**Question:** Our organization is trying to engage the Latino community to do healthy marriage programming. However, not a lot of people seem to want to participate. Through our grant we provide transportation, babysitting, food, and also a $50 check for completing the program, yet they still do not want to come. All they request are ESL classes and immigration consultations, which we do offer. How do we get them to engage fully and want to participate in healthy marriage and relationship programming?

**Answer:** *From Alicia La Hoz, Executive Director, Family Bridges*

One of the things that we do is we partner with long-standing institutions that are trusted within the community and have a close connection with families: working with the church down the street, the local Head Start program, or the different partners within the community is an important way to engage the families.

The second piece is that connection, that initial connection. We have staff members at intake, from the beginning, that are Spanish speaking and can engage the individuals and the couples we serve. We also have facilitators that speak the language and really understand what’s happening with the community, so there’s that strong sense of connection that makes individuals want to attend.

So again partnering with trusted institutions and having bicultural staff that both facilitate in-service and initial intake is really helpful.

And then the third piece is we have a lot of videos and testimonials. Feel free to go to our YouTube page on the Family Bridges website (www.familybridgeschicago.org) and there’s a plethora of different types of videos that we often use whenever we have an orientation or other event. Whatever the opportunity, we’ll use the videos as a bridge in terms of making a case for why this is important.

*From Rodrigo Manjarres, Family Bridges*

I think [our success in the Latino community] speaks to the fact that we’re using personalismo. I think being able to be there at the office—say somebody goes to Catholic Charities and they talk to someone there and they receive a flyer—the personalismo factor has not been tapped into. Also, typically what I try to do is anytime different people come [to a program or workshop] as a group, we welcome the whole group to the event.
Question: Does the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families have a curriculum on healthy marriages and the associated topics?

Answer: From Robyn Cenizal, Project Director, National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families

We have a curriculum in our Virtual Training Center on the Resource Center website (www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org) that folks can access. It focuses on seven key research-based concepts of healthy relationships and also includes some conversation starters, activities, and informational handouts that can be used with families directly. I would suggest if you're interested in going through the virtual training that you start with Module One, which really gives you a lot of the background on healthy relationship education skills—what they are, why they matter, and what they could look like integrated—and then take advantage of Module Two, which is the curriculum.

In addition, on the website we also have a curriculum guide that's available that gives you information about a variety of free and low-cost curricula. And when I say low-cost, we cap at it $300 for whatever it would take to actually hold a workshop with at least 20 folks. We had to have some sort of variable, so that was the way we determined it, but yes please take advantage of both of those resources.

Question: Is Family Bridges Chicago-based only or do you have a presence in other parts of the United States?

Answer: From Alicia La Hoz, Executive Director, Family Bridges

Our program, based here in Chicago, has long deep roots. We've been here for a while and we're just now in the process of scaling up some of our programs in other states. However, we have programs or resources that can be used anywhere. For example, we have mini-workshops via apps, available if people go to our website (www.familybridgeschicago.org). And so that makes it accessible anywhere with global technology. We've got content in Spanish and English, as well as a resource manual for couples that's available in Spanish. And so we're just beginning to work with organizations in other states, but the wide breadth of programs are here in the Chicago area.

Question: We are an organization located in Minnesota and have an established well-organized program for parents, but we're missing out on male participation. Any ideas how to reach out to males?

Answer: From Rodrigo Manjarres, Family Bridges

I have seen that happening in many organizations across my years working here in the United States. One of the things that I would suggest is—in addition to making it kind of
open to the males—utilize facilitators who are males and who will encourage other males to attend. I have seen that when there’s a male facilitator who goes into the community, it opens the door for, “this is not something only about females that is only important for females.” So I think something to consider strongly when you are tapping into the community is that by having facilitators who are both male and female engaging people to attend, they can model behavior for participants.

From Alicia La Hoz, Executive Director, Family Bridges

Also, one of the things that we do is we make a lot of outreach phone calls. We make a really strong effort to not just speak to the female of the household, but to the male. That personal invitation is a sign of respect and goes a long way.

Question:
Does Family Bridges serve documented and non-documented persons of the Latino community? We’re having a hard time getting non-documented persons involved. What is the best practice in terms of addressing documentation issues?

Answer: From Alicia La Hoz, Executive Director, Family Bridges

We open our groups to the community—to everyone—and so we serve undocumented and documented individuals in a lot of our programs. You need to be really careful in terms of asking lots of questions and helping participants understand how identifying information will be used because obviously there's a lot of anxiety in the communities that we serve. “Is my information going to be shared with the government?” these are the type of questions are being asked. So while we're collecting intake data and information we're pretty sensitive about that.

From Rodrigo Manjarres, Family Bridges

I think the critical piece here is that people in the community will attend those places where they feel safe. So I really encourage any organization who’s trying to provide services in the community to identify what the individual’s [needs are]. Do they feel safe going here, since we are a new facilitator and program that they don’t have an [existing] relationship with? [One way to build trust] is by working with those organizations in the community that have relationships already established. I see, particularly in the north side of Illinois, we have established relationships with many organizations. You can also make [your organization’s] presence known in the community by volunteering to give presentations about different issues that would be relevant to the family. [You want to help] the family feel, “This is a safe place, they provide services I need.” I think that's a critical thing when working with documented and undocumented individuals.
Question: Does Family Bridges have any materials for same-sex Latina or Latino couples and families?

Answer: From Alicia La Hoz, Executive Director, Family Bridges

Unfortunately, we as an organization don’t. I do know of other marriage and relationship education organizations nationally that have been working towards that. I know the Gottman Institute has been working on that, but I’m not sure [about materials] particularly for the Latino community.

