



WORKSHOP: “FIRST STEPS TO CIVIC EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT”

Summary report prepared by

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The *First Steps to Civic Education & Community Engagement Workshop* was organized by the National Latino Research Center (NLRC) at Cal State San Marcos and was sponsored by the Vista Townsite Community Partnership (VTCP), the CSUSM President’s Office, and the City of Vista, California.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This workshop was developed in collaboration with the Vista Townsite Community Partnership (VTCP) and the City of Vista to underscore the importance of serving and working cooperatively in local communities; to raise awareness about the benefits of civic participation; and to provide technical tools to residents in San Diego County to become more civically engaged.

Numerous individuals and organizations provided invaluable expertise and contributions during the planning and implementation of the workshop. In particular, we would like to thank and acknowledge the following individuals and organizations:

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- * Prisco Resendez
- * Algimiro Morales
- * Enrique Lomelí
- * Jorge Luis Pérez
- * Areli Pérez
- * Rosa Gallegos
- * Bill de la Fuente

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Ballet Folklórico Xochiquetzal from MiraCosta College entertained workshop participants the day of the event. Performers include:

- * Angélica Aparicio
- * César Canseco
- * Neric Canseco
- * Gonzalo García
- * Zulma García
- * Agustín Hernández
- * Citlalli Peña
- * Glafira Refugio

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Francisco Vázquez, Director of the Hutchins Institute for Public Policy and Community Action at Sonoma State University, delivered the keynote address.

Presenters (in order of appearance):

- * Rosa Gallegos, Vista resident and Vista Townsite Community Partnership resident committee member.
- * Jorge Luis Perez, Vista resident and Vista Townsite Community Partnership resident committee member.
- * Consuelo Martínez, Comité de Derechos Humanos de Escondido.
- * Alicia Lepe, from the California Partnership/Center for Community Change, discussed the strategies for community organizing and California legislation affecting Latinos.
- * Adrián Álvarez, President of the Association of Latin American Gardeners of Los Angeles, discussed strategies and challenges for social change and community organizing.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	2
II. TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	4
III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF CIVIC EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT	7
IV. THE NEED FOR CIVIC EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT.....	8
V. PROCEEDINGS OF THE <i>FIRST STEPS TO CIVIC EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP</i>	9
VI. WORKSHOP EVALUATION.....	17
VII. NEXT STEPS TO INCREASE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.....	18
VIII. APPENDIX 1: WORKSHOP AGENDA	20
IX. APPENDIX 2: INDICATORS OF A CIVICALLY ENGAGED COMMUNITY	21
X. APPENDIX 3: ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE CIVIC AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT	22
XI. APPENDIX 4: COMMUNITY RESOURCES.....	23
XII. APPENDIX 5: MEDIA COVERAGE.....	24



WORKSHOP SUMMARY

FIRST STEPS TO CIVIC EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Pressing circumstances -- the debate in the U.S. Congress on immigration reform, community rallies that drew millions of people to the streets of cities throughout the country,¹ and a general recognition that civic education is missing in our community -- framed the discussion, among Latino residents from the Vista Townsite Community Partnership, to organize the *First Steps to Civic Education and Community Engagement* workshop in the spring/summer of 2006. Through their organizing and collaborative efforts, these community partners were able to develop and organize this event.

In addition to providing a brief overview of the guiding principles of civic engagement and need for civic participation, this report summarizes workshop planning, proceedings, and offers next steps to continue increasing civic education and community engagement opportunities in local communities.

The “First Steps to Civic Education & Community Engagement” workshop underscores the importance of serving and working cooperatively to increase civic participation by raising awareness about strategies for the involvement of Latino residents in North County San Diego. The workshop served as a catalyst for ongoing dialogue, promoting engagement and capacity-development of Latino families in North County San Diego. This workshop identified and addressed challenges to increase civic engagement of the Latino community.

“Hay que trabajar juntos”.
(“We need to work together.”)
- Workshop participant

The workshop targeted the need for more civic education among Latinos, California’s growing population. In North San Diego County communities, Latinos comprise over 40% of the total population. Some areas with high concentrations of Latinos are in cities such as Escondido, Oceanside, San Marcos, and Vista.² By 2040, Latinos will comprise well over half of California’s population. As the Latino population continues to grow both in numbers and levels of civic participation, Latinos are becoming a deciding factor in shaping electoral outcomes and public policy. The National Latino Research Center (NLRC) at Cal State San Marcos recognizes that there exists a gap in providing culturally appropriate access to relevant policy information and other civic resources of interest to the Latino community.

The “First Steps to Civic Education & Community Engagement” workshop provided an introduction to civics and community organizing.

Introduction to Civics presented a guide to democracy, how our government works and the responsibility of informed constituents; the legislative process and how individuals can influence that process. More specifically, this section described the process that legislative bills follow to

¹ Rodolfo de la Garza and Louis DeSipio. *Conference Summary: New Dimensions of Latino Participation: A Tomas Rivera Policy Institute Symposium in conjunction with the Metropolitan Center, Florida International University*. The Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, October 2006.

² San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). *Mapping the Census: Race and Ethnicity in the San Diego region*. San Diego, April 2002.



become enacted into law. Questions such as what to do when bills go to committees, how to track legislation, how to access information about bills, and how to obtain general information about legislation, were addressed. The goal here was to let people know that there are opportunities at various phases of the legislative process where individual and community input can influence public policy.

Community Organizing discussed strategies to help Latinos develop and sustain democratically-based participatory organizations that promote involvement and empowerment of people with the purpose of creating safer, healthier, and more educated communities. The goal here was to present a variety of civic engagement strategies for community residents to pursue, along with an analysis of effectiveness based on civil rights history.

PLANNING OF THE WORKSHOP

Date & Location of the Workshop: The workshop was held on Saturday, August 5, 2006 in the Clarke Field House Grand Salon at Cal State San Marcos from 10:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Target Audience: The audience included community residents, local leaders, community agencies, educators, and researchers working in the North County region of San Diego on issues related to civic education and community engagement.

