

National Hispanic Institute Recruiting High-Achieving High School Students for Transformative Summer Leadership Programs

NHI's slate of summer programs, hosted by universities across the U.S., help students expand friendship networks, build leadership skills, and pursue college.

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Nicole Nieto

Institute, providing transformative leadership experiences for high-achieving students for over 45 years, seeks 9th, 10th, and 11th graders who aim to expand their friendship networks, build leadership skills, and pursue college. Students are invited to apply for admission to NHI's 2026 summer leadership programs.

The summer academies, open to all who meet the 3.0 grade point average requirement, begin with a focus on creativity, public speaking, and community betterment. Current 9th graders may apply and will attend a residential

experience called the [Great Debate](#) next summer.

Current 10th and 11th graders learn to manage themselves in organizations, increase awareness for public policy, and grow collaborative skills through the eight-day [Lorenzo de Zavala Youth Legislative Session](#) – the largest and arguably most life-changing of all the NHI programs.

Finally, as the capstone experience for current 11th graders, the five-day [Collegiate World Series](#), the summer before participants' senior year, provides a twofold preparatory experience for college and beyond, focusing on college applications, networking, and inquiry-based learning.

NHI's leadership education has immediate tangible outcomes for students, with 98 percent of participants going on to college – including Ivy League universities and notable public universities and liberal arts colleges — and 90 percent of those students completing a degree program within five years.

Yet NHI does more than prepare high-achieving students for college. Its emphasis on community equity building, starting with focus on the assets present in one's community, has provided a

foundation for more than 100,000 alumni to offer principled, growth-minded leadership in government, business, education, and the non-profit sector — including current and former members of Congress.

“NHI gathers students with the capacity for leadership, and year after year, develops them into more confident, cognizant, and community-minded young leaders,” said Nicole Nieto, NHI’s executive vice president. “In the process, they travel to and experience life on a university campus, meet similarly-engaged peers, participate in fascinating conversations, form lifelong friendships, become part of a special multigenerational and international community, and enter into a network that will benefit them well beyond college.”

Students committing to NHI during this recruiting period will have their choice of leadership experiences, hosted by universities across the U.S., attracting aspiring young leaders from throughout the Americas.

2026 programs, running from early June through late July, include:

Texas Great Debate, June 6-9, Austin College, Sherman, Texas (Dallas-Fort Worth area)
Texas Star Great Debate, June 9-14, Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, Texas
Texas Ambassador Great Debate, June 27-30, St. Mary’s University, San Antonio, Texas
Midwest Great Debate, June 28-July 3, Augustana College, Rock Island, Ill. (Quad Cities)
California Sol Great Debate, July 7-12, University of San Diego, San Diego, Calif.

Dennis Chavez New Mexico LDZ, June 7-14, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, N.M. (for New Mexico students only)
Colorado LDZ, June 20-27, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colo.
American LDZ, July 19-26, Seton Hall University, South Orange, N.J. (New York City metro area)
Texas LDZ, July 19-26, Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas
Rocky Mountain CWS, June dates TBA, Regis University, Denver, Colo.
Texas CWS, July 21-25, University of St. Thomas, Houston, Texas

To start the application process, visit nationalhispanicinstitute.org or email admissions@nhimail.com. To nominate a student you believe is deserving of NHI leadership education, fill out a nomination form.

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