

ASSISTANCE FOR LATINO BUSINESSES

Outline Of Need: *More than 10,000 Latino residents live in Sussex County, Delaware and Latino-owned businesses, whether Hispanic grocery stores, landscaping companies or restaurants, are one of the fastest growing business sectors in Delaware; this is why the University of Delaware Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located in Georgetown (Sussex County) wanted to launch a statewide Hispanic Business Assistance Program. The program is designed to support a business advisor that will provide bi-lingual business assistance and training to the Hispanic businesses located throughout the State.*

How Rural Development Helped: *In June 2008, a Rural Business Enterprise Grant in the amount of \$27,000 was provided to the SBDC to help support the start-up of the Hispanic Business Assistance Program. This is a first of its kind program in Sussex County.*

The Results: *The SBDC has hired Mr. Jose Somalo as their Business Advisor who brings more than 20 years of small business management to his new assignment. Free business assistance and training are available from the SBDC office in Georgetown as well as from a Business Resource Center located at La Esperanza in Georgetown. Mr. Somalo has presented 3 seminars and has conducted door to door outreach in Latino communities. So far, he estimates that he has helped 16 to 20 Latinos develop business plans and apply for loans, and one has opened a restaurant.*

Pictured at the funding announcement held on June 13, 2008 are: Jose Somalo, SBDC Business Advisor; Lisa Fitzgerald, USDA Rural Development Loan Specialist; Bill Pfaff, SBDC Director; Marlene Elliott Brown, USDA Rural Development State Director; U.S. Senator Thomas Carper; and Dr. Bobby Gempesaw, Dean of Learner College of Business and Economics, University of Delaware.

