



SU CONEXIÓN A LA COMUNIDAD

Legislative Agenda 2023

At El Centro Inc. we believe all individuals deserve equal access opportunities to education, healthcare, and public services regardless of language, socioeconomic, or documentation status. El Centro remains committed to advocating for equitable policy changes that work to eliminate socioeconomic and health disparities amongst the most underserved communities, particularly the Latino community. The agency plays a critical role in promoting key policy issues that advance the interests of the Latino community. These are to be promoted through the facilitation of direct services, community education and direct action. In advocacy, the agency will take a multifaceted, proactive, and at times reactive, approach to furthering community interests and deterring harmful policy developments. These efforts will be supported by the agency's strongest assets, its grassroots client base, allies, issue expertise and reputation.

I. Legislative Priority: Build safer communities and create equal access to services through a fully implemented community photo identification card program because of the passage of the Safe and Welcoming ordinance in Wyandotte County.

The Safe and Welcoming ordinance in Wyandotte was approved with a two-prong approach to creating safer communities, ensuring equal access, and strengthening community bonds by facilitating access to photo identifications and protecting community members who lack an immigration status. The municipal photo identification card program would be accessible to the most vulnerable community members such as foster youth, seniors, undocumented immigrants, homeless individuals, and others who face barriers to accessing traditional government issued identifications. The ICE noncompliance resolution would limit cooperation between municipal law enforcement and immigration enforcement authorities, thus making the ID program safe for undocumented community members.

Unfortunately, during the 2022 legislative session the second part of the ordinance that passed in Wyandotte county was overridden. Although a disappointment this will not derail our work in moving forward with promoting the establishment of the community ID project that will strengthen the fabric of Wyandotte County by ensuring equal access to services and functions and creating a safer community.

II. Legislative Priority: “Ni Uno Mas” campaign that will address cancer care access inequities faced by uninsurable/undocumented residents of the KUCC catchment area due to their discriminatory financial assistance policy.

This grassroots campaign's aim is that By September 1, 2023, KUCC will change their financial assistance policy eligibility guidelines to include undocumented residents within their catchment area and 80% of uninsurable (i.e., undocumented, and uninsured) Latino(a) patients referred by El Centro and partners for cancer treatment will receive cancer treatment at KUCC. We will implement the campaign through a two-prong approach that will include two primary drivers; advocacy (*to increase awareness and implement a grass-roots campaign around*

removing barriers to cancer care) and access (to change eligibility requirements to financial assistance policy at KUCC.

III. Legislative Priority: Medicaid Expansion in Kansas

For nearly a decade, Medicaid expansion has been actively blocked by Kansas leadership, despite widespread public support. Kansas is only one in twelve states that has yet to expand Medicaid. The need for coverage has been exacerbated by the pandemic, especially for those who fall into the coverage gap. El Centro Inc. commits to actively supporting traditional legislative routes for Medicaid Expansion, as well as the newly proposed constitutional amendments, which would give Kansas voters a say by putting Medicaid expansion up to a public vote during the 2023 general elections. El Centro will use its advocacy and engagement tools and assets to mobilize the community in appealing to legislatures to vote in favor of Medicaid expansion.

IV. Legislative Priority: Comprehensive Immigration Reform with a path to citizenship for the over eleven million undocumented individuals who are essential to the social and economic fabric of the U.S.

Historically, Latino's have been courted by politicians with the false promises of immigration reform, only to be treated as economic commodities and political pawns in the end. The agency commends the passage of a comprehensive immigration reform, including a path to citizenship for the over eleven million undocumented immigrants living in the United States as well as those with limited status, such as DACA recipients.

As part of our commitment to the well-being of our Latino communities we understand there are other important issue that effect the daily lives of the populations we serve therefore we will continue to promote the success of progressive policies and deter the prospects of negative ones. Other imperative policies that El Centro Inc supports include but are not limited to:

- I. El Centro Inc. supports criminal justice reform that works to eliminate socioeconomic and racial disparities at all levels of the justice system, including the elimination of a monetized industrial prison complex and mass incarceration which disproportionately targets Latino and Black individuals.
- II. El Centro Inc. opposes any legislation that censors or politicizes American history and takes local control from school boards and the State Board of Education and supports the teaching of Critical Race Theory in schools.
- III. El Centro Inc. supports the expansion of affordable housing programs to address the rise in housing insecurity and homelessness aggravated by the pandemic and inflation.
- IV. El Centro Inc. supports the transparent, equitable and non-gerrymandered process of redrawing of congressional district lines that does not dilute the voting power of people of color and communities of interest in our congressional districts.
- V. Promoting livable wages, as we know BIPOC and women are most likely to be disproportionately affected by the low income wage of \$7.25 in Kansas and the poverty that effects our communities.