



The Latinx Community in Pinellas County

An entry point to building a strong foundation of data and support for the Latinx community.



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Introduction

This report aims to craft a baseline narrative of the Latinx community in Pinellas County that informs, guides and deploys an equity strategy. This narrative seeks to address the community that has no clear racial identification and faces labels as well as categories that fail to reflect Latinx's views and experiences (Gonzalez-Hermoso and Santos).

Through connection, conversation, and creativity, a group of community volunteers, *MiGente*, seek to:

- shape the Latinx narrative,
- listen for modalities to create inclusion and belonging,
- heal with each other,
- build capacity for unity and equity through advocacy

MiGente MiPueblo is committed to amplifying the stories of Latinx, healing internalized oppressive behaviors and attitudes, and advocating for systematic changes. The group aims to create and share space to empower the Latinx narrative safely. They prioritize building social movements across places, people, and issues. [With these driving goals, the need for an authentic portrait of Tampa Bay Latinx families and individuals is crucial.](#)

Florida possesses the 3rd largest Latinx population in the nation. According to the US Census, the Tampa Bay area refers to the Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco counties, or the Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Clearwater metropolitan areas. In the Tampa Bay area, Latinx families continue to plant roots and call the area home. They consist of engaged community residents, innovative business owners, creative artists, educators, healers, and equity advocates.

Of the 331 million people in the United States (U.S.), 18% are Latinx, which is closely mirrored in Pinellas County, where the Latinx population represents 10.2% of residents (U.S. Census Bureau). While Pinellas County has 24 cities, the largest representation of Latinx in St. Petersburg (8.7% Latinx), Clearwater (17.8%), and Largo (11.5%) (Unite Pinellas Data Explorer). Therefore, the report will focus on the aforementioned areas and draw comparisons as inferences where possible.

The data visualized and reviewed presents recommendations for systemic improvements and considerations for how to close identified gaps in the Latinx community in Pinellas County.

Data in this report will be leveraged to identify gaps, community needs, and trends, specifically, examining the various educational, wealth, and poverty levels and the economic impact Latinx contributes to the county. These areas will be compared to other racial and ethnic groups to show disparities and areas where Latinx is underrepresented.

Methodology & Terminology

Demographics will be identified according to geographic location, inferences will be drawn based on the data collected, and a discussion will be held on available versus unavailable Latinx-related data. The method used to distinguish these factors was breaking down the county by its three largest cities, St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and Largo.

The most notable statistics about the Latinx community in Pinellas County are in the key facts below.

The next section of this report discusses the three largest cities and the associated census tracts where the most Latinx reside. While each city has upwards of 20 census tracts, the highest Latinx populated census tracts were recorded, and the demographics of the zip codes in which the tracts fall are discussed. The purpose of defining the census tracts' demographics is to provide details on where exactly the majority of Latinx are living, determine if they are living together, address gaps, and identify the other minoritized neighbors.

The education, wealth, poverty, and economic mobility of the Latinx community in Pinellas County is reflected in the geographic location of the majority of the Latinx community. Graduation rates on Latinx were easily accessed, along with other forms of higher education; however, the wealth distribution in Pinellas County was not entirely reflective of the Latinx population. The limitations that follow discuss what we know about the Latinx community but mostly the gaps in available data and why.

Many terms will be used throughout this narrative to tell the story, beginning with “Latinx. Spanish is a gendered language differentiating between masculine and feminine terms through words like “Latina” and “Latino.” Although the Royal Academy of Spanish rejects the use of Latinx, the word Latinx was cultivated and is now often used as a gender-neutral neologism (Clarín). Latinx is a term used as an identifier for a spectrum of identities, where the intersectionalities from many Latinx are acknowledged. Yet, there is little awareness about the word “Latinx,” particularly among older Latinos, aiming to create a more inclusive term within a gendered language (Noe-Bustamante et al. 12). Whenever possible, individuals will be contextualized based on other descriptors, for example, national identity or ethnicity. An ethnic identification is distinct from a racial identification. Indeed, Latinx individuals can further identify as Black, Afro-Latino, White, or Asian. Throughout this report, there will be terms such as “Latinx (non-White) or (White).” The terms above are helpful in racially identifying the Latinx population discussed.

KEY FACTS

18% of (approximately 59.5 million people) the U.S. population identifies as Latinx;

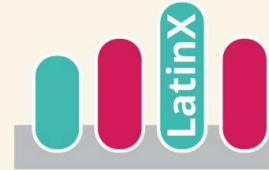
26% of Florida's population (21,236,667 people) consists of Latinx.



