

Bridging the Gap for Hispanic Newcomers Case Overview



In Athens, Georgia, the home of the University of Georgia since 1801, Mexican and other Spanish-speaking immigrants have arrived in significant numbers since 1995, attracted by the labor needs of the area's poultry processors. Athens Clarke County Regional Library (ACCRL) together with Lyndon House Arts Center set out to enhance cultural understanding and educational opportunities for recent Mexican immigrants as well as the greater Athens community through the project "Bridging the Gap Family to Family: Athenian-Mexican Cultural Exchange and Learning."

For Clarke County, with a population of over 108,000, the largest employers in addition to UGA are Pilgrim's Pride and other poultry processors. The Hispanic population, shown at 6% in the 2000 census, has been estimated as up to 20% in 2005. Public school figures show 37% of the K-12 students are Hispanic (2006).

The project's goals include:

- Improving the education of recent Mexican immigrants by strengthening vocational and English language skills
- Increasing their participation in library and arts center facilities
- Increasing educational and cultural exchange between the Mexican-American community and the greater Athens community to nurture cross-cultural understanding.

The program, in conjunction with the Georgia Public Library Service, set to establish a Community Learning Center in a portable classroom at Pinewoods, a primarily Hispanic mobile home park, that, in addition to other services, would provide family literacy programs, vocational training, and English instruction. The Center would also collect and provide Spanish-language materials.

In conjunction with the Mexican Department of Education's *Plaza Comunitaria*, Pinewoods would offer free distance-education classes (in Spanish) for participants to complete high school. Alternating between the Lyndon House Arts Center and the ACC Regional Library headquarters, cultural exchange programs would pair English-



speaking and Spanish-speaking families learning the vocabulary around an activity (building a piñata) or event (such as an anniversary celebration). In addition, Pinewoods would host art exhibits and offer arts classes. Athens-Clarke County Regional Library (ACCRL), serving more than 170,000 people in the area, wrote a IMLS National Leadership Grant, to create Pinewoods as the eleventh branch in the ACCRL. The ACCRL website lists all the branches, with the Pinewoods page in Spanish serving as a portal to the county-wide services.

ACCRL offers a regular slate of educational and cultural programs including children's storytimes, lectures on topics such as the Civil War, workshops in areas such as computer skills and genealogy, and arts programs like concerts. For more information on the Pinewoods Center and the Athens Regional Library System, see

<http://www.clarke.public.lib.ga.us/branches/pinewoods/pinewoods.html>

The Athens-Clarke County Department of Leisure Services operates the Lyndon House Arts Center (LHAC). Housed in a historic Greek Revival and Italianate home, the Lyndon House Arts Center



offers a variety of arts classes including photography, woodcarving, and cartooning for children and adults. In addition, LHAC regularly shows special art exhibits, and its facilities include a shop and a small museum.



Other partners in the program include the Clarke County School District, the University of Georgia Office of International Public Service and Outreach, Center for Latin American Achievement in Education [CLASE] at UGA, and the Athens Regional Medical Center which has provided health educators for our monthly health seminars which have had great attendance.

Profiles of Stakeholders

These are fictional statements typifying attitudes and illustrating needs, not actual direct quotations.



Mexican Immigrant (Sofia Garcia, wife of Juan, mother to 8 year-old Marisol, translated in part by a bilingual neighbor)

Marisol and I came to this area two months ago when Juan sent for us. He has been living here for a year, working many hours so we can have a better life. I need to learn how to talk to her new teacher. Marisol catches on quickly. She already knows many English words and knows how to get around at school. For me, though, I need help in learning English. It is harder than I thought it would be. I need to know what foods are at the grocery store, how to pay our electric bill, how to find a doctor, things like that. I want to meet my new neighbors and talk to Marisol's friends. Sometimes I get homesick and feel lonely. I would like to have more ways

to remember Mexico and make sure that Marisol doesn't forget.

