

Opening CG: Community Assessment

"I like the community work. I like going out to the community talking about Head Start."

"It's something that I was drawn to..."

"I always tend to be the person who helps out and I bring that to my job.

Nat sound..."It's going to come in handy. Nice to see you. Thank you.."

"I mean I think it's something, it's something you either have or you don't."

Nat sound meeting with HS staff..."there's a large focus on the community assessment...."

"The biggest challenge with the community assessment is the gathering of data."

Nat sound meeting with HS staff..."In the beginning just write down the trends that our staff are identifying and then go from there, but we really want to focus on the families that we are serving..."

"You don't want to gather too much of nothing. You want it to be relevant."

"We shouldn't fear computers. They're actually really helpful. You know you go from counting to actually just plugging in a number and getting the results that you're looking for. It saves so much time."

Nat sound meeting... "The parent input is really important as you well know..."

"I don't think that the families relate to me just because I'm a Latina. They relate to me I think because I take the time to get to know them. And I appreciate their situation and I'm honest and sincere and, you know, there's a level of trust that I build."

"I like the thought of being a helping hand in someone's life. To think that, you know, if you think of life as a journey, you know, it's an honor for me to think that maybe I helped someone along the way."

CG: Vanessa Otero

CG: Understanding The Hispanic Community  
In Your Area

Building Block 2

Nat sound... "A lot of the families came from down in here..."

Narrator:

So far, we have seen how the Hispanic population in the United States is changing. But because the Hispanic community is growing as we speak, and because Hispanics living in the United States originate from so many different parts of the world, you can only best serve your area if you learn about the Hispanics living in your community. The best way to do that is to modify your community assessment process to take this growing population into account.

CG: Janis Santos, Executive Director

"I think that although I am a director that loves change, I welcome change, I think that it's trying to convince the staff that change is good for our program and that sometimes we can't keep doing things the way we do because it is a very changing environment."

CG:

Successful Community Assessment

Step 1. Plan and Organize

Step 2.: Design Data Collection

Step 3. Gather Data

Step 4. Review and Analyze Data

Step 5. Make Decisions

Narrator:

A successful community assessment consists of five parts; planning your strategy, designing how you will collect the data, gathering the data and then reviewing and analyzing what you have collected so you can use what you have learned to make decisions about location, recruitment, staff and programs. Each of these steps will be impacted in some way by this growing Hispanic population.

CG: Plan

Nat sound ... "I think what we can talk about is the process that we want to use, who will be involved in it..."

For example, once you put together your Community Assessment team, you will need to tell them how the Hispanic community in your area is growing and why they need to make sure they consider this growth during each part of the community assessment process.

Hispanic Head Start parents are an important source of information. They can tell you about living conditions, child health care concerns and working conditions that give you a window into the needs of local Hispanic families.

CG: Brad Edmondson, Population Analyst

Brad Edmondson:

"The Census Bureau does a good job of counting Americans but it does not do a perfect job. And, unfortunately for Head Start, the very audience that Head Start is targeting, low income families with young children, is one of the groups where the Census Bureau really struggles to do a good job."

CG: 1990 Census

8,700 in Oakland

9,400 in Miami

16,000 in Dallas

Narrator:

One statistician recently reported that the 1990 census missed at least 5 percent of Head Start eligible children. That may not sound like a lot at first but it translates into 8,700 children missed in Oakland, 9,400 uncounted kids in Miami and 16,000 in Dallas.

Collecting data about Hispanic families in need is difficult because they make up the majority of the estimated 10 million undocumented immigrants. Because of immigration concerns and general distrust of government, many Hispanics will not participate in surveys. Add that to the fact that many immigrants share housing and tend to move frequently, and you can see how official statistics under-represent the population most in need of Head Start.

Edmondson:

"There's not a perfect correlation between the tools of market research that are used for McDonalds or 7-11 and the tools of research that are appropriate for Head Start centers because after all, it's not a for-profit company. But there is still a lot of use that can be gained at Head Start by adopting some of these very simple market research techniques to get a very sharp understanding of where the next one thousand children are coming from."

CG: Design Data Collection

Narrator:

Population analyst Brad Edmondson has created a step by step strategy to collect data that can help locate un-enrolled Head Start eligible children.

Edmondson:

"If you can add and subtract and multiply and divide, you can do this. Basically, what happens is you get a list of your current enrollees, children who are currently in programs, and then you compare that with a list of children who are eligible for your programs and you see how well you are doing neighborhood by neighborhood."

Narrator:

This Head Start in Springfield, Massachusetts was one of the first to try this new strategy.

CG: Janis Santos, Executive Director

Janis Santos:

"The sign of the growing number of Hispanic families moving into the Springfield area are the number of businesses that are increasing here, we see them everywhere."

Narrator:

The Springfield program is starting its three year review and Vanessa Otero will head the project. Otero wears two hats. For part of the year, she's the center's Migrant Family Specialist. But in the off-season this year, she'll spend most of her time on the review. The center's other specialists will provide input, but the overall responsibility is hers.

CG: Vanessa Otero, Program Design Manager

Otero:

"You have to find the information, one, then you have to decide whether or not it's valuable. And, decide whether or not it's a trend, or affecting large pockets, or a big enough pocket of the community that you serve in and then, you have to find, figure out what that all means. You have to do the analysis of it."