Co-Sponsoring Organizations: The Vista Townsite Community Partnership was actively involved in the entire planning process; the City of Vista and the CSUSM President's Office financed the workshop; and the National Latino Research Center (NLRC) hosted and facilitated the workshop.

The **Vista Townsite Community Partnership (VTCP)** was founded in 1996 under the name of the Vista Townsite Area Partnership (VTAP). VTAP was a coalition of Townsite residents, social services agencies, the City of Vista, and the Sheriff's Department. In its short existence, the VTAP was very active, completing many projects that contributed to an improved quality of life in the Townsite area of Vista. In October 1998, VTAP received its 501(c) 3 non-profit status and evolved into a formalized agency. Its name became the Vista Townsite Community Partnership (VTCP), and today it's commonly referred to as "The Partnership."

The **National Latino Research Center (NLRC)** at California State University San Marcos specializes in applied research, training, technical assistance, and research-based services that contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the rapidly growing U.S. Latino populations. The Center's local and national projects have explored topics such as environmental justice, migrant health, educational equity, oral history, cultural diversity and competency training. These topics have been applied to projects involving Head Start teachers, foster care reform, violence prevention, youth mentorship, after-school programs, family and juvenile courts, intercultural communication, and mental health. The bicultural and bilingual staff of the NLRC has demonstrated expertise in the area of diversity, in addition to competence and extensive experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse populations.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF CIVIC EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

The fundamental principle of civic engagement is the legal and constitutional premise that “all men are created equal,” a credo for equality and justice embedded in the United States legal framework and nationhood. Thus, civic engagement underscores the need to protect a healthy democracy by promoting active participation.

However, minority groups, immigrants, and poor people have encountered numerous barriers to civic participation throughout our history. In fact, even today, many communities receiving new immigrants lack adequate systems to help them learn about democracy and civic engagement.

“Ordinary people can create extraordinary change.”

-- Wendy Bay Lewis,

Six Levels of Civic Leadership

Despite countless achievements by civil rights leaders, much work remains to be accomplished; inequality is still an everyday reality in our society. Thousands of civically engaged people throughout the country, using a variety of strategies to demand change in local, state, and federal policy have helped to correct many discriminatory practices that rendered African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos second-class citizens during various eras in our history. However, many communities across the country have yet to fully overcome legacies of slavery and *de facto* segregation. Race and skin color continue to matter in this country. This is particularly evident in communities where current attitudes and public policies toward certain immigrant groups are reminiscent of *nativism* that surfaced during the early 1900s.³ Since the 1800s, immigrants from Latin America, Asia, and other parts of the world were the targets of discrimination and intolerance.

Our diverse society is facing serious challenges integrating populations that have been excluded from political participation in the past. Overcoming a legacy of inequality and discrimination requires that all people living in the United States believe in and uphold the ideal of “justice for all,” which represents our country’s democratic ideal. Even when there are disagreements over specific policies, civic progress requires willingness to recognize past injustice, speak-out, dialogue, and support policy decisions to tear down barriers that negatively impact specific groups of people.⁴

During the last fifty years, Latinos in San Diego have engaged in ongoing civil rights advocacy.⁵ However, despite their historic presence in the region, they are often viewed as outsiders or immigrants, a stereotype that undermines the complexity of Latino ancestry in the United States. In reality, they constitute a complex mix of native-born U.S. citizens, immigrants who have become citizens by naturalization, permanent residents, temporary residents, and individuals who trace their ancestry to different countries of origin. Hence, any efforts to engage Latinos in contemporary civic affairs need to take into account their history and political status in San Diego.

³ Arcela Nuñez-Alvarez. *Al Norte de San Diego History Project*. National Latino Research Center, 2004-05.

⁴ Adrian D. Pantoja, Ricardo Ramirez, and Gary M. Segura. “Citizens by Choice, Voters by Necessity: Patterns in Political Mobilization by Naturalized Citizens.” *Political Research Quarterly*. Vol. 54, No. 4 (Dec., 2001), pp. 729-750.

⁵ Robert R. Alvarez, Jr. The Lemon Grove Incident: The Nation’s First Successful Desegregation Court Case. *The Journal of San Diego History*. Vol. 32/No. 2, Spring 1986. This article can be accessed at <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/86spring/lemongrove.htm>



THE NEED FOR CIVIC EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

The overarching goal of civic engagement is to increase civic participation in the legislative process of the United States government and socio-political institutions. Civic engagement activities address both the structural and attitudinal barriers to full civic/electoral participation, activities which are vital to the social, economic and political welfare of the nation. This workshop focused on a segment of the population crucial to the future of our democracy, yet generally excluded: Latinos.

In December 2001, the San Diego Association of Governments published a report, *Impact of Changing Demographics on Decision-Making*,⁶ describing demographic trends in population size and other characteristics in San Diego County. The report suggested that our population will become more ethnically diverse as a result of the number of births and the continued arrival of immigrants from other parts of the world. As the population grows, the proportion of residents who are Latino will grow.⁷ Currently, Latinos account for one in every four San Diegans. They constitute a complex mix of native-born U.S. citizens and immigrants who trace their ancestry to different countries of origin.⁸

As a result of shifting demographics, there is a strong need to consider several factors when designing strategies to increase civic education and community engagement such as language, immigration trends, literacy and educational attainment, and geography. Legislators and constituents need to be equally aware of these changes to ascertain that policymakers' decisions are aligned with the region's priorities and needs. Recent scholarship on community-based strategies for change and civic engagement suggests a grassroots approach will positively-impact communities and society at large. The Vista Townsite Community Partnership initiated a discussion to advance issues of civic participation and inclusion in the City of Vista. Partners agreed to support a multi-pronged strategy starting with a workshop to inform community residents of their rights and responsibilities.

⁶ San Diego Association of Governments. *Impact of Changing Demographics on Decision-Making*. SANDAG, December 2001.

