

JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023

impact report

JUSTICE AND MERCY LEGAL AID CENTER



JUSTICE AND MERCY
LEGAL AID CENTER

TRANSFORMING LIVES



LEFT: JAMLAC Leadership Team (left to right): Jose Escobar, Associate Director & Family Law Attorney; Sulma Mendoza, Immigration Director; Steve Thompson, Lead Servant & Senior Attorney, and Nikki Koster, Director of Development

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dear jamfam,

"JAMFAM" is the endearing name we use for our dedicated staff and faithful supporters – our JAMLAC Family – where compassion creates change.

A huge THANKS to all of you for participating with us this last year in the important work happening at the Justice and Mercy Legal Aid Center (JAMLAC). When I think about our work of seeking justice for people who are struggling with poverty and oppression I am reminded of the words of the Psalmist:

*"My hope is in the Lord my God, who made heaven and earth. The sea and everything in them. Who keeps his truth forever, **who executes justice for the wronged**, who provides food for the hungry, **who frees those who are bound**, The Lord **who restores those broken down . . . who keeps watch over the immigrant**, who adopts the orphan and the widow." Psalm 145:5-9*

How does God do these wonderful things? Through us. Through you and me. Your partnership with JAMLAC has enabled us to provide critical civil legal services to 3,000 individuals – plus indirectly benefits thousands more. Together we are accomplishing these life-changing works of God.

Please read through this report to take a deeper dive into what God has done through JAMLAC this past year.

Peace of Christ,

Steve Thompson
Lead Servant, JAMLAC

Right: JAMLAC Staff and Board Members (not all pictured)



Resilience Rewritten: Monica's Journey to Freedom

In the depths of her struggle, Monica, a resilient soul with a story of hardship, sought help at JAMLAC. Monica's journey was marked by the pursuit of justice, hope, and the yearning for a brighter future for her and her children. Faced with the daunting task of breaking away from an oppressive relationship, the path to freedom was fraught with obstacles.

Trapped in a challenging situation where adversity often lurked in the shadows, Monica's plea for help echoed with urgency. Her life had been marred by torment at the hands of her partner. The scars ran deep, etched into the hearts of her children, who had witnessed the difficulties their mother faced. Their fear cast a long shadow over their lives, but she held onto a fragile hope - the hope of safeguarding her children and herself by escaping this harrowing ordeal.

Monica's ability to provide for her family had been stifled – her abuser had barred her from seeking employment. Her financial difficulties added further layers of complexity to her plight. Monica's voice may have been muffled, but her resolve was unwavering, a testament to her incredible courage.

Her life had been marred by verbal, financial, and physical torment at the hands of her husband. The scars ran deep, etched into the very hearts of her children, who had witnessed the horrors of their mother being beaten and strangled.

It was in this tumultuous journey that JAMLAC emerged as a lifeline, guiding Monica through the intricacies of the complex legal process. Together, we persevered, and in the end, justice prevailed.

The court's divorce order granted Monica the autonomy she sought, offering her not just freedom from abuse but also the promise of a new



life for her and her children. Monica's story is a poignant reminder of the transformative power of compassion, determination, and justice.



government costs
include legal, medical, enforcement and foster care



community costs
include schools of impacted children, opportunity costs for those not able to contribute, businesses of impacted employees



household costs
include impact on children, family income, quality of life and well-being



individual costs
include legal, medical, lost wages, self-sufficiency, quality of life

OUR IMPACT: 96% of our clients do not return to their abuser.

the costs of domestic violence

- Domestic violence hurts *not only* the kids who witness the violence, but also their classmates – **reading and math test scores decrease** as well as **lower rates of college attendance**. Misbehavior among other students in the classroom is increased by 16%.
- Victims of intimate partner violence **lose a total of 8.0 million days of paid work** each year.
- Domestic violence costs the U.S. over **\$8.3 billion** per year.



accomplishments & impact

131 volunteers gave
2,205 hours of service for an
estimated value of **\$250,000+**

87% of our clients are
survivors of domestic violence
or other serious crimes.

