

2nd Annual Latin@ Economic Summit

**Rising Together: Empowering and Shaping the
Future Strategically**

**Thursday, July 18th
Malcolm X College**

8:30 AM - 1:30 PM

BMO



CHICAGO LATINA
RESILIENT. PASSIONATE. CULTURED. EMPOWERED.
BUSINESS FOUNDATION & MAGAZINE



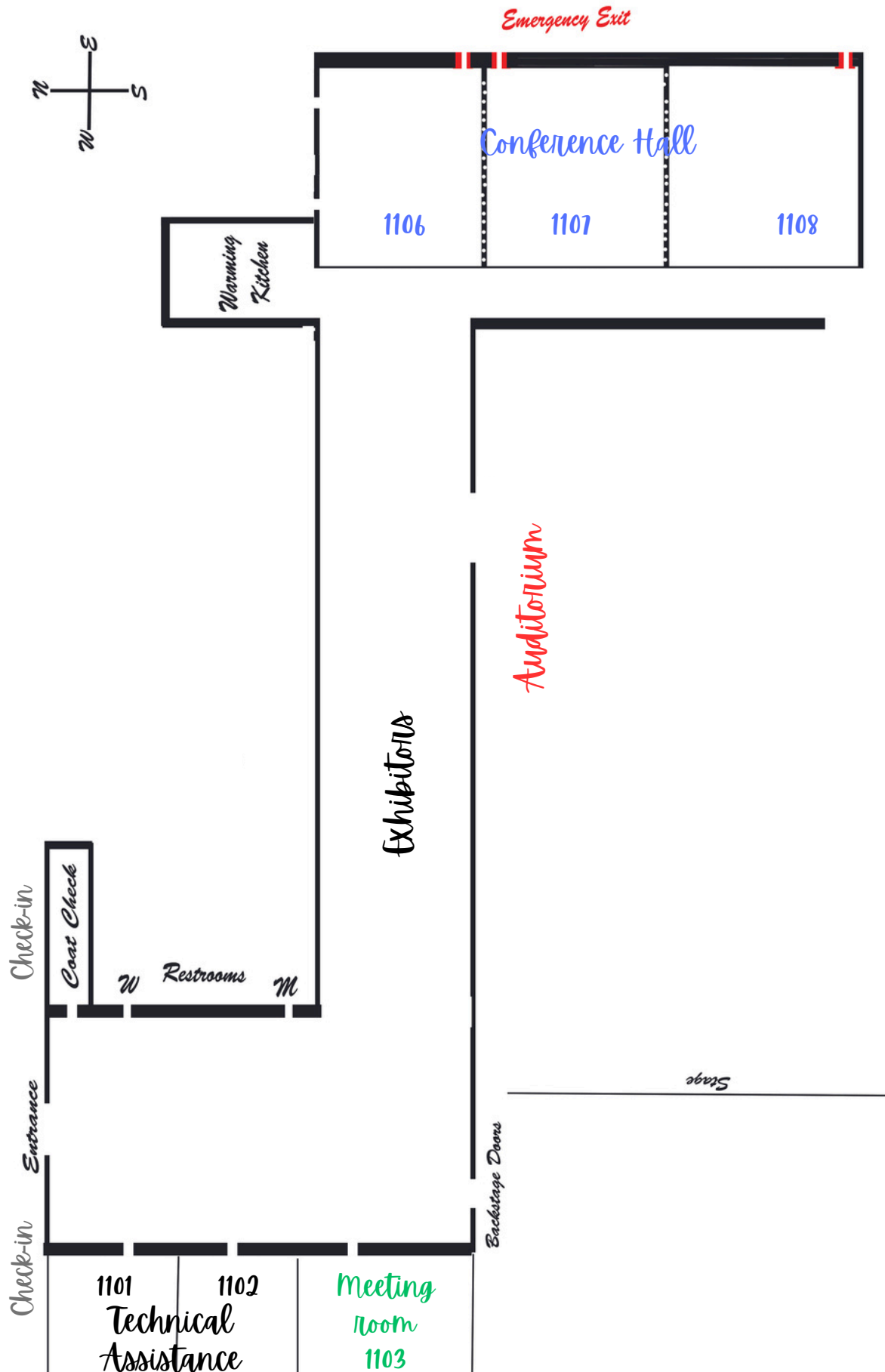
**Illinois
Department of Commerce**
& Economic Opportunity
OFFICE OF MINORITY ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



