

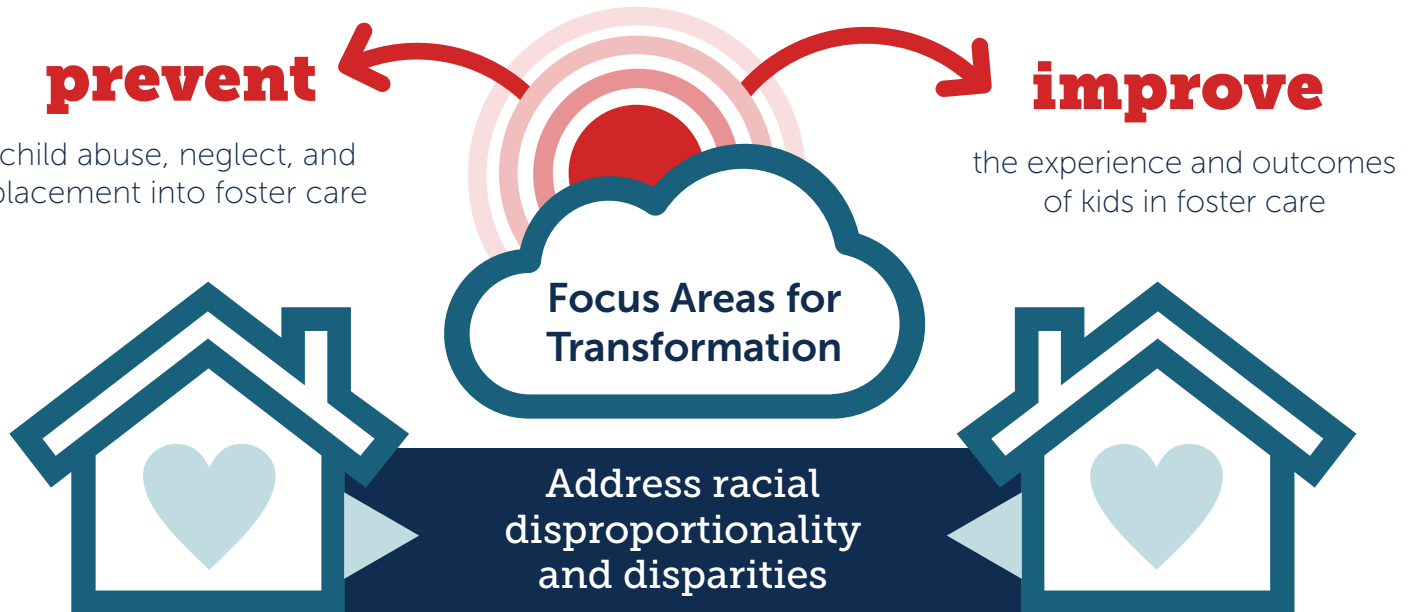
# FOSTER AMERICA



**2020 Annual Report**

# Our Mission

Foster America is a non-profit organization that aims to improve the lives of America's most vulnerable children: those in foster care or at risk of entering the system. We are developing a pipeline of leaders and innovators and building a movement to transform the child welfare system.



Foster America aims to transform child welfare by **preventing** family separation and **improving** foster care.

