

# MAKE THE ROAD NEW YORK 2016—2017 ANNUAL REPORT



**Make the Road New York builds the power of immigrant and working class communities to achieve dignity and justice.**



**DEAR FRIENDS,**

The years 2016 and 2017 were among the most challenging in our history. Yet members responded to hatred and fear with bold, beautiful actions that were felt across our state and the world. And every step of the way, we found ourselves standing shoulder-to-shoulder with New Yorkers like you. We couldn't have done it without you.

When a few community members and two young lawyers started Make the Road by Walking in a church in Bushwick, they didn't imagine the landmark victories we would one day achieve—like language access policies that enable thousands of immigrants to access critical services, or the strongest protections against wage theft in the US.

In 2017, our 20th anniversary year, we dug in our heels to protect everything we've built together. We provided critical training and support to thousands of immigrant New Yorkers facing intensified ICE enforcement, and mobilized tens of thousands more to defend our rights—from the steps of Trump Tower, to JFK airport, to the streets of our own neighborhoods.

New York is our home, no matter who's in office. We just broke ground on a new center in Queens: a beautiful multi-story building near Corona Plaza that will serve as a beacon of hope for our own members, and all immigrants and working class New Yorkers of color. And we've added a fifth community center in Westchester which will allow us to organize more effectively to ensure that New York State is representative of all its residents.

In 2017, we provided critical services to more than 15,000 people from over 40 countries—legal representation to avoid deportation, classes in English as a second language, healthcare access, and so much more. We exceeded that number in 2018, and we continue to play a critical role in defending healthcare and other critical services that are in danger of being eliminated. We are more grateful than ever to have you with us.

Sincerely,



Deborah L. Axt & Javier H. Valdés



In 2017, MRNY helped to lead the national resistance against the most viciously anti-immigrant presidential administration in recent history, and fortified our organization as a place of resilience, healing and support for our 22,000 members.

# OUR WORK



## **COMMUNITY ORGANIZING**

that builds the leadership of our 22,000 members and forges broad coalitions to win far-reaching reforms.



## **TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION**

that reaches 4,000 people every year with adult literacy classes, college access support, job training, and citizenship preparation.



## **LEGAL AND SURVIVAL SERVICES**

that provide tools for 10,000 families annually to lift themselves out of poverty.



## **POLICY INNOVATIONS**

that meet the needs of our members and improve the lives of millions more.

# HERE TO STAY

## HIGHLIGHTS OF MRNY'S FIRST TWO DECADES



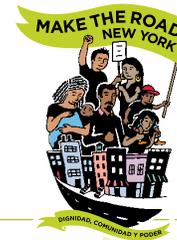
**1992**

**Saramaria Archila and Colombian immigrants launch the Latin American Integration Center** in Jackson Heights, Queens to provide citizenship assistance and support to Latin American immigrants.



**2001**

**MRNY expands to Staten Island**



**1997**

**Oona Chatterjee, Andrew Friedman and community members launch Make the Road by Walking** in St. Barbara's Church in Bushwick, Brooklyn to organize for welfare rights.

**2007**

**Make the Road by Walking and Latin American Integration Center merge** to form Make the Road New York, the largest grassroots citywide immigrant organization.



## 2011

MRNY expands to Long Island.



## 2014

MRNY and the Center for Popular Democracy launch sister Make the Roads in Connecticut, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, creating a regional power bloc.



## 2012

MRNY's founders launch the national Center for Popular Democracy to build the movement and replicate MRNY's model.



## 2017

MRNY expands to Westchester, launches a capital campaign to build a new community center in Corona, Queens, and works with the Center for Popular Democracy to launch Make the Road Nevada.



# BUILDING A MOVEMENT



# OF RESISTANCE



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We dug in to defend our communities and build a just and dignified future for immigrant and working class people across the US.

