



FLORENCE
IMMIGRANT
& REFUGEE
RIGHTS PROJECT

2018

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

IN 2018...



3,468
Adults
Served



7,290
Kids
Served



1,115

**Cases opened for direct
representation with
children's program**

30% increase from 2017



139

Pro bono cases placed

*64 adults, a 10% increase from 2017
75 children, a 20% increase from 2017*



667

**Children separated from their
parents at the border**



267

**Men, women, and children
provided with social services**

165 children and 102 adults



IN DEFENSE OF MIGRATION

On June 3, 1939, a ship full of emigrants fleeing the German Third Reich sailed along the coast of Florida, begging for entry to the port of Miami. The passengers' pleas for refuge to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt went unanswered. The ship was blocked by the U.S. Coast Guard and forced to return to Europe. Over a quarter of the passengers were murdered in the Holocaust.

In 2018, tens of thousands of people sought refuge at the U.S.-Mexico border. Rather than extend protection, U.S. officials fired tear gas across the border into crowds of migrants. They separated families, causing lifelong psychological trauma. They ruled that immigrants can be detained indefinitely, and they restricted access to asylum. They escalated the militarization of the border.

The stories of those who seek refuge in the United States have varied dramatically across the decades, but anti-immigrant rhetoric has remained the same. Immigrants hurt our economy. They bring conflict. They should wait their turn. Our nation is splitting around a single question: What will we do about immigration?

Despite the rhetoric, the tear gas, the family separation, and the indefinite detention, immigration continues. Despite enforcement that drives migrants into the most dangerous parts of the desert, immigration continues. Despite bigger walls and longer wait times, immigration continues.

For many people, immigration is not a choice. It is the only path to a life free from harm.

At any given time, a person incarcerated in an immigration detention facility has the option to take a voluntary departure or deportation. Some Florence Project clients, when faced with the options of indefinite incarceration or return to the conditions they fled, choose to leave. Many say that detention is traumatizing, or retraumatizing for trauma survivors, and cannot bear to be detained any longer. It is a very difficult choice to make. Despite this, many spend months and years in facilities that function like prisons. For many, returning is not an option. Their only option is to continue to fight for their safety and freedom.

*Artwork provided by a FIRR client,
a domestic violence survivor detained in Eloy*

At the Florence Project, no one asks: What will we do about immigration? We ask: What will we do when migrants come to our ports? How can we serve them and make sure their rights are respected? We have the opportunity to answer this question every day. What will we do? DEFEND. ACCOMPANY. WELCOME.

A portrait of Jose Luis, a man with short dark hair, wearing a blue short-sleeved button-down shirt with white polka dots and a red collar. He is standing in front of green foliage. The name 'JOSE LUIS' is written in large, white, outlined letters in the upper right corner.

JOSE LUIS

*“We came fleeing to this country,”
said Jose Luis.*
“We had to ensure the safety of
our children.”*

In Mexico, his home country, Jose Luis' nephew was murdered. Eyewitnesses said the Federal Police were involved. Jose Luis and his family received escalating threats. Another nephew was murdered. Jose Luis' car was set on fire outside of his home. The family tried to relocate within Mexico, but the threats continued. In 2017, Jose Luis and his family presented for asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Immigration officials separated Jose Luis from his family. Though his wife and two children were paroled into the country and allowed to live with family while their immigration cases continued, Jose Luis was detained in Florence, AZ. At the time, individuals who were detained after presenting at a port of entry became eligible for a bond hearing after six months of detention. Jose Luis anxiously awaited his bond hearing, scheduled for March 2018, at which point he hoped to be released and reunited with his wife and children.

The right to a bond hearing, intended to prevent immigrants from languishing for years in detention facilities, was mandated by a 2013 court ruling called *Rodriguez v. Robbins*.

In February 2018, as Jose Luis counted down the days until his hearing, the Supreme Court reversed this ruling in *Jennings v. Rodriguez*. Under this ruling many immigrants, including asylum seekers like Jose Luis who presented at a port of entry, became permanently ineligible for bond.

