

# GroundWork

(n.) work done to provide the right conditions for something that is coming later; preliminary work to pave the way for a better future



# 2021

JusticeMatters Annual Report

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reproduction of original artwork by a client of JusticeMatters

# A Letter From Libby



Dear Friends,

Welcome to GroundWork—our new and improved annual report!

Groundwork is “work done to provide the right conditions for something that is coming later; preliminary work to pave the way for a better future.” This is the work of JusticeMatters.

As a nonprofit law firm, we’re on the ground every day—seeking justice for survivors of exploitation to promote healing, and seeking justice for the vulnerable to prevent exploitation in the first place. From this position, witnessing how systems-level inequity fuels exploitation and hinders healing, we seek justice in the systems we engage. This is groundwork for freedom and flourishing.

Over the past year we’ve also laid key internal groundwork, positioning JusticeMatters for greater impact. As you peruse this report, I invite you to celebrate mission reaffirmed, values formalized, challenges faced, projects launched, and sustainability strengthened.

Most importantly, I invite you to join me in celebrating each client served—each life represented by art, metric, and story in these pages.

As we near the end of 2021, we’ve only just begun our second decade of service. Along with our Board of Directors, I’m delighted to introduce our Three-Year Strategic Plan and Ten-Year Target! Over the next decade, we will expand in underserved areas of our state, working to meet the need while addressing the core issues underlying human trafficking.

We don’t expect to end human trafficking, but we’re committed to doing our part, with each day we’re given, to address its roots and repercussions—paving the way for the freedom and flourishing of all our neighbors in North Carolina.

As we look ahead to 2022 and the decade beyond, I invite you to roll up your sleeves and partner with JusticeMatters at a deeper level—journeying together as we lay the groundwork for a brighter future.

We journey from a posture of humility and hope. A posture of listening and learning from those we serve, and those we serve alongside. A posture of proximity, entering in and drawing near. A posture anchored in our common humanity, affirming that our lives and futures are bound up together.

This is the true groundwork for freedom and flourishing. May God give us strength!

Gratefully,

*Libby Coles*

Libby Magee Coles, Esq.  
Founder & Executive Director

## A Special Thank You to Our Board of Directors:

- Robin Muse, Esq.**  
Board Chair
- Alma Tinoco Ruiz, M.Div.**  
Professor  
Duke Divinity School
- Andre Mann**  
Partner  
Apex Impact Management, LLC
- Carolyn Barnes, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor  
Duke University, Sanford School of Public Policy
- Chen-Sen “Samson” Wu, Esq., MD**  
General Counsel, Products  
GE Healthcare
- Daisy Magnus-Aryitey, MA**  
Program Director  
NC IDEA
- Heather Horton, CPA**  
Chief Financial Officer  
NC Department of Commerce
- Kathleen Lehman Hajek**  
Managing Director  
Stanton Chase
- Lynn Easterling, Esq.**  
VP and Deputy General Counsel  
Cisco Systems, Inc.
- Rev. Dr. M. Keith Daniels**  
Managing Partner  
Resilient Ventures, LLC
- Mary Cunningham, CPA**  
Manager  
Dixon Hughes Goodman LLP
- Raven K. Edwards, MPH**  
Senior Manager, Share our Strength  
Adjunct, UNC Chapel Hill, Gillings School of Public Health
- Samantha Kilpatrick, Esq.**  
Attorney  
Kilpatrick Law Group



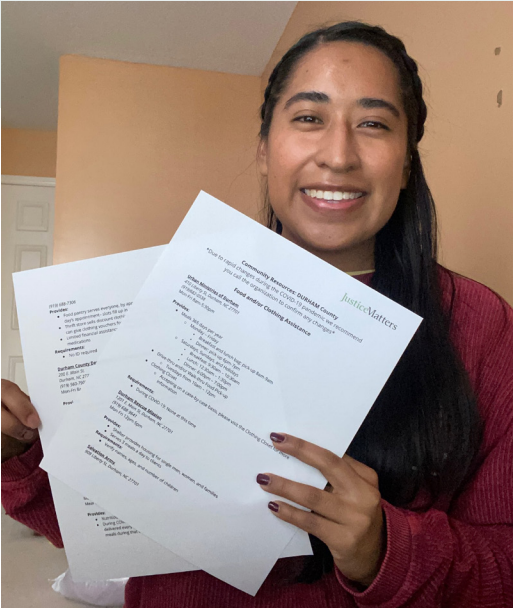
The Team

We address the roots and repercussions of human trafficking in North Carolina.

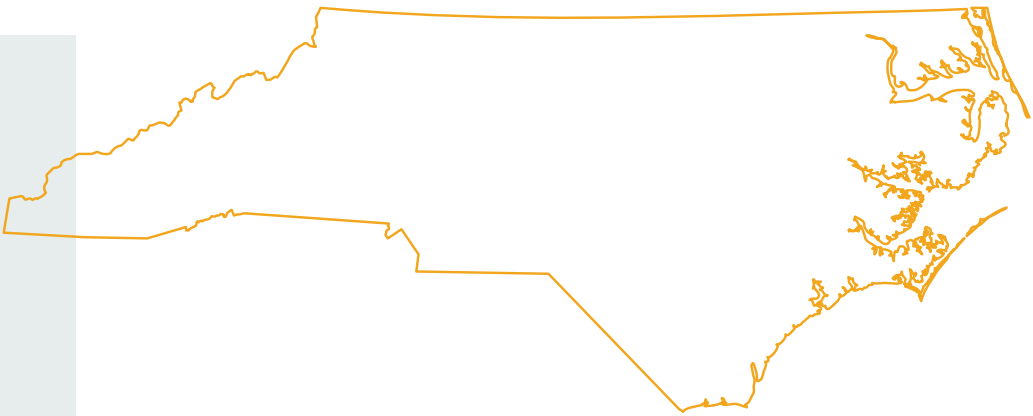
Founded in 2009, JusticeMatters has grown from a volunteer effort into a **highly specialized nonprofit law firm**. Today we serve at the forefront of **anti-trafficking efforts** in North Carolina.

