

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Project
Safeguard

Justice and Safety

FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



Dear Project Safeguard Supporters:

We are excited to share this report with you! It highlights the amazing advocacy and support that we provided in 2021. The last two years have been difficult for everyone, and we at Project Safeguard are no exception. However, we are thrilled with the ways our team has evolved and shifted how we do our work so we can continue serving our clients. Despite the challenges the pandemic created, we've discovered ways to offer services that we hadn't considered before.

We seek to serve as many clients as we can, as comprehensively as we can, while ensuring our staff is supported. COVID taught us new ways of working, communicating, and connecting. We are now able to provide services in person or remotely, depending on the unique needs and preference of our clients. This was especially important in the early days of the pandemic when courts were closed and our clients were under stay-at-home orders, balancing safety, family obligations, and basic survival. While the face-to-face model of client services will always be a pillar of Project Safeguard, we continue to adopt solutions that can better meet the diverse needs of the people we served.

We also recognize that the needs of our staff have changed, and we have adapted in response. While we are once again providing in-person services, most of our staff is operating on a hybrid schedule, giving them more flexibility to address their needs and responsibilities outside of work. We've begun providing clinical support to our direct service staff to help them process the traumatic events they hear about daily. We have raised salaries in response to inflation and increased housing costs in our service area, and we are grateful to our donors and funders who have enabled us to do so. Lastly, we expanded our paid year-end break and observe periodic office closures to give our staff additional time off to care for themselves. Project Safeguard's leadership knows that our advocates and attorneys do amazing and difficult work, and we are committed to ensuring they are supported.

FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



Our clients often meet us at a vulnerable and painful time in their lives, and we hope they leave feeling empowered and hopeful. We don't have space in this report to share the stories of all the clients we helped in 2021, but we wanted to share the following as an example how our work impacts the lives of the people we serve:

Last year, our client “Carol” successfully proved in court her need for a permanent Civil Protection Order. After hours of practice with Project Safeguard attorneys, Carol was able to share her powerful story with the judge. Sharing her story took an enormous amount of courage and strength, not only because she shared private details about her relationship with a perpetrator of domestic violence, but also because she showed her abuser that he no longer had control over her. Even when her abuser tried to use the legal system against her, she prevailed. Carol is a shining example of how brave survivors can truly be, especially when supported and empowered with trauma-informed services.

The judge in Carol’s case called it “a classic example of domestic violence.” Such explicit recognition of her abuser’s coercive control by a judicial officer was incredibly validating. Carol’s ability to tell her story to the judge and have the judge truly hear her and understand the severity of the coercive control was crucial to keeping her and her three children safe.

We appreciate everyone who helps us continue working with survivors of gender-based violence as they navigate the civil legal system to increase their safety and seek justice on their terms. Thank you for being part of our community!

Sincerely,

Laura Johnson-Morris
Board President

Jennifer Eyl
Executive Director



OUR MISSION AND FOCUS

Project Safeguard's (PSG) mission is to **empower and partner** with people who have experienced **gender-based violence**, helping them navigate a course of **survivor-driven justice** through expert, **trauma-informed legal advocacy and representation**.

PSG's programs assist victims of gender-based violence (including but not limited to domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking) in Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, and Denver Counties with accessing protections through the civil court system to increase safety and self-sufficiency and build a violence-free life.



OUR PROGRAMS



PSG's non-attorney legal advocates specialize in intensive assistance for victims who are ready to pursue civil legal solutions, with a focus on Civil Protection Orders (CPOs). They help with safety planning, provide support in court proceedings, and refer victims to other resources they may need. The **Legal Advocacy Program** provides a foundation from which victims can begin their journey to safety. For many of the clients we serve, our non-attorney services sufficiently meet their needs, but those with more complex legal needs benefit greatly from access to and support from a licensed attorney. PSG provides **attorney services** in the following ways:

- **Divorce and Custody Clinics:** Clients interested in filing for Dissolution of Marriage and/or Allocation of Parental Responsibilities due to their crime victimization can access pro bono attorney assistance through a bi-monthly clinic staffed by PSG's roster of volunteer attorneys. Additionally, one legal clinic per month is conducted in Spanish.
- **Lawyers for Victims (LFV):** In this innovative program, PSG contracts directly with experienced and trauma-informed attorneys for a flat-fee rate to represent some clients at their Permanent Civil Protection Order hearing.
- **In-house staff attorneys:** Staff attorneys provide legal advice and support to victims in primarily domestic relations and complex CPO matters. Services provided include consultations, case strategy sessions, hearing preparation sessions, limited representation, and full representation.

