

DREAMING
IS
LIBERATION



**ANNUAL
REPORT** **2023**

 Transgender Law Center

VISIONING
AND REALIZING
TRANS POWER



Dear friends,

We are tremendously proud of Transgender Law Center's comprehensive work to protect and build trans power across the U.S. In this report, we reflect on the incredible work of TLC in 2023, the care we take for the people we serve, and the impact on the greater movement for trans liberation. Like you, we resolve to pursue our dreams, no matter how long it takes.

Thank YOU for championing TLC by dreaming with us, giving financial contributions, sharing our impact with your networks, and showing up for trans communities. 2023 was the first time we were able to gather again in-person, and reconnecting with our people – at the Creating Change conference, our annual SPARK benefit, the Black Trans Circles convening, representing our clients in court, and more – made us even more powerful.

TLC remains strong by centering the perspectives and experiences of the most creative, generative, and caring leaders among us. In keeping with our Trans Agenda for Liberation, TLC continues to lead the national trans movement because we've centered Black and Indigenous and people of color, people with disabilities, people living with HIV, youth, elders, sex workers, poor folks, migrants, and trans women and femmes.

Your support means so much to us. When we dream together, liberation will be ours.

In solidarity,

SC

Shelby Chestnut
Executive Director

Imara Jones

Imara Jones
Board Chair

TLC BY THE NUMBERS

Watch our video about Building Trans Power here:
<https://transgenderlawcenter.org/Building-Trans-Power>



We responded to **1,229** requests through our legal helpline and **710** through our prison mail program, a **63%** increase since 2018



We provided legal information and services to **975** migrants, including **626** in Mexico and **349** in the U.S. **430** LGBTQ+ migrants benefited from an individual consultation with an attorney before entrance into the U.S.



We engaged, trained, and/or resourced **577** transgender activists and allies – the most ever!



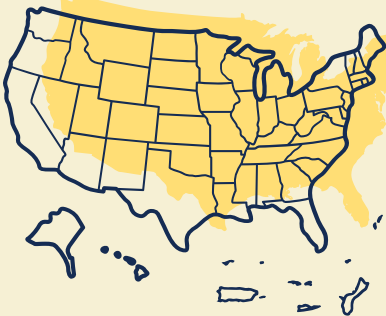
We mobilized **63** volunteers through our **Legal Services Project**, including attorneys and other legal professionals



TLC's Gender Justice Leadership Programs (GJLP)'s TRUTH, Roses, National Youth Council, and Two-Spirit Initiatives combined forces in a new collective – the **Trans Queer Two-Spirit Youth Council** – which **onboarded 18** leaders across the U.S.



We maintained and activated **82** partnerships with fellow movement and cross-movement groups



TLC has a presence in **33** states and U.S. territories through support of emerging leaders, movement partners, and staff



We litigated **14** impact cases, and filed **5** amicus briefs

LEGAL STRATEGIES TOWARD LIBERATION

“The primary focus of TLC’s prison mail response program is to connect incarcerated transgender and nonbinary people with legal information and resources to equip them to advocate for themselves. For many of our writers, the prison mail response program is often one of the very few avenues they can receive life-changing information. Through education, we help protect individual rights and contribute to broader efforts for systematic change in how transgender and nonbinary people are treated within the criminal legal system.”

**– Omar Garcia,
Prison Advocacy and
Helpdesk Coordinator**



TLC’s Legal Services encompasses several support systems in our collective fight for the liberation of trans, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary people. TLC’s legal work harnesses community power to meet ever-evolving community needs.

In 2023, TLC focused on improving our current resources to help end the abuses people experience in all forms of detention including prisons, jails, immigration detention, and state hospitals. We had conversations about these resources with people who are incarcerated to get their feedback to ensure TLC is giving the most effective and useful legal information, sample documents, and guides to folks on the inside. Thanks to the expansion of our staff, the Prison Mail program thoughtfully answered all 700+ letters, and the response time for 1,200+ Help Desk hotline requests is now less than one week.

