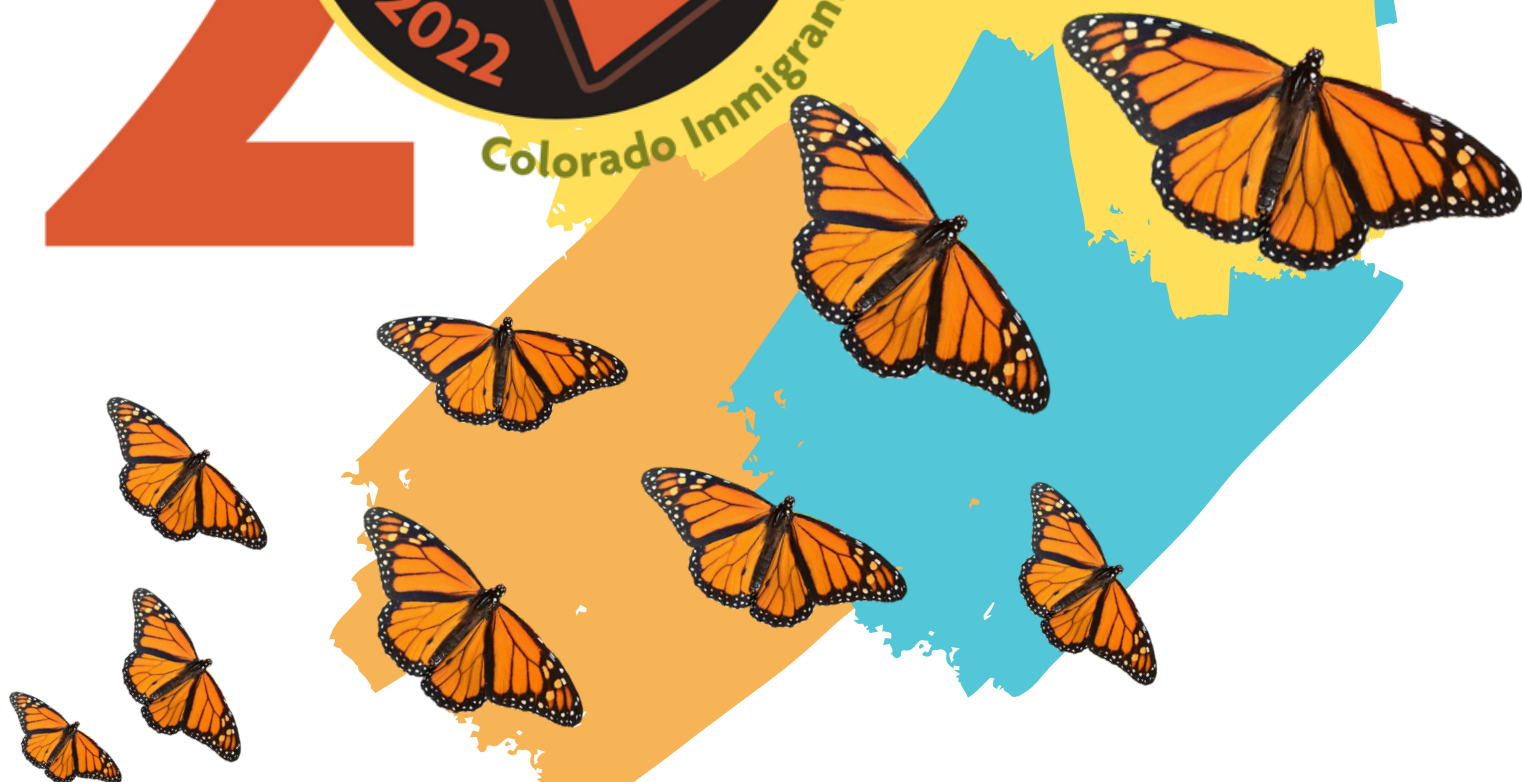


20th Anniversary Impact Report

A 20 YEAR HISTORY OF BUILDING
IMMIGRANT POWER IN COLORADO



CIRC turns 20 this year

For 20 years our coalition of members has fought for immigrant rights in Colorado and beyond.

