



ACTIVATING LATINO MILLENNIAL CIVIC POWER

A Report of the Aspen Institute Latinos and Society
Convening: Unlocking Latino Millennial Civic Potential

Dave Grossman, Rapporteur

*This report is written from the perspective of an informed observer at the **Unlocking Latino Millennial Civic Potential** convening. None of the comments or ideas contained in this report should be taken as embodying the views or carrying the endorsement of any specific participant at the gathering or of any of the supporting donors.*

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Abigail Golden-Vázquez

Executive Director
Latinos and Society Program
The Aspen Institute

Monica Lozano

Chairman of the Board
Latinos and Society Program
The Aspen Institute

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Increasing Latino Millennial civic participation is vitally important for the continued health and prosperity of American democracy and society, given the size of the Latino population, the overall youth of the population (average age of 28 compared to almost 43 for white Americans), and the fact that U.S. Latinos vote and otherwise appear to engage civically at lower rates than other groups.

In June 2016, the Aspen Institute Latinos and Society Program convened a group of 26 organizers, activists, philanthropists, students, leaders and other civic sector and volunteer organization representatives to discuss and develop concrete proposals for activating and propelling Latino Millennial civic engagement in the United States.

The goal of the Latinos and Society convening was to bring together a carefully selected, diverse group of practitioners largely comprised of Millennials, have them identify the critical challenges and barriers to Latino Millennial civic participation, and ask them to generate their own ideas and solutions for addressing those barriers.

Defining broadly what it means to be civically engaged and identifying Millennials as people who are between the ages of 19 and 35 in 2016, the group discussed a wide range of activities along the continuum of civic participation: voting, engaging with local officials, community organizing, writing to representatives, participating in parent teachers associations, and running for office.

Among the many challenges the group identified as factors contributing to the low participation rates among Latinos and other Millennials, some of the most important were lack of civic education offered in schools, knowledge base on how to participate civically, and understanding of why civic engagement is vital. Other important factors identified included: policy barriers, cultural barriers, racism (and a range of other “-isms”), unhelpful media narratives, lack of infrastructure and institutions, failure to engender agency and power, and general disillusionment with politics. The participants emphasized the interconnection between many of these challenges, highlighting the need to work much harder to enable young Latinos to become and remain engaged. For Latino Millennials to feel that they have a stake in American democracy, they must believe that their participation is welcome and needed.

The following page lays out the project ideas and creative solutions developed by those who attended the Aspen Institute convening. The hope is that the attendees as well as others, will further cultivate these ideas in ways that truly unlock Latino Millennial civic potential.

Recommended Projects and Programs to Address Priority Challenges

Policy Barriers, Institutions, and Infrastructure

Create a “Good Citizenship” Aspen Leaf certification that recognizes business, non-profit, and political/government organizations that involve Latino Millennials, with unique criteria for each type of organization, and with three levels of certification.

Continuum of Civic Engagement

Develop a campaign that leverages the activity of Millennials who are engaged on social media, but who are not engaged civically, and move them along a continuum from online to offline action - from memes, “likes”, and hashtags to gamified surveys and engagement with local and grassroots organizations that fit them and their interests.

Racism, Other -“isms”, Cultural Cohesion, and Cultural Barriers

Create a two-year fellowship program with 50-100 Millennials representative of the diversity of American society to explore, learn about, and initiate community-based projects to foster the making of a new civil society that emphasizes inclusiveness, liberty, equity, justice, and respect.

Agency, Power, and the Media

Create within the White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation a new three-part Millennial Civic Engagement Initiative: (1) an online, crowdsourced, curated best practice hub; (2) a community activation competition called “Millennials Engage - it starts with ME”; and (3) an effort to shift media narratives to more authentically incorporate millennial perspectives.

Information and Education on Civic Engagement

Develop an interactive online resource called #mycomunidad to build civic understanding, power, and engagement within communities by creating and sharing infographics (using data, narratives, or both) that address local, state, and national issues affecting Latino Millennials.

