

La Gran Manzana:

THE ROAD AHEAD

FOR NEW YORK CITY'S LATINO COMMUNITY

acknowledgements

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about our network



Hispanic Federation (HF) is the nation’s premier Latino nonprofit membership organization. HF uplifts millions of Hispanic children, youth and families through public policy advocacy, innovative community programs and strengthening Latino nonprofits. By working with a dynamic network of leading Latino community-based organizations, HF is able to fulfill its mission to empower and advance the Hispanic community.

As part of its advocacy strategy, HF works with its network leadership to educate policymakers, funders, the public and media about the needs and aspirations of Latinos in the areas of education, health care, immigration, economic development, civic participation, the environment and more.

The following organizations are part of HF’s New York City member network:

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|--|---|
| Acacia Network Inc. | Latino Commission on AIDS |
| ACCION East and Online | Latino Justice PRLDEF |
| Aid for AIDS | Loisaida, Inc. |
| Alianza Dominicana | Make the Road New York |
| Amber Charter School | Mercy Center |
| Andrew Glover Youth Program | National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health New |
| Asociación Tepeyac de New York, Inc. | Immigrant Community Empowerment |
| ASPIRA of New York, Inc. | New York Council on Adoptable Children Northern |
| Audubon Partnership for Economic Development | Manhattan Arts Alliance |
| Betances Health Center | Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights |
| Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education Coalition | One Hundred Hispanic Women |
| for Hispanic Family Services Committee for Hispanic | Pregones Theater |
| Children and Families Community Association of | Puerto Rican Family Institute |
| Progressive Dominicans Comunilife, Inc. | Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre |
| Dominican Women’s Development Center Dominico- | Regional Aid for Interim Needs, Inc. |
| American Society | Repertorio Español |
| East Harlem Council for Community Improvement | Society of the Educational Arts, Inc. |
| East Harlem Council for Human Services, Inc. | South Bronx Mental Health Council |
| El Barrio’s Operation Fightback, Inc. | Southside United Housing Development Fund Corp. |
| El Centro del Inmigrante | Spanish Speaking Elderly Council |
| El Museo del Barrio | St. Ann’s Corner of Harm Reduction |
| El Puente | Teatro Círculo |
| El Taller Latino Americano | Unitas Therapeutic Community |
| Hispanic AIDS Forum | United Bronx Parents |
| Institute for Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly INTAR | UPROSE, Inc. |
| Theatre | Urban Health Plan, Inc. |
| Inwood House | Violence Intervention Program |
| La Fuente | VIP Community Services |
| | We Stay/Nos Quedamos |

a letter from hf president



September 2013

Dear Friends,

More than 2.3 million Latinos call New York City home. They live in every borough and every neighborhood in the city: from Jackson Heights to Washington Heights, from Parkchester to Port Richmond, from Sunset Park to Bedford Park. Over the course of several decades they have rebuilt communities, opened new businesses, changed the way we eat and speak, and become integral parts of the fabric of New York City. Now, more than ever before, you are as likely to hear New York City described not as the Big Apple but as *La Gran Manzana*.

Because Latinos now occupy such an important role in the daily life of the city, it is important that our political leadership understand and respond to the manifold challenges facing our community. This is an election year in New York and one that promises significant changes to the political landscape. Not only will we welcome new members of the City Council but also a new Comptroller, a new Public Advocate, and perhaps most significantly, a new Mayor.

As we have watched the electoral process unfold we have been heartened by the amount of attention that the candidates have been paying to Latino voters. But we worry also that while candidates may recognize the value of the Latino electorate, they may not fully grasp the scope of the challenges that Latino families, businesses and seniors face in New York City.

Hispanic Federation and its network of over 60 NYC member agencies are uniquely positioned to understand those challenges because we confront them each day. Through our network, we are able to dig deeply into communities and examine the ways in which government can best support the needs and aspirations of Latino New Yorkers. For decades now, we have worked with Latinos from every borough and every national origin to create policies and programs that empower and advance the Hispanic community.

In order to help the candidates for Mayor and all city government offices better understand the Latino community, we are proud to present ***La Gran Manzana: The Road Ahead for NYC's Latino Community***. This policy blueprint, compiled after extensive conversations with our community leadership, addresses the key issues facing Latino New Yorkers and offers common sense and practical solutions for improving their lives. Our hope is that this guide will not only help candidates formulate policy agendas that address issues that affect Latinos, but also serve as a starting point between the Hispanic Federation and our member agencies and the new leaders of *La Gran Manzana*.

Sincerely,

José Calderón
President

executive summary

We are at a critical juncture in New York City. Amid great challenges and opportunities, we are preparing to elect a new Mayor and City Council that will determine the future direction of this great metropolis. With Latinos constituting nearly a third of New York City's population, the state of the Hispanic community must be of particular importance and focus for the city's new Executive and Legislature. ***La Gran Manzana: The Road Ahead for NYC's Latino Community*** is a policy blueprint designed to introduce current and prospective government officials to the key issues facing the Latino communities of New York City. It contains recommended reforms developed by HF policy staff, member agencies and partner advocacy institutions. As the city elects new political leadership, this blueprint can serve to inform how they address the opportunities and challenges facing New York's growing Latino community.

Hispanic Federation and its network of Latino nonprofits – consisting of human service agencies, senior centers, day schools, theaters, community health clinics and immigrant and civil rights groups – have chosen to highlight nine focus areas that should be central to the policy and planning priorities of New York City's next generation of government leaders. The points on the following page highlight each of those areas and summarize the key action steps laid out in this report.



