



Town of Acton
Comprehensive Community
Plan Outreach
472 Main Street
Acton, MA 01720
Telephone (978) 264-9636
Fax (978) 264-9630
outreach@acton-ma.gov
www.ActonOutreach.com

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Targeted Outreach Meeting: Brazilian Community

After several efforts to gather a group of Brazilian residents together to have a mini-visioning session were unsuccessful, we conducted an interview of two Brazilian residents willing to be representatives of their community. The meeting took place in DiCapri's pizzeria.

Andre Abreu
Renato Amorim

Linda Chance, a member of the Outreach Committee and her husband Gabe, both of whom speak Portuguese attended and participated in the meeting.

Why do you think most Brazilian's moved to Acton?

- jobs (e.g.. pizza places)
- schools
- other Brazilians (including that there are two Brazilian shops selling Brazilian goods)
- business community is educated

What do you think most Brazilians like about Acton?

- Schools
- Landscape – trees, open space
- Feel very welcome in the community – people are educated, some have been to Brazil, know about Brazil, etc.
- Indoor soccer (at Teamworks on Great Road in Acton)
- Soccer in school

What do you think most Brazilians dislike about Acton?

- Hard to commute – limited parking at train station
- Need more computers at the library
- Need for more Portuguese language books at the library
- Expensive – rent + taxes



What would you say are the main issues facing the Brazilian community in Acton?

- ESL for children and adults
 - Need for more ESL after school (volunteer program)
- Would like more entertainment (nightclub, food, music, dancing).
 - Jazz Café used to have Brazilian night once a month, unsure if it still does
 - Acton/Boxborough Cultural Council had “Day in Brazil” – could have more
 - Capoeira – martial arts/dance (slave dance developed in Brazil) taught in South Acton
 - Some Brazilians would love to have a carnival in Acton
 - A Brazilian restaurant would be a good thing (pizza place tried to add Brazilian items to the menu but was not successful – no marketing).

If you could do one thing to make Acton better for the Brazilian community, what would it be?

- Town wide shuttle bus (many Brazilians do not have a driver’s license)
- ESL teachers at school do not speak Portuguese (children are assigned a Spanish-speaking teacher)

Why do you think most Brazilians do not participate in town government (main obstacles)?

- Perception that they are here only “temporarily” (going back to Brazil even if it doesn’t eventually turn out to be true, it is in their minds)
- Estimated 70% of Brazilian population in Acton is undocumented
- They are not used to the idea of participation – attitude is more traditional of “leave it up to the government to decide.”
- Language

What can the town do to increase participation on the part of Brazilians in town government?

- Have a Portuguese-speaking staff person at Town Hall
- Have a person(s) represent the Brazilians and speak on their behalf

The two individuals interviewed found it difficult to estimate the number of Brazilians in Acton; they guesstimated approximately 500. Most can be found at the Baptist Church in Acton and the Catholic Church in Maynard. Networking tends to be done by “word of mouth” and there are no formal networks currently in place.

NOTE: Linda Chance and Renato Amorim exchanged e-mails and talked about the possibility of organizing a Brazilian carnival some where in Acton next winter. Because of the cold weather, they both agreed to look into possible indoor venues.