



THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS @ CHICAGO'S  
CENTER FOR LITERACY

# 2019~2020 ANNUAL REPORT



# Letter from the Executive Director

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of UIC Center For Literacy (CFL) staff and learners, I am pleased to introduce to you our 2019-2020 Annual Report. 2020 has been a year like no other. While the pandemic has bred illness, trauma, and division, it has also opened our eyes to the innovation, collaborative ability, and resilience of human beings. Nowhere is this truer than in the story of CFL. Staff and students supported each other, innovated, and ultimately persevered through remote learning, personal economic hardships, and racial traumas to pursue the ultimate mission of CFL: building supportive relationships and pathways to learning opportunities.



In this report, you will read about the achievements and accomplishments of CFL programs, students, and staff. However, keep in mind the stories of perseverance that exist behind the numbers and statistics. During the height of the pandemic, CFL instructors made phone calls day and night to check in on their students and make sure they were ok and stayed engaged and connected. We mourned the loss of students and family members that passed away from COVID-19 and sent care packages and notes of support to those that were ill. We created circles of support to process the killing of George Floyd and the aftermath. We learned new technologies and created new ways of engaging families through remote learning.

It is a tremendous achievement that we have continued to engage and serve thousands of families through the pandemic. In many instances, CFL served as a much-needed remedy to the loneliness and isolation brought by the pandemic. The human care and connection, attention to educational needs, and critical witness to challenging life experiences that were provided to learners and patrons promoted community wellness and sustainability.

Moving forward, CFL will continue its mission to promote educational equity and community-based relationships in this changing world by evolving and adapting our services and programming in ways that meet the needs of the community. We plan to build upon newly developed expertise in remote learning to provide broader access to Chicago families and to engage in partnership building with community leaders and organizations to better support our work. We are determined as ever to be a resource for families in Chicago and a model for change-making university and community partnerships for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kira Baker-Doyle'.

Dr. Kira Baker-Doyle  
*Director of the UIC Center for Literacy*

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## Our Mission

To promote educational equity and community-based social capital through multigenerational literacy programming, research, and partnerships.

## Our Vision

CFL will be a national innovator and leader in efforts to design and model culturally sustaining multigenerational literacy education practices that promote equity in our increasingly digitally connected world.

To achieve this Vision, CFL will:

Leverage new modes of learning and connected technologies to support multigenerational learning, community-based social capital, and access to resources and opportunities.

Convene scholars at local and national levels to research and discover literacies of the connected world and build research-based resources to support equity in multigenerational learning.

Cultivate community partnerships that help to build 21<sup>st</sup> century educational opportunity pathways for families and youth.

## Our Principles

We seek to be self-aware and in constant reflection about who we are and what we do. In order to achieve our mission, we believe that we must all work to understand our personal identities and biases in efforts to be culturally responsive and rooted in place.

With this assumption in mind:

We embrace participants so they can feel safe, comfortable, and courageous as they bring their evolving, intersectional identities to our co-created learning environments;

We empower participants to confidently explore new ways of understanding and reimagining our shared world;

We create bridges to connect communities and open opportunities for cross-generational collaboration; and

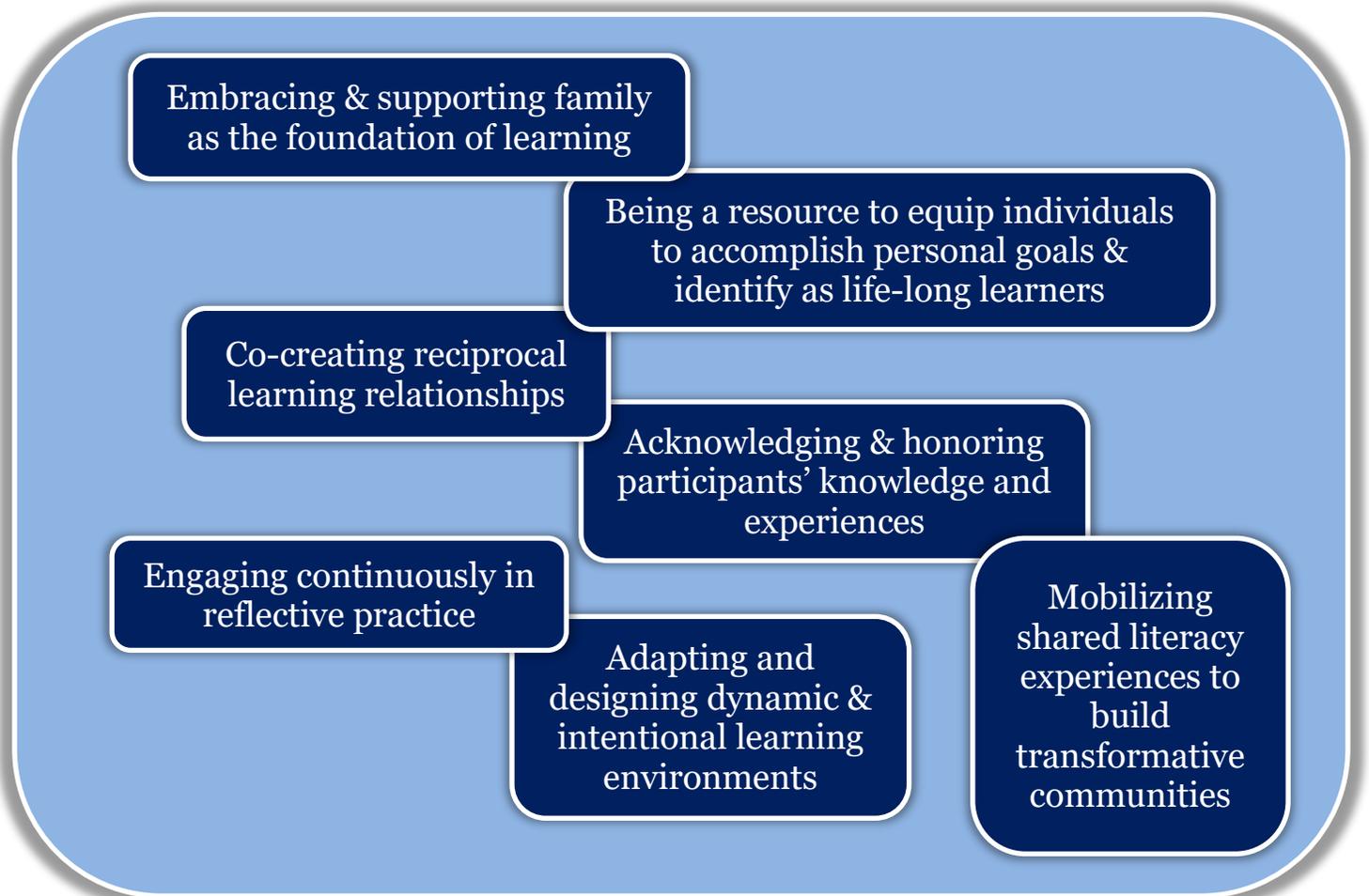
We are people, educators, practitioners, and community members who practice humility and self-care so that we may be responsive to the needs and goals of the communities in which we work.

## Our Pedagogical Practices

Using a strengths-based approach, we build learning communities that tap into and expand our collective creativity. Our learning environments are organized with intentionality to support positive personal and professional growth. We work with individuals, families, and communities to advocate for the goals and issues that are important to their lives and well-being, drawing on community resources to build power at every level.

This community-oriented approach - working in relationship with, rather than in relationship to, our participants and their communities - serves as a compass that guides us in a continual process of evaluating our work in order to keep it authentic and relevant to the rich diversity of Chicago's residents.

As such, below are the pedagogical practices we use in our work:



## Our History

In 1991, Family Start Learning Centers (FAST) implemented services to Head Start families via The Chicago Public Library Literacy Initiative, which developed family literacy service centers in eight public housing reading and study centers that were first-floor apartments that were converted into library spaces.

To the surprise of many, parents and children filled the centers to hear stories read, participate in poetry workshops, attend adult literacy classes, receive help with children's homework, and learn basic computer literacy skills.

