



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2025 Request for Proposal

## General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2025-198

**Proposal Title:** Engaging Latine Communities in Conservation and Preservation

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Carolina Ortiz

**Organization:** Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Accion Latina

**Office Telephone:** (612) 806-1791

**Email:** carolinao@copalmn.org

## Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** COPAL will utilize community-based partnerships and communications platforms to host outdoor events educating 15,550 Latine and BIPOC participants about the need to protect Minnesota's air, water, and natural resources.

**ENRTF Funds Requested:** \$400,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** June 30, 2027

**LCCMR Funding Category:** Environmental Education (C)

## Project Location

**What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?**

Statewide

**What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?**

Statewide

**When will the work impact occur?**

During the Project and In the Future

## Narrative

### **Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.**

Routinely visiting parks and engaging in outdoor activities increases peoples' commitment to water and land conservation (DeVillie et al., 2021). Yet in 2022 only 11% of visitors to Minnesota's state parks identified as BIPOC, while 22% of MN's population is BIPOC (Minnesota DNR, 2022). Barriers included cost, transportation, knowledge of outdoor spaces, language access, and racism.

For Latine families who speak Spanish, the lack of educational resources and Spanish-speaking staff at community parks and outdoor events can make it difficult to navigate the outdoors. Parks and outdoor activities hold a special significance in Latine cultures. Many cities and towns throughout the Caribbean, Central America, and South America host outdoor festivals in town squares, and many cultural traditions include connections to the natural world. Without access to Minnesota's outdoors, Latine communities lose a cultural keystone.

ENRTF funding will allow COPAL to expand programming to create culturally-relevant, accessible avenues to Minnesota's parks and outdoor activities for more Latine and BIPOC communities. Participants will learn key conservation techniques, and based on the impact the work has had thus far, will result in increased participation in preserving Minnesota's land and resources among Latine and BIPOC communities.

### **What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.**

COPAL partners with local organizations to provide monthly events that increase access to Minnesota's parks, natural resources, and outdoor activities among Latine and BIPOC communities. We provide the transportation, financial resources, and language services that our communities need. Our curriculum increases civic participation in the agencies that govern pollution and natural resources, and we educate attendees on best practices to preserve Minnesota's natural resources. We also educate park rangers and staff about how to ensure outdoor activities are accessible for our Spanish-speaking communities.

COPAL recently hosted an outdoor event at Bdote (Fort Snelling State Park). By removing parking and transportation fees, and guiding people to the location, over 50 community members participated in the event, many of whom had never been to a state park. Families signed up to attend future events and invited their friends. Park staff learned how to work with translators and about the barriers Latine and BIPOC communities face in accessing parks.

Our impact was not just at the event site, however. Our strong communications presence and our videographer - who has extensive experience documenting conservation efforts in Chile – educate over 15,550 people each month about preserving Minnesota's land and water.

### **What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?**

During the grant period, 600 people will attend COPAL's outdoor events throughout Minnesota. Post-event surveys will demonstrate an increased interest in and ability to protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance the state's natural resources. Participants will become leaders in COPAL's environmental justice work.

To increase the reach and impact of our efforts, we will disseminate information and educate our Latine and BIPOC communities via our strong communications presence. We expect to reach over 15,550 people monthly via social media, newsletters, YouTube videos, and our 24/7 radio station.

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: 600 people (300 per year) will attend 24 events (1/month)

**Activity Budget:** \$267,807

**Activity Description:**

o Objective: Connect Latine and BIPOC communities with Minnesota’s natural resources and conservation efforts

o Tasks & How they will be accomplished: Plan, create agendas for each event, publicize on communications platforms, collaborate with local partners, gather materials for, and execute monthly events at state and city parks. Events will focus on different topics such as how to safely fish in Minnesota’s lakes and rivers, how to snowshoe, and practical steps like how to reduce pollution and environmental harm at home. Evaluate each event using post-event surveys and capture demographics about each participant.

