



**From**  
**resilience**  
**to hope**

ESPERANZA UNITED ANNUAL REPORT FY 25



## Dear friends and supporters,

As I look back on our 2025 fiscal year, the twelve months from July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, I want to take a moment to say thank you – for standing with Esperanza United during a time of change, growth, and continued purpose.

When I stepped into this role following the incredible leadership of Patti Tototzintle, I knew I was inheriting not just an organization, but a movement. For over 40 years, Esperanza United has mobilized Latin@ communities to end gender-based violence. Today, we continue to rise to the moment, adapting to new challenges, uplifting community voices, and ensuring every survivor has access to safety, healing, and hope.

This year, our team has expanded our reach in powerful ways. We've supported advocates and survivors in every region of the country, shared culturally responsive training with national partners, and strengthened prevention efforts that begin with youth, families, and community. Together, these actions create the ripple effect of change that defines Esperanza United – one grounded in community wisdom and collective care.

Inside this annual report, you'll see the impact of your support:

- A snapshot of the lives touched through prevention, intervention, policy, research, and national training
- Stories of resilience and transformation from the people we serve
- A look at where we've been this year, from local collaborations to national conversations shaping the future of our work

Every milestone we've reached this year is possible because of you – our donors, funders, and partners who believe in a world where every survivor is supported, every community is empowered, and every voice is heard.

Thank you for walking alongside us, for believing in our mission, and for investing in hope. Together, we will continue to build the future our communities deserve.

With deep gratitude,



Vivian Huelgo, J.D.  
President & CEO  
Esperanza United



## Our work



### Family advocacy

Providing family advocacy to the Latin@ communities in the seven-county metropolitan area of the Twin Cities, Minnesota, meeting survivors and their children where they are.



### Prevention and social change

Working with the entire community to prevent domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, using a whole-family approach.



### Training and technical assistance

Increasing the capacity of government and community-based organizations to deliver culturally responsive and trauma-informed approaches to Latin@ survivors through organizational and professional development.



### Public policy

Working to ensure that policies nationwide are responsive to the needs and realities of Latin@ domestic violence and sexual assault survivors and their communities.



### Research and evaluation

Elevating the voices and realities of Latin@ communities through research and evaluation that advances social justice in domestic violence and sexual assault, uniquely examining this intersection both within and beyond the field.

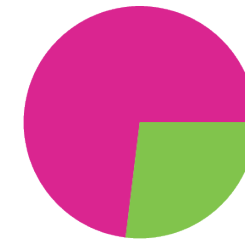


### Sembrando capacity

Enhancing the capacity of Latin@ culturally specific community-based domestic violence and sexual assault programs; strengthening Latina leadership, economic security, and survivor advocacy.

## By the numbers

In fiscal year 2025, we accomplished the following:



1,587 community members engaged  
423 youth



43

trainings, reaching nearly



3,500

people



Guided policy makers on:

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) practices
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) visa self-petitions
- Humanitarian, Adjustment, Removing Conditions, and Travel Documents (HART) Service Center staffing

Published:

- National Domestic Violence Hotline survey on risk and protective factors for Latin@ survivors
- Case study on importance of building parent-child relationships



Disbursed nearly **\$12 million** in multi-year grants → **30** culturally specific organizations

## Breaking assumptions, building bonds

When a Spanish-speaking father picked up the phone to call Esperanza United, he did it with a knot in his throat. He wasn't sure anyone would believe him. The violence he endured in his relationship had left him with invisible scars – the kind you can't see on the skin but that weigh heavily on the soul. Yet there was something stronger than fear: his love for his children.

That single call changed everything. On the other end, he found a bilingual advocate from Esperanza United who not only spoke his language, but also understood his culture, his doubts, and his fears. With patience and empathy, she gave him something the system had never offered: Validation.

He began to ask the questions he had held inside for years:

- Can I ask for custody?
- Will anyone believe me?
- Do I even have the right to want something better for my kids?

And every time, the answer was the same: yes.

With the support of his advocate, he learned how to navigate the documents, prepare for court, and, above all, raise his voice in spaces that had once silenced him. He wants to be fully present in court and for his children. Because he understands that fatherhood is not just about providing – it is about showing up, about healing, about love.

**At Esperanza United, we believe every survivor deserves to be heard, no matter who they are or where they come from.** We are here to walk alongside them, to open doors where there were once only walls, and to show that culture is not a barrier – it is a bridge toward justice and healing.