⁷ SANDAG Data Warehouse Census Tracts 202.02 and 202.12

⁸ Recent scholarship on civic education and engagement finds trends toward civic disengagement. Includes Stephen Macedo's *Democracy at Risk: How Political Choices Undermine Citizen Participation, and What We Can Do About It*. The APSA and Brookings Institution Press, 2004. Another important study is 2004 National Survey of Latinos: Politics and Civic Participation (<http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/33.pdf>)



PROCEEDINGS OF THE *FIRST STEPS TO CIVIC EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT* WORKSHOP

The National Latino Research Center organized the “*First Steps to Civic Education & Engagement Community Workshop*,” held on Saturday, August 5, 2006 from 10 am to 4:00 pm at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) at the Clarke Field House Grand Salon. This workshop was organized by a partnership comprised of the National Latino Research Center, Vista Townsite Community Partnership, Cal State San Marcos’ President’s Office, and the City of Vista.

This partnership recognized that a void exists in availability of culturally and linguistically appropriate and relevant policy information and other civic information resources of interest to Latinos. It further underscores the importance of serving and working cooperatively in underserved communities to increase civic engagement. *First Steps to Civic Education & Engagement* aims to raise awareness and build local capacity of community residents to increase civic involvement of Latinos in North County San Diego.⁹

The *First Steps to Civic Education and Engagement* sought to accomplish the following objectives:

- ❖ Stimulate discussion and create awareness about the role of the large and growing population of Latinos into the North San Diego County region in community advocacy and civic engagement.
- ❖ Identify and address emerging issues related to civic engagement of the Latino community.
- ❖ Cultivate active collaboration that builds strong working relationships between CSUSM, the National Latino Research Center, community organizations, government agencies, non-profits, community-based organizations, and foundations.

To this end, the NLRC carried out the following:

- ❖ In collaboration with partner agencies, the NLRC brought together Latino residents and community leaders from throughout North San Diego County to learn and share reasons and strategies for Latino civic participation. Rather than continuing to work in isolation, this workshop helped community members to network across cities and communities.
- ❖ Presented an overview of the civic process, called “Civics 101,” to increase awareness among participants regarding civic duties and responsibilities and how the legislative process works in the United States, identifying areas of involvement.
- ❖ Provided tools and strategies for civic engagement to develop advocacy skills that will enable residents to organize at the grassroots level, locally with city legislators, and with regional, state, and federal initiatives.

⁹ Recent scholarship on civic education and engagement finds trends toward civic disengagement. Includes Stephen Macedo’s *Democracy at Risk: How Political Choices Undermine Citizen Participation, and What We Can Do About It*. The APSA and Brookings Institution Press, 2004. Another important study is 2004 National Survey of Latinos: Politics and Civic Participation (<http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/33.pdf>)



- ❖ Compiled resources to disseminate relevant and culturally appropriate materials, as reference materials, for participants to use in their local communities.
- ❖ Invited community organizations to provide resources and information for participants to increase civic involvement.
- ❖ Documented event proceedings to be compiled into a report on civic engagement.

The NLRC at Cal State San Marcos is committed to strengthening and expanding its partnerships in ways that allow it to better serve the community by providing intellectual resources, research skills, and leadership abilities to help solve critical regional challenges.

WORKSHOP PLANNING

Resident Leadership: During spring 2006, Catherine Manis, Executive Director of the Vista Townsite Community Partnership, worked with a group of community residents from the Vista Townsite community to discuss issues related to immigration reform. Within the context of immigration discussions and massive immigration-related protests throughout the nation that took place during spring 2006, a group of Vista residents decided to organize an educational community forum to distribute information about immigration reform that was under consideration at the federal level at the time. From that moment on, local residents participated in the planning and implementation of the civic engagement workshop. They took on a variety of roles as advisors, recruiters, speakers, and community organizers. Committee members nominated each other to take on various leadership roles during the workshop. Some prepared to facilitate discussions the day of the workshop, while others prepared to give testimonials about their own involvement in community affairs.

Topics of Interest: A group of Latino residents from the City of Vista served as the primary civic engagement workshop planning committee. They held a series of planning meetings to discuss content, outreach, and logistics for the workshop. The committee agreed that given the context of immigration discussions and community mobilization during spring 2006, the main topics to be discussed at this workshop should include a history of immigration; and how to make one's voice heard in the legislative process including voting rights, legislative access, and other forms of civic participation. A third topic suggested was a presentation about the legislative process, how bills become laws, with particular focus on the immigration bill HR4437. Lastly, the committee believed it was necessary to identify and compile any advocacy resources, particularly in Spanish or bilingual, for community access.

Community Outreach: The planning committee began to reach out to various community groups and organizations to assess interest in the civic engagement workshop. They spoke to residents from the Vista Townsite community, local businesses, high school students, churches, Spanish-language newspapers, the City of Vista, and socio-cultural organizations such as the Coalition of Indigenous Communities from Oaxaca (COCIO). Planning committee members assessed the need for child care services and transportation to Cal State San Marcos. Each committee member volunteered to bring at least five other residents to the workshop. They crafted an outreach strategy consisting of door-to-door neighborhood visits inviting neighbors, friends, and family to participate in the workshop. In addition, they identified Latino congregation sites for distribution of advertising flyers. These sites included the Escondido Swap Meet, Fallbrook soccer arenas,



Oceanside Library, San Luis Rey Bakery, Saint Francis Church, Vista Adult Literacy classes, ESL classes, Head Start, Guelaguetza event at Cal State San Marcos, Latino businesses in various cities, and e-mail distribution lists. In total, committee members distributed over 3,000 informational flyers.

The planning committee contacted the National Latino Research Center (NLRC) at Cal State San Marcos to explore the possibility of sponsoring and hosting the educational workshop. They believed that by involving Cal State San Marcos and the NLRC, the workshop could be expanded to welcome residents from throughout the county, thereby taking a first step to build broader networks with residents in neighboring cities. Doing so would launch a needed initiative to unite Latinos in a regional organization to support each other on issues they have in common.

