



2019 Impact Report



From top to bottom: Carolina Ortiz, Ryan Perez, Marco Hernández, Gaby Cuate, Rico Durán, Francisco Segovia

Estimada Comunidad,

On Friday, September 20, 2019, a young Latino organizer stood behind a podium and a large crowd of over 8,000 community members on the stairs of the Minnesota Capitol. Under scorching sunrays magnified by the white marble steps, he reflected on his life journey up to this point. How is it that Marco and other student leaders of color could become such a powerful voice in the state's climate movement?

Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Acción Latina (or COPAL) formed in January 2018 with the goal of uniting Latinxs in Minnesota in active grassroots communal democracy that builds racial, gender, social and economic justice across community lines. Since launching, the organization has grown to include 7 staff members, a base of 150+ volunteers, and over 10,000 supporters across the state. In addition, this year, it has gained a 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) legal status, creating greater opportunities for community service as well as direct political action. Forever in gratitude for the support of TakeAction Minnesota, COPAL will be operating as a totally independent organization. With new energy, COPAL is uplifting Latino voices across the state and building community power.

This year, COPAL has further developed programs to advance its core mission with regards to the Environment, Democracy 2050, Education, Immigration, and Leadership.

2020 will be full of challenges. The Census and the 2020 elections will have serious implications for years to come. Underpinning work in both areas is a struggle between two world views: a world view that cages immigrant children, concentrates wealth in fewer hands, and ignores the human-made environmental catastrophes impacting the Earth and its people; and a people-driven world view that embraces a shared humanity and prioritizes the need to protect the planet. COPAL, committed to advancing the people's world view, plans to engage thousands of Latinxs across the state to participate in the upcoming election and the U.S. Census.

To join our movement, COPAL invites you to take the next steps:

Become a sustaining member:

copalmn.nationbuilder.com/donate

Volunteer with Us:

copalmn.nationbuilder.com

Seguimos adelante, the future belongs to us!

Francisco Segovia
Executive Director

|| Many small people in small places doing small things can change the world. ||

Eduardo Galeano

Immigration – Citizenship:

COPAL's Citizenship Classes are an opportunity for members of the community who are eligible to take the test required to become a citizen of the United States. COPAL community leaders walk students through the learning process, provide legal advice, and build relationships within the classroom. This year, 60 students joined COPAL in preparing for their citizenship tests.

The Minnesota USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) office has a backlog of 17,000 applications. Due to the backlog, the waiting time for citizenship went up from six months to twenty-four months. Plus, there are close to 9 million immigrants nationwide that are eligible for citizenship but haven't applied. So, COPAL is encouraging the community to naturalize now to get the right to vote later. This year, student leaders from the Citizenship Class program met with Representative Angie Craig to make the case for why her office should advocate for citizenship issues.

Immigration – TPS:

There are about three hundred thousand people in the United States from 13 different countries with Temporary Protected Status (TPS), whose status was put in jeopardy by the Trump administration. Minnesota is home to about five thousand TPS holders. So, COPAL has made TPS advocacy part of its core programming. Leaders of the Minnesota TPS Campaign met with members of the Minnesota congressional delegation, advocating for permanent residency. As a result of community power-building and advocacy, TPS recipients won the fight for a 1-year extension.

There is no social-change fairy.

There is only change made by the hands of individuals.

Environment:

Climate change and resource extraction have created economic and environmental refugees across the world. So, COPAL is building power with frontline communities to pass environmental policies that ensure everyone benefits from a green economy. COPAL's Climate Justice Team facilitated a tour for Wendy Cruz, a Honduran eco-feminist.

The team also organized a delegation to Central America to learn about the region's environmental degradation and the political & social issues that push people to migrate. And, moving to build political power, the team will introduce climate justice legislation in the upcoming 2020 MN legislative session.

