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Education • Immigration • Opportunities • Leadership



códice

**Education &
Leadership
Foundation's
Official
Newsletter**

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FOREWORD

Dear Esteemed Partners and Friends,

In July, we launched our revised newsletter “Código” a reflection of the many ways the Education and Leadership Foundation (ELF) uplifts lives, creates opportunity and seeks a brighter safe future for our communities. As we advance through 2026, the Education and Leadership Foundation remains firmly committed to strengthening communities, keeping families together, and above all quality services in support of underrepresented individuals and families within our Central Valley. This moment in our work is defined not only by progress, but by purpose—grounded in our shared responsibility to ensure meaningful outcomes for everyone, especially immigrants, refugees, those from lower income households and with limited English proficiency.

Early this year, we looked back at the challenges of 2025, how we adjusted and kept moving forward, reflecting the core of our mission, empowering marginalized community. ELF provides an array of services supporting overlooked populations to engage as active members of our society through legal immigration services,

educational opportunities, community engagement and advocacy, along with social, economic, and environmental justice. These challenges, though difficult, were opportunities not only to adjust our focus, refine processes, seek diverse revenue, but to reinforce a collective commitment to continuous improvement, organizational excellence and community trust.

As the legislative landscape evolves, ELF remains focused on providing clear, timely updates related to policies, rules, and broader immigration legislative activity. This work is essential to ensuring that our communities are equipped to navigate change with confidence, clarity, and consistency together. Through direct engagement with our community partners, we reinforce the strength and dedication that define this region’s collaborative efforts in serving our communities. This is especially true for those within our vast rural area that keeps families from getting the help they need. ELF works to eliminate that barrier by working with others in servicing these communities.

The work ahead calls for continued focus, partnership, and a steadfast commitment to excellence for our underserved communities. I am confident in the direction we are moving and grateful for the role each of you plays in advancing our shared mission.

Without your continued support we could not do the work we do to help our families, neighbors and communities to thrive. Consider supporting our work at www.elfus.org/donate

¡Un abrazo!

Mario A Gonzalez, J.D., Executive Director 🌱

Immigration Updates

New Challenges for DACA Recipients: Advance Parole Trigger Lasting Repercussions

Since the start of the current administration, DACA recipients have continued being affected by changes in USCIS processes, such as the significant delays in the renewal process, with many applications taking up to six months to be approved. Even those who filed within the recommended 120-day renewal period have reported lapses in work authorization, resulting in lost employment, driver’s license complications, and increased uncertainty for families.

Recent developments have also changed the landscape for Advance Parole, which previously allowed eligible DACA recipients to travel abroad for educational, employment, or humanitarian purposes.

A new Board of Immigration Appeals decision now may trigger the three and ten year bars for any travel after August 13, 2026, creating significant risks and further barriers to adjustment of status for DACA recipients considering international travel.

Given these changes, DACA recipients are strongly encouraged to seek legal guidance before traveling outside the United States.

If you have questions about DACA renewals, Advance Parole, or your immigration options, contact the Education and Leadership Foundation at (559) 291-5428 to schedule an appointment or attend a free consultation on our walk-in events the first and third Wednesday of the month. 🌱



Education

Students Explore Global Cultures at ELF's Arts Around the World Summer Camp

Continuing with the efforts to promote health and education among children, the Education and Leadership Foundation's Education Department hosted the Arts Around the World Summer Camp at California State University, Fresno.

This activity was one of several summer enrichment programs made available through the Fresno Unified School District. Designed for Transitional Kindergarten through 4th grade students, the camp designed by the ELF team provided young learners with an engaging opportunity to explore art, culture, and creativity through hands-on experiences in a university setting.

During weeklong sessions, students participated in activities such as canvas painting, clay sculpting, and ceramic painting while learning about culture, music, arts, and

celebrations from around the world, including African American, Indian, Hmong, Mexican, and many others. A total of 230 students participated in the camp, which was offered over three weeklong sessions, with both morning and afternoon programming available.

The program concluded with a vibrant activity inspired by Holi, the Festival of Colors, where students enjoyed having fun creating colorful t-shirts using powders, in homage to how the festival is celebrated in India, to mark the end of their summer experience. Families were then invited to a special showcase where students proudly displayed and took home the artwork they created throughout the camp.

Belkis Cariño, Education Department Manager at ELF, shared, "What I love most about

Photo 1: Student proudly presents her parent her work during the showcase

Photo 2: Students enjoy a Holi inspired activity, creating colorful shirts while safely playing with color powder

Photo 3: ELF team member congratulates young artist on a job well done

our camps is seeing the excitement and curiosity in our students as they experience something new."

She continued, "Creating a space where they can learn, be creative, have fun, and simply be kids is what makes camp so special to me. Seeing the fellows and staff smiles and also let their inner child come out as they engage with the students and create their own projects fulfills my heart."

