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PROGRESS, DELIVERED TO YOUR INBOX



Dear %FirstName%,

September 15th marks the start of Hispanic Heritage Month. It is also a month that recognizes Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) Week. As a proud Afro-Latina and first-generation college student, I know how important HSIs are to Latina/o/x communities throughout the nation. Currently, the [Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities \(HACU\)](#) is fighting back against a lawsuit that seeks to dismantle the HSI program. The program provides federal grants to universities and colleges with a student body that is over 25 percent Latina/o/x. It supports Latina/o/x students and other low-income students to obtain and complete a postsecondary education and degree.

Cutting federal grants to HSIs not only harms students, but also the colleges and universities that serve them. The grants benefit all students by supporting purchases of laboratory equipment, supporting student services, improving university and college infrastructure, and creating pathways for students to achieve social mobility. The funding creates opportunities and provides resources for Latina/o/x students and low-income students that want to pursue a higher education, as well as the staff who support them.

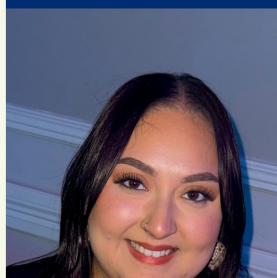
There are 33 HSIs in Illinois and 39 Minority-Serving Institutions throughout the state. Illinois is committed to improving racial equity in higher education, and so is Women Employed. You can read more about how Women Employed is working to [Advance Equity in Higher Education](#), as well as WE's Senior Research Analyst, Corinne Kodama's Medium blog post about [Supporting Minority Serving Institutions in Illinois](#). You can also learn more about how WE is assisting Illinois community colleges in closing equity gaps for Black and Latina/o/x students by reading more about the program I manage, the [ASPIRE Project](#). It is imperative now more than ever before that we support Students of Color and other minoritized students in reaching their goals of obtaining a postsecondary degree by supporting organizations, like Women Employed, who are fighting for them.

To all Latina/o/x students and the Hispanic-Serving Institutions that educate them: we support you. We celebrate with you. We are cheering you on! Not just during Hispanic Heritage Month, but all year round. **¡Sí, se puede!**

In solidarity,

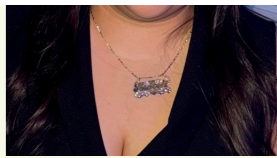
Christina Green
ASPIRE Senior Program Manager

"She Says" with Araceli Muñoz Salazar



She Says "

I think about the time after I graduated and feeling directionless, only to now help students navigate and discover their purpose, or set goals, or even be an example of a professional in the field. I know that this



the workforce. I now know that this is where I am supposed to be versus any of my previous roles.

Araceli Muñoz Salazar

There's a lot that happens when you turn 18. You're officially an adult. You can vote. You can even serve in the armed forces. And for many 18-year-olds, you leave the nest and go face the next big challenge in your life—college. While that may sound like freedom or a chance to find yourself for some, for others, especially first-generation college students, it can be filled with many uncertainties. Just ask Araceli Muñoz Salazar. At 18 years old, and the first in her family to do so, she courageously went away to school without knowing anyone and stepped foot on her college campus for the first time on move-in day.

Thankfully, that single act of bravery helped pave the way to her current role as the Latinx Engagement Coordinator at [Waubensee Community College](#). There, she leans into her prior experience as a college student to help support Hispanic Students as they navigate college life. Something that she not only feels deeply passionate about, but hopes will one day become her legacy.

Araceli's story is a tale of bravery, compassion, empathy, and humility. And we are honored to share her journey in this month's ["She Says."](#) Continue reading to learn more about Araceli Muñoz Salazar, the importance of serving students of Hispanic Heritage, being a first-generation professional, and what she would tell her 18-year-old self.

[Read More](#)

What WE Are Talking About

For the Common Good: The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)



In our latest installment of [For the Common Good](#), we're talking about **the importance of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)** and the data they collect and report, the threats they are currently facing, and what **YOU** can do to make an impact.

Good policy is underpinned by good data. That's why we should all be paying attention to what's happening at the BLS. Recently, the Trump administration has launched a series of attacks on research, data, and the people who produce them across a wide range of government agencies—including BLS.

Those attacks ramped up when Trump fired BLS Commissioner Erika McEntarfer after he didn't like the July jobs report, which was released in early August. And now he has nominated E.J. Antoni to be the next commissioner—a man who has already worked to undermine trust in federal data, and has proposed reducing the frequency of the monthly jobs report—or ending them entirely. Doing so would keep the American people in the dark about the state of our workforce and economy, potentially impacting everything from interest rates to state budgets.

