

Dulce Castañeda graduated from Northwestern University in 2016 with a Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies and Sociology. Upon graduating, she returned to her hometown of Crete, Nebraska to serve as the city's first Community Assistance Director. There, she implemented a welcoming center for New Americans and advised various city departments and elected officials on diversity and inclusion initiatives.

A few years later, she went on to work as a legal assistant for a private law firm, where she currently works. As the daughter of immigrants, she is particularly passionate about immigrant rights.

In April of 2020, Dulce helped found the group "Children of Smithfield" in Crete. Shortly after she and other friends learned about the alarming working conditions her father and other community members were facing at the Smithfield Foods plant in their rural town, they began to advocate for workers' rights and better working conditions for all meat-packing workers. Since then, Dulce has shared her family's story publicly, including in national media outlets such as the [New York Times](#), [ProPublica](#), and [Univision](#), and has helped create awareness about the dangerous working conditions meat-packing workers have always faced in order to advance workers' rights.

The group has received awards for its advocacy including Legal Aid of Nebraska's [Community Partner Equal Justice Award](#), Nebraska Appleseed's [2020 Good Apple Award](#), and Brandworkers: [2020 Champion of Economic Justice Honoree](#).