



LATINO AMERICANS

500 YEARS OF HISTORY

A national programming initiative of the
National Endowment for the Humanities
and the American Library Association



FINAL REPORT • FEBRUARY 2017



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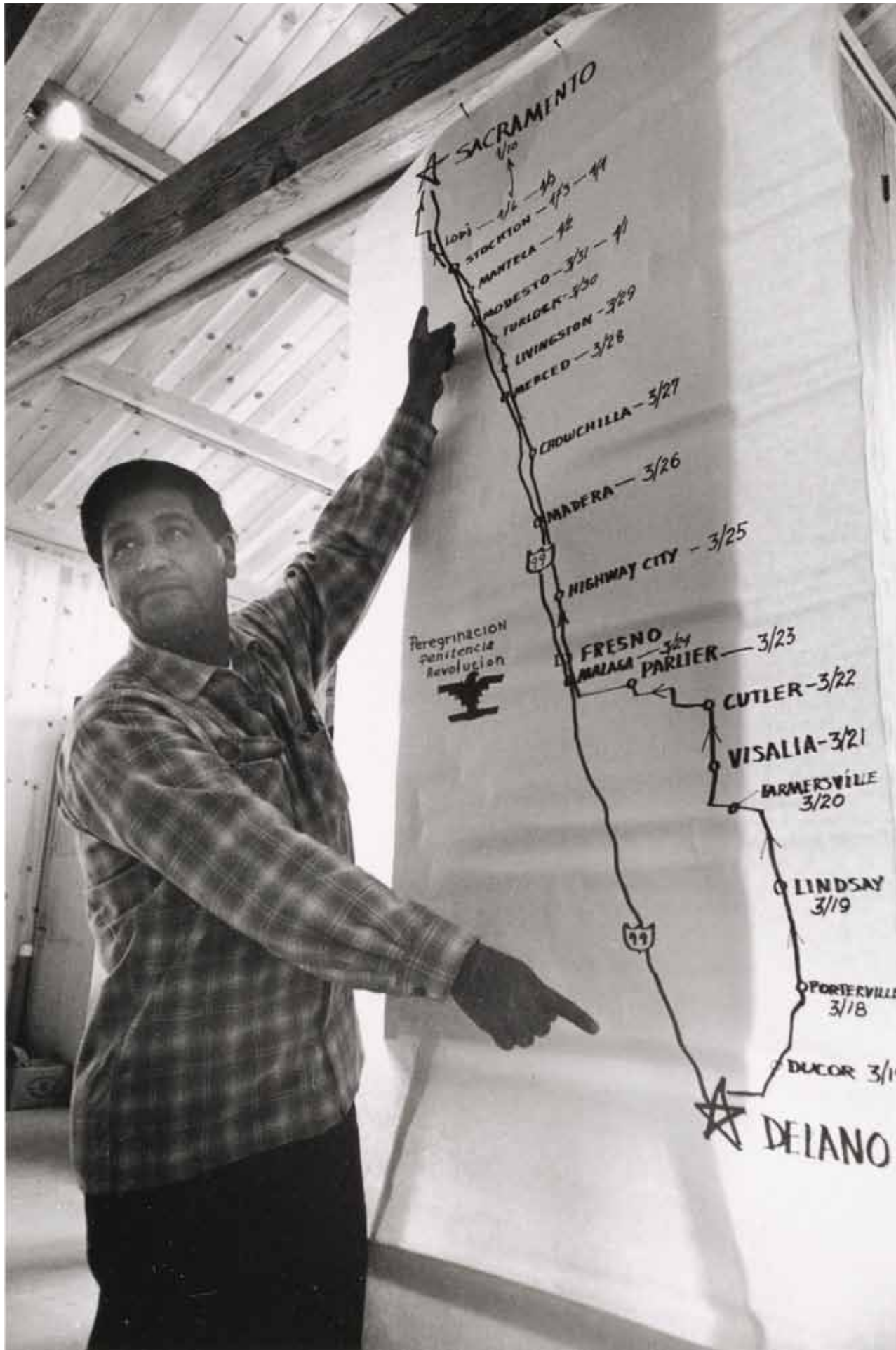


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A performer poses at the Somerset (N.J.) Public Library's Hispanic Heritage Festival in October 2015.



A crowd gathers around a piece of art at El Museo del Barrio's ¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York exhibit as part of the Queens Museum's LA500 programming.

**Latino Americans:
500 Years of History
— a nationwide
celebration of Latino
American history
and culture**

12
months

203
grantees

750
program
venues

\$1,008,000
in funding

Nearly
2,000
programs

450,000
people reached in communities
throughout
42
states and the District of Columbia

ABOUT LATINO AMERICANS: 500 YEARS OF HISTORY

With more than 50 million people of Latino descent currently residing in the United States, Latino Americans have become the nation's largest minority group. *Latino Americans: 500 Years of History* (LA500), produced by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the American Library Association (ALA), is a nationwide public programming initiative that supported the exploration of the rich and varied history and experiences of Latinos, who have helped shape the United States over the last five centuries.

More than **200 grantees around the country** — libraries, museums, state humanities councils, historical societies, and other nonprofits selected through a competitive application process — received funding, resources, and support to host festivals, collect oral histories, facilitate informed discussions, and hold other public events about Latino American history and culture between July 1, 2015, and July 1, 2016.

The cornerstone of the project was the six-part, NEH-supported documentary film *LATINO AMERICANS*, created for PBS in 2013 by the public television station WETA. The award-winning series chronicles Latinos in the United States from the 16th century to present day. All LA500 grantees hosted scholar-led viewing and discussion events that featured the documentary film.

As hoped, LA500 programming reached far and wide across the nation. Grantees represented 42 states and the District of Columbia, and comprised 78 public libraries, 68 college/university libraries and organizations, 19 community college libraries, 10 state humanities councils, 12 museums, and a variety of other nonprofit organizations. Fifty-seven organizations received \$10,000 grants, and 146 received \$3,000 grants, totaling \$1,008,000. In addition to financial support for programming, grantees received a copy of the *LATINO AMERICANS* DVD set with public performance rights; access to programming and humanities resources developed by national project scholars, librarian advisors, and outreach experts; and promotional materials to support local outreach.

Artists Marco Albarran, Martin Moreno, Jose Benavidas, Zarco Guerrero, and Norma Garcia-Torres pose with a mural at Chandler Gilbert Community College's Celebrating Local Latino Artists and Community Oral History exhibit in Chandler, Ariz. Photo courtesy of Michael Lucas.



A speaker at an LA500 program at the Queens Museum in Corona, N.Y.

The outcomes of LA500 have been varied and powerful.



Josh Salyers shows volunteers how to work recording equipment at Ignacio (Colo.) Public Libraries' Voices of Ignacio Oral History Project training workshop.

- **Houston Public Library** hosted an exhibit dedicated to remembering Houston's World War II Latino veterans through archival items.
- **Grand Performances**, a presenter of free performing arts in southern California, offered screenings, discussions, and recorded story circles on topics including Latina feminism, the importance of grassroots leadership, and the value of arts and culture in emerging communities.
- **Bakersfield College** commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Delano grape strike with a three-day symposium about the farm workers' movement.
- **The Fort Worth Human Relations Commission** collected stories and artifacts from Fort Worth's Latino community, culminating in an open house displaying the collection.
- **The Pioneer Valley History Network**, a consortium of historical societies, museums, libraries, and sites in western Massachusetts, created bilingual museum exhibits centered on current issues facing the area's growing Latino community.

Nearly 2,000 free public programs were held in more than 750 venues as part of LA500, and they were as varied as the communities that conceived them. In this report, we explore a handful of these educational and cultural offerings that enriched cities, towns, and campuses as part of this important initiative, as well as the people and organizations who made them possible.

THE SCHOLARS AND ADVISORS

Latino Americans: 500 Years of History would not have been possible without the support of a dedicated team of scholars and advisors. From the first planning meeting in September 2014 until the final programs concluded in June 2016, the following humanities scholars and public programming advisors were integral partners who lent their expertise and passion every step of the way, including the preparation of this report.

Humanities Scholars



Megan J. Elias (Director of Online Courses at the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History) is the lead faculty mentor for *Bridging Historias through Latino History and Culture: An NEH Bridging Cultures at Community Colleges Project* (funded 2012). She is also the author of *Stir It Up: Home Economics in American Culture*.



Maria Cristina Garcia (Howard A. Newman Professor of American Studies at Cornell University) conducts research on refugees, exiles, and transnationals in the Americas. She is the author of *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959-1994* and *Seeking Refuge: Central American Migration to Mexico, the United States, and Canada*.



Gary Gerstle (Paul Mellon Professor of American History at University of Cambridge) studies immigration, race, and nationality in the 20th century. He is the author of several books including *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*; *Ruling America: A History of Wealth and Power in a Democracy*; and *Working-Class Americanism*.



David Montejano (Professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley) is the author of several books of historical and political sociology including *Quixote's Soldiers: A Local History of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1981* and *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*.



Kristine Navarro-McElhaney (Research Administrator at Arizona State University, Interim Executive Director for the Oral History Association and a member of the governing board of the National Council on Public History) was a lead researcher for *The Bracero History Archive: Collaborative Documentation in the Digital Age*, which collected the life stories of almost 800 Mexican migrants brought to the United States as guest workers between 1942 and 1964.



Frances Negrón-Muntaner (Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University) is an expert in Caribbean and Latino literature and culture, as well as media and popular culture studies. She is the author of *Anatomy of a Smile and Other Poems* and *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and the Latinization of American Culture*.



Stephen Pitti (Professor of History and American Studies and the Director of the Ethnicity, Race, and Migration Program at Yale University) focuses on the history and culture of Latinos in the 20th century. He is the author of *The Devil in Silicon Valley: Race, Mexican Americans, and Northern California*. He also wrote the core essay for the National Park Service's American Latino Theme Study.



Vicki Ruiz (Distinguished Professor of History and Chicano/Latino Studies at the University of California, Irvine) specializes in gender and ethnic identity. She is the author and editor of several books including *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* and *Latinas in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia*.



Marta Tienda (Maurice P. During Professor in Demographic Studies, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and Director, Program in Latino Studies at Princeton University) publishes widely on educational outcomes and immigration patterns between Latin America and the United States. She currently serves on the White House Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

Public Programming Advisors



Holly Alonso's (Executive Director of Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park) work and education prepared her for the arts and cultural mix of Peralta Hacienda, including a degree in music from UC Berkeley, as well as graduate study in Spanish and audio design at SF State University. She directed and performed musical theater for two decades before becoming Peralta Hacienda's executive director 17 years ago. She has forged its special community history mission in one the most diverse communities in the country, and spearheaded its exhibits, programs, and capital development.



Andrea Blackman (Division Manager for the Special Collections Division of the Nashville Public Library) consulted and taught in both Florida and Tennessee for 11 years before she began coordinating the library's nationally recognized Civil Rights Room and Collection in 2003. She regularly speaks in the community and in academia on multicultural education, library services, and oral history methodologies. Under her leadership, the Nashville Public Library has launched four successful oral history projects: Civil Rights, Veterans History, Nashville Business Leaders, and the 2010 Flood Digital Project.