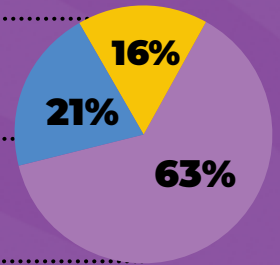
96% of those clients **do not**
return to their abusers.

Of over **3,000*** people served:

487 clients had legal and/or
advocacy services

625 clients had
full representation

1,975 attended legal
clinics or workshops



*(this number is significantly higher than previous years because
of workshops for large groups of newly-arrived migrants)*

* ripple effect

We directly served 3,000 individuals, but our work in fact positively impacts **thousands more**. Many legal matters involve **children**; the results give children better living environments and **change their lives**. Opportunities can affect generations to come, and the **decreased cost to the community** from reduction of domestic violence and other crimes, plus increasing economic opportunities for families and communities represents **profound impact**.

Right: JAMLAC client celebrating being reunited with her family – Grandma seeing her grandson for the first time.



From Crisis to Hope: Stories of Strength at JAMLAC

At JAMLAC, our mission is to seek justice for those struggling with poverty and oppression. The need for our services is especially prevalent during the ongoing migrant crisis. Temporary shelters stand as a place of hope and change, where every step reveals unique stories of resilience.

Marlene Bedoya, JAMLAC's Communication Director, emphasizes the urgency, "We've been extremely busy lately, particularly with the migrant crisis. We feel a strong obligation to help." In this atmosphere of profound need, our collaboration with case managers and other nonprofits works to connect migrants with vital resources. One touching story involves a Venezuelan family seeking refuge in Denver.

After they arrived in Denver, JAMLAC stepped in to help them and other Venezuelan migrants navigate the legal system in a new country and access the resources they needed.

JAMLAC's unwavering commitment to justice has shone brightly in our support for Afghan individuals and their families who bravely stood alongside Americans, facing immense risks in the process. Through our tireless efforts, we've provided a lifeline for these courageous souls by navigating the complex legal landscapes of Parole (including Re-Parole), SIV (Special Immigrant Visa), Asylum, and Residency. By offering them the opportunity to rebuild their lives safely, we honor their sacrifice and showcase the transformative power of legal aid in pursuing a brighter, more secure future. Together, we create lasting change and champion the cause of those who have risked everything for a better tomorrow.

OUR IMPACT: We rapidly responded to the Venezuelan and Afghan Evacuee crisis, significantly expanding our services to provide legal guidance and representation to those in dire need – a small piece of the collective effort of organizations like JAMLAC to provide solace and support to those starting anew.



Above: Marlene Bedoya, Communication Director and Development Officer, organizing legal presentations for migrants in the shelters.

"I was a Lieutenant in Venezuela and was treated as a traitor when I refused to harm innocent people. I signed up to defend my people and my country, not to destroy them. The government began to harass, threaten, and persecute my family and me."



Above: Venezuelan Family receiving legal information.

Below: Immigration Attorney Mckenna Newsum Schoenberg providing legal representation to an Afghan family.





finances

Your investment in JAMLAC’s robust legal aid center allows thousands of vulnerable people to get life-changing services. Thanks to your generosity, JAMLAC is in a stable financial position to continue our mission as we enter 2024.

income

Government Funding	\$808,491	48%
Contributions	\$228,979	14%
Foundations	\$259,928	15%
Events	\$129,889	8%
Pro Bono Legal Services	\$256,740	15%
Total Income	\$1,684,027	100%

expenses

Legal Program Personnel	\$925,688	55%
Administrative Personnel	\$175,859	10%
Program Expenses	\$33,633	2%
Development & Marketing	\$21,316	2%
Facilities & Equipment	\$94,589	6%
Administrative & Management	\$169,242	10%
Pro Bono Legal Services	\$256,740	15%
Total Expenses	\$1,677,068	100%

game changer
 Research indicates that the primary public service that reduces domestic abuse in the long term is **women’s access to legal assistance.**

vision

We are well underway into our 3 year strategic growth initiative launch in 2022. Thanks to a significant grant from The NextFifty Initiative and other generous donors – we are **establishing more targeted services for older adults.**

The passion of our staff and commitment from the community has allowed us to **enhance our immigration services.** We are growing and will continue to grow by leveraging our existing structures and finding alternative ways to make greater impact. In the coming years, we hope to **expand to additional areas of law** to meet the civil legal needs of more people experiencing injustice.

