



IRIS CANTOR-UCLA  
WOMEN'S HEALTH  
CENTER

EDUCATION  
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RESEARCH CENTER

# 2024

## Iris Cantor – UCLA Women's Health Education & Research Center Impact Report

### Funders for Community Engagement Activities

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 **CALIFORNIA  
BREAST CANCER  
RESEARCH PROGRAM**

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# Engaging Diverse Community Partners



## MISSION STATEMENT



The Iris Cantor - UCLA Women's Health Education & Research Center has been nationally recognized since being established in 1995 as a leader in research, community engagement, and advocacy for women's health.

Through a social justice perspective, the Center addresses women's health beyond a genetics and gender lens. The Center aims to reduce health inequities by partnering with cross sector collaborators in reaching women in under resourced communities.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

### Women's Health Student Leadership Internship Program

Mentorship and job shadowing opportunities are offered for students to gain "real-world" experiences and skills to become women's health leaders.

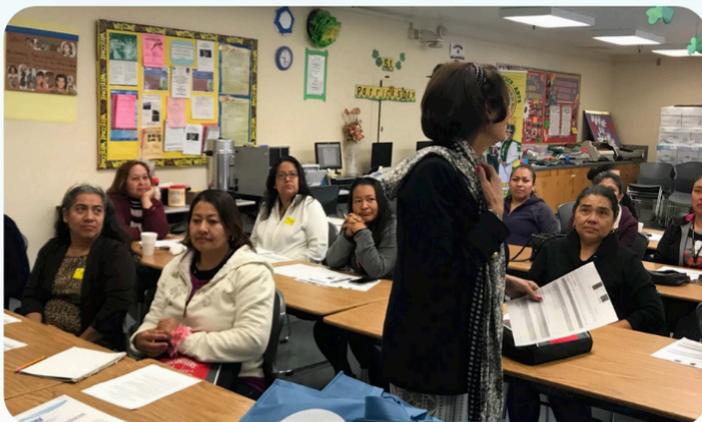
Interns work on a variety of education and community engagement projects, including grant writing, community participatory research, curriculum development, program outreach, and designing educational materials.

Students learn from numerous women's health leaders from community-based and government agencies through program and research collaborations.



### Women's Health & Money

*Women's Health & Money* is a financial capabilities training and coaching program. It is aimed at helping low income women balance their health and financial challenges and choices.



The program moves women towards optimal health, self-sufficiency, and economic security. Programs are held in conjunction with community-based organizations, job training centers, schools, government agencies, community development agencies, and health care organizations. Participants gain the tools to advancing their financial goals and health status.

# Caring for Lesbian, Bisexual & Queer Women's Health



The Los Angeles County Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women's Health Collaborative (LBQWHC) trains health care providers and social service professionals to deliver inclusive and culturally sensitive care to LBQ women. The Center is the lead agency managing the LBQWHC.

The purpose of the allyship trainings are to create long-term systemic changes to the health care and social service systems. Participants learn about the unique health issues facing LBQ women, recognizing implicit biases, and how to provide care in a nurturing and welcoming environment that builds trust and disclosure.

## Women's Health & the Environment

The *Promoting a Healthy Body and Home* program addresses how women can lower their risks of exposure to toxins at home, work, and in the community.

One component is training women to become Community Health Workers to educate friends and family about the impact of environmental toxins on reproductive health and breast cancer.

The Center hosts evidence-based seminars to educate health professionals, environmental justice advocates, community development professionals, women's health leaders, and scientists on current research, policies, and advocacy efforts.



