

2006

Washington State
Latino/Hispanic Assessment

State of Washington Commission on Hispanic Affairs

Official Recognition



This report would not have been possible without the ongoing support and generous contributions of State Farm Insurance.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Uriel Iñiguez", is written over a horizontal line.

Uriel Iñiguez
Executive Director
Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs

2006 Washington State Latino/Hispanic Assessment

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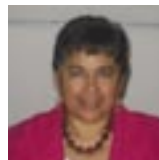
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Cover

Pachamama - Madre Tierra ('Pacha Mama'; 'Earth Goddess'; or 'Mother Earth') Regardless, of her title, she is feared and revered around the world by those who ascribe to her mythological roots as protectorate of our global sphere and those closely linked to agriculture. Those who heed her challenge to work within the ever shrinking boundaries of our global eco-system and do well by her are smiled upon with reverence. Those who ignore the delicate balance between natural resources and personal gain are held in contempt and 'Pacha Mama' will unleash her scorn at the time of her choosing.

About the artist

Blanca Santander is a native of Lima, Peru. She has been drawn to colors, shapes, and forms and has been inspired by her dreams and deepest feelings. These inspirations allowed her to create as a child and still continue to drive her today. She has an extensive palette of artistic interest and abilities that range from canvas to watercolors and to the photographic image. She resides in Seattle and is currently illustrating a series of children's books.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It has been my pleasure to serve as Chair of the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs this year and to have had an opportunity to meet numerous members of our communities throughout the state. It has also been an honor to work with my fellow commissioners, our Executive Director, and the Commission staff – all of whom are committed to improving the quality of life for Hispanics/Latinos in Washington State.



This year has been both challenging and rewarding. We have focused on a variety of issues that impact the Hispanic/Latino communities including education, health care access, farm worker protection, housing, and economic development. We have also enhanced our efforts to reach out to our communities and to be a stronger voice for all Hispanics/Latinos in the state of Washington.

We worked collaboratively to develop a comprehensive strategic plan that identifies and sets goals to ensure cultural competency within state government, created an environment for institutional change, encouraged community engagement and interaction, analyzed public policy, and examined data driven research.

All of us affiliated with the Commission take the responsibility of representing Hispanics/Latinos seriously. We continue to work closely with state government officials, legislators, agencies, community leaders, and others while reflecting the wishes and priorities of Governor Christine Gregoire who appointed and empowered us with upholding the highest standards of public service.

We hope that you will find our annual report informative and of value. We represent one of the many voices in our state that advocates relentlessly for all Hispanics/Latinos residing in the state of Washington. We welcome your issues/concerns and suggestions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Yvonne Lopez-Morton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Yvonne Lopez-Morton

INTRODUCTION

Hispanics/Latinos are the largest minority at the state and national level. Disproportionate obstacles face Hispanic/Latino's in areas such as: health care, education, justice equity, housing and environmental health. The Commission recognizes the importance of addressing issues that directly affect the Hispanic/Latino community and responding to their changing needs.



"Hispanics either don't exist, or there are many misconceptions about them," said John Valencia, Executive Director for the Grays Harbor Latino Network. He added that "Latinos are without agency representation from the community." Mr. Valencia further explained that the Grays Harbor area does not have a Spanish language newspaper and little has been done to create an environment of inclusion. The challenges facing Hispanic/Latinos are multifaceted,

this population is younger, has less formal education, and generally has a lower income base than the general population -characteristics that can have compelling consequences on the community.

Organizations such as the Grays Harbor Latino Network, the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) Coalition, and Project HOPE are working to remove gaps in information, education and health care access in their community.

The following statistics provide evidence of the rising significance and demonstrate a clear indication of the growing impact of Hispanics/Latinos in Washington State:

- Hispanics/Latinos currently represent 8.5% (517,055) of the population in Washington State (Larson Report), and they constitute the largest minority population group.
- By 2010, it is estimated that there will be 626,349 Hispanics/Latinos living in Washington State; median age 24.84 (Provisional Projections of the Total population by age, gender, and race for the state of Washington).
- Twenty-eight percent of Immigrants in Washington State are Hispanic/Latino (Northwest Federation of Community Organizations) and that foreign-born Hispanics/Latinos in the state increased by 300% between 1990 and 2000, (Growth and Change in Washington State's Hispanic Population).
- Six percent of Washingtonians speak Spanish at home (In Our Own Words: Immigrant's Experiences in the Northwest, Feb 2006, Northwest Federation of Community Organizations)
- Seventy-eight percent of the American unauthorized population in 2005 hails from Mexico and Latin America (PEW Hispanic Research Center).

Hispanics/Latinos living in Washington cities or towns face identical issues with other Hispanics/Latinos in dissimilar Washington communities: low graduation rates, low Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) test scores, lack of health care coverage, farm worker's risks (pesticide exposure and work injuries), inadequate access to interpreters for services, and little progress in economic development. According to Bob Arrington, Assistant Director in Pesticide Management for the Washington State Department of Agriculture, "Housing for migrant workers and non-migrant workers are without a doubt two of the biggest initiatives necessitating legislative support."

Disproportionate rates and injustice are present in every dimension of Hispanic/Latino lives; however, tangible outcomes and preventable measures do exist. Three major themes consistently emerge when searching for a solution to the existing gaps:

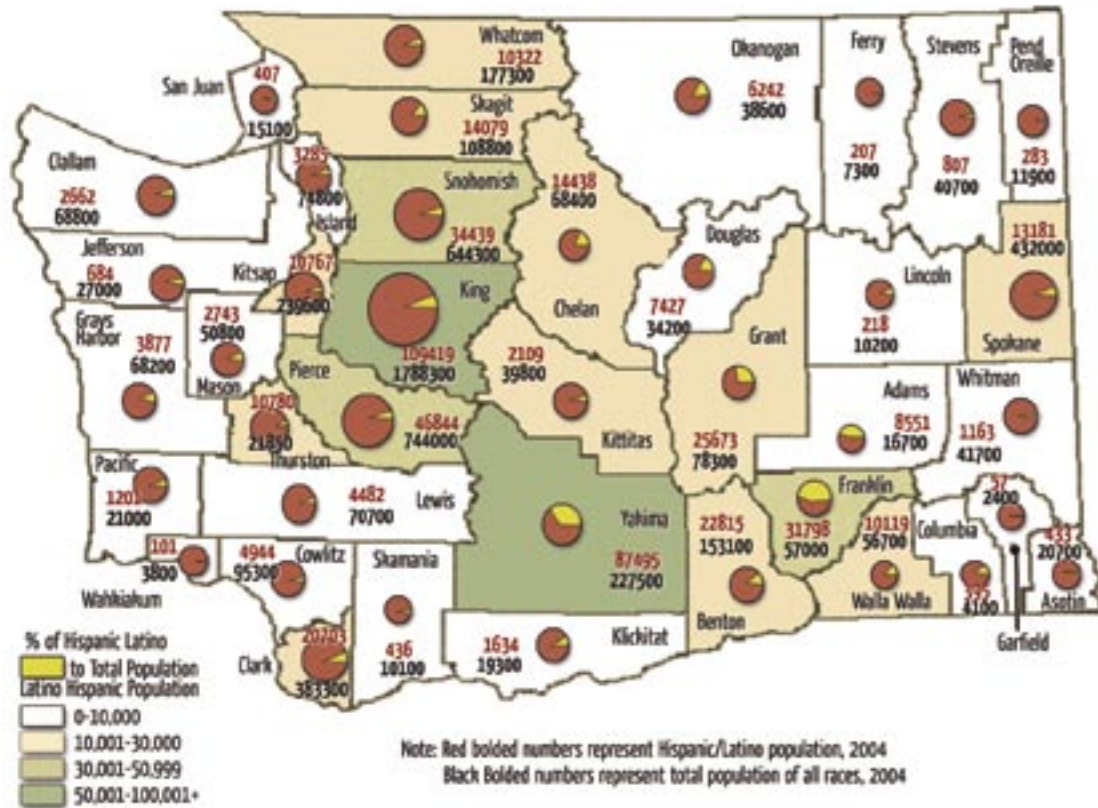
1. Knowledge base (e.g. cultural competency)
2. Social strategy to accomplish change
3. Political will to support change (i.e. generating resources needed to produce change)

The State has actively looked and continues to look for improvements. The Department of Social Health Services (DSHS) and Labor and Industries (L&I) continue to enhance their efforts to certify medical and social service interpreters and translators working for state agencies. These efforts must be consistent and constant if progress is to be made in reducing the issues facing the Hispanic population.

2006 DEMOGRAPHICS

Washington State Distribution of Hispanic/Latino to Total Population in Individual Counties

Source: Office of Financial Management, 2004



2006 DEMOGRAPHICS

- As of July, 1st 2005, the Census Bureau estimated that there were 296.4 million people living in the United States; 42.7 million call themselves Hispanic.
- Hispanics/Latinos are the largest minority in the nation and in Washington State. During the 1990's, Washington State's population was one of the highest growing in the country due to the 105% increase in the Hispanic/Latino population (Washington State Republican National Hispanic Assembly).
- The Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) illustrates that in 2000 the Hispanic/Latino population was 441,509. By 2005, the Hispanic/Latino population had increased by 22.3% to 540,048. The increase between 2000 and 2005 shows that another 98,539 Hispanics/Latinos have moved to Washington State.
- The annual graduation rate for Hispanic/Latinos (HLs) during the 2004-2005 school year was 60.2% and the student dropout rate was 29.8%. Hispanic/Latino students with limited English proficiency had graduation rates of 50% and were less likely to graduate than those with greater English proficiency (OSPI Graduation and Dropout Statistics for Washington 2004-2005).
- In 2005, the uninsured rates for Hispanics/Latinos (HLs) remained statistically unchanged at 32.7%, while the number of HLs without coverage increased from 13.5 million in 2004 to 14.1 million in 2005. The uninsured rate for non-Hispanic Caucasians in 2005 was 11.3%, for Blacks it was 19.6%, showing statistically no change from 2004. Asians rates increased from 16.5% in 2004 to 17.9% in 2005. Statistically, Hispanic/Latinos continue to report as "uninsured" more than non-Hispanic Caucasians, Blacks, and Asians (US Census Bureau).
- The 2004 Washington State Population Survey of Health Insurance by race/ethnicity reports that Hispanics/Latinos are disproportionately represented among the uninsured compared to non-Hispanics. Roughly 9% of Washington's non-elderly population is Hispanic, but 15%, or approximately 91,000 of the uninsured, are Hispanic/Latino (WA State Office of Financial Management).