The Assistant Director of Children's Services, which was then managed by the Chicago Department of Human Services, decided to review the program and they were pleased with their findings. Their review found that families received a great deal of attention, and the staff had a high commitment to the facilitation of intergenerational learning. Families were eager to participate in the program and many families attended on a daily basis.

Subsequently, the Chicago Public Library Literacy Initiative staff was asked to develop a pilot program that provided family literacy services to Head Start families. Head Start programs were designed to give children an educational head start, and parents were taught techniques to support their children's literacy while developing their literacy skills. Out of this pilot program the Family Start Learning Center was born, **FA** for Family and **ST** for Start, which became known by the acronym "FAST".

FAST began by serving 60 families the first year. Much of the staff's time was spent learning about Head Start, surveying delegate agencies, and acquainting themselves with the culture and unique needs of the families being served within the Head Start community.

Each year the FAST program offerings improved, and in 1996, the University of Illinois at Chicago's Center for Literacy (CFL) was asked to manage the program. Immediate refinements included grouping parents according to their skill level, adding additional instructors trained in early childhood education and/or adult education, implementing research-based family literacy training for parents, and upgrading assessments, case management, and data collection systems.

The City of Chicago's Office Early Child Care and Education Plan, in conjunction with the Mayor's Office, supported the duplication of FAST services. So, UIC's Center for Literacy created three additional Family Start Learning Centers - one on the Southside and two, new, centers to support Latinx and Hispanic families enrolled in Head Start programs. The outcome goals were to improve the literacy skills of parents while supporting their personal education goals, as well as improve the early literacy skills of their children.

Since its inception, FAST, with the guidance of UIC's Center for Literacy, has grown to support seven additional programs that focus on improving, supporting, educating, training, and researching various aspects of family literacy. In addition, FAST has continued operating its family literacy sites and growing its community relations through its family literacy outreach programs and events. FAST's family literacy workshops are facilitated citywide and are based upon the University of Illinois at Chicago's Center for Literacy's nationally recognized family literacy program entitled, "*Family Literacy Aprendiendo Mejorando Educando*" (FLAME). The Center for Literacy, and FAST, are known for being rooted in the communities they serve;

many staff are former volunteers and/or participants in the program or live in the communities that they serve. Furthermore, CFL is recognized as a distinguished center for research application and evaluation and has published numerous scholarly works that have been translated into practical community applications.



# our Impact



2019-2020

# AECT

Adult Education & Career  
Transitions



In the **Adult Education and Career Transition (AECT)** program, we provide classes and tutoring to parents interested in continuing their basic education, learning English, or obtaining their high school equivalency. We also support parents in making successful transitions to college programs, employment, and training opportunities. We strive to promote children's success in school in part by helping parents achieve their educational and economic goals.

## Our 2020 Impact

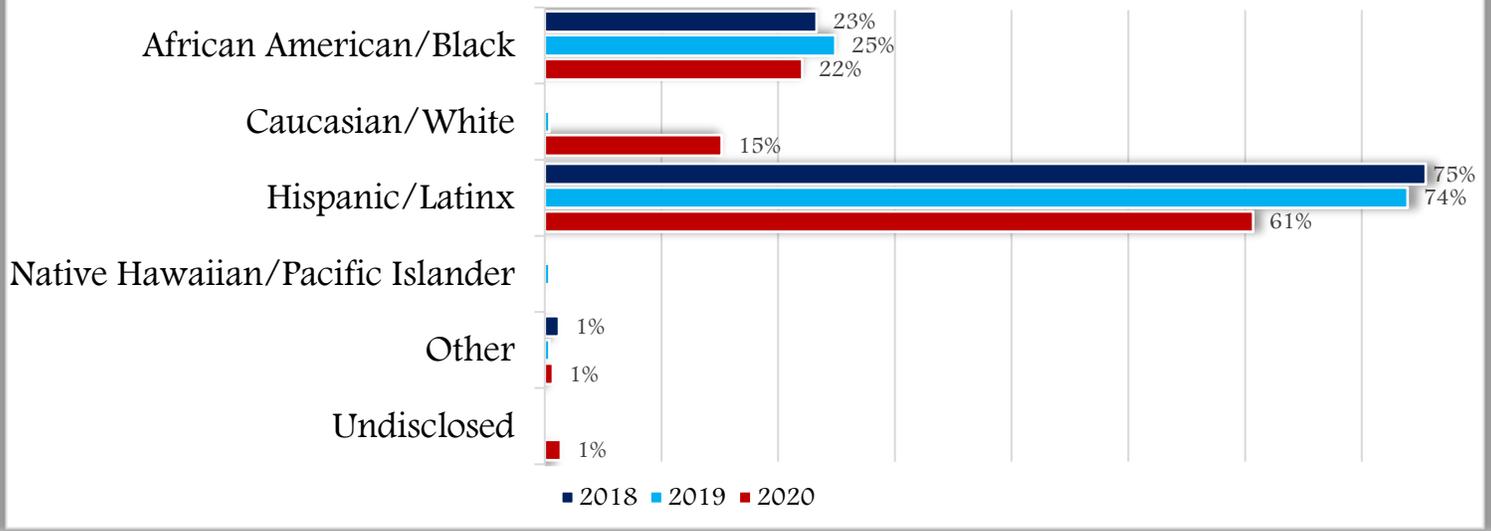
The Adult Education & Career Transitions (AECT) program operates adult learning sites on the West, South, and Southwest sides of Chicago that provide free English as a Second Language (ESL) and High School Equivalency (HSE) courses to underserved Chicago communities. In 2020, AECT provided educational services to 201 ESL and HSE participants, totaling 1,876.90 instructional hours. The Adult Education & Career Transitions program saw, on average, 72% of their student population successfully complete an academic session. In addition, 79% of participants who took an HSE assessment, either the HiSET™ or the GED®, passed one or more subtests. Finally, prior to academic enrollment into the program, 37 individuals participated in engagement activities that included, but were not limited to, attending a motivational assembly, completing the student intake/interview process, and/or participating in a needs assessment to identify potential barriers to success.

## Who We Serve

In 2020, of the Adult Education & Career Transitions (AECT) program's participants, 82% - Female, 17% - Male, and 1% - Undisclosed, and the average age of all participants was 38 years old. Moreover, the highest grade level that the average participant completed was 10th grade. The Adult Education & Career Transitions (AECT) program served predominately Hispanic/Latinx and African-American/Black communities, with over 45% of those participants coming from the zip codes of 60609 (21%), 60629 (14%), and 60632 (13%). The top three Chicago wards served in 2020 were the 14th, 16th, and 23rd wards. Ultimately, the Adult Education & Career Transitions department served a total of 4 Chicago Early Learning delegate agencies which was comprised of 9 early learning sites.

## The CFL Difference

What sets the CFL's Adult Education and Career Transitions (AECT) program apart from other adult education programs in Chicago's underserved communities, is that participants were provided with **free** adult education courses, in conjunction with receiving free case management and career transitional services. According to our data, in 2020 approximately 47% of classroom participants were unemployed but seeking employment. Knowing this, our career transitions department provided services to 86% of that population with a focus on educational planning and employment readiness support. The majority of transitional services rendered were for pre-employment services (32%) that included, but is not limited to, continuing education and/or job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, and self-advocacy trainings and workshops. Furthermore, 19% of those receiving career services secured employment past 90 days

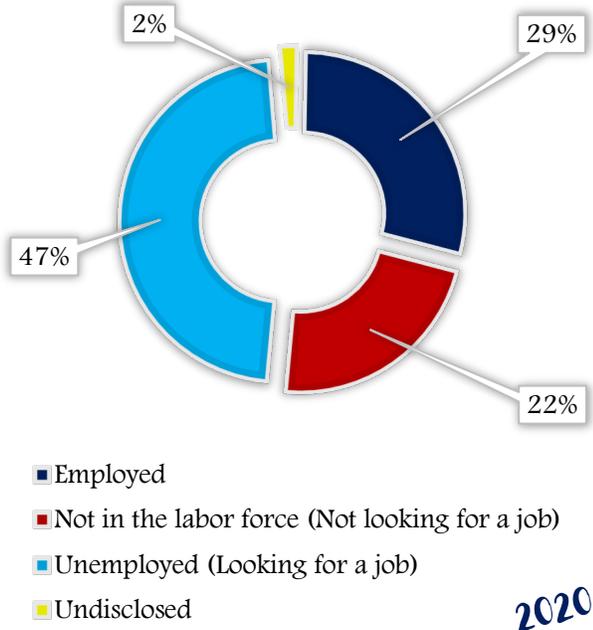


## Connecting Our Vision

2020, and COVID-19, brought with it many changes. A major change for the AECT program was the 100% transition to online/virtual learning for students and staff. This transition ushered in the ramped-up use of technology for students in Chicago's underserved communities. To assist participants with technological inequities AECT created a laptop and mobile Wi-Fi loaning program as a means to increase access to resources and opportunities.

