

2020: Challenging Year, Stronger Mujeres!



M U J E R E S

LATINAS EN ACCIÓN

EMPOWERING LATINAS AND THEIR FAMILIES

— EST. 1973 —

2019-2020 Impact & Annual Report

In the nearly five decades of Mujeres Latinas en Acción (Mujeres), we have had some years that can be described as challenging and distressing. We have also had some years that were full of expansion and years in which Mujeres shined even brighter. And there have been some years that have profoundly changed the way Mujeres approached its work. **2020 is one of those years** when all of these things were true.

Through it all, we've stayed committed to serving the community and helping immigrants, survivors, entrepreneurs, leaders, parents and their families through an unparalleled time. A year like this one demands a lot of Mujeres and the people who do the hard work. In 2020, Mujeres led with *fuerza y corazón*.



Domestic Violence Awareness Month, October 2020

In the second week of March 2020, Mujeres was getting ready to host its most successful, largest Voces Unidas Luncheon. After canceling the event due to the emergence of COVID-19, Mujeres began the difficult work of closing our physical offices and planning for pivots in our service delivery. We asked our teammates to share their experiences with you.

When the stay-at-home order began...

“

...I was checking-in with survivors who were in therapy with me... letting them know that our offices would be closed for two weeks, but even as I was calling them, we were slowly realizing it would be longer...

Simone, Child Therapist

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“

...I began having a lot of work, right away! So many calls. My clients were just as worried as I was. It was emotionally difficult.

Bertha, Community Engagement & Mobilization Director

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“

...for the legal advocates it was hard. The path to help survivors looking for orders of protection was unclear; the courts were unclear. It was heavy for us. We didn't know how to move forward.

Joel, Domestic Violence Court Advocate Supervisor

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When the stay-at-home order began...(continued)

“

...there was a combination of fear and denial. As the weeks progressed...there was a mourning process and a learning of how to hold a space of healing for survivors without a physical office.

Erika L., Sexual Assault Therapist

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“

...I was getting a lot of calls for resources. People were losing their jobs, going unemployed, schools were closed. Now we know the resources, the testing, the food pantries, but at the beginning... it was so difficult, I didn't have the answers.

Erika A., Domestic Violence Court Advocate

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“

...I don't stress out easily, but there was a lot of anxiety not just from our clients, but on our team, as well. But being able to focus on the clients' needs, doing assessments, figuring out their technology access, learning how to use YouTube, Zoom ... it all helped us prepare to conduct our Empresarias trainings virtually.

Alicia, Empresarias del Futuro Director

”

THE PIVOTS

By early April 2020, Mujeres had shifted all our programs to comply with the Governor's Stay-At-Home Order. This required a massive investment and lift in Mujeres' technology infrastructure, revamping of curricula for virtual trainings, and the build out of our tele-counseling and tele-therapy services. So even when our physical offices were closed, our services to the community continued. As Illinois moved into different phases of reopening, Mujeres prioritized our crisis intervention services within our Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Parent Support programs; offering safe, hygiene-vigilant in-person office hours at all three locations.

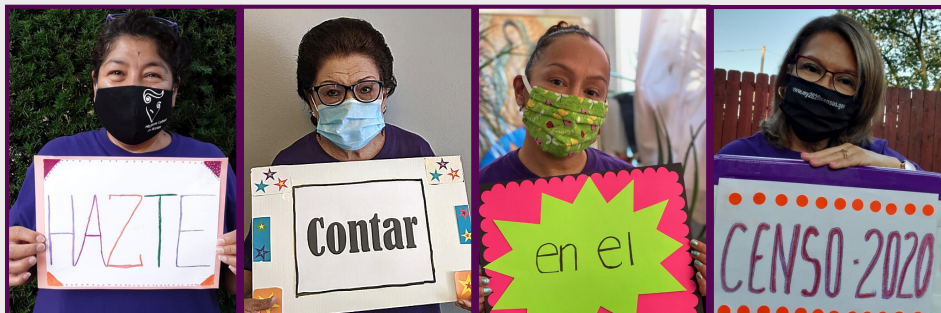
The impact data for fiscal year 2020 shows that **Mujeres directly served over 2,500 people**, including:

- **1,302 survivors of domestic violence** through counseling and therapy, including 211 children
- **508 survivors of sexual violence** through counseling and therapy, including 75 children
- **140 Latinas** were trained as entrepreneurs through our Empresarias del Futuro program
- And our Parent Support program, helped **157 individuals**. The Supervised Visitation/Safe Exchange component of this program made it possible for 54 children to safely, supportively interact with their parents.

