



Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative Activities Summary





The Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative (HHMI) is a targeted strategy led by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to engage the Hispanic community in delivering effective, culturally appropriate marriage and relationship education programs. It evolved from the federal Healthy Marriage Initiative to address the unique cultural, linguistic, demographic, and socio-economic needs of children and families in the Hispanic community. The HHMI began with a roundtable held in Washington, D.C. in 2004, and has gathered momentum through a series of roundtables with community leaders from across the country. This document summarizes key activities and plans for future events to support healthy marriages in Hispanic communities.

Hispanic Roundtables

The HHMI convened a series of 15 roundtables in Illinois, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico and Texas to inform and engage key Latino community leaders and stakeholders. These events were held throughout 2005 with the following primary goals.

- Promote the Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative;
- Increase awareness of marriage education programs; and,
- Inspire action at the community level.

Research Activities

HHMI convened the first ACF-funded gathering of researchers and practitioners who study Hispanic couples and relationships in the fall of 2005. Information shared at the HHMI Research Meeting, held in Washington, D.C., guided developers of marriage education programs targeting Latino families, and shaped new research that could be helpful to these programs. This meeting was held in conjunction with Supporting Healthy Marriage, an on-going demonstration and evaluation project. Three additional research meetings were convened, in San Antonio, St. Louis and Oklahoma City identifying areas where further research is needed and to discuss culturally relevant outcome measures. In support of this research agenda, memos were developed and a literature review was written by the Office of Planning Research and Evaluation.

The HHMI continues to work with the research community to further the knowledge base for providing services to the Hispanic community. Currently, the HHMI is providing support and guidance to the Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative: Grantee Implementation Evaluation. This five-year evaluation, a joint effort between the Administration for Children and Families Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), both within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will examine the ways in which healthy marriage grantees are developing, adapting and implementing culturally relevant and appropriate healthy marriage programs for Hispanic populations.

National Efforts

Conferences and Forums

In May 2006, the first National Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative Conference was held in San Antonio, Texas. This conference convened professionals from various fields to discuss: lessons learned from a community delivery model perspective; working with youth, fathers and couples; adapting curricula for low-income Hispanic families; and building community coalitions. A second HHMI national conference was held in July 2007, in Washington, DC and provided information on promising practices and continued the dialogue among professionals regarding healthy marriage work with Hispanic communities.





The HHMI aims to be actively involved in opportunities to connect with policy makers and practitioners to disseminate information and resources related to healthy marriage among Hispanics. In November 2007, the HHMI participated on several panels during a forum hosted by the Brookings's Center on Children and Families and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The forum, "The Future of the Hispanic Family," addressed issues related to marriage and childbearing in the Hispanic community and probed discussion among practitioners and policy-makers on necessary steps to strengthen Hispanic families. Another opportunity to connect with healthy marriage practitioners took place in July of 2008 when the HHMI participated in the annual Smart Marriages conference held in San Francisco, California. The HHMI presented a session on marketing healthy marriage services to Hispanics and hosted three roundtable discussions which convened a host of Hispanic-serving healthy marriage programs and practitioners. Additionally, the HHMI staffed a resource exhibit to disseminate materials to conference participants and increase the network of Hispanic-serving practitioners by registering attendees for the HHMI list serve.

In August of 2008, the HHMI hosted a Peer-to-Peer Forum for healthy marriage programs funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. This forum targeted programs serving Hispanic communities and provided practitioners with an opportunity to share with one another and learn about resources and promising practices for healthy marriage work with Hispanics. Key strategies and challenges that were discussed during the forum are being summarized and will be made available via the HHMI website to all healthy marriage programs to help enhance service delivery to Hispanic couples and families.

Marriage Showcases

The HHMI sponsored Marriage Showcases in San Antonio, Chicago, Denver, and Miami in 2006. These one-day events provided a sampling of marriage education to the local Hispanic community. Each event was held in partnership with local Hispanic organizations to offer the community marriage/relationship skill-building activities. These events were attended by over 800 individuals interested in learning how to have a healthy marriage. These events were also an opportunity for local organizations to learn how to recruit couples for services and deliver effective programs.

Improving Outcomes / Technical Assistance Events

The HHMI has provided targeted, practical training and technical assistance in areas serving a high percentage of Hispanics. Participants at these events, held in New Jersey, California, Texas and Colorado received training on strategies related to recruitment, retention, and measuring program outcomes within the Hispanic community.

Resources

Curriculum Modules

In response to a common challenge expressed by healthy marriage researchers and providers throughout the country, the HHMI is currently developing a series of Hispanic-focused supplemental curriculum modules. These modules, funded in part by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, will address issues that are specific to the cultural values and life experiences of Hispanic couples. By highlighting issues related to marriage and relationships within the context of the Hispanic culture, the skills presented in existing healthy marriage curricula become more relevant and applicable to the everyday interactions of Hispanic couples. Upon completion, the curriculum modules will be made available to healthy marriage programs via the HHMI website.





Promising Practices Guide

The HHMI is currently working to identify promising practices related to reaching Hispanic populations and providing culturally relevant and responsive services. Healthy marriage programs serving large numbers of Hispanic couples and families will be identified and interviewed. A resource document providing an overview of various promising practices related to healthy marriage services for Hispanic populations will be developed and made available to other healthy marriage programs via the HHMI website.

Summary

The various HHMI events have stimulated an array of community-based healthy marriage activities, increased awareness of the initiative and supported on-going research of this emerging field. Local partnerships have been formed to support the goals of the HHMI in Los Angeles, Chicago, Phoenix, San Antonio, Houston, Philadelphia, Orlando, San Juan, Orlando, Ft. Myers, Tampa, and Miami, and many other local Hispanic initiatives have been launched. Most notably, 11 Hispanic-focused organizations competed and were successful in obtaining federal funding awards from the Office of Family Assistance to provide healthy marriage services to Hispanic communities. Many more organizations serving Hispanic couples were also funded to deliver marriage education and responsible fatherhood programs. A comprehensive list of Healthy Marriage Education Programs can be found by visiting the ACF website: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/pdf/june18_list_marriageedprograms.PDF. Additional resources related to healthy marriage work with Hispanic couples can be found by visiting the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center website: <http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/>.

As the field continues to grow, the HHMI aims to keep practitioners connected and help Hispanic couples access culturally relevant services. To support these goals, ACF supports the HHMI web site. This web site offers access to guidance tools and resources for program enhancement. In addition, a list serve has been created that actively connects Hispanic-serving healthy marriage programs to the latest events in the field. You can sign up for the list serve on the HHMI website.

Under the direction of Frank Fuentes, Deputy Director of the Office of Head Start for the Administration for Children and Families, the HHMI continues to inform programs that support healthy marriages and strong families in our nation's diverse Latino communities. For more information, about the Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative visit www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/about/hispanic_hm_initiative.html.

