

CAUSA

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CAUSA, INC.

Our New Logo and Mission

CAUSA, Inc., is dedicated to enhancing the overall well-being of the Hispanic/Latino population in Connecticut with special emphasis on Advocacy, Research and Technical Assistance through and with its member agencies.

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What is a CBO ?

A CBO is a "non-profit organization which provides educational and 'lifeline' services to new immigrants, low-income and working class Latino families.

Our First Issue

We are pleased to present our first issue of "Causa News." As you know, CAUSA is well aware that much of our success is due to the positive relationship between CAUSA's member agencies. Together, we will continue to strive to deliver the highest quality of services to Hispanics in Connecticut.

In recognition of the critical importance of that relationship, we feel it's important to establish a more formal means of communicating important information about CAUSA, its programs and member agencies.

CAUSA will attempt to provide up-to-date news on recent developments,

programs and issues we believe will be of interest to you. Hopefully, you will find this publication helpful and informative. In order to be more responsive to our member agencies needs, we welcome comments and suggestions.

I want to thank the editorial board and all contributors for making this publication a success. Most importantly, CAUSA wants to truly express our appreciation to all its member agencies for the services they provide to the Hispanic community of Connecticut. We hope you will acknowledge this publication as a small token of our appreciation.

From the Director

As the new Executive Director of the Connecticut Association for United Spanish Action, Inc. (C.A.U.S.A.), it is my place to share with you the current changes and accomplishments of our agency. C.A.U.S.A. , has been in existence since 1975. I've had the opportunity to meet a diverse group of board directors with wealth of social service, health, education, and economic development experiences. Many of them, who were founders of CAUSA, are still among us, they include: Mrs. Magali Kupfer, Mr. Ramon Larracuente, and Mr. Daniel Maldonado. I commend them for their commitment, leadership and work they have given the organization throughout the years.

During the summer, we developed a new logo for C.A.U.S.A. The logo represents CAUSA's goal of bringing all Hispanic CBOs together in order to serve and create a stronger Hispanic community in Connecticut. We've revised our bylaws and added Associate and Supporting Members in addition to our full membership. I had the opportunity to visit the member agencies to discuss their services, needs, concerns and goals.

With the help of Mrs. Rosaida Rosario, President of Rosaida & Associates with the

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CBO DIRECTORY

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"From the Director"*

cooperation of the Board of Directors, we developed a new multi-year strategic plan which charts an ambitious increase in services and technical assistance for Connecticut's Hispanic communities.

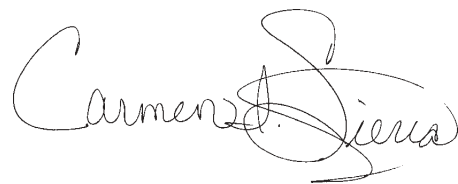
We revised our mission, vision and developed short and long-term goals for our agency. Our long-term goal is to increase the capacity, efficiency and effectiveness of our member agencies in serving Connecticut's rapidly growing Hispanic/Latino population.

I'd like to thank Mrs. Rosario for her outstanding services as the facilitator of our strategic plan. Her commitment, interest and leadership were commendable. In addition special thanks to the directors for their efforts, work and long hours that they put in preparing the agency's plan.

I would like to take this opportunity to give thanks to the Honorable Johnny Martinez, Mr. Paul Puzzo, President, Ms. Lena Rodriguez, Vice President CFO of Community Renewal Team, and Dennis King, former Director of Urban & Community Affairs for the Department of Social Services, and Alberto Bonello, President of Influential Designs, for their support, and guidance they have given me since I came on board. They have been very instrumental in helping CAUSA move forward.

I look forward to working with you, or your agency in the near future.

Sincerely,



Carmen Sierra,
Executive Director

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- **Project Nexo Core Site**
This site offers Computer lab, courses and access to the internet.

Executive Profile



Carmen Sierra

Mrs. Sierra was born and raised in Hartford, Connecticut. She attended and graduated from Burr Elementary School. She also attended high school in Puerto Rico and graduated from Buchanan High Military School. Mrs. Sierra has a B.S. in Management/Human Resources from Central Connecticut State University and a M.S. Public Administration from the University of Hartford.

