



# ASIAN PRISONER SUPPORT COMMITTEE YEAR-END REVIEW

2023



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# OUR STORY SO FAR

## ABOUT US

Asian Prisoner Support Committee is a grassroots organization that was founded in 2002 and based out of Oakland, California. Since its founding, APSC has led programs in prisons, organized anti-deportation campaigns, provided resources to “lifers,” and developed culturally relevant reentry programs. APSC grew out of the campaign to support the “San Quentin 3”—Eddy Zheng, Viet Mike Ngo, and Rico Riemedio. The San Quentin 3 advocated for Ethnic Studies at San Quentin and in retaliation by the prison administration—were sent to solitary confinement and transferred to different prisons. After spending months in solitary confinement (up to 11 months), Eddy, Mike, and Rico were released, and eventually, all received parole (Eddy 2005, Rico 2007, Mike 2011).

For over a decade, APSC operated as an all-volunteer organization. In 2017, APSC hired its first paid staff employees and opened an office space in Oakland Chinatown. Today, APSC facilitates Ethnic Studies programs in prisons, provides community-based reentry services, and organizes deportation defense campaigns.

## MISSION

The mission of the Asian Prisoner Support Committee (APSC) is to provide direct support to Asian and Pacific Islander (API) prisoners and to raise awareness about the growing number of APIs being imprisoned, detained, and deported.



## AREAS OF FOCUS



**IN-PRISON PROGRAMMING  
THROUGH ETHNIC STUDIES**



**COMMUNITY BASED  
REENTRY SERVICES**



**ANTI-DEPORTATION  
ADVOCACY AND STRATEGIES**

# REFLECTING ON 20 YEARS



In 2023, the Asian Prisoner Support Committee (APSC) joyously commemorated two decades of building community power and implementing targeted programs to confront the multifaceted challenges faced by Asian and Pacific Islander communities impacted by mass incarceration and immigration. From our inception, our mission and values have been dedicated to remaining attuned to the evolving leadership and needs of impacted Asian and Pacific Islander communities.



Nearly a decade after the safe release of the San Quentin 3 from incarceration, APSC achieved a groundbreaking milestone by establishing the inaugural Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies class within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), operating at both San Quentin State Prison and Solano State Prison in 2013.



Rooted in grassroots advocacy for the freedom of the San Quentin 3, APSC has evolved into a dynamic organization, now focusing on cultivating leadership, spearheading advocacy efforts, implementing comprehensive reentry programming, and amassing expertise in addressing the intricate interplay of incarceration and immigration. **Through the transformative campaign of the San Quentin 3, we blossomed into the development of 7 impactful programs, all of which are currently managed and operated by formerly incarcerated staff members.**

Reflecting our growth and impact, our dedicated staff has grown from 4 paid members in 2017 to a resilient team of 12, exemplifying our commitment to expanding our reach and impact.

# PROGRAM UPDATES



## ETHNIC STUDIES AND ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAMMING INSIDE PRISON

**Restoring Our Original True Selves (ROOTS)** proudly recommenced in April 2023, marking a resurgence after a hiatus of over two years. The program continues with an enriched curriculum rooted in Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies that is co-facilitated by inside participants and outside volunteers. **Noteworthy is the remarkable shift in program dynamics, with the majority of former participants having been successfully paroled and released from CDCR custody. At present, only two of the thirty ROOTS participants from the previous cohort continue.**

In a demonstration of solidarity and community engagement, ROOTS participants, in collaboration with members of the Native Hawaiian Religious group, spearheaded a self-organized fundraiser to aid the wildfire-stricken Lahaina, Maui. The collective efforts, including extensive outreach within correctional facilities, resulted in the collection of over \$2,400. Additionally, a hygiene drive yielded four large boxes filled with essential items such as protein bars, soap, shampoo, socks, flip-flops, and toothbrushes. All contributions were channeled to the Hawaii Community Foundation.

Looking ahead, the upcoming year holds a strategic focus for ROOTS—centered on robust leadership development, forging impactful partnerships, and unveiling innovative projects slated for 2024. The ROOTS program continues to thrive as a beacon of positive transformation and community impact.



