



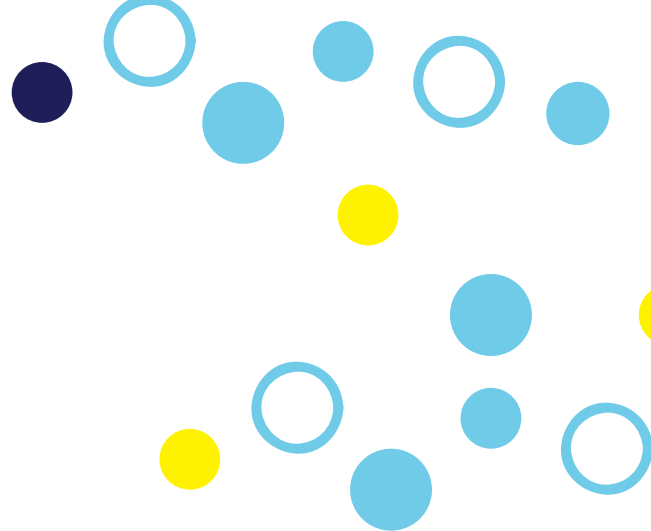
# Sin Barreras

Building a community without barriers

## Annual Report 2021



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# Letter from the Executive Director



At Sin Barreras, we see and feel the burden the immigrant community carries daily. The people who have the least resources, formal education, don't speak English, and don't have immigration status, are targeted, taken advantage of at every turn, discriminated against, and blamed for problems that are out of their control. Yet, despite these realities, they are resilient and essential to our way of life. They take care of us as harvesters, caregivers, builders and by exposing themselves to significant dangers which allow others to work in comfort.

Sin Barreras has prioritized its services, programs, and advocacy, driven by heart and dedication. It's been a difficult journey, but one that we relish because we believe in our cause. To serve our community the best we can and continue to grow, we are working to become a more professional and sustainable organization while maintaining the heart and community-centered focus we've always had.

Sin Barreras persevered from doing this work with little to no resources for years to currently having seven paid staff members and opening a second office in Waynesboro. We led our region in the successful multi-year statewide effort to achieve driving privileges regardless of immigration status. In addition, we shifted our programming to meet extraordinary demand during the health and financial crisis caused by the pandemic.

Looking ahead, we will continue to develop our structure to meet more of the demand for our services. This includes our founder's longtime dream of locating space for a center as a home to carry out our many activities, empower the immigrant and Latinx community, and be a catalyst for positive change.

We made significant progress toward our goals in 2021. Thank you to our donors and community members deeply for trusting and believing in us. We look forward to more growth with your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edgar J. Lara'.

Edgar J. Lara  
Executive Director

# Staff, Board, & Structure

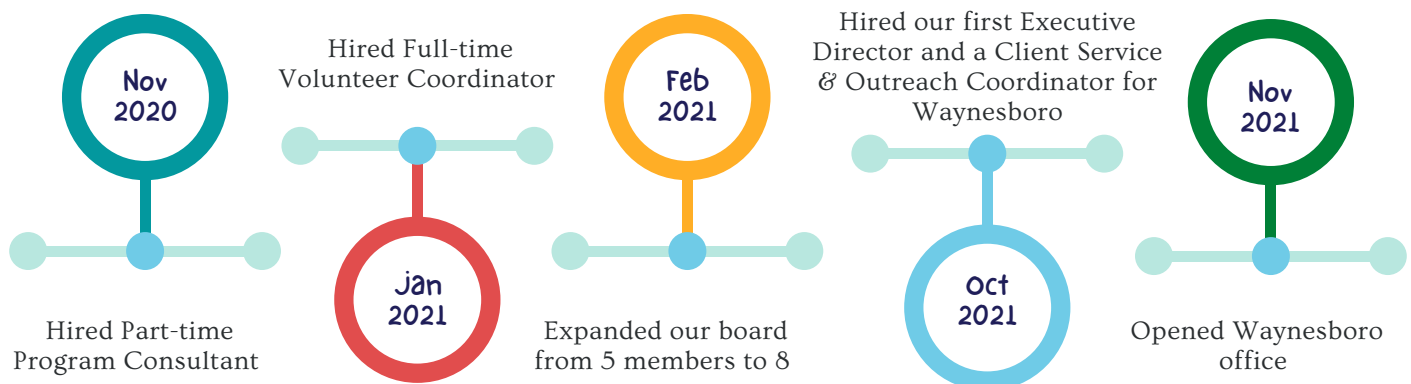
## Management & Staff

- Edgar Lara: Executive Director
- Victoria McCullough: Client Services
- Javier Raudales: Client Services
- Chayla Rowley: Volunteer Coordinator
- Shirley Varela: Programs Consultant
- Matt Gildner: Client Services & Outreach
- Frank Sullivan: Unpaid Accredited Representative