2006 DEMOGRAPHICS



- 2005 characteristics and median earnings in the past 12 months indicate that the median earnings by Hispanic/Latino men and women are the lowest in the identified ethnic/racial groups. Hispanic/Latino men had median earnings of \$27,380 per year, compared to Asian men who had the highest median earnings in any single race: \$48,693 per year. Non-Hispanic Caucasian men had the second highest earnings at \$46,807 per year, followed by Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander men at \$35,426 per year. Black, American Indian, and Alaska Native men had earnings of \$33,520 per year. Each of these ethnic/racial groups had higher earnings than Hispanic/Latino men. The pattern observed for woman by ethnicity/race was similar to that of men. Hispanic/Latina women earned less than the other ethnic/race groups with an average of \$23,678 per year (US census Bureau).
- There are more pregnancy related deaths among Hispanic/Latina woman (10.3 per 100,000) than among non-Hispanic Caucasian women (6 per 100,000). Puerto Rican women are more at risk among Latinas (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).
- Certified minority and women's businesses employed over 9,700 people and generated over \$500 million in revenue for the Washington State economy (2003 Report from the Office of Women and Minority Business Enterprises).
- According to the 2006 Latino Labor Report, the Hispanic/Latino unemployment rate reached a historic low of 5.2% in the second quarter of 2006. The gap between the seasonally-adjusted unemployment rates for Hispanics/Latinos and non-Hispanics/Latinos was just 0.6 percentage points—the smallest since 1973 when employment data on Hispanics/Latinos first became available (Pew Hispanic Center).
- Wage growth, while inconsistent across groups, tended to favor minority workers. Median wages for Hispanic/Latino and Black workers, which started at lower levels and remained lower, increased in 2005-2006 while wages of Asian and Caucasian workers declined slightly. The median wage; however, actually declined amongst foreign-born Hispanics/Latinos (they represent the biggest share in the Hispanic/Latino labor pool). In addition, Hispanics/Latinos continue to have the lowest median wage of all racial and ethnic groups (Pew Hispanic Center).
- According to the Pew Hispanic Center "Hispanics and the 2006 Election Fact Sheet" dated October 12, 2006, of the 514,722 Hispanics living in the state of Washington 190,576 are eligible voters. The population eligible to vote is defined as U. S. citizens ages 18 or older.
- The Pew Hispanic Center estimates that more than 17 million Hispanics will be U.S. citizens over the age of 18 and thus eligible to vote in the November 2006 election, an increase of 7% over the 2004 election. The Hispanic share of the U.S. electorate will increase to 8.6 from 8.2 in 2004.

2006 LEGISLATIVE RECAP

INTRODUCTION

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs tracked 67 bills that were relevant to the Hispanic communities of Washington State. Many of the bills tracked pertained to one of the following categories: education, health care, farm worker rights, economic development, housing and/or legal issues.

Despite the short legislative session, the Commission had many successes. In addition to the successes, new areas were identified where much work remains to be done. Some of the policy successes and challenges will be discussed later in this report.

The Director of the Commission worked hard to effect changes in the education arena. Mr. Iñiguez along with CHA's Legislative Intern collaborated in the creation of a speech that was presented to the Governor's Washington Learns K-12 Council. The presentation was well received by the Council.

The Director also participated in a weekly radio broadcast on Radio KDNA. During his broadcast he provided updates on bills that were before the House and Senate, in particular, those that impacted Hispanics/Latinos.

Other successes included the 2006 Latino Legislative Day which brought Hispanics from throughout the state to Olympia. Nearly 350 Hispanics/Latinos gathered on the Capitol steps on February 8th to kick off the day long campaign, chanting "Juntos, Si Se Puede" – "united, yes we can." They came to voice issues and concerns that affect the Hispanic/Latino communities within our state.

Our population will undoubtedly continue to grow consequently state legislators will continue to hear from the Commission and our presence will surely be more visible. This event also provided educational and change-making opportunities for those that attended.

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs applauds and thanks all the people who worked arduously to make Latino Legislative Day a reality. Above all, a heartfelt and cordial thank you to Carlos Jimenez and Alexia Iñiguez for their dedication, perseverance, and the countless hours they spent planning this event.

In addition to the Latino Legislative Day, the Commission hosted a Legislative Reception in collaboration with the other ethnic commissions and participated in the Latino Educational Achievement Project (LEAP) conference.

The Legislative Reception was truly a notable success. The Commission was honored with the presence and performance of the talented Hispanic/Latino youth of the Wenatchee High School Mariachi Band. They stole the show with their performance at the reception, the Rotunda and in the O'Brien building.

Equally notable was the public meeting held in conjunction with the LEAP conference. The meeting site was filled with Hispanic/Latino students eager to voice their concerns regarding the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), acquiring funding for higher education, and getting assistance in educating their parents to support and approve higher education. The Commissioners responded to student questions and assured them that pressure would be placed on Washington State legislators to keep their issues in mind.

Without a doubt, improving the quality of life for Hispanics/Latinos in the State of Washington is a constant issue. The Commission remains committed in its efforts to educate both the community and policy makers regarding the significant issues that confront the Hispanic/Latino population.

The Commission would like to express a heartfelt thank you to each and every legislator that listened to these concerns, attended the Legislative Reception and or invited the Commission to participate in hearings in 2006.

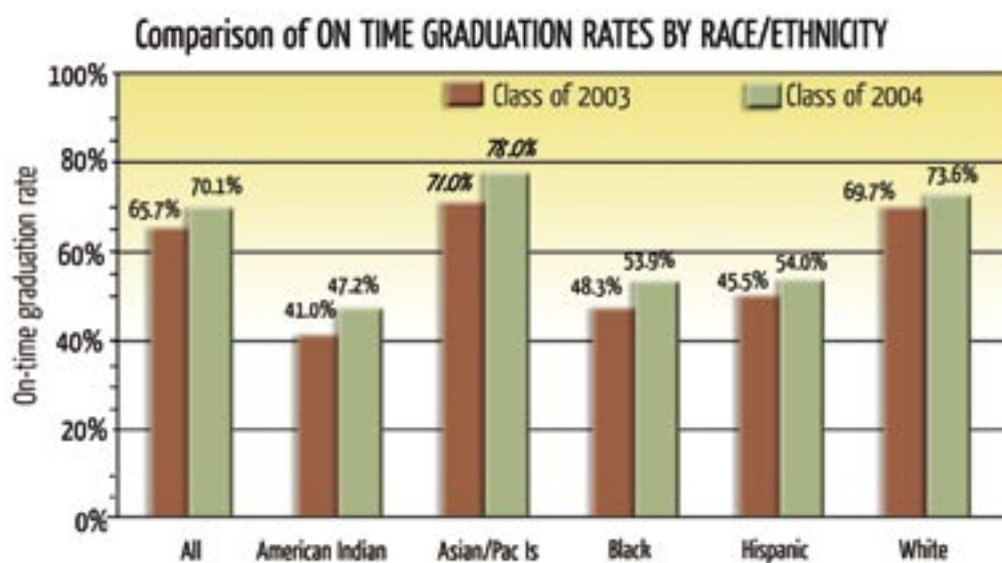
In addition, the Commission would like to thank all advocates, administrators and constituents who provided feedback and who participated in this year's short session.

EDUCATION

There were numerous significant bills that the Commission believes would have aided in closing the achievement gap for Hispanics/Latinos. Unfortunately, many of them did not pass during the 2006 legislative session. Nonetheless, the Commission will continue to work toward improving the education system. Some of the bills the Commission supported but that did not pass are as follows:

- HB 1191 would have allowed persons who hold non-immigrant visas to pay resident tuition at institutions of higher education
- HB 1727 would have revised dropout reporting requirements to better capture the rates of youth who drop out of high school
- HB 2293 would have removed the requirement of including highest WASL scores for any given subject area on high school transcripts
- HB 2423 would have encouraged middle, junior, and high schools to implement a comprehensive guidance, counseling, and planning program
- HB 2429 would have provided for a comprehensive analysis of Washington's assessment system. One has not been conducted since 2001 with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act
- HB 2430 would have provided diagnostic assessments for students in a variety of grades
- HB 2581 would have dedicated funding to replicate successful parent and community involvement models within diverse student populations,
- HB 2582 would have provided for expansion of high school completion programs at community and technical colleges for older students who have not received a diploma but are eligible for state support

HB 2582 was of great significance and would have been of great benefit for many Hispanic students who are not passing their assessment and not graduating on time. Not being able to pass the assessment tests has been a major contributing factor in the high school drop out rate. This bill would have provided older students with a more appropriate forum to complete their education.



Source: OSPI Web Site

2006 LEGISLATIVE RECAP

There were other Education bills that did not gain support.

It is important to discuss the successes of the session as well. There were several bills that gained support in the legislature during this session:

- SHB 2733 authorized an alternative method of assessment and an appeal process for the Certificate of Academic Achievement. This bill was combined with SB 6475 and HB 2785 for the same outcome
- HB 2964 created a department of early learning, recognizing the importance of a child's early development on future emotional, social, and educational growth
- SB 6194 requires the Department of Health to establish an ongoing multi-cultural health awareness and education program. Education programs for health care professions are required to integrate instruction in multicultural health into the basic education preparation curriculum no later than July 1, 2008.

SB 6194 is of particular importance. The Commission strongly believes that in the field of education, educators must acquire experience and knowledge in working with diverse populations. This will inevitably reduce the inherent and often subtle biases that work their way into systems. It also believes that educators must be exposed to the diverse communities that they will serve. This bill is a step in the right direction for those being educated in the health care profession.

The Kaiser Foundation did a review of studies conducted between 1984 and 2001, and found that 84% of all studies reveal racial/ethnic differences in cardiac care. The 2005 report, titled Policy Challenges and Opportunities in Closing the Racist/Ethnic Divide in Health Care, also found that many medical professionals had to be educated regarding the existence of the disparities.

SB 6618 was another accomplishment during this session. The Washington Institute of Public Policy is directed to conduct a study that will consist of three components:

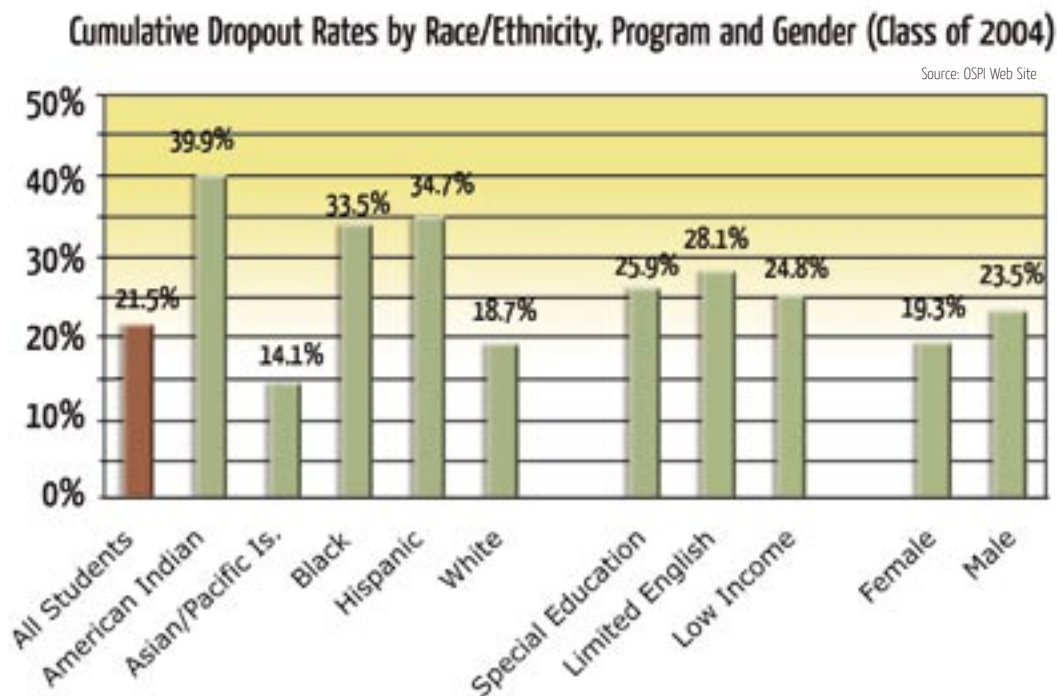
- 1) A statistical analysis of the characteristics of the students who did not meet the state standard on the WASL and identification of possible barriers to student success or possible causes of the lack of success
- 2) A review and identification of additional alternative assessment options that will augment the current assessment system
- 3) A review and identification of additional alternative methods, procedures, or combinations of performance measures to assess whether students have met the state learning standards By December 1, 2006, the Institute must provide an interim report to the Legislature and a final report by December 2007.

