

Elsa E. Smith and Alison Velazquez

Metropolitan Business League's

MEMBERS OF THE MONTH

Elsa E. Smith and her daughter, Alison Velazquez – are the dynamic mother-daughter duo behind *The Business People, LLC*, a Richmond-based, bilingual business consulting firm dedicated to helping entrepreneurs start, grow, and sustain successful ventures.

Elsa, originally from Peru, has spent decades empowering Virginia's Latino and immigrant communities. A graduate of the University of Memphis with a degree in Business Administration, she has used her education and experience to guide countless small business owners through complex processes—from business registration to compliance and marketing. In 2000, Elsa helped found the **Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on Cinco de Mayo**, a milestone that marked her longstanding commitment to Latino economic empowerment in the region. Today, she continues to work as a **Financial Opportunity Center coach**, serving as a trusted mentor and resource for aspiring entrepreneurs.

Alison, born in Brazil and raised in the United States, brings a modern entrepreneurial spirit to the team. A mother of three, she is a licensed real estate broker, business strategist, and passionate advocate for small business development. Alison's expertise spans business operations, marketing, and community engagement. Alongside her mother and sister Amanda, she co-founded *The Business People* in 2019, transforming what began as informal help for friends into a thriving business services company.

Together, Elsa and Alison offer tailored support in **English, Spanish, and Portuguese**, helping clients navigate everything from forming LLCs and obtaining EINs and ITINs, to launching marketing campaigns and accessing local resources. Since its founding, *The Business People* has helped **hundreds of clients** across industries—especially within Richmond's Latino and immigrant communities.

Their guiding philosophy, "*Learn, Share, Receive*," reflects their deep belief in knowledge-sharing, empowerment, and service. For Elsa and Alison, business is not just about profit—it's about building stronger communities, one entrepreneur at a time.



**Elsa E. Smith and
Alison Velazquez**
Founders
The Business People, LLC



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