

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

BELONGING BEYOND BORDERS

VISION

We dream of a world without “others,” where fear gives way to connection, and every person’s humanity is fully honored.

MISSION

To create physical and relational spaces where connections build peace, leading to collective flourishing on the border and beyond.

“Abara is holding space for a more complete narrative of the American story.”

— Border Encounter Participant

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Reflecting on this past year, I am once again filled with gratitude for your presence, generosity, and belief in Abara's work. In a world often marked by division, you continue choosing curiosity over fear, proximity over distance, and compassion over indifference. Your partnership makes it possible for Abara to create spaces where people can encounter one another across borders, both physical and unseen.

In 2025, our work deepened in meaningful ways. We welcomed hundreds of participants through our Border Encounters, continuing to create spaces where people from across the country can learn directly from the realities of the borderlands.

Together with our partners in El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, we strengthened support for migrant shelters and grassroots leaders serving displaced families with dignity and care. And we continued building the foundation for Abara House, our future Borderland Center for Peace and

Transformation. Located just feet from the U.S.-Mexico border, Abara House represents a long-term commitment to connection, learning, and shared flourishing in this region. Over the past year, we made significant progress in planning and partnership, engaging architects, community leaders, and collaborators to continue to shape the vision for this space.

When complete, the campus will serve as a gathering place for dialogue, education, storytelling, and community building—an anchor for those seeking deeper understanding of the border and pathways toward a more connected future.

As we look ahead, we remain hopeful. The challenges facing our communities are real, but so is the possibility of transformation when people choose to come together with humility and courage. Thank you for walking alongside us. Your partnership makes this work possible, and we are deeply grateful for the role you play in this growing story.



With gratitude and hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sami DiPasquale". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sami DiPasquale
Executive Director





FEAR OVER IMMIGRATION DIVIDES US. ABARA CREATES SPACES FOR CONNECTION TO BUILD PEACE.

Without meaningful relationships with our neighbors—whether across the aisle or the border—fear thrives. Harmful narratives spread, and we lose sight of our shared humanity. Located on an ancient crossroads along the US-Mexico border, Abara creates physical and relational spaces for people to connect.

We're writing a new story—one of belonging and peace.



WHAT WE DO

Creating Connection on the Border

Abara House | Relational Connection

Abara is in the early stages of a capital campaign to bring Abara House to life as a future Borderland Center for Peace and Transformation.



- * **Global Café & Marketplace** - Celebrating food, culture, and craftsmanship.
- * **Event & Training Spaces** - Hosting dialogues, leadership development, immersive learning, concerts, and a mix of public and private events.
- * **Contemplative Gardens & Chapel** - Spaces for reflection, lament, and healing.
- * **Guest Housing** - Welcoming visitors to engage firsthand in border realities.

Border Education | Experiential Learning

Three-day immersive experiences that deepen empathy and understanding through:

- * **Firsthand engagement with migration realities.**
- * **Conversations with migrants, shelter leaders, and law enforcement.**
- * **Space for reflection, storytelling, and action.**



Border Response | Meaningful Action

Working alongside 16 shelters in Juárez, Abara provides:



- * **Essential resources** - Meals, hygiene kits, and infrastructure support.
- * **Micro-enterprise training** - Economic opportunities for displaced families.
- * **Leadership care** - Respite and training for shelter directors and staff.



WHERE WE WORK

CD. JUÁREZ - EL PASO: SISTER CITIES

A Region of Movement & Connection

The Cd. Juárez - El Paso region is one of the most dynamic border crossings in the world. As the largest bilingual, binational community in the Western Hemisphere, it is home to **2.7M+** people connected by culture, commerce, and family ties.

Interwoven Lives & Economies

Over **80%** of El Paso population is Hispanic. **23.1%** of El Paso residents are foreign-born.

Juárez is a major manufacturing hub, driving binational trade.

Families and businesses flow daily across the border.

20M+ annual crossings.

A Global Migration Corridor

Although migrant crossings in El Paso were noticeably higher in previous years, there was a **significant decline** in 2025. Many neighbors on the move remain in Juárez, where Abara continues to accompany individuals, children, and families across a range of living situations.

A Place of History & Resilience

A **historic** crossroads for Indigenous trade, the Camino Real, Butterfield Trail and modern migration.

The border fence symbolizes both division and connection.

Despite challenges, the people here embody hospitality and strength.

Updated statistics are provided on a monthly basis via Abara's Global Migration page.

