

Latinx Community COVID19 Response

Monday, April 27, 2020 - Meeting Minutes

State of MN Updates

Migdalia Loyola—Gov. Walz and Lt. Gov Flanagan's office

Series of announcements of new initiatives and plans halt spread of COVID-19

- Widespread testing on COVID-19 so that everyone with symptoms can get tested. \$36 million in funding.
- Ability to deliver 20,000 tests per day and 15000 serology tests (for antibodies) per day
- Also announce new website –to get info about sites and clinics where testing will be available. Pls help spread the word so people know where to go. Includes interactive screening tool to help you determine if you need a test: <https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/>
- Online/distance learning will continue through the end of the School year.
 - We know that distance learning is not working for all students and are working with the Department of Education and school districts to offer the best education we can.
 - Invite you to continue to be in conversation with us on this
- Gov announced plan (implementation can begin today) get up to 100,000 workers safely to their jobs in the industrial, manufacturing and office settings. Gradually reopening of society, in consultation with businesses, labor and public health experts. Industrial, manufacturing and office setting are first industries.
- We are also collecting information from community about social distancing and how it is working:
 - Support for Worthington and other communities with manufacturing plants by meeting with community members and leaders.
 - Considering needs relating to other processing plants in other parts of the state—improving response in other communities.
 - Not Mpls specific but many of us have ties to these communities. Many of those plants have high representation of latino workers.

Dominic McQuerry—housing assistance programs

- Dominic is a Policy Advisory in Governor's Office—covers housing and bonding and other issues.
- Contact info: Dominic.mcquerry@state.mn.us
- Housing assistance at State Legislature—Senate bill would provide \$30 million but require cutting some protections from Governor's Executive Order (# 20-14). House bill would provide \$100 million in housing assistance
- Senate is pushing narrative that we are standing in the way, but Gov's office does not want to give up moratorium/for housing assistance--will continue to push legislature so we are not evicting people in order to get support.
- Positives in the house bill include 30-day notice period which would go into effect/restriction on late fee penalties.

- Looking for community advocacy for House bill. If you have stories to share with members of legislature (including people who are low income and homeowners) sharing stories with members of legislature would be helpful

Maureen Ramirez DEED (Department of Employment and Economic Development)

- Good news—our agency was able to start making payments for self employed and independent contractors through CARES. Pandemic unemployment assistance. Started making payments at end of last week.
- If you know people who have gotten paid let us know. These are people who otherwise did not qualify. Payments backdated to the end of March.
- It took 3-4 weeks for program to get up and running. Can backdate if lost business due to COVID19
- Minimum benefit: \$234/week. There is also \$600 that each person who qualifies for unemployment insurance gets on top of regular unemployment insurance benefits.
- There have been expansions so that if you've lost your job/workplace is closed/outbreak of COVID-19 in your workplace/caring for children with no other child care arrangement, you may be eligible for expansion
- Unemployment insurance covers about 1/2 of lost income. Is paid on a weekly basis. You have to request a benefit every week. First you apply, answer questions about employment history, that info is verified, but every week you have to request.
- Upper limit: \$740 per week, additional \$600 on top of that from Federal Government.
- Re Undocumented: UI Benefits only for people working legally. Not available for undocumented residents. We know that many people are not eligible. That is our current reality based upon federal regulation.
- UI/Immigration: if you are eligible to receive this is an earned benefit and so it does not count as public charge.
- Independent contractors: can use this step by step guide to apply. They must first apply for UI benefits and then they will get denied, and that is part of the process:
https://www.uimn.org/assets/application-step-by-step-instructions-selfemployed_tcm1068-425640.pdf
- You can only get UI through one of the programs. Either through the regular UI benefits (b/c you're working for an employer) or through PUA b/c you're self-employed or an owner. You can't be eligible for both at the same time.
- DEED is doing weekly calls community calls on response to COVID-19. Calls take place on M/W/Th at 4PM. You can submit questions in advance here: <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=RrAU68QkGUWPJricIVmCjKODN34SXxpOreQ8ZVW8NtIUMUxONk9XMU9UQ1Y4S0IOQkNPtTRDWDNWRi4u>
Call in # and Pin is the following:
Call-in number: 415-655-0003 PIN: 969-724-973
To be added to invitation list for calls, contact Maureen Ramirez, Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, at Maureen.ramirez@state.mn.us

City of Minneapolis

Heidi Richie—Mayor Frey's Office

Mayor Frey will be broadcasting his State of the City address on Wednesday, April 29th at 12:30 p.m. on the City's social media platforms.