**sunshine
ENTERPRISES**



Malcolm X College - Conference Center



Agenda

8:30 AM - 1:30 PM Exhibitors, Technical Assistance, and professional headshots (headshots only in the morning) are available.

8:30 - 9:00 AM Registration & Sign-in **Conference Center area**

9:00 - 9:10 AM Welcome Remarks **Auditorium**

9:10 - 9:16 AM Exciting Éxito Speaker: Omar Corral, La Michoacana Premium **Auditorium**

9:16 - 9:28 AM Latin@ Businesses Data **Auditorium**

9:28 - 9:35 AM Exciting Éxito Speaker: Brisa Berumen-Dixon, Seabreeze Non-Emergency Medical Transportation **Auditorium**

9:35 - 10:27 AM Marketing - Crafting Your Business Pitch **Auditorium**

Learn to create and transform your business pitch into a persuasive message that captivates investors, partners, and customers. Discover how to refine your message, capture attention, build credibility, and master delivery to effectively achieve your business goals.

- Moderator: Elizabeth Colón, Metaphrasis Language & Cultural Solutions, LLC
- Alexia Guzmán, Rogers Park Business Alliance (RPBA)
- Jasmine Hernandez, Ubuntu Strategies
- Eve Rodriguez Montoya, Rodriguez Media Communications Inc.

10:27 AM - 10:35 AM Exciting Éxito Speaker: Bobby Ibarra, Ibarra Group LLC **Auditorium**

10:35 - 10:45 AM Break

10:45 - 11:35 AM Breakout Sessions #1

“Match Making to Funding Opportunities” **Conference Hall 1107-1108**

Want to learn about what lenders can offer your business? In this session, you'll have the opportunity to connect with various lenders. This session will consist of two parts. Part 1 - Panel to learn firsthand from lenders about documents needed to apply for a loan, strategies, tips to building a relationship with a lender, and the difference as well as the importance of business and personal credit. Followed by Part 2 where you will be matched with a lender to have a small group discussion about the lending opportunities and services they can offer your business.

- Moderator: Nilda Esparza, Logan Square Chamber of Commerce
- Edgar Candelas, Wintrust
- Julisa Sanchez, Waterman Bank
- Cynthia Valle, Self-Help Credit Union

“Building & Sustaining Business Network” **Auditorium**

Let's Network! Let's build your social capital, in this session, attendees will have the opportunity to learn about different strategies for networking, forging partnerships, and leveraging community resources to foster business growth and sustainability. This interactive session will be followed by a guided networking activity to put your new knowledge into practice.

- Moderator: Ericka White, DCEO
- Edith De La Cruz, Antigua, Inc.
- Jose Alfredo Suarez, Executive Latino Council
- Andrea Vallejo, the Office of Illinois Governor JB Pritzker

“Setting Your Business for Success”

Conference Hall 1106

Calling all businesses 3 years and under or businesses that want to learn strategies and tips for setting up your business for success. Hear insights from a recent business owner, a business consultant, a lawyer, and an accountant on strategies to set up your business for success.

- Moderator: Marisa Alcantar, Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Roberto Carmona, Carmona Strategic Solutions
- Georgina Fabian, The International Business Law Group LLC (INTBLG)
- Christell Frausto, River City Grill
- Enrique Lopez, Lopez & Company, CPAs.