REFLECTING ON A YEAR OF IMPACT

Key Highlights

+

283 Border Encounter Participants

- Hosted **students, faith leaders, and communities** for immersive experiences.
- Facilitated **conversations with asylum seekers, advocates, and law enforcement.**
- Created **transformative spaces for learning and action.**

+

Strengthening the Migrant Shelter Network

- Partnered with **16 shelters** across Juárez.
- Provided **meals, hygiene kits, and essential supplies.**
- Expanded the **Huellas Microenterprise Program** for migrant people inside and outside the shelters.
- Provided **leadership retreats and getaways** for shelter directors/leaders to prevent burnout.

+

Progress on Abara House

- Secured **Historic Ft. Bliss Officers Quarters** as addition to Abara House campus.
- Raised **\$1.8M** toward the capital campaign from 2021 through 2025.
- Advanced site development for a sustainable peace-building center.

ABARA HOUSE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN: A BORDERLAND CENTER FOR PEACE



Rooted in History, Shaping the Future

Located only feet from the U.S.–Mexico border, this historic site has long been a place of movement and exchange:

- Indigenous trade routes predated colonization.
- Spanish settlers arrived in 1598.
- The site witnessed revolutions and key moments in the U.S.–Mexico border.

Now, it is being restored as a space for peace and transformation.

A Vision for Sustainability

Abara House will be financially self-sustaining (after renovation) generating revenue through:

- **Hospitality & Events**
Supporting dozens of events and training.
- **Education & Training**
Facilitating border encounters and immersive learning experiences.
- **Micro-enterprise initiatives**
Empowering migrant communities and people around the world experiencing instability.



AN INVITATION TO INVEST

ABARA HOUSE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

We are raising an estimated **\$20M+** to complete Abara House as a **self-sustaining hub** for learning, hospitality, and advocacy.

Your investment will:

- **Preserve Historic Landmark**

Restoring the Hacienda and its surrounding spaces.

- **Create a Sustainable Campus**

Green infrastructure, water conservation, and shaded spaces.

- **Expand Transformative Programming**

Supporting Border Encounters and Advocacy.

Asset Acquisitions in 2025:

- Abara invested \$228,978 in 2025 in property acquisition & loan payoffs.
- These investments directly increase Abara's stake in the Abara House campus and accelerate the path toward full ownership of the future Abara House site.

ABARA HOUSE 2025 STATS



67 →

Events were hosted at Abara House involving over **2,100+** people.

- **A few examples:**

Art Festivals, and other celebrations; Staged two long-standing major regional border events at or adjacent to our property: BNHR Mothers' Day Hugs Not Walls, Border Mass for the Catholic Diocese of El Paso.

- Secured the historic Ft Bliss Army Officers Quarters - including **1.25** acres and three historic buildings.

BORDER JOY | According to Rosa, Toya, and Ana

Rosa Mani Thomas, Juárez Team Coordinator

Hello friends, My name is Rosa Mani Thomas, and I arrived to these precious borderlands 9 years ago. At first, things were very difficult for me. I didn't have a great support system, but I decided to stay and live here. My decision came after that dark night in September when I was deported from the U.S.

This was a very sad time, full of uncertainty; however, God gave me the opportunity to pick myself up little by little, to walk in love, dignity, hope, strength, and A LOT of work. He also allowed me to flourish where he planted me, here in the middle of the desert.

Today, to be able to walk hand in hand with others who find themselves in the same situation that I did 9 years ago has given deep meaning to my life. Juárez gave me

a deep exhale in the middle of my desperation. I have learned to enjoy these borderlands, to breathe them in, feel them, love them, respect them, and above all to honor them.

I have learned that all of us here smell like resilience, a resilience that sooner or later becomes joy. For me, it is the joy of walking with others, the joy of being family through sadness, the joy of forgetting our loneliness, because now, now we are one! The joy of enjoying every morning God gives me, every precious orange sunset that only Juárez could give. I am Rosa Mani Thomas, and I live in victory here in the desert.

Victoria "Toya" De Anda, Research & Executive Assistant

It seems odd to be thinking about joy in the midst of chaos, and by chaos I mean harsher treatment of immigrants in the U.S., cultivating fear in their everyday lives, and no clear hope of any immigration reform or policy coming soon for those whose goal is to get to the U.S.. Yet, when I think about the border, the joy and chaos can co-exist at the same time. How? Well, as someone that is a border girl or a 'fronteriza', as I like to call myself, I can see the joy in Ciudad Juarez, my home.

