



Commission on Hispanic Affairs: Emergency Preparedness and Language Access

Executive Director Uriel Iñiguez

Vice Chair Anita Ahumada

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs

- The Commission is a small agency which represents the Hispanic community of Washington State to ensure that Latinos participate in all fields of endeavor.
 - The Commission does not provide direct translation services
 - All commissioners are appointed by the governor and serve on a volunteer basis
- The Commission's authority is established by RCW 43.115.



Definitions

- LEP (Limited English Proficient) – Persons whose primary language is other than English and either do not speak or understand it, or have limited knowledge of the English Language.
- Vulnerable Population – People who have needs that may not be easily addressed by traditional means or that are unable to use standard resources due to existing limitations.

Vulnerable groups include:

Children

The Aging

Persons with a physical or mental disability

Immigrants

Persons with limited English proficiency

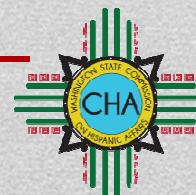
Homeless people



Priorities

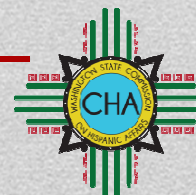
Some of the Commission's priorities:

- Emergency Preparedness and Language Access
- Equal Services to LEP/Vulnerable Population in Disaster

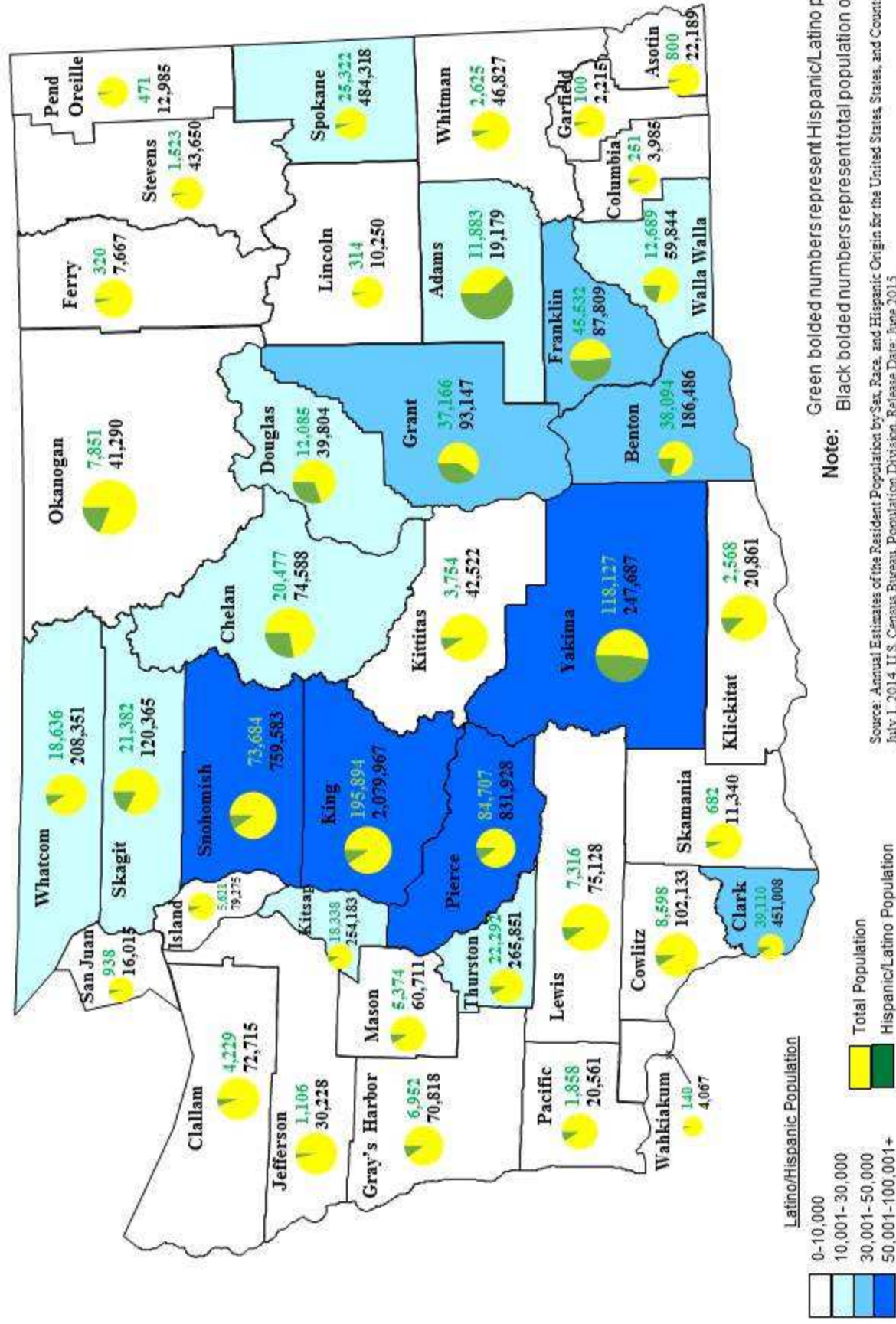


Our Role in Emergency Preparedness

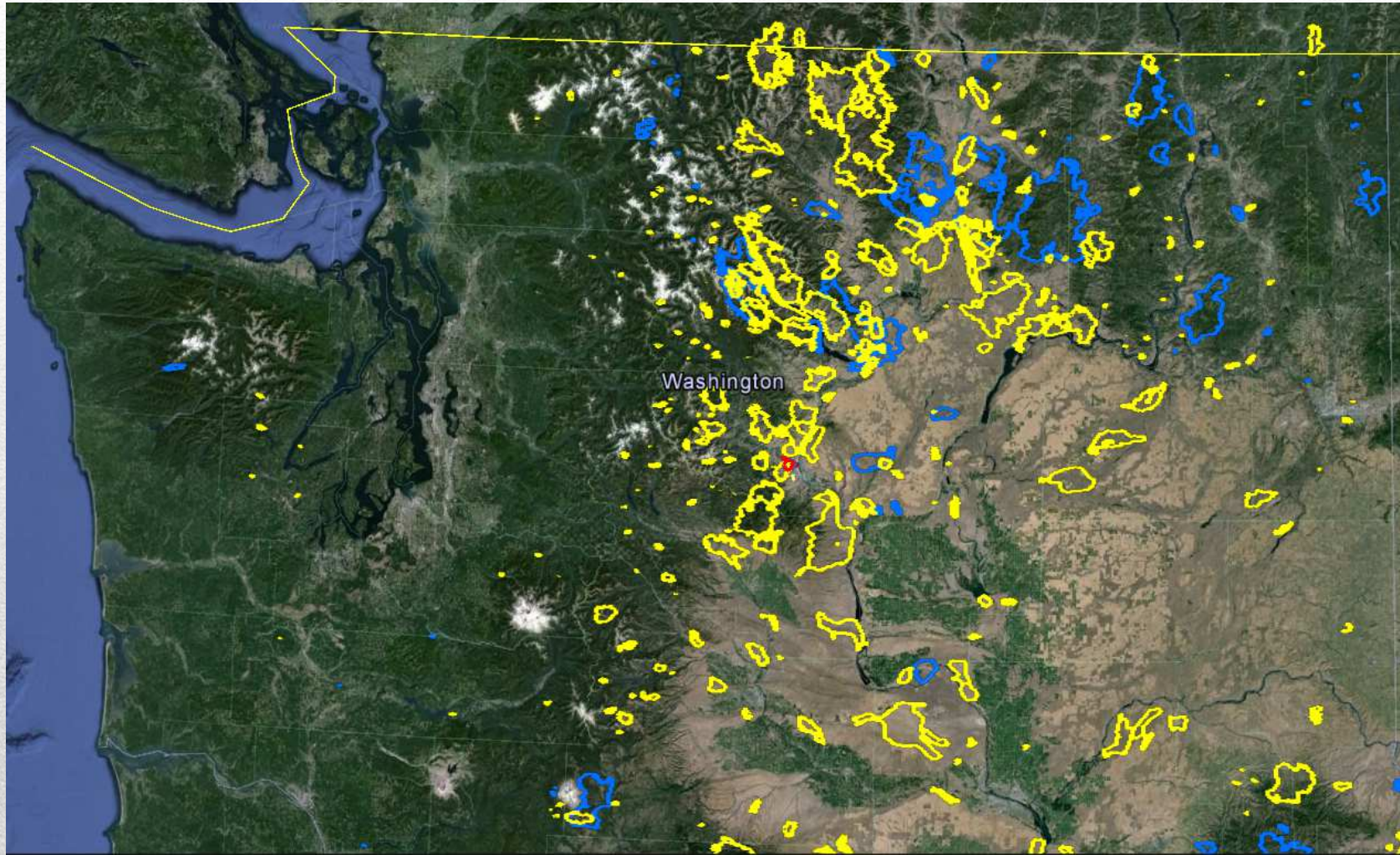
- The Commission works with State Agencies, the Governor's Office, and other entities to ensure that the Latino population is informed of current emergencies
 - The commission holds these entities accountable to provide information in Spanish
 - The commission ensures that agencies make information readily available to the Latino community
 - The commission works with the Latino community to ensure information is being disseminated



