



2018 RECAP

a year of growing in power

Dear Adelante Family,

Last year was full to the brim with activity and growth at Adelante. Our membership, staff, and supporter base all expanded significantly in 2018. We harnessed those resources to **go deeper in our work** combating workplace abuses, fighting deportations, celebrating our cultures, and training the vanguard of 21st-Century civil rights leaders in Birmingham, Alabama.

We were able to bring on full-time organizers to focus on both workers' rights and immigration and policing, as well as essential administrative staff to help insure that our internal structure reflects the change we want to see in the world and **sustains our work over the long term**. We marked our full independence from our former fiscal sponsor and seed funder, the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (Adelante continues to participate in NDLN's national network of immigrant worker centers). We launched a major new project to provide pro bono legal representation in one of the country's worst immigrant jails, among many other exciting developments—keep reading for a full summary of our work in 2018.

As Adelante continues to grow even stronger this year, we are committed to **staying true to our roots**—agile and scrappy, fiercely independent, and always standing on the side of those with the least power and privilege, **facing down hate, discrimination, and criminalization in the heart of the South**.

Looking forward, we will be **celebrating Adelante's 5th Anniversary this fall!** As part of this next stage, we are looking to secure a permanent home for Adelante that can also serve as a vibrant local hub for arts, culture, and activism—stay tuned for more updates in the coming months. Meanwhile, we invite you to **continue to walk alongside us** by [volunteering your time](#) or [making a monthly contribution](#) to Adelante to support this critical work.

With love and solidarity,

Jessica Vosburgh
Executive Director

Marisol Aguilar
Board President & Adelante Member

"One thing I learned about growing up in Birmingham... resistance could be fun!" — Angela Davis

CAMPAIGN & PROGRAM UPDATES

Combating Wage Theft & Defending Workers' Rights

This year we:

- Took on employers who use **immigration-based threats** to intimidate their workers—even **securing a U Visa** (a special visa for crime victims that provides a pathway to citizenship) for one worker who was on the brink of deportation after his employer retaliated against him by reporting him to ICE
- Hired our first dedicated, full-time **Workers' Rights Organizer**
- Stepped up our outreach and education efforts, offering weekly Workers' Rights workshops and intake nights to **educate hundreds of low-wage and immigrant workers** about our rights in the workplace
- Started training workers and advocates to **seek justice by bringing their own cases** in Small Claims Court—often workers' only option due to Alabama's complete lack of worker protections and the state legislature's attacks on local advances like Birmingham's Minimum Wage Ordinance



Adelante member Eduardo celebrating the recovery of his stolen wages from a plumbing job.

Birmingham Sanctuary Campaign



Press Conference outside of Birmingham City Hall with members of Birmingham Trust Coalition

Adelante organized a diverse and powerful coalition of local social justice organizations and allies to keep up public pressure on the city of Birmingham to take a stand against police-ICE collusion.

Together, we held rallies, marches, and press conferences outside City Hall, and brought city residents directly impacted by immigration enforcement to share their stories with Mayor Randall Woodfin.

We ensured that sanctuary was a key issue in the recent Sheriff elections, securing a pledge from Jefferson County's newly-elected sheriff, the first African-American to ever occupy the post, to sign a policy against ICE detainers and detention contracts.

Dismantling Detention—Shut Down Etowah Campaign



Action outside Etowah County Detention Center, protesting Sheriff Entrekin's misappropriation of jail food funds

This year, the Shut Down Etowah campaign shifted strategy from publicly shaming and pressuring the federal administration into terminating ICE's contract with the county to **calling out the sheriff and other local officials for corruption and human rights violations.**

Longtime Sheriff Todd Entrekin lost his bid for reelection and is under investigation after we helped to reveal **his personal pocketing of millions of dollars of food funds earmarked for feeding ICE and county detainees.**

This issue garnered **international media attention** for our work and the abuses happening at the jail, increasing scrutiny on the Etowah County Commission and Sheriff's Office, and fueling support across the political spectrum for **changing state policies** on jail food funds after intense public critique.

The People's Tribunal put Etowah and ICE on trial.

In April we organized the Etowah People's Tribunal, hearing testimony from detained persons and their families, and issuing a searing judgment condemning our nation's immigrant detention system.

