

An Interview with Janet Quintero

Perspectives from the COVID-19 Pandemic: Leadership and Learning in Nevada

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Principal Researchers:

Magdalena Martinez, Ph.D. and Kelliann Beavers, Ph.D.

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Each interviewee had the opportunity to review their transcript. All measures have been taken to preserve the style and language of the interviewee. This interview features Janet Quintero, Vice President of External Affairs for United Way of Southern Nevada, and was conducted on 11/14/22 by Kelliann Beavers and Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio. This interview covers topics including reflections on leadership, organizational challenges, and opportunities for collaboration.

Interview with Janet Quintero

Date: 11-14-2022

SPEAKERS: Kelliann Beavers, Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio, Janet Quintero

Kelliann Beavers [00:08]

All right. Thank you, Janet, for being with us and for confirming your permission to record the audio. The first question is, can you describe your role throughout the pandemic and the role of your organization, as a whole, as you see it?

Janet Quintero [00:27]

Yes. I just wanted to take a moment, also, to say hi to you both. Thank you for including me and thank you for being flexible with the rescheduling. So, I'm so grateful that you included me in the process.

My name is Janet Quintero. I'm currently the Vice President of External Affairs at United Way of Southern Nevada. But during the pandemic, I was a director of government and community affairs. I would say that my role still includes what it was when the pandemic started, you know. Pre-pandemic, during the pandemic, and a little bit post-pandemic, has just grown a little bit in responsibility, and kind of the new mission and vision of what United Way, what we would love it to be for our community.

One of the key things that United Way did during the pandemic is, we implemented the Emergency Assistance Community Needs Fund. And we were able to really get that going really quickly. I would say that probably, in a matter of a week, we were able to get that going, and that was meant to provide rental assistance to the community. Just because after the governor's – what's it called – the State of Emergency press release kind of went out – we knew that many families would not be able to keep working.

We were able to replicate this quickly because at the national level, United Way – just local United Ways in general – we are the sole recipient of the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, or EFSP, for short, which is a national program. So we get those funds from – it's a congressional budget process, and then it kind of goes to United Way Worldwide for administration. It gets trickled down to local United Ways. And we are one of those administrators here at the state level because we already had experience with that, and there's a lot of rental assistance programs, food assistance programs, who were able to quickly shift to a more broad assistance program with the creation of that Emergency Assistance and Community Needs Fund separately.

We did fund separately for that because EFSP, being a federal program, it has very strict guidelines. And recognizing that we didn't know what COVID would look like for our community, we wanted to be able to have the flexibility of having funds, and having donors and funders who understood that we could react and just approach this work, you know, as it needed to, and quickly shift. At the time, the county didn't have CHAP set up yet, right? These were

conversations that were *barely* happening. So, I think that is one of the benefits of having nonprofits be a part of that process.

Kelliann Beavers [03:23]

It's hard to even imagine that it was that way now. As much a part of things as CHAP is when you say that it's like "Oh, my goodness." It's crazy.

Janet Quintero [03:33]

Yeah. And I would say it's still difficult now for the county to even process just the volume of applications that they have. It's like two years after the pandemic; so I can only imagine trying to set up a program in the midst of everything with the workforce. So I would say that we were very lucky in the fact that we knew this process, and we were able to duplicate and replicate what was useful, and then, be creative as we needed to be. And I think that's something that we hear a lot; that the nonprofits are nimble enough, right, that we could react and act quicker.

Something else that happened during the pandemic is – I'm an immigrant, born and raised in Mexico. And a lot of that was recognizing that, as we were getting all these programs out, they're talking about the vaccine and talking about what is COVID. I was hearing family members, community members. I was still one of the few Spanish speakers here at the office at the time.

So I was hearing that a lot of the information that, according to us, we have put out there, and it was put out in the community, that we were getting those same questions in Spanish, right? I'm answering the phone in Spanish, and people are asking me, "Do you have rental assistance?" and I kept thinking, "Of course, we do," right? "There's a PSA, and we have a flier in English, and it's on our website." But that's not how you reach all of the communities. And I think that realization became clear, even as I'm educating my family myself, right? I work at United Way. I have these answers, and I'm still trying to explain this to my family. So I can only imagine, to people that don't have this access to the information, how hard is it to get it to your neighbors and community members?

