

Margo Chaly, Esq.

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH EDUCATION



BACKGROUND

Margo Chaly is a first generation Guatemalan American whose career has been driven by expanding educational opportunity and public service. A graduate of Ithaca College and Seton Hall University School of Law, she has dedicated her leadership to helping students access affordable higher education while championing equity across New Jersey. Her passion for public service was sparked as a participant in the New Jersey Governor's School program while she was a rising high school junior, inspiring a lifelong commitment to expanding opportunity through education.

CAREER

Chaly spent more than a decade in the insurance industry and later worked for a New York law firm. She joined the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority in 2021 as Chief of Staff before being appointed Executive Director in 2024, where she oversaw nearly \$1.4 billion in grants and scholarships, expanded student loan relief initiatives, and strengthened workforce development programs. As Acting Secretary of Higher Education, she now leads statewide higher education policy, affordability initiatives, and strategic planning to ensure New Jersey's colleges and universities remain accessible.

IMPACT

Margo Chaly made history as the first Latina to lead New Jersey's Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, marking a significant milestone for Latino representation in state government. Her leadership is expanding access to higher education by advancing policies that promote affordability, student success, and workforce readiness. As a trailblazer in public service, Chaly's achievements inspire the next generation of Latino leaders to pursue careers that shape education, government, and the future of their communities.

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