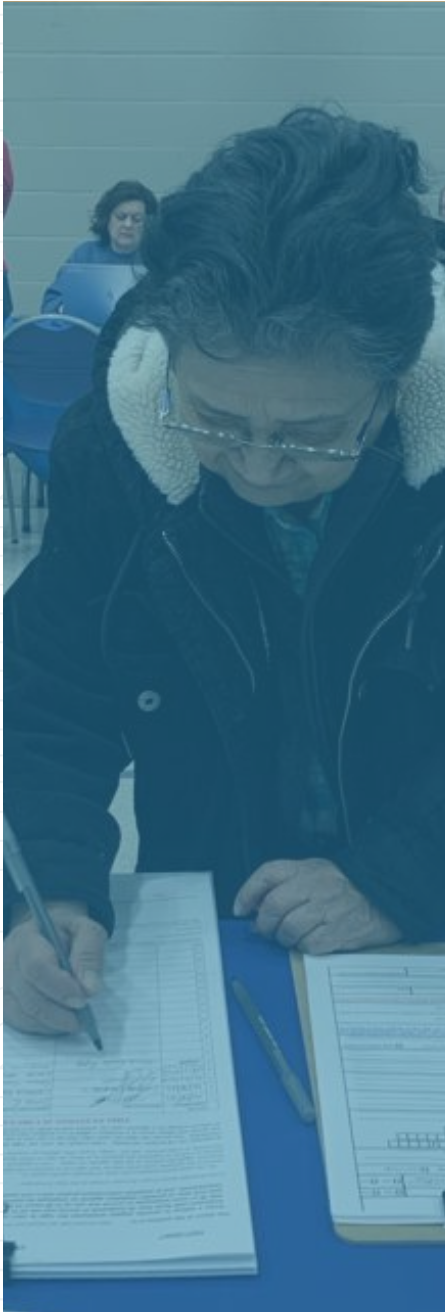




ANNUAL REPORT 2023



IMPACT



**BEGINS
WITH**



YOU

Heartland Workers Center engages and activates immigrants and individuals who have been historically underrepresented. We focus on developing leaders, increasing civic participation, and promoting workers' rights and responsibilities within these communities. We work to ensure the rights, cultures, and the ability of all people to create positive change are respected and valued.

Our Mission

The Heartland Workers Center develops and organizes leaders, promotes workers' rights, and fosters a culture of civic engagement in order to build power and create change with immigrant and underrepresented communities.

Our Vision

A community where the collective power is rooted in each individual's ability to promote, protect, and defend their human rights.

Our Values

SOLIDARITY: Championing unity with marginalized communities, we weave individual experiences into a powerful force for understanding and respect.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: Advocating for equity and human rights at all levels, we develop leaders who reflect our community through just actions and policies.