Thank you to our many partners! To our community partners, for sharing your expertise and serving alongside us. To our financial partners, for sustaining this work. To all who pray, volunteer, and share encouragement, connections, and counsel—we're stronger together!

As we celebrate 2021, we celebrate YOU. We're so glad you're on the team!



Edith shares our Resources & Referrals Handout—we couldn't do what we do without our community partners!



"JusticeMatters has been a pioneer in providing immigration and family law remedies to vulnerable people, coupling trauma-informed practices with sincere and dignifying interactions with clients. They have been a champion of our mutual clients, and I am grateful to be able to work alongside them."

Rachel Parker, Anti-Human Trafficking Program Manager, World Relief Triad



Our **15** staff hail from **9** states, **1** territory, and **4** countries. We hold **12** advanced degrees (8 JD, 2 MBA, 1 MSW, 1 MPH), **5** of us are biliterate, and our **8** attorneys have collectively practiced law for over **75** years. We house **27** pets and **innumerable** plants. Over the past year we've celebrated **2** weddings, **2** first homes, **1** empty nest, and a **2nd place** singles finish in the state tennis tournament!

Although we can't agree whether to hold a post-COVID staff retreat at the mountains or the coast, we all agree that justice *matters*.

"I'm so glad to have joined the JusticeMatters team, where our clients' resilience never fails to inspire me and our staff's enthusiasm for this work is contagious."

Mary Beth Reed, Staff Attorney  
Duke Law '21, Keller Fellowship inaugural recipient



Welcome to the North Carolina State Bar, Mary Beth!

We're grateful for our Interns, Externs, and Fellows!

Special thanks to the faculty and staff of Campbell, NC Central, Duke, UNC, and Wake Forest law schools, UNC School of Social Work, and Duke University.



# Announcing... Our Core Values!

In 2021 we focused on clarifying our core identity statements. The Board of Directors reaffirmed JusticeMatters’ mission and vision, created a foundation statement, and formalized core values. Although this is the first time we’ve formalized our values, we’ve been living them out for over a decade. Special thanks to our clients, partners, staff, and board—your observations and insight throughout this process confirmed who we are, helping to illuminate the path ahead!

## We uphold TRAUMA-INFORMED principles.

We believe that the way we provide legal services—not solely the legal results we secure—holds potential to promote restoration. We are characterized by a concern for safety, trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, collaboration and mutuality, empowerment (voice and choice), and humility regarding cultural, historical, and gender issues.



*Pursuing wellbeing involves internal policies, and for some staff it also involves hiking in western NC!*

## We seek JUSTICE.

We seek justice for our clients through the law. We address injustice in both the content and application of the law, and in systems and institutions that perpetuate oppression. We believe justice requires both righting wrongs and investing our resources to strengthen the fabric of our community.



*Libby speaking at a press conference during her tenure as Chair of the NC Human Trafficking Commission.*



*Gathering as a community of volunteers, partners, Board, and staff looked different pre-COVID, but the ties run deep.*

## We embrace COMMUNITY.

We affirm the inherent dignity, equality, and worth of all people. We cultivate mutual respect and empathy with our clients, staff, and partners. We hold space for disagreement and difference. We center the margins—amplifying voices, elevating experiences, and affirming our interconnectedness. We are honored to provide legal representation to our clients and together call North Carolina home.



*Staff including our very first (Cheryl) and most recent (Mary Beth) attorney hires pause for a photo at the Durham County Courthouse, evidencing a legacy of excellence.*

## We strive for EXCELLENCE.

We strive for excellence in every facet of our mission and methods. We zealously protect and pursue each client’s interests as they pursue their dreams.



