

Organization Name: [Mujer Al Volante, Superación Constante](#)

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Organization Interviewees: Jacqueline Garcia Castillo, Ana Lisa Lazaro, Veronica Cedillo

Impact 100 GRT Interviewers: Andrea Radosevich and Katrina Russell

Application Link: [Click here](#)

Organization Mission: Mujer al Volante, Superación Constante's mission is to support low-income immigrant and refugee women and mothers to *take the steering wheels of their lives*.

What are the compelling reasons for Impact 100 to partner with this organization?

Mujer al Volante (MAV) was founded based on recognition that driving was the first step towards empowerment, personal development and independence for Latinx women that could lead to the means to combat economic violence against women. Started as a way to enable Latinx women to get their driver license, MAV has evolved into many additional programs that provide opportunity for evolution and advancement. Their approach to empowerment identifies financial, social, and family hurdles and sets up strategies and resources to successfully assist mothers and women to realize their potential while gaining mobility, self-respect, skills, and confidence to self-advocate. Ability to drive benefits not only the individual woman, but the entire family and creates a positive impact on their community. MAV is the first organization in the state of Washington, and from what they know, one of the only organizations in the country that supports women by teaching them how to obtain their driver's license. The name "Mujer al Volante" challenges a sexist Latinx American saying – "mujer al volante, peligro constante" – which translates to "woman driving, constant risk." MAV Founder and Executive Director said: "I absolutely wanted to reverse that saying, so I called the organization 'Mujer al Volante, Superación Constante,' which translates to 'woman driving, constant improving'."

Do you have any reservations about this organization as a potential grantee partner for Impact 100? None.

What does the organization do?

MAV's flagship program is Taking the Steering Wheel of My Life, a no-cost driver education course that prepares immigrant and refugee women to pass the written driver's test and get their learner's permit. Participants who pass the written test can apply for a MAV scholarship for 10 hours of driving lessons with a certified driving instructor. Many of the women who participate in the course come from immigrant communities where women do not traditionally have the same autonomy as men. Getting a driver license is the first step to unlocking greater independence and power for the women. In addition to the core driving program, MAV offers the following programs that empower immigrant women in other areas:

- Driving My Finances (Banking and financial literacy)
- Driving My Business (Starting and running a small business)
- Driving the Computer (Computer literacy)
- Driving the Democracy (Voting and civic engagement)
- Driving My Leadership (Developing women as community leaders)
- Taking the Steering Wheel of my Health (Health education)

Who does the organization serve?

MAV is located in south King County (Federal Way), home to the most diverse population in WA state with over 120 languages spoken. MAV expanded beyond its initial focus on the LatinX community to serve additional low-income immigrant, refugee and asylee women, prioritizing those immigrant communities where women have traditionally had limited independence. The communities currently served, and languages offered, include Arabic, Dari, English,

French, Kurdish, Pashto, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish and Ukrainian. MAV helped change the lives of over 170 women in 2023.

How does the organization reflect, maintain proximity to and stay accountable to the community it serves?

MAV's founder and Executive Director, Jacqueline Garcia Castillo, is an immigrant herself and has created a community of women immigrants who share experiences, needs and desires. Their internal team is composed of 5 women of color who share culture, language and lived experiences with participants. Most of the team come from immigrant/refugee backgrounds, some are first-generation immigrants, and some are mothers. They also have a large supporting staff that includes 10 collaborators, 4 interpreters and 3 childcare providers. Board members reflect the community served, bringing diverse backgrounds and perspectives to the work. Most are immigrants themselves; these include an immigration attorney, a director for the office of Community Outreach for Highline college, an educational advocate for youth of color in South King County and one with experience working with nonprofits that serve immigrant and refugee communities. MAV takes feedback from the women served to continuously enhance and expand its programs to meet the needs of the community.

What inequity is the organization addressing and what is the root cause of that inequity? How is the organization addressing this?

MAV has identified a huge gap in support services for immigrant, refugee and asylee mothers and have made it their mission to fill that void with a comprehensive and empowering solution. Immigrant and refugee women with children are frequently isolated and are the victims of gender, domestic and economic violence. Learning life skills and developing personal and financial independence helps them escape this behavior and has a ripple effect on the family and community. Self-confidence attained while driving and learning practical skills helps counter diminishing, demeaning attitudes and allows them to make a positive impact in their communities.

How is the organization collaborating with other community-based organizations?

MAV works with other nonprofits and community organizations to reach women in different immigrant communities and to find language interpreters. For example, MAV has worked with the Afghan Association, the Somali Health Board, the Somali Task Force, the Ukrainian Community Center and Mother Africa. MAV has also collaborated with government organizations. The WA State DOT provides support for the driving program, and the Office of the State Treasurer provided support for the Driving My Finances program. The King County Library system has provided space for meetings and has lent laptops for the Driving My Computer program. MAV has been in discussions with credit unions to find a path for undocumented immigrant women to get car loans, since their undocumented status often excludes them from traditional bank loans.

What is the vision for the organization in 5 years?

By 2028, MAV plans to level up programs to the highest standards of quality and effectiveness by investing in internal capacity building and professional development. Aside from classroom instruction, they are in the process of becoming a certified nonprofit driving school. If successful they can offer behind-the-wheel training tailored to the needs of participants. This is an important step in their journey to expand their impact. MAV is not only dedicated to empowering immigrant mothers but also to advancing social change, promoting work life balance, and ensuring long lasting impact of the organization and the broader nonprofit sector. Mujer Al Volante seeks to lead by example for other organizations nationwide.

What is the organization's area of greatest need?

MAV always has waiting lists for its driving program but needs additional funding to offer the program more often in more languages. For example, MAV recently advertised a class for French-speaking African women; 50 women

registered but the MAV office can only fit 30-40 people for a class. For each class MAV must pay for interpreters, childcare and snacks. MAV would also like to offer more scholarships for behind the wheel lessons. A recent cohort of 22 women passed the written driving test but MAV will only be able to give 5 of them a scholarship for driving lessons. Looking ahead, MAV will also need funding to realize its goal of opening and operating the country's first certified non-profit driving school for immigrant women.

Highlight a story of impact.

MC is a 62 year old Latinx recent graduate of the MAV driving program. She sent a thank you note and photo of herself with her newly obtained driver license to MAV. MC had to overcome many challenges to reach this point. MC has a chronic medical condition that progressed to the point that she was unable to walk and needed bilateral hip replacements. She was suffering from deep depression and feelings of loss and isolation. She had a strong desire to walk again and to learn to drive. She obtained hip replacement surgery and came to MAV to get her driver license. Successfully achieving this goal has allowed her to become more independent and productive, help overcome her depression and she is now excited to be looking for a job. MAV Executive Director Jacqueline Garcia says this is only one of many similar stories!