX About Child Support Enforcement.* 1998

“Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans comprise almost 80 percent of all Hispanics/Latinos, but the differences in socioeconomic status, education level, and geographic locations of the three groups make each distinct. For example, Puerto Ricans in the US reside in northeastern cities...”²⁰ The US Cuban population resides in the southeastern part of the US. Mexican Americans primarily reside in southwestern states—Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and California.

National and Community-Based Organizations

There are more than 300 national Hispanic/Latino organizations in the United States. They and their community-based affiliates provide leadership and a wide range of services to Hispanics/Latinos across the country.

Their national and local expertise about Hispanic/Latino communities, families, and strategies should be sought. Partnering with some of them would provide child support agencies nationally, and at State and local levels, with helpful insights. Some could serve as valuable information conduits into Hispanic/Latino communities and their families.

The national organizations have over 800 state, regional and national chapters across the nation. There are also approximately 450 colleges and universities designated as Hispanic/Latino serving institutions. Contacting them can provide child support enforcement agencies with data, a working knowledge of, and strategic expertise about Hispanics/Latinos in their communities.

Over 8,000 Hispanic/Latino community-based organizations are listed by State in the *Anuario Hispano*, an annual Hispanic/Latino yearbook.²¹ See Appendix 3, *Sources* on page 185.

20. Harvard Family Research Project..., 1996

21. TIYM Publishing Company. *Anuario Hispano/Hispanic Yearbook*. 1998

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Your Hispanic/Latino Customer

The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement is providing general Census data, market, and study findings in this Guide to fill the demographic and cultural information gaps that exist so they can be used to establish Hispanic/Latino customer service and communications policies and procedures.

Data collection on the ethnicity of clients in Federal and State agencies has not been required. Therefore, these types of Hispanic/Latino data have not been available to CSE policymakers for analysis and planning purposes. High Hispanic/Latino population percentages in key States and certain localities have a significant impact for CSE program policy and management. Specific State and locality data about Hispanics/Latinos and their media preferences are important to management planning.

As previously noted, Census Bureau reports and current market demographics show that 77 percent of Hispanics/Latinos live in five States—California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois. A large part of the remainder live in five other States—New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada and New Jersey. Ninety percent of US Hispanics/Latinos live in these ten states. Michigan also has significant concentrations.

These State and local level data provide a better picture for assessing current, and the impact of future, child support caseloads. Large numbers of Hispanics/Latinos in a State or metro area can affect program operations, particularly when Hispanic/Latino customers need information in Spanish.

Pinpointing where Hispanic/Latino customers live is an important baseline from which to begin, and an important step in a planned customer service approach.

A New CSE Data Source

Two series of focus groups were conducted by the National Office of Child Support Enforcement in key States with large Hispanic/Latino populations.

The first was Communicating with Latino Customers About Child Support: A Qualitative Study Among Hispanic/Latino Community Leaders in Washington DC, New York City, Miami FL, Los Angeles CA, and San Antonio TX.²²

Communicating with Hispanic/Latino Customers

The first five focus groups were conducted across the country with Hispanic/Latino community leaders, many of them heads of community-based organizations. The scope of the discussions included:

- ❖ Identifying local knowledge, perceptions and attitudes about child support enforcement.
- ❖ Identifying communications strategies that can facilitate effective communication with Hispanic/Latino customers about child support enforcement requirements and services.
- ❖ Identifying specific child support factors that may hinder effectively communicating with Hispanic/Latino customers about child support.

Five Hispanic/Latino community-based organizations were selected to host the focus groups and to recruit participants. Selection criteria emphasized the importance of identifying participants who could speak to the issues around child support enforcement in their communities. The

22. HMA Associates. *Communicating with Latino Customers...*, 1998

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Hispanic/Latino community leaders selected represented a cross-section of health, education, social services, judicial and other institutions and worked predominantly with Hispanic/Latino families and children.

The focus group participants included executive directors of Hispanic/Latino community-based organizations, education administrators, community outreach workers, social workers, case managers, counselors, and attorneys. Collectively, they represented a cross-section of individuals from the health, education, social services, judicial, and multi-service agencies serving Hispanic/Latino communities. All but one were of Hispanic/Latino origin— Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans.

Child support enforcement officials and staff from CSE Central and Regional Offices, and State and local child support offices participated as observers in each of the focus groups. Bilingual facilitators were selected for the focus groups so that the participants could discuss the questions in their preferred language.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Another series of three focus groups was held with Hispanic/Latino custodial and non-custodial Spanish-speaking parents, to test a CSE customer satisfaction survey.²³ The survey questions were adapted into the Spanish language. Discussion about the customer satisfaction survey prompted discussion about other child support enforcement subjects.

The recruiting of the participants was carried out by local Hispanic/Latino community-based organizations based on a set of criteria that they be custodial or non-custodial parents. The focus groups were held at Mujer, Inc., in Homestead FL, Comité Hispano de Virginia in Falls Church VA, and Nuestro Canto de Salud in Burlingame CA.

23. HMA Associates. *Child Support Enforcement Customer Satisfaction Focus Group Forums for Limited English Proficiency Customers in Homestead FL, Falls Church VA, and Burlingame CA.* 1998



Almost all of the participants had difficulty understanding parts of the survey. They related that many words, and some of the questions, were difficult to understand. They also did not understand some of the child support terms in the questions.

A few were receiving TANF benefits. Those that could benefit from receiving child support enforcement services at all three sites, did not have information available to them about child support enforcement services and where the local child support offices were located.

Some of the participants had a current case at their local CSE agency. Participants said it was difficult to get through to a person on the telephone. They were afraid of the automated telephone response systems because they could not figure out how to use the system to get information about their case.

Discussions at all three places centered around the length of time to get cases processed, not being informed that a support check would provide only half the funds that were expected, not being informed that the amount withheld was to pay back welfare received, and not being advised that cases could be reviewed so adjustments can be made to child support payments.

