

2023/2024

Annual
REPORT

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Who We Are

HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE OF NORTH TEXAS

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2029

STRATEGIC PLAN 25



MISSION

To empower immigrants facing human rights abuses through legal and social services, promoting their right to life and liberty.

VISION

We envision an America that upholds and celebrates the dignity of every immigrant, a society where the cornerstone is human rights.

INDICATORS

- Restored Dignity
- Empowered
- Opportunity
- Stability
- Sense of Community



ADVANCE STAFF EXCELLENCE

Create a positive environment to recruit & retain exceptional talent.



ACHIEVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Assess and develop efficient internal processes and systems



FORGE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Enhance and expand partnerships and leverage external resources in the community to deliver exceptional services



DIVERSIFY FUNDING SOURCES

Define and explore multiple fundraising sources to enhance organizational sustainability and support growth



ENHANCE CLIENT EXPERIENCE

Offer holistic support through legal and social services to clients in pursuit of immigration status

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Letter From the Executive Director



Dear Friends and Supporters of HRI,

I am Shalaina Abioye, and it is with great privilege that I serve as the Executive Director of the Human Rights Initiative of North Texas, having been in the role since October 30, 2023. While relatively new to this role during the 2023/2024 reporting year, my commitment to advocating for immigrant rights and supporting vulnerable communities spans over 16 of the 24 years of my professional career.

As we reflect on fiscal years 2023 to 2024 and look forward to the future, I am honored to share with you the journey of transformation and resilience that the Human Rights Initiative of North Texas (HRI) has undertaken.

The challenges we have faced have been formidable. With the backdrop of a complex immigration landscape and the disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic- in early 2020, HRI made the difficult decision to pause consultations. This lasted over three years due to mounting caseloads caused by systemic backlogs in the immigration and court systems. However, fueled by our unwavering dedication to our mission, we resumed consultations in September 2023, gradually expanding our capacity to provide crucial legal services to those in need.

To navigate these transformative times, we strengthened our team during this period with key hires, including a Legal Services Director and Senior Director of Development. Their leadership has proven instrumental in elevating our legal services and broadening our network of support and resources. They bring a wealth of experience and dedication that aligns seamlessly with our mission to serve the immigrant community with excellence.

Furthermore, our Social Services team, led by our then Director of Social Services, were unwavering in expanding our community partnerships throughout FY 2023-24. They were pivotal in assisting our clients in accessing vital resources and directly provided essential support such as emergency cash assistance, food, and toiletries. Their proactive approach ensured that our clients received comprehensive support beyond legal representation.

Letter From the Executive Director



Throughout the second half of fiscal year 2024, we focused on operational efficiency, capacity building, and strategic growth initiatives. Our commitment to expanding our programming, developing sustainable revenue streams, and adapting to the evolving immigration landscape remains steadfast.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the opportunities on the horizon. We are preparing to scale our children's program significantly, explore fee-based services to reach a broader demographic, and position ourselves to address emerging and shifting needs to align with changing landscapes.

Our newly developed Strategic Plan is central to our strategy. It was crafted in collaboration with our dedicated board, external consultants, team members, feedback from clients, and insight from community organizations. This plan sets the course for our organization as we navigate transitions and continue supporting our clients' rights and dignity with fierce commitment and focus.

As we face the future, I am eager to meet each of you personally in the coming year. Your support—whether through financial contributions, guidance, networking, or advocacy—empowers us to make a tangible difference in the lives of our community's most vulnerable. Together, we are catalysts for change, promoting justice and protecting fundamental human rights.

On behalf of everyone at HRI, I extend my deepest gratitude for your steadfast support and belief in our mission. Your commitment fuels our determination to forge ahead, knowing that together, we can achieve lasting impact and create a more just society for all.

Thank you for standing with us.

Warm regards,

Shalaina Abioye
Executive Director

Our Background



In 1999, a social worker and an attorney had an idea; build an organization that supports the most vulnerable immigrants in North Texas at every step of their journey.

Over its twenty-five years in operation, HRI has helped thousands of immigrant survivors of human rights abuses gain legal status in the United States. At the center of our work has always been our clients, who bravely come out of the shadows to seek the promises of liberty and justice that America offers.

As the organization looks forward to its next twenty-five years, we are grateful to Serena Simmons-Conelly and Betsy Healy for breathing life into this vision.