11:35 AM - 12:30 PM Lunch Panel: Latino Prosperity Utilizing State Resources

Conference Hall 1107-1108

A detailed discussion on the resources available from the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity from business grants, loans, tax incentives, and other programs that can support all business industries with an emphasis in clean energy.

- Moderator: Letty Velez, IC Clean Energy & IC U/Latinas
- Manny Lopez, DCEO
- Hilary Scott-Ogunrinde, DCEO

12:30 - 12:35 PM Break

12:35 - 1:25 PM Breakout Session #2

“Match Making to Funding Opportunities”

Conference Hall 1107-1108

Want to learn about what lenders can offer your business? In this session, you'll have the opportunity to connect with various lenders. This session will consist of two parts. Part 1 - Panel to learn firsthand from lenders about documents needed to apply for a loan, strategies, tips to building a relationship with a lender, and the difference as well as the importance of business and personal credit. Followed by Part 2 where you will be matched with a lender to have a small group discussion about the lending opportunities and services they can offer your business.

- Moderator: Emmanuel Davila, Southland Development Alliance
- Vanessa Aguirre, Local Initiatives Support Corp. (LISC)
- Yessenia Diaz de Leon, Allies for Community Business (A4CB)
- Caridad Del Rio, BMO Bank

“Building & Sustaining Business Network”

Auditorium

Let's Network! Let's build your social capital, in this session, attendees will have the opportunity to learn about different strategies for networking, forging partnerships, and leveraging community resources to foster business growth and sustainability. This interactive session will be followed by a guided networking activity to put your new knowledge into practice.

- Moderator: Paulina Roe, Kiss FM
- Oswaldo Alvarez, Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation
- Dora Cornelio, Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois
- Jennifer Sanchez, Women's Institute of Self Development and Efficacy (WISE)

Learn how to become a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Women's Business Enterprise (WBE), Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), or Veteran-owned Business Enterprise (VBE) certified and the benefits of becoming certified. This session will go over the required documents needed to apply, the flow process, the different certifying agencies, and how to identify which one is the correct one for your business based on the type of contracts/work you are seeking.

- Moderator: Ivette Trevino, Hispanic American Construction Industry Association (HACIA)
- Benjamin Bedenfield, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)
- Carlos Guttierrez, Commission on Equity and Inclusion
- Jose Robles-Michelena, Chicago Minority Supplier Development Council

1:25 - 1:30 PM Break

1:30 - 1:40 PM Closing Remarks and Wrap-Up

Conference Hall 1107-1108

Opening Remarks and Closing Remarks

Opening Remarks:



Cameron Joost serves as the Acting Assistant Director at the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). She has worked at various levels of government serving the people of the State of Illinois for fifteen years. Most recently she was State Director to US Senator Tammy Duckworth, overseeing all of the Senator's offices across Illinois. Previously, she worked in Senator Durbin's office handling constituent casework and community outreach.

Closing Remarks:



Rebecca Estrada is the Deputy Director of the Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE). She has over 15 years of progressive leadership experience working in the nonprofit and government sectors. Her work has addressed issues in the areas of education, immigration reform, fair housing, violence reduction, and workforce development. She holds an MBA from National Louis University and a BS from Loyola University Chicago.

List of Exhibitors:

1. [Allies for Community Business](#)
2. [BMO Bank](#)
3. [Chicago Community Loan Fund](#)
4. [Founders First Capital Partners](#)
5. [Huntington Bank](#)
6. [Illinois Capital Development Board](#)
7. [Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion](#)
8. [Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation](#)
9. [Illinois Department of Human Rights](#)
10. [Illinois Department of Human Services Community Services Enterprise Programs - BEP](#)
11. [Illinois Office of the Comptroller](#)
12. [Illinois Secretary of State](#)
13. [Illinois State Treasurer's Office](#)
14. [JP Morgan Chase](#)
15. [Self-Help Federal Credit Union](#)
16. [Waterman Bank](#)
17. [Wintrust](#)