Other subjects discussed pertained to having to talk to a different caseworker each time, and that CSE office hours made it difficult for working parents to meet with caseworkers or access services. Only one person was aware that the Internet can be a source of child support enforcement information.

The findings of the two OCSE qualitative studies reveal gaps in child support enforcement information dissemination to Hispanic/Latino parents, in English or Spanish, in all eight cities. They also indicate that

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Hispanic/Latino parents say they need basic child support enforcement information, particularly about the program and the types of processes they have to undergo in a local program.

In addition to information about available child support services, participants said they would like an overview of basic legal steps they might expect, a description of new administrative procedures, lists of the types of basic assistance they can request, explanations of how to use automated telephone services, as well as information about new Welfare Reform requirements and opportunities. Information is needed in both English and Spanish. They suggested that child support enforcement information be provided through local Spanish-language media.

There was a concern on the part of the Hispanic/Latino community leaders that the new PRWORA²⁴ child support requirements and opportunities need to be provided to Hispanic/Latino families as soon as possible.

Focus groups are a research method for collecting qualitative data through focused discussions involving homogeneous groups of people in social interaction. The intent is to promote self-disclosure among individuals about a particular program, product, or service. It is the best method for evaluating social programs where relevance, practicality, and utility are the expectations of the environment. Focus groups are not held for the purpose of educating individuals about a particular program, product, or service.²⁵

24. PRWORA: Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

25. HMA Associates. *Communicating with Latino Customers...*, 1998

Child Support and Other Study Findings

Other recent professional studies say that it is important to move from Hispanic/Latino parents and cases being perceived as the problem, toward removing in programs that serve them, the attitudinal and language barriers to effectively assist them.²⁶

Beyond obvious cultural considerations, qualitative studies discovered that Hispanic/Latino parents, both custodial and non-custodial, do not receive basic information about child support enforcement. They need to understand the CSE system(s), or the procedures, or series of steps they must follow to obtain child support for their children.²⁷

In focus group discussions, custodial parents were less inclined to favor a slogan approach to information about child support enforcement, and more toward learning the specifics about what they need to do, or to know, to obtain support for their children.

Filling the child support enforcement information gap in Hispanic/Latino communities is a needed first step in some cities. This would support Hispanic/Latino parents' being able to obtain services so their children can receive child support.

A number of ways to accomplish this were discussed. One method recommended is to partner with Hispanic/Latino community-based organizations to assess specific local Hispanic/Latino needs and to work jointly to develop outreach and service strategies.²⁸

Local Hispanic/Latino CBOs said they do not receive CSE information. They need it in English and Spanish. Many CBOs can be information conduits, help disseminate information, or recommend how best to do it.

26. Harvard Family Research Project, 1996

27. HMA Associates. *Child Support Enforcement...*, 1998

28. HMA Associates. *Communicating with Latino Customers...*, 1998

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Non-custodial parents say they need to know more about both PRWORA requirements and their rights and responsibilities. They want to know about and understand reevaluation of support orders and how to arrange for visitation.

Both custodial and non-custodial parents related that they need assistance in understanding what the CSE programs in their localities do and how the enforcement process works.

The study recommended regularly scheduled presentations about child support enforcement through CBOs, in Spanish and English. Many child support terms are not understood and need to be defined or explained. Defining legal and other terms can also remove barriers to understanding what Hispanic/Latino parents need to do.

In interstate cases it would be helpful to brief Hispanic/Latino parents that CSE programs and methods of administration vary by State and locality and what this means in their particular case.

Presentations about key components of the local child support program or network and how the telephone information systems work would be welcomed in all the communities where the focus groups were held. Allowing time for questions and answers at presentations will tailor the information provided to local needs.²⁹

When inadequate communications occur for persons who do not understand English well, they perceive rude treatment. This can be solved in a number of ways.

29. *ibid*



For instance, Hispanic/Latino community-based organization leaders can serve as information conduits for basic child support information dissemination which has been appropriately adapted into Spanish. This will help to bridge communications gaps occurring in Hispanic/Latino communities.³⁰

Employing bilingual staff to work with Hispanic/Latino customers at key points in the process, or using interpreters, can effectively lift language and comprehension barriers.³¹ They want an overview of legal steps, new administrative procedures, basic assistance available, and automated services, as well as the new Welfare Reform requirements. These are needed in both Spanish and English, and are requested to be provided through local Spanish media.

There is a concern that if the new PRWORA child support requirements and sanctions are not made known in Hispanic/Latino communities, it could create an undue burden on Hispanic/Latino families. Hispanic/Latino community-based organization leaders want to partner with child support agencies. Based on their expertise and experience in the Hispanic/Latino communities they can advise in planning customer service strategies, particularly in paternity establishment and establishing and enforcing child support orders.

30. *ibid*

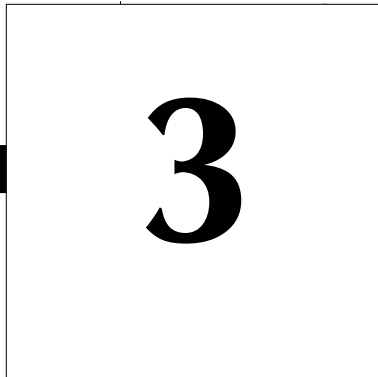
31. Department of Health and Human Services. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. *Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination—Persons with Limited English Proficiency*. 1998

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“The prevailing attitudes about culturally competent workers is only half the story. Cross-cultural competence speaks to the almighty importance of understanding the detrimental effects of persistent poverty and closed opportunities for vulnerable Hispanic/Latino families and its effect on a future vision and hope. Unquestionably, it demands that service providers assume multiple, non-traditional roles of reinforcing the cultural strengths of Hispanic/Latino families, while simultaneously forcing down the systemic barriers of institutional exclusion and discrimination.”

