




# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

OHIO COMMISSION ON  
HISPANIC/LATINO AFFAIRS



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# OUR MISSION



**ADVISE** State government on issues affecting Hispanic Ohioans.

**CONNECT** the diverse Latino communities across Ohio.

**BUILD** the capacity of community organizations so they may better serve the fast growing population of Ohio.

## CORE VALUES

**BUILD** cooperation and understanding between Hispanic Ohioans and government by providing resources and informing State leaders on issues impacting Hispanic Ohioans.

**COLLABORATIVE** with the community to promote engagement, education, and inclusion to ensure Latinos are part of the fabric of the State of Ohio.

**PARTNER** with State agencies to ensure equity and access to culturally relevant programs and services for Latinos.

**IDENTIFY** matters impacting the Latino agenda and align our initiatives with efforts that seek to empower and integrate Latinos in the United States.

**PLAN** the work of the Commission based upon the outlined strategic priorities that meet the needs of the Latino Community.

**ENCOURAGE** new ideas and support acceptance of differing ideas and beliefs.

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Dear Fellow Ohioans,

We welcomed 2022 with eagerness as Ohio and the country transitioned from the COVID-19 Pandemic Response to a new phase of Post Pandemic Recovery. This year brought along hope, opportunities and new challenges for our team and those who serve the growing Latino community in Ohio.

Our Commission continues to strengthen its relationships with state agencies through our advisory roles. Our team is engaged with 19 advisory groups and taskforces to ensure that relevant information about Latinos is conveyed and crucial resources are shared through our extensive networks. Our team provided support and assistance to numerous Latino grassroots organizations across Ohio. Our OLANet (Ohio Latino Network) accounted for 540 Latino serving organizations in the state and our team completed a total of 635 visits and engagements this year. Our commission successfully secured an unprecedented \$816,804 in additional funding through the Latino Mental Health Navigator Project grant (\$735,939) and the in-kind volunteer hours (\$80,865).

A major highlight for our Commission in 2022 is indeed the Latino Mental Health Navigator Project. The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services funded this grant and enabled us to implement seven programs in different regions of the state. This project builds capacity at the local level, increases collaboration among Latino serving organizations and mental health providers, and it is generating useful data and information regarding mental health services and accessibility.

Our team made its mark on the national scene with opportunities to present at the National Local Government Hispanic Network and the Midwest Latino Mental Health Conference, as well as participate in the National Institute on Emergency Preparedness hosted by the National Association of Latino Elected Officials. We are also honored by the selection of our Executive Director to serve on the National Hispanic/Latino Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Advisory Board.

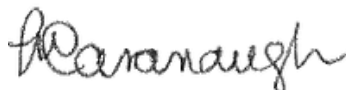
Constituent services remains a major component of our work with 217 inquiries resolved. We connected with the public through our social media reaching 3,500 followers on Facebook, over 1,100 on Twitter and 974 on Instagram. Our redesigned website had over 36,812 page views and continues to be a critical channel to provide timely and valuable information for our constituents.

We are eager to serve our community in 2023 and to build even more capacity. It is an honor to connect Latinos to government and to serve in advisory roles that increase opportunities for Ohio's growing Hispanic/Latino community.

On behalf of our Board of Commissioners and Staff,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Manuel Lopez Ramirez", enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Manuel Lopez Ramirez  
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lilleana Cavanaugh".

Lilleana Cavanaugh, MBA, CPM  
Executive Director

# 46TH BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



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MANUEL LOPEZ  
RAMIREZ  
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MARY SANTIAGO  
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AL CUTRONA  
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Community Liaison



LILLEANA CAVANAUGH  
MBA, CPM  
Executive Director



ANNABEL MELEÁN  
MPA  
Public Policy Officer



MICHELLE GOODMAN  
Administrative  
Professional

# Meet Our New Public Policy Officer

We were delighted to welcome Annabel Meleán to our team as our new Public Policy Officer. In this capacity, she is responsible for advising the Governor, General Assembly and State Agencies on challenges and opportunities facing Hispanic Ohioans and participating in policy shaping taskforces & committees that concern and affect the Latino Community. Annabel works closely with leaders and commission members building civic engagement, increasing Latino participation in government and creating rapport between elected officials and our community. She also provides support for our Education and Workforce Development initiatives.

