

National Service and Civic Engagement Grant Competition FY 2015

University Auxiliary and Research Services Corp.

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Purpose/Research Questions:

Civic engagement among Latinos lags far behind White, Asian, and African American counterparts across every form of participation in California and nationally. Although individual experiences that motivate civic engagement are well-documented, research on factors such as age, educational background, socio-economic status, familial upbringing, cultural context, and geographic locale, which are also related to civic engagement, have not been studied empirically. Comprehensive approaches to understanding civic engagement of Latinos are needed to (a) recognize the strengths of this population in order to build upon them and (b) understand what will lead to their increased civic engagement. The goal is to develop methodological and theoretical innovations to help us recognize strengths and understand what factors may increase engagement.

The research will examine changes in civic engagement behavior including traditional forms of civic engagement and non-traditional avenues driven by participation in Cultivando Liderazgo, a university-community-family-individual project designed to demonstrate feasible and effective methods for promoting lifelong civic engagement. Specifically, the study will use pre- and post-tests, and other metrics to study 290 Latino participants, from 7 to 70+ years old who are primarily low income and adults who have low (formal) educational levels. The motivating factors that explain civic engagement behavioral outcomes are important to our partners, stakeholders, and the community at large. An understanding of such factors is important for predicting future civic engagement outcomes across the lifespan.