

# CONDUCTING IM/MIGRANT HEALTH RESEARCH: RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

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## Outline

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Community-engaged  
immigrant health research

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Coalition building for  
community-engaged  
immigrant health research



# Community-engaged Immigrant Health Research

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# Community-engaged Research Basics

A collaborative approach to improve the health and quality of life of community members

Based on partnership between investigators and community members

All partners participate in defining, analyzing, offering solutions to problems

Sharing power, decision making, ownership

Based on trust and mutual respect

Responds to local needs using a socio-ecological perspective

# Finding Synergies for Community Engagement

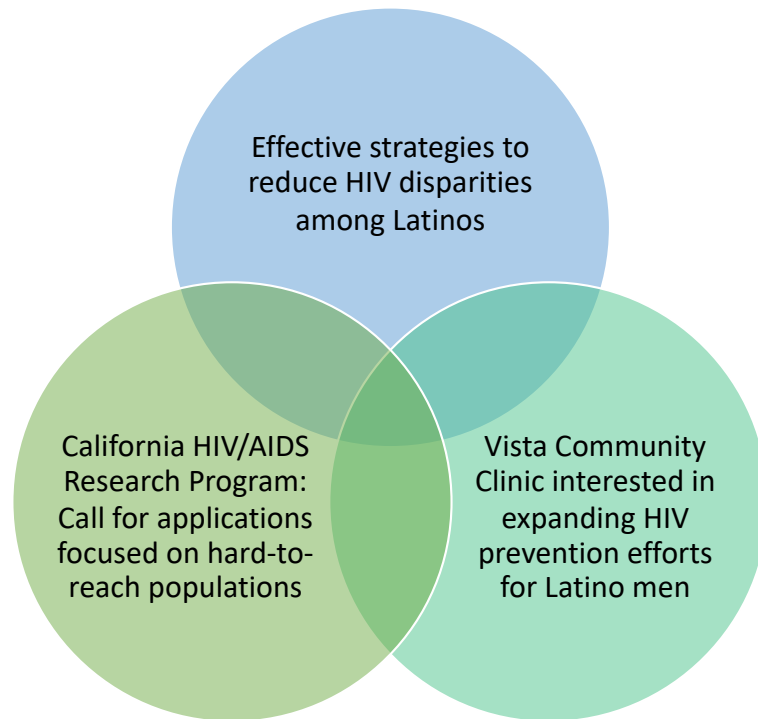


# Example 1: Cuidándome Project



- A community-engaged research project to implement and evaluate a peer-based intervention to promote cervical and cancer screening among Latina immigrants in Dane County, WI
- A collaboration between UW-Madison and Planned Parenthood of WI

## Example 2: Hombres Sanos Project



- A 3-year community-engaged research project to design and evaluate a social marketing campaign to promote HIV testing and reduce unprotected sex among heterosexually-identified Latino men who have sex with men
- A collaboration between San Diego State University and Vista Community Clinic

