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Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs

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<https://mn.gov/mcla/>

AT A GLANCE

The Council advises the governor, the legislature, and government agencies on issues affecting Latino Minnesotans, informing, and involving our constituency on policy and legislation. The Council represents almost 346,000 Latinos in Minnesota, or 6.1 percent of the total population. Approximately two-thirds are Minnesotans of Mexican descent, followed by Puerto Rican, Ecuadorian, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Colombian ancestries. The Council is composed of 11 community board members and four legislative board members. Board members and staff reflect the rich ethnic diversity rooted in Latin America and the Caribbean.

General State of the Minnesota Latino Community

Growth in the Latino population is significant. It has increased 26 percent since 2010, compared to 7.6 percent growth for the state. One-third of the Latino population lives in Greater Minnesota, primarily in southern and central Minnesota. About two-thirds of the Latino population is U.S. born; with 90 percent of children under 18 born in the United States. The median age of the Minnesota Latino population is 25 years old. Latinos have the highest labor force participation rate in Minnesota and their purchasing power is \$5.4 billion. Despite their contributions, Latino Minnesotans were disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Small businesses, agricultural workers, and low-income families – also affected by the digital divide in distance learning – were hit the hardest. Despite some economic recovery, prevailing disparities were exacerbated during the pandemic crisis.

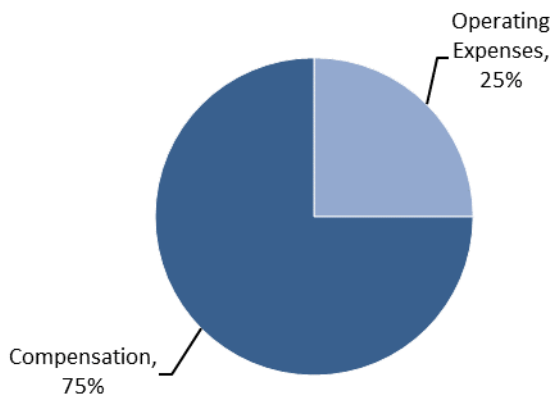
PURPOSE

Minnesota Statute 15.0145 states that the MCLA must work for the implementation of economic, social, legal, and political equality for its constituency. The council shall work with the legislature and governor to carry out this work by performing the following duties:

- Advise the governor and the legislature on issues of importance to the Latino community such as:
 - Administrative and legislative changes needed to improve Latinos’ economic and social condition
 - Implications and effect of proposed administrative and legislative changes
- Serve as a liaison between state government and organizations that serve the Latino community
- Design and/or execute studies designed to suggest solutions to the problems in the Latino community in the areas of education, employment, human rights, health, housing, social welfare, and other related areas.

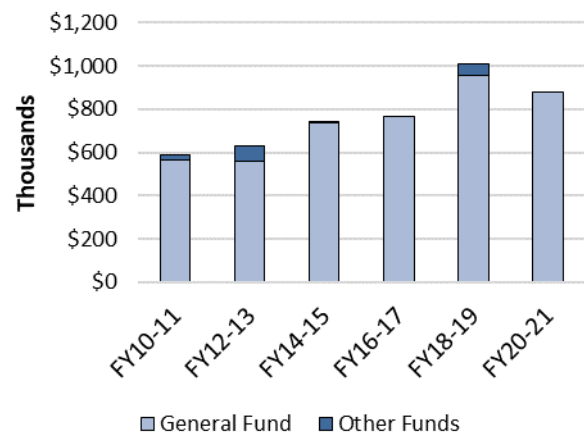
BUDGET

**Spending by Category
FY 2021 Actual**



Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)

Historical Spending



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

The Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs activities are funded through general fund appropriations and, occasionally, by grants from Minnesota foundations. MCLA has a total FY 2022-23 biennial appropriation of \$2,122,000 dollars. This funding serves to cover expenses to operate MCLA's office, which includes four full-time employees, contractors, and student workers that carry out the agency's statutory requirements.