From **community activists**, **movement leaders**, **immigrant moms** after jobs and in between jobs, **students** with DACA, without DACA and no way to get DACA, **dads** from inside detention, **friends** on the picket lines screaming for justice, **women** in sanctuary who refuse to give up, give in, or stop the fight, **farmworkers** whose sweat grows fruit for our tables, **daughters** who yell "**undocumented and unafraid**" in the streets for the courage and sacrifice their parents made to cross the border and give them a new life, our members persist in the struggle for justice.

As we reflect on the last 20 years, we are in awe of the work our coalition has accomplished and we are inspired anew to never stop the fight for immigrants in Colorado.



THE BEGINNING

Federal anti-immigrant legislation thrived on the national level in the years following 9/11, including the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act (2002), Homeland Security Act (2002), and REAL ID Act (2005). These federal policies and the strong rhetoric that accompanied them set off state-level efforts to establish anti-immigrant policies, including in Colorado.

These laws stripped immigrants of basic legal protections, increased law enforcement's authority to target and detain immigrants, limited immigrants' access to public benefits and services, prevented immigrants from obtaining documentation, and excluded them from progressive reforms.



AS A RESULT OF THIS CLIMATE, IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS IN COLORADO FOUNDED CIRC IN 2002 TO BE A UNIFIED STATEWIDE VOICE AND MOVEMENT TO DEFEND AND ADVANCE JUSTICE FOR IMMIGRANTS. THE FIRST EVER CIRC CONVENING TOOK PLACE THAT YEAR IN BRECKENRIDGE.



CIRC

In 2002, Colorado was an epicenter of hate speech and anti-immigrant sentiment. Right wing groups with ties to eugenicists and white supremacists were visible and vocal. These groups purported that if life in the U.S. was made unbearable for the undocumented, they would “self-deport” to their home countries. September 11, 2001 had a profound impact on the nation’s views on immigration. Although immigrant rights organizers presented thousands of pages of documentation from all over the state from immigrants who needed a driver’s license, the state legislature rejected the 2002 bill.

State legislators widely rejected the notion that undocumented immigrants are essential to our state and play a vital role in our economy and communities.

Groups in Colorado recognized the need to work together in coordination to counter the damaging policies and narratives that were being promoted at the time. The Colorado Statewide Parents Coalition offered space to meet at their annual conference, held in Breckenridge. A group of about 40 people attended to explore the possibilities of forming a statewide coalition, and CIRC was born. Early leaders included: Danielle Short and Sarah Gill of the American Friends Service Committee, Jorge De Santiago of Centro Amistad, Ricardo Perez from Montrose, CO, who was at Catholic Charities at the time, Ricardo Garcia of the Colorado Statewide Parents Coalition, Olivia Lopez of Centro Companero Latino in Durango, Ricardo Martinez of what was then Padres Unidos, Eddie Canales of the Carpenter's Union and SEIU Local 105.





"A DAY WITH OUT IMMIGRANTS"

September 11 caused the U.S. to conflate immigration – families migrating to find work and flee violence – with national security and law enforcement. These damaging narratives continue to haunt efforts to integrate immigrants into our communities and to pass pro-immigrant legislation. In 2005, the Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 was passed through the House of Representatives (HR4437), known commonly as the “Sensenbrenner bill.” Considered by many to be the most anti-immigrant bill in a century, the bill considered all undocumented immigrants to be felons and created new penalties for those found to be assisting undocumented immigrants.

TO STOP THIS LEGISLATION, MAY 1, 2006 WAS DECLARED BY GRASSROOTS ORGANIZERS AS “A DAY WITHOUT IMMIGRANTS”, A DAY WHERE IMMIGRANTS WERE ENCOURAGED TO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE US ECONOMY AND INSTEAD TAKE TO THE STREETS TO ADVOCATE FOR THEIR RIGHTS. WHAT FOLLOWED WOULD BE ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROTESTS IN AMERICAN HISTORY. ACROSS THE COUNTRY, MORE THAN A MILLION PEOPLE CAME TOGETHER IN UNITY TO MARCH AGAINST THE LEGISLATION THAT WOULD HARM IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES. IN DENVER, THE COLORADO IMMIGRANT RIGHTS COALITION WAS AMONG ONE OF THE GROUPS THAT HELPED PLAN A MARCH OF OVER 200,000 PEOPLE.

