



2023 Impact Report



CONNECTING LAWYERS WITH CAUSES

A MESSAGE FROM

Anna Chu

Executive Director of We The Action

As I reflect on the achievements of the past year, I am inspired by the We The Action community members I met during our inaugural Summit. The We The Action Summit was proof of our community's commitment to our mission to expand access to justice and deliver free legal services where they are critically needed. At the heart of We The Action lies a sentiment beautifully expressed by Melinda Lim, a DC-based lawyer and Summit attendee. She shared with us, "We The Action connects me not only to causes I care about and organizations whose missions I deeply believe in, it connects me to the reason I wanted to be a lawyer in the first place – advocating for those who need their voices heard."

Melinda's words capture the essence of our collective pursuit as lawyers to protect the most vulnerable, fight for justice, and defend our values. The demand for pro bono services has expanded, and in response, we've witnessed an unprecedented and inspiring response from lawyers to meet this need. Since our launch in 2017, We The Action has welcomed over 45,000 lawyers. They've generously contributed their specialized skills and expertise, supporting more than 570 nonprofit organizations tackling the nation's most pressing issues – ranging from ensuring fair elections to addressing immigration, racial justice, and gender equity. Our dedicated volunteers have provided over 285,000 hours of legal services, valued at more than \$122 million in billable hours, to empower high-impact organizations.

At the Summit, Attorney General Eric Holder reminded us that the moral arc of the universe does not bend on its own, but that lawyers have a continued, important role in bending it towards justice. With your ongoing support, I can confidently say that we are bending the moral arc of the universe towards justice for future generations to come. Whether you're a volunteer lawyer, a nonprofit working in your community, or a supporter of our work helping spread the word: Thank you. I am proud to share this report – a reflection of your efforts – with all of you. None of this would be possible without your support.

With gratitude,

Anna Chu
Executive Director, We The Action

Our community of
45,000
lawyers



has donated more than
285,000
hours



worth over
\$122M



to our more than
570
nonprofit partners

Inaugural We The Action Summit

In 2023, we hosted our inaugural We The Action Summit – a convening of volunteer lawyers, thought leaders, and nonprofit partners.

From panels on the most pressing issues facing the nation to an incredible fireside chat with 82nd Attorney General of the United States Eric Holder and 19th Associate Attorney General of the United States Vanita Gupta, the Summit was a celebration of the power of lawyers to bend the arc of history towards justice.

At the Summit, We The Action lawyers:

- Completed voter suppression research alongside the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights;
- Reviewed immigration case law with VECINA;
- Screened 184 individual cases with the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition to determine if a formerly incarcerated individual is eligible to have their voting rights restored.



“With the leadership of this great organization and involvement of people like you and others who you will bring along...we will be as successful as prior generations in saving, protecting, and enhancing our democracy.”

– ERIC HOLDER

82nd Attorney General of the United States



Honored our first Volunteer of the Year and Legal Partnership of the Year. Congratulations to Debbie Cooper and Spotify!