Last year, TLC joined local co-counsel and sued the State of Texas to stop SB14, the needlessly cruel unconstitutional medical care ban that puts trans youth at risk, infringes on the rights of parents, and threatens doctors. We sued on behalf of five families with trans youth, three doctors, and two organizational plaintiffs, and while we had several victories along the way, in June 2024 the Texas Supreme Court reversed a lower court ruling, allowing the ban to remain in effect (<https://transgenderlawcenter.org/TX-Refuses-To-Block>). Through this litigation, we partnered with TENT and other local organizations to ensure that the Texas community was kept updated and informed at every step of this case. Our partnership with TENT has grown stronger and stronger and we will continue to follow their lead as we fight anti-trans legislation in Texas. We will never stop fighting for the rights of trans youth, and we will not rest until all trans people are free.

TLC joyously won our case challenging criminalization of self-defense on behalf of our client, a Black trans woman in Tennessee. “Nya” was initially charged with second-degree murder when she fought for her life against the person who trafficked her into sex work. We joined this difficult case in 2019 and through extensive advocacy and many court dates we are ecstatic to announce that in early 2023 all charges were dismissed and her record was fully expunged. Through this case, we established lasting relationships with local co-counsel, and educated the Tennessee District Attorney about trans issues and trafficking.

In 2023, TLC filed a new lawsuit in Tennessee (<https://transgenderlawcenter.org/New-Suit-TN>) challenging a law that criminalizes people living with HIV, an issue that disproportionately impacts trans people. This targets sex workers living with HIV and forces them to register as dangerous sex offenders for the rest of their lives. We are working closely with local partners, sharing information, and deepening our mutual understanding of how to end HIV criminalization.

TRANS YOUTH TO THE FRONT!

We look up at the night sky and remember those nights in starlit clearings. There is something in all of us that remembers what it was like to be there, to stand barefoot on the damp grass and feel that thing, that community flowing between us. We are ancient, we are eternal. We are enduring. Maybe there is a little bit of starlight in us all.

**Excerpt of “The Children of the Stars”
by Cassian Miller-Felix from the Trans Joy Zine**



The partnership between TLC and GSA Network’s (GSAN) trans youth programs brings so many gifts to the movement as we all continue to fight together. Our Gender Justice Leadership Program (GJLP) engages young leaders from every corner of the U.S., including many who live in states that have already enacted harmful bans on gender affirming care for trans youth and adults. GJLP encompasses the National Trans Youth Council (TRUTH), and Roses Initiative for trans girls and fems of color, and focuses on learning from trans youth on how to best advocate, create art, and bring life to activism for trans, nonbinary, and Two Spirit communities.

In 2023, GJLP partnered with TLC’s communications team to publish the popular Trans Joy Zine (<https://ourtranstruth.org/transjoyzinespring2023/>) showcasing visual and literary art works from fifteen trans and nonbinary youth located across the U.S., ages 14-18. In honor of Pride season, we released the third edition of our No Pride without Trans Youth Zine (<https://ourtranstruth.org/no-pride-without-trans-youth/>) to amplify what it means to be living through a time when healthcare for trans youth is banned or under threat. Our Roses Initiative released a series of Intergenerational Gurl Talk (<https://ourtranstruth.org/intergenerational-gurl-talk/>) videos, featuring Black and Brown trans women and girls in conversation over mutual support, care, and leadership.

GSAN hosted our National Gathering in Washington DC, where GJLP participated and got to hear first-hand from our partners the effects of anti-LGBTQ legislation and impacts to organizing youth within GSA Clubs. TRUTH, Roses, National Youth Council, and Two-Spirit Initiative combined forces in a collective known as the Trans Queer Two-Spirit Youth Council, which ran throughout the school year and onboarded 18 youth from Arizona to Idaho, from Hawaii to Vermont. They organized support for the GSA Day 4 Gender Justice, calling for action on decolonization and reparations, and mailed care packages of stickers and zines to 510+ GSA clubs nationwide.

COLLECTIVE POWER OF DISABILITY JUSTICE



Artist: Ava Tuitt

“When we know our needs, and we know the experiences that people are having, and we can tell all of our stories, then we can create really critical movement building opportunities...I see this survey as a critical tool for us to really start to concretize what the works looks like together, but also, how we show up best for each other.”