HB 3127 declares the intent to reactivate the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning. This bill creates an educational ombudsman and an advisory committee to the Governor whose duties will be to provide information to the public regarding the public education system; develop parent involvement materials; identify obstacles to greater parent and community involvement in schools; identify strategies for improving success for student groups with disproportionate academic achievement; and refer or facilitate the resolution of complaints.

Areas of focus and concern for the future include high school drop out prevention, continued work on closing the achievement gap, and promoting higher education.

High School Dropout Prevention

"The Graduation and Dropout Statistics for Washington's Counties, Districts and Schools Report", released in September of 2005 by OSPI reiterates the importance of obtaining a quality high school education in the growing global economy. This report lists cumulative dropout rates for the Class of 2004 – the chart below is taken from this report (Bylsma & Ireland, September 2005).



Future legislation that provides for more one-on-one student-teacher or student-advisor interface, increases cultural awareness of educators, and works to involve parents of minority children and their community. This legislation will undeniably assist and contribute to addressing this problem.

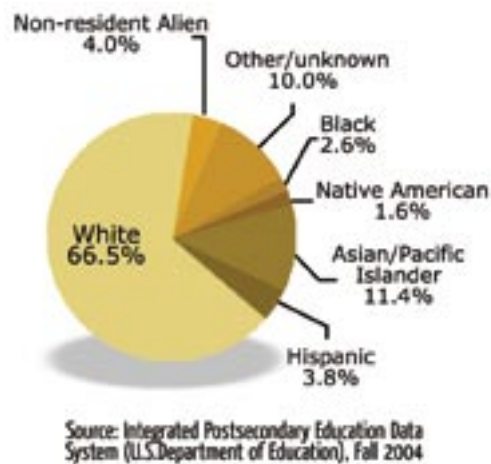
Achievement Gap

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs is aware of the persistent gap in educational achievement for Hispanics/Latinos. According to The National Council for La Raza, Washington State has a high Hispanic/Latino population, ranking 10th in the nation. As this population grows, additional resources, research, and work will need to be granted in order to serve this population's needs.

Higher Education

Higher education is increasingly becoming a necessity in today's job market. According to the January 2006 HEC Board Report, "Key Facts about higher education in Washington," Hispanic/Latino enrollment is only 3.9% at four year institutions, as this chart shows.

Public Four Year Institutions Enrollment by race/ethnicity Fall 2004



2006 LEGISLATIVE RECAP

For independent four year institutions (e.g. specialized schools for cosmetology and computer graphics), the Hispanic/Latino enrollment is 4.7%. The highest enrollments for Hispanics/Latinos are at community and technical colleges, which have a 9.6% enrollment.

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs is committed to informing and providing recommendations to policy makers, state legislators, and the Governor's office regarding improving the K-12 system and increasing access to higher education.

EMERGENT ISSUES

Pesticides

The use of pesticides and the potentially harmful affect on farm workers and children's health is of concern to the Commission. HB 1388 would have limited the use of pesticides in and on school facilities. Unfortunately, it did not gain support in the legislature. The Commission recommends that the legislature revisit this issue at the next session.

Another bill central to this issue was HB 1863. This bill acknowledged that farm workers are at increased risk of exposure to highly toxic pesticides; many which could be replaced by less toxic versions. HB 1863 would have made the replacement of the highly toxic pesticides with less toxic ones a priority for workplace safety. HB 1863 did not gain legislative support this year.

SB 5030 also did not gain support in this year's legislature session. It would have required various state agencies responsible for chemical use and regulation to coordinate their activities in a timely manner to ensure adequate monitoring of chemical use and protected workers, adults, and children from the effects of toxic chemical exposure.

SB 6607 required that the State Board of Health adopt rules requiring any person applying a pesticide with the signal words "Danger/Poison" to notify adjacent schools, hospitals, nursing homes, or state-licensed child or adult day care centers at least two business days before the start of application. This bill did not pass.



It is evident that much work remains to be done in this area. The Commission believes that passing legislation to monitor and/or limit pesticide use would not only benefit the Hispanic/Latino population but the greater Washington State population as well.

Wage Violations

There were several bills that addressed wage violations in this year's legislative session. None of them gained support:

- HB 2623 would have required a deposit of a separate repatriation bond by any person acting as a farm labor contractor. The purpose of the repatriation bond was to cover travel expenses for H-2A workers return to their home country of origin, room and board, and other living expenses while they awaited repatriation
- SB 6352 is a partner bill to the prior bill. SB 6352 would have protected agricultural workers by ensuring that farm labor contractors were licensed annually.

Protecting the rights of farm workers is an important priority for the Commission. It is their goal and desire that future work on these issues will have further success for the benefit and well being of our Hispanic/Latino community.

Health Care

Of particular interest during this session, were bills that dealt with mental health care needs of both adults and children. HB 2501 passed the legislature and was signed by the Governor on March 15, 2006. This bill clarifies that coverage for mental health services applies to all group health plans and for groups other than small groups as defined in RCW 48.43.005. It requires that group benefit plans phase in mental health parity in 2006, 2008, and 2010.

Unfortunately, SHB 2397 did not pass. This bill would have established a pilot program to support collaborative local efforts to select, implement, and ensure that quality, evidence-based mental health services were provided to children by December, 2006. This bill would have provided for at least one pilot program on the Eastern side of the state.

2SSB 6197 passed to create a Health Disparities Council. The intent of this bill is to create the healthiest state in the nation by striving to eliminate disparities in women and people of color.

Other health care bills the Commission tracked this session are listed as follows:

- SSB 6195 did not pass. This bill would have created health impact assessments
- SSB 5888 did not pass. This bill would have revised provisions addressing the Washington State health insurance pool
- HB 2473 did not pass. This bill would have protected citizens against pharmacy benefit manager's unfair prescription drug practices. They would have been required to notify, in writing, the entities they contract with of anything that directly or indirectly presents a conflict of interest

Law Enforcement & Immigration

Enforcing federal immigration law is the responsibility of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. State agencies should make clear to crime victims that they are not immigration agents. SB 5647 would have declared that all general authority, limited authority, and specially commissioned Washington State police officers should refrain from the enforcement of federal civil immigration laws. This bill did not gain support in the legislative short session.

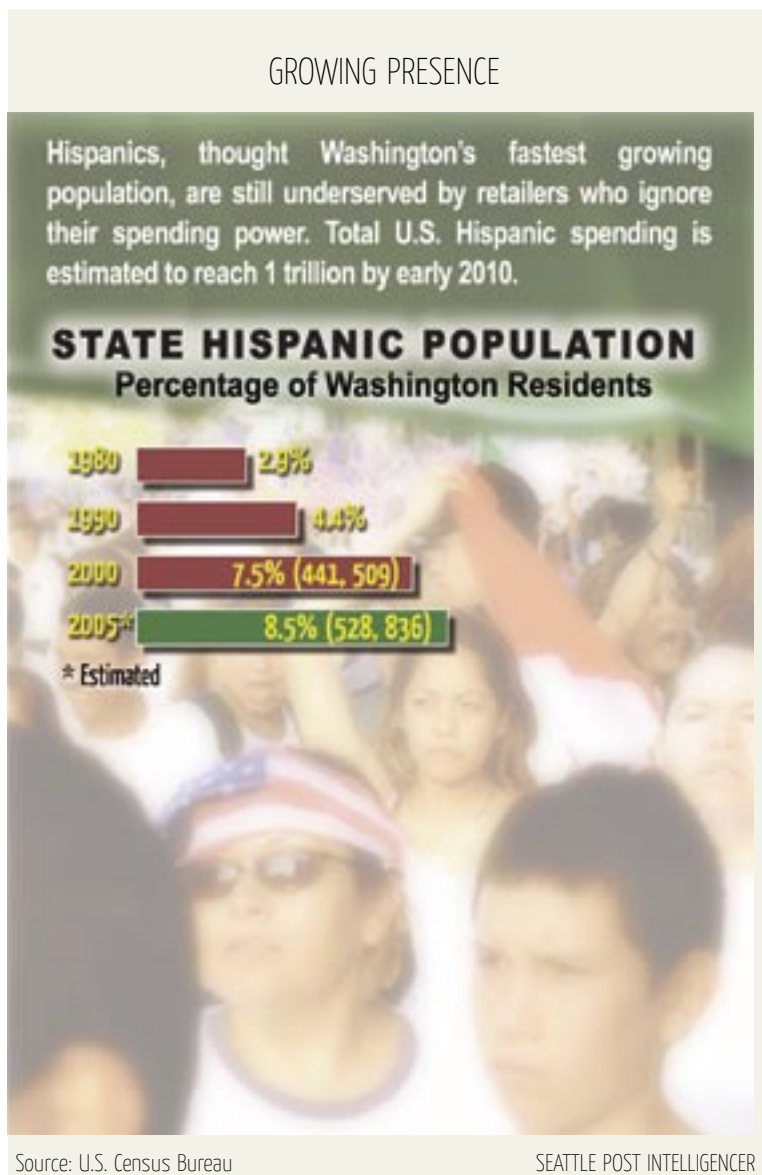
SB 5648 is an interrelated bill. It was an issue of concern in the 2005 session as well. This bill would have forbidden general authority, limited authority, and specially commissioned Washington State police officers and/or general authority and limited authority Washington State law enforcement agencies from inquiring about the immigration status of criminal victims, witnesses, or others seeking or calling for assistance from these officers or agencies.

The Commission strongly urges the legislature to reassess these matters in the future.

2006 LEGISLATIVE RECAP

Economic Issues

Kristen Millares Bolt of the Seattle-PI reports on the recent attention being given to Hispanic/Latino buying power in the Washington State economy. She cites examples such as Home Depot's estimation of the Hispanic/Latino \$30 billion home improvement market. Bolt also cites Celis, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce member, as stating that the state's Hispanic/Latino population has grown 200% in the last 20 years. The article titled Retailers start to realize Hispanic buying power also cites Seattle/King county area as the area with the fastest growing rates of Hispanic/Latino population (October 8, 2005). This, in concert with the growing population means that economically, Hispanics/Latinos are gaining power which can translate into gains in other areas as well. Below is a chart from Bolt's piece:



The 2006 session saw many bills that dealt with economic issues.

