



EMERGING LATINO COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

2001-2011 IMPACT STUDY

BUILDING LEADERSHIP, CAPACITY, AND POWER

NCLR
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA



The National Council of La Raza (NCLR)—the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States—works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Through its network of nearly 300 affiliated community-based organizations, NCLR reaches millions of Hispanics each year in 41 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. To achieve its mission, NCLR conducts applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy, providing a Latino perspective in five key areas—assets/investments, civil rights/immigration, education, employment and economic status, and health. In addition, it provides capacity-building assistance to its Affiliates who work at the state and local level to advance opportunities for individuals and families.

Founded in 1968, NCLR is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan, tax-exempt organization headquartered in Washington, DC, serving all Hispanic subgroups in all regions of the country. It has state and regional offices in Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Phoenix, and San Antonio.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is the largest national Hispanic civil rights organization in the United States. During the 2001–2011 period, with support from the **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation** and the **Walmart Foundation**, NCLR's Emerging Latino Communities (ELC) Initiative provided more than \$1.4 million in funding to 63 Latino organizations in 32 states. The program combined funding with comprehensive technical assistance and training aimed at increasing the organizational sustainability, civic engagement capacity, and community impact of Latino organizations in communities experiencing rapid, new growth in the Hispanic population.

This report presents findings gathered from a survey of representatives and staff from organizations that participated in the ELC Initiative between 2001 and 2011.* It examines the role the program played in helping Latino community-based organizations increase their organizational sustainability and advance meaningful social change on the issues impacting their communities.

* This report excludes the results of an earlier, precursor program, operated from 1998 to 2000, that conducted similar activities. Under that program, about two dozen Latino-focused community-based organizations (CBOs) were funded and/or provided with access to technical assistance and policy support, including El Pueblo in Durham, North Carolina; Ayuda/DC Immigrant Coalition in Washington, DC; Casa de Maryland in Takoma Park, Maryland; Padres Unidos in Denver, Colorado; Centro de la Familia in Salt Lake City, Utah; the California Civil Rights Network in San Francisco, California; and others. Many of these organizations gained substantial prominence in their own right. El Pueblo emerged as the most visible and effective Hispanic advocate in its state, as did Casa de Maryland. The DC Immigrant Coalition led the successful effort to ensure legal immigrant eligibility for most city-funded assistance programs after welfare reform as well as the enactment of one of the strongest language access laws in the country. Padres Unidos led a largely successful effort to ensure equal educational opportunity for English language learners in Denver; Centro de la Familia successfully supported maintenance of Salt Lake City's "noncooperation with Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)" ordinance and persuaded then-Rep. Chris Cannon (R-UT) to become the lead House sponsor of the precursor to the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act; and the California Civil Rights Network led the unsuccessful fight against Proposition 227, the ballot initiative that essentially banned bilingual education in California. Most of these organizations received technical assistance and policy support, but not funding, from NCLR's subsequent ELC program.

Key findings of this report include the following:

- The ELC Initiative operated like angel capital for nascent Latino organizations,* successfully building the capacity of dozens of early-stage Hispanic organizations. Of the survey respondents, 77% (24 out of 31) stated that their organizations are stronger and more influential than they were when they began the ELC program; only one respondent reported a weaker organization.
- A small percentage of organizations developed into high-impact organizations that have become the most influential Latino-serving and immigrant rights institutions in their states. The most successful graduates of the program include the **Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition**; the **Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama**; the **Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance**; **VOZ Workers' Rights Education Project** in Portland, Oregon; and the **Salem/Keizer Coalition in Oregon**. From an average staff size of 1.8 and an average annual budget of just over \$74,000 when they began the ELC program, these organizations have grown to an average staff size of 11.4 with budgets averaging over \$619,000 per year.
- Program participants cited technical assistance, funding, networking opportunities, enhanced organizational credibility (due to the association with NCLR), and mentoring relationships with NCLR staff as the program's key contributions to increasing their organizational capacity and community impact.

* From 2001 to 2010, the ELC program focused significant resources on nurturing and developing nascent Hispanic CBOs. In 2007, with guidance from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, NCLR began shifting its strategic grant-making criteria for the ELC program to focus on more mature organizations. However, NCLR continued to support several nascent Latino organizations until 2010 with funding from the Walmart Foundation.

- Technical assistance provided through the ELC Initiative was effective. Of the groups that received technical assistance, 85% reported that they are now stronger and more influential than when they began the program, compared to only 55% of groups that did not receive technical assistance. Based on survey data collected, 78% of the technical assistance projects referenced by survey respondents (18 out of 23) appear to have contributed to increased capacity in the targeted organizational development area (board development, fundraising, and so on).
- ELC organizations have engaged in policy advocacy and community organizing in a variety of issue areas, including immigration; juvenile justice; workers' rights; education; health care; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues; housing; and the economy. In particular, ELC partners have made significant contributions to the national immigration movement, taking the lead in fighting draconian, anti-immigration state legislation in Florida, Nebraska, Texas, Alabama, and Georgia; opposing harsh local immigration enforcement measures; and making critical contributions to the movement for federal immigration reform.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR)—the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States—works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Through its network of nearly 300 affiliated community-based organizations (CBO), NCLR reaches millions of Hispanics each year in 41 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. To achieve its mission, NCLR conducts applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy, providing a Latino perspective in five key areas—assets/investments, civil rights/immigration, education, employment and economic status, and health. In addition, it provides capacity-building assistance to its Affiliates that work at the state and local level to advance opportunities for individuals and families.

III. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Hispanics are the largest minority group in the United States. The U.S. Hispanic population, currently at an estimated 50.5 million people, has seen the fastest rates of growth in areas previously not associated with Latinos. These emerging Latino communities are spread out across the country, in places like Dalton, Georgia; Salem, Oregon; and Ashtabula, Ohio. The growth of the Hispanic population has presented some unique challenges and opportunities. In many areas around the country, immigrants and their children will drive household growth, serving as an economic engine for local economies. Their expanded buying power has captured the attention of corporations. However, the rapid population growth in some areas has led to anti-immigrant backlash that has been legitimized and reinforced by political leaders at every level of government. These anti-immigrant sentiments have manifested themselves in tangible ways that do harm to the community, including racial and ethnic profiling, housing discrimination, and lack of services or investment in neighborhoods and schools.

