“Stick out your tongue if you can understand,” a nurse told Emiliano*. The 16-year-old boy lay in a pediatric care facility in Phoenix, Arizona, paralyzed and unable to speak or move his head. “Blink your eyes if your name is Emiliano,” the nurse suggested. And he did. Sticking out his tongue and blinking his eyes were the only movements he could use to communicate.

Emiliano became disabled while migrating into Arizona through the rugged Sonoran Desert. In 2020, when these events occurred, a record number of migrants died in the U.S. borderlands; Customs and Border Protection found 254 human remains that year. And 2021 would prove even more deadly.

The ongoing militarization of the Southern border and policies halting access to asylum at U.S. ports of entry have forced people to attempt treacherous crossings in hostile climates and mountainous terrain.

Border Patrol agents found Emiliano alone and near death after receiving an emergency call. Severe dehydration had caused him to suffer a stroke that resulted in debilitating brain damage. He was taken to a hospital, and later to a long-term pediatric care facility. The Florence Project’s Children’s Program meets with unaccompanied children in Arizona to provide them with free legal and social services. But Emiliano’s condition was so dire, our Children’s Program was informed by the government that he was unlikely to survive.

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which holds custody over unaccompanied immigrant children, identified Emiliano and contacted his family. His mother gained permission to enter the U.S. temporarily to be with her son. If Emiliano remained in a coma, it would be up to her to decide whether to continue life support or end his palliative care.
Fortunately, Emiliano awoke. Shortly afterward, he gained the ability to communicate through facial gestures. Then in April 2021, the Florence Project was alerted that he did, in fact, need our advocacy. The Department of Homeland Security had already sought to expel Emiliano back to Mexico through Title 42—the policy blocking access to asylum at the time—until his doctors warned that he would likely die in transit.

Without immigration status, Emiliano remained vulnerable to deportation. The Florence Project’s legal and social services team responded immediately, understanding the life-or-death ramifications of his case. Emiliano was on a breathing tube and a feeding tube, under the care of trained specialists. If he declined to pursue his immigration case and chose to end the lonely anguish of hospitalization in the U.S., he had to accept that the journey back to Mexico could end his life. And although his family was willing to provide round-the-clock care back in their home in Mexico, they did not have the resources to make home care a possibility. It would have required weeks of intensive training to learn to provide the support Emiliano needed, as well as expensive medical equipment and nearby access to specialist services.

Emiliano likes pets, so his attorney brought her dog on their video call. Mexican music makes Emiliano feel at home, so the social worker played it in the background. He likes soccer. Emiliano’s attorney and social worker expressed their fondness for the sport as well. Recognizing Emiliano’s limited ability...
to communicate, the Florence Project advocates moved, with compassion and patience, to a carefully planned conversation regarding his wishes. Did he want to pursue continued care in the U.S., or did he prefer to stop? They listened with their eyes as he used limited body gestures to communicate.

For anyone, let alone a teenager far away from home, collapsing in the desert and waking up paralyzed is the stuff of nightmares. Yet, Emiliano had come to the U.S. to pursue a dream to stay in school. In Mexico, he was unable to continue his education. His journey didn’t work out as planned, but that didn’t mean that he wanted to die. He extended his tongue and blinked to express his desire to keep recovering in the U.S.

Anna Marie, a manager in the Florence Project’s Social Services Program, recalls, “My first thought as the social worker was: He really needs health insurance.” Emiliano’s healthcare coverage was set to expire in mere months when he turned 18, as he would no longer be in custody of the ORR system. His quality of life would dramatically deteriorate if that occurred.

At the same time as our Social Services Program worked to identify possible resources, our legal team learned more about Emiliano’s decision to migrate. Florence Project Legal Assistant Elizabeth Arrazola talked to his dad and quickly learned that Emiliano was a victim of human trafficking. In Mexico, Emiliano worked part time growing corn and coffee and selling chickens until he connected on Facebook with men who promised to provide food, lodging, and the opportunity to work and go to school in the U.S. They offered to help him cross the border. It is believed that they called emergency services when Emiliano suffered his stroke, and that they intended to exploit him for labor.

