



COLABORATIVA
LATINA NC
PROYECTO NARRATIVO
STORYTELLING PROJECT



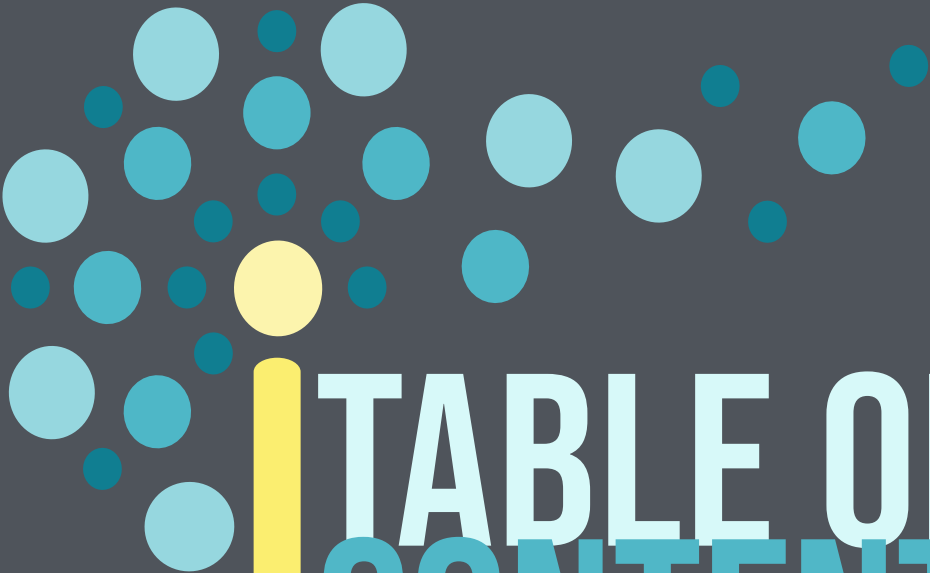


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HOW WE CAME TO BE

In most versions of our origin story we say the work of this collaborative began in 2018, but the truth is, the seeds of this work were planted long before that. For decades now, social justice oriented foundations have invested resources in the form of grants and capacity building opportunities for Latinx-led organizations across our state. The work of the North Carolina Latinx Collaborative (NCLC) is an offspring of those many years of tending to the rich soil of our communities and staving off negative forces determined to prevent our flourishing.

This work also represents an evolution in thinking. Although North Carolina is proud to be home to several progressive foundations who have done a good share of their work in the sphere of equity, very few of these foundations had made significant moves towards democratizing the grantmaking process. This collaborative is an experiment of sorts, an exploration in operationalizing equity, and a concrete step towards shifting decision-making power into the hands of Latinx leaders themselves.

The next few pages are intended to offer a glimpse into the goodness that we've been able to create together. It is not intended to be comprehensive or all encompassing, for how could we ever capture the diversity and unique facets of NC's Latinx communities with just a few words and images? We are proud of the work we have done thus far and are grateful for the opportunity to keep fostering this work in the years to come.



Delia Jovel, co-founder of Tierra Fertil Cooperative, seeds a garden bed inside a greenhouse preparing for a winter garden



MISSION

We work together to strengthen the capacity, resilience and power of groups led by Latinx people in North Carolina. We do this by:

The redistribution of financial resources through a participatory community fund.

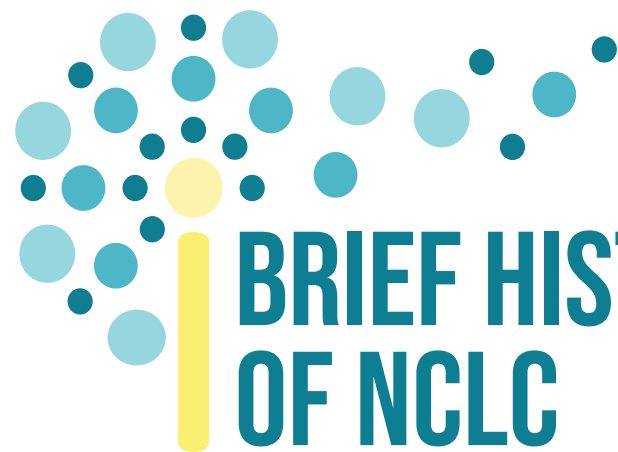
The creation of co-conspiracy spaces (capacity building, training, healing spaces).

VISION

Our collective work to build a stronger state where Latino communities and all communities can thrive and feel connected to their own power.



Grassroots organizations from across the state participate in a day of action at the General Assembly to protest several bills targeting immigrants in North Carolina.



BRIEF HISTORY OF NCLC

2018

Established local control of the Funders' Collaborative which had previously operated under the umbrella of Hispanics in Philanthropy. 7 foundations remained committed to push the work forward in NC. Worked with several consultants to understand landscape, clarify mission, priorities, structure. Shift from focus on capacity-building to power-building and how to connect Latinx communities to larger networks.

January 2019

Hired bilingual/bicultural Project Manager to help lead the work. Began exploring what a participatory grantmaking framework could look like. Started fundraising and meeting with Latinx leaders individually.

August 2019

Held a design meeting with 15 Latinx leaders at Haw River State Park, Brown Summit, NC. Began to flesh out what participatory grantmaking meant and could look like.

Spring 2020

Covid-19 Pandemic. Distributed \$205,000 of the funds raised to Latinx-led organizations providing direct support and building infrastructure.

August 2020

Established the inaugural Unifying Council.

Fall 2020

1st round of participatory grantmaking. The Unifying Council selected 29 groups to receive 2-year general operating support grants totaling a little over \$1.1 million.

Fall 2021

2nd round of participatory grantmaking. The Unifying Council selected 16 groups to receive one-time mini-grants totaling \$125,000.

Fall 2022

3rd round of participatory grantmaking. The Unifying Council selected 16 groups to receive 2-year general operating support grants totaling \$700,000.

November 2022

Held the first in-person convening at Haw River State Park, Brown Summit, NC.

October 2022

Unifying Council retreat held at Earthseed Land Collective, Durham, NC. Worked on a new mission, vision and name.

