



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Winnebago Area Literacy Council Awarded Inaugural WisACT Civic Visionary Award
Oshkosh, WI – April 28, 2026**

The Winnebago Area Literacy Council (WALC) has been awarded the inaugural Civic Visionary Award from the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Whitburn Center and WisACT (Wisconsin Alliance for Civic Trust). The award recognizes an individual or organization that overcomes challenges to pursue bold ideas and develops innovative solutions that uplift communities while strengthening civic trust and civic health in Wisconsin. WALC was nominated by State Representative Lori Palmeri.

In 2025, the Winnebago Area Literacy Council began offering monthly Immigration Learning Circles in response to growing community interest in creating a space for civic dialogue on immigration-related topics. Since then, WALC has hosted scholars, researchers, practitioners, and individuals with lived experience to explore a range of immigration issues. Past presenters include Dr. Sergio Gonzalez, historian and author of *Latinos in Wisconsin*; Drs. Chong Moua and Choua Xiong of the UWO Hmong Studies Program; and Dr. Lucero Estrella, assistant professor of Ethnic Studies at Lawrence University. WALC learners have also shared their personal journeys of (im)migration to the United States and to Oshkosh.

WALC's monthly Immigration Learning Circles have drawn approximately 150 attendees from Oshkosh and the surrounding Fox Valley region. The organization also recently received a Converse and Connect Grant from Wisconsin Humanities to support the Learning Circles in 2026. This grant supports initiatives like the Immigration Learning Circles that strengthen civic infrastructure and democracy in partnership with local communities.

The next Immigration Learning Circle will take place on May 19 from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. at the WALC Learning Center in downtown Oshkosh (111 N Main Street Suite 202) and will feature local immigration attorney Molly Smiltneek, who will present on the current state of U.S. immigration. More information is available at: <https://winlit.org/immigration-learning-circles/>

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