Based on this information, the Florence Project’s legal and social services team recognized Emiliano’s eligibility to access health insurance and other benefits as a survivor of trafficking. After much coordination, the team submitted an application to the Office on Trafficking in Persons and it was approved. He could continue receiving the care he needed.

By then, Florence Project advocates could recognize when it was best to communicate with Emiliano based on how his moods and energy levels corresponded to meals, baths, trachea tube cleanings, and medications. They coordinated with his caregivers to schedule video calls when he was least likely to be tired or overwhelmed.

Ultimately, having his mother at his bedside helped Emiliano the most. His loving gratitude for her was profoundly visible in his eyes and face. While she’d already been granted permission to temporarily enter the U.S., the Florence Project partnered with other organizations to help her access lodging, a cell phone, and financial support to allow her to focus on spending time with her son. With her present, Emiliano’s condition improved. He started to regain movement in his fingers.

The Florence Project legal team identified that Emiliano was eligible for asylum relief. Moreover, the only way for the family to reunify would be through an asylum win for Emiliano. His parents and siblings could then apply for residency as “derivatives” on his case. The Florence Project worked on his asylum claim, arguing that no testimony should be required since Emiliano remained nonverbal and unable to participate in hours-long interviews. The government pushed back, requesting that Emiliano’s parents or social worker give testimony for him. The Florence Project argued that this would violate Emiliano’s rights by placing him in more hostile court proceedings due to his disability. The government conceded. The case was decided based on the potential dangers Emiliano faced in a Mexican institution for incapacitated people, where abuse, neglect, and death are common.

In May 2022, Emiliano won asylum and remains in the United States. His mother is seeking to reunify the family and shares that Emiliano’s condition is improving. While he is still unable to move most of his body, with physical therapy he is regaining use of his hands, he appears more awake and alert, and can move his head and smile. “What great support [The Florence Project] gave him,” she says. “The asylum and everything happened very fast. It’s not easy for Emiliano, but now everything is possible.”
Anna Marie, a seven-year veteran of the Florence Project Social Services Program, acknowledges that, “This is the saddest case I’ve ever worked on.” Yet, the outcome made her proud and grateful. “We accompany and advocate for people every day as they are forced to make very difficult decisions, sometimes decisions with life-or-death implications. You don’t get to see the results of that work right away a lot of the time. The fact that this result happened relatively quickly—I don’t want to say it gave me faith in the system, but it did make me think our advocacy can make a difference in holding the government accountable. It was a good feeling knowing I was a part of the advocacy that led to [the government] making the right decision.”

*pseudonym used to protect privacy
Our Impact in 2022

**SOCIAL SERVICES Program**

552 people received lifesaving social services, including 311 unaccompanied children. We help our clients transition out of detention, assist with their cases, and facilitate access to medical treatment, mental health support, education, job resources, and more.

182 cases of family separation responded to with advocacy to reunify the families.

**CHILDREN’S Program**

14,622 unaccompanied children received “Know Your Rights” presentations.

668 children received direct legal representation.

54 children aged five or younger received legal aid—many of whom were unable to express what happened to them.

**ADULT Program**

1,650 adults received “Know Your Rights” presentations.

9,897 legal educational packets were mailed to individuals in immigration detention.

220 adults received direct legal representation, including 117 people who a judge had deemed unable to represent themselves.
Our Impact in 2022

**BORDER ACTION Team**

13,731 people at the border in Nogales, Sonora, and Nogales, Arizona, received legal orientations, consultations, and other services.

1,530 Title 42 exceptions achieved for people now safely pursuing asylum in the U.S.

**PRO BONO Program**

44 new legal matters pursued, including cases taken by outside pro bono attorneys recruited and mentored by Florence Project staff.

**ADVOCACY Team**

28 wrongful decisions appealed to the Ninth and Fifth Circuit Courts.

15 cases presented to the Board of Immigration Appeals.

12 amicus briefs signed or drafted by our team.

68 advocacy efforts joined with other national legal service providers or humanitarian organizations.

30 local and national news stories featured our work.

In 2022, the Florence Project served people from 74 countries, and our clients spoke a combined 42 languages!
Mission Moments in 2022

In 2022, the Florence Project advocated for clients through media, Congress, and federal agencies; added new positions; and received a historic philanthropic gift. Here are some of the most impactful mission moments that we accomplished with your support!

