



# Latiné and HIV Community Action Plan Development: *Phase 1 Executive Summary*

*\*\*Familias is using the term Latiné in this document to describe our communities in an inclusive manner. We recognize that there is no single term that will encompass everyone.\*\**

**We envision a reduction of new HIV infections among the Latiné community in Oregon to reach zero new infections by 2030.**

## Background

In 2020, Familias en Acción (Familias) was granted a 3-year contract from Oregon Health Authority to develop *Me Cuido, Te Cuido*, a culturally specific program, with a focus on HIV/STIs and sexual health education, for the Latiné community to support Oregon's state-wide [END HIV Oregon](#) initiative. In the first three years of our program, Familias has trained over 50 community leaders to deliver sexual health education classes through a train-the-trainer model. In partnership with other organizations, these leaders have facilitated a combined 33 (virtual) classes, all offered in Spanish, to over 300 community members in the Portland Metro region and statewide. In June 2021, Familias hosted our 12th Annual Latino Health Equity conference which centered on *Me Cuido, Te Cuido*, engaging over 400 people on topics related to HIV/STI research, education and community-based prevention efforts.

Now we want to build on the success and learnings of our efforts to date and deepen and broaden our collective impact across the state. To enable this, we are launching a learning cohort to support and connect agencies currently doing HIV prevention work, and build capacity for others who want to initiate or increase their participation to serve the Latiné population across Oregon. To ensure the design of the cohort is meaningful and relevant, in 2022, we conducted interviews with 27 organizations and their representatives from across the state, with special attention given to hearing from those in rural areas. The interviews sought insight from leaders, impacted and affected community members, agency representatives, and more to test key elements of collaboration, program development and delivery needs, and to ensure the learning cohort would be designed in alignment with the context, challenges, and opportunities of communities across the state.

Interviewees were selected based on their organization's role in at least one of the following:

- They currently provide treatment and care for individuals living with HIV;

- They don't provide treatment and care for individuals living with HIV but do provide prevention work across a range of social health needs; and
- They are Latiné-led and/or serve Latiné communities.

## Summary of Findings

Interview participants painted a complex and dynamic picture of the forces that influence efforts towards HIV prevention and treatment among Latiné communities in Oregon. The state's unique geography and population distribution, where a large swathe of the state is extremely rural, juxtaposed with a few notably more liberal population centers, means that the availability of resources throughout the state is uneven, and political tensions can run high. Many Latiné individuals experience racism or face threats of deportation, meaning that service providers often experience challenges building trust within these communities. Providing continuous, culturally-relevant services and information is often extremely challenging. In short, the need to provide consistent and accessible services alongside accurate information lies in direct tension with the cultural and physical characteristics present in much of the state.

Participants expressed that while these factors do present a challenge, they also form the backdrop for a high level of collaborative potential among interviewees. Because of the complexity of the environment, fostering creative approaches to cross-sector collaboration was named as a key strategy for leveraging the strengths of different agencies and individuals. Likewise, the ability to successfully reach and engage Latiné communities hinges on consistent, culturally-affirming messaging; the ability to provide this thorough and responsive communication is bolstered by coordination and collaboration across agencies and sectors. In fact, many of those interviewed expressed hope at what they see as an emergence of increased collaboration statewide.

*"...we need to let people of color lead this work. We can no longer be the only ones doing this, or the ones telling BIPOC organizations how to do this work. And I think that humility really allowed there to be an intentional collaboration across all of the organizations."*

Familias en Acción seeks to strengthen its role as a backbone organization to such emergent collaboration in the field of HIV prevention amongst Latiné Oregonians. Interviewees offered several insights into what is needed across the state to help shape and inform such collaboration. One theme that stood out in the interviews was the need to foster and support a holistic approach to HIV prevention and treatment. Interviewees stressed that siloed approaches fail to address the complex array of factors that contribute to HIV risk in Latiné populations. At the same time, complex systems need to be navigable by Latiné community members if they are to engage with prevention, testing, and treatment, further reinforcing the need for a highly coordinated, multi-pronged approach. Ultimately, building and maintaining trust with Latiné

populations—particularly in rural areas—was named as the lynchpin to successful HIV prevention and treatment efforts statewide.

*"Our communities... have been in poverty and struggling with so many vulnerabilities, so many negative social determinants of health, for so long, that people don't understand that it's not normal... we have such a level of drug use, of teen pregnancy, of people not accessing care, that that somehow and just struggling to get by in so many ways. So our priority is really to try and change that norm"*

Throughout the interview process, participants highlighted ways in which Oregon's unique social, cultural, and geographic conditions impact efforts towards HIV treatment and prevention. These insights provide a framework for understanding the needs and challenges that Familias en Acción hopes to address through a learning cohort and future action collaborative. For instance, interviewees reflected on how structural and systemic factors reinforce siloing, which means that efforts at collaboration often require increased efforts to carve new approaches to working together. Also needed are opportunities for increased education and training specific to working with Latiné populations in rural Oregon, which is currently perceived to be lacking. Finally, capacity constraints—such as limited or restricted funding and competing priorities—continue to act as a barrier to success, in the view of many interviewees.

Finally, the interviews conducted revealed a strong set of values that were broadly shared by interview participants. Overwhelmingly, participants expressed a shared value around supporting a community-led approach to HIV prevention and treatment. Many believe that Latiné-identifying community members and those who are most impacted by the work of HIV prevention and treatment should be engaged in and central to the work itself. Many interviewees identify personally with the work—because they identify as Latiné, or have lived experience with HIV—and as such are firmly committed to approaching the work with compassion and integrity, while empowering the communities they serve. Many saw Familias en Acción as a key partner in these efforts.

Now Familias en Acción is ready to launch a learning cohort to support and connect agencies eager to learn and excited to act, so collectively, **We can reduce new HIV infections among the Latiné community in Oregon to reach zero new infections by 2030.** If you are interested in joining the Latiné and HIV Spring 2023 Learning Cohort you can learn more and apply [here](#)