

# Latinx Community Center for Empowerment (LCCE)

**FOUNDED:** 2019

**CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET:** \$257,000

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People of Hispanic descent are the fastest-growing group in the United States. (Note: For maximum inclusivity, the terms Latinx, Latino, Latine, and Hispanic will be used interchangeably.) Research from the Pew Research Center projects that the Latino population in the United States will rise to 128 million by 2060, more than doubling in size from today. In Lowell, nearly 20% of the adult population and almost half of the school-aged children identify as Latinx.

Despite this, there are very few Latinos in positions of influence across academic, economic, and civic institutions. This lack of representation in civic life is the result of multiple barriers that Latine individuals face—such as limited language skills and knowledge of the system and little connection to others in the various communities—when trying to access resources and opportunities.

The Latinx Community Center for Empowerment (LCCE) works to break down these barriers by helping people build on their strengths and get connected to a network. LCCE's programs focus on promoting civic engagement, workforce development, financial education, and community events that connect and celebrate the variety of Hispanic cultures. The result is a more civically-engaged community where the Latinx perspective is represented across all aspects of civic life.

## Two-Year Goals

- **Double** the number of English language classes by offering evening options
- **Hire** 8 full-time staff from the LCCE community to build organizational capacity
- **Expand** the participants in workforce development programming by 250%
- **Deepen and expand** partnerships with Latinx-serving institutions

