



**Texas Credit Union League™**



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## **Texas Credit Unions Aren't Alone in Outreach Efforts**

*Texas Credit Union League, Coopera Consulting Collaborate to Help Bridge Gap between Texas' Hispanics and Credit Unions*

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Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2009 – (Dallas, TX) – Collaboration between the Texas Credit Union League (League) and Iowa-based Coopera Consulting means Texas credit unions' aren't alone in their Hispanic outreach efforts. The two organizations will work together to ensure Texas credit unions have the tools, resources and know how to bring Texas' emerging Hispanic population into financial mainstream.

“Hispanics represent a disproportional amount of the unbanked and underserved segment of the population. Without the benefits of a credit union relationship, these consumers are forced into a fringe economy that preys upon the working class,” notes League president and CEO Dick Ensweiler. “The credit union movement is committed to ensuring all consumers, whether affluent or impoverished, have access to affordable financial services.”

Several years ago, the League launched an initiative, Juntos Avanzamos – or “Together we Advance.” Geared toward the Spanish-speaking population within Texas' unbanked and underserved market, this program seeks to empower Texas credit unions to more effectively address the unique needs of this market. In order to become a “capacity to serve” credit union, these financial cooperatives must first complete an extensive application that asks among other things what products/services they offer that are tailored to this specific market; what operational considerations they've undertaken to ensure they have the infrastructure to support service to this population, and what strategies they will deploy in order to be successful in serving this demographic group.

Upon earning their designation, Juntos Avanzamos credit unions receive marketing collateral, as well as access to grant dollars through the Richard L. Ensweiler Community Investment Fund. Credit unions can use these funds for programs such as financial education, home buying seminars, participation in Hispanic community events, etc.



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“In every community across our country, along urban thoroughfares and strip malls, you will find check cashers, payday lenders, title loan companies and other quick-cash providers embedding themselves in the very fabric of our society,” continues Enswailer. “There has got to be a better alternative for these families whose wealth is being stripped away by outrageous fees. We believe credit unions are the solution.”

Enswailer says the League is collaborating with Coopera Consulting to strengthen its Hispanic outreach program because this credit union-owned organization has developed a comprehensive tool that compliments the League’s Juntos Avanzamos program. Enswailer says he is confident that this collaboration will elevate the League’s Hispanic outreach initiative, and most importantly, help expand credit union service to a segment of the population that needs it most. Further, it positions the Texas program to expand nation-wide.

“Building the trust of the Hispanic market is a long-term and rewarding proposition,” says Warren Morrow, CEO of Coopera Consulting. “Without a road map, credit unions often embark on this journey alone and without strategic vision. They may end up frustrated as a result or worse, they may end up retreating from the initiative all together.”

To prevent well-intended but false starts, Coopera created the Hispanic Opportunity Navigator (HON). The HON is a comprehensive assessment of the opportunities and challenges in Hispanic outreach that are unique to a credit union. After completing this assessment, a credit union will have the prioritized steps necessary to become the financial institution of choice serving Hispanics within its field of membership. The HON assessment and the Juntos Avanzamos program are a natural fit to strengthen the Hispanic outreach efforts of Texas credit unions.

Coopera Consulting is owned by the Iowa Credit Union League and is a strategic partner of the Credit Union National Association (CUNA). With CUNA’s commitment to help credit unions serve Hispanics, Coopera is able to offer Texas credit unions not only assessment tools, but also educational training solutions, consulting services, translation services and Hispanic consumer products to better serve the largely underserved Hispanic market.

“By forming this statewide partnership, the League is taking a momentous step to secure the growth of Texas credit unions for the future,” says Morrow. “Credit unions and Hispanics are ideal for one another. Credit unions are looking for opportunities to serve responsible, loyal, and young populations and Hispanics are vastly underserved, young, and responsible.”

With this new collaboration, every Texas credit union interested in becoming a Juntos Avanzamos credit union must first go through the HON assessment. This is a fee-based program and the negotiated cost for Texas credit unions will be shared between the applying credit union and the League – through the Richard L.



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Ensweler Community Investment Fund. The fund was established in honor of Ensweler for his deep commitment and passion to Hispanic outreach.

There are currently 11 Juntos Avanzamos credit unions in Texas. Two other Texas credit unions have submitted their applications and are going through the HON assessment. Those credit unions are Beacon Federal Credit Union (FCU) in La Porte and EECU in Fort Worth.

Jack McAddo, president and CEO of Beacon FCU says, “Gaining the Juntos Avanzamos designation is a reflection of our commitment to recognize and respond to our members and community needs. At Beacon, an important piece of our vision and commitment is to offer products and services that support and serve the needs of the Hispanic community. We are excited about the Juntos Avanzamos designation because it will help bring awareness to the Hispanic community that they can and will receive friendly, affordable and home-town financial services from an institution that puts people before profit.”

McAddo says the credit union is excited to participate in the assessment process because it will help validate efforts they’ve already undertaken to meet this needs of the Hispanic community, and will also offer them additional insight and strategies for better serving this demographic group within their area.

The 11 Juntos Avanzamos credit unions are: Amarillo Community FCU; DATCU (Denton); First Central CU (Waco); FirstLight FCU (El Paso); Neighborhood CU (Dallas); Plus4 CU (Houston); generations federal credit union (San Antonio); Shell FCU (Deer Park); Space City CU (Houston); Unity One FCU (Fort Worth); and Velocity CU (Austin).

***About Texas Credit Union League™***

*The Texas Credit Union League is the official trade association for credit unions within the State of Texas. The League represents, on a state and federal level, over 500 credit unions state-wide, which are owned by 7.2 million members (about one-third of the state’s population). Organized in 1934, the League protects credit unions and promotes their growth, strength and unity. It accomplishes the mission through advocacy services, regulatory and compliance advice, training and event activities, marketing and public relations actions, and by delivering innovative, high value and profitable business solutions to the members. For more information, visit [www.tcul.coop](http://www.tcul.coop) and [www.creditunionmember.org](http://www.creditunionmember.org); write to us at 4455 LBJ Freeway, Suite 1100, Dallas, Texas 75244, or call us at 469-385-6400.*

*Texas credit unions - strong, safe, and secure for 75 years.*

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