

# chica project



**FOUNDED:** 2011  
**CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET:** \$1,691,636  
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## Investment Opportunity

Chica project seeks an investment of \$1M over the next three years to support its work towards a world where women, girls, and all people experiencing oppression at the intersection of race, ethnicity, and gender have the opportunity to rise to their full potential. The investment will support chica project's new strategic initiatives as it launches Programming 2.0., creates a sustainable team member model that is values-aligned, builds a strong network of chica project alumni, and helps leverage its collective power and advocacy.

In 2011, Nurys Camargo, sought to establish an organization that focused on providing mentorship specifically to Latina youth and youth of color. With a small group of accomplished women volunteers, she founded chica project and began to realize her vision of empowering young women of color.

Today, chica project provides in-school, afterschool, and community-based programming to girls of color ages 11-18 from under resourced communities in Boston, Lawrence, and Framingham, MA.

Rooted in its culturally affirming, intergenerational, and asset-based framework, chica project supports chicanas\* on a lifelong journey of community and self-discovery to build collective power.

Chica project is led by successful women of color, many of whom are first-generation college graduates. Chica project's team members, fellows, interns, and accomplished women mentors empower participants to understand their history and culture, recognize their strengths, and build the self-efficacy and skills needed to launch themselves into adulthood and on whatever path they choose.

## Three-Year Goals

- Evolve chica project's youth program curriculum and program delivery model to support organizational scale
- Develop a sustainable values-aligned model for chica project team members
- Establish a chica project alumnae network to support mission-related strategic activities
- Develop an organizational perspective and approach to building social, political, and economic power for the chica community and beyond

## Ways to Invest

### FINANCIAL

- \$200K: Expansion into 4 new schools
- \$140K: Immediate hire of 2 FT team members
- \$150K: Increase youth employment opportunities
- \$80K: Nonprofit summit

### IN-KIND

- I pads to support Virtual Village and in-school programming
- SWAG printing
- Free space
- Intergeneration mentors of color
- Board member to support organization's strategy

## Leadership & Governance

Executive Director Zaida Ismatul Oliva has extensive experience with mentor recruitment, curriculum development, and training for academic achievement for youth. Prior to leading chica project, she was the Interim Assistant Director of Dual Enrollment and the Early College Program at Bunker Hill Community College. Chica project's Board of Directors consists of leaders from the nonprofit, financial, and legal sectors who provide fiscal oversight, guidance, and long-term planning for the organization.

## CHICA PROJECT'S MODEL



“

I came from the Dominican Republic to Lawrence, Massachusetts when I was 13 and I didn't have any role models. When I first heard about chica project, I instantly wanted to be part of it because I wished there was a mentor for me when I was 13.

”

**BELKIS FRIAS,**  
Tres GOLPE Podcast and chica  
project mentor



Chica project participants are often from communities with restricted access to good educational resources. The school-based programming is designed for a group of 15-25 students and utilizes a curriculum titled **Chicas in Bloom-Cultivating My Future: A Life, College & Career Readiness**. This curriculum has 3 modules and is considered the “special sauce” that helps build participants’ confidence and skills to be leaders in their lives, schools and communities.

**Power of Me:** This module sets the foundation for the remainder of the program. Conversations center on social and personal identities, privilege and burden of identities, the systems of oppression and intersectionality.

**Power of My Freedom:** Builds on the knowledge and skills learned during **Power of Me**, bridging the personal and the interpersonal, teaching resilience through solidarity. Conversations center on culture, beliefs, and values.

**Power of My Service:** Participants consider how they are connecting to their communities (family, friends, church, school) and how they take up space in this world. Conversations center on networking, as well as on civic and community engagement.

In addition, every participant is connected to a mentor. These are powerful women of color from all walks of life with whom the participants can build trusting, healthy, and long-term relationships while receiving guidance and support. They help youth challenge intersectional oppression, while illuminating pathways to college and meaningful careers.

Through its Peer Leadership Program and its Interns/Fellows Program, the organization supports career readiness and exploration for youth. Chica project provide structured opportunities that allow people to tap into their leadership skills and discover their authentic selves and talents.

“Chica project made me understand a lot about others and myself. Me being someone who has a lot of social anxiety, I am now able to talk to others and for all the new people I met I am so grateful for every one of them.”

Student Participant,  
Margaret Fuller Middle School,  
Framingham

### Key Investors

- AMERICAN STUDENT ASSISTANCE
- THE DEVONSHIRE FOUNDATION
- LIBERTY MUTUAL FOUNDATION OPERATING GRANT
- MA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
- WELLINGTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

### Partners

- CONVERSE
- DANTE LUNA MEDIA GROUP
- ESTOY AQUI LLC
- THE POSSIBLE ZONE

Chica project applies an assets-based model that is the core of women’s advancement, Women of Color leadership, and positive youth development. As an organization that is led by and serves women of color, chica project has incorporated the assertion made by founding board member and former State Representative, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, that “Those closest to the pain, should be closest to the power.”

