



DETENTION
WATCH NETWORK

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Detention Watch Network (DWN) is at the forefront of the movement to abolish immigration detention through strategic communications, collective advocacy, and grassroots organizing.



Immigration detention is the inhumane practice of jailing immigrants while they await a determination of their immigration status or potential deportation. The U.S. locks up survivors of torture, people seeking asylum, visa holders, people who have been granted the permanent right to live in the U.S., people who have lived here for years and may have American citizen spouses and children, and vulnerable groups including pregnant women and families with children.

We believe all people should have the freedom to live and move with dignity. As a membership-based organization, DWN bridges the gap between local and national strategies to ensure we are working towards the same vision. We bring people together from across the country to build relationships, strategize, and share expertise on the immigration detention landscape.

AT A GLANCE

**CAPACITY BUILDING FOR
GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING**



**LOCAL, STATE, AND
FEDERAL ADVOCACY**



**SHARP MEDIA AND
DIGITAL STRATEGY**

BY THE NUMBERS



105

**ORGANIZATIONAL
MEMBERS**



\$150,000

**PROVIDED TO 10
GRASSROOTS GRANTEEES**



505,692

**PEOPLE REACHED ON
SOCIAL MEDIA**



429

**PRESS
HITS**



OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Reducing Immigration Detention Capacity & Preventing Expansion

- DWN's State Legislation Working Group utilized lessons learned from the June 2023 passage of HB23-1100 in Colorado, which prohibits local governments from entering into agreements with ICE and selling land to build new private immigration detention centers, to develop a strategy for the 2024 New Mexico legislative session and crafted language for their Intergovernmental Service Agreement Ban Bill. The bill came extremely close to passing, highlighting the progress we are making and providing valuable insight for our continued efforts.
- Defund Hate, co-led by DWN, coordinated a letter representing 192 organizations opposing the White House supplemental funding request for immigration enforcement, contributing to the exclusion of supplemental funding for ICE and CBP in the continuing resolution that passed on September 30.
- DWN collaborated with cross-movement partners on direct actions during Senate appropriations committee hearings in the fall, focused on rejecting requests for military aid and border enforcement.



Photo credit: André Chung



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Building Movement Power

- DWN delivered "Anthology of Abuse" reports to the Biden administration on Winn Correctional Center (LA), Farmville Detention Center (VA), and Elizabeth Detention Center (NJ), urging closures and adherence to democratically approved bans.
- Collaborating with partners, DWN held a joint House and Senate briefing in September and secured new co-sponsors for the Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act. DWN also held a House briefing on New Way Forward in September.
- Freedom Fellow Johannes Favi completed a year-long fellowship in October, culminating in the premiere of "**Caged Dreams**", a short documentary sharing the enduring trauma of three individuals formerly detained, including Johannes.

Expanding DWN's Narrative Reach

- DWN offered technical assistance and tailored messaging to members, prioritizing campaigns to shut down facilities with contract expirations over the summer, including Shut Down Elizabeth in New Jersey and Shut Down Farmville in Virginia.
- In response to Secretary Mayorkas's op-ed, "**Congress must bring our border security into the 21st century**" in the Washington Post, DWN Executive Director Silky Shah was published in the Post with the Letter to the Editor: **Customs budget won't make communities safer.**
- Senior Advocacy Manager Gaby Viera was featured in **Time's Top 100 photos of 2023** while demanding a ceasefire and that members of Congress reject the White House's supplemental funding request during a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing. With red paint on their hands, activists chanted "from Palestine to Mexico, all the walls have got to go!"

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

DWN hosted impactful in-person convenings, including a second border convening in July, uniting 30 people from 21 organizations to strategize on demilitarizing the border and ending detention. We also hosted a Deep South convening in December to develop shared strategy and strengthen relationships among members in this region, where the detention system is expanding and movement resources are lacking. We prioritized attending in-person strategy sessions with members in places such as Louisiana, New Jersey, and Texas.

In April, DWN celebrated the graduation of the founding Formerly Detained Leaders cohort – a group of 13 fierce leaders from across the country organizing against detention and for investment in our communities. This cohort is a space for leadership development, political education, peer support, and healing.

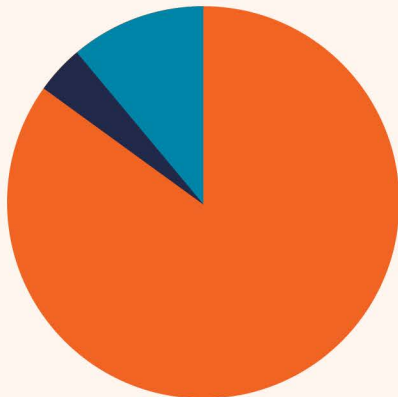
“ Being part of the cohort has taught me the necessary tools to collectively raise our voice and support others in need while feeling part of a trusted family. Today I feel empowered and, above all, I feel supported. ”

–Edinson Calderon



FINANCES

Support and Revenue
\$2,510,720



- Foundation Grants - 85%
- Membership Dues - 4%
- Contributions and other (program revenue, interest income, retail sales, special events) - 11%

Expenses
\$3,287,364



- Communications - 18%
- Advocacy - 22%
- Organizing - 17%
- Member Capacity Building - 12%
- Management and General - 26%
- Fundraising - 5%

FUNDERS

- Anonymous
- Ford Foundation
- Four Freedoms Fund
- Heising-Simons Foundation
- Oak Foundation
- Abundant Futures Fund
- DWN members, who contributed **\$98,940 in dues**
- Individual Supporters, who contributed **\$33,877 in donations**



[National Member Directory](#)