Our Award Winning Platform

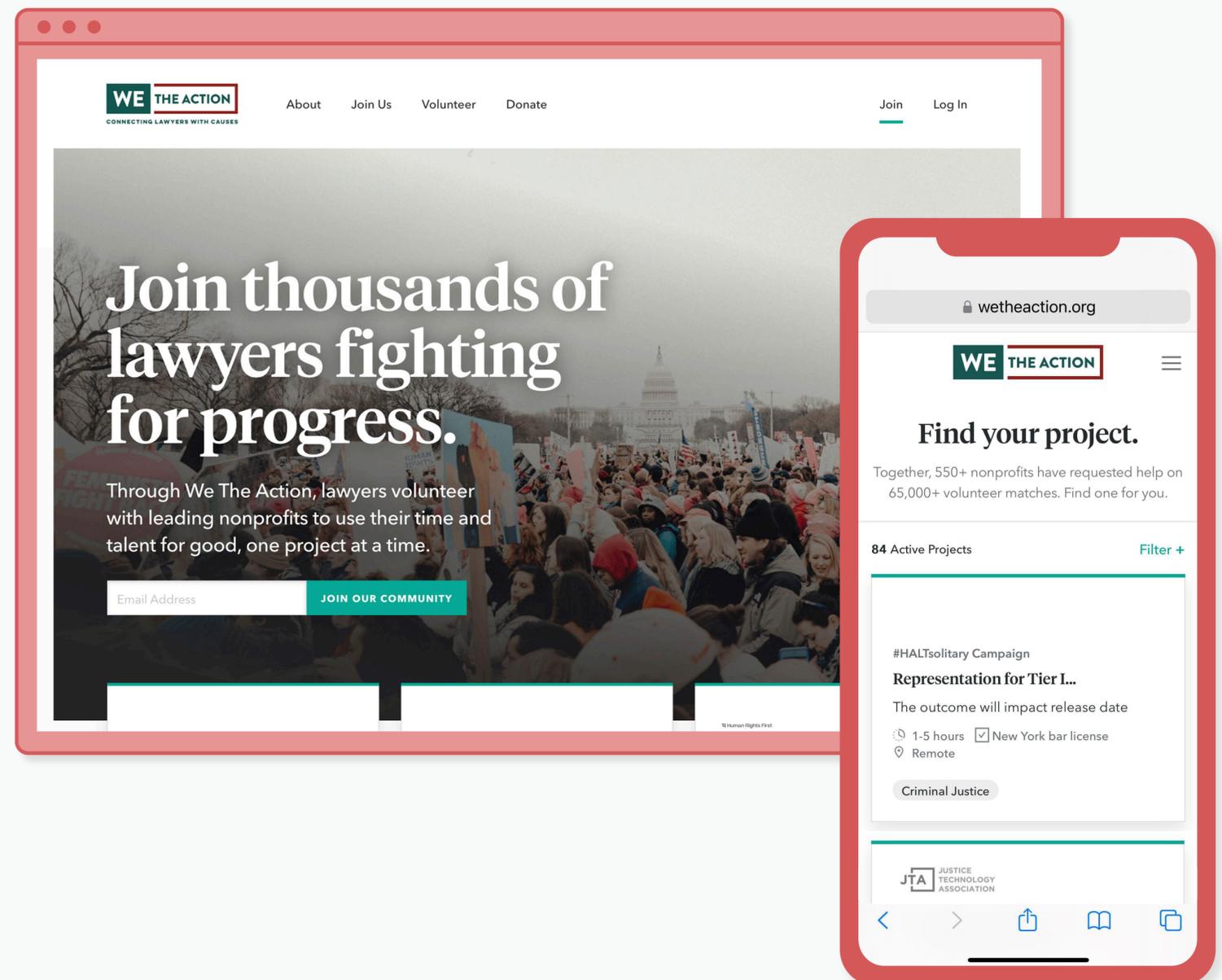
This year, leading technology and innovation publication *Fast Company* recognized We The Action as a “World Changing Idea.” We The Action is proud to have been distinguished as a finalist in the Software category and to have received an honorable mention in the Social Justice category as part of the prestigious award.

Since its inception, We The Action has partnered with Able, a product design studio dedicated to helping ambitious founders build technology. Through this collaboration, we’ve built an innovative platform that transforms unmet legal needs into actionable, high-impact projects for civic-minded lawyers. We’re always eager to showcase the platform – contact us to schedule a demonstration.

FAST COMPANY

“This platform is remarkable.”

– PILR TRAINING
Nonprofit partner since June 2023



Meet the We The Action Lawyers



45,000+

volunteer lawyers



from all

50 states



with an average of

13 years

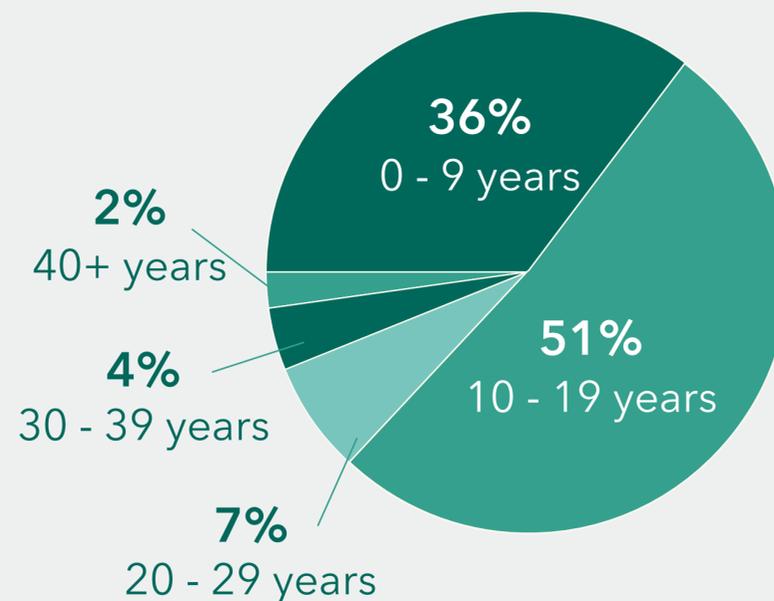
legal experience

“We The Action has literally changed my life for the better.”