A brief summary of these bills and their status follows:

- HB 1589 would have increased the work activity under WorkFirst from 12 to 24 months (amount of vocational education that qualifies as work activity). This bill did not pass.
- HB 1788 would have provided that the adjusted minimum wage rate be calculated to the nearest cent (using the percentage change in the implicit price deflator for U.S. personal consumption expenditures for the latest twelve month period). This bill did not pass.
- HB 1789 would have provided that minimum wage be increased by the rate of inflation for the months that the State of Washington had full employment during twelve months prior to each September 30th. This bill did not pass.
- HB 2630 would have revealed that there is inadequate information regarding small loans, also known as "payday loans." This bill would have required a study to determine the amount of fees/interest needed to enable lenders to cover their cost of doing business. This bill did not pass.
- SHB 1311 would have authorized penalties for wage payment violations. This bill did not pass.

2007 RECOMMENDATIONS

As the Commission prepares for the next legislative session, it plans to focus on the following priorities:

- State funding for bilingual early education interests
- Equality within the standardized testing system
- Encourage further study and or programs that will improve the low Hispanic/Latino graduation rate
- Wage equality for Hispanic/Latino laborers
- Health care services for low-income Hispanics/Latinos
- Culturally competent, linguistically appropriate, affordable, prevention-oriented, and accessible government agencies and services
- Data collection to identify service needs and disparities
- Comprehensive safety standards for pesticide use so that Hispanic/Latino farm workers understand and are aware of necessary precautions
- Data collection on health impacts of Hispanics/Latinos' working conditions
- Government and non-profit measures to provide quality housing for all migrant workers
- Gang prevention programs that engage the community
- Availability of Spanish documents in the criminal justice system

The Commission also wishes to acknowledge and thank the staff of other government agencies and non-governmental organizations that contributed to the Commission's successes. The Commission looks forward to partnering with these groups in the 2007 session to effect substantive change for Washington State's Hispanic/Latino community.



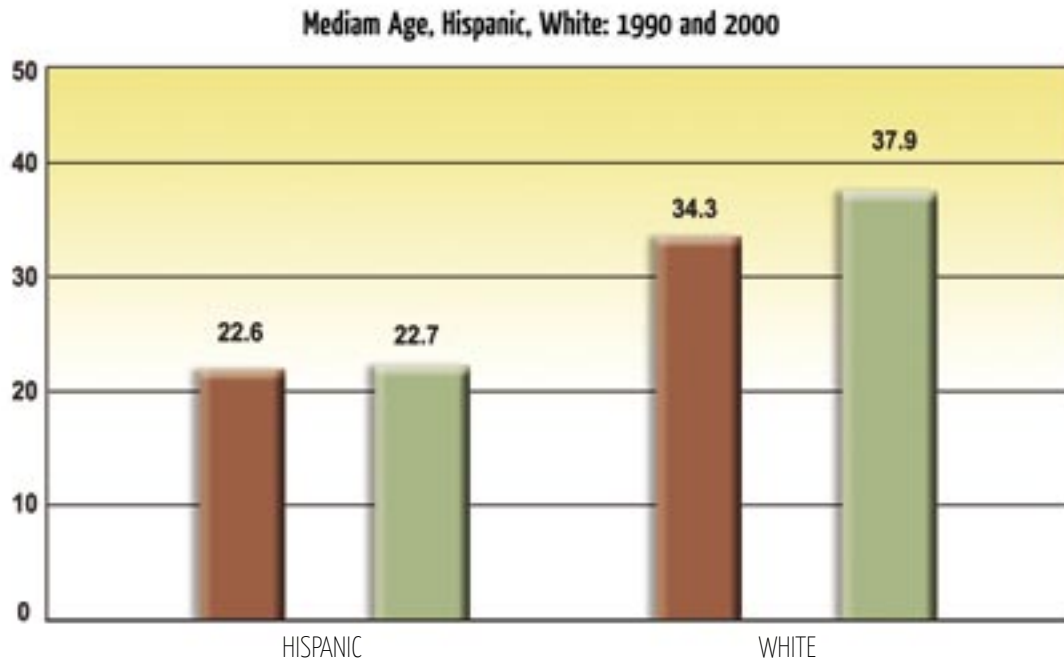
EDUCATION REPORT

Education is of vast importance to the Hispanic/Latino community of Washington State. The Commission on Hispanic Affairs recognizes that improved quality and accessibility to education remains the primary focus for this emergent population. Achieving this goal within all levels of education is necessary for the acquisition of an equitable future for the State of Washington.



EARLY EDUCATION

The median age of the Hispanic/Latino Population in 2000 was 22.7; Hispanic/Latina women have an average of 2.7 children. (Growth and Change in Washington State's Hispanic/Latino Population, Washington State University).



These statistics indicate that many Hispanics/Latinos in Washington State will soon start families, substantiating that early childhood education remains a pertinent issue. Studies show that inequalities within early childhood education lead to significant gaps in educational achievement in future schooling. The Early Childhood Education Longitudinal Study shows that “Black and Hispanic children score substantially below Caucasian children on math and reading achievement when they start kindergarten.” In a study produced by Princeton and Brookings, Ron Haskins and Cecilia Rouse approximate that if all Hispanic/Latino children were enrolled in high quality early education programs, this gap could be closed by 36% (The Future of Children, Princeton Brookings). Consequently, the Commission supported the creation of the Washington State Department of Early Learning. The legislation that created this department demonstrates recognition of the importance of a child’s early development for future educational success and emotional and social growth. This department must now work to ensure that Hispanic/Latino children are able to enter kindergarten with a fair and equal chance at attaining the skills necessary for them to succeed.

EDUCATION REPORT

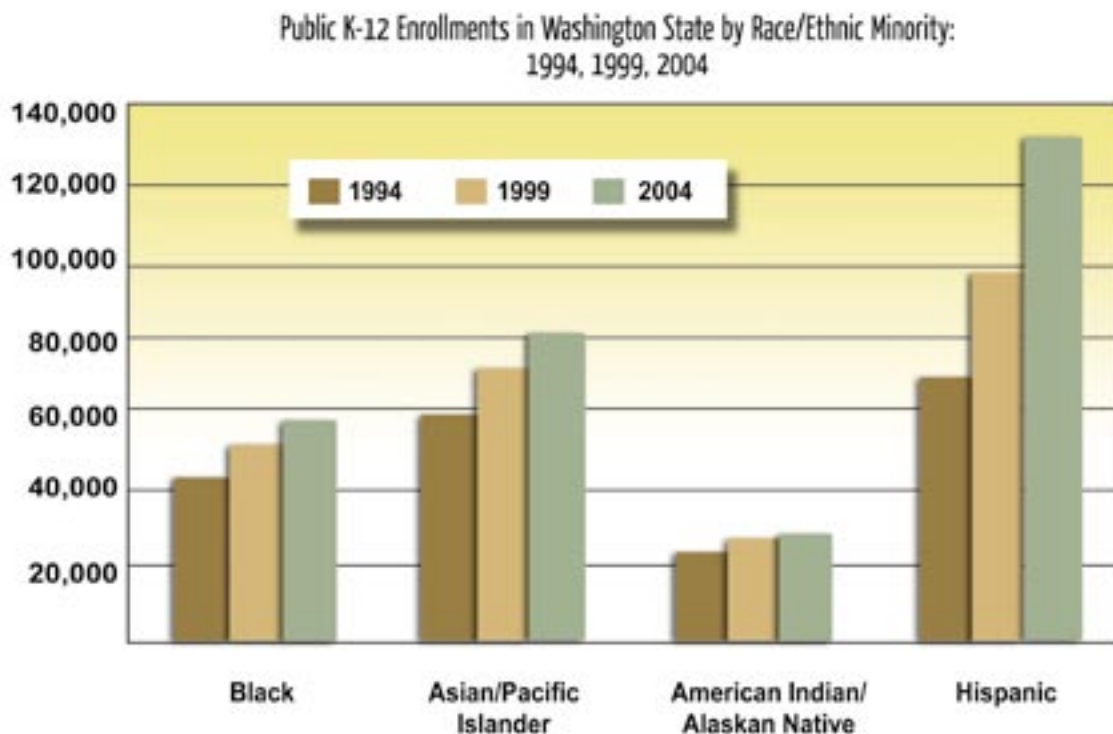
The needs of those children who fail to receive any sort of early education must be addressed. Many Hispanic/Latino children are not incorporated in any way into state sponsored or private early education and are, therefore, entering public schools far behind. Further, a culturally aware study must be conducted to learn how we can better incorporate additional Hispanic/Latino children into the system. Early education must be accessible to children from low-income and non-English speaking families. Education must also be available to parents with an emphasis on the importance of early education and quality prenatal care. By encouraging improved care of children from day one, they will undeniably have an equal opportunity at growth and development.

A study conducted by the Brookings Institute stresses the importance of focusing early educational policies on the improvement of young children's aptitude and health. Bilingual childcare training classes and early reading projects in King County are examples of successful programs that have recently been implemented for young children. Jose Marti, a Spanish bilingual preschool

in Seattle, was recently accredited as the first Bilingual Child Development Center in Washington State. Efforts such as these are costly and require funding and commitment. Culturally relevant training of educators and childcare providers is also necessary to execute these programs. It is important to provide these resources to ensure that Hispanic/Latino children will have an equal chance of success. Reduction of the achievement gap currently being experienced by Hispanics/Latinos can occur through the creation of policies that target children and it will provide a catalyst for greater social change and improved socioeconomic conditions for the Hispanic/Latino community in Washington State.

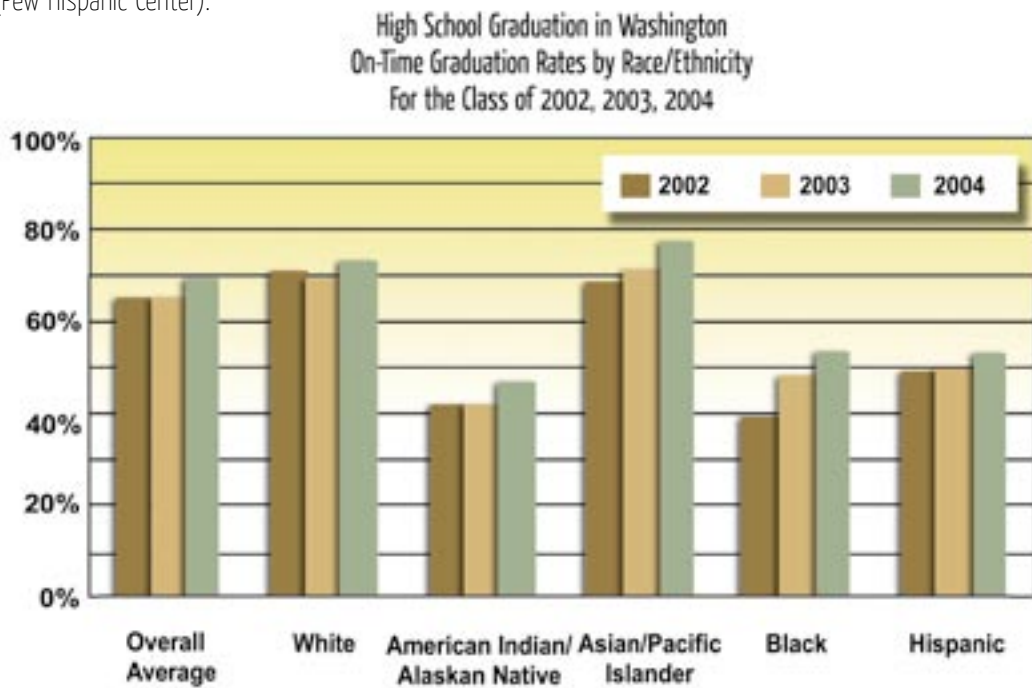
K-12 EDUCATION

The number of Hispanics/Latinos enrolled within the Washington State public school system has increased 250% over the past twenty years (OSPI Latino Education Project).



