

**THE  
ASYLUM  
SEEKER  
ASSISTANCE  
PROJECT**

*ANNUAL REPORT | 2018*

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 wavered.

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

*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

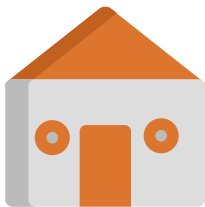
**ASAP provides services to address the critical, unmet needs of asylum seekers.**

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*

+



## **STABILITY**

*via community engagement opportunities*

+



## **ECONOMIC SECURITY**

*via employment services*

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

**450+**  
supporters met ASAP clients at numerous community events.

**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**

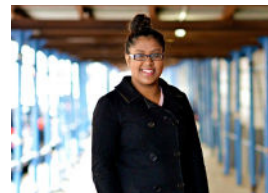
*ASAP is awarded five local government grants to provide a range of services to asylum seekers in DC and Montgomery County, Maryland.*

## **2019**

*To be continued...*

# ASAP STORIES

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

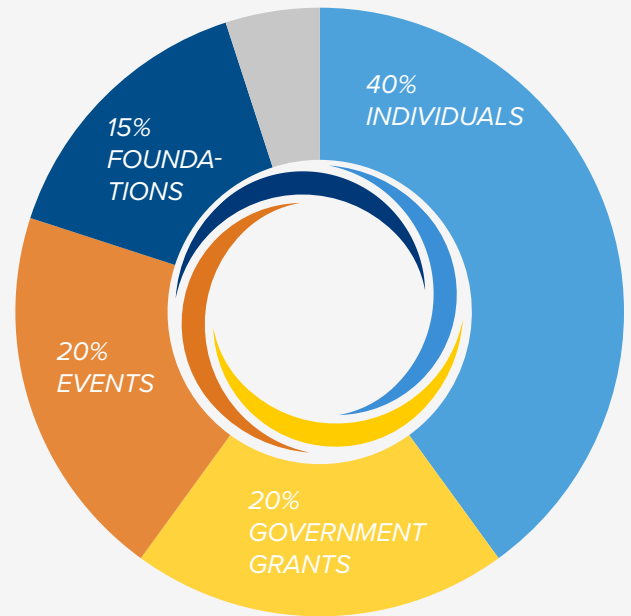


**Abu's Story**, ASAP's first animated video, was created by skilled ASAP volunteer and multimedia professional, Stephanie M. Brown.

# FINANCIALS

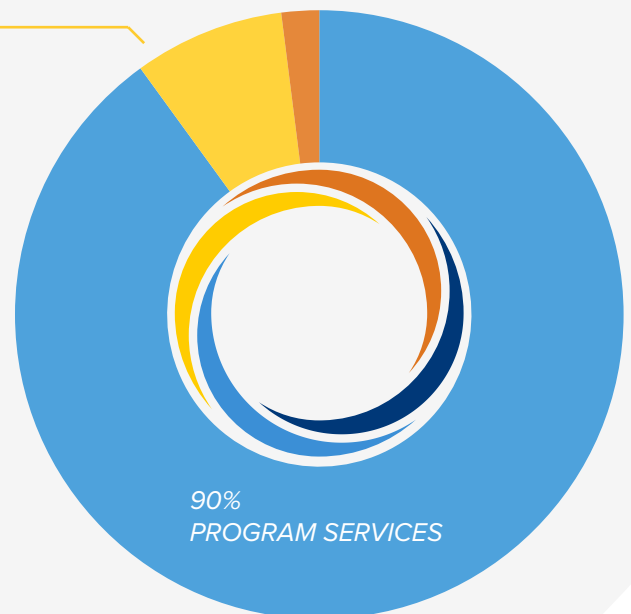
In our first full year in operation, ASAP raised \$98,387.

5%  
CORPORATIONS



2%  
DEVELOPMENT

8%  
MANAGEMENT  
& OPERATIONS



As our promise to you, we keep ASAP running efficiently.

# SUPPORTERS

**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*

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*Member*

Tracey D'Angelo  
*Member*

Susan Klavens Hutner, JD  
*Member*

Anam Rahman, JD  
*Member*

Pablo Tercero-Alvarado, MBA  
*Member*







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THE

# ASYLUM SEEKER

## ASSISTANCE PROJECT