



DETENTION
WATCH NETWORK

2024 Annual Report

Detention Watch Network is at the forefront of the movement to end immigration detention, employing a comprehensive approach blending strategic communications, collective advocacy, and grassroots organizing.

Overview

Immigration detention is the unjust and inhumane practice of jailing immigrants while they await a determination of their immigration status or potential deportation. The U.S. locks up people seeking asylum, visa holders, people who have been granted the permanent right to live in the U.S., people who have lived here for years and may have U.S. citizen spouses and children, and vulnerable groups, including pregnant women and families with children.

We believe everyone should be free to move and live with dignity in community.

As a membership-based organization, Detention Watch Network (DWN) bridges the gap between local and national strategies to ensure we are working towards the same vision. We bring people together from across the country to build relationships, strategize, and share expertise on shifting policies and the immigration detention landscape.

At a glance



Capacity building for grassroots organizing



Local, state, and federal advocacy



Sharp media and digital strategy

By the numbers

2,000+

people registered
for trainings

109 organizational members

in 27 states, including 10 new members

11 formerly detained leaders

participated in the Freedom Fighters cohort for leadership development

1.4 million

people reached on
social media



82.3K

engagements

12%

following
growth overall

\$150,000

provided to 10 grassroots grantees

382

press hits

Our collective impact

Reducing Detention Capacity and Preventing Expansion

- DWN convened various coalitions and working groups, including holding strategy sessions with New Mexico members in July, Colorado members in August, and New York members in October 2024. In addition to our long-standing proactive State Legislation Working Group, DWN and Immigrant Legal Resource Center launched a Multi-State Anti-Immigrant Legislative Working Group in late 2024. The group convenes organizations and individuals resisting anti-immigrant policies at the state level to coordinate efforts and share best practices for advocacy, messaging, and litigation strategies.
- In May 2024, DWN worked with Senator Elizabeth Warren to develop a letter signed by nine other Senators urging Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement to close four immigration detention facilities.
- As a follow up to both Senator Warren's letter and a letter signed by 221 organizations demanding a halt to detention expansion, DWN organized a lobby day in September resulting in 21 meetings with Members of Congress. Several offices expressed interest in exploring next steps.



Photo: Gerard Brister



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Building Movement Power

- DWN disbursed \$150,000 in subgrants to 10 grassroots members, prioritizing the south and southwest. Grantees are leading shutdown campaigns, supporting formerly detained organizers' leadership development, and pushing state legislation to ban detention.
- DWN completed internal movement partner mapping to better understand existing relationships across progressive sectors. For example, DWN collaborated with cross-movement partners to produce an analysis of Project 2025 and its roots in White Christian Nationalism. DWN also collaborated with Rising Majority, Kairos, Muslims for Just Futures, and more.
- DWN conducted extensive scenario planning ahead of the 2024 presidential election, collecting input from staff, members, allies, and the Board of Directors. As a result, DWN had materials and trainings prepared and began prioritizing safety and security planning efforts towards the end of 2024.

Expanding Narrative Reach

- DWN Executive Director Silky Shah traveled around the country for the *Unbuild Walls* book tour, including over 25 in-person events, a feature in Teen Vogue, and an appearance on Democracy Now!
- DWN garnered 1.4 million impressions, more than 8,000 new followers, 93.7K views on 37 reels, and 17.76K profile visits on Instagram. We continued to build our TikTok channel with over 1,800 followers in 2024.
- DWN reached the final stage of our messaging research project with Goodwin Simon Strategic Research, exploring the early adopter audience and developing messaging recommendations that resonate and build support. We began developing a dissemination plan to share findings and help members and partners implement messaging recommendations.





