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OHIO LATINO AFFAIRS

Advise. Connect. Build.

ECONOMIC SUPPORT PLAN

Prepared by Ohio Latino Affairs – Public Policy Center
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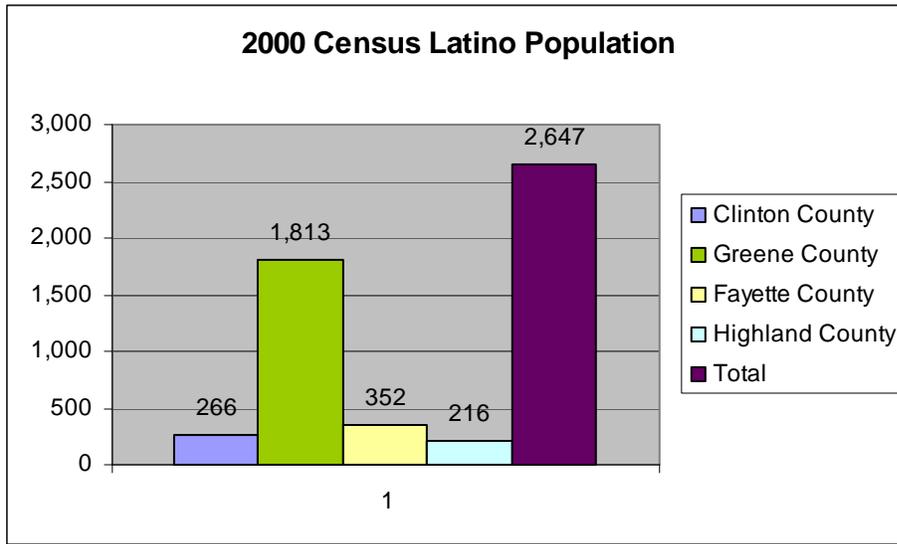
Background

The U.S. Department of Labor recently reported that Ohioans have faced the largest proportionate job loss since the Great Depression. Between 2000 and 2007 Ohio employment dropped by 3.7 percent, with a loss of 209,400 nonfarm jobs, which constitutes the biggest seven-year drop since the period beginning in 1939. The jobs lost have been primarily in manufacturing, with Ohio recording a 23.3 percent of its manufacturing jobs (236,000 jobs). The state has also lost jobs in construction, wholesale and retail, information services, and financial activities. Recent job growth occurred in private health service, restaurants and bars, and state and local government. Furthermore, Ohio only added 2,500 jobs in firms providing professional, scientific and technical services.

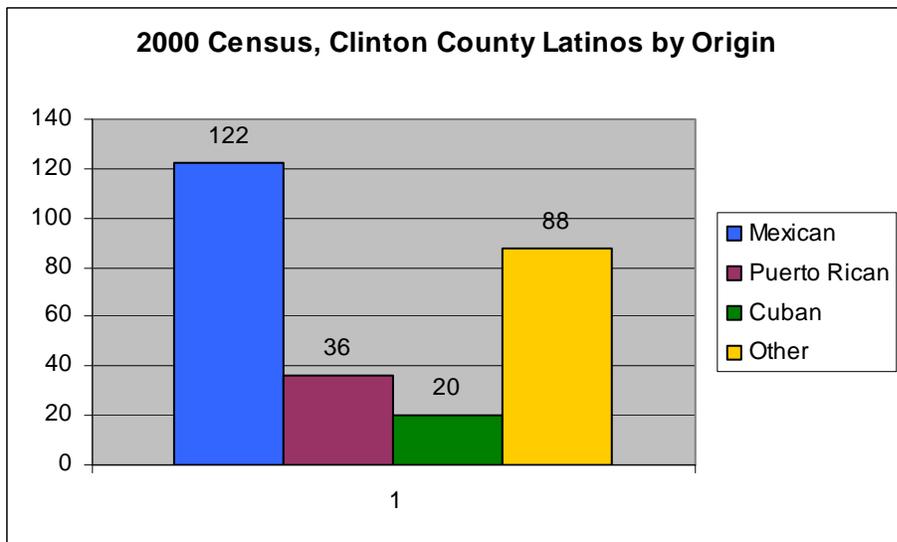
With so many Ohio jobs disappearing, it is critical that all displaced workers receive the assistance and services necessary to continue to contribute to the economy. Because the Ohio workforce is diverse, Ohio must be able to address the needs of many different groups of workers. For example, when jobs are lost, among those families affected are Latinos. Thus, Ohio Latino Affairs has created an economic support response plan to assess and analyze the extent of the effect of job loss on the Latino community in a geographic region, as well as provide information and resources to minimize such effect.

