



Hispanic Employment Plan Advisory Council Minutes.

Via Webex

Thursday, March 6, 2025, | 10:00 A.M. – 12 P.M

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am by Council Chair Carlos Charneco

- The Chair expressed gratitude for all attendees and welcomed everyone to the first quarterly meeting of the calendar year.

Chair Carlos Charneco recognized Francisco Alvarado council coordinator to initiate role call:

II. Roll Call—Council Coordinator Francisco Alvarado conducted the roll call.**A. Council Members**

Hispanic Employment Plan Advisory Council			
COUNCIL MEMBERS			
Council Members	Present	Via Webex	Absent
	In person - Chicago		
Charneco, Carlos (Chair)		X	
Muñoz, Jose M.		X	
Guajardo, Ana		X	
Gonzalez, Layla Suleiman (Vice Chair)		X	
Martín-Ocasio, Kenny		X	
Mota, Patricia		X	
Rosales, Giraldo		X	
Sepúlveda, Roberto		X	

Total: 5 Council Members present, 4 were absent, quorum was achieved.

**B. Agency Ex-Officios, Agency Representatives and CMS Staff**

Hispanic Employment Plan Advisory Council					
EX-OFFICIOS					
Ex-Officio Agency	Agency Designee	In person Chicago	In person Springfield	Via Webex	Absent
IL Department of Aging	Robin Tucker			X	
IL Department of Children and Family Services	Jose Lopez			X	
IL Department Commerce and Economic Opportunity	Diana Alfaro			X	
IL Department of Corrections					
IL Department Employment Security	Anna D'Ascenzo			X	
IL Department Healthcare and Family Services	Terri Shawgo			X	
IL Department of Human Services	Amelia Gavina			X	
IL Department of Human Rights	Martin Duncan				X
IL Department of Public Health					
IL Department of Transportation	Aisha Price			X	



Attendance Roster: Agency Representatives

Agency	Representative	In person Chicago	In person Springfield	Via Webex	Absent
IL Department of Central Management Services	Aundra Williams Sarah Kerley Bobby Tucker Jill Kilroy Arthur Sutton Patricia Young John Chepulis Patricia Santoyo-Marin Kevin Young Chris Bond			X X X X X X	 X X X X
IL Department of Innovation and Technology	Hannah Rabideau Aisha price Jason Thoron			X X	
IL Department of Juvenile Justice	Jaime Vasquez Jim Crowley			X X	
IL Department of Human Services	Amelia Gavina Krista Culbertson Daniel Kuznetshy Ramon Ortiz			X X	 X X



IL Department DCEO	Christopher Gasperin Diana Alfaro Becky Lucker			X X	
Illinois Department of Natural Resources	Jose Burgos			X	
Illinois Department of Agriculture	Heather Boise				X
Illinois Department of Revenue	Shelby Kaiser				X
IL Department of Children and Family Services	Jose Lopez Lorena Hernandez			X X	
Illinois Department of Transportation Illinois department on aging	Pamela Martinez Ruiz			X	
IAHSE				X	
Illinois State Police	Mary Dowdy Sgt. Sherise Gipson			X	X
Illinois Department of Corrections	Kelly Firebaugh			X	
Illinois Department of Healthcare Family Services	Terri Shawgo				X



Illinois Environmental Protection Agency	James Wilcockson			X	
Illinois Lottery	Peter Roman			X	
Illinois Department of Employment Security	Anna D' Ascenzo			X	
Illinois Gaming Board	Dovie Shelby			X	
Illinois Department of Public Health	Ericka Williams			X	
GOV	Alici McNeal Denise Maldonado			X	X

- Francisco conducted the roll call to ensure quorum.
- Carlos R. Charneco confirmed that quorum was met for the meeting, as acknowledged by Francisco. **Quorum** was confirmed, and the meeting proceeded.

All ex-officious and agency representatives were asked to sign in on the chat for the purpose of attendance.

Since quorum was reached, the first order of business was to review the minutes of the previous Council meeting held 12-05-2024.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 09-05-2024 were approved without amendments.

Giraldo Rosales motioned to accept the minutes, and Patricia Mota seconded the motion.

No further questions or discussions regarding the minutes.

Vote: All present voted in favor. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Old Business

Development of Pipeline committee Headed by Vice Chair



Francisco provided an update on the pipeline discussions. The Vice-Chair has taken the lead in developing a pipeline committee.

Two meetings have been scheduled for March:

March 17th, 2025

March 31st, 2025

The committee will continue to work on developing a concept, and updates will be provided to the Council as the discussions progress

CMS Diversity & Inclusion Staffing Updates – CMS D&I Deputy Director, Patricia Santoyo-Marin:

Provided an update on new positions within the Diversity and Inclusion portfolio.

New Staff: Two new team members have started as of Monday.

Latinx Statewide Manager for Diversity and Inclusion: Interviews are scheduled for the upcoming week, on Tuesday.

Applicant Pool for New Positions:

The team received over 100 applicants for the open position, and several modes of communication were established to assist applicants in learning more about the role.

