

# Esperanza Gutierrez

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## Personal Statement

## Educational and Professional Experience

Born in Mexico City, Esperanza Gutierrez immigrated to the United States at the age of eight. The daughter of a barber and a homemaker, she graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1976 with Bachelor degrees in Spanish and Social Work. Being the first in her family to attend and graduate college, Esperanza was active in the Chicano Movement. She toiled alongside other emerging Latino leaders in Milwaukee, protesting the injustices of racism and advocating for Latino engagement and Spanish-speaking opportunities on campus.

After graduation, Esperanza was first employed as a daycare teacher at La Causa before working as a Bilingual Counselor at SER Jobs for Progress where she counseled at risk high school students and supported adults in obtaining their educational goals. Now entering her 25<sup>th</sup> year, Esperanza works for Milwaukee County in the Department of Aging. Esperanza has been a tireless advocate for the Latino community and a selfless public servant. Inspired by the tenets of social justice, Esperanza could not separate herself from her work, she found herself bringing her work home – whether it was supporting clients in need, or volunteering at community organizations. At every opportunity, she volunteers to not only enhance the quality of life for residents of Milwaukee, but also to enhance the community of her colleagues. She actively participates in the County's Diversity, Intergenerational, and Underserved Population committees. Rather than seeing her work and home responsibilities as separate, Esperanza has lived her life as a tireless advocate for the most vulnerable populations and as a builder of communities.

She has never been able to simply standby and be an observer. Her small demeanor and quiet voice, does not in anyway impede her strong will and compassion for the betterment of the human race. Along with her public service, Esperanza is an active volunteer with the KK river project and neighborhood. She has volunteered as a peace circle facilitator for the Latino aging community. And most distinctively, she has never been afraid to demand accountability from local businesses, leaders, and elected officials to enhance the quality of life for Latinos in Milwaukee.

Regardless, as a single mother in the central city of the south side of Milwaukee, her proudest accomplishment has been raising her two children, Paulina and Romke, to love their community as much as she does. In her spare time, Esperanza finds no greater pleasure than hanging out with her eight grandkids.