So we became more intentional in making sure that all this was translated and more accessible. Not only outside of a webpage, we made sure that if people needed to answer this information over the phone, they could do it over the phone. And if they needed to answer this information in Spanish, that it was available in Spanish. Not everything could be done remotely, and I think that in the midst of the pandemic – and I've said this before – we sacrificed accessibility for the sake of efficiency for the ones in the back of the administrators, right? We were like, "Well, we're remote, so everyone else has to be remote." Because we're doing everything, and that's not how all communities work, especially historically marginalized in the most vulnerable communities. That's not how they access information.

And being a member of that community myself and having the access to information here at United Way, we were able to shift quickly, and we were able to shift how we operate as a nonprofit. And I know I've kind of touched on two things, you know, the Emergency Assistance Fund, and then how we re-imagined access to that. And I do have two more examples, but I'll pause in case you have any questions.

Kelliann Beavers [06:42]

Oh, we are all ears. Please, go on.

Janet Quintero [06:46]

Sounds good. Let me go grab my water bottle. So, something else that we still have today is, our CEO at the time, her name is Kyle Rahn. I think it was also right after the governor's emergency notice. People were calling her saying, nonprofits don't know if we are – what's the term – for essential workers, right? Is that the term that they used?

Kelliann Beavers and Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [07:20]

(both nod affirmatively)

Janet Quintero [07:23]

So, as nonprofits, we weren't sure if we were essential workers or not yet. I think this was also being defined. So they called her, and they said, "How are we going to continue serving our community? You should bring, or host a call, United Way. That's what you do. You're a convenor. You bring the nonprofits together. You bring the communities together."

So, at the time, she said, "Well, here's a link." It was literally a conference call with a four-code password. We had like 200 people call in, and it was a disaster, right? No one can see each other. They're all over the phone. And it was clear that nonprofits wanted some connection and wanted some guidance, but it wasn't happening. I think all we realized is that there was a need for it – so I don't think we even knew what Zoom was at the time, right? It was like some people use it, some people don't, or maybe use it as a conference line. But we didn't really have this access to video conferencing like we do now.

So we scheduled another call that same week to engage nonprofits and social service organizations, and we scheduled a Zoom call. So, we all called in together, and we realized that there was a need for this coalition building. We had people from the emergency management office at the county join, and just keeping us apprised of "There's PPE coming in, you know. We might have face masks coming in, and hand sanitizer." And it also served as this main place where, you know – we receive like a huge shipment here, and we have nonprofits come and pick them up from our office, hand sanitizer. And we were just also – "Do you need volunteers?"

So it became kind of this very emergency response action-driven space. And we were meeting on a weekly basis, and every week, we had something to talk about. And it was, how are we responding to the pandemic? Who still has rental assistance left? Who has food? What are the needs out there? How are we serving our community?

I would say this probably went on for almost a year. Where it was, very much, like an emergency response. I remember at the time, it was the Red Cross who joined the call, and they said because of the COVID protocol, they couldn't host the blood drives at their current office because they needed to have six feet in between each bed. So they couldn't do that anymore – "Does anyone here have space for a blood drive? Because there's a huge need for blood." And in that call, we had probably like 10 people raise their hand and say, "Yes. We have a warehouse.

We have a room." So it was also a space for an open forum, and for question and answer. And it was happening almost immediately.

So we recognized that although we were a year later in that state of emergency, there was still a need for coordination, with resources and asset mapping, in that informal way in which it was born. And saying, "I have a need. I need a space. Who has a space?" Luckily, we've been able to continue that space. We don't meet weekly anymore. We meet bi-weekly. And it's kind of transformed what we recognize is that nonprofits value that connection, especially because we were all working from home at the time. So, we meet bi-weekly, and instead of being an emergency response, we've made it this – we have presenters – it has to be something that benefits our community for like 15-20 minutes. Then we have a calendar of events, you know, what we have coming up. And then the last 15 minutes, we call it an open forum. And I think that's everyone's favorite part because anyone could just raise their hand and say, "Hey, I'm Janet. I'm at United Way. I just wanted to say, hi everyone." Or, you can literally say, "Hey, I'm I have a family of five. I don't have funds for clothing or food. Who here can help me?" We've had all kinds of stories during that open forum. So we still host that bi-weekly, and similarly, we host that in Spanish. And that was also part of the realization and just recognition that we weren't doing everything to reach every community.

