

Minnesota Latina Leadership Academy

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HACER

October 2019



Research, Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research

WCA FOUNDATION

About Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research (HACER):

HACER's mission is to provide the Minnesota Latino community the ability to create and control information about itself in order to affect critical institutional decision-making and public policy. General support for HACER has been provided by Minnesota-based philanthropic organizations and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits.

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Suggested citation: *Minnesota Latina Leadership Academy*, Richmond, Daisy [et al], HACER, 2019

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

Gender inequalities remain robustly entrenched in society. Women encounter obstacles when trying to obtain respectable jobs, and face workplace discrimination and a gender pay gap. Often, they cannot access basic education and medical care. Women suffer violence and discrimination all over the world. They are underrepresented in the decision-making of political and economic processes. The Latino population in the Minnesota metropolitan area does not escape this reality. Being a unique and rapidly growing community, it is often invisible to legislators, as well as to the agencies and organizations that serve women. This is why HACER created the Minnesota Latina Leadership Academy. The goal is to get more Latinas living in the Twin Cities area involved in leadership positions.

Objectives

1. Create a leadership development program for Latinas over the age of 18 who live in the metropolitan area using the Design Thinking methodology to identify and solve the challenges and barriers Latinas face individually and as a community. This will help them to address their own lives and positively impact society through greater participation in civic life.
2. Implement empowering Latina Women, which will result in 20 Latinas developing the confidence and skills they need to commit with total confidence to the challenges they face in their personal lives and actively participate in the organizations and institutions that influence their lives. These skills include financial education; self-defense; the resolution of conflicts; the ability to communicate and negotiate effectively; knowledge about the role of neighborhood associations, school boards, town halls, advisory committees and other entities that influence the quality of life of individuals and groups in the metropolitan area; and knowledge about how to get involved with relevant entities through participation in neighborhood associations, economic development organizations, schools, advisory boards, and commissions.

“People think of Latina women as being fiery and fierce, which is usually true. But I think the quality that so many Latinas possess is strength. I am very proud to have Latina blood.”

-Zoe Saldana



PRELIMINARY PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Minnesota Latina Leadership Academy has so far been a very successful program. This program is made up of a series of workshops, each focused on a different aspect of leadership and how Latinas can be more involved in that area of leadership. We had 60 applicants for this program but were only able to choose 20 participants. This is why, in the future, we would like to expand this program to be able to include more participants.

Since HACER is also a research and evaluation organization, it is always very important to us to have a thorough evaluation of our programs to determine their effectiveness and help us to improve them. We asked the participants to answer a few questions when applying for the program and we collected some basic demographic data. Mexico is the country of origin of the majority of the participants, but we also have participants from Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, and Guatemala. The distribution of the country of origin of the participants is shown in figure 1.

