



m MINNESOTA
COUNCIL ON LATINO AFFAIRS

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Community Members, Partners, and Stakeholders,

The Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA) serves as a bridge between Minnesota's Latino communities and state government. Our role is to advise and inform the Governor, Legislature, state agencies, and other decision-makers on matters affecting Latino Minnesotans and to ensure that community perspectives are reflected in public policy discussions.

Throughout the 2026 legislative session, MCLA worked to elevate community voices by monitoring legislation, conducting policy analysis, providing testimony, submitting letters, participating in coalitions, and engaging with community members and stakeholders across the state. The experiences, priorities, and concerns shared by Latino Minnesotans helped inform our work and the information we provided to policymakers.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the community organizations, nonprofit partners, service providers, faith leaders, advocates, and volunteers who supported Minnesota families throughout the year. In particular, many organizations carried significant responsibilities before, during, and after Operation Metro Surge, providing trusted information, direct services, legal assistance, food support, healthcare navigation, and other critical resources to community members. Volunteers played a key role by delivering food and providing transportation,



further ensuring that essential needs were met throughout the community. Their work helped connect residents to services and demonstrated the strength of Minnesota's community networks.

This report highlights legislative actions, budget investments, policy developments, and MCLA's activities during the 2026 legislative session. We hope it serves as a resource for policymakers, community leaders, and residents seeking to better understand issues affecting Latino communities across Minnesota.

Thank you to our board members, community partners, legislators, advocates, and residents who contributed their time, expertise and lived experience throughout the year. Your engagement helps ensure that Minnesota's Latino communities continue to be seen, heard, and represented.

MCLA remains committed to its mission of informing policy, connecting communities to government, and ensuring that Latino voices continue to be reflected in the legislative and policymaking process. We invite you to continue partnering with us, sharing your perspectives, and working together to build a stronger future for all Latino Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

Sonia Reyes
Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

The 2026 legislative session ended on time, with lawmakers in a closely divided Legislature reaching agreement on major budget and policy priorities. Notable investments and policy changes were made in healthcare, housing, education, workforce, and economic development, infrastructure, and tax policy. Lawmakers also debated proposals on public safety, immigration enforcement, access to public services, and the well-being of diverse Minnesota communities.

Operation Metro Surge was a central issue during the session, prompting discussions among policymakers, community organizations, businesses, service providers, and residents about its economic and social impacts. Legislative debate drew on multiple studies and reports documenting the operation's economic consequences. Researchers at the University of San Diego estimated that Operation Metro Surge resulted in approximately \$600 million in lost business revenue and more than \$240 million in lost wages in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. More recently, the City of Minneapolis reported that Operation Metro Surge cost the city, its residents, and businesses nearly \$700 million in lost economic activity in Minneapolis alone. Lawmakers proposed measures related to economic recovery, worker support, housing stability, public safety, and community protection. Although some recovery proposals advanced through portions of the legislative process, most did not pass during the 2026 session.

Consistent with its statutory mission to advise and inform the Governor, Legislature, and state agencies on matters affecting Latino Minnesotans, MCLA monitored legislation, gathered input from Latino communities, provided testimony, submitted letters, participated in coalition efforts, and elevated community perspectives throughout the session. In response to community requests for accessible and timely information, MCLA also launched MCLA Informa, a monthly Spanish-language Facebook Live series that provides information, resources, and updates to Spanish-speaking communities across Minnesota.

This report summarizes key legislative actions, budget investments, policy developments, and MCLA activities during the 2026 session that may affect Latino communities throughout Minnesota.



FOUR FOCUS AREAS



K-12 AND HIGHER EDUCATION

During the 2026 legislative session, education policy discussions focused on school funding, student safety, access to educational opportunities, and the long-term sustainability of higher education financial aid programs. Lawmakers considered several proposals on the impact of Operation Metro Surge on students, families, and schools. These proposals did not become law, partly due to a divided Legislature. Legislation to establish a statutory right to education for all students, regardless of immigration status, also did not advance.

Approved policies included a ballot measure to increase distributions from the Permanent School Fund, providing more than \$50 million in additional annual statewide funding without raising taxes. Lawmakers also passed an omnibus K-12 bill that includes additional investments in statewide school safety programs.

In higher education, lawmakers addressed concerns about fraudulent enrollment, or “ghost students,” in the Minnesota State system. They also considered the financial stability of state aid programs. However, an anticipated funding shortfall for programs such as North Star Promise grants remained unresolved by the session’s end.