This environment creates polarizing relations between long-time residents and newcomers, and it undermines community stability and cooperation. For example, in a survey of 500 recent Latino immigrants in the southern United States, the Southern Poverty Law Center found that only 46% had confidence in the police.* This mistrust is fueled by increased efforts on the part of local law enforcement to enforce immigration laws and to engage in

* Southern Poverty Law Center, *Under Siege: Life for Low-Income Latinos in the South* (Montgomery, AL, 2009) <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/publications/under-siege-life-for-low-income-latinos-in-the-south>.

racial profiling. As a result, newcomers are more reluctant to report crimes and cooperate with the police, undermining community safety. Similarly, the failure to promote the integration and success of Latino newcomers in local schools can lead to higher drop-out rates and increased levels of poverty and gang activity; and the failure to provide access to English classes and job training for new immigrants, who are fueling population growth in many areas, can stymie local economic development.

Immigration will continue to increase the size of the foreign-born population in the United States. Sometime between 2020 and 2025, the percentage of U.S. residents who are foreign born will exceed the previous high of the early twentieth century.* Welcoming these newcomers and successfully integrating them into the economic, social, and civic life of their receiving communities will be critical for building safe and vibrant communities—not only for foreign-born residents, but for native-born Americans as well.

The United States has a rich tradition of welcoming immigrants and helping them integrate into our society. The Settlement House movement, led by Jane Addams beginning in the 1880s, established institutions in neighborhoods that were entry points for German and other European immigrants. The settlement houses supported newcomers' transition to America by providing social services; English and citizenship classes; and an introduction to America's institutions, norms, and systems. Helping immigrants assimilate into American society and to learn and adopt U.S. cultural and democratic values has long been viewed as an important societal goal. Today's immigrants have the same needs.

Like the settlement houses of the early twentieth century, Latino organizations in emerging communities today fill a key gap in their communities around the delivery of culturally relevant services, broader advocacy to address the communities' needs, and integration of newcomers into civic life. They serve as a touch point for new residents and immigrants, and promote the successful integration of newcomers into their communities. However, without outside investment and support, these organizations have difficulty attaining the long-term organizational sustainability, scale, and power to improve the lives of Latino families and to strengthen the fabric of communities experiencing rapid immigration growth.

* U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Building an Americanization Movement for the Twenty-first Century: A Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on New Americans* (Washington, DC, 2008), 4 <http://www.uscis.gov/files/nativedocuments/M-708.pdf>.

IV. OVERVIEW OF THE EMERGING LATINO COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

In 2001, NCLR launched the **Emerging Latino Communities (ELC)** Initiative to build the capacity of Latino CBOs that provide services, support civic leadership development, and facilitate the successful integration of recent immigrants into the broader community in areas of the United States where the Latino community is experiencing rapid, new growth. The goals of the program are to (1) build the long-term organizational sustainability of Latino CBOs in emerging Latino communities; (2) strengthen the ability of Latino organizations to promote civic participation, develop local leadership, and influence the public life of their communities through community organizing; and (3) integrate grantees into NCLR's national advocacy campaigns so that they can influence federal policy issues impacting the Hispanic community.

The ELC Initiative combines small grants of \$5,000 to \$20,000 per year with targeted training and technical assistance aimed at strengthening the organizational and leadership capacity of community-organizing groups in emerging Latino communities. Specifically, the program:

- provides individualized technical assistance to build organizational capacity in the areas of governance, fundraising and resource development, strategic planning, financial management, and program planning and evaluation;
- coordinates national convenings and conference calls to facilitate peer learning, information sharing, and collaboration among grantee organizations; and
- provides training and technical assistance to strengthen the community-organizing work of grantee organizations in the areas of campaign strategy, base building, media, and leadership development.

During the 2001–2011 period, with support from the **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation** and the **Walmart Foundation**, the ELC Initiative provided a total of **\$1.4 million** in funding to **63 Latino organizations** in **32 states**. This report presents findings gathered from an evaluation of the impact of the ELC Initiative during this period, including the role the program played in helping Latino CBOs increase their organizational sustainability and advance meaningful social change on the issues impacting their communities.

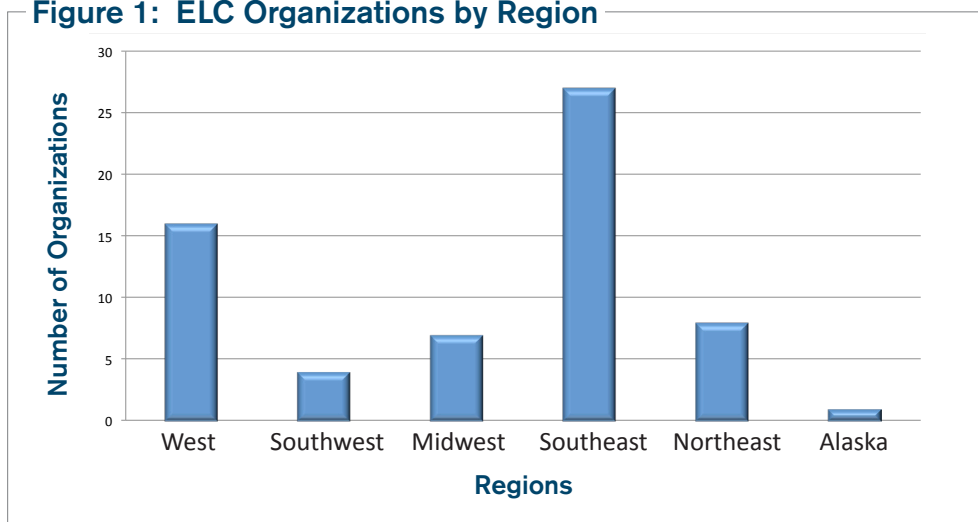
V. METHODOLOGY

NCLR staff gathered data from current and past ELC participant organizations via short- and long-form questionnaires. Staff attempted to contact all 63 past participants in the program to administer the short-form survey, successfully completing surveys with 31 organizations (49% response rate). Staff completed these short-form surveys through online data collection as well as follow-up phone conversations. In addition to the short-form surveys, staff conducted longer, more qualitative interviews with seven organizations. Five of these organizations were selected because they have achieved sustainability and significant impact in their communities; the other two were selected as case studies of unsuccessful organizations that were unable to achieve organizational sustainability. These more in-depth interviews with a subset of successful and unsuccessful organizations provided richer data and helped deepen NCLR's understanding of the program's successes and limitations. Both short- and long-form questionnaires, and a list of organizations that responded to each questionnaire, are included in the appendix.

