

# 2023 IMPACT REPORT



# IMPACT THIS YEAR

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# A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Dear Friends,

The first time I learned about Reza's journey, I was reminded of the saying:

**"DO NOT PRAY FOR FAIR WEATHER.  
PRAY FOR COURAGE."**

Born in Afghanistan, Reza worked hard to build a good life for himself and his family until the Taliban overthrew the Afghan government in August 2021.

Overnight, Reza's work educating women at a regional university, coupled with his Hazara ethnicity, made him a target. Unable to board an evacuation flight, Reza applied for visas to 10 different countries before he was granted entry to Brazil. From there, he traveled thousands of miles by foot, car, and train to reach his final destination: Woodbridge, Virginia. Reza had made it to the U.S., but now he felt lost. Unsure what to do next, Reza contacted AsylumWorks at the suggestion of a friend. It was here, Reza said, that he found what he was looking for. It was here, at AsylumWorks, that he felt human again.

This past year has been marked by extraordinary achievements for AsylumWorks. As detailed in our Annual Report, AsylumWorks provided life-changing services to 459 individuals and families from 48 countries. We also expanded existing programs and launched new initiatives to ensure no one feels invisible or forgotten.

Because of your generosity, our team continues to guide newcomers like Reza toward a brighter future, anchored by the possibility of real and lasting change. Thank you for your continued belief in our mission and vision. We are deeply grateful.

Sincerely,



Joan Hodges-Wu, MA, LGSW  
Founder & Executive Director



# MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

The United States lacks a formal system to address the complex needs of individuals and families seeking humanitarian-based immigration protection.

**AsylumWorks was created to bridge this gap.**

## OUR MISSION

Founded in 2016, AsylumWorks is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization established to empower asylum seekers and other underserved newcomers to rebuild their lives safely and with dignity.



## OUR VISION

Our vision is a world where people seeking safety are uplifted by their new communities.

## OUR VALUES



### RADICAL HOSPITALITY

We believe that welcome fosters belonging.



### COURAGE

We are willing to take risks and challenge convention.



### RESPECT

We believe all people have value regardless of power or privilege.



### COLLABORATION

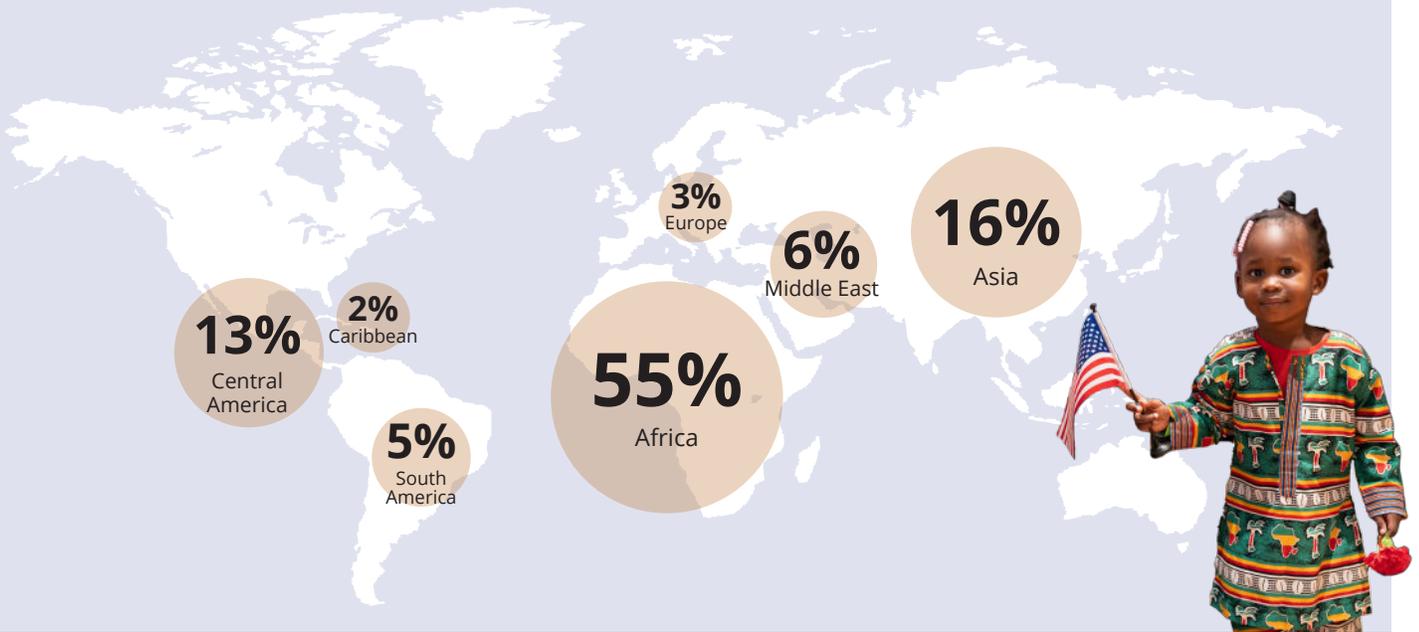
We believe that effective problem-solving requires a diversity of voices.