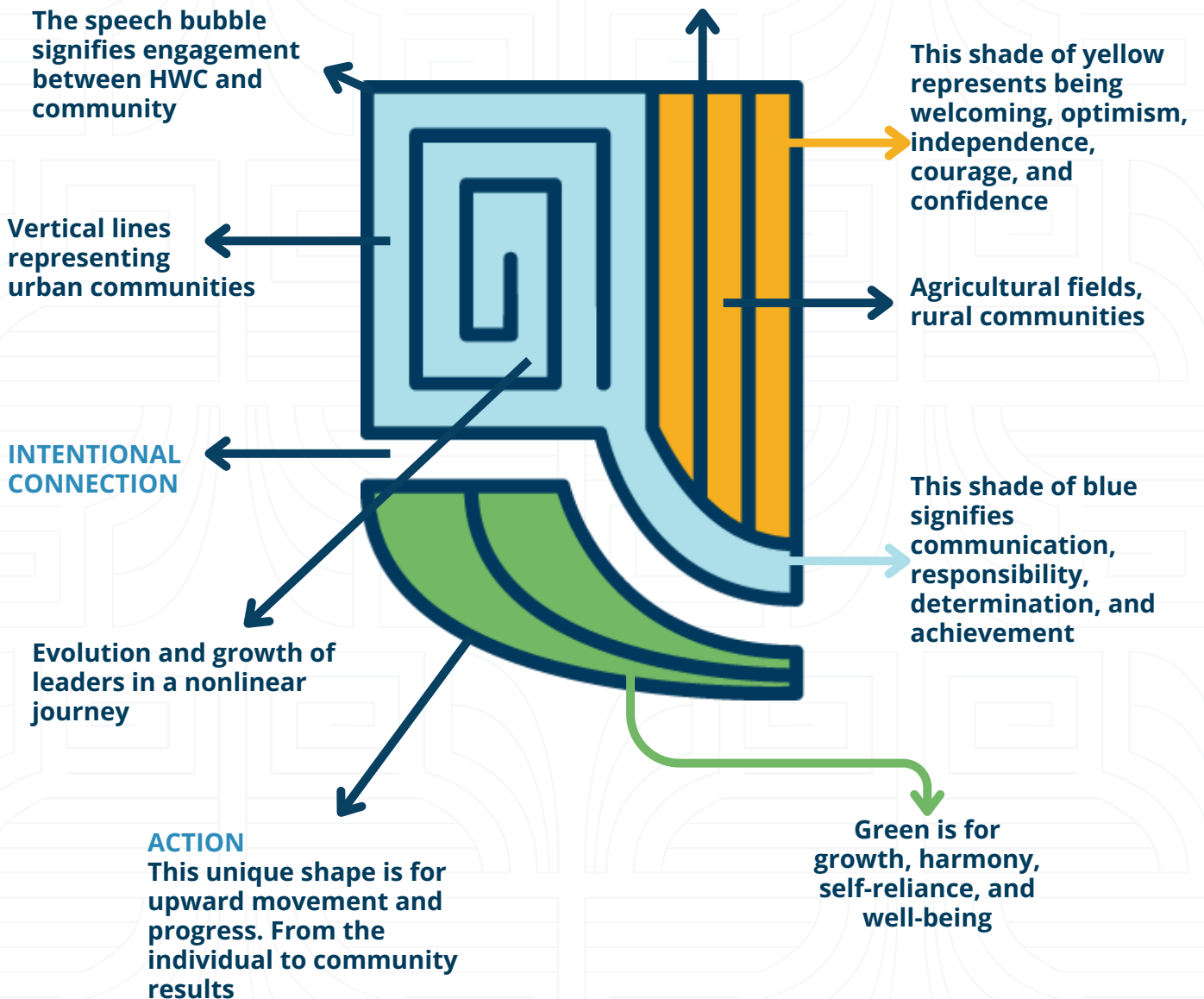
INCLUSIVITY: We embrace and honor community diversity, valuing unique perspectives and lived experiences that enrich our understanding of one another and the world.

EQUAL RIGHTS: We uphold the belief in human rights, envisioning a world where every individual thrives and contributes boldly to the community in an environment of equitable freedoms for all.

CULTURAL RESPECT: We value and support people from all backgrounds, recognizing our shared humanity and embracing differences with compassion and empathy.

BUILDING COLLECTIVE POWER

THREE CORE PROGRAMS
Leadership Development,
Civic Engagement, and
Workers' Rights



Impact Begins With You.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Meet our Board of DIRECTORS

Rev. Ernesto Medina
Chair

Christian Espinosa
Secretary

Rosenda Ovalle
Treasurer

Maria Vazquez, Ph.D.

Elizabeth Cabrera

Elizabeth Evans

Daniel Padilla

Jessi Hitchins, Ph.D.

Reflecting on our journey since 2022, I am thrilled to share the incredible strides we have made together in advancing our mission at Heartland Workers Center. The dedication and passion of our incredible team and hunger to learn is commendable. They are leading the way to participation. Your support has played an integral role in propelling us towards our shared vision of fostering empowered communities, promoting workers' rights, and creating lasting change. Your commitment has been instrumental in building power and creating positive transformation in immigrant and underrepresented communities.