Support from the City of Vista: The Vista Townsite Community Partnership planning committee supported the idea to host an educational forum to discuss civil rights, the legislative process, and resources for the community. City of Vista staff participated in the planning process and partnered with Cal State San Marcos and the National Latino Research Center to organize the Civic Engagement workshop. The City of Vista agreed to support the workshop financially by providing funds for NLRC staff time, educational materials, consultants and honorariums, interpreting, childcare services, and printing costs.

Partnership with Cal State San Marcos & National Latino Research Center: The National Latino Research Center (NLRC) joined the Vista Townsite Community Partnership and the City of Vista planning committee in late May 2006. Cal State San Marcos Communication professor, Fredi Avalos, who was working with City of Vista staff and community residents, recommended the NLRC participate in the workshop. The NLRC's expertise on issues related to Latinos made it a natural partner in this effort. Committee partners, NLRC staff, in collaboration with the City of Vista staff, and the Vista Townsite Community Partnership committee, proceeded to solicit support from the CSUSM President's Office and faculty to create the workshop agenda and to identify resident facilitators and presenters. CSUSM President, Dr. Karen Haynes, endorsed and co-sponsored the workshop and committed resources to cater meals for the event. The NLRC also contributed financial resources to cover use of facilities, parking, and meals. In addition, the NLRC created bilingual (English/Spanish) outreach and educational materials including flyers, proposals, and resources. With input from the planning committee, the NLRC finalized the agenda, identified presenters, and prepared logistics to host the workshop on August 5, 2006 at Cal State San Marcos.

In sum, the partnership between the Vista Townsite Community Partnership, Vista community residents, City of Vista, CSUSM President's Office, CSUSM faculty, and the National Latino Research Center provided the leadership that made the workshop possible. Each partner contributed resources, ideas, time, and energy to promote new levels of Latino civic participation in North San Diego County.

THE DAY OF THE WORKSHOP

The format of the one-day workshop was one where academics, local experts and members of the Latino community presented information and voiced concerns to an audience of community residents and organic leaders interested in increasing engagement of Latinos in civic activities. Grassroots leaders took the podium to voice their concerns and posited creative solutions to deal



with local challenges. Vista residents including Mr. Jorge Luis Pérez and Mrs. Rosa Gallegos, who had never addressed a formal group, encouraged Latinos to learn and get involved in community organizations. Lastly, civil rights advocates and leaders discussed California legislation affecting Latinos, highlighted local issues, and provided strategies and tools for organizing in local communities. In the end, participants formed a circle to share their hopes and concerns for ongoing civic education and engagement. Their comments are provided in the Closing Remarks section of the report.

Presentations

All presentations and speakers were carefully selected to address a specific topic related to civic engagement. The topics presented included “Rights, laws, and the legislative process,” “Defining Civic Engagement,” “California Legislation Affecting Latinos,” “Local Reports,” “Testimonials,” and “Strategies, Tools, and Challenges for Community Organizing.”

Dr. Gerardo M. González, Dean of Graduate Studies at Cal State San Marcos, welcomed workshop participants on behalf of CSUSM President, Dr. Karen Haynes. He stressed the university’s commitment to community partnerships and civic engagement as described in Strategic Priority 4: Community Partnerships of the university’s strategic plan. Cal State San Marcos desires to strengthen and further expand our local, national, and international partnerships in ways that allow us to better serve our community as a leader in regional development and enhancement. The university is committed to establishing and strengthening mechanisms for mutual engagement of university and community.¹⁰

Morris Vance, Mayor of the City of Vista, thanked participants for investing time and energy to participate in the civic engagement workshop. Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, he encouraged participants to think about changes needed and to be “the change you expect to see in the world.” He acknowledged that Latino members of the Vista community are underrepresented and, as result, are not served as well as they should be. Hence, he encouraged participants to get involved in civic affairs and to make a city “your own.” Civic involvement makes it possible to meet neighbors and make connections with persons that have similar interests. He invited participants to attend city council meetings or commission meetings, set up appointments with a city commission or committee to discuss issues of concern, send a letter expressing their concerns, or simply stop by City Hall to meet City Council members and/or staff. Lastly, he reminded participants that there are many benefits to community participation including gaining a greater awareness of what the City is and does, the types of concerns and issues elected officials are addressing, and first-hand knowledge about programs, activities, capital projects, and many more city and community activities.

Francisca “Panchita” Acevedo, community liaison and advocate, co-moderated the workshop. She has worked to improve the lives of Latinos in San Diego County for many years. She works with the Vista Townsite Community Partnership on a variety of community issues and programs and provides ongoing support to community residents. As a teacher, interpreter, and resource, she has been involved in the Chicano/Latino movement and continues to advocate for civil and human rights. Residents consider her a great resource in the community.

¹⁰ For additional information about community partnerships and civic engagement, visit: <http://www.csusm.edu/plan/CommunityPartnerships.htm>



Jorge Luis Perez, Vista resident and planning committee member, talked about the need to get more residents civically engaged. He discussed a series of serious issues residents in the City of Vista are confronting and encouraged Vista residents and others to learn more about issues affecting Latino families. He mentioned issues such as the approval and implementation of a Day Labor ordinance prohibiting day laborers from soliciting work on street corners. He believes ordinances such as this one make it difficult for hard working Vista residents to make a living and feels that it targets a disenfranchised group of people in the city. He also discussed the need to improve relations between Latinos and law enforcement. If more residents get involved and joined resident committees, they can begin to voice their concerns and hopefully change policies that negatively affect Latinos. He forms part of the Vista Townsite Community Partnership resident committee and has learned a great deal about issues, has made contacts with other residents, and has learned about city programs and services.

Arcela Núñez-Álvarez, Interim Director of the National Latino Research Center at Cal State San Marcos, presented “Rights, Laws, and the Legislative Process.” This presentation defined civic engagement within the context of human and civil rights. In the context of present human rights, all persons are entitled to humane treatment, regardless of their immigration status, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc. As Eleanor Roosevelt wrote, “The destiny of human rights is in everyone’s hands.” She described the workings of the legislative process within a democracy and encouraged participants to find mechanisms to give input and make their concerns heard. Since laws have a direct impact on people’s lives, civic participation is important. The legislative process should have input from community residents; therefore, residents need to educate legislators about issues of concern and how to solve them.