- **Supporting Latino Nonprofits**
Establish a nonprofit stabilization fund, protect New York City Council Discretionary Aid, and reform the RFP process to strengthen the city's human services infrastructure.
- **Improving Education**
Make greater investments in early childhood education and after-school programming, strengthen English Language Learners support services, prioritize college readiness and success, and significantly improve parent and community engagement.
- **Supporting Healthy Lifestyles**
Engage in proactive health education through schools and community-based organizations, and strengthen initiatives aimed at increasing Latino health care access and reducing health disparities.
- **Integrating Immigrants**
Support English instruction and immigration assistance programs, expand immigrant rights, and protect our vulnerable undocumented neighbors.
- **Economic Empowerment and Financial Security**
Drive city resources to create living wage jobs, expand workforce development training, create anti-poverty initiatives and significantly increase affordable housing units.
- **Environmental Justice**
Enact policies to reduce unfair environmental burdens on Latino neighborhoods and prepare for and respond to future climate-related disasters.
- **Civil Rights**
Protect all New Yorkers' rights and pass reforms to stop profiling and prevent barriers based on race, ethnicity, English proficiency, gender, sexual orientation and religion.
- **Women's Rights**
Increase economic opportunities, strengthen social safety net services, and protect the employment and reproductive rights of Latinas.
- **Arts & Culture**
Reform and increase cultural affairs funding to support Latino theaters, museums and arts organizations including smaller nonprofits.

These proposed reforms represent the collective wisdom of many of New York City's best leaders and institutions. It is a valuable and necessary guide for meaningful debate on the future of our city and its Latino families, workers and institutions. It is our hope that this document will inform the priorities and decisions of the city's political leadership in the months and years ahead. We know that the investments we make to strengthen the Latino community in each of these nine areas will yield huge results in every neighborhood of New York City for generations to come.



section 1:

supporting latino nonprofits

Across New York City, Latino nonprofit organizations provide critical and vital community services that implement and augment government assistance. For the most vulnerable members of society, our nonprofits are there with food for the hungry, shelter for our seniors, care for those living with HIV/AIDS, and refuge for victims of domestic violence. They provide job training, meals to seniors, health screenings, parenting skills workshops, and child care to assist low income working families. What is more, beyond providing important services to residents in our communities, these organizations serve as a vital source of employment and economic security for thousands of New Yorkers.

Unfortunately, many of our organizations are struggling to survive and meet the growing needs of the Latino community. Private philanthropy is less likely to provide support for necessary operating expenses. While Latinos comprise 28% of New York City residents, foundations and charitable giving to Latino nonprofits barely hits 2% of their total awards.

More problematic, however, is the growing instability and retracting of funding from New York City and other government sources. The City's RFP process has become more complex, making it more difficult for smaller community-based organizations to compete for grants against larger, more established providers. And even when smaller groups do receive support through the competitive grants process, delays in payment place stress on weakened financial systems. Coupled with recent cutbacks and plans to dismantle desperately needed City Council discretionary funding, Latino nonprofits are closing their doors at a time when our community needs them the most.



The next Mayor and City Council can do a better job supporting our city's human services infrastructure by implementing the following reforms:

- Create a \$10 million Nonprofit Stabilization Fund to support people of color-led nonprofit organizations with core, operational infrastructure needs and technical assistance
- Award 10% of points in the Request for Proposal (RFP) process for organizations that demonstrate their capacity to provide culturally-competent and language-accessible services
- Diversify RFP Review Panels to ensure they include experts who understand our local community context and nonprofits, and reflect the diversity of the city
- Distribute funding according to more localized census tract data – not zip code clusters – to ensure geographically-small, high-poverty or dense Latino neighborhoods are sufficiently resourced
- Reform the city budget process by ending the “budget dance,” baselining vital human service initiatives, and speeding up timing on contract payments
- Preserve City Council Discretionary Funding to meet growing community needs and support smaller and locally-based organizations best equipped to respond to emerging trends



section 2:

improving education

Forty percent of the city's 1.1 million public school students are Latino, making them the single largest group in the city's classrooms. Small wonder that the quality of education in the city is a top-of-mind concern for the Latino community. Sadly, many of the indicators of Latino student performance in New York City reveal public schools are struggling to educate children and prepare them for the global workforce. The Latino graduation rate is just 59% and, of those who graduate, just 15% are classified as "college-ready." Moreover, English Language Learners (ELLs), who make up 13% of city students, have a deplorable 40% four-year graduation rate. Once in college, many Latino students face a difficult road to graduation due to poor high school preparation, growing costs and few culturally appropriate counseling and student success programs. Equally important, too many young adults and immigrants lack quality, affordable learning opportunities to help their children succeed and secure better paying jobs.

There are bright examples of Latino student success and experts acknowledge that when we invest in effective programs, the overwhelming majority of at-risk youth can succeed. For the sake of these children, their families and the future of New York City, the next Mayor and City Council must enact a series of reforms designed to improve student achievement, harness the power of parents, support adult learners, and make every school, no matter where it is in New York City, a palace of effective learning for all our kids and their families.



section 2: improving education (continued)

The following recommendations will ensure New York City sets a path toward achieving these goals:

1. Early Education

- Make free full-day pre-Kindergarten available to all city three- and four-year-olds
- Ensure new full-day pre-K aid includes the same requirement for 10% investment in community based organization (CBO) programs similar to existing Universal Prekindergarten (UPK)
- Ensure public school pre-K teachers are compensated and trained similar to K-12 grade teachers
- Establish additional Spanish dual language pre-K programs

