

An aerial photograph of El Paso, Texas, showing the city built on a hillside with a prominent mountain range in the background. The sky is clear and blue. The city features a mix of residential houses and commercial buildings, including several tall skyscrapers. The mountains in the background are rugged and brownish, with some communication towers visible on the peaks.

**PROJECT BRAVO**  
EL PASO COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

HELPING PEOPLE | CHANGING LIVES

## A message from our **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The COVID-19 Pandemic affected our community in ways that will have lasting effects for years to come. We all experienced the uncertainty of the health crisis, the economic impacts of business shutdowns, and the sadness of losing people in our community, and sometimes members of our families, to COVID-19. Throughout the Pandemic, Project BRAVO worked hard to support the most vulnerable in our community in ways that truly made a difference in people's lives.

Like many other organizations, Project BRAVO had to change its way of doing business to ensure the health and safety of staff and clients. Project BRAVO began planning for the possibility of a lockdown in February of 2020, therefore when the County of El Paso, the State of Texas, and the CDC provided guidance to the community to limit the spread of the virus, our organization was ready to work remotely. Working remotely required constant program assessment, changes in policies and processes, adoption of new technology, increases in staff, creation of new programs, and a commitment to ensuring the health and safety for employees and the community. Like many organizations, Project BRAVO never stopped working despite all the challenges presented by the pandemic and our commitment to ensure program accessibility to the most vulnerable people in our community.

The 2020 Project BRAVO Annual Report highlights the work of the Project BRAVO team to ensure people in economic distress, especially those affected by COVID-19, had their basic needs met. Some grants, such as CARE funds used for rent and mortgage assistance, called on us to create new policies and procedures, hire staff, and implement services in a period of a few months so that we could meet the overwhelming needs in our community.

Other existing federal grants received significant funding increases to address economic distress in the community. In those instances, our management had to take on additional duties, supervise additional temporary staff, and pivot whenever a new challenge arose.

I am very proud of our team and their tireless commitment to serving our borderland community. As you read the report, see the outcomes, and listen to the stories of our clients, I want you to know that none of this is possible without our committed Project BRAVO employees. We live up to the Community Action ideals of "Helping People" and "Changing Lives".



**LAURA PONCE,  
Executive Director**

## **OUR MISSION**

Project BRAVO builds bridges to opportunities that help individuals and families thrive in our Borderland community.

## **OUR VISION**

To bridge access to opportunities for residents of El Paso County to achieve equity and elevate our quality of life through education and social services that lead to self-sufficiency.

# 2020-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

In July 2020, Project BRAVO staff, management, and board members engaged in a collaborative Strategic Planning process that is required every 3 years. Strategic planning is an exercise that helps identify an organization's objectives and strategies to achieve them.

As a result, stakeholders were able to identify four goals that are to be met by Project BRAVO by 2023.

In connection to these goals, we reassessed Project BRAVO's mission and vision statements to align them with our strategic objectives.

We wanted to ensure that they communicated the organization's purpose and its overall direction to employees, clients, community partners, and other stakeholders.

Project BRAVO is supporting a thriving Borderland community in El Paso County, Texas by providing resources and support to promote self-sufficiency of people and families and empower community members to achieve their dreams. Through providing short-term relief and fostering collaborative partnerships, individuals are achieving equitable outcomes and improved quality of life.

- 1 Expanding holistic service offerings
- 2 Diversify funding sources
- 3 Enhancing communication and outreach
- 4 Investing in people, technology, and strategic data collection and impact measurement

# HOUSING PROGRAM

As one of two HUD Certified Programs in El Paso, Project BRAVO's skilled Counselors provide housing and financial empowerment education and resources to families. Our Housing Program aims to provide safe, affordable, and quality housing opportunities to all El Pasoans.

## Affordable Apartments

36 Apartment Units

46 Families

Obtained affordable housing

\$228,114

in Rental Savings

## Homebuyer Education & Counseling

248 Clients

Assisted in Homebuyer Education & Counseling

182.5 Hours

of Homebuyer Education & Counseling

5 Families

Purchased their First Home

## Foreclosure Prevention

90 Families

Assisted in Foreclosure Prevention

\$124,917

in Aggregate Savings

## Project BRAVO Success Stories:

# Francisco Quiroz & Family

The Quiroz family started with our Housing program before the pandemic in 2019 due to unemployment. They needed help to save their home. An assessment was done and the Quiroz family was able to apply for an Unemployment Forbearance.



With our Housing Department's support, they were able to obtain forbearance for 12 months. Their savings amounted to over \$800 a month.

In the meantime, Mr. Quiroz was also enrolled in the GED and CARE program. Mr. Quiroz was able to obtain his GED in 2020, and through continued education with the CARE program, he obtained his EKG Tech Certification. Project BRAVO has also been able to help the Quiroz family with Utility assistance, weatherization, and other incentives to help Mr. Quiroz obtain his goal of becoming self-sufficient.

