

■ They tried  
to bury us.  
They didn't  
know we  
were seeds.

RAICES | ANNUAL REPORT 2020







ABOUT US

RAICES, formally known as the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services, defends the rights of immigrants and refugees; empowers individuals, families, and communities; and advocates for liberty and justice.

Founded in 1986 as the Refugee Aid Project, RAICES provides legal and social services to disenfranchised immigrants and refugees, including families and unaccompanied children, and pairs direct client service with impact litigation and advocacy focused on expanding permanent protections for immigrants and changing the narrative around immigration in the U.S. The 501(c)3 not-for-profit is headquartered in San Antonio, with offices in Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and Laredo. Each year, RAICES opens more than 10,000 affirmative and defensive direct representation cases, including social services case management; provides Know Your Rights presentations and legal intakes in 15 shelters and select emergency facilities for unaccompanied children; and resettles more than 200 refugee parents and children, including Afghan Special Immigrant Visa holders.

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**IN TIMES OF CRISIS, THE ALREADY EXPLOITED SUFFER THE GREATEST.** Together with you, RAICES continues to ensure that our commitment to bring and keep families together deepens in accordance with the need. Some of the harshest and most restrictive conditions denying migrants legal redress in 2020 extended beyond the southern border.

Government overreach was found in detention centers, courtrooms deliberating DACA protections, and town squares where public protests centered on the cries for accountability. Intrusions and denial of human rights provoked broad migrant rights community to rally. As the end of one administration neared and the global pandemic raged, RAICES asked: **How do we defend the human rights of migrants as a nation veils white supremacy behind a public health imperative?**

In a year where government abuse of immigration law could be reframed as COVID-19 protections, the overreach almost defied solution. Yet, in the midst of humanitarian crises throughout our nation and the world, our service recipients, advocates, trusted allies, and supporters in the fight for migrant justice grew stronger than ever.

**They tried to bury us.  
They didn't know we were seeds.**

**10,548**  
LEGAL CASES OPENED  
**8,179**  
CLIENTS SERVED

**How do we defend the human rights of migrants as a nation veils white supremacy behind a public health imperative?**



(Photo by Patrick T. Fallon/Getty Images)



# FIGHTING FOR FAMILIES

**2020 WAS A YEAR THAT DEMANDED** answers and resiliency. At RAICES, our scope of work called for deepened commitment to the hundreds of thousands of families — whether waiting in detention, waiting in Mexico, waiting for release, or waiting for reunification, each member of a larger family waited to reunite, resettle, and renew their lives in new communities.

Weaponizing the language of public health, the government's COVID-19 restrictions enforced nativist bans on the legal protections once lauded for welcoming the tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free.

**"I remember that very well. I cannot forget it, as if it's happening right now. The immigration officer took out my son. The officer told me, 'You will never see him again.' He told me they were going to take him for a bath and that they would bring him back to me. And that day I did not see my son again. From there, I did not see him for 90 days."**

**[ NAME REDACTED ]**  
Service Recipient at RAICES

**466**  
INTAKES  
IN FAMILY  
DETENTION

## ADVOCATING FOR FAMILY RIGHTS

Whether detained together or separated from their parents, the U.S. government decided in 2020 to use migrant children as pawns to attempt Family Separation 2.0. After the courts ended family separation under the "zero tolerance" policy in 2018, the government began holding families together in detention centers — divided by gender in prison-like facilities where the threat and reality of COVID-19 caused mental and physical havoc.

Amplifying the #FreeTheFamilies campaign in coordination with Amnesty International USA, RAICES alerted the public to the COVID-19 circumstances that detained parents faced: the binary choice of releasing their children without guarantee of reunion — or remaining together in squalid conditions ripe for infection.

RAICES attorneys uncovered the initial threat of renewed family separation in May 2020, when the nation's three family detention centers made a coordinated effort demanding that parents sign away the rights to their children without the opportunity to consult with their legal counsel. The following month, U.S District Judge Dolly M. Gee, in her oversight of the 1997 Flores Settlement Agreement, ruled that children must be released from detention by July 17, 2020, due to poor and inconsistent compliance with COVID-19 protections. Her stipulations noted that minors should be released in one of three circumstances: with parental permission; with their parents at ICE's discretion; or



with their parents via separate federal court ruling.

In June 2020, RAICES published "The U.S. Government Kidnapped My Son," a report assessing the long term mental and behavioral health impact of 2018's family separation tactics. We knew that the harm from separation was far too great. Despite deadline accommodations, litigative pursuits by RAICES and others, and public outcries, parents and children remained in custody in the midst of a global pandemic.