So, I'll pause there for any questions.

Kelliann Beavers [11:54]

This is great. You answered the questions I had, which were – sorry, the song's going on – how this has continued to impact the overall attitude of collaboration. And it is amazing what you guys have made possible in the community.

I think I'll just move on to our next question in the list of questions. But please feel free to share anything that comes to mind, just as you are.

You've somewhat described this in your other ways of sharing. The question is, can you walk through a timeline, as you remember it; what happened, what did you do, and were there pivotal moments that shaped a response in leadership? And you don't have to dwell on this one, since that was kind of what you already described, but if there's anything else you'd like to share.

Janet Quintero [12:38]

I will just say, March was the governor's notice of emergency. March is the same month where we started hosting what we now call the nonprofit sector call, which I've just explained. In May of this same year, we started hosting the same space fully in Spanish. Because we saw the need to also bring in other people – and mostly grassroots individuals – to a similar space.

In June of the same year, 2020, we began the internal DEI task force, and this was in response to recognizing that some communities were being affected more than others. The staff recognized that, again, they had similar stories to mine, right? Where I saw the need with my family and my neighbors, and now I'm communicating that to my supervisors and to my board that there's this need. And then the "Black Lives Matter" movement, of course.

So in June, we began hosting the DEI taskforce. And in January 2021, we began a full calendar of activities, honoring and celebrating each history and heritage month. And we merged the space that we had created with the nonprofit sector call over Zoom and brought panels and movie nights for each history month. And we began that with Black History Month for January of 2021, watching John Lewis' *Good Trouble* film, and bringing panelists in and talking about just how can nonprofits better serve their community. And that's the same question that we asked of every single history and heritage month for the remainder of the year and for two years now.

Kelliann Beavers [14:31]

That's amazing. I have a question about the nonprofit sector call, and it's that my heart grows 10 times in size when you talk about you all collaborating this way. And I find myself thinking, oh, my gosh, what it would be to be like a fly on the wall in these calls. And then thinking, how many people in the community would be responsive if there were able to be tapped on the shoulder in that way and say, "We need this now for these specific people that need help, and we don't have a way to help them." Is there any way in which you envision, a way in which it's already unfolding, to sort of let those – I'm sure already, it's so much work to make this call happen, and that's another question I have is: How you even do it, and whether you need support to make it happen? But also, how that can kind of connect out to the broader community[15:16] so that we can support you, and people can support you who are not necessarily running a nonprofit.

Janet Quintero [15:25]

So, I'm just saying the nonprofit sector call, although that's its name, is open to everyone. We've had similar conversations. So, no need to be a fly on the wall. And I'll send an invitation after this, you know. You're welcome to join. We would love for you to join and just connect with everyone.

It's grown to be so much more, right? I think it's really a community call. Sometimes we even have media joining. And if they hear anything, they reach back out and they're like, "This has to be a PSA. We're going to run this on our PSA." So I think it's really becoming that hub where we collaborate. Yes, absolutely, like I said, there's a huge need for asset mapping, and knowing that there are people like you who have that expertise, or who have done it with maybe other resources. We would love to collaborate.

We have a really strong partnership with the UNLV School of Public Health. And through that, what we did is, of course, the School of Public Health received messaging and funding to educate a community on COVID, on vaccines, on the risks, on everything. And through the platform, an audience that we had created, we started hosting webinars. And that was also in June 2020, and we went until July 2021. We hosted one every month. So we have 12 webinars that we've hosted in Spanish. And I will say out of the 12, about five or six were solely on COVID, where we had the head of the Southern Nevada Health District, Dr. [L-16:57] because he's a Spanish speaker. So, who better to share this message than someone who is actively working in that space, who speaks the language, and who understands the culture?