VI. GENERAL STATISTICS

The ELC Initiative provided a total of **\$1,416,000** in funding to **63 organizations** in **32 states** during the 2001–2011 period. Of these 63 organizations, staff confirmed that 44 (70%) are still in existence and 4 (6%) are no longer exist. NCLR was unable to reach an additional 15 organizations because of a lack of accurate contact information; staff members conducting this research strongly suspect that many of these organizations also are no longer in existence. A large plurality (27 of 63, or 43%) of the organizations NCLR funded through the program were located in the southeastern United States (Figure 1).

Figure 1: ELC Organizations by Region



The median annual grant size during this period was \$10,000, and organizations participated in the program for an average of 2.2 years. Two-thirds of the organizations surveyed (20 out of 31 organizations) received funding or direct support for technical assistance projects.

The program had limited success in generating new NCLR Affiliates during this period. Only four ELC organizations became Affiliates while in the program or upon graduation. Six organizations were already NCLR Affiliates when they participated in the ELC program.

VII. ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

The survey data suggest that NCLR helped increase the internal capacity and external influence of its ELC partner organizations. Of the survey respondents, 77% (24 out of 31) stated that their organizations are stronger and more influential than they were when they began the ELC program; only one respondent reported a weaker organization. A significant majority of survey respondents reported that their organizations are stronger with regard to board diversity and leadership (74%), political influence (85%), and grassroots base (73%). In contrast, the program appears to have been less successful in strengthening participating organizations' financial management systems and staffing, with just 52% and 46% of respondents reporting increased capacity in those areas, respectively.

Technical assistance projects appear to have had a high success rate in increasing the organizational capacity of ELC partners. As seen in figure 2, 3, 4, and 5 the data suggest that a sizeable majority of technical assistance projects referenced by survey respondents (18 out of 23, or 78%) helped the organizations increase capacity in the targeted organizational development area (board development, fundraising, and so on).