### REPORT

## The U.S. Government Kidnapped My Son

*Surviving family separation and prolonged family detention*

Made possible by the contributions of 278 formerly separated families who bravely spoke out against prolonged family detention based on their own experiences, the report illustrates in great detail how family separation and detention are unacceptable policies.



## ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The humanitarian challenge of unaccompanied children permeated the U.S. In the second half of 2020, RAICES witnessed a 3,000 percent increase in legal intakes for unaccompanied children — thereby recognizing the potential for the historic rates of arrest that awaited migrant children in 2021.

RAICES maintains an active presence in 15 facilities for unaccompanied children, serving approximately 10 percent of those held in HHS facilities annually. With the pandemic looming over the border and capacity for these children dwindling,

numbers continued to rise. At the root of this challenge were the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), commonly known as the Remain in Mexico policy, still the subject of protracted court battles.

While unaccompanied children are detained, RAICES provides “Know Your Rights” presentations and legal intakes, and helps win their release from custody to post-release. RAICES provides access to continued legal representation, case management, and protection from deportation. In addition to the RAICES legal team, children have access to attorneys through a national legal

referral network established by RAICES in 2018, which currently spans 19 states and includes the not-for-profits Arkansas Immigrant Defense, Keep Tucson Together, Orlando Center for Immigrant Justice, Tahirih Justice Center Atlanta, and Immigrant Services and Legal Advocacy with offices in Louisiana.

Due to the complexity, the average length of an unaccompanied child's case is three to five years. Immigrants with legal representation are five times more likely to establish the right to remain in the U.S. than those without access to counsel. Because there is

no guarantee of court-appointed counsel, it is estimated that 75 to 90 percent of children undergoing deportation proceedings do so without an attorney; the importance of legal representation for unaccompanied children cannot be overemphasized.

**As a nation, we have two choices to address the humanitarian challenge in front of us. We can continue to endorse a system that terrorizes and dehumanizes people seeking asylum, including children, or step up to the challenge and build a system to welcome them. It shouldn't be a difficult choice.**

**SARAH VALDES**

Co-Director of the Children's Program at RAICES

### TESTIMONIAL

#### YORLENI

Yorleni fled violence in Guatemala and arrived in the U.S. as an unaccompanied child at the age of 17 with her baby girl. Three months later, she reunified with her mother after spending 11 years apart. At their asylum merits hearing held 958 days after arrival, an immigration judge granted Yorleni and her daughter withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture.

**“I feel happy and grateful to be here in the United States. I am working to give a better future to my daughter and give her all the opportunities that I did not have back in Guatemala, but most importantly I want her to be safe from violence and have a happy childhood.”**

**YORLENI**

(Photo by Brandon Bell/Getty Images)



### LITIGATION SPOTLIGHT

#### Mejia-Rios v. GEO Group

Jointly litigated by RAICES with Aldea PJC and Arent Fox LLP, this lawsuit seeks financial damages on behalf of 26 parents and children who were forcibly separated at the Karnes family detention center in August 2018. In May 2020, U.S. Magistrate Judge Richard B. Farrer denied the GEO Group's motion to dismiss, a pivotal turning point in the case, which then proceeded into discovery.



## ADVOCATING FOR LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

As administration officials scaled deportations, narrowed eligibility criteria, and delayed entry for would-be asylum seekers at legal ports of entry, LGBTQ+ migrants suffered greatly. Many had fled violence and feared returning to their homelands or remaining in tent cities across the U.S.-Mexico Border statistically vulnerable to gang violence.

But danger also awaited inside the U.S. In detention centers, LGBTQ+ individuals experience exploitative situations leading to physical and psychological trauma. Trans people are regularly detained without regard for gender identity and are 13 times more likely to be sexually assaulted while in these prisons.

Since 2018, RAICES has expanded to serve the needs of intersectional populations, including LGBTQ+ community members — many of whom have been rejected by their families of origin, survived physical or sexual assault as children and adolescents, and are in need of the found family that our community represents. By leveraging our network to forge solutions-oriented partnerships, we offer the trauma-informed services, tools, and resources that they need to live safe and secure lives in the U.S. during their pending legal cases.

In 2020, RAICES attorneys successfully advocated for the release of all trans clients that had remained held at the South Texas Detention Complex in Pearsall, Texas, and simultaneously saw an increase of men from Uganda, Ghana, Senegal, and Sierra Leone at the Rio Grande Detention Center in

Laredo, Texas. They had all sought asylum protections after being persecuted in their countries of origin due to their homosexuality. One contacted our office. Through him, we met and spoke with others, ultimately representing and assisting five clients — most of whom did not have a sponsor. An ally in Virginia volunteered to assist them as a sponsor even though he had never met them; his support was crucial to securing their release.