Bilingual Needs and Bilingual Pay Statewide Manager Position:

This position was temporarily paused due to collaboration with the Office of New Americans. The Governor's Office has introduced a new tiered model for language access requirements.

CMS, along with the Department of Human Rights and the Department of Human Services, is working on ensuring that CMS's contributions to these requirements are met.

The position will be a Senior Public Service Administrator level. The job description is being finalized, and it is expected to be submitted to HR by Friday for posting.



Office Administrator Level 2 Position:

This position will assist the team with logistical tasks, outreach payments, and sponsorships.

It will be a bargaining unit position, and the role will also be designated as a Spanish-speaking coded position.

New Team Members Introduced:

1. **Roxanne Lavallie, Native American Diversity and Inclusion Manager:**
Roxanne joined CMS from another agency and has over a decade of experience in civil rights, human resources, affirmative employment plans, community mentoring and Advocacy.
2. **Naomi Sacedol, Asian American Community Program Manager:**
Naomi has over ten years of experience advocating for Asian American communities, including legislative campaigns and organizing Asian American Action Day in Springfield. She holds a master's in social work and has worked with various organizations focused on immigrant rights and empowerment.

Discussion and Questions

Statewide Manager's Position for Bilingual Needs:

A question was raised about the posting location for the bilingual manager position. It was confirmed that the position will be posted in Chicago at 555 West Monroe but will also involve some travel to Springfield.

Veterans Outreach Program Update (Presented by Chris Bond)

Introduction:

Chris Bond provided an update on the Veterans Outreach Program, which aims to enhance veteran employment within the state of Illinois.

The program, originating from Public Act 86-1324, gives veterans preference in state employment applications.

Program Growth and Statistics:

Veterans' employment in Illinois has increased from 9% to 11% due to the program's efforts.



The program is working to expand outreach and improve its processes to accommodate the increasing number of veterans seeking employment with the state.

Veteran Demographics in Illinois:

Illinois has approximately 460,000 veterans.

The program aims to increase veteran outreach and expand staff to better process veteran applications.

Latino Veterans Demographics

Population: Approximately 32,000 to 35,000 Latino veterans in Illinois, comprising around 7% of the total veteran population.

Data Limitations: The current system does not allow for detailed breakdowns of Latino veterans specifically, due to outdated infrastructure. Efforts are underway to upgrade the system for better demographic tracking.

Outreach Process

Soft Handoff Model: New veterans coming off active duty are introduced to the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA), where they receive a letter about available benefits. Veterans then proceed to employment services for job matching.

Veterans' Initial Steps:

- First stop: IDVA to establish veterans' preferences.

Veterans then move to Employment Security to set up job profiles.

Partnerships: Collaborations with veteran organizations such as the VFW, American Legion, Illinois National Guard, and local reserve units help ensure robust outreach.

Targeted Outreach Areas: Particularly focused around Chicago and surrounding counties.

Veterans Employment Services



Increase in Veteran Outreach Events: Career service teams are attending more events (up 200% year-over-year) to engage with veterans.

Service Offerings: Comprehensive support for veterans, including career counseling, resume assistance, and profile establishment, leading to increased veteran employment in Illinois.

Eligibility for Preference Points

Veteran Status: To receive employment preference, a veteran must have an honorable discharge or be a member of the Illinois National Guard or Reserves.

Documentation: Veterans must submit certified documentation, either through a county clerk's office or the IDVA Record Center.

Recent Improvements and New Initiatives

Public Self-Submit Portal: Veterans can now submit their documentation directly via a portal on the Illinois government website. This helps streamline the process for establishing preference points.

Processing Improvements: The state now processes veteran applications more efficiently. Over the past year, 2,000 new veterans have been processed for preference points, significantly boosting Illinois veteran employment to 11%—well above the national average.

Future Goals and Plans

Expansion of Outreach: With additional staffing expected, efforts will expand to engage more veterans through external organizations and job fairs.

Workforce Expansion: The addition of an HR representative is aimed at easing the processing workload.

Acknowledgments and Feedback

Council Member Feedback: Council members expressed interest in measuring outreach to Latino veterans specifically. A request was made for information on how many of the 2,000 new veterans processed are Latino or Hispanic.

Questions Raised:



Department of Government Efficiency: Concern was raised about potential dismissals or layoffs, especially from federal employment. Chris acknowledged a recent uptick in veterans affected by federal cuts, particularly following announcements of significant cuts to the VA. The outreach program is preparing to handle an increase in demand due to these developments.

Questions and Discussions

Giraldo Rosales inquired about the impact of Department of Government Efficiency (DOJ) on Illinois' veteran recruitment efforts. Chris confirmed that there was a noticeable increase in veterans reaching out following federal layoffs, with some proactive measures being taken to assist them.

Ana Guajardo raised concerns about the difficulty of accessing veteran benefits and asked for better communication and outreach to Latino veterans, particularly regarding the stigma around using government services.

Ana Guajardo emphasized the importance of educating veterans about the benefits available to them, particularly for Latino veterans who may not be aware of all available resources.