# A Process for Community-Engaged Research



KNOW THE LANDSCAPE, DO  
YOUR HOMEWORK



REACH OUT, KNOCK ON  
DOORS, MAKE YOURSELF  
VISIBLE



THINK SMALL FIRST, LOW-  
HANGING FRUIT



BUILD A SYMBIOTIC  
RELATIONSHIP, MAKE  
YOURSELF USEFUL



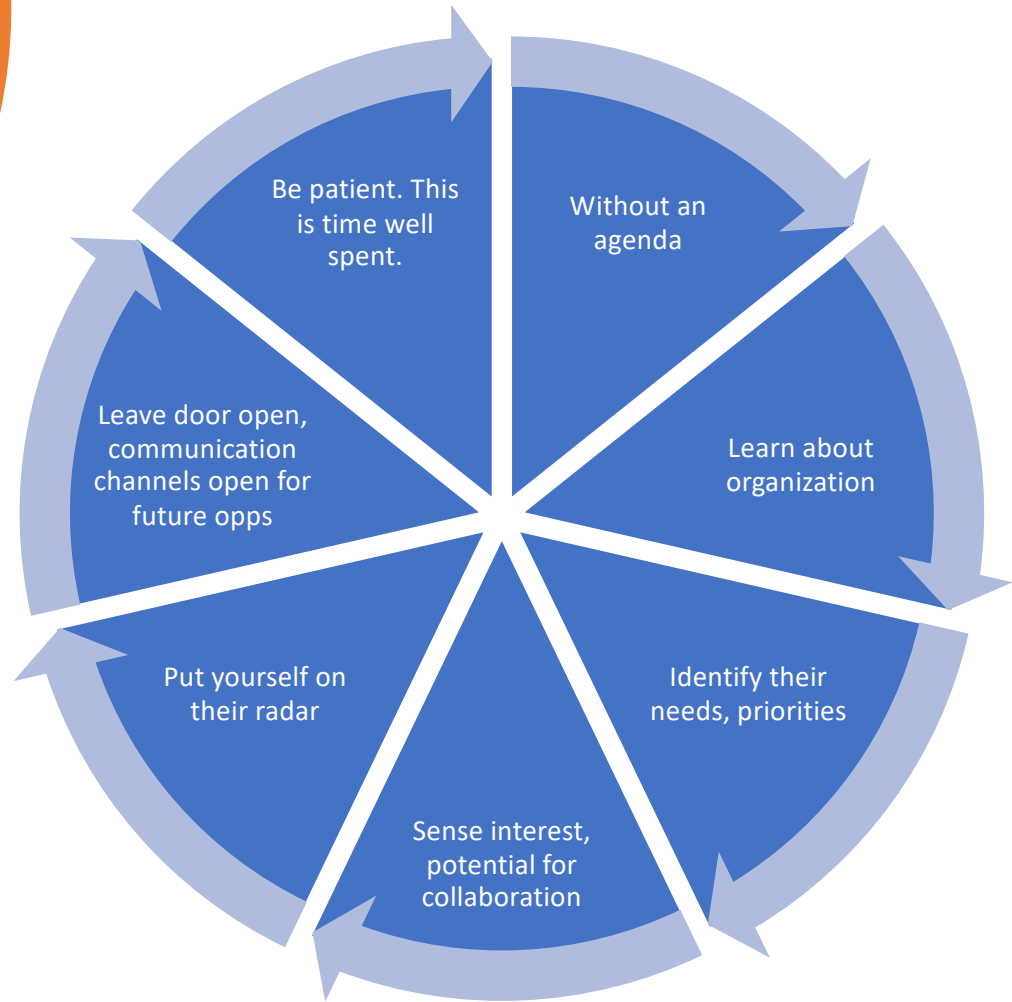
# Know the Landscape

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- Do you research regarding im/migrant focused organizations
  - Population/communities served
  - Services
  - History
  - Leadership
  - Previous relationships with academic institutions



# Reach Out



# Think Small First

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- Identify intramural, less competitive funding opportunities
- Pursue “low-hanging fruit”: Opportunities for collaboration even w/o funding
- Engage (other) students in small collaborative projects
- Projects that focus on organization needs (needs assessment, program evaluation, quality improvement)
- Prioritize service, find research edge



# Build A Relationship

**Trust takes time and  
sustained  
commitment**

**Be generous with  
your time  
Be present**

**Do not rush things  
Allow time for trust  
building**

**Understand  
different timelines  
& demands**

**Engage in more  
ambitious projects  
as relationship  
solidifies**

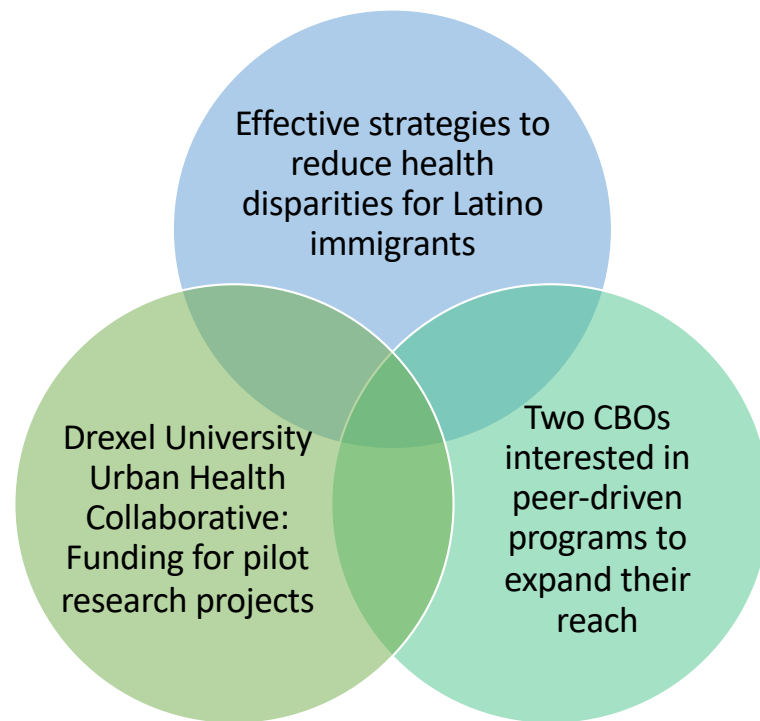
**Acknowledge the  
expertise of each  
partner**

**Transparency and  
fairness**

# Additional Considerations

- Starting from scratch is hard
- Reach out to established community-engaged researchers
  - Shared research interests
  - Complementary expertise
  - Respected by community
- Tag along, build on and expand their reputation
- Don't take relationship with community partners for granted
- Maintain dialogue and symbiotic approach
  - Ongoing check-in points, ongoing sharing
  - Avoid parachute research
- Expect challenges and tensions