**Literature (Lit) Club** concluded the year with a series of remarkable achievements. Conceived as a remote volunteer-based Ethnic Studies program, Lit Club fostered connections between inside participants and dedicated APSC volunteers. Notable highlights include:

- 🧩 Crafting a collective zine on healing and transformation
- 📖 Delving into 6 short readings and 1 book
- 💰 Distributing \$3,600 of care funds to all 12 inside participants
- ✈️ Organized a visit to the California Institute for Women (CIW), where we engaged with half of our Lit Club participants.

## MAIL AND CORRESPONDENCE

# CORRESPONDENCE BY THE NUMBERS

**1,117**

individuals on our mailing list across 8 states  
(California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida,  
Massachusetts, New York, Tennessee, and  
Washington)

**47**

support letters written for parole  
board, clemency applications, and  
resentencing petitions

**325**

letters received from  
2022- 2023

**1,200+**

annual newsletters sent  
out

## COMMUNITY MEMBER TESTIMONIALS

In her book, *The Wake Up*, Michelle MiJung Kim shares a powerful reminder that the work of social justice is ultimately about human lives. Mail is essential in how we connect with community members on the inside. We are highlighting letter excerpts from incarcerated community members to ground us in the necessity and impact of our work:

*"Thanks to you, the board panel found me suitable for parole. The top commissioner acknowledged your support letter for me and he loved it... You have given me and countless others a lot of hope. Thank you so much for the work that you do."*

*"One of my Asian brothers shared an article with me from your newsletter. It's a heartwarming privilege to be able to read our brothers and sisters' stories as it also gives me a sense of embracement and hope."*

*"Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your support letter... When I first read it, I was blown away... I made copies and sent it to various family – first, my mom."*

*"I am doing good and now even better with that postcard you guys sent. Thank you... it lifted my spirits so much. It might mean something small for you all but you all don't know how much it uplifted me."*

## COMMUNITY-BASED REENTRY AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

### ROOTS 2 REENTRY

In our commitment to reentry services, the R2R team employs a high-touch approach, ensuring every client is paired with a dedicated reentry navigator. Together, they craft a comprehensive case plan encompassing short and long-term goals, covering areas such as employment, education, and personal aspirations. Beyond being guides in goal achievement, our reentry navigators play a crucial role as emotional support and resource peers.

This year has marked significant strides for our reentry team. **We've successfully expanded our capacity, allowing us to serve more individuals effectively. Notably, we've extended our support to include court accompaniment, a vital service aimed at ensuring the protection and support of our clients, preventing further incarceration.** It's been a year of impactful growth, embodying our dedication to comprehensive reentry assistance.

### COMMUNITY AND REENTRY EMPOWERMENT (C.A.R.E)

The CARE program unfolds over a 6-month duration, uniting participants virtually through monthly Zoom meetings. **CARE was developed to specifically serve women, gender non-forming, and trans community members.** These sessions transcend geographical boundaries, featuring attendees from SoCal, NorCal, The Valley, Tonga, and the Philippines. Our dynamic CARE meetings showcase informative presentations, delving into diverse topics like Tech 101, mental health Support and career development.

In addition to our virtual gatherings, we believe in the power of in-person connections. Noteworthy events, such as the Food Justice collaboration with APSC's LIT Club and Self-Care Days for participants in SoCal, NorCal, and the Valley, have left a lasting impact. For those outside California, inclusivity is paramount – we keep them engaged by running Zoom during events and inviting their active participation, ensuring everyone, regardless of location, feels an integral part of our empowering community.

**Our second cohort will graduate 16 participants in the Fall of 2024.**

## REENTRY BY THE NUMBERS

49

successful client case plans completed

40

family sessions and workshops provided

\$113,416

in program incentive funds distributed

154

individual client sessions and workshops provided

17

family reunification program enrollment

12

successful court accompaniment outcomes

96%

of our reentry community members did not recidivate

## COMMUNITY IMPACT FELLOWSHIP

The Community Impact Fellowship fosters leadership and personal development for justice impacted community members. In the past year, we successfully completed a 16-week comprehensive fellowship program, selecting four reentry individuals who contributed significantly to various projects:

### Care Package Program:

- The fellow played a crucial role in outreach efforts, connecting with over 30 potential recipients.
- Managed the ordering of more than 300 items.
- Coordinated and shipped 15 packages to six different countries.

### Prison In-reach

- Corresponded with and provided resources to over 50 currently incarcerated individuals.
- Offered administrative support for mail processes.
- Conducted research to identify current resources for incarcerated individuals.

