

Spotlight on Latino Inclusion in Apprenticeships

Overview of UnidosUS

UnidosUS, previously known as NCLR (National Council of La Raza) is the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Through our unique combination of expert research, advocacy programs, and an Affiliate Network of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico, UnidosUS simultaneously challenges the social, economic and political barriers that affect Latinos at the national and local levels.

Workforce Development Focus

The Workforce Development (WFD) component enables an ecosystem that supports Latino individuals in their journey to thrive in the workforce and achieve economic prosperity. For this to happen, Latino jobseekers need access to jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and offer opportunities for career advancement. The WFD team builds the capacity of Affiliates and other Latino service community-based organizations so they can implement innovative workforce development programs that prepare Latino workers and small business owners for successful careers and promote systems change by working with all stakeholders to change practices that will allow Latino individuals to access more training and employment opportunities.

UnidosUS's Role in Apprenticeships

As a part of the National Innovation Hub for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in Registered Apprenticeships powered by Jobs for the Future (JFF), UnidosUS plays a pivotal role in promoting the inclusion of Latino apprentices. The WFD team leverages its robust partnerships with a broad network of nearly 300 community-based organizations (CBOs) and employers to raise awareness and boost participation in apprenticeships, connecting thousands of Latinos to career opportunities across the country.

Engagement Strategies

UnidosUS engages all key stakeholders – including CBOs, employers, intermediaries and potential apprenticeship participants – through a dual approach:

- **National Strategy:** Provides technical assistance to Affiliates, CBOs and employers on their apprenticeship journey.
- **Regional Strategy:** Focuses on specific regions, targeting Los Angeles, Chicago and San Antonio, to address local needs and provide tailored support.

Promoting Latino Inclusion in Apprenticeships

UnidosUS promotes Latino inclusion in apprenticeships through the following efforts:

- Coaching and Resources for Employers:** UnidosUS provides guidance and resources for employers interested in creating equitable apprenticeship opportunities. This includes assistance in designing apprenticeship programs that are inclusive and accessible to Latino individuals.
- Technical Assistance:** The organization offers technical assistance to employers and other stakeholders, aiding them in integrating apprenticeships as a sustainable hiring model and sourcing talent. This ensures navigating the complexities of apprenticeship programs to meet the needs of diverse populations.
- Connecting Employers with Latino-Serving Nonprofits:** UnidosUS connects employers with its network of almost 300 Latino-serving nonprofits across the country. These partnerships

serve as a valuable resource for building a sustainable talent pipeline for employer partners. By partnering with these organizations, employers can access a diverse pool of candidates and ensure their apprenticeship programs are inclusive.

Impact and Importance

UnidosUS's efforts in enhancing equity in apprenticeship opportunities are vital. Statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor show a 92% employment retention post-program completion for apprentices. Expanding occupations that offer apprenticeships could potentially fill 3.2 million jobs. By investing in Hispanic talent through apprenticeships, organizations can significantly advance diversity and inclusion within the workforce.

Through these comprehensive strategies and initiatives, UnidosUS continues to promote economic empowerment and advancement within the Latino community, ensuring a more inclusive and diverse future for apprenticeship programs.



INTERVIEWS Select a scenario below.

Scenario 1: Interviewing an Affiliate with a Pre-Apprenticeship Program

Scenario 2: Interviewing an Affiliate with a Registered Apprenticeship Program

Scenario 3: Interviewing an Employer with a Registered Apprenticeship Program

Scenario 1: Pre-Apprenticeship Program



Introduction to the Affiliate Organization

Name and location: Dr. Alexis Aviña, Chief Early Education Officer, MAAC – California, San Diego County

Brief background on the organization: MAAC provides services to over 100,000 individuals annually throughout San Diego County. MAAC's Pathways of Service — Advocacy and Leadership Development, Economic Development, Education, Health and Well-being and Housing — support its mission of maximizing self-sufficiency with families and individuals through high-quality programs and advocacy.

encompasses 2,215.6 hours, integrating both academic coursework and practical on-the-job training. Hands-on training and educational workshops are conducted face-to-face, providing direct, practical experience. Coursework and some seminars are available in a hybrid model, offering participants flexibility in how they complete these components. The 12 coursework units are typically completed over a sequence of four courses (3 units per semester, including summer). The modality includes a combination of in-person and online classes, providing both synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities. The program includes tutoring, technology and job-readiness training, as well as childcare support. MAAC can then employ these teachers at their 17 Head Start centers.

