

# Multicultural Resource Office Annual Report 2009

Volume 1, Issue 11

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## A message from the coordinator



Ellen Pedersen, Coordinator of the Multicultural Resource Office

The Multicultural Office had another busy year. Major events include the economic downturn, the H1N1 flu pandemic, and the continuing need to improve access to health care.

Many Gunnison Valley families were impacted by the economic downturn, especially those families already living in poverty. Job losses created additional hardship resulting in some families leaving the area. Other families were disrupted by some family members having to leave the area while others stayed to provide any financial support available. The impact of disrupted lives affects everyone.

Regarding access to health care, the MCRO was fortunate to receive funding from the Office of Health Disparities, Caring for Colorado, the Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley, and the Colorado Trust Foundation. Funding is for health navigation services, coordination of other related health care services, and funds for vouchers for direct health care services.

Immigrant involvement with various organizations and groups is a good indicator of Immigrant Integration in our community. Beginning this summer, we had many uncertainties regarding the H1N1 flu pandemic. The messages from the Public Health Department changed rapidly based on directives from the state and CDC. To deliver these messages in Spanish, the Multicultural Resource Office came up with a communication system that involved Spanish speaking leaders of neighborhoods that have a high number of immigrant families. Whenever we had a flu shot clinic or we had to distribute mass amounts of information, we would give the leader that information and he or she would spread the information within their neighborhood. This system was very efficient and was a good way to involve our immigrants and to have this system in place in the event of a more serious emergency.

Ellen Pedersen  
Multicultural Resource Office Coordinator

Ellen Pedersen received the AILA (American Immigration Lawyers Association) Colorado Immigrant Liberty Award in June for her work with victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. AILA is the national association of immigration lawyers established to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members.

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## Our clients: Who they and what help they receive

The Multicultural Resource Office is part of the Department of Health and Human Services. We act as a single entry point for non-English Speakers in the community to get information, education, referrals and any type of assistance that is culturally and linguistically appropriate to facilitate a smooth transition into our county.

The Multicultural Resource Office opened its doors in December 2001; in 2009 we helped 215 unduplicated families. The number of families we have seen has steadily increased since 2001. This year, however, we saw fewer clients than we had seen during the last two years, this can be attributed to the fact that some people have moved away. Table 1 shows the number of families, people and children that were served each year since 2002; 2009 shows a decrease in the numbers of families, people and children served. The current economic situation has affected our clients so much that they have had to leave Gunnison, some have returned to their native country and others have gone to other cities or towns where they might be able to find work. On average, we saw 104 families per month during the 2009 year, down from an average of 116 families per month in 2008.

All of the families, family members and children that are represented in the statistics provided are not in Gunnison at all times. (Continued on Page 3)

### INTERESTING CLIENT STATISTICS FOR THE 2009 YEAR

**Table 1.** Number of clients, family members and children

Year	# Families	# people	# children
2002	94	n/a	n/a
2003	137	420	173
2004	147	420	189
2005	173	466	196
2006	196	523	215
2007	248	638	271
2008	253	623	264
<b>2009</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>250</b>

**Table 2.** Number of unduplicated families per month

Month	Families
Jan	99
Feb	113
Mar	103
Apr	95
May	100
Jun	98
Jul	93
Aug	101
Sep	102
Oct	105
Nov	116
Dec	124

**Table 3.** Mean number of clients per month

Year	# of Clients
2004	67
2005	81
2006	94
2007	109
2008	116
<b>2009</b>	<b>104</b>

**Table 4.** Country of Origin/ethnicity (families)

Country	%
Mexico	91.1
Mexico (other than Cora)	51.2
Cora	39.9
So. Cent. America	7.5
Europe/Asia/Africa	1.4

**Table 5.** Age Range of Women  
n=174

Age	%
< 19	5
20-25	17
26-30	24
31-35	21
36-40	10
41-45	6
46-50	5
≥50	4
Unknown	8

**Table 6.** Number of Children per family

Children	%
0	37.3
1	23.4
2	18.9
3	16.4
4	3.0
5	1.0

**Table 7.** children's age (n=250)

age	# children	%
0	17	6.8
1	26	10.4
2	19	7.6
3	20	8.0
4	22	8.8
5	17	6.8
6	15	6.0
7	10	4.0
8	13	5.2
9	10	4.0
10	13	5.2
11	10	4.0
12	11	4.4
13	14	5.6
14	12	4.8
15	11	4.4
16	4	1.6
17	6	2.4

**Table 8.** Volunteer Hours

year	hours
2002	431.5
2003	192.6
2004	617.5
2005	626.6
2006	517.0
2007	521.0
2008	460.0
2009	263.0

(Continued from page 2)

Some people move to other places, family members, and entire families have moved back to their native country.