In 2020, Adult Education & Career Transitions designed and delivered a multigenerational at-home curriculum, that included activities in a "take-home" backpack for parents. These activities promoted parent-child interactions making use of theme-based literacy techniques.

Adult Education & Career Transitions hosted family literacy community events that were designed for the entire family. At these events, families received themed, culturally relevant children's books, created arts and crafts, participated in family literacy workshops and activities, and received a healthy and nutritious snack.



# PYO

Parent & Youth Outreach



**Parent & Youth Outreach (PYO)** provides workshops and special events designed to engage parents at their child's Chicago Early Learning site. The workshops are comprised of research-based self-enhancement activities that are focused on financial management (FLIP), preemployment planning (PEER), and family literacy (FLAME). In addition, the male involvement division of Parent & Youth Outreach program oversees the Dad's Reading Daily (DRD) workshops which provide specific support and encourages dads to be involved in their children's education.

## Our 2020 Impact

In 2020, the Parent & Youth Outreach (PYO) program provided workshops to 741 new participants that have never attended a workshop. Of the 85 workshops offered in 2020, 40% were FLAME, 30% were FLIP, 25% were PEER, and 5% were DRD garnering an overall total of 1440 attendees. Of those attendees, 93% indicated on a post-workshop survey that the workshops met their expectations. In addition, 75% of PYO workshop participants demonstrated knowledge gains on the content that was covered during the workshop as documented by improved scores on a retrospective pre/post survey. The Parent & Youth Outreach (PYO) program saw, on average, 24% of their participant population hailing from the 60629 area code, which serves the following Chicago Community Areas: Garfield Ridge, West Elsdon, Gage Park, Clearing, West Lawn, Chicago Lawn, and Ashburn. In addition, in 2019-2020 the Parent & Youth Outreach (PYO) program provided approximately 80% of its family literacy workshops to the following Chicago Early Learning (CEL) Delegate Agencies and their community sites: Chicago Public Schools (56%), El Valor Corporation (12%), Chicago Youth Centers (5%), City College of Chicago (4%), The Ounce of Prevention (4%).

## Who We Serve

The Parent & Youth Outreach (PYO) program presented family literacy workshops, in English (59%) and Spanish (41%), at various early learning sites throughout Chicago providing services to Hispanic/Latinx (41%), African-American/Black (35%), Undisclosed (20%), Caucasian/White (2%), and Other (2%). In 2019-2020, the program saw 741 new workshop participants, and 1440 parents attended in-person and virtual workshops on topics covering family literacy, employment readiness, and financial literacy. Of that population, 7% participated in the Dads Reading Daily with Devotion (DRD) program which follows the 24/7 Dad® Curriculum which trains fathers to be involved, responsible, and committed in life and fatherhood. Of the PYO workshop attendees, 99% identified, on post-workshop surveys centering on employment readiness (PEER) and/or financial literacy (FLIP), specific concepts or skills that they learned would be beneficial in assisting them in supporting their family's well-being. Of those receiving PYO family literacy services, 33% were repeat participants, which speaks to the importance and timeliness of the content being covered. In the Summer of 2020, the Parent and Youth Outreach (PYO) program hired 130 Chicago teens to create online digital family literacy content for use by the general public with children ranging in age from 0 -5 years.

## The CFL Difference

What sets the CFL's Parent & Youth Outreach (PYO) program apart from other family literacy programs in Chicago's underserved communities, is that **free** workshops are presented directly at the Chicago Early Learning (CEL) sites, so the participants are not required to travel to an off-site location to attend PYO workshops; in addition, in 2020 the Parent and Youth Outreach (PYO) program introduced virtual family literacy workshops for Chicagoland residents. Furthermore, the Summer Teen program taught teens the foundational elements of being an effective leader and strengthened their life skills, as well as their employment and educational readiness skills.