Annabel's country of heritage is Venezuela and she grew up in Columbus, Ohio. She attended the University of Cincinnati, where she graduated with a Master's Degree in Public Administration and Social Justice. Annabel comes to us from the Ohio Senate where she most recently served as a Senior Legislative Aide for new Assistant Minority Leader Senator Hearcel Craig.

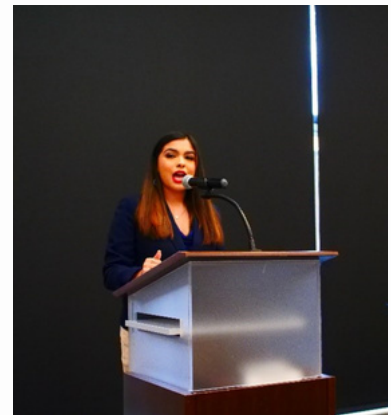


# Intern Spotlight

Lauren González is a second-year student from San Antonio, Texas, studying at The Ohio State University. She majors in Public Management, Leadership, and Policy with a minor in Latino(a) Studies. Lauren is a Morrill Scholar and is involved in different student organizations on campus. She holds various leadership positions, is a member of Alpha Psi Lambda, and is the founder of Teal Week, a sexual violence awareness organization. She is currently the Public Policy Intern for the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission and is hoping to pursue a career in public policy for the advancement of disadvantaged communities.

During her internship with the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission, she organized the Farm to Table townhall at the Ohio State University. As the granddaughter of a Mexican migrant farmworker, Lauren is passionate on educating voters about farmworker struggles. After learning about the Farmworker Modernization Act bill that had been introduced to Congress in 2021, Lauren was driven to plan the Farm to Table townhall with the help of her fraternity, Alpha Psi Lambda, to educate Ohio State students on the adversities farmworkers face daily.

The townhall panel included Laura Nadal from Justice for Migrant Women, immigration attorney Mark Heller from Advocates for Basic Legal Equality Inc., and Commissioner Maria Martinez from the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission. Lauren moderated the panel with 70 students in attendance. Students also registered to vote at the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission voter registration table.



Lauren González welcomes participants.







# YEAR AT A GLANCE

**635**

Community Visits & Engagements

**540**

Organizations registered in OLANet, a virtual directory of Latino serving organizations

**SOCIAL MEDIA  
IMPRESSIONS**

**110K**

Connecting with the Latino public in Ohio through Facebook, Twitter & Instagram

**36,812**

**WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS**

**12**

Specialized Resource Directories



**217**

Constituent inquiries resolved

**\$80,865**

In-Kind value of 2,700 volunteer hours



**\$735,939**

Latino Mental Health Navigator Grant Funding Received

\*Estimated national value of each volunteer is currently \$29.95, as of April 2022.

# Capacity Building: Latino Mental Health Navigators Program

In 2022, OCHLA partnered with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to develop seven sites within the Latino Mental Health Navigator Program in areas throughout Ohio. The Program started in March 2022 and received funding for a total of \$735,939. The Latino Mental Health Navigator Program seeks to reduce disparities in availability, accessibility, and quality of behavioral healthcare services for members of the Hispanic-Latino community.

The seven sites that have launched projects include:

- [HOLA](#) (Ashtabula)
- [OCCHA](#) (Youngstown)
- [Proyecto Raices](#) (Akron)
- [El Puente](#) (Dayton)
- [Del Pueblo, Inc.](#) (Springfield)
- [Our Lady of Guadalupe Center](#) (Columbus)
- [Su Casa](#) (Cincinnati)



# LATINO MENTAL HEALTH NAVIGATORS

(March to November 2022)

