



City of Tacoma

City Council

December 12, 2023

Washington State Legislature
416 Sid Snyder Ave SW
Olympia, WA 98504

To Whom it May Concern,

The Tacoma City Council is pleased to send this letter in support of Mi Centro's request for funding in the State Operating Budget and thank Representative Mena and Senator Trudeau for their support of this request.

This additional funding for Mi Centro is vital to ensure Mi Centro's important work serving our community. Mi Centro, based in the Hilltop neighborhood, has been a longstanding community organization serving Tacoma and Pierce County's Latino populations, first opening its doors in 1992. To this date, they have served thousands of families and provide vital services to the fastest growing demographic in Washington State. These services include:

- Data collection to identify the impacts of homelessness, gun violence, domestic abuse, drug challenges, etc. on the Latino community.
- Civics education and advocacy training Dolores Huerta Institute, English as a second language courses, and college readiness via FAFSA education and completion assistance.
- Technical support, mentorship, and grant/loan connection for Latino small businesses through the Camino Al Exito program, which partners with Pierce County's "Business Accelerator Program". This program is also launching the first ever Tacoma Latino Chamber of Commerce.
- Family support services through the Maru Mora Centro Familiar center, which provides rental assistance, temporary housing, language support, and advocacy.
- Arts and cultural programming through the Arreguin Arts & Cultural Center, which have included festivals, art shows, music lessons, art lessons, etc.

While the organization was hit hard during the COVID-19 pandemic, they have been able to adjust to meet the surging needs of the community. However, demand for services has been rapidly outpacing the organization's capacity, particularly because it is the sole Latino service provider in the Tacoma/Pierce County area.

Without the additional support of the Legislature, Mi Centro may not be able to meet the needs of its clients, ultimately leaving families behind at a critical time of need.

We strongly urge the members of the Legislature to support Mi Centro and the Tacoma community by funding this request for additional resources to Mi Centro.

Sincerely,

Mayor Victoria Woodards

Council Member Catherine Ushka – Position 4

Deputy Mayor Kristina Walker – Position 8

Council Member Joe Bushnell – Position 5

Council Member John Hines – Position 1

Council Member Kiara Daniels – Position 6

Council Member Sarah Rumbaugh – Position 2

Council Member Olgy Diaz – Position 7

Council Member Keith Blocker – Position 3