



# LatinoNetwork

Last session, the Legislature allocated \$4 million in Lottery Backed Bonds for the construction of La Plaza Esperanza. This community center will serve Latinx youth and families in East Multnomah County, and provide a replicable model that can be used to serve Latinx communities across the state.

**We are grateful for the Legislature’s decision to appropriate funds to the construction of La Plaza Esperanza. Unfortunately, the timing of the Lottery Backed Bond sale will be after the completion of construction. In the 2024 session, we are advocating for the prior Lottery Backed Bond allocation to be part of the 2024 bond sale. The timing of this bond sale in 2024 would allow us to use such funds to complete construction. This is not a request for additional funds, just to change the timing of the bond sale that was already appropriated.**

East Multnomah County is home to more than 50,000 Latinx residents that don’t have access to many critical culturally specific services related to preschool, educational supports, housing stability, healthcare, and legal services. Situated in the heart of the Rockwood neighborhood, La Plaza Esperanza fills that gap and serves as a safe space for members of our community to gather and access services in a setting that is comfortable and familiar to them.

Under the leadership of Latino Network, a successful capital campaign brought together a diversity of public, private, and foundational support to build La Plaza Esperanza. \$4 million in lottery bonds were allocated to this project during the 2021 legislative session, and Latino Network continues its work to secure the resources needed to complete La Plaza Esperanza. This requested timing change will allow the facility to open on schedule in Fall of 2024.

## **La Plaza Esperanza will meet the needs of our community in these critical areas:**

### **Early Childhood Education**

About 30% of the La Plaza’s services will be dedicated to supporting the needs of families with preschool children. Latino Network has over 20 years of experience in culturally-specific early childhood education. The staff have a proven track record of bringing parents, teachers and advocates together to have an active role in the decisions that affect their children. More specifically, La Plaza Esperanza will: Respond to Oregon’s shortage of culturally-specific early childhood education with a 4,300 sf preschool designed to best practice standards.

La Plaza Esperanza will address the preschool workforce shortage in Oregon by serving as a training site for Latinx parents to convert lived experience into professional skills. This full-time, high-quality preschool will provide access to low-income families residing in the area, which includes approximately 4,500 Latino/x children under age 6 that live within five miles of the site. This demonstration site will ensure that all Latinx preschool children will have access to culturally-specific children’s programming at La Plaza Esperanza.

### **Youth Empowerment and Violence Prevention**

Latino Network’s Community Healing Initiative (CHI) program leverages prevention strategies and community-based services to reclaim the lives of at-risk and gang-involved youth, and to ensure whole families achieve stability. CHI serves Latinx-identifying youth ages 12-18 referred by the Department of Community Justice with at least 65% of our referrals coming from East Portland. La Plaza Esperanza will provide job training and community engagement activities for local youth that will be a major deterrent from gang involvement by creating connection, belonging and hope.

### **Family Stability & Community Support**

From a family perspective, La Plaza Esperanza will provide a place for families to connect with each other. In a central, culturally specific site where people feel welcomed and respected, Latino Network staff will coordinate much-needed programs and services that families need. Space will be dedicated to house Latino Network's family stability and community support programs – these services are in high demand and include utility and rent assistance, workforce development and immigration navigation support.

Our community yearns for a place that we can call our own. La Plaza Esperanza will serve as a safe space for our children and youth to learn and grow in an environment with no glass ceilings and no roadblocks to top quality, culturally specific education, programs, and services. We need La Plaza Esperanza in our community. It's critical that the state do its part to make this center of hope a reality.

**We urge the legislature to ensure that the \$4 million Lottery Backed Bond appropriation is part of the 2024 bond sale to allow for the completion of La Plaza Esperanza.**

Nonprofit and Community Organization Endorsements:



Metropolitan Group  
the power of voice



Foundation Partner Endorsements:



The Heatherington Foundation  
For Innovation and Education  
in Health Care, Inc.



**Public Agency and Elected Official Endorsements:**



CITY OF  
GRESHAM

**GRESHAM**  
REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



Parkrose  
School District

Portland, Oregon

**Corporate Partner Endorsements:**



**OnPoint**  
COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION



**Heritage**  
BANK



**CareOregon**



**TITAN**  
FREIGHT SYSTEMS



**NW Natural**

*We grew up here.*

TRAVEL  
**PORTLAND**



**SALAZAR**  
**ARCHITECT**

**ZGF**