So we had him speak. We also had rental assistance. We had how to support your child as they're doing remote learning, or as they're going back to school. So, all of this exists on not only

YouTube and Facebook; but again, I think we recognized that we needed to go to trusted sources of information. So we have an organization reach who works out of the Mexican and Salvadorian Consulate. And they let us use their Facebook platform to share these webinars live, and use their audience, and share this with their audience. And we were able to reach people that were not in the United Way universe, at the UNLV School of Public Health universe. But they're the universe of reach – the Mexican Consulate and the Salvadorian Consulate.

So, similarly, I think that's just one example of how, you called it, "the citizens" can support. We were very open to collaboration. I think that one of the greatest things about United Way and why I love working here is that we truly get to be creative, but at the same time, we don't support just one program. I see I see that more of the United Way's support is the structure and the framework of nonprofits. So, you know, we can work with universities, and hear about anything that you have going on, and then create something that will support many nonprofits and interns. So, yeah. I'm happy to collaborate after this too.

Kelliann Beavers [18:51]

That's awesome. Thank you so much. And I would definitely be excited to be a part of that call.

I'm going to ask one more question, and then I'm going to pass the questions on to Carmen. And fortunately, the song is really quiet right now. How did you work with or serve groups who were hardest hit by the pandemic, and who were those groups in your opinion?

Janet Quintero [19:13]

Communities who are hesitant to engage with any public or government entity. And that can vary, the reasons can vary, the demographics can vary. But it is communities who, for historical reasons, don't trust the messaging, and I think that's why we have to engage in a culturally-appropriate manner. It's not just about translating something into a different language. It's not about adding the "Google Translate" feature on a website, and We get that. I think we really have to engage the leaders in that community.

I recognize that I have some understanding of what it means to be an immigrant from Mexico, and I have my own struggles. But I don't represent every Latino and Latina here, right, in the United States. I think that we have to recognize that our experience is not every experience. And then, on top of that, recognize the struggle of Black and African American people or the API community. So, actively engaging with communities to hear the struggle – and not just with one – tokenizing someone. Not just asking one person and saying, "I did my research." But really understanding outreach, and then also, the capacity that we have, so we don't make promises and further break that trust. I'm very careful when I engage with a community member, to not make promises that I can't keep. Because at that point, we're representing the system, right? You, as a university, me as United Way, although we're not a government or public entity, people see you as an institution. And if I engage with someone, I think that I have to be careful that they're placing their trust in *me*, and if something happens, then I'm breaking that trust, and then I'm just delaying that process for them to come back to the system. So I don't know if there's a specific culture, although I think we know it from just historical examples. It's just people who have a hard time trusting the system, and for good reason.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [21:37]

Thank you, Janet. First, I want to ask you where you're from in Mexico. My family is from Veracruz, first generation.

Janet Quintero [21:47]

Yeah. I think I heard "Vera Cruz?"

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [21:48]

Yes.

Janet Quintero [21:50]

Yeah. I'm from Tijuana. I was born and raised in Tijuana, and then my family – my dad's from – his family is from Guadalajara and my mom's from Michoacan. And I just share that for cultural context because I know that Tijuana is a melting pot of culture.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [22:04]

Yes. I lived there when I was a child. It was the best time. I loved it. I'm glad to hear you mention the Mexican Consulate. I had ties over there, too. And I wanted to clarify that it was the R.E.A.C.H. Program, the Ventana de Salud that you were referring to, that translates the window of health? But they also have a new program, Salvando tu Salud - You can save that for later, but I was just wondering if you worked with them.

The next question – and of course, through this project, we've been able to talk to you, a lot of people, and a lot of kind, compassionate people. But at the same time, we still want to ask you – you just mentioned trust in government. Trust in messaging. Is there anything that you wish, or that you have heard people say that they wish the government had done differently or could do differently in the future? And this is governance at any level, right: local, state, or federal.