## Board of Directors

- Fanny Smedile (President)
- Janie Eckman (Secretary)
- Clay Wilcher (Treasurer)
- Sheila Herlihy
- Dan Vogus
- Natalia Alvarez Diaz
- Rocio Zamora
- Sarah Gaines

## Changes to Staff & Structure in 2021





## MISSION

To empower immigrants and their families in Central Virginia, with a focus on the Latinx population, by educating, advocating, and supporting their needs.

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## VISION

We envision a society where the essential needs of all its members are met, regardless of immigration status, color, social & economic class, or culture of origin.

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## VALUES

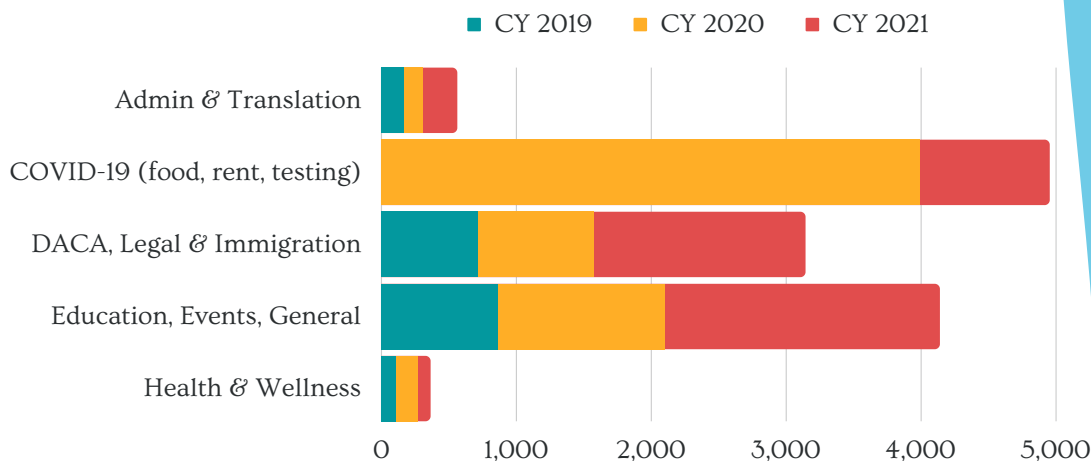


# Service Reporting

## Critical Needs

Service is the foundation of our work and how we learn of our community's needs. It informs the direction of our advocacy and programming. The following are highlights of our service activity.

## Remote Services for 2019, 2020, & 2021



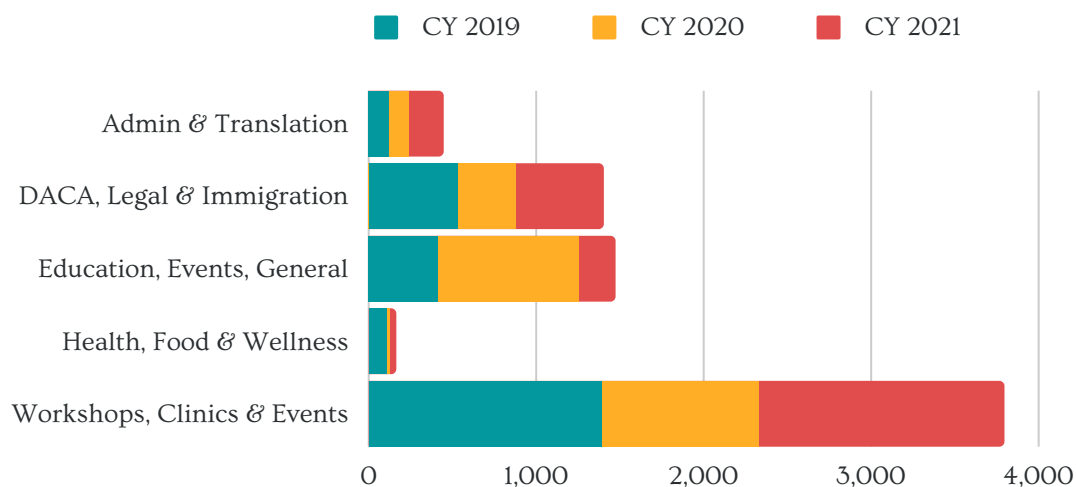
4,858

Calls we responded to in 2021

179%

Increase in calls from 2019. 24% drop from 2020, which was an extraordinary year.

