



GREATER PHILADELPHIA  
HISPANIC CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE

# 2020 LATINO SMALL BUSINESS AGENDA





Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
**2020 Latino Small Business Agenda**

The Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (GPHCC) was established to develop, promote and advocate for Hispanic business in the Greater Philadelphia region while encouraging the advancement and economic growth of the larger Hispanic community.

Today, Latinos outpace all demographic groups in entrepreneurship, starting businesses at three times the rate of the general population. Not only do these businesses comprise 40 percent of all minority-owned businesses, but many of them are also owned by immigrants and Latinas. Despite this level of activity, Latino-owned businesses tend to start smaller and remain smaller than their counterparts, even as they mature, creating an opportunity gap that prevents our community from maximizing its job creation and wealth-building potential.

The success of the growing Hispanic population is inextricably linked to the success of our regional and national economy. For this reason, GPHCC has created the 2020 Latino Small Business Agenda, which outlines policies and actions we will prioritize, based on membership surveys, industry focus groups and the results of the Chamber's 2019 Annual Meeting.

We are committed to closing the opportunity gap for the betterment of the regional economy and to reducing the structural poverty that hampers the growth and development of our city. When our legislators craft policies that support the Hispanic population, jobs are created, wealth is created, and we become more competitive. On behalf of the board of directors of GPHCC, we look forward to working with our leaders in government, in the private and nonprofit sectors to build a stronger economy for all.

Respectfully,

Jennifer I. Rodríguez, MCP  
President & CEO

Lou Rodriguez  
Chair

## Hispanics and the Economy

Since 2012, Hispanics have not only outpaced all demographic groups in startup businesses in the US, but they also comprise 40 percent of all minority owned businesses. Furthermore, many of these businesses are immigrant- owned.

The growth of Hispanic startup businesses is due in great part to Latina business owners—who drive 50 percent of the growth. However, despite thriving in terms of business creation, when measured in financial terms, Hispanic businesses tend to start small and remain small even as they mature, creating a \$1.3 trillion opportunity gap in revenue on an annual basis.



“WHEN IT COMES TO HAVING AN IMPACT ON THE U.S. ECONOMY, LATINOS ARE FAR MORE THAN JUST CONSUMERS; THEY ARE AN ENTREPRENEURIAL FORCE.”

Stanford Latino Entrepreneurship Initiative

The financial growth and scaling of Hispanic businesses is expected to accelerate throughout the next decade, which presents opportunities not only for Hispanic business owners to succeed, but also for communities to build wealth.

At 38 percent, the Hispanic community in Philadelphia observes the highest poverty rate of any group. The benefits of supporting the scaling of Hispanic businesses could be transformative for the community because a modest increase of one or two jobs in Latino-owned businesses could result in 22,000 jobs, significantly impacting unemployment and wealth.

To ensure that the growth of the Hispanic community is supported by a vibrant business sector, GPHCC has identified the following priorities:

### GPHCC Priorities

- Advocating for a Welcoming Business Environment
- Helping Latino-Owned Businesses Adopt Best Practices
- Supporting the Access, Management and Control of Capital
- Supporting Businesses in the Recruitment and Retention of a High-Quality Workforce
- Building the Social Capital of GPHCC’s Network
- Supporting Technology and Infrastructure Investments
- Encouraging International Trade and Commerce
- Supporting Immigration Reform