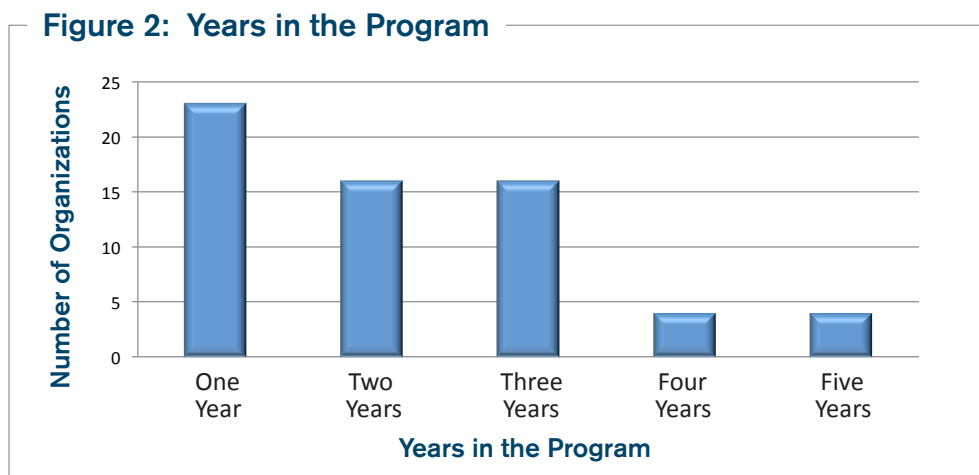


Figure 3: Board Leadership and Diversity

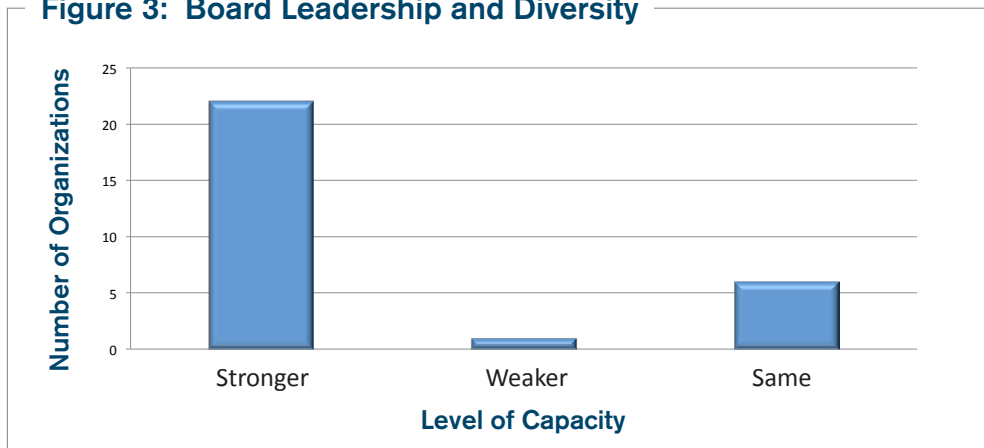


Figure 4: Funding

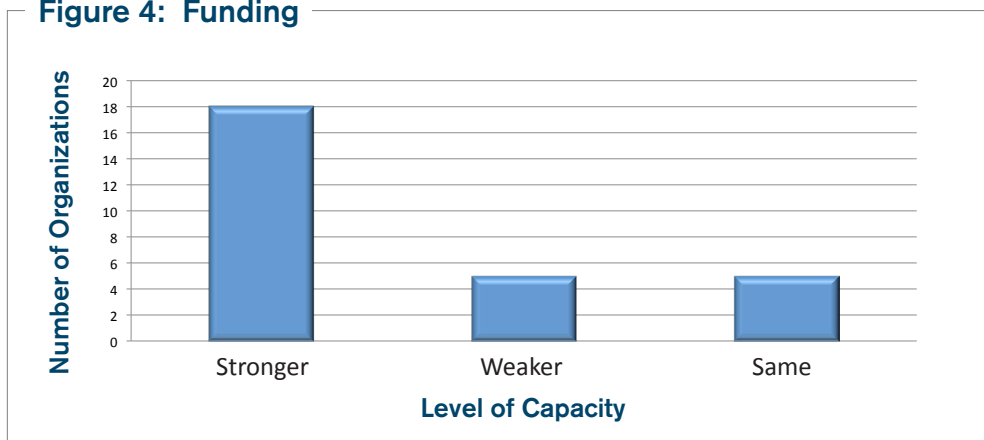
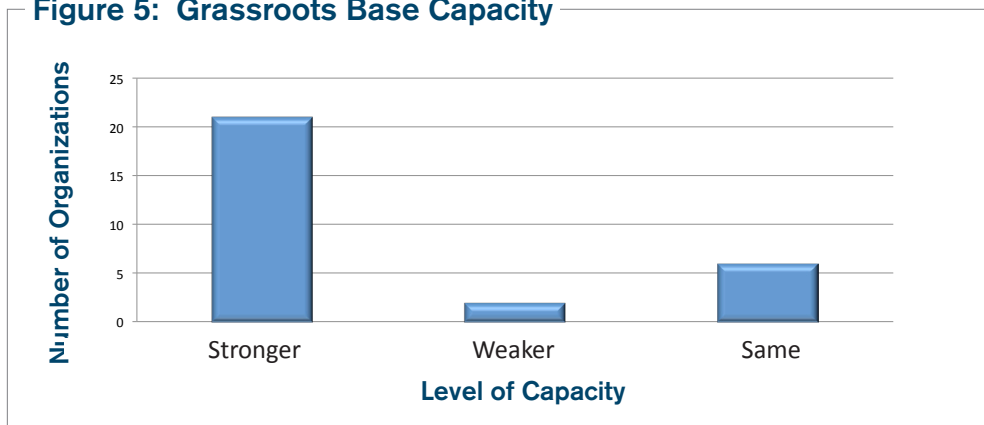


Figure 5: Grassroots Base Capacity



VIII. COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Latino organizations that have received support through NCLR's ELC Initiative are located on the front lines of the battle against discrimination and hate around the country. In most of the communities in which they are located, ELC groups are the only Latino-led organizations representing the needs of the Hispanic community. ELC groups advance the needs of the Hispanic community through direct services as well as through civic leadership development and community organizing.

Among survey respondents, 52% (16 of 31) indicated that their organizations provide direct services, reaching a total of approximately 150,000 people per year. ELC organizations operate a wide array of service programs in their communities, including citizenship assistance and immigration legal services, English classes and job training programs, workers' rights education and legal support, tax preparation services, homeownership classes and foreclosure prevention services, crisis assistance case management services, and youth and educational programs.

In addition to providing culturally relevant services, most current and past participants in the ELC program (27 of 29, or 93%, with two nonresponses) engage in advocacy and community organizing. NCLR has engaged in a variety of activities to increase its partners' organizing capacity, coordinating trainings on base building and campaign strategy and providing technical assistance and policy support for its partners' ongoing advocacy efforts. With support from NCLR, ELC organizations achieved a number of concrete public policy victories during and following their participation in the program, expanding access to health care programs for Latino children, combating wage theft and recovering hundreds of thousands of dollars in unpaid wages for day laborers, and expanding services for English language learners in local school systems.

On the issue of immigration in particular, ELC organizations have played important roles at local, state, and national levels. ELC organizations have taken the lead in fighting, and in some cases defeating, Arizona-style, anti-immigrant legislation in Florida, Nebraska, Texas, Alabama, and Georgia as well as draconian immigration enforcement measures at the local and county levels. They have made critical contributions to the national immigration movement, helping to organize May Day marches with thousands of people, and mobilizing constituents and allies to lobby members of Congress for the passage of comprehensive immigration reform, the DREAM Act, and other federal immigration legislation.

Notable examples of ELC organizations' contributions to the immigration movement during or subsequent to their time in the ELC program include the following:

- In 2004, in Durango, Colorado, **Compañeros** organized its membership to push the city to pass a resolution to oppose Secure Communities, a program that would have separated Latino families. Durango was the only municipality in Colorado that openly opposed Secure Communities.
- During the 2010 state legislative session, the **Idaho Community Action Network** led coalitional efforts to stop three anti-immigrant bills that would have criminalized the use of false documents to gain employment, revoked a business's license for knowingly hiring an undocumented worker, required the use of E-verify by all employers, and penalized individuals for harboring or transporting individuals without proper immigration status, among other measures.
- **Nebraska Appleseed** developed a campaign, in collaboration with other statewide allies, to stop an Arizona-style law in Nebraska in 2011. The organization was also instrumental in passing and protecting a state law allowing undocumented students to pay in-state tuition at public universities and colleges in Nebraska.
- The **Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition** mobilized its base to work in partnership with the Reform Immigration for Texas Alliance to defeat SB 9, Arizona copycat legislation introduced in the 2011 session of the Texas legislature.
- The **Florida Immigrant Coalition** developed a statewide campaign titled "We Are Florida" to defeat an Arizona copycat bill introduced in the state in 2011. The campaign was a significant victory for the immigrant rights movement in the state.

The appendix includes longer case studies detailing the successful organizing campaigns of two grantees—the **Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA)** and **Nebraska Appleseed**—during their participation in the ELC initiative.