Janet Quintero [23:09]

um, that I've heard, kind of examples from the public. No – and I'm going to say it's because of the same people who have a hard time trusting the public or the government, I think there is this idea that you have to fend for yourself. So, I think it's really hard to – you already believe that you're in this alone, like "Oh, I'll just work three jobs if I have to." So there's no expectation from the government, at least in my experience, right, and the people I've interacted with. I haven't encountered someone who's like, "Well, someone should do something." I think it's very much a community that is very tight-knit. So there's an expectation from each other; from the *tía* – the aunt, the grandpa, but not from the government. I don't know if it's a negative or a positive but that's been my experience.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [24:10]

No, that's actually really interesting, and that phenomena of community policing, for instance, right, expectations of each other, and I've seen it in my neighborhoods and family members.

So, just to kind of reflect that question back at you; were there any other policies or programs that you wish had been done differently or that you would do differently?

Janet Quintero [24:36]

I think it's something very life-changing, and hopefully, world-changing in a good way that we all went through it together. So there's nothing that I would say, you know, I would do differently because we don't know how we're going to react. I think we have to give grace to our leaders because who knows how we would have handled it, right?

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [24:57]

Yeah.

Janet Quintero [24:59]

Like they always say, you don't know how you're going to react until you're actually going through it.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [25:01]

Yeah.

Janet Quintero [25:04]

But I will say that I hope that we will continue on this path. I have worked at United Way for five years, and the level of collaboration and openness that I experienced during the pandemic and now, after, has been so refreshing, and I just hope that this continues. Some silos came down, some sharing of information, and some recognition that even leaders who have been in the community for a long time don't have all the answers.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [25:34]

Yeah.

Janet Quintero [25:35]

And even as a younger person, I was able to share my ideas and they were very well taken. So, I will say, I just hope this continues, and that we're open to new ideas of investing money and investing in programs. Because we've learned that the way we've always done it hasn't been successful.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [25:55]

I'm so glad that you put it that way, Janet because that's been kind of a recurring theme. That we on the team have been picking up is like a newfound – maybe not a newfound, because I've never experienced this before – but this appreciation for the people leading us, like you said, and that grace found. So, you mentioned a few budgetary policies in the beginning that were relevant to United Way, at least locally. Were there any specific policies that the state or federal government implemented that you noticed really impacted people?

Janet Quintero [26:31]

Yeah. As a recipient or as the administrator, I think the official term is the Secretary of the EFSP Program. We received ARPA and CARES funding that went directly toward the EFSP Emergency Food & Shelter Program, and I know that had a huge impact. We do have – don't quote me on this – but I can get you the numbers. I think it's like 11 organizations that we work with, Catholic Charities, the Salvation Army, and Hopelink. So, we have organizations that

administer the funds, and then they go out to the community through different mechanisms. So I know that was very impactful for our community. But again, being a federal program, very strict guidelines.

And then the Emergency Assistance & Community Needs Fund, that one, we fundraised for that separately, and mostly through private donations and grants. And we were able to have a little more flexibility with that grant because again, it was private funding, and I think it allowed us to react to the need.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [27:37]

Thank you. And for clarifying that, it's good to know where the funding streams come from and where they end up, right?

Janet Quintero

(nods affirmatively)

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [27:45]

So, you just talked about some innovative ways that organizations have collaborated with each other to make these things happen. And some private enterprise partnership, right, you said you did some separate fundraising for the same program, right, coming in from different funding streams. Can you think of an example of a collaboration between, for example, an organization and citizen leadership, or organizations and businesses that we should know of, or be thinking about as the new model for any kind of crisis in the future; be they health pandemics, or security crises, or what have you, right?

Janet Quintero [28:35]

Let me know if this is kind of what you're thinking. But during the pandemic, there was one organization that didn't really have the 501(c)(3) status yet, Puentes, they are an established 501(c)(3) now. I serve on their board after they became established. And what they did differently, I guess, is that they never stopped with community resource fairs. I think that most nonprofits took a step back from community outreach. And Puentes, at that time, was being citizen-led, Guy Girardin is the name of the president and CEO there. And I mean, I say "president and CEO," but it was just Guy. It was just one person saying, "I'm going to call myself Puentes, and no formal 501(c)(3) status." But he recognized that there was a need to continue hosting resource fairs, specifically, with food distribution. Because communities are not just going to shift the way – they're not going to drive outside of your zip code and to maybe pick up food, or maybe you don't have a car.

