

# UndocuFund

MONTEREY BAY

## Impact Report



[www.undocufundmb.org](http://www.undocufundmb.org)

A PROGRAM POWERED BY VENTURES

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UndocuFund Monterey Bay (MB) is a collaborative effort to assist Monterey Bay area undocumented immigrant workers impacted by COVID-19. Developed by Ventures in conjunction with nonprofits throughout the Monterey Bay region, this Latina immigrant-led program builds on networks of trust and community organizing to support a population that was otherwise ineligible for federal or state pandemic relief. Thanks to the support of neighbors like you, UndocuFund MB has distributed nearly five million dollars to support families with emergency assistance through the COVID-19 crisis.

This report outlines the major impacts of the UndocuFund MB program since its inception in 2020. First, we provide an overview of the challenges that Monterey Bay area undocumented workers faced throughout the pandemic. Then, we detail the UndocuFund MB program's strategic and compassionate responses to these challenges, highlighting the approaches that have made this program successful. Finally, we outline next steps for the UndocuFund MB program to continue to build community capacity and financial equity for undocumented workers in the Monterey Bay beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

# BACKGROUND

The Monterey Bay area is home to a large portion of the undocumented workers in the state of California, with undocumented immigrants making up a greater percentage of the county population in Monterey and San Benito counties (13.5%) than any other county in the state (Hill and Johnson 2011). To live with an “undocumented” status means to live without a valid visa or green card, and therefore at risk of deportation and without access to the same rights that come with full citizenship. And yet Monterey Bay residents who live with an “undocumented” status, along with their families, have developed long-standing ties to the region, playing crucial roles in their communities – in many cases, over decades. The majority of undocumented workers who live in the Monterey Bay region work in agriculture and hospitality (Monterey Bay Board of Supervisors 2019), and play an important role in keeping food on tables in California and throughout the United States. During the early stages of the pandemic, however, community members and organizers began to see the economic and health impacts of COVID-19 disproportionately impacting the region’s undocumented workers. Researchers have since illustrated that the breadth and depth of impact was much larger than previously reported: undocumented workers in the Monterey Bay region were more likely to contract COVID and experience worse health outcomes than their California neighbors (Lewnard et al. 2021; Mora et al. 2021).

Despite often being designated as “essential workers,” undocumented workers were ineligible for the same kinds of safety nets and protections that supported most Californians through the pandemic. Anyone living with an “undocumented” immigration status is ineligible for federal and state level stimulus payments, as well as unemployment payments that have kept other workers and families afloat. Though undocumented workers were eligible for a new state-level stimulus payment of up to \$1,700, their unemployed neighbors with citizenship were eligible for twenty times as much economic aid through unemployment insurance and stimulus

support (\$35,000) (Flores et al. 2022) For this community, therefore, the effects of the pandemic were felt swiftly through loss of employment, decreased income, and a higher likelihood of contracting COVID-19. Additionally, contracting COVID-19 itself was linked to both health and financial wellbeing, as illness itself often led to decreased employment and long-term health complications.

Ventures designed the The UndocuFund MB program to respond to these growing concerns about the impacts of the pandemic among undocumented workers in the Monterey Bay region. From the onset, The UndocuFund MB program has been collaborative by design: staff members at Ventures worked in conjunction with community organizers and organizations, including Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance (PVPSA) and Salud Para la Gente. When the UndocuFund MB program was launched, each of these community organizations was already involved in long-term partnerships with community members through providing health resources, checking in on families with chronic health concerns, and advocating for early COVID-19 vaccine allocation among farmworkers. Ventures staff were therefore able to leverage the strong networks of trust that these organizations had already established in order to provide support to individuals and families who had been most affected by the pandemic.

*With the support of donors like you, UndocuFund MB has distributed nearly \$5,000,000 to thousands of families across the Monterey Bay region*, with stipends ranging from \$100 to \$1500 per family. A total of 16,730 people were supported through UndocuFund MB, either as individuals or as part of a family that received a stipend. The Ventures team selected families and individuals who were most likely to experience precarity during the pandemic: families living in rural areas, families with young children, families in which one or more family members already had a chronic illness, single parents, and people who lost jobs and income because of the pandemic. A review of the demographic data for the people who received stipends from UndocuFund MB between 2020-2022 reveals that the program has been

been successful in maximizing support for people most likely to experience precarity. The large majority of people who received stipends were Latinx (88%), female-identified (64%), and Spanish-speaking (84%). A total of nine percent of applicants spoke indigenous languages, including Mixteco, Zapoteco, and Triqui. Sixty-one percent of UndocuFund MB recipients

worked in agriculture, followed by restaurant work (6%), hospitality (4%), janitorial work (3%) and caregiving (2%). As the pandemic evolved, Ventures staff continually revised their approach in collaboration with community members and organizations, in order to ensure that as many families as possible would be eligible for support.

