Tackling the Racial Hunger Gap and Advancing Equity

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Alejandra Gepp, Health Programs Director, Training & Engagement
About UnidosUS

- **UnidosUS**, formerly the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), is the nation’s largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization.

- For more than 50 years, UnidosUS has united communities and different groups seeking common ground through collaboration as well as share a desire to make our country stronger. We have led with courage, tenacity, and purpose.
Our Most Unique Asset

### AFFILIATE NETWORK

- **285 Latino-focused,** nonprofit, direct-service providers delivering critical services (i.e., education, civic engagement, health, housing, financial capability).

- **41 states,** DC, and Puerto Rico

- **50,000 nonprofit leaders/staff**

- **8 million** clients reached per year

- Ability to tap into **targeted** community networks
Food Insecurity and Latinx

- **Latinos are more likely than the general population to experience food insecurity and chronic conditions.** This can be traced back, or in part, to the impact of the social determinants of health (the conditions of the places where people live, learn, work, and play) that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes.

- Racism, language, education, and cultural barriers create inequalities that make Latino communities more vulnerable to food insecurity.

- COVID-19 has exposed all the inequity and racism that have long existed, making it even tougher for families to afford healthy and nutritious meals. Food insecurity among Latinos rose from almost 16% in 2019 to more than 19% in 2020.
System Challenges

- **Access Barriers to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** Eligibility criteria, **navigation in a virtual world**, limited access to bilingual/bicultural staff in application centers, scarce outreach and information about the program, and in some communities, the lack of reliable public or private transportation.

- **Limited access to culturally relevant food and ingredients:** *Comprando Rico y Sano* subgrantees have consistently reported that local food banks or pantries have limited availability of food commonly consumed by Hispanics (i.e., beans, corn flour, and rice) and fresh fruits and vegetables.
Comprando Rico y Sano (Buying Healthy and Flavorful Foods)

• Comprando Rico y Sano is a national program where promotores de salud conduct charlas (small educational sessions), grocery store tours, cooking demonstrations, and other complementary hands-on activities to promote health-conscious shopping, smart food choices, and cost-saving strategies, as well as provide information and enroll eligible Latinos into (SNAP). The program evaluation is data-driven and includes process and outcome measures.

• Comprando Rico y Sano has become an UnidosUS signature program due to its comprehensive and culturally responsive model—promotores de salud—coupled with UnidosUS’s capacity to work with diverse subgrantees as partners under one common goal—reducing hunger and food insecurity in communities.
COMPRANDO RICO Y SANO
(BUYING HEALTHY AND FLAVORFUL FOODS)

UnidosUS’s program—led by community health workers (promotores de salud)—seeks to reduce food insecurity and instill healthy shopping and eating habits among Latinos through nutrition education and enrollment assistance in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

In 2019–2020...

43.5%↑
Increased their fruit intake

50.4%↑
Increased their vegetable intake

65.7%↑
Increased the number of home-prepared healthy meals

24,381
eligible Latinos enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefiting 10,913 households.

4.3 million
Latinos reached with nutrition and SNAP information via news and social media

87,774
Latinos were reached with face-to-face nutrition education and community events, including 12,124 Latinos reached with at least one or more of culturally and linguistically appropriate nutrition education.

20,232
Latinos participated in cooking demonstrations and grocery store tours

267
Promotores de salud received training to implement the program

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STRONGER COMMUNITIES. STRONGER AMERICA.
Our Best Practices to Reduce Food Insecurity

• **Access to Information and Enrollment in Federal Nutrition Programs:**
  - **At the program level:** Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and enrollment assistance in communities. We know that SNAP participation is critical to reducing food insecurity.
  - **At the advocacy/policy level:** Eliminate or reduce barriers to access and expand access to SNAP and other federal nutrition programs.

• **Partner with Grassroot Organizations:** Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are highly effective in disseminating information to Latino communities and bringing about substantial change.

• **Use a culturally relevant health promotion model:** Promotores de Salud help build trust for healthier communities.

• **Maintain program sustainability:** Replicable models for building well-being and health.
Opportunities at the Federal and Local Level to Reduce Hunger and Food Insecurity

- Policymakers must invest in alleviating persistent hunger among Latinx and other communities:
  - Ensure an equitable and just lens is integrated in all policies and procedures.
  - Invest in the development of culturally and linguistically appropriate health promotion programs.
  - Bolster future benefits by taking immediate action to remove barriers and increase participation in federal nutrition programs, such as SNAP.
Reflection: System Change

• What are we doing today that can change how we impact the lives of Latinx families and other groups in communities tomorrow?

• Is your organization **intentional** in how to serve priority groups?
Advancing Equity through Policy and Programs

- UnidosUS: 50 Years of Impact - YouTube
Questions?
agepp@unidosus.org