



STATE OF INDIANA

**INDIANA COMMISSION ON
HISPANIC/LATINO AFFAIRS**
Mitchell E Daniels, Jr., Governor

ICHLA

**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 30, 2011
3:00pm – 4:30pm
Conference Center Room 18
Indiana Government Center South
Indianapolis, IN**

Commissioners Present:

Freddie Thon, House Lay Member, South Bend
Richard Espinosa, Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne (Vice-Chair)
Christian Gallo, Senate Lay Member, Lafayette (Chair)
Guadalupe 'Herb' Hernandez, Senate Lay member, Fort Wayne (Treasurer)
Shanida Sharp-Byrnes, Designee, Dept of Education
Tina Little, Designee, Dept of Correction
Virginia Hernandez, Indiana Civil Rights Commission
Ralph Flores, House Member, Munster
Pedro Ledo, Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne
Teresa Velez, Designee, Family and Social Services Administration

Commissioners Not Present:

Rep. Rich McClain
Alfredo Gonzalez, Governor Appointee
Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon
Pat Rios, House Lay Member, Indianapolis
Senator Greg Walker
Senator Frank Mrvan
Virgil Madden, Designee, Lt. Governor's Office

Visitors:

Marsha Thompson, Vicky Cuenca, and Yuri Ortega of the IACCR

Staff Present:

Danny Lopez, Executive Director

- I. Chairman Christian Gallo called the meeting to order at 3pm and noted the absence of quorum. He introduced Commissioner Teresa Velez, representing FSSA in place of Commissioner Michelle Stein-Ordoñez. Velez introduced herself and provided some information on her background. Commissioners then introduced themselves. Marsha Thompson, Vicy Cuenca, and Yuri Ortega from the Indiana Association for Child Care Resource and Referral also introduced themselves.
- II. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Lacking quorum, minutes could not be approved. Commissioner Pedro Ledo noted that his name had been left off the attendance list from the past meeting.
- III. Approval of Financials
 - A. With no quorum, financials could not be approved. Executive Director Danny Lopez said that financial activity for fiscal year 2010-2011 had been closed, and the only remaining expenditure to hit the books in June were salary/benefits. Commissioner Freddie Thon asked if the remaining \$5,000 in funds from the previous fiscal year would roll over, and Lopez said they would not. Lopez told commissioners that they should be commended for aligning funding with priorities and not going over-budget.

Lopez said that in the coming month he would be traveling to meet in person with all ICHLA partners to work out details about the collaborations.

Regarding the budget for fiscal year 2011-2012, Treasurer Herb Hernandez asked Lopez to walk commissioners through the budget process and specifics. Lopez said that the amount being held by the State for the coming year was significantly less than last year, amounting to 2% of the previous year's allotted budget. Lopez said that in discretionary spending, the commission would have roughly \$43,000 to spend. This figure, he pointed out, does not include mandatory spending, such as commissioner per diems and salary. The total budget for the year is \$102,400.

Commissioner Richard Espinosa asked about projects not included in the strategic plan drawn up for the remainder of the fiscal year in May, and Lopez said that projects not included could be brought up for consideration for the coming year. Commissioner Ralph Flores asked if the \$102,400 was for the current fiscal year, and Lopez clarified that that figure was for fiscal year 2011-2012 beginning on July 1, 2011.
- IV. Reports
 - A. Gallo said that the more aggressive deportation policy from the federal government has become an issue in Lafayette and surrounding areas. Gallo said that a number of those individuals arrested and being processed are being held in local jails for extended periods of time, and many have asked for expedited deportations as an alternative to awaiting procedure here. Some have advocated for this because it will save the Indiana Department of Corrections money.

Gallo asked if the commission could have some conversations with some legislators to explain the challenges and encourage legislation, mirroring federal legislation, to allow those detained to petition expedited deportation – as opposed to awaiting the end of sentencing. As of now, the issue lies in the hands of federal Department of Homeland Security. However, Gallo noted, a State law would enable judges in the state to accept these petitions from detainees. He also said this differs from current law which allows a detainee to ask to serve out sentence in their home country.