Fatima Moore—IGR Department

Contact info: fatima.moore@minneapolismn.gov

Rental assistance

- Dominic is a good advocate and champion on housing issues in Gov Office.
- SF 4495 is the least favorable bill regarding housing assistance. Attempts to use FHPAP program—provides funding directly to either homeowners or landlords so that their housing needs can be taken care of. Have eviction and foreclosure moratorium. Does not go far enough. Does not provide a 30 day notice before rent can be imposed on person. Imposes fees on renters. Once the moratorium ends still responsible. The bill was heard on Wednesday. Committee did not have enough time to finish discussion on bill. Taking up today at 3PM. Sen Dziedzic sits on that committee and was hoping to introduce amendment that would increase the rental assistance amount so it would mirror what the house bill would dictate.
- HF4541 is the more favorable bill, was also heard last Wednesday morning. Provides \$100 million for rental assistance. House bill passed out of committee last week and will be heard by ways and means (House finance committee) this week.
 - Bill info here: <https://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/bills/Info/HF4541/91/2019/0>
 - This bill has support from Gov. Office
 - Speaker Hortmann sent letter with Homeless for all Coalition indicating support
 - There is urgency around this issue—cannot wait
- By comparison--City of Mpls's housing assistance program—as of this morning, there have been 7500 applications—individuals and households 30% of less of AMI—highlights the fact that need for housing assistance is immense.

Michelle Rivero/OIRA

President Trump issued a proclamation preventing some people from immigrating to the US

- Does not impact people who are already in the US applying for adjustment of status. Also does not impact spouses and under 21 year old children of US citizens. Other exemptions as well.
- More information on the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs webpage: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/oira/index.htm>
- From Veena at Immigrant Law Center of MN:
 - ILCM will do a facebook live on the Proclamation in multiple languages including Spanish this Wednesday. (full list of languages: Somali at 1; English at 3:30; Spanish at 5; Karen at 7.)
 - ILCM also has a fact sheet and FAQs available. It's in English now and Spanish should be up later this afternoon. <https://www.ilcm.org/latest-news/fact-sheet-april-22-2020-proclamation-suspending-immigration/>

Immigrants in detention—advocacy

- The local medico/legal group FALM is working to get a meeting with Sen Klobuchar/Smith and Governor to address release of immigrants in detention and are asking that additional Latinx advocacy groups to sign onto a request to meet with Senators offices and governor on this specific issue.
- For more information
contact: Miguel Fiol MD fiolx001@umn.edu Kathy Moccio: kmoccio@umn.edu

Shunu Shrestha/Sr. Advisor on Human Trafficking and Exploitation (in chat notes)

- For resource need/questions regarding human trafficking, sex trafficking and labor trafficking, pls contact Shunu at: shunu.shrestha@minneapolismn.gov

- There's often an overlap between wage theft, other labor violations and labor trafficking, so knowing/learning about other victimizations could open up additional resources
- Women's Foundation of Minnesota has created a COVID-19 Women & Girls Response Fund. Learn more here - <https://5hmu22w0slizp30doyr8p14u-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19-Women-and-Girls-Response-Fund-RFP.pdf>

Monica Romero (Small Business Team) and Leda Schuster (Health Department)

- Clarification re City of Minneapolis GAP rental assistance: if the original call was made before our deadline (12:00 today), it will be processed.

CM Cano: I'll work with the City folks get more specific updates about the number of total applicants versus the number of Latinxs served through the City's program on rental/housing assistance.

Health Dept. info: Coordination of donation offers and resource requests. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Minneapolis is working to coordinate donation offers with community organizations and people in need.

