

2025

# CFR ANNUAL REPORT



## We are here to serve low-income families.

As a public defender, we provide our clients with free legal representation and social work services built on more than two decades of experience fighting the “child welfare” system, or what we call the family policing system. We work with primarily low-income Black and Brown parents facing an ACS investigation or prosecution and minors who have been arrested.

At CFR, we work in coalition with peers and parent advocates to arrive at community-based solutions and educate the public on the harm the family policing system inflicts. In addition to family defense, CFR offers youth defense, assistance with housing and public benefits, immigration defense, criminal defense, appeals, and assistance with SCR records.

We also advocate for policy changes that benefit families while continuing to fiercely defend our clients. Our team of attorneys, social workers, and parent advocates—who have direct experience being investigated by ACS—work in partnership with our clients to listen to their needs and ensure they are addressed.

### OUR IMPACT

**3,100+**

Families served annually

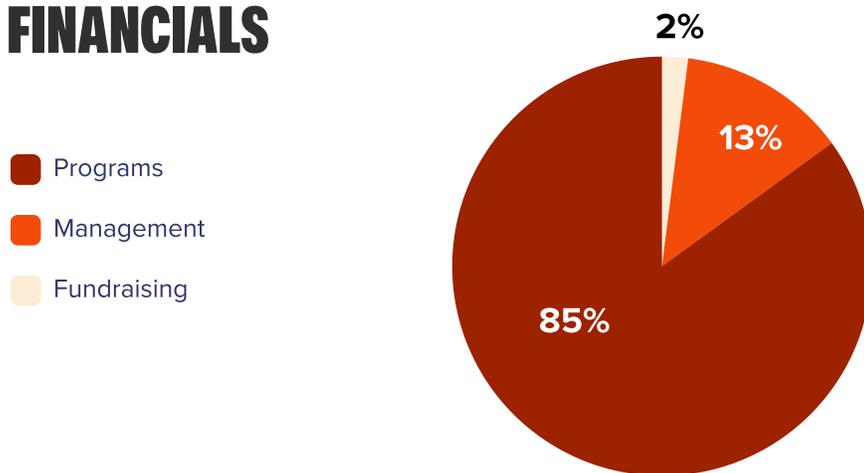
**5,474**

Legal matters handled across all practice areas

**208**

Staff members contributing to CFR’s interdisciplinary representation model

## FINANCIALS



**TOTAL REVENUE: \$31,723,737**

Government **\$30,483,569**

Contributions **\$133,660**

Special Events **\$396,900**

Foundations **\$694,609**

# FEATURED CFR CLIENT STORY: JASMINE



Jasmine is the mother of five children who worked for years to overcome a substance use disorder and reunify her family. Jasmine struggled to complete inpatient programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, when social distancing protocols severely restricted rehabilitative treatments and interactions with her children. **During this time, the Center for Family Representation (CFR) connected Jasmine to virtual therapy and parenting skills programs so she could continue her treatment.** Despite facing many challenges, Jasmine never gave up. She was able to complete her services and get clean – all with the ultimate goal of reunifying her family.

Recently, **all five children were returned into Jasmine's care** after being separated from their mother for years. Although they all continue to process the trauma of family separation, the children are thrilled to be back at home with their mother and each other.

## 2025 FAMILY FUN DAY



CFR hosted our second annual **Family Fun Day** at Rufus King Park in **Queens**. We had a wonderful turnout of over **250 community members** who enjoyed lunch, ice cream, face painting, games, and music. CFR staff was able to build connections with families and share resources about their rights with ACS and the work we do here at CFR.

## WHO WE SERVE

**100% of CFR's clients live in poverty.** Additionally:

- **94%** are people of color
- **67%** are women
- **31%** are unhoused
- **27%** are immigrants
- **26%** are survivors of intimate partner violence
- **37%** are single parents
- **22%** have a mental health diagnosis
- **31%** have a concurrent criminal case
- **15%** were in the foster system themselves

## OUR IMPACT

# 420

Parents assisted in either avoiding eviction or otherwise maintaining safe housing

# 146

CFR clients accessed basic necessities through our Client Emergency Fund

# 2025 APPEALS CASE HIGHLIGHT



In 2025, our appeals team represented Mr. Z, an immigrant father who lost his parental rights after his infant son was removed from his care due to his wife’s disability. His son was placed in foster homes that did not share the family’s language or culture.

**The New York State Court of Appeals reversed the termination of Mr. Z’s parental rights** because the foster agency failed to demonstrate that it had made diligent efforts to reunify Mr. Z and his son before seeking to terminate their relationship.

