

Beyond the Rhetoric: Improving Service to the Hispanic Community



December 12, 2012

hispanicfamily.org

National Alliance For Hispanic Families | 1250 Maryland Ave, SW CY10 | Washington DC | 20024

Overview of this Report

The post-election focus on the Latino community, after it played an indispensable role in re-electing President Barack Obama, underscores the need to address issues critical to Hispanic families. These issues are not new. In 1978 the cover of *Time* magazine read, “Hispanics: Soon the Biggest Minority.” The article recounted a meeting of Hispanic leaders in Washington, D.C. who called for a White House Conference on Hispanic Americans, greater emphasis on bilingual education, bigger immigration quotas, and, more federal civil service jobs.


In the 35 years since that article was published, the Hispanic community has grown almost 300% and is projected to grow larger still. Yet the conditions within the Hispanic community - education, immigration policy, and equitable representation to name a few - remain unchanged, and in some cases, have worsened. To be sure, the work ethic and value placed on the family has enabled many Hispanics to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and overcome the odds against them. Unfortunately, however, there are too many Hispanic children and families whose need for outside intervention is neglected. Our country’s safety net has not adapted to its new reality and, at a great cost to our country’s future, has missed addressing the needs of vulnerable Hispanic children and families. While Hispanics now comprise 21 percent of the U.S. population under the age of 25, they also have the highest rate of poverty. As 50,000 Hispanic youth turn 18 years of age every month, two in ten drop out of school at record rates,¹ and four in ten become pregnant before they turn twenty.² It is our hope that this demographic reality, and the importance of the Latino community, serves as a tipping point toward relevant and meaningful action addressing the many issues negatively impacting Hispanic children and families. No longer can our country afford to respond to the needs of vulnerable Hispanic children and families with empty rhetoric. It's time to implement actions that deliver results.

The National Alliance for Hispanic Families (NAHF) is a coalition of more than 2,000 leaders and 300 grass roots Hispanic-serving organizations throughout the country. It has targeted its work over the past year to forging change within one of the key federal agencies whose mission is to improve the welfare of poor children and their families. The following report chronicles NAHF’s efforts with the Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to equitably invest its resources in the Hispanic population.

¹ Chapman, C., Laird, J., Ifill, N., and KewalRamani, A. (2011). Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 1972–2009 (NCES 2012-006). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>

² Martin JA, Hamilton BE, Ventura SJ, et al. Births: Final data for 2009. National vital statistics reports; vol 60 no 1. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2011.





These eight recommendations were the focal point of NAHF engagement with ACF last year. While these ideas are practical, results-oriented and budget neutral, their implementation requires leadership and commitment to equitably serve Hispanic families. It is important to note that these systemic recommendations are applicable, not just to ACF, but to many other federal and state offices.

1. Target Use of Discretionary Funds

We recommend that ACF increase the amount of discretionary funding that targets Hispanic communities by releasing funding announcements with priority areas focused on Hispanic concerns and open to organizations with evidence of successfully serving Hispanic communities. Priority areas and increased funding levels are justified by the demographic data that demonstrates unmet needs within the Hispanic community. These areas of focus would include support for demonstration projects that propose culturally relevant, linguistically appropriate, and proven effective practices with Latino populations such as healthy marriage and relationship education, mental illness, child abuse neglect prevention, prevention of out-of-home placement in foster care, foster care reunification, teen pregnancy prevention, and domestic violence prevention and intervention.

2. Fund Hispanic-Focused Research


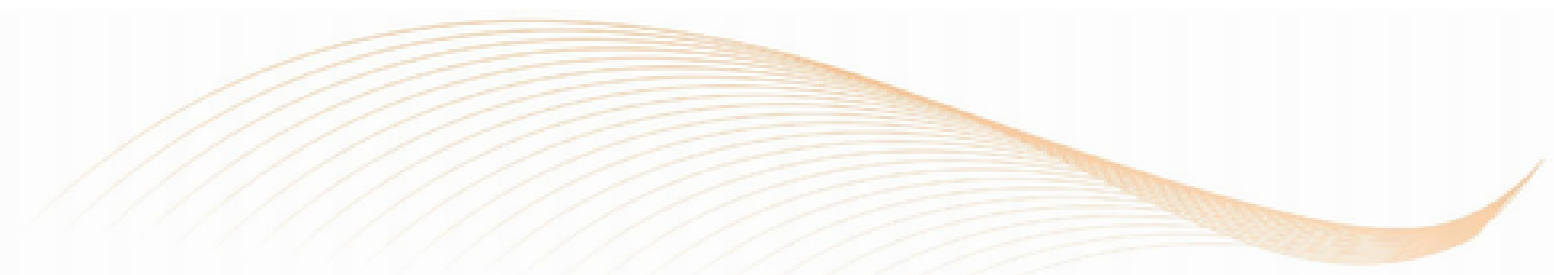
It is essential that increased funding be directed to the dearth of research available on a variety of ACF-related program efforts and their role in the Latino community. This research should be procured and competed in such a way that allows for the full and fair participation of Hispanic-led research entities that have not received very limited federal funding heretofore.

3. Build Internal Awareness

Given the virtual absence of Hispanics within the ACF workforce, nationally and regionally, there is a vacuum of experience and knowledgeable representation of the Hispanic community. Awareness of the Hispanic demographics and needs, and the importance of addressing Latino community concerns, should be established within the agency. Training of administrators, managers, and staff should be conducted by entities that have demonstrated success in serving Hispanic communities. Further, these efforts must be of sufficient rigor to overcome decades of pervasive neglect.

4. Diversify Review Panels

Review panels have significant influence on the funding of efforts in the community. While this may be one of the easiest recommendations to achieve, there has been virtually no Hispanic presence throughout ACF's history of review panels.





5. Expand Accessibility Initiative

Long-term funding must be dedicated to a non-traditional outreach and communication strategy that convenes, educates, and informs grass-roots community and faith-based organizations in a systematic, consistent, regular, and relevant manner.

6. Fill Workforce Vacancies with Experience in Hispanic Communities


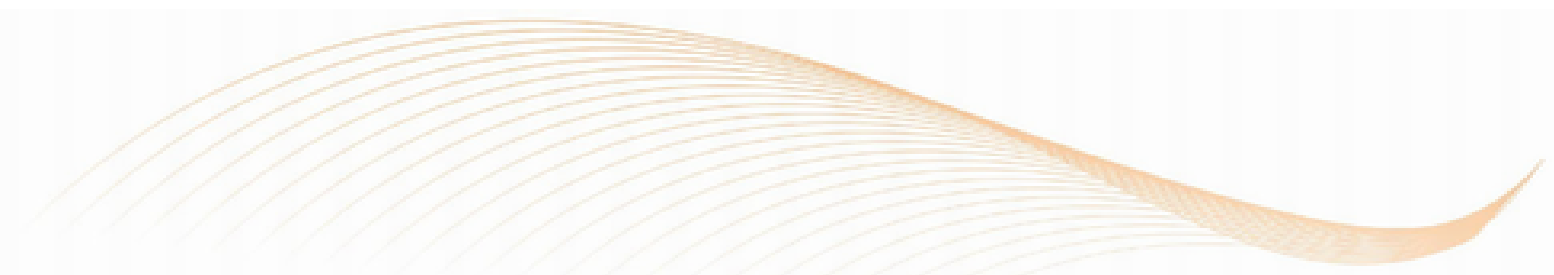
The abysmal representation of Hispanics within the federal workforce relative to the civilian labor force has a far-reaching negative impact. Vacancies should be announced for no less than 30 days on a nationwide basis, with specific and targeted efforts to inform Hispanic-serving schools of higher education as well as national, regional, and local community organizations the day the announcement is published. Secondly, all current and future hiring announcements should include selected factors for awareness, understanding, and experience of human and social needs in the Hispanic community.