List of Technical Assistance Providers:

1. [36Squared Business Incubator](#)
2. [Center for Changing Lives](#)
3. [Greater Southwest Development Corporation](#)
4. [Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce](#)
5. [SBDC at Waubensee Community College](#)
6. [Southland Development Authority](#)
7. [Sunshine Enterprises](#)
8. [The Binational Institute of Human Development \(BIHD\)](#)

Planning Committee



Diana Alfaro is the Latinx Business Development Manager for the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity – Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE). She is equity-driven and has spent her time supporting and empowering underserved communities, minorities, women, persons with disabilities, veterans, Arab/MENA, and LGBTQIA+, focusing on Latinx/o/a and Hispanic-owned businesses. Diana supports small businesses, as they are vital to building a strong economy, by creating intentional outreach removing systemic barriers.

Also a speaker for Latin@ businesses data.



Sergio Anariba works at Southland Development Authority. He has a Business Administration academic background equipping him with the necessary knowledge to assist small businesses effectively. His passion lies in utilizing his expertise to benefit small businesses in Chicago, helping them develop their entrepreneurial skills and establish or expand their enterprises.



Mayra Avila is a Marketing & Social Impact Manager. She has over 16 years of experience as a marketing and business development professional. Mayra comes from a financial background working for credit unions in Illinois and Indiana, most recently at United Credit Union. At the Southwest Collective, she brings her passion for building relationships and helping small businesses.



Linda Del Bosque is the Founder and Editor in Chief of Chicago Latina Magazine, a publication focusing on exceptional Latinas within the Chicagoland area, closing the gap of resources, access to information, and building generational wealth. Del Bosque is a pre-law student at Northwestern University, with a 2027 graduation date from Pritzker Law School.



Edgar Delgado serves as the Federal Executive Board Eastern Region Director (CFEB). In his role, he convenes the heads of federal agencies and connects the federal community for collaboration and cost savings. Delgado oversees the execution of various programs such as emergency preparedness, employee safety, and workforce development, and facilitates large interagency projects.



Letticia Flores Poole is a BMO Bank Senior Regional Manager with the U.S. Zero Barriers to Business program - She supports the bank's strategy assisting Latino and Hispanic businesses accessing capital, educational resources, and meaningful networking opportunities across the U.S.- specifically within Northern Chicago and Arizona. Letticia has 25+ years of banking leadership and management experience.

Also serves as MC



Juliana Gonzalez-Crussi is an accomplished public service leader with extensive experience in advancing racial equity in the fields of housing, workforce, entrepreneurialism and community development. She is the Executive Director of the Center for Changing Lives and holds appointed positions on the Illinois Housing Development Authority Trust Fund Advisory Board and the Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund Board. Juliana also serves as a board member for the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance.



Anggi Lewis is the Marketing Data Specialist at the Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE). She leads OMEE's marketing targeting diverse demographics and communities. Her previous employment includes Southern Illinois University Carbondale, where she focused on online and nontraditional students at military bases and community colleges across the US. She has a master's in Television Management from Drexel University.



Sindi Palomino is the Administrative Assistant and Fiscal Liaison in the Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE) at DCEO. She has been serving Chicago for over 15 years working in not-for-profit, education, and IL state agencies. She joined the Illinois Department of Human Services in 2019 and provided critical Medicaid, CASH and SNAP services during the pandemic. Sindi has seen the importance and impact of education, financial literacy, and small businesses supporting IL families and communities.



Cindy Patino is the Membership Manager at the Hispanic American Construction Industry Association (HACIA), a nonprofit and membership organization working to ensure equity in the construction industry. As a Membership Manager, Cindy develops and implements engagement strategies with new members, manages outreach events, fosters strategic relationships with partners and stakeholders, and provides technical assistance to support member's business needs.