–Disability Project Community Advisory Board member Ejeris Dixon

The Disability Project leads TLC’s work to break isolation, grow connection, build leadership and infrastructure for trans and queer disability, Deaf, ill and Mad communities, while increasing capacity in the movements that serve them. We magnify the collective power, analysis, and visibility of these communities, and we are co-led by staff and strategic partners who are multi-racial, cross-class, cross-disability and multi-generational disabled, trans, queer, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary people.

Last year, the Disability Project launched the first-ever national Disability and Deaf Trans People’s Survey (<https://transgenderlawcenter.org/DP-Survey-Launch>). This seminal survey sought to amplify the lived experience and perspectives of disabled and Deaf trans people by gathering and sharing knowledge about our needs, conditions, and priorities, particularly centering BIPOC, low-income, and rural disabled and Deaf trans people. To activate the largest response possible, we spread the word far and wide including at the Creating Change conference, through partnerships with the Trans Justice Funding Project, Autistic Women and Non-Binary Network, Sins Invalid, and the National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network, and by launching our Instagram @disabilityproject.tlc. The survey received 1,200+ responses, providing an enormous data set, and proving the need for more work that centers disabled communities. Stay tuned for survey results!

We expanded our focus by beginning our series of Disability Carceral State trainings at the Drug Policy Alliance conference. We led political education on how disability shows up outside of the traditional “prison industrial complex” to include locations of incarceration, criminalization, surveillance, and violence against disabled folks. We also attended and led trainings on Disability Informed Abolition at Open Society’s US Alumni gathering; Reproductive Justice, Disability, and Blackness at the Collective Power conference at Hampshire College; and a session on disability justice for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students at Gallaudet University.

As we continue to organize against COVID denialism and amplify and support disability-led grassroots efforts, the Disability Project provided direct support to distribute masks and other PPE supplies and educate about the necessity and positive impact of masking up. Collaborating with Chicago-based disabled organizers, by the end of last calendar 20,000 masks were successfully distributed to disabled trans and queer BIPOC folks with low incomes, their personal assistants, and organizations that work with them.

FULFILLING THE PROMISES OF THE TRANS AGENDA FOR LIBERATION



Artist: Xóchitl Carranza IG: @xo_xochitl_c

“Sisterhood can be a source of strength, and can help people through difficult times. With strength we’re unstoppable. I can count on every one of them, no matter what. There is a deep love and connection that is truly irreplaceable. This opportunity has also given me a hands-on approach to learning the different factors that play a major role in our existence as trans women.”

**– Byancha Lawson,
Certified Recovery Support Peer Specialist,
Black Trans Circles Member**

It’s been four years since TLC rolled out the Trans Agenda for Liberation (<https://transgenderlawcenter.org/trans-agenda-for-liberation/>), a community-led guide toward the world we deserve. And just two years since we launched the Trans National Coordinated Strategy to support local transgender and nonbinary communities while building long-term movement capacity across the U.S.. In 2023 we continued putting these visionary plans into action, building trans power through leadership, policy transformation, and storytelling.

2023 was the first year that TLC got back to pre-Covid pandemic levels of gatherings, including our Black Trans Circles (BTC) convening in Atlanta. BTC develops the leadership of Black trans women in the Southeast, Southwest, and Midwest through the creation of healing justice spaces to work through oppression-based trauma and incubate community organizing efforts to address anti-trans murder and violence. We created and led the three-day convening curriculum where leaders shared their lived experiences, counseled each other about challenges they’re facing, swapped organizing strategies, gave presentations on strengthening funding, and sharpened and elevated their leadership. 22 leaders attended and the group was truly intergenerational, ranging in life experience from 25 to 57 years young. Together, we’re already planning our next convening in Detroit!

We’re deepening and expanding growth within TLC in order to meet the moment. In 2023, Mariah Moore and Mickaela Bradford built on TLC’s organizational strengths during their first full year as co-Deputy Directors. We hired Policy Director Heron Greenesmith to support our grassroots and national partners through policy training and responding to and pushing back on the ever-evolving anti-trans political climate.