*“I spent a year in detention,”
Jose Luis told us.
“I couldn’t have imagined it in my
head... to be detained.
I never would have imagined.”*

Due to the *Jennings* ruling, Jose Luis did not have the bond hearing he'd been waiting for. Instead, he continued to develop his asylum case from inside of the detention center. With Florence Project assistance, he prepared his asylum application, gathered evidence, and practiced his testimony. Jose Luis represented himself in his individual hearing in April, and he continued to wait in detention for a response from the judge.

** Client names changed to protect their privacy*

“The judge approved my asylum,” Jose Luis said, “but the prosecutor appealed the decision. He said I couldn't stay in the U.S. I had been detained 11 months. And I was still detained.”

A month later, Florence Project staff went to visit Jose Luis in Florence, where he was still detained as the government's appeal was ongoing. They were informed that he had been moved to a prison in Phoenix.

*“No one ever told me why they
moved me to a federal prison,”
he said.*

The Florence Project sprang into action. Florence Project legal staff searched for a pro bono attorney to help Jose Luis with his appeal. As attorneys went to work on the case, they received a call from Immigration and Customs Enforcement: the prosecution would withdraw their appeal in his immigration case. After a year in detention, Jose Luis was released.

“Nobody knew they were going to let me out. They just took me out of the prison, no bond, and said you can go free. They dropped me at the plane terminal in Phoenix... My wife didn't even know I'd left until I arrived at her door.”

Jose Luis' story is a quintessential example of immigration cases in 2018. Policy and procedure are arbitrary and punitive. Families are torn apart. Lives are irrevocably changed.

*“I left detention thanks to you all, to
the Florence Project,”
Jose Luis said.
“[You] helped me so much.”*

Earlier this year, we arranged for a photographer to visit Jose Luis' home in Oregon. His family posed in the front yard, full of lush green leaves and grass. They stood, stoic and unsmiling, and then broke into grins. The camera clicked, capturing in one photo the opposing sentiments—solemnity and celebration.

*“We lived through it,”
Jose Luis concluded.
“It was very hard, but here we are.”*

2018 IN REVIEW: POLICY CHANGES WITH DEVASTATING IMPACT

For the Florence Project and our clients, 2018 was a year of unprecedented brutality. The complexities of immigration law were compounded by reinterpretation of policies that once offered migrants access to freedom and justice. We remember new challenges that 2018 brought, and with your support, we continue to fight for justice in the year to come.

FEBRUARY 2018:

Immigrants Denied Access to Bond

In 2013, the Ninth Circuit ruled in *Rodriguez v. Robbins* that it was unconstitutional to detain certain immigrants for more than six months without access to a bond hearing. In February, the Supreme Court's ruling in *Jennings v. Rodriguez* reversed the Ninth Circuit's decision, which means that thousands of immigrants can now be mandatorily and indefinitely detained, a violation of their fundamental human rights. We were there to share the impacts of this important ruling with individuals in detention and to explain their rights and options under the new law.

MARCH 2018:

Pregnant Women No Longer Prioritized for Release

On March 29, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) issued a new directive saying that they would no longer prioritize the release of pregnant women from detention. As a result, we've seen more pregnant women in detention. Florence Project staff, particularly our social services team, are assisting pregnant women and advocating that they be released on parole. Many of our pregnant clients have told us that they worry they are not receiving adequate prenatal care or nutrition, and that the stress of immigration detention will cause long term harm to themselves or their babies.

APRIL 2018:

Funding for Legal Orientation Program Unilaterally Halted

On April 10, the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced that funding for the Legal Orientation Program (LOP) would be halted. The Florence Project pioneered the LOP program nearly two decades ago, and it is now used by legal service providers throughout the country. Our LOP work empowers detained

immigrants, like Jose Luis, who have to represent themselves in their cases, by offering group legal workshops, individual legal orientations, and referrals for pro bono representation. For the vast majority of immigrants detained in Arizona, LOP is the only resource for lifesaving legal information. Though the DOJ later announced that it would reinstate funding, the threat underscored the vulnerability of thousands of immigrants we work with every day, who would have been denied access to critical support and information about their legal rights.

MAY 2018:

Family Separation Mandatory at Ports of Entry

"I showed up at the shelter to do intakes, and all I heard was screaming children," said Maite, a Florence Project attorney. "I spent three hours with little children screaming for their parents."

