Reflecting on the Past...
Celebrating the Present
This 55th year history book is dedicated to past and present members of the UMOS Board of Directors and past and present UMOS staff who have been devoted to providing programs and services to help improve the employment, educational, health and housing opportunities for migrant farmworkers and other underserved populations.

This book is also dedicated to the many lives touched over the past fifty-five years.
July, 2020

UMOS is proud to celebrate 55 years of service to the community.

Although our original geographical community started in Waukesha, Wisconsin in 1965 and spread to other communities statewide, our community has since expanded into other states: Arkansas, Florida, Minnesota, Missouri, and Texas.

However, our dedication to meeting the needs of those we serve has not changed. Our devotion to meeting the performance standards of funding sources, also, has not changed.

We take pride in meeting the needs of our clients and customers while meeting and exceeding the expectations of our funding sources.

We continue to be proud of the positive impacts made on the lives of the hundreds of thousands of individuals and families we have served over the years, and we are gratified to see so many have gone on to make positive impacts in the communities where they live, work and raise their families.

We hope you find this historical book on UMOS of interest.

We also hope you will continue to support UMOS and our mission as we continue to dedicate ourselves to Building Better Futures® for those we are privileged to serve.

Ben Obregon
UMOS Board Chair

Lupe Martinez
President and Chief Executive Officer
Representatives from the various ecumenical groups meet frequently as they work toward the development of an organization in Wisconsin that will be dedicated to the betterment of migrant farmworkers. As differences are set aside, a structure evolves, and the United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. is formed on March 25, 1965. Gladys Zophy, the Rev. Ray A.F. McDaniel and Carlos Perez-Pena sign the incorporation papers of the organization. UMOS becomes one of the first (and currently the oldest) migrant farmworker organizations in the nation.

A Board is organized comprised of nine representatives – three from the Wisconsin Council of Churches, three from the Episcopal Church and three from the Roman Catholic Church. Representatives to the Board include three incorporators who represent the Milwaukee, Fond du Lac, Madison and Racine-Kenosha area. Included on the Board are the former Father John Maurice, from the Council for the Spanish Speaking, who is chosen as the first Chairperson of the UMOS Board of Directors along with the Reverend Ralph Maschmeer, Genevieve Medina, Arthur Kastensen, Susan Simmonds, Dr. William Mudge and Bishop Jerome Hastrich.

Derived from these beginnings, the history of the UMOS organization begins. The Reverend Ralph Maschmeer serves as the interim director of the organization while a search for an executive director is conducted; Frank A. Mueller is hired.

Office of Economic Opportunity funds are awarded for four day care centers operating from July to September. Migrant farmworkers in Wisconsin are earning an average of $1,737 per year during this time. UMOS opens its first office in Waukesha where the administrative offices are located.

UMOS is awarded an additional $1,010,361 from the Office of Economic Opportunity and the service area is expanded to 12 counties. Adult education is provided in nine different communities and the day care program expands. There are nine summer day care sites operating, five that continue into the fall and four that are opened in the spring. William Kruse becomes the second Executive Director of UMOS.

In Wautoma, a march to Madison is organized. Migrant farmworkers demand access to public washrooms in the fields in Wautoma, minimum wages, better housing, enforcement of workers’ compensation laws and representation on the Governor’s Committee on Migratory Labor.

The Office of Economic Opportunity provides $1.2 million in funding and UMOS’ target area for the day care program expands to seventeen counties. A center on Milwaukee’s near south side has adult basic education classes available for migrant farmworkers who have decided to relocate in Milwaukee.

UMOS sends a bus-load of supporters to Washington for the Poor People’s March. The Office of Economic Opportunity purchases a building at 809 W. Greenfield Avenue in Milwaukee and moves from its Waukesha office. The new building houses both administration and the Milwaukee day care program site.

A national Poor Peoples’ March to Washington is organized as part of the civil rights movement headed by Dr. Martin Luther King and UMOS is actively involved, sending a bus full of staff, students and volunteers to Washington.
Controversy begins over UMOS’ program services and its administrative leadership. Five top level administrators seek a job contract from the UMOS Board of Directors, but the request is denied and they resign. Jesus Salas is hired as Executive Director. The Office of Economic Opportunity sends a management team which encourages a self-help approach and a new direction. The philosophy of the organization changes to self-help and advocacy. The design for a self-help housing program is initiated and UMOS starts the Southeastern Wisconsin Housing Corporation.

Federal funds are again reduced and the funding level in this year is $700,000. The Southeastern Wisconsin Housing Corporation receives a grant of $100,000 and self-help and rural rental housing activities begin in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth Counties.

Dante Navarro gives a voice to Milwaukee Latino community with the first Spanish-language radio program. Jesus Salas resigns as Executive Director and Salvador Sanchez, the former Field Operations Coordinator becomes the new Executive Director.

Salvador Sanchez initiates a series of meetings with other Midwest Migrant Farmworker program directors and the Midwest Association of Farmworker Organizations (MAFO) is created as a unified voice for Midwest migrant farmworkers.

UMOS organizes a nine-day march to Madison from Milwaukee to demand abolition of the trespass law which has created serious problems for staff attempting to meet with migrant families. Migrant housing is also a serious problem and better conditions are demanded. A nine-day march to Madison in 1971 concludes on August 24th with a meeting with former Governor Patrick Lucey. Marchers insist they will not leave the Capitol until demands are met. On August 26, 1971 the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations commits to the following:

- To establish an Inspection and Enforcement Team to provide overall coordination and direction to the agency in the areas of inspection and enforcement of laws protecting migrant farmworkers.
- To appoint one representative of each UMOS center as a deputy, giving them authorization to enter and inspect migrant housing.
- To reduce the amount of time allowed for compliance with migrant housing code violations.
- To order the immediate closing of any camp found to be operating without certification and request the Attorney General to prosecute.
- To establish an Executive Policy Committee on Minority Affairs to work with the Department in drafting necessary changes in laws affecting migrant farmworkers.
- To distribute information and brochures in Spanish on workers compensation and unemployment laws in Wisconsin.
- To request prosecution by the Attorney General for violations of the new rules.
- To pursue a hearing on and passage of HB 774 dealing with enforcement of laws and codes.
- To actively recruit Latinos/Hispanics for public service careers.
A family planning program with clinics targeting migrant farmworkers and the Hispanic/Latino community are opened in several UMOS offices. UMOS’ funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity remains stable at $700,000.