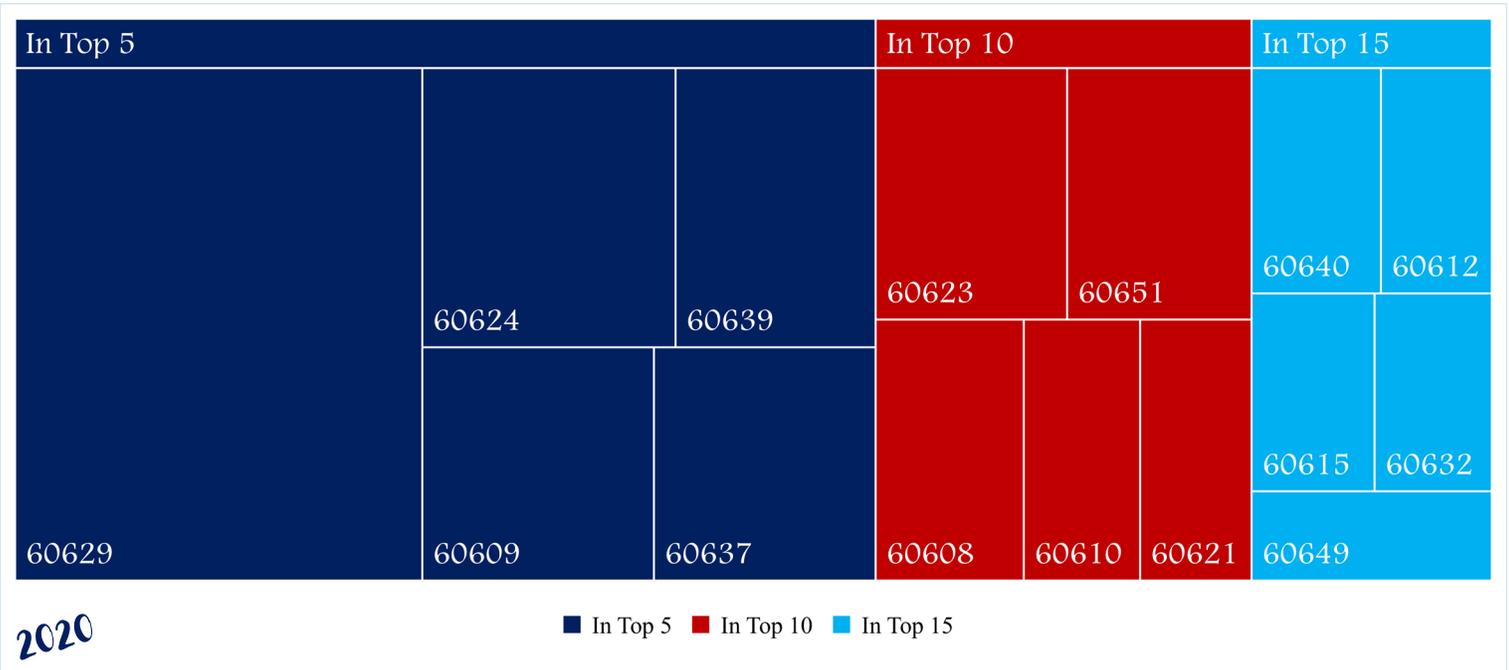
Workshops in English

59%

Workshops in Spanish

41%

2020

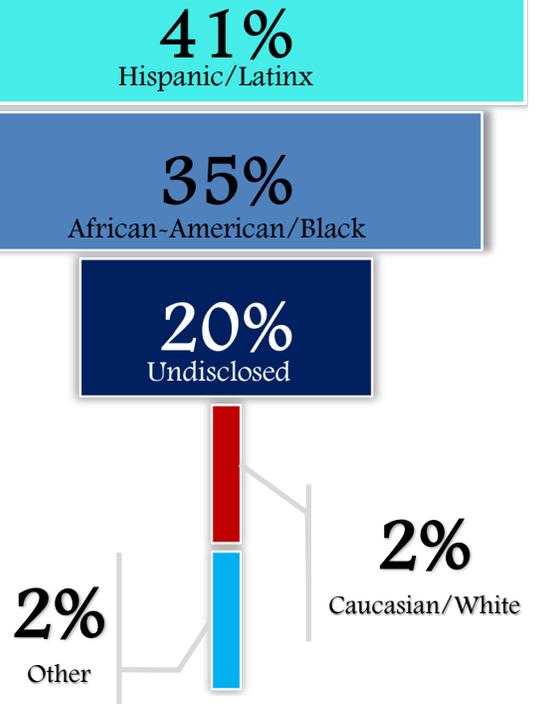


## Connecting Our Vision

2020, and COVID-19, brought with it many changes and a major change for the PYO program was the 100% transition to online/virtual presenting for workshop participants and staff. With this technological pivot came the ability to offer PYO workshop services beyond Chicago.

In 2020, Parent & Youth Outreach designed, developed, and delivered an all virtual summer teen training model that immersed Chicago teens into family literacy methodologies. That knowledge guided them in the creation of effective and useful digital family literacy content that was uploaded and available for download by the early childhood education community throughout the Chicagoland area and beyond.

Parent & Youth Outreach focused on issues facing Black & Brown communities in 2019-2020. The PYO program recognized and acknowledged a need among incarcerated fathers to become more involved in their families and communities. The PYO built a partnership with the Illinois Department of Correction's SAVE Program to provide training focused on increasing male and father involvement.





# SSD

Social Service Department



The **Social Service Department (SSD)** which is comprised of Transitional Services, Case Management, and Parent Resource is a holistically designed support system which focuses on Chicago Early Learning's Family Service Workers (FSWs) and Chicago Early Learning (CEL) families. For CEL families, the department provides professional development opportunities in the form of evidence-based communities of practice. In addition, the Parent Resource program helps to promote engagement and involvement by providing ongoing trainings, professional development, and technical support to FSWs working at Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) funded sites

## Our 2020 Impact

In 2020, the Social Services Department (SSD), through its Parent Resource Department, later in the year renamed to Family Engagement Professional Network (FEPLN), provided 41 professional development workshop sessions that were focused on, but not limited to, tips for fostering family engagement, goal setting, writing case notes, and self-care. These workshops were geared towards to needs of the 280 Chicago Early Learning Family Service Workers (FSW) in attendance. In addition to workshops, the Social Services Department provided 123 Family Service Workers and Home Visitors with Communities of Practice where they were able to connect with others in their field, share experiences, and support one another. The Case Management Department provided social-emotional services to 226 individuals, while the Transitional Services Department delivered services to 83 individuals. The Transitional Service Department assisted 57% of its service population in completing an employment goal which includes, but is not limited to, resume writing assistance, preparing for an interview, attending pre-employment workshops, and securing employment. Conversely, the Social Service Department provided 40% of its service population with Social-Emotional Counseling Services, which focuses on establishing and maintaining mental wellbeing and the importance of self-care.

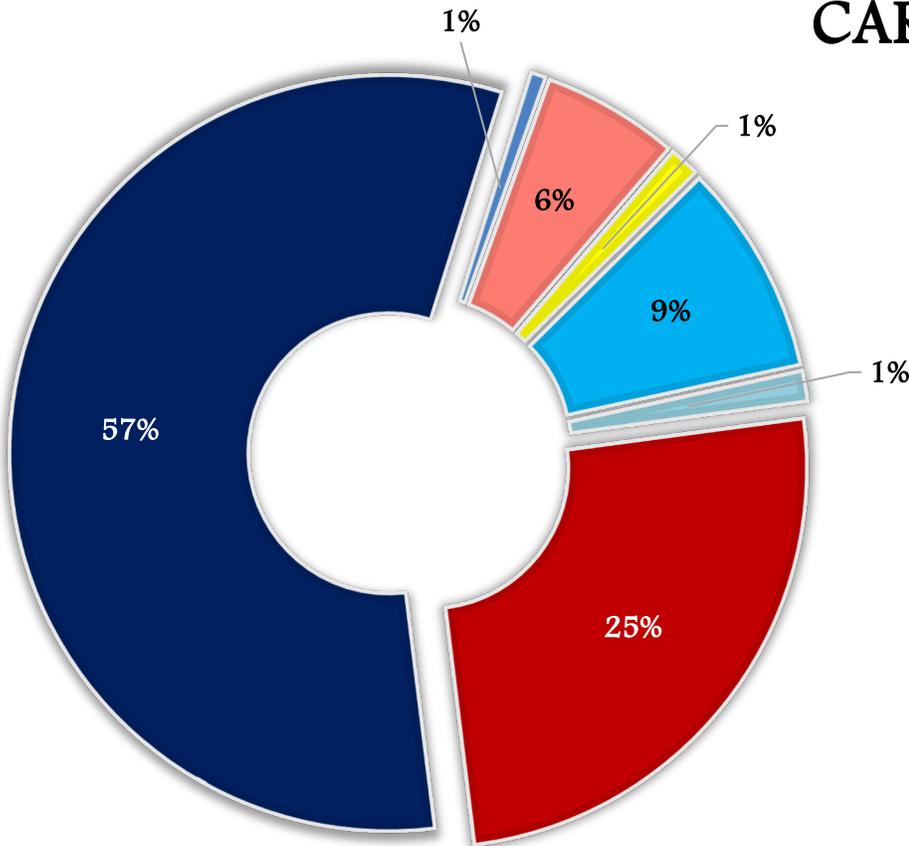
## Who We Serve

The Social Service Department (SSD) provided services to Family Service Workers, Home Visitors, and Chicago Early Learning parents. Among the Family Engagement Professional Network (FEPLN) participants 98% reported that the trainings, workshops, and Communities of Practice satisfactorily met the needs and expectations. In addition, 100% of surveyed participants acknowledged that they made demonstrable and measurable increases in their professional goals through their participation in the FEPLN program. The Case Management Department assisted 76% of participants in accessing resources and services that were identified as making a positive impact on their lives. In 2020, the Social Service Department was able to expand its reach and service offerings as a result of providing virtual workshops, trainings, and Communities of Practice. In addition, for the first time, the Case Management and Transitional Services Departments were able to provide Employment and Mental Health & Wellbeing virtual workshops in, both, English and Spanish.

## The CFL Difference

What sets the CFL' Social Service Department (SSD) apart from other family literacy programs in Chicago's underserved communities, is that it offers **free** transitional services, with a focus on education and employment; in addition, the department offers free Case Management services to assist in addressing social-emotional barriers to success. Moreover, the Social Service Department's Family Engagement Professional Network was designed to work with and support Family Service Workers and Home Visitors and provide them with the tools and resources they need to achieve success in their current roles. The Center for Literacy is unique in that it provides wrap-around services for Chicago Early Learning families via the Social Service Department, while also providing supportive services to Chicago Early Learning (CEL) staff members. To ensure that CFL is fostering the social working community, the Case Management Department trains and mentors social work interns from Chicago colleges and universities.

# CAREER TRANSITIONS GOALS ACHIEVED & SERVICES RENDERED



- Employment Goal Completed
- General Transitional Goal Completed
- In-Person Individual Transitional Meetings
- Transitional Advocacy Services (Outreaches)
- Transitional Advocacy Services (Referrals)
- Transitional Info Session Completed
- Transitional Workshops Attended

2020

## Connecting Our Vision

2020, and COVID-19, brought with it many changes and a major change for the Social Service Department was the 100% transition to online/virtual training, workshops, and Communities of Practice.