Source: OSPI
Caucasian enrollments exceed 700,000 currently.
2004 data include two categories not shown here: "Multi-Racial" and "Not Provided"

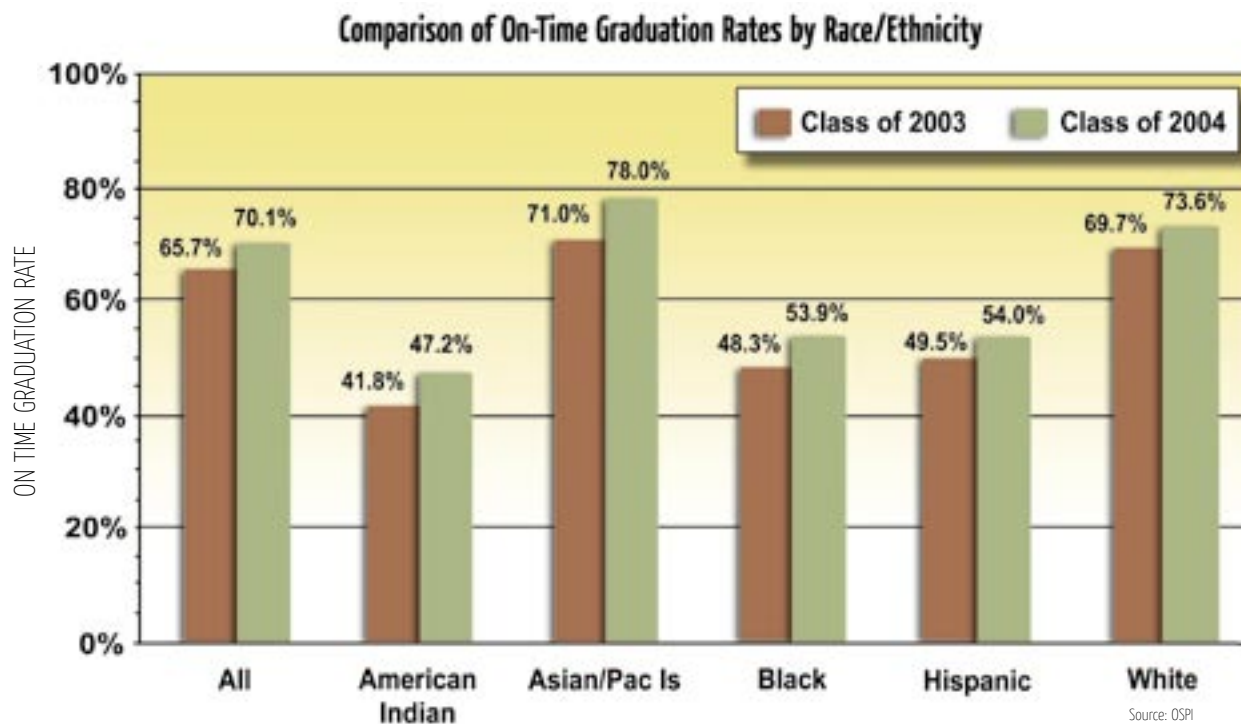
In 2005, 134,502 Hispanics made up 12% of the student body within schools in Washington (OSPI Enrollment Comparisons). Unfortunately, Hispanics/Latinos only have a 54% on-time graduation rate (Class of 2004, OSPI). A multitude of complicated issues contributes to this disparity within public schools. A nationwide surveyed group of Hispanics/Latinos listed several reasons for poor graduation rates including lack of parental encouragement, cultural differences and stereotypes, lack of quality teaching and poor English skills (Pew Hispanic Center and Kaiser, 2004). There is also increasing evidence that Hispanic/Latino youth growing up in agricultural areas are being exposed to pesticides that interfere with their ability to learn. To enable youth to reach their full intellectual potential, the problem of pesticide exposures must also be addressed. (See the Environmental Health Report for more information) There are also considerable differences within public schools regarding the performance of foreign born and native-born students, further increasing the disparities (Pew Hispanic Center).



Source: OSPI.
Data reflect cohort of those starting 9th grade four years earlier.



EDUCATION REPORT



The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) scores for Hispanic/Latino students continue to lag behind the Washington averages.

Hispanics/Latinos 10th Grade WASL					
Year	Reading	Math	Writing	All 3	Science
1998-99	26.0%	11.6%	20.8%		
1999-00	35.9%	12.6%	12.7%		
2000-01	38.4%	14.6%	23.5%		
2001-02	34.9%	14.3%	29.4%		
2002-03	34.6%	16.2%	34.3%	17.5%	11.1%
2003-04	41.3%	19.6%	42.5%	16.0%	11.1%
2004-05	53.1%	23.9%	43.7%	20.1%	14.2%
2005-06	62.5%	25.4%	59.9%	21.8%	14.0%

Source: OSPI

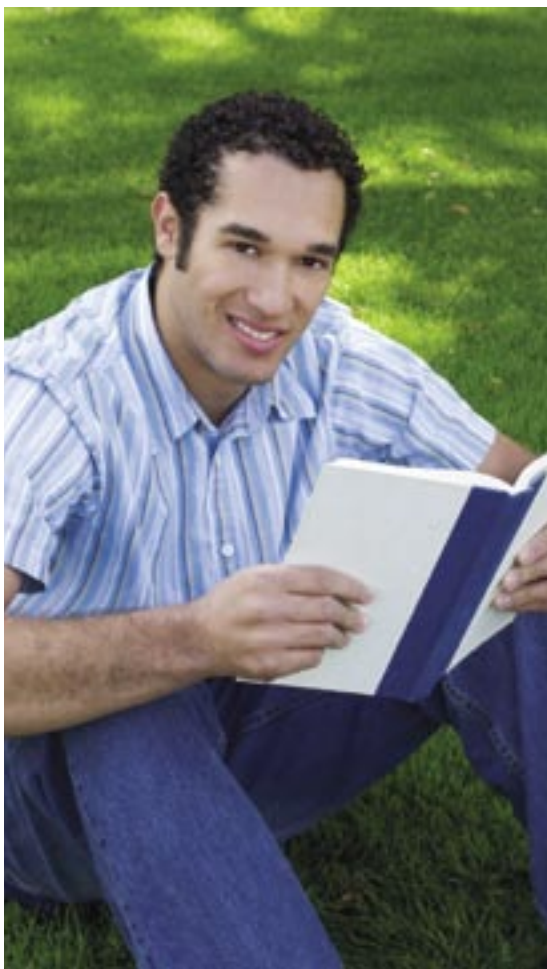
EDUCATION REPORT

While 62.5% of Hispanics/Latinos passed the reading portion, only 25.4% passed math, 59.9% passed the writing, and only 21.8% of 10th grade Hispanics/Latinos passed all three tests (OSPI 2005-06 WASL Statistics). These low WASL scores have the potential to contribute to dropout rates and the vulnerability felt by students working toward graduation. The Commission supports measures that will provide alternative methods and opportunities for students to obtain their diploma and to continue to use the WASL as a tool of accountability to insure that all school districts provide students quality education. The Commission also encourages further study of assessment requirements and the availability of alternative testing options to ensure that all students despite race and background have an equal opportunity to succeed. It is recognized that increased cultural competency within K-12 education will better provide for diverse school populations.



EDUCATION REPORT

The Commission encourages forming counseling and alternative education programs to better accommodate this diversity. Partnerships between culturally sensitive educators, parents, and communities will help to create the support that students need within the public school systems. These groups must work together to provide all students the financial resources and support that will sanction equality within education. The Commission believes that the creation of the Education Ombudsman will encourage and enhance communication regarding education. Also, the creation of community partnership grants that provide funds to community ethnic organizations to encourage minority students is an important acknowledgement of the problems within the schools.



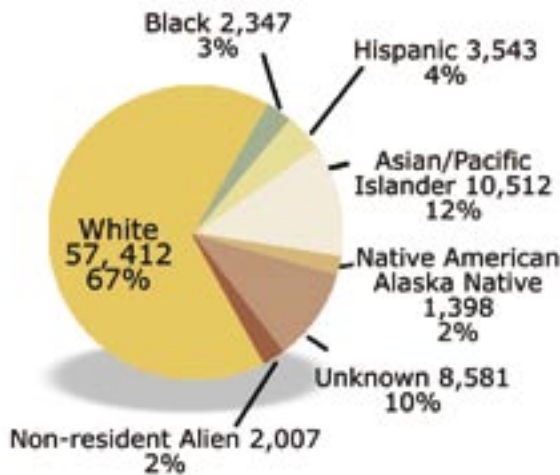
Israel Vela of the Kent School District recognizes the importance of a financial dedication to these goals. He states, "We must develop a funding source that will directly work through OSPI and community agencies to specifically meet the needs of Hispanic communities around the state. It would require that this office be implemented with a variety of resources including field representatives that would be responsible for coaching and mentoring districts throughout the state. The school districts need to work with their communities, local community colleges, and universities to ensure that our students are working towards a diploma and or higher learning opportunities".

Institutional capacity within school districts must be built to reach Hispanics/Latinos. Developing culturally competent staff programs and training will help address the needs of a Hispanic/Latino community containing many levels of acculturation. It must be ensured that the needs of both recently immigrated children and those whose families have lived in the U.S. for generations are met. For example, in the state education system only half of teachers of Limited English Proficient Students (LEPs) have English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement (OSPI). "Currently program funding is intended only for K-12 students who have a primary language other than English and whose English language skills are sufficiently deficient. In this light, it seems that Washington's Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP) is intended not to educate bilingually, but rather to transition LEPs as quickly as possible to the predominant usage of English," (State of the State for Washington Latinos, Whitman College 2005). Increased commitment to establishing quality bilingual education programs will significantly improve the education received by recent immigrants in increasingly diverse school districts. Only through increased cultural awareness and capacity that translates into direct action will necessary educational changes be possible.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Hispanics/Latinos are more likely than other ethnic groups to enter the workforce after High School graduation and forego the pursuit of higher education (OSPI Washington State Graduate Follow-up Study (GFUS), class of 2004). In 2004, only 15% of Washington Hispanics/Latinos who obtained a high school diploma enrolled in a four year university. Only 3.9% of Washington Public four-year university enrollment and 4.7% of independent four-year university enrollment was Hispanic/Latino. These percentages are far from being equal to the overall population increase of Hispanics/Latinos in Washington State. Retention and graduation rates within these higher education institutes are also low.

