



College &  
Community  
Fellowship

# 2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT

## 2021 GRADUATES

We created a unique virtual experience for graduates to highlight their individual and collective success.

## PELL REINSTATEMENT

After a long fight, Congress voted to restore access to Pell Grants for all people in prison.

## THE FUTURE OF THRIVE

New goals will help make THRIVE more sustainable for businesses and justice-impacted people.

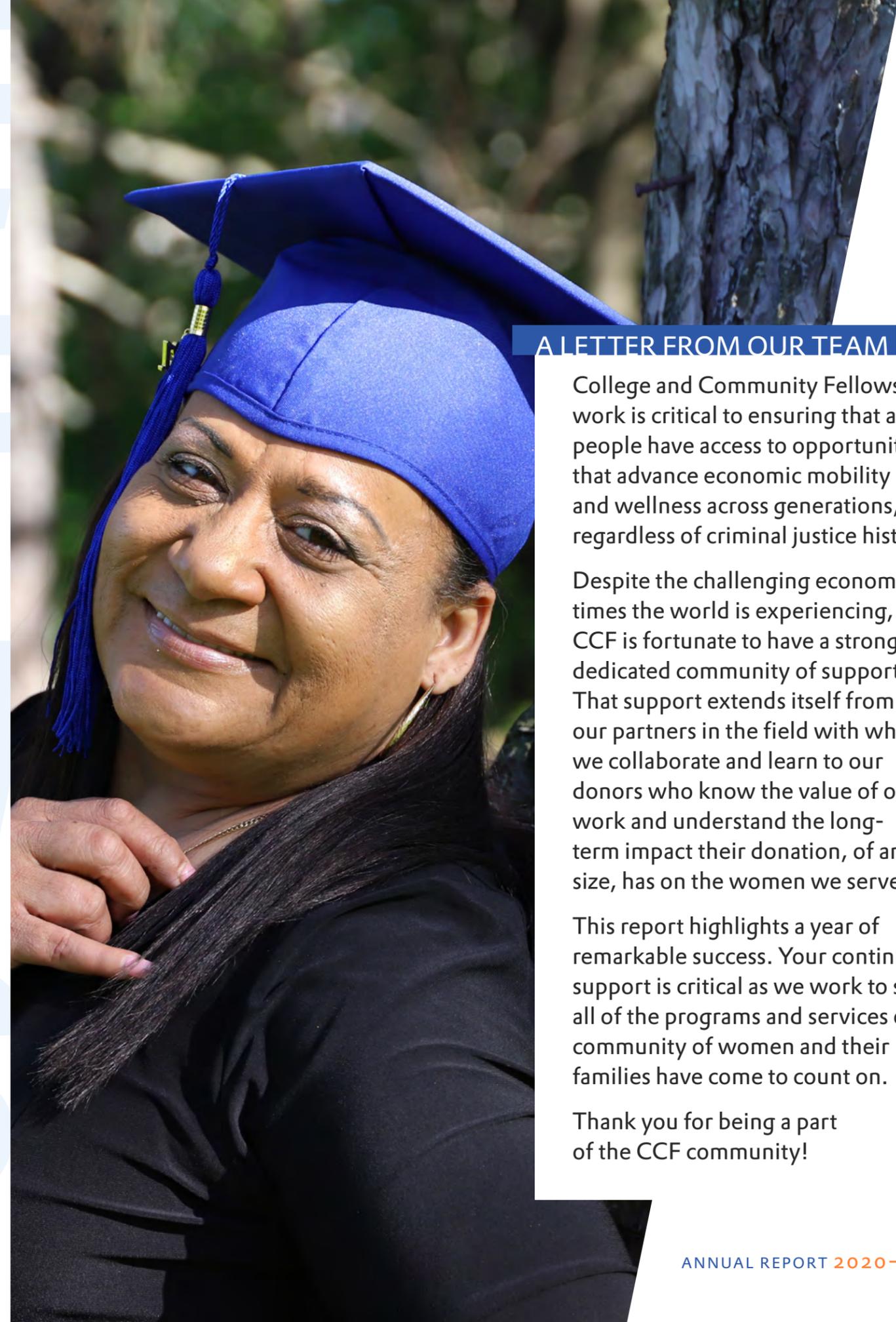
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**A LETTER FROM OUR TEAM**

College and Community Fellowship's work is critical to ensuring that all people have access to opportunities that advance economic mobility and wellness across generations, regardless of criminal justice histories.

Despite the challenging economic times the world is experiencing, CCF is fortunate to have a strong, dedicated community of supporters. That support extends itself from our partners in the field with whom we collaborate and learn to our donors who know the value of our work and understand the long-term impact their donation, of any size, has on the women we serve.

This report highlights a year of remarkable success. Your continued support is critical as we work to sustain all of the programs and services our community of women and their families have come to count on.

Thank you for being a part of the CCF community!



## MISSION

CCF's mission is to enable women with criminal justice involvement to earn their college degrees so that they, their families, and their communities can thrive. We advocate for equity and opportunity for the communities we serve.

## VISION

CCF envisions a world where all people, regardless of criminal legal histories, have equitable access to opportunity.



