

# Women's Initiative For Self Employment

*How can Women's Initiative increase their  
Spanish speaking mentors in the Get Connected program?*

*With the increase in these mentors how can  
Women's Initiative mold these mentors into donors?*

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# Executive Summary

The Women's Initiative for Self-Employment is a non-profit organization whose mission is to aid low-income women become economically self-sufficient. Women of all ethnic and social backgrounds are assisted through entrepreneurial training, technical assistance and financial services. Since 1988, WISE has served more than 13,000 women, disbursed loans totaling over \$800,000 and helped clients leverage \$1.8 million in lending sources. Over the years, WISE graduates have started over 1,500 businesses which is translated in employment for others and economic self-sufficiency.

In order to aid women in their entrepreneurial planning, one of the services that is provided to them are networking/mentoring opportunities. Through a program called "Get Connected", the clients are matched up with corporate volunteers & donors, called "Connectors", and are given the opportunity to have a one on one mentoring session. Throughout the year, there are four "Get Connected" events that provide mentoring, motivational talks as well as pertinent business seminars.

With WISE's program growth and span, there has been an increasing demand for Spanish Speaking Connectors; almost half of the clients attending the program are Spanish speaking. The potential to grow the Spanish Speaking Connectors have many positive implications: increase donor base, increase networking opportunities for clients and increase client participation.

In order to address this issue, there were several methods that were used to come up with recommendations. Consultants had a meeting with Development Director and Program Manager to discuss the issues that would be addressed. Second, a connector event was attended by one of the consultants, and participated as a Spanish Speaking Connector. Survey analysis was done of both client surveys and connector surveys. Lastly, research on donors, board diversification and volunteers was done.

In synthesis, it is recommended that WISE change the format of the Get Connected Events. As they stand, there is limited time devoted to the mentoring piece. There is a demand and a client base to have a Spanish Get Connected Event with Spanish speaking connectors and guest speakers. Event logistics need to be smoothed out and streamlined, there needs to be department ownership. Lastly, a donation "Ask" needs to take place at the end of the event; there is potential dollars being lost from those attending the event. Records show that many Connectors do not return, so they need to be engaged as donors when they are in participation.

The second major recommendation is to develop a stronger connector relationship. By building this relationship with the connector, the odds of increased donor loyalty will be established. It is also important that clients are allotted adequate time to develop mentoring relationships with the connectors; "High Impact Low Commitment" model does not suit your clients nor the organization. Connectors should be trained and briefed prior to the event(s); this will aid in relationship building and in being prepared with expectations of the event.

Finally, board diversification is key to building a network of non-white donors and volunteers. Board participation is taken very seriously by WISE and all board members are required to raise \$20,000; by building into this infrastructure board diversification there can be an increase in funds streaming in from minority led corporations and organizations.

## **Organization Description**

Women's Initiative for Self-Employment helps economically disadvantaged women to open or expand their business by providing them with entrepreneurial training, technical assistance, and financial services. For almost two decades, Women's Initiative has proven that women create jobs for themselves and others, access the mainstream economy, and increase their economic self-sufficiency when they are given business planning and financing support.

WISE's mission is to assist low-income women of diverse ethnic and social backgrounds in becoming economically self-sufficient through entrepreneurial activities. Services are provided in English and in Spanish. By targeting low-income women, focusing on the needs of traditionally underserved groups including minorities, immigrants, and welfare recipients, Women's Initiative brings new resources into local communities in a unique model. Over half of the Women's Initiative community participates in classes offered in Spanish through Alternativas para Latinas en Autosuficiencia (ALAS) program, which boasts culturally competent services and extensive networks that propel Latina entrepreneurs into business success.

Since 1988, this organization has served more than 13,000 women, disbursed loans totaling over \$800,000 and assisted clients in leveraging an additional \$1,800,000 in capital from other lending sources. In recent years Women's Initiative clients have started or developed over 1,500 businesses, from photography studios to catering companies and jewelry stores. Currently, Women's Initiative has training sites in San Francisco, Oakland, Richmond, Marin and San Jose; the goal for 2007 is to graduate 700 clients and open a new site in the Fruitvale district in Oakland.

Women assess their businesses and entrepreneurial readiness through WISE's comprehensive business management and personal development training. One-on-one technical

assistance, peer support networking events, and ongoing business support services ensure economic success and business growth. In addition, Women's Initiative administers a revolving loan fund, disbursing loans ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000, and links women with asset building opportunities, including matched savings accounts called Individual Development Accounts (IDA's) where participants have the potential to double their savings for capital investments. Graduates dramatically increase their incomes; the average median income of the participants increases 85% within 18 months of completion of the business management training. Women's Initiative has been recognized for its excellence in enhancing entrepreneurial skills, for which the organization received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Micro-enterprise Development in 2001.

### **Client Profile**

Many low-income women in California fail to make ends meet and move forward in their life. Nearly 37% of single women in California still live below the federal poverty level (compared with 25% nationwide), including many that have never received public assistance. Women's Initiative serves women with the dream of becoming business owners. These women are usually highly motivated, show entrepreneurial aptitude, and have skills in a particular craft or service. At the same time, they often face an array of obstacles when trying to launch a business: limited education or opportunity, lack of start-up capital, undeveloped business skills, competing family responsibilities, and limited access to marketing information and expertise. WISE serves immigrants that face additional barriers, including lack of: business regulation knowledge, access to marketing opportunities and understanding of information technology as an asset to their business..

