

G i r a s  o l

Apoyo para el bienestar de los inmigrantes
Supporting the Wellbeing of Immigrants

2-Year Report

2018-2020

Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing

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ABOUT GIRASOL

Girasol was launched in September of 2018 as a culmination of over two years of volunteer work with immigrants in detention and training for the professionals who serve them. The mission of Girasol is to build professional capacity and connection to increase the ability to work at the intersection of mental health and immigration.

Our Mission

Girasol provides trainings, consultations, and resources to build a network of trauma-informed professionals that support immigrant families.

Our Values

Social Justice, Connection & Growth



OUR VISION

A GLOBAL COMMUNITY THAT
PRIORITIZES THE MENTAL HEALTH
AND WELLBEING OF ALL IMMIGRANT
FAMILIES.

What We Do

We provide
Mental health-focused:

Training

Consultation

Resources

Direct support

To:



Social work
students



Mental
health
professionals



Immigrant
families

Which increases:

- Knowledge and skills
- Capacity for self and systems advocacy
- Trauma-informed and culturally-relevant services
- Understanding of the immigration system

So that:

1. Professionals can feel competent and confident in their ability to center the mental health of immigrant families in their work.
2. Immigrant families can engage in systems that support their mental health and wellbeing.

The Girasol Program

Girasol strives to achieve its vision by working to create a global community of trauma-informed professionals. In so doing, we are ensuring access to integrated systems of support and resources for the well-being of all immigrant families.

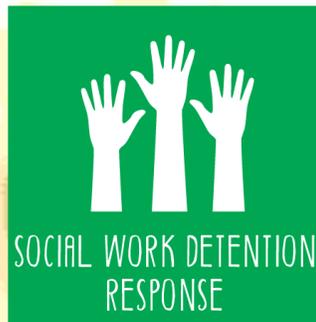
WE GET IT DONE WITH THESE 4 PROGRAM AREAS



We provide professionals with trainings and consultation services.



We collaborate and maintain a statewide network of social workers and mental health professionals working in immigration.



We provide social work students with volunteer and advocacy opportunities.



We maintain and update the Navegando Austin website, a comprehensive list of available immigration resources.

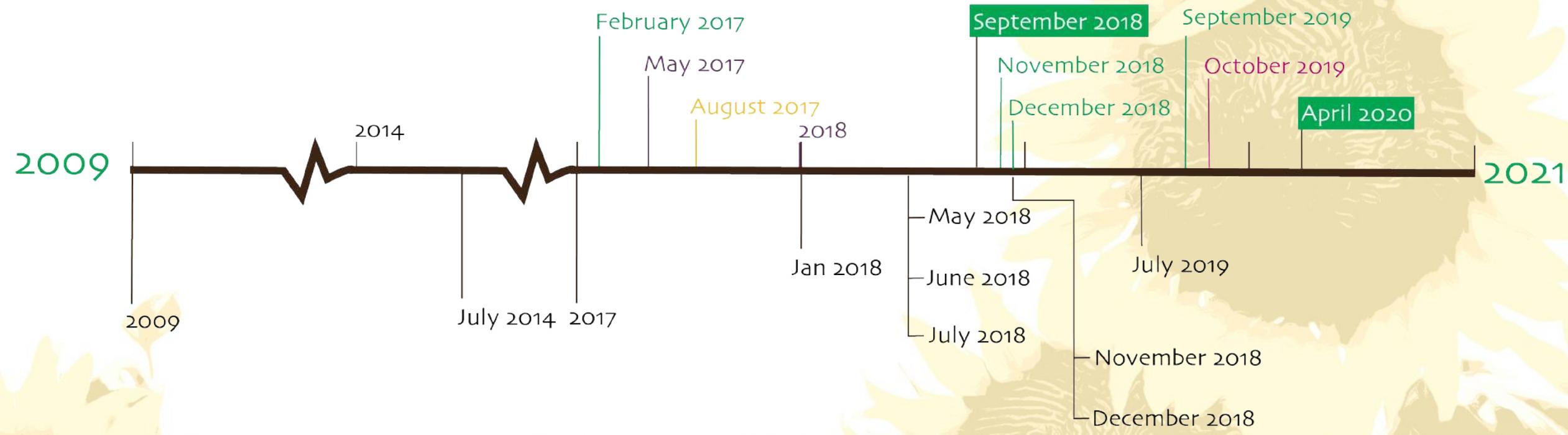
How Girasol meets immigrant families where they are.

In 2019, nearly 1 million migrants crossed the Texas-Mexico border, the majority of whom were families seeking asylum. Texas houses two of the nation's three family detention centers. Girasol is uniquely positioned to collaborate with local organizations to bring our programs and services to meet families where they already are, while also supporting the programs and professionals already on the ground doing this work. See how our programs fit into the immigration response landscape to the right.



To learn more about our work, hover over parts of the map!

Girasol is responding to U.S. Immigration Policies.



Hover over the dates to learn more!



TRAININGS
& CONSULTING



Trainings & Consulting

Since 2017, Girasol has been providing professionals with knowledge, resources, and skills to support the wellbeing of immigrant families. Girasol has trained and consulted with attorneys, social service providers, and organizations to improve trauma-informed care, the efficacy of interdisciplinary teams, and access to resources. Our ultimate goal is to create a global community of trauma-informed professionals who will be able to adequately address the complex mental health needs of immigrant families.

16 trainings and workshops

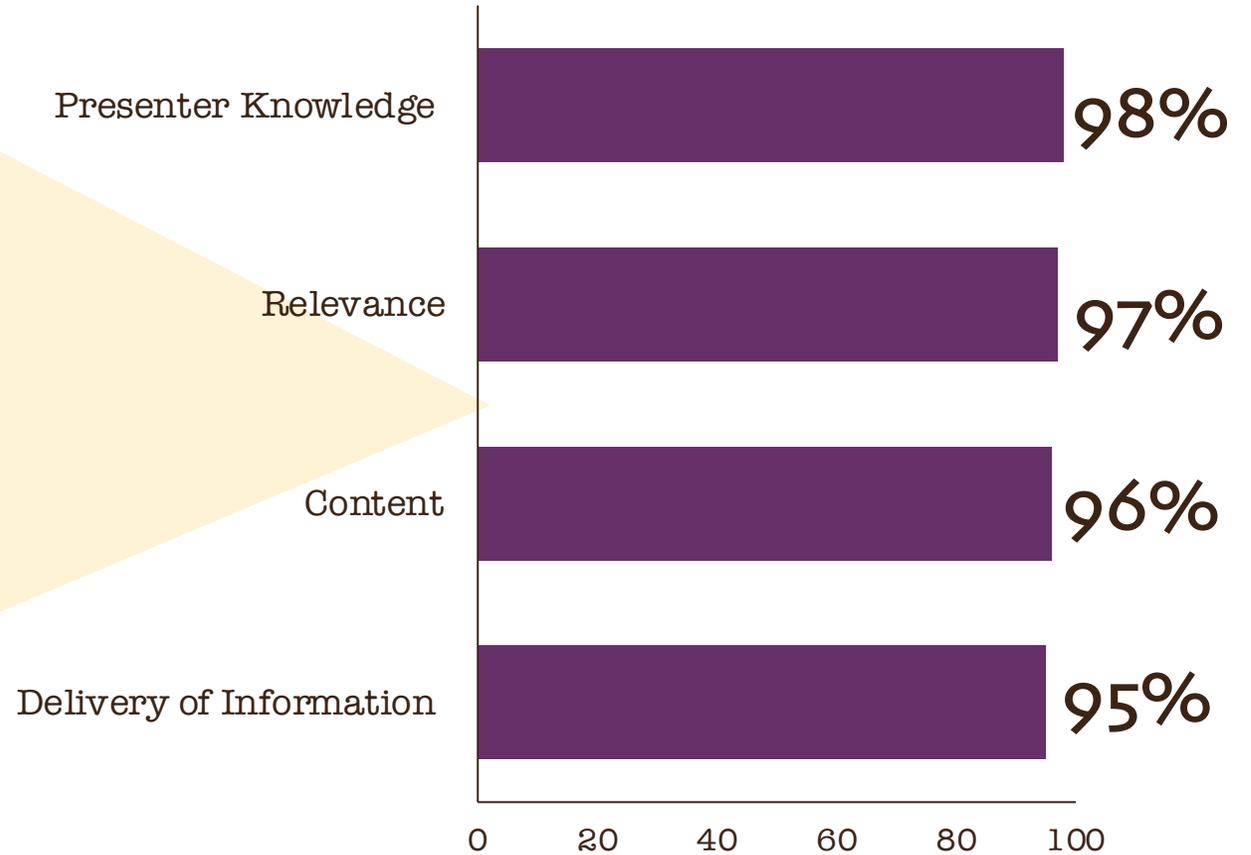
650 individuals trained

100% of people who have participated in a Girasol training would recommend us to a friend