## WHO WE SERVE

The majority of the women we serve come from Black and Brown communities which are disproportionately impacted by the criminal legal system. In our College & Career programs, our gender-specific and trauma-informed approach allows women to restore their self confidence and rebuild themselves and their communities. The strong and encouraging relationships that women in our programs build together are proof that justice-involved women in community are powerful.



## COLLEGE & CAREER

Through our College & Career programs (Academic Support, Career Advancement, Uplift Mentoring, and MultiGen) we support women in their higher education and career journeys through providing access to resources, tools, financial aid, and most importantly, community. By increasing access to education, resources, and opportunities, we work to mitigate the disproportionate impacts the criminal legal system has on the communities we serve.

## POLICY & ADVOCACY

Policy & Advocacy are some of the most powerful ways we center the voices of directly-impacted women as the experts on their own lives, struggles, and needs. Through our WISH Advocacy Training program, women learn and equip themselves with the essential skills that they need to become leaders in advocating for themselves and their communities. On the policy side, CCF builds campaigns to advocate for increasing access to education as well as increasing civic engagement in justice-impacted communities.

## THRIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Through our THRIVE Technical Assistance program, we work with institutions such as non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and businesses to support the successful reentry of people with justice involvement. We do this by helping institutions gain a better understanding of justice-involved people as an under-utilized workforce as well as the barriers justice-involved people face in accessing education, employment, and many other necessities in reentry.

## Pell Reinstatement

For over 20 years, we've done our work with the conviction that increasing access to education is the key to racial justice, economic equity and overall progress that benefits everyone in our society. After a long fight against the dehumanizing ban on Pell for people in prison, Congress voted to restore access to Pell Grants for all people in prison on December 27, 2020. With directly-impacted advocates writing the narrative and the support of our community and other organizational partners, we led a campaign involving conversations with members of Congress as well as virtual panel discussions and Twitter chats to raise awareness on the urgency to restore Pell.

Now, everyone inside, regardless of the nature or length of their sentence, will have greater access to education as well as the freedom and power that comes with it.

**VICTORY!**  
**Pell Restoration Passed by Congress!**  
**#EquityIsJustice**

“ I specifically applaud currently and formerly incarcerated people who steadily fought for the reinstatement of Pell since 1994. We must not bow our heads in false humility and decline to celebrate this victory. We wanted this more than anyone. We bore the cost more than anyone. Every time we sat before elected officials, sharing expertise and stories about the transformative power of education, we lived a paradox. The power of our testimony came with the stigma of incarceration. Yet, chins held high, we claimed that we are worthy of educational opportunity. And many educators stood with us—keeping hope alive by providing college behind bars when Pell was not an option.”

Excerpt from Vivian Nixon’s Statement on the Passage of Pell Restoration for Incarcerated People

Moving forward, CCF is focused on advocating for the expansion of bridge programs, through the implementation of Pell in prison, that offer students support to complete degrees in the community or go on to an advanced degree.

**PELL RESTORATION AND RACIAL EQUITY**  
**A PANEL DISCUSSION**  
**Sept 30TH**  
**12 PM EDT**  
**#EquityIsJustice**

## Bard Microcollege for Just Community Leadership

CCF partnered with the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI) and JustLeadershipUSA to launch the Bard Microcollege for Just Community Leadership. Located in Harlem at the Countee Cullen branch of the New York Public Library, this is the nation’s first tuition-free college dedicated to advocacy, arts, and sciences! The Bard Microcollege offers an Associate’s degree program that centers just community leadership, community-based advocacy, and the importance of access to education within criminal legal reform.

Justice-involved women who enroll in the Harlem Microcollege have access to CCF’s range of support programs that ensure educational and career success, support social and economic advancement, and foster civic engagement. Current CCF participants and alumnae are also eligible to apply.

**MICRO**  
**Bard**  
**HARLEM**  
**COLLEGE**

**The Bard Microcollege for Just Community Leadership**

**The IMPACT Blog**  
**13**  
**BLOG POSTS**



## IMPACT Blog

In September of 2020, we launched the IMPACT blog to publish influential and noteworthy writing and messages from members of our community and staff. Over the last year, published 13 blog posts including pieces on significant news events such as the January 6th insurrection and the #TurnOnTheTAPNY campaign and pieces from members of the CCF community.

# COLLEGE & CAREER

## COLLEGE & CAREER PROGRAMS

College & Community Fellowship provides academic and career services that help women with criminal justice involvement achieve their higher education and career goals. We address the educational and professional needs of our participants through four distinct but overlapping programs: MultiGen, the Academic Support Program (ASP), Uplift Mentoring, and the Career Advancement Program (CAP). Providing individual support and building community networks are the two key pillars of our College & Career Programs that help alleviate barriers to opportunity faced by justice-involved women. Last year, ASP, Uplift Mentoring, MultiGen, and CAP continued to respond to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and further developed their virtual platforms. These programs also implemented several notable changes that helped our participants build a sense of community and gain access to a wider range of resources.