IX. ELC SUCCESS STORIES

The ELC program is akin to a high-risk venture capital fund: because NCLR invests in a large number of nascent organizations, the failure rate is high (up to 30% of ELC partners from the 2001–2011 period are no longer in existence), but a small minority of groups achieves not only long-term sustainability, but also high impact. For this evaluation, NCLR

closely examined five former ELC partner organizations that have achieved significant community impact in their regions—the **Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama (HICA)**, **MIRA**, the **Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC)**, the **Salem/Keizer Coalition (in Salem, Oregon)**, and **VOZ Workers’ Rights Center** (in Portland, Oregon). These institutions are now the most influential Latino-serving and immigrant rights institutions in their states. From an average staff size of 1.8 and an average annual budget of just over \$74,000 when they began the ELC program, these organizations have grown to an average staff size of 11.4 with budgets averaging over \$619,000 per year. During their time in the program, they achieved numerous community victories:

- In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, **MIRA** worked with the American Red Cross to remove border patrol staff from the shelters and to demand that services be provided to immigrants regardless of status. NCLR worked with MIRA to facilitate communication with the Red Cross to support MIRA in its efforts.
- In 2010, **TIRRC** carried out a statewide campaign to defeat an “English-only” bill that would have required English to be spoken in places of employment and would have allowed employers to require their employees to speak English. This policy victory received national media attention.
- **HICA** is lead plaintiff in a lawsuit against the State of Alabama to challenge HB 56, Arizona-style legislation that would authorize police to demand documents demonstrating citizenship or immigration status during traffic stops and would make it a crime for Alabamians to engage in ordinary, everyday interactions with undocumented individuals.
- **VOZ** has recovered more than \$300,000 in wage theft of day laborers through direct actions.
- **Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality** successfully advocated for the permanent inclusion of program implementation, capacity building, and professional development to support more than 10,000 English language learners in the Salem/Keizer School District strategic plan.

NCLR, **TIRRC**, **MIRA**, and **HICA** played lead roles in the formation of the **Southeast Immigrant Rights Network (SEIRN)**, which convenes organizations in the Southeast to promote collaboration on immigrant rights issues. SEIRN has been playing an important role in combating anti-immigrant state legislation in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and other states in the region.

Each of these five successful organizations credited the ELC program and NCLR as playing an important role in its success, citing the funding, credibility, networking opportunities, mentoring relationships, and technical assistance provided through the program as critical factors in its development.

According to **Eduardo Angulo**, executive director of the Salem/Keizer Coalition, *“ELC gave us training on how to govern ourselves, how to fundraise, how to organize, and financial skills to make sure we are accountable to our community and funders. Basically, you helped us build our organization from boxes in our living room and big plans to a respected, funded, and credible education reform advocacy organization.”*

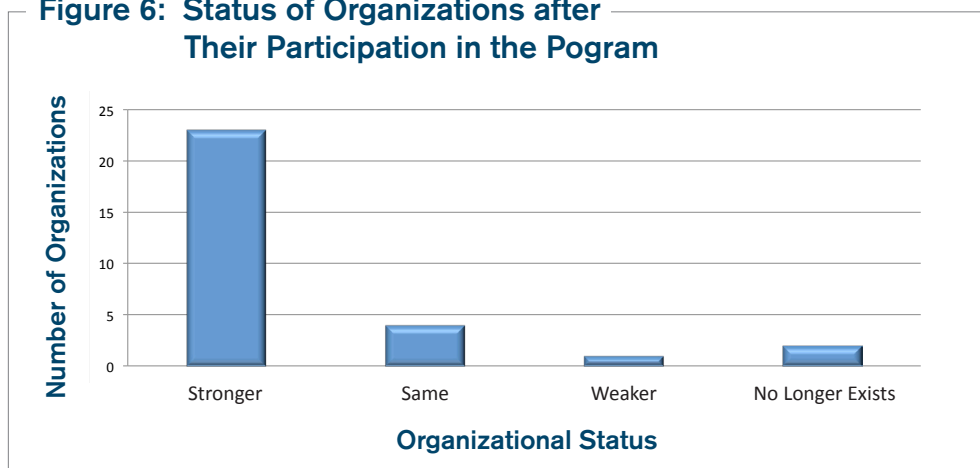
Or, as **Isabel Rubio** of HICA put it, *“The ELC program... was a difference of life and death for HICA.”*

X. THE ROLE OF NCLR IN BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY—LESSONS LEARNED

Participants in the ELC program cited five key contributions that the program made to developing their organizational capacity and sustainability and increasing their community impact—technical assistance, funding, credibility, events and networking opportunities, and policy support and mentoring.

Technical Assistance

Out of 31 organizations, 19 listed technical assistance as the greatest contribution that NCLR made to their development, more than any other activity referenced. NCLR conducted individualized technical assistance projects with grantees in the areas of strategic planning, board development, fundraising, and campaign strategy, among other areas. Groups that received direct technical assistance from NCLR were more likely to report increased organizational capacity and influence after their participation in the program, see Figure 6. Of the groups that received technical assistance, 85% reported that they are now stronger and more influential than when they began the program, compared to only 55% of groups that did not receive technical assistance. The data suggest that a sizeable majority of technical assistance projects referenced by survey respondents (18 out of 23, or 78%) helped the organizations increase capacity in the targeted organizational development area (board development, fundraising, and so on).

Figure 6: Status of Organizations after Their Participation in the Program

Support for board development appears to have had a particularly significant impact on partner organizations: four out of the five most successful groups mentioned board development as one of the greatest contributions of the ELC program. Three groups also indicated that the ELC program's support for strategic planning processes played a key role in helping them increase their effectiveness and leverage additional funding.

Funding

The funding provided to grantees through the ELC program, while relatively modest in size, nevertheless was cited by numerous participants as a key factor in their organizational development. Sixteen organizations stated that funding to support general operating expenses was fundamental in stabilizing the organizations and allowing them to focus on community organizing and other programs. Four organizations reported that NCLR's funding allowed them to hire additional staff.

Multiyear funding appears to have had a greater impact than single-year funding. All but one of the five most successful ELC organizations detailed in section IX received consistent funding and support during a five-year period. (The other group, HICA, received three years of funding.) On average, these successful groups were in the program longer than other ELC grantees (4.4 years versus a 2.2-year average for all participants) and received more money (an average of \$62,400, or just over \$14,000 per year, compared with a median grant size of \$10,000 per year overall).

Credibility

Three organizations mentioned that the partnership with NCLR was critical for enhancing their credibility and influence within their communities, with policymakers, and with other funders. For example, David Lubell, the former executive director of **TIRRC**, stated that NCLR's support, which came at a critical juncture in TIRRC's organizational development, provided vital credibility at the national level that helped the organization secure support from other major funders.

