



NEWS RELEASE

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NALEO Educational Fund launches *Defiende la Verdad* campaign to combat misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation efforts that threaten Latino civic participation

"Our goal with this initiative is to equip community leaders and other stakeholders with the tools they need to identify and counter misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation so they can better address the challenges the Latino community faces when participating in the American civic and political process."

— NALEO Educational Fund CEO Arturo Vargas

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund today announced the launch of the ***Defiende la Verdad*** (defend the truth) campaign to combat incidents of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation that target Latinos. ***Defiende la Verdad*** will enhance the ability of community leaders, Latino-serving organizations, and media partners to monitor for and report misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation to defend the community's ability to participate in the political process.

The Latino community's online presence and its reliance on internet platforms for information make this a critical issue that requires that the community has access to accurate information in a timely manner. ***Defiende la Verdad*** will help fill the gap that currently exists with social media companies' [limited capacity to monitor](#) for and take down incidents of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation in languages other than English, including Spanish.

"The prevalence of misinformation across different media platforms exemplifies a systemic inequity affecting the Latino community and other communities," **said NALEO Educational Fund CEO Arturo Vargas.** "This issue is a contributing factor in limiting the Latino community's ability to access and fully engage in our nation's political processes. Our goal with this initiative is to equip community leaders and other stakeholders with the tools they need to identify and counter misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation so they can better address the challenges the Latino community faces when participating in the American civic and political process."

Defiende la Verdad will feature presentations for community leaders and other stakeholders, trainings on how to identify and report these kinds of incidents, and monitoring sessions to help fill the current gap in monitoring social media for Spanish-language content. The campaign will also create tools for community members to counter online misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation in their own social and professional networks, especially within encrypted platforms like WhatsApp. NALEO Educational Fund's partnership with the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) will allow it to track these incidents through its Junkipedia tool.

Defiende la Verdad will also engage Latino media partners — especially Spanish-language outlets — to raise awareness around this issue, encourage increased coverage of it, and develop strategies to protect their audiences.

The first ***Defiende la Verdad*** presentation will take place virtually on Tuesday, September 27, and will feature opening remarks by New Jersey Secretary of State Tahesha Way, Esq., president of the National Association of Secretaries of State (NAAS). “Misinformation harms voters and undermines faith in our elections,” **said Secretary Way**. “***Defiende la Verdad*** will empower Latino voters by helping them identify the best sources for election information.”

Partners interested in hosting ***Defiende la Verdad*** training sessions for their members, clients, or constituents can request one by filling out [this interest form](#).

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About NALEO Educational Fund

NALEO Educational Fund is the nation’s leading non-partisan, non-profit organization that facilitates the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.