STRATEGIES

The Council delivers on its mandated mission by using the following key strategies:

Legislative and policy making process focused on four interconnected policy areas (lifelong learning, prosperity and financial stability, wellbeing, and belonging):

- Trusted source of information to the Governor's office, legislature, and community
- Draft, support, and monitor legislation derived from community input and needs
- Consult with legislators and state agencies
- Provide research-based testimony, position statements, reports, and policy recommendations
- Facilitate constituency input and participation in the legislative process

Direct constituency communication

- Targeted meetings and conference calls with Latino serving organizations statewide
- Consistent and intentional use of bilingual social media and newsletters to inform and connect with constituency
- Develop and publish in-house research reports

Community engagement

- Plan, organize, and hold community listening sessions in Greater Minnesota and the metro area
- Connect constituency with legislators, state program administrators, and other Latino serving agencies
- Collaborate in inter-agency and community efforts to address Latino Minnesotan needs through legislative and policy recommendations
- Organize and collaborate with other organizations on legislative and policy forums and presentations
- Attend community events, and partner in cultural and social gatherings to recognize Latino cultures

RESULTS

<i>Type of Measure</i>	<i>Name of Measure</i>	<i>Previous</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Quantity	Legislation and Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafted legislation • Bills included in omnibus bills • Tracked legislation • Legislative testimony/ position statements submitted • Participation and advisory role in agency workgroups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 • 1 • 30 • 15 • 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 • 3 • 50 • 20 • 6 	FY2021, FY2022
Quantity	Statewide Community Engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community forums and listening sessions • Meetings with constituents, community leaders, and local organizations • Constituents reached through combined social media and traditional communication, including newsletters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 120 • 35,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 • 300 • 40,000 	FY2021, FY2022
Quantity	Reports, briefs, and outreach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual community outreach and engagement report(s) • Latino Demographics Report • Bilingual mid and end of legislative session reports • Developed publications to advise legislators, the governor’s office, and constituency through graphs, charts, infographics, and legislative district-specific fact sheets • Annual Mandated Reports • Bilingual Newsletters shared with approximately 8,000 subscribers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 1 • 2 • 67 • 1 • 9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 2 • 67 • 1 • 12 	FY2021, FY2022

Tracked activities are aimed at fulfilling the Council’s following statutory responsibilities:

- Legislation and Policy: Statute 15.0145, Subd. 6, Paragraphs A, C, D, & F
- Statewide Community Engagement: Statute 15.0145, Subd. 6, Paragraphs B & E
- Reports and Studies: Statute 15.0145, Subd. 6, Paragraphs B, E, & F

Legal Authority: Minn. Stat. § 15.0145 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=15.0145>) provides the legal authority for the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs.

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY20	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimate FY23	Forecast Base FY24 FY25		Governor's Recommendation FY24 FY25	
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>								
1000 - General	389	489	438	640	544	544	664	680
Total	389	489	438	640	544	544	664	680
Biennial Change				200		10		266
Biennial % Change				23		1		25
Governor's Change from Base								256
Governor's % Change from Base								24

Expenditures by Program

Latino Affairs Council	389	489	438	640	544	544	664	680
Total	389	489	438	640	544	544	664	680

Expenditures by Category

Compensation	309	367	375	412	408	419	523	550
Operating Expenses	80	123	63	228	136	125	141	130
Other Financial Transaction			1					
Total	389	489	438	640	544	544	664	680

Full-Time Equivalent

	3.68	4.31	3.91	4.10	4.10	4.10	5.10	5.10
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(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY20	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimate FY23	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
					FY24	FY25	FY24	FY25
1000 - General								
Balance Forward In		140		96				
Direct Appropriation	519	525	534	544	544	544	664	680
Cancellations		176						
Balance Forward Out	130		96					
Expenditures	389	489	438	640	544	544	664	680
Biennial Change in Expenditures				200		10		266
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				23		1		25
Governor's Change from Base								256
Governor's % Change from Base								24
Full-Time Equivalents	3.68	4.31	3.91	4.10	4.10	4.10	5.10	5.10

