

Contact Information

Name

Carlos Davalos

Email Address

carlos.davalos@wortfm.org

Member Type?

Participating Member

Length of term

Until June of 2028

Current Occupation

Ph.D. candidate

Any past felony convictions?

No

Background:

Please indicate your involvement with WORT, past or current.

On May 16th, 2025, I will finish a year-long fellowship at WORT where I participated in several activities. These included producing Spanish and English segments for Labor Radio through the partnership with local organization Worker Justice Wisconsin, interviews with scholars, filmmakers, athletes, Mexican journalists, etc., and collaborations with the 8 O'Clock Buzz and A Public Affair shows, as well as the daily local news hour segment. I also was part of the team that covered the Democratic National Convention in August 2025, and have been a constant supporting collaborator in the Los Madrugadores show (Saturdays 5-8 am) that is channeled to Latino laborers in the Madison area, but has audience in the entire country and some Mexican states like Puebla and Michoacan. I have also recruited Spanish-speaking volunteers who are now being integrated into WORT's different areas.

Please indicate your involvement with communit(ies) in WORT's listening area.

I am involved with the Latino community in general and with the academic community at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Through my work at WORT over the past year, I have also developed ties with sections of the labor and organizing community and the music scene.

Ideas

What are your goals for WORT?

My primary goal is to contribute to WORT's ongoing transformation into a truly inclusive, multilingual, and community-centered radio station that reflects the lived realities of all who, like myself, call Madison home. As someone who has studied and practiced journalism in different countries, I understand the power of media as a space of identity formation, civic participation, social accountability, and, most importantly, community integration. For WORT, this means maintaining its continuing legacy as an alternative, community voice in Madison and expanding it, particularly by supporting more Spanish-language and bilingual programming and public affairs coverage that centers marginalized (undocumented) voices.

I envision WORT as a place where underrepresented communities don't just contribute content but shape the station's editorial frameworks and cultural identity. I want to help build sustainable access for training and mentoring new volunteer producers, especially from immigrant and working-class backgrounds, and to find new ways to bridge journalism, cultural work, and community presence through radio. WORT can become a hub for civic media, interlanguage dialogue, and solidarity with marginal (and targeted) communities.

What do you see as WORT's major responsibilities to the community?

WORT's responsibility is not simply to broadcast but to listen, accompany, and generate a bidirectional, horizontal dialogue with all community members, not only the white majority (inside and outside the radio station). WORT can continue shifting from speaking to minority groups to talking with them. It has a unique role as one of the last remaining platforms of grassroots radio, away from corporate influence. This means it must be vigilant in how it holds space for Madison's diverse population's struggles, dreams, and cultural expressions.

I think WORT's responsibilities should include: 1) Providing accurate, contextual information, especially for those excluded from mainstream political discourse, including undocumented (targeted) workers, monolingual non-English speakers, and working-class communities. 2) Creating cultural and creative production platforms, particularly for those whose voices are often invisible. 3) Reducing the technical, institutional, and language barriers to participation, WORT could continue serving and channeling more resources as a training space for citizen journalists, especially those with little prior media experience. 4) Responding to crises and changes (whether that's climate, immigration enforcement, housing, or health), solidarity and resources rooted in authentic empathy and mutual care. And 5) encouraging interconnection between different racial, linguistic, generational, and political communities in Madison, encouraging cross-pollination and critical dialogue.

There are many areas where WORT could improve and many new activities WORT could undertake. Please list specific tasks on which you would be willing to work.

Here are specific areas I'd be happy to contribute to: 1) Spanish-Language Programming Expansion: Strengthening the editorial on-air content for consistent Spanish-language programming. This includes recruiting, training, and mentoring new volunteers, especially members of minority groups. 2) Community Engagement and Listening Sessions: Organizing town halls, story circles, or bingo-loteria-style dialogues to learn what listeners, again, especially those from underrepresented Madison areas, need and want from their community station. 3) Worker-centered Journalism: strengthening the existing segments focused on labor rights, wage theft, tenant issues, and immigrant resilience (with partnerships with worker centers and community organizations like the one already existing with the Worker Justice Wisconsin organization). 4) Strategic Partnerships: Developing collaborations with local libraries, public schools, and cultural centers to distribute content, co-create programming, and integrate WORT into broader public knowledge infrastructures. This idea could have a national and international dimension, collaborating with other community radio stations. 5) Archival storytelling, such as the "Know Your Rights" immigration series called "What is an Immigrant," which I am currently developing with my friend and colleague, Ankur Malhotra. This idea could preserve and re-circulate WORT's rich history (possibly in audio documentary form?) alongside new stories that are being made right now by Black, brown, queer, and working-class Madisonians.

Why do you wish to be on WORT's Board of Directors?

I want to join the Board to bridge languages and different social realities in Madison. My experience as a Mexican journalist, academic researcher, commercial and community radio producer /host, and volunteer at WORT gives me a multifaceted perspective on the station's unique potential. I see the Board as a space not only for governance but also for transformation. For moving beyond token inclusion toward structural equity. I think representation matters a lot, but what matters more is the redistribution of decision-making power and airtime. I want to be part of that redistribution. I believe the Board can support long-term strategic planning that brings together editorial diversity, radio media technology, and community solidarity without losing the soul of what makes WORT beloved.

I have no illusions or expectations about the challenges ahead, but I do believe that public, participatory, community-based media must not only survive but thrive as democratic institutions. I hope to contribute to that effort with humility, creativity, humor, and deep community ties.

The Board currently meets monthly on a Wednesday night. Meetings are scheduled at 7:00 p.m. and may finish as late as 11 p.m.. Are you able to regularly attend Board meetings?

Absolutely.

WORT's Board is an active participant in station affairs. Board members do committee work and participate in pledge drives and other fundraising events. Board members are expected to commit to five to ten hours a month in addition to meetings. Roughly estimate the time you have available for work in addition to Board meetings.

7-10 hours.

Feel free to add any additional relevant material.

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