o Outcomes, Impact, Evaluation: Through post-event surveys, Minnesota’s Latine and BIPOC communities will name ways they will conserve and preserve the state’s natural resources. 80% of survey respondents will visit a state park again. State park staff will be able to name barriers Latine and BIPOC communities experience in accessing the parks and actions they will take to mitigate these obstacles.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Engage 600 participants throughout Minnesota (Twin Cities metro, southern, western, and northern MN).	June 30, 2027
80% of survey respondents will say they will visit a state park in the future.	June 30, 2027
90% of survey respondents will list how they will conserve the state’s natural resources.	June 30, 2027
Form 2 new partnerships annually with BIPOC organizations to reach more participants throughout Minnesota.	June 30, 2027
Continue existing partnerships with 3 local organizations.	June 30, 2027

### Activity 2: Environmental Justice (EJ) Committee Members lead COPAL’s EJ work

**Activity Budget:** \$58,800

**Activity Description:**

o Objective: Create avenues for COPAL’s member-based environmental justice committee to be leaders in COPAL’s EJ work.

o Tasks & How they will be accomplished: Educate the 40-member committee on various conservation efforts and provide opportunities to share out learnings to the group. Connect members via 1-1 conversations with rebate programs to make their homes more sustainable. Work with members individually to foster sustainable conservation efforts. Involve members in event planning, scaling up their involvement based on a rubric of necessary skills, and support members to share their experiences with representatives and public offices, like the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

o Outcomes, Impact, and Evaluation: Evaluation activities will include individual conversations and listening sessions with committee members. Committee members will become representatives of COPAL’s EJ work and outdoor activities, gaining the skills to continue being leader advocates in their communities for sustainable lifestyles.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Throughout programming, engage 10-15 committee members in leadership roles.	June 30, 2027
50 new attendees engage in the outdoor activities due to committee member outreach.	June 30, 2027
During the second year of programming, 5 committee members lead at least 2 events.	June 30, 2027
2 committee members are hired in conservation programming, leading efforts in Minnesota	June 30, 2027
Educate 600 families about rebate programs and directly connect 20 families with eligible rebates.	June 30, 2027

### Activity 3: Educate 15,550 people per month about conserving Minnesota’s natural resources

**Activity Budget:** \$73,393

**Activity Description:**

COPAL will use our multitude of communications platforms to reach a wide audience of (predominantly Spanish speaking) Minnesota residents to educate them about actions they can take to conserve the state’s natural resources. We expect to reach at least 15,550 people through social media, radio, videos, and newsletters. Outcomes will include awareness of the urgent need to preserve natural resources and an expanded network of Minnesotans who are working on conservation efforts. Evaluation will include a monthly presentation to COPAL's 8-member leadership team about reach, what's working well, and what to improve.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Social media: 2 posts per week will reach 9,000 people per month	June 30, 2027
Newsletters: 2 newsletters per month will reach 5,650 people per month	June 30, 2027
YouTube: 2 videos per year will reach 500 people per month	June 30, 2027
Weekly show about environmental justice on COPAL’s radio station will reach 400 people monthly	June 30, 2027

## Long-Term Implementation and Funding

**Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?**

We will evaluate our grant activities through our 40-member Environmental Justice Committee, 1-1 conversations, post-event surveys, and data analysis. Results will be implemented to reduce the disparity of BIPOC individuals accessing parks.

After project completion, we will utilize our strong partnerships and membership base - which we expect to grow throughout the outdoor events - to determine the needs of the Latine community in preserving and conserving Minnesota's natural resources. We will continue funding our environmental justice program through grants with which we have a strong relationship and history of funding.

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Carolina Ortiz

**Job Title:** Environmental Justice Director

**Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.**

Carolina Ortiz is the Environmental Justice Director at Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Accion Latina COPAL Education Fund (COPAL). Hailing from Zacatecas, Mexico, Carolina embodies the spirit of resilience and determination. Her advocacy for environmental justice is not just a vocation but a lived experience, drawing strength and motivation from her own encounters and those of her community.