A Migrant Legal Services component is established and Ness Flores becomes the first Migrant Legal Services Attorney at UMOS. Work is begun on drafting new legislation that will offer greater protection to Wisconsin migrant farmworkers.

More diversification for the organization, and another UMOS office is opened in Beaver Dam, where a migrant multi-purpose center is set up. The office provides comprehensive migrant farmworker services, a family planning clinic and temporary housing for workers in the mobile homes that make up the center.

The Department of Transportation and the National Highway Safety Administration funds a program to teach drivers education in Spanish at UMOS. The migrant work force in the state begins to decline due to mechanization.

The first grant for emergency food and medical services is received and 4,190 family members benefit from the program.

There is a takeover of the Governor’s Committee on Migratory Labor. Demonstrators insist that the membership must include migrant farmworkers, as well as the growers currently on the committee.

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) is passed. Funding for migrant farmworker programs like UMOS is transferred from the Office of Economic Opportunity to the U.S. Department of Labor. Under CETA, supportive services that are essential to migrant farmworker families are de-emphasized and the focus switches to employment and training.

UMOS modifies its infrastructure to increase its capacity to reach migrant farmworkers. New offices are opened in Burlington, and Fond du Lac and the target area increases to 32 counties.

A three-day march to Madison is organized to demonstrate the need for day care for migrant farmworker children. The migrant legal services component expands to include services to the Latino/Hispanic community at large.

Under the auspices of the Milwaukee Area Technical College, a Family Living and Consumer Homemaking Consortium is funded; classes in nutrition, sewing and crafts become available at the Milwaukee UMOS building. The building also houses a radio studio which begins broadcasting in Spanish.

UMOS’ funding is now at $1.2 million, with contracts from 12 different sources. Migrant farmworker advocacy is strong. UMOS’ Executive Director Salvador Sanchez, and staff members Roman Ramos and Jesus Tellez are arrested and jailed in Clyman, Wisconsin for advocating for the rights of African American migrant farmworkers newly arrived from Louisiana.

The Migrant Legal Services component is transferred to the former Milwaukee Legal Services on Milwaukee’s South Side. (Milwaukee Legal Services later became Legal Action of Wisconsin and currently maintains a migrant legal services program).
Salvador Sanchez resigns. Lupe Martinez is hired as the fifth Executive Director for UMOS. Funding continues at $1.2 million; a new program to work with disabled migrant workers is funded by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The 8th and Greenfield building is modified to be more accessible to people with disabilities. CETA is now in place and programs like UMOS across the country are being transitioned into the Department of Labor.

UMOS receives its first CETA, Title III grant. Expansion continues with the funding level approaching $1.4 million with contracts from 20 different sources. The Family Planning Program is reduced to one clinic in Milwaukee. Childcare, a standing program in the UMOS building, with funding from the former Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), is terminated and the statewide early childhood development program is threatened.

The target area expands to 46 counties in another period of growth and development. Funding now exceeds $2.3 million.

The State Manpower Council awards the agency a three year contract to provide technical assistance and training to thirty-three community based organizations and Native American program sponsors under CETA. The expanded growth is visually apparent. At this time UMOS has 15 offices across the state including Milwaukee, Green Bay, Beaver Dam, Racine, Wautoma, Fond du Lac, Appleton, Kenosha, Stevens Point, Madison, Richland Center, Oconto, Hartford, Jefferson and Sheboygan. UMOS awards two subcontracts to La Casa de Esperanza in Waukesha and the Comunidad de Amigos in Belgium to expand services to migrant farmworkers.

An internal agency analysis of the location of migrant farmworkers in the state and their enrollment patterns leads UMOS to close several area offices. There are now nine area and satellite offices with $4 million available for services under 23 different programs. The UMOS Board of Directors provides partial funding for a health study on migrant farmworkers to the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Due to increased mechanization over the years, the number of migrant workers migrating to the state decreases to about 8,000; however there is increasing discussion about the needs of the 40,000 plus seasonal agricultural workers in the state and plans are initiated to better serve that population.

The U.S. Department of Labor decreases allocations of funds to the states and the migrant farmworker program funding levels are subsequently reduced. UMOS’ total operating budget for that year falls to $2.4 million.

During the summer of 1979 the Department of Labor approaches the UMOS Board of Directors to request that UMOS assume administrative responsibility for the operation of the Iowa and Nebraska migrant farmworker programs. Weekly trips are made to Iowa to keep the program operational during the summer.

The Madison office develops and obtains funding, for two new programs; one designed to teach basic skills in coping with a new environment, and a Farmworker Youth Employment and Training Program designed to offer education and employment skills to youth. Wautoma’s childcare program is expanded to include an additional center. An infant in-home care program located in the migrant camps is started with funding from the Department of Health and Social Services.
Department of Labor funding is cut another 10% and UMOS total funding for the year is $2.2 million. UMOS joins the Illinois Migrant Council’s Midwest Youth Employment and Training Program which enables migrant farmworker youth to participate in the Midwest and upon their return to Texas. UMOS operates ten offices statewide this year.

Thousands of Cubans leave their country to come to the United States. Many are migrant farmworkers and eligible to participate in UMOS programs; UMOS begins to respond to their needs.

The City of Milwaukee provides UMOS with $1 million to renovate and upgrade the Greenfield Avenue building in Milwaukee.

UMOS initiates the Annual Hispanic Awards Banquet to recognize individuals from around the state who are making significant contributions to their communities; another annual UMOS event, is started, “Breakfast with Santa” for community children.