Espinosa asked if ICHLA would be able to get involved in this discussion, and Lopez said that he would attempt to follow up with State agencies concerned to find out more about the process. Thon said that ICHLA could disseminate information, as well.

B. Executive Director's Report and Budget Discussion

Lopez said that in addition to working with current partners on MOUs, a series of new partnerships was sought during the month of June. Lopez noted that one statewide collaboration fostered by the commission was materializing between partners in Gary, South Bend, and New Albany to take a big-picture approach to the challenges of parent education and engagement faced all over Indiana. The group has been working together on a framework through which to seek funding, share information and experiences, and collaborate. With Lopez moderating, they will be presenting a workshop at the Indiana Black Expo in July.

Lopez asked for input regarding the commission carrying out a series of information sessions throughout the state, seeing feedback from commissioners regarding whether this was a task for the commission at all. Lopez reiterated to commissioners that these meetings, along with any other ICHLA activities, work only if lay appointed commissioners are active and engaged. He said that State agency designees serve more of a support role for the commission rather than drivers of initiatives.

Lopez also asked commissioners to weigh in on what sorts of community conversations would be most valuable to everyday Latinos throughout the state and noted that he would prefer to hold meetings at the most grassroots level possible.

Espinosa said that some time back he had attempted something similar as a board member of the Urban League. He said that inclusion of community leaders would be important in order to avoid local territoriality. Thon suggested that meetings be completely open and should be held in churches.

Lopez asked if commissioners felt comfortable and confident that they would be able to encourage attendance. Commissioners all said they did. Hernandez asked about the suggested dates emailed to commissioners by Lopez and raised concerns that meetings during the day would be difficult. He said that he had spoken to someone in Fort Wayne recently about interpreters and their training and whether she would be able to attend the meeting. Afternoons or evenings seemed better.

Lopez asked if Sundays after mass would work, and Hernandez said it would not.

Gallo said, referring to the concerns raised by Hernandez about interpreters, that many people who consider themselves bilingual are not. The certification process must be challenging to weed them out. Hernandez agreed but said that there is a legitimate concern that many qualified people do not pass the exam.

Flores said that there are several locations in his area that he thinks would be ideally suited for something of this nature.

Velez asked commissioners who they would like to see attend the meeting. Lopez said that while the decision belonged to the commissioners, he saw the most value in connecting directly at the grassroots levels with families.

Thon said that many people and organizations already provide information, but that the role of ICHLA should be to funnel this information and encourage communication and coordination throughout the state. Hernandez also noted that summer months would be difficult for many people and that we could potentially wait for the fall.

Lopez said that all points were well-taken and valid. Dates could certainly be moved. Lopez also noted that information rarely trickles down, so while there are countless organizations in every community that overlap and perform similar functions, translating that into tangible impacts for the community is often difficult. Professional meeting attendees and self-proclaimed community leaders do little to better the situation for or provide information to people most in need. As a result, as much as possible those people should be bypassed and information and services should be taken directly to the people.

Thon again noted that the Latino community is very fragmented, creating another obstacle. He also said that ICHLA should be sure to follow up on last year's virtual strategy summit as well before moving on to other topics.

Gallo said that another important strategy would be to connect with local municipal leadership to ascertain the real needs of the Latino community from their perspective. Focusing on this side of the equation would provide some concrete things on which to work.

Finally, Hernandez thanked Commissioner Shanida Sharp-Byrnes for sending him information on State intervention meetings at North and South Side High Schools in Fort Wayne. He also credited Ledo with remarks he made during those meetings.

C. Guest Presentation

Thompson, Cuenca, and Ortega of the IACCRR spoke to commissioners about their organization, the services they supply to the State and residents, and their need for

support from the commission. Cuenca said that IACCRR has been spending more energy and resources on reaching Latino families throughout Indiana. The group will be having a Spanish-language event in September and is hoping for support from commission, as well as an opportunity to partner on activities in the future. Lopez said he would be connecting with Thompson in July to see if this was possible, and Thompson said a proposal would be made through Lopez to commissioners for help.

Following the presentation, the meeting with adjourned.