The same day, Colorado passed one of the first Show Me Your Papers Laws, SB-90. It required local law enforcement to report “suspected” undocumented immigrants to ICE upon arrest. About a dozen anti-immigrant bills were passed, and another dozen in a special session later that year.



ALTHOUGH THE MARCHES WERE SUCCESSFUL IN SHOWING NATION-WIDE OPPOSITION TO HR4437 AND LED TO THE BILL’S FAILURE IN PASSING THROUGH THE US SENATE, IMMIGRANT ORGANIZATIONS IN COLORADO REALIZED THEY HAD A LOT OF WORK TO DO IN THE CENTENNIAL STATE.

RICARDO PEREZ

HISPANIC AFFAIRS PROJECT, MONTROSE

"It was a big surprise for us when we started organizing a regional march in 2006 in Grand Junction, the amount of people showing up and offering help. Just the meetings with local leaders to organize the march gathered between 50-80 people every time, and it was a great opportunity to connect with people from different communities across the western slope and surrounding areas in the mountains and the south. This is when the western Colorado justice for immigrant committees were born!"



"THE MARCH GATHERED OVER 4,000 PEOPLE WITH PERFECT COORDINATION TO MOBILIZE ALL FOLKS IN THE BUSIEST STREETS IN GRAND JUNCTION"

"It was the first time organizing something like that for many of us. Remember that HAP and CIRC were new organizations and we were still learning, connecting and drafting a work plan. After the march, for the first time, immigrants started attending city council or county meetings, providing testimonies in the state capitol, traveling to D.C., visiting Congress, traveling to state conferences, promoting Get Out The Vote campaigns, and more."

GETTING ORGANIZED

2006 changed everything. While the massive protests galvanized the immigrant community, CIRC and other immigrant rights leaders realized that large protests were not enough **to change lives, we needed to change laws.**

That year, CIRC hired its first executive director to unite the voice of the statewide immigrant rights movement. The organization and its members prioritized work and began creating a plan to repeal SB-90 and ensure Colorado does not pass other anti-immigrant legislation.

In 2010, CIRC helped co-found Engage Colorado, a program that aimed at increasing the Latino vote. Over 1 million voter contacts and over 100,000 voters mobilized to vote, the largest Latino and immigrant vote-share in Colorado history. Seeing the importance of mobilizing new american voters and getting more involved in Colorado politics, **CIRC Action Fund was established in 2012.**

2012 would continue to be a critical year in CIRC history. That summer, CIRC hosted Operation Meltdown which united 100 immigrant rights leaders from around the state to form the Campaign to Unite Colorado and build collective strategy to repeal SB-90. Immigrant leaders pushed CIRC to fight for a full repeal, with no carve outs. After 7 years of collective actions and organizing, the **Show Me Your Papers Law was repealed in 2013** with the passage of HB-1258, the Community and Law Enforcement Trust Act, making **Colorado the first state in the nation to fully repeal a show me your papers law.**

CIRC also participated in a weeklong hunger strike at Obama's Denver campaign headquarters, refusing to leave his office until he passed administrative relief for undocumented young people. **DACA was issued shortly after, galvanizing a generation of young leaders into the fight for justice for immigrant communities.**



Up until 1998, all immigrants had access to a driver's license in Colorado, irrespective of their immigration status. When racist laws were passed to block undocumented Coloradans from accessing a license, many had to drive without one. This led to tickets, vehicle impoundment, arrests, and thousands of deportations. But CIRC and the immigrant community fought back. CIRC's I Drive Coalition was formed and in 2013, we finally succeeded, with SB-251, a law making driver's licenses available to every Coloradan no matter their immigration status! Since then, we've fought to pass five more bills making the program more effective and accessible to all.



