

**Virginia Latino Advisory Board**  
**2015 Report**

Office of the Governor  
Mr. Ryan O'Toole  
Virginia Latino Advisory Board (VLAB) Liaison  
A complete copy of this report is found on our website at:

[www.vlab.virginia.gov](http://www.vlab.virginia.gov)

or by contacting:  
Office of the Governor  
Ryan O'Toole  
Deputy Director of Scheduling  
Liaison, Virginia Latino Advisory Board  
Office of Governor Terence R. McAuliffe  
804-371-0828

***Report prepared by members of the Virginia Latino Advisory Board  
Commonwealth of Virginia***

## Table of Contents

VLAB Members .....	4
Introductory Letter to Governor McAuliffe .....	5
Recommendations to the Governor .....	6-20
Civic Engagement .....	6
Education .....	8
Workforce Development .....	9
Business .....	15
Health .....	17
Acknowledgments .....	21
Appendix A: Overview of VLAB .....	22-23

## 2015 Latino Advisory Board Members

**Estuardo V. Rodriguez, Jr.**, Board Chair (Fairfax, VA)

**Aida Pacheco**, Board Vice Chair (Mechanicsville, VA)

**Zuraya Tapia-Hadley**, Board Secretary (Arlington, VA)

**Gonzalo Aida** (Richmond, VA)

**Cecilia Barbosa** (Richmond, VA)

**Carolina Espinal** (Arlington, VA)

**Christopher J. Falcon** (Falls Church, VA)

**Julio Cesar Idrobo** (Falls Church, VA)

**J. Michael Martinez de Andino** (Richmond, VA)

**Gloria Maria Peña Rockhold** (Charlottesville, VA)

**Alex Rodriguez** (Annandale, VA)

**Vivian Sanchez-Jones** (Roanoke, VA)

**Theresa Speake** (Alexandria, VA)

**Gresilda A. Tilley-Lubbs** (Roanoke, VA)

**Cecilia Williams** (Fairfax, VA)

**John Villamil-Casanova** (Manassas, VA)

**Lucero Soto-Wiley** (Virginia Beach, VA)

**Diana Vall-Ilobera** (Charlottesville, VA)

**Louisa Meruvia** (Vienna, VA)

**Keisha Graziadei-Shup** Roanoke

**Sergio Rimola** (Vienna, VA)

\***Michel Zajur** (Richmond, VA)

\***Christine Lockhart Poarch** (Roanoke, VA)

\***Alex Vanegas** (Purcellville, VA)

\*Not current members but were members through October 2015

## Letter from the Chairman

Dear Governor Terry McAuliffe,

It is with great energy and enthusiasm that the Virginia Latino Advisory Board members gathered this year to compile the attached recommendations for your consideration. For many of us, including myself, this will have been our first year serving in this important role as a voice for the fastest growing population in the Commonwealth. As you are well aware, the Latino community is as diverse culturally as it is politically, but where we come together is in our commitment to the betterment of our communities and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

As we enter another election year, we can expect the Latino community will once again play a pivotal role. Understandably, the issues that will drive voter turnout are those that concern every American: access to healthcare, the economy and workforce development, education, and broadly speaking, opportunity. With each passing generation, the Latino community grows in its political and economic power, sharing in the American dream to provide for their families and succeed in their endeavors. The critical role of the government here is to ensure that opportunity exists and that the Latino community is able to maximize their contributions to the financial and intellectual competitiveness of the state.

On behalf of the Virginia Latino Advisory Board, we understand that your office has various ongoing policy priorities and initiatives, but we feel strongly that our attached recommendations can only serve our community if they are accompanied with some level of metrics toward success. Therefore, we request that we meet in six months with your administration to review efforts in relation to the recommendations and to assess progress and any challenges that may exist. We will be in touch with your office to secure a time and location that best suits your schedule.

In closing, it has been an honor to serve as Chair of the Latino Advisory Board this year and have the opportunity to lead an amazing group of Latino leaders and public servants from across the state. We look forward to working with your administration in the coming year to set the path forward for Latinos and all Virginians.

Respectfully,

Estuardo V. Rodriguez, Jr.  
Board Chair  
Virginia Latino Advisory Board

## Virginia Latino Advisory Board (VLAB) Recommendations

*For each of the following areas, the VLAB divided its work into separate subcommittees, developing an area of focus, statement of need, and recommended actions to be taken under each.*

### **I. Civic Engagement**

While the Latino population has grown in size, economic and political importance in the Commonwealth, the community remains largely inactive in civic and political life. There are currently over 100,000 Latinos who meet the eligibility criteria to vote, but who are not yet registered. Additionally, many local and state-wide civic boards and commissions across Virginia lack Latino representation. The reasons for this vary but the openly anti-immigrant and anti-Latino sentiment evidenced in recent years in some localities in Virginia has undoubtedly played a role in deterring engagement. An equal challenge is the lack of understanding of where potential opportunities exist.

As members of the Virginia Latino Advisory Board, and community leaders from around the Commonwealth, we have seen and worked to close the gaps in civic engagement and participation but we believe there are structural barriers that can be addressed with the help of State Government. Through collaboration, we can provide better education and resources that embrace the presence and contributions of the Latino community and offer opportunities for Latinos to engage in local and state activities.

