

Unlocking Sikh American Potential

Annual Report 2021



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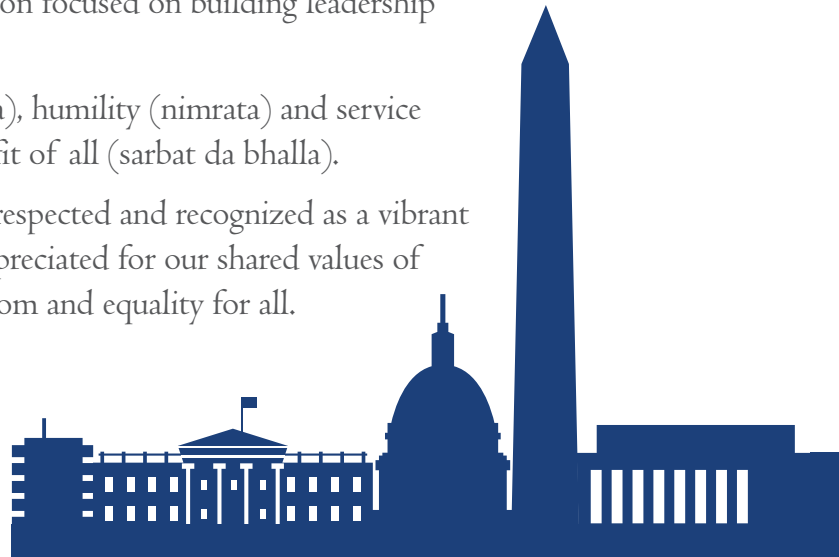
We are grounded in our values of optimism (chardi kala), humility (nimrata) and service (seva), inspired by the community (sangat) for the benefit of all (sarbat da bhalla).

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

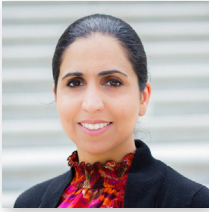
SALDEF is a national Sikh American impact organization focused on building leadership and capacity in the Sikh American community.

We are grounded in our values of optimism (chardi kala), humility (nimrata) and service (seva), inspired by the community (sangat) for the benefit of all (sarbat da bhalla).

We envision a United States where Sikh Americans are respected and recognized as a vibrant and integral part of the fabric of this nation and are appreciated for our shared values of service, social justice, and an unshakeable belief in freedom and equality for all.



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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kiran K. Gill". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kiran Kaur Gill, SALDEF Executive Director

INVESTING IN AN END TO HATE



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

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, Jasvinder 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.

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.

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.

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.



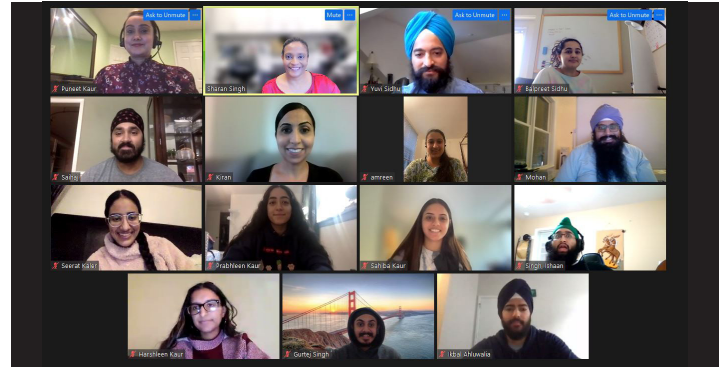
VIRGINIA: Asian Americans got the right to draw legislative districts that did not divide their homes and separate them from their schools and houses of worship.



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

1.4
MILLION
PEOPLE
REACHED

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.

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.

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.