At the beginning of 2021, Mr. Quiroz found steady employment at a good-paying wage. We helped the Quiroz family apply for a modification and received approval. The Quiroz family now maintains over \$400 in monthly savings.

Mr. Quiroz has stated that he is so grateful, wishes the staff many blessings, and always says how words can never begin to express how thankful and blessed he is for Project BRAVO's help.



Retomando mis estudios:

# María Angélica Hernández Viesca

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Hace un año me inscribí en el programa de GED en Proyecto BRAVO. Aunque sabía que lo lograría, nunca me imaginé todo lo que tendría que superar. Al principio fue difícil la adaptación después de años sin estudiar, dedicarme a mi familia en tiempo completo y no trabajar. Sin embargo, con ayuda de mi familia y el profesor Muñoz, pude avanzar en mi camino; él siempre nos motivaba a seguir adelante, aunque a veces fue frustrante no entender de qué se hablaba, siempre tenía una palabra de aliento para calmarnos y continuar aprendiendo, motivándonos a dar todo de nosotros. A pesar de que estábamos atravesando por una pandemia, siempre supimos adaptarnos al cambio.

Proyecto BRAVO nos proporcionó todo lo necesario para facilitarnos el estudio, desde computadoras LapTop, hasta brindándonos becas para clases de inglés en EPCC. En todo momento el programa, junto con la administración del mismo, nos ayudaban a los estudiantes que estábamos dedicados en nuestras clases.

Hoy quiero decir a todas esas personas que por motivos diferentes detuvieron sus estudios, que sigan adelante, que jamás es tarde para empezar a hacer algo por nosotros mismos, que confíen en su potencial y que todo con esfuerzo y dedicación se logra.

Yo soy mamá, ahora trabajo y estudio al mismo tiempo y no hay mayor satisfacción que disfrutar con mi familia cada uno de mis logros y comprender que una mente estudiada, es una mente fuerte y preparada para un futuro mejor.

Gracias.

””



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I was furloughed from my job of fifteen years, one that I had hoped to retire from. Due to the circumstances in 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, I was then forced to seek out any type of help to further my education and provide the means for my family and home. I then found the services that Project BRAVO was willing to offer.

I proceeded to fill out an application for the services and my first contact with Project Bravo was with Mr. Hiram Acosta. Mr. Acosta was very helpful in giving me information as to the programs that Project Bravo provided, and in directing me to Ms. Carolina Soto.

Working closely with Ms. Soto, I was able to register for a continuing education course at Western Technical College for their Commercial Driver Training. The course was five weeks long and Project Bravo provided the tuition assistance for me to attend, complete, and graduate from the course, with a 3.75 GPA. I am also receiving assistance from Project BRAVO's utility assistance program and working closely with Ms. Maria Ramos for that assistance.

With the help of the people mentioned above, and Project BRAVO as a whole, I am now currently in the process of making appointments for interviews for possible employment pertaining to the training I received. I want to thank Project BRAVO and all the programs they provide to help people like myself, and other families in need of help managing life changing events.

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# COMMUNITY SERVICES

Project BRAVO's Community Services Program provides wraparound services to maximize a household's ability to become self-sufficient and independent. We aim to help individuals and families transition out of poverty by providing utility assistance, career and academic readiness, adult basic education, and patient assistance.

## Utility Assistance

**7,505** Families Assisted

**2,135** Families Assisted with COVID Hardship

**\$4,927,174** Provided in Utility Assistance

## Patient Assistance Program

**56** Medication Prescriptions

**85** Free Eye Exams

**66** Free Eyeglasses

**\$129,374** in Aggregate Savings

# COMMUNITY SERVICES

## Career & Academic Readiness (CARE) Program

8 Clients Transitioned Out of Poverty

\$38,058 in Rental Assistance \*

\$46,461 in Support Services

\$3,600 in Transportation Support

\$48,648 in Tuition Assistance

\*Value of CARE clients assisted with rental assistance. COVID assistance found on page 13.

## Adult Education Program (GED)

23 Students Enrolled in GED Classes

2 Students Received their GED

\$3,164 in Testing Scholarships



# WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Project BRAVO's Weatherization Assistance Program reduces energy costs for low-income households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes, while ensuring their health and safety. Through weatherization improvements and upgrades, we help households save on energy costs, resulting in hundreds of extra dollars per year to the homeowner.

In 2020, we had to pause our weatherization services for the safety of our clients and staff amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, we were able to assist families in early 2020, and at the end of the year when safety measures allowed our employees to return to the field.