## KEY FINDINGS:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic hit Monterey Bay's undocumented workers and their families particularly hard, through **loss of employment** and a **disproportionately high risk of contracting COVID-19**. Disproportionate impact was linked to structural inequalities that existed long before the pandemic.
2. The large majority (81%) of UndocuFund MB recipients used stipends to pay for **rent and housing**; in many cases funds **stabilized families on the brink of eviction** and allowed them to stay housed during the pandemic.
3. In stories shared with the Ventures team, undocumented workers described the links between **financial, physical, and psychological well-being** during the pandemic; the UndocuFund MB program supported wellbeing by reducing financial stress and connecting recipients with community resources.
4. The UndocuFund MB Program strengthened a **community-directed safety net** for undocumented workers otherwise ineligible for federal and state support. The program targeted individuals and families who were most likely to experience precarity during the pandemic, particularly families with children, women and female-identified workers, single parents, and people living in rural areas. Funds were distributed widely across the Monterey Bay region.
5. UndocuFund MB's immigrant-led and collaborative model supported recipients with unrestricted stipends. This model emphasized the **dignity and autonomy** of recipients to determine their own path for recovery and stabilization during the COVID-19 crisis.
6. Ongoing development of the successes of UndocuFund MB through the newly-developed Alas Program provides a model for building a **long-term safety net** that will support undocumented workers and mixed-status families in the future.

Total Funds Distributed:  
**\$4,864,691**

Households Served:  
**3,738**

Total Population Served:  
**16,730**



## WHO RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM UNDOCUFUND?

### EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY (TOP 5)

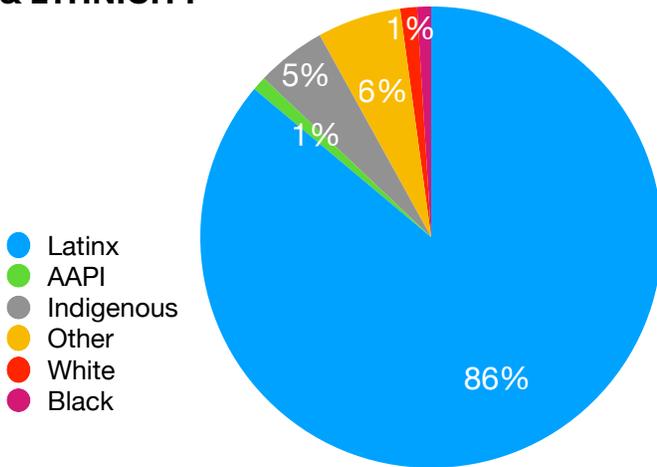


1. Agriculture (61%)
2. Food Service and Restaurants (6%)
3. Janitorial and housekeeping (4%)
4. Hospitality (4%)
5. Caregiving (2%)

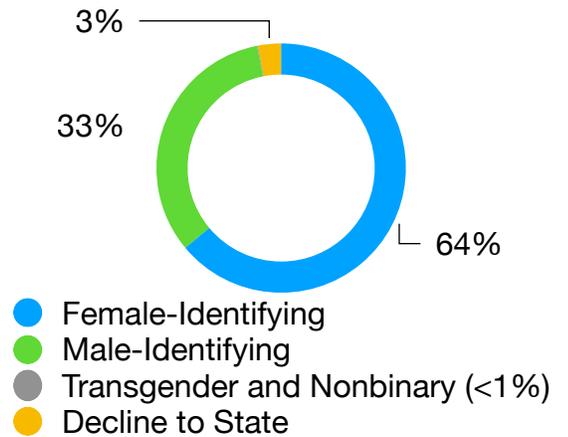
### LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME (TOP 5)