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Health and human services legislation during the 2026 session focused on healthcare access, provider stability, public program administration, and the long-term sustainability of Minnesota’s healthcare safety net. Lawmakers approved stabilization funding for Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) and authorized access to reserve funds for hospitals experiencing financial pressures related to uncompensated care.

The Legislature also approved investments in county technology systems used to process human services applications, eligibility determinations, and benefit payments. Additional legislation addressed compliance with federal Medicaid funding requirements and other administrative updates affecting public healthcare programs.

Throughout the session, policymakers debated eligibility requirements for publicly funded healthcare coverage and the potential impacts of changes to federal funding on Minnesota’s healthcare system. Legislation enacted during the session modified eligibility for certain state-funded health coverage programs for some noncitizen populations.

Lawmakers, healthcare providers, and community organizations also discussed broader barriers to healthcare access, including workforce shortages, affordability, utilization of preventive care, and the effects of public policy and enforcement activities on individuals’ willingness to seek medical care. These discussions highlighted ongoing concerns regarding access to routine, preventive, urgent, and emergency healthcare services for communities across Minnesota.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development and workforce policy discussions during the 2026 legislative session focused on infrastructure investments, tax policy, housing, workforce stability, business regulation, and support for key industries.

A key focus was economic relief for small businesses affected by Operation Metro Surge. Several bills were introduced to provide grants and loans for these businesses. A \$100 million loan bill passed the Senate but died in the House without a vote. The House Jobs, Workforce, and Economic Development Committee also passed a bipartisan omnibus bill that included the Governor's proposal to provide \$10 million in relief, but it never reached the House floor for a vote. Although none of these proposals passed, small businesses can still apply for the remaining \$60 million in funds from the Promise Act.

Worker benefits such as Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) and Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) were not modified, despite several proposals introduced to reduce or eliminate these programs. However, although the Department of Labor and Industry recovered \$1.8 million in stolen wages in the construction sector, a request to increase enforcement funding was not approved.

Housing legislation passed at the end of the legislative session included \$100 million for

affordable new homes and \$40 million in emergency rental assistance. It also provided funding for rental and mortgage assistance programs, housing infrastructure bonds, and initiatives intended to increase housing supply and affordability across the state.

The Infrastructure and Jobs Bill included provisions to invest \$1.24 billion in infrastructure and local projects, supporting transportation systems, water infrastructure, higher education facilities, environmental projects, and other public improvements throughout Minnesota. These investments are expected to support job creation.

The Legislature also approved an additional \$125 million in tax credits for homeowners through the Homestead Credit Refund. Tax legislation also included updates aligning state tax law with federal tax changes and the creation of a free direct tax filing system for eligible taxpayers.

Additional legislation addressed fraud prevention, virtual currency regulation, cannabis business licensing, and support for industries including agriculture, energy, and small business development. Lawmakers also considered workforce development and economic mobility strategies, as well as barriers to employment and business growth affecting communities across Minnesota.



PUBLIC SAFETY AND IMMIGRATION

Throughout the session, MCLA collaborated with the Minnesota Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans and the Minnesota Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage on legislation affecting immigrant communities. As part of this coalition, the three ethnic councils jointly submitted a letter supporting a proposal to provide \$100 million in grants and partially forgivable loans to businesses impacted by Operation Metro Surge. The letter cited estimates of approximately \$600 million in lost business revenue and \$240 million in lost wages in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, and outlined key considerations related to program design, eligibility, and accountability. It was addressed to Governor Walz, Lieutenant Governor Flanagan, legislative leadership, and caucus leaders.

MCLA also joined the Minnesota Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, the Minnesota Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, and the Minnesota Council on LGBTQIA2S+ Minnesotans in issuing a joint public

statement regarding immigration enforcement and its impacts on Minnesota communities. The statement highlighted the social, economic, and workforce contributions of immigrants and refugees to Minnesota and urged state and local leaders to ensure that all residents could access public services, education, healthcare, and legal resources. It also emphasized the importance of clear communication about the respective roles of federal, state, and local governments in immigration enforcement and public services.

During the session, state agencies, nonprofit organizations, local governments, researchers, business owners, and community members provided testimony and information on the economic, educational, healthcare, and public safety impacts of Operation Metro Surge. Discussions addressed employment disruptions, school attendance, business activity, and access to healthcare services.