INTRODUCTION

Successful democracy depends on an engaged citizenry, and the sheer size and increasing importance of the Latino population in the United States makes it critical to have robust Latino civic participation. There are 55 million Latinos in the United States, the second largest race or ethnic group in the country. Latinos are approaching 18% of the U.S. population and are projected to reach nearly one-third by 2060. The Latino population is significantly younger than other groups, at an average age of 28 (compared to almost 43 for non-Hispanic white, 36 for Asian, and 33 for black Americans). Millennials as a whole (roughly those born between 1980 and 2000) are now a larger group than the Baby Boomers in the United States. Based on demographics alone, Latino Millennials will be critical to the future success of the United States.

When talking about politics, it's often said that demographics are destiny. Demographics, however, may not be destiny if Latinos do not participate. Latino voter turnout tends to be low compared to other groups. Successive generations of all Americans are coming out to vote later and later in life. Hispanics comprise 21% of all U.S. Millennials and 44% percent of all Hispanic eligible voters are Millennials which raises concerns about Latino participation in the absence of concrete intervention and investment to reverse this trend.¹

Beyond voting, other measures of civic participation, such as volunteering, political participation, group membership and social connectedness, tend to be lower for Latinos than other groups. The full measure of Latino participation in these areas is more difficult to gauge and may be higher than we know because many of the ways that Latinos are known to participate, such as volunteering, engaging through churches, and online political activities, are not tracked.

Since Latinos appear to fall behind other groups in civic engagement despite their massive potential, a large and increasingly important group is being left out of the civic conversation. Therefore, we need to figure out how to mobilize young Latinos to engage civically, including, but not limited to, capitalizing on elections as galvanizing moments.

To help address this challenge, the Aspen Institute Latinos and Society Program convened a diverse group of organizers, volunteers, philanthropists, activists, and other young leaders in Aspen, Colorado in June 2016 to discuss and develop concrete proposals for boosting civic engagement by Latino Millennials in the United States. The participants were invited for their unique perspectives as individuals, in addition to their professional and organizational experience.

¹ <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2016/04/20/the-nations-latino-population-is-defined-by-its-youth/>

Latino Millennials and Civic Engagement

Neither Latinos nor Millennials are monolithic. They vary ethnically, racially, regionally, socioeconomically, and politically, as well as by country of origin and legal status.

Still, there are some relevant general trends for both groups. Latinos remain disproportionately represented in underserved and low income communities, are starting families and work earlier than other groups, and take on leadership roles in their families earlier than some of their counterparts, including serving as gatekeepers and translators. As for Millennials, studies show that they have a strong desire to serve, but young people are not joining organizations as often as prior generations did. More broadly, the country as a whole has seen a decline in civic participation over the last few decades, perhaps in part because civic education is no longer offered or required in many schools.

Not all Latino Millennials are following these trends. Some are engaging on issues that affect the Latino community directly, such as immigration, as well as on issues that affect their communities like public housing, education, and voter registration and turnout. They are becoming more active in regions of the country with rapidly growing Latino populations, such as the Southeast which has not traditionally welcomed Latino or immigrant communities. They are also engaging in centers of national power (e.g., Washington, DC) and in places with long histories of activism (e.g., California). Latino Millennials are joining grass-roots and advocacy non-profit organizations – and if they cannot flourish there, they are starting their own. They are using social media to learn and connect. They are engaging and exercising their political and civic power. These pockets of vibrant engagement, including the participants in the convening, offer models to learn from and build upon.

There are still many Latino Millennials, however, that do not engage in politics or other types of civic activity because they are not exposed to it or do not understand the institutions, processes or mechanisms for engagement. Also, they may not believe that they are welcomed by government, political parties or other civic institutions because they do not feel that these institutions have their well-being in mind. In sum, they do not have a stake in them or feel that their participation is welcomed.

Obstacles to Unlocking Latino Millennial Civic Participation

Efforts to boost Latino Millennial civic engagement often run into the continual challenge of finding adequate funding. There are some promising trends in philanthropy, however. Philanthropic organizations are increasingly coming to see the connections among many of the issues they work on and there is increased recognition that diversity, equity, and inclusion are at the root of many problems. Foundations increasingly see the potential for civic engagement to be an integrated solution that cuts across and underlies education, health care, poverty, the environment, and many other issues they are working to improve. Indeed, civic engagement has been shown to decrease youth disconnection and is a predictor of upward mobility for young people as well.

