

LINN-BENTON LATINX NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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ACCESS AND AWARENESS

Overall, Latinx community members are not aware of resources and programs available and/or are unable to access them due to geographical location or language. Compared to Benton County, Linn County is under-resourced and has fewer services for its residents. Families living in rural areas may have a more challenging time accessing Spanish-language resources. There are unintentional structural barriers for families to understand school, health and food systems.

Service providers should strive for consistent communication to community members and coordination of services. There is a lack of cultural understanding and awareness by the wider community.

Interviews indicated a positive benefit could be made from a Latinx Extension connection in their work area and community by collaborating with community partners and increasing outreach efforts. However, there is confusion from community members and partners around Extension: what it offers and to whom it is offered, how local Extension programs coordinate with Extension state level programs and initiatives, and how Extension programs coordinate efforts to increase positive impact on the community and Latinx population.

CONCLUSIONS

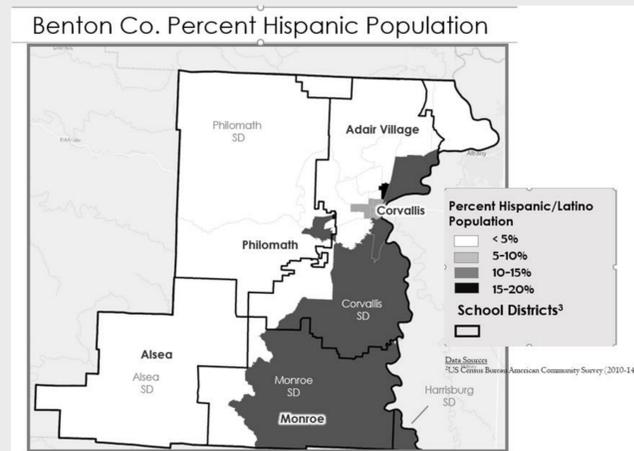
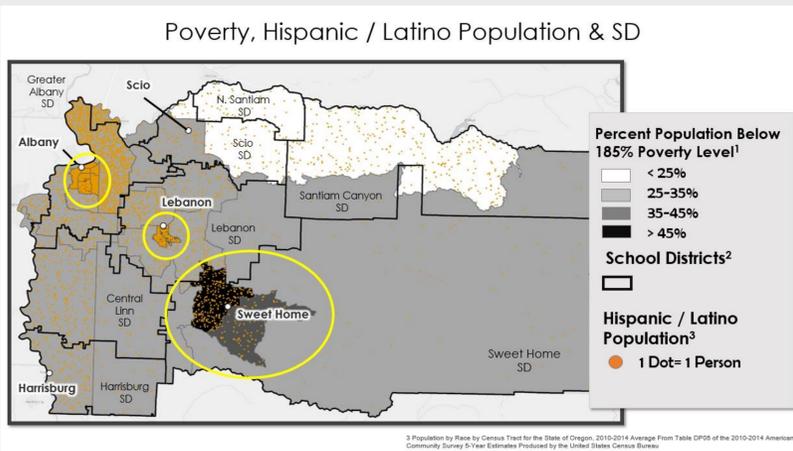
Linn-Benton Latinx community members are largely unaware of available resources and programs. Geographical location contributes to inequitable resource distribution.

NEXT STEPS

It is Extension's role and responsibility to inform and clarify to community members and partners about its organizational structure and how it operates to meet community needs.

Linn-Benton Latinx will work in collaboration with internal and external partners to ensure coordination of services, inclusive practices, culturally appropriate and language specific program development and implementation.

"Building trust with the community can take a long time. Consistency is a key factor for building relationships with the community. The community needs people to help empower them and believe in them." - Regional non-profit



LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Materials and information available in more than one language is essential for resource accessibility.

"It is jaw dropping how hard it is to get an interpreter in some places. Lots of hoops to go through to get one and sometimes you need to know English to get from one step to the other." - Regional non-profit

"Some farmworkers only speak their dialect so it can be hard to communicate with them." - Regional public organization

BACKGROUND

Needs assessment is a primary Extension tool to understand community strengths and needs to best align research-based knowledge to strengthen communities and economies, sustain natural resources, and promote healthy families and individuals.

CONTEXT

In 2019 Latinxs made up 13.3% of Oregon's population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). In Linn County, Latinxs are the second largest ethnic/racial group after the White population and comprise 9.5% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Albany is the largest city in the county and has the highest Latinx population with 12.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). In Benton County, Latinx is 7.6% of the population; 7.9% in Corvallis, and 20% in Monroe (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019).

METHODS

Thirty-four key informant interviews were conducted spring 2020. Key informants have experience working in the Latinx community and represented a wide range of organizations and sectors. All were asked the same set of questions. The research team independently identified common themes. Quotes were edited but were not substantially altered.

REPRESENTATION

With a growing number of Latinxs, a large gap still remains in bilingual/bicultural staff. Increased representation can reduce challenges such as language barriers, lack of cultural understanding, underuse of services, fear, uncertainty, discrimination, and more.

"The biggest gap is not having someone who looks like you and speaks the language to represent the organization." - Regional public organization

"Not all schools have bilingual staff available to help." - Lebanon school district

DIVERSITY

Not all Latinxs are the same or experience the same challenges. Lived experience varies with immigration status, educational level, income level, country of origin, indigenous identification, age, and English language ability.

The majority of Linn-Benton Latinx adults are first-generation immigrants. Whether or not they are living in rural communities, transportation is a top issue for many Latinxs. However, rural community members without a license face additional barriers.

"Lack of cultural understanding and awareness by non-Latinx folks is a gap." - Corvallis school

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Both parents and organizations are positively impacted when parents feel part of a school. Developing parent leadership is a successful strategy. Language-supported groups increase parent engagement and communication at schools. This inclusive practice creates an equal space where Spanish-speaking parents feel comfortable, welcomed, and empowered.

"Lack of knowledge for parents to navigate the school system and help kids be successful in school. The more the kids grow up, the bigger the gap between the parents and institutions." - Linn-Benton Community College

"Most immigrant parents do not understand the importance of their child attending school and doing well in school...they see it as an option more than an obligation. Parents do not know how to support the student(s)." - Lebanon school district

"Some parents work seven days a week because they need the money which can lead to less engagement with the kids and their education." - Lebanon Church

"We need to educate people on the cultural capital that is required to be successful in a predominantly White society, importance of deadlines, navigating the system, etc." - Linn-Benton Community College