



Galveston-Houston Immigrant
Representation Project

Annual Report

2021 - 2022



Galveston-Houston Immigrant Representation Project

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Dear GHIRP Friends & Supporters,

Welcome to our first Annual Report! I am excited to share news about our community impact and to lift the voices of our immigrant clients who have shown incredible resilience and strength throughout their lives.

Inspired by the idea of fundamental fairness, Liz, Vanessa and I created GHIRP to bring a new level of advocacy to meet the realities of our immigration justice system today. GHIRP launched in 2020 as a non-profit organization focused exclusively on immigration representation. Our goals were twofold: increase free, high-quality representation in Houston; and open the first organization housed on Galveston Island representing immigrants. We are well on our way to achieving those goals.

Since our start, GHIRP has grown from the three founders taking cases and building community support to 18 staff members passionately advocating for immigrant rights. Our legal teams provide universal representation to minors and adults in detention facilities, represent survivors of violence and human trafficking, and help families reunify and access safety in Galveston and Houston. Our social services coordinators ensure that clients have their basic needs met, including housing and medical and counseling services. We are energized and ready to meet the challenges ahead.

Every year, immigration law and enforcement policies have become more complicated, politicized, and draconian. This year alone, GHIRP clients have been illegally deported before their first court appearance, deprived of their right to seek asylum, and detained for reporting their violent kidnapping to the local police. GHIRP will continue to fight to undo these new, dehumanizing barriers to justice. Each time we litigate to bring a client back, advocate for basic asylum protections, or facilitate a client's release from detention, we are reminded that legal representation is a lifeline.

Our progress has been a community effort, no doubt. Our initial funders trusted us to build something great and took a chance on us before our website was live. Partner organizations and stakeholders provided their unwavering support, and our friends and family from all over the globe helped us open our doors. Let's break down barriers together for years to come.

Thank you for your support!

Chiqui Sanchez Kennedy
Executive Director





About GHIRP

Eliminating Barriers to Justice for Immigrants

We are a legal services organization serving immigrants in the Galveston-Houston area. GHIRP's robust services range from outreach and education to complex litigation. Our model relies on person-centered legal representation to advocate for clients and eliminate barriers to due process. Due process means that immigrants are heard, treated equally and given an opportunity to meaningfully participate in their legal process. Access to counsel is a critical component to due process for immigrants seeking family unity, freedom from abuse and persecution and protection from deportation.

A lawyer makes a difference. Immigrants with an attorney are up to five times more likely to be successful in their immigration case than individuals without attorneys. Immigrants have no right to appointed counsel in deportation proceedings, and inherent systemic disparities make it nearly impossible to succeed without one.



Often, low-income immigrants are eligible for lawful status but cannot access the justice system due to a lack of affordable, local, high-quality legal services. Immigration law is profoundly complex, rapidly changing and the consequences of each case have lifelong impacts. As a nimble, independent project focused exclusively on immigration legal services, litigation, and partnerships, GHIRP is uniquely equipped to positively impact the immigrant community. We believe quality legal services empower immigrants to reach their greatest potential by first achieving safety, stability and independence.



Who We Are

Our Mission

GHIRP's mission is to build a resilient, diverse community by providing comprehensive representation and holistic legal services to immigrants in need.

Our Values

We believe:

- Each and every immigrant should have a voice in their legal process.
- Safety and autonomy are fundamental to achieving one's potential.
- Diverse and inclusive communities make us stronger.





Leadership



Liz Hoefler
Managing Attorney,
Co-founder



Chiqui Sanchez Kennedy
Executive Director,
Co-founder



Vanessa Perez
Managing Attorney,
Co-founder



Alexa Sendukas
Managing Attorney



Billy Roberts
Board Member



Dalia Castillo-Granados
Board Member



Our Services

Survivors of Crime & Human Trafficking Program (SCP)

As representatives of immigrant survivors in Galveston and Houston, our model relies on person-centered representation and case management services to effectively advocate for vulnerable clients. Our team provides Know Your Rights (KYR) presentations in the community and local shelters to inform survivors about their rights, legal options and facilitate self-identification. If eligible, our legal team represents survivors throughout their immigration case to ensure they achieve safety and stability. Additionally, we collaborate with other organizations to ensure that immigrant survivors' needs are met.