Funding is just one of numerous challenges and obstacles that prevent or inhibit civic participation for Latino Millennials. The group in Aspen developed a lengthy list of such challenges and obstacles, including (but by no means limited to) the following:

1. Information and education
 - Lack of universal civic education in the school curriculum.
 - Lack of understanding of what civic participation looks like beyond voting.
2. Structural barriers
 - Legislative hurdles such as voter ID laws and that voter laws that disenfranchise because felons, particularly impacting communities of color.
 - Tedious or difficult voter registration processes.
 - Inconvenient voting times.
3. Social barriers
 - Cultural norms brought from countries of origin where there were negative repercussions for being politically engaged or where rigged or bought elections led to voting apathy. Since civic behavior is most often learned from parents, if parents are not engaged, the next generation is unlikely to be.
 - Language barriers, including a lack of voter and other materials in Spanish.
 - Fear of how information about them will be used (e.g., risks to undocumented family members, knowing people who have been deported for being outspoken).
 - Lack of time, Full-time students with multiple jobs and extracurricular activities feel too stretched to engage politically.
4. Racism, cultural cohesion, and a range of other “-isms”
 - People of color internalizing white supremacy and views of what constitutes a “model citizen”.
 - Internal community dynamics, such as who is and is not viewed as Latino and lack of cohesion across Latino groups.
 - Latino leaders being viewed monolithically as leaders of Latinos, as opposed to leaders serving a wider population.
5. Messaging and framing
 - Messages spread by traditional and social media including the way different issues, movements, and people are represented, send messages that systems are broken, corrupt, or exclusive, discouraging participation.
6. Lack of civic infrastructure, organizations, and funding
 - Lack of an overarching organization or government infrastructure that helps everyone get involved and register to vote,
 - Leaving outreach to campaigns and non-profits that often do not invest deeply in Latino outreach or focus narrowly on battle ground states, leaving out great numbers.
 - Need to engage communities beyond presidential elections and battleground states.
 - Fewer organizations that represent and organize communities of color and engage them in civic life, including many service provider organizations that do not engage in these issues out of fear their funding will be jeopardized.

- Lack of philanthropic investment in Latino organizations (and lack of risk-taking).
- Lack of organizing that targets second- or third-generation Latinos, who are the largest portion of the U.S. Latino population.
- Failure to move people along the continuum of civic engagement towards deeper, long-term engagement that changes people, not just compels actions.
- Absence of deep-rooted movements and Latino youth development in some parts of the country (e.g., the South, Plains states).

7. Disillusion and failure to engender agency and power

- Legacy of exclusion: Many Latinos have grown up seeing politicians trying to exclude their family members, having their citizenship questioned, being labeled with disparaging terms. Perhaps without knowing why, many young people have no interest in getting involved in a system that they feel does not represent them. In a democracy that mostly represents the people who show up, this creates a reinforcing cycle of exclusion and powerlessness.
- Coming of age in a polarized political climate, whereas Millennials often do not identify with political party labels and thus feel they do not have a voice.
- Leaders in a range of areas lacking accountability and authenticity.
- Lack of young Latino role models in positions of power, including elected offices, boards, and leadership roles in organizations with the capacity to make change.
- General apathy and feeling like involvement makes no difference.

Solutions to Unlocking Latino Millennial Civic Participation

Many of the challenges to developing a more civically engaged society are closely related or interconnected. The goal of the ***Unlocking Latino Millennial Civic Participation*** convening was to learn from participants about what they view as the biggest challenges to Latino Millennial civic engagement and to encourage them to develop their own ideas, projects and solutions to address them.

The group collectively identified numerous solutions that ranged widely, from tactical suggestions to visionary ideas, including:

1. Changing elections, candidates, and elected officials
 - Create boot camps for women and people of color on running for office.
 - Shift to an automatic or opt-out voter registration system.
 - Modernize and simplify elections, access, and the overall political process.
 - Create a true multi-party system in the United States.
 - Organize polling locations on college campuses.
 - Make Election Day a national holiday, including holiday pay.
 - Make a secure app that facilitates voting and offer free Wi-Fi nationally on Election Day.