Fall 2023

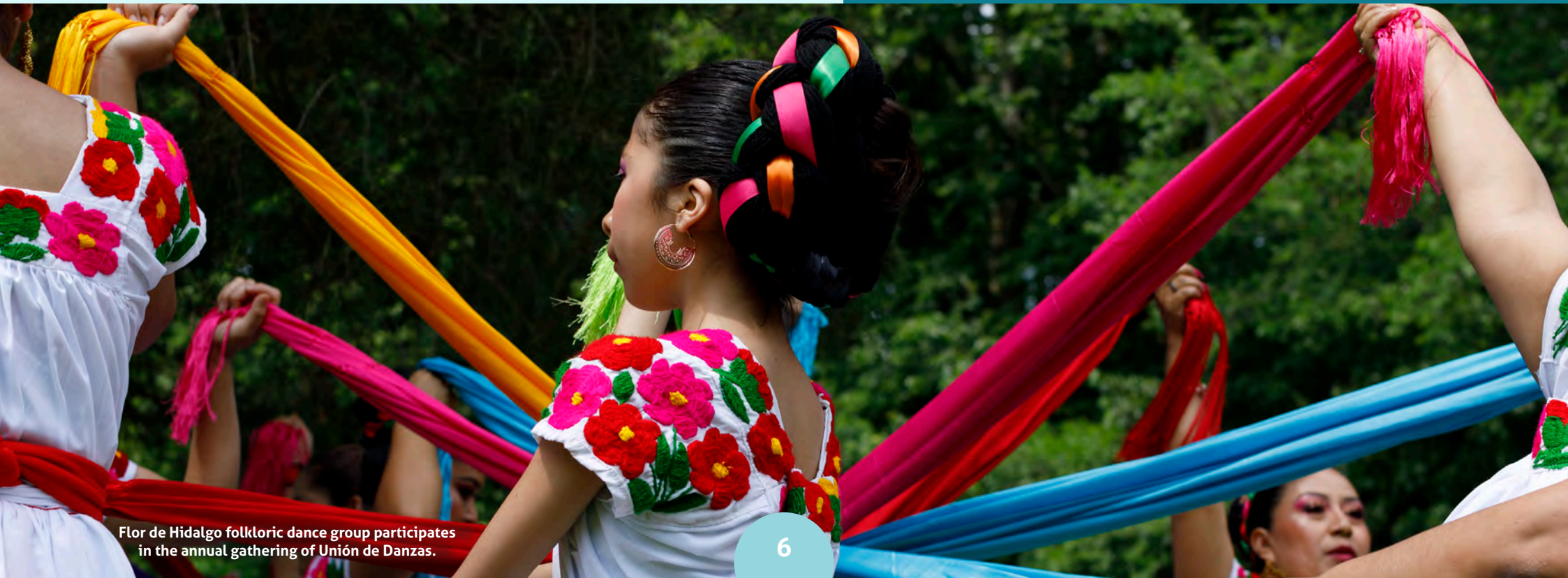
4th round of participatory grantmaking. The Unifying Council selected 16 groups to receive one-time grants from a Reinforcement Fund totaling \$148,000.



Community Leaders present at "Activating Our Cultures," an annual celebration of indigenous languages and traditions organized by Ma Hñākihu in Asheville, NC.

WHAT PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING MEANS CONCRETELY

- Streamlined/simple application processes
- All of the information available in Spanish and English
- Most of the meetings took place in Spanish (or with simultaneous interpretation)
- Accompaniment provided by Project Manager
- Realistic/simple reporting requirements
- Calibrating our expectations for what impact would look like and how it would be documented
- Funders that understood their roles as strong champions (not necessarily the decision-makers)
- Lightness, laughter, music, storytelling...reflecting the beauty & strength of our people!



Flor de Hidalgo folkloric dance group participates in the annual gathering of Unión de Danzas.

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP



Grassroots organizations from across the state participate in a day of action at the General Assembly to protest several bills targeting immigrants in North Carolina.

CONTRIBUTING FOUNDATIONS

Blue Cross NC Foundation*
Foundation for a Just Society
Four Freedoms Fund
Grantmakers Concerned with
Immigrants and Refugees
Heising-Simons Foundation
Marguerite Casey Foundation
Mary Reynolds Babcock
Foundation*
Oak Foundation*
Triangle Community Foundation*
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation*

**These foundations also have
representatives participating
in the Funder Learning and
Organizing Space.*

INAUGURAL UNIFYING COUNCIL

Compañeros Inmigrantes de las
Montañas en Acción (CIMA)
AMEXCAN
Hispanic Federation
Siembra NC
Western NC Workers Center
Comité de Acción Popular
Comité Popular de Asheville
por la Justicia Social
NC FIELD Inc.
Comité Popular Somos Raleigh
+3 foundation representatives



WORDS OF AFFIRMATION FROM 3 OF OUR CORE FUNDERS

“ Systemic change, socio-economic barriers, and immigration reform are issues that can be improved when funders and the Latine community work together towards a common goal, there can't be a divide. The NC Latinx Collaborative makes it happen by facilitating difficult conversations, paving the way for grassroots organizations to thrive, and becoming a beacon of hope for the North Carolina the Latine community dreams of. ”

- Eniris Delgado-Riddick,
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

“ I have enjoyed working with all the folks in the NC Latinx Collaborative. As an intermediary, it can reach grassroots Latinx organizations more effectively and support them in building their capacity to make changes in their communities. ”

- Millie Brobston,
Oak Foundation

“ Being part of the NC Latinx Collaborative has been a rewarding experience. The space held has supported both funder and grantee partners in aligning our work to promote equitable distribution of resources for long-term power-building work, strengthening the Latinx-led ecosystem of organizations. Latinx organizations, particularly grassroots groups, continue to have limited access to flexible, sustainable funding for social justice work. The Collaborative plays a crucial role in addressing this gap through participatory grantmaking, leveraging resources, and creating a container for collective learning. ”

- Tania Durán,
Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation

A NEW EXPERIENCE IN POWER

Participatory grantmaking by definition “cedes decision-making power about funding—including the strategy and criteria behind those decisions—to the very communities that funders aim to serve.” Put simply, participatory grantmaking “is a lever for disrupting and democratizing philanthropy.”

Like with so many other frameworks and belief systems, participatory grantmaking also exists within a spectrum, highlighting different hues of relinquishing control and power. For the last five years we’ve been bringing to life our own uniquely-shaped version, ceding decision-making power to a Unifying Council, a group made up of 9 Latinx leaders and 3 foundation representatives (all Latinas). These Latinx leaders represent all 3 regions of our state, urban and rural contexts, grassroots groups as well as established 501(c)(3) nonprofits.

For several of the members of the Unifying Council, this was their first time participating in a grantmaking process. It was a steep learning curve that required both streamlining—doing away with unnecessary, bureaucratic layers that didn’t benefit the grantee or the foundation—as well as orientation and accompaniment. This is where the bilingual/bicultural liaison role of Project Manager became essential. To help with the translation (literal and figurative) of processes in a way that would enable full and active

participation regardless of familiarity with the nuances of the philanthropic world.