Carolina's impactful footprint extends far beyond her role, encompassing a profound depth of environmental advocacy, coalition management, media advocacy, and steering key legislative initiatives. She led the Frontline Communities Protection Coalition to pass the cumulative impacts legislation, a law identifying neighborhoods where residents are most vulnerable to harmful polluting projects.

She has cultivated relationships locally and nationally to effect change on multiple fronts, marking her as a cornerstone in the pursuit of equitable and just societies. Carolina is a Board member of Alianza Americas, a network working to create an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable way of life for migrant communities in the United States. Carolina attended COP28 with 16 Alianza leaders to engage in international climate negotiations.

Funding from LCCMR will allow Carolina to oversee the ongoing implementation of an environmental justice project focused on educating, disseminating information, and training Minnesota's Latine and BIPOC communities on efforts they can take to improve and maintain water quality, reduce and monitor energy and water consumption, and restore and maintain a healthy and biodiverse natural environment. The project will implement existing curriculum to connect Minnesota's Latine and BIPOC communities with outdoor activities and natural resources. Carolina's specific responsibilities will include managing and supervising personnel and partnerships, overseeing the implementation of grant activities, evaluating the impact of grant activities, and using results to improve future activities and outcomes.

**Organization:** Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Accion Latina

**Organization Description:**

Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Accion Latina (COPAL) was founded in 2018 to better the quality of life for Latine families by building collective power, transforming systems, and creating opportunities to live a dignified life in Minnesota. COPAL's environmental justice (EJ) program protects, conserves, preserves, and enhances Minnesota's air,

water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources by strengthening the power and influence of Minnesota's Latine communities. The program engages in coalitional and non-partisan 501c3 advocacy work, hosts a monthly 40-member environmental justice committee, and organizes monthly outdoor events to raise awareness about EJ issues impacting our Latine families.

COPAL has scaled to a staff of over 30 that engages a network of 44,000+ stakeholders throughout Minnesota. All COPAL staff speak Spanish, and over 80% are Latine. Our staff come from diverse backgrounds, giving COPAL a rich tapestry from which to understand the Latine experience.

COPAL's strong communications presence reaches approximately 15,550 people per month: 9,000 on social media, 5,000 via our monthly newsletter, 650 via our monthly EJ newsletter, 500 through high-quality videos, and 400 via our 24/7 radio station.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
Environmental Justice Coordinator		Coordinating lead acting as a liaison for families and communities to ensure effective implementation of environmental justice initiatives.			20%	0.5		\$31,200
Environmental Justice Director		Project lead overseeing strategic direction and implementation of environmental justice projects, with a focus on community engagement and empowerment.			20%	0.6		\$86,400
Outdoor Specialist		Planning and executing outdoor activities and programs, fostering a connection between communities and the environment.			20%	2		\$124,800
Communications Coordinator		Posting on social media to promote events and educate predominantly Spanish-speaking community members on conservation and preservation efforts. Creating and publishing monthly newsletters.			20%	0.5		\$27,955
Videographer & Photographer		Capturing visuals and testimonials during events, creating compelling videos to showcase community involvement and impact.			20%	0.4		\$25,958
Podcast/Radio Tech		Hosting a weekly environmental justice show and producing post-event audio materials for podcasts and radio broadcasts aimed at increasing community participation and engagement.			20%	0.2		\$12,480
Health and Wellness Navigator		Connecting community members to outdoor events when they call COPAL's hotline for assistance			20%	0.5		\$33,696
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$342,489</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
Baztec Fishing	Sub award	Engage Baztec Fishing for sustainable fishing practices and knowledge sharing within the project scope.				1		\$9,000
Huellas Latinas	Sub award	Collaborate with Huellas Latinas to integrate Latine perspectives and contributions into project initiatives.				1		\$9,000