### Storytelling/Art Projects:

- Created an in-prison newsletter distributed to over 1000 incarcerated Asian and Pacific Islanders.
- Assisted with project coordination for creative initiatives and storytelling featured in the newsletter.

### Overseas Intern in Cambodia

- Managed event planning and coordination with over 50 deportees in Cambodia.

**In the fall of 2024, APSC is expanding our program from a 13-week fellowship to a 26-week program based on program evaluations. For the upcoming period, our fellows will be engaged in the following impactful projects:**

### Community Resource Guide:

- Develop a comprehensive resource guide for deportees, and reentry community members.
- Gather and categorize information on housing, jobs, healthcare, legal aid, and community support.

### Media and Communications Campaign:

- Develop storytelling and media strategies to compliment APSC research work.
- Create narrative shifting projects that center justice impacted individuals.
- Collaborate with ROOTS leadership in developing ROOTS newsletter.

### Policy Brief and Advocacy Campaign:

- Address challenges faced by Southeast Asian communities in the San Joaquin Valley.
- Conduct data analysis, investigate criminal justice disparities, collect personal stories, and develop policy briefs.



## CARE PACKAGES AND MUTUAL AID

Established in 2020, our Care Package Program stands as a direct lifeline, enabling our organization to maintain crucial contact and support for formerly incarcerated individuals who, unfortunately, have been deported. In the words of our co-director, Nate Tan **"The care package program is of immense importance. Deportations sever ties with families and homes. The care packages serve as a connection, bringing a piece of home to those deported, a constant reminder that people here in the States are thinking of them and continuously offering support."**

Beyond providing comfort through familiar U.S. foods, we recognized the need to enhance the quality of life for deportees. Thus, we initiated a Laptop Distribution Program. **This program is designed to empower deportees by giving them the tools to find employment, acquire technical skills, and facilitate easier communication with their families.** In regions such as Cambodia, Vietnam, and the Philippines, where many of our deportees reside and earn less than \$200 a month, obtaining a laptop is often financially challenging. This program addresses that barrier, striving to make a positive impact on the lives of those affected by deportation.



## CARE PACKAGE BREAKDOWN

29

total care packages delivered

9

Cambodia



5

Vietnam



5

Philippines



6

Samoa



2

Tonga



2

Lao



20

laptops distributed



## ADVOCACY AND POLICY PRIORITIES

### PRIDE IN NATALY CAMPAIGN

In another rare victory, Nataly Merino (he/him), a transgender immigrant from El Salvador, was reunited with his family and community after being found eligible for release from CDCR – and not turned over to Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) for deportation. Through impactful advocacy across the state, Nataly has safely reintegrated into their community.

**Highlighting the rarity of averting an ICE transfer, Nataly's story shouldn't be the exception – it should be the norm.**

The Asian Prisoner Support Committee is incredibly proud to have partnered with the [California Coalition for Women Prisoners \(CCWP\)](#) and [Survived and Punished California](#) to anchor this campaign. **Over the course of four months, we garnered the support of 105 organizations that submitted support letters, 1,500+ petition signatures, sent in 700+ postcards to the Governor's office, and made over 200+ calls and emails advocating for Nataly's freedom.**



### APSC 4 CAMPAIGN UPDATES

The fight to pardon the APSC 4 continues. Despite Governor Newsom's disappointing inaction and a notably low clemency rate this year, the unwavering community support for the APSC 4 remains evident. Key achievements from this year's advocacy endeavors include:

- Conducting 11 impactful political education workshops at universities and within the community, reaching an audience of over 400 people.
- Sending out over 1000 postcards to the Governor's Office, amplifying the voices advocating for the APSC 4.
- Collaborating with the Alameda Health & Human Resource Education Center podcast to create compelling content exploring the intersections of mass incarceration, immigration, and mental health.
- Securing a resolution from the Alameda County Democratic Party in support of the APSC 4's pardon, a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts.

### CDCR LIGATION

On April 26th, 2023, APSC joined [Root & Rebound](#), incarcerated, and formerly incarcerated Californians in a lawsuit – represented by [ACLU NorCal](#), [Asian Law Caucus](#), and the pro bono law firm of Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP – challenging their ICE hold policy against the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). CDCR, without legal obligation, implemented a xenophobic policy voluntarily reporting and imposing temporary immigration holds based on perceived foreign birth.