Preface, The Harvard Family Research Project Supporting Latino Families, Volume 1, 1996



FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

A review and discussion of Federal assistance requirements for publicizing the availability of child support enforcement services in a State Plan and the requirements for serving persons of limited English proficiency in the 1964 Civil Rights Act follows.

Publicizing the Availability of Services

The Office of Child Support Regulations at Section 302.30 45 CFR Ch III, amended in 1986, Publicizing the Availability of Support Enforcement Services (October 1997 edition) require that the State plan shall provide that the State will publicize regularly and frequently the availability of child support services under the plan through public service announcements, and that publicity must include information about any application fees which may be imposed for such services, and a telephone number or postal address where further information may be obtained.

In States with large concentrations of Hispanic/Latino residents, this requirement to publicize the availability of child support enforcement services must take into account that information dissemination plans or strategies need to address informing and serving Hispanic/Latino child support customers.

The following focus group findings illustrate some of the reasons to ensure that plans address providing Hispanic/Latino parents with information about child support enforcement:

- ❖ Over 50 percent of the Hispanic/Latino community leaders said they had only a general awareness of child support enforcement. A large percentage had none.

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- ❖ The majority of Hispanic/Latino community leaders had minimal knowledge of CSE laws and the specific provisions regarding child support enforcement.
- ❖ Latino community leaders’ current sources of information about child support are primarily trusted family, friends, and colleagues, within and without the community-based organizations, and social service agencies, rather than CSE agencies.
- ❖ In general, the community leaders were not familiar with their local child support program. This included local child support office projects, the availability of CSE publications and other resources, or how child support information is provided to the communities.
- ❖ CBO leaders and clients who had had contact with CSE offices perceived their experiences as disrespectful to them.
- ❖ When asked for recommendations for communicating effectively about CSE services and requirements, the majority of focus group participants highlighted:
 - The need to profile the Hispanic/Latino community State-wide and locally. The need to establish baseline knowledge and an understanding about Hispanics/Latinos in the State and in the cities, such as population composition; socio-economic factors; education levels; income and employment; as well as historical issues that might bar some Hispanics/Latinos from seeking government services.
 - The need to develop culturally effective Spanish and English-language child support information to Hispanic/

Latino customers that can be understood, and to use the popular media (both English and Spanish) such as TV, radio, and print, and bilingual staff, researching what is most effective in a particular locality.

- The need to understand that considering Hispanic/Latino values and beliefs can help to maximize the effect of child support enforcement messages to these customers. Stressing positive values such as family and extended family relationships and customs such as “respeto” (respect) and “cumplir” (responsibility) are more effective in messages than negative ones.
- The need to consider the impact of the stressors that affect Hispanics/Latinos and their families such as severe economic hardships; fear of domestic violence; intimidation of legal immigrants; not being provided with information they can understand; and not being able to speak to people they can understand; and that there are effective ways to address or change these situations to achieve child support goals.
- The interest of many Hispanic/Latino CBO leaders in partnering with local CSE offices to disseminate child support enforcement information, serve on advisory panels, and help to develop culturally effective outreach strategies.
- The general consensus about the need to establish mutual trust and respect between the CSE offices and Hispanic/Latino community leaders in order to enhance child support efforts in the communities.³²

32. HMA Associates. *Communicating with Latino Customers...*, 1998

Serving Spanish-Speaking Persons

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires all agencies receiving Federal funds to provide the same quality, and type of services and information, to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) as to the general population.

Section 601 states that “no person in the United States shall on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

The statute and 45 CFR Part 80 regulations prohibit recipients of Federal funds from adopting and implementing policies and procedures that exclude, or have the effect of excluding or limiting, the participation of beneficiaries of their programs.

The recent Guidance from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Civil Rights (OCR) on enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, explains that although English is the predominant language of the United States, the US is also the home of millions of national origin minority individuals who may be limited in their ability to speak, read, write, and understand the English language.

Language barriers—such as not being provided with information they can understand—experienced by Spanish-speaking persons can result in limiting their access to critical services to which they are legally entitled. If their ability to receive notice of, or understand what services are available to them is limited, then their access is limited.

The complete Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights text can be accessed on the WEB at <http://www.hhs.gov/progorg/ocr/lepfinal.htm>



Who is Covered

All entities that receive Federal financial assistance from the Federal government, either directly, or indirectly through a subgrant or subcontract are covered by Title VI. Covered entities thus include any State or local agency, private institution or organization, or any public or private individual that operates, provides or engages in health, medical, social services, or other programs and activities that receive or benefit from HHS assistance.

The OCR Guidance sets out factors to be considered in determining whether Federally-assisted providers of medical care or social services are taking steps to overcome the language barriers to receiving health care and other HHS services encountered by persons who do not speak or read English well.

Ensuring Equal Access to LEP Persons

The HHS directive states that the key to ensuring equal access to benefits and services for LEP persons is to ensure that the service provider and the Spanish-speaking client can communicate effectively.

LEP customers should be given information about and be able to understand the services that can be provided by the agency to address his/her situation, and the client must be able to communicate his/her situation to the recipient service provider.

Structure the Communication

The OCR Guidance counsels that recipients of Federal funds are more likely to utilize effective communication if they approach this responsibility in a structured rather than an on ad hoc basis. This is a

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particularly important approach for States and localities with large concentrations of Hispanics/Latinos to consider.

Assess Points of Contact

The Guidance states that developing policies and procedures to address the language needs of persons with limited English proficiency is best accomplished through an assessment of points of contact in the program or activity where language assistance is likely to be needed, the non-English language(s) most likely to be encountered, the resources that will be needed to fulfill this responsibility, and the location and/or availability of such resources.

It also states that in identifying available resources, it is helpful to consult with national origin organizations and groups for their service areas. This recommendation is corroborated by the OCSE focus group participants.