Contracted survey design and analysis	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Contract with an evaluation firm to design surveys, collect data, and analyze results to assess the project's impact on the community and conservation efforts.				2		\$10,000
Cultural Performance Per Year	Sub award	Partner with one organization per year to host a cultural performance or demonstration at an event to celebrate and showcase the diversity of Latine and BIPOC cultures, fostering community engagement.				2		\$4,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$32,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
	Tools and Supplies	360 reusable grocery bags (15 per event)	Collaborate with local grocery stores or markets to offer reusable bags as an alternative to single-use plastic bags, reducing plastic waste and promoting sustainable shopping practices.					\$2,000
	Tools and Supplies	360 reusable water bottles (15 per event)	Distribute reusable water bottles as giveaways at events, workshops, or community gatherings, promoting sustainability.	X				\$2,000
	Tools and Supplies	Paint, chalk, paper, pencils, extra supplies	Invest in arts and crafts supplies for creative expression workshops that integrate art with nature, fostering personal connections with the environment through activities like painting, sculpture, and photography.					\$500
	Equipment	20 bikes, tennis rackets, or other equipment	Purchase or rent outdoor recreation equipment like bikes, tennis rackets, or fishing gear to provide hands-on experiences for participants, promoting outdoor engagement and active lifestyle choices.					\$2,000
	Equipment	25-person translation system with interpreter monitor	Acquire equipment like portable translation devices or headsets to facilitate language interpretation at events, enhancing accessibility and inclusivity.	X				\$2,500



							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$9,000</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	1 outdoor event per month to different areas in MN, so 24 events to report mileage	Cover expenses for staff members to attend outdoor events or to report findings at events.					\$2,500
	Other	Provide transportation for community members to attend 2 events/year	Reduce the barrier of transportation costs for Latine and BIPOC community members to increase participation at outdoor events.					\$5,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
	Printing	600 event flyers, 300 brochures, and 50 posters	Budget for printing event flyers, brochures, posters, and educational materials in both English and Spanish					\$2,500
	Printing	30 comic books	Create illustrated comics targeting children and families to raise awareness about conservation and outdoor stewardship, fostering a sense of responsibility towards nature.					\$4,000
	Printing	600 multilingual trail maps	Print trail maps and guides in multiple languages to ensure inclusivity and accessibility of outdoor recreation opportunities for non-English speakers.					\$1,000

							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
		Parking and entrance fees for 200 participants	Cover parking and park entrance fees to remove barriers for community members to attend events, ensuring inclusivity and participation.					\$1,511
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,511</b>
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>

## Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>		360 reusable water bottles (15 per event)	Water is not always present at parks. Having water on hand reduces the financial barrier of participants having to purchase their own refreshments and ensures participants do not become dehydrated or get heat stroke.
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>		25-person translation system with interpreter monitor	Necessary for communicating with Spanish-speaking Latine communities at events where staff only speak English. Expands COPAL's impact and reduces barriers to accessing the outdoors.

## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
Cash	Trillium Family Foundation	Covers ineligible & prohibited expenses plus part of the remaining personnel costs. All other personnel costs are covered by grants for programming unrelated to outdoor events.	Potential	\$60,000
Cash	McKnight Foundation	Covers ineligible & prohibited expenses plus part of the remaining personnel costs. All other personnel costs are covered by grants for programming unrelated to outdoor events.	Potential	\$168,334
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$228,334</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$228,334</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$628,334**

**This amount accurately reflects total project cost?**

Yes

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Visual Component*

File: [730325ff-88d.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Visual Component*

Demonstrates several of the areas where COPAL's outdoor events are held....

#### *Financial Capacity*

Title	File
Most recent single audit compliance report for COPAL. Only COPAL's c3 applies to this grant.	<a href="#">2f4d6f20-009.pdf</a>
Most recent 990 for COPAL	<a href="#">c803cd76-7db.pdf</a>
Evidence of good standing with the Secretary of State	<a href="#">cabb605d-b2f.pdf</a>

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
Board Resolution Letter on behalf of COPAL	<a href="#">e22e0be1-a05.pdf</a>

## Administrative Use

**Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?**

No

**Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?**

No

**Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?**

N/A

**Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?**

N/A

**Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?**

No

**Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?**

No

**Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?**

No

**Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?**

Yes

**Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to**

**whom children's services are provided by your organization?**

Yes

**Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:**

Maria Bertrand (Grants Manager) - COPAL. Francisco Segovia (Executive Director) - COPAL.