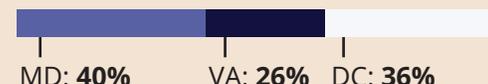
### ACCOUNTABILITY

We demand excellence from ourselves and take responsibility for our work.

# WHO WE SERVE



Client services are free and available to individuals and families living in Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Northern Virginia. We welcome newcomers regardless of language, country of origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and/or gender expression. Some of our clients arrive in the U.S. with resident status. Some do not. All have a right to apply for humanitarian protection under international and domestic law.

 <p><b>TOP 5 COUNTRIES</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethiopia</li> <li>Afghanistan</li> <li>Cameroon</li> <li>El Salvador</li> <li>Honduras</li> </ol>	<p><b>LOCATION</b></p>  <p>MD: 40%    VA: 26%    DC: 36%</p>	<p><b>NATIONALITIES REPRESENTED</b></p> <p><b>48</b></p>	<p><b>LANGUAGES SPOKEN</b></p> <p><b>33</b></p>
	<p><b>DEPENDENTS</b></p>  <p>57% arrived without dependents</p>  <p>43% arrived with dependents</p>	<p><b>TOP THREE REFERRAL SOURCES</b></p>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Word of mouth</li> <li>Immigration Attorney</li> <li>Google search</li> </ol>	
	<p><b>GENDER</b></p>  <p>48% Female</p>  <p>52% Male</p>		

# PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

AsylumWorks provides culturally and linguistically appropriate services to help asylum seekers and other underserved newcomers protect and promote their health, participate in immigration legal proceedings, and access opportunities to integrate into their new communities.



## HEALTH & WELLNESS

The Health & Wellness team works with individuals and families to address their physical, emotional, and social needs.



## EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

The Employment & Education team offers comprehensive services to help job seekers prepare for, find, and keep employment that pays a living wage.



## LEGAL NAVIGATION

The Legal Navigation program helps newcomers overcome the legal, financial, and practical barriers within the U.S. immigration system.

# OUR IMPACT

IN 2023, ASYLUMWORKS PROVIDED:

459

Individuals and families with Health & Wellness services



121

Migrants with Legal Navigation services



61

Job seekers with Employment & Education services



AFTER SIX MONTHS OF SERVICES AND SUPPORT:



95%

of clients report good or improved mental health



94%

of clients report increased or sufficient access to community resources



92%

of clients report increased or sufficient access to healthcare



82%

of clients reported increased or sufficient community involvement



88%

of clients report an increased ability to work with legal representation



**I didn't expect to talk about my feelings when I came to AsylumWorks.** My expectation was to talk about what I needed in terms of resources and information, and that was it. But you gave me the opportunity to talk about my feelings, loss, and grief. When I think about what this means to me, my eyes fill with tears.  
—Sabine, a newcomer from Cameroon



# NEW INITIATIVES

## DEVELOPING NEWCOMER TALENT TO SERVE AFGHAN FAMILIES

When the Taliban took back control of Afghanistan in August 2021, the United States evacuated over 100,000 American citizens, embassy staff, and vulnerable Afghans who supported the U.S. mission in Afghanistan. To serve the unprecedented number of new arrivals resettling to the D.C. metro area, AsylumWorks was awarded a significant, multi-year federal grant to support these newcomers.

To offer this support, AsylumWorks leveraged its nationally acclaimed fellowship program. Piloted in 2021, AsylumWorks maintains a one-year, on-the-job professional training program to teach bilingual, bicultural newcomers to

work with new clients as therapeutic case managers. In March 2023, the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement recognized this initiative as a national best practice.

This summer, AsylumWorks hired several Dari-speaking fellows to work directly with Afghan individuals and families. These fellows lead community outreach efforts to build trust within the Afghan community. Their guidance helped staff build and message services that felt safe and familiar to Afghan clients. As a result of their efforts, AsylumWorks has served a record number of Afghan clients in 2023 while simultaneously empowering newcomers to re-establish themselves as leaders within their new community.



