



Achieving Authentic Nonprofit Board Diversity

The Challenge - America's nonprofit leadership does not reflect the nation's rich ethnic diversity. In 2017, a BoardSource study found that Latinos made up barely 5% of board members at the 1,759 U.S. nonprofits surveyed. Twenty-seven percent of these boards were all White—a disappointing *increase* from 25% in 2015. The report summarized, *"Boards are no more diverse than they were two years ago and current recruitment priorities indicate this is unlikely to change."* Dozens of similar studies have found that governing boards in every major sector of the nonprofit industry fall short of Latino demographic representation. Surveys of nonprofit leaders consistently cite several factors contributing to this challenge: A lack of qualified Latino board candidates (*i.e.*, no "pipeline"); doubts that Latinos can meet board member annual giving expectations; and, difficulty in retaining the few Latinos who are elected to boards.

Importance of Nonprofit Board Diversity: There is overwhelming empirical evidence that ethnically diverse nonprofit boards catalyze direct and sustained positive outcomes in a wide range of programming, operational, and institutional goals. Socially diverse groups are more innovative and resourceful than homogeneous groups; people with different backgrounds bring new information and are less likely to "rubber-stamp" suboptimal management strategies and program designs. Latino board members can provide access to new donor pools, brimming with prospects who have enjoyed unprecedented growth in household income and personal wealth. Private foundations and donors give greater weight to governing board diversity as a criteria in philanthropic decisions. Latino board members can help nonprofits recruit diverse staff and volunteers, develop culturally authentic programs, and build new audiences—all critical to staying relevant and competitive in an ever-evolving market. Nonprofits can realize mission integrity by electing Latino board members—intentionally promoting Latino leadership development and strengthening the Latino community.

Mission & Organization Background: The mission of Latinos LEAD (Latinos for Leadership Excellence And Diversity) is to prepare and recruit Latino leaders for nonprofit governing board service. Pursuing this mission advances Latino professional and community development, improves charitable sector outcomes, and contributes to a better quality of life for all Americans.

Latinos LEAD is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in California in 2017. The Latinos LEAD concept was developed by founder and executive director Patrick Salazar, who brings more than 30 years of senior nonprofit management and consulting experience. The Latinos LEAD theory of change and program model designs are grounded in extensive research and field experience. Ongoing strategic planning and program evaluation sustain and improve delivery of services to nonprofit partners. Latinos LEAD shares findings from its work to promote replication of similar efforts. Funding for Latinos LEAD services and program development is provided by foundation grants and program service fees. Recent major grants have been awarded by the Ford Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Orange County Community Foundation (anonymous donor-advised fund).

Operating Principles:

- There is a deep talent pool of highly qualified Latinos who are willing and able to serve on nonprofit boards; we help the nonprofit industry tap into this pipeline.
- Increasing Latino representation on nonprofit boards will strengthen the charitable sector, advance Latino professional development, and fortify Latino community leadership.
- Our program and business models are evidence-based: Studies consistently show that nonprofit programs have greater impact when a nonprofit board authentically reflects its target population and catchment service area.
- Latinos can drive meaningful social justice by leveraging their nonprofit leadership experience to serve in public office, or on advisory boards and commissions.

Business Model: Latinos LEAD collaborates with nonprofit boards and senior staff to provide state-of-the-art governing board recruiting and retention services, customized for the organization's mission and programs. Contract fee revenue covers candidate recruiting costs and governing board inclusion training, while foundation grants and donor gifts support Latino community and candidate engagement, governance training and leadership development, program evaluation, and nonprofit industry outreach.

Programming Summary: Latinos LEAD programs are designed to achieve three crucial and interrelated outcomes: 1) Recruit highly-qualified Latino board members; 2) Foster Latino board member retention by helping nonprofits develop customized Inclusion Blueprint; and, 3) Provide nonprofit governance training and leadership development.

- **Board Member Recruiting: *Pathways to LEAD*** deploys state-of-the-art executive recruiting techniques to bring Latino talent to the nonprofit boardroom. Candidates for board vacancies apply directly, are nominated by third-parties, or are identified through vigorous referral source outreach. Latinos LEAD taps into its robust database of candidate profiles to begin the search, following leads and seeking the optimum alignment between the candidate's competencies and the priorities of the nonprofit organization. Latinos LEAD screens and interviews promising candidates, then offers the selection committee a slate of strong nominees.
- **Promoting Inclusion: *LEAD with Intent-Inclusion Blueprint*** directly engages nonprofit leadership teams (CEO and board) to develop a stronger awareness and understanding of the organization's opportunities to recruit Latinos, and identifies practices that either hinder or promote new board member retention. An Inclusion Map is developed to portray how the organization is positioned regarding its access to, credibility with, and readiness to recruit and retain Latino professionals. The Inclusion Map lays the foundation for the Inclusion Blueprint workshop, a three-hour virtual session during which Latinos LEAD guides the nonprofit's leadership team to achieve three essential outcomes: 1) Draft a new (or, review the current) Inclusion Statement; 2) Set specific goals and timelines for recruiting Latino board members; and, 3) Assign responsibility and accountability for achieving those goals.
- **Leadership Development: *Ready to LEAD*** prepares Latino professionals for success as nonprofit board members. This seminar (available as a webinar in Spring 2021), provides instruction in fundamental nonprofit governance. Topics include: Board Member Roles & Responsibilities; Fundraising; Boardroom/Executive Team Dynamics; and, Nonprofit Finance & Accounting. Ready to LEAD's curriculum can be customized to emphasize specific fields, such as health/human services, arts and culture, climate/conservation, and education.

Current Initiatives:

LOBO (Latino Online Board Opportunities): LOBO is a free online service designed to assist nonprofit organizations with recruiting Latino professionals for governing board positions. Latinos LEAD conducts preliminary interviews of applicants, then facilitates an introduction of qualified candidates to the nonprofit organization.

DELI (Diversity in Environmental Leadership Initiative): DELI offers free virtual workshops for leadership teams at selected California-based climate and conservation nonprofit organizations. Inclusion Blueprint workshops are designed to drive stronger board inclusion practices and to achieve specific Latino governing board recruit goals. Organizations that successfully complete the workshops are eligible for reduced fee governing board member recruiting services.

Learn More

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