

# 2021 Annual Report



# Dear Friends of Cabrini,

Like many, we began 2021 with a sense of uncertainty, but we also felt a sense of hope for a new chapter ahead and an appreciation for the community that helped us through the challenges of 2020. The economic, social, and emotional impacts of the pandemic have been particularly devastating for our immigrant members, so as we entered 2021 we knew that our emergency response to the pandemic would have to become a sustainable, long-term source of support as our members navigated this new reality and began to rebuild. We opened our Food Pantry for a second day of distribution to ensure our clients had food on their tables, and trained our Social Services team to help clients access financial relief to pay their bills. We held support groups and offered counseling, creating a safe space for clients to reflect on the challenges of immigration and the pandemic. Our Legal Services team grew, ensuring we could continue and expand our work to reunify families and protect vulnerable immigrants. Our Justice for Immigrants Program provided a space for building power, resilience, and hope.

As we celebrate these achievements, we look towards the future with optimism. **We are excited to announce we will be moving to a new space at the St. Frances Cabrini Shrine in Washington Heights in May of 2022.** All of our programs will continue to operate and serve clients from all over New York City, as they have for many years. However, this larger, renovated space will allow for the continued expansion of our staff, provide beautiful spaces for our community to gather, and allow us to connect more meaningfully with our Cabrinian roots.

Thank you for supporting us through many transitions, moments of growth, and challenges over the past two decades. We hope you will continue to partner with us in the years to come.



Javier Ramirez-Baron  
Executive Director



Ilze Earner  
Board Chair



# Our Mission

Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC (CIS-NYC) provides essential services to immigrants in the spirit of Mother Cabrini, patron saint of immigrants and founder of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Our mission is to empower immigrants, their families, and their communities through education, access to essential services, civic participation, and community building. We strive to work together with the immigrant community to create a more inclusive society by fostering justice, dignity, and respect.



# Immigration Legal Services

Low-income immigrants in New York City face significant barriers to high-quality legal representation and are often vulnerable to legal services scams and other abuses. At CIS-NYC we aim to bridge this gap in services by providing low-cost, comprehensive, and competent legal services to the local immigrant community. Our low-cost legal services ensure that families don't have to choose between putting food on the table and seeking life changing legal assistance.

CIS-NYC's Staff Attorneys and Social Workers collaborate to ensure all who come to CIS-NYC are provided with legal orientation and education, connected with vital resources, and supported through the often grueling and discouraging legal immigration process. In 2021 we began conducting legal consultations at the Mother Cabrini Shrine in Washington Heights, in order to reach a wider range of clients.

As new opportunities and pathways to protection for our community members arose throughout the year, we responded rapidly to support our clients in understanding and benefitting from these vital changes. In May 2021 CIS-NYC held a Temporary Protected Status (TPS) clinic for Venezuelans in partnership with Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid (VIA). **We were able to assist 30 individuals with completing their TPS applications.**

**677**

**IMMIGRATION  
CONSULTATIONS**

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**308**

**NEW IMMIGRATION CASES  
OPENED**

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**504**

**IMMIGRATION  
APPLICATIONS  
SUCCESSFULLY SUBMITTED  
TO USCIS**

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**\$527K**

**SAVED IN LEGAL  
REPRESENTATION FEES**

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# 27

**INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED THEIR GREEN CARDS** with the help of CIS-NYC. Now they are able to reunify with their families, work legally in the United States, make long term plans for themselves and their families without fear of separation and deportation, and have the opportunity to become citizens in the future.

## *Carlos & Esther's Story\**

Carlos came to CIS-NYC in 2019 for assistance reuniting with his wife, Esther, who was living in the Dominican Republic. Esther is Haitian, but migrated to the Dominican Republic when she was 15 years old due to the unrest in her home country. Unfortunately, when Carlos came to CIS-NYC, he was suffering from end-stage renal disease and could not travel, which delayed the immigration process. This also meant that he was unable to see his wife as he went through treatment and waited for a kidney transplant. Finally, in 2021 CIS-NYC's attorneys were able to advocate for Carlos and his wife and request that their case be expedited. Due to current backlogs, without this expedite they may have had to wait another year to be reunited. At the end of 2021 Carlos's wife received her Visa to come to the U.S. and officially became a green card holder upon arrival. They were both ecstatic and relieved that after years of separation, Esther could finally be by her husband's side as he continues to go through treatment.