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## RESPONDING TO THE TRUMP ELECTION

The morning after the 2016 election, community members poured into our offices to mourn and plan. Since then, we have regularly led thousands into the streets and helped to build the national resistance. We continue to design and launch new programs to meet emerging needs and to provide support and services to sustain our communities over the long haul.





### **EDUCATING OUR COMMUNITIES**

Through our new “know your rights” program, we train hundreds each month in critical topics such as what to do if ICE comes to your home or workplace. We constantly update the curricula to respond to changing policies and conditions, like changes to DACA. We created a bilingual deportation defense manual that can be used across the US.

### **RESPONDING RAPIDLY TO RAIDS**

We designed a protocol that can be used by groups across the country to respond to actual or rumored ICE raids. The protocol involves tracing the report back to someone with direct knowledge, collecting details, identifying whether the individual is in ICE custody and where they are detained, and providing support to their loved ones. We also support families in accessing legal representation, preparing for court dates, and mobilizing community support.





## BUILDING A NETWORK OF ALLIES

We convened a network of allies, Aliadxs, to support our communities. (*Aliadxs* is the gender-inclusive Spanish word for “allies”.) The network helps to mobilize in the streets, conducts education on immigrant rights, advocates for individual immigrant families, and fundraises.

## CONFRONTING HATE VIOLENCE

Hate violence especially impacts the translatinx community. After an incident of violence, we jump into action, supporting the survivor in reporting the incident, and ensuring that the violence is taken seriously. If relevant, we provide the survivor with legal representation, while mobilizing community members and elected officials to denounce hate. We offer bystander training to non-trans allies so that the allies know what to do if they witness a hate incident.





## **HOLDING THE CORPORATE BACKERS OF HATE ACCOUNTABLE**

We launched our Corporate Backers of Hate campaign on May Day 2017, bringing 500 people to the headquarters of JPMorgan Chase to demand it stop financing private prisons and immigrant detention centers. Since then, New York City and State have divested their pensions from private prisons and detention centers. In early 2019, both JPMorgan Chase & Wells Fargo finally agreed to stop financing the largest private prison corporations in the country—an incredible victory for our community!





Nosotros Somos  
la gente, Para la gente  
y Por la gente!  
Apoya tu comunidad  
que te necesita. Unete.

Unidos Somos  
mas fuertes!!!

WWW.MAKETHEROADNY.ORG

Si   
EDUCACION  
NO LAS  
DEPORTACION

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MAKE THE ROAD  
NEW YORK

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# DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

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Those most impacted by injustice must devise and implement the solutions. From our earliest days, we made it a priority to develop the leadership of community residents to undertake this work. Now more than ever, we are committed to this goal.

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## BUILDING A LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

We provide newcomers with multiple opportunities to study organizing skills and practice them alongside more experienced members. We conduct extensive political education for both members and staff, so that everyone, at all levels of our organization, understands the root causes of the problems we face. Experienced members have opportunities to apply for paid internships and can run for election to the board of directors, where they supervise the Co-Executive Directors and oversee the work of the entire organization.

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MRNY supported **Mateo Guerrero** (on stage), originally from Colombia, in stabilizing his immigration status, learning organizing skills and coming out as a transman. He is now our Popular Education Coordinator, working to expand the very trainings that supported him in getting where he is today.





## ELEVATING COMMUNITY MEMBERS INTO STAFF ROLES

Over 80% of MRNY's staff are people of color, and the majority come from the communities we serve. Several of our most senior staff also started as members. Through our programs, they learned the skills they needed for entry-level staff roles and then worked their way up.



# ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITIES IN CIVIC LIFE

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MRNY's non-partisan civic engagement programs involve community members in issue organizing and voter registration. We are pushing New York to be a progressive beacon for the nation in this critical moment.

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## REGISTERING NEW VOTERS

Along with our allies in the Long Island Civic Engagement Table, we've registered approximately 30,000 voters of color and immigrant voters since 2011 on Long Island and in New York City, pushing to make the voices of our communities heard at the ballot box.



