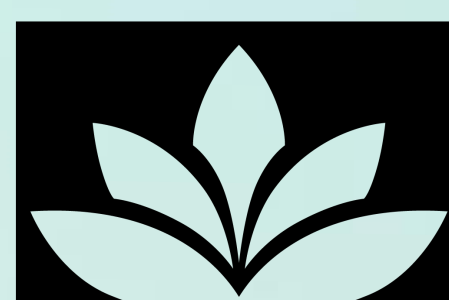




2023

# Asian Family Support Services of Austin Impact Report



**AFSSA**  
ASIAN FAMILY  
SUPPORT SERVICES  
OF AUSTIN



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24-Hour Hotline  
877-281-8371

# Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends of AFSSA,

**Sustainability.** sus·tain·a·bil·i·ty /səˌstānəˈbɪlədē/.  
*noun*  
the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level.

As a supporter of AFSSA and advocate for Asian and other marginalized survivors of abuse, your role has, and continues to, *sustain* our movement to break the cycle of violence. For 32 years, our AFSSA community has been on the frontlines, responding with safety planning and advocacy to survivors while also preventing abuse by changing culture, policies, and systems that create barriers for our people to be safe and free.

With over three decades of *sustained* successes and stronger services like transitional housing and cultural healing supports, from a warm line run by volunteers as they were available to professionally trained case managers staffing our 24/7 hotline (serving in as many as 39 languages), we hope you feel pride in our collective and continual efforts to build on your strengths, talents, and generosity. We’ve come so far for survivors in our community, we’ve reached and responded so powerfully to our community members at risk of violence; and it’s because we know that our own people deserve the same basic access to resources as others have.

And at the same time, it’s a painful reality that it’s even harder today, in 2024, to be an Asian survivor of abuse than it was three years ago. The barriers we’ve torn down in the last 30+ years are rising up and rising higher. Texas laws changed, federal laws changed, our society faces unprecedented struggles. For as many wins as there have been, there are dire and dangerous setbacks.

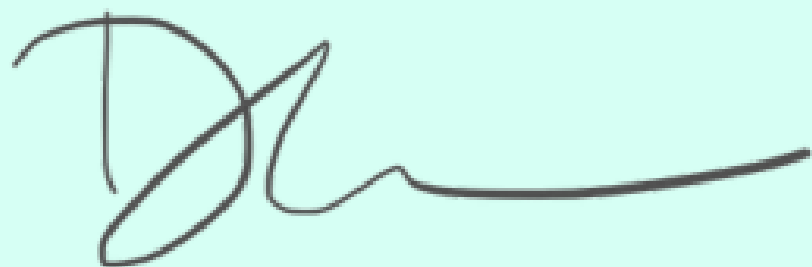
The good news is that, while these laws and setbacks create greater expense and require additional resources, they are perfectly overcome-able. *You are the life-force that has sustained safety in our communities.*

Thanks to you, we are in a strong position to face the challenges of 2024 – and we won’t give up. Our purpose is to break the cycle of violence, our promise is to keep survivors safe, and every day we rise to ensure that every community member knows their rights – in their home language. Thanks to you, we are poised to jump these higher hurdles, keep our promise, and reach our people with good news and resources where they are, as they are.

Our work isn't done yet – and we refuse to stop until it's safe for all of us.

All Heart. All Ways.

In gratitude,



**Darlene Lanham**  
Executive Director  
Asian Family Support Services of Austin





# 2023 Highlights

## 1. First Annual **Legal Fair**

In May, we hosted our first Legal Fair. We invited several law firms and other legal resources to hold information booths and give presentations so that you and the community we serve were able to learn more about legal matters and your rights. We hope that everyone who attended felt empowered and enjoyed being in community with one another.



## 2. Kicked off AAPI Heritage Month with **Austin FC**

We were honored to be highlighted by Austin FC during AAPI Heritage month. Reflecting on what AAPI Heritage month means to the community we serve, AFSSA Executive Director Darlene Lanham said, "**Let's keep lifting up our heritage, our stories, our diverse identities - because it's working! Community and belonging are protective factors that reduce risk of violence.**"



## 3. Connected with our Community at the **Silk Road Gala**

What a joy it was to celebrate with everyone this past October at the 2023 Silk Road Gala! Thank you so much to everyone who attended and showed their support for our mission of serving Asian survivors of violence. We are grateful for our co-chairs, Jocelyn and Andy Tau, our keynote speaker, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, and the entire gala committee. Thanks goes out as well to Hema Muller and Vyasara Ganesan, our two emcees who made the evening as outstanding as they are. We are eternally grateful to have a community so dedicated to supporting the movement to end domestic and sexual violence.

### 2023 Silk Road Committee

Jocelyn & Andy Tau | Co-Chairs

Vandana Agarawal · Lila Broslma · Ronald Cheng  
Samira Ghosh · Hon. Sean Hassan · Emily & Robert Lee  
Sierra Segura Lund · Carlos Salinas · Jinny Suh  
Caroline Tang · Lesley Varghese & Dr. Harry Thomas  
Sherine Thomas · Marshall Thompson  
David & Rachel Wyatt · Paul Yin





# The AFSSA Difference

## Our Mission

is to promote abuse-free Asian communities through advocacy, support, awareness, and access to social services.

## Our Vision

is a world where every Asian person is free from fear of physical or psychological harm.

### What?

Prevention, Education, and Services for survivors of violence.

### How?

Educate, Advocate, Empower.

## Free, Confidential, Culturally Informed Services

AFSSA's direct services and community education teams provide an array of services to our clients and community to meet their diverse needs. Here are some of our highlights:



24/7 In-Language Hotline



"Know Your Rights" Sessions



Crisis and Safety Planning



In-Language Services Navigation



Culturally Relevant Case Advocacy



School Based Prevention Programs



Transitional Housing



Trainings for Law Enforcement and Social Service Providers

## Our Values

### Prevent

We help each other, our clients, and the community act proactively to prevent violence by challenging and changing norms.

### Advocate

Empower self-advocacy by providing access to services and resources.

### Respond

Act as a stabilizing force in our ever-evolving environment

### Transform

Challenge ourselves and others to change the way we feel, think, and act.

"Are we doing our **PART?**" is not a slogan at AFSSA — it is our measure of success in everything we do.



