

Policy Issues

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Environmental Policies

Education

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ASPIRA supports efforts to increase awareness and knowledge of environmental issues among our youth, as well as of the importance of healthy environments.

ASPIRA supports programs that encourage Latino youth to enter careers in environmental fields.

General

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ASPIRA believes that in order for our youth to thrive, they need to live in healthy communities. ASPIRA opposes discriminatory practices that result in disproportionate amount of and hazardous waste being deposited in Latino communities and the effects on health this entails.

Media

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Policies

Media Ownership

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ASPIRA supports efforts to increase the participation in ownership of Latinos in the media, including the print, television and radio.

Recognizing that many “Hispanic” media outlets (TV, radio and print) are not “Latino owned, ASPIRA supports efforts to advocate to ensure that these outlets adequately serve the needs of the Latino community and are responsive to the community

Depiction of Latinos

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ASPIRA recognizes that the portrayal of Latinos and Latinas in the mainstream media has tended to stereotype Latinos and/or present them in a less than favorable light, even denigrating Latinos.

ASPIRA supports advocacy efforts to ensure that Latinos are depicted properly, without bias.

Participation in the Media Industry / Education in Arts and Media

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ASPIRA supports efforts and programs to increase the representation of Latinos as artists, news anchors, and other “in-front-of-the-camera/microphone” jobs, including advocacy with media to hire more Latino artists, radio announcers/commentators, and programs to prepare young Latinos for these positions.

ASPIRA also supports programs to increase the representation of Latinos “behind-the-cameras/microphones” in positions such as producers, directors, writers, camera-people, and technicians, and programs to prepare young Latinos for these types of jobs.

ASPIRA supports collaborative efforts and programs with others.

Language

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Policies

Culture

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ASPIRA supports programs that promote Hispanic-Latino culture.

Spanish

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As a PR/Latino organization, ASPIRA supports efforts to ensure that Latinos retain their knowledge of Spanish and promote its use.

ASPIRA supports programs to strengthen and expand the learning and use of the Spanish language –as well as other languages- among our youth.

ASPIRA opposes efforts to limit the use of Spanish in any setting, especially in schools.

National / Official Language

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ASPIRA considers the United States to be a multi-cultural society which should value its diversity.

ASPIRA opposes efforts at all levels to make English the official language of the United States or the “National” language of the US.

Voting Rights / Civic Participation

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Policies

Voting Rights Act

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ASPIRA supports the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, key legislation in ensuring fair participation of all Americans in the electoral process.

Civic Participation / Advocacy

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ASPIRA recognizes the importance of participation of the Latino community in the country's civic life and the important role of advocacy to attain social and economic gains.

ASPIRA supports programs and efforts

- to engage young people in civic education and civic participation.
- to promote youth participation in voter registration and “get-out-the-vote” drives.
- to create and implement programs to educate youth on public policy issues that affect the Latino community and on strategies for advocating for education, youth and the community.

ASPIRA encourages efforts by young Latinos to consider seeking public office.

Immigration

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Immigration Policies

Immigration Law

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ASPIRA supports comprehensive immigration reform that provides for

- increased border security, but that provides pathways to legalization; citizenship for the estimated 12 million undocumented Latino immigrants.

Border Security / Local Enforcement

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ASPIRA believes immigration is a federal issue and opposes efforts by states to pass laws restricting immigrants, punishing employers or using local law enforcement to enforce immigration laws.

ASPIRA also opposes

- militarization of the boarder with Mexico;
- discriminatory/abusive behavior against undocumented immigrants, and supports humane treatment of all undocumented immigrants;
- calls for constructing physical barriers on the border;

enforcement by local authorities of immigration laws.

Technology

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Technology Policies

Telecommunications Policy

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ASPIRA supports policies that increase access by Latino communities to the latest technology, including broadband.

To this end, ASPIRA supports

- competition because competition will lead to lower prices for telecommunications services (video, telephone and broadband) hence increasing access and benefiting our community and youth;
- legislation that would allow the telephone companies to deploy fiber optic cable to provide a choice to the cable companies, as long as it is assured that all communities will eventually be served by these services without discrimination, as included in the current pending legislation;
- state, rather than local, franchising authority. This reduces the burden and hence the cost of providing telecommunications services in Latino communities.

ASPIRA opposes the so-called “net neutrality” because it creates a disincentive to deploy new technologies that can benefit our communities.

Technology in Schools / High Tech Education

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ASPIRA recognizes that Latinos still have significantly less access to state-of-the-art technology in schools.