— JOANNE KLABIN

We The Action Volunteer since 2020

Years of Experience of a We The Action Lawyer



We The Action Lawyers Bring a Wealth of Expertise

TOP AREAS OF EXPERTISE AMONG WE THE ACTION LAWYERS



LITIGATION



BUSINESS LAW



LABOR & EMPLOYMENT LAW



CORPORATE & TRANSACTIONAL LAW



INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW

Meet Our Nonprofit Partners


570+
nonprofit partners


30
new partners joined in 2023


168
projects posted to
WeTheAction.org in 2023

We The Action's partners worked on the nation's most urgent problems. 50% of projects are connected to a volunteer in less than a week, and 20% are connected in less than one day.

Most common issue areas for projects in 2023:


IMMIGRATION
47
projects


DEMOCRACY
& ELECTIONS
41
projects


GENDER EQUITY
17
projects


RACIAL JUSTICE
13
projects

“Working with We The Action has increased our capacity and ability to initiate legal actions to combat police misconduct and abuse in Mississippi.”

— ACLU OF MISSISSIPPI
Nonprofit partner since 2017

From nationally recognized organizations to volunteer-driven local nonprofits, we're proud to provide free legal support to more than 570 partners. This year we welcomed 30 new nonprofits, including the logos in color below.



Meet Our Advisory Council

In 2023, we established our first Advisory Council with ten prominent lawyers from across the nonprofit, academic, and private sectors. This new Advisory Council will help We The Action continue to expand our impact, grow our community of volunteer lawyers, and build new partnerships nationwide.

“Addressing the access to justice gap is one of the most important tasks we face to ensure our democracy delivers for all. That’s why I’m excited to be leading We The Action’s Advisory Council. We The Action has already effectively mobilized tens of thousands of lawyers from across the country, proving that when a community of lawyers works together, they can build a more just and equitable nation.”

– DANA REMUS

Advisory Council Chair and Partner, Covington & Burling LLP



**Advisory Council Chair
Dana Remus**

Partner, Covington
& Burling LLP



Nishka Chandrasoma

Vice President, Chief
Legal Officer and
Secretary, Ford Foundation



Ilona Cohen

Chief Legal & Policy Officer,
HackerOne



Julie B. Ehrlich

Program Director, Presidential
Initiatives and Chief of Staff,
Mellon Foundation



Josh Hsu

Partner,
Jenner & Block LLP



**Astri Kimball
Van Dyke**

Director, Google



Jonathan Kravis

Partner, Munger, Tolles
& Olson LLP



**Professor Spencer
Overton**

Patricia Roberts Harris Research
Professor, George Washington
University Law School