In 2020, the Social Services Department, specifically Transitional Services was selected to participate in the *2020 Transforming Impossible Into Possible (TIP)*<sup>®</sup> Experiential Group cohort. TIP is an evidenced-informed intervention model designed to assist low-income job seekers by addressing the psychological self-sufficiency (PSS) process in workforce development.<sup>1</sup>

In 2020, the Social Services Department implemented the *Community Spotlight* that was developed to familiarize CFL and its participants with additional resources available from other Community-Based Organizations in the Chicagoland area. There are two virtual spotlight presentations each month.

<sup>1</sup> TRANSFORMING IMPOSSIBLE INTO POSSIBLE (TIP) ®. (n.d.). TRANSFORMING IMPOSSIBLE INTO POSSIBLE (TIP) ®. Retrieved October 27, 2021, from <http://www.tipprogram.org/>

## CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES RENDERED



2020

# RCADD

Resource Center for Autism  
& Developmental Delays



The **Resource Center for Autism & Developmental Delays (RCADD)** provides a rich collection of resources, trainings, referrals, and consultations by educational specialists to those who care for, teach, and serve children with an autism spectrum disorder or other developmental delays. These services are designed to support Chicago Early Learning staff and families as they address the needs of children with autism and other developmental delays. Trainings focus on understanding autism and the spectrum of developmental delays as well as strategies to effectively advocate for children with special needs

## Our 2020 Impact

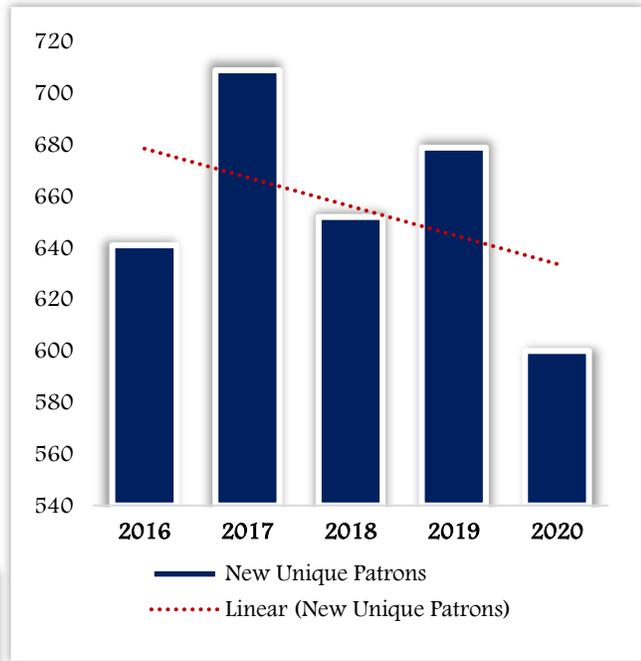
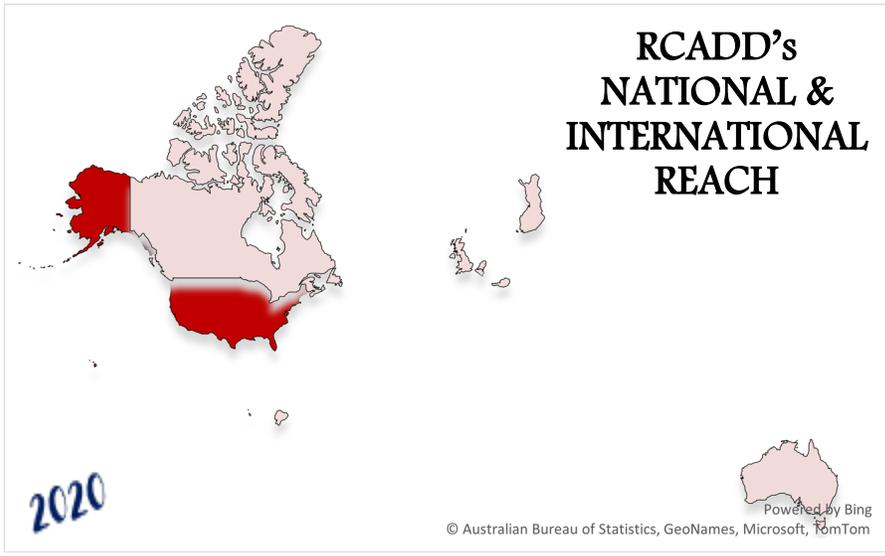
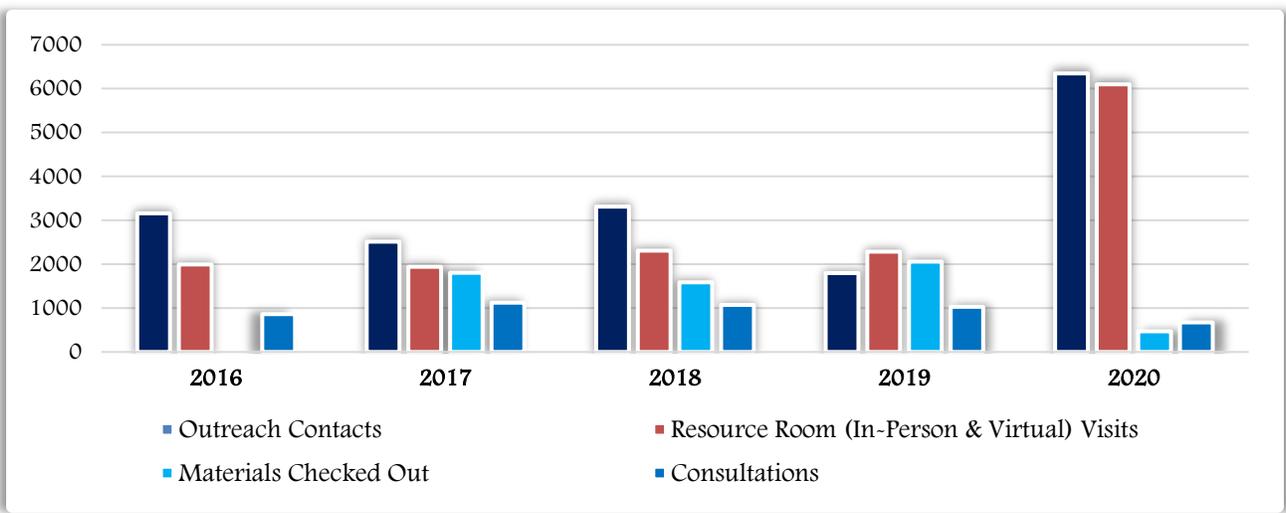
In 2020, RCADD was able to introduce 600 new in-person and virtual patrons to the free resources and services that RCADD offers. Consultations are another big draw for new and returning RCADD patrons, and in 2020 the RCADD Staff was able to successfully complete 675 consultations. Moreover, RCADD offered 80 virtual and in-person trainings, in 2020, which was a 264% increase from the previous year. Of those training participants, 99% reported that the training met their expectations, but most importantly 89% demonstrated knowledge increase as determined by gains made on the retrospective pre/post survey. It should be mentioned that in 2020 RCADD had 6098 visits to its virtual and in-person Resource Room, and of those visitors, 82% found that the facility and staff were able to successfully meet their needs.

## Who We Serve

The Resource Center for Autism & Developmental Delays (RCADD) ramped up its virtual lending library and saw a 167% increase over last year for patron visits to its in-person and virtual Resource Rooms. Moreover, the virtual Resource Room was able to reach a broader audience than just the Chicagoland area and Illinois. Through the virtual platform, resources serving those with Autism and Developmental Delays were able to be accessed by individuals living in South America, Europe, Australia, and Asia; this is a far greater reach than in previous years. Of those seeking RCADD services, 62% were seeking services for someone with Autism and 25% were looking for services for someone with a Developmental Delay. The remaining 13% were Undisclosed or not specifically looking for services for someone with Autism or a Developmental Delay. Furthermore, 57% of in-person visitors identified as Educators, while 27% classified themselves as Parents and/or Caregivers, 14% as Other Professionals, and 2% as Students. In 2020, the vast majority (67%) of in-person visits to RCADD were for Resources, which included, but were not limited to, the lending library where they were able to check out books, games, and tip sheets. That was followed closely by the 31% of individuals who were new to RCADD services and resources, and they were visiting the in-person Resource Room for the very first time. The in-person RCADD Resource Room saw the most visits from individuals who resided in the 60609 area code which encompasses the following Chicago Community Areas: Armour Square, Bridgeport, Douglas, Fuller Park, Gage Park, Grand Boulevard, McKinley Park, New City, and Washington Park.