LICENSES FOR ALL SILVIA HERNANDEZ

GRUPO ESPERANZA, COLORADO SPRINGS

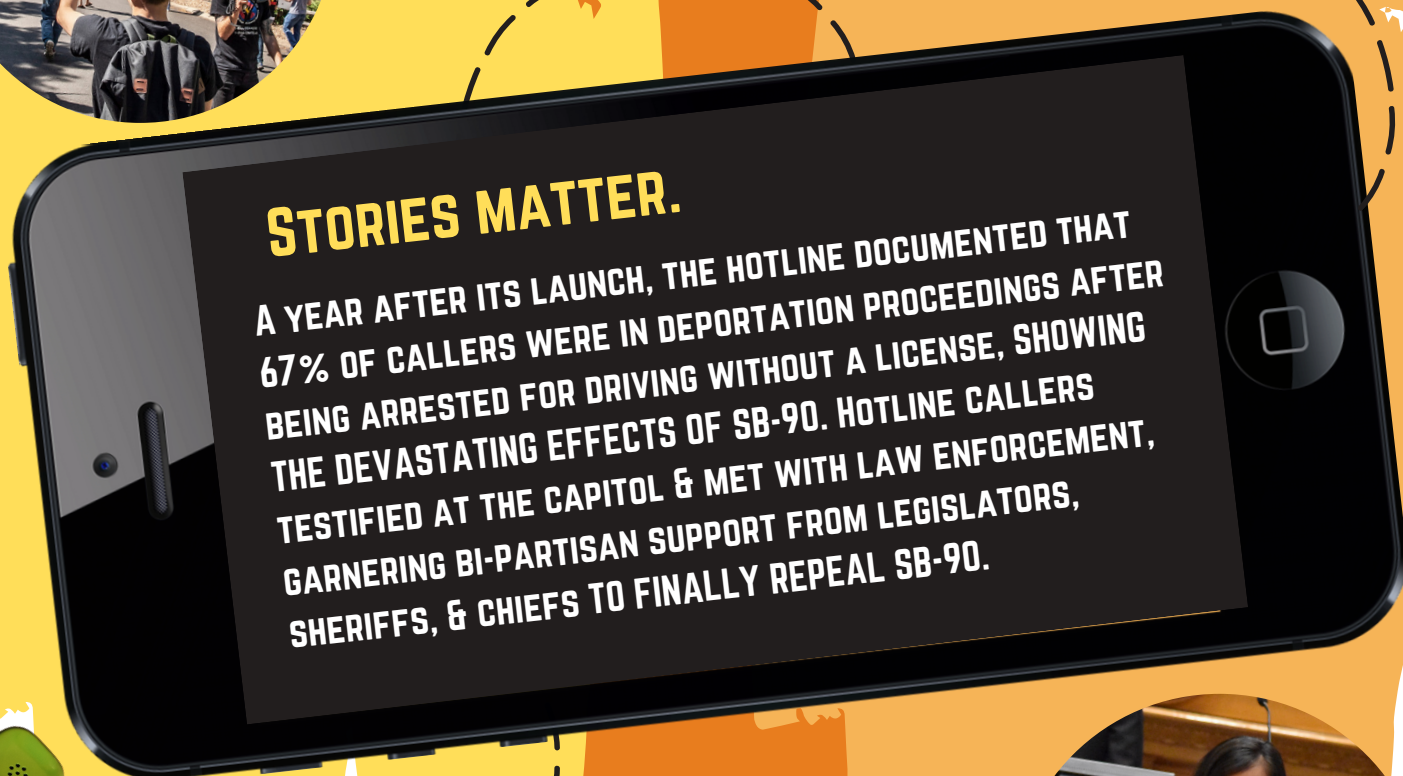
"We decided to form a group here in Colorado Springs to fight for and expand driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants. We began to ask for signatures, we held vigils, we marched, we sent letters. I remember that once we held a meeting where we all asked the Congressmen to open more DMV offices for us. It was a huge victory for CIRC and communities like ours to be able to get to where we are now.