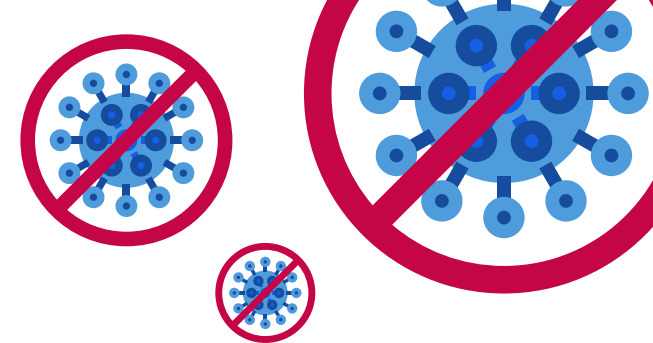
Homes Weatherized **106**

in direct assistance **\$861,589**

Homes Received HVAC Repair **999**

in direct assistance **\$1,506,196**

# RESPONSE to the COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Project BRAVO's application processes, service delivery, and overall mission and vision: the COVID-19 pandemic immensely impacted our agency and our community.

We made changes necessary for the safety and health of the community and our staff, closed our centers to the public, adapted a Work from Home model, and learned to continue to provide services virtually.

Through additional funding distributed to assist those affected financially by the pandemic, Project BRAVO was able to temporarily offer rental assistance, mortgage assistance, and the El Paso Community Card, a debit card to help cover essential expenses.

In the midst of accommodations in these new times, we were able to implement an online application process, which made accessing our services easier than ever. We installed secure mailboxes that allowed the public to pick up and drop off applications at their own convenience, we allowed applications and documents to be submitted electronically, and opened the application dates instead of limiting the days you could apply at a certain center.

Project BRAVO is proud to have been one of the organizations that families could look to for support when our lives were changed drastically.



# COVID RELIEF PROGRAMS

\$334,230

in assistance

219

households assisted

## Emergency Housing Payment Assistance Program - Rental Assistance

Project BRAVO's EHPA Rental Assistance provided COVID-impacted clients with up to three months of rental assistance of up to \$3,000.00.

\$306,686

in assistance

141

households assisted

## Emergency Housing Payment Assistance Program - Mortgage Assistance

Project BRAVO's EHPA Mortgage Assistance provided COVID-impacted clients with up to three months of mortgage assistance of up to \$3,750.00.

\$822,000

in assistance

411

households assisted

## El Paso Community Card

Through a partnership with the El Paso Community Foundation, we were able to provide limited use debt cards to those financially affected by COVID-19 to help purchase household essentials, groceries, and more.

\$502,083

in assistance

108

households assisted

## Texas Eviction Diversion Program

As one of nine state-designated organizations to oversee this pilot program, Project BRAVO was able to provide clients with up to 6 months of rental assistance for households facing eviction.

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**DECEMBER 31, 2020**

**ASSETS**

Current Assets:		
Cash	\$	568,662
Grants and other receivables		1,293,624
Prepaid expenses		47,387
Total current assets		1,909,673
Non-Current Assets		
Property and equipment-net	\$	1,070,634
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>2,980,307</b>

**LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS**

Current Liabilities:	\$	355,476
Revolving Line of Credit		868,486
Accounts Payable		21,833
Current portion of notes payable		32,742
Current portion of forgivable notes		108,346
Accrued expenses		190,083
Deferred revenue		
Total current liabilities		1,577,327
Long term liabilities:		
Long term notes payable		78,611
Forgivable notes		121,780
Tenant deposits		13,191
Total long term liabilities		200,391
Total liabilities		1,790,909
Net Assets:		
Unrestricted		1,189,398
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>		<b>2,980,307</b>

# FINANCIAL REPORT

**STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020**

**PROGRAM REVENUES**

Federal grants	\$	12,075,321
Other grant revenue		20,234
Rent revenue		212,883
Interest Income		16
Debt forgiveness		32,742
Donations		48,594
Other income		84,783
<b>Total revenue and income</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>12,474,573</b>

**EXPENSES**

Utility Assistance	\$	5,972,553
Weatherization		2,516,881
GED and Transition Out of Poverty		104,422
Mortgage & Rental Assistance		678,551
Direct service support		2,104,985
General and administrative		1,074,408
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>12,451,802</b>

Change in net assets	\$	22,771
Net Assets, beginning		1,166,626
Net Assets, ending		1,189,398

## Administrative Office

2000 Texas Ave. El Paso TX 79901

## Community Centers

Central | 2000 Texas Ave. El Paso TX 79901

Westside | 7000 5th St. Canutillo TX 79835

Northeast | 8815 Dyer St. Suite 300, El Paso TX 79904

Eastside | 14901 Whitetail Deer Dr. El Paso TX 79938

Ysleta | 8908 Old County Rd. El Paso TX 79907

Lower Valley | 13680 Socorro Rd. San Elizario TX 79849



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