Another factor that could affect client usage of the Multicultural Resource Office is that so many other organizations in the community have hired employees who speak Spanish, this also explains why the number of hours that the volunteers work have decreased from 460 hours in 2008 to 263 hours in 2009.

The majority, 91.1%, of the clients that visit the Multicultural Resource Office are from Mexico of those 39.9% are Cora Indians and the other 51.2% come from several states in Mexico. Clients from Central and South America include people from Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru. Other clients that have used this office are from Africa and Asia.

Women use the office more frequently than men and the highest percentage, 24%, of these women are between the ages of 26 and 30. The percentage of families without children or with children in their native country living with relatives dropped, in 2008 51.6% of the families that visited the office did not have children living in the home and in 2009, 37.3% of the families did not have children in the home. Some families have brought their children from their native countries to live with them in Gunnison, other clients have started their family with their first child. Given that the majority, 62%, of the clients are between the ages of 20 and 35 we also have a young population of children. Close to 55% of the children are under the age of six.

In 2009 the Multicultural Resource Office made 3,182 contacts on behalf of clients, down from 3,666 in 2008. A contact is a call or communication with office staff or other persons on behalf of clients or vice versa. Follow up calls were made if it was required. The following is a description of the typical contacts we make for clients.

**Education:** Contacts for this category were made with all of the schools regarding Literacy, GED, transportation, free or reduced lunch or a sick child, for example. Selenia Rascón was hired in 2005 as the Education Liaison (this position ended in July of 2009, corresponding with the end of the SIRFI grant). Many of these contacts were made through her, these contacts and data were not a part of the Multicultural Resource Office’s statistics.

**Health:** Some examples of these contacts include Public Health (appointments for immunizations, family planning, Cardio Vascular Program and other programs that are housed in Public Health); local clinics and doctors; prenatal care; hospitals in Gunnison, Montrose, Grand Junction and Denver; local and out of town dentists; and mental health providers. We helped make appointments, interpret or set up an interpreter for the visits, made calls regarding medical bills, and phone calls to the pharmacy. Contacts in this category have decreased since 2008. One factor that has caused a decrease in the number of contacts we make for clients is that the hospital and the clinics in town have hired Spanish speaking personnel.

**Department of Human Services:** Contacts made in this category are made through the department of Human Services for food assistance, Medicaid, child abuse or neglect, LEAP.

**Legal:** Refers to contacts with Colorado Legal Services and local and out of town law enforcement and lawyers. We contacted the local police department, sheriff's office, public defender’s office, the courts and the jail. We provide interpreters and help answer immigration questions.

**Miscellaneous:** These are contacts with the Gunnison Arts Center, banks, DMV, Partners, Bright Beginnings, telephone companies, post office, social security office, taxes, and utility companies. We provide interpreters for some of these contacts and we help our clients understand many of the complex systems that exist in the U.S.

**Work:** The Multicultural Resource Office does not help with job placement but we do help with communication with prospective or existing employers and local businesses. These contacts are ones made directly with employers. We had a few cases where we helped establish contact with the Colorado Department of Labor in cases where the employers refused to pay their employees.

Type of contact	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	% compared to 2004
Education	198	112	148	157	215	154	78
Health	1165	1447	1258	1441	1736	1518	130
Human	269	230	159	178	240	243	90
Legal	274	257	280	387	450	308	112
Miscella-	640	519	511	618	819	759	119
Work	240	207	104	217	206	200	83
Total	2,786	2,772	2,460	2,998	3,666	3182	114

## Programs

### The Light Program



THE LIGHT PROGRAM

The mission of this program is to provide voluntary, community based primary care services including high quality, cost effective health care to low-income residents of Gunnison County by promoting wellness, dignity, patient initiative, and access to health care. The Light program provides care for acute and chronic illness, specialty referrals and resources, health education, and a caring culturally competent environment. We value the concept of a "medical home" as an important part of this program. A medical home originates in a primary health care setting. It is the central source of care, both preventative and curative, record keeping, and care coordination.