## The CFL Difference

What sets the CFL apart from other family literacy programs in Chicago's underserved communities, is that it offers **free** resources to communities that are supporting those with Autism and Developmental Delays. RCADD is a one-of-a-kind asset, in that, it provides resources, trainings, and consultations at no cost to its patrons. In addition, RCADD provides visual supports that assist those with Autism and Developmental Delays understand what is being communicated to them, and conversely, they aid in teaching them to communicate with others and make sense of the world around them. RCADD is grounded in the advocacy work that it does on behalf of those with Autism and Developmental Delays, working tirelessly to make sure that there is impartiality and equity of services and resources for communities that may be under-resourced, or not resourced at all when it comes to supporting those with special needs.

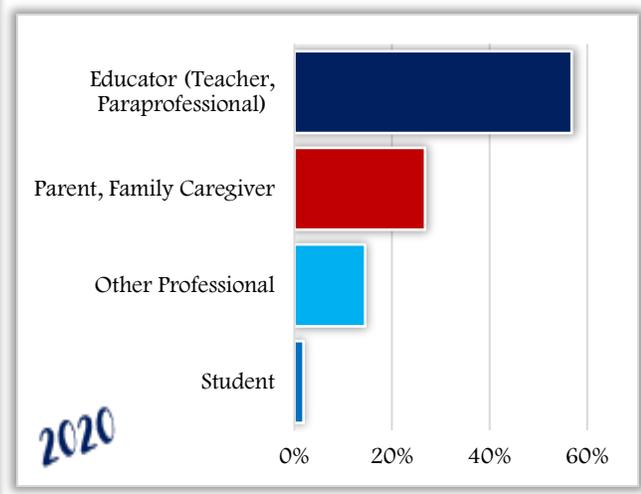


## Connecting Our Vision

2020, and COVID-19, brought with it many changes and a major change was the ramped offering of online/virtual services. Through providing services on a virtual platform RCADD was able to expand its reach. This transition fostered RCADD's creation of a specialized website that allowed users to access on-demand videos, visual supports, and schedule appointments for remote consultations with an RCADD Disability Specialist.

In 2020, the Resource Center for Autism & Developmental Delays presented at numerous in-person and virtual national conferences, partnered with local children's hospitals and organizations to train staff on pertinent issues affecting those with Autism and Developmental Delays. In addition, RCADD provided research-based trainings that focused on addressing the needs of those working directly with those with Autism or Developmental Delays.

In 2020, the Resource Center for Autism & Developmental Delays fostered lucrative community partnerships with Lakeshore Learning and Chicago Autism Network. These partnerships allowed for a transference of resources and knowledge between the two organizations and the Center for Literacy's RCADD.



# ENGAGE

Community Engagement



The **Community Engagement Department (ENGAGE)** provides short-term & long-term volunteer opportunities, which allows participants to get involved with Center for Literacy service projects. There are three facets of the Community Engagement department in which a person can participate, or a community-based organization can develop and enhance their current volunteer program. In the AmeriCorps program, volunteers (“Members”) support Chicago Early Learning families and receive hands-on training. The CFL Volunteers program offers short-term and long-term volunteer opportunities. The Volunteer Resource Program offers volunteer management workshops.

## Our 2020 Impact

In 2020, the Community Engagement Department oversaw 16 Project MORE AmeriCorps (AC) Members successfully complete their service year, amassing 15,002 service hours, and individually the number of service hours completed by 10 Project MORE AmeriCorps members was 1710.

## Service Projects

Every year the Center for Literacy’s Community Engagement Department via the Project MORE AmeriCorps program commits to two major service projects a year. In 2020, the first service project was held in January to honor the work and legacy of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the second project was held in November to commemorate the courage and sacrifices of our United States service members. The MLK Service Day consisted of a donation drive that was valued in excess of \$600, which was donated to various homeless shelters throughout the Chicago area. In addition, to the donation drive, AC Members, CFL Staff, and community volunteers hosted and participated in a Pop-Up Literacy Fair at the DuSable Museum of African American History. In conjunction with the museum fair, literacy fairs were also presented at the homeless shelters that received a donation. At this service project, 300 children and 150 parents were actively engaged in family literacy-based activities. During the November community service project, CFL’s Project MORE AmeriCorps Members prepared and delivered care packages to 81 veterans residing in Hope Manor, a veteran housing facility located on Chicago’s west side. The contents of the care packages were the results of donations made by local businesses, community leaders, and community members, and the valuation of those donations was more than \$1200.

## The CFL Difference

What sets the CFL apart from other family literacy programs in Chicago’s underserved communities, is that it offers **free**, to community-based organizations (CBOs), access to its Volunteer Resource Program (VRP), which provides trainings, tools, and resources to assist CBOs in managing and effectively utilizing their volunteers. In 2020, the Volunteer Resource Program provided services to 11 non-profits and/or community-based organizations that implemented 3+ of the tools that were learned in the VRP trainings. The non-profits and/or community-based organizations used those tools to create, develop and/or enhance their current volunteer programs. Overall, in 2020, the Volunteer Resources Program provided services to 48 participants representing 31 non-profit and/or community-based organizations.

# 15,002



## AmeriCorps Project MORE Service Hours Completed

# 1,710

Individual service hours completed by 10 Project MORE AmeriCorps Members.



# 2020

## Project MORE

(Making Opportunities for Reading Enrichment)

## Events



=

### January 20<sup>th</sup>

18<sup>th</sup> Annual MLK Donation Drive & Day of Service

MLK Donation Value:

**\$600+**



=

### November 11<sup>th</sup>

Veteran's Day Donation Drive & Day of Service

VA Donation Value:

**\$1200+**

## Connecting Our Vision

2020, and COVID-19, brought with it many changes and a major change was the ramped offering of online/virtual services, through providing virtual VRP trainings. In addition, 2020 paved the way for the use of virtual giving campaigns which were designed to support the two major AmeriCorps Service Projects.

In 2020, the Volunteer Resource Program laid the foundation for the development of what will eventually become a research-based training curriculum for non-profit and community-based volunteer programs.

In 2020, the Community Engagement Department cultivated relationships in communities of color to introduce and promote the benefit of family literacy and bring awareness of the impact it has on children and the community-at-large. These community events brought attention to CFL and its Mission and Values.

# 11

Non-profits & CBOs implementing 3+ new tools learned in the VRP trainings.

# 48

Volunteer Resource participants representing 31 Non-profits & CBOs.

# our Success Stories

2019 - 2020



# Adult Education & Career Transitions (AECT)

## Adult Education (Bilingual Literacy)

### *Success Story*

In early 2020, UIC Center for Literacy's Family Start program participated in a community craft workshop series, called "El Regalo" (The Gift) designed to highlight the gifts of language, culture, and community shared between parents and children. The workshop series arose from a partnership between the UIC Center for Literacy and MECA: Movimiento para la Educación Cultural y Autónoma (Movement for Cultural and Autonomous Education) and a desire to provide intentional family programming that honored participants' language, culture, and ancestral knowledge.

In English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQZfk5BXE24>

En Español: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mb2KMFZvxVE&t=2s>

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## Career Transitions

### *Success Story*

Transitional Student #1 began their journey with FAST Southwest as an ESL student in 2018. The student instantly felt at home and the support not only from their instructors but from their peers too. "It was a very welcoming space, I felt comfortable right away, and could feel the support from everyone in the program", student's statement. While taking ESL classes, they learned that FAST SW also offered HSE classes. The student went back and forth on the decision to enroll, after giving it some thought and talking it over with their partner who always encouraged them to continue studying, so they decided to make the jump. The student told themselves, "if I was able to complete courses in my hometown (Mexico), why shouldn't I be able to do it here?" At first, they felt a bit overwhelmed with double the classes, taking care of their children, and daily house responsibilities. The student began to doubt themselves and their abilities and would often tell themselves, "I'll never get my HSE, I should just drop the classes." However, they found a big source of inspiration and motivation from a student also taking HSE classes. A student who they say, "was a mother of two and her youngest has a disability that requires a lot of her time, she has no support from her family, and still finds the motivation to continue the course and eventually graduated! I find this incredibly inspiring and was a big part of my own journey to obtaining my HSE." With that in mind and the support of their instructors, the student eventually transitioned into a full-time HSE student.