January 2022
Advocated for People Displaced at the Border by Title 42

“It should not take a call to a congressperson for a child with blood clots in the brain or [a] tangled spinal cord to be considered urgent humanitarian circumstances.”
- Chelsea Sachau, Border Action Team Managing Attorney, speaking to Buzzfeed News

After waiting for weeks or months for a response to our requests for humanitarian parole or Title 42 exceptions for displaced migrants with severe medical conditions or urgent security concerns, we advocated for our clients through the media. It was only after seeking to escalate our complaints to Congress that several of the requests were granted.

March 2022
Co-Hosted Vigil Commemorating Second Anniversary of Title 42

In partnership with the ACLU and ACLU of Arizona and in solidarity with Los Revolucionarios, migrant organizers in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, we co-hosted a vigil commemorating the second anniversary of Title 42, honoring all the people who were harmed by the policy, and calling for its end.
April 2022

Filed Complaint Regarding the Abuse of Children in Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Custody

“[CBP] is an agency that should have nothing to do with children.”
- Laura Belous, an advocacy attorney, quoted by the Marshall Project

In 2021, the Florence Project filed more than 130 individual complaints to the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties on behalf of children who suffered mistreatment, including excessive detention, verbal and physical abuse, deprivation of medical care, insufficient food and water, family separation, and other human rights violations while in CBP custody.

After compiling these individual complaints and seeing trends of mistreatment and abuse endure for years, we knew that more advocacy was warranted, and we filed an organizational complaint with the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in 2022. Two months later, the Marshall Project and Politico published “No Place For A Child,” an alarming investigation into CBP’s long history of mistreatment of children, partly based on Florence Project interviews with over 6,000 minors about their experience in CBP custody.

July 2022

Advocacy Team Grows: Advocacy Social Worker and Policy Coordinator Join the Team

We added new positions to our Advocacy Team, an Advocacy Social Worker and a Policy Coordinator. The Advocacy Social Worker engages closely with attorneys and legal assistants on the Advocacy Team and throughout the organization to pursue systemic change. In 2022, she focused on helping detained adults file complaints about issues affecting them, such as medical neglect, excessive use of solitary confinement, inadequate and inedible food, and other inhumane conditions.

Our Policy Coordinator focuses on advocating for our clients with legislators at the state and federal levels to ensure the voices of the Florence Project and our clients are heard in the rooms where decisions are made. She also represents the Florence Project in national coalitions.

August 2022

DHS Stops Enrolling People in ‘Remain in Mexico’

The Florence Project advocated for four years to end “Remain in Mexico,” the Trump-era program that forced people to wait unprotected in Mexican border communities while their asylum claims were adjudicated. While it was in effect, the policy put tens of thousands of asylum seekers in grave danger. In August 2022, the Department of Homeland Security began the process of unwinding the policy, a long overdue victory for people seeking protection in the United States and their advocates.
October 2022

Adult Trafficking Response Team Is Formed

In addition to our Youth Trafficking Response Team, we established a similar team within our Adult Program. Having a dedicated team will allow us to deepen our impact and allocate resources specifically to identify and serve adults who have been victims of trafficking or are at-risk of trafficking.

Florence Project and Partners Sue Detention Centers for Violating Due Process

The Florence Project and other legal services organizations filed a lawsuit against several Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers for unlawfully preventing attorneys from communicating with detained immigrants. At Florence Correctional Center (FCC) in Arizona, barriers to counsel include a lack of private attorney visitation rooms, insufficient interpretation services, and barriers to in-person access to counsel for people in medical and mental health observation or segregation. We succeeded in securing a court order requiring ICE to install either private attorney-client visitation rooms with access to phones for interpretation or phones for fully confidential and private calls with counsel. The court also found that the barriers ICE has erected blocking access to counsel and the restrictions in place at FCC are both excessive and punitive and likely unconstitutional.

