

Expanding Sanctuary Press Kit

Runtime: 21 min

Genre: Documentary

Country of origin: USA

Completion: November 2023

[Film Trailer](#)

Festival Screenings

- BlackStar Film Festival, winner of the Philadelphia Filmmaker Award
- St. Louis International Film Festival
- Vieques Film and Human Rights Festival (FCDHV)
- San Diego Latino Film Festival
- Houston Latino Film Festival
- Gasparilla International Film Festival
- Phoenix Film Festival
- XicanIndie Film Fest
- The Poppy Jasper International Film Festival
- Queer Women of Color Film Festival
- Oak Cliff Film Festival
- Davey Fest

Logline

An immigrant mother's fight sparks a community's battle against ICE.

Short Synopsis

Expanding Sanctuary follows an immigrant mother who becomes a powerful community leader in the fight to end police data-sharing with ICE. The film captures her transformation from personal desire to bring her mother to the U.S. into a passionate, collective movement for immigrant rights and family protection.

Long Synopsis

An immigrant mother becomes an unexpected community leader during a groundbreaking campaign to end the Philadelphia police's data-sharing with Immigration and Customs

Enforcement (ICE). *Expanding Sanctuary* tells a rarely seen story of resilience, tracing the Latinx immigrant community's successful fight to protect families and change legislation against a backdrop of systemic injustice.

At the heart of the film is a personal journey of transformation. What begins as a woman's quest to bring her mother to the United States for her wedding evolves into a profound awakening. As she works with the immigrant rights organization Juntos, she discovers her voice, power, and agency, channeling her initial hope for personal connection into a larger purpose. Her newfound role as an organizer not only redefines her life but strengthens her entire community's fight for justice, illuminating the extraordinary potential of collective action and solidarity.

Director Bio

Kristal Sotomayor is an award-winning nonbinary Peruvian American director, producer, journalist and curator based in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Named one of "10 Latinx Filmmakers You Should Know About" by HipLatina, they have received distinctions such as the DOC NYC Documentary New Leader Honor and Rockwood Documentary Leadership Fellowship (formerly known as the JustFilms Fellowship). Kristal's short Latinx immigrant rights documentary "Expanding Sanctuary" won the Philadelphia Filmmaker Award at the 2024 BlackStar Film Festival and is being distributed through OTV and New Day Films. Their short experimental documentary "Don't Cry For Me All You Drag Queens" has screened across the globe at Newport Beach Film Festival, NewFest, GAZE International LGBTQIA Film Festival, and Sidewalk Film Festival. Kristal is currently in post-production on their debut narrative short film "Las Cosas Que Brillan," a coming of age story about a Trans Latina mermaid, produced with support from the BlackStar Filmmaker Lab. They are in-development on a number of short and feature-length directorial projects through their company Sotomayor Productions. Kristal's work has been supported by the Outfest Creative Hope Fellowship, If/Then & CIFF North Shorts Residency, MDOCS Storytellers' Institute Visiting Fellowship, DCTV Docu Work-In-Progress Lab, and NeXtDoc Fellowship. They have curated acclaimed programming across the country at SFFILM, Frameline, True/False Film Fest, and the Philadelphia Latino Film Festival. They are the Editor-in-Chief of the cinéSPEAK Journal and their freelance writing bylines include The Philadelphia Inquirer, Documentary Magazine, Autostraddle, AL DÍA, and WHY?.

Director Filmography: *Expanding Sanctuary* (2023), *Don't Cry For Me All You Drag Queens* (2024)

Director Statement

Expanding Sanctuary has been over six years in the making, born from my deep collaboration with Juntos, a Latinx immigrant rights nonprofit. This partnership lies at the heart of my filmmaking process, focusing on authentic, community-driven storytelling.

The film follows an immigrant mother who becomes a leader in the fight to end police data-sharing with ICE. What begins as her effort to bring her mother to the U.S. transforms into

a passionate journey for immigrant rights. As Linda discovers her voice, the film documents her powerful shift from personal desire to collective action, culminating in a historic victory for the community.

This project is deeply personal to me, inspired by my love for my immigrant parents and my desire to honor the struggles of immigrant families, particularly Latina mothers. As a first-generation Latinx nonbinary person, my experiences mirror those of the community, yet I recognize the privilege I hold in telling these stories. I aim to decolonize the typical portrayal of immigrants in media and provide a platform for authentic representation.

My work with Juntos ensures that power, transparency, and accountability are at the forefront of the process. The crew, made up primarily of Latinx, immigrant, and gender-expansive people of color, reflects the community we document, ensuring an inclusive and intersectional approach to filmmaking.

Social Media

Instagram: @KristalSotomayor @Sotomayor.Productions #ExpandingSanctuaryFilm

Twitter: @KristalSotomayr

Facebook: @KristalASotomayor @TheSotomayorProductions

Website: www.kristalsotomayor.com / www.sotomayorproductions.com