



Manuel Castañeda, MS, MJ

Manuel Castañeda has both lived and worked in New Brunswick for most of his life. From growing up in New Brunswick, Castañeda continues to be involved in the City through his efforts at New Brunswick Tomorrow and as a City Councilman. He has worked at community-based organizations and Rutgers University in various roles servicing the community. Castañeda has extensive client advocacy and case manager experience with an expertise in health-related, legal and benefit/entitlement areas. As the Statewide Legal Services Manager for the Hyacinth AIDS Foundation, he managed a statewide legal services program providing legal and client advocacy services for New Jersey residents living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. He also served as the editor of the publication, *AIDS In The Law In New Jersey* 2nd edition. Through his work at the Central Jersey Legal Services Corporation, Castañeda provided both assistance and education in areas such as social security disability, Medicaid, social services benefit/entitlement programs and immigration to Middlesex County residents. At Rutgers University, he served as a case manager for the Robert Wood Johnson Pediatric AIDS Program and he continues to serve as an adjunct professor at Rutgers' School of Health Professions.

In 2015, Manuel Castañeda joined the team at New Brunswick Tomorrow as Director of Community Health. In this most important role, Manuel manages the Healthier New Brunswick initiative; a comprehensive collective impact approach to improve the overall health of city residents. His work includes strategy building and collaborations with task force volunteers and local stakeholders in understanding and responding to the health, human service and educational needs of city residents. He generates ideas and initiatives that affect neighborhoods and initiatives aimed at engaging the community. Castañeda has worked diligently with community members to develop and evolve community engagement into community integration in projects such as the New Brunswick Diabetes Community Outreach Program, New Brunswick Healthy Housing Collaborative and the New Brunswick Latino Telehealth Project to name a few. He's also coauthored *Community Engagement and Engaging With Communities-Lessons (Re)Learned From COVID-19*, a book and journal article, respectively emphasizing the importance and contributions of community engagement. Castañeda is honored to have the opportunity to help make New Brunswick a healthier community for all the families who live and work in the City and he is proud to call New Brunswick home.