

Hispanic Bridges Initiative

Executive Report

Commissioned by the
Jamestown Hispanic Community Council
Jamestown, New York

Prepared by
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Background and Data

The data below provides a snapshot of the Hispanic community representation in Chautauqua County, Jamestown City, and Jamestown City School District (JCSD). This information is not consistent (by year) and needs to be updated, but the number most compelling for attention and discussion is the growth in Hispanic/Latino students in JCSD. Now, one in five students in JCSD self-identifies as Hispanic/Latino and the true number is probably greater considering the high percentage of multiracial students.

- Chautauqua County Population 2013 (source: Chautauqua County Health Indicators):
 - Total population = 133,080
 - Hispanic or Latino = 9,004 (6.8%)
 - Total percentage of families below poverty = 14.6%
 - Hispanic percentage of families below poverty = 45.7%
- Jamestown City Population 2010 (source: City Datasets) [\[need updated data\]](#)
 - Total population 2010 = 31,146
 - Hispanic percentage of population 2010 = 8.8%
- Jamestown City School District Enrollment 2014-2015 (source: New York Student Information Repository System – SIRS):
 - Total K-12 = 4,839 students
 - **Hispanic or Latino = 941 students (19%)**
 - Multiracial = 462 (10%) majority assumed to be a mixture of White and Hispanic
 - English Language Learners = 216 (4%)
 - Economically Disadvantaged = 3,527 (73%)

Due to the data above and the growing concerns of the Jamestown Hispanic Community Council (JHCC) that improvements could and need to be made to better integrate Hispanic individuals into the Jamestown community, a series of actions have taken place. The JHCC has commissioned Dr. Kyle Reyes to compile input from various segments of the Jamestown community and lead conversations towards the development of a strategic plan.

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FINDINGS FROM HISPANIC COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Jamestown Hispanic Community Council created and conducted a community survey to members of the Hispanic community. The results of the survey showed the following:

- **Top reasons Hispanic parents moved to Jamestown:** more opportunities, better future, better schooling, family issues, affordable living, and perceived economic opportunities.
- **Top needs of Hispanic parents and families:** better job opportunities, basic needs (food, water, housing), transportation, health care, and education.
- **Biggest obstacles young Hispanic adults face:** lack of bilingual professionals (teachers, doctors, etc.), lack of security and bilingual police officers, language barriers, lack of employment opportunities, and racism/discrimination.
- **What Jamestown Public Schools can do to provide better support for Hispanic students:** more bilingual teachers/staff, student activities, broaden ESL programs, transportation, and communication between teachers and parents.
- **What would motivate Hispanic college students to remain in school and finish their degree:** more Hispanic professionals in the community, faculty providing support and mentoring, and more schooling opportunities.
- **What community activities/events might inspire you to be more successful:** Hispanic activities in the community (festivals, parades, etc.), and employment fairs.

FINDINGS FROM TARGETED FOCUS GRUOPS

On March 11 and 12, Dr. Kyle Reyes conducted four focus groups and one interview. These meetings were meant gather information from key segments of the Jamestown community including Hispanic students (K-12 and college), Educators, Hispanic parents, Hispanic pastors, and the Chief of Police. The most common issues that were raised include:

- Lack of bilingual/Hispanic educators and role models
- The need for more Hispanic community celebrations
- More productive activities for Hispanic youth
- A place to replace what the East Side YMCA had become (Centro Hispano)
- Sad about negative media representation of Hispanics
- Family is central to Hispanic culture (families need to be involved)
- Integrate, don't separate Hispanic students from mainstream (Jefferson Middle School)
- Need more educators who even try to understand Hispanic culture
- Hispanic community needs to know more about resources (Family Literacy program)
- Hispanic community is perceived as a "challenge" not as a "benefit" to the community
- Transportation and housing issues hinder Hispanic families from flourishing
- Hispanics not given opportunities (jobs) to showcase or develop talents/skills
- Only one bilingual officer on Police force and none in Fire Dept.
- Perception that Hispanics are now majority (which they are not)
- Concerns about heroine addictions
- Hispanic parents want opportunities (educational and jobs) for their children
- Change the mindset of those on welfare so that the children don't develop same outlook
- Hispanic families need access to basic community survival information (DMV, starting a business, accessing medical services, renting a home)
- Assume that because you speak Spanish, you are an immigrant

Community Conversation Notes

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

On Saturday, March 12, 2016, the JHCC hosted a Jamestown community conversation from 10:00am-2:30pm. Nearly 50 people attended this session during which participants brainstormed issues, barriers, and opportunities concerning the growing Hispanic community. The three guiding questions were:

1. What are the most critical issues facing the Jamestown community concerning the integration, accommodation, and acculturation of the growing Hispanic community?
2. What are the biggest barriers to addressing these issues in a productive manner?
3. What are the biggest opportunities to address these issues in a productive manner?