46% of WI's clients speak Spanish as their first language only, and most of the ALAS clients come from Mexico and countries from Central America. According to information provided by the WI Evaluation and Research Department, 36% of the clients are at the basic level of English proficiency. The majority of the ALAS clients have business related with food and cleaning services, while the clients of the English program open business related with retail and clothing.<sup>1</sup>

#### Women's Initiative - Client Profile

- Average age is 41
- 100% are low-income women at program entry
- 78% are women of color
- 46% speak Spanish as their first or only language
- 29% are single parents
- 15% have a disability

### **GET CONNECTED Program**

There are several ways to get involve with Women's Initiative, and one of those is participating in the GET CONNECTED program as a Business Connector. Through this program Women's Initiative invites corporate and entrepreneurial leaders to share their skills and support with new entrepreneurs as Business Connectors. Becoming a Connector is an easy way to deepen volunteer involvement with Women's Initiative and work with clients face to face. Women's Initiative especially welcomes Connectors that reflect the ethnic and social diversity of the communities served.

The Get Connected program was created in 2005 to satisfy the clients' need for networking and to engage potential and current donors in a way that makes them feel closer to the clients. Women's Initiative clients need access to networks so they can grow professionally

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to Appendix A.

and have access to markets; on the other hand, volunteers and potential and current donors want to have personal contact with the clients and feel part of the WISE family.

The program started as an idea of the WISE's CEO, Julie Castro-Abrams and the Development Director, Heather Haxo-Phillips. They decided to start the program by inviting donors and board members to become business connectors for clients. Their vision was to build a community of executive volunteers and potential donors who after meeting and interacting with the clients, at the Get Connected events, would: a) fall in love with the agency and become donors or solicitors without having to spend a lot of time with the clients. After the first Connect Event in October 2005, Women's Initiative officially launched a Campaign to recruit more business Connectors who spoke both English and Spanish.

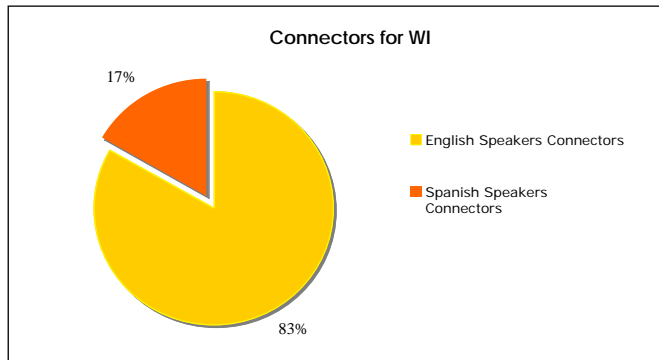
Women's Initiative see connector's as prospect donors, becoming a connector is the first step toward "falling in love" with the organization. More than half of the people that have come to WISE's networking events have been referred by someone and have little knowledge about the organization; however, after their first interaction with the clients, the goal is that they become more interested and will return and become more involved with the organization.

The Connect Events are held quarterly in San Francisco or Oakland. The events usually last three hours; each event has a thematic topic which is the focus of the event, for example: marketing, networking, stress-management, strategic planning, etc. The last event topic was "Networking: Get great results: 'Put' the work into building strategic connections". At every event, a keynote speaker opens the program giving a message addressing the central topic. Then, there are seminar sessions in both English and Spanish for the clients and a Connector Orientation for the connectors. The Get Connected Session is the last activity of the day, where connectors and clients are paired up and have thirty minutes to connect and share experiences.

There is usually a reception, either at the end or the beginning of the event, this time is also used for networking.<sup>2</sup>

### Connector’s Desired skills and experience

A Business Connector is an experienced businessperson who shares their expertise with new entrepreneurs at Women’s Initiative quarterly Connect Events. Connectors are also invited



to offer business seminars in their area of expertise; to mentor the graduates; provide keynote speeches at graduations; and are invited to help link the organization to people and resources that can help Women’s Initiative and its graduates to

move forward and succeed. WISE seeks individuals and companies who have a passion for their mission and understand the challenges faced by low-income women starting businesses in the Bay Area. The ideal Business Connector is an experienced business owner, founder or senior manager or executive.

	Oct-05	Apr-06	Jul-06	Oct-06	Feb-07	Apr-07
English Speaker Connectors	80	20	40	60	21	23
Spanish Speaker Connectors	18	10	15	20	7	5

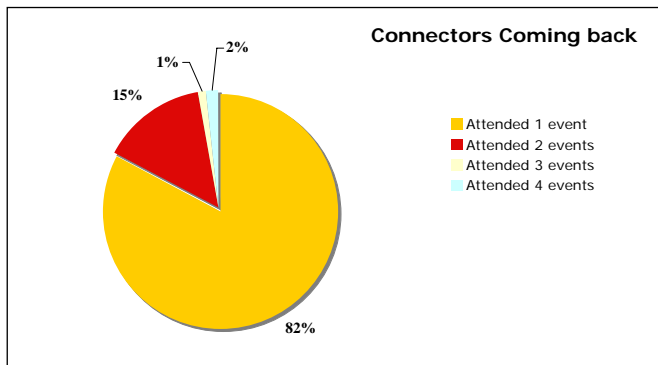
Since 2005, 263 people have participated as business connectors and only 17% of them speak Spanish. This number does not meet the demand of the Spanish speaking clients who

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Appendix B for agenda of event

attend the networking events. On average, 25 Spanish speaking clients attend the networking events and only 5 to 10 Connectors are Spanish speaking. The ratio, for the Spanish speaking clients and connectors, are 4 clients per connector; on the other hand, the ration for English speaking clients to connectors is 1:1 or 1:2. As is obvious, there is a tremendous necessity for an increased number of Spanish speaking connectors.