Events and Networking opportunities

Out of 31 organizations surveyed, 10 mentioned events and networking opportunities as a key contribution of the ELC program. NCLR provides several opportunities for ELC grantees to network with each other and with other Latino and allied organizations across the country, including the ELC annual convening, monthly conference calls for grantees, **NCLR's National Latino Advocacy Days**, and other trainings and conferences. These activities are opportunities for partner organizations to build and strengthen their relationships with each other, access trainings and workshops that can build their skills and expertise, and engage in peer learning.

During these events, grantees exchange information on their work; this sometimes leads to new funding opportunities or programmatic initiatives. For example, **Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates**, an ELC group from 2007 to 2011, launched "Welcoming Missouri," a new initiative to create a more welcoming atmosphere for immigrants in that state, after learning about the success of a similar initiative undertaken by TIRRC in Tennessee. Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates applied for and received a grant from Welcoming America to launch this new initiative. TIRRC itself launched its "Welcoming Tennessee" campaign after attending NCLR's 2005 Annual Conference, where it learned about the "Welcoming" campaign model at an NCLR conference workshop coordinated by the Center for New Community.

Policy support

Several organizations mentioned that access to NCLR policy experts and research helped improve their understanding of the issues impacting the Latino community in their regions. Two of the five most successful ELC organizations reported that they saw NCLR policy staff as mentors or partners. In some cases, NCLR policy staff served as mentors for the ELC grantees in specific areas, such as education and immigration. These

types of mentoring relationships have sustained NCLR's relationships with these groups, even after their participation in the ELC program ended.

XI. OTHER FACTORS IMPACTING THE SUCCESS OF LATINO ORGANIZATIONS IN EMERGING COMMUNITIES

Through our survey, NCLR was able to identify additional internal and external factors impacting the success and sustainability of Latino organizations, independent of NCLR's role and its capacity-building work.

Several organizations (11 out of 29, or 38%) referenced experienced staff and strong internal board leadership as key factors in their success and growth. In contrast, the two less successful organizations that we interviewed cited weak board leadership and poor decision making as a key factors in their inability to sustain their operations.

Among the most successful ELC organizations, visionary founding leadership appears to have been a critical determining factor in their success. **VOZ, HICA, TIRRC, MIRA, and Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality** had strong founding executive directors, each of whom was able to articulate a clear and compelling vision and attract support from funders, community stakeholders, and other partners. In contrast, the two organizations interviewed that did not sustain operations were formed in reaction to an issue seen as an imminent threat, without a larger strategy or vision. Such was the case for the Mesa Verde Community Organizing Project in California, which started organizing because of a direct threat—the removal of the community's water source. After winning its campaign, the organization disbanded as a result of the lack of a common vision that could unify its constituency.

Community support—either from constituents, external partners, or public officials—was a key contributor to success according to a few groups, including two of the five most successful groups interviewed. Some of the most successful groups had access to additional institutional support and expertise apart from NCLR and the ELC program. For instance, **Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality** and **VOZ** are part of regional or national networks (CAUSA and the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, respectively).

XII. LIMITATIONS OF THE ELC INITIATIVE

For several years, the ELC program had a strong regional focus on the Southeast. This regional focus appears to have led to stronger efforts

to promote regional coalition building, such as the establishment of the SEIRN in 2006. More recently, ELC has shifted to a national approach that funds groups throughout the country. The lack of a regional focus makes it more difficult to foster active collaboration and regional collective action on the part of the groups.

Several groups (12 out of 31) mentioned that additional technical assistance would have been helpful in aiding their organization's development. Others mentioned the need for higher funding levels to support organizing or training activities or greater assistance in connecting with other funders and securing additional grant money. As noted above, the program was less successful in helping groups improve their financial management and fundraising capacity, compared to other organizational areas, such as board development. A few groups discussed the need for training and technical assistance delivery to be better targeted toward their communities, citing the need for Spanish language trainings or trainings that were more relevant to the education or experience levels of their staff and leaders.

Because the ELC Initiative targeted a large number of nascent organizations, extremely robust and intensive levels of support and engagement were needed to achieve success. The relatively high failure rate of ELC organizations is a reflection of the difficulty of transforming nascent community groups into sustainable, high-impact organizations; it may also be a sign that the program was a bit too ambitious, spreading scarce resources (funding, technical assistance, and professional capacity-building staff) across too many institutions.

As **Eduardo Angulo** of **Salem/Keizer** put it, *"Twenty groups one year, twenty groups the next year—there were too many groups. Even though the ELC provided a lot of technical assistance, it still wasn't enough ... this work demands the most robust level of engagement. You need more than one staff person to engage with the organizations; you need three at least to engage more with the groups, and they will be there for 30 years."*

XIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A sizeable majority of ELC partners reported that they are stronger and more influential now than when they began the program, particularly in the areas of political influence, grassroots base, and board diversity and leadership. These groups credit the ELC program with making significant contributions to increasing their capacity through funding, technical assistance, peer learning and networking, enhanced credibility due to the association with NCLR, and mentoring relationships with NCLR staff.

A small number of organizations experienced remarkable organizational growth and achieved high levels of community impact during and after their time in the ELC program. These organizations received higher levels of funding and technical assistance over a longer period than did many of the less successful ELC groups. The consistency and higher levels of support provided to these organizations may have contributed to their greater success compared with other groups. Strong and visionary internal leadership also appears to have played a significant role in the success of the highest-impact groups.

Based on the findings of this report, the following best practices are recommended for the ELC Initiative moving forward:

- Provide sustained and consistent multiyear funding and support to ELC partners.
- Target higher levels of support to a smaller cohort of grantees. This will enable the provision of more intensive, individualized technical assistance and will avoid spreading staffing, funding, and training resources across too many organizations.
- Increase technical assistance and training in the areas of fundraising and financial management—two areas in which the program appears to have been less successful in increasing capacity.
- Continue to create networking and peer learning opportunities for grantees. If possible, the ELC annual convening should be reinstated as a venue for information sharing and networking among ELC partners.
- Seek out partner organizations with strong boards and visionary leadership, and provide them with the support and resources they need to grow into influential organizations. Only a small number of groups will achieve high impact—the key is to identify and channel resources toward the groups with the greatest potential.
- Consider focusing support in a more targeted geographic area. A regional approach to the ELC program creates greater opportunities for the program to foster regional networking and collaborative action on the part of ELC partners.

