

# Report to the Governor's Consortium on Hispanic Affairs



# Delaware's Hispanic Needs Assessment

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# Introduction

The Delaware Governor's Consortium on Hispanic Affairs (the Consortium) is conducting needs and strengths assessment research regarding the Hispanic population of the state in order to determine where the Consortium's energy and resources can be best utilized to help the Hispanic community. The Consortium hired Bendixen & Associates (B&A), a professional research company in Miami, Florida to conduct the research for this needs assessment. In order to best understand the needs of the Hispanic population in Delaware, B&A created a research design that involves collecting both qualitative and quantitative data.

The first stage of the research was to conduct qualitative focus group research with the Hispanic population. This allowed for an open format in which complex issues could be discussed and the thoughts and perspectives of the Hispanic population itself could begin to be measured. The second stage was to conduct another round of qualitative research, but this time with opinion leaders – including Hispanic opinion leaders – throughout the state. This aspect of the research allowed B&A to conduct in-depth interviews with key opinion leaders throughout the state in order to determine what they believe are the most important needs of the state's Hispanic community. Both of these qualitative stages produced useful information that is presented herein. Additionally, perhaps the most important aspect of all of the qualitative research, is that it provided focused direction for the statewide poll of Hispanics, which was the final stage of the research. The quantitative data obtained through the statewide poll provides concrete data from a representative sample of the Hispanic population of Delaware and can therefore be projected to the entire Hispanic population. It is this quantitative data that will be of particular use to the Consortium as it reviews the research to best determine where the resources would be best utilized and most effective.

# Methodology

## Overview:

In order to collect the necessary data in the most comprehensive method possible, B&A designed a three-stage research methodology for this project. The first stage entailed conducting a series of focus groups with Hispanics throughout the state. Next, 50 executive interviews (or in-depth interviews) were conducted with key opinion leaders throughout the state. These two qualitative research stages were followed by the final stage of the research – a statewide poll with a representative sample of all Hispanics in the state of Delaware.

## Focus Group Methodology:

B&A and the Consortium determined that although quantitative data would be necessary to accurately collect needs assessment data, collecting qualitative data from the Hispanic population prior to administering the statewide survey would be very instructive in helping to guide the direction of the poll and determining the key issues that would need to be quantified. Therefore, a total of three focus groups were conducted.

The first two groups were conducted in Wilmington, Delaware at the *Latin American Community Center* on Thursday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. Participants for these two groups were recruited from throughout New Castle County. The first group (conducted in English) took place from 6:00 to 8:00 in the evening and all participants were English-dominant Hispanics who live in New Castle County. The second group (conducted in Spanish) took place from 8:00 to 10:00 in the evening and all participants were Spanish-dominant Hispanics who live in New Castle County.

The third and final group was conducted in Georgetown, Delaware at *La Esperanza* on Friday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007. Participants for this group were recruited from throughout Sussex and Kent Counties. The group (conducted in Spanish) took place from 7:00 to 9:00 in the evening and all participants were Spanish-dominant Hispanics who live in either Kent or Sussex County.

A professional focus group facility – MBC Research in New York, NY – was hired to manage the recruiting process and the logistics of the focus groups (including checking participants in at the groups, recording the sessions, coordinating food for participants, translating the sessions when needed and ensuring that the groups ran smoothly overall). A screener was composed by B&A senior researchers and this screener was used to recruit all participants. The recruiting process was closely supervised by senior researchers from B&A in order to ensure accuracy and representativeness. B&A instructed the focus group facility to recruit a total of 20 participants for each of the three groups. Every individual who was recruited for one of the groups was screened to ensure that they were Hispanic, that they lived in the proper county for the group they were being recruited for, and that they were not employed by or heavily involved with either the *Latin American Community Center* or *La Esperanza*.

In each group, the objective was to get as much variation among participants as possible. To achieve this, 10 to 11 participants were selected to participate in each group (from the 20 pre-screened recruits) in a way that allowed for considerable variation by age, country of origin and town of residence. The table below (Table 1) provides a demographic overview of participants for each of the focus groups.

**Table 1: Demographics of Delaware Focus Groups**

<b>Description of Group</b>	<b>Towns Represented</b>	<b>Countries Represented</b>	<b>Gender of Participants</b>	<b>Age Range of Participants</b>
Wilmington (English-dominant; 10 participants)	Bear, New Castle, Newark, Wilmington	Dominican Republic, Honduras, Panama, Puerto Rico, Venezuela	5 men / 5 women	22 to 49
Wilmington (Spanish-dominant; 11 participants)	Bear, Elsmere, New Castle, Newark, Newport, Pike Creek, Wilmington	Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Puerto Rico	5 men / 6 women	20 to 69
Georgetown (Spanish-dominant; 10 participants)	Georgetown, Milford, Milton, Rehoboth, Seaford, Smyrna	Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Puerto Rico	5 men / 5 women	18 to 68

**Executive Interview Methodology:**

The second stage of the research was also a qualitative approach. A total of 50 executive or in-depth interviews were conducted with opinion leaders throughout the state of Delaware. Interviews were conducted between December 6<sup>th</sup> and December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007. For the purposes of this research, opinion leaders were defined as individuals in various types of professions that have an impact in the state. Leaders from the business sector, elected officials, educational leaders, grassroots community leaders, those in the public sector and Hispanic leaders in various professions were all eligible to be selected for an interview. A list of leaders was aggregated by B&A researchers by both compiling names submitted by members of the Consortium and through web mining research. The list was then vetted by key Consortium members who added several names to the list and identified those individuals that should be classified as VIPs. The final list of approximately 165 names was approved by the Consortium.

Three professionally trained executive interviewers from B&A conducted the 50 interviews. The average interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. All data was recorded on paper for each individual interview. The transcriptions of each interview were then aggregated in an electronic file and analyzed by senior researchers at B&A. A demographic profile of the executive interview participants can be found below.

- 23 of the 50 interviews were conducted with designated VIPs
- Racial/Ethnic breakdown of participants:
  - 4 Black
  - 24 Hispanic
  - 22 White
- Gender breakdown of participants:
  - 27 Women
  - 23 Men

- Age breakdown of participants:
  - 22 were under the age of 50
  - 28 were over the age of 50
- Years in Delaware:
  - 17 have lived in Delaware for less than 20 years
  - 33 have lived in Delaware for 20 years or more

County:

<i>County</i>	<i>Number of Interviews</i>	<i>Percent of Interviews</i>	<i>Actual Percent of Adult Population (per 2006 Census)</i>
Kent	8	16%	17%
Sussex	9	18%	22%
New Castle	33	66%	61%

- Leadership categories:
  - 13 Public sector leaders
  - 8 Private sector leaders
  - 11 Educational leaders
  - 5 Healthcare leaders
  - 11 Non-profit/Community leaders
  - 2 Religious leaders
- Examples of actual professions of those interviewed:
  - Mayor
  - University leadership
  - Doctor
  - Lawyer
  - Attorney
  - Teacher
  - Chamber of Commerce leadership
  - City and County officials and representatives
  - Reverend
  - Assistant Superintendent
  - Newspaper editor
  - Real estate professional
  - Business owner
  - Non-profit director

**Statewide Poll Methodology:**

The final stage of the research was to conduct a statewide poll of Hispanics. A total of 800 interviews were conducted between February 1<sup>st</sup> and February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008. In order to be sure that all aspects of Delaware’s Hispanic population were represented in the survey, two modes of data collection were employed. The majority of interviews (N=750) were conducted via landline telephone. The overwhelming majority of U.S. Hispanic households have landline telephone service and B&A

assumes the same is true for Hispanics in Delaware. However, some do not have landline service and in order to include the opinions of those, door-to-door interviewing was done.

The landline sample was selected based on a process called ethnic encoding. The ethnic encoding process allows for the identification of potential respondents using first and last name algorithms. By employing this method, sample selection does not depend solely on having a Hispanic surname. Instead, the ethnic encoding process tests first and last names of all potential respondents (all Delaware households with a listed telephone number). The first and last names are tested down to the syllable level. Any name that contains at least one syllable (in either the first or last name) signifying a high likelihood that the individual is Hispanic was selected. The ethnic encoding process yields a sample that is more comprehensive and therefore more accurate than the traditional Hispanic surname method. For example, using the often-utilized Hispanic surname selection method, the name “Sergio Bendixen” would not be selected for the sample because the surname “Bendixen” does not indicate Hispanic heritage. However, using the more sophisticated ethnic encoding process, the name “Sergio Bendixen” would be included in the sample since “Sergio” contains syllables indicating a high potential that the individual is Hispanic. Once the sample list was compiled, it was then cross-referenced against the latest U.S. Census data available for the Delaware Hispanic population to be sure that it was representative in terms of income, education and other demographic indicators for Hispanics in Delaware.

All landline telephone interviews were conducted by professionally trained bilingual interviewers at a central location using CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing). Interviewers began each survey in the language in which the telephone was answered, but all respondents were given the choice to continue the interview in either English or Spanish. B&A research staff oversaw all aspects of the interviewing process and monitored selected interviews at random on the first several nights in the field to be sure the survey instrument was functioning properly and the interviewers were adhering to the instrument.

Additionally, interviews were conducted in person in order to be sure that Hispanic households that do not have landline telephone service were not systematically excluded from the sample. A team of professional, trained, bilingual interviewers conducted the in-person interviews at designated sampling points (SPs) throughout the state. The first step for the in-person interviewing process was to identify SPs in high concentration Hispanic areas throughout the state. SPs consist of towns or neighborhoods with a high concentration of Hispanic residents. Once all possible SPs were determined, every effort was made to randomize the selection of the actual SPs where interviewing would take place. The SPs were selected in a way that maximized the possibility of selection for all types of Hispanics in Delaware (immigrants and native born, young and old, male and female, etc.) A total of 5 SPs were selected and field teams were sent to each one to identify specific locations where they could conduct the interviews for that SP. These locations included restaurants, work locations, remittance sending locations, churches, stores and other centralized locations within each SP where the Hispanic population may gather. Convenience sampling and snowball sampling methods were also used to gather the sample.

Convenience sampling consists of interviewing a group of individuals that is ready and available. In this case, individuals at the selected locations within each SP were interviewed. In an effort to collect the most representative sample possible and to randomize the sample, the field teams visited each location within each SP a minimum of 3 times so that the sample was not biased in representing only those individuals who were at the location at one specific point in time.



Once all of the interviews were completed, all data was entered into an electronic file and analyzed by researchers at B&A. The overall sampling error for the complete sample of 800 is  $\pm 3.5$  percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. This means that if the survey was repeated an infinite number of times using the same methodology employed here, 95 percent of the time we would expect the results to fall within  $\pm 3.5$  percent of the results reported herein.

# Research Phase One: Focus Groups

## Summary:

Overall, Hispanics view Delaware as a quiet, peaceful place to live that offers a fairly good quality of life. Many see that the state has many opportunities for Hispanics – especially for those that are bilingual. The quiet lifestyle, the location (with easy access to major cities) and the favorable tax situation that Delaware offers is appealing to most Hispanics. Those that don't want to remain in Delaware plan to leave mostly because the lifestyle is a bit *too* quiet for them and they feel bored. In addition, the high pollution was seen as a major drawback to living in Delaware. Another drawback to living in Delaware for Hispanics is the subtle discrimination many feel they face. Some mentioned experiences with being passed over for promotions and raises at work by less qualified and experienced non-Hispanics, and most think this is due to discrimination. Others mentioned that the discrimination that young Hispanics face at school could be a reason for the high drop out rate and the increase in gang activity among Hispanic youth. Immigrants, particularly those who live in Kent and Sussex Counties, report higher rates of direct discrimination in Delaware.

For the most part, Hispanics do not report many problems when it comes to accessing basic services in Delaware. However, immigrants were more likely to be uninsured and therefore more likely to have difficulty accessing quality healthcare. Additionally, low-income immigrants reported major issues with transportation in Delaware (particularly in Kent and Sussex Counties). Because there is not a reliable public transportation system in the state and because many cannot obtain a driver's license, Hispanic immigrants are left with few transportation options. This lack of access to reliable transportation directly impacts – in a limiting way – the employment and educational opportunities for this population.

Education is the key area where Hispanics feel things need to be improved. This applies not only to improving the quality of life in the public education system for Hispanic youth, but also many other areas. For example, several participants mentioned the importance of offering more job training programs and more opportunities for immigrants to learn English. Both of these, participants believe, would have a directly positive impact on their job opportunities and overall quality of life in Delaware. Additionally, many participants mentioned that higher education in Delaware is prohibitively expensive for the majority of Hispanics and therefore many do not see it as an attainable option for themselves or their children. If higher education was more affordable, participants felt that more Hispanics would seek it out, ultimately increasing their options and improving their lives.

When it comes to the major problems facing Delaware's Hispanic young people – high dropout rates and gang activity – again many think education is the answer. Some participants feel that it is important to offer education to Hispanic parents so they are better equipped to help their children succeed. Both English classes and other specific parenting technique classes were proposed as options that may help reduce the problems among the youth by educating the parents. In addition to helping Hispanic parents, participants also pointed to having more support for Hispanic young people in the schools. It is felt that the lack of Hispanics that are in teaching and administration positions leaves young people with few resources or mentors to turn to and relate to within the school when they are having problems. Some of the focus group participants think that this lack of support, coupled with the discrimination some Hispanic students receive from their peers, leads some to drop out or turn to gangs for a support system.

In addition to addressing the specific issues around education mentioned above, some other participants thought it would be useful for the state to create a centralized agency or community center to specifically address the needs of Hispanics in Delaware. Those who thought this would be a good idea envisioned a “one-stop-shop” for Hispanics that would be highly visible and accessible and would help Hispanic residents with a wide variety of issues. The concept was basically to have a simple resource for Hispanics that they could go to for anything from questions about acquiring documents to information about English classes and job opportunities. The Consortium could also provide support for parents to address problems their children face and help to make their children successful.

Many issues were raised in the focus groups that required further testing in the quantitative component of the research (the statewide poll of Hispanics) to determine how important each one actually is to the entire state’s Hispanic population. In addition to some of the other topics the Consortium wished to measure, the poll specifically explored each of the educational issues raised, the transportation issue, issues relating to the Hispanic youth, economic issues, discrimination and the overall environment for Hispanics in Delaware.

### **Major Findings:**

**1. Many Hispanics see education as the gateway to a better life. Participants believe that increased access to job training programs and increased availability of classes to learn English would significantly help the Hispanic population of Delaware.**

It is clear that education is the main issue on the minds of many Hispanics throughout the state of Delaware. Most participants feel that education can open a lot of doors for Hispanics so they can get better jobs, earn more money, have more power, get more respect and have a better life overall. There were many different ideas about how to improve educational opportunities that came out of the groups. Some felt that having more English classes available for those that do not speak the language would be a critical part of helping immigrants assimilate and ultimately succeed in Delaware. Others mentioned that increased job training programs were necessary to help Hispanics have access to higher-paying jobs. Additionally, many participants mentioned that obtaining a higher education in Delaware needs to be more affordable. Tuition keeps increasing and this is making life difficult for many Hispanic families. Many see the value of a higher education, but the financial burden makes it unattainable.