**“The immigrant population in general deals with so much discrimination. But when you add in the transgender population, the discrimination, the prejudice, the violence, that’s directed toward them is exacerbated exponentially. They’re discriminated against within the caravan, within the migrant population, within their home countries. When they get here, they still face discrimination in the workplace, in public, in schools, and within their families.”**

**BETHANY GONZALES**

Community Center Manager at RAICES

**“What I heard from my clients again and again is that you basically have to be passed out or bleeding before they will take you to medical assistance. The situation was really delicate for this population. Some of them are HIV positive. Some of them were continuing or starting hormones for the first time. The medical situation is really complicated, and, at this detention center and a lot of other detention centers, the medical services are not at an adequate standard for human care.”**

**CRISTIAN SÁNCHEZ**

Staff Attorney at RAICES



### LITIGATION SPOTLIGHT

## Kiakombua v. Wolf

The prior administration attempted to destroy the credibility of migrants petitioning for asylum. RAICES and the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) fought back and were victorious after a court overturned the administration’s changes to asylum standards via credible fear determinations.

The lawsuit challenged DHS’s April 2019 unlawful changes to the Credible Fear Interview Lesson Plan used by asylum officers. The changes deleted references to trauma and PTSD — a fundamental reason that many LGBTQ+ asylum seekers fear persecution and torture in home countries — and shifted the burden to migrants to prove intricate elements of the standard. Additionally, the changes required statements from historically anti-LGBTQ+ CBP officers for negative credibility determinations, among other requirements. After multiple rounds of briefing, the

Court issued a 99-page order vacating the lesson plan in its entirety.

The Court also required that all individual plaintiffs receive new interviews under the pre-April 2019 standard. Underlining the harm caused in 2020 by even the most transitory legal changes, two RAICES plaintiffs were deported over the course of this lawsuit. The Court ordered that both plaintiffs be located and returned to the U.S. at government expense so that they could undergo new credible fear determinations.

**“I feel very happy with the decision that was taken and I am immensely thankful to the lawyers of RAICES and IRAP for their readiness to continue with this process that has been a bit long, but in the end it has been worth it. I am emotional about the opportunity that this is giving me.”**

**JULIA**

Kiakombua v. Wolf Plaintiff





(Photo by Charlie C. Peebles/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)

## CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP

### Immigration is a Black Issue

To engage the public and activate supporters about the complexity and disproportionate harm that systemic racism imposes on Black immigrants specifically, RAICES partnered in 2020 with Haitian-American activist and influencer Joyce Louis-Jean to create the educational video, “Immigration is a Black Issue.”

Through the collaboration of leaders including the Haitian Bridge Alliance, Black Alliance for Just Immigration, UndocuBlack Network, and many others, the video garnered over a million views



across social media platforms and earned a Shorty Award and Audience Honor for Social Activism, quickly becoming a resonant and accessible tool for advocacy surrounding the Movement for Black Lives. Together, we will dismantle the institutional racism that has historically denied access to justice for all.

## ADVOCATING FOR BLACK IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

Seven percent of all immigrants in the U.S. are Black, but they make up 20 percent of immigrants fighting deportation.

The impacts of racism in immigration are staggering. Black immigrants in detention are six times more likely to end up in solitary confinement. Their bonds are higher: on average, Haitian immigrants have to pay 54 percent more than any other immigrants to get out of detention – a statistic gleaned from bonds that RAICES paid in 2019 and 2020 in coordination with the National Bail Fund Network.

Black immigrants are also three times more likely to be detained and deported on an alleged criminal offense, even though there is no evidence that Black immigrants commit more crimes than any other immigrant population.

**7%** OF ALL  
IMMIGRANTS IN  
THE U.S. ARE BLACK  
YET THEY MAKE UP

**20%**  
OF IMMIGRANTS  
FIGHTING  
DEPORTATION



**“The dehumanizing and abusive treatment by the government through the use of legislative and police powers is not new to Black people in America. To be persecuted and to have your legal rights denied by the government through legislation, court decisions, and police violence is not new to Black people in America. To seek asylum is a lawful act unless you are Black.”**

**NICOLE MORGAN**  
Family Detention Attorney at RAICES



## ADVOCATING FOR VOTING RIGHTS



RAICES promoted the full participation of immigrant community members in the November 2020 elections. In a year when our Black and brown constituencies suffered disproportionately from the health and economic toll of COVID-19, we launched the multi-faceted, non-partisan, geo-targeted “Don’t Look Away” campaign, rooted in the message that each voice and vote matters.