Difficult years ensue for many community based organizations. In an effort to remind the nation about the plight of migrant farmworkers, a National Day of Mourning is organized. Carlos Reyes, UMOS Board Chairman, is at the forefront organizing the efforts. 5,000 staff, migrant farmworkers, migrant agency board members and volunteers from across the country converge on Washington to demonstrate concern on migrant farmworker issues.

A home weatherization and fuel efficiency project is initiated in the Milwaukee offices.

UMOS receives funding to work with Cuban youth in Milwaukee County, focusing on education and employment for youth that have come to the United States without their parents. The Cuban Youth Independent Living Project assists them to learn to live in the United States. The Adult Cuban Entrant Program awarded to UMOS helps adults adjust to the culture and focus on education and employment in the Milwaukee area.

Funds for the Midwest Farmworker Youth Employment and Training Program are increased and the program expands to serve out-of-school as well as in-school youth.

The number of migrants continues to decrease in Wisconsin with estimates as low as 6,000. DOL funds to the organization are again reduced by 10%. The federal funding sources are moving toward a system of block grants to the states and UMOS staff are actively involved with this process to make sure that farmworker interests are represented.

Block grants are implemented in Wisconsin and UMOS staff work with the State and community action agencies across the state to insure that migrant farmworkers are targeted for community service block grant dollars. A 4% set-aside for migrant farmworkers is agreed upon. Out of this effort comes the Comprehensive Crisis Relief Program which will provide emergency shelter, food, transportation, car repairs and other services to migrant farmworkers.

The Milwaukee Child Development Center closes after 17 years of operation; the space does not sit idle for long as the La Causa Day Care Center takes over the space and continues child care in the building.

UMOS is approached by the Governor’s Employment and Training Office to develop a conduit system for funding to several other community based organizations beginning with the Spanish Centers of Racine, Kenosha and Walworth in November, 1983.

The area office for the Lake Michigan area is moved from Manitowoc to Appleton to be more centrally located within the entire target area being served.

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The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act is replaced in Congress with the Job Training Partnership Act. Migrant farmworkers are included for targeted national funding. UMOS is called upon to help design new regulations and performance standards for this JTPA program that will eventually be referred to as the 402 program.

A unique undertaking with State funding forms the Employment Generating Services (EGS) project in Beaver Dam, Waunona and Manitowoc, which combats unemployment. Management assistance for the purpose of job creation is provided to new/expanding employers.

UMOS is approved by the Governor’s Employment and Training Office to develop a conduit system for funding to several other community based organizations.
The UMOS Hispanic CBO Employment and Training Consortium expands to include La Raza in Jefferson and Comunidad de Amigos in Sheboygan. UMOS applies for and is awarded Office of Community Services funding for an Employment Generating Services program to assist migrant farmworkers in attaining self-sufficiency through job creation. Other employment and training related projects include On-the-Job Training in Milwaukee County and a similar program in the Manitowoc office.

Milwaukee’s manufacturing base loses thousands of high paying jobs in the early 80s, leaving a workforce that needs to be re-employed with different skills. UMOS becomes part of a city wide effort to provide education and training opportunities under the JTPA Dislocated Workers Program.

UMOS celebrates its 20th Anniversary. UMOS’ Milwaukee Center begins a short order cook training program funded by the Milwaukee Area Technical College. UMOS initiates a customized job training program throughout the state. It provides a unique attraction for employers—training a group of workers in a classroom setting followed by on-the-job training, all on site at the employer.

The conduit system with the Hispanic community based employment and training agencies continues; UMOS offices are located in Milwaukee, Madison, Wautoma, Appleton, Manitowoc and Green Bay. A special education project is started in the Milwaukee Center to concentrate on adults with special needs including speech impediments, learning disabilities, mental and physical limitations.

UMOS receives a grant from the Bureau of Community Corrections to assist individuals with felony convictions to obtain employment.

UMOS’ private sector staff in Madison assists with the funding and development of the Madison Incubator for Technology Development. When the incubator is funded, UMOS provides management services for the incubator and the individual companies located therein.

The Office of Community Services funds a migrant farmworker apprenticeship project designed to provide long term employment through apprenticeship training in high demand occupations.

UMOS transfers the administration of the Consumer and Homemaking Consortium to the Council for the Spanish Speaking. The Bureau of Corrections program for training and placement of individuals on probation and parole receives a funding increase.

The U.S. Department of Labor JTPA Title IV program changes its funding allocation process and UMOS becomes a subcontractor of the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations for the operation of this program.

The Roundy’s Plant in Kaukauna, Wisconsin shuts down and UMOS is awarded a Title III Dislocated Workers Re-employment Project in the Northern Lake Winnebago area to assist workers.

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services provides increased funding for migrant day care. Staff coordinate activities with the Texas Migrant Council to cover areas and time periods when Migrant Head Start is not available.

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The U.S. Department of Labor JTPA Title IV program changes its funding allocation process and UMOS becomes a subcontractor of the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations for the operation of this program.
Funding level is $2.6 million. UMOS celebrates its 25th anniversary. Offices are now located in Milwaukee, Kenosha, Madison, Appleton, Green Bay, Sparta, Richland Center, Beaver Dam and Wautoma. The Board begins to talk seriously about economic development and staff begins to research various business ventures for UMOS.

The Midwest Regional Migrant Farmworker AIDS Prevention Education Consortium is off to a solid start. During a nine month period in 1989, staff in the six constituent states provide HIV prevention education to over 23,000 migrant farmworkers. In Wisconsin, the Consortium project serves as the foundation for several new projects this year including the Multi-Cultural AIDS Project targeting HIV/STD prevention education to women and adolescents in Southeastern Wisconsin. At the request of the Centers for Disease Control, Consortium staff provide technical assistance and training in Wisconsin, Indiana, Kansas, Ohio and Arizona.

UMOS embarks on its first economic development venture, forming a subsidiary for-profit corporation, Home-Aide of Fox Valley, Inc., purchasing a Merry Maid’s franchise in Appleton.

