



2023  
**CIRC ACTION FUND**  
annual report



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# mission & vision

CIRC Action Fund was established in 2012 to build a strong and thriving Colorado where all residents are treated with dignity and respect, have equal access to a fair quality of life and the opportunity to live united with family.

Our mission compels us to elect and protect candidates with a history of championing immigrant rights issues and to mobilize an electorate of People of Color and New Americans that reflects the populations where we work.

CIRC Action aims to shape Colorado as a national champion of cutting edge pro-immigrant elected and appointed leaders and to become Colorado's premier multicultural and intersectional statewide political advocacy organization.





# A WORD FROM OUR CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Dear Community,

Reflecting on 2023, we are thrilled to share the accomplishments and deepened connections with our community members that ultimately led to a more immigrant-friendly Colorado. With your support, this year, we successfully endorsed 13 candidates who won their election in municipal elections across the state. Each one is dedicated to champion the needs and aspirations of our immigrant communities.

We also expanded our community work with our sister organization, CIRC, which focused on actively engaging with directly impacted immigrant community members in our endorsement process for the first time. Immigrant community members also helped create and evaluate responses to a survey for Denver mayoral candidates this Spring.

We are excited to build upon our work in 2024 and continue to coordinate directly with immigrant communities across Colorado. We are grateful to all those who contributed in any way to our movement — especially to our organizers, volunteers, members, and donors. Together, we are proof of the power in people and what happens when we believe in our mission.

Here's to a future filled with continued collaboration, progress, and believing in the transformative power of our collective mission.



Together,

-Gladis Ibarra and Henry Sandman-



# SPRING ELECTIONS - PROGRAM RESULTS

SENT 115,000 TEXTS TO DENVER VOTERS



USED OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS TO PUBLICIZE THE RESULTS AND ENCOURAGE TURNOUT IN THE DENVER MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND RUNOFF.

ENDORSED FOUR CANDIDATES FOR DENVER CITY COUNCIL, ALL WHO PROMISE TO FIGHT FOR OUR IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES WHILE IN OFFICE.



SERENA GONZALES-GUTIERREZ

WON!



SHONTEL M. LEWIS

WON!



CANDI CDEBACA

LOST



JAMIE TORRES

WON!

A granddaughter of a prominent Chicano activist in Colorado, Serena propels her grandfather's work by focusing on equity by pushing for affordable housing, promoting child welfare legislation, supporting domestic violence victims, and advocating to protect our environment. She has played a significant role in passing key legislation in healthcare and data privacy for immigrants.

Shontel is an advocate for progressive policies because she has lived through first hand experiences of displacement and the rising cost of living in Denver. She is dedicated to expanding protections for renters and increasing the accessibility of opportunities for home ownership for all Denverites – especially those who are at risk of being uprooted from their communities.

Candi was the first LGBTQ Latina to serve on Denver City Council in 2019. Candi has continued to be an advocate against the criminalization of poverty, environmental racism, and the displacement of Denver's Black and Brown communities. She will continue to fight for community and infuse city government with policy expertise, a lens for justice, and ancestral wisdom.

Jamie started the Denver Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs because she saw a need for greater immigrant inclusion. She worked directly on issues of poverty, equity, food insecurity, community and civic engagement, immigrant integration, and approaching innovative ways of direct leadership development in underrepresented communities.



# 2023 DENVER MAYORAL CANDIDATE SCORECARD

In March, CIRC Action Fund members and staff created and distributed a questionnaire on the important issues that impact immigrants in Denver that we sent to all mayoral candidates. We also publicized our scorecard on our website and social media accounts.

This questionnaire included 20 questions and was available in both Spanish and English.

We then evaluated the responses and graded candidates with a committee of four directly impacted immigrants who live in Denver. We compiled the total score to create overall grades for candidates. Below are the results.

**CIRC Action Fund**  
**MAYORAL SCORECARD**

CANDIDATE	SCORE	CANDIDATE	SCORE
Mike Johnston	B+	Terrance Roberts	B
Thomas Wolf	D+	Ean Tafoya	A-
Chris Hansen	B-	Trinidad Rodriguez	B
Dr. Abass Yaya Bamba	C+	Lisa Calderón	A
Debbie Ortega	B-	Kelly Brough	B+
James Walsh	A-	Renate Behrens	C
Paul Fiorino	C		

**No response or response past deadline**

- Leslie Herod
- Kwame Spearman
- Matt Brady
- Andy Rougeot
- Al Gardner
- Auerlio Martinez
- Robert Treta



[Click here](#) to see more information and to see the responses of individual candidates. We did not receive responses from the following candidates: Al Gardner, Auerlio Martinez, Robert Treta, Leslie Herod, Kwame Spearman, Matt Brady and Andy Rougeot.

# FALL 2023 ENDORSEMENTS





# CIRC ACTION FUND FALL 2023 WINS!

CIRC Action Fund is proud to announce that **11 of our endorsed candidates have won their elections** in Aurora, Boulder, Commerce City, Fort Collins, Thornton, and Westminster!



