

## Local Family Information Centers: Ensuring Effective Parental Involvement in Education

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) supports Local Family Information Centers (LFICs), which are authorized in the No Child Left Behind Act. These centers would help parents understand how they can use data to hold schools accountable, what educational options are available to their children, and how to choose the program best suited to teaching children with limited proficiency in English. Specifically, LFICs:

- **Would enable parents to help their children meet high standards and to hold schools accountable.** Through LFICs, parents would receive meaningful communication about such issues as curriculum, standards, instruction, assessments, and school report cards. Parents would then be in a better position to hold schools accountable for helping their children meet rigorous academic standards.
- **Are necessary to help parents make informed decisions about their children's education.** Parents would also receive information about the educational options available to their children, such as public school choice, charter schools, magnet schools, and distance learning opportunities. In addition, these centers can empower parents of limited-English-proficient students to choose which program of study they decide is best for their children.
- **Would be nonpartisan and locally based.** Nonpartisan, nonprofit, and community-based organizations can play a crucial role in providing appropriate services to parents based on their needs and that of the local community in which they live. Local organizations are in a good position to be an independent source of information and support for low-income families as they try to navigate the often-complicated school system.
- **Are not duplicative of current parental involvement provisions.** NCLR supports the parental involvement provisions in NCLB and believes that LFICs can play an important role in supporting these requirements. In addition, Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs), which are also authorized in NCLB, are often located in geographic areas that are inaccessible to low-income parents. Thus, many parents do not receive services through the PIRCs.

NCLR believes that effective parental involvement is critical to making the No Child Left Behind Act work at the school level. As authorized in the No Child Left Behind Act, funding for LFICs is contingent on overall funding for parental assistance programs. Thus, LFICs can only be funded if the budget amount for federal parental assistance programs exceeds \$50 million. NCLR supports funding parental assistance programs at \$100 million to ensure that LFICs can provide these much-needed services to Hispanic parents.