- For use by organizations/individuals wanting to donate items other than Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/1614aa3cfb5445eb94abf1c20983491c>
- Request for Information and Resources: For use by organizations/individuals needing items other than Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/a6ec5734947240a48d8782ceb5fdb908>

Miluska: Note Hennepin County Business Assistance-- Hennepin County provides business assistance without asking immigration status. Does require at least one employee with W-2. Does not ask for owner's migratory status. Info here: <https://www.hennepin.us/economic-development/programs/Emergency-relief>

Wage and Employment related issues

Sara Ellstra, Program Administrator, Labor Standards. MN Department of Labor

- Contact info: Sara.ellstra@state.mn.us, 651-478-8148
- Labor issues including people who are pregnant and may need accommodations and nursing mother accommodations
- Concerns about rights in the workplace. Have been gathering frequently asked questions. Getting people to DEED. If info that is on DEED's website our investigators can respond to that quickly.
- Have been primarily responding to call since Mid-March when businesses started closing. Sent links to worker protections relating to COVID-19. Frequently asked questions—can my employer require me to return to work. Do I need to go if I'm sick? Do they have to pay me for the time it takes to take my temperature?
- The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) hosts a weekly webinar to discuss worker rights and responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - When: Wednesday, April 29, from 6:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
 - Who: Labor leaders, worker organizations and community organizations?
 - To register click here
 - Please email questions or topics you'd like addressed to Dave Skovholt, DLI outreach coordinator, at david.skovholt@state.mn.us.

Bryan Walsh at City of Minneapolis, Civil Rights Department (Director of Labor Standards)

Labor Standards is like a mini labor department. Like Sara but at city level. We enforce minimum wage, wage theft prevention ordinance and Sick and Safe time ordinance. Many questions from employers and employees about what sick leave and paid sick leave looks like with Global Pandemic.

- High level thoughts—a challenge we have in complaint-based enforcement—we rely on complaints from individual employees—the employees least likely to file are also the most vulnerable employees. It is a fundamental system challenge. Set up to enforce reactively—even in good times this is a huge challenge.
- Reach out to Bryan directly at bryan.walsh@minneapolismn.gov
- Doubly/triply hard when almost the entire economy has come to a halt. People are even more vulnerable, because many feel like they are lucky to have a job at all. Less likely to rock the boat, challenge employer's unlawful payment.
- Less incentive to reach out to government to start an investigation about your boss. That is a scary proposition.
- Sarah and Bryan/all of us need to work doubly/triply hard to build lines of communication and partnership.
- Also working in a more official way with CTUL—work hard to work in collaboration with CTUL because they are on the ground organizing low wage workers—building capacity of communities of low wage workers to ensure that rights are enforced
- One unique and good thing about labor law enforcement is that it is often anonymous. If it is happening to one worker is likely happening to others.
- Please share - To TEXT (in Spanish or English) Labor Standards Enforcement staff for the City of Minneapolis any questions or concerns: (612) 673-3012

CTUL—Indira, Principal Organizer

(612) 332-0663 Telf CTUL. Dejar mensaje [/Indira@ctul.net/](mailto:Indira@ctul.net) cel.507.301.8079

- Thinking about our membership on what this means and what is happening.
- Membership of CTUL is latinx and afro-american. We have talked about our membership 6 million of workers are front line workers but no undocumented immigrant qualifies for unemployment Medicaid.
- 1/3 of the US is without work. 4.4 million people applied for unemployment insurance in the last week.
- How are we living. The COVID-19—we are receiving many calls, more than normal
- In March when the crisis started, or became more part of our experience. CTUL did surveyed our base--people who recognize our organization and were calling us.
- Our survey data indicated that a principal concern, of over 70% of people who answered was how to pay rent. 38% were without work. Also a percentage had lost hours in their work and that impacted them. Another statistic 24% still working with no protection—meaning that their employers don't have a safety protocol or people who are not using personal protective equipment.
- In calls people are reporting many cases of wage theft. Employers (restaurant workers) saying yes next week you'll get your check, but it doesn't come. More wage theft concerns in our community.
- Many in the latinx community cannot apply for unemployment and a percentage of those who could qualify do not know how to—CTUL is helping people understand. And we are informing people who are self-employed showing them how to apply. That there is a change in employment law.

