

# Painting with a Purpose

By MOLLY WASHINGTON

Leticia Nunez has focused her career on helping her community. Started in 2017, Leticia is the owner of Columbia River Painting, a residential and commercial painting company, her platform to uplift and economically empower the Latinx community.

Leticia keeps her pipeline of work full through sheer will, determination, and persistence. From large projects with large contractors that bring in significant revenue, to small projects with affordable housing providers that typically don't pencil out, all projects have value "To me, it's not the size of the project. It's the satisfaction of helping the families," Leticia notes.

For Leticia, success for her company is not measured with money or profit. "It's, for me, seeing that my crew has enough jobs to keep them busy all year round, and that they have livable wages, and that there's enough work on the horizon to keep them busy for the next 2 or 3 years. To me, that's success." Her focus is not on how much she takes home, but on her responsibilities. "As of today," Leticia explained, "we have 19 employees. 19 employees means that I have to provide a secure job for the next 2, 3 years for 19 families. And it's a big responsibility."

"I always wanted to do something that I feel was connected to my community in Portland," she said. "The painting company just happened." After learning about some grants for home repairs through Latino Network, the idea for a painting company took off. Although she didn't believe



Leticia Nunez

she'd make any money with her company, she wasn't deterred. That wasn't her goal anyway. "This is how I support the community," she said. "I won't make any money from the very beginning and that's fine with me, but I'll be doing something that I feel proud of doing, connecting with the community, learning a little bit more..." Leticia recalls the impact of a work slowdown a few years back and in order to keep her crew employed, she had them paint her own house. Twice. And then a friend's house. And another friend's house. Work eventually picked back up and now Columbia River Painting is a profitable company that has a strong pipeline of projects, with enough work on the horizon to provide security for 19 families and counting.



Renise Kelly (teeth whitening technician and dental hygienist) Tisha Aspirations (owner) Miranda (stylist)

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who is the owner and specializes in Hair Loss and extensions.

The Beauty Supply Store is located in the Pearl District at 634 NW 12th Ave, Portland, OR 97209. It is the First Black Owned Beauty Supply Store in the Pearl District. Operation hours are 8am - 3pm Tuesday- Friday and 8am-5pm Saturdays. Community members can reach out to 503-841-6220 for an appointment or visit their website at [Naturalhairandextensions.com](http://Naturalhairandextensions.com)

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