

Our History



In the face of discrimination, economic disparities, and a lack of political representation on local and national levels, Latinos in 1960s Colorado were determined to impact their communities for the better. With support from what is now known as the Mile High United Way, 27 local community leaders banded together to form the Latin American Research and Service Agency (LARASA) on March 13, 1964 - the **first Hispanic/Latino-serving 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization** in the United States. Now known as the **Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy and Research Organization (CLLARO)**, the organization has been working to serve as an advocate for the rights, concerns and successes of Colorado Latinos for over 50 years.

Founding Members of CLLARO (Formerly LARASA)

[Lena L. Archuleta](#) | [Charles Tafoya](#) | [Bernard “Bernie” Valdez](#)

[Hon. Roger Cisneros](#) | [Rev. Eutimo Duran](#) | [Dr. James Galván](#) | [Rev. James Prohens](#)

[Levi J. Beall](#) | [Benjamin Bezoff](#) | [Bert Gallegos](#) | [Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales](#)

[Joseph Herrera](#) | [Cletus Ludden](#) | [Helen Lucero](#) | [Robert Lucero](#)

[Isaac Moore](#) | [Rachel B. Noel](#) | [Don Pacheco](#) | [Herrick S. Roth](#)

[George Roybal](#) | [Betty Salazar](#) | [John Sanchez](#) | [Sheldon Steinhauser](#)

[Eduardo Terrones](#) | [Phillip Torres](#) | [Moses Trujillo](#) | [Charles Vigil](#)

In line with the vision of the original founders, Ms. Lena Archuleta, Mr. Charles Tafoya, and Mr. Bernie Valdez, CLLARO’s ongoing mission is to empower Latinos through leadership development, advocacy, and research in order to address disparities in education, health, job readiness and social justice, with the goal that when Latinos are achieving their fullest potential, it strengthens Colorado. However, the concerns of Colorado Latinos have evolved:

There are now over 1.1 million Latinos in Colorado, making up 21% of the population, yet:

- 25% of that population lives below the federal poverty level.
- 26% of that population lacks equitable access to affordable healthcare options.
- 33% of that population is incarcerated.

Today, CLLARO exists to serve not only as an advocate for the Latino community, but also as the voice of other marginalized communities such as low-income children, refugees, and immigrants.

Major community concerns include:

- Access to affordable housing
- Access to quality healthcare
- Access to healthy, natural foods
- Access to quality childcare, pre- and post-secondary education
- Access to leadership development education
- Equal representation at both the local and national political level

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