I can see the joy in all the migrants that are able to attend English classes and music classes in our office in Juarez.

I can see the joy in the migrant mothers who get to have a space to heal while their kids are being taken care of. I can see the joy in our team every time we listen to how these migrants are changing our way of seeing life. Thus, yes, both joy and chaos can coexist at the border.

Borders have always been surreal in that sense; resilient to survive in that sort of duality: joyous and chaotic. Borders nature is to embrace that duality and to allow them to create new ways of life.

Ana C, Program Participant

Hello World! I would like to introduce myself. My name is Ana C. Born in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. Raised in Oklahoma for 33 yrs. Been deported to Juárez for fifteen months now. I'm a single mother of seven beautiful children. And by the grace of God my mother has them back home in Oklahoma.

I am a widow of twenty six months now. I have overcome depression! Learned and am still learning about letting things go and why I seem to harbor grief. I am a daughter of God! I am blessed! Found myself more humble than ever. Even more I am very grateful for the good and bad.

Praying non-stop bc I know our Father in heaven listens and well just as it says in 2 Corinthians 5:7 "Walk By Faith Not By Sight!" A year ago I thought my life was over; but now, I am surrounded by amazing people from Abara most of all! They believed in me and THAT motivated me to want better in life and take advantage to have a second opportunity at life! With nothing but love; God first.

Sincerely, Ana C.



NEIGHBORS FROM THE OTHER SIDE | Friends across the border

Even if you don't know your neighbors, you are a witness to their lives and they to yours. You see each other's homes, passing cars. Until you know your neighbors, they are like background noise, like a green screen. For a long time, we would look through the mesh-like metal of the border fence behind Abara and we'd see a bright orange apartment. We'd squint past the barbed wire in the river and the tall cranes from the construction project burying the canal.

Everyone who works at Abara or visits Abara looks through the fence into Juárez hearing the sounds, sometimes even the smells! And we wondered if they could see us too, could see the new mural on the office facing south, could see us when we stood on the roof and dreamed about future binational events.

One day Sami crossed over the international bridge downtown, got in the car with Rosa, and they went to walk the blocks in Juárez adjacent to Abara's Campus. They met people walking to and from work, they knocked on doors, introducing themselves with a simple message: "We're your neighbors!", always pointing back toward the Hacienda, the apartments, the offices, and the new mural that's



Roberto & Lupita's House in Ciudad Juárez

visible from Juárez. They were met with some suspicion and some confusion. Roberto and Lupita lived in one of the orange apartments, and some extended family in other units. Their family has been there for over 50 years! Roberto and Lupita's family remembers when the view of El Paso and the river looked very different than it does today.

After a few more visits from Rosa, our vecinos del otro lado agreed to let us host a meal with them, on the sidewalk in front of their apartments. Our team along with friends from two nearby shelters

gathered for tacos de discada. A popsicle cart rolled by and we erupted in joy. Sometimes the best reason to get together is because you are proximate. You are witnesses to each other's lives. We dream that one day Abara Juárez will be instrumental in installing beautiful public spaces along the river bank across from Abara El Paso, and that we will host binational events based in art, music, sport, and international friendship. But for now, we'll just be having tacos again in a few weeks with Roberto and Lupita.

If you'd like to experience our first meal with our across the river neighbors, watch this 3 min video:

[Click Here](#)

BORDER RESPONSE STATS OF 2025

In 2025, Abara’s border response focused on meeting basic urgent needs, restoring dignity, and fostering human connection—in partnership with shelters and organizations including Tres Ríos, DHIA, MCC, and DIF.

Ciudad Juárez Response

Area of Focus	Total Number Served, Number of Shelters
<p>Children + Adolescents: Games, Art Therapy, Holiday Parties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 556 Unaccompanied minors cared for through structured activities designed to bring stability, creativity, and healing - offering moments of childhood in the midst of uncertainty.
<p>Adult Stability + Opportunity: Huellas Microenterprise, English Classes, Computer Lab.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 273 Adult migrants and shelter leaders served in Ciudad Juárez and El Paso with employment support, English, and computer skills. → 690 Individuals on the move were accompanied toward stability and next steps.
<p>Basic Needs + Emergencies Support: Groceries & Prepared Food, Clothing and Shoes, Hygiene Products, Medical Care, Shelter Referrals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 5,518 People from shelters were served with basic needs in Ciudad Juárez. → 2,524 People received hygiene and cleaning supplies. → 707 People benefited from shelter support and repairs in their shelters. → 500 People received utilities assistance. → 100+ People received medical care.