2403 - Gift

Balance Forward In	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Receipts	0	0	0					
Balance Forward Out	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Biennium 2024-25
Direct				
Fund: 1000 - General				
FY2023 Appropriations	544	544	544	1,088
Forecast Base	544	544	544	1,088
Change Items				
Addition of Communications Specialist		105	105	210
Maintain Current Operations		15	31	46
Total Governor's Recommendations	544	664	680	1,344

Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs

FY 2024-25 Biennial Budget Change Item

Change Item Title: Addition of Communications Specialist

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
General Fund				
Expenditures	105	105	105	105
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact = (Expenditures – Revenues)	105	105	105	105
FTEs	1	1	1	1

Recommendation:

The Governor recommends additional funding of \$105,000 in FY 2024 and each subsequent year from the general fund for a Communication Specialist (fringe benefits, IT needs, equipment). This would be a new position at the Council and would add one additional FTE to our current team of 4 FTEs. The Communication Specialist would be designated to lead and coordinate the Council’s bilingual communication efforts both in traditional and social media platforms, ensure compliance with ADA standards, and support community outreach.

Rationale/Background:

Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA) was created to advise on policy and legislation to address state-wide disparities, ensure equality, promote equity, and guarantee representation of Latinos across the state, a population of 345,640 or 6.1% of the total population according to the 2020 Census.

Thanks to the dedication and consistent work of staff in the last five years -particularly during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis-, the Council has become a reliable source of information in its main policy areas and in the legislative, policy making, and research processes. The problem is that the Council does not have a dedicated communications position, so relaying information, and all other communication tasks (including website updates to Tridion) are distributed amongst the Executive Director and staff. A Communication Specialist will improve our messaging in two languages, while freeing up significant staff time to work on policy, legislative outreach, and providing vital information to the legislature, state agencies, and governor’s office. There will be a significant multiplier effect from this position that will have an impact felt in every legislative district.

The lack of this position impacts staff productivity. It limits their time dedicated to the MCLA’s legislative and policy work and requires other sets of skills, including ongoing marketing and targeted communications, which are outside of the legislative and policy expertise of existing staff. This new position will support our efforts to provide continuous and consistent bilingual communications and engage Minnesotans statewide through both traditional channels (MCLA e-newsletters, press releases, announcements, website updates) and social media platforms, including videos and infographics. Community is also in need for more training and information about the legislative process, how our constituents can reach out to their elected officials, and learn more about issues evolving at the state legislature to be civically engaged. All of this requires cultural and linguistically responsible information, interaction, and follow-up with our constituents.

This proposal is based on community requests that continue to grow. The demand for translated official communications, quick information from government, user friendly flyers or visuals, contacts, and connections in Greater Minnesota, have consistently come from community leaders and organizations, as well as from other

government entities. Board members who represent their communities have also seen an increase of requests from the constituents they represent. Our board strongly supports this proposal.

The intended results with this new position will be:

1. Equity in the access to proper and timely information statewide through the design and implementation of a comprehensive communications strategy centered on legislation, policy, community engagement, and key information distribution (approximately 50% of time). The agency is frequently asked to provide support to inform community about existing programs, voting and Census information, re-districting work, and other processes to strengthen our democracy.
2. Improved support to logistics to set and promote Webex events, webinars, and short videos that can be distributed through our social media to inform on legislation and policy. This in-house support is even more essential now that the public consumes quick visual information, and most government operations and communications have switched to remote platforms that might continue indefinitely (approximately 25%).
3. Assistance to other state agencies in the creation of culturally competent information so that they are relevant and useful to more constituents (approximately 25% of time).
4. Innovative practices through leveraging the potential offered by virtual platforms to engage with the community. The pandemic has offered us an opportunity to close the gap with Greater Minnesota by using remote platforms that generate savings in travel and lodging.
5. User-friendly visual communications on social media to amplify government outreach efforts with underserved Latino communities.
6. Production of bilingual reports to the community (legislative summaries, legislative agenda, community reports, surveys) to inform policy makers, stakeholders, and local government entities.
7. Improved capacity to manage our website, social media, and other communication platforms to increase MCLA and government related information for the public.
8. Increased communications to update Minnesotans on the work of the Council and other legislative updates as frequent and quick as possible (Daily, weekly, monthly, and breaking news) using various communication platforms, without having a wait time on the translated materials.