- CTUL is also working closely with the city, to reinforce information about wage theft, safe and sick time. There are more cases—part of our work with the City of Minneapolis involves educating our membership about labor laws that exist and how to organize.
- We are encouraging people we work with to share knowledge with other workers, to expand the # of people who have this knowledge. In this time more than ever
- CTUL conducts work by visiting people at work. As we are restricted to working remotely, it helps to have the trust of our membership. We help people get information about the different funding resources that exist, in St. Paul and Mpls. Food resources too
- Normally this is not our principal work, but because of COVID we are offering this support. There is much information, but sometimes it is not accessible, and sometimes our membership does not have access to the internet.
- Renters protections: orienting people on huelga de renta—we inform renters that if landlord is threatening you, there is an executive decree that prevents evictions. The landlord is still asking for rent and so we are sharing information on where to file a complaint and we are sharing information from Attorney General Ellison. Working with Inquilinxs Unidos
- On May 1 there will be an action calling for a moratorium on rent and mortgages payments. And we are thinking about a renters strike, to transform. People can call CTUL for more information.
- We have also contracted with a couple of additional people part time as navigators. We have hired people who help people apply for funds and more focused on wage theft.
- Q for CTUL: in what sectors of the economy are members of CTUL are employed. A: Restaurants, cooks, mesero. Cleaning, Education, Construction Still working but they have reduced working hours. Factory workers (incl Shakopee). The industry most impacted is food industry.

CLUES/Ruby Lee:

- CLUES fund--650 applications received. Over 300 from residents of Mpls. CLUES also helped City of Minneapolis expand capacity assisting in over 500 calls for GAP fund callers the first 24 hours.

Q: Monica—Small Business Team/comment regarding housing assistance.

Gap funding for housing assistance closed today at noon. Even though we have not finished making calls, we will—everyone who calls before noon today will have a chance to apply. Especially CTUL and CLUES that have been helping with calls.

Q: Mexican Consulate. Very interested in worker rights. Will put the contact information in the chat so that we can coordinate—We are following what is happening in Worthington. CTUL please connect with Mexican consulate.

Policy Conversation

CM Cano—how this began:

- Weekly briefings started approx. 5 weeks ago. At first meeting Mayor Frey participated. Every week when we would come together, a few key leaders would talk about the need for all of us to work together to advance policy changes so that latinx community would not be left out of conversations.
- Ambar—works for Mortenson Family foundation—suggested taking up interest in getting together merging with efforts of Latino Lead who have their own track of work on policy changes.
- Please connect with Rosa/Irma if interested in this policy work

Irma from LatinoLEAD: irma@latinoleadmn.org (507-995-3485)

- Met Wednesday, discussed meeting with the Governor and Lt Governor which will happen tomorrow (Tuesday) at 5:30PM. Waiting for weblink to send out (some people have gotten invitation). There is a limit on # of people on call. If you have specific questions. Have talked about 3 main issues. Will have 40 minutes, and some commissioners may be on the call as well. 1st meeting that is specific to latinx community.
- Making sure to ask questions about those who are left behind.
- Will not be able to share all recommendations that are coming out of policy committee

Rosa/Latinx Council:

- Thanks to CM Cano for sharing context of these conversations.
- As a united front we can have this first conversation with Gov and Lt Governor on issues. Excited about partnership that we are creating. Understand this will be first meeting we will have directly with Gov Walz and Lt Governor Flanagan.
- Policy recommendations we are talking about (COVID-19 and post COVID-19) will be finalizing this week or next week—work in progress—live document. Based upon interest in members, we identified some policy categories/subcommittees. Some people have volunteered to be part of these:
 1. Access to health care
 2. Education
 3. Rent assistance and housing
 4. Criminal justice

Irma—

- We are inviting folks in the ground who are doing work around housing, development etc. Accurate reflection regarding what community actually needs.
- These are the policy areas we have identified for subcommittees:
 - Housing and Rental Assistance—need more support/Casa de Esperanza interested
 - Medical
 - Economic development
 - Food access—need more support
 - Education access
 - Workers rights—suggest Indira in CTUL/MX consulate is interested here
 - Corrections and the justice system (need support here)
 - Access to transportation
- May reduce this based upon the workgroup that Governor is working on. If you want to be part of this, right now needing support in housing
- Draft deadline--next Monday. Want a legal lens into this to make sure that recommendations do not harm our community (Public charge). Will share with immigration lawyers to make sure that support is beneficial.
- Invite people (Whether on the call or not) to reach out Irma and Rosa to be able to have a thorough recommendation list.

Another bill at the state legislature:

- Veena indicated that Sen Franzen and Aisha Gomez are working on bill to provide emergency grant to individuals and families. This includes undocumented community. It has been drafted and will be made public in the next few days. That is when we will have to mobilize community in support of the bill.