Robert Rivkin

Senior Vice President
and Chief Legal Officer,
United Airlines

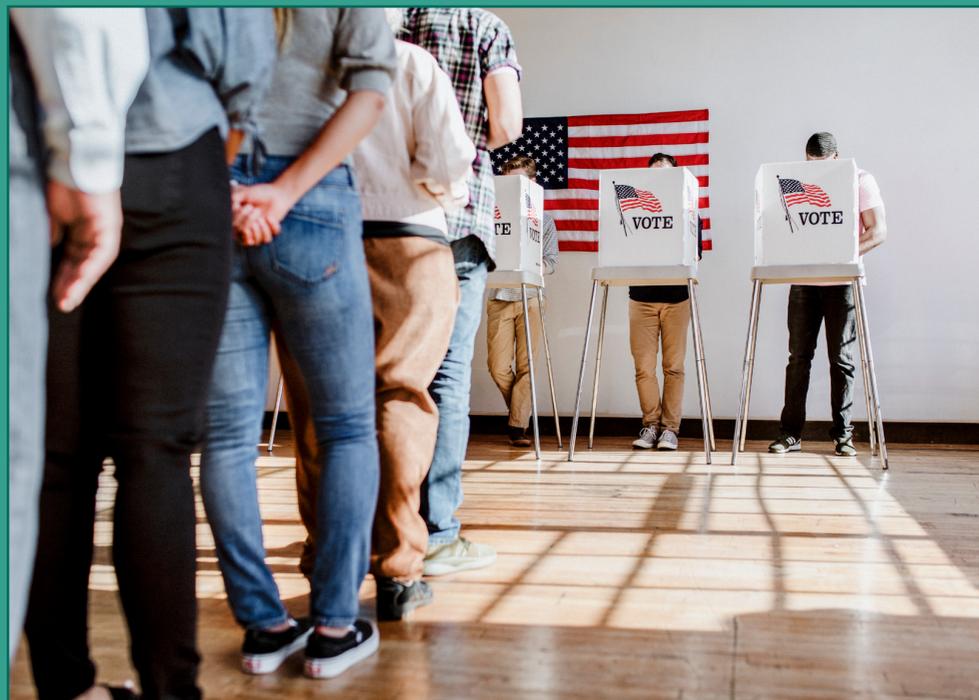


**Professor Cristina
Rodriguez**

Leighton Homer
Surbeck Professor of Law,
Yale Law School

Protecting Democracy

The fight for fair elections and the right to vote is more urgent than ever. Our democracy remains under assault from the Big Lie, harassment of election officials, systematic disenfranchisement of communities of color, and other threats. At We The Action, protecting voting rights and democratic institutions is and always has been the cornerstone of our work since our inception in 2017.



“We The Action has been a reliable and integral resource for the past two years. When attorneys can easily connect with opportunities to do good, organizations working to protect democracy benefit.”

– ELECTION OFFICIAL LEGAL DEFENSE NETWORK
Nonprofit partner since 2021



“Voting and the right to vote are so foundational, and are constantly under attack these days. Anything to make the effort to protect voting rights easier for people on the ground fighting is so important.”

– MISASHA SUZUKI GRAHAM
June 2023 Amicus Mundi Award Recipient

Examples of We The Action's 2023 Democracy Work



Supporting the Largest Nonpartisan Voter Protection Campaign in the Country

In 2018, We The Action partnered with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in building a bespoke platform to support thousands of lawyers who volunteer to protect the vote on and leading up to Election Day. In 2023 alone, lawyers staffed 1,200 shifts on the 866-OUR-VOTE hotline to support local elections by answering calls from voters.



Strengthening Grassroots Democracy Initiatives

Elections are highly local, with most important decisions affecting voting access made by state or local governments. We The Action partnered with several organizations, including All Voting is Local, to broaden our local democracy efforts across 24 states (AZ, CA, CO, DC, FL, GA, IL, IN, MA, MD, MI, MN, MO, NC, NH, NJ, NV, NY, OH, OR, PA, TX, VA, and WI). Volunteers researched state laws, confirmed polling locations and election-related dates, and served as poll workers.



Monitoring Legislative Sessions to Stop Anti-Voting Bills

State legislatures have passed a near-record number of new restrictive voting laws this year. Volunteers worked with The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights to identify, monitor, and combat discriminatory voting laws in eleven states. Their efforts involved tracking new legislation in an attempt to prevent restrictive voting laws from passing.



Helping Formerly Convicted People Restore their Rights to Vote

Since 2020, We The Action has partnered with Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, a 2023 Nobel Peace Prize nominee, to research individual cases to determine if a formerly incarcerated individual is eligible to have their voting rights restored. 500 volunteers from 26 states have researched close to 45,000 cases, including 184 cases during our October Summit.



Protecting Election Officials

In response to increasing threats and harassment against election officials nationwide, We The Action partnered with the Election Official Legal Defense Network. Since 2021, We The Action has recruited over 100 volunteers to support election officials across the country as they face ongoing threats, intimidation, and a deluge of misinformation.



Developing Resources for 2024

State laws that apply to nonprofit advocacy and democracy work are confusing and complex. Since 2022, more than 400 lawyers have donated 1,750 hours to The Democracy Capacity Project to create over 150 different capacity building resources, empowering nonprofits to navigate and conduct advocacy, civic engagement, and Get Out the Vote programs.