Below we have outlined key areas where we believe there are substantive opportunities that state government can help facilitate. We also include specific recommendations for consideration.

#### **Areas of Focus**

- Leadership Development
- Civic Education
- Voter Engagement
- Immigration
- Community Policing

#### **Recommendations:**

##### **1. Leadership Development**

- We suggest that the Governor establish a quarterly review of key gubernatorial appointments with VLAB, starting in January 2016, to identify potential placements for Latinos and to recruit candidates for high level appointed positions in all areas;
- We also believe that much like the Latino Summit hosted by the Governor this past year, it is necessary to follow up in 2016 with a leadership development summit to educate Latinos about participation on state wide boards and commissions;

- We encourage the Governor to issue a memorandum to all state agencies indicating VLAB as a resource to help them with outreach and engagement of the Latino community;
- Call for the development of a targeted plan for identifying and recruiting qualified Latino youth attending institutions of higher learning to apply for the Governor's Fellows Program.

## **2. Civic Education**

- We ask for the Governor's support to have his agencies and VLAB partner with schools to identify and/or develop youth leadership camps that focus on building knowledge about state and local government, ethical leadership and global citizenship ideals; and,
- To host a second Latino Summit in collaboration with VLAB, which can serve as a forum for discussing an expanded array of issues including civic participation, education, economic development, and healthcare, among others.

## **3. Voter Engagement**

- We ask that the Governor direct the Virginia Department of Elections to work with VLAB and Latino community based organizations and provide adequate resources to develop and implement a targeted voter outreach program focused on registration of eligible Latino constituents; and
- Call for the coordination between the Virginia Department of Elections, consulates that are currently providing assistance with naturalization applications, and all entities authorized to conduct naturalization ceremonies, the League of Women Voters, and other nonpartisan organizations to conduct voter registration drives at citizenship and naturalization events.

## **4. Community Policing**

- Given the current relevance of this topic in particular, we ask that the Governor join VLAB in calling for a full review of the incarceration rates, resources and pardons issued for Latinos in the Virginia correctional system to better assess areas of need – particularly language access needs and in ensuring due process for immigrants who may face both immigration and criminal or civil proceedings;
- We encourage the Governor to direct staff to vet existing law enforcement training and develop a comprehensive training program with the Latino community's input to dispel misconceptions and foster positive community relations; and
- Allocate resources for staff to host a series of community policing dialogues and workshops in targeted jurisdictions with significant Latino populations. VLAB would attend these sessions along with the Governor and/or his staff.

## **Conclusion**

Civic engagement is critical to ensuring the voice and perspectives of the community are heard and respected. These recommendations provide a road map of deliberate and authentic ways for the McAuliffe administration to engage the Latino community and encourage participation in civic life. For our part, VLAB is committed to serve as a partner to help usher these ideas into communities across the Commonwealth over the course of this administration.

## **II. Education**

In response to the burgeoning immigrant and refugee population in the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is a need for certain initiatives that will assist in providing a high quality education, based on principles of equity, for all students. In addition, these initiatives will also assist in providing a high quality, equitable education for all Virginians, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, socioeconomic class, or any other status that creates vulnerability for any student. In order to achieve this goal, we submit the following recommendations.

### **Cultural Competency Requirements**

In response to the burgeoning immigrant and refugee population in the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is a need for a requirement for all public school personnel to participate in workshops that offer specific information in regard to providing a high quality education for all students. In order to achieve this goal, we submit the following recommendations:

- All school divisions receiving state and federal grant funding should require all faculty, staff, and administrative personnel to complete a workshop on cultural competency, consisting of a minimum of three two-hour sessions.
- All Requests for Proposals for federal and state funding need to include requirements that include cultural competency training within a given period of time after grant funds are awarded.
- Each semester, each school division should be required to offer this same workshop as a means of completing recertification hours.

### **Recommendation:**

We recommend that the Governor endorse the above recommendations, and that during 2016, the VLAB Education and Workforce Development Committee work closely with the Secretary of Education and with the Virginia Department of Education in order to develop powerful and robust curricula for the recommended workshops. The goal would be for these curricula to be user-ready by the end of 2016.

We also recommend that the Governor request that the Secretary of Education amend the Requests for Proposals for state and federal grants to include the requirement for participation in cultural competency workshops within a given period of time after the grant funds are awarded by the end of 2016.



## **Language access**

On a related note, in order to disseminate information to parents who speak limited or no English, we recommend that all websites containing information for parents be in a presentation and language such that they reflect the population that they serve. This initiative could also result in enabling parents to become more involved in their children's education. In order to accomplish this goal, we make the following recommendations:

- All Virginia Department of Education websites that have parent information need to be available in as many languages as possible.
- All Virginia public school divisions need to provide translations of all applicable languages of all webpages that contain information for parents.
- The information on the rights of English language learners and their families, based on the recent Department of Justice guidelines, needs to be available on the parent portal of all school divisions.
- All websites that are available in diverse languages need to have access instructions that make them easily accessible to parents whose English is limited.