Although the report focuses on the impact of a proposed closure of DHL in Wilmington, which would result in economically devastating job loss of an estimated 8,000 workers, our agency hopes that the report will be replicated and used to address the needs of not only Latinos in other cities and other situations, but also to address the needs of other groups of persons. Ohio must ensure that we are doing all we can for each worker.

Area Analysis—Population and Employment Information



Clinton County, where Wilmington is located, has a recorded population of only 266 Latinos. However, the total population for the area, including the surrounding counties, is 2,647.



The majority of the Latino population is Mexican or from other Latin American origins.



Hispanic Labor and Employment

The number of Hispanic Ohioans in the civilian labor force is more than 126,000. Hispanic Ohioans have an unemployment rate of 9.9 percent.

Hispanics between the ages of 25 and 64 have an unemployment rate of 8.5 percent while Hispanics between the ages of 20 and 24 have an unemployment rate of 11.9 percent. The Hispanic immigrant community tended to have a lower unemployment rate than the Ohio Hispanic community taken as a whole.

Employed Hispanics are heavily represented in service and production/transportation occupations compared to the state as a whole. Of the nearly 114,000 employed, 25 percent are in service occupations with 12,600 employed in food services. Production and transportation occupations account for 22 percent with 17,000 Hispanic Ohioans involved with production.

Company Outreach

Ohio Latino Affairs contacted ABX, a DHL sub-company, to determine the number of Latinos working within the company. Yvonne Spendlove, A Staffing and Placement Division employee, was not aware of many Latinos working at ABX. However, she said that there was a possibility that they might be working a different shift than she. Yvonne suggested that her manager may be able to try and generate reports on the number of Latinos at the company and work with Ohio Latino Affairs to determine if there will be a specialized need for services. Further information is pending as of 10/3/08.

Community Organizations– OLANet

Ohio Latino Affairs connects the diverse Latino communities across the state, and builds the capacity of community organizations so they may better serve the fast growing Latino population of Ohio. To meet the challenges of community organizations and communications, the Commission created OLANet, a statewide database of organizations that serve the Latino population. The comprehensive database has a directory of organizations, news service, and events calendar.

Any Latino or Latino serving organization may become part of the OLANet directory. This includes individuals, organizations, agencies, or businesses that are Latino or Latino-operated, or those that focus their operations or initiatives on serving the Latino community.

To find these resources in a geographic area, the directory is available at <http://ochla.ohio.gov/orgdirectory/index.aspx>. Although there were no resources listed for Wilmington or Clinton County, our Commission was able to gather a list of 63 organizations in the region, which may be able to provide needed resources to Wilmington's Latino residents. Please see Appendix A for listing.



Community and Church Leaders—Contact Information, Interviews and Findings

Lilleana Cavanaugh, the Community Liaison for Ohio Latino Affairs maintains a database of individuals who are integral to the success of Latino communities throughout Ohio. Lilleana has developed strong relationships with these community and church leaders. They provide her with current information on events, issues, needs, and successes in each of their communities. Thus, in response to news of the DHL closing, Lilleana gathered information regarding the population and needs of the Latino community in Wilmington by relying on information provided by community leaders and local churches in the Southwest area. Below is a summary of findings and summaries of the conversations with those local leaders.

Additionally, contact information has been provided should the Economic Task Force for the DHL Hub in Wilmington need further information, advisement, or participation on the Task Force.

Summary of Findings

The Latino population in Wilmington is very small. The majority of those remaining in the city are of Puerto Rican origin. A few documented Mexican families remain in the area. In the late 1990s early 2000s there were a lot more Latinos working in several industries. However, after 9/11, the majority of undocumented individuals left the county as rules regarding document verification became stricter. There does not appear to be a substantial number of Latinos working for DHL. Of those working there, they are likely well assimilated.

Reverend Jayne Ruiz, Miami Presbytery Hispanic Ministries Coordinator, (937-205-5033)

In early 2000, there was a lot more activity in Wilmington. There were restaurants, small businesses and people working in the service industry. However, the majority of Latinos have left since long ago; even before these latest DHL closures were announced. Jayne had worked before with the Catholic Church (only one in the area), which was conducting mass for Latinos. Jayne recommended contacting St. Columbkille Catholic Church.

Sister Maria Stacey, Catholic Church Hispanic Services (937- 222-1340)

Sister Stacey conducted some work in the Wilmington area years ago. Her main contact in the community is Noemi, a long time resident in the area (15 yrs +). Because Noemi is bilingual, many Latinos would come to her for help and assistance. According to Sister Maria, the Latino population in Wilmington has really thinned out. There is not much work there, and it is very difficult to find a job. Everyone is asking for ID verification and proof of residency/right to work.