November 2022

Florence Project Receives Transformational Gift from MacKenzie Scott to Advance Systemic Change

Through a generous, foundational investment from MacKenzie Scott, we will pilot a service model that further closes the gap in access to holistic legal representation for detained adults and children in immigration removal proceedings in Arizona. No adult or child should be forced to appear in court alone. As the Florence Project pursues greater systemic change through this representation model and expands its advocacy and communications work, this gift will ensure immigrants are treated more fairly and humanely and save the lives of people fleeing persecution and violence.

DETAINED: Voices from the Migrant Incarceration System

Throughout 2022, the Communications Team worked to collect and archive the stories of previously detained people for “DETAINED: Voices from the Migrant Incarceration System,” a collaboration between faculty at the University of Arizona and Arizona State University, the Florence Project, Salvavision, and previously detained
individuals. In addition to oral histories, the archive includes art, correspondence, and other artifacts. Through this collection, the public has the opportunity to hear directly from people who have been detained in Arizona, and we hope to change the permanent, historical records regarding immigration enforcement.

**As we look to the future, we know we cannot do any of this work without you. Thank you for your unwavering support.**

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**Where are they now?**

**Uplifting News from Former Clients**

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**Eduardo and Antonio**

Eduardo* and Antonio* met while working on a Cuban development mission to Venezuela. Eduardo was a dental hygienist; Antonio was an electrician. They fell in love, but they did not feel safe in Venezuela or Cuba, where they both had been persecuted for being gay. To pursue safety and freedom, the couple fled to the United States. They sought refuge at the border and were sent to ICE detention, where the Florence Project connected with them and helped them seek asylum.

Eduardo and Antonio won their case and have since resumed their respective careers in dentistry and electrical work. They recently took their first vacation outside the U.S.—a romantic trip to Paris. “Another dream is complete,” Eduardo said. He sent us a photo of the best moment—his marriage proposal to Antonio in front of the Eiffel Tower. Antonio said “yes” and they’re looking forward to a life together, safe from persecution.
Mariana
In 2008, Mariana was detained by ICE after a routine traffic stop in Phoenix. She spent a month in immigration detention. She was finally released after requesting bond through guidance from then Florence Project attorney Christina Powers, who also advised Mariana on how to petition to adjust her legal status.

Motivated by the support she witnessed and received, Mariana became a Florence Project donor. She went on to attend law school and says Christina was her inspiration. She recently graduated and passed the bar. She will practice family and immigration law in New York!

“Now, as a law graduate, I am inspired and committed to give back to the community, just as the Florence Project did for me. Their work is truly invaluable, and I am forever grateful for their support,” Mariana says.

Ariana
Ariana* spent ten years separated from her children and siblings after being detained by ICE in 2012, then deported in 2014. We appealed Ariana’s case for over eight years. The government challenged us every step of the way. But we used patience, persistence, and every legal tool available to seek access to justice.

This past March, we succeeded in getting Ariana returned to the U.S. after the Ninth Circuit agreed that her first immigration court hearing had grievous mistakes. Ariana’s new hearing finally concluded this past summer. We’re thrilled to report that she won! Ariana now has legal status and can live her life with her family in the U.S., free from danger.

“My children are happy and grateful to you,” Ariana says. “I am no longer afraid, all thanks to the Florence Project. Thank you all for fighting for me and bringing me back.”

Ariana embodies the powerful love of a mother who will move mountains and traverse rigid borders to get back to her family. Watch a video of their emotional reunification through the following QR Code.

*psuedonym used to protect privacy
Twenty years ago, Jeffrey Topping visited a detention center in Florence, Arizona, on a photography assignment for The New York Times. He and the newspaper’s reporter wanted to meet an Iranian cyclist who had been detained at the U.S. border while biking around the world. We helped facilitate the interview.

“After the assignment I looked more into the Florence Project and stayed in contact with the people there,” Jeff says. “I learned about how they help people who need asylum—people in detention who need help legally and have no economic resources.” Jeff’s work also led him to witness the immense challenges migrants face at the U.S.-Mexico border.

“I did enough [photojournalism and reporting] to learn about the situation and the hardships, and what people deal with while in detention. If it wasn’t for me being a journalist, I may never have learned about the Florence Project, and its work to fight for these individuals’ rights and guide them through the system and help reunite them with family and loved ones.” Jeff became a donor in 2009; he has made gifts to our mission every year since, and now leaves a legacy in his will.