Detained Adults Program

We represent adults in the four Houston-area immigrant detention facilities. Our cases range from seeking release for immigrants to reunite with their families to representing asylum seekers and complex litigation. Our team participates in the first-ever public-private partnership with Harris County to represent low-income Houstonians regardless of the merits of their case. This “universal representation” operates as a public defender model, where we are assigned to represent individuals on a first-come first-served basis, regardless of the strength of the case. Additionally, we represent detained adults who are found incompetent to proceed in immigration court without an attorney.



Our Services

Immigrant Children & Youth (ICY) Program

Our team serves unaccompanied children who are placed into Immigration Court proceedings without the right to a free attorney. We provide KYR presentations, legal consultations, social services and direct legal representation to detained and released immigrant children and youth in the Galveston-Houston area. Many of these services are conducted through a universal representation model, meaning we assist clients in navigating the complexities of the immigration process without regard to the strength of their case. We offer a full range of holistic services from fighting their deportation in court to securing permanent legal status in the United States.



General Immigration Program

We represent immigrants seeking family unity, freedom from abuse and persecution, protection from deportation and citizenship in Galveston and Houston. This program is the most responsive to the community, as we offer free legal clinics and limited legal services to immigrants who walk through our doors. In Galveston, we partner with St. Vincent's House and Clinic to provide free, monthly KYR presentations and consultations to immigrants on the Island. In both Galveston and Houston, we provide pro bono representation to individuals who do not otherwise qualify for grant funded services.



Program Impact

Survivors Program

- 49** consultations provided
- 34** clients represented
- 9** clients connected to social services
- 8** community legal clinics

Detained Adults Program

- 49** consultations provided
- 28** clients represented
- 16** clients represented under universal representation model

General Immigration Program

Galveston

- 79** household members impacted
- 170** participants received KYR presentations
- 39** consultations provided
- 10** clients represented

Houston

- 61** consultations provided
- 27** clients represented

ICY Program

- 602** kids received KYR & screening
- 169** kids received direct legal services
- 155** kids connected to social services



Our Impact

“

Thank you with all my heart for the support GHIRP has given me over the years. It was difficult to live with many obstacles in my country, but coming to the United States, GHIRP gave me many opportunities that will let me have a better future. Especially my lawyer, she has helped me a lot throughout the years. She is the best I could have had, and I am proud of all her work. I am so happy, and I know my dreams are coming true.

”

- Javier, Asylum-seeker from Guatemala

“

I sincerely appreciate the help I was given. As a woman born outside the U.S. who has been physically and emotionally abused, it's been difficult for me to get a job and pursue a career. This opportunity to apply for immigration benefits will open doors for me that I thought were impossible. It reassures me of a prosperous future, and a legacy left for my children. GHIRP gave me hope that nothing is impossible; dreams do come true. I am truly honored to have this this opportunity to learn and grow.

”

- Maria, Survivor of domestic abuse from Mexico

“

My husband, son, and I left our home in Romania and came to the U.S. to find safety. When we arrived in this country, they separated us for months; my husband and I were in detention facilities and my five-year-old son was in a shelter. I felt like my world was falling apart, like it was a horrible dream I couldn't wake up from. Many immigration attorneys refused to take my case. Finally, we found Liz. Thanks to her help we were able to get out of detention and reunite with our son. I know with GHIRP's help we can stay in this country and have a better life. I want to thank everyone at GHIRP and my attorney Liz. You are the best.

”

- Sara, Asylum-seeker from Romania

Success Stories



We represented an LGBTQ+ youth from El Salvador who feared threats, sexual abuse and discrimination if he disclosed his sexual identity. After his openly gay family member was violently attacked by gangs and survived familial abuse, he knew the same would happen to him if he remained in El Salvador. He fled to the U.S. seeking protection and a life true to himself. After winning his case, he felt safe and free for the first time in years and now he is thriving!

GHIRP represented a child survivor of human trafficking who was kidnapped and held hostage by members of a notoriously dangerous gang in her home country. In February, she was granted a T Visa, which means she can now live safely in the United States with access to crucial social services and counseling, and she can reunify with her immediate family!