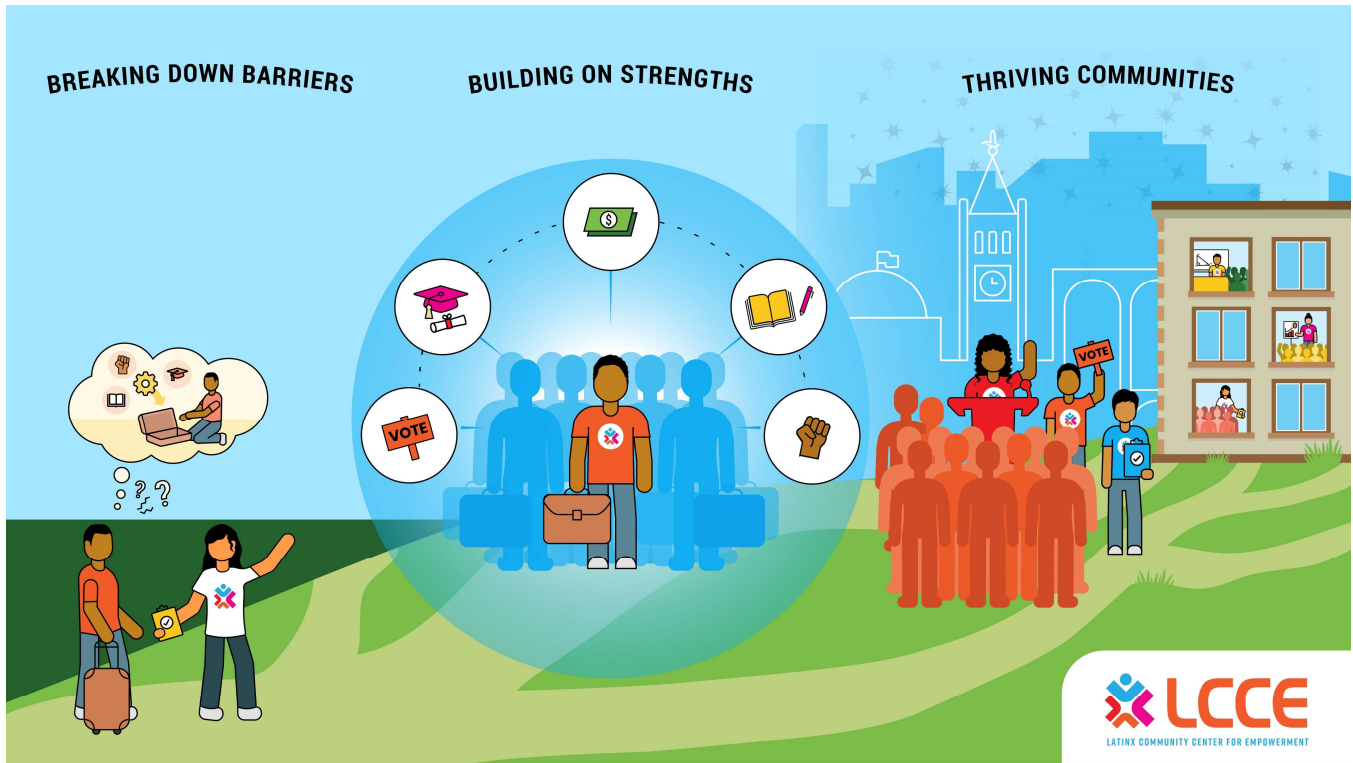
## Investment Opportunity

Latinx Community Center for Empowerment (LCCE) is seeking \$1M over the next two years. These funds will allow LCCE to invest in building its organizational capacity and infrastructure through hiring program staff who are already in the LCCE network and represent the Latine community in Lowell. Funding will also support program development to meet the growing need through expanded workforce development programs in collaboration with local and state entities and increased classroom space to accommodate additional English classes.

## Ways to Invest

- Sponsor the Lowell Hispanic and Latinx Festival
- Provide scholarships for students to participate in language classes
- Help LCCE secure a space of its own
- Donate technology for classes and professional attire
- Connect LCCE to potential partners and collaborators

# LCCE MODEL



## Approach

Many Latinos come to the US with a set of tools, knowledge, and expertise, but they don't always know how to put them to use because of a language barrier, limited access to information, or lack of a network.

LCCE helps people find the path that will lead them to success by building on their strengths and making connections to resources. LCCE also works to change the social conditions by providing community organizations with training and guidance on culturally competent practices for serving the Latinx community.

By working to empower and uplift individuals and advocating for their voices, LCCE promotes a thriving city where there is Latinx representation across the civic, social, and economic life of the community.

## Program Areas

LCCE has four main program areas: civic education and engagement, workforce development, financial education, and community building. All LCCE's programs are designed to meet the specific and diverse needs of the Hispanic community.

## Civic Education and Engagement

These activities aim to increase Latinx participation and representation in the democratic process, including voter registration, citizenship preparation, and canvassing activities. Programs are targeted specifically for first- and second-generation immigrants from the Latin American region who bring a wide range of beliefs about democracy.

LCCE also partners with other community organizations, which provide participants with workshops about immigrant rights as well as legal clinics for individualized assistance.



### Workforce Development

LCCE provides tailored support to help participants access the workforce, including English language classes, resume advice, interview prep, professional clothing, and job placement. LCCE recently completed a successful pilot of a GED class for adult learners that will continue to grow.

### Financial Education

LCCE provides financial literacy classes that address the specific needs of the Latine community who tend to live in multigenerational households, which creates specific financial challenges and stressors. In addition, LCCE hosts a financial symposium where the local banks and credit unions share information about how to navigate the process of applying for accounts, loans, and mortgages through their institutions.

### Community Building

LCCE hosts the annual Hispanic and Latinx Festival to celebrate and showcase the multiple cultures in the Latin American region. To amplify important leaders in the Latine community, LCCE created and maintains the Lowell Latinx Archive, housed at Lowell History and UMass Lowell.

*“Our ability to incorporate racial equity in our strategic planning process is directly related to our partnership with LCCE and their willingness to guide our approach for the needs of the Latinx community.”*

— Devin Gilmore, Lowell Public Health Department

## Leadership & Governance

Diego Leonardo is the Founder and Executive Director of LCCE. Trained as a scientist, Diego has extensive leadership experience in the biotech sector. His work is inspired by his own lived experience in an immigrant family navigating resources for the Latinx community in Lowell.

The LCCE Board of Directors and Advisory Committees include 7 community members who represent the diversity of perspectives, needs, and aspirations of the Latinx community in Lowell. Their collective experience and expertise includes the areas of public health, research and evaluation, finance, social services, and state resources.

## Financial Sustainability

With a largely volunteer team, LCCE has been successful in securing support from foundations, public contracts, corporate sponsors, and individual donors. Over the next two years, LCCE will increase staff to grow organizational capacity across programs, development, and communications. LCCE is also looking to build a revenue stream from providing culturally relevant training and guidance to Latinx-serving institutions, such as universities, companies, and municipal agencies.