## Issue Areas

Women's Initiative is looking for ways to increase their Spanish speaking mentors in the Get Connected program due to the diversity of their clients. As stated before, WISE has a growing number of Latina clients who speak English as their second language. This has posed a variety of issues with the Get Connected events because there are often not enough Spanish speaking connectors. This has also posed significant cultural issues because these Latina clients lack a mentor who they can relate to on a cultural level.



WISE uses these Get Connected events as a way to introduce Connectors to the programs that they operate and as a place for future donors to see the program in action. However, they have not been able

use the resources of their Spanish speaking connectors to the fullest extent because there is little follow up with the connectors. Because of this, the Get Connected events have only had 18% of their connectors return for a second event.

We have provided recommendations based on the following questions:

- *How can WISE increase their Spanish speaking mentors in the Get Connected program?*
- *With the increase in these mentors how can WISE mold these mentors into donors?*

## Methods

In order to approach WISE's problem of Spanish speaking connectors we took a variety of different steps to provide a thorough list of recommendations. These strategies included attending a Get Connected event, meeting extensively with staff from WISE, analyzing survey results for both clients and connectors, and reviewing previous research related to our problem.

In February, we had the opportunity to participate as a connector at the Get Connected event<sup>3</sup>. This direct observation gave a first hand perspective on the Spanish Speaking connector's involvement in the event. We were able to understand how the event worked. This experience relates directly to our recommendations.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout this entire process we have been able to have direct support and connection with staff members of WISE, primarily the Program Manager and Development director. Each of these individuals have been able to provide an organizational insight to the problem. Furthermore, we were able to understand how this program relates to the overall organization and relates to their fund development.

Surveys were distributed to both clients and volunteers following the Get Connected events. However, much analysis on this has not been completed. The survey results created a list of further questions and ideas related to the survey. This analysis allowed us to create recommendations directly related to feedback from volunteers and clients and their perspective.<sup>5</sup>

There has been very little research done on *Spanish speaking* volunteers so we have expanded our review of literature to Latino volunteers. Much of this research become relevant in understanding how *Women's Initiative* can connect with this group in increasing their Spanish

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to Appendix E for full "experience" write-up

<sup>4</sup> Refer to Appendix C for detailed analysis of *Get Connected* event

<sup>5</sup> Refer to Appendix D for survey results

speaking connectors. Furthermore, this relationship provides future focus on how to involve the connectors to become donors.

### ***Background information on Latino Volunteerism***

In order to increase the number of Spanish speaking connectors the relationship of the connector and the organization must be developed in a manner that creates opportunities for more involvement in the organization. We are assuming that our Spanish speaking volunteers are of Latino descent and we will apply this research accordingly. When seeking our Spanish speaking volunteers it is imperative to understand the cultural reasoning for these volunteers to get involved with Women's Initiative and how Women's Initiative can adapt in order to create these environments.

Latino volunteerism is traced throughout the history of the Latino people in the United States with the formation of many community organizations though the documentation of much of this remains anecdotal (Cortes, 1991). Three important themes have emerged in the community participation of Latino's in nonprofits, being the importance of being family oriented, an opportunity that is meaningful and a structure that is respectful to the ethnic and cultural values of those participating (Gregory & Stebring, 2003).

### ***Family Centered Involvement***

Because of the importance that the family unit plays in the Latino culture and daily life it is only natural that these types of opportunities in volunteering are important. Melville (1991) states that "perhaps one of the most basic of all Latino ideals is that it is one's family, primarily of origin, but also the nuclear unit, that one must identify with and rely on for emotional and

materials support”. Safrit and Lopez (2001) found that Latino adults are more likely to participate in the community if they have a child that is also involved.

### *Worthwhile and Meaningful Activities*

When looking for volunteer opportunities, Latino’s look for opportunities that help others in a manner that is worthwhile and meaningful for their community (Hobbs, 2000). Hobbs (2000) further describes that “For a Latino adult, helping others is just second nature- it occurs everyday. Helping others is looked upon as an obligation or social responsibility”. Community involvement then leads not only to individual development, but to the entire Latino community through the development of the social, economic, cultural and political well being of the community (Safrit and King, 1994).

### *Comfortable Environment*

A welcoming environment and sense of trust in a program is key to contributing to the willingness for the Latino community to participate (Hobbs, 2000; Perez, 1991). This environment can be created by providing opportunities that involve people that the volunteer may already be familiar with such as a family member or friend (Safrit and Lopez, 2001). Hobbs (2001) discusses further the importance of organizations to build a strong presence in the Latino community in order to create lasting relationships.

## **Recommendation 1: Change the format of the Get Connected Event**

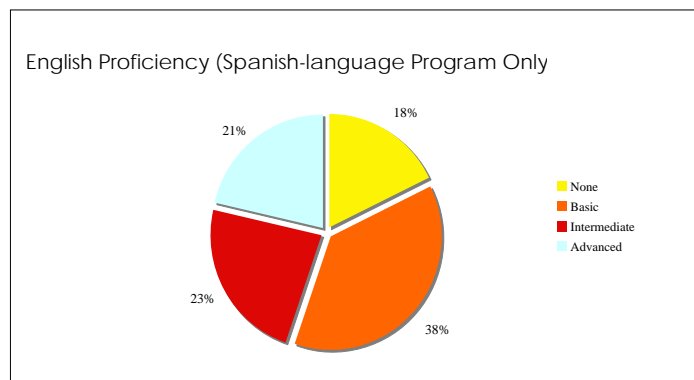
### **Increase time that connector spends with client**

Currently clients and connectors are only given 30-45 minutes to engage in conversation; because of this time limitation the potentials of the conversation are inhibited. If the connector was briefed before the event, that would free up that hour so that more time could be allotted to the mentoring piece.