Migrant Day Care expansion continues with proposals submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services and Washington for direct funding of a Migrant Head Start Program in Wisconsin.

Another program is added to the Milwaukee health related initiatives. The Hispanic Access Network Delivery System (HANDS) focuses on access issues in Milwaukee county providing translation, transportation, advocacy, referral and case management services for developmentally disabled, physically or mentally ill Hispanic persons. Milwaukee Consortium staff provide training on quality health care and advocacy for rural populations to 39 Guatemalan Rural Health Promoters over a 2-1/2 month period.

UMOS leases a migrant labor camp in Aurora, Wisconsin. With 16 housing units providing housing to 481 individuals its first season in operation, June – September, 1991. Funds for the renovation and preparation of the center are provided by the Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Emergency Shelter Grant Program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Administration. The shelter becomes known as the Aurora Center.

UMOS receives its first contract for a Migrant Head Start Program which opens for the summer in Endeavor, WI, serving children from Marquette, Adams and Columbia Counties. This increases UMOS’ capacity to provide child development services and day care for children, while continuing to work closely with the Texas Migrant Council which provides staff to Wisconsin for the operation of multiple Migrant Head Start sites.

The Office of Community Services funds a non-traditional program for women; a Women’s Entrepreneurial Training Project is funded to provide migrant farmworker women with technical assistance needed to start their own businesses.

A GATES Project for English as a Second Language is added and funded by the Milwaukee County Private Industry Council as part of the State’s welfare reform initiative.

The organization’s funding level for this year tops $3 million.

The Aurora Center provides temporary shelter to over 500 migrant farmworkers and family members. Staff recognize a need for additional units as well as a need for rural rental housing and begin to discuss these needs with the Farmers Home Administration.

Several new programs are added to the UMOS health promotion and disease prevention component which is known as Special Projects. These include the Hispanic Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Intervention projects in Milwaukee and Kenosha, and Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention project targeted to children and teens, a Nutrition Education and Outreach Network project, and an HIV Multicultural Case Management and Support Program.
Funding is obtained to start a statewide workplace literacy program. UMOS is awarded a contract to assist people receiving public assistance to obtain education, training and employment. UMOS is responsible for assessment, case management and placement, and the Career Advancement Center (CAC) is implemented.

UMOS sells its home of 24 years at 809 W. Greenfield Ave. in Milwaukee to La Causa Day Care center. Another new program starts as a result of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

SLIAG (State Legalization Impact Assistance Grant) funds are made available to provide instruction in civics and government to enable people to meet the educational requirements for permanent resident status. Classes are held in numerous locations across the state.

The Texas Migrant Council enters into a subcontract with UMOS to operate the Migrant Headstart Program in Wisconsin. The center opens with a 12 hour day to accommodate parents working in the fields. Seven child care centers open that year in addition to the 45 in-home child care providers under the Migrant Day Care Program. Services are provided in a total of 15 counties with funding exceeding $3.7 million.

A building at 929 W. Mitchell Street is purchased for the Milwaukee Center, with the administrative offices temporarily relocating to a different office.

Floods plague Wisconsin and the Midwest. Migrant farmworkers are unable to work and their incomes drop. The requests for supportive services increase. Many decide not to stay in Wisconsin due to lack of work but their pursuit of work in other Midwest states yields the same negative results.

The Career Advancement Center becomes part of a larger employment and training plan for Milwaukee County and is moved into the HIRE Center on Milwaukee’s south side. There they work in coordination with staff from the AFL-CIO Job Service, the Food Stamp Program and others. The beginnings of one-stop shopping for employment and training services in Milwaukee County begins.

UMOS is invited to submit a proposal for another five-year Cooperative Agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and is successful in obtaining a technical assistance and training program for the Midwest Consortium. The Consortium has now expanded to include five new states, Indiana, with Florida and Texas for Kansas Iowa, interstate case tracking. The CDC asks that the Consortium expand its focus to include STDs and TB and the group becomes the Midwest Farmworker HIV/STD/TB Prevention Education Consortium.

The Aurora Center breaks ground for the construction of an additional 16 units. The 16 units will provide additional temporary housing for families. For the first time in the nation, the Farmers Home Administration is allowing a project to be used for both temporary shelter and seasonal rental units for migrant farmworkers. The Aurora Center is promoted as a national model for states with similar problems in farmworker housing. Staff begin to look at replication at more sites within the state. UMOS obtains nearly $1 million for construction and rental subsidies for the Center. There is discussion about building a Head Start Center on site.

There is significant expansion in the Migrant Head Start program with over $700,000 in new funds provided from the Department of Health and Human Services. A second Merry Maids franchise in Neenah/Menasha is purchased.

The Office of Community Services funds a joint venture between UMOS and the State of Wisconsin Department of Development to promote job creation in the Wisconsin Enterprise Zones.

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As a result of the Midwest flooding, certain counties are designated as disaster areas; Wisconsin receives funds to provide flood relief, and the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services provides some of those funds to UMOS. Migrant farmworkers whose incomes were affected by the floods are eligible to receive special financial assistance as well as counseling and case management to help them through difficult times and periods of loss.

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services approaches UMOS to become the lead and fiscal agent for the JOBS program on Milwaukee’s South Side. A new statewide Work Place Literacy project is funded by the Office of Community Services.

Under the Special Projects component, a teen mentor HIV training and education outreach program is funded by the Wisconsin Division of Health and the Department of Public Instruction; HIV testing is provided to migrant farmworkers in the field funded by the Wisconsin Division of Health. An HIV Case Finding Initiative is funded by the City of Milwaukee Health Department targeting high-risk behaviors, the first of its kind in Wisconsin.

After two years of classes under SLIAG, the Department of Health and Social Services funds an anti-discrimination and employer education project to disseminate information to employers and workers regarding the anti-discrimination provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act. Funding in 1994 reaches $7 million dollars with more than 30 grants and contracts.