Sister Maria confirmed that DHL was very strict about hiring people and would ensure they were documented. They “fired” many people after 9/11 who did not pass the verification of documents test. She also confirms that most Latinos would reach out to the Catholic Church which provided mass services in Spanish and some basic support services as well.



Noemi Brady, Latina Community Leader and Business Owner, (937-205-5033)

Noemi is a long time resident of Wilmington. She states that there are Latinos, but very few of them work for DHL. The majority of the Latinos still living in the area drive to a nearby town where they work in a company that “cuts wood.” Only documented Latinos work in DHL. Those who don’t have papers were dismissed after 9/11. Prior to 9/11, DHL had people with fake documents (they did not know it, but when verification time came, these people either were dismissed or left before they were told that their documents were not matching). After 9/11, DHL only hired people with confirmed verified documents. Among the immigrants they hired were Africans, a few Puerto Ricans and even fewer Mexicans. There are maybe 15 Latinos at most working at DHL.

The community is made of very few but large families. The majority of those who have stayed back are men; there are very few single women and even fewer small/young families. In the past, there were two churches that had services and outreach for Latinos. One is a Baptist Church, the other a Christian Church. On average, church attendance on both churches was around 7-10 individuals. This demonstrates that there are very few people left, as in most communities, the church is the place where new immigrants seek help, comfort and information.

The Latinos who are left at DHL are well assimilated. They are either Puerto Ricans or a few Mexicans. They have documents and they speak English. They have been told that they will receive a severance package when they are cut from the company. (ps. Noemi’s daughter is one of those Latinos working at DHL who may lose her job).

Kathy Schwab – Columbkille Catholic Church, www.stcolumbkille.org, 73 N Mulberry St, Wilmington (937-382-2236) Main Priest: Father Frank Klamet

Kathy explained they are the only Catholic Church in the county. In years past, there was a large ministry to serve the Latino community. However, Latinos have left. Years ago there was a “Company Garcia” which brought Latinos to work in the area. However, they had fake documents and when this was found out, the company left along with the Latinos.

Some Latinos scattered in surrounding areas (Greenfield and Washington Courthouse), but the majority just moved on. To her knowledge, there are only few Latinos working at DHL. There are a few established Latino families in the community, but not that many. The Latinos that she knows about are mostly Puerto Ricans. She states that the Latinos left do have verifiable documents and are pretty well adjusted to the community. Kathy thinks they would be able to easily navigate the system and obtain assistance, if needed. Because the area is rural, people are scattered in the small communities. During years past, the priest would come and give mass in Spanish. This priest is also an obstetrician, so he was able to provide some basic advice to the community about health issues, but as stated before, there are just too few Latinos left.

Victor Garcia, Del Pueblo Inc., Latino Community Organization, P.O. Box 1863, Springfield, OH 45501, (937-767-2307)

Victor Garcia does not have any specific contacts in Wilmington. He will check with other community advocates to find out if there have been reports of specific needs or situations. As far as he knows, the Latinos from Wilmington moved out of the area after 9/11, when finding work became more difficult. He will keep Ohio Latino Affairs posted on any additional information.



Esteban Ortiz, Latino Community Leader, 53 E. Locus Street, Apt 2, Wilmington, OH 45177, (614-620-0698)

Esteban is an active member of the Latino community in Ohio. He is currently living in Wilmington. He lived there for 4 years in 2002-2006 and moved out of state for awhile before moving back. He said there was a Mexican store and restaurant in Wilmington, but within at least the last couple of years it closed. He said there is still another Mexican restaurant in Wilmington and he has spoken with the owner there, who is afraid that the DHL closing will harm his business. Also, the Latinos used to be living in a more centralized area, but now they are pretty much scattered. Esteban said many Latinos have left in recent years. Mostly there are Puerto Ricans, and Cubans left. Some of them work for DHL.

Javier, Latino Employee, preferred that contact information not be given

Javier works at local restaurant in Wilmington. He stated that there are few Latinos who live in Wilmington at this time. The few he has seen are Puerto Rican. He said there are very few Mexicans left. The situation for the restaurant and community in general has changed a lot since the announcement was made on the DHL closure. Sales are low and they are assessing the situation on a daily basis. Some time ago, there were Latinos working at “ERGO” and the airport which serviced the DHL company. But they are all gone. People are moving because there is no work.

Government Outreach— Resources and Opportunities

CLOI

Ohio Latino Affairs has created the Catalog of Latino Outreach Initiatives (CLOI) which features state government agencies that target the needs of Latino communities, programs and resources therein offered and qualified staff operating to carry on these tasks. Whichever business sector is affected, CLOI may be useful to facilitate access to information regarding government resources available.