The substantial growth of our Core Team volunteers in each community is one of our biggest points of pride. Our HWC organizers met with 1,405 community members, assessing their needs, skills, and gauging their interest in additional leadership development opportunities. As a result, we have increased our Core Team members to 402, which is more than double the number from 2022. This growth has strengthened our organizational capacity and it has magnified the collective impact we can have on the communities we serve. HWC was able to facilitate the targeted leadership development of 567 community members who either gained or worked towards a credential that will advance their education and improve their employability.

At the core of our success lies our belief in the power of community members to influence systemic change. Through cultural competence, clear and common language, and the creation of meaningful connections, individuals recognize their ability, responsibility, and power to shape the world around them. HWC core team members and volunteers understand the value in their participation in PTAs, community boards, and advisory committees. Fostering relationships with a wide variety of representatives has paved the way for a deeper understanding of the issues faced by our local communities and has positioned us as a respected voice in the legislative process.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our supporters who have stood with us on this journey. Because of you, immigrants and historically marginalized individuals are experiencing positive change in their lives. Together, we are creating a more inclusive and just society. I am filled with excitement for our 2024 initiatives and believe that they demonstrate a strong commitment to bringing value to the communities we serve through continued civic engagement, leadership development opportunities, and intentional training. Your support will continue to be essential to the transformative work we are doing.

With tremendous gratitude,

Lina Traslaviña Stover, Ph.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OUR TEAM