Athens Community Member

I have lived in this area several years, and the number of Spanish-speaking folks has grown tremendously. Our community takes pride in being friendly and neighborly. I go to St. Joseph's Catholic Church and see new people arriving for the Spanish Mass as I am leaving the regular service. I feel awkward because I don't know what to say. We had a church dinner recently and I ate a real tamale for the first time, and some other foods I'd never heard of before. It made me want to learn about Latino food. I know how hard it is to read something as common as food labels anymore, and I can't imagine doing it in another language. Our community needs to have more resources available for the Mexican immigrants to learn about our culture and stay connected with their own. Some of my neighbors, like me, are 'interested citizens' and we want to learn more about our new neighbors. Maybe we can help them feel more at home.



Library Staff Member

Our library takes seriously its mission "to be an integral part of the educational development of our community." When we realized how many new Spanish-speaking immigrants, most of them from Mexico, were arriving in our community, we knew we had to act. Many of the new immigrants and migrant workers don't speak English, and our collection of Spanish-language reading materials is small. Beyond that, we know that we need to be reaching



out to our community members since many of them come from places where public libraries are not familiar organizations. We need to strengthen our collection and services to reflect the new demographics of our community.

Arts Center Staff Member

Our Arts Center is a vital part of the community. Many of our volunteers are skilled in multiple media and enjoy sharing their expertise by giving programs, teaching classes, and acting as docents for group tours. We would like to extend our community outreach to include new members, such as those people who speak Spanish. We already know that there

is much to learn by a cross-cultural exchange, especially through art since it allows us to communicate without words. It is a wonderful medium to cross cultural gaps and to enhance the cultural richness of our area. We want all of our residents to know that our facility is open to all people, and that by sharing our knowledge, we can better understand each other.

Logic Model Worksheet

I. Situation: program partners and stakeholders	
What is the program's name ?	Bridging the Gap Family to Family: Athenian-Mexican Cultural Exchange and Learning
What partners are involved?	Athens-Clarke County Regional Library Lyndon House Arts Center Georgia Public Library Service Center for Latin American Achievement in Education [CLASE] at UGA Athens Regional Medical Center
Who are the program's stakeholders ? (Be sure to include yourself, your target audience, partners, funders and any other stakeholders.)	What does each stakeholder want to know?
Mexican Immigrant Population	What services are available to help us make our way in the local community? How can we stay connected with our home country and culture?
Athens-Clarke Community at large	How can we get to know our neighbors better?
Athens-Clarke County Regional Library	How can we better serve the educational and informational needs of the Mexican immigrants in our community? How can we improve cross-cultural awareness and understanding?
Lyndon House Arts Center	How can we better serve the cultural needs of the Mexican immigrants in our community? How can we improve cross-cultural awareness and understanding?

<p>Georgia Public Library Service</p>	<p>How can we better serve the educational and informational needs of all users in our community? Can we partner with arts organizations to reach more people? Is this a cost-effective way of reaching diverse communities?</p>
<p>II. Program planning: connecting needs, solutions, and results</p>	
<p>Who are the audiences?</p>	<p>Spanish-speaking new immigrants and long-time residents wishing to learn about their new neighbors</p>
<p>What are the needs of the audience?</p>	<p>A significant recent influx of immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries need the services of the library and cultural system to take advantage of educational and cultural opportunities, and the long-time residents need to learn about their new neighbors.</p>
<p>What are some audience considerations?</p>	<p>Library services need to be near the new immigrant communities. Outreach should be in Spanish for students and parents.</p>
<p>What solution fulfills the needs?</p>	<p>House a new library community center in a portable classroom near a primarily Hispanic mobile home park; offer educational programs after school and after work including English as a Second Language as well as topics on community needs—such as health care and home ownership; arrange cultural programs at the library and Lyndon House Arts center with Hispanic and Anglo families.</p>
<p>What will be the desired results?</p>	<p>Improve English-language skills of new immigrants and raise educational levels; introduce new immigrants to library and cultural resources; increase cross-cultural knowledge between Hispanic and Anglo families.</p>