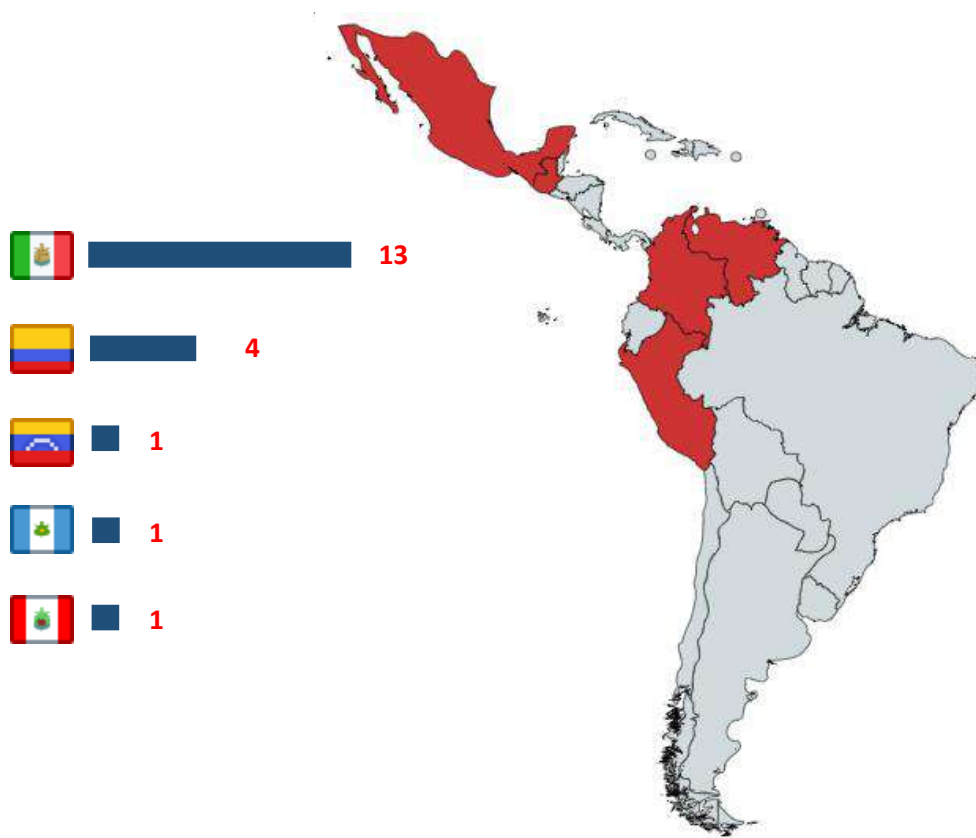


Figure 1

Today, the majority of the participants live in the suburbs of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area, especially St. Louis Park, Bloomington, and Woodbury, with a few living directly in Minneapolis or St. Paul. The majority of the women have now been in the U.S. for over 10 years, as shown in figure 2. A few have been in the U.S. for only a few years or even only a few months. One of the participants decided not to respond about their time living in the U.S. As a result, we were only able to collect 19 responses for the following chart.

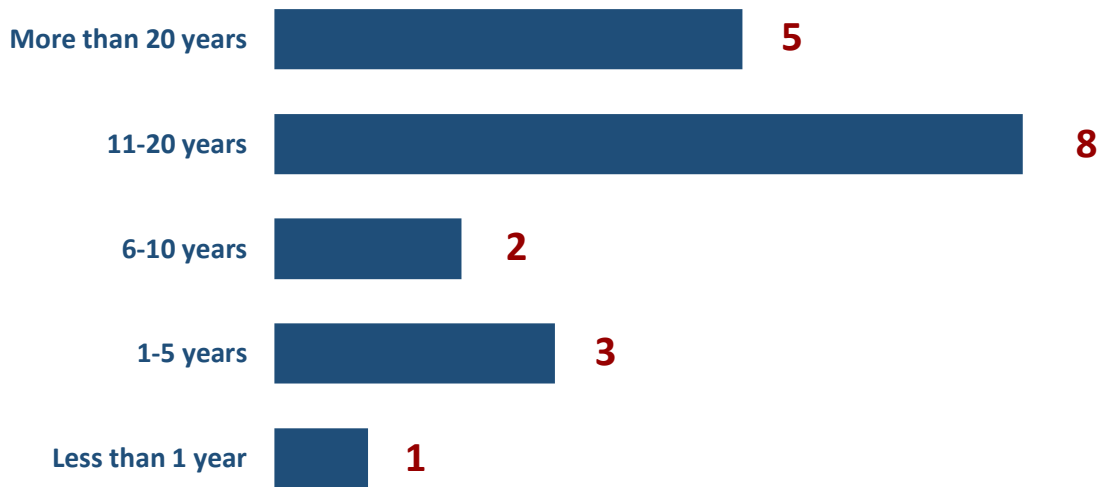
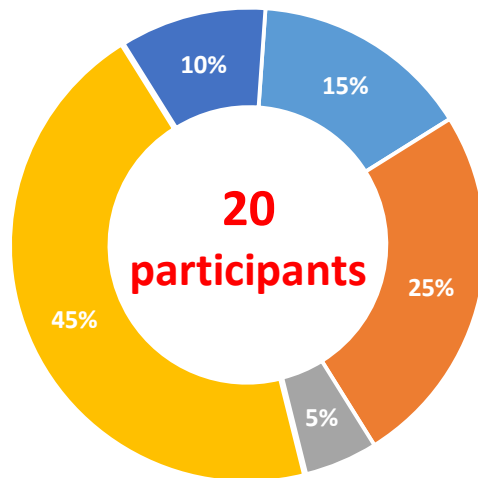