BORDER RESPONSE STATS OF 2025

Ciudad Juárez Response (continued)

Area of Focus	Total Number Served, Number of Shelters
<p>Leader Care and Network Support: Caring for caregivers for those serving under pressure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➔ 190 Leaders + Volunteers from shelters that served in Ciudad Juárez receiving leadership care in 15 events throughout the year.➔ The leader care program reached 14 out of the 16 shelters in Juárez.

Totals for 2025

- ➔ Supported a total of **16** partner shelters with resources (all of them in Ciudad Juárez).
- ➔ Accompanied a total of ~**6,954** forcibly displaced neighbors and shelter leaders.

El Paso Response

Abara played a key role in supporting immigrant advocacy and legal awareness in 2025, contributing to court observation efforts, participating in weekly community vigils, collaborating with regional advocacy groups, and connecting others to these efforts. Provided critical guidance and support to families navigating detention processes in El Paso, offering connections, information, and on-the-ground assistance.



BORDER EDUCATION STATS



Border Encounters

Leaders representing **28** states. **283**

- **24** Border Encounters hosted. We continue to invite groups at a steady, repeatable cadence as demand for Border Encounters continues to increase.
- **99%** Feel better equipped to contextualize current border realities.
- **94%** Better understand root causes of forced displacement.



Learning & Beyond: Abara's Reach

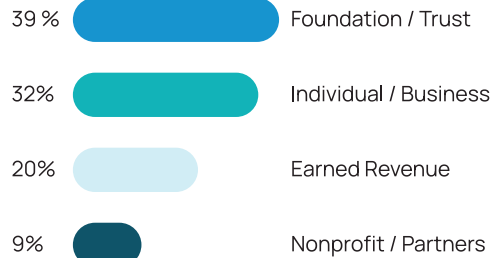
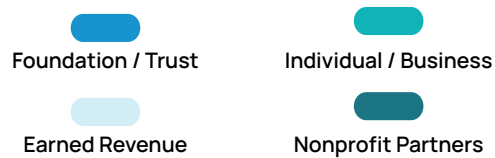
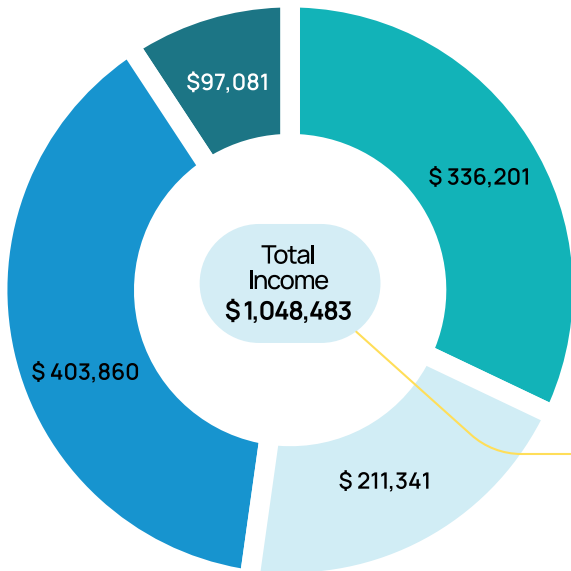
Abara co-facilitated:

- **15** Local university classes.
- **4** Book club sessions.
- **1** Online webinar reached **34** attendees, reflecting increased demand for virtual guidance beyond foundational border encounter programming
- **2** College interns per semester.
- **3** Educational intensives for **145** national leaders & students (such as UNIDOS US, FaithWorks, and MCC).
- **67** Offsite events reached over **7,600** people around the US and the world.