She has over ten years of experience in highly visible, responsible roles in state, and federal government and in a Fortune 500 health insurance company. She is a Commissioner for the Hartford Economic Development Commission, Board Member of Connecticut Workforce Development Board, Former members of Catholic Family Services,

Institute of Hispanic Family, and many more. Currently, Ms. Sierra is the Executive Director of the Connecticut Association for United Spanish Action, Inc. (C.A.U.S.A.) the largest coalition of Latino community-based organizations.

CBO Spotlight

CAUSA, Inc. is Connecticut's largest coalition of Latino community based organizations that provide educational and 'lifeline' services to new immigrants and to low income and working class Latino families. CAUSA agencies are trusted neighborhood hubs offering everything from ESL classes to employment services to child care and youth programming. Each year, more than 200,000 Latino men, women and children in Connecticut rely upon services provided by CAUSA agencies. A strong coalition of Latino community centers has never been more essential at a time when:

- 40% of Connecticut Latinos live at or below the poverty level (nearly 7 times the statewide average.)
- This population experienced a 14% growth rate between 1995 and 2000 and is projected to grow another 14% by 2005.
- Population expansion is driven by an increasingly diverse influx of immigrants from Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador, Argentina, and Salvador (both documented and undocumented) with social and economic needs.

CAUSA's Project Nexo

In 2000, CAUSA was awarded one of 35 grants selected from 628 grant applications submitted to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Technology Opportunity Program. The \$438,000 grant provides funding over a two year period for Project Nexo, which is designed to bridge the digital divide on behalf of Latinos and Hispanics.

Connecticut was the only state to receive an award to create a national model for using community-based agencies and large non-profits to provide better services and increase access to educational opportunities. Project Nexo establishes twelve public access computer centers for Latinos across Connecticut. Project Nexo also offers free internet access as well as easy access to on-line adult basic education and community college courses.

CBO SUCCESS STORY

Shy, disfigured and homeless, Naomi walked through the door of Centro de la Comunidad (New London) for the first time.

Naomi was born in Puerto Rico with a disfiguring tumor on the left side, of her face -so pronounced, that one of her eyes was protruding from her face. Her physical state planted a seed of insecurity that the men in her life preyed upon. She struggled with four children, an abusive husband in Puerto Rico and she decided to make Connecticut home.

Armed with a trickle of State Assistance income for her only child born in the States Naomi struggled. Poor English and few marketable skills led to depression. Naomi began to self-medicate with valium and quickly progressed to hard-core drugs. Overwhelmed with life and now homeless, Naomi voluntarily surrendered her children to foster care before the winter hit.

Upon hearing her story, a Centro case manager immediately placed Naomi in a shelter, linked her to a mother's support group, parents' aid program, 1-to-1 counseling, as well as additional social service referrals.

Naomi now lives with all of her children in an apartment she found through Centro, and supports them with a full time job at a local Casino. Centro staff even identified a special fund at Yale New Haven Hospital to pay for reconstructive surgery for Naomi, whose self-esteem skyrocketed as a result.

Naomi is eager to start taking computer classes at Centro's Project Nexo computer center and hopes to participate in the new Hispanic Scholars program through Charter Oak State College for single mothers to take on-line college courses.



Rebecca A. Sanchez
Executive Assistant

Rebecca A. Sanchez was born in North Dakota but raised in Minnesota. She graduated from East Grand Forks Senior High School. Rebecca attended the University of North Dakota, for one semester.

She then transferred to Laredo, Texas where she attended Laredo Community College. Ms. Sanchez worked for the Webb County District Attorney's Office for 5 years. She recently moved to Connecticut with her fiance. Ms. Sanchez joined CAUSA, INC. April 15, 2001 as the Executive Assistant to the Executive Director.



Leslie-Ann Soto
Project Director for Project Nexa

Leslie Ann Soto was born in Hartford, CT. In 1994 she graduated from Manchester High School. After a year of studies at Morse School of Business in 1997

Leslie joined the United States Marine Corps. She served four years stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. While in the Marine Corps she attended several schools and training, one of which was a two week intensive Microsoft Office training.

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