



Texas Policymaking Lacking Latino Policy Research Leadership

Latino-based policy research leadership is sorely lacking. Limited evidence exists regarding Latino-based research and policy impact aligned with improvements among Latino *bienestar* (well-being) indicators. Of particular concern are impacts on those Latinos who are at-risk or who are in poverty, less educated, unemployed, and/or in poor health.

In response, the LTPC and collaborative partners successfully implemented the pilot initiative, “Making Research Count: Translating Latino Research into Policy”, on November 3-4, 2023. The twelve selected ‘Fellows’ from academic institutions and non-profit organizations completed the initial 2-day training. The goal is to increase policy research that informs equitable policymaking, leading to increasing economic mobility opportunities and improvement in Latino *bienestar*.

Over the next 9 – 12 months, the Fellows, LTPC, and training partners will continue to target the training objectives:

2. To increase the skill set of Latino researchers in policy brief development, messaging, and advocacy in the policymaking process.
3. To produce a Latino Policy Briefing report encompassing cross-issue human capital investment needs.
4. To increase the number of Latinos/ leaderships conducting policy research and advocacy.

The training is the first step toward creating new ideas, policies, and program approaches that are needed to address the inequities and disparities that Latinos continue to experience. Latino-based policy research can provide needed leadership to inform and influence change to address decades of inequities and barriers to social and economic prosperity.

Social determinants such as education, employment, income, housing, built neighborhood environments, and political and policy barriers are significant contributing issues. Latino policy research and advocacy capacity that target Texas’ inequitable and racially based policymaking across social determinants must increase. The envisioned policy outcomes are to equitably expand opportunities to learn, work, earn a living wage, create wealth, maintain good health, and increase civically engaged voters.

Policy research leadership must intentionally target increasing our capacity to influence policymaking in ways that 1) more closely reflect our beliefs and values, 2) move research outcomes to policy actions and implementation, and 3) are positively received by Latinos themselves meaningfully impacting them and the issues targeted.

While Latino-based research has increased across disciplines over the past 2 to 3 decades, most focused on education, health, and the social sciences. Further, most research avoids identifying how existing policy analysis, racially biased institutional structures, and beliefs contribute to marginalizing populations.

In summary, there are weaknesses in our research capacity and outcomes to influence policy in ways that:

- Challenge, organize, and help develop interested researchers toward direct policy processes involved with their research outcomes.
- Closely reflects Latinos' social and material conditions, *bienestar* needs, and policy priorities.
- Contribute to the translational ability of research results to move into policy actions and implementation.
- Catalyze both research and policy actions through collaborative partnerships.

The Making Research Count: Translating Latino Research into Policy and Twelve Fellows is a demonstration and step forward to increase policy research leadership.

LTPC FELLOWS AND FACULTY