## We are anchored in CELEBRATION.

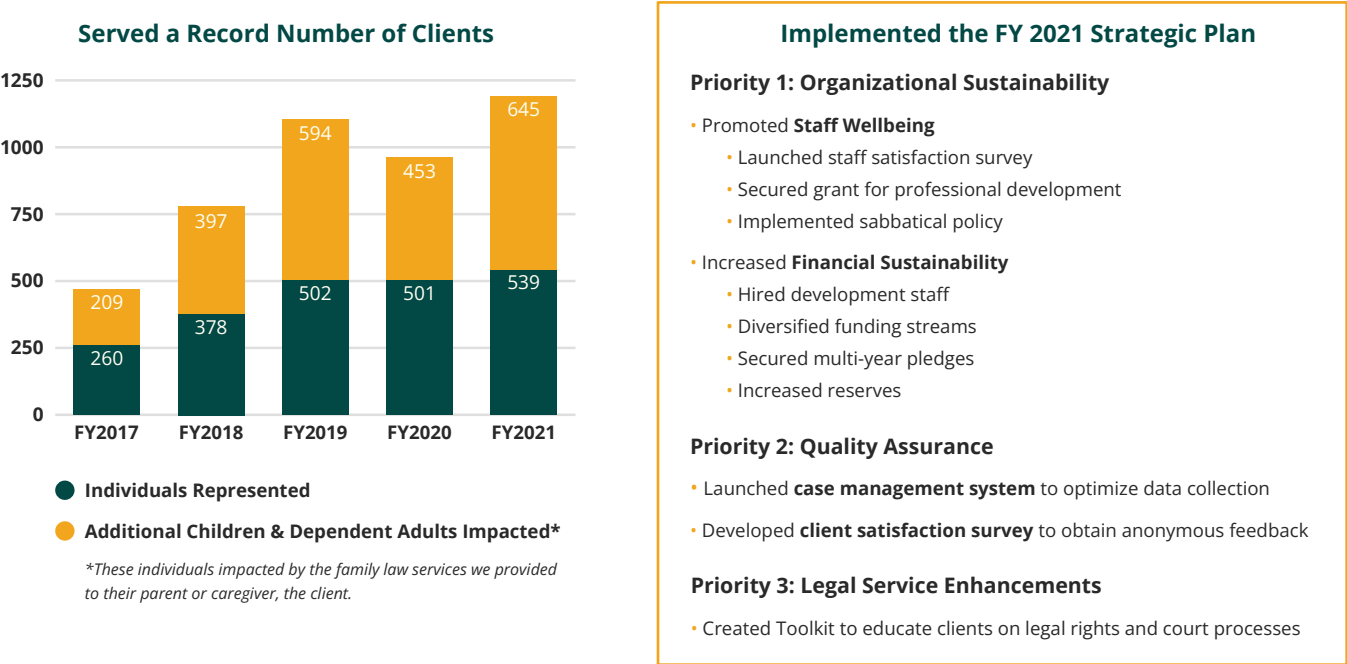
We pursue hope and joy. We celebrate the strength and resilience of our clients, staff, and partners, and we celebrate every victory achieved as we seek justice together.



*Celebrating Santa's 2nd place singles finish in the state tennis tournament!*

# Year in Review

## Fiscal Year 2021 (October 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021) Highlights



### Launched Two Pilot Projects



#### Trauma-Informed Design Pilot

In August, JusticeMatters launched a three-year pilot project with Greenleaf Integrative to comprehensively integrate trauma-informed design agency-wide for the good of both staff and clients. This is the culmination of a commitment made by our Executive Director and Board of Directors nearly a decade ago.

We are grateful for the generous support of The Michael Cameron Dempsey Fund and the nationally-recognized expertise of Greenleaf, which specializes in interventions that reach beyond burnout or employee wellness to support staff who are—directly or indirectly—exposed to trauma as part of their job.



#### Immigrant Legal Services Pilot

In September, JusticeMatters launched a two-year pilot project with the City of Durham to provide immigration services to undocumented members of our community. Recognizing the social, economic, public health, and public safety benefits of these services, the City Council voted to fund this project through the city budget.

We are grateful for the support of the City and stakeholders, who recognize that our undocumented immigrant neighbors are at heightened risk of exploitation. Legal status, and more temporary forms of federal immigration relief, are foundational protections against these injustices—promoting the flourishing of these neighbors as well as the shared social and economic prosperity of all residents of Durham County.

### Faced Challenges

- 1 **Federal Funding Cuts**

The federal Victims of Crime Act funding allocated to NC was cut by 70%, shrinking a key revenue source for agencies serving victims of crime—including JusticeMatters and our partners. Uncertainty regarding renewal accelerated our revenue diversification goals.
- 2 **Client Services Support**

Due to uncertainty of federal funding, we froze hiring for the vacant Client Services Specialist position, increasing staff workload.
- 3 **Stress, Burnout, & Trauma**

The reality of serving in a high-trauma environment, especially in a season of increased need and decreased resources, heightened risk to staff wellbeing.
- 4 **Capacity & Increased Need**

The pandemic continued to disproportionately impact those we serve, increasing vulnerability to exploitation while disrupting identification and access to services.

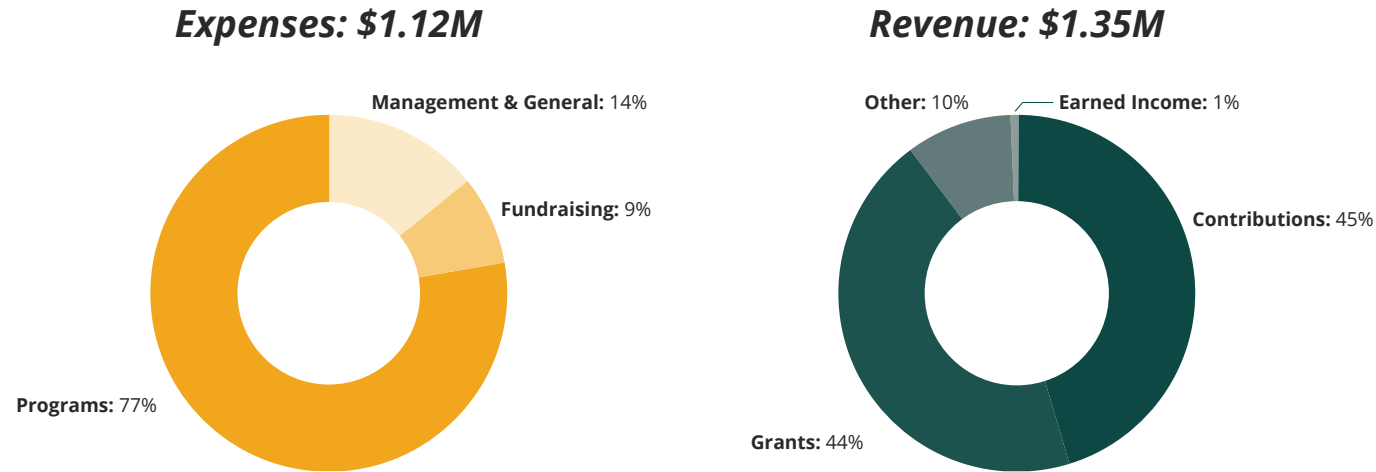
### and Sent Our Executive Director on Sabbatical!



