

## CENTRO HISPANO's STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2021-2022

**¡Juntos Podemos!**

### **HISTORY**

Centro Hispano is rooted in the vibrant culture of the diverse Latino community in Frederick County, Maryland. With a 15-year track record of creating life-changing opportunities for Latinos and for the greater community, Centro Hispano continues to make a difference in the lives of the people it serves. What sets us apart is our continuous involvement in community-based activities for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) community members and our growing portfolio of programs and services for Spanish-speaking individuals, families and children of all ages.

Throughout our history, Centro Hispano has been committed to transforming the lives of local LEP Latinos by offering programs and services that ensure successful and productive lives. In addition to our Basic Needs Program consisting of 16 services and an Emergency Relief Food Pantry with weekly food distributions, we offer programs for senior citizens, young mothers with children, and youth. Also, we conduct outreach to rural Frederick County to make sure migrants/farmworkers and their families living in more remote and isolated areas are aware that our resources are available to them as well. Our long-standing collaborations across different sectors of academia, business, government, nonprofits and basic needs coalitions have promoted and empowered those who seek to forge ahead and become contributing members of society.

Our client caseload has more than tripled in the past three years – from 689 to over 2,200 and growing. Our clients are a mix of recently arrived immigrants, those who have migrated to Frederick County from neighboring counties in search of better opportunity and quality of life, and those who have been well established in Frederick County for a significant amount of time – often spanning generations. The number of senior clients has risen as families have brought their older relatives with them to reside with them in Frederick County – no longer “sending money home.” Many new clients are arriving at our door to allay their extreme anxieties about the COVID-19 pandemic – seeking to obtain information and advice. Centro Hispano is recognized by Frederick County's Latino LEP population as the “Go-To” nonprofit for the compassionate and excellent service it provides. In incremental growth spurts, we are proud to have helped more than 10,000 to date take full advantage of their lives in Frederick County - overcoming language and cultural challenges – and giving back by helping others, contributing to the local economy and through strong civic engagement.

Community members in our network of 50 trained and screened volunteers have donated a total of 68,796 hours during the past 15 years - or 5,292 hours of time and talent per year – expected to increase in FY' 2021-FY' 2022. This exceptional demonstration of community participation amounts to a 15-year total of \$694,840 and an average of \$53,449 per year – based on prevailing Maryland hourly minimum wages.

Centro Hispano de Frederick's positive growth continues! In response to changing demographics and needs, Centro Hispano has completed its **Strategic Plan – 2021-2022** – organized around four clearly defined and inter-connected themes. **1. Centro's focus** on the education of young members of our community and quality of life for the growing population of Spanish-speaking senior citizens who have made Frederick their permanent home. **2. Centro's recognition that** our organization is an important

community anchor providing hope, skills and resources to inter-generational families and residents in all stages of life. **3. Centro's reaffirmation** that we are a part of a vibrant city and county and that public-private sector partnerships are key to solving complex socio-economic issues to which our youth, young parents and seniors are connected like no generation before. **4. Centro's commitment** to invest in its own growth underscoring the necessity of building organizational capacity so we are well poised to meet the challenges of expanded services and sustainable new programs.

## **ABOUT US**

**Mission:** To inform, refer, and educate Limited English Proficiency (LEP) residents of Frederick County in order to promote full participation in community and the successful pursuit of opportunity.

**Vision:** We envision an informed and vibrant community in which people of all backgrounds and all ages succeed and thrive.

### **Values:**

1. Community – We encourage opportunity, prosperity and inclusion.
2. Service – We exist to serve our clients and to help them improve their quality of life.
3. Integrity – We develop highly relevant programs and services to help individuals and families advance.
4. Accountability – We are responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to Centro Hispano.
5. Joy – We celebrate community, well-being and equity for all.

**Board Members and Executive Director:** Centro Hispano's 9-member Board of Directors is comprised of outstanding community members who have dedicated their lives to community well-being and progress. They are accountants, attorneys, business professionals, civil rights leaders, community activists, hospital administrators, law enforcement professionals, teachers and IT technicians. Centro Hispano's Founding Director, still in place in our 15<sup>th</sup> year, is a National Certified Medical Interpreter, a leader in working with LEP patients and their families at Frederick Health Hospital (FH) and a founding member of the FH Diversity Council.

## **CURRENT CONTEXT AND ENVIRONMENT**

Centro Hispano's new strategic goals respond to changing trends and community needs which affect our clientele. These include but are not limited to:

- Dramatic increase in Latino population particularly in K-12 and 65+ age categories. In the past five years the City of Frederick has seen an astounding 258% increase with a 58% in Frederick County.
- Anti-immigrant sentiment and actions.
- Growing number of separated families due to detention, incarceration and deportation of undocumented community members.
- Under-achievement and inability to stay on grade level of LEP Latino students in elementary, middle and high schools.
- Limited pathways to secondary education and vocational training for LEP Latino students.
- Physical, emotional and mental health crises due to anxieties and stress.
- Barriers to employment and living wages.