# A CER Case Study: CRISOL Contigo



- A community-engaged research program to promote Latino immigrant health in Philadelphia
- A collaboration between Drexel University, The Philadelphia AIDS Consortium, and Women Organized Against Rape





A COMMUNITY-  
ACADEMIC  
PARTNERSHIP,  
SINCE 2017

- Researchers, staff at CBOs, students, community members
- Health disparities affecting Latino immigrants
- Mixed-methods to assess health, healthcare needs, and community assets
- Development and testing of a pilot peer-driven intervention
- Intramural seed funds → R21 NIH award → NIH Supplement

# CRISOL Contigo

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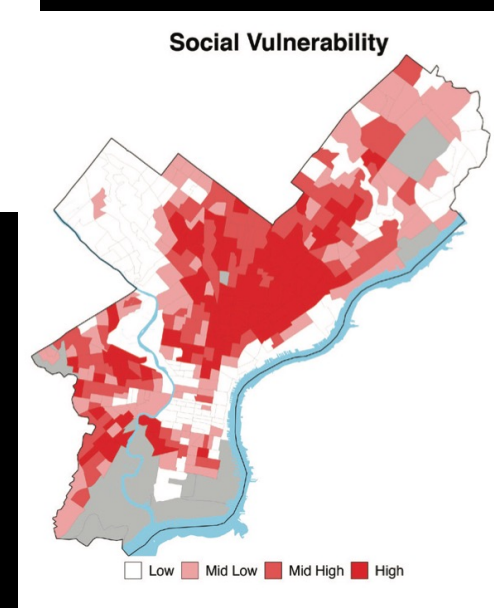
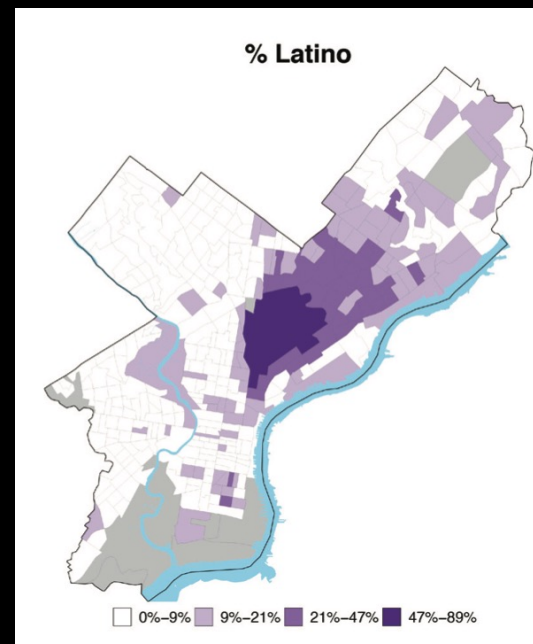
- A multi-level intervention to reduce COVID-19 disparities affecting Latino immigrants in Philadelphia, USA
- A community-academic collaboration based on:
  - Community-based participatory research principles
  - Popular Opinion Model
  - Community resilience theory
  - Social-ecological framework