Led by 450 trained volunteers who operated by a detailed code of conduct and maintained a facilitated online hub via Slack, a Get Out The Vote (GOTV) texting program reached over 500,000 voters through 648,353 texts to individuals predominantly aged 18 to 34 in Texas, Arizona, and Florida. Outreach was enhanced through grassroots Vote Tripling activities in Harris County, Texas, through which volunteers (while adhering to strict health guidelines) directly engaged 7,320 voters for a potential tripling impact of almost 22,000 voters.



(Photo by David Dee Delgado/Getty Images)

## ADVOCATING FOR SERVICE RIGHTS



(Photo by Guillermo Arias/AFP via Getty Images)

Recognizing the scale of need for service provisions in Texas and across the country, RAICES launched Canopy— a robust, evidence-based national hotline that provides internal and external legal and social services referrals for the immigrant community.

In accordance with best-practices training from Polaris, the national human trafficking hotline, Canopy has a comprehensive and equitable system, inclusive of follow-up procedures designed to meet the needs of those who contact the hotline and vetted, values-aligned service providers. Support services that we facilitate include medical care, dental care, mental health services, reproductive care, shelter, employment assistance, English proficiency coursework, GED and other continuing education, food access, clothing, and rental and utilities assistance.

**“Don’t look away from the terrors enacted in your name. Don’t look away from the kids in cages, the asylum seekers turned back at our border, the deportation raids destroying communities across the country. This anti-immigrant crackdown has to end.”**

**ERIKA ANDIOLA**

Chief Advocacy Officer at RAICES

## TESTIMONIAL

### Karina

Service Recipient at RAICES

“When I got accepted into a nursing program a few years ago, I had to drop out because DACA did not exist and nursing, or any healthcare program, requires a work permit and a Social Security number to enroll. I felt my world collapse when I was notified of this. I really thought my life was over, that my purpose was no longer possible, and that my undocumented status meant my hard work did not matter.

Now, I am 30 years old and currently in the Respiratory Care program at Lone Star College-Kingwood. It has been extremely difficult to stay in school. I tell myself it has to get better. I tell myself I cannot give up now

because this is my only chance to make something out of life, this moment right now. Finishing my program will mean I can have a steady income with a steady job in the medical field.

When the pandemic hit, I felt uneasy because I knew my DACA permit would expire in just a few months. Without a job and the bills piling up, I did not know how I was going to be able to pay for my DACA renewal. I started looking for help online, and I found the RAICES DACA assistance opportunity. I was so overwhelmed with happiness because it meant securing my legal status and being able to stay in my current college program. Without organizations like RAICES and without the donors that make it possible to have assistance programs for DACA, my future would have been uncertain.”

## CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP

### Homeland Insecurity

**“The whole thing [establishing DHS] is problematic looking back on it, because it turned immigration into a threat rather than the wonderful thing that it is, which is an expansion of our country being inclusive. You know, we have been that great experiment that always welcomed immigrants from all over the world. I never ever imagined that a corrupt executive could turn this into his own police force.”**

**HON. BARBARA BOXER**

U.S. Senator from California (1993 – 2017)

Education remains an organizational imperative. Beginning in May 2020, RAICES released the original, eight-part serialized documentary



podcast *Homeland Insecurity*, chronicling the untold story of DHS. Narrated by our Chief Advocacy Officer Erika Andiola, the series goes back to the beginning, when our government built a powerful new agency in the wake of 9/11 to protect America from terrorists — only to use that agency to terrorize immigrants.

In 2020, DHS expanded its definition of “terrorism” to include public dissent when federal agents were deployed in Portland. *Homeland Insecurity* consistently ranked in Apple Podcasts’ Top 10 for Documentaries in the U.S. — peaking at No. 7.

