

PHILANTHROPY WITH PURPOSE

The Transformative Benefits
of Latino Giving Circles



INTRODUCTION

The Latino Community Foundation (LCF) is proud to have built the Latino Giving Circle Network™ (LGCN)—the largest network of Latino philanthropists in the Nation. Generosity is embedded in the DNA of the Latino community which is why we've grown from one circle of 14 women to a movement of more than 20 Circles and over 1,000 members mobilized since 2012. Together, we've invested over \$2.9 million into more than 150 grassroots organizations across California.

Giving Circles are a community-driven model that puts philanthropy back in the hands of everyday people. They vary in size, location, and focus but share the same basic approach—a group of people pool their resources to collectively contribute to issues they deem important in their community. In turn, members become more strategic philanthropists and more engaged change-makers creating ripple effects of giving and action across their communities.

Our Giving Circles are especially powerful because we infuse the entire network with pride, culture, and love. Each member contributes a minimum of \$1,000 a year to establish a pooled fund. **Members collectively distribute these resources and engage in civic action activities.** The LCF team works closely with each Giving Circle to identify Latino-led organizations that align with their priority areas and **supports their leaders to facilitate member participation.**

In partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and facilitated by the Center for Effective Philanthropy, LCF oversaw an evaluation of our Latino Giving Circle Network to learn more about the impact and benefits of Giving Circle membership. In this report, we are excited to share our findings and amplify the powerful impact of the growing Giving Circle movement. We are a movement of leaders ready to take action and invest our time, talent, and resources to lift up the leaders and organizations who help our communities thrive.





METHODOLOGY

Over the course of two years, our evaluation consisted of two surveys and four *pláticas* (discussion groups) offered in English and Spanish with members of the LGCN. The first survey took place in early 2020, the second in fall 2021, and the *pláticas* took place in the spring of 2021. Throughout these evaluations, more than 400 LGCN members participated in providing their input. This research was conducted by Dr. Adriana Loson Ceballos from 2020-2021.

THE LGCN MOVEMENT AT A GLANCE

While the majority of our members are highly educated, middle and upper-middle-class working professionals, the Latino Giving Circle Network also represents the diversity of Latinos in California and beyond. Given the large number of Latinos who identify as Mexican in California, only 66% of LGCN members have at least some Mexican ancestry, showing more diversity in Latino ancestry within the network than within the state. Most respondents identify as first-generation Americans (i.e., born in the U.S.). Members represent nearly every decade of adult life, from early 20s through retirement age.

People join a Giving Circle for a range of reasons—but the most common motivation is a desire to affect positive change in their local Latino community. What they find is a place to discover new ways to make a difference, nurturing their cultural pride, and building a beloved community of people who catalyze their giving to fuel civic action.

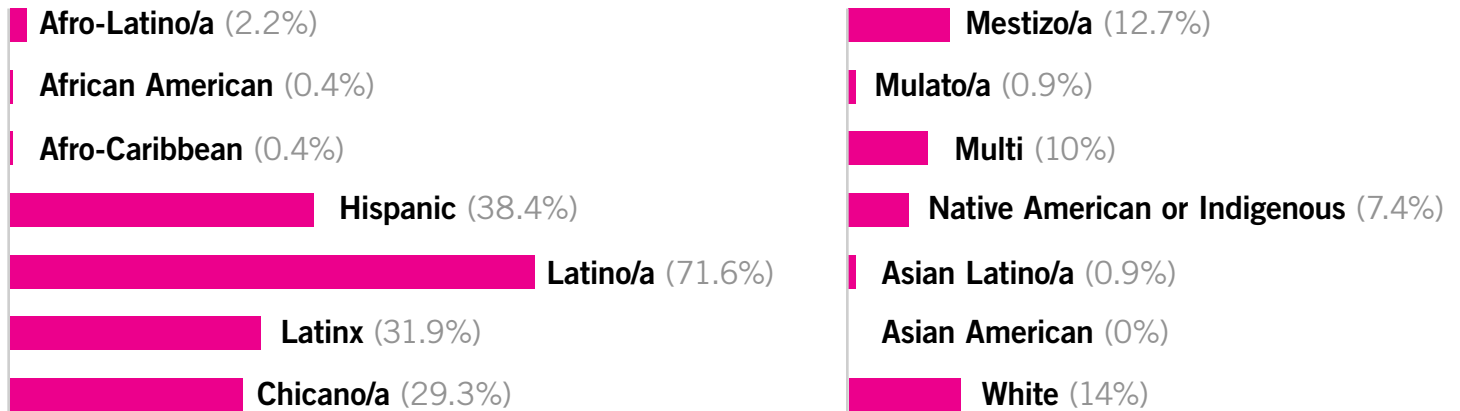
“I love being involved with my giving circle. It’s inspiring to see the incredible work our local organizations are doing, exciting to be able to contribute to it, and I’ve walked away with beautiful connections and friendships. I love being a part of this movement with LCF!”

