About Us

West Marin Community Services (WMCS) is the central hub for a diverse range of services that support our neighbors in West Marin – including Tomales, Bolinas, Stinson Beach, and San Geronimo Valley – who are struggling to make ends meet. We address needs not addressed by other organizations or government programs, and work to bring our community closer together.

WMCS lends a hand to our most vulnerable residents and those going through tough challenges in their lives. We bring the community together to bridge cultural divides and partner with agencies across the county so that no one falls through the cracks.

Our Mission

The purpose of West Marin Community Services is to support programs and services that ensure the well-being of individuals and families in West Marin.

Self-sufficiency, human dignity, and social justice are the values that guide our efforts.

Accomplishments

By design and in response to ever-changing circumstances, WMCS is a dynamic organization. For more than 40 years, we have responded to crisis with vital support taking many forms—supplying food to the hungry, clothing and household items to dislocated families, referrals for county, state or federal support services, and sponsorship of other local non-profits providing important services to our shared community. With your support, we will continue to meet the needs of the future.

- Last fiscal year, we provided approximately 8,900 units of service, including emergency assistance, food pantry visits, case management, referrals, childcare scholarships and community programs.
- We built on our work from 2018 to develop a Community Collective Vision. With the help of a facilitation team from On the Verge, our multi-racial leadership cohort began to formally develop a “Collective Vision” for bridging divides in the West Marin community.
- We collaborated with Parent Services Project on a series of eight “Leaders for Change” (L4C) trainings.
- We worked with Legal Aid of Marin to provide trainings and legal assistance to farm workers in our area.
- We partnered with Heart Of Compassion Sangha Group to provide sleeping bags, underwear, warm meals, coffee and tea to the homeless in our community. We are proud of these major events and the many other community engagement efforts we led this year.
- In 2018 – 19, WMCS underwent many changes including staff transitions and an unexpected increase in expenses due to office expansion. Even with those challenges, we were able to deliver all of our programs and remain financially healthy.
- Over the last three years, our budget has grown an average of 10.3% per year—a testament to the strength of our donor base and outreach work. For the first time we received multiple-year funding which has enabled us to: Plan long-term programs upon which our community can rely; expansion of our efforts to a broader audience; and development of targeted new programs aimed at strengthening cohesiveness in our diverse community.
- Community support has allowed us to retain quality, bilingual, and culturally diverse staff and to devote more staff time to our programs and services for our clients. Our staff is imperative in setting a welcoming tone, building trust within our community, and multiplying our impact beyond making sure our clients have enough to eat.
Collaboration is key to our success.

We know that we can do more collectively than we can alone. This year, we deepened our commitment to collaboration to maximize our impact in many areas.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the many organizations that help us to reach new communities and expand the services we can offer to West Marin.

Locally we join forces with

West Marin Senior Services, Health and Human Services, Coastal Health Alliance, Shoreline Unified School District, West Marin Standing Together, The Dance Palace Community and Cultural Center, Community Land Trust Association of West Marin (CLAM), Point Reyes Public Library, San Geronimo Valley Community Center, KWMR, and other groups for referrals and service delivery.

At the county level we partner with

Health and Human Services, Canal Alliance, Canal Welcome Center, Parent Project Services, Community Action Marin (CAM), California Highway Patrol, Marin Fire Department, San Francisco and Marin Food Banks

Drawing on the past, we are inspired for the future.

In August, 2019 we hosted one of our most historic events: “West Marin, Si, Se Puede,” an evening with Delores Huerta. This event was one of the largest in our history, and brought together approximately 600 community members with the support of restaurants and organizations from across West Marin. Ms. Huerta advocated for greater community representation and particularly representation of the Latinx community in the 2020 census. As we move into the 2020, we will be directing focused energy towards this crucial effort, and look forward to new projects and more inclusive community events, including our inaugural “Community Giving Thanks” potluck dinner.

