



ILLINOIS LEGISLATIVE **LATINO CAUCUS** FOUNDATION

2024 Impact Report





**ILLINOIS LEGISLATIVE
LATINO CAUCUS
FOUNDATION**



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OUR MISSION

To foster the next generation of Latino leadership while advocating for the needs and wants of the community.

OUR VALUES

The three core values (Raices) of the ILLCF:

◆ **Equity**

◆ **Justice**

◆ **Community Development**

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation (ILLCF) is a non-partisan, non-profit organization founded in 2002 that advances policy, leadership, and community development in the state of Illinois. The Foundation advances equity for Latino communities across the state by producing data-driven research, investing in the next generation of Latino leaders, and creating spaces for community input to shape policy agendas.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Rey Raigoza
Treasurer

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Executive Director
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Deputy Director
Juan Carlos Arenas
¡Soy El Futuro!
Program Manager
Margarita Olmos
Policy Advisor
Marissa Leal
*Illini Science Policy Fellow**

*The Illini Science Policy Program is a unique post-graduate opportunity for students graduating from any of the University of Illinois campuses and who are interested in University of Illinois Extension's critical issue areas – food, economy, environment, community, and health – and the policy decisions affecting those resources.



RAÍCES

OVERVIEW

Through the Raíces program, the Foundation fulfills its role as the public policy arm of the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus, advancing a strategic agenda grounded in the core values of **equity, justice, and community development**. These guiding principles inform a comprehensive platform that: (1) addresses a broad spectrum of policy issues affecting Latino communities; (2) intentionally responds to the distinct needs of specific populations, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ Latinos; and (3) promotes innovative approaches to improving the built environments where Latinos live—particularly in recognition of the growing Latino presence in suburban areas beyond the city of Chicago.

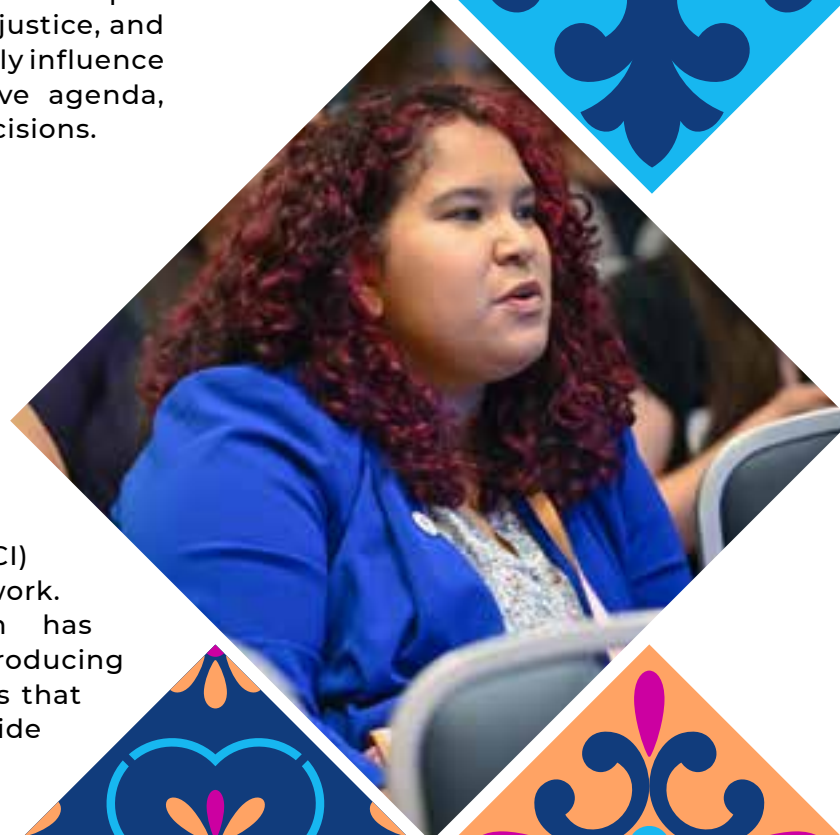
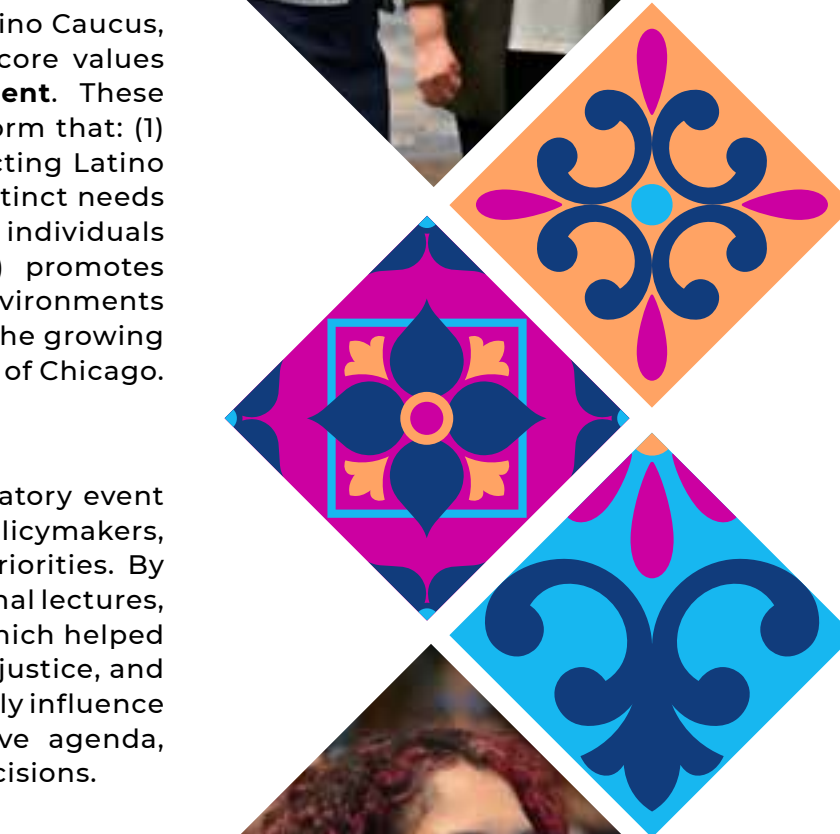
◆ Conference