Effective Person-to-Person Communication

Achieving effective communication with Hispanic/Latino customers may require an agency to take all or some of the following steps (at no cost or additional burden to the customer) depending on its size; the size of the Spanish-speaking population it serves; the setting in which interpreter services are needed; the availability of staff members and/or volunteers to provide interpreter services during its hours of operation and the proficiency of available persons to provide needed services:

- ❖ A procedure for identifying the language needs of customers.
- ❖ Ready access to, and provision of the services of proficient interpreters in a timely manner during hours of operation.



- ❖ Written policies and procedures regarding interpreter services.
- ❖ Dissemination of interpreter policies and procedures to staff, and ensuring staff awareness of them, and of their Title VI obligations to limited English proficiency persons.

The Guidance counsels that an agency not require a customer to use friends or family members as interpreters. This could result in a breach of confidentiality to reveal personal information critical to their situations to their family or friends. Additionally, they would lack familiarity with the specialized terminology of the program. Volunteer use should be predicated on availability, and that they are qualified, trained, and capable of ensuring customer confidentiality.

Compliance and Enforcement

Recipients of Federal funds should establish and implement policies and procedures to fulfill their responsibilities to LEP persons in the populations eligible to be served. In determining compliance, the concern is whether the agency system allows Hispanic/Latino customers to overcome language barriers by communicating effectively with them and thus allow them to have equal access to, and an equal opportunity to participate in, all the Department’s health and human service programs and activities.

28 CFR Subpart F, “Coordination of Enforcement of Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs” is the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act 1964 government-wide regulation issued by the Department of Justice to address the circumstances in which recipients of Federal financial assistance must provide language assistance, in written form, to persons with limited English proficiency.

★ BEST PRACTICES

CSE and the Hispanic/Latino Community in New York State

The Hispanic/Latino community represents an increasingly significant part of New York State's population, particularly in New York City. For some years, the Office of Child Support Enforcement in New York City's Administration of Services for children has made available to customers all printed child support enforcement (CSE) public information materials in Spanish. Current titles include: "Sustento Para Niños: Como conseguir ayuda cuando la necesita!"³³ The City of New York also uses materials prepared by the State such as "Servicios de Manutención Infantil."³⁴ printed in English on one side and Spanish on the other.

The City of New York adapted materials from Maryland's "Campaign for Our Children" and distributed them to the Board of Education, Housing Authority Community Centers, Youth Centers and other city agencies including the Human Resources Administration Office of Employment Services. Posters carried the message: "Es sorprendente ver cuantos hombres desaparecen cuando se presenta uno de éstos," and "Actúa como un hombre. Actúa responsablemente."³⁵

As an outreach tool, New York City uses bus shelter placards and subway signs in Spanish and English in its large metropolitan transit system. Posters are also periodically displayed. These campaigns have featured signage in Spanish and English.

The State of New York's statewide telephone voice response system, the "Child Support Information Line" is operated by Lockhead-Martin IMA to support its centralized collections and disbursements. Two types of information are provided: General child support services information and case-specific payment information for cases with support collection orders. Statewide, callers can obtain this information in Spanish or English. New York City's "Child Support Helpline" which provides information on a wide range of child support enforcement issues can provide it in English or Spanish.

The State prepares and distributes mailings on behalf of local support collection units and child support offices. All mailings to New York City are automatically released in both Spanish and English. These include monthly billings to respondents and notices of support collected. Any notices that require due process notification, such as driver's license suspensions, are mailed in the same envelope in both Spanish and English.

33. "Child Support for Children, Information for Parents Who Received Public Assistance," and "Child Support for (your) Children: How to Obtain Assistance When You Need It!"

34. "Child Support Services"

35. "It is surprising to see how many men disappear when one of these appears" and "Be a man. Be responsible."

4

A NEW APPROACH

This section of the OCSE Guide for Hispanic/Latino Customer Service provides information and suggestions to ensure that effective child support customer services are provided to Hispanic/Latino families and their children.

It brings together research and other data about Hispanics/Latinos not previously available to the child support enforcement community, into a more coherent picture nationally and in particular, in the States where they live.

The information has been presented in narrative and chart form to assist in making the management decisions necessary to serve Hispanic/Latino child support customers. Through these presentations, it is hoped that respectful communication and new understandings will place once and for all, Hispanic/Latino parents and their families as enduring parts of the child support enforcement network.

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Target the Hispanic/Latino Customer

Latino families are an important part of the entire child support enforcement customer base. In their need for child support services, they are no different than other families. Their language and culture should not be viewed as impediments to receiving the same quality and level of services as the rest of the child support customer base.

Rather it should be understood that their language and culture are attributes that support a vast network of communities and communications opportunities for the child support network. A goal of this Guide is to promote targeting Hispanic/Latino child support customers from an informed basis. Another is to graphically pinpoint where Hispanics/Latinos live and provide demographics that relate to their State or city. A last one is to advise when to use the Spanish language, and to respect cultural preferences.

Latino community-based organizations can be partnered with by State and local CSE agencies to achieve mutually beneficial purposes: Hispanic/Latino families receive the child support enforcement services they need, and the CSE network achieves its legislative mandate. The Hispanic/Latino media can be utilized to achieve effective communications with these customers. This results in long term cost-benefits.

Effective Messages and Strategies

Communications strategies will be effective and successful if you know your Hispanic/Latino customer. Understanding a target audience in a community is key to optimal customer service and developing messages that can be understood.

A number of key findings emerged from the series of focus groups conducted in 1997 and 1998. Hispanic/Latino custodial and non-custodial parents and leaders of community-based organizations participated in Los Angeles, CA, San Francisco, CA, Miami, FL, New York, NY, San Antonio, TX, Arlington VA, and Washington DC.

Messages and strategies should consider what they said:

- ❖ The majority indicated they had minimal knowledge about CSE laws and the specific provisions regarding child support enforcement.
- ❖ Most of them were not familiar with their local child support enforcement program, and did not know about local CSE offices, projects, publications, or where to get information.
- ❖ Most of the participants relied on trusted family members, friends and colleagues in their community-based organizations, and social service institutions to get information about child support.
- ❖ Those that had contact with CSE offices perceived their experiences as disrespectful.