### **A dedicated Spanish “Get Connected” event should take place.**

One of the four connector events should concentrate on all Spanish speaking students.

Incorporating both English and Spanish speaking students into the events is difficult. If there’s a language barrier, the student is not able to take full advantage of the whole purpose of the event. For example, the



guest/motivational speaker addressed the group in English as a result about 30-40% of the students participating possibly couldn’t understand it or get the most of the talk as if it were in their native language.

- ***Single Spanish Event: 46% of WISE clients are Spanish speaking***

To date, WISE has six events annually; it is recommended that there be a dedicated Spanish Connector Event. It would be to the best interest of the program to offer this service since almost have of their clients are Spanish speaking. As WISE begins to plan for the upcoming connector events, it is recommended that they attempt organize a Spanish only event, using this

as a pilot event. When the survey results are in, WISE can then determine if it is a step in the right direction or not. The recommendation is not to increase the number of events; it is simply to change one of the pre-existing events to all Spanish.

### ***Spanish Keynote Speaker***

Inviting speakers to the events that the women can understand and learn from is extremely crucial to their learning experience and motivation on the road to self-sufficiency in the world of micro-enterprise. If there is a language barrier between the client and the speaker the event speaker is not benefiting the client. For those Spanish speaking clients with limited or remedial English capacities, it is most beneficial to have a keynote speaker with whom the client can: a) identify with, b) understand, and c) approach if more information is needed.

### **Streamline Event Logistics (what department is in charge of what)**

Event logistics, as in all event preparations, is very important. One of the concerns that WISE staff had was that there was no ownership of event planning and preparation. Currently, the work is done by the development and program departments, but there is no clear direction as to what department is in charge of what event logistics. As part of streamlining logistics an “Connect Event Planning” timeline has been constructed to aid in this process.<sup>6</sup>

It is recommended that event planning and preparation begin six months prior to the event and that the logistics be divided amongst the following departments: Program, Marketing and Development. The planning sheet includes all tasks, which include timeline details and task lead. Having this document will also allow everyone in all departments clear direction and event planning will become easier and more efficient.

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<sup>6</sup> Appendix D

## **Making the “Ask” at the event**

There is never an opportune time to ask for a donation, but in events where people feel good about what just happened the likelihood of donating without putting much thought into it is heightened. There is a great donating potential that is not being tapped into. It would be well worth WISE’s time to brainstorm on how to incorporate the “Ask” into one of your events. Possibly during the closing remarks, giving volunteers an envelope, etc.

## **Recommendation 2: Developing a stronger Connector Relationship**

“Research in the past decade indicates that women prefer to give to organizations with which they feel personally connected. Development professionals can help women fulfill their potentials philanthropists by strengthening that sense of connection through donor education and relationship building.” -

Kaminski, A

*Source: Hank Rosso's Achieving Excellence in Fund Raising*

### **Building stronger relationships between Connectors and clients**

The “high impact, low time commitment” model does not seem to meet the needs of WISE’s students. If the point is for the student to learn how to network then there should only be a networking event. On the other hand, if connectors and students develop ongoing relationships, both the mentor and the student will get more out of it. As a result of cultivating real “mentoring” there’s an increase in dedication to the program and a possible increase in monetary donations. As the previous research is shown it is important to create opportunities for our connectors to feel comfortable in their environment and give them the opportunity to participate in a worthwhile activity (which is the Get Connected event).

### **Develop a stronger training process for Connectors at Events**

During the event there is a loss of focus, some people are simply there for the networking and know that there is little commitment toward the student. The event should be focused on the mentoring piece, especially for those connector’s that have 2 or more students. If the connector feels that they are an asset to the program, they are more likely to come back as connector’s.

This can further be addressed through creating a training program specifically for connectors. This event would take place prior to the Get Connected event. The volunteer training would create the opportunity for connectors to get a thorough introduction to the

organization, understand the role that they play in the event. A training guide would need to be developed for the connectors and the program team would be responsible for the delivery of this training. By providing this training it has the strong possibility of leading to an increase of overall satisfaction of the volunteers which will hopefully lead to an increase of these Spanish speaking connectors becoming strong sources for fund development.

### **Creating collaborations with outside organizations working with Spanish Speaking Small Business Owners**

Women's Initiative should continue to forge relationships with other organizations that work with Spanish speaking business owners, such as the San Francisco Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, San Francisco Small Business Association, and Women in Small business. A list from the Hispanic Business of Commerce on the top 3 enterprises that the ALAS clients are owners of has been provided as a starting point for the organization. This list provides the name of the business and their contact information.

Though creating these connections to Small Business owners was not the original intention of the Get Connected program, clients surveyed have asked for having more of a connection to the Connectors. Because many of the Connectors are in executive level positions the women in the program feel as though they do not share many of the same experiences.

Another source of business owners is having former clients in the program provide feedback to the current clients. These women would be able to provide a direct service to the clients by showing them success. This brings the program full circle with clients by giving them the opportunity to give back their time and money to an organization that helped them become successful.