## VICTORIES

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### ORGANIZING NON-PARTISAN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

We host spirited public candidates forums that win concrete commitments from candidates and give community residents a chance to learn about issues and practice organizing skills. Overall, our work has improved civic participation in communities of color on Long Island, with research showing a statistically significant, positive impact on voter turnout in key elections.

In 2017, we worked with partners to lead a canvass on Long Island that reached 20,000 voters of color at the doors, helping to shift the political tide on the island and across the state!



Knocked on more than 4,000 voters' doors in one critical April 2017 election on Long Island, and on more than 20,000 Long Islanders' doors that November.

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Registered nearly 30,000 Long Island voters since 2011.

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Led Get Out the Vote work that has reached more than 100,000 voters of color on Long Island and in New York City and generated a statistically significant increase in voter turnout.

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MRNY taught **Gabriela Andrade** organizing and civic engagement skills, enabling her to take on a staff role as MRNY's Long Island civic engagement organizer. An immigrant from Ecuador, she naturalized as a US citizen in 2016 and voted for the first time in that year's elections.



# PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES' HEALTH

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Our communities have long struggled with diabetes, asthma, and other health problems, as well as lack of access to healthcare and nutritious food. These challenges loom even larger now. MRNY has ramped up our efforts on all fronts—organizing, educating, and providing critical services.

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## PROVIDING “KNOW YOUR RIGHTS” EDUCATION

As the screws tightened on our communities, many wondered if receiving benefits for which their families are eligible, like food stamps, would attract attention from enforcement. We redoubled our outreach efforts, making sure that families had accurate information and, if necessary, tools to make difficult decisions.



MRNY's community health workers taught **Maritza Puma** how to clean her children's teeth and choose healthy snacks to alleviate their dental problems. Inspired by this experience—and also in search of work—Maritza signed up for MRNY's five-month community health worker training program. The training gave her the skills she needed to assume a staff role as a community health worker in Staten Island, where she coaches families on managing their kids' asthma.

## ORGANIZING TO PRESERVE AND EXPAND CARE

We organized community members to speak out about how the Affordable Care Act impacted them. We educated public officials, took busloads to Washington, and won a guarantee that New Yorkers with DACA can continue to receive Medicaid regardless of what happens with DACA at the federal level. We worked to expand programs that increase access to care, like community health worker programs that provide culturally competent health coaching.

## ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

The climate of hate increased the need for mental health services. Our school-based staff worked double time to provide intensive support to high school students dealing with traumatic family separation and other crises. We provided opportunities for peer-to-peer support and story sharing, and offered free bilingual yoga classes and meditation sessions. We trained our staff in Mental Health First Aid, and assembled a list of free and low-cost mental health professionals.

## VICTORIES

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Helped over 300 families improve their children's health through a transformative, data-driven Community Health Worker program that includes home visits and culturally competent counselling.

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Alleviated hunger for 2,500 people, mostly children, by enrolling them in food stamps and coaching parents on how to adopt healthy eating habits.

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Enrolled 3,500 people in health insurance, enabling access to critical care.

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Helped over 500 individuals navigate the health system, including fighting unlawful refusals by insurers to cover treatment, and negotiating the elimination or reduction of debilitating hospital bills.

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Served 36,000 hungry families with our two food pantries, in Brooklyn and at our new pantry in Queens.

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Won a major commitment by the City to provide dedicated physical education space for all the City's schools by 2021 (ensuring that all students have a chance to exercise and let off steam).

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# WORKING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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Gentrification continues to drive up rents and give landlords an incentive to push out long-term tenants. From Staten Island to Long Island, MRNY is on the frontlines of this crisis, organizing to stop harassment, providing direct services to keep families in their homes, and designing enforceable solutions to the housing crisis.

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## **PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY HOUSING SERVICES**

Our housing attorneys represent tenants to obtain repairs, stop harassment, prevent unlawful eviction, and provide fair housing advocacy and a myriad of pre-litigation services. Last year we provided free high-quality bilingual legal services that helped 300 people avoid eviction, and tenants' rights education to many more.

