
ABOUT PASO NUEVO YOUTH PROGRAM

Paso Nuevo was officially started over 30 years ago, initially under the direction of local poet Quique Avilés, and using the name Spoken Resistance. However, GALA had always offered training programs for youth since it is founding in 1976. Paso Nuevo is now an acclaimed community-based performing arts program which provides low-income and multicultural youth with critical life and job skills in a creative, bilingual environment. Through **Paso Nuevo**, Latino youth ages 14-19 have a safe space in which to explore and take pride in their linguistic and cultural heritage, improve literacy and communication skills in both English and Spanish, discover their creative voice, gain valuable academic and job skills, and develop the tools necessary to engage more successfully in their schools and communities. The **Paso Nuevo** program is effective: teenagers who complete the program graduate high school at a 15-20% higher rate than their peers outside of the program.

The program is divided into three program cycles per year: Fall/Winter, Spring, and Summer. During each session, approximately 35 students receive acting and technical theater training, study the works of renowned Hispanic authors, create and write their own original pieces (short plays, skits, monologues poems, and songs), and perform them for the public on GALA's main stage. Classes are conducted bilingually, with a focus on retaining and developing the Spanish-language skills of Latino youth while improving their confidence and dexterity with the English language. Through the program, students strengthen their academic skills in the areas of vocabulary building, reading comprehension, creative writing, memorization, pronunciation, and public speaking. They also enhance their Hispanic cultural literacy skills and knowledge of history, literature, and dramaturgy. Exercises in teamwork, cooperative decision-making, and problem-solving further promote the participants' self-esteem and ability to compete in an academic environment or job market.

Each **Paso Nuevo** session culminates in a public presentation attended by families, friends, school staff, artists, city officials, press, and the general public, reaching a potential audience of 250 per show. Participants have the opportunity to perform and also to run lights and sound, work backstage, and design and disseminate publicity. All **Paso Nuevo** participants perform in the public presentations, which are followed by an open discussion program in which the audience, youth participants, instructors, and performing arts experts can exchange ideas and reactions to the different themes raised in the pieces, such as education, immigration, inter-generational communication, and cross-cultural understanding.

What is the cycle of the program?

We have Fall/Winter, Spring, and Summer programs, each ending with a staged production written and acted by the youth. Shows are usually in April-May, August, and December.

What is the schedule?

The Spring and Fall/Winter (i.e. during the regular school year) schedule is Monday through Thursday from 4 to 6 pm. In the summer program is more intensive running Mon-Fri, from 1 to 6 pm. As it gets closer to the student's performance date, there might be some Saturday rehearsals (this applies to all program cycles).

When can teens apply?

There is no deadline to apply. Teens can start Paso Nuevo whenever and jump into the cycle. We suggest signing up a few months before one of the Paso Nuevo show dates, so that they can fully participate in it. However, we do not require this. You can register online, by filling out the form published on this webpage: <https://www.galatheatre.org/paso-nuevo>.

Who can apply?

Any young person between the ages of 14 and 19, with an interest in the theatre arts. We do focus our program on Latino youth and Latino heritage but welcome all backgrounds.

How can one apply?

Applicants should contact **Paso Nuevo** Director Francisca Tapia to arrange for an informal interview. Francisca will meet with the teens and talk to them about the program and their interests.

How much does it cost?

The program is absolutely free. The only payment is the expectation of students to be respectful, hard-working, and attentive.

For more information, contact Francisca Tapia at pasonuevo@galatheatre.org.