Activities like the summer and winter camps that ELF hosts showcase the need for quality programming at no-cost for families with young children, continuing to promote learning, creativity, and cultural appreciation while helping students develop confidence, friendships with peers, inclusion, and a lifelong love of learning. 🌱



Special Projects

Lending Circles Program Draws Nationwide Attention

The Education and Leadership Foundation's Lending Circles Program recently gained nationwide recognition after a story produced by KVPR, Valley Public Radio, highlighted the program's impact on local families. The story was later shared by a social media influencer, expanding its reach and introducing audiences across the country to an innovative financial empowerment model that is helping participants build credit and achieve their financial goals.

The attention generated by the influencer's post soon attracted the interest of Univision Evening News, which will feature the program in a national segment highlighting its benefits. The story includes interviews with ELF staff and a program participant who shared how Lending Circles helped create new financial opportunities and provided a pathway toward stronger economic stability.

A community tradition, with 21st century tools and protections

Lending Circles, offered through a partnership between ELF and San Francisco-based Mission Asset

Fund (MAF), transforms a concept known in Latin America as a *tanda*, *cundina*, *vaquita*, among others, into an opportunity for financial growth. Participants contribute an agreed-upon amount each month, and each member takes a turn receiving the full pooled amount.

Several aspects of Lending Circles make it unique from *tandas*:

1. Every payment is reported to the three major credit bureaus, helping participants establish or improve their credit.
2. It implements an online app, myMAF, to apply for the program and access the financial education
3. The program is backed by ELF and MAF, ensuring that even if a participant leaves the circle, the remaining members still receive their full share as scheduled.

ELF also hopes that this focus on the Lending Circles program can inspire entrepreneurs who could benefit from the program. Through ELF's participation in SCALE Fresno, a collaborative initiative focused on strengthening and supporting the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, ELF is able to also provide resources to help them grow and succeed.

If you are interested in joining an ELF Lending Circle or need more information, please contact Carmen Cárdenas at (559) 291-5428 for more information. 📍



Reach your financial goals with Lending Circles



Build Credit.

Reported to all three major credit bureaus to help build credit.



Keep your info & money safe.

Your information is secure and your money is guaranteed by the program.



Help others.

Support your community while meeting your goals.



Access financial education.

Choose from a wide range of online courses to help you grow.

How a lending circle works



A group of 6-12 people form a lending circle



The **payment contribution** is decided by the group (between \$50 and \$200 per month)



A new member of the Lending Circle receives the full amount every month until all get their chance.





Education

ELF Honors 42 Outstanding College Students in Fellowship Program with Scholarships

The Education and Leadership Foundation (ELF) celebrated the achievements of college students in the Empowerment Fellowship Program on Sunday, August 16, at the Aroza Event Center. The evening brought together fellows and their families, community leaders, and supporters to recognize the dedication and service of these outstanding students.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of \$1,000 scholarships to 42 fellows, totaling \$42,000 in scholarship support. These awards were provided in addition to the stipends fellows earn through the program, which can total up to \$5,000 based on hours completed.

Attendees were inspired by special guest speakers, both former members of the program: Fresno County Office of Education Board Member, Itzi Robles, and Pedro Hernandez, co-founder of the Central Valley Worker Center and Fresno State's first AB 540 Student Body President. Each speaker shared personal stories of perseverance, leadership, and the importance of being given opportunities to succeed. Their remarks encouraged fellows and their families as students prepare for a new academic year and to not be afraid to try as they begin their careers.

The celebration also featured a delicious taco dinner and an interactive video booth where guests recorded words of encouragement and inspiration for the fellows. The messages will serve as reminders of the community's support as students continue pursuing their educational and career goals.

Supporters and Leaders Invest in the future of our community

The scholarships were made possible through the generous support of the event's sponsors: California Immigrant Policy Center, Fresno County Office of Education, Los Visionarios for Educación, PG&E, Inter-Act Educational Services, Latino Peace Officers Association - Fresno Chapter, Centro La Familia Advocacy Services, CVIIC, Proteus, United Health Centers, Dumont Printing, and Donaghy Sales. Their contributions help ensure



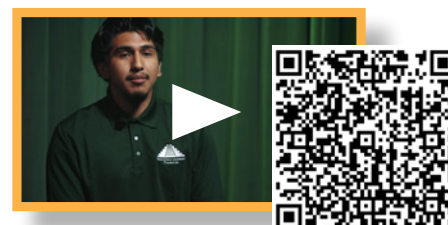
that ELF can continue investing in the next generation of leaders and expanding opportunities for students throughout the Central Valley.

A Pioneering Program for Student Leaders

ELF's Empowerment Fellowship Program provides college students, regardless of immigration status, with opportunities to serve their communities through hands-on learning experiences, leadership development, and professional growth. **Applications for the 17th cohort of the program open from September 1-15. Students can visit www.elfus.org/fellowship to view requirements and apply.**

For more information, please contact Belkis Cariño, Manager for the Education Department at ELF, at bcario@education-leadership.org or by phone at 559 291 5428. 🌱

Scan the QR to hear their stories



Understanding your Pay Stubs Helps Protect Your Pay

Your pay stub shows exactly how your pay is calculated. Taking a moment to review it each pay period helps you make sure you are paid correctly, catching mistakes early on before they compound or go completely unseen. Ultimately, granting you a greater understanding and involvement in your taxes and deductions.

