



Hispanic EPAC Council FY26 Q4 Meeting Minutes

Date: May 15, 2025

Time: 10:02 AM

Chair: Carlos Charneco

Roll Call—Chair Carlos Charneco recognized Francisco Alvarado EPAC coordinator to conduct the roll call.

A. Council Members

Hispanic Employment Plan Advisory Council			
COUNCIL MEMBERS			
Council Members	In person Chicago	In person Springfield	Via Webex
Chair Carlos Charneco, Carlos			X
Vice Chair Dr. Layla Suleiman Gonzalez			X
Ana Guajardo			X
Kenny Martín-Ocasio			X
Patricia Mota			
Jose Muñoz			X
Giraldo Rosales			X
Roberto Sepúlveda			X
X - Denotes a member's attendance, a blank represents a member's absence			

Total: 7 Council Members present, 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
IL Department of Aging	Robin Tucker			
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				
IL Department of Human Services	Amelia Gavina			X
IL Department of Human Rights	Martin Duncan			
IL Department of Public Health				
IL Department of Transportation	Adam Graham			X
	Aisha Price			
X - Denotes a member's attendance, a blank represents a member's absence				

ATTENDANCE ROSTER: Agency Representatives

Agency	Representative	In person Chicago	In person Springfield	Via Webex
IL Department of Central Management Services	Sarah Kerley			X
IL Department of Innovation and Technology	Vickie Simpson			X
IL Department of Juvenile Justice	Jim Crowley			X
IL Department of Human Services	Amelia Gavina			X
IL Department DCEO	Diana Alfaro			X
Illinois Department of Natural Resources	Eric Shirley			X
Illinois Department of Agriculture	Heather Humphrey			X
Illinois Department of Revenue	Shelby Kaiser			X
IL Department of Children and Family Services	Jose Lopez			X
Illinois Department of Transportation				
Illinois State Police	Mary Dowdy			X



Illinois Department of Corrections	Marian McCann			X
Illinois Department of Healthcare Family Services	Jenny Aguirre			
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency	Pam Smith			
Illinois Lottery	Peter Roman			
Illinois Department of Employment Security	Anna D'Ascenzo			X
Illinois Gaming Board	Dovie Shelby			X
Illinois Department of Public Health	Ericka Williams			X
	Lubia Nunez			X
GOV	Alicia McNeal			X
	Denise Maldonado			
X - Denotes a member's attendance, a blank represents a member's absence				

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM by Council Chair **Carlos Charneco**.

Chair Charneco recognized Council Coordinator **Francisco Alvarado** to initiate roll call. Coordinator Alvarado conducted the roll call of Council members. All ex-officio and agency representatives were asked to sign in via the chat for attendance purposes.

A quorum was reached during the meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes

As quorum was confirmed, the first order of business was to review the minutes from the previous Council meeting held on **March 6, 2025**.

Chair **Carlos Charneco** and Council members reviewed the minutes and requested the following corrections:

- Adjournment should have referenced **May 15**, not March 6.
- **Staff Updates: Adam Graham** and **Terry Shawgo** are no longer with the state.
- **Pamela Martinez** clarified as the representative for the **Department on Aging**.



A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes with the above corrections.
The motion carried unanimously.

III. Old Business

Approval of December 5, 2024, Minutes

- Minutes were previously approved.

Latino Unity Day Update *(Presented by Chair Carlos Charneco)*

- Held on **May 8, 2025**, with participation from **16–17 state agencies**.
 - Over **800 attendees**.
 - The **May 7** panel focused on **language equity and employment**.
 - Chair Charneco acknowledged the organizers for a successful event.
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IV. New Business

Ex-Officio Agency Representative Updates *(Presented by Chair Carlos Charneco)*

- **Illinois Department of Corrections:** **Eddie Escamilla** attended; **Viviana Hernandez** to assume the role.
- **Illinois Department of Transportation and Healthcare and Family Services** to assign new representatives.
- Chair Charneco requested updated representative information from all agencies.

Council Meetings and Engagement *(Presented by Chair Carlos Charneco)*

- The Council discussed increasing meeting frequency from quarterly to **five times per year**.
- Chair Charneco encouraged ongoing engagement between agencies and the Council.

Agency Strategy and Ad Hoc Committees *(Presented by Chair Carlos Charneco)*

- Proposal to form two ad hoc committees for survey planning:
 - *Hispanic Employment Plan Committee*
 - *Bilingual Needs & Pay Survey Committee*
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- Suggested participants include **Department of Employment Security, Department of Human Services**, and possibly the **Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity**.
- **Goal:** Evaluate past surveys and improve the upcoming fall survey cycle.