The Foundation's annual conference is a participatory event where over 1,000 community members, leaders, policymakers, and advocates come together to shape policy priorities. By fostering meaningful dialogue rather than traditional lectures, the conference generates actionable solutions, which helped the Foundation define its commitment to equity, justice, and community development. These discussions directly influence the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus's legislative agenda, ensuring community voices guide state policy decisions.

◆ **1,000+**
PARTICIPANTS
& RESPONSES

◆ Raíces Report

While the Foundation serves as the public policy arm of the Illinois Latino Caucus, our partnership with the Great Cities Institute (GCI) brings a critical research dimension to our work. Through this collaboration, the Foundation has significantly expanded its research capacity—producing data-driven insights and evidence-based findings that directly inform policy recommendations and guide community-focused initiatives.



◆ Raíces on the Road

Each legislative session, the Foundation conducts district tours to promote the Raíces platform while actively soliciting community input. This approach enables a deep engagement with local concerns, ensuring that Raíces continues to guide the Latino Caucus's policy priorities. The initiative culminates annually in Springfield during Latino Unity Day, where the Foundation collaborates with partner nonprofits and advocates to amplify a unified community voice. In 2023, the Foundation hosted five Raíces on the Road events throughout the state, including in Aurora, Waukegan, Melrose Park, and Springfield.

◆ Latino Unity Day

Latino Unity Day (LUD) is a two-day conference in Springfield, Illinois, bringing together community advocates and stakeholders to address current policy concerns impacting the Latino community. The event fosters solidarity, civic engagement, and collective advocacy for policies that promote the well-being of Latinos in Illinois. The Foundation plays an active role in planning and executing LUD activities, participating in the steering committee and contributing to panel discussions through topic development, panelist involvement, and supporting day-of activities.

