

# 2010

## *iSin Ganas No Ganas!*

Civic Engagement Team Project  
Hispanic Austin Leadership



### **Project Members:**

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Lizette Montiel, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Luis Rodriguez, Boy Scouts of America  
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Greater Austin Hispanic  
Chamber of Commerce  
*Expanding Business Culture*

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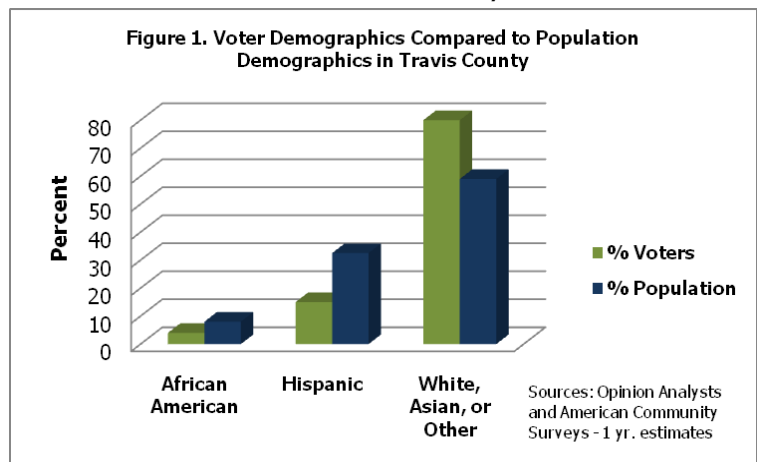
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# Executive Summary

Texas's Hispanic population is the second largest in the nation and is dramatically transforming the composition of Texas, including our local Austin community. With nearly 8.4 million Hispanics residing in Texas as of 2008, and 3.6 million (or 20 percent of all U.S. Hispanics) eligible to vote, civically engaging the increasingly growing and historically disengaged Hispanic population is critical in order to maintain sustainability.<sup>1</sup>

Locally, 32.5 percent (316,643) of Travis County's population is Hispanic. Despite the diverse make-up of this large population, civic engagement remains low and representation in the voting booths is disproportionate compared to the population (Figure 1).



Although civic participation has a variety of meanings and does not

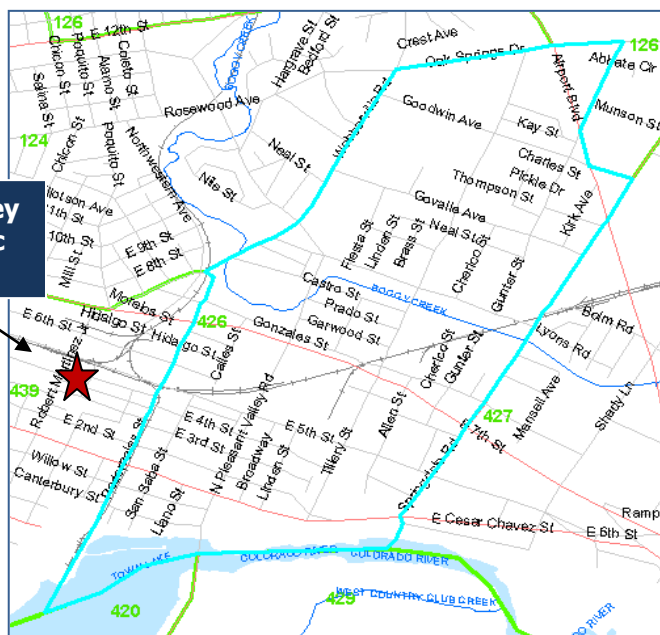
only encompass voting, participation at the polls has a direct correlation to engagement of all kinds. According to the Nonprofit Voter Engagement Network, people who do not vote are less likely to volunteer, contact their elected officials or participate in public life.

The Austin's Hispanic Quality of Life Initiative, *Opportunity for Prosperity* report provides the following finding regarding our local community:

*Potential emergence of two communities: one fully integrated and engaged, and the other isolated, existing within a cultural bubble--and this sub-community is decidedly disadvantaged.*

Figure 2.