Janeth Cano

Director of Programming and Training

Raul Muñoz

Advocacy and Organizers Manager

Jackeline Prados

Senior Organizer GOTV

Penélope León

OSHA-Authorized Outreach Trainer
Health & Safety Training Institute Manager

Jaden Perkins

Policy Fellow

Guiovanny Ramírez

Communications Manager

Georgina Nuñez

Health & Safety Training Institute Coordinator

Rosa Pinto

Community Organizer
Columbus

Dolores Ramírez

Community Organizer
West Point

Perla Ochoa

Community Organizer
South Omaha

Luis Lucar

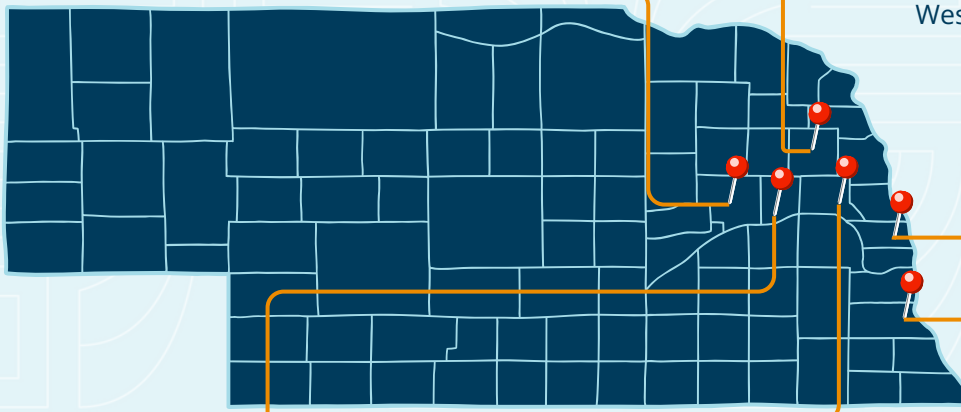
Senior Community Organizer
Schuyler

Antonio López

Community Organizer
Fremont

Andrea Hincapie

Community Organizer
Nebraska City



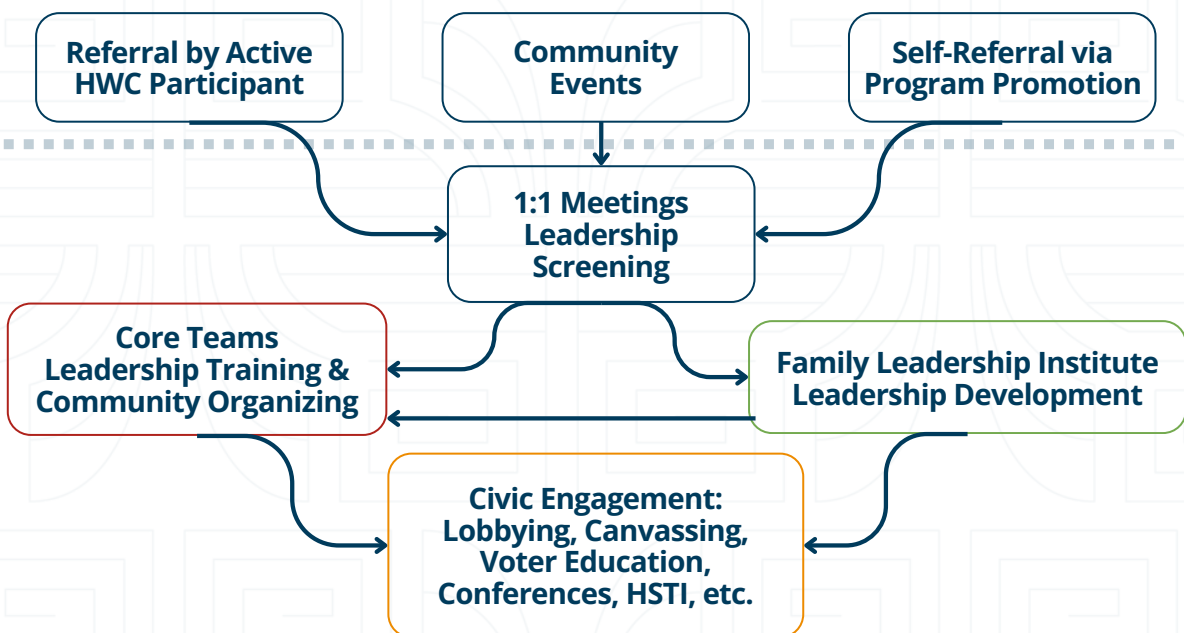
BUILDING CULTURAL WEALTH IN OUR COMMUNITIES

HWC has successfully implemented two transformative frameworks. At the forefront is the Cultural Wealth Model, strategically employed as the theoretical framework underpinning our programs. Within this model, HWC systematically cultivates six forms of capital: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance capital. Within the framework, participants gain a sense of agency and embark on an educational journey that fosters their capacity to organize around issues and create meaningful and sustainable change for themselves and their communities. HWC programs stand as pillars, shaping leaders who are not only well-versed in the intricacies of their communities but also equipped to drive positive change.

The second dimension of our transformative framework revolves around the activation of these empowered individuals through our pioneering Core Team model. Participants seamlessly transition from educational components to dynamic engagement in activities such as grassroots lobbying, canvassing, and various forms of civic participation. This strategic approach ensures a continuum of growth and impact, where theoretical knowledge transforms into real-world action, sparking change at both individual and community levels.