- Create a no-confidence option (analogous to a “dislike” button) for all elections.
 - Change laws to allow anyone living in the United States to vote.
 - Redraw political districts to better reflect diversity of constituents and prevent carving out political enclaves.
 - Restore and strengthen the Voting Rights Act.
 - Emphasize the importance of mid-term elections.
2. Boosting leadership development and civic education
- Put leadership development and civic engagement curricula back in public schools.
 - Create a DARE-like campaign and program (including a mascot) that comes into schools to talk about civic engagement.
 - Provide financial, mentorship, and other resources to build a pipeline of Latino leaders for everyone, including recruiting Latino candidates.
 - Create a civic engagement app connecting mentors to students.
 - Create a civic/community service hours incentive program.
 - Foster Latino entrepreneurship, including creating a culture of philanthropy and giving back.
 - Create an initiative to identify young leaders on college campuses and help them strengthen their messages.
 - Create a network of private colleges that open their doors to the undocumented.
 - Create a library of resources on civic engagement, including creating a coalition or affinity group for organizations, companies, and others working in this space.
3. Boosting civic awareness and the feasibility of Latino Millennial engagement
- Designate a Civic Engagement Month.
 - Create a National Latino Millennial Advisory Council on civic engagement.
 - Create community liaisons in all agencies, and create an award for agencies and non-profits that are most effective in engaging community members.
 - Engage Pixar or Disney in creating a movie that has a message encouraging children to become civically engaged.
 - Create an awareness campaign on civic engagement using humor.
 - Initiate “state of your union” surveys from the local to the national levels, assessing and then publicize results.
 - Paid internships or public financing of grants for people interning in the non-profit sector.
 - Find the policies or mechanisms that would make Latino Millennial civic participation more powerful (e.g., similar to how Social Security has made the elderly not just more politically active but more powerful).
 - Undertake a massive, community-led, local, paid effort to get Millennials door-knocking and communicating peer to peer.

- Develop comprehensive maps of small towns in different regions (e.g., the South) with large numbers of Latinos, and share those maps with civic engagement outreach organizations.
 - Work with funders to carry out collective-impact approaches in Latino communities.
 - Create a national strategy for building and funding grassroots community power.
 - Offer free early childhood education.
 - Help people move beyond basic survival through systems changes, including increasing the national minimum wage, so they can think about and participate in civic engagement.
4. Tackling racism and anti-immigrant sentiment
- Work with media companies to be more intentionally inclusive in programming and in staffing.
 - Foster race education and workshops.
 - Foster a massive cultural and media campaign to change attitudes towards people coming to the United States.
 - Redefine what it means to be a 21st century American Latino, including changing the way Latinos are portrayed in films, books, and TV shows.
 - Encouraging the media to have more bilingual, bicultural messengers.

These solutions, and many others, were then considered, prioritized, and honed by smaller working groups focusing on five broad priority areas: (1) **policy barriers and the lack of institutions and infrastructure**, (2) **moving people along the continuum of civic engagement**, (3) **racism, other “-isms”, cultural cohesion, and cultural barriers**, (4) **messaging, communications, and engendering power and agency**, and (5) **information and education on civic engagement**.

The working groups then devised, designed, and presented solutions to address each of these priorities. The remaining sections elaborate on the solutions developed under each of these five areas.

Recommendation 1

POLICY BARRIERS, INSTITUTIONS, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Challenge:

Policies and infrastructure – such as voter ID laws, access to election information, and outdated election systems – can all present obstacles to civic participation. These challenges are perpetuated and exacerbated by a lack of Latino representation in political and institutional leadership positions.

Recommendation:

Create a “Good Citizenship” Aspen Leaf certification that recognizes business, non-profit, and political/government organizations that involve Latino Millennials. The different types of organizations would have different criteria for certification. There would be three levels of certification – Emerging, Achieved, and Exemplary. The certification would be similar to the LEED certifications for green buildings, with a range of criteria that entities can choose from to achieve various levels of certification.

The criteria for businesses would include: representation on boards, philanthropic initiatives, workforce makeup, and civic participation by employees.