Letty Velez is CEO of IC Clean Energy, a clean energy company focused on solar and EV Charging Station installations. She is known as a “Community Navigator” by creating value for her Clients/Community Partners. Letty is also the Founder of IC U/Latinas, an entrepreneur learning cohort (that’s like a mini MBA on steroids) with over 275 Latinas nationwide.

Also serves as a moderator for Lunch Panel: Latino Prosperity Utilizing State Resources

AMBASSADOR



Alfonso Bautista Jr. is the VP Business Relationship Manager at BMO Bank with over 10 years of experience helping business owners achieve their business financial goals. He enjoys learning about entrepreneurs’ journeys and goals and loves being a resource in the community. Alfonso is also a Chicago native, a husband, and a father of three.



Araceli Carrillo uplifting's fellow Latinas to achieve financial freedom. She created “Mercadito Chicago -Mujeres Artesanas con Carrillo”, a group composed of artisan women who make their own products and, at times, sell items from Latin American artisans. The group, located in the Logan Square neighborhood in Chicago, hosts events to support fellow artisans and the “handmade movement” in Chicago.



David Hernández is a property Broker, Realtor, and an Investment Strategies Coach with Coldwell Banker Realty. He helps first-time home buyers and investors get properties that produce cash flow. David focuses educating people on basic financial literacy, helping hard-working people get on a wealth-building path through real estate.



Caridad Del Rio is a Business Relationship Manager at BMO Bank and has been in the banking industry for 21 years. She spent the last seven (7) years in Small Business Banking, helping small businesses with cashflow needs and advising them on their full financial picture. She loves helping her community and has partnered up with her town’s park district providing financial literacy to young minds.

Master of Ceremony



Letticia Flores Poole is a BMO Bank Senior Regional Manager with the U.S. Zero Barriers to Business program - She supports the bank's strategy assisting Latino and Hispanic businesses accessing capital, educational resources, and meaningful networking opportunities across the U.S.- specifically within Northern Chicago and Arizona. Letticia has 25+ years of banking leadership and management experience.

Also serves on the planning committee for this event

Exciting Éxito Series



Dr. Brisa Berumen-Dixon is the founder and CEO of Seabreeze Non-Emergency Medical Transportation,- a company founded after identifying a significant need for reliable wheelchair and stretcher transport services in her community. Seabreeze Non-Emergency Medical Transportation has become a vital resource, removing barriers and enhancing the quality of life for many individuals with mobility challenges by providing access to safe and efficient transport.



Omar Corral has always had a passion for sales and entrepreneurship. Starting as a salesman for La Michoacana, Omar developed his skills in customer service and business operations. His dedication and love for the brand, along with the support of his wife, Brenda Corral, inspired them to open their own La Michoacana Premium store. Through hard work and determination, they have successfully expanded their business while giving back to the community in tremendous ways.



Bobby Ibarra created the Ibarra Group LLC, a craftsman steel fabrication expert group, in 2010 in the Old Schwinn bicycle factory. After overcoming challenges in his business, in 2023, the Ibarra Group purchased a 18,000 sqft building in the heart of Little Village. "I want to be 100% established in our community." Bobby advocates for Latino businesses to develop their communities from within instead of being outsourced "These are our communities; we should be building them."

Marketing - Crafting Your Business Pitch

Moderator:



Elizabeth Colón is the President and Founder of Metaphrasis Language & Cultural Solutions, LLC, a distinguished interpreting and translation services company. Her commitment to top-notch language services and educational resources has earned her numerous accolades, including the 2021 Wintrust LatinX Community Award, and Crain's 2020 Business Notable Entrepreneur title. In 2023, she received the Latino Leaders Maestro Award for Professional Achievement.

Speaker Bios:



Alexia Guzmán is the Economic Empowerment Center Director at Rogers Park Business Alliance (RPBA) in Chicago, Illinois. She coordinates RPBA's Business Accessibility Toolkit, providing no-cost professional service consultants. Alexia also facilitates PROGRESANDO, RPBA's bilingual entrepreneurial training program aimed to start new businesses in Illinois. Through one-on-one technical assistance, webinars, and classes, Alexia makes resources, information, and business acumen accessible to local entrepreneurs.