WMCS would not be able to operate without the generous support of our community. WMCS received donations from more than 240 individuals almost 3,000 hours of service from 120 volunteers over the past year. Your donations make our work possible and we look forward to continued expansion of our reach in the coming year.

We are deeply grateful for the assistance from supporters and neighbors who have helped WMCS function for the last 40 years. We encourage open and honest communication, and welcome your ideas and input as we continue to evolve to meet the dynamic needs of West Marin.
In July of 2018, Socorro Romo transitioned into the role of Executive Director of WMCS after 11 years at the organization. She has played many roles at WMCS and comes to the job with deep ties to the West Marin community and a powerful vision for the role WMCS can play here. Some of the goals Ms. Romo sees for her work with West Marin include increasing county wide collaboration, supporting Latinx and Anglo youth, and continuing to build bridges in the Latinx community. Since she became Executive Director, Ms. Romo has already led many efforts towards these goals, including launching a new bi-racial working group called Collective Vision, expanding the range of programming for WMCS’s Latinx engagement program (Abriendo Caminos), and bringing Dolores Huerta to West Marin for one of the largest events to bring our Latinx and Anglo communities together.
Our Programs

For almost 40 years, WMCS has provided supportive care and emergency funds to people who have unmet needs or are in crisis and are unable to find assistance through any other means. We provide direct services and partner with county and non-profit organizations so that all available resources can be brought to bear. In 2018-2019 we provided over 8,900 units of direct service to families and individuals, as well as referrals and other assistance through our Core Programs, Community Programs, Community Engagement, Workshops and Events.

Food Pantry

No one in our community should have to go hungry, and the WMCS Food Pantry is here to make sure everyone has food on the table. With support from the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank, Extrafood.org, and community donations, WMCS operates the only food pantry in West Marin that is open five days a week.

This year we also started a collaboration with a local Buddhist Sangha group to start a Winter Homeless Warm Meal and Morning Coffee Program, which reached 25 people. We plan to continue and grow this program in 2019-2020. We purchased two new refrigerators which allows us to store food longer and reduce waste, and we will continue to expand our reach to provide fresh food to anyone in our community who needs it.

180,000
Pounds of food distributed in the last fiscal year

9,500
Individual food pantry visits

200
Individuals depend on visiting the food pantry weekly
Emergency Assistance & Case Management

Our Emergency Assistance Fund and Case Management provide crucial support for low-income residents and those experiencing temporary hardships. We offer fast, confidential support for a range of needs, including heat, rent assistance, car and home repairs, medical costs, and other miscellaneous issues.

Like the rest of the Bay Area, affordable housing continues to be the most significant need in West Marin. We have seen increased pressure on our safety net services as residents pay more for housing and low-income residents struggle to make ends meet. We are also seeing increases in unjustified evictions and residents seeking legal assistance to remain in their homes. Over the last year, we have also seen increased requests for assistance with car repairs, and other basic needs from our low income residents. This year, we provided $16,000 in funding for emergency car repair, rental assistance, medical expenses, and other urgent assistance. Our average disbursement was $500 per individual for car repair and $1,000 per individual for rent assistance. Many of our requests for car repairs come from individuals who have lost their homes and are using their car as primary shelter as well as transportation, so funding for these repairs are also crucial to keep residence off the streets. Most of our requests for assistance come from residents who are facing homelessness due to a job loss, medical expenses, or other financial hardship combined with the rent increases and declining rental availability in the area.

“Rental assistance helped us in getting ahead. My husband was unemployed for about a month. We felt that we were falling behind. We now know that we will be able to pay the rent next month. It gives us peace of mind because we know that our three-year-old, and eighteen-month-old babies will have a roof over their heads.”
— Point Reyes mother of four

Thrift Store

The West Marin Community Thrift Store, a local institution since 1987, offers shoppers and community members with low-cost clothing and household items. It is also a mechanism for recycling usable, quality merchandise and provides employment with benefits to local residents. We distribute 100% of the profits from the Thrift Store back into the community through our programs. Each year, WMCS provides financial support for child care through four local non-profit preschools, and three after-school and summer programs from Tomales to Stinson Beach. We also return profits from the Thrift Store to the community through emergency assistance funding, pay for staff and other community efforts.