**WE CELEBRATED SPARK 2023
IN SAN FRANCISCO, WITH TLC
SUPPORTERS FROM NEAR
AND FAR MAKING MAGIC ON
THE DANCE FLOOR!**



HIV+ TRANS LEADERSHIP FOR LIBERATION



“Working with Positively Trans has been transformative in my journey to combat HIV stigma and advance reproductive justice. Their dedication to eliminating discrimination and advocating for trans rights has significantly amplified my impact in these critical areas. I am grateful for their partnership in this crucial work.”

-Dr. Evonne T. Kaho, aka Queen Mother of The South

Positively Trans (T+) is the longest-running program since TLC’s founding. For nearly a decade, T+ has led the work to end HIV criminalization, stigma, and discrimination. The 22 members of our National Steering Committee are trans women and men of color living with HIV throughout the U.S., and over 50% live in the South. Our leaders use research, advocacy, and storytelling to center the experiences of people living with HIV, and the needs for trans liberation.

In 2023, T+ conducted groundbreaking research on the experiences of trans people living with HIV accessing care through telehealth. The listening sessions resulted in recommendations to advocate more fully for HIV and trans care including fostering inclusion of clients assigned female at birth (AFAB); ensuring people have adequate access to technology and private space for appointments; and enacting policies that allow trans people to access mental health care across state lines.

T+ supported advocates who are working against the onslaught of anti-trans legislation by leading a pre-conference institute for trans and gender expansive people ahead of the 5th annual HIV Is Not a Crime Training Academy in Emory, Virginia. Positively Trans partnered with the SERO Project in hosting the Academy, alongside Positive Women’s Network-USA, Transforming HIV Resentments into Victories Everlasting (THRIVE SS), and the U.S. People Living with HIV (PLHIV) Caucus, where 400+ advocates either living with HIV or impacted by HIV shared best practices to dismantle HIV criminalization in the US.

In 2023, several T+ staff and members were recognized as fierce leaders and advocates. Tiommi Luckett was sworn in to serve on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA). A delegation of T+ members were supported to attend the U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS, where Tori Cooper was honored as a Champion of Change by Gilead Sciences. At the conference, members AJ Scruggs, D’Jamel Young, and Renae Taylor presented to address the needs of transmasculine folks, the importance of inclusion in the greater HIV community, and critical visibility for nonbinary folks living with HIV. Tiommi and Tori hosted a PACHA panel (<https://transgenderlawcenter.org/PACHA-Panel>) on the needs of the transmasculine community alongside AJ Scruggs and D’Jamel, and friend of T+ Ja’Mel Ware.

CENTERING TRANS STORIES



Still from the film “The Songs of Water”

TLC’s work goes deep, including storytelling about the lived experiences of the people in our communities. 2023 was a banner year for raising up powerful stories for trans liberation, and increasing TLC’s influence and visibility. Our work reminds audiences that we are on the winning team – the tides of change are already in motion in our favor.

TLC’s visibility and influence expanded in media and legal advocacy. We were extensively quoted in major legal cases, such as the ongoing battle against Texas Senate Bill 14, which bans life-saving medical care for transgender youth. TLC’s Legal Director, Lynly Egyes, was prominently quoted alongside other civil rights groups in major publications, emphasizing the constitutional violations and the harmful effects of anti-trans legislation. This case has attracted significant media attention, including coverage in *The Texas Tribune*.

We also launched the Trans Agenda for Liberation Narrative Lab (<https://transgenderlawcenter.org/Narrative-Lab-Launch>), which is a groundbreaking effort to reshape trans narratives in the media aimed at fostering a new era of empowered transgender and nonbinary voices in the field of communications and narrative strategy. Narrative Lab is bringing together 10 fellows from various organizations to center BIPOC and Midwestern and Southern storytelling for trans liberation. Through this lab, TLC is equipping trans leaders with the skills to craft and share their own stories, further amplifying their voices in the fight against discriminatory policies.

