



2020 ANNUAL REPORT



HISPANIC CENTER

of western michigan

2021 Board of Directors



Dear friends,

The past year has been full of challenges and new opportunities for our organization that pushed us to step up, grow, and adapt to the changing needs of our Latinx community. The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected many vulnerable and underserved populations, while highlighting deep-rooted racial/ethnic disparities in the Hispanic community. We share in the grief felt for those who lost their loved ones, jobs, and livelihoods; those that faced food insecurity, and the long-term consequences that those events created. The Hispanic Center will continue to stand by our community and listen and respond to their needs.

Our frontline staff, volunteers, donors, and funders showed the dedication they have for our community and were a crucial part in our organization's success this year. We understood our clients' need for accessibility during these difficult and unprecedented times. In response, the Hispanic Center's team developed a plan to keep our doors open to continue serving the community while keeping them and our staff safe. We also took on new initiatives such as food distribution, flu vaccine drives, distribution of La Lucha Fund, and unemployment assistance. The lack of language accessibility in the distribution of information on the virus and vaccinations was also a main concern for us. As a response, our Language Services Department was able to provide interpretation and translation services to our community in partnership with other organizations. We noticed a clear need for bilingual and convenient access to COVID-19 testing and vaccines. As a result, the Hispanic Center organized and hosted clinics both on-site and throughout the community. We were able to support our clients' needs in these unparalleled times as well as maintain and adapt our regular operations. Rather than limit hours or shut down, we expanded our capacity to meet the increasing demand for services.

Looking forward, we will continue to value and learn from challenges and experiences brought forth by 2020. The Hispanic Center maintains committed to building a Latinx nonprofit that our community can be proud of. One that treats our clients, employees, vendors, partners, and individuals with dignity and respect. The root of our success is in our people. We want to personally thank community members, donors, foundations, corporations, volunteers, and everyone that supported our work. Every success we achieved in 2020 was a reflection of the trust you have in us.

Best,
Evelyn Esparza-Gonzalez
Executive Director

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Our basic needs department works on breaking down barriers to community member's basic human needs. These include Health care, food, transportation, and shelter. We helped individuals learn about and gain access to the extensive community resources available in our community.

Our navigators support our clients in a personalized way. They assess each family and individual and develop a plan of action to increase client's awareness of community resources and connect them to services that align with their needs.

In order to minimize gaps in service delivery and optimize efforts for those mutually served, the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan develops relationships with community service providers such as:

- ACLU of Michigan (Know Your Rights)
- Diocese of Grand Rapids Immigration Legal Services
- Dwelling Place
- Family Outreach Center
- Health Net
- Heart of West Michigan United Way
- Kent County Health Department
- Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates
- Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS)
- Michigan Immigrant Rights Center
- Michigan United
- MomsBloom
- North Kent Connect
- Salvation Army of Kent County
- Strong Beginnings
- TrueNorth Community Services

*This is not an exhaustive list of our partners.

People serve in navigation services: 695

Timely community education is provided to encourage awareness of and engagement in national, state, and local civic duties, including efforts such as the U.S. Census and local and state elections, among others. **People serve in human rights services: 309**

The Comprando Rico y Sano program is a three-class series that is open to community members and dedicated to teaching participants about basic nutrition, chronic-disease prevention, and preparation of nutritious meals. The Civil and Human right services provide direct client support and engages in community advocacy and education to ensure community members have access to immigration and citizenship-related resources.



COVID RESPONSE



In partnership with other organizations such as Feeding America, Michigan Fresh, and YMCA, and Kent County Health Department we served 10,488 families in our food distribution efforts.

We provided the Flu vaccine to 527 individuals through the collaboration of Meijer and Healthier Communities.

We were successful at transferring our programs from in-person to online. We were able to lend Chromebooks to our clients in need for the following programs:

- GED en Espanol
- Exito Educativo
- Comprando Rico y Sano
- CIAI

Distributed 425 bags of hygiene products, blankets, and PPE to migrant workers families by partnering with the Kent County Health Department, Migrant Legal Aid, Botello's Harvesting and the local churches.

Provided 200 coats for our community members.