Francisco Vázquez, PhD, professor of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Hutchins School of Liberal Studies and Director of the Hutchins Institute for Public Policy Studies and Community Action at Sonoma State University, delivered the keynote address at the start of the program. He reminded participants that their ancestors fought for political reform and basic human rights even in their home countries in Latin America. Asserting their right to educate themselves about community affairs, Dr. Vazquez called on people to join the historical struggle and stand up for human rights. He discussed Chicano/Latino history to illustrate the lengthy battles Latinos have waged for civil rights since 1848 and explained the need to work together involving children and families to overcome barriers to political participation. Lastly, he reiterated that contemporary social activism is for human rights and everyone should monitor, lobby and advocate, and present solutions for contemporary problems.

Alicia Lepe, Director of Community Organizing for the East LA Community Corporation, worked under contract with Unión de Residentes para la Protección Ambiental de Val Verde (URPAVV), a group dealing with environmental issues. The group was originally called Lucha Ambiental para la Comunidad Hispana (LACH). She trained LACH members to mobilize residents in Val Verde to come together to prepare for a hearing, prepare posters in protest of the existence of the landfill in low-income Latino and Afro-American area, and demanded justice. She narrated her personal story and invited participants to get involved in community issues and to voice their concerns. Additionally, she discussed California legislation affecting Latinos and encouraged participants to learn more about current bills.

Rosa Gallegos, Vista resident and planning committee member, shared her story and discussed the benefits of civic engagement. She takes leadership and professional development classes offered through the Vista Townsite Community Partnership. She is learning to speak in public and



this workshop gave her the opportunity to speak in public for the first time. Now she feels more confident about speaking up and voicing her concerns. She looks forward to working with other residents and invited participants to visit and volunteer at the community garden.

Consuelo Martínez, Coordinator of the Comité de Derechos Humanos de Escondido, discussed the need for community residents to get involved in documenting human rights violations in the community. In collaboration with American Friends Service Committee, the Vista Coalition for Justice, Peace and Dignity, Ms. Martínez has become one of the prominent human rights advocates in San Diego County. She supports development of grassroots leadership and works closely with community residents to become human rights observers.

Adrián Álvarez, President of the Association of Latin American Gardeners of Los Angeles, California, closed the day with a discussion on strategies for community organizing. He explained that community organizing is the task of forming a strong circle that cannot be broken. In the process, organizers build community. The first step to community organizing is to understand the community. Organizers need to study and understand community organizing dynamics in order to carry out effective organizing strategies (hunger strikes, boycotts, legislation, etc.). Organizing Latinos and immigrants has been and continues to be challenging. Diversity exists within the community, where there are different socio-economic classes and interests. Hence, there ethnicity or country of origin are not effective organizing tools alone. The second strategy for effective community organizing is to study history and use historical lessons (what has worked? What has failed?) as important organizing tools. He pointed out that community organizers often confuse originality with the “reinventing the wheel syndrome” where many Chicanos/Latinos do not know history and they repeat the mistakes of the past. We are confronting serious challenges in community organizing. First, the needs and concerns in our community are too many to address all at once. There is a need to prioritize and get community input to begin tackling issues and concerns. The majority of people are busy, working several jobs, and barely making enough to support their families. Hence, community organizers are competing for time and energy with many occupations, apathy, television, drugs, sports, soap operas (*novelas*) and many other social problems. We don’t have time to dialogue or build social relations and most residents will not become full-time community activists. Lastly, community organizers need community leaders and community leaders are elected by the people to represent them. Community organizing is a time consuming, slow and gradual process that can have great costs and rarely a “thank you” (at least in our lifetime!). The ultimate goal, however, is to strengthen community participation and ultimately democracy.

Closing Remarks from Workshop Participants

Overall, workshop participants had very positive feedback about the information they received as well as the workshop in general. They commented on the need for ongoing collaboration and networking across cities and regions. They expressed having learned a great deal about human rights, civil rights, and the importance of working together and decided to take the information back to their respective communities. The workshop provided some residents an opportunity to speak in public and to share their issues and concerns with others. Others expressed feeling empowered and energized to continue doing the work that needs to be done in the community. Their responses are presented below.