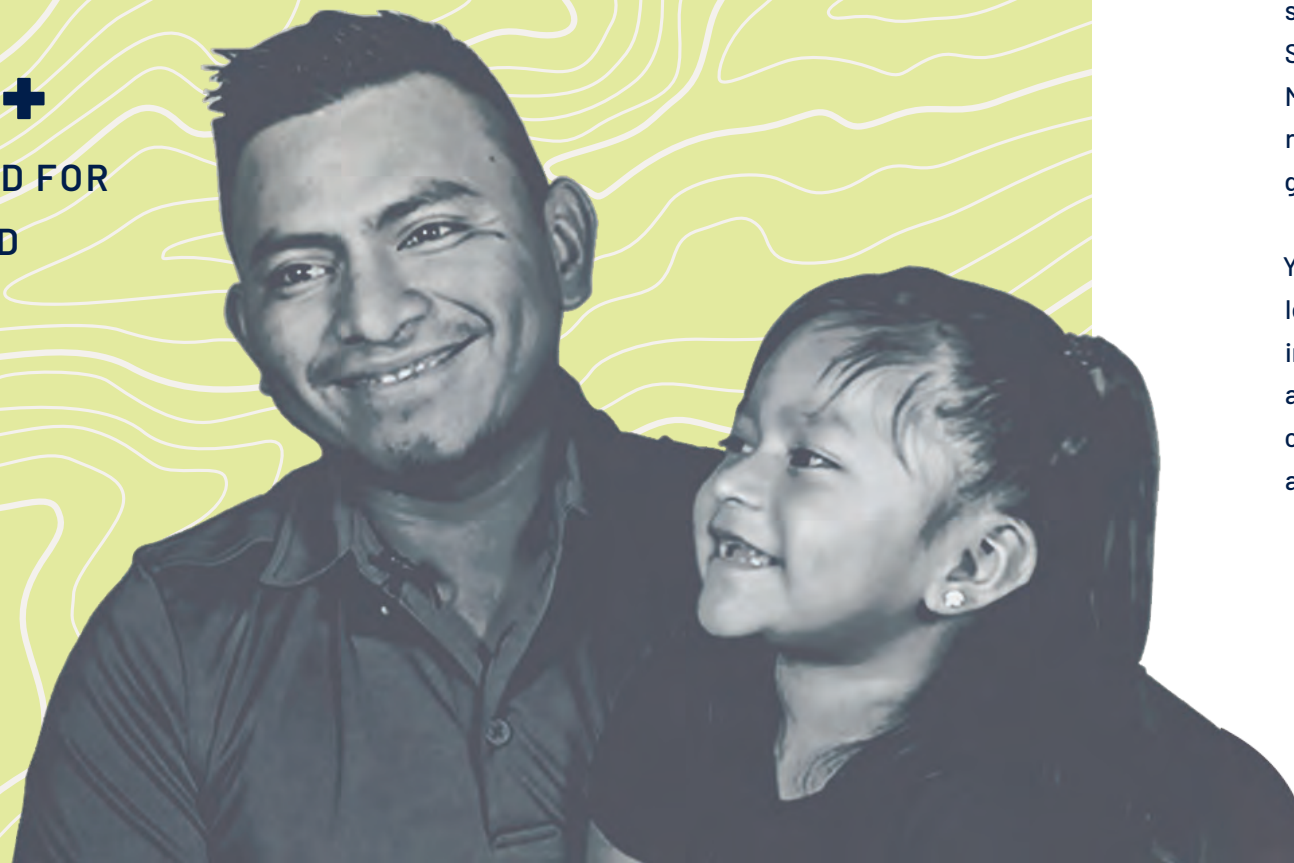


# FIGHTING FOR DIGNITY

**IT IS AN EMERGENCY WHEN ANYONE FLEES PERSECUTION** in their home country to seek safety within another country's borders. Seeking asylum is a legal form of entry to the U.S., but families faced impossible scenarios: staying locked in detention while COVID-19 raged; waiting for asylum in Mexico while cartels plagued; or sending their children unaccompanied only for ICE to keep them caged.

As COVID-19 outbreaks threatened to consume detention centers, freeing immigrants trapped inside became a RAICES priority. With community support and multi-organizational advocacy, we paid over \$5.1 million in bonds throughout Texas and across the country.

**\$5.1M+**  
IN BONDS PAID FOR  
464 DETAINED  
IMMIGRANTS  
NATIONALLY



Despite docket delays that extended into July 2021, RAICES attorneys represented clients tirelessly throughout 2020. Whether facing tough judges in removal proceedings, meeting evidentiary standards during pandemic shutdowns, waiting for outcomes in VAWA green card hearings, or counseling DACA-recipients during suspended renewals — legal advocacy continued.

The year ended with a series of executive branch immigration restrictions that carried into the hours preceding the swearing in of the next presidential administration. The ramifications of the executive orders continue to disrupt migrant access to legal resources.

While DHS framed MPP as the humanitarian response to a pandemic, it was in fact a humanitarian crisis. COVID-19 protections superseded international human rights and all established migrant legal protections.

Under MPP, migrants became targets of organized crime with little recourse. Human Rights First documented reports of murder, torture, rape, kidnapping and other violent attacks against asylum seekers, including attempted kidnapping of children. Stranded in Mexico, only two percent of people under MPP accessed a U.S. lawyer to represent them. As a result, only 0.1 percent of these asylum seekers were granted asylum in the U.S. in 2020.

