

The United States Conference of Mayors

# Latino Alliance in Action

Local Partnerships Creating Impact

2025 Best Practice Playbook  
June 2025



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# Foreword

In today's dynamic policy landscape, local action is a driving force for meaningful change. This Best Practice Series highlights how mayors and community partners are advancing innovative strategies to support Latino communities through targeted efforts in housing, workforce development, education, and small business growth.

Each example showcases a partnership between cities and local organizations—models that are not only impactful but also replicable. These stories reflect what effective, equity-driven governance can look like at the local level.

We commend the mayors featured here for leading with purpose and invite fellow policymakers to draw inspiration and insights from their work.



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The 2025 Latino Alliance Playbook provides a collection of successful strategies from cities across the U.S., including – Atlanta, Edina, Little Rock, Madison, Phoenix, San Leandro, and Santa Fe, designed to bolster Latino communities. This resource showcases programs focused on key areas such as education, housing, small business growth, workforce development, and civic participation, all with the goal of fostering more inclusive and economically vibrant cities.

Featured programs include:

- Community navigator initiatives, which link residents to vital resources and services.
- Projects aimed at preserving affordable housing and preventing displacement of residents.
- Training and support programs designed to empower small business owners and entrepreneurs.
- Spanish-language radio programs that promote civic engagement and disseminate important, culturally relevant information.
- Workforce development centers that offer training and job placement assistance.

A central theme throughout the playbook is the substantial economic impact of Latino and immigrant populations. Recognizing their essential role in driving local economies, the playbook emphasizes the need to eliminate obstacles that limit their full participation and success. By doing so, cities can cultivate more prosperous and equitable environments for everyone.

# Atlanta, Georgia

## Mayor Andre Dickens

### *Welcoming Atlanta Community Navigator Program*

#### **Topic Area/Theme:**

Education

#### **How long has the program been in service?**

2020-present

#### **Program Partners:**

City of Atlanta and Latino Community Fund

#### **Program Mission:**

Through a partnership with the Latino Community Fund Georgia (LCF Georgia), the Mayor's Office of International and Immigrant Affairs – Welcoming Atlanta is working to empower Spanish-speaking community leaders (Community Navigators) to improve access to resources, earn trust, and enhance neighborhood identity in the City of Atlanta's immigrant communities. This program invests in existing leadership strengths through training, education, and professional development opportunities, which prepare Community Navigators to play a key role in supporting our immigrant neighbors. This innovative program fosters connectivity and accessibility, cultivating essential relationships with residents and providing them with key access points to resources, services, and programs from the City of Atlanta and its external partners.

#### **How has this program/partnership specifically supported the Latino community?**

The Welcoming Atlanta Community Navigator program contracts 8 part-time Spanish-speaking community leaders (Community Navigators) to share information about resources, services, and programs offered by the City of Atlanta and its partners, while fostering a sense of community within the neighborhoods they serve. The Mayor's Office of International and Immigrant Affairs provides Community Navigators with professional development training, leadership opportunities, and education on resources, programs, and services available to the Latino community, equipping Navigators to share these resources directly with the communities they serve. This program has enhanced feedback cycles between Latino residents and the City of Atlanta, establishing a channel of communication that allows residents to voice concerns, connect with City resources, and actively contribute to solutions together. In 2024, Navigators supported 31 community engagement events and activities for 9 City of Atlanta departments and 19 external community partners, improving Latino participation and access.

Since the program's inception, Community Navigators have provided services and information to 315,770 residents to date, including immigrants from 22 Latin American and Caribbean countries. This program features place-based community events and an engagement strategy that responds to barriers Latino residents face, including language, transportation, social stigmas, and distrust of institutions. Through over 1,150 community resource fairs and events, Community Navigators have been able to connect residents directly to resources and services they may not have known about, lacked access to, or were hesitant to seek out on their own.

#### **How many people have been served by this program?**

315,770 people, representing 74 countries and speaking 46 distinct languages.

**Why should this program be shared with other cities as a featured best practice?**

By hosting this program within the City of Atlanta's Mayor's Office of International and Immigrant Affairs – Welcoming Atlanta, we have achieved significant growth in building trust between local government and Latino communities, and residents have reported improved access to city and external services, an increase in their sense of belonging and neighborhood pride, and feeling safer and more welcome in the City of Atlanta. Formalizing Community Navigators' role within the City of Atlanta as paid contractors allows them to dedicate consistent hours to the role, stabilizing a position dependent upon their communication and leadership skills.