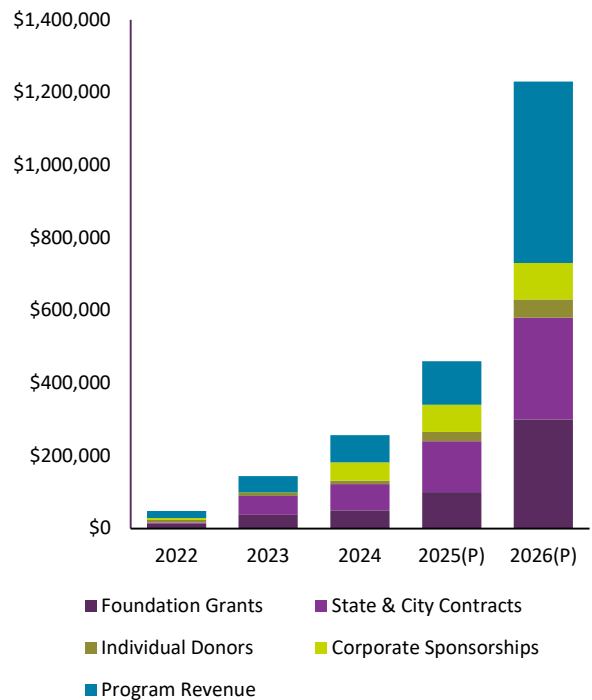
### KEY INVESTORS

- Berkshire Bank
- The Boston Foundation
- City of Lowell
- Democracy Hub
- Greater Lowell Community Foundation
- Massachusetts Cultural Council
- Mass Humanities
- Massachusetts Voter Table

### KEY PARTNERS

- Coalition for a Better Acre
- Community Teamwork
- Lowell Alliance
- Lowell Community Health Center
- Lowell Public Schools
- Middlesex Community College
- The Center for Hope and Healing

### Revenue by Source





## Success Story

### JONATHAN

Jonathan came to the Latinx Community Center for Empowerment looking for help accessing the workforce. As a refugee from Nicaragua who also has a disability, he didn't know where or how to start looking for a job. Jonathan said, "It was hard to come to this country and be in a place where I'm not accepted for who I really am."

Jonathan enrolled in LCCE's Saturday morning English language classes, got assistance with his resume, and accessed job placement resources. Additionally, he was motivated to return to school and is currently working on his pre-med requirements at Nashua Community College.

LCCE hired Jonathan as a part-time staff member and he's now one of the most positively-received teachers. Of his experience with LCCE, Jonathan says, "They always treated me like a person and helped me see a world of opportunity for myself."

## Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below is a summary of the key measures that LCCE tracks to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, incorporate lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary.

	FY 2024	FY 2025(P)	FY 2026(P)
<b>Program Performance</b>			
Number of students in HiSET (GED track)	10	25	30
Number of students in English language classes	153	250	300
Number of educators trained	300	350	450
Hispanic & Latinx Festival attendees	1,600	2,000	5,000
<b>Organizational Health/Capacity-Building</b>			
Number of full-time staff	1	4	8
Number of Board members	7	11	15
% of Latinx Board members	90	90	90
Available classroom space (sq. ft.)	2,100	2,800	4,200
Total Revenue	\$257,000	\$460,000	\$1,230,000

## Social Impact

As the Latinx population continues to grow, there is an increasing need for services to help people navigate the path towards economic and social development and civic engagement. LCCE works to reduce the barriers, build on individual strengths, and strengthen a feeling of connectedness across the Latino community. When people have access to opportunities and can connect to a network, the civic, social, and economic life of the city will thrive. LCCE envisions a community where there is Latinx representation across the board from education to government and business to civic engagement.

Below is the summary of the social impact that LCCE aspires to have in the next two years.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2026(P)
% students who complete English classes	83	90
% workforce development participants placed with a job	100	100
% participants who feel welcome at LCCE	100	95
% participants who feel LCCE helped them connect to resources they didn't previously know about	94	95