



ADELANTE

ALABAMA WORKER CENTER

2019 RECAP

**Vamos Adelante! Moving our communities forward
in pursuit of dignity, justice and liberation**



MISSION

Adelante Alabama Worker Center unites day laborers, domestic workers, and other low-wage and immigrant workers and their families in the Birmingham area to defend their rights, promote their dignity, and pursue justice for all.

VISION

We envision a multiracial worker-led movement for justice, dignity and human rights that lifts up the voices of the most vulnerable and excluded workers, and welcomes individuals of all races, ethnicities, genders, ages, sexualities, faiths, and immigration statuses. We strive to move our communities *adelante* (“forward”) to a world where immigrants, people of color, and all working-class families are respected and safe at work, in the streets, and where they live.

CONTACT US!

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Social Media: [@adelantealabama](https://www.instagram.com/adelantealabama)



DONATE

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ECONOMIC JUSTICE & WORKER RIGHTS

Defending workers' rights and building just economic opportunities for our base has always been at the core of Adelante's work. 2019 was a year of regrouping and rebuilding our work in this area to encompass not only labor rights, but also language justice, tenants' rights, collectives, and other important aspects of a holistic approach to economic justice work.

- **Workers' Rights Defense Program** — We informed hundreds of workers about their rights on the job through our weekly workshops, and helped workers' recover thousands of dollars of unpaid wages through case-by-case organizing, advocacy, and direct action.
- **Domestic Worker Advocacy** — We planted the first seeds to begin advocating for federal and state policies that would secure workplace protections for domestic workers; we also helped a group of our domestic worker members to form a collective and secure a small loan to support their businesses.
- **Language Justice Initiative** — We began training a collective of community members to serve as interpreters — a much-needed resource in our community and a source of economic opportunity for bilingual, often young first- and second-generation immigrants. Several workers who completed the training are now regularly getting interpreting jobs, including at Adelante and other social justice organizations.



IMMIGRANT JUSTICE & DETENTION ABOLITION

Guided by our newly-formed immigrants' rights committee comprised of Adelante members, we've implemented and improved our programs in this work area like never before. These are some of the ways we "melted" ICE this year:

- **Community Deportation Defense & Navigation** — We trained the committee to provide support and orientation to community members with a loved one in ICE detention. We advocated in the streets, the media, and the courts to secure the release of community members from local jails and immigration detention centers.
- **Sanctuary Campaign** — We continued to press for local policy changes in the Birmingham area to block the jail-to-deportation pipeline and weaken ICE's power to tear apart our families and communities. We secured a commitment from the newly-elected Jefferson County Sheriff to stop detaining and transferring people to ICE from the local jail, but the sheriff has yet to sign the policy we helped draft.



Tenant Organizing in Five Points West MHP

Home to many Adelante members, the Five Points West Mobile Home park is located on the West Side of Birmingham. Its residents, mostly Latinx-immigrant and African-American families, suffered under the weight of random eviction notices, trash dumped in nearby waterways, and outrageously high water bills. In May, several residents reached out to us about the park's abusive property manager, who had threatened residents with ICE, eviction, and even physical violence. Finding solidarity in their shared experiences, members of the community came together to form a tenant association, with the goal of improving conditions in the park. After several weeks of organizing, residents succeeded in pressuring the then-owner to sell the property back to its previous owner, with whom the tenants had a positive relationship, and who has implemented many of their demands.

- **Rapid Response Coalition** – Together with local and state partners, we launched an emergency hotline that mobilizes a network of organizations and community leaders to respond to ICE activity and do on-site Know Your Rights training and immediately intervene during ICE raids and other enforcement activities.
- **Accompaniment Program** – We continued to grow our accompaniment program, which pairs community members with our network of volunteers to provide support and exercise their privilege at ICE check-ins, court dates and other situations where there is a high risk of ICE presence.

Shut Down Etowah Campaign

Four years ago, Adelante helped launch the Shut Down Etowah campaign, a national coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to **exposing human rights abuses** at Etowah County's infamous ICE detention center in Gadsden, AL. In 2019, the campaign worked tirelessly to liberate more individuals from the detention center by growing its pen pal and visitation programs, deepening their relationship with the Gadsden community, and internally restructuring and revamping the campaign. Here's a look at some of the ways SDE's biggest victories this year:



- Secured the release of **FOUR** people from Etowah through bond and advocacy campaigns
- Deepened connection to Gadsden community by hiring a Gadsden-based organizing fellow and hosting the first "Gadsden Freedom Festival"
- Took steps to solidify SDE as an independent, volunteer-led campaign



COMMUNITY OUTREACH & MEMBERSHIP

- Our **Women's Group *Nueva Esperanza*** ("New Hope") continues to give Latina immigrant women a safe space to share their experiences, wisdom and creativity with one another. The weekly group not only creates the art and decor that make Adelante home, they also host informational workshops with guest speakers on a variety of topics including reproductive health, parenting, and personal finance
- **Annual Health & Justice Fair** – For a second year, we hosted the fair in collaboration with AIDS Alabama, bringing in more than 300 participants to Adelante's space, who stopped in for free blood pressure tests, vision and dental check-ups, and STD/STI screenings, as well as general information on healthy, immigrant and worker justice.