Community Navigators are selected based on their involvement and leadership in their respective communities, even in informal capacities (previous education levels and formal professional experience are not barriers to participation), and the program invests in these skills to better equip Navigators to do what they are already doing for their neighbors – supporting the City of Atlanta's mission to offer opportunity for all. Fluency in Spanish is a requirement, and Community Navigators who do not have written or spoken English fluency attend English classes as part of their paid hours, empowering bilingual leaders to better serve their neighbors on behalf of the City of Atlanta.

**For more information about the program, please visit:**

[www.WelcomingAtlanta.com](http://www.WelcomingAtlanta.com)

# Edina, Minnesota

## Mayor James B. Hovland

### *Affordable Ownership Preservation Program*

**Topic Area/Theme:**

Housing Accessibility

**How long has the program been in service?**

2019-present

**Program Partners:**

City of Edina, Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, and Homes Within Reach

**Program Mission:**

The Affordable Ownership Preservation Program aims to preserve Edina's existing moderately priced housing stock for long-term affordability. This, coupled with the First Generation Down Payment Assistance Program, has served to make homeownership possible for first-generation homebuyers. The City partners with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity and Homes Within Reach to renovate the homes and place them into a Community Land Trust to assure affordability for future buyers.

**How has this program/partnership specifically supported the Latino community?**

Before launching these initiatives, City staff engaged with homebuyer counselors and real estate agents specializing in serving the Latino community. Some professionals expressed resistance, noting that high housing costs posed significant barriers and that the city's demographic diversity was limited. In response, staff developed targeted programs and forged partnerships aimed at reducing these obstacles. Key efforts included creating a First Generation Homebuyer Program, which offers a forgivable down payment assistance loan, complementing our longstanding Down Payment Assistance (DPA) program. Additionally, collaborations with Community Land Trusts were established to provide affordable homeownership opportunities.

According to the American Community Survey, approximately 1.2% of owner-occupied housing units are occupied by individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino. In contrast, 15% of participants in our Housing Preservation Program identified as Hispanic or Latino. Furthermore, 25% of First Generation Homebuyers in our program identify as Hispanic or Latino, indicating a positive impact of our targeted initiatives.

**How many people have been served by this program?**

16 people have participated in the Affordable Ownership Preservation Program, and an additional 5 benefited from the First Generation Program alone (not buying a Land Trust home).

**Why should this program be shared with other cities as a featured best practice?**

Although our numbers thus far are low, the programs are relatively new. Comparing the percentage of Latino households who benefited from the program relative to the percentage of Hispanic homeowners in the City as a whole demonstrates that these types of programs do have an impact, especially in higher housing cost communities.

**Additional Information:**

We believe these programs are working to make Edina more attainable and are serving to diversify the City.

**For more information, please contact:**

Stephanie Hawkinson, Affordable Housing Development Manager, shawkinson@edinamn.gov

# Little Rock, Arkansas

## Mayor Frank Scott, Jr.

### *Emprende*

#### **Topic Area/Theme:**

Small Business Development

#### **How long has the program been in service?**

2022-present

#### **Program Partners:**

Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation; Arkansas Capital Corporation; Arvest Bank; Encore Bank; First Community Bank; Hope Credit Union; and Southern Bancorp.

#### **Program Mission:**

Emprende is a comprehensive educational program that offers Little Rock's Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs a series of free classes on establishing, managing, and growing a business. Emprende is the only program of its kind in Little Rock. Tailored specifically for the construction, professional services, landscaping, janitorial, food services, and real estate and housing sectors, the program equips participants with the knowledge, resources, and connections necessary to engage with the City of Little Rock. Emprende bridges access and opportunity, ensuring that our Spanish-speaking community is fully included in—and contributing to—Little Rock's economy.

#### **How has this program/partnership specifically supported the Latino community?**

The Emprende program offers comprehensive education on various aspects of business development, including business entity types, financial management and access to capital, taxation, licensing and permits, insurance, networking, customer service, marketing, and engaging with the City of Little Rock.

Since its inception in 2022, the program has hosted five cohorts, dedicating over 100 hours of training to empower 148 participants, with an impressive 84% graduation rate. A recent survey of past Emprende participants indicates that 76% experienced an increase in business income following the program. Additionally, half of the respondents were able to hire additional part-time employees, and nearly one-third expanded their workforce with full-time staff. Furthermore, emerging evidence suggests that the program has facilitated improved access to capital for participants.

