



Latino youth are one of the fastest-growing populations in the United States and account for one in four K-12 students and one in five college students. In recent years, Latinos have enrolled in college at higher rates than ever before. However, this increase is not reflected in college completion rates since only one in five Latinx students graduate from two-year institutions and one in two graduate from four-year institutions. UnidosUS is preparing for the future by investing directly in youth through education programs and by tackling institutional barriers—such as college affordability, access to financial aid, and student loan repayment—that hinder Latino youth’s ability to contribute to our nation’s success.

## **ESCALERA** **STEPS TO SUCCESS**

The *Escalera: Taking Steps to Success* college- and career-readiness program for 11th and 12th grade students seeks to promote upward economic mobility for Latino youth by increasing educational attainment, career planning, and access to information about professional careers. *Escalera* primarily serves first-generation, Latino, low-income, and English learner (EL) students—students that have historically lacked access to quality K-12 education and who face barriers to completing a higher education. Since 2015, *Escalera* has reached more than 3,300 high school students.

*Escalera* is delivered through culturally competent, curricula-based program sessions, experiential learning activities, and case management. *Escalera* provides:

- Opportunities to explore and plan for future academic and career goals, such as developing the college admission profile or professional skills (building a resume, professional networking, etc.).

- A two-year, cohort-based experience that encourages persistence in high school, enrollment in post-secondary education, and pursuit of advanced careers.
- Opportunities to network at the UnidosUS STEM Youth Summit and other events in which students can be civically engaged, elevate pressing issues, and connect to the larger Latino community.
- Access to post-secondary and community partners to help students expand the realm of perceived possibilities and advance in the academic and professional worlds.

## **About**

UnidosUS, previously known as NCLR (National Council of La Raza), is the nation’s largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Through its unique combination of expert research, advocacy, programs, and an [Affiliate Network](#) of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico, UnidosUS simultaneously challenges the social, economic, and political barriers that affect Latinos at the national and local levels.

For more than 50 years, UnidosUS has united communities and different groups seeking common round through collaboration, and that share a desire to make our country stronger. For more information on UnidosUS, visit [www.unidosus.org](http://www.unidosus.org), or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

**For more information about *Escalera*, please contact UnidosUS Education Program Manager Ulysses Urquizo at [uurquizo@unidosus.org](mailto:uurquizo@unidosus.org).**

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