**4**

years

**17**

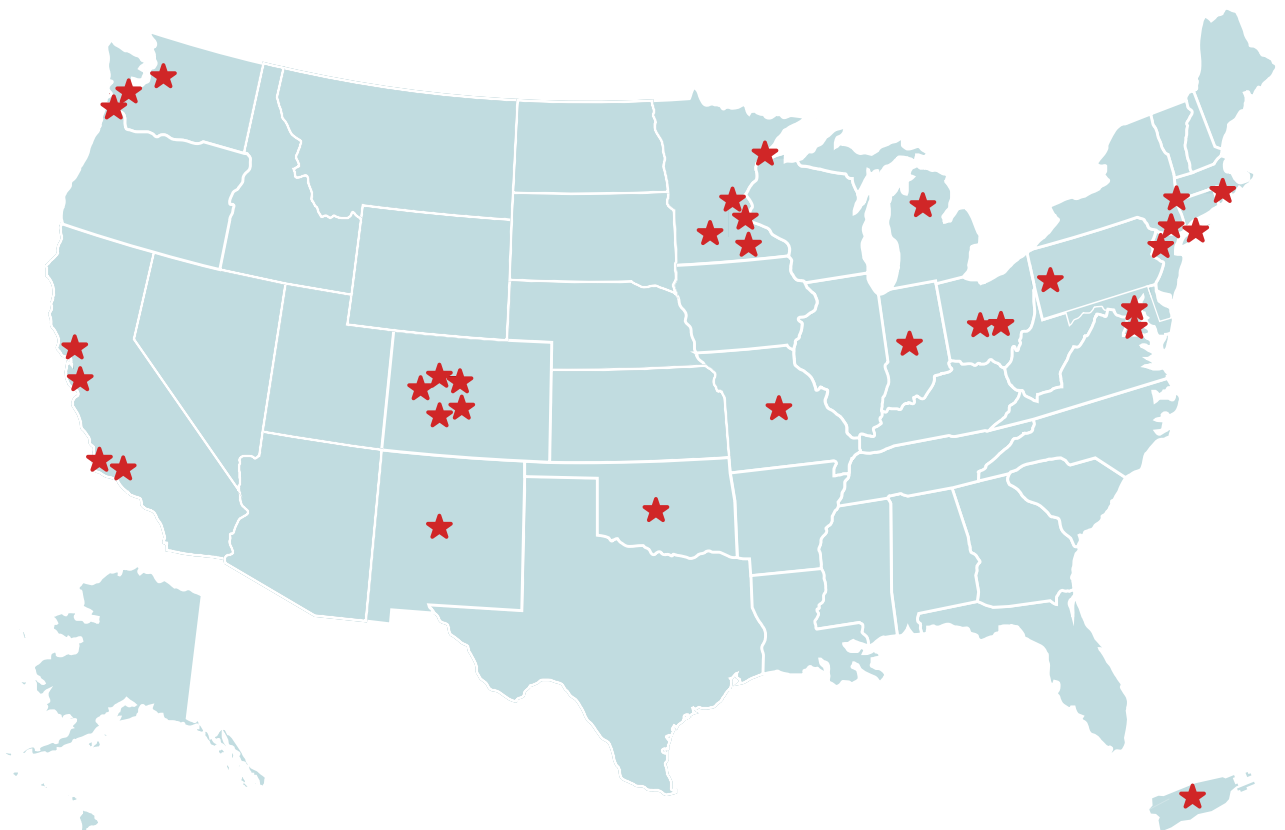
states/territories

**33**

agencies

**55**

fellows



# Letters from Leadership



Dear Friends,

Today, we share this first official annual report with you, having reached a critical milestone – becoming a fiscally independent 501(c)(3) organization. Just days after reaching this goal on March 1, 2020, our world changed drastically. Across the country, the COVID-19 pandemic placed immediate,

immense strain on our lives and our systems. Families and children continue to experience great stress and loss – of loved ones, jobs, educational opportunities, and the networks of support that connected us to our communities.

Amidst the global pandemic, our team and fellows pivoted to working remotely, taking on new tasks, and strategizing how to best support families as most of our lives moved to virtual spaces. We graduated our third cohort of fellows, our largest to date. Our fourth and fifth cohorts and our alumni remain in the field, in leadership roles across the country. We are more certain than ever that our invitation to innovators to help create a more just child welfare system is contributing to real, lasting change.

This year also brought us time and again to face the terrible realities of intersecting systems of oppression, ongoing manifestations of white supremacy, and their impacts on the lives of Black, Indigenous, and people of color. We are galvanized in our commitment to dismantle racism in ourselves, our organization, and the child welfare systems of which we are a part.

As I embrace a new role at Foster America, I am grateful to so many for bringing us to this day, especially our founder Sherry Lachman for her inspiring vision. I am eager to build on what we've learned in our first five years. In collaboration with you – our staff, fellows, alumni, board, faculty, and partners – I am hopeful about all that is yet to come. From this moment of disruption, may we work in service of a different, better future.

With gratitude,

**Marie Zemler Wu**  
*Executive Director and Co-Founder*



Dear Friends,

The past year has forever changed us. From the senseless murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd to the COVID-19 pandemic and the unraveling of our social fabric in the midst of an insurrection that attacked our nation's capital, the structural failures of our nation are laid bare. As an organization focused

on systemic change, we are called to work in radically new ways to bring about the equity we seek.