#### **How many people have been served by this program?**

148 participants

#### **Why should this program be shared with other cities as a featured best practice?**

Immigrants make up just 14% of the U.S. population but own about one in five new businesses—companies that often grow faster, last longer, and generate more economic value than those founded by native-born counterparts. Between 2018 and 2023, Latino entrepreneurs led this surge, with the number of Latino-owned businesses rising 44% to 465,202, even as white-owned businesses declined. During the same period, total revenue for Latino-owned firms increased by 36%. Despite this momentum, Latino-owned businesses remain smaller on average, with fewer surpassing \$1 million in annual sales. Closing this revenue gap—so that Latino-owned firms match the average revenue of white-owned counterparts—could add an estimated \$1.1 trillion to the U.S. economy (HBR IdeaCast, Stanford Business).

**Additional Information:**

At the heart of our efforts lies a powerful mission: to uplift and empower local entrepreneurs, ensuring their success becomes the foundation of Little Rock's thriving economy. Programs like Emprende, tailored to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking residents, are transforming dreams into realities, helping participants grow sustainable businesses and make a lasting impact.

**For more information about the program, please visit:**

[www.littlerock.gov](http://www.littlerock.gov).

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# Madison, Wisconsin

## Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway

### *Spanish Radio Show “Conectando Con Tu Ciudad”*

#### **Topic Area/Theme:**

Education and Civic Engagement

#### **How long has the program been in service?**

2024-present

#### **Program Partners:**

La Movida Radio Station (Mid-West Family Broadcasting)

#### **Program Mission:**

The mission of “Conectando con tu Ciudad” is to increase civic engagement and access to information among Madison’s Spanish-speaking residents. Through monthly radio broadcasts, the show connects community members with City departments and services, aiming to bridge language and accessibility gaps. The program fosters trust and transparency between the City of Madison and the Latinx community. It also supports culturally relevant communication and promotes equitable access to city resources, initiatives, and programs. Community members are able to ask questions during each show through the Facebook Live feature and connect with City employees in an approachable and joyful medium.

#### **How has this program/partnership specifically supported the Latino community?**

“Conectando con tu Ciudad” has created a consistent and accessible platform for Spanish-speaking residents to stay informed about important city initiatives, programs, and services. By featuring interviews with staff from various municipal departments, the show empowers the Latino community with knowledge about how local government works and how to access available resources. Topics have included public health, housing assistance, workforce development programs, educational initiatives, and more. This format helps to remove barriers that occur due to language, cultural disconnect, or the availability of relevant information in Spanish. The show also promotes a sense of belonging and inclusion by spotlighting Latinx voices and encouraging participation in civic life. Community members can engage directly, ask questions, and learn how decisions made at the city level affect their day-to-day lives. The radio partnership ensures culturally relevant outreach using a trusted, local Spanish-language media outlet, “La Movida Radio”.

#### **How many people have been served by this program?**

The program reaches approximately 1,000 to 1,500 Spanish-speaking listeners each month through radio broadcasts and digital streaming, with steadily increasing engagement and community outreach. To date, we have hosted 14 radio shows. Our most popular episode, featuring the Mayor, has garnered over 2,100 views and continues to attract listeners.

#### **Why should this program be shared with other cities as a featured best practice?**

The “Conectando con tu Ciudad” show is a replicable, low-cost model for municipal governments to build trust and improve communication with Spanish-speaking residents. It directly addresses disparities in access to public information and services by using culturally and linguistically appropriate channels. The collaboration with a well-known local Spanish radio station ensures broad outreach and community credibility. The show is also a tool for cross-departmental collaboration and provides a regular, public-facing opportunity for city staff to connect with the Latinx community. Other cities can adopt this model to increase civic participation, promote equity, and improve government transparency in underserved communities.

**Additional Information:**

The program has significantly improved communication between the City and Madison's Latinx residents, increasing participation in public programs and awareness of city services previously unknown to many. After airing an episode featuring the Mayor, our Bilingual Community Connector, Enoch Melgarejo, joined the Fire Department at a site where residents facing housing insecurity recognized him from the show, which helped build trust and encouraged them to voice concerns. This illustrates the show's powerful reach among vulnerable community members and the impact of culturally relevant communication in building trust. It has also led to tangible outcomes, such as a rise in Spanish-speaking childcare providers pursuing city accreditation after a segment highlighting available resources. Overall, the show has strengthened representation and visibility for the Latino community in local government, making residents feel more seen, heard, and empowered to engage.