- Jackets are being done today. Need community support. \$50 million dollars for families that need a safety net who are not eligible for state/federal funding. (a bill passed in California—we are working from that)
- we'll need specific language on the "call to action" to support the bill that's going to be introduced by Aisha and Melissa—Irma will reach out to Veena for more info re timeline and will be back in touch with this group about when and what we need to be doing after. We are currently working on talking points for legislators now and ILCM is working on two letters that will also be part of the call to action, which we can share with this group once it's finalized.

Large Group Conversation/Issues

Miluska:

- Henry said that MN got funding for state and one county because HC is the only county with more than 500,000 inhabitants. Please don't lose sight of the CENSUS. If you can keep it in the minds of people you talk to. See here: <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Census-Data-and-Methodology-Final.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0KJIXNzC3L5hm7iX760nLI8NMNzm4fBb5vDjkeOBRp8EPCwQ8iAIOPhA>
- Note from Dominic/ Hennepin and Ramsey Counties will both directly receive funds from the CARES Act
- Election issues: Wisconsin problems with election—likely there will not be sufficient election judges for November in MN. Encourage people to register as election judges and train as election judges. Earlier the better-and register for absentee voting as soon as possible on May 13. Info here: <https://mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/ABRegistration/ABRegistrationStep1.aspx>

Amire Adawe, Beautywell Project (chat comment):

- We work with immigrant communities to address chemical exposures and environmental impacts as well as improve the health literacy of these communities. We also do research and policy advocacy. Let us know how we could be helpful to the Latino community during this time. Here is my email: Amira.adawe@thebeautywell.org

Henry/LEDC:

- this is likely not the second/last round of funding. Important to push on why it is important to invest. No doubt that at least \$30 mill will be agreed upon. Need to start injecting policy changes in these types of bills as well.

Cano:

- The business community can be an ally. Should consider figuring out whether MN chamber of commerce has a role to play and Mpls regional chamber—Jonathan Weinhaugen-- In the past he has played a national role in supporting effort to block Citizenship question on the 2020 census form. Consider engaging these individuals.

Ruby/CLUES:

- Question to Henry—do you need support? CDFIs—push at national level. Is there anything that we can do locally to support the need for financial assistance. A: When it comes to funding through small business emergency loan fund, originally \$30 million. LEDC received \$1 million. We are having difficult time confirming that all of our Latino clients, if they are ready or not ready we help them. Trying to make sure they get packets in on time. If money comes in hopefully we will get an

additional \$1 million—Irma/Rosa when you talk to Governor say it's important that LEDC gets a significant amount b/c working with Latinx and Immigrant clients.

- Federal information is helpful. CLUES is not a CDFI but have clients, and can put forward information.

Henry:

- Question we get is: “why are some of the other organizations are moving faster than we are”? The ones that are focused on immigrant communities move slower, but we are getting it done— We are providing technical assistance on many levels, and we will have the tools to be ready for the next round of funding, etc.
- Next round of funding also included banks. Still in competition with them.
- Many small business owners only have money cash in hand 2-3 weeks. Overdue for them to get this funding. Not trying to be greedy but “we are going to get the money to the smallest of the small” Business with less than 10 FTEs need help/support. Indoor retail space--\$10million—would help people in Mercado Central. Money targeting our clients.
- Survey results—those could also inform policy makers. Received over 500 as of last week. Under 12 were Spanish speaking clients. Important to get info from our clients. Magnitude of what we are asking our clients is great.

Ambar:

- Conversation on supporting BIPOC communities—Convo on MN Council of Foundations: 1)how to support immigrant families, 2) supporting BIPOC community in general.
- Ambar will share info when gets solidified.
- If you have not applied to Otto Bremer for a grant (Grants and loans), if you are a nonprofit and have not applied for their emergency response grants please do. 1 page application does not take long to complete.
- Ruby—can you make a request from greater Minnesota for financial support—in Austin funds are exhausted.
- Henry—Whenever there is a new policy. If there is a 1 pager that needs to be completed by a business, that impacts our clients. That adds more work for us. All those things need to be thought out and how they disproportionately impact organizations like LEDC and CLUES in coming up with plans.

Cano/Closing:

- We will likely have more specific information on housing and business by next week.
- Health department has been working a lot—opening for grants—RFPd out to community. Grant we got from state of MN. Thanks to the state—we are regranting to community. Think about a statewide strategy. Smaller cities/towns immigration contributions are more significant because of proportionality.

-