

10 STRATEGIES
REACHING AND ENGAGING WITH
HISPANIC COMMUNITIES



CRIMSONBRIDGE
FOUNDATION

10 Strategies

Reaching and Engaging with Hispanic Communities

1. Know your audience; take time up front to understand their backgrounds and preferences.

- Know how your audience self-identifies and use that information in your outreach efforts. Some communities may identify as “Latino” while others may identify as “Hispanic,” or by their country of origin.
- Know and use your population’s preferred language in your messaging. A growing number of Latinos are English proficient or bilingual heritage speakers, while new immigrant families tend to be monolingual Spanish speakers.
- When translating information into Spanish, ensure that you are capturing the language preferences of your target population. Families coming from different regions of Latin America and the Caribbean may be familiar with different meanings for colloquial terms and phrases. To ensure the most accurate version of your translation, it is best to assign two or more Spanish speakers to a given translation task to promote quality and accuracy. Ask Spanish speakers from different countries of origin to review your translated material to ensure your audience can understand your translation.

2. Ask your community about issues that are relevant to them.

- Conduct a focus group or needs assessment to deepen your knowledge about your target population.
- Tailor your message to be relevant to the information your audience is seeking. For example, for parents with young children you could say: *Children who attend quality early education programs do better in kindergarten. Register your child today!*

3. Develop relationships with your audience by building on their cultural strengths.

- Family and the family unit is central to Hispanic/Latino culture. The importance of family is often associated as a source of support and cultural traditions. In your messaging, convey a shared value such as the importance of family and provide information of how their family would benefit from your services.
- Communicate face-to-face. Personal contact is still the most important way to communicate with Latino families. You could plan meetups at a local parish, or distribute flyers at community events, schools, bus stops, or other gathering places.
- Look around the community for images and sounds that are familiar to your specific audience and use that information to include in your outreach strategy. For example, if you host a community event, include images of Latino families or children, and play music that is familiar to

your audience (but be accurate!). Collaborate with a member of the community to best ensure that the representation is accurate and appropriate.

4. Partner with respected community organizations.

- To gain buy-in from your audience, partner with well-respected community organizations to spread the word about your services. For example, partner with organizations and churches that already serve Latinos, schools, other organizations serving children, community stores, or restaurants that the population frequents.

5. Leverage community leaders or peers that your target audience trusts.

- Know who your audience trusts and turns to for advice or counsel. Some of the people that Latinos turn to for advice include church and religious leaders, medical and spiritual practitioners, and peers.

6. Use calls and texts to complement your communication efforts.

- Although face-to-face is an effective communication strategy for Latino audiences, calling or texting can complement these efforts. This is particularly the case for audiences that have low-to-no literacy skills, and those whom you've already made an initial contact.
- Ensure to engage your audience in their preferred language and modes of communication. WhatsApp, a mobile app, is the preferred method at-large for texting and calling among Hispanic/Latinos.
- Note of caution! Before calling or texting, ask your audience if it's okay for you to do so.

7. Use traditional media outlets to reach your audience.

- If resources permit, use paid media placements to run TV or radio ads that advertise your services. Before doing so, know what radio and TV programming your audience frequently uses.
- To save costs, cultivate relationships with local news reporters to gain regular access to radio and TV spots and interviews about your organization or program. This will give you the visibility you need to reach your audience.

8. Take advantage of social media.

- Increase your organization's presence on social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, to reach young Latinos.
- Use social media to increase awareness about your organization and services. This can help your organization build community partnerships, engage in advocacy efforts, and fundraise.

9. Optimize websites to be user-friendly and include videos.

- Mobile-optimize your website to reach audiences that may be mobile dependent to access the internet.

- Embed short videos in Spanish on your website, welcome families in Spanish via an “en Español” tab with dedicated information for families written in Spanish, share testimonials, offer information about your services, and describe how to reach you directly.

10. Actively learn from your outreach strategies and adjust accordingly.

- At the outset, set measurable and achievable goals for each of your strategies. Track the success of each strategy and compare it to your initial goals.
- Think critically about which strategy was most effective in reaching your goal and which one was not, and why this was the case. For example, set a goal to engage 50 families through your face-to-face interactions by a specified time. Track the number of participants you have reached through your face-to-face efforts and compare this number by the specified time of your goal. Compare this strategy with other ones and think why this strategy might have been successful or not.

Information on these tips comes from the *Reaching and Engaging with Hispanic Communities: A Research-Informed Communication Guide for Nonprofits, Policymakers, and Funders* report that Child Trends created in partnership with the Crimsonbridge Foundation. [Download the full report.](#)