## **Recommendation:**

We recommend that the Governor endorse the above recommendations regarding language access, and that during 2016, the VLAB Education and Workforce Development Committee work closely with the Secretary of Education and with the Virginia Department of Education in order to develop web pages that are accessible to English language learners and their families in their home languages. The goal would be for these web pages to be user-ready by the end of 2016. We also recommend that the Governor request that the Secretary of Education amend the Requests for Proposals for state and federal grants to include the requirement that all school divisions receiving federal or state grant funding revise their websites to include the above information for English language learners and their parents in their home languages within a given period of time after the grant funds are awarded.

## **III. Workforce Development**

Among the nation's top 25 metropolitan counties with rapidly growing Hispanic Communities in the new century; seven are in Virginia, more than any other state. The growth in Hispanic and Latino Virginians accounts for a substantial share (38%) of the overall growth in Virginia's population since 2007. Moreover, they are long-time residents; two-thirds living in Virginia for a decade and 29% for over 20 years.<sup>1</sup> They have had time to lay down roots and adapt their job skills to the needs of their communities, thereby, contributing significantly to Virginia's economy.

Over half of the Hispanic population in Virginia was born in the United States and a significant number are naturalized U.S. citizens. Hispanics and Latinos are also an increasingly young

population; one in three between the ages of 18 – 29. The median age is 26 years old and much younger for native-born Hispanics (14) while for foreign-born Hispanics much older (35). Susan Clapp from the Weldon Cooper Center at the University of Virginia made an impactful statement at the conclusion of her report titled “Hispanics in Virginia”. “Children are, and will continue to be, a significant portion of Virginia’s Hispanic population due to high fertility rates among Hispanics. Optimizing these children’s potential to become productive and successful holds the greatest promise for their futures and for strengthening Virginia through the talents and of her citizens.”

Education attainment and language skills are connected to the employment and economic well-being of Hispanics in Virginia. Hispanics aged 16-65 have higher labor force participation than non-Hispanics; 86% vs. 79% for non-Hispanics. Although, Hispanics contribute to high rates of employment, they have lower wage occupations than non-Hispanics in the same age range. The top occupations of foreign-born Hispanics are notably different in that these occupations pay less and require lower levels of English speaking ability than the leading occupations for non-Hispanics and U.S born Hispanics. During the recession, Hispanic workers were especially hit hard with an unemployment rate of nine percent compared to six percent for non-Hispanics likely due to the loss of jobs in the construction sector, in which many foreign-born Hispanics are employed.

The Governor acknowledges that the future of Virginia and its economic well-being is inextricably linked to the future of the Hispanic/Latino community. In a letter to the Virginia Latino Advisory Board dated November 17, 2014, he asked the Board for recommendations on how to improve educational opportunities for Latinos in order to ensure they have the access to a quality education and the skills necessary for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce. As such, we have developed the following recommendations.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Virginia Latino Advisory Board recommends that Virginia invest in a targeted set of strategies that aim to overcome the skill gaps by creating an outcomes-based funding formula that:
  - 1) rewards community colleges when students complete industry credentials identified by business as in-demand;
  - 2) expands need-based financial aid at community colleges for short-term workforce training that results in an industry credential;
  - 3) seeks to develop and deliver targeted messages to increase the supply of talent seeking industry credentials leading to in-demand jobs; and
  - 4) Positions Virginia competitively against other states by sharing in the cost of customized training that result in new jobs, wage increases, or the aversion of layoffs.
- Ensure that specific strategies are identified to increase credential attainment, such as, developing and delivering targeted messages to the Latino population, providing workers with appropriate language training, and making sure programs are accessible to those who may speak English less fluently.

- The Governor’s Latino Community Outreach Liaison will facilitate the development of an outreach plan that is culturally and linguistically sensitive to promote awareness of the various educational and training opportunities and financial assistance available. It is further recommended that the outreach plan include the Workforce Centers.
- Explore how VLAB and Administration can support the following evidence-based programs and develop a strategic plan to enhance or replicate:
  - 1) Hispanic College Institute -Virginia Latino Higher Education Network (VALHEN)
  - 2) GEAR UP – State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
  - 3) Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program –Northern Virginia Community College
  - 4) Plaza Comunitaria – Mexico’s Adult Basic Educational Program
- Tied to the recommendation of the civic engagement group, coordinate a statewide effort to increase the number of Hispanics and Latinos in state government jobs, boards and commissions.