NUMBER OF  
INDIVIDUALS  
SERVED

**16,575**



NEW CLIENTS

**3,831**

CLIENTS  
CONNECTED WITH  
MENTAL HEALTH  
PROVIDERS

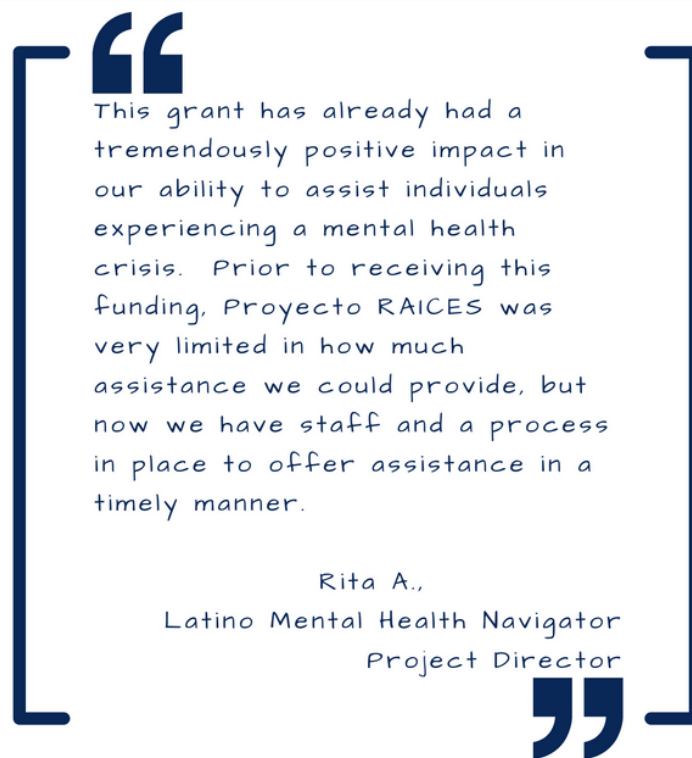
**274**



CLIENTS  
CONNECTED WITH  
COVID-19  
RESOURCES

**8,310**

The Latino Mental Health Navigators have received specialized technical training through a program led by El Centro de Servicios Sociales in Lorain, Prevention Action Alliance, and the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC). Each site has made strides in identifying and targeting structural barriers for the populations they serve, promoting engagement in behavioral healthcare through education, and facilitating navigation of systems of care. In addition, the Navigators have served Latinos who experience disparities related to COVID-19 with accessing relevant health and safety information, with a special focus on boosting vaccine confidence.



Despite the many barriers to services, Mental Health Navigators have responded to the immediate needs of their communities. They advocated for clients throughout referral processes; provided educational outreach including “Hablemos” Facebook live streams on topics like suicide prevention; established Wellness Workshop Series; facilitated discussion among parents and children on mental health, and provided connections to wrap around services. In 2023, OCHLA will release a report featuring each project’s accomplishments and discoveries in improving access to mental/behavioral health services for Latinos throughout the Latino Mental Health Navigator Program.

# Latino Mental Health Navigators Advisory Board

Our work has been guided by a robust team of professionals who have wide experience working with the Latino community in Ohio:

- Lead advisor: Dr. Marilyn Sampilo, Clinical Psychologist, The Cleveland Clinic
- Isaac Báez, M.P.H., C.D.E. Manager, Primary Prevention and At-Risk Populations, Summa Health Equity Center
- Elijah Jones, MSW, LISW-S, LICDC, CCTP, CDP, Director of Health Equity & Clinical Resources Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities
- Elizabeth Guzmán-Bowman, Commissioner, Latino Affairs Commission, Senior Outreach Coordinator at OSU Wexner Medical Center



[Click here to watch:](#)  
Columbus organization working to expand social services in Hispanic community

[Click here to read:](#)  
Proyecto RAICES connects Akron's Hispanic youth to roots and opportunities



# Policy and Civic Engagement

The Commission tracked over 117 bills in the 134th General Assembly and provided legislative updates to community members on issues pertinent to the Latino Community through the Public Policy Center e-Newsletter. It is imperative for the growing Latino and Hispanic community in Ohio to stay informed because of their potential to influence policy issues and elections with active voter participation. Our team has started planning for the Hispanic Legislative Visit Day slotted for April 2023. This event will convene Latino advocates, leaders and students from across Ohio, enabling them to meet with their elected State Representatives and Senators.

## Voter Mobilization - Tu Voz Importa!



Roughly half of the Hispanic population in Ohio are eligible to vote. With the 2022 Ohio and Congressional midterm elections held this year, it was imperative to encourage the 199,000 Hispanic voters to be civically engaged and vote. It is a priority for the Commission to increase Latino participation in civic responsibilities by educating, empowering, and getting Latinos to the polls.

The Commission held several educational programs in 2022 to make voter information more accessible to the community. This included collaboration with the National Voter Registration Day and hosting several voter registration events including the Latino Parade in Columbus, the Farm to Table Townhall at the Ohio State University, and the Latino Hispanic Heritage Month Education and Policy Panel at Columbus City Hall.