### **Participant Quotes:**

*“Education is the main issue – so many (Hispanics) don’t have it because it is too expensive, but it would open a lot of doors for people to progress.”*

*“Higher education needs to be more attainable for kids; it needs to be made an accessible reality.”*

*“There needs to be more training for Hispanics to learn a trade so they have more job and career development opportunities.”*

*“There are barriers to getting a higher education – financial barriers and language barriers.”*

*“When a person is educated, they know where to go. They should create education centers and publicize them for the Hispanic community. Once you have an education you have access to everything.”*

**2. The problems faced by Hispanic youth in Delaware including high dropout rates, increased gang involvement and lack of access to higher education are also issues that many participants believe can be resolved, or at least improved, through changes made to the education system.**

Several participants recognized that there is a problem with Hispanic youth and directly related this to education. Some suggested that both the high dropout rate and the increased gang problem could be positively impacted by changes that could be made in the educational system. Again, the language barrier came up, as some participants feel that many Hispanic students have difficulty with English, which makes keeping up in school particularly trying. In addition, some suggested that in most schools in Delaware, Hispanics are such a minority that they feel isolated. Because there are so few Hispanic teachers or administrators to help the Hispanic students, they feel as though there is nowhere for these students to turn and therefore they turn to negative outlets such as gangs to gain the feeling of acceptance that they do not feel at school. One other insight that was mentioned was that once a young person drops out and sees the immediate impact of working and earning money to buy things, it is difficult to convince them that they will ultimately have more opportunities by returning to school.

Participant Quotes:

*“Young (Hispanic) people in school feel discriminated against and so they go to the gangs to feel protected.”*

*“The language barrier is a problem with education for young people.”*

*“The dropout rate is a problem and some of it is due to the overcrowded classes and that they (Hispanic students) don’t have any role models at the schools (few Hispanics in teaching and administration positions).”*

*“Because sometimes the parents aren’t educated, there is no role model at home (as far as education goes).”*

*“Some think that if they can work and earn money that is better than going to school.”*

*“The neighborhood environment isn’t good – since there is nothing (for the young people) to do they end up doing bad things.”*

**3. Hispanics are fairly evenly split as to whether or not they will remain in Delaware. Many love the state and plan to live in Delaware for the rest of their lives, while others – particularly those under the age of 40 – expressed a strong desire to leave the state at some point in the future.**

Several focus group participants mentioned that one of the things they like best about Delaware is the quiet, peaceful atmosphere of the state. However, for some, this type of lifestyle means that there is not enough excitement to keep people interested in staying in the state. Those who are comfortable with the quieter, suburban lifestyle are happy in Delaware and expect to stay here with their families forever and see it as a great place to raise their children. This laid back lifestyle coupled with the attractive tax situation in Delaware and the prime location of the state (with easy access to major cities such as New York City, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and Baltimore as well as access to beaches) make it the ideal place to live for several of the Hispanics who participated in the groups. Additionally, several participants felt that there are numerous opportunities for Hispanics in Delaware,

especially for those who are bilingual. While Hispanics who do not speak English may encounter various problems when it comes to educational and job opportunities in the state, those who are bilingual feel as though they may even have more job opportunities than some non-Hispanics. The demand for employees across all sorts of professions who speak Spanish (but who are also fluent in English) is apparently high, which has opened doors for bilingual Hispanics in Delaware.

Participant Quotes:

*“This is home, where I’m raising my kids.”*

*“We don’t pay taxes here – so there are financial benefits (to living in Delaware) that other states don’t have.”*

*“There are a lot of job opportunities for me because I am bilingual.”*

*“When I arrived in Delaware, I loved it. I would like to stay here if I can.”*

*“I would like to return to my country, but there are too many problems there so I will stay here in Delaware.”*

*“I like it here. I see a lot of potential with the work I do to grow my business here.”*

*“I will stay here all my life unless the property taxes keep rising. It’s calm, quiet and pretty, but taxes are going up.”*

Hispanics who plan to leave Delaware at some point in the future either to return to their home country or to move to a different state in the U.S. mostly plan to leave because the state is a little too quiet for their tastes. Most of those who plan to leave due to the “lack of excitement” in Delaware were younger people who were not currently raising families in the state. Another reason for wanting to leave the state is a desire to return to one’s home country. For some others, specific problems such as the high pollution, increased crime rate and an overall negative environment for Hispanics in the state are the main reasons for wanting to relocate.

Participant Quotes:

*“It’s boring here – I definitely want to leave.”*

*“There is not much power to grow my ideas here in Delaware.”*

*“I go where the money/work opportunities are. There are more opportunities in bigger cities; Delaware is too small (so opportunities are limited).”*

*“I’ll stay here for a few more years to finish my education and then go back to my country where my family is.”*

*“I may want to leave because of the contamination in Delaware. There is a lot of pollution and a lot of people with cancer.”*

*“There is no real Hispanic community here – I feel like an outcast as a Hispanic in Delaware.”*

*“Delaware doesn’t attract me. I need a more social life.”*

*“I don’t have any family in Delaware. I’ve really been wanting to leave I just haven’t had the opportunity to (leave) yet.”*

A few of the focus group participants were recent immigrants who brought a unique perspective to the issue of whether or not they planned to remain in Delaware. The current atmosphere in Delaware and the nation overall around illegal immigration and immigration reform clearly has an impact. Some recent immigrant participants expressed a desire to remain in Delaware, but were unsure whether or not they would be able to or not. Many are concerned about potential immigration reform policies and how this will affect them. Additionally, there is concern about specific anti-immigrant laws at the state and local levels that are being passed throughout the country. There is some fear that if laws like these are passed in Delaware, they will have to leave the state and perhaps leave the country altogether.

*Participant Quotes:*

*“The immigration controversy concerns me. My parents don’t have documents and they may have to leave – then I would leave too. If there were no immigration problems, I would stay here in Delaware.”*

*“There is an anti-immigrant environment in the United States right now and it is difficult to get work because I don’t have documents so I will probably leave Delaware.”*

*“They are killing the dreams of the Latinos with the laws they are trying to pass.”*

**4. Hispanics in Delaware report that discrimination is an issue in the state, albeit to varying degrees for different segments of the Hispanic population. While U.S. born and bilingual Hispanics are more likely to feel more subtle forms of discrimination, all Hispanics recognize that immigrants face harsher, more overt forms of racism in the state.**

When the topic of discrimination was raised, the reactions of participants were fairly mixed. Those who participated in the English group reported the lowest direct experience with discrimination. Once again, those who speak both English and Spanish fluently felt that they actually had more opportunities rather than barriers. Even in the English group though, several did report experiences with subtle discrimination. This seemed to be dependent on what type of job a person had – some who work in white collar professions with mostly non-Hispanics felt they may have gotten passed over for promotions because they were Hispanic. However, others said they have not encountered any discrimination when it comes to finding a job and working in Delaware. Although this group said that overt discrimination did not have a major impact on their daily lives, several pointed out that things were worse (when it comes to being faced with discrimination) for the immigrant Hispanics and those that live in the southern part of the state. It is not surprising then, that participants in each of the Spanish groups seemed to have more direct experience with discrimination. Some said that Hispanics – especially immigrants – face constant discrimination in the low-wage job environment. They feel that Hispanics get put in the most dangerous and demanding positions and often receive the least pay. Several participants felt that employers take advantage of the strong work ethic of Hispanic immigrants. In addition, some in the southern part of the state actually felt that racism and discrimination are quite severe in Delaware and make the living environment undesirable.

Participant Quotes:

*“I haven’t felt it (discrimination) personally but hear about checkpoints asking people for identification.”*

*“Racism is the worst thing about living in Delaware.”*

*“Employers take advantage of the fact that you want to work hard and make a better life.”*

*“The discrimination mostly affects the undocumented – they stop you (to check your documents) if you have a ‘Hispanic look’.”*

*“There is actually more discrimination between different Hispanic groups – like Puerto Ricans and Mexicans – than between Hispanics and non-Hispanics.”*

*“If they (the police in Delaware) catch you without a license, they treat you like an animal – like you have no rights.”*

*“(As a Hispanic) you feel discrimination in your job but not as much in daily life. Americans get more advanced with less preparation and Hispanics get put in the most dangerous jobs.”*

*“There is more discrimination in the southern part of the state.”*

**5. Transportation is a major problem for the fastest growing segment of Delaware’s Hispanic population – immigrants. The lack of a well-functioning public transportation system, coupled with the difficulty of obtaining a driver’s license for many immigrants, limits employment and educational opportunities for many of Delaware’s Hispanics.**

The Kent/Sussex County focus group participants felt quite strongly that transportation is a major concern for Hispanic immigrants in Delaware. A few participants in the New Castle groups did mention the transportation problem as well, saying things like having a car is necessary in Delaware because there is no public transportation and everything is so spread out. But, it was a more widespread concern for those in Kent and Sussex. Several participants felt frustrated that they have extremely limited work opportunities because there is no reliable public transportation and they cannot obtain a driver’s license. Some felt that their only option was to drive without having a license, which raises the fear that they will go to jail if they are stopped by police. This group felt strongly that if there was some solution to the transportation issue, many other problems they encounter would also be resolved. A few participants said that if they could get a driver’s license they would be able to work and support their family and therefore be much happier living in Delaware.

Participant Quotes:

*“There is no public transportation, which makes it tough for immigrants.”*

*“Because of the transportation problems, it forces people to drive without a license and then you can go to jail.”*

*“If you don’t have a license, you can’t drive and so you can’t work.”*

**6. Some focus group participants proposed that the state should have a centralized agency or community center devoted to Hispanics that would be centrally located, easily accessible and that would provide a resource for Hispanics in a one-stop-shop format.**

When focus group participants were asked for the one thing they would tell the Governor of Delaware to focus on that would improve life for Hispanics in Delaware, education (and the various issues under the umbrella of education discussed above) was the top response. Resolving the transportation concerns for those in Kent and Sussex Counties was another key suggestion for the Governor. In one group however, a few participants suggested that the state should create a centralized agency or center that would address all of the issues Hispanics face. They described it as a one-stop-shop of sorts that Hispanics could call or visit to address any number of issues they may face in the state. Some felt that the bureaucracy in the state government makes the system very difficult to navigate for Hispanics – especially for those who may need assistance the most (the less educated, those who do not speak English, immigrants, etc.). Participants felt that if there was a highly visible Hispanic agency or center that Hispanics could feel comfortable contacting, many of the problems they face in Delaware could be resolved.

Although realizing such an agency or center may not be realistic, it is an important finding to recognize that at least some Hispanics feel as though there is currently nowhere for them to go when they do have issues or problems. Some feel that the resources that do exist are not visible enough to be as effective as they could be.

*Participant Quotes:*

*“They need to have a center for all Hispanics for all issues.”*

*“If there was one central agency to specialize in Hispanics that works and you can get information about all these issues – education, housing, drugs, etc. (that would be good).”*

*“I think the central agency would be a good idea and could help out a lot – it would need to be in a very visible location and easy to access.”*



## Research Phase Two: Executive Interviews

### Summary:

The opinion leaders of Delaware made a very clear statement that the key issue that the Consortium should focus on that would have the biggest impact on improving the situation for the Hispanic population in Delaware is, without question, education. Opinion leaders believe that increasing educational opportunities for Hispanic adults and youth is the key to helping the community have more opportunities and ultimately to achieve a better quality of life.

When it comes to education as it affects Hispanic adults, many opinion leaders felt that English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and helping to teach Hispanic parents the value of education for their children were the two most important factors. Additionally, some mentioned that increased access to job training programs and other continuing education programs (beyond English classes) would be very beneficial to the Hispanic adult community.

In terms of the Hispanic youth, opinion leaders expressed many areas that need to be improved in order to help Hispanic students be more successful and to decrease the achievement gap and lower dropout rates. Some felt that there is an overall lack of support for Hispanic students in the schools. The lack of bilingual personnel at the schools coupled with the lack of cultural understanding among school officials was perceived to be a major reason for high dropout rates and even gang involvement. There is a feeling that Hispanic kids don't really have anywhere to turn for support when it comes to their education – they cannot go to their parents because their parents don't understand English, are busy working or don't see the value of education. In addition, Hispanic youth can't turn to the school because few understand the Hispanic culture and the specific issues they face in terms of pressure from family, discrimination from peers and trying to understand the American educational system.

Over and over again, opinion leaders pointed to the pressure and/or desire to work as a reason that many Hispanic teenagers drop out of school. Many feel that it is critical to help Hispanic parents to see the long-term value of an education for their children in the United States. Opinion leaders think many Hispanic parents and teenagers only see the short term and the value of money that can be earned now – even if it is at a low-wage job. The perception among leaders is that few Hispanic parents see the opportunities for higher-paying jobs that can come from completing one's education, which would ultimately improve the economic situation for the family in the long term.

Another over-arching theme that emerged is that opinion leaders feel there is a great deal of cultural misunderstanding between Hispanics and non-Hispanics. This is viewed to be a barrier to achieving success in Delaware for Hispanics. Overall, opinion leaders feel that it is important to strike a balance between assimilation and cross-cultural exchange to foster understanding between all Delaware residents. While some felt strongly that the burden lies with Hispanics to assimilate to American culture – by learning the language, the laws and the customs – others felt that assimilation alone is not the answer. Many pointed to a cross-cultural exchange so that non-Hispanic Delawareans can learn to appreciate the value of the Hispanic community to the state and the overall cultural enrichment the community provides.

Regardless of whether assimilation or cross-cultural exchange is the preferred approach, leaders certainly feel that fostering understanding will help the Hispanic community in all facets of life in

Delaware. Many felt strongly that the more Hispanics assimilate or learn about American culture and values, the less likely they will be to be the victims of discrimination and exploitation. There is a feeling among several leaders that if Hispanics can learn English and learn what services are available to them and what their rights are, they will have greater power and therefore be less likely to be victimized.

The themes of education and cultural understanding were common threads in nearly every interview conducted. Opinion leaders did highlight several other problems they believe the Hispanic community in Delaware is currently facing, such as lack of access to healthcare, immigration concerns, lack of affordable housing, lack of transportation, lack of economic opportunities, language barriers and public safety concerns. However, each of these issues tie into the overall need for more educational opportunities and increased cultural awareness and understanding. The bottom line is that opinion leaders believe that the majority of the problems Hispanics face in Delaware can be resolved, or at least improved, with increased educational opportunities and increased cultural understanding.

### **Major Findings:**

#### **Section 1: Needs Assessment**

**Overwhelmingly, Delaware’s opinion leaders point to education as the single greatest need for the state’s Hispanic population.**

Although the 50 opinion leaders interviewed mentioned about 15 different key problems that they believe the state’s Hispanic population is currently facing, education was not only the most frequent response, but also was viewed to be either related to or a possible solution for each of the other problems the community faces. There are two key aspects of the general theme of education that were specifically discussed: education for the Hispanic adult population and education for the Hispanic youth population.

#### **Education Needs for the Hispanic Adult Population**

When it comes to the educational needs of the Hispanic adult population, opinion leaders largely point to the need for Hispanic adults to learn English, the need for parenting classes for those that have children in the state and the need for job training and other continuing education programs. By and large, the greatest area of need identified by the leaders who were interviewed was for Hispanics in Delaware to learn to speak English. Many leaders, both Hispanic and non-Hispanic, believe that learning English directly correlates to the number of opportunities available to each individual. Many feel that by learning English, not only will many people increase the job opportunities available to them, but can improve their overall quality of life (beyond economics) in Delaware. Leaders feel that learning English would empower the Hispanic community and give them more access to the services available to them in the state. Additionally, several respondents believe that the Hispanic population would face much less discrimination and exploitation if they had a better command of the English language.

Another educational need for the Hispanic adult population that was identified by leaders was the need for programs or classes specifically for Hispanic parents. Many felt that several of the problems that the Hispanic youth face could be greatly improved by educating parents. There is a sense that a number of Hispanic parents – particularly immigrants – do not fully understand the American

educational system or the value that the U.S. places on education. Therefore, there is often a disconnect between parents and the school system as to what is best for their children. In addition, a large number of leaders throughout the state feel that there is tremendous pressure on all Hispanic immigrants to work and earn as much money as possible while there are opportunities to do so. It is believed that Hispanic parents may put greater value on working than on going to school. Leaders expressed a frustration with this mindset and a desire to help Hispanic parents understand the long-term value of education and the opportunities it can provide for the children and ultimately the entire family. Educating parents on the value of education and on how to navigate the educational system would have a tremendous positive impact on the Hispanic youth and the Hispanic population overall, according to opinion leaders.

