

Longmont Multicultural Plan

Longmont Multicultural Plan Vision

The people of Longmont are working together to be a caring and inclusive community - proud to embrace, respect, and celebrate each other

Background

- The multicultural strategic planning process emerged from the findings of a 2001 community assessment of Boulder County Latino needs and assets
- The Longmont City Council invited the Boulder County Latino Task Force to participate in Council's 2002 annual retreat to explore how to take action on the assessment data

Background

- Longmont developed a five-year (2003 – 2007) strategic plan designed to guide the community in becoming a multicultural and inclusive community; this was accomplished through a community-wide effort

Six category areas addressed

- Education
- Health
- Housing
- Culture
- Economy
- Community

Task Forces of The Longmont Multicultural Plan

- EDUCATION- Increase involvement and educational achievement in the Longmont community through active promotion of local resources and opportunities.
- HEALTH- Establish a network of individuals and organizations willing to work on Latino health issues. Support and develop programs within Longmont that will provide for a healthy community.

Task Forces of The Longmont Multicultural Plan

- HOUSING- Organize efforts that focus on creating safe, affordable housing in Longmont; implement a rental inspection program; promote fair housing practices; educate and create an awareness of housing services, programs and homeownership opportunities in Longmont
- CULTURE- Promote positive community climate, participation and increase multicultural awareness. Expand the use of media to increase and celebrate awareness of all cultures.

Task Forces of The Longmont Multicultural Plan

- ECONOMY- Prepare people and businesses to be successful long-term contributors to our community; provide resources to assist businesses in regulatory environment.
- COMMUNITY- Engage more diverse members in community leadership roles at the neighborhood, local and/or regional level; identify and address barriers to community involvement.

Steering Committee

- Co-chairs from each task force also serve on the Longmont Multicultural Plan Steering Committee, which is responsible for providing ongoing direction and guidance to the plan implementation

Accomplishments

1. Published and distributed bilingual education resource brochures throughout Longmont
2. Partnered with the City to strengthen its rental inspection program
3. Partnered with the City to implement a fair housing program and conduct fair housing workshops in the community
4. Sponsored a “New Americans” film/discussion series in conjunction with the Longmont Museum
5. Annually organize several cultural festivals: Cinco de Mayo, Dia de los Muertos, Diez y seis de Septiembre



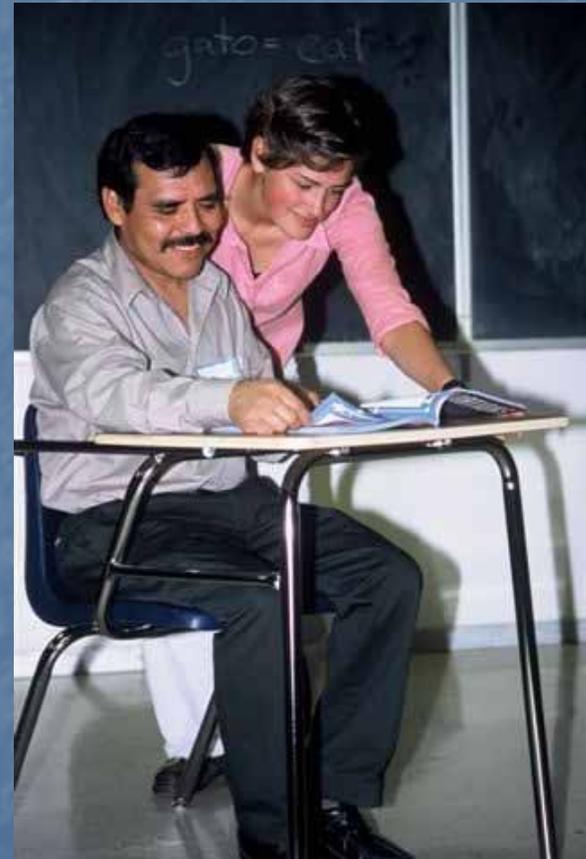
Accomplishments

6. Created and facilitated over 20 “Tamales & Talk” and “Quesadillas & Conversation” sessions with community members
7. Conducted focus groups to identify barriers to community involvement in Longmont
8. Organized community forums to discuss transportation access concerns
9. Met with Spanish speaking business owners to get input on what needs are not being met in the community
10. Worked with local newspaper to publish a month-long series on Latinos in Longmont



Accomplishments

11. Partnered with school district to offer cultural competency training to staff and to create a mentoring program to enhance student achievement at one of our local high schools
12. Continued to offer Latino parent leadership and advocacy training
13. Collaborated with local hospital to design and offer cultural competency training for medical personnel
14. Sponsored workshops to increase awareness of predatory lending practices and how to avoid getting involved
15. Partnered with other entities throughout the county to create the Latino Chamber of Boulder County



Lessons Learned

- Requires high level of commitment and leadership
- Requires making a strong business case for the effort (beyond “it’s the right thing to do”)
- Don’t push coordination too quickly; encourage disparate actions and what individuals can do within their own boundaries
- Explore sustainable structures to champion the effort/shared leadership models
- Communicate actions and accomplishments within the effort and throughout the community

Lessons Learned, cont.

- Strong relationships are the basis for greater community involvement
- One of the biggest barriers to inclusive community involvement is trust and understanding
- It is difficult to reach out to other ethnic groups when we don't understand these groups well
- Two of the biggest predictors of community and community involvement are a person's sense of connection to the community and the extent of their networks throughout the community

Lessons Learned, cont.

- People's first goal when entering the community realm is to be understood by others
- Increasing community involvement is not a one-step process; involvement begins by building relationships and networks and grows from there
- Ultimately an inclusive, caring community depends on fostering positive relationships between *individuals*