Figure 2

Most also have at least some education beyond high school, as can be seen in figure 3.



■ Less than high school degree ■ Some college ■ Technical School ■ Bachelor's degree ■ Master's degree

Figure 3

The participants come from a wide variety of occupations, including teaching, law enforcement, childcare, cleaning services, and more. The average age of participants is approximately 39, with ages ranging from 23 to 50. All but two participants said they felt that Latinos were not fairly represented in public positions in their city, as shown in figure 4.

Do you think the Latino community is fairly represented in public positions and civic organizations in my city/community?

Options	Total Responses
Agree	2
Disagree	11
Strongly Disagree	7

Figure 4

Additionally, each participant completed a pre-test during the first workshop, asking about their current leadership skills, self-confidence, and political participation. The participants will complete the same evaluation at the end of the program, in order to help us determine the effectiveness of the program. Participants will also complete an overall evaluation asking about their thoughts on the program, what went well, and what can be improved in the future. According to the pre-evaluation, 79% of participants reported that they consider themselves leaders. 63% said they participate actively in institutions and organizations in their community. Three participants had previously run for public positions in Minnesota. We hope to see improvements in responses on the post-test at the end of the program, and, in the long run, to see several of these women running for and holding public positions.

In the first session, each participant was asked to write down a brief summary of a project they would like to develop that would benefit their community. Based on the proposals they came up with, each participant was paired with a mentor, also a Latina, who has some knowledge and/or experience in the area that her mentee would like to work in. Each mentor helps her mentee to develop and plan her project idea. The mentors are asked to help their mentees to establish clear and reasonable goals, taking into consideration obstacles that they may encounter. The mentors are also asked to help their mentees to connect with other members of the community, as well as help to identify tools, lectures, websites, or other places where information



they may encounter. The mentors are also asked to help their mentees to connect with other members of the community, as well as help to identify tools, lectures, websites, or other places where information

to develop their proposal exists. Then, the mentee is responsible for executing the plan and making her idea a reality. These project ideas focused on issues such as education, physical and mental health, creating a non-profit, leadership, and entrepreneurship. For example, one participant wanted to develop and put into action a business plan for the construction of a childcare center. Another wanted to create a group of older adults in a mobile park that would help them through programs and activities to improve their lifestyle. Of course, the specifics of these projects will likely go through some changes during their development. The mentees are currently working with their mentors to develop their project idea. Most participants have met with their mentor at least once so far, and we have received some very positive feedback from participants about meeting with their mentors and the development of their projects.

“I have the best mentor...I’m very happy with the program.”

-a MN Latina Leadership Academy participant



This academy has had very good attendance and participation among participants. For each workshop, we usually have full attendance or only one to two people who couldn't make it. The participants have been very engaged and involved in the presentations, discussions, and activities. We have been grateful to have several important members of the Latino community come to the workshops and share a message with participants on the topic of that workshop. For example, for the leadership and political participation workshop, a woman from the Ecuadorian Consul spoke to the

participants about the problems of violence against women in Latin America, the need for more women—especially Latina women—in politics, and how to combat sexism, specifically within the Spanish language. For this workshop, we also had Minnesota state representative Carlos Mariani come to speak with participants. He spoke about his experience being a Latino in politics, where he was the only Latino in the Minnesota House of Representatives for eight years. Today there are still only four Latinos. He also spoke about holding political office in general, emphasizing that it is a lot of work and not very glamorous. In addition to speakers, each workshop includes at least one activity that aims to improve participants' self-knowledge and confidence, leadership skills, project development skills, and/or skills at working in a group.