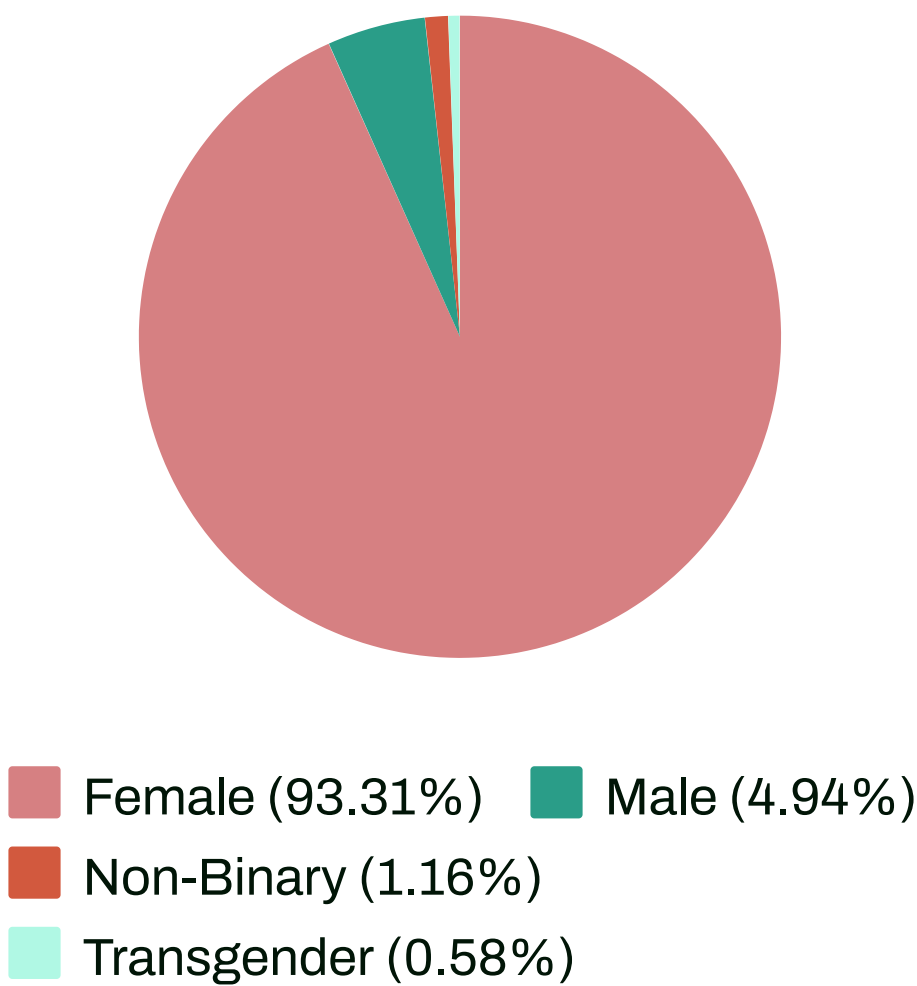
Empowerment

AFSSA's direct services team proudly serves clients pursuing an array of needs. Whether a client is seeking emotional support during a crisis or requesting referrals to attorneys to represent them in a divorce, our client advocates are fiercely advocating for their clients in the community. AFSSA is survivor-led and survivor-centered. Our staff speak 15 different languages and many come from our local Asian community. For survivors of violence, AFSSA is a place that can be trusted to understand their lives and their situations.

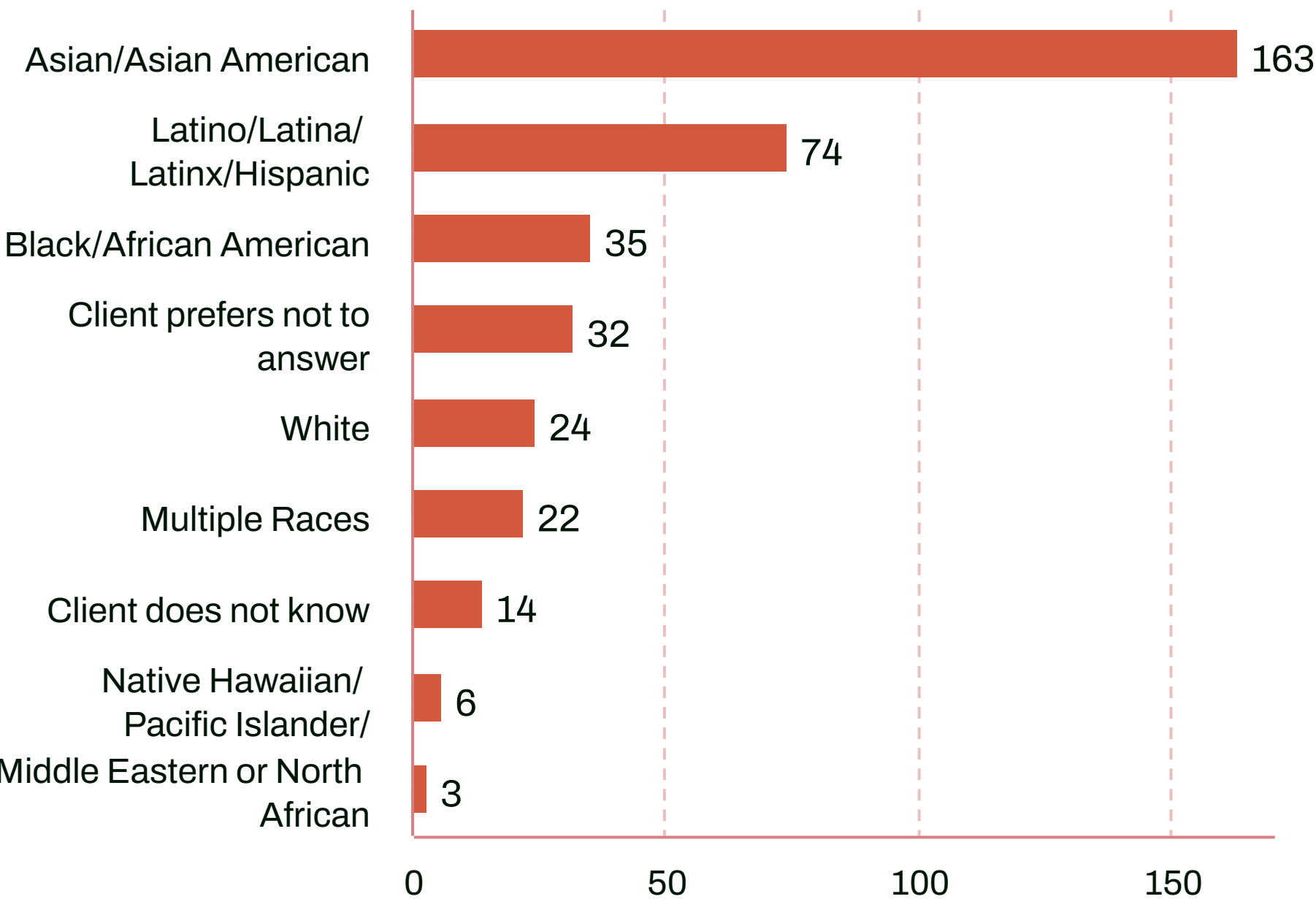
We strive to create an inclusive environment for our clients at AFSSA, and we are constantly evaluating what the community needs from our team to ensure they can live a life free of violence. With the aim of support and tools that lead to a survivor's liberation, autonomy, and financial sustainability, AFSSA's direct services include: safety planning; 24/7 hotline with interpretation services; legal advocacy and legal service accompaniment; hospital accompaniment; individual and group counseling; supportive transitional housing; basic needs assistance; and economic empowerment services. **AFSSA distinguishes itself from other service providers by offering culturally relevant long-term case management in the client's preferred language and where a client's heritage and customs are normalized.**