The People's Tribunal:

- Offered an alternative to the **failed court system**
- Put the power back in the hands of **people directly impacted** by the issues
- Gave two former Etowah detainees the platform to **shed light on the despicable conditions** they endured

We held three more actions outside of the detention center to protest the pocketing of food funds and the horrific living conditions of those imprisoned there.

This year, we also deepened our collaboration with the Etowah Visitation Project, coordinating monthly trips to Gadsden and **visiting nearly 100 people in detention.**

To learn more visit www.shutdownetowah.org and follow @ShutDownEtowah.



Former Etowah detainees Ray and Sylvester, serving as judges at The People's Tribunal held outside the constitutional black hole they survived

Community Deportation Defense

Defending our community is key as ICE raids and arrests continue to escalate. We've taken on exciting new projects and continue deploying effective strategies such as Know-Your-Rights trainings and rapid raids response. These are some of the organizing strategies we use to keep our people informed and safe:

- **Know-Your-Rights Education and Capacitation**—workshops in community spaces like churches or in members' living rooms to gain an understanding of what to do during interactions with the police or ICE, then share that information with family and friends
- **Accompaniment**—pairing community members with our network of volunteers who can provide moral support, bear witness, and exercise their privilege during court dates and ICE check-ins
- **Raids Response**—connecting with a network of organizations and community leaders to quickly verify information, alert our base of ongoing ICE activity, locate detained people, and support their families
- **Orientation and Navigation**—providing community member with the skills needed to navigate the immigration detention system, such as locating a loved one who has been detained, accessing pro bono or low cost legal representation, and depositing funds for basic necessities and phone calls before a loved one gives up hope



We met Edgar through one of our visits at the Etowah detention center, and learned that he had been detained at Etowah for over a year; he had been granted bond but did not have the money to pay for his freedom. We launched a fundraising campaign that raised enough for his bond and his travel home in only three days! Upon release, our network worked collaboratively to provide him with meals, clothing, and solidarity housing. Volunteers even helped him get a new passport in order to get him home in time to spend the holiday season with his baby daughter.

Edgar, after being released from Etowah, with Gabriel and Jenna—two of the people moving mountains to see him free.

Litigation & Legal Representation

As Adelante's organizing work has grown, we have also been able to expand our legal docket. All of our legal work is grounded in a law and organizing approach—it is driven by our campaigns, our mission, and the needs and experiences of our members. In 2018, we:

- **Sued the Department of Homeland Security** in federal court – Adelante v. DHS – for failing to disclose public records documenting a pattern of civil rights violations at the Etowah County Detention Center (with co-counsel Public Citizen)
- **Launched the Etowah Habeas Project**, providing pro bono representation to individuals seeking release from extremely prolonged detention at Etowah (with significant support and collaboration from the Southern Poverty Law Center)
- Filed suit on behalf of immigrant workers in state and federal court seeking **tens of thousands of dollars of unpaid wages** and **redress for workplace retaliation**
- **Represented Adelante members and local raids victims in immigration court**, seeking release from for-profit immigration jails and relief from deportation

Community Outreach & Education

Adelante's community meeting space has been buzzing with more activities than ever before!

Women's Group, "Nueva Esperanza" ("A New Hope")—weekly group that brings women together to share creative talents with one another, such as traditional embroidery techniques, and host guest speakers giving informative workshops on varied topics.

English Classes by The Literacy Council of Central Alabama—weekly classes for all levels with a quickly growing attendance rate.

Health and Justice Fair—more than 20 organizations and clinics offered free health screenings and other much needed resources to our community in a fun environment, connecting over one hundred underserved people with the care they need.

Asambleas (Workers' Assemblies)—monthly membership meetings continue to be an essential part of our structure, and with the hiring of a Membership Coordinator, attendance has grown immensely, packing up to 60 people in our space to take part in training, convivio and decision-making about the direction of Adelante's work.



Vision screenings at Adelante's Health and Justice Fair, thanks to University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry

Membership

We've had remarkable success connecting with our base this year thanks to expanded capacity and maximizing our outreach efforts. Last year alone, **our membership doubled**, and new members are joining at each Asamblea.

In August, we conducted our first **membership survey** through which we learned more about members' relationship with Adelante, how they came to be involved, in what areas they feel we should grow and improve, and demographic information, creating new strategies and areas of focus in our work.