7. Utilize Performance Plans

As evidenced by the implementation and progress of the Hispanic Research Workgroup led by the ACF Director of the Office of Planning Research and Evaluation, performance plans are essential for ensuring action on specific outcomes. Consequently, each of these recommendations should be included in the performance plans of program office heads, their deputies, and appropriate division directors. Further, progress on these performance plan elements should be reviewed by agency leadership on a quarterly basis to ensure timely attention.

8. Appoint Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration to Lead Hispanic Efforts

To implement these recommendations, seasoned, experienced civil service leadership is required. This individual should report to the Assistant Secretary on the progress of these recommendations and provide day-to-day, coordination among the various program offices within ACF. To this end, we recommend the appointment of the Deputy Assistant Secretary (DASA) for Administration to serve in this capacity. In addition to overseeing the accomplishment of the above recommendations, the DASA will convene quarterly progress meetings.





Beyond the Rhetoric: Improving Service to the Hispanic Community


Background

Representing more than 2,000 leaders and 300 community-based organizations serving vulnerable Hispanic families, the National Alliance for Hispanic Families (NAHF) has concluded 12 months of intensive efforts to encourage the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to fulfill their mission to the Hispanic community. Acting Assistant Secretary George Sheldon states that “substantial progress” has been made. However, there is no quantifiable evidence to support this claim.

The Administration for Children & Families (ACF) is a division of the Department of Health & Human Services. Administering more than 60 programs with an annual budget of over \$51 billion, ACF promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals and communities. While the work of other federal agencies is important, many of the critical areas that impact vulnerable Hispanic children and families are within the purview of ACF, such as Head Start, child care, child welfare, adolescent pregnancy, youth development, domestic violence, home visiting, child support, fatherhood and healthy marriage, and research. As highlighted in the *Hispanic Data Source* released on September 26, 2012 (hispanicfamily.org), the fact that Hispanic children and families are the most at-risk sizable population in our country is irrefutable. Furthermore, the ability – or inability – of our country to meaningfully address the Hispanic populations’ critical needs while strengthening this growing population and future workforce will have a direct impact on the well-being of our country as a whole.

On September 28, 2011, *The Washington Post* headlines reported that for the first time in our country’s history, Hispanic children now have the highest rate of poverty among all population groups. On this very same day, the NAHF leadership met with the ACF Acting Assistant Secretary George Sheldon to urge him to continue to build on the successful work of his predecessors including the former Assistant Secretary Carmen Nazario, the only Hispanic to





serve in this capacity in the history of ACF. Most notably, they had initiated a multi-pronged strategy that included an intentional results-oriented capacity building effort for Hispanic serving organizations; an active recruitment effort to improve the presence of Hispanics in the ACF work force; and a process to eliminate funding barriers that have prevented Hispanic populations from equitable participation in federal support.

It was imperative that the momentum generated prior to the Acting Assistant Secretary's arrival not be lost but be continued and strengthened. In meeting with Mr. Sheldon and his team, the NAHF offered eight practical, results-oriented, budget neutral recommendations (through re-prioritization consistent with community needs) that are within the purview of ACF's authority and could be implemented within a nine-month period. These recommendations were outlined in a letter transmitted to Acting Assistant Secretary George Sheldon on October 7, 2011 (Appendix A) and a subsequent communication on January 19, 2012 (Appendix B).

On September 19, 2012, Acting Assistant Secretary George Sheldon responded to NAHF's request for information to incorporate into a report on ACF's progress (Appendix C). In summary, Sheldon responded that he was pleased that "substantial progress ... in the right direction," has been made in the past twelve months. With the intention of wanting to be clear on the efforts of ACF, NAHF requested baseline data to substantiate the agency's reported progress. (Appendix D). However, on September 29th, Mr. Sheldon reported that the data requested "would take quite a while to compile or is not currently available." (Appendix E).

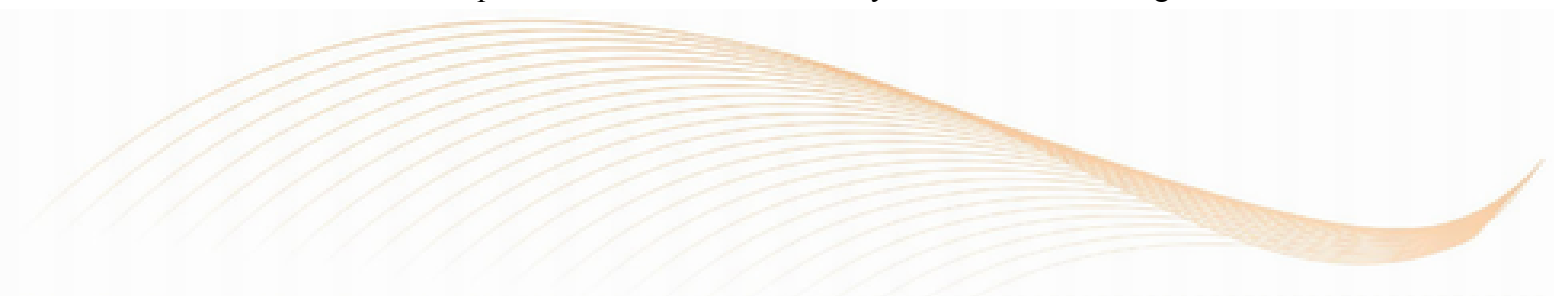
Findings and Analysis


The ACF responses and NAHF's comments on each of the recommendations are summarized below:

Recommendation 1: Target Use of Discretionary Funds

ACF Response Regarding Progress in Last Twelve Months: ACF states they have "taken action to include underrepresented and underserved populations in funding announcements and encourage non-traditional sources to apply" and named one Hispanic individual who is getting trained to serve as an ACF grant reviewer. Further, ACF states that it is "strengthening the Hispanic Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Initiative."

Analysis: ACF was unable to provide quantifiable data to measure the impact of their efforts (Appendix D). The fact that none of our members witnessed any evidence of these efforts in their communities coupled with our own limited analysis reveals that among the \$16 billion





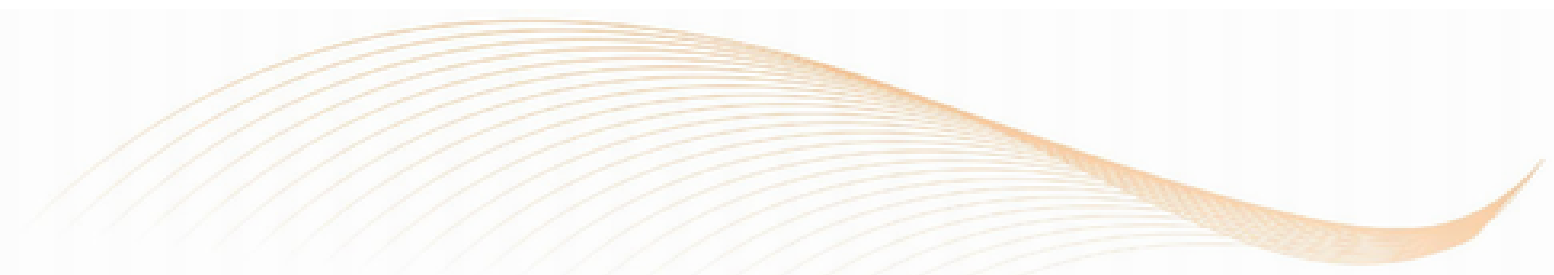
in funding opportunity announcements made in the last twelve months, there has been little to no improvement in targeting the needs of the Hispanic community. In fact, **Hispanic Serving Organizations have lost gains made in previous Administrations.** For example, the number of healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood grants was significantly reduced from those funded in the previous Administration. While the more effective, stellar organizations with a history of annually serving thousands of Hispanic families with measurable outcomes lost funding, other organizations that have no evidence of effectively serving Hispanic families in this specific program area were awarded discretionary funds, some up to \$2 million annually.