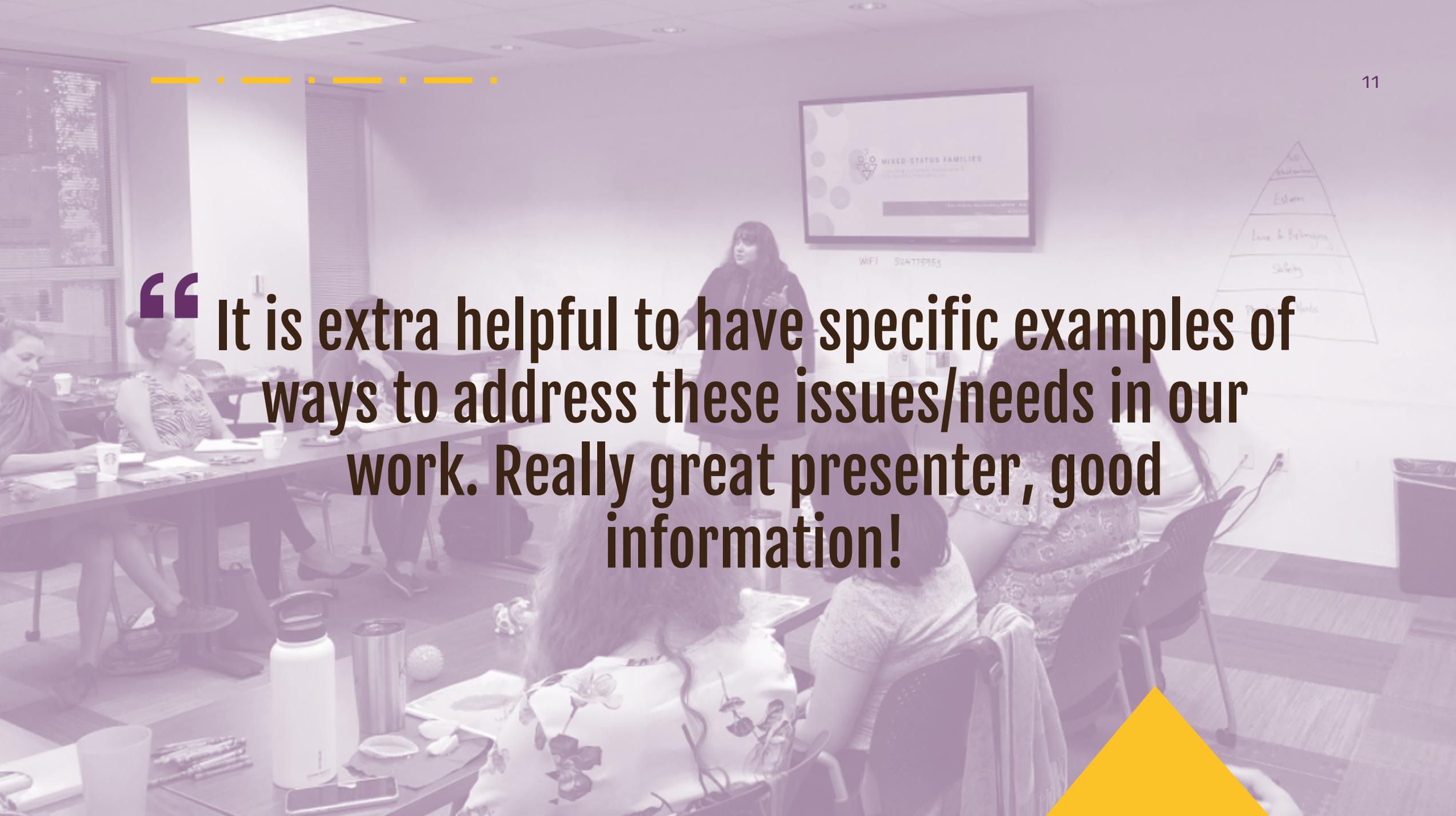
Data is from May 2017 – July 2020

Our trainings have been consistently rated “very good” & “excellent.”

Percent of participants that rated our training “very good” or “excellent.”



Data is from May 2017 – July 2020

A woman in a dark jacket is standing and presenting to a group of people seated around a long table in a meeting room. A large screen behind her displays the logo for 'MIXED-STATUS FAMILIES' and the text 'PROVIDING CULTURAL ASSISTANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES'. To the right, a pyramid diagram is drawn on a whiteboard with the following levels from top to bottom: 'Self-Actualization', 'Esteem', 'Love & Belonging', 'Safety', and 'Physiological Needs'. The room has large windows on the left and a patterned carpet. A yellow triangle is in the bottom right corner.

“ It is extra helpful to have specific examples of ways to address these issues/needs in our work. Really great presenter, good information!

Girasol's Workbook for Professionals Working with Women in Detention



In 2020 we released our first ever trauma-informed workbook with activities, coloring pages, and information designed to support immigrant women in detention or who have been previously detained. The contents may also be useful for other professionals working in other contexts. Feel free to download and print the workbook from our website. The workbook is currently only in Spanish, and it includes:

- Metaphor activities
- Grounding techniques
- Coloring pages
- Activities to help process the migration journey
- Psycho-education on trauma, domestic violence, and symptoms

Trainings Spotlight




**DIGITAL TALKS ON COVID-19:
COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR IMMIGRANT FAMILIES & SERVICE PROVIDERS**

May 30th, 2020 | 9:30am-12:30pm | Register for Zoom information

The University of Texas at Austin
Texas Institute for
Child & Family Wellbeing
Steve Hicks School of Social Work GirasolTexas.org

We held a virtual mini-conference in May of 2020 that provided resources and information specific to supporting immigrant communities through the pandemic. Participants had the opportunity to choose between two tracks—track one, in Spanish, tailored directly to the immigrant community, and track two, in English, tailored to social service providers.

141

Participants

14

Presenters

2

Language
Tracks



What They Said ABOUT DIGITAL TALKS ON COVID-19

“ I enjoyed every moment of it and I learned so much. I felt inspired even more than I already do everyday to speak up and be an advocate for this community.

“ Great job with the presentations and I felt like everything went smoothly. I enjoyed switching through the Spanish and English presentations and I learned many new resources in our community. Muchísimas gracias!

“ I was truly impressed by this event– it flowed seemingly effortlessly, the moderation was excellent, the presenters were obviously knowledgeable, and I was interested in what each one had to say. I loved attending, especially because the topics were all relevant to my work (and it was free!).

“ The information was very informative and reflects the advocacy, empowerment and compassion of the Social Work profession.

“ I enjoyed learning about the different ways people can get involved to assist those in detention, and appreciated the updates on COVID cases within [detention centers].

Trainings & Consulting Goals



In March of 2020, Girasol made a quick pivot to bring all training and consulting services online. Girasol plans to continue to expand these services in the next two years.

In the next 2 years we will

- Increase national reach
- Provide consultation to organizations serving immigrant families
- Further develop best practices for interdisciplinary team model
- Host our 2nd Digital Talks conference
- Provide trainings for 1,000 individuals
- Train 8 external organizations
- Provide 12 community trainings
- Create a training and consultation brochure
- Create a certificate for professionals



MENTAL HEALTH
COLLABORATIVE



Mental Health Collaborative

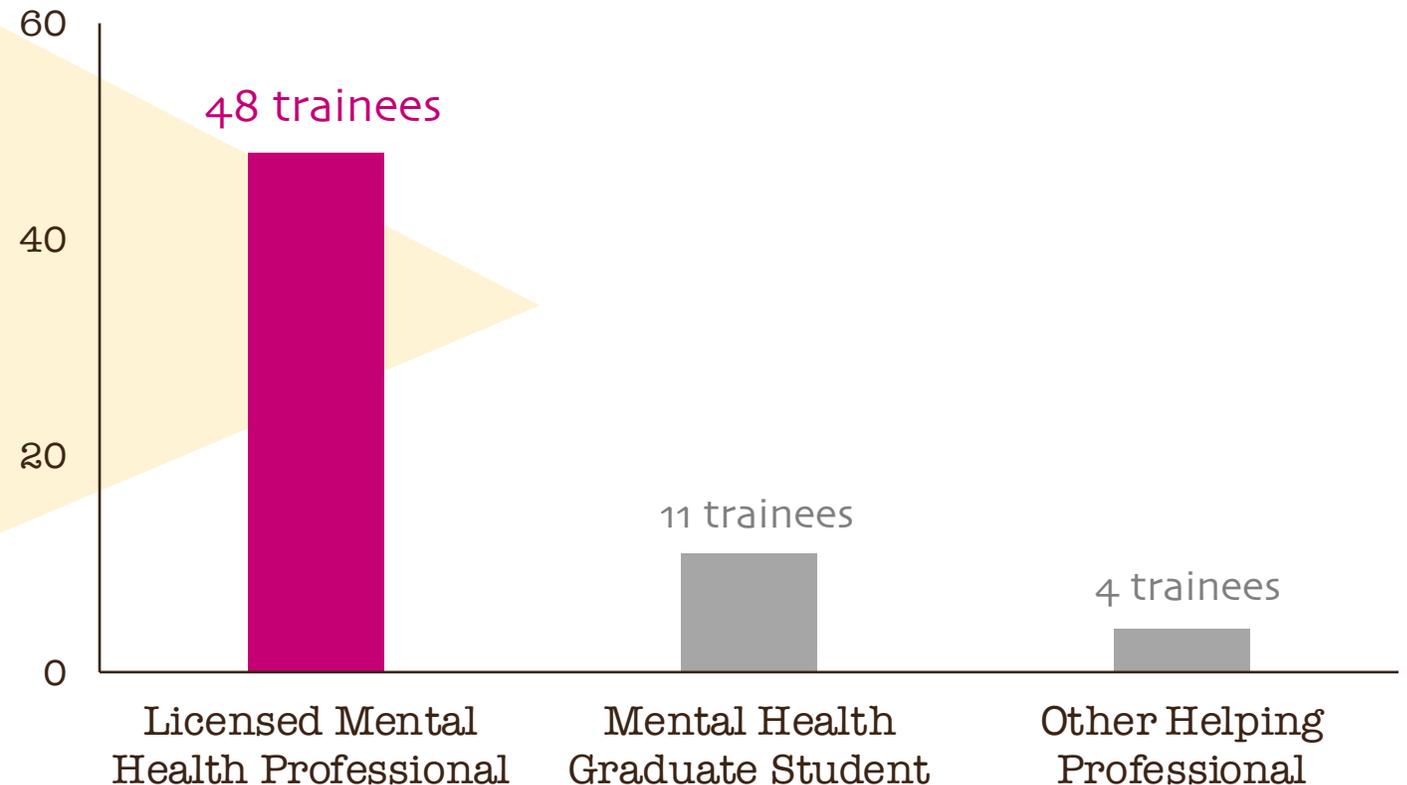
Immigrant families often experience layered, or complex, trauma. Beginning with violence in their home countries, they often have higher risks of abuse along their migration journey, and additional oppression faced in detention center settings. Having a well-trained mental health professional involved in asylum cases is important because asylum-seekers are asked to “re-live” this trauma through the Credible Fear Interview, which asks for a detailed account of these traumatic experiences.

