



Rachel Garcia Guerrero

“What a privilege it is to serve on the LLC Board, whose mission is to improve the lives of Latina/o/x individuals and support their personal growth towards resiliency, and successful management of their life challenges, as well as support taking on leadership positions and discovering their own way to make a difference.”

Rachel is the proud daughter of a Bracero. Her father was commissioned and brought to the USA as part of the national Bracero program in the 1940's. Bracero comes from the Spanish word for *braso* meaning arm. The U.S. government established the 'Bracero Program' in the 1940's. U.S. government representatives traveled throughout Mexico and systematically recruited young, healthy Mexican men to return to work in the U.S. during WWII to help with the war effort. Their contributions have systematically been ignored by U.S. history. Rachel is also the daughter of a strong U.S. born Mexican mother, who like her father, never graduated from high school. Her mother became a community advocate for Latino equity in southern California where Rachel was born and raised. Her parents always stressed education as a way out of poverty. Her fathers' message to his five children was he wanted them to *“work with their brains not their backs.”* Rachel's siblings include two LA firefighters, one probation officer, one teacher and Rachel, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Also, a too familiar Latina story, Rachel was the first in her family to graduate from college and first to earn a Masters Degree.

Rachel retired from the State Department of Mental Health in 2010 and shortly afterwards joined the LLC board in 2014. Rachel's career expands over 40 years in community mental health services. In 1979, after obtaining her Masters in Social Work, she was hired as the first Spanish-speaking therapist in Yolo County and served as a Child Family therapist for over 10 years. She went on to have a successful career in public mental health administration. First, serving as a project manager for children's programs and then as Chief of the Office of Multicultural Services. As Chief of that office, and in partnership with many community stakeholders, she had the lead responsibility to develop strategies and policies to address solutions for the elimination of mental health disparities and inequities found in public mental health programs that were adversely affecting California's racial, ethnic, and cultural and LGBTQ communities. Rachel considers this the job of her dreams, hired to lead a statewide effort to seek solutions towards the elimination of health disparities. Many of the policies and programs she implemented are still in effect. Her work to create culturally competent organizations has been recognized by many national and state awards. She is currently retired but continues to work on health care disparities, through her own consulting and training practice, Guerrero Consulting.