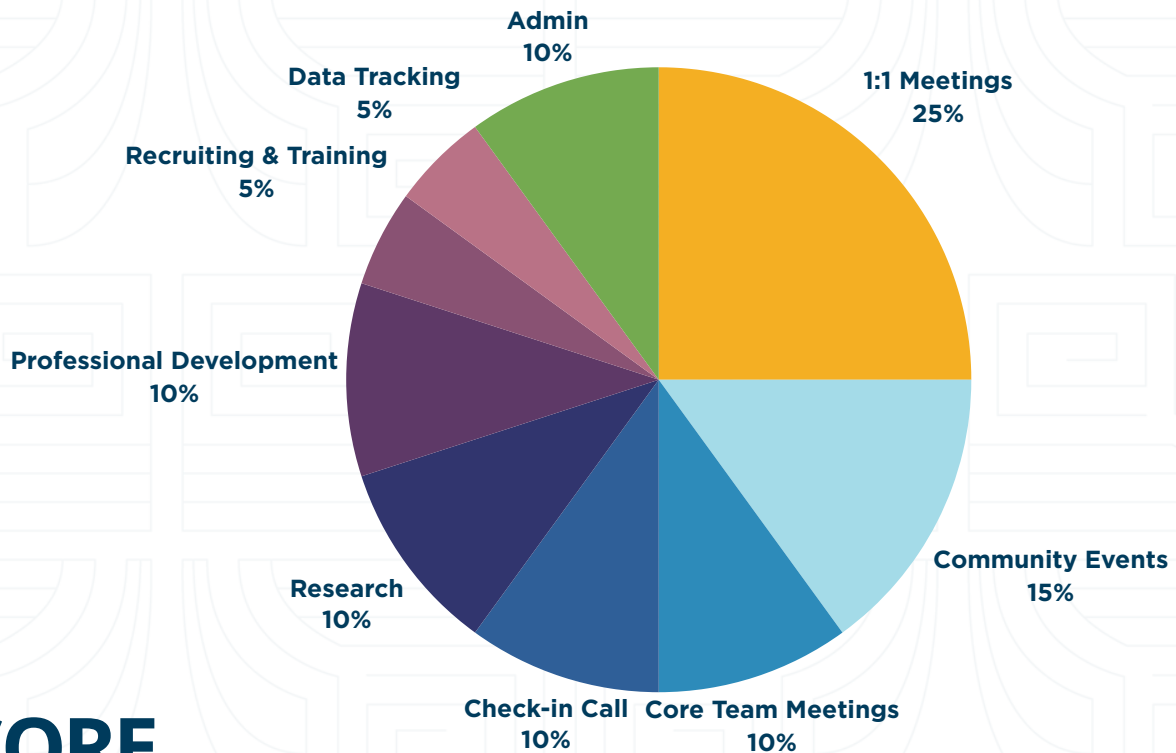
The infographic below illustrates how individuals evolve from learners to leaders, ultimately becoming active contributors to the betterment of their communities. HWC programs are evidence-based and emphasize the effectiveness of certain pathways in sustaining leader engagement over the long term. Sustained engagement is key to not only helping participants identify and harness different forms of community capital but also in activating leaders in various capacities.

→ **Ideal Participant Pathway**



COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS

Passionate Experts in Community Transformation, our Community Organizers have a vested interest in leveraging unique cultures, experiences, and abilities to enhance the well-being of our entire community. Here's how our 11 organizers spend their time:



CORE TEAMS

Our Core Team model was enhanced by formalizing the use of the 10 steps to community organizing 1. Build Relationships 2. Investigate and Listen 3. Research Issues. 4. Delivery of Findings. 5. Plan of Action. 6. Execution Outside of HWC. 7. Evaluate. 8. Communicate Results. 9. Celebrate. 10. Assess and Wonder. Each core team concentrates on specific topic to develop and execute and experience the result of coalition building towards one single goal. Core Team are local to various communities throughout Omaha and rural Nebraska.

402 Community members recruited to Core Teams for local community work

133 Core Team meetings held to organize around local community issues

29 Core Teams engaged in grassroots organizing on various community issues

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

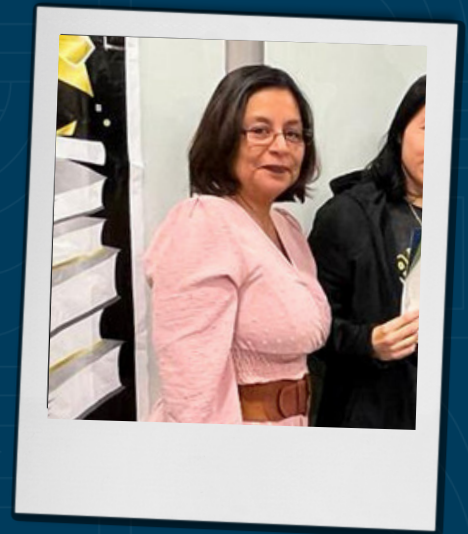
Here at the Heartland Workers Center, we are building a legacy of empowered leaders and shaping a brighter future for our communities. Our leadership development program provides individuals with training and mentorship opportunities, builds upon individual's skills to address issues where they live and work, and helps people to understand their power and capacity to take action. The data below is a testament to the impact we've made in fostering leadership within our communities.

1,405 Community members screened for leadership potential.