The most important aspect of this is the way we created a concrete system to share power with the people best equipped to determine what “power-building” in the Latinx community looks like and feels like. When we first began this work, we used terms like equity, justice and participatory grantmaking knowing in our hearts that it would take so much more than speaking these words to bring them to life. The funders involved in the NCLC shared a real commitment to move beyond talk and into action. They harnessed their connections and helped pool resources to then boldly relinquish control, understanding that the folks who should be making decisions about how these resources were allocated, were the folks doing the work day in, day out.



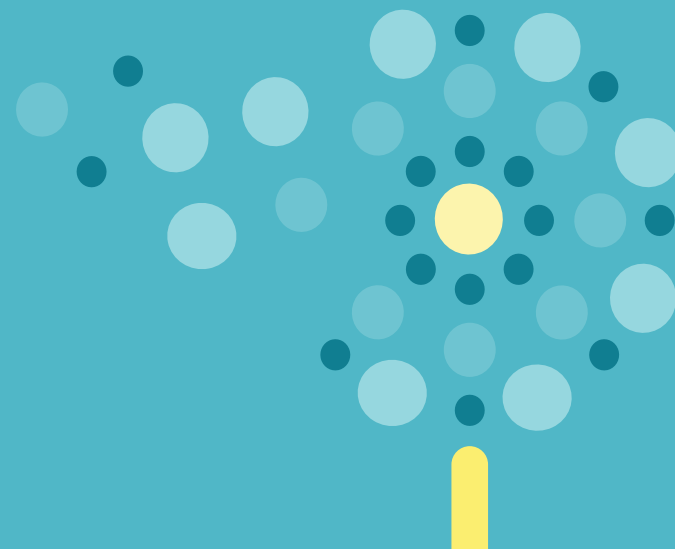
The Comité Popular de Asheville para la Justicia Social, participates in a day of action at the General Assembly to protest several bills targeting immigrants in North Carolina.



Portrait of Martha Hernández, member and co-founder of Comité de Acción Popular.

For many of the Unifying Council members, this was the first time they experienced this type of power, and the first time they got to see behind the veil of how grantmaking happens. Two of these grassroots leaders, Yolanda Zavala and Martha Hernandez, presented with NCLC's Project Manager at the NC Network of Grantmakers (NCNG) in 2023. It was the first time that NCNG made simultaneous interpretation available at their conference, their first exploration in language justice. Most importantly, it created a space where these two women, powerful in their own right, could share a bit of their personal stories, and the impact of our collective work on their lives.

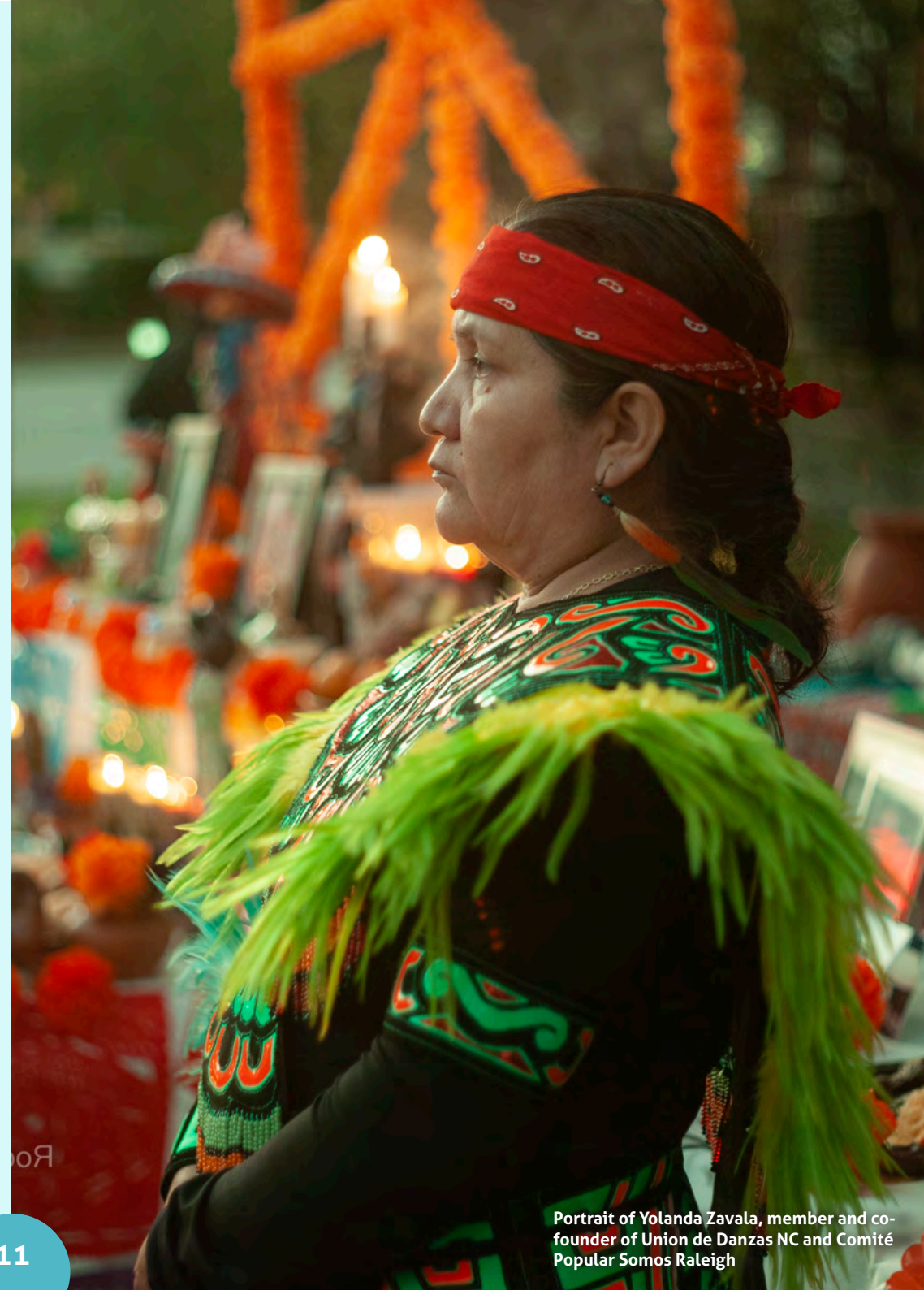
On November 15, 2023, another one of our Unifying Council members, Magaly Urdiales, represented the NCLC at the Women for Women Fall Event hosted by the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina. Magaly did a great job serving on a panel highlighting different aspects of trust-based philanthropy. These are just tiny examples of the many ripple effects this work has had on the Unifying Council members. Trusting the people has positive outcomes that extend far beyond the individuals, into their families and their extended community.