# Academic Support Program

The Academic Support Program (ASP) helps women navigate their educational pathway by providing essential resources to help mitigate the unique challenges that justice-involved women face in higher education.

## WHAT HAPPENED

Throughout the year, participants and alumnae attended community meetings that covered a range of topics designed to help them achieve their goals as well as break down informational and economic barriers, including health and wellness, professional development, and financial education. Ninety women attended ASP's college awareness workshops, and many received individual financial coaching through ASP's expanded partnership with the Community Service Society, which helped them strategize ways to work on their financial goals like paying off debt and building credit. CCF also continued to support women in their pursuit of high-quality career certification through ASP's Career Education Enhancement Program (CEEP). Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, our graduation rate remained strong in 2021.

## WHAT'S NEXT

Looking toward 2022, ASP intends to grow its partnership network to provide the women we serve with even more external resources and community connections.

## Degrees Earned

- 2 Associate's Degrees
- 7 Bachelor's Degrees
- 4 Master's Degrees
- 1 Career Certification

THE PROGRAM PROVIDED  
**\$200,000**  
IN FINANCIAL SUPPORT

**146**  
WOMEN WERE SERVED



## Graduation

In 2021, CCF wanted to create a unique virtual experience for our graduates to highlight their individual and collective success. Fourteen women graduated with their associate's, bachelor's, or master's degrees, and one participant earned a career certification through CEEP. In addition to speeches by Valorie Wilkinson-Watts (two-time valedictorian) and Camila Broderick (salutatorian), the graduation included a special poetry reading. Two of our graduates, Glenna McCarthy and Dorian Bess, wrote for CCF's Impact Blog about their life experiences and the impact that completing their education has had on their lives.

“As my personal growth strengthens, it enables me to help and inspire others that are currently facing similar challenges I once endured. I am excited about all of the milestones in my personal development as it has been hard-earned. Learning about oneself and what motivates behavior is never easy. But I also have new accomplishments, goals, clarity, and an overarching sense of purpose.”  
Valorie Wilksinon, CCF 2021 Valedictorian



“I joined CCF because, at the time, I was navigating life on my own. What kept me at CCF and what keeps me recommending it to people and trying to be a part of that community is that I am a part of a sisterhood of people who genuinely care about me. Now, I have a million friends who have been through what I've been through and can advise me or help me help someone else. I stay now because of the community.”  
Sherika Stewart, 2021 CCF Graduate



# The Power of Women in Community

By Dorian Bess

When I left the confines of my prison cell and returned home, the first thing I wanted to do was go back to school. I knew that earning my degree would be key to accessing new opportunities and transforming my life. But first, I needed to figure out how to get there and stay there.

As is the case for most people returning home, I had a difficult time acclimating and finding direction. I walked out of prison and quickly realized that I had entered a new digital age - one in which I had to learn how to navigate each system carefully as a woman with justice-involvement. Even still, I refused to accept the status quo.

I didn't know where to start, but thankfully, I met two amazing women who had similar struggles and dreams. We shared our stories, related and listened to one another. They connected me with College & Community Fellowship (CCF), and with it, the resources and guidance I needed to go back to school, build a career, and advocate for people impacted by the criminal legal system.

“I never would have imagined that less than two weeks after my release I would find a supportive community of other justice-involved women. For the first time, I met women in their thirties, forties and fifties who, like me, were excited about their education. That's when I knew I was in the right place.”

When you come home, your family supports you in the ways they think are best, but no one can support you the way other women who share in your experience can. When I'm having a day where I feel like I'm inside again, I can always talk to my community and know that they will empathize with me and lift me up. The women that I met in CCF's Uplift Mentoring

program encourage me, nurture my individuality and voice, and continually help me find my path.

With their support, I knew I could do anything I set my mind to. So, I did. I trained to be an advocate for others with justice involvement through WISH. Additionally, I attend LaGuardia College for Criminal Justice, and I am now working at The Osborne Association Health Justice Network while also participating in the Theater of Change program at Columbia, the #HALTSolitary campaign, being a recovery coach, and much more.

“I know that my community at CCF will tirelessly support me until I reach my goals.”

When I finish school, I want to be Dr. Dorian Bess. My ultimate goal is to be self employed. I'm in the process of starting a recovery facility and I hope to eventually create a program to assist and guide women coming home from prison through a comprehensive and hands-on approach.

When I took my first college course in prison, I thought to myself, "How amazing would it be if I went back to school, earned my doctorate, and dedicated my life to helping others?" I laughed out loud and thought again, "People would ask themselves, is that the same Dorian Bess?"

Yes, it's the same Dorian Bess.



Dorian (Didi) Bess is an alumna of College & Community Fellowship's WISH advocacy training program and an active participant in CCF's College & Career Programs.



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STUDENT CAREGIVERS PARTICIPATED IN THE PROGRAM LAST YEAR



Informed by the expressed needs and interests of CCF students, MultiGen fosters our participants' ability to identify, share, and build on their strengths as learners and caregivers through the exchange of knowledge, resources, and support while building social capital.

## WHAT'S NEXT

One of MultiGen's main goals for 2022 is to implement strategies to help our participants maintain the sense of community they build during MultiGen events beyond their time in the program.