A. Pre-Apprenticeship Program Details

The Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship program is geared toward working parents of children enrolled in MAAC's 17 HeadStart centers. MAAC partners with Palomar College to provide participants with paid work experience with families and children under the guidance and support of a mentor, including free college coursework in child development through Palomar College. Participants can qualify for the Associate Teacher Permit in 18 months (about 1 and a half years or 80 weeks). The program

B. Focus on Latino inclusion

MAAC serves a significant Latino population, and family circumstances vary. The families MAAC serves are predominantly low-income, living 200% below the poverty line with an average income of \$37,000 for a family of four. Some participants may only speak Spanish and require ESOL learning supports or be navigating the nationalization process, or perhaps recently immigrated and may be interested in reskilling as an Early Childhood Education preschool teacher.

C. Interview Questions

This document spotlights three distinct scenarios within the Apprenticeship ecosystem, focusing on the successful inclusion of Latino apprentices. The WFD team conducted interviews with various stakeholders, including Affiliates and an employer, to explore different approaches to successfully including Latinos in these programs.

1. What motivated your organization to start a pre-apprenticeship program?

Early childhood education centers have been experiencing teacher shortages for years, so the program was motivated by the desire to fill this need and increase the children's ability to thrive by creating career pathways for parents. MAAC is the second organization in California to offer this kind of program. The first cohort of the program is currently underway and is made up of approximately 25 participants who are mostly parents.

2. What are the main objectives and target demographics?

MAAC invests in developing the whole child by working through family as a mechanism. Develop low-income communities in the workforce and serve the whole child by working through family as a mechanism for health, safety, security and the child's ability to thrive through Early Childhood Education (ages 0-5) preschool centers.

3. How do you recruit and select participants for each program, and what criteria do you use?

MAAC's recruitment process begins with their 17 Head Start locations with outreach to families and parents; this

creates trust as other parents can vouch for the program because of Head Start's high standards of quality.

4. How do you ensure the program is accessible and inclusive for Latino individuals?

All program resources are available in both English and Spanish starting with recruitment. Coursework is also offered during the evening, allowing for schedule flexibility. In addition to childcare, participants benefit from a range of supportive services, including: **Textbook and Technology Access:** Provision of textbooks, laptops and internet hotspots. **Transportation Assistance:** Includes bus passes, ride-sharing vouchers and funding for mechanical repairs. **English Language Learner (ELL) Support:** Embedded tutoring for non-native English speakers, with 234 hours of supplemental instruction per year. **Career Services:** Support with career counseling and job placement assistance. **Mental Health Support:** Access to individual sessions and group workshops. **Additional Childcare Support:** Assistance with childcare needs during summer and academic days.

5. What specific skills and competencies do participants gain during the pre-apprenticeship program?

All participants earn as they learn; upon hiring they are enrolled and required to complete 12 coursework units of Child Development or Early Childhood Education within 24 months of employment at the cohort's pace, with one course per semester through Palomar College. They also learn skills such as how to work effectively on a team and communicate with others.

6. What types of support services do you offer to participants during and after the pre-apprenticeship program?

Participants meet regularly with their success coordinator or team, with the frequency based on individual needs. This includes routine biweekly to weekly check-ins, as well as group meetings held monthly. These meetings are essential for developing personalized development plans, tracking competency-based assessment progress and addressing any challenges to ensure participants stay aligned with their career goals. The team also provides community resources, navigation and referrals for additional support.

7. What resources and support services do you offer to apprentices, both during their apprenticeship and as they transition into the workforce?

A dedicated staff person (Program Success Coordinator) is available for participants to ensure they are tracking progress for success and supporting their personalized needs.

8. How do you measure the success and impact of your pre-apprenticeship program?

What key metrics track?

Beyond salary increases, enhanced confidence and overall program satisfaction, we have observed:

Quantitative:

- High job placement rates within six months of program completion with industry-recognized credentials
- Increased number of apprentices achieving advanced certifications
- Improved participation and retention rates

Qualitative:

- Better work-life balance reported by participants
- Enhanced job readiness and professional skills
- Increased engagement in children's educational activities at home
- Higher levels of participant self-efficacy and personal growth
- Improved interpersonal and communication skills among participants

9. What are some challenges you've faced in implementing this program, and how have you addressed them?

The program is in its pilot year, so they are gathering learnings and feedback on how to address any challenges for the upcoming cohort.

10. Based on your experience, what are the key components of a successful pre-apprenticeship program and what advice would you offer to organizations looking to implement similar initiatives.

Because MAAC's program employs participants, it is integral to work closely with other departments such as Workforce Development and Family Engagement which are different components that serve the child and whole family. MAAC's advice is to be patient and really get to know the needs of potential apprentices, since the program will only be as successful as those apprentices are successful. Adopting a new program can be difficult and every organization will experience those lessons uniquely, so set staff expectations early on to set your program up for success.