The Council is not a cabinet level agency, so it was not part of the designated work groups advising on budget requests. Nevertheless, establishing frequent and ongoing communications and outreach to the public is an expectation from community and will help bridge the information gap that currently exists in regards of the existence of programs and services for all Minnesotans.

Proposal:

The addition of a Communication Specialist is a new initiative that would align with the Council’s goals in serving the community and state government by offering reliable bilingual information in a timely manner through culturally relevant media communications across the state. The addition of a Communication Specialist would help the Council increase its effectiveness and efficiency. It would support the Council to continue to meet its goals and expectations stated each year. This position would allow the legislative team (Executive Director and two Legislative and Policy Directors) to be more focused and become more specialized and innovative in their legislative proposals, and meeting with more legislators before, during, and after each session. It would also help the Council in supporting the state’s equity and inclusion efforts at a time when almost 20% of the population identifies as persons of color or indigenous. In times of crises, MCLA will be able to respond faster with reliable information. This position will be able to coordinate with the various community outreach directors in various state departments (MDE, DHS, MDH, DEED, DNR, etc.) to relay important information to the community, by being of service to them in providing videos/visuals with bilingual and relevant material.

The equipment that would be purchased is one cell phone plan and a video camera for the additional FTE to be able to conduct work. The estimated cost would be \$3,500. Information and Technology (IT) needs would cost \$5,000.

The specific group that will be positively impacted is the Latino Community which is estimated at 345,640 people or about 6.1% of the total Minnesota population. The proposal would complement the current direction of the Council by increasing capacity and delivery of services. We strongly believe that the restructuring of the Council in 2015 was a first step in the right direction. We are now cementing its second phase, which is to properly staff the Council to an efficient level to be able to carry out the Council's statutory duties. As the Council continues to provide quality evidence base information and recommendations, the demand continues to increase. The public nowadays is more avid to learn and be engaged to be part of the solution. Adding one FTE to our current team is a strategic investment that would increase our capacity tremendously to offer needed resources and information to the community. In return, MCLA will help the state take major strides in addressing disparities and promoting equity for all Minnesotans.

The Council estimates that this position will be hired by the end of December 2023, before the start of the 2024 legislative session. The agency will evaluate this proposal's success by the number of video spots and infographic produced to increase the understanding of the legislative process; the number of people that interact with MCLA's website and social media; the number of programs and services that community members start using; the number of increased relationships with legislators and policy makers; the number of Latinos who increase their visit to the Capitol and legislators; the number of board members who reach out to their communities and legislators; the number of Latino business that become vendors to the state.

Impact on Children and Families:

The proposal will perfectly align with the priorities of the Governor and the Children's Cabinet (as well as other state agencies) through promoting existing resources both in English and Spanish to increase access in the community. MCLA has been working very closely with MDE and other state agencies advising about the need to have information available in Spanish to parents, especially in Greater Minnesota. Access to quality education and securing the wellbeing of families and individuals are at the center of our legislation and policy agendas. MCLA has a dedicated staff working on education and keeps constant communication with stakeholders in the community, including parents, students, and officials. Based on our continuous community engagement, we've heard from multiple stakeholders what we need to do to better frame messages and identify trusted messengers in the community -including MCLA Council members-. This additional position will make sure that through a coordinated communications plan, more Latino children and families take advantage of existing programs and resources to reduce disparities in areas such as childcare and early education, access to mental health supports, and stable housing. Latino youth and families get their information through mobile phones and social media. This new position will be in charge to tailor better Latino outreach and communications strategies to make this information more accessible and sustainable over time.

