The Early Escalera Program seeks to improve educational and career outcomes for Latinos by increasing high school graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment and completion rates, and advancement into careers with opportunities for upward mobility. Early Escalera focuses on ninth and tenth grade students to begin an early pipeline of leadership development, self-awareness, and college and career readiness. The program provides students with opportunities, resources, and support they may not otherwise receive by implementing its personal development and college and career readiness curriculum with a national network of community-based organizations and charter schools.

The Early Escalera curriculum is culturally and linguistically responsive and addresses key strands of the Common Core State Standards. The structured, organized lessons support high expectations across Affiliate sites and enable instructors to spend their valuable time customizing delivery to differentiate for diverse learners. This program model also includes the following components:

• **Program sessions** provide students the opportunity to explore the topics of self-awareness, leadership, self-advocacy, and college and career readiness in structured and supported ways.

• **Experiential learning activities** complement classroom learning with a focus on personal development and college and career readiness. These types of activities include, but are not limited to, field trips to area colleges, career shadowing days, summits, panels, and conferences.

• **Case management** is the most tailored aspect of the curriculum. Each student receives one-on-one attention to address issues students may be facing in the program or other areas of their lives.

The Early Escalera Program launched its first cohort in 2015 and hopes establish an early pipeline of success and college and career readiness for Latino youth beginning in the ninth grade. The Escalera Program has had proven success that Early Escalera expects to expand and grow:

• Since 2008, the Escalera program has expanded from six Affiliate sites to 31 community-based organizations and Affiliate charter schools across 17 states.

• By 2015, NCLR and its Affiliates would have served more than 2,000 Latino youth through the Escalera Program.

• Since 2001, **88%** of students who have enrolled in the Escalera Program have completed the program and graduated from high school. Furthermore, **90%** of Escalera Program graduates have chosen a path to upward economic mobility by immediately enrolling in postsecondary education.

**For more information, please contact**
Lucerito Ortiz, Escalera Program Manager, lortiz@nclr.org.