HRI is unique because of its commitment to offering services that encompass the complex needs of our clients and their families. By acknowledging that client needs go well beyond legal representation, HRI ensures that when clients leave, they have the best chance possible for a successful life.

Our Board



During this reporting period, the HRI Board was made up of attorneys, development professionals, former clients, and professionals dedicated to making the organization's mission a reality.

Justin Banta, Board Chair
VP of Development: SPCA of Texas

Meghan McCaig, Chair-Elect
Senior Associate General Counsel:
North American Partners in Anesthesia

Eric Renner, Board Treasurer
Managing Director, Alvarez & Marsal

Betty Yang, Board Secretary
Partner: Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher

Carolyn Ruiz, Previous Chair
Attorney: Office of Civil Rights,
U.S. Department of Education

***Ashlie Alaman**, Board Member
SVP of Legal & General Counsel: CleanArc

Wes Holloway, Board Member
Chief Operating Officer: CommonTeri Services

Madhvi Jayarao, MD, Board Member
Executive Management, PwC

Anita Kelley, Board Member
VP/Financial Advisor: Morgan Stanley

Richard Lakpassa, Board Member
Information Technology Professional

David Lee, Board Member
Assistant Vice President:
Curriculum Operations and Strategy at SMU

***Jonathan Lin Davis**, Sub-Committee Chair
Independent Consultant

Sarita Prabhu, Board Member
Managing VP, Legal Counsel: Gartner

***Kelley Rogers**, Board Member
Vice President Banking: JP Morgan

David Sillers, Board Member
Partner: Clare Locke

Alayna Thomas, Board Member
Retention Strategist: Magnet Culture

Ruth Villalonga, Board Member
Vice President of DEI Communications: HK
Strategies

*denotes former board members who served during this reporting period

Our Team



Shalaina Abioye
Executive Director

Margarita Alarcón
Legal Assistant

Zeyla Gonzalez
Senior DOJ Accredited Representative

Naschaly González Montalvo
Legal Assistant

Richard Lucero
Legal Services Director

Christian Piatt
Senior Director of Development

Evelina René-Bute
Senior Staff Attorney

Antonio Reyes
Staff Attorney

Legal Programs



The Legal Services Department is the backbone of HRI's work. Our dedicated team of attorneys, DOJ-accredited representatives, legal assistants, pro bonos, and interns work tirelessly to help clients navigate the complex immigration system.



ASYLUM

The asylum environment remained challenging, but HRI continued to advocate strongly for its clients seeking asylum. Over the past five plus years, a significant backlog has developed in the immigration courts and with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. This was due to the influx of immigrants entering the country. As a result, asylum seekers often wait several years to get their cases heard.

Nonetheless, HRI continues to partner with its pro bono partners to continue to provide superior representation to those immigrants who have suffered persecution in their country based on legally-protected grounds.

Legal Programs



CRIME VICTIMS PROGRAM

HRI offers representation for immigrants who are protected under the Violence Against Women’s Act (VAWA) and The Victims of Trafficking & Violence Protection Act (UVISA). These reliefs offer protection to women, men, and children who survive or are witness to certain crimes, including domestic abuse, violent crime, and trafficking and who work with law enforcement to get the perpetrator behind bars. The laws in this field are complex and over the last 25 years, HRI has obtained relief for countless survivors. We continue to seek justice for those who have been victimized.



Legal Programs



CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

HRI continues to advocate for children eligible for various humanitarian reliefs such as asylum, VAWA, UVISA, and Special Immigrant Juvenile Visa status (“SIJS”). SIJS is a form of legal relief available to children who have experienced abuse, abandonment, and neglect by one or both of their parents. Because many children leave their countries and come to the United States due to a lack of a proper caregiver, severe neglect, or familial abuse, SIJS is a necessary legal remedy for children to seek protection in the United States.

With our pro bono partners, HRI, through the SIJS program, has been successful in obtaining legal permanent resident status for numerous children who are the most vulnerable in the immigrant population. The SIJS laws can be complex, and children can only navigate SIJS relief with legal representation. We are proud to serve some of the world’s most vulnerable children in this way.



Legal Support



For those who have already obtained initial legal protection and who are therefore authorized to work legally in the U.S, HRI offers secondary support to renew work authorizations, green cards, or apply for citizenship.