10.2 %

of Pinellas County are Latinx as of 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau).

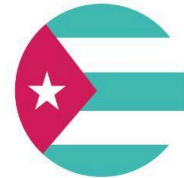
Latinx is the third most common ethnic group in **Pinellas County.**



12.1% of Pinellas County residents who identify as Latinx were born outside of the U.S.



The most common birthplace for foreign-born residents of Florida **is Cuba.**



7.46%

of Latinx identify as White (Hispanic) according to the 2019 census .

Of the 14.4% of Pinellas County Citizens who are non-English speakers, **7%** speak Spanish as their first language, with **Greek** and **Vietnamese** being the following two most common first languages.

Latinx are the **third largest** ethnic group living below the poverty line in Pinellas County.



Latinx Population

(percentage by nation, state, and county)

Location	Latinx
US	18.3%
Florida	26%
Pinellas County	10.7%

Key Facts

- 18% of (approximately 59.5 million people) the U.S. population identifies as Latinx; 26% of Florida’s population (21,236,667 people) consists of Latinx.
- 10.2 % of Pinellas County are Latinx as of 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau).
- Latinx is the third most common ethnic group in Pinellas County.
- 12.1% of Pinellas County residents who identify as Latinx were born outside of the U.S.
- The most common birthplace for foreign-born residents of Florida is Cuba.
- 7.46% of Latinx identify as White (Hispanic) according to the 2019 census .
- Of the 14.4% of Pinellas County Citizens who are non-English speakers, 7% speak Spanish as their first language, with Greek and Vietnamese being the following two most common first languages.
- Latinx are the third largest ethnic group living below the poverty line in Pinellas County.

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Pinellas County

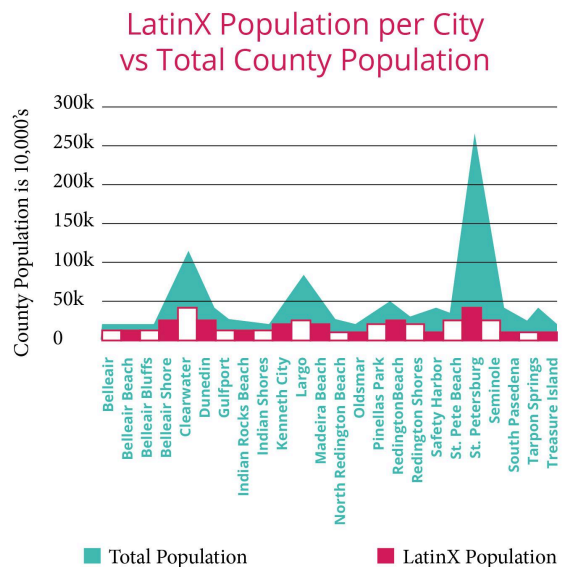
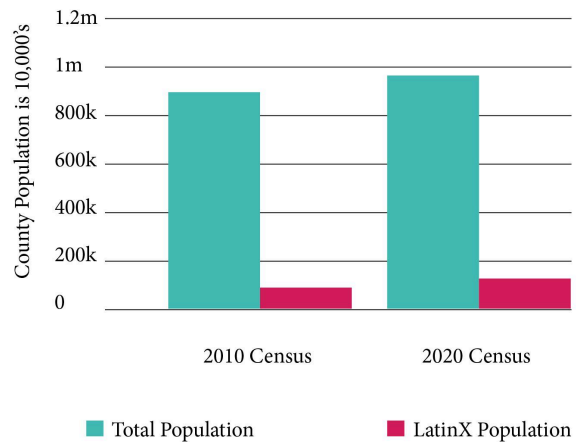
Pinellas County is the sixth-largest county in Florida and possesses the tenth-largest Latinx population in Florida. (U.S. Census Bureau). As of 2019, Pinellas County was made up of 99,408 Latinx (U.S. Census Bureau). That number increased by 2.7% to a total of 105,149 Latinx people in 2020. With 982,705 people, Pinellas County is home to 24 cities. The three largest cities are St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and Largo, which are home to the largest Latinx population in the county. Nearly 10.2% of the population within these cities are Latinx, which is non-reflective of the national (18.31%) or state (26%) level population. Nearly 14.4% of Pinellas County residents are non-English speakers (the national average of non-English speakers is 21.9%; the state average is 30.3%). Indeed, the most common language spoken among the non-English speakers is Spanish (7%).

