



# Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

## *Latino Population 2006*

### **Learning for Life**

---

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

### ***The Problem***

- Georgia has the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest growing Latino population in the U.S. Georgia's Latino population increased by 300% between 1990 and 2000. The projected Georgia Latino population increase between 2000 and 2004 was 37.5% (Georgia County Guide 2005).
- Georgia is the state with the 11<sup>th</sup> largest Latino population in the U.S. (National Council of La Raza)
- Latinos are the largest minority in the country. According to the 2000 US Census, the Latino population (12.5% of the total population) exceeded the African American population (12.3% of the total population) in the United States.
- The estimated Latino population in Georgia was 598,322 in 2004. This is 6.8% of the total population in Georgia (Georgia County Guide 2005).
- "Latinos represent an increasing share of workers and taxpayers, yet they are overwhelmingly vulnerable to economic downturns and experience high poverty rates, especially among working families with children" (National Council of La Raza).
- According to the Georgia Diabetes Advisory Council, Latinos have the second highest rate (6.9%) of diabetes prevalence.
- Research studies conducted by UGA faculty have found that housing and transportation are the largest issues facing the new immigrants to the state.
- The language barrier, health care, and education are additional issues impacting the Latino population and their ability to cope with Georgia's cultural, legal, and economic norms.

### ***Research-based Solutions***

- Recent immigrants benefit from educational programs that help them adjust to a new way of life. Research-based programs in extension provide information essential to accessing housing, understanding nutrition and health care, addressing childcare needs, and learning basic financial skills needed to avoid financial scams and unscrupulous overcharging.

### ***Extension's Role***

- Family and Consumer Sciences agents are the leading source of reliable, research-based consumer education and information in the state. Many programs are currently being translated into Spanish to address the needs of the growing Latino population in Georgia.
- Several Extension Agents are learning Spanish and studying Hispanic culture to better serve the needs of the growing Latino population.
- Spanish speaking bilingual educators were recruited to reach the growing Latino population.

### ***Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem***

- Family and Consumer Sciences Extension employed 13 Spanish-speaking extension field staff to serve the needs of the growing Latino population in Georgia in 2006.
- Extension programs reached over 9,000 Latinos.
- Various educational programs and Extension publications such as water quality protection, child care, and nutrition were delivered in Spanish.

## ***Impact on Georgians***

- All of the Latinos who participated in the First time Home Buyer Education program in Colquitt County stated that the training was very helpful in providing them with knowledge about home buying. Over three quarters of the participants planned to use the knowledge they learned when buying their first house. After the program, for example, 93% of the participants indicated that they will plan for affordable housing expenditures in their current budget; 77% indicated that they will plan to compare all the available mortgage options before making a commitment for the loan; and 86% will plan to make their monthly mortgage payments on time.
- The comparison of pre and post-test results indicates that Latinos who participated in the foodservice food safety courses significantly improved their safe food handling knowledge. Of the 58 participants, over 82% scored higher on post-test than on pre-test. Over half of the participants indicated a desire to follow recommended food safety practices. For example, 94% plan to wash their hands with hot running water and soap for at least 20 seconds after handling raw meats, poultry, and fish; 94% plan to sanitize their cutting board with chlorine bleach in water – especially after cutting raw meat, poultry, or fish; and 95% plan to check the temperatures of foods on hot and cold buffets or serving lines at least every two hours.
- Of the Latinos that participated in the foods and nutrition program, *Stretch Your Food Dollars*, in Colquitt County, over half planned to apply learned recommended food purchasing habits. For example, 60% planned to save money at the supermarket by making a shopping list; 64% planned to compare unit prices to identify the best buys; and 58% planned to avoid grocery shopping when hungry. Overall, 79% of the participants found the program helpful.
- Comparison of pre and post-evaluations show that all of Latinos who participated in radon education programs significantly improved their knowledge. Most of the participants in the program planned to apply healthy indoor air quality practices. For example, 88% plan to tell their friends and family about radon gas and its health effects; 88% plan to test their home for radon gas; and 83% plan to seal radon entry points in their homes and will contact a certified radon mitigator if elevated radon levels are found.

## ***Contacts***

Gail M. Hanula, EdS, RD, LD, EFNEP/FNP Coordinator, ghanula@uga.edu,  
Sharon M.S. Gibson, CYFAR Coordinator, smsgibs@uga.edu,  
Dr. Jorge Horacio Atilas, Associate Dean for Extension & Outreach and Associate Professor,  
jhatilas@uga.edu, (706)542-8860,  
College of Family and Consumer Sciences or your local Cooperative Extension Service office

---

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State University,  
The U.S. Department of Agriculture and Counties of the State Cooperating. The Cooperative Extension Service offers educational programs,  
assistance, and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability.  
*The University of Georgia is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.*