Yet, immigrants stayed resolute that asylum would lead to safety and a new life. Despite months of living in makeshift camps in border towns like Matamoros and Nuevo León — designated as “Do Not Travel” cities by the U.S. State Department — the hope of asylum outweighed the risks of MPP.

**COVID-19 protections superseded international human rights and all established migrant legal protections.**

(Photo by Omar Martínez/picture alliance via Getty Images)



**I fight so my amazing daughter can grow up and succeed in whatever she may choose to do. When she grows up, she wants to be a fashion designer, a mechanic, a flight attendant, a singer, a lawyer, an actress, and a scientist. The only thing stopping her from becoming any of those things should be herself — not patriarchy, white supremacy, her class status, or anything else. Through our volunteer program, we are building a community of trustworthy allies and empowered individuals to join together and protect immigrant communities — and make our vision a reality.**

**RODOLFO MORAN**

National Volunteer Director at RAICES





## DEFENDING WOMEN AND CHILDREN

(Photo by Brandon Bell/Getty Images)

In parallel to the implementation of Title 42, RAICES began to recognize troubling shifts in detainee demographics at Karnes Family Residential Center. Documented changes included an increase in the number of detained pregnant women continuing into the COVID-19 pandemic; a disproportionate increase in the number of Black families detained; and an increased number of infants under 1 year, toddlers 1 to 3 years old, and young children (5 years and under) in detention. In total, 56 percent of families, or 284 total, were from majority-Black countries, 77 percent of whom were from Haiti.

On March 3, 2021, RAICES, in coordination with the Cameroon American Council, Haitian Bridge Alliance, and UndocuBlack Network, filed a formal complaint requesting an investigation into inadequate medical care for Black pregnant women, infants, and young children documented throughout 2020 at Karnes. The complaint has as of yet gone unanswered.

**I told them that I was pregnant when I first arrived at the hielera. The doctor checked me and told me everything was fine. When I started bleeding about four days later, I was in so much pain that the other people in the room went and told someone to find a doctor. The officers took me to a hospital and did some tests and scans, and the doctor came and told me that I was having a miscarriage and that there was nothing that they could do about it other than give me pain medication. When I returned to the hielera, I was still experiencing pain and bleeding. There was a man in a uniform who used to come around and check on everybody and told us that he was a doctor. That doctor told me that my bleeding was normal because of the miscarriage. I was in so much pain that I just kept walking and moving around to manage it. The doctor gave me medicine to ease my pain, and told me there was nothing else that they could do for me."**

**[ NAME REDACTED ]**

Service Recipient at RAICES

## DEFENDING DACA



(Photo by Mandel Ngan/AFP via Getty Images)

There are an estimated minimum of 1.3 million individuals who currently qualify for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)—a program established in 2012, stymied by litigation from 2017 through 2020, and again in 2021. DACA is not a secure immigration status, but depending on local and state laws, confers financial, educational, travel, and employment rights to recipients that would otherwise remain elusive. Across the U.S., approximately 202,500 DACA recipients were classified as essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, over 40,000 of whom serve on the frontlines in healthcare and social services. According to the Center for American Progress, Texas alone is home to more than 109,000 DACA recipients, with the age of arrival averaging 7 years old.

Following the Supreme Court's reprieve of DACA on June 18, 2020, RAICES officially launched a DACA Fund to underwrite programs for both renewal and prospective DACA applicants, including information sessions; complimentary legal screenings, referrals, and direct representation for those

at risk of deportation; evidence collection for applications; and, needs-based financial assistance for filing fees. This marked the first time that adolescents who aged into eligibility for the program since 2017 could apply for DACA and receipt of its protections.

RAICES received over 2,000 financial assistance applications, predominantly from individuals of Mexican descent living in Texas and California. By the end of the year, 1,238 were funded. Approximately 70 percent of applicants self-identified as female; approximately 50 percent were in school or planning to commence higher education in 2021. As of this publication, RAICES stands with DACA applicants and recipients in support of a "Pathway to Citizenship" in the Senate's Budget Reconciliation after U.S. District Judge A. Hanen struck down the program's validity and denied deportation protection for first-time applicants in August 2021.

**1,238** DACA FINANCIAL  
ASSISTANCE APPLICATIONS APPROVED



## DEFENDING ASYLUM



(Photo by Stringer/picture alliance via Getty Images)

The Mexican government did not protect people seeking asylum. Not-for-profit shelter capacity in Mexico quickly became overwhelmed, meaning that under MPP many were homeless and lacked access to vital services.