Project Safeguard's model of pairing wraparound civil legal advocacy with long-term, multi-issue legal representation for victims of gender-based violence is unique in our service area.

2021

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Project Safeguard saw some exciting changes in 2021, starting with the adoption of a **new mission, vision, and core values** for the organization. Like many nonprofits, the COVID-19 pandemic provided us with a unique opportunity to slow down and reconsider our identity as an organization and how we could best serve survivors of gender-based violence. Our services haven't changed, but our philosophy on how best to deliver them has evolved and these new statements reflect that evolution.

We also saw changes in our staff capacity and roles. In late Spring, we promoted one of our legal advocates to the new role of Communications and Screening Advocate. This position was created to be the first point of contact for individuals seeking services through or information about Project Safeguard. When that staff member left later in the year, this position was renamed to Bilingual Legal Advocacy Program Assistant. We also hired three new legal advocates in summer and fall to work out of our Denver Courthouse and Rose Aodom Center offices.



Read our new adopted mission, vision, and values by scanning the QR code to the right with a smartphone, or visit www.PSGhelps.org/mission-vision-values.



2021

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our Attorney Services Program hosted two Legal Fellows in 2021, thanks to a partnership between the University of Denver Sturm College of Law and the Division of Criminal Justice Office for Victims Programs. These fellows were recent law school graduates, and one was hired on as a Staff Attorney after completing her fellowship in the fall.

This program also hosted a resident attorney through the Legal Entrepreneurs for Justice (LEJ) program in 2021. LEJ prepares talented and entrepreneurial lawyers in Colorado to launch and manage innovative, socially conscious, and successful law practices. LEJ attorneys have the option to be placed at one of LEJ's partner legal aid organizations for a "pro bono residency" to get the kind of practical real-world training that cannot be taught in a classroom. This attorney's residency was six months long, during which they contributed 20 hours per week to help represent Project Safeguard clients in protection order and domestic relations cases. They have continued to volunteer their time to periodically staff our divorce and custody clinics.



2021

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In July, Project Safeguard's Executive Director, Jennifer Eyl, was awarded the Senator Norma Anderson Excellence in Victim Advocacy Award by the Office of Domestic Violence and Sex Offender Management. A quote from the nomination said of her, "She seemed to be involved in, speaking at or training at every committee or policy event that I attended. She struck me as brave, knowledgeable, and utterly committed to improving the lives of survivors of domestic violence. Her passion and commitment to her work has been an inspiration to me. Her knowledge and her willingness to share her expertise has helped countless people over the years of her career." This annual award was established to honor "excellence, innovation, or creativity in victim representation ... [and] exceptional compassion, dedication, and commitment to victims", qualities that Jennifer has demonstrated over her years of work as an advocate and an attorney.



JENNIFER EYL



“Every day I get to hear how the work that the team at Project Safeguard does made someone safer and gave them hope. Taking those stories and turning them into policy and systems change is what energizes and excites me.”

IN MEMORIUM

2021 also brought great sadness as Project Safeguard and our community mourned the death of long-time advocate Denise Thach, who died after a fierce battle with lung cancer in October. Denise was a dear friend, colleague, and incredible legal advocate, who had been a staple at PSG for nearly 30 years and helped increase safety for countless survivors during her career.



DENISE THACH



IN MEMORIUM: DENISE THACH

Denise Thach was hired at Project Safeguard in 1995 but began her career with the organization several years earlier, as a volunteer advocate. She became the face of Project Safeguard in the Denver County Courthouse and was known and loved by everyone in the courthouse who had the privilege to cross her path.

Denise hated working from home during the pandemic, not because she was lonely or felt isolated, but because she missed working with survivors and seeing coworkers in person. She knew that there were countless survivors who were unable to get the help they needed because they were stuck at home with their abusers.

Denise's impact was not only with the thousands of survivors whose lives she changed over the years, but with the colleagues, coworkers, and professionals—from volunteer advocates to judges—whom she inspired, trained, cajoled, and laughed with. Her impact on the world of advocacy for survivors of gender-based violence extended far beyond her office at the City and County Building.

