



Annual Report 2012

Mission Statement

The Florence Project provides and coordinates free legal services and related social services to indigent men, women, and unaccompanied children detained in Arizona for immigration removal proceedings. The Project strives to ensure that detained individuals have access to counsel, understand their rights under immigration law, and are treated fairly and humanely by our judicial system.

A Message from the Executive Director

It is hard to believe we are ready to reflect on another year of accomplishments and challenges for the Florence Project and our clients. Time continues to fly by and preparing our annual report is a welcome opportunity to stop and recognize what have been able to achieve over the last 12 months. This task can be a challenge in and of itself as it often feels like we are paddling upstream against a very strong current. This year we were powered by additional strength from you - our supporters - as you helped us to provide critical legal and social services to nearly 9,000 indigent immigrants in Arizona.

For me, a highlight of 2012 was the opportunity to accept the Emil Gumpert award on behalf of the Florence Project, an honor provided by the prestigious American College of Trial Lawyers at their annual meeting at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. As I sat between the U.S. Solicitor General and the Deputy Chief Counsel of the Constitutional Court of South Africa waiting for my turn to make remarks I was admittedly nervous but also felt right at home representing The Florence Project in such an esteemed setting. I felt this way because I know the work our organization undertakes is just as essential and groundbreaking as the work of any well-recognized, well-funded, global institution. More importantly, our client's due process rights and desires to live free, safe, and healthy lives with their families are as worthy a cause as any to support. I continue to be immensely proud of our accomplishments and am optimistic about the prospect for some improvements to our immigration system in the coming year. Thank you for paddling alongside The Florence Project and for allowing us to share this snapshot of our work.

The People We Serve

The Florence Project's constituency consists of over 3,200 immigrant and refugee men, women and unaccompanied children held by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on any given day in detention facilities in Florence, Eloy, and Phoenix, Arizona. The majority of our clients are monolingual Spanish speakers with limited educational background. While most are from Mexico and Central America, we served people from more than 75 countries in 2012. Because there is no right to government appointed counsel in immigration proceedings, an estimated 86% of detained immigrants appear alone in their immigration court hearings. The Florence Project's work seeks to address this inequity and provide due process to this vulnerable and isolated population.

2012 Accomplishments

Direct Services to Clients

- Live **“know your rights” presentations** regarding people’s rights and remedies in removal proceedings. In 2012, we provided 516 rights presentations to 8,710 detained individuals. 1,916 of these individuals were unaccompanied immigrant children.
- **Individual case assessment** for all who request it and follow up **pro se assistance** for individuals fighting their removal cases who cannot afford to hire private counsel. In 2012, we provided case assessment and pro se assistance to 6,300 people.
- **Direct representation**, as resources allow, and **pro bono referrals** to volunteer attorneys in the community. In 2012, we provided direct representation to 52 adults and referred 49 cases to volunteer attorneys in the community. Our Children’s Project successfully represented an additional 49 unaccompanied immigrant children pursuing relief before the Immigration Judge and referred another 146 children to pro bono attorney matching organizations across the country.
- Assistance with release from custody including pro se **bond** support, requests for **humanitarian parole**, and **habeas corpus petitions**. In 2012, we assisted 462 people pursue release from detention.
- Group **peer-to-peer workshops** for individuals fighting similar forms of relief to assist and prepare each other for their final court hearings. In 2012, we provided 98 workshops to 660 individuals on topics including cancellation of removal for lawful permanent residents, bonds, and asylum.
- **Social service support** to especially vulnerable clients through our Integrated Social Services Program. In 2012, we assisted 243 people with social service needs including emergency housing, access to medical care, and help with urgent child custody matters.