### Supportive Data

- The Governor signed Executive Order 23 on August 13, 2014, establishing “**The New Virginia Economy**”. One of the ways the Governor’s workforce initiative seeks to overhaul our economy is by increasing postsecondary education and workforce credentials. Given the persistent gaps in skills, affordability, interest, and competitiveness that prevent the Commonwealth from supplying the skilled talent demanded by business for jobs that offer access to Virginia’s new middle class, the state needs to invest in its workforce by creating this outcome-based funding formula.
- The Commonwealth will need to fill an estimated 1.5 million jobs by the year 2022. Of those jobs, some 50 to 65% are expected to require more than a high school diploma, but less than a bachelor’s degree. Moreover, the Governor’s workforce initiative’s Pathways to 50K sets a goal of 50,000 credentials licensures, apprenticeships and sub-baccalaureate degree earned that meet the immediate needs of Virginia’s workforce. If we are to reach these numbers and fill the jobs of today and tomorrow, Virginia can’t afford to leave Hispanics out of the equation.
- According to a report issued on June 2014 by the Virginia Community College System, Hispanic students are attending Virginia Community Colleges (VCCs) in record numbers, outpacing non-Hispanic enrollment. VCCs serve more than half (55%) of all Hispanic college students in the Commonwealth; the majority enrolled in NOVA. More than a quarter (27%) is first-generation and those receiving Pell awards more than doubled from 14% to 30%. An outcome-based formula could serve as an incentive for Community Colleges to augment their recruitment efforts of Hispanics, thus, increasing the share of Hispanic student enrollment across the state. The need based financial aid would assist many first generation, low-income students who struggle keeping up with school as many have to work more than one job or end up quitting school due to financial hardship.

- As a result of our preliminary research, the problem is not the lack of resources, but rather the disconnect between the resource and its intended public. We need to engage the community so that they know where to find these resources. For instance, Virginia has about 40 Workforce Centers and multiple satellites that provide career services, assistance with job search, and access to education, training, and career opportunities. There are basic career services that are offered free to any jobseeker, regardless of eligibility. Other than the Centers located in the northern part of Virginia, there is an underutilization of these centers by the Hispanic and Latino organizations.
- Latinos make up 8.6% of Virginia's population, but comprise less than 2% of state government employees. One of Governor Terry McAuliffe's priorities is to increase diversity in state government. To make an impact on policy decisions, Latinos and Hispanics need to be represented in all levels of state government.
- By 2025, the Hispanic population will be 12%, but we will make up 18% of public high school graduates. Total Hispanic 2015 fall undergraduate enrollment was 117,000 or 4.8%. Of these, 24,583 Hispanic students were enrolled in just 14 institutions in 2014. (Total of 72 institutions in Virginia (private % public; 2 & 4 year). We continue to take longer to complete college and have a higher drop-out rate than non-Hispanics. Below is supportive data for a few model programs that are making a difference in breaking down barriers and increasing access to post-secondary education:
  - The **Hispanic College Institute (HCI)** is led by VALHEN; a non-profit dedicated to college and career access and solely run by volunteers. HCI is a residential pre-college program held annually in July for about 120 students designed to teach high school students how to navigate the college landscape, build a network with successful Latino professionals, develop an understanding of financial aid and scholarships, and be career ready and able to succeed in the workforce. The successful model was adopted in 2012 from the Hispanic Scholarship Fund's former Hispanic College Institute. HCI was selected in 2015 by the U.S. Department of Education as a Bright Spot in Hispanic Education. HCI is a residential four-day program. About 70% of the students accepted in 2014 were US born, 9% were naturalized citizens, 67% were bilingual, 80% had a B to B+ average, a significant percentage are first generation, and 59% reduced lunch. The majority were from NVA (70%). There are two main partners: NASA Langley, which sponsors special guests and conducts workshops on STEM, and a college to host the Institute. College students serve as mentors and volunteers facilitate Hispanic Heroes, Issues to Action, talent and speech competition, and the Career and College Resource Fair. Virginia Community College staff introduces the students to the Wizard and help them develop a career plan. We would like to see more students outside of NVA benefit from HCI and increase the number attending.
  - **GEAR UP:** The idea for GEAR UP derived from HCI. GEAR UP is an undergraduate program funded by the USDOE for seven years from 2006-12; and a new grant was received in 2014. The National Council for Community and Education Partnerships provides technical assistance. The priority population served is homeless/unaccompanied youth and the main purpose is to significantly increase the number of students who go to college. In addition to providing college access services, supportive services are offered, such as, tutoring, mentoring, financial aid

and summer bridge programming. Cell phone and text services for timely reminders and motivational messages. Students are followed through senior year to first year of college. Fifteen schools were invited to participate where 59% of the students received free or reduced lunch. Of the areas served under this grant, Fredericksburg, Harrisonburg and Newport News have the highest Latino student population. A release form is obtained to grant SCHEV permission to collect information from students and SCHEV is in the process of gathering the data. VLAB should obtain the baseline data from SCHEV's GEAR UP Program and FASA Project to compare any impact made as a result of VLAP's outreach plan.

- **Pathway to the Baccalaureate** is an award-winning initiative, launched in 2005, designed to increase college access, success and completion for underserved students from high school through completion of a baccalaureate degree. The program is a partnership between George Mason University, NVA Community College, and school divisions. There is a blended academic with a workforce development focus, so they partner with WIOA and VCCS Career Coach Program to leverage resources and identify students who need extra support to transition from secondary to post-secondary. The program adopts a customized approach, as many students work, and a family engagement component via a partnership with the Aspen Institute is included in the model producing dual generational outcomes. Over 90% of the 12,000 participants represent one or more US Department of Education populations known to adversely affect persistence in college, including first generation (70+%), immigrant (80%) and minority populations, and students with disabilities. Two-thirds never participated in college access opportunities and 50% receive free or reduced lunch. Financial aid participation rate doubled from 2004-05 to 2013-14. Program Outcomes: 86% transitioned to post-secondary, one and five earned a credential last year, 25% STEM-H credential and 80% STEM-H credential retention rate, experiential learning is 200% + more than general population, of the WIOA referrals, more than 50% placed in credential related employment and at six month post-completion, average hourly wage earned was \$28.88. Credential rate at NOVA increased more than 100% between 2004-05 and 2013-14. The program Director offered technical assistance and support in convening key community stakeholders to explore replication.
  