1. Spanish (84%)
2. English (7%)
3. Mixteco (6%)
4. Triqui (3%)
5. Zapoteco (<1%)

### RACE & ETHNICITY



### GENDER IDENTIFICATION



## HOW DID RECIPIENTS USE STIPENDS?



**1. Rent**



**3. Childcare**



**5. Healthcare & Medications**



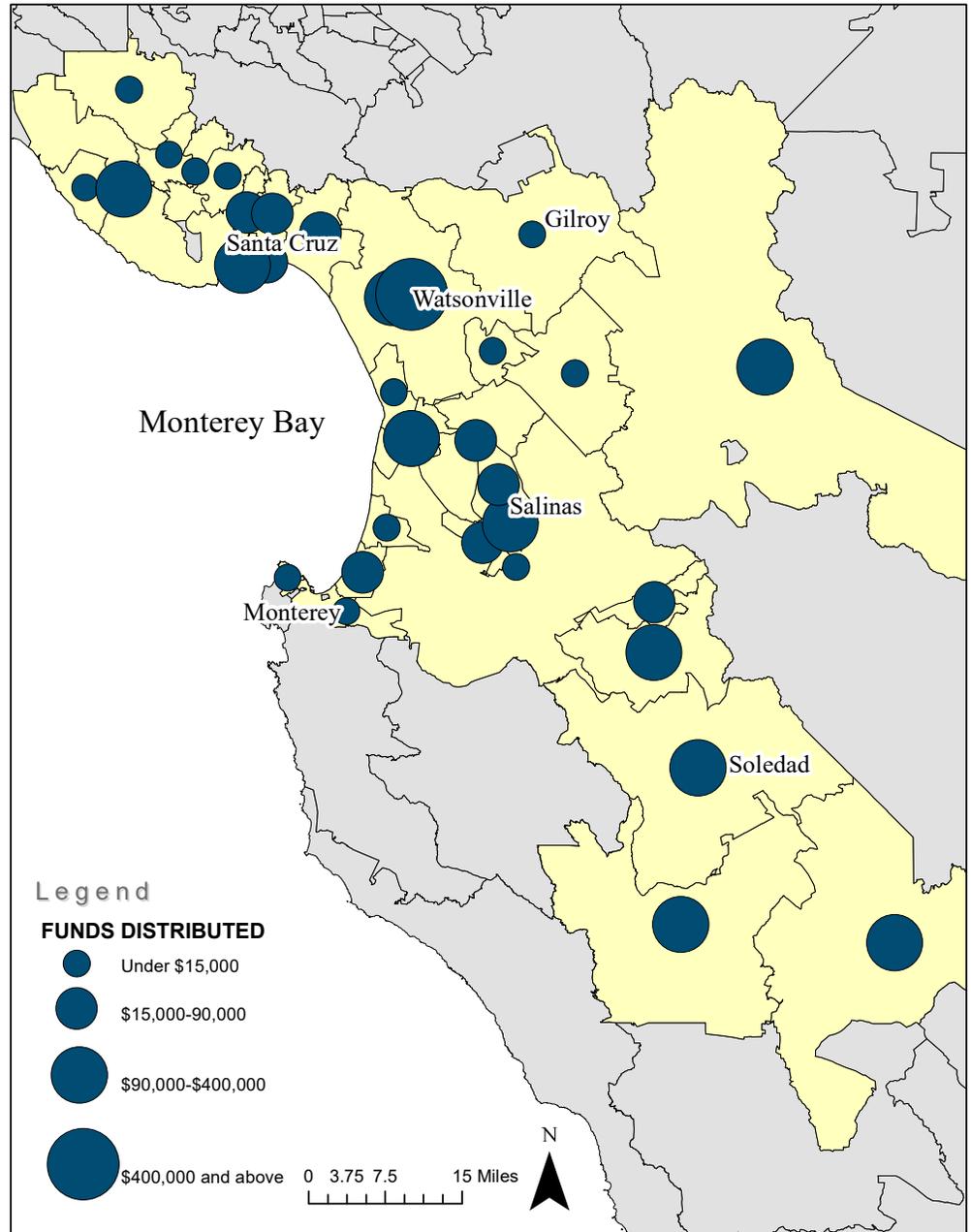
**2. Food**



**4. Family Support**

# FUNDS DISTRIBUTED ACROSS THE MONTEREY BAY REGION

UndocuFund MB stipends were distributed widely across the Monterey Bay region, though the majority of funds were distributed in larger population centers such as Watsonville and Salinas. The map to the right illustrates the distribution of funds by zip code, with each circle indicating the approximate location and amount of total funds distributed in each zip code. As the pandemic evolved, staff at Ventures revised their approach to ensure that funds were distributed equitably across as many locations as possible, with an emphasis on reaching rural locations where other resources like regular food distributions were less common.