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Planning Communications

The value of developing local strategies for communicating with Hispanic/Latino customers is to ensure they get the information they need, whether they are custodial or non-custodial parents. This supports them by providing information for obtaining access to, and availing themselves of child support enforcement services in their community.

The outcome of a communications strategy should be, that if carried out successfully, Hispanic/Latino parents can participate on an informed basis, in any step in the CSE process they are in—locating an absent parent, establishing paternity, establishing an order, enforcing an order, sending in payments—or any others relevant to their case.

Communications are best accomplished strategically utilizing two of the conduits that reach most of the Hispanics/Latinos in the United States: Hispanic/Latino community-based organizations and the Hispanic/Latino media.

Outreach Resources

To develop outreach strategies for Hispanics/Latinos, national Hispanic/Latino organizations are excellent venues for advice on how to design communications to increase awareness about and disseminating child support messages and information. The national Hispanic/Latino organizations have regional and local affiliates across the country in the places where most of the Hispanics/Latinos live.

Organizations such as the National Council of La Raza and the National Puerto Rican Coalition, both in Washington DC, hold annual conferences. The Cuban American National Council, Inc. is located in Miami FL, and holds conferences every other year. The conferences attract 5,000 or more participants, primarily Hispanic/Latino community leaders. National and local Hispanic/Latino conferences are excellent opportunities for presentations or exhibiting child support enforcement materials and videos. Many Federal agencies participate in their events. Partnering with them can be an effective way to find out community-based child support enforcement needs, and to discuss meeting with Hispanic/Latino customers, nationally and locally.

There are other related national organizations, such as COSSMHO (Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organization), that are also excellent sources of information and venues for partnerships and disseminating information. National organizations will usually provide a list with addresses of their local affiliates in key States.

A list of [National and Community Resources](#) can be found in Appendix 3, page 175. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of national organizations. The intent in providing this kind of information is not to endorse any particular national or local Hispanic/Latino organization. Rather it is to engender explorations with Hispanic/Latino organizations into the potentials for effective Hispanic/Latino outreach strategies.

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Partnering with CBOs

Partnering with local multi-purpose CBOs that work with Hispanic/Latino families every day is also a valuable, but different type of, strategy for outreach and presenting child support enforcement information. The CBOs can create local opportunities as part of their children and family programs, to increase awareness about child support directly among Hispanic/Latino parents.

Involvement in the Hispanic/Latino communities by child support agencies is key to planning, developing, implementing and evaluating successful communication efforts. Such partnerships enhance a child support program's credibility and ensure broader Hispanic/Latino community participation.

The participants in the focus groups conducted by the National Office of Child Support Enforcement indicated that most community leaders that represent Hispanic/Latino community-based organizations would partner with local child support offices.

The benefits to child support agencies of collaborating with Hispanic/Latino national or community-based organizations are:

- ❖ The generation of ideas and information specific to effective State or local child support outreach and communications strategies for Hispanic/Latino families.
- ❖ Acquiring knowledge of important historical cultural and family dynamics in the State or community that, taken into account in terms of child support, enhances customer service.



- ❖ Early identification of opportunities, and concerns or issues, related to child support enforcement and Hispanic/Latino families in a State or locality.
- ❖ Understanding the scope and range of family support groups or activities in a Hispanic/Latino community that can be utilized to disseminate child support information or make presentations, including schools, churches, health clinics, community and social service organizations.
- ❖ Active support and participation as partners of local child support offices and Hispanic/Latino community organizations, which expands the reach and success of child support enforcement efforts.

Focus group findings indicate that all Hispanic/Latino CBOs need child support information in both Spanish and English.

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★ BEST PRACTICES NEW MEXICO'S BILINGUAL POLICY

The State of New Mexico Human Services Department Child Support Division has a standing policy to provide every piece of its program literature in Spanish and English for its customers.

The New Mexico Program Manager for Paternity Establishment is Hispanic/Latino and bilingual. The manager visits schools, community centers, and sets up booths at community events throughout the State. The manager presents child support enforcement information in Spanish and English.

The manager focuses on providing child support information throughout New Mexico. The manager's current project is production of a video in Spanish about the importance of establishing a child's paternity. The manager is adapting the script into Spanish. In collaboration with New Mexico's Child Support Community Relations Coordinator, the video will be produced through the Public Access Television Center in Albuquerque. The Public Access Center is described as "especially adept at producing video materials for the Hispanic/Latino community." Hispanic/Latino productions are a major part of its work.

New Mexico's Child Support Web Pages were recently revamped and plans for updates include information in Spanish for Hispanic/Latino customers.

5

THE MEDIA RESOURCE

To effectively reach Hispanics/Latinos with child support enforcement information, it is important to understand the role of Spanish-language radio, television, and print media in the lives of most Hispanics/Latinos. These media, as marketing experts have researched, are the most effective and important community resource for increasing awareness and reaching Hispanic/Latino parents.

Dr. M. Isabel Valdez, a highly respected media researcher states, "...for Hispanics it (the media) is a major source of information and education that helps them deal with severe information gaps." This is corroborated in Figure 3 below.