“With the immigration issues in this country, there needs to be constant involvement from people,” Jeff says. “I’m just happy to do what I can. Contributing to the endowment is one way I can do that.”

Jeff is building a legacy founded on the core value that every person deserves to live safely and be treated with dignity. His willingness to plan beyond his lifetime ensures that people threatened with deportation in Arizona will continue to enjoy these values for years to come. We feel grateful and inspired by his profound generosity.

Legacy gifts, whether designated for the endowment or unrestricted, allow us to better plan for our future and to ensure we are able to serve immigrants for years to come. We invite you to make a planned gift in support of our work today. Estate planning is now free, accessible, and confidential for our generous community through our partnership with FreeWill. Create a will through the following QR code and protect yourself and those you love most today!

For more information about these and other giving opportunities, please contact donate@firrp.org or:

Gabi Corrales, Esq. | Director of Philanthropy
gcorrales@firrp.org | Tel. 520.441.3430
Andy Silverman, a founding member of the Florence Project’s Board of Directors, received the Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Southern Arizona Chapter. Andy’s dedicated service to the Florence Project has spanned over three decades, and his wisdom, leadership, and commitment are truly irreplaceable.
In October, we hosted our first in-person Pro Bono Appreciation Event in three years! We expressed our gratitude to the generous pro bono attorneys, community partners, and volunteers who went above and beyond donating their time and skills to our clients and our mission.

Volunteers increase our capacity to provide free legal services to adults and children in removal proceedings, serving as critical partners in our pursuit of justice. It is an honor to work with these talented and dedicated advocates.

Thank you to all donors, volunteers, and supporters who helped create bridges to justice in 2022! We would not be able to do our work without the generosity of this community.

2022 Pro Bono Award Winners

Patrick Lacroix, The Law Office of Patrick Lacroix, PLLC
Children’s Program Pro Bono Attorney of the Year

Crews’n Healthmobile, Phoenix Children’s
Children’s Program Special Partnership

Alisha Herman, Perkins Coie LLP
Adult Program Pro Bono Attorney of the Year

Osborn Maledon, PA
Adult Program Special Partnership

Mahfoudh Jemaa, Interpreter and Translator Volunteer of the Year
2022 Pro Bono Attorneys