Jenna Carlsson,
Contra Costa
Latinx Giving Circle



RACE & ETHNICITY

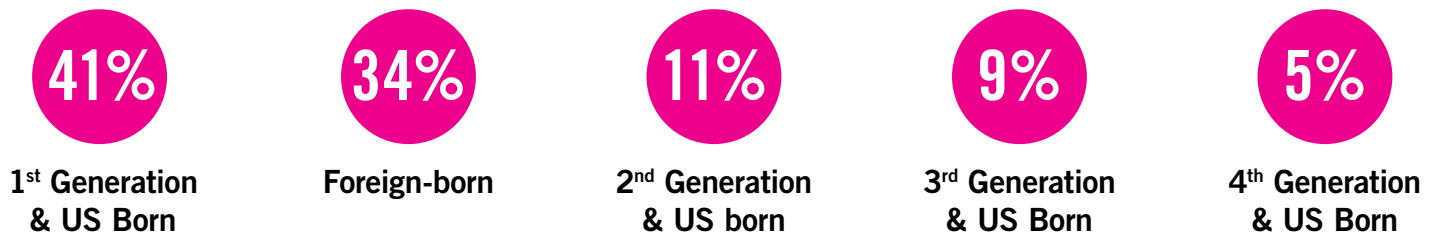
Respondents' Race & Ethnicity, n=229



Response percentages exceed 100% as respondents were allowed to select multiple answers.

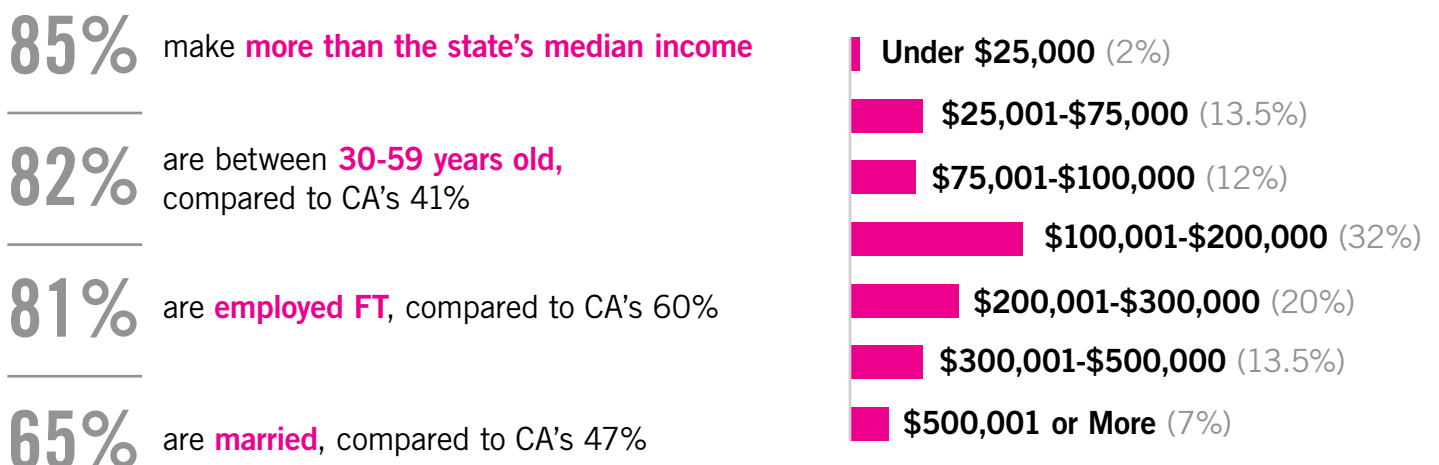
IMMIGRATION GENERATION

Respondents' Immigrant Generation, n=228



INCOME LEVEL

Respondents' Income Level, n=221



WHAT WE LEARNED

Giving Circles are good for your health

Through this evaluation, we were excited to demonstrate that being part of a Giving Circle truly supports the mental health of our members. In fact, 72% of our respondents said that Circle membership had a positive effect on their wellness. We are proud to cultivate a network of leaders grounded in our shared values: love, culture, and power.

“Our giving circle provides connection and community - this was especially true during the pandemic. There is nothing like being a part of something that is innately you, your culture, your familia.”

Theresa Huerta, Santa Barbara Latino Giving Circle



Each Giving Circle evolves into a beloved community, fostering genuine connections among its members, who, in turn, find a sense of connection to something greater—be it within themselves, with fellow Giving Circle members, or the community organizations they support. This was especially important during the pandemic as our community struggled with the impact of isolation, losing loved ones, and xenophobia in the political discourse. Giving Circles became a collective space where our members could mourn losses, have courageous conversations about health and race, and celebrate wins—big or small.