◆ ◆ **700** ◆ ◆
ATTENDEES

◆ Policy Briefs

In preparation for legislative sessions, the Foundation produces policy briefs that analyze the budgets and expenditures of state agencies, public universities, and commissions as they relate to Latino populations in Illinois. By examining key aspects of executive branch operations—including spending, contracting, grantmaking, and hiring—our research can be used to assess the effectiveness of equitable representation and the distribution of services, programs, and resources within state government. The analyses equip policymakers with the insights necessary to make informed decisions and advocate for fair and equitable resource allocation.

◆ **50+** ◆
REPORTS



Ambar Medrano J
Diana Mendoza-Va
Irerri Miranda-Gonz

¡SOY EL FUTURO!

❖ Scholarship & Leadership Program

The Foundation awards twenty \$5,000 scholarships annually, to students across Illinois. Recipients are honored at our annual gala and participate in a weekend Leadership Development Training Program.

- +400 scholarships have been awarded
- +\$1 Million in scholarship funds
- +500 applications received per year

❖ Alumni Association

The Alumni Association currently includes 367 members, with 26 alumni serving on the Alumni Association Board. Alumni help support efforts across three subcommittees:

- Leadership Development
- Networking and Outreach
- Communications
- Scholarship Review

❖ Internship & University Partnerships

The Foundation collaborates with university partners, such as UIC's LARES, to help Latino students develop leadership skills, engage in civic initiatives, and connect with mentors through discussions on policy, legislation, and professional growth. Each year our caucus leadership mentors over 50 students, many times culminating in internship programs at district offices.

Additionally, the Foundation nominates alumni to intern with the State of Illinois – successfully placing alumni in various Illinois departments. Throughout both programs, board members and staff support students with mentorship, guidance on capstone projects, and opportunities to build professional networks while fostering future leaders and agents of change in the Latino community.

❖ Cafecitos

Cafecitos is an online professional and leadership development workshop hosted by the ILLCF Alumni Association. The purpose of Cafecito con ILLCF is to equip alumni and community members with tools to advance their careers, and become empowered leaders in our community. Cafecitos, cover a range of impactful topics, including:

- Branding and Marketing
- Cultural identity and Its Psychological Impacts
- How to Start an LLC
- Immigration
- Mental Health
- Personal Finances

Alumni Association

367
MEMBERS

PLÁTICAS

The series of pláticas are sector-specific conversations created to explore gaps, challenges, and opportunities as they relate to the Latino community. These discussions have proven to be valuable platforms for both education and long-term relationship-building—often resulting in tangible policy outcomes. The Foundation has partnered with the following industries:

- **Broadcasters & Media**
- **Transportation**
- **Biopharmaceutical and medical industry**
- **Cannabis**
- **Construction**
- **Colleges & Universities**

◆ **Latina Heritage Brunch**

The Latina Heritage Brunch is an annual large-scale Plática in partnership with diverse sectors to amplify the voices of Latinas. This event highlights a specific sector where Latinas are making a significant impact. The Foundation provides a vital platform for Latinas to come together, share their stories, and foster mutual support. Whether participating as panelists or engaging during networking sessions, attendees unite to celebrate successes, discuss challenges, and uplift one another across their respective industries.



Latina Heritage Brunch
300+
ATTENDEES



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

Community Engagement

The Foundation hosts an annual large-scale celebration that serves not only as a key fundraising event, but more importantly, as a an opportunity to uplift Latino identity and pride. From storytelling series that uplift local heroes, to artist-designed chairs crafted and upholstered by hand, to vibrant Lotería card displays honoring Latino representation—each element showcases the richness and diversity of our Raíces. Through art, storytelling, and community engagement, the Foundation brings together members from across the state to honor our shared heritage and strengthen cultural connection.