Because no one should carry pain alone. And because when community comes together, healing stops being a dream and becomes reality.





## When survivors speak, change is possible

Earlier this year, Esperanza United hosted our first Congressional Week of Action – five days dedicated to bringing more survivor voices into national policy conversations. Over the course of the week, we organized 23 meetings between survivors and congressional representatives and trained 31 advocates – all of which proved what we’ve always known: when survivors speak, change is possible.

One of those powerful advocates was Cindy Sánchez. We first met her thanks to our local Minnesota partners Bridges to Safety, who recognized her strength and clarity. For Cindy, a mother of two, military veteran, and survivor, the Week of Action was more than an event – it was a turning point.

She’d already walked a difficult path: Leaving an abusive relationship, navigating a complicated court system, and facing the weight of cultural expectations that told her to stay silent.

When Cindy joined Esperanza United’s Congressional Week of Action, she carried her personal story into a collective effort, speaking directly to policymakers. Her message was clear: Culturally specific services save lives.

These programs are not extra. They are essential. They ensure that survivors – especially those navigating language barriers, legal systems, or cultural stigma – have access to safety, community, and healing.

Her journey shows what Esperanza United strives to do every day: Not only to provide direct services, but to create spaces where survivors lead systems change. Survivors like Cindy are not just recounting trauma, they are shaping policy, educating Congress, and ensuring the next generation has more options than they did.

**Survivors already have the power to lead.** At Esperanza United, we create the opportunities for them to do just that.

**At Esperanza United, we believe survivors already have the power to lead.**

With your support, we make sure they also have the platform. Because as Cindy so powerfully reminds us, “We are not going to diminish our light to keep someone else in power”.

### About Cindy Sánchez

Cindy Sánchez is a Mexican American domestic violence survivor, advocate, and author of [Rising From The Ashes: A Survivor’s Guide To Healing](#). Drawing from her own journey, Cindy created this resource to equip others with tools for healing and self-discovery. She has donated copies to shelters and legal centers across Minnesota and is currently preparing a Spanish edition to expand its impact and accessibility.

As a pageant titleholder, Cindy uses her platform to raise awareness about domestic violence while celebrating resilience, culture, and community. Her mission is to empower survivors to reclaim their voice, embrace their strength, and believe in their ability to rebuild a brighter future.



## Esperanza United is my lifeline, a resource for life

Hope begins when young people know they matter. Behind every youth leader at Esperanza United is a story of transformation, built from moments when they are seen, heard, and encouraged to grow.

One of those stories began with uncertainty. A young woman joined our Youth Leadership Development Training unsure of her own voice. She hesitated at first, but step by step she discovered her strength. Our partnership with Free Arts gave her space to explore creativity. Leadership training reminded her that confidence can be built. And when she joined our Youth Conference planning committee, she realized she had something powerful to offer.

Each step was more than an activity – it was a reminder that she wasn't a number on a checklist. She was a leader in the making.

What makes Esperanza United unique is the follow-through. Even after programs end, our connections don't. We stay in touch, share resources, and remind youth that they're not alone. Once someone joins our youth programs, they join a community that walks with them for the long haul.

For this young leader, the journey didn't stop at participation. Today, she is a facilitator, leading financial literacy workshops for other young people. She shows them what's possible, helping the next generation find their voice, step into their authentic selves, and imagine a future beyond survival.

When asked how she describes her journey, she said it best:

***“Esperanza United is my lifeline – a resource for life.”***

At Esperanza United, that is what we strive to be: Not only a program, but a lifeline, a community where youth leaders take root, thrive, and grow into agents of change.



## Where we've been

Through conferences, presentations, and trainings our reach brought culturally relevant approaches to advocates and communities across 20 states and Puerto Rico.