IN HER OWN WORDS

Yolanda Zavala, Unifying Council Member:

“ I am very grateful to be part of the Unifying Council that makes the decisions about money. It has given grassroots groups have more opportunities to access those funds, because everything has been simplified. There are times when we know there is money available, but it is overwhelming. The formats they put in place are very complicated. As part of this advisory council, we have tried to make everything so simple that the groups that are with the community, the groups that deserve it, have those resources, because fortunately, while it is not a ton, but it is not a small amount either. For us this money helps us a lot. I want to mention that for the grassroots groups, sometimes only with the resources provided by the collaborative, is what they have to work with during the whole year. ”



Portrait of Yolanda Zavala, member and co-founder of Union de Danzas NC and Comité Popular Somos Raleigh



OUR GRANTMAKING

To date the NCLC has gone through **6 rounds** of grantmaking (2 funder-led, focused on rapid response COVID-19 funding and 4 via participatory grantmaking) resulting in just over \$2.5 million dollars moving into the hands of Latinx-led groups/organizations in all three regions of our state. Below is a list of the 65 groups that have received support from the NCLC.

(Time period: Spring 2020 through Winter 2023)



Traditional music at "Activating Our Cultures," an annual celebration of indigenous languages and traditions organized by Ma Hñākihu in Asheville, NC.

Adelante Education Coalition
 AMEXCAN
 Asheville/WNC en Espanol
 Asociacion de Guatemaltecos Unidos NC
 BeLoved Asheville
 Black River Health Services - Manos Unidas
 Camino Community Development Corp.
 DBA Camino Research Institute
 Carolina Migrant Network
 Casa Azul de Wilson
 Catawba County Hispanic Ministry / Centro Latino Hickory
 Center for Participatory Change
 Centro Unido Latino-Americano
 Colaborativa La Milpa
 Comité de Accion Popular
 Comité Henderson Resiste
 Comité Interfe de Morganton
 Comité Popular de Asheville
 Comité Popular Somos Raleigh
 Compañeros Inmigrantes de las Montañas en Acción (CIMA)
 COMUNICA
 Comunidad Colectiva
 Comunidad Vida Nueva Inc
 Creando Familias Felices
 El Centro Hispano
 El Colectivo NC
 El Pueblo
 El Vínculo Hispano
 Enlace Latino NC
 Episcopal Farmworker Ministry
 Faith Action International House
 Farmworker Advocacy Network c/o North Carolina Council of Churches
 Fuerza Latina Unida para Triunfar
 Fuerza y Union Multiple
 Hendfact
 Hogar del Inmigrante Inc
 ISLA
 It's Our Future, Know Your Rights
 JPro TV
 Justicia y Esperanza
 La Coalición de Justicia Para Inmigrantes
 La Esperanza Immigrant Outreach
 Latin American Coalition
 LATIN-19
 Latino Advocacy Coalition
 (El Centro de Henderson county)
 Latinx L.I.F.E.
 Mā hñākihu: Indigenous Language Preservation Project
 Mariposas Community
 Mujeres Organizando Oportunidades Notables
 NC FIELD
 Noonday Kitchen
 Nuestro Centro
 Respuesta Rapida de Durham
 Siembra NC
 Student Action With Farmworkers
 Sunrise-Amanecer Inc.
 The Hispanic League
 Tierra Fertil Coop
 tilde Education Fund
 True Ridge
 ULECAN
 Union de Danza NC
 Valores
 Wake Resiste
 Western NC Workers' Center - Women Fighting for Justice Program (WFFJ)
 Western North Carolina Workers' Center



UNIÓN DE DANZA & COMITÉ POPULAR SOMOS RALEIGH



Danza Guerreros Quetzalcoatl perform at the annual Day of the Dead Celebration organized by Unión de Danzas NC.

Yolanda Zavala:



The Comité Popular Somos Raleigh has been in the social struggle for years defending immigrants in different aspects [...] against anti-immigrant laws. It has helped them in different ways. When people are deported, we take families to visit them in the courts, in jails. We have been at bus stations, giving [supplies] to families coming from the border who have arrived in caravans. We have done a lot of different things as part of the Comité.

The Union de Danzas, this is a new organization that has been founded with leaders of different [traditional] dances statewide.

I am passionate about it because culture is also resistance.

We have realized that many times, when we immigrate to other countries, we leave behind our cultures, our traditions. [...] Sometimes they are traditions of generations that our ancestors have left with us. So we wanted our children here to feel proud of who we are. Through the traditional regalia used in different types of dances, they feel the same love and affection



Danza Guerreros Quetzalcoatl perform at the annual Day of the Dead Celebration organized by Unión de Danzas NC.

towards a country, so they never forget that they were born here, but that they have roots from another country.

I have been in the social struggle for many years and it has been very difficult for us to have economic support. Many times what is given to the community has come out of our pocket, and in reality that hurts a lot because you have a family, and you're not always in the position where you can give.

Receiving a resource for us has been a relief because we no longer have to divert our time trying to raise money from somewhere else. So for us it has been a blessing to have the help, because our focus has been on supporting the community more directly instead of still looking for funds.

I really thank all the people who donate. I hope that the money you contribute to this collaboration, you will continue to do so. Because in reality we do the work, we are in the community, we know the needs. We know because we are there with them, we cry when they cry and we push forward with them, when we have to push forward.





COMITÉ POPULAR DE ASHEVILLE POR LA JUSTICIA SOCIAL

VICTOR ALVAREZ:

“ *We are fighting for social justice, human rights, and immigration reform.* ”

But we are also always trying to monitor anti-immigrant bills to try to stop them from affecting our hard-working communities in Asheville and across the state of North Carolina.

The Comité de Asheville was founded in 2015. We were already community activists before that, but given the work we've been doing, we founded a group and that's where the Comité Popular de Asheville por la Justicia Social was born.



Victor Alvarez, founder of the Comité Popular de Asheville para la Justicia Social, speaks at a press conference during in a day of action at the General Assembly to protest several bills targeting immigrants in North Carolina.

You have to adapt to the things that are coming, work with the community, with what little you have, support them, support us, and keep going— survive. We already survived COVID-19. Now we're facing an anti-immigrant bill here in Raleigh in the Legislature. But we're always going to keep fighting for immigration reform. That is the main focus of the Comité Popular de Asheville por la Justicia Social.