Social Services



During this reporting year, the Social Services department provided comprehensive support to clients awaiting resolution of their legal cases. We identified each family's most urgent needs, connected them with our community partners, and offered guidance when they faced challenges and barriers to obtaining essential documents and services. Furthermore, we empowered our clients to become more self-sufficient by equipping them with the necessary tools and educating them on what they need to achieve success.

Typical Social Services programs include:

Back to School

We are addressing a need our clients have for back-to-school essentials. With the help of Baylor Scott and White Cardiovascular Unit, we have been able to provide the clients with their back-to-school supplies.



Social Services



Food Drives and Partnerships

Throughout the reporting period, our primary objective was to ensure food security for both our clients and the broader community. By collaborating with organizations such as Giving Fridge, Eetz App, and Catholic Charities Dallas, we provided access to fresh and nutritious food. Recognizing the lack of affordable and nutritious options faced by many in our community, we consider it paramount to connect clients to essential resources.



Our partnership with Catholic Charities Dallas allowed us to co-host food distributions with our neighbor, Dallas Area Rape Crisis Center, bringing fresh fruit, vegetables, and other essential items to our community. We have extended these services not only to our clients, but also to the broader community of downtown Dallas, ensuring that more people have access to nutritious food.



Social Services



Periodic Drives

Because of seasonal and other changing needs, we organize drives throughout the year for the following types of items:

- Hygiene items (shampoo, soap, feminine products, etc)
- Diapers and wipes
- Non-perishable food items

Appreciation Gifts

In an ongoing effort to restore sense of self-worth and personal dignity, during this reporting period, we coordinated with various beauty and self-care brands to organize surprise gifts for our clients.

Social Services



Keep Warm, Give Thanks

Historically, an event held in November has been known as the 'Clothing Bazaar,' and was renamed 'Keep Warm and Give Thanks'. This event assisted clients who were facing financial difficulties, especially in the face of the rising cost of living.

The event provided our clients with warm clothing, shoes, and essential home goods. In addition, each family received a food box provided by the Eetz Rescue App to help with their holiday meals, alleviating food-related concerns during this season.

This event also provided an opportunity for both HRI staff and clients to interact with one another. Clients had the chance to meet others, expanding their network of friends and extended family.

Social Services



Holiday Wish

HRI's Holiday Wish program gave our clients the ability to celebrate the holidays with family, without the added financial stress that so many face at this time of year. Thanks to donors like you, many of our clients can provide gifts and joy to their families through this gift giving program- without choosing between paying a bill late and getting that shiny new bike for their child.



Volunteers



The Heart of Human Rights Initiative

Pro Bono Attorneys

Volunteer attorneys donate their time and talent to represent HRI's clients, and every pro bono is supervised by an HRI Staff Attorney who provides expertise and guidance. HRI offers continuing legal education to attorneys who want to learn more about immigration law.

Non-Legal Volunteers

HRI utilizes volunteers with a variety of talents to support our clients, including interpreters who help our clients share their stories with our staff, attorneys, and the courts, and doctors and mental health professionals who help clients stay healthy and process their unique traumas.

Internships

HRI offers internships to students in every phase of their education who want to learn more about immigration law or nonprofit work. We partner with universities like UT Arlington and University of Chicago to offer undergraduate internships for students interested in human rights.



Volunteers



By the Numbers

2023

Volunteer Hours:

4,443

Value:

\$1,845,517



2024

Volunteer Hours:

2,145

Value:

