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Funders' Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities awards grants to thirteen Latino nonprofits in the D.C. area

(Washington, D.C., August 11, 2008) – The Washington Area Funders' Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities announced the award of \$375,000 to support 13 Latino organizations in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, marking the local Collaborative's second anniversary and its second round of grants for Latino communities.

The Collaborative is a multi-million dollar effort led by Hispanics in Philanthropy, bringing together local, national and transnational funders and corporations to build capacity among small- and medium-sized Latino nonprofit organizations through grants and technical assistance. The Washington, D.C. metropolitan area is one of 18 sites across the U.S. and Latin America.

The local Collaborative is a unique cross-sector partnership of foundations, corporations, government agencies, and international organizations. The local partners of the Collaborative are the Inter-American Development Bank, Fannie Mae, the Eugene & Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, GEICO, the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs, and the Washington Area Women's Foundation. Of the 18 sites, it is the only one that includes partners from such a diverse range of sectors. "We all believe there is tremendous value in investing in the capacity of these leaders and their organizations and hope that more funders will join us for year three," said Danielle M. Reyes, Meyer Foundation program officer and chair of the local Collaborative.

While most funding initiatives support programs and services, the Funders' Collaborative supports capacity-building projects that strengthen the infrastructures of nonprofit organizations. In its second round of grants, the Collaborative has sought both to build on the successes of organizations previously funded and to reach out to new organizations.

"We must all make the commitment to enhance the long-term stability and capacity of effective philanthropies and nonprofit organizations targeting disadvantaged populations," said Luis Alberto Moreno, president of the Inter-American Development Bank. "This collaborative is one more expression of the enormous possibilities that are generated when international organizations and the public, private and nonprofit sectors come together."

The newly funded organizations include Hispanics Against Child Abuse and Neglect, which will develop a strategic plan to guide the organization's growth over the next several years. "When we founded HACAN in 1985, we had a dream of reaching out to as many Hispanic families as we could about the issues of child abuse and neglect to help prevent child abuse in our

communities,” said executive director Carmen Fernandez. “With the help of this grant, we are developing the knowledge, abilities, and strategies we need to make those dreams into a reality.” Some of the funded organizations, such as Escuela Bolivia in Arlington, are relatively young and have annual budgets of less than \$200,000. In 2007, the support of the Collaborative allowed Escuela Bolivia to hire its first full-time staff person, and, in 2008, funds will allow the organization to assess and improve the effectiveness of its programs.

Other funded organizations have longer histories and larger budgets, such as the Latino Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), which was founded in 1991 to improve the wealth-building capacity of low and moderate-income Latinos. “Thanks to a grant in 2007, Latino Economic Development Corporation was able to research options for a social enterprise to help us achieve greater self-sufficiency,” said Manuel Hidalgo, the organization’s executive director. “This year, the Collaborative’s continued support will cover our enterprise’s business plan and launch. With the financial strength that this enterprise will give us, LEDC will put into practice the business advice we give to entrepreneurs all over the Greater Washington Area.”

All six of the funders who participated in the first year of the Collaborative have renewed their support for the initiative. “The efficacy with which we were able to leverage our resources through the first year of the Collaborative persuaded us to double our support for its second round of grantmaking,” said Mercedes Lemp, director of the Office on Latino Affairs. “Being part of this collaborative greatly enhances our support to Latino nonprofits, and we are already seeing how our investment is yielding social returns.”

Phyllis R. Caldwell, president of the Washington Area Women’s Foundation, said the Women’s Foundation “is proud to continue to support the Collaborative this year. Those grantees chosen in its first year, and this new cadre, demonstrate the Collaborative’s collective strength in identifying innovative organizations doing vital work among the Hispanic community—many of which are also making a lasting, focused impact on the lives of Hispanic women and girls.”

Diana Campoamor, president of Hispanics in Philanthropy, said, “In the D.C. area, we’re fortunate to work with a group of local philanthropic leaders who have a strong track record of working with Latino communities. Through the Collaborative, HIP brings national funds to the region, while drawing on the knowledge and expertise of our local funding partners.”

Hispanics in Philanthropy is a transnational network of grantmakers, founded in 1983 on the belief that philanthropy should be more inclusive and responsive to communities of color. HIP was created in response to the under-funding of Latino communities across the country. Although Hispanics make up approximately fifteen percent of the population of the U.S., Latino-serving organizations receive less than two percent of foundation funding. HIP’s mission is to increase resources for the Latino and Latin American civil sector, as well as to increase Latino participation and leadership throughout philanthropy.

HIP launched The Funders’ Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities in 2000, and as of July 2008, the Funders’ Collaborative has raised more than 36 million and committed funding in 18 sites to 466 Latino community organizations that provide invaluable programs and services to the most vulnerable segments of the Latino population.