



Service Use in Rural Hispanic/Latino Populations A Case Study: Exploring Effective Means to Community Inclusion



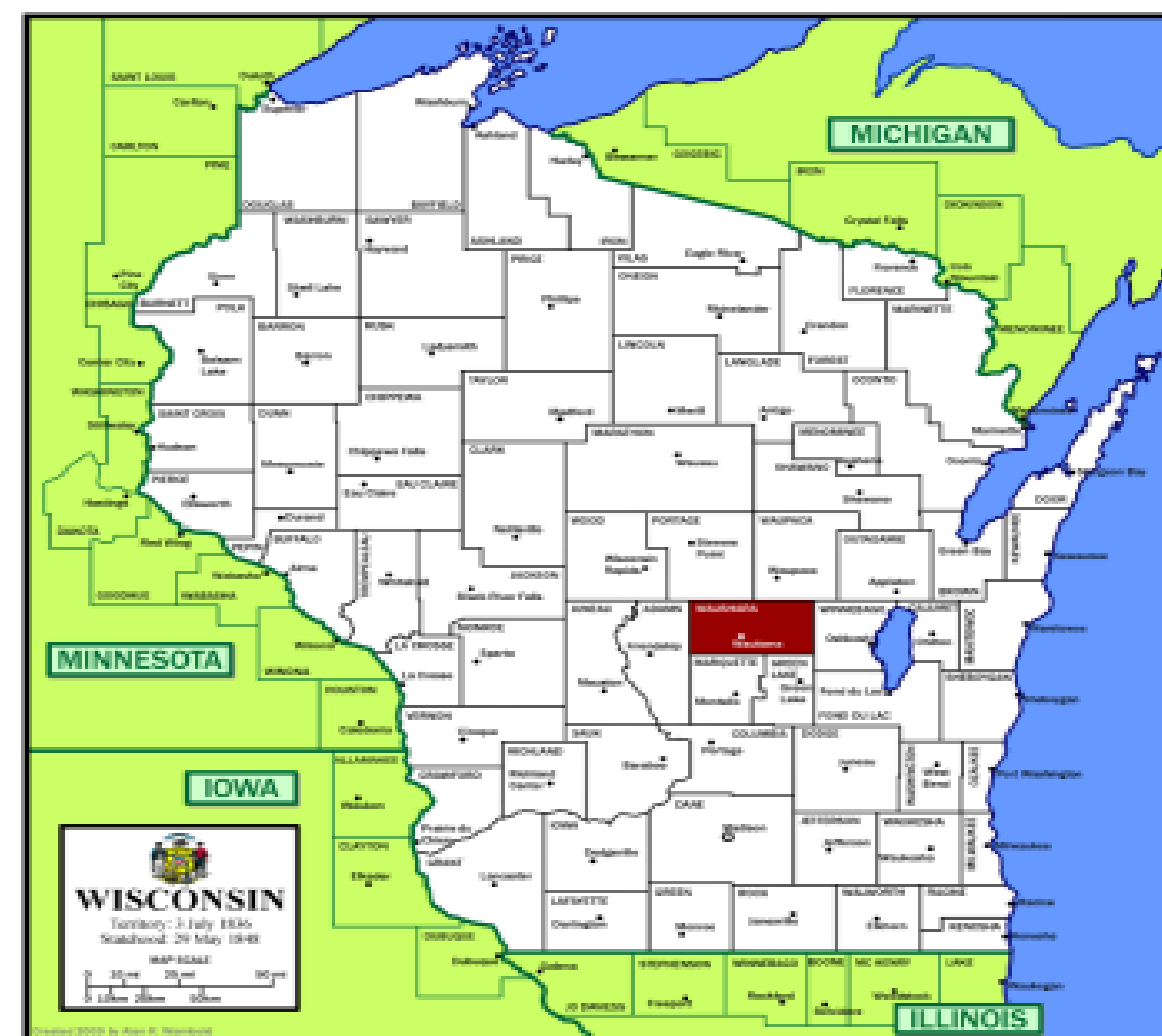
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify barriers to service of the Hispanic/Latino population of Waushara County, Wisconsin and to explore how these may be best addressed to further the goal of community inclusion. Fourteen (14) key informant interviews were conducted to discuss these barriers, and challenges in overcoming these barriers, in addition to perceived needs of the population from the perspective of community partners. As a result of these conversations, several similarities as well as gaps were revealed when compared to the literature. These include barriers associated with second-language aptitude and documentation/status issues as they relate to ever-changing government legislation and policy. Those assets that were identified by key informants that aid them in service provision to the target population consist of bilingual staff and trust and relationships established over time. These findings will serve to inform future steps taken by the University of Wisconsin-Extension to overcome these identified barriers to service in an effort to include individuals and families of Hispanic/Latino descent in community programming.

BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

The University of Wisconsin-Extension Waushara County has previously attempted to establish relationships with community partners that serve the local Hispanic/Latino population, as well as with the target population itself, in order to identify and address specific needs that may be unique to this community, in addition to barriers to involvement with the greater community. A Hispanic coalition was formed as a result of an identified need to better understand the desires and concerns of this growing population. These were explored and addressed through focus groups and also through a prior grant to address Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR). Due to staff turnover and grant funding reaching its end, the coalition has since disbanded resulting in weakened connections with the Hispanic/Latino population of Waushara County and the agencies and organizations that remain serving them.



WAUSHARA COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Total Population:
24,178
(2014, estimated)

Percent Hispanic residents:
6.4%
(2014, estimated)

Percent increase in Hispanic residents (2000-2011):
72%

The main objectives of UW-Extension are to reestablish these relationships, maintain an understanding of what services are currently being provided to address previously identified needs and barriers, reassess and identify possible new and/or unmet needs and barriers, and determine the best course of action to address these issues.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to identify common themes regarding challenges, barriers, and successes in serving the local Hispanic/Latino population in a specific rural, Midwestern community (Waushara County, Wisconsin), and to further examine why these may be taking place in an attempt to form a best-practice approach to community inclusion.

METHODS

- 28 key informants selected via convenience sample:
 - State (3) and county (3) government
 - County libraries (8) and school districts (3)
 - Community service organizations (9) and local businesses (Hispanic/Latino owned, 2)
- 22 responses (some did not meet criteria)
- 14 semi-structured interviews:
 - Twelve-question interview instrument
 - 60 minute average length of interview
 - Conducted in person between December 22nd, 2015 and January 18th, 2016
- Descriptive coding and qualitative data analysis in MAXQDA software

RESULTS

Perceived population needs	Perceived barriers to service	Population assets (indirect)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation/DL • Health care/literacy • Basic necessities • English-language ed • Housing • Employment • Legal counsel • Resource awareness • Child care • Adult education – GED or HSED/parenting/technology • Leadership/empowerment • Mental health/AODA/domestic violence • Post-secondary prep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited English • Transportation/unable to obtain driver's license (DL) • Rigid work schedules/lack of time • Do not qualify for some services/status • Do not seek help – lack of trust/fear of legal recourse/pride • Cultural barriers • Low education/literacy levels • Limited resources • Transient/seasonal • Lack of resource awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help one another (informal support networks) • Family as priority • Parents make sacrifices for kids/family • Strong work ethic • English language proficiency (ELP) increasing • Taking leadership roles (community integration) • Kids graduating HS and finding better jobs (moving away from ag), also possess dual-lang. • Purchasing own homes
Agency assets	Organizational barriers	Perceived opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust/relationships/longevity • Referral networks/ability to partner • Increase in bilingual/bicultural staff • Staff dedication (both internal and external) • Explore diverse funding/supplement • Advocacy/legal efforts (local, state, national government) that aid staff in providing services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language barrier/lack of bilingual staff • Agency schedules in conflict with target population • Changes in funding • Lack of cultural understanding • Unsure how to best reach (lack point of entry) • Transiency of population • Changes to program requirements • Broken relationships/lack of strong relationship • Differing priorities amongst organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education • Collaborate/work together/pool resources • Community bridge • Cultural awareness • Promote higher education/explore other post-secondary options • Translation/transcription services • Employer education • Grant-writing • Empowerment • Mental health education • ESL (language) classes • Focus groups/research

CONCLUSIONS

- As a result of the research, similarities and gaps have been identified as compared with existing inquiries (see below)

POPULATION BARRIERS TO SERVICE

Similarities

(as identified in the literature)

- Limited ELP (language)
- Transportation
- Rigid work schedules
- Lack of service need, awareness, or access
- Discrimination/fear of legal consequences
- Community exclusion

Differences

(as a result of the research)

- Inability to obtain a valid driver's license (specific to Wisconsin)
- Changes in legislation that affect status and service access contribute to additional barriers (not explicitly stated in literature)

- Trust and relationships are perhaps the greatest asset in providing services to the Hispanic/Latino population, as well as bilingual staff persons to aid in communication
- The language barrier remains the largest obstacle to service access and provision, in addition to barriers associated with documentation status/government policy
- As an organization, UW-Extension continues to struggle with community recognition and service identification

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Include a wider sample of key informants representing different sectors to gather additional information and build rapport
- Collect data from the target population itself through interviews, focus groups, and/or surveys
- Assess the community's readiness for change prior to action
- Identify clear goals and objectives to guide community intervention
- Revisit and refine goals and objectives to account for continuing changes in community needs

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