



**LEAGUE of UNITED LATIN  
AMERICAN CITIZENS  
RICHMOND REGION**

**Project Title:** LULAC Pa'lante Technology Center  
Southside Community Center  
6255 Old Warwick Road  
Richmond, VA 23225

**Office hours:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday  
10:30 AM – 6:00 PM (extended hours by request)

**Submitted by:** Vilma Seymour, President  
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### **BACKGROUND**

The motivation to establish the LULAC Pa'lante Technology Center (PTC) is in direct response to new data released October 2018 by the VA Department of Education showing the on-time graduation rate for Richmond Public Schools students fell to 75.4 percent last year, down from 76.9 percent in 2017 when it posted the state's second-worst rate. The breakdown of the report lists Richmond Public Schools Latino students as having the lowest (38%) graduation rate and highest (60%) dropout of all the districts within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The urgent need to develop the Center is based on the findings uncovered at the conclusion of the Huguenot High School LULAC – Ford Driving Dreams (FDD) 2017-19 Grant cycle on June 15, 2019:

- below average levels of language proficiency and reading comprehension identified as tremendous barriers to passing the VA Department of Education Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. Hours were directed towards helping the students find resources to overcome this challenge;
- an unwritten 'no Spanish' policy followed by teachers is a leading contributor to chronic absenteeism and the dropout rate for Latino students, particularly newcomers to our country placed in inappropriate grade levels with no language skills;
- assessments of the greatest barriers and challenges to learning and personal development were conducted with students in collaboration with bilingual guidance counselors, home visits, and individual conversations.

### **PURPOSE**

The PTC aims to create a safe environment as a resource where students across a broad age range and their parents can confidently gain technology skills in collaboration with the Richmond Public Schools Welcome Center, Office of Community Wealth Building, and Richmond City Parks and Recreation. The environment is designed to encourage an interactive, safe learning space for Latino students and their families with a specific focus on guiding new arrival to this country through the education process:

- exposing Latino students to high-quality, engaging digital tools that integrate language and literacy development with deep content learning
- engaging parents in every stage of the learning process
- working to develop parents' familiarity with technology to increase their confidence in using them alongside their children.



## PROGRAMS

### Learning Lab

The Learning Lab will be open during office hours to supplement or augment the Spanish-speaking students' instructional time in specific academic disciplines or more intensive academic assistance on course-related work—with the goal of tutoring these students keep pace with their peers. Identified areas of persistent difficulties include:

- math
- reading/writing comprehension
- SOL practice
- SAT prep
- computer literacy
- English conversation classes
- STEM related activities

### Éxito Escolar

*Éxito Escolar* is an exciting multimedia college access curriculum focused around a series of four bilingual films. The goal of this program is to prepare Latino students and their families for postsecondary education. The curriculum builds off the collection of films, which follow the experiences of students and their families as they explore life beyond high school. These highly engaging films are created in the style of popular Spanish-language telenovelas.

Topics addressed include:

- Benefits of postsecondary education
- Financial planning for college
- Family and cultural influences
- U.S. higher education structure
- Role of standardized admissions testing
- College application procedures

### Beginning English Conversation

This course focuses on conversation emphasizing pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary. It also provides the knowledge, vocabulary, and linguistic structures necessary to use English immediately for communication, as well as an introduction to the English language and culture. The course will include the necessary oral practice of dialogue, vocabulary and basic grammar to communicate in English at a basic level.

### Beginning Spanish Conversation

This course focuses on conversation emphasizing pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary. It also provides the knowledge, vocabulary, and linguistic structures necessary to use Spanish immediately for communication, as well as an introduction to the Spanish language and culture. The course will



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include the necessary oral practice of dialogue, vocabulary and basic grammar to communicate in Spanish at a basic level.

### **STAKEHOLDERS**

Community partners have joined in our commitment to tear down the sometimes-insurmountable barriers to academic success and cultural challenges our LULAC-Ford Driving Dreams program has uncovered. The champions who have planted the seeds with in-kind support to continue the LULAC-Ford Driving Dreams legacy are:

- **Richmond City Parks and Recreation** – provide space within Southside Community Center situated in a school district with large Hispanic demographic
- **Innovation Education Project - Hacktastic** – oversight of STEM-related activities
- **CodeVA** - robotics intramural league development; computer science SOL prep advisor
- **Richmond City Office of Wealth Building / Mayor's Youth Academy** – four full-time positions earmarked for Latino high school students (unfortunately none of FDD participants have eligible employment status). The four students hired are from academic specialty schools and will serve as SOL, English, and math tutors for FDD students struggling in those areas
- **Richmond Public Schools Welcome Center** - provide staff support for events and assist with workshop facilitation; promote Párate FTC as an academic support resource throughout RPS
- **Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond** - 8 student tutors/mentors enrolled in Justice and Civil Society class

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