The final educational need that opinion leaders identified for Hispanic adults was the need for job training and continuing education programs. Beyond ESL programs, many felt that specific skill training programs could have a very positive impact on the Hispanic population. Leaders pointed to a lack of education that many immigrants receive in their native countries as a reason why many are stuck in low-paying positions in Delaware. Job training programs that teach specific skills to Hispanics could help to pull many out of these very low-wage positions. This, in-turn could open up more opportunities for not only higher-paying jobs, but for jobs that offer healthcare benefits. In addition, with higher-paying jobs comes access to better housing and increased economic power.

#### Opinion Leader Quotes:

*“We have to educate the parents so that they are more encouraging of their children. This is hard because they have to work and they really don’t see a lot of opportunities for higher education so they become disinterested. Outreach programs need to reinforce the value of education to both children and parents.” – Non-profit leader*

*“I think it all comes back to education and I think the primary responsibility falls on the (Hispanic) parents. Above anything else they need to make an effort to learn the language – once they do that they can communicate with teachers, the PTA, etc.” – Healthcare leader*

*“Parents don’t speak English and cannot navigate the educational system for their children.” – Educational leader*

*“We have to facilitate learning English. This is not a culture that seeks to be isolated – these people want to fit in and language is the first step toward doing that.” – Non-profit leader*

*“There is a mentality among some Hispanics that they are “just passing through” so they don’t need to learn the language. There are plenty of programs available but some people are just too busy working to take time out to go to school, however, I think it needs to be mandatory for Hispanics to learn English.” – Educational leader*

*“If they learn English, it will decrease the amount that they are exploited by businesses as consumers and by businesses as employees.” – Private sector leader*

*“I think we have to stop enabling (people who don’t speak English) and help to speed up assimilation by providing as many ESL programs as necessary.” – Educational leader*

### Education Needs for the Hispanic Youth Population

The needs identified by Delaware's leaders that relate to the Hispanic youth population and education mainly focused on the school environment for Hispanic students and the lack of support for Hispanic students when it comes to education. There is an overwhelming sense that Hispanic young people do not receive the support they need either in the schools or at home. This lack of support is viewed to be the main cause for problems such as the achievement gap between Hispanics and non-Hispanics, the high dropout rate among Hispanic students, the lack of access to or interest in higher education and the increasing involvement with gangs among Hispanic young people.

Opinion leaders feel that many Hispanic students are faced with obstacles that non-Hispanic students do not have to deal with at school. Many think that Hispanic kids often have trouble assimilating to the American educational system. This difficulty adjusting to the system is exacerbated by the lack of Hispanic or bilingual personnel in the schools. In addition, because many of the parents of Hispanic students do not speak English well or do not understand the education system themselves, the students also have a lack of support at home. Furthermore, many believe that Hispanic youth face significant discrimination in the schools from their peers and even sometimes from teachers and school administrators.

All of these obstacles coupled with the lack of reliable places to turn for support leave many Hispanic young people with few options. Opinion leaders believe that this is what leads to dropping out and, in some cases, getting involved with gangs. When students drop out they not only alleviate the pressures of discrimination and assimilation they feel at school, but many can see an immediate benefit of working and earning an income that can allow them to buy things and to help support their family. Additionally, several believe that the young person can find newfound support from their parents since the value of working is more easily understood than is the value of an education. Leaders also believe that in more extreme cases, troubled Hispanic kids who are not receiving the support they need at home or at school will turn to gangs. Leaders we spoke with say that those who recruit for gangs specifically prey on those that feel hopeless or that they have nowhere to turn for support and guidance. Therefore, these kids rely on gangs to fill the void left by schools and parents and to help them boost their self-confidence.

#### Opinion Leader Quotes:

*“They are not getting the motivation that they need to stay in school; they don't see the importance of it.” – Public sector leader*

*“(Hispanic kids) have nothing to look forward to and they can't see the long term. They only see the paycheck now and they feel guilty that they are in school while the rest of the family is working and feel as though they also must bring in money for the family now.” – Educational leader*

*“Teenagers are often forced to work and they don't have rights or access to the services they need.” – Non-profit leader*

*“There is a lack of teachers who can relate to these kids.” – Public sector leader*

*“There is a lack of engagement by the public schools – they are not connecting with the (Hispanic) students. Schools must provide these kids with guidance and they must show the kids the value of higher education. The schools must take the lead.” – Public sector leader*

*“I think (Hispanic) parents want their kids to graduate (from high school) but there is a lot of pressure to go to work. I think we need to get creative about ways to keep the kids in school but that takes more money.” – Private sector leader*

*“The kids need to get attention and feel loved by someone, which I think is the main reason they get involved with gangs. We must provide outreach programs to get young people involved in other things.” – Educational leader*

*“There is a lack of hope felt by these kids and gangs are a way for them to feel empowered. They can feel at home and accepted in a gang.” – Educational leader*

*“There is a lack of professional jobs in the state so there isn’t a clear benefit to staying in school or pursuing higher education if you can’t find a job when you graduate. It is hard to keep them engaged if you have nothing to offer them at the end of the line.” – Educational leader*

### Addressing Educational Needs

When it comes to how to best address these educational needs, many felt that it had to be a collaborative effort between school districts, government agencies, community organizations and churches, the business community and Hispanic individuals. Several mentions were made of a “holistic” approach to resolving what was sometimes referred to as “the education crisis.” When it comes to ESL, job training and parenting classes for Hispanic adults, many felt that government, non-profits and business should work together. Many agreed that local Hispanic community organizations would be the best place to offer job training, ESL and parenting classes, but resources for these organizations are already strained. Therefore, some think that the combination of government and private funding and support from the business community would be the best approach. Several leaders stated that the business community needs to recognize the economic value that the Hispanic community provides to the state and need to be more proactive in ensuring that this vital segment of the workforce stays in Delaware.

A collaborative approach would also be the most effective way to address the needs of the Hispanic youth with regard to education according to opinion leaders. Many felt that the majority of the responsibility lies with the school districts and with the Hispanic parents. However, because the problems are so pronounced at this point, some feel that community organizations, churches and government need to step in as well to help find solutions to the education problems facing Delaware’s Hispanic young people. In terms of what the schools should do, there are two specific recommendations that leaders made: increase the number of bilingual school personnel and start introducing programs early on (in grade school and middle school) that show the value of completing one’s education. Some leaders mentioned that although the gang problem is viewed to be linked to the educational problems, public safety officials need to take the lead in resolving this issue as it does go beyond the schools. In terms of the community organizations and churches, leaders think these groups can play a vital role, particularly in supporting parents and helping them to support their children in their educational endeavors. Again, the need for funding was raised by leaders and this is the area where government support could play an effective role in resolving the problem.

Opinion Leader Quotes:

*“Organizations like the Latin American Community Center and other groups should get together to develop programs that will teach English to immigrants.” – Public sector leader*

*“I think we need Spanish-speaking administration officials in the schools to work with the parents (who do not speak English).” – Educational leader*

*“Businesses and government should recognize the value of bilingual Hispanic employees and properly compensate them for the value they add. (This also helps others see the value of education and learning English.)” – Educational leader*

*“The churches, community organizations and state government need to work together to help clarify the value of education and keep an aggressive campaign going until the message gets through.” – Healthcare leader*

*“We have to focus on the Hispanic youth early and have targeted assistance programs to get them ready and prepared (for school and for college). I think this needs to be a government initiative with agency involvement.” – Educational leader*

*“The police need to take a proactive role to engage kids to do other things (besides getting involved with gangs) and help change the mentality of these kids who are susceptible to what older kids who prey on them say. Public safety must take the lead with this issue.” – Public sector leader*

*“We have to work together as a community to find ways to keep the kids in school and help them understand that with a better education they will get better jobs. We have to have regular contact with parents, no matter what it takes to get them to buy into the value of their children’s education.” – Public sector leader*

*“The churches and community centers are a good place to start (with addressing the need to teach Hispanics English) but they need resources from the government to make these programs viable.” – Educational leader*

*“The school districts need to address the educational issues by incorporating early childhood education programs that show the value of education and create incentives for kids to stay in school.” – Public sector leader*

*“The criminal justice system should step up and take a serious look at this issue (gangs). We must give our kids a place to belong to make them feel they can succeed and that they are wanted – provide a place for them to succeed.” – Non-profit leader*

**Another major need for the Hispanic population that was identified by state opinion leaders is the need for increased understanding of the American culture and values system. In addition, leaders feel that cross-cultural understanding between the Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations in Delaware needs to be dramatically improved.**

Opinion leaders identified two general areas that would have an immediate and significant impact on the lives of Hispanics in Delaware. The first has to deal with assimilating to American culture. Many leaders felt that Hispanics are being held back by their failure to assimilate. Most leaders who stressed the importance of assimilation did recognize the importance for many Hispanics of retaining their cultural identity and staying true to their own belief and values systems. However, it is widely felt that if Hispanics could take steps to assimilate to American culture while still retaining their own beliefs, their quality of life could be drastically improved.

Many leaders expressed that the first step in assimilating is learning English. As discussed earlier, there is a strong and widespread belief among Delaware's leadership that learning English is the first step toward a better life for the state's Hispanics. Beyond learning the language though, leaders feel that Hispanics need to learn the culture, values and laws of the state and the country overall so that they can better adjust to life here. Many leaders say that much of the discrimination and exploitation that Delaware's Hispanics face could be alleviated if the community had a greater understanding of the systems and services available to them.

The second area identified by leaders goes beyond assimilation to a more comprehensive cross-cultural exchange. A number of leaders felt that it was not only the responsibility of the state's Hispanics to assimilate to American culture, but that Delaware's non-Hispanic residents also had a responsibility. For some leaders, assimilation alone on the part of Hispanics will not be sufficient to solve some of the serious problems the population faces in the state. Many believe that a cross-cultural exchange between non-Hispanics and Hispanics needs to take place in order to help foster understanding and acceptance of the different cultures of the state's population. A number of leaders said that if the non-Hispanic leaders in the state had a better understating of Hispanic culture, they could more effectively help to solve some of the problems. Furthermore, several in the private sector said that more non-Hispanics in Delaware need to understand the economic value that Hispanics provide to the state (and the potential negative impact that a mass exodus of Hispanics from Delaware could have on the state's economy). Some also said that the cultural fabric of the state is only enriched by the growing Hispanic population and the more that this is embraced by the overall population, the better things will be for all Delawareans.

Opinion Leader Quotes:

*“The Hispanics don't have the motivation to learn our customs.” – Public sector leader*

*“There has to be a happy medium where people can maintain their cultural identity and also be an American. There should be better programs to get Hispanics into the mainstream faster.” – Religious leader*

*“The culture gap makes it difficult for kids to feel like a part of the community – many Hispanics have difficulty making American friends.” – Private sector leader*

*“They (Hispanics) need to learn our customs so they can access services and understand our laws. Parents need to help give their kids more of an understanding of different cultures.” – Public sector leader*

*“The Hispanic community – particularly the undocumented immigrants need to be informed of the programs (with regard to accessing healthcare) that are available to them – not just with a little flyer, but with information all over so they can see it. The state government should get involved with solving this problem.” – Non-profit leader*

*“The community at large and the Hispanic community need to be educated on the reality of co-habiting. The American people say, “speak our language” and the Hispanics are afraid to Americanize and lose their cultural identity. We need to find a balance.” – Non-profit leader*

**Many leaders support enacting a driver’s license program in Delaware for Hispanic immigrants and think that making licenses available to Hispanic immigrants would help to solve a number of problems this population faces.**

A number of leaders specifically mentioned the importance of transportation in the lives of Hispanics in Delaware. They recognized that because the state does not have a reliable public transportation system, a car is the necessary means of transportation. However, undocumented immigrants cannot currently obtain a driver’s license in the state of Delaware. This leads to a number of problems for the population. Most importantly, it limits the job opportunities for these immigrants. Without reliable transportation, Hispanic immigrants cannot get to their jobs and therefore end up losing jobs. Others will drive without a license, putting themselves and the rest of the population at risk because they are not trained on American road signs and driving laws. Several mentioned a driver’s license program in Maryland that has been successful and that could be the model for a program in Delaware. Leaders felt that if immigrants had access to a driver’s license many of their other problems could be resolved and the state as a whole would benefit.

*Opinion Leader Quotes:*

*“An issue that can easily be solved is providing driver’s licenses so that people can drive legally, obtain insurance and buy cars. It is a basic form of identification that contributes greatly to the safety of the entire society. I don’t see a downside to this and it has worked successfully in Maryland for four years. We should introduce the same program here.” – Non-profit leader*

*“The biggest problem is that these people have no identification. They cannot get driver’s licenses, insurance or loans. I think we need to issue driver’s licenses to Hispanic people so they can prove they are who they say they are.” – Private sector leader*

**State opinion leaders identified several other important needs of the state’s Hispanic population, such as healthcare, affordable housing, immigration reform, economic opportunities, public safety and discrimination. However, all of these were viewed to be secondary to education.**

Although education was clearly the top concern of the state’s opinion leaders when it comes to the Hispanic population, a number of other important issues were also mentioned. For some leaders, there are many needs relating to healthcare for the Hispanic population. Lack of insurance was viewed to be the major barrier to accessing quality healthcare in the state. Leaders mentioned that since the majority of Hispanics work in low-paying jobs, they do not have access to health insurance through their



employers, nor do they have enough money to purchase individual healthcare policies. Beyond insurance, some leaders also felt that the lack of bilingual healthcare providers and personnel created another barrier to accessing healthcare for many of the state's Hispanics. Finally, some believe that the pressure to work – and to not miss work due to illness – leads many Hispanics to not only forego taking preventative healthcare measures, but also to avoid addressing health concerns when they first arise and only seeking medical attention when the situation has become more serious.

Other recommendations such as the need to increase wages for Hispanics and the need to increase access to affordable housing were also mentioned by some of the state's opinion leaders. Beyond the impact that education could have on each of these issues, some leaders also feel that the government and the state's business community need to work together to find ways to ensure that Hispanics can make a living wage at the jobs that they do. Of course, increasing wages would have a direct impact on the accessibility to more suitable housing for many Hispanics. Some leaders felt though that the state needs to make a major effort to increase the availability of affordable housing. Between increasing housing prices, lack of ownership opportunities and exploitation Hispanics face from landlords, accessing affordable housing in a safe community is difficult for many.

Opinion leaders also said that discrimination against Hispanics is a problem in the state of Delaware. This discrimination impacts many aspects of the daily lives of Hispanics – especially immigrants. Leaders say that Hispanics are faced with discrimination not only in the educational system, but also in the job market, in the housing market, when trying to access healthcare, at the hands of the police, and when they are simply walking down the street. Again, this ties into the need for both increased education and increased cultural exchange, however, some feel that more short-term solutions need to be put into effect to help address this issue. The main area where leaders see a need for immediate action when it comes to discrimination is in the area of public safety. Some leaders feel that Hispanics are prime targets for crime in Delaware because they are forced to live in unsafe neighborhoods and many do not have bank accounts and therefore often carry cash on their person. Since many leaders also believe that many Hispanics have an inherent fear of law enforcement in Delaware, many of the crimes against them go unreported. Leaders suggested that the law enforcement community take steps to interact with the Hispanic community and build a trusting relationship so that Hispanics do not fear the police, but rather look at them as an ally.