567 Community members gained credentials for their own professional advancement

PATTY COLUMBUS, NE VOLUNTEER ELL INSTRUCTOR

"The HWC has impacted my leadership in wonderful ways. I have always tried to participate in my community but the HWC showed me there is much more to do. They offered me an opportunity that I never imagined doing- teaching English to the Hispanic community. I learned that I can make my voice heard and with their support and motivation I took the step to start my own cleaning company. The sky is the limit!"



386 Family Leadership Institute Participants.

116 English Language Learner Graduates.

20 Students enrolled in literacy classes.

13 Students enrolled in NEMILISTLI classes at the Latino Center for the Midlands.

10 Students enrolled for General Education Development (GED) with 3 graduates.

10 Students enrolled in Nutrition classes.

9 Citizenship Students with 3 new citizens.

3 Students enrolled at Metropolitan Community College.

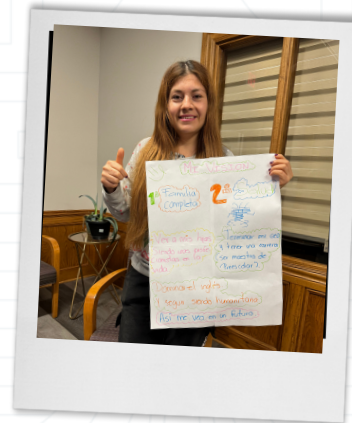
FAMILY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

In collaboration with esteemed partners such as the Nebraska Department of Education and Project ASSETS, we proudly introduce the Family Leadership Institute (FLI) curriculum. This groundbreaking initiative, slated for annual delivery over the next five years, serves as the bedrock of our leadership development endeavors. The FLI curriculum, a comprehensive educational framework, is meticulously designed to equip families with the knowledge, tools, and inspiration needed to guide their children towards success in both scholastic and life pursuits. The culmination of each cohort is marked by a graduation ceremony featuring Consuelo Castillo Kickbush, a nationally recognized speaker and main facilitator of the program. Our FLI participant outcomes are nothing short of remarkable:

- 100%** Recognized that leadership begins at home, embracing their roles as leaders.
- 100%** Gained insight into the importance of social-emotional learning, aligning it with traditional intelligence.
- 100%** Comprehended the significance of fostering positive school relationships for their children's academic success.
- 100%** Acknowledged the importance of creating and nurturing a conducive learning environment at home.
- 97%** Acquired communication strategies enhancing their ability to convey ideas effectively.
- 97%** Implemented changes in their lives using FLI strategies.
- 92%** Affirmed that the institute provided a valuable opportunity for their self-development.

JAZMIN FREMONT, NE ELL & FLI PROGRAM

"My experience in the Family Leadership Institute program has been transformative. I learned valuable tools that not only strengthened my relationship with my daughters but also allowed me to envision a more promising future. The program is not just a learning journey but an expedition towards building stronger family bonds."