### Alabama

- One Place Alabama Family Justice Center site visit

### Arizona

- Improving the Criminal Justice Response (ICJR) to Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Institute

### California

- ABA/NLADA Equal Justice Conference
- EVAWI Conference
- LA LGBT Center training
- MICOP site visit & listening session

### Colorado

- Behavioral Health Providers listening session
- Fort Collins Police training

### District of Columbia

- Alliance for Immigrant Survivors convening
- Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute event
- Gender Equity Coalition Capitol Hill Meet & Greet and Congressional Briefing [2025 Spring Advocacy Day]
- Hispanic Lobbyists Association Avanza Awards 2024
- Latina Fellowship convening & White House Visit
- National Sexual Assault Conference (NSAC) 2024
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) Sadistic Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) Briefing on Capitol Hill
- NNEDV Restorative Justice policy meeting
- NOVA Youth Engagement Summit

- U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Briefing on Language Access

### Florida

- Florida Council on Sexual Violence Biannual conference
- Nuevo Sendero training

### Georgia

- GA Commission on Family Violence site visit

### Illinois

- Chicago Children's Advocacy Center convening
- Emerging Spaces NRCDV convening
- Midwest Ecological Regional Conference 2024
- National Domestic Violence Hotline convening

### Indiana

- Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence BIPOC Leadership Summit

### Iowa

- Economic Security Conference
- LUNA site visit & listening session
- PaTis Libuelas encuentro

### Minnesota

- 2A Billion Launch/Minnesota Lynx event
- APHA conference
- EMBRACE camp
- Feria de Salud: Sagrado Corazón
- Intimate Partner Homicide Memorial
- Latino Chamber of Minnesota convening
- Minnesota Council of Non Profits Conversations with the President

- Minnesota Council on Foundations/ Minnesota Council of Non Profits Annual Conference
- MN Lead training
- Tu Salud health fair
- Violence Free Minnesota Regional Meeting: Policy team presentation
- Women's Foundation of Minnesota Feminist Festival
- Esperanza United Youth leadership conference

### New Jersey

Women Aware event

### New Mexico

- Emerging Spaces NRCDV convening
- Hispanics in Philanthropy conference

### New York

- Eastern Psychological Association conference
- NYC Mayors Office of Criminal Justice site visit
- Survivors Agenda convening
- VIP Economic Security listening session

### Ohio

- City of Columbus site visit

### Pennsylvania

- NNEDV Economic Justice Summit

### Puerto Rico

- Taller Salud listening session

### Texas

- BWJP annual retreat
- City of Austin, Office of Violence Prevention site visit
- Conference on Crimes Against Women
- Denton Friends of the Family convening

### Virginia

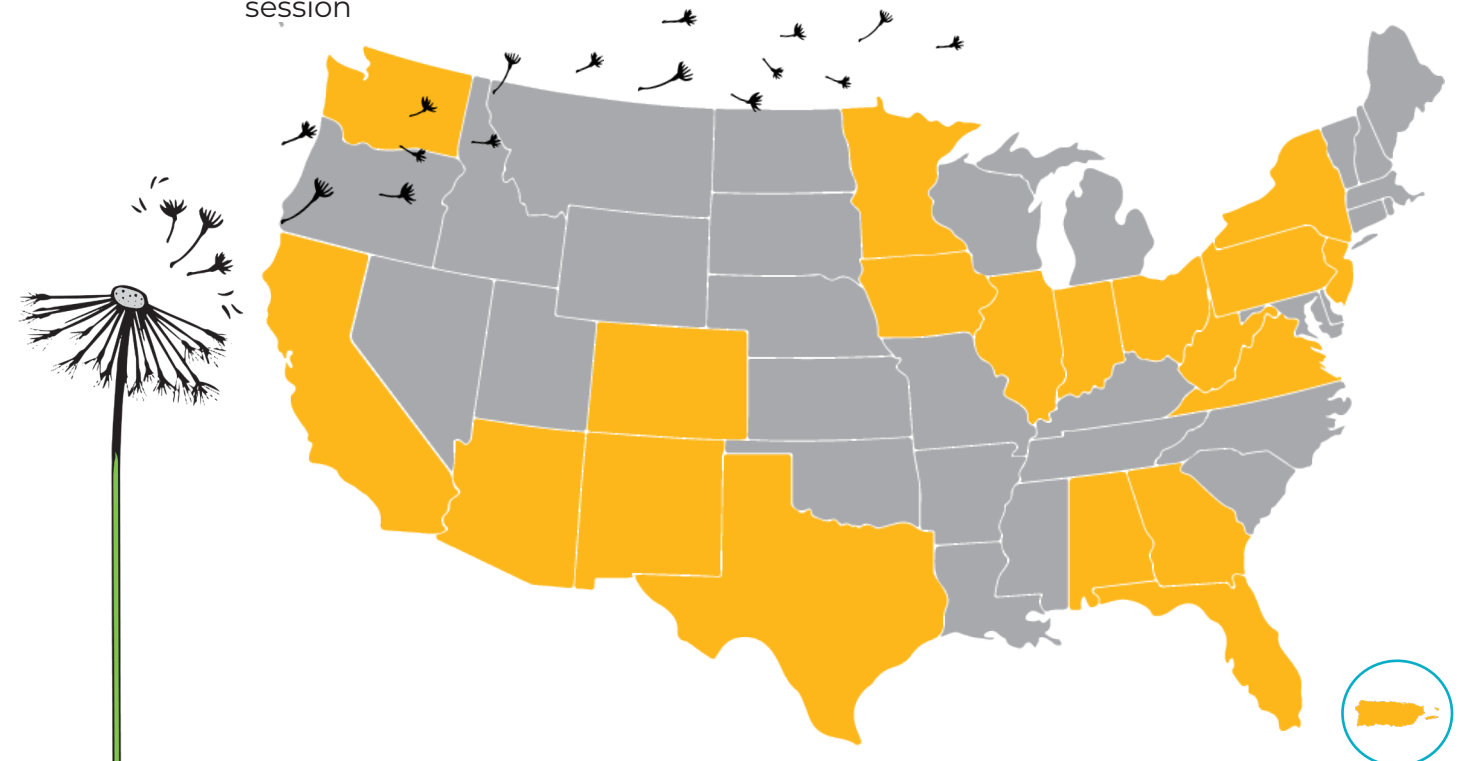
- Afro Latina listening session
- Madre Tierra encuentro