## **ORGANIZING FOR REPAIRS**

We won passage of new policies that rein in tenant harassment and ensure repairs of asthma-triggering conditions. We continued to track the progress of the Alternative Enforcement Program, a program we helped create which ensures repairs in the worst buildings.

“What I love most about my work is that I can empower compañeros who are having a hard time in life. People usually enter our offices thinking about their own problems. I try to help them make connections so that we can take control over our lives and build our commitment to a collective fight.”

—ANGEL VERA (far right, with microphone)



## MOBILIZING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

We recruited more than 300 new tenants to our organization last year, including many who joined our campaigns to shape the rezonings in our core neighborhoods. In the North Shore of Staten Island, we brought together a broad and diverse coalition to influence the rezoning process and in Bushwick we helped shape the community’s rezoning proposal.

## VICTORIES

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Provided housing assistance to over 1,000 people, advising them about their rights as tenants, halting illegal evictions, and stopping landlord harassment.

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Organized tenant associations covering more than 2,700 units of housing on the North Shore of Staten Island.

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Won new laws to rein in harassment and speed up repairs of asthma-triggering conditions.

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# STOPPING OVERPOLICING AND THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

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Our youth members walk into school greeted by the same police force that harasses them in the streets. MRNY organizes to end the school-to-prison pipeline and advances youth-led campaigns to ensure safety and dignity for young people of color.

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## **ENDING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE**

Our organizing laid the groundwork for new restrictions on suspensions for youngest students in kindergarten through second grade in New York City. MRNY member Christine Rodriguez was appointed by the mayor as the only youth participant of the team that recommended this change.

## **ELEVATING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

Our restorative justice initiative has improved school climate and reduced suspensions by 50% at our community schools, even as suspensions have increased throughout the city. We continue to organize for the city to invest in restorative approaches, which replace punitive, biased discipline with processes that build genuine accountability and trust.



After **Isaiah Quiñones** (known as IQ and pictured above speaking) received an unjust citation for organizing a peaceful school walk-out, MRNY supported IQ in responding and in building organizing and leadership skills. IQ is now helping to lead major campaigns on policing, education and LGBTQ rights. This year, IQ's school awarded IQ its first-ever community leader award, which MRNY presented to IQ at IQ's graduation ceremony. IQ is now at Hunter College, and plans to become a geologist.

## CALLING FOR POLICE JUSTICE

We organize for policy solutions to increase police accountability and transparency at the city and state levels. We publicly highlight incidents of police violence and continue to call for accountability for the murders of Ramarley Graham, Akai Gurley and Eric Garner.

## VICTORIES

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Oversaw implementation of the Student Safety Act, a law that we championed and that requires public release of school discipline data; we are now educating legislators about the new data, which shows persistent inequities in school discipline.

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Organized hundreds of “know your rights” trainings for youth to prepare them for interactions with police.

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Won a second commitment of \$2.4 million by the City Council to restorative justice programs, which replace biased discipline with approaches that foster genuine accountability and improve school climate.

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## SPEAKING OUT IN THE MEDIA

Our youth members wrote dozens of op-eds and spoke out on social media, building our social media following by thousands, and shaping debates on school discipline and policing. With allies, we released reports exposing the terrible toll of these problems on our communities.



# ORGANIZING FOR WORKPLACE JUSTICE

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We organized more fiercely than ever to defend the rights of low-wage workers, which are under attack from corporations and the federal government.

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## RESPONDING TO THE CRACK-DOWN ON IMMIGRANT WORKERS

In 2017, more workers reported abuses such as harassment and firings by employers emboldened by Trump's xenophobic policies. We provide education and legal support to combat this surge of abuse and organize local campaigns to hold these employers accountable. We organize to transform rogue industries, forging paths for pro-worker protections that benefit millions of people.



