

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Latino Leadership

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### Key Themes Report

#### Iowa West Foundation Focus Group

**Facilitated By:** The Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) and the Heartland Worker Center

**Focus Group Attendees:** 40 Latino Council Bluffs adults and 13 children

**Date:** May 23, 2013. **Place:** HyVee, Council Bluffs

**Transcribed and Coded by:** Darling Handlos and Elisha Novak (Justice for Our Neighbors)

*\*Key questions asked are in bold and numbered. Themes are listed in no order of priority, however, those receiving significant attention are denoted with a parenthesis that includes the number of times that the theme occurred during the evening (not equal to number of participants but rather consensus across the room as theme emerged).*

**1) What are the advantages that Council Bluffs offers to live, work, and prosper?**

Themes:

1. Education for children- (2)
2. Social service agencies- (2)
3. Diversity/Culture (art, youth activities)- (2)
4. No traffic
5. Education for adults (ESL/GED)
6. Acceptance/Diversity (Feeling Welcome)
7. Government assistance (Food Stamps)
8. Equality in Schools (No racism)

**1A) What are the advantages that you enjoy and which do you not?**

Themes:

1. No traffic

**2) What problems and serious disadvantages does the community have?**

Themes:

1. Lack of knowledge of available services
2. Activities for kids are costly
3. Lack of education prevents access to better jobs

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4. Lack of opportunities to finish school and further education
5. Language barrier preventing access to opportunities
6. Lack of legal status prevents higher education
7. Fear/lack of involvement by parents
8. Lack of communication (of community activities)

### **2B) Of those problems or disadvantages, which directly affect the Latino community in Council Bluffs?**

#### Themes:

1. Students/Youth loosing/forgetting Spanish- (4)
2. Language barrier prevents accessing opportunities – (2)
3. Transportation- (2)
4. Restrictive/long work hours prevent adults from engaging- (2)
5. Lack of information for college preparation
6. Need a central place to go for resources/guidance
7. Adults not educating themselves/getting involved in the community
8. Lack of knowledge of labor rights/laws
9. Lack of immigration status (fear of losing jobs)
10. Lack of scholarships
11. Lack of childcare that prevents adults from participating civically
12. Lack of knowledge of available services

### **2C) What affects your family or your personal situation?**

#### Themes:

1. Not aware of the opportunities and existing services (including scholarships)

### **3) What are some of the responses/solutions available to some of those problems or disadvantages?**

#### Themes:

1. Learn English

### **4) Before today, what did you know about the Iowa West Foundation and their work in your community?**

#### Themes:

1. Technical business support
2. Streetscape projects/beautification projects
3. Helped fund the childcare services for Centro Latino services

### **4A) What is some of the work that has been beneficial or important for the Latino community? Or for you or your family? No responses/Not known**

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**5) In your opinion, what should be the problems or concrete projects that Iowa West Foundation can dedicate?**

Themes:

1. Awareness of labor rights (law)- (4)
2. Lack of Spanish language outreach via communications media (news, print)- (3)
3. Need programs to teach Spanish (Spanish teachers in Council Bluffs schools)- (2)
4. Transportation- (2)
5. Education in a larger/broader/institutionalized context – (2)
6. Medical assistance in Council Bluffs (In Spanish)
7. Need to increase communication/knowledge of existing services
8. Better working conditions/better jobs
9. GED in Spanish
10. Spanish speakers in stores
11. Support small business owners who create jobs
12. Support Centro Latino to grow/expand
13. Community needs to know and state needs (further research on needs of community by the community)
14. Adult education
15. Fund a scholarship program (where legal status is not relevant)

**5A) How should the community assure that the Foundation, or those that are going to receive the Foundation money to work in the Latino community, consult with or inform the community, when and where, and how they should invest their resources?**

No responses/not addressed