We will never know how many lives were changed because Denise Thach dedicated her life advocating for survivors of gender-based violence, but we know that for every life we know about, there are likely hundreds or even thousands that we don't. To say that Denise will be missed is beyond an understatement. Project Safeguard will truly never be the same without her. We lost a fierce, brave, generous and kind woman, who truly changed the world.

Project Safeguard will be creating a plaque in Denise's memory to install at the Rose Andom Center and a bench is being dedicated in her honor in the Denver City and County Building.



COVID IMPACTS

The COVID-19 pandemic created a variety of challenges for Project Safeguard, but it also created opportunities to imagine new ways of conducting our work. Unlike other agencies serving survivors of domestic violence, who saw an increase in demand for services during the early months of the pandemic, Project Safeguard saw the numbers of clients we served in 2020 decrease by approximately 40%. This was largely due to closures and procedural changes within the courts where we work, along with the reality that survivors were focusing on day-to-day needs and stability and were more likely to wait to seek civil legal support. We quickly pivoted to providing services remotely and found that this reduced barriers for some populations, so we have continued offering remote options even after resuming in-person services in 2021.

Some of the challenges we saw impacting our clients during the early days of the pandemic included increased isolation, limited ability to reach out for support due to increased monitoring by their abusers, escalation of violence, decreased law enforcement response, less containment of abusers to manage jail populations, and increased financial insecurity. The clients we worked with during the height of the pandemic had more complex needs and provision of services remotely took more time and required more contacts, particularly when clients needed support in languages other than English or Spanish.

As Project Safeguard adapted to this new normal, our legal advocates and attorneys became experts in helping their clients navigate ever-changing requirements for virtual filing and court appearances. The number of clients we served increased by 13% in 2021 and continues to steadily increase as the courts return to normal operations.

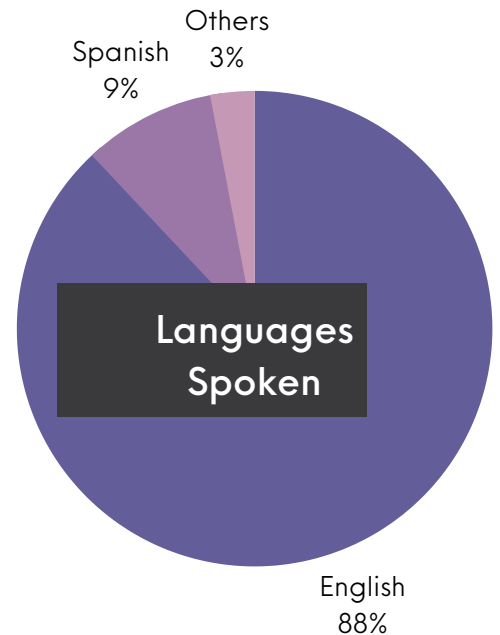
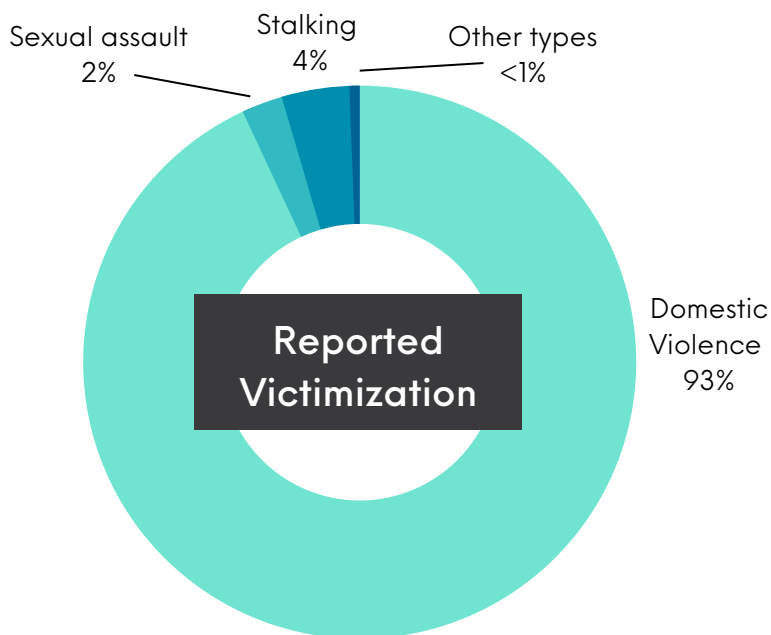
Despite the challenges of the past few years, Project Safeguard has maintained a growth mindset and positive outlook on the future. We have a dedicated staff that has remained flexible and creative during a time of uncertainty, finding innovative ways to ensure that we can continue meeting the growing demand for services. While we have returned to providing in-person services, we have also maintained a hybrid work environment that is responsive to the needs of our staff and the clients we serve.