In 2019, 12.1%, or approximately 116,000 residents of Pinellas County, were born outside of the United States. The most common birthplace for foreign-born citizens in Florida is Cuba, followed by Haiti and then Colombia. Further, 4.92% of Pinellas County residents are non-citizens, of which 37.9% were born in Latin America.

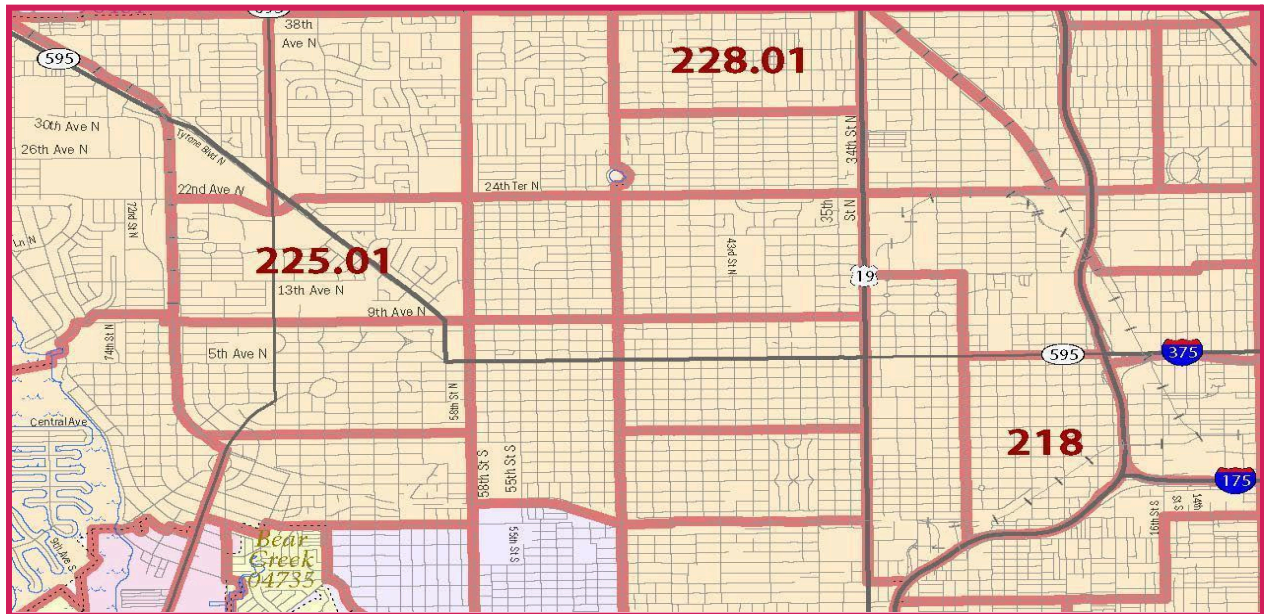
St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and Largo

As mentioned above, St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and Largo are the three largest cities in Pinellas County (by population). These cities are also home to many Latinx, with Clearwater having one of Florida's largest Latinx populations (17.8%).