Legislators introduced proposals to expand support services, community assistance programs, and oversight related to immigration enforcement activities. While some measures advanced through parts of the legislative process, many issues concerning immigration enforcement and community impacts remained unresolved at the close of the session and are expected to be revisited in future legislative sessions.



MINNESOTA LATINO LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE (MILLA)



Throughout the 2026 legislative session, MCLA advanced its policy priorities through the Minnesota Latino Leadership Alliance (MILLA), a coalition that convenes Latino-led and Latino-serving organizations from across Minnesota. MILLA promotes collaboration, information sharing, and coordinated advocacy on issues affecting Latino communities and works to advance the social, economic, legal, and political well-being of Hispanic, Latino, and Latine Minnesotans.

On February 17, 2026, MILLA held a press conference at the Minnesota State Capitol. The event outlined its 2026 legislative priorities and highlighted Operation Metro Surge's impact on Latino and immigrant communities. The press conference took place on the opening day of the legislative session. Community leaders, advocates, and state legislators gathered for the event. Coalition members called for economic recovery investments and support for workers and families. They also called for housing stability and policies to address the impact of Operation Metro Surge on Minnesota communities.

Throughout the session, MCLA provided regular legislative updates, policy analysis, and bill tracking. It also offered strategic guidance to MILLA members. These services helped organizations remain informed about legislative developments, committee hearings, advocacy opportunities, and emerging policy issues. Through regular meetings and communications, alliance members stayed engaged in the legislative process. They coordinated advocacy efforts on issues affecting Latino communities across the state.

MCLA also worked closely with MILLA members to develop and refine legislative language for a proposed

nonprofit support and recovery initiative. The initiative aimed to strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations serving Minnesota communities. Alliance partners collaborated on legislative strategy, bill development, messaging, testimony preparation, outreach efforts, and stakeholder engagement. MCLA coordinated discussions with legislators, their staff, coalition members, and community stakeholders.

In addition, MCLA helped organize advocacy activities in support of economic recovery legislation. The organization coordinated testimony, outreach, letters of support, and engagement with policymakers. Through MILLA, community organizations, business owners, nonprofit leaders, and residents had opportunities to share their experiences and perspectives directly with legislators.

Under the leadership of MILLA Steering Committee members Sonia Reyes, Executive Director of the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA); Irma Trapero, Executive Director of LatinoLEAD; and Rodolfo Gutiérrez, Executive Director of HACER, the alliance maintained a coordinated advocacy strategy throughout the session. Together, they helped guide alliance priorities and facilitate communication among members. They coordinated outreach efforts and elevated Latino community perspectives in legislative discussions.

These efforts strengthened collaboration among Latino-led and Latino-serving organizations. They increased the visibility of Latino policy priorities. The work also reinforced MCLA's role as a convener, connector, and trusted source of information for Latino communities and policymakers throughout Minnesota.

KEY POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Several notable developments during the 2026 legislative session sparked discussions among Latino communities and policymakers, reflecting broader conversations about representation, public accountability, and the role of public institutions.

One of the most significant developments was the formation of the Minnesota Latino Caucus, a sub-caucus of the House Republican Caucus created to serve as the face and voice of conservative Latinos in Minnesota. This caucus reflects the growing presence and influence of Latino elected officials in Minnesota's legislative process, as well as the increasing diversity of perspectives within the state's Latino community.

Another issue involved the repeal of César Chávez Day, a state observance established in 2023. In response to public reports and allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct involving women and minors, lawmakers introduced legislation to remove the observance from state law. HF4541 passed the House unanimously (129–0) and advanced through the legislative process. The proposal sparked debate among community organizations and residents about how public commemorations are created, maintained, and reevaluated. Perspectives varied: some supported the repeal, while others emphasized Chávez's historical role in the farmworker movement and civil rights advocacy.

The 2026 session established an independent Office

of the Inspector General (OIG) within the executive branch to strengthen oversight, accountability, and fraud prevention in state programs. The office is expected to be fully operational by September 1, 2027. It will oversee agency inspectors general, investigate credible allegations of fraud, and issue public reports on investigations and corrective actions. Beginning in 2028, the office may create a dedicated law enforcement unit focused on fraud and misuse of public funds. This legislation is particularly significant for Latino communities, as many public programs and services for Latino residents, business owners, and nonprofit leaders rely on oversight to ensure fairness and prevent misuse. Enhanced oversight helps safeguard resources and services that support Latino families and organizations throughout Minnesota.