So, he started hosting monthly resources at Mater Academy, which is a charter academy, and I know that it has a big Latino population. I know that it's in a high-poverty area as well. And from this effort, he engaged Three Square and started receiving donations. A lot of our government officials started going to these resource fairs to share information because he was the only one organizing them. And he's still doing that now.

But through that, and not being an official 501(c)(3) – I joined the board, and then we got the official 501(c)(3) status. So, a newly-established nonprofit was doing things differently. He hires

what he calls "cultural ambassadors," which goes back to that point – if you want to reach a community, go to them and understand them. So he started going to apartment complexes and just setting up resources for us and vaccination clinics in their little atrium area or in the community area. And people could just literally go down from their apartment and, in their slippers, get their vaccine shot and go back to their room.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [30:55]

Wow.

Janet Quintero [30:58]

And it was amazing. He started working with the apartment managers, and at the same time, "Do you have people who are behind on rent? Do I need to process rental applications for anyone?"

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [31:06]

Yeah.

Janet Quintero [31:10]

Through that process, I also said, "EFSP is coming back. You should apply." And we have a board and committee who make those decisions.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [31:19]

Right.

Janet Quintero [31:22]

Just to have a vote and everything. So he submitted an application to a committee, and they saw that he was doing things differently, more creatively, with the cultural ambassadors and going out to the community. He was the recipient of the EFSP, one of the youngest ones. Because we have what we call – what's the term – "legacy" nonprofits who have always served our community. But at the same time, we have a new version of nonprofits, like Puentes, who's doing things differently.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [31:53]

Yeah.

Janet Quintero [31:56]

And he is very grassroots, I would say. That's his focus.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [32:00]

That's a perfect example of citizen organization collaboration that I think we were asking about. Can you spell his last name for me? Guy-

Janet Quintero [32:07]

Yes. G-i-r-a-r-d-i-n.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [32:12]

One more time. I'm so sorry.

Janet Quintero [32:14]

G-i-r-a-r-d-i-n. And he is originally from Canada. So he might pronounce it the French way, right? I don't know how to do that.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [32:28]

Okay. No, that's great. And it works really great for our transcriber, too. So thank you for that.

So the next question is – I'm going to actually bring it to something relevant, and maybe you've heard about these statistics. Because I want to know from you what you think we can learn from the COVID crisis that could serve as policy lessons for the future, which we've kind of touched on a little bit. But maybe you've heard that Latinas specifically are disproportionately impacted by long COVID and things like that. And so that really represents a need in our community that we know about, is there – do you see any kind of partnerships forming to address something like this? We're in a state where we have such low mental health care access, for instance, or the same kinds of services that you all provide to this population.

Janet Quintero [33:21]

So, I hadn't heard of that statistic. In general, our healthcare system, I think, is not where we would want it to be. And whether it's on COVID or any other health issues, I understand that we're not taking care of our community in the best way that we could be. But in the healthcare system, I think we focus a lot on – here at United Way, we focus a lot on access. We are currently developing a language access program that would affect just all programs. We don't necessarily have a healthcare pillar. We have three pillars, just for context, here at this local United Way. This might change from one local United Way to others.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [34:10]

Mm-hmm.

Janet Quintero [34:11]

But we have education, workforce, and emergency assistance. Healthcare is not something that we call out. What we do work on like I shared, is access to resources, and through that, we're working on developing a language access resource, in collaboration with the Governor's Office for New Americans.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [34:29]

Mm-hmm.

Janet Quintero [34:30]

Which we know is taking the lead in developing a language access program for the state. And we recognize that health institutions are the ones that might be more advanced on this path-

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [34:41]

Yeah.

