



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 6
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Cultivating Hispanic Community Involvement



Beyond Translation

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Why Go Beyond?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 6 office in Dallas Texas, began the *Beyond Translation* effort in 2005 to improve communications and collaboration with the Hispanic community. Over the past several years, the Agency came to realize that in addition to translating documents into Spanish to inform the Hispanic community of EPA's programs and activities, it was important to ensure that EPA was addressing the needs of the community as well as encouraging better environmental stewardship. Through the *Beyond Translation* effort, EPA is proactively seeking new opportunities to effectively engage this growing sector of the American population, which to date remains largely under-represented in the Agency's agenda-setting process.



Who is the target audience?

The effort targets the Hispanic community, including representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs); local, state, and federal government; business; media; and academia.



What do we strive to achieve?

- ♣ **Identify** environmental and related public health challenges in the Hispanic community and translate them into mutually-beneficial partnerships;
- ♣ **Build** an education / recruitment / career development pipeline to address the long-standing under-representation of Hispanics in EPA's workforce; and
- ♣ **Enhance** communication networks between EPA's programs and their

Hispanic constituents so as to ensure that EPA's agenda reflects priorities of the Hispanic community.



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The 2006 & 2007 Beyond Translation Forums

On October 17-18, 2006, EPA Region 6 hosted the first *Beyond Translation* forum in San Antonio, Texas.

The forum brought together a cross-section of more than 100 Hispanic leaders. Discussions focused on addressing environmental challenges and opportunities, exploring ideas for improving the Agency's service to Hispanics, and enhancing partnerships and networks. As a result of the forum, four workgroups were formed to address the following issues that were identified as priority concerns in the Hispanic community.

The topics included:

- Health and the Environment
- Environmental Careers, Recruitment, & Development of Hispanics
- Economic Development
- Communications



The workgroups worked together for one year and reported on their progress to an audience of 100 community leaders at the second *Beyond Translation* forum held in Houston, Texas on October 10 -12, 2008.



What Has Been Accomplished?

Since its inception, EPA's *Beyond Translation* initiative has:

- ▶ Increased Hispanic applicant pool for environmental health-related grants.
- ▶ Assisted six communities in addressing environmental challenges.
- ▶ Increased distribution of environmental education tools.
- ▶ Created collaborative partnerships with EPA's multimedia programs, sister organizations, business organizations, and academia.

▶ Created opportunities for students to learn about EPA's mission and career opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math.

▶ Shared resources and tools for greater access to economic opportunities.

▶ Created a *Beyond Translation* electronic network and webpage as a tool for sharing environmental information, opportunities and resources available to communities.



The EPA laboratory facility in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina held its own *Beyond Translation* forum on October 3, 2007. Its success has led to more states joining in the *Beyond Translation* effort.

Helping Create Healthier Communities

Due in part to the 2006 *Beyond Translation* forum, low-income residents of Nueces County, Texas, will receive assistance in addressing longstanding environmental and related health concerns through an education initiative.

Lionel and Janie Lopez have worked hard with local citizens over the last several years to help address persistent environmental and health problems that continue to plague the *colonias* of Texas, substandard housing settlements located in several parts of the state that today still lack basic government services and infrastructure. Through their organization, the South Texas Colonias Initiatives (SCTI), the Lopezes have focused past efforts on assisting the residents of the *colonias*, a predominantly Hispanic population, in identifying the environmental problems in their communities and developing a better understanding of the implications on the health of their children and families. In support of SCTI's work, EPA awarded the organization a \$12,000 grant in 2007 to work with local residents to develop an environmental health training project and a health fair for at least two *colonias*. These initiatives are intended to bolster SCTI's efforts to enhance the communities' understanding of environmental risks and their potential health implications.

Los Tres Amigos children's health video and booklet reached a large audience as a result of the effective networks created from the *Beyond Translation* forums. The Spanish language video / booklet is designed to heighten awareness about environmental health concerns in and around the home.

Citizens of Lubbock, Texas, helped organize the cleanup of an important local waterway after learning about EPA's *Beyond Translation* initiative.

Early last spring, 60 volunteers joined members of the Guadalupe Neighborhood Association in their first effort to clean up "El Arroyo", a local waterway that has suffered from years of neglect. With assistance from the City of Lubbock and EPA's Environmental Justice program staff, citizens initiated plans to restore the creek to its natural beauty by collecting trash and debris, trimming trees, and preparing the area for the extraction of concrete slabs dumped in the waterway in the aftermath of the tornado that hit the area in 1970. The Association plans to continue this effort to create more green space in the neighborhood bordering the waterway. Long-term plans include the development of a recreational area for Lubbock's children and their families.



Addressing Children's Health

EPA awarded \$10,000 from its Children's Health funds to the Southwest Center for Pediatric Environmental Health to present a workshop, *El Terror Invisible: Preventing Exposure to Agricultural Chemicals* for Promotores. The four-hour interactive workshop will teach Hispanic health promoters how to prevent accidental exposure to pesticides and to share their message with other families and co-workers in their communities.