Innovation Fellows Program

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

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: DC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



Karanjit Singh
Cornell University, NY,
Equal Employment
Opportunity Commission
(EEOC)



Simreen (Simi) Rehill
American
River College, CA,
Senator Dhingra
(WA)



Kavita Rai
University of Southern
CA, Equal Employment
Opportunity Commission
(EEOC)



Harwinder Singh
New York University,
National Council of
Asian Pacific Americans
(NCAAPA)



Simarpreet Kaur
Yale University,
Congressman
Thompson
(CA-05)

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: DC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



Avijit Singh
Duke University, NC,
New Heights
Communication &
Wilson Center



Rajveer Singh Kindra
Cypress Halls High School,
Houston TX,
Congresswoman
Shelia Jackson Lee's
(TX-18)



Jujhar Singh
University of Texas,
Counterterrorism Group
(Create Sikhism Training
for FBI agents and work on
creating resources for Know
your Rights and collaborate
with Office for the Center
for Prevention Programs
and Partnerships/ CP3)



Sahaj Singh
Harvard University,
MA, New Heights
Communication



Tarleen Kaur Sodhi
Nova Southeastern
University, FL, Conference
on Asian Pacific
American Leadership
(CAPAL)

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: DC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



Tarina Kaur Ahuja
Harvard College, MA,
National Democratic
Institute



Arfan Warraich
North Carolina State
University, NC, Parliament
of World Religions



Karmine Kaur Malhi
University of Virginia, VA,
Student Trainee
(Health Insurance) at
the Centers for Medicare
and Medicaid Services
(CMS)



Mehnaz Kaur Grewal
University of California,
CA, Rep. Ilhan Omar
(MN-05)



Saneha Borisuth
University of Illinois at
Chicago, IL, Conference
on Asian Pacific
American Leadership
(CAPAL)

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: REGIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Name	School	State	Internship with
Ujjal Bathla	Phoenix Country Day High School	Arizona	Arizona, AANHPI for Equity
Sargun Dhillon	Monta Vista High School	California	Assemblyman Evan Low (CA-28)
Sarabjot Kullar	Salesian College Preparatory High School	California	Councilmember Darling
Teghpreet Singh	UC Berkeley	California	City of Jurupa Valley
Bani Kaur	Amador Valley High School	California	Assemblyman Gallagher's office
Jasleen Gosal	Live Oak High School	California	SALDEF Media Intern
Baltej Kaur	San Jose State University	California	Assemblyman Lee
Deepa Bajwa	UC Berkeley	California	Senator Nancy Skinner
Keerit Ahluwalia	University of California-Davis	California	Councilmember Barlett (Berkeley, CA)
Jasmin Gill	College	California	Councilman Mikey Hothi (Lodi, CA)

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: REGIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Name	School	State	Internship with
Bhajleen Khalsa	Stockton Early College Academy	California	Councilmember Diallo
Shaan Singh	Monte Vista High School	California	Councilmember Bartlett (Berkeley, CA)
Harleen Dhillon	Tracy High School	California	Councilwoman Davis
Kareena Grewal	Lincoln High School	California	Mayor Lincoln (Stockton, CA)
Raveena Chahal	UCLA & London School of Economics	California, London, UK	SALDEF
Gurjap Kohli	Monroe Township High School	New Jersey	Benson office
Vineet Dhillon	Monroe Township High School	New Jersey	Benson office
Arshleen Kaur	Monroe Township High School	New Jersey	Benson office
Mehreen Kaur	Central Jersey College Prep Charter School	New Jersey	Danielsen office
Jasleen Kalsi	Moorestown High School	New Jersey	Assemblywoman Carol Murphy (NJ-7)

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: REGIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Name	School	State	Internship with
Dibjot Kaur	Monroe Township High School	New Jersey	Assemblyman DeAngelo (NJ-14)
Sareena Datta	West Windsor Plainsboro High School South	New Jersey	Reynolds-Jackson
Deep Singh	Franklin High School	New Jersey	Danielsen office
Unnat Singh	Monroe Township High School	New Jersey	Benson office
Nimrat Sandhu	Robbinsville High School	New Jersey	Reynolds-Jackson
Harnoor Sachar	Bergen County Academies	New Jersey	Assemblyman Stanley
Jaitsiri Ahluwalia	Washington University in St. Louis	Missouri	Division of Civil Rights in AG Grewal
Diya Sethi	Monroe Woodbury High School	New York	Assemblyman James Skoufis (NY-39)
Ikroop Singh	Half Hollow Hills High School West	New York	Assemblyman Stern (NY-10)
Surveen Singh	University of Michigan	Michigan	Kelly Breen (Michigan House)