The following demographic data was collected to provide insight on who we serve and how we can expand our reach to those who need us most.

Client-Identified Gender



Client-Identified Race



We speak your language!

Through our translation and interpretation practices, we have the ability to provide services in over 300 different languages.

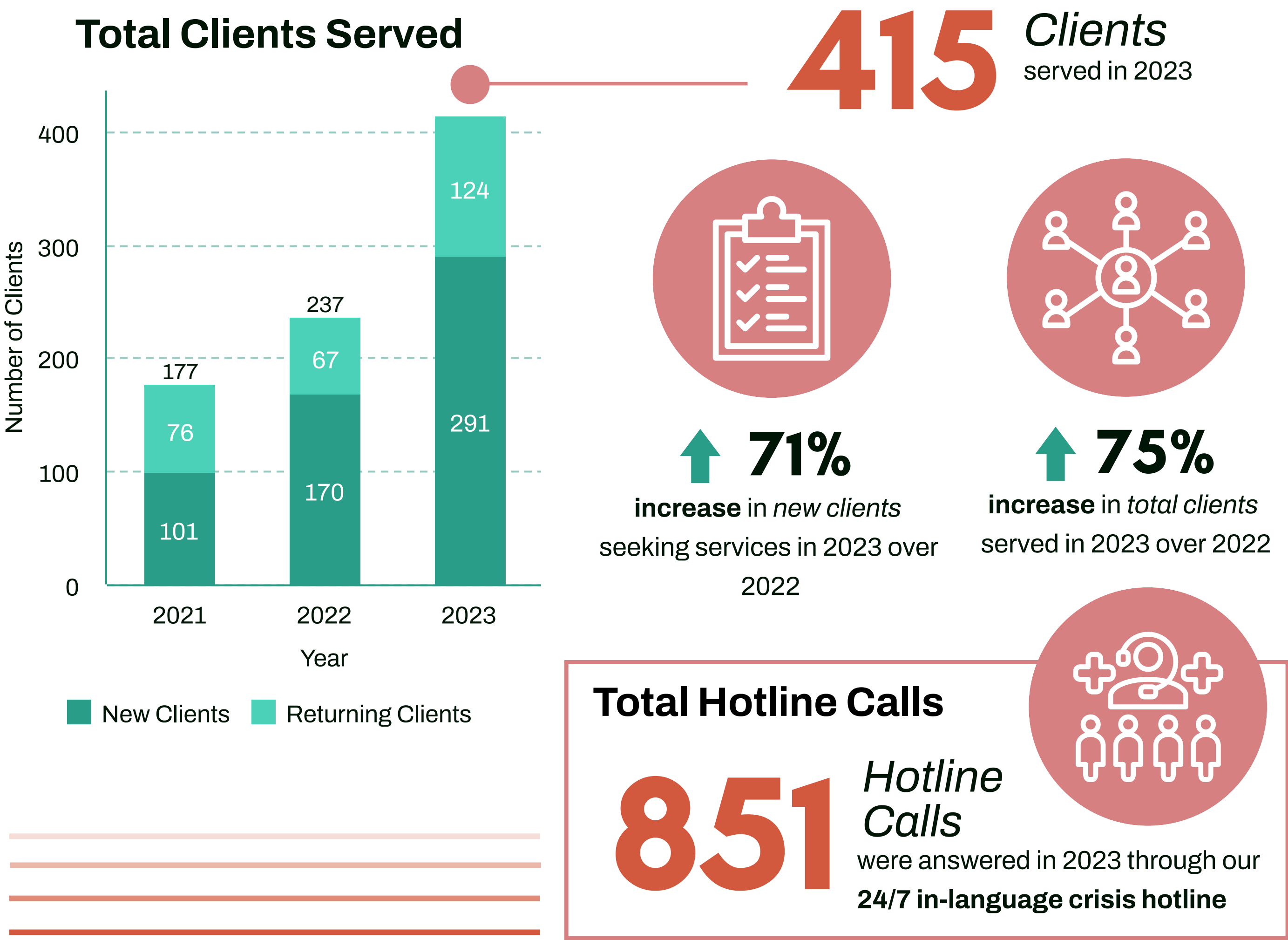
Afghan Farsi	Chinese (Mandarin)	Japanese	Telugu
Afghan Persian	Dari	Nepali	Tigrinya
Arabic	English	Pashto	Urdu
Burmese	Farsi, Iranian	Portuguese	Vietnamese
Cambodian	French	Spanish	
Chinese (Cantonese)	Hindi	Thai	

22

Languages

used for service delivery at AFSSA in 2023





Program Spotlight

Economic Justice and Transitional Housing

The Economic Justice and Transitional Housing Program (EJ/TH) helps survivors prepare for and navigate the U.S. financial, economic, and employment systems to find employment and education/training so they can gain independence and become self-sufficient. The EJ Program provides comprehensive, tailored support for clients to attain self-sufficiency, including:



- job-readiness services
  - financial literacy counseling
  - medical and transportation advocacy
  - housing support
- childcare access
  - education information
  - ESL
  - life-skill trainings.