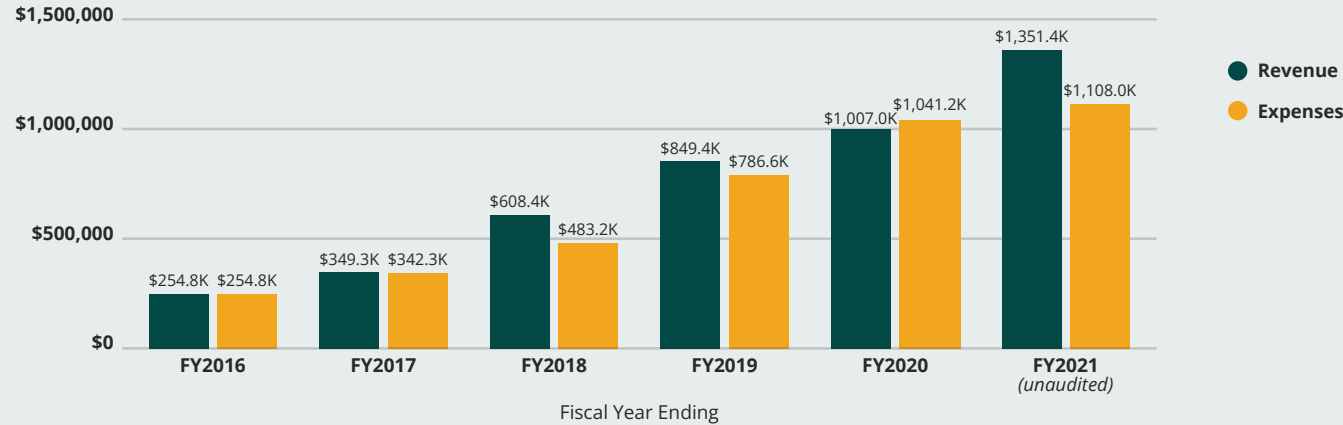
Libby (and family) on sabbatical in Colorado, celebrating over a decade of leadership!

# Financials

In FY 2021 we provided legal services valued around **\$4M** on a budget just over **\$1M**. We served **539 clients** at an average cost of just over **\$2,000/client** for services valued up to **\$25,000/client**.



## Financial Trends FY 2016-2021



## A Note From Our Treasurer

This fiscal year was marked by both blessings and challenges. Although we faced uncertainty regarding the continuation of federal funding in the upcoming year, we were able to raise our total budget earlier than anticipated and began to craft a multi-year fundraising plan to diversify our revenue sources and rely less on government funding.

We're grateful for the generosity of over 300 financial partners in 2021, some of whom stepped up to donate early and make multi-year commitments. We praise God for His provision through you!

These financials for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2021 are estimates based on unaudited financial statements. An independent certified public accountant firm has been retained to audit our financial records. Full, audited financials will be linked from our website for review by January 31, 2022.

Heather Horton, CPA, Board of Directors



# Legal Services

## WE PROVIDE TRAUMA-INFORMED LEGAL SERVICES THROUGHOUT NORTH CAROLINA.

JusticeMatters served **539 clients** in FY 2021, responding to **878 calls** requesting services.

At JusticeMatters we provide **preventive** and **restorative** legal services. Some of our clients have survived human trafficking. Many more are at heightened risk of exploitation due to lack of legal status in the U.S., lack of legal security in a family, or prior experience of trauma.

We protect the rights of our clients and provide high-quality family law and immigration services, reducing the risk of exploitation and helping survivors rebuild their lives.

338

Callers Provided Info and/or Referrals

258

Clients Provided 1+ Legal Consultation(s)

281

Clients Provided Legal Representation

42

Immigration Relief Secured

Secured deferred action, temporary protected status, legal status, legal permanent residency, and citizenship for 42 undocumented immigrants and their family members ("derivatives"), equipping them with legal tools to protect and provide for themselves and their families.

48

Legal Protection Secured

Secured 48 custody, guardianship, and adoption orders for 52 parents/caregivers, equipping them with legal tools to protect and provide a stable home for the 54 children and 1 dependent adult in their care.

"Individuals in the United States vulnerable to human trafficking include: **children** in the **child welfare** and **juvenile justice systems**, including **foster care**; **runaway and homeless youth**; **unaccompanied children**; individuals **seeking asylum**... **migrant laborers**... persons with **limited English proficiency**... and victims of intimate **partner violence** or **domestic violence**."

- *Trafficking In Persons Report, U.S. State Department, June 2021*



Savannah, Cheryl, and Nicole at work!

