SD VOICES FOR PEACE & SD VOICES FOR JUSTICE

IMPACT REPORT 2021

OUR MISSION

South Dakota Voices for Peace builds power and enables healing in immigrant, refugee, and Muslim communities by amplifying their voices and working in solidarity with all who dismantle bigotry and racism.

OUR VISION

We imagine a South Dakota that is diverse, inclusive, and anti-racist.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 2017, a small group of people came together to create SD Voices for Peace (SDVFP) and SD Voices for Justice (SDVFJ). Our shared values included building welcoming communities where immigrants, refugees and Muslims belong and eradicating hate by pushing back on bigotry and racism whether it appeared at our dinner tables or legislative session. Our sister organizations work together to create social change by working "top down" in influencing policies and laws that hurt our communities (SDVFJ) and work "bottom up" to build communities by providing them access to immigration legal services and access to information to use their voices through civic engagement (SDVFP).

Over the last four years, our journey has taken us to new places and shaped who we are in this moment. Some of our highlights include:

- The first rally we organized was a national day of action called "Families Belong Together." This solidarity action took place on June 20, 2018 and was in response to the administration's "Zero-Tolerance Policy" to separate children from their parents at the southern border. Nearly 500 people showed up in solidarity. This community response became the foundation of what today is our free immigration legal services program where we serve children and survivors of violence in immigration court.

- In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, our team raised $1.2M for the state's only Emergency Relief Fund for Immigrants in SD, assisting 1,700 immigrant-led households with direct cash assistance. With this work, we hired outreach coordinators to make sure immigrant communities across the eastern half of the state knew about this resource. Our rapid response program received national attention and funds to grow our outreach programming by creating more access to information around COVID-19, the vaccine and now Medicaid Expansion. The trust our outreach team has made with multilingual communities is the foundation we needed to grow our health equity work.

- On September 17, 2019, we organized community members in the McKennan Park neighborhood to advocate for the City of Sioux Falls to pass a "no-hate" resolution, after KKK recruitment fliers were found. This led to our ByStander to Upstander Training - providing tools to disrupt racist and bias incidences while assuring the victim of the incident comes back into belonging.

- Through our various advocacy and lobbying efforts in our Legislature, City Council and County Commission meetings, we learned that SD is full of neighbors who care for one another and want to speak out more against racism and bigotry, but they felt alone. This sparked the idea of our Cohorts for Courage program where we bring similar sectors of people together to learn about Islamophobia and why bigotry exists in our communities. We learn about strategic ways to respond. The inaugural cohort were Christian Faith Leaders, which led to an interfaith justice collective West River, and a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) Youth Advocates Cohort leading to the *In The Know* podcast.

Throughout our journey, the support of donors, cheerleaders, and community partners have pushed us to grow in ways we could not have predicted. Thank you for your continuous support and belief in this important work.

"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty" - Maya Angelou.

Sincerely,

Taneeza S. Islam, Esq.* (licensed in SD & MN)
Executive Director

LEGAL SERVICES

Our clients have collectively traveled 183,598 miles to reach safety in South Dakota.

Our clients traveled from: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Kuwait, Burundi and Ethiopia.

SDVFP is the only free immigration legal service provider in the state.

We serve two distinct immigrant populations:
1) Survivors of Violence: Violent crimes which take place in the U.S.
2) Unaccompanied Children (UC): children who travel to the U.S. border without their parents.

As of 2022, we are serving and representing

30 Unaccompanied Minors
14 Survivors of Violence
And we have a growing waitlist

The Immigration Process

We collect evidence and interview clients to determine whether they will qualify for a pathway to citizenship. There are 4 pathways to citizenship that our clients qualify for: 1) **Asylum**, 2) **SIJ**, 3) **U visa**, and/or 4) **VAWA**. Clients can be eligible for more than one pathway to citizenship. There are two federal government entities we work with : 1) **USCIS** (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, an agency within Department of Homeland Security), and 2) **Immigration Court** (IC is within the Department of Justice. Immigration Court is Regional and appearances for court are in Fort Snelling, MN. Some interviews with USCIS take place in Omaha, NE).