Jasmine Hernandez is the Founder and CEO of Ubuntu Strategies, a national marketing and events firm headquartered in Chicago. Under her leadership, Ubuntu Strategies has become synonymous with purpose-driven campaigns, specializing in partnering with socially impactful clients who share the Ubuntu philosophy of "I am because we are." The firm takes pride collaborating with numerous non-profits and corporate entities driving significant social change.



Eve Rodriguez Montoya is the President & CEO of Rodriguez Media Communications Inc., a bilingual MBE/WBE firm established to assist clients looking to elevate and expand their brand, product, mission, or service in the fastest-growing market. Eve currently serves on the Board of Trustees for the National Museum of Mexican Art, the Board of Directors for Saturday Place, is a member of the Economic Club of Chicago, and was appointed to the Choose Chicago Board by Governor Pritzker.

Lunch Panel: Latino Prosperity Utilizing State Resources

Moderator:



Letty Velez is CEO of IC Clean Energy, a clean energy company focused on solar and EV Charging Station installations. She is known as a “Community Navigator” by creating value for her Clients/Community Partners. Letty is also the Founder of IC U/Latinas, an entrepreneur learning cohort (that’s like a mini MBA on steroids) with over 275 Latinas nationwide.

Also serves on the planning committee

Speaker Bios:



Manny Lopez joined DCEO’s Regional Economic Development (RED) team in 2020 and is now the Assistant Deputy Director of team RED. Manny has led multiple business development projects in the Chicagoland area, securing hundreds of millions in investment and creating thousands of jobs with the support of EDGE tax credits, the Advantage Illinois participation loan program, and the Illinois’ Angel Investment Credit program. Manny is a proud United States Navy veteran, having served in Hawaii, the Persian Gulf, and in South Korea.



Hilary Scott-Ogunrinde serves at the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity as Deputy Director of Energy and Utility. As a leader and advocate in the construction and energy industry, Hilary led and directed teams to design, develop, and finance cutting-edge projects that have an environmental, economic, and social ROI. She is a champion for environmental and economic opportunity in environmental justice and depressed communities in Illinois and Missouri.

Match Making to Funding Opportunities

Moderator:



Nilda Esparza is the Executive Producer of the Logan Square Chamber of Commerce. Since 2020, Nilda's efforts and team-building abilities helped farmers and entrepreneurs power through the global pandemic, never interrupting operations and awarded the "Best of Chicago's" "Best Farmers Market" 5 consecutive years in a row by the Chicago Reader.

Speaker Bios:



Edgar Candelas is an Assistant Vice President at Barrington Bank & Trust (Wintrust Community Bank), with over 8 years of experience establishing solid financial foundations for the Hispanic community. Edgar is responsible for new business development, driving new programming initiatives and identifying strategic growth opportunities specializing in Small business Finance.



Julisa Sanchez is a Market President-Chicago Branch for Waterman Bank. Julisa has been a prominent leader in the financial lending industry for over three decades. With a deep passion for community development and entrepreneurship, she has helped countless individuals achieve their dreams of homeownership and business success through her innovative approaches to diversified lending.



Cynthia Valle is the Senior Business Development Officer for the Commercial Lending Team at Self-Help Federal Credit Union. She brings over 17 years of extensive commercial lending experience and has worked in the non-profit, Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) space as well as the traditional for-profit banking industry. She is a strong community advocate focused on serving the underserved.- habla español

Building & Sustaining Business Network

Moderator:



Ericka White is the State Director for the Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network. She oversees 42 SBDC locations, ensuring regulatory compliance, setting network goals, securing funding, and building stakeholder relationships. Additionally, Ericka supervises the deployment of the APEX Accelerator program and both the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act Contractor Incubator and Primes Accelerator programs. Her expertise includes small business development, strategic planning, policy implementation, and program management.

