



School of Continuing Education
Marketing

NEWS RELEASE

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UWM Partners with US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation

MILWAUKEE -- With the 26th annual US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Convention coming to Milwaukee, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee is helping to support the success of the convention within the Hispanic community.

El Centro Empresarial, the Center for Entrepreneurship, a UWM initiative to help local Hispanics start and build businesses is a partner with the US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation. The partnership allows El Centro to provide interpreting services, coaching and mentoring for the USHCC Convention September 14-17.

The USHCC Foundation gives Latino entrepreneurs alternatives for life preparation and life-long learning by developing and implementing initiatives and educational campaigns to awaken and nurture their entrepreneurial spirit.

The largest dimension of the partnership is coaching the USHCC BizFest. BizFest is a three-day national business plan development competition. Coaches work with teams to refine and perfect their business plans before they are presented to the judging panel.

The coaches also attend workshops and seminars and act as mentors for the students during the convention. BizFest participants are Latino high school students from across the country who have won regional competitions and have earned the right to be a part of the national BizFest. The students compete for a financial award and future access to entrepreneurial channels.

Reinaldo Lopez, an El Centro BizFest coach, says that the commitment to empowering the Hispanic community is what got him involved. "I believe we have a moral responsibility to give back to our community. The best way I can give back is through mentoring and coaching."

"We are proud to be a part of the USHCC convention and to be coaching the BizFest competition," says Nelson Soler, director of El Centro Empresarial, and BizFest coach. "The ideas and energy these kids have put into the business plans is incredible. We want to help develop and direct that energy."

Another facet of El Centro's involvement will be with the US Small Business Administration's Business Matchmaking session. The Business Matchmaking session is a networking event designed to bring Hispanic entrepreneurs into contact with counselors, purchasers and consultants with interests in the small business sector.

The September 14 session is in conjunction with the convention and will use El Centro volunteers as intermediaries when needed with limited English speaking clients.

"We will be on hand to assist with any language or reading needs we may encounter. This is a part of El Centro's regular services. We are always here to help in any way possible to build Hispanic opportunities," Said Soler.

El Centro Empresarial will also have a booth on the convention floor. In its second year, at the UWM School of Continuing Education, El Centro offers bilingual education and consultations to entrepreneurs and growth minded business owners. The booth will highlight the success of the program and its community connections. Attendees will get information on El Centro's bilingual training programs, business plan development assistance and business counseling programs.

To learn more about El Centro Empresarial and the involvement with the USHCC or the everyday commitment to the community, contact Nelson Soler at 414-277-3105 or nsoler@uwm.edu.