- **Plaza Comunitaria** is a multi-media adult education program that was initially undertaken by the Mexican government in conjunction with other Latin American countries for citizens living outside of their countries. The program is based on conclusive research that supports the premise that individuals need to be literate in their language of origin first before they can be literate in other languages; and can be implemented in any community setting, including in the correctional system.

Furthermore, replication of the model requires minimal resources as the Mexican government covers the cost of the program, provides staff training, reviews and evaluates the educational history, administers the diagnostic tests and maintains the database to support documentation and testing. There are two levels: *Primeria*, which consists of 10 basic modules and 2 electives, and the *Secundaria*, which consists of 8 basic modules and 4 electives. After the successful completion of all the modules, the student has completed his mandatory education program, and can move forward to other educational and training opportunities. Because of the increased Latino population in Virginia's Correctional system, the program was piloted in 2005 at two locations, Coffewood and Lunenburg Correctional Centers. The intent is to improve the inmates' reintegration process back into society by improving their literacy skills with educational credentials. Since 2005, 146 Latinos were enrolled in the Plaza program at Lunenburg Correctional Center; 56 completed *Primeria* and 62 *Secundaria*. Many of the students received credentials in the trade programs offered at the Center. The successful outcomes of the program led to program expansion in 2009 to 11 other correctional centers. VLAB would like to see replication of this program beginning at Community Colleges and Workforce Centers or Satellite Centers, where a significant Hispanic foreign-born population reside.

#### **Next Steps:**

1. To identify an existing Hispanic/Latino state employee who will serve as a liaison between VLAB and the Governor's workforce development and policy team by January 2016.
2. Convene a meeting with the Governor, Secretaries of Commerce and Trade and Education, the Senior Advisor to the Governor for Workforce Development, Virginia Community College System, Staff to the Virginia Board for Workforce Development, SCHEV, and Virginia Latino Higher Education Network, and other Latino serving community organizations and leaders to coordinate a statewide effort to ensure Latinos are included in the Governor's workforce agenda. (Before General Assembly session begins.)
3. Education and Workforce Development Committee to meet in December with the VCCS, Vice-Chancellor for Workforce Development to discuss how VLAB can partner to help promote the creation of an outcome-based funding formula.
4. Establish baseline data on number of credentials attained by Hispanics and identify a method to track and measure progress the next two years of this administration by February 2016.
5. Conduct regional focus groups throughout the state to hear from community leaders and other stakeholders on the needs of Hispanic and Latino workers; and to identify strategies to increase access to educational and training opportunities that lead to industry recognized credentials, and to support evidence-based programs noted in this report by July 2016. (Note: NVA's College and Career Pathways offered technical assistance to

facilitate regional community partnerships beginning in Hampton Roads to replicate the model.)

6. Draft and distribute a survey to Community Colleges and other higher public institutions in the Commonwealth to establish a baseline data on Hispanic student enrollment, dropout and completion rates, and dual enrollments, credential attainment; and identify evidenced best practices in the recruitment and retention of students, in addition to, other factors, as determined appropriate by April 2016.
7. Compile results of the focus groups and survey and report to the Governor who will then ensure that specific recommendations with targeted measures are incorporated into Virginia's Workforce Development agenda. The Secretary of Commerce and Trade, who leads the Governor's workforce initiative, will designate staff to track the progress and report the results to VLAB on an annual basis.
8. Work with the Virginia Community College to explore using the Wizard, which is available in Spanish, to serve as a one-stop resource portal; and ensure the link to the portal is posted in various state agencies and community –based Hispanic serving organizations by fall 2016.
9. Identify and customize an existing curriculum and a state resource to train workforce development front-line staff on cultural competency, diversity and inclusiveness by December 2016.
10. Conduct regional workshops similar to the one held for Metro Richmond to share available resources on workforce services, showcase the Commonwealth's job search website, and engage the community in a dialogue on how we can work together with the Governor to elevate the presence of Latinos in state government jobs, boards and commissions by fall 2016.

## IV. Business

The Virginia commonwealth ranks at number nine in the nation when it comes to highest percentage of Hispanic-owned businesses, and these companies are growing 20 percent faster than the national average. From Harrisonburg to Roanoke, Hispanic-owned businesses increased at more than double the national rate between 2002 and 2007 according to the U.S. Census. More recently, just last year in Fairfax County, Hispanic businesses secured over \$1.8 billion in federal procurement awards, and \$451 million in total sales and receipts. Hispanics are also growing as consumers, with the average income of Latino families in the state rising.