Scenario 2: Affiliate with Registered Apprenticeship Program

Introduction to the Affiliate Organization

Name and location: Project Vida Health Center, founded in 1991, is in the Chamizal neighborhood of south-central El Paso, Texas. Its mission is to identify and address the community's comprehensive needs.

Brief background on the organization: Project Vida was born out of a series of Community Congresses, where residents determined their needs. Since then, it has focused on providing healthcare, affordable housing, education and support services to the community, becoming an integral part of improving lives in the area.



education and skill development, thus enhancing their professional growth and our organizational capacity.

1. How did your organization establish its registered apprenticeship program?

Our organization began by securing a federal Health Resources and Services Administration grant, which motivated us to explore the potential of a registered apprenticeship program. Recognizing our existing capabilities, we aimed to provide upskilling opportunities, focused on recruiting individuals with strong soft skills and then provided the necessary education and skill development.

2. What motivated your organization to start a registered apprenticeship program?

The primary motivation was to offer upskilling opportunities and address gaps in our workforce. By identifying individuals with the right soft skills, we aimed to provide them with targeted

3. Can you walk us through the process of setting up the program from inception to implementation?

The process began with identifying and securing the Health Resources and Services Administration grant. We then researched apprenticeship programs to understand what we had and what we needed. We identified three key areas of specialization: Community Health Workers (CHWs), navigation, outreach and chronic care management. The next step was to develop the curriculum and class training to address these specializations. This comprehensive approach allowed us to effectively implement our registered apprenticeship program.

4. What steps have you taken to attract and retain Latino participants in the program?

Partnering with Workforce Solutions has been instrumental, as they send us candidates that align with our needs. We focus our recruitment efforts in areas with high poverty rates, ensuring that we reach Latino individuals who can benefit the most. As a result, 100% of our apprentices are Latino.

5. How does your organization actively reach out to Latino communities to promote the apprenticeship program?

Our outreach strategy includes promoting the program in various community spaces such as supermarkets, parks and other local venues. This approach ensures that are visible and accessible to Latino communities, encouraging participation through familiar and trusted locations.

6. Have you implemented any specific strategies or initiatives tailored to Latino individuals?

Yes, our recruitment strategy is designed to diversify not just by ethnicity but also by income level, gender and sexual orientation. We focus on comprehensive outreach and targeted promotion to ensure we are inclusive and meet the diverse needs of the community.

7. How do you ensure that Latino apprentices have access to necessary support and resources?

What support structures are in place to assist Latino apprentices throughout their apprenticeship?

The support structures that are in place to assist Latino apprentices are the One-to-One sessions. During these sessions, the apprentice and the coordinator discuss how work is going, if personal life is affecting work/class instruction if any resources are needed. If the apprentice needs health care/social services, the coordinator will connect the apprentice to an access navigator to schedule appointments to the services required.

The frequency of the one to ones vary depending on the time that

the apprentice has in the program. For example, the first 3 months are once a month. For months 5-9, the apprenticeship case management coordinator and the apprentice meet with them on months 5, 7 and 9. The last one to one happens on month 12. The duration of the meeting is 1 hour and it takes place in person or virtual.

8. Do you provide any additional resources or services specifically for Latino apprentices?

As Project Vida provides holistic integrated services, apprentices can be enrolled in services such as behavioral health and primary care and referred to other social services.

9. How do you address language barriers or cultural differences that may arise during the apprenticeship?

The coordinator plays a big role in assisting the apprentice in any challenges with language since most of the material is in English. Since all of our participants have been Latino, we have not had many cultural differences.

10. Can you share any success stories from Latino apprentices who have completed the program?

A Project Vida apprentice Navigator who is about to complete her apprenticeship started her journey during a difficult time in her life. She was in the middle of exiting her marriage due to ongoing domestic violence for over 15 years. Although English is not her first language, she participated in the community health worker certification and engaged with the community while registering individuals for discounts, Medicaid, Medicare, food stamps and other social services. She found

the resiliency and determination to surpass her personal obstacles and Project Vida connected her to legal aid and medical services she needed. Her divorce is almost finalized, she has attended therapy for the past year, and she is continuing her work to support the community within Project Vida.