The spring of 1995 marks the opening of the expanded Aurora Center and UMOS’ 30th birthday on March 25, 1995. Housing staff actively seek additional sites for new temporary shelters patterned after the Aurora Center.

There is continued expansion under Special Projects with a Pesticide Education Training Project funded by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, and expansion of HIV prevention, case management, technical assistance, training and advocacy components. The HIV Teen Mentor Program expands to 40 teens with funding from the Milwaukee Foundation.

The Career Advancement Center moves from 838 W. National to its new facilities at 611 W. National Avenue, in Milwaukee.

Funding tops $8 million.


Special federal initiatives provided expansion dollars for the construction of a new modular Migrant Head Start facility at the Aurora Center housing development for the children of families staying at the Center. This was one of the first combinations of emergency shelter/ head start center in the nation located on the same property.

Our Employment and Training program provided services to over 2,000 individuals, resulting in employment for over 1,500 individuals.

A new program was started in our Health Promotion/Disease Prevention component to address the issue of domestic violence.

UMOS, through its operation of a one-stop job center, began to prepare for changes in federal and state welfare reform initiatives.
UMOS applied for and was awarded a two-year $51 million contract with the State of Wisconsin to administer the Wisconsin Works (W-2) welfare reform program in region two of Milwaukee County.

UMOS acquired a new building located at 1644 South 9th Street in Milwaukee to accommodate W-2 program service delivery and staff.

Renovations were made to an existing building located at 802/804 West Mitchell Street, Milwaukee, to accommodate agency growth.

A new migrant housing facility was under development for Montello, Wisconsin. A new modular Migrant Head Start operation, located in Montello, Wisconsin, was under construction.

Funding increased 66%.

A new migrant housing facility, known as the UMOS Montello Center, opened in Montello, Wisconsin. Eight farmworker rental housing units were made available.

A new Migrant Head Start operation was added to the Montello Center. Migrant Head Start opens new regional office in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

UMOS achieved the greatest percentage of W-2 caseload reductions among Milwaukee County agencies.

UMOS subcontracted over $1.5 million to other Milwaukee area Community Based Organizations and other agencies to assist with W-2 implementation.

Migrant Head Start and Migrant Day Care expanded operations to Spring Lake, Wisconsin.

UMOS received a $125,000 multi-state housing consortium grant to provide technical assistance to five midwestern states.

A new satellite office was opened in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

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A new satellite office was opened in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

UMOS attained a two-year, $37 million contract renewal from the State of Wisconsin, Department of Workforce Development to administer the W-2, welfare reform program in Milwaukee County.

A new program, StartFresh™ was implemented to assist non-custodial parents with employment and training opportunities.

A W-2 job fair was held to connect job seekers with employers.

A state-wide Hispanic Housing Partnership was established in Minnesota.

Grant services rendered increased to $20 million.

Cinco de Mayo festival moved to the Wisconsin State Fair Park with record attendance.

A Migrant Farmworker Day celebration was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

UMOS was awarded a $4.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to implement a Welfare to Work program linking Texas, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

The UMOS Migrant Head Start program received a $233,600 start-up grant to serve seasonal migrant workers in the Palmyra, Wisconsin area.

UMOS moves One-Stop Job Center from 611 West National Avenue, Milwaukee, to 910 West Mitchell Street, Milwaukee, to offer greater client convenience and efficiency.

A new office is opened in Weslaco, Texas.

UMOS, in conjunction with the Council for the Spanish Speaking, distribute Thanksgiving food boxes to 1,200 families.

An agreement is initiated with the University of Wisconsin System to deliver a model Distance Learning Program to migrant families throughout Wisconsin.
UMOS receives a housing consortium grant to provide technical assistance to nonprofit and other organizations within a 15-state area.

Organized Wisconsin Hispanic HIV Leadership Summit.

UMOS adds over $2 million to existing grants.


The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) honors UMOS with the National Affiliate of the Year Award at the 2001 national conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Grant revenues increase by 6%.

A second region in Milwaukee County to provide Wisconsin Works (W-2), welfare reform services is secured, making UMOS the largest W-2 agency in the State of Wisconsin.

Opened new office in Crookston, Minnesota.

Continued to provide supportive services to victims of domestic violence through the UMOS Latina Resource Center, the only center in Wisconsin that targets Hispanic women.

Receives funding to operate a High School Equivalency Program (HEP) in Minnesota.

Returned $500,000 to the Milwaukee community through tax preparation assistance and the Earned Income Tax Program (EITC).

Distributed 3,000 bags of supplies at the UMOS Back to School Fair.

Received approval to begin $800,000 renovation on the Claremont Housing Center, Claremont, Minnesota.

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Received approval to begin $800,000 renovation on the Claremont Housing Center, Claremont, Minnesota.

Opened the Cesar Chavez School of Excellence in Racine, Wisconsin.

Secured $400,000 Texas workforce development grant.

Received $1.6 million funding approval to operate new Migrant Head Start operations in Kansas and Missouri.

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Received a $50,000 grant through the efforts of Attorney General Jim Doyle, now Governor of the State of Wisconsin, for the Latina Resource Center.

Held the first ever El Pueblo Hispano Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Completed construction of new Migrant Head Start Center in Beaver Dam Wisconsin.

Received award of recognition from Milwaukee Common Council President.

Purchased 117,000 square foot building for use as new corporate headquarters and education, training and banquet facility.

UMOS receives $100,000 economic development grant from the Wisconsin Housing Economic Development Authority.

Secured new child care grant in Texas.

Formed a strategic alliance with Coalition of Florida Farmworker Organizations (COFFO).
Graduated first class of High School Equivalency Program (HEP) students in Minnesota.

Served a record number of McDonald’s breakfasts to parents and kids and distributed over 1,500 gift boxes at the annual “Breakfast with Santa.”

Continued to entertain tours from around world, including the Governor of Puebla, Mexico, at the UMOS Job Center-South, the most utilized job center in Wisconsin.

Maintained position as Wisconsin’s largest Hispanic-managed, nonprofit organization.