## In-Person Services for 2019, 2020, & 2021



20%

COVID-related calls in 2021

## Financial Assistance

The pandemic created health and financial hardship for much of our community and worsened the current housing crisis. In these extraordinary circumstances, we sought and were awarded grants for community rent, bill, and food support in 2020. Approximately 23% of our 2021 grants and expenses for 2021 were for community distribution to families in need.

2,450

Total number of in-person services provided in 2021

## Legal Consultations & Immigration Petitions

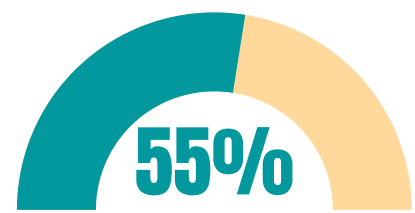
A pillar of SB activities is one-on-one services for legal, immigration, and administrative matters during office visits. Immigration petitions are a critical issue facing many of the area's immigrant communities. In 2015, Sin Barreras received government recognition to perform immigration services through two Department of Justice approved non-lawyer volunteers called 'Accredited Representatives'.



Clients we advised on  
“big” legal issues



DACA, Green Card and  
Citizenship clients counseled



More clients counseled than  
previous year

## Four-Year Impact Evaluation

Changed lives: Independent evaluators recently concluded a study of long-term improvements in Sin Barreras clients' lives. Fifty people who received five different services reported a substantial impact on their income, sense of self-worth, family life, and social standing. DACA, Green card, and citizenship clients reported the most significant income gains. Study participants universally described Sin Barreras staff as providing excellent, caring service. An additional impact reported by the study's psychologist author was a greatly improved sense of 'secure base' for area Hispanic neighbors as a result of Sin Barreras activities. Please see the full evaluation on the Sin Barreras website for rich, word-for-word quotations and other insightful analysis.



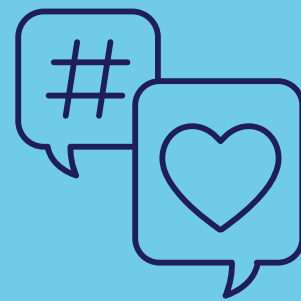
# Social Media Impact

## Facebook Live Sessions

The big question at the beginning of 2021 was - how to continue to inform and connect with the community during the pandemic? We explored the idea of utilizing an online platform to disseminate information to the community. The result was a series of Facebook Live sessions every Friday on critical topics of interest to "nuestra gente" (our people). With our founder, Fanny Smedile, leading each session and many guest speakers, we discussed education, advocacy, health, COVID-19, and many other subjects.

Advocacy and Health topics were the most engaging subjects for our community. Facebook Live sessions allowed us to discover what our community wanted to learn more about and what conversations they wanted to have.

We are extremely grateful to all the guest speakers and our community members. Thank you for tuning in every Friday to 'La casa de Sin Barreras'!



