

Eva Plaza

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Assistant Secretary, Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity

Eva M. Plaza, the current Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, brings over 15 years of experience to her position as a lawyer, manager and policy-maker.

Eva Plaza came to the United States from Mexico when she was two years old with her parents and three siblings. Ms. Plaza was admitted to Harvard University and graduated in 1980 with a Bachelor's Degree in Government. Ms. Plaza went on to study law at the University of California Berkeley (Boalt Hall) where she served as Associate Editor of The California Law Review and as Editor-in-Chief of La Raza Law Journal. After law school, Ms. Plaza was selected to the highly acclaimed Honors Program of the Department of Justice in 1984, where she worked as a Trial Attorney in the Civil Division's Commercial Litigation Branch.

Subsequently, Ms. Plaza entered private practice in Washington, DC. While her private practice focused on government contracts, she also served as one of the lead counsel in the well-known class action immigration litigation initiated as *Ayuda v. Meese*. Under the Clinton administration, Ms. Plaza joined the Department of Justice, where she managed and supervised a legal staff consisting of 254 employees specializing in all areas of tort law, including aviation, admiralty, constitutional torts, environmental torts, medical malpractice, AIDS litigation, banking litigation, vaccine and radiation litigation. She also chaired the Torts Branch's Representation Committee where it was her responsibility to ensure uniformity and equal treatment for federal employees in providing representation. Ms. Plaza briefed the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General on complex landmark cases that had fallen under media and congressional scrutiny.

Ms. Plaza has received awards for outstanding achievement such as the Albert Arent Pro Bono Award in 1989, Department of Justice and U.S. Office of Personnel Management Awards for outstanding contributions in furthering recruitment and advancement of Hispanics in the Federal Workforce in 1994, the National Conference for College Women Leaders Woman of Distinction Award in 1998, and a Fellowship at Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government in 1978-1980. In 1997, Ms. Plaza was honored as one of the "100 Most Influential Hispanics in the United States."

In September of 1997, President Clinton nominated Ms. Plaza for the position of Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Ms. Plaza was confirmed by the Senate on November 8, 1997.

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