2. English Language Learners (ELLs)

- Common Core methodologies and performance measures must respond to the unique needs of ELL students, and parents and teachers must be sufficiently informed about the changes and impact on their children
- Restore and significantly increase the number of Spanish transitional bilingual and dual language programs across the five boroughs
- Strengthen parent outreach and notification procedures to ensure parents of ELLs are aware of their child's rights and educational options among ESL, transitional bilingual and dual language programs
- Strengthen ELL teacher quality by providing all teachers an opportunity to learn methodologies to support ELLs in all academic and elective courses and by expanding bilingual teacher recruitment initiatives
- Ensure all new and existing public schools can serve and are accessible to ELLs
- Support the expansion of innovative immigrant- and ELL-serving schools like International High Schools, newcomer academies, and night-and-day academies
- Provide extended instruction and summer academies for at-risk ELLs (overage and/or under-credited) and SIFEs (Students with an Interrupted Formal Education)

3. Turnaround Failing Schools & Build Strong Community Schools

- Significantly reduce class sizes – especially in failing schools
- Provide incentives to excellent teachers to relocate to failing schools and to mentor newer teachers
- Launch a pilot program in select failing schools to extend the school day and year to provide intensive academic intervention including through CBO partners
- Provide technical assistance for CBOs to become DOE vendors to offer services in schools
- Increase funding for a reinvigorated Youth Line that would be a gold standard of student and parent portals – a 311 hotline for education
- Increase the number of Parent-Teacher Conferences in failing schools and implement parent “Homework Help” workshops
- Create 50 new community schools in the next four years
- Provide additional resources to foster relationships between Latino-led CBOs and schools in the pursuit of authentic community schools and extended learning time
- Adopt and replicate models to transform school culture, teaching and learning in failing schools including alternatives to discipline/conflict resolution, parent engagement and training, and student leadership development
- Support and fund culturally and linguistically-competent, community-based health education models that educate at-risk Latina/o youth on topics such as teen pregnancy and reproductive rights, and help them improve their life opportunities through mentoring and counseling
- Restore and expand arts, computer and music classes in public schools including coordinating resources amongst small schools in the same building
- Expand CBO-led dropout prevention, disconnected youth, and multiple pathways initiatives
- Hire additional guidance/college counselors to reduce the student-to-counselor ratio and incorporate all upper-grade teachers in the college search and preparation process

4. Afterschool Support

- Expand Beacon, Out-of-School Time and Cornerstone after-school programs in Latino neighborhoods
- Support a policy that would require all schools to partner with high quality youth-serving CBOs to keep schools open between 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm, when space in schools is free, to provide academic, cultural, athletic and other activities and supports to students

5. Reforming Admissions Process for Specialized High Schools and Gifted and Talented Programs

- End sole reliance on standardized tests for admissions to gifted and talented (G&T) programs and the city's specialized high schools and incorporate other factors like grades, portfolio assessments and other academically-reliable factors
- Improve parent outreach – including in various languages – regarding admissions policies and the availability of preparation programs for G&T classes and specialized high schools
- Increase the number of preparation programs for G&T classes and specialized high schools
- Create reliable assessments and G&T programs for English Language Learners



6. Higher Education

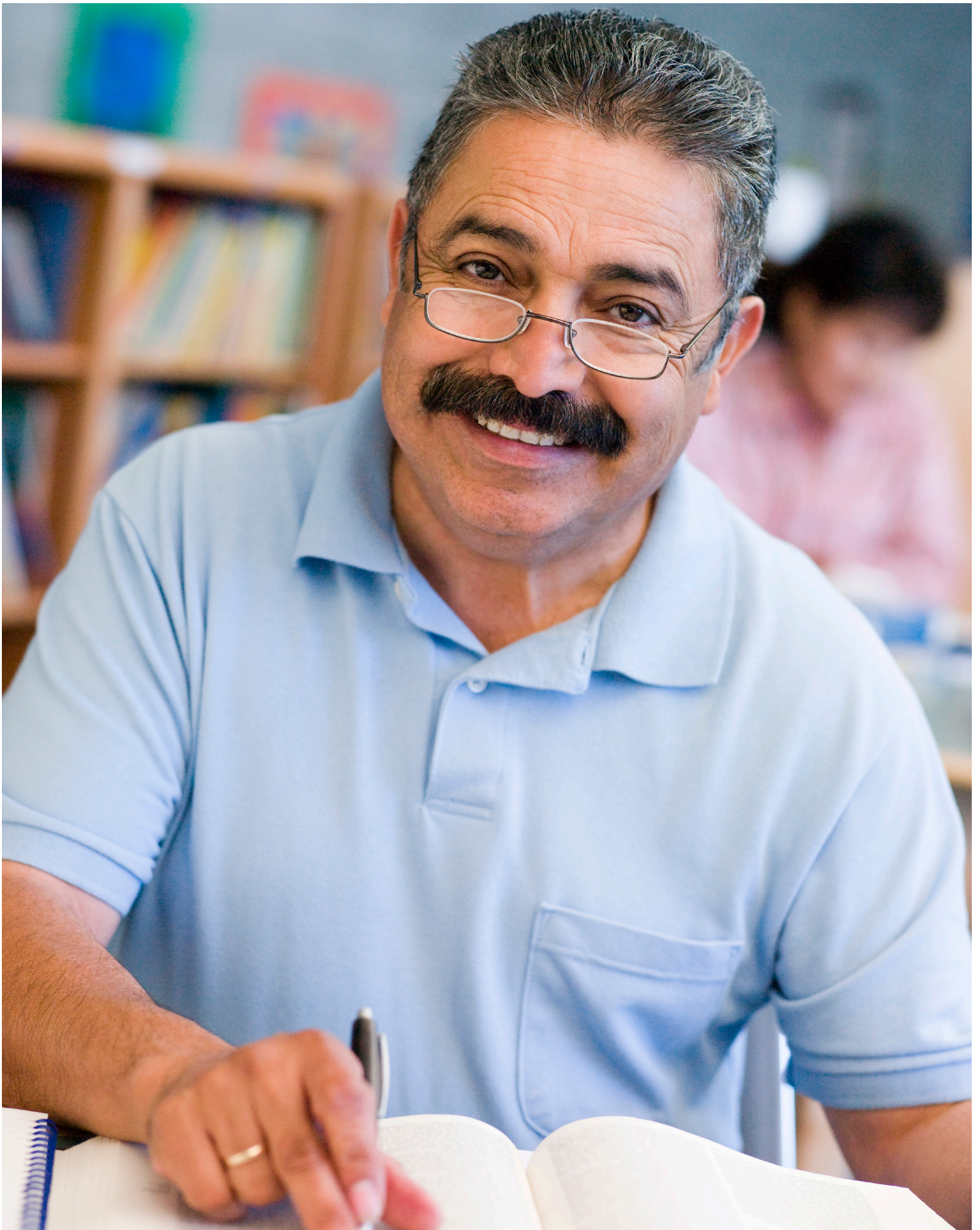
- Support NYC Department of Education and City University of New York (CUNY) educators in their efforts to align curricula and to make them culturally relevant
- Continue and expand programs that promote awareness of the costs of college and that provide real tools and incentives for smart education financing
- Expand innovative student mentoring programs (like HF's CREAR Futuros Initiative at 4 CUNY Campuses) to improve college retention and success
- Ensure that all schools offer Advanced Placement and College Now courses and are staffed with qualified teachers
- Offer the CLEP (College Level Examination Program) Exam to all seniors to leverage early college credits and lower college costs
- Provide CUNY free tuition for all city public school graduates finishing in the top 5% of their graduating class
- Increase aid for CUNY Summer Immersion programs to support college readiness