After five small groups compiled brainstorm lists, and similar topics were consolidated, all participants had a chance to submit five votes on the issues that they believed were: (1) critical areas to be addressed, (2) feasible in terms of progress that could be made, and (3) within the scope of the committee's influence. The 12 categories were:

1. Spanish/English Language Issues (42 votes)
2. Educational Opportunities and Changes (36 votes)
3. Cultural Integration, Understanding, and Exposure (30 votes)
4. Lack of Role Models (29 votes)
5. Building Community Trust (20 votes)
6. Employment Opportunities (20 votes)
7. Awareness of Current Programs and Resources for the Hispanic Community (14 votes)
8. Hispanic Networking and Leadership Development (13)
9. Divisions in Hispanic Leadership (7)
10. Transportation (6)
11. Housing (6)
12. Career Preparation (6)

After combining a number of the themes above, and adding the rest of the brainstorm recommendations offered, the committee has consolidated to four primary areas of focus: Cultural Bridges, Educational Bridges, Linguistic Bridges, and Professional Bridges. Each area of focus is complex and houses a number of sub-issues to be addressed.

The tables below highlight the ideas, opportunities, recommendations, and potential indicators within each of the areas. The issues raised came directly from a combination of the community conversation and the focus groups. In other words, while some of the issues raised are found in many other communities, certain issues listed below are unique to the Jamestown community and all are present within the Jamestown community.

The first table (page 5) contains a summary of the Areas of Focus along with newly written objectives and the list of issues generated throughout the two days of conversations. The tables that follow (pages 6-9) contain recommended action steps and assessment measures for each of the Areas of Focus. The recommended action steps come from a combination of the community conversation and Dr. Reyes' research. The potential indicators/assessment measures also come from Dr. Reyes' research and consulting experiences.

Areas of Focus - Summary

Area of Focus 1 Cultural Bridges	Area of Focus 2 Educational Bridges	Area of Focus 3 Linguistic Bridges	Area of Focus 4 Professional Bridges
<p>We seek to foster an appreciation of all cultures within the Jamestown community by providing opportunities for cross cultural engagement and education.</p>	<p>We value equitable and culturally responsible educational opportunities for all of our community members and recognize the value of families in the education of our Jamestown youth.</p>	<p>We seek to build skill development of and understanding between individuals who speak the two prevailing languages of our community: English and Spanish.</p>	<p>We recognize the high value of diverse professionals in all fields and will work towards increasing the number of diverse role models within critical industries.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation of Jamestown culture and Hispanic culture • Increase community cultural gatherings: events, dialogues, connection points, and common goal projects. • Address isolation • Community orientation and onboarding efforts to decrease stress in navigating system • Unity within the Hispanic community (including religions). • Identify Hispanic leaders and invite them to work towards building unity. • Workshops to combat cultural ignorance, prejudice, and discrimination • Create more opportunities for Hispanic voice to be heard and valued • Define cultural trust • Change majority community perception of Hispanic community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher/counselor training – cultural sensitivity (focus on assets) • Providing a welcoming environment to Hispanic students and families • Hispanic parent involvement • Communication with families and schools about programs and resources for Hispanic community. • Tracking Hispanic students to Jefferson Middle School • Graduation credits and exams • Hard to get G.E.D. • Role and presence of resource officer. • Hispanic student frustrations • Career preparation • K-16 partnerships • Help youth “walk in multiple worlds” • Road maps to career exploration • Access to equal opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for ENL (English as a New Language) opportunities • Lack of competent translators/interpreters • Stress of navigating system in English • Lack of bilingual employees across industries • Dearth of materials translated into Spanish (including important documents) • Adult ESL classes • Spanish Education offerings • Flexibility of offerings: evening, weekend, online. • How do we get families involved? • Create a clearinghouse of bilingual community members • Combat assumptions that Puerto Ricans are not American • Explore Dual language immersion model • Specialized classes only in English (Small Business Development, DMV, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of role models and bilingual professionals in a variety of critical industries: education, healthcare, family services, law enforcement, government, business, and media. • Utilize JCC and JBC Hispanic students as cultural navigators. • Need more Hispanic networking and leadership development opportunities. • Influence more Hispanic students to explore a variety of careers. • Hold Hispanic community workshops to explain key job search skills (resume building, interviews, professional attire, etc.) • Influence media outlets to show more positive Hispanic role models. • Explore parent development workshops • Lack of Hispanic-owned businesses (no Hispanic Chamber of Commerce) • Increase internships