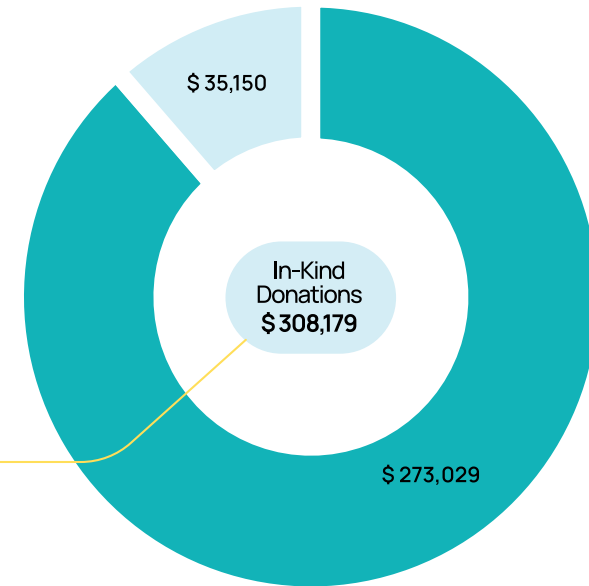


2025 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

2025 Income



Additional In-Kind Donations



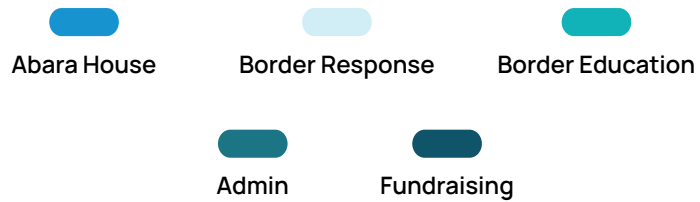
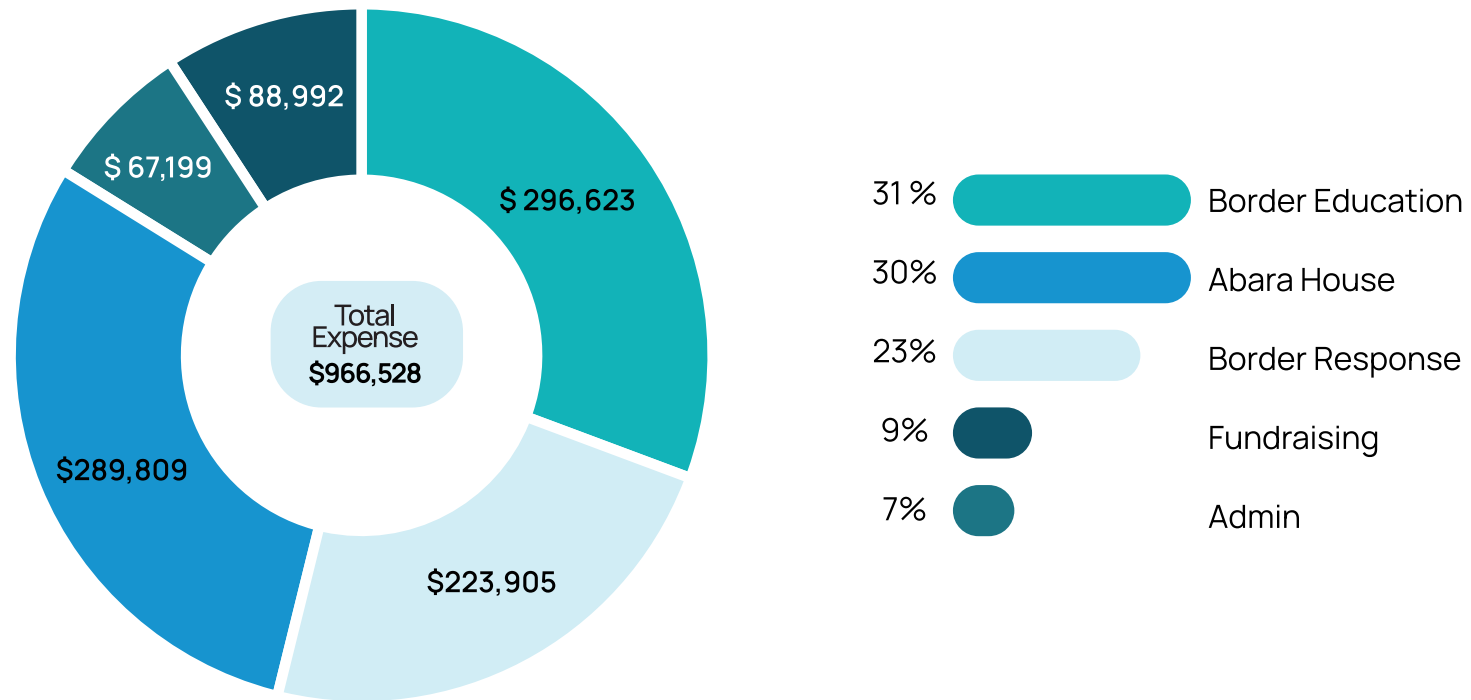
Combined Total Income
\$1,356,662

In addition to financial contributions, Abara received significant in-kind support:

- Asset-building contributions include both a \$225k reduction in the purchase price of the historic Ft. Bliss property and \$48,029 in assignment of loan interests in the Hacienda that increase Abara's ownership stake in the property.
- Additional in-kind support includes donated goods and professional services that directly supported program delivery.

