

María Teresa Kumar

Posey Leadership Award 2019

Ms. Kumar is the founding President and CEO of Voto Latino, a leading national civic engagement organization that works to encourage Latino youth to participate in public policy. She earned a BA in Economics and International Affairs from the University of California, Davis and a Master's degree in Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

Ms. Kumar's national **servant leadership** is evident throughout her work with Voto Latino. She believes that Latinos can improve their quality of life as well as contribute to building a healthy, strong America by understanding the electoral process. María Teresa co-founded Voto Latino in 2004 to increase young Latino's involvement in civic life. The organization uses social media, celebrity spokespeople, and other innovative initiatives, such as launching the first national mobile voter registration campaign, to connect Latino youth with political issues that affect the Hispanic population. Today, Voto Latino includes **issue-based advocacy** into the following areas:

- Healthcare
 - Provides education and resources to teach Latino populations about the Affordable Care Act
 - Provides resources to young Latinas to educate them on their sexual health
- Immigration and Citizenship
 - Advocates for immigration reform at all levels of government
- Social Justice
 - Fights racial profiling and police brutality

Ms. Kumar's Voto Latino also supports **youth leadership initiatives**. Voto Latino's *Power Summit* is a two day leadership conference that helps Latinos develop the skills necessary to mobilize for change. The *VL Innovators Challenge* is a technology competition that awards \$10,000 to \$100,000 grants to Millennial-led projects that will improve the lives of and expand opportunities for Latinos in the US.

An Emmy-nominated journalist, Ms. Kumar is a regular contributor to political programs such as *HardBall with Chris Matthews* and *Morning Joe* where she covers issues that affect the Hispanic population. She's the host of MSNBC's *Changing America* and is a frequent guest on media outlets such as NPR and Telemundo. Ms. Kumar's work can also be found in national publications where she is a frequent opinion writer.

Highly Recommended Resources:

- TEDx Talk – María Teresa Kumar
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HxxAZoryOQ>
- Voto Latino
 - <http://votolatino.org/>
- America's Quarterly
 - <http://www.americasquarterly.org/node/3036>