## LAUNCHING A STATEWIDE WORKERS TABLE

We launched a statewide low-wage workers table to organize to enforce wage theft protections, improve workers compensation and health and safety policies, and eliminate the tip credit for carwash workers and other tipped workers. (The tip credit keeps wages very low.) As a result, the state legislature introduced bills to end the tip credit for car wash workers. We are also working to replicate our innovative model of organizing to clean up the carwash sector.



## ORGANIZING TO STOP FORCED ARBITRATION

With allies, we launched a first-of-its-kind campaign to stop exploitive “forced arbitration” agreements which are used by powerful companies to force workers to sign away their rights. We worked to expose companies that have acted egregiously and to elevate model policies to rein in forced arbitration in states and cities across the US.

## PROTECTING WORKERS’ HEALTH & SAFETY

Our health & safety team provided desperately needed bilingual training to over 3,000 workers and partnered with our car wash campaign to survey car wash workers and work with them to determine what strategies will stop chemical exposure, loss of limbs, and even deaths in the city’s car washes.

## VICTORIES

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Mobilized thousands of low-wage workers to help win a \$15 minimum wage for workers in New York City, Westchester, and Long Island, an historic victory for nearly 1.5 million working families.

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Continued to clean up the exploitative car wash industry with the RWDSU and New York Communities for Change, resulting in over \$3 million in back wages in workers’ pockets, an estimated \$2 per hour raise across the industry (even before the minimum wage hike), and innovative licensing legislation.

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# WORKING FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

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We worked to design, implement and refine model educational programs and then organize for widespread adoption.

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## CREATING MODEL SCHOOLS

We helped lead the national movement for community schools that lift up the voices of students. When, in response, the City of New York launched a community school project, we became the non-profit implementer of the four Bushwick Campus schools, which serve 1,200 students.

At our community schools, we are transforming school climate, building youth leadership, and putting students on the path to success. We coordinate an array of services, from legal services to mental healthcare. We run a youth-led college access program that has resulted in 85% college acceptance rate among graduating seniors. Our restorative justice initiative reduced suspensions by 50% and built trust among members of the school community.

We are supporting the city's efforts to create 215 community schools in New York and engaging public school parents in their children's education, organizing for culturally competent curricula, solutions to overcrowding, and more.



## PROVIDING INNOVATIVE ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

More than ever, conversational English, job skills and citizenship are crucial for navigating life in the US. MRNY classes are fun, supportive and designed to help adults build literacy while engaging critically with the issues affecting our communities.

Last year, 1,300 adults completed our English courses, prepared for their naturalization exams or learned job skills. Over 80 percent of our students who complete their English course advance at least one level. To date, MRNY has helped over 12,000 people become U.S. citizens.

## EDUCATING IMMIGRANT WORKERS FOR CAREERS

Our Bridge to Health Careers Class and our Community Health Worker program build English literacy and job readiness, and prepare students for careers in the fast-growing health sector. Our graduates see their hourly wages increase by an average of 46%, to \$17. Through strong partnerships with employers, MRNY connects graduates to stable careers in healthcare.



**Jorge Idrovo**, a MRNY member from Long Island, came to the US 19 years ago and started his own painting business. When lack of English prevented him from expanding his business, he enrolled in MRNY's ESOL classes. In one year, he advanced three full levels, enabling him to communicate with English speaking customers who live across Suffolk and Nassau counties.



## VICTORIES

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Secured the construction of a new middle school in northwest Queens which will add 600 seats to one of the city's most overcrowded school districts and improve learning environments.

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With partners, organized for the addition of over \$12 million in city funding for adult literacy in 2016-17 and ensured this funding was preserved the following year.

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Took NYC Department of Education Chancellor on a tour of our youth-led college access program which helped spur the city to replicate this highly successful program in 15 additional schools.

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# DEFENDING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

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In a time of vicious attacks on immigrants, MRNY is fighting back, working to make New York a beacon for immigrants around the world.