30%

have limited English proficiency

81%

identified as Black, Hispanic, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, and/or Alaska Native

65%

have 1+ child

67%

reported being a victim of crime (e.g. child abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault...)

73+

Nationalities

14+

Languages Spoken

4-76

Years Old

72+

Counties of Residence in NC

**Our clients** are our neighbors and represent the diversity of **ability, age, ethnicity, gender, language, sexual orientation, race, and religion** in our community. We are honored to together call North Carolina home.

# Systems-Change Work

## WE PROMOTE JUST POLICIES AND PRACTICES IMPACTING OUR CLIENTS AND COMMUNITY.

At its core, human trafficking is the **exploitation of vulnerability for profit**. To effectively address human trafficking, we must address the systems-level issues that create and exacerbate vulnerability to exploitation—and make it harder for certain survivors to rebuild their lives.

At JusticeMatters, we're committed to centering the voices of our clients and community, elevating what we learn to prevent exploitation and promote better outcomes for *all* survivors in North Carolina.

In **2021** we honed in on three strategic opportunities to advance systems change:

- ✓ furthering strategic, collaborative efforts through state and local task forces,
- ✓ providing targeted advocacy for issues facing our clients at the state and local level, and
- ✓ delivering virtual training and education.

18

Task Forces

4

Advocacy Engagements

494

Professionals Trained

170

Community Members Educated

"[E]nduring discriminatory policies and practices... have a disproportionate effect on individuals already oppressed by other injustices. These challenges further compound existing vulnerabilities to exploitation, including human trafficking. We must break this inhumane cycle of discrimination and injustices if we hope to one day eliminate human trafficking."

Trafficking In Persons Report  
U.S. State Department, June 2021

"COVID-19 disrupted the pathways clients typically use to access our services, as well as the identification of human trafficking survivors. We've focused training efforts on equipping professionals at key access points, such as medical clinics, schools, and mental health service providers, to better identify and advocate for survivors and vulnerable individuals they encounter."

Betsy Divers  
Training and Education Specialist

"What does this mean for each of us, personally? **Justice requires** righting wrongs, but justice is so much more than this. Justice requires that we generously invest the good gifts God has given us—our resources, skills, education, expertise, and influence—to dismantle systemic injustice and strengthen the fabric of our community for the wellbeing of *all* our neighbors.

**Justice requires** that we acknowledge where we are complicit in injustice, supporting or simply benefitting from inequitable systems that benefit some at the expense of others. (We're all flawed, imperfect people and, whether intentionally or not, we build flawed, imperfect systems.) **Justice requires** that we see and hear those at the margins, and welcome all into the center of our community.

Ultimately, it takes each of us to build a world free from human trafficking. *It takes each of us to ensure the freedom and flourishing of all people.*"

 Libby Magee Coles, Esq.

"We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself."

Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer

# Journey: Prevention

This year we had the honor of representing Ms. Taylor\*, whose sister died unexpectedly leaving behind two young boys. There was no father on their birth certificates or involved in their lives. Ms. Taylor was determined to provide for her nephews, but didn't have the resources to hire an attorney to secure legal custody.

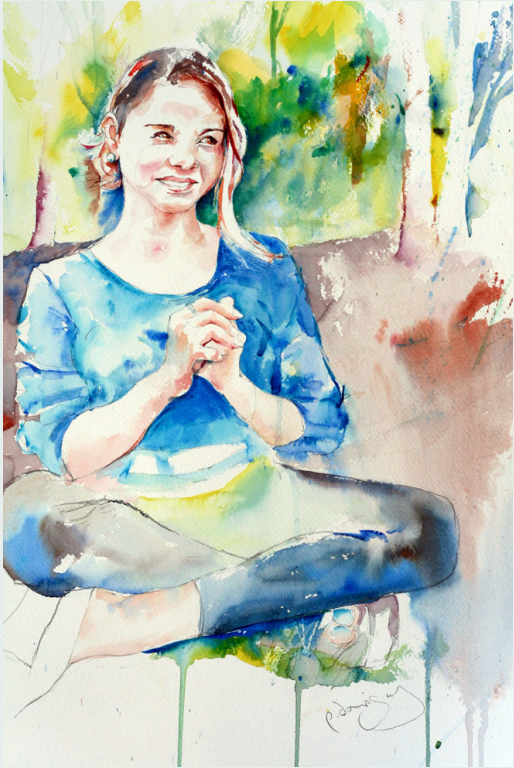
Referred by the boys' elementary school, Ms. Taylor reached out for a legal consultation and engaged JusticeMatters to represent her at no cost. As the family struggled with grief, our team helped ease the difficulty of navigating the custody process and connected Ms. Taylor, at her request, with therapeutic services for her nephews. Ms. Taylor' strength and courage was incredible to witness, as she took the difficult steps necessary to promote the wellbeing of her nephews and provide the stability of a permanent home.

With legal custody, Ms. Taylor now has the legal authority to protect and provide for her nephews in the ways they need. She can secure medical care, register them for school next fall, and assure them that they can live in her home for the years ahead.

Through our preventive legal services, we protect vulnerable children from human trafficking and other forms of exploitation. When a child's parents are unable or unwilling to care for them, placement with family or friends tends to result in better outcomes than placement in foster care with a stranger. Fundamentally, a stable, loving home provides critical protection for children—keeping them out of the child welfare system, and away from those who would exploit their vulnerabilities.