On May 7, former Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that separation of children from their parents was official policy of the U.S. government. Florence Project staff were tracking cases of family separation and were able to refute the government's denial of the destructive practice before they announced the zero tolerance policy. The Florence Project served over 650 children who were forcibly separated from their parents, including nearly 300 children under the age of 10, and over 30 children under the age of three. Family separation forced us to reconceive our work. Legal staff and social workers banded together to support inconsolable children and their distraught parents who, in the midst of life-altering trauma, were forced

to endure complicated immigration proceedings. We represented children with disabilities, advocated for toddlers and infants, and met with parents who were facing deportation and had to choose whether to bring their child back with them to the harrowing conditions they fled or leave their child alone in the U.S. to fight for a future free from harm.

“We saw parents accept that for their children it’s best for them to stay [in the U.S.], but we heard things like ‘if they deport me, I just want to say goodbye to my child’...and that’s just really heartbreaking,” said Lauren, Florence Project adult team attorney.

It was later revealed that this cruel and inhumane policy was intended as a deterrent. The long term effects of separation cannot be underestimated, and we are proud that our staff mobilized to serve both children and parents undergoing this torture.

“When we talk about family separation, we have to redefine success,” said Cristina, Florence Project BIA Accredited Representative. “Success didn’t necessarily mean winning a case, or even staying in the United States. It meant fighting for children to be safe, whether they stayed in the U.S. or returned home.”

MAY 2018:
Immigration Judges’ Authority Restricted

On May 17th, the DOJ unilaterally eliminated immigration judges’ authority to administratively close cases, except in very limited circumstances. The former Attorney General’s directive on administrative





closure strips away immigration judges' authority to make independent decisions and opens the door for the government to restart deportation proceedings against thousands of people who judges had previously decided deserved to have their cases paused. Administrative closure was a powerful tool for our clients with serious mental health issues, who are not able to adequately participate in their legal proceedings, even with our legal representation. Many of our Children's Program clients also had their cases administratively closed while their asylum or visa applications were pending with U.S. Citizenship and

Immigration Services. These changes have made our work even more challenging.

JUNE 2018:
Many Victims of Violence No Longer Eligible for Asylum

On June 11th, former Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that he overruled the Board of Immigration Appeals' decision in the Matter of A-R-C-G-, defying decades of legal precedent protecting asylum seekers. The decision considered the case of Ms. A-B-, who fled years of rape and physical abuse by her husband in El Salvador. The former Attorney General's ruling deemed asylum applicants who have been victims of crimes by private actors generally ineligible for asylum, including victims of domestic violence and gang violence.

This decision puts thousands of people in unnecessary danger at the hands of intimate partners, family members, or members of their communities. We have seen its impact on victims of domestic violence and gang violence, and it could potentially undermine other valid asylum claims in which perpetrators are non-government actors, including victims of violence



targeting the LGBTQ community, female genital mutilation, and inter-ethnic violence. We continue to advocate for our clients, including expanding our appellate practice to challenge this decision.

NOVEMBER 2018:
Further Restrictions Implemented on Asylum Seekers

On November 1, President Trump announced his plan to issue an expansive Executive Order illegally restricting the ability of people to seek asylum in the United States and detaining asylum seekers and other immigrants indefinitely. The Executive Order stated that anyone who crossed the border between ports of entry would be ineligible for asylum. The right to seek asylum, whether or not one presents at a port of entry, is unambiguously protected by United States and international law. We will continue to advocate for the human and legal rights of asylum seekers.



DECEMBER 2018:
Administration Announces "Remain in Mexico" Plan

On December 20, the President announced a new plan that would require asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while their asylum claims are adjudicated. Asylum claims can take months, or even years, to process, and this plan will endanger the lives of vulnerable migrants while they wait. This plan will also effectively prevent asylum seekers from accessing legal resources and justice in the process of seeking asylum. We fear that this will result in asylum applicants with strong claims who have suffered immense trauma being deported, due to lack of resources to assemble and present a thorough legal argument. For some migrants, deportation is a death sentence. The Florence Project, through an innovative partnership with Kino Border Initiative in Nogales, MX, is strategizing about how to increase access to legal information for asylum seekers in Mexico.