Washington: Distribution of Hispanic/Latino Population by County (2014)



Wildfires in Washington, 2000 - 2015



Authorities Requiring Language Access and Inclusion in events of disaster

- Stafford Act as Amended in 2013
- Washington Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)
- 2000 Executive Order 13166
- FEMA LEP Plan (Draft 2014)
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964



Challenges for Emergency Teams

- Unclear federal and local jurisdictions responsibilities
- Priority focuses on assisting the general public
- Lacking or limited information on immigrant populations
- Limited resources available to address vulnerable populations' needs, cultural differences
- Lack of interpretation and/translation resources



Barriers affecting LEPs

- Immigration status/fear of government
- Unfamiliar with the system
- Geographic isolation
- Lack of sources they can trust
- Limited access to information in their language
- No/limited internet access
- Confusion generated by machine translated notices



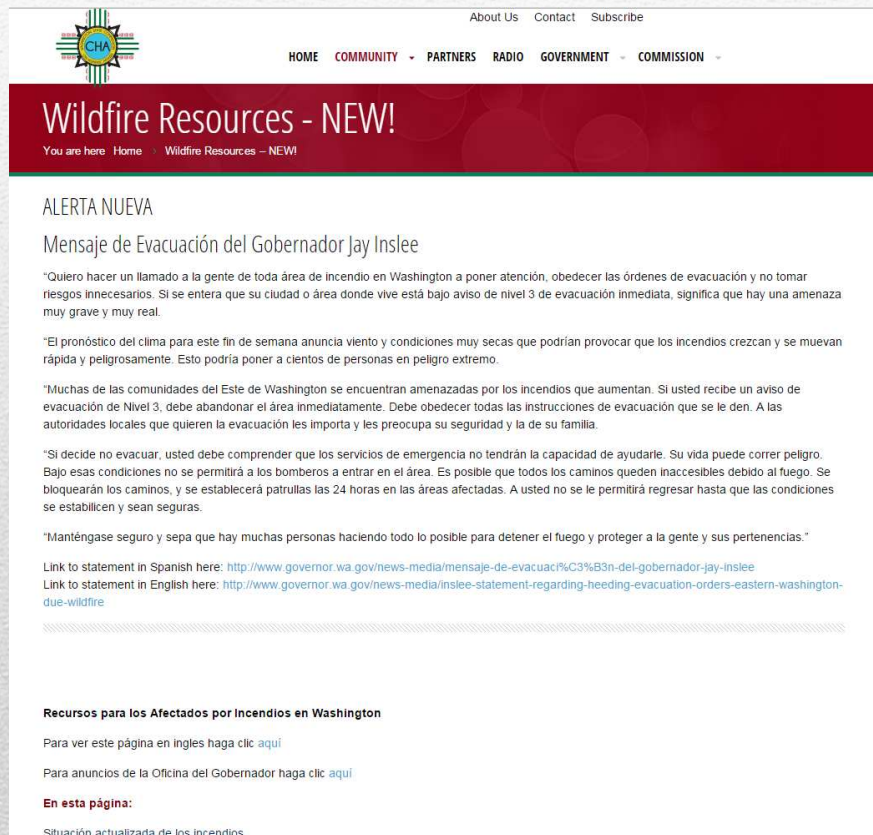
Gaps Last Year

During last year's wildfires in Washington many gaps were found:

- Misinformation to the Spanish speaking community
- Lack of resources
- No language access plans had been created
- Gaps in communication in rural locations
- Miscommunication on evacuation routes
- Lack of collaboration, coordination, and education



Changes this Year



The screenshot shows the CHA website with a red header. The navigation bar includes links for HOME, COMMUNITY, PARTNERS, RADIO, GOVERNMENT, and COMMISSION. A red banner reads "Wildfire Resources - NEW!". Below this, the page title is "ALERTA NUEVA" and the subtitle is "Mensaje de Evacuación del Gobernador Jay Inslee". The main text is in Spanish, discussing wildfire risks and evacuation orders. It includes links to a statement in Spanish and English. At the bottom, there is a section titled "Recursos para los Afectados por Incendios en Washington" with links to more information in English and Spanish.