As an employee in the state of California, you have the right to receive accurate pay and itemized pay stubs. Should you have questions about your pay, you can ask them from your employer and are protected from retaliation.

If you believe your rights have been violated or your employer did not meet requirements made by the State of California here is what to do:

- **Gather Evidence:** Keep copies of all relevant pay stubs.
- **Document the Details:** Note the specific dates, hours worked, and pay received.
- **Attempt Resolution:** Speak with your employer or HR department to address the discrepancy.
- **File a Claim:** If the issue remains unresolved, file a formal claim with the California Labor Commissioner's Office (DLSE).

Have Questions or need help filing a claim? Give us a call at (559) 291-5428

For more information you can refer to California's Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) website where you can also file a wage claim online <https://www.dir.ca.gov/>

In California, by law under Labor Code 226 your pay stub must include the following items, which you will find in the sample paystub below

- 1. Employer Info:** The legal name and address
- 2. Pay Rates:** All hourly rates used (e.g., regular vs. overtime) and the exact hours worked at each of those rates. *Always check if the hourly rates correct.*
- 3. Pay Period & Date:** The start and end dates of the period you're being paid for, plus the actual pay date
- 4. Employee Info:** Your full name and at least the last 4 digits of your SSN or an employee ID number
- 5. Total Hours:** The total number of hours worked during that specific pay period. *Always make sure to check for missing hours!*
- 6. Itemized Deductions:** A clear list of everything taken out, such as federal/state taxes, SDI, health insurance, or 401(k). *Are there any new or unfamiliar deductions?*
- 7. Gross Wages:** Your total earnings before any taxes or deductions are taken out.
- 8. Net Wages:** Often called "take-home pay," this is the final amount you actually receive after all deductions. *Was there a sudden drop in pay with no explanation?*

SMITH AND COMPANY, INC. 123 West Street Smalltown, CA 98765			
EMPLOYEE Johnson, Bob	SOCIAL SECURITY NO. XXX-XX-6789	PAY RATE 18.00 regular 27.00 overtime	PAY PERIOD 1/7/XX to 1/13/XX
EARNINGS	HOURS	AMOUNT	DEDUCTIONS
Regular	40.00	720.00	Federal W/H
Overtime	2.00	54.00	FICA
GROSS EARNINGS:		774.00	Medicare
TOTAL DEDUCTED:		213.29	CA State W/H
NET EARNINGS:		560.71	CA State DI
			401k
SICK LEAVE:			
40.00 HOURS AVAILABLE			



JOIN OUR TEAM!

Make a real impact in your community and grow your career!

Apply at elfus.org/jobs

Program Manager, Regional HUB for Immigrant Families

Full time
\$70,000-\$75,000 Salary/year

Oversees the administration and operation of the Regional Network Hub, serving as a key liaison between local organizations, the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC), and the CA Department of Social Services (CDSS).

The Project Manager ensures effective coordination of the Regional Network Hub, overseeing service delivery, partnerships, and facilitates community collaboration, and advances legal access and education for immigrant families.

Staff Attorney

Full time
\$73,000-\$84,000 salary/year

Responsible for providing direct legal representation, consultations, and case management for immigrants seeking immigration benefits. This role provides legal support with both affirmative and removal defense immigration issues.

They will represent clients in both affirmative and removal defense immigration cases or matters. They will also conduct legal consultations, case assessments, and application preparation, ensuring clients receive thorough and compassionate legal assistance.

Director of HR Compliance

Full time
\$80,000-\$85,000 salary/year

Leads ELF's HR and compliance function, partnering with the Executive Director and leadership team to build people systems that support and develop the organization's programs, staff, and long-term growth.

This role oversees the HR team and serves as the organization's lead on employment law, employee relations, benefits, and workforce compliance.

We offer competitive salaries, excellent benefits, and the opportunity to help make a difference every day. For more information, please visit www.elfus.org/jobs or call 559 291 5428

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sept
1**

Empowerment Fellowship Applications Open for Cohort 17

online at www.elfus.org/fellowship

Program for college students to build their skills and resumé, receiving a stipend for their efforts. Please see article on page 4 for more information. Applications close September 15.

**Sept
2**

Walk-In Wednesday

*1308 E Olive Ave, Fresno, CA 93728
Wednesday • 9-11AM & 1-4PM*

Free immigration consultations, no appointment needed.

**Sept
15**

SCALE Success Summit: Rooted in the Valley. Rich in Value.

*DoubleTree Convention Center, 2233 Ventura Ave, Fresno, CA 93721
Sept 15 & 16 • 12PM*

Register at scalefresno.org/scalesuccesssummit

**Sept
16**

Walk-In Wednesday

*1308 E Olive Ave, Fresno, CA 93728
Wednesday • 9-11AM & 1-4PM*

Free immigration consultations, no appointment needed

Keep in touch!



Give us a follow on social media

  **ELFfresno**