Therefore, the VLAB Business sub-committee conducted research and met with some of these Virginia business owners in order to evaluate what has been done to help Latino-owned businesses operate in the Commonwealth. We also set out to review the process for SWaM (Small Women-owned and Minority businesses) Certification through the Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity, researched Latino purchasing power in Virginia, and began to look into the viability of a trade mission to Latin America; specifically to Mexico and South America. Lastly, as a result from our sessions with business owners, we are assisting an applicant with the eVA and SWaM Certification application in order to better learn the process and its requirements, and we are working with an applicant that was denied SWaM Certification

to learn the reasons for the denial, and to then tailor our recommendations to Latino business owners.

**A. Recommendations**

- a. Outreach to Latinos businesses and prospective startups regarding SWaM opportunities – we recommend advertising SWaM Certification and eVA in local Latino newspapers, radio stations, and holding free seminars throughout the Commonwealth with members of VLAB, Governor McAuliffe’s cabinet, Hispanic bar associations and local chambers. Based on our meetings with Latino business owners, we found that many business owners could qualify for these great opportunities, but they do not know how to apply for them, or even that they exist. Therefore, we ask that the Governor direct the Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity to work with VLAB to address these challenges.
- b. Tracking data on Latino owned businesses – we recommend conducting a survey of Virginia small and mid-sized businesses to get an accurate measure of how many are Latino owned, what type of services are being provided and or products sold, whether they are aware of SWAM contracting opportunities and connecting them to resources to apply if they are eligible.
- c. The growth of exports from Mexico and South and Central America provide an opportunity to identify key trade missions with partners to help strengthen and grow Virginia’s economy.

**B. Supportive data or Evidence-based Best Practices that support the recommendation**

- a. Our subcommittee researched population trends, buying power and business ownership in the Virginia Latino community, and found that there were 649,000 Latinos in Virginia, up 92% since 2000. This segment represents 20 Billion dollars in purchasing power, and is growing.
- b. In the last U.S. Census Bureau Survey of Business Owners (SBO), it was estimated that 4.5% of Virginia businesses are operated by Virginia Latinos. We are confident this number will increase when the 2012 SBO Census results are published later this year.
- c. On May 13, 2015, the subcommittee held a Small Business forum in McLean attended by three Virginia Latino small business owners. Below is a summary of our findings from the forum:
  - i. All three owned companies in the service industry (cleaning, realty and property management).
  - ii. None of the owners were well versed in how to utilize small business credit lines or lending programs – none borrowed money from financial institutions to start their businesses; all used personal savings to finance their startups.



- iii. Reflective of the Latino culture, most relied on family and friends for recommendations of vendors, and prefer to do business in their native language, thus putting them in a position to potentially be prey to less knowledgeable or less ethical vendors.
    - 1. Most encountered issues with vendors, including tax preparation services that set up their business. One owner incurred several delinquent tax penalties due to mistakes by his tax service and also experienced issues with an insurance agent who overcharged him.
    - 2. Their customer base is also largely Spanish-speaking
  - iv. All have an ambition to grow
    - 1. One owner is researching marketing his business into Latin America.
    - 2. One owner knew about the State Corporation Commission website and that it contained forms to help set up businesses, but did not utilize it due to lack of computer knowledge.
    - 3. None of the owners were aware of the new SWaM opportunities in Virginia, though they were very interested to hear about the contracting opportunities.
  - v. All had previously worked in their chosen industry prior to opening their business.
- d. On October 6, 2015, members of the VLAB Business Sub-committee began to review the denial of an application for SWaM Certification to a Virginia small business owner based on apparent non-compliance with U.S. Immigration law. We had concerns that denials to non-U.S. citizens based on immigration status would disproportionately affect the Latino population in Virginia and wanted to review the requirements.

We reviewed the denial letter, supporting documents and the applicable statutes. We also spoke with the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity. It was concluded that non-U.S. citizen permanent residents and non-permanent residents in compliance with U.S. immigration law may both apply for SWaM Certification, but they have the burden to provide documentation of their legal status in the U.S.

## V. Healthcare

While Hispanics make up almost 9% of the residents in Virginia, they make up a disproportionately higher percentage of the uninsured or underinsured in Virginia. This fact makes Latino children and seniors particularly vulnerable. As VLAB, we recognize that our community faces both health care and health equity disparities – in other words – we still see a great need to expand access to quality preventive services and health care, as well as health *equity*, which relates to all the social and environmental factors that also make up one’s overall well-being (e.g., access to quality and fair housing, a safe work environment, culturally competent and linguistically appropriate health services).

## **Recommendations:**

- a. Expand Healthcare access - VLAB seeks to work with the Governor more closely in order to ensure an increase in Latino enrollment in the federal marketplace for health care programs.
- b. Increase attention to prevention of illness and injury, promote wellness.
- c. Defend Latinos' access to health care providers

### **1. EXPAND HEALTHCARE ACCESS**

#### **a. Expand Medicaid**

- We recommend that the Governor continue to work with legislators to expand Medicaid to eliminate the coverage gap.

#### **b. Expand outreach to Latino communities**

- We ask the Governor to establish community meetings and outreach programs that join the Department of Health, Department of Medical Assistance Services, Department of Education, and Department of Social Services to provide general medical insurance information and assistance to Latinos throughout the Commonwealth.