*\*names have been changed*



# Social Services

CIS-NYC's immigrant community members face numerous challenges, including isolation due to language and cultural barriers, high rates of poverty and food insecurity, unemployment, and lack of access to public benefits, health care, trustworthy legal services, and education. Our Social Services team aims to address many of these challenges by providing holistic case management services, short-term crisis counseling, and psychoeducational support groups for parents.

In 2021, we supported our community members in their continued recovery from the impacts of the pandemic: they needed support identifying financial resources, feeding their families, securing safe housing, receiving medical care, finding jobs, processing devastating losses, and more. Through expanded case management services we were able to provide our clients with holistic support and referrals in each of these areas. Clients also received additional mental health support through short term crisis counseling and support groups. In 2021 we held a women's support group, a parenting group, and a family reunification group, each of which provided participants with a safe space to reflect on and process their shared experiences of immigration and the challenges of the pandemic.

**200**

**CASE MANAGEMENT  
CLIENTS**

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**85**

**CLIENTS RECEIVED SHORT  
TERM CRISIS COUNSELING  
OVER THE COURSE OF**

**298**

**SESSIONS**

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**136**

**INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATED  
IN OUR SUPPORT GROUPS**

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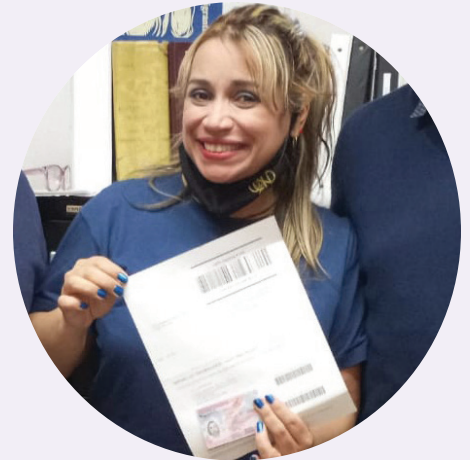
**36**

**GROUP SESSIONS HELD  
OVER THE COURSE OF  
THE YEAR**

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# Yelitza's Story

“I am from Venezuela and I moved to the United States at the end of 2019. I arrived in New York City during the pandemic with little money, alone, and disoriented. CIS-NYC helped me with my political asylum and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) applications, they sheltered me from the cold, and I received emotional support, legal assistance, and food. After 8 months, I received my social security card and work permit. In my heart I can only have gratitude for Cabrini and their staff because they are family to me, who accompanied me faithfully through this journey. —Yelitza”



## SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAM SPECIAL INITIATIVES

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### ANGEL FUND SCHOLARSHIP

CIS-NYC's Angel Fund Scholarship Program provides scholarships to low-income immigrant students who are pursuing higher education. Students also receive ongoing support from our social work team throughout the school year. We distributed **\$5,700 in scholarships to seven immigrant students** for the Spring 2021 semester and **\$7,400 to eight students** in the Fall 2021 semester.

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### CHRISTMAS GIFT DISTRIBUTION

In December we held our annual gift distribution to ensure our families would have a Merry Christmas despite the financial burdens many were experiencing as a result of the pandemic and other challenges. Each family received gifts (including toys, clothing, and books), a bag of groceries, lunch to-go, and a gift card to help cover daily costs. Thanks to our generous donors and volunteers, we were able to distribute **234 toys, 137 winter jackets, 400 pairs of socks, 300 books, and \$3,000 worth of gift cards to 60 families (117 children).**



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### FAMILY TRIPS

Due to COVID-19, we had to limit the number of family trips we held in 2021. Instead of holding a trip, in March we distributed large bags of **essential groceries to 25 families in need**. In August, we were able to hold our first family trip since the start of the pandemic. **We took 19 families (66 individuals) to the Bronx Zoo.**



# Margi's Story

## ANGEL FUND RECIPIENT

*Margi received the Angel Fund Scholarship throughout her enrollment at Hunter College and graduated with a BS in biology in 2021.*

