

In times like this, it is extremely important that systems, institutions, and municipalities be prepared to communicate to all communities they serve and to whom they are accountable. We hope and expect that they allocate necessary resources to ensure that all communities have access to the latest information about COVID-19, community precautions and resources available to them. This includes offering information in a variety of formats and languages. LatinxGR, a collaborative of the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan, Latino Community Coalition, Latina Network of West Michigan, West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the West Michigan Latino Network, is concerned about the lack of information available in Spanish and other languages. We need every person to be informed to minimize exposure to the virus. Lack of multi-language translation and interpretation of information further exacerbates the public health pandemic we are facing.

In an attempt to meet the language and information needs, LatinxGR organized a crowdsourcing strategy for local bilingual volunteers to translate text for smaller sized messages, such as Facebook posts, which can be accessed by volunteers and organizations that need support at bit.ly/GRVolunteerTranslation. For translation of larger documents and/or for interpretation services, the Hispanic Center of West Michigan has some funds available to support organizations for whom the cost of translation or interpretation is a barrier. We strongly encourage groups that do not have a strategy in place to share critical information in languages other than English, to reach out to the Hispanic Center's language services manager, Holly Rea, to share written materials for translation or to request interpretation. The Center can translate in over 85 languages. Holly will monitor her email (hrea@hispanic-center.org) and cell phone (616-828-9679) over the weekend, and can be reached next week at (616) 742-0200 ext 132.

Right now LatinxGR is focused on keeping the community safe and informed. Once the COVID-19 pandemic subsides, our focus will be on connecting with system, institutional and municipal leaders to ensure they serve and are adequately prepared to communicate with all of the community on a regular basis and in times of crisis.

Thank you to the bilingual volunteers providing translation services and to other community efforts, such as the [Grand Rapids Area Mutual Aid Network](#) connecting people to [rides, medicine, child care and food](#), and [Heart of West Michigan United Way Volunteer & Needs Match](#) portal, for their leadership in facilitating community support during this time of precaution.

Contact Adnoris Torres with questions about additional Hispanic Center of Western Michigan services at atorres@hispanic-center.org or (616) 742-0200 ext 160, and Erika VanDyke at latinxgr@gmail.com or (616) 648-6079 for questions related to LatinxGR and community resources.

Signed,



HISPANIC CENTER
of western michigan



LATINA NETWORK
of WEST MICHIGAN



WEST MICHIGAN
HISPANIC
CHAMBER of COMMERCE



LATINO
COMMUNITY COALITION

WEST MICHIGAN

Latino
NETWORK