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: REGIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Name	School	State	Internship with
Maheep Singh	Oakland Community College	Michigan	Representative Ranjeev Puri (Michigan House)
Savleen Singh	University of Colorado Denver	Colorado	SALDEF
Krish M Kumar	Rock Canyon High School	Colorado	SALDEF
Navkunwar Singh	Highlands Ranch High School	Colorado	SALDEF
Gursevak Singh	Westgate Community School & Front Range Community College	Colorado	County Judge
Amrit Kaur Ahuja	STEM School Highlands Ranch	Colorado	SALDEF
Simar Kaur Soni	Bethel High School	Connecticut	SALDEF
Muntara Kaur Singh	The Morgan School	Connecticut	<u>International Religious Freedom Roundtable</u>
Gurshaan Sidhu	Amity High School	Connecticut	SALDEF
Jasleen Kaur Sodhi	Windermere Preparatory School	Florida	Faith Counts

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: REGIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Name	School	State	Internship with
Jaideep Singh	South Elgin High School	Illinois	SALDEF
Noor Kaur	Oswego East High School	Illinois	Parliament of the World Religions
Amneet Kaur	Downers Grove North High School	Illinois	Parliament of the World Religions
Mehtab Singh	Warren Township High School	Illinois	Asian Caucus
Mantej Singh	York High School	Illinois	Just Protect
Sahib Kaur	Glenbrook North Highschool	Illinois	Representative Jennifer Gong Gershowitz
Esees Kaur Komal	Schaumburg High School	Illinois	State Representative, Michelle Mussman, and Congressman, Raja Krishnamoorthi
Taranjot Singh	Neuqua Valley High School	Illinois	Congregation Beth Shalom
Eknor Kaur	Thomas S Wootton High School	Maryland	International Religious Freedom Roundtable
Manvir Kaur Matharu	University of Maryland	Maryland	Parliament of World's Religion

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: REGIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Name	School	State	Internship with
Ishika Kaur	American University	Maryland	International Religious Freedom Roundtable
Amrit Vir Chadha	Arlington High School	Massachusetts	APIA Vote
Jashika Kaur	Natick High School	Massachusetts	APIA Vote
Trinjan Kaur	King Philip Regional High School	Massachusetts	BWR
Danveer Nijjar	Natick High School	Massachusetts	SALDEF
Nam Simran (Sebastian Salazar Lamas)	University of New Mexico	New Mexico	International Religious Freedom Roundtable
Ishnoor Kaur	SFS School	Washington, DC	International Religious Freedom Roundtable
Shanti Singh	George Mason University	Virginia	Deanna Singh
Navraj Singh	University of Pennsylvania	Virginia	Elicit Consulting
Harbani Kohli	Rick Reedy High School	Texas	Dasvandh Network

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: REGIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Name	School	State	Internship with
Pavneet Kaur	Brandeis High School	Texas	Councilman Clayton Perry (D10)
Gurleen Kaur Kindra	University Of Texas	Texas	Commissioner Garcia
Armaan Dhillon	Ronald Reagan High School	Texas	Councilman Clayton H. Perry (D 10)
Gursneh Kaur	Williams Highschool	Texas	Senator Dhingra
Simran Kaur Sidhu	College	North Carolina	nCino
<u>Ekjoatroop Kaur</u>	University of Missouri	Kansas	GlobeMed. The University of Missouri-Kansas City Chapter.
<u>Japjit Kaur Tutt</u>	University of Indiana	Indiana	Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Denaturalization – The goal of this project is to educate and inform the Sikh Americans about their citizenship rights and how to deal with the issue of denaturalization.