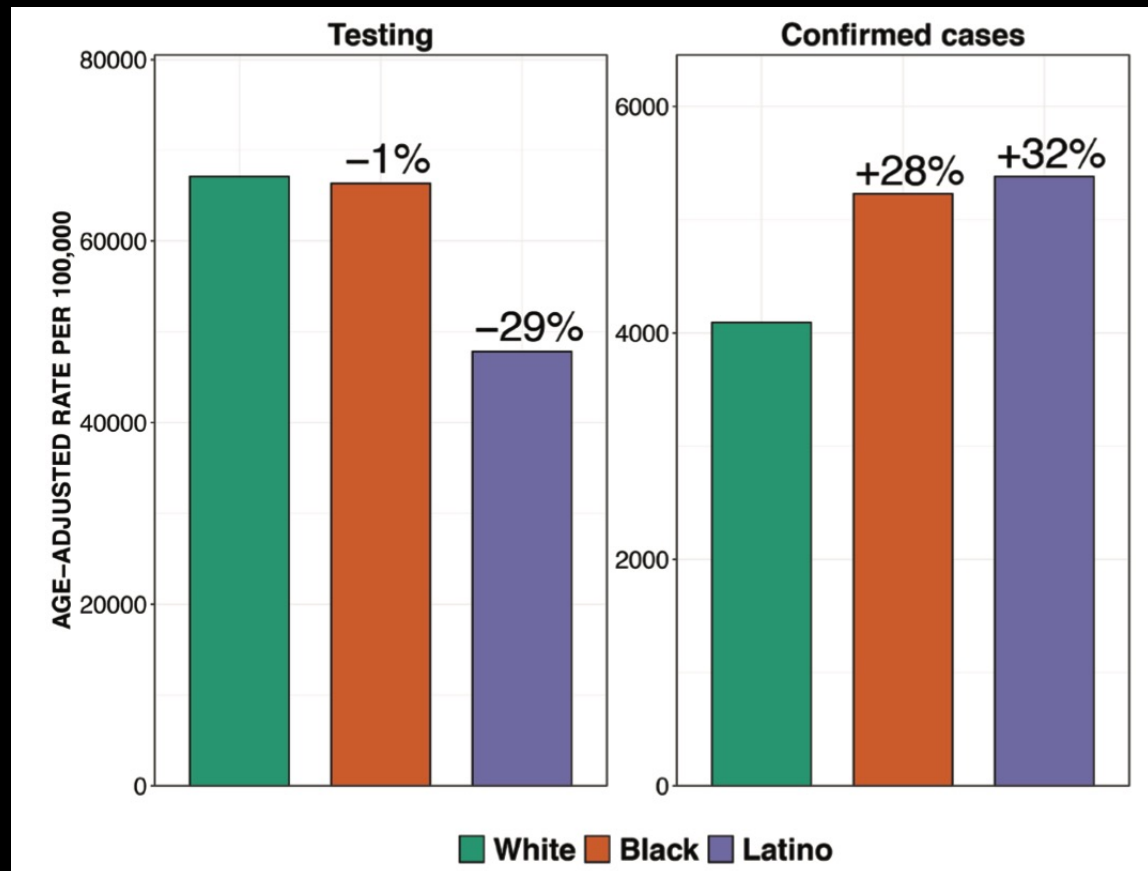


# LATINOS IN PHILADELPHIA

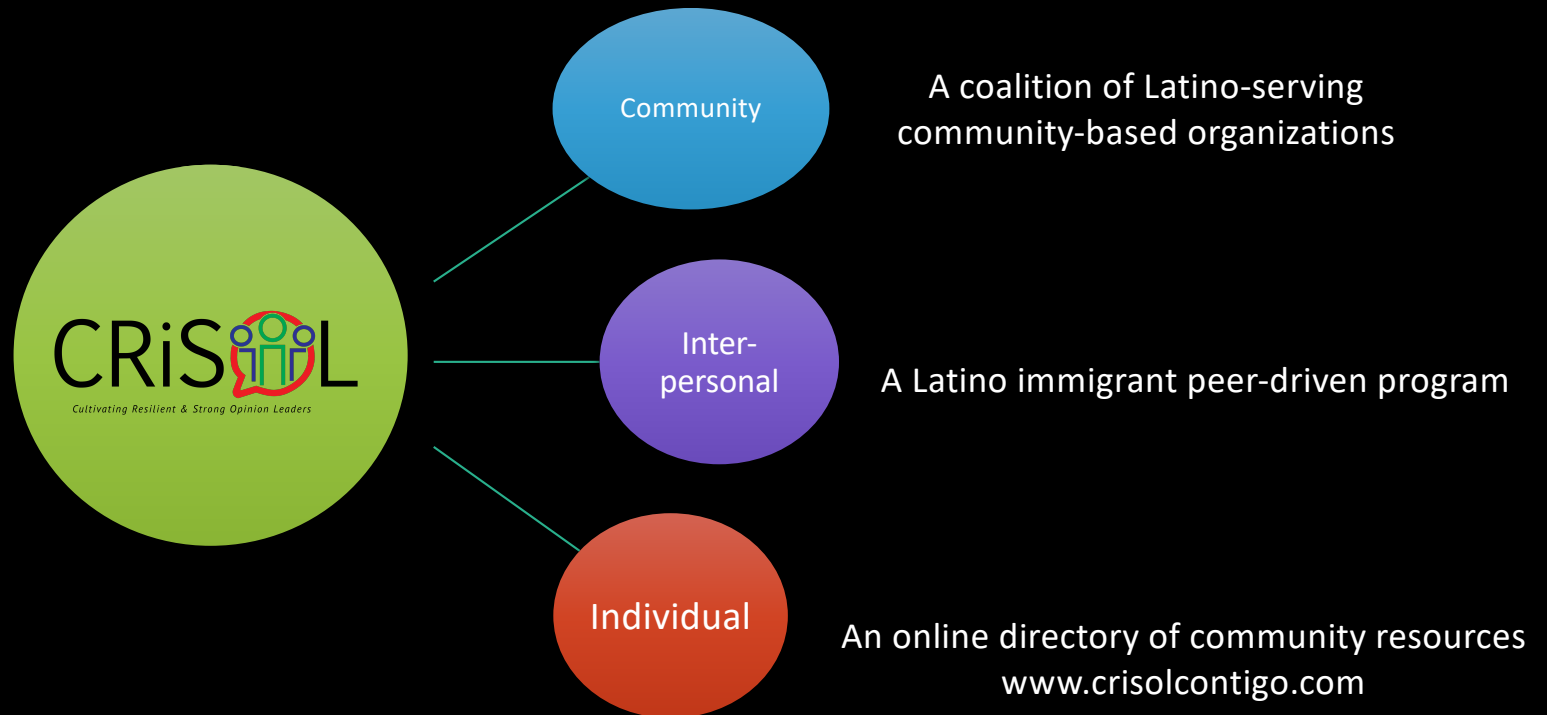
- 15% of city's population
  - 15% born in Puerto Rico
  - 20% born outside the U.S.
- Socio-economic disadvantaged
  - 40% living in poverty
  - Poorest neighborhoods
- Little political representation
  - 44% of residents are Black
  - 34% are non-Hispanic White