Monica Chapa-Domercq (Principal Librarian for Adult Services, Oceanside Public Library) oversees public library programming, collection development, and reference services for adults. Since 2009, she has been a member of the library management team, developing an exciting vision for programs for adults, the Spanish-speaking, and anyone in the community interested in culture and literature. She is active in REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Services to Latinos and the Spanish-speaking, and has served on ALA's Public and Cultural Programs Advisory Committee.

THE FILMS

The cornerstone of *Latino Americans: 500 Years of History* was *LATINO AMERICANS*, a landmark six-hour documentary series created by WETA Productions that aired nationally on PBS in fall 2013.

The films chronicle Latinos in the United States from the 16th century to present day, offering a story of people, politics, and culture, large in its scale and deep in its reach. It is a story of immigration and redemption, of anguish and celebration, of the gradual construction of a new American identity that connects and empowers millions of people today.

Through six distinct episodes, the series explores expansionism, Manifest Destiny, the Wild West, multiple wars (Mexican-American, Spanish-American, World War II), the rise of organized labor, the Great Depression, the post-World War II boom, the Cold War, the Civil Rights movement, globalization, and the effects of multiple kinds of technologies, from the railroad and barbed wire to the internet and satellite television.

[\(View the PBS Episode Guide\)](#)

Episode I: Foreigners in Their Own Land (1565-1880)

Episode II. Empire of Dreams (1880-1942)

Episode III. War and Peace (1942-1954)

Episode IV. The New Latinos (1946-1965)

Episode V. Prejudice and Pride (1965-1980)

Episode VI. Peril and Promise (1980-2000)

LATINO AMERICANS features interviews with an array of individuals, including entertainer Rita Moreno, the Puerto Rican star of *West Side Story* and a winner of Academy, Tony, Grammy, and Emmy Awards; labor leader and 2012 Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Dolores Huerta, who in the 1960s co-founded with César Chávez the National Farm Workers Association, which later became United Farm Workers of America; Mexican-American author and commentator Linda Chávez, who became the highest-ranking woman in the Reagan White House; and Cuban singer and entrepreneur Gloria Estefan, who has sold more than 100 million solo and Miami Sound Machine albums globally.



KEY SUBJECTS AND THEMES

Using the *LATINO AMERICANS* documentary series as both a feature and an inspiration for other program planning during the one-year grant term, grantees offered public events, exhibits, dialogues, and other activities that explored three key documentary themes.

Re-examining America's Social and Cultural History

In many ways, the history of Latino Americans is an untold story. With Latinos as one of the fastest growing and largest minority populations in the United States, the re-examination of our shared history and cultural identity has never been more important.

The story of immigration lies at the heart of the *LATINO AMERICANS* documentary series, and it was a focus of many LA500 programs as well. The film provided a starting point from which audiences explored questions of why various immigrant groups left their native countries, how they became part of America, and how "American" and "Latino" culture have been historically defined.

Through diverse contributions to literature, music, art, film, food, and other areas, Latino Americans have made an enormous impact on American culture. From the origins of Mexican culture and identity in the Southwest to the formation of Puerto Rican American identity in post-World War II New York, Latino culture has powerfully changed the flavor and feel of American life.

"As part of our grant proposal, we planned to conduct oral history interviews with the last generation of women and men who lived in Ybor City. As Florida's first Latino community, the Cuban-Americans who grew up in the community have a unique perspective on the city's development. While their parents and the immigrant generations have been well documented, their stories had not. As part of the NEH/ALA grant, I conducted 20 interviews with women and men who are part of this generation."

— Sara McNamara, Ph.D. Candidate,
Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, Gainesville, Fla.



A crowd led by labor union activists Eliseo Medina and Dolores Huerta strike in Chicago.

“Our goal was to pass along the heritage of the Latino civil rights struggle to a new generation. We invited past and current activists to share their experiences and featured music from two members of a popular local band, Making Movies. Local scholar Dr. Gene Chávez created a presentation of the history of local Latino activism that he plans to share with other audiences.”

— Ralph Tomlinson, Adult Services Librarian, Olathe Public Library, Olathe, Kan.

The Fight for Equal Rights

The Latino American fight for equal rights appears throughout various historical periods. Individual stories and the history of collective movements illustrate the struggle for political representation, educational access and equality, economic rights and opportunity, veterans’ rights, and civil and human rights for Latinos.

The film tells the story of U.S. Army Captain and surgeon Hector Garcia, who returned to Texas after World War II and began offering medical services to Mexican American veterans. These actions led Garcia on a journey to fight the institutionalized discrimination that had denied Latino veterans their medical and educational benefits.

Garcia was not alone. In California, Cesar Chavez championed the fight for human rights facing migrant farm workers, cofounding the United Farm Workers Organization in 1962 and becoming a nationally known activist. In support of educational rights, high school teacher Sal Castro led the largest student walkout in U.S. history in 1968, protesting unequal conditions in the Los Angeles Unified School District and advocating for inclusion of classes in Mexican American history.

Through these and other stories, the *LATINO AMERICANS* documentary and related local programming detail struggles against segregation, poverty, racial violence, discrimination, exploitation, and other injustices. Through film discussions, local history exhibitions, lectures, and more, audiences were invited to look at war as a transformative force in the fight for equality and examine other struggles for civil rights that immigrants have faced throughout United States history.



Mexican-American educator and activist Sal Castro joins a Latino student walkout in Los Angeles in 1968.



Dolores Huerta holds a “huelga” — or “strike” — sign over her head.

Building America, Becoming Latino America



Congressman Herman Badillo was the first Puerto Rican elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.



Puerto Rican-American actress, dancer, and singer Rita Moreno's career has spanned more than 70 years; she is perhaps best known for her role in *West Side Story*.

The *LATINO AMERICANS* film examines the history of Latinos in America from the 16th century to the present day, chronicling countless contributions and introducing fascinating characters from our history. Viewers meet heroes who served America's efforts through military service and on the home front, including Guy Gabaldon, who was awarded a Silver Star for his heroism in fighting and capturing Japanese soldiers during World War II. Viewers hear the story of Herman Badillo, the first Puerto Rican elected to Congress, who championed landmark legislation supporting bilingual education and voting rights.

The series also explores the lives, stories, and contributions of Latina Americans, including actress and singer Rita Moreno, poet and author Julia Alvarez, and Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. Viewers are introduced to those whose lives exemplify the American Dream, such as Eligio Peña, who emigrated from the Dominican Republic and founded a supermarket chain in New York, and the Capo family, who fled Cuba and rebuilt a furniture business in Miami with the help of a loan from the Small Business Administration.

"The City of Fort Worth in Texas created *Viva Mi Historia: The Story of Fort Worth Latino Families* that collected the history of Latino Fort Worth told from the perspective of the residents who lived it. During the course of the LA500 project, 43 memoirs and testimonies were captured from veterans of foreign wars, activists, retired professionals, social workers, laborers, school administrators, business owners, and educators. Interviewees shared personal stories that included recollections of the Great Depression, World War II, and the Civil Rights movement. A couple of notable segments include interviews with Victor Espino, an activist in the current battle for immigrant rights, and Santiago Diaz, a Mexican-born World War II veteran whose family fled the turmoil of the revolution in Mexico in the 1910s. ... The project affirmed that Latinos and Latinas have been and will continue to be major players on the American and world stage."

— The City of Fort Worth (Texas) Human Relations Commission



Santiago Diaz, a Mexican-born World War II veteran, fled Mexico with his family during the revolution in the 1910s. Diaz was interviewed as part of an oral history project at the City of Fort Worth (Texas) Human Relations Commission.

RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

Throughout the LA500 initiative, NEH and ALA offered a variety of programming resources and professional development opportunities for use by grantees and their partner organizations.

The **LA500 Orientation Workshop**, held in June 2015 during the ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition in San Francisco, kicked off the project, introducing grantees to important humanities and programming concepts and enabling valuable connections among grantees from across the country. Presenters included David Montejano (University of California, Berkeley), who spoke about the importance of the LA500 initiative; Stephen Pitti (Yale University), who spoke about humanities themes; Lesley Williams (Evanston Public Library), who shared her experiences managing controversial public programs; and Kristine Navarro-McElhaney, who provided best practices for oral history programming. The presentations were recorded and made available online for grantees who were unable to attend the workshop. During the grant term, the orientation videos shared with grantees were viewed 677 times.

Once programming is under way at grantees' respective institutions, it is common for questions and concerns to arise. When this occurs, one's fellow grant recipients can provide an invaluable source of information, ideas, and support. To foster these connections, LA500 grantees were invited to participate in a **moderated online discussion forum** (LA500@lists.ala.org), where they shared successes, offered advice, and recommended resources to one another. During the one-year project term, 325 individuals signed up for the discussion forum, and 332 messages were exchanged between members, sparking additional conversations that continued off-list.

"The resources provided by the NEH and ALA were a great foundation from which to build. In particular, the orientation in June 2015 was helpful. The speakers offered wonderful advice and resources. Meeting other grantees was also helpful, in terms of listening to their project ideas and finding ways in which to incorporate them to our own."

— Lizeth Ramirez, Archivist/Reference Librarian,
Orange Public Library and History Center, Orange, Calif.

Grantees from three metropolitan areas were given an additional opportunity to connect in person at three **LA500 regional gatherings** in New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Participants took part in moderated discussions about their LA500 plans, successes, and challenges, and enjoyed ample time for networking. Read more about these regional gatherings on page 50.

Many LA500 project directors wear numerous hats in their positions — particularly those at smaller institutions — and the task of promoting programs can feel burdensome. To assist with local program promotion, NEH and ALA provided grantees with a variety of **promotional and outreach materials**. These included professionally designed posters, postcards, and bookmarks provided in both printed and digital formats; web imagery such as banners and logos; and template public relations materials, including a press release, media alert, public service announcements, and social media posts. Materials were available in both English and Spanish.

As part of their LA500 final report, grantees were asked to share information on program attendance and submit feedback gathered in connection with the grant. To assist in this process, NEH and ALA provided **sample evaluation forms** designed to collect feedback from program participants, scholars, and community partners. Grantees were invited to customize the forms to suit their needs.

WETA's LATINO AMERICANS website provided grantees and the public with in-depth information about the documentary series, including film clips, episode guides, and educational materials like lesson plans and activities. The website and resources remain available in both English and Spanish.

"The resources and assistance provided were helpful to TAM educators and our partner organizations alike. TAM especially used the survey examples and marketing materials provided on the website to inform our own design and strategy."

— Samantha Kelly, Director of Education,
Tacoma Art Museum (TAM), Tacoma, Wash.

For grantees with less experience planning public events — particularly the required film screenings — NEH and ALA offered support through a program guide, **“A How-To Guide for Film Viewing and Discussion.”** The document made it easy for beginners or experienced programmers to dive into the task with a sample program outline, a pre-event checklist, and tips for working with humanities scholars.

LA500 grantees were invited to connect with project staff and advisors for personal, one-on-one support for project needs and concerns. ALA Public Programs Office staff assisted with programming requirements and reporting. LA500 National Outreach Advisor Neyda Martinez helped grantees with outreach, particularly with Latino American communities, and humanities scholar Kristine Navarro-McElhaneay worked individually with 10 institutions on their oral history programming.