## Map of Community Partners by Program Focus



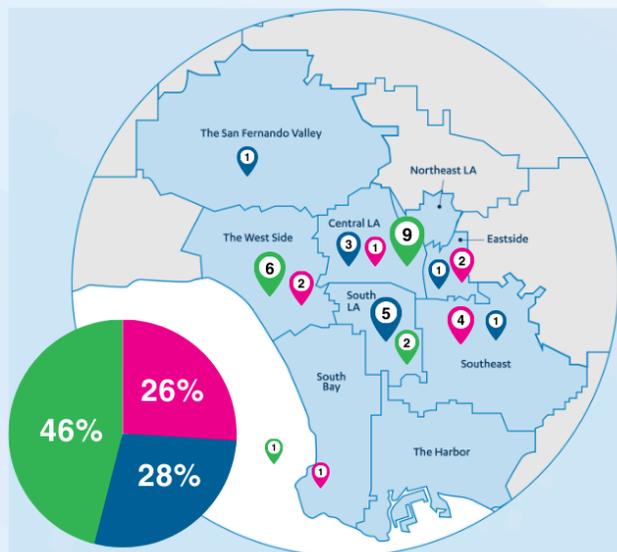
**Women's Health & Money**



**Women's Health & the Environment**



**Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer Women's Health**



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## **Aims of the Women's Health & Money @ Work Program**

The goal of the Women's Health & Money @ Work (WHMW) program is to advance health equity and financial empowerment of women in LA County by providing low-to-moderate (LMI) women with the knowledge, tools, and coaching to balance their health and financial challenges and improve their life choices on and off the job.

## **Target Audience**

The target audience of the program is women earning 25% to 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

## **Impact of Financial Stress on Health**<sup>1\*</sup>

With 75% of Americans reporting finances as their main stressor, it is clear that financial struggles and stress are linked, and stress can affect health. For example, 27% of people reporting high debt stress had ulcers or digestive-tract problems, compared to only 8% of individuals with lower debt stress. Additionally, 29% of those with high debt stress suffered severe anxiety, while only 4% of those with low debt stress did.

## **Unbanked Households**<sup>2\*\*</sup>

Unbanked women lack access to government issued savings or opportunities to build credit, incur risks of theft, fraud and loss, and can become prey to expensive predatory products and services that make it harder for them to achieve financial security. Overall, 9.7% of households in Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Santa Ana region are unbanked and 11% of unbanked individuals report poor health status.

## **Medical Debt**<sup>3\*\*\*</sup>

Medical debt is the #1 source of personal bankruptcy filings in the US. Almost 20% of people with medical bill problems have declared bankruptcy and 45% of Americans say they have difficulty paying an unexpected \$500 medical bill. Additionally, 40% of Americans racked up debt resulting from a medical issue.

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<sup>1\*</sup> 2008 Associated Press – AOL health poll ([http://surveys.ap.org/data/SRBI/AP-AOL%20Health%20Poll%20Topline%20040808\\_FINAL\\_debt%20stress.pdf](http://surveys.ap.org/data/SRBI/AP-AOL%20Health%20Poll%20Topline%20040808_FINAL_debt%20stress.pdf))

<sup>\*</sup> Financial Stress Institute Report (2015)

<sup>2\*\*</sup> FDIC Report ([https://www.fdic.gov/householdsurvey/2012\\_unbankedreport.pdf](https://www.fdic.gov/householdsurvey/2012_unbankedreport.pdf) PEW Health)

<sup>\*\*</sup> Group Report ([http://unitedwayla.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/PEW-Unbanked-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://unitedwayla.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/PEW-Unbanked-Report_FINAL.pdf))

<sup>3\*\*\*</sup> Health and Financial Well-Being: Two Good Things that Go Better Together

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> The Case for Credit Union and Health Care Collaboration © 2018 National Credit Union Foundation

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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Open Access

## Employment and Income Insecurity Experienced by Low-to-Moderate-Income Latinas During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Stephanie Brito-Yates,<sup>1</sup> Luisa Blanco,<sup>2</sup> Grace Vasquez,<sup>1</sup> Jocelyn Sandoval,<sup>1</sup> Julie Friedman,<sup>1,\*</sup> Angel Ramos,<sup>3</sup> Helen Ramos,<sup>3</sup> Christine Tran,<sup>1</sup> Gabrielle A. Pascua,<sup>1</sup> Ryan McKenzie,<sup>1</sup> Sophie Viray,<sup>1</sup> and Janet Pregler<sup>4,5</sup>

### Abstract

**Purpose:** Research has established interconnections between financial strain and health outcomes. The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected low-to-moderate-income (LMI) Latinas. The added stress may have strained the mental and physical health of LMI Latinas. Understanding the impact of the pandemic on financial and health status among Latinas offers important insights into ongoing pandemic recovery efforts to reduce health and financial disparities.

