

Why Oregon Latino/a/x mental health is important to all Oregonians

The Latino/a/x population is a large and growing community in urban and rural Oregon

- 13.1% of Oregon's population is Latino/a/x.
- Most of Oregon's Latino/a/x population is located in rural and urban (and not frontier) counties. Between 15% and 36% of the population in Oregon's rural counties is Latino/a/x, and between 13% and 27% of Oregon urban counties' population is Latino/a/x.
- The native Latino/a/x population has grown by 21% since 2000.
- One in four students currently enrolled in the Oregon public school system is Latino/a/x.
- An Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Department of Human Services study analyzed 30 years of administrative data. It found that Oregon's Latino/a/x K–12 students are almost twice as likely as the general student body to access mental health referrals and services from school settings.
- Health disparities such as COVID-19 and many others disproportionately affect this community.

Key recommendations of *Crisis de Nuestro Bienestar: A Report on Latino Mental Health in Oregon**

1. Build on Oregon's work toward health equity by increasing diversity in and providing training for the workforce, pipeline and credentialing of culturally and linguistically specific, trauma-informed mental health providers.
 - » Increase systemic resources and implement policy and organizational structures to address the scarcity of and support for mental health providers that serve Latinos/as/x and rural populations.
 - » Increase access to behavioral and mental health services by building systemic supports for comprehensive care in school districts and schools. Scale down existing culturally specific providers' caseloads to account for the time and labor needed to manage cultural complexity. This will decrease the number of clients existing providers can serve. This recommendation

* Please see the full report at https://www.oregon.gov/oac/Documents1/Crisis_de_Nuestro_Bienestar_-_Latino_Mental_Health_in_Oregon.pdf for specific recommendations regarding increasing access and implementation.



highlights the urgency for Oregon to simultaneously train and develop more mental health providers qualified to serve the Latino/a/x community.

- » Reconceptualize the use of metrics, data collection and analyses in research as iterative tools for system transformation.
 - » Embed evaluation in all programs and actions related to improving Latino/a/x mental health care.
2. Establish as standard practice the appointment of practitioners of color, Communities of Color and other historically underserved groups on all licensing boards and public bodies.
 3. Community integration is key: Integrating culturally and linguistically specific mental health care with community services that Latinos/as/x in Oregon regularly use will address three prominent barriers for Latinos/as/x in Oregon — access, retention and stigma.

Create dedicated spaces and places for Latino/a/x clients by increasing systemic resources and implementing financial incentives to increase culturally specific mental health programming that combats stigma.

4. Ask the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to work with the Oregon Department of Education to address provider workforce needs for Latinos/as/x and other Communities of Color in Oregon.
5. Increase funding for Latinos/as/x and other historically under-resourced behavioral and mental health services in Oregon, with specific targeted resource allocations for funding increases that ensure equity.
6. Resource and support a Latino behavioral health task force that centers equity for Latinos/as/x. Also create a larger culturally specific behavioral health task force for historically underserved communities.

These task forces will focus on:

- Applying culturally specific lenses to behavioral and mental health, and
- Using the *Crisis de Nuestro Bienestar: A Report on Latino Mental Health in Oregon* to inform an action agenda for the Oregon Legislature.

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The full *Crisis de Nuestro Bienestar* report: https://www.oregon.gov/oac/Documents1/Crisis_de_Nuestro_Bienestar_-_Latino_Mental_Health_in_Oregon.pdf

This document will be available in Spanish, and may be available in other languages, in the near future (as of 03/09/21). Contact the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office at 503-302-9725 or email OACO.mail@oregon.gov.