

R. Michael Cortez, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, Department of Community and Economic Development

Mike Cortez was originally appointed as Deputy Secretary for Administration in 2011. In that role, he was responsible for all HR, IT, Financial Management, Customer and Administrative Services for the Department. In August 2012, Mike was promoted to Senior Advisor to the Secretary. In this role, Cortez is responsible for coordinating funding streams from DCED's various Boards and Commissions, the general operation of the Department's seven regional offices, and serves as a liaison to the Governor's office.

Cortez came to DCED from Altoona, where he served as vice president, general counsel and secretary for Sheetz, Inc. Among other roles at the company, he was responsible for supervising all legal and government affairs work, advising management on all corporate legal issues, and overseeing the operation of the Legal Department and the Claims and Litigation Department. During his time at Sheetz, Cortez served as chairman of the legal committee within the National Association of Convenience Stores, chairman of the Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association's legislative committee, and a member of the PFMA Convenience Store Council, among other professional affiliations.

In 2004, Cortez was appointed by former Governor Ed Rendell to serve on the Pennsylvania Business Tax Reform Commission, which was tasked with recommending changes to the commonwealth's business tax structure.

Prior to his tenure at Sheetz, Cortez worked as house counsel and assistant secretary for Weis Markets in Sunbury, PA. Cortez began his career as an Associate Attorney in two California-based law firms.

Outside of work, Cortez has been an active member of his community, serving on the advisory boards of both the Salvation Army and the Blair County Chapter of the American Red Cross, as well as the board of directors for Sheetz Family Charities. For several years, he coached girls' summer league softball, and he has also coached boys' youth football and basketball.

Cortez holds a Juris doctorate from the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law and a bachelor's degree from Bucknell University. He has four adult children and five grandchildren.