*firm at time of engagement

Clara Acosta, Lubin & Enoch, P.C.
Ruperto Alba, Attorney at Law
Jen Al-Imari, Jennifer Al-Imari PLLC
Adam Anderson, Anderson Clarkson Johnson Brown PLLC
Marisol Angulo, Angulo Legal, PLLC
Jessica Anleu, Federal Immigration Counselors, AZ
Mario Anleu, Federal Immigration Counselors, AZ
Annabel Barraza, Osborn Maledon, P.A.
Ashley Beck, Lewis Roca
Josh Bendor, Osborn Maledon, P.A.
Tucker Bingham, Salvatierra Law Group, PLLC
Jocquese Blackwell, Blackwell Law Office, PLLC
Susan Boswell, Attorney at Law
Payslie Bowman, Osborn Maledon, P.A.
Liz Bradley, University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, Transnational Legal Clinic
Carter Bradshaw, The Bradshaw Firm PLC
Michael C. Brown, Lewis Roca
Rachel Bus, Law Offices of Brelje & Associates, P.C.
James Carroll, The Carroll Law Firm, PLC
Anne Chapman, Mitchell & Stein & Carey & Chapman Attorneys at Law
Alina Charniauskaya Mehta, Fragomen, Del Ray, Bernsen, and Loewy, LLP
Sayda Colindres, Juarez Law Office PLLC, Lehman Law Group*
Emma Cone-Roddy, Osborn Maledon, P.A.
Marsha Cotton, Snell & Wilmer LLP
Kelly Daly, Snell & Wilmer LLP
Tucker DeVoe, Goodwin Procter LLP
Tracy Donahue, Paypal, Inc
Andrea Driggs, Perkins Coie, LLP
Nick Enoch, Lubin & Enoch, P.C.
William Evans, Goodwin Procter LLP
Jesse Evans-Schroeder, Green | Evans-Schroeder, PLLC
Lina Fernandez, Ogletree Deakins, Goodwin Procter LLP*
Juan Flamand, Fragomen, Del Ray, Bernsen, and Loewy, LLP
Mary Jo Forman Miller, Attorney at Law
Mary Fowler, Snell & Wilmer LLP
Timothy J. Franks, Perkins Coie, LLP
Kimberly Friday, Osborn Maledon, P.A.
William Furnish, Osborn Maledon, P.A.
Jacqueline Genovesse Bova, Goodwin Procter LLP
Yalda Godusi, Lewis Roca
Matt H. Green, Green | Evans-Schroeder, PLLC
Matthew Grumbling, Eversheds Sutherland (US) LLP; Nguyen Tarbet LLC*
Edward Hermes, Snell & Wilmer LLP
Matthew Hoff, Datafoxtrot, LLC
Ari Hoffman, Lewis Roca
Matthew Hoppock, Hoppock Law Firm
Maria Hubbard, Paypal, Inc
Vianey Hurtado, Vianey K Hurtado Law, PLC
BriAnne Illich-Heard, Osborn Maledon, P.A.
Robert T. Re, Snell & Wilmer LLP
Ronita Khakshoor, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP
Ron Kilgard, Keller Rohrback, PLC
Kory Koerperich, Lewis Roca
Ian M. Kysel, Cornell Law School, Asylum and Convention Against Torture Clinic
Patrick Lacroix, Law Office of Patrick Lacroix, PLLC*
Luis Lanz, Quarles & Brady LLP
Sarah Lawson, Osborn Maledon, P.A.
Clement Lee, Urban Justice Center
Debora Lelli, Lelli Law Firm
Norris C. Livoni, Attorney at Law
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<tr>
<td>Alchemy Foundation</td>
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<td>AmazonSmile Foundation</td>
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<td>Byrd-Borland Foundation</td>
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<td>Connie Hillman Family Foundation &amp; Social Ventures Partners Tucson</td>
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<td>Leaves of Grass Fund</td>
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<td>Lewis Roca</td>
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<td>LGBTQ+ Alliance Fund held at the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona</td>
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<td>Lodestar Foundation</td>
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<td>MEB Charitable Foundation</td>
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<td>Peggy Goulding &amp; Social Venture Partners Tucson</td>
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<td>The Law Office of Patricia G. Mejia, PC</td>
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<td>The Morningstar Foundation</td>
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Florence Project staff at the 2022 Holiday Party
**2022 Financials**

Thanks to your partnership, the Florence Project was able to maintain a strategic reserve to fund our ongoing growth and address the increased need for immigration advocacy and defense in Arizona. Your support allows us to advocate against unjust policies at the border and rapidly respond to global events. We will continue to strategically secure our future, and, as always, we will put every dollar toward meeting the needs of detained immigrants. Thank you for standing with us!

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<th>Revenue</th>
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<td>$10,000,000</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undesignated Net Assets for 2022</td>
<td>$5,694,397</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Net Assets for 2022</td>
<td>$34,423,790</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Revenue Composition:** 31.0% Contracted Legal Services, 6.9% Individual Contributions, 2.1% In-Kind Donations, 62.7% Foundations, 0.0% Other, -2.8% Investment Activity

**Expenses Composition:** 78.7% Program Services, 16.4% Operating Costs, 4.9% Fundraising

**Net Assets Composition:**
- Restricted by Donor: 31.0%
- Restricted by Board: 6.9%
- Innovation Fund: 2.1%
- Other: 62.7%
- Investment Activity: 0.0%
- Total Net Assets: 31.0%

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![Charity Navigator](image1.png)

**Platinum Transparency 2023**

**Candid.**
2023 is shaking out to be a great year. We hosted our Spring Client Appreciation Event in-person for the first time since 2019!

The images here and our cover photo are from that event, which was made possible through your gifts in 2022.

Thank you for your support!

Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
FLORENCE | PHOENIX | TUCSON
P.O. BOX 86299 | TUCSON, AZ 85754 | (520) 777-5600
DONATE@FIRRP.ORG | WWW.FIRRP.ORG

The mission of the Florence Project is to provide free legal and social services to detained adults and unaccompanied children facing immigration removal proceedings in Arizona.