The criteria for NGOs would include: campaigns on voter turnout, voter ID laws, voter education, and pathways to citizenship (including the ability of 21-year-olds to petition for their undocumented parents); representation of Latino Millennials on boards and in leadership (particularly for larger NGOs); and partnerships with the private sector and government to identify and vet Latino Millennial candidates for various positions (thereby making compliance easier for entities in those sectors).

The criteria for political and government organizations would include: engagement with the Latino community; inclusive public policies; makeup of the staff; paid fellowships and internships to provide opportunities to gain experience; and appointed and elected positions.

The “Emerging” Leaf certification would acknowledge an organization that has been familiarized with Good Citizenship and meets some basic criteria. The “Achieved” Leaf certification would recognize advancements in Good Citizenship. The “Exemplary” Leaf certification would recognize model institutions demonstrating Good Citizenship.



Similar to the way LEED has been evolving, the Good Citizenship Aspen Leaf certification would involve review processes to ensure the rating matches current performance (i.e., entities would not get certification and then maintain it indefinitely). To avoid tokenization and ensure that Latinos have a true voice in the organizations, reports that certified entities would have to submit during review processes would have to include first-person narrative reports from the 18- to 35-year-old Latinos involved.

The Good Citizenship Aspen Leaf certification effort could build on existing initiatives, such as the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility's Corporate Inclusion Index and its work to track Latinos on corporate boards, Inclusv's work to partner with employers in politics to ensure qualified and diverse people of color get hired, and work with various congressional staff associations to recruit, retain, and advance Hispanic staffers in the U.S. Congress.

Impacts:

- Increase Latino participation in ways that lead to long-term civic engagement.
- Increase Latino involvement and representation as corporate philanthropic activities are being planned.
- Increase the number of Latinos going into appointed and elected government positions.
- Increase NGO involvement in civic participation, voter turnout, fights against unjust voter ID laws, etc.
- Diversify staff, workforce, and boards across the private sector, government, and NGOs.

Target:

Latinos and Latinas age 18-35 (even after Millennials age out of this range)

Recommendation 2

CONTINUUM OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Challenge:

Latino Millennials lack access and opportunity to engage civically in their communities in a sustained and meaningful way. This lack of access and opportunity is driven by a proliferation of shorter-term, one-off activities that do not build and sustain long-term engagement in local communities and with community based organizations. Latino Millennials increasingly engage online and care about issues, but there is a dearth of opportunities to connect online activities to offline local organizations and collective action.

Recommendation:

Develop a campaign that works with partners to leverage the activity of Latino Millennials who are engaged on social media but not engaged civically – and to move them along a continuum to eventually connect with organizations on the ground. This campaign would try to meet Millennials where they are. It would identify potential target audiences active on social media (e.g., those that like or use campaign-developed memes/hashtags like #catsvotefool), encourage those audiences to then do a gamified survey (i.e., with rewards) that further identifies their interests, and then connect them to local/grassroots organizations that would be a good match for them. The campaign would utilize simple, consistent messaging and system analytics. It would be piloted in one geographic area (e.g., Arizona) to provide proof of concept.



In addition, the campaign would invest in training partner organizations on how best to engage with the Millennials who are moving from online to offline engagement. If the offline engagement is boring and uninspiring, it is unlikely to be sustained. Partner organizations need to make sure they do not commodify Millennials and are being strategic in figuring out how Millennials want to get involved.

Impacts:

- Leverage Latino millennials' passive online engagement to engage them in grassroots activism and civic activities on the ground through local organizations (i.e., go from online to offline to make an impact).
- Increase voter turnout, specifically among non-voting Latino Millennials.
- Broaden the membership base of grassroots organizations, amplify their work online, and make those organizations more representative of Latino Millennial communities.

Target:

Latino Millennials

RACISM, OTHER -ISMS, CULTURAL COHESION, AND CULTURAL BARRIERS

Challenge:

The white, hetero, cis-gender, patriarchal society that dominates and defines American culture has values and views that permeate and influence communities of color, affecting interactions between communities and within communities. These dominant values and views then permeate further into individual and collective psyches (e.g., what is considered privilege/oppression, what it means to be a “model citizen”). Never before have we lived in such an interconnected society (at least in terms of technology), but there is a lot of language and actions occurring that risk our connection as a people.