“I like seeing that older Latina women in my community are interested in this information.”

-a MN Latina Leadership Academy participant



THE FUTURE

We are currently planning the next session, which will focus on cultural transition and ending violence against women. In this workshop, participants will hear from two Latina leaders about how to handle the cultural transition from their country of origin to the U.S. as well as how to get help if they or someone they know are the victim of violence—domestically, in the workplace, or on the street. In future workshops, we also plan to include activities that use the design thinking method to help the participants to develop and plan their project ideas.

In the fourth session, we will be focusing on women in academic processes. For this workshop, researchers from the University of Minnesota will come to share their experiences and discuss the importance of education for women as well as show other areas where women can grow their leadership. The fifth session will focus on the economic empowerment of women. This workshop will include guest speakers who are Latinas working in the area of finance, who will share their experiences and recommendations with the participants. We will discuss good money management, economic security and independence, credit, taxes, and female entrepreneurship. Finally, in the last session, each participant will present their proposals of their leadership projects and well will discuss gender equality in today's society.

We are hoping to continue this program, with current participants becoming mentors for future participants. We would also like to expand the program to include many more participants, since we've seen a very high level of interest in the program. We hope to foster the leadership and civic engagement of many Latinas in the Twin Cities and throughout Minnesota, who we believe have so much to contribute to society.

APPENDIX

Appendix A Pre-test / Pre-evaluation

Please mark the response that best represents how you feel about each statement.
Por favor marca la respuesta que representa mejor cómo se siente sobre cada frase.

Question/Pregunta	Strongly disagree/ Totalmente en desacuerdo	Disagree/En desacuerdo	Neutral	Agree/En acuerdo	Strongly Agree/Totalmente en acuerdo
I am a leader / Soy un líder.					
I am a confident person / Soy una persona segura de sí misma.					
I actively participate in institutions and organizations around me (advisory boards, commissions, schools, neighborhood organizations, etc.) / Participo activamente en instituciones y organizaciones de mi comunidad.					
I am good at resolving the challenges and problems I face on a day-to-day basis / Soy bueno en resolver los desafíos y problemas que enfrento cada día.					
I feel confident in my financial knowledge and abilities / Tengo confianza en mí sabiduría y habilidades financieras.					
I have good communication and negotiation skills / Tengo buenas habilidades de comunicación y negociación.					
I have self-defense skills / Tengo habilidades de defensa personal					
I am able to write an effective action plan / Puedo escribir un plan de acción efectivo.					
I tend to achieve the goals I set forth for myself / Usualmente, logro las metas que me propongo.					
I am familiar with the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals / Estoy familiarizada con los objetivos del desarrollo 2030 establecidos por las Naciones Unidas					
I am politically active (in the community or through political action) / Soy políticamente activa (en la comunidad o a través de acción político)					
I am committed to participate in civic life / Estoy comprometida a participar en la vida cívica					

Appendix B

Guide for Program Mentors “Minnesota Latina Leadership Academy” 2019

We are very pleased to have you as part of our team of mentors. “Minnesota Leadership Academy” is a new program of our organization and has been designed to guide the participants through a significant leadership experience.

We believe that the best way to exercise leadership is through our interests, knowing who we are and what we like. This makes it possible for us to think of the areas where we can develop ourselves best as leaders.

Each participant has had the opportunity to identify her personal interest through a project idea. Based on each participant’s project proposal, we have assigned them a mentor to accompany them during the five-month development of their project idea.

It’s possible that right now the project idea is very general, but that is the task, to adjust it to something more doable and concrete. We only expect the development of the idea, the sequential steps that must be taken to complete the project well. Execution is not required. We are only looking for the participants to learn how to handle their initiatives, how they can develop and/or plan them so that when they execute them, they obtain the expected results.