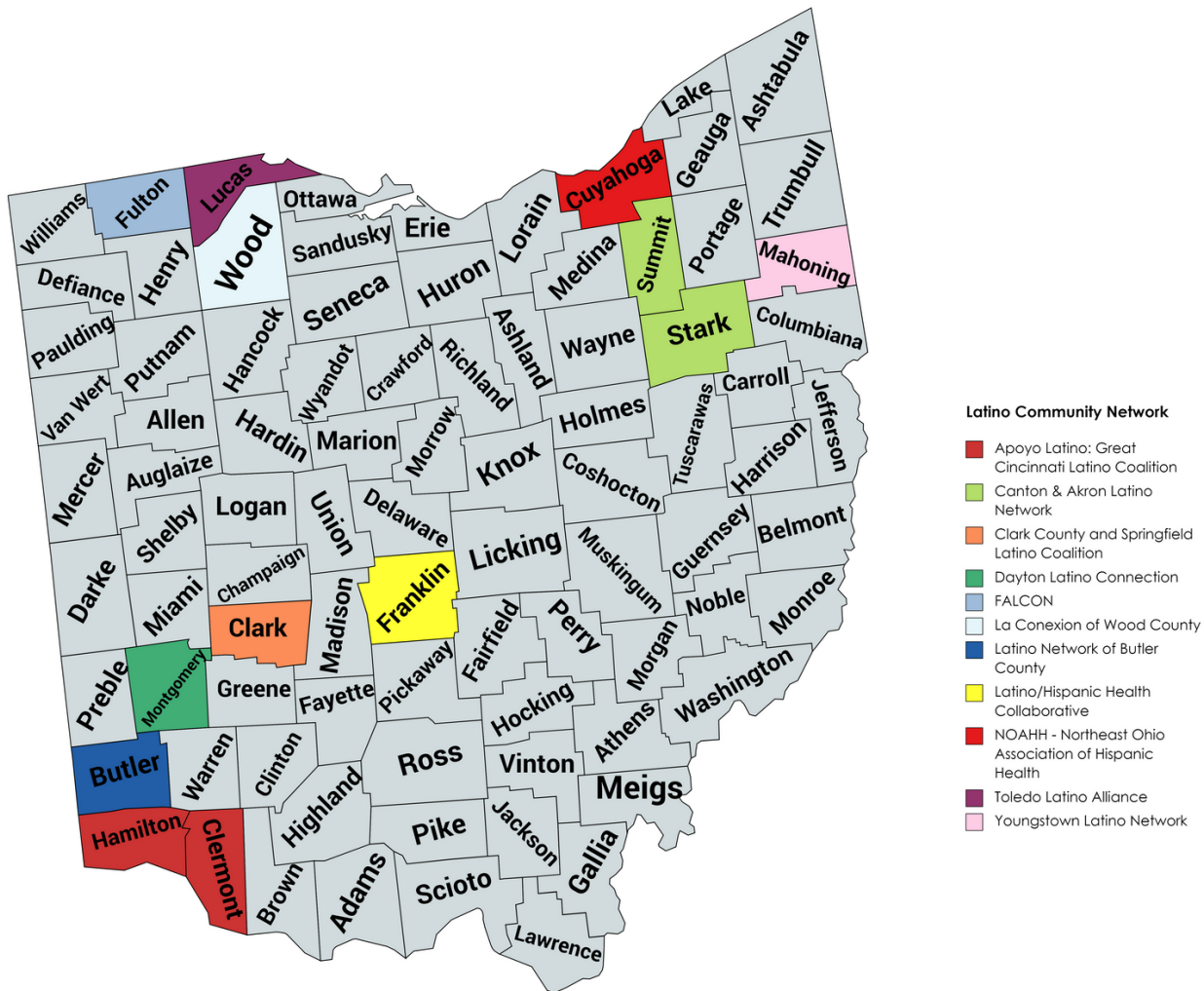
Social media campaigns explaining eligibility, registration, identification, language access and the importance of the vote were distributed via social media campaigns on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Our social media campaigns on voter registration had a total of 7,831 likes with 180 retweets and 90 shares. A total of 60 posts have been made informing the public on how to register to vote and encouraging voter participation.

## Advocacy for CentroVilla25 - La Villa Hispana, Cleveland

The Commission helped support the Northeast Ohio Hispanic Center Economic Development in their quest for funding by submitting letters of support for their State Capital Budget request for fiscal year 2023-2024 to the Ohio House and Ohio Senate Finance Committees. As well, the Commission submitted a letter of support for congressional funding. The project successfully received State funds for the construction of the CentroVilla 25 market, business incubator, and resource center in Cleveland's Clark-Fulton community.

