



2025 CHAMPS Awardees

Virtual Awards Ceremony | Wednesday, December 10, 2025

Outstanding Advocate of the Underserved Award
Araceli Calderon, Immigrant and Refugee Center Director
Sunrise Community Health, CO

Araceli Calderon’s journey from an Indigenous village in Michoacán, Mexico to becoming a respected leader in Northern Colorado is a powerful testament to her resilience, vision, and lifelong commitment to community advocacy.

At 17 years old, she left her hometown to pursue a degree in philosophy, supported by a scholarship earned through grassroots activism. That formative experience shaped her values and ignited a passion for organizing and serving underrepresented communities. Since arriving in Colorado 16 years ago, she has continued this work—bridging immigrant families with vital resources and empowering both individuals and institutions to collaborate for lasting change.

As Director of Sunrise's Immigrant and Refugee Center, Araceli has more than doubled the organization's reach. Her leadership is grounded in three guiding principles: meeting client needs, maintaining fiscal responsibility, and fostering inclusive decision-making. She is a facilitator, a connector, and a trusted voice, especially in times of uncertainty.

Her career spans decades of service across Mexico and the United States, including her work as an educational specialist with the Secretary of Culture in Michoacán. Araceli’s unwavering dedication, cultural insight, and collaborative spirit make her not only an extraordinary advocate, but a beacon of hope for the communities she serves.

In recognition of her exceptional work uplifting communities through compassion and collaboration, we are pleased to present Araceli Calderon with the CHAMPS Outstanding Advocate of the Underserved Award.