"I came to Adelante looking for help for my elderly neighbor. When they told me they had a women's group I was interested, because I like learning new things and meeting new people. Since then I participate in the group every week and I like to volunteer in all the other activities that they have in or outside of the Center."

I became an Adelante member and I have come to the Asambleas in which they give a lot of important information.

It makes me feel like a useful person and I have met great people. They also helped me find medical services which I did not have access to without health insurance. I have barely three months as a member but in that short time I've had so many benefits by volunteering and participating in meetings.

I greatly appreciate that you are helping us and guiding us to know our rights and to be able to assert them."

-- María Julia Calderon Orellana, New Adelante Member

Arts & Culture

Our love and reverence for art continues to touch every aspect of our work, from our screen-printed T-shirts to the banners, posters, and puppets we make for each action. Members and allies alike gather regularly in our space to **create art together and share our cultures** with one another.



Learning the sounds of Capoeira, the Afro-Brazilian martial art that incorporates music and dance



Día de los Muertos altar, decorated with garlands of cempasúchitl (the flower of the dead)

Here are some of our favorite ways we have engaged each other with culture and expressed ourselves through art in the past year:

- **Poetry readings** in collaboration with University of Alabama at Birmingham students
- **Kermésses (Community Festivals)** continuing to attract old and new friends with delicious homemade food, music, and children's activities, and also helping to raise funds for Adelante and build our base of grassroots support
- **Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)** was once again a thriving cultural celebration of our history and ancestors, while also remembering unjust deaths at the hands of law enforcement, in detention facilities, and at the border
- **Capoeira Angola classes** offered twice weekly. Capoeira is the Afro-Brazilian martial art that combines elements of dance, acrobatics, and music, developed by African slaves in Brazil at the beginning of the 16th century

Building Regional & National Solidarity

Adelante has continued to partner with other Alabama organizations promoting justice and equity as well as participating in regional and national networks, including Southeast Immigrant Rights Network, National Domestic Workers Alliance, National Day Laborer Organizing Network, Detention Watch Network.

We hosted our friends from the **TPS Journey 4 Justice** as they travelled through Alabama on their quest to inform and advocate for Temporary Protected Status across the country. Together we held a community forum and travelled to Selma to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

On Thanksgiving, our city faced the tragic fatal shooting of Emantic "E.J." Bradford Jr. by a police officer a mere mile from the Adelante



*Marisol and Jessica were honored by the Alabama chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations with the **Champions of Justice Award** at their annual banquet. Thank you to CAIR-Alabama for the recognition and for the excellent work you have accomplished in our state!*

office. As local racial justice, police accountability and **Black Lives Matter** leaders called for transparency around the shooting, and organized numerous protests of another innocent black death at the hands of law enforcement, we joined in support—offering our space to meet and create banners for actions, and putting our bodies on the line in a civil disobedience that shut down a major highway.

OUR TEAM

We are proud to have welcomed **four new staff members** to the Adelante team this year!



Miriam Nava, Membership Coordinator

Miriam is originally from Guatemala and loves working with and for her community. She has lived in Alabama since 2005. A former domestic worker, Miriam is a fierce organizer in her own right. She previously volunteered at La Casita, and then worked for the Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama for several years. “*For me it is a lovely experience to be able to show my community what one day other people taught me. Now I have the great opportunity to work at Adelante and continue to be involved with the community, which is the work I have always loved to do,*” explains Miriam.



Luis Robledo, Workers' Rights Organizer

Luis has brought a new rigor and structure to our workers’ rights defense program, bringing in new workers and supporting the successful resolution of wage theft cases. Born in Colombia, Luis immigrated to the U.S. as a child with his family. He has been in the Birmingham area since 2006, when he began his undergraduate in International Studies at University of Alabama at Birmingham. Luis is interested in empowering the worker community with the tools they need to represent themselves in their struggle for equality and justice.



Victoria Siciliano, Director of Administration and Fundraising

Victoria is strengthening our grassroots fundraising efforts and focusing on our financial security in the years to come. Victoria was born in Montevideo, Uruguay and moved with her family to Birmingham in 1996. Her professional background includes community organizing, communications, and development with a focus and passion for Latin American culture and storytelling of the immigrant experience in the U.S. “*Working at Adelante is an incredible honor,*” says Victoria, “*I deeply admire every member, their powerful individual voices, and their collective fight for liberation.*”



Gabriel Cabán Cubero, Enforcement and Detention Organizer

Gabriel joined our staff full-time in December after working as the Organizing Fellow for the Shut Down Etowah campaign. They are leading our efforts to organize against detention, deportations, and police-ICE collusion in the Birmingham area and at the infamous Etowah County Detention Center.