Recommendation:

Create a two-year fellowship program that convenes 50-100 diverse millennials from all sectors of society in hopes of tapping into their lived experience, intelligence, passion, and vision to contribute to the creation of a new civil society that emphasizes inclusiveness, respect, liberty, equity, justice, and love. As the fellowship provides education, leadership trainings, skill development, and mentoring, the fellows will be charged with continuing this work in their own organizations and/or communities. The fellows will be nominated or recruited to build a team that is representative of the diversity of American society, though it will of course be challenging to be truly representative across all possible categories and identities.

The first year of the fellowship will involve study, education, and discussion about the current state of civil society and its existing economic and socio-cultural realities, to learn what works and what does not and to better understand the cultural waters we are all swimming in. The first-year study will include exploration of historical context (i.e., how we got to where we are today), alternative societal models in other countries, and privilege and oppression.

The second year of the fellowship will take that knowledge and turn it towards envisioning a new civil society. The fellows will go back into their communities, share what they have learned, and solicit ideas from their communities about what should be done. They will then come together again to whittle the ideas down to real solutions and projects that will move forward (hopefully with seed money).



Alumni of the program can serve as mentors, but the idea is for the fellows to lift each other up, as opposed to having learnings and connections be more top-down.

There are existing programs to build on and learn from, including several emerging/aspiring leaders programs, the #PopJustice report series from Unbound Philanthropy, and a range of fellows programs run by the Aspen Institute.

The United States often helps other countries develop and recreate their civil societies; it is time to recreate our own.

Impacts:

- Increase awareness and respect of differences and commonalities and create a new definition and understanding of humanity.
- Empower Millennials to engage in their communities and spur projects to create a new civil society.

Target:

50-100 Millennials every two years, as well as their communities

Recommendation 4

AGENCY, POWER, AND THE MEDIA

Challenge:

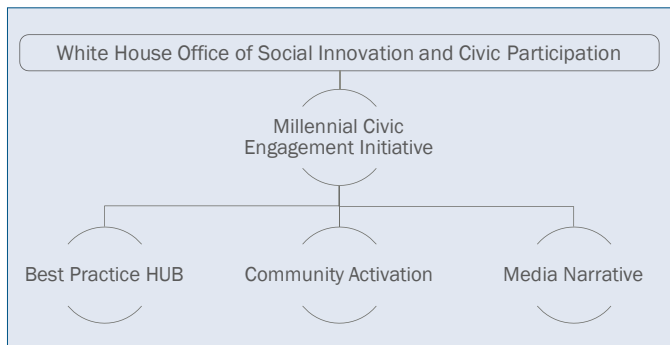
Latino Millennials who have the potential to engage and mobilize their communities in the civic process lack the resources and opportunities to do so. Traditional media outlets also often exclude Millennial voices and experiences from the national conversation. These conditions deter Millennial civic engagement.

Recommendation:

Create a new three-part “Millennial Civic Engagement Initiative” within the White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation.

The first part of the Initiative will be an online best practice hub (available on the web, iOS, and Android) to house what we know works and provide a platform to act. The hub will be an online community that allows millennials to learn about civic engagement, connect to their peers, and find and take action on opportunities that align with their interests and beliefs. It will be a crowdsourced clearinghouse to which any person or organization can contribute. Like Yelp, it will be driven by social ratings. The hub will also have expert curation, with the best people in the field making sure the best practices bubble up.

The second part of the initiative will be community activation. The core of this part will be an annual civic engagement competition called “Millennials Engage – it starts with ME!”, in which any Millennials living in the United States (19-35 years old, including undocumented) can propose civic engagement service projects tailored to their communities, with a likely focus on communities of color. The projects do not have to focus on any particular area of civic engagement, though potential areas could include increasing understanding of citizen power, community service, voter engagement, advocacy, and organizing. Selected proposals will get a \$5,000 matching grant to launch their projects, along with media opportunities, technical assistance, and leadership development.