APPENDIX–CASE STUDIES

Defeating Anti-immigrant Legislation in Nebraska

The Latino population in Nebraska grew 77% between 2000 and 2010. According to recent census data, 167,405 Hispanics currently live in Nebraska, constituting 9.2% of the population; statewide, the K–12 school-aged population is 20% Latino. In particular, many small, meatpacking towns across Nebraska have very large Latino communities, with 25% to 50% of the population of Hispanic origin, and an even larger school-aged Latino population. (For example, in Lexington, Nebraska, the K–12 population is 74% Latino, and the pre-K population is 89.9% Latino.)

Nebraska Appleseed is a statewide nonprofit organization that focuses on advancing policies and practices that promote self-sufficiency for Nebraska’s working poor families, provide safe and adequate child welfare services, increase access to the legal system by low-income people, and foster participation by low-income people in the electoral and public policy decision-making processes. In 2008, **Nebraska Appleseed** became a partner in the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) Emerging Latino Communities (ELC) Initiative, receiving funding and technical assistance to build a statewide Latino leadership network. Over the next three years, Nebraska Appleseed built a network of 80 Latino leaders across the state, capable of mobilizing hundreds of people to events and generating thousands of grassroots contacts with elected officials. Nebraska Appleseed’s work with this network of Latino leaders has focused on immigration reform, meatpacking worker health and safety, and efforts to counter hate messages and anti-immigrant proposals while proactively working to build stronger, integrated communities.

During its 2011 legislative session, the Nebraska state legislature introduced LB 48, a proposed law modeled on Arizona’s harsh anti-immigrant state law, Arizona SB 1070. The proposed law would have given police the right to ask for documents from individuals they suspected of being in the country illegally, opening the door for broad racial profiling of and discrimination against the Latino community and other communities of color, and increasing deportations and the separation of undocumented and mixed-status families. During the same session, the legislature considered repealing the state’s in-state tuition law, which allows dozens of undocumented students each year to continue their higher education at affordable rates.

Nebraska Appleseed played the lead role in convening a statewide coalition to oppose LB 48 and to uphold the in-state tuition law. This

diverse statewide coalition included the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the American GI Forum, religious leaders, student groups, and prominent members of local Native American tribes as well as leaders from local law enforcement, who opposed the measure on public safety grounds. Appleseed and its statewide Latino leadership network mobilized 500 people to a rally at the state capitol opposing these anti-immigrant measures; generated phone calls, letters, and postcards to key state legislators; organized targeted legislative visits; and mobilized people to testify at legislative hearings.

According to **Darcy Tromanhauser**, Nebraska Appleseed’s immigrant integration and civic participation program director, *“Our statewide ELC network of Latino leaders was instrumental in generating grassroots contacts to legislators through a 500-person rally, meetings, and testimonies at legislative hearings, phone calls, and collection of 6,500 postcards [opposing LB 48].”*

Through the powerful efforts of Appleseed’s Latino leadership network and statewide allies, they were able to defeat LB 48 and uphold Nebraska’s in-state tuition law for undocumented students.

“There was a public shared effort to say, ‘this is not who we are; we are not going to be like Arizona,’” said Tromanhauser.

NCLR and the ELC program’s support were critical in these successes. ELC provided the funding that enabled Appleseed to hire an organizer, who has carried out extensive leadership outreach in Latino communities across Nebraska during the last three years. The program provided training to Appleseed in leadership development and base-building techniques as well as campaign strategy. NCLR national immigration policy staff also supported the organization in its campaign against LB 48, providing background information on anti-immigrant legislation being introduced in other states as well as an advocacy toolkit for opposing “Arizona-style” legislation.

According to Tromanhauser, *“ELC’s support for the development of a statewide network of Latino leaders was critical ... the network is stronger and has greater capacity each year. It’s thanks to the ELC leader network that we can turn out hundreds of people to events and generate thousands of grassroots contacts with elected officials. ELC leaders are also organizing far more local advocacy events—and events to bring communities together to discuss common issues—in communities across the state.”*

VOZ Workers' Rights Education Project—A Model of Organizational Development

The *VOZ Workers' Rights Education Project*, founded in 2000, works to promote the rights of day laborers in Portland, Oregon, through organizing, leadership development, and community education. VOZ addresses issues of wage theft through workers' rights training, legal advocacy, and direct action; promotes employment opportunities for its members; and conducts organizing campaigns around local and national immigration issues. VOZ is one of the most prominent Latino-serving organizations in Oregon and a national leader in the immigrant day laborer organizing movement, helping to found the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON) in 2001. Today, NDLON has 36 members nationwide. **VOZ founded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Worker Center in 2008**, which offers a safe and healthy space for workers to wait for work, provides accountability to employers, and sets a mandated minimum wage of \$10 per hour, protecting workers from exploitation. Since its founding, **VOZ has helped recover \$300,000 in wage theft for day laborers in Portland.**

VOZ joined the ELC program in 2006, with a staff of two people and an organizational budget of approximately \$100,000. During its five years in the ELC program, NCLR provided comprehensive technical assistance to help VOZ increase its organizational capacity in a variety of areas, helping it to grow into an organization that currently employs eight staff and to nearly triple its annual budget.

When VOZ began the ELC program, NCLR supported the organization in becoming an independent 501(c)(3) organization; at one point, NCLR even advanced grant payments to VOZ during a cash flow shortage, enabling the organization “to stay alive for a few extra months while we got funding from the city,” according to executive director Romeo Sosa.

Later, NCLR hired a consultant to assist VOZ with grant writing and fundraising, helping the organization generate over \$250,000 in revenue that was used to hire 1.5 additional full-time equivalent staff and to triple its grassroots fundraising revenue over a three-year period. NCLR provided VOZ with technical assistance in the area of financial management, helping the organization set up an accounting system with improved financial recording and reporting, including a more sophisticated cost accounting system that enables the organization to track costs on a program-by-program basis. With NCLR's support, VOZ also received assistance in improving its website, developing the capacity to receive online donations.

Finally, NCLR (1) provided support for a comprehensive strategic planning process that helped VOZ identify strategic priorities for the next two years and increased the leadership capacity of its staff and board and (2) hired a consultant that helped VOZ develop program evaluation tools that enable it to track quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the impact of its programs.