Those conducting oral history programming as part of their LA500 work also took advantage of a collection of **oral and local history resources** compiled for grantees. This included materials from the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, Oral History Association, and Veterans History Project.

Several **online learning sessions**, led by LA500 scholars and advisors, were offered during the grant period on topics of interest to LA500 grantees. Sessions were led both by outside experts and the grantees themselves, encouraging peer learning. The live webinars attracted 308 participants who had the opportunity to engage via chat with presenters and project staff. All webinars were also recorded and archived on the LA500 website, where they were accessed more than 700 times during the grant term. Webinar offerings included:

- “Latino Americans: 500 Years of History – Online Orientation”
- “Oral History @ Your Library: A Beginner’s Guide”
- “Latino Americans: 500 Years of History – Promoting Your Programs”
- “Latino Americans: 500 Years of History – Hosting a Scholar-Led Film Screening and Discussion”
- “Authentic Engagement: From Programs to Partnerships”
- “Latino Americans: 500 Years of History – Final Report Walkthrough”

“These resources were of tremendous help and really contributed to the flow and professionalism of everything we did. I appreciate the consistency that was presented, the organization, and the clarity.”

— Heather Rodriguez, Assistant Professor, Director, Latino and Puerto Rican Studies Program, Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, Conn.

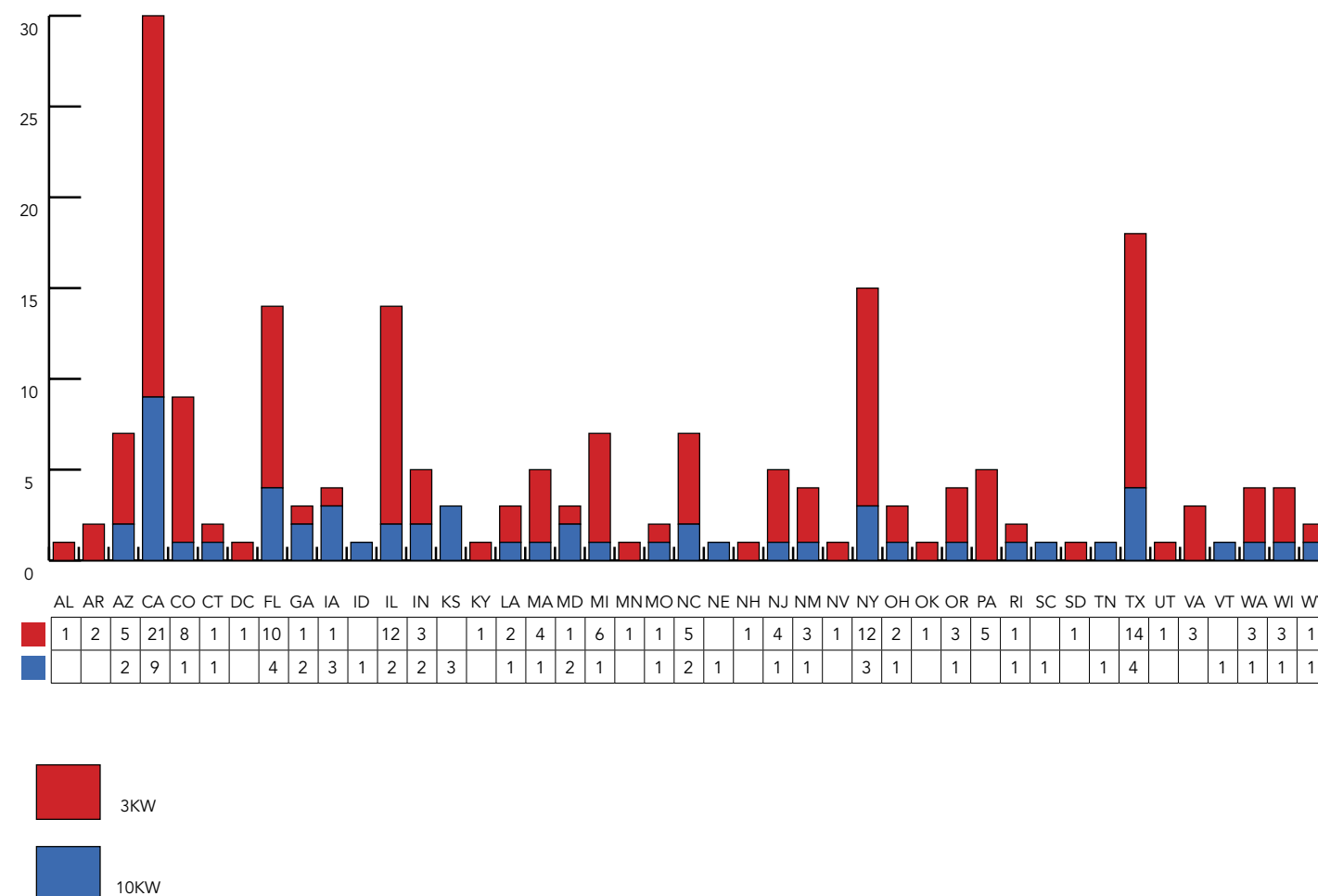
PROGRAMMING IN THE FIELD

LA500 programs were presented in 42 states and the District of Columbia. California had the highest number of participating sites, with 30; Texas had the second highest number of grantees, with 18; and New York had the third highest number, with 15.

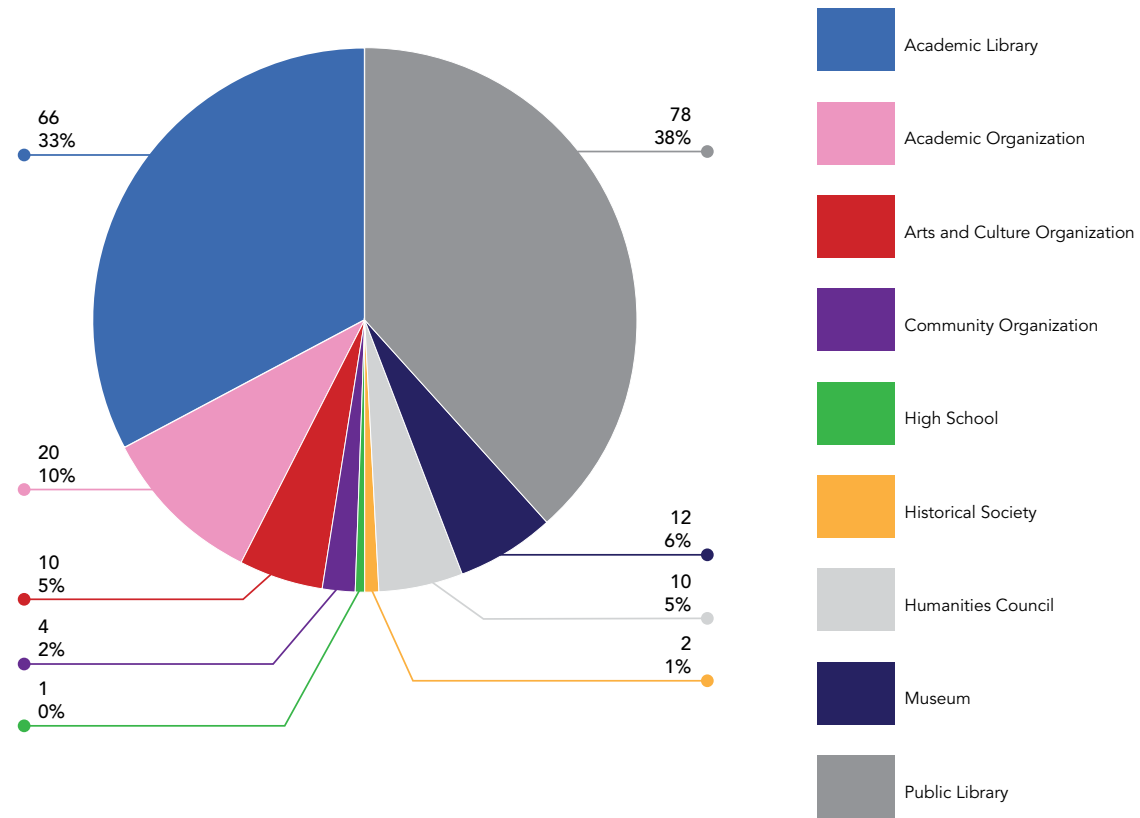
Seventy-eight of the participating sites (38 percent) were public libraries, making that group the largest institutional category. The second most common institution type was academic libraries (33 percent), followed by academic organizations (10 percent).

The following charts further illustrate the distribution of LA500 awards and the reach of LA500 programming in communities across the nation. A complete list of participating venues may be found in the Appendix.