\$1,401,485

Programming By the Numbers



Legal Services FY2023

Asylum

Participants: 136

Litigations: 521 cases

Success Rate: 97%

Crime Victims

Participants: 205

VAWA Success Rate: 100%

UVISA Success Rate: 99%

Unaccompanied Children

Participants: 71

Success Rate: 98%



Programming By the Numbers



Social Services FY2023

Total # of Participants: 125

Pounds of Food Distributed: 238

of Referrals Made: 148

Financial Assistance Provided: \$51,289

Holiday Wish Families Served: 38

Programming By the Numbers



Legal Services FY2024

Asylum

Participants: 120

Litigations: 700 cases

Success Rate: 95%

Crime Victims

Participants: 180

VAWA Success Rate: 95%

UVISA Success Rate: 95%

Unaccompanied Children

Participants: 35

Success Rate: 95%



Programming By the Numbers



Social Services FY2024

Total # of Participants: 557

Pounds of Food Distributed: 200

of Referrals Made: 175

Financial Assistance Provided: \$30,000

Holiday Wish Families Served: 35

Support By the Numbers



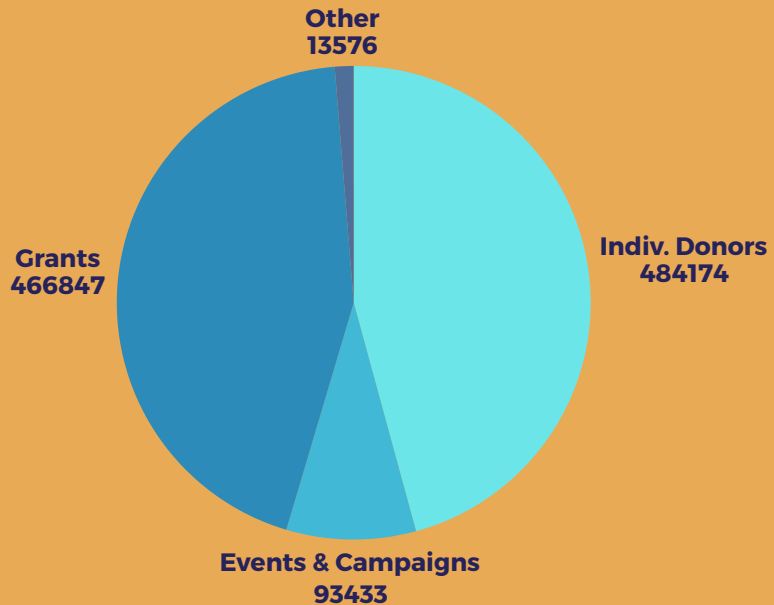
FY 2023

GRANTS: \$466,847

**INDIVIDUAL DONORS:
\$484,174**

EVENTS: \$93,433

OTHER: \$13,576



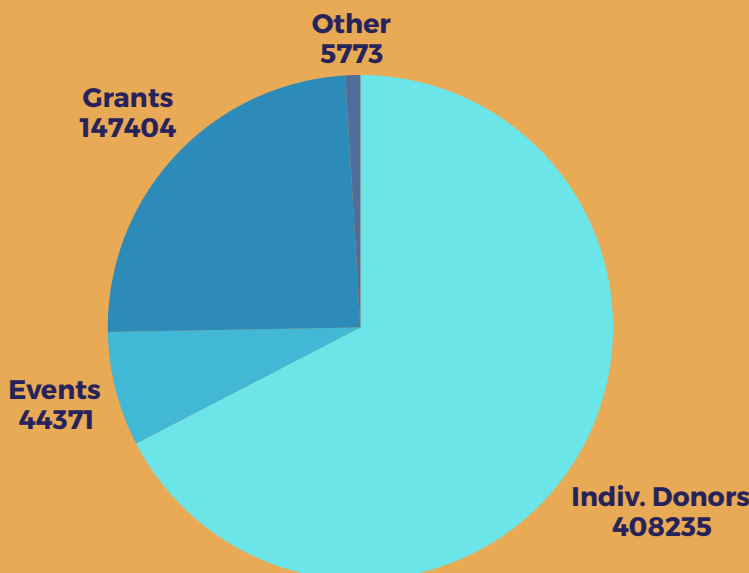
FY 2024

GRANTS: \$147,404

**INDIVIDUAL DONORS:
\$408,235**

EVENTS: \$44,371

OTHER: \$5,773



Driven by a Vision



Mention the topic of immigration in social circles or online, and you're sure to get an impassioned response. Ninety percent of Americans surveyed believe that immigration is a concern; we can agree. We may disagree about possible solutions, but we know the system is broken and needs to change.

Here at HRI, not only do we believe that change is possible, but we see the change happening every single day right here in our community. While we aren't able to change the broader environment in which we operate, we are setting new courses for individuals and families who otherwise would have little hope of living a life of dignity, stability, empowerment, opportunity, and community.

That's the kind of change we can initiate, and we're grateful you're right there with us every step of the way.

It's a particularly challenging time for nonprofit organizations, let alone those seeking justice for individuals and families coming to the U.S. to seek refuge. Despite these adversities, we have cast a new vision and mission, adopted a new strategy, and undertaken remarkable restructuring efforts to keep us effectively and efficiently focused on fulfilling our purpose for the next 25 years.

There are many challenges, and sometimes hope feels hard to find. But we will not stop until the vision inscribed at the feet of the Statue of Liberty is realized:

*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

Christian Piatt
Senior Director of Development

Major Supporters



HRI is grateful to all of our supporters! This section highlights individuals who gifted the organization \$1,000 or more in this reporting period.