- VLAB also seeks to coordinate with the Governor, his staff, and local community organizations, public libraries, health centers, churches and schools prior to the FHIM application enrollment period to help educate and inform the local communities of the benefit and need to obtain health insurance (ACA, FAMIS, Medicaid) coverage, including information regarding assistance with the online application process.

Example: Coordinate with community events of the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (such as the “Cinco de Mayo” and the “Que Pasa” events) to provide education and enrollment assistance.

- Implement Spanish and English handouts that encourage ACA, Medicaid and FAMIS enrollment. See Appendix B as examples. These handouts should be distributed at all schools, public libraries, colleges and universities; Hispanic/Latino community organizations, forums, and churches; and through the media, including Spanish language newspapers, radio, and TV channels.

#### **c. Increase the number of accurate online insurance applications through the FHIM.**

- Increase the number of FTEs throughout the Commonwealth to help Virginia residents enrolling in ACA.
- Devote resources and/or support to local organizations under the leadership of VLAB and Latino activists to establish computer workshops and training sessions early in the year for Spanish-speaking individuals to learn how to assist others with the online enrollment process (a type of train the trainer program)

- To provide computer access and assistance with the FHIM, have computers at State and County libraries, community colleges and health care centers readily available for the dedicated use for individuals trying to complete their insurance application.
- Encourage people to self-identify race and ethnicity for improved tracking of outreach and enrollment success.

## **2. INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS**

- a. Provide relief from state regulations and fees that limit well-trained Spanish-speaking health care providers (including mental health care providers) who are trained in foreign countries from exercising their profession in Virginia.
- b. Increase funding for mobile health clinics that can provide health assistance in local areas.
- c. Provide funding for telemedicine access centers so that individuals can access health assistance via telephone and Internet.

## **3. INCREASE ATTENTION TO PREVENTION OF ILLNESS AND DISABILITY AND PROMOTE WELLNESS**

We ask the Governor to meet with and ensure that all the following agencies have literature about their services in both English and Spanish, can provide linguistically and culturally competent service to their constituents and patients, and that they participate in “train the trainer” programs whereby they train community activists to promote good health habits and health equity:

1. Virginia Department of Health
2. Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services
3. Virginia Department of Health Professions
4. Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
5. Virginia Department of Education
6. Virginia Department of Social Services

## **4. IMPROVE HEALTH OF SPECIFIC POPULATION GROUPS**

Particularly as a result of current political discourse against institutions like Planned Parenthood and against health centers that provide reproductive health services, we reiterate the danger that recent state legislative initiatives pose to **women’s health**, and the health of their children. We commend the Governor and the Attorney General for their stance this year declaring that additional regulations being imposed on women’s health clinics were not appropriate, allowing these health service centers to remain open. We commend you and ask that you please sustain that position, and use your influence with other Governors to do the same. Our recommendation is for the Governor himself and his staff to tour health centers such as those that were in peril in order to verify that they are operating without threats and without additional obstacles imposed from opponents in that community.

We also draw the Governor’s attention to the very serious physical and mental challenges faced by **agricultural workers** in the state of Virginia. The most recent National Agricultural

Workers Survey (NAWS) from 2011-2012 indicated that 72% of agricultural workers in the United States are male. A current understanding of men's health issues is of crucial importance to those who provide services to agricultural workers. Male agricultural workers face a wide range of occupational health risk factors, psychological stressors, and discrimination, all of which can contribute to poor health outcomes. Heat-related illnesses (HRI) are of serious concern to agricultural workers. A recent analysis of heat-related workplace deaths found that workers in the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry had a fatality rate 35 times higher than workers in other industries. This study also found that 97% of heat-related deaths occurred in men, and that Hispanic workers were three times more likely to die from a HRI.<sup>ii</sup>

Musculoskeletal injuries and chronic pain may be especially prevalent among male agricultural workers. In a survey of 390 male agricultural workers in Virginia, musculoskeletal pain was the most common health condition reported, the workers had a mean age of just 38.5 years.

While not yet documented in the United States, chronic kidney disease of non-traditional causes (CKDnT) has been recognized as an epidemic among young male agricultural workers throughout Central America and Asia. Long working hours in high ambient temperatures with reoccurring dehydration appears to be the primary cause of CKDnT in agricultural workers, a risk factor present among many U.S. agricultural worker communities.

Male agricultural workers who are separated from their families may also be more vulnerable to depression, alcoholism, and substance abuse. In the eastern United States, mental health research with agricultural workers has demonstrated that increased time spent in the United States leads to an increased risk of depression. Men who reported feeling social isolation and more stressful working conditions also reported a higher number of symptoms for depression and anxiety, and a higher incidence of alcoholism and other substance abuse.

In conclusion, we recommend that health equity and safety issues such as these be included in the Governor's healthcare platform, and we offer to organize a visit for the Governor to an agricultural employment site, and we hope to encourage the Governor to continue to push his administration to monitor workplace safety for rural workers and to enforce state and federal labor laws, as well as support local organizations that tend to the needs of these workers.