Public Four-Year Undergraduate Enrollment Fall 2004



Hispanics/Latinos are half as likely as their Caucasian peers to finish a bachelor's degree (PEW Recent Changes in the Entry of Hispanic and Caucasian Youth in College, 2005). In 2004-2005, 3.6% of students earning a bachelor's degree in Washington State were Hispanic/Latino, a .7% increase since 1995. "Even though 71% of Latina/o students who enter a community college desire to transfer to a 4-year university, only 7 to 20% end up transferring" (Journal of Hispanic Higher Education). Statistics also show that few Hispanics/Latinos comprise the faculties of higher education institutions: 3.1% of public two-year, 2.3% of public four-year and 1.9% of independent four-year faculty is Hispanic/Latino.

Public Four-Year Institutions Undergraduate Enrollments and Bachelor Degree Compared to Population

	2004 Washington Population Ages 17-48 * % Distribution	Undergraduate Enrollment Fall 2003 (headcount) % Distribution	Bachelor's Degree 2003-04 % Distribution	2020 Population Projections: Ages 17-48 % Distribution
White	76.1%	69.0%	70.5%	69.8
Black	3.7%	2.6%	2.4%	3.6%
Hispanic	9.3%	3.9%	3.7%	13.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7.1%	12.2%	11.3%	7.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%
Unknown		10.6%	10.5%	
Two or More	2.3%			3.6%

Source: IPEDS (enrollment and degrees); OFM Web Site (population)

*Ages 17-49 include 98% of Public Four-Year undergraduate enrollments in 2003.

Note: "Nonresident Alien" not included in enrollment and degree percent distributions.

EDUCATION REPORT

Lack of college preparation continues to contribute to the above mentioned statistics. Hispanic/Latino graduates in 2005 who took the ACT earned an average composite score of 18.6; behind the national average of 20.9. Thirty-three percent of these Hispanics/Latinos scored above the College Readiness Benchmark in reading, with 24% meeting the mark in math (Hispanic PR Wire, August 17, 2005). Similarly, just over half of Hispanics/Latinos who took the ACT actually completed the recommended high school curriculum for college preparation. Fifty-eight percent of Hispanics/Latinos enrolled in college in Washington must take remedial courses in math and/or reading (OSPI, GFUS 2004). Although 9.6% of the community and technical college student body in 2004 was Hispanic/Latinos, only 18% of two year college Hispanic/Latino entrants continued their education and received a bachelor's degree (PEW, Recent Changes), partly due to lack of college preparation.

Programs must be established that encourage Hispanics/Latinos to pursue further education while still in high school. Programs that engage Hispanic/Latino students in the educational opportunities available to them will further access resources created to help these students. Universities must also ensure that the needs of Hispanic/Latino students are met in order to increase retention rates within higher education. Clear paths to universities from high schools and community colleges must be created. College administrators must also create culturally competent university environments. Sean Michael Patrick Gallegos of the Comparative Ethnic Studies Department of Washington State University argues that "we need to, as administrators and students, see the differences in cultures that exist and appreciate them. It's the differences that make us whole. This must be allowed in order to celebrate culture. It doesn't work to celebrate culture by not seeing any of it."



Universities must appreciate cultures and embrace the differences that exist in order to accomplish the goal of a diverse educational system.

The improvement of the K-12 educational system, through increased college preparation and encouragement of Hispanics/Latinos to continue their education, remains a goal of the Commission. It is also important to ensure that Hispanic/Latino students continue to have access to financial aid and thus have the opportunity to higher education. The Higher Education Board of Washington State has received legislative-mandated funding of scholarships for students with bilingual abilities who plan on becoming teachers. Programs such as these encourage students to attend college and contribute to the future improvement of schools. Increasing financial aid accessibility will enable higher education to be an attainable goal for many Hispanics/Latinos in Washington State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Work to provide state funding for bilingual early education centers
- Continue to support legislative efforts toward equality within the standardized testing system. This includes culturally competent and relevant counseling and support systems and educational alternatives to help minority and bilingual students
- Call attention to the low Hispanic/Latino graduation rate and encourage further studies and programs that will improve this trend.
- Continue to support programs created to help Hispanic/Latino students' progress toward higher education. This includes further funding and support of programs that encourage students to pursue higher education and inform Hispanics/Latinos of educational options
- Work with state agencies and institutions of higher education to provide Hispanic/Latino students with the necessary information to successfully transition from community and technical colleges into universities
- Increase funding to student based organizations that encourage Hispanic/Latinos students to continue their education
- Encourage Hispanic/Latino students to pursue careers in education in order to increase diversity within the school system.
- Increase funding in Washington State for local scholarships in Hispanic/Latino communities and for colleges that accept applications from documented and non-documented individuals



ECONOMIC REPORT

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs remains dedicated to achieving the goal of economic equality for the Hispanic/Latino community of Washington State. As the Hispanic buying power within the state continues to grow, so does the necessity of ensuring equal opportunities for all.

It is estimated that by 2010, Hispanics/Latinos in Washington State will have over \$14 billion in buying power (Georgia Business and Economic Conditions). Over the past fifteen years, this buying power has risen 365.5%. Average household income for Washington State Hispanics/Latinos is currently estimated to be \$49,140.

LATINO POPULATION		Buying Power in Washington State		
MARKET AREA	1980	1990	2000 (With buying power)	2006 (With buying power)
SEATTLE TACOMA	66, 800	115,400	258,820 (\$2.8 Billion)	285,600 (\$3.7 Billion)
YAKIMA/TRI-CITIES	43,400	82,500	152,518 (\$1.5 Billion)	168,000 (\$2.3 Billion)

Source: 2006 Larson Northwest Hispanic Market Report

This economic clout will lead to increased business representation. Hispanic/Latino owned businesses have grown in this region at rates of 70-80% over the past ten years (Larson Northwest Hispanic Market Report). These outstanding growth rates indicate that striving toward increased economic development will benefit the Hispanic/Latino community.

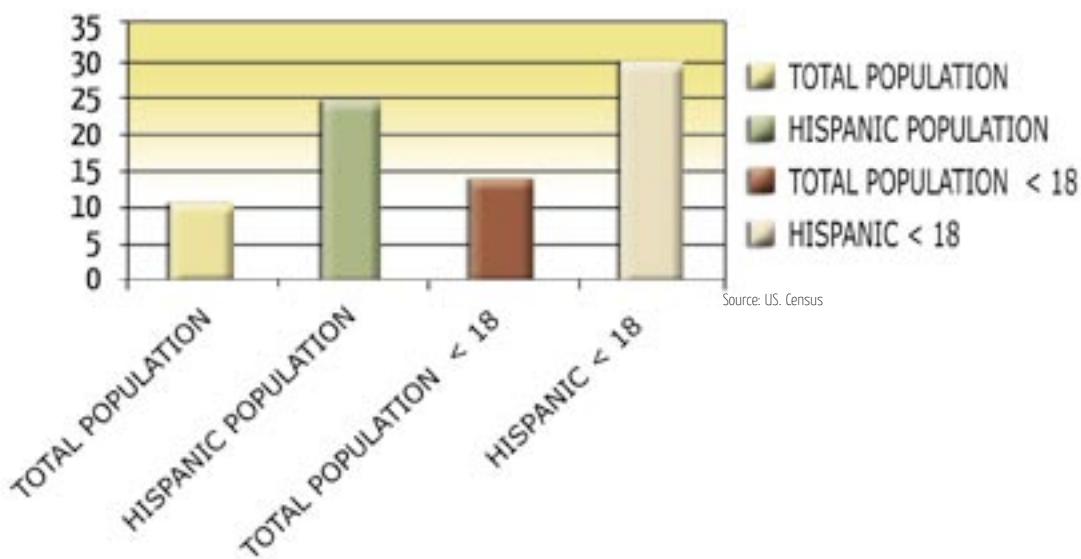
Economic development is a vital and pertinent issue in Washington State. The Commission; however, emphasizes that it is important to strive for equitable growth and that it is vital that we focus on obtaining development within all sectors of the Hispanic/Latino

community. For example, a program temporarily funded by the supplemental budget of 2006 will provide grants to assist minorities in obtaining job training. Training will help employees and employers find economic success within Washington State, expanding overall economic potential. The Commission recognizes that potential entrepreneurs must have access to skills and resources necessary to start a business and must also continue to receive support from communities and government to find long-term success. Cultural understanding and competence must be taken into account by state agencies to encourage the economic growth of the Hispanic/Latino community.

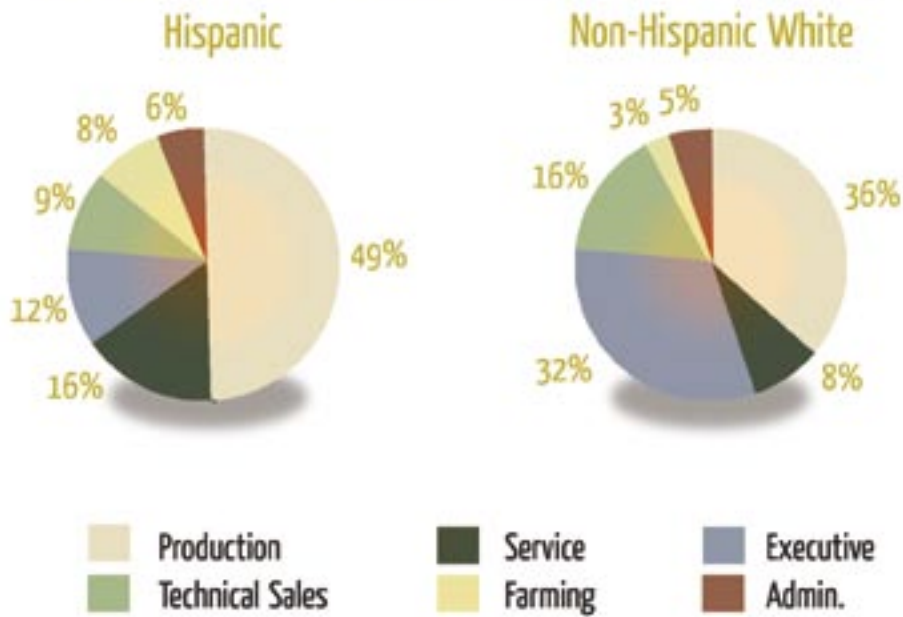
It is imperative that we make certain that Hispanic/Latino workers are being compensated with minimum wages for which they are entitled to. The Commission will continue to work on this issue to ensure that worker rights are not being violated. Protecting the rights of workers will undoubtedly further the economic vitality of Washington State.

The Commission recognizes the importance of helping low-income Hispanics/Latinos elevate themselves from poverty. Disparities between Hispanic/Latino migrant workers and permanent residents still exist. The average income for a Hispanic/Latino migrant in Washington State is \$8,000, nearly \$5,000 less than the average income of a permanent resident (Larson Report). In 2000, a quarter of all Hispanics/Latinos in Washington State lived in poverty, compared with 10% of the total population (Growth and Change in Washington's Hispanic/Latino Population). Thirty-seven percent of Hispanic/Latino children live in poverty and large racial gaps exist in socioeconomic conditions (Future of Children, Brookings Institute). Poverty affects the ability of children to succeed in school and to access proper health care and nutrition, broadening socioeconomic disparity. Ensuring equal access to quality health care and education for all will help those living in poverty. Improving these social conditions and economic opportunities will increase equality and opportunity for Hispanics/Latinos living in poverty.