Participants in all OCSE focus groups confirmed that Hispanic/Latino media are very popular with them. Hispanic/Latino radio, TV, and newspapers and magazines are their major source of information, in both English and Spanish.³⁶

Broadcast Media Usage Among Hispanic/Latino Adults 18 and Over			
Television			
97% watch television	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>35.7% in Spanish</td> </tr> <tr> <td>47.0% in English</td> </tr> </table>	35.7% in Spanish	47.0% in English
35.7% in Spanish			
47.0% in English			
Radio			
89% listen to radio	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>35.7% in Spanish</td> </tr> <tr> <td>46.8% in English</td> </tr> </table>	35.7% in Spanish	46.8% in English
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Source: Strategy Research Corporation, 1998

Figure 3

36. HMA Associates. *Communicating with Latino Customers: A Qualitative Study Among Hispanic/Latino Community Leaders in Washington DC, New York NY, Miami FL, Los Angeles CA, San Antonio TX About Child Support Enforcement.* 1998

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Across the nation, there are about 150 Spanish-language television stations, over 900 Spanish-language radio stations, and 1500 Spanish-language and bilingual print newspapers and magazines. Market data indicate that most Hispanics/Latinos prefer to watch Spanish-language TV and listen to Spanish-language radio.

A recent announcement reports that a local (Spanish-language) Univisión TV affiliate has been rated the most watched television station in Miami. In Los Angeles, Univisión's KMEX-TV has been rated the number one station at 6 pm for 18 to 34 year olds.

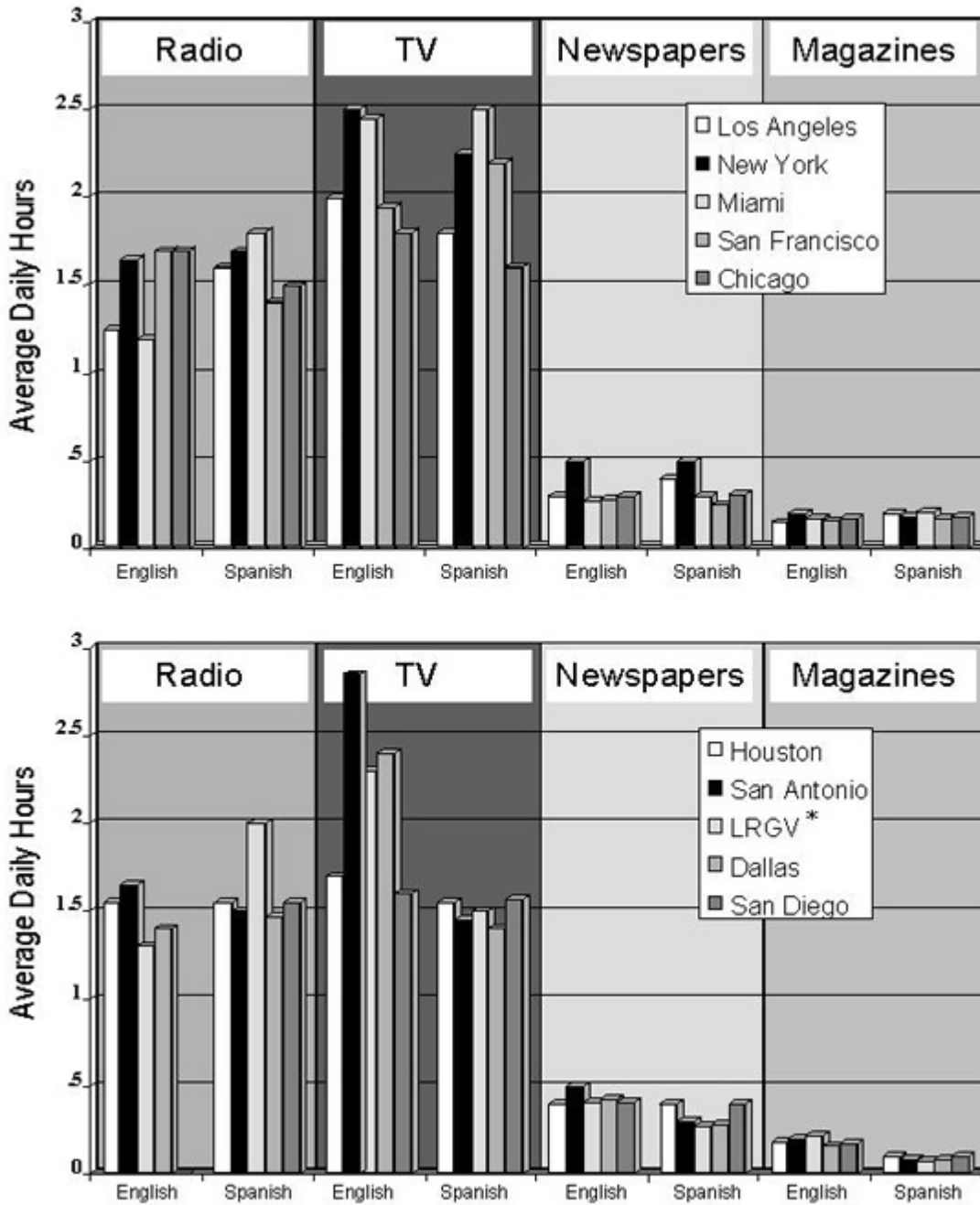
KLVE-FM and KLAX-FM, two of 10 Spanish-language stations in the nation, have soared to the top 10 radio stations for all listeners, ages 12 and over.³⁷ Hispanic/Latino stations are also high in the ratings in New York, and throughout Texas and California.³⁸

Radio and TV usage is higher for Hispanics/Latinos than for the general population. And, the data show that Hispanics/Latinos prefer to read Hispanic-identified newspapers and magazines, many of which are published in Spanish and English.

The decision about which language to use, or whether to use both English and Spanish, in the Hispanic/Latino media will depend on what local research of media preference in the State or locality reveals. Many Hispanic/Latino newspapers publish in English and Spanish. They are an excellent source of knowledge about what works in Hispanic/Latino communities. Their advice is important when designing child support enforcement materials for Hispanics/Latinos. They may translate press releases themselves, or advise on where to obtain such services.

