



THE CISNEROS CENTER
FOR NEW AMERICANS

The Inaugural Program:
The *American Dream* Initiative

A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER:

HENRY G. CISNEROS



The full integration of immigrants, particularly the large number of poor immigrants, is both an opportunity and a challenge for our nation. Most are going to be here for the long haul. We can also say with certainty that they will be numerous. Will they be undercompensated, undereducated, and in time resigned to second class status? Or will they be educated, productive, and a source of youthful energy for every institution in American Society? Either way, they will move the needle of national progress in one direction or the other.

While our political leaders focus on a workable legal framework for a successful immigration policy, I believe our nation, through our educational, social, and economic institutions will be called to work smarter and in even greater partnership and create programs that foster the full integration of immigrants into American Society.

And, although countless nonprofit institutions work tirelessly to affect positively the immigrant experience, the desire and commitment must also come from within the immigrant population – it must include people like me who’s family immigrated and became United States citizens generations ago as well as undocumented immigrant families who have come more recently.

The Cisneros Center is being established to develop a “road map” to empowering immigrants as they strive to fully integrate into American Society. We will harness the collective knowledge and expertise of our fellow practitioners and leverage partnerships with key civic, academic, and corporate stakeholders. We will embolden and equip the next generation of motivated young professionals to be our nation’s “boots on the ground” in communities as they work to catalog, articulate and help address the gaps and barriers that keep immigrant communities and families from achieving the American Dream.

The Cisneros Center will house a technology-driven platform to identify and develop best practices in the immigrant integration space with the goal of developing an immigrant integration toolkit. And through a sustained media campaign we will take the lead in shaping and elevating the attitudes and perceptions immigrants have about their capabilities to achieve the American Dream. The Center will establish a dynamic board with grassroots experience to guide its efforts.

Just as the “piece meal” approach to *immigration policy* is not a long-term solution, neither is the “piece-meal” approach to *immigrant integration*. Our efforts must be comprehensive and our resolve unwavering if we are to empower immigrants to achieve the American Dream. Today, I invite you to learn more about the Cisneros Center mission and objectives and I offer my sincere appreciation for your future active participation in this critical work.

THE CISNEROS CENTER MISSION

The Cisneros Center, a 501(C)(3) non partisan, non-profit institution headquartered in San Antonio, Texas, initiates and conducts nationally-based operations and programs that result in measurable social, economic, and educational advancement in the lives of Latinos and immigrants seeking to fully integrate and participate in the promise of the “American Dream.”



The Cisneros Center will carry out this work by focusing on two principle strategies:

- Identifying and promoting immigrant integration best practices
- Instilling a sense of urgency about education

The principal human capital which will carry out these strategies is an American Dream Corps of talented young professionals and established community leaders.

The entire effort will be supported by a public awareness campaign to create a sense of urgency among immigrants, receiving communities, and the American public.

THE AMERICAN DREAM INITIATIVE

THE INAUGURAL PROGRAM OF THE CISNEROS CENTER

The American Dream Initiative will focus on communities that have experienced a significant growth in new immigrant population and where the infrastructure for immigrant integration is not fully developed. We will engage stakeholders to work with new immigrants whose economic and cultural presence merits greater understanding by the receiving community.

1. Improve access for new immigrants to the resources and services they need to pursue the American Dream, including through the path we have developed: *A Road Map to The American Dream*.
2. Instill a sense of urgency about education in new immigrant families by engaging family members in educational goals and breaking down barriers to academic achievement.

The American Dream Initiative employs the talent, energy and optimism of the next generation of leaders to build and lead a movement aimed at driving immigrant integration. This initiative will identify, replicate, and leverage best practices for immigrant integration.

An element of the strategy must be to initiate public affairs campaigns that create awareness among immigrants and generate understanding in the general public. The Cisneros Center will Also provide a national forum and platform for dialogue, information sharing, and best practices cross-pollination that further accelerates the measurable social, economic, and educational achievements in the lives of Latinos and immigrants.