III. Logic model summary: program purpose statement

We do what?	Provide Spanish and bi-lingual educational programs, cultural enrichment, and information resources for recent Spanish-speaking immigrants and encourage cross-cultural exchanges.
For whom ?	Mexican immigrants and Athens-Clarke community at large
For what outcome /benefit(s)?	
Hispanic Immigrant Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increase English-speaking skills •Increase educational achievement in courses •Increase use of library and art center resources and programs •Increase cross-cultural understanding through family-to-family programs
Athens-Clarke Community at large	Increase cross-cultural understanding through family-to-family programs and volunteering (tutoring)

IV. Program elements

Inputs	Outputs (or counts)
Library staff	Number of staff hours
Arts center staff	Number of staff hours
Project and advisory board staff	Number of staff hours
Learning center collection	

Internet access	
Exhibition costs	Cost of exhibition rentals
Facility costs	
General supplies and equipment	
Activities	Outputs (or counts)
Hire staff	
Purchase portable classrooms	
Purchase books, including Spanish books, computers and supplies	# of books added to the collection
Plan programs	# of education and arts programs
Train staff and volunteers	# of staff and volunteers trained
Design exhibits	
Conduct marketing and public relations	
Services	Outputs (or counts)
Circulate library materials	# of materials that circulate from the community center # of people who sign up for library cards

Offer computer literacy classes (needed before taking Plaza Comunitario distance education classes)	<p># of people who visit the community center</p> <p># of online courses completed by Spanish speakers</p> <p># of hours of computer use logged in computer literacy and distance-education classes</p>
Provide Pinewoods webpage in Spanish linked to other ACCRL sites	
Offer ESL classes	# of people who attend ESL classes
Host arts exhibitions and activities	# of people who attend arts programs
Host lecture series, of interest, to families	
Provide after school-programs and tutoring for children	
Offer family-to-family bi-lingual programs around cross-cultural activities	<p># of online courses completed by Spanish speakers</p> <p># of families in cross-cultural activities</p>

V. Outcomes

Outcome 1: *Hispanic immigrants in Athens-Clarke County raise their educational level.*

Indicator(s)	Applied to	Data Source	Data Interval	Target
% and # of language-proficiency program participants who go up at least ONE level in proficiency as established by the National Reporting Service for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) AND	Adult non- English speakers attending ESL classes at Pinewoods who complete at least three months of study	ESOL competency measure	Quarterly	50%
# and % of enrollees in Mexican Plaza Comunitaria classes who pass the class	Enrollees in Mexican Plaza Comunitaria classes who complete a class successfully	Plaza records of registration and completion	Semester	80%

Outcome 2: *Hispanic immigrants demonstrate enjoyment of ACC library and arts programs.*

Indicator(s)	Applied to	Data Source	Data Interval	Target
The # and % of Hispanic immigrants who rate their enjoyment of the program as “high” to “very high” on a five part scale question.	Participants who register or sign in	Attendance records database	Yearly (starting at the end of the first year of operation)	50%

Outcome 3: ACC residents, both long-term and recent immigrants, attain cross-cultural understanding.

Indicator(s)	Applied to	Data Source	Data Interval	Target
% and # of participating family units who can list at least 3 vocabulary terms in Spanish and English related to the event. AND	Each family unit (working together to answer)	Exit Survey	After each event (up to 4 a year)	90%
# and % of participating family units who rate Family-to-Family events as good or excellent in increasing understanding of another culture	Individual attendees	Exit survey (Likert scale) with questions such as “Did you feel comfortable with the family you were paired with by the end?” “Would you feel comfortable greeting a member of your paired family if you saw one of them in Athens?”	After each event (up to 4 a year)	90%