59

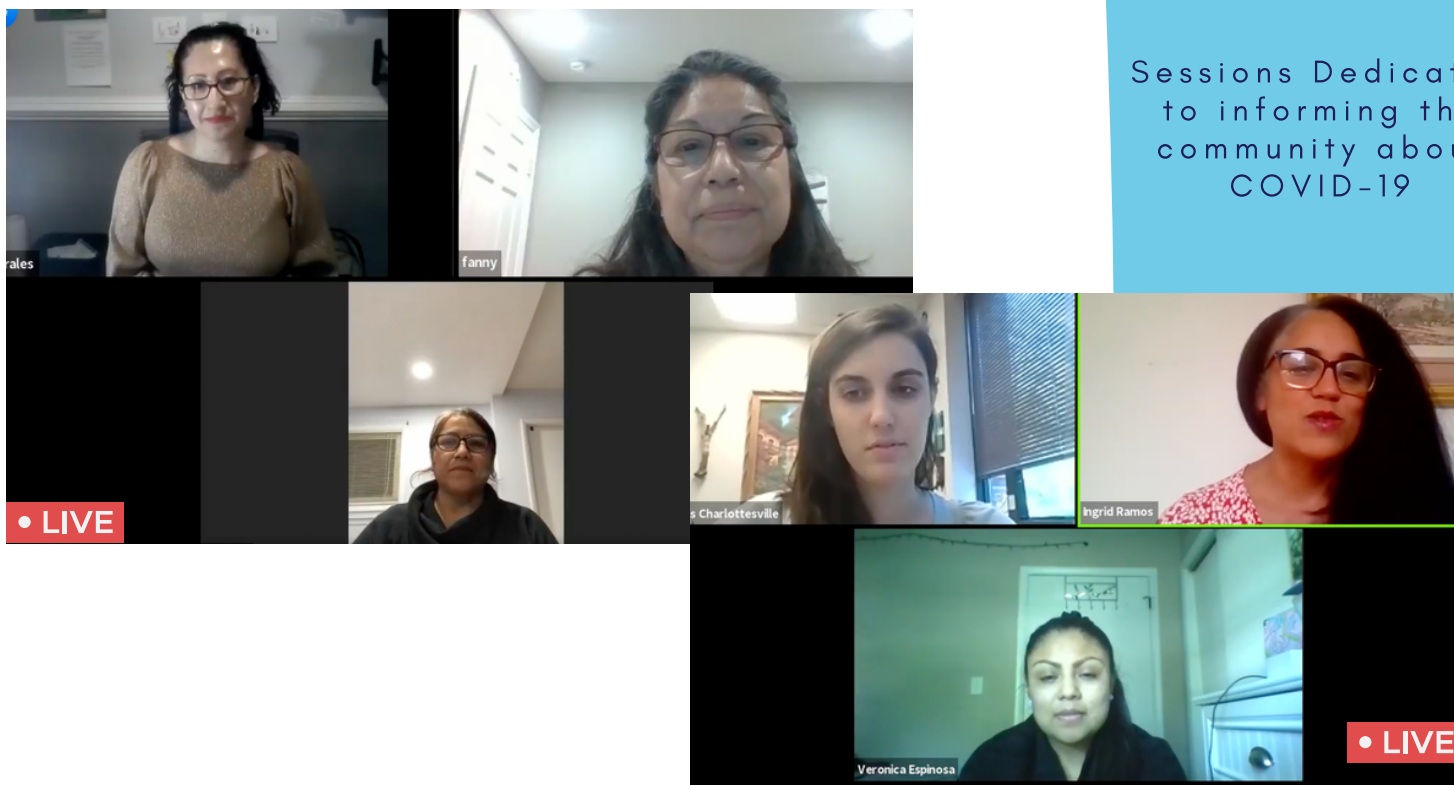
Facebook Live Sessions

218

Highest Number of Unique Views

7+

Sessions Dedicated to informing the community about COVID-19





# Community Testimonials



*Receiving the financial help and the gift card was a big help because I was not working due to COVID.*

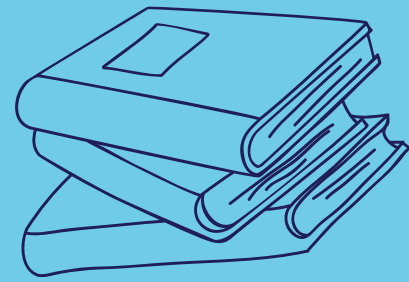
*When you don't have any type of documents, people look at you, like, differently; they judge you. I feel like when I got DACA, I felt like I belonged a little more. Like I wasn't such an outsider anymore.*