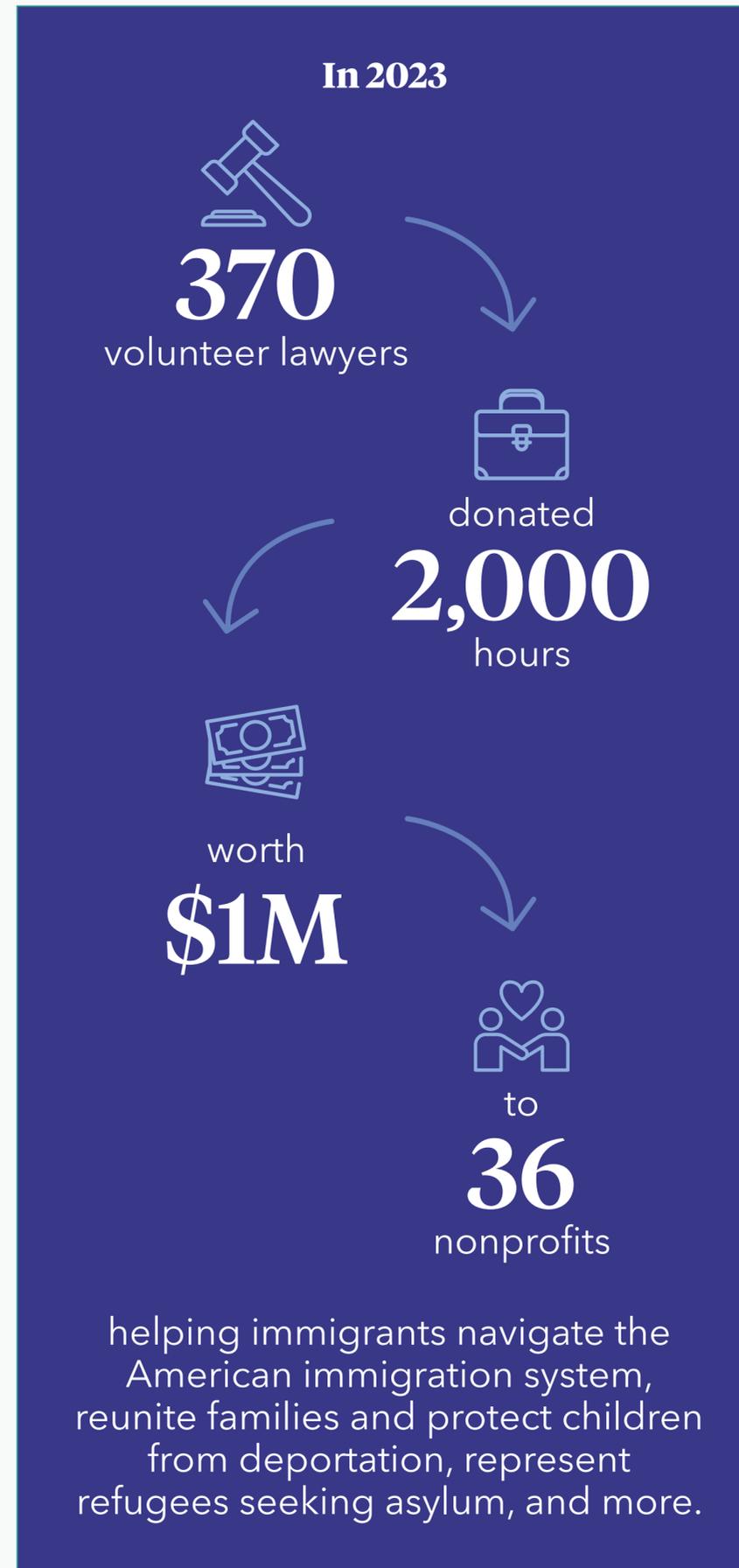
Supporting Immigrant Communities

Legal services often make the difference between whether someone is allowed to remain safely in the United States or is deported. One study revealed that immigrants in detention are 10.5x more likely to be allowed to remain in the United States if they are represented by a lawyer.¹ But only 44% of the 5.6 million individuals who appeared in immigration court between 2002 and 2022 had legal representation.² We The Action volunteers are increasing access to legal representation for immigrants.



1. Vera: [New York Could Become the First State to Provide the Right to Legal Representation in Immigration Court](#)

2. [American Immigration Council and American Immigration Lawyers Association: What Does Legal Representation Look Like in Immigration Courts Across the Country?](#)



“After the fall of Kabul to the Taliban, we needed volunteer attorneys to assist us in helping Afghan refugees with their various immigration legal needs. Connecting with attorneys around the US who were willing to help has been a very important part of the work we do at Human Rights First. We The Action became an integral part of connecting with volunteers by helping us create a simple to use space to highlight and share our work.”

– HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST
Nonprofit partner since 2022



“On a personal level, there’s something about when one of my immigration clients gets released from detention. It’s completely amazing, because they’re not convicted of a crime, they just came here seeking asylum, and they’re put in detention. So when someone gets released, it’s incredible. We The Action just makes it so easy to be helpful.”

– DEBBIE COOPER
We The Action 2023 Volunteer of the Year

Examples of We The Action's 2023 Immigration Work



Reuniting Families & Protecting Children from Deportation

In 2022, a record 152,000 immigrant children were taken into U.S. custody without their parents. The process for reuniting immigrant children with families or sponsors can be heart-breakingly slow. But we know that immigration judges are 100 times more likely to grant relief to unaccompanied children with legal representation than to those without it. In the face of this challenge, We The Action mobilized volunteer lawyers to work with organizations such as Kids in Need of Defense, Safe Passage Project, and VECINA to help children facing deportation reconnect with loved ones in the United States and avoid returning to unsafe living conditions in their home countries. With an army of lawyers, we can ensure that no child appears in immigration court without high quality legal representation.

Human Rights First



Welcoming Afghan Allies by Offering Essential Legal Support

After the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, thousands found themselves displaced, terrified, and fleeing for safety. Faced with the looming threat in their homeland, many embarked on a perilous journey to the United States. Over the past two years, 18 We The Action partners, including Human Rights First, Doctors Without Borders USA, and the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, have aided our Afghan allies in accessing crucial legal support. This year, we enlisted 85 lawyers to bolster their efforts. For Afghans currently within their initial two-year humanitarian parole, urgent re-parole applications are essential before their temporary status expires. As these and other intricate deadlines approach, the continued support of volunteers remains imperative.



Helping Immigrants Seeking Safety in the United States

With a backlog of nearly two million asylum seekers waiting for their case to be heard, it can be all but impossible for newly-arrived immigrants to navigate our complicated immigration legal system without the support of a lawyer. Organizations such as Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network, NALEO Educational Fund, and Pathways to Citizenship are the first line of defense for these asylum seekers from Haiti, Cuba, El Salvador, Cameroon, and other eligible countries. We The Action volunteer lawyers are preparing asylum seekers for hearings, helping file applications for temporary protected status, and representing them in court proceedings. As one nonprofit shared, these are life and death decisions, and the impact of these volunteers is immeasurable.

Fighting for Reproductive Freedom and Gender Equity

Lawyers play a central role in protecting reproductive freedom and advancing gender equity. They advise abortion providers, analyze current and proposed legislation, and increase capacity for domestic violence hotlines and pro bono networks that provide legal information and resources. Through legal expertise and advocacy, We The Action lawyers have been instrumental in dismantling barriers, safeguarding reproductive rights, and championing gender equity for all individuals.



working to fight for reproductive freedoms, empower trans and gender nonconforming people, and reduce gender-based and sexual violence.

“Our organization could not do its essential work without the support of partners like We The Action.”

– TRANSGENDER LAW CENTER
Nonprofit partner since 2018



“My most memorable experience with We The Action was helping set up TransLash Media as a 501(c)(3). Their belief is that if people get to know members of the trans community, there will be a lot less hatred. To see Imara Jones, TransLash’s founder, on MSNBC, to hear her voice, it was very rewarding.”

– NANCY KUHN
We The Action Volunteer since 2018

Examples of We The Action's 2023 Reproductive Freedom and Gender Equity Work



Empowering Trans and Gender Nonconforming People to Assert Their Rights

From facing employment and housing discrimination to dealing with criminalization and violence, transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) people often find themselves navigating a legal system not designed with their needs in mind. Since our partnership began in 2017, we have connected 217 volunteers, including pro bono coordinators at law firms and corporate legal departments, to the Transgender Law Center's Attorney Solidarity Network. We The Action volunteers assist in responding to over 1,000 inquiries each year from TGNC individuals across the country, including incarcerated community members, who are seeking legal guidance and assistance in order to assert their rights.



Defending Reproductive Rights and Access to Abortion Care

Since the Supreme Court's *Dobbs* ruling in 2022, the impact of abortion restrictions and bans has affected people across race, class, and gender identities. In particular, people of color continue to bear the brunt of the harm caused by the lack of protection of sexual and reproductive health rights. In Virginia, volunteers worked with Choice Tracker to draft clear explanations of abortion-related bills to educate Virginians about the state legislature's actions on abortion rights. And, if needed, a task force of volunteers are prepared to work with Regulatory Assistance for Abortion Providers to support abortion providers by acting as local counsel in their state.