Another huge milestone was the production of our short documentary “The Songs of Water” which will premier at NewFest in 2024. This film, which TLC directed, is a meditative exploration of humanity’s connection to nature through the reflections of eight transgender individuals. The film highlights care, chosen family, and resilience, inviting viewers to connect with the broader biodiversity of life. The documentary’s poetic approach to storytelling resonates with audiences, helping to further humanize and broaden understanding of trans experiences.

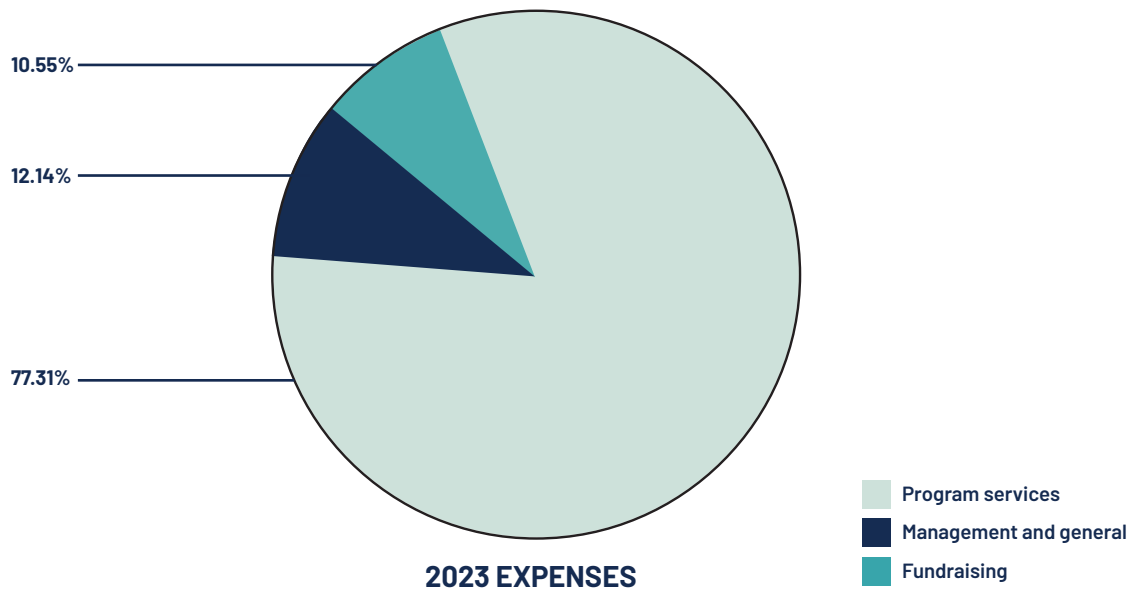
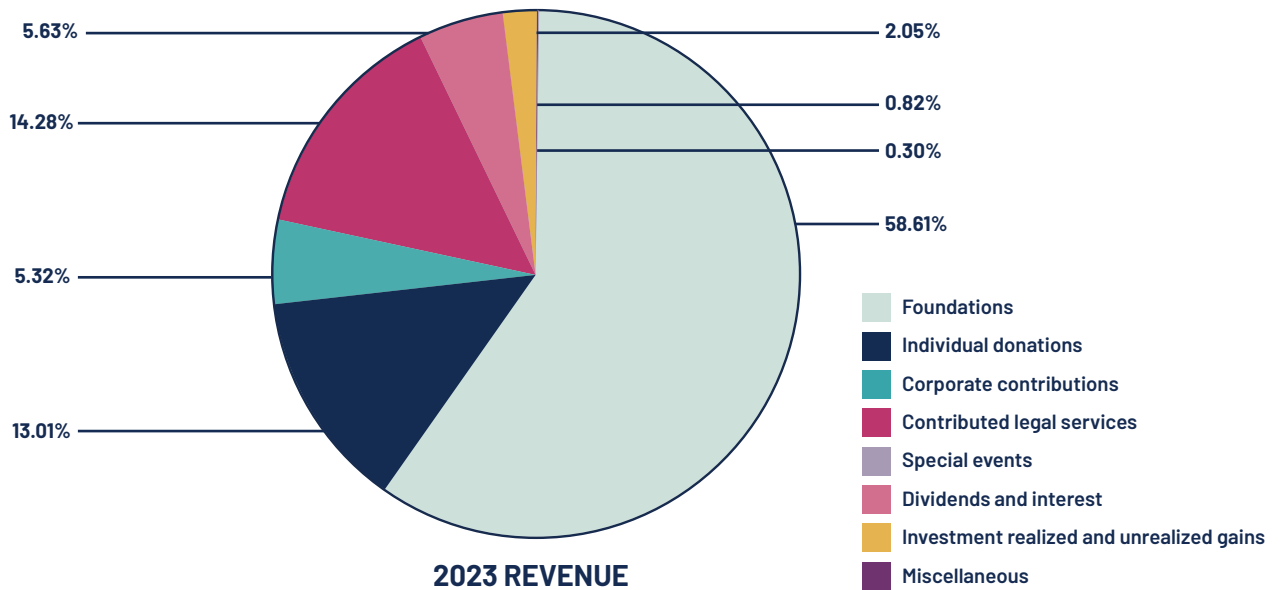
FINANCIALS 2023