## **VI. Conclusion**

We thank the Governor for his steadfast support and commitment to the Latino community, and look forward to continuing to make progress on issues of key importance to Latinos in Virginia, but more importantly, to the commonwealth at large. The issues discussed here are not only critical to Latinos, but to all Virginians, and we want to ensure the continued growth and positive development of our state. To that end, it is imperative to take action to promote civic engagement of Latinos, improve their access to quality education, help the great employers that are Latino businesses, promote quality health care and health equity, as well as workforce development. We trust that these recommendations will assist the Governor as he seeks to make inroads in the aforementioned areas, and VLAB remains committed to working with the Governor and his staff in order to enact the recommended actions.

## Acknowledgements

The Virginia Latino Advisory Board would like to thank the following individuals who provided technical assistance and shared information that contributed to the development of the recommendations:

- **Jaime Areizaga-Soto**, Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- **Lisette Carbajal**, Policy Analyst and Community Outreach
- **Ann Cavan**, Regional Principal, Baskerville and Lunenburg Correctional Centers, Virginia Department of Corrections –Division of Education
- **Edgardo Cortes**, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Elections
- **Elizabeth Creamer**, Senior Advisor to the Governor for Workforce Development
- **Teresa Gooch**, Division Director of Law Enforcement and Security Services, Department of Criminal Justice Services
- **Craig Herndon**, Vice-Chancellor for Workforce Development Services, VCCS
- **Kerin A. Hilker-Balkissoon**, Executive Director, College and Career Pathways
- **Erin McGrath**, GEAR UP Senior Coordinator/Program Director, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)
- **Marcela Quintana-Baker**, Former President and Board member, Virginia Latino Higher Education Network (VALHEN)
- **Maribel Ramos**, Director, Virginia Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
- **Nancy Rodrigues**, Secretary of Administration
- **Veronica Tate**, Director of Federal Programs, VDOE
- **Dietra Trent**, Deputy Secretary of Education
- **Leah Walker**, Community and Minority Affairs Liaison, VDOE

## Appendix A

### VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2005 SESSION CHAPTER 636

*An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 24 of Title 2.2 an article numbered 21, consisting of sections numbered 2.2-2459, 2.2-2460, and 2.2-2461, relating to the Latino Advisory Board.*

[H 2420]

Approved March 23, 2005

#### **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 24 of Title 2.2 an article numbered 21, consisting of sections numbered 2.2-2459, 2.2-2460, and 2.2-2461, as follows:**

#### *Article 21.*

#### *Latino Advisory Board.*

*§ 2.2-2459. Latino Advisory Board; membership; terms; compensation and expenses.*

*A. The Latino Advisory Board (the Board) is established as an advisory board, within the meaning of § 2.2-2100, in the executive branch of state government. The Board shall consist of 21 nonlegislative citizen members, at least 15 of whom shall be of Latino descent, who shall be appointed by the Governor and serve at his pleasure. In addition, the Secretaries of the Commonwealth, Commerce and Trade, Education, Health and Human Resources, Public Safety, and Transportation, or their designees shall serve as ex officio members without voting privileges. All members shall be residents of the Commonwealth.*

*B. After the initial staggering of terms, nonlegislative citizen members shall be appointed for a term of four years. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the unexpired terms. No member shall be eligible to serve more than two successive four-year terms; however, after the expiration of the remainder of a term to which a member was appointed to fill a vacancy, two additional terms may be served by such member if appointed thereto.*

*C. The Board shall elect from its membership a chairman and vice chairman. A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. Meetings of the Board shall be limited to four per year and shall be held upon the call of the chairman or whenever the majority of the members so request.*

*D. Members of the Board shall receive no compensation for their services, but shall be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and 2.2-2825.*

*§ 2.2-2460. Powers and duties; acceptance of gifts and grants.*

*A. The Board shall have the power and duty to:*

- 1. Advise the Governor regarding the development of economic, professional, cultural, educational, and governmental links between the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Latino community in Virginia, and Latin America;*
- 2. Undertake studies, symposiums, research, and factual reports to gather information to formulate and present recommendations to the Governor relative to issues of concern and importance to the Latino community in the Commonwealth; and*
- 3. Advise the Governor as needed regarding any statutory, regulatory, or other issues of importance to the Latino community in the Commonwealth.*

*B. The Board may apply for, accept, and expend gifts, grants, or donations from public or private sources to enable it to carry out its objectives.*

*§ 2.2-2461. Staff; cooperation from other state agencies.*

*The Office of the Governor shall serve as staff to the Board. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall assist the Board upon request.*

**2. That the intent of this act is to codify the Latino Advisory Commission, which exists pursuant to an executive order of the Governor, as the Latino Advisory Board, a permanent advisory board in the executive branch.**

**3. That the initial appointments of nonlegislative citizen members in accordance with this act shall be staggered as follows: seven members for a one-year term, six members for a two-year term, five members for a three-year term, and three members for a four-year term.**

**4. That the provisions of this act shall become effective on October 15, 2005.**

---

<sup>i</sup> *Statistical source: The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis*

<sup>ii</sup> *National Center for Farmworker Health, Health of Male Agricultural Workers; last accessed December 3, 2015; [http://www.ncfh.org/uploads/3/8/6/8/38685499/menshealthfactsheet\\_bb\\_2.13.15.pdf](http://www.ncfh.org/uploads/3/8/6/8/38685499/menshealthfactsheet_bb_2.13.15.pdf)*