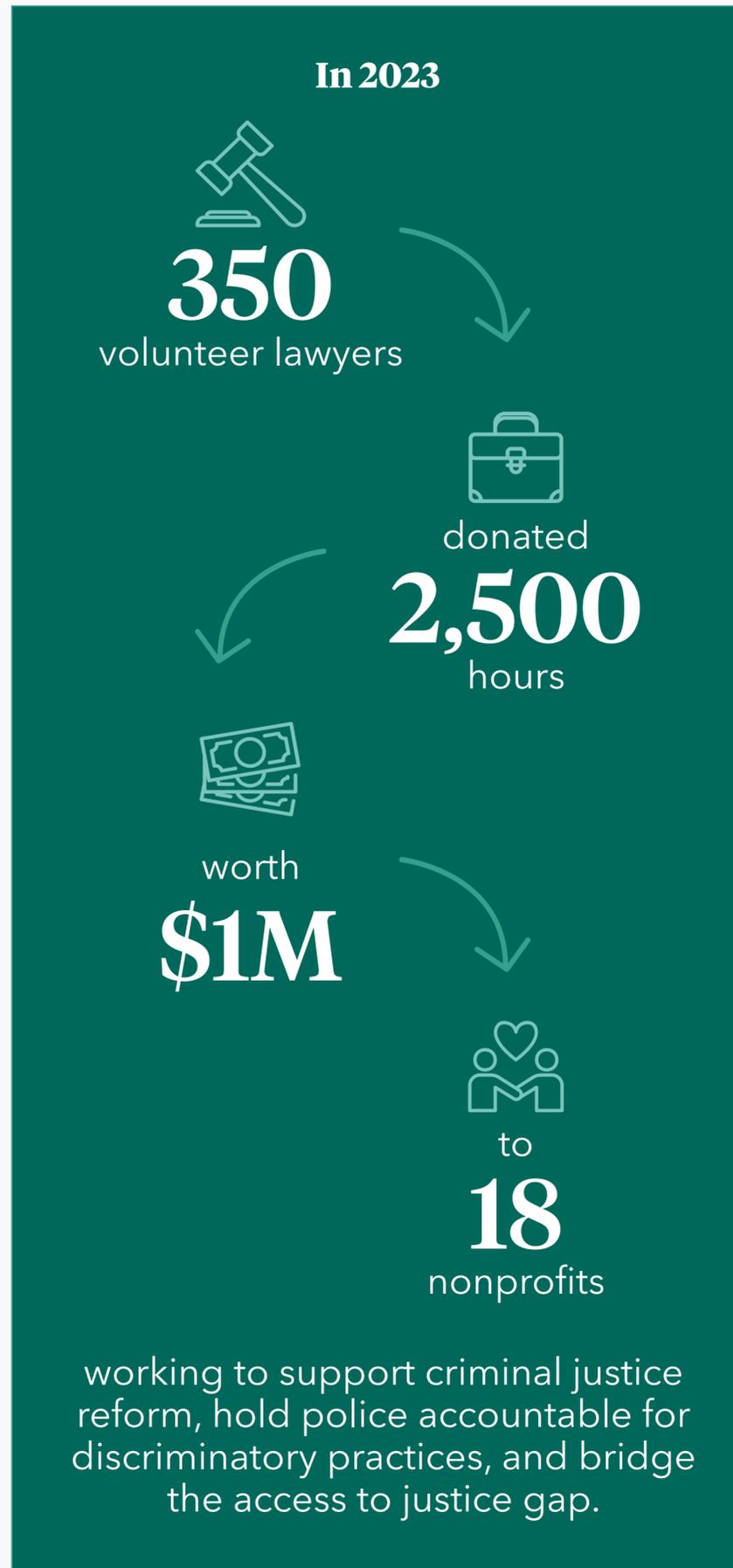
Supporting Survivors of Gender-based Harassment, Sexual Assault, and Domestic Violence

The tragic impact of gender-based violence is inarguable, and 1 in 5 female victims require legal services.³ Working with leading nonprofits in the movement, including TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund and WomensLaw, We The Action volunteers are increasing capacity at domestic violence hotlines and pro bono networks that provide legal information and resources to survivors. Volunteers are also helping to strengthen survivors' rights by working with Rise to complete a legislative landscape analysis of sexual assault survivors' rights in several states.