PROGRAM IMPACT DATA

In 2021, Project Safeguard provided legal advocacy and/or attorney services to **955 survivors of gender-based violence** through approximately **250 in-person and more than 4000 phone and email contacts**.



Of the total clients served, **110 (12%) received consultation or representation from a Project Safeguard staff attorney** and **137 (14%) were represented by a contract attorney** through our Lawyers for Victims program.

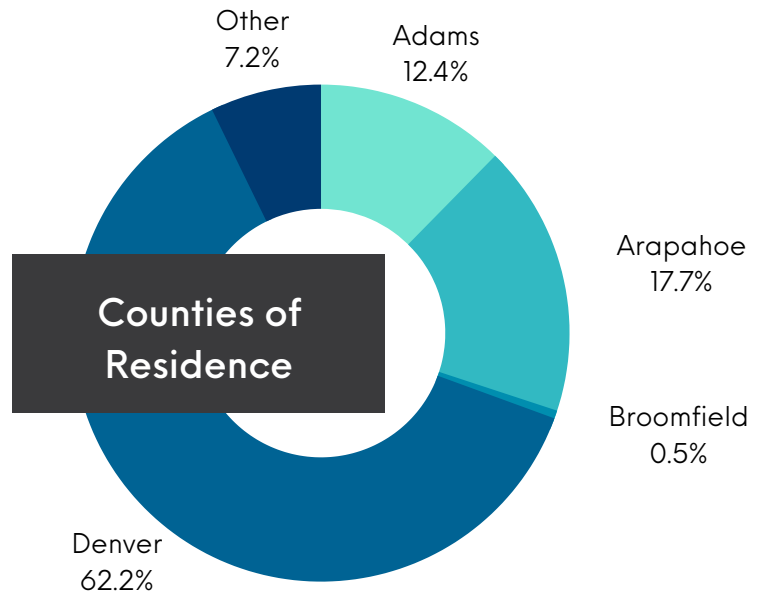
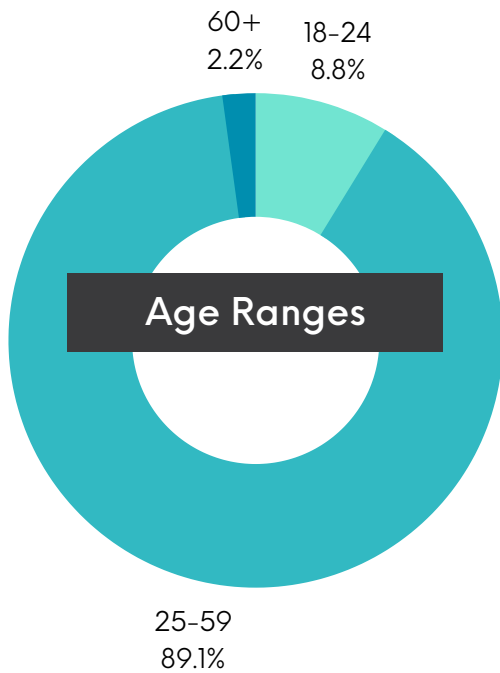
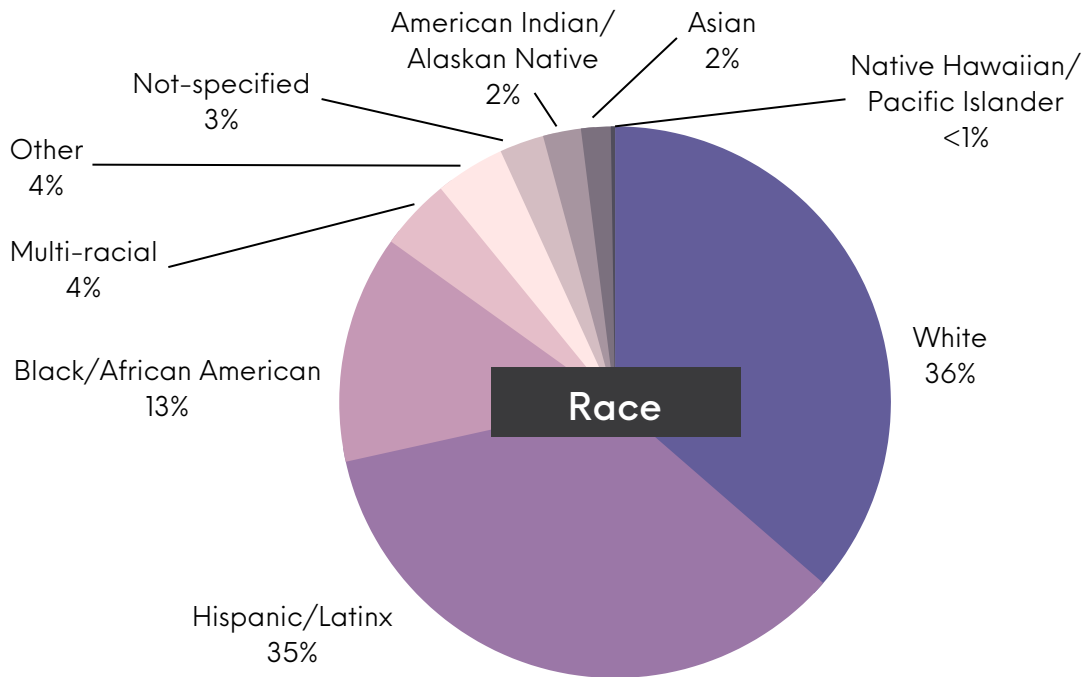
Approximately **9% of services were provided in Spanish** and services were provided **in a total of 14 languages**. In addition to English and Spanish, clients were served in American Sign Language, Amharic, Arabic, Cambodian, French, Karen, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Tigrinya, Twi, and Vietnamese.