On behalf of the board of directors, I am grateful to the Foster America team, both staff and fellows, who have constantly pivoted to accommodate the one constant this year: change. Staff quickly responded to declining state and local budgets, and fellows transformed their work to better serve children and families as the pandemic impacted them and their communities.

Additionally, Foster America became fiscally independent, convened our founding governing board, and doubled the size of the staff. In early 2021, we continued to change, celebrating the bittersweet appointment of our founder Sherry Lachman to the White House and naming our co-founder and Chief Program Officer Marie Zemler Wu as her successor.

As we reimagine and create the future, our board looks forward to collaborating with Marie, the Foster America staff, fellows and alumni, and our many valued partners in service of a more just society for children and families. Thank you for joining us in our mission to create a world where equity is centered in all that we do, where families have the supports they need to thrive, and in the rare instances where foster care placement is needed, children and families experience the respect, dignity, and healing they rightly deserve.

In partnership,

**Rafael López**  
*Board Chair*

# Highlighting Cohort 3's Impact

Foster America graduated our third cohort of fellows in June 2020.



Several of our Cohort 3 fellows stand together outside Foster America's convening in Los Angeles in January 2020. Pictured, L to R: Shree Lakshmi (SL) Rao, Kristin Barnes, John Drebing III, Rebecca (Becca) Kaplan, Heather Wilson, Crystal Williams, Jeffrey (Jeff) Tran, Idauli (Ida) Tamarin, Jermeen Sherman, Sonya Soni, and Heather Durosko. Not pictured: Yumiko Dougherty, Anthony Silverman, Mollie Bradlee, and Rebecca (Becca) Frank.

## Teams of Fellows

Within Cohort 3, Foster America placed two teams of fellows in Colorado and Los Angeles County to accelerate the rate of reform and scope of impact. These two teams of fellows worked together to share learnings, troubleshoot challenges, and advance change together in real-time.

## Family First Implementation

Several of our Cohort 3 fellows worked with their sites to implement the Family First Prevention Services Act, federal legislation that funds services to strengthen families, prevent entries into foster care, and bolster kinship placements for foster children.

## Community Engagement

All Cohort 3 fellows received training in Human-Centered Design and related practices. Several fellows supported their agencies to formally incorporate community voice and lived expertise into program design and delivery. Across the country, fellows engaged youth, families, and community members in design sessions and developed new roles for those with lived expertise to influence agencies' policies and practices.