The TH Program offers **scattered site, survivor-chosen housing options for survivors of violence**. Many survivors leave their abuser with few resources. Transitional Housing provides long-term housing support for up to **18 months** to ensure clients and their children are able to maintain a stable home while working toward their goals toward autonomy and independence.



### Diana's Story\* Written by Diana's Direct Services Advocate

**\*Trigger warning for domestic violence and sexual assault.**

Diana is from Vietnam. There, she met her husband and was enamored by his charisma and outgoing personality. Although he was much older than her, she felt reassured by his wisdom and his deeply religious family. After a few years of marriage, they decided to move to Texas to live near her husband's parents and his family.

Moving to Texas was a hard cultural adjustment. With no family or friends of her own, Diana had to learn how to adapt. She worked as a nail technician at her husband's family's nail salon, and learned English at an English as a Second Language (ESL) school outside of work. After a long day of work, she would head home and begin her role as a wife. She would do all the domestic chores and would cook and clean seven days a week. As days went by, Diana started feeling fatigued and neglected in the relationship. There were many expectations from her husband, but it was always one-sided. She would often come home alone to an empty home, having not seen her husband all day. He would either go fishing until late in the evening, or go out drinking with his friends. Normally after returning, he would demand and force her to have intercourse repeatedly.

Coming from Vietnam, Diana had always been told that a married woman needs to be submissive to their husband regardless of how he behaves. Diana tried to be the best wife she could be, but her marriage progressively got worse; her husband began to physically abuse her. By this point, she had already given birth to her first child with him. Despite the new baby, her husband kept his drinking habits. With the added responsibility of childcare, Diana felt even more beat down. One day, she couldn't hold it in anymore and decided to confront him. Diana expressed how exhausted she was and asked that he stop drinking and contribute to the household duties. As the argument escalated, her husband became violent and punched her multiple times in the face and knocked her down. Diana blacked out in that moment and could faintly recall her father-in-law jumping in to stop his son from continuing.

After that incident, Diana's family begged her to forgive her husband and not call the police to press charges. Her family and her husband's family both told her it was her fault for causing him to lose his temper and that she should have known better and behaved. Under so much pressure, Diana remained silent and continued to tolerate the abuse, which only increased. Her husband would come home drunk and pressure her to have intercourse. Whenever she refused or was not physically well, she would be slapped and punched as he continued to force himself on her.

For years, Diana lived in fear and continued to endure the pain while understanding that perhaps this was her fate. She had two more children with her husband during this time. In October of 2022 after an incident of abuse, Diana finally decided to call AFSSA's 24/7 crisis hotline number to receive help for her situation. I received her call and requested her to be my client given that I was not only able to help provide peer support, but also translate and interpret Vietnamese. Through our work together, I was able to connect her to a pro-bono attorney at American Gateways, who helped her to start the divorce process.

In late November, Diana's situation intensified when her husband decided to sexually assault her once again. It was so painful that she decided to gather evidence and went to report it. Diana was terrified, but with the peer support she received, she was confident in her decision. She reported the sexual assault to the police and received a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) examination. From there, she was sent to a shelter where she was able to stay away from her husband.

Diana and her three kids ended up staying in the shelter for two months. She and her children struggled to adapt to an unpredictable situation, but there was nowhere else to go. Throughout the process, Diana remained strong and patient for her kids as she waited for the divorce process to start, and for her SANE results to return. Once the results came back confirming that she had been sexually assaulted, her attorney worked with her to accelerate her divorce process, requesting a protective order against her husband and an official hearing. The day of the hearing came, and Diana courageously went to court prepared and represented by her attorney. Her husband did not show up and as result, the judge granted her the protective order and permission to move back into the house with her kids until the divorce process was settled.

Although it was only a start, there is finally hope after a dark period of time for Diana. Every now and then, she would express her remorse for not taking the initiative to act sooner. Yet she is comforted and reassured that her current actions broke the cycle of gender and intergenerational violence. Diana fought hard this time and felt empowered. She has even joined AFSSA's first Vietnamese Language Peer Support Group to help other Vietnamese women who are going through the same situation she did. Diana has done her best to advocate for every woman in the community who is going through abuse. She continuously hopes to be that voice of encouragement and give back support to her community.

After a year of waiting, her divorce had finally been completed. Despite it being finalized, lots of challenges still remain as a single, limited-English-speaking mother with financial restraints and limited financial resources. Although Diana is now free from the abuse she suffered for years, the road is long, and she expressed to me the many hardships she faces daily. She is happy to have primary custody, but Diana is financially struggling to support her three children. With no access to financial support for daycare, and with language barriers, her job options are limited. She wishes to go back to school and earn a degree to get a better job, but she cannot due to the work hours that revolve around her children's schedule.

With no family or trusted peers, Diana finds herself isolated and feeling very lonely. Unfortunately, she cannot move closer to her parents due to the appointed rule by the judge that she must stay in the vicinity of her ex-husband so the children can see their father. The path remains arduous for Diana, but as her advocate, I am so proud of her. She is not only resilient, but also immensely courageous for breaking the vicious cycle of violence within her community. Although she was continually abused and forced to stay quiet for over ten years, she is now aware of her rights and freedoms and will no longer be silent.

***Diana has done her best to advocate for every woman in the community who is going through abuse.***



Education

AFSSA’s Community Education, Prevention and Outreach team breaks cycles of violence through in-person and digital outreach; bi-lingual prevention programming in schools; and culturally grounded trainings and presentations to community groups, school administrators, congregational leadership and members, law enforcement officers, and health care providers.

**Our programming is available in home language and is always designed with an eye to meeting the various cultural needs and the myriad of barriers that impact Asian clients and communities.** Our prevention and community education advocates work in both in-person and digital spaces to not only connect survivors to essential life-saving services, but also to engage in conversations around healthy relationships and help communities and families build shared vocabulary around interpersonal violence. Our goal is to prevent violence and harm from occurring in the first place.