Held groundbreaking ceremony and began construction on new corporate headquarters.

Organized 33 Annual Mexican Independence Parade and Festival, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Hosted 24th Annual Hispanic Awards Banquet.

Secured $10 million grant award to operate another Wisconsin Works (W-2) welfare reform region in Milwaukee County.

UMOS administrative staff moves into new corporate headquarters.

UMOS holds first spring W-2 graduation ceremony.

Celebrates 40th Anniversary (1965-2005) with a “Reunion to Remember” Banquet.

Secured $9.7 million grant to operate third Wisconsin Works (W-2) welfare reform region in Milwaukee County.

Organized the 15th Annual Cinco de Mayo Festival.

Held Career fairs at Job Centers – North and South – attracting 1,800 job seekers.

UMOS administrative staff moves into new corporate headquarters.

UMOS holds first spring W-2 graduation ceremony.

Certifies 40th Anniversary (1965-2005) with a “Reunion to Remember” Banquet.

Completed renovations of new corporate headquarters at the UMOS Center.

Signed long term lease agreement with the first bilingual Department of Motor Vehicle Service Center in Wisconsin, to occupy space at the new UMOS Center.

Held annual Back to School Fair.

Held annual Cinco de Mayo Festival, for the first time on the UMOS Center grounds.

Served a record 2,000 kids and parents at annual Breakfast with Santa event.

Awarded the Social Security Insurance (SSI) contract, making UMOS the sole service agency in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin.

Awarded the National Farmworker Jobs Program contract in Missouri.

Awarded Child Care Services contract in Laredo, Texas for the second year.

Maintained leadership position as the largest Wisconsin Works (W-2) welfare reform agency in Wisconsin.

UMOS collaborated with City of Milwaukee and County Transit System to establish a bus route that drops off/picks up job seekers at the UMOS Comprehensive One-Stop Job Center.

The UMOS SSI/SSDI Advocacy Agency has consistently been rated highest among all Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, W-2 agencies in both performance and customer satisfaction (according to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce development “Green Flag Reports”).

UMOS Job Center-Southeast moved into the 120,000 square foot UMOS Center.

The Department of Motor Vehicles moved the first bilingual service center in the state of Wisconsin into the UMOS Center.

Ben Obregon is elected chairman of the UMOS board of directors.
Had record attendance at the 2006 UMOS Cinco de Mayo SpringFest.

Celebrated the 26th Annual UMOS Hispanic Awards Banquet honoring the Hispanic Man, Woman, Youth and Family of the Year.

Served 2,000+ kids and parents at the Annual Breakfast with Santa event.

Started construction on leased space for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for spring 2007 occupancy at the UMOS Center.

Distributed school supplies to over 1,300 kids at UMOS Back to School Fair.

Maintained position as the largest Hispanic-managed, nonprofit agency in Wisconsin.

Awarded new contracts, in partnership with the Kaiser Group, to operate three job centers in the state of Kansas.

Placed over 4,900 job seekers into employment in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin.

Named W-2 agency of the year by the Community Youth Development Agency.

Awarded a “gold” certificate of excellence for program performance from the Federal Office of Head Start. Only two gold certificates were awarded in the nation among the 2,100 Head Start and 26 Migrant and Seasonal Head Start operators.

Purchased a 16-unit apartment complex from La Raza Farm Labor Housing, Inc. in Jefferson, Wisconsin.

Organized first ever “Bride’s Walk” in Wisconsin against domestic violence.

Awarded 2,978 job seekers in finding family supporting employment.

Provided child care services to 894 children and their families, allowing parents to work with peace of mind.

UMOS Latina Resource Center staff provided domestic violence supportive services to over 300 women to assist them to live in a safer and more peaceful environment.

Provided emergency, temporary and seasonal affordable housing to 232 families.

Assisted 373 migrant and seasonal farmworkers in finding employment through the National Farmworker Jobs Program, implemented in Wisconsin and Missouri.

UMOS NAMED AGENCY OF THE YEAR

Recognized as the W-2 Agency of the Year by Community Youth Development, a Milwaukee nonprofit agency.

Strengthened affiliations with national organizations and networks such as UFW, NCLR, National Farmworker Alliance, and MAFO (a national partnership of rural and farmworker organizations).

The UMOS SSIA agency served an additional 289 participants for a 36% increase over the previous year while consistently being rated highest in customer satisfaction among its W-2 clients throughout Milwaukee County.

Held open house for a newly renovated, 16-unit UMOS Jefferson Apartments in Jefferson, Wisconsin, providing year-round affordable housing for area families.

UMOS RESPONDS TO THE NEED FOR IMMIGRATION SERVICES

Held graduation ceremonies for over 80 GED, HSED graduates.

Held four job fairs, attracting over 2,700 job seekers, with 60% of entry level positions including benefits.

Served breakfast and provided gifts to over 2,000 families at annual Breakfast With Santa event.

Remained Wisconsin’s largest W-2, welfare reform agency in the state.

Assisted over 1,500 participants in the UMOS basic adult education program.

Provided school supplies to 2,500 children during Back to School fair.

Held first Little Miss Cinco de Mayo Pageant.

The formation of Community Services Block Grant Advisory Committee (CSBG) went into affect to oversee the planning, budgeting, implementation and analysis of over $400,000 in funding and program efforts.

In anticipation of comprehensive immigration reform legislation at the federal level, UMOS adds an Immigration Services Program. The program provides low-cost, family-based immigration services.

UMOS leases remaining space at the 117,000 UMOS Center to Social Development Corporation (SDC), a well respected nonprofit agency in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
UMOS cancels Annual Cinco de Mayo SpringFest due to the swine flue (H1N1) outbreak. At the time, Wisconsin (Milwaukee) had the highest number of confirmed cases in the nation.

UMOS was selected as the site for a pilot accelerated GED program by Milwaukee Area Technical College. UMOS also becomes a certified GED testing center, with a record number of GED graduates in 2009.

Claudia Frias is selected as the 2009 Employee of the Year.