“Thank you for the generous Angel Fund Scholarship. I am grateful and appreciative to have been selected for this award. I am currently working as a medical scribe and studying for the MCAT. I plan on applying to medical school in May of this year. My ultimate goal is to become a medical doctor dedicated to serving and advancing our community. As an immigrant myself, I personally lived and experienced the struggles that our people endure each and everyday. Whether with finances, housing or healthcare, as immigrants we are at a predisposed disadvantage and it is our right and my desire to fight against these disparities. Thanks to the Angel Fund, I am one step closer to achieving my goal. By awarding me the Angel Fund Scholarship, you reduced my financial burden tremendously which in turn allowed me to focus on my school work rather than worrying about paying for school. I hope that one day I will also be able to help struggling students reach their goals in higher education like you helped me. —Margi”



## SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAM COVID-19 RELIEF

The majority of CIS-NYC's clients were not eligible for unemployment insurance, stimulus checks from the federal government, or other forms of relief throughout the pandemic, despite being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. In 2021 we made it a priority to support our clients in accessing relief through programs such as the **New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program** and the **Excluded Workers Fund**.

While the Excluded Workers Fund was only open for two months, CIS-NYC was able to assist 145 individuals in applying for the program before funds ran out. We estimate that in total **our clients received over \$1.5 million in relief funds**.

In 2021 we also supported 10 individuals in applying for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, which provided relief to low-income individuals who owed rent and were at risk of eviction. We estimate that **our clients received \$41,172 in relief funds**.



# Food Pantry



CIS-NYC's Food Pantry provides healthy, well-balanced packages of food to clients from our local community. In 2021 we **added a second distribution day** each week in order to meet the immediate needs of our legal and social services clients. We also continued to distribute masks and personal hygiene items in addition to food.

Throughout the year we offered a range of additional services and resources during pantry service hours, including: safe walks home with Protect Chinatown in response to an increase in anti-Asian violence; information about the Child Tax Credit from the NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection; referrals to free COVID vaccines; and more. We also provided **seven nutritional workshops** in partnership with the Food Bank for New York City.

## 9,723

PACKAGES OF FOOD &  
PERSONAL HYGIENE ITEMS  
DISTRIBUTED

## 810

PACKAGES OF FOOD  
DISTRIBUTED ON AVERAGE  
PER MONTH

## 251,324

MEALS WORTH OF FOOD  
DISTRIBUTED

## \$18,300

IN GROCERY VOUCHERS  
DISTRIBUTED

## 1,100

FAMILIES IN NEED SERVED

# Justice for Immigrants

The Justice for Immigrants Program (JFI) aims to engage our multigenerational immigrant membership in educating their communities, developing leadership skills, building community resilience, and advocating for a more humane immigration system.

JFI had **150 active members** at the end of 2021. JFI members attended bi-weekly membership meetings and monthly educational workshops, engaged in leadership development opportunities, and participated in campaign activities.

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## COMMUNITY EDUCATION

In 2021 we held **19 virtual workshops** on Facebook Live and Zoom. The workshops had **nearly 5,000 views and over 200 participants**, with an average of 30 participants at each Zoom workshop. Workshops were on a range of topics such as workers' rights, tenant rights, updates on changes in immigration legislation, and more. We also provided five off-site workshops for community partners.

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## ORGANIZING & ADVOCACY

**179 JFI members participated in 23 campaign activities**, including rallies, press conferences, and meetings with elected officials. We played a role in advocating for the successful passage of the NY HERO Act and the Excluded Workers Fund, both of which have had profound impacts on the lives of our members. Throughout 2021 we also advocated for a pathway to citizenship for millions of immigrants, mobilizing 50 members to the streets of New York City and traveling to Washington, DC with 20 members.

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## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**15 JFI members participated in our 2-day intensive leadership training** where they learned about the global and historical context of migration and systemic oppression, as well as practical skills for community organizing.

In 2021 we launched a Fellowship Program where members had the opportunity to develop organizing and outreach skills, and to take on meaningful leadership roles within JFI. Fellows were given a stipend for their time. In 2021 three fellows completed the program.

