

LATINO FOCUS GROUP- MARCH 16, 2010

LATINO BUSINESS ASSETS

Diverse Businesses – construction, flooring, food/restaurant and stores, health care, art, landscape, Sheraton (lodging), cleaning, informal, agriculture, child care, teaching

Money and saving creativity

Network; leverage networks; relate people to people; child care– vital link

Willing to open business

Willing to sell and buy

Not credit card users; do not build debt; save instead=keeping the economy going now

Don't have fear – not worried

Know they can get a job again if laid off

CHALLENGES

Petaluma says 'No'

Process to open business – Petaluma requires more information

So---2 separate economies: Informal – number of businesses does not show in data, outnumbers formal (licensed)

Want CA license; want to follow rules; want to get licenses and certification; need to know rules

Conflicting rules between County and City=>Reach out to community

Seemingly inconsistent application of rules:

- Permit – food sales
- Apartment – driver's license
- Police oversight – tax permit
- Finger printing
- Health
- Too many permits and city
- City – too many rules – parking, hours, traffic, food more picky – night time, insurance

Not enough information about process

Language issue – get in the way

Large Latino community in Petaluma: Hispanic services should be county-wide, not just in Santa Rosa.

Day laborer lots of benefits; do a lot of work for Construction + AG makes some people uncomfortable; Wages stolen – should be able to file complaint with police; Petaluma police not understanding; not treat Latinos well; missing outreach relationship

SOLUTIONS

Contract – help open business technical assistance; Services – technical assistance, Mentor

Bring all services together. For instance, County has system – large room, desk for every department, takes you to each department.

Common sense program facilitator: Staff or community member to offer advice to deal with multiple agencies – not bound by rules open to giving advice. Mentors, mentors, mentors

For instance: need explanation for things like why liability insurance

‘Flexible’ demographics=Different way to do business; Want Latino business to be welcome, respect

Need a Flexible system; getting a one-day permit – cumbersome

Understand for their point of view Explanations, why? No saying ‘No’

Learn – don’t understand; need to build trust, Confianza = trust

Need Workshops – insurance, license, taxes, marketing > what the reason for these and rules

Outreach – City pay attention, Latino businesses have money too; can help city with fiscal problems; Latinos have money to make investments in business

Latinos say, ‘Let me work’; They don’t believe in getting things for free – does not work