Rapid Response Program

The Foundation addresses emerging needs in the Latino community through its Rapid Response Program. This initiative provides up to four grants of \$5,000 each to support urgent situations or timely opportunities that advance community well-being. To date, the Foundation has awarded over \$100,000 in rapid response grants. Past Rapid Response grants have supported efforts such as:

- Community Flooding Relief
- Assistance for Newly Arrived Migrant Populations
- Support for DACA Recipients Seeking Advance Parole

Illinois Asian American Legislative Caucus Foundation (IAALCF)

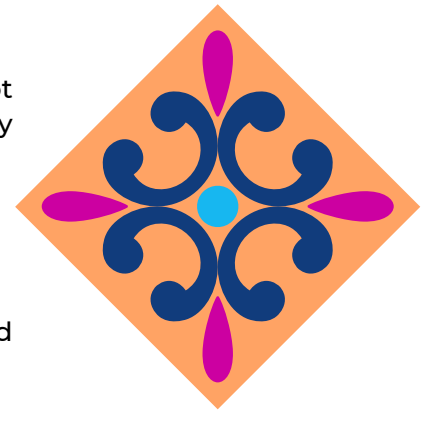
IAALCF Fiscal Sponsor

In May 2024, the Foundation proudly supported the establishment of the Illinois Asian American Legislative Caucus Foundation (IAALCF). Modeled after the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation, IAALCF was created to serve as the public policy arm of the Illinois Legislative Asian American Caucus. As a non-partisan, tax-exempt organization, IAALCF is committed to advancing equity and representation for Asian American communities across the state. The Foundation is honored to serve as the fiscal agent during IAALCF's initial organizational phase, reflecting our ongoing commitment to cross-cultural collaboration and coalition-building.

Illinois Legislative Black Caucus Foundation (ILBCF)

Annual Black & Brown Celebration

Every year, we partner with the ILBCF to come together and celebrate the end of session. Together, we host the annual "Black and Brown Celebration" in Springfield, Illinois. This is an opportunity to network and celebrate the long-standing partnership and bonds we have as brothers and sisters.





ILLINOIS LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS FOUNDATION

OUR IMPACT

The Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation empowers Latino communities to lead, influence, and thrive—ensuring that equity, justice, and development are not just values, but lived realities across Illinois. More than a nonprofit—the Foundation is a strategic infrastructure for Latino empowerment in Illinois. Its work creates measurable change by:

- ◆ **Rapid Response Program**
- ◆ **Elevating New Latino Leaders**
- ◆ **Shaping Responsive, Inclusive Policy**
- ◆ **Building Lasting Community Capital**
- ◆ **Responding with Agility to Community Needs**
- ◆ **Partnering Across Sectors to Maximize Reach**



◆ **Gardenia**

Amazon
Cabrera Capital
The Chicago Community Trust
ComEd
Google
Illinois Trial Lawyers Association
Peoples Gas
Senate President Don Harmon
Speaker of the House Emmanuel “Chris” Welch
United Airlines
University of Illinois System

◆ **Clavel**

Accel Entertainment
AFSCME Council 31
Ameren Illinois
ASI NE Healthcare Services
Chicago Blackhawks Foundation
Chicago Teachers Union
Comcast
Constellation
faegre drinker
Foundation for Fair Contracting
Illinois Association of Nurse Anesthesiology
Illinois Railroad Association
Instacart
McDonalds
Meridian
MZI Group, Inc.
National Association of Landscape Professionals
NextEra Energy
Nicor Gas
Pepsi Co.
PhRMA
Reyes Coca-Cola Bottling
SEIU Healthcare/SEIU Council
TruGreen
Tik Tok
Uber
University of Illinois - Chicago
Urban Warriors
Vistra
Vertex
Wintrust
Wynndalco Enterprises

◆ **Semilla**

abbvie
allwyn
Alternative Schools Network
BrightStart 529
Bristol Myers Studio
The Chicago School
Crown Castle
CSI 3000
dailypay
DoorDash
Gilead
Heartland Bank & Trust Company
Johnson & Johnson
JP Morgan Chase & Co.
Merck
Mercury
Nascar Chicago
paycom
Snapchat
St. Augustine College
Technet

◆ **Raices**

American Property Casualty
Insurance Association
Aurora University
Bally's Chicago Casino
Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies
Illinois Bankers
Lyft
Miche Fest
Primera Foundation
State Farm
Zillow

◆ **Sector of the Night**

IL Corn Growers Association
Illinois Beef Association
Illinois Farm Bureau
Illinois Milk Producers Association
Illinois Pork Producers

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



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