**For more information about the program, please visit:**

[www.lamovidaradio.com/](http://www.lamovidaradio.com/)

# Phoenix, Arizona - Mayor Kate Gallego

## *Innovation 27*

### **Topic Area/Theme:**

Workforce Development and Education

### **How long has the program been in service?**

Scheduled to open in summer 2026 (broke ground on Wednesday, May 7, 2025).

### **Program Partners:**

City of Phoenix, Arizona State University; Northern Arizona University  
Maricopa Community College; West-MEC and Washington Elementary School District

### **Program Mission:**

By next summer, Innovation 27 will transform a long-vacant building into a dynamic workforce training and education hub. Thanks to support from multiple education partners, Innovation 27 will be a collaborative, high-skilled talent accelerator for Phoenix by meeting residents where they are to provide them with the tools they need to gain new skills and meet industry demands. The center will offer courses at levels ranging from high school to university for both residents at the start of their careers and those who have long been in the workforce. Innovation 27 will provide training in various highly skilled fields such as semiconductors, biosciences, law and public safety, information technology, and cyber. Whether residents simply want to gain a new skillset or want to pivot to a new career, this initiative will help prepare them for jobs in high-growth sectors.

### **How has this program/partnership specifically supported the Latino community?**

Phoenix is proud to be a culturally rich city, with over 40% of the population made up of the Latino community. Located in west Phoenix, Innovation 27 will bring dynamic resources straight to the backyards of those who may not traditionally have access to such tools. This project addresses systemic barriers in access to education and workforce development that disproportionately impact the Latino community here in Phoenix. By making these resources more accessible to the Latino community, we hope to help reduce the wealth gap by connecting residents to promising careers with great pay.

### **How many people have been served by this program?**

N/A (not yet open).

### **Why should this program be shared with other cities as a featured best practice?**

Phoenix understands the importance of preparing our residents for careers in high-growth sectors. Phoenix is recognized as a top location for workforce quality, and Innovation 27 will only elevate this excellence. We believe in investing in upskilling workers to meet the demands of high-skilled industries and provide our residents with quality jobs. We encourage other cities to think creatively about ways to innovate existing space to better serve their communities and take advantage of the natural partnership between local government and educational institutions.

### **For more information about this program, please contact:**

David Drennon  
Senior Policy Advisor, City of Phoenix  
david.drennon@phoenix.gov

# San Leandro, California

## Mayor Juan González

### *Small Business Technical Assistance Program*

**Topic Area/Theme:**

Small Business Development

**How long has the program been in service?**

2023 - present

**Program Partners:**

City of San Leandro and Renaissance Entrepreneur Center

**Program Mission:**

The Small Business Technical Assistance Program was established in 2023 to improve and increase services to small businesses directly and through partners. A key piece of the program is to rebuild trust and credibility with the local non-English-speaking business communities, many of which have been historically underserved. One-time recovery funds were used to build the local capacity of partner organizations. Among those in the program, Renaissance Entrepreneur Center was selected due to their success in connecting with Spanish-speaking businesses elsewhere in the San Francisco Bay Area.

**How has this program/partnership specifically supported the Latino community?**

During the past 3-5 years, small businesses in San Leandro have been devastated by the impacts of COVID, e-commerce, increases in business costs, lack of financing, workforce shortages, supply chain disruptions, and other market changes. These trends have had a disproportionate impact on immigrant communities, which play an important role in San Leandro's diverse, working-class community.

Renaissance employed grassroots promotion through targeted "guerrilla-style" flyering, strategic social media campaigns, and Instagram posts highlighting classes and newsletters to expand upon the City of San Leandro's communications. Additionally, the initiative continued to harness the power of word-of-mouth referrals and community engagement by participating in events, where tabling activities helped connect directly with residents.

To help Latino-owned and other small businesses adapt, San Leandro and our partners have offered a range of workshops and individual counseling on general topics identified by local businesses like access to capital, marketing to new customers, recruiting and training employees, permitting processes, and more. In addition, industry-specific support in manufacturing, restaurant operations, home-based childcare, exporting, and government contracting was provided or is planned to deliver needed information in areas with significant Latino-owned business participation.

The City of San Leandro has emulated Renaissance's commitment to serving businesses in Spanish by offering simultaneous interpretation of workshops into Spanish as well as Cantonese. The City has also expanded translation of print materials, including for related activities like small business grants and incentives.