**You can find the AFSSA outreach staff at community and cultural events all year round!**  
<https://www.afssaustin.org/events/>



## Social Media

100,000+

Community Members  
Reached

through Instagram and Facebook in 2023

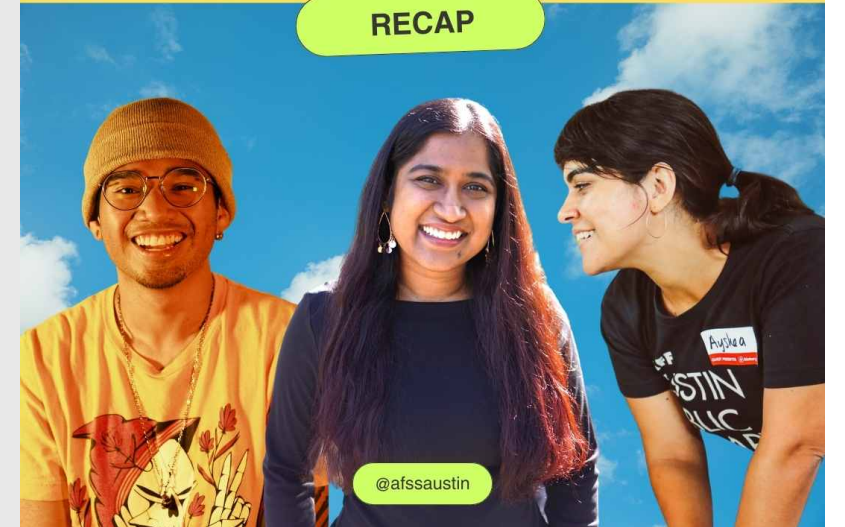
How do I establish  
boundaries in an  
Asian-American  
household?

@AFSSAUSTIN

@ASIANSFORSEXPOSITIVITY

UPROOTING  
anti-Blackness  
IN ASIAN COMMUNITIES

RECAP



@afssaustin

COUNTERING  
ISLAMOPHOBIA

+ ERASURE OF  
MUSLIM VOICES

Common Stereotypes  
and Counters

Ways to Counter  
Islamophobia

Intersectional  
Identities

A BETTER  
FORCE  
- ASIAN  
FAMILY  
SUPPORT  
SERVICES  
OF AUSTIN

001

HOW DO YOU  
ENVISION  
A MEANINGFUL

RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN THE SEX  
WORKER COMMUNITY  
AND DV/SA ORGS?

READ ON →

14,200+

Engagements

across all of AFSSA's social media  
platforms in 2023

@AFSSAAustin



## Success Story

### Understanding a Cultural Healing Practice

As part of the ongoing work of AFSSA's Systems Advocacy and Community Access teams, our staff regularly attends Sexual Assault Response Team meetings comprised of victim service providers, law enforcement and criminal justice staff. At one such meeting our staff met with Detective Ruben Vasquez, with the Georgetown Police Department. Detective Vasquez shared how significant it was for him, as a law enforcement officer to be able to speak with some of AFSSA's hotline staff to help him discern if the markings that a teacher had reported as potential child abuse or harm, had a cultural explanation. Detective Vasquez shared that when he called the AFSSA hotline and described the markings, AFSSA staff shared information on a specific cultural healing practice called coining. Coining uses a coin or other small, hard object rubbed across the skin until a bruise appears, and is done with the intention of relieving illness.

While Detective Vasquez visited with the family and spoke with the parent, he shared that under that specific circumstance, the coining was a medical remedy for that culture and there were no actions by the parent that constituted a criminal element. Being able to speak with someone about the cultural practice of coining avoided a long investigation that would have put hardship on the family for no reason.

**This story speaks so powerfully about the importance of culturally specific work and collaboration between systems and the lives it can change for the better.**



***Because of the diversity of our community, it is a comfort to know that there is a resource that can be called to ask about Asian cultures that can help us avoid criminal charges for something that is a cultural norm for that family."***

**- Detective Vasquez,  
Georgetown PD**

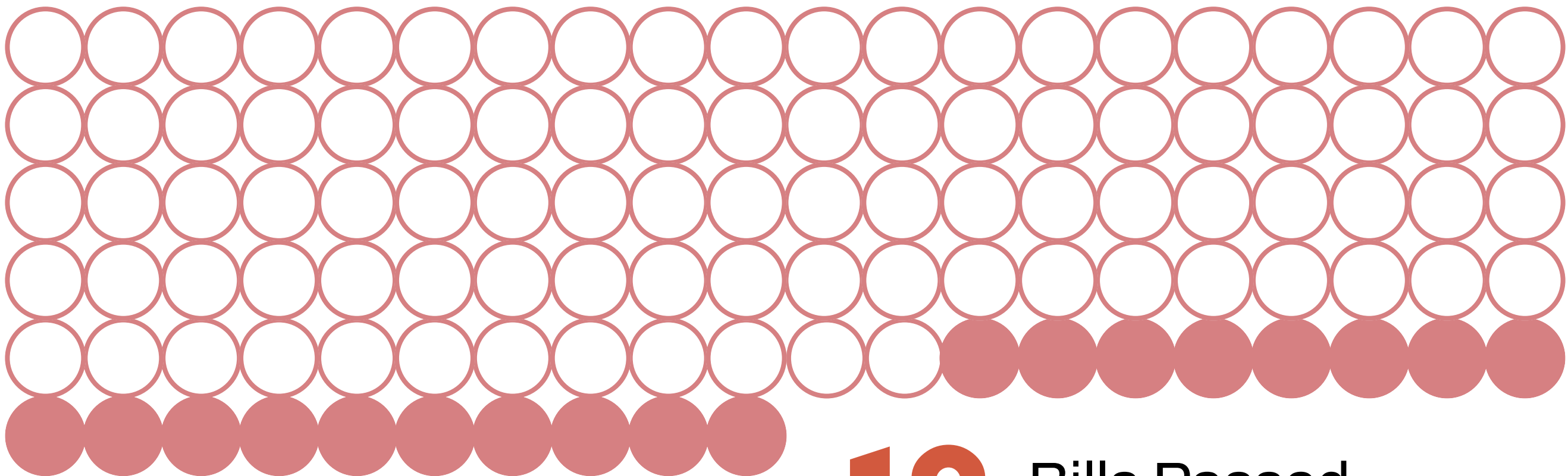


Advocacy

Asian Family Support Services of Austin’s Hogg Foundation Policy Fellow, Clarice Cross, led the agency’s efforts in continuing to build and strengthen our Statewide Coalition. **The Texas Coalition for Asian Survivors (TCAS)** spent the year determining priorities, developing bylaws and building social media platforms. TCAS met throughout the year to stay informed on the 11,807 bills filed and 4,550 bills passed during the 88th Legislative Session. In addition to monthly virtual meetings, the coalition met in person at the Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV) and Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA) Capitol Day, where they met with Senate and House representatives throughout the day.

