



We share the latest news by and for our community!

Dear friend,

Recently, we have celebrated the hiring and promotion of several team members!



Nubia Imbago has joined our team as a Community Educator and Navigator. Nubia studied business administration at Santiago de Cali University and worked in the private business sector before coming to the United States. Upon arriving, she saw the need to continue her education, studying English and labor rights. From this experience, she began to do community work to enable others to learn the same things she did. We are grateful to Nubia for all of her contributions to the community and warmly welcome her to the team.



Claudia Lainez has joined our team as an Employment and Career Counselor. Claudia grew up in El Salvador during the Civil War. At the age of 17, Claudia immigrated to the United States. Formerly an organizer with the National TPS Alliance (NTPSA), Claudia has dedicated much of her life to fighting the injustices faced by TPS holders and undocumented immigrants. Through NTPSA, Claudia learned of COPAL and moved to Minnesota from California to work at our Workers' Center. We are delighted to welcome her to the team!



Leslee Gutiérrez Carrillo has been promoted to Lead Environmental Justice Organizer after working at COPAL since March 2020. A community activist who centers her organizing around pipelines, incinerators, cumulative impacts, and other issues that disproportionately harm communities of color, Leslee is committed to centering the lives and experiences of frontline communities, as well as understanding the connections between the climate crisis and forced migration. We are proud to announce Leslee's promotion!



Environmental Justice

This month, our Environmental Justice Team has grown! We now have Carolina Ortiz, Tim Schaefer, Leslee Gutiérrez Carrillo, and Alejandro Cáceres-Aranda leading our environmental justice work.

Recently, the bill HF3146 authored by Rep. Fue Lee was heard in the Environment and Natural Resource Committee in the House of Representatives. Our Frontline Communities Protection Coalition is working alongside Rep. Lee to push this legislation forward and get community input. Alejandro Cáceres-Aranda, our Public Policy Intern, testified in favor of the bill.

Additionally, a few members of our team went on a weeklong delegation to Mexico City to hear from organizations throughout Latin America and the U.S. doing work to aid those forced to migrate from their home countries. They visited two organizations, Centro Prodh and CAFEMIN, which run shelters assisting migrants from Central America and Haiti, both of which are extremely impacted by current environmental and economic issues.

During their time in Mexico, they joined the largest protest in the country for International Women's Day. The day was not a time for celebration, but rather a commemoration and fight for all the women who have been murdered, assaulted, or kidnapped due to gender-based violence. "This was the most moving and inspiring protest I have ever witnessed. The strength and courage from these women give me hope for change—for my sisters, for my mother, for my friends in Mexico," said Leslee Gutiérrez Carrillo, Lead Environmental Justice Organizer with COPAL.



Health and Wellness

Everyone has had a long and complicated year. However, COPAL has been able to support the community throughout the pandemic and alleviate some of the financial strains of paying rent and utilities at home. COPAL has a helpline to connect people with the resources they need, and through this program, has helped distribute \$1,081,915.18 to members of the community in the last year. COPAL partnered with RentHelpMN to support families until last January, and since then has been finding other ways to provide the community with the support they need.

Although the RentHelpMN program has ended, COPAL continues to support the community by connecting people with available resources. To contact our navigators, call (612) 249-8736. If they don't answer, please leave a voicemail with your name and phone number and they will call you back as soon as possible.

In early March, the community vaccination clinic that we have been holding every Wednesday since August 2021 in South Minneapolis, moved from Mercado Central to La Alborada. There, we continue to offer vaccination against COVID-19 for those over 5 years of age on a weekly basis. In the past month, the Health & Wellness team has organized 12 free community vaccination clinics in several cities and towns in the state.

We continue to provide the Latino community with access to vaccination, rapid COVID-19 tests, and KN95 masks, ensuring that we have the tools we need to protect our and our families' health.



Civic Participation and Leadership

Recently, our Civic Engagement and Leadership efforts have focused on town halls. We have had some of the first delegates participating in the precinct caucuses, or community meetings where neighbors come together to express which candidates and platforms to support. We are working hard to ensure delegates are prepared and know what to expect; we are planning a preparatory meeting with more delegates for the next convention.

We are also hosting a phone bank with the support of student volunteers from the University of Minnesota in preparation for the upcoming election and will have two more sessions in April.

Lastly, we are expanding our Leadership and Civic Engagement meetings, which meet monthly to strategize, plan events, and take action that empowers the community to create political and social change.



South-Central Initiative

The COPAL office in Mankato seeks to ensure our community in the south-central region of Minnesota can access the necessary resources to achieve a better quality of life.

Additionally, with the support of community organizations and leaders, we have successfully provided health education materials, KN95 masks, and at-home rapid tests to more than nine counties in the state.

Through health promotion work, we are reaching out to rural Minnesota, listening to community members' questions and concerns, and offering access to vaccination for children ages 5 and up.

All this work would not have been possible without the efforts of regional committee members, community leaders, agencies, organizations, and institutions. We count on you all to make a more just Minnesota.



Finally, we wanted to invite you to our upcoming celebration. On **Sunday, May 1**, COPAL's Primero de Mayo Workers' Center will celebrate its first anniversary. The event will be at the Workers' Center located at **3521 E. Lake St.** from **10 am – 2 pm.**

Last year on International Workers' Day, we opened the Primero de Mayo Workers' Center, a COPAL essential worker wealth creation, led by immigrant workers, that elevates the voice and leadership of our community. The Center has been working on building a society where we can work and live a dignified life. This year, we celebrate the commitment and contributions made by our community to fight for workers' rights.

[Register here](#)

In solidarity,

COPAL



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