Lupe Martinez, celebrated 40 years of service to UMOS, 35 years as President/CEO.

Mexican Independence Festival is moved to the UMOS Center from Mitchell Park.

UMOS celebrates 45th anniversary.

UMOS enters its 14th year of operating the Wisconsin Works (W-2) workforce development program. In the midst of an economic downturn in the nation’s economy, the W-2 caseload increases by nearly 60% in the UMOS Job Center.

UMOS celebrates the 30th year of the Hispanic Awards Banquet.

The UMOS food pantry assisted 35,800 adults and children with their emergency food needs.

UMOS receives a performance-based contract to operate the Transitional Jobs Program in Milwaukee, funded by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. The program provides job seekers with temporary, subsidized, work experience while meeting employer employment needs.

The UMOS GED Education Program graduates 228 students, a 26% increase over the previous year.

Lupe Martinez and senior staff members travel to Missouri to hold roundtable discussions with migrant families to determine the impacts of flooding and other weather related disasters.

UMOS works with 250 employers in Wisconsin and Missouri to place 615 National Farmworker Jobs Participants into more stable work situations: truck drivers, heavy truck drivers, machinist, welders, CNAs clerical, assembly workers and painters.

Through the Community Crisis Relief (CCR) funding in Wisconsin, UMOS assists 2,078 migrant and seasonal farmworker individuals and families with emergency food, gas, lodging, car repairs and other needs.

UMOS opens an office in Racine, Wisconsin to serve the migrant farmworker population in the area.

UMOS receives its first Rescue and Restore Human Trafficking Outreach Grant in the state of Missouri. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, UMOS staff participates in a press conference to announce the prosecution of the first human trafficking allegation in the state.

The UMOS Teen Tobacco Advisory Council provides 2,500 hours of tobacco prevention and education information to 3,820 teens in Milwaukee.

The UMOS Latina Resource Center holds its 5th Annual Brides Walk Against Domestic Violence.

Salvador Carranza was selected as the 2010 UMOS Hispanic Man of the Year, Gloria Gonzalez as the UMOS Hispanic Woman of the Year, Alejandro Cortes, UMOS Hispanic Youth of the Year and Juan and Martha Andrade and Family as the UMOS Hispanic Family of the Year.

Victoria Piñeda was selected as the UMOS Employee of the Year.

Juan M. Lopez is selected as the UMOS Employee of the Year.

The Child Development division opened new infant and toddler classrooms in Malden, Missouri. Migrant Head Start moved into a newly renovated facility in Lexington, Missouri.

The UMOS Latina Resource Center touched the lives of 1,800 adults, youth and children, an 80% increase since the Center’s conception.

The UMOS HIV/AIDS program was recognized by the State Health Department as the number two testing site in Wisconsin.

A total of 249 students, the highest in UMOS history, obtained their GED/HSED with the help of the education team.
The UMOS Immigration Services Program changes its name to UMOS Immigration Legal Services. UMOS’ first Immigration Legal Services client was granted Legal Permanent Resident Status by the U.S. Customs and Immigration Service.

A new office in Kenosha, Wisconsin was opened to operate a new grant: the Home Energy Assistance Program.

UMOS staff placed more than 1,000 eligible parents into unsubsidized employment, a 56% increase over last year through the Wisconsin Works (W-2) program. The UMOS Transitional Jobs Program placed more job seeker participants into unsubsidized jobs than any other provider in Milwaukee County, resulting in an additional $3 million grant extension.

UMOS was awarded $300,000 in Wisconsin Works Wins (W-3) funding by the Department of Workforce Development.

UMOS participates in a National Farmworker Alliance briefing, hosted by President Barack Obama’s White House staff.

Nelson Soler was selected as the 2011 UMOS Hispanic Man of the Year, Sandra Rybacheck as the UMOS Hispanic Woman of the Year, Mario Alberto Gomez Juarez, UMOS Hispanic Youth of the Year and Osiel G. Romero-West and Family as the UMOS Hispanic Family of the Year.

Juan Jose Lopez was re-elected as the UMOS Board Chair.

Pedro Alibier was selected as the 2012 UMOS Hispanic Man of the Year, Jessica Cavazos as the UMOS Hispanic Woman of the Year, Daniela Cortes, UMOS Hispanic Youth of the Year and Osvaldo Romero-West and Family as the UMOS Hispanic Family of the Year.

Alfonzo Gardner was selected as the UMOS Employee of the Year.

The UMOS Latina Resource Center held its 7th Annual Brides Walk Against Domestic Violence with more than 300 women, men, youth and children participating; a 33% increase.

The UMOS Food Pantry distributed 515,512 pounds of food to those in need.

The housing department provided technical assistance and WIA 167 pass through funds to help develop 41 units of multifamily housing for farmworkers in Aberdeen, South Dakota, and 30 units in Fairbault, Minnesota.

The UMOS W-2 workforce development was the top overall performer among W-2 agencies in Milwaukee County. Staff at the UMOS Job Center, on average, now assists 20,000 customers per month.

Ruben Burgos was selected as the 2013 UMOS Hispanic Man of the Year, Maria Castrejon-Perez as the UMOS Hispanic Woman of the Year, Mayra Alaniz, UMOS Hispanic Youth of the Year, and Jimmy and Elena Castaneda and Family as the UMOS Hispanic Family of the Year.

The UMOS Job Center, on average, now assists 20,000 customers per month.

Ruben Burgos was selected as the 2013 UMOS Hispanic Man of the Year, Maria Castrejon-Perez as the UMOS Hispanic Woman of the Year, Mayra Alaniz, UMOS Hispanic Youth of the Year, and Jimmy and Elena Castaneda and Family as the UMOS Hispanic Family of the Year.
The UMOS Board and Staff participate in annual strategic planning retreat in Fontana, Wisconsin.

The UMOS Child Development Division continued to provide environments and opportunities that allow families and children to develop their full potential. Children, families and communities have historically been at the center of UMOS core commitments. Children in the child development program showed gains in each Head Start development domain.