As they began to get ready to take the HSE exams, they couldn't believe all the support and resources they were receiving from staff, instructors, and the social services department. "This was a really challenging time for me. I had my two kids and I had started working. My work schedule conflicted with my school schedule, but the instructor always [tried] to work with me whenever I could attend and send me anything I had missed. I began to utilize the wrap-around services, case management, and transitions, and felt that I really had a whole community not only supporting me but sharing in my dream of obtaining my HSE." Before the student knew it, they were getting ready to take their first official exam. "I took my first exam and unfortunately did not pass it. I felt devastated and a bit discouraged." However, with their support system behind them and some extra study time with their instructor, the student retook the test in 8 days and passed! The student slowly began to pass each test and with each pass, they felt celebrated and supported by the FAST Southwest program. The student obtained their HSE and graduated in FY2019-2020. The student knew this was just the beginning and had no plans on slowing down.

With the continued support of their transition coach post-graduation, the student decided to apply to the AmeriCorps Project MORE program. The student once again had their support system with them and felt empowered throughout the rigorous application process. The student was accepted into the program in September 2020. "There are no words to ever describe how grateful I feel to have found FAST Southwest. I'm grateful to everyone who believed in me and never gave up on me, who challenged me, and motivated me when I wasn't able to motivate myself. FAST Southwest has opened so many opportunities to me and my family, I've seen so much growth in myself and have done things I never dreamed possible. I cherish those experiences so much and there are so many moments that fill my heart with love and joy. I have found friends, resources, and community in this program, but best of all I have made FAST Southwest part of my family."

C.H., CFL Transitional Counselor (2020)



## Learner Spotlight ~ Doralis Morales

Doralis Morales is the mother of two children ages 5 and 6. Both are attending Chicago Early Learning programs through Head Start and Chicago Public Schools. When Doralis enrolled her oldest daughter into the St. Joseph's Early Childhood Center Head Start in the Back of the Yards neighborhood, she learned about the Family Start (FAST) program.

She immediately enrolled in the FAST English as a Second Language program located upstairs from her child's classroom. Having arrived in the U.S. from Mexico only a few years prior, Doralis wanted to better understand the education system her daughter was entering and carve a better life for her and her family. In ESL classes, she learned about the FAST GED/High School Equivalency (HSE) program and set her sights on a new goal.

Despite support at home, Doralis suffered from....[read full story here!](#)



## Learner Spotlight ~ Lizmary Ayala

Lizmary Ayala is a FAST West High School Equivalency (HSE) student who enrolled in March of 2020 and passed the HiSET exam in December 2020. She had a plan when she enrolled and was determined to graduate before her birthday at the end of December. Not only did Lizmary pass her HiSET examination within this timeframe, but she was also working on her Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Certification at the same time.

In addition to juggling responsibilities for her HiSET and EMT, she also balanced family responsibilities and other obstacles to remain steadfast to reach her goals. She took care of several of her children while she studied. In addition, she had to study for her HiSET exam remotely during the pandemic, which posed a technical challenge that she overcame. After she passed the HiSET Practice tests for Reading, Writing, Science, and Math, she had to schedule the official exam. While she passed her first test remotely, at home, she had to reschedule her second test because the HiSET Test Monitor said there was too much background noise in her home. Consequently, she had to complete an in-person test at a testing site during the pandemic. These tests were scarce, so she had to take the test on the date and place that was available. Finally, she had to be the caretaker of two family members who came down with COVID-19. As each obstacle arose, Lizmary confronted it with a positive and calm attitude. She did not let any of these roadblocks deter her from reaching her goals before her birthday. We are so proud of Lizmary and want to thank the staff and instructors who supported her in reaching her goals!

# Resource Center for Autism & Developmental Delays (RCADD)

## RCADD Patron Testimonials

I just wanted to say THANK YOU!

The interactive resources and PowerPoints you all have been uploading onto your RCAAD site have been lifesaving (especially on Mondays when I feel like I'm starting all over again) and absolutely on point for us educators that are continually trying to create new and engaging academic content for our students. I have always been a major fan [of] RCAAD especially the resource library and task boxes.

I wanted to be sure to send an email to say thank you and let you all know that [your] work is appreciated and many of us are utilizing these resources. I have been sharing the RCAAD website and resources with parents, students, and staff to ensure that the [programs] at RCAAD [continue]!

Have an awesome day! You all are AMAZING!!!

~ M. E., Occupational Therapist & RCADD Patron (2020)



Amazing work, very prompt [when] answering emails and collaborating with me to find the perfect materials for my students to learn and continue growing. I can't wait to come back for more.

~ Unknown, RCADD Patron (2020)

## Social Service Department (SSD)

### Case Management *Success Story*

Case Management Participant #1 is an excellent student who began the program after I had already completed my internship. When I met this student, she/he was one of the friendliest students I have ever met. Similar to all of the students we serve, it is sometimes hard to express vulnerability, share experiences and life stories. This individual has attended almost every one of the Case Management workshops and has shown growth each time. She/He is very insightful, kind, and inspirational and it has been a pleasure working with her/him.

~ A.A., CFL Case Manager (2020)

### FEPLN Success Story *Building a Network of Support*

This year, Family Engagement Professional Network (FEPLN) wrapped up the Family Service Worker (FSW) Learning Circles. This group of FSWs served in their role for five years or less. The focus of the learning circle is to help participants deepen their practice in their role as a Family Service Worker, learn from their peers, and build a network of support.

During their time together in each session, the participants in this Foundational FSW Learning Circle found meaningful ways to lean in and support one another. In each session, the FEPLN facilitation team could see their bonds were growing beyond the space of the Learning Circle time. At the end of the last session, the group decided to continue meeting and stay connected. On the post-survey, one participant noted, "thank you for expanding my circle of support. I am not alone in my role". The commitment to stay connected and build new bridges of support is one of the key outcomes for FEPLN. Having a sense of connection and support helps to mitigate workplace factors of burnout.

