



By The Office of Equal Opportunity, Kristal White

Each month, the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) looks forward to providing content that celebrates the diversity across our State's workforce and embraces the differences that help make us better together. We believe diversity and inclusion are everyone's responsibility and we hope all state employees carry such responsibility with honor, courage, and passion. Check us out [here](#)!

Hispanic Heritage Month takes place from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15. Hispanic Heritage Month originally began as a commemorative week in June 1968, by George E. Brown, a Congressman from the state of California. The support of this commemorative week grew tremendously, and on Sept. 14, 1989, former President, George H.W. Bush, declared the 31-day period from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 as National Hispanic Heritage Month.



Why September 15 to October 15? The 15th of September is



significant to the history of independence for many Hispanic countries. On Sept. 15, 1821, five nations in Central America declared their independence from Spain. In addition to this, Mexico declared its independence from Spain on Sept. 16, 1810, and Chile on Sept. 18 of the same year. Columbus arrived in the New World on Oct. 12. This day is also known as Dia de la Raza. Dia de la Raza is the celebration and recognition of the cultural fusion of indigenous American and Spanish heritage.

According to an article on [HispanicMonth.net](https://www.hispanicmonth.net), "In 2023, celebrations regarding this event are more inclusive and widespread than ever! Events range from museum exhibits and educational workshops to food festivals and music concerts. These celebrations are not limited to states with significant Hispanic populations like California, Texas, and Florida; they span the entire nation, making it a truly American celebration."

Contact us if you have ideas on diverse groups to celebrate at CelebrateDiversity@oa.mo.gov.



Since this is a time of year to recognize and celebrate the many contributions, cultures, and histories of the American Latino community, we would like to highlight Paul Rojas. Paul, whose real name is Raul, was the first Latino elected to State Office in Missouri. Raul was elected to the Missouri General Assembly in 1972 and since leaving an elected office, he continues to serve the community in a positive way. Raul is Chairman Emeritus of the Guadalupe Centers Board. According to the National Register for Historic Places, the Guadalupe Centers is the Longest Continuously Operating Social Services Agency Serving Latinos in the United States. For more information on the Guadalupe Centers [click here](#).