The Northeast Ohio Hispanic Center for Economic development plays a critical role in the advancement of Hispanic businesses in Cleveland and surrounding areas in Northeast Ohio. Northeast Ohio holds an estimated 17.1% of the total Hispanic population in Ohio. The Commission strongly supported the project and its emphasis on generating employment and business development opportunities, especially because of the large potential impact for Hispanic Ohioans.

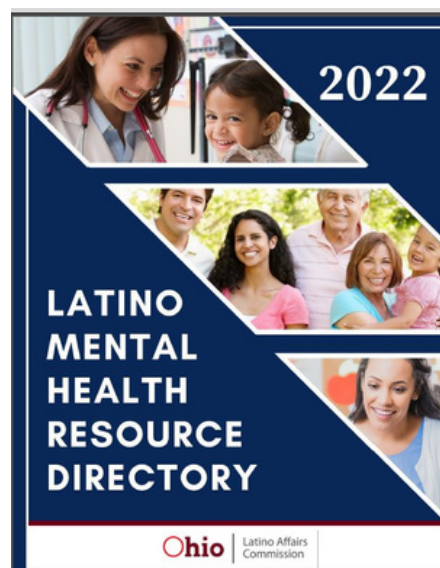
# Connecting with Hispanic Ohioans: Latino Community Networks



Our Commission is an active member of eleven Latino Networking Groups across Ohio that convene to share relevant information and resources to assist Latinos throughout the state. These networks involve over 300 leaders who actively seek to empower Latinos and to serve them to improve their quality of life and increase their educational, health and employment opportunities. Our Commission is very pleased to have provided direct support to the Canton, Akron and Youngstown Latino Networks which are now well-established and robust.

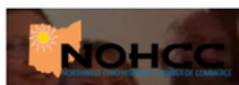
# Latino Mental Health Network:

The Latino Affairs Commission hosts the Latino Mental Health Network, created to provide support and best practices to professionals that serve the mental health needs of Latinos through healthcare practices or Latino serving organizations.



# Hispanic Chambers of Commerce Network:

Our Commission conveys bimonthly meetings with Ohio's five Hispanic Chambers of Commerce. During 2022, we hosted representatives from the Bureau of Workers Compensation and the Ohio Department of Development during our meetings with the Chambers. Additionally, the Commission also participated in the Hispanic Business Awards, hosted by La Mega Media, to highlight the Hispanic owned business communities' positive impact and their contributions to the local economies in Ohio.





# Expanding Our Networks

## Local Government Hispanic Network Columbus, Ohio



Board Secretary Dan Molina addresses Latino Government Administrators.

The Local Government Hispanic Network was established in 1975 to encourage professional excellence among Hispanic/Latino local government administrators. The Network seeks to improve the management of local government, to provide unique resources to Hispanic local government executives and public managers, and to advance the goals of professional, effective and ethical local government administration. Our Commission participated in this Network's annual national meeting held in Columbus, Ohio. The Commission's Board Secretary, Dan Molina, was featured as the keynote speaker. Secretary Molina presented on the work of the Commission and its growing relationships with city, county and state governments as we expand collaborations to better serve Latinos in Ohio.

## Midwest Latino Mental Health Conference Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Latino Affairs Commission Executive Director, Lilleana Cavanaugh, had the opportunity to present at this conference about the Commission's Latino Mental Health Navigators project and share about lessons learned and best practices. The conference focused on navigating behavioral health complexities for Midwest Latino Communities with a specific emphasis on Mental Health for school children. It explored the significant risk of mental health problems faced by Latino youth, including anxiety, depression and suicide attempts. Sessions provided information about family therapy, the use of counselors and the importance of cultural competence.





Other topics included Community Mental Health Workers Engagement, Mental Health Services for Latino Youth, Addressing Bullying Among Hispanic and Latino Children in School Settings and Responding to the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Mental Health.

## **NALEO, National Institute on Emergency Preparedness Chicago, Illinois**

The National Association of Latino Elected Officials' (NALEO) Emergency Preparedness Institute provides Latino policymakers and public servants with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the different levels of planning and preparedness. This program helps communities prepare for, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from various types of disasters and emergencies. The training covered topics including Understanding Local, State and Federal Roles during Emergencies, Identifying Hazards, Multi-Jurisdictional Mitigation Planning Communications and Mass Evacuation during a Disaster, Housing and Education Needs for Displaced Residents and Best Practices. Director Cavanaugh participated in this important national training event.



