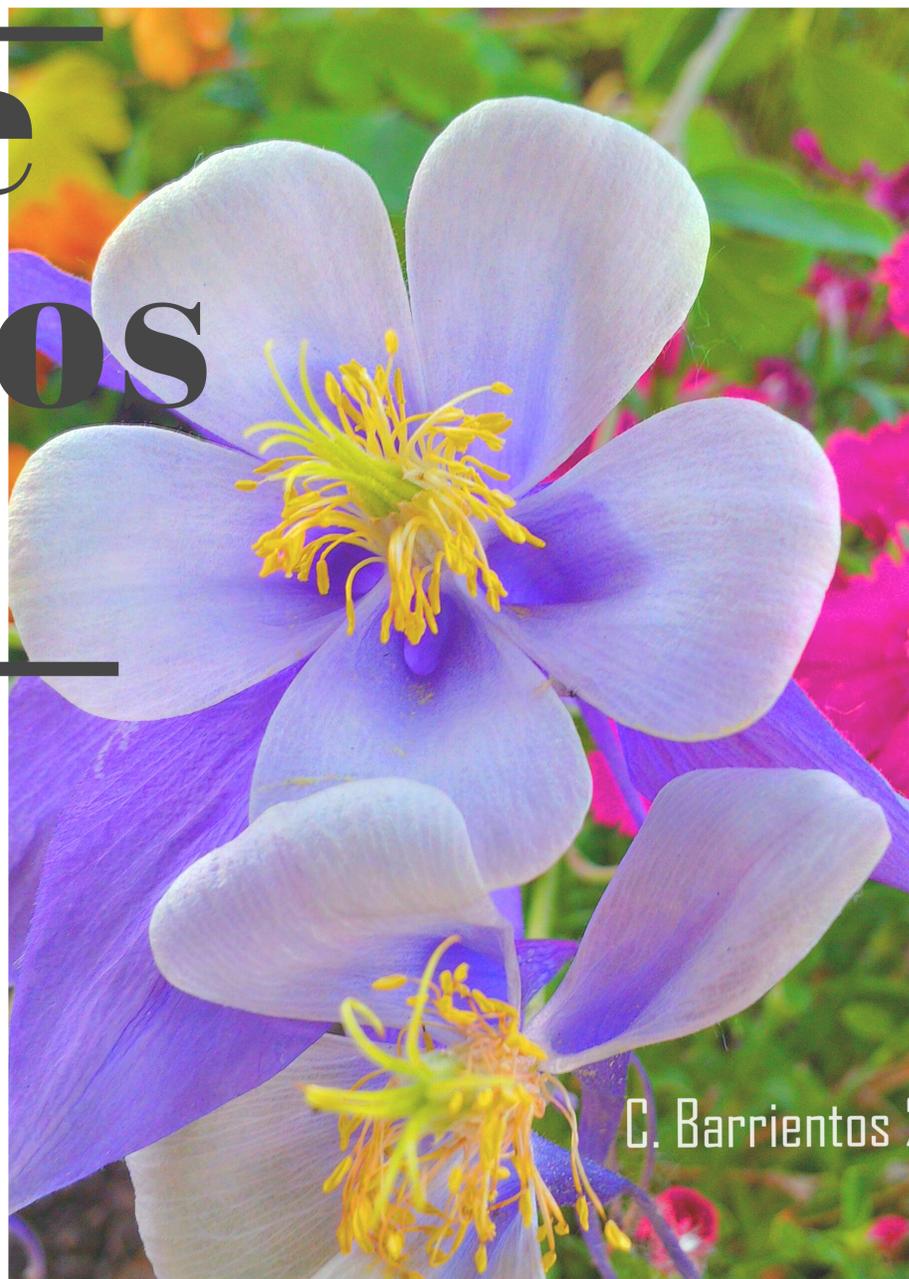


Charlene Barrientos Ortiz



ABOUT

Charlene Barrientos Ortiz is a Community Research Liaison (CRL) for Latina/o/x and indigenous communities of Colorado with a focus on metro Denver. Charlene's journey with the PACT began at the program's inception, where she started out as a scientific staff member and then became a CRL.

CCTSI ENGAGEMENT

Community Research Liaison

- Education and Training Committee
- Pilot Grants Coach
- Research Readiness Workgroup

PROJECT INVOLVEMENT

In her role, she not only engages the community in research but also serves as a coach for CCTSI community engagement pilot grant awardees, trains new coaches, and is the lead of the PACT Education and Training Committee. Charlene also is involved with the PACT's Research Readiness Program, a program that aims to support community-based organizations in learning the foundations of research, how to partner with academics, and conduct community-engaged research projects. In addition to her work with the CCTSI Community Engagement core, Charlene works on community engagement projects through the Colorado School of Public Health.

OUTLOOK

She loves her job as a CRL as it marries her professional and personal world by connecting her community to the world of academic research. She calls her role as a CRL, a "hybrid", as she is able to walk amongst both worlds, but finds her home in the community. This position has highlighted the importance of having a role that's supported as a partner rather than an expert. With this, she is able to support and serve her community in a unique way. During the pandemic, it has been heartbreaking for Charlene to see the disproportionate effects of the virus on her community, but she has been able to find a silver lining. She believes COVID-19 has pulled back the curtain on health equity projects and advocacy efforts, shining the spotlight on the changes that need to be made for the sake of peoples' wellbeing. She is hopeful that this will prompt people to be *true* allies, both in their outward efforts and their own introspection. She knows that people have the capacity to change things, and she hopes that they will take advantage of the new opportunities that arise. In her many years in this role, Charlene has seen so much progress—community progress, research progress, and progress within the role of the CRLs. Looking to the future, Charlene hopes to use her expertise and passion to strengthen the CRL's voice in the matters that include them and their communities, encourage them to be more and do more, and ultimately help them to be supported in the work that they do.

“They say find a job you love and you’ll never work a day in your life. Well, I think I’ve found it.”