Pinellas County Overview



St. Petersburg

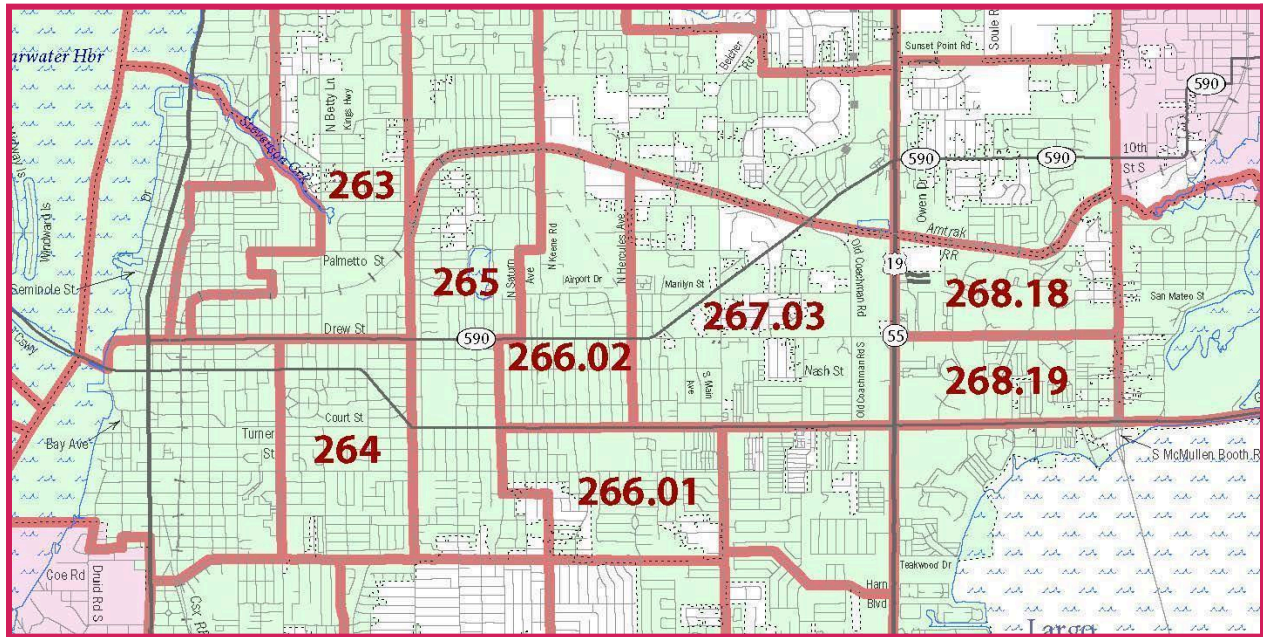


Census tracts 225.01 (4,934 residents), 228.01 (5,383 residents), and 218 (2516 residents) (total St. Petersburg population is 261,338) show the highest concentrated Latinx areas in St. Petersburg. The highest Latinx populations seem to be spread out among two zip codes within St. Petersburg - 33712 and 33713. Tracts 228.01 and 218 comprise the Disston Heights and Historic Kenwood neighborhoods, respectively. The majority of community members (76.32%) within 33712 identify as Black, while 3% identify as Latinx. The median household income for zip code 33712 is \$35,109, and school performance is functioning below average.

The majority (67.46%) of residents within the 33713 zip code identify as non-Hispanic White. Additional populations within the 33713 zip code include Black and African Americans (10.6%) and Latinx (9.59%).

The third census tract, farthest from 218 and 228.01, is 225.01 (also known as Garden Manor neighborhood). This tract is located in zip code 33710 and is 20.1% Latinx. The zip code is made up of majority non-Hispanic Whites, with Latinx being the second largest demographic. The area of zip code 33710 comprises approximately 11 census tracts, but only one tract, 226.01, in the area is highly concentrated with Latinx (21.1%). Of grade school students in the public school system in this zip code, 12.6% are Latinx.

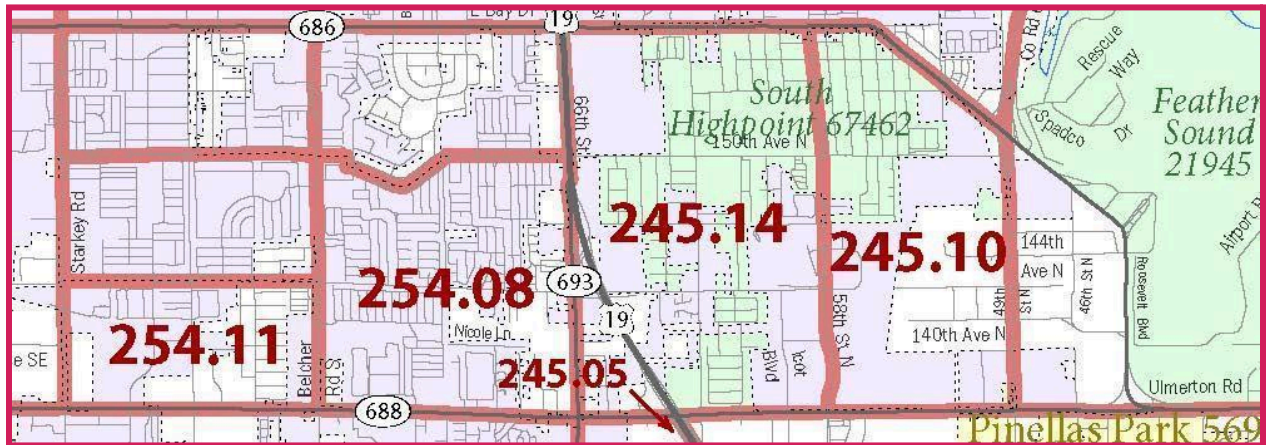
Clearwater



Clearwater has multiple census tracts that are heavily populated with Latinx. The census tract with the highest Latinx population is 264 at 39.2%. As seen in the map above, all but two tracts are south of the train (denoted by a gray line) and further inland from the water. All eight tracts are located within the two zip codes, 33765 and 33755. Median household income for 33765 and 33755 is \$45,926, respectively. Within 33765, LatinX make up 37.7% of the public school population, which is only 2% lower than the grade school non-Hispanic Whites. Public schools in this zipcode are performing above average. Approximately 12.6% of Latinx individuals reside within 33755. The median household income is \$42,134, and schools are performing below average in this zip code.

