

John Keller
Executive Director

Lenore Millibergity
Senior Attorney
Supervising Attorney

Sheila Stuhlman
Senior Attorney

Susan Jorgensen Flores
Staff Attorney

Ana Lisa Peña
Staff Attorney

Adela Meráz
*AmeriCorps*VISTA Attorney*



Cynthia Anderson
Accredited
Representative

Pal Yang
Legal Assistant

Melissa Pfeiffer
Operations Director

Tammy Villegas
Office Manager

Robyn Eliason
Education
Coordinator

Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota

450 North Syndicate Street • Suite 175 • Saint Paul • Minnesota • 55104

Tel: 651.641.1011 • 1.800.223.1368 • Fax: 651.641.1131

www.immigrantlawcentermn.org • E-mail: oficinalegal@ilcm.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more Information Contact:

John C. Keller
Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota
651-641-1011 ext. 203

The Closing of Centro Legal: A Challenge to ILCM and all Minnesotans

St. Paul, MN (April 28, 2009) – It is with great sadness that the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (ILCM) acknowledges the closing of Centro Legal after 28 years of service to the Latino Community. The two agencies have been very close and have worked very hard together for decades on dozens of legal initiatives. Both agencies have always shared a deep-rooted commitment to providing quality legal representation to Minnesota’s immigrant community.

In that same spirit, ILCM has spent many hours over the last months to ensure continued client representation in the face of Centro’s difficulties. Unfortunately, because of Centro Legal’s substantial financial liabilities, a merger of the two organizations was not possible. Nonetheless, thanks to the hard work and sacrifice of both agencies, ILCM is pleased to report that three of the four remaining Centro funders have agreed to transfer to ILCM the balance of grants they had committed to Centro Legal. The funders share our organizations’ underlying commitments to assist as many immigrant families and children as possible to build strong, new beginnings in Minnesota.

ILCM has already begun to transfer some of Centro Legal’s cases and it is anticipated that the bulk of Centro Legal’s more than 200 open cases will be transferred to ILCM by the time the transition is complete. The bulk of these cases include many vulnerable clients and their children who have been victims of crime or abuse. Other cases include petitions to reunite families both in the U.S. and through petitions at U.S. consulates, deportation cases, and cases where clients have been pursuing remedies in the complex immigration system for several years. Additionally, ILCM plans to hire some of Centro’s staff to make the transition as smooth as possible for clients.

“As a result of this difficult process, ILCM is prepared to take on substantial new work and focus. We will open our doors to Centro’s clients and, for that matter, to immigrants statewide because ILCM is committed to serving clients where the need is the greatest,” said ILCM Executive Director John Keller. “During this difficult chapter, ILCM asks the extended Minnesota community to help us sustain this effort and to build a stronger organization that will benefit all of Minnesota.”

###