

Papitto Opportunity Connection

September 2022

Setting The Bar

Women. Immigrants. First generation college students. Yelitza Montesino (below, left) and Dania Polanco (below, right), both summa cum laude graduates of Providence College, are the recipients of 2022 Papitto Opportunity Connection Law School Scholarships. The scholarships are offered annually to persons of color from Rhode Island who have been accepted into an accredited law school. These scholarships, administered by the Rhode Island Bar Foundation, provide \$25,000 annually and are renewable for an additional two years.

Both Yelitza and Dania are about to embark on their first year of law school. Yelitza is entering Boston University, while Dania is attending the City University of New York.

[Learn more here.](#)



Building Bankable Business

Latinos are opening businesses faster than any other population in the United States, yet they are facing bigger hurdles than most. Perhaps the biggest obstacle is the ability to secure financing from a bank.

According to a Latino Entrepreneurship report, Latino-owned businesses are significantly less likely to have loans approved by a financial institution than white-owned businesses. More than 60 percent of Black and Latinos are rejected by banks for loans.

The [Rhode Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce](#) (RIHCC) is working with area banks to break barriers and create change. The RIHCC has partnered with [Navigant Credit Union](#) and the Papitto Opportunity Connection (POC) and launched Building Bankable Business, a microloan program for Latino entrepreneurs and small business owners.

The main goal is to help Rhode Island Latino small business owners and entrepreneurs increase access to capital, create relationships and history with financial institutions, and generate an acceptable and credible credit score.

[Learn more here.](#)



Hispanic Heritage Month

September 15 kicks off Hispanic Heritage Month, a time to celebrate and recognize the important achievements, contributions, and influence of Hispanic Americans to the history, culture, and achievements for the United States.

This year's theme is Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation, is meant to showcase the diversity of this population.

Latin history is rich, diverse, and deep, with immigrants, refugees and Spanish-speaking people living in the United States. From establishing our country's first permanent settlement in Florida in 1565, to Sonia Sotomayor being sworn in as our country's first Latina Supreme Court Justice in 2009, Latinos have been part of our country's fabric for generations. Latinos have contributed tremendously to the collective American experience.

Papitto Opportunity Connection is proud to celebrate and support many local organizations that provide crucial services to Latino communities across Rhode Island, among them, [Progreso Latino](#), [FLY Initiative](#), [Latino Dollars for Scholars](#), [Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island](#), [Rhode Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce](#), [Elisha Project](#), [Community Libraries of Providence](#), and many others.



Tomaquag Museum Hosts Annual Celebration

Papitto Opportunity Connection is honored to be recognized by Tomaquag Museum with the 2022 Kauknot Philanthropic Award. POC was presented the award during the 2022 Annual Honoring and Cultural Celebration at the University of Rhode Island.

POC is proud to support the Tomaquag Museum and the Indigenous Empowerment Center which strives to eradicate poverty in the Indigenous community across Rhode Island. IEC creates a bridge from the Native community to the outlying communities in Rhode Island, leveraging relationships with local businesses and organizations to affect change in Indigenous communities through the creation of educational opportunities, job creation and job training, small business development and advocacy.

Participants are trained by Indigenous educators, empowering them to pass on cultural knowledge while building important skills for the workplace. By providing training and opportunities to learn technological skills, audio-visual, office assistance, presentation, public speaking, business management, marketing and more, Native individuals will become competitors in the job market.

The overall goal is to bring the Indigenous people out of poverty while empowering them with their culture.



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