11. How has the apprenticeship program impacted the career trajectories of Latino participants?

Being in the border region means that we encounter various situations and backgrounds within our participants who have all been members of the Latino community. Our apprentices have ranged from having traumatic situations in their early stages of life to dealing with life threatening situations as adults in their lives. Whether it be conducting monthly check-ins to connecting them to social services or providing them with financial assistance for any barriers, we have created a pathway for participants to focus on their future, increase skills and develop new ones. The apprentices have stayed within the organization after completion or successfully been hired by other CHW employers within our region.

12. What benefits has your apprenticeship program had for your organization and for the community?

A benefit that the apprenticeship program has brought to Project Vida Health Center is the development of our CHW workforce, what this means is that apprentices are being guided and provided with training to

perform their responsibilities while understanding the bigger impact that CHW can have in the community.

13. What recommendations would you offer to other community-based organizations (CBOs) interested in starting a similar apprenticeship program?

Based on your experience, what advice would you give to CBOs considering launching a registered apprenticeship program?

One piece of advice that we can provide for the CBOs is to be open to a system change in their organization. Apprenticeship programs are developed to not only change the life of the apprentice but to make changes in all levels of the organization such as in HR, payroll and in a leadership level. At the end, the one that benefits the most is the organization because they are developing their own workforce.

14. Are there any key lessons you've learned that you would share with other organizations embarking on a similar journey?

When starting the conversations regarding the apprenticeship program, start the conversation by explaining what an apprenticeship is and what are the benefits of and what is the end goal of the program. As Project Vida apprenticeship program is about community health workers our conversations start with those main topics to make sure they understand the concept. Also to have visuals (presentation or flyers) as this facilitates the conversation.



15. Are there specific challenges that you encountered in the process that other CBOs should be aware of?

One of the main challenges for any agency is funding, always having different plans of sustainability would be important for incorporating apprentices in the organization.

16. What recommendations would you give to employers interested in collaborating with CBOs on apprenticeship programs, particularly regarding Latino participation?

How can employers best support CBOs in recruiting and retaining Latino apprentices?

Employers can support CBOs in retaining apprentices by conducting one-to-ones. With these one-to-one employers can identify what are the real needs of apprentices and help them to access those opportunities or resources. Project VIDA has a designated staff position of Apprenticeship Case Management Coordinator, who conducts one-on-ones and tracks the progress of the apprentices throughout the program. Based on the one-year apprenticeship program, the Apprenticeship Case

Management Coordinator will meet with the apprentices on to discuss progress, barriers and obstacles, the CHW course certification and any other matters related to the success of the apprenticeship at hand.

17. Are there any specific ways employers can adapt their workplace culture or practices to better accommodate Latino apprentices?

For an apprentice to feel welcome in a place, employers need to make a safe space environment. This safe space environment is a place in which any questions can be addressed, there is support and guidance not only from the supervisor but also from the team members.

18. Based on your experiences, what are some effective strategies for fostering successful partnerships between employers and CBOs in the context of apprenticeship programs?

Communication and flexibility are the key. These two components are useful for relationships and partnerships to grow and share responsibility.

Scenario 3: *Employer with Registered Apprenticeship Programs*



1. Can you tell me about your company?

Aon is a globally renowned British-American professional services and management consulting firm, headquartered in London with its North American operations based in Chicago at the Aon center. We specialize in offering a broad array of risk-mitigation products and services, helping clients navigate the increasingly intricate landscape of risk and opportunities. Our two-year, full-time apprenticeship program combines education and work experience to offer a unique path to a career with Aon. At the same time as they are earning their degree, Apprentices develop vital workplace skills and earn a competitive salary as a full-time Aon employee.

2. What motivated your company to develop a registered apprenticeship program?

Aon's motivation to develop a registered apprenticeship program stemmed from the need to address high turnover rates among individuals recruited from 4-year colleges

and universities. While these recruits were entering our launch program with potential, we faced challenges in retaining them after training. Inspired by the success of apprenticeship programs in the UK and through conversations with the Department of Labor, we decided to implement a similar program in the U.S. We worked with the non-profit organization, One Million Degrees in Chicago, to provide comprehensive support services for apprentices.

3. How do you ensure diversity and inclusion within the program, particularly Latino participants?

Aon ensures diversity and inclusion within our apprenticeship program by acknowledging that not everyone can afford a degree and by addressing the gap in diverse representation. We are intentional in sourcing our talent, collaborating with community colleges, nonprofit organizations and local schools in highly diverse communities. By taking this approach, we can reach a broader population, including Latino participants, ensuring our program benefits from a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

4. Can you share any success stories of Latino apprentices who have thrived within your program?

Aon has several inspiring success stories from our apprenticeship program, including two standout Latino participants. Victor Gutierrez transitioned from the hospitality industry with no prior experience in professional services. As part of our first cohort, Victor quickly adapted and excelled, ultimately becoming a manager who now oversees apprentices himself. Another success story is Gabriela Caballero, who graduated from our program last summer. Her outstanding performance led to her being designated a national Department of Labor ambassador, and she even had the honor of introducing the Secretary of Education. Both Victor and Gabriela exemplify the impact and opportunities our apprenticeship program provides.