TOPIC OF COMMENT	ENGLISH	SPANISH
Presentation by Adrián Álvarez	<i>"The last speaker was incredible. He brought us all to where I had hoped we would land. That is, with a sense of purpose and connection."</i>	<i>"El último orador fue increíble. Él logro traernos a donde yo quería llegar. A llegar a un propósito y conectarnos."</i>
Collaboration & Networking	<i>"We are not alone. I am happy because the people who attended made me realize that we are not alone. We have the same or similar problems in other communities."</i>	<i>"No estamos solos. Estoy contento porque los compañeros que asistieron me hicieron ver que no estamos solos. Los mismos o similares problemas existen en otras comunidades."</i>
Partnership & Collaboration of Event Organizers	<i>"Catherine (Manis)'s efforts have given positive results. Let's keep going. I hope it becomes something more."</i>	<i>"El esfuerzo de Catherine (Manis) ha tenido resultados. Sigamos adelante. Que llegue ha algo más."</i>
Civic Education	<i>"I learned so much. Thanks to Catherine (Manis) for her support. It was a great experience. Many people stayed late after the event talking and looking for solutions. I really liked learning about the United States Constitution and about human and civil rights. Thanks to everyone. The seed has been planted and now it will produce good fruit."</i>	<i>"Aprendí mucho. Gracias a Catherine (Manis) por su apoyo. Fue una bonita experiencia. Personas se quedaron hasta tarde platicando y buscando soluciones. Me gustó mucho estudiar sobre la Constitución de los Estados Unidos y sobre los derechos humanos y civiles. Gracias a todos, la semilla está sembrada y va a dar buenos frutos."</i>
	<i>"I am very proud of being here. I learned a lot. I want to learn more to become stronger to change and improve our communities."</i>	<i>"Estoy orgullosa de estar aquí. Aprendí mucho. Quiero aprender mucho más y armarnos de valor para cambiar y mejorar nuestras comunidades."</i>
	<i>"Now I understand what is happening around me."</i>	<i>"Ya me di cuenta de lo que está pasando a mi alrededor."</i>
Leadership & Public Speaking	<i>"It was my first time speaking in public and it was a great experience. I want to be better prepared in the future."</i>	<i>"Fue mi primera vez hablando en público y fue una gran experiencia. En le futuro quiero estar mejor preparado."</i>
Civil & Human Rights	<i>"I thought the event was very interesting. The most important thing that I learned was that we all have civil rights and that people who are not legal residents can also help in the political process. For example, they can help to campaign."</i>	<i>"Se me hizo muy interesante el evento. Lo más importante que aprendí es que todos tenemos derechos civiles y las personas que no son residentes también pueden ayudar en el proceso político. Por ejemplo, pueden ayudar a empadronar."</i>
	<i>"I really liked what we shared about our rights and what is going on in the community."</i>	<i>"Me gustó lo que compartimos sobre nuestros derechos y lo que está pasando en la comunidad."</i>
Collaboration & Communication	<i>"We need to work together."</i>	<i>"Hay que trabajar juntos."</i>
	<i>"I want our community to become a model for other communities."</i>	<i>"Quiero que nuestra comunidad sea un modelo para otras comunidades."</i>
	<i>"I want to work with other groups that are already working on these issues to unite our efforts."</i>	<i>"Quiero trabajar con otros grupos que ya están trabajando en estos asuntos para unir nuestras fuerzas."</i>
	<i>"I want to be connected to the community."</i>	<i>"Quiero conectarme con la comunidad."</i>
	<i>"We should communicate more."</i>	<i>"Hay que comunicarnos más."</i>



	<i>"I learned so much and I think we should unite more."</i>	<i>"Aprendí mucho y creo que debemos unirnos más."</i>
	<i>"We need to spread the word and unite in our communities."</i>	<i>"Debemos correr la voz y unirnos en nuestras comunidades."</i>
Importance of Civic Engagement	<i>"Thank you for taking us into consideration in this workshop."</i>	<i>"Gracias por la importancia que se nos ha dado en este taller."</i>
	<i>"You have given us so much to say and think that I was not aware of. But now, I know it's very important."</i>	<i>"Nos han dado mucho que decir y pensar que yo ignoraba. Pero ahora veo que es importante."</i>
	<i>"This event is really good. It made me very happy and I want to keep going, working to improve the lives of our people."</i>	<i>"Este evento es muy bueno. Me dio mucho gusto, y quiero seguir adelante trabajando para mejorar la vida de nuestra gente."</i>
	<i>"I have heard things that I didn't know before. I really liked being here."</i>	<i>"He escuchado cosas que no sabía y me gustó mucho estar aquí."</i>
	<i>"The seeds of our future are here. Let's make sure they provide positive results."</i>	<i>"Las semillas de nuestro futuro están aquí. Hay que asegurarnos que den fruto."</i>
	<i>"I want to get more involved in the community to know what is going on in the community. I also want to support everyone."</i>	<i>"Quiero involucrarme más en la comunidad para conocer lo que está pasando en la comunidad y quiero apoyar a los demás."</i>
	<i>"I want to be part of the struggle."</i>	<i>"Quiero unirme a la lucha."</i>
	<i>"I want to participate in the defense of our human rights."</i>	<i>"Quiero participar en la defensa de los derechos humanos."</i>
	<i>"I am here to support the people against any injustice."</i>	<i>"Estoy aquí para apoyar a la gente en contra de cualquier injusticia."</i>
	<i>"This program has given me strength to keep going."</i>	<i>"Este programa me ha dado fuerzas para seguir adelante."</i>
Cultural Diversity	<i>"Thank you for remembering our roots."</i>	<i>"Gracias por recordar nuestras raíces."</i>
	<i>"I am American and I am contributing to my country. I can study, work, learn Spanish, and I am also developing social awareness."</i>	<i>"Soy americana y estoy contribuyendo a mi país (Estados Unidos). Puedo estudiar, trabajar, aprender español y estoy desarrollando una conciencia social."</i>
	<i>"I am an Oaxacan indigenous person and I appreciate the work that has been provided."</i>	<i>"Soy indígena oaxaqueña y agradezco este trabajo porque nos provee información."</i>
	<i>"We are America."</i>	<i>"Somos América."</i>



WORKSHOP EVALUATION

On August 13, 2006, the NLRC facilitated a debriefing meeting with the community resident planning committee in Vista to request their input regarding the civic engagement workshop.

Summary: The “First Steps to Civic Education and Community Engagement,” aimed to raise awareness about civic involvement among Latinos. The event was held on August 5, 2006 from 10 am to 4 pm at the California State University campus. The presentations delivered the information the committee had requested. Participants learned that Latinos in Vista are not alone or isolated. In fact, many community residents in other cities are confronting similar challenges and issues. However, for the follow-up workshop, participants would like more concrete ideas and exercises about community organizing & next steps to follow to increase civic engagement.

Logistics: Participants indicated that the workshop was well organized and planned. In terms of interpreting, participants thought it was very good. Out of the two interpreters, coordinated by professional interpreter, Yolanda Walther-Meade based in San Diego, one was excellent. Participants welcomed childcare services and thought it was very helpful. However, the university campus is too big; some participants mentioned they became lost trying to find the location of the workshop. Even though the building was accessible, additional signage around campus to direct people to the Clarke Field House was recommended for the next workshop.

Outreach: Community residents conducted the majority of the outreach in North County cities inviting community residents to attend the event. They distributed over 3,000 flyers throughout San Diego County and other organizations sent electronic announcements to community partners.