I want to send a message to the foundations, to all the people who generously give back to the movement, to our immigrant communities and [...] to all the communities in North Carolina. Thank you so much for your support. We're just getting started-- we want to continue to support the community, to help. And not just in times of pandemic or other adversity, but always. Now with these resources that you have given us, we can do this, we can mobilize people, we can support them. Before, we had to take the money out of our own pockets to be able to come to the events.

Thanks to the support that the foundations give us, we can do this. We can fight with our community, from our communities. And we are no longer thinking about how there are no resources— we are thinking about how to defend ourselves, how to move forward, and in the future achieve an immigration reform for the more than 11 or 12 million undocumented immigrants who live not only in North Carolina, but in the whole country. ”



The Comité Popular de Asheville para la Justicia Social, participates in a day of action at the General Assembly to protest several bills targeting immigrants in North Carolina.



TIERRA FERTIL

Delia Jovel:

“When we started, we began with food distribution. The interest was to provide fresh, natural, quality food to our community. And with that experience of providing food to families, we realized that it was also necessary to create autonomy in the production of food. That is why we thought of the cooperative as a resource to produce food, but at the same time an economic resource for the members. And also to show the community that it is possible to do collective projects that generate abundance and economic, social, and community development.

The escuela campesina is a fairly new project. It is now how we reconnect with that knowledge, how we recover the ancestral knowledge of our communities on how to produce food. And how to also be our own doctors, because we have knowledge. The land has wisdom. Plants are medicine. Therefore, the escuela campesina is the space where we want to recover and give back to our communities that knowledge that always belonged to us, but that we have lost due to circumstances related to economic necessity, to the system in which we live and also because of the pressure to forget who we are.

It is what we carry inside. It is the identity and the roots that are part of who we are. I always say that wherever we go, our communities are fertile ground.

Because we can generate wealth. We can generate well-being, health, harmony and development through who we are. So to recover that knowledge is to recover the power that we have lost.



Portrait of Maria López, member-owner of Tierra Fertil Cooperative



Maria López (foreground) and Delia Jovel (background) of Tierra Fertil Cooperative, care for the cooperative gardens.



Detail from Tierra Fertil's vegetable garden.

We feel very grateful for the trust. I think one of the most important things for groups like us— we are not a nonprofit, we are not legally constituted organizations— we are people from the community working for ourselves, working collectively. The fact that [donors] trust us is a super important step, because trust is crucial to create really long-lasting relationships.

The fact that the funds are flexible and that they are destined to the concrete needs of the groups has been very good for us. With the funds we had this year, we have been able to continue our food distribution program, where we have almost 150 families receiving fresh food once a month. We'd like to do more.

It has generated a network of family, people that we count on, people that we can now call our community and people with whom we can develop other initiatives. We believe that these funds simply give our communities the right to do what they need and what they deserve as well. So we feel super grateful for that.

The first message [I have for the supporting organizations] is that they have to start valuing not the publicity that is given to the projects, but the concrete changes that are being made at the community level. It is important that the organizations see, come, make visible, observe what our communities are doing, what our leaders are doing, because it is really amazing that with few resources you can really do a lot, as long as you have that community commitment.

So perhaps the most important message is: Believe in us, believe in our groups, believe in our capabilities that have nothing to do with economic condition, with social status or academics, but that have to do with the love we have for who we are, the desire we have to resist in societies that are not ours, and the desire we have to demonstrate that we are more than the category of undocumented and illegal immigrant. All these absurd concepts that have really erased the enormous potential, the enormous wisdom, the enormous capacity that our people have.

”



ELIZABETH Cantú:

“What motivates me to do this [...] is that I was also a farmworker. As a teenager, I worked for several years harvesting sweet potatoes, cucumbers, squash, peppers and eggplant. I was also planting tobacco, sweet potato, and making tobacco bales.

I am here because when I did this kind of work, nobody educated me, nobody taught me how to take care of myself when there were crops, how to protect myself from pesticides.

It is easier for [the farmworkers] when we go to their houses and give them this help, service, or this little bit of health education about how to protect themselves from



NC Field staff helps farmworkers apply for Farm and Food Worker Relief (FFWR) Grant Program at the Brightleaf Flea Market in Smithfield, NC.



NC Field staff helps farmworkers apply for Farm and Food Worker Relief (FFWR) Grant Program at the Brightleaf Flea Market in Smithfield, NC.

pesticides. And for me it is a great satisfaction to be able to reach them, because when I was there, nobody told me how to take care of myself. So now I feel very happy to be able to do it well.

The funds that you donate really help us a lot, because with this we have more resources to reach [our community]. Sometimes we are short of resources for brochures, for copies, for medicines that people may not have access to, or do not have enough money. And with these funds we can help a little bit. So, they are really very important when we have this help from the organizations that provide them. And any help that comes is welcome, because there are really a lot of people who are in need.

The funds that you give us are very helpful and we can help many people, not only one. We can reach many, many localities.

”



FLOR HERRERA PICASSO:

“ Our community wasn't activated, wasn't mobilizing and we said to ourselves, 'How is it possible that it's 2020 and there no organization, no community center for the Latinx community?' And so that sense of urgency to activate, to mobilize, to organize our community, that's what drove us to create La Casa Azul de Wilson.

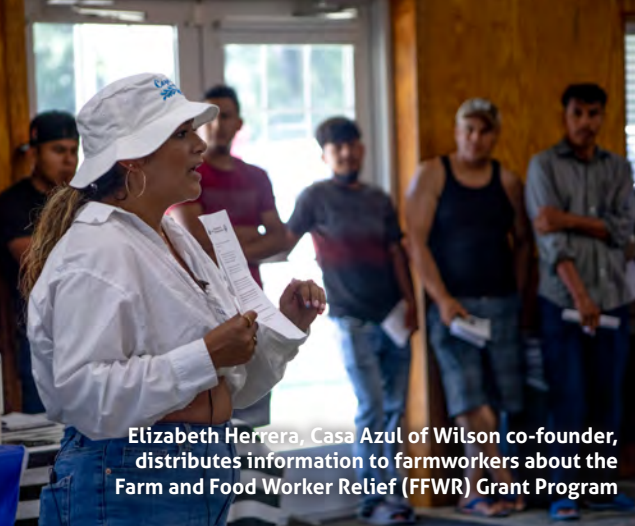
We work in four different areas, because those are the resources that we would have wanted when we were little girls here growing up in Wilson.

It's like we are healing our inner child, we are healing all the trauma that we had growing up here in Wilson with all the needs, and the lack of resources, and the lack of support, and the lack of culture, and that sense of self-love that we didn't have back then.