# LESSONS LEARNED FROM UNDOCUFUND MB RECIPIENTS

Throughout the pandemic, the Ventures team and their community partners met with undocumented workers throughout the Monterey Bay area to assess community needs. During these meetings, they encouraged recipients of UndocuFund MB stipends to share some of their stories about how the pandemic was impacting them firsthand. We conducted a qualitative analysis of the stories that they shared, noting patterns that emerged across multiple stories and experiences. As a whole, these stories reveal that while the pandemic had disproportionate effects on people living with an undocumented status in

the Monterey Bay region, many of the structural challenges they faced – job insecurity, lack of access to healthcare, and discrimination – were long standing challenges that became newly exacerbated by the pandemic. Their stories also show that despite these challenges, UndocuFund MB recipients utilized existing community resources and strengths to respond to the pandemic. We summarize below some of the major themes and patterns that emerged from our analysis:

# 1. UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS' JOBS AND UNEMPLOYMENT STATUSES WERE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO IMPACTS FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

Across California, agriculture is the most common source of work for undocumented workers (Flores et al 2022). A large portion of UndocuFund MB recipients (61%) worked in agriculture, an industry that was especially vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic for several reasons. First, there are lower standards of workplace safety and protections that are allowed for undocumented workers in this field of work, which meant that workers faced increased risk of contracting illness on the job, and a fear of losing employment if they did contract COVID-19 (Flores and Padilla 2020; Lewnard et al 2020). Next, the pandemic separately brought global volatility to agricultural markets, meaning that work with certain crop commodities became more unpredictable and less reliable for seasonal workers to depend on (Pottinger and Puglia 2020). Finally, in the Monterey Bay region, the pandemic coincided with major fires, most notably the CZU lightning complex fires, which meant that workers who faced higher risk of COVID-19 also had to contend with exposures to wildfire smoke on the job (Gross 2021).

UndocuFund MB recipients reported delays in the beginning of the agricultural season, decreased availability of hours that they could work during the week, and mass layoffs when members of a team developed COVID-19. One Ventures staff member recorded the following note in an application from a young woman who worked in the lettuce fields, which shows the sense of fear and lack of transparency that many agricultural workers faced during the pandemic: “She was working in the fields. One day, they started to notice that people stopped showing up and no one knew why. Then soon after someone

***“She was working in the fields. One day, they started to notice that people stopped showing up and no one knew why. Then soon after someone leaked that the workers who stopped going had COVID-19 and no one told them. She has since stopped working.”***

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Beyond agricultural work, the next most common source of layoffs among UndocuFund MB recipients was restaurant and food service work. During the initial lockdown phase of the pandemic, many restaurants closed or reduced operations, leaving dishwashers, line cooks, and servers without work or with significantly reduced hours. Other recipients reported decreased availability of work in part-time and contingent care professions, such as working as personal care aids for senior citizens across the Monterey Bay area, with employers citing the risk of COVID exposures as a reason for layoffs. Volatility in care labor was more likely to impact undocumented women, who on the whole were already paid less than undocumented men, and on average earn forty-nine cents to every dollar earned by white men (Vega Varela, Clot, and Cohen 2022). Layoffs and/or decreased hours

also occurred for people who did housekeeping and janitorial work, particularly in the homes of elderly Monterey Bay area residents, who cited fear of exposure to COVID-19 in laying off part-time workers. In several cases, recipients with their own small businesses – a gym, flower shop, a party planning business, a tamale stand - described having to close or curtail their business operations during lockdown, often not knowing when the pandemic

and lockdown conditions would allow them to open up again.

Many UndocuFund MB recipients had to stop working simply because they had no other childcare options and needed to stay home to look after children and support them with new online learning experiences. This dynamic was often gendered, with women and female-identified recipients most likely to give up work entirely in order to support children. These reports from UndocuFund MB recipients reflect broader trends across the state of California in which researchers have found that Latina women disproportionately bore the brunt of care labor during the pandemic, having to leave the

workforce in order to take care of children (Hernández et al. 2021). In meetings with Ventures staff, UndocuFund MB recipients described the challenges associated with staying at home, not being able to contribute any money towards household expenses, especially rent, and watching their children struggle with a new online learning regimen, which often required additional payments for WiFi with enough broadband to support multiple Zoom calls at once. Given this particular difficulty for women, the UndocuFund MB program made an explicit effort to support female-identified people (64% of recipients), single parents, parents with young children, and, separately, people who were pregnant and reporting concerns about the impacts of COVID during pregnancy.

