

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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**Immigration  
Counseling  
Service**



# Executive Director Message

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In 2023, ICS celebrated our 45th anniversary of achieving equity and justice for our immigrant and refugee neighbors in Oregon and southwest Washington. Our advocacy and accessible legal services have endured a long road of progress and obstacles. Our work—and our world—have been immeasurably shaped by decades of global conflicts, racial injustice, climate change, and pandemics.

Throughout these tumultuous years, the team at ICS has risen to the challenge time and time again to provide life-changing legal support. We've worked tirelessly on behalf of immigrants in danger of deportation, asylum seekers fleeing persecution, families trying to reunify across borders, DACAistas, unaccompanied children, LGBTQIA+ immigrants, and survivors of human trafficking and other serious crimes.

ICS has worked to uphold Oregon's status as the nation's first Sanctuary State since it was first enacted in 1987. We have achieved access to driver's licenses and state tuition equity for undocumented Oregonians. Immigrants facing deportation in Oregon now have a right to pro-bono universal representation, a major advancement in immigrant rights that is now being replicated across the country. And in 2023, Oregon became one of six states to offer health care coverage to all eligible residents regardless of their immigration status.

For 45 years more, we are dedicated to building justice, every day, despite whatever challenges may arise. We would not be where we are today without our staff, board members, community partners, donors, and avid allies. Thank you for everything you have done to make this work possible.

**Frank Garcia**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# 2023 ACHIEVEMENTS



**1,600+ LEGAL CASES & CONSULTATIONS**



**\$19,000 PROVIDED TO COVER LEGAL CONSULTS & COURT FILING FEES**



**9,700+ ENGAGED IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH**



**480 HUMANITARIAN VISAS & ASYLUM CLAIMS**



**340 CASES TO SUPPORT UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN & THEIR FAMILIES**



**125 WORK PERMITS, RESIDENCY CARDS, & CITIZENSHIP**



**210 PETITIONS TO REUNITE FAMILIES**



**95 DACA RENEWALS**



**420 INDIVIDUALS & ORGANIZATIONS DONATED TO ICS**

# Our Impact

Like many immigrants, our client Pablo (right) faced many delays and frustrations with the immigration system. The U.S. government only allows a limited number of green cards each year and there is high demand, causing many challenges and creating a protracted process. Despite these challenges, ICS did everything we could to ensure Pablo's application was successful. He received his green card in 2023!



**“[ICS] has been helping my parents since I was a child. From paperwork, to renewing their residency, etc. Always very professional and direct. Can’t say enough good things about them!”**

**-Amalia**

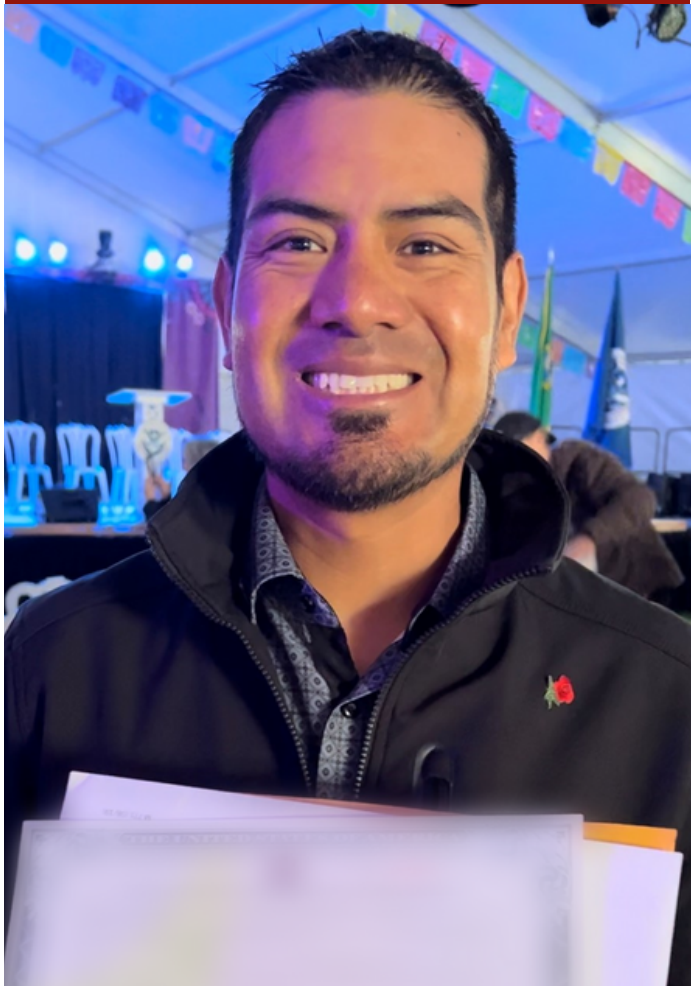
**“ICS personnel are human beings that know exactly what immigrant families are going through. They help you like a family member even though they have to comply with the rule of law. But they do the best they can to help you out. Thank you very much ICS for helping my big family.”**

**-Naro**



# Millions Waiting

**Millions of immigrants in the United States are left waiting every year while their cases hang in limbo. This is how ICS is helping.**



As the United States faces an unprecedented number of new arrivals on its border, 4.3 million immigrants across the country are awaiting decisions from the U.S. government on their appeals for asylum, employment authorizations, other immigration benefits, and—ultimately—lawful permanent residency and citizenship. These delays leave our clients facing uncertainty and struggling to make ends meet while they wait.