Percent in Poverty: 2000



Current Occupations for Men by Hispanic Origin: 1999



Source: U.S. Census



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide potential Hispanic/Latino business owners with resources and information necessary to create a successful business; funding Hispanic/Latino business programs and conferences
- Encourage state agencies to assist Hispanics/Latinos in obtaining the necessary training and certification to become business owners through culturally relevant legislation
- Continue to support measures that will bring about wage equality for Hispanic/Latino laborers.



HEALTH CARE REPORT

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of working-age Hispanics/Latinos were uninsured at some point during 2005, compared to 20% of working-age Caucasians. (M.M. Doty and A.L. Holmgren, Health Care Disconnect, the Commonwealth Fund, 2006). The number of uninsured Washingtonians is growing and thus a barrier to appropriate health care. Consequently, urgent identification and development of programs to address health disparities needs to be developed.



Hispanics/Latinos are disproportionately uninsured compared to Caucasians and all other minorities. In 2005, 91,000 Washington Hispanic/Latino residents were without insurance (OFM report, 2005). According to the Institute of Medicine, the following points impact the poorer health of Hispanics/Latinos:

- People without health insurance are more likely to receive little medical care or receive it too late
- Communication barriers and cultural differences between health care providers and Hispanic/Latino patients can reduce treatment adherence and compromise overall disease management (National Pharmaceutical Council, 2004).
- “Hispanics are less likely to receive or use medications for asthma, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDS, mental illness, and pain” (Genes, Culture, and Medicines: Bridging Gaps in Treatment for Hispanic Americans, 2004).
- Furthermore, uninsured adults of any ethnicity have a 25% greater mortality risk than adults with coverage.

This means that Hispanics/Latinos are at a higher risk for many serious illnesses. The top two leading causes of death for Hispanics/Latinos of all ages in the State of Washington (2003) is cancer and heart disease.

Accidents are the third leading cause of death among Hispanics. Similarly, the rate of HIV/AIDS infection among Hispanics/Latinos is twice that of Caucasians in King County, while those in extreme poverty are almost four times as likely to contract HIV/AIDS. Nationally, Hispanics/Latinos have significantly higher rates than Caucasians developing certain illnesses. There are a greater number of Hispanics/Latinos with HIV/AIDS. Finally, they are twice as likely to develop diabetes. Rogelio Riojas, Director of Sea Mar Health Clinic said, "Diabetes among Latinos is a common disease, just as it is in the general public," however, he explained, the Hispanic/Latino community is less likely to receive benefits due to cultural/language barriers.

Two major concerns for health clinics are the amount of time it takes Hispanic/Latino patients to get coverage and to get proof of citizenship. Rogelio Riojas explained that thousands of individuals are not served because of this long process. Thirteen percent of the Caucasian population was not covered by the Basic Health Plan, while 36% of Hispanics/Latinos were not covered. The Basic Health Plan remains the only avenue for insurance coverage for low-income working Hispanics/Latinos in Washington State. Health care coverage can reduce these ethnic disparities by providing improved access and stability and quality of care. A health care system that is culturally and linguistically appropriate, affordable, prevention-oriented, and accessible needs to be implemented.

King County ranks 14th in lack of health insurance compared to 15 major metropolitan U.S. counties (Health of King county report, 2006). There has been an increase in the uninsured and substantial disparities persist intensified by income and race/ethnicity. Uninsured individuals are less likely to get preventive care which increases the likelihood of morbidity and mortality (The State of the State for Washington Latinos, 2005). Hispanics/Latinos are also less likely to seek needed medical care and receive screenings due to cost.

Hispanics/Latinos are significantly less likely to receive regular routine care as compared to other ethnicities. The disparity is even more severe when examined through language. They have less confidence in their doctors because they do not feel they can relate to them (The State of the State for Washington Latinos, 2005).

Hispanics are disconnected from the health care system and as a result are less likely than Caucasians to:

- Have a regular doctor
- Have visited a doctor in the past year
- Feel confident about their ability to manage their health problems (The Commonwealth Fund, August 2006).

Regular health visits are one of the key factors of preventative care. In addition to expanded insurance coverage, policies that promote continuity in patients' relationships with health care providers are also needed to reduce disparities in access. The issue of cultural competence in health care is an added concern inasmuch as medical personnel fail to understand or cannot connect with Hispanic/Latino patients' cultural background.

HEALTH CARE REPORT

Uninsured Hispanic/Latino children have greater health risks than insured children. Insured children are more likely to get regular medical services and preventative care. Among poor children, 36% of uninsured children had an unmet medical need, compared to 9% of children with public insurance. When children get sick, they struggle to concentrate in school or they miss school completely. Among the many consequences of being uninsured, disruption in education ranks the highest. One study discovered that uninsured children are 25% more likely to miss school than insured children.

Requiring adequate health care data collection to identify needs is a goal for the Commission. By identifying the disparities, the state will be able to focus on increasing the supply of minority health care providers and diversifying the health workforce. Furthermore, it is important to set cultural and linguistic standards for all health professionals so that they will be aware of important differences. More funding and support is needed for community-based clinics serving the Hispanic/Latino population.



Although Hispanics/Latinos make up 12.5% of the total U.S. population, they comprise only 2% of pharmacists and 1.3% of emergency medical technicians and paramedics. Washington State also lacks representation of Hispanics/Latinos in the health care arena. In 2000, 7.5% of the state population was reported to be Hispanic/Latino yet only 2% of doctors, 4.5% of physician assistants, and 1.6% of nurse practitioners are Hispanic/Latino (Office of Financial Management State of Washington, 2006). Measures need to be taken to allow easier access to health insurance coverage and improvements are needed in access to education and health care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a system of information distribution to help Hispanics/Latinos receive health benefits.
- Require adequate data collection to identify service needs. By identifying the disparities, the state can focus on increasing the supply of minority health providers and diversify the health workforce.
- Develop a system to connect Hispanics/Latinos to quality health care systems and a regular doctor so they feel confident about their ability to manage their health.
- Support policies promoting continuity in patients' relationships with health care.
- Support a system that is culturally competent and linguistically appropriate, affordable, prevention-oriented, and accessible.



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORT

Hispanics/Latinos make up a large percentage of the agricultural industry workforce. Sixty-five percent of the Hispanics/Latinos in the lower Yakima Valley work in the fields. (The State of the State of Hispanics, Whitman College, 2005)



Massive volumes of highly toxic pesticides are used on crops in Washington State and it is evident that farm workers and their families are being exposed to these pesticides. Routes of exposure for workers include: contact while handling pesticides, residues on plants and soils, and drift from nearby applications. Routes of exposures for family members include: drift from nearby applications, and contact with pesticides on workers' skin, hair and clothes. Children may also be exposed prenatally.

Evidence of widespread exposure of workers and their families include:

- Numerous studies measuring pesticides in house dust and pesticide metabolites in the urine of workers and their children.¹
- The Washington State's medical monitoring program for pesticide handlers. In 2006, approximately 11.8% of workers tracked in the program experienced significant nervous system impacts (greater than 20% decline in the enzyme cholinesterase) after handling pesticides.²
- Air monitoring by government agencies in California which revealed significant concentrations of agricultural pesticides in the air.³ Preliminary results of air monitoring by farm worker community members in Washington State show frequent exceedances of children's health guidelines.⁴

Exposure to pesticides place workers and their families at risk of very serious immediate health effects. Organophosphate pesticides for example, can cause a range of symptoms such as nausea, headaches, difficulty breathing, muscle weakness, and convulsions. In extreme cases, death can occur. Some acute poisoning episodes are reported in the State's annual Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking (PIRT) report. The reported cases' however, are just the tip of the iceberg. Discussions between Washington State Department of Health focus groups and farm workers revealed that three out of four noted having been sickened by pesticides at work⁵ although almost none of these cases were reported. Factors that prevent reporting include fear of losing one's job, the inability to forego pay during time away from work for a doctor's visit, and other concerns.

Immediate obvious impacts are not the only health risks associated with pesticide exposure. Numerous studies find higher rates of various chronic health problems among farm workers such as cancers, long-term neurological damage, vision problems, etc.

Recently, new studies have shed a light on the neurological impacts that agricultural pesticide exposures may be causing. For example, in one study farm workers in Hood River, Oregon performed very poorly on neurobehavioral tests than a similar immigrant population that was not exposed to agricultural pesticides.⁶ Poorer performance on portions of the tests were associated with pesticide metabolite levels measured in the workers' urine. (The higher the contamination the poorer the performance) This study and others are bolstered by a large body of laboratory studies in which animals dosed with Lorsban or other organophosphate pesticides experienced significant adverse changes in neurological development and in behavior.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REPORT

While training and education of workers is an important tool for trying to reduce exposure, it should be noted that even with the most conscientious compliance with regulatory requirements, high risks to health can continue. In re-registering certain pesticides, EPA openly acknowledges that even with the best available protective equipment and engineering controls, worker's risk still exceed "acceptable" levels.⁷

The widespread problem of farm worker community exposure to agricultural pesticides exists partly because it is largely invisible. Growers are not required to report their pesticide use nor are they required to give advance notice of applications to neighboring people and institutions. Washington State does not engage in air monitoring for tracking the concentration of pesticides that people may be inhaling.

In the context of this invisibility, little has been done to reduce and eliminate exposure. The state Department of Agriculture has not proposed rules or fostered public discussion of measures such as establishing no-spray zones around daycares, schools, homes and unprotected workers. Resources allocated to promote safe alternatives to pesticides in order to prevent exposure overall remain sparse.



RECOMMENDATIONS

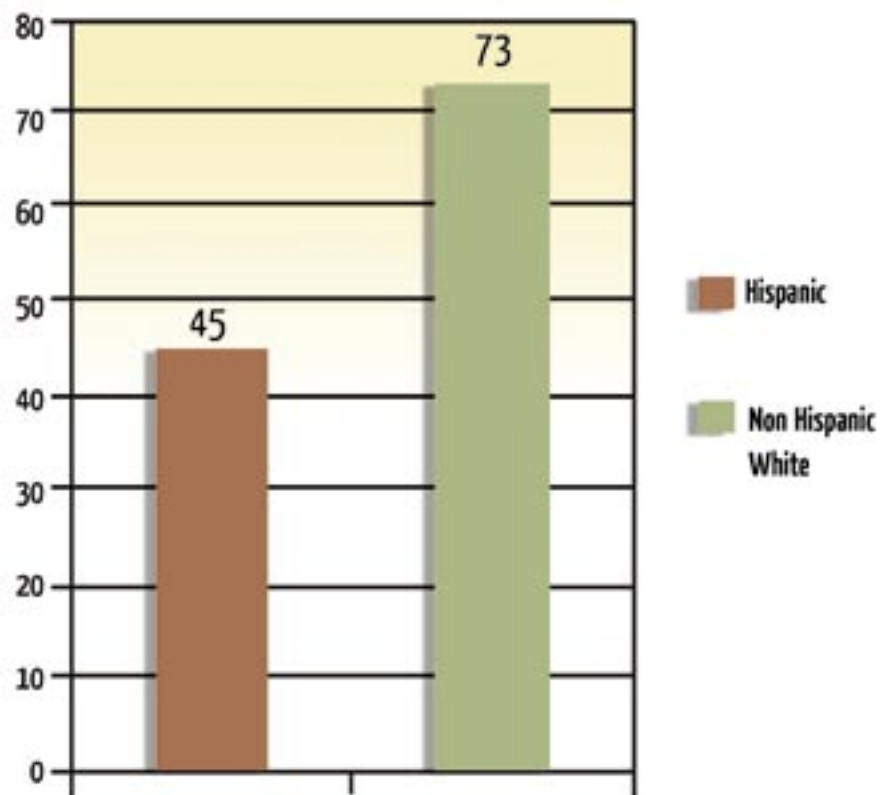
- Require and fund air monitoring for agricultural pesticides by appropriate state agencies
- Establish timelines and a process for phasing out the most dangerous agricultural pesticides and phasing in safer methods for growing food. Mandate and fund an analysis that will identify specific policies and programs that should be implemented in order to ensure transition to alternatives. Farm workers must be given a place at the table in this analysis process.
- Direct state agencies to adopt rules to better protect workers and their children pending transition to alternatives, such as no-spray zones.