Blocking migrant access to healthcare was a feature of the U.S. administration's efforts to end asylum. Despite having a \$51 billion budget, DHS did nothing at the onset of the pandemic to protect migrants that they had endangered.

RAICES litigation resolutely pushed against the undermining of international human rights and the relief of asylum. Through policies like MPP, the U.S. government renegotiated international standards and bypassed human rights laws for state-sanctioned cruelty.

RAICES was able to mitigate the ramifications of emergent crises and systemic oppressions through direct legal action defending asylum seekers and fighting to preserve "credible fear," the standard that protects migrants from deportation after fleeing abuse, violence, war, persecution, and other threats in their native countries.

### LITIGATION SPOTLIGHT

## East Bay Sanctuary Covenant v. Barr

In its attempts to ban asylum seekers from reaching the U.S., the previous administration bypassed precedent and procedure in favor of its destructive policies. East Bay Sanctuary Covenant v. Barr was not just one case but two, as separate filings fought to end the "third-country" travel policy. The rule required migrants to seek asylum in the countries through which they passed before entering the U.S., thereby deeming Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala countries capable of offering protection — the very countries from which 92 percent of asylum seekers flee.

RAICES won a case in collaboration with Capital Area Immigrants' Rights (CAIR) Coalition, Human Rights First, and Hogan Lovells representing nine individual asylum seekers. U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly of Washington, D.C., ruled in June 2020, that the "third-country asylum rule" jointly published by the DOJ and DHS violated the Immigration and Nationality Act.

## DEFENDING REFUGEES



(Photo by: Luis Antonio Rojas/Bloomberg via Getty Images)

In collaboration with our national partner USCRI, RAICES began refugee resettlement programming in 2017 — before our growth at the height of family separation under the "zero tolerance" policy. This work has served to influence our long-term vision for a broadly-applied, humane construct for asylum in the U.S.

The principles of refugee resettlement are firmly part of the RAICES ethos, providing pathways for individual and family self-sufficiency through access to legal counsel; case management that ensure public benefits are accessed and leveraged in full; housing and food assistance; job and school placement; and healthcare. While 2020 presented significant challenges for clients due to heightened financial and health uncertainty, our dedication did not wane and only deepened as we welcomed 222 parents and children from Afghanistan, as well as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran, and Myanmar.

RAICES also launched culturally sensitive mental and behavioral health diagnostic

and treatment services, recognizing the impact that pandemic-related stressors have had on individuals already predisposed to higher than average rates of depression and suicidal ideation. Our clients now have access to case managers trained by the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Social Work in conducting trauma-informed assessments, as well as an in-house mental health clinician — working together to provide a standard and equitable level of care.

**222** REFUGEE PARENTS  
AND CHILDREN WELCOMED  
from Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic  
of the Congo, Iran, and Myanmar

**91%** SPECIAL  
IMMIGRANT VISA HOLDERS  
FROM AFGHANISTAN



**OVER THE COURSE OF ONE YEAR, HUMANE IMMIGRATION LAWS WERE DELEGITIMIZED.** An administration known for wearing its disdain for immigrants consistently engaged in usurping legal precedent and procedure, fast-tracking its deportation agenda, and appealing its losses to limit migrant access to justice.

RAICES leaned on the knowledge that immigrants with legal representation in court are more likely to successfully assert their right to remain in the U.S., and that a community who knows our rights can stand shoulder-to-shoulder to help navigate the immigration system.

Throughout the year and with your support, RAICES focused on advocacy to raise public awareness and leverage our collective political pressure, education to bolster a network of well-informed allies and legal and social services to directly affected migrants. To our service recipients, we thank you for trusting this community with your dreams and aspirations for a safe and fruitful future. To our broader community of supporters and advocates, we thank you for your cultivation of our shared values.