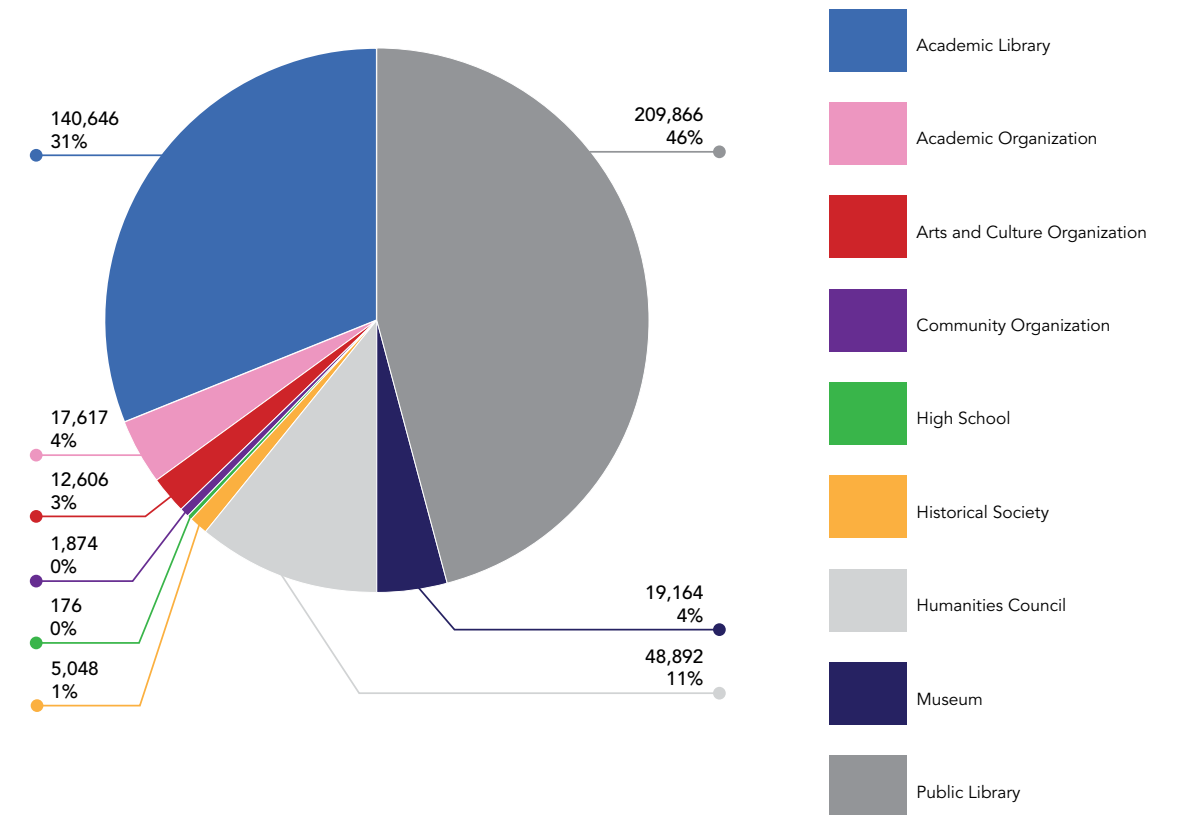
Geographic Distribution of Awards



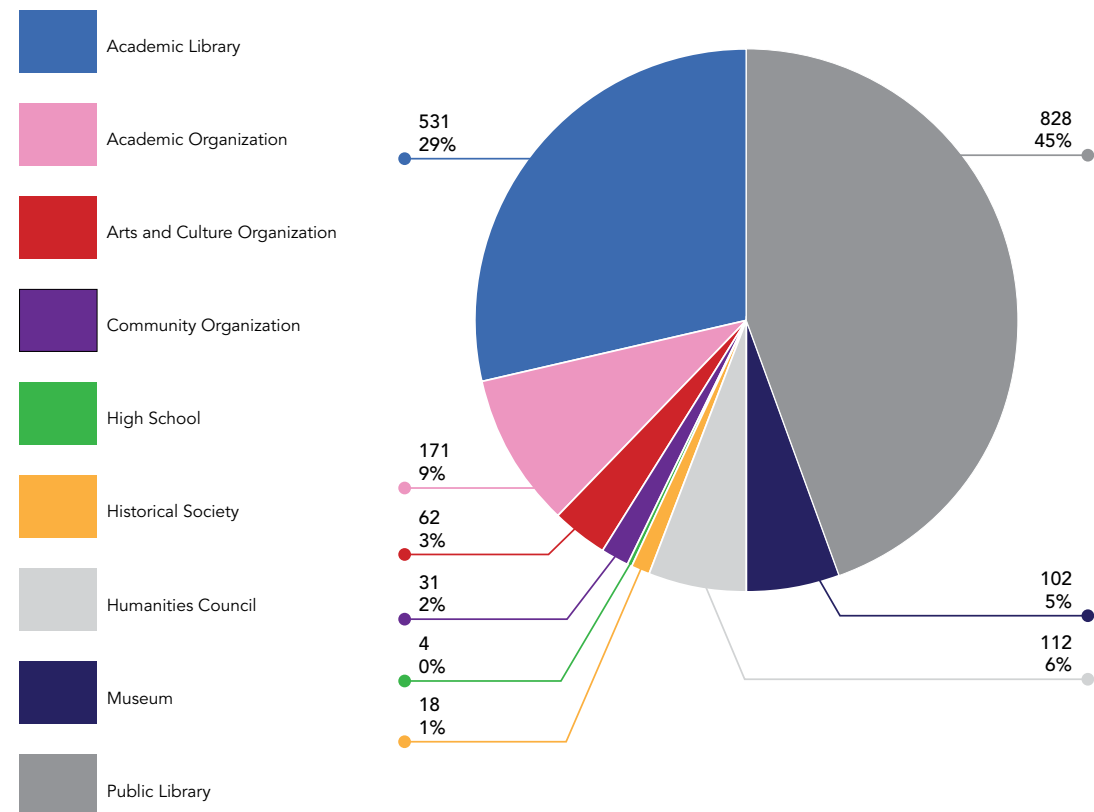
Grantees by Institution Type



Attendance by Institution Type



Programs by Institution Type



LA500 AT THE NASHVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY: A PUBLIC LIBRARY EXTENDS ITS REACH

"To the outside world, Nashville is still black and white and country music," said Andrea Blackman, manager of special collections at the Nashville Public Library, "but there's much more to Nashville." To demonstrate just how much more, the library's LA500 project, *Estamos Aquí: 500 Years of Latino American History*, highlighted Nashville's diversity and wove together its complex cultural tapestry.

"Immigrants make up 14 percent of Nashville's population," said Blackman, noting that in addition to its significant Latino population, Nashville is home to the largest Kurdish population in the United States. *Estamos Aquí* ("We Are Here") brought together Nashville's diverse populations: black, white, Latino, and more.

Community Engagement

"We looked to community advisers to recommend much of the programming," noted Blackman, who wrote the library's LA500 grant proposal. "Getting that community buy-in on the front end was key to the success of the project."

Another key was to build on existing programs. Blackman has been recognized for coordinating oral history projects on civil rights and on the 2010 floods that devastated Middle Tennessee. In 2014, a *StoryCorps @ Your Library* grant, also offered by ALA, enabled the library to record the stories of 39 immigrants for a digital collection called *Nashville's New Faces*.

"For *Estamos Aquí* we picked up where we left off with *New Faces* but focused on Latino Americans," said Blackman. "In Nashville there's no one picture of what Latino looks like. For the oral histories we interviewed more than 30 people, and we're going beyond the grant cycle to continue with this component."



Part of Nashville Public Library's *Estamos Aquí* programming was an exhibit of paintings, prints, photography, sculpture, and folk art by 14 Tennessee Latino American artists.



The library's diverse LA500 programming included art and dance events, as well as discussions about race and identity, student activism, and immigration.

Making Connections

In addition to tapping the diversity of Nashville's Latino population, the library's programs explored commonalities with other groups through workshops on topics such as black male culture.

SWAG: Black Men across the Americas and the Revolution of Cool sparked a conversation between scholars from different backgrounds: Ifeoma Nwankwo, a Vanderbilt University professor whose research centers on African American and Caribbean literature and culture; Rosa Carrasquillo, a College of the Holy Cross professor who focuses on Latin American and Afro-Caribbean history; and writer and former MTV executive Terrance Dean, author of *Hiding in Hip Hop: On the Down Low in the Entertainment Industry—from Music to Hollywood*. "Their discussion was relevant to our community, and it was a hit with listeners," said Blackman, who came to the library in 2003 to coordinate its nationally recognized Civil Rights Room and Collection.

The topic of immigration proved to be one of the most important points of connection for groups across Nashville and beyond. The library partnered with the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) to provide workshops on immigrant rights and enforcement for the TIRRC's annual convention. "We wanted our program to reach beyond Nashville," said Blackman. "We were the only organization in the state to receive this grant, and we wanted to share."

Taking the Library Outside

Another goal was to bring the programming out of the library and into the community with roundtable discussions and film screenings at local public schools as well as nearby Vanderbilt University and Lipscomb University. One program, *El Movimiento: The Tradition of Student Activism*, examined how historic Latino American student movements, like the 1968 East Los Angeles Walkouts that empowered Chicano students, foreshadowed contemporary voices such as Black Lives Matter.

The library brought its programming outdoors for a wildly popular citywide event, the InterNASHional Food Crawl. Under a tent set up near vendors featuring delicacies from Mexico, Colombia, Cuba, and El Salvador, library staff showed excerpts from the *LATINO AMERICANS* film series and explained the components of *Estamos Aquí* to a sold-out crowd of registrants, some of whom had never visited the library's main building.

"With 21 local branches of the Nashville Public Library, many people had never come downtown or been aware of the resources we offer," explained Blackman. "Thanks to those introductions, thousands of new users now know about our programs."

A Grand Finale

More than 10,000 people made the trip downtown for *Estamos Aquí: Voces Contemporáneos*, an art exhibit that capped off the year of LA500 programming. A grand finale day of art and conversation engaged participants of all ages.

- Preschoolers crafted paper images of themselves to reveal their singular identities as well as their commonalities.
- Nashville printmaker Jorge Mendoza worked with teenagers to recreate and reinterpret a controversial mural he had painted in his native Bolivia in the 1970s.
- Fourteen Tennessee artists with roots in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, and Mexico explained their work in gallery talks.

"*Estamos Aquí* was one of the most successful projects the Nashville Public Library has ever produced," said Blackman. "It extended the reach of our library and will shape how we do public programs going forward."



Nashville printmaker Jorge Mendoza worked with teenagers to recreate a mural he painted in Bolivia in the 1970s.

LA500 AT THE PERALTA HACIENDA HISTORICAL PARK: A HISTORICAL PARK SPARKS EXCITEMENT

The media has not been kind to Fruitvale, a neighborhood in east Oakland that is home to the city's largest Latino population. Since the release of the indie film *Fruitvale Station*, which told the story of the 2009 killing of an African American youth by a Bay Area Rapid Transit police officer, Fruitvale's stigma as a troubled, unsafe community has worsened.

Of course, viewers of the film learned little about the *other* Fruitvale — the historic, culturally rich community that more than 50,000 people call home.

"We wanted to showcase Fruitvale as more than a crime-ridden part of Oakland," said Holly Alonso, executive director of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park, a six-acre park and historic house in the Fruitvale neighborhood. "Our LA500 grant allowed us to do that. It was transformative. It gave our Latino neighbors such a feeling of pride and purpose."

Collecting Stories

Collecting the stories of Fruitvale's residents has long been part of Peralta Hacienda's mission. "We had gathered the histories of our Cambodian, Laotian, and African American populations," noted Alonso, "but until our LA500 project we hadn't focused on the story of our biggest community."



The Peralta Hacienda Historical Park's (Oakland, Calif.) mission is to promote understanding, historical healing, and community amidst change and diversity.

Fruitvale's population is nearly 60 percent Latino American, including residents with roots in Mexico as well as Guatemala, El Salvador, Argentina, Colombia, and Puerto Rico. Major exhibits at the historical park and cultural center reflect that heritage, but in an effort to remain inclusive and to avoid being pigeon-holed as solely for the Latino American community, the organization had never undertaken a project with the concentration of its LA500 events.

"It was a whole year of inspiring events for the Latino community," said Alonso. "We plan to build on that excitement, while maintaining our inclusiveness, after the grant ends."

Walking Through History

Kick-starting the year of programming was a community history and art walk along Oakland's International Boulevard. Dubbed the *Paseo de Fruitvale*, the tour drew 75 participants. To lead the tour, Alonso tapped the expertise of the Oakland Heritage Alliance, a nonprofit dedicated to Oakland's architecture, history, and culture. Project scholar Alex Saragoza, emeritus professor of Chicano/Latino studies at University of California, Berkeley, added a nuanced view of history to the walk as well as other project events. "People asked questions at every stop," said Alonso. "Alex Saragoza made each stop unique and relevant."



Patrons walk and sample Latino foods at the Peralta Hacienda Historical Park's Feasts of Fruitvale neighborhood tour in May 2016. More than half the tour participants lived outside of Fruitvale. At lower left, scholar Alex Saragoza speaks about a local mural.

A second community walk focused on food, starting at Peralta House kitchen and parading to Latino restaurants in the Fruitvale neighborhood. "Each restaurant owner told his or her story. One demonstrated how to make pupusas, cornmeal pockets," said Alonso. "It was wonderful to be so warmly welcomed by Fruitvale business owners."