Now, we can get license plates, we can have much cheaper insurance. If someone has an accident, they feel much safer to call the police and say they had an accident. Before people were terrified, and would pretend nothing happened due to fear of the police. **Now everyone feels safer.**"

RESISTING ICE

One of the worst products of the post 9/11 anti-immigrant wave was the creation of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in 2003. This rogue agency has committed countless human and civil rights violations since its beginning 19 years ago. Resisting ICE and documenting its abuses is critical for immigrant justice.

On September 15th, CIRC launched the 1st statewide ICE incident hotline to collect stories of people affected by anti-immigrant laws such as SB-90 and train leaders to join the movement against deportations & police/ICE collusion. The fight to repeal SB90 would never have been successful without the launch of the Statewide ICE incidente hotline.



STORIES MATTER.

A YEAR AFTER ITS LAUNCH, THE HOTLINE DOCUMENTED THAT 67% OF CALLERS WERE IN DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS AFTER BEING ARRESTED FOR DRIVING WITHOUT A LICENSE, SHOWING THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF SB-90. HOTLINE CALLERS TESTIFIED AT THE CAPITOL & MET WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT, GARNERING BI-PARTISAN SUPPORT FROM LEGISLATORS, SHERIFFS, & CHIEFS TO FINALLY REPEAL SB-90.

Following the success of the first Hotline, CIRC launched the Hotline 2.0 in 2013 and expanded the Docuteam to 30 people. The Hotline has continued to support Coloradans fighting ICE abuse and deportation threats by documenting stories and responding to needs in real time.



LUPE LOPEZ

DOCUTEAM MEMBER, FORT MORGAN



LUPE BECAME INVOLVED IN CIRC'S HOTLINE WORK AFTER CALLING IN HERSELF WHEN HER HUSBAND AND HER WERE PULLED OVER AS A RESULT OF SB-90, COLORADO'S RACIST SHOW ME YOUR PAPERS LAW, AND IMMEDIATELY PUT INTO DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS. SHE CONTINUES TO FIGHT HER CASE WHILE HELPING OTHERS.

"Unfortunately, we have lost people to deportation. But thanks to the support of the organization we are here and we are fighting. The Hotline helps a lot because people can know where to go and what to do: they call, they document their case, and we give them guidance and real time help. And callers often become involved in our work. They become leaders, and they tell their stories with lawmakers and this is what changes laws.

"WHEN, I STARTED TO TELL MY STORY, THE TRUTH WAS POWERFUL. IT IS LIKE THERAPY. EACH TIME I SHARE, I HEAL LITTLE BY LITTLE."

This state is so beautiful and to live is very beautiful. We keep fighting so that we can change many laws that affect immigrants."

HOME IS HERE

2016 and 2017 were hard years. The Trump Administration ushered in nationwide xenophobia and hatred. Fear spread in the immigrant community with increased ICE activity and outrageous new anti-immigrant policies.

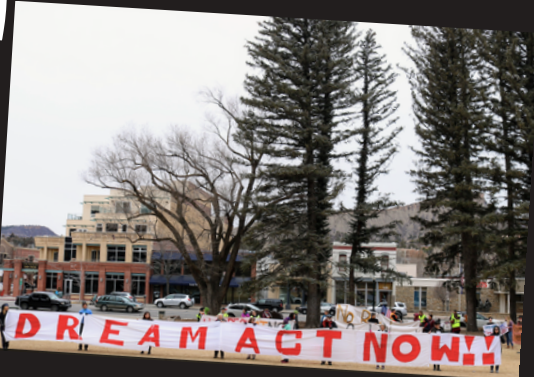


But instead of giving up, our members were fired up and ready to take action to defend our community and galvanize our allies to stand firmly with us on the right side of history:

- WE PARTNERED WITH MUSLIM ORGANIZATIONS TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE MUSLIM BAN
- WE ORGANIZED THE FAMILIES BELONG TOGETHER RALLY WITH OVER 4,000 PARTICIPANTS
- WE LED OVER 1,000 PEOPLE TO THE PUBLIC COMMENT SITE TO SHARE OPINIONS ON THE PROPOSED PUBLIC CHARGE CHANGES

In 2017, the Trump Administration announced the end of the DACA program and Temporary Protected Status for many countries and created new deportation priorities, targeting all undocumented immigrants. In response, CIRC members planned historic walkouts at Denver Public School high schools and college campuses, bringing 4,000 to the Auraria Campus.