## Disparities in COVID-19 Testing & Infection Rates in Philadelphia (Through January 2021)



# A MULTI-LEVEL, COMMUNITYWIDE INTERVENTION TO REDUCE COVID-19 DISPARITIES FOR LATINOS



# THE CRISOL CONTIGO PEER-DRIVEN PROGRAM

## Trusted community members trained to:

- Educate peers, dispel myths
- Modeling healthy behaviors
- Connect peers to services
- Bring feedback to organizations

## 2 phases

- Training – 16-hour virtual training (Asynchronous-synchronous)
  - Homework
- Community Outreach – 9 months
  - Bi-monthly booster meetings



THE CRISOL CONTIGO COMMUNITY LEADERS

## Training & Outreach



14 community leaders  
trained

16-hour virtual training  
93% fidelity  
100% attendance  
9.6 satisfaction (0-10 scale)



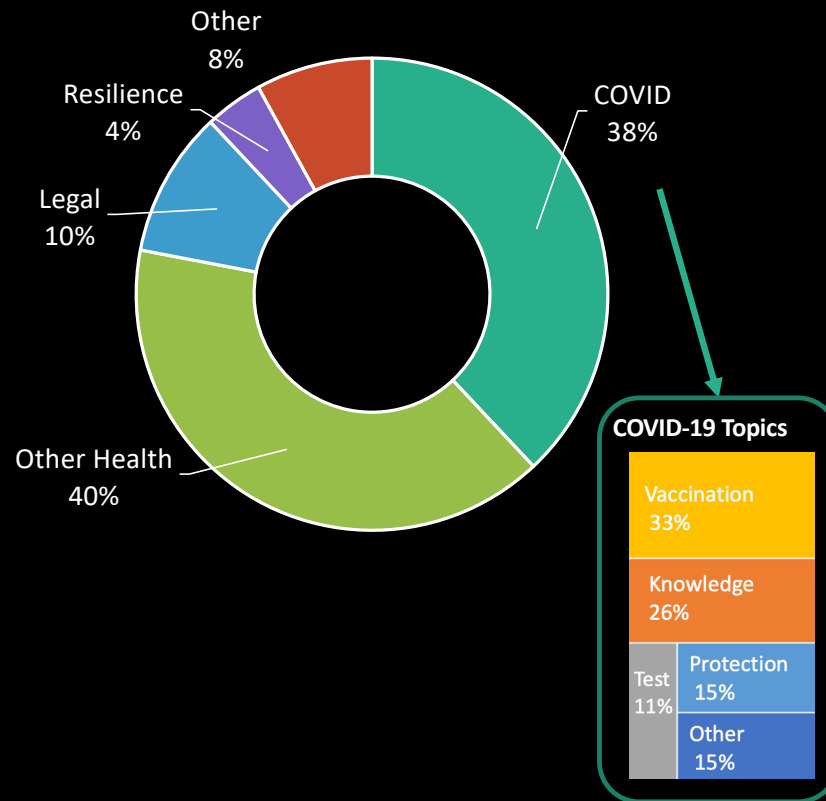
11 leaders active over 9-month outreach  
period



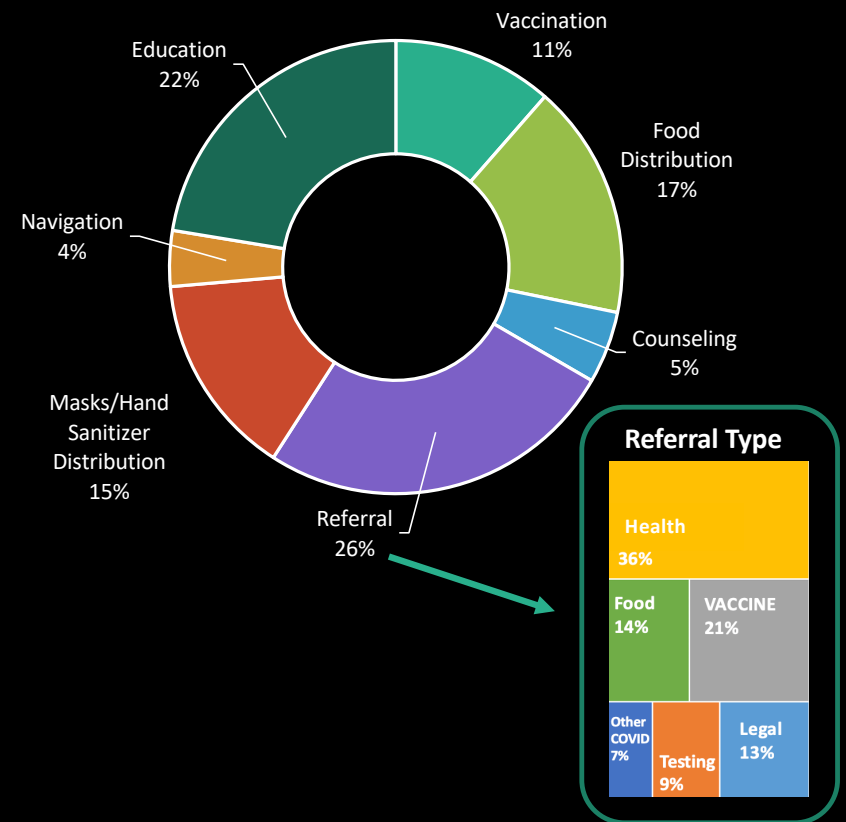
>8,000 intentional interactions with  
community members