37. Michealson, Judith. "A Shake-up at Top of L.A. Radio". *Los Angeles Times*, April 22,1998, B8
38. Valdes, Isabel M., and Marta Seoane. *Hispanic Market Handbook*. 1993

Radio, TV, Newspaper and Magazine Usage Hispanic/Latino Adults 18 and Over



* Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas

Source: Strategy Research Corporation, 1998

Figure 4

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For example, if the local Hispanic/Latino community consists primarily of immigrants from other countries, Spanish-language media will be the more effective venue. If the community residents are a mix of recent immigrants and second and third generation Latinos, a combination of both English- and Spanish-language media may be more effective.

Local research should be augmented with talking to Hispanic/Latino community leaders about which is the most effective media to use for child support enforcement: Radio, TV, newspapers, or magazines, and whether messages should be in Spanish or English, or both. They will also advise on the types of print or video materials that will be most effective. Merely translating available English-language materials is not effective.

Spanish-Language Television

It has been well documented in market studies that Spanish-language television is a major source of information for Hispanics/Latinos. Approximately 150 Spanish-language TV stations in the US reach over 89 percent of the Hispanics/Latinos in the US.

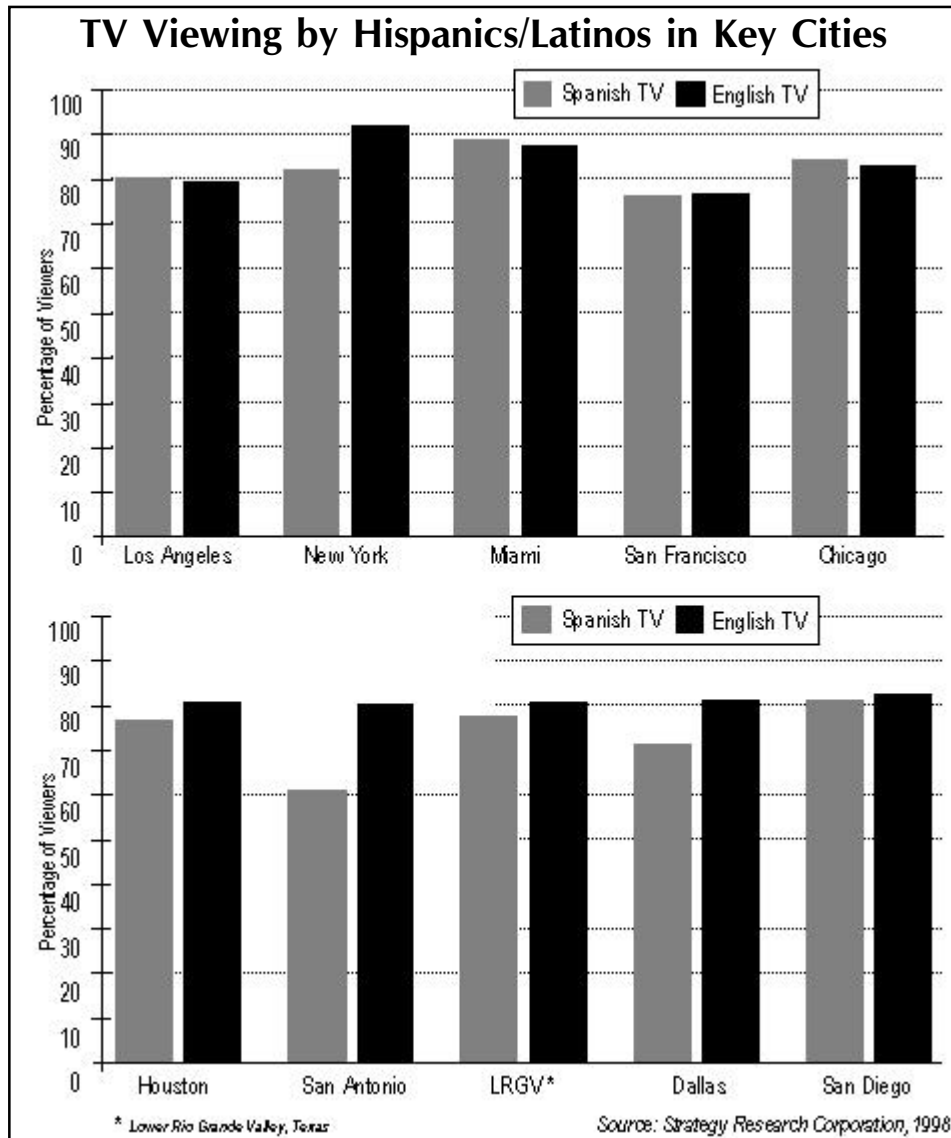


Figure 5

Cable television should not be overlooked as an opportunity to provide child support enforcement information. In addition to Spanish-language channels, cable companies know which of their channels are preferred by Hispanic/Latino viewers. Cable systems are required to make public service time available in local communities. A small amount of research will glean what type of public service announcement time is available and the program format requirements.



Figure 6

HBO, MTV, CNN, ESPN, Fox, the Discovery Channel and NBC are entering into Spanish-speaking markets. This has application to child support as they are also excellent sources for public service announcements for Hispanics/Latinos.