7. Adult Education

- Increase funding for CBO, CUNY, library and senior center adult literacy and General Equivalency Diploma (GED) programs including for 18-21 year olds
- Establish additional certification programs at CUNY schools for workers seeking career credentials including for essential workers in construction
- Expand Career and Technical Education schools and programs to offer high school students alternatives to college including English Language Learners and undocumented immigrants

8. Parent & Community Engagement

- Replicate and expand community-based initiatives that train Latino parents on how they can support their children's learning. One such example is HF's Pathways to Educational Excellence, a series of parent-tailored workshops on college preparation, dropout prevention and early childhood education
- Reform parent coordinator responsibilities and partner with community organizations to increase parent engagement, conduct leadership trainings to increase participation rates in school leadership teams and community education councils, and guide parents in organizing for school-based and system-wide improvements
- Support and expand community organization-run school parent resource centers to provide multilingual information and computer access regarding school issues
- Establish an ELL Parent Academy to prepare and assist parents and families in supporting their children's education, including teaching them how to participate in schools and manage their child's behavior and academic progress
- Strengthen and enforce public hearing and community approval rights for school openings, closures and reconfigurations



section 3:

supporting healthy lifestyles

Latino New Yorkers confront some of the most serious health challenges of any group in the city. Buffeted by poverty, environmental stressors, and limited access to affordable and quality health care, New York’s Latinos regularly rank among the city’s unhealthiest residents. Latinos are twice as likely as white New Yorkers to be diagnosed with diabetes and are at a dramatically higher risk for asthma, breast cancer, obesity, HIV/AIDS, among other health problems.

For Latino children, the bleak health landscape means increased visits to hospital emergency rooms to treat chronic asthma and other lung diseases caused by poor housing, air quality and health care. For Latino teens, rates of depression and suicide attempts are dramatically greater than they are for their peers. For older Latinos, diabetes and physical inactivity compound the health challenges implicit in aging.

For all Latinos, these health issues are made more difficult to treat by the lack of access to health care. Latinos have the lowest health insurance coverage rates of any group in New York City and many remain unaware of important changes that will take effect as a result of the full implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Despite the higher prevalence of risk factors, nearly every health disparity Latinos experience could be prevented or more effectively managed given timely access to health care and proactive health education.



section 3: supporting healthy lifestyles (continued)

There is a great deal that the next Mayor and City Council can do to improve the health of Latinos including:

1. Youth Development

- Enforce city compliance with school physical education requirements (daily gym classes for grades K-3 and at least 3 days per week for higher grades)
- Eliminate shame-based health education campaigns and invest in strength-based healthy-lifestyle educational models
- Implement extensive health education in schools, prioritizing nutrition and comprehensive sex education
- Provide free culturally and linguistically-competent mental health counseling to all young people
- Allocate funding to suicide prevention programs serving young people of color, especially for Latina teens who have the highest rates of suicide attempts in NYC

2. Combat Obesity and Create Green Light/Healthy Lifestyle Districts

- Incentivize small businesses to sell fresh fruits and vegetables (including in letter-grades), increase the number of city Green Cart permits, expand the city's Green Thumb program, and subsidize Community-Supported Agricultural (CSA) programs for low-income families
- Incorporate physical activity components into an anti-obesity campaign including funds for community-based fitness and health education programs
- Expand the city's Bike Share program to upper Manhattan and all boroughs including majority Latino neighborhoods
- Incorporate youth and adult recreational and fitness infrastructure in city parks and improve access to remote green spaces by increasing bus service/routes and adding highway overpasses