THE YEAR IN REVIEW: CELEBRATIONS!

In a year of darkness and seemingly insurmountable challenges, our clients are our inspiration and our light. This year, we celebrate some of our Children's Program clients who won their Lawful Permanent Residency! Congratulations to Kevin*, Donys*, Yariela*, and many others who now have the right to live and work permanently in the United States, thanks to your support and Florence Project legal advocacy.



Kevin lives with a host family in Phoenix, works full-time, and plans to someday own a business.*

KEVIN

age 20, has been fighting his case since 2015 and won residency in July 2018!

"I never thought I'd be here. I'm always grateful, every day. I think about it a lot—there are many people who immigrate and don't make it. I worked with four lawyers at the Florence Project, and I had a beautiful experience. I never thought I would have papers. I thought I would live without anything. But I've seen that there is a multitude of possibilities for me here."

"Kevin is such a wonderful and hardworking young man. He is resilient, responsible, and kind, and he is always willing to help others out when he can. I look forward to seeing all that he will accomplish in the future, and I am so happy to see him continue working on his education and achieving his dreams." – Roxana, Florence Project Attorney.

DONYS

age 20, has been fighting his case since 2015 and won residency in September 2018!

"My dream is to become somebody who doesn't just work. My passion is to educate kids so that they can have opportunities I never had. Thanks be to God, the Florence Project gave me this blessing so that I can work and reach my goals."

"Donys is a client I will always remember. He never lets his experiences get him down and always strives to do more. He is a joyful person to be around." – Anna Marie, Florence Project Social Worker.

** Client names changed to protect their privacy*



Donys lives with relatives in Phoenix, works full-time, and plans to visit his mother in Guatemala to celebrate his 21st birthday.*

YARIELA

age 14, has been fighting her case since 2016 and won residency in October 2018

When asked how she felt when she won her case, Yariela let out a huge sigh. "Oooyy, happy," she said. "I was so happy and content when I won my case. It was hard."

"I'm proud of Yariela because, despite all she's been through, she's always full of joy. Her smile lights up a room."
– Gabi, Florence Project Attorney.



Yariela* lives with her family in Tucson and is in the eighth grade. She is learning English, she loves playing with her baby brother, and she wants to be a lawyer when she grows up, so she can help other kids like her.

PRO BONO ATTORNEY FEATURE: VIANEY HURTADO, ESQ.



Vianey Hurtado first learned of the Florence Project when she was an intern and a law student. When she started her job at Thomas Law Firm, they were already involved in pro bono cases with the Florence Project. Getting involved with the Florence Project was easy for Vianey because the organization was impactful and present in the community. She saw a need to help, and she has always had a soft spot for children, so when the chance arose to work on a children's program case, she jumped at the opportunity.

Growing up in Yuma, AZ, as the daughter of immigrants, Vianey became an attorney because it was her father's dream. He put his dream to the side to raise Vianey and her siblings and never had the chance to fulfill it. Over time, it became Vianey's dream too.

In her day job as a criminal defense attorney, Vianey has seen firsthand how impactful having an attorney in life-altering legal proceedings is which inspired her to become involved with immigration cases. "Immigration cases are life-altering. It will make a life-changing difference for people fighting to stay in this country, and I want to help make that difference," she says. "The kids I've seen are fleeing conditions or circumstances so horrific that I can't even understand because I've been so privileged to not lead that life. I'm honored to be able to make a difference in even one child's life."

Although immigration law is complex and intimidating, Vianey draws upon her clients' bravery. "I can see how brave they are for sharing their stories and leaving everything they know to come to a place they don't know, where they don't speak the language. Seeing how brave they are inspires me. It has been such a rewarding and gratifying experience."