*Sin Barreras is waking up the leader in us*

# Educational Programs

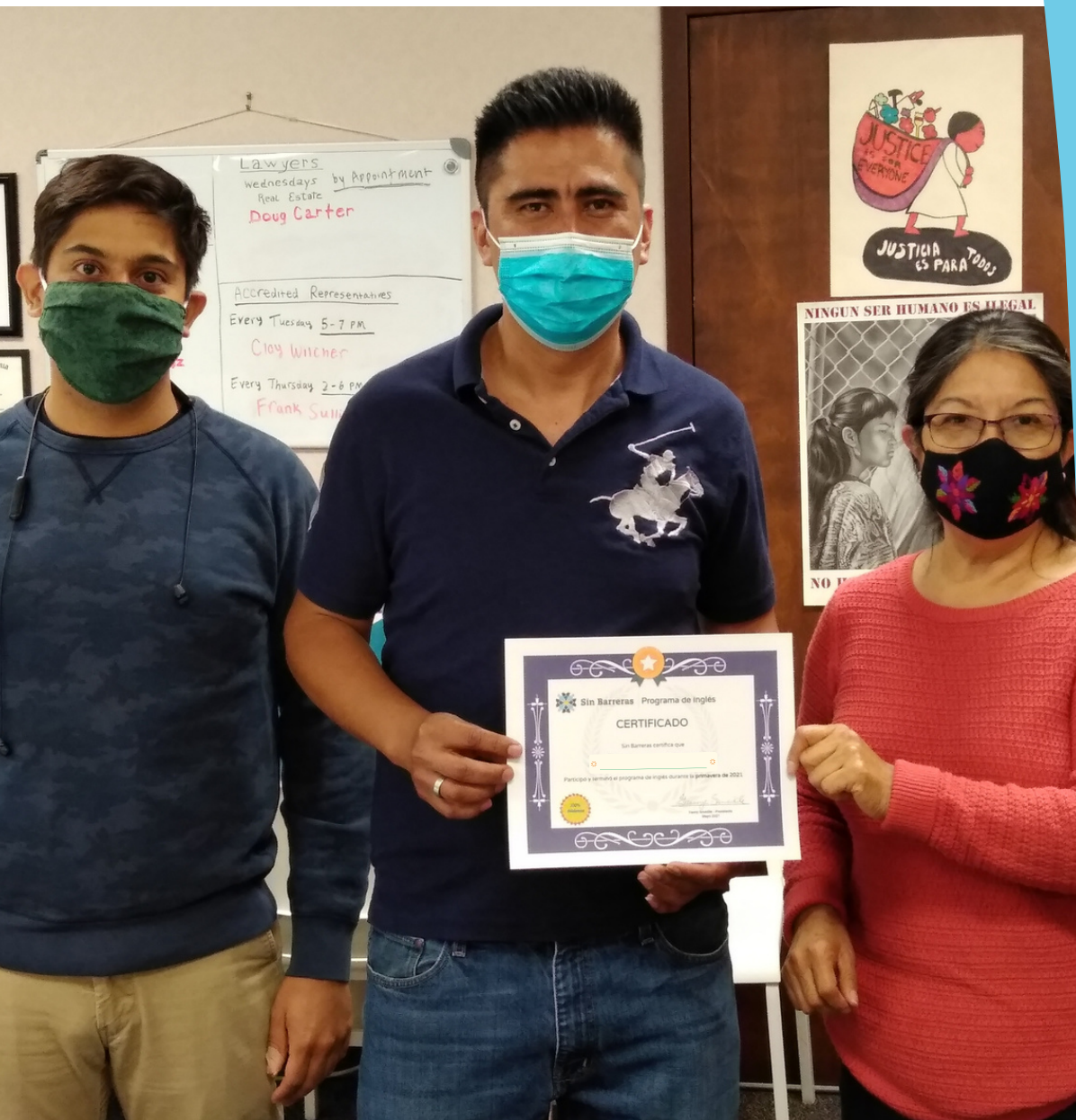
## Empowering the Latinx Community

Sin Barreras values the power of education in our community to transform lives. The COVID-19 pandemic challenged us to rethink how to continue providing educational programs. In 2021, we shifted to an online platform and formally structured our programs. By the end of the year, we had organized twelve in-person and online programs and launched three new programs.



*"Now that I speak more English, I understand people when they talk to me, and I am able to answer their questions. My life is changing."*

- Sin Barreras Programs Participant



# 12

Educational Programs (online & in-person)

# 83

Students/  
Clients

# 68

Volunteers/  
Tutors



## New Educational Programs

### Conecta2 Pilot

In May 2021, in partnership with the UVA Equity Center, we launched Conecta2: Latinx Leadership in technology. The program was designed to train and mentor Latinx leaders in the Charlottesville region in response to challenges posed by COVID-19. The program allowed community members to develop their technical knowledge and leadership skills.