Janet Quintero [34:43]

-on having this pathway. But there's no collaboration that, at least in my role, I'm aware of or engaged in.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [34:54]

I noticed on the website when it came to, I think, words that you shared about your promotion, you talked about that language access is so important. And especially in having providers for communities and their cultures. And so, in my mind, it just felt that healthcare providers would fall under that, you know? But you're right. You have something really unique, which is something that maybe the Mexican Consulate perhaps only shares, and that's trust from the community. So, providing health information specifically, right, is really sensitive and vital.

So, having shared this really sad statistic with you, as two Latinas talking to each other, I just want to ask you our final question, and find out, from your perspective, right, as a leader, but also as a person, as a human: Are you hopeful, and if so, what are you hopeful about?

Janet Quintero [35:50]

Oh, yes. I'm hopeful. I'm hopeful, and that's why I love my job. And I love having more access to the decision-making process. And I think that, as people who have not historically been in this role and who get to bring this experience, there's a chance to really improve just the policy. And that's why I'm in this role. I love – so, United Way, right? We fund a lot of programs. And I know that you have to be able to provide emergency shelter and emergency food assistance. But how do we make sure that our community does not need emergency food assistance and shelter as often? And that is through policy, and that is through creating partnerships. And that's what I love about my role; I've been in that grassroots – I've done community outreach. I've volunteered for programs. And I think that the way I see it, at least in my path, the next step is how to address these problems in a way that we're addressing it for more people, and it's long-lasting change.

So that is why now, we're getting ready to engage in the state legislative process. We also have our county process. We have our municipalities. We have our federal representatives. So, I have hope that these conversations are happening again. I think we're in the midst of a new wave of social justice movements, right? It's been happening for a long time, and I think it's something good that, at least, these conversations are happening, so we can advance a little more towards a more equitable future, which I think is a hope that we're all working for.

Kelliann Beavers [37:49]

Do you want to share any of the specific ways you guys are engaging with the state legislative process, in case there are particular things we stay aware of? And if not, that's okay too. You could send me the materials later. I just want to be aware of it.

Janet Quintero [38:03]

Yeah. I can definitely send you our literature. Just to call out, one of the biggest things is that we have also administered the "Nevada Ready Pre-K Grant," which are scholarships for three to five-year-olds, for families under 250 percent of the poverty level. And we know that this also supports a two-generational approach. Because, you know, you have families and caretakers, mothers and fathers, who sometimes can't go to work because they have to take care of a child.

And in a way, we also recognize that some students are behind in their reading. So we really see this expansion of pre-K access as just a way of the intervention of early prevention.

And we are doing a lot with tax clinics. I know that I could have a whole other conversation about tax clinics. So, I'll send you what we have, and how we're working on that. Language access is another big one, again, in collaboration with the Governor's Office for New Americans. And I think those are the three that are top of mind. But I'll send you the collateral once we have it.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [39:20]

That's awesome. Thank you so much, Janet. Thank you for talking to us about your operations. It really gives us an insight into what that looks like. We've been hearing from a lot of different people that this was a really unique assessment. Anything that we can do to help you in the future, please let us know. We do follow legislative activity, So if there's anything relevant, we'll be sure to send it your way. Keeping it short, right, fact sheets, things like that. And again, thank you.

Kelliann Beavers [39:55]

Thank you so much, Janet. This is really meaningful. And thank you for all the work that you do.

Janet Quintero [40:03]

Thank you. Just one last question for you both. I know this is part of a study, but how do you usually work with nonprofits, or how can we engage in collaboration, moving forward?

Kelliann Beavers [40:13]

That's actually a particularly good question right this minute. Sorry, there's also a motorcycle, which is just unacceptable. In many ways, in the past, the Lincy Institute has led public forums collaborating with nonprofits and the community and creating more citizen engagement through specific events around specific areas of community need, and I could get you some examples of that. But also, right now, we are participating in something that's part of a cooperative extension, which is part of UNLV. And they're doing these roundtables all throughout the university, where different researchers are talking about what they're researching.