EPA's Asthma Program awarded \$60,000 under a competitive grant process to the City of Houston for the BREATHE Project to reach 165 low-income families with asthmatic children. The program leverages its resources with other community-based organizations to enhance residents' awareness regarding asthma triggers, lead poisoning prevention, and other household risks.



Creating a Pipeline for Advancement



Pipeline for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE)

Establishment of the PACE Workgroup was an important outcome of the first *Beyond Translation* forum in San Antonio, Texas, in 2006. Working to meet its charge to develop a strategy to prepare and guide middle and high school students towards a career in the environmental and health fields, the workgroup has sought to expand its outreach efforts by leveraging the goals of the Administration's STEM initiative, which seeks to encourage more students to enter the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. In particular, the PACE effort is a four-prong strategy to:

1. Enhance middle and high school students' awareness of careers in the STEM fields;
2. Promote college-level student enrollment in the STEM fields;
3. Help provide opportunities for student involvement in environmental and related health projects through internships at EPA and other federal agencies; and
4. Provide career development opportunities for federal employees so as to help prepare them for senior management positions in the federal government.

Chucho Salva el Dia, a Spanish language DVD, was launched at Brentwood Middle School to a very enthusiastic audience.



Students Become Scientists for a Day

Students from Brentwood Middle School in San Antonio, Texas, received real-world scientific experience on October 17, 2006.

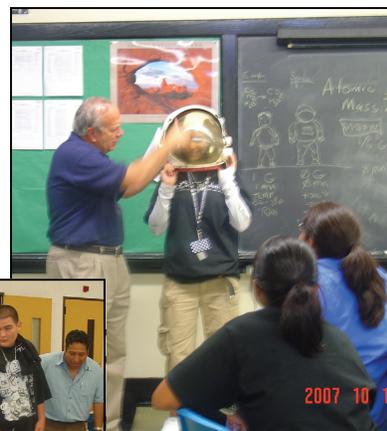
The day began with a presentation on the important role we each play in protecting our environment, followed by the launching of the Spanish-language DVD on pollution prevention, *Chucho Salva El Dia*, created by EPA Region 6. The students spoke enthusiastically about the importance of disposing of trash properly, using fertilizers sparingly, and recycling to protect the environment. At Woodland Lake Park, the students became scientists for the day through their participation in **World Water Monitoring Day**. This fun-filled activity led by the Texas Watch Volunteer Environmental Monitoring program gave students first-hand experience in measuring what is happening in the environment around them and enhanced their understanding of water quality issues. The students also had an opportunity to interact with real scientists.



Student Forums

EPA and partners conducted student forums in Houston, Texas

On October 10, 2007, EPA partnered with scientists and other officials from the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Houston Health Museum, EPA Houston Lab, City of Houston Health Department, and Houston Independent School District to conduct one-day student forums at **Milby and Stephen F. Austin High Schools** in Houston, Texas. The effort was designed to showcase the broad array of careers in science and engineering and to highlight the crucial need for a highly-skilled workforce these organizations are anticipating in the future. The forums also provided students with a unique opportunity to participate in a range of hands-on, interactive scientific activities directly related to the mission of the organizations.



Preparing for the Future

On September 5, 2007, the National Organization for Mexican American Rights (NOMAR), co-lead organization of the PACE Workgroup, held its first Senior Executive Service (SES) forum in San Antonio, Texas. The forum was conducted to follow up on a recommendation of the workgroup to bring together Hispanic SES managers in the federal service to develop a strategy for preparing and recruiting students into federal government careers. One of the key outcomes of this first meeting was the establishment of a partnership among federal agencies to 1) promote educational and recruitment activities to increase the pool of Hispanic applicants seeking federal government employment and 2) prepare current federal government employees for senior management positions, including the SES ranks.

On December 3, 2007, a second SES forum was held in Washington, D.C. to follow up on discussions initiated in the September meeting in San Antonio. The second forum was conducted through a partnership between the National Park Service and NOMAR and expanded outreach efforts to include other federal agencies. The decision to convene an "SES Summit" in April 2008 was a key outcome of the meeting. Participating agencies agreed that the proposed summit will be designed to bring together 25 SES managers and prospective SES candidates from their respective agencies. The objective of the April meeting, which will be held at the Department of Commerce in Washington, D.C., is to provide a forum through which SES managers can help mentor and provide guidance to the SES candidates.