Photo: Gerard Brister

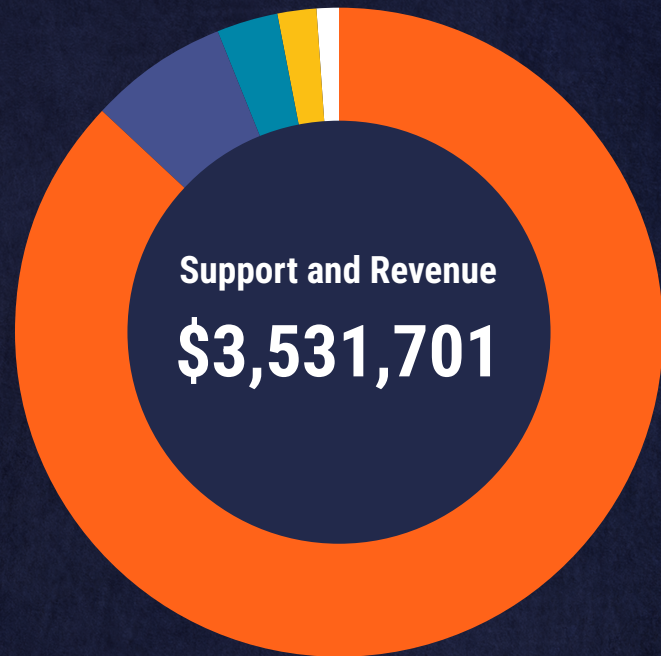
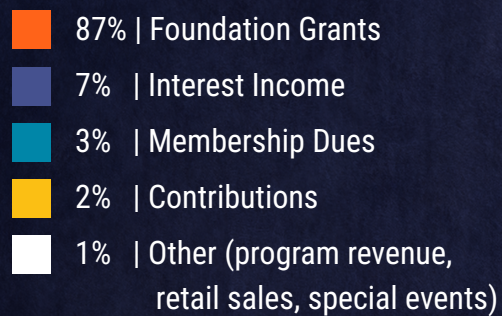
Bringing People Together

DWN hosted several impactful in-person convenings in 2024, including DWN's 14th National Member Conference in May in Atlanta, Georgia. Over 180 people attended, including 45 formerly detained leaders—the most ever at a DWN conference. DWN provided 40 scholarships for directly impacted members and hosted workshops on topics ranging from “Tending to Traumatic Stress in Our Movement Work” to “The Divest/Invest Approach: Examining Effective Budget Campaigns.”

The second iteration of the Freedom Fighters cohort for formerly detained individuals came together throughout 2024 for bi-monthly virtual gatherings to build community and leadership. Sessions included a workshop on abolition, “Just Transitions” as a framework after detention centers close, and efforts to end detention at the state level and fight against anti-immigrant legislation. All active members received a stipend for their participation, and DWN awarded five \$5,000 subgrants for projects led by cohort members.

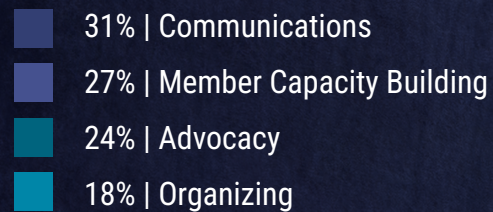
Finances

Support and Revenue

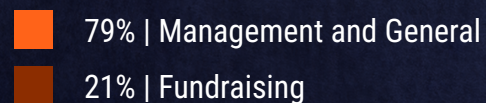


Expenses

74% | Program Services



26% | Supporting Services





Funders

Anonymous

Immigrant Defense Project

Ford Foundation

Oak Foundation

Four Freedoms Fund

Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

Give Forward Foundation

FWD.us Education Fund

Heising-Simons Foundation

Texas Civil Rights Project

National Member Directory

DWN members are working at the national, regional and local levels to fight against detention and deportation, while advocating for humane and just immigration policies.

Network members include formerly detained people and their families, community and faith-based groups, legal service providers, lawyers, national and regional advocates and organizers, and law school clinics.

[Learn more about our diverse organizational membership](#)





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