THE COMMUNITY FIGHTS BACK

In many ways, 2020 was the culmination of years of attacks on immigrant families. Fear of ICE raids, threats to pathways to citizenship, use of the public charge rule, and a possible undercount in the 2020 Census were all intimidation tactics employed by an anti-immigrant presidential administration. Mujeres did not back down. In fiscal year 2020, we trained Promotoras de Salud & Latina Leaders to carry ambitious, grassroots community education campaigns. For the 2020 Census count, Mujeres trained **80 volunteers**, made **63,338 calls**, and knocked on **6,613 doors** throughout Chicago and the Western Suburbs.

To overcome the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to need community-led solutions. By mid-July 2020, in Chicago, the Latina/o/x population represented 47% of positive cases and 32% of COVID-19 related deaths. Through virtual town halls, community meetings, and social media, Mujeres' staff and trained community leaders called on the Illinois General Assembly to (1) offer free COVID-19 testing regardless of insurance or immigration status and (2) emergency cash assistance. With our partners in the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights, this advocacy directly led to **securing the largest commitment in the Illinois state budget's history** to the Immigrant Services Line Item which included direct cash assistance to undocumented individuals left out of the federal stimulus package.



Census #TodosContamos Campaign, August 2020

As our teams got their footing in the new normal, their work took on more significance; families needed Mujeres in a different way.

Connecting in a pandemic...

“

...there was a different connection--- the economic impact was real. They were telling me: I don't have money for rent, I don't have food. I only have the last gallon of milk left for my children.

Yolanda, Domestic Violence Supervisor

”

“

...If you don't have your basic needs met, if you don't have food, shelter, money, you're not going to have the emotional ability to do real counseling.

Erika A., Domestic Violence Court Advocate

”

“

...my job is to advocate, to fight and yet I was feeling powerless... I remember so vividly that my coworker called me and asked, "Why are immigrant, undocumented families being left out of all these resources?" That's when I told myself:

Ponte las pilas!

We had to recreate our advocacy platform. We had to respond. We had to fight!

Bertha, Community Engagement & Mobilization Director

”

SURVIVORS & COVID-19

The emerging data of survivors of sexual and domestic violence illuminates the devastating challenges. According to the International Journal of Mental Health: “Family violence during pandemics is associated with a range of factors including economic stress, disaster-related instability, increased exposure to exploitative relationships, and reduced options for support.” According to the Journal of Public Economics:

- *“The pandemic led to a 7.5% increase in calls for service during March, April, and May. The biggest increase came during the first five weeks after widespread social distancing began when domestic violence calls were up 9.7%.”*
- *“The pandemic and accompanying public health response led to a 10.2% increase in domestic violence calls. The increase in reported domestic violence incidents begins before official stay-at-home orders were put into place, is not driven by any particular demographic group, but does appear to be driven by households without a prior history of domestic violence.”*

At Mujeres, we saw a spike in request for emergency services. Our counselors and therapists increased their caseloads and we also had to create an external referral system for (non-emergency) adult counseling services in early summer 2020.

“

It was a hard transition for some survivors, honestly. In our counseling and therapy, we get cues from body language in person .. And that was gone. So there was hesitation. Privacy was a key concern. Not having the space... A lot of brainstorming with our clients. How can we make this work? I want to be there for you during this difficult time. It took a lot of creativity and imagination.

Erika L., Sexual Assault Therapist

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Connecting in a pandemic...(continued)

“
...Some Empresarias had to put their business plans on hold, but a lot of them changed their business model so they could be more virtual, so they can stay open. It was a learning experience, also...so we would know how to highlight their businesses virtually.

Ana, Empresarias del Futuro Advocate

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...I was trying to connect with this one young girl, so I put on music and danced. We clapped and moved along together, finding a very real way to feel connected and laughing. Since then, doing movement exercises with children helps them focus and go a little deeper.

Simone, Child Therapist

“
Eventually the courthouse figured out some protocols, but there were still moments of helplessness. So many people that we serve didn't understand the technology, or there were limits on their access, all on top of a language barrier. Later, we were able to help them fill out the petitions for their orders of protection. But many times they didn't have the privacy--and it took some time to fill these petitions--there were some clients who would have to wait until the perpetrator was out of the house for work so they could complete them... and as jobs shut down, it became harder and harder for survivors to complete those petitions. With orders of protection, timeliness is so essential.

Joel, Domestic Violence Court Advocate Supervisor

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Some of the Empresarias are survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault, but they are in a stage of their healing where they want to keep working on their goals. They had a lot to learn but they confronted those challenges, and it was inspiring.