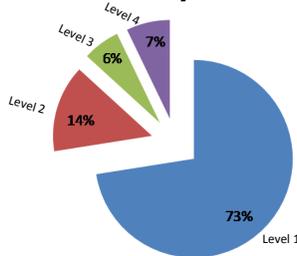
To apply, clients fill out the application and turn in a copy of their driver's license or identification, their most recent pay stubs for all members of the household who work, and a utility bill or rental agreement that proves their status as a Gunnison County resident. The client pays between \$20 to \$35 for the voucher with the sliding fee scale.

2009 marked the third year of the Light Program in Gunnison County. It is named after former Gunnison Physician Dr. Mason Light and it is a collaborative between Gunnison County Health and Human Services and Gunnison County primary care providers that participate in the program. This program was formally housed in public health. Selenia, the Health Navigator took over the program in August of 2009. Gunnison County residents who are uninsured and are at or under 185% of the federal poverty can apply for a voucher with a sliding fee scale that provides them with primary medical care.

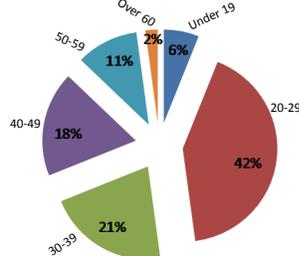
In 2009, the program was funded in part by grants received from the Colorado Trust Supporting Immigrants and Refugee Family Initiative (SIRFI), the Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley, and an award from the El Pomar Foundation. Additional funds were received from the Community Services Block Grant and private donations. A total of 280 vouchers were given out to Gunnison County residents. The benefits to the community speak for themselves. People are provided access to curative and preventative healthcare that they otherwise would not receive because of an inability to pay for services and, there is a more appropriate use of health care resources in our community.

The following charts are some statistics on client usage of the program. For more information, call Selenia at 641-7674.

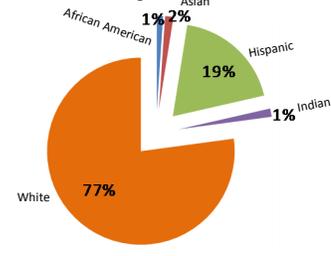
#### Poverty Level



#### Age



#### Ethnicity



### Gunnison Dental Initiative

The Gunnison Dental Initiative started in 2001. Gentle Dental has been on board since this program's inception. It was created to help low income, uninsured children who do not qualify for Medicaid or CHP+. In 2009, 29 children participated in the Program. Dr. Anderson from Gentle Dental and his staff donated over \$12,000 and countless hours of free dental care for children who otherwise may not have received the oral care they needed. They have given the gift of a healthy smile to many children during the years that they have participated in this program. Everyone at Gentle Dental has been very generous in providing these services. We cannot thank Gentle Dental enough for all they do for the young children of Gunnison.

### Multicultural Resource Office Hospital Charity Program

The Charity Program started in 2006 as part of the collaboration between the Gunnison Valley Hospital and the Multicultural Resource Office. It was created to help people that do not qualify for the Gunnison Valley Hospital's in house Charity Program.

We have received \$25,000 each year for the past four years from the hospital to use for our own charity program. The Multicultural Resource Office has a screening form and uses the same parameters for qualification as the hospital when it comes to determining a client's eligibility. We have been able to help 40 families with their hospital bills with the money in this fund.

### Walk Your Way to Health! — ¡Camine por su Salud!

Walk your way to health was a six week bilingual exercising and healthy eating Program. This program was through Public Health and the exercise consisted of walking. There were a total of thirty participants in the program. Each person received a free pedometer and nutrition education. This was not only a great opportunity for participants to exercise with a group of individuals but they also had the opportunity to partner with other participants to practice speaking another language.

Thank you to Margaret Wacker and all the participants for making this program a success.

## Prenatal Program

The Prenatal Program through Gunnison County Public Health and the Multicultural Resource Office is available to uninsured women that do not qualify for Medicaid or CHP+. For a reasonable fee, the women visit the doctor during their entire pregnancy to receive prenatal care, if necessary, they are accompanied by an interpreter and/or the Health Navigator (or they see Dr. Matthews, who speaks Spanish).