AMERICAN DREAM INITIATIVE

A BASIC FRAMEWORK

Long-term, sustainable
immigrant empowerment

Identify and
promote immigrant
integration
best practices to
create a “Road
Map” to the
American dream

Instill a sense of
urgency about
education

American Dream Corps

THE AMERICAN DREAM INITIATIVE

HOW WE ACHIEVE IMPACT

“Road Map” to the American Dream

- Offer immigrant families a clear path to American society
- Build an immigrant integration toolkit
- Provide a framework for sharing of best practices

Instill a Sense of Urgency about Education

- Launch a large scale media campaign
- Create awareness about our “Road Map”
- Involve parents in their children’s education

American Dream Corps

- Leverage local talent and resources
- Organize and empower host community
- Identify and generate scalable best practices

Long-term, sustainable Immigrant empowerment

A ROAD MAP TO THE AMERICAN DREAM

The Cisneros Center has developed a guide to help new immigrants understand the journey to the American dream. We refer to this guide as “The American Dream Road Map.”



A ROAD MAP TO THE AMERICAN DREAM

Our plan seeks to encourage new immigrants to undertake the following ten point life plan:

1. We will add English to our first language and learn the traditions of America.
2. We will work to become model U.S. citizens the way countless immigrants have done before.
3. We will be a learning family and stress the importance of education, including partnering with our schools' teachers.
4. We will make life-long learning our family's goal and establish college graduation or advanced education as a family tradition.
5. We will constantly strive to improve our skills in order to meet our family's financial needs.
6. We will prepare for our long-term financial responsibilities, including making plans for savings, housing, college funds, health insurance, and retirement.
7. We will learn healthy nutrition and exercise habits and be attentive to our family's health needs.
8. We will seek balance in our family by spending quality time together and nurturing supportive relationships.
9. We will accept civic responsibilities and give back to our community from the blessings bestowed upon us.
10. We will carry our home country in our hearts but commit to our obligations in the United States.

AMERICAN DREAM INITIATIVE **IN** **THE FIELD**

To achieve our goals, The Cisneros Center will establish an *American Dream Corps* of young, and talented individuals dedicated to accelerating the process of immigrant integration into American society. Our program participants will work to bring together the philanthropic, nonprofit, government, faith-based, and private sectors to create a path to full engagement in U.S. society for new immigrants.

This national corps will be composed of two cohorts of leaders - *American Dream Fellows* and *American Dream Leaders* - who will work together to put immigrant families in our host communities on a positive trajectory of integration into American society.

American Dream Fellows and Leaders will go through a rigorous and strategic selection process and be **ready to begin the program by the summer of 2014**. Throughout their experience, American Dream Fellows and Leaders will receive strategic mentorship and development to harness and enhance their leadership abilities. The American Dream Initiative experience will:

- Instill in Fellows and Leaders a sense of urgency about empowering immigrant communities;
- Develop Fellows' and Leaders' mindsets and skills to be transformative leaders; and
- Introduce Fellows and Leaders to a network of influence that enables them to be agents of change.

AMERICAN DREAM FELLOWS PROGRAM

The American Dream Fellows are a select cohort of young leaders, who commit 13 months to serve in one of our host communities. After a four week intensive training program, Fellows will conduct a 11 month long residency in a host community. Fellows will support host community stakeholders in identifying and developing plans to address barriers to immigrant integration.

The American Dream Fellowship program will begin in July and run through August of the following year. Fellows will receive a stipend and benefits.

During their residency, Fellows will:

- ▶ Assist the host community in developing comprehensive immigrant integration plans with a special focus on education.
- ▶ Marshal community assets and help forge an effective ecosystem of services.
- ▶ Help identify financial resources for host community programs.
- ▶ Develop an immigrant integration toolkit of best practices and resources specific to the needs of each community.
- ▶ Evaluate and document successful practices for replication to scale.
- ▶ Assemble insights and experiences to provide support for the ongoing national policy dialogue.

AMERICAN DREAM LEADERS PROGRAM

The American Dream Leaders Program consists of proven leaders recruited from our host community and supported by The Cisneros Center to advance and advocate for the priorities of their community. Leaders will guide and support the Fellows in identifying the most urgent needs in the local immigrant community and developing strategies to address these needs.

The American Dream Leaders program will begin in July and run through August of the following year. American Dream Leaders will receive a stipend for their commitment to The Cisneros Center.

