
Latinos in Action in East Boston: The East Boston

National, state, and local trends have indicated that the Latino community is the fastest growing minority community. Specifically, according to the recent Census 2000 data released by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), Latinos in East Boston has increased from 18% in 1990 to 39% in 2000; an astounding 21% increase. East Boston is home to approximately 15,000 Latinos where they have made a

strong presence. Mexicans, Salvadorians, Hondureans, Peruvians, Colombians, Puerto Ricans, and Venezuelans fill the streets of East Boston. The area is filled with shops, restaurants, and a lively cultural spirit.



Recognizing the urgency to address the needs of this growing community, the Mayor's Office of

residents and service agencies in East Boston to find effective strategies on developing an inclusive process for identifying issues in the Latino community. The first meeting was held at City Hall, and subsequent monthly meetings were held at community organizations in East Boston. The working group met for nearly a year to define an inclusive collective process to identify issues, conduct a needs assessment from residents and service providers for Latinos in East Boston, and surveying if there is a need for a Coalition to be formed.

Community needs assessment tools were developed to identify issues affecting the East Boston Latino community. The assessment included surveys that asked what are the prominent issues and barriers to services, and if there was a need to form a coalition to address these issues. Some of the most prominent issues identified for the Latino community in East Boston includes, the lack of affordable housing, the need for additional English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, affordable childcare, immigration issues, domestic violence, low paying jobs, and discrimination. There was also a consensus to form a Coalition to prioritize issues and take action on these iden-

Boston United to End Racism Workshop

On August 31- September 7, 2001 the United Nations will be holding The World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa. WCAR will focus on action-oriented

and practical steps to eradicate racism, including measures of prevention and education..



Locally, in celebration of this

international event a diverse coalition of organizations and individuals who care about ending racism are joining forces in partnership with the Boston Re-evaluation Counseling Communities to sponsor a workshop, "Boston United to

Need English Classes? Tuition Vouchers Available! Call the BCAE for more information

Boston Center for Adult Education (BCAE): ESOL Tuition Voucher Program

- BCAE offers beginning through advanced ESOL courses both daytime and evening, year-round. A new “term” starts every 8 weeks. There are intensive courses that meet 4 times a week in the

daytime as well as evening courses that meet once or twice a week. All of our courses currently

meet at our 5 Commonwealth Avenue building, in the Back Bay, accessible by



at

the MBTA green or orange lines.

- BCAE offers 2 vouchers per course for the ESOL program, on a first-come, first-serve basis. There are usually 12-15 courses occurring at any one time, for a total of up to 30 vouchers every term.
- In order for a student to use a tuition voucher, they must be referred to BCAE through a

tified issues.

As a result, *The East Boston Community Coalition* was formed with the following mandates:

- Improve/facilitate Latino’s access to support services existing in East Boston
- Increase collaboration among East Boston agencies/ community groups that focus

their work on Latinos; and

- In-par-Lati-sues able of edu-



This coalition hopes to improve access to ser-

vice create civic participation of nos around is-such as afford-housing, lack childcare, and cational issues.

vices for Latinos in East Boston, and work collectively to address the issues one by one.

Immediate and future activities of the coalition include prioritizing identified community issues, and developing an action plan to address these issues, and mapping out its immediate and long-term goals.

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MONB Sponsors 245(i) Clinic to Assist Immigrants

On Saturday, April 7, 2001, a 245(i) clinic to assist immigrants with the legislative amendment was organized in partnership with the Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS), Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI) the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians, and other immigrant serving organizations. This event was held at City Hall. About 75 family visa applications were completed during the clinic session and 150 families were assisted with information related to 245(i).



A window of opportunity opened for those who could apply for a green card but had not because of the 3- and 10-year bars. Individuals needed to know about this opportunity and needed assistance with the application form. Organizations working with immigrants began to spread the word and to organize clinics to help individuals complete the immigration forms.

Background of 245(i)

On December 21, 2000, then President Clinton signed into law the Legal Immigration and Family Equity Act,

also known as the LIFE Act. The LIFE Act consists of several provisions, one of which temporarily extended section 245(i) of the Immigration and Naturalization Act. Without 245(i), individuals who can apply for green cards but are undocumented must leave the U.S. and remain outside the U.S. for 3 or 10 years. Just one example is an undocumented immigrant who has been married to a citizen. The undocumented individual can apply for a green card but needs to leave the U.S. for 3 or 10 years. The individual would not want to leave family members for so many years, and as a result, does not apply for a