This narrative will focus heavily on tract 264 because of its high percentage of Latinx and foreign-born residents. Of the 77.9% of foreign-born residents living in tract 264, 76.8% were born in Latin America. Within this tract, 31.4% of the population speak Spanish as their first language, and 16.1% of them reported that they do not speak English “very well.” Of all residents between the ages of 18 and 65 in tract 264, 20.8% reported living below the poverty line (\$26,500 for a household of 4).

Largo



Largo is a neighboring city south of Clearwater. Of the three largest cities, Largo had a consistent 24% of Latinx in close proximity (approximately 4 miles) to each other, spread out across two zip codes, 33760 and 33764. The layouts of these zip codes lock in the Latinx population. Observing the illustration above, 245.05 and 254.08 are bordering tracts; however, 71.9% Whites and 10.8% Asians reside in tract 245.05, which is in an entirely different zip code than the surrounding tracts. The first zip code, 33760 had a median household income of \$41,770, and the public-school majority is 42.8% Latinx. Like other heavily populated Latinx communities, many young Latinx reside in this zip code, where the public schools perform poorly (significantly below average). The second zip code, 33764, comprises only 8.39% Latinx, but the public-school count for Latin attending school is 25.4%. The schools in this zipcode are performing above average. According to the postal service, this zip code is addressed as Clearwater; however, the tracts that fall within the zip code are located in Largo.

Education

89.5% of Latinx in Florida high schools graduate, and Latinx females (92%) are more likely to graduate than males (86.6%). Not much is known about the education status of grade school students in Pinellas County; however, in 2019, Pinellas County Schools gathered data to distinguish the Latinx population in public schools throughout the county. There are a total of 101,427 students (Pre-K - 12th) in Pinellas County Schools, and 17.7% of them are Latinx. The 2021 graduation rate across all Pinellas County students was 91.5%, with the rate for Latinx at 92.5%. The graduation rate of Latinx in Pinellas County is higher than the 2019 national average (82%).

Education Level	Hispanic Population
Less than High School Diploma	17.1%
Bachelors degree or higher	26.2%
High School graduate or GED	26.7%
Some college or associates degree	30%

The education breakdown for Latinx is described in the table to the right. Latinx with less than an HS diploma is 17.1%. Latinx with a bachelor's degree or higher is 26.2%. Those with a high school diploma or GED is 26.7%, and Latinx with some college or associate's degree falls at 30%. This data is according to the census data in Pinellas County for 2020.

Wealth, Poverty and Economic Mobility

The census tracts described above can be utilized to determine the wealth distribution and economic mobility of the Latinx community in Pinellas County. However, there is a lot of data missing in this regard. While we determined poverty and wealth of the overall population of Pinellas County, still much is unknown about the Latinx community. We see that a fair percentage of Florida's Latinx population resides in Pinellas County and can determine where the majority of Latinx in the county are living (down to the neighborhood); however, the 2020 Census data has yet to provide detailed information on the socioeconomic status of Latinx in the area.

Nearly 13% of the population lives below the poverty line in Pinellas County. The largest race or ethnicity living in poverty in 2019 was Whites at 62.5%, followed by Blacks (18.3%) then Latinx (11.2%). However, according to a Pew Research study, in 2016, Whites were paid \$4 more per hour than Latinx. In the heavily populated Latinx census tracts described above, the poverty rates (by race) were majority White. The further inland within the county, the lower the overall income of families.

Furthermore, according to the Census tracts, most of Latinx in Pinellas County live in central areas and sometimes only two to three tracts away from the water (on both east and west sides of the county). The highest average salaries in Pinellas county (by race) are Asians, Whites, and American Indians. One of the reasons for relatively low unemployment rates in Pinellas County is due to the high employment rates of women and Latinx.