Each pathway requires different evidence and has varying timelines for a final decision. We file an **EAD** (work authorization) application once a client is eligible. Upon approval, clients have to renew EADs every 2 years, and we assist in filing these applications too. At the same time, we are appearing in court, filing motions with the court, and responding to USCIS inquiries. Once a client becomes eligible for **LPR** status (Lawful Permanent Resident), we file this application. LPR status allows for eligibility of government services, like student financial aid and permanent work authorization. After receiving LPR status, the client will be eligible for U.S. Citizenship.

Asylum: prove past persecution of well founded fear of future persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or "particular social group."

SIJ: Special Immigrant Juvenile status is granted to children under 21 who prove they have been abused, neglected or abandoned by one parent and it is not in the child's best interest to return to home country.

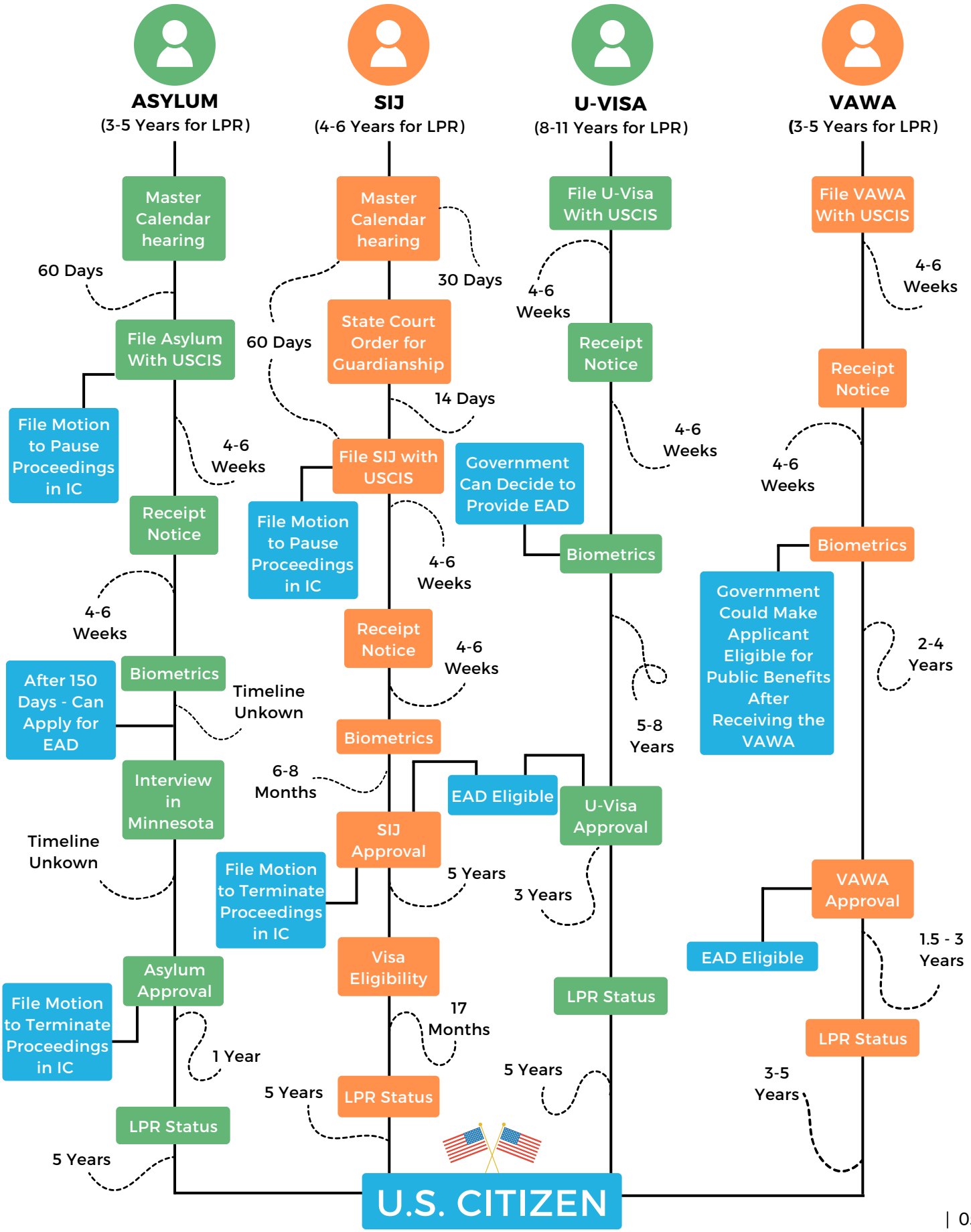
U Visa: must suffer from mental or physical abuse from qualified crime and are helpful to law enforcement in investigation or prosecution.

