

www.COPALMN.org



NEWS



SEPTEMBER 25 2025

Latine Heritage & Community Impact: COPAL September Newsletter

As September continues, we take a moment to reflect on the season and all that we have built together. This month has been filled with learning, action, and moments of celebration that remind us of the strength of our community.

This September, as we mark Latine Heritage Month, we recognize that celebrating can feel complicated, especially now that our communities and allies are being targeted and so many still feel unseen. Yet history reminds us that Latine communities have always faced hardship with resilience, from the farmworkers' movements that reshaped labor rights to the student walkouts that demanded educational equity. Honoring our heritage means not only remembering these struggles and triumphs, but also continuing to uplift our voices, defend our dignity, and advance justice here in Minnesota and beyond.

As we prepare to close this chapter and look ahead to the last months of the year, we remain grounded in our shared vision of justice, dignity, and collective care.

Environmental Justice

On August 14, members of COPAL's Environmental Justice Committee gathered at the COPAL Worker's Center in Minneapolis for the *Future of Gas Public Comment Workshop*. This hands-on training gave participants the tools to draft and submit public comments to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), while also deepening their understanding of the urgent need for a just energy transition. The workshop underscored how critical it is for our communities to speak up on the decisions that directly impact our environment, health, and future generations.



Later in the month, on August 30, COPAL joined families, youth, and community leaders at *Latine Day at the Expo Center* during the State Fair. At the Eco Space, our Environmental Justice team shared educational resources, interactive activities, and messages highlighting the importance of local climate action. It was a vibrant opportunity to celebrate Latine culture while strengthening alliances and uplifting the voices of those committed to building a healthier, more sustainable future.

Looking ahead, the fall season will bring several opportunities for our communities to come together, celebrate, and take action for environmental justice:



College Tour – October 6–9

Students will visit Minnesota universities to explore educational opportunities and reflect on their role in climate leadership. Call us for more information at our Navigator line at (612) 249-8736.



Farm Tour – October 11.

An educational journey through local agricultural spaces with activities, a community lunch, and shared reflections on sustainability and our connection to the land.

Find more information [here](#).

This month also brought a powerful moment of international solidarity. From September 2–4, COPAL participated in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in Riohacha, Colombia. There, we brought the voices of migrant communities in Minnesota to the global stage, emphasizing the urgent connection between migration and climate change. Our message was clear: the climate crisis knows no borders, and migrant families are often on the frontlines of its impacts. By lifting up these realities, we reaffirmed that the fight for a healthier planet is inseparable from the fight for justice and dignity for displaced people, because caring for our Earth and honoring human dignity must always go hand in hand.



Primero de Mayo Workers' Center

At the Worker's Center, our programs continue to create pathways for community members to learn, grow, and build opportunities for the future. Every week, participants have access to computer classes, employment workshops every Thursday, citizenship classes, and regular information sessions with practice tests to prepare for the driver's license exam. The Youth Committee also meets once a month, offering a space for young leaders to connect and organize.

So far in 2025, the Worker's Center has administered more than 3,700 practice exams for the driver's license test, a reflection of both the high demand and our community's determination to access safe, reliable mobility.

We want to invite you,

PROTECTING MINNESOTA'S DREAMS | **PROTEGIENDO LOS SUEÑOS DE MINNESOTA**

30 SEP 4 PM | **COPAL MN, 3702 E Lake St, Minneapolis**

Nuestros jóvenes are organizing! We're uplifting our voices on the DOJ lawsuit that threatened the North Star Promise & Dream Act. **Join us for a youth-led event focusing on education and building power**

¡Nuestros jóvenes están organizándose! Estamos alzando nuestras voces sobre la demanda del DOJ que amenazó la North Star Promise y la Dream Act. **Únase a nosotros en un evento dirigido por jóvenes, enfocado en la educación y en fortalecer nuestro**

Comida gratuita y reunión comunitaria
Espacio para conectar con jóvenes y aliados