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## Topics Discussed with Community Members



## Help Offered to Community Members







# The Latino Health Collective

A Coalition to Promote Latino Immigrant Health in Philadelphia

Image source: Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau





# Formation of the Latino Health Collective

- Based on community relationships formed following CER process
- Meetings and interviews with stakeholders to:
  - Understand network of Latino-serving organizations
  - Hear Latino-serving providers' perspectives on syndemic and services
- A roster of organizations and stakeholders
- The COVID-19 pandemic: Crisis --> Opportunity
- Emerging as honest brokers, creating a platform for dialogue and joint advocacy





## The Latino Health Collective

- A coalition of Latino-serving agencies, city officials, Consulate staff, and others, convened by academic partner
- Monthly town hall meetings since April 2020
  - Identifying pressing needs during pandemic
  - Sharing information and other resources
  - Facilitating dialogue and collaboration
  - Advising and advocating for resource allocation, service design
- Ongoing communication with partners:
  - Meeting minutes, slides, materials
  - Weekly newsletter
  - Listserv

# LHC ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS (March 2020 - November 2021)

23

town hall  
meetings

+60

organizations

+150

individuals

Protective  
equipment  
for staff

Access to  
testing  
supplies and  
training

Pop up  
testing sites

Community-  
based  
vaccination  
sites

Dissemination of  
information

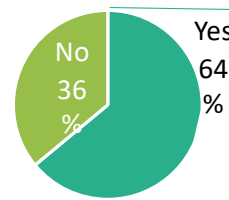
Reducing  
barriers to  
testing

Reducing  
barriers to  
vaccination

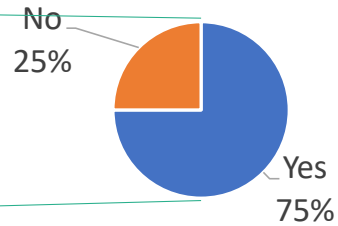
Recommendations  
for vaccine equity

# A Survey of Latino-serving Organizations

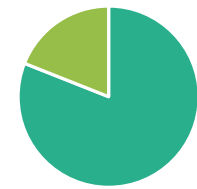
Aware of Latino Health Collective



Included in LHC Listserv

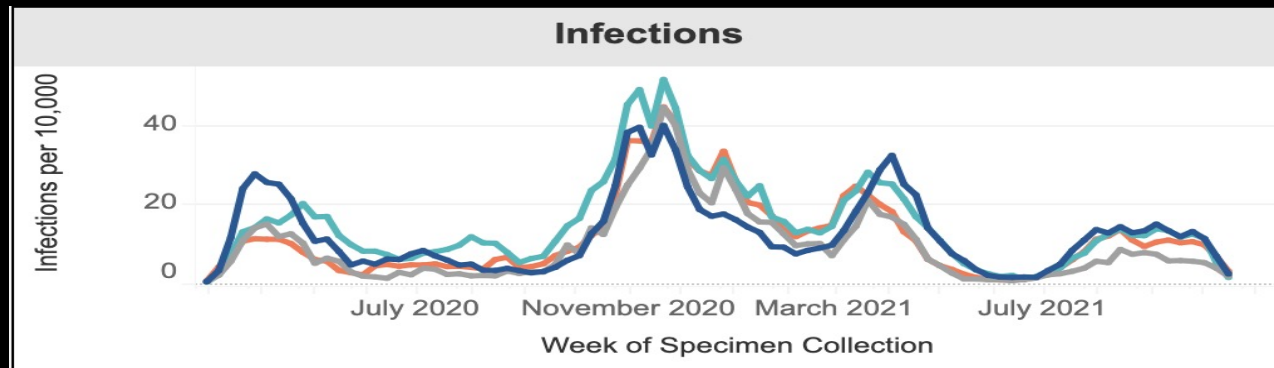


Organization participates in LHC

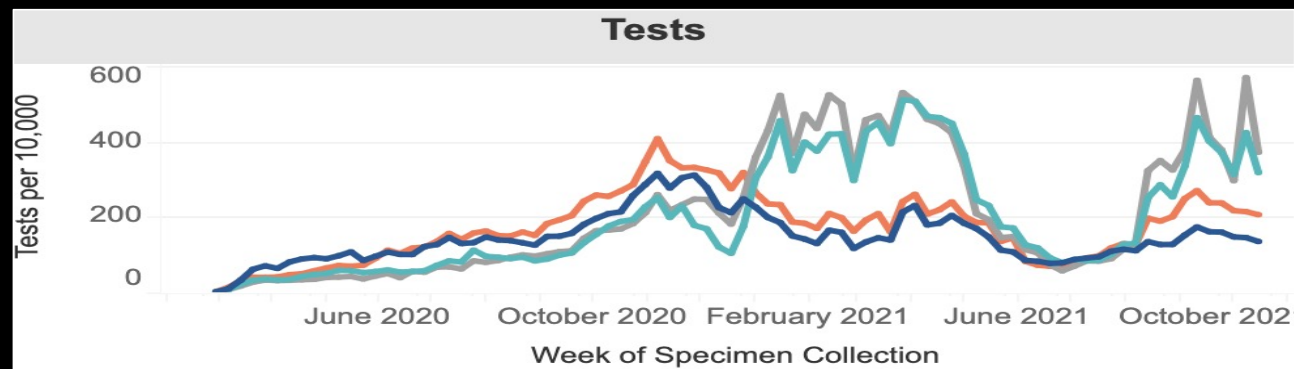


## HELPING TO CHANGE THE TRENDS

■ African American
 ■ Hispanic
 ■ Asian
 ■ White



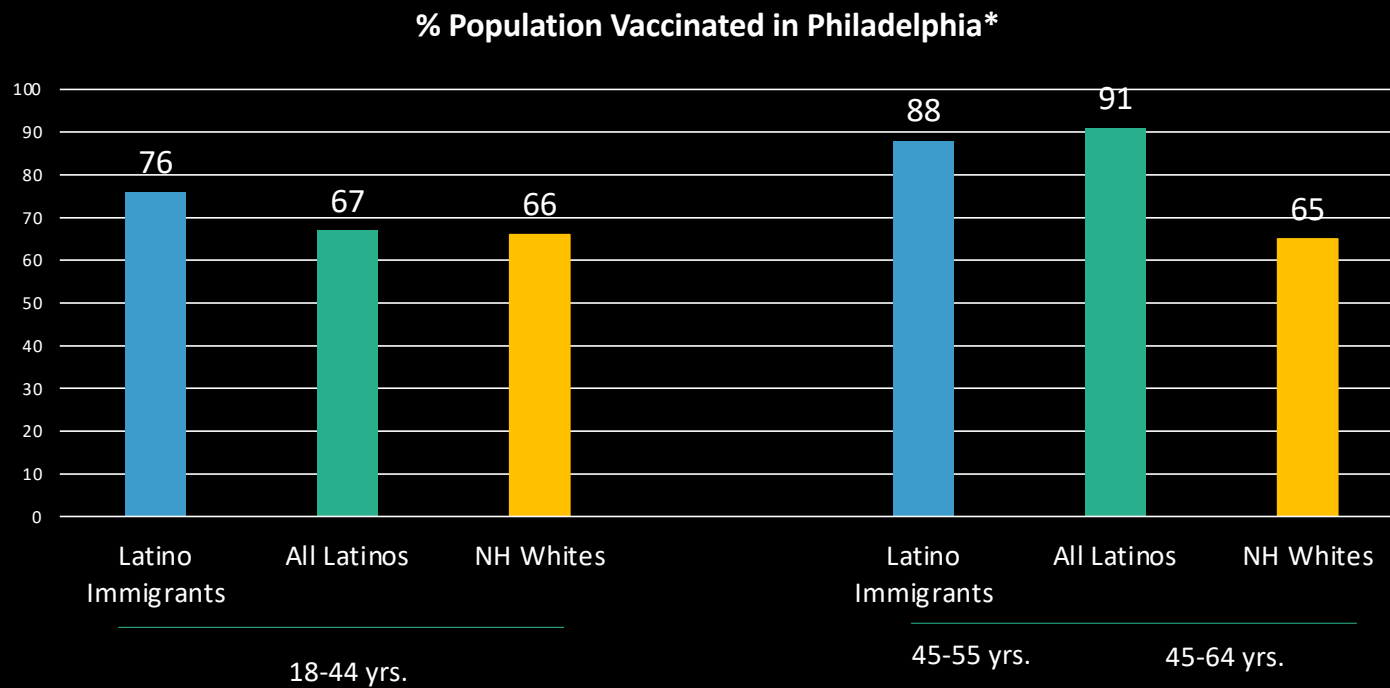
**Rates per 10,000,  
Week of 10/24**  
 Hispanic: 4.5  
 White: 6.6



**Rates per 10,000**  
 Hispanic: 334.9  
 White: 209.1

Source: Philadelphia Public Health Department, November, 2021

## IMPACT ON COVID-19 VACCINATION RATES



Source: Philadelphia Public Health Department, November, 2021; Unpublished data from RDS survey by our team.