ASPIRA supports

- efforts by school districts, states and the Federal Government to increase access to technology specifically in schools attended by Latino students to at least the levels of access in the more affluent schools;
- continued research into the impact of technology on the education and lives of Latinos and on the issue of access;
- efforts to research and implement technology-based education programs that are proven effective with Latino students;
- initiatives that provide quality professional development to teachers so they can maximize the effective use of technology as a tool in the classroom;

- As programs that offer high tech training to Latino youth as either an alternative career path or as a supplement to their education;

the responsible use of Internet and the promotion and dissemination of information on safety for Internet users.

Access to Technology

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ASPIRA recognizes that there is still a substantial “digital divide” that disproportionately affects Latino youth and communities.

ASPIRA supports

- programs, such as the Community Technology Centers, that provide access and training to youth in communities;
- reinstating the CTC programs under the Department of Education and the Department of Commerce.

Economic Empowerment / Wealth Development

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Economic Empowerment / Wealth Development Policies

Representation the Federal Workforce

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ASPIRA recognizes that the lack of representation of Latinos in the Federal Government can have a negative effect on the Latino community when decisions are made regarding funding, applying regulations and others. It also recognizes the extreme and growing under-representation of Latinos in the Federal workforce (7%) vs. the civilian labor force (13%).

ASPIRA supports

- the full implementation of the President's Executive Order that mandates efforts to increase the representation of Latinos in the Federal workforce;
- efforts to ensure that the Office of Personnel Management report on Latino representation directly to Congress and well as to the President.

Representation in Corporate America

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Latinos are woefully underrepresented in the Corporate boardroom, in the top levels of management, in the procurement of major corporations and in receiving philanthropy dollars from Corporate America.

ASPIRA supports

- the efforts of HACR to serve as an advocate for inclusion of Latinos in Corporate America in commensurate with the contribution of Latinos to Corporate America;
- programs that expose youth to the corporate setting and role models to encourage them to seek careers in Corporate America.

Workforce Discrimination / Sexual Harassment

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ASPIRA supports programs that educate Latinos about discrimination and sexual harassment policies, as well as appropriate action to take if necessary.

Youth Development

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ASPIRA supports a National Campaign focusing on the crisis of Latino youth as a policy issue.

Workforce Development

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Workforce development programs are seriously under-funded.

ASPIRA supports

- a significant increase in funding under the Workforce Development Act;
- targeted programs to provide job training to displaced Latino workers, new entrants into the workforce, or high school students who are not intending to go to college;

the strict monitoring of job training programs so they provide meaningful training in areas where employment will be available in the future.

Entrepreneurship

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ASPIRA recognizes the importance of entrepreneurship to generate wealth in communities.

ASPIRA supports:

- programs that expose youth to business development and the business environment;
- efforts, both private and public, to increase access to capital in Latino communities and to
- support the development of new businesses, especially the SBA.

Safety

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Safety Policies

Safety in the Workplace

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ASPIRA recognizes that increasing numbers of Latino youth and adults are working in low-wage jobs and in many cases un-safe working conditions.

ASPIRA supports efforts to fully enforce workplace safety laws and regulations under OSHA.

Traffic Safety

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ASPIRA recognizes that the leading cause of death among Latino youth is automobile crashes.

ASPIRA supports outreach programs to inform parents and to educate Latino youth about alcohol abuse, drinking and driving, safe driving, pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, seat belt use and child safety seats.

Education

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Education

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

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ASPIRA supports the basic tenets of higher standards for all students, school accountability and assessments. ASPIRA's main concerns are that:

- the serious under-funding for No Child Left Behind (NCLB), especially of Title I students and parents and low-income communities, imposes a higher bar for students and schools to reach without the means for students and schools to achieve at high levels;
- because of the lack of resources, such as highly prepared/experienced teachers and educational resources, schools that Latino children attend are often ranked as "failing" and hence will lose further funding;
- students will be penalized (sanctions on schools, such as loss of funding) for the low

- performance of their schools because of arbitrary and overly ambitious achievement targets;
- lack of research on the impact and consequences of NCLB measures results in high stakes decisions made without sufficient evidence;
- the class size in schools attended by Latino students may be too high and not conducive to high achievement levels;
- imposing NCLB on high schools is detrimental without adequate funding and without sufficient time to assess the impact on elementary and middle school students;
- standardized tests may not be properly and continuously monitored to ensure that they reflect the standards, that other measures of student performance should be considered (multiple indicators), and that assessment results should be used for improvement and not to penalize schools/students;
- care may not be taken in adequately assessing LEP students and that LEP students scores may be used improperly to determine student progress;
- parents and communities are not being adequately informed on progress of their children or of the school, and of their right to transfer their children to another school or their right to receive supplemental education services.