Speaker Bios:



Edith De La Cruz began her construction career flipping residential housing. After years of difficult experiences, the only path for growth and success of her company was becoming a General Contractor-GC. As a GC, she can bid on projects directly. Ms. De La Cruz is an advocate and representative of women in construction and manufacturing and was appointed to Mayor Lightfoot's 2020 City of Chicago's MBE/WBE Advisory Board.



Jose Alfredo Suarez is a Risk Management Consultant for the Alera Group. Jose has been in the business insurance industry for two decades working his way from the print room to senior executive. Currently, Jose is responsible for building and leading a practice that serves the Latino community specifically with MBE, DBE, and WBE-certified businesses with their risk management needs. In Chicago, Jose has leveraged his network contacts benefiting his clients with increased opportunities and resources.



Andrea Vallejo bridges gaps and forges connections between stakeholders. She currently serves as the Deputy Director of Public Engagement at the Office of Illinois Governor JB Pritzker. In her role, Andrea acts as a direct liaison between the Governor's Office and local governments, municipalities, and community organizations in counties. Through her long-standing grassroots connections with local county officials, Latin consulates, and Latino community leaders, Andrea provides valuable expertise.

Setting Your Business For Success

Moderator:



Marisa Alcantar is a Director of the Illinois Latino Small Business Partnership by the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (IHCC). She has over 7 years of professional experience supporting and assisting Latino small business owners. She is deeply committed to engaging with small business owners within Latino communities by providing them with essential resources to successfully expand their businesses.

Speaker Bios:



Roberto Carmona is the President/CEO of Carmona Strategic Solutions (CSS). CSS has helped leaders in small businesses, corporate executives, local governments, nonprofits, universities, and healthcare institutions with their strategic priorities in the areas of growth, marketing, sales, grant writing, organizational development, executive coaching, and executive level recruitment projects.



Georgina Fabian is the Founding and Managing Member of The International Business Law Group LLC (INTBLG), a law firm providing corporate, transactional, employment, immigration, arbitration, and litigation services, both nationally and internationally. Ms. Fabian is authorized to practice law in Illinois, New York, and the Mexican Republic. She is a part of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.



Christell Yosunni Frausto is the owner of TequilaRia Wine & Spirits, founder of CFS United Inc, River City Grill and Exito Peoria, a non-profit named after the Spanish word for "success" that aims to serve the community. She serves as President of the Greater Peoria Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, participates on various boards, and organizes for the Peoria Southside Soccer Club. Through her efforts, Christell is dedicated to making a positive impact and empowering others in her community.



Enrique Lopez is the principal of Lopez & Company, CPAs. Lopez & Company focuses its practice on representing businesses and individuals in the professional services and healthcare industries operating domestically and internationally. Enrique has served on the board of private corporations as well as nonprofit organizations. He is a member of the AICPA and Illinois CPA Society.

Match Making to Funding Opportunities

Moderator:



Emmanuel Davila is the Director of Business Growth Services for Southland Development Authority. With a strong track record in program management, grant acquisition, and strategic leadership, Emmanuel has been instrumental in the creation and execution of 26 small business and economic development programs since 2020. These initiatives have delivered over 4000 hours of business advising and funneled nearly \$5 million in investment into Chicago's South and West sides.

Speaker Bios:



Vanessa Rodriguez Aguirre is a Senior Small Business Program Officer with Local Initiatives Support Corp. (LISC); a national community development financial institution. She earned an MBA in Finance and has 15+ years of business banking experience. Vanessa is the daughter of immigrants who taught her to work hard and help others, she does this by providing equitable lending services and technical assistance to small businesses.