The third part of the Initiative will involve developing a strategy to incorporate millennials in the media narrative and address the role of social media in aiding or harming civic engagement. The White House Office will work to shift media narratives from ones that spread controversy, conflict, and opposition to ones that publicize, promote, educate, and raise consciousness. Part of this effort will involve having Millennials be the ones in the media addressing the issues they are facing, providing authentic perspectives and offering recommendations through various media outlets (e.g., the Sunday politics shows); the winners of the Millennials Engage competition could be some of those voices. The Initiative could also promote creation of documentaries about issues faced by Latino and other Millennials.

To advance these ideas, next steps could include: (1) creating a We the People petition to create this Millennial Civic Engagement Initiative, and if the petition receives 100,000 signatures in 30 days, the White House has to issue an official response within 60 days; (2) identify funders focused on civic engagement; and (3) identify organizations already focused on civic engagement and work to expand their reach to include Millennial voices.

Impacts:

- Make it easy to learn about civic engagement.
- Empower Latino Millennials to galvanize their communities.
- Include Millennial perspectives in news narratives by partnering with traditional media outlets.

Target:

Millennials

Recommendation 5

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Challenge:

Latino Millennials in the United States lack access to and understanding of civic engagement opportunities and resources at the local, state, and federal levels, and in the public and private sectors. At a foundational level, a need exists to define civic engagement and the various forms it can take. In addition, Latino Millennials need a clear pathway to community involvement.

Recommendation:

Develop an interactive online platform called #mycomunidad designed to engage Latino Millennials in creating infographics or storygraphics to address local, state, and national issues. Primary users would be Millennials, who are already civically engaged and are looking for tools to reach other people, and grassroots/local organizations that may not have the resources or time to create their own infographics.

The online platform would allow users to learn about the mission and vision for #mycomunidad and navigate to one of five areas of engagement where Latino Millennials spend most of their time: work, schools, families, neighborhoods, and places of faith. (There would also be a “miscellaneous” category.) Under each category, users can learn about what the power structures are in that space, ways to civically engage, and other examples of engagement. Users will see national statistics and data trends related to each category, and using localized IP information, the site can also provide information on related local issues.

A user could register for the site by creating a profile including information such as name, photo, email, social media, demographics, areas of interest, affiliations, and a short narrative. The user can sign up to get notified when others post content related to their areas of interest. When users post an infographic, it is tagged with their user profiles, so others can see who created graphics in particular areas of interest, find out what else those users have created, “like” various infographics, and find other users creating similar content. The site will thus compile a tagged library of infographics completed by users, which other users can search.



Users would go through a series of steps to create their own infographic. The first step will be to decide whether to create a story graphic or a data graphic (or a hybrid of the two). If the former, the user will go to a template to create a story graphic (e.g., a comic-strip-type narrative about how the user was able to get civically engaged locally). If the latter, the user will choose the data for the graphic (with links to potential data sources) or create a survey to collect the data, and then the site will provide a range of interactive graphics to use for the infographic. The last step will involve spreading the word, including on social media and with local officials.

In addition, the #mycomunidad site will have video testimonials – personal testimonies about getting civically engaged and using #mycomunidad to do it.

In sum, #mycomunidad will be a participatory, democratic online resource to build civic understanding, power, and engagement within communities by connecting people to resources, tools, and data and by sharing knowledge and experiences. #mycomunidad will be a tool to amplify, not coopt, people's voices.

Impacts:

- Enhance access to and understanding of resources at the local, state, and federal levels and in the public and private sectors.
- Create a pathway for community involvement.
- Enhance understanding of politics, as well as formal and informal power structures.
- Demystify what civic engagement means and the different forms it can take.

Target:

Latino Millennials (ages 19-35) at different seasons of life (though available to anyone)

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The organizers and the participants that convened in Aspen to discuss how to unlock Latino Millennial civic potential brought diverse experiences, skills, strengths, and perspectives. They tackled broad, multifaceted challenges and worked in teams to devise innovative solutions. The projects frequently relied on technology, sought to change the narrative, provided resources, and helped people connect the dots. The projects also sought to provide pathways for Latino Millennials to more easily become civically engaged.

A combination of project working groups, creative ideation sessions, and structured team-building contributed to the creation of new and actionable ideas. In a feedback survey conducted at the end of the convening, 100% of participants said new ideas were generated and 96% of participants affirmed that the ideas were also actionable.