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## ORGANIZING TO PROTECT IMMIGRANTS

### CITY AND COUNTY LEVELS

We won new policies in Westchester and New York City that protect New Yorkers in those counties from inhumane federal immigration enforcement. We worked to ensure that our cities and counties follow laws that require interpretation and translation services in government offices, and that limit ICE's reach.

### STATE LEVEL

We released the New York State Immigrant Opportunity Agenda, elevating policies that limit state cooperation with ICE, protect workers, and invest in healthcare and education. As a result of our work, Governor Cuomo issued an executive order preventing state agencies from inquiring about New Yorkers' immigration status unless it's absolutely required.

### FEDERAL LEVEL

We brought busloads of community members to Washington and educated our congressional representatives about what our communities need on healthcare, housing and more. We helped lead the campaign for passage of a clean Dream Act to provide a path to citizenship for Dreamers without additional immigration enforcement.



## VICTORIES

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### PROVIDING DESPERATELY NEEDED LEGAL SERVICES

Our immigration legal team worked round the clock to handle a surge of cases and deal with the increased difficulty of resolving these cases under this administration. We continued to handle a very diverse range of cases from affirmative cases like citizenship to deportation defense, and took on potentially transformative cases that will set precedents. We are routinely called on by government agencies and other legal service agencies to provide advice on complicated cases and are helping to lead a major national impact litigation lawsuit to save DACA with our Dreamer members and staff as plaintiffs.

Closed over 2,700 immigration legal cases in the year that ended in June 2017, an increase of 36% over the previous year.

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Helped lead a potentially groundbreaking impact lawsuit to defend DACA with our DACAmented staff and members as plaintiffs.

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Signed up 25,000 people for municipal identification cards (IDNYC) in Brooklyn and Queens, enabling all immigrants to have a usable ID card.

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MRNY's legal team helped **Jonathan, a gay Honduran immigrant** (third from right), win a complicated asylum case and avoid being deported to his home country where he would've faced homophobic persecution. He is now a MRNY member and a leader of our immigrant rights campaigns, including our campaign to hold JPMorgan Chase accountable for financing immigration detention centers.

# ADVANCING TGNCIQ JUSTICE

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This year, MRNY showed New York and the country that transgender, gender non-conforming, intersex and queer (TGNCIQ) people of color are here to stay.

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MRNY's TGNCIQ organizing project has deep ties to the larger Latinx organizing community, which allow us to address the multifaceted challenges facing immigrant, undocumented and TGNCIQ Latinx people in the age of Trump.

We responded rapidly to a series of brutal attacks on trans women, organizing rallies and press conferences to galvanize support, while providing direct assistance to survivors. We held desperately-needed bystander trainings for allies, enabling these allies to respond effectively when they see an incident of hate in progress. We also provided Know Your Rights training for transwomen.

When a local Queens police precinct repeatedly failed to provide translation and interpretation services and treat our members with respect, we took action, filing a formal complaint and advocating with the city to address this abuse.

We also provided direct support to TGNCIQ community members to address workplace discrimination, health access, HIV referrals, and more.



**Elizabeth Chavez** found her way to New York after fleeing transphobic persecution in her native Mexico. In search of community and support, she came to MRNY. Our staff encouraged her to complete our leadership school, where she learned critical organizing skills, and connected her to our Trans Immigrant Project (TrIP), where she became a leader of campaigns to defend trans rights.

## VICTORIES

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With allies, won an executive order that protects the right to use city-owned restrooms that align with one's gender identity.

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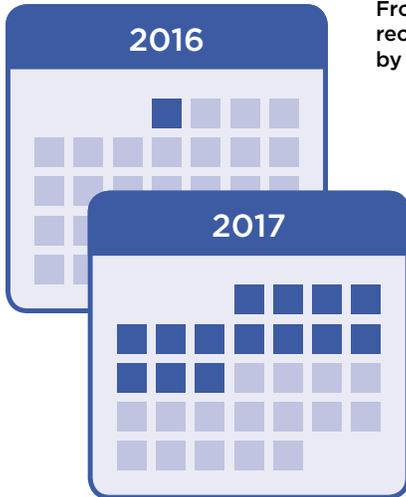
Demanded justice and celebrated our resilience at our 5th Translatina March, 11th Bushwick Pride and Trans Day of Action.