Finally, another issue that was mentioned throughout the interviews with state leaders was the issue of immigration reform. There is no doubt that many of Delaware's opinion leaders feel that everything comes back to immigration and the problem of illegal immigration. There is a feeling that this is largely beyond the state's control and that the federal government needs to take action to resolve the immigration problem in the country as a whole. Until comprehensive immigration reform is enacted by the federal government, leaders do feel that the state of Delaware can take steps (such as those mentioned throughout this report) to ease many of the problems that stem from illegal immigration.

#### Opinion Leader Quotes:

*“I think the state and county governments need to step in and make the state more business-friendly and thereby increase the number of decent-paying jobs rather than watch the businesses move out of the state.” – Private sector leader*

*“There is an abject fear of law enforcement (among Hispanics). Law enforcement should be providing public safety without frightening people.” – Non-profit leader*

*“We need more police officers who are Hispanic or at least that speak Spanish so they can relate to immigrants and help ease their fears and make them feel more comfortable with law enforcement (reporting crimes).” – Public sector leader*

*“The main problem is public safety. Police do not take the people seriously if they come forward to report crimes and people are very hesitant to report crimes for fear that they will be discriminated against or reported to immigration. I think an educational campaign by the police needs to be undertaken so the laws and rights can be explained.” – Non-profit leader*

*“Hispanic people are getting harassed on the streets for no reason, it has even affected Hispanics who are legal, they still get harassed for documents.” – Public sector leader*

*“Many Hispanic immigrants don’t have health insurance so they can’t get the treatment they need.” – Non-profit leader*

*“There is not sufficient funding to make the necessary healthcare services available. There must be a community wide effort to address it.” – Educational leader*

*“To address the healthcare problem in the short term there should be more bilingual healthcare providers from doctors to nurses to staff. In the long term, the federal government will have to address the insurance problem.” – Private sector leader*

## **Section 2: Direction for the Consortium**

**As education is viewed to be the most important need for the Hispanic population in Delaware, the majority of leaders feel that this is where the Consortium should focus its efforts.**

When asked specifically about the one most important thing that the Consortium should focus on with regard to improving the situation for the Hispanic community in Delaware, the overwhelming response was to focus on education. The specific ideas mentioned above such as offering ESL classes, job training and parenting courses for Hispanic adults and improving support for Hispanic youth in the schools by increasing the bilingual personnel and teaching the long-term value of education were the main recommendations for the Consortium. Additionally, leaders felt that if the Consortium could spearhead a cross-cultural understanding program in the state, many of the other problems could be solved. Again, it was clear from the interviews that most leaders feel that all of the problems relating to Hispanics and the needs of the community can be resolved or at least improved through education programs and cultural understanding. Therefore, the Consortium could conceivably have an impact on a number of problems by focusing their efforts and their funds on these two areas.

The opinion leaders we spoke with also stated the importance of the Consortium concentrating their efforts on one program at a time. There was a sense of frustration with past efforts of other groups charged with addressing Hispanic concerns in Delaware. Some felt that the groups try to take on too many issues at once and end up not solving anything. Additionally, there was concern among some that past groups have been subject to influence from political or private groups or individuals, and this has ultimately compromised their effectiveness. Leaders feel that the Consortium must function as an independent group and base its actions on the research it compiles and not be influenced by outside factors. If it is able to do this, most feel that the Consortium can have an immediate and lasting impact on improving the quality of life for Hispanics in the state of Delaware.

Opinion Leader Quotes:

*“All of the efforts need to be focused on education. Ninety percent of the problems can be avoided by keeping kids in school and producing literate educated individuals.” – Non-profit leader*

*“Education is the gateway for equality.” – Educational leader*

*“The Consortium needs to involve local people who are involved on a day-to-day basis and more people from the lower income bracket. These consortiums get comprised of middle class and upper class people who want to help but who can’t relate to the community – some are not even raised in the state.” – Public sector leader*

*“There need to be more economic opportunities with access to good jobs that pay a living wage.” – Public sector leader*

*“The number one issue to address is education. It all starts here. It is the only way in America for social mobility.” – Educational leader*

*“Education is the key to success.” – Non-profit leader*

*“Education is really the only long-term solution to anything that will really help the Hispanic community.” – Private sector leader*

*“We must educate the public and show the general population the value that Hispanics provide to the community.” – Healthcare leader*

*“Education gives people opportunity – it is the key to success so this is where the Consortium should focus its efforts.” – Private sector leader*

*“Reach out to parents and teach them what services are available to them and that (learning the English) language is very important.” – Private sector leader*

*“Focus on one issue at a time and complete it – don’t be another GACHA (Governor’s Advisory Council on Hispanic Affairs) and don’t be politically motivated.” – Non-profit leader*

*“The number one issue that should be addressed by the Consortium is the lack of political representation among Hispanics. The Hispanic community must organize. They must come together and do something about these issues. There are no influential Hispanic people in this state – no political power.” – Public sector leader*

*“The state needs to take the lead in resolving all of these issues. The demands on the community-based groups are so high currently that they need government assistance. Small businesses need to get involved too.” – Public sector leader*

*“Let’s solve the education crisis! We can start a pilot program through the education system where we look at the whole individual to identify the problems and work toward solving them. These kids have a lot of issues they are bringing to school such as the lack of support they are getting from their parents, the lack of preparation for school and the language barrier because the parents do not speak English. We need more bilingual counselors who can talk to both the parents and the students to help*

*them work through the issues that are causing them to fall behind. This is not only a burden on the kids, it is a burden on the schools and the teachers so focusing on and resolving these things has benefits that go beyond just the Hispanic population.” – Public sector leader*

*“I think you need to focus on affordable housing. There is just not enough to go around and it forces the Hispanics to live in very crowded conditions.” – Private sector leader*

*“I have a very specific recommendation that is to set up a task force to work on the driver’s license issue. They (Consortium members) should go to Maryland where such a program has been in place for several years and look at what is working and what is not. I can’t reiterate it enough that having an identity and being able to prove that you are who you say you are would solve the majority of the problems affecting the Hispanic community. Even though she appointed them, I hope the Consortium will tell the Governor the truth and I hope this time she listens.” – Private sector leader*

*“I think there is a balance that has to be struck between what is the responsibility of the individual and what is the responsibility of the community. For example, English needs to be taught and learned (by Hispanics) but critical information should be translated.” – Religious leader*

*“We need to do whatever we can to get these people out of the shadows so they can assimilate faster and have less stressful lives with better wages. Once the immigration issues are dealt with we can focus on education and civil rights.” – Non-profit leader*

*“Develop a proactive strategy to address how to provide basic academic and job skill training. By increasing incomes and the chances for economic stability, these people can build their assets, thereby contributing to the overall economic impact on the state.” – Non-profit leader*

*“We need to promote the value of education and look at ways to strengthen the family unit so the support the children need is provided. We have to start with parent literacy and be creative about ways to allow the parents to be involved in the children’s schools.” – Private sector leader*

*“They (the Consortium) should lay out a plan with short-term and long-term goals, develop an educational campaign and talk about the benefits and opportunities that it would give to the community as a whole.” – Educational leader*

*“Have a consensus building – call people together to talk, not just a few people but large bodies of people.” – Public sector leader*

*“We need to disentangle law enforcement and immigration control. There is a perceived collaboration that contributes to the Hispanics’ fear of reporting crimes. Once we stop relying on the local police to help with immigration sweeps, we should have an outreach program to educate the community that the police are there for protection and public safety and nothing else.” – Non-profit leader*

*“The Consortium should start with healthcare. The state can cover the children and offer coverage for adults at a cost they can afford. The outcome is that the multi-million dollar write-off for hospitals treating uninsured will go away. This will have a huge economic impact and result in healthier people that feel more a part of the community.” – Non-profit leader*

## Research Phase Three: Statewide Poll of Hispanics

### Summary:

Overall, the findings from the quantitative portion of the research back up much of what was found in the earlier qualitative phases. By and large, Hispanics in Delaware are happy and most plan to remain in the state for the foreseeable future. The population is quite young and extremely hardworking. Hispanics provide a great benefit to the state by doing the low-wage, hard-labor jobs that most other Delawareans do not want to do. Additionally, the poll reinforces the focus group finding that there is a great immigrant spirit that Hispanics bring to the state. Most are optimistic and have positive views of the state and state services.

The poll findings also highlight several key areas of need among the Hispanic population. As the qualitative phases of the research found, there is a great need in the area of education. Specifically, the need for English classes and job training programs as well as finding a solution to the extremely high dropout rate among Hispanic youth was clear in the poll. When it comes to addressing the issue of the dropout rate, the poll shows that a significant percentage of Hispanic adults believe that the main reason for the high dropout rate is the need for Hispanic youth to work to help support their families. Clearly, a great deal could be accomplished by unveiling a major public information campaign aimed at convincing Hispanic young people and their parents that completing school is more important than dropping out to work in a menial job.

Both of the qualitative phases of the research also identified a need to address the lack of transportation that many Hispanic Delawareans – especially immigrants – face. Again, the quantitative data reinforces that there is a need in the area of transportation. The poll shows that nearly half of all Hispanic adults in Delaware do not have a driver's license. Since there is not a well-functioning and easily accessible public transportation system in the state, many Hispanics are forced to get rides with friends or family, walk or drive without a license in order to get to and from work. Something as simple as a localized public transportation system could have a significant positive impact on the state's Hispanic population.

Another area of need that was mentioned in both the focus groups and the executive interviews was healthcare. The survey reinforces that there is significant need in this area. To begin with, a substantial percentage – nearly half of all adults – do not have any health insurance. This leads to the flooding of the emergency rooms at the state's hospitals by the uninsured. One way to curb the overcrowding of emergency rooms is to open primary care facilities for the uninsured to access for routine medical needs. An additional problem highlighted in the statewide survey is that a quarter of Hispanics say they frequently have problems communicating with doctors or other healthcare providers because they do not speak Spanish. Of course, the law mandates that all medical facilities that receive federal funding provide interpreters to those that do not speak English. Clearly, more Spanish interpreters are needed in Delaware.

Additionally, two-thirds of the Hispanic population says they have no access to mental health services in the state and a significant percentage of Hispanic men do not get regular screenings for major healthcare concerns such as heart disease. To address these needs, again a public information campaign highlighting the importance of regular screenings for cancer, heart disease, diabetes and other medical concerns as well as knowing the signs for mental health concerns and how to access mental health care could be helpful.

This groundbreaking research for the state of Delaware helps to paint a clearer and more complete picture of the state's Hispanic population. The quantitative research provides useful demographic data and baseline quality of life measures. In addition, the poll clearly shows that the Hispanic population of Delaware has several strengths and adds a great deal to the state in a positive way. However, there are several areas of need that the poll also highlights. In many cases though, the solutions to these needs are straightforward and can easily be addressed by the Consortium. Since the data collected in the statewide survey is representative of the entire Hispanic adult population in the state, addressing the needs identified in the poll will likely benefit most Hispanics, which will in-turn be beneficial to the overall population of Delaware.

## **Major Findings:**

### **Section 1: Descriptive Findings**

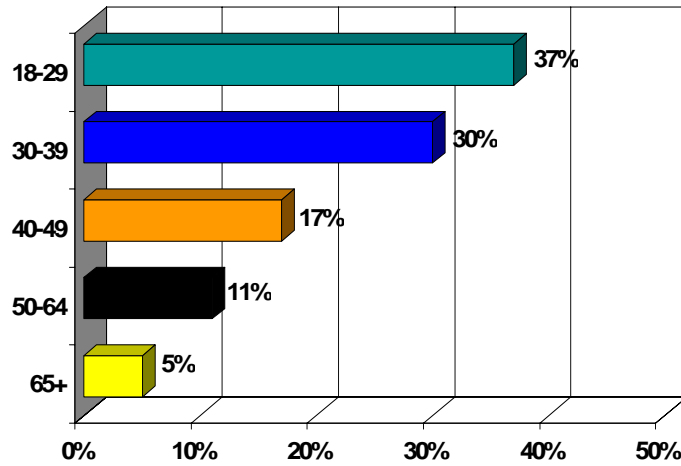
In addition to the major substantive findings that deal directly with the strengths and needs of the Hispanic population in Delaware, which are detailed in the next sections of this report, a good deal of descriptive data was gathered from the poll that also helps to paint a more complete picture of the state's Hispanic population. This descriptive information is broken into three areas: demographics, sources of information and quality of life.

#### **Demographics**

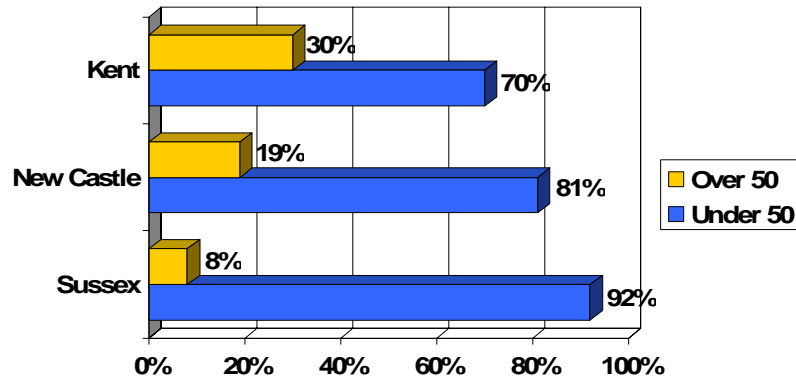
Demographic data is an important part of any quantitative study as this information helps to provide an understanding of many basic aspects of the population being studied. Additionally, the demographic data can be compared to Census numbers to be sure that the sample is an accurate representation of the population being studied. In this study, demographic data is particularly important as it helps to provide a general understanding of a population – Hispanics in Delaware – that has not been researched much prior to this project.

Delaware's Hispanic population is equally divided between men and women – each gender accounting for exactly 50 percent of the population. Hispanics in Delaware are significantly younger than the overall population of the state. In fact, two-thirds of the state's Hispanic adults are under the age of 40 and nearly two-fifths are between 18 and 29 years of age (see Chart 1.1). The highest concentration of older Hispanics can be found in Kent County whereas Sussex County has the highest percentage of younger Hispanics (see Chart 1.2).

### Chart 1.1: Age



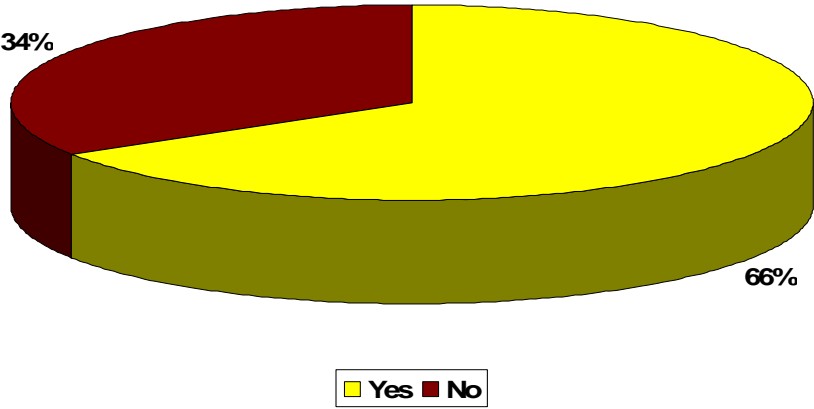
### Chart 1.2: Age by County



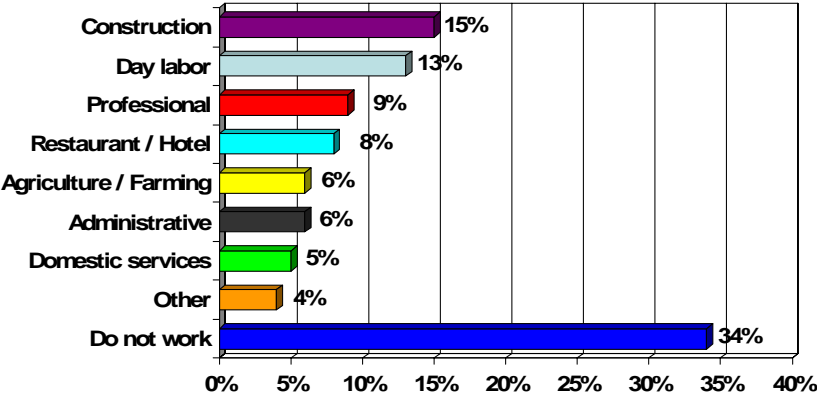
The relatively young Hispanic population in Delaware largely falls into the lower socio-economic bracket. Although two-thirds of the population is currently employed (see Chart 1.3), nearly half feel as though they do not earn enough money to support themselves and their families (see Chart 1.6). Most are employed in low-wage jobs that require significant physical labor such as construction, agriculture, hotel and restaurant services, housekeeping and other similar types of occupations (see

Chart 1.4). With more than three-fifths of Hispanics living on less than \$30,000 a year, a significant portion of this population represents the working poor (see Chart 1.5). Furthermore, less than one tenth of the population has a college degree and two-fifths have less than a high school education (see Chart 1.7).

