



INVESTING IN OUR OWN STORIES

Since day one, SALDEF has focused on the importance of Sikhs' media representation with a key part being to tell our stories and define our narratives. All throughout 2021, we led efforts to highlight the power of our values.

SALDEF SUCCESS:

- ✓ **We produced** the SEVA documentary in collaboration with Nishkam TV, in which our SikhLEAD participants told the story of the incredible service of Sikh Americans in their community during the pandemic.
- ✓ **We reached** thousands of non-Sikhs in partnership with Faith Counts, introducing them to the values we live every single day.
- ✓ **We continued** our partnership with Comcast/NBC Universal to reach millions of people across the country.
- ✓ **We supported** community efforts, like the 'American Sikh Film' by former SALDEF Media Fellow, Vishavjit Singh, upcoming book projects by SikhLEAD alum, Ekjoatroop Kaur, and the Sikh American History Project led by SikhLEAD alum and historian Tejpaal Singh Baniwal to expand better understanding of our communities' stories.

Contact Us

We have moved!
1612 K Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 393-2700 | info@saldef.org
saldef.org

Please support
our efforts by
donating to
SALDEF today!



- f saldef
- 🐦 SALDEF
- 📷 sikhamericans



UNLOCKING SIKH AMERICAN POTENTIAL

2021 SALDEF YEAR IN REVIEW



"As we celebrated the 25th anniversary of our founding, I was inspired by the legacy and continuing spirit of chardi kala of our sangat, our organization, and our supporters like you."

– Kiran Kaur Gill, Executive Director

INVESTING IN AN END TO HATE

In April 2021, the people of Indianapolis experienced an act of horror when Matthew R. Alexander, 32, Samaria Blackwell, 19, Amarjeet Johal, 66, Jasvinder Kaur, 50, Jaswinder Singh, 68, Amarjit Sekhon, 48, Karli Smith, 19, and John Weisert, 74, were killed. SALDEF Executive Director Kiran Kaur Gill was on the scene after the attacks, spending weeks in Indianapolis supporting the sangat and getting resources to support the families. To support long-term development and on-going community needs, SALDEF invested directly in the community, conducting community organizing



work in and with the sangat, supporting community-based, youth-led initiatives and training over 300 police officers and FBI agents in the greater Indianapolis area about anti-Sikh hate and bias.



We passed national hate crimes legislation!



Additionally, we advocated for change at the federal level, winning our years-long fight to get the Jabara Heyer Hate Crimes Act passed along with meeting the moment with the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act. We collaborated with communities and local departments to build relationships. We gave tools to help officers understand how to identify attacks on our communities. We continued virtual education programs for the sangat and larger Asian American community.

Executive Director Kiran Kaur Gill brought our concerns directly to the White House, meeting with President Biden and Vice President Harris.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh**

During 2021, we continued to live our lives in the shadow of the pandemic. However, as we celebrated the 25th anniversary of our founding, I was inspired by the legacy and continuing spirit of chardi kala of our sangat, our organization, and our supporters like you.



For the past 25 years, SALDEF has been committed to finding new ways to build the strength and voice of our community. As our SikhLEAD program entered its eleventh year, we supported the largest ever cohort of young Sikh American leaders and expanded the initiative to include a new focus on using entrepreneurship to advance public service. We expanded our efforts to promote civic engagement, advocacy and representation in politics, and we continued to find new ways to use the media to help Sikh Americans tell our own stories. Finally, we took Sikh American concerns directly to the White House, meeting with President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris in August 2021. Over the years, we continue to see the tremendous power and potential of our community actualized.

With your support over 2021, we expanded the size of our staff and built state-based volunteer teams. I encourage you to continue to connect with us on social media and online to follow our new and expanding initiatives. I hope you will continue to make a monthly donation at saldef.org to support our work and help unlock our community's incredible potential. With your continued support, together we will reach even greater heights in the next 25 years.

It is you who undeniably makes all of this possible. Thank you again for your steadfast support.

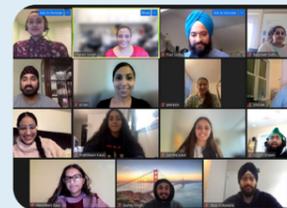


Kiran K. Gill

Kiran Kaur Gill, SALDEF Executive Director

EMPOWERING FUTURE LEADERS

In 2021, the SikhLEAD program invested in nurturing **over a hundred** young Sikh American leaders from around the country. These young leaders were able to develop their skills consistent with their values through the support of mentors, guest speakers, staff, and participants in each of the following four tiers:



Washington, DC, Internship Program

- 15 college students and young professionals pursued **public service** in the federal government and Congress.

Leadership Development Program

- 13 students from 10 different states spent intensive sessions exploring **leadership concepts** and learning from accomplished Sikh Americans from across the country.

Regional Internship Program

- 68 high school students and college students were given the opportunity to work with nonprofits and **state and local governments** in 17 states.

Innovation Fellows Program

- 11 participants leveraged technology to design solutions to pressing problems and promoted **entrepreneurship in pursuit of public service**.

RAISING OUR VOICE

By investing in community outreach programs, SALDEF increased Sikh American participation in the fundamental parts of our democracy. Sikh Americans worked hard running for office and pushing for legislation in our city councils, state houses, and Congress.

1.4
MILLION
PEOPLE
REACHED

We mobilized outreach teams through **SikhVOTE** to contact Sikh American voters in Virginia and New Jersey and organized communities throughout the states to ensure that Sikhs had a voice at both the ballot box and when the lines were being drawn.

VIRGINIA: Asian Americans got the right to draw legislative districts that did not divide their homes and separate them from their schools and houses of worship.

NEW JERSEY: We led the movement to include Asian Americans (10% of the population) in the fight to create fair districts.

SUPPORTING THE GLOBAL PANTH

2021 demonstrated how the panth is not restricted by global boundaries. The actions of technology companies impacted Sikhs in the US, India, Canada, UK, and elsewhere. Similarly, our sangat mobilized across the world as part of the Farmers Protests.

- ▶ **We pushed back** on technology and social media companies for their censorship of Sikhs online.
- ▶ **We submitted testimony to the U.S. Congress**, and worked with policymakers and our global Sikh partners in Canada and the United Kingdom to address the disparate treatment of Sikhs around the globe.
- ▶ **We helped the community** raise their voice on the Farmers Protests, educating lawmakers on the issue and teaching people advocacy strategies so they have transferable skills to use for advocacy now and tomorrow.