3. HIV/AIDS/HCV Prevention & Treatment

- Increase funding for the NYC Council Communities of Color (NYCCCOC) Initiative
- Incorporate testing opportunities into community events including parade pavilions and street fairs
- Provide Department of Health and Mental Hygiene approved physician education regarding HCV treatment and care
- Create a multi-year community mobilization campaign with stakeholders to address rising HIV infections among African American and Latino men who have sex with men
- Re-invest resources into borough-wide testing initiatives like Bronx Knows in all five boroughs
- Conduct town halls and community meetings to discuss the impact of declining resources and funding for HIV and AIDS in NYC and engage stakeholders on how NYC funds should be spent in order to reach an AIDS-free generation in NYC





4. NYS Health Benefit Exchange Support and Community Outreach

- Establish programs with CBOs to spread awareness and support enrollment in NYS Health Benefit Exchange
- Re-establish the Managed Care Consumer Assistance Program to provide ongoing support for NYS Health Benefit Exchange enrollees
- Launch and maintain ongoing public education campaigns focused on educating target populations on prevention and access to care of health disparities including diabetes, asthma, cancer and other diseases disproportionately impacting the Latino community
- Ensure universal access to linguistically appropriate support services, including the navigation of the healthcare system and social service programs
- Prioritize the development of a pipeline of Latino health professionals

5. Reproductive Justice

- Ensure continued access to Community Health Centers (CHCs) and Title X clinics with emphasis on sliding-scale fee programs
- Continue to ensure women in New York have access to a full range of reproductive health services (including abortion and contraception) without being misled or deceived into going to a Crisis Pregnancy Center

6. Safe Spaces

- Increase funding for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Homeless Prevention Programs
- Train the NYPD on harm reduction services like needle exchange programs in order to address police harassment of clients
- Incentivize medical professionals to pursue cultural awareness/sensitivity training
- Create a multi-year anti-homophobia community mobilization and social marketing campaign to address LGBTQ bias and prejudice

section 4:

integrating immigrants

New York City has a long and rich tradition of welcoming immigrants. As recently as 2011, there were more than 3 million foreign-born New Yorkers residing across the five boroughs. More than one-quarter of the city's immigrants are Latino and at least one-sixth are lacking legal immigration status. Immigrants have been essential to stabilizing and growing our city's economy. According to the Center for an Urban Future's analysis, job growth in immigrant neighborhoods far outpaced overall employment gains in recent decades (7% citywide vs. 34% in Washington Heights, 28% in Jackson Heights and 23% in Sunset Park from 1994 to 2004).

Our newest New Yorkers face a multitude of challenges – from language barriers to fraudulent businesses – that make life hard for their families and slow economic advancement. If New York wants immigrants to continue to contribute to the city's economic success, it must create the infrastructure to help immigrant workers and families succeed. Services for immigrant New Yorkers do not come close to meeting the need, particularly in key areas such as language instruction, legal protection and financial literacy and counseling.

As New York looks to Washington to address the plight of the city's undocumented neighbors, the city can build on recent accomplishments – Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and city laws limiting federal cooperation – to keep families together and facilitate a safe and prosperous future for our most vulnerable residents. Moreover, our city can continue to lead the nation as a pro-immigrant beacon by expanding rights and opportunities for all immigrants.

Hispanic Federation and other immigrant advocates will continue to work hard and push for federal immigration reform. Regardless of the outcome in Washington, our city must bolster government and nonprofit programs to meet the existing and potentially expanding need for immigrant services.



section 4: integrating immigrants (continued)

The next Mayor and City Council can help advance immigrant integration through the following actions:

1. Help Immigrants Achieve Citizenship

- Increase and baseline Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI) funding to \$25 million to serve an additional 50,000 new New Yorkers and expand the range of allowable activities to include:
 - pre-screening consultations to explore all avenues for legalization
 - tax preparation
 - identification document support
 - legal clinics
 - wage theft prevention and recovery services
 - employment assistance
 - fraud prevention and general community outreach
- Increase and baseline funding for immigrant adult literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes including the City Council Adult Literacy and DACA (Deferred Action) ESL Initiatives
- Allow for more practical formats and curricula for ESL and adult literacy instruction including focusing on essential worker (restaurant, construction, etc) training, school parent involvement skills and civic participation
- Work with financial institutions to establish a low-interest loan program to assist all immigrants with fees and fines for the legalization and citizenship application process

2. Protect Vulnerable Immigrants from Fraud

- Prevent immigration and employment services fraud through community outreach and enforce regulations – including increased fines – through NYC Department of Consumer Affairs sweeps to identify, investigate and terminate fraudulent practices
- Expand funding to all borough District Attorney's (DA) Offices to replicate the Manhattan DA's Immigrant Affairs Program

3. Immigrant Civic Engagement

- Pass legislation to restore voting rights to legal permanent resident immigrants for municipal elections

4. Stop Deporting New Yorkers and Keep Families Together

- Protect and expand city policies preventing local government cooperation and information sharing with federal immigration authorities
- Preserve Executive Order 41 and recent local laws limiting the NYC Department of Correction's cooperation with the US Department of Homeland Security's Immigration & Customs Enforcement division including the honoring of voluntary detainees
- Expand limits to federal cooperation to include NYPD
- Oppose participation in the federal Secure Communities (S-Comm) program
- Preserve and expand the new \$500,000 City Council Initiative establishing the nation's first public defender system for immigrants facing deportation. The city should work toward making this a universal right for all city residents facing deportation.