Recommendation 2: Fund Hispanic-Focused Research

ACF Response Regarding Progress in Last Twelve Months: ACF has undertaken “several research projects focused on Hispanic populations...” Further, the “Hispanic Research Work Group” was convened in March 2012 and is scheduled to meet in December 2012.

Analysis: While ACF is to be commended for convening the Hispanic Research Work Group, an effort that was initiated under the previous Assistant Secretary, it is disappointing that after two meetings in the last twelve months, the results from the gatherings have been limited given the investment of time and resources made. While ACF did not identify any specific research projects focused on the Hispanic community that are being initiated, we have discovered that within the estimated \$100 million dollars of grants and contracts awarded by ACF’s Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in the last year, there is one project scheduled to be funded that is focused on the child welfare implications and practices for citizen children of undocumented parents who are detained or deported. However, the procurement plan for the referenced project is designed in such a way so that the only organizations that may compete for the work are a handful of evaluators who already receive large sums of federal contracts and grants and who have limited in-house Hispanic expertise. While these contractors have at times subcontracted with Hispanic researchers, it is often in a minor role. In short, the procurement strategy chosen by ACF excludes the participation of experienced Hispanic-led research entities and organizations.

It should be noted that the funding of the one project mentioned above is narrow in scope and does not provide any resources to address the dearth of research regarding the work of Hispanic led community serving organizations. As highlighted in the NAHF report entitled *La Diferencia* released on October 4, 2012 (hispanicfamily.org), these organizations provide the best opportunity to succeed in reaching Hispanic communities. Yet, there has been virtually no federal investment to “prove up” their work. The absence of historical funding for evaluation, coupled with the federal government’s emphasis on, and restriction to programs that are evidence-based, leaves Hispanic serving organizations in a dire, double-jeopardy situation. With only two exceptions in more than 20 years, ACF has not conducted research to determine





how its programs impact Hispanic children and families. However, ACF has conducted such research for other vulnerable populations, none of which are as large as the Hispanic population. The absence of research that provides data, findings, knowledge, and evaluation results regarding the human service needs and intervention for the Hispanic population is a violation of ACF's mandate and a disservice to our country.

Recommendation 3: Build Internal Awareness

ACF Response Regarding Progress in Last Twelve Months: ACF makes note of an event in Puerto Rico as well as a convening in New York. Further, ACF highlights their intention to translate their program description book, and portions of their website to Spanish.

Analysis: While translating materials to Spanish is noteworthy, it is of very limited value if the underlying policies and programs are not adapted to the realities of the Hispanic community. Further, a voluntary awareness session during Hispanic Heritage month in one federal region is insufficient to address the years of neglect toward the Hispanic community within the Agency. After the initial meeting with Mr. Sheldon, there was a flurry of calls from various Regional Offices to members of our NAHF leadership. We collaborated where asked and found that while the Regional Offices were cordial, their efforts soon faded as they lacked direction in terms of what to do once individuals were convened.

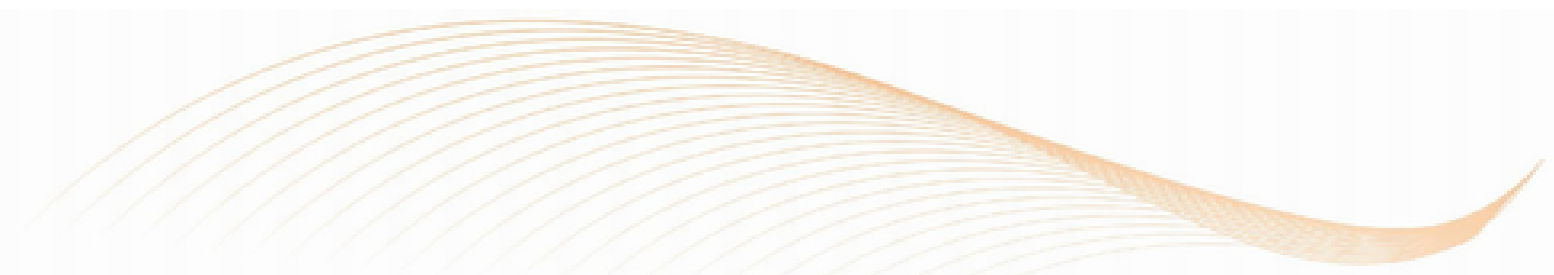
To his credit, Mr. Sheldon has acted on the NAHF's invitation to visit the sites of various Hispanic-led, community serving organizations. However, we are not aware of any benefit or improvement to the Hispanic community as a result of these visits.


Recommendation 4: Diversify Review Panels

ACF Response Regarding Progress in Last Twelve Months: Mr. Sheldon cites a new prospective grant reviewer that is getting trained for the Head Start designation renewal process.

Analysis: Year after year, there are hundreds of individuals ACF recruits to serve as grant reviewers. Recruiting individuals with experience in serving the Hispanic community is one of the easiest and first efforts that should be pursued to begin impacting the direction of federal funding.

A number of NAHF members were willing to make the investment and sacrifice to support the implementation of this recommendation to increase Hispanic reviewers. In April 2012, six months after the September 28th meeting, NAHF members received the first and only communication listing the websites where Hispanic professionals interested in serving as reviewers could submit an application. However, our members learned that some of the reviewer recruitment processes had already closed by the time the April notification was provided. After





further pursuit and protest of the delay, some were able to submit an application but never received a response from the federal agencies. In spite of these roadblocks, one of our members' application finally made it through the process only to receive an unreasonable two day advance notice making it impossible to dedicate a week of time to the effort. Further, we are not aware of any directive given to the contractors to consider the recruitment of Hispanic experts a priority so that the reviewers' experiences would be more representative of the populations served. Unfortunately, we are only aware of one Hispanic individual – the same person cited by Mr. Sheldon – that was trained to serve as a reviewer but has yet to be utilized.

The inability of ACF to provide information regarding specific activities and data that measures the results of these activities, coupled with the absence of evidence among our members across the country, we can only conclude that ACF has no meaningful interest in recruiting reviewers with experience in Hispanic communities and thus allocating resources to effectively address the needs of Hispanic children and families.