“Since its inception, The Thrift Store has provided over $775,000 to the community in individual and non-profit grants! This year we provided $25,000 grants to local pre-schools and summer programs; $16,00 in emergency assistance funding; and gave a full day of profits ($1,500) to support victims of the Camp Fire in Butte County.

“The Thrift Store has fair, affordable prices, provides a chance to mingle with friends and I know that all dollars spent will go to the needy in our community.”
— Gina Kutchins, volunteer
Waterdogs Swim Classes were established in the early 1940s, and these Red Cross-certified classes are held every summer to ensure our kids are safe in Tomales Bay. Operated at Shell Beach in Inverness, this year, 61 children participated in Waterdogs classes. We were able to raise funds to provide full scholarships to 19 low income students, in part through the funds raised at the Inverness Fair with our annual Tostada Booth and community contributions. Special thanks to the Marin Fire department for providing life guards for our program this year and ensuring that we are able to maintain this vital program for our whole community.

Community Giving Thanks Dinner

For 34 years, West Marin had established a tradition of celebrating a Thanksgiving meal together as a community. Over time, the event took on a vibrant life of its own and grew exponentially. In 2018, we realized we needed to take a break to rethink and redesign the dinner to match our mission statement. Our board and staff met with other community organizations to reevaluate the event and agreed that community input was needed to help us reshape future annual community dinners. The results of this planning were a revision of the tradition in 2019 on a new date and with a new name. Community Giving Thanks is a potluck dinner for West Marin locals, near the beginning of the traditional holiday season. We expect to continue this local community-centered dinner for years to come.

Holiday Gift Program

Each year, the Holiday Gift Program delivers food and gifts to low-income families in partnership with Point Reyes Books, the California Highway Patrol, the Dance Palace Community Center, West Marin Lions Club, Shoreline Unified School District, Point Reyes Public Library, and Bolinas Community Center. This year, we served 95 families through our Holiday Gift Program, including 265 children and teens who received gifts. We also distributed 130 boxes of food (approximately 2,500 lbs of food, not including chicken/turkeys and pies) for in-need families to have their own holiday meals.
Tax Prep Saturday

Our Tax Prep Saturday program provides assistance to low-income taxpayers in our community. With the support of tax preparers from AARP and space donated by the Dance Palace Community Center, we are able to offer this crucial service and help more residents to receive tax refunds. This year, we served 31 community members through this program and helped our clients qualify for tax refunds amounting to $34,000, all together.

Fiscal Sponsorship & Local Collaborations

WMCS offers Fiscal Sponsorship Services to provide administrative and fiscal agent support for community programs that fall within our mission. We also support and collaborate with local organizations on specific programs and events that serve the community. We are the non-profit umbrella that accepts grants and tax-deductible donations, files income tax and contractor returns, pays sales tax, and provides other fiscal support. This service is crucial for small organizations that serve the community, such as the Tomales Bay Youth center, which is operated by the Lions Club of West Marin with fiscal sponsorship from WMCS. Under our sponsorship, the center can accept grants and donations, and we employ the director, offering the same salary rate and benefits as our regular staff. We also support the Point Reyes Farmers Market and many other community programs and events.
Among our many functions, WMCS increasingly serves as a bridge between the immigrant population and the larger West Marin community. We partner with agencies in the West Marin Collaborative to focus on Latinx leadership and engagement. One program, Abriendo Caminos (Finding our Path), builds on decades of work to move us toward the goal of being one community.

Abriendo Caminos

WMCS sponsors Abriendo Caminos in partnership with other West Marin agencies and organizations. This program engages and empowers, while addressing cultural divides and working toward the goal of being one community. Abriendo Caminos was created after over 35 years of work connecting with members of the local Latinx community – who are often isolated on rural ranches – to the greater West Marin community. Since its inception, Abriendo Caminos has expanded to include Point Reyes, Tomales, Bolinas, and the San Geronimo Valley with a mission to build bridges, collaboration, and respect on all sides of our local communities. We have identified key issues of labor rights, housing, education, cultural events, and immigration.