Executive Director Lilleana Cavanaugh speaks at NALEO Institute.

# Advisory Boards

In 2022, the Commission's staff served on advisory roles in 18 different councils, where they were able to share their expertise in cross cultural communications, outreach strategy, cultural competence, diversity and inclusion:

- ADAMH Workforce Advisory Council, Franklin County
- Brent Spence Bridge Project, I&D Committee, Cincinnati
- Disparities and Cultural Competence Advisory Committee (DACC), OhioMHAS
- Diversity & Empowerment Council, Secretary of State's Office
- Eliminating Disparities Taskforce, Ohio Dept. of Health
- English Learner Advisory Committee, Ohio Dept. of Education
- Equity Advisory Council, Franklin County Dept. of Public Health
- Health Equity Interagency Workgroup, Ohio Dept. of Health
- Minority Health Vaccine Team, Ohio Dept. of Health
- National Hispanic/Latino Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Advisory Board
- New Americans Advisory Council, Franklin County
- Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) Diversity and Equity Advisory Board
- Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness, EMA
- Ohio Council to Advance Maternal Health, Ohio Dept. of Health
- Ohio Institute of Communities of Color
- Ohio Opioid Education Alliance
- Ohio State University Family Engagement Center
- Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant Advisory Group
- Whole Child Advisory Group, Ohio Dept. of Education



# Advisory Board Highlights

## Health Equity Interagency Workgroup, Ohio Department of Health

The Latino Affairs Commission regularly participates in the Ohio Department of Health Office of Health Opportunity initiatives to advance the health and well-being of all Ohioans by transforming the state's public health system through unique partnerships and funding streams; addressing the community conditions and inequities that lead to disparities in health outcomes; and implementing data-driven, evidence-based solutions. Through this workgroup, the Commission can share relevant information about Latinos, their needs, as well as best practices that are producing positive impact on the community.



## English Learner Advisory Committee, Ohio Department of Education

OCHLA staff participates regularly on this advisory committee to provide insight regarding the educational needs of Latino Youth. The committee provides to the Department of Education and the Lau Resource Center feedback on best practices, resources and recommendations to further the shared goal of improving educational programs for English learners. The Committee members work collaboratively with other educators, parents and community members with diverse perspectives from a variety of backgrounds from across the state. The thoughtful and ongoing dialogue between and among state and local educators is vitally important for English Learners' educational equity and overall school success.

## Ohio TESOL Conference

The Latino Affairs Commission presented at this statewide event in November this year. The conference brings together experts in PreK-12th grade, higher education, children, adult and refugee education. Our team shared best practices to connect, educate and disseminate relevant information regarding children and adult education resources to Latino parents and grassroots organizations. Additionally, the team presented on policy matters affecting Latino education in Ohio.



Annabel Meleán and Mary Grace Sanchez present at TESOL Conference.



Annabel Meleán provides legislative update at TESOL Conference.



## ***Distinguished Hispanic Ohioan Awardees***

Arianna Hoet  
On Our Sleeves Clinical Director, Nationwide Childrens Hospital, Columbus

Daniel Brown-Martinez  
Deputy Fire Chief, City of Toledo, Whitehouse

Diana Gutiérrez Paiz  
Administrator, Catholic Central School, Springfield

Gus Hoyas  
CEO & President, Hoyas Insurance Group, Strongsville

Jennifer Rodriguez  
Digital Reporter, WKBN, Youngstown

Dr. Odell Moreno Owens  
Retired Medical Doctor, Cincinnati

Tomas Ortiz  
Pump Specialist, City of Elyria, Lorain

## ***Latino Military Service of Distinction Awardees***

Carlos Quinones  
Colonel, U.S. Air Force, Centerville

Dominic Garcia  
Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force, Toledo

Federico Rojas Jr.  
Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force, Centerville

Felipe Gonzalez  
Corporal, US Marine Corp (Retired), Youngstown

Susan Santos  
US Army, Lorain

## ***Nuestra Familia Awardees***

Andrea Loch  
Chief Ranger, Catholic Order of Foresters, Cristo Rey Court, Toledo

Barb Smoot -WELD  
President & CEO, Women for Economic and Leadership Development, WELD, Westerville

Jill P. Meyer  
CEO, Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, Cincinnati  
Springfield Society of St. Vincent de Paul District Council  
Springfield





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**ADVISE | CONNECT | BUILD**

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