5. Don't Shut Out Immigrants

- Preserve and expand translation and interpretation policies and resources across all city agencies to ensure access for limited English proficient New Yorkers
- Establish a NYC Small Business Services Department Translation & Interpretation Unit to translate key forms, enact a multilingual hotline and deploy bilingual staff to better inform Latino small business owners of regulations and programs, and reduce the onslaught of fines received by immigrant small business owners
- Strengthen monitoring, city employee training and enforcement of the city's provision of translation and interpretation services
- Establish a municipal photo identification card via the city's library system or Health & Hospitals Corporation to ensure access to immigration, housing, banking and other core services for all New Yorkers including undocumented immigrants

6. Support Day Laborers

- Create Community Job Centers in all five boroughs to assist immigrant day laborers and other workers to safely find employment and offer a range of workforce development and support services including job development, health and safety training, adult literacy, job skills training, legal services, immigration assistance, tax preparation and other services

7. End Housing Discrimination Against Immigrants

- Enforce against landlord sweeps aiming to check documentation of suspected undocumented immigrant tenants for the purposes of eviction and rent increases
- Expand post-Sandy emergency rent vouchers to undocumented New Yorkers through city and private funds

8. Support DREAMers

- Create a \$20 million initiative to support college costs for undocumented youth who are ineligible for financial aid

Photograph courtesy of Jessica Guzman.



section 5:

economic empowerment and financial security

New York City is one of the world's most important centers of finance and commerce. Latinos are a key part of the city's economy representing one quarter of New York's labor force. But in many of the city's neighborhoods it has become increasingly difficult for families to make ends meet. Unemployment, especially among Latino youth, was already high when the 2008 Great Recession began and has only worsened in the intervening years. What's more, many Latinos, saddled with low educational attainment rates, are limited to jobs that pay cripplingly low wages. Much of the slow recovery has comprised of the creation of low-wage jobs with little to no benefits.

Beyond the matter of employment however, Latino families are faced with the impact of forces well outside of their control. The decline of the city's manufacturing sector and increases in housing, transportation and utility costs have combined to make New York City frighteningly unaffordable. For Latino families, whose median income is the lowest of any group in New York, this has meant living in substandard and often dangerous housing and depending on a strained network of public and private charities and food pantries for everything from children's clothing to groceries.

A major factor keeping our community from economically advancing is the cost and quality of housing. From growing homelessness to the lack of quality transitional, public or affordable housing, our community will never grow into a thriving middle class community without reforms aimed at dramatically increasing the number of affordable low- and middle-income housing units in every corner of the city.



section 5: economic empowerment and financial security (continued)

The next mayor and City Council can support working families and build a strong middle class by:

1. Creating Good Jobs

- Ensure city-subsidized jobs pay a living wage and benefit city residents
- Appoint a Job Creation Advisor to implement innovative strategies to create good-paying jobs in emerging sectors and economically depressed neighborhoods
- Support worker organizing and unionization efforts for fast food, car wash, airport, taxi and other essential workers through the city budget and other avenues
- Strengthen paid sick leave policies for small business employees
- Maximize city pensions to leverage local jobs and increase retirement options for nonprofit and small business employees
- Increase Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) funding to ensure 100,000 youth annually learn the importance of workplace behavior and financial literacy

2. Supporting Small Businesses

- Foster small business growth in Latino and immigrant neighborhoods by driving 20% of city procurement to Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) and by encouraging tourism in Upper Manhattan and the outer boroughs
- Appoint an MWBE Ombudsman to ensure city contracts are sufficiently benefitting Latino and other MWBE businesses
- End the overreliance on fines targeting small businesses that is stifling job growth
- Increase entrepreneurial training and apprenticeship programs to build the next generation of Latino small business owners and CEOs
- Centralize oversight on all activities related to small businesses into the Department of Small Business Services to make it a "One Stop Shop"

3. Expanding Workforce Development

- Bring immigration services, ESL, and workforce development programs together to form a model of integrated service delivery
- Use community-based organizations – who provide needed services and have strong reputations in the community – as an entry point for workforce development services for Latinos
- Develop and finance intermediary institutions that serve as a bridge between key system stakeholders and can help design and drive workforce strategies
- Seek out synergies between small-business support and workforce development programs to bring immigrant employers into the workforce development system.
- Ensure Workforce1 Centers serve all New Yorkers including those who face barriers such as a lack of a high school diploma or having a criminal record
- Re-designate targeted Special Populations WIA Funding (now part of Workforce 1) for Limited English Proficient (LEP) New Yorkers to provide vocational ESOL and worker skills training through community-based organizations
- Expand Bridge to Tomorrow GED Program to include contextualized ESOL and encourage vocational ESOL curricula to be used to help workers move up the economic ladder
- Ensure workforce development programs match growing industries including health care



4. Combating Poverty

- Establish a major transitional jobs and training program for public benefits recipients to rebuild our city's infrastructure and provide vital support services
- Significantly increase Administration for Children Services (ACS) and other childcare slots to support low- and middle-income working families seeking culturally and linguistically-appropriate programs
- Establish a Financial Literacy Initiative to partner with community based organizations and run multi-media advertisements to teach New Yorkers about basic budgeting, banking, credit and financial planning principles and resources
- Fight wage theft for vulnerable workers through a public education campaign, monitoring businesses and enforcing state law
- Support and enforce policies preventing government agencies and private companies from solely disqualifying job candidates based on criminal records or credit scores
- Expand the New York City Earned Income Tax Credit
- Support and pass progressive tax reforms including closing corporate loopholes and raising income taxes on high-income earners to support anti-poverty and education programs
- Implement alternatives to prison and detention for young, first time non-violent offenders and undocumented immigrants