A further key development during 2026 was the establishment of the Governor's Council to Record the Truth of Operation Metro Surge and Operation PARRIS on Minnesotans (Minnesota Truth Council). Created through Executive Order 26-05, the Minnesota Truth Council's purpose is to develop a comprehensive public record of the impacts of these operations on Minnesota residents, businesses, schools, childcare providers, and local communities. Its work includes documenting harms and abuses experienced during Operation Metro Surge, as well as highlighting how communities supported one another and demonstrated resilience. The Council will also develop recommendations to help prevent the recurrence of unlawful or harmful conduct by federal agents. Throughout 2026, it will convene public meetings and issue a preliminary report by October 31 and a final report to follow on December 1, 2026, to the Governor, legislative leaders, and Minnesota's congressional delegation. MCLA supported outreach and engagement efforts related to this initiative, including sharing information about participation opportunities, encouraging applications from Latino community members, and providing perspectives on the importance of Latino representation in the Council's membership and work. MCLA also served as a resource during the appointment process by identifying and recommending Latino community leaders and stakeholders whose experiences and expertise could contribute to the Council's work.



INVESTING IN THE LATINO COMMUNITY

POLICIES THAT PASSED

ORGANIZATION / PROGRAM	FUNDING AMOUNT	FOCUS AREA	IMPACT ON LATINO COMMUNITIES IN MINNESOTA
HCMC	Direct stabilization funding of \$205 million	Healthcare	Stabilization support for a major safety-net hospital serving a large share of uninsured and immigrant patients in Hennepin County.
County Human Services Systems	Technology investment \$90 million	Human Services	Updated county technology systems for processing human services paperwork and payments, improving access for low-income residents including Latino families.
Minnesota Latino Museum	~\$3 million (one-time, capital investment)	Arts and Culture	Capital investment to support the creation of the first Minnesota Latino Museum, preserving and celebrating Latino heritage and history in the state.
Rental Assistance (Housing Omnibus)	\$40 million	Housing Stabilization	Emergency rental assistance for families at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, providing relief to households impacted by Operation Metro Surge and broader housing instability.



INVESTING IN THE LATINO COMMUNITY

POLICIES THAT DID NOT PASS

BILL	FUNDING AMOUNT	FOCUS AREA	IMPACT ON LATINO COMMUNITIES IN MINNESOTA
SF 4535 / HF 4477 — Minnesota Business Recovery Loan Program	\$100 million	Economic Development	Would have provided grants and forgivable loans to small businesses impacted by Operation Metro Surge. The Senate version passed but failed in the House.
SF 4527 / HF 4342 — Small Business Relief Grants	\$100 million	Economic Development	Would have provided direct relief grants to small businesses negatively impacted by Operation Metro Surge activity across Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and greater Minnesota.
SF 3596 / HF 3425 — Emergency Rental Assistance	\$40–50 million	Housing	Would have provided dedicated rental assistance for families impacted by Operation Metro Surge, distinct from the broader Housing Omnibus rental assistance that did pass.
SF 3611 / HF 3435 — Safe Schools	N/A	Education	Would have limited immigration enforcement access on school grounds, protecting students and families from disruption to learning environments.
SF 3616 / HF 3415 — Safe Child Care Centers	N/A	Education / Child Care	Would have limited immigration enforcement access to licensed childcare facilities, protecting young children and their caregivers.
SF 3803 / HF 3409 — Right to Education	N/A	Education	Would have affirmed the right to public education for all Minnesota residents regardless of immigration status. A component was included in SF 3699, which passed the Senate but failed in the House.
SF 3754 / HF 3627 — North Star Promise Expansion	N/A	Higher Education	Would have expanded North Star Promise eligibility to families earning up to \$100,000, increasing college access for low- and middle-income Latino students.
HF 3623 — North Star Promise Expansion (MN State / Tribal Colleges)	N/A	Immigration / Public Safety	Would have established judicial warrant requirements in certain spaces, created separation ordinances between local and federal law enforcement, and codified other immigration-related protections. Forced to a House floor vote and voted down.
SF 3699 — Safe Spaces	N/A	Immigration / Public Safety	Would have established safe spaces across schools, childcare centers, college campuses, and courts, among other provisions. Passed the Senate but failed in the House.
SF 3771 / HF 3483 — Trespassing Without Judicial Warrant	N/A	Immigration / Public Safety	Would have created a trespassing ordinance for immigration authorities entering protected spaces without a judicial warrant, including school grounds.
SF 3628 / HF 3477 — Civil Rights Liability	N/A	Immigration / Public Safety	Would have created civil rights liability for constitutional violations by law enforcement and required federal agencies to agree to uphold constitutional rights before partnering with local authorities.