Census:

Minnesota risks losing 1 of its 8 congressional seats because of a Census undercount. So, COPAL is working to ensure a complete Census count as part of its inclusive Democracy program. This year, COPAL collected over 1,000 Census Pledges: "Yes, We Count-Invisibles No Más." A full-census campaign will be implemented in March-September of 2020. Politicians have tried to scare immigrant communities away from participating in the Census. However, it is important that every person be counted regardless of documentation, because the Census is used to determine vital community resources, such as funding for schools and hospitals. It is safe to participate. By law, the Census cannot release identifiable information about an individual for 72 years. By participating in the Census, a community member makes their power visible and their community stronger.

Action

Education:

Minnesota consistently ranks among the top states for education, but is also among the worst in terms of racial inequality, routinely failing students of color. Due to an unmet resource need, Latino students are falling behind. So, COPAL is organizing with parents of students attending Minneapolis Public Schools to increase the graduation rate among Latino students.

Early in 2019, COPAL began organizing with parents whose children are attending Minneapolis Public Schools. At this time, the district released the first version of the Comprehensive District Design (CDD). The CDD, according to the district, examines how MPS educates students, how students are placed in and transported to MPS schools, and how the district ensures tax dollars adequately fund this important work.

Parents adopted a principle on public education to guide their work: ALL KIDS HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN EQUAL EDUCATION. Using this principle, parents implemented the following actions:

- Parents began running the Latino Parent Advisory Council (LPAC)
- Parents identified and began working on 3-key issues for the school year 2019-2020: To better the communication between MPS and parents, to influence the bilingual department of MPS to support a vision centered in the need and aspiration of the students and families, to open the office of Latinx Student Achievement

Leadership:

COPAL has made leadership development a core aspect of all its programs. COPAL will continue to center and uplift the voices of affected community members in the struggle for a just society and an active, grassroots, communal democracy that transcends community lines.

Thank you!

We at COPAL also extend our sincere appreciation to our donors; without them our work would not be possible. These organizations support COPAL's core areas: Environment, Democracy 2050, Education, Immigration, and Leadership:

- Bymore Supermercado
- Energy Foundation
- Equity Fund
- El Fondo
- McKnight Foundation
- Movement Voter Project
- Mortenson Family Foundation
- New Venture Fund
- The Graves Foundation
- The Minneapolis Foundation
- The Saint Paul Foundation
- Schwab Charitable Foundation
- VOQAL
- And many more individual donors!



From top to bottom: Peggy Ponce, Mónica María Hurtado, Felipe Illescas, Ruth Meza, Erika Hernandez, Henry Jiménez

Thank you

COPAL continues to partner with organizations that share a commitment to empower people in the community through volunteering, community service, and civic engagement.

We at COPAL would like to acknowledge the following organizations for their incredible work and continued partnership:

- Alianza Americas
- America Votes
- Augsburg University
- Black Immigrant Collective
- Centro Tyrone Guzman
- City of St. Paul
- City of Minneapolis
- Ecuasonido Radio
- Emerge
- Gustavus Adolphus College
- ICOM
- ILC
- Indivisible MN
- La Prensa de Minnesota
- Latino Economic Development Center
- Macalester College
- Mankato State University
- Minneapolis Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
- Minneapolis Public Schools
- Minnesota 350
- Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs
- National Partnership for New American
- National TPS Alliance
- Our Minnesota Future
- Revista Integra
- Sacred Heart Church (Saint Paul)
- Saint Cloud State University
- Saint John's University
- Take Action MN
- Unity Unitarian Church (Saint Paul)
- University of Minnesota – Professor Kathleen Ganley and Students
- Univision
- Volunteer Lawyer Network
- Voices for Racial Justice
- Women's March MN
- 100% Campaign

Board of Directors

Thank you to our executive board of directors. We applaud your dedication to this organization as we grow and expand our mission. We value your faith in the organization and vision for what we can accomplish.

- Peggy Ponce
- Felipe Illescas
- Henry Jiménez
- Erika Hernandez
- Mónica Maria Hurtado
- Ruth Meza

Special Thanks

On behalf of our members, staff, and board of directors, we want to express our most profound appreciation for the support provided by Bancroft Elementary School in organizing and hosting the visit of the Salvadorian Consulate. Bancroft Elementary allowed us to serve over 3000 people in three days. Your efforts contributed substantially to the quality and effectiveness of the event.



July 21st, 2019 Salvadorian Consulate Event.