2018 PRO BONO ATTORNEYS: AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2018

Mario Acosta, *Law Office of Mario Acosta Jr.*
Marysol Angulo, *Hernandez Global*
Daniel Arellano, *Ballard Spahr LLP*
Alexander Arpad
Kristen Arredondo, *Quarles & Brady LLP*
Nathan Arrowsmith, *Osborn Maledon PA*
Lenin Arthanari, *SRP*
Jennifer Axel, *Polsinelli PC*
Vicenta Rodriguez Bañuelos,
Bañuelos Law Office
Rhonda Barnes
Daniel Barr, *Perkins Coie LLP*
Kristine Beaudoin, *Perkins Coie LLP*
Josh Bendor, *Osborn Maledon, PA*
Sean M. Berens, *Perkins Coie LLP*
Maja Berlin, *Honeywell*
Daniel W. Bowen, *Snell & Wilmer LLP*
Cabell Breckinridge
Toby Brink, *Banner Health*
Jeffrey Brooke, *Bowman and Brook LLP*
Carlos Brown, *Carlos Brown Law, PLLC*
Zachary Brugman,
The Law Offices of Pope & Associates, PC
Ian O. Bucon, *Ballard Spahr LLP*
Mindy Butler-Christensen
Jose Carrillo, *Western Alliance Bank*
Jason Choy,
Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP
Hans Clugston, *Boyle, Pecharich, Cline,
Whittington & Stallings, P.L.L.C.*
Joel Copeland,
Apoyo Legal Immigration Law
Stephanie Corcoran, *Lehm Corcoran Law*
John Craiger, *Polsinelli PC*
Hayleigh S. Crawford, *Osborn Maledon, PA*
Sambo Dul, *Perkins Coie LLP*
Alexa S. DuMity, *Quarles & Brady LLP*
Alex Egbert, *Steptoe & Johnson LLP*
Nicholas J. Enoch, *Lubin & Enoch PC*
Alan Feldman, *Steptoe & Johnson LLP*
Alyse Fischer, *Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP*
Judy Flanagan, *Judy C. Flanagan PC*
James Florentine, *Snell & Wilmer LLP*
Lisette Flores
Craig Friedrichs, *Quarles & Brady LLP*
Dale Furnish,
Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law
William D. Furnish, *Osborn Maledon, PA*
Kristine L. Gallardo, *Snell & Wilmer LLP*
Melanie Gleason, *Attorney on the Move*

Janel Glynn, *Polsinelli PC*
Arturo Gonzalez,
Ryley Carlock and Applewhite
Kevin Groman, *Crown Canyon*
Laura Hendrickson,
Catholic Social Services
Edward Hermes, *Snell & Wilmer LLP*
Phil Higdon, *Perkins Coie LLP*
Kari Hong, *Boston College Law School*
Maria Fernanda Hubbard, *Polsinelli PC*
Saul Huerta, *The Huerta Law Office PLLC*
Vinaey Hurtado, *Thomas Law Firm PLC*
Robert Jobe, *Law Office of Robert Jobe*
Adam Kaplan, *Honeywell*
Lawrence A. Kasten,
Lewis Roca Rothberger Christie LLP
Ron Kilgard, *Keller Rohrback LLP*
Andre Knapp
Molly J. Kjartanson, *Quarles & Brady LLP*
Daniel J. Kuo
Isabella Leavitt, *Polsinelli PC*
Spencer Lee, *Smith Alston & Lee PLC*
Jared Levine, *Crowell & Moring LLP*
Norris Livoni
Oscar Lopez, *Polsinelli PC*
Hiedy Marcus, *Marcus Law Firm PLLC*
Aaron T. Martin, *Snell & Wilmer LLP*
Katherine E. May, *Perkins Coie LLP*
Samantha W. McAlpin,
Gust Rosenfeld PLC
Leah Medway, *Perkins Coie LLP*
Mary Jo Miller, *Independent*
Nicholas Meza, *Quarles & Brady LLP*
Heliodoro Moreno,
Law Office of Robert Jobe
Martha Moron, *Polsinelli PC*
Brian Mosely, *Osborn Maledon, PA*
Karen Nagle, *Nagle Law Group*
Nicole Nakaji
Rachel Nicholas,
Lewis Roca Rothberger Christie LLP
Victoria Nielson, *Catholic Legal
Immigration Network*
John O'Neal, *Quarles & Brady LLP*
Benjamin Nucci, *Snell & Wilmer LLP*
Juliana L. Ore-Giron, *Law Office of
Juliana L. Ore-Giron, PLLC*
David J. Ouimette, *Dickinson Wright PLLC*
Luis Fernando Parra,
Parra Law Offices, PLLC

