



For Immediate Release

Thursday, June 19, 2025

Illinois Chamber President Lou Sandoval to Receive Cuauhtémoc Leadership Award from the National Latino Education Institute

Springfield, IL – The Illinois Chamber of Commerce announced that President and CEO Lou Sandoval, will be honored with the prestigious Cuauhtémoc (KWA-Tay-MOWK) Leadership Award by the National Latino Education Institute (NLEI) at its annual Fund It Forward Fundraiser on June 24, 2025. The event will take place at the historic University Club of Chicago.

The Cuauhtémoc Leadership Award is the highest honor bestowed by NLEI, recognizing individuals whose leadership exemplifies vision, integrity, and a strong commitment to promoting economic opportunity while empowering the Latino community. Notable past recipients include Gery Chico, Partner at Chico & Nunes P.C.; Martin Cabrera, Founder and CEO of Cabrera Capital Markets, LLC; Guy A. Medaglia, former CEO of St. Anthony Hospital; and the Honorable JB Pritzker, Governor of the State of Illinois.

"As the first Hispanic President and CEO of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, Lou has quickly established himself as a powerful advocate for inclusive economic growth and opportunity," said Elba Aranda Suh, Executive Director of NLEI. "His leadership across sectors—whether in finance, small business, or civic engagement—sets a profound example for emerging Latino leaders across the nation."

In addition to leading the state's largest business advocacy organization, which represents over 3,000 employers, Sandoval has consistently broken barriers throughout his career. He was the first Hispanic Business Leader appointed to the board of Wintrust Bank N.A. and the first Hispanic Commodore of the historic Chicago Yacht Club, establishing himself as a trailblazer in the yacht and marine industries as a successful entrepreneur. His leadership has opened doors and increased representation in industries where Latinos have often been underrepresented.

"It is an incredible honor to receive the Cuauhtémoc Leadership Award from NLEI," said Lou Sandoval. "This recognition is not only a personal milestone but also a reflection of the broader movement to ensure that leadership at all levels reflects the rich diversity of our communities. NLEI's work is critical—empowering people with the tools and training to build lives of dignity, purpose, and economic freedom. I'm proud to stand with them."

Sandoval's dedication to service involves active participation on various nonprofit and civic boards, supporting organizations that emphasize equity, innovation, and community investment. Through his published writing, public speaking, and mentorship, he continues to motivate others to lead with purpose and create a lasting impact.

The Cuauhtémoc Leadership Award will be presented during NLEI's Annual Leadership Luncheon, a cornerstone event that celebrates leaders who make a difference and raise

the bar for future generations.

For more information, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/NLEI-Fund-it-forward>

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