Other issues not captured in the table above:

- Transportation
- Housing – Geographic isolation, opportunities to invest in property
- Healthcare services
- Safety
- Lack of incentives to come back to Jamestown once Hispanic students leave and get educated
- Inadequate coordination and presence of resources to build bridges

AREA OF FOCUS 1 - CULTURAL BRIDGES

We seek to foster an appreciation of all cultures within the Jamestown community by providing opportunities for cross cultural engagement and education.

Issues / Goals	Recommendations / Action Step Ideas	Potential Indicators / Assessment Measures
Increase exposure to and appreciation of Hispanic culture(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Taste of Jamestown” culinary festival • Traditional Puerto Rican holiday celebrations • Hispanic Heritage month events • Showcasing Hispanic student talents • Screening of a Spanish foreign film • Hispanic arts and crafts festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Hispanic community events • Estimated number of people participating in such events • Exit surveys about the experiences of participants
Advocacy for Hispanic voice(s) to be represented and heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a community survey about Hispanic needs • Host community town hall gatherings to discuss Hispanic community concerns • Community leadership meeting with leaders in Hispanic community • Create Hispanic boards and associations • Invite Hispanic community to join community discussions (i.e., School Board meetings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Hispanic entities created and functioning • Results from Hispanic community survey about needs • Notes from focus groups and community dialogues assessing the cultural climate
Diminish fear and negative perceptions of Hispanic community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JCC/JBC facilitate workshops on appreciating difference & multiculturalism • Assess different strategies to address prejudice within different generations • A team of white and Hispanic community members conduct/model “Did you Know?” conversations throughout community sharing data and debunking myths • Educate community that Puerto Ricans are Americans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community survey about understanding of Hispanic community • Notes from workshops • Exit surveys from workshops
Improve opportunities for Hispanic community to acclimate and acculturate to Jamestown culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Resource Guide in Spanish • “Welcome to the Community” open houses twice a year hosted by the Mayor’s office • Translate portions of the Jamestown community website most needed by Hispanic community • Involve Hispanic community in the traditional Jamestown gatherings, festivals, celebrations, and cultural activities • Chamber of Commerce (or equivalent) develops a helpful guide/workshops for Hispanics who would like to start their own businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of and access to community resource guide • Number of Hispanic participants at traditional Jamestown gatherings • Participation in Hispanic business and other professional development workshops
Develop unity within the Hispanic community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue monthly dialogues with Hispanic pastors • Develop a network of services (Centro Hispano) and communicate information throughout Hispanic community • Multi-denominational faith and food gathering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hispanic community survey about unity within Hispanic community • Regularity of meetings between Hispanic leaders

AREA OF FOCUS 2 - EDUCATIONAL BRIDGES

We value equitable and culturally responsible educational opportunities for all of our community members and recognize the value of families in the education of our Jamestown youth.

