

Lilia Sahagun
Employee of the Year Nomination
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Written by Alvaro Valdez, Assistant Management Services Director

It is our privilege to nominate Lilia Sahagun, Workers' Compensation Administrator, for the City of Burbank Employee of the Year. Since joining the City in 2023, Lilia has demonstrated exceptional leadership, initiative, innovation, and commitment to service while transforming the City's Workers' Compensation Program into a more proactive, responsive, and employee-focused operation.

Lilia has led a comprehensive revamp of the Workers' Compensation Program, establishing a culture centered on exceptional customer service, accountability, and proactive claims management. She recognizes that behind every claim is an employee navigating an injury and often an unfamiliar process. Under her leadership, Lilia and her team approach employees with professionalism, empathy, responsiveness, and clear communication while also protecting the City's interests.

Lilia's leadership is especially evident in her approach to problem solving. She actively identifies barriers, evaluates solutions, and collaborates with departments, medical providers, legal counsel, and other partners to move claims toward appropriate resolution. This proactive approach has contributed to a reduction in litigated claims, helping resolve issues before they escalate into costly and prolonged disputes.

A significant part of Lilia's success is the strong partnership she has developed with the City's labor unions. Through open communication, transparency, responsiveness, and a collaborative approach, she has built trust and strengthened relationships with labor representatives. These partnerships have helped to address employee concerns earlier, improve communication throughout the claims process, and resolve issues before they become unnecessarily adversarial.

Lilia has also demonstrated outstanding fiscal stewardship. Through increased oversight, strategic claims management, earlier intervention, and timely resolution, Lilia and her team's efforts have resulted in approximately \$1 million in savings to the City's General Fund. This significant achievement has been part of the City's solution to its budget deficit and helped preserve resources for other important City services. These financial results have been achieved while maintaining strong claim closures and quality service for injured employees.

Equally important is the positive team culture Lilia has developed. She leads by example and empowers her staff to take ownership of their work, collaborate on difficult claims, and

maintain high standards of service. Her leadership has created an environment where employees are encouraged to solve problems, communicate, and continually improve.

Lilia's impact extends beyond the Workers' Compensation team. Her leadership has strengthened confidence in the program among employees, departments, and labor partners while demonstrating how effective claims administration can support the City's broader operational and financial goals. She has created sustainable improvements that will continue to benefit the organization and its employees well into the future.

Lilia exemplifies the qualities the Employee of the Year award is intended to recognize which is inclusive of dedication to duty, innovation, teamwork, exceptional performance, fiscal responsibility, and service. Her leadership has produced meaningful and lasting improvements for the City, its employees, and the Workers' Compensation Program, and we are proud to nominate her for this well-deserved recognition.