Enforcement Initiatives Assisting Hispanic Communities

Partnership with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)

EPA Region 6 partnered with TCEQ to conduct a survey of ambient air quality along the Houston Ship Channel, an area with a large Hispanic population. EPA Region 6's Geographic Initiative (RGI) program funded the use of the Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer (TAGA) mobile air monitoring unit to facilitate air sampling. The TAGA unit is a self-contained, mobile laboratory capable of real-time sampling and analysis of air emissions. A FLIR® ThermaCam Gas-FinderIR infrared camera was also used to identify potential sources of emissions that were detected by the TAGA. Targeted areas included the Manchester community, Galena Park, Battleground Park, and

Bayport. Results of the sampling effort can be viewed at the final report at:

<http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6en/a/taga-pics/07-tag-a-results.pdf>

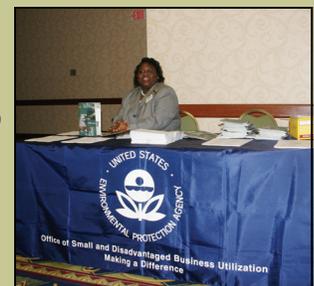


EPA Collaboration with City of Houston

On November 8, 2007, Houston Mayor Bill White, met with Granta Nakayama, EPA's Assistant Administrator for the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, to discuss air toxics emissions in the Houston area. As a result of the meeting, EPA and the City of Houston are developing a collaborative strategy to help address the concern of high levels of benzene emissions in the Houston area. The strategy will include surveillance and enforcement activities and a mechanism to identify benzene emissions that are unaccounted for from specific sources. EPA will continue its close cooperation, coordination, and collaboration with state and local officials to address air quality issues in the Houston/Galveston area, a major urban area with a significant Hispanic population.

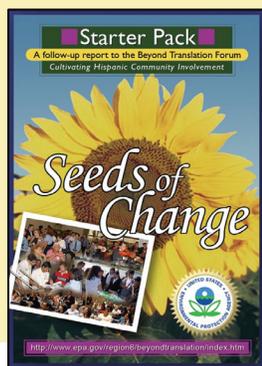
Environmental Results Through Economic Development

The Economic Development Workgroup presented two economic development workshops in San Antonio and Houston, Texas. The group concentrated on identifying the needs or weaknesses of smaller organizations seeking resources from local, state or federal government. Presentations highlighted the EPA Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) grant; US-Mexico Border 2012 Grant Program; supplemental environmental projects, as well as assistance under the Environmental Justice program for dispute resolutions. The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) which assists nonprofits and minority businesses in seeking funding opportunities, provided information on local resources.



EPA Beyond Translation Commitments for 2008

-  Implement a pesticide awareness initiative targeting agriculture workers and their families
-  Conduct a Student Forum for 200 students
-  Conduct an economic development workshop
-  Improve recruitment efforts of Hispanic applicants including for the Senior Executive Service candidate pool
-  Enhance communication networks at the national level, including via the web
-  Host the 3rd Beyond Translation forum



Work in Progress

Pesticide Collaborative Workgroup of El Paso area

EPA staff, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Department of Health, New Mexico Environmental Health Department, Texas Department of Agriculture, Pan American Health Organization, the Migrant Farm Workers Coalition, and other organizations are working together on a pesticide initiative for the El Paso area. Over the past several months the workgroup has been developing a research project to evaluate migrant workers' exposure to organophosphates. In addition, the group is working to improve binational communication on acute pesticide exposure, and to develop a communication strategy for agriculture workers.



Work in Progress

Work in Progress

Plans to conduct three student forums in schools along the US-Mexico border area are currently underway.

Locations & Dates:

- 1. Ojinaga, Chihuahua, Mexico** (includes students from Presidio, Texas)
Date: April 22, 2008
- 2. Palomas, Chihuahua, Mexico** (includes students from Columbus, New Mexico)
Projected Date: Early Summer 2008
- 3. El Paso, Texas**
Projected Date: Fall 2008



Members of EPA's *Beyond Translation* team are supporting the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to get the word out on the Texas Emission Reduction Plan (TERP) by encouraging Hispanics to apply for TERP funds. EPA's efforts include outreach to Hispanic business leaders, media and trade organizations, and also assisting with translation into Spanish. TERP grants are available to individuals, businesses, nonprofits, school districts, and government agencies that own and operate heavy duty vehicles or equipment in the eligible counties. New and upgraded equipment pollutes less and improves the air quality in Texas. Applications will be accepted through April 1, 2008. For more information, please visit www.terpgrants.org or call 1-800-919-TERP (8377).



BEYOND TRANSLATION TEAM

*Cultivating Hispanic Community Involvement
in Environmental Protection*

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2006-2007 Partners

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Minority Business Development Agency

Mothers for Clean Air

National Organization for Mexican American Rights (NOMAR)

Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (TEJAS)

U.S. Department of Human & Health Services—Region VI

U.S. EPA HQ/OARM/Human Capital Planning Branch/Office of Human Resources

U.S. EPA Office of Radiation and Indoor Air

U.S. EPA Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

U.S. EPA Region 6, Management Division - Hispanic Outreach Initiative

U.S. EPA Region 6, Multimedia Planning and Permitting Division

U.S. EPA Region 6, Pesticides, Toxics, & Underground Storage Tanks Branch

U.S. EPA Region 6, Regional Geographic Initiative

U.S. EPA Region 6, US-Mexico Border Program

We are on the web!

www.epa.gov/region6/beyondtranslation