Jose Martinez was selected as the UMOS Employee of the Year in 2013.

To engage the entire family and increase participation, 12 fatherhood activities were hosted by Migrant Head Start staff.

The UMOS Latina Resource Center touched the lives of 2,000 adults, youth, and children through nine different programs.

UMOS began the first year of a multi-million dollar performance-based contract as one of two agencies selected to operate the Governor’s Transform Milwaukee Jobs Program.

UMOS staff worked with 52 persons identified by law enforcement agencies and partner agencies as victims of human trafficking.

The amount of food distributed through the food pantry increased to 571,801 pounds.

Jose Ruano was selected as the 2014 UMOS Hispanic Man of the Year, Dora Zuniga as the UMOS Hispanic Woman of the Year, Caroline Maria Dannecker, UMOS Hispanic Youth of the Year, and Pedro Martinez and Family as the UMOS Hispanic Family of the Year.

Vangpao Lee was selected as the UMOS Employee of the Year in 2014.

Lupe Martinez received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee for 45 years of service at UMOS, 40 years as president/CEO.

UMOS hosts Annual Farmworker Appreciation Day Picnic for over 400 migrant farmworker families, friends, vendors and elected officials.

Lupe Martinez received the 2014 Legacy Award from Omega School for 45 years of service to the community.

UMOS and Lupe Martinez were recognized by the American Heart Association-Milwaukee for dedication to the community.

Lupe Martinez received the Bravo Entrepreneur’s Award from BizTimes Magazine (Milwaukee).

UMOS was recognized by the Milwaukee Historical Society for 50 years of service.

Lupe Martinez received recognition for 46 years of service and UMOS received recognition for 50 years of service from the Wisconsin Social Services Association.

UMOS Celebrates its 50th Anniversary.
UMOS cuts ribbon to open a new office in Florida City, Florida, adding to the states of Minnesota, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin.

UMOS believes a comprehensive approach to workforce development means substantial employer engagement, deep community connections, career advancement, human service supports, as well as industry-driven education and training.

UMOS was awarded a $4 million Tech Hire grant and an historic workforce development partnership was established between the Menominee Nation and UMOS.

UMOS successfully competed for and was awarded two additional “Transitional Jobs” performance-based workforce development contracts for $2.3 million for Southeastern and Northeast Wisconsin.

UMOS was awarded a $4 million grant to implement the Home Energy Assistance Program in Kenosha County, Wisconsin, serving 6,752 households.

UMOS remains the only nonprofit performance-based contractor in Milwaukee, Wisconsin that operates the Wisconsin Works (W-2) program; all others are for-profit corporations.

UMOS was awarded an additional $4 million grant to serve four additional counties in Central Wisconsin.

UMOS was awarded a third Transitional Jobs Program grant to serve four additional counties in Central Wisconsin.

UMOS adds the Back to School event to its list of corporate and community events, distributing 500 back packs filled with school supplies.

The UMOS Latina Resource/Immigration Services division was selected by the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Program under contract with Teaching, Mentoring Communities (TMC) for decades, UMOS finally gained Interim Grantee status to serve a portion of Wisconsin as an independent agency. UMOS applies to be the regular Grantee after the interim period ends.

UMOS added a ninth corporate event: Cerveceros Taiglate in conjunction with the Milwaukee Brewers Major League Baseball Team.

For the fourth consecutive year, UMOS was awarded a third Transitional Jobs Program grant to serve four additional counties in Central Wisconsin.

The Community Learning Center After School Program was one of three Milwaukee Public School programs, out of 58, recognized by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for the success of its “intentional classroom design and professional development” initiative.

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, awarded UMOS and its partner, LOTUS Legal Clinic, a 3-year, Legal Assistance for Victims grant to address the needs of non-intimate partner sexual assault/ human trafficking victims. This grant gives UMOS the opportunity to provide these specific services throughout Wisconsin.

Participants completing the National Farmworker Jobs Program in Missouri earned 26% higher wages than the national program performance goals.
The UMOS Health Promotions Department continued to use the latest detection technology in the fight against HIV.

The UMOS TechHire Program partnered with local companies in the Milwaukee area, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections and Milwaukee Area Technical College, to develop a customized Computer Numerically Controlled Operators training program for those currently incarcerated that could lead to careers earning $30,000 to $55,000 per year upon release.

UMOS W-2 Staff were recognized as the number one program performer in Milwaukee, Wisconsin by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.

The UMOS Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Program was awarded two contracts for $3.1 million to serve 206 children in Arkansas and the Missouri Bootheel.

Maria Watts served as interim board chair. Ben Obregon was elected board chair at the UMOS Annual Corporation Meeting in July 2019.

LULAC National selects UMOS to host a press conference in the corporate headquarters board room to kick off their 2019 national conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The UMOS Breakfast with Santa event sets a record by providing almost 3,000 kids and parents with a free McDonald’s breakfast and wrapped gift from Santa.

UMOS partners with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to develop assessment tools and implement practices that better serve clients with mental health issues.

UMOS Job Center and other programs had over 300,000 customer contacts.

Lupe Martinez, President and Chief Executive Officer, celebrates 50 years of service with UMOS.

The UMOS Latina Resource Center and Health Promotions Department moves into the UMOS Center consolidating most Milwaukee, Wisconsin provided programs and services under one roof.

UMOS National Farmworker Jobs Program staff distribute personal protection equipment (PPE) to migrant farmworkers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while the food pantry accepts donations to meet the 177% increase in community food assistance demands, also due to COVID-19.

Sold the property located at 1644 South 9th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Paid off the $7 million mortgage on the UMOS Center and headquarters: 6 years ahead of schedule.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UMOS cancels many events: FunFest, Cerveceros Tailgate, Mexican Independence Parade and Festival, Hispanic Awards Banquet.

UMOS receives $1 million in funding for farmworkers from an anonymous donor advised fund at The Chicago Community Foundation.

UMOS celebrates its 55th anniversary.