### Plaza Comunitaria Program

In the fall of 2021, Sin Barreras launched the Plaza Comunitaria Program supported by the Mexican Consulate and Instituto Nacional para la Educación del Adulto. Plaza Comunitaria is an educational program in Spanish for migrants who speak Spanish and are over 15 years of age. It offers three levels of education: Literacy, primary, and secondary. During the first semester of the Plaza Comunitaria program, Sin Barreras registered five adult students eager to complete their primary and secondary education.

### GED in Spanish Pilot

In the fall of 2021, Sin Barreras also launched the GED in Spanish Pilot program. The program prepares students to take the U.S. GED exam certifying that the student has completed the equivalent of a high school education and allows Spanish-speaking immigrants who had an education back home to complete their GED in Spanish. During our first semester of fall 2021, we registered four students who have been preparing and studying for their GED in Spanish.



# Advocacy

## Leading Community Efforts

Sin Barreras continues to be a leading voice in local, state, and federal issues impacting the Hispanic immigrant community of Central Virginia.

### Local Advocacy

We supported over 200 individuals in their efforts to obtain driver's privilege cards. We organized meetings with Delegate Sally Hudson and the leadership of the DMV to address issues and extra barriers at the Charlottesville office around this program. In addition, we advocated with the city, county, and regional agencies to raise issues and promote better understanding of the Hispanic immigrant community.

### Statewide Initiatives

We proposed and were instrumental in getting passed a Virginia Standby Guardianship law with Senator Creigh Deeds to ensure children of people detained or deported would be cared for according to their parent's wishes. We actively participated in work to pass state bills that benefit immigrants and all Virginians. In addition, we partnered with VACOLAO and colleague organizations for the 9th annual Virginia Immigrant Advocates Summit.

### Federal Initiatives

We held workshops and information sessions to educate the wider community on the need to reform our broken immigration system that leaves over 11 million without protection, including many of our neighbors.