Recommendation 5: Expand Accessibility Initiative

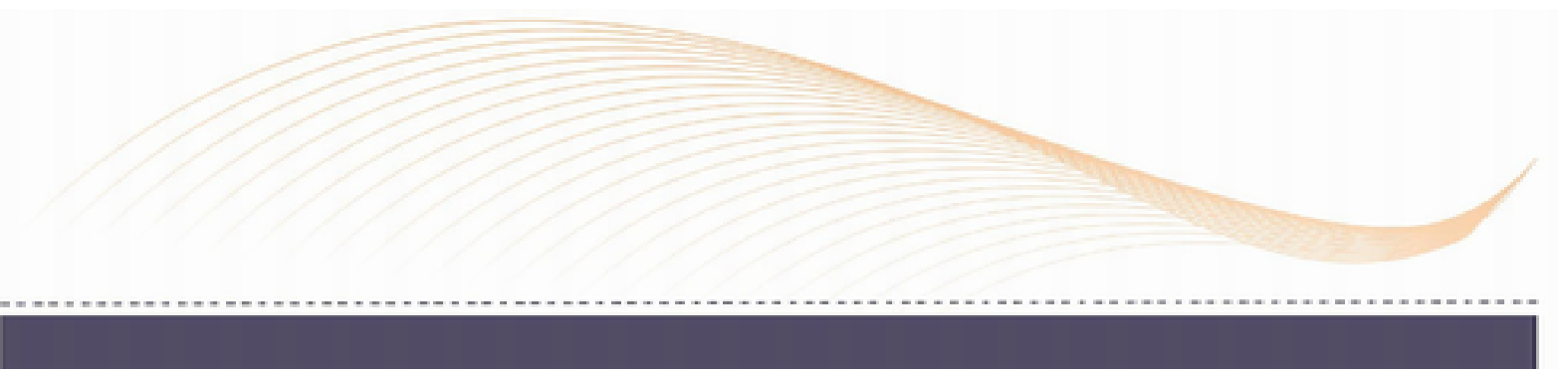
ACF Response Regarding Progress in Last Twelve Months: No response.


Analysis: In 2010, ACF provided funding to support the external implementation of the Accessibility Initiative launched by Assistant Secretary Carmen Nazario. This effort was designed to inform organizations serving Hispanic, Developmentally Disabled, LGBT, and other underserved populations about ACF programs, funding opportunities, panel review openings, and employment vacancies. It further provided basic skills to understand and respond to funding announcements.

In spite of the Initiative's impressive first-year results that engaged hundreds of non-traditional community-based organizations working with some of the most underserved populations in our country, ACF did not extend the contract a second year. Since then, the initiative has been reduced to a periodic electronic newsletter inaugurated in the summer of 2012 that documents Mr. Sheldon's travel experiences and knowledge gained from his visits with Hispanic Serving Organizations.

Recommendation 6: Fill Workforce Vacancies with Staff Experienced in working with Hispanic Communities

ACF Response Regarding Progress in Last Twelve Months: In March 2012, an agency-wide initiative was announced to increase the number of Hispanic and other underrepresented groups in the Federal workforce.





Analysis: In 2012, the Hispanic civilian labor force representation in our country was 14.9% versus the 3.4% representation within ACF. While in the last six months, ACF has regularly shared vacancy announcements with the NAHF leadership (and we assume with other Hispanic serving organizations), ACF reports that it has no data to measure the success of its outreach efforts. Furthermore, the Office of Personnel Management reported an overall increase of only .01% government-wide. Given the fact that HHS continues to be at the bottom of the list of agencies making progress in this area, we can only assume that ACF's record of hiring Hispanics in its workforce has not improved. NAHF's communications highlighted several recommendations that would remove some of the barriers that have prevented the agency from being reflective of the population it is supposed to serve. For example, we suggested adding factors that require experience in working with vulnerable Hispanic families and extending the application dates to thirty days instead of the more common seven day window. Mr. Sheldon's report does not indicate any changes to the traditional processes that have led to the current abysmal record.

Recommendation 7: Utilize Performance Plans

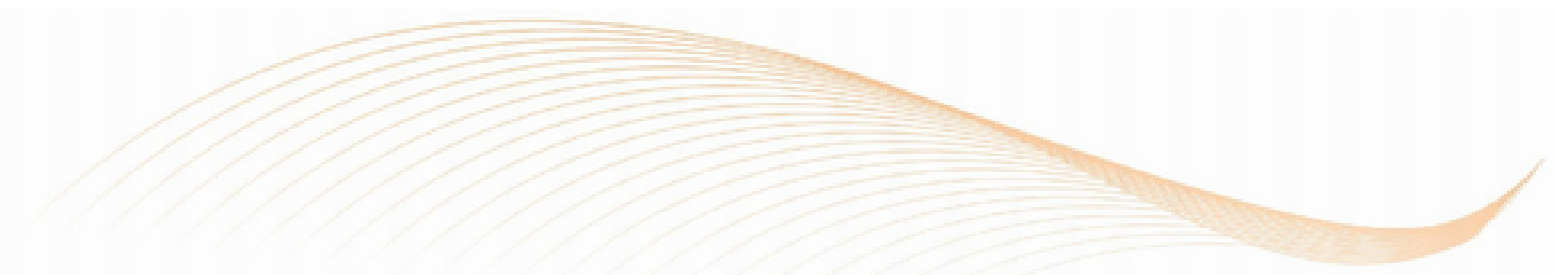
ACF Response Regarding Progress in Last Twelve Months: ACF does not address this recommendation.


Analysis: The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) states that managing performance to achieve desired results is a responsibility that HHS takes very seriously, and rightly so. All of the NAHF recommendations align with HHS' own published goals. ACF's silence on the utilization of performance plans to eliminate disparities and improve services to Hispanic communities suggests that the tool is not being appropriately utilized and/or that staff is not being held accountable for their failure to include the Hispanic population in their endeavors. This reflects poorly on the investment made by US taxpayers, and in any other environment, would render leadership negligent.

Recommendation 8: Appoint Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration to Lead Hispanic Efforts

ACF Response Regarding Progress in Last Twelve Months: We are not aware that anyone has been designated to lead the Agency's Hispanic Initiatives.

Analysis: NAHF requested that a civil servant designee with authority be appointed to serve as the lead on Hispanic Initiatives recognizing that the Assistant Secretary has great demands on his schedule and without appropriate leadership, any commitment he made would falter. Further, the request was forwarded with an interest in providing stability to this role and endeavor, protecting it from changes that are common among political appointees. While NAHF requested that Mr. Sheldon appoint the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration as the





lead on Hispanic efforts, the individual in this position was referenced to only having made an announcement regarding an agency-wide initiative to increase the number of Hispanic and other underrepresented groups in the Federal workforce.

Conclusion

The recommendations offered to ACF on September 28, 2011 marked the beginning of a new federal grant cycle and budget year, allowing ample time to adjust funding opportunity announcements that address critical human service needs, level the playing field by broadening the pool of eligible applicants, increase the number of Hispanics in the reviewer pool, expand and strengthen the Hispanic research agenda and recruit and develop a Hispanic workforce. Unfortunately, these opportunities were all missed. Instead, the Acting Assistant Secretary and the Administration he represents chose to use the last twelve months to “rediscover” the Hispanic community and its pressing concerns. In spite of our representation of the data and demographics that required clear and immediate action, the Acting Assistant Secretary chose not to pursue meaningful, results-oriented efforts. While the Agency’s efforts were self-characterized as “substantial,” the Agency was unable to provide quantifiable data from which the conclusion was reached.

It is unacceptable for an Agency as large as ACF to not have readily available, quantifiable data to track its progress in serving one of our country’s largest populations. If not for the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of its programs, then at least for transparency and accountability, a \$51 billion Agency has a responsibility to track important outcomes relative to its progress in serving the Hispanic community. In short, not having readily available data to measure performance is remarkable and would undo any other entity outside of the federal government

To be sure, Mr. Sheldon and his team did not create the years of neglect that ACF has practiced. But while data from multiple sources continues to reflect the urgent needs of Hispanic families, valuable time to improve the lives of the next generation of our country’s Hispanic citizens has been unnecessarily lost.



Appendix A

October 7, 2011



Acting Assistant Secretary George Sheldon
Administration for Children and Families
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Sheldon,

On behalf of the tens of thousands of Latino children and families we serve, we the undersigned, together with the National Alliance for Hispanic Families, thank you for graciously hosting the meeting last week. The group you brought together was unique in that they are voices “from the field” who have tirelessly worked in and among Latino families in need. We are compelled to take action as for many years, even decades, our communities’ needs have been neglected. We recognize that you too are facing a series of challenges in your agency that are not of your own doing and that in many cases, have also been chronic challenges. We commend you for your willingness to take on these challenges, and we assure you that for the next 15 months we stand ready to work with you shoulder to shoulder to help ACF meet its mandates and to make an impact for the vulnerable in our country.