Most of the people on the walks were from outside the Fruitvale neighborhood, giving them a glimpse into the richness of the community. The tours garnered notice inside the community, too. Oakland Grown, a local organization that promotes small businesses, has asked to partner with Peralta Hacienda to repeat the tour.

Diverse Programming

Another event brought a busload of Fruitvale families to the UC Berkeley campus for a film showing and discussion of the Mexican American immigration experience, moderated by Saragoza. "Undocumented students told their stories," said Alonso. "There wasn't a dry eye in the house."

A panel discussion with local school superintendents and high school students considered *Mendez v. Westminster*, the 1947 federal court case that ended school segregation in California four years before *Brown v. Board of Education*. "We had to rent a tent to accommodate everyone who wanted to come," noted Alonso.

Other program events organized by the Peralta Hacienda Historical Park included:

- film screenings and discussions at the Hacienda's summer youth camp
- a lecture on Pío Pico, the last governor of Mexican California, at Oakland's African American Museum and Library
- a screening of *The Fight in the Fields* followed by a panel discussion with filmmaker Ray Telles and scholars on the legacy of Cesar Chavez

Ending With a Flourish

¡Viva Fruitvale! Festival de la Cultura Latina ("Fruitvale First! Latino American Culture Festival") wrapped up the project with a flourish, bringing together a diverse audience of more than 600 people to enjoy programs and activities rooted in the cultural traditions of area residents. The afternoon of arts, cultural activities, and film screenings was introduced by Alex Saragoza, professor emeritus of Chicano/Latino Studies at UC Berkeley, who offered a discussion of the racial diversity of the Latino heritage. Participants perused outdoor history displays, cooled down with *agua fresca*, and shopped at booths offering locally made arts, crafts, and food. A parade of retro Toyota art cars framed the Latino tradition of decorating cars as an art form and allowed car owners to share their stories.

Dance was also a focus of the event. Presentations explored the African influence on Latin dance from Cuba and Brazil. Opportunities for participation — a dance contest, samba lessons, and open dancing to live music — alternated with performances by community organizations, including one featuring a black Cuban rumba performer who invited all the folclórico dancers in their traditional dresses to dance rumba.

Although the LA500 events are officially over, Latino history and culture programs will continue at Peralta Hacienda Historical Park. As part of the project, arts and architecture students at Laney College helped create an art installation on the Anza National Historic Trail, commemorating the expedition that brought Spanish-speaking settlers to California in 1776. The exhibit will move to the Hacienda in 2017.

LA500 AT OCEANSIDE PUBLIC LIBRARY: A MIDSIZE PUBLIC LIBRARY FLEXES ITS MUSCLES

The LA500 project hit home for Monica Chapa-Domercq, principal librarian for adult services at Oceanside Public Library. Chapa-Domercq, who co-wrote the library's LA500 grant application and also served as a national project adviser, also resides in Oceanside, a southern California city of 170,000 with a 36 percent Latino population.

At the heart of the library's LA500 work was a "history harvest," *Nuestra Historia Revelada/ Our History Revealed: Reexamining the Latino Social and Cultural Experience through a New Lens*. The city's diverse Latino population was encouraged to share family photographs, stories, and historical artifacts like religious folk charms, jewelry, clothing, and currency that illustrate the Latino history of Oceanside.

"We explained that they were documenting history," said Chapa-Domercq, who has been active in REFORMA, a national association to promote library and information services to Latinos and Spanish speakers.

Bookmobiles visited neighborhoods to scan the items, with graduate students from California State University assisting bilingual library staff. Workshops held at the main library and branches, as well as community centers, gathered more material. The images and stories became the basis for an exhibit curated by Chapa-Domercq with local scholars and historians as well as artists from El Centro de la Raza, a community-based Chicano/ Latino civil rights organization.



Left: A photograph of two men on a farm, used in promotional materials for Oceanside Public Library's *Nuestra Historia Revelada/Our History Revealed* program.

Right, pg. 29: Oceanside's diverse Latino population was encouraged to share family photographs and artifacts that illustrate the area's Latino past.



Sparking Memories

"The exhibit caught people's attention and sparked their memories," said Chapa-Domercq. "Even after it closed people brought in more pictures, so we'll continue with it. It's something we were trying to do on a smaller scale before the grant, and we're eager to build on that." After the exhibit closed, the materials found a home online as a [digital archive](#), and the participants received the large-format prints of their photos made for display. The library also donated materials to the Oceanside Historical Society, which will continue to collect oral histories.

Community involvement added to the excitement throughout the project. At the unveiling of *Nuestra Historia Revelada*, Oceanside city council member and attorney Esther Sanchez spoke about growing up in the Eastside neighborhood. "She's fifth generation, and she spoke about the importance of education in achieving success," said Chapa-Domercq.

The kickoff event for all the programs featured local author Victor Villaseñor, who spoke about his experience growing up in Oceanside and his 1991 national bestseller, *Rain of Gold*, which looked at his ancestors' journey from Mexico to the area. Having appeared in the first two parts of the *LATINO AMERICANS* film series, Villaseñor brought star power to his talk at the library. "The room filled to capacity, including people who had never come to the library before," noted Chapa-Domercq. "It was an empowering experience for the audience."

Book Clubs in Spanish

With a half dozen ongoing book clubs — including several for teens, one for seniors, and one in Spanish — the library focused some of its LA500 programming on *The Book of Unknown Americans*, a novel by award-winning author Christina Henriquez that explores the experiences of Latino immigrant families in the United States. "It's a really approachable book with key teenage characters that made for lively discussion in all the groups," said Chapa-Domercq. "The discussions provided another inroad to the program and to our goal of promoting cultural understanding."

Chapa-Domercq said that receiving the grant made the community proud. "It makes such a huge difference, especially for a smaller library like us. It was an honor to be selected. The community valued the connection it gave us to this national effort. That lent even more importance and excitement to the project."

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT: STEPHEN PITTI

Through his research, teaching, social media presence, and advisory role in public programs like LA500, Stephen Pitti is dedicated to sharing his passion for history with diverse audiences.

LA500 was “one of the most important public history projects in recent decades,” said Pitti, who is professor of history and American studies at Yale. “Latinos are a rising demographic in all 50 states. The LA500 programs inspired thousands of people around the country to ask questions and learn about Latinos in ways they haven’t before. Our discussions about what America looks like, how race relations work — these are topics that matter to local communities and to the nation as a whole.”

LA500 participants appreciated Pitti’s expertise and his engaging style of presentation. “Having Stephen Pitti here to discuss Latino Americans was like having Steve Irwin talk about crocodiles,” commented a project director at Central Connecticut State University.



Humanities scholar Stephen Pitti, professor of history and American Studies and the Director of the Ethnicity, Race, and Migration Program at Yale University, speaks to LA500 program attendees in Connecticut and his native California.



Sparking Important Conversations

Pitti’s involvement in LA500 developed from his work on the advisory board for the PBS documentary series. “The filmmakers did an incredible job in compressing 500 years of history in ways that were academically responsible and accessible, telling an impressive set of stories. I learned much from the series, and I’ve used it in my teaching,” said Pitti, who appears in the first episode, “Foreigners in Their Own Land.” “It made me think about how I present the material to students and to outside audiences.”

In his keynote address at the ALA orientation workshop that set the stage for LA500, Pitti spoke about the hallmarks of the film series and how librarians could draw on the material presented. “The series amplifies the words and opinions of Latinos themselves, people who have historically not received much attention,” said Pitti in his address.

A screening of “Foreigners in Their Own Land” preceded Pitti’s talk as an LA500 project scholar at Central Connecticut College, which drew an audience of all ages from the community. “The LA500 programs were good for lots of different constituents,” said Pitti, “not only students but faculty, staff, and the public.”

As a project scholar Pitti also participated in events at Bakersfield College in California. Although separated by a continent, Bakersfield College and Central Connecticut State University face similar challenges, according to Pitti. “Both campuses are under-resourced, and having their projects recognized confirmed the importance of these topics,” said Pitti. “The grant money started a wonderful set of important local conversations that wouldn’t have happened if not for this program.”

A Powerful Form of Learning and Community Engagement

The author of the forthcoming book *The World of César Chávez*, Pitti spoke at Bakersfield College as part of a three-day program, Remembering the Delano Grape Strike. The program commemorated the 50th anniversary of the labor strike that began in September 1965 when Filipino American workers walked off grape fields to protest poor pay and working conditions. The striking Filipinos asked César Chávez, the leader of the National Farm Workers Association, which was mostly Latino, to join their protest. Rather than allowing the growers to pit one group against the other to break the strike, Chávez realized that acting in solidarity would give the workers the best chance to succeed. The five-year strike led to a national boycott of table grapes and the formation of the United Farm Workers.

Staging the commemorative events in Bakersfield bought history home and forged a natural connection with the community. The inland California city is only 30 miles from Delano, the starting point of the 1966 march Chávez led to focus attention on the cause of farm workers. The 300-mile march ended at the state capital in Sacramento, where Pitti grew up.

That sense of place is critical to the connections librarians forge with their constituents on an ongoing basis, said Pitti. “Librarians and cultural organizations play important roles in their locales in collecting stories,” said Pitti. “They can encourage their audiences to speak and to connect what they’re learning to what they know. It’s a powerful form of learning and of community engagement.”

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT: VICKI RUIZ



"For me, history remains a grand adventure," said Vicki L. Ruiz, distinguished professor of history and Chicano/Latino studies at University of California, Irvine. Ruiz's adventure "began at the kitchen table, listening to the stories of my mother and grandmother, and then took flight aboard the local bookmobile."

"The bookmobile stopped a block from my house," said Ruiz, who grew up in Florida. "It was the highlight of my week."

As a project scholar for LA500, Ruiz shared that sense of discovery and adventure with patrons at the Whittier Public Library and Orange Public Library in southern California. "It was a wonderful experience," says Ruiz. "It was community-building centered around books and history, not around trying to fix a problem in the neighborhood. There was a real exchange of ideas. Libraries are wonderful spaces to talk about issues without being polarized. People really conversed with one another."

Sharing and Gathering History

Ruiz's role as a project scholar built on her work as a content adviser on the PBS series *LATINO AMERICANS*. She was interviewed onscreen for the second episode in the series, "Empire of Dreams," which tapped her expertise in 20th century U.S. history.

At the Whittier and Orange Public Libraries, Ruiz led discussions with library patrons after screenings of episodes of the series. "Many seniors came out, some of whom were children in the 1930s and 1940s and experienced events in the film. Their contributions made the film come alive," she said.

"People were very forthcoming," noted Ruiz. "They talked about having family members deported in the early 1930s, even though they were born in the U.S." Approximately one-third of Californians with Mexican roots were deported in those years, some 60 percent of them U.S.-born. "One woman came up to me during the reception and told me how her father had been deported and how her mother had cleaned houses to support the family until he could return."

Participants didn't shy away from topics like attending segregated schools. "They talked about how the local Orange cinema was segregated," said Ruiz. "It was moving to see people who had perhaps not talked about these topics outside of their families share their history."

New Resources

The library discussions were not only about sharing information but also about gathering it. Ruiz's graduate students collected names and phone numbers to harvest source material about labor strikes in the 1930s and other topics. "The library patrons were great source material," said Ruiz.