## **2. AN UNDOCUMENTED STATUS MEANT DECREASED ACCESS TO THE SAFETY NETS AND LEGAL RIGHTS THAT PROTECTED OTHER CALIFORNIANS FROM THE WORST IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC**

Undocumented workers were ineligible for pandemic relief payments at the federal or state level, including unemployment payments. They also lacked access to the same workplace safety standards and legal protections that protected colleagues from COVID exposures at work and loss of employment. On the job, workers faced an environment of decreased access to job stability under employers who had little incentive to keep them hired. As undocumented workers enjoy fewer rights than documented workers, their contingent status meant that they were the most likely to be fired at the onset of the pandemic, and least likely to be able to access worker safety nets after having developed COVID (Flores and Padilla 2020). When workers went back after having contracted COVID, they were often told that they had no jobs left, and often were left with no way to contest lay-offs. One agricultural worker who was still experiencing COVID symptoms, even after having tested negative, explained to Ventures staff: “When I tested positive for COVID I got laid off for forty days. Then the employer didn’t want to rehire me back. I still have a mild cough and it won’t go away.” Our analysis suggests that lack of access to standard legal rights often extended to the realm of housing as well. Many of the

UndocuFund MB recipients lived in crowded apartments or homes in order to be able to afford living in the Monterey Bay region, one of the most expensive rental markets in the country. Many families lived in crowded conditions. As health studies have shown, living in close quarters also accelerated the spread of COVID within units that housed multiple families (Page and Flores-Miller 2021). And yet on top of this acute public health concern, many families had to contend with the very real possibility of eviction. Even though housing activists in California worked tirelessly to prevent evictions throughout the state during the pandemic, and federal eviction protection supported many families throughout the US, undocumented workers experienced decreased access to the same kinds of eviction protections afforded to documented workers (Chabria 2020). One family explained to Ventures staff: “my family and I were evicted and we have been without a home for six months.” Others cited the threat of eviction as a major stress, and a motivation for doing whatever it took to pay rent – by far the highest expense that most families faced. One father explained his family’s situation, emphasizing the mental toll of a looming threat of eviction: “We are still behind on bills that we have to pay and are currently in debt right now. We owe \$4000 in rent apart from other bills that we also have. My family and I are very worried and stressed right now as we don’t know what is going to happen to us and whether we will continue to have a home or not.” The urgency of paying rent – and staying housed – is also reflected by the fact that for the large majority of UndocuFund MB recipients, rent was the first priority for an UndocuFund MB stipend (84%), followed by food (7%) and childcare (1%). Across the diligent notes taken by Ventures staff, a common justification for approving a family’s application was, simply, “Funds will help this family stay housed.”

***“When I tested positive for COVID I got laid off for forty days. Then the employer didn’t want to rehire me back. I still have a mild cough and it won’t go away.”***

### **3. THE FINANCIAL IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC HIT THIS COMMUNITY SWIFTLY AND DISPROPORTIONATELY, WITH EACH PHASE OF THE PANDEMIC BRINGING NEW CHALLENGES.**

Reduced availability of work – either from layoffs or reduced hours – meant that undocumented workers and families fell behind on rent and utilities payments in the early lockdown phases of the pandemic. UndocuFund MB recipients who work in agriculture, sixty-one percent of all recipients, reported burning through savings that they had allocated for the off-seasons in which they normally could not count on having regular hours at work. In one note at the early stages of the pandemic, a Ventures staff member wrote that one mother “has spent the little money her family had saved for emergencies to help with rent. Her family has been going to local food distributions and relying on food distribution at a local school for food for her children.” Another note describes a family who was paying over \$2,000 every month for rent. As the first of the month rolled around and the work opportunities remained sparse, she writes, “They had to limit

themselves in a lot of ways.” This kind of self-limiting took on several forms across stories: some families could no longer afford to buy diapers or clothes for their children; others had to forego meals.

As the virus itself spread and began to affect the undocumented community at disproportionately high levels, recipients reported challenges in quarantining from other family members. One agricultural worker rented a hotel for a week to protect her family from the virus, and the hotel expenses “took a hit on her finances,” limiting her ability to continue to make rent payments. After contracting COVID-19, many recipients struggled to return to work or find employers willing to re-hire them; a fact that made it even more difficult to meet rent payments. Indeed, as the virus began to have a disproportionate impact on undocumented workers, the Ventures team made a particular effort to fund people who had tested positive. Between initial lockdowns to contracting COVID-19, each phase of the pandemic brought distinct challenges. The Ventures team and its partners therefore emphasized listening to community members in order to best support new challenges as they arose.