“This is an amazing victory—both for Mr. Z, who will now have an opportunity to work towards reunification with his son, and for all the families with children in the foster system whose efforts to reunify have been hampered by foster agencies’ lackluster efforts to assist them,” said **Emily Wall, CFR’s Attorney in Charge of Appeals**. “This decision reinforces that foster agencies must make more than minimal efforts to help families reunite. They must communicate clearly with parents, offer linguistically and culturally appropriate services, and assist parents with overcoming the underlying obstacles to reunification, even when those barriers are economic.”



## OUR IMPACT

**629**

CFR clients served by our SCR appeals team

**273**

CFR clients supported in immigration matters

**293**

CFR clients represented in criminal court proceedings

**94%**

of CFR clients represented in criminal court avoided presentencing incarceration.

**283**

Young people received free, holistic legal representation

**1,123**

Instances where CFR’s Youth Defense social work staff provided family support

## CFR CLIENT VOICES

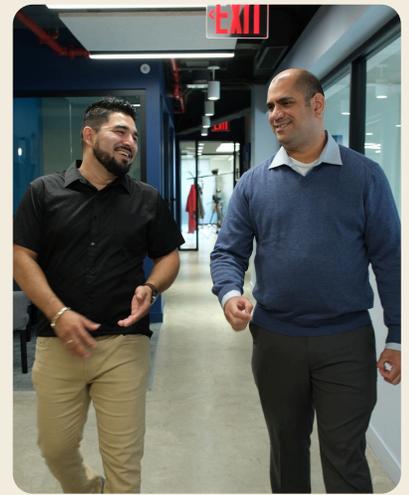


“The entire CFR staff treated me like family and did so much for me. **With CFR’s help, I got back on my feet and regained my hope...** Thank you CFR for your assistance!” -*Aminullah Hussain*

“I want to express my gratitude to CFR **for believing in me, for their effort, for their support, for fighting for my rights,** and for allowing me to be with my family, united and well.” -*Genesis Munoz*



# FEATURED CFR CLIENT STORY: JUAN



Juan is an asylum-seeker from Colombia who fled to the United States with his wife and three young boys. He was arrested, removed from his home, and a neglect petition was filed against him by ACS due to corporal punishment allegations. In Juan’s community in Colombia, corporal punishment is the norm; Juan did not understand that this isn’t the case in the United States.

**CFR’s family defense, criminal, and immigration teams sprang into action, working together to connect Juan with appropriate services to ensure that he would have no criminal record and period of incarceration.** CFR also utilized our **Client Emergency Fund** to provide Juan’s family with fresh food when he had to spend extra money on a separate living space for himself. Recently, **Juan was reunited with his wife and three sons.** He hopes to receive asylum in the United States, so he can continue to support his children and provide them with the opportunities that he was never afforded.



## NEW CFR OFFICE: THE BRONX



CFR has been practicing in the Bronx since 2022, and this recent move to a new office location not only better accommodates the organization’s growing staff, but also allows it to house and distribute important resources clients need and provides additional privacy for client meetings.

“During a time when the federal government is increasingly willing to use family separation to target vulnerable communities that are already being impacted by the family policing system, youth legal system, housing crisis, and soaring costs for basic necessities, we know the fight to ensure every family has a meaningful opportunity to stay together is one we must be laser focused on,” **Tehra Coles, CFR’s Executive Director**, said.

“Our new location will allow us to even better serve and partner with these communities, advocates, and the many other organizations that are equally committed to this fight.”



# LEGISLATIVE VICTORY: ANTI-HARASSMENT IN REPORTING

CFR is proud of our role in supporting the passage of the Anti-Harassment in Reporting Act. For far too long, families have been subject to harassment due to baseless allegations and invasive, traumatic investigations. Instead of people being able to report anonymously, the new law requires those making neglect or abuse allegations to leave their name and contact information, and prohibits the office of children and family services from releasing information identifying the person making the report.

This legislation was designed and led by directly-impacted people who shared their experiences of being harassed through CPS investigations. They rallied advocates across the state, including **CFR's policy team**, who **contributed to memos in support, helped plan lobby days, met with the governor's office, and strategized with other family defenders and advocates to get this legislation passed**. This legislation is a powerful acknowledgement that we must continue to take steps toward shrinking the number of families who experience harmful CPS investigations.



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## NEW CFR OFFICE: STATEN ISLAND



Staten Island is a historically underserved borough, particularly for low-income families targeted by systems of family policing. CFR has been practicing in Staten Island for over a year, and this recent move to a permanent ground-floor space on Bay Street makes us more accessible to our clients and the community.

“Staten Island families, specifically ones from underserved communities on the island’s north shore, have been subject to surveillance, degradation and cruel separation with little support or recourse for far too long,” **Kelsey Boston, Social Work Director of CFR’s Staten Island Practice**, said. “CFR hopes to change this reality by providing zealous advocacy to parents in and out of the courtroom.”

