



# Strengthening Latino Communities

## Workforce Development Programs

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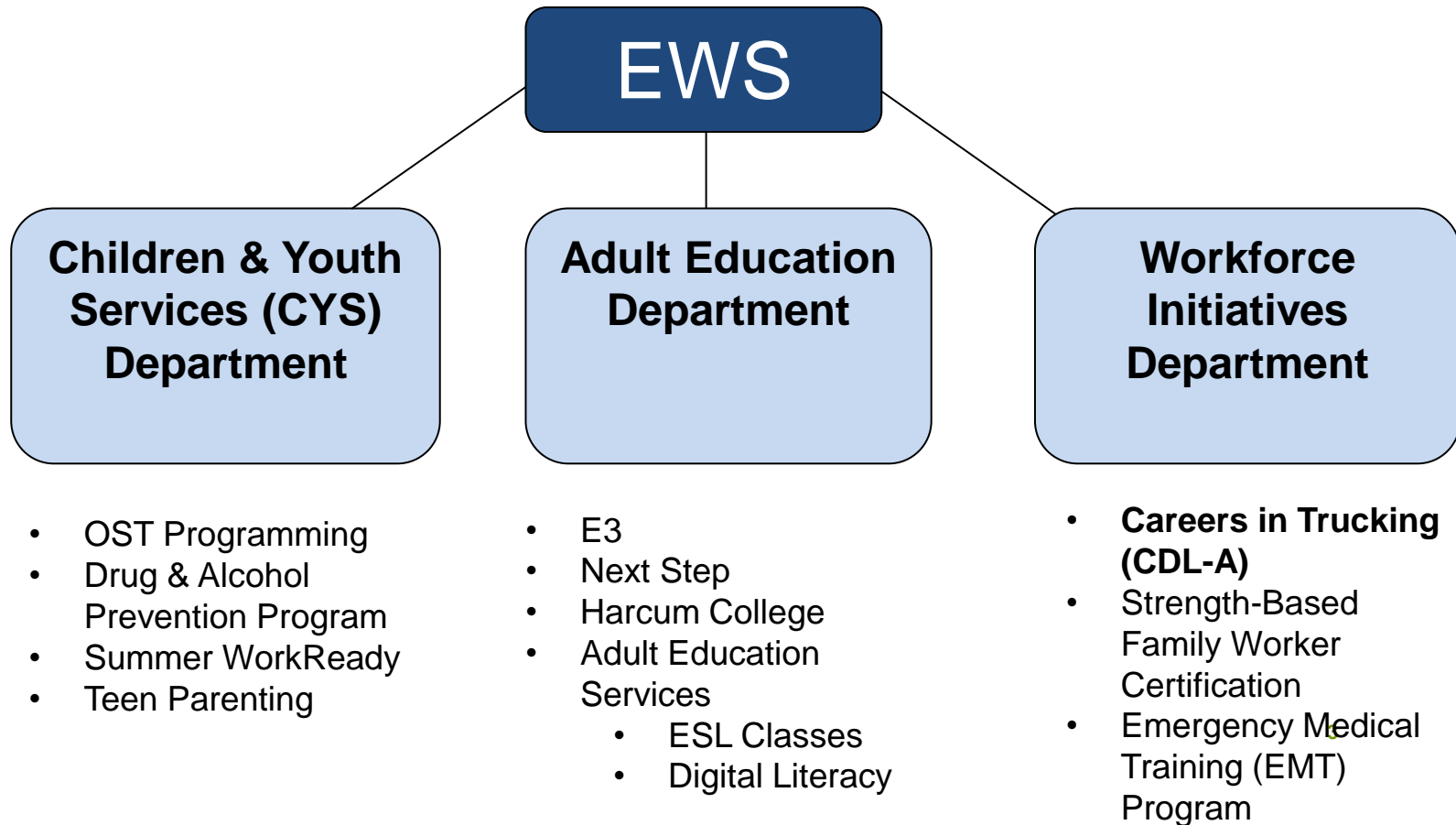


## Congreso's Story

Founded in 1977, Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Inc. is a nonprofit with a mission to enable individuals and families in predominantly Latino neighborhoods to achieve economic self-sufficiency and well being.

Headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Congreso is a leading provider of high-quality programs in the areas of education, workforce development, housing, health, and parenting with an expert focus on the Latino community. Congreso's ensures a client-centered, data-driven approach to service delivery to influence its impact and outcomes on the community.

# Overview of the Education & Workforce Services (EWS) Division



# EWS Financial and Personnel Overview

- Financial Overview:
  - There are approximately 36 contracts to manage with a total of over \$7.2M budgeted for the entire division for FY23.
- Personnel Overview:
  - 57 FT Staff
  - 30 PT Staff

# **Commercial Driver's License Class A (CDL-A)**

Program Services, Selection Process,  
Instructional Methods, Best Practices,  
Human-Centered Design,  
Innovations and Outcomes

## Careers in Trucking Program - CDL-A

Congreso's CDL-A "Careers in Trucking" Program provides the education and resources for individuals to secure the Class-A driver's license and become part of the Transportation & Logistics Industry.

