

The National Council of La Raza's (NCLR) nearly 300 community-based Affiliates work in 41 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C., to meet the diverse needs of Latinos. From education and health care to homeownership counseling and workforce development, the services provided by NCLR Affiliates support millions of Hispanic Americans each year as they seek to build strong futures for their families. "Family is a value that defines Latino culture, and families are at the heart of the day-to-day work our Affiliates are engaged in," says Janet Murguía, President and CEO of NCLR. "By advancing opportunities for Latino children, families and communities, NCLR and its Affiliates together are working to strengthen America as a whole."



CONEXIÓN AMÉRICAS

CONEXIÓN AMÉRICAS

Award-winning program: ENLACES Information, Referral and Support Services

Renata Soto, Executive Director

800 18th Ave., Suite A

Nashville, TN 37203

615-320-5152

www.conexionamericas.org

CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2007 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

THE LATINO CONNECTION

As Nashville's Latino population quadrupled over the past two decades, many community organizations began offering services for Latino families new to Middle Tennessee. But no organization focused solely on coordinating comprehensive services for Latino families until Conexión Américas began in 2002. Conexión Américas helps Latino families achieve social and economic advancement by creating networks of support and helping families integrate into the community.

Through the ENLACES Information, Referral and Support Services program, Conexión Américas connects families to culturally appropriate and affordable services – from home-buying help and counseling to legal assistance and health care. Last year, ENLACES, which means “links,” served more than 2,400 Latino families with more than 3,600 interactions through a Spanish Help Line and face-to-face assistance. “The majority of our families are new arrivals facing many challenges,” says Renata Soto, Executive Director of Conexión Américas. “We make sure they receive the comprehensive support and opportunities they need to achieve success through economic, social and civic integration.”



THE LATINO FAMILIES THAT COME TO US
HAVE THE DETERMINATION TO IMPROVE
THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE. WE HELP THEM
CONNECT WITH THE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT
THAT THEY NEED SO THEY CAN ACHIEVE THEIR
HIGHEST ASPIRATIONS.

—Renata Soto, Executive Director, Conexión Américas

A BRIDGE TO SUCCESS

When Spanish speakers call “211” – Tennessee’s social services hotline – they are automatically referred to Conexión Américas as a potential resource for family needs. Most community members seeking help from Conexión Américas are undereducated, low- to moderate-income, underinsured, Spanish-speaking immigrant parents. Conexión Américas links families to services through a constantly updated resource database that tracks the offerings of community partners. The ENLACES system also tracks families’ progress through past referrals. “We’re intentional in making sure that families learn how to access resources themselves,” Soto says. “We also hope families come to us repeatedly – but for different needs as they move forward in their integration process.”

By tracking family requests, Conexión Américas identified two common concerns: legal issues and taxes. As a result, Conexión Américas established a legal clinic by partnering with bilingual lawyers to provide free legal consultations. Conexión Américas also began a tax education campaign, holding community workshops and helping families file their returns. The result: more than 500 people attended workshops and 291 families filed tax returns for 2006. “We are committed to helping our families and serving as a bridge for them to reach the information and resources they need to succeed in a new community,” Soto says.

FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the Families Count Family Strengthening Awards recognize NCLR Affiliates with outstanding programs that work to give children what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.