As explained more fully in the attached addendum, it is imperative for ACF to implement deliberate efforts that are focused on better serving and engaging the Hispanic community. Without this level of intentionality, ACF’s ability to equitably address the health and social needs of low income Hispanic children and families will never be realized but instead will deteriorate further as evidenced most recently in this week’s announcements in which ACF dramatically and disappointingly cut in half its Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood funding to organizations that primarily serve Hispanic populations. We find these actions unacceptable.

In our meeting last week, you asked for input on how ACF can improve its work with Hispanic communities. While we have been encouraged to lower our expectations, the challenges our communities face make it imperative that we aim high. Our communities deserve no less. To this end, we make 8 recommendations to you which are included in the attached. With the appropriate accountability measures, significant progress can be made in the next twelve months to implement and establish these recommendations within ACF.

We know you are only one person, and that your time at the helm of ACF may be limited. But we heard loud and clear your commitment to get the agency moving in the right direction regardless of time constraints. With your experienced leadership combined with the

political will, we believe that all of our recommendations can be implemented in a timely manner by federal staff who are held accountable for their implementation. If your legacy within ACF becomes one of inclusion and attention to a heretofore underserved and unrecognized population, we know that your efforts will result in a vote of confidence of this Administration's stated commitment to Hispanic communities.

Mr. Jose Villalobos, Senior Vice President of TELACU, has agreed to serve as our point of communication with your office. He may be reached at JVillalobos@TELACU.com or 323-506-2720. We look forward to hearing from you regarding the next steps in this dialogue.

Sincerely,

Dr. Etiony Aldorando
University of Miami

Dr. Alicia LaHoz
Family Bridges Chicago

Dr. Luis Torres
University of Houston

Dr. Alicia Diaz
Cuban American National Council

Elba Montalvo, Committee for
Hispanic Children and Families

Tadeo Saenz-Thompson
Washington State Migrant Council

Dr. Blanca Enriquez
El Paso Region 19

Virginia Madueno
City of Riverbank

Jose Villalobos
TELACU

Analco Gonzalez
Center for New Communities

Drs. Reyes and Colon-Padilla
Puerto Rican Family Services

Sylvia Zaldivar Sykes
Lake County Community Foundation

Carmen Joge
Congressional Hispanic Caucus
Institute

Dr. Anderson Torres
Puerto Rican Family Institute

cc 9/29/11 ACF Meeting Participants

Recommendations to the Administration for Children and Families to Improve Services to Hispanic Community

Recommendation #1: Target Use of Discretionary Funds

We recommend that ACF increase the amount of discretionary funding targeting Hispanic communities by releasing funding announcements with priority areas that are focused on Hispanic concerns and open to organizations with evidence of successfully serving Hispanic communities. Priority areas and funding levels can be justified by the demographic data that demonstrates unmet needs within the Hispanic community. These topics would include support for demonstration projects that propose culturally relevant, linguistically appropriate, and proven effective practices with Latino populations such as healthy marriage and relationship education, child abuse neglect prevention, prevention of out of home placement in foster care, foster care re-unification, teen pregnancy prevention, and domestic violence prevention and intervention. In addition, projects that look at underutilization by Latino youth of the runaway and homeless system should be an area of investigation.

In funding announcements that are exclusive to state government or agency competition, ACF should ensure that the needs of Hispanic communities and other emerging populations within those jurisdictions are not ignored but proportionally addressed. In their application, States should be required to provide detailed assurances of how funds will be allocated within the state, the eligibility of community and faith-based organizations serving Hispanic populations to compete for those funds, and the description of the culturally and linguistically appropriate services to be provided.

Recommendation #2: Fund Hispanic-focused Research

OPRE. Research projects focused on closing the gap on available information on a variety of ACF related program efforts and their role in the Latino community are essential. This would be accomplished by integrating members of the Hispanic Research Workgroup into the existing seven subject matter workgroups currently managed by OPRE. Further, research projects to address the above should be competed in such a way that allows for the full and fair participation of Hispanic-focused Research Centers throughout the country, who have up to now not received federal support.

Program Offices. In every area of programmatic endeavor within ACF, there is a need to significantly increase the knowledge and understanding of the impact, or lack thereof, of human service programming in Hispanic communities. To quickly fill this knowledge gap, each program office should be directed to announce and fund field-initiated research projects within a set of programmatic appropriate activities. This will generate potential best-practices and community-based strategies that have proven effective in each of these program areas, and ultimately increase our repertoire of evidence-based interventions targeting Hispanics.

Recommendation #3: Build Internal Awareness

Given the virtual absence of Hispanics within the ACF workforce nationally and regionally, there is a vacuum of experience and knowledgeable representation on the human service needs of the Hispanic community. Awareness of the Hispanic demographics and experience, and the importance of addressing Latino community concerns should be established within the agency. Efforts to increase the cultural competency of ACF staff must use experienced contractors who are intimately aware of conditions in the Latino community and can easily and quickly be engaged using the already established SBA 8a procurement process.

As part of this internal awareness training, we invite you and your team to see our communities because nothing surpasses the first-hand exposure to understand the need for action.

Recommendation #4: Diversify Review Panels

The broad and deep engagement of Hispanics on all ACF review panels is necessary. As you know, the review panels have significant influence on the funding of efforts in the community. Unfortunately, throughout the history of review panels, there has been virtually no participation of Hispanic reviewers. In our view, this is “low hanging fruit” that should be easy to implement but continues to get lost in a quagmire of bureaucracy for lack of leadership. Your personal leadership in re-addressing this grave failing is essential, and we were very encouraged by your outspoken support for this initiative during our meeting. Each program office head and their deputy should be required to ensure the inclusion of Hispanic reviewers. Program offices and contractors responsible for managing the review panels should be monitored for compliance and their efforts in placing a national call for Hispanic reviewers in all disciplines. In this effort, we are prepared to make initial recommendations of individuals who can be recruited as reviewers in this process.

Recommendation # 5: Expand Accessibility Initiative

The Accessibility Initiative proved to be a successful strategy as a first step to turn the tide of decades of neglect of the Hispanic community. While you are reticent about sole source contracts, we know that where warranted, this is a normal course of business throughout the federal government, including HHS. Given that that SBA 8a program allows such arrangements, and that the existing contractor has the unique combination of the experience and knowledge of both the Hispanic community and ACF, we encourage you to re-consider your position and reinstate the existing contract. We believe that because of the urgency of time, and the dearth of success ACF has in serving the largest population of poor children and their families in the country, this contract should not only be allowed to continue the work began last year but to expand into a more robust manner.

Recommendation #6: Fill Workforce Vacancies with Experience in Hispanic Communities

As stated in our meeting, the abysmal representation of Hispanics within the ACF workforce relative to the civilian labor force has a far-reaching negative impact. This finding is supported by a recent report from OPM that found HHS to have the worst representation of Hispanics among all federal agencies. We understand that ACF's data is virtually identical to

that of the entire HHS agency wall of HHS at 3.3% of its workforce. fall in last place among its To this end, we recommend that any vacancies be announced for no less than 30 days on a nationwide basis, with specific and targeted efforts to inform Hispanic serving schools of higher education as well as national, regional, and local community organizations the day the announcement is published. Secondly, given the absence of knowledge and experience within ACF of the Hispanic community, all current and future announcements should contain as a selected factor the awareness, understanding, and experience of human and social needs in the Hispanic community. This effort will build ACF's internal capacity to appropriately and effectively address the human service needs in our country.

