

The Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA) is a state agency with statutory duties to advise and inform the Governor's Office, the Legislature and stakeholders on policy and legislation.

### 2023 Legislative Priorities

#### Lifelong Learning (Education)

Minnesota's economic competitiveness and socioeconomic outcomes depend in part on Latinos' educational attainment. Progress has been made in closing the achievement and opportunity gaps that disproportionately impact Latinos, but much work remains to further narrow them.

- **Minnesota Teacher shortage:** Advance the "Addressing Teacher Shortages Act" and other legislation addressing teacher shortages.
- **Teachers of Color:** Secure funding for programs aimed at increasing the number of teachers of colors and American Indian teachers in Minnesotan schools.
- **Multilingual Learners:** Advocate to increase funding for English Language Learners (ELL) programs.
- **Affordable Childcare:** Support legislation to improve access to quality and affordable childcare in Minnesota.

#### Budget Recommendations:

- Increase funding to support and expand Head Start programs, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start.
- Target funding for Latino families to increase access to Childcare Assistance Program.
- Invest in targeted information to Latino students to access PSEO, FAFSA and other financial resources to reduce barriers to access college.
- Protect and increase sources of funding for in-state tuition rates in college (Prosperity Act).
- Funding for Student Support Personnel that targets specifically Latino personnel services and students.
- Fully fund ITCA programs like Grow your Own, CUGMEG Grants, Underrepresented Student Teachers Grants, and Aspiring MN Educators of Color Scholarships.

Contact: Katya Zepeda | Legislative and Policy Director | (651) 592-8537 | [Katya.zepeda@state.mn.us](mailto:Katya.zepeda@state.mn.us)

#### Prosperity and Financial Stability (Economic & Workforce Development)

Latine/x Minnesotans are a vital part of the state's workforce, having the highest labor force participation rate in the state. However, this high participation in the workforce has not yet translated to higher incomes or economic stability. MCLA supports legislations that promote Minnesotan Latino economic security and financial stability.

- **New Hair Technical License:** Lead the passage of a cosmetology bill to create a new Hair Technical License to assist Latina estheticians in becoming licensed, operate, and work under state regulations.
- **Trades & Postsecondary attainment:** Promote awareness among Latine/x students and parents about post-secondary education options, including trade programs and STEAM careers.
- **Financial Literacy classes:** Supports legislation mandating financial literacy classes in the curriculum and funding Latino nonprofits to offer financial literacy classes to our youth.
- **Consumer protection:** Lead a bill that would require used car dealerships to inform consumers if a "kill switch" has been installed in their cars and under what circumstances it would be activated.
- **DLs Renewal Process with DPS/DVS:** Continue communicating with DVS/DPS to reinstate Individual Taxpayer Individual Number (ITIN) users access to driver's licenses renewal.
- **Advancing Racial Equity:** The Council supports racial equity impact notes in the analysis of bills and budget allocations that will not have adverse economic outcomes for Latinos, indigenous and people of color.
- **Minnesota Secure Choice Retirement Program Act:** MCLA will support legislation pertaining to retirement programs that would provide employees without access to retirement savings plans the opportunity to save for retirement - an essential step towards financial security.

#### Budget Recommendations:

- Allow ITIN users to apply for better housing options.

- Ensure ITIN users being able to access credit resources.
- Include ITIN users to apply for Working Family Tax Credit and Homestead programs.
- Maintain rent prices under control.
- Provide more resources for Latino nonprofits to provide financial literacy classes to the youth.
- Include Latino organizations to provide Advance Youth Engagement & Employment Opportunities.
- Secure funding for DLI/DEED to provide Know Your Rights workshops or resources.
- Remove the public benefits cliff, where people lose all benefits when reaching an income threshold.
- Increase investments in workforce training and outreach programs – especially for youth and women.

Contact: Nicauris Heredia Rosario | Legislative and Policy Director | (612) 414-3462 | [Nicauris.heredia-rosario@state.mn.us](mailto:Nicauris.heredia-rosario@state.mn.us)

### **Health & Wellbeing**

MCLA is committed to advocating for the improvement of Latine/x families' access to affordable and quality health care and to providing services that are culturally and linguistically relevant.

- **Expand MN Care:** MCLA supports the expansion of health care coverage for individual and families living in Minnesota, regardless of immigration status.
- **Mental Health:** MCLA supports legislation that aim at addressing the shortage of culturally specific mental health service providers, strengthens current legislation, and work with state agencies to address our community's mental health needs.
- **Paid sick leave:** The Council supports initiatives that would provide paid sick leave to employees to care for themselves or family members, regardless of immigration status.

### **Budget Recommendations:**

- Invest in mental health screening, guaranteeing culturally relevant practices, including per pupil allocations that also include Latino students and staff.
- Invest in Social Emotional Learning programs to build a respectful, safe, harmonious, and productive school environment.
- Invest in outdoor activities, funding promotional information that culturally and linguistically targets Latino youth to explore state and municipal parks.
- Create and fund an outreach and awareness program for Latino youth with mental illness and other medical conditions.
- Invest in programs tailored to Latino families, children, and youth to increase healthy nutrition and physical activity.
- Support funding for community health clinics, particularly in Greater Minnesota.
- Allocate funding to Latino organizations to promote preventive health care and mental health services.

Contact: Rosa Tock | Executive Director | (651) 592-7487 | [Rosa.tock@state.mn.us](mailto:Rosa.tock@state.mn.us) | Katya Zepeda | Legislative and Policy Director | (651) 592-8537 | [Katya.zepeda@state.mn.us](mailto:Katya.zepeda@state.mn.us)

### **Immigration & Belonging**

The Council strongly support state-level immigration policies that are humane, nondiscriminatory, and consistent with America's longstanding values of inclusion and integration.

- **Driver Licenses for All:** Support the community's efforts to re-instate access to a MN Driver's License to all drivers regardless of immigration status.

### **Budget Recommendation:**

- Invest in an Office of New Americans with the Department of Employment and Economic Opportunity (DEED). The Council recommends that the ONA has branches, staff, and resources in Greater Minnesota. The Office should also advise on foreign accreditations to integrate skilled new American workers.

Contact: Rosa Tock | Executive Director | (651) 592-7487 | [Rosa.tock@state.mn.us](mailto:Rosa.tock@state.mn.us)