

Metropolitan Family Services



KARINA AYALA-BERMEJO

Vice President, Human Resources & General Counsel

Karina Ayala-Bermejo currently is the General Counsel and Vice President of Human Resources for Metropolitan Family Services (MFS). As GC and VP of HR she is responsible for all legal and human resources aspects for MFS. Prior to MFS, she was with the City of Chicago for nearly three years most recently as the First Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Human Resources (DHR). She also served as DHR Managing Deputy Commissioner and DHR Acting Commissioner. Prior to the City, she spent seven years as the Director of Community Services for the Chicago Bar Association (CBA) where she encouraged attorneys to take on pro bono work and collaborated with the bar and various divisions of the Circuit Court of Cook County on initiatives to improve the justice system. She also served as the first Executive Director of the Sun Times Judge Marovitz Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth Program, a foundation that mobilizes the legal profession around the importance of mentoring youth. She was instrumental in securing a \$2 million dollar cy pres award, the largest in cook county's history for Lawyers Lend-A-Hand. Prior to joining

The CBA, Ms. Ayala-Bermejo was an attorney in the Litigation Division of the Chicago Board of Education for 4 years handling labor and employment matters.

Ms. Ayala-Bermejo has been a leader involved in community service for over 20 years and received the Mayor's Leadership 2000 Award. She was selected to participate in the Leadership Greater Chicago Fellows Program (2002); the Metropolitan Leadership Institute (2005); Featured in DePaul University Magazine: Careers in Bloom: Success Stories from 14 Alumni Under 40 (2007); Named Chicago Daily Law Bulletin's "40 Under 40 Lawyers to Watch in Illinois," (2007); and Featured in JD Bliss, an online magazine: "Success Story, A Career Dedicated to Helping Others," (2005). Ms. Ayala-Bermejo is the former President of the Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois where she founded their mentoring program, JD Mentors. She also served as the General Counsel, National Vice President and Regional President (WI, IL, MI, IN) of the Hispanic National Bar Association.

She currently serves as Hispanic National Bar Association National Vice President of Regions; Board of Trustees for the Hispanic Lawyers Scholarship Fund; Board of Directors of the Jane Addams Juvenile Court Foundation; Alumni Board Member for Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity; Advisory Board Member for the DePaul University College of Law Public Interest Law Institute, and Board Member of the Chicago Legal Clinic. She also finds time to serve on the Annunciata school board and as a Boy Scouts den leader for pack 773 where her children attend.

Over the years she served on numerous boards and task forces, including serving three terms as a member of the U.S. District Court Northern District of Illinois Magistrate Judge Selection Committee; Member of the Diversity Pipeline Subcommittee of the ISBA Task Force on Diversity; Planning Committee of the Women Everywhere Service Project; Founding Member of Illinois Legal Aid Online; Latina Leadership Council of the Chicago Foundation For Women; Coordinating Committee Member for The Equal Justice Illinois Campaign; Advisory Board member for Centro Comunitario Juan Diego; Board Member for Southeast Chicago Development Commission; Board Secretary for Our Children in the Courts Foundation; Member of The Illinois Task Force on Unaccompanied Immigrant Children; and Member of The Charter Steering Committee for Voices for Illinois Children.

She has received numerous awards and recognitions including: CBA Alliance for Women's Alta May Hewlett Award (2009); Seton Academy 2008 Alumni of Distinction Honoree; Chicago Commission of Human Relations: Advisory Council on Latino Affairs Award (2008); Cook County State's Attorney Richard A. Devine, El Humanitario Award (2004); DePaul College of Law, Latino Law Student Association Distinguished Alumnus Award (2003); and DePaul College of Law, Outstanding Service as a Young Alumnus Award (2002).

Ms. Ayala-Bermejo was born in Jalisco, Mexico, and raised in South Chicago, where she currently resides with her husband Frank, and three children (Liam 8, Elijah 7 and Abbey Rose 5). She is a graduate of Loyola University-Chicago and her JD from DePaul University College of Law in 1998.