

# Convención receives grant for pastors initiative

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The [Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas](#) received a grant from the Lilly Endowment to launch its [Conexión Pastors Initiative](#) to assist ministers who are in transition or facing unusual circumstances.

The \$506,965 gift from the Lilly Endowment is the second grant Convención has received since 2010. Previously, Convención received a \$50,000 grant from Duke Divinity School for its Young Latino Leadership Development Initiative.



Jesse Rincones, executive director of the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas, signs documents accepting a grant from the Lilly Endowment to start the Conexión Pastors Initiative. (Courtesy Photo)

The Conexión Pastors Initiative is an investment in ministers who are in transition or facing unique circumstances, and it is intended “to help pastors thrive in their ministries,” Convención Executive Director Jesse Rincones said.

Pastors in transition include those who are about to graduate from seminary, are moving to another church or facing retirement age. Ministers in unique situations may serve in churches where there are disagreements about language or challenges because of immigration or generational dissonance, Rincones explained.

“We want to come alongside the churches to encourage them and empower them,” he said.

Conexión will help ministers by providing necessary personal support, which will mean healthier and more stable churches, he observed. In turn, strong churches will lead to stronger *compañerismos*, the 42 Hispanic associations in Texas, he added.

Convención will launch the initiative early in 2019. Fernando Hill, currently the volunteer director of Young Latino Leaders, will become the director of Conexión in January.

Each year Convención will work with eight *compañerismos* to discover the challenges they are facing and talk about what can be done to address those challenges. The first cohort involving four *compañerismos* will begin in February and a second one in March.

Convención will make available individuals who have experience in addressing particular situations, but Conexión’s goal is to help churches in *compañerismos* to collaborate to address the issues of its own congregations, Rincones said.

The approach will enable churches to use contextual resources to plan and execute collaborative solutions that address challenges specific to their culture, he said.

Convención wants to communicate to *compañerismos* and the churches, “You create the responses to these challenges, and we will help you with

the resources,” Rincones said.

Those contextual responses not only are different because they are for Hispanic churches, but also because Hispanic churches vary from location to location and with different populations, he added.