Spanish–Language Television Stations by City

CITY		CITY	
ALBUQUERQUE, NM	K59DB / KLUZ	MORRO BAY, CA	K09UF
ATLANTA, GA	W67CI	NEW YORK, NY	WNJU / WXTV
AUSTIN, TX	K11SF / K30CE	ODESSA-MIDLAND, TX	K60EE / K49CD
BAKERSFIELD, CA	KABE	OGDEN, UT	KSVN
BARSTOW, CA	K39DW	ORLANDO, FL	W07BZ / WVEN
BOSTON, MA	WUNI	PALM SPRINGS, CA	KVER
BROWNSVILLE, TX	XHRIO	PHILADELPHIA, PA	WTGI / WXTV
CHICAGO, IL	WSNS / WGBO	PHOENIX, AZ	K64DR / KTVW
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO	K49CJ / KGHB	RENO, NV	KUVR
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX	KAJA / KORO	SACRAMENTO, CA	K47DQ / KUVS
CORTEZ, CO	K51DB	SALT LAKE CITY, UT	K38CN / K48EJ / K66FN
DALLAS, TX	KFWD / KUVN	SALINAS, CA	K15CU
DENVER, CO	KUBD / KCEC	SAN ANTONIO, TX	KVDA / KWEX
EAGLE PASS, TX	KVAW	SAN DIEGO, CA	XHAS / KBNT / KNSD
EL PASO, TX	KHIJ / KINT	SAN FRANCISCO, CA	KSTS / KDTV
FORT WORTH, TX	KUVN	SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA	KTAS
FRESNO, CA	KMSG / KFTV	SANTA FE, NM	K52BS
HARLINGEN, TX	KNVO	SANTA MARIA, CA	K07TA
HARTFORD, CT	W13BF / W47AD	SANTA ROSA, CA	KDTV
HOUSTON, TX	KTMD / KXLN	SPRINGFIELD, MA	W65BX
LAREDO, TX	KLDO / KLDO	STOCKTON, CA	K52CK
LAS VEGAS, NV	KBLR / KINC	TAMPA, FL	W57BA / WVEA
LOS ANGELES, CA	KVEA / KMEX	TUCSON, AZ	KHRR / K52AO
LUBBOCK, TX	KBZO	VICTORIA, TX	K51BG / DUNI
MIAMI, FL	WSCV / WLTV	WASHINGTON, DC	W64BW / WMDO
MILWAUKEE, MI	W46AR	YUMA, AZ	KCJT / KVYE
MODESTO, CA	K61FI	YUMA-EL CENTRO, AZ	KSWT
MONTEREY-SALINAS, CA	KSMS		

Source: Strategy Research Corporation, 1998

Figure 7

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Radio in Spanish

Another major source of information for Hispanics/Latinos is Spanish-language radio. There are over 900 radio stations in the United States. These radio stations reach over 70 percent of the US Hispanic/Latino market.

Latinos are described as great radio listeners, tuning in on an average of 26 to 30 hours a week, and listening to the radio about 13 percent more than the general population.³⁹ According to Arbitron, Spanish-language radio is the format preferred by Hispanics, ages 12 and over, 43 percent of them. In Los Angeles, KLVE-FM and KLAX, two of 10 Spanish-language radio stations have soared to the top 10 for all listeners, ages 12 and over. Hispanic/Latino stations are also high in the ratings in Miami, New York, and throughout Texas and California.⁴⁰

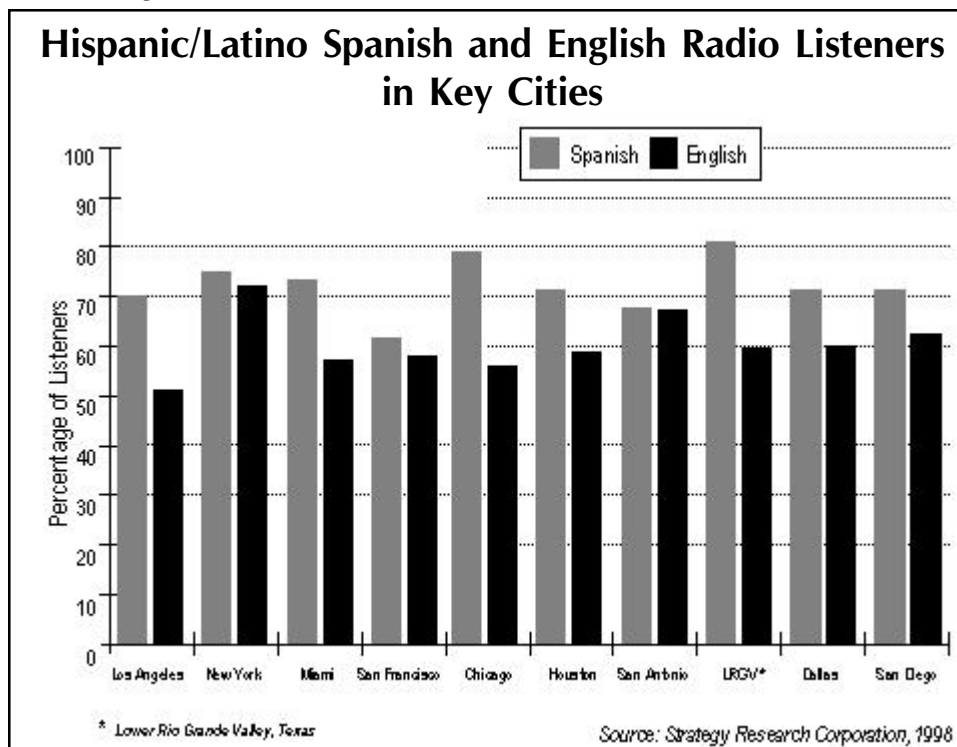


Figure 8

39. Arbitron. 1992

40. Valdes, Isabel M., and Marta Seoane. *Hispanic Market Handbook*. 1993

Newspapers and Magazines

Daily and weekly publication of 1500 Spanish-language and bilingual newspapers and magazines defies the perception often conveyed, that as a group Hispanics/Latinos do not, or cannot, or will not read.

Depending on the source, and there are several, readership for magazines and newspapers for Spanish-speaking persons ranges from 60 percent to 72 percent⁴¹ as compared to 85 percent for Whites.⁴²

Newspapers			
66.1% read newspapers	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>35.7% in Spanish</td> </tr> <tr> <td>47.0% in English</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	35.7% in Spanish	47.0% in English
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Magazines			
65.5% read magazines	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>35.7% in Spanish</td> </tr> <tr> <td>46.8% in English</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	35.7% in Spanish	46.8% in English
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Source: Strategy Research Corporation, 1998			

Figure 9

41. Valdes, Isabel M., and Marta Seoane. *Hispanic Market Handbook*. 1993

42. The US Bureau of the Census. 1990

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