110 Bills Tracked

in 2023 related to Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence, and Trafficking in the communities we serve.



18 Bills Passed  
of the 110 that were tracked.

Follow the Coalition!  
[@txcfas](#)



Photo: AFSSA board members, staff, and supporters at the Texas Capitol with Rep. Donna Howard.

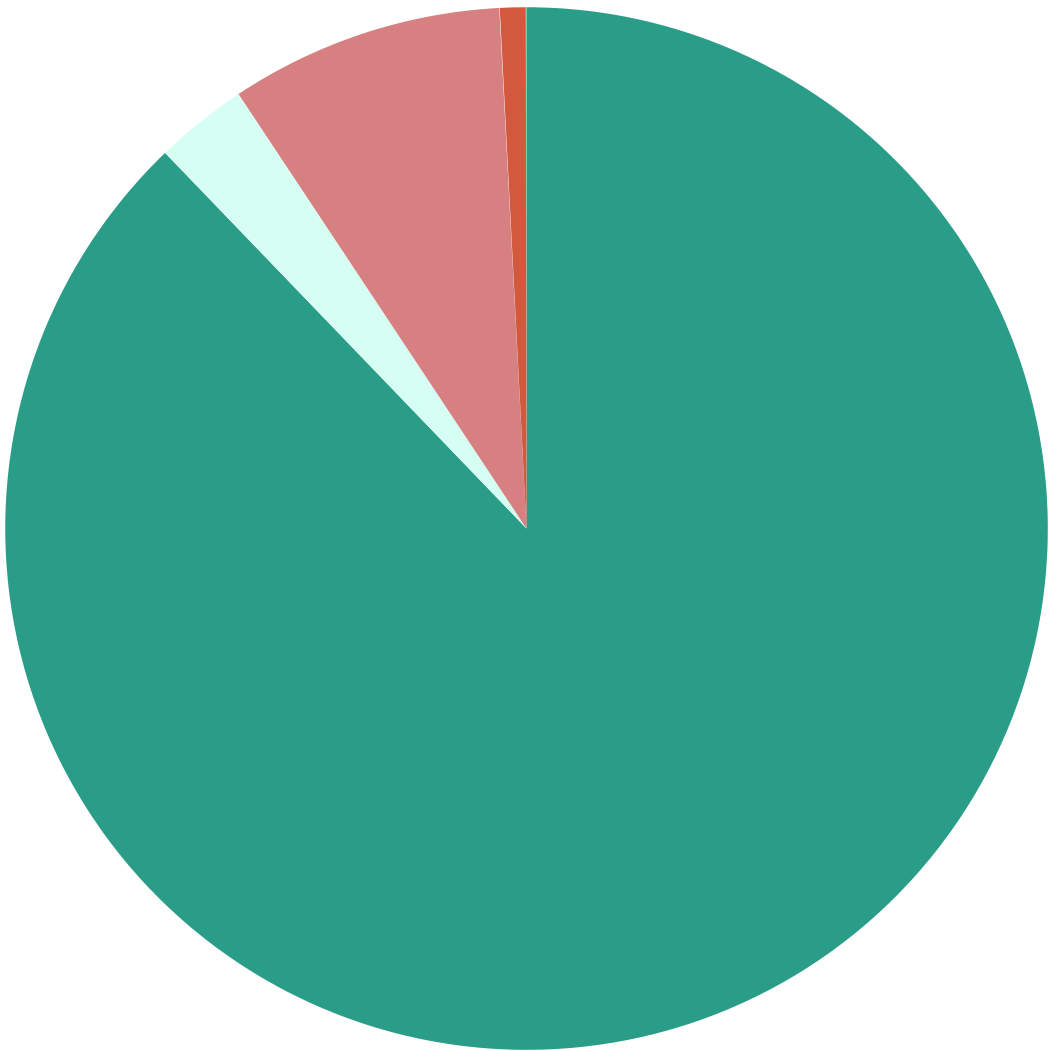
Bill Spotlight — SB 1841

SB 1841, championed by Rep. Donna Howard, improves regulated services and standards family violence centers (like AFSSA) must provide. The bill includes:

- An overarching framework guiding how family violence advocacy services are provided. TCFV, with research partners, developed a service model informed by AFSSA and other regulated providers that is rooted in **trauma-informed, voluntary services that respect survivors' needs.**
- Requirements that family violence centers offer specific services related to: economic/housing stability; physical, behavioral, and mental health; the needs of children who are survivors; and counseling and peer support.
- Changes to community education to include **violence prevention efforts.**
- A definition of peer support and dating violence that now includes dating violence survivors.