**Chart 1.3: Employment Status**  
*Are you currently employed in Delaware?*

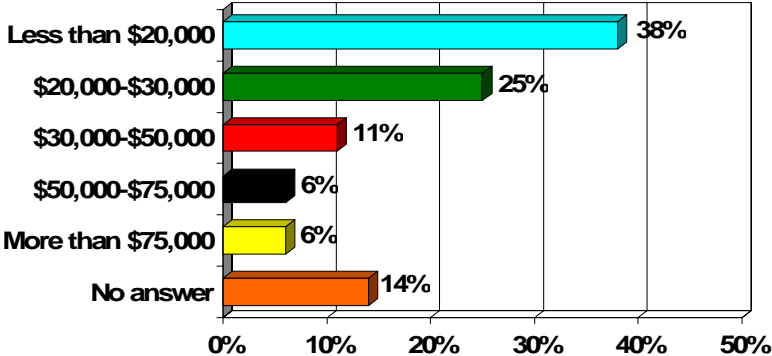


**Chart 1.4: Type of Employment**  
*What type of work do you do?*



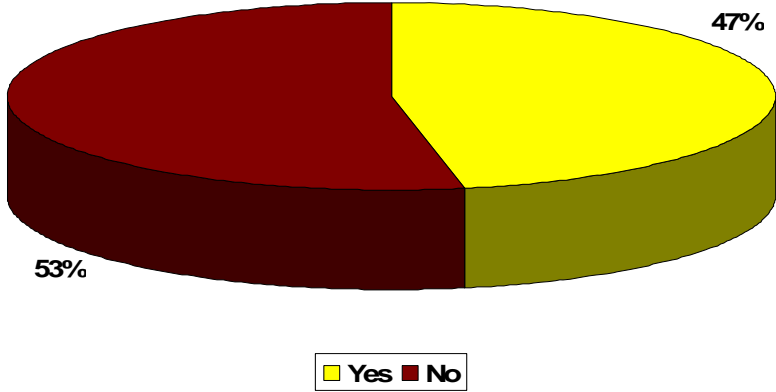


### Chart 1.5: Annual Household Income

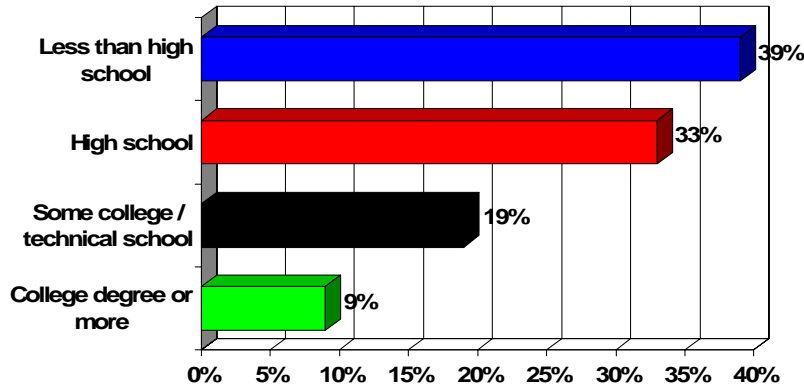


### Chart 1.6: Earn Enough to Support Family

*Do you feel as though you currently earn enough money to support yourself and your family?*

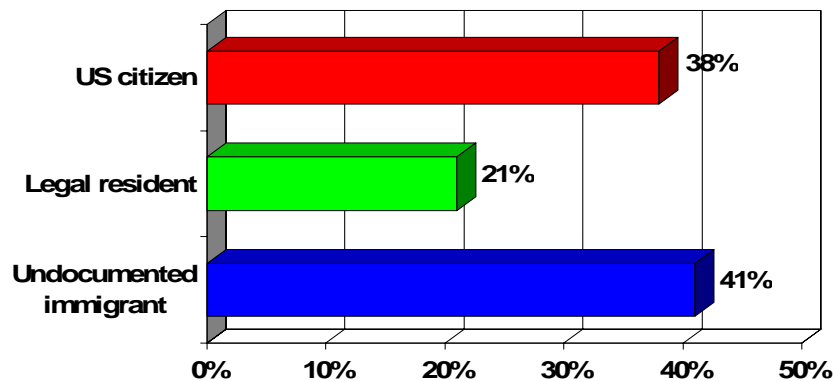


## Chart 1.7: Educational Attainment

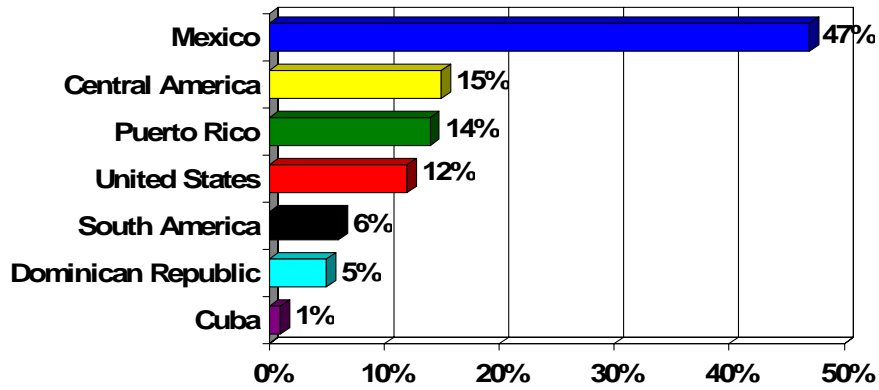


The majority of the Hispanics living in Delaware are doing so legally. Two-fifths of the Hispanic adults in Delaware are United States citizens and another fifth of the population are legal residents. The remaining two-fifths of the state's Hispanic population are undocumented immigrants who may be in the process of completing the necessary paperwork to become legal residents (see Chart 1.8). Overall about a quarter of the population was born in the United States or Puerto Rico, nearly half were born in Mexico and the remaining quarter of the population were born in Central and South America, the Dominican Republic and Cuba (see Chart 1.9).

## Chart 1.8: Legal Status

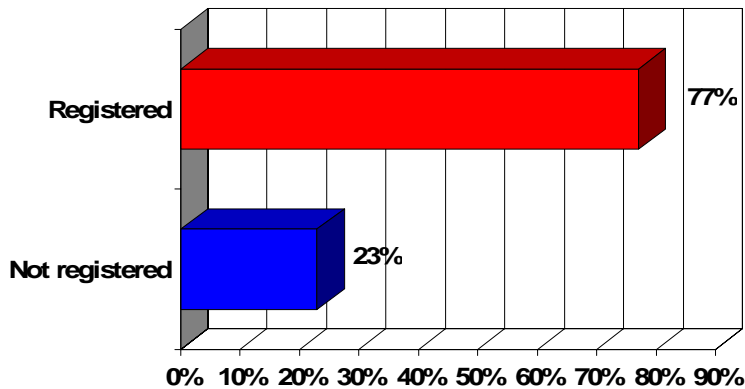


### Chart 1.9: Country of Birth



The overwhelming majority of Delaware’s Hispanics who are citizens are registered to vote. Seventy-seven percent of Hispanic citizens are registered to vote compared with just 68 percent<sup>1</sup> of the general population in the state that is registered (see Chart 1.10).

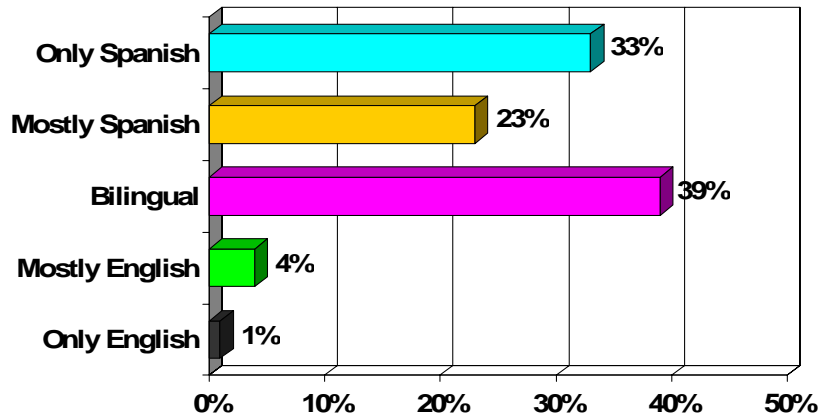
### Chart 1.10: Voter Registration (U.S. Citizens)



<sup>1</sup> As reported by the United States Census Bureau Current Population Survey (CPS) Voting and Registration in the Election of 2004 data table by state.

When it comes to language preference, over half of Delaware’s adult Hispanic population is Spanish-dominant. Another two-fifths are bilingual and just 5 percent are English-dominant (see Chart 1.11).

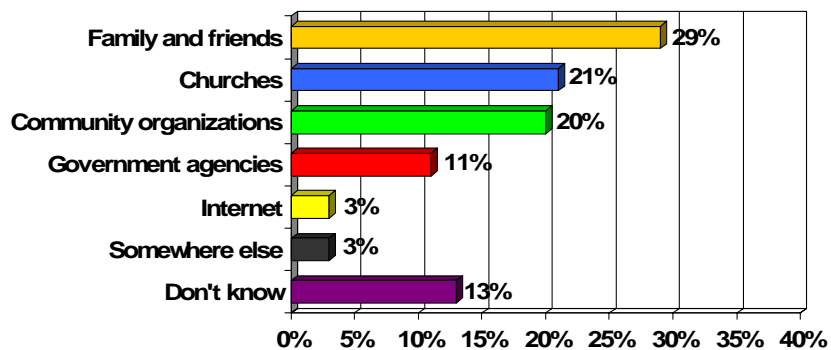
**Chart 1.11: Language Spoken**



Sources of Information

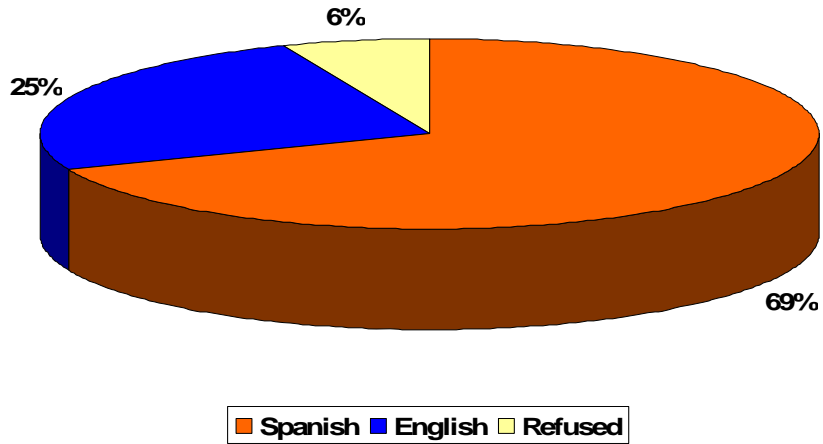
Hispanics in Delaware – particularly those that are Spanish-dominant – rely heavily on family and friends, churches and local community organizations for information about issues that affect the community (see Chart 1.12). The local organizations that were mentioned most often are the *Latin American Community Center* and *La Esperanza*. Other organizations such as *La Casita*, *La Red* and *Voces sin Fronteras* were mentioned less frequently. English-dominant Hispanics are more likely than their Spanish-dominant counterparts to rely on government agencies for information.

**Chart 1.12: Sources of Information**  
*Where do you go when you need information about issues that affect you and your family?*

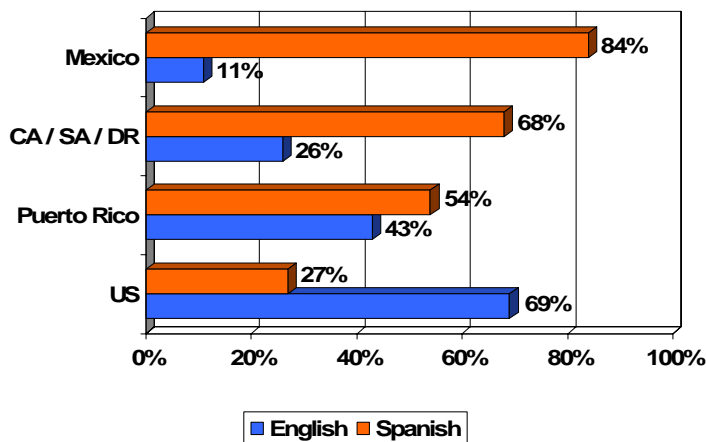


Respondents were also asked about their media preferences. Spanish-language television reaches the vast majority of Hispanics in Delaware as seven-in-ten respondents say they watch Spanish-language television most often. A quarter of the Hispanic population prefers English-language television stations (see Chart 1.13). Not surprisingly, those born in the United States are much more likely to prefer English-language television whereas immigrants are more likely to prefer Spanish-language stations (see Chart 1.14).

**Chart 1.13: Television Viewing**  
*Do you mostly watch Spanish-language television stations or English-language stations?*



**Chart 1.14: Television Viewing by Country of Birth**  
*Do you mostly watch Spanish-language television stations or English-language stations?*



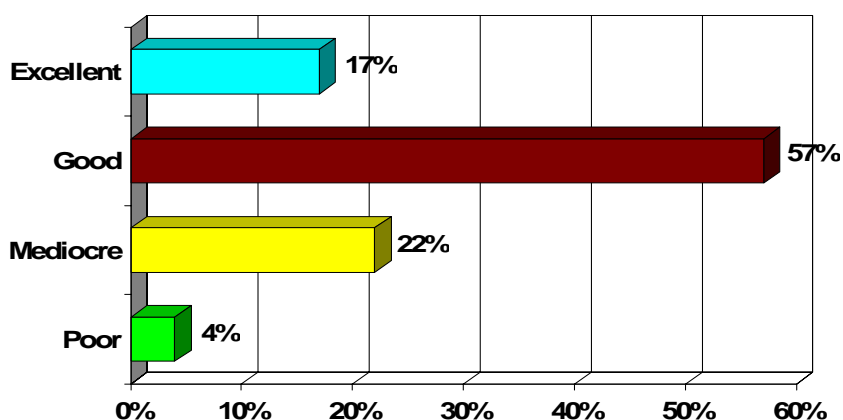
The Spanish-language radio stations that are listened to most often are WYUS 930AM (*La Exitosa*), WNWK 1260AM (*Radio Sabrosa*) and WEMG 1310AM (*La Mega*). When it comes to print media, Hispanics in Delaware read English and Spanish language newspapers. The most regularly read

English papers are *The News Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *Cape Gazette*. For papers in Spanish, *El Sol*, *Hoy en Delaware*, *Al Día*, and *El Tiempo Hispano* are the favorites.