- **Asamblea (Workers' Assembly)** — Our monthly Asambleas remain an essential component of our outreach, leadership development, and collective decision-making. Each month, Adelante members and staff convene to discuss important community issues, strategize, and celebrate campaign wins and new members.

LITIGATION & LEGAL REPRESENTATION

As Adelante's organizing work continues to expand, so has our legal advocacy. Carried out in close collaboration with the on-the-ground work of community members and organizers, our legal work continues to uplift our mission and values of justice, dignity, and freedom for everyone. In 2019 we:

- **Etowah Habeas Project** — After launching the project in late 2018, we have expanded significantly, filing twelve new *habeas corpus* petitions on behalf of individuals in Etowah seeking release from extremely prolonged (often multi-year) detention. So far, **our efforts have successfully freed six men**, and we recently filed our first appeals to the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, hoping to **change the legal landscape** for immigrants detained in the Southeast
- **Birmingham Trust Coalition v. City of Birmingham** — We filed suit under Alabama's Open Records Act to force Birmingham city government to hand over grant agreements, contracts, communications, and other records relating to the city's involvement in immigration enforcement
- **Bond Representation** — We represented community members seeking release from detention, including several Alabama residents swept up in the massive **Mississippi poultry raids**, successfully securing the release of several clients.
- Filed a new **federal wage theft lawsuit** on behalf of restaurant workers deprived of years of minimum wage and overtime pay
- **A Win for Transparency** — We secured a significant victory on summary judgment in *Adelante v. DHS*, our federal lawsuit (with co-counsel Public Citizen) under the Freedom of Information Act, forcing DHS to disclose an internal "super-recommendations memorandum" on systemic civil rights abuses at the Etowah County Detention Center and over a hundred pages of related expert reports.



Free Lucy Campaign

Adelante led a coalition of organizations to carry out a large-scale public pressure and congressional advocacy campaign to free beloved community member Lucy Herrera after she was arrested by police in Georgia for a traffic violation and handed over to ICE for deportation.

Although ICE claims to no longer exercise positive discretion in favor of detained immigrants under the Trump Administration, we succeeded in pressuring ICE to release Lucy on minimum bond before having to go before a judge to seek her release

BUILDING NATIONAL & REGIONAL SOLIDARITY

Adelante continues to **build community power and unity through our collaboration with local, regional and national organizations** that share our values of dignity, justice, and liberation for all. We're proud to work with many wonderful Alabama organizations, including Greater Birmingham Ministries, Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice,

Alabama Arise, and the Etowah Visitation Project. We have also continued to participate in regional and national networks including the Southeast Immigrants' Rights Network (SEIRN), the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON) and the National Domestic Worker Alliance (NDWA). In 2019 we:

Mobilized with SEIRN to support those affected by the mass immigrant raids in Mississippi and **strategized with NDLON** on the best way to defeat ICE in our communities in the digital age and participated in various trainings to keep our organizers up to date on the latest tactics.

Fought back with co-counsel from Southern Poverty Law Center and Asian Americans Advancing Justice--Atlanta in several habeas cases to secure freedom for Etowah detainees.

Liberated people from detention with the National Bond Network, ¡Arriba! Las Vegas Worker Center, and The Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) by collaborating to pay bonds for several people detained in Alabama.

Advocated with NDWA in order to raise awareness about the lack of legal protections for domestic workers across the nation and to demand federal policy reform with a candlelight vigil named "Domestic Workers Demanding Dignity".

Collaborated with the Detention Watch Network to host their annual #CommunitiesNotCages Convening in Birmingham, which included working with the Shut Down Etowah campaign to organize a direct action on the final day of the convening.



FREE MARCOS! FREE JUAN!

A STORY OF COMMUNITY POWER & STRENGTH



Tragedy Strikes

- Beloved Board member, Marcos Baltazar, and his son, Juan, were detained at a routine ICE check-in
- The Baltazars would go on to be incarcerated in both Etowah County Detention Center and the private for-profit immigration prison LaSalle in Jena, LA, despite their compliance with ICE's requests for regular check-ins. Both facilities have been called out by human rights groups for their inhumane treatment of detainees

Adelante mobilizes!