We partner with All-State Career School, AAA School of Trucking and Smith & Solomon to provide students with 8-10 weeks of mandatory instruction that includes:

- 2 weeks of mandatory course work to secure the Class-A driver's permit
- 1-2 weeks of Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT)
- 5-6 weeks of hands-on training required for CDL-A licensing

# Careers in Tracking Program - CDL-A (continued)

## Program Services

- Congreso provides cost of School tuition and all training related expenses (such as the DOT physical, drug screening, uniforms and endorsements).
- Intensive case management support is offered to all students to ensure success.

## Eligibility Requirements

- Preferred applicants are over 21 years old
- Possess a clean driving record for at least one full year
- Must be registered with the PA CareerLink System
- Ability to communicate in English
- Must be able to attend training for 8-10 weeks Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. through 5 p.m.
- Ability to pass a Department of Transportation (DOT) physical and submit to immediate drug testing

## Participant Selection Process

- Prospective students attend information sessions at Congreso to learn more about the training, Congreso's educational partners, and step-by-step instructions on enrolling in the program.
- Interested students are invited to then meet with the program's selection panel, comprised of Congreso's program staff, an employer partner, program alumni, and the CDL-A training providers.
  - The CDL-A panel interviews each candidate to determine their motivation, work ethic, and determination to succeed in this intensive program.
  - Once all candidates have been interviewed, the panel selects a roster for the upcoming cohorts.
  - Candidates who are not selected at any stage of selection and enrollment are given targeted feedback and encouraged to try again in a subsequent cohort.



## Participant Selection Process (continued)

- Interviews enable Congreso to reduce negative enrollment outcomes by identifying highly engaged CDL-A candidates.
  - Selected candidates are given detailed instructions on moving forward in the program.
  - Congreso schedules the candidate with instructions on obtaining a DOT physical and drug screen.

## Instructional Methods

- The CDL-A program curriculum consists on-hands, “behind-the-wheel” and classroom instruction that trains participants to successfully operate tractor trailers.
- During behind-the-wheel instruction, students have control of a commercial motor vehicle. Behind-the-wheel training does not include time when the student observes others operating a vehicle or driving simulations.
- Classroom instruction includes lectures, audio-visual presentations, computer-based instruction, driving simulations, or similar.
- The combination of behind-the-wheel training and classroom instruction ensures students develop the conceptual and practical skills needed to pass the PennDOT exam and obtain their Class A license.

## Primary Client Model™ (PCM)

- Congreso uses our homegrown Primary Client Model™ (PCM), a client-centered, data-informed, and culturally appreciative service delivery approach to drive effective learner engagement and information retention throughout every phase of the program.
- PCM emphasizes cultural appreciation through bilingual, Spanish-speaking staff who increase program engagement and information retention among Latino and other underrepresented students.
- Congreso's unique case management approach personalizes support for students to help them envision a longer-term goal trajectory and develop plans to meet their goals.

# Congreso Best Practices for Successful Workforce Development Programs

- Small cohorts (maximum of eight students)
  - The small cohort size ensures students receive individualized instruction that maximizes information retention and preparation for careers in the Transportation & Logistics Industry.
- Case Management
  - Congreso's workforce staff support learners in crafting ambitious goals and increasing confidence. Our staff meet with students and visit the training sites each week during the program.
- Robust recruitment, selection, and enrollment practices
  - When there is a lack of engagement or poor performance and information retention, Congreso works with the student to resolve underlying barriers, such as housing instability or a lack of childcare.

# Congreso Best Practices for Successful Workforce Development Programs (continued)

- Our PCM's client-centered lens brings a culture of inclusion to all Congreso's programs and services.
- Strong relationship with employers' partners
  - Congreso's CDL-A program has built relationships with employers who understand the needs and experiences of our customers. Our employer partners, such as Navarro Trucking, JM Transportation, and Western Express, present successful clients with employment opportunities with family-sustaining salaries.

# CDL-A Training Model

## Human-Centered Design (HCD) at Congreso

- HCD is a set of principles used throughout the private sector to thoughtfully design products and services from the perspective of the end-user to ensure optimal user-friendliness and value.
- Congreso uses human-centered design (HCD) to identify clients' needs and design programmatic approaches that are customized for individuals and populations.
- Congreso's HCD "design labs" provide an intentional space for staff to think creatively and design client- and staff-informed programs to improve long-term client outcomes.
- As a result, these tools have helped Congreso increase engagement, retention, and successful program completion, proving that our services meet clients' diverse needs.

# CDL-A Workforce Development and Housing Initiative

- In FY 2021, Congreso received a grant from Bezos Foundation to support clients that are facing eviction and homelessness.
- Our CDL-A students experience a wide range of barriers that impact their learning and success. In FY 22 Congreso helped 18 CDL clients with support that prevented eviction, homelessness, and termination of utilities.
  - A holistic approach keep students on track for graduation, employment, and family-sustaining careers.
- In one instance, a CDL-A program student, faced eviction from his apartment that would have caused him to become homeless.
  - Congreso connected him with our housing team who prevented him from being evicted and becoming homeless. He graduated from the CDL-A program and now earns over \$85,000 as a tractor-trailer driver for Sysco.

## Outcomes for FY22

**Enrollments: 93**

**Terminations: 8**

**Credentials: 71/93 or 76% of enrolled students**

- 13 additional students are expected to graduate 9/30/22.

**Employment: 61/71 or 86% of eligible students**

- This number is projected to increase to at least 74/84 or 88% of credentialed students by 10/31/22.



# Thank You!