

Initially implemented in 2001, the **Escalera Program, Taking Steps to Success** seeks to improve educational and career outcomes for Latinos that will lead to economic stability by increasing the Latino high school graduation rate, postsecondary enrollment and completion rates, and advancement into careers with opportunities for upward mobility. The program was designed to offer Hispanic students the resources and support they were not receiving elsewhere and continues to accomplish this by implementing its college and career readiness curriculum with a national network of community-based organizations (CBO) and charter schools.

The 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. A new focus on technology and soft skills addresses the needs of a 21st-century workforce. And the Escalera Learning Community digital platform enables real-time collaboration and problem-solving with Affiliates across the country. This new program model also includes:

- **Experiential learning activities** complement classroom learning with a college and career focus. 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.
- **Internships** enable students to explore their interests and practice basic job skills, such as clerical, customer service, professional etiquette, and communication. Students complete a minimum of 80 hours (paid or unpaid) and gain an experience to include on their resumes and hopefully make valuable connections with local professionals.

The success of the Escalera: Steps to Success Program propelled the growth of this college and career-readiness initiative to include Early Escalera and Escalera STEM. Since 2008, the Escalera Program has expanded from six Affiliate sites to 31 CBOs 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.

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