Shalayne Pillar, *Snell & Wilmer LLP*
Christina L. Powers,
Law Office of Christina L. Powers
Rachael Pugel, *Snell & Wilmer LLP*
Ray Reyes, *Schneider & Onofry PC*
Daniel G. Roberts, *Quarles & Brady LLP*
Juan Rocha, *Juan Rocha Law Office*
Mike Romeo, *Wilmer Cutler Pickering
Hale and Dorr LLP*
Michael Rubin, *Dickinson Wright PLLC*
Mercedes Ryden, *Burns Law Office, P.L.C.*
Bruce E. Samuels,
Lewis Roca Rothberger Christie LLP
Jennifer M. Settles, *U-Haul*
Alexis B. Sharpe, *Quarles & Brady LLP*
Lindsay Short, *Snell & Wilmer LLP*
Mara Siegel
Margarita Silva, *Silva & Fontes*
Marissa Soltz, *Quarles & Brady LLP*
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Lewis Roca Rothberger Christie LLP
Heather Stanton,
Lewis Roca Rothberger Christie LLP
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Jazmyn Taitingfong, *DM Cantor*
Kylie Tenbrook, *Pierce Coleman PLLC*
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David Thompson, *Dickinson Wright PLLC*
Leah A. Tinney, *Quarles & Brady LLP*
Stacy Tolchin, *Law Offices of Stacy Tolchin*
Kimberly D. Topel, *Snell & Wilmer LLP*
Hanna R. Torres, *Quarles & Brady LLP*
Kevin Valdez, *Phillips Law Group*
Claudia Valenzuela
Krizia Verplancke, *Gust Rosenfeld PLC*
John Vryhof, *Snell & Wilmer LLP*
Hillary Gaston Walsh,
Law Office of Hillary Gaston Walsh
Shayna F. Watts,
Rusing Lopez & Lizardi PLLC
Benjamin T. Wiesinger, *The Law Offices of
Pope & Associates, PC*