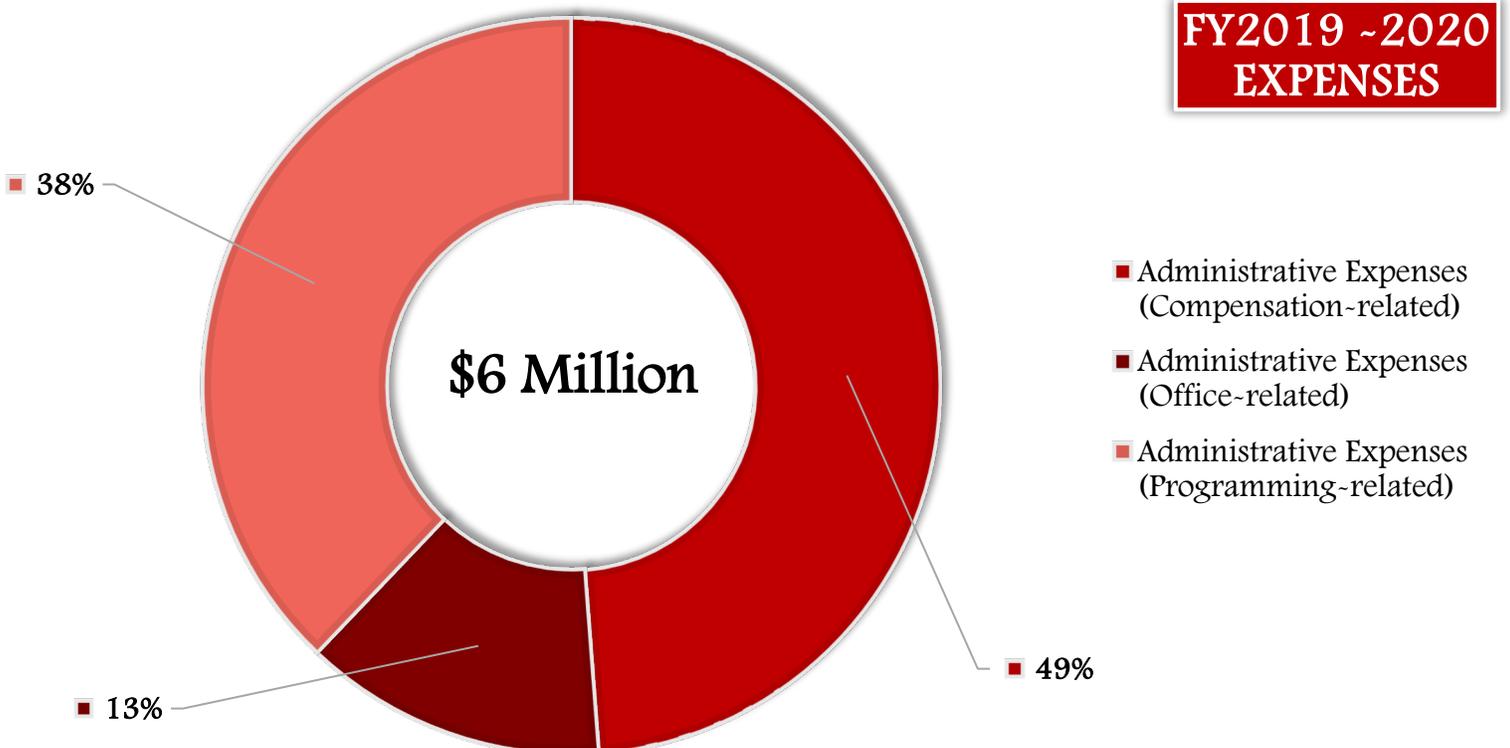
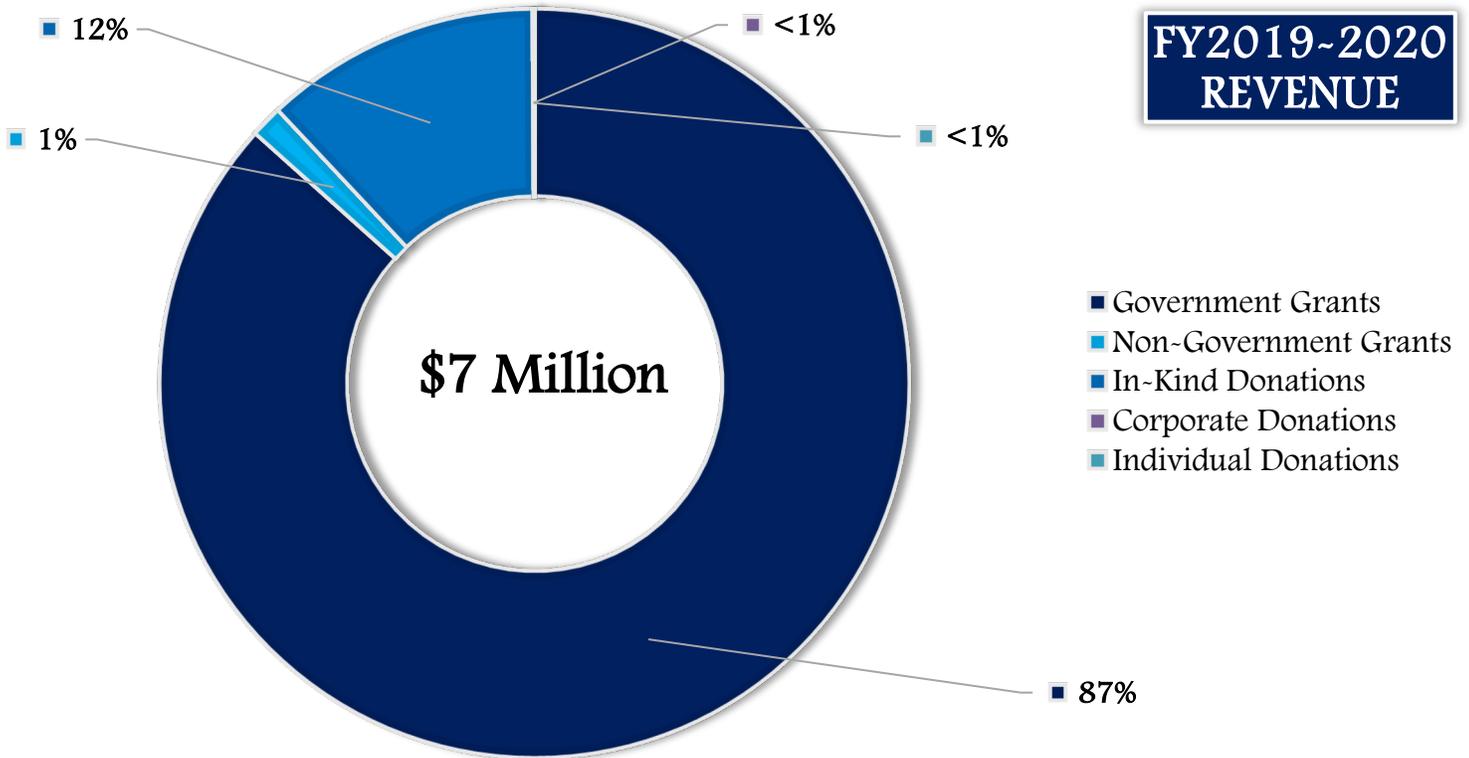
~ FEPLN Facilitator (2020)

# Our Financials



2019 - 2020

# Financial Outlook



# Acknowledgements

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Thank you for your generosity to the Center for Literacy. We are thrilled to have your support. Through your donations we have been able to continue working towards designing and modeling culturally sustaining multigenerational literacy programs.

You truly make the difference for us, and we are extremely grateful!

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## Our Major 2020 Community Supporters

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# Get Engaged



**Visit** us. Stop by our program spaces and virtual workshops/training to see CFL in action.

**Volunteer.** We're always looking for great and dedicated volunteers to work with our organization and make a lasting impact in the lives of others. To volunteer email [CFLvolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:CFLvolunteers@gmail.com).

**Sponsor.** CFL events throughout the year and have your name and/or business highlighted on the program.

**Partner** with us. Join CFL's team of community partners to make a positive impact in the early learning community.

**Like** us on Facebook ([UIC Center for Literacy](#)), Twitter ([@uiccfl](#)), and Instagram ([@uic.cfl](#)) to stay up to date on our latest news, photos, and videos.

To Donate click [here](#).

# 2019~2020 Annual Report

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The University of Illinois @ Chicago's  
Center for Literacy

## 2019~2020 Annual Report Prepared by

—●—  
**C. Multrie (Author)**  
*Program Evaluation Coordinator*  
Center for Literacy

**D. Rios-Ibarra (Co-Author)**  
*Data & Evaluation Clerk*  
Center for Literacy

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**Delivered:** November 2021

The following report is a summative of the Center for Literacy fiscal year 2019-2020 (December 1, 2019 to November 30, 2020) services. The report was prepared and written by Chivon Multrie (Author) and Diana Rios-Ibarra (Co-Author).

Technical assistance and guidance were provided by Ruby Camacho, Associate Director and Andrea Vaughan, Assistant Director of Literacy Research, UIC Center for Literacy.

Information included in the report covers the program's promised deliverables for the City of Chicago, Department of Family Support Services (DFSS) scope, internal evaluation completed in 2019-2020, and a summary of programmatic impact.

Questions regarding this report should be directed to:

**Andrea Vaughan**  
*Assistant Director of Literacy Research*  
UIC Center for Literacy  
[avaugh6@uic.edu](mailto:avaugh6@uic.edu)  
312-996-5991



# Center for Literacy

1040 W. Harrison St. (MC 147)  
Education, Theatre, Music & Social Work (ETMSW)  
Main Office, Room 1223  
Chicago, IL 60607

**Email** | [CFL@uic.edu](mailto:CFL@uic.edu)  
**Phone** | (312) 413-1914  
**Fax** | (312) 413-8083