VAWA: victim is an abused spouse, parent or child of a U.S. Citizen or LPR abuser.

Pathways to U.S. Citizenship

All of our UC clients are in Immigration Court. Some of our adults may not be in court.

***Denial:** If an application is denied and our client is in Immigration Court, our client may appeal the decision to a judge. If our client is not in Immigration Court, there will be an order for removal (deportation).*



OUTREACH & HEALTH EQUITY

SDVFP Covid-19 Journey

The pandemic exacerbated existing barriers. In SD, most of the COVID-19 information, whether about testing or accessing vaccines, was only available in English. To confront the challenges posed by inaccessible information, our team developed materials that would be translated in Spanish, Amharic, and Nepali to address the specific needs of immigrant, refugee, and Muslim populations. When information was ready to be distributed, we traveled to various places of worship, immigrant-owned businesses, and non-profit organizations in Sioux Falls and Eastern South Dakota.

Our model is based on the premise that "we need to meet communities where they are and not wait for them to come to us." Reaching our communities in-person and having one-on-one conversations was our most effective strategy. This approach facilitated connection and communication with community members and organizations who shared similar goals in the greater community. We proudly presented to national stakeholders on the success of our model, including to Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Outreach continued at various cultural events, festivals, and celebrations. Part of our mission was to increase vaccine confidence in South Dakota, and with our partners South Dakota Urban Indian Health and Lewis Drug Pharmacy, we organized a series of pop-up clinics throughout the year and into 2022, vaccinating nearly 500 people. The first pop-up clinic was hosted in partnership with South Dakota Urban Indian Health and South Dakota State University Dairy Extension in July of 2021; the clinic was located in the Empire Mall parking lot for convenience and accessibility. The achievement of this initial pop-up clinic became a guide for the development of future COVID-19 efforts.

COVID-19 DATA

8,152 ATTEMPTS

6,574 PEOPLE REACHED

5,132 FLYERS DISTRIBUTED

4,889 CONVERSATIONS

462 VACCINATIONS

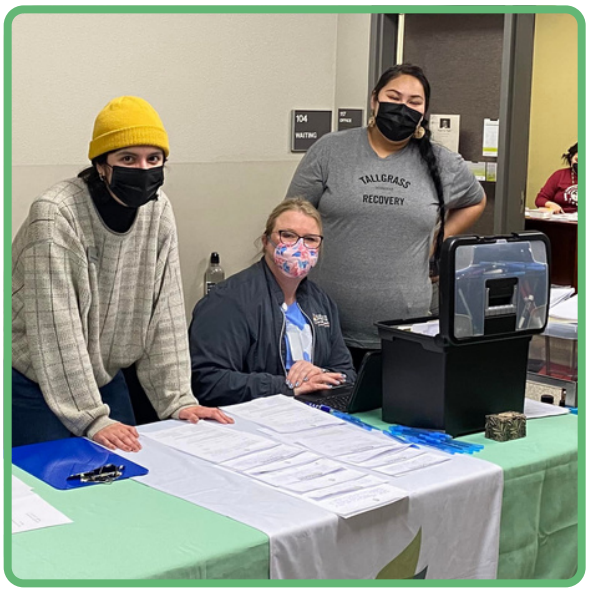
53 EVENTS

10 POP-UP CLINICS

SDVFP Meets with Dr. Fauci to present our work to the Department of Health and Human Services team

3,098 MILES TRAVELED

Pop-up Clinic at Hammink Dairy



Pop-up Clinic with SDUIH at Bishop Dudley Hospital House

Pop-up Clinic with SDUIH at the Empire Mall

Recipient of 3 National Grants

Made to Save (Civic Nation)

Made to Save was a COVID-19 initiative created by Civic Nation to focus on national education and grassroots campaigns to increase COVID-19 vaccine accessibility; they do so by empowering community-based organizations to focus on outreach programs that facilitate opportunities for vaccinations in communities that were disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

Community Catalyst

Community Catalyst is a leading non-profit national health advocacy organization dedicated to advancing a movement for health equity and justice. Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the national program aims to increase vaccine confidence through community-based outreach.

