



September 22, 2022

Dr. Hannah Gill
Director, Latino Migration Project
3205 Fed Ex Global Education Center
301 Pittsboro Street, Chapel Hill NC 27599-3205

Letter of Support and Direct Partnership

Dear Dr. Gill,

As the president of El Puente Hispano, I am thrilled to share my support for the application from the City of Concord and El Puente Hispano to the Local Government Language Access Collaborative.

El Puente is Cabarrus County's only nonprofit focused solely on meeting the needs of our Hispanic population. El Puente's mission is to fill the gap in culturally aware, Spanish-language services by offering free after-school activities, ESL classes, workshops, mental health therapy, food vouchers, information, vaccines, and referrals to the Latino community. El Puente also works with local organizations to build their capacity and tailor their work through an equity lens that incorporates the needs and concerns of our Latino neighbors.

The City of Concord has been an invaluable partner for our organization since its inception. They have supported our efforts to better the lives of Latino families in Concord in many and various ways. For example, they have contributed financially to our tutoring programs for Latino students and our English classes for their parents. In addition, year after year, their Fire Department has partnered with us to teach Latinos CPR techniques and their Police Department has joined forces with El Puente to educate the Latino community about their rights and responsibilities; their Parks and Recreation Department has developed exercise programs in Spanish, so families are more encouraged to participate. The commitment from the City to include everyone is such that they joined forces with El Puente to host an annual international Festival to celebrate diversity and promote a more inclusive community.

The City's efforts to promote an equitable community are impressive, but the need is enormous. During the 2016 and 2020 Cabarrus Needs Assessments, Latinos identified communication as one of the main barriers to accessing services and local resources. The Latino community was one of the most vulnerable and most financially, physically, and mentally impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in our area, and the Latino communities most affected are among the least able to access information, medical attention, and financial assistance. Communication, trust, cultural differences, and knowledge of local resources are great challenges faced by Latinos in our City.

If selected to become part of this initiative, we commit to working alongside the City of Concord to formulate strategies and advocate for policies that address these challenges. We want to bridge communication and cultural gaps between the City and the Latino community. We will use the trust that the community has in us, our talents, resources, and connections to help create a plan that engages individuals from all backgrounds. Hence they feel they belong and contribute to this community where residents can live, highlighting our similarities while embracing and celebrating our differences.

Best regards,
Sandra Torres
President, El Puente Hispano