Profiling people's immigration status based on birthplace, race, ethnicity, and language skills is simply racist. This has resulted in challenges for incarcerated immigrants to receive fair treatment in accessing programs that would benefit them and creates a dual system of double punishment.

CDCR's policy has created the biggest source of deportations in California. CDCR's policy channels thousands into immigration detention, undermining the efforts of many APSC community members who, after years of working towards parole, find themselves handed over to ICE on their first day of freedom.

Currently, this lawsuit is still ongoing into the next year in 2024.

## HARMONIZING OUR MEASURE FOR EQUALITY (HOME ACT), AB 1306

The Harmonizing Our Measures for Equality (HOME) Act, AB 1306, authored by Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo and proudly co-sponsored by the Asian Prisoner Support Committee, represented a pivotal stride towards justice and compassion within California's criminal justice system. This legislation aimed to protect the rights and well-being of immigrant Californians, allowing them to reunite with their families and communities after serving their time in state prisons and earning release under existing criminal justice reforms, rather than facing the cruel threat of transfer to ICE custody.

Despite the HOME Act garnering overwhelming support from both houses of the legislature, enjoying widespread backing from families, communities, and organizations across California, and encountering no registered opposition, Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed the bill on September 9, 2023.

While the Governor may profess a belief in rehabilitation and second chances, his simultaneous endorsement of racist targeting leading to the detention and deportation of immigrant Californians contradicts these principles. The veto imposes a significant toll on immigrant Californians, their families, and communities eagerly awaiting reunification and the continuation of their healing journeys.

**The Asian Prisoner Support Committee maintains its steadfast commitment to advocating for policies prioritizing compassion, fairness, and the fundamental rights of all immigrant Californians.**

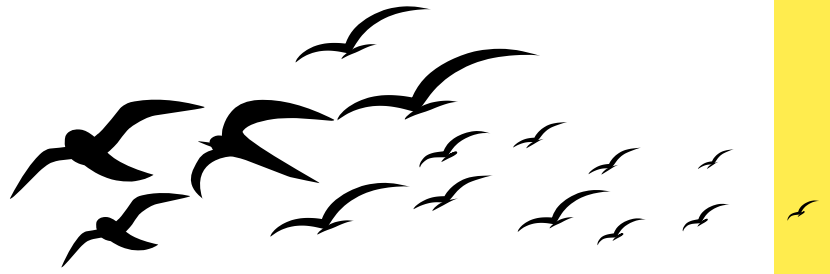
## BREAKING DOWN THE "OTHER" ACT, AB 943

**Breaking Down the "Other" Act authored by Assemblymember Ash Kalra was inspired by APSC's 2021 Survey Data Project. This bill passed with astonishing support through the legislature and signed by Governor Newsom.**

This bill directs the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to release disaggregated ethnic and race data for the state and communities to provide better language services and identify the gaps in programming within CDCR.



# LOOKING FORWARD



The upcoming year holds the potential for transformative initiatives that will undoubtedly shape our impact. Here's a glimpse into what's on our horizon:

**Powerbuilding and Leadership Development:** Through ongoing advocacy efforts and a series of dynamic APSC-related events, our focus will be on empowering our community, nurturing leadership, and carving pathways for transformative change. This entails strengthening our volunteer and membership base, with a dedicated emphasis on cultivating impactful leadership within our community through various programs.

**Survey Research Brief:** The culmination of our 2021 Survey Data Project will be unveiled through a research brief. Capturing the lived experiences of impacted Asian and Pacific Islander communities, this survey delves deep into the nuances that shape the lives of those affected by incarceration and deportation.

**ROOTS Symposium:** After nine years since our inaugural ROOTS Symposium in San Quentin State Prison, we are eager to revive this transformative event. In collaboration with community partners, the symposium will serve as a platform for incarcerated community members to engage with advocates, leaders, and community members. Discussions centered around healing and transformative justice will take center stage, creating a dialogue that will bridge the gaps understanding how to build a more just and safe society.

**Anthology:** The eagerly awaited release of our second anthology is on the horizon. We are thrilled to embark on a book tour series, bringing the stories to life and fostering connections that transcend the pages.