### Quality of Life

Overall, Hispanics are quite happy living in Delaware. About three-quarters of respondents say their quality of life in the state is excellent or good and just 4 percent rate their quality of life as poor (see Chart 1.15). It is not surprising then, given the high quality of life, that most respondents said they plan to remain in Delaware for at least the next few years.

**Chart 1.15: Quality of Life**  
*How would you rate your quality of life in Delaware?*



## Section 2: Needs Assessment

### Need #1: Education

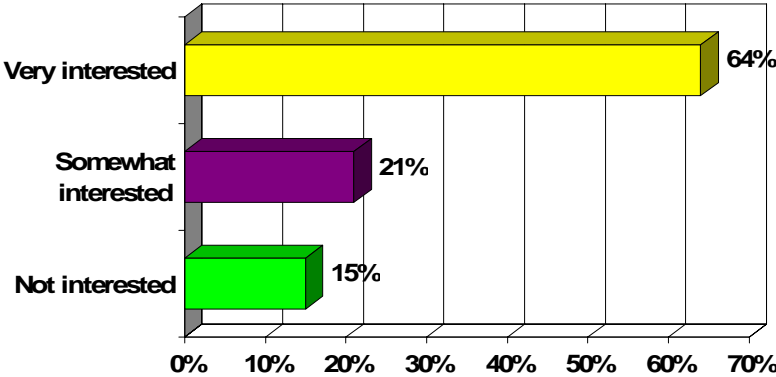
**There are three key areas of need that fall under the umbrella of education. First, there is a clear need for classes where Spanish-dominant Hispanics can learn English. Next, Hispanics identify a need for job training programs that allow people to learn additional skills so they will have access to greater work opportunities. Finally, there is a high dropout rate among Hispanic youth that needs to be addressed.**

### English classes

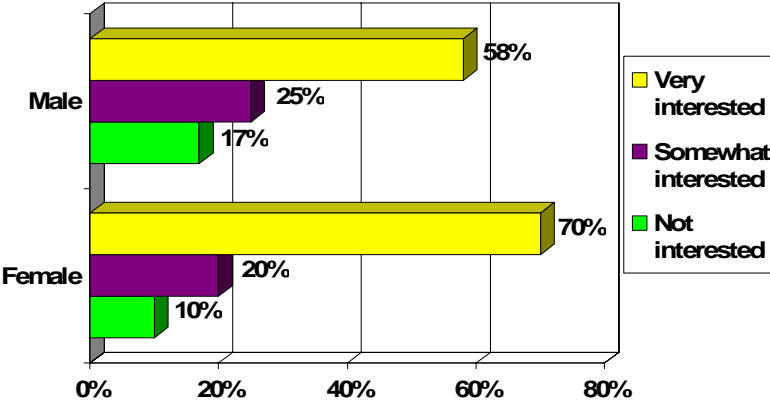
As mentioned earlier in the demographics section, the majority of Hispanic adults in Delaware are Spanish-dominant. As the focus groups and especially the executive interviews show, there is a great need for those Hispanics that do not speak English to learn the language. The poll reinforces that the need for English classes is very real as 85 percent of Spanish-dominant Hispanics are at least somewhat interested in learning English (see Chart 2.1). Spanish-dominant Hispanic women in particular are very interested in learning English (see Chart 2.2). Additionally, as Chart 2.3 shows, those who have children under the age of 18 living with them are extremely interested in learning English (much more so than those without kids at home). Considering this high level of demand, it is

unfortunate that two-fifths of the population is not aware of any English classes near their home or workplace. English classes seem to be most difficult to come by in Kent County where the majority – 55 percent – of the Spanish-dominant population is unaware of classes being offered.

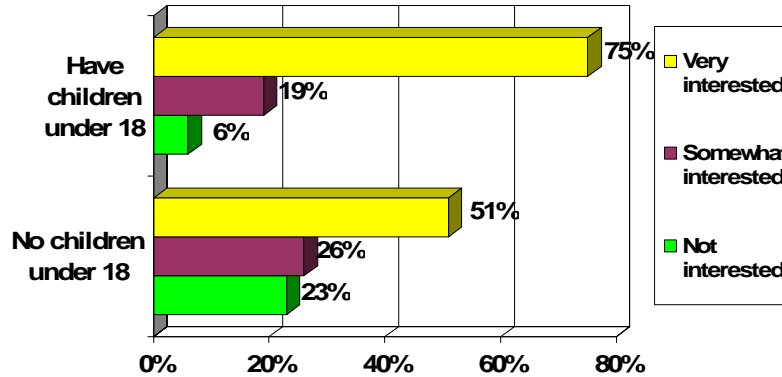
**Chart 2.1: Interest in Learning English**  
*How interested are you in learning English?*  
*(Asked only of Spanish-dominant Hispanics)*



**Chart 2.2: Interest in Learning English by Gender**  
*How interested are you in learning English?*  
*(Asked only of Spanish-dominant Hispanics)*



**Chart 2.3: Interest in Learning English by Children in Household**  
*How interested are you in learning English?*  
*(Asked only of Spanish-dominant Hispanics)*

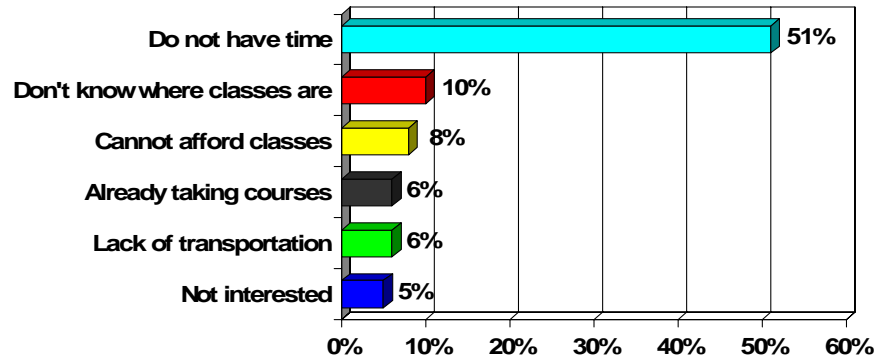


A clear course of action that can be taken to address this need is to simply offer more English classes for Spanish-dominant Delawareans. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the classes need to be readily accessible to those that need them most. First, they need to be offered in locations that are convenient to the homes or places of work of Hispanics. Furthermore, it is important to consider another need that was highlighted in the research – the need for transportation. A significant percentage of Hispanics in Delaware do not have driver’s licenses or access to reliable public transportation. In light of this, it may be worth considering to offer transportation to and from English classes.

Timing for the English classes also needs to be considered. About half of Spanish-dominant Hispanics say that the main reason that they have not taken English classes up to this point is that they simply do not have the time to take the classes (see Chart 2.4). Offering the classes at times that are convenient to those who need them most is a critical component of addressing this need in an effective manner.



**Chart 2.4: Reasons for Not Taking English Classes**  
*What is the main reason that you have not taken English classes in Delaware?*  
*(Asked only of Spanish-dominant Hispanics)*

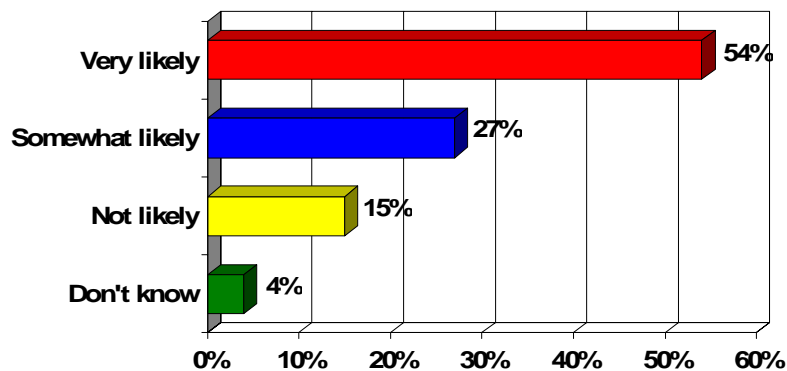


### Job training programs

In phase 1 of this research project, Hispanic focus group participants expressed an interest in job training programs where one could learn additional skills that would help advance their career. Some participants pointed out that many Hispanics feel stuck in low-paying and low-skilled jobs and if they had access to training programs, they could in-turn have access to better, higher-paying jobs. The findings from the executive interviews also highlighted a need for job training programs in the state. Many of those interviewed felt that such programs could have a significant positive impact on the Hispanic population and make the overall workforce of the state stronger.

Hispanics throughout Delaware make it clear through the statewide poll that they too are interested in job training programs. Chart 2.5 illustrates that eight-in-ten respondents say they would be likely to attend job training and continuing education programs if they were available.

**Chart 2.5: Interest in Job Training Programs**  
*If there were more job training or continuing education programs available for Hispanics in Delaware, how likely would you be to attend such programs?*



Again, this is a need that has a fairly straightforward solution. Simply offering more job training and continuing education courses and making the Hispanic community aware of those courses could help to address this need. Similar to offering an increased number of English classes, however, it is important to not isolate this need for increased job training and continuing education courses. When considering making such programs available to the Hispanic population, transportation and timing concerns should be taken into account to ensure the success and effectiveness of the programs.

### Addressing the high dropout rate

Another educational need that was highlighted in earlier phases of the research affects not the adult population, but the Hispanic youth. In Delaware, there is an extremely high dropout rate among Hispanics. Focus group participants felt that the lack of support for Hispanics in the school system was the main reason for this high dropout rate and for other problems affecting the Hispanic youth population. The state leaders interviewed in phase 2 of the research also felt that there was a lack of support for the specific needs of Hispanic young people in the schools. Additionally, many leaders felt

that there was pressure on Hispanic young people to join the workforce to help support their families. This feeling that working – even in a very low-paying job – was more important than finishing high school or attending college was also thought to be a contributing factor to the high dropout rate.

The statewide poll asked Hispanics what they thought the main reason for the high dropout rate was. As shown in Chart 2.6, over a third said that the pressure for Hispanic youth to work to help support their families was the main reason. As was found in the qualitative phases of the research, the poll identified the problems Hispanic youth face at the schools themselves in the form of lack of support (25 percent) and outward discrimination (12 percent) as other key reasons for the high dropout rate.

**Chart 2.6: Reasons for Dropping Out**  
*What do you think is the main reason Hispanic youth have a much higher high school drop-out rate than other groups?*

Need to work and help support their families	<b>36%</b>
Lack of support in the schools	<b>25%</b>
Discrimination in the schools	<b>12%</b>
Language barriers	<b>8%</b>
Laziness	<b>7%</b>
Negative peer pressure	<b>4%</b>
Poor parenting skills	<b>3%</b>
Drug abuse / gang involvement	<b>2%</b>

One way to address this problem is to launch a major public information campaign in the Hispanic community aimed at convincing people – especially parents – that it is more important and beneficial for Hispanic young people to finish high school than it is for them to drop out so they can work. For families that are struggling to make ends meet, it may be difficult to understand how sending a teenager to school rather than having them work will ultimately benefit the family much more. However, it is important to get this message across. The Hispanic community needs to recognize how essential education is to one’s economic future and that without a high school diploma, many Hispanic young people will forever be stuck in low-paying jobs.

It is also important to address the lack of support and discrimination that students are facing in the schools, but this would come after the public information campaign highlighting the need for Hispanic young people to finish high school. If Hispanic parents do not fully appreciate the value and importance of education to their child’s future, then the young people will still feel pressure from their families to work even if they have the support they need at the schools. Ultimately, once everyone agrees that education is vital, parents, teachers and community leaders can work together to improve the conditions for Hispanic youth in the schools.

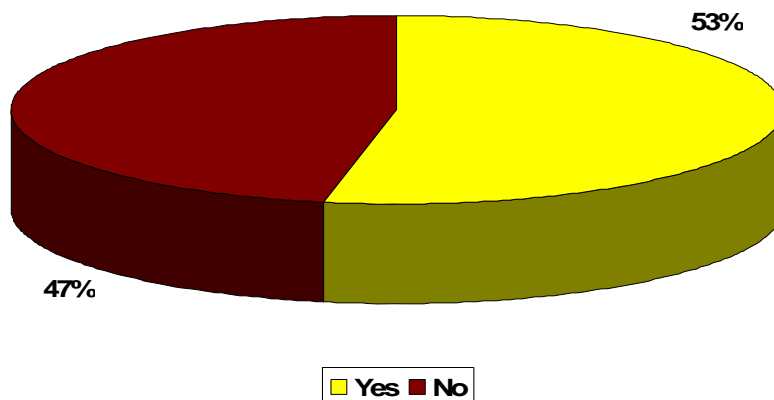
## Need #2: Transportation

**Public transportation systems in Delaware need to improve significantly. A large number of Hispanics do not have a driver's license and since there is no real public transportation system in the state, many Hispanics have difficulty getting around.**

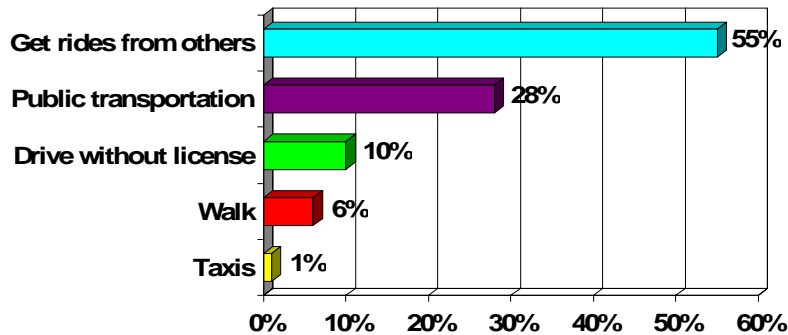
The focus groups and executive interviews made it clear that transportation is a major problem for many Hispanics throughout the state. Focus group participants – particularly those in Kent and Sussex Counties – highlighted the need for an improved public transportation system. Executive interview respondents also stressed that there is significant need for attention to the issue of transportation for the Hispanic population. The qualitative research identified that there was a problem and that it was important to get a quantitative measure of the severity of the transportation problem in the statewide poll.

To that end, respondents in this phase of the research were asked whether or not they currently have a driver's license. The poll showed that nearly half of all Hispanic adults in Delaware do not have a driver's license (see Chart 2.7). Lower income, Spanish-dominant immigrants are the least likely to have a license. In fact, 69 percent of those who earn less than \$20,000 per year do not have a driver's license. Most of those without a license are forced to rely on family and friends for rides while 1 in 10 drive illegally without a license. Public transportation is utilized by the small percentage that has access to it – mostly those who live in New Castle County. (see Chart 2.8)

**Chart 2.7: Driver's License**  
*Do you currently have a driver's license?*



**Chart 2.8: Means of Transportation**  
*How do you get around most of the time?*  
*(Asked of those who do not have a driver's license)*



The most straightforward solution to this issue seems to be improving the public transportation system throughout the state. Phase 2 of the research also suggested that a driver's license program similar to the one currently in effect in Maryland could also help. This driver's license program is much more controversial though and some believe that it only enables illegal immigrants. However, all Delawareans – including Hispanics – could benefit from an improved public transportation system. Perhaps a localized transit system could be an effective solution. Something as simple as minibuses that could take people to and from work could have a major impact.