Alicia, Empresarias del Futuro Director

COVID-19 COMMUNITY IMPACT

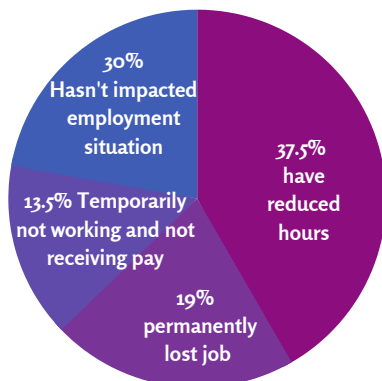
At the conclusion of August 2020, Mujeres conducted a community assessment to capture the devastating impact COVID-19 was having in our communities.

69%

of survey respondents have had their employment impacted due to the pandemic

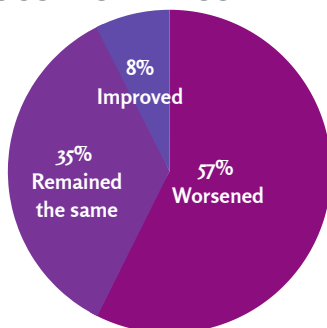


IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT



IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Since the end of April 2020, family's financial situation has..



73%

of households surveyed have suffered income loss due to the pandemic

64%

are ineligible for unemployment insurance and ineligible for federal stimulus check(s)

NO SAFETY NET



MUJERES LATINAS EN ACCION'S RESPONSE

Between April and October 2020, we have connected 534 families with \$359,637 in direct cash assistance.

DIRECT CASH ASSISTANCE

\$167,137

*were raised by Mujeres
for direct cash assistance
& provided to*

349 families



EXTERNAL FUNDS

185 families

*were connected by Mujeres' staff
to partners and external funds for
direct cash assistance totaling*

\$192,500



Moments of Hope

“

We helped Empresarias apply for a small business loan. One of them called me after she was approved. She told me that she had literally been crying on the floor the day prior, wondering if her business was going to crash after so much hard work.

Alicia, Empresarias del Futuro Director

”

“

In the work that I do, it can be difficult to find joy, but in these last few months when a client had been granted the longest term for an order of protection, which is two years, she was so happy. Now she can't be harassed at work... she felt safe, she felt at peace, she felt that she can move forward.

Joel, Domestic Violence Court Advocate Supervisor

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“

The therapeutic space has shifted so much. Being able to help survivors ground themselves takes real work. One of the most rewarding moments I had was when a survivor and I worked out a space and time for the session and she said it was one of the most peaceful moments she had had in a long time.

Erika L., Sexual Assault Therapist

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“

The first time I was able to get a survivor access to Mujeres' emergency cash funds, it was quite an experience. I knew she was worried about getting evicted, about food... And I was so scared that the amount was small, that it wouldn't really make a difference, but she was so relieved and happy and grateful. It's a moment I'll never forget.

Erika A., Domestic Violence Court Advocate

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“

I was helping a survivor with her U-visa application. And she had just lost her job at a fast-food place and she told me that she was running out of milk, I wasn't sure what to do. I don't have a car, but I'll walk anywhere. We were able to connect her to food for her children and I was able to get her emergency funds.

Yolanda, Domestic Violence Supervisor

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“

I was helping an Empresaria with an application that was only offered in English. Aside from documentation, they wanted to understand the Empresarias' personal story.

That's when I learned that her store was unique. She wants her store and merchandise to celebrate her Indigenous culture from Ecuador, to share it with the community of Chicago. She explained to me that she wanted to keep her traditions alive through these artisanal goods. She told me that in a big city, when you are separated from your homeland, your family, keeping culture alive is vital... When she received her grant it was such a proud moment for us.

Ana, Empresarias del Futuro Advocate

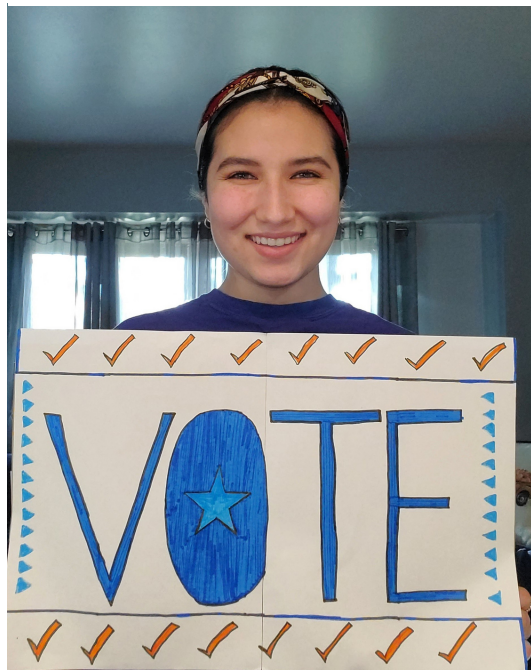
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There was a lot of sadness for the applicants who were applying for citizenship. When citizenship pathways and classes became available again, it was such a relief. People who have come to our citizenship workshops say that the attention we give them, the follow-up, that care, not just them, but their whole family, that it means a lot... I had two brothers come to our workshop and I remember one of them telling me: "My family has certainly struggled. Being a citizen, makes me feel like I can stand up for our family... My mom pushed my brother and I to become citizens, even though she couldn't. So even though she couldn't vote in November, our two votes count for her vote."

