

## National Council of La Raza

### Q What is the National Council of La Raza?

A The National Council of La Raza (NCLR)—the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States—works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Through its network of nearly 300 affiliated community-based organizations (CBOs), NCLR reaches millions of Hispanics each year in 41 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Founded in 1968, NCLR is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan, tax-exempt organization headquartered in Washington, DC. NCLR serves all Hispanic subgroups in all regions of the country and has operations in Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Antonio, and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

### Q What does the term “La Raza” mean?

A The term “La Raza” has its origins in early 20th century Latin American literature and translates into English most closely as “the people,” or, according to some scholars, “the Hispanic people of the New World.” The term was coined by Mexican scholar José Vasconcelos to reflect the fact that the people of Latin America are a mixture of many of the world’s races, cultures, and religions. Some people have mistranslated “La Raza” to mean “The Race,” implying that it is a term meant to exclude others. In fact, the full term coined by Vasconcelos, “*La Raza Cósmica*,” meaning the “cosmic people,” was developed to reflect not purity but the mixture inherent in the Hispanic people. This is an inclusive concept, meaning that Hispanics share with all other peoples of the world a common heritage and destiny.

### Q Whom does NCLR serve?

A NCLR serves all Hispanic nationality groups in all regions of the country through its formal network of nearly 300 Affiliates—reaching millions of Hispanics annually. NCLR welcomes affiliation from independent Hispanic groups that share NCLR’s goals and self-help philosophy. NCLR also assists Hispanic groups that are not formal Affiliates through issue networks on health, education, housing, leadership, and other areas.

### Q How does NCLR work toward achieving its mission?

A NCLR works through two primary, complementary approaches:

- **Capacity-building assistance to support and strengthen Hispanic community-based organizations:** providing organizational assistance in management, governance,

program operations, and resource development to Hispanic community-based organizations nationwide, especially those that serve low-income and disadvantaged Hispanics.

- **Applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy:** providing an Hispanic perspective in five key areas—assets/investments, civil rights/immigration, education, employment and economic status, and health—to increase policymaker and public understanding of Hispanic needs and to encourage the adoption of programs and policies that equitably serve Hispanics.

NCLR strengthens these efforts with public information, media activities, and collaboration. These include formation of and participation in coalitions and other special activities that use the NCLR structure and credibility to create other entities or projects that are important to the Hispanic community.

### Q How does cooperation and collaboration with partners advance NCLR’s mission?

A NCLR staff belong to and help lead many issue-focused coalitions and associations, cooperating with other nonprofit organizations and private-sector entities on issues ranging from welfare reform to charter schools. All of NCLR’s national projects include efforts to educate public and private organizations about Hispanic needs and help them develop partnerships with community-based organizations. As a member of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, NCLR also carries out joint projects with other Latino organizations and its sister civil rights organizations to advocate for increased opportunities for Latinos throughout the country.

### Q What is NCLR’s role in providing an Hispanic perspective on national issues?

A NCLR’s Policy Analysis Center is the premier voice in Washington, DC for Hispanic Americans. Its unique capacity to provide timely policy analyses, combined with its considerable advocacy expertise, a reputation for political independence, and an identifiable constituency, permits NCLR to play an important role in policy and advocacy efforts. Its policy-oriented documents command extensive press and policymaker attention, and NCLR is consistently asked to testify and comment on public policy issues such as immigration and education, as well as other issues of broad concern, from affordable housing to health policy and tax reform. It uses a synergistic and complementary approach between its capacity-building efforts and its advocacy-related activities to achieve its goals.

## Q Who are NCLR's leaders?

**A** NCLR President and CEO Janet Murguía has become a key figure among the next generation of leaders in the Latino community. She began her career in Washington, DC as legislative counsel to former Kansas Congressman Jim Slattery, serving for seven years. She then worked at the White House in various capacities from 1994 to 2000, ultimately as deputy assistant to President Clinton and deputy director of legislative affairs, serving as a senior White House liaison to Congress. Prior to joining NCLR, she was the Executive Vice Chancellor for University Relations at the University of Kansas, overseeing the university's internal and external relations with the public, including governmental and public affairs, and coordinating the university's strategic planning and marketing efforts.

Murguía is currently a Board member of the Independent Sector, a coalition of leading nonprofits, foundations, and corporations committed to connecting, informing, and advocating on behalf of the nonprofit and philanthropic community. She is also a member of the Merrill Lynch Diversity & Inclusion Council and is an executive committee member of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. In addition, Murguía sits on the Board of the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility and the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda.

- 2008: Was the first Hispanic to give the keynote speech at the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Breakfast in Birmingham, Alabama
- 2007: Featured in *Newsweek's* Third Annual Women and Leadership issue
  - Named to *Poder* magazine's "The Poderosos 100"
  - Chosen for *Latino Leaders* magazine's "101 Top Leaders of the Hispanic Community"
  - Selected for *Hispanic* magazine's "Powerful Latinos 2007"
- 2006: Named to *Washingtonian* magazine's "100 Most Powerful Women in Washington"
  - Chosen for *The NonProfit Times'* "Power and Influence Top 50" leaders
  - Named to *People En Español's* "100 Most Influential Hispanics 2006"
- 2005: Finalist for *Hispanic Business* magazine's "Woman of the Year Award"
  - Received the "KU Law Alumni Association Distinguished Alumnus/na Award"
- 2004: Selected for *Hispanic* magazine's annual list of "100 Top Latinas"
  - Chosen for *Hispanic Business* magazine's "100 Most Influential Hispanics"

**NCLR Board Chair Andrea Bazán** is the President of Triangle Community Foundation, a charitable foundation in Durham, North Carolina. Bazán is responsible for leading the Foundation which has made grants of nearly \$120 million to a wide range of community nonprofits with a special emphasis on civic engagement and youth. She is a frequent speaker at local, state, and national meetings, has served as a mentor to many young Latino students, and is an active member of her community.

Bazán serves on a variety of boards including BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina. She holds a master's degree in social work and a master's in public health from the University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill.

## Q What constitutes NCLR's governing structure?

**A** NCLR's governing Board of Directors represents the constituency it serves. Bylaws require that the Board include representatives of all geographic regions of the U.S. and all Hispanic subgroups, that half the Board represent Affiliates or have identifiable constituencies, and that the Board include equal representation of men and women. The Board's leadership consists of a Chairperson and an Executive Committee—members who share responsibility for Board governance and organizational oversight issues.

NCLR also receives guidance from its Corporate Board of Advisors (CBA). Established in 1982, the CBA is made up of senior executives and liaison staff from 25 major corporations. The CBA meets with NCLR leadership twice a year to discuss issues and programs of common concern. CBA members also assist NCLR and its network through financial, in-kind, and programmatic support.

## Q What resources are available from NCLR?

**A** NCLR has produced and offers a range of resources to educate the public and the Latino community about important issues. In particular, its publications are a credible source of facts and information on a wide range of issues, from education and health to political and social empowerment. They present a uniquely Hispanic perspective, particularly on issues affecting minority, limited-English-speaking, and/or low-income Hispanics. Materials include research and policy papers, training materials, statistical analyses, fact sheets, issue updates, congressional testimony, and selected speeches and presentations. These materials can be obtained through NCLR's website.