\$1,000 to \$4,999

Adam Zaner
Andrew Freeman
Andy B. Nace
Anna Whitener
Ashlie Alaman
Ashton Gary
Barbara Clay
Bill Holston
Brent Christopher
Camilla Thomason
Carolyn Ruiz
Catherine Costigan
Catherine Parsley
Cherish Heard
Corey Sadowsky
Daisy O Wehe
Daniel Miller
David Pryor
Dell and Oscar F. Gerster
Diane Mims
Ed Wagner
Elena Westbrook
Ellen J McVey
Eric A. Renner
Fremy salazar
Gary Neil Gross
Ginger Kruiswyk
Godwin Dixon
Greg Swalwell
H. Kate Hopkins
Haseena Enu
Jadd Masso
Jain Rutherford
James and Lucinda
Rosenthal
James Mihills
James Reed
Janette Sullivan

Jason Albers
Jeff and Margaret Jacobs
Jeff Kaplan
Jennifer Kreuziger
Jennifer Weil
Jeremiah Scott
Jessica La Patra-Greene
Jimmie Hudson
John Mark Hollingsworth
Joseph Cross
Justin Banta
Kamie Maddocks
Kathleen Winder
Kavita Khandekar Chopra
Kelly G Nash
Kelsea Miles
Kelvin E Thompson
Kristen Sillers
Kristin Hanson
Lisa Dawson
Lisa White Shirley
Maria D Gea Arredondo
Mark Pizzato
Matthew Lloyd
Natalie Parker
Nicole Kamprath
Norman Wagner
Oscar Gerster
Patricia A. Cook
Patricia Freshwater
Patty Walnick
Pedro A Sanchez
Peter Agüero
Robert Scott Hudson
Rocio Garcia
Roger and Susan Shake
Ronald M. Hanson
Rosalie Durkot
Rupal Gupta

Sanjeeb Samanta
Sreedhar Rayudu
Thomas Pigeon
Tillman Rodabough
Tolesa Dera
Tyler Milton
wendy koster
Yvette Wade
Yvonne Sheffield

\$5,000 to \$19,999

Alissa K Christopher
Anita Douglas Kelley
Anonymous Anonymous
Aubrey Meyers
Barbara Kennedy
Betty L Regard
Betty Yang
Charles Lincoln Sr Allen
Charlotte Auen Ashley
Christi J. Offutt
Don Glendenning
Hunter Hunt
John and Regina Dupree
Juliana Bratun
Kathleen McGavok
Kelly Rogers
Kerry Moskop
Lisa Simmons
Loretta Feehan
Pat and Colleen D'eramo
Patricia Ann Engen
Paul and Cindy R. Obermeyer
Peter Greenfield
Rebecca & John Halperin &
Storey
Robert Graham
Roy Cisneros
Ward Stauffer

\$20,000+

Tom Connelly
Dean and Sally Hamilton
Elizabeth Healy
Maureen Murry
Christina Jonsson

Major Supporters



HRI is grateful to all of our supporters! This section highlights trusts, funds, or organizations that gifted the organization \$1,000 or more in this reporting period.

\$1,000 to \$4,999

Altrusa International of Downtown Dallas
American Century Investments Foundation
Community Unitarian Universalist Church
Dallas Association of Young Lawyers
Foundation
Gibson Dunn & Crutcher
Good Space
Gulf Coast Community Foundation
Hammond Family Foundation
J Crayton Pruitt Foundation
J. Thomas and Janet Rajala Nelson Fund
Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP
Life in Deep Ellum
Love Life Foundation
Spanish World School
Texas Instruments Foundation
Texas Women's Foundation
Willis Charitable Foundation

\$5,000 to \$19,999

AT&T
Carver Foundation
Curious Iguana
DLA Piper
Fidelity Investments
Howard and Paula Trienens Fund
John DeWitt Gregory Charitable Trust
Locke Lord LLP
State Bar of Texas - Corporate Counsel Section
State Bar of Texas - Immigration & Nationality Section
The Winfield Foundation

\$20,000+

Akin Gump LLP
Dykema Gossett PLLC
G. Rollie White Trust
Texas Bar Foundation
The Meadows Foundation
Women of Saint Michael and All Angels

CONNECT WITH HRI



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