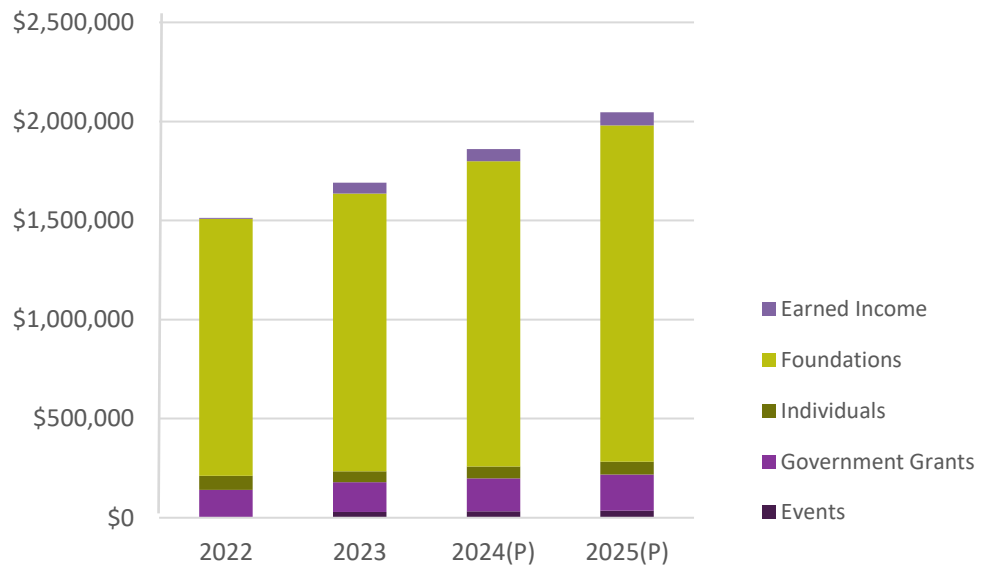
Using feminist-based practices and qualitative research to assess impact, chica project approaches this work by positioning the participants as partners to co-develop programming and facilitate curriculum-based workshops. Chica project ensures its participants are provided pathways to success through interactive workshops, employment, and service learning. By focusing on personal agency, self-efficacy, and instilling hope, the participants gain confidence and a sense of pride in their history and cultures, as well as building social capital.

Chica project envisions a future for the organization where thousands of Women of Color will grow into their power as future business, education, science, nonprofit, and civic leaders. Chica project’s core values: *power & potential, cariño & connection, radical authenticity, and grace & intention* are an integral part of the work to provide its participants with strategies and tools to overcome intersectional oppression and achieve their goals.

### FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Chica project has grown from a volunteer organization in 2011 to 5 FTEs, 6 part-time staff, 8 Fellows, 13 interns, and over 60 mentors in 2022. While many programs reduced attendance during the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for chica project’s innovative work has grown exponentially. Currently, chica project is well-positioned to continue on a trajectory of financial and programmatic sustainability and growth.

### Revenue by Source



### Success Story: Priscila

In 2018, Priscila became a chica. According to her, “being part of chica project opened my awareness to the shared experiences of Latina women and the strength that comes with coming together, speaking up, and supporting one another.”

She thinks the biggest way chica project impacted her professional life was by providing a support system that she could access during college applications, essays, and scholarship applications.

Priscila, recently received an associate’s degree and will pursue her BA/BS in the fall of 2023. She is currently taking a nonprofit education certification because she is inspired by the work of nonprofits.

In Priscila’s own wise words “Follow the journey that makes you happy. Plan for it wisely but accept the changes you didn’t plan for. These often lead to much bigger things.” Chica project helps chicas navigate different paths of life and to trust their personal journeys.



## PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Below is a summary of the key measures chica project tracks to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, capture lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary.

	FY 2023	FY 2024 (P)	FY 2025 (P)
<b>PROGRAM PERFORMANCE</b>			
Chicas served	400	450	500
Alumni engagement	30	45	60
School partnerships	2	3	5
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH/CAPACITY-BUILDING</b>			
Number of staff	5	7	8
Number of board members	6	7	9
Peer leaders/youth employees	30	45	60
Total Revenue	\$1,691,636	\$1,860,799	\$2,046,879

## SOCIAL IMPACT

Chica project centers the voices and power of its community of female identifying (and gender fluid) youth and women of color. The organization implements a mixed methods assessment (interviews, pre-and post-test surveys, testimonials) to measure progress on outcomes and the ability to strengthen holistic well-being, self-esteem, social justice knowledge, academic progress, and willingness to create community change.

Below are indicators that chica project will track to ensure progress and impact of the program

INDICATOR	2022-23 BASELINE	2024-25 PROJECTED OVER 2 YEARS
Participants reporting improved social-emotional skills	88%	95%
Participants completing Chicas in Bloom curriculum	133	300
Number of participants earning college credits	73	125
Number of intergenerational mentors	30	95

**\*chica** - what two women call each other affectionately, in support of solidarity and sisterhood. Chica project’s programs are designed to center, affirm, and empower:

- Black, Latina, and Indigenous identities; Asian, Arab, Pacific Islander, and multiracial women of color are also welcome
- Anyone who identifies as girl/woman, regardless of gender assigned at birth. The organization also welcomes people who identify as femme, non-binary, or gender nonconforming who feel aligned with experiences of girlhood and womanhood
- Youth beginning at 11 years old, young, and adult women
- Those whose sense of identity and belonging has been shaped by immigrant or diaspora experiences