The ultimate result of it is that researchers are going to apply for grants, but do specific proposals that propose to work with the community directly. So, different from just any old research grant, they have to be very immersed in community needs and in working with the community organization itself. I think it's really open-ended what we can propose, and it's almost so open-ended that it's overwhelming. So, I'd love to hear anything from you about how we might be able to include something that is meaningful for you and/or to run ideas by you, as we have been. Because it's a whole lot of grant money that's available, and we definitely want to apply to seek some of it.

Janet Quintero [41:43]

Yeah. I would love to continue this conversation. I think that asset-mapping would be one thing that comes to mind. And it seems like having just that research background, you know the processes, right? We might be able to build something together that really benefits our

community. And we don't only apply for funding as a nonprofit, we also support other nonprofits. So, I also think it helps us in developing programs where the gaps are. For example, I know that we have rental assistance, right? And we always focus on rental assistance, rental assistance. But when you're new and looking for a place, you need money for the deposit. You need money for the moving fees. You need the application fee. And these are all fees that are not covered.

So, I think as we recognize the gaps in our system, we want to create a process where we capture them. And as one of the funders in this community, we have a good way of sharing that with other people developing programs. So that's just one of the things that come to mind. I'm really excited to just continue the conversation. I'll invite you to the nonprofit sector call, so you get to hear from the community directly. You're welcome to sit in the background if you want. But yeah, I will reach out for another meeting once you're ready. I don't know what the next-

Kelliann Beavers [43:00]

Yeah. I'll definitely stay in touch with you. And what you just described makes me want to jump up and down. I feel so excited about doing exactly that and supporting you in the way that you're describing. I think that is a perfect possible proposal that we could put out there. And of course, it would require holding hands with you all, to understand how to do it right and how to be supportive in the best ways. But I think that's fantastic. And of course, we could chat about anything else that comes to mind for you. And I'm actually going to be in town throughout Thanksgiving week. As far as the next two weeks, my schedule is very flexible, so we could just work around what works for you. Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you, Carmen.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [43:43]

That's okay. I just wanted to touch base on the fact that you mentioned asset mapping. That's something that Kelliann and I have been exploring a lot lately. And sometimes it's just about connecting the right people, and we love that, right? We just interviewed a transitional housing nonprofit for people impacted by the-

Kelliann Beavers [44:01]

I don't know what's going on, Carmen, but your mic keeps cutting in and out. I don't know if you're accidentally touching it or moving away. But I want to hear what you're saying, so I just want to make sure that we capture it.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [44:12]

I was just mentioning that sometimes it's just about connecting the right people. So, Janet, if you keep that conversation open with us, right, I'm sure it can lead to some transformations. Thank you.

Janet Quintero [44:27]

All right. You won't get rid of me now. Now that we're in each other's lives, we'll be in touch. And can I share, just a trick? If you enable closed captioning – because this has happened to me before. It will kind of spell out, you know, as Carmen's microphone was going in and out-

Kelliann Beavers [44:44]

Oh, I like it!

Janet Quintero [44:47]

Even for you, with the background, it picks up your voice. So if you enable it – yeah. It's just good for everyone to follow.

Kelliann Beavers [44:55]

Thank you so much for saying that. I'll look into that. I'm sure that our transcriber will be like, "Please tell that woman thank you." (laughter)

Janet Quintero [45:04]

Oh, yes. It saves the transcription of the whole conversation, too. And it says like, "Janet said this," based upon your screen name. So, yeah. We use that to take minutes all the time. So, yeah.

Kelliann Beavers [45:16]

Awesome. Well, we will do that. And I will send a follow-up email so we can stay in touch about the other thing that you mentioned. I could see that turning into multiple future endeavors, right? As gaps are identified, then that informs future things that need to be focused on. Anyways, thank you so much.

Janet Quintero [45:34]

Thank you so much. Thank you again for your flexibility. Again, I'm so sorry that I missed your last-

Kelliann Beavers [45:37]

Oh, no worries.

Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio [45:40]

It was meant to happen this way.

Janet Quintero [45:43]

All right, bye. Have a good afternoon.

Kelliann Beavers [45:44]

Bye. You, too.

End of audio: 45:49