Members, supporters, and allies quickly mobilized on all fronts to support Marcos and Juan.

- Our Rapid Response team rallied in less an hour outside of the Homewood ICE office where they were initially detained
- Adelante and the Shut Down Etowah campaign held a protest outside of Etowah County Detention Center the next day when Marcos and Juan were transferred there/



Marcos Goes Viral

- Our communications team quickly organized a press conference for Marcos and Juan's release, which brought national attention and coverage.
- This opened the gateway to thousands of dollars flowing into a GoFundMe, while Adelante members took charge of local fundraising, organizing a food sale that raised over \$1,600.



Free at Last!

After spending nearly 4 weeks in detention facilities, we secured bond for both Marcos and his son. Thanks to the enormous amount of community support and a generous donation from Free Our Neighbors, we raised more than \$30,000 and happily welcomed Marcos and Juan home with a crowd of nearly fifty community members on September 19, 2019.



Marcos Today

Since returning, Marcos and Juan have fearlessly shared their story with community and press alike, in an effort to bring attention to the conditions in detention centers and to the cruel and arbitrary nature in which people are arrested, caged, and deported. They continue to be active and dedicated members in our organization. When asked how it felt to reclaim his freedom, Marcos Baltazar responded by saying, "I'm overwhelmed and happy. Thank you to everyone who supported me."

ADELANTE IN THE NEWS

- *Law360*. “DHS Must Turn In Full Memo On ICE Detention Center Abuse,” March 27, 2019
- *AL.com*. “Alabama groups helping Mississippi immigrants affected by raids,” August 9, 2019
- *AL.com*. “Johnson: Detention of immigrants rights group board member brings national shame home,” August 26, 2019
- *Shadowproof*. “ICE retaliates against immigrants rights activists by suspending visitation program in Alabama,” December 17, 2019

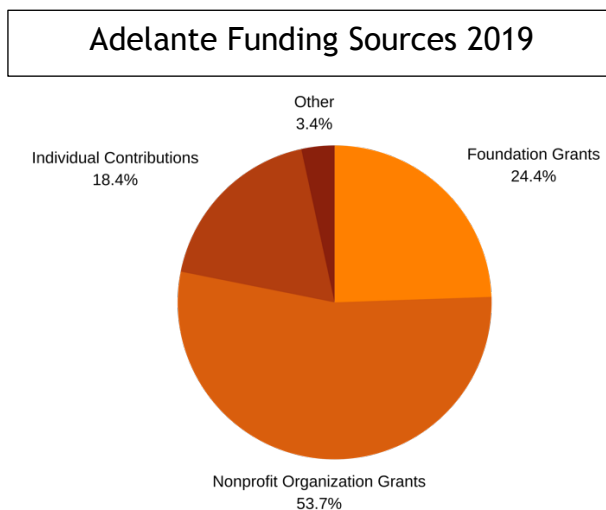
FUNDING & SUSTAINABILITY

2019 has been a fruitful year both in our organizing work and in diversifying the sources of funding that make that work possible. In December, we launched our second annual recurring donor drive with amazing success! Our monthly donors, nicknamed *Luchadores por Justicia* (Fighters for Justice), are Adelante members and allies located all over the country. Together their contributions pay for nearly all of the monthly rent on our community worker center and office space!



We thank the following foundations and organizations for their support in 2019:

Abelard Foundation – East, Ben & Jerry’s Foundation, Blue Oak Foundation, Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, Detention Watch Network, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Economic Policy Institute – EARN in the South, Hill-Snowdon Foundation, National Domestic Workers’ Alliance, NEO Philanthropy – Four Freedoms Fund, Peggy Browning Fund, Southern Poverty Law Center, Ratliff Charitable Foundation, Solidago Foundation – LIFT Fund



ARTS & CULTURE

One of Adelante's deeply held values is that art is a way to celebrate our cultures, creatively express political dissent, showcase our skills, and heal. We infuse every project, action, and meeting with art—but our *Noches Culturales* (Cultural Nights) are celebrations of our love of art in all its forms.

POETRY NIGHT

We hosted our first Poetry Night, featuring an exchange of our favorite Latin American poems between our members and Spanish students from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. The formation of a committee to plan these cultural events means that our future will be more artful than ever before!



INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY KERMÉS

Our biggest cultural event of the year, the International Workers' Day Kermés (Community Festival), has become an annual tradition. The 2019 Kermés featured some of our founding members making delicious *sopes* by hand and cooking them to order on an outdoor grill. The Workers' Day Kermés is a completely member-organized event and serves as a tool for community outreach and fundraising, but is also one of few events throughout the year that are only about fun and togetherness with the Adelante family.



DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

Día de los Muertos at Adelante transforms our center into a huge altar every year. This year's altar was decorated with *papel picado* (the colorful tissue paper garlands), sugar skulls, and *pan de muerto* (the traditional bread offered to our ancestors) all made by members' own hands. During this night we honor not only our loved ones, but the lives of those who died while detained, attempting to cross the border, or as a result of state-sanctioned violence.

CELEBRATING 5 YEARS OF ADELANTE ALABAMA WORKER CENTER

Adelante celebrated five years of fighting for justice, dignity, and freedom for all people by throwing a HUGE celebration! Check out some of the activities from our big day.

Music and Live Performances

From cumbia to salsa, we celebrated with a variety of music and dance. The traditional Aztec dance troupe, Xochipilli Danza Azteca, delighted the crowd with vibrant dance costumes and traditional instruments, like the thundering conch shell. The contemporary salsa and bachata showcase from Corazón de Alabama ("Heart of Alabama") got everyone ready to show off their moves on the dance floor. We finished out the night with live performances from local sensation Grupo Milenio de Birmingham and DJ Suaze.



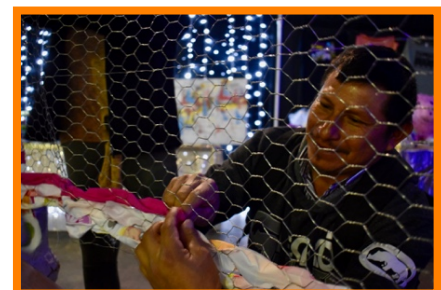
Honoring Members

We couldn't have made it five years without our dedicated members. During our 5th Anniversary, we had the chance to honor the founding members of Adelante and former members of our Board of Directors for their contributions and support throughout the years. Each person received a certificate of appreciation and a succulent in a hand-painted ceramic trophy pot.



Community Art Project

Over the last five years, Adelante has brought together people from all walks of life to stand in solidarity for a better community. Although we each may only be a single thread, together, we make a quilt. Guests had the chance to weave together solidarity in a fun textile art project.



Timeline

Our free-standing timeline took guests on a journey through FIVE YEARS of Adelante's challenges and victories. Guests were able to add their hopes and dreams, as well as share their favorite memories of Adelante on the different interactive sections.



OUR TEAM

STAFF



Adelante staff and fellows at our annual Staff & Board Retreat at Camp McDowell

Gabriel Cabán Cubero
Enforcement & Detention
Organizer

Luis Robledo
Economic Justice Organizer

Resha Swanson
Policy & Communications
Coordinator

Miriam Nava
Membership Coordinator

Victoria Siciliano
Director of Administration
& Fundraising

Jessica Vosburgh
Executive & Legal Director

NEW HIRE

Resha Swanson

Policy & Communications Coordinator

In 2019 we welcomed Resha to the Adelante team! Resha first arrived in Alabama in 2015 to attend the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Social Work and Bachelor of Arts in Spanish. Her professional background is in intercultural relations, victim services, and policy analysis. Before beginning as a full-time staff member at Adelante, Resha served as an organizing fellow for the Shut Down Etowah campaign, where she used her social work background to advocate for detention abolition. Resha's work is informed by her own experiences as a black woman in the South and in Latinx spaces. She is extremely interested in how organizations can use policy as an organizing tool and strengthening the alliances between brown and black folks through strategic communication.



Organizing Fellows

Adelante regularly hosts Organizing Fellows who help support specific aspects our campaigns and projects. Fellowships are learning and leadership development opportunities that last 6-12 months. In 2019 we were fortunate to have the following fabulous fellows:

Immigrants' Rights

Yolanda Ruíz

Workers' Rights

Maricela García
Isaac Guazo

Shut Down Etowah

Lisa Moyer (Birmingham)
Patricia Baez (Gadsden)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Jean Hernandez — Secretary

John Maddox

Yazmín Contreras — Treasurer

***Marcos Baltazar**

***Julia Calderón** — President

***Cesar Mata** — Vice President

***Adelante member**

¡GRACIAS!

LIKE US, THE ARMADILLO IS A CREATURE OF THE AMERICAS THAT HAS MIGRATED AND EXPANDED ITS HABITAT TO BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH MEXICO AND THE US SOUTH. THE ARMADILLO (OR "LITTLE ARMORED ONE") IS OFTEN REPRESENTED AS AN ALEBRIE IN MEXICAN FOLK ART, AS THEY ARE STRONG, AMAZINGLY ADAPTABLE, SELF-SUFFICIENT AND ATHLETIC.