The sense of belonging gained through participation is also a key benefit to our members' mental health. Ninety-four percent shared that they did not feel as alone in the US after they joined their Giving Circle. This was especially true for the newer immigrants in our evaluation. Meeting and collaborating with people from different class backgrounds and nationalities reduces polarization and increases a sense of belonging.



SO WHY DO PEOPLE JOIN?



I wanted to affect **change in the local Latino community** (83%)



I wanted to pool my resources with others to **increase our impact** (70%)



I wanted to be **part of the LGCN philanthropic movement** (47%)



I wanted to **have fun while giving with Latino values** and celebrate culture (30%)



I wanted to **change how my Latino community is seen** by its members (20%)

*Reasons for
Joining Giving Circle,
n=232*

Latinos thrive when exercising their power as part of a collective

A message we heard loud and clear through this evaluation is the importance of centering relationships and community. This model transforms traditional approaches to philanthropy by seeding giving as a collective experience rather than individual. Members are positively impacted by the range of relationships they build with others in their Circle, with members of the broader network, and with leaders from the organizations they support. Studies on Giving Circles have also demonstrated that nonprofit leaders find deep support and solidarity when they know that funds are being invested by members of their own community.

For many, Giving Circles might be one place where they interact with large, diverse groups of Latinos, catalyzing greater action. For instance, one *plática* participant shared his experience connecting with fellow Latinos in his field through his Circle. Together, they advocated for solidarity with their Black colleagues amid the racial reckoning in 2020. Another *plática* participant shared that after moving to a predominantly white community, she found a space where she did not have to code-switch and where her children could see what a Latino community had to offer.

“In the Los Angeles Latino Giving Circle, we are more than members; we are a familia united by our deep love for our Latino community. Our collective impact inspires us to address racial disparities and advance equitable outcomes, fostering positive change together.”

Steven Almazan, Los Angeles Latino Giving Circle



Participation in the network catalyzes deeper and greater philanthropic and civic action over time.

Generosity is embedded in the DNA of the Latino community. Giving Circles provide people a way to tap into that inherent generosity.

Membership in a Giving Circle supports their journey to become philanthropists and more importantly, agents of change. Most members report that joining a Circle actually increased their giving—donating greater sums and giving to more organizations. Roughly two-thirds of members (66%) reported giving additional money beyond funding through their Giving Circle. Network members also reported that their participation inspired them to take action beyond giving, through volunteering (52%), joining boards (46%), and providing technical assistance to nonprofits (39%). Because Circles provide an opportunity to build community and affect change with like-minded individuals, members gained clarity and confidence in their actions.

During the pandemic, some LGCN members turned to their Circles for support as they adapted their community engagement efforts. Others found that discussions within their Circle increased awareness about how to take actions that can positively impact their community. Our findings show that Giving Circles provide connections to changemakers, increase members' confidence to create change, and help members understand the power of their voice when addressing social issues. In other words, Giving Circles help members become more effective change agents.



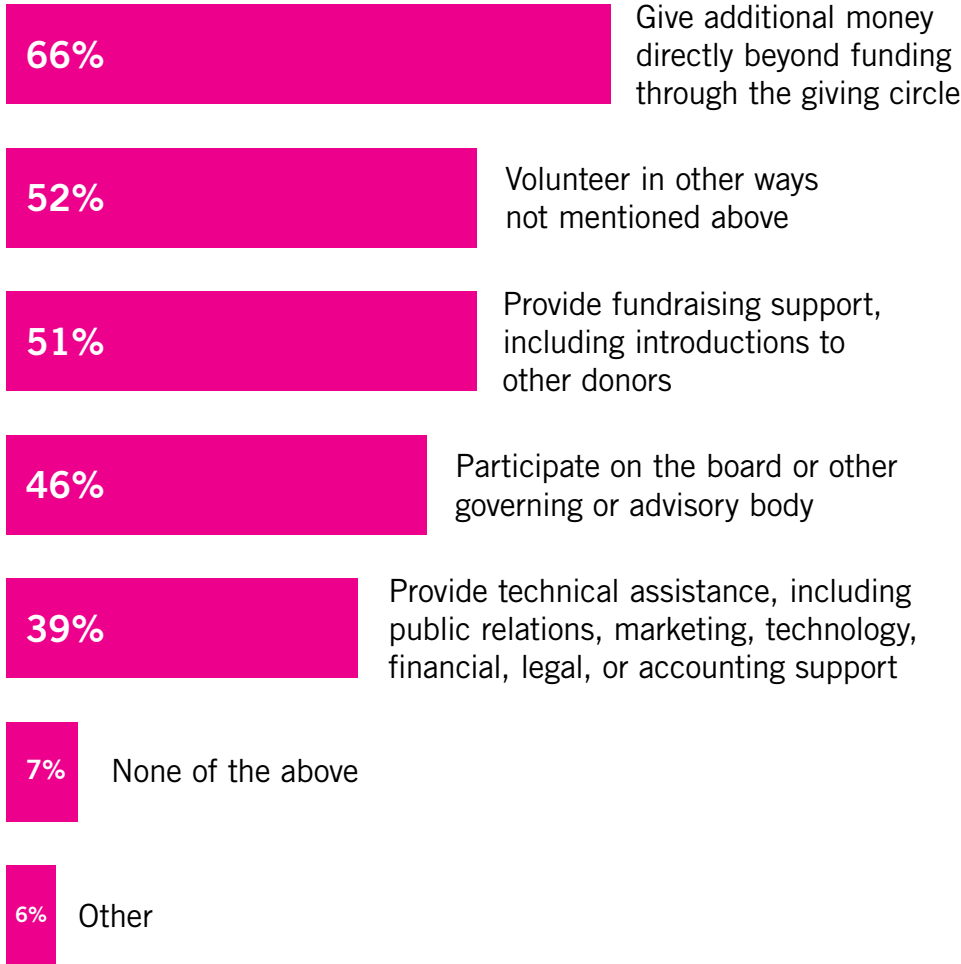
“Advocating for farmworkers’ rights in Stanislaus County became a natural extension of our commitment, showing that our circle is not just about donations but also about civic engagement and social justice.”