11

General assembly bills prioritized and 10 were passed

200+

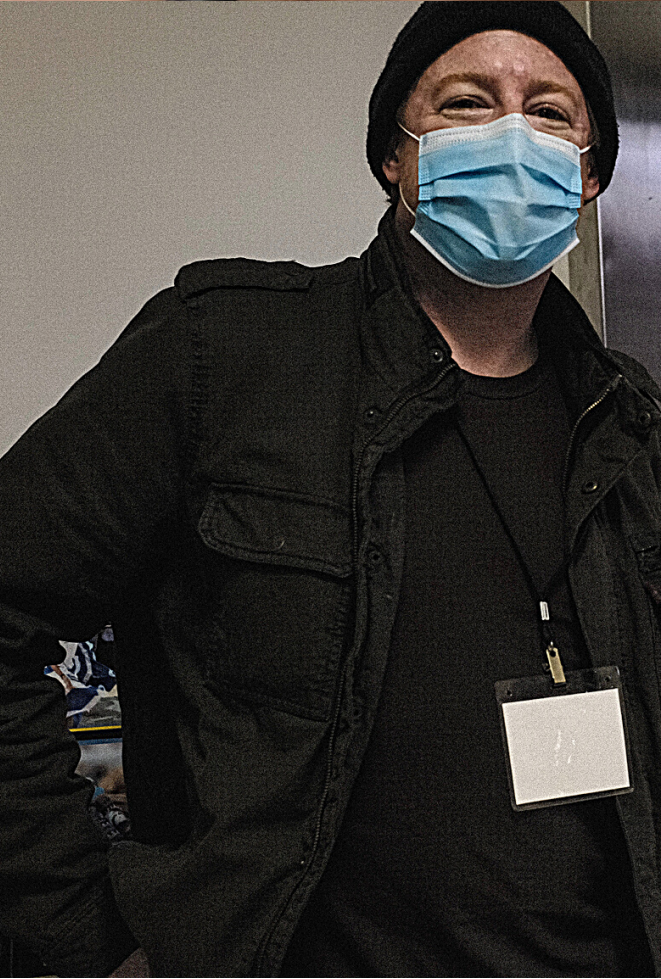
Individuals supported

6

In-person sessions on immigration reform









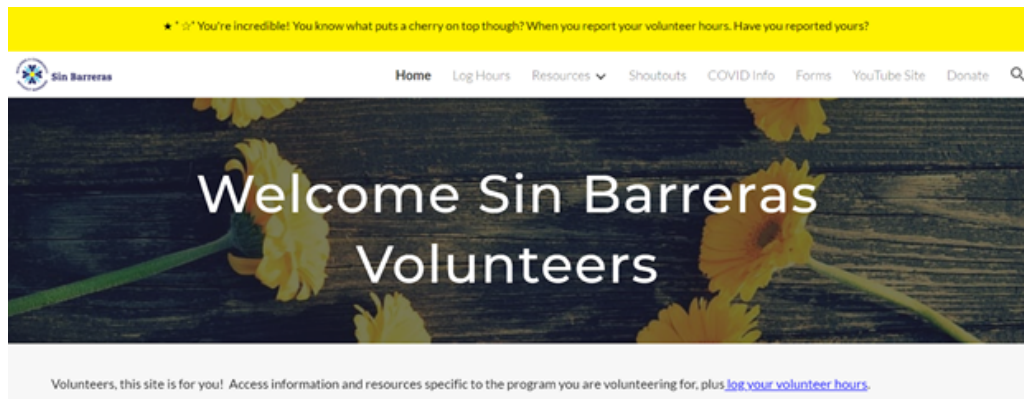
# Volunteer Contributions

## Appreciation

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. In 2021, our core volunteers contributed 59% of the total volunteer hours. We are able to provide better assistance for the immediate needs of our community and offer more development opportunities for their long-term growth because of the time, skills and care volunteers devote. Our respect and gratitude are immeasurable.

## News

Given the strong role volunteers play in our organization, this was our first year with a full-time Volunteer Coordinator on staff. Subsequently, we have seen enhancements such as the organization's first site for volunteers and monthly-nominated volunteer appreciation packages. We also saw a 10% increase in the number of volunteer hours from the previous year.



New Sin Barreras Volunteer Site

## Impacts

The facts & figures provided highlight and help quantify volunteer contributions. Because our work is above all relational, on the following page we have also provided photos & quotes to share what the experience has meant to volunteers and to the lives of those they touch. Volunteering is as much about the connections made between people as it is the tasks performed. No matter their backgrounds or roles, our volunteers embody that principle.



150+

Total Number  
Volunteers Who  
Contributed in 2021

8,000+

Cumulative  
Volunteer Hours in  
2021

\$230,000+

Monetized Value of  
Volunteers Time  
\*Based on VA \$29.14/hr

4.6/5

Average Volunteer  
Experience Rating



Nominated Appreciation  
Package Recipients

# Volunteer Testimonials



*"I am really enjoying the tutoring I am doing. I think we are both learning a lot :)"*

- Sin Barreras Volunteer Tutor

*"I gained a better understanding of the immigrant experience and the frustrations and potential cultural barriers."*