Girasol’s Mental Health Collaborative is a group of mental health professionals working on immigration asylum cases. Through our contract with RAICES, Girasol provides training, consultation, and coordination for mental health assessments for immigration cases, as well as continuing education opportunities. Girasol provides ongoing support to The Collaborative by offering one-on-one consultation, hosting a 24/7 online collaboration forum, and providing a monthly collaborative check-in.

In our pilot year,
we trained **63**
professionals and
students.

Who is in The Collaborative?

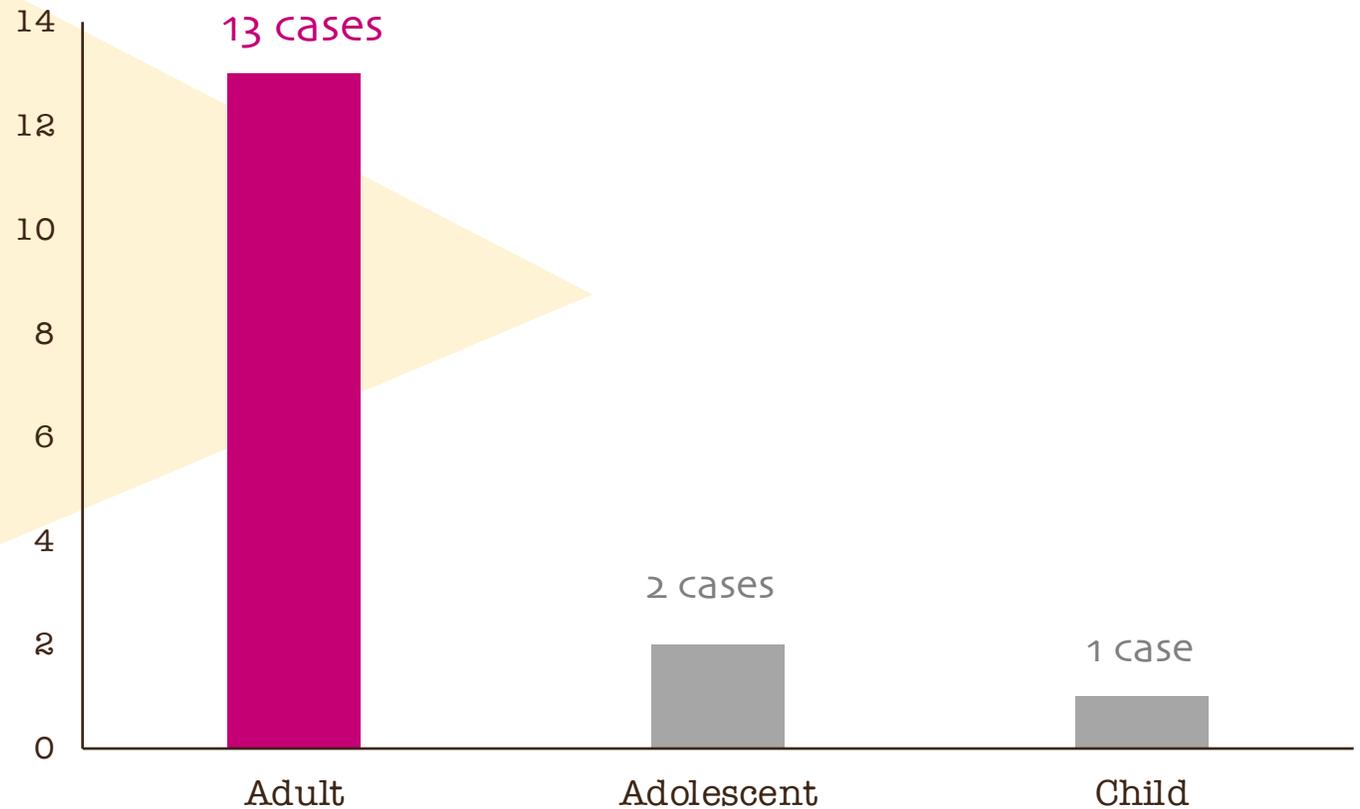
Over **75%** of the people we trained are licensed to evaluate immigrants in detention to contribute to their legal asylum cases. Our database of licensed evaluators includes **29** social workers, **14** professional counselors, and **5** marriage and family therapists. Some of our Collaborative members are not licensed to assist in asylum cases currently but are being prepared to do so as they continue along in their careers.



Data is from October 2019-July 2020

In our pilot year, we coordinated assessments for 16 cases.

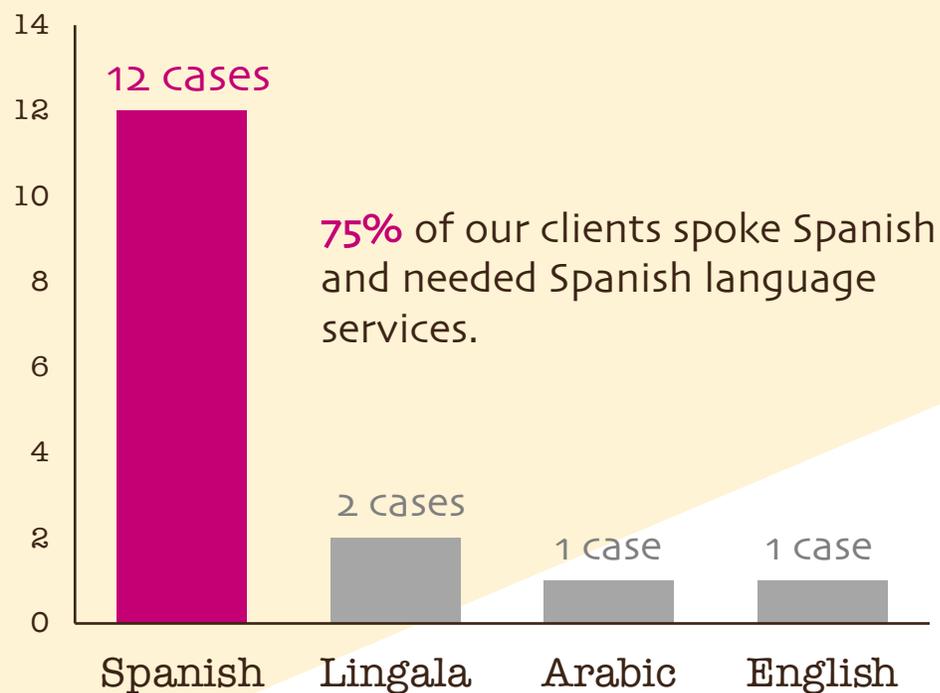
81% of Mental Health Collaborative clients were adults. By coordinating assessments of adults, the adolescents and children who are migrating with them will also be impacted by the services they receive.



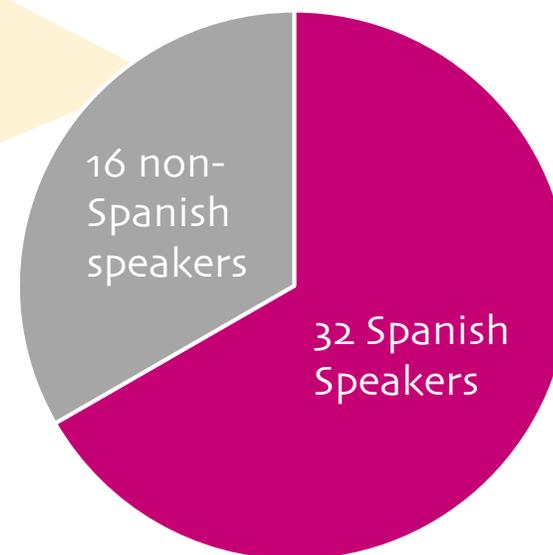
Data is from October 2019-July 2020

How our Collaborative addresses client language needs.

Of the **16** cases we coordinated in 2019...



Of the **48** licensed mental health professionals we trained to conduct evaluations...