**How many people have been served by this program?**

Renaissance reported that they served 53 clients from 9/2023 through 12/2024 in San Leandro and nearby County pockets (separately funded). Of these: 74% (39) were women, 53% (28) were Latina women, and 72% (38) were startup businesses. Their work sustained or created 28 full-time and 10 part-time employees beyond

the small business owners. The City of San Leandro and other Program Partners, like the San Leandro Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), also delivered workshops, counseling, and more to San Leandro businesses, though participants were not asked to disclose their ethnicity.

### **Why should this program be shared with other cities as a featured best practice?**

San Leandro researched local technical assistance organizations available to help entrepreneurs and concluded that more assistance needed to be delivered to Latino and other under-resourced business owners. Some key lessons from implementing the program are that:

Identifying a trusted partner is important – Renaissance has a good reputation in the region, which helped them better connect with local businesses through word of mouth.

Not every local partner will be able to build capacity – As an established regional organization, Renaissance already had the tools and staff to deliver high-quality services without a long lead-time; some volunteer organizations may take longer to ramp up.

Programs may benefit by aligning with work and funding of other governmental agencies and philanthropic organizations interested in supporting entrepreneurship.

Even with a robust partner, one year of funding may not be sufficient to build momentum for communities like San Leandro with limited targeted engagement with Latino businesses.

### **Additional Information:**

The program supports local businesses through resources, training, and consulting that help them grow, improve operations, and remain competitive. Education and mentoring have been shown to increase entrepreneurial success and build wealth in diverse communities.

In addition to measurable business outcomes, Renaissance shared success stories of Latina entrepreneurs:

Glenis Alvarado turned her passion for holistic care into a business selling crystal bracelets and wellness items. After learning about Renaissance from a friend, she enrolled in the Plan de Negocios class, gaining the confidence and skills to formalize her business. She also joined the Digitalízate Emprendedor program, which helped her expand online and grow her customer base.

Teresa Delgado founded FLUID, a business focused on sustainability and community empowerment through innovative waste diversion. Drawing on her background in professional organizing, she transforms surplus materials into resources for underserved communities.

Jade Le launched Lemonade51o in 2018 with just three stickers and a goal of paying off student loans. A Bay Area native and former teacher, her side hustle evolved into a full-time business by 2023, celebrating local culture through bold, creative designs.

# Santa Fe, New Mexico

## Mayor Alan Webber

### *Southside Feria*

**Topic Area/Theme:**

Small Business Development

**How long has the program been in service?**

2022 - present

**Program Partners:**

Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce and Santa Fe Business Incubator

**Program Mission:**

Feria Southside was created to unlock the American Dream for Latino and immigrant families on Santa Fe's Southside by removing barriers to entrepreneurship and civic engagement. Through culturally resonant vendor fairs, bilingual business workshops, and a unique educational video series styled as a "telenovela," the program delivers economic information in a relatable and engaging format. Local Latino creatives shaped the content to reflect the lived experiences of the community. This initiative has started to reverse the trust deficit toward government in our community and opened entrepreneurship as a path to prosperity.

**How has this program/partnership specifically supported the Latino community?**

Feria Southside addresses both systemic and geographic inequities by activating the Southside of Santa Fe, an area perceived as under-resourced compared to Santa Fe's historic downtown and other districts. The initiative brought resources into neighborhoods where many Latino families reside and work, transforming public spaces like libraries, business incubators, and the Fraternal Order of the Police into welcoming locations of opportunity. Its telenovela-style video series reached over 19,000 viewers in its first month.

In-person workshops on food business licensing, vendor training, and entrepreneurship provided real-time support, while free childcare ensured accessibility for working families. The Feria's markets have featured over 60 local vendors and drawn more than 3,000 attendees, helping new businesses test the waters and grow. More than just an event series, Feria Southside has reshaped how our City government connects with immigrant communities and sparked Latino prosperity in Santa Fe.

**How many people have been served by this program?**

- Video Engagement: 19,300+ views in the first month of release
- Event Attendance: Over 3,000 participants at community fairs and markets
- Vendor Support: 60+ local vendors featured across 8 events
- Workshop Services: 90+ children supported with child care at 5 business workshops
- Professional Development: 40 attendees at a women-led entrepreneur networking panel.

These numbers reflect broad and meaningful engagement in economic development efforts tailored to the Latino community.