In 2018, CIRC continued statewide mobilizing and advocacy around DREAM Act legislation and pushed Senator Cory Gardner to take action. We launched a Dreamer Movement Building training with 40 leaders and organized the Tour of DREAMS with 5 Dreamers who traveled across the state to share stories about impacted youth, build support for the DREAM Act, and encourage communities to take action.





Trump's nativism also showed the critical need for citizenship to protect from deportation. In 2018, our naturalization program that works with pro-bono immigration attorneys and highly trained volunteers, we assisted 600 Legal Permanent Residents with their N-400 applications, 600 Coloradans ready to become full Americans and ready to vote



In partnership with our sister organization, CIRC Action Fund, we led one of our largest civic engagement campaigns by reaching over 120K voters in the 2018 midterm elections. This led to a historic turnout for people of color and low-propensity voters in Adams, Arapahoe, and El Paso counties.



"IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS!"



With cruel, xenophobic ICE activity ramping under the Trump Administration in 2017, CIRC came together with the American Friends Service Committee, the Colorado People's Alliance, Mi Familia Vota, Together Colorado, Padres y Jóvenes Unidos, and others to start the statewide Colorado Rapid Response Network in order to keep our communities informed of ICE activity and to document ICE incidents and human rights abuses. The CIRC Docuteam Hotline identified 2 counties honoring ICE holds. This enabled us to work with the ACLU of Colorado to sue El Paso and Teller Counties, thus holding the line against ICE holds by other sheriffs.

In 2018, the CIRC Docuteam Hotline received 164 calls and documented 66 stories. During those years, CIRC also ramped up its Know Your Rights workshops. It can be difficult to remember your constitutional rights in the moment, especially if you grew up in another country and/or English is your second language. Each workshop provides immigrants with the ability to defend and protect themselves when dealing with immigration authorities, so that they are able to remain united with their families.

13,332 IMMIGRANTS WERE EDUCATED, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CIRC MEMBERS, AT IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS IN 2018.



A NEW COLORADO FOR IMMIGRANTS

The road has been long, but the persistent work and support of community organizations, champion legislators, and CIRC members has produced many legislative successes. From passing in-state tuition, winning driver's licenses for all, creating a statewide legal defense fund, ensuring ICE is locked out of our state data, and expanding health coverage to undocumented children and pregnant people - we can confidently say that Colorado has become more immigrant friendly over the past 20 years as a result of our work. These achievements inspire us to continue moving forward to make Colorado a welcoming place for all.

THE 2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION WAS MONUMENTAL FOR IMMIGRANT RIGHTS IN COLORADO. 11 PRO-IMMIGRANT BILLS WERE SIGNED INTO LAW INCLUDING 3 BILLS CHAMPIONED BY CIRC AND OUR MEMBERS, AN INCREDIBLE REVERSAL FROM THE ANTI-IMMIGRANT LEGISLATIVE SESSION OF 2006.





EVELYN RODRIGUEZ

GRUPO MAYAS, PUEBLO

"The movement has changed a lot in the last 20 years.

Before there weren't many possibilities. There were few people who wanted to participate. But when our coalition was formed, this force started and the struggle to triumph and obtain more rights began.

The future seems stronger! We are stronger and we are fighting. We know that we matter. We know that we are human beings like everyone else and that we all deserve the same rights."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

CIRC looks to a Colorado that continues to grow as a model of inclusion for the nation. We can't move forward without looking back at the past 20 years and we can see from history that immigrant rights connect so fundamentally to issues of workers rights, health care, data privacy, mass incarceration, LGBTQ rights, community safety, and more. It is our privilege to work with our many allies, and to seek out many more. We hope you get a small glimpse of the power of the entire immigrant rights movement in Colorado in these pages.

We are grateful to our current leaders around the state, working tirelessly and fiercely for their communities, and we hope for a future that brings forward powerful immigrant leaders. We look forward to creating together the changes that we all need within our communities, our legislatures, and our nation's Congress.