### **Recommendation 3: Diversifying Board of Directors**

Board of Director Diversification is also important, especially when wanting to address issues that are impacted by the organization's cultural sensitivity. If the organization wants to increase its leverage in the Latin community (i.e. gain volunteers and donors) then there needs to be that community needs to be represented on the

According to the US Census Bureau, only half of the nation's population is expected to be non-Hispanic white by the year 2025. Increasingly, foundations expect this diversity to be mirrored in the leadership of nonprofit institutions in the United States, increasingly, foundations are requesting that nonprofit boards of directors reflect the diversity of the communities and populations they serve. – Gwendolyn Perry

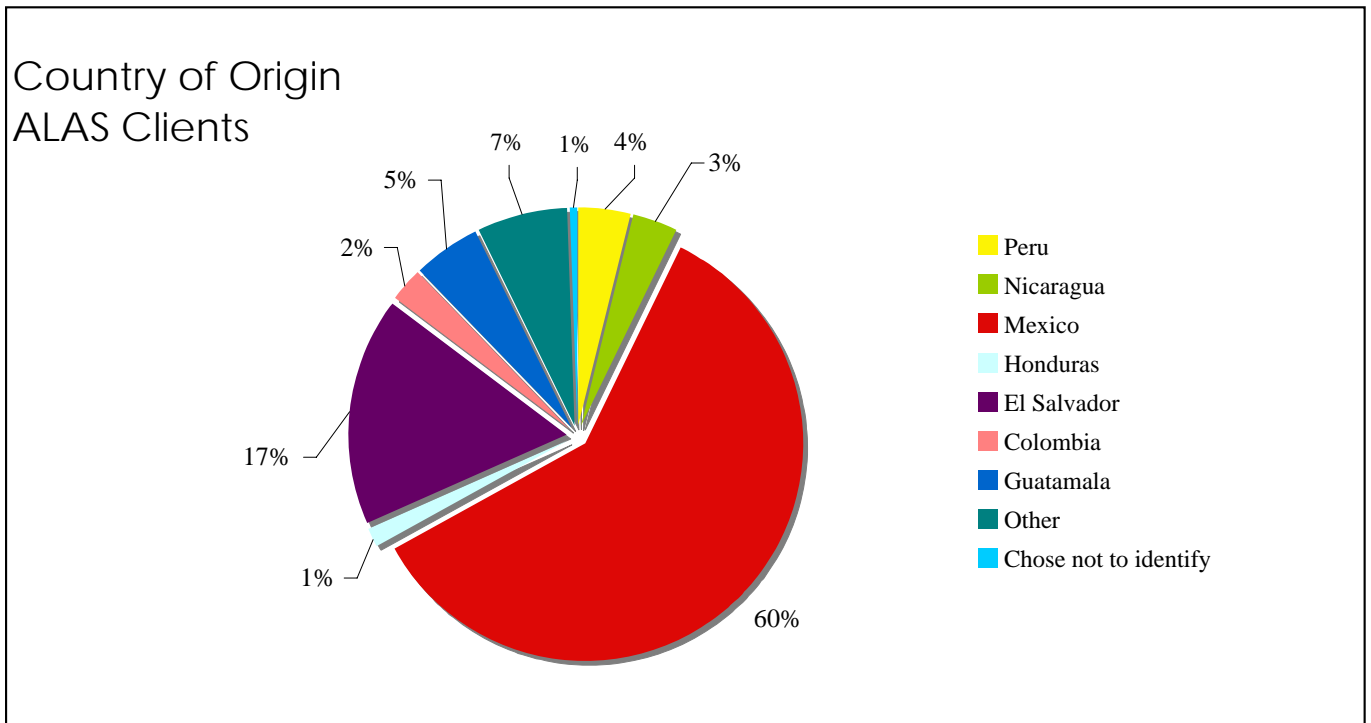
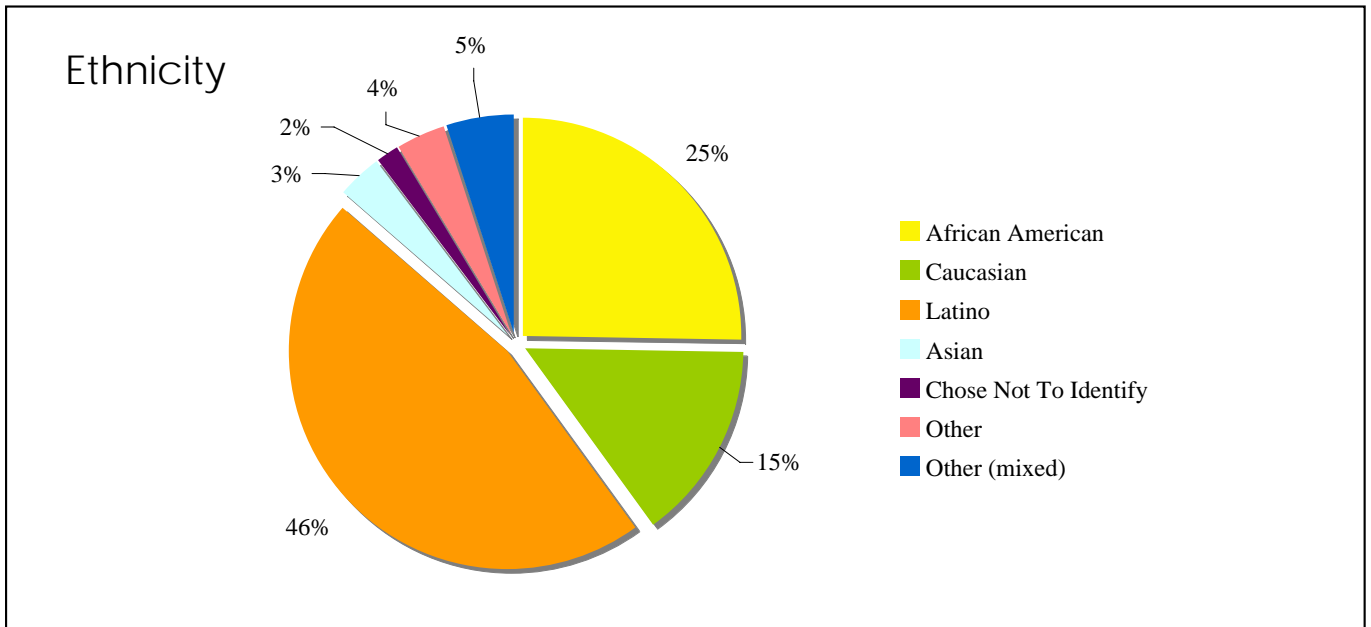
*Source: Hank Rosso's Achieving Excellence in Fund Raising*