Gurtej Singh Sangha, Evergreen Valley College, CA
Amreen Bhasin, Lewis & Clark Law School, OR

Sikh Health Survey – The goal of this project is to conduct a survey among Sikh Americans to collect their health data and conduct data analysis to raise awareness and recommend strategies about common health issues in Sikh Americans

Saihajdeep Singh, Sacred Heart University, CT
Balpreet Kaur Sidhu, University of California Davis, CA
Gurbani Kaur, Harvard College, MA
Rhea Singh, Virginia Commonwealth University

SikhLight Podcast – The goal of this project is to create a podcast where Sikh American professionals and changemakers are interviewed and they discuss how Sikh values have affected their interaction with the work they are engaged in!

Yuvraj Singh Sidhu, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, NC
Mohansingh Gurmukhsingh Udhvani Jr., Belmont University, TN
Harshleen Kaur, University of Illinois at Chicago, IL
Prabhleen Kaur Batra, University of Maryland

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Sikh Americans in Media – This project examined the appearance of Sikhs in American media across different time periods and compiled a list of variables for researchers to pull from films.

Ikbal Singh Ahluwalia, Yale University, CT

Sikh Short Film – This project is aimed at producing a short film with Sikh American actors aimed at showcasing a Sikh American family setting tackling with their child's unconventional career choice.

Ishaan Singh, Rowan University, NJ

Revamping Gurudwara Elections – This project is aimed at bringing change in the traditional Gurudwara Election system by engaging youth and eliminating the concept of Elections in Gurudwaras.

Seerat Kaur Kaler, DePaul University, IL

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: INNOVATION FELLOWS PROGRAM



Baaz Jhaj
Arizona State University, AZ



Simarjit Chhabra
CA – Cataliize



Jyotinder Singh Baweja
Ernst & Young LLP, OR



Tejpal Singh Sodhi
Campbellville
University, FL

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: INNOVATION FELLOWS PROGRAM



Simrat Bhutani
Yara International, India

Surtej Sarin, MD
Booz Allen

Arshmeet Singh
Staten Island Technical
High School, NY



Navjot Sagoo
VA – Microsoft

SIKHLEAD CLASS OF 2021: INNOVATION FELLOWS PROGRAM



Devinder Sagoo
Reed College, OR

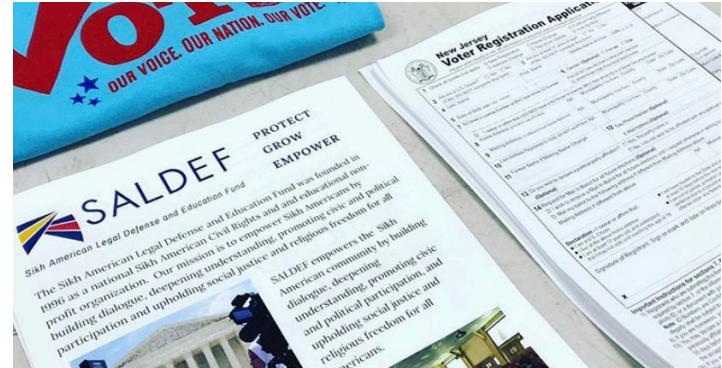
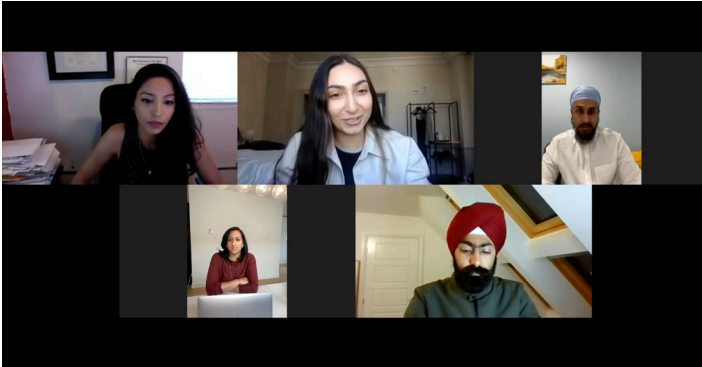


Bharat Rai
University of Southern
California, CA



Manan Singh
Carroll Senior High
School, TX

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.