Free food & community gathering
Space to connect with youth & allies

COPAL
www.COPALMN.org

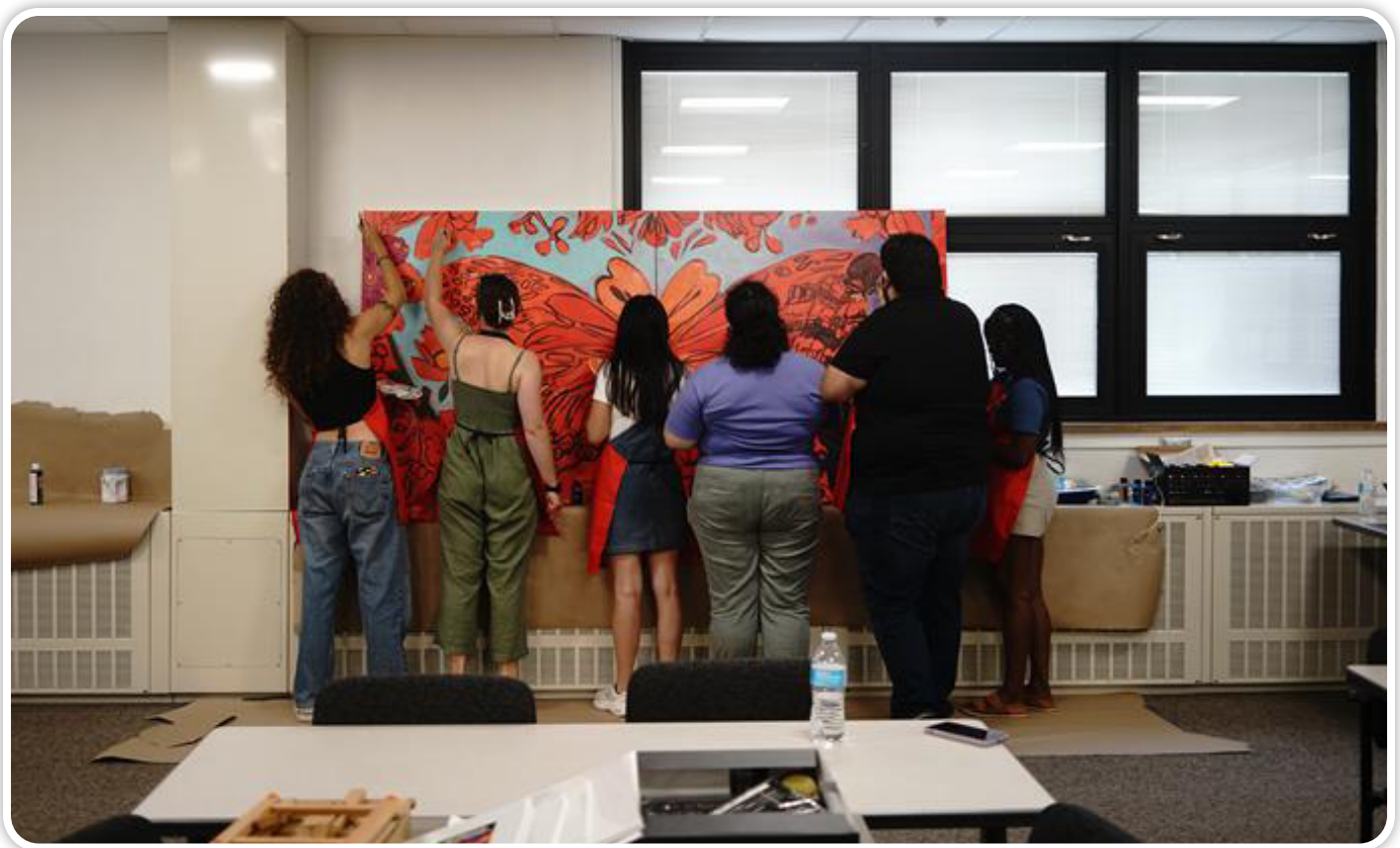
(612) 875-2349

YouTube Instagram Facebook

Last month alone, we served more than 450 people at the Center, including over 100 community members from Saint Paul. This milestone reminds us of the vital role the Worker's Center plays in expanding access, supporting education, and strengthening connections across Minnesota's Latine communities.

MANKATO South Central Initiative

August was a month of connection and creativity for our Mankato team. We hosted Back-to-School Resource Fairs in both Madelia and Mankato, where more than 115 children received school supplies and resources thanks to the support of 12 partner organizations and agencies. We also organized Art as Resistance: Stories that Heal, a gathering where community members came together in a safe and reflective space to draw, share memories, and envision the dreams they carry in their "life suitcases." In addition, COPAL maintained a strong presence across the region with outreach tables at Latine-owned businesses and participation in several local community events.



Looking ahead, the Mankato team is preparing to launch Training the Trainers: Biology of Trauma and Stress, starting with two workshops open to the entire community. This new program seeks to create spaces of healing, learning, and resilience-building for all participants.

We also invite the community to tune in to COPAL: Tu Punto de Encuentro on KMSU every Saturday at 2 p.m. (89.7 FM in Mankato, 91.3 FM in Austin), and on Radio Jornalera Saturdays at 2 p.m. and Sundays at 10:45 a.m. The program continues to be a vital resource for news, dialogue, and connection.

This past month also marked the beginning of an exciting new partnership with the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council. Together, we are envisioning a stronger community rooted in creativity, resilience, and collaboration.

ROCHESTER Southeast Initiative

Throughout August, our Southeast team stayed active across the region, creating spaces for dialogue, offering resources, and strengthening community power. We hosted informational sessions in Red Wing and Austin, where over 25 community members learned about the Minnesota Driver's Manual and prepared for the knowledge test. These gatherings are essential steps to ensure that more residents have access to safe and legal driving.



Last month, our staff accompanied a family from Wabasha to their courthouse appointment, providing interpretation and acting as Constitutional Observers. The family had been fearful of attending court, but with COPAL's support, their case was resolved without a hearing. Grateful for the accompaniment, the father later returned to our office with a donation, wanting to ensure that other families could also receive the same support.

Regional Committee Meeting

Members of our Regional Southeast Committee met in Rochester for a session on "The Four Types of Power." Alongside food and community time, the group reflected on how to build stronger collective action. Community members interested in joining future meetings can call (612) 965-9022.