During their tenure Leaders will:

- ▶ Provide local leadership and expertise to efforts aimed at identifying most critical needs
- ▶ Serve as community representatives to the network of community stakeholders
- ▶ Provide leadership for the recruitment of new immigrant families
- ▶ Recruit volunteers to support initiatives
- ▶ Serve as a voice for the American Dream Initiative in the community

HOST COMMUNITIES

The American Dream Initiative will focus its work in communities that have experienced a significant growth in new immigrant population, where the stakeholders define the need, and where the infrastructure for immigrant integration is not yet developed. The American Dream Initiative will work with new immigrants whose economic and cultural presence merits greater understanding by the receiving community.

In order to work with a host community, we will seek support from and partnership with stakeholders in the philanthropic, private, non-governmental organization, community based organization, faith based, and local government sectors as well local residents.



AMERICAN DREAM INITIATIVE

A COMPREHENSIVE AND UNIFIED APPROACH



WHAT WE BRING TO EACH HOST COMMUNITY

We bring a comprehensive, community driven approach designed to build an effective immigrant integration ecosystem and to instill a sense of urgency about education in each of our host communities. This approach will foster a *community of talent*.



EXPECTED IMPACT WITHIN THREE YEARS

- Service providers will have additional resources and exposure to best practices
- Communities will have necessary additional services, improved quality of services, and a greater number of people receiving services
- Stakeholders from all sectors will have collaborated to develop a supportive ecosystem (funding, programs, etc.)
- Immigrant families will understand the Road Map to the American Dream and take initial steps to pursue the elements
- American Dream Leaders Corps alumni will institutionalize services and programs for long term impact
- American Dream Fellowship alumni will provide needed support and gain valuable experience in leadership
- The Cisneros Center will have developed a tool kit based upon study of different integration approaches
- The Initiative will have assembled and documented best practices in order to design future community efforts
- The greater community will have developed a deeper appreciation for the contributions and potential of a global community of talent

EXPECTED IMPACT WITHIN SEVEN YEARS

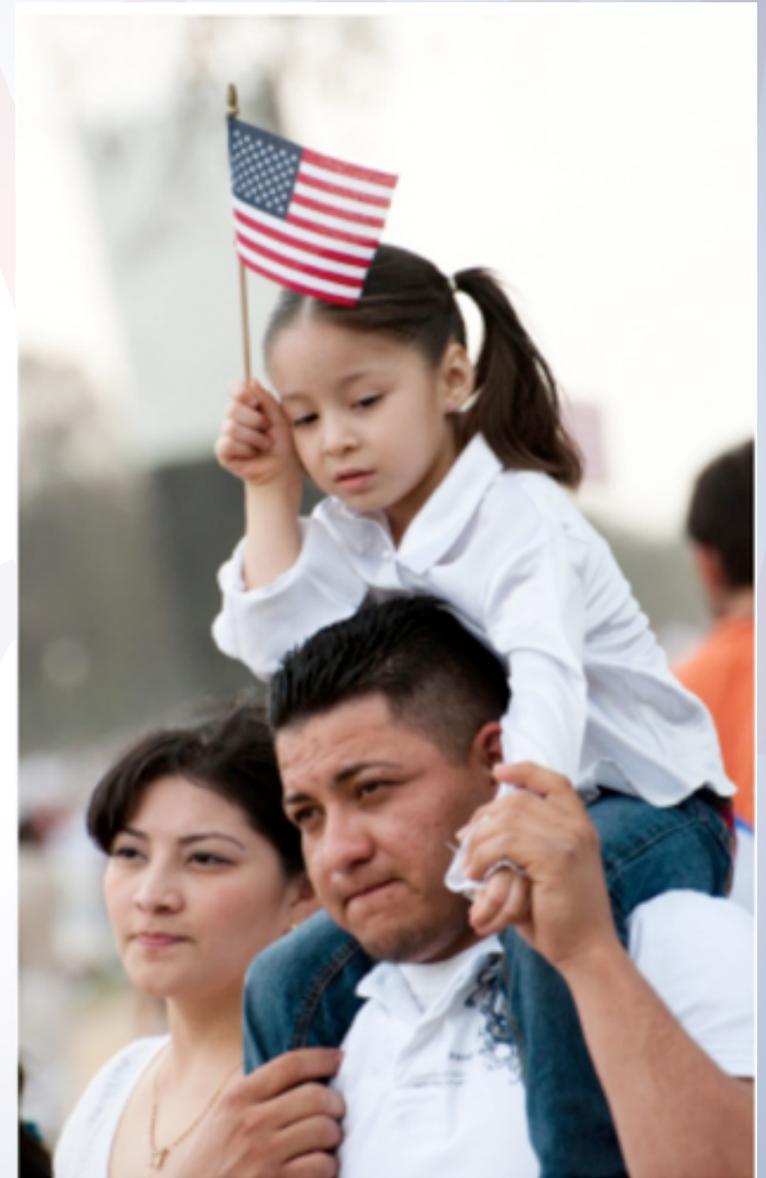
- New immigrants will be widely integrated into the social and economic fabric of the community
- New immigrants will believe that the American dream is achievable and will have taken steps to achieve it
- New immigrant families will understand the value of education as a necessary investment and their academic performance will reflect measurable progress
- Community institutions will demonstrate commitment to immigrant integration
- Public policies will be aligned to support immigration integration
- American Dream Leaders Corps alumni will institutionalize services and programs for long term impact
- American Dream Fellowship alumni will move into senior leadership positions across a range of American institutions
- American Dream Leaders Corps alumni will be increasingly identified for their leadership roles within in their community
- Communities across the country will adopt best practices identified and developed by the American Dream Initiative