board of directors. It is important to note that WISE's board of directors are very active and each board member is required to raise \$20,000 a year, this is a huge source of revenue for the organization. By inviting Latino's and other people of color to the board, the span of the organization will grow and lead to increased donations and volunteers.

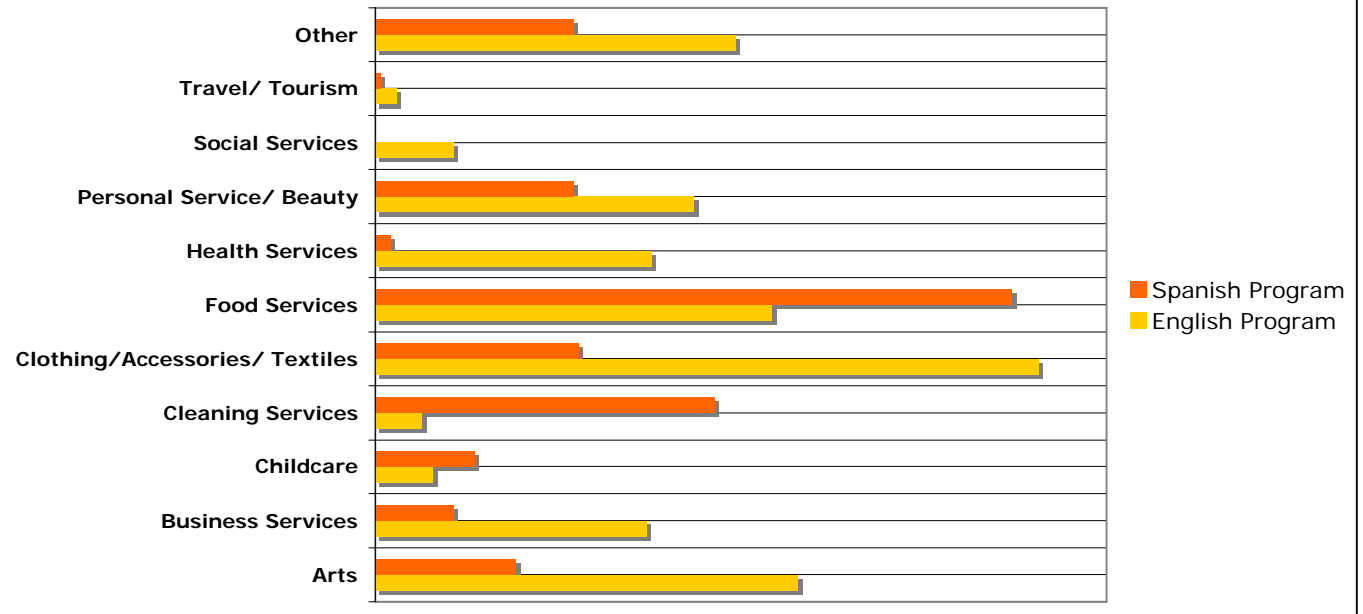
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## Appendix A



Business Sectors per Program



## Appendix B

### April 20, Connect Event Program

“Networking: Get great results ‘Put’ the work into building strategic connections”

11:00 – 11:30	<b>Registration</b>
11:30 – 12:00	<b>Brunch</b>
12:00 – 12:05	<b>Welcome</b> <b>Julie Abrams</b> Women’s Initiative CEO
12:05 – 12:25	<b>Keynote Speaker</b> <b>Micaela Duboff</b> Explaining Jeffrey Gitomer’s Little Back Book of Connections
12:30 – 1:05	<b>Seminars</b>  Networking: “The ball is in your court” <b>By Laurie Kretchmar</b> Women’s Initiative Connector Steering Committee  Como hacer que tus conexiones aumenten tus ganancias? <b>By Cesar Plata</b> Networking expert and Founder of InfoBayArea.com & Muybueno.net  Connectors Orientation <b>By Heather Haxo-Phillips</b> Women’s Initiative Development Director
1:10 – 1:45	<b>GET CONNECTED!</b> Time to meet and mingle with clients and connectors
1:45pm	<b>Closing Remarks</b> <b>Julie Abrams</b> Women’s Initiative CEO