Yessenia Diaz de Leon is the Director of Community Lending at Allies for Community Business (A4CB). Yessenia manages a team of Community Lenders, working closely to ensure A4CB funds as many loans as possible each year. Previously, Yessenia worked at a small bookkeeping and accounting business serving mostly Latinx-owned businesses on the South Side of Chicago. Yessenia holds a B.A. in Business from the University of Notre Dame.



Caridad Del Rio is a Business Relationship Manager at BMO Bank and has been in the banking industry for 21 years. She spent the last seven (7) years in Small Business Banking, helping small businesses with cashflow needs and advising them on their full financial picture. She loves helping her community and has partnered up with her town's park district providing financial literacy to young minds.

Building & Sustaining Business Network

Moderator:



Paulina Roe is an on-air personality at The Fred Show on 103.5 KISSFM and iHeartRadio. A Southwest Chicago native, Paulina is a young, diverse, bold voice within the city. She also hosts her podcast, "unEntitled," where she shares powerful stories of today's millennials. As a Latina/Polish woman who grew up in an immigrant household, she is passionate about volunteering with local community organizations and advocates for mental health awareness.

Speaker Bios:



Oswaldo Alvarez is the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation's (ILLCF) Executive Director and oversees all programs, operations, and organizational development. In just two years, Oswaldo has grown ILLCF from a budget of under \$300,000, to over \$1.6 million spanning across three program areas. Oswaldo has nearly 20 years of experience, working across the sectors of nonprofit, government, and philanthropy – working with and for the community.



Dora Cornelio is an Attorney at Schmidt Salzman & Moran, Ltd., where she advises and represents her clients in matters of real estate taxation. Dora is a servant leader in the legal and Latinx community - she is the President of HLAI-Serving the Hispanic Lawyers of Illinois, a member of Wilbur Wright College's Paralegal Program Advisory Board, as well as part of the Emerging Leaders Auxiliary Board for Casa Central.



Jennifer Sanchez is a real estate investor, community creator, public speaker, and life/business coach with a passion for strategizing and holding entrepreneurs accountable to their personal and professional goals. Since 2018, she has worked with hundreds of professional & entrepreneurial women through her conferences, retreats, networking events, and programs under her organization called WISE (Women's Institute of Self Development and Efficacy).

Navigating Certifications

Moderator:

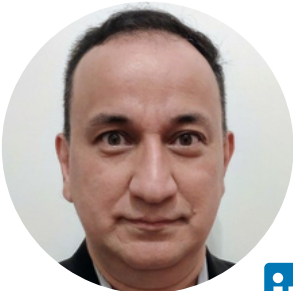


Ivette Trevino is the Director of Strategic Partnerships and Membership Engagement at the Hispanic American Construction Industry Association (HACIA). Ivette creates impact by engaging with partners, members, and government leaders to provide advocacy, programs, and resources to small and minority-owned businesses. Ivette invests in her leadership skills by completing programs like the Chicago Latino Caucus Foundation, Leadership Academy and the Mujeres de HACE program at the Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement.

Speaker Bios:



Benjamin Bedenfield graduated from the University of Illinois - Springfield College of Business and Management. He has been a certifier, educator, and advocate for small businesses in the CTA's Diversity Programs department for 6 years and is an expert working with federal regulations governing the DBE program. Benjamin manages one of the nation's leading certification programs specialized in promoting equitable economic opportunity for small business owners.



Carlos Gutierrez is the Certification Manager for the Business Enterprise and the Veteran Business Program for the State of Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion. He has extensive knowledge of certification, contract compliance, and outreach in equity and inclusion, including, but not limited to, the federal, state, and local levels. He has served on various panels in the corporate and public spheres addressing disparities impacting diverse communities and the importance of inclusion.



Jose Robles-Michelena is an Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff of the Chicago Minority Supplier Development Council, he is responsible for the daily operations of the entire organization including MBE Development Programs, Minority Supplier Certification, Corporate Members Engagement and Business Diversity and Inclusion Advocacy. He is also responsible for the financial health of the organization implementing and executing responsible spending.