WORKERS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

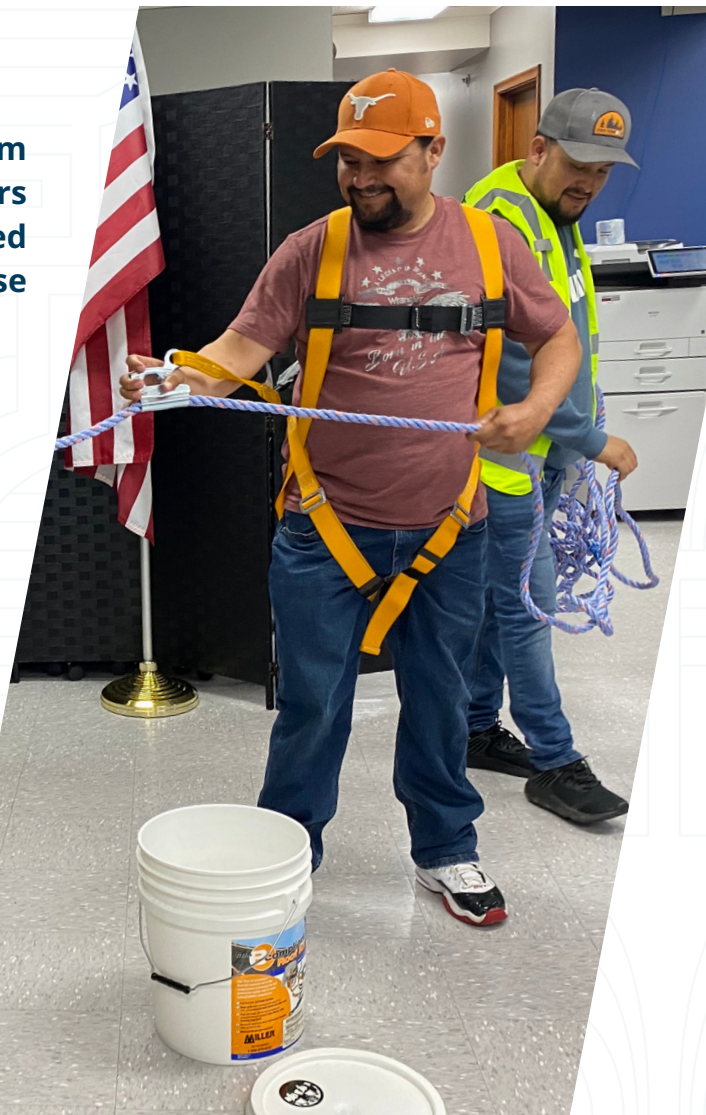
The Workers' Rights and Responsibilities Program engages employers in delivering accessible bilingual training, meticulously tailored to their specific needs, directly at the worksite. Facilitated by an OSHA-authorized trainer, this comprehensive approach ensures that our participants receive top-notch education on health and safety practices. Simultaneously, our program plays a pivotal role in community building. We actively organize workers and community leaders, fostering a united front that advocates for policies influencing the health and safety landscape. This collaborative effort not only amplifies individual voices but also catalyzes collective action, emphasizing the strength found in unity.

EMMA WEST POINT, NE FUTURE OSHA AUTHORIZED TRAINER

"In September 2023, I participated in the 10-hour OSHA Construction course. Currently, I am applying to become an OSHA Authorized Trainer in Construction for the next year. My goal is to be an agent of change in the workplace, promoting occupational safety and health among Spanish-speaking workers. I appreciate HWC West Point for providing me with opportunities and support to move in this direction. I am excited to contribute to workplace safety."

The Workers' Rights and Responsibilities Program has had a tremendous impact on both employers and employees in the local community. We helped 128 Individuals resolve work related Issues. These are the most common claims:

- 4** Major Labor Claims
- 35** Wage Claims
- 24** Workers Compensation
- 19** Discrimination Claims
- 14** Wage Theft Prevention by incorporating as LLC



HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING INSTITUTE

At the heart of our initiative is the Health & Safety Training Institute (HSTI), a cornerstone developed to holistically address all aspects of workers' rights and responsibilities. This centralized hub streamlines our efforts, allowing us to deliver impactful and cohesive programming. Our commitment to excellence has resulted in the issuance of 116 OSHA cards. Each certificate signifies not just the completion of a training program but, more importantly, the acquisition of knowledge and skills that empower workers to navigate and shape their professional environments.

116 Health & Safety Training Institute participants received 10- hours OSHA cards

114 Employees empowered to file a labor claim to improve their work environments



The HWC Workers' Rights and Responsibilities Program illuminates positive impact on workplace dynamics, policy advocacy, and the overall empowerment of our local workforce.



ABEL FREMONT, NE ELL PROGRAM

"This course provided me with a valuable perspective on workplace safety. I am now a member of the Safety Committee at my job, applying what I've learned to prevent injuries. I appreciate HWC Fremont for the opportunities and tools they have given me to enhance my work environment. I am committed to sharing this knowledge for a safe and healthy workplace."



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Heartland Workers Center Civic Engagement program helps people to understand the election process and the importance of their voice, engages grassroots leaders in civic life to impact public policy, and gets voters registered and prepared to vote in every election.