Mobile Pathways

Mobile Pathways helps immigrants gain access to reliable legal information about their numerous pathways to immigration via mobile technology. Mobile Pathways created the Vaccine Equity Coalition to work on vaccine confidence and accessibility for undocumented immigrant communities who are disproportionately undervaccinated.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY & RAPID RESPONSE

COHORT OF COURAGE
YOUTH ADVOCATES

First Cohort of Courage BIPOC Youth Advocates

Cohorts of Courage: Youth Advocates is our next initiative in fighting bigotry and racism. By giving Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) youth the tools and knowledge they need to make positive change in their communities and be the next generation of change agents. Cohorts of Courage deepens the understanding of what it means to build community and take action to implement strategies of social change.

In August 2021, SDVFP launched our first BIPOC Youth Advocates Cohort. Students learned how to organize press conferences, write op-ed letters, research issues and develop talking points. They heard from local media on the importance of using their voice.

The culmination of the week-long intensive program was a public forum where participants presented on topics that they were passionate about and proposed solutions for: healthy foods in schools, public transportation in Sioux Falls, and discrimination in public schools.

In the Know Podcast

CoC Youth Advocate members have developed the *In the Know* podcast - A podcast allowing BIPOC youth a space to share their ideas, by bringing the latest and important news and topics in a digestible and relatable form. Through conversations with people doing the work of fighting bigotry and racism, they unpack complex topics for the listener.

Bystander to Upstander Trainings

What can a person do when they hear or observe another person being treated with disrespect, and even potential violence? Every one of us encounters acts of discrimination, hate, and bigotry whether in our schools, workplace, grocery store or dinner table. We cannot be Bystanders to these kinds of incidents. The Bystander to Upstander Intervention training is a 60-minute introduction on ways to respond to these kinds of traumatizing incidents. Participants learn how to safely disrupt these situations and bring the target of the incident back into belonging.

We have provided these training sessions to educators, community organizations, business professionals and concerned citizens.

Perspectives Column

In collaboration with the Argus Leader, SD Voices for Peace organized the Perspectives Column, to uplift voices of our BIPOC communities by sharing various aspects of lived experiences in South Dakota. The Argus Leader was recognized by the South Dakota Newspaper Association in its annual awards ceremony for this column.

> **"Thoughtful, important conversation-starters for the community. These columns provide meaningful insight on issues while using the newspaper's platform to educate community members who may be unfamiliar with diverse voices or unsure how to learn more."**
>
> **- The Judge's Comments**

Responding to Hate

After anti-Semitic posters were disseminated across Sioux Falls in late 2021, SDVFP created a space for Jewish community members and supporters to rally against the hateful propaganda. The rally was hosted at First Congregational Church on the last night of Hanukkah.

Rally at First Congregational Church

SDVFP tracks incidents of hate in our communities and will strategize with community leaders to take action steps. Tracking incidents is the first step in understanding the gravity of hate and bigotry in our communities. In order to combat hate, we must document it with photos, videos, and words.

Grassroots Coalition Building

SD Justice and Equity Coalition

We strategically bring community leaders, local criminal justice reform stakeholders and organizers together to call for accountability, transparency and equity in every level of the SD justice system, specifically focusing on the needs of individuals impacted by the criminal justice system.

SD Dream Coalition

Our DREAM is for full inclusion of our diverse immigrant, refugee, and undocumented communities in South Dakota. We are grassroots organizations and individuals who believe in justice and equity for our communities. SDVFP organizes monthly meetings for collaboration on initiatives serving our vibrant communities on the eastern half of South Dakota.

OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT

Establishing Community Requires Community Input

SDVFP Team Volunteering at The Banquet

Partners

"South Dakota Urban Indian Health (SDUIH) is a Federally Qualified Health Center providing primary, behavioral, and cultural care to in the Sioux Falls and Pierre communities. Through a partnership with South Dakota Voices for Peace, SDUIH implemented a mobile COVID-19 vaccine clinic and inoculated hundreds of relatives in Sioux Falls and its surrounding communities. Together, SDUIH and SDVFP provided accessible protection against COVID-19 by identifying and eliminating barriers such as transportation, language, and citizenship status." - **Samantha Chapman, SDUIH Communications Director**