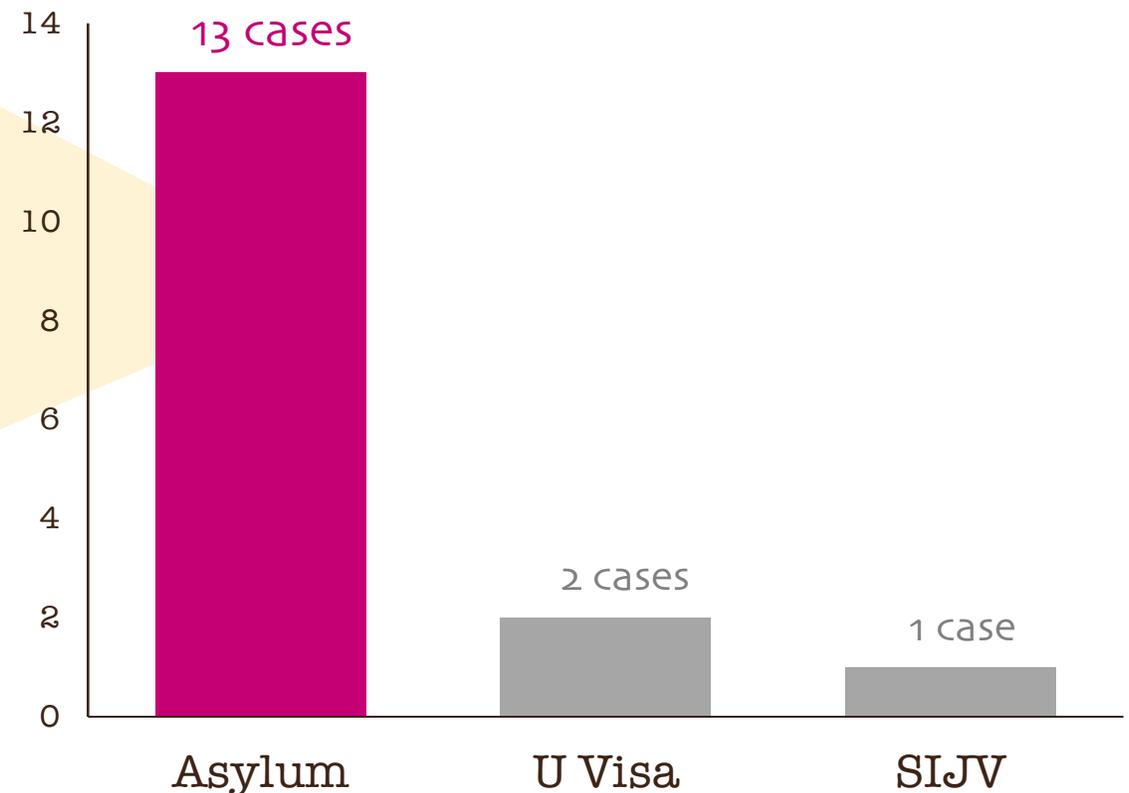


Currently **67%** of our MHC members can speak Spanish. By 2022, we hope to increase our Spanish-speaking MHC members by **25%**.

Data is from October 2019-July 2020

How our Collaborative members help asylum-seekers.

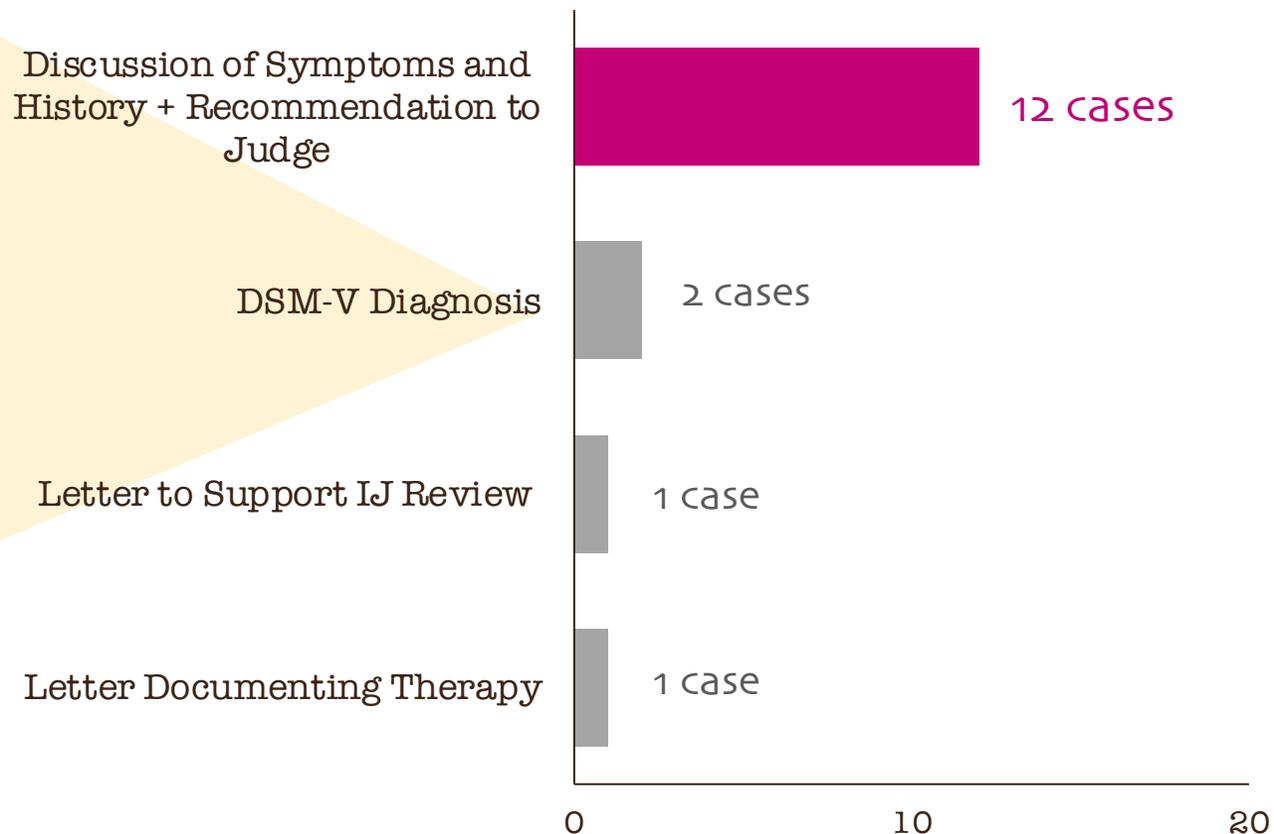
We assisted **81%** of clients with the asylum process. Additionally, we provided evaluations for U Visa cases, in which attorneys seek protection for immigrants who have had a crime committed against them in the United States. Lastly, we worked on one case for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJV), which provides protection for a child who faced parental abandonment and is not able to return to their home country. All of these cases are based upon one's identity as a survivor, which points to the importance of involving mental health professionals trained in trauma. Our goal is to collaborate on another **60 cases** in the next 2 years.



Data is from October 2019-July 2020

How our Collaborative members help asylum-seekers.

Immigration judges and officials are rarely trained in understanding trauma and mental health. When it comes to proving harm in a case, mental health professionals are vital in demonstrating emotional and psychological harm that has been perpetrated. Providing information about symptoms, a diagnosis, or the mental health impacts of being detained can be crucial for attorneys' arguments in immigration court. For **75%** of cases, the mental health professional evaluated the client, and then wrote a testimonial letter discussing symptoms, providing relevant history, and providing a professional recommendation to the judge.



Data is from October 2019-July 2020

Mental Health Collaborative Goals



Girasol will continue to offer Mental Health Collaborative introductory trainings and ongoing support groups on a monthly basis. Our contract is currently extended on a monthly basis, but we plan to seek additional funding and contracts to continue and expand on this important work.

In the next 2 years we will

- Increase the number of trained and licensed mental health professionals in the collaborative.
- Broaden the number of organizations requesting assessment letters.
- Train and recruit 80 new licensed mental health professionals to join the Collaborative
- Coordinate at least 60 individual cases
- Create new relationships with 2 legal partners requesting assessments



SOCIAL WORK DETENTION RESPONSE



Social Work Detention Response Team

The Social Work Detention Response Team provides social work students with knowledge, resources, and skills to support the wellbeing of immigrant families.

The response team also collaborates with partner organizations to document the detrimental mental health impacts of immigrant detention while working to end the detention of immigrants.

Since 2017 we've completed:

24

Trips to Karnes Detention Center

6

Trips to Hutto Detention Center

4

Border Trips

History & Context

The Social Work Detention Response Team collaborates with [RAICES](#) and the [UT Immigration Law Clinic](#) to provide legal support services to immigrant women and children in detention. Interdisciplinary teams of social work and law students orient migrants to the credible fear interview and asylum system, assist in their preparation for the interview, and provide emotional support to women and children undergoing this process. The team has served an average of 15 women per month for over two years.

The UT School of Social Work's [Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing](#) and [St. Edward's University](#) co-developed the Social Work Detention Response Team in the spring of 2017 in response to the detention of migrant families seeking asylum, particularly from the countries of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

Given that Texas has a large number of immigration detention facilities, including two facilities that house women and children, social workers have been called upon to assist attorneys in helping detained migrants recount stories for the asylum process.

Detained migrants have a “credible fear interview” in which they have to explain why they are seeking asylum. Essentially, they must show that there is a credible fear of danger should they be returned to their home country. These stories generally involve intense traumas that migrants have not had the opportunity to process. In many cases, they have difficulty recounting their stories. Social workers are skilled in helping capture these stories while being mindful and attentive to migrants’ wellbeing. The Detention Response Team pairs social work students with law students from the UT Immigration Law Clinic to work in interdisciplinary teams at the Karnes detention center as a part of supporting women and children through this process.