School Financing

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ASPIRA supports equitable financing of schools. The disparities in school financing, resulting from the use of property taxes to fund schools, creates enormous disparities in funding between school districts even within the same state. With this financing formula, students in low income areas will have fewer resources than students in more affluent areas.

ASPIRA supports remedies, such as Abbott in New Jersey, to equalize school funding.

Teachers

- [Log in](#) [36] to post comments

ASPIRA supports programs and efforts at all levels that:

- increase the number of highly qualified and experienced teachers in schools with large numbers of Latino students;
- target Latinos in college to encourage them to become teachers;
- provide on-going, quality professional development for teachers;
- provide teachers of Latino students with professional development so they can better address the needs of these students;
- provide incentives to highly qualified/experienced teachers to teach in low-income community schools;
- increase the number and quality of bilingual education teachers;
- increase teacher compensation to attract highly qualified people to the profession.

Drop Out Prevention

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ASPIRA supports continued adequate and appropriate funding of current programs that exist to encourage students to complete their high school education, such as the drop out prevention demonstration program.

Charter Schools

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ASPIRA supports the charter school movement, especially in districts in which significant numbers of Latino students are failing.

ASPIRA supports

- limiting the numbers of charter schools in districts, so the charter schools do not undermine the public school system;
- ensuring that school districts cover the real cost of students in charter schools, especially the cost of physical facilities;
- Developing research-based academic programs in its charter schools, including such areas as math, reading, science, and technology;
- Using charter schools as models to improve education in the public schools;
- Ensuring that charter schools address academic and personal needs of students.

Students with Disabilities

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IDEA is seriously under-funded.

ASPIRA supports efforts such as the Hagel-Harkin plan to allocate the funds necessary so that IDEA will eventually be fully funded

ASPIRA supports efforts to better inform parents of their rights under IDEA and that schools implement programs that are effective in dealing with students with disabilities.

ASPIRA supports greater use of technology in addressing the educational needs of students with disabilities.

Head Start

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As one of the most successful federal education and nutrition programs, ASPIRA supports efforts to increase funding for head start so that it can serve 100% of the students who qualify for the program (currently 60%).

Vocational Education

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ASPIRA supports adequate vocational education funding and expansion, especially for professional training in areas with promising future potential for employment, such as in allied health and technology fields.

Community / Parental Engagement

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ASPIRA supports efforts to prepare and involve parents in the education of their children, in schools and in promoting education reform. ASPIRA supports the parent engagement programs and requirements under NCLB, as well as private efforts such as ASPIRA's APEX and similar quality programs.

ASPIRA supports efforts, programs and organizations that promote community and parent advocacy for improving schools, such as training and information for parents in their native language on

- how their school system works and its connection to the larger democratic landscape, e.g. voting for their school board and accountability;
- appropriate avenues for parental participation and involvement decision-making bodies of their schools;
- the background and implication of laws on their children's education, e.g. interaction of NCLB and their rights under the law.

After-School Programs

- [Log in](#) [43] to post comments

ASPIRA supports structured, high quality after-school programs that provide a mix of academic enrichment, counseling, academic help, personal development and a safe, drug and violence-free environment.

ASPIRA supports programs that promote positive youth development, such as the ASPIRA Process.

Bilingual Education / LEP Students

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ASPIRA supports the notion that all students must learn English to succeed in the United States and the global economy, but endorses a bilingual approach to language education as an appropriate transition to English proficiency. This approach ensures that a child maintains grade level academic standing in all subjects and retains quality ability in their native language.

ASPIRA supports

- ‘transitional’ and dual Spanish language programs rather than ‘immersion;’
- quality bilingual education for every child that needs bilingual education;
- increased funding for bilingual education programs where needed;
- programs that support the professional development and recruitment of bilingual teachers to ensure a quality bilingual education teacher force.

Educational Research

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ASPIRA supports efforts to increase funding for research that analyzes the success of

- transition programs that serve to integrate Latino students into public education;
- educational pipeline programs that ensure equity and opportunity in entering post-secondary education institutions;
- Latino English Language Learners;
- programs that use of technology to increase educational achievement;
- after school programs;
- diverse methods of teaching;
- drop out prevention programs;
- student leadership development approaches to promoting school success (ASPIRA’s Model);
- early college awareness programs.