Updates & Opportunities

Our Rochester office now offers the CASAS test, which helps individuals measure their English reading and listening comprehension: and we are enrolling participants in our Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program, providing training and certification for those interested. To learn more or register, visit our office or call (612) 965-9022 for both opportunities.

On Oct 18, our team will join partners like Indivisible 507, ISAIAH, and others for the NO KINGS 2.0 event at Soldier Field Park in Rochester (12–4 PM). Call (612) 965-9022 for details.

Health and Wellness

As we honor Suicide Prevention Awareness Month this September, we are reminded of the importance of community, connection, and caring for one another. Seeking help is a sign of strength, and support is always available. The 988 Minnesota Lifeline is part of a national service providing free, confidential mental health support 24/7. This easy-to-remember number connects anyone in need, whether for themselves or a loved one, with qualified mental health specialists. Remember: it's okay to ask for help.

Health and wellness also means staying informed about ongoing public health concerns. Long COVID can affect anyone, and keeping up with vaccines can reduce the risk of persistent symptoms such as fatigue, shortness of breath, muscle aches, and brain fog. If symptoms persist, it is important to consult a healthcare professional. For guidance and support, our navigators are available at (612) 249-8736. To help community members better understand how to care for their health and their family's, COPAL hosts weekly talks on the healthcare system, long COVID, and chronic disease management with Dr. Francisco Ramírez every Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. at the Centro de Trabajadores Primero De Mayo (3521 E. Lake St., Minneapolis).

COPAL also offers FREE virtual Psychological First Aid trainings, taught by M Health Fairview, with free materials and CEUs available. These trainings provide skills to support people after traumatic events, public health emergencies, or personal crises, and are open to volunteers, frontline staff, community workers, and professionals. For registration and more details, [visit here](#).

Organizing

On September 12, COPAL staff met with the McKnight Foundation to share updates from our South Central Initiative, which coordinates work across Health and Wellness, Workforce Development, Organizing and Leadership, and the Immigrant Defense Network. The discussion focused on local challenges—such as the closure of diversity programs, cutbacks on community classes, and growing fears of immigration enforcement, and on the need for strong partnerships to protect our communities.

Together with allies like the Land Stewardship Project (LSP), which supports small and mid-size farmers, we explored ways to bring more farmworker voices into campaigns that defend land, labor, and local ownership. We are grateful to the McKnight Foundation for their support in advancing social justice across Minnesota.

From September 10–13, delegates from Minnesota and South Dakota traveled to Pasadena, California, to learn from the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON). Alongside partners such as the Minnesota Interfaith Coalition on Immigration, Ayada Leads, MN8, the ACLU of Minnesota, and others, our delegates participated in workshops on immigrant rights, grassroots organizing, and popular education.

The delegation also engaged in hands-on volunteering and witnessed the resilience of communities in Altadena rebuilding after devastating wildfires. These experiences brought back powerful lessons on rapid response, the role of arts and culture in organizing, and creative community practices, from square dances to adopt-a-place initiatives, that strengthen solidarity.

As we face increasing challenges at home, these exchanges remind us of the importance of building resilient communities that can respond to crises together. We thank NDLON and our partners for the opportunity to learn and grow alongside them. ¡Juntos ganamos!

Interested in becoming a member and taking leadership for social change?

Being part of COPAL is more than just joining an organization! By becoming a member, you become an active voice in the movement for our community's rights, participate in decision-making, and help create a more just future for all. Your involvement can make a difference. [Join us and be part of the change!](#)

As September comes to a close, we want to thank everyone in our community for their continued engagement, energy, and dedication. This month has shown us once again that change happens when we come together, whether through learning, creating, advocating, or simply lifting each other up.

Let's carry the spirit of collaboration, resilience, and care into the coming months. Stay informed, stay involved, and continue to share your voice, your ideas, and your commitment to building stronger, healthier, and more just communities. Together, every action counts.

COPAL



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, please contact the MN Mental Health Crisis Line:

****CRISIS or **274747**

Dial from your cell phone and you will be connected to your county crisis team.

Please see the following summary of mental health, general health and dental services compiled by the Minnesota Department of Health for the lowest cost or at scale. Look at the column that specifies if they have interpreters or people who speak Spanish.



TUNE IN HERE



Radio Jornalera has grown and now has five weekly shows every day of the week and our daily morning show, **El Jornal de la Alegría** with **Mike Castillo** every weekday from 7 to 10am.

DOWNLOAD THE APP

COPAL

DONATE NOW

YOUR HELP MAKES OUR WORK POSSIBLE

ALWAYS IN SOLIDARITY

COPAL



Established in 2018, COPAL is a member-based organization that leads social impact initiatives to improve the quality of life for Latine families. It does so by building collective power, transforming systems, and creating opportunities for a dignified life.

To create a more inclusive Minnesota, COPAL is advocating for a legislative agenda that advances the issues that impact the lives of Latines in Minnesota, such as health care for all, dignity for workers, environmental justice, popular democracy, immigration and public safety, which includes restoring licenses to all.