Wildfire Resources - NEW!

ALERTA NUEVA

Mensaje de Evacuación del Gobernador Jay Inslee

*Quiero hacer un llamado a la gente de toda área de incendio en Washington a poner atención, obedecer las órdenes de evacuación y no tomar riesgos innecesarios. Si se entera que su ciudad o área donde vive está bajo aviso de nivel 3 de evacuación inmediata, significa que hay una amenaza muy grave y muy real.

*El pronóstico del clima para este fin de semana anuncia viento y condiciones muy secas que podrían provocar que los incendios crezcan y se muevan rápida y peligrosamente. Esto podría poner a cientos de personas en peligro extremo.

*Muchas de las comunidades del Este de Washington se encuentran amenazadas por los incendios que aumentan. Si usted recibe un aviso de evacuación de Nivel 3, debe abandonar el área inmediatamente. Debe obedecer todas las instrucciones de evacuación que se le den. A las autoridades locales que quieren la evacuación les importa y les preocupa su seguridad y la de su familia.

*Si decide no evacuar, usted debe comprender que los servicios de emergencia no tendrán la capacidad de ayudarlo. Su vida puede correr peligro. Bajo esas condiciones no se permitirá a los bomberos a entrar en el área. Es posible que todos los caminos queden inaccesibles debido al fuego. Se bloquearán los caminos, y se establecerá patrullas las 24 horas en las áreas afectadas. A usted no se le permitirá regresar hasta que las condiciones se estabilicen y sean seguras.

Manténgase seguro y sepa que hay muchas personas haciendo todo lo posible para detener el fuego y proteger a la gente y sus pertenencias.

Link to statement in Spanish here: <http://www.governor.wa.gov/news-media/mensaje-de-evacuacion/C3%B3n-del-gobernador-jay-inslee>

Link to statement in English here: <http://www.governor.wa.gov/news-media/inslee-statement-regarding-heeding-evacuation-orders-eastern-washington-due-wildfire>

Recursos para los Afectados por Incendios en Washington

Para ver este página en ingles haga clic [aquí](#)

Para anuncios de la Oficina del Gobernador haga clic [aquí](#)

En esta página:

Situación actualizada de los incendios

The Commission has worked this year by:

- Hosted a webpage translated by Anita on our website with useful information provided by the Governor's Office
- Working with emergency responders ensuring information is conveyed in Spanish
- Coordinated with Spanish radio stations to disseminate information
- Worked with emergency responders daily to check on progress and vital communication responsibilities
- Worked with local, tribal, and county jurisdictions daily to ensure information was provided in Spanish



Gaps This Year

This year's wildfire preparation, though better, still needs improvement:

- Delays in information being translated to Spanish
- Lack of Spanish media involvement
- Gaps of communication in rural areas
- Issues with federal aid disbursement
- Lack of addressing behavioral health



Improvements for Next Year

The Commissions Goals for next year:

- Ensure information is disseminated immediately
- Continue to work with Emergency Management to ensure language access plans are being executed
- Communicate with Spanish media affiliate.
- Expand communication with Latino community leaders
 - i.e. Churches, Non-Profits, Volunteers, etc.
- Increase collaboration, coordination, and education with the Latino Community
- Ensure a behavioral health approach is taken



Recommendations for Emergency teams of all levels:

- Secure demographic information on language needs in the state
- Identify and develop a profile to create partnerships with the LEP (Hispanic) populations
- Identify faith based organizations, non-profits, news affiliates, volunteer groups, community clinics, other cultural associations
- Create a cultural advisory committee that includes members from ethnic groups
- Develop or revise emergency plans and strategies to communicate with LEP populations
- Create a directory of Spanish speaking organizations that work and serve the immigrant populations



Questions?

- Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs
- Email: Hispanic@cha.wa.gov
- Website: <http://cha.wa.gov>
- Phone: 360-725-5661