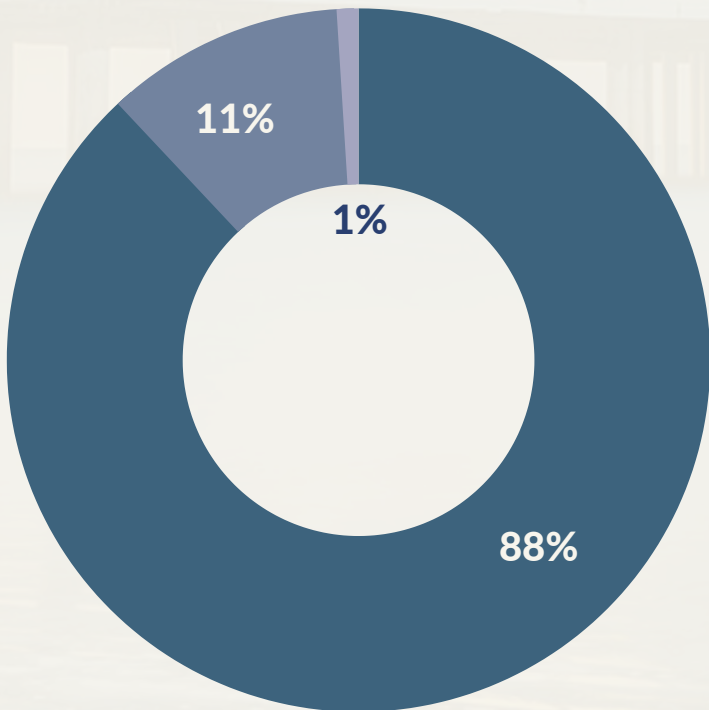
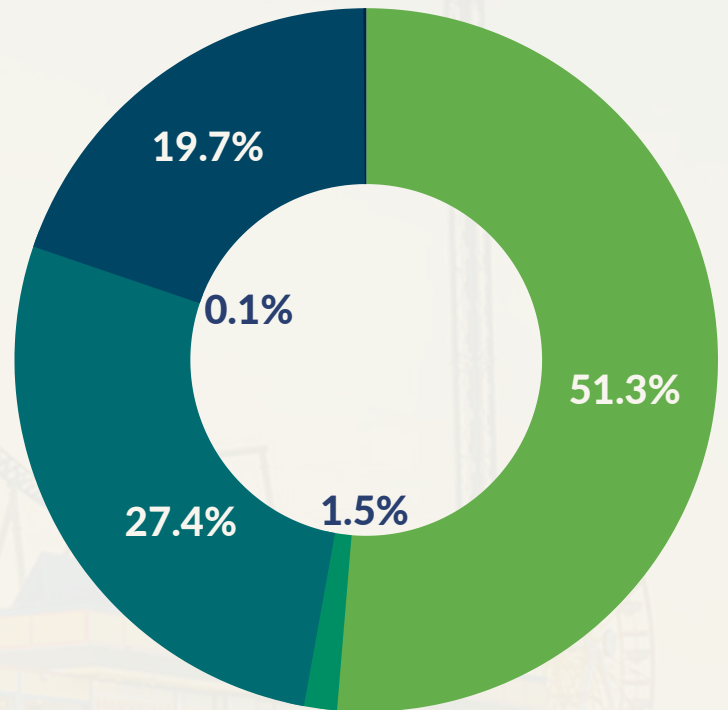


Our Finances

Funding Sources

■ National Organization Funding	\$809,654
■ Foundation Contributions & Grants	\$432,000
■ Government Grants, State & Local	\$309,982
■ Individual Contributions	\$23,870
■ Other	\$2,010

Total \$1,577,516



Operating Expenses

■ Program Services	\$895,559
■ Supporting Services	\$111,945
■ Fundraising	\$10,179

Total \$1,017,683



Thank You



- Created by Sofia from Honduras

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve undocumented immigrants, and it's because of supporters like you that we can dedicate our efforts to making a difference in their lives. It was a challenging and rewarding year; we look forward to next year and are ready to tackle the work ahead.

