The **Asylum Seeker Assistance Project (ASAP)** was founded in 2016 to address a longstanding service need affecting an estimated 25,000 asylum seekers and their families living in the D.C. Metro region. Our vision was to create an organization that would empower asylum seekers to rebuild their lives in the U.S. with dignity and purpose.

A lot has changed in two years. Today, asylum seekers have become the lightning rod of a divisive immigration debate. Despite the political chaos, ASAP has been inundated with messages of solidarity and pledges of support to address this ever growing need.

In less than two years of operation, ASAP’s client base has expanded by nearly 60%, our staff continues to grow, and we’ve increased our active funding partners from zero to seven. The reason behind ASAP’s success is simple: our commitment to the courageous men, women, and children we serve has never waivered.

**To our donors, volunteers, partners, and clients—thank you for your continued belief in our mission and vision.**

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**Joan Hodges-Wu**  
*Joan Hodges-Wu, MA, MSW, LGSW  
Founder & Executive Director*
The Problem

In the shadow of World War II, 145 countries came together to agree on a basic set of principles for how refugees should be treated if they went to another country seeking safety from violence and persecution.

In the resulting 1951 Refugee Convention and its followup, the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, these countries (including the US) agreed to treat refugees with compassion and to respect their human rights while their legal claims are considered.

Today, these refugees are called asylum seekers. An asylum seeker is a person who applies for refugee status from the safety of the United States. Crossing an international border does not solve all problems. For most asylum seekers, it simply marks the end of one journey and the beginning of another.

Seeking asylum is a legal act, but asylum seekers will face tremendous challenges during the prolonged legal process.

Although 44 countries accept asylum seekers, the U.S. remains the only country to deny asylum seekers access to basic services and simultaneously delay permission to work.

As of June 2018, an estimated 730,000 U.S. asylum applications remain pending. This backlog has resulted in unprecedented wait times ranging from four to eight years before legal protection is granted. Unable to work and ineligible for services that could help them meet their basic needs, many asylum seekers live in a state of uncertainty, poverty, and isolation during the asylum legal process.

The Solution

ASAP provides services to address the critical, unmet needs of asylum seekers.

The Asylum Seeker Assistance Project (ASAP) is the only nonprofit dedicated to serving the estimated 25,000 asylum seekers in the D.C. Metro region. Our mission is to support the safety, stability, and economic security of asylum seekers and their families.

Our comprehensive approach has quickly established ASAP as the go-to resource for nonprofit legal providers, pro bono attorneys, and private law firms seeking to refer their clients to non-legal services. Our model provides ASAP clients with a coordinated continuum of care, increasing the likelihood of a successful legal outcome.
OUR WORK

113 asylum seekers from 15 different countries received services from ASAP between Oct. 1, 2017 and Sept. 30, 2018.

SAFETY
via social work services

Clients report a 28% average increase in overall well-being from intake to six months.

STABILITY
via community engagement opportunities

450+ supporters met ASAP clients at numerous community events.

ECONOMIC SECURITY
via employment services

90% of clients are hired for new jobs within 150 days of program enrollment, and 67% of clients secure jobs within their chosen careers.
A BRIEF HISTORY

November 2016
Donald Trump is elected the 45th US President.

October 2017
ASAP receives its first significant funding from the DC Mayor’s Office of African Affairs.

May 2018
The Trump Administration announces its “zero tolerance” family separation policy.

June 2018
President Trump rescinds his Executive Order authorizing the separation of migrant families in response to public outrage. Attorney General Sessions challenges the right to asylum protection for survivors of domestic violence and gang violence.

September 2018
ASAP, in partnership with HIAS, is awarded a large, multi-year federal grant to provide direct services to asylum-seeking survivors of torture.

July 2016
ASAP is founded with four board members and $4,000.

April 2017
ASAP launches client services with 12 asylum seekers.

April 2018
In an effort to journey safely, a caravan of asylum seekers travels to the border to petition for asylum.

August 2018
ASAP is awarded five local government grants to provide a range of services to asylum seekers in DC and Montgomery County, Maryland.

2019
To be continued...
In 2018, ASAP launched the #HumansofASAP series on Facebook to document the diversity and humanity of asylum seekers.

Abu’s Story, ASAP’s first animated video, was created by skilled ASAP volunteer and multimedia professional, Stephanie M. Brown.
In our first full year in operation, ASAP raised $98,387.

As our promise to you, we keep ASAP running efficiently.
ASAP wouldn’t exist without our supporters. Everything we do is made possible because of your generosity, enthusiasm, and support. You donate online, mail in checks, volunteer at events, and even give up your birthday presents to help us do what we do.

A special thank you to our 2018 event co-sponsors:
- The National United Methodist Church
- All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church
- Human Rights Campaign
- The University of DC David A. Clarke School of Law
- No Lost Generation, Georgetown University
- No Lost Generation, George Washington University

ASAP’s Board:
- Cindy Hallberlin, JD Chair
- Lindsay Muir Harris, JD, LLM Vice Chair
- Olivier Poirot, CPA Treasurer
- Tiffany Lung, MBA Secretary
- Fatima Akhtar, MBA Member
- Ty Cobb, JD Member
- Tracey D’Angelo Member
- Susan Klavens Hutner, JD Member
- Anam Rahman, JD Member
- Pablo Tercero-Alvarado, MBA Member