## 4. THE HEALTH IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC WERE DISPROPORTIONATELY HIGHER IN THIS COMMUNITY, AND CLOSELY LINKED WITH THE FINANCIAL IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC

Among UndocuFund MB recipients' stories, it is difficult to separate out the pandemic's financial impacts from its health impacts. Living and working conditions made UndocuFund MB recipients more likely to contract COVID. As illustrated by stories outlined above, contracting COVID made it difficult to get back to work – in part because employers didn't always rehire people who had quarantined or tested positive, and in part because UndocuFund MB recipients occasionally experienced long-term COVID symptoms that made it difficult to return to work, especially if work required extensive manual labor.

Additionally, the financial stressors and prolonged period of uncertainty ushered in by the pandemic influenced mental and physical health. One UndocuFund MB recipient described the experience of these overlapping financial and health risks: "I was not prepared to deal with this economically or mentally." Others elaborated on what the physical and mental health impacts of the pandemic looked like for them and their families. After one mother experienced an especially bad case of COVID, she explained to a Ventures staff member: "To this day, my kids get nervous when they see me showing any signs of being sick. They're reminded of when I had COVID in the past."

A woman in her sixties who has been living in the region for twenty five years talked about the mental health impacts her family was experiencing: "My whole family has been suffering from depression since we all lost our jobs and have been working reduced hours. Two of them have been hospitalized due to heavy depression." In the peak of the pandemic, as rent and bills piled up, another recipient voiced his

***"To this day, my kids get nervous when they see me showing any signs of being sick. They're reminded of when I had COVID in the past."***

concerns with these words that represented what many others felt: "I'm worried about the future." For community members with pre-existing conditions like leukemia, diabetes, or autoimmune conditions, the linked financial and health impacts of the pandemic hit especially hard. Since many of these pre-existing conditions make the risk of contracting COVID-19 higher, individuals and their concerned family members would respond by restricting work at sites where exposures were likely – a dynamic that often exacerbated financial precarity by reducing household income as one or multiple family members stopped working. Separately, the financial stress of paying for medications, surgeries, and bills was compounded by the other financial stressors of the pandemic, leading some families to forego treatment in favor of

paying bills and rent. This dynamic was exacerbated by the fact that most undocumented workers have limited access to health insurance coverage. While MediCal access has recently become available to undocumented people under age 26 and above

age 50 (during the later stages of the pandemic after many workers had already contracted COVID), undocumented workers between the ages of 26 to 50 remain ineligible for MediCal benefits (Cha and McConville 2021). The unrestricted stipend provided by UndocuFund MB worked as a way to extend this safety net to undocumented workers, giving families the flexibility to pay for medical expenses and their own family's priorities for linked financial, physical and mental health.

## 5. UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS RESPONDED TO THE PANDEMIC BY RELYING ON TRUSTED RESOURCES, NETWORKS OF SUPPORT, AND EXISTING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Ten years ago, a young father who received UndocuFund MB support moved to Soledad from Santa Barbara. He found that the community in Soledad was better, and he felt more connected

to the people there. He met his wife there, and soon got married and had two children, who started attending Soledad schools. He found the schools welcoming, helpful, and supportive of his family. Close by in Salinas, a woman in her thirties is one of the reasons why other families find schools to be so supportive: she volunteers weekly at her children's school, facilitating craft activities for the kids and regularly signing up to chaperone day trips. A short drive up the road in Watsonville, when the pandemic hit, a young woman's neighbors allowed her to borrow a room short term. She helps them with errands and they even pay her a small amount of income. If it weren't for them, she doesn't know where she'd be staying right now; with their support, she knows she can rely on a sense of stability.

While the pandemic may have hit undocumented workers in the Monterey Bay region especially hard, the magnitude of impact was lessened by some of the existing community resources and assets that have been in place long before the pandemic. As community members applied for support from the UndocuFund MB, they described some of their long-held ties to the community – families with roots in the region for 10, 25, 30 years – and some of the ways that

they contribute to the strength of their community. Sometimes that looked like neighbors checking in on neighbors, sometimes it looked like church-based or school-based food distributions that meant that parents didn't have to worry about where their kids' lunch was coming from that day. Sometimes that looked like high schoolers studying hard so that they could bring political changes to their hometowns.