**Methods:** This study employed community-based participatory qualitative and quantitative research methods to examine the experiences of Latinas residing in Los Angeles (LA) County in relation to their health and financial challenges. Focus groups were conducted among LMI Spanish-speaking Latinas, who are residing or employed on the west side of LA County. Study participants were members of Building Skills Partnership, which is a trade association training union workers.

**Results:** Participants identified concerns that pandemic closures, reduction in work hours, unemployment, insurance loss, and childcare loss are attributed to financial hardship. Consequently, participants expressed that their ability to manage stress was compromised. Dealing with uncertain employment status exacerbated the economic challenges Latinas already faced prepandemic and resulted in the prioritization of living expenses and delaying health care. Participants were supportive of the idea of being offered more financial and stress management classes and support group discussions to help them navigate the challenges they face due to financial hardships.

**Conclusion:** The study provides evidence from qualitative data analysis supporting the development of educational and coaching programs aimed at enhancing the mental health and financial well-being of LMI

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## Women's Health & Money Program

Organization Name/Community Program	Month	# of Attendees
Building Skills Partnership/Community Workshops	January	22
Building Skills Partnership/Community Workshops	February	20
Women's Health & Money/Salvation Army	February	13
Women's Health & Money/California Hospital Medical Center	March	9
Women's Health & Money/South Central LAMP	March	54
Women's Health & Money/South Central LAMP	May	30
TOTAL: 148 women		

The curriculum for Women's Health and Money has been updated from Cathay Bank funding. The curriculum reflects updated materials from the FDIC "Money Smart" program to focus on current practices related to credit building, fixing credit, and budgeting. The health education component of the program reflects more emphasis on mindfulness and resiliency to address stress. The curriculum also incorporates our issues of cultural diversity and the impact of family on financial and health decision making.

## Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer Women's Health Programs for Allies and Supporters

Organization Name/Community Program	Month	# of Attendees
PHFE Women, Infants, and Children	February	42
LA Department of Mental Health Suicide Prevention Division	March	36
Every Woman Counts	April	9
Vision y Compromiso	May	11
Lundquist WIC	May	15
Para Los Niños	May	21
Cedars-Sinai OB-GYN Residency	June	19
Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) Webinar	June	37
City of Long Beach	June	6
Maternal Mental Health NOW	June	4
Cedars-Sinai OB-GYN	December	27
TOTAL: 227 women		

## Impact of Environmental Toxins on Breast Cancer: Promotora Training

Promotoras Trained	Community Workshops Held by Promotoras	Community Members Reached by Promotoras:
24	42	239

### Future Plans

Rather than Women’s Health & Money being a stand alone program, our aim is to integrate it into other organizations’ programs and services. Ideally, collaborations with guaranteed income programs is the direction for future exploration. Holding a Women’s Health & Economic Empowerment sponsored by Cathay Bank would be a good conference to emphasize a deliberate, mutually reinforcing, and geographically targeted approach to health improvement and community revitalization intended to effectively reduce health and financial inequities. The conference will serve to advocate for enhancing local economic vitality and regional competitiveness. The attendees will not only be LMI women, but also those who serve LMI women. This conference aims to build common understanding, support, and shared commitment to strategic investments in narrowing the health-wealth gap. Conference aims include:

- Addressing the social determinants that predict the health status and financial security of low-to-moderate-income women
- Promote women’s health and community development best practices and evidence-based research
- Foster cross-sector collaborations and networking between public health and community development leaders

The impact of the conference is beyond the education gained by participants. The expected outcome is to motivate attendees to adopt cutting-edge strategies and practices advocated at the conference into their work. A conference evaluation will be administered to collect data on the attendee’s feedback on the conference and to measure their intentions for integrating what they learned into their work. The evaluation outcomes will provide feedback regarding if the conference achieved its objectives but also to identify the needs and interests of attendees for future conferences.