**Cristo Rey Catholic Church**



The Hispanic Austin Leadership Civic Engagement Team targeted the community service project on the "isolated" sub-community by identifying a highly Hispanic concentrated precinct with low voter turnout. Travis County precinct 426 in the heart of the east Austin community was isolated as one with only 6.1 percent (or 119 of 1,947) of registered Hispanic voters voting in the May 2009 city elections.<sup>2</sup> In an effort to increase awareness of the importance of being actively engaged in ones community, the team partnered with Reverend Jayme

Mathias and Cristo Rey Catholic Church to connect local leaders with the vast number of Hispanic members of the congregation (Figure 2). The team identified local community leaders such as Austin Mayor Pro Tem Mike Martinez, Austin Community College Board of Trustee Raul Alvarez, and Pio Renteria who is a neighborhood leader and civil rights activist, to attend three church meetings with 60-100 members of the congregation at each. Surveys developed by the team were distributed to meeting attendees in an effort to help Father Mathias and the church leadership why the members of the congregation, citizens of Precinct 426 did not participate civically outside of church. The goal of this part of the project was to:

- ✓ Familiarize the community with a variety of Austin Hispanic leaders in an effort to remove social misconceptions or existing barriers of communication;
- ✓ Educate the community of the benefits of volunteering outside of church, being involved in their children's education, or encouraging their children and families to be more civically involved throughout their lifetime;
- ✓ Gather data on the reasons for disengagement in the community for church to utilize in future projects aimed to motivate civic participation;
- ✓ Explore what voting means to them and their families; and
- ✓ Provide resources and information on what assistance local leaders may provide.

*26.5% of adults  
volunteered in  
Austin in 2008.*

*Source: Volunteering in America*

In addition to connecting local leaders to members of the congregation, the team attended four masses (approximately 500 attendees) prior to the Primary elections on March 2 to emphasize the team motto, *Sin Ganas No Ganas* and empower members to vote. Information on Precinct 426 polling locations and other resources were given to churchgoers to equip them in their decision making.

In order to drive sustainability and increase the likelihood of prosperity in the Austin community, Hispanics must begin to engage in civic opportunities and contribute locally. The massive and continuous growth in the Hispanic community is significant and with growth comes added responsibility.

# Project Details

*54.8% of Austin volunteers chose educational or religious endeavors.*

*Source: Volunteering in America*

## Team Member Roles and Responsibilities

Team members shared responsibilities equally and collaborated on all efforts. Team synergy was high between members throughout the entire planning and implementation process. Each team member brought their professional and creative skills to the table and contributed effectively toward the final project.

Team Members	Role	Responsibilities
<b>Patty Fougerat</b>	Project Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Kept team on task</li><li>Provided direction through organization of team meetings</li><li>Researched data</li><li>Organized meetings with specific community advisors</li><li>Made announcements at bilingual masses</li><li>Secured community leader for church meeting</li></ul>
<b>Lizette Montiel</b>	Marketing/Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Developed surveys with team input</li><li>Organized and prepared project binder</li><li>Served as Spanish speaking resource for church announcements and interaction with community</li><li>Researched data</li><li>Organized meetings with specific community advisors</li><li>Secured community leader for church meeting</li></ul>
<b>Luis Rodriguez</b>	Research/At Large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Researched data</li><li>Organized meetings with Rev. Mathias and secured church involvement</li><li>Served as Spanish speaking resource for church announcements and interaction with community</li><li>Managed survey data collected</li></ul>
<b>Edmundo Salazar</b>	Finance Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Kept track of team budget</li><li>Made all purchases</li><li>Researched data</li><li>Served as Spanish speaking resource for church announcements and interaction with community</li><li>Translated team binder and surveys to Spanish</li><li>Secured community leader for church meeting</li></ul>