Dr. Bonney, Dr. Garren, Dr. Matthews, Dr. McMurren, and Dr. Niccoli all participated in the Prenatal Program. Marketa Zubkova and Selenia Rascón interpreted for many of the appointments.

**In 2009, 19 healthy babies were delivered** by women who participated in this program.

In the past 5 years, all of the babies who's mothers participated in this program were born healthy, with good birth weight, and none of the babies had to be flown out of Gunnison for medical treatment.

Thank you to the doctor's offices (everyone from doctors, nurses, to receptionists) and to the Gunnison Valley Hospital, Gunnison County, the interpreters, and everybody else involved. Welcome to all of the beautiful babies!

## Activities and Collaboration in 2009

**Gunnison Valley Hospital:** To improve the quality of services for the non-English speaking community members: Language Barrier Program providing Medical Interpreters and substantial monetary help for the Charity Program. Bilingual volunteers for the Health Fair; promotion of the program. **Health Fair:** Despite the lack of free vouchers for the Health Fair participation was high. Thanks to private donations, some vouchers provided by Gunnison Valley Hospital, and the participation of immigrant as interpreters, the health fair was a success! After the results were mailed to the clients, the Multicultural Resource Office set up an evening where the results were interpreted by Dr. Marie Matthews. **Law Enforcement:** List of interpreters to call 24/7. **Gunnison Arts Center:** "Book Talk" (every March we discuss a book related to immigrant lives in English or Spanish and have a bilingual discussion). **Gunnison County Parks and Recreation:** scholarships and translation of materials. **Extension Nutrition Programs Family & Consumer Science Agent-Colorado State University Cooperative Extension:** Parenting classes, announcements, and activities. **Toys for Tots:** Distribution of Christmas presents. **Partners:** Promotion of Summer Youth Program, after school program, and all of the Partners programs. **Gunnison Shopper:** Publishes ads and announcements in Spanish. **Saint Peter's Church** and the **Community Church:** Assist needy families in paying the rent while facing difficult circumstances. **Western State College:** Tax preparation assistance **Department of Human Services:** MCRO Coordinator is a member of Child Protection Team, Health and Human Services Commission, Family Advocacy and Support Team (FAST), Early Childhood Council (ECC). **Translation of materials for organizations such as:** Gunnison Valley Hospital, Gunnison Schools, Library and Literacy Action Program, Local Businesses, Partners, Public Health, Toys for Tots, etc.; **Colorado Legal Services (Gunnison, Denver, and Frisco)** collaboration on cases and workshops. **Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley (Brenda Kiester):** Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. **Colorado Fitness:** Jane Tunnadine donated several free gym passes to Multicultural Resource Office clients. **CURVES:** donated Christmas presents for needy families. **GCSAPP** (Gunnison County Substance Abuse Prevention Project), **ECC** (Early Childhood Council) **Gunnison Area Restorative Practices (GARP)** used Multicultural Resource Office interpreters for meetings. **Clients and community members** donate money, time, clothes, furniture, strollers, etc. to the Multicultural Resource Office and clients. **Gunnison Valley Community Alliance** donated \$1,500 in food cards. **Jubilee House,** collaboration on cases. **Schools:** Career Fair, Interpreter Program. **Parenting Class:** Monica Billow taught the STEPP program in Spanish **Early Childhood Council** (ECC) workshop. Over 20 participants at the EEC Workshop on "Involving Parents from Different Cultures" Presenting strategies for early childhood professionals to engage immigrants in programs highlighting cultural competency. Mary Burt and Ellen Pedersen presented. The best part of the presentation was the panel: Patricia Sabino, Yesenia Salinas and Beatriz Alarcón. **Living in America:** How to prepare taxes: 37 adults participated. Thank you Candy Sparks and Katie Osborne. **GCSAPP and Tobacco Coalition:** two great events were held for immigrant families. 72 people and 45 families participated in the GCSAPP dinner in February, and 20 families participated in the Tobacco Coalition event in June. All events were fun and informative and we got great feedback from the participants.