The libraries gathered new resources as well. Many of the participants at the Orange Public Library discussions committed to donating materials such as oral histories, photographs, and artifacts to the library's archive. One donor family had been part of the landmark 1947 *Mendez v Westminster* case that desegregated schools in California. At the Whittier Public Library, patrons asked Ruiz for a reading list so they could explore the topics further. The library ordered all the books Ruiz recommended and added the titles to their collection.

Ruiz noted that the library audiences included a mix of ages and backgrounds and that some of the material in the films was as unfamiliar to Latinos as it was to non-Latinos. That was especially true for younger generations, said Ruiz. "It can be hit or miss in the schools. Many younger people aren't learning about events in history that relate directly to issues we're discussing today, such as immigration policy."

One of the best ways to fill those gaps in education, said Ruiz, is to take advantage of library programs. "The librarians have so much energy," she said. "They deserve credit for great programming and for stretching the grant money. They've made it their mission to reach all sectors of the community. The rooms were packed to the gills, and people wanted to stay and talk."

Vicki Ruiz, Distinguished Professor of History and Chicano/Latino Studies at the University of California, Irvine, shared information and also gathered source materials about labor strikes at LA500 events in Whittier and Orange, Calif.

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT: KRISTINE NAVARRO-MCELHANEY



LA500 humanities scholar Kristine Navarro-McElhane worked one-on-one with 10 LA500 grantees on collecting powerful oral histories from their communities.

When LA500 grantees gathered in San Francisco for the orientation workshop in June 2015, one of the first to address them was Kristine Navarro-McElhane, who coached them on the fine points of collecting oral histories.

“Family stories are important,” she told the crowd, and she spoke from the heart. Navarro-McElhane is research administrator at Arizona State University and interim executive director of the Oral History Association, which serves a diverse international membership committed to the value of oral history. “I had done this work for 15 years,” she told her listeners at the workshop, “but when my parents died within days of each other, I hadn’t recorded their stories.”

Sharing her personal story engaged the audience’s attention for practical pointers on gathering oral histories. She ended her talk with encouragement and an offer to lend her own time and expertise for grantees’ LA500 programming: “Collecting oral histories teaches you about yourself. We will make this happen together.”

Community members in Fort Worth, Texas, brought family keepsakes to an oral history event at the local library.



A Tiny Library Takes on an Important Project

Ten libraries, from Oregon to Georgia, followed up on her offer for one-on-one programming assistance, seeking advice over the phone or by email. One library took it to the next level. Ignacio Community Library, located in a Colorado town with a population of 700, brought Navarro-McElhane to the library to train a dozen volunteers in a two-day workshop on collecting oral histories.

“We had no experience with this,” said Ignacio Community Library Service Desk Manager and Art Coordinator Renee Morgan, who worked with Navarro-McElhane on the Voices of Ignacio Oral History Project. “Kristine loves what she does, and her energy got us excited about the project.”

Morgan visited Navarro-McElhane at Arizona State University for more training sessions, and after the project year ended, Morgan and a team member were slated to present their work at the 2016 conference of the Association of Tribal, Archives, Libraries, and Museums.

“Working on this project opened important discussions in our community,” said Morgan. “It also opened the gateway for our library to look for other opportunities to serve the community.”

For the Love of Stories

Navarro-McElhane, who provided input for LA500 when the project was in the planning stage, said that being a project scholar opened her eyes to the benefits of collecting oral histories outside the university.

“The grant really enabled me to see the untapped resource of librarians. I hadn’t realized how deeply rooted librarians are in their communities,” she said. “Universities are sometimes limited to their academic circles, but librarians can bring these projects to the heart of their communities — and these stories make an amazing gift to the community.”

LA500 PROGRAMS: CREATING REPLICABLE MODELS

A benefit of national programming initiatives like LA500 is that funded institutions may explore exciting new programming avenues and then share their experiences and discoveries with others, who may wish to replicate them. Several LA500 grantees shared their work on ProgrammingLibrarian.org, a website of the ALA Public Programs Office and the premier online forum for information related to library programming. Visit www.bit.ly/LA500-models to access these complete LA500 program models, including advance planning instructions, marketing tips, budget details, day-of-event advice, and other program implementation specifics.

Olathe Hispanic Heritage Month

In a creative partnership with local Girl and Boy Scouts, Olathe (Kan.) Public Library offered a special patch that scouts could earn by attending various Hispanic Heritage Month activities. Scouts could choose from several activities: attending a chat with *Enrique's Journey* author Sonia Nazario; taking part in a story walk with a book reading in English and Spanish; making a memory box for personal treasures and mementos; and more. The partnership between the scout organizations and the library was "mutually beneficial," said Adult Services Librarian Ralph Tomlinson.

Little Havana Walking Tour

Barry University's Monsignor William Barry Memorial Library in Miami Shores, Fla., offered a three-hour tour of the world-renowned Little Havana neighborhood. Participants were treated to an amazing wealth of knowledge about Little Havana's significance to Miami's Cuban community and its many historical, political, and cultural connections. Perks included freshly brewed Cuban coffee, freshly squeezed guarapo (sugar cane juice), and a book signing with tour guide Corinna Moebius, co-author of *A History of Little Havana*.



Above: Olathe (Kan.) Public Library created a Hispanic Heritage badge, which encouraged Girl and Boy Scouts to participate in LA500 offerings.

Right: Participants in Barry University's Little Havana Walking Tour stop to discuss Cuban art.

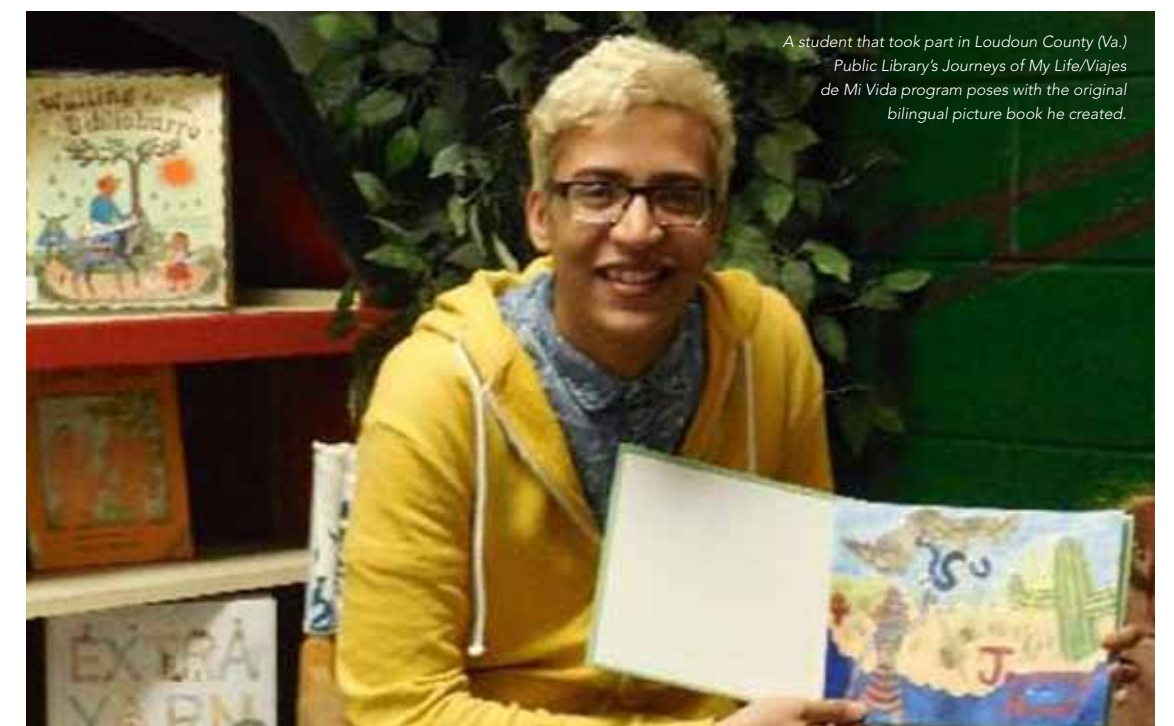


A Celebration of Latino Lives in Florida

Also offered as part of Barry University's suite of LA500 programming, A Celebration of Latino Lives in Florida was a storytelling and -recording event with storyteller Caren Neile. After a presentation on storytelling in Latino culture, event attendees volunteered to share personal stories with the audience. The audience then voted on their favorite stories; the winning story told how a participant, her parents, and brother celebrated their first Thanksgiving after immigrating from Peru. The stories were later aired on the local public radio station and archived in the WLRN Public Storyteller website.

The Journeys of My Life / Viajes de Mi Vida

Loudoun County (Va.) Public Library forged an outside-the-box partnership with its local school district's One to the World initiative, inviting students to address a problem, create a product, and connect with the world. Seventy high school students worked with award-winning Latino artist John Parra for two days to produce original stories and illustrations to be made into bilingual picture books. Topics included the students' personal journeys, Latino role models, and historical events that support Latino history and culture. The books were presented by the students to the Honorable Francisco Altschul, ambassador of El Salvador to the United States, who would later deliver them to the Biblioteca Luz Children's Library in El Salvador. The student authors and illustrators also read their books at public story times.



A student that took part in Loudoun County (Va.) Public Library's Journeys of My Life/Viajes de Mi Vida program poses with the original bilingual picture book he created.

HUMANITIES TEXAS CURRICULUM

With support from ALA, Humanities Texas has developed an innovative suite of curriculum resources to accompany each episode of the six-part *LATINO AMERICANS* documentary. Classroom teachers have expressed a tremendous need for materials that include the experience of Latino Americans in significant events in U.S. history. Designed primarily for middle and high school students, these educational resources will help teachers lead their students in the examination of critical elements of the Latino American experience from the 16th century to present day.

Humanities Texas conducted extensive research to identify and compile compelling primary source materials — including historical documents, photographs, works of art, and oral histories — that enhance and supplement the historical content of each *LATINO AMERICANS* episode and worked with experienced master teachers and expert scholars to develop multiple lesson plans for each episode. Humanities Texas is hosting the lesson plans, along with related resources, on their website. Teachers and students from across the country also have access to related audio and video presentations made available through the Humanities Texas online digital repository.

Downloadable lesson plans introduce teachers to each *LATINO AMERICANS* episode, the history and themes it explores, and related instructional materials. Video analysis worksheets guide students through an initial examination of each episode, asking them to watch the episode closely, take inventory of their knowledge on the subject matter, and summarize the key points addressed in the episode. Primary source worksheets examine a single primary source and present a series of related questions. The questions require students to analyze the source within the historical context portrayed in the episode. Additionally, extension activity worksheets correspond to the optional extension activities outlined in the lesson plans that encourage students to delve even deeper into a particular aspect of the historical era portrayed in each episode. Finally, a worksheet detailing additional classroom activities, assignments, and further resources provides more prompts and ideas for assignments, lessons, and major projects.



Humanities Texas has developed a set of educational resources that will lead students in an examination of the Latino American experience.



PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Patrons peruse artwork at El Museum del Barrio, part of the Queens Museum's LA500 offerings.