## WHAT HAPPENED

38% of the women we work with serve as caregivers to school-age children. This is why our work strengthening family ties, which have often been weakened due to incarceration, is critical since parents' educational achievements positively impact their families' academic and career achievements for future generations.

MultiGen includes 4 workshops, 2 family events, one-on-one check-ins with staff, and a \$1,000 caregiver stipend each semester. MultiGen is open to women currently enrolled in either CCF's Academic Support and/or Career Advancement Programs.

## Survey Results

100% of women surveyed said they would recommend the program.

100% indicated they were able to make positive relationships during their time in MultiGen.

100% expressed they received the kind of support they were hoping for.

# CAREER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

*CAP empowers women with criminal justice involvement by helping them develop digital literacy, communication, and office skills through module-based training and one-on-one career coaching.*

## WHAT HAPPENED

As a means of cultivating a sense of community, CAP created a new cohort of participants every three months and organized opportunities for them to connect with one another. These events have given the participants a chance to discuss the challenges they face in the workplace and network to find new career opportunities.

## WHAT'S NEXT

In 2022, CAP will continue providing participants with the skills and sense of empowerment that they need to meet their career goals by expanding our partnerships, making the program more flexible, and increasing visibility.

## Virtual Engagement

One of the main barriers that keep CAP participants from joining the program is time. However, virtual forms of engagement allowed participants with full school, work, or childcare schedules more flexibility, which increased their engagement in the program and overall career success. Even through tough economic circumstances, our participants were not only hired but also received promotions and bonuses.

CAP SERVED  
**35**  
WOMEN AND ORGANIZED TEN WORKSHOP EVENTS, ATTENDED BY FORTY-FIVE PEOPLE

ALL  
**10**  
PARTICIPANTS WHO SECURED JOB PLACEMENTS OR INTERNSHIPS RETAINED THEIR POSITIONS BY THE SIXTY-DAY MARK



## Paid Internship Program

One of the most exciting CAP developments was the CAP Paid Internship Program. CAP worked with community partners that helped connect participants to meaningful careers based on their interests. Participants completed internships with partners including the National Guild for Community Arts Education, STRIVE Career Pathways, and the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC). These experiences gave participants the skills, references, and confidence to apply for jobs and retain their positions during a challenging economic climate. The internships also helped them navigate stigmas and misconceptions that often arise during the hiring process. By gaining experience in a certain field, participants were able to present themselves as qualified and confident candidates, which helped combat any false narratives that potential employers might have about their background.

**5**  
PARTICIPANTS PLACED IN INTERNSHIPS

**5**  
PARTICIPANTS PLACED IN JOBS

*Uplift Mentors are justice-impacted women who have already earned a college degree and want to help guide other justice-impacted women, Uplift Mentees, in achieving their educational, professional, and personal goals. With the shared experience of justice involvement, Uplift Mentors help mentees break down unique barriers to higher education and opportunities.*

### WHAT HAPPENED

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Uplift Mentors were particularly creative in finding ways to motivate their mentees and ensure their needs were being met. For instance, when one of the mentors learned that her mentee was facing a lot of stress, she led a Zoom yoga session to help her relax and stay focused. Another mentor helped her mentee track academic goals and keep everything on task. To maintain the engagement of ASP participants who have not yet enrolled in school, Uplift Mentoring created cohorts that help women preparing for college build a sense of community and maintain their intention to continue in the program. Mentors and mentees helped lead Mentor Circles and Sister Circles, which gave them an opportunity to grow their leadership skills and confidence while building community.

UPLIFT  
MENTORING  
TRAINED

20

MENTORS  
AND SERVED

37

MENTEES,  
AND ALL OF  
THE MENTEES  
ENROLLED  
INTO ASP.



## Uplift Mentoring Spotlight: Kenya Edmonds

Although I come from a family of college grads, my mom didn't get her degree until I was in my teens. I watched her navigate higher education when I was in high school, but when I got to college, there were still a lot of things I needed to learn to navigate on my own. Once I did, I felt like it was imperative to reach back out to other women impacted by the criminal legal system and give them a helping hand. That's why I became an Uplift Mentor.

When I first met my mentee, I was ecstatic! I knew it would be a really good connection right off the bat. But, I knew that among people with justice involvement there tends to be a lot of mistrust, so I made sure that my mentees knew that this was a safe space for them to open up and that I had their best interest at heart.

Our connection grew quickly as we related beyond the simple mentor/mentee relationship. Because we share the experience of justice involvement, there are a lot of things that we could joke about that we aren't able to joke about with other people. Being around other women who share similar experiences feels good and fosters a strong sisterhood.



When people come through the criminal legal system, they are dictated at all the time and that becomes who you are. That's why I wanted to give [my mentees] the freedom and room to become who they really are. Giving them that reassurance and helping them rediscover their agency has been especially rewarding.

Our shared experience was one of the most powerful ways I have been able to help my mentees. When people come through the criminal legal system, they are dictated at all the time and that becomes who you are. That's why I wanted to give them the freedom and room to become who they really are again. Giving them that reassurance and helping them rediscover their agency has been especially rewarding. I've not only been able to help my mentees navigate higher education, but I've been able to help them navigate themselves, their lives, and their futures after contact with the criminal legal system.