\* At least 1 dose of vaccine

# CER Sustainability



Pilot CRISOL → **CRISOL Contigo**  
(COVID-19)



CRISOL program adopted by our  
community partner



**CRISOL Mente (R01 MD018206)**

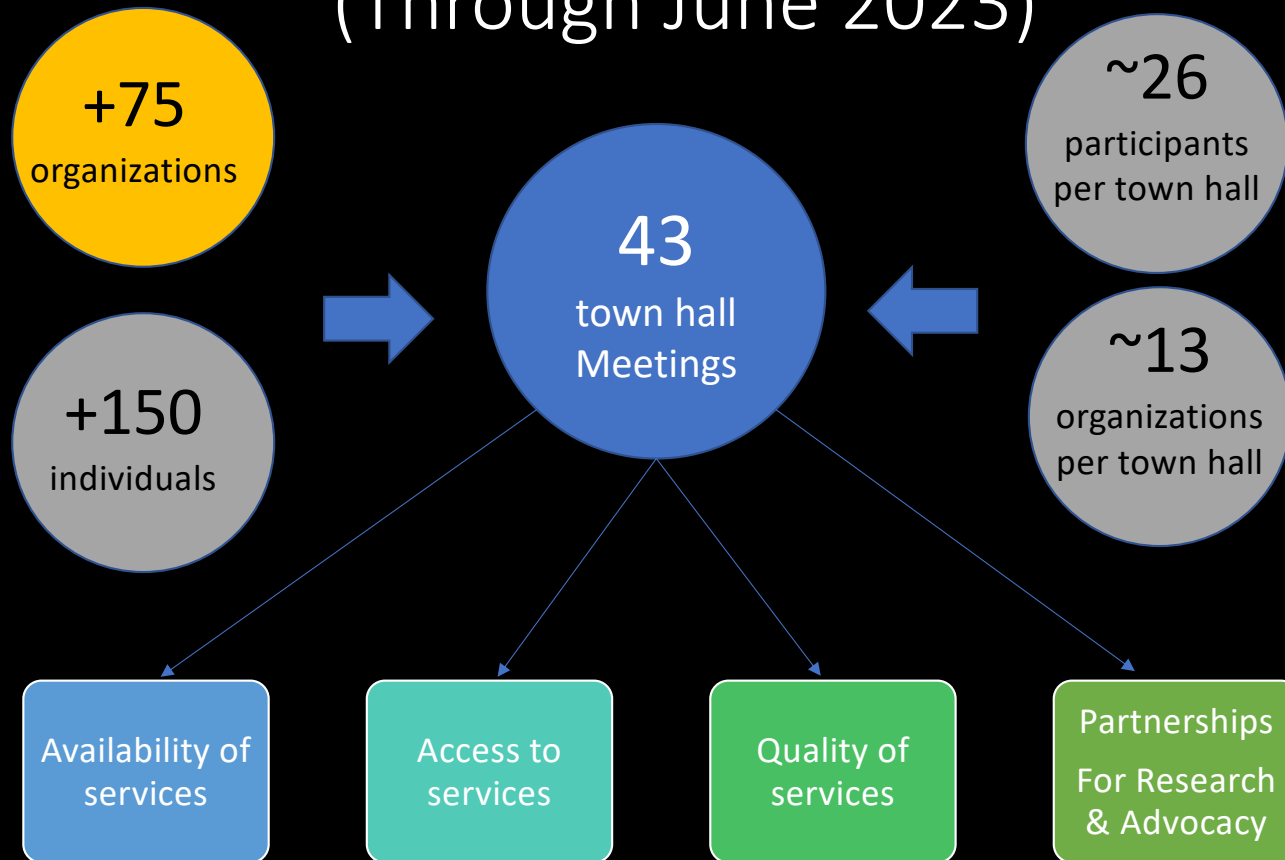
More community partners  
Mental health focus

- Access to mental health
- Mental health awareness and stigma
- Capacity of Latino-serving network
- Growing the Latino Health Collective



CRISOL immigrant leaders  
gained increased visibility and  
are engaged with many  
organizations

# Latino Health Collective Sustainability (Through June 2023)





## Additional Considerations on CER

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**Community-engaged health research is ideally suited** to address evidence gaps and local community needs for migrants and other ethnic minorities

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Community-based, multi-level strategies can **increase community capacity and** offer a **sustainable approach to combat health inequities**, beyond specific research funding streams

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A flexible model, **easily adaptable** to address other health issues and other communities

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**Promoting dialogue and community partnerships** is critical to break silos and reduce disparities

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Academic institutions can **serve as honest brokers and coalition builders** to advocate for ethnic and immigrant health



Questions?