## Advocating for a Welcoming Business Environment

- Support the creation of a Business Owner’s Bill of Rights, an initiative championed by the Sustainable Business Network, which would set customer service standards for city agencies and would include the right for a business to appeal a decision, and transparency and objectivity in decision-making.
- Restructure tax policies that discourage start-ups and make it difficult for small businesses to comply with regulations. Some examples include, the elimination of the Business Income and Receipts Tax (BIRT) and redefining “new company” for tax incentive calculations.
- Empower the Special Committee on Regulatory Review and Reform, created by City Council, to ensure its recommendations receive timely consideration and a vote.
- Modernize licensing and permitting requirements by conducting regular reviews of state and local business licensing requirements and regulations.
- Hold government entities accountable for a thorough community engagement process related to issues that affect small businesses.
- Advocate for regulations that are part of a larger, strategic effort to support local business development and not a patchwork of legislation adopted in reaction to perceived and/or existing challenges.
- Advocate for public investment in safer, cleaner and attractive neighborhood commercial corridors.
- Ease licensing and regulations in order to spur growth in key industries for the Hispanic, including but not limited to, food preparation and beauty salons.
- Advocate for increased accountability and testing for fraud in supplier diversity contracts.
- Support local procurement and supplier diversity programs and policies that provide an effective *on-ramp* for Hispanic businesses that want to increase their business-to-business (B2B) portfolio.
- Support programs and policies that provide opportunities for Latino businesses to establish in thriving commercial corridors/nodes, such as Center City, the Philadelphia Airport, Fishtown, and University City.



## Helping Latino-Owned Businesses Adopt Best Practices

- Educate businesses on the importance of filing taxes, keeping adequate accounting and risk management practices, etc.
- Promote higher utilization of business incentives and resources.
- Secure access to affordable high-quality business education programs that are geographically and language accessible.
- Advocate for investment in affordable high-speed internet access and technology education for micro-businesses (\$1 million or less in revenue) that incorporates essential skills for business owners.
- Support technical assistance investments that are focused on commercial corridors in order to leverage business clusters and their ecosystems.

## Supporting the Access, Management and Control of Capital

- Ensure equitable access to the capital ecosystem.
- Promote expanded use of equity investments for small businesses, not only in technology, but also in traditional sectors.
- Advocate for transparency and responsible practices in lending.
- Advocate for the creation of flexible debt/financing products.
- Support investments in mission-driven financial institutions, especially those with strong track records of serving the Latino community.



**70** % of GPHCC members surveyed indicated that providing employee benefits is a significant business challenge.

## Supporting Businesses in the Recruitment and Retention of a High-Quality Workforce

- Identify and advocate for affordable healthcare solutions for small businesses.
- Identify and advocate for affordable retirement benefit solutions for small businesses.
- Advocate for affordable childcare solutions for employees of small businesses.
- Support development of apprenticeship programs and career skills training.
- Support diversity and inclusion in corporations, government and large institutions, particularly in senior and executive positions.

## Building the Social Capital of GPHCC's Network

- Build social capital through networks and develop ecosystems in key industries.
- Advocate for the appointment of Latinos to boards and leadership positions.
- Develop the leadership skills of emerging Latino professionals.

## Supporting Technology & Infrastructure Investments

- Investment in public transportation systems that improve the movement of the workforce.
- Road and pedestrian improvements along commercial corridors and main thoroughfares.
- Advocate for investment in affordable high-speed internet access and technology education for micro-businesses (\$1 million or less in revenue) that incorporates essential skills for business owners.
- Support improvement and maintenance of aging infrastructure.

## Encouraging International Trade & Commerce

- Help Hispanic businesses access international networks.
- Support the development of international trade relations in Latin America.

## Supporting Immigration Reform

- Support the passing of a comprehensive immigration law guaranteeing eventual citizenship for those who play by the rules and contribute to our economic success, coupled with appropriate and reasonable employment verification provisions.
- Find a long-term solution for recipients of Deferred Action for Child Arrivals (DACA), understanding that young immigrants like the Dreamers work at small businesses, start new ventures at higher rates and contribute to our nation's economic success.
- Find a long-term solution for recipients of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), understanding that many workers who are integral to our nation's economic success would lose their legal status and their ability to continue contributing to the economy if the program were to end.
- Support expansion of the H-1B visa program to allow more visas for low-skilled workers.
- Create a "Startup Visa" for foreign-born entrepreneurs who wish to start a business in the United States.
- Support the granting of drivers' licenses for undocumented immigrants.

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