We couldn't do it without YOU! Thank you!

Immigrants
Belong Here



OUR COALITION MEMBERS

- Accompaniment and Sanctuary Coalition of Colorado Springs Grupo Azteca
- Alianza NORCO
- American Civil Liberties Union – Colorado
- American Friends Service Committee
- Anti-Defamation League Mountain States Region
- Asociación de Jóvenes Unidos en Acción
- Athmar Park Neighborhood Association Lifespan Local
- Boulder Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Immigrant Justice Task Force
- Centennial BOCES
- Center for Health Progress
- Centro AMISTAD
- Centro de Los Pobres
- Centro Humanitario Para Los Trabajadores
- City and County of Denver
- COBALT Advocates
- Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
- Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights
- Combat Human Trafficking
- Community Language Cooperative
- Compañeros: Four Corners Immigrant Resource Center
- Construyendo
- Denver Justice and Peace Committee
- Denver Public Library
- Edgewater Collective
- El Comité de Longmont
- El Grupo Vida
- Forever Indivisible
- Fundación Contigo Progresando
- Grupo Esperanza
- Grupo MAYAS
- Grupo Santos
- Grupo Azteca
- Heart & Sol
- Hispanic Affairs Project
- Hunger Free Colorado
- Immigrant and Refugee Center of Northern Colorado
- San Luis Valley Immigrant Resource Center
- Ithaka Land
- Almmigrant Legal Center of Boulder County
- Indivisible Front Range Resistance Ithaka Land, Inc.
- Intercambio de Comunidades
- International Rescue Committee in Denver
- Lamar Unidos
- League of Women Voters of Boulder County Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley
- Madres E hijos
- Mental Health Center of Denver
- Mile High Japanese American Citizens League
- Mojados Unidos
- Mujerr
- New Era Colorado
- Northern Colorado Immigrants United
- OneMorgan County
- Out Boulder County
- Philanthropiece
- Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado Motus Theater
- Riverside Task Force
- Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
- Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center
- Rosa Belongs Here
- Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence
- Sanctuary for All Colorado
- SAVA Center
- Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning
- Towards Justice
- Tri-County Health Network
- Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Grand Valley
- Violence Free Colorado
- Voces Unidas for Justice
- Warren Village
- Western Colorado Alliance
- Western Colorado Migrant and Rural Coalition



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Chambers Initiative
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Colorado Educator's Association
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Colorado Immigration Advocates
Colorado Jobs with Justice
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Colorado Trust
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Common Counsel Foundation
Community Change
Community First Foundation
Community Foundation Boulder County
Community United Church of Christ
Connie Burwell White & William W. White Foundation
Conservation Colorado
County Collectives Fund at Longmont Community Foundation
Crested Butte Nordic
Denver Beer Company
Denver Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs
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DOIRA
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ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod
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Hispanic Affairs Project
Hispanic Federation Funds for Charitable Giving
Hunger Free Colorado

Almigrant and Refugee Center of Northern Colorado
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Immigrant Services at Metropolitan State University of Denver
Immigrant Services at MSU Denver
Intercambio Uniting Communities
Jordy Construction
KeyBank
L.P. Brown Foundation
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Mile High United Way
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National Immigration Law Center
National Partnership for New Americans
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Reciprocity Collective
Right to Read of Weld County
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
Rock Cut Brewing Company
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center
Rogers-Berman Family Fund
Rose Community Foundation
Rosenblatt & Gosch PLLC
Sage Fund
Scholars Strategy Network Colorado
SEIU Local 105
Servicios De La Raza
Smith Immigration
Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning
Stephanus Family Foundation
Summit Foundation
The Colorado Fiscal Institute
The Colorado Trust
The Western Colorado Alliance
Towards Justice of Colorado
Tres Margaritas Downtown
UN Boulder Association
Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock
Vera Institute of Justice
Warm Cookies of the Revolution
Welcome Strangers
Western Colorado Alliance
Western Union
Whole Foods
Winter-Lehman Family Foundation

We strive to be as accurate as possible with our list of current supporters. If we made an error, please let us know by calling 720.288.0314 or emailing marine@coloradoimmigrant.org.

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