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.

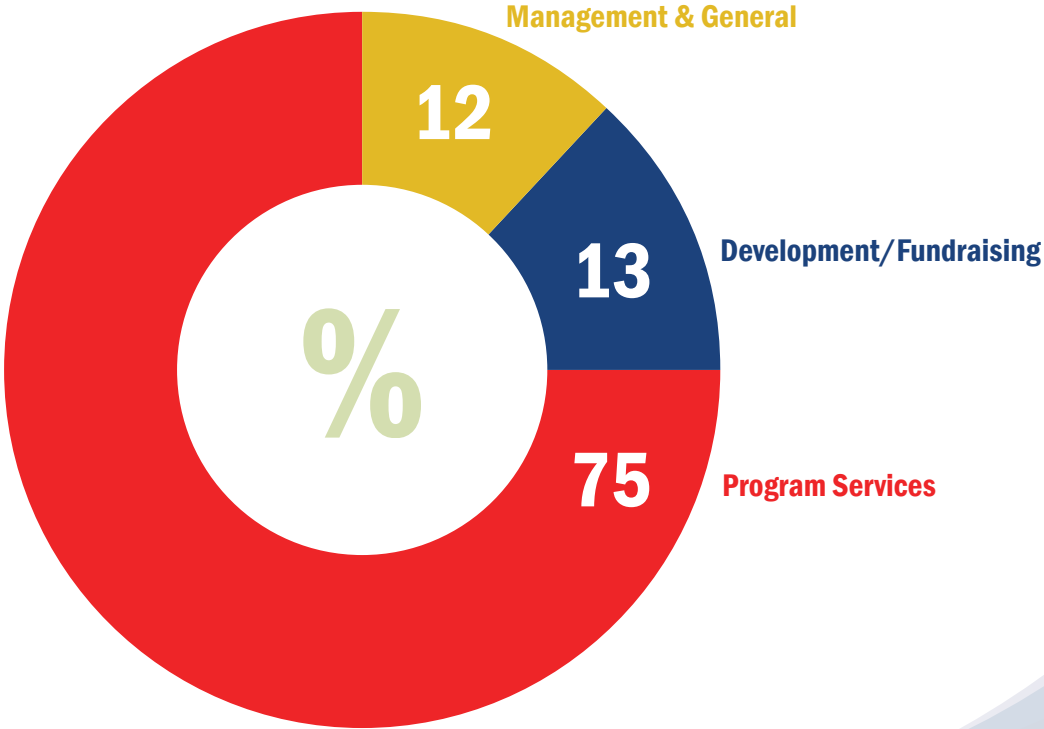
We reached thousands of non-Sikhs in partnership with Faith Counts, introducing them to the values we live every single day.

We continued our partnership with Comcast/NBC Universal to reach millions of people across the country.