Their passion for organizing developed into advocacy opposing HB2 (anti-Trans bill in North Carolina), pressuring decision makers to make Wake Forest University a Sanctuary Campus for undocumented students, and educating peers in organizing and power building. Continuing to push for justice, they are incredibly excited to be directly addressing immigration detention and mass incarceration with this amazing group of people.

ADELANTE IN THE NEWS

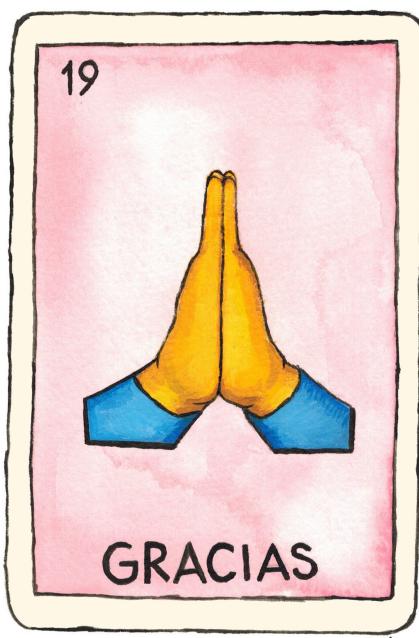
These are just a few of the media pieces from 2018 featuring Adelante's work and our members:

- AL.com: "[Communities of color encourage voting following court decision to uphold travel ban,](#)" June 27, 2018
- Alabama Today: "[16 coalition groups call on Randall Woodfin to take action on ‘trust and public safety’ order,](#)" July 31, 2018
- The Guardian: "[Etowah: The Ice detention center with the goal to ‘make your life miserable,’](#)" December 2, 2018
- New York Post: "[Alabama sheriff pocketed \\$1.5M from illegal immigrant fund: report,](#)" December 31, 2018

FUNDING & SUSTAINABILITY

2018 has marked the achievement of our goal of transitioning to full financial independence from the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, which provided seed funding and technical support since our founding in 2014. In order to secure our future we have been diversifying our funding sources and growing our pool of individual contributors and monthly sustainers. In December, we launched a campaign to gain recurring donors. In only one week we more than **quadrupled our base of recurring monthly donors!** This is a key source of support that allows us to maintain our autonomy and fierce independence, and to plan for the future.

We thank the following foundations and organizations for their support in 2018: Abelard Foundation – East, Ben & Jerry’s Foundation, Blue Oak Foundation, Detention Watch Network, Fringe Foundation, Hill-Snowdon Foundation, Peace Development Fund, Peggy Browning Fund, Southern Poverty Law Center.



Como Tú - Roque Dalton

Yo, como tú,
amo el amor, la vida, el dulce encanto
de las cosas, el paisaje
celeste de los días de enero.

También mi sangre bulle
y río por los ojos
que han conocido el brote de las lágrimas.

Creo que el mundo es bello,
que la poesía es como el pan, de todos.

Y que mis venas no terminan en mí
sino en la sangre unánime
de los que luchan por la vida,
el amor,
las cosas,
el paisaje y el pan,
la poesía de todos.

ABOUT ADELANTE

Our Mission & Vision

Adelante unites low-wage and immigrant workers and their families in the Birmingham area to defend our rights, promote our dignity, and pursue justice for all.

We envision a multiracial worker-led movement for justice, dignity and human rights that lifts up the voices of the most vulnerable and excluded workers, and welcomes individuals of all races, ethnicities, genders, ages, sexualities, beliefs, and immigration statuses. We strive to move our communities forward (*adelante*) to a world where immigrants, people of color, and all working-class families are respected and safe at work, in the streets, and where they live.

Board of Directors



Marisol Aguilar*, President

Yazmín Contreras, Treasurer

Cesar Mata*

Remedios Perez*

Karla Pesquera* (not pictured)

Jean Hernandez, Secretary

Helen Rivas*

Benjamín Tzompaxtle Itehua*, Vice President

*Adelante member

Adelante Board members, staff, and family at the 2018 Board and Staff Retreat in Chelsea, Alabama.

Contact Us

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