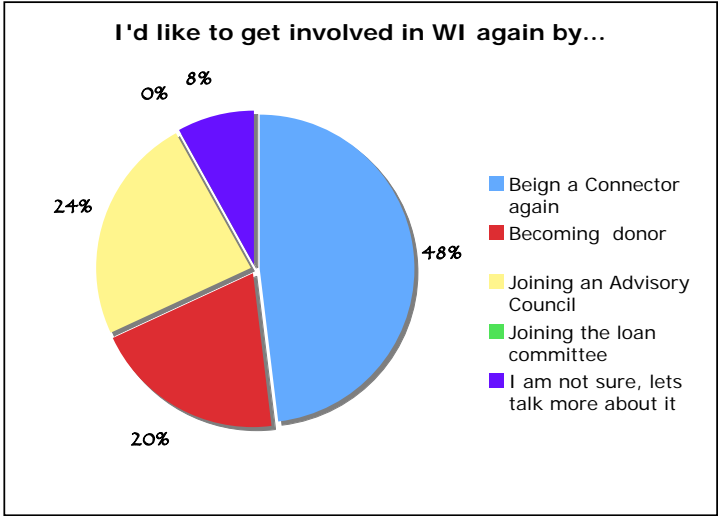
## Appendix C

### Survey Results for Connectors

The survey was administered after the last Networking Event on April 20, 2007

<b>What did you think?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>A little</b>	<b>Not much</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
The event met my expectations	87%	13%	0%	0%
The orientation adequately prepared me to work with clients	80%	13%	7%	0%
The clients were adequately prepared to talk to me	60%	33%	7%	0%
I had enough time to network or get connected to clients	47%	40%	7%	7%
Networking with other connectors is important to me	60%	40%	0%	0%
I had enough time to network with other connectors	27%	47%	20%	7%
I would recommend "GET Connected" to other people	93%	7%	0%	0%

<b>I was drawn to today's event because</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>A little bit</b>	<b>No</b>
Somebody asked me	87%	0%	13%
I am interested in micro-enterprise and small business	92%	8%	0%
I wanted to mentor someone	55%	36%	9%
The time commitment was short	62%	23%	15%
I wanted to network with other connectors	57%	29%	14%
I wanted to network with WI's clients	85%	15%	0%
I enjoyed being around other women	82%	18%	0%
Other reasons	60%	20%	20%



## Appendix D

### Connect Event Planning

Task	Timeline	Owners
Topic	6 months before	CEO, Program and Development Departments
Request Sponsors & In-Kind donors	6 months before	Development Department
Brain Storm Meeting	6 months before	CEO, Program and Development Departments
Keynote Speakers and Seminar Presenters	6 months before	Development Department
Space		
-Day	6 months before	Development and Program
-Time		
Write Event overview and agenda (walk through the space)	4 months before	Program
Design the hard copy invitation	2 month before	Marketing
Share with staff and get people involved	2 months before	Program and Marketing
Save the date email	4 months before	Program
Send out hard copy invitation to clients	1 month before event	Program
Send hard copy invitation to Connectors	6 weeks before event	Program
Confirm volunteers for the event	1 month before	Program
Select Catering	1 month before	Program
A/V equipment	1 month before	Program and Marketing
Private collection or tradeshow	1 month before	Program
Announcement in e-newsletter and website	First wk of the month of the event	Marketing
Send email invitation to Connectors and clients	Same wk as the hard copy in mailboxes	Program
Follow-up call to confirm Connectors	3 wk before	Program
Send welcome package to connectors	2 wk before event	Program
Decoration of the event	1 wk before	Program
Programs	1 wk before	Program
Hand-outs for presenters	1 wk before	Program
Plastic wear/cups/	1 wk before	Program
Reminder email to clients	3 days before event	Program
Name Tags	Day before	Program
Pictures	Day of event	Program
Evaluation	Day of event	Program and Evaluation
Thank you notes	Next day	Program
Press release	Couple of days after	Marketing
Follow-up story for e-newsletter	Beginning of the following month	Marketing
Add pictures to website	after event	Marketing
Pay bills	Wk after event	Program

## **Appendix E**

### **The “Connector” Experience by Vanessa Muñiz**

In February, I was able to participate as a connector at the “Get Connected” event. Originally I thought I was just going to observe the event, but I ended up being a connector which is another name for a mentor. I will outline the whole experience, broken down into segments; much like the event was broken out and provides recommendations for each session.

#### **Registration & Welcome Reception**

I walked in and was greeted by WISE staff, I checked in and was given a name tag and was briefly directed into another room. Upon entering this large room, there were many women and a few men standing around; some were talking, others exchanging business cards, and others simply just stood there wondering what was going on. I was fortunate to have walked in with a woman who was also there for the first time and she was there from a local news broadcasting company as a Spanish speaking connector. As I soon learned, I too was a Spanish speaking connector.

In this reception room, there were all sorts of people and I had absolutely no idea who were WISE students, WISE employees, or volunteer Connectors. We stood around, then we were welcomed by WISE’s CEO and then a guest speaker came up to the podium. She gave a motivational talk aimed to all the WISE students amongst the crowd. The talk was about 30 minutes and though it was really good, it was a little tiring since we had been standing for the past hour.

#### **Connector Briefing**

After welcome reception everyone was directed into one of two places: WISE Student Training or Connector Briefing. In this room there was appetizers and drinks and it was again we were given time to do some networking, though this time we all new that we were all connector’s. After we were given some time to grab a bite to eat and do some talking we were given an opportunity to introduce ourselves to the group and then WISE staff gave us a run-through of the mentoring session. We were told that this was “speed-mentoring” and that we were not required to continue the relationship with the student only if we so desired. After that, we were directed to the rooms where this would be occurring.

#### **Get Connected Session**

I was assigned as a Spanish speaking connector and we were given large cards with a number. We were instructed to go into the room, where the students would be, and hold up our number card. The students were instructed to look for the connector with the same number that they were assigned to. Because there was a lack of Spanish speaking connectors I ended up having a conversation with two women who were in the program. The room was crowded so we opted to find some chairs and move our conversation to the hall.