INVESTING IN THE LATINO COMMUNITY

POLICIES THAT DID NOT PASS

BILL	FUNDING AMOUNT	FOCUS AREA	IMPACT ON LATINO COMMUNITIES IN MINNESOTA
SF 3653 / HF 3886 — Local Detention Agreements	N/A	Immigration / Public Safety	Would have barred local governments from entering into agreements with federal authorities to detain individuals for immigration purposes.
SF 3842 / HF 3413 — Immigration Enforcement Agreements	N/A	Immigration / Public Safety	Would have prohibited state, county, and local governments from entering into certain Operation Metro Surge agreements and required termination of existing ones.
SF 3660 / HF 3405 — BCA Oversight of Federal Agents	N/A	Public Safety	Would have granted the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension explicit authority to investigate use-of-force incidents involving federal agents, including deaths and sexual assaults.





LATINO YOUTH DAY AT THE CAPITOL

As part of its commitment to strengthening civic engagement and leadership within Minnesota's Latino community, MCLA hosted its inaugural Youth Day at the Capitol on March 30, 2026. The event was organized in partnership with LatinoLEAD, Latinos en Comunidad, and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE). It brought together more than 75 Latino students, young professionals, educators, and community leaders from across the state for a day of learning, networking, and advocacy at the Minnesota State Capitol.

Guided by the theme "Learn. Connect. Advocate", participants gained firsthand experience with the legislative process. They explored pathways to public service and engaged directly with elected officials, policymakers, legislative staff, and community leaders. The youth also had the opportunity to hear from Minnesota Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan, whose remarks, including her personal story, inspired attendees to embrace civic leadership and community engagement. As part of their Capitol experience, the youth visited the House Chamber, sat in the representatives' seats, and received a guided tour, offering an immersive look at Minnesota's legislative spaces and history. Through presentations, interactive discussions, and networking, attendees learned how public policy is developed. They also learned how advocacy can influence decisions and how community members can shape Minnesota's future.

Small-group discussions gave participants a chance to hear personal stories of leadership and public service from Latino elected officials, county commissioners, city council members, legislative staff, and policy professionals. These conversations helped participants see themselves reflected in Minnesota's civic and political institutions. They also gained insight into the opportunities and challenges of public service.

The event also featured a bipartisan panel discussion with Representatives Samantha Vang, David Gottfried, and Sandra Feist, and Senator Eric Pratt. Panelists shared insights into their work and discussed current policy issues. They answered participants' questions and encouraged young people to stay informed, engaged, and active in their communities, regardless of political affiliation.

Youth Day at the Capitol reflects MCLA's ongoing commitment to developing the next generation of Latino leaders and advocates. By creating opportunities for young people, MCLA helps build civic knowledge, connect them with decision-makers, and strengthen their leadership skills. This support helps them envision themselves as future community leaders. MCLA is helping ensure Latino voices remain represented and engaged in shaping Minnesota's future.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT AND TESTIMONIES

Throughout the 2026 legislative session, MCLA engaged with the Legislature through letters of support, formal testimony, policy analysis, and coalition advocacy, each action rooted in the Council's statutory mandate to advise on matters shaping the economic, social, legal, and political well-being of Minnesota's Latino communities. MCLA also collaborated with state agencies to elevate community concerns, share feedback informed by direct input, and advance policies and practices that foster equitable access to services and opportunities for Latino Minnesotans.

BILLS SUPPORTED

SF 4176 – STAR ACT

Would have established judicial warrant requirements in certain spaces and created separation ordinances between local and federal law enforcement. Drawing on MCLA's 2025 community survey of more than 250 Latino Minnesotans, in which 45% of respondents identified discrimination as a concern and 36% cited immigration, MCLA submitted a letter of support to the Senate State and Local Government Committee in March 2026, framing the bill as a necessary step toward restoring community confidence and ensuring due process. The bill did not advance; however, a related measure, SF 3699, which sought to establish safe spaces across several settings, passed the Senate, but failed to get through the House at the end of the session.