COMMUNITY TRAININGS

Project Safeguard staff provided training to 100 people from allied agencies on topics including safety planning, Civil Protection Orders, and the services we provide



CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS



We have done our best to ensure the accuracy of the data presented here, but acknowledge that we have imperfect data systems and human errors occur. We have chosen not to include gender data in this report, because our current systems could not provide details about the nuances of our clients' gender identity. We are making adjustments to ensure we can share this data in future years.



CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

Never in a million years did I ever think I'd be wandering the courthouse in search of legal help to protect my children from a relative. The process is not an easy one and when you're an emotional wreck, it's impossible. I truly don't think I could have made it through the process without the assistance of the Project Safeguard advocate. She walked me through every step and attended every hearing with me, providing support, knowledge and a literal hand to hold and shoulder to cry on. She provided me with referrals to an exceptional attorney who gave me so much sound advice and support even before formally engage (sic) her services. What Project Safeguard does is critical to the safety of individuals who find themselves in unimaginable circumstances. THANK YOU!

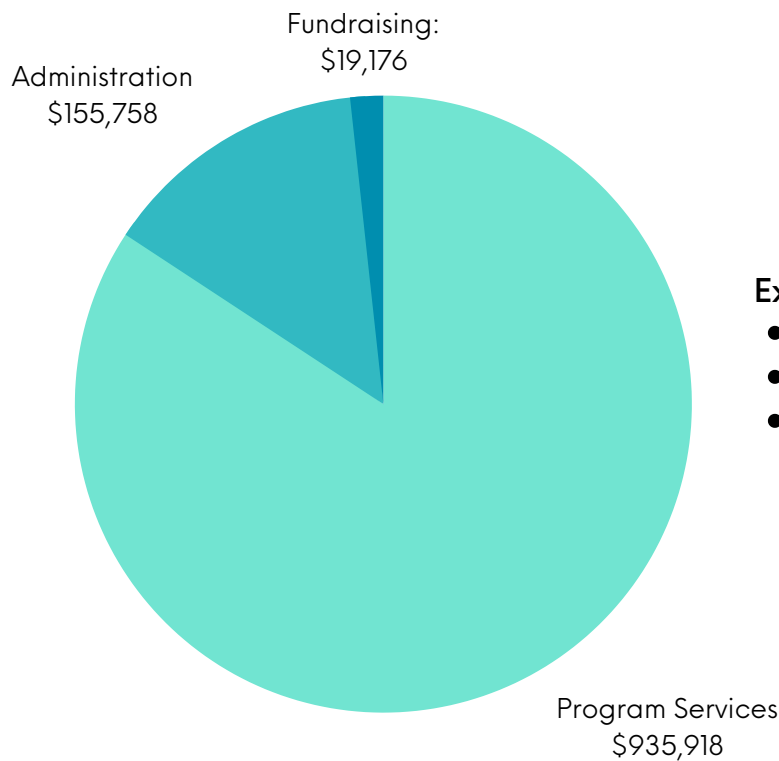
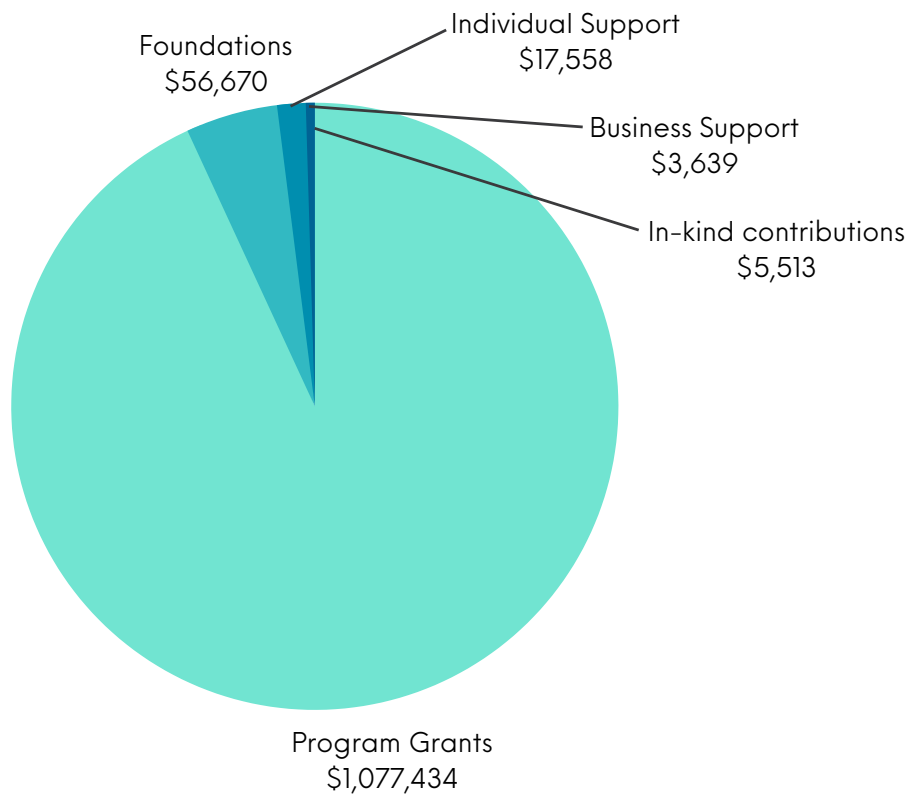
Everyone at Project Safeguard has been absolutely wonderful in their support and thoughtful, actionable advice and clear guidance. [Client's Legal Advocate and Staff Attorney] in particular have been amazing to work with, and I don't know where I would be right now without their help. Thank you, [client's Legal Advocate and Staff Attorney], and thanks to everyone at Project Safeguard. This is an amazing and essential organization helping people in my situation. I'm so grateful. Thank you!

