

Hispanic Impact

Highlighting Latinos in Ohio

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Interview with Commissioner Dan Molina

Building the Future of Latino Engagement in Southwest Ohio

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Dan Molina is a Gubernatorial-appointed Commissioner for the Latino Affairs Commission in the State of Ohio. His parents, originally from Cuba, have been involved with the Cincinnati community for almost three decades. Commissioner Molina is a dynamic entrepreneur, community leader, mentor, and visionary. He resides in Cincinnati with his wife and three children. We met to reflect about his tenure with our Commission and this is what he shared with us.



“As a group, we don’t recognize limitations and we don’t believe that anything is impossible, therefore, the sky is the limit.”

- Dan Molina

Can you share with us a little history about your professional background?

I currently serve as President & CEO of CenterGrid, which is a managed cloud provider headquartered in Hamilton, Ohio. Before that, I had a ~20-year career at Accenture where I had a variety of roles ranging from technology to business strategy that I would describe as 7 or 8 careers all under one roof. This has helped me see the world through the eyes of others. Prior to that, I also spent time at the Kettering Foundation, a non-profit in Dayton, OH where I focused on research related to finance and leadership.

We consider you an up-and-coming leader in the Cincinnati community. What can you share with us about people who have inspired you as role models?

I have been blessed to have many role models that invested their time and talent in teaching me. Those role models helped reveal to me that regardless of all that I may have learned, I still had so much more to learn. My primary role models have come from my family. I look up to my grandmother, who helped get my Dad and his brothers get out of Cuba. I also consider my parents, my siblings, and my entire family as role models. I draw a lot of my examples from my family and other good friends I've been fortunate enough to walk the road of life with.

With so many competing opportunities and priorities, how do you stay focused and what inspires you?

Everyone is busy. What's helped me stay focused is that I approach opportunities with a sense of curiosity about what the possibilities might be. That drives me, that fuels me. I use that same approach with everything, whether it is with OCHLA, CenterGrid, or at home. That lens on life really gets me out of bed in the morning.

You have been serving in the Commission for the last four years. How did you become involved with OCHLA?

There was a former OCHLA Commissioner who was unable to complete his term due to illness, leaving a seat that needed to be filled. I was fortunate enough to be recommended for that role by Tillie Hidalgo Lima, the CEO of Best Upon Request. Based on Tillie's recommendation, the Governor's Office reached out, I submitted the information that they requested, and the rest is history.

What was your first impression of OCHLA?

I attended my first meeting in December, and not long after that the retreat took place. In that first meeting, the Commission needed to make a decision regarding a future strategy. In listening as the conversation took place, it occurred to me that we had an excellent opportunity. We had the opportunity to directly connect with the people of the state, and in doing so fulfill our charter to represent, recognize and interact with the Latino citizens in Ohio. From this experience I developed the impression that sky was the limit for what OCHLA could accomplish.

Our audience often wonders what it is like to serve in a position where you are appointed by the Governor of the State of Ohio. Describe for our readers what it is like to be a part of OCHLA and to work with the other commissioners.

It is quite an honor and privilege to be an appointee of the Governor and to work with a team that is the caliber of the OCHLA staff and Commissioners. The road we have traveled over the last several years really demonstrates the proverb of 'Iron Sharpening Iron.' As a group, we don't recognize limitations and we don't believe that anything is impossible and therefore, the sky is the limit.



2018 Ohio legislative Visit Day



2014 Executive Perspective

What has surprised you most about serving at the Latino Affairs Commission?

Not a lot surprised me, once I observed that this was a team that never gave up and always challenged what was possible, I never really thought there was anything we couldn't do. We are a small commission that has operated with a relatively small budget, yet we've delivered significant accomplishments. That's a point of great pride for me. I believe that some of our strategies are not only unique to Ohio, but over time will become a model for the country.

Tell me about a project or accomplishment that you consider to be the most significant in your career. Or, what are you most proud of while working with OCHLA?

I am very proud of the OCHLA strategies and vision. The sense of accountability, community, and engagement is critical in all we do. For example, we recently worked to secure partners for our 2018 Hispanic Legislative Visit Day (HLVD). Our intent was not to simply find a partner only interested in making a one time contribution. Instead, we sought out a strategic partner to team up with for the future. We were fortunate enough to partner with the Kroger Company for HLVD."

What do you wish other people knew about OCHLA?

I wish other people could see OCHLA through my eyes. OCHLA engages different sectors that otherwise may not have the opportunity to participate. From engaging legislators and Latino leaders, to empowering Latinos and mentoring them to find their voice, or increasing training and leadership opportunities, the commission exists to create opportunity for Hispanic Ohioans. Our board and team work diligently to make change happen. For example, we have developed the Cincinnati Latino Leaders Collaborative (CLLC). This is a regional collaborative in Cincinnati that brings together legislators from local, state, and federal government together with Latino leaders to work on policy issues impacting Latinos in the region.



Cincinnati Latino Leaders Collaborative (CLLC).

What are some of your upcoming projects, Commissioner Molina? Is there a special effort you would like to mention?

We are trying to put together a Technology Collaborative for the State of Ohio, and we are leveraging Latino Leaders in Ohio to do just that. The Collaborative is based on an observation that technology is coming in from the east and west coasts of the United States to the Midwest for reasons such as cost, environment, or safety. Ohio is well-positioned to capitalize on this trend. In that vein, we are trying to bring together leaders from big and small business, colleges and universities, and regional leadership institutions to advise the Governor and JobsOhio.

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- Dan Molina on serving at the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission