



## County of Monterey – 2025 CSAC Challenge Awards

### Executive Summary County of Monterey Immigration Rights Initiative

**OVERVIEW** – The County of Monterey Immigration Rights Initiative mobilized to ensure every resident has equitable access to rights and protections, regardless of language, status, or circumstance.

**CHALLENGE** – Immigrants in Monterey County, many integral to our thriving agricultural and hospitality industries, faced steep barriers: scarce affordable legal aid, language gaps, and deep-seated fears of federal systems. These challenges threatened not only family unity but also the economic stability of the region.

**SOLUTION** – Under the leadership of Supervisors Chris Lopez and Luis Alejo, an ad hoc committee of more than 100 leaders from industry groups, law enforcement, healthcare, schools and nonprofits sprang into action, meeting weekly to maximize outreach. In just a few months, a county-wide outreach program was fully underway. By April 2025, we had hosted four community “Know Your Rights” forums in Salinas, Greenfield, Pajaro, and Seaside—drawing over 2,500 participants. Evergreen video recordings of these events have since reached more than 35,000 viewers on Facebook and YouTube.

We distributed 120,000 pocket-sized, multilingual Know Your Rights Red Cards, available both in print and for download, to 95 nonprofits and all 27 county departments. Two press conferences outside the County Government Center drew over 150 representatives from community organizations, elected offices, and the public, with coverage from major news outlets and live streams amplifying the message.

Strategic partnerships with the Mexican Consulate General in San José, the Honorary Consul of Mexico in Salinas, and local, state, and federal offices ensured robust support. At each forum, community fairs offered resource booths, free materials, and refreshments, creating a safe and welcoming space for learning and connection.

**INNOVATION** – Our approach broke new ground. Animated explainer videos produced in English, Spanish, and four Indigenous languages made vital legal information accessible to thousands and ran as Public

Service Announcements on local TV hundreds of times across the region. Distinctive, pocket-sized Red Cards were created which carried clear, critical guidance for encounters with federal agents and became a visible emblem of empowerment across the county. The cards were embraced by the Monterey County Hospitality Association, the Farm Bureau, and dozens of partner agencies. Thousands of Family Caregiver Affidavit packets were distributed for parents to plan if separated from their children through school-based forums, which also provided direct access to immigration attorneys. This rapid implementation of resources set a new efficiency benchmark, rolling out the entire initiative in just four months.

**RESULTS** – Nonprofits reported an immediate surge in requests for legal aid, with attorneys providing direct, hands-on support. Partnerships with the county education department brought rights education into classrooms, building trust from an early age. Both the Hospitality Association and the Farm Bureau noted a boost in worker confidence. Our evergreen videos and widely covered press conferences continue to serve as trusted resources.

**REPLICABILITY** – This turn-key model was built on a multilingual resource hub, downloadable tools, school-based forums, and cross-sector partnerships offers a ready blueprint for other counties, especially those with agricultural or hospitality-driven economies. It was accessed by tens of thousands in and outside our County.

## **CONTACT**

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## **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS**

- Immigration Rights Website (downloadable resources): [Know Your Rights Resources](#)
- Press Conferences Links: [1/15/2025](#) and [6/18/2025](#) (Tri-County effort private and public sector)
- Indigenous Language Video Links: [Mixteco, Triqui, and more](#)
- Immigration Forum Playlist: [YouTube Playlist](#)