Educational Materials: The NLRC prepared and distributed an informational binder to each workshop participant. The informational binder is a good material to begin to identify and compile community resources. However, more information is needed to aid residents in their pursuit of civic engagement. More information is needed such as legislations, sample letters to contact city, state, and national officials, and fact sheets with talking points to contact legislators. This is recommended to be included in the next workshop.

Attendance: 120 people participated in the Civic Engagement Workshop. Participants came from different towns in California including the cities of Carlsbad, Davis, Encinitas, Escondido, Fallbrook, La Jolla, Oceanside, Richmond, San Diego, San Marcos, San Ysidro, Valley Center, Vista, and Windsor. Approximately 100 adults participated in the workshop and 20 children. Child care was arranged.



NEXT STEPS TO INCREASE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Since civic participation is everyone’s responsibility, developing, fostering, and valuing the voice of civically-minded persons of diverse backgrounds takes a concerted effort by organizations and government institutions.

The next steps to increase civic participation begin with creating awareness about the need and value of civic involvement among all peoples; promoting the value of inclusion and participation of racially, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse groups; and tearing down structural, institutional, and attitudinal barriers for civic participation. When an entire community is inclusive, tolerant, and responsive to people’s needs, mass community engagement is possible.

Based upon the results of the civic engagement workshop, the NLRC recommends the following steps be taken to increase civic awareness education and facilitate community engagement.

CIVIC EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT PRIORITY OBJECTIVES	STEPS/ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE CIVIC AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT FOR GOVERNMENT & OTHER SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS	STEPS/ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE CIVIC AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT FOR COMMUNITY RESIDENTS
1) Increase awareness about the value of civic participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support and sponsor educational programs such as the civic engagement workshop. ○ Offer classes, workshops, or trainings for community members. ○ Conduct outreach to underprivileged, immigrants, new citizens, and youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contribute to planning and participate in educational programs such as the civic engagement workshop. ○ Study and learn about the legislative process, civics history, constitutional rights, and human rights. ○ Learn about rights and responsibilities in the U.S.
2) Build grassroots leadership capacity in local neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fund and support grassroots leadership development programs in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify and participate in leadership programs to build capacity to take on leadership roles.
3) Facilitate access to information and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assess literacy and educational needs of community residents and design an appropriate outreach media campaign to inform people how to access information. ○ Collaborate with local schools and libraries to be a key source of information. ○ Collaborate with cable companies to publicize and broadcast public meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify organizations and institutions providing information and seek. ○ Visit local schools and libraries to find information about events and resources. ○ Watch public meetings on cable television.
4) Design culturally and linguistically appropriate resources, services, and outreach materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assess cultural and linguistic needs of community residents and design resources, services, and outreach materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Request resources, services, and information in the language in which you communicate.



<p>5) Respond to resident issues and needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implement a variety of programs and interventions to revitalize the community, promote economic development, and improve community facilities and services. ○ Schedule neighborhood meetings in various communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify and organize neighborhood improvement activities. ○ Attend and participate in local neighborhood meetings.
<p>6) Monitor democratic practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Form taskforce to monitor democratic practices and elections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Register to vote, vote in elections, monitor electoral campaigns, report voting irregularities.
<p>7) Maintain active taskforces to advise local government and service organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Form active taskforces to advice local government on issues such as affordable housing, planning and zoning, civil rights, voting outreach, policy-community relations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Join community committees, boards, taskforces to provide input on local issues and decisions.
<p>8) Monitor local policy decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide simple mechanisms for public input and participation in legislative process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Express opinions about local policy decisions, attend city council meetings, read the newspapers to learn about current issues, and testify at city council meetings.
<p>9) Build partnerships of government institutions, community organizations, businesses, and colleges/universities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify areas of mutual interest and bring partners together to discuss possible activities to advance civic engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participate in planning committees to express ideas and voice priorities.
<p>10) Participate in local schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local schools provide mechanisms for volunteer and parent involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Volunteer at local schools.
<p>11) Respect and affirm diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor protection of human rights and civil rights laws. ○ Promote community pride and mutual respect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report human and civil rights violations to appropriate organizations. ○ Organize multicultural events bringing diverse communities together.



APPENDIX 1: WORKSHOP AGENDA

Civic Engagement Workshop / Taller de Compromiso Comunitario
August 5, 2006 / 5 de agosto del 2006
Agenda

Topics/Temas	Presenters/Presentadores(as)	Time/Hora
Registration/Registro		10:00 – 10:20
Welcome/Bienvenida		10:20 – 10:30
Welcome to CSUSM Bienvenida departe de CSUSM	Dr. Gerardo M. González, Dean, CSUSM Dr. Gerardo M. González, Decano	10:20 – 10:25
Welcome from City of Vista Bienvenida departe de la Ciudad de Vista	Morris Vance, Mayor of Vista Morris Vance, Alcade de Vista	10:25 – 10:30
Introduction/Introducción		10:30 – 10:50
Vista Community Resident Committee Comité de Residentes de Vista	Francisca “Panchita” Acevedo Vista Committee / Comité de Vista	10:30 – 10:40
Civic Participation Participación cívica de residentes	Jorge Luis Pérez Vista Resident / Residente de Vista	10:40 – 10:50
Civics Education and Engagement Educación Cívica y Compromiso Comunitario		10:50-12:00
Rights, Laws, and the Legislative Process Derechos, leyes, y el proceso legislativo	Arcela Nuñez-Alvarez National Latino Research Center	10:50 – 11:30
Defining Civic Engagement Compromiso Comunitario	Francisco H. Vázquez Professor, Sonoma State University	11:30 – 12:00
Lunch/Almuerzo		12:00 – 12:30
Cultural Performance Baile Cultural	Ballet Folklórico Xochiquetzal MiraCosta College	12:00- 12:30
Community Organizing / Organización Comunitaria		12:30 - 2:00
California Legislation Affecting Latinos Legislación afectando a los latinos	Alicia Lepe, Community Advocate Alicia Lepe, Activista comunitaria Center for Community Change	12:30 – 1:00
Local Reports Reportes local de la comunidad	Rosa Gallegos Vista Resident / Residente de Vista	1:00 – 1:10
	Consuelo Martínez Escondido Resident	1:10 – 1:20
Strategies, tools, and challenges for community organizing Estrategia, herramientas, y retos para la organización comunitaria	Adrián Alvarez Community Advocate Latin American Gardeners Association	1:30 – 2:00
Next Steps / Próximos pasos		2:00 – 2:30
Closing Remarks / Comentarios de Cierre		3:00 – 3:15