Recommendation #7: Utilize Performance Plans

As evidenced by the implementation in the last 6 months of the Hispanic Research Workgroup by the Director of the Office of Planning Research and Evaluation, performance plans are essential for ensuring action on specific outcomes. Consequently, each of our recommendations should be included in the performance plans of ACF Program office heads, their deputies, and appropriate Division directors. Further, progress on these performance plan elements should be reviewed by the ACF leadership on a quarterly basis to ensure timely attention.

Recommendation #8: Appoint Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration to Lead Hispanic Efforts

To implement any of our recommendations, seasoned, experienced civil service leadership is required. This individual will report to you on the progress of these above recommendations and provide day-to-day, coordination among the various departments within ACF. To this end, we recommend the appointment of the Deputy Assistant Secretary (DASA) for Administration to serve in this capacity. In addition to overseeing the accomplishment of the above recommendations, the DASA can ensure that the appropriate staff coordinate the quarterly reconvening as we discussed in our meeting.

Rationale for Focus on Hispanic Communities

The Hispanic community faces a number of chronic challenges that cannot be addressed without the focused and effective deployment of federal resources to areas of greatest need. Both quantitative data and anecdotal experiences reflect the fact that without a paradigm shift in the way our federal government directs its resources, the unmet needs of the Hispanic population will cripple our country. We recognize that many diverse communities have multiple and complex needs, and we do not wish for the focus on Hispanic communities to come at the expense of other communities. At the same time, the data speaks for itself, and Hispanics are disproportionately and adversely impacted by the very issues ACF is charged with addressing. As noted in the Washington Post headline article the morning we met, Hispanic children are the largest group of children living in poverty. With this, the out of wedlock birthrates for Hispanics are climbing while others are declining. The rate of entry of Latino children into foster care has continued to increase over the last ten years while other groups remain the same. These and other similarly unfortunate facts compel us to seek out focused attention and resources specifically on the Hispanic community. Indeed, focusing on Hispanics is not just a moral imperative or a political mandate; it is an economic necessity. Hispanics are the largest and still the fastest growing demographic in the country. With a median age of 27, Hispanics already form a large segment of our workforce and will continue to make up an increasingly larger share in the decades to come. As the fortunes of Hispanics go, so will the fate of our country. The issues that cripple the Hispanic family will also cripple our economy.

The Administration is to be congratulated for making efforts to place Hispanic political operatives in federal government. This could have long-term benefits as these young professionals gain experience in the decades to come, however, their tenure is short and as such, they will be unable to have the lasting presence to affect the systemic change necessary for the full participation of the Hispanic community. The most recent example of this is the Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood funding that was announced this week. While the RFP states that ACF reserves the right to consider preferences to fund organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations, it appears that this option was not exercised, as organizations with a stellar track record of providing relationship and marriage education in primarily Hispanic communities were not funded. The result was a decrease of almost 50% in funding directed to organizations that are intentionally, and successfully, focused on serving Hispanic populations. While Hispanic children account for nearly 40% of all poor children, ACF awarded only 5% of this TANF supported program to Hispanic communities. Sadly, this was a recapitulation of last year's pregnancy prevention grant awards. Hispanic have the highest rates of adolescent pregnancies, and less than five awards of more than one hundred were made to organizations intentionally and successfully focused on serving primarily Hispanic adolescents.

Appendix B

January 19, 2012

Acting Assistant Secretary George Sheldon
Administration for Children and Families
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201



Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Sheldon,

The NAHF Roundtable recently received your response to our letter of October 7, 2011. We wish to acknowledge your willingness to continue our dialogue and follow-up with tangible recommendations, and we hope to build a partnership with you and your staff that can result in some concrete outcomes.

It is encouraging to see the number of Hispanic-focused activities outlined in your email and letter. Many of these action items, however, refer to longstanding ACF commitments and, while potentially promising, do not substantively respond to the recommendations presented at our meeting September 30th. Specifically, you cite convening the Hispanic Research Work Group; publication of the Dual Language Learners paper; completing the Hispanic Healthy Marriage Evaluation; continuing the next stage for the Carrerras en Salud evaluation; and translating the ACF Directory into Spanish. To be sure, these are important initiatives and we applaud your commitment to see them through to fruition. We have been engaged in conversations over the last four years to see these initiatives come to light, only to see them stall. We are certain that with your commitment and leadership we will see the finish line on these efforts. Additionally, your stated commitment to increase Hispanic employment in the ACF workforce and to ensure equitable Latino participation in review panels, both critically important, are also longstanding ACF commitments with little tangible results.

Surely we can work together to advance bold initiatives that will increase the likelihood of you remaining at the helm at ACF beyond 2012, or at the very least cement your legacy within the organization. It is our sincere hope that the February 2012 discussion you recommend with us will focus on ACF investments made to ensure progress on the critical and time sensitive recommendations presented by the Roundtable. Specifically, we wish to work with you to ensure the following:

- Increasing Hispanic representation on the review panels which will occur **this Spring and Summer (2012)**;
- Informing program announcements that reflect Hispanic human service concerns which are currently being drafted and approved by all ACF Program Offices for award by September 30, 2012; and,
- Increase the number of research projects awarded this fiscal year which inform ACF on the nature of Latino community access issues related to ACF services, catalogue Hispanic population needs for focused ACF service delivery and discretionary projects, and generate data for a Hispanic research agenda. This research effort

would be similar to the recent research project your agency announced to address the needs and concerns of the LGBT community. The March, 2012, meeting of the Hispanic Research Work Group, convened by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, can produce the particulars for this activity.

These are three critical areas in which, working together, we can make a serious impact in the activities of ACF. The NAHF Roundtable looks forward to working cooperatively with ACF on these immediate projects as we steadfastly move forward on the array of recommendations set out in the October 7th correspondence. The Roundtable represents all of the expertise needed to assist ACF to succeed in achieving its goals with the Hispanic population, and stands ready to work with you and your staff on these initiatives. Given the time sensitive nature of this work the Roundtable leadership is willing to meet even prior to the February 2012 meeting with the internal ACF Task Force that produced the action plan attached to your December 28, 2011 letter. Once I receive the contact information for the Task Force members I will reach out to them so that preparation can begin for a productive discussion in February.

We look forward to working together toward some tangible outcomes this year.

Sincerely,



Luis R. Torres, PhD
On Behalf of NAHF Roundtable

cc The Honorable Secretary Kathleen Sebelius

Roundtable Participants:

Dr. Alicia La Hoz, Family Bridges – Chicago, IL
Ms. Carmen T. Joge, Center for New Communities - Washington, D.C
Dr. Etiony Aldarondo, University of Miami - Miami, FL
Dr. Luis R. Torres, University of Houston – Houston, TX
Dr. Rosa M. Gil, Comunilife, Inc. – New York, NY
H. Analco González, J.D., MBA, Center for New Communities - San Antonio, TX
Dr. Blanca Estela Enriquez, Region 19 – El Paso, TX
Alicia Diaz, CNC – Washington, D.C
Dr. Marcelino Colon, Puerto Rican Family Service Alliance – Puerto Rico
Dr. Ruth Reyes Ramos, Catholic University – Puerto Rico
Ms. Virginia Madueño, Riverbank Mayor – Riverbank, CA
Ms. Elba Montalvo, CHC – New York, NY
Mr. Tadeo Saenz-Thompson, Washington State Migrant Council - Sunnyside, WA
Dr. Anderson Torres / Maria Elena Girone, PRFI – New York, NY
Mr. Jose Villalobos, TELACU – Los Angeles, CA
Ms. Sylvia M. Zaldivar-Sykes, Lake County Community Foundation / Chicago
Community Trust – Chicago, IL
Dr. Luis Zayas, University of Texas – Austin, TX



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Appendix C

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Office of the Assistant Secretary, Suite 600
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

September 18, 2012

Luis R. Torres, PhD
University of Houston
Graduate College of Social Work
110 HA Social Work Building—Room 303
Houston, TX 77204-4013

Dear Dr. Torres:

Since our February meeting with the National Alliance of Hispanic Families (NAHF), we have taken some important steps to ensure that the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) better reflects the diverse priorities and experiences of the Hispanic population.