Many of the projects, if carried to fruition, could easily connect with or reinforce each other. The group expressed interest in coming together again to further refine the ideas, flesh them out, and figure out if they can all connect into one big endeavor. They also suggested creating a crowdsourced hub to map the actual resources available.

In addition to the new and actionable ideas generated, participants reported that the intentional collaboration among different ethnic, political and ideological backgrounds, throughout the convening, added value to the depth of their understanding on issues affecting Latino millennials and contributed to their project outputs. One participant stated that “people coming from different backgrounds but still working towards a common goal” aided collaborations.

The work already underway in the country and the new projects envisioned in Aspen to boost Latino Millennial civic engagement should not happen in silos. The work can be amplified and connected by partnering with other organizations (e.g., focused on African American youth or Native American youth) that are having similar conversations, facing similar obstacles, and focusing in the same communities. While the projects presented in Aspen focused primarily on Latino Millennials, most had far broader applicability and could be accessible to a wide range of individuals and organizations. There are opportunities that should not be missed to find synergies with other communities.

Our hope in sharing this report is that the attendees and readers will see the capacity and desire that Millennials of all races and ethnicities have to generate solutions to the challenges they see around them. Furthermore, by putting this report into the public sphere, we hope that the ideas and projects generated by the convening and laid out in this document will be further cultivated in ways that truly unlock Latino Millennial civic power and advance a more inclusive and participatory democracy for Latinos and all Americans.

PARTICIPANTS

*Unlocking Latino Millennial Civic Potential – A Collaborative Convening
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Aspen, CO*

Jamiel L. Alexander

Aspen Forum for Community Solutions

Alberto Andre Altamirano

Cityflag

Lashon Amado

Opportunity Youth United

Miguel A. Blancarte, Jr.

Toward180.com

Kristen Cambell

PACE (Philanthropy for Active
Civic Engagement)

Jason N. Chavez

Center for Native American Youth

Ryan N. Dalton Sr.

National Council of Young Leaders/
Opportunity Youth United

Efrain Escobedo

California Community Foundation

Marandah Rain Field-Elliot

University of California Berkeley /
IGNITE: Political Power in Every
Young Woman

Ethan Frey

Ford Foundation

Prarthana Gurung

Netcentric Campaigns

Krystal Leaphart

IMPACT

mark! Lopez

East Yard Communities for
Environmental Justice

Oliver Merino Morales

The Levine Museum of the New South

Joel Miranda

YouthBuild USA

Maria Gabriela “Gaby” Pacheco

Define American

Graciela Nuñez Pargas

Washington State Democratic Party

Nicolas Perilla

Cisneros Center for New Americans

Kimberly Pham

National Council of Young Leaders

Eliza Ramirez

House of Representatives –
Congressman Michael E. Capuano

Helena Ramírez Richardson

The Heritage Foundation

Jessica Reeves

Voto Latino

Monique Rizer

Opportunity Nation

Julie Rodriguez

The White House

Esmerelda Sánchez

Southern Methodist University

J. Ramiro Sarmiento

OLC Global

**Note: Affiliations are as of the date of the conference.*



THE ASPEN INSTITUTE LATINOS AND SOCIETY PROGRAM

The Aspen Institute founded the Latinos and Society Program in 2015 to foster learning about American Latinos and to elevate their role in solving the country's most critical problems. This policy program convenes thought leaders and voices of all backgrounds and subject matter expertise to promote understanding of how the success of this nation - and the Latino community - are deeply intertwined. The program is developing a pipeline of Latino leaders and connecting them to Institute programs and networks to foster collaboration and help put policy changes into motion. Its vision is to develop a more informed citizenry and promote the engagement of all people in securing a prosperous and inclusive future for America. To learn more, follow @AspenLatinos, or visit AspenInstitute.org/policy-work/latinos-society.



THE ASPEN INSTITUTE is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. The Institute has campuses in Aspen, Colorado, and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It also maintains offices in New York City and has an international network of partners.

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www.aspeninstitute.org/latinos-society

One Dupont Circle • Suite 700 • Washington, DC • 20036