2025 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

2025 Expense



LOOKING AHEAD



Expanding Border Education

- ➔ Including students, faith leaders, and wider networks.
- ➔ Enhance curriculum for deeper learning and engagement.
- ➔ Expand reflection spaces for immersive experiences.
- ➔ Increasing online engagement.



Strengthening Border Response Partnerships

- ➔ Grow resources for frontline leaders and associations.
- ➔ Expand micro-enterprise & holistic initiatives alongside displaced families.
- ➔ Increase advocacy to amplify migrant voices.



Advancing Abara House Capital Campaign

- ➔ Continue renovations on the historic Hacienda.
- ➔ Launch new programs for learning, dialogue, and leadership.
 - ➔ Deepen local & national partnerships, including MASS - Model of Architecture Serving Society.



Meet the Team

Board of Directors 2025

Donny Cannoy | Board Treasurer
Co-Founder and Chief People Officer
at Steele Consulting

Sami DiPasquale, MBA | Board President 2025
Founder and Executive Director at Abara

Tiffany Etterling | Vice President
C12 Borderplex Principal Chair

Joseph Gainor
Founder & Owner at Wholesalers USA

Alisia N. Muir, Ph.D, NBCT | Board Secretary
English Department Chair at Northwest
Early College High School

Sarah De Los Santos Upton, PhD
Professor at University of Texas at El Paso

Our Staff



Sami DiPasquale
Executive Director



Victoria de Anda
Research & Executive
Assistant



Rosa Mani
Migrant Services
Coordinator



Daniel Banda
Shelter Connector



Clara D. Compean
Border Education &
Outreach Coordinator



Monica Bharadwaj
Grants & Development



Meredith Mayo
Strategy & Leadership
Coach



Kim Schaefer
Architect & Project
Director



Angelica Acosta G.
Asylum Narrative
Translation Project Director
& Hospitality



Salvador Sierra
Caretaker & Land Steward



Jonathan Klassen
Hospitality & Office
Coordinator



Rebeca Alvidrez
Graphic Designer
& Communications
Specialist



Laurel Alvarez
Stewardship Coordinator



Nate Ledbetter
Partnerships &
Development

Wisdom Council Members

Dr. Sarah De Los Santos Upton

UTEP Professor, Abara Board Member, Wisdom Council co-chair

Sami DiPasquale

Executive Director of Abara

Adrian Aragon

Chicano Studies Professor

Jesse Kapenga

EPCC / UTEP Professor

Veronica Salgado

Teacher

Socorro Heredia

Community Leader

Dr. Alisia Muir

Researcher & Professor, Abara Board Member, Wisdom Council Co-chair

Alma Martinez

Ciudad Nueva Food Co-op Coordinator

Monico "Mono" Acuña

Brown Street Market Owner

Blanca Estrada

EP Finest Artist Collective & Muralist

Claudia Cochran Miller

EPCC Professor

Betty Camargo

Advocate & Organizer

Salvador "Sal" Sierra

Abara House Caretaker and Land Steward

Jorge "Yorch" Perez

Artist, Baker, Activist (Juárez)

Rosa Mani

Social Worker, Advocate (Juárez)

Rafael Batrez

EP Finest Artist Collective & Leathermaker

Andrew Wong

Civil Engineer

Dra. Flor Rocio Martinez

Academic (Juárez)

Lucero De Alva

Teacher, Author, Volunteer (Juárez)

Andrea "Andie" Everett

GIS Services, Indigenous Storyteller

Kathrin Zeiske

"Luchadora" + Activist (Juárez)

June Straight

High School Teacher

Irvin Diaz

Local Artist

Dr. Luis Diaz

Academic (Juárez)

Eddie Endlich

Retired HS Principal, ESL Program Director

Omar Rios

Architect + Migrant Advocate

Naomi Fertman

UTEP Professor

Lupe Negrete

Community Leader



Join a Growing Community of Voices & Neighbors

28
States

18
Denominations

Creating physical and relational spaces for belonging and building peace in our divided world.



EL PASO
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



NATIONAL
IMMIGRATION
FORUM







BELONGING BEYOND BORDERS

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