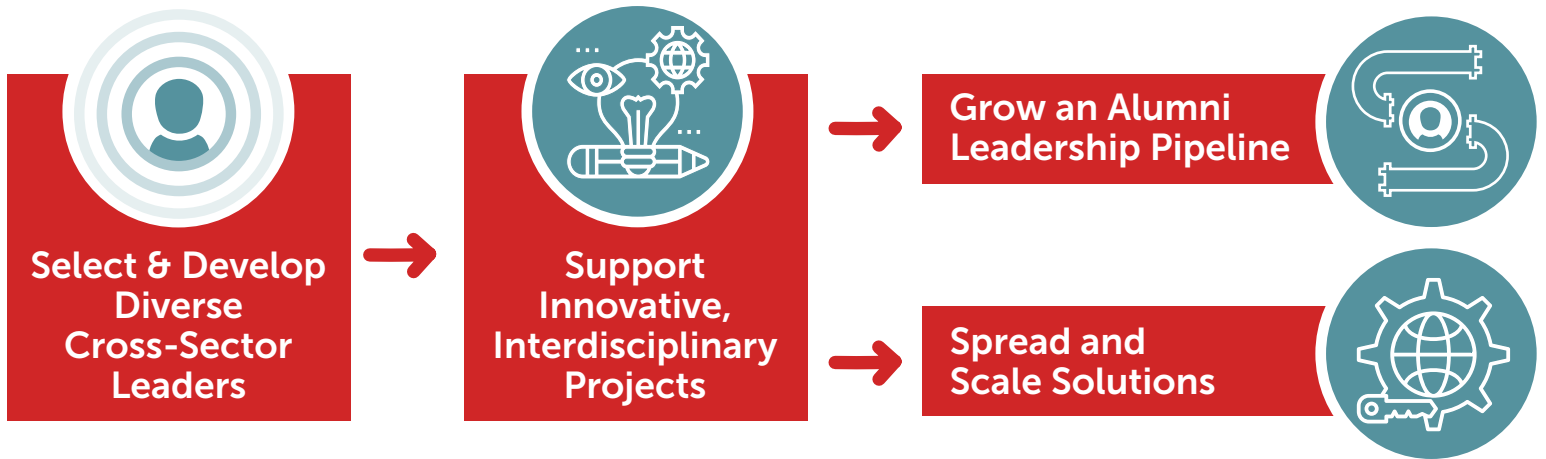
## COVID-19 Response

Cohort 3 fellows pivoted their work to support the health and safety of families and children. From managing emergency quarantine shelters to maximizing supplementary funds for economic assistance, fellows' work moved beyond the scope of their original projects in response to the pandemic.



# Our Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change drives action toward our ultimate goal, which is to strengthen families and increase positive outcomes for children, while working to eliminate systemic racial inequities.

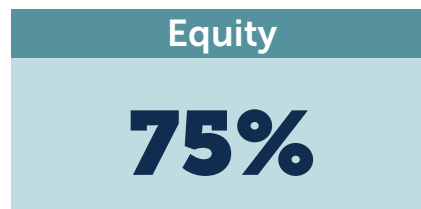


## Our fellows' work embodies Foster America's Theory of Change

An end-of-fellowship survey of Cohort 3 fellows and site partners showed that fellows' work had a positive impact on their jurisdictions



of agencies report that fellows' contributions improved experiences and outcomes for children and families

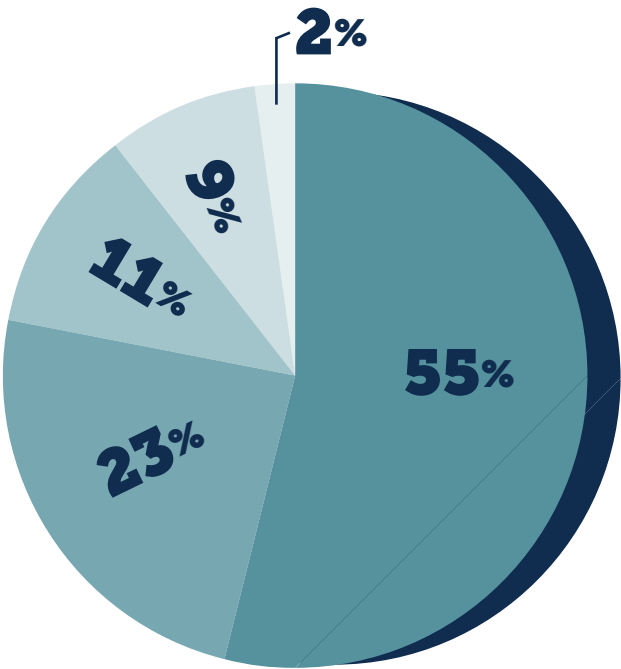


of Cohort 3 site partners agreed that their fellows' work specifically improved outcomes for children and families of color



of Cohort 3 graduates remain employed in the child welfare field six months post-fellowship

