



Building Partnerships with the Latino Community:

FACT SHEET FOR 4-H STAFF

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THE REALITY

UC ANR understands the following:

- University Cooperative Extension in the United States has an obligation as a recipient of federal funds to engage Latino and ethnic minority youth in the 4-H Youth Development Program (YDP).
- Building partnerships with the Latino community helps address Latino youth needs, and everyone may benefit from Latino community resources.
- During a 2014 4-H statewide conference, most California 4-H staff members expressed commitment to provide opportunities for Latino and other diverse youth in the 4-H YDP, yet they expressed a lack of understanding on how to reach out and start building partnerships to serve Latino youth as well as their families and communities.

RESEARCH AND PROMISING PRACTICES

Sustained participation and positive outcomes among Latino youth and communities result when 4-H personnel develop partnerships with the Latino community, which include

- identifying stakeholders, partners (networks, faith-based organizations, community organizing groups, migrant programs, schools, local organizations, government agencies, etc.), and members of the community to develop programs that build on the local Latino community knowledge and assets
- building trust among community leaders and organizations that have positive relationships with the Latino community
- developing relationships to gain the trust of parents and caretakers, since parents may have negative experiences with formal organizations
- making an intentional commitment to engage with and serve marginalized Latino youth populations

“One foundation of trust-building is demonstrating that key program staff and leaders have an interest in and understanding of the local landscape of Latin@diversity...”

(Erbstein and Fabionar 2014)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Understand your local Latino community.

- Invest time to understand the history and culture of your diverse local Latino community. This diversity includes differences in length of residence in the United States (ranging from predating U.S. existence to recent arrival), nations and regions of origin, immigration authorization, socioeconomic status, racial or ethnic background, and preferred spoken language or dialects.

Identify informal and tightly-knit social networks as well as formal organizations that serve Latino youth and families.

- Gain a deeper understanding of social networks and key organizations by learning from their web presence and by participating in community collaboratives.
- Reach out to the leadership of organizations or associations, and set up an informational interview to learn about their program goals, needs, and structure. These conversations will help build trust and mutual respect with prospective partners. These are some organizations to start with: ELAC (English Learner Advisory Committee), PTA (Parent Teacher Association), Afterschool Alliance, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and Boys and Girls Clubs.
- Identify how the 4-H program can connect to the goals of other youth programs, and leverage resources to meet common identified needs.
- Tap into individual and shared Latino assets, and integrate youth, families, and community leaders into program design, implementation, and evaluation.

Monitor and strengthen 4-H program reputation.

Investigate which 4-H program qualities resonate well with Latino community members, and identify their perception of 4-H. This can be accomplished by forming an advisory board composed of internal and external Latino stakeholders.

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