LONG TERM IMPACT

Every new immigrant will have the opportunity to make his or her American dream a reality and make a contribution to strengthening our country.

In their journey to achieving the American dream, new immigrants will be:

- Inspired by a love for this country and acquire a sense of ownership and personal responsibility;
- Aided by a network of effective services;
- Embraced by the larger community; and
- Supported by practices and policies at all levels and in all sectors of American society.





CISNEROS CENTER LEADERSHIP



CECILIA ELIZONDO HERRERA
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

A native and resident of San Antonio, Texas, Cecilia Elizondo Herrera joins the Cisneros Center with more than 25 years of decorated foreign affairs service for the United States government as well as an initial eight years of public service for the Alamo Area Council of Governments, a regional planning agency in San Antonio. Her work with the United States government has made her a highly respected and sought after leader as an institution builder, complex projects facilitator, and expert protocol officer. Cecilia's distinguished tenure includes posts as the Assistant Chief of Protocol for Administration and Executive Director of the Office of the Chief of Protocol for the Department of State and the White House. While serving in this capacity Cecilia established the Office of Protocol at the U. S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. She has also served as Consul General in Matamoros, Mexico, and most recently as Management Counselor at the U. S.

Embassy in Caracas, Venezuela. Cecilia holds a Bachelor of Arts in English and Political Science from Our Lady of the Lake University, a Master of Science in National Security Strategy from the National War College, and completed post-graduate work in Public and Institutional Administration at St. Mary's University. She is married to San Antonio attorney Frank Herrera, Jr. They have two sons, Jorge and Javier, both practicing attorneys in the family firm.



NICOLAS PERILLA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AMERICAN DREAM INITIATIVE

Nicolas joins the Cisneros Center with experience and expertise in classroom instruction, school management, and education policy. Early on, Nicolas spent several years working at NCLR as part of the team that planned and executed the organization's annual conference. He served as Teach For America corps member in Mission, TX where he taught physics and AP physics for La Joya ISD and later as a teacher and administrator for IDEA Public Schools. After his time in the classroom, Nicolas joined the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions under Chairman Tom Harkin, as the 2012 – 2013 CHCI Secondary Education Graduate Fellow. During this time, Nicolas played a lead role in the crafting of the Strengthening America's Schools Act, the Senate's version of the No Child Left Behind reauthorization. Nicolas is a native of Arlington, Virginia, and was raised in Bogota, Colombia and Springfield, Virginia. He holds a Master of Arts in

Education Leadership from Columbia University in New York City, New York, and a Bachelor of Science in Physics from the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg Virginia.



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