

Varsovia Fernandez
President & CEO
Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce



Ms. Fernandez joined the Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (GPHCC) in March 2006. During her tenure, Ms. Fernandez has helped the GPHCC achieve record levels of membership, revenues and member-driven activities through the implementation of new strategies and programs. She contributed to the successful delivery of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's 27th annual convention, which brought over 4,000 people to the Philadelphia region with an overall economic impact of \$4.5 million in hospitality and tourism.

Ms. Fernandez launched the GPHCC's Professional Mentoring Network and Scholarship Fund, a workforce development and diversity initiative to help Hispanic professionals connect with executives and with Hispanic youth in efforts to help increase Latino participation in corporate management, Latino high school graduation rates and corporate diversity. Ms. Fernandez has made a priority of minority business education in the Greater Philadelphia business community and has worked to increase minority business contracts and certifications among Hispanic businesses in the region. Through a partnership with an established micro lender, she instituted a character-based micro lending fund for small businesses helping secure SBA and corporate funding to support it. Ms. Fernandez has been a proponent of Latin American trade and has co-hosted three trade missions to Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Panama and Peru, in partnership with the World Trade Center of Greater Philadelphia. Most importantly, under Ms. Fernandez's leadership the GPHCC has created a voice for Hispanic business in the region by developing a programmatic strategy that helps build on the small business, professional and corporate Hispanic markets. Under her leadership, the GPHCC received the 2011 U. S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Medium Chamber of the Year.

Prior to the GPHCC, Ms. Fernandez worked with Congreso de Latinos Unidos as Vice President of External Affairs from 2003 to 2006. While at Congreso, she succeeded in maximizing government and corporate relations as an advocate for the Latino community. Ms. Fernandez established strong relationships with legislators and their staff across government agencies, and worked with national and state organizations to introduce Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), domestic violence, and immigration legislation to Capitol Hill, and domestic violence and utility protection legislation within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. She was also instrumental in helping to pass the minimum wage increase legislation in Pennsylvania. A co-founder of the first bilingual job seeking center in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, she supported Congreso's annual budget. Today, Ms. Fernandez continues to maximize these relationships by targeting legislative issues that affect businesses, minority contracting and economic development, and founded Latino Business on the Hill in support of Latino businesses across Pennsylvania.

A strategic thinker, Ms. Fernandez is an executive with over fifteen years of senior management expertise across industries including not-for-profit, information technology, venture capital, commercial lending and eCommerce. She sits on numerous boards including the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission. Fully bilingual in English and Spanish, she possesses excellent networking and communication skills and functional experience specific to these industries including management of human resources, accounting, finance, sales, marketing, and relationship management.