LA LUCHA FUND

The fund was created as a short-term, emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was designed to provide immediate financial resources directly to families in Kent County who are undocumented or have mixed immigration status which makes them ineligible for unemployment, CARES Act relief, or other government support. La Lucha fund was a collaboration between The Hispanic Center of Western Michigan, Movimiento Cosecha, the Grand Rapids Area Mutual Aid Network, and Latinx GR, and was organized by the Grand Rapids Community Foundation.

The Hispanic Center played a pivotal role by administering and distributing the funds to the families and individuals who were approved to receive the assistance.



Our Workforce Development department focuses on providing a variety of career services and partners with local universities, businesses, and organizations to deliver workforce training and professional development.

231 people served for soft skills and job placement.

CAREER SERVICES

Our Career Services department provides access to programming, case-management services, and technology that help individuals find, secure, and maintain employment. We assist through bilingual services with navigating employment-related systems and agencies such as the U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services and the State of Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency.

CASE MANAGEMENT

We identify individual needs, develop a customized employment plan, establish career goals, and take actionable steps towards meeting these goals. We assist with job searches, employment applications, obtaining work authorization, and interview preparation.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

We offer skills training such as résumé writing, interview preparation, effective communication development, workplace etiquette, professional conduct, and dressing for success. Many community referrals such as GED, post-secondary training, or other educational opportunities are made to other HCWM programs or community organizations or institutions.

Unemployment assistance
provided in 2020

95

Numbers America's Promise
Grant of participants

114



EMPRENDE (HOST)

The Hispanic Center of Western Michigan hosts Ferris State University to deliver a customized version of their 12-week small business-coaching program in Spanish.

AMERICA'S PROMISE GRANT (PARTNER)

In partnership with Grand Rapids Community College under the America's Promise grant, which ended in December 2020, the Center served as an enrollment site, helping clients to determine their eligibility, apply for the program, and connect to the various training and educational sites.

EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS

Connections with local businesses are created to support the Center's clients and to collaborate with and serve employers. The Center consults with employers to resolve barriers such as access to employment locations, and to advocate for considerations related to starting pay and benefits.

YOUTH & EDUCATION SERVICES

Students served in
CDBG in 2020

20



Accessibility to educational programming from preschool to post-secondary training is provided.

LA ESCUELITA PRESCHOOL

In partnership with the [Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative](#), we offer the La Escuelita preschool program, located at the San Juan Diego Academy, providing free bilingual (English & Spanish) preschool education preparing children for kindergarten and beyond. We successfully graduated 15 students in 2020.

GED EN ESPAÑOL

General Education Development (GED) certification in Spanish. The self-paced coursework is offered to community members to help prepare for and pass the GED examination.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

The Youth Employment Initiative program is a 3-cohort, 6-week program offered to Grand Rapids residents, ages 14 through 24, with career exploration and a paid internship with a local employer.

Participants develop skills in résumé writing, interview preparation, and job application. We support participants in obtaining employment upon completion of the program.

2020 PARTNERS:

- Roosevelt Park Neighborhood association
- BDO
- Calvin University
- Friend of GR parks
- GVSU
- Hispanic Center
- Pochis Sweet Designs

ÉXITO EDUCATIVO (PARTNER)

In partnership with [The Julian Samora Research Institute](#), the Éxito Educativo program was created and is offered to Latinx parents and their high school students to learn about high school graduation requirements, benefits of a college education, and pathways to college. Furthermore, we discuss the structure of U.S. higher education, sources of financial aid, financial planning, and college application and admissions process. The program consists of an orientation session and six (6) two-hour-long online modules, which occur over the course of a semester.





Interpretation hours

6502

The Language Services Department at the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan is a fee-for-service social enterprise that provides high-quality interpretation and translation services to individuals, organizations, and businesses in West Michigan, delivering services in a confidential and accurate manner to meet client needs. Services are provided in over 84 African, European, Latin, Asian, and Middle Eastern dialects.

INTERPRETATION

Spoken and signed interpretation services include consecutive (paused interpretation), simultaneous (conference/public speaking with equipment if on-site), and sight-translation (written document interpreted aloud). **6502 interpretation hours**

TRANSLATION

Services include written translations, proofreading, and editing as well as video dubbing, transcription, and production. Translations are available in a variety of different formats and languages and expedited delivery options are available.

INDIVIDUAL SERVICES

Language Services provides individual community members with a notarized written translation of documents from their native language to English. Interpreters are also provided for personal appointments such as immigration hearings and driving tests. Pricing is based on the type, urgency, and quantity of services rendered.

CORPORATE SERVICES

West Michigan businesses and organizations commission translation services that include but are not limited to translation of marketing content on websites and social media, translation of training materials and manuals, video voice-overs/dubbing, and transcriptions (audio files to written text). Interpretation requests are also available and consist of interpreting for services such as board meetings, probationary hearings, doctors' appointments, home visits, and parent-teacher conferences.



INTERPRETATIONS
6,502
hours

TRANSLATIONS
2,816
pages

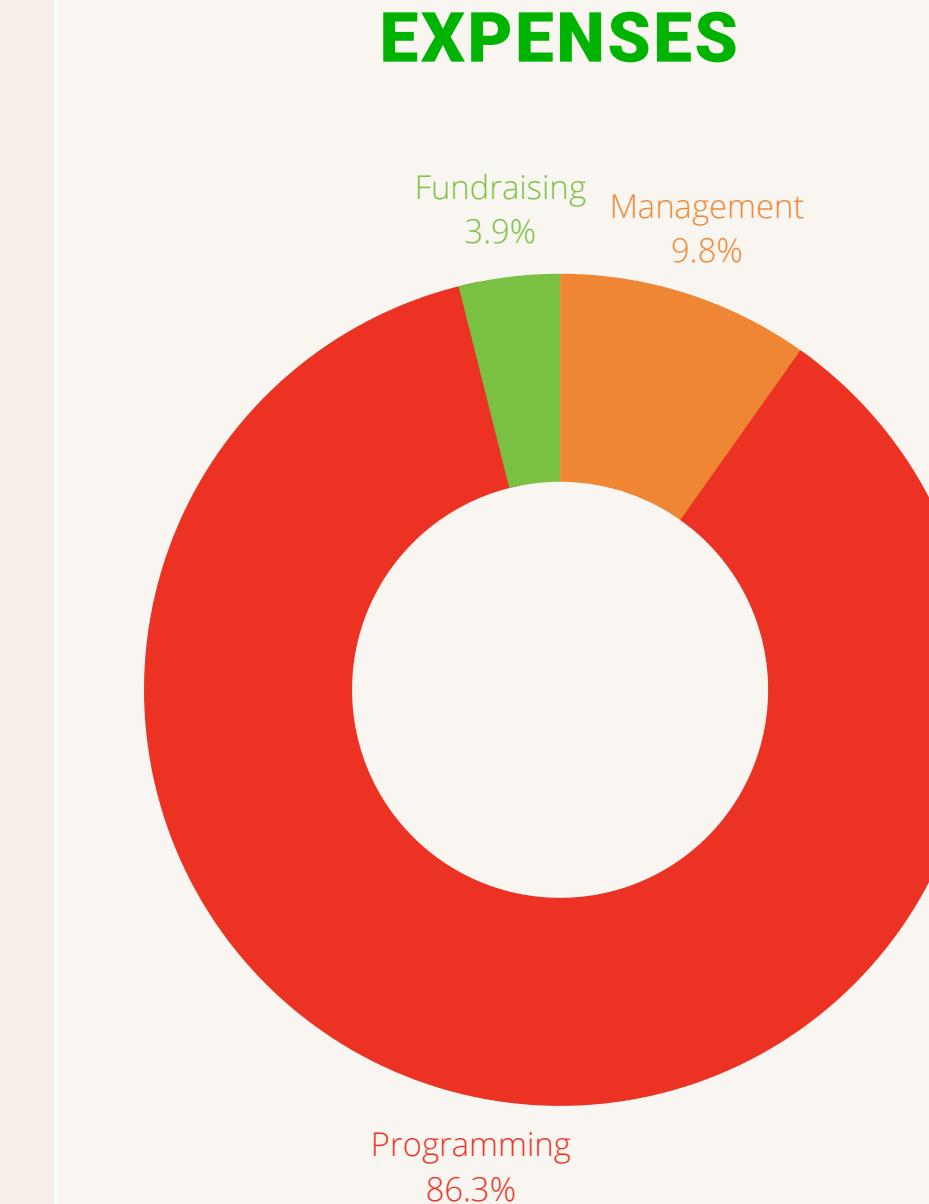
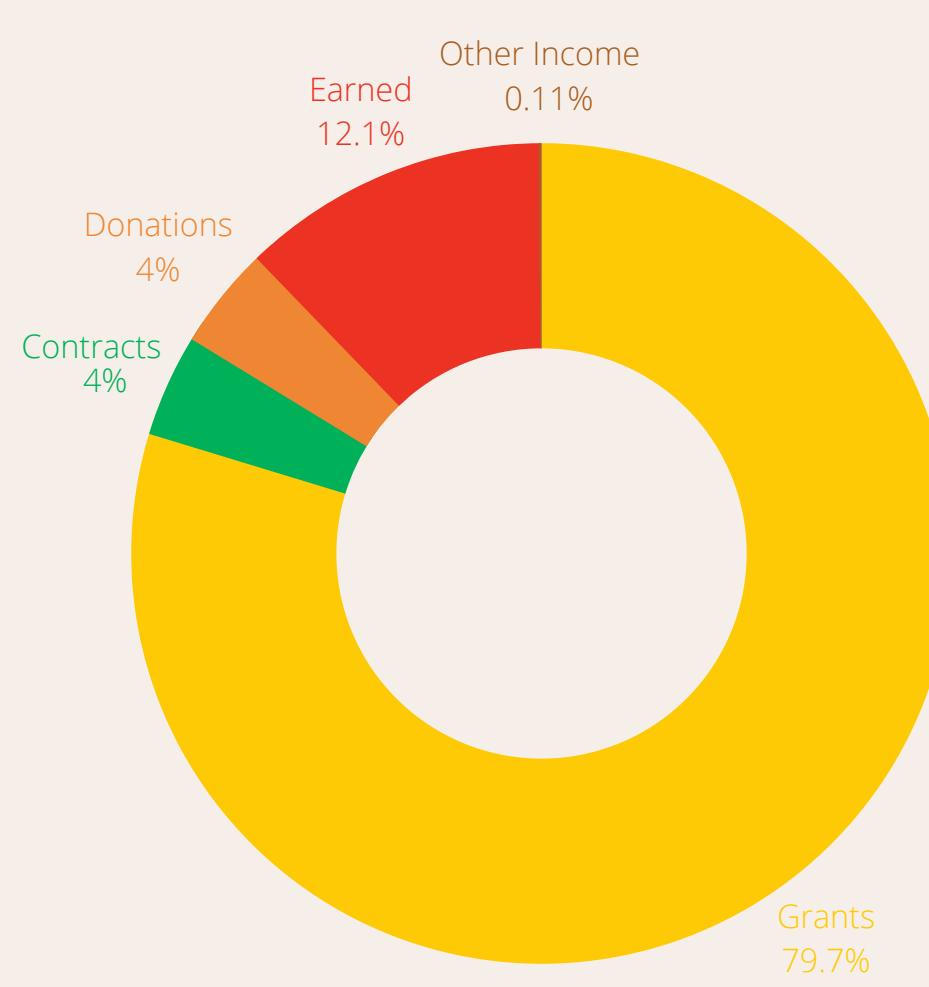
50 PEOPLE
ENROLLED IN CLAI

INTERPRETER TRAINING

The Community Interpreter® International (TCII) training through [Cross Cultural Communications](#) is delivered on-site or online by a licensed trainer three to five times per year, allowing professionals in the West Michigan community to become certified interpreters. All training is delivered in alignment with TCII Ethics and Standards. The Hispanic Center of Western Michigan incentivizes contracted interpreters to become certified in medical and legal interpretation through a certification reimbursement program. Additionally, two to three Continuing Education Unit workshops are offered annually to interpreters to continue to develop their skills in the following areas:

- Vicarious Traumatization
- Medical Terminology for Interpreters
- Simultaneous Interpreting
- Diversity and Mindfulness within the Hispanic Community

REVENUE & EXPENSES





A special thanks to Fifth Third Bank
for their support.



HISPANIC CENTER
of western michigan

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