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## PAPELES

In our new storytelling program, **“PAPELES,”** participants learned to tell their stories through various artistic mediums. Over the course of four sessions, **14 participants learned** from and collaborated with professional artists to develop creative pieces. **View some of their final projects here:**  
**<http://cis-nyc.org/papeles/>**

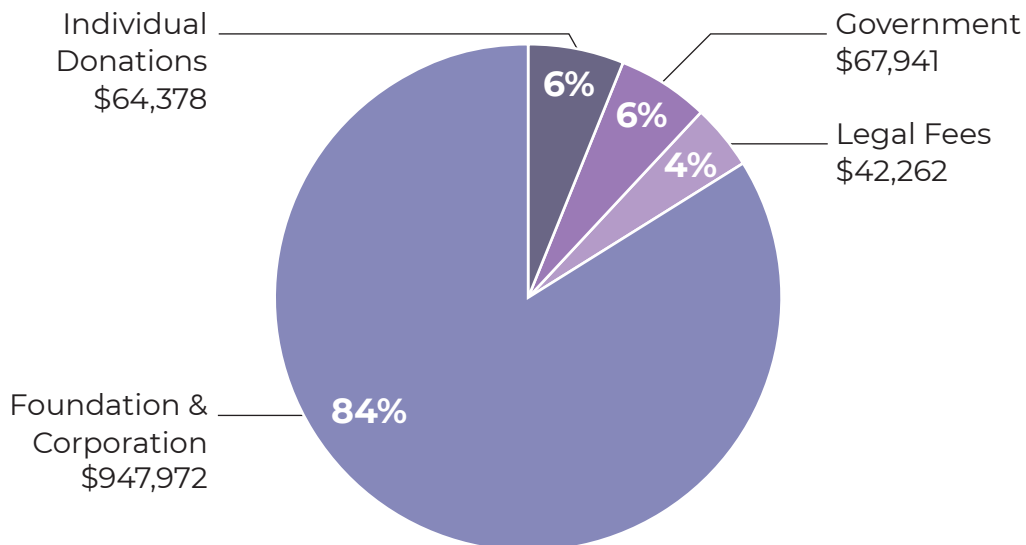


“Justice for Immigrants is a community that nourishes leadership and empowers us to raise our voice. Taking part in the PAPELES Storytelling Workshop helped me process my migration journey through writing and filmmaking. I recently became a JFI Fellow, where I conduct outreach to organize our community. —Leticia Y Yovani”

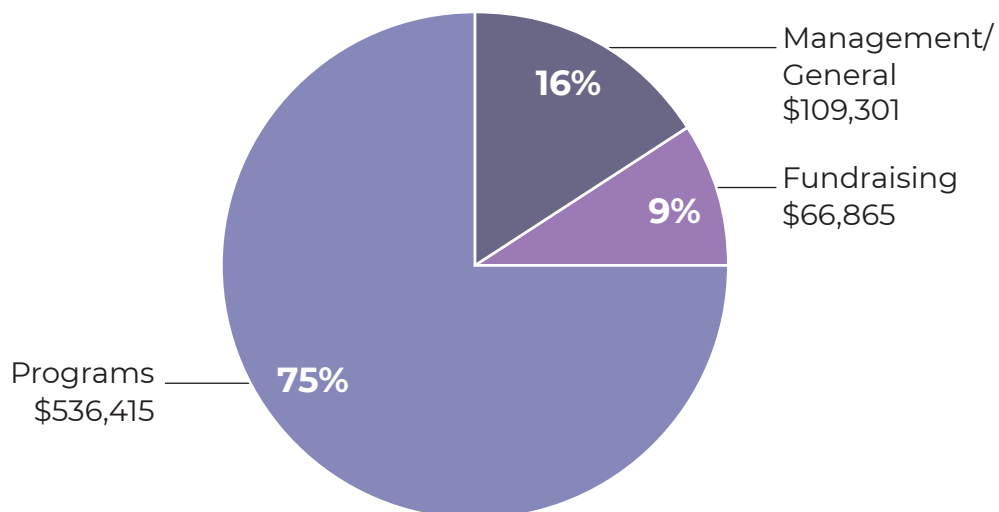


# FY 2021 Financials

## REVENUE TOTAL: 1,122,553



## EXPENSES TOTAL: \$712,581



# Thank You to Our Generous Donors

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## \$100,000 - \$499,999

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Emergency Food Assistance Program  
(Food Bank for New York City)

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## **ROMPIENDO LAS AGUAS ON RADIO MARIA**

Rompiendo Las Aguas is a radio program supported by CIS-NYC that began broadcasting on Radio Maria in 2015. The radio program focuses on bringing information and empowerment to listeners, and in particular immigrants. Rompiendo Las Aguas is hosted by Angel Diaz who is a community leader and board member at CIS-NYC. Learn more and listen at: [www.radiomariasp.org/shows/rompiendo-las-aguas](http://www.radiomariasp.org/shows/rompiendo-las-aguas)







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and mailed to the address below.

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