During the last fiscal year we continued to host events and workshops in these areas and worked to make all of our services accessible to our whole community.

A major issue facing many of our safety net clients is the fear of immigration enforcement which results in further isolation. In an effort to ensure that our clients feel safe accessing our services, this year we expanded our services in several ways. We extended Abriendo Caminos to the ranching community by hosting casual barbeques to build trust and offer information. West Marin Immigration Rapid Response Team has also continued to actively engage with the immigrant population and help make sure that our clients do not feel targeted in our community.
Collective Vision

Last year, we launched a new program, called Collective Vision, which brought together nine leaders from across our community. Building on established groundwork, this year we worked towards creating a true “collective vision” and ways to make that vision a reality. After five years of leadership training with the Latinx community, we broadened the scope of Abriendo Caminos to bring us together as one community through multicultural training with the goal of forging pathways that promote equity and mutual respect.

For ten months, a group of nine community leaders dug deep to develop a shared vision, identify problems and solutions, and bring the results to the broader community. The group process gave us a deeper understanding of cultures barriers. We identified unseen issues and their impact on our community and began to shape public conversations to voice personal perspectives, concerns, and expectations.

We concluded these gatherings with a night of storytelling from each of the nine participants to show the “Seen and Unseen” stories that create the foundation of our communities. We want to encourage community leaders to work more effectively to build a community where all people belong. Two experienced coaches, including one bilingual coach from On the Verge led us in this process. As we continue to develop and realize our collective vision, we are looking forward to engaging the broader community more deeply on key topics that affect us all. We are planning four community conversations for the upcoming year, on topics including racial disparities and equity in our community.

Leaders For Change

We are especially proud of our collaboration with Parent Services Project (PSP) and Papermill Creek Children’s Corner who, along with Abriendo Caminos, brought Leaders For Change (L4C), a vital training, to our school-age parents to increase Latinx parents’ participation at schools.

Local Immigrant Support Efforts

Working with the heartfelt support of our whole community including West Marin Standing Together Immigration Rapid Response Team, Canal Alliance, and others, we helped to develop an ICE Rapid Response Team last year. This year, we expanded this work and sponsored “Know Your Rights” trainings, offered meetings with immigration attorneys, and support for members of our community coping with stress and fear.

Temas de Imigración Radio Show

WMCS, Canal Alliance and KWMR radio, collaborate on a monthly radio show, Temas de Imigración, that keeps the Immigrant community informed of their rights and any changes to Immigration law.

“The ‘Seen and Unseen’ storytelling was very profound; it changed my life forever.”
— Local resident Chris Giacomini
Workshops & Events: Highlights

We engaged with over 500 community members through a number of events focused on education, housing, labor rights and cultural events. We continued to offer workshops on self empowerment including a Self Confidence and Inner Strength workshop, and Zona de Ser y No Ser (Zone of Being or Not Being). We continued to work with the Latino Advisory Committee of CLAM to provide workshops on housing and two community gatherings per year to build connections and strengthen relationships between CLAM and the Latinx community. We formed a new partnership with Natura Institute for Medicine and Ecology to create a Latinx Women’s Wellness Circle, which meets four times per year and brings together women to address health issues and to experience the medicine of connecting with each other and nature.