The Families We Serve

Our Clients in Detention

79% of our clients came from what have been termed “Northern Triangle” countries (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) which are known for their increasingly high homicide rates, most likely due to violent local gangs, some of which originated in the United States.

105 Total Clients

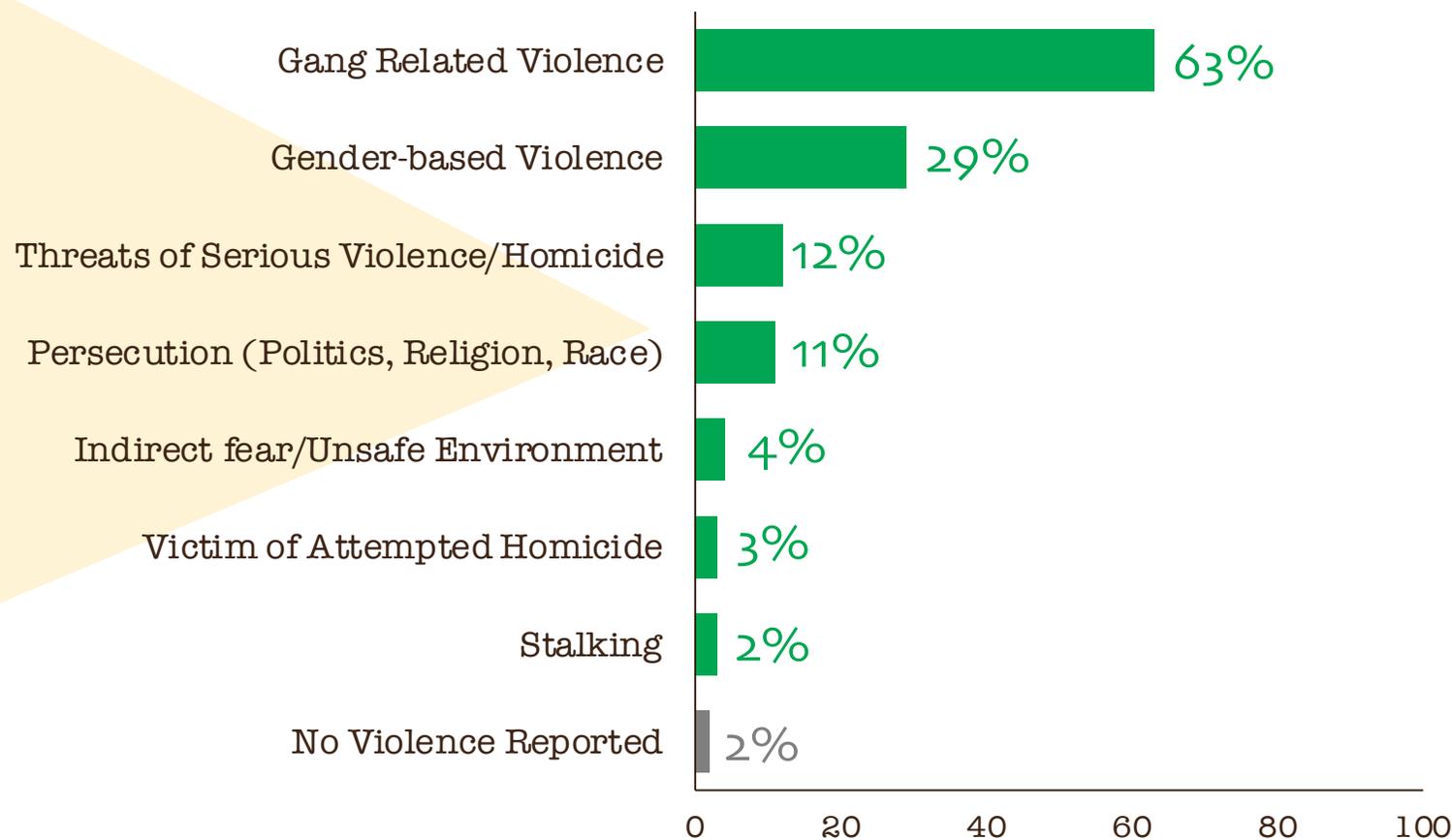
All together, our **105 clients** have a total of **187 children**. Many of our clients were in detention with at least one of their children.



Data is from our Karnes Detention Center Clients only

Types of Violence Our Clients Have Survived

98% of detention center clients are survivors of violence. 1 in 4 Girasol clients report surviving more than one type of violence.

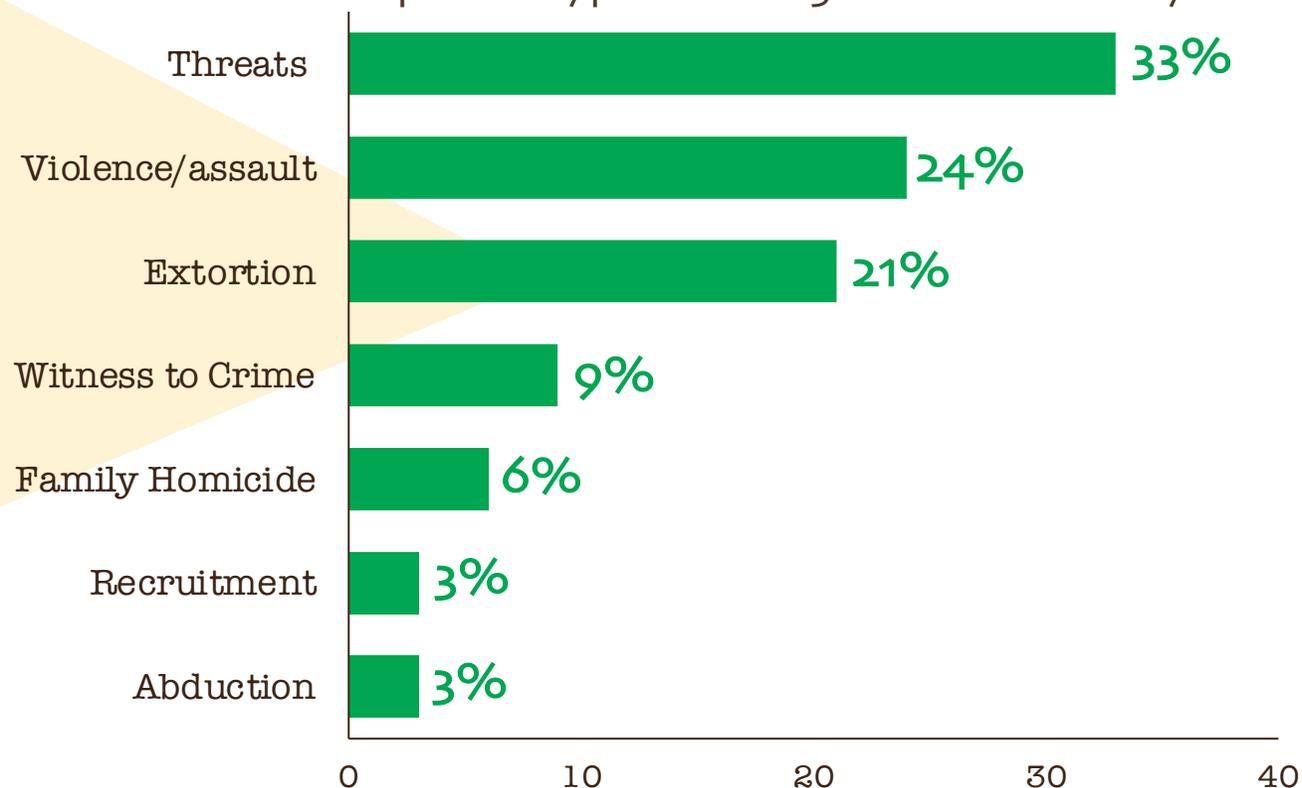


Data is from our Karnes Detention Center Clients only

A Closer Look at Gang Violence

63% of our 105 clients reported experiencing gang-related violence serious enough to flee their country. American asylum law does not recognize gang violence as a legitimate form of structural violence.