Alison Coombs  
Aurora  
City Council At-Large



Justin Martinez  
Thornton  
City Council Ward 1



Roberta Ayala  
Thornton  
City Council Ward 2



Renée Millard Chacon  
Commerce City  
City Council Ward 3



Susan Noble  
Commerce City  
City Council Ward 4



Julie Pignataro  
Fort Collins  
City Council District 2



Melanie Potyondy  
Fort Collins  
City Council District 4



Emily Francis  
Fort Collins  
City Council District 6



Amber Hott  
Westminster  
City Council At-Large



Claire Carmelia  
Westminster  
City Council At-Large



Aaron Brockett  
Boulder  
Mayor of Boulder

Colorado Springs  
No on Ballot Measure  
2A

We chose to invest in local elections because we believe in the vital importance of local races. City council seats and mayoral positions directly influence local policies that impact the daily lives of the communities we serve. By endorsing candidates who share our values and by engaging with voters who have been historically left out of our democratic processes, we believe we can create tangible and immediate change at the grassroots level that reverberates throughout our state.

# 2023 TOTAL NUMBERS

## PARTISAN NUMBERS

15,000

text messages

13,000

doors knocked

3,500

face to face conversations

## NON-PARTISAN NUMBERS

125,000

text messages

5,000

doors knocked

700

face to face conversations

1,250

vote  
commitments

Our voter engagement program helped defeat ballot measure 2A in Colorado Springs, which would have added unnecessary funds to their police department, perpetuating a system that has historically harmed marginalized communities, at the expense of social programs.



# LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2023

## CONTINUE HEALTH CARE EXPANSION AND EDUCATION

In 2022, our team led HB22-1289 and the Cover all Coloradans Campaign to victory, expanding healthcare coverage for undocumented children and pregnant people. In 2023, we rolled out an education campaign to ensure immigrants are aware of this new law, as well as other pro-immigrant healthcare laws such as OmniSalud and the Colorado Option.

## COVER ALL COLORADANS POLICY DETAILS

Beginning in January 2025, HB22-1289:

- Creates a [Special Enrollment Period](#) for pregnancy, which will allow people to sign up for individual market insurance coverage as soon as they find out they are pregnant.
- Makes breast pumps a covered benefit for [all Coloradans](#) who use Medicaid and CHP+ – just as they are a covered benefit in private health plans, because all families deserve to be able to feed their babies in the way that works best for them.
- Eliminates [CHP+ annual premiums](#).
- Strengthens the [Healthy eMoms Survey](#), a critical perinatal data source.
- Creates a stakeholder process to determine how best to use additional federal resources to support perinatal health in Colorado.

## 2023 EDUCATION CAMPAIGN DETAILS

- We collected information from the community about how the OmniSalud enrollment process went and compiled that information for feedback and testimonial purposes.
- We held 1:1 conversations to contextualize and understand the barriers immigrants still face.
- Organizers met to understand opportunities for further engagement of our membership around healthcare issues and to provide tools for our members to bring these conversations back into their local communities.
- We plugged energized communities into ongoing advocacy and implementation efforts taking place locally, statewide, and nationally.

We envision this campaign as a building step in fighting for our larger vision, which is expanding healthcare access to the entire undocumented population in Colorado.

# INCREASED DRIVER'S LICENSE ACCESS

With the I Drive Coalition, we continued our fight to improve the SB251 driver's license program. In June 2023, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the signing of SB251 and launched two critical updates: all 35 DMV offices now offer SB251 licenses to undocumented residents and rebranding the license to "Standard License" for consistency and clarity.

# AFFORDABLE HOUSING - JUST CAUSE EVICTIONS

We partnered with the Colorado Eviction Defense Project to organize Know Your Rights trainings and Legal Clinics to educate immigrant communities about their housing rights, particularly in rural areas where legal resources are limited. We collected stories from immigrant communities of housing discrimination and created educational materials and resource toolkits to empower tenants to advocate for their rights. As part of the Colorado Homes for All Coalition, we mobilized our members for the legislative campaigns for "Just Cause for Evictions" and for "Local Control of Rents" bills.

# OTHER WINS IN COLORADO IN 2023

## IGSA BILL/HB23-1100 ADVOCACY (ICE RESISTANCE)

We heavily advocated for HB23-1100, a bill that passed during the 2023 legislative session which effectively ends IGSA contracts in Colorado (local jails can no longer rent bed space to ICE). Two of our own staff members supported with their personal testimonies.





# board of directors

## **KARLA GONZALEZ GARCIA - CO-PRESIDENT**

Gender, Sexuality & Identity Director for Amnesty International

## **CAITLIN TRENT - CO-PRESIDENT**

i2i Strategies, Founder and Principal Consultant

## **NADEEN IBRAHIM - SECRETARY**

Organizing Director, East Colfax Community Collective

## **SARAH PLASTINO - TREASURER**

Sarah Plastino Consulting

## **HELEN OH**

Litigation Attorney, Tyrone Glover Law, LLC

## **ASHLEY WHEELAND**

Hunger Free Colorado

# THANK YOU

to our funders and  
partners

AMERICA ✓ VOTES

**ROSE** COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

COMMUNITY  
Power from the  
ground up **CHANGE** **VOTERS**

*Movement*  
VOTER FUND

THE  
**FOUR**  
**FREEDOMS**  
ACTION FUND 

MERLE CHAMBERS



# how you can support



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