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Workforce Development

At the Department of Job and Family Services, Office of Workforce Development, Benito Lucio is a key contact regarding Latino related programs and services within this department. Although Benito works in the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program, his knowledge base and contacts are far-reaching.

In January of 2008, Benito hosted an information session with several departments of the Office of Workforce Development for the Ohio Latino Affairs Board of Commissioners. As a result, the Commission is currently working on an initiative to identify opportunities to improve access to workforce development services for Latinos. Preliminary research showed that the following suggestions should be further analyzed:

- There is an overall need to connect Latino community organizations with workforce services.
- Services need to be more basic. Often times the process relies on applicants being internet ready, even though many of the potential clients are not computer literate.
- Companies are frequently asking for bilingual customer service representatives and human resource personnel because they want to reach the Hispanic market. We need a program that serves this need, such as a Human Resource Training Program.
- More Latinos need to be working at the one-stops and members on the WIA boards.
- Workforce services need to connect with organizations like ECCHO, Educators and Community Helping Hispanics Onward. For more information about the organizations, please visit <http://www.echho.org/>.
- Job Fairs need to include diversity recruiters from local colleges.



Clinton County One-Stop—Workforce Services

Ohio Latino Affairs contacted the Clinton County One-Stop in order to inquire as to the possible needs of Latinos affected by the DHL closing as well as the services provided. Our Commission was referred to Harold Collum, of Workforce Services United, and who is in charge of handling the coordination of statewide services. Harold stated that to date, there have been 223 Workforce Investment Act Application (WIA) and Survey documents filed in connection with DHL job losses. Of those applications, only six have identified themselves as Latinos, which is 2.7 percent.

However, Mr. Collum stated that there may be larger numbers of Latinos applying later in the lay off process. Currently many of the jobs lost have been in professional services. When some of the lower level positions, resulting in larger number of lay offs, occur there may be more Latinos affected. Harold sent a copy of the WIA Application and Survey of Background, Experiences, Skills and Interests to Ohio Latino Affairs for review. See Appendix B. Possible recommendations include the following:

- Education Status information should include an option as to whether an applicant has received a degree or license in any other country besides the U.S.
- Citizenship information should include whether or not the applicant is a Legal Permanent Resident.
- Job skills/skills sets information should also include a question as to whether or not the applicant is bilingual, and his/her level of proficiency.

Other concerns with workforce services are the following:

- The transient nature of the Latino community— As demonstrated from interviews by area Latinos, when jobs leave, often Latino families will relocate. Moreover, these families may relocate not to another area in Ohio, but to another state; or if they are foreign-born, they may leave the country altogether. Workforce services must take into account the likelihood of relocation.
- Clear policy—In order for some Latino workers to feel comfortable accessing government services, there must be a commitment from the government not to inquire into the immigration status of family members. Additionally, services available to Legal Permanent Residents, or other visa holders must be clearly delineated from those that are available only to U.S. Citizens.

Department of Development– Workforce and Talent Division

Maria Goeser helped found the Latino Migrant Coalition of Clark and Champaign Counties and is a key leader in the Latino community in the Southwest area. Maria has also been assigned to help oversee the DHL hub closing in her capacity as Business Service Representative for the Workforce and Talent Division, Department of Development.

Expansion of OLANet

Ohio Latino Affairs is currently researching the possibility of expanding OLANet services to include employment information. However, factors such as budget cuts and the capacity of the web program may limit our ability to offer these services.



Conclusion

The closing of the Wilmington DHL hub would be devastating to the Wilmington area in a time when Ohio is already struggling to retain jobs. However, based on assessments of the population through various resources, it does not appear that a large number of Latinos will be affected. Additionally, it is likely that the Ohio workforce services will be adequate to meet the needs of those Latinos that are affected, since community reports demonstrate that they are well assimilated.

More importantly, a significant first step has already been taken, and that is including Latinos in the process. By connecting government and the Latino community, both sides benefit. Ohio workforce services are better adept at serving all groups of individuals and individuals are able to continue to contribute to the Ohio economy. Ohio cannot afford to allow any worker to fall through the cracks. Thus, it is also critical that Ohio takes the opportunity to reevaluate services to ensure that all workers needs are being met. This report includes several recommendations. In addition, Ohio Latino Affairs is currently developing a more detailed and intensive analysis of workforce development opportunities. The Commission will provide the report to the Governor, legislators, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, and local WIA boards. Finally, the Commission will continue to monitor the situation in Wilmington regarding the DHL closing, and provide assistance, information and advisement wherever possible.

Submitted 6 October 2008
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