

2026 FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

Spotlight on ILLINOIS

IMMIGRATION

Federal Immigration Operations

Indiscriminate mass apprehension operations conducted by the federal government have led to widespread community disruption, severe economic damage, and numerous deaths, including of U.S. citizens.

- *For instance: Since January 2025, roughly 33 percent of those arrested by federal immigration enforcement authorities in Illinois have been collateral arrests, with last year's brutal crackdown on Chicago prompting economic damage that will last for years to come.*
- **Hispanic Federation urges Congress to impose meaningful guardrails on federal immigration enforcement operations, including standard protocols for clearly visible identification of federal agents, ending roving patrols outside of their jurisdiction, restoring pre-arrest approval and judicial warrant requirements, and accountability measures for violations of protocol, including disciplinary actions and review panels.**

Due Process

The Administration's enforcement efforts have encroached heavily on constitutional rights, perhaps none more so than the right to due process under the law. More than 400 federal judges have ruled roughly 4,500 recent instances of immigrant detention illegal, an unsurprising outcome in the face of revelations like DHS guidance instructing agents to circumvent the need for signed judicial warrants for home entry.

- *For instance: Last October, a federal agent arrested a 19-year-old U.S. citizen who was leaving a Walgreens. About 15 minutes after the arrest, the arresting agent told a supervisor that he had arrested the man for "nothing." The agent then attempted to claim that he had been assaulted, but bystander video belied that claim. The man was held for hours, but was never charged with any crimes related to the arrest.*
- **Hispanic Federation demands Congress take steps to restore basic constitutional rights to due process for those entailed within federal enforcement operations, including timely legal representation, fair hearings, vetted review processes to regularly assess detention legality and necessity, and adequate funding to address the continuous backlog at USCIS.**

Detention Overhaul

A rapid expansion of detention infrastructure has led to widespread reports of harm amid unsafe conditions. The last year has seen new records broken in fatalities among those held in immigration detention, all while the number of those held without criminal convictions has risen 25-fold. As the ranks of those detained expands rapidly, communities, news outlets, and lawmakers alike have reported horrifying conditions, including woefully inadequate access to medical treatment and rampant sexual abuse.

- *For instance: After 82 days in ICE detention, Chicago business owner Nenko Gantchev died after facility staff allegedly neglected to provide medical care for his type 2 diabetes, even deferring an echocardiogram for over a month. ON the night he died, facility personnel declined to call 911, instead calling Lake County's non-emergency, administrative phoneline. Sheriff's deputies were not alerted to the incident until after Gantchev's body had been removed, denying both his family and local authorities answers.*
- **Hispanic Federation exhorts Congress implement measures reforming the conditions and processes of immigrant detention like suspending the practice of family separation, enforcing standards of access to hygiene and health care, regular health and wellness inspections, and creating enforceable mechanisms by which detainees may report abuses.**

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: From January through March of this year, Hispanic Federation financially supported four different organizations from four different states in the Midwest: Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin and Illinois. These funds were to cover USCIS fees for DACA renewals, naturalization, work permits, health screenings for applicants, and more. Each organization received \$7,475.00 in discretionary dollars, with eligibility based on whether they have a DOJ accredited staff or lawyer in their team to ensure legal compliance with these efforts.

HEALTH CARE

Health Care Access

Recent legislative and executive actions are poised to strip health care coverage from upwards of 11 million Americans, which will prove catastrophic not only to vulnerable communities but also underlying health care infrastructure that supports all Americans from home to school to the workplace.

- *For instance, the elimination of ACA marketplace plan subsidies has led to a roughly 125 percent increase in out-of-pocket premium payments for the average Latino family in Illinois, while Medicaid funds for the state are slated to decline by \$38bn.*
- **Hispanic Federation demands Congress reverse looming and actualized funding cuts to key health care access programs like Medicaid and Affordable Care Act marketplace plan subsidies to protect millions of Americans from losing health care coverage through no fault of their own.**

Vaccines

Repeated real-world trials and biological theory render it indisputable that vaccines work. Mass immunization campaigns reduce incidence of illness and hospitalization, supporting healthy, productive living for all, including those living with immunocompromising conditions.

- *Across the Midwest, falling immunization rates are jeopardizing the health of our most vulnerable. Illinois for instance has fallen below the 95 percent herd immunity threshold. In turn, our communities are at dangerous risk of endemic spread and breakthrough infections.*
- **Hispanic Federation thereby urges Congress to redouble its commitment to vaccination as an essential pillar of public health through policies including public information and outreach campaigns, and proper funding for vaccines, immunizations, and research support.**

Health Care Provider Resources

Our communities rely on access to well-funded health care facilities and well-trained medical professionals. Reductions in federal funding going to health care facilities, particularly rural health care facilities, and proposed caps to federal financial aid for graduate students pursuing degrees like nursing are likely to lead to diminished availability of health resources.

