
LatinxGR

— COVID-19 in the Latinx
Community —

Who is LatinxGR?

- LatinxGR was originally convened in 2018 as a way for five of the major Latinx leadership organizations in Grand Rapids to use their collective voice to strategize and advocate for our community.
- Meet on an as needed or events-based timeline-- COVID-19 has brought us together



LatinxGR During COVID-19

- We are here to build alliances, build trust, making significant gains
- Language services
- Infection rates-- information sharing, testing, access to hospital care
- Business owners
- La Lucha Fund

COVID Infection Rates in Kent County

- Disproportionate → Nearly 40% of those testing positive for COVID are Latinx, but we are only 10% of the county population as a whole
- Historically our neighborhoods and communities of color haven't had a proper communication with municipalities and other entities which has prevented resources to get to those disadvantage areas.
- Needs:
 - PPE
 - Testing-- accessible, widespread messaging
 - Support applying for emergency Medicaid + navigation of healthcare system
 - Guarantee of care at hospitals regardless of insurance status or socioeconomic status

Analysis of Causes

- Historical lack of investment
- Lines of communication have not been strong, sometimes non existent
- Language barriers both in the Latino community and in systems to which they are constituents
- Socioeconomic causes linked to: access to PPE, access to technology and internet connection, basic needs not able to be met now
- All of these are the foundation on which systems rely on in moments of crisis.
- We are having to scramble to cover lost ground
 - Relying on our built relationship, trust, and understanding of our community

Latinx Business Owners

- The Latinx business community is in need of PPE
- Over 90% of Latinx businesses in Kent County haven't received any financial support
- There is a need for funds for Latinx businesses to make sure they can survive
- Our Latinx business community will need technical assistance and wrap-around services in the next 6-18 months to rebuild their businesses and make sure they are in a position that allow them thrive
- The WMHCC is poised to provide technical assistance since we have programing in place and also a direct connection with our Latinx community but we need more resources to build capacity within our organization to be able to work with the business community as we reopen the economy

La Lucha Fund

- LatinxGR, Grand Rapids Area Mutual Aid Network, Movimiento Cosecha, and the Grand Rapids Community Foundation
- Received 1,200 applications in two weeks-- mostly word of mouth
- Raised appx \$340,000 in a month (GRCF, Kellogg, individual gifts and pledges)
- Have reviewed nearly all the applications, and **have approved nearly 800 families for almost \$300,000**
- Continue receiving requests-- we plan to reopen once round one reviews are complete
- We have set a total fundraising goal of \$750,000, which would allow us to serve between 1500 and 2500 families in Kent County

La Lucha Fund Eligibility

- Live in Kent County
- No adults in the household eligible for federal aid
- Awards on a one time basis, one per family, up to \$500
- Funds available as a check or a Visa gift card through the Hispanic Center
- Fund is Latinx led, but anyone who qualifies may be awarded

Families are using money for **rent, utilities, food, medicine**, and other basic needs

Current Needs and Next Steps

- Draft budget shared Tuesday includes line items for most of this-- but the funds need to be distributed to organizations that can ensure support reaches Latinx families who need it most
 - PPE, access to testing
 - Funds for WMHCC businesses to combat the crisis
 - Funds general use at organizational levels for COV-19 needs
 - Support to La Lucha Fund, for the basic needs of families who haven't received any relief from the federal government

We are here to support Kent County. We can be a **bridge** to community members who need support, and have historically been excluded.