Of our clients who reported experiencing gang violence, this is the breakdown of the specific types of danger to their safety:



Data is from our Karnes Detention Center Clients only

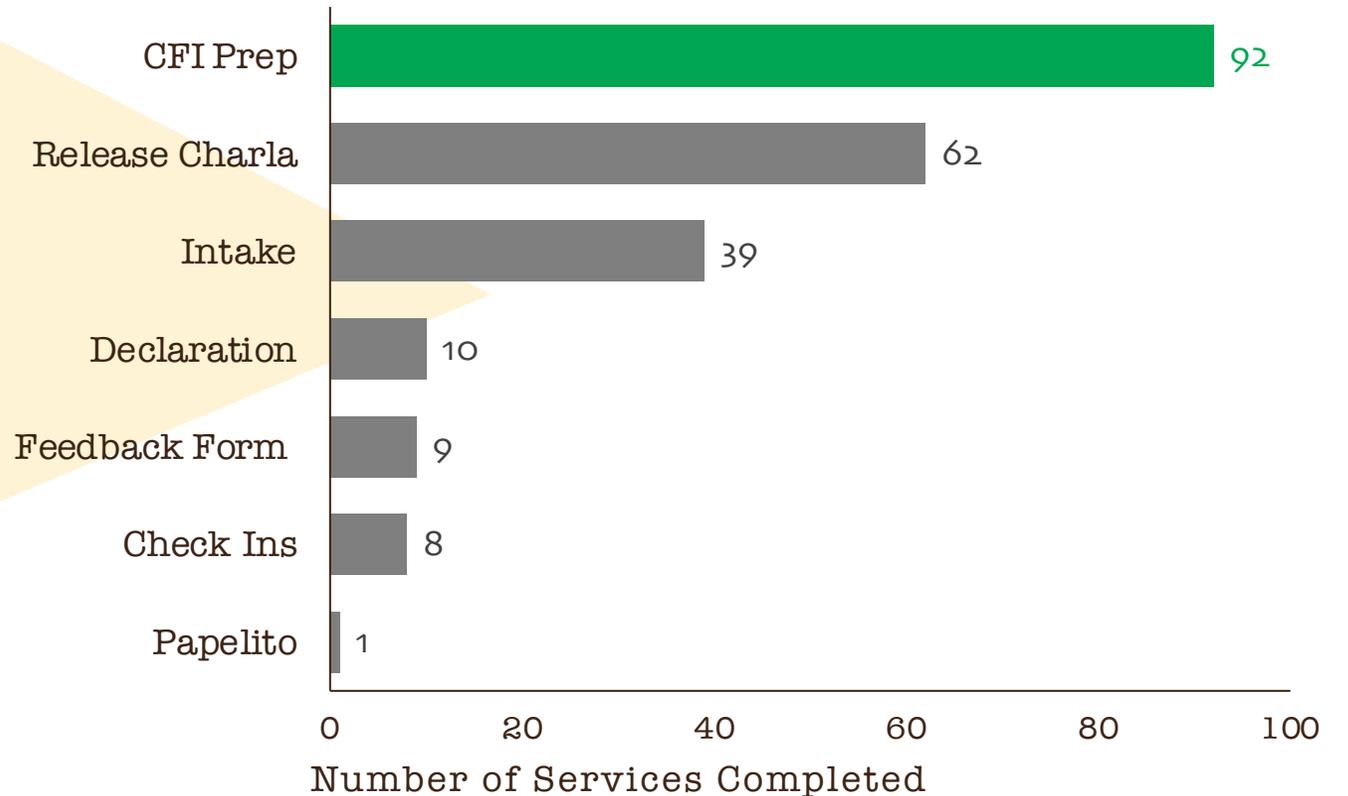
How We've Helped Our Clients Seek Asylum

221

Total Services

We have prepared 92 clients for their Credible Fear Interview (CFI). The Credible Fear Interview is a critical aspect of the asylum-seeking process, which many immigrants in detention are inadequately prepared for by the U.S. legal system.

Aspect of Asylum Process Completed with Client



Data is from our Karnes Detention Center Clients only



Our Volunteers

We've taken 4 trips to the border since 2018.

We went to the border in December 2018 and March, July, and December of 2019. Every time we make the trip, we bring trunk-loads full of requested donation items.

Most Valuable Donation Items

- ❖ feminine hygiene pads
- ❖ coloring books and crayons
- ❖ tote bags and backpacks
- ❖ baby wipes
- ❖ sanitary/cleansing wipes
- ❖ books/reading material
- ❖ toys
- ❖ diapers



Ways We've Helped

Volunteering at the bus station

Visiting Posada Providencia

Catholic Charities Respite Center

Volunteering at La Escuelita

Food Delivery to the Mexico side of the border with Team Brownsville



What our volunteers said

ABOUT THE BORDER TRIPS

“ I think we helped demystify the immediate next steps of the journey (literally) and also empowered folks to be proactive and persistent in seeking resources in the months to come.

“ We were a visible, valuable presence in that setting and I think we collectively established ourselves as people that families could trust and depend on.

“ Working at the bus station, it was really powerful and a true affirmation of our social work profession...I was surprised by how little people understood about the journey ahead, how important getting a lawyer is, and the asylum process in general.



Our Work at Detention Centers



30

Total volunteer trips to family detention centers.

43

The number of distinct individuals who went to a detention center with Girasol.

82

Total Volunteers: Our average volunteer went on two different detention center trip.

533

Direct Service Hours: The amount of time spent directly serving clients. We spend roughly 6.5 hours in detention centers on each trip.

861

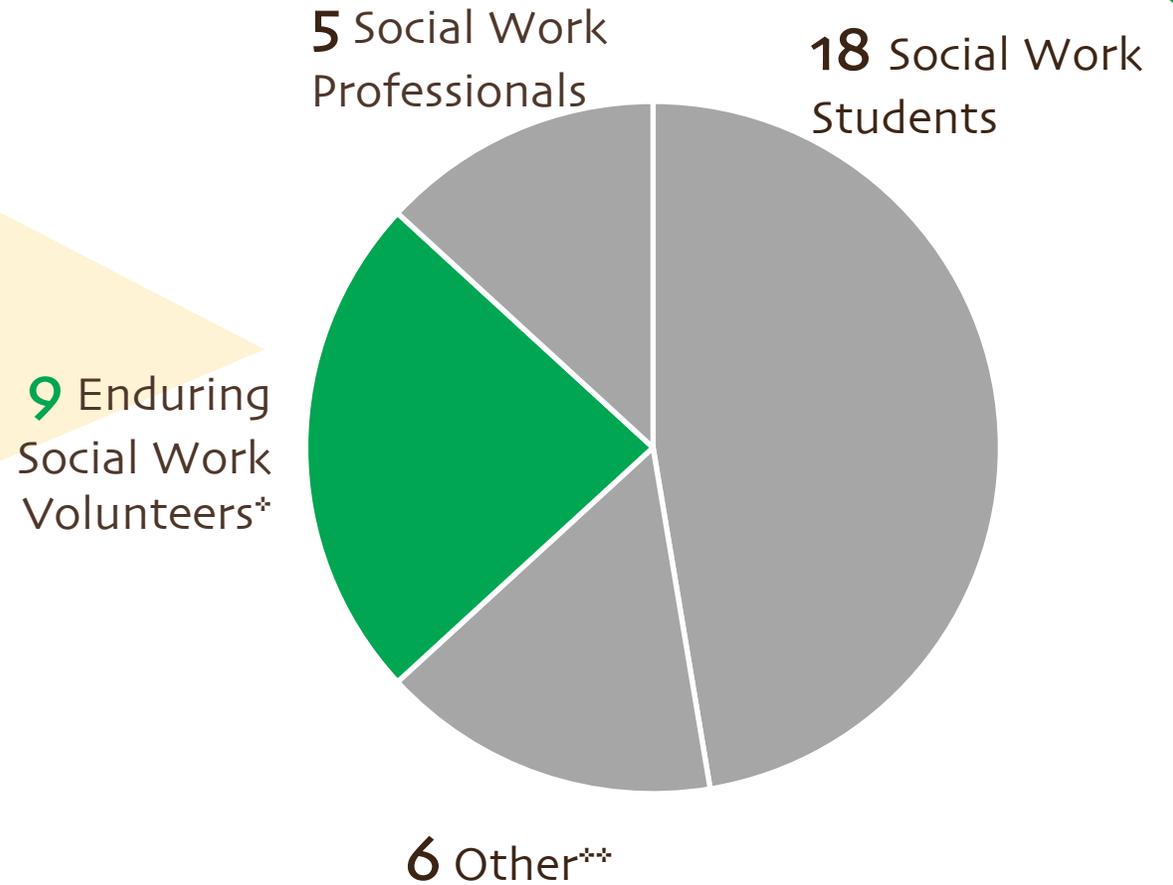
Total Volunteer Hours: Volunteers drove 2 hours each way to reach Karnes Detention Center, where most of our Detention Response Team service occurred.

The Social Work Detention Response Team is a group of highly committed volunteers.

*Enduring volunteers are those who joined the Social Work Detention Response team as students and continued volunteering once they graduated and became professionals.

**Other volunteers included graduate students in related fields, including law, public health, and public policy.

Detention Center Volunteers:





What Our Volunteers Said

ABOUT COLLABORATING WITH OTHER DISCIPLINES AT THE DETENTION CENTERS



Each of us had our own perspective and questions that were important to include. We played off each other and gave each other time to ask questions, so I think the partnership helped to paint a more complete picture of our client's story.

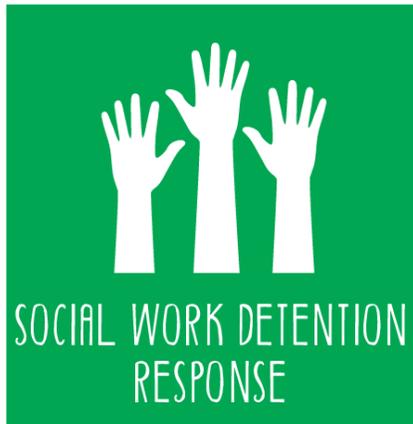


I had a great experience working with a law student. I think my partner was really appreciative of the social work skills (in particular, the active listening skills) that I brought to the team. Also, I think I learned a lot about legal strategies for helping women frame their stories for the CFI.



Really enjoyed collaborating with my partner - I think we worked well and learned from one another throughout the day. I think, together, we created a safe atmosphere with our clients and offered empathy, attention to detail, and even humor in otherwise challenging circumstances. We worked with the same father and son pair for over 3 hours and I think the four of us developed a memorable rapport and trust.

Social Work Detention Response Team Goals



Girasol will continue to offer virtual opportunities for students to respond to the detention of immigrant families seeking asylum in this country.