Limitations

While the information on the Latinx community in both Florida and the United States is relatively detailed, the information available on behalf of the Latinx community in Pinellas County is limited. This is the most prominent limitation we see in this report. We have yet to determine why, in both Largo and St. Petersburg, Latinx are living in close proximity to each other with similar median household incomes. The census tracts are an important tool in identifying where Latinx in Pinellas County are living and why. Zip code 33760 has public schools performing significantly below the poverty line, and this zip code was heavily populated by grade school Latinx. Zip code 33614 is across Old Tampa Bay and has 60% Latinx. While Pinellas County has one of the lower Latinx population rates of the largest counties in Florida, Hillsborough County, a neighboring county, has one of the larger Latinx populations.

For the most part, the county's economic development department is collecting data on behalf of housing authorities and equal housing acts; otherwise, the majority of the data is being collected and interpreted by the Census Bureau. A majority of the data found in this report was collected solely from the 2010 and 2020 censuses. Surprisingly not many philanthropic sectors have data or reports on behalf of the Latinx community in Pinellas County. There does not seem to be any light brought to the fact that not many organizations, businesses, or nonprofits are collecting data concerning areas in Pinellas County. While this data is from the Census Bureau, it would be important to get qualitative data from philanthropic organizations, schools, community members, and leaders to fully understand what is happening with the Latinx and Black and African American communities in Pinellas county.

Aspirations and Next Steps

We hoped to shed light on the accessible demographics available regarding Latinx living within the Pinellas County borders with this report. The data presented shows that Latinx represent over 10 percent of the Pinellas County population, and live fairly concentrated within a few zip codes, mainly located inland. We observe that public schools in these zip codes perform a full spectrum of below-average to above average. Yet the high school graduation rate of Latinx is fairly high and on par with the county's overall graduation rate.. Income information based on race and ethnicity is limited for Pinellas County. Still we know that the median household incomes by zip code where Latinx are concentrated fall between the low to the middle-income range.

Census Bureau data is easily accessible and gives us a snapshot of where and how people live , but there is much missing from the data. We continue to lack information that provides a full picture of who Latinx in Pinellas County are and their needs .

Some of our stated goals are to create a community for and within the Latinx population; and broaden the narrative about Latinx people, their history, needs and identities. Not only is more data needed to reveal a complete picture of the Latinx community, but there is also a need to reach out to those communities and begin building that narrative.

The fact that the Pinellas County statistics are lagging behind those of state and national tells us that the Latinx community in Pinellas County has gone mostly unseen and unaccounted for. This report confirms that opportunities are needed for Latinx people residing in the county to feel a sense of belonging to the larger community and to help catalyze their shared experiences and engagement with reliable data and authentic narratives.

Mi Gente Mi Pueblo invites the Latinx community to share their lived experiences and stories. This type of qualitative data emphasizes the human focus of Mi Gente's equity work. The daily happenings, struggles, barriers, and connection to each other must be illuminated. A deeper understanding of the present environment Latinx face will foster the ability to create the space, support, and change the Latinx community requires to not only survive, but thrive in Tampa Bay. With credible data and active listening to Latinx individuals and families, a representative and inclusive narrative of the Latinx diaspora living, working and contributing to this community can be established. We can begin to use narrative as a tool for social transformation, healing and systematic change.

We invite you to join us! You can email jessica@healthstpete.foundation for more information or to share your feedback.

Next Steps

- What data and narrative is needed to create a baseline of the transformation needed to serve equity with a Latinx community engaged?
- What are the things we care about and want to see? Any policy issues that are important and relevant to us? Who is housing these issues?
- Do we need more data on Latinx? Who has and can share what they know about Latinx in the Pinellas and/or Tampa Bay region?
- Who, where and how is Latinx considered as it relates to the issues below?
 - Racial equity
 - Leadership
 - Migration and forced displacement - elevate, amplify, acknowledge
 - Civic participation
 - Workforce Development, Entrepreneurship
 - Gender equity
 - Wealth resilience, health in our community
 - Education thriving
 - Technology access
 - Housing
 - Food Security
- Strengthening Latinx power, participation, relationships, and leadership.
- Improving channels of communication for/with/about Latinx communities
- amplifying and re-defining (where needed) the voice and stories/narratives of the Latinx community
- Create safety for Latinx communities and individuals to activate their participation (undocumented, whitewashed identities, conformity of narrative for job security)
- Who do we want/need to hold accountable for the inclusion of Latinx needs in the city, county, region?

MiGente: Our shared purpose is to advance equity for, with, and in the Latinx Community by building our political power, unity, and advocacy.

Our focus is on the following:

1. Developing & Shaping the Latinx Narrative (the data & stories)
2. Reimagine Healing Spaces (the belonging & inclusion)
3. Building Sustainability & Strategy for Advocacy (the systems change)

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