



Put Down the Tortilla and Pick up the Fork: Using peer education to ensure culturally-appropriate nutrition education in Chicago Latino Communities

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UIC Neighborhoods Initiatives



Chicago Partnership for Health Promotion

A USDA funded Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program

Mission Statement:

To provide high quality nutrition education, health promotion and disease prevention services through partnerships directed at eligible families in Chicago.



Food Stamp Nutrition Education

➤ Encouraging Healthy Food Choices

States have option (and are actively encouraged) to provide nutrition education to food stamp recipients/eligibles as part of their program operations.

➤ Required focus areas

- Eating fruits, vegetables, whole grains & low fat dairy
- Food security
- Food safety
- Food resource management/
Shopping behaviors

**Food Stamps Make
America Stronger.**



You or someone you know may qualify for food stamps. Find out.
Call 1-800-221-5689

CPHP's Team Approach:

Combined Paraprofessional/Professional model

- **Nutrition Peer Educators:** representative of our diverse Latino & African American clients, specially trained in nutrition education. Able to send powerful "peer" message to community.
- **Nutrition Specialists** (typically Registered Dietitians): Work independently and also with Peer Educators to design, coordinate, & implement nutrition education services.

CPHP Nutrition Education Venues

2006 Projects Breakdown

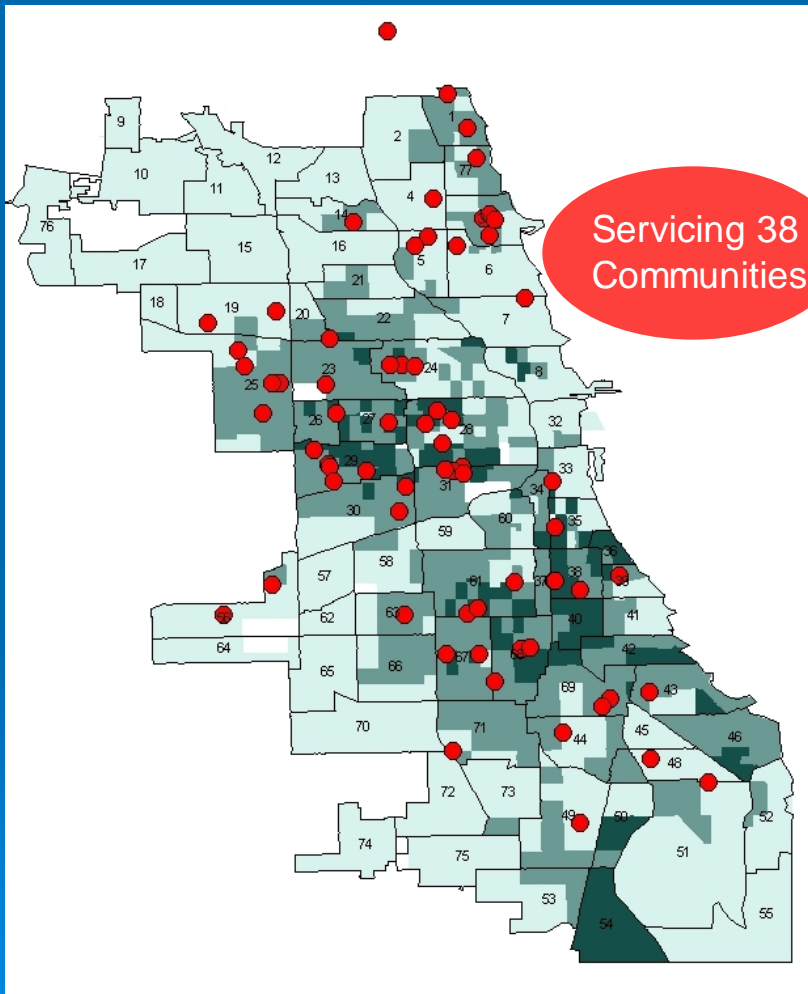
34 – Food pantries

31 – Schools

26 – Community Organizations

19 – Community Health Centers

110 Total Projects



Chicago's Latino Community: Large and Growing

- Approx 1.4 million Latinos in Metro Chicago area (17.4% of area residents)
- Btwn. 1990 and 2000, Latino pop. grew from being 60% as large as African American pop. to 91% of the size of African American pop.