Together, we look forward to making strides, breaking barriers, and creating a legacy of positive impact. The journey ahead is illuminated with the collective strength of our community, and we march forward with purpose, passion, and the shared vision.

# FINANCIALS

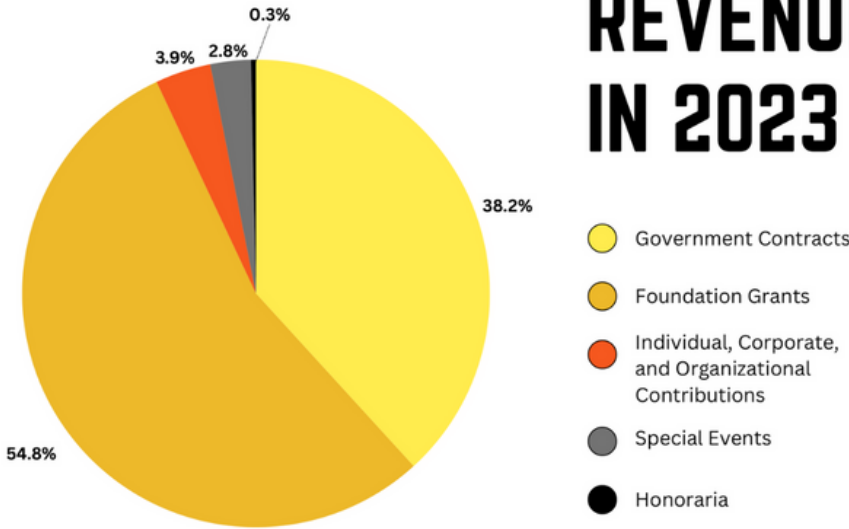
## 2023 ACTUALS

REVENUE	
Government Contracts	613,281
Alameda County AB 109 Family Reunification, California Department of Social Services, Elevate Youth California, Just Cities	
Foundation Grants	879,211
Individual Contributions	43,676
Corporate and Other Organizational Contributions	18,104
Special Events	44,868
Honoraria	5,475
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>1,604,615</b>
EXPENSES	
Salaries	803,042
Fringe Benefits	173,621
Personnel Subtotal	976,663
Consultants	102,157
Stipends	44,724
Office Expenses	12,818
Equipment Rental	2,604
Telecommunications	5,992
Postage and Delivery	5,788

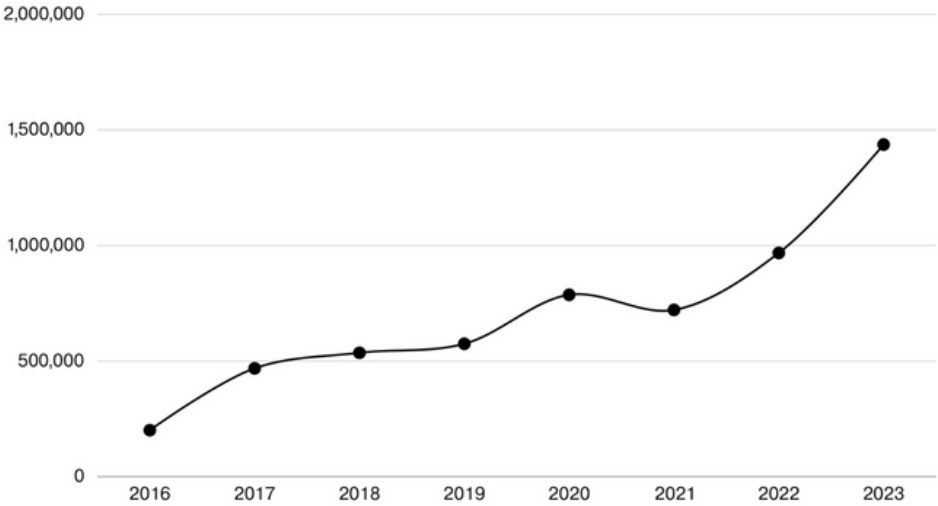
**2023 ACTUALS (CONTINUED)**

<b>EXPENSES (CONTINUED)</b>	
Copying and Printing	5,496
Utilities	4,195
Rental	12,163
Rental-Housing Stipends	92,800
Travel	12,696
Dues and Donations	6,152
Workshops and Events	3,297
Food and Catering	11,011
IT/Computer	4,575
Staff Development	3,500
Fees and Licenses	99
Donations Fees	1,659
Subtotal Nonpersonnel	331,726
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS</b>	<b>1,308,389</b>
Administrative (Fiscal Sponsorship Fee)	127,869
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,436,258</b>
<b>CHANGE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>	<b>168,357</b>
<b>UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>	<b>597,114</b>