3. [The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey \(NISVS\): 2010-2012 State Report](#)

Advocating for Racial Justice

Systemic racism permeates every level of the American legal system, and lawyers have a crucial role to play to address these disparities. We The Action's lawyers work every day to bridge the access to justice gap through legal representation, policy advocacy, discrimination case litigation, and supporting community initiatives. By leveraging their legal expertise, lawyers play an essential role in the ongoing fight for racial justice, striving to create a more equitable society for all.



“We The Action made it possible to connect survivors of police abuse with talented, tenacious attorneys willing to represent them when nobody else would.”

– CIVIL RIGHTS CORPS
Nonprofit partner since 2020



“People who have a career in the federal government always talk about what they’re going to do when they retire. I always said I would go back to doing public interest work. There are too many inequities in our society for me to not utilize my skills to try and fix some of them.”

– JEFF NESVET
January 2023 Amicus Mundi Award Recipient

Examples of We The Action's 2023 Racial Justice Work



Holding Police Accountable for Discriminatory Policing Practices

The murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd in 2020 served as yet another wake-up call for many Americans regarding racism in policing. They also emphasized the fact that previous efforts to address discriminatory policing practices have consistently proven inadequate. We The Action lawyers work with the ACLU of Mississippi to combat police misconduct and abuse in one of the poorest areas of the country. With assistance from We The Action's partnership with the law firm O'Melveny & Myers LLP, which has generously contributed over 800 hours to this project, the ACLU of Mississippi filed two separate lawsuits in federal court on behalf of people who had their rights violated by the Lexington Police Department.



Supporting Criminal Justice Reform

Severe disparities in the treatment of prisoners are ingrained within criminal justice systems, with disproportionately adverse impacts on Black men. The National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers Return to Freedom Project trains We The Action volunteers to help those serving overly harsh sentences secure clemency, compassionate release, or expungement. We The Action volunteers also work with the #HALTsolitary Campaign to provide representation for people in NY prisons challenging their placement in solitary confinement. This year, such representation supported individuals as they challenged abusive treatment and supported the overall efforts to push for proper implementation of the HALT Solitary Confinement Law.



Fighting for Representation in Government

Friends for more than 20 years, We The Action volunteers Susan Hill and Stephanie Khandeshi helped engage lawmakers and policy experts to pass a federal law expanding the availability of the Plum Book, a key document for ensuring inclusive hiring practices across high-level positions in the federal government. Since 2021, Susan and Stephanie have donated more than 100 hours to Inclusive America, culminating in President Biden signing the PLUM Act into law in 2023. Reforming the Plum Book, which lists more than 9,000 appointed leadership positions in the federal government, could be key to expanding diversity, equity, and inclusion in the federal government.

From all of us at We The Action: Thank you.

To stay informed on the latest from
We The Action, join us at [WeTheAction.org](https://www.wetheaction.org)
and follow us on social media.



And you can help us continue the fight for a
more just and equitable nation. Please consider
making a donation to We The Action.

[DONATE](#)

In reflecting on our accomplishments, we are immensely grateful for the unwavering support of our community. From protecting our democracy, to supporting immigrant communities, to fighting for reproductive freedom and gender equity, to advocating for racial justice, We The Action's dedicated team has remained steadfast in our mission. By transforming unmet legal needs into actionable, high-impact projects for civic-minded lawyers, We The Action amplifies the impact of nonprofit leaders, accelerates progress, and infuses millions of dollars of free legal support into the movement for a more democratic and equitable world.

We will build on our work over the next year. We The Action volunteers will:

- Donate 150,000 hours to ensure the 2024 elections are safe, secure, and accessible for every voter by deepening our work in key states;
- Help thousands of returning citizens recover and secure their voting rights;
- Combat disinformation, interference, and sabotage efforts as the 2024 election results are tallied and certified;
- Advocate for the rights of trans people and provide direct legal support in places where those rights are most under attack;
- Provide legal support for patient-led organizations in the Rare As One Network working to improve the lives of people affected by rare disease;
- Represent asylum seekers and unaccompanied children as they seek legal status and protection.

The We The Action community is ready to rise to the occasion. We look forward to continuing our work together in 2024.

Sincerely,

Anna, Beth, Drew, Katie, Oakey, Victoria, and Wilson