We are honored to equip caregivers with the legal tools they need to protect and provide for the children in their care.

*\* In order to protect the identity of our clients, we have utilized a pseudonym and woven several client stories together into this composite story.*



original artwork by Rev. Patrick Dominguez

"Whereas the Sixth Amendment guarantees the right to legal counsel to most criminal defendants, there is almost no right to counsel in civil cases in the United States. A large percentage of the population in North Carolina cannot afford the services of a private attorney. **Each year, thousands of North Carolinians must navigate complex civil legal issues such as... child custody without the benefit of representation.** Unable to pay for counsel or access legal aid, these families either proceed pro se (i.e., they represent themselves) regardless of education level or language barrier, or they simply fail to have their day in court."

*- In Pursuit of Justice: An Assessment of the Civil Legal Needs of North Carolina, NC Equal Access to Justice Commission, June 2021, emphasis added*

## Contact

Ms. Taylor calls to ask for a family law consultation, sharing that her nephews' elementary school recommended she reach out to JusticeMatters for help with enrollment.



## Intake

Client Resources Specialist talks with Ms. Taylor to screen for eligibility and learn about her legal need. Then the lead Family Law attorney reviews and approves scheduling.

## Consult

Staff Attorney meets\* with Ms. Taylor to determine her goals and advise her about her legal options and the legal process in family court.

*\*virtually, during the pandemic; in person at our offices or at one of our Pro Se Centers (Durham County Courthouse and Mexican Consulate)*

## Engagement

Staff Attorney advises Ms. Taylor that she is eligible for representation in obtaining custody of her nephews, and shares about our services and process. Ms. Taylor decides to engage JusticeMatters to represent her (at no cost to her).



### How do our clients find us?\*

- Law Firms & Legal Service Providers: **32**
- Public Agencies: **118**
- Medical and Behavioral Health Providers: **13**
- Service Providers for Survivors of DV or Sexual Assault: **29**
- Service Providers for Survivors of Human Trafficking: **17**
- Family or Friend of Client: **26**
- JusticeMatters Staff or Board: **14**
- Current or Former Client: **6**
- Other: **27**

*\* FY 2021 data provided by clients who opted to share.*

original artwork by a client of JusticeMatters



Referrals

Case Specialist offers Ms. Taylor the opportunity to identify any additional needs for which she'd like a referral for herself or the children, via our holistic assessment.

Our team facilitates referrals during the initial consultation and throughout representation, as needs change and trust builds.



original artwork by Rev. Patrick Dominguez

Court Process

Our legal team files a Complaint for custody in family court, and then ensures ongoing compliance with court and legal requirements —e.g. locating and serving opposing parties— while preparing the client for what to expect in every aspect of the court process.



As we apply a trauma-informed approach to our legal services, we ease the difficulties of navigating the legal process through practices like providing flexibility in scheduling appointments—allowing time for clients to address tangential issues impacting their family.

Custody Order

As the children's mother is deceased and their fathers are unknown, our attorney walks Ms. Taylor through a custody trial; at the close of evidence, the judge grants custody to Ms. Taylor. This approval provides the boys the legal security of a permanent home with a caregiver who has authority to make legal decisions for their care, unlocking access to safety, stability, and services—critical for these children to begin to grow and heal in the years ahead.

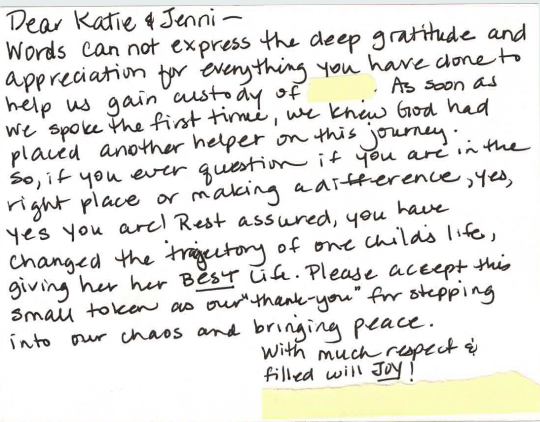
Although the custody order brings relief, many of our clients and the children in their care express deep, mixed emotions—deep love for the parents, and deep pain over the reasons the parents are unable or unwilling to care for their children, from death to incarceration, struggles with impairing substances, or deportation.

"Our clients give up their time, their limited financial resources, their energy, and a certain level of peace and control in their lives when they commit to caring for children whose parents can't. Yet they do so enthusiastically and with great love. They walk children through life's joys and struggles, holding the hope, pain and fear of those children in their own hearts. They are true heroes, and our Family Law Team looks forward to every contact we have with them, even long after their cases end."

Christy Hamilton Malott, Lead Family Law Attorney

Case Close

As staff close out Ms. Taylor's case, they provide her with a copy of the custody order and talk with her about what to expect, reminding her that JusticeMatters is always available as a resource to her in the future.



A thank you note from a JusticeMatters client.

The Hard Road Ahead

In many cases, clients continue to reach out to staff for advice, advocacy, and legal services as they work to rebuild their lives. Given the lingering impact of trauma, the path isn't easy.

Where Are They Now?

One of the **earliest clients** we served has started a **nonprofit to empower women!**





# Journey: Restoration

Paul\*, originally from a country in West Africa, dreamed of attending school in the United States. When Paul was a teenager, he was recruited by an American coach to come to the U.S. and attend high school as a student-athlete. However, once Paul arrived in North Carolina, the coach refused to enroll him in school. Instead, he required Paul to work long hours daily without pay and withheld proper food, clothing, or housing.