UndocuFund MB recipients sought support from an extensive array of immigrant-led nonprofits and organizing efforts in the region, including Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance and Salud Para la Gente. These organizations had worked for decades to establish trust among people living with an undocumented status – for whom seeking resources, especially amid new waves of anti-immigrant rhetoric, was often associated with fear of discrimination, contact with immigration agents, and possible deportation. Utilizing community resources and contributing to the intangible parts of a community safety net – through volunteering, chaperoning, checking in on neighbors – were all common strategies to navigate the uncertainty and challenges of the pandemic.



# BEYOND CHARITY: BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

As a Latina immigrant led organization, Ventures prioritizes building partnerships with Latino working-class families throughout California's Central Coast. With this emphasis on *partnership* rather than more conventional models of *charity*, the team at Ventures designed the UndocuFund MB program to address many of the systemic challenges outlined above, with racial and gender equity as guiding principles to envision and work towards a region-wide recovery from the pandemic. The Ventures team prioritized listening to community needs as the pandemic evolved, emphasizing the dignity and community assets of undocumented community members who were most impacted. Beyond the quantitative measures of the program's successes, our analysis of the stories of people who received UndocuFund MB stipends suggests the following qualitative impacts of the program. As a whole, the UndocuFund MB program's approach:

## 1. STRENGTHENED A COMMUNITY-DIRECTED SAFETY NET

By leveraging the work already being done by Salud Para la Gente and Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance (PVPSA), among other community organizations, Ventures was able to identify community members who had been most strongly impacted by the pandemic. These organizations have long ties with working class Latino families in the Monterey Bay region, and have both emphasized building trust and long-term relationships with people who live with an undocumented immigration status. PVPSA's team of "promotores de salud," community health workers who go door-to-door to visit families in the area, emphasized humility and listening to respond to family needs and

build community health. Salud Para la Gente and PVPSA have been building trust with families, giving people an opportunity to speak and be heard, for decades. Venture's partnership with these organizations meant that they could activate that community-directed safety net in the crisis of the pandemic, and respond flexibly, listening directly to community needs, as the effects of the pandemic evolved.

## 2. PROVIDED AUTONOMY AND EMPOWERMENT AT A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY

By providing cash stipends instead of other forms of assistance, Ventures allowed families to make their own decisions about how stipends would be used. The value of an unrestricted cash stipend moved beyond traditional models of charitable giving by emphasizing the dignity and self-determination of undocumented workers. The Ventures approach involved trusting families to identify how stipends would best support their family's individual needs and priorities as they built plans for recovery and stabilization beyond the pandemic.

## 3. SUPPORTED LINKED PHYSICAL AND FINANCIAL WELLBEING

At the core of the Ventures approach is a dedication to recognizing that more equitable distributions of wealth and income builds wellbeing. Wellbeing is a broader indicator of both financial and physical health – beyond illness or disease – that emphasizes how people perceive their own quality of life (World Health

Organization 2022). During the pandemic, on one hand, families lost work opportunities or fell behind on rent because of illness. On the other hand, they often experienced mental health concerns because of prolonged financial stress. Orienting towards wellbeing as a goal allowed Ventures staff to address physical and financial health holistically. Families who received UndocuFund MB support described stipends as ameliorating some of the worst physical and mental burdens of the pandemic and opening possibilities for a more equitable recovery from the pandemic.

## 4. STABILIZED FAMILIES ON THE BRINK OF EVICTION

The large majority of UndocuFund MB recipients reported that they ultimately used their stipends to pay rent. Some families were months behind on rent payment and very concerned about the possibility of being evicted; others had already been evicted, and some were living – with young children – in regional shelters for people who are unhoused. In all of these cases, stipends provided a significant form of stabilization, allowing families to get up to date on rent payments, move from a shelter into a home, and in many cases, to stay housed.

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR UNDOCUFUND MB?

Even as mask mandates lift and the pandemic subsides throughout California, it remains as important as ever to address some of the structural inequalities that undocumented workers around the state face every day. In the Monterey Bay region in particular, these inequalities existed before the pandemic but were made even more stark across each of the pandemic's waves. While the UndocuFund MB program was successful in supporting families with short-term stabilization during the pandemic, a long-term equitable recovery from the pandemic requires building a sustainable, equitable safety net that undocumented people in the region can continue to trust in times of crisis. As climate change continues to impact the state of California, researchers have suggested that undocumented workers, particularly those who work in agriculture, are most likely to be at risk for environmental disasters like flooding, drought, and fires (Flores et al 2022). Therefore, a long-term model that supports a safety net that includes undocumented workers and mixed-status families is more vital than ever.