### **Need #3: Healthcare**

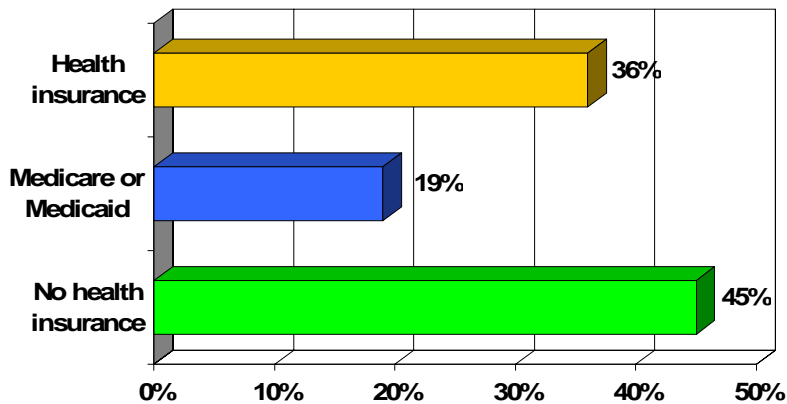
**When it comes to healthcare, there are several key areas of need for the Hispanic population. A substantial percentage of the population has no health insurance and many therefore rely on the emergency room for their basic medical care. In addition, a quarter of Hispanics report difficulty communicating with healthcare providers because the providers do not speak Spanish. Another need in the area of healthcare is that two-thirds of the population has no access to mental health services. Finally, many do not get regular screenings for serious diseases such as heart disease and cancer – this need is particularly apparent among Hispanic men.**

The qualitative phases of the research only briefly touched on the needs of the Hispanic community in the area of healthcare. Although education was viewed to be the area of greatest need, in the second phase of the research, several state opinion leaders also identified healthcare as a key area of need. As discussed earlier in the report, lack of insurance, lack of bilingual healthcare providers and foregoing preventative healthcare were viewed as the most important issues. In order to quantify the degree of need in each of these areas, the statewide poll addressed each one specifically.

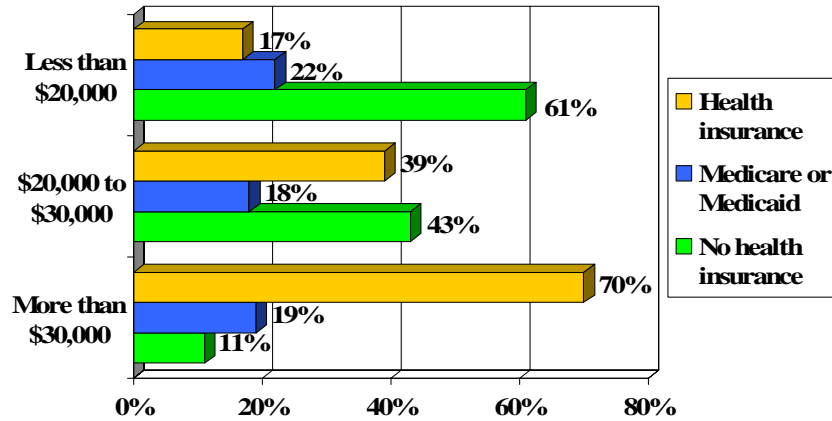
Lack of insurance

The poll results confirm the qualitative finding that lack of health insurance is a widespread problem in Delaware’s Hispanic community. Almost half of the adult population does not have any health insurance (see Chart 2.9). Chart 2.10 illustrates that Hispanics who earn less than \$20,000 a year are the least likely to have health insurance – 61 percent have no medical coverage. This is not terribly surprising considering that those who work in low-wage jobs are often the least likely to have access to healthcare benefits through their employer and since they earn a very low income, most cannot afford to purchase a policy on their own.

**Chart 2.9: Health Insurance**  
***Do you currently have health insurance, Medicare or Medicaid, or do you not have health insurance?***

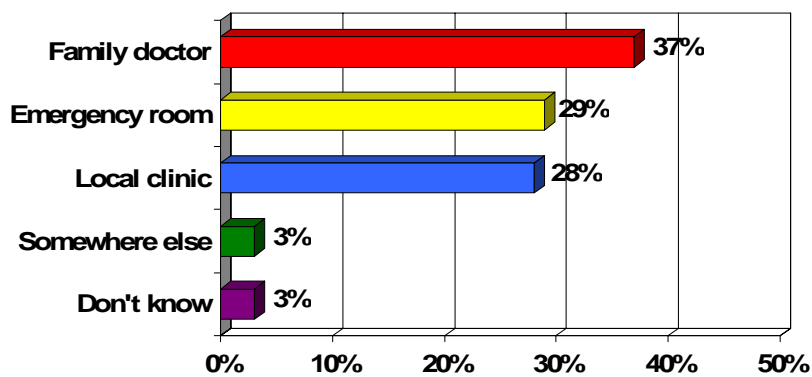


**Chart 2.10: Health Insurance by Income**  
*Do you currently have health insurance, Medicare or Medicaid, or do you not have health insurance?*



Of course, this leads a substantial number of Hispanics to utilize hospital emergency rooms as their primary source of healthcare services. In fact, just 37 percent of respondents say they go to a family doctor when they are sick (see Chart 2.11). This use of the state’s hospital emergency rooms for non-emergency medical concerns results in over-crowded emergency rooms with long waits for all patients.

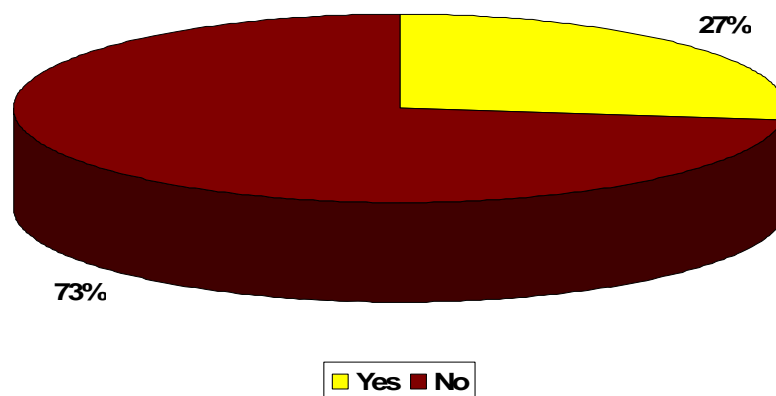
**Chart 2.11: Sources of Medical Care**  
*Where do you go when you or a family member is sick?*



Lack of interpreters at medical facilities

Another area of need that falls under the umbrella of healthcare is the issue of communication. Perhaps more than in any other setting, it is critical that there is clear communication when dealing with a person's medical needs. Despite the fact that the United States government mandates that all hospitals and clinics that receive federal funding must provide professional interpreters for patients who do not speak English, many Hispanics in Delaware say that language barriers still exist. As shown in Chart 2.12, just over a quarter of Hispanic adults say they frequently have problems communicating with doctors or other healthcare providers because those providers do not speak Spanish. Younger and less educated Hispanics are particularly likely to have such communication problems. A third of those between 18 and 29 years of age and 36 percent of those with less than a high school education say they have frequent problems communicating with healthcare providers.

**Chart 2.12: Language Barriers in Healthcare**  
***Do you frequently have problems communicating with doctors or other healthcare providers because they do not speak Spanish?***



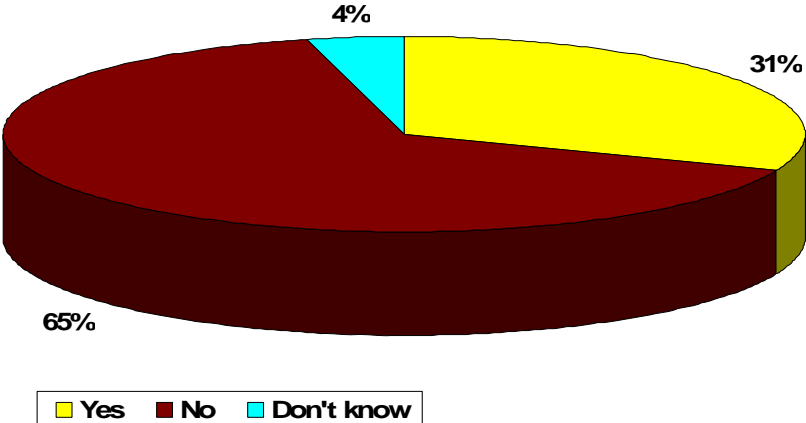
One cannot overstate the potential problems that can arise from miscommunication due to language barriers in healthcare settings. In-depth research in this area from across the country shows that those who do not have access to professional interpreters at healthcare facilities are more likely to misunderstand their diagnosis, their prescriptions and instructions relating to their care.



Lack of access to mental health services

Nearly 1 in 5 Hispanics say that they or someone in their family has been diagnosed with clinical depression or anxiety. In addition, about a tenth of the population says someone in their family has sought treatment for drug or alcohol addiction. In spite of this, two-thirds of respondents say they do not have any access to mental health services in Delaware (see Chart 2.13).

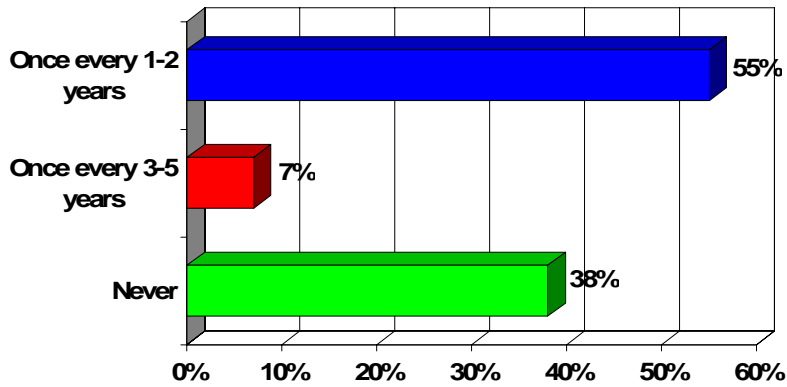
**Chart 2.13: Access to Mental Health Services**  
*Do you have access to mental health services?*



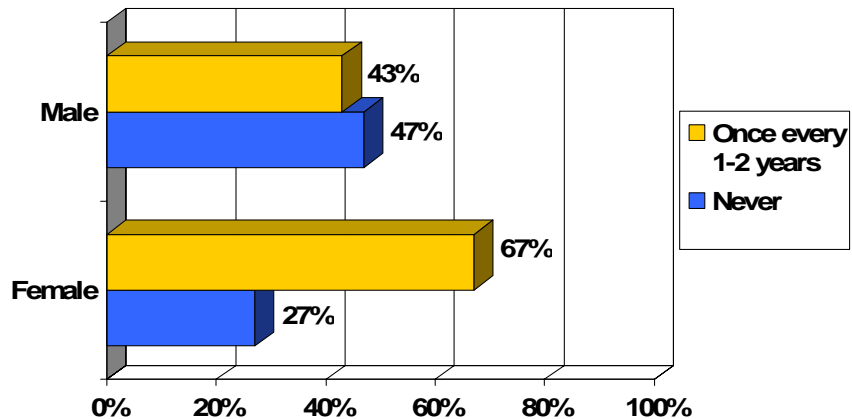
Lack of proper screening for major healthcare concerns

A final need that was uncovered in the area of healthcare is the need to educate the Hispanic population about the importance of preventative healthcare and screening for serious illnesses. Nearly two-fifths of Hispanic adults say they never get health screening tests for common illnesses like heart disease and cancer (see Chart 2.14). This is particularly true for Hispanic men as nearly half say they never get heart disease, cancer and other types of screening tests (see Chart 2.15).

**Chart 2.14: Frequency of Health Screenings**  
*How often do you get health screening tests for common illnesses like heart disease or cancer?*



**Chart 2.15: Frequency of Health Screenings by Gender**  
*How often do you get health screening tests for common illnesses like heart disease or cancer?*



### Addressing Healthcare Needs

When determining the actionable steps to address the healthcare needs for Hispanics in Delaware, again it is important to use a holistic approach. Increasing the number of primary care facilities where those without insurance could go to receive basic medical care could be an effective first step. This would help to reduce the over-crowding of emergency rooms and allow them to function as they are supposed to – to treat true medical emergencies. In addition, a priority for staffing these primary care facilities should be to employ bilingual medical personnel and professional interpreters so that language barriers will not be an issue.

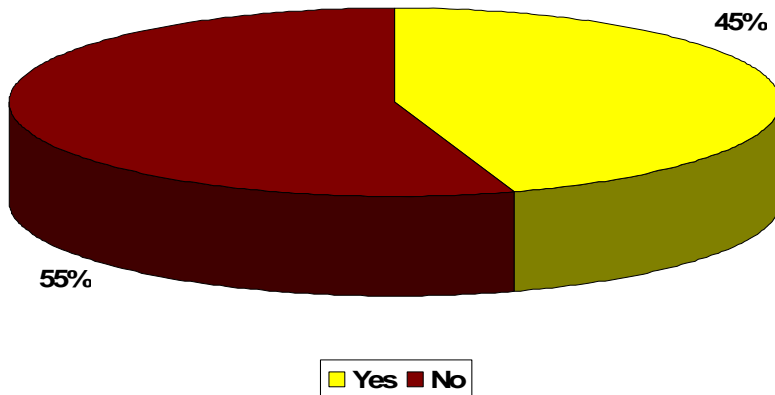
Another step that can be taken to respond to these healthcare needs is to launch a public information campaign highlighting the importance of treating mental health issues and of regular screenings for heart disease, cancer and other common medical conditions. Such a campaign, particularly aimed at Hispanic men could be useful, especially if it went the additional step to direct people to places where they can get screened for these illnesses at little or no cost. Of course, increasing the number of bilingual mental health service providers is another important step to addressing this need.

#### Need #4: Financial Services

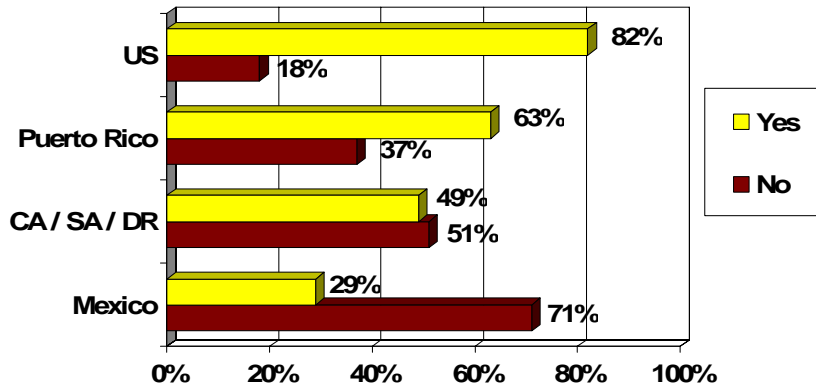
The majority of Hispanics in Delaware do not have a bank account and just a third own their home.

Although two-thirds of Delaware’s Hispanic population is employed, the majority do not have a bank account in the state (see Chart 2.16). As with many of the other needs highlighted in this report, the segment of the population where the need is most pronounced is the lower income, immigrant and Spanish-dominant individuals (see Chart 2.17).