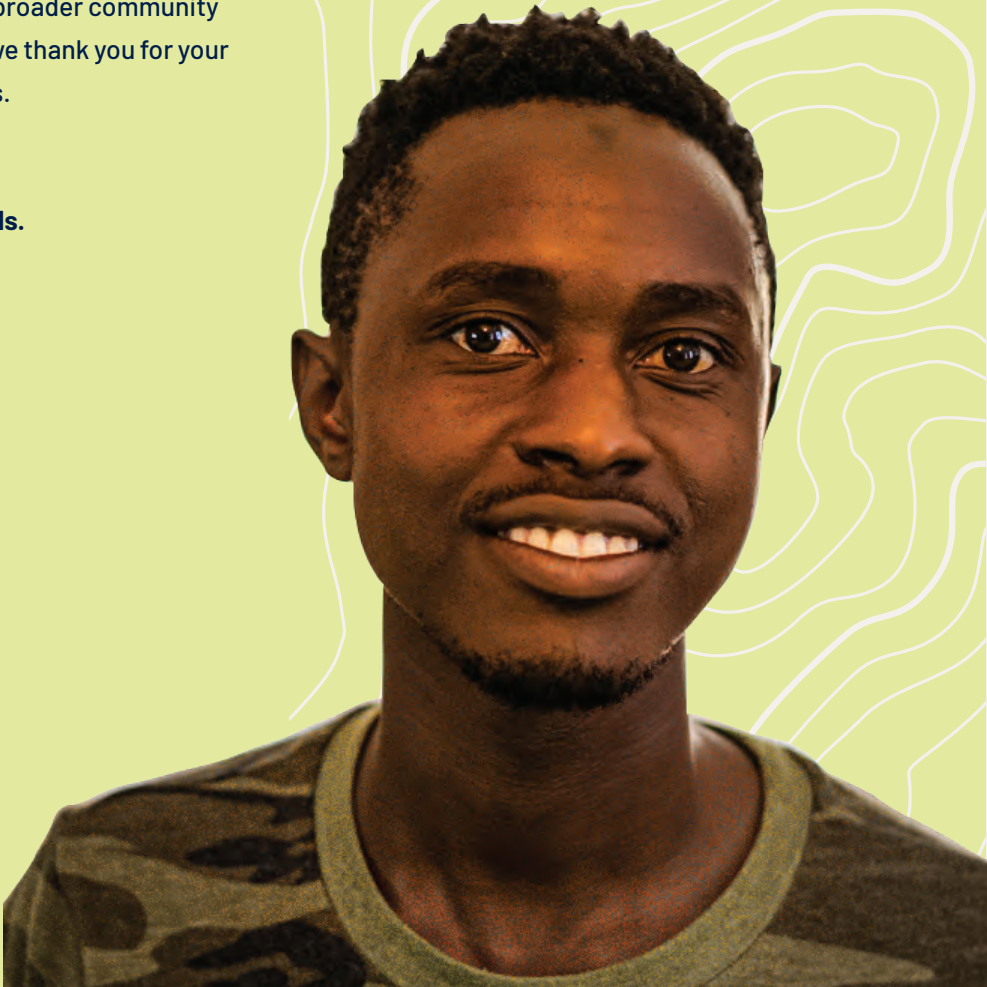
**They tried to bury us.  
They didn't know we were seeds.**

PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

**\$21.7M+**  
DIRECT LEGAL AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES

**\$3M+**  
REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

**\$1.9M+**  
RIGHTS ADVOCACY



FINANCIALS

Because of allies and advocates across like you, RAICES received unprecedented support in 2018 and 2019 as part of the American public's call for transformational change in the lived experiences of our migrant community members.

In 2020, RAICES made strategic program and administrative investments to ensure long-term

sustainability as public support began to fluctuate following the onset of the pandemic.

To remain resilient and in alignment with best fiscal practice, RAICES maintains an Operating Reserve Ratio slightly exceeding 100 percent.

	2018	2019	2020
REVENUE			
Contributed Revenue	\$55,290,228	\$41,186,787	\$25,627,900
Earned Revenue	\$972,972	\$ 1,318,240	\$671,731
Total Revenue	\$56,263,200	\$42,505,027	\$26,299,631
EXPENSES			
Program	\$12,447,782	\$26,283,732	\$26,781,872
General and Administrative	\$859,951	\$3,842,986	\$5,855,821
Fundraising	\$874,677	\$2,445,123	\$3,004,948
Total Expenses	\$14,182,410	\$32,571,841	\$35,642,641
NET ASSETS			
Change in Net Assets	\$42,080,790	\$9,933,183	-\$9,643,615
Beginning Net Assets	\$4,108,365	\$46,189,155	\$56,122,338
Ending Net Assets	\$46,189,155	\$57,122,338	\$46,478,723

YOU CAN SHOW YOUR CONTINUED SOLIDARITY WITH OUR MOVEMENT BY EXPLORING ALL THE WAYS TO GIVE TO RAICES, INCLUDING:

- **Stock share transfers**, providing you tax savings of up to 70% and made easy via our partners at FreeWill
  - **Donor Advised Fund (DAF) grants** initiated through our website or by contacting your grant administrator
  - **IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)** for those 70 ½ and older can meet your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)
  - **Legacy Gifts** by naming RAICES as a beneficiary of your estate plan
  - **Match Gifts** from your employer, which can double or triple your impact
- To learn more, visit: [raicestexas.org/give](https://raicestexas.org/give)  
Every donation makes a difference.