



LatinoNetwork

President Courtney, Speaker Kotek, Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward, Rayfield, Girod and Holvey,

We urge your support for Latino Network's funding request of \$4 million for the construction of La Plaza Esperanza. This community center will serve Latinx youth and families in East Multnomah County and provide a replicable model that can be used to serve Latinx communities across the state.

East Multnomah County is home to more than 50,000 Latinx residents that don't have access to many critical culturally specific services related to preschool, educational supports, housing stability and legal services. Situated in the heart of the Rockwood neighborhood, La Plaza Esperanza fills that gap and serves as a safe space for members of our community to gather and access services in a setting that is comfortable and familiar to them.

Under the leadership of Latino Network, a capital campaign has launched that will bring together private and foundational support to build La Plaza Esperanza. To ensure the success of this one-of-a-kind project, it is critical that the state play a role by contributing \$4 million toward the cost of this \$12 million project.

La Plaza Esperanza will meet the needs of our community in the following areas:

Early Childhood Education

About 30% of the La Plaza's services will be dedicated to supporting the needs of families with preschool children. Latino Network has over 20 years of experience in culturally-specific early childhood education. The staff have a proven track record of bringing parents, teachers and advocates together to have an active role in the decisions that affect their children. More specifically, La Plaza Esperanza will: Respond to Oregon's shortage of culturally-specific early childhood education with a 4,300 sf preschool designed to best practice standards.

La Plaza Esperanza will address the preschool workforce shortage in Oregon by serving as a training site for Latinx parents to convert lived experience into professional skills. This full-time, high-quality preschool will provide access to low-income families residing in the area, which includes approximately 4,500 Latino/x children under age 6 that live within five miles of the site. This demonstration site will ensure that all Latinx preschool children will have access to culturally-specific children's programming at La Plaza Esperanza.

Youth Empowerment and Violence Prevention

Latino Network's Community Healing Initiative (CHI) program leverages prevention strategies and community-based services to reclaim the lives of at-risk and gang-involved youth, and to

ensure whole families achieve stability. CHI serves Latinx-identifying youth ages 12-18 referred by the Department of Community Justice with at least 65% of our referrals coming from East Portland. La Plaza Esperanza will provide job training and community engagement activities for local youth that will be a major deterrence from gang involvement by creating connection, belonging and hope.

Family Stability & Community Support

From a family perspective, La Plaza Esperanza will provide a place for families to connect with each other. In a central, culturally specific site where people feel welcomed and respected, Latino Network staff will coordinate much-needed programs and services that families need. Space will be dedicated to house Latino Network's family stability and community support programs – these services are in high demand and include utility and rent assistance, workforce development and immigration navigation support.

Our community yearns for a place that we can call our own. La Plaza Esperanza will serve as a safe space for our children and youth to learn and grow in an environment with no glass ceilings and no roadblocks to top quality, culturally specific education and programs.

We need La Plaza Esperanza in our community. It's critical that the state do its part to make this center of hope a reality.

We urge the legislature to allocate \$4 million toward the construction of La Plaza Esperanza.



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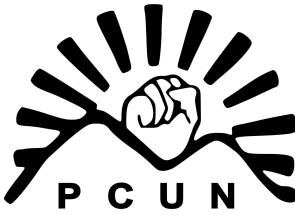
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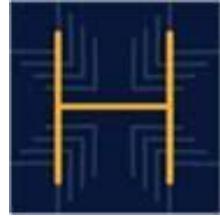
Children's
Institute



Latino Network



NEW
AVENUES
for Y o u t h



EARLY LEARNING
MULTNOMAH



CITY OF
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Parkrose
School District



JESSICA VEGA
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MULTNOMAH COUNTY
COMMISSIONER



Carmen Rubio
Commissioner
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Gresham City
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NW Natural®
We grew up here.



Shirley Craddick
Shirley Craddick
Councilor, District 1

Multnomah County
Commissioner Lori
Stegmann