**Chart 2.16: Bank Account**  
*Do you have a bank account in Delaware?*

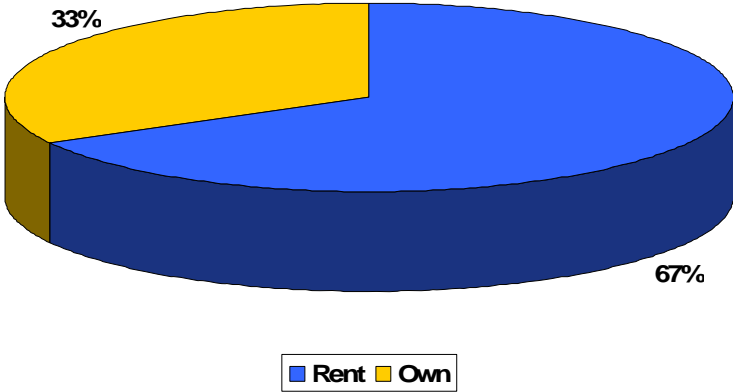


**Chart 2.17: Bank Account by Country of Birth**  
*Do you have a bank account in Delaware?*

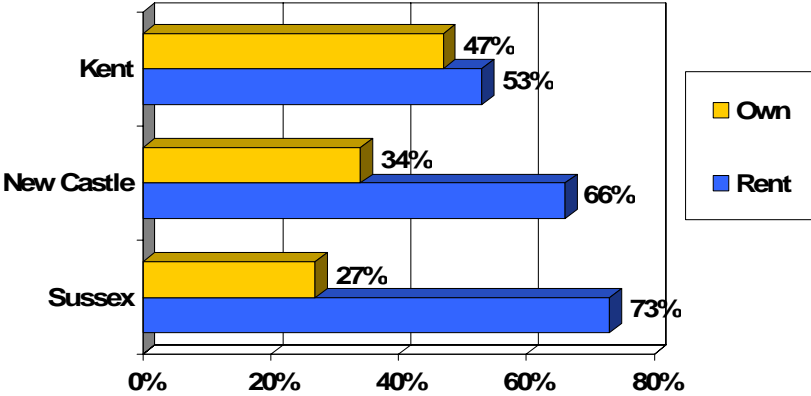


As other research throughout the country has shown, this lack of a relationship with financial service providers leads many Hispanics to get stuck in a financial rut. Without a simple bank account, many find it difficult to obtain credit or qualify for a mortgage. This may be a reason why two-thirds of Hispanics in Delaware rent – rather than own – their home (see Chart 2.18). As Chart 2.19 shows, Hispanics living in Kent County are the most likely to own their home whereas those who live in New Castle and Sussex are more likely to rent. Not surprisingly, those without a bank account are more likely to rent their home (see Chart 2.20). An additional concern for those without a bank account is the safety concerns that arise from keeping significant quantities of cash on their person or in their home.

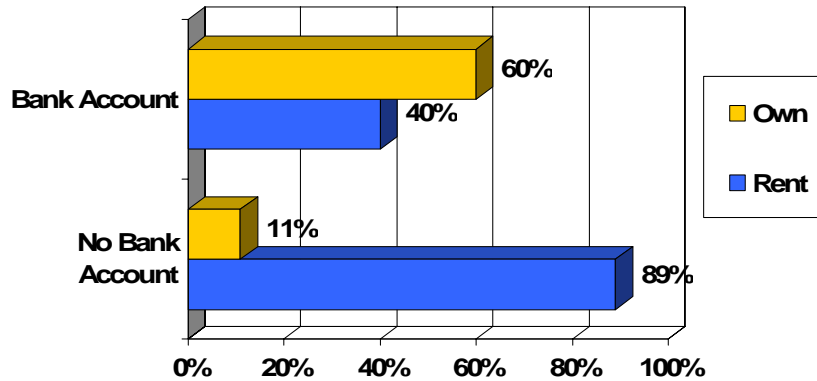
**Chart 2.18: Own versus Rent**  
*Do you currently rent or own your home in Delaware?*



**Chart 2.19: Own versus Rent by County**  
*Do you currently rent or own your home in Delaware?*



**Chart 2.20: Own Versus Rent by Bank Account**  
*Do you currently rent or own your home in Delaware?*



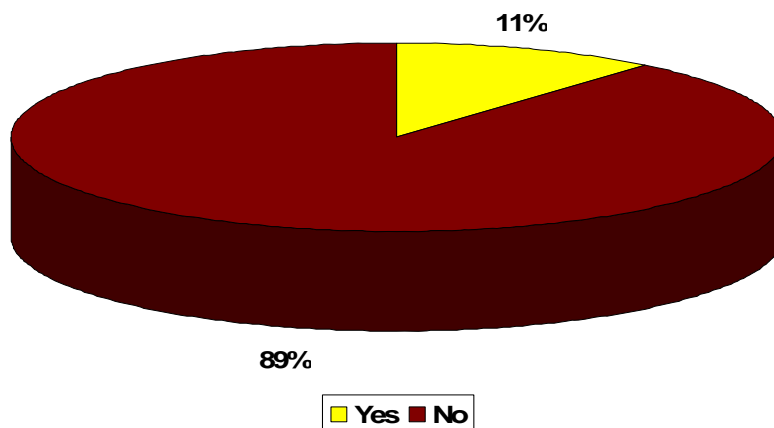
Again, disseminating information could be a valuable first step in addressing this area of need. Helping Hispanics to understand the importance of establishing relationships with financial service providers would be useful. In addition to relaying information about the importance of such relationships, it would be even more beneficial to help people understand how they can access financial services and dispel some of the myths about bank accounts (that one has to have a lot of money to open an account or that the bank will charge substantial fees, for example). This could ultimately lead to higher homeownership rates among Delaware's Hispanic population and help many to get out of the financial rut they are currently in.

## Need #5: Gangs and Discrimination

Although gangs were identified as a problem in the focus groups, the poll indicates that this problem affects a very small percentage of the population. Discrimination is considered a major problem by a plurality of Hispanics, but the numbers are significantly lower than the national average.

The qualitative research identified a concern by some that there is a growing gang problem among Delaware's Hispanic youth. In order to quantify this potential problem, respondents in the statewide poll were asked if the gang problem has personally affected themselves or their family. Reassuringly, as illustrated in Chart 2.21, just 1 in 10 Hispanics said they had been affected by the gang problem. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that the problem does not exist and may be serious in some areas. However, it does show that the problem is certainly not widespread and that it only affects a small segment of the population.

**Chart 2.21: Gang Problem**  
*Has the gang problem in Delaware personally affected you or your family?*

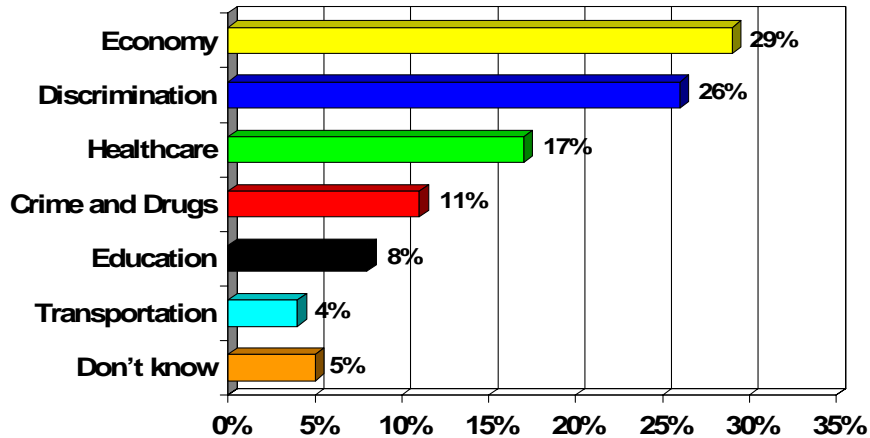


Discrimination is another problem that was highlighted in the first two phases of the research. Focus group respondents felt that discrimination – especially in more subtle forms – is a problem in Delaware that makes life extremely difficult for many Hispanics. Additionally, the executive interviewees pointed out that discrimination and an overall lack of cross-cultural understanding between Delaware's Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations was an issue. When this subject was addressed in the statewide poll, the qualitative findings were reinforced.

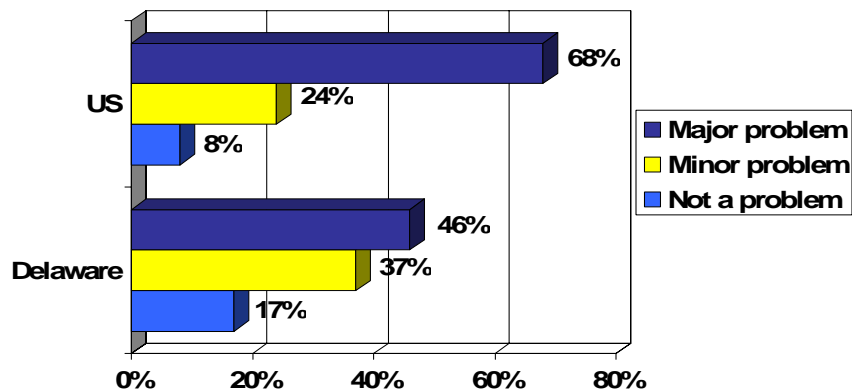
A quarter of Hispanics that were surveyed name discrimination as the most important issue currently facing Hispanics in Delaware (see Chart 2.22). Furthermore, when asked specifically how severe of a problem discrimination is throughout the state – almost half say it is a major problem. Although this is a significant finding that highlights an important problem, it is necessary to put the finding into proper context. When compared with national numbers, Hispanics in Delaware are actually better off when it comes to dealing with discrimination. Whereas nearly 7 in 10 Hispanics at the national level say that discrimination is a major problem, far fewer – 46 percent – of Hispanics in Delaware say discrimination is a major problem (see Chart 2.23). Again, this is not to suggest that the issue of

discrimination can or should be ignored – it is indeed a serious problem in Delaware; however, the issue should be viewed in the appropriate context.

**Chart 2.22: Most Important Issue**  
*What do you think is the most important issues currently facing Hispanics in Delaware, is it...?*



**Chart 2.23: Discrimination – National versus Delaware**  
*Do you think discrimination against Hispanics in Delaware is a major problem, minor problem or not a problem?*



Determining the steps that can be undertaken to address the problem of discrimination is not an easy task. Stopping discrimination involves changing people’s mindsets and helping people to become more culturally sensitive and understanding. Perhaps the suggestions offered by the executive interview respondents (for example, that leaders from various sectors lead the way to having a true cross-cultural dialog and exchange so that all Delawareans may better understand each other) could be useful first steps.

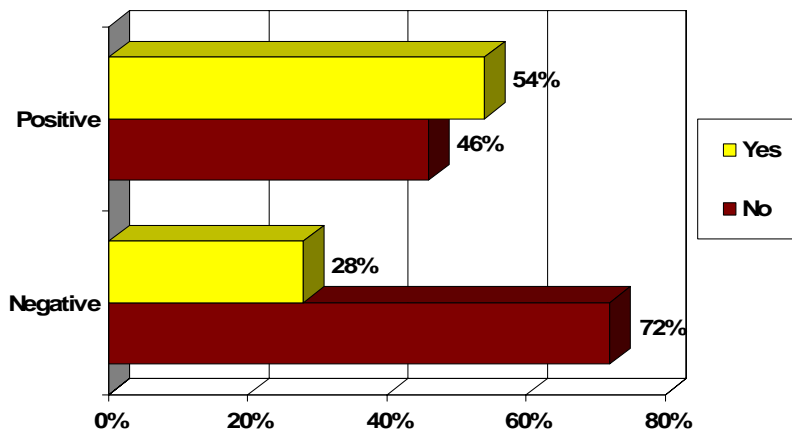


### Section 3: Strengths and Positive Contributions

Although the research project overall and the statewide poll in particular were very useful in identifying the needs of the Hispanic population, the results also show several strengths and positive contributions that this population adds to the state.

Overall, it is clear that like in so many other areas of the country, Hispanics bring a positive immigrant spirit and optimism to Delaware. Even when faced with difficulties, this optimistic spirit comes through. Despite the fact that many find it difficult to make ends meet at the end of each month, a significant number still have a positive view of their quality of life in the state (see Chart 3.1).

**Chart 3.1: Earn Enough by Quality of Life**  
Do you feel as though you currently earn enough money to support yourself and your family?

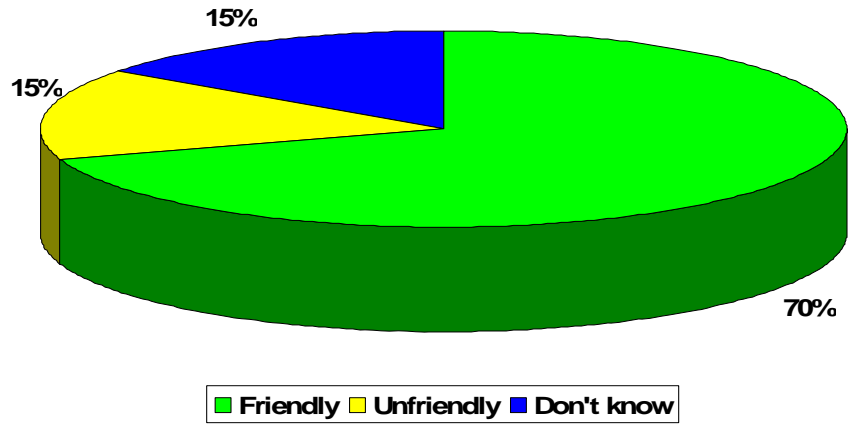


Beyond bringing a positive spirit to the state, Hispanics also provide Delaware with something quite tangible. As noted earlier, the majority of Hispanics work in low-wage jobs that are physically demanding such as agriculture, construction and hotel and restaurant service. These are, by and large, the jobs that other Delawareans do not want to do, but are necessary to the health of the state's economy.

Another positive finding that bears mentioning is the positive relationship that Hispanics in Delaware report having with the state's law enforcement personnel. Whereas in many areas throughout the country relationships between Hispanics and law enforcement are quite strained, this is not the case in Delaware. The overwhelming majority of respondents to the statewide poll say that the police in Delaware act friendly toward Hispanics (see Chart 3.2).

This finding conflicts with what came out of the executive interviews on the subject of law enforcement. Several state opinion leaders felt that Hispanics had a difficult relationship with police in Delaware and were fearful of reporting crimes committed against them. According to Hispanics, however, their relationship with police is, by and large a friendly one. Perhaps the police could build on this positive relationship to establish greater trust of law enforcement among Hispanics.

**Chart 3.2: Relationship with Police**  
*How would you describe the way the police in Delaware treat you and your family?*



## Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

Many of the needs identified by this research undertaking are interconnected. For example, there is a nearly universal feeling throughout the state that the Hispanic population needs to have more access to English classes and job training programs. While interest in such programs is high, many of those who are most in need of such opportunities would not be able to access them even if they were more readily available due to their lack of transportation. Additionally, because much of the population earns an extremely low wage, many work multiple jobs and/or long hours which makes having the time to take advantage of English classes and job training programs challenging. So, clearly, the best way to address the needs of the Hispanic population is to take a holistic approach. In addition to increasing the number of English classes and job training programs, the Consortium might also consider offering transportation to and from the classes and trying to offer the courses at a variety of times.

Similarly, when addressing the needs associated with healthcare, it is important to take into consideration all of the specific problems that were identified through the research. Increasing the number of primary care facilities where those without insurance can go to receive basic medical care is an important step, but if there is not significant Spanish-speaking personnel on staff, the facilities will not be as effective as they can be. Furthermore, transportation and timing must be part of the equation. Many Hispanics do not get screened for serious illnesses because they cannot or will not take time away from work. Having flexible hours at the primary care facilities will therefore be important. Additionally, because of the widespread transportation problems, it would be helpful if there could be a bus service to and from these facilities.

All of the issues highlighted in this report also suggest that there is a great need for information. The Consortium may consider utilizing Spanish-language media as well as churches and community organizations to inform the Hispanic community about some important subjects such as: the importance of high school and college education, the importance of treating mental health problems and the importance of preventative healthcare, just to name a few. If Hispanics can receive this useful information from a trusted source it may have a significant impact on beginning to solve some of the problems the community faces in Delaware.

Overall, this three-phased research initiative provides the Consortium with a great deal of information from multiple perspectives about the needs and strengths of the Hispanic community in Delaware. The Consortium members can use this information as a starting point to fully evaluate the major priorities for the population. The report offers suggestions as to potential actionable first steps that can be taken to utilize the strengths of the community and to address each of the key areas of need. However, ultimately, it is up to the Consortium to determine how and when to act in a way that will have the strongest and most positive impact on Delaware's Hispanic community.