Below: JAMLAC community workshop

Left: Supporting a client through the legal process





José’s Extraordinary Journey: A Tale of Resilience, Triumph, and Heartfelt Reunions.

A cherished client, José, faced emotional turmoil and financial challenges after a brutal assault. Our immigration team fought tirelessly for his permanent status, despite pandemic-related delays. Tragically, during this wait, his father passed away, intensifying his pain.

Hope emerged as José’s permanent resident case was approved, filling his heart with indescribable joy. He reunited with his 90-year-old mother in Mexico, ending 30 years of separation. José, a hardworking construction worker, provided his services as a gesture of gratitude. His story reflects the transformative power of our work, bringing hope and happiness to clients and future generations.

Above: “José asked how he could ever repay me. I told him ‘Just send me a picture of you and your mom reunited.’ This simple picture filled me with immense joy and pride in the transformative work we do here at JAMLAC. We are truly changing lives!” —Sulma Mendoza, JAMLAC’s Immigration Director

From Desperation to Transformation: The Journey of Six Vulnerable Hearts

In the face of heart-wrenching circumstances, we received an urgent plea for help concerning six vulnerable children ages 7 to 17, separated from their parents during the Afghanistan evacuation. They arrived in the United States unaccompanied, finding support from relatives and guardians who desire legal representation for official guardianship. Through our Pro Bono Program, we turned to Holland and Hart LLP to join forces to help these children.

Attorneys Ryan J. Martin and Kylie J. Crandall engaged in heartfelt dialogues and innovative brainstorming and jumped in to represent these children. While the cases are unfolding, their unwavering dedication offers these children a brighter future. Your support continues our Pro Bono Program mission, shaping these young lives through compassion and justice.

OUR IMPACT: We established more targeted services for older adults, enhanced immigration, and expanded our holistic legal services.

Right: Sulma Mendoza in the lobby with three of our youngest clients. JAMLAC provides services for abuse, abandoned, and neglected children.



Advocacy in Action: Clients Becoming Agents of Change

Through the work of our bilingual navigator and support staff, clients gain access to additional wraparound services which enable them to not only rebuild their lives, but also become advocates for themselves and their communities.

Empowered by their newfound knowledge and resources, they navigate the system together and encourage others to seek help. This ripple effect creates a network of individuals who trust and share valuable resources, fostering resilience and hope within the community. At JAMLAC, we are honored to be part of these journeys of transformation to self-sufficiency.



Above: Many of our staff, including Aide Salazar Zetina our Bilingual Navigator (above), help clients navigate wraparound resources beyond legal services.

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thanks to our donors

including **229 individuals & families, 80 businesses** and:

Government

- Victim Assistance Law- Enforcement (VALE) Boards from the 1st, 2nd, 17th and 18th Judicial Districts
- Aid to Agencies Arapahoe County
- Colorado Civil Justice Corp Fellowship
- Family Violence Justice Fund
- Office of Victim Programs - Crime Victim Services
- Colorado Refugee Services Program
- Colorado Department of Human Services

Churches

- Bear Valley Baptist Church
- Celebration Community Church
- City Church Denver
- Colorado Community Church
- Denver Community Church
- First Christian Reformed Church
- Life Center, Mission Hills Church

Foundations

- Anschutz Family Foundation
- Colorado Bar Foundation
- Rose Community Foundation
- Standing Pines Foundation
- The Denver Foundation
- The Myriad Impact Foundation
- 1st Judicial District Bar Association
- NextFifty Initiative
- Colorado AILA Chapter
- and various family foundations

Justice and Mercy Legal Aid Center
913 North Wyandot St.
Denver, CO 80204
303-839-1008
www.JAMLAC.org



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