- *For instance, twenty percent of rural hospitals Illinois are staring down immediate reduction in services or even risk of closure. Simultaneously, the state faces a considerable shortfall of more than one thousand nurses over the next four years alone, which will only be worsened in direct consequence of funding cut in H.R. 1.*
- **Hispanic Federation exhorts Congress to appropriate wider, targeted funding to support the staffing and maintenance of health care facilities for underserved and rural communities and to reduce cost barriers for all students pursuing degrees in health care.**

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: The Hispanic Federation Midwest office has been proud to support nearly twenty community-based organizations and their staff through the Por Nosotros mental health and wellness initiative. Through culturally responsive workshops, wellness programming, peer support opportunities, and conversations focused on emotional well-being, the program has helped provide critical tools and resources to frontline nonprofit professionals serving Latino communities across the region. Por Nosotros continues

to play an important role in promoting mental wellness, reducing stigma, and strengthening organizational resilience among the Midwest network.

AI AND TECH

Digital Infrastructure Investments that Expand Access and Opportunity

Only two in three Hispanic adults have home broadband and a computer at home, leaving millions disconnected. The bipartisan Digital Equity Act was poised to close longstanding gaps in internet access and digital skills, yet the administration has moved to dismantle it before its promise could be realized.

- *For instance, across Illinois, nearly \$40 million dollars in Digital Equity Act funding have been cancelled, affecting over 10 million people statewide. Likewise, over 700,000 households across the state were dependent upon Affordable Connective Program funding for broadband access, which has now been jeopardized.*
- **Hispanic Federation urges Congress to expand broadband programs and digital infrastructure investments through the Digital Equity Act, the BEAD program, Universal Service Fund and to create a replacement for the Affordable Connectivity Program. These programs empower everyone in this country with the tools and connectivity required to access jobs, health care, education, and essential government services.**

Federal AI Governance that Protects the Rights, Safety, and Opportunities of Hispanic Communities and All Americans

AI systems are already making consequential decisions impacting Latino communities. Our communities need AI guardrails that protect civil rights, secure data privacy, and ensure systems are transparent, accountable, and independently audited. The unregulated development and widespread deployment of artificial intelligence have left communities vulnerable to the impacts of algorithmic discrimination, privacy violations, and serious safety concerns.

- *For instance, while Illinois has been proactive in attempting to leverage the opportunities accorded by gains in Artificial intelligence while protecting small businesses and civil rights, several of those laws are threatened by moves toward federal preemption of state-level AI regulations. Six such laws in Illinois are threatened by the federal push to remove these safeguards.*
- **Hispanic Federation calls on Congress to enact comprehensive federal AI governance legislation that mandates evaluations for accuracy and disparate impact for AI tools used in federal enforcement and benefits decisions – including implicit biases, privacy protections that limit procurement and deployment of personal data, and ensures affected communities have meaningful recourse when algorithmic systems cause harm.**

AI Literacy and Workforce Development

As AI reshapes industries and the skills employers demand, Latino workers risk being left behind without targeted investments in the education and training programs that build digital fluency and career readiness.

- *For instance: Across Illinois, at least 1.3 million residents have low digital literacy skills, with Hispanic residents reporting lower confidence than average in performing critical online tasks like online banking or finding reliable health information, while 90 percent of jobs in the state require digital skills.*
- **Hispanic Federation urges Congress to invest in AI literacy and workforce development programs that equip Hispanic communities and all Americans with the capacity to fully engage in a rapidly changing digital economy, including education and workforce funding for traditional and nontraditional students, as well as workers in at-risk industries, partnerships with Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and initiatives that expand Latino representation beyond end users into the AI field itself.**

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: Since 2020, HF has trained 1,682 Illinois residents in digital workforce skills — including 223 in AI literacy since 2024 — helping 281 secure employment, and has connected CBOs with state broadband offices to expand digital access.

NON-PROFIT PROTECTIONS

Nonprofit community-based organizations play essential roles in the communities they serve, filling vital service niches in their local areas by addressing gaps in services from governmental and for-profit providers. Over the past few years, the nonprofit sector has contributed approximately \$2 trillion to the GDP, providing essential services to address gaps in each of the areas discussed above.

- *For instance, the Federation's network of COVID-19 grantees, which had an estimated combined reach of more than 10 million people annually, was able to deliver emergency services, including food and housing assistance and health care, to some of the most overlooked and vulnerable communities during times of crisis, including individuals without health insurance, undocumented and mixed-status families, children and youth, pregnant women, domestic violence survivors, farmworkers, day laborers, and seniors.*
- *Likewise, Hispanic Federation's Lucha Contra El Hambre hunger relief effort focused on boosting food support to families throughout New York, Florida, and Illinois. Since its inception in 2011, the program has provided more than 1,250,000 fresh, healthy and culturally-responsive meals to Latinos in New York alone through our network of 71 non-profit member organizations across the city. In Puerto Rico, HF piloted a new preparedness program in 20 municipalities to stock 23 community kitchens with a three-day emergency supply of nonperishable food. These community-managed kitchens that provide hot meals after disasters committed to store the food through the end of hurricane season, only to be used in case of emergency.*
- **Hispanic Federation implores Congress and executive officials alike to protect and support vital community-driven, nonprofit funding and 501c3 status.**

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: The Hispanic Federation Midwest office has expanded the CREAR Futuros program to support Latino college students through mentorship, academic guidance, leadership development, and student support services. In partnership with institutions such as University of Illinois Chicago and Northeastern Illinois University, the program has helped students navigate higher education, strengthen career readiness, and build pathways toward long-term success. CREAR Futuros also works to increase retention and graduation outcomes by connecting students with mentors, professional development opportunities, and a strong community of support both on and off campus.



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