



Financial Assessment Report

Data compiled from input provided by the
Hispanic Financial Wellness Committee
and
Soaring Eagle Hispanic Dairy Farm Employees

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Report Compiled by

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Soaring Eagle Dairy Farm employees also contributed to the needs assessment through conversations with Hispanic Consortium member Rudy Pineda and their employer, Sandie Fitzgerald

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Introduction

In February 2003, a committee of Manitowoc County Hispanic Consortium members and other interested people in the community gathered for a three-hour discussion on the need for financial education for the growing number of Latino persons in Manitowoc County. The need was first identified by Sandie Fitzgerald, a Consortium member who is the owner of Soaring Eagle Dairy Farm. Sandie and her husband employ Hispanic Dairy workers. Other concerns were voiced by representatives of local hospitals who indicated their concern with being "tapped out" of charitable contributions resulting from, particularly, uninsured Latino residents who had emergency medical needs.

This report identifies what was suggested as educational opportunities by the committee members and, by the Hispanic dairy workers working on Sandy's farm. The findings were formulated into two trends, "Insurance Education" and, "Banking Education". Following the input are "interpretations" of the suggestions to clarify the discussion of the group. Immediately following the interpretations are "recommendations" for action.

The interpretations and recommendations were formulated by the author of this report, Faye Malek, and are not intended to be conclusive. The readers of this report can add their insights into the findings to develop further conclusions.

Trend #1: Insurance Education

n = 19

1. Committee Input on the Topic of "Insurance":

- Many Hispanics/Latinos do not understand why health insurance is needed, why put the money upfront, and why money is removed from the paycheck.
- There is a need to teach prevention through an explanation of insurance.
- It is needed to be looked at as a safety net.
- It is difficult to understand the hospital bill.
- The need for it, an explanation of what it is, what premium, deductible, and co-pay terms mean, how to get children insured, keep using the same name, rates at company and self-pay.
- There are four components in the provision of health insurance: need, pay, pass, see. Need includes the desire to want insurance (many do not want it or see the need for it). Pay: *everyone* wants a low deductible or a low-cost insurance. Some do not want insurance because they do not plan to stay here and feel it is not a good deal. Pass: this involved medical and financial underwriting. Will undocumented persons what to go through the rigor of obtaining insurance? Age makes a difference - the older the person - the more expensive. Also pre-existing conditions also come into play.
- Health care is not sought out until they are in dire need. Oftentimes, this results in going to the emergency room which generates an even higher cost.
- Some people have false documents. Some buy documents they think are legal and get scammed. Many use a variety of names so they don't get caught.
- It is difficult finding dentists who will treat patients without insurance.
- If an employer has less than 5 employees, the employer is not required to offer workers compensation.
- Individuals cannot be forced to take insurance.
- Hispanics/Latinos need to have a catastrophic plan at minimum.
- The hospital(s) can help with minor needs, not with major needs.
- Residents have to be documented in order to secure insurance.
- Some wives of male farm workers work outside the home and get insurance through their employer
- It is difficult for employees to communicate with a Spanish-speaking customer because of the language barrier. Using an interpreter is a potential liability.

Reporter's Interpretation of the "Insurance Education" Input

1. Some Hispanics do not understand the concept of insurance.
2. Some Hispanics do not understand the terminology associated with insurance.
3. Some Hispanics cannot afford insurance.
4. Some Hispanics first realize the importance of insurance when there is a medical emergency and they have no insurance to pay the bill.
5. Hispanics need to be documented in order to get insurance.
6. Hospitals can at times assist Hispanics with minor costs but, not major costs.
7. Some Hispanics do not want to spend their money on insurance, whether they are employed or not.

Committee's Input on Educational Approaches for "Insurance Education":

- Many live in fear and try not to reveal themselves to other Hispanics/Latinos and to whites. This is one reason why they do not get a driver's license. One must be sensitive to their fears.
- Leaders of the Hispanic/Latino community need to be the teachers so others follow. Get leaders to initiate the concept (i.e. Francisco and Maria, others from Lakeside Packing). The more established people should share it with the new arrivals.
- Provide a comfortable atmosphere where conversation is provided first. Offer a night program as well to accommodate shift workers.
- Classes could be taught at WIC sites, the Neighborhood Network Learning Center, ESL classes, after Mass, etc.
- Many Hispanics/Latinos cannot afford insurance, it is expensive when making so little per hour.
- If we can make a difference for them, we will show them that we welcome them. They are a proud culture. It's hard for them to accept a handout.

Reporter's Interpretation of Educational Approaches Recommended to Teach "Insurance Education" Topics

1. Some Hispanics live in fear of being identified as "undocumented". Therefore, they might not seek out the help they need.
2. Some Hispanics feel insurance is too expensive and are willing to go without.
3. Hispanics trust information that comes from Hispanic leaders in the community.
4. Hispanics are a proud people and "handouts" are hard to accept.
5. Hispanics appreciate convenient ways to get education.