2018 FLORENCE PROJECT STAFF: AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2018

Administration

Lauren Dasse, Esq.
Executive Director

Christian Avila
Accounting Manager

Jamie Martin Bengtson, MA
Operations Manager

Leah Bishop
*Community Engagement
Coordinator*

Elizabeth Hannah
Development Assistant

Amalia Luxardo, MA, ABD
Director of Philanthropy

Greer Millard
Communications Manager

Paz Preciado
Human Resources Assistant

Maria Serrano
Accounting Clerk

Carolyn Simmons
Annual Giving Manager

Children's Program

Golden McCarthy, Esq.
Children's Program Director

Carmine Aiello, Esq.
Phoenix Staff Attorney

Laura Belous, Esq.
Tucson Managing Attorney

Gabriela Corrales, Esq.
Tucson Staff Attorney

Edward Cott Tolentino
Tucson Legal Assistant

Diana Counts
Phoenix Legal Assistant

Veronica Cuellar
Phoenix Legal Assistant

Rebecca Curtiss, Esq.
Tucson Staff Attorney

Cindy Flores
Phoenix Legal Assistant

Pamela Florian, Esq.
Phoenix Managing Attorney

Casey Frank, Esq.
Phoenix Staff Attorney

Maite Garcia, Esq.
Phoenix Staff Attorney

Jose Garcia-Madrid
Phoenix Legal Assistant

Evan Gorelick, Esq.
Phoenix Staff Attorney

Patrick Helling, Esq.
Phoenix Managing Attorney

Ana Hernández-Zamudio
Tucson Legal Assistant

Cristina Infanzón, J.D.
*Phoenix BIA Accredited
Representative*

Dakota Kohfield
PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer

Jimmy Leyva, Esq.
Staff Attorney

Ana Maria Miranda
Phoenix Legal Assistant

Eugenia Ojeda-Martinez, Esq.
Phoenix Staff Attorney

Bethany Palmer, Esq.
Phoenix Managing Attorney

Carmen Perez
Phoenix Senior Legal Assistant

Crystal Perez
Phoenix Legal Assistant

Yesenia Ramales
Phoenix Senior Legal Assistant

Denise Rebeil
Tucson Legal Assistant

Andrea Reyes
Phoenix Legal Assistant

Ana Rivas
Phoenix Legal Assistant

Hugo Rodriguez, MS
*Special Immigrant Juvenile
Status Specialist*

Sylvia Rodriguez
Phoenix Receptionist

Martin Ruiz
Phoenix Office Coordinator

Natalia Salazar
Tucson Legal Assistant

Berenice Sanchez
Phoenix Legal Assistant

Gabrielle Shaw
Tucson Office Coordinator

Fae Sowders, Esq.
Phoenix Staff Attorney

Kat Viele
Tucson Data Entry Assistant

Adult Program – Florence & Eloy

Laura St. John, Esq.
Legal Director

Jessica Alvarado, Esq.
Staff Attorney

Kira Aranow
Legal Assistant

Yvette Borja, J.D.
Law Graduate

Lola Bovell, Esq.
Managing Attorney

Elizabeth Bradley, Esq.
Staff Attorney

Monica Cordero-Vazquez, Esq.
Staff Attorney

Dorien Ediger-Seto, Esq.
Staff Attorney

Esteban Galindo
Florence Office Coordinator

Helen Gonzales
Legal Assistant

Shannon Johnson, Esq.
Asylum Attorney

Lauren Kostas, Esq.
Staff Attorney

Evangelina Lopez
Legal Assistant

Claire Magoffin
Legal Assistant

Madeline Moore
PLAN Legal Assistant

Rekha Nair, Esq.
PLAN Lead Attorney

Anthony Pelino
*Managing Attorney – Direct
Representation Program*

Valentina Restrepo Montoya, Esq.
Staff Attorney

Camilo Rodriguez, J.D.
Law Graduate

Noah Schramm
Legal Assistant

Anisa Villarreal
Legal Assistant

Michael Zambrano
Legal Assistant

Social Services Program

Kaitlin Porter, LMSW
Social Services Manager

Mayra Alvarado, LMSW
Social Worker, Family Separation

Jessica Brown, MSW
*Social Worker – Children's
Program*

Elizabeth Casey, MSW
Social Worker

Annalise Parady, MSW
Social Worker

Anna Marie Smith, LMSW
*Lead Social Worker, Children's
Program*

Pro Bono Program

Larry Levi Sandigo, Esq.
Pro Bono Manager

Lillian Aponte, Esq.
Pro Bono Mentor

Roxana Avila-Cimpeanu, Esq.
Pro Bono Mentor

Katharine Ruhl, Esq.
Pro Bono Mentor

Luis Valencia Amaya
Pro Bono Legal Assistant

FINANCIALS

Due to the media coverage of family separation and other crises, and our donors' generous response, we had a tremendous increase in revenue in 2018-2019. These assets are being strategically utilized to respond and serve our clients through significant increases in staffing and advocacy. As unprecedented numbers of children and adults are being detained, we will need every dollar of this surplus and more to meet the need. Thank you for your outpouring of support - last year and every year. You are needed and appreciated.

REVENUE

Contracted Legal Services	37.5%
\$4,240,000	
Foundations	29.7%
\$3,360,000	
Individual	28.3%
\$3,200,000	
Other (Corporations, Faith Based Orgs, Law Firms)	4.4%
\$500,000	
Total	100%
\$11,300,000	

EXPENSES

Program Services	83%
\$4,760,000	
Operating Costs	10%
\$650,000	
Fundraising	7%
\$390,000	
Total	100%
\$5,800,000	

ASSETS

Total Net Assets Beginning of 2018	
\$4,770,000	
Temporarily Restricted by Donor	
\$2,920,000	
Temporarily Restricted by Board	
\$5,850,000	
Ending Assets for 2018	
\$10,229,000	

Note: The figures outlined above include unaudited numbers. For a copy of the audited financials, please contact our Accounting Manager at firrp@firrp.org.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2018

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Bonnett, Fairbourn, Friedman, & Balint PC

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Burns Law Office

Ira Feldman *Treasurer*

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