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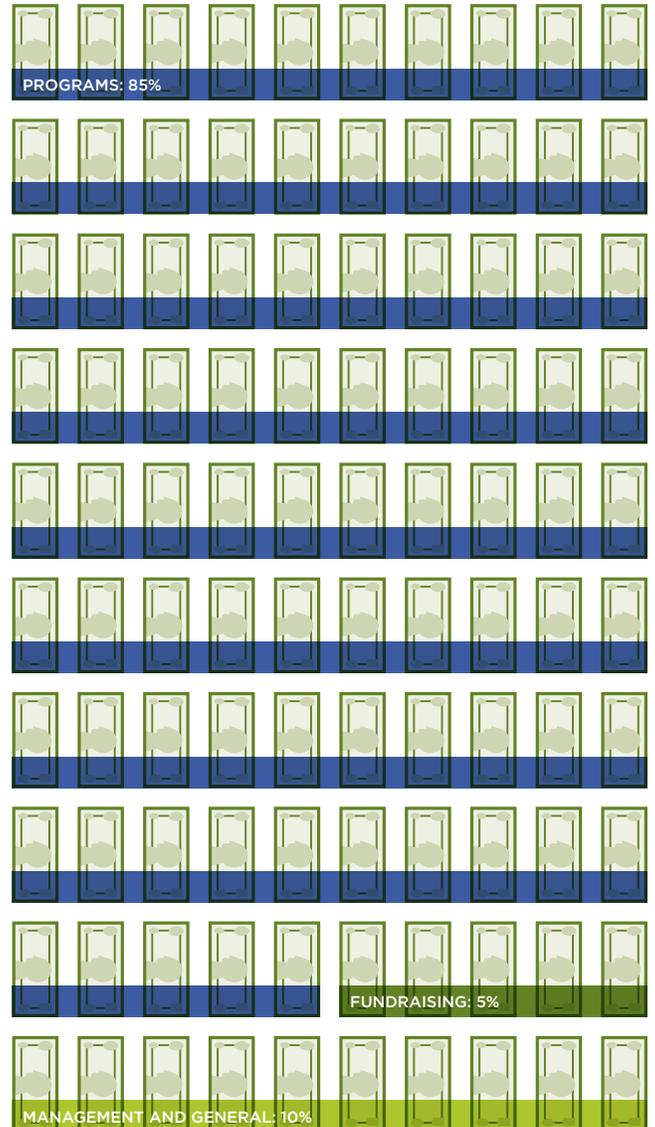
# BY THE NUMBERS

## Recurring Donations

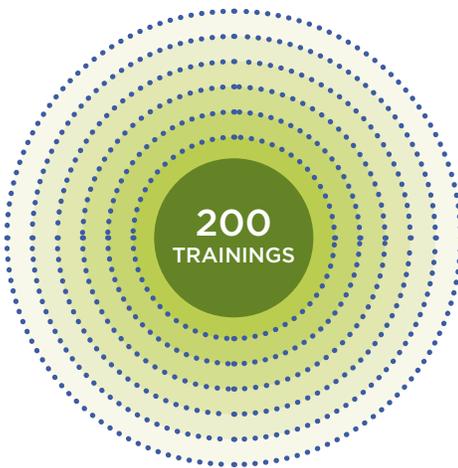


From 2016 to 2017, monthly recurring donors increased by over 14 times.

## Where Your Money Goes



## Know Your Rights Training Workshops



**9,000**  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
TRAINED ON CRITICAL  
SKILLS TO DEFEND  
THEMSELVES IN THE  
ERA OF TRUMP

## Volunteers



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