# POLICY & ADVOCACY

## POLICY & ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

We believe that those with firsthand knowledge of the criminal legal system should be at the forefront of reform efforts, and because of this, we strive to give voice to their power, agency, and experiences. In this work, we prioritize the following: campaigns focused on increasing access to higher education for currently and formerly incarcerated people, community education and civic engagement projects, and leadership development and advocacy training for women impacted by the criminal legal system.



Our #TurnOnTheTAPNY campaign fights for the reinstatement of TAP for incarcerated people.

## WHAT HAPPENED

After the reinstatement of Pell, Nineteen states have no barriers to accessing state-based financial aid while in prison, but the New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), a critical companion to Pell, has not been restored to incarceration students. When TAP was banned in 1995, around 3,500 students in forty-five prisons across New York were receiving funding. To fight for the reinstatement of TAP for incarcerated people, CCF relaunched the #TurnOnTheTAPNY campaign in January of 2020. This campaign has continued over the last year and with it, community groups and college-in-prison providers across New York have joined us to repeal the ban on TAP grants for incarcerated students.

## WHAT'S NEXT

Our efforts over the past year to reorient our front-facing messaging around educational equity and racial justice, along with our tireless leveraging of emerging virtual advocacy channels, have allowed us to gain increased institutional capacity for this bill. Looking forward, we plan to work on integrating TAP into the New York State budget by making our coalition stronger and more diverse so that we are ready for future budget negotiations.

WE HAD MORE THAN

70

MEETINGS WITH LEGISLATORS TO SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF RESTORING TAP

Restoring TAP funding for people in prison IS

Racial Justice



TURN on the TAP

Restoring TAP funding for people in prison IS

Educational Equity



TURN on the TAP

## Adapting Our Approach

Our efforts to restore TAP have involved collaborating our efforts with a coalition of community organizations and college-in-prison providers such as Central Synagogue and the Bard Prison Initiative. We worked on reorienting our core messaging and leveraging the shift to virtual platforms to attract more co-sponsors and garner public support for the cause. Just as we did with Pell, we recentered our focus on closing gaps with respect to equity and racial justice. The response to COVID-19 and the political climate, displayed the enormous disparities that exist in society, and we wanted to connect more deeply with those issues by bringing them to the forefront of the campaign. As with Pell, this shift involved drawing more attention to the need to provide this opportunity for all incarcerated individuals regardless of nature or length of sentence - universal eligibility.

We emphasized that the reinstatement of TAP will help strengthen democracy, promote educational equity, and advance racial justice. In March, we hosted a Virtual Advocacy Day event, in which many of our state representatives spoke, including State Senators Robert Jackson, Brad Hoylman, and Toby Stavisky. We also organized group meetings with legislators, where advocates, co-sponsors, and other key stakeholders discussed the critical importance of the bill. Over 70 people met with legislators during this event, and the conversations that took place there earned us the support of new co-sponsors, including Assembly members Alicia Hyndman and Charles Barron.

## Virtual Education

Our efforts to reinstate TAP involved using new virtual platforms to promote public support for the bill by familiarizing people with the mission of the campaign. Many people did not know that TAP was still banned or that Pell had passed on the federal level, so we used virtual channels to educate the public about the issue, which involved more than 70 meetings with legislators to spread the word about the importance of restoring TAP. In May and June, we conducted 3-4 meetings per day in order to talk with different groups about the inherent values of restoring TAP.

# #EquityIsJustice

In 2020, we launched #EquityIsJustice, a campaign that centered racial equity, economic justice, and the universal restoration of Pell to all people in prison regardless of length or nature of sentence.

## WHAT HAPPENED

As always, the focus of our efforts centered the voices of directly impacted people as we focused our messaging on racial equity, economic justice, and the universal restoration of Pell to all incarcerated people. The launch of this campaign was crucial to ensuring that the right to education was restored to all individuals in prison, without carve outs.

We hosted three virtual #EquityIsJustice panels throughout the year, which reached over 2100 people. In leveraging the shift to virtual platforms, we were able to keep the issue relevant and work with Representatives and Senators on both sides of the aisle, such as Chairman Lamar Alexander, to get the policy into the omnibus spending bill.

Many CCF students, participants, and alumnae participated #EquityIsJustice and tirelessly spoke with members of Congress. Because of their willingness to share their stories, Pell funding was restored for incarcerated people on December 27, 2020, as part of the year-end COVID-19 relief package.

## WHAT'S NEXT

To maintain an ecosystem that ensures the best outcomes of Pell restoration, organizations like CCF must be upheld by the stakeholders and funders that helped get the nation to this critical juncture.

WE REACHED OVER

# 2100

PEOPLE WITH OUR  
THREE VIRTUAL  
#EQUITYISJUSTICE  
PANELS

“

We wanted this more than anyone. We bore the cost more than anyone. The power of our testimony came with the stigma of incarceration. Yet, chins held high, we claimed that we are worthy of educational opportunity.”