We also hosted two events to bring the community together through a Bridging Communities potluck called La Mesa de las Abuelas (The Table of our Grandmothers), and several screenings of films, including Dolores, and Por Que Venimos (Why We Come). We participated in National Night Out, hosted by the Marin County Sheriff’s office, to increase trust between vulnerable community members, the Latinx community, and our local law enforcement. We hosted our famous salsa tasting contest at West Marin’s 70th Western Weekend to encourage Latinx participation at this annual community event. We also celebrated Mexican Independence Day and fiscally sponsored our 28th annual Dia De Los Muertos event in downtown Point Reyes Station, which featured Aztec dancers, the local children’s choir, and many other festivities for the community.
“West Marin, Si Se Puede!”
An Evening with Dolores Huerta

One of the most highly anticipated and significant community events this year was an evening with civil rights leader Dolores Huerta, which was hosted at West Marin School on August 30th. Ms. Huerta spoke to about 520 students during two school assemblies (she spoke to elementary students in the morning, then 6th through 12th graders in the afternoon). Local schools bussed students from Shoreline Unified School District and Bolinas School District for the assemblies. Later in the evening, approximately 600 members of the community came out to participate in a historic celebration and meeting. We had financial support and donations of food and drinks from Redwood Credit Union, West Marin Fund, Marin Community Foundation, Inverness Gardening Services, KWNR Radio Station, Point Reyes Presbyterian Church, Palace Market, Straus Family Creamery, Station House, Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese, Star Route Farms, Bovine Bakery, Drakes Bay Oyster Company, Stellina, and many private donors. We are very grateful to the many local businesses, organizations and community members who helped make this event a truly community-wide, cross-cultural celebration.

Dolores’s presence and her inspiring message made a remarkable imprint in our community. After the event, participants described the night as “fantastic”, “memorable”, “glorious”, “unbelievable”, “unique”, and “transformative”! These words and the success of the event are a testament to the collective work of this community—educators, businesses, donors, volunteers, and non-profit organizations, and every person who made this event happen.

WMCS hopes to follow in Ms. Huerta’s legacy and continue working to make sure that everyone’s rights are met, in West Marin, and beyond. We also hope that our whole community will follow her call to expand our collaboration as we work on the census, immigration, housing and equity issues. West Marin Si Se Puede! is an example of what we can accomplish when working together in creating an inclusive, welcoming environment.
WMCS relies on the support and services of many organizations across West Marin to reach our broad and diverse community and meet the varied needs of our clients. While these programmatic areas have already been covered in more depth in this report, we list them here again, to highlight the importance of our partners and of partnerships in general. We couldn’t do what we do without this teamwork.

Collaboration

Housing & Rental Assistance

One important collaboration is with Community Action Marin (CAM). We connect our in-need clients with assistance programs through our case management system and refer homeless clients to the CAM CARE Team. We also work with CAM to assist with applications for HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) and Season of Sharing for rental assistance. We collaborate with Community Land Trust Association of West Marin (CLAM) to educate residents about housing issues and opportunities in the area. We also support the Latino Advisory Group, which advises CLAM on housing issues within the Latinx community and ways to address these issues.

Food Access & Direct Service Delivery

We also work with San Francisco Food Bank and Extra Food to ensure that everyone in West Marin has food on the table. Locally we joined forces with West Marin Senior Services, Health and Human Services, Coastal Health Alliance, Shoreline Unified School District, West Marin Standing Together, The Dance Palace Community and Cultural Center, and other groups for referrals and service delivery. We were active in the West Marin Collaborative, a group of nonprofits and community organizations that meets monthly to address emerging needs in the community. This year we collaborated with a local Buddhist Sangha group to start a Winter Homeless Warm Meal and Morning Coffee Program.

Immigration & Worker Support Services

We collaborate with many different groups to provide various forms of support to workers and immigrants in our area. We collaborate with the Canal Welcome Center and maintain constant communication to report any ICE activity in the San Rafael area and keep in contact with the rapid response teams in our communities. WMCS also works with the Canal Alliance and KWMR radio to collaborate on a monthly radio show, “Temas de Imigración,” which keeps the Immigrant community informed of their rights and any changes to Immigration law. We also collaborated with Legal Aid of Marin to provide legal assistance and trainings on workers rights for farm workers in Marin County.