The coach manipulated Paul to stay by claiming he was waiting on final documents for his student visa paperwork, and that Paul would be sent home and never allowed back in the U.S. if he spoke a word to anyone. Paul did not try to alert his family because he felt afraid to let them down after the tremendous sacrifices they made to help him pursue his dreams in the U.S.

Paul was referred to JusticeMatters through a service provider after seizing an opportunity to tell someone what was happening. We represented Paul in securing a T visa, which was granted in 2018, authorizing Paul to remain safely in the U.S., attend high school, and obtain services for healing. The T visa also opened a path for Paul to seek lawful permanent residency, which we helped him secure this year.

Paul continues to navigate the lingering effects of his victimization. He is now enrolled in college and accessing support for critical needs with the support of case management organizations throughout North Carolina.

Through our restorative legal services, we provide survivors with legal tools to rebuild their lives. For Paul, these tools include legal status and work authorization. Paul can now engage safely in our community, work legally to provide for himself, and access medical and mental health care for healing.

We are honored to equip survivors with the legal tools they need to rebuild their lives and pursue their dreams.

*\* In order to protect the identity of our clients, we have utilized a pseudonym and woven multiple client stories together into this composite story.*

“As a psychiatrist working with immigrant families, every day I hear firsthand about the disproportionate rates of traumatic events that impact the lives of my patients. While I work with them directly on the mental health impacts, too often these impacts—and the realities of complex immigration laws and migration contexts— result in legal impacts as well. JusticeMatters is a go-to resource for warm and supportive services that are approachable and respectful to the immigrant families we serve, helping to reduce anxieties and fears that can otherwise get in the way of forward progress. Their sensitivity with trauma-informed approaches is a big reason I refer my patients to them. That’s why we consider them a close partner in our mission to nurture stronger familias to live out their dreams.”

- Luke Smith, MD, Executive Director and Psychiatrist, El Futuro



original artwork by Rev. Patrick Dominguez

## Contact

A medical provider calls to refer Paul, whom they believe has recently escaped from a labor trafficking situation.



## Consult

Staff Attorney meets\* with Paul to hear the parts of his story he is ready to share, determine his goals, provide information about Paul’s legal options, and share about our services and process.

*\*virtually, during the pandemic*

## Intake

Client Resources Specialist talks with Paul via volunteer French interpreter to screen for eligibility and learn about his legal need. Then the lead Immigration attorney reviews and approves scheduling.

## Referrals

Case Specialist offers Paul the opportunity to identify any additional needs for which he’d like a referral, via our holistic assessment.



## Engagement

Staff Attorney advises Paul that he is eligible for a T Visa, and shares about potential risks and benefits of applying. Paul decides to engage JusticeMatters to represent him.



original artwork by a client of JusticeMatters

Report

Staff Attorney coordinates with law enforcement, protecting Paul's rights as he reports the perpetrators and cooperates with requests for evidence and testimony.

M With few exceptions, reporting to law enforcement is a key step in establishing eligibility for a T visa.

Application

After hours of work to compile evidence and prepare his T Visa application, Paul and staff celebrate submission to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)!

M These applications can take 20-30 hours to prepare and weigh over 2 pounds when mailed to USCIS.

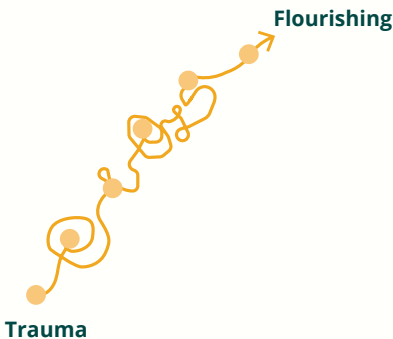


Processing

As USCIS processes Paul's T Visa application, which can take 2-3 years, staff field requests from USCIS and work with Paul to help him overcome obstacles to the services he needs to heal: providing consistent advocacy in this period of uncertainty and instability.

M This period can be one of the most stressful for our T Visa clients, as they continue to experience the effects of trauma while living in limbo.

The Trauma Healing Process



"Analyses revealed that healing was not an isolated event that happened at a particular point in time. Rather, healing typically took place in fits and starts over an extended period of time. This process was not linear and not predictable. The path to healing was different for each person. The metaphor of a journey emerged as an apt description of this process."

Scott, J. G., et al. (2017). "Healing journey: a qualitative analysis of the healing experiences of Americans suffering from trauma and illness." BMJ Open.

Approval

Three years in, Paul receives his T Visa approval! This approval provides legal status in the U.S. and work authorization, unlocking access to safety, stability, and services - critical components of his goals to rebuild his life and his dreams for the future.

- ✓ Legal status: authorizes Paul to live in the U.S.
- ✓ Work authorization: permits Paul to work in the U.S. to provide for himself and his family
- ✓ Certification: authorizes Paul to secure public benefits and services due to his victimization (the same provided to refugees)

How long do our clients stay clients?

- 0-1 years: 402
- 1-2 years: 102
- 2-3 years: 27
- 4+ years: 8

Family Reunification

Based on his approval, Paul's immediate family members—his mom and two young siblings—are granted legal status and, with help from international aid agencies, join him in North Carolina.