IV. CMS – Chief Administrative Officer Sarah Kerley

Presenter: Sarah Kerley

Recruitment and Retention Updates:

Sarah confirmed that both Chris's team and the programs under recruitment and retention are included in the same division.

Career services and BOP recruitment teams are focused on onsite recruitment events, with a particular emphasis on collaboration with community partners and council members.

Sarah encouraged reaching out to provide information about any events for potential recruitment opportunities. She noted that staffing availability might limit participation for this weekend, but ongoing efforts will continue.

Diversity and Inclusion Efforts:



Sarah addressed questions regarding the impact of federal actions on the diversity and inclusion efforts in Illinois. She reassured the group that Illinois' commitment to diversity and inclusion remains unchanged. The necessary steps have been taken to protect state funding for these initiatives.

She emphasized that the state continues to prioritize diversity and inclusion in recruitment to ensure better decision-making through diverse perspectives and better representation of the communities served.

Job Fair and Recruitment Initiatives:

Sarah provided updates on two upcoming statewide job fairs:

- **March 11, 2025** – Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE)
- **March 20, 2025** – Malcolm X College, located in the Med District

These events will focus on recruiting professionals, particularly for mid-to-upper-level management positions.

Sarah mentioned that the events are targeting former federal employees, soon-to-be-former federal employees, and public sector employees.

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) is working in partnership to help attract recently laid-off individuals, especially in healthcare sectors.

There was a light-hearted social media exchange between the state of Illinois and New York on Twitter, highlighting recruitment efforts.

Veteran-Specific Services:

Sarah discussed the ongoing efforts to align services for veterans in collaboration with IDES, including targeted programs for veterans to ensure they have a streamlined process to access necessary resources.

Sarah expressed appreciation for the feedback received and highlighted a positive outlook for recruitment efforts in the upcoming quarter.

She encouraged attendees to provide any additional feedback or questions.

1Hispanic Employment Plan Report:

Francisco presented an overview of the 2024 Annual Report, focusing on key highlights.



Workforce Diversity:

The Hispanic workforce in state employment increased to 7.7% in 2024.

A total of 3,621 Hispanic individuals are now employed across various state agencies.

Key Initiatives:

The unit developed partnerships with 12 state agencies and Hispanic-serving institutions.

33 Hispanic interns were placed in 49 agencies, facilitating community engagement and workforce development.

14 state agencies established dedicated recruiters from Hispanic cultural backgrounds, with a focus on bilingual capacity.

6 agencies appointed leadership roles to support the hiring of multicultural and bilingual individuals.

Agency Responsibility and Goal Setting:

In 2024, state agencies began setting their own workforce diversity goals, with support from the council and CMS. These goals are aimed at addressing community needs, particularly for Hispanic youth.

Internship Programs:

The internship program identified 33 Hispanic interns out of 384 total interns across the state.

CMS's Diversity and Inclusion (DNI) unit led efforts to target diverse communities, promoting partnerships and direct communication with organizations.

Council Recommendations:

The council made 15 recommendations to improve the hiring of Latinos within state government. These recommendations were included in the report, and a QR code was provided for access to the full details.

A link to the annual report will be shared for further review by the council members.

Questions & Discussion:



Carlos R. Charneco opened the floor for questions from the council members.

Kenny Martin-Ocasio Council member asked if Francisco could revisit slide, number 8 and requested clarification on the percentages and goals pertaining to the number of Latinos in state government versus the population and if the goal was a target and how the goals are established.

New Business/

Chair Carlos Charneco introduced and addressed the following items.

Latino Unity Day:

Latino Unity Day is scheduled for May 7th and 8th. The chair deferred to **Layla Suleiman Gonzalez (Vice Chair)** regarding further details on this initiative.

The importance of not treating current Latino demographics as the ceiling but rather as the floor was emphasized.

The proposal was made to continue discussions and set clear goals for what **CMS** can do to support Latino Unity Day efforts.

b. Scheduling Meetings with State Agencies:

Key Points:

Council members were encouraged to identify specific state agencies they wish to meet with based on report findings.

Francisco will be informed about the agencies selected by the council members for potential meetings.

Council members were invited to volunteer for meetings with state agencies during the year, as was done in previous years.

Filling Council Vacancies: Carlos Charneco



Key Points:

The council discussed the ongoing process of filling council vacancies, including recent outreach to civic leaders and submitting information to the governor's office.

While follow-up efforts have been made, the governor's office has not yet responded.

The chair expressed concern over potential delays due to ongoing budget hearings and other priorities at the governor's office.

Follow-up: A conversation with **Sarah** will be scheduled to confirm if someone else could assist with the process or if there are updates from the governor's office.

VI. Public Comments

Chair Charneco invited public comments. Several members of the public expressed their appreciation for the Council's efforts to improve diversity and representation in state hiring practices.

VII. Adjournment of Meeting

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at **11:55 AM**, with the next meeting scheduled for **May 15, 2025**.

Motion to Adjourn:

Council Member Rosales motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council Member Munoz. There was no opposition, and Chair Charneco adjourned the meeting.