## Schedule and Events

### September 2009 – January 2010

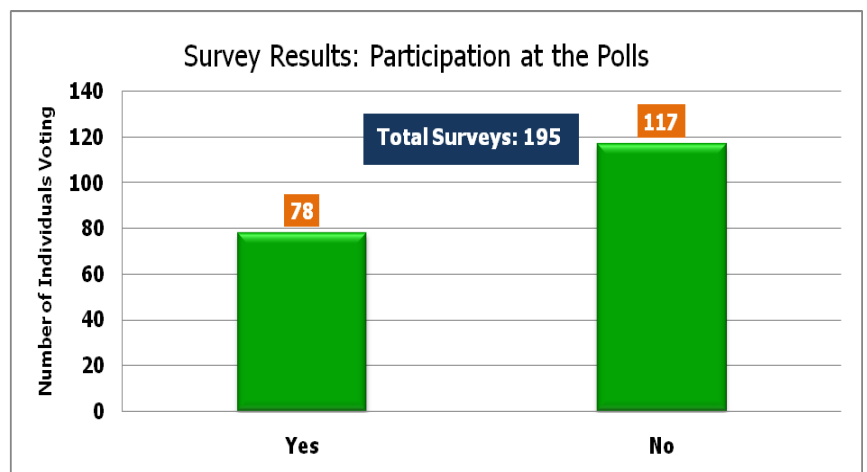
- Team met bi-weekly or as needed to discuss project ideas and gather data
- Team met with community advisors for guidance on project ideas and to find community needs

### February 2010 – April 2010

- Team had multiple meetings with Rev. Mathias from Cristo Rey Church to develop a plan for engaging the surrounding community to become more civic minded and to explore ways to inform the community of the vast resources available for assistance and opportunities for participation.
- Team attended a series of masses in English and Spanish to make announcements to church attendees. The team introduced the project and their presence at the church for the next few months. Attendees were encouraged to vote in the March Primary elections. The team answered questions about voting and getting involved.
- Team attended three meetings organized by church leaders of approximately 60-100 members. Local community leaders engaged with the attendees and spoke about the importance of being civically engaged, and gave examples of opportunities to volunteer and be engaged.

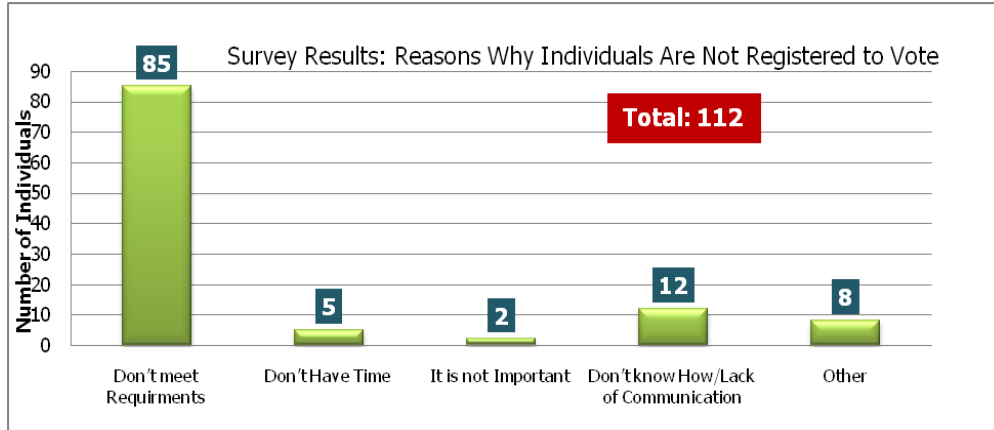
## Impact of Project

Surveys were developed by the team to gauge participation at the polls, reasons for not voting, and the likelihood of contacting their local leaders on an issue of interest or for assistance. The survey results represented here are as of April 10, 2010.