Program guidelines:

Guide for Proposal Development:

- Name of the proposal
- Objective(s) of the proposal
- Description (phases of development) that they’re going to execute, why and how
- Necessary resources (financial, human)
- Timeline

Working Guide for the Pair:

- Initiate communication through email or phone to agree on a time for a first meeting.
- Share your life stories and interests.
- Establish a flexible calendar for both identifying the best way and frequency to maintain communication.
- Talk about the idea of the project to establish clear and reasonable goals. Take obstacles into consideration.
- Promote creativity and thought, trust, a balance between praise and criticism.
- Incentivize connections with other members of the community.
- Identify tools, lectures, websites, or places where information to develop the proposal exists.
- The participant should send a monthly report to HACER.
- A survey will be distributed at the end to know your opinions about your experience of the program.
- The participant should present her proposal during the last session Friday, February 21, 2020.

Appendix C
Available Resources

ÁMATE, PIDE AYUDA



La violencia se puede prevenir y detener. ¡No te quedes callada! Pide ayuda a estas organizaciones:

- 1 CASA DE ESPERANZA**
 651-646-5553
 WWW.CASADEESPERANZA.ORG
- 2 360 COMMUNITIES**
 952-985-5300
 WWW.360COMMUNITIES.ORG
- 3 MINNESOTA COALITION FOR BATTERED WOMEN**
 651-646-6177
 WWW.MCBW.ORG
- 4 MINNESOTA COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT**
 651- 288-7446
 WWW.MNCASA.ORG
- 5 WOMEN'S INITIATIVE FOR SELF IMPROVEMENT (WISE)**
 651-646-3268
 WWW.WOMENOFWISE.ORG
- 6 COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY HEALTH CARE CENTER (CUHCC)**
 612-558-9977
 WWW.WOMENOFWISE.ORG
- 7 PSYCHOLOGY ATTENTION @ HOLY ROSARY CHURCH IN MINNEAPOLIS**
 612-724-3651
- 8 VENTANILLA DE SALUD DEL CONSULADO DE MÉXICO**
 651-771-5494



ATENCIÓN INMEDIATA




Hollaback!
Hollaback!

APP PARA EL REPORTE Y ATENCIÓN A VÍCTIMAS O TESTIGOS



NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

LÍNEA DE EMERGENCIA 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), O AL 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)



domestic abuse project
D A P

TERAPIAS FAMILIARES O INDIVIDUALES
612-874-7063
EMAIL DAP@MNDAP.ORG



911
EMERGENCIAS



Appendix D
Participants' Projects

Work with families. Create a pamphlet with information on mental health, housing and medical insurance.

Design a work strategy to help women in their personal development.

Develop a business plan for the construction /elaboration of a children care center.

Develop a community artist social project with young adults, where they can show the cultural diversity from the school they belong to.

To educate women about their rights, how they can protect themselves and their family. Fight against domestic violence and what to do not to create a negative impact in their children.

To create support and accompaniment groups for cancer patients in the cities of Minnesota.

To create an elder adult group at the Mobile Park to offer programs and activities to improve their lifestyles.

Package or resources, information of organizations that offer services to the Latino Community.

To be a mentor for young adults to promote options for their future, one of them, to become a police officer.

To create a circle of girls between 8 -15 years of age to foster self-confidence.

Domestic violence.

To create a community organization to help young adults to adapt easier to their multiculturalism and to help them grow emotionally, economically and spiritually.

How to create a nonprofit organization.

Healthy development in children and young adults.

First aid training for Hispanic families.

Motivate women to be independent and self-confident and entrepreneurs with big dreams.

Community development programs: family education and mental health (resources, orientation and activities).

To become a coach to give seminars to women and to work with the Latina community.

Increase the number of the Hispanic population in my place of work by fostering the Latino community knowledge.

Urban justice. To learn what are the problems the twin-cities have to evaluate possibilities and ideas to confront them.