From an organization that almost had to shut its doors because of insufficient funding, VOZ has developed into a sophisticated, high-impact organization with quadruple the staff; triple the budget; and model fundraising, financial management, and program evaluation systems—thanks in large part to comprehensive, multiyear technical assistance and support offered through the ELC program.

Says Sosa, *“The ELC program helped us build a strong infrastructure to support our organization. By helping us to develop our administrative foundation, we increased our ability to meet the needs of our organization, and to provide services to the day laborer community.”*

Defending Latino and Immigrant Access to Humanitarian Aid after Hurricane Katrina

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Red Cross and other organizations set up a series of shelters across the Gulf Coast region to assist victims of the storm. However, in three Red Cross shelters in southern Mississippi—in Bay St. Louis, D’Iberville, and Laurel—Latino families were removed from shelters if they could not provide documentation of their immigration status. In D’Iberville, three or four Latinos were removed from the shelter under the direction of Red Cross shelter directors and the local sheriff, who closed the entrances to the parking lot of the shelters so that they could arrest these individuals and take them to jail. In other places, shelter workers and police kicked Latinos out of the showers. Many people were denied emergency assistance because they were suspected of being “illegals,” and Latinos were required to produce documents to receive any services from the Red Cross.

While the public perception is that Latinos came to the Gulf Coast region only after the storm, the fact is that a Latino population has been in the area for many years. The most recent, pre-Katrina wave of Latino immigrants arrived to work in the hotel and casino and shrimping industries beginning in the early 1990s. The Latino population in Gulf Coast counties was approximately 30,000 people prior to Katrina and has increased more rapidly following the storm. Census figures indicate

that the overall Latino population in Mississippi more than doubled between 2000 and 2010.

The **Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA)**, a membership-based immigrant rights group and an ELC partner from 2005 to 2010, played a lead role in organizing people in the shelters, providing them with information on their rights, setting up an 800 number to provide individual assistance, and mobilizing the community to confront the Red Cross about these abusive practices. MIRA used grassroots mobilization and media strategies to pressure the Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to open up the shelters to everyone, regardless of immigration status, race, or ethnicity. It organized protests at the shelters while simultaneously enlisting the support of the **Congressional Hispanic Caucus** and then-Rep. Hilda Solis (D-CA), who helped broker a meeting with the director of the Red Cross.

The ELC program supported these efforts with funding, and NCLR also became directly involved in the campaign. NCLR chief executive officer and president Janet Murguía met with the Red Cross director and traveled to Mississippi personally to support the campaign and participate in a news conference with MIRA's board president.

Thanks to MIRA's efforts, the Red Cross ultimately opened up the shelters to all Latinos, and immigration enforcement officials were removed from the premises.

MIRA director **Bill Chandler** suggests that the campaign had a larger impact on the community's sense of empowerment: *"When victims are engaged in pushing back and recovering what was their right, it empowers them. People who live in fear, live in the shadows. This struggle empowered the Latino community That power showed up in the big immigration reform marches of 2006, when 1,000 Latinos were not afraid to march because they learned during the Katrina struggle that if they got organized, they could win."*

Building Latino Leadership and Organizational Capacity in the Southeast

The top five states and seven of the top ten states with the fastest-growing Latino populations are in the southeastern United States. This rapid growth presents unique challenges and opportunities for the Latino community. On the one hand, the political and economic power of Latinos is growing rapidly in this region, in tandem with their population growth. Increasingly, Latinos in the South will be in a position to shape

the public debate on many issues of importance. On the other hand, the rapid population growth in some areas that have not traditionally had large Hispanic communities has led to anti-immigrant backlash, including racial and ethnic profiling, housing discrimination, and a lack of services or investment in neighborhoods and schools.

Over the last ten years, NCLR has made significant investments in building the capacity of Latino community-based organizations (CBOs) in the South to develop strong civic leadership and mobilize their communities for systemic change on critical issues of social and economic justice. Specifically, the ELC program has supported 32 Latino CBOs in emerging Latino communities in the southeastern United States, including groups in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. In 2006, NCLR worked with its ELC partner organizations in the Southeast to organize the first ever Southeast Immigrant Rights Conference, out of which emerged the **Southeast Immigrant Rights Network (SEIRN)**.

SEIRN currently includes more than **50 Latino-and immigrant-serving organizations** in the Southeast—of which seven are current and former ELC partners—and works to promote collaboration and collective action on the part of organizations in the Southeast to promote immigrant rights. This work is particularly critical since many Latino- and immigrant-serving organizations have limited capacity on their own; the support of a robust regional network, however, enables organizations to amplify their voices on issues important to the Latino and immigrant communities in the region. For instance, when the Florida Immigrant Coalition—a former ELC partner—organized its “Trail of Dreams” to send young supporters of the DREAM Act on a march to Washington, DC, SEIRN organizations in Georgia, South Carolina, and other states mobilized resources to support the advocates on their march.

Recently, **SEIRN** hired its first full-time organizer, and the network has played an important role in combating anti-immigration legislation in southern states introduced in the wake of Arizona’s passage of SB 1070. Three states in the Southeast—Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina—passed SB 1070-style legislation during 2011. In Georgia, organizations affiliated with **SEIRN** were involved in organizing a Day of Action to oppose the legislation.

Alabama’s law, HB 56, is the worst of all the anti-immigration state legislation passed in 2011. The law requires both children and parents of students

to show documentation of immigration status in order to attend public schools, prohibits U.S. citizens from marrying undocumented immigrants, and makes it a crime to have an undocumented immigrant in one's house or car. The law has been enjoined temporarily while the courts determine its constitutionality. However, immigrant rights groups in Alabama and in the Southeast, led by the **Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama (HICA)**, a former ELC partner and current NCLR Affiliate, and by SEIRN, have mobilized strong opposition to the law, including a 3,000-person rally this summer. SEIRN organizations in several states supported the rally by turning people out or by sending organizers to Alabama to help organize the event.

While the ELC program's investments in the Southeast have not all panned out—for instance, the program supported several organizations in Georgia that no longer exist—the work of SEIRN and former ELC partners such as **HICA**, the **Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition**, and MIRA are evidence that the program has played a critical role in building institutions that successfully elevate the voice and power of the Latino community in the region.

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