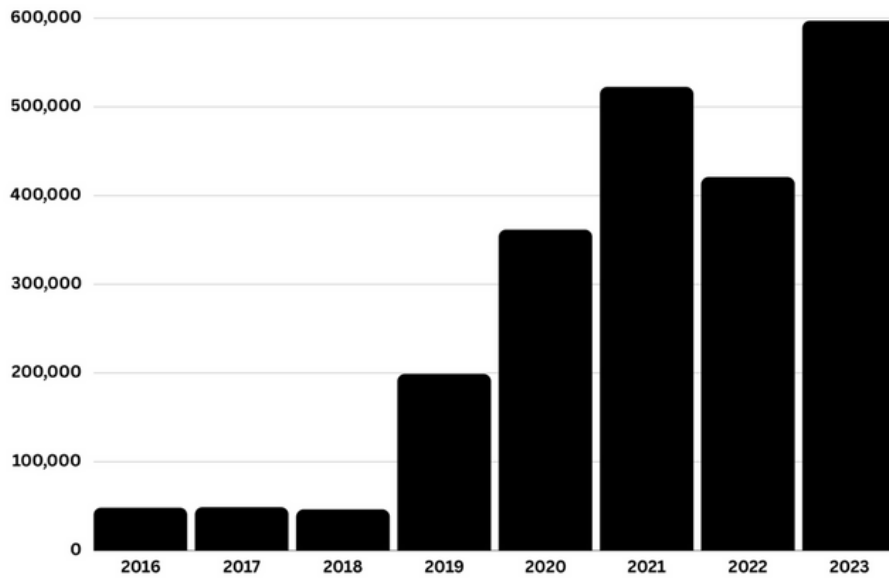
# REVENUE IN 2023



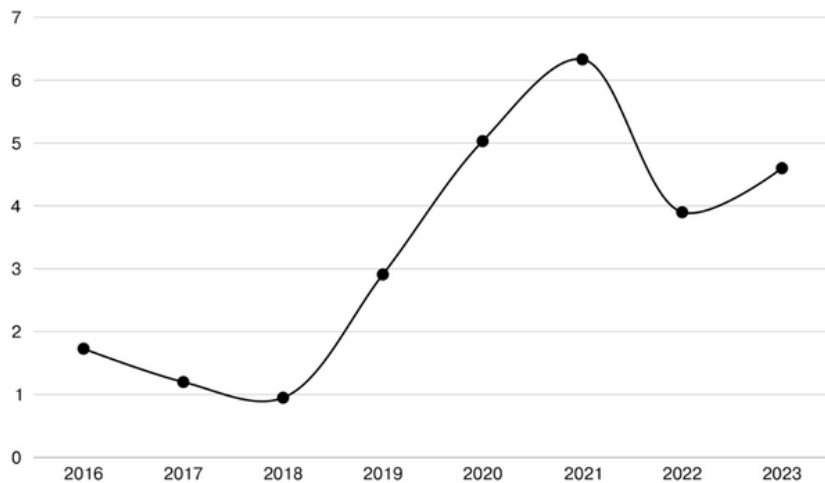
## ANNUAL EXPENSES 2016-2023



## UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS ON DEC. 31



## RATIO OF RESERVES TO AVERAGE MONTHLY EXPENSES





# WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN OUR PROGRAMS



## HOW TO SUPPORT

To make an online donation, visit [asianprisonersupport.org](http://asianprisonersupport.org)

To make a check donation:

- Make a check payable to Chinese for Affirmative Action with APSC in the memo line, and mail to 17 Walter U. Lum Place, San Francisco, CA 94108.
- If you have any questions, or for contributions of securities, matching gifts from employers, IRA contributions, or planned giving, contact us at 415-274-6750 or [donations@caasf.org](mailto:donations@caasf.org)



APSC is fiscally sponsored by Chinese for Affirmative Action, a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit civil rights organization. Contributions to APSC via CAA are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

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