Community Engagement

We are especially proud of our collaboration with Parent Services Project (PSP) and Papermill Creek Children’s Corner who, along with Abriendo Caminos, brought Leaders For Change (L4C), a vital training, to our school-age parents to increase Latinx parents’ participation at schools. We collaborated with On The Verge to facilitate our Collective Vision program and worked with the Dolores Huerta Foundation to bring Ms. Huerta to West Marin. We continue our partnership with the Marin County Sheriff’s office (National Night Out) to increase trust between the Latinx community and our local law enforcement. We also worked with Natura Institute for Medicine and Ecology to create a Latinx Women’s Wellness Circle. We also hosted a series of events on Women’s Empowerment, including a workshop on Conflict Remedy workshops (Conflict and Communication 101 and Effective Conversations with Difficult People).
Looking Ahead

Moving in to this new year, we are committed to building upon successful efforts of the past year. We look forward to growing our cross-cultural community engagement and furthering our “Collective Vision.” We will continue to lead our flagship programs and involvement in many community events. We are freshly energized to empower Latinx leadership through our Abriendo Caminos programs, and to strengthen and build new bridges throughout our diverse community including the 2020 West Marin Giving Thanks potluck dinner and myriad other events.

We are also looking forward to growing in new directions! We strive for representation for every individual, from disabled and homebound seniors, Latinx workers living on isolated farms and ranches, to homeless and low-income residents living in unconventional housing.

The 2010 Census was unprecedented in its failure to represent several vulnerable groups within our community. For example, reports from 2010 indicate there were no children under age five, or Latinx families living in Tomales.

Inaccurate results of census under-reporting have far-reaching consequences which affect funding of our schools, medical facilities, and many other areas for years to come. Everyone deserves representation and we are mobilizing our resources to support this goal. In order to encourage an improvement in accuracy in the 2020 Census, WMCS will engage in multiple efforts to ensure this injustice does not repeat itself. One measure is a staff expansion. We’ve hired a trusted, local community organizer to leverage relationships with clients and families by engaging with all vulnerable residents – in their neighborhoods, through local businesses and faith-based organizations. This is a broad task and requires engagement across seven unincorporated “Hard-to-Count Communities” including Point Reyes Station, Bolinas, Tomales, and Inverness.

As we look to the longer term future, we will maintain financial health and strengthen our financial sustainability. We plan to be a reliable source of community assistance in the coming years, despite uncertainty in the world around us. We will be here to continue supporting our community. We are here for “Every One. All ways.”

Thank You, Generous Supporters

Thanks to your support, we had a very productive year and have much to look forward to in the coming year. We would like to extend our thanks to all of the many community members who make this work possible, by donating your time, energy, and other resources to WMCS. We would also like to extend special thanks to the following organizations for helping us to make many of our goals a reality this year:

- Marin Community Foundation for a multiple year grant of $100,000 per year. This grant enabled us to provide approximately 50% of our direct service units in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.
- West Marin Fund for a $9,000 grant to support Women and Girls empowerment
- The Nancy H. and James Kelso Fund of the Marin Community Foundation for a generous donation $100,000
- An anonymous donor for $40,000 contribution.
- Marin Fire Department for providing lifeguards for our Waterdogs program this year and helping us continue this vital service for children in West Marin.
- Everyone who contributed to the Dolores Huerta Foundation/WMCS Fundraiser Event. We raised $31,500 after expenses.

Thank you to the many other community members who have supported us over the years! We couldn’t do it without you!

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## Financial Report

### FY 2018-2019

#### Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>$259,601</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thrift Store, Event Library, etc.</td>
<td>$315,511</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>$ 162,851</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising, fiscal sponsorship fees</td>
<td>$ 48,651</td>
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**Total Income** $768,615

#### Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs (excluding personnel)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program administration, fundraising, sponsorships, etc</td>
<td>$159,925</td>
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<td>Rent and facilities</td>
<td>$ 61,180</td>
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**Total Expenses** $618,675

**Net Total Income** $175,916

- $65,000 program deferred/sustainability
- $15,000 for 2019-2020 program expansion
- $20,000 for technology, Food Pantry, and Events Library equipment update