— Vivian Nixon, CCF Executive Director 2006 - 2021



ACCESS TO PELL

IN PRISON IS

**ECONOMIC  
JUSTICE**

#EquityIsJustice



ACCESS TO PELL

IN PRISON IS

**RACIAL  
EQUITY**

#EquityIsJustice

## Virtual Advocacy

Because of the move to virtual advocacy, we were able to bring together advocates, legislators, and a diverse range of stakeholders in a way that we had never been able to before. This allowed us to pair more directly impacted people with members of Congress and foster conversations about why the restoration of Pell matters.

# VICTORY!

**Pell Restoration Passed  
by Congress!**

#EquityIsJustice

## The Fight For Pell Pays Off

As CCF WISH Alumna Hope Sanders said, “Education changes lives. I know it changed mine. It gave me a broader idea of people, society, behaviors, and a deeper understanding of myself.” In the 1994 Violent Crime bill, Pell grants that had allowed for higher education inside prisons, were banned for incarcerated people. However, after many years of advocacy, CCF and our partners were able to push for Congress to reinstate Pell Grants for our family inside prison. This incredible policy victory, while long fought, was a testament to the bravery of many directly-impacted people who told their stories to their representatives.

Restoring Pell has always been a key advocacy effort at CCF. We recognize that increasing access to education is a critical component of promoting equity and racial justice. Expanding college access for people in prison would not only give people a sense of value and purpose, but also increase opportunity in communities ravaged by cyclical incarceration. The economic security attained through college education also makes the children of justice-involved individuals more likely to pursue a college education themselves. In addition to promoting social mobility, access to college education strengthens democracy. Research indicates that there is a strong correlation between higher education and civic engagement, which means that those who pursue education while in prison are more likely to get involved in community efforts after they are released.

As the Department of Education works to reinstate Pell funding for people in prison, CCF will continue to ensure that no one is excluded from the opportunity to pursue an education.

We are also committed to the expansion of bridge programs that offer students the opportunity to complete degrees in the community if they are released from prison before degree completion or choose to pursue an advanced degree.



To help restore and promote the voting rights of justice-involved people, the advocacy team at CCF organized Justice Votes NY in the Fall of 2020.

### WHAT HAPPENED

Many individuals in communities with high rates of incarceration do not vote because they are uncertain about their eligibility or unfamiliar with the steps involved in the voting process. We designed the Justice Votes NY campaign and program to help educate justice impacted individuals about their right to vote and empower them to become civically engaged.

### WHAT'S NEXT

CCF is continuing to expand its civic engagement work through multiple partnerships and the upcoming release of an evaluation that provides a framework for how we might mobilize those with criminal convictions to the polls.

## Educational Programming

CCF ran three voter education classes in the lead-up to the New York October deadline to register to vote. Some of the topics covered in this programming included the historical roots of disenfranchisement, voter suppression, New York-specific qualifications for voting based on conviction status, how to register to vote, deadlines for voting, and informed voting.

OUR 70 MILLION STRONG RALLY REACHED OVER  
**500**  
VIEWERS VIA LIVE STREAM



## 70 Million Strong Rally

We also organized the 70 Million Strong Rally, which took place on the first day of early voting ever in NYC, to energize the justice-involved people in our community and beyond to vote and give voice to their experiences. More than 40 people attended this event at the Bronx Supreme Court steps, and we reached over 500 viewers via live stream. Speakers discussed the marginalization of justice-involved people in American democracy and encouraged people in their community to practice their civic duty and recognize the power that they have as a voting block.

## Resist and Rise

Justice Votes NY also organized an art and advocacy event called Resist and Rise the day before Election Day 2020. Resist and Rise was an opportunity for our community to come together and tell the stories of those marginalized as a form of civic engagement. As Ivelisse Gilestra stated at the beginning of the evening, this virtual event was “about daring to envision new ways to address vast social issues and also give room to our shared experiences.” It featured ten artists from our community who used poetry, painting, and song to share their stories and advocate for racial, gender, and economic justice. In taking time to celebrate the healing power of art and showcase the different voices in our community, we inspired viewers to vote and encourage others to show up to the polls the next day.



Women Influencing Systems and History (WISH) is an eight-week advocacy training program that empowers women closest to issues related to criminal legal reform so that they can act as champions of change. Participants learn about different forms of advocacy, the policymaking process, and how people’s perceptions and biases shape their understanding of policy.