APPENDIX 2: INDICATORS OF A CIVICALLY ENGAGED COMMUNITY

The following table includes twenty-four questions to conduct an asset map of a community's civic infrastructure. Civically-oriented communities recognize and promote organizations that advance civic engagement, community service, and democracy. Residents living in these communities decide to serve and change aspects of their communities they do not approve of, support mechanisms to increase civic knowledge, and promote greater participation and equal access to democracy. Residents read and stay informed of current issues, join community organizations and associations, vote in elections, and volunteer for community service projects.¹¹

INDICATORS OF A CIVICALLY ENGAGED COMMUNITY	
SOCIO-POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS	INDICATORS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
Government & Politics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are elected city and county officials accessible and responsive to citizens through public meetings, office hours, and meetings with neighborhood organizations? 2. Are state legislators accessible and responsive to citizens in their districts? 3. Do U.S. Congressional representatives maintain local offices in or nearby your community? 4. Is voter turnout strong in local elections? 5. Does your community have active task forces to advise local government on issues such as affordable housing, planning and zoning, and civil rights?
Schools & Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Does the community have confidence in local schools and demonstrate support through fundraising and parental involvement? 7. Are there services for pre-school children such as Head Start? 8. Are there services and programs for teens such as after-school activities, 4-H?
Community & Social Organizations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Is there a public library with sufficient hours of operation? 10. Are there services for seniors such as delivery of meals, affordable housing, and transportation? 11. Are there services for low-income families such as health care, literacy, and housing? 12. Are there volunteer centers or organizations that connect volunteers with local service agencies? 13. Are there neighborhood associations? 14. Are there community-based arts and cultural organizations? 15. Do employers and local businesses provide generous charitable support to nonprofit groups?
Law Enforcement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Do police have citizens' respect? 17. Do residents believe the courts are fair and efficient?
Media & Information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Is local media (newspaper, television and radio) informative and fair? 19. Is there an online community bulletin board? 20. Does your community have a cable access channel to broadcast public meetings?
Environment & Ecology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Does the community have strong green values, such as recycling programs, cleaning up environmental contamination, creating open space, parks, and trails?
Civil Rights & Diversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Are there services to address the needs of immigrants, migrant laborers, and new citizens? 23. Does your community respect and affirm all people regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, income level, physical or mental disabilities, etc.? 24. Is there a sense of community pride and mutual respect?

¹¹ Bay Lewis, Wendy. *Six Levels of Civic Leadership*. <http://www.civicmind.com/qcomm.htm>



APPENDIX 3: ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE CIVIC AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT

Individuals can take a variety of steps to increase their awareness of civic issues and become more engaged in local affairs. The following table provides some ideas to increase civic awareness and some activities for ongoing community engagement.

ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE CIVIC AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT	
CIVIC AWARENESS ACTIVITIES	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
○ Read the newspaper to learn about current issues.	○ Keep files of newspaper clippings about local issues and learn about the facts and the people involved in finding solutions.
○ Join a community organization.	○ Become a leader by serving on the Board or a committee of a nonprofit organization or a community group.
○ Vote in elections.	○ Support a candidate for office by distributing leaflets, displaying a yard sign, attending a rally or debate, or introducing a local candidate to friends and neighbors.
○ Donate money to a community organization or a political campaign.	○ Raise money to help sustain a community organization or to support a political campaign.
○ Volunteer for community service.	○ Start a community organization or citizens' task force to solve a community problem.
○ Use the Internet to explore a public issue such as Social Security, funding for schools, environmental threats, etc.	○ Sign-up online to receive electronic newsletters or send an e-letter to an elected official such as your U.S. Senator.
○ Study civic and political history of the U.S.	○ Organize educational events to educate community residents about Civil Rights history and struggles.
○ Learn about Constitutional rights and Immigrant rights.	○ Organize human rights organization to monitor civil and human rights in your community.
○ Monitor electoral campaigns.	○ Run for public office to represent your community's voice.
○ Study history of the La Raza Unida Party and other non-mainstream political parties.	○ Form an alternative political party to represent your community's concerns.
○ Study history of Voting rights and Women's rights.	○ Track election results and document voting/election irregularities
○ Study legislative process at local level.	○ Testify at City Council policy hearings
○ Participate in Cooperative Service Learning activities at local colleges/universities.	○ College Students can enroll in classes aimed at increasing student involvement in community.



APPENDIX 4: COMMUNITY RESOURCES

As part of the workshop, each participant received a binder containing information about the event as well as other valuable information about civic engagement and political participation. A list of materials included in the binder is listed below:

- * Brochure for the National Latino Research Center (English)
- * Booklet: “The Legislative Process: A Guide to the Participation of all Californians” (English & Spanish)
- * Fact Sheet: “Citizen’s Guide to the Legislative Process” (English)
- * Workshop Agenda (English & Spanish)
- * Informational Handout about the NLRC (Spanish)
- * Informational Handout about the Civic Engagement Workshop (Spanish)
- * COPS Handout from City of Vista (English & Spanish)
- * Handbook: “City of Vista: A Guide to Resources 2006” (Spanish)
- * Registrar of Voters Handout (English)
- * Handout: “Comité de Derechos Humanos de Escondido” (Spanish)
- * Mobilize the Immigrant Vote ToolKit (Developer and produced by Partnership for Immigrant Leadership and Action at www.PILAweb.org)



APPENDIX 5: MEDIA COVERAGE

The following newspaper articles covered the civic engagement workshop.

