



## HISTORY AND MISSION OF MCLA

The Council was first established in 1978 as the Spanish Speaking Affairs Council, later it was renamed the Chicano Latino Affairs Council (CLAC). With a restructure of mandate, the Council became the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA) on July 1, 2015.

Our mission is to advise and inform the governor's office and state legislators on matters of importance to Latinos in Minnesota by consulting on the impact of proposed policy, procedures, laws, and regulations on Minnesotan Latinos.

MCLA assesses the impact of legislation through a combination of research and analysis, collaboration with council partners, and engagement with Minnesota's Latino community.

## HOW MCLA WORKS FOR YOU

At the Capitol, MCLA drafts legislation and consults on the content of proposed bills. MCLA meets with state legislators or the governor's office to advise on current issues affecting Latinos state-wide. Staff monitors legislation throughout the legislative session to evaluate its impact on the Latino community and then testifies at the Senate or House committee hearings or provides written testimony. MCLA also advises the different state agencies on the implementation of existing and newly adopted policies and programs.

The MCLA team works hard acting as the Latino community's liaison and bridge to state government. One of MCLA's objectives is to empower Latinos by injecting their voice into the legislative policy making process.

## MCLA'S LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY AREAS

MCLA focuses on interconnected policy and legislative areas of particular importance for Latinos living in the state.

## 2025-26 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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



### Lifelong Learning (Education)

In the area of Education, our priorities focus on the needs expressed by our students and their families which include student support from a diverse teacher workforce, remove barriers to higher education, and mental health supports in order to feel safe at school. Some progress has been made in closing the achievement and opportunity gaps that disproportionately impact Latinos, but much work remains to further narrow them.

Culture is also part of the dimension of belonging and integration, and MCLA is committed to advancing legislation and supporting organizations that celebrate our diverse histories, traditions, and cultures as a way to belong, heal, and preserve our contributions.

- Advise on whether statutory or administrative changes in the aspiring teachers of color program are needed to empower students of color to apply and finish their degree so that the funds not used remain in the program.
- Minnesota Latino Museum: Advocate for the establishment and funding of the first dedicated Latino Museum in Minnesota to preserve and celebrate the rich cultural heritage and contributions of the Latino/Latine community.
- Migrant Education Program: seek supplemental state funding for the Migratory Youth Leadership and Job Skills Program.
- Expand bilingual academic support, increasing culturally relevant family engagement programs, and enhancing transportation options for extracurricular activities.
- Continue supporting bilingual outreach campaigns to improve awareness of financial aid options like the North Star Promise, ensuring that Latine families have access to resources that support academic success and economic mobility.



## Belonging and Integration

The Council strongly supports state-level immigration policies that are humane, nondiscriminatory, and consistent with America's longstanding values of inclusion and integration. We will review all legislation that targets immigrants and assess the impact it will have on the Minnesota Latino community. The Council will continue promoting awareness around the contributions of immigrants to the state's economy, culture, and society to ensure that Minnesota is a welcoming state with a future of strength and economic competitiveness residing in its vibrant and diverse social capital.

### The Council supports fair and just immigration measures that:

- Respect the human and civil rights of immigrants and their families.
- Recognize present and future contributions of immigrants to the state's economy and vitality.
- Procure an integration pipeline to ensure equitable access to education, health care, and English language and civic classes.
- Prioritize family reunification.
- Protect the civil liberties of all Minnesotans from use of surveillance technologies.
- Protect data protections for noncitizens.



## Health and Wellbeing

Healthcare access disparities continue to affect Latino populations, with high uninsured rates persisting despite initiatives like the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Nationally, the uninsured rate for Latinos decreased from 33% in 2010 to 18% in 2022, while in Minnesota, it dropped from 25.9% to 17.3%. However, language barriers, limited culturally competent care, immigration status restrictions, and geographic challenges still hinder access to healthcare, resulting in unmet needs and poor health outcomes.

- Support Latino organizations to bridge healthcare gaps and facilitating access to essential services.
- Support the creation of the Office of Latino Health to promote the health and wellbeing of the Latino community, modeled after the Office of Native American Health, Office of African American Health and the Office of Rural Health.
- Increase awareness and information of the upcoming MinnesotaCare expansion's implementation, especially in Greater Minnesota
- Financial counseling services to assist Latino communities in navigating medical debt.
- Expanding resources, information, and available assistance programs for Latino agricultural workers regarding private wells and water contamination (nitrate contamination)
- Support the creation of a Latine Violence Prevention Taskforce/Office



## Financial Stability and Prosperity

Latinos are integral to economies in both the Twin Cities metro and greater Minnesota. As one of the fastest-growing minority groups, Latinos comprise an increasingly important segment of Minnesota's workforce. Latinos have the highest labor force participation rate in the state. Along with this, minority-owned businesses, and particularly female minority-owned businesses, are growing at a faster rate than the Minnesota average. However, these successes have not yet translated to higher incomes or more economic stability. Many Latino families still struggle from below average household incomes and above average poverty rates.

- Support tenant advocacy services and Spanish-language resources, revise zoning laws for more affordable housing and tailored financial education.
- Support the establishment of an Ombudsperson for Safety, Health, and Wellbeing of Agricultural and Food Processing Workers.
- Recommends streamlined certification for foreign-trained professionals, stronger labor protections, wage equality, and expanded bilingual workforce development programs and outreach in collaboration with the ONA.
- Support Contract for Deed Law technical amendments.
- Support implementation of new Hair Technician License
- Access to credit because small Latino businesses don't have the technical skills to apply to a loan.
- Support non-profits who do direct outreach to small businesses to access capital.
- Advise on better collaboration between DEED, the Secretary of State, MNDOT and DOLI to have the right data, policies and programs across agencies.
- Support the creation of an advisory committee from the Latino community to advise DEED.
- Support the creation of an affordable auto insurance program.

ADVISE AND INFORM ON  
**LEGISLATION AND POLICY**  
WITH **LATINO MINNESOTANS**