- We are currently translating the *Administration for Children and Families Directory of Programs*, the *ACF's Guide to Resources & Funding for Community and Faith-Based Organizations*, as well as sections of our new website and other important documents, into Spanish;
- ACF programs have taken action to include underrepresented and underserved populations in funding opportunity announcements and encourage non-traditional sources to apply for ACF grants. I was pleased, for example, to find new prospective grant reviewers such as Dr. Marcelino Colón, a NAHF member, getting trained for the recent Head Start designation renewal process;
- We have undertaken several research projects focusing on Hispanic populations, including children who are dual language learners or children of migrant and seasonal workers. We convened our Hispanic Research Work Group in March 2012 to discuss the development of a demographic survey module and explore existing research regarding cultural competence/responsiveness in social services and the implications for ACF programs. We also convened researchers to discuss economic mobility among low-income Hispanic families. The ACF Hispanic Research Work Group will meet again in December 2012. I was also very pleased and encouraged by the keen interest in developing data and facilitating research at the local level demonstrated by stakeholders, researchers and advocates during my recent visit to Puerto Rico. In partnership with the *Universidad del Sagrado Corazon*, we are currently coordinating a follow up meeting to further discuss research and data in Puerto Rico;
- We are strengthening our Hispanic Healthy Marriage & Responsible Fatherhood Initiative. The HHMFI will focus on technical assistance strategies to improve the outcomes for Hispanic children by strengthening healthy relationships, married two-parent families, and responsible father involvement by addressing the unique cultural, linguistic, demographic and socio-economic needs of families in Hispanic communities;

September 18, 2012

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- ACF, particularly our Regional Offices, continue to improve Outreach, Capacity Building & Accountability, and Cultural Competence & Awareness amongst Hispanic and other underserved populations. Our Regional Offices are coordinating roundtables and forum with local stakeholders and service providers on funding and resources, etc. On September 21, for example, our New York Region, in partnership with the Puerto Rican Family Institute and the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, will convene a summit on *Asset Building for Low-Income Hispanic Families and Children in New York City*;
- In March, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration Jason Donaldson announced an agency-wide initiative to increase the number of Hispanic and other underrepresented groups in our Federal workforce. If NAHF members want to receive vacancy notifications, please forward your email address to ACF Director of Human Resources, Melissa Smith, at Melissa.Smith@acf.hhs.gov, under the subject, ACF Outreach and Job Vacancy Information. We are also enhancing our workforce's cultural competence. During Hispanic Heritage Month, for example, NAHF member Elba Montalvo will provide a *Latino Cultural Competency Training*, and HHS Office of Civil Rights Director Leon Rodriguez will make a presentation on *Accessing Stakeholders with Limited English Proficiency*; and
- ACF has taken a lead role in the Administration's efforts to identify and alleviate the impact of restrictive immigration laws on public benefit program and social services. Throughout the summer, an ACF Team, including ACF Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Mark Greenberg and ACF Senior Advisor Miriam Calderón, visited ICE facilities in California, Georgia, North Carolina and Texas; and met with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials, representatives from public human service organizations, child welfare agencies, consular officials, and non-governmental organizations to discuss how to best coordinate support for children with parents who are in detention or facing deportation.

It is in the best interest of this nation's future to address the ongoing health, education, social, and economic disparities afflicting our Hispanic and other underserved/underrepresented populations. ACF's strategic outreach to these populations must be realistic, flexible, deliberative, and involve community partnerships at the local, regional and national level. We may not always agree on how to achieve our shared goals, but I truly appreciate NAHF's willingness to continue an open, honest and straightforward dialogue.

As you know, our ACF Strategic Initiatives Plan includes holding discussions with key national and regional leaders and stakeholders related to underrepresented and underserved populations, such as Hispanic communities. My staff will be coordinating a meeting with Hispanic stakeholders, including representatives from various national Hispanic-serving organizations, in the near future. It is my hope that NAHF will be able to participate in this meeting and continue to be part of the dialogue.

September 18, 2012

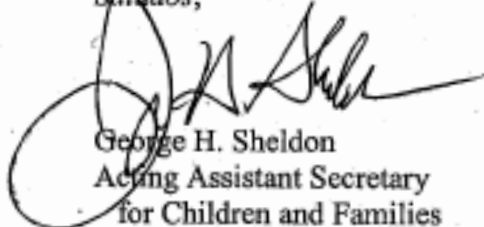
Page 3

Finally, I would like to invite you to visit <http://transition.acf.hhs.gov/blog>, where you can get information on the latest issues and news related to ACF's program work. We are also issuing *Informe*, <http://transition.acf.hhs.gov/informate>, a monthly e-newsletter on ACF programs, outreach, resources and employment opportunities for the Hispanic community.

While we still have much to do to improve our Hispanic outreach, I do believe that the initiatives outlined are a large step in the right direction.

Thank you again for your passion and interest in better serving your communities and collaborating with the Administration for Children and Families and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Saludos,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. H. Sheldon", written over a circular stamp or seal.

George H. Sheldon
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families

From: Torres, Luis R [mailto:lrtores@Central.UH.EDU]

Appendix D

Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 5:37 PM

To: Sheldon, George (ACF); Irizarry, Laura (ACF) (Laura.Irizarry@ACF.hhs.gov)

Cc: 'Anderson Torres'; Blanca Enriquez; Carmen T. Joge; Elba Montalvo; 'Etiony Aldarondo PhD (etiony@miami.edu)'; analco@oci-group.com; analcogonzalez@gmail.com; Jose Villalobos; 'Lorena G. Gonzalez Ph. D. (LGonzalez@hispanicfamily.org)'; Luis Torres; Luis H. Zayas PhD (lzayas@austin.utexas.edu); koamex146@yahoo.com; Rosa Gil; Ruth Reyes (ruthreyes_108@yahoo.com); sylvia@cct.org; Irizarry, Laura (ACF); Sylvia M. Zaldivar-Sykes; tadeo.saenz@wsmonline.org; 'Alicia Diaz'

Subject: RE: Letter from National Alliance for Hispanic Families Regarding Press Release

Importance: High

Dear Mr. Sheldon:

Thank you for your prompt response and for sharing with us the various initiatives ACF has undertaken. We acknowledge that ACF has made some progress in attending to the needs of the Hispanic community in the past year, although much work remains. In the interest of full disclosure and accountability, and in order to place this progress in its proper context, we want to include in our press release more specific details of these accomplishments. These specifics allow for a fuller measure of ACF's progress. Borrowing from the Administration's focus on evidence-based efforts, the narrative you've shared is lacking in quantifiable information that enables progress to be measured. To this end, we would appreciate your sharing the following with us:

1. How many applications have been submitted to ACF as a result of your efforts to "encourage non-traditional sources to apply for ACF grants"? How does this compare to the baseline data from which you measure progress?
2. Regarding grant reviewers, you may recall that we discussed and recommended that at least one Hispanic reviewer participate in each review panel. You countered with a strong argument that panels reviewing applications from Hispanic organizations or for programs serving predominantly Hispanic communities should have a majority (2/3) of Hispanic reviewers. We know that Dr. Colon was one of those reviewers this past year, but clearer metrics will enable us to fully understand how much progress has been made. For instance:
 - a. What percentage of the reviewers for all of ACF grant programs were Hispanic during grant reviews in the 2011-2012 cycle?
 - b. What is your baseline period and how does the 2011-2012 cycle compare to the baseline?