FINANCIALS



Income/Revenue:

- Program Grants: \$1,077,434
- Foundations: \$56,670
- Individual Support: \$17,558
- Business Support: \$3,639
- In-kind contributions: \$5,513



Expenses:

- Program Services: \$935,918
- Administration: \$155,758
- Fundraising: \$19,176



STAFF AND BOARD

Project Safeguard has a staff of 15 people providing services in four locations throughout metro Denver. Because of the nature of our work, the safety of our staff is of utmost importance, and we chose not to publish the names of all staff in this report. We appreciate each and every member of the staff for their important role in helping Project Safeguard achieve its mission! Below are the names of staff who were in leadership positions in 2021, along with our Board of Directors:

LEADERSHIP STAFF

- **Jennifer Eyl**, Executive Director, Legal Director
- **Nancy Olson**, Grants and Finance Director
- **Shae Davis**, Legal Advocacy Program Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Laura Johnson-Morris**, President, Educause
- **Anne Wintemute**, Treasurer, Highlands Micro School
- **Alexis Freet**, Secretary, Community Volunteer
- **Heather Strack**, Board Member, Faegre Drinker
- **Jordan Smith**, Board Member, COVID-19 Eviction Defense Project
- **Meghan Courtney**, Board Member, GEM Family Law





VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

We rely on volunteer attorneys to staff our Divorce and Custody Clinics (offered in English and Spanish) and provide immigration consultations to our clients. Clinics were cancelled at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, but we began offering them again virtually in April of 2021. Volunteer attorneys contributed more than \$5,000 of donated time in 2021. **Thank you to everyone who stuck with us through this challenging time and volunteered to support our clients!** We couldn't achieve our mission without your support.





CONTRACT ATTORNEY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We also want to acknowledge the 12 attorneys who supported 137 Project Safeguard clients through our Lawyers for Victims program in 2021. These attorneys work with us on a contract basis to represent clients with complex Permanent Protection Order (PPO) cases or in immigration proceedings related to their victimization. **We are grateful to have partners like you to help us to serve more clients, more deeply than we could on our own!**



THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS!

INDIVIDUALS

- Alexis Freet
- Allen and Michele Thach
- Amy Maestas
- Amy Pohl
- Anne Tupler
- Ashley Emanuelson
- Barbara Marquis
- Barbara Moritz
- Brielyn Akins
- Corinne LeBaron
- Dana Stranz
- Dr. Gary Prose
- Ellen Buckley
- Heather Strack McCutcheon
- Jackie St.Joan
- James Nolte
- Jeanne Marquis
- Jill Cruickshank
- Jonathan Tilton
- Jordan Smith
- Julie Frosh
- Karen V Kowiak
- Kathleen Markey
- Kellyn and Tim Gorman
- Kimberly Carlson
- Laura Johnson-Morris
- Laura Shrawder
- Leslie Dengler and Mark Mobley
- Lorraine and William Eyl
- Marcy Kaufman
- Mary Fenstermaker
- Melina Hernandez
- Nissa Baker
- Pat Madsen
- Patricia Charles
- Robin Margolin and Laurie Cohen-Ringler
- Sara Berger
- Sari and David Frosh
- Sasha Hutchings
- Tamara Webb
- The Novins-Montague Family Fund

We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this list. We apologize for any omissions or errors. Please call 720-827-3286 with corrections.



THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS!

BUSINESSES

- Amazon Smile
- Benevity
- Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck
- Emily Davis Consulting
- Faegre Drinker
- ONEHOPE
- Vanguard Charitable Funds

FOUNDATIONS

- Colorado Health Foundation
- Community First Foundation
- Fred and Jean Allegretti Foundation
- Project Safeguard Foundation
- White Family Foundation
- Wintemute Family Foundation

GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

- 17th Judicial District Victim Assistance Law Enforcement Board
- 18th Judicial District Victim Assistance Law Enforcement Board
- Aurora Victim Witness Advisory Board
- Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families: Domestic Violence Program (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funding)
- Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice: Office for Victims Programs (U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Justice Programs: Victims of Crime Act funding)
- Family Violence Justice Fund
- Rose Andom Center Family Justice Center Project (U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women: Improving Criminal Justice Responses to Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking Grant Program funding)

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Project
Safeguard
Justice and Safety

Scan the QR code below or visit www.PSGhelps.org to learn more about Project Safeguard and how you can stay connected with us.



COMMUNITY FIRST FOUNDATION

COLORADO GIVES DAY 
Community Partner

ColoradoGivesDay.org **Dec. 6**

Save the Date and Give Where You Live!

For 24 hours on December 6, Colorado will come together to raise funds for local nonprofits, and we're excited to be part of the day! We invite you to join us by helping us share the news about Colorado Gives Day and invite your family, friends and your personal network to participate.