G was born in Guatemala and first came to the United States in 1998. Staff from the Florence Project met G this year when he was detained in Florence waiting for his reasonable fear interview because he had been deported years before and recently returned to the United States. When we first spoke with G he explained that he feared return to Guatemala in part because of his involvement in indigenous rights groups and in part because of a fear of gangs. After he was deported, G lived in Honduras for years working as a street minister to encourage young gang members to quit their involvement with gangs and turn their lives around. As we got to know G better, we learned that working with street children appealed to him because he himself had been a street child for many years during Guatemala’s civil war. After learning this, G’s case really opened up. He revealed that when he was 7 years old he had been traveling with his father several days distance from their home town and they were caught up in a massacre of indigenous people by the Guatemalan government. G only survived because his father threw his body on top of his young son to protect him. When G came to, his father’s body was still on top of him and everyone else around them was dead. G was lost and alone and so began to try to survive on his own. He wandered around the hills of Guatemala with a group of other displaced people witnessing many of the atrocities that the Guatemalan army carried out against indigenous people during the armed conflict. Eventually, he ended up a street child in Guatemala City. When he turned 18 he eventually found his family again and was finally able to learn about his indigenous roots and understand his childhood experiences through a political lens. As a result, G is a man with a deep social conscious. With the Florence Project’s support, he appeared pro se in his asylum hearing and eloquently testified about the complexities of the civil war in Guatemala. After spending over a year in detention G was granted humanitarian asylum. He is now reunited with his family in California.

Outreach & Collaboration

- **Outreach:** Staff members presented as experts or led trainings at 81 different local and national events in 2012. These included conferences hosted by the American Psychological Association, the Federal Bar Association, the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, the Arizona Public Defender Association, and the American Immigration Lawyers Association as well as the annual Arizona Judicial conference, the annual Arizona District Court conference, and the Latino Children's Summit. Through our Defending Immigrants Program we further provided 561 consultations to public defenders and defense attorneys about the immigration consequences of convictions.
- **Collaboration:** We leveraged our limited resources through the work of 104 volunteers, including attorneys, physicians and mental health professionals, students, interpreters and country conditions researchers. We also relied on the help of 24 student interns and volunteers from the following institutions: University of Arizona, Arizona State University, Boston College, Loyola University, New York University, Tulane University, Earlham College Border Studies Program and United World College – USA.

Plans for 2013

- **Supporting Family Unity:** We will continue to build on our success of bridging the immigration and child welfare systems to ensure the rights of immigrant parents and children are protected. We plan to collaborate with the state bar and court improvement program to share information and training about the immigration enforcement system with family law practitioners and stakeholders so detained and deported parents are not lost in the system. We will support all detained clients with family based claims for relief from deportation and work with family members to support their loved ones legal cases in detention. We also plan to begin assisting more abused, abandoned, and neglected immigrant children currently in Arizona's child welfare system so they don't age out of the system without lawful immigration status.
- **Representation in Court:** In late 2012, we underwent internal restructuring to enable our staff to represent more clients in Florence and Eloy because we know that having an advocate in the courtroom is essential to the outcome of the case, helps build relationships with stakeholders, and enhances staff professional development and retention. With a new managing attorney position, four of our longtime staff earning Board of Immigration Appeals Accredited Representative status, and an enhanced pro bono referral program we will ensure a higher percentage of our adult clients are strategically provided full legal representation by the Florence Project's staff.
- **Self Help Materials:** With a grant provided through the American College of Trial Lawyer's 2012 Emil Gumpert Award we will publish new and improved legal guides for pro se detainees in Arizona, building on the success of our current guides, first published in 1996. Our guides will be updated by our legal staff and redesigned with the support of an adult education expert. They will be distributed widely through detention facilities in Arizona and to advocates and immigrants around the country through our website.
- **Building Community Support:** We will continue to work with organizational partners in Tucson and Phoenix to enhance a growing community support network to provide a true alternative to detention for clients eligible for release and emergency social services for clients released from detention including housing and access to legal services.
- **Strengthening our Capacity:** In an effort to continue to try to mitigate the impact of the economic recession on our programs we will work to diversify our funding sources with a particular focus on generating new foundation support and continuing to build our individual donor base.

Financial Information

Year End December 31, 2012*

Federal Government Subcontracts	60%
Foundation Grants	17%
Individuals	14%
Law Firms	3%
Corporations	3%
Religious Organizations	1%
Other	2%
Total Revenue	\$1,001,009.76
Program Services (staff costs)	82%
Office Overhead	11%
Building Costs	4%
Management & Fundraising	3%
Total Expenses	\$952,327.04

*Accrual based budget / 2012 audit not yet completed

2012 Major Public Donors*

Aetna Foundation	Karuna Foundation
Alcock & Associates, PC	Lewis & Roca, LLP
American College of Trial Lawyers	Little Chapel of All Nations
Anonymous donor	Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service
Arizona Diamondbacks Foundation	Luis & Mary Navarro
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