With these long-term solutions in mind, Ventures has developed a new program called Alas. Alas, which means wings in Spanish, is a six-month financial stability program to help working-class Latino families build community, self-determination, and financial wellbeing. This program couples the stipend distribution model of UndocuFund MB with programming and workshops that support participants in developing greater financial literacy, stability, and empowerment in planning for long-term financial goals. Alas participants receive six payments of \$500 over a six month period in which they meet with other families and Ventures staff to discuss budgeting, banking resources, and financial goals. More importantly, participants develop community with other families in the region and benefit from 1:1 meetings with Ventures staff to develop long-term financial plans that support their family's goals and dreams. The successes of both the UndocuFund MB program and the Alas program show that with your support, we can continue to work **towards a shared and prosperous economic future where zip code, race, gender, or immigration status do not dictate income or wealth.**



## **METHODS:**

The map completed for “Funds Distributed Across the Monterey Bay Region” was created in ArcGIS mapping software using several data layers available through the CA.gov California State Geoportal. These feature layers include: “California County Boundaries,” and “California ZIP Codes.” Separately, we used a US-wide “USA Major Cities” data layer available through the ArcGIS ESRI Data and Maps service through the ArcGIS Hub ([hub.arcgis.com](http://hub.arcgis.com)). The blue circles representing funds distributed show the total amount of funds distributed by the UndocuFund MB program per zip code area throughout the Monterey Bay Region. The four categories of “Funds Distributed” were classified with the Natural Breaks (Jenks) classification, and rounded to the nearest whole number.

The “Lessons Learned from UndocuFund MB Recipients” is the result of a qualitative analysis of the stories UndocuFund MB recipients shared as they applied to receive funding from the UndocuFund MB program. We conducted a qualitative analysis of 3,400 notes written either by undocumented workers themselves in a “tell us your story” section of the application, or by staff at Ventures or other community organizations in an “additional notes” section of the application. Using ethnographic qualitative analysis, we coded these notes for major themes, noting patterns that emerged across multiple entries and highlighting stories that were particularly representative of the experiences of multiple UndocuFund MB recipients.

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# UNDOCUFUND MB PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:



Community Action Board  
of Santa Cruz County, Inc.



PAJARO VALLEY PREVENTION  
and student assistance, inc.

## Salud Para La Gente

*Working Together for a Healthy Community*



Helping Farmworkers Help Themselves



Catholic Charities  
Diocese of Monterey  
*Providing Help. Creating Hope. Serving All.*



**BUILDING  
HEALTHY  
COMMUNITIES**  
EAST SALINAS



**COMMUNITY BRIDGES**  
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# UNDOCUFUND MB HAS BEEN FUNDED IN PART BY:

Anonymous  
AT&T  
Bay Federal Credit Union  
The California Endowment  
California Immigrant Resilience Fund  
Community Foundation for Monterey County  
Community Foundation Santa Cruz County  
Dignity Health  
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Sarah Christiano Charitable Fund  
Women's Foundation of California

# VENTURES



## About the Partners:

Ventures partners with rural Latino working-class families in California's Central Coast to implement transformational programs that activate and strengthen their economic and political power. Together, we are working towards a shared and prosperous economic future where zip code, race, gender, or immigration status do not dictate income or wealth. [sccvonline.org](http://sccvonline.org)

The UC Santa Cruz Global Health and Wellbeing Fellowship program is an interdisciplinary program that prioritizes the improvement of health and well-being in communities worldwide. Building upon collaborations across departments, divisions and the community here in Santa Cruz, we seek to address forces affecting health outcomes that range from the molecular, ecological and genomic to the global, political and economic. Ultimately our goal is to support the sustainability of communities and climates for health both locally and globally, doing so in ways that cultivate a new generation of global and community health leaders.

## APPRECIATION

*Special thanks to Christopher Rios at Stanford University for early review of the UndocuFund MB program in 2020. Thanks also to Claudia Manrique and Lucia de la Torre for supporting this report and analysis, and to all the UndocuFund MB recipients who shared their stories with the Ventures team. This project was made possible through seed funding from the UCSC Vice Chancellor for Research John McMillan in conjunction with the UCSC Global and Community Health Wellbeing Fellowships in collaboration with the Kurniawan Equitable Health Lab.*

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