M Congress provided survivors the opportunity to apply for legal status for their most immediate family members—children, spouse, parents, and certain siblings. One of our staff's greatest joys has been to meet these family members when they arrive!

Case Close

As staff close out Paul's case, they advise him on his rights and responsibilities given his new legal status. In the future he can return for representation to obtain legal permanent residence (his "green card"), and eventually citizenship.

The Hard Road Ahead

In many cases, clients continue to reach out to staff for advice, advocacy, and legal services as they work to rebuild their lives and pursue their dreams. Given the lingering impact of trauma, the path isn't easy.

Where Are They Now?

One of the earliest clients we served, who experienced significant trauma as a child, became a U.S. citizen this year! He first came to our office at 16, and our staff was honored to represent him again after so many years.





# Our work is needed, and it is especially needed *now*...

Human trafficking is the exploitation of people for labor or commercial sex acts through force, fraud, or coercion.

As the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report\* confirms, immigrants without permanent legal status in the United States, children without the legal security of an adult committed to their care, and survivors of trauma are at higher risk of human trafficking and other forms of exploitation.

**Legal status and legal security are foundational protections against these injustices, and when delivered according to a trauma-informed approach create opportunities for clients to heal, flourish, and pursue their dreams.**



"COVID-19 generated conditions that increased the number of people who experienced vulnerabilities to human trafficking and interrupted existing and planned anti-trafficking interventions... At the same time, human traffickers quickly adapted to capitalize on the vulnerabilities exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic."

from  
\*Trafficking In Persons Report, U.S. State Department, June 2021

In May 2021, the North Carolina Equal Access to Justice Commission reported:

- 1 Low-income North Carolinians face a severe **shortfall in affordable legal resources.**
- 2 The top two most **underserved** practice areas in NC are **family law** and **immigration.**
- 3 The **COVID-19 pandemic** has significantly **increased the need** for civil legal aid in NC.

from  
In Pursuit of Justice: An Assessment of the Civil Legal Needs of North Carolina, NC Equal Access to Justice Commission, June 2021

Now, more than ever, we are committed to this work!

# Impact

Fundamentally, we provide our clients with legal tools to protect and provide for themselves and the children in their care, reducing risk of future exploitation and increasing opportunities for healing and wellbeing.

We help our clients overcome legal barriers to: **Safety, Stability, and Services**, which are foundational to the social determinants of health—conditions that impact wellbeing.

Our work directly impacts the following social determinants of health:

- Economic Stability**
    - ✓ Unlocks authorization to work in the U.S.
  - Education Access**
    - ✓ Unlocks access to higher education
    - ✓ Provides caregivers with legal authority to increase educational opportunities and help the children/youth in their care advance in school
  - Health Care Access**
    - ✓ Provides caregivers with legal authority to obtain health care services for the children in their care
    - ✓ Unlocks access to medical and behavioral health services
- Our work also promotes:
- ✓ Safer neighborhoods
  - ✓ Social and community support



Healthy People 2030, U.S. DHHS, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved 11/23/21, from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>



original artwork by a client of JusticeMatters

“[JusticeMatters' staff] showed me kindness and attentiveness from the heart, and were highly professional through the whole process.”

client feedback received via anonymous, opt-in survey

“[JusticeMatters' services] changed my life for the better and I feel secure, protected.”

client feedback received via anonymous, opt-in survey

# Advancing the Vision

## 10-Year Target

By 2032, JusticeMatters will serve 5,000 individuals annually, expanding in underserved areas to ensure that survivors of human trafficking and those at heightened risk have access to excellent, trauma-informed legal services. We will advance systems change to prevent exploitation and promote better outcomes for survivors across our state.

### Priorities for the next three years, Fiscal Years 2022-2024:

P1

**Strengthen Trauma-Informed Design** across JusticeMatters to cultivate and sustain the wellbeing of our workforce and to promote the wellbeing of our clients.

P2

**Increase capacity** of legal teams to strengthen preventive services.

P3

**Open and strengthen pathways** for survivors of human trafficking to access our legal services.

P4

**Solidify systems-change efforts** to prevent human trafficking and increase opportunities for healing and wellbeing.

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"The past two years have provided a beautiful glimpse into God’s faithfulness as he has guided and sustained us through the pandemic. We see his faithfulness in our clients’ stories, in our staff’s compassionate advocacy, and in various opportunities to expand our services. As we grow our services, I am confident we will see God’s faithfulness in offering our clients hope and a path to flourish. I am thankful to be a part of JusticeMatters."

Robin Muse, Esq., Board Chair

JusticeMatters

Your generosity sustains this work. Please visit [JusticeMattersNC.org](https://JusticeMattersNC.org) to partner with us for freedom and flourishing!



We are fueled by faith, and  
by our vision for the freedom  
and flourishing of all.

## Get Involved

### Connect

Invite us to present to your business, congregation, giving circle, or group.

*[JusticeMattersNC.org/get-involved](https://JusticeMattersNC.org/get-involved)*

### Join the Team

It takes all of us to advance freedom and flourishing.

*[JusticeMattersNC.org/get-involved](https://JusticeMattersNC.org/get-involved)*

### Receive/Share Services

We welcome your call to ask about services or make a referral.

*919-794-7511 x2*

### Partner Financially

Your generosity makes this work possible.

*[JusticeMattersNC.org/donate](https://JusticeMattersNC.org/donate)*

# JusticeMatters

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