# Financials

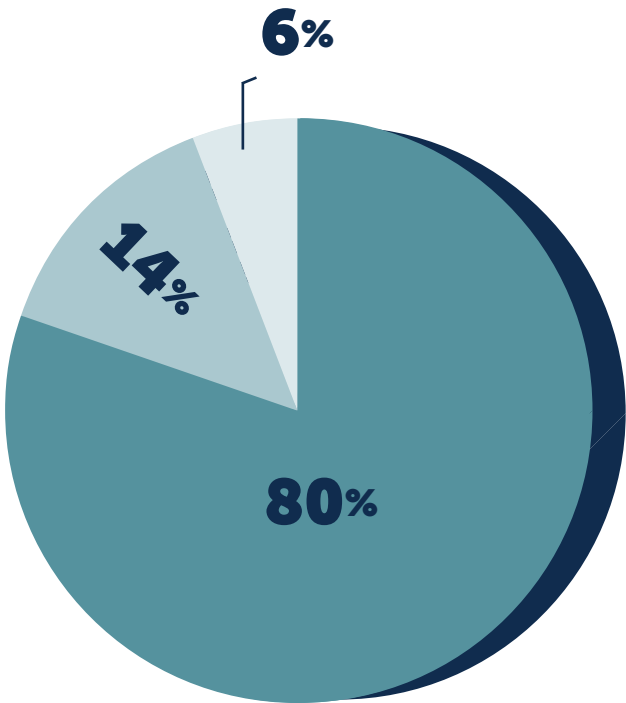


## Total Revenue\* \$6,466,525

Foundations	\$ 3,565,717
Government Contracts	\$ 1,486,463
Individuals	\$ 723,862
CARES Act Grant	\$ 559,312
Donated services	\$ 131,172

## Total Expenditures\*\* \$3,479,592

Program	\$ 2,786,628
General & Administrative	\$ 483,858
Fundraising	\$ 209,106



Only revenues and expenses since March 1, 2020 are reported in the above numbers. January & February 2020 financials fall under our former fiscal sponsor's fiduciary oversight.

\*\$1,928,719 of these revenues are restricted for future use in 2021 and beyond.

\*\*Expenditures were lower than budgeted due to COVID-related decreases in training and travel expenses, and the postponement of several fellowships from 2020 to 2021, also due to COVID.

# Board of Directors

On March 1, 2020, Foster America spun off from our fiscal sponsor, the Tides Foundation, and became an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. As such, our board transitioned from serving in an advisory capacity to becoming a governing board. We are grateful for our board members' time and commitment to Foster America's mission.



**Rafael López**  
*Board Chair*

*President*  
*López Consulting*



**Lola Adedokun**

*Director*  
*African Health Initiative*  
*Program Director*  
*Child Well-Being, Doris*  
*Duke Charitable Foundation*



**Jolie Bales**

*Vice President*  
*TechSoup*



**Sandra Gasca-Gonzalez**

*Vice President*  
*Annie E. Casey*  
*Foundation*



**Janine Jelks-Seale**

*Senior Advisor*  
*Allegheny County*  
*Department of Human*  
*Services*



**Allegra Lawrence-Hardy**

*Partner*  
*Lawrence & Bundy LLC*



**Susan Notkin**

*Senior Vice President*  
*Center for the Study of*  
*Social Policy*



**David Sanders**

*Vice President*  
*Casey Family Programs*



**Daniel Stephens**

*Partner*  
*McKinsey & Co.*



**Pete Treadway**

*Founder and CIO*  
*Metavasi*

# Thank You!

This work would not be possible without you—our incredible network of partners, friends, supporters, colleagues and advocates. We are deeply grateful for all of the ways that you guide and support us.

As we look ahead to 2021 and beyond, Foster America remains as committed as ever to reforming the fundamental operations of our country's child welfare system, using talent and innovation as our drivers and equitable outcomes as our compass.

## Jurisdictional Partners

From 2016 to 2020, Foster America placed fellows in agencies in 17 states and territories. These agencies at the state and county level are invaluable partners to our work.

### California

Freedom Forward  
Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services  
Los Angeles Department of Mental Health  
Santa Clara County Social Services Agency

### Colorado

Colorado Human Services Directors Association  
Department of Human Services  
Denver County Department of Human Services  
Douglas County Department of Human Services  
Larimer County Department of Human Services

### Connecticut

Office of Early Childhood

### Indiana

Department of Child Services

### Maryland

Baltimore City Department of Social Services

### Michigan

Department of Health and Human Services

### Minnesota

Olmstead County Health, Housing, and Human Services  
Department of Human Services  
Scott County, MN Department of Health and Human Services  
St. Louis County Health and Human Services  
Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators

### Missouri

Children's Division

### New Mexico

Santa Fe Children, Youth, and Families Department

### New York

Administration for Children's Services  
The Door, New York City

### Ohio

Department of Job and Family Services  
Hamilton County Job and Family Services

### Oklahoma

Department of Human Services

### Pennsylvania

Allegheny County Department of Human Services

### Puerto Rico

Departamento de la Familia

### Rhode Island

Department of Children Youth and Families

### Washington

Department of Children, Youth and Families  
Office of Homeless Youth  
Washington Association of Children and Families

### Washington DC

Child and Family Services Agency  
Youth Villages