

May 11, 2003

Foundation's mission is growing in strength

Philanthropy group builds up Hispanic nonprofit agencies

By **Robert Miller**

The Hispanic population in the United States is undergoing vast changes, which means the philanthropy serving that public, relatively new itself, must adapt to proven ways of doing business but also break ground.

For instance, the fastest growth of Hispanics in the United States is not in California, New York or Texas.

It's in states such as Arkansas and North Carolina, says Magui Rubalcava, director of programs at Hispanics in Philanthropy, the principal Hispanic foundation in the nation.

At the recent national convention of Council on Foundations in Dallas, organizers noted that according to the 2000 census, Hispanics number more than 35 million and make up nearly 13 percent of the population, making them the largest ethnic minority group in the country.

Hispanics in Philanthropy, or HIP, has only a handful of staff members. Its headquarters and its president, Diana Campoamor, are in San Francisco, and Ms. Rubalcava lives in St. Paul, Minn.

Increasing population

According to information from HIP, by 2050, 49 percent of the U.S. population will be people of color, and "one-quarter of this ethnically diverse population will be Latino, accounting for 98 million people - a 200 percent increase from the present Latino population."

"This rewriting of the U.S. demographic map will have significant impact on the nation's - and the trans-nation's - cultural, economic and political landscapes," Ms. Campoamor said.

It will also present significant challenges and opportunities for nonprofit and philanthropic leaders, she said.

On the philanthropic front, Ms. Campoamor notes that HIP is only 20 years old and has turned to some of the largest and best-known foundations in the nation for support.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Mich., was one of the first to step forward, giving \$750,000 in the form of a challenge grant.

Yet private philanthropy gives less than 1.5 percent of its grant dollars to Latino organizations.

HIP decided three years ago to address this issue by creating the Funders' Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities with support from the Ford, Rockefeller and Kellogg foundations.

The immediate goal is to raise \$16.5 million over five years to strengthen the infrastructure of the Latino nonprofit sector and to cultivate the next generation of Latino leadership in the United States and Latin America.

It may initially seem incongruous to an outsider that the group is focusing on the infrastructure of Hispanic nonprofit agencies rather than on social and economic issues.

But it's critical for a nonprofit organization with limited funding and a huge, growing target public to do so, Ms. Rubalcava explained.

Creating strong nonprofit groups will allow them to carry out the four principal objectives of the collaborative, which are to:

- Increase the net amount of philanthropic dollars flowing to Latino nonprofit agencies.
- Help non-Latino foundations such as Ford, Rockefeller and the Houston Endowment of Texas learn to understand Latino nonprofit groups, the communities they serve and the roles they play.
- Strengthen the managerial and technical capacity of small- to medium-size Latino nonprofit groups with annual operating budgets of less than \$2 million.
- Foster leadership and collaboration among Latino nonprofit agencies.

At last month's convention, the team that designed and implemented the Funders' Collaborative was given the Robert W. Scrivner Award for Creative Grantmaking. The co-recipients were Ms. Rubalcava; Aida Rodriguez, dean of the Milano School of Nonprofit Management at the New School in New York City; Barbara Taveras, president and board secretary of the Edward Hazen Foundation; and Luz Vega-Marquis, president and CEO of the Marguerite Casey Foundation.

Latinos earn about half the national average per capita income, and those numbers have remained stagnant, preventing Latinos from entering the middle class, Ms. Campoamor said.

"With the government cutting its social and economic programs, the outlook for social services becomes more desperate than ever," she said.

Areas in need

Ms. Campoamor listed the following as areas of large concentrations of Hispanics who need to be served by nonprofit groups:

Argentina, Colorado, Connecticut, Chicago, Delaware Valley (Philadelphia), Dominican Republic, Massachusetts/Rhode Island, southeast Wisconsin, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, the Upper Midwest (Minnesota, South Dakota and Montana), Northern California and the Central Valley, Southern California and south Florida.

The inclusion of Argentina and the Dominican Republic reflect the "trans-national" issue, Ms. Campoamor said.

Just as NAFTA reflects the north-south axis in trade, she said, "we're trying to craft parallel agreements involving philanthropy. The source of the Latino culture, its views and problems are to be found in Latin America."

It makes sense to connect with that part of the hemisphere, she said. "Everything is so interdependent. We must work together."

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