- By far the biggest impact on our LEP Latino clientele in 2020 has been the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This has exacerbated learning issues among LEP Latino youth struggling to master distance learning in virtual classrooms in homes that typically are not technologically up-to-date. The digital divide has become a serious impediment.
- Food insecurity among our inter-generational clients and families has become a new reality with extended job furloughs and loss of hours.
- Our clients, 90% of which are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed – ALICE households, are struggling to purchase basic needs items, keep up with rent and car payments as well as other bills, other transportation needs, childcare, and health and insurance costs. The remaining 10%, living at or below poverty level, are facing even more precarious situations.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

1. Expand presence in the LEP Latino and general community to extend Centro’s impact and reach.
2. Strengthen ongoing programs and develop new programs in response to current client needs.
3. Expand existing services in our priority focus areas.
4. Identify recognized standards of excellence for each program and service and strive to achieve and exceed.
5. Maintain best practices based on training, evidence-based and proven outcomes.
6. Integrate a trauma-informed care model across all programs and services as needed while also eliminating silos.
7. Expand presence in the LEP Latino and general community to extend Centro’s impact and reach.

### **STRATEGIC GOALS**

1. Continue to enhance and expand Años Dorados/Golden Years Program into a fully functioning LEP Latino Senior Center –a Frederick County first.
2. Continue to expand and add new components to our EXITO! STEAM Summer Youth Success Academy and Academic Year Boost! Basic Learning & Homework Guidance Program for LEP Latino students Grades 4-12.
3. Continue to expand and add new components to our Entre Mujeres Self-Sufficiency Program.
4. Continue to expand our Basic Needs Services portfolio in response to newly identified client needs.
5. Continue to increase organizational resources and capacity.
6. Reinforce Centro Hispano’s financial foundation.

### **STRATEGIES**

1. Meet LEP Latino community members where they are on their path-ways for successful integration into the City of Frederick and Frederick County.
2. Touch community members at every age and stage of life through on-going basic needs information and referral services.
3. Offer support to all clients as they come to Centro Hispano seeking advice and assistance to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Continue priority focus areas for senior citizens, young parents with children and youth.
5. Link data-informed programs and services.

6. Continue to use the framework we created with our new MIS Data Collection System to gather and analyze client information and use it to plan new services and programs.
7. Adapt an organizational framework for tracking performance measures, indicators and outcomes.
8. Increase number of paid staff.
9. Invest in staff and board development.
10. Foster and obtain new funding streams that cover full costs of doing business.
11. Develop new relationships with public-private sector funders.
12. Research and use new ALICE and poverty level data as well as City of Frederick and Frederick County reports to develop new programs and services that align with emerging trends.
13. Pursue funding opportunities to double operating budget by 2022.

### **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**

1. Broaden rural outreach to migrant/farmworkers and their families living and working in the more remote and isolated areas of Frederick County.
2. Continue Centro's Emergency Relief Food Pantry and food distributions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Develop a Culturally Relevant Food and Basic Needs Pantry during and after the pandemic.
4. Initiate a Volunteer Certification Program – for volunteers in Centro's English language and citizenship classes, computer training/computer lab and any new volunteer support opportunities that may arise.
5. Obtain our Platinum Level GuideStar Certification so that Centro is reflected as a fully validated nonprofit on GuideStar.
6. Seek funding for a new Program Manager-Compliance Manager position as Centro's portfolio of grants increases in size and requires multiple tracking and reporting actions.
7. Seek funding for a Centro Hispano 18-passenger van/driver for client and student transport to and from programs and for field trips.
8. Consider innovative ways to support our young LEP parents with critical child care needs.
9. Seek funding for a new Mental Health and Coping Skills component to our Años Dorados/Golden Years, Entre Mujeres and EXITO! Youth Success Programs.
10. Seek funding for Fair Housing and Racial Equity Programs as these are key funding areas in the current environment – in the context of public awareness and education.
11. Seek funding for a new Financial Literacy component to our Años Dorados/Golden Years, Entre Mujeres, and EXITO! Youth Success Programs.
12. Develop a companion component for Entre Mujeres – Entre Padres.
13. Seek new partnerships that are value-added for new programs/ program components.
14. Further develop Centro Hispano's website and social media pages to include photos, success stories and videos from our programs and services in order to strengthen the Centro Hispano brand.
15. Develop Centro Hispano's participation in the Frederick County United Way's Annual Unity Campaign.
16. Develop adequate and required capacity to be invited to submit funding requests and applications to public-private sector funders outside of Frederick County.
17. Initiate Centro Hispano's first Management Letter and first Audit as our operating budget grows.

**PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT TO ENHANCE CENTRO HISPANO'S ACCOUNTABILITY, IMPACT & SUCCESSFUL PURSUIT OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Gather success stories from each Program Coordinator on a quarterly basis to ensure robust reporting and compliance with funder guidelines.
2. Create summaries of the impact of program activities on a quarterly basis.
3. Design program participant evaluation questionnaires to distribute, allow time for completion and collect at the end of each week.
4. Individual Program Coordinators will take the lead for new program marketing and outreach including fliers and distribution - for their specific program.
5. Initiate a Program Coordinator team meeting per quarter to ensure cross-service/cross-program collaboration and cooperation.
6. Team Work!
7. The Executive Director will submit a written report to Board Members at each Board meeting.
8. Board Members will consider reverting to Centro Hispano's former Board Committee structure with Executive Director oversight.