### Washington

- City of Yakima site visit
- Consejo Counseling encuentro

### West Virginia

- West Virginia Foundation For Rape Information and Services training



## Individual donors

Adam Born	Donald Heitzman	Kelly Regan
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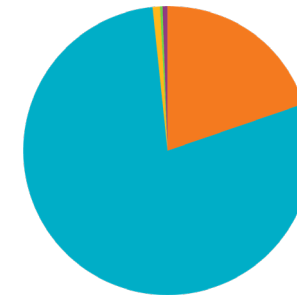
\* Patricia Tototzintle Legacy Fund donors



## Corporate, Foundation, and Government Funders

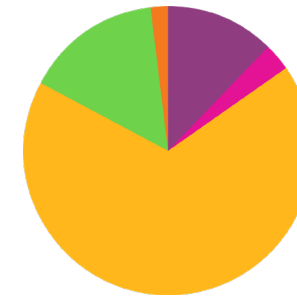
Anonymous	Minnesota Department of Public Safety
Abbott Laboratories	United States Department of Justice - Office of Justice Programs
Best Buy	
April Base Fund	United States Department of Justice – Office on Violence Against Women
Entegris	United States Department of Health and Human Services
F.R. Bigelow Foundation	
Hugh J. Andersen Foundation	
Greater Twin Cities United Way	
Minnesota State Bar Foundation (MSBF)	
Mortenson Family Foundation	
Old National Bank	
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Progressive Insurance Foundation	
Saint Paul and Minnesota Community Foundation	
The Allstate Foundation	
WCA Foundation	
MTS Systems Corporation	
Stantec Consulting Services	
Thomson Reuters	
US Bancorp	
Zimmer Law Group	
City of Minneapolis	
Hennepin County	
Minnesota Department of Health	
Minnesota Department of Human Services	

## Financials



### Operations

Revenue sources	2024	2025
Grants & Contributions	1,736,959	2,846,429
Government	8,056,879	11,202,123
In-Kind	35,031	104,224
Service Fees	43,713	63,341
Other	18,751	43,135
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Support</b>	<b>10,553,478</b>	<b>14,817,744</b>



Expenses	2024	2025
Family Advocacy	1,484,494	1,728,056
Prevention & Social Change	415,791	413,837
National Initiatives	6,728,329	9,463,616
Management & General	1,933,732	2,150,763
Fundraising	216,665	245,270
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>10,779,011</b>	<b>14,001,542</b>

### Balance sheet

Current assets	2024	2025
Net Property & Equipment	116,726	142,990
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>9,902,619</b>	<b>11,054,826</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>1,929,301</b>	<b>2,265,306</b>
Unrestricted Net Assets	7,413,379	8,174,772
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	559,939	614,748
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>9,902,619</b>	<b>11,054,826</b>



**ESPERANZA UNITED**

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[esperanzaunited.org](http://esperanzaunited.org)



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