Through *Latino Americans: 500 Years of History*, NEH and ALA provided community and cultural organizations with an historic opportunity to offer a year-long series of events and programs focusing on the historical and present-day experiences of the largest minority group in the United States.

The project offered humanities content, financial support, promotional resources, networking connections, and the unifying visibility of a far-reaching national initiative to libraries, academic institutions, historical societies, museums, state humanities councils, and other nonprofit organizations. In collaboration with the 203 LA500 grantees, NEH and ALA supported the following significant accomplishments.

Connecting the Public to Outstanding Humanities Content

Using the *LATINO AMERICANS* film series as a programming cornerstone, the LA500 initiative provided the necessary support for grantees to connect their public audiences to the incredible, centuries-long history of Latino Americans. Screening events as well as circulating library collections engaged new audiences with this historical content that was curated and conveyed by nationally respected humanities scholars and brought to life through interviews with American heroes and history makers.

By providing grants of \$3,000 or \$10,000 to participating institutions, NEH and ALA supported more in-depth engagement with the series and subject matter through lectures, panel presentations, and moderated discussions led by local humanities practitioners. These programs were attended by more than 450,000 people in diverse communities nationally.

*An attendee comments at *Empire of Dreams and Nightmares*, a film screening and discussion about immigration at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago.*



“The people who attended our film screenings appreciated seeing the film. ... The audience was engaged, and clearly the film sparked interest in the broader topic. I don’t think people know that much about the Latino/a presence in the U.S. prior to ca. 1990s or so, and this series is essential in helping people understand [Latinos’] longstanding presence in, and essential role in creating and defending, the United States, and in shaping U.S. culture.”

— Peggy Sisselman, Adult Services Librarian,
Poughkeepsie Public Library, N.Y.

“[Audiences] were excited about the LA500 documentary series because the scholar was able to connect the film with the Latino history of Chicago. The audience took away a knowledge of how Latinos contributed to the workforce and economy in Chicago and its surrounding areas.”

— Carmen Higgins, Outreach Coordinator, Westmont Public Library, Ill.

“Our showing of “[Episode III:] War and Peace” generated over an hour of audience discussion. Participants repeatedly made comments regarding the importance of sharing Latino history with other Latinos to generate pride and how the films showed them pieces of history that they were not aware of.”

— MariaElena Olmedo, Librarian, Watsonville Public Library, Calif.

Promoting Understanding and Awareness of Latino American History

During the proposal process, many LA500 grantees articulated organizational goals of introducing Latino American history to new audiences from Latino as well as non-Latino backgrounds, and sparking community conversations about related issues of importance, such as immigration, civil rights, local history, and social and cultural contributions. A majority of grantees indicated that they met or made significant progress toward achieving these goals.

Above: Latino students at the Santa Rosa Junior College (Santa Rosa, Calif.) participate on a panel, *The Latino Student Experience at SRJC*, in February 2016.
Below: Performers from Danzas Ceremoniales de Mexico perform traditional songs and stories at Evanston (Ill.) Public Library's *The Big Read/LA500* kick-off event.



A sign welcomes participants to an LA500 oral history event.

“Our goals were to facilitate an understanding of our differing cultures as a means of enrichment, to bring the college and community together in deliberate and thoughtfully guided discussions, and to help facilitate a deeper appreciation for the shared evolving history of our community. We were largely successful in achieving each of these goals. ...Through survey feedback gathered at all events we received multiple positive comments about how much attendees learned about their own history that was unknown to them. ...The Bracero Program lecture generated a great deal of conversation at the college about shared heritage among students and staff. The student panel was wildly popular for attendees, who expressed relief, joy, and appreciation for what the students on the panel shared with them, and that the experiences shared helped audience members feel more part of the community.”

— Nancy Persons, Public Services Librarian, Santa Rosa Junior College, Calif.



Sparking Community Dialogue About Issues of Importance

Another goal that was nearly universally articulated by grantees was to facilitate community dialogue among people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, ages, educational levels, and economic circumstances. The conversations that took place immediately following screenings of the *LATINO AMERICANS* series varied in terms of attendance and topic, with communities engaging in conversation about historical and contemporary issues related to immigration, changing community demographics, the importance of storytelling and identity, cultural contributions to the city or region, and more.

Above: A woman views photographs at the Hialeah History Exhibit hosted by Hialeah (Fla.) Public Libraries.
Below: Attendees gather for a holiday mariachi performance at the White Lake Township Library in December 2015.



“The films and discussions were excellent in provoking thinking about immigration, past, present, and future. These three programs had increased attendance each time, with every person who attended the first program returning for the other two. The initial core audience grew to know each other through the series, enabling more personal conversations.”

— Denise Harris-Fiems, Reference Librarian,
White Lake Township Library, Mich.

“The audience for the LA500 documentary film and discussion series were an excellent mix — women modestly dressed in headscarves; residents who shared their dream of coming from Latin America 35 years ago; and teachers in the community who gathered important information and real knowledge. All were interested, and the discussions were lively and often opinionated. The scholar’s background, personal interest, and achievement, including his role as the Virginia Chancellor’s Commonwealth Professor on immigration, were vital to the open dialogue that was the result of the film topic. A participant, referring to the film and scholar-led discussion series, stated, ‘This series has made me a better neighbor.’ Another attendee said, ‘It is wonderful to share my own experiences with people that are willing to listen.’”

— Linda Holtslander, Division Manager, Loudoun County Public Library, Va.

Engaging Communities With Public Humanities Scholars

Each LA500 grantee worked with at least one public humanities scholar to lead film screenings and other events, and most organizations engaged three or more expert presenters. Humanities scholars participated in LA500 by offering presentations, moderating discussion, sharing personal experiences, and answering questions, as well as by playing significant roles in series planning and establishing new connections between community and campus organizations.

“Erlinda Gonzales-Berry [emeritus professor and chair in the Department of Ethnic Studies at Oregon State University] is the author of *Mexicanos in Oregon: Their Stories, Their Lives*. It was a big bonus to have a local expert conduct our discussions. Dr. Gonzales was not only familiar with Oregon Latino history, but well versed in all the subject matter. She was down to earth, explaining complex issues and bringing them to a level where all participants could contribute to conversation. Best of all, she is bilingual and she was going back and forth between the languages with complete ease. Patron comments [referred to her as a] ‘top-notch facilitator’ who ‘created a friendly atmosphere.’”

— Hanna Hofer, Program Coordinator, Canby Public Library, Ore.



“The greatest contributing factor to our success was our speaker, Dr. Yolanda Martinez-San Miguel [professor, Department of Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies, Rutgers University]. Her welcoming manner encouraged participation in the discussion. The high quality of information presented in the *LATINO AMERICANS* episodes raised many topics for subsequent discussion; Dr. Martinez-San Miguel was able to greatly expand our understanding of these topics by providing even more information than was given in the videos.”

— Karla Ivarson, Principle Librarian, Information Services, Ocean County Library, N.J.

Inspiring Local Partnerships

One of the most impressive achievements of the LA500 initiative is that grantees collectively maintained or developed new partnerships with over 1,500 community organizations in their pursuit of program implementation. This extended the program's reach, impacting more than seven times the number of organizations selected for an award. During the one-year grant term, public events were hosted in more than 750 different venues, demonstrating that grantees reached out beyond library, campus, and museum walls to reach new audiences. These programs were attended by more than 450,000 people. Reports from grantees indicate that many of these partnerships will continue well beyond the grant LA500 grant period, supporting additional programming efforts related to Latino American history in communities nationwide.

A dancer performs at a Hispanic Heritage Festival at the Somerset (N.J.) Public Library in October 2015. Earlier that week, the library hosted a discussion about how various ethnic groups struggle to become American while simultaneously maintaining their identity and integrity. The talk was led by Dr. Aaron Rockland of Rutgers University.



“Over the course of the grant, our project director collaborated with community organizations and supporters to develop and facilitate programs on Latino history in Tampa. These events ranged from book groups to public lectures, oral history workshops, scholarly panels, walking tours, and dynamic events. ... To attract a younger audience to history events, we moved many venues from museum and college campuses to bars. These events attracted the highest numbers and created a following of a larger audience. By July 2016, all events were consistently [full]. Many of these programs will continue after the grant period.”

— Sara McNamara, Ph.D. Candidate,
Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, Gainesville, Fla.

Making Regional Connections

To best support new connections between LA500 grantees, their community partner organizations, and their public humanities scholars, ALA and NEH convened three regional gatherings, which were attended by 39 people. Locations were determined by the number of grantee organizations that were within a three-hour drive from the host's location. By organizing this opportunity for grantees, ALA and NEH maximized collaboration and peer-to-peer learning while keeping expenses at a minimum. Grantees and their partner organizations attended with local support in the form of time away from work and travel expenses.

The events were well attended with 77 percent of participants traveling an hour or more to expand their local network and hear what other grantees were doing for the project. Many in attendance expressed gratitude for an opportunity to meet fellow grantees during the implementation phase in order to share successes and lessons learned. Other participants stated an appreciation for the opportunity to hear more about how other organizations were promoting their programs and learn how to expand their institutions' audience for LA500 events.



Students chat over refreshments at an LA500 event at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago.



A guitarist performs at a Hispanic Heritage Festival at the Somerset (N.J.) Public Library in October 2015.

“When we broke into two groups and brainstormed — the ideas were really flowing and smoke was rising! All great!”

— Attendee, East Coast Regional Meeting

“I loved hearing what other people were doing and I liked the idea of sharing resources.”

— Attendee, Southern California Regional Meeting

“[I really valued] learning about different tools out there and techniques to keep young people engaged and interested.”

— Attendee, Midwest Regional Meeting

East Coast Regional Event

On September 29, 2015, the New York Public Library hosted a regional event for LA500 participants. National Outreach Advisor Neyda Martinez led a moderated discussion about the successes, challenges, and future opportunities for collaboration presented by the LA500 initiative. A discussion about use of social media to raise the visibility of local LA500 programs concluded with a group photo session in celebration of the NEH's 50th anniversary. Attendees included representatives from New York Public Library, Freeport Memorial Library, Uniondale Public Library, Nassau Community College, Rutgers University, the Clemente Soto Velez Cultural and Educational Center, the City University of New York, Central Connecticut State University, Queens Museum, and the University of Saint Joseph.

Midwest Regional Event

On November 12, 2015, individuals involved with LA500 programming from the Midwest gathered at the Illinois Humanities Council headquarters in Chicago. During the event, attendees heard from Ellie Walsh, Ph.D., assistant professor of history and social sciences at Governors State University, who delivered a presentation titled "Latino History as American History." National Outreach Advisor Neyda Martinez led participants in small group discussion of their program plans, outreach efforts, and ideas for further organizational collaboration.

Southern California Regional Event

On January 25, 2015, LA500 participants convened for a half-day event at the Los Angeles Public Library's Central Branch. David L. Moguel, Ph.D., professor of secondary education at California State University, Northridge, delivered a presentation titled "Latinos in America: It's Not About Race — It's About Religion and Self-Reliance," which was followed by a group discussion. Attendees also convened for a networking lunch and participated in break-out discussions about community outreach and audience recruitment efforts.



