



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Amistades Secures \$500,000 Federal Grant to Strengthen Climate Resilience throughout Latino Communities across Tucson

The funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will address environmental inequities and enhance resilience to extreme heat in disproportionately affected Latino neighborhoods

(TUCSON, AZ) April 2, 2024: Amistades, Inc. (Amistades), a Latino-led, Latino-serving non-profit committed to race and equity issues, today announced it has been awarded \$500,000 over three years from the EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (EJCPS) Cooperative Agreement Program.

The funding will support Amistades' [Justicia Juntos \(Justice Together\)](#) initiative that aims to increase heat resiliency in disproportionately affected, Latino-dominant communities in Tucson with the development of community-driven projects that tackle climate justice challenges and strengthen heat resilience.

"Amistades is grateful for this significant federal investment that will help support local solutions for our vulnerable Latino communities in Tucson's southside," said Claudia Jasso, President and Chief Executive Officer, Amistades. "Our initial focus will be on one of Tucson's most impacted Latino areas in zip code 85706, where we will first engage the community, listen to their concerns, and bring awareness to the increasingly harmful impacts of climate change."

Together with community partners, including the [City of Tucson](#), [Chispa Arizona](#), and [The Arizona Center For Empowerment](#), the collaborative effort will develop a climate coalition that centers on families to learn from their stories about heat exposure, environmental needs, and everyday living. Justicia Juntos will also build capacity for Latino advocates in the southside and set the stage to integrate two culturally focused innovative climate resilience hubs to provide safe spaces for residents to cool down, build connections, and access resources. The effort will support the city's [Climate Action and Adaptation Plan – Tucson Resilient Together](#).

"I congratulate Amistades, Inc. for securing the Justicia Juntos EPA grant. Building climate resilience is crucial, and community-led initiatives are the foundation of our progress. Amistades' dedication is a perfect example of the spirit of our city. I am thrilled to support these endeavors as we build a stronger, more resilient community together," said Tucson Mayor Regina Romero.

Amistades recently expanded its areas of focus to include environmental justice and this is its first federally funded climate action initiative to mobilize immediate and long-term solutions for disproportionately impacted Latino communities.



“Climate change is an intergenerational issue and underdiscussed topic within the Latino community,” said Jasso. “An overarching goal of Justicia Juntos is to bring that narrative closer to home, making direct connections between what is happening environmentally with the people in our community, igniting action and understanding around the severity of the issue, and providing practical solutions whereby everyone feels empowered to contribute to the solution. With this community-led approach, we hope the successes achieved in Tucson’s southside will be modeled in other Latino communities – ultimately making a larger, stronger, impact for current and future generations.”

About Amistades

Amistades is a Latino-led, Latino-serving non-profit committed to race and equity issues in Southern Arizona through the provision of culturally responsive services, advocacy for social justice, and community empowerment. Amistades uses a culturally rooted, intergenerational family approach to working with Latinos. The agency prioritizes addressing immediate issues, leads efforts that eliminate false narratives about Latinos, and develops system focused strategies that change the conditions that perpetuate inequities.

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