SALDEF is grateful to be awarded the Multicultural Coalition Partnership Award by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

The award recognizes SALDEF's decade-long partnership with the TSA along with our significant work on developing an educational online training titled "Effective Engagement and Screening of Sikh Travelers and their Religious Items". This impactful training is aimed at raising awareness of Sikhi to TSA officers nationwide and providing a clear understanding of how to respectfully engage with Sikh travelers and the Sikh articles of faith.

Advancing the Sikh American Narrative

In our twenty-six-year legacy, SALDEF remains a leader in setting the agenda and advocating for strong outreach and improvement of federal grant programs to our community. The federal government makes this money available, and we are making sure the Sikh community and our gurdwaras are not left behind.

Ensuring a Seat at the Table

Secretary of Homeland Security appointed Executive Director Kiran Kaur Gill to serve as Chair of the Department of Homeland Security Faith-Based Security Advisory Council. As Chair of the 25-member council, Kiran will advise on strategies and recommendations to help keep faith-based communities safe.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

RAISING THE SIKH AMERICAN VOICE ACROSS THE NATION

As the nation’s oldest Sikh American civil rights group, SALDEF has been a voice for Sikh Americans on issues that affect the lives of all Americans. Based in Washington DC, we leverage our political network to represent Sikh Americans on issues such as voting rights, religious freedom and more.
TURNING TRAGEDY INTO UNITY

Remembering Oak Creek Victims at 10th Anniversary

On August 5, 2022, we commemorated the ten year anniversary of the mass shooting at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in Oak Creek, which resulted in the death of seven members of the sangat. To ensure that we never forget the tragedy at Oak Creek, SALDEF organized a remembrance event in coordination with affected community members and partner organizations. Together we came together to heal, reflect, and take action.

• SALDEF staff members conducted gurdwara tours for interfaith residents of Oak Creek to help them understand the role of the gurdwara in Sikhi.
• Concurrently, SALDEF hosted a series of workshops featuring partner organizations and SikhLEAD program alumni such as “youth mobilization” led by SikhLEAD alumni Tanina Ahuja.
• Along with the commemoration events, SALDEF hosted a panel featuring Sikh youth of Oak Creek, Wisconsin, as they discussed their vision for the Sikh American community, their path to advocacy and the support they received from community members in the aftermath of the shooting.

In response to the tragedy of the Oak Creek shooting, SALDEF also released a whitepaper, “Taking on Hate & White Supremacy: Policy Recommendations Ten Years after the Attacks in Oak Creek, Wisconsin” to offer concrete policy solutions to better protect our community and others who may be facing similar challenges.

SALDEF continues to actively work to empower our community to get engaged and advocate for policies to use the lessons from Oak Creek to prevent acts of hate, build united communities, and support those who are impacted by tragedy.

STRENGTHENING OUR DEMOCRACY

Every citizen of the United States has the right to a ballot, but many eligible voters have been conditioned to believe their votes don’t count. This is due to decades of voter suppression, language barriers, and misinformation.

At SALDEF, we believe that language accessibility is something that doesn’t need to be another barrier in the voting process. We collaborated with JusPunjabi TV to reach Punjabi-speaking voters. We began to work with local, rural communities around the country to mobilize and create awareness around the lack of Punjabi voting materials in areas that needed them the most. As a result of our partnerships and advocacy, SALDEF mobilized over 100,000 Sikh American voters across the nation.

Phone-banking, social media engagement and in person community outreach have all been tools in our efforts to ensure accessible voting for all Sikh Americans.

Advocating at the White House Against Hate

SALDEF Executive Director Kiran Kaur Gill met with President Biden, Vice President Harris, and other national leaders at the White House multiple times throughout this year to share strategies to counter hate and violent extremism that threatens minority and marginalized communities. She presented and shared recommendations with the Commissioners of the President’s Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders and the leadership of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders about the connection between gun violence, mass shootings, and racism.

"These prominent faith and law enforcement leaders will help us build and strengthen the community partnerships that are so vital to our mission success. We will work together to increase access to our services, ensure equity, maintain openness and transparency, and fully restore the trust of the communities we serve.”

– DHS Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas

Uniting Against Hate

The nearly 3,800 reports of incidents targeting the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community over the past year are a challenge to the conscience of the country. On June 25, 2022, SALDEF collaborated with national AAPI organizations to march in Washington, D.C., alongside other marginalized communities to unite against hate.