Source: University of Notre Dame Institute of Latino Studies: [Latino Demographic Growth in Metropolitan Chicago 2004](#)

Chicago's Latino Community: Country of Origin

- **1.1 million Mexicans** (75% of area's entire Latino population)
- 150,000 Puerto Ricans
- 37,000 Central Americans
- 36,000 South Americans
- 17,000 Cubans



Source: University of Notre Dame Institute of Latino Studies [Latino Demographic Growth in Metropolitan Chicago 2004](#)

Obesity a health issue for local Latinos

- In 2003, higher obesity rates than Non-Hispanic Whites (31.9% among Latinos in Chicago)
- Obesity is associated with diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, asthma, arthritis, and poor health.

Sources: Chicago Dept of Public Health. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System: Chicago Reference Tables. 2006. Mokddatel et al. Prevalence of obesity, diabetes, and obesity-related health risk factors. 2001. JAMA.

Challenges in serving the Latino Community

- Long standing habits and family traditions
- Differences between lifestyles back home vs. the U.S.
- Different cultural backgrounds
- Hardships of being immigrants



Differences in nutrition lifestyles between back home & U.S.

Country of Origin

- Home-cooked and fresh foods
- More walking/physical labor
- Party foods only on special occasions

United States

- Fast food & processed foods
- More sedentary lifestyle, car use
- Party foods on daily basis

Differences in nutrition lifestyles between back home & U.S.

Country of Origin

- Slow paced lifestyle/time to cook
- Farming home grown produce/shopping more often
- Traditional Latino 'junk food' (Sabritas, chicharrones)

United States

- Fast paced lifestyle/no time to cook
- Supermarkets/stocking up
- Availability of both Latino junk food and American junk food

OUR SUPER LATINO OUTREACH & TRANSLATION TEAM!



What We Do:

Make nutrition education services & literature culturally-relevant for Latino community

- Create/translate Spanish-language handouts
- Create food models/educational tools/posters using typical Latino foods



What We Do (cont.)

- Partner with related organizations/projects
- Educate our team members and staff
- Provide other resources to the Latino community



Our Team's Field Research

- Visited supermarkets, eateries, bakeries in Little Village neighborhood
- Walked main streets to see local environment (street vendors, typical purchases, advertising, etc.)
- Chose traditional foods/menus/store coupons to use as food models



Partnering and Networking

- Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago's Children
- Logan Square Neighborhood Assoc
- Padres Unidos/Healthy Schools Campaign
- Little Village Environmental Justice Org
- UIC Midwest Latino Center
- Muevete exercise class
- West Town Parents



When Translating....

- Use translation guidelines for materials/ recipes (easy to read, accurate, culturally-relevant)
- Ask ourselves “Will my community use this?”
- Use dictionaries, online resources, & each other- “I’m going to call my mom.”
- Keep communities’ cultural traditions in mind

Where and How We Reach Clients

- Diverse sites: Kedzie Access & Alivio Health Clinics, Mujeres Latinas en Accion, Pilsen-Little Village Mental Health Center
- Teachable moments
- 6-10 week nutrition class sessions
- Healthy cooking demonstrations

Adapting our teaching to our community's culture

Challenge/Cultural Belief

- Meals high in carbohydrates (tortillas)
- Soda is the beverage of choice
- Chubby baby is a healthy baby

How we address

- Educate on a healthy plate/modify traditional recipes
- Tap water is safe, inexpensive, & healthier choice
- Increase in weight is risk factor

Adapting our teaching

Challenge/Cultural Belief

- Voluptuous is sexy/
losing weight makes
husband jealous
- Male head of household
won't accept dietary
changes
- Women place family/
husband 1st, neglect
themselves

How we address

- Higher body weight is
health risk factor
- Speak to both husband
& wife
- Importance of taking
care of themselves

Adapting our teaching

Challenge/Cultural Belief

- Immigrant hardships
- Language difficulties
- Won't listen to someone they don't know

How we address

- Stress management techniques
- Materials @ appropriate literacy levels
- Build trust of local leaders, knowledge of local resources

Next steps for our team

- Learn about spending/buying patterns and opinions
- Create directory of resources available in Latino community
- Make more of our own nutrition education resource materials



Conclusions

- 1.4 million Latinos in Chicago
- Incidence of Type II DM, CVD, asthma, obesity are increasing
- Definite need for culturally-relevant education/materials for Latinos
- **CPHP providing & developing services to meet this need**

Thank you!

For additional information:

Chicago Partnership for Health Promotion

www.cphp.uic.edu