Issues / Goals	Recommendations / Action Step Ideas	Potential Indicators / Assessment Measures
Improve outreach to and engagement of Hispanic parents and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Hispanic PTA (even for just one year) to create a safe space for Hispanic parents to meet, dialogue, and make recommendations • Hire a Hispanic parent liaison to help communicate with and involve Hispanic parents and families • Translate vital school materials for Hispanic parents • Invite Hispanic parents to come into the schools to share about culture and language • Create Hispanic family information nights within the schools to both build community and disseminate information • New family orientation in Spanish for students and families who are new to the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants in school-hosted Hispanic family activities • Pre and post assessment of Hispanic parent and family engagement • Number of Hispanic parents who participate in school related activities (PTA, parent-teacher conference, classroom volunteers)
Improve school environment reflective of and welcoming to Hispanic students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include Hispanic cultural décor around school • Have flags from around the world, words from various languages, and prominent people from different backgrounds posted in classrooms and around the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student survey asking whether or not they notice different cultures represented throughout their school
Improve teacher/counselor sensitivity to and appreciation for Hispanic culture and students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with JCC and SUNY Fredonia to offer cultural sensitivity trainings for teachers and pre-service teachers • Create a development plan for any teachers who demonstrate cultural insensitivity • Develop in-service dialogues (led by principals) to discuss ways to integrate Hispanic culture into the curriculum • Invite school resource officers to go through Hispanic cultural sensitivity training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of trainings offered • Number of participants involved in trainings, dialogues, and workshops • Pre and post test assessing teacher dispositions towards Hispanic community
Assess and change the systemic variables that reinforce stereotypes about and within the Hispanic community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the Jefferson Middle School pipeline and discuss options for change • Change policies that place English proficient students in ESL • Examine policies and practices that hinder Hispanic student achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluations conducted and specific steps are taken to address critical areas that hinder Hispanic student success
Help Hispanic students develop a strong sense of cultural identity & leadership involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community dialogue about what it means to “Walk successfully in both worlds.” • Expand number of Hispanic students in school leadership groups (student council, clubs, sports, dance groups) • Develop Hispanic mentoring programs (Latinos in Action model) throughout K-16 system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Hispanic students who participate in leadership and mentoring opportunities • Reflective journals about what Hispanic students are experiencing
Develop school, college, community partnerships to leverage collective resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a K-16 Alliance - regular meetings between K-12 leaders and college leaders to address common interests around Hispanic (and other) issues • Collaborate on potential grants to address the needs of Hispanic community members and/or low-income communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress made on goals outlined by K-16 Alliance • Grants pursued to address Hispanic student achievement

AREA OF FOCUS 3 - LINGUISTIC BRIDGES

We seek to build skill development of and understanding between individuals who speak the two prevailing languages of our community: English and Spanish.

Issues / Goals	Recommendations / Action Step Ideas	Potential Indicators / Assessment Measures
Increase ESL/ENL offerings, flexibility, opportunities, and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and market adult ESL classes • Explore grants to increase funding for more ESL teachers • Increase students who leave SUNY Fredonia with ESL endorsement • Develop evening classes for students and parents to learn English together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of ESL classes offered to youth and adults • Number of people participating in classes • Increase in English proficiency exams
Increase opportunities to learn Spanish in various sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with JCC Hispanic students to conduct community Spanish language classes • Increase business and industry buy-in of Spanish language development as part of their professional development • Market existing online Spanish language resources to the broader community • Spanish Language Appreciation Day where various activities are conducted in Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Spanish classes offered to youth and adults • Number of people participating in classes
Increase quantity of Spanish translators, interpreters, and bilingual professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a clearinghouse of bilingual professionals. Train them and pay them by the hour to be a resource to the entire community. • Hire more Spanish speakers in all sectors (through grant money and business partnerships) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of bilingual professionals and their hours spent providing language interpretation
Increase number of materials throughout the community that are translated into Spanish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Spanish translation task force to help provide services for entities willing to translate their materials • Focus on critical information areas that the Hispanic community needs to access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in volume of material translated into Spanish
Explore Dual Language Immersion program in K-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research what states are doing to increase number of Dual Language Immersion (DLI) offerings • Identify schools with highest percentage of Hispanic student enrollment • Conduct pilot of DLI in one elementary school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot of DLI conducted and assessed
Increase specialized classes in Spanish/English to help Hispanic individuals navigate community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key areas to successfully navigate Jamestown community and develop a series of workshops/guides to help Hispanic community (i.e., DMV, home buying, applying for a job, registering children for school, religious denomination information, banks and credit unions, setting up a small business, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of community navigation workshops • Number of Hispanic individuals participating in workshops

AREA OF FOCUS 4 - PROFESSIONAL BRIDGES

We recognize the high value of diverse professionals in all fields and will work towards increasing the number of diverse role models within critical industries.