I was extremely impressed with the women that I spoke to. Both women introduced themselves and gave me their business cards. We were told during the briefing that the women would have a set of questions that they had and would be addressing them with us the connector. The two women that I had the opportunity to speak with had very distinct business plans. One women

was interested in starting a business selling furniture from Latin America and the other wanted to open a pastry bakery specializing in cakes. And just like their business, both women were very different: one outspoken, the other quiet, one had inflated business objectives while the other had succinct and realistic business aspirations. Having a short time to speak to these women, made it very difficult to completely answer all of their questions, more time was definitely needed to have a more in depth conversation. At the end of the session, which I believe lasted 45 minutes, they asked me for my business card and I offered it to them and that was the end of my commitment for the evening.

## Appendix F

Beginning list of Possible Businesses to follow up with ([www.sfhcc.org](http://www.sfhcc.org))

<b>Botana Cafe</b> <a href="#">3231 Mission Street (map)</a> San Francisco, CA 94941 <b>Phone:</b> 415-550-8181 <b>Category:</b> <u>Restaurant/Catering Services</u>	<a href="#">438 Geary Street (map)</a> San Francisco, CA 95118 <b>Phone:</b> 415-440-2737 <b>Fax:</b> 415-440-0866 <a href="#">Website: <u>www.colibrimexicanbistro.com</u></a> <b>Category:</b> <u>Restaurant/Catering Services</u> <b>Member Since:</b> 6/1/2006	<a href="#">Website: <u>www.mamasf.com</u></a> <b>Category:</b> <u>Restaurant/Catering Services</u> <b>Member Since:</b> 6/1/2006
<b>Cafe Arguello</b> <a href="#">2832 Mission st. (map)</a> San Francisco, CA 94110 <b>Phone:</b> 415-643-3160 <b>Fax:</b> 415-643-3182 <a href="#">Website: <u>www.cafearguellosf.com</u></a> <b>Category:</b> <u>Restaurant/Catering Services</u> <b>Member Since:</b> 5/25/2006 <b>Contact:</b> Martha Arguello, Owner <b>Email:</b> cafearguellosf@yahoo.com	<b>El Raigon</b> <a href="#">510 Union St. (map)</a> San Francisco, CA 94901 <b>Phone:</b> 415-291-0927 <b>Fax:</b> 415-291-0991 <a href="#">Website: <u>www.elraigon.com</u></a> <b>Category:</b> <u>Restaurant/Catering Services</u> <b>Member Since:</b> 6/1/2006	<b>Lelenita's Cakes, LLC</b> <a href="#">3743 Mission Street (map)</a> San Francisco, CA 94110 <b>Phone:</b> 415-282-2253 <a href="#">Website: <u>www.lelenitascakes.com</u></a> <b>Category:</b> <u>Bakery</u> <b>Member Since:</b> 6/1/2006
<b>Casa Sanchez</b> <a href="#">53 Camellia Ave. (map)</a> San Francisco, CA 94110 <b>Phone:</b> 415-586-2400 <b>Fax:</b> 415-586-2482 <a href="#">Website: <u>www.casasanchezfoods.com</u></a> <b>Category:</b> <u>Restaurant/Catering Services</u> <b>Member Since:</b> 6/1/2006	<b>El Rincon Sinaloa Restaurant</b> <a href="#">3723 Mission Street (map)</a> San Francisco, CA 94118 <b>Phone:</b> 415-285-3580 <a href="#">Website: <u>www.elrincondesinaloa.com</u></a> <b>Category:</b> <u>Restaurant/Catering Services</u> <b>Member Since:</b> 6/1/2006	<b>Kids Cuts</b> <a href="#">85-29th Street (map)</a> San Francisco, CA 94104 <b>Phone:</b> 415-643-8582 <b>Category:</b> <u>Beauty Salon</u> <b>Member Since:</b> 6/1/2006
<b>Chevy's Fresh Mex</b> <a href="#">201 3rd Street (map)</a> San Francisco, CA 94111 <b>Phone:</b> 415-543-8060 <b>Fax:</b> 415-947-0195 <a href="#">Website: <u>www.chevys.com</u></a> <b>Category:</b> <u>Restaurant/Catering Services</u> <b>Member Since:</b> 6/1/2006	<b>La Corneta Taqueria</b> <a href="#">2731 Mission Street (map)</a> San Francisco, CA 94111 <b>Phone:</b> 415-643-7001 <b>Fax:</b> 415-643-1745 <b>Category:</b> <u>Restaurant/Catering Services</u> <b>Member Since:</b> 6/1/2006	<b>Victoria Calvo-Perez</b> <a href="#">1473-46 Ave. (map)</a> San Francisco, CA 94140 <b>Phone:</b> 415-731-5325 <b>Category:</b> <u>Janitorial Services</u> <b>Member Since:</b> 6/1/2006
<b>Colibri Mexican Bistro</b>	<b>Mama Art Cafe</b> <a href="#">4754 Mission Street (map)</a> San Francisco, CA 95401 <b>Phone:</b> 415-586-8453	<b>The Wash Quarters</b> <a href="#">985 Valencia Street (map)</a> San Francisco, CA 94110 <b>Phone:</b> 415-826-7634 <b>Fax:</b> 415-978-5474 <a href="#">Website: <u>www.washquarters.com</u></a> <b>Category:</b> <u>Janitorial Services</u> <b>Member Since:</b> 6/1/2006