5. Tackling Food Insecurity

- Combat child hunger and poor academic performance by providing free in-class breakfast and lunch to all city public school students
- Significantly increase the number of schools providing free summer lunches to youth
- Increase Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) funding to \$15 million for soup kitchens, food pantries and food banks
- Aggressively support the establishment of major supermarkets in neighborhoods lacking sufficient fresh fruits and vegetables

6. Promoting Affordable Housing

- Expand transitional housing options by restoring the Advantage NY Program
- Reform The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) by ensuring budget and operational transparency and increasing aid to speed up repairs and needed community investments
- Build and restore 200,000 Affordable & Middle-Income Housing Units in the next 4 years
- Expand the Alternative Enforcement Program to inspect and repair more buildings in struggling Latino neighborhoods
- Expand foreclosure prevention outreach efforts to preserve the Latino middle class
- Oppose mass evictions by increasing legal services funding for housing court consultations and representation
- Support the homeless by preserving the right to shelter and ensuring robust social safety net services for all residents



section 6:

environmental justice

Confronted with the stark warnings about the impact of climate change, cities across the country are launching efforts to mitigate the impact of issues such as air pollution and rising sea levels.

For Latinos, these efforts are especially important because they are disproportionately affected by environmental menaces. While some issues that threaten the health of Latinos nationally are largely absent from New York City (e.g. exposure to agricultural pesticides, limited access to potable water, etc.) Latinos in the city face very serious environmental hazards including disproportionately high rates of exposure to air pollutants and other environmental contaminants. This is especially true in those areas of the city where housing stock is substandard (including public housing facilities) and where Latinos come into direct contact with contaminants along highly trafficked roadways.

Latinos are also directly affected by policies that, in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, are designed to reshape the coastal contours of the city including the placement and or relocation of public and other low-income housing. Although New York City has made a number of advances that have improved the environmental quality of the city, many of these advances have largely bypassed Latino communities (e.g. bike share, increased open space, location of green jobs, etc.).



The next Mayor and City Council can promote environmental justice for Latino New Yorkers through the following reforms:

1. Solid Waste Management

- Complete the construction of the City’s marine transfer stations to reduce impacts of the clusters of land-based waste transfer stations primarily located in Latino neighborhoods - including the East 91st and Gansevoort marine transfer stations (which still requires \$25 million each from the City and State)
- Pass “capacity reduction” legislation for land-based waste transfer stations, once marine transfer stations become operational
- Increase residential recycling and launch commercial waste (the bulk of NYC’s waste) recycling campaign to both reduce reliance of land-based waste transfer stations and generate hundreds of new recycling jobs

2. Energy

- Support “re-powerings” of existing power plants and pursue renewable energy sources to both reduce local emissions and increase megawatt production
- Oppose the introduction of “waste-to-energy” technologies such as gasification, which are just newer forms of incineration (and regulated as such by government)
- Support distributed generation/micro-grids for The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments in coastal areas to prevent blackouts during severe weather events
- Increase investment in green buildings and retrofitting businesses to reduce energy use and costs

3. Climate Justice

- Mandate risk assessments of climate change impacts, and hazardous substances emergency control plans, for industrial uses that rely on chemical materials sited in Significant Maritime and Industrial Areas (SMIAs) in order to ensure the host communities are not exposed to toxic contaminants in the event of severe weather
- Require technical and financial assistance for small industrial businesses to help them reduce the risk of potential toxic exposures, increasing the resilience and sustainability of these jobs
- Support community-based organizations in their efforts to increase community resiliency through the development of Climate Justice Community Resiliency Centers, which are envisioned to consolidate resources for disaster preparedness and emergency management in order to provide a permanent location for vulnerable communities to access information and receive support before, during and after emergencies
- Require a Community Health Investigation to determine the health impacts of post-Sandy contamination, including an analysis of the impacts on community first responders and recovery workers. This analysis should be developed in collaboration with community-based organizations, and focus on the cumulative impacts to residents of coastal neighborhoods and workers of industrial waterfront communities that are vulnerable to storm surge, among other climate change impacts
- Increase the number of food distribution hubs to ensure a major storm does not cripple the city’s ability to feed New Yorkers
- Expand bus service to ensure future subway system disruptions following storms will not prevent New Yorkers in outer boroughs from evacuating and resuming their lives



section 7:

civil rights

Throughout the United States, Latinos face a number of significant challenges to their civil rights. Whether it is immigration policing practices or attacks on voting rights, basic civil rights seem to be under attack everywhere. As the recent federal court ruling demonstrated (Floyd, et. al v. City of New York, et. al.), Latinos in many of the city’s neighborhoods are regular targets for the New York Police Department’s (NYPD) “Stop and Frisk” program. Recently passed City Council legislation establishing an NYPD independent monitor and banning profiling will go a long way to changing this reality. However, much more is needed to ensure all New Yorkers feel safe and are not unfairly targeted based on their race, gender or religion.

Data released by the New York City budget office revealed that Latinos now account for 33% of all inmates in the city’s jails, a disproportionately high number compared to the city’s Latino population generally. We must do more to prevent our young men from ending up in prison and help those who have completed their sentences fully integrate back into society.

In addition, while voting rights may not be under siege in New York City as they are in other parts of the country, many Latinos in the city find it difficult to fully exercise their voting rights due to a lack of bilingual poll workers and faulty machinery.

