



## Seattle Metropolitan Credit Union Serves and Empowers Latino Consumers with Juntos Avanzamos Program

**SEATTLE – February 14, 2017** – [Seattle Metropolitan Credit Union](#) (SMCU) has been designated a Juntos Avanzamos or “Together We Advance” financial institution by the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions (the Federation).

SMCU is the first credit union in Seattle and the second credit union in the state of Washington to be accepted into the program that recognizes its efforts to serve the Latino community.

The credit union will officially accept the designation with a flag raising ceremony on Tuesday, February 14, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the grand opening of its new Beacon Hill branch. It is located in the new Roberto Maestas Plaza at El Centro de la Raza (1604 S. Roberto Maestas Festival Street, Seattle, WA 98144). Guests will include Seattle Deputy Mayor, Hyeok Kim; El Centro de la Raza’s Executive Director, Estela Ortega; CDCU’s SVP of Membership and Network Engagement, Pablo DeFilippi; and Northwest Credit Union Association (NWCUA) President and CEO, Troy Stang.

“We congratulate Seattle Metro for becoming a Juntos Avanzamos (Together we Advance) credit union, joining a fast growing network committed to financial inclusion and to providing asset building opportunities for Latinos and immigrants. We salute Richard Romero and his team for their leadership on brining responsible and sustainable financial services to the Hispanic community in Seattle,” said Pablo DeFilippi, Federation SVP Membership and Network Engagement.

“On behalf of the entire Northwest Credit Union Movement: thank you to SMCU for your tireless efforts to help so many advance, together,” added NWCUA President and CEO Troy Stang. “Your work exemplifies the member-driven, not-for-profit cooperative structure, as well as the Juntos Avanzamos mission.”

“As SMCU has grown with the City of Seattle, we have focused on serving the communities that need more affordable financial services, plus options like bilingual services and more,” said Richard Romero, CEO of Seattle Metropolitan Credit Union. “This designation is an important recognition of our initiatives and commitment to provide outstanding service to Latinos.”

According to the Federation, immigrants are a large and vibrant part of the US economy, yet they remain largely unbanked and vulnerable to predatory financial service providers.

The Juntos Avanzamos program was developed by Cornerstone Credit Union League in Texas and is expanding nationally by the Federation to meet this demand. Member credit unions who receive this designation are recognized for serving and education the Latino community on their journey to financial independence.

As a member of the “Together We Advance” family of credit unions, SMCU has demonstrated that, at a minimum, it:

- Has a formal strategic plan for improving service to Latinos
- Offers bilingual services and information
- Collaborates with organizations that support the Latino community
- Offers affordable products and services that meet the needs of Latinos, and

- Offers financial information tailored to the Latino community

Some examples of SMCU's initiatives in the Latino community include:

- In 2005, SMCU opened its Rainier Avenue branch in the heart of one of the nation's most diverse communities. In January, SMCU will open another branch in Beacon Hill in the new Plaza Roberto Maestas at El Centro de la Raza.
- SMCU now offers Online Banking, the SMCU.com website, and printed resources in Spanish. Employees at SMCU represent many cultures and languages that mirror the communities it serves. SMCU is staffed with fluent Spanish speakers and accepts Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) for opening loans and accounts.
- SMCU has partnered with the City of Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs to create a new Citizenship Loan to help new immigrants finance their path to U.S. citizenship. SMCU was onsite for the first three workshops and will continue to have a supporting presence in the city's ongoing program.
- SMCU participated with the Mexican Consulate and the Latino Educational Training Institute to present an 8-week financial education series from March through May of 2016.
- SMCU CEO Richard Romero has served on the YearUp Leadership Council, the Federation of Community Development Credit Unions Board of Directors and Leadership Eastside Board of Directors.
- Romero also won the 2016 Crosscut Courage in Business Award for reaching out to immigrants and other underserved populations.
- SMCU is a sponsor of the Latina Style Business Series conference, the Latino Community Fund Gala and the El Centro de la Raza Building the Beloved Community Gala.

## **About Seattle Metropolitan Credit Union**

Since its founding in 1933 by five City of Seattle employees, Seattle Metropolitan Credit Union has been Seattle's trusted partner in growth and prosperity, providing financial services to the employees and family members of the City of Seattle. Since then, SMCU expanded its charter to include anyone who lives or works in the state of Washington. SMCU offers trusted financial advice, a breadth of products and premium personalized service while reinvesting in members and the local community.

SMCU is federally insured by the NCUA and is an Equal Opportunity Lender. For more information, visit <http://www.smcu.com> and follow SMCU on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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