Committee's Input on Appropriate Target Group(s):

- "The settlers" (those that are here for five years or more) are the target group. They have established jobs and, possibly, can afford insurance.
- Target the employed, has no insurance or, opted not to take it.
- Different companies have different policies ... it's difficult to make an "over-all presentation", therefore, insurance education is needed at each company.

Reporter's Interpretation of Appropriate Target Group(s)

1. Target employed Hispanics.
2. Work though the companies who employ Hispanic workers since policies differ from worksite to worksite.

Reporter's Recommendations for Trend #1: "Insurance Education"

1. Leaders of the Hispanic community need to take leadership roles in providing insurance education to Hispanics.
2. If affording an insurance policy is not an option for Hispanics, provide options so they can get the medical attention they need.
3. Hispanics who are employed or who can afford insurance and do not already have it need be provided with education on the benefits of insurance.
4. A non-threatening and comfortable atmosphere is needed when offering educational sessions to help develop a trusting relationship between clients and facilitators.
5. Companies need to be notified that Hispanics do not always understand the concept of insurance or, if they have insurance, they do not always understand their policy.

Trend #2: Banking Education

Committee's "Banking Education" Input:

Education is needed on:

- How the banking system works, especially for new arrivals.
- How a savings account can be opened legally without a social security card (W8BEN form).
- Why not to get a false SS card to open an account and why a SS card is not needed to open a savings account.
- On reporting undocumented people to INS by bank employees (yes or no).
- The benefits of becoming a customer of a bank (i.e. wiring \$ fees).
- How to select a bank or a credit union.
- What is and the use of the W7 form.
- Check-and-Go and the charges that go with it.
- Where to cash a check affordably. (Banks are not obligated to cash a check from a non-customer.)
- To not use false identification when going to a bank.
- How to close a bank account if a false identification was used. Reopen using legal avenues.
- Wiring money/bank issuance of debt cards/money orders ... what's the best?
- Fee levels for every bank are not the same.
- It's okay to ask questions! Shop for a bank/credit union by asking questions. (Determine what questions should be asked and, include the location of the facility for convenience.)
- It is not discourteous to not open an account at a bank/credit union after meeting with personnel from that institution.
- Saving for the future.
- Managing money from paycheck to paycheck.
- How much to keep. How much to send home.
- How to file taxes.
- Tracking spending.
- Store brands vs. national brands.
- Places to shop frugally for food.
- Education with local grocers for them to provide ethnic foods.
- Understanding WIC.
- Operation of the thermostat, space heaters, microwave as they relate to cost of operation.
- Need for cultural sensitivity education at pantries, etc.
- Retirement funds.

Reporter's Interpretation of "Banking Education"

1. Hispanics need to be informed of the benefits of a bank and/or credit union membership.
2. Hispanics need to know how to operate within the banking system using legal methods when opening accounts.
3. Hispanics need to know how to "shop for" a bank or credit union facility, in other words, what questions to ask so they can make an informed decision.
4. Aside from understanding the banking system, Hispanics need overall money management education to help them manage from paycheck to paycheck and, have money set aside for the future. This includes information on how to get the best buy for necessities.
5. Hispanics need to know of local resources and programs to help them stretch the dollar.

Committee's Suggested Educational Approaches for "Banking Education":

- Use a non-threatening approach to education. Many did not have the opportunity in Mexico and other countries to experience the banking system and, financial management.
- Provide a comfortable atmosphere when teaching and, encourage participants to ask questions.
- Encourage participation through discussion and in having participants contribute to the cause by educating others with the information.
- Many do not feel they belong here. When that is the case, people find it difficult to ask questions.
- Churches are comfortable and respected/believable places for sessions (after Mass).
- It is important to not be judgmental and to be positive, friendly, and genuine in all presentation ... just like with everyone else

Reporter's Interpretation of Educational Approaches to "Banking Education"

1. Educators need to be sensitive and non-judgmental to Hispanics since some feel uncomfortable in situations where unfamiliar topics are covered (i.e. the banking system and financial management topics).
2. Sessions should be interactive to include the participants in the learning process.
3. Educational events should be held at places where Hispanics find believable and respected.

Recommendations for Trend #2: "Banking Education"

1. The banking system needs to be explained to Hispanics since it is an unfamiliar topic.
2. Hispanics need skills to make informed decisions on whether or not to become a member of a bank or credit union.
3. Education on what legal documents can be used by undocumented persons to operate within the banking system is needed. This will help reduce incidences of the use of illegal documentation.
4. Education needs to be provided on money management.
5. Local resources need to be identified as a way to stretch the dollar for needed expenditures.
6. Facilitator - participant connections need to be based on trust and respect. Whenever possible, include the learner in activities.