5. How do you incorporate feedback from Latino apprentices to continuously improve and adapt the apprenticeship program?

Aon ensures the continuous improvement and adaptation of our apprenticeship program by facilitating monthly surveys for all apprentices, including Latino participants. These surveys provide valuable feedback on various aspects of the program, allowing us to identify areas for enhancement. We analyze the feedback to understand the specific needs and challenges faced by our apprentices and implement changes accordingly. This ongoing dialogue helps us create a more effective and inclusive apprenticeship experience.

6. Do you provide any financial support or assistance to Latino apprentices who may face socioeconomic challenges?

Aon provides financial support to apprentices facing socioeconomic challenges through a supportive service budget, facilitated by our partnerships with Community Based Organizations. This support structure is designed to help Latino apprentices and others overcome financial barriers, enabling them to successfully participate and thrive in the program.

7. What initiatives has your organization implemented to promote diversity and inclusion, particularly within the Latino community?

Aon has established a Latino Professional Network as part of our commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion. This global network allows colleagues from various regions to join and participate, fostering a sense of community and support among Latino employees.

8. How do you approach recruiting and retaining Latino talent within your organization?

Aon approaches the recruitment and retention of Latino talent through our structured apprenticeship program, which has shown a 10% greater retention rate compared to our previous LAUNCH program. Our apprenticeship program has an over 80% completion rate, highlighting its effectiveness. Additionally, we provide financial support facilitated by our contracts with CBOs and career development opportunities, ensuring that our Latino apprentices have the resources and encouragement they need to succeed and grow within our organization.

9. What impact have your diversity and inclusion initiatives had on the Latino community and within your organization?

Aon's diversity and inclusion initiatives have created a highly diverse apprenticeship program, with 90% of participants from underrepresented groups. This commitment to diversity has significantly benefited the Latino community within our organization. Our program provides comprehensive support and development opportunities, enabling apprentices to excel and progress in their careers. The inclusive environment fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment, which has translated into high retention and completion rates. By embracing diversity at every level, we have built a stronger, more dynamic workforce that reflects the rich cultural fabric of the communities we serve.

10. What challenges have you encountered in promoting diversity and inclusion, especially for the Latino community?

Aon has faced challenges in ensuring that candidates applying to our apprenticeship program are ready for its academic and professional demands. While we may identify outstanding candidates, some may not meet the program readiness

requirements at the college level. This can be due to various factors, including gaps in prior educational experiences or personal circumstances affecting their preparedness.

11. What advice would you offer to a company considering the establishment of its own apprenticeship program or in the early stages of launching one?

Aon recommends that the company first determine the specific roles they are looking to fill and consider how these roles fit into the company's workforce development plan. It's important to ensure there is a clear career path for the roles included in the apprenticeship program. When launching the program, be agile and flexible, and tap into existing apprenticeship networks for guidance and support. Starting with a small cohort model, ideally with 3-5 apprentices, can be beneficial. Bringing apprentices in at the same time allows them to support each other while receiving on-the-job training. Additionally, leveraging networks like the Greater Houston Apprenticeship Network, Greater Washington Apprenticeship Network, and others across the country can provide valuable resources and community support for new programs.



12. What are your organization's future plans for further expanding opportunities for the Latino community?

Aon is significantly investing in the growth of our apprenticeship program and networks to expand opportunities for all, including the Latino community. In 2021, Aon committed to investing \$30 million into expanding apprenticeships, with the ambitious goal of creating 10,000 apprentices by 2030. This investment is aimed at growing the program and enhancing the support and resources available to apprentices. By expanding our reach and creating more opportunities, we aim to foster a diverse and inclusive environment where Latino talent can thrive and advance their careers.

Conclusion

Summary of key points and the importance of Latino inclusion in apprenticeship programs:

UnidosUS's efforts in enhancing equity in apprenticeship opportunities are vital. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, there is a 92% employment retention rate post-program completion for apprentices. Expanding occupations that offer apprenticeships could potentially fill 3.2 million jobs. By investing in Latino talent through apprenticeships, organizations can significantly advance diversity and inclusion within the workforce. UnidosUS's comprehensive strategies promote economic empowerment and advancement within the Latino community, ensuring a more inclusive and diverse future for apprenticeship programs.