And now we are healing through our work, but also supporting our community.



Portrait of Flor Herrera Picasso, co-founder and director of Casa Azul de Wilson.



Elizabeth Herrera, Casa Azul of Wilson co-founder, distributes information to farmworkers about the Farm and Food Worker Relief (FFWR) Grant Program



Members of Casa Azul of Wilson help farmworkers fill out applications for the Farm and Food Worker Relief (FFWR) Grant Program



Members of Casa Azul of Wilson help farmworkers fill out applications for the Farm and Food Worker Relief (FFWR) Grant Program

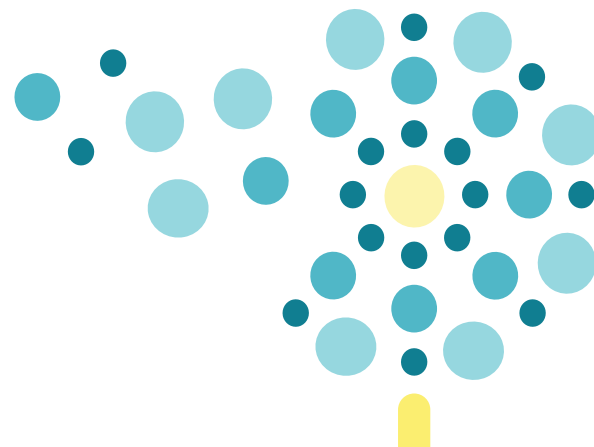
We are from here and we are working here but we are doing it for us, for our inner child. But we are also doing it for future generations, so that they don't go through what we went through and so that it is a network that we are creating for young Latinxs.

I think our community is very dynamic. There are the adults, the elders, those who came here as immigrants. But there is already the second generation, the third generation of Latinxs who are being born and growing up here. So I do see the dynamic that we are growing [as a community], but many are already from here, they are already established here. So we want to create a space so that they don't forget their culture, they don't forget their identity and they can connect the beauty of being bicultural, bilingual and children of immigrants— all those areas of our identity— connecting and celebrating them.

We are very grateful to the North Carolina Collaborative for Strong Latinx Communities, because in fact the grant we received with them was our first grant, a mini grant, but the first one we had. So that pushed us to say, 'Okay, we have to take these steps and connect with different networks and different funders. But it's possible.' That was the seed that planted the hope for Casa Azul de Wilson.

It was flexible funding, which is ideal. Because we have received other funds that are very specific to different projects, which is work that has to be done, and we want to do it, but at the same time it puts up barriers and obstacles to be able to grow our team, to have the capacity that we need to have to serve our community effectively and sustainably.

I think one message I would give to funders is that there are really small organizations that have the passion and want to do the work, but sometimes they want us to have a lot of documentation in order to be eligible for big funding. But it's unsustainable to expect so much from small organizations without having the financial support. So the message that I would like to give is that if an organization has the passion and has the proof of different support that they have given in the community, that bigger funds should be available to grow the team, to have a healthy life, a balance of work and personal time. That would be my message.



COMITÉ DE ACCIÓN POPULAR

MARTHA HERNÁNDEZ:

“The Comité de Acción Popular has been operating for approximately seven to eight years. And basically what we do is exchange information with the community. This serves as a basis for us to take action, to change things so that we can live better, progress together, and above all know our rights. We are always in pursuit of advancing and continuing together, moving forward. We bring family, we bring culture, we bring many things that we want to contribute to this community. And here we are doing what we can to grow.

All of us who are part of the People's Action Committee are volunteers. And we are people who generally have a 40 or 60 hour job to support our families. But we do a lot of activities. We know that one way to have an impact on improving our lives and the lives of our communities is to be in the General Assembly. We watch the bills to see how we can make sure that these proposals, which are harmful to our community, do not pass. There are also times when we have to take action, we have to go out to the streets. And fortunately, we have allies, people who support the cause of immigrant people, especially undocumented immigrants.



María Vargas, member of the Comité de Acción Popular, holds a sign from the "Familias Unidas" campaign in Raleigh, NC.



Members of the Comité de Acción Popular hold a banner in Raleigh, NC



Adrian, member of the Comité de Acción Popular, records an event on the topic of "Crimmigration" in Raleigh, NC.

In the Comité de Acción Popular we don't have a status of who is in charge and who is not in charge. We all contribute and share ideas. From there we decide what everyone does. So we don't have a boss. We all contribute and we all decide.

The grants have served us to finance the campaigns that we have run and that fortunately have been won here in Wake [County]. These campaigns have been in alliance with other groups. And one of the other big projects that we've been able to fund with grant money is a community alert network and that serves all of Wake County. And in that network we have about 15,000 people who are receiving the information that we're able to provide them. These are some expenses that we have on a monthly basis. Part of the grants always go to this community project, to this alert network.

A call to the people who make the decisions in the foundations: We are working because the benefit is not individual, we are talking about bringing a benefit to the community. So on behalf of the community we want to say this is not about charity. If there is the money available, the people who are making the decisions in the foundations should make sure that the money goes to the people who are doing the work, who are from the community and who are working for the community.

This is not about charity, it is about justice. ”



ENLACE LATINO NC

Paola Jaramillo:

“Enlace Latino NC is the first Spanish-language nonprofit digital news organization. We provide journalism for Latinx immigrants in the state. We provide information about local and state politics, immigration, public safety and community issues. I believe we are helping to bridge an existing information gap in the state with Latinx immigrant communities that consume information in Spanish, undocumented Latinxs and farmworkers living in rural areas, by providing them with useful, public service information so they can adapt much more quickly to their life in North Carolina and ultimately make informed decisions about political and immigration issues in the state.

We have learned that work is day-by-day, one-step-at-a-time. Our community must first have the confidence in themselves to finally understand that if they do participate and become more involved and informed, they can make informed decisions for the well-being of their families, themselves and their communities. But it is a process, it is not something that happens overnight. It is something that takes years and decades to see changes in the communities.



Portrait of Enlace Latino NC co-founders Paola Jaramillo and Walter Gómez.



Enlace Latino NC meeting during a staff retreat in Raleigh, NC.



Group picture of Enlace Latino NC during a staff retreat in Raleigh, NC.

But I think the most important thing is that our Latinx community is finally, slowly realizing the importance of participating, the importance of coming together, the importance of being informed. That they have information and educate themselves on issues that they probably don't know about because they come here new and they don't know how the system works. I think it all lies in the fact that they themselves are realizing that when they are informed, when they work together, when they are integrated, they can achieve much easier changes that will benefit them and their Latinx communities.