HF 4477 / SF 4527 / SF 4535 – BUSINESS RELIEF LEGISLATION

In the wake of Operation Metro Surge, MCLA documented severe economic harm to Latino-owned businesses across the state, with many reporting revenue declines of 40% to 90%. Minnesota is home to at least 1,768 Latino-owned businesses supporting approximately 17,200 jobs and more than 10,500 self-employed Latino entrepreneurs. MCLA submitted letters of support to both the House and Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee and, in April 2026, returned to the

Senate committee with a follow-up letter specifically regarding SF 4535, underscoring the Council's sustained commitment to this issue as the bills moved through session. MCLA framed the proposed \$100 million in relief not as emergency aid but as a strategic investment in a community whose stability is directly tied to Minnesota's economic health. The legislation did not pass before the end of the session.

SALT APPLICATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

MCLA expressed support for legislation establishing a certified salt applicator program, noting that the share of Latino deicers in the U.S. workforce has grown from 15% to 18.4% since 2010. The Council highlighted the program's dual benefit: reducing salt pollution in Minnesota's waterways and creating a professional pathway for community members through industry certification.

SF 3737 – SNOW CLEARANCE PROFESSIONALS RECOGNITION

Would have dedicated a month to recognizing snow clearance professionals. MCLA submitted a letter of support in March 2026, noting the disproportionate representation of Latinos in snow removal industries and the broad community benefit of safe winter roads. Did not advance.

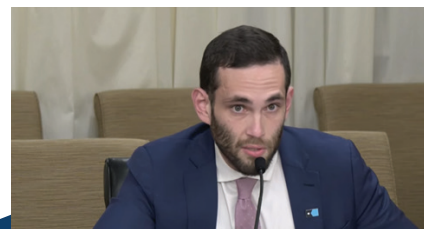
BILLS OPPOSED

HF 1323 – FINANCIAL AID CITIZENSHIP DISCLOSURE

Would have required disclosure of citizenship status as a condition of receiving state financial aid. MCLA testified in opposition, consistent with the Council's commitment to removing barriers that prevent Latino students from accessing education and economic opportunity. Did not advance.

HF 3168 – ETHNIC COUNCIL OPERATIONS

Would have altered the governance and operations of Minnesota's ethnic councils. MCLA testified in opposition, citing concerns about the proposal's potential impact on the councils' structure, effectiveness, and ability to fulfill their statutory responsibilities. The bill did not advance.



House File 1323
Undocumented noncitizens made ineligible for state financial aid p
MN House Tuesday, March 10, 2026

STATEMENTS & JOINT COUNCIL STATEMENTS

In addition to legislative testimony and policy advocacy, MCLA issued public statements and collaborated with Minnesota's other state councils on issues affecting Latino communities during the 2026 legislative session. These efforts helped inform policymakers, state agencies, and the public about community concerns and the potential impacts of policy decisions on Minnesota's Latino communities.

MINNESOTA MUST PROTECT IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

December 19, 2025 — Joint Statement

Issued jointly with the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, and the Minnesota Council on LGBTQIA2S+ Minnesotans, this statement called on Minnesota's state and local public officials to use their authority to counter harmful rhetoric and enforcement practices targeting immigrant and refugee communities. The councils noted that immigrants, including those with refugee status, contribute approximately \$26 billion to Minnesota's economy annually, account for 94% of the state's population growth, and represent 60% of labor force growth. The statement warned that fear-based enforcement destabilizes Minnesota's workforce, weakens small businesses, and threatens the state's broader fiscal health.



CALL TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST LATINAS

March 19, 2026 — MCLA Statement

Issued to Minnesota state and local public officials in response to recent reports of violence against Latinas, this statement reaffirmed MCLA's commitment to community safety, accountability, and culturally responsive support. The Council called on the Minnesota Legislature to establish a Task Force on Violence Against Latinas to examine root causes, develop community-centered solutions, and ensure appropriate intervention and prevention. The statement was issued in both English and Spanish and emphasized that Latino communities are not defined by any single individual but by the collective strength and resilience of many.