- c. What percentage of the review panels met your suggested goal of being majority Hispanic?
- d. What percentage of review panels met our goal of a composition of at least 1/3 being Hispanic?
- e. What is the number and percentage of Hispanic reviewers by program office?

3. We also applaud the process you have led with regard to research. It is critical to gauge the results of the effort, in addition to the process. As you may recall, we were specifically interested in two aspects of research. First, increasing the investment in research specific to Hispanic populations. Second, increasing the opportunities for research on Hispanic populations to be led by Hispanic researchers and institutions. In this regard, we would like to know:

- a. What is the percentage of ACF research dollars (grants and contracts) that have been specifically directed to study Hispanic populations?
- b. What is the percentage of research dollars (grants and contracts) that have been awarded to Hispanic led organizations?
- c. What is your baseline period and how do the results of the last twelve months compare?

4. Given that many of our NAHF members are engaged in family strengthening efforts, we are delighted to learn from your statements that the Hispanic Healthy Marriage and Responsive Fatherhood Initiative is being strengthened, and we applaud this effort. Can you please provide more specific information on how the initiative has been "strengthened"? For instance:

- a. How many dollars are being allocated to serve the initiative?
- b. What is the baseline level from which the initiative is being strengthened?
- c. What level of effort from staff experienced in working with Hispanic communities is dedicated to this initiative?
- d. How does this compare to the baseline year?
- e. How many Hispanic organizations/leaders have benefitted from this effort as compared to your baseline year?

5. You cite increased activity in the Regional Offices to respond to the growing needs of the Hispanic community. How many of the ten regions have undertaken training efforts similar to that of your New York Region since our meeting one year ago? We also acknowledge that one of our members has been approached by ACF to do a lunch-time presentation that is going to be broadcast to all the regions. While this is certainly a step in the right direction, cultural competency requires more than a 20-minute celebration speech during lunch that people voluntarily attend. The growing importance of the Hispanic population demands a comprehensive, intentional, and ongoing training effort with measurable outcomes.

6. We are aware of the roundtable activities, since a couple of our members were invited to participate. We applaud ACF's efforts to bring Hispanic experience and expertise to the table, and we would like to report on what meaningful changes or improvements in ACF's policies and investment in Hispanic families have been generated as a result of the

roundtable deliberations and recommendations. What metrics has ACF been using to assess the impact of these roundtables?

7. We strongly applaud the Deputy Assistant Secretary's efforts to increase the number of Hispanics and members of other underrepresented groups in the ACF workforce. We would like to report in our press release:

- a. How many jobs have been filled in the agency in the five months since the effort was launched?
- b. What percentage of those jobs have been filled with Hispanics?
- c. How does this rate compare to previous periods where similar efforts have been undertaken by ACF?
- d. How does this rate compare to representation by other important constituencies (i.e., other minority groups)?

8. Regarding your efforts to identify and alleviate the impact of restrictive immigration laws on public benefit programs and social services, especially in light of the recent Administration announcement on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), many of whom are Hispanic, we would like to include in our press release:

- a. What have been the improved results?
- b. What data/metrics reflect the improvement?

Again, our interest is in fairly and accurately reporting the impact ACF has had on Hispanic families and communities, with clear, transparent, and easy to gauge metrics. This is the only way in which progress can truly be ascertained.

Finally, we would like to note that there are several of the eight recommendations outlined in our letter to you dated October 7, 2011 that have not been addressed. Please let us know if you have initiated any efforts in these areas, and if so, any progress you have achieved and the metrics used to measure such progress.

We assume that in keeping with the Administration's focus on outcomes, the additional data we are requesting to better ascertain ACF's progress is collected as part of ACF's ongoing efforts to measure progress and improvement. Thus, we do not believe our request is unreasonable or represents an excessive burden on your staff. Moreover, it is critical information that enables us to understand what ACF has achieved, and to determine what work remains. This is why we made the decision to postpone our press release and give ACF until September 28th to get back to us (the press release is targeted for October 8th), so we could include this data.

Celebrating heritage is important. But the growing size and unattended needs of the Hispanic community can no longer be relegated to a series of four-week events that shine a light on our community and generate some photo ops and sound bites. The growing importance of our Hispanic community demands an intentional, thoughtful, and results-oriented approach all year long.

We look forward to a continued candid discussion about outcomes at the December 3rd meeting of the OPRE Hispanic Research Work Group. We want to formally invite you to meet with us during the time of the Work Group, since many of us will be in attendance.

We thank you for your leadership and commitment, and we look forward to hearing from you with the added information by September 28th so we can incorporate it in our October 8th press release.

Sincerely,

Dr. Torres, On Behalf of NAHF Roundtable

Luis R. Torres, PhD

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From: Sheldon, George (ACF) [mailto:George.Sheldon@acf.hhs.gov]
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2012 4:13 PM
To: Torres, Luis R
Subject: RE: Letter from National Alliance for Hispanic Families Regarding Press Release

Dear Dr. Torres:

Thank you for your recent email. While there is still much to do, I do believe that the initiatives to improve our Hispanic outreach, as outlined earlier, are a large step in the right direction.

I truly appreciate your thoughtful offer to postpone the release of NAHF's upcoming press release, but the information you have requested would take quite a while to compile or is not currently available. I would not want to delay your deadline. Please rest assured we will continue--through our monthly newsletter *Infórmate*; our meetings with local, regional and national stakeholders; and other outreach activities--to keep you informed of our continuous efforts to ensure that the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) better reflects the diverse priorities and experiences of the Hispanic population.

Thank you again for your passion and interest in better serving your communities and collaborating with the Administration for Children and Families and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Saludos,

George H. Sheldon
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families

From: Torres, Luis R [mailto:lrtores@Central.UH.EDU]<mailto:[mailto:lrtores@Central.UH.EDU]>
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 6:37 PM
To: Sheldon, George (ACF); Irizarry, Laura (ACF)
Cc: 'Anderson Torres'; Blanca Enriquez; Carmen T. Joge; Elba Montalvo; 'Etiony Aldarondo PhD (etiony@miami.edu<mailto:etiony@miami.edu>); analco@oci-group.com<mailto:analco@oci-group.com>; analcogonzalez@gmail.com<mailto:analcogonzalez@gmail.com>; Jose Villalobos; 'Lorena G. Gonzalez Ph. D. (LGonzalez@hispanicfamily.org<mailto:LGonzalez@hispanicfamily.org>); Luis Torres; Luis H. Zayas PhD (lzayas@austin.utexas.edu<mailto:lzayas@austin.utexas.edu>); koamex146@yahoo.com<mailto:koamex146@yahoo.com>; Rosa Gil; Ruth Reyes (ruthreyes_108@yahoo.com<mailto:ruthreyes_108@yahoo.com>); sylvia@cct.org<mailto:sylvia@cct.org>; Irizarry, Laura (ACF); Sylvia M. Zaldivar-Sykes; tadeo.saenz@wsnconline.org<mailto:tadeo.saenz@wsnconline.org>; 'Alicia Diaz'