**Why should this program be shared with other cities as a featured best practice?**

Feria Southside is rooted in American values of opportunity, self-reliance, and innovation; this initiative reimagines economic development to be more accessible, culturally relevant, and family-centered. It shows that when cities invest in underrepresented neighborhoods and speak the language, both literally and culturally, their residents experience stronger businesses, deeper trust, and more resilient communities.

**Additional Information:**

We are a small city, and perhaps this type of initiative is easier on a small local level.

**For more information about the program please visit:**

[www.santafechamber.com/feria.html](http://www.santafechamber.com/feria.html)

[www.santafechamber.com/feria-educational-resources.html](http://www.santafechamber.com/feria-educational-resources.html)

# Santa Fe, New Mexico

## Mayor Alan Webber

### *Investing in Our Workforce: How Santa Fe Built a Practical, Immigrant-Driven Economic Plan*

**Topic Area/Theme:**

Workforce Development and Small Business Support

**How long has the program been in service?**

2023 - present

**Program Partners:**

This initiative is supported by a broad coalition of local, national, public, private, nonprofit, and business entities, including: American Immigration Council, Welcoming America, Gateways for Growth, Somos Un Pueblo Unido, Christus St. Vincent, Presbyterian, Lodgers Association, Santa Fe Public Schools, Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce, Santa Fe Homebuilders Association, Northern New Mexico Labor Council, Santa Fe Community College, Semilla Project, La Fonda, Workforce Connection, City of Santa Fe Economic Development Department, Growing Up New Mexico, Northern Area Workforce Development Board, WESST, local employers, and grassroots organizations.

**Program Mission:**

Santa Fe's economy relies on immigrant workers and entrepreneurs—particularly in construction, hospitality, healthcare, early childhood education, and tourism. Yet immigrants often lack access to training, licensing, or business support, leaving critical workforce gaps unaddressed.

To solve this, the City of Santa Fe partnered with Somos Un Pueblo Unido to apply for the Gateways for Growth (G4G) Challenge. We surveyed 118 immigrant workers across five sectors and formed a diverse working group with industry leaders, educators, and community-based organizations. Together, we launched a dual-track strategy: (1) engage immigrant workers through bilingual focus groups and surveys, and (2) collect labor market data to target key growth sectors. This effort resulted in a clear roadmap—now adopted by the City—that guides both immigrant inclusion and broader workforce development efforts.

**How has this program/partnership specifically supported the Latino community?**

Immigrants in Santa Fe County pay \$122 million in taxes, generate \$365 million in spending power, and contribute \$1.1 billion to the local GDP. They fill essential roles, start businesses, and raise families here. Yet they remain disconnected from services that could help them contribute even more.

The barriers are familiar: limited outreach in Spanish, unclear business licensing, and difficulty accessing training. These obstacles don't just affect immigrants—they affect everyone. If child care businesses can't get licensed, working parents across Santa Fe suffer. If construction workers can't access certification programs, housing supply falls short.

This initiative responded by: Hosting lunch-hour focus groups with bilingual facilitation, engaging employers and workers directly, and creating actionable strategies backed by data.

One childcare entrepreneur shared: "We're already doing the work. We just need a path to do it right—and to grow."

**How many people have been served by this program?**

A total of 118 immigrant workers and business owners have been engaged, resulting in new business and licensing support for immigrant entrepreneurs. Outreach for the program focused on 5 growth sectors identified by the workforce board. Additionally, more than \$25,000 in initial funds have been leveraged into the public program expansion and FERIA Southside funding increased to \$75,000.

The strategy now informs full city Workforce Development Plan, supported by an ARPA-funded specialist

**Why should this program be shared with other cities as a featured best practice?**

It was an economic development solution. Santa Fe started with a community often left out of planning, and used their experiences to shape a model that benefits the entire city. What began as immigrant-centered outreach now anchors Santa Fe's long-term economic strategy.

The result is a scalable, cost-effective approach rooted in trust, local data, and shared outcomes. In July, the City will host a delegation for a site visit titled "Workforce Development as Social Movement", showcasing this model at City Hall and the State Capitol.

Santa Fe's experience shows that workforce development doesn't start with top-down policy—it starts with listening. And when we invest in people already doing the work, everyone wins.

**Additional Information:**

This project has helped reframe the role of immigrants in Santa Fe's economy—from service workers to essential contributors and strategic partners. By investing in systems that work for all, the city is strengthening small businesses, unlocking workforce potential, and addressing key economic gaps in housing, childcare, and health care.

**To learn more about the program, please visit:**

<https://sfreporter.com/coverstories/immigrant-investment/>





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