# NEW INITIATIVES

## CELEBRATING LEGAL VICTORIES



*Click to watch a video of the celebration*



Celebrating major life milestones is an important community function. This year, AsylumWorks created a new event to recognize newcomers granted asylum or reunited with their family members.

In June, clients, staff, and supporters gathered for a special ceremony to honor these life-changing achievements. The day brimmed with joy; children flew kites, families shared stories over lunch, and cheers erupted when the ice cream arrived.

More than a celebration, this event offers newcomers an opportunity to connect and share their joy with a community that understands the hard work, sacrifice, and resilience necessary to achieve such accomplishments.

***“Seeing my clients celebrate their legal victories fills me with great happiness. I have walked in their shoes, so I know this event means a lot to them because it means a lot to me.”*** —Zelalem, AsylumWorks fellow, former client and recent asylee

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Cindy Hallberlin, J.D.**  
Chair

**Stephen Cox, MA**  
Vice Chair

**Timothy Aluise, J.D.**  
Treasurer

**Tiffany Lung, MBA**  
Secretary

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

**Rob Fifer, MBA**  
Member

**Tracey D'Angelo, MA**  
Member

**Ty Cobb, J.D.**  
Member

**Susan Hutner, J.D.**  
Member

**Pascal Masuba, MA**  
Member

**Liana Montecinos, Esq.**  
Member

**Sally Miller, J.D.**  
Member

**Richard Koffman, Esq.**  
Member

**Ken Scott, Esq.**  
Member

**Tameem Al-Talabani, MA**  
Member

**Hassan M. Ahmad, Esq.**  
Member

## INCOMING DIRECTORS



### TAMEEM AL-TALABANI, MA

Tameem is an international humanitarian professional and program manager with over fourteen years of experience both in

the Middle East and the US. Tameem has successfully launched and managed education, workforce development, psychosocial support, and emergency assistance initiatives. He has held significant positions at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the USCRI, and Global Refuge.



### HASSAN M. AHMAD, ESQ.

Hassan is the founder and principal of the HMA Law Firm. He believes that prosperity is rooted in protection from harm and

perseverance through the law. Hassan bridges the gap between clients and lawmakers, serving on advisory boards and advocating for the aspiring American community. He has spent over two decades advising individuals from over 117 countries and is fluent or proficient in eight languages.



### KEN SCOTT, ESQ.

Ken serves as legal counsel at Relman Colfax, PLLC, advising financial institutions on fair lending, consumer protection, and

financial technology. Previously, he served two tours as a Trial Attorney at the DOJ's Civil Rights Division, where he litigated fair housing and fair lending cases. Ken has also held various roles in fair lending and consumer fairness compliance at major financial institutions.

# INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL GIVING

AsylumWorks works with individuals and institutions to address the complex needs of individuals and families seeking humanitarian-based immigration protection. With their help, AsylumWorks has been able to weave together a safety net where one did not previously exist.

## **\$15,000 AND ABOVE**

Cindy Hallberlin and Joel Kanter  
Delphina Worsley  
In honor of Lauren Catron Fifer  
Sally Miller and Michael King  
Timothy Aluise and Amy Friend

## **\$10,000 - 14,999+**

Anonymous  
Joan Hodges-Wu and Wendell Wu  
Olivier and Sylvie Poirot  
Megan and Trey Blanchard  
Tracey and Dean D'Angelo

## **\$5,000 - 9,999+**

Anonymous  
Kathryn and Michael Hanley  
Richard Koffman and Jacqueline  
Duby  
Susan Klavens Hutner  
Stephen Cox

## **\$1,000 - 4,999+**

Abdullah Issa Chtewi  
Alex Slater  
Anam Rahman  
Anonymous  
Constance Bernard

Debra Fried Levin  
Dennis Baker  
Derek Fong  
Edward Meehan  
Hesha Lomar  
Joan Lombardi  
Jocelyn Vas  
Joe and Dorothy Highland  
Jonathan Ruckdeschel  
Joseph Glauber  
Josie Burke  
Kelly Geloneck  
Kenneth Scott  
Kreszentia Duer  
Laura Welch  
Liana Montecinos and Bradley  
Jenkins  
Liesbeth Kozlowski  
Michelle Bove  
Molly Singer  
Nicole Kadomiya  
Sally Madden  
Tania Ponomarenko  
Tiffany and Herbert Lui  
Ty Cobb and Greg Fuller

## **\$500 AND ABOVE**

Andrew Roberts  
Arsalan Malik  
Christine Kessides  
Dr. Min Sheng Wu and Shwu  
Meei Wu  
Rabbi Gilah Langner  
Jeffrey Halpern  
Joaquin Carbonell  
Joshua Tripp  
Julia Boles  
Lindsay Muir Harris  
Michelle and Glenn Engelmann  
Michelle Palmer  
Patricia White  
Pascal Masuba  
Rebecca Hamm  
Richard Rediker  
Shaun Hardy  
Sonika Data  
Sue Cohn  
Sylvia Horwitz  
Tameem Al-Talabani



\*A list of donors who have generously given \$500 and below is available upon request.

# INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL GIVING

ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**  
Office of Refugee Resettlement

**Up**work  
Foundation

**SOMOS**  
WASHINGTON  
**DC** **MAYOR'S OFFICE ON  
LATINO AFFAIRS**

**GREATER WASHINGTON  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**

**Welcome.US**

**THE MORRIS & GWENDOLYN  
CAFRITZ FOUNDATION**

**PHILIP L. GRAHAM  
FUND**



**GIRA**  
Georgetown International  
Relations Association, Inc.

GROOM LAW GROUP

**HERBLOCK**  
The Herb Block Foundation

**E.R.Samuels Foundation**

BET MISHPACHAH

**Jack R. Anderson  
FOUNDATION**

LAVIN FAMILY  
FOUNDATION

THE LEVELER  
FOUNDATION

**VENABLE**  
FOUNDATION

**COHENMILSTEIN**

**SIDGMORE**  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

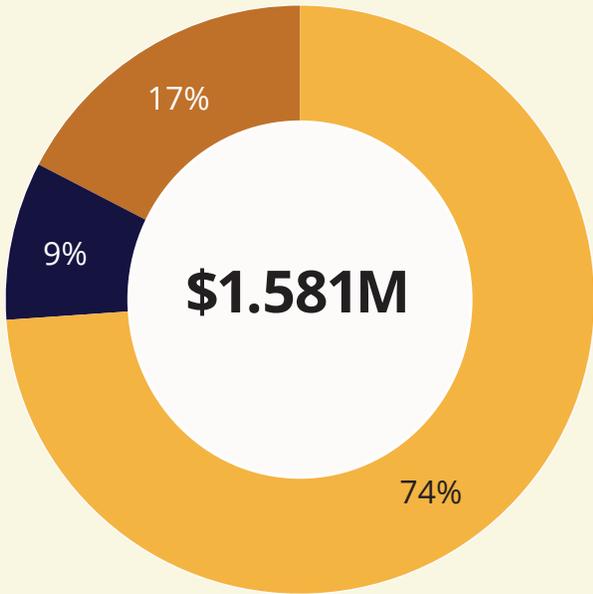
UNITED METHODIST WOMEN  
METROPOLITAN MEMORIAL

GOOD SHEPHERD  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING

# FINANCIALS

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2023

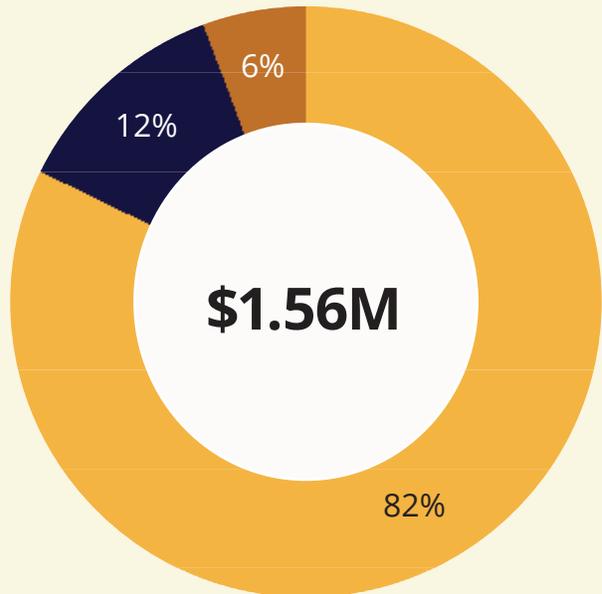


## TOTAL INCOME

- **\$1,169,040** Grants
- **\$137,624** Contracts
- **\$275,250** Contributions

## TOTAL EXPENSES

- **\$1,285,700** Program
- **\$188,954** Administration
- **\$88,908** Fundraising





## CONTACT

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[www.asylumworks.org](http://www.asylumworks.org)