Meanwhile, systemic delays imperil 1.7 million immigrants who are awaiting court dates or currently in proceedings in immigration courts. Immigrants often wait 5 years or more for their court dates but become unable to continue fighting deportation because they become ineligible during the waiting period or lack the resources for ongoing legal representation.

Slow immigration processing means that ICS often supports our clients for years—if not decades. In 2023 alone, ICS filed 100 permanent resident and citizenship applications to help our clients cross the immigration finish line and attain legal status. So far, 13 of those applications have been approved! We are so honored to share this important milestone with our clients—like Rogelio—who have persisted for so long to achieve their dreams of immigration.

**Our client Rogelio was one of 50 new U.S. citizens from 25 countries sworn in during a ceremony on Cinco de Mayo in 2023. In his message to ICS, Rogelio says, “I am very grateful for all the support you have given me. For the staff who do a great job. For this achievement that—thanks to God—I was able to fulfill. I am very happy with the work that ICS did and that you never left me alone. Thank you so much.”**

# Why Asylum Matters

Jessica\* and her three boys fled their home, a small village in Guatemala, and traveled more than 1,000 dangerous miles to seek asylum in the United States. [\*Note: Names and details in this story have been altered to protect Jessica's identity.]

But what could make someone run for so long and so far, facing an uncertain future? Cartels and other criminal organizations controlled the area where Jessica's family was living; these groups extorted Jessica's husband and threatened their sons with gang recruitment. When they refused, Jessica's husband was killed, and the threats did not stop.

Despite her legal right to seek asylum, Jessica was turned away at the border to await an asylum hearing.



Jessica was then kidnapped and separated from her children. When she escaped and was finally admitted into the United States, she had to wear an ankle monitor for two more years before she could even tell her story before a judge.

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## Who are refugees and asylum seekers?

A refugee is someone who has fled their country because of war, violence, and/or persecution. The risks to their safety and life were so great that they felt they had no choice but to leave and seek safety elsewhere. Refugees have a right to international protection.

An asylum seeker is also someone who seeks international protection from dangers in their home country, but whose refugee status hasn't been determined legally. Asylum seekers must apply for protection in the country of destination—meaning they must arrive at or cross a border to apply. Then, they must prove that they meet the criteria to be covered by refugee protections. Not every asylum seeker will be recognized as a refugee.

ICS guided Jessica throughout her asylum case, helped reunite her family, and secured work authorization so she could find a stable job, home, and education for her children.

Like Jessica's family, thousands of people across Central America have fled extreme danger — murder, kidnapping, violence against women and children, and forced recruitment by gangs. Those arriving at the U.S. border are often depicted as "illegal" immigrants despite their right to seek asylum.

Today, the right to asylum in the United States remains under threat as the U.S. government continues efforts to block asylum for the vast majority of people who come to our southern border seeking protection.

ICS continues to advocate for the rights of all immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers and remains committed to ensuring our government honors its responsibility to protect the rights of vulnerable migrants.

**Many asylum seekers are unaccompanied children. Each year, thousands of children fleeing poverty, war, gangs, or abusive family relationships enter the U.S. as unaccompanied children separated from their parents or legal guardians.**

**ICS is the sole non-profit organization providing legal services for unaccompanied children in Oregon. Without legal representation, these children are deported in 9 out of 10 cases.**

**"Our immigration system is not designed or equipped to humanely handle its responsibility to the most vulnerable people fleeing persecution," explains ICS Executive Director Frank Garcia. "This is why organizations like ICS must step up to provide services."**





# Protecting DACAistas

Since 2012, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program has provided a vital lifeline for 11,000 young people in Oregon alone – and hundreds of thousands of immigrants nationwide who were brought to the United States as children.

DACAistas, like our client Maria, have made tremendous contributions to our communities in Oregon and southwest Washington. Immigrants have represented 1 in 7 frontline essential workers in Oregon during the COVID-19 pandemic, including administering COVID tests, providing vaccine outreach, and maintaining many of the essential jobs required to keep our state running. Immigrants are 54% more likely to be essential workers than other Oregonians.

However, DACAistas do not have the same freedoms as other Oregonians. For example, DACAistas are not allowed to travel outside of the United States without prior approval. Without this approval, DACAistas could be barred from returning to the United States. Our client Maria had an important job opportunity in Mexico but faced several months of processing time for approval. ICS was able to cut through the red tape so Maria could travel and safely return to her home and family in Oregon.

ICS continues to fight for DACAistas like Maria and the DACA program, which has protected thousands of young undocumented immigrants from deportation and allowed them to work legally and make significant contributions to our state and country.





# Sponsors & Supporters



Thank you for making our mission possible!



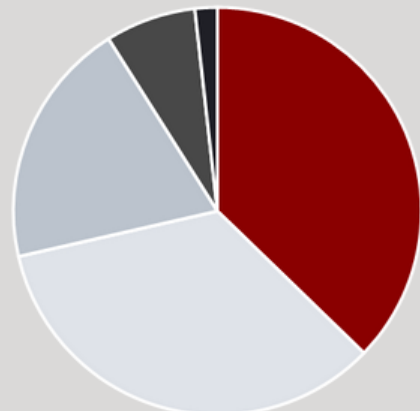
# Finances

Revenue: \$1,931,682



- Government Grants
- Foundation Grants
- Invoiced Services
- Individual Donors
- Corporate Donors

Expenses: \$2,171,853



- Client Services
- Unaccompanied Children
- Administration
- Development
- Community Outreach