HWC followed 33 Legislative Bills, including but not limited to Voter ID, the need to have a full time Meatpacking Coordinator, supporting unemployment benefits for DACA, TPS, and the increase of the minimum wage. HWC gathered 700 signatures in an effort to put paid sick leave and Support our Schools on the Nebraska ballot so Nebraskans can vote for what they want.

HWC held 7 advocacy trainings for staff and Core Teams to improve civic engagement outcomes. Topics included: Lobby Days; Ballot Initiatives & Referendums in Nebraska; How your Local Government Works for You; Advocacy through your Local School Board; Nebraska Legislature Basics. HWC also educated community members on voting basics like how to interpret ballot language, developing an informed opinion on various proposed initiatives, and Voter ID requirements. HWC staff participated 10 Public Hearings at the State Legislature and organized 3 additional "Trips to the Capitol" for Core Team leaders.



- 700** Signatures collected in support of various initiatives
- 35** Volunteers enrolled for the 2024 GOTV campaign
- 33** Legislative bills tracked
- 10** Hearings attended
- 7** Trainings held to enhance civic engagement efforts
- 3** Trips coordinated to the Capitol with local Core Teams

2023 CAFECITO FUNDRAISER

At our inaugural Cafecito Fundraiser, we had over 120 attendees participate in a brainstorming session to think about ideas on how to recruit and retain workers in Nebraska. These are the results of that activity.

How to recruit and retain workers in Nebraska

Policies:

- Immigration reform
- Implement inclusive policies that protect the rights of migrants and ensure they are treated fairly in the workplace and society
- Anti-discrimination policies
- Expanding and protecting voting rights, advocating for a living wage & healthy workplace democracy
- National recruitment campaign in low wage/low opportunity communities.

Development of work, professional skills:

- Create pathways to have their foreign qualifications and skills recognized making easier to find relevant jobs.
- Increased education- workplace partnerships centered on building/training on career literacy career pathways internships/externships.
- More mentorship promotion within organizations.

Bilingual services:

- Bilingual services
- Hire bilingual/trilingual staff
- Offer language interpretation services in essential settings like hospitals, schools, and government offices.

Sharing of information:

- Launch campaigns to raise awareness about the contributions of migrant workers and challenge negative stereotypes.
- Create more welcoming communities.
- Shine a light on rural Nebraska.

Inclusivity:

- Provide a safe space for diversity and inclusion
- Flexibility
- Marketing re-do: Nebraska is for Everyone

Wages:

- Guaranteed minimum income.
- Affordable housing and strengthen tenant rights
- Set up affordable and reliable childcare services to support working migrant parents

Worker/Labor development:

- Easier access to licensing for specialized jobs/skilled jobs.
- Recruit retirees as part time critical staff for roles that they have experience in or want to be trained in, ex: teachers/paras, trainers, etc.

Personal/Community development:

- Establish social clubs/online groups where migrants can connect, share, experiences, and provide mutual support.
- Establish community gardens that allow migrants to grow familiar crops from their home countries fostering a sense of connection to their roots.
- Develop programs that help workers integrate into the local culture: language classes, cultural events, and community workshops

MAJOR PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

Thank you to all our major partners and supporters that made 2023 a year of transformation and growth for HWC. Your support has directly benefited immigrants and historically marginalized and underrepresented people in our community.

Adah & Leon Millard Foundation
 Castro Realty Group
 Clean & Prosperous America
 E Creative
 Immanuel Vision Foundation
 John & Diane Scott Fund
 Lozier Foundation
 Mutual Of Omaha
 Nebraska Civic Engagement Table

Nebraska Department of Education
 Nebraska State Education Association
 Omaha Community Foundation
 The Sherwood Foundation
 United Way of the Midlands
 Weitz Family Foundation
 William & Ruth Scott Foundation
 Windward Fund



Donate

Impact begins with you





CONTACT US:

 www.heartlandworkerscenter.org

hwc@heartlandworkerscenter.org

402.933.6095

4923 South 24th St. Ste. 101 Omaha, NE 68107