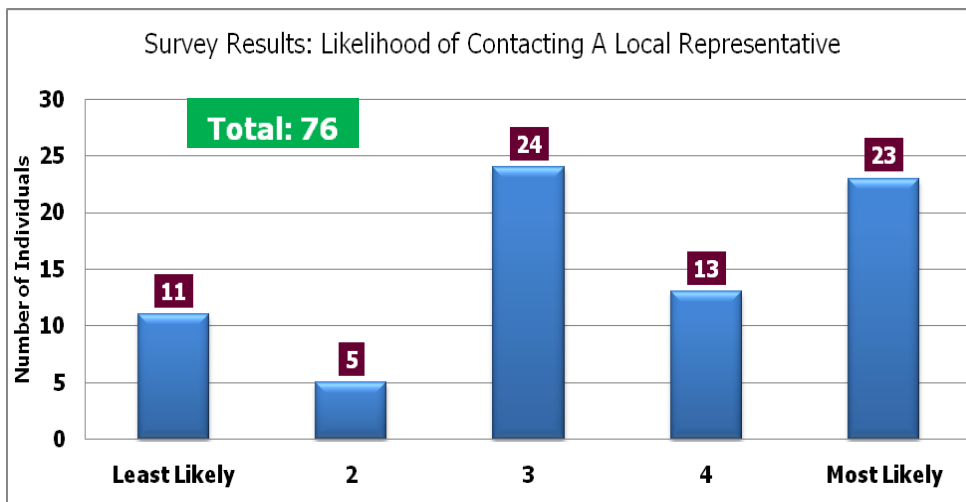
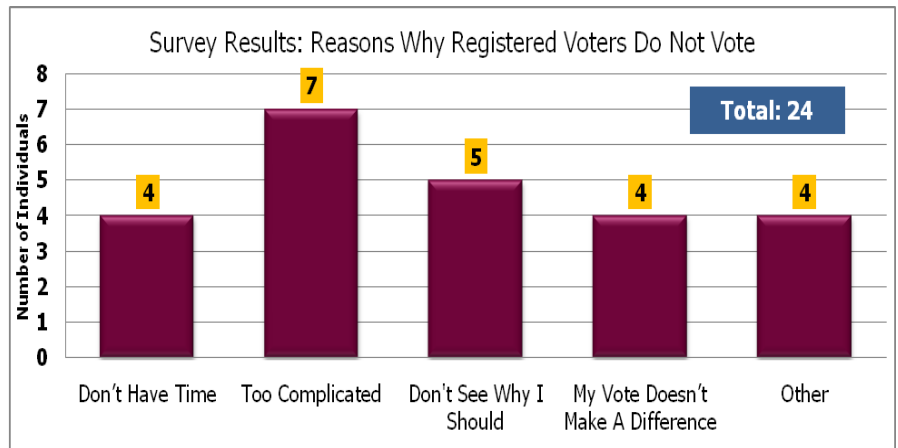
Overall, the team felt the project impacted the community members by providing them with resources, encouragement, and re-enforcing the significant differences they can make within their own communities and families by giving back.

At the end of the project, the team found that 60 percent of individuals who completed the survey do not vote or have any participation at the polls.



The ultimate reason why individuals are not registered to vote is because they do not meet the requirements.

Registered voters on the other hand, do not see why it is important to vote or reported voting is too complicated. The team aimed to increase awareness and understanding of the impact they have on the local Austin community.



Surprisingly, many individuals who completed the survey said they were highly likely to contact a local representative in the event that an issue or concern arose.

## Community Resources Involved

The team sought advice and direction from key Austin community leaders in the Hispanic community. The leaders included below either participated in the team project or were looked to for guidance.

- **Mike Martinez**, Mayor Pro Tem, Austin City Council
- **Raul Alvarez**, Austin Community College Board of Trustee, Place 5
- **Reverend Jayme Mathias**, Pastor, Cristo Rey Church
- **Sabino "Pio" Renteria**, Neighborhood Leader and Civil Rights Activist
- **Paul Saldaña**, President and Principal, Adelante Solutions, Inc.
- **Vanessa Sarria**, Executive Director, Community Action Network

### **Local Action – Central Texas Region**

In 2008, as in previous years, **85%** of the regional population got involved in at least one activity at the local level in the past year as a result of their concern for the future of their community. While 13% did nothing, almost **60%** participated in at least three activities.

Source: 2009 Data Report - *CENTRAL TEXAS SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS PROJECT*



# Project Budget

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## Civic Engagement Team Expenses

<b>Budget: \$500.00</b>		
<b>Expense Type</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Marketing	iSin Ganas No Ganas! T-Shirts	\$108.25
Marketing	Project video	\$300.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$408.25</b>
<b>ENDING BALANCE</b>		<b>\$91.75</b>

# Resources

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<sup>1</sup> Pew Hispanic Center, *Hispanics in the 2008 Election: Texas*  
<http://pewhispanic.org/files/factsheets/vote2008/Texas.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Jeff Smith, Opinion Analysts, Austin, Texas