"South Dakota Voices for Peace has been a partner in the development of parent engagement programming for Thrive's Kid Link Initiative. SDVP staff have taught Kid Link volunteers more about the diverse populations we both serve, and made connections to resources that we could not have accessed on our own." - **Michelle Erpenbach, Sioux Falls Thrive**

Cohort of Courage: Youth Advocates

"The Cohort of Courage program quite literally gave me the courage and strength I needed to step up as an advocate in my community. The resources along with the knowledge gained from the program were the perfect tools I needed to believe in myself and to make an impact." -**Rachida Mahamed, Cohort Participant & host of *In The Know***

Clients

"Voices for Peace helped me to know the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status was the best option for me, and after it was approved I am able to not worry about my status here or being sent back to Guatemala. I now have to wait for the visa and employment authorization but it's all ok, I can wait! I graduated high school in May and SDVP also helped me because I was able to think of my future and graduating was very important." -**WMC, 18 unaccompanied minor from Guatemala, client since 2020**

"She [Taneeza Islam] just did her job and was very nice to me during my case. I thank God and all of you who supported me with my case that now I have won. I now have my work permit and am looking for a job. I have no words to thank you." - **BCN, 20 unaccompanied minor from Guatemala, client since 2020.**

Community Outreach and Coalition Building

"The visitation your organization did in the Liberian community provided corridors for information on how they get benefits from the various programs you have available for the immigrants community. "- **Edwin Tarplah, Liberian Community Leader**

"SDVFP takes advocacy to a whole new level that our community has never seen before. Their staff is focused and prepared to ensure the issues that matter to those in need are addressed and never ignored." -**Heather Krause, Concerned Parent**

SOUTH DAKOTA VOICES FOR PEACE
2021 FINANCIAL REPORT

INCOME	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Grants & Contributions	$537,048.88	$300,662.16	$157,933.62	$117,407.86	$23,550.00
Other — PPP Loan	$0.00	$27,809.67	$80.00	$0.00	$0.00
Total Income	$537,048.88	$328,471.83	$158,013.62	$117,407.86	$23,550.00

NET ASSETS	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Assets	$462,296.67	$400,265.96	$230,691.91	$129,933.60	$23,506.80
Liabilities	$11,479.11	$3,861.08	$1,126.45	$0.00	$0.00
Net Assets	450,817.56	$396,404.88	$229,565.46	$129,933.60	$23,506.80

EXPENSES	2021	Distribution %	2020	2019	2018	2017
Program	$529,327.62	87%	$116,935.49	$50,595.60	$7,406.67	$0.00
Support	$82,322.83	13%	$22,505.62	$7,786.16	$3,574.67	$43.20
Total Expenses	$611,650.45	-	$139,441.11	$58,381.76	$10,981.06	$43.20

SOUTH DAKOTA VOICES FOR JUSTICE

Justice Overview

SD Voices for Justice is the sister organization to SDVFP. As a 501(c)(4), SDVFJ works to lobby for legislation, policies and elected officials who support our vision and mission, and we work to lobby against bills that endanger our mission and vision. We organize and coach community members to testify at committee hearings. Since 2017, we have lobbied against anti-refugee bills, advocated at school board meetings for mitigation measures during COVID-19, advocated for an Anti-Hate Resolution at city council meetings, and supported the resettlement of refugees in county commission meetings. We also endorsed candidates who align with our mission and vision in 2020.

2021 Highlights

SD High School Rodeo Club

Slave Branding Auction Event: Through our action alerts we educated the community on the great harm caused by this event on historically enslaved communities and asked community members to reach out the board members to express their concern. This led to a social media storm, news coverage and ultimately the cancellation of this event.

Interfaith Day at the Capitol

This annual lobbying day brings together Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Atheists and Agnostics from across the state. This lobbying day started in 2018 under the leadership of then ELCA Bishop Zellmer. SDVFJ has been a part of this event since. Adhering to COVID-19 precautions, this event took place via Zoom in 2021.

2021 Legislative Session SDVFJ Wins and Losses

HCR 6005 - ADVOCATED AGAINST: DEFEATED
Resolution distorting Black History but phrased as "Celebrating Black History Month."

HB 1199 - ADVOCATED FOR: PASSED
Establishes the Office of Liaison for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons.

SB71 - ADVOCATED AGAINST: DEFEATED
Designates Juneteenth as a working holiday.

SB 89 - ADVOCATED FOR: LOST
Adds Juneteenth as a State Holiday as a paid day off.

