



Office of the Chief Administrative Officer Hispanic Liaison Office

Mission

The City of Richmond Hispanic Liaison Office (HLO) increases access to City and community services, and promotes community information, education, and citizen participation. The HLO supports City agencies in developing the capacity to interact, communicate, and serve our diverse community.

Background

Latinos are a burgeoning part of the City of Richmond's population, increasing over 150% from 1,898 in 1990, to 5,074 in 2000, and to 9,052 in 2007. Richmond's Hispanic population has grown 95% since the 2000 census and now accounts for nearly 5 percent of the city's population at about 9,900 people (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, July 1, 2008). Many Latino families moving to Richmond are new arrivals to the country and initially have limited English language skills. The language barrier can be challenging for both the families and for the City of Richmond in regards to services. In response to the need for culturally appropriate services, a group of Latino residents presented the City of Richmond with a proposal describing the creation of a Hispanic Liaison Office. The City of Richmond Hispanic Liaison Office was subsequently established in 2004.

In April of 2006, the HLO moved to the City of Richmond's Southside Community Services Center. The new location offers additional space and renovated furnishings. The Hispanic Liaison Office transitioned at that time to the Human Services portfolio of the City of Richmond, under the Office of the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Human Services. The move was strategic on various levels, including greater visibility within City structure, a higher profile by the inclusion within the Office of the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Human Services, and more support for the expansion of the HLO initiatives – all allowing for closer collaboration with City Departments. In July of 2008 the HLO transitioned to the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, where it is currently housed. This is an exciting time for the City of Richmond, and it is abundantly clear that the Hispanic Liaison Office is an integral component to the City's core operation.

HLO Services & Initiatives

In order to best serve the Latino community, the HLO has developed an inclusive approach to include:

- 1) Intervention and Referrals for individuals and families
- 2) Community Building Projects
- 3) Opening up City Government to the Hispanic community

As part of this approach, the following are HLO services and initiatives:

- Interpreting Assistance – Office helps residents with oral interpretation for City departments and services.
- Community Resource Referrals – Office offers a contact network system of medical clinics, legal assistance, non profit organizations, educational organizations, cultural groups, etc.
- Educational Resources – Provides information on education classes, for example - 'English as a second language,' 'Spanish as a second language,' Parenting classes, etc.
- Tax Assistance Programs – Office coordinates bilingual volunteers trained by the IRS that provide free tax assistance at sites located throughout the City.

- Information for New Americans – Support of consulate visits to Richmond that assist immigrants in obtaining passports and/or identification.
- Imagine Festival — Co-sponsor of the Imagine Festival, a yearly festival highlighting Richmond’s diverse community and promoting safety.
- Translation Assistance – Assistance to City Departments in translating written documents and forms.
- Community Outreach – Two radio shows in Spanish that focus on educating the Latino community about important topics, upcoming events, and opportunities to get involved.
- Technical Assistance – Office works with City Departments to provide training, recommendations regarding serving the Latino community, and assistance in hiring bilingual staff.

HLO Data

Requests include contacts via phone, email, or walk-in customers:

In FY 05, the HLO fielded 5,037 requests for assistance.

In FY 06, the HLO fielded 9,462 requests for assistance – close to twice that of the year prior.

In FY 07, the HLO fielded 11,027 requests for assistance.

In FY 08, the HLO fielded 11,299 requests for assistance.

Staff and Contact Information

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