I think that the support of organizations that are part of this grant or other foundations is fundamental. Without their support, it would be difficult for news organizations, independent journalism organizations, like Enlace Latino NC to exist. The community would not be receiving information on issues or topics as specific and important as state policies, public policies and migration.

We invite you to make a real commitment to the Latinx community.

A commitment that goes far beyond changing the terms or changing the words. So we invite you to visit us, not only us, but all the other organizations, foundations, grassroots groups that do spectacular work in their communities and that need the support of organizations like the ones that are now supporting this group.





MÄ HÑÄKIHU: INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE PRESERVATION PROJECT

Abel Gonzales:

“Mä hñäkihu means 'our language' or 'our culture.' We are focusing on the revitalization of the Hñähñu language, which comes from the Valle del Mezquital, located in the State of Hidalgo, Mexico. We know that here in the Asheville region there are a lot of people from Hidalgo, Mexico but there has been a disconnect with their culture.

We want to bring them back to that connection, to reconnect with their own culture and their language and their customs.

We have encountered several people where there has been a total disconnection with their own language. Even with the parents, many of us have children who may no longer speak Spanish perfectly, and the parents have had to learn English in order to be able to communicate with their children. In this case we have also focused on the revitalization of the Hñähñu language because we have realized the impact it has



Portrait of Abel Gonzalez,
founder of Ma Hñäkihu.



Traditional music and dance at "Activating Our Cultures," an annual celebration of indigenous languages and traditions organized by Ma Hñākihu in Asheville, NC.

Gregorio Ortiz Martinez:

"The group that we are starting, it is like a resistance. Resistance so that our culture, our language does not die and also to do something different that we have not done for many years. But now that we have started we realize how important it is, because sometimes we arrive in this country and it's like we lose everything, where we come from. And suddenly we realize that we are already living another culture. It is not bad, maybe, but without losing what is ours. Living with other cultures is not bad at all, but the point is not to lose one's own."

had on the people here. Now because of the time they have been here they have definitely forgotten their language, their culture, their customs, even their food. We become accustomed to what is here, to what is spoken here. And we have also realized that nowadays young people are going more to visit their grandparents in Mexico, and they don't have a way to communicate because their [grandparents'] first language is Hñāhñu.

I feel proud that people have responded to the work that I and we as a team are doing. I feel proud that I am who I am now, because I think that by speaking the native language, now I know that my father is happier listening to me, talking to him, having conversations with him in the language.

There is a lot of work to do. We thank the organizations that have supported us. I think that without all this it would not be possible to continue bringing the materials we need. The materials are for the children, we need to bring more books, so all this has been possible because of the support. I think it is important that [foundations] focus more on cultural work, because now we realize that there are many speakers of other native languages and they are very interested in what we are doing, and they want to do the same thing. As well as the work we are doing, we are also inspiring more people.



Antelmo Salazar:

“ One of the reasons I was motivated me to work in this organization was when they took away our licenses. Seeing our communities complaining, always sad, that they no longer had a document to drive, then I got the idea that sitting in our living room watching television is not going to achieve anything, we have to take to the streets.

The small funds we have received have helped our organizations a lot, because before money always came out of our own pockets to attend marches, to attend protests. It was always out of our pocket and unfortunately there were always big organizations, but they did not care about small organizations like us. Fortunately big foundations have realized that our work is very important and have responded by giving us some small funds.



Portrait of Alfredo Espindola Hernández, member of Hendfact and performer at Hendfact anniversary celebration.



Folkloric dancing and singing at the Hendfact anniversary celebration. Bottom Right: Hendfact founder, Antelmo Salazar.



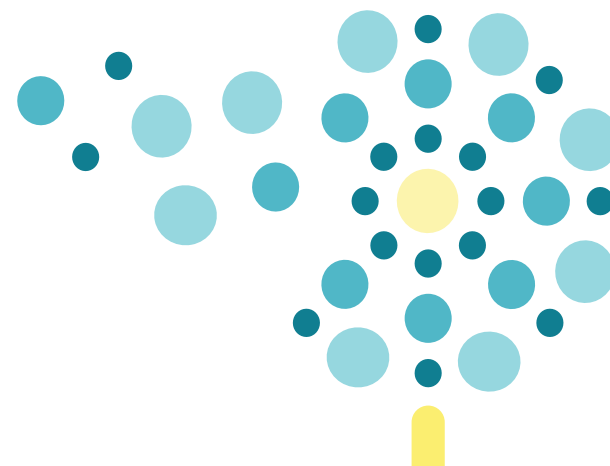
Folkloric dancing and singing at the Hendfact anniversary celebration.

Today we are celebrating 14 years. Today, this day fills me with honor, because I remember the first step I took. And then those who followed me now feel present and proud too, because they know that this effort was not in vain. There was always a light and when I saw that light everyone walked towards that light. And so now we are strong.

Over 14 years we have achieved something very beautiful that exists in our hearts; the respect, the attention of our community.

Our community is grateful and that is one reason why we continue in our struggle, because we are grateful and thankful for all the support that we are receiving from the big foundations as well.

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COMITÉ INTERFE MORGANTON

BACILIO CASTRO:

“It has been almost ten years since we started the Comité Interfe. We started with two or three people.

I remember that we saw the need to create a group to support the Guatemalan indigenous community in Morganton, so we began talking with different church leaders.

We do different types of work. At this time we were registering Guatemalan people to vote. We know that it is the responsibility of every Guatemalan to vote in [Guatemala's elections]. So we registered many people in the community of Morganton to show an example to other people of other nationalities. We also worked on the issue of driver's licenses. We disseminate [information] to the community. And we also have a women's group, they meet to discuss women's experiences, and we also work on labor rights.



Portrait of Bacilio Castro, founder of Comité Interfé de Morganton.



Portrait of Bacilio Castro, founder of Comité Interfé de Morganton, Angelica Maria Mena, organizer of the Women's Committee, and their son Jared.

It's work we do with the community. And now that we received a small grant from the foundation, we are continuing that work. And what we have seen from the feedback is that the work we are doing has strengthened the committee.