HB 1212 - ADVOCATED AGAINST: LOST
Stand Your Ground Expansion. This bill allows any person anywhere to use deadly force against any person they believe is a threat. There is no duty to retreat. This bill was signed into law on March 8, 2021.

SB 166 - ADVOCATED FOR: LOST
Adds sexual orientation and Native American Two Spirit to a list of protected classes to SD's existing hate crimes laws.

SB 90 - ADVOCATED FOR: LOST
Recognizes hair discrimination as an unfair or discriminatory practice.

SB 125 - ADVOCATED FOR: LOST
Temporarily requires the wearing of face covering in the state under certain conditions and to declare an emergency.

SOUTH DAKOTA VOICES FOR JUSTICE
2021 FINANCIAL REPORT

SDVFJ depends on individual donations for its lobbying work.

INCOME	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Individual Donations	$11,718.08	$3,551.86	$5,671.00	$19,875.00	-
Other — PPP Loan	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	-
Total Income	$11,718.08	$3,551.86	$5,671.00	$19,875.00	-

NET ASSETS	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Assets	$13,205.09	$6,754.03	$2,317.00	$10,075.00	-
Liabilities	$582.44	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	-
Net Assets	$12,622.65	$6,754.03	$2,317.00	$10,075.00	-

EXPENSES	2021	Distribution %	2020	2019	2018	2017
Program	$5492.42	94%	$17,019.69	$11,807.00	$9,500.00	-
Support	$357.04	6%	$2,311.71	$1,622.00	$300.00	-
Total Expenses	$5,849.46	-	$19,331.40	$13,429.00	$9,800.00	-

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special Thanks

To **JM Kaplan Fund** for awarding us the 2019 Innovation Prize of $50,000 per year for 3 consecutive years, $25,000 for Technical Assistance and a national cohort of incredible and innovative social change entrepreneurs.

To the **Northwest Area Foundation** for granting us funds every year since 2019.

To the **Proteus Fund/Rise Together Fund**, our first national grantor who has granted funds every year since 2018 and provides us a community of social justice advocates.

To **Goosman Law Firm** for their low-bono partnership in securing state court guardianships for UC client SIJS filings, since 2020.

Megan Grode Wolters for her pro bono service providing mental health assessments for legal clients, since 2019.

First Congregational Church for welcoming us into their community and providing SDVFP our office space since 2019.

Tanner Wangsness from Minuteman Press for always getting our urgent print jobs done on time!

Grantors & Supporting Foundations

Community Catalyst /CDC
Doris Duke Foundation
Four Freedoms Fund/Neo Philanthropy
JM Kaplan Fund
Made to Save / Civic Nation
Northwest Area Foundation
Office of Violence Against Women Legal Assistance for Victims Sub-recipient through the SD Network Against Family Violence & Sexual Assault
Presentation Sisters
Rise Together Fund
Sheldon Reese Foundation
Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation
South Dakota Community Foundation
South Dakota Humanities Council
St. Paul & Minnesota Foundation
Tate Profilet & Mary DeJong Foundation
Twillio
Tides Foundation

Corporate Donors

Anonymous Donor Thru Poet
Terra Shepherd
Lemonly
Spirit of Peace
Sioux Falls Food Co-Op

2021 SDVFP Staff

Taneeza Islam, Esq. - Executive Director
Rev. Dr. Naomi Ludeman - Deputy Director
Jen Dreiske - Program and Development Director
Megan Deye - Legal Case Manager
Olimpia Justice - Legal Case Coordinator
Yesenia Gonzalez - Legal Case Coordinator
Janet Guerrero - Legal Case Coordinator
Carla Graciano - Outreach Coordinator
Sara Telahun Birhe - Outreach Coordinator
Haley Hardie - Outreach Coordinator
Saliya Ali - Outreach Coordinator
Renu Chetri - Outreach Coordinator
Umaima Koch - Digital Content Specialist

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Kids Table Sponsors

Bread & Circus
Khorasan Kabob House
MB Haskett
Mama's Ladas
Pizza Cheeks
Swamp Daddy's

Uplifting Voices Concert

First Congregational Church
Sioux Falls Chamber Music Collective

Awards

EMBE's Embeliever Award - Taneeza Islam

@sdvfpeace

@sdvfjustice

sdvfpeace.org
southdakotavoicesforjustice.org

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