

# HISPANIC/LATINO COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

Erie County is home to a diverse and vibrant Hispanic/Latino community. Spanish is the most commonly spoken language in Erie County other than English, and many Spanish speakers in Erie County have limited English language proficiency. In 2023, began developing programming for the Hispanic/Latino community including Spanish language Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainings and Spanish language workshops on sexual health. The ECOHE's Hispanic/Latino community programming includes these trainings as well as community engagement activities and is designed to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking communities in Erie County, especially residents who speak Spanish but have limited English proficiency.

Through community engagement with a focus on Hispanic/Latino cultural connection and trainings provided in Spanish, the ECOHE is able to build trust and open lines of communication to secure feedback

from Spanish-speaking community members that aid in key functions of the Office, including analyzing disparities in health, health care, and availability/accessibility to health care services among disadvantaged and marginalized Erie County populations; understanding and connecting factors that contribute to health outcomes; and making recommendations for the improvement of health care delivery and access. The Hispanic/Latino community programming also provides coordinated educational opportunities with the goal of supporting healthy lifestyles among Hispanic and Latino communities, which are often marginalized and underserved—another key function of the ECOHE.

Outcomes of Hispanic/Latino community programming in 2023 include community engagement with an estimated 1,000 people at 16 community events within the Hispanic/Latino and Taino Indigenous communities. A wide range of community education and engagement materials were translated into Spanish, and a community engagement plan for Hispanic/Latino communities was developed. Two ECOHE staff members were certified as Spanish language instructors for both MHFA for adults interacting with other adults (Adult MHFA) and MHFA for adults interacting with youth ages 12-18 (Youth MHFA). Two Spanish Youth MHFA trainings were facilitated in 2023, one with school personnel and another with parents and caregivers.

Feedback regarding ECOHE Hispanic/Latino community programming has been positive. One Spanish Youth MHFA training participant shared, *"I am thankful for this training because, during it, I was able*



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*to reflect on how far I've come. This training gave me the space to talk about my trauma and has given me the tools to better help youth when they're going through a mental health crisis."* Another Spanish Youth MHFA training participant stated, *"I am glad I was able to take this training to teach my kids better ways to deal with anxiety, depression, and other mental health stuff, so they won't have to suffer like I did. More parents need to take this training."*

Next steps for Hispanic/Latino community programming include the continued delivery of Spanish Adult MHFA and Youth MHFA trainings and the finalization and delivery of Spanish language sexual health workshops. The ECOHE also hopes to further explore and assess community resources and barriers to care for Hispanic/Latino residents of Erie County as well as to develop strategies to mitigate barriers to care.

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-Spanish Youth MHFA Participant

"I am glad I was able to take this training to teach my kids better ways to deal with anxiety, depression, and other mental health stuff, so they won't have to suffer like I did. More parents need to take this training."

-Spanish Youth MHFA Participant



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HISPANIC/LATINO COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING**

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