Funding Sources

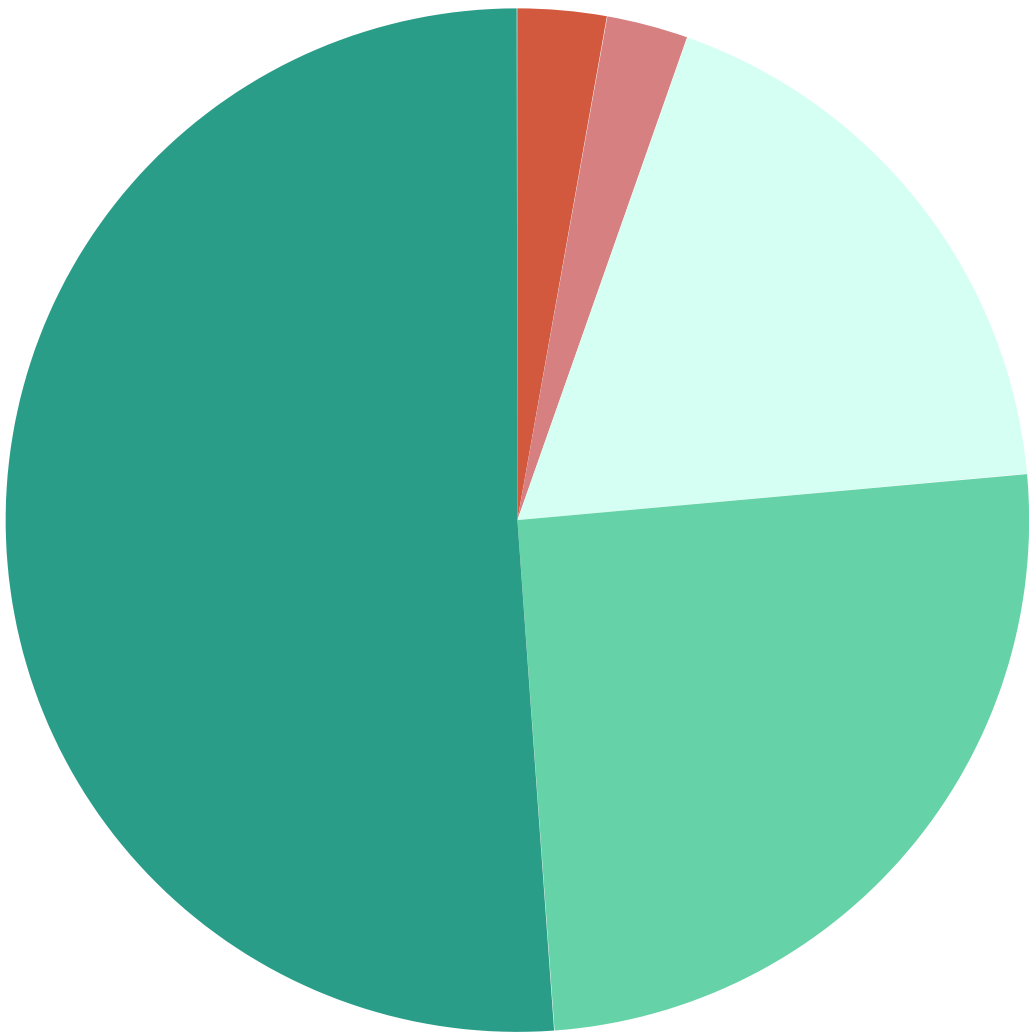


- Government Grants (87.82%)
- Philanthropic Grants (2.87%)
- Development Income (8.48%)
- Other Income/In Kind (0.82%)

Competitive Government Grants	\$3,108,019.19
Philanthropic Grants	\$101,580.00
Development Income	\$300,287.41
Other Income/In Kind	\$29,174.83

Total Agency Funding \$3,539,061.43

Means of Community Support



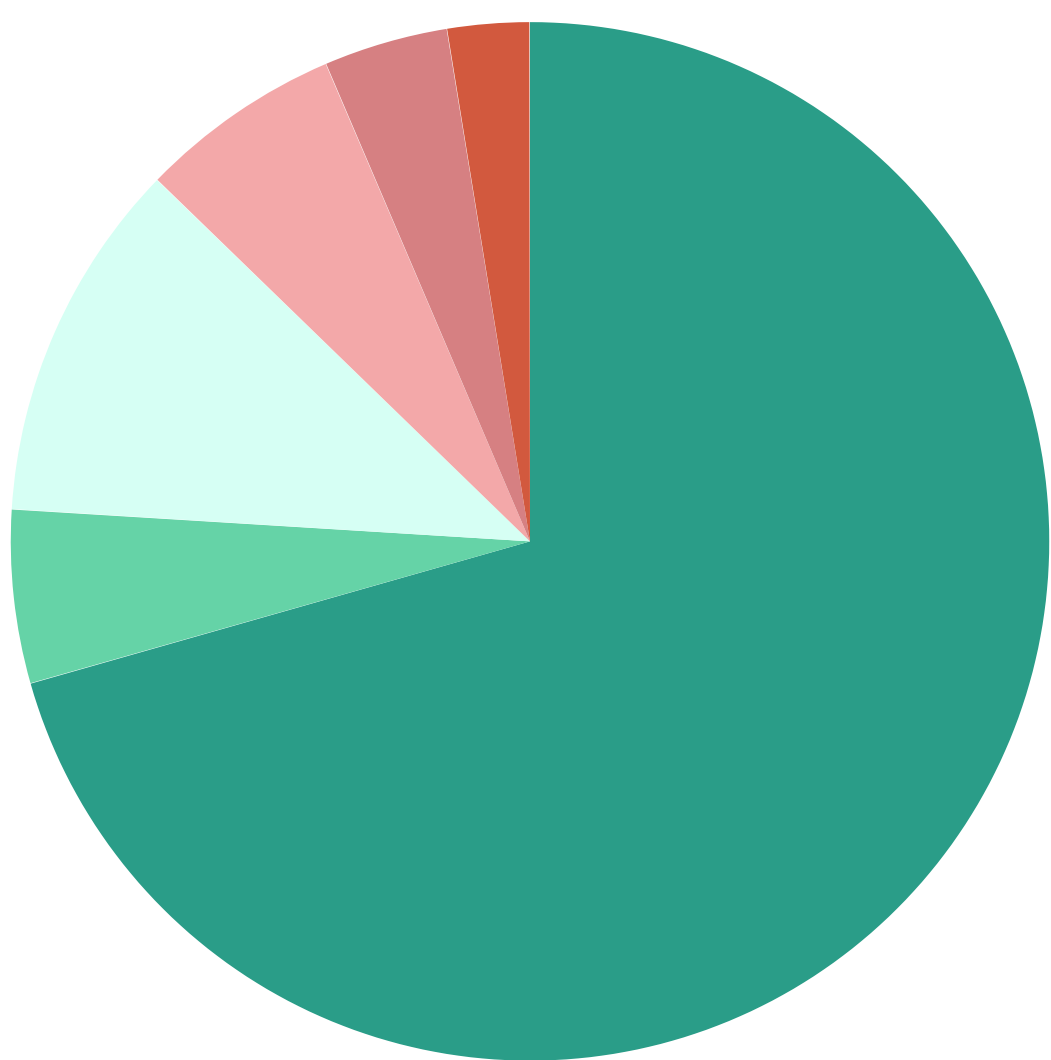
Monthly Giving Circle	3%
Corporate and Employee Giving	3%
Individual	18%
Philanthropic Foundation Grants	25%
Events	51%

Thank You

to the all the individuals, foundations, community partners, and volunteers who generously supported us in 2023.