Maria Arevalo,
Stanislaus Latino Giving Circle





HOW DO MEMBERS SUPPORT NONPROFITS?



Ways you have supported nonprofits in your community between 2020 and now





Latinos deeply believe in change, not charity.

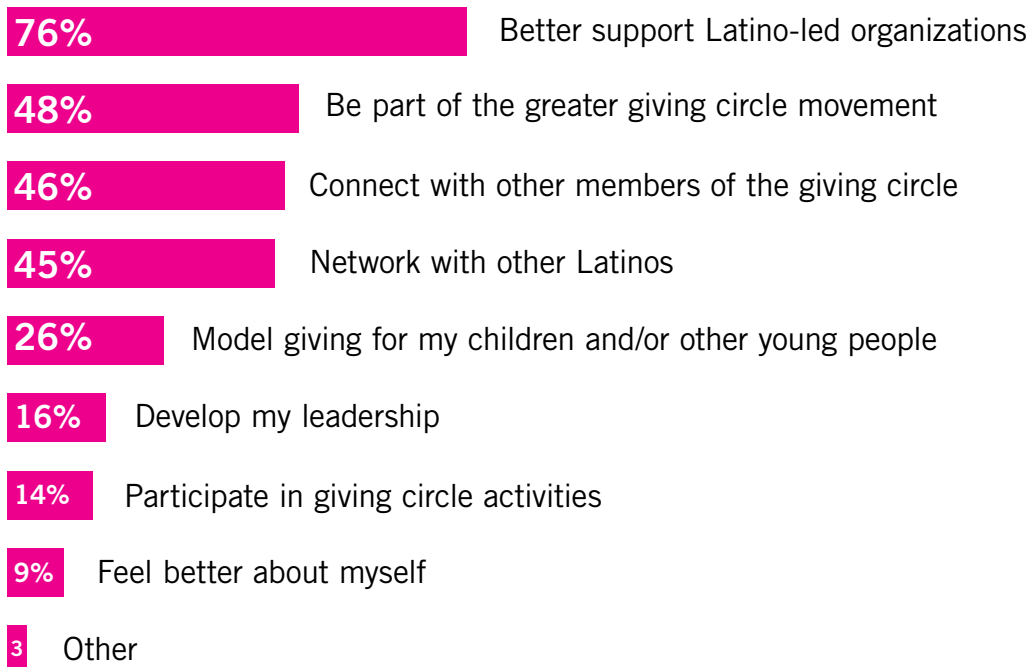
The desire to contribute to social change is the most reported benefit of participating in a Giving Circle. Many members have first-hand experience with the impacts of xenophobia, racism, and oppression in their communities. Being able to do something about social norms and policies that have caused harm is powerful and easier to do in a group.

When we asked our members why they stay involved in the Giving Circle movement, 76% of respondents were motivated by the opportunity to support Latino-led organizations in a more thoughtful and strategic way.

“I love being part of LGCN because it’s not just about giving money; it’s about making a real impact beyond the dollar.”

Abraham Velazquez,
Latinos in Tech
Giving Circle

WHY DO PEOPLE STAY? *Reasons for Staying in Giving Circle, n=232*



LATINO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



To learn more about the
Latino Community Foundation and the
Latino Giving Circle Network

Contact: lgcn@latinocf.org

Visit: latinocf.org