- Sin Barreras Volunteer



*"It was an amazing way for us students to connect with the community"*

- Sin Barreras Volunteer UVA Group

*"I had a lot of fun!"*

- Sin Barreras Volunteer

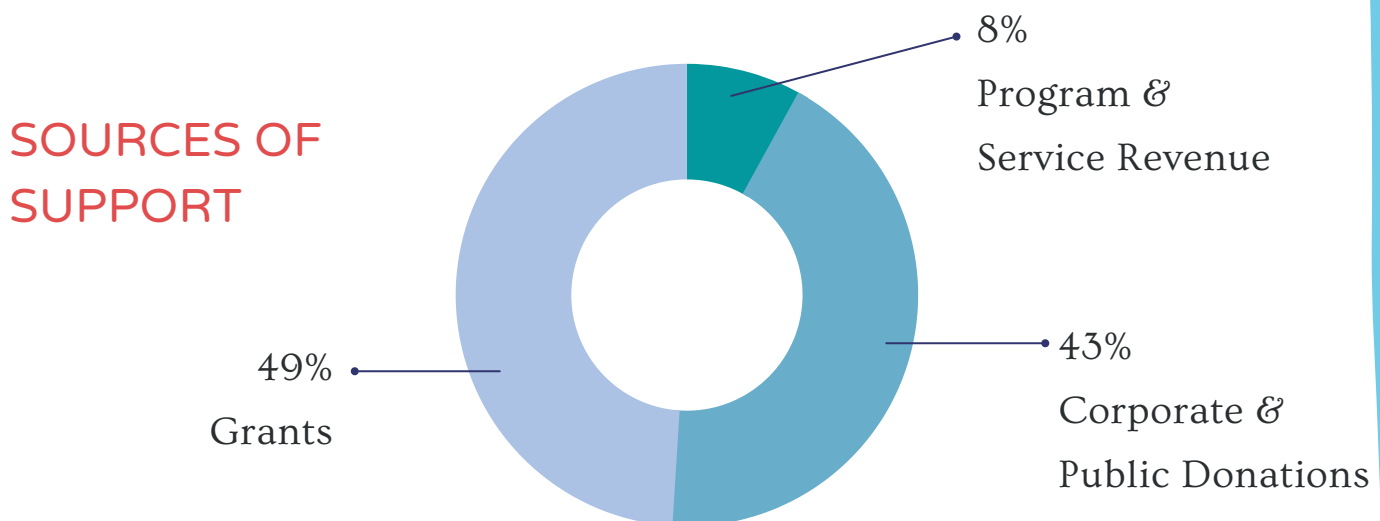
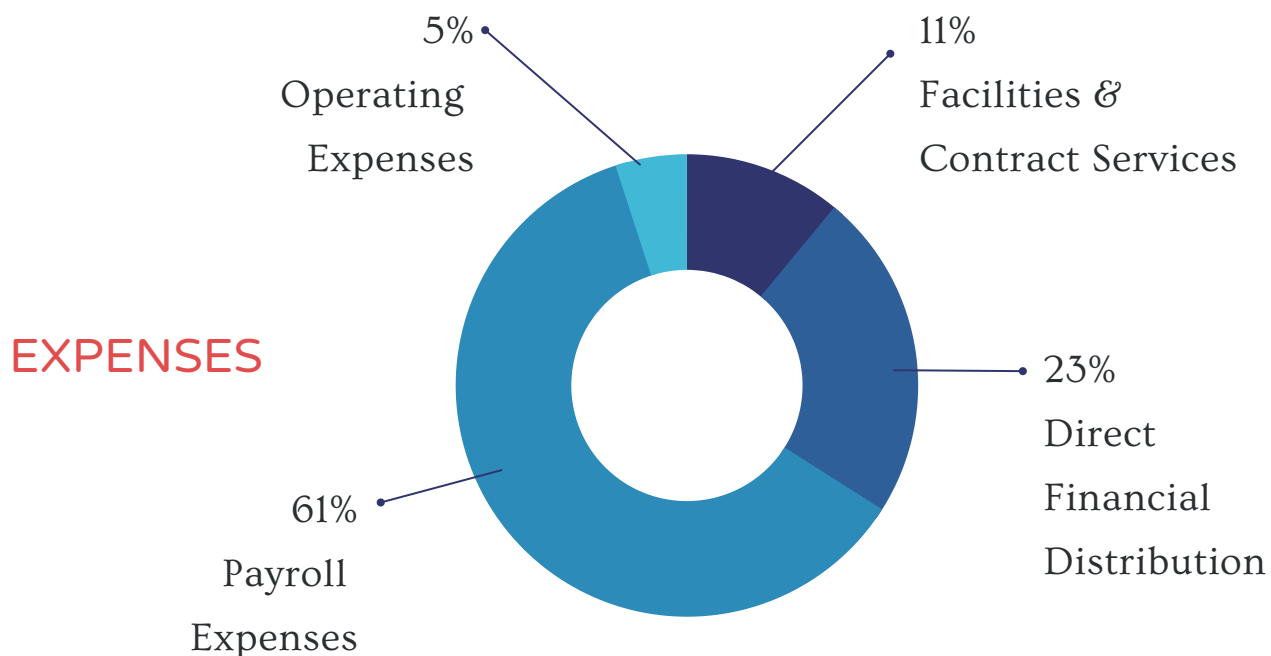


# Financials

## 2021 Reporting



Sin Barreras' 2021 expenses totaled \$247,594 with 23% distributed as direct financial support to families. The remainder of the funds was primarily spent on a dedicated staff that manages our variety of services, programs and activity, leveraging the invaluable efforts of volunteers.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We send a special thank you to our donors and the local churches that have stood by us over the years. Sin Barreras is dependent on the philanthropy of our community. Not everyone is available to be directly involved, but your financial and overall support is just as critical. We are truly grateful for the generous donations in 2021. Your belief in our mission propels us to extend our services and continue to serve nuestra comunidad!



# WAYS TO GIVE

We accept donations on our website or by mail:  
Sin Barreras  
P.O. Box 6433  
Charlottesville, VA 22906



# STAY CONNECTED



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