Use of Funds



- Advocacy Personnel (70.59%)
- Contract services (5.4%)
- Direct Client Assistance (11.27%)
- General and Administrative (6.32%)
- Fundraising (3.87%)
- Other Expenses/Inkind (2.55%)

Advocacy Personnel	\$2,416,377.00
Contract Services	\$184,717.00
Direct Client Assistance	\$385,817.00
General and Administrative	\$216,179.00
Fundraising	\$132,610.00
Other Income/In Kind	\$87,201.00

Total Agency Use of Funds \$3,422,901.00

Financial Summary and Balance Sheet

Revenue and Other Support		
Competitive Government Service Contracts		\$3,108,019.19
Other Revenue		\$431,042.24
Total Revenue		\$3,539,061.42
Expenses		
Direct Program Services		\$2,854,074.00
Support Services (Administration and Development)		\$568,826.98
Total Expenses		\$3,422,900.98
Revenues less Expenses		\$116,160.45
Total Assets	Total Liabilities	Net Assets
\$2,140,725.49	\$266,481.43	\$1,874,244.06

\*Financial statement numbers are unaudited as of the printing of this publication; audit completion expected July 2024.



# Board and Staff Members

## 2024 Board of Directors

- Charles Lu

President
- Rajina Pradhan

President Elect
- Adrián Rizo

Treasurer
- Kirtana Banskota

Secretary
- Michelle Arishita
- Katie Bombra
- Sandy Eapen
- Lily Huang
- Lorrayne Ward
- Paul Yin



## AFSSA Staff

- Darlene Lanham

Executive Director
- Samira Ghosh

Director of Advocacy
- Nirmala Krishnamurthy

Director of Finance
- Zahra Shakur Jamal

Director of Community Outreach, Education and Prevention
- Jordan Lueker

Director of Operations
- Ariana Cruz

Access Advocate
- Em Gallegos

DV Advocate
- Friday Genung

Fund Development & Exec Coordinator
- Stacie Gutierrez

Economic Justice Services Manager
- Emily Hataway

EJ Advocate
- Aakriti Koirala

SV Advocate
- Sarina Lal

SV Advocate
- Christine Langa

Community Access Manager
- Priya Maharaj

DV Advocate
- Vanya Nanda

Systems Advocacy & Training Manager
- Ryan Orr

Office Systems Manager
- Bhumika Purohit

Systems Advocate
- Alpha Shrestha

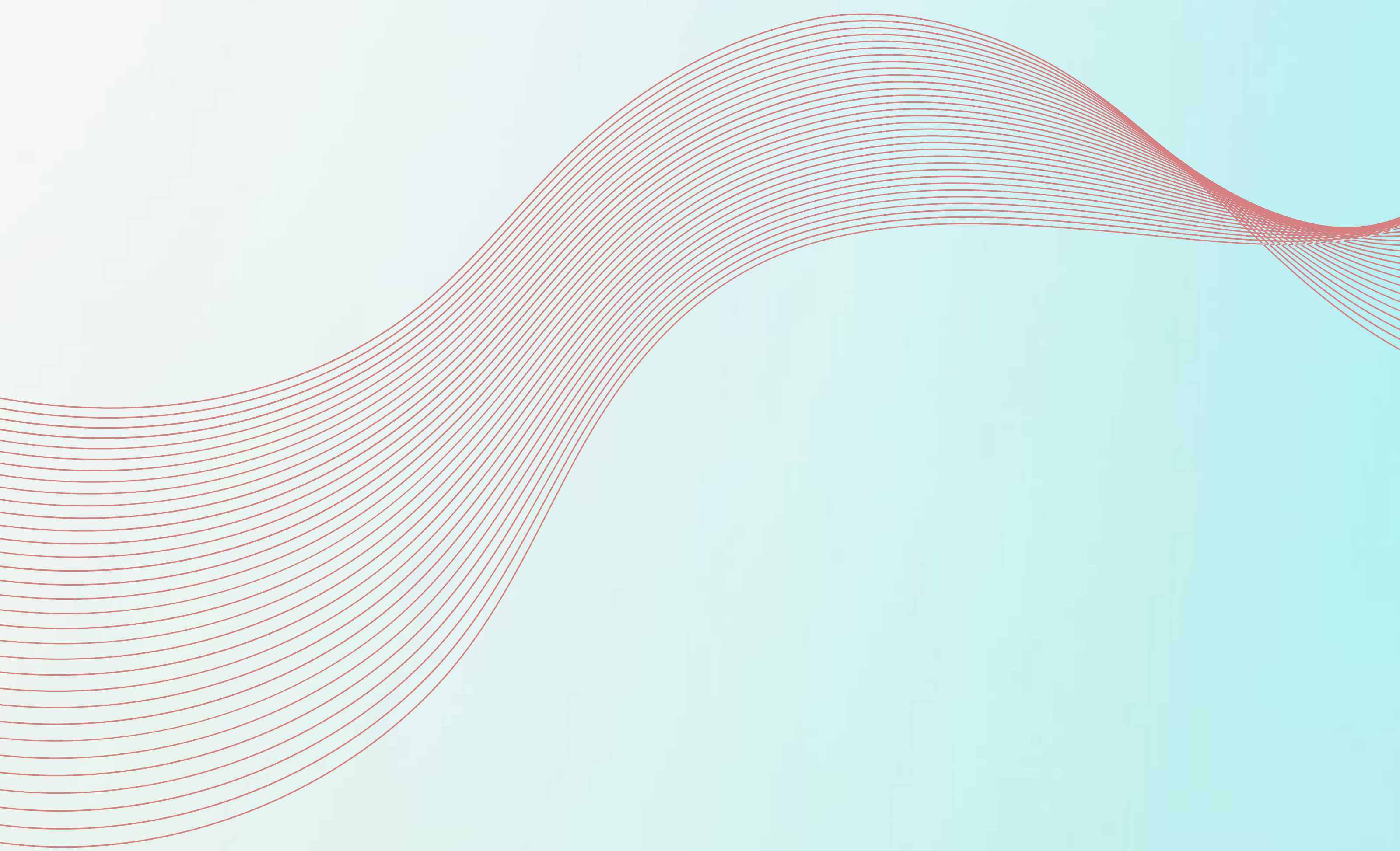
Community Education & Outreach Manager
- Jennifer Xia

Digital Outreach Advocate

14 additional advocacy staff members not named for safety concerns.







# 2023

## Impact Report



Report prepared by:  
Friday Genung  
Jordan Lueker

P.O. Box 14234  
Austin, TX 78761  
[afssaustin.org](http://afssaustin.org)

Office Main Line: 512-358-6318  
[info@afssaustin.org](mailto:info@afssaustin.org)



**AFSSA**  
ASIAN FAMILY  
SUPPORT SERVICES  
OF AUSTIN