Access to Postsecondary Education And Financial Aid

- [Log in](#) [46] to post comments

As a leader in education of Hispanic youth, ASPIRA has created a leadership development model for communities and groups to increase Latino representation in higher education. This model also includes intervention programs, especially in mathematics and science-based careers, as well as TRIO programs, such as Upward Bound and Talent Search.

To support college aspirations of Latino youth, ASPIRA supports

- increases in Pell Grants and other federal financial assistance to allow more Latino youth to afford college;
- college-based affirmative action programs that actively seek out Latino students to attend college;
- the Dream Act that would allow over 60,000 undocumented high school graduates to attend college and seek a pathway to legalization.

ASPIRA strongly opposes imposing a higher loan burden on Latino families so their children can attend college.

Higher Education

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ASPIRA supports pipeline and transition programs, especially

- efforts and programs to ensure students remain in college, in particular continuity of financial aid and college-level intervention programs such as TRIO's Student Services program;
- programs that encourage, prepare and provide financial assistance to Latino students interested in pursuing graduate studies.

Gangs and Youth Violence

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Gangs and Youth Violence Policies

Intervention / Law Enforcement

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Recognizing that law enforcement plays a significant role in reducing violence and enhancing safety measures, ASPIRA supports programs to educate law enforcement about gangs and youth violence and on effective strategies for dealing with gangs.

ASPIRA supports the ban on assault weapons.

Prevention / Education

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ASPIRA recognizes that gangs and youth violence disproportionately affect the Latino community and Latino youth and that it is a growing national problem, especially in Latino communities.

ASPIRA also recognizes the link between youth gangs and violence and rejection of Latino young people by the non-Latino community and the need for an identity.

ASPIRA supports

- programs that promote positive youth development among Latino youth, such as the ASPIRA Clubs;
- efforts to inform communities, parents, schools, teachers and community organizations about gangs and gang prevention and to educate them on how to develop effective prevention programs;
- intervention and prevention programs to decrease hate crimes in schools due to race, religion, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation.

Health

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Health Related Policies

Health Insurance

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ASPIRA recognizes that Latinos disproportionately lack adequate health insurance and that Latinos are one of the highest in the proportion of uninsured.

ASPIRA promotes

- efforts to increase coverage to Latino uninsured through state and federal programs, especially a National Campaign to institute Universal Health Care;
- efforts to provide incentives to private employers to provide health insurance to uninsured employees and their families, regardless of the industry in which they work.

Health Awareness / Education / Outreach

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ASPIRA supports outreach and enrollment programs that specifically target the Latino community, especially programs operated by community-based organizations.

ASPIRA supports targeted, culturally and linguistically sensitive and appropriate, bilingual programs to inform our community on diseases that disproportionately impact the Latino community, such as heart disease, HIV/AIDS, high blood pressure, asthma, and diabetes.

HIV / AIDS

- [Log in](#) [54] to post comments

ASPIRA recognizes the great threat and devastating effects of HIV/AIDS among Latino youth.

ASPIRA supports

- targeted efforts to inform youth and communities about HIV/AIDS in a culturally and linguistically sensitive way;
- quality intervention programs for Latinos with HIV/AIDS.

Adolescent Health / Behavioral Health

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ASPIRA supports programs that strengthen the role of CBOs in promoting adolescent health and behavioral health, as well as access by adolescents to quality health care.

ASPIRA supports a continuum of approaches from abstinence and awareness to cultural competence and support for teen parents.

ASPIRA strongly supports targeted, culturally sensitive, bilingual programs to inform youth about, and to discourage unhealthy behaviors and lifestyles, such as smoking, drugs and alcohol use.

Access to quality care

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ASPIRA recognizes the enormous disparity in health care provision and supports programs that target improving access to quality health care specifically for Latino families.

ASPIRA strongly supports

- culturally and linguistically sensitive health care environments that is family-centered in which there is effective communication between patients and care providers;
- providing Puerto Rico equal participation and funding on parity with the rest of the states in all federal health programs such as Medicaid, children's health insurance (CHIPs) and Medicare, among others;
- efforts and programs to inform Latino parents of their rights to become insured under the CHIPs program in their state.

Health professions

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ASPIRA supports a diverse and competent health professions workforce working in Latino communities.

ASPIRA supports programs that encourage Latino youth to enter the health professions and that provide academic and financial support to these students (including mentoring, academic enrichment and internship programs that expose Latino students to health careers and health professionals as role models). Therefore it supports increasing funding for the Health Careers Opportunities Program (HCOP).

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