CG: Gather Data

First, Otero located the list of current Head Start enrollees in the computer system. The Center had organized the data to

include, name, address and age. They put it in an Excel format at Springfield, but any spreadsheet program could work.

To figure out who is not being served Otero set out to find Head Start eligible data.

While not perfect, the best source for a good list of income eligible families in your area is the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families list. This list varies by state, but usually contains the addresses and ages of families with children that have applied for welfare.

CG: [www.hsnrc.org](http://www.hsnrc.org) for a list of regional offices and state collaboration directors

Temporary assistance is administered differently from state to state. The best way to get the data is to contact the state's Head Start collaboration director.

For planning purposes, be aware that this list is readily available in some states, in other states it can prove more difficult. The Office of Head Start is continuing to work with the collaboration directors to make the process easier.

Nat sound ..."I think the maps are really good. We captured a really accurate number of the areas..."

Once you have both lists entered into your spreadsheet program, your goal is to compare them to see if you are missing families and to get some idea of where the missing families live.

Nat sound... "So are we targeting the right areas?..."

One way to do this would be to create a computer map that would pinpoint the locations of the families on both of your lists.

To make the map, you will need to take the addresses and turn them into a format that map making programs can read. It's called geocoding--creating a numerical code that represents a geographical location.

There are several sources of free geocoding. A geocoding site takes these addresses and turns them into numerical codes, also known as latitude and longitude, the most accurate way to locate a position on a map.

The final step is to take your numerical code list and enter it into a basic mapping program. There are many available at reasonable prices.

Edmondson:

"People who run Head Start centers aren't used to working with demographic statistics and it can be a little overwhelming the first time you are confronted with them. My advice to a Head Start Director who wants to use demographics to sharpen a community assessment would be to find the person in the office who's most comfortable with computers and software and to work with that person to develop those skills."

Narrator:

While the welfare list is considered a more accurate list for our purposes than the Census, it too has shortcomings. Many families are reluctant to apply for welfare because they are suspicious of government agencies.

Edmondson:

"Using statistics only to get a sense of what's going on in an area is kinda like looking through a dirty window and only you have to go outside and clean the window to really get the clearest view of what's going on in the neighborhood. You have to walk around and talk to people and go door to door and really get a sense of what's going on in the neighborhood. But the value of using statistics is that it does give you a broad outline of what's going on so it can show you which neighborhoods you need to focus on."

Narrator:

A successful community assessment includes a mix of different kinds of data...

Nat sound... "translation is a definite need..."

not only data collected in the form of numbers but also data collected in the form of words either from conversations or written surveys.

Nat sound... "parent meetings, home visits, all of that..."

There are many forms available in the Head Start Community Assessment workbook that can help you document and analyze these conversations.

CG: Gathering Places

Church services  
Markets  
Laundromats  
Bodegas  
Meeting places

To collect these data, look for gathering places for the new immigrant Hispanic community like Spanish language church services and church dinners, Hispanic markets, laundromats, informal bodegas or meeting places.

The data you collect could include family size, ages of children, education levels of parents, transportation problems, child care issues, and health and disability needs.

CG: Review and analyze data

Narrator:

Once you have your maps as well as the data you collected from parents at the center and by walking around meeting people and observing the neighborhood, you'll need to make some sense of what you have learned.

This is probably one of the most important parts of the process.

Nat sound... "And it looks like we have families that might be moving out of the Springfield area..."

You will need to identify and prioritize the needs of this new population, looking not only at size and location but also some of the other issues affecting this community.

Santos:

"One of the things that we're noticing is that the, at one time the Hispanic population seemed to be centered in one area in the city of Springfield and that's definitely changed now. They've branched out to other areas in the city."

"We may want to look at moving a site if we have to, to accommodate those children."

CG: Make Decisions

Nat sound... "If they have input they buy into it, and they understand it better..."

If the Hispanic community is growing in your area, you will have a lot to think about.

Population growth trends will probably be first and foremost in your mind.

Nat sound... "and housing has moved up the hill..."

Your center's location and whether or not the Hispanic community is nearby will likely be a concern.

And if your data show that most Hispanic families prefer home-based care or if you are already operating to capacity, you may initially need to think about expanding your home-based programs and later examine if the Hispanic community is appropriately represented at the center.

You will also need to think about how your services will need to change. Will you need Spanish speaking teachers and teaching materials; family service workers who speak the home language and can provide the handouts in Spanish; and, who on your staff will need to get up-to-date on the best way to teach literacy so a child moves forward in both their home language as well as English.

For many families, immigration can be traumatic. What kind of mental stress are children and families under and will you need to think about a bilingual mental health professional to address those needs.

How can you properly test a child for disabilities if your tests are in English and your child only speaks Spanish.

And what kind of foods can your cook make that will make these children feel comfortable and ready to learn?

Santos:

"We see it maybe not so much as a challenge but a new way of doing things, a new way of looking at things, but knowing that this is going to help these families and these children need us and that's what Head Start staff do."

One thing is certain. You will need to make changes to your program. The next two parts offer a road map as to what those changes might be and how to best serve the needs of your growing Hispanic families and children.

CG: Next...Meeting the Needs of Hispanic Families