REVENUE	2023	2022
Foundations	\$12,985,933	10,860,969
Individual donations	\$2,881,919	1,790,961
Corporate contributions	\$1,178,121	3,498,147
Contributed legal services	\$3,164,128	2,591,722
Gifts in-kind	-	39,383
Special events	\$180,905	257,517
Dividends and interest	\$1,246,527	321,002
Investment realized and unrealized gains	\$453,644	-105,377
Miscellaneous	\$66,998	68,212
Total Support & Revenue	\$22,158,175	19,322,536

EXPENSES	2023	2022
Program services	\$12,891,153	\$9,767,469
Management and general	\$2,024,740	\$1,596,833
Fundraising	\$1,758,900	\$1,407,484
Total Expenses	\$16,674,793	\$12,771,786
Change in Net Assets	\$5,483,382	\$6,550,750

BALANCE SHEET	2023	2022
Total assets	\$40,240,583	\$34,566,798
Total liabilities	\$3,192,338	\$3,001,935
Total net assets	\$37,048,245	\$31,564,863
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$40,240,583	\$34,566,798

Note: Includes revenue and expenses for TLC's fiscally sponsored organization Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project.



THANK YOU DONORS!

We love all TLC donors, and as such, we list all supporters by name, regardless of giving level. We strive for the most accurate listing, but if you would like changes to your listing in the future, please contact us at Giving@TransgenderLawCenter.org. To see a digital listing of all our nearly 11,000 TLC donors in 2023, scan the QR code.



THANK YOU TO TLC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Artist: Gabriele-Marion Jones IG: @humblee.bumblee.b

2023 BOARD

Imara Jones, Chair

Phillipe Cunningham, Vice Chair

Ana Conner, Secretary

Myles Paisley, Treasurer

Sunu Chandy

Jayy Covert

Morgan Darby

Daroneshia Duncan-Boyd

Chinyere Ezie

Ebony Harper

Louis Porter II, Ed.D.

Gwendolyn Rogers

Beckham Rivera

Alic Shook

Diamond Stylz

Ex-Officio Board

Brielle Darynn

Transgender Law Center (TLC) is the largest national, trans-led organization working to set all people free. We champion the right of all transgender and gender-nonconforming people to make their own choices and live freely, safely, and authentically. Prioritizing BIPOC, disabled, and HIV+ communities, we advance community-driven strategies that harness trans knowledge, power, and joy to ensure that we all not only survive but thrive at all ages and phases of life.

We envision a world where transgender liberation intersects with racial, economic, and social justice. In this future, every person, regardless of identity or background, has the autonomy to define and pursue their own path to happiness and fulfillment. We believe that our liberation is interconnected and that none of us are free until all of us are free.

 **Transgender Law Center**

**PO Box 70976
Oakland, CA 94612-0976**

[TransgenderLawCenter.org](https://www.TransgenderLawCenter.org)



@translawcenter