Issues / Goals	Recommendations / Action Step Ideas	Potential Indicators / Assessment Measures
Increase representation of Hispanic professionals in vital industries to be role models for Hispanic youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Hispanic Educators of Tomorrow program with JCC and SUNY Fredonia (as well as similar programs in other key areas: nursing, business, public administration, communication, etc.). • Encourage more Hispanic student participation at JCC, JBC, and SUNY Fredonia and create pipelines to employment • Identify Hispanic professionals and have them present about their profession in classrooms. This helps all students reframe Hispanic representation in various fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of Hispanic students enrolling in key disciplines • Increase in Hispanic student enrollment at all the colleges • Number of Hispanic professionals invited into local schools • Hispanic student survey about career aspirations
Increase K-12 Hispanic student engagement with Hispanic college students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore K-16 Hispanic mentoring program – college students become cultural navigators • Hispanic college students host K-12 students for a college/campus visit • Big Brother, Big Sister type programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Hispanic K-12 students who tour a college campus • Number of mentoring contact hours made between mentors and mentees
Develop more college/industry internships for Hispanic students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask all businesses to consider partnering with colleges to offer internships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Hispanic student-placed internships (year to year) • Number of internships that lead to jobs
Increase community workshops for Hispanic community to develop job readiness skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional workshops in Spanish/English to explain key job search and preparation skills (resume building, interviewing, professional attire, PowerPoint presentations, public speaking, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of and number of participants in professional workshops
Develop Hispanic networking and leadership development opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Hispanic Chamber of Commerce • Create cross sector Hispanic Leadership Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey to Hispanic leaders about collaboration, unity, and leadership development
Offer parent development workshops to create more role models within the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have United Way assemble a Hispanic parent committee to discuss the greatest parenting needs and the information that would be useful in a workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents who participate in the committee and the workshops

Moving Forward

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

As the Jamestown Hispanic Community Council moves forward, I invite them to take into account a number of next steps. Although some of these recommendations can be sequential, not all of the recommendations need to follow the order as outlined below. The recommendations also assume that each committee member will review this report come together to discuss revisions, additions, etc.

1. **FRAMEWORK** – Assess whether or not the four Areas of Focus are acceptable as a framework, as categories, and as titles. Please discuss each area of focus along with its accompanying objective (page 5) and revise the language to represent where the council would like to focus. It is important that the Areas of Focus and complimentary Objectives are agreed upon and solid. These, individually and collectively, will provide the overarching direction for the entire strategic plan.
2. **AREAS OF FOCUS & OBJECTIVES** – Review each Area of Focus and determine whether or not the issues outlined in the first column of each table captures/represents the community conversation and your own sense of where the council should focus its energies. As a council, please edit, remove, or add anything you feel helps to bring focus to your efforts.
3. **RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS** – Within each Area of Focus, each issue has a series of recommended action steps. These steps are simply recommendations and it is not feasible that all can be accomplished at the same time. The committee will need to decide which ones are both ambitious and achievable. You may decide to phase the action steps in. For example, you may decide to label the action steps according to Phase 1, Phase 2 and so forth. Some action steps require a longer timeframe to fulfill and others can be implemented this summer. Once again, the list is limited so feel free to add more ideas of ways to address the specific issue or need. It is here that I also invite your best efforts to collaborate and get creative. Resources to address the issue may be limited when approached as a single entity or sector (i.e. K-12 education) but when combined with other entities, resources can compound to affect more individuals. This process also requires a resource assessment and resource gap analysis. These two analyses will inform your baseline data as well as provide a realistic picture of what you do and do not have to start with.
4. **INDICATORS** – The Assessment Measures provided for each issue represent ideas to measure whether or not progress is being made on any particular area. Some areas/issues are harder to measure than others, but they should not stop you from trying to conduct assessments. We measure what we care about and we pay attention to what we measure.
5. **STRATEGIC PLANNING TIMEFRAME** – The council should develop a strategic planning timeframe to provide guideposts of progress. The timeframe could look something like this:
 - a. March–August 2016: Finalize areas of focus, objectives, targeted action steps, and indicators. In addition to the Hispanic Community Council meetings, this includes more community dialogues about the plan.
 - b. August–December 2016: Phase I – Implementation of 3-4 action steps/initiatives, communication of the plan broadly, continue community conversations about potential plans, research grant opportunities, bring sectors together for collective impact.
 - c. January 2017-June 2017: Phase II – Implementation of 3-4 more action steps/initiatives, assess pilot initiatives, continue community conversations, write for grants.