In the next 2 years we will

- Implement Immigration Dialogues as a virtual space to engage in learning, advocacy, and volunteer opportunities.
- Create an advocacy toolkit to support the work to end immigrant detention from the mental health perspective.
- Engage 200 distinct individuals through our immigration dialogues and advocacy toolkit.
- Collaborate with 15 different organizations to increase learning, advocacy, and action to support the mental health of immigrants navigating detention systems.



NAVEGANDO AUSTIN

Navegando Austin Navigating Austin

...ir la [nueva pestaña sobre COVID-19](#) en este sitio web para ver información sobre el
...nico, las reglas federales de la carga pública, y recursos accesibles a la comunidad.

...u can go to our [new COVID-19 tab](#) for updates about the pandemic, federal public charge rule
...resources available to the community.

Este sitio web ha sido creado por la Iniciativa de Liderazgo Universitario y estudiantes de la escuela de Trabajo Social Steve
de UT Austin para apoyar a los inmigrantes en Austin y en todo el estado de Texas. Nos esforzamos para juntar información
los recursos que están disponibles para los inmigrantes y específicamente para los individuos indocumentados. Este sitio web
hecho por la comunidad para la comunidad y está disponible públicamente para individuos, maestros, prestadores de servicios
sociales, y cualquier persona que trabaja con inmigrantes en Texas.

This website has been made by the University Leadership Initiative and students at the UT Austin Steve Hicks School of So
Work in support of immigrants in Austin and throughout the state of Texas. It is an effort to gather information about resou
that are available to immigrants, and specifically undocumented individuals. This website was made by community for com
and is publicly available to individuals, teachers, service providers, and anyone who works with immigrants in Texas.

Girasol

Navegando
Austin

Home

COVID-19

✓ Acceso a la universidad/
College Access

✓ Alojamiento/Housing

Atención médica, cuidado
dental/ Health Care, Dental
Care

✓ Ayuda financiera/ Financial
Assistance

✓ Educación/Education

El cuidado infantil,
actividades/Childcare,
Activities

G i r a s o l

Apoyo para el bienestar de los inmigrantes
Supporting the Wellbeing of Immigrants

Nos gustaría recibir sus comentarios - ¿Sabe usted de un nuevo recurso disponible para los inmigrantes indocumentados?
usted parte de una organización y tiene noticias sobre sus servicios? Por favor incluye datos nuevos en [este formulario](#) para

Navegando Austin

Navegando Austin is a website that has been developed and maintained by Girasol since 2017. The goal of Navegando Austin is to provide clear and accurate information about resources accessible to immigrant communities. Girasol collaborates with partner organizations to improve accessibility and accuracy throughout the city of Austin.

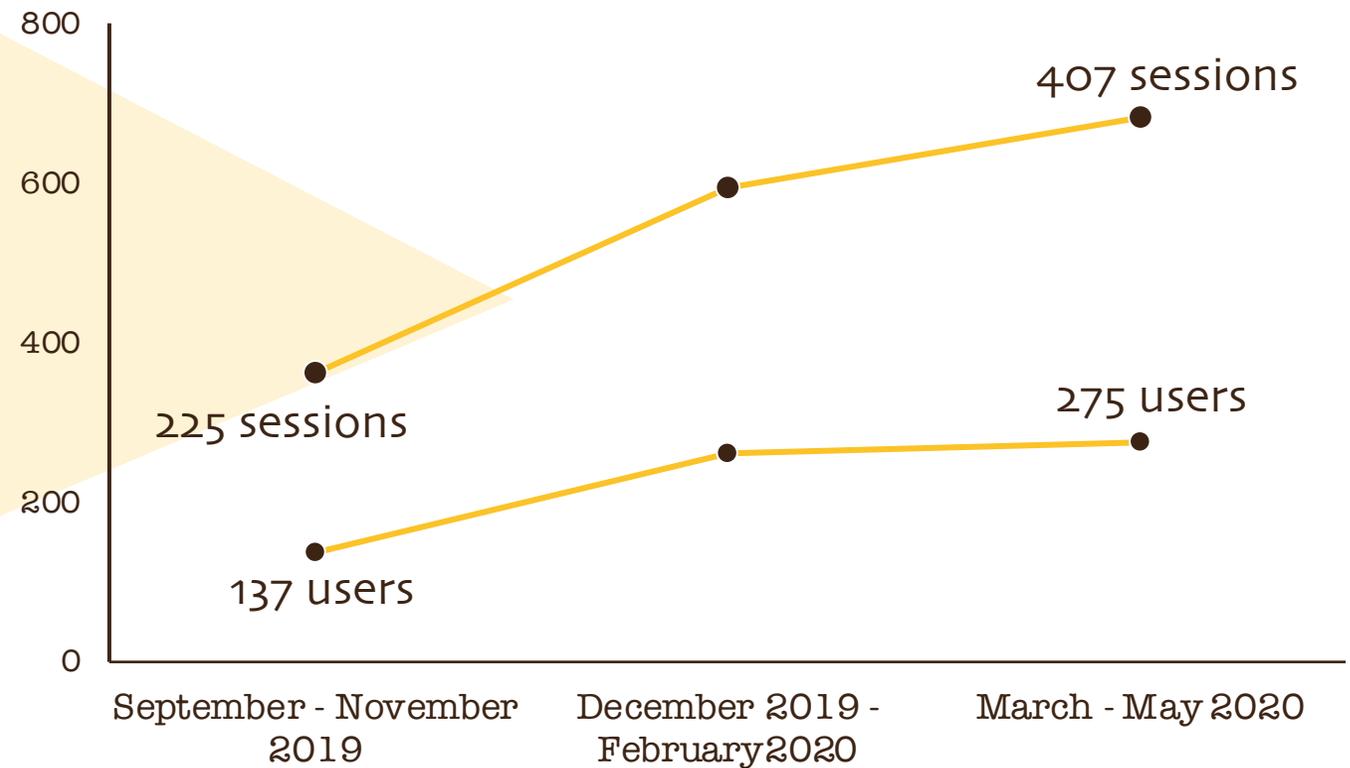
We've had **1,500**
website hits
from September
2019 to May
2020.

Website visits are increasing.

989

Site visitors

The website saw an approximately **50% increase** in number of users and in number of sessions over the past year.



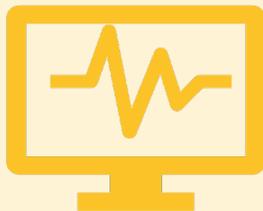
Visitors are accessing specific resources.