## Funding for the Multicultural Resource Office

**Funding for the Multicultural Resource Office is provided by the following organizations:**

**THE OFFICE OF HEALTH DISPARITIES** funds Ellen Pedersen's position as Coordinator

**CARING FOR COLORADO** Funds Selenia Rascón's Position as Health Navigator

**THE COLORADO TRUST:** This grant ended July, 2009. It provided funding for Ellen and Selenia

**STATE TOBACCO EDUCATION & PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**CANCER, CARDIOVASCULAR, AND PULMONARY DISEASE PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**GUNNISON COUNTY**

**LOCAL GRANTS**

**DONATIONS** from clients and community members

## Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Family Initiative (SIRFI) on Immigrant Integration By Mary Burt

The Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Family Initiative (SIRFI) came to its conclusion in 2009. This four year, \$300,000 grant supported eight local efforts created by a community collaborative that promoted Immigrant Integration. The Colorado Trust of Denver created this statewide initiative that helped 19 communities around Colorado meet the needs of a growing new-comer population.

The approaches included: grow and sustain the Multicultural Resource Office, create access to health care for the uninsured, create daytime family literacy, create a bilingual resource guide, start up a Spanish page in the newspaper, create living in America workshops and banking classes and create and support an education liaison.

All efforts expanded the diversity of the community and services offered. Some efforts did not work in Gunnison, however the grant afforded us the flexibility to try out innovative ideas such as providing a weekly Spanish page in the Gunnison Country Times newspaper and banking classes. We learned by working with the immigrant community that these ideas do not fit the needs of the newcomer community. Other projects, like the access to healthcare for the uninsured, the Light program, created opportunities for a program that is now utilized by more receiving community members than newcomer community members.

Most of the projects created while we had the SIRFI grant allowed our community to figure out if they worked for us. The things that worked have grown or planted seeds for other programs that fit our needs. The Multicultural Resource Office has now doubled in size to include two full time staff and the department it is housed in, now has six bilingual employees, for a total of eight bilingual staff; there were only two when the initiative started in 2004.

This commitment on behalf of the County has created the stepping stones for other entities, such as the Gunnison County Literacy Action Program and the Gunnison Schools to grow and partner their programming to include Even Start Family Literacy services for preschool and kindergarten families. The Even Start grant was awarded to Gunnison in 2009, based on their merits as working successfully as part of the SIRFI collaborative.

SIRFI projects will continue to grow with the community. This was evident as I was putting together the Even Start program as my new job as grant coordinator. The networking was still in place, although better now with the strong immigrant network that Ellen Pedersen, Selenia Rascón and Marketa Zubkova have tirelessly worked on. The commitment from the community to support efforts like Even Start and the local group of the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition will continue the goal of creating a greater sense of Immigrant Integration. Thank you Gunnison for building diversity!

### Volunteers

The Multicultural Resource office has a list of 23 bilingual or multilingual volunteers. Together these volunteers speak seven languages, these are: Czech, Danish, English, Hebrew, Slovak, Spanish, and Sign (ASL / PSE).

In 2009 the volunteers did 263 hours of interpretation or translation through events or appointments that were set up through this office.

Thank you: Beatriz Alarcón, Elba Alarcón, Arden Anderson, Timothy Bakken, Monica Billow, Sylvia Bonham, Mary Burt, Luke Danielson, Joan Grant, Karen Hausdoerffer, Karen Immerso, Laurie Lokie, Manuel Manzano, Verónica Méndez Maqueo, Angélica Mora, Laura Rascón, Daniela Runge, Patricia Sabino, Cinthia Sáenz, Brady Snow, Clara Valdez, Janet Welsh Crossley, and Marketa Zubkova.

And special thanks to those who volunteered for seven or more hours: Elba Alarcón, Timothy Bakken, Sylvia Bonham, Luke Danielson, Joan Grant, Karen Hausdoerffer, Karen Immerso, Angélica Mora, and Marketa Zubkova.

## Volunteer of the Year —2009

The volunteer of the year for the Multicultural Resource office is...Marketa Zubkova . Marketa has won this award five years in a row! She has volunteered more than 111 hours of her time to help the clients of the Multicultural Resource Office.

This year Marketa went to most of the prenatal appointments and in many cases she was called by Gunnison Valley Hospital for the delivery.