Flor, Citizenship Advocate

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ANNUAL REPORT*

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Maribel Gerstner
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Nathan Laporte
Sandra Magallon
Sandra Valenzuela
Sunny Fischer
The Honorable Barack Obama
Timothy J. O'Malley
Tracey Kreiling

Top Foundations, FY2019

Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation
Community Memorial Foundation
Healthy Communities Foundation
Polk Bros Foundation
The Greer Foundation
The Hearst Foundations
The Reva and David Logan Foundation
Verizon Wireless
United Way of Metro Chicago
VNA Foundation

Top Government Funders, FY2019

Department of Children and Family Services
Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Illinois Department of Human Services
United States Department of Justice

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*Based on the most recent audit of *Mujeres Latinas en Acción*

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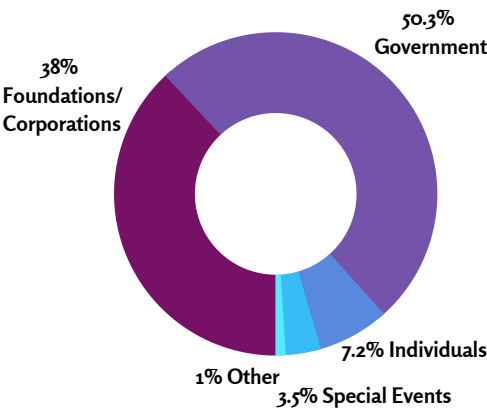
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Schiff Hardin LLP

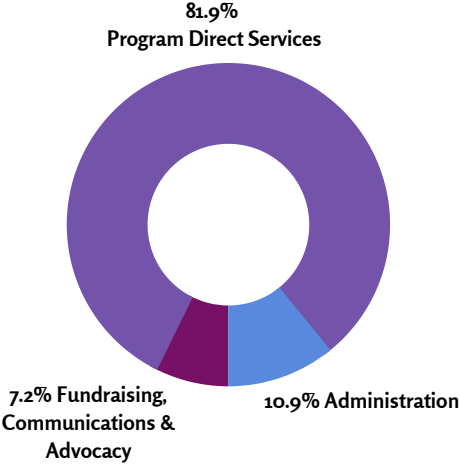
REVENUE

Government.....	\$1,751,866
Foundations/Corporations.....	\$1,325,267
Individuals.....	\$250,431
Special Events.....	\$122,407
Other.....	\$34,689
Total Revenue.....	\$3,484,660



EXPENSES

Program Direct Services.....	\$2,755,436
Administration.....	\$365,748
Fundraising, Communications & Advocacy.....	\$244,496
Total Expenses.....	\$3,365,680



WHATEVER THE NEW YEAR BRINGS...

Mujeres will be ready! We asked our teammates what single word describes their 2021 hopes and below are the most common words they shared:

COMMUNITY **CONSCIOUS** **Revive**
Reconnect **POSITIVITY** **READY**
PERSEVERE **COMPASSION**

This year, Mujeres was able to provide vital support to our community, but we couldn't do it alone. Mujeres' ever growing list of partners includes donors of all sizes, community-based organizations, private and public funding streams, program officers, government officials, current and previous YPAC members, current and former board members, community leaders, business leaders, professors, coalitions, etc. You likely see yourself in one or more of these categories of supporters. We want you to know that we see you as part of the Mujeres' team—right there along with the *compañeras* and *compañeros* who shared their stories in this booklet. **We hope we can count on you as we face the challenges and continue this journey in the new year.**



GIVE TODAY

VISIT MUJERES LATINAS EN ACCIÓN AT ONE OF OUR LOCATIONS

Pilsen Headquarters

2124 W. 21st Place
Chicago, IL 60608
773-890-7676

Brighton Park Office

4700 S. California
Chicago, IL 60632
773-890-8620

West Suburban Office

7222 W. Cermak Road 509
North Riverside, IL 60546
708-442-1299