

Gardening Program Gets Boost at Nebraska-Based Health Center

The Latino Center of the Midlands will use a \$50,000 grant to extend a program that teaches Latino families how to grow their own food.

May 23, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

The Latino Center of the Midlands, a Nebraska-based community center, was awarded a \$50,000 grant in support of its Siembra Salud (“Sow Health”) initiative, which addresses [health equity](#) and workforce shortages through internships and gardening projects for [Latino](#) families, according to a [news release](#).

The grant comes from The MolinaCares Accord in collaboration with Molina Healthcare of Nebraska.



[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Latino Center of the Midlands (@latinocenterofthemidlands)

“MolinaCares is proud to support the Siembra Salud program to create more equitable outcomes for those in the Latino community,” said Frank Clepper, plan president for Molina Healthcare of Nebraska, in the release. “Addressing social determinants of health, like nutrition and employment, is critical for improving the overall well-being of a [community](#).”

Albert Varas, CEO of Latino Center of the Midlands, started the initiative 10 years ago as board chair of City Sprouts, which the Latino Center took over two years ago and renamed [Cultiva Bienestar](#) (“Cultural Wellness”).

The program teaches Latino families how to garden as a tool for addressing both health and social needs. About five new households join the program each year, Varas said. The program expects to serve 63 families this year, according to the [Latino Center](#).



[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Latino Center of the Midlands (@latinocenterofthemidlands)

“The community members will see these grant dollars in the garden beds that they see in their homes,” Varas [told MSN](#). “It means that we’re able to really expand our services and address the

needs of the community.”

A team at the Latino Center provides hands-on education and ongoing support to help families understand and prioritize their health and wellness.

Each family receives a cedarwood garden bed and culturally appropriate plants such as cucumbers, habaneros, tomatillos, cilantro and oregano. Twice a month, staff visit each home to lead lessons on topics such as diabetes prevention, which is quite prevalent among Latinos, and building healthy habits.

“We extend our gratitude to Molina and MolinaCares for their generous support of the Latino Center of the Midlands,” Varas said in the release. “Together, we are fostering a healthier, more equitable community by providing hands-on learning opportunities, nurturing future health leaders and ensuring that our families have access to the tools and resources they need to thrive.”

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

<http://beta.docker.tusaludmag.com/article/gardening-program-gets-boost-nebraskabased-health-center>