



January 20, 2012

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:**

Yvette Nunez, [nunezy@congreso.net](mailto:nunezy@congreso.net)

267-241-9361/mobile

**CONGRESO AWARDED \$1.5 MILLION  
IN 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CHALLENGE GRANT FUNDING**

PHILADELPHIA – The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has awarded Philadelphia non-profit Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Inc. \$1.5 million over three years as a 21st Century Community Learning Challenge Grant awardee. Congreso was one of 119 applicants, and one of only 57 award recipients in Pennsylvania selected to receive this federal funding, established under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Designed to establish and support community-based education centers in areas of high poverty and low academic performance, the 21st Century Community Learning Challenge Grant will help Congreso serve 420 students through existing and expanded programming at Clemente, Fairhill and Sheppard Elementary Schools as well as Edison High School.

“Access to services that support quality education is vital to the sustainability of any community,” said President and CEO Cynthia Figureroa. “As Philadelphia’s Latino community leads the way in growth and number of children per household, we must pay particular attention to the education of this community and their role as tomorrow’s workforce. This award, coupled with Congreso’s existing services, helps to ensure that students and families receive the holistic supports they need to succeed.”

In the announcement, PA Education Secretary Ron Tomalis shared, "Efforts are being made to transform Pennsylvania's educational establishment for the benefit of every student – however change is not occurring fast enough for a generation of students who we are failing. Thankfully, we have organizations and community leaders who willingly continue to support students in their educational endeavors after the school bell rings."

Pan American Academy Charter School, founded by Congreso in 2008, also received an award.

“Together with Pan American Academy Charter School and other support services providers, we anticipate a marked improvement in the lives of those students we serve through this grant,” summarized Figueroa.

###

*Founded in 1977, Congreso's vision is to transform the lives of Latinos in Eastern North Philadelphia, by moving them up the economic ladder and, ultimately, out of poverty. The agency accomplishes this by assisting clients in achieving education credentials and employment, while providing support to remove social and health barriers and emphasizing cultural identity. Congreso served more than 15,000 individuals in FY11 through its education, employment, health and safety programs.*