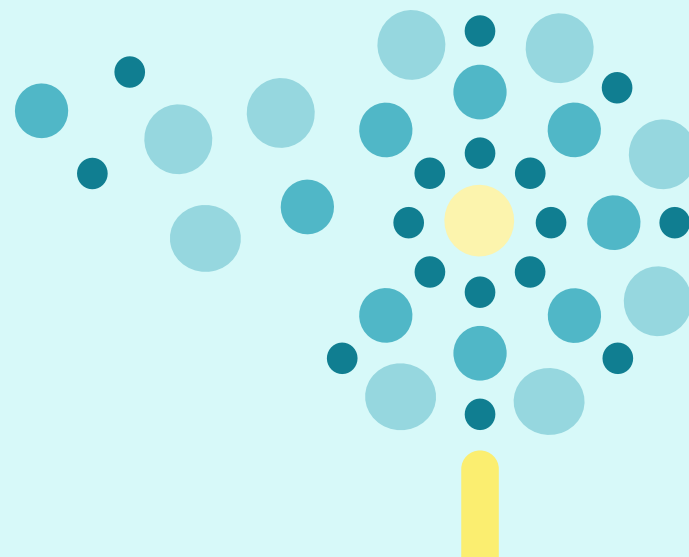
Many organizations like ours, small ones, don't receive any help. And thank God that this year, precisely because of the pandemic, we were recognized by many foundations. Now there are many small groups that have worked for a long time with the community and are receiving support from foundations. I think that this is the best way to work-- to support the grassroots groups that are rising up.

I think the small grassroots groups also need support from the big foundations. Maybe the big foundations don't know about us, because we are isolated, maybe we don't get so much attention, but these days I have seen that grassroots groups like ours, the Comité Interfe, are being recognized at the state level [...] and we are very grateful.

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Bacilio Castro, founder of Comité Interfé de Morganton takes part in a press conference against anti-immigrant legislation at the North Carolina General Assembly.





Hector Rivera Suarez:

“We are sharing information so that [people] know how to protect themselves and in the process can also protect the community where they live. Our members, they always inspire me by how much they care about helping other people. The members that we have here have not been impacted by wage theft, but they care about the other people who have been impacted. They have grown in their leadership, in the way they help the organization. The organization that we have here in Asheboro always wants to involve more members, more people in the community and they are always looking for new opportunities to organize. It's nice to see how the work inspires others.

There is power in community. I think that is something we have always tried to make people understand.

It is something that we are seeing right now in these cases of wage theft, in the campaign that we are organizing. The power that you feel in having a group behind you when you go to make your claim, your complaint about what is happening to you, with that you don't feel so alone. And that's then what we hear from our people— the first



Portrait of Elena Jimenez, Randolph County Siembra NC member leader



A meeting organized by Siembra NC to inform community members about workers' rights against wage theft in Asheboro NC.



A meeting organized by Siembra NC to inform community members about workers' rights against wage theft in Asheboro NC.



Portrait of Marlene Martinez, Community Response Coordinator with Siembra NC.

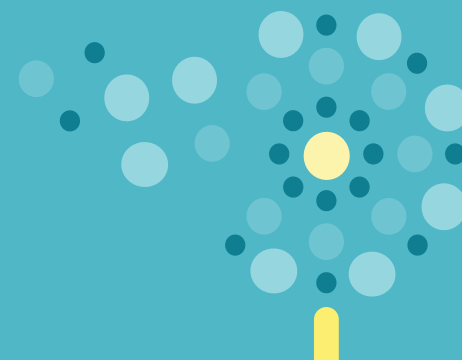
step is to say something, but there's always a concern about our legal status. But when they see our members working with us who have had similar experiences, they understand that if there is power in community, there is collective power. That's the message we try to give to people. And the best people who can do that are our members who have been through these situations and can share how it helped them, so that other people can seek the same help.

What we are doing right now is teaching people that there is power in us, that there is power in community. That has helped us bring more members, and for the members that have come in, to grow in their leadership.

This work has been very important. And more so here in rural communities. Today we are here in a trailer park in Randolph County, where people say, 'No, no one has come here to talk to us. No one has shared this information with us.' It's super important that there are organizations like us knocking on doors, giving information in Spanish and not just giving any kind of information, but information that is relevant and important to our communities.

We want to continue creating that power, not just here in Randolph County, so that the leadership of our people continues to grow and to go to other counties to share that information as well.

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THE ROAD AHEAD

This experiment, now six years in existence, is made possible because of a few key elements:

- **Organizations/Groups Doing Good Work:** There are many ecosystems that exist within Latinx communities that have supported our survival and our growth. These groups, formal and informal, were investing in their communities' well-being long before they were noticed or acknowledged by the philanthropic world. The resources provided by the NCLC have amplified and strengthened a deep-rooted power that has always been there.
- **Committed Foundations Willing to Lean Into Trust:** Although financial support is not everything, it sure is helpful! Especially when it comes in the form of grants that honor the sovereignty and self-determination of a group of people that are far too familiar with marginalization. The foundations that have formed part of this collaborative understand the importance of multi-year general operating support. They also understand that Latinx leaders are the best equipped to determine how resources should be allocated in their own communities. Relinquishing control over how grants are allocated is just one way that these institutions exhibit trust in the wisdom of Latinx leaders.
- **Cultural liaisons/Bridge-builders:** Most efforts that bring people together across lines of difference (race, class, sexual orientation, etc.) benefit greatly from the guidance and support of individuals who straddle those worlds. In addition to a bilingual/bicultural Project Manager role, this collaborative is also strengthened by several other individuals who understand viscerally what it means to be a bridge builder.



Group picture of Enlace Latino NC during a staff retreat in Raleigh, NC.



Portrait of Hugo Quintero, outreach worker with NC Field, at the Brightleaf Flea Market in Smithfield,



NC Field distributes information at the Brightleaf Flea Market in Smithfield, NC.



Portrait of Graciela Pérez,
member of Ma Hñäkihu.



Portrait of Laura Garduño García, Lead Organizer
with Siembra NC, holding an informational flyer on
workers' rights against wage theft.



Portrait of Mateo Ramón Jiménez,
member of Hendfact.

State-level systemic change happens one person, one community, one region at a time. The specific area of our work has focused on building power among NC's Latinx communities by providing both resources and opportunities to step more boldly into leadership. Overall, we are proud of the progress we've made in the arena of community-led grantmaking.

We launched this collective endeavor with the intention of moving from a capacity-building frame towards power-building which has afforded us the opportunity to explore and expand traditional definitions of power. Initially we made the decision to uplift healing justice as an essential component of power building. In our last full round of grantmaking we went

a step further to also include cultural work, understanding that our strong connection to our cultural practices is a clear vehicle to building individual and collective power.

Most important has been the open invitation we've extended to potential grantees to step into their own self-determination by offering general operating support, understanding that it is they who know their communities needs and strengths the best. Together we've been able to achieve so much. Together we'll face whatever challenges and opportunities the future brings our way. Undoubtedly, there is power in community. We are honored and grateful to in some small way contribute to amplifying that power.