Equity and Inclusion:

Removing barriers to information is the key to increase equity and inclusion in accessing existing state programs. This proposal will also be looking at compliance with language access in all communications. In addition, it will be tailored to close gaps in geographical areas where communication is either nonexistent or not effectively disseminated. The request for this additional FTE will increase the capacity of the Council in addressing communications gaps in a consistent and professional way. The impact will be positive for our diverse Latino communities. According to our listening sessions and additional outreach, the Latino community would like to see the capacity of the Council increase and their voices included. The Council's constituents would like to receive more of the information about the State of Minnesota provided by the Council, and an increased presence of our agencies in their Greater Minnesota communities.

The Latino community will continue to grow and make significant contributions to our state. Investing in improving the lives of this sector of the population is vital for the overall prosperity of Minnesota. The funding provided to the Council can become sustainable because of the cost-savings it would provide the state indirectly by supporting other state agencies in their efforts to reduce disparities and promote equity within their designated departments.

Tribal Consultation:

Does this proposal have a substantial direct effect on one or more of the Minnesota Tribal governments?

- Yes
- No

Results:

This is a new position so in terms of activities, the person hired will have to establish the performance measures of a comprehensive communications plan, but below you'll find some preliminary measures we would be using:

<i>Type of Measure</i>	<i>Name of Measure</i>	<i>Current Value</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Projected Value (without)</i>	<i>Projected Value (with)</i>	<i>Date</i>
Quantity	Community Events Videos Infographics Media coverage of our events					
Quality	Rural and Greater Minnesota attendees Social media views and reactions Positive reports Understanding of Latino nuances Simple and effective narratives					
Results	More collaborations with MCLA Increased information and contacts in Greater Minnesota Legislators gaining better understanding of Latino Minnesotans					

Data will be collected monthly on a similar chart, and shared with board members, the legislature, and community members.

Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs

FY 2024-25 Biennial Budget Change Item

Change Item Title: Maintain Current Service Levels

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
General Fund				
Expenditures	15	31	31	31
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact = (Expenditures – Revenues)	15	31	31	31
FTEs	0	0	0	0

Recommendation:

The Governor recommends additional funding of \$15,000 in FY 2024 and \$31,000 in each subsequent year from the general fund to maintain the current level of service delivery at the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA).

Rationale/Background:

Each year, the cost of doing business rises—employer-paid health care contributions, FICA and Medicare, along with other salary and compensation-related costs increase. Other operating costs, like rent and lease, fuel and utilities, and IT and legal services also grow. This cost growth puts pressure on agency operating budgets that remain flat from year to year.

Agencies face challenging decisions to manage these costs within existing budgets, while maintaining the services Minnesotans expect. From year to year, agencies find ways to become more efficient with existing resources. For MCLA, efficiencies have been implemented to help offset rising operating costs such as delivering services to a growing Latino population in Minnesota without an equivalent increase in Council financial resources. However, cost growth typically outstrips efficiencies, and without additional resources added to agency budgets, service delivery erodes. Growth in the Latino population is significant, it has increased 26 percent since 2010, compared to 7.6 percent growth for the state.

For MCLA, operating cost pressures exist in multiple categories—increases in compensation and insurance costs at the agency, increasing costs to maintain our current staff complement in a challenging labor market, and increasing IT costs. If an operational increase is not provided, the services MCLA delivers to Minnesotans will be impacted. MCLA is a trusted source of information for the Latino community, without this funding the Council will struggle to continue delivering bilingual information to Latinos in Minnesota.

Proposal:

The Governor recommends increasing agency operating budgets to support maintaining the delivery of current services. For MCLA, this funding will cover the cost of salaries, rent, insurance, IT and travel.

Results:

This proposal is intended to allow MCLA to continue to provide current levels of service and information to the public.