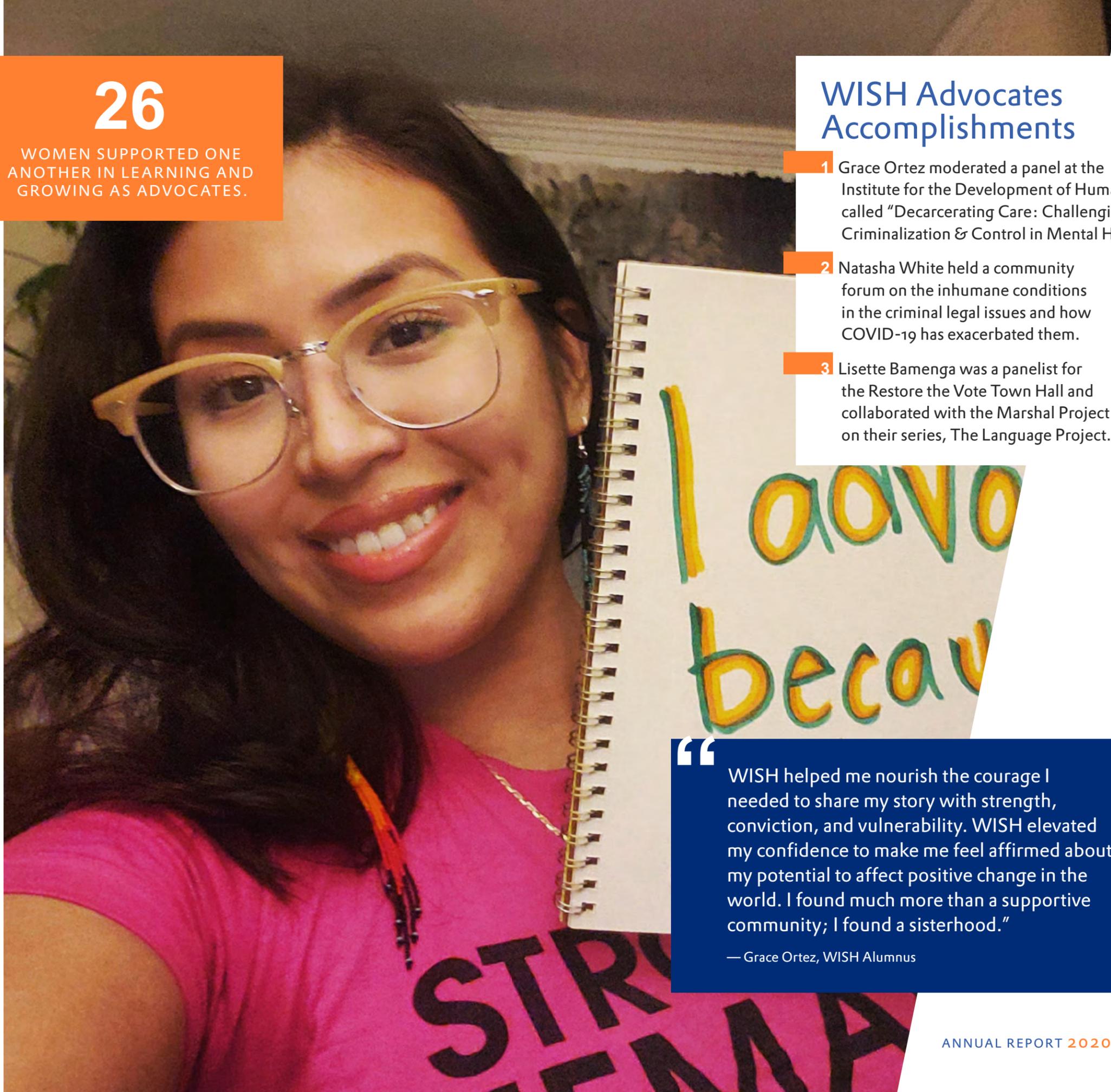
### WHAT HAPPENED

This past year, the facilitators held space for the women to gather and discuss racial and economic injustices that became more pronounced during the pandemic and alongside the tragic deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Many WISH advocates joined the Black Lives Matter movement and coordinated securing aid to the “invisible population” of women inside prisons as COVID-19 raged on.

The shift to a hybrid platform allowed participants from across New York State to meet as a community, share their personal experiences, and cultivate the hard skills they need to make meaningful change as advocates. This year, we shifted the focus of our curriculum from theory to practical application and emphasized helping women learn to navigate government systems. In demystifying these legal processes, the WISH program allowed the women to be at the forefront of systemic change.

The women involved in WISH participated in and led numerous community campaigns such as the Flip the Script campaign, VOCAL-NY, and the Justice 4 Women Task Force.

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WOMEN SUPPORTED ONE ANOTHER IN LEARNING AND GROWING AS ADVOCATES.



## WISH Advocates Accomplishments

- 1 Grace Ortez moderated a panel at the Institute for the Development of Human Arts called “Decarcerating Care: Challenging Criminalization & Control in Mental Health”.
- 2 Natasha White held a community forum on the inhumane conditions in the criminal legal issues and how COVID-19 has exacerbated them.
- 3 Lisette Bamenga was a panelist for the Restore the Vote Town Hall and collaborated with the Marshal Project on their series, The Language Project.

“WISH helped me nourish the courage I needed to share my story with strength, conviction, and vulnerability. WISH elevated my confidence to make me feel affirmed about my potential to affect positive change in the world. I found much more than a supportive community; I found a sisterhood.”  
— Grace Ortez, WISH Alumnus

# THRIVE

Technical Assistance Program

THRIVE provides training to staff and faculty at other institutions that serve people affected by the criminal legal systems and human resources professionals positioned to hire people with criminal history records. The evidence-based and promising practices that we use in our College & Career Programs are the basis for the curriculum, covering state and local laws and regulations that protect people with criminal record histories. While other programs focus on change at the individual and systemic levels, THRIVE is the only program designed to change institutional practices and culture.