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1. See for example, Coronado et al, "Agricultural Task and Exposure to Organophosphate Pesticides Among Farmworkers", Environmental Health Perspectives, 112(2), 142-147 (Feb. 2004); Lu et al, "Pesticide Exposure of Children in an Agricultural Community: Evidence of Household Proximity to Farmland and Take Home Exposure Pathways", Environmental Research Section A 84, 290-2 (2000); Fenske et al, "Children's Exposure to Chlorpyrifos and Parathion in an Agricultural Community in Central Washington State", Environmental Health Perspectives 110 (5): 549-553 (May 2002)
 2. Washington State Department of Health Weekly Report, results for 1/1/06 through 8/21/06
 3. Lee et al, "Community Exposures to Airborne Agricultural Pesticides in California: Ranking of Inhalation Risks" Environmental Health Perspectives 110(12) December 2002
 4. Farm Worker Pesticide Project
 5. Washington State Department of Health, "Learning from Listening: Results of Yakima Farmworker Focus Groups About Pesticides and Health Care", June 17, 2004
 6. Rothlein et al, "Organophosphate Pesticide Exposure and Neurobehavioral Performance in Agricultural and Nonagricultural Hispanic Workers", Environmental Health
 7. See US Environmental Protection Agency "Proposed Decisions for Remaining Uses of Azinphos-methyl" June 9, 2006 p. 7. In proposing extension of the use of Guthion, EPA acknowledges that field workers will experience risks it deems of concern upon reentering fields at the time EPA is designating as legal. EPA also notes that without enclosed cabs applicators will face unacceptable risks, but is not proposing to require those cabs.

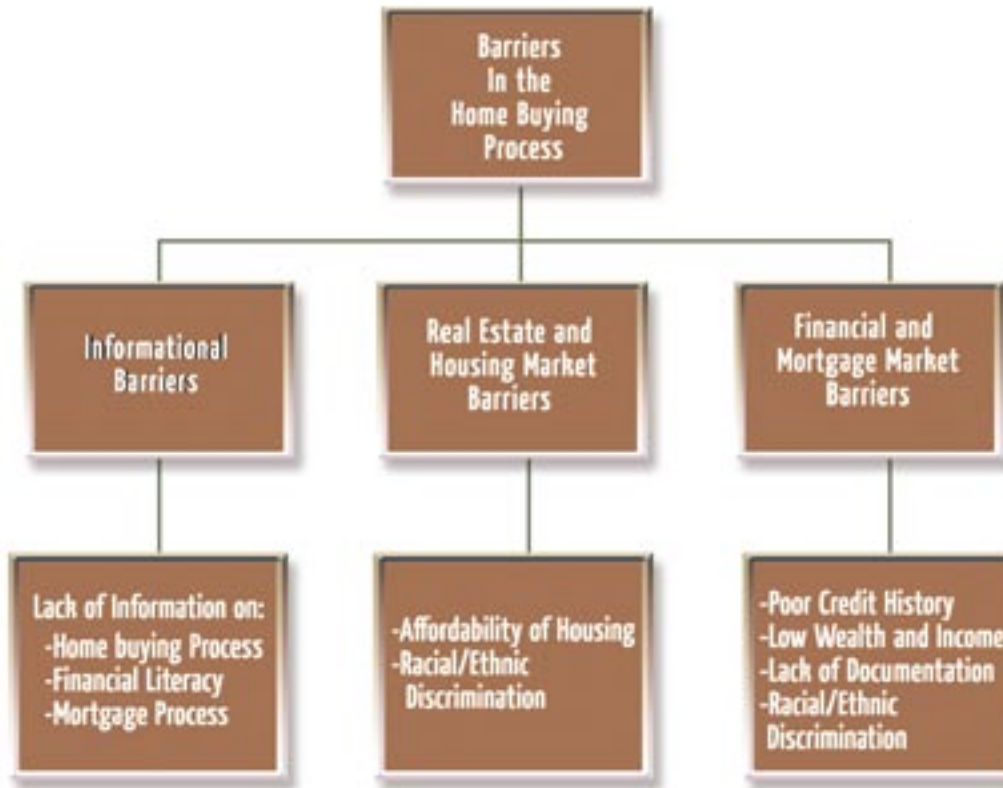
HOUSING REPORT

According to data collected in 2005, only 50% of Hispanic/Latino households own their home, compared to 76% of non-Hispanic/Latino Caucasian households (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, March 2006). Hispanic/Latino owner-occupied housing is averaged at about 45% in the Northwest region (Larson Northwest Report). This housing gap is due to a number of issues including lower income levels, discrimination within the housing market, lack of information regarding the housing purchase process and access to housing finance. The Commission would like to stress the importance of encouraging Hispanics/Latino to invest in housing.

Percent Owner-Occupied Households by Hispanic Origin: 1999



Source: US Census



The Commission supports efforts by government and citizens to provide funds and programs for farm workers in need of housing. "About 60% of the migrant population in the United States is considered homeless. When they do have a residence, the physical conditions of the place are substandard. These houses are overcrowded, not well-maintained, and isolated from society.

HOUSING REPORT



Those workers born outside of the United States (49%) are more likely to share their homes with many individuals, five or more persons for example, than those born in the United States (19%)” (State of the State for Washington Latinos, Whitman College 2005). It is important that these farm workers receive the support and resources needed to secure acceptable housing. The Commission supports all efforts that ensure continued housing improvement and the quality of life for these laborers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support funding for equal housing organizations to provide Hispanics/Latinos with bilingual and competent literature regarding home ownership.
- Continue to support measures taken by government and private non-profit organizations to provide quality housing for all migrant workers.



JUSTICE AND EQUITY REPORT

Young Hispanics in Washington State are disproportionately over-represented in the juvenile justice system: The Washington State Department of Corrections reports that 71% of Caucasians make up the confinement population, while 9.8% are of Hispanic origin. Hispanics represent 8.6% of the State's total population. Lorena González, President of the Latino Bar Association, summarized the difficulties Hispanics/Latinos face in the justice system: "Hispanics currently and continually do not have accessibility [sic] to our justice system."



Many youth gangs are subcultural and have Hispanic/Latino cultural origins (National Youth Gang Center, Gang-Related Legislation in Washington State, 2006). According to a survey done by the National Youth Gang Center, 49% of all gang members in the United States are Hispanic/Latino. Gang involvement and negative peer association continues to be a problem for Hispanic/Latino youth in Washington State. Studies show that certain social conditions predispose gang involvement. Factors such as poverty, lack of school support, exposure to violence, and lower income contribute to Hispanic/Latino participation in gangs. Youth gang violence has stunted the social progress of Hispanic/Latino communities. The loss of life and lack of positive opportunity for growth caused by youth gang violence needs to be brought to an end.

The Washington State Office of Financial Management conducted a survey that asked populations throughout Washington State regarding the types of serious crimes that occurred in their neighborhoods in a twelve month period. Eighteen percent of the respondents said people openly sold drugs, 24% reported auto theft, and 31% specifically was breaking and entering and stealing personal property (North Puget, King County, Puget Metro, and Clark County, Spokane County, and Tri Cities were the areas surveyed).

Hispanic children are more likely to live in poverty and in neighborhoods that suffer from poverty. Studies show that living in poverty contributes to family structures that push Hispanic/Latino children to get involved in gangs. Many cases show a lack of adult supervision thus allowing juveniles to be exposed to violent behavior.

Yakima-Tri Cities region reported that one murder occurred in their neighborhood in the past 12 months. Eleven percent of King County residents and 13% of Yakima-Tri City residents reported crimes with guns in their neighborhoods compared to 5% of residents in Puget Metro (Washington State Population Survey, 2005).

Hispanics/Latinos who commit crimes are not successfully being rehabilitated. This is shown in the high recidivism rates. They have the highest probability of reentering the justice system. There is an 82% chance a Hispanic/Latino will commit another crime once he/she has been through the justice system. That means that out of 1,824 total Hispanics/Latinos sentenced, 1,501 were recidivist. African Americans had a recidivism rate of 78% and Caucasians 75% (sentencing Guidelines Commission in the State of Washington, 2005).

In order for Hispanics/Latinos to benefit from the justice system, they must know and understand English as well as have an understanding of the judicial structure and the legal system. While many Hispanics/Latinos have adapted to American culture in many aspects, specific knowledge of these systems and one's rights within them is often lacking. Additionally, there is a short supply of translators and court interpreters, creating difficulties for Hispanics/Latinos in receiving qualified attorneys. There are only 166 certified Spanish language interpreters in the State of Washington. Information in Spanish about the justice and legal systems is necessary to communicate the rights and needs of those affected. Culturally sensitive staff is also important. These changes are needed immediately in order to reduce the biases and the impacts on ethnic communities.



Latino Youth Summit 2006

JUSTICE AND EQUITY REPORT

Washington State has three Hispanic/Latino elected representatives in legislature, one appointed Hispanic/Latino Superior Court Judge, and one Federal District Court Judge. Lack of a diverse workforce in the judicial system compounds the many difficulties Hispanics/Latinos face when seeking these services.

The U.S. Department of Justice mandated that Yakima County comply with federal voting rights provisions to ensure the full participation in elections of Spanish speakers. While voter registration has increased in Yakima City (one-third Latino), rarely have Hispanic candidates run for City Council elections (Whitman College report 2005). A council that focuses on community interaction and examines the concerns of adequate interpreting and translating services for monolingual Spanish speakers would be beneficial. The Commission encourages gang prevention programs that engage the entire community, especially in larger cities such as Seattle, Spokane, and Yakima.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide documents in Spanish so that Hispanics/Latinos in the criminal justice system are better informed of their rights and/or can learn about the resources available for assistance in their rehabilitation and/or their representation.
- Fund more gang prevention programs that engage all of the community. For example: before-and-after school, mentoring, and leadership programs; homework help; culturally related activities and programs; educational programs for parents that focus on areas of child rearing, adjusting to a new culture, and parent involvement in schools.









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