[Watch this video](#) to learn more about this threat, then [read our post on Medium](#) to find out about the importance of the BLS—and of good data in general—in shaping policies that sustain and protect working Americans.



The threats to our rights are frightening, but we have the power to fight them. To do that, we must all stand together, firmly, and LOUDLY, on the side of equity and opportunity for all. Your voice matters, and we need you by our side to force change and protect those who need it most.

Register For Navigating the Maze Webinar



[Join us on October 6th](#) to learn the findings from our recently released report, **"Navigating the Maze: Challenges in Healthcare Career Advancement."**

The report investigates the career pathways of women healthcare workers who started in entry-level, low-paid roles in Chicago, with a particular interest in Women of Color.

We will share our learnings about what these workers experience throughout their journey from education and training to hiring and promotion, and provide recommendations for healthcare employers, education and training providers, and other stakeholders to address the barriers that thwart their goal of long-term economic mobility.

Event Details:

- **When:** Monday, October 6, 2025
- **Time:** 3:00 p.m. CST
- **Women Employed Speakers:** Cherita Ellens, President and CEO; Corinne Kodama, Senior Research Analyst; and Efrata Sasahulih, Programs and Research Coordinator

[Register Now](#)

Thank you to the healthcare workers who shared their stories with us and helped us understand the complexity and myriad paths of healthcare career journeys. This report would not have been possible without your participation.

Thank you to our Health Care Career Pathway Research Partner Organizations: Chicagoland Healthcare Workforce Collaborative, Esperanza Health Centers, Health & Medicine Policy Research Group, Instituto, Safety Net Learning Collaborative, and West Side United.

And thank you to JPMorganChase. This report was made possible by your generous support.

Upcoming Equal Pay Days



Save the dates! This October, we observe **Latina Equal Pay Day (October 8th)** and **Disabled Women's Equal Pay Day (October 23rd)**, two very critical reminders that the fight for fair wages is far from over. Both dates represent how far into the year Latina/x women and disabled women must work just to earn what white, non-Hispanic men made in the previous year.

Did you know that, when looking at all earners, Latina/x women make only 54 cents for every dollar paid to white men? And all disabled women earners make just 56 cents compared to every dollar earned by nondisabled men? These numbers highlight the realities of women whose hard work supports themselves, their families, and their communities, and how this loss of income affects the generations that follow.

Closing the wage gap means fighting for policies and workplace fairness that recognize women as essential members of the workforce and worthy of **FULL** pay. Stay tuned to our social media channels (you can follow us @WomenEmployed on all social media platforms) to learn how you can honor women's labor on these dates by amplifying their stories and sparking important conversations.

EVERY woman deserves pay equity and together, we can build a future where no one will have to settle for anything less.

Our Friends at Economic Security IL Want to Hear from YOU!



Survey



Our friends at [Economic Security IL](#) have launched an Affordability Tour to give Illinoisans a voice on the most important issues in their and their families' lives around affordability, supplementing in-person meetings in southern and central Illinois with a survey. As part of this series, they're collecting survey results from community members and constituents of organizations to better inform the strategic direction of the coalition's efforts for 2026.

To access the survey, visit: <https://bit.ly/4pBCVDP>.

Resources

[***Know Your Rights If Confronted by the National Guard and ICE***](#)

[**Salary Transparency is Now the Law in Illinois**](#)

[**You Deserve Fair Pay**](#)

[**Paid Leave in Illinois and Chicago**](#)

[**Know Your Rights at Work**](#)

Events

[**Navigating the Maze**](#)

On the Blog

[**For the Common Good: The Bureau Of Labor Statistics \(BLS\)**](#)

[**Where in the World is Women Employed?**](#)

WE in the News

[**Women of Color Are Being Targeted and Cancelled. It Must End.**](#)

Patch

What We're Reading

[**Trump's Economy Is Bad for Women**](#)

The Century Foundation

[**Best and Worst States for Working Women**](#)

Oxfam America

[**More Alike than Different: Findings from CivicSpace's 2024 Financial Security Survey**](#)

New America

[Low-Wage Workers Rarely Get to Control Their Time. Stable and Flexible Scheduling Gives Them the Autonomy They Need to Learn, Care, and Rest.](#)

Urban Institute

[The economy is in freefall – and Black women carrying the weight of it all | Jobs Day September 2025](#)

National Partnership
for Women and
Families

[Financial disparities will deepen economic insecurity for Black and Hispanic households amid the 2025 slowdown](#)

Economic Policy
Institute



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