From Robyn Cenizal, Project Director, National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families

There are a number of curricula out there that are designed to work with individuals that is typically gender neutral. And so for those who are concerned about working with same-sex couples, I’d consider looking at some of the curricula that's designed to work with individuals and consider how that might be helpful as a starting point until the field catches up in this direction.

Question: Can you suggest any best practices for entry points in the Latino community?

Answer: From Alicia La Hoz, Executive Director, Family Bridges

So entry points meaning—I'd suspect that they mean ways to begin to connect with the Latino community and make headway. One of the pieces that we speak about in the Latino toolkit is the strong influence of religion and faith in the Latino community. We find that about 60% of our programs—we serve about 10,000 individuals, couples, and families a year and 72% of them are of Latino origin—are running the programs within the church community because that's such a strong part of Latinos and there’s a strong sense of trust. So being able to partner with the faith community is a great way to make that transition and entry way. And again, you might be going to a community where you're not known. If people don't know you, they're not going to trust you. They're not going to go to a program that you offer, but they will if their local school teacher or their priest that they trust is offering that program. And so we've been able to offer our non-faith based programs in faith institutions and that seems to be an effective entryway.

The other thing is that we're constantly doing radio programs with media outlets for the Latino constituency, as well as things like health fairs, parent open houses in schools, community fairs, those kinds of things where we're out there just really trying to bring awareness of our programs and connect. When we're out there we definitely have volunteers and individuals that speak the language and have gone to the programs so that sense of connection occurs and then people actually follow-up with those referrals that we provide.
From Rodrigo Manjarres, Family Bridges

One of the things that I've found that's very effective is trying to identify what organizations are in the community. For example, we're part of what's called Best Organizations in Lake County Area as well as Coalición Latinos Unidos de Lake County, and as part of that we volunteer to do presentations about different issues. So when we are looking for places to go, we already have that relationship with them and they're more than willing to accept us. I'd say identify what are the community agencies in the community and I'd ask them how they can be supportive. Thank you.

Question: How do you find funds for programs and services engaging Latino community members?

Answer: From Alicia La Hoz, Executive Director, Family Bridges

There's obviously grants.gov—that has all the different grants. You can look at that. There are different foundations within your community, being able to research that is helpful. A lot of libraries have free [resources] and librarians that are able to help you access their donor databases and their foundation databases. And if you're able to visit with them, they can pull a list of the different foundations for you or someone that's designated within your institution.

So there are definitely different strategies. And more and more, a lot of the RFPs are asking for diversity of services to be included within the constituency that's being served. So it does take some research, it takes some work, it takes some patience. Look at your state, a lot of states have grant workshops in terms of how to write grants effectively and build that capacity within institutions to help within the framework. So it's kind of a very broad answer to the question, but certainly there are resources out there. There are databases that can be tapped into that can help with those efforts with regards to grants and foundations.

From Robyn Cenizal, Project Director, National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families

I would just add that a lot of the local United Way chapters also offer grant writing and some funding opportunities. The one thing that I would discourage is there are a lot of organizations out there that want to sell you lists of foundations and lists of grant opportunities. Don't pay for that stuff. Like Alicia mentioned, grants.gov is a fabulous resource and so is checking out a lot of those local foundations through your library. But I would discourage anyone from getting caught up in having to pay for information that, quite frankly, is available for free.
Question: Do you hold workshops for your families in Spanish and do you train your staff in Spanish as well?

Answer: From Alicia La Hoz, Executive Director, Family Bridges

Yes, certainly we do that. We try to actually match the culture of the community that we're going to with facilitators that tend to be bilingual just because it just makes a lot more sense than using translators and things like that. So our facilitators that are delivering programs to the Latino community are Spanish speaking and bicultural and completely understand. So it's easier for [our facilitators] to adapt the content and speak to all these values that we cover with the curriculum pieces. So that's a huge part of what we do.

From Rodrigo Manjarres, Family Bridges

Yes, I think delivering services in the language of the individuals that are attending is a critical piece. I also think you need to remember that when you're working with the Latino community you need to find individuals who have the ability to adapt the language, because Spanish is the same language in every country. However, there are so many idioms to be aware of that whoever is going to be taking the lead for a community needs to [to be able to] identify “to whom am I addressing this?” Is it more of a Puerto Rican community, a Mexican community, a South American community? Because it'll be much better if you can tap into examples that directly touch their lives. But yes, the training being in the Spanish language is most effective.

Question: You work closely with different denominations church leaders. Does your work involve spiritual guidance?

Answer: From Alicia La Hoz, Executive Director, Family Bridges

Thank you for your question. With our grant based information, we stick to our evidence-based curriculum, which is specific to skills. We're talking about communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution. And when we tend to speak about spirituality, it tends to be in the context of the roles of religion and family in the life of the families, but we're not integrating the practice. Now we do have on staff a pastor that's not funded by grant funds. And in that regard, if a church or community wants something to be integrated they can go through that program component, but that's obviously with private funds and that's independent of the grant funds that we're working with. And obviously there's variability in how that's laid out from organization to organization. So for us a lot of our programs are sponsored with public dollars. We want to be careful of that.
Question: Where can I find the slides from this webinar?

Answer: Visit the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families website at www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org/events-archive to download a copy of the slides, recording, transcript, and Q & A document from today’s webinar.

Question: Who should I contact if I have more questions about this webinar?

Answer: Visit the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families website at www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org or email us at info@HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org.