## WHAT HAPPENED

The program's biggest accomplishment of the year was that it took full advantage of the transition to a virtual platform by using the new format to promote solidarity among trainees. The people involved in our program usually do not have the opportunity to take part in group training activities with their colleagues, so their experience with THRIVE allowed them to develop a sense of comradery while working together to provide more support for justice impacted students and employees. Trainees were especially receptive to group activities that encouraged them to reflect on how they can be more responsive when engaging with justice-involved people.

## WHAT'S NEXT

We established four core goals that will help make THRIVE more sustainable for businesses and justice-impacted people. This new vision for THRIVE will work to better educate and decrease stigma among businesses and institutions on people with justice involvement and increase access to opportunities for justice-involved people. These goals will guide us as we continue to restructure THRIVE in order to expand our services and make our training available to more organizations in the years to come.

LAST YEAR, THRIVE TRAINED  
**159**  
PEOPLE, INCLUDING ACADEMIC COUNSELORS, STAFF, FACULTY, AND TEACHERS, ACROSS FIVE SITES



# THRIVE



## THRIVE NEW Trajectory

- 1 Increase understanding about protections for businesses and the benefits of hiring justice-involved people;
- 2 Expand employment options for justice-involved people;
- 3 Raise awareness about common challenges faced by justice-involved people and their impact on families, communities, and the nation's economy; and
- 4 Decrease stigma in order to create a more diverse and inclusive work and culture and maintain company compliance.

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We thank you for your support!

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## STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

### ASSETS

ASSETS	2021	2020
Cash	\$1,562,429	\$879,475
Contributions receivable	\$170,175	\$150,030
Government grants and subcontracts receivable	\$709,474	\$711,963
Investments	\$1,348,721	\$1,064,205
Prepaid expenses	\$45,049	\$33,322
Property and equipment, net	\$3,083	\$11,936
Security deposits	\$17,927	\$2,038
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$3,856,858</b>	<b>\$2,852,969</b>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

LIABILITIES	2021	2020
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$162,132	\$129,731
Refundable advances	\$300,291	\$288,715
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$462,423</b>	<b>\$418,446</b>

NET ASSETS	2021	2020
Without donor restrictions	\$2,745,818	\$1,775,257
With donor restrictions	\$648,617	\$659,266
Total net assets	\$3,394,435	\$2,434,523
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$3,856,858</b>	<b>\$2,852,969</b>

## STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

### SUPPORT + REVENUES

	2021			2020		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Contributions	\$1,139,646	\$573,617	\$1,713,263	\$819,971	\$625,423	\$1,445,394
Contributions In-Kind	\$175		\$175			
Contributions Non-Cash	\$1,340		\$1,340			
Government grants and contracts	\$1,396,894		\$1,396,894	\$1,069,569		\$1,069,569
Program service revenue	\$114,651		\$114,651	\$125,981		\$125,981
Government subcontracts	\$60,937		\$60,937	\$117,759		\$117,759
Special events:						
Income	\$84,800		\$84,800			
Less: related direct costs	(\$68,120)		(\$68,120)			
Net special event income	\$16,680		\$16,680			
Investment return	\$293,906		\$293,906	(\$30,227)		(\$30,227)
Other income	\$346		\$346	(\$252)		(\$252)
Net assets released from restriction						
Satisfaction of purpose restrictions	\$509,266	(\$509,266)		\$405,699	(\$405,699)	
Expiration of time restrictions	\$75,000	(\$75,000)		\$221,000	(\$221,000)	
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUES</b>	<b>\$3,608,841</b>	<b>(\$10,649)</b>	<b>\$3,598,192</b>	<b>\$2,729,500</b>	<b>(\$1,276)</b>	<b>\$2,728,224</b>

### EXPENSES

	2021			2020		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Program services						
College & career services	\$1,148,290		\$1,148,290	\$951,435		\$951,435
Policy & advocacy	\$511,728		\$511,728	\$550,525		\$550,525
Technical assistance	\$213,003		\$213,003	\$251,088		\$251,088
Total program expenses	\$1,873,021		\$1,873,021	\$1,753,048		\$1,753,048
Supporting services:						
Management and general	\$491,703		\$491,703	\$439,258		\$439,258
Fundraising	\$273,556		\$273,556	\$301,251		\$301,251
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,638,280</b>		<b>\$2,638,280</b>	<b>\$2,493,557</b>		<b>\$2,493,557</b>
Increase/(Decrease) in net assets	\$970,561	(\$10,649)	\$959,912	\$235,943	(\$1,276)	\$234,667
Net assets, beginning of year	\$1,775,257	\$659,266	\$2,434,523	\$1,539,314	\$660,542	\$2,199,856
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$2,745,818</b>	<b>\$648,617</b>	<b>\$3,394,435</b>	<b>\$1,775,257</b>	<b>\$659,266</b>	<b>\$2,434,523</b>

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2020-21

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