These issues require a comprehensive civil rights strategy on the part of City Hall. We recommend the next Mayor and City Council work to achieve the following:

- Reform NYPD policies, training and practices to ensure Latinos and all New Yorkers are not profiled or stopped and frisked without criminal cause
- Establish an NYPD Task Force and training for the Transgender Community to better respond to hate crimes and unjust public disturbance complaints
- Reform the NYC Board of Elections (BOE) to ensure the rights of Latinos and Limited English Proficient (LEP) New Yorkers are upheld including drastically increasing the number of bilingual poll workers and improving training
- Pass a New York City voting rights act to ensure greater transparency and notification rights for changes to voting districts and BOE procedures



section 8:

women's rights

The majority of New York City's more than 2 million Latinos are women. In the workplace, in the classroom or at home, they are leading the Latinization of New York.

In order to continue contributing to the city, however, Latinas need the public infrastructure that can guarantee their success. Unfortunately, they also bear the brunt of a number of significant socio-economic challenges. At home, Latinas confront disproportionately high rates of domestic violence and few resources to help them escape their abusers. In the workplace, Latinas face a significant income wage gap when compared to their non-Latina peers. From increased access to child care and improved access to capital to grow their small businesses, from pay equity legislation to greater support for victims of domestic violence, Latinas need an advocate in City Hall.

The next Mayor and City Council can help empower Latinas through the following:



- Protect and expand women's access to comprehensive reproductive health services, including abortion access, without systematic or institutional barriers or deceptive practices
- Create awareness to stamp out domestic violence in our city and support domestic violence victims by increasing rent subsidy, shelter and community-based organization funding
- Increase NYPD capacity (including more bilingual staff) and training to ensure criminal complaints and U-Visa requests are correctly filed and processed immediately
- Enforce pay equity and anti-harassment laws through stings and employer education
- Expand Family Justice Center Funding to community-based organizations who provide more welcoming venues for many women
- Encourage financial institutions to be flexible with regards to identification requirements and past financial setbacks attributed to former partners
- Similar to the city's anti-bullying campaign, launch a Crime Bystander Reporting & Intervention Training Initiative
- Support the expansion of paid family leave policies
- Launch a community education program to combat sexual harassment and violence

section 9:

arts and culture

Latino arts and cultural institutions in New York City range from community-based theater programs to world-class museums. Each of these organizations serves a valuable role. Whether it is preserving the history of the Latino community, providing a space for artists to create and present their works to the public or engaging children and the elderly in the arts, these groups contribute to the cultural effervescence of New York City.

But there is more to the arts than just art. The economic impact of arts institutions, particularly on distressed communities where Latinos are disproportionately present, cannot be overstated. In East Harlem, for example, a recent study showed that for every \$1 dollar that the city invested in El Museo del Barrio, the institution generated \$19 dollars, much of which circled back into the local community. The influx of tourists, the creation of spaces where artists can commercialize their work, the availability of employment opportunities for local residents, and the ripple effects on other sectors of Latino communities' economies (e.g. restaurants, cafes, retail stores, etc.) are just some of the reasons why Latino cultural institutions need support from City Hall.

Unfortunately, many Latino arts organizations are unable to compete for public and private support against other larger, more established organizations. They lack both the fundraising connections and the administrative capacity to create and implement development strategies that can provide long-term stability.

The next Mayor and City Council can improve the condition of Latino arts and cultural organizations by:



- Committing 1% of the city's expense budget to arts and cultural institutions including a focus on smaller nonprofit organizations
- Establishing a line-item funding stream for additional programming and general operating support for Latino nonprofit arts and cultural organizations
- Ensuring diversity on proposal review panels for the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs
- Reforming and increasing Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) funding to support existing awardees based on current attendance figures and additional smaller institutions
- Establish a lower cap for capital budget requests from smaller nonprofits that require lower dollar infrastructure and equipment investments
- Protecting artistic freedom and freedom of speech of all artists including non-English and multilingual, multi-cultural expression

conclusion

New York City is in the midst of one of its most important elections in recent history. After twelve years of a powerful executive in City Hall, the next Mayor – and the next Public Advocate, Comptroller and City Council – will be refashioning the internal dynamics of the city’s political decision-making. This change in the way politics works in New York City is occurring alongside a continued and fundamental shift in the city’s demographic and socio-economic realities. The next generation of NYC leadership is inheriting a city that is more diverse than ever and that confronts the very real threat of growing disparities in everything from income to educational attainment.

How the next generation of leaders approach these and other problems is of great concern to all New Yorkers, but especially so to Latino New Yorkers. Confronted with challenges that stretch from the classroom to the boardroom, Latinos are looking for their elected leadership to address many of the structural issues that affect their communities. The Hispanic Federation’s *La Gran Manzana: The Road Ahead for NYC’s Latino Community* is a guide for how policymakers can best address these issues.

The recommendations contained in this report reflect the collective efforts of New York City’s Latino nonprofit sector. These organizations know their communities – the challenges they face and opportunities they can leverage – better than anyone else. They work daily providing direct care to families, investing in community development initiatives, and advocating for changes that improve the lives of the New Yorkers they serve. As the candidates for the most important elective offices in the city enter the final stretch of the campaign season, we believe that the practical and common sense recommendations outlined in the previous pages must serve as the starting point for discussions about the future of New York.

Hispanic Federation and its network of nonprofits have a long tradition of working closely with elected officials – irrespective of party affiliation – to craft policy solutions to some of our community’s most significant problems. By combining real-world, community-based experience with research, we are able to guide policymakers toward legislative and administrative innovations that yield results.

We urge all candidates seeking elected office in New York City to engage and act upon these proposals. Together, we can find ways of improving the lives of Latinos and all New York City residents. Together, we can make *La Gran Manzana* work for everyone.



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