Agency Presentations *(Presented by Chair Carlos Charneco)*

- Agencies with less than **10% Latino staff** were asked to present strategies.
- Example cited: **Department of Revenue (~4%)**.

Standardized Questions, Surveys, and Follow Up *(Presented by Chair Carlos Charneco)*

- Chair Charneco to circulate a standardized question template.
- The Council discussed improving specificity in future surveys.
- The Council discussed including Veterans in the questions so we may identify them.
- The Council also mentioned the understanding of how goals are identified and determined.

Data Sources Reviewed *(Presented by Chair Carlos Charneco)*

- Hispanic Employment Plan
- Bilingual Pay Report
- Agency Workforce and Affirmative Action Reports

V. Pipeline Update *(Presented by Vice Chair Dr. Layla Suleiman Gonzalez)*

- Dr. Suleiman Gonzalez provided an update and will be scheduling follow-up meetings.
- The Council discussed ongoing efforts with identifying bottlenecks and how to make the outreach more effective including professional organizations; the topic was **tabled for the next meeting**.

VI. CMS Updates

Staffing Announcements *(Presented by Council Coordinator Francisco Alvarado)*

- **Christopher Naranjo** introduced as Statewide Manager of the Hispanic Employment Plan and Council.



- **Gloria Bates** introduced as Statewide Manager of the African American Employment Plan Council.

Latino Workforce Representation *(Presented by Sarah Kerley, Chief Administrative Officer, CMS)*

- **Total State Workforce (March 2025):** 55,340
- **Including seasonal employees:** ~58,000
- **Estimated Latino representation:** ~8–9%

Updated Latino Employee Count *(Presented by Chief Administrative Officer Kerley)*

- **Previous count:** ~3,600
- **Current (including seasonal):** 4,487
- Seasonal/permanent breakdown pending.

Applicant Data *(Presented by Chief Administrative Officer Kerley)*

- **10.91%** of 2024 applicants identified as Hispanic/Latinx.
- Approximately **14,000 offers extended** out of ~137,000 applicants.
- Estimated **7,000 new employees** (net growth: 5,000).
- More clarity needed on **external Latino hires**.

Quarterly Hiring Data & Reporting *(Presented by Chief Administrative Officer Kerley)*

- Agencies were asked to submit data via chat.
- CMS and EPAC will create a shared reporting process.
- Retention concerns discussed (e.g., **70% loss rate at Juvenile Justice**).

Demographic Reporting Limitations *(Presented by Chief Administrative Officer Kerley)*

- **70** selected “Two or More Races”; **86** selected “Prefer Not to Disclose”.
- Chair Charneco emphasized these gaps hinder effective analysis.

Council Vacancies & Governor’s Office Follow-up *(Presented by Chief Administrative Officer Kerley)*

- Several Council vacancies were noted.
- Follow-up with the Governor’s Office is expected before the next meeting.

Career Counseling & Latino Tracking *(Presented by Chief Administrative Officer Kerley)*



- Data tracking remains inconsistent across agencies and does not have a central tracking tool.
 - **CMS Referral Email:** CMS.Referral@illinois.gov
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VII. Action Items *(Presented by Chair Carlos Charneco)*

- Chair Charneco to send out key questions and a data collection outline.
 - Ad hoc committees to be organized.
 - Members to review agency data and provide survey feedback.
 - Agencies encouraged to use workforce data in strategic planning.
 - Urged agencies to move beyond **minimum compliance** in DEI efforts.
 - Requested a **wage equity and retention analysis/comparison**.
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VIII. Illinois State Police Hiring Update *(Presented by Illinois State Police Representative Mary Dowdy)*

- **Civilian Hires (Q3): 13; 1 Hispanic/Latino**
 - **Sworn Officers: 32; 4 Hispanic/Latino**
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IX. Council Discussion Highlights

Council Member Ana Guajardo

- Requested standardized agency questions.

Council Member Kenny Martin-Ocasio

- Requested what the other Employment Plan Advisory Councils are asking when discussing with the agencies and departments across the state.

Council Member Jose Muñoz

- Emphasized the importance of **long-term workforce planning for specific departments and agencies**.
 - Suggested identifying agency units with only **one Spanish-speaking staff member**.
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X. Public Comments

Chair **Carlos Charneco** opened the floor for public comments.

Several members of the public expressed appreciation for the Council's ongoing efforts to improve **diversity and representation** in state hiring practices.

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at **11:51 AM**.
The next meeting is scheduled for **July 2025**.

Motion to Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion carried, and the meeting was officially adjourned