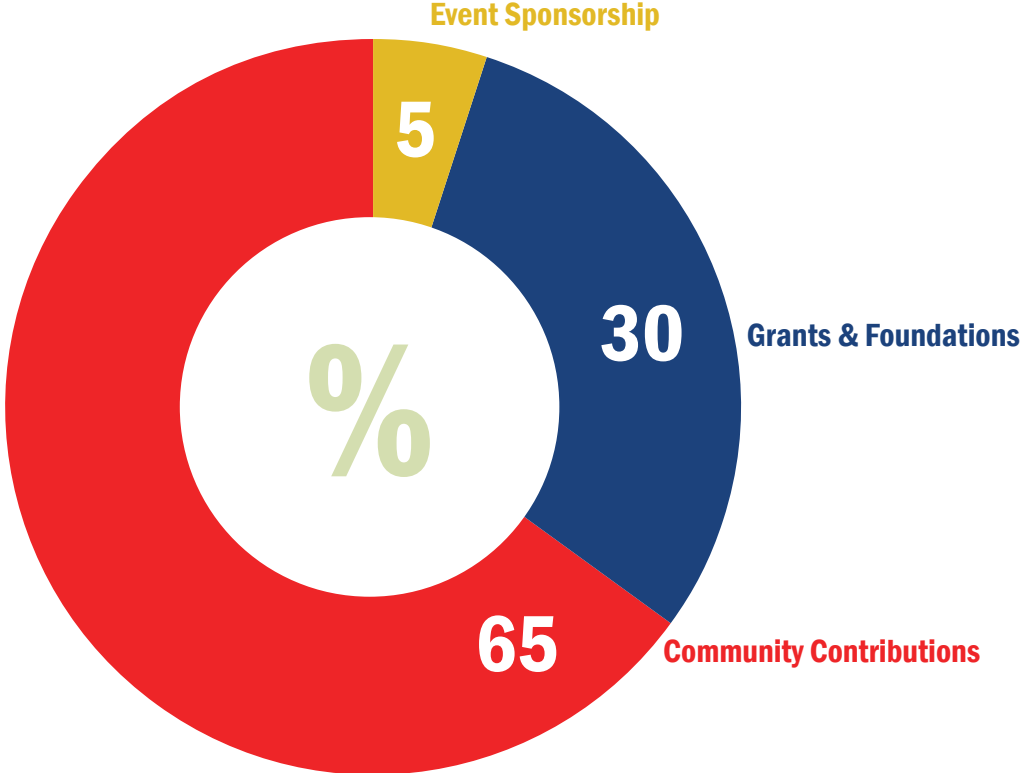
We supported community efforts, like the 'American Sikh Film' by former SALDEF Media Fellow, Vishavjit Singh, upcoming book projects by SikhLEAD alum, Ekjoatroop Kaur, and the Sikh American History Project led by SikhLEAD alum and historian Tejpal Singh Baniwal to expand better understanding of our communities' stories.



FINANCIALS: 2021 EXPENSES



FINANCIALS: 2021 INCOME



SALDEF TEAM – STAFF



Kiran Kaur Gill
Executive Director



Sharan Kaur Singh
Program Director



Puneet Kaur
Program Manager



Amrita Kular
Communications Manager



Sahiba Kaur
Media Relations Manager



Jyot Singh
Policy Manager



Jaspreet Kaur
Operations Manager



Prabhleen Kaur
Intern



Navdeep Singh
Consultant



Ishinder Singh
Entrepreneur in Residence

SALDEF TEAM – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. Kavneet Singh, Chair
2. Amman Singh, Vice Chair
3. Juspreet Kaur, Secretary
4. Simran Singh, Treasurer
5. Manjit Singh, Co-founder
6. Navjeet Singh, Board member
7. Gunvir Singh, Board member



MEDIA MENTIONS

Title	Publication
Facebook again censors the Sikh community on Social Media platforms	Sikh24
Indian-American groups condemn attack on US Capitol	Economic Times
Counselors, a camp and the tools to stand up to bullies Opinion	True Jersey
Anti-racism resources to support Asian American, Pacific Islander community	NBC News
Shocked by the Indianapolis carnage, Sikh community calls for action	The American Bazaar
“We are shook, again”	Vox
‘This Is Nothing New’: Stop Asian Hate Protesters, in Their Own Words	NBC Boston
South Asian communities have built power in the wake of violence	The Washington Post
As US Emerges From COVID, AAPI Leaders Say Hate Incidents Expected to Rise	NBC LA

MEDIA MENTIONS

Title	Publication
Groups Urge President Biden to Include Immigration in Pardon Process	Human Rights Watch
Readout of the President and Vice President's Meeting with Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Leaders	The White House
Honour everyone impacted by the tragedy': Joe Biden pays homage to victims of 2012 Oak Creek Gurdwara shooting	FirstPost
TAAF Announces Its Anti-Hate National Network, Including The Launch of AAPI Action Centers in Chicago, New York City, and Oakland	Cision
Houston post office named after slain Sikh cop Dhaliwal	The Hindu
N.J. district disbands group behind diversity initiatives, says topic is 'too divisive'	True Jersey
Religious Organizations Are Integral to the Fight Against Gun Violence	Center for American Progress



Contact Us

We have moved!

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