The Multicultural Resource Office depends heavily on volunteers to do the interpretation work. Marketa is transitioning to other areas of work that are taking advantage of her compassion and skills.

Hats off to Marketa who is so generous with her time. She is always willing to help!

## How to obtain an Interpreter

Multicultural Resource Office interpreters are in most cases volunteers. The going rate to pay an interpreter (which many agencies, organizations and businesses do in town) is \$15-\$30 an hour (but can be up to \$150/hour or more). The interpreters use volunteer time to practice and broaden language and interpretation skills. Many are trained in specific areas such as medical or court interpretation.

The Multicultural Resource Office will be able to help you with your specific needs so please always call us first at (970) 641-7999. The hours interpreters put forth are used to obtain grants to sustain the Office so it is crucial for volunteers to report hours and services provided.

*Please contact the Multicultural Resource Office when you need an interpreter and never call the interpreter directly.*

TO INQUIRE ABOUT  
INTERPRETERS  
OR TRANSLATIONS  
CALL  
641-7999

## What our clients say about us..

"The Multicultural Office is very important because it helps us solve our problems. Sometimes we feel like the world is closing in on us and we make a small glass of water, that would be our problems, seem like the sea. We need someone to help us see things differently or that helps us understand things better. As individuals who don't have health insurance, immigrants can lose the opportunity for services. No other office helps, also many people do not speak English and they would not be able to understand what is being said at the places where they are seeking services. Personally, I have benefited immensely from the help and information I have received. I would like to thank the people who work at the Multicultural Office for listening to me whenever I have needed someone to talk to."

"I want to give thanks for all of the support that the multicultural Office gives us. Hopefully they will be able to continue to help us for a long time. I don't know what would happen if this program ends because the Multicultural Office helps us make appointments with the doctor, it guides us with a lot of problems we have. For example there are people who are shy and don't really like talking and there [at the Multicultural Office] they make us feel like we can trust them and we can say what is wrong with us. More than anything, they give us support. Hopefully they will be able to continue helping us."

"I would like to thank the Multicultural Office for all of their support and all of the things they do to help people such as myself to make appointments with the doctor, give people advice regarding their different problems. In my case, I am thankful for all of the help that I have received. I hope that the Multicultural Office will be there for a long time because we always use it and we would not know what to do without it since a lot of us don't speak English."

"The multicultural Center is important because it is the only place that gives us information and that helps us immigrants. They assist us with a lot of things, with our children or when we have problems with our families or when we get sick and we have to go to the doctor "

"I have received a lot of information and support about how to help my children. I also have received help with health related things and interpreters. I have received all kinds of help through the Multicultural Office and I have benefited from all of it."

"It is also worth mentioning that Ellen Pedersen is a very efficient and capable person, she is able to act in any situation that presents itself and she is also very friendly."

"I am sure that without the help we receive our lives here would be more difficult. "

"I hope that my family will be able to keep counting on this office for a long time"

"It helps us feel more equal in this country "

# Gunnison County Multicultural Resource Office

225 North Pine Street, Suite C  
Gunnison, Colorado 81230



Please distribute to all interested people and organizations.

Call if you would like to be added to our mailing list



CARING FOR COLORADO  
FOUNDATION



VISIT OUR WEB PAGE

[http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/health\\_human\\_services\\_multi\\_cultural.html](http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/health_human_services_multi_cultural.html)

Find the **Bilingual Resource Guide** [find all the resources available in the community] and the **Cora Booklet** [learn about our neighbors, the Cora] here!

## *Multicultural Resource Office*

### *Advisory Board*

Maria Aguilar  
Mary Burt  
Fortino Celestino  
Paul Duba  
Jonathan Houck  
Lazaro Jeronimo  
Ellen Pedersen  
Selenia Rascón  
Vikki Roach Archuleta  
Lorenzo Rodríguez  
Patricia Sabino  
Cynthia Saenz  
Jenny Thomes  
Rob Whiting

## Mission Statement

We focus on providing an excellent resource for the Gunnison Valley where education, communication and networking can take place in order to aid in the integration of families into the Community

- Provide interpreters as needed for client and community
- Develop, provide, and translate materials
- Provide community with culturally appropriate materials and services
- Provide statistical information for community planning
- Work with community providers to promote culturally diverse, sensitive, and affordable health services