average time
on website

2:26

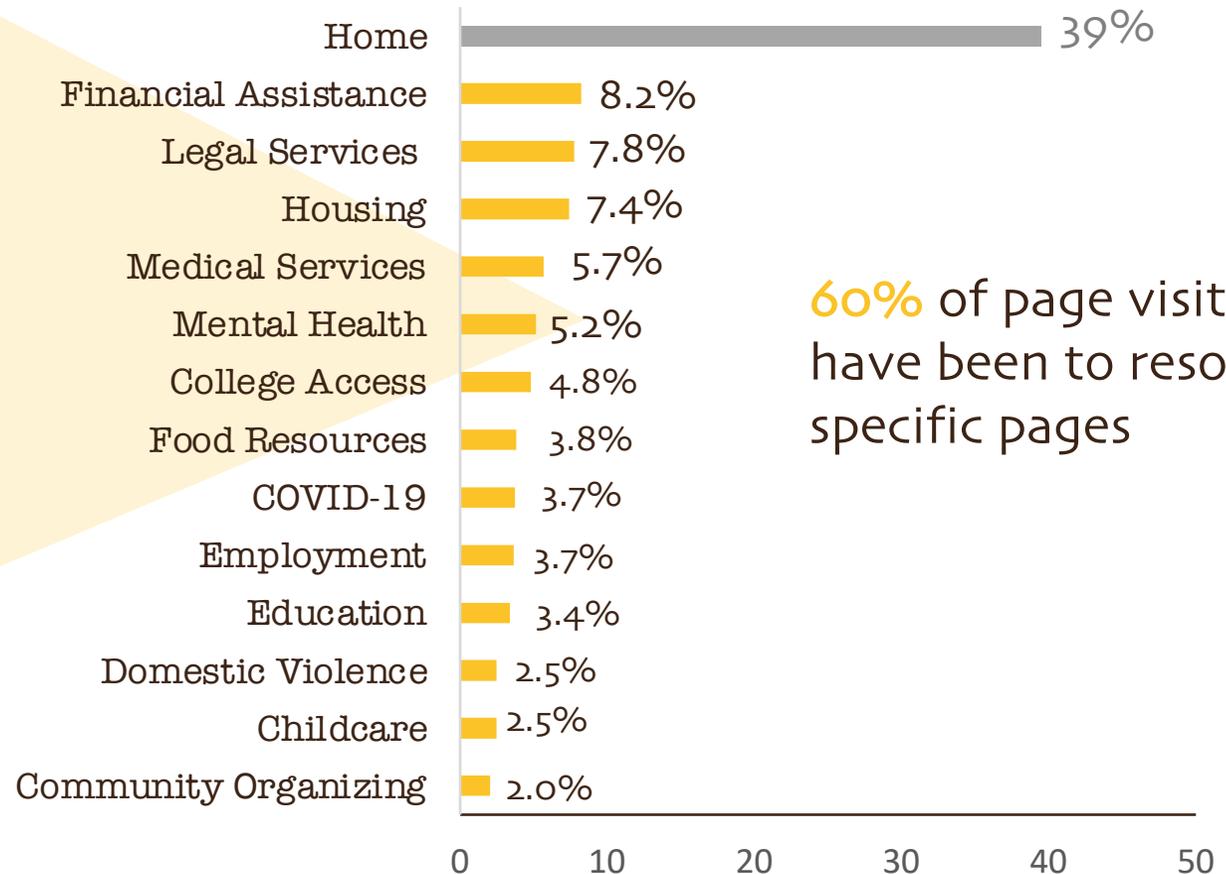
Minutes Seconds



bounce rate*

52%

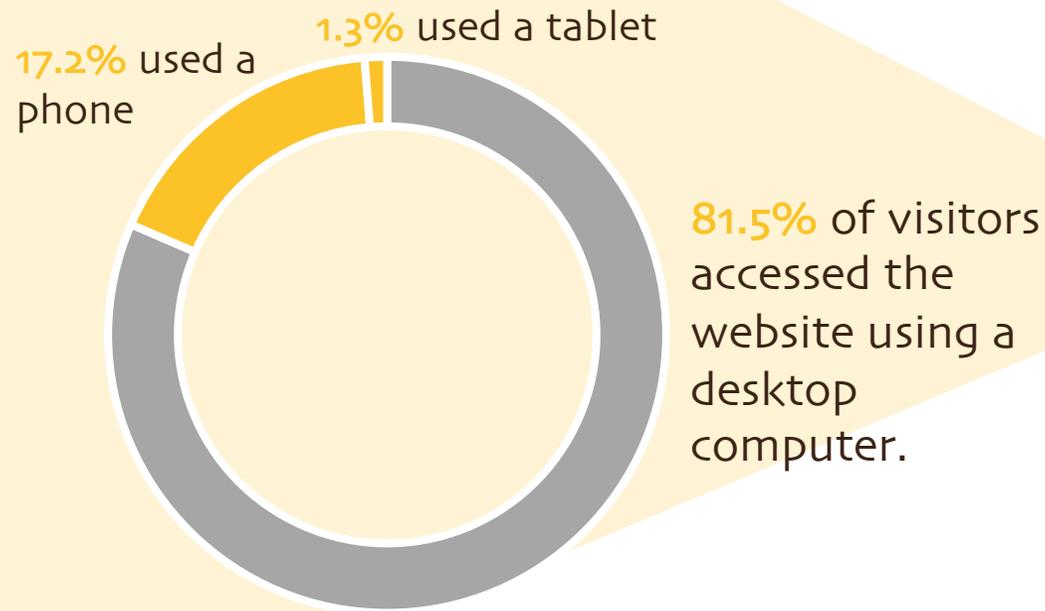
*Bounce rate is the amount of visitors who leave the site after only visiting one page. This is below the average rate of nonprofit websites (60%-70%), which means our website performs better than most.



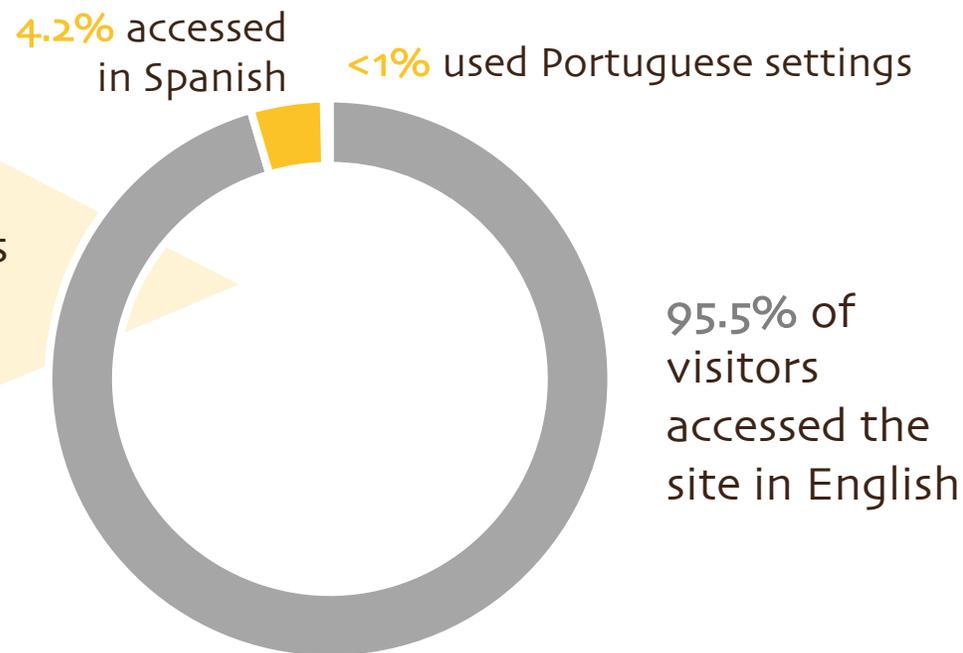
60% of page visits
have been to resource
specific pages

We want to increase accessibility.

Device Used



Language Access Settings



We want to increase access by mobile users and non-English speakers by 20% by 2022.

Navegando Austin Goals



In October of 2020, Girasol partnered with a team of developers and designers from IBM as part of the 48 for 48 challenge. Together, they were able to turn our vision of a new and more user-friendly website into a reality. This collaboration is a major step toward one of our initial goals of creating a new site and enables us to continue the work of increasing Girasol's accessibility on a larger scale.

In the next 2 years we will

- Work with a web designer to continue working toward increased accessibility
- Collaborate with partner organizations to implement updates and increase accessibility
- Reach 5,000 community members through the website
- Increase the listed number of organizations by 20%
- Increase access by mobile users and non-English speakers by 20% by 2022.
- If given additional funding: attend 4 monthly collaborative meetings and build stronger relationships with 35 organizations

— . — . — . — . — . — .

LOOKING FORWARD



Girasol in the future will:



Create a model for conducting and coordinating mental health assessments for immigration cases that can be expanded and replicated nationwide.



Engage and mobilize students, professionals, and communities to envision and advocate for the creation of alternatives to immigrant detention that focus on mental health.



Become a leader in trainings and consulting on immigrant justice and mental health on a national scale. Create a virtual platform for professionals to access trainings and resources.



Make Austin more accessible for immigrant families through grassroots and systemic-level interventions.

In the next two years we will:



- Increase the number of trained and licensed mental health professionals in the Collaborative.
- Broaden the number of organizations requesting assessment letters.



- Implement Immigration Dialogues as a virtual space to engage in learning, advocacy, and volunteer opportunities.
- Create an advocacy toolkit to support the work to end immigrant detention from the mental health perspective.



- Increase national reach.
- Provide consultation to organizations serving immigrant families.
- Further develop best practices for inter-disciplinary team model.
- Host 2nd Digital Talks conference.



- Work with a web designer to create a more user-friendly and accessible website design.
- Collaborate with partner organizations to implement updates and increase accessibility.
- We want to increase access by mobile users and non-English speakers by 20% by 2022.

Success will look like:



- Train and recruit 80 new licensed mental health professionals to join the Collaborative.
- Coordinate at least 60 individual cases.
- Create new relationships with 3 legal partners requesting assessments.



- Engage 200 distinct individuals through immigration dialogues and advocacy toolkit.
- Collaborate with 15 different organizations to increase learning, advocacy, and action to support the mental health of immigrants navigating detention systems.



- Provide trainings for 1,000 individuals.
- Train 8 external organizations.
- Provide 12 community trainings.
- Create a training and consultation brochure.
- Create a certificate for professionals.



- Reach 5,000 community members through the Navegando Austin website.
- Increase the listed number of organizations by 20%.
- Attend 3 monthly collaborative meetings and build stronger relationships with 35 organizations.

FUNDING PRIORITIES



Fund Girasol's Digital Talks & create additional trauma-informed workbooks



Fund a full-time Mental Health Collaborative project manager



Fund 2 more years of Immigration Dialogues



Fund a full-time Navegando Austin project manager

— . — . — . — . — . — .

IN CONCLUSION





SOCIAL JUSTICE

We will continue to respond to the needs of communities and professionals serving immigrant families.

The immigration system in the United States lacks transparency and accountability. Immigration enforcement and detention often create fear, trauma, and a feeling of constant crisis.

There can be no global community that supports the mental health and wellbeing of immigrant families while there is still immigrant detention.

At Girasol, we create interventions, support systems, and resources to respond to crisis without *being* in crisis.



CONNECTION

We center humanity,
healing, and hope in
everything we do.



We value our relationships, along with the skills, caring, and creativity that everyone in our Girasol community brings to this work.

We are grateful for the resilience and power of immigrants, professionals, and communities.



GROWTH

We boldly move
toward the vision of
the world we want
to live in.

We believe in the capacity for change on individual, group, and system levels.

We invite creativity, possibility, and hope as we collaborate to build a just world for immigrant communities.

We are committed to the long-term work it will take to create a global community that supports the mental health and wellbeing of *all immigrant families*.

Thank You To Our Partners & Donors!



Your contributions are critical to the success of our program. When you donate to Girasol Texas, you are committing to supporting justice and well-being for our immigrant communities. Thank you to the following individual donors and partnering organizations for supporting our mission!

Dean Luis Zayas
Robert Margolin
Sherika Wilson
Anya Tyson
Daniel Hogan
Julie A. Macrae
Kathleen Wendland
Margaret Everhart
Kaitlyn C. Doerge
Lumos
St. David's

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RAICES
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