STATEMENT ON RENEE NICOLE GOOD AND ALEX PRETTI

January 7, 2026 — MCLA Statement

Following the fatal shootings that resulted in the deaths of Renee Nicole Good and Alex Pretti, MCLA issued a statement condemning the actions that took their lives and calling for immediate independent investigations into enforcement abuses and full accountability for federal actions. The Council stood in solidarity with the families of those lost and with all marginalized communities, Latinos, African-heritage Minnesotans, and Asian-heritage Minnesotans, immigrants, refugees, LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, and mixed-status families, who have endured ongoing fear and trauma. MCLA directed the public to the Minnesota Attorney General's Federal Action Reporting Form and called for approaches to public safety that uphold dignity and protect human life.

STATEMENT ON ATTEMPTED ENTRY AT THE ECUADORIAN CONSULATE

January 27, 2026 — MCLA Statement

Following reports of federal immigration agents attempting to enter the Ecuadorian Consulate in the Twin Cities, requiring consulate staff to physically block their entry, MCLA issued a statement affirming that respect for international law and diplomatic protections is non-negotiable. The Council committed to monitoring enforcement impacts, sharing findings with policymakers, and continuing to serve as a bridge between Latino and immigrant communities and state government. The statement also directed community members to the Minnesota Attorney General's Federal Action Reporting Form to document federal enforcement abuses.



STATEMENT ON THE REDUCTION OF FEDERAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS IN MINNESOTA

February 12, 2026 — MCLA Statement

As federal authorities signaled a planned reduction in large-scale immigration enforcement operations in Minnesota, MCLA acknowledged the development as a step toward stability while making clear that the transition must be swift, accountable, and accompanied by a genuine commitment to repairing harm. The Council emphasized that the economic, familial, and psychological damage had been immediate and profound, and that much of it would continue to surface over time. MCLA is committed to working alongside community leaders, policymakers, and public institutions to support recovery, rebuild trust, and ensure Minnesota remains a place where all communities can live, work, and thrive.

**JOINT LETTER: SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC
RELIEF TO BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY**

FEDERAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

*May 5, 2026 — Joint Statement to Governor and
Legislative Leadership*

Co-signed by the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage and the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, this letter was addressed directly to Governor Tim Walz, Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan, Speaker Lisa Demuth, House DFL Caucus Leader Zack Stephenson, Senate Majority Leader Erin Murphy, and Senate Minority Leader Mark Johnson. The councils urged the Legislature to adopt \$100 million in grants and partially forgivable loans for small businesses impacted by Operation Metro Surge. The letter documented that in Minneapolis and Saint Paul alone, small businesses had lost an estimated \$600 million in revenue and over \$240 million in wages. With session waning and urgency fading, the councils warned that failure to act would result in the permanent loss of small businesses and deeper cycles of disinvestment in the communities they serve. The letter called for relief that was sufficient, fraud-resistant, and broadly applicable across impacted communities, geographies, business sizes, and industries.



CONCLUSION

The 2026 legislative session included significant policy discussions and legislative actions affecting Minnesota's Latino communities. Working within a Legislature characterized by narrow partisan margins and a rapidly evolving policy environment, MCLA continued its statutory role of advising policymakers, providing information on issues affecting Latino Minnesotans, and participating in coalition efforts with community, nonprofit, business, and government partners. This work was informed by research, community engagement, and ongoing partnerships with organizations across Minnesota.

The session resulted in policy and budget decisions across a range of areas, including capital investments, tax policy, housing, healthcare, education, economic development, and cultural initiatives. Legislative outcomes included funding for transportation and infrastructure projects, housing assistance programs, support for healthcare providers, and state funding for the Minnesota Latino Museum, a significant milestone in preserving and celebrating the history, culture, and contributions of Latino Minnesotans. The session also included changes to healthcare eligibility policies, discussions regarding public safety, workforce participation, access to public services, and the impact of federal immigration policies on Minnesota communities.

While the session concluded with action on many issues, several topics are expected to remain part of ongoing policy discussions in future legislative sessions, including economic opportunity and workforce development, public safety, community trust and belonging, concerns regarding racial profiling and civil rights, youth and student well-being, access to educational opportunities, healthcare access, and the economic challenges experienced by workers, families, and businesses. MCLA will continue to fulfill its statutory responsibilities through research, community engagement, partnerships, and collaboration, while providing information and analysis and advising policymakers on issues that affect Latino Minnesotans.

mn MINNESOTA
COUNCIL ON LATINO AFFAIRS

 **651-757-1762**

 **658 Cedar Street Suite G-56 St. Paul, MN 55155**

 **MN.GOV/MCLA**

 **@Minncla**

 **/Minncla**

 **mnlainoaffairs**