LA500 grantees and scholars take a moment to celebrate NEH's 50th anniversary at the East Coast Regional Event at New York Public Library on September 29, 2015.



Somewhere Over El Arco Iris Chicano Landscapes, 1971—2015



The Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach, Calif., hosted a tour of its Chicano art exhibition, Somewhere Over el Arco Iris, with guest curator Julian Bermudez in October 2015.

Attracting Matching Support

Although LA500 grantees were not required to provide or report on receipt of matching grant funds, 113 of 203 institutions reported raising more than \$740,000 in additional support for their programming efforts. These donations were received from a variety of sources including local Friends of the Library groups, area businesses, nonprofit partner organizations, academic institutions, and private donors.

Among grantees that reported receipt of matching funds, a dollar-for-dollar match was exceeded. Forty sites that received a \$10,000 LA500 grant, representing \$400,000 in NEH funding, raised a cumulative total of \$415,459. Sixty-nine sites that received a \$3,000 grant, representing \$207,000 in NEH funding, reported raising \$325,271.

While an additional 90 participating organizations did not report on their local fundraising efforts, all grantees provided considerable in-kind support in the form of staff time spent on program planning and implementation.

“We surpassed nearly all of our community outreach goals ... [and] were able to expand the project thanks to additional funding from the Office on Latino Affairs’ Summer Youth Employment Program (\$14,000); Humanities DC’s Soul of the City grant (\$10,000); the University of Maryland’s (\$3,500) payment of three college intern stipends; and individual donations.”

— Christine, McDonald, Managing Director,
HOLA CULTURA, District of Columbia

A group samples baked goods at a stop on the Peralta Hacienda Historical Park’s Feasts of Fruitvale neighborhood tour.



ABOUT US

About the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at www.neh.gov.

About the American Library Association (ALA)

The American Library Association is the oldest and largest library association in the world, with approximately 57,000 members in academic, public, school, government, and special libraries. The mission of the American Library Association is to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

About the ALA Public Programs Office

ALA’s Public Programs Office provides leadership, resources, training, and networking opportunities that help thousands of library professionals nationwide develop and host cultural programs for adult, young adult, and family audiences. The mission of the ALA Public Programs Office is to promote cultural programming as an essential part of library service in all types of libraries. For programming ideas, professional development and grant opportunities, on-demand online courses, and other free resources, visit www.programminglibrarian.org.

About WETA

Founded in 1961, WETA is the leading public broadcasting station in the nation’s capital, serving Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia with educational, cultural, news, and public affairs programs and services. WETA’s mission is to produce and broadcast programs of intellectual integrity and cultural merit that recognize viewers’ and listeners’ intelligence, curiosity, and interest in the world around them.

APPENDIX

The 203 organizations listed below were selected to participate in *Latino Americans: 500 Years of History*. Those marked with an asterisk received the \$10,000 programming grant; others received the \$3,000 programming grant.

Alabama

Troy University Troy

Arkansas

University of Arkansas Fayetteville

University of Arkansas at Little Rock Little Rock

Arizona

Arizona Historical Society Tucson

Arizona Humanities Council Phoenix

Borderlands Theater Tucson

Bullion Plaza Cultural Center and Museum Miami

Chandler Gilbert Community College* Chandler

City of Chandler Public Library Chandler

Phoenix Public Library Foundation Phoenix

California

Acción Latina San Francisco

Altadena Public Library District Altadena

Bakersfield College* Bakersfield

California State University, Fresno Fresno

California State University, Northridge Northridge

Day One Pasadena

Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park* Oakland

Fullerton Public Library Fullerton

Grand Performances* Los Angeles

The Hayward Area Historical Society Hayward

Lake Tahoe Community College South Lake Tahoe

Los Angeles Public Library* Los Angeles

Media Arts Center San Diego*

Mendocino College Ukiah

Museum of Latin American Art Long Beach

Napa County Library Napa

Oceanside Public Library* Oceanside

Orange Public Library & History Center* Orange

Pepperdine University Malibu

The Regents of the University of California Los Angeles

The Regents of the University of California * Riverside

Saddleback College Mission Viejo

San Diego Public Library San Diego

San Francisco Public Library San Francisco

Santa Fe Springs City Library Santa Fe Springs

Santa Rosa Junior College Santa Rosa

University Corporation at Monterey Bay* Seaside

Upland Library Upland

Watsonville Public Library Watsonville

Whittier Public Library Whittier

Colorado

Denver Public Library Denver

Garfield County Public Library District Rifle

Ignacio Community Library Ignacio

Nielsen Library Alamosa

Otero Junior College La Junta

Pine River Library Bayfield

Su Teatro Cultural and Performing Arts Center* Denver

University of Northern Colorado Greeley

Western State Colorado University Gunnison

Connecticut

Central Connecticut State University* New Britain

University of Saint Joseph West Hartford

District Of Columbia

Hola Cultura Washington

Florida

Barry University*	Miami
Broward County Library	Fort Lauderdale
Flagler College	St. Augustine
Hialeah Public Libraries	Hialeah
Lee County Library System	Fort Myers
Manatee County Public Libraries	Bradenton
Orange County Library System*	Orlando
Palm Beach State College	Palm Beach Gardens
Rollins College	Winter Park
Santa Fe College*	Gainesville
St. Thomas University	Miami Gardens
State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota	Bradenton
UWF Historic Trust	Pensacola
University of Florida *	Gainesville

Georgia

Georgia Highlands College	Rome
Georgia Regents University Libraries*	Augusta
University of Georgia*	Athens

Iowa

Council Bluffs Public Library	Council Bluffs
Humanities Iowa*	Iowa City
Kirkwood Community College*	Cedar Rapids
University of Northern Iowa*	Cedar Falls

Idaho

Idaho State University*	Pocatello
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Illinois

Aurora Public Library*	Aurora
Columbia College Chicago	Chicago
Evanston Public Library	Evanston
Harper College	Prospect Heights
Illinois Humanities Council *	Chicago
Illinois Institute of Technology	Chicago

Joliet Junior College	Joliet
Moline Public Library	Moline
Palatine Public Library District	Palatine
Peoria Public Library	Peoria
South Holland Public Library	South Holland
Steger-South Chicago Heights Public Library	Steger
West Chicago Public Library District	West Chicago
Westmont Public Library	Westmont

Indiana

Big Car Collaborative	Indianapolis
Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites	Indianapolis
Indiana University East Campus Library*	Richmond
Marian University*	Indianapolis
West Lafayette Public Library	West Lafayette

Kansas

Kansas Humanities Council*	Topeka
Olathe Public Library*	Olathe
The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the University of Kansas*	Lawrence

Kentucky

Lexington Public Library	Lexington
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Louisiana

La. Endowment for the Humanities*	New Orleans
Nicholls State University, Ellender Memorial Library	Thibodaux
Southeastern Louisiana University	Hammond

Massachusetts

Berkshire Community College	Pittsfield
Framingham State University	Framingham
Pioneer Valley History Network*	Belchertown
Springfield City Library	Springfield
University of Massachusetts Lowell	Lowell

Maryland

Enoch Pratt Free Library	Baltimore
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Frederick County Public Libraries*
Towson University*

Frederick
Towson

Michigan

Ann Arbor District Library
Davenport University
Dearborn Public Library
Public Libraries of Saginaw
Wayne State University*
White Lake Township Library
Ypsilanti District Library

Ann Arbor
Grand Rapids
Dearborn
Saginaw
Detroit
White Lake
Ypsilanti

Minnesota

Ramsey County Library

Roseville

Missouri

Missouri Humanities Council*
University of Missouri-Kansas City

St. Louis
Kansas City

North Carolina

Catawba County Library
Catawba Valley Community College
Charlotte Mecklenburg Library
Durham County Library*
North Carolina Museum of History*
University of North Carolina Wilmington
Wayne County Public Library

Newton
Hickory
Charlotte
Durham
Raleigh
Wilmington
Goldsboro

Nebraska

Humanities Nebraska*

Lincoln

New Hampshire

Pease Public Library

Plymouth

New Jersey

Camden County College
Morris Museum
Ocean County Library
Rutgers University*

Blackwood
Morristown
Toms River
New Brunswick

Somerset County Library System,
North Plainfield Library Branch

North Plainfield

New Mexico

El Rito Library
Museum System *
New Mexico Highlands University
Octavia Fellin Public Library

El Rito
Las Cruces
Las Vegas
Gallup

Nevada

North Las Vegas Library District

North Las Vegas

New York

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
CUNY Dominican Studies Institute
Cinema Tropical
Clemente Soto Velez Cultural & Educational Center
The College at Brockport
Loisaida Inc
Mount Vernon Public Library
Nassau Community College*
The New York Public Library
Poughkeepsie Public Library District*
Queens Museum *
Rochester Public Library
Suffolk County Community College, Brentwood Campus
Syracuse University
Uniondale Public Library

Buffalo
New York
New York
New York
Brockport
New York
Mount Vernon
Garden City
New York
Poughkeepsie
Corona
Rochester
Brentwood
Syracuse
Uniondale

Ohio

Delaware County District Library
Oberlin College
University of Dayton*

Delaware
Oberlin
Dayton

Oklahoma

Oklahoma State University

Stillwater

Oregon

Albany Public Library

Albany

Canby Public Library	Canby
Multnomah County Library*	Portland
Portland State University	Portland
Pennsylvania	
Kutztown University	Kutztown
Lancaster Public Library	Lancaster
Lower Macungie Library	Macungie
Muhlenberg College	Allentown
Reading Area Community College	Reading
Rhode Island	
Providence Community Library	Providence
RI Council for the Humanities*	Providence
South Carolina	
The Citadel*	Charleston
South Dakota	
Siouxland Libraries	Sioux Falls
Tennessee	
Nashville Public Library Foundation*	Nashville
Texas	
Angelo State University	San Angelo
City of Fort Worth Human Relations Commission*	Fort Worth
Fort Bend County Libraries	Richmond
Houston Community College	Houston
Houston Public Library	Houston
Irving Public Library	Irving
Lone Star College-North Harris	Houston
Midwestern State University*	Wichita Falls
Palo Alto College	San Antonio
San Antonio Public Library	San Antonio
Texas A&M University- San Antonio	San Antonio
Texas A&M University-Commerce*	Commerce
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi	Corpus Christi
Texas State Technical College Harlingen	Harlingen

Trinity University*	San Antonio
University of North Texas	Denton
University of Texas at El Paso Library	El Paso
The Williamson Museum	Georgetown
Utah	
Southern Utah University	Cedar City
Virginia	
Loudoun County Public Library	Leesburg
University of Richmond	Richmond
Virginia Tech	Blacksburg
Vermont	
Vermont Humanities Council*	Montpelier
Washington	
Central Washington University Brooks Library	Ellensburg
Garfield High School	Seattle
Tacoma Art Museum*	Tacoma
Yakima Valley Libraries	Yakima
Wisconsin	
Lawrence University	Appleton
University of Wisconsin - Green Bay*	Green Bay
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point	Stevens Point
Verona Public Library	Verona
Wyoming	
Laramie County Library System	Cheyenne
Wyoming Humanities Council	Jackson

