UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Initiative

UCLA Latino Applied Policy Research Awards 2022-2023

The UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative has awarded a total of $150,000 to six Latino-led applied research projects at UCLA aimed at developing policy solutions to challenges facing Latino communities in California. These awards will support the translation of academic research into public-facing briefs that will inform local, state, or national policies. Through these awards, LPPI will support investigators and their teams through awards of up to 12 months to expedite the uptake of evidence-based practices, interventions, and policies to policymakers and other non-academic stakeholders that will use the findings to generate positive change for Latinos and other communities of color.

Summary of Projects Awarded

Title of Project: Hostile Terrain 94: Policy Reflections on Public Facing Participatory Exhibitions

Research Team:
- Jason De León, Executive Director of the Undocumented Migration Project (UMP), Professor of Anthropology and Chicana, Chicano, and Central American Studies, UCLA
- Austin Ella Shipman, Assistant Director, the Undocumented Migration Project

Description of Project: In 1994, the U.S. Border Patrol started the deadly "Prevention Through Deterrence" (PTD) policy designed to discourage undocumented migrants from attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border near urban ports-of-entry by making the trip as hazardous and dangerous as possible. To raise critical public awareness around PTD, Dr. Jason De Leon launched an impactful public facing exhibition called Hostile Terrain 94 (HT94). Through this grant, Dr. De Leon and his team will evaluate the effectiveness of HT94 at garnering public support against enforcement policies that have led to the death of thousands of migrants along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Title of Project: "Schools under Siege: The Impact of Immigration Enforcement on Educational Equity"

Research Team:
- Lucrecia Santibañez, Ph.D. Education, M.A. Economics, Associate Professor, UCLA School of Education & Information Studies

- Patricia Gándara, Ph.D. Educational Psychology, Research Professor of Education and Co-Director of the Civil Rights Project, UCLA
- Julieta Rico, doctoral Student, Urban Schooling, School of Education, UCLA

Description of Project: US citizen children of immigrants are being unfairly punished and their education trajectories severely disrupted because of harsh immigration policies affecting their families – through no fault of their own. Through this grant, Dr. Lucrecia Santibañez and DR. Patricia Gándara will document the impact of immigration enforcement actions and rhetoric on the educational attainment of Latino students, and will create the Coalition for the Educational Rights of Immigrant Youth, to create a mobilization platform that leverages their research findings to push for immigration reform.

Title of Project: What the numbers miss: redefining Latinx homelessness

Research Team:
- Melissa Chinchilla, Ph.D., M.S.H.P.M., M.C.P., Health Science Specialist at the VA Greater Los Angeles
- Deyanira Nevarez Martinez, Ph.D., M.S.G.I.S.T., M.S.P., Assistant Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, Michigan State University
- Molly Richard, M.S., doctoral student and National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program fellow, Community Research and Action program at Vanderbilt University

Description of Project:
Los Angeles County has one of the largest numbers of people experiencing homelessness in any region of the United States. Latinxs are likely to be underestimated in official homeless counts as they tend to live outside of traditional homeless spaces (e.g. homeless shelters and encampments) and with family and/or friends in overcrowded residences in lieu of using homeless services, a situation referred to by scholars and federal agencies as "doubling up. Dr. Melissa Chinchilla and Dr. Deyanira Nevarez Martinez, will develop a new methodology to estimate the homeless population in Los Angeles that better accounts for those who are doubling up. They will also assess the impact of past and new homelessness estimates on the resource allocation across communities and analyze federal, state, and local housing subsidies eligibility based on varying definitions of homelesness.

Title of Project: Policy Mapping Wildfire Impacts to Undocumented Latina/o and Indigenous Migrants

Research Team:

- Michael Méndez, PhD, MCP, Assistant Professor, University of California, Irvine Department of Urban Planning and Public Policy
- 2 research assistants to be hired

Description of Project: American society routinely treats undocumented migrants, as well as other marginalized groups, such as the homeless, as less than human, outside the norm, and disposable. These forms of exclusion directly shape disaster planning and response. This project will examine the impacts of excluding undocumented Latino/a and Indigenous migrants in California from disaster planning and response strategies within the context of climate change- induced extreme wildfire events in Sonoma County, California. The findings will inform policy recommendations to build disaster response plans that incorporate the needs of Latinx and Indigenous immigrants.

Title of Project: Amateur and Professional Boxing Regulations in California: Labor, Wellness, and Public Policies.

Research Team:
- Rudy Mondragón, PhD in Chicana/o and Central American Studies, Visiting Assistant Professor in Sport and Society, Pitzer College
- Abel Valenzuela, Ph.D., Urban and Regional Studies, Professor of Chicana/o studies and Urban Planning and Director of UCLA's Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, UCLA
- 2 research assistants to be hired

Description of Project: Boxing is an under-regulated sporting industry that often preys and exploits vulnerable fighters, most of whom are Latino, Black, or Filipino. With no central governance and boxer-led unions, most fighters do not have access to comprehensive health care, pension or retirement plans, or a minimum salary. In this project, Drs. Rudy Mondragon and Abel Valenzuela will systematically analyze current boxing regulations in California to understand the structural and financial limitations of the California State Athletic Commission to provide a better labor context for boxers. The project will yield policy recommendations to strengthen the labor protections for boxers in California and to create a model that can be replicated in other states.

Title of Project: Toward More Effective Coalitions Between People of Color: Latinos and Their (Shifting) Position in America's Racial Hierarchy

Research Team:

- Efrén Pérez, PhD, Professor of Political Science and Psychology, UCLA
- Alisson Ramos, Undergraduate Student, Race, Ethnicity, Politics, and Society (REPS) Lab Research Assistant, UCLA

Description of Project:
The 2020 U.S. Census has again underscored the growing racial and ethnic diversity of our nation, with Latinos and other People of Color (PoC) driving most of the population growth in the past decade. Although PoC are broadly socioeconomically disadvantaged with respect to Whites, building effective political coalitions PoC is challenging given the diversity of experiences of different communities of color: groups vary dramatically by how they arrived to the U.S., how they are treated by government institutions and authorities, and the political aspirations and goals they express. Through experiments that test the messages and narratives that yield solidarity between disadvantaged groups, Dr. Efren Perez's project will produce a policy brief on how to create viable pathways to effective coalition-building amongs PoC at all levels of government—local, state, and national.