



**American Friends Service Committee,
Arizona Program**

2016 Annual Report



**American Friends
Service Committee**

Quaker values In action

Message from the Director:

"We were born for these times."

In the aftermath of an extremely divisive election season, we have received an incredible number of calls and emails asking, *"What can I do?"*

We have been encouraged by the willingness of our community to stand together, protect our most vulnerable members, and to demonstrate the Light and love we wish to see in the world.

Here at AFSC-Arizona, we are ready.

We are ready to protect the gains we have made in reforming our criminal justice system, respecting immigrant rights, and rejecting for-profit incarceration.

We are ready to defend the inherent worth and dignity of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration status, criminal history, religion, political affiliation or any other characteristic that some would use to criminalize, marginalize, or exclude us.

We are ready to keep moving forward, to make even greater strides toward true justice and safety in our communities.

Are you ready? Will you join us? Will you support us?

Your gift is not just a gesture of support—It is an action, a commitment you can make toward change. Thank you.



Caroline Isaacs, Program Director



Caroline Isaacs (far right) meeting with Palestinian Journalist Mohammed Omer (center) and staff on global iterations of criminalization and control

Expanding Our Work

Last year, AFSC-AZ received a nine-month emergency grant from the Public Welfare Foundation to ramp up our sentencing reform efforts in the state.

Ana Yanez-Correa, Program Officer with the Public Welfare Foundation, came to Arizona for a site visit April 18 and 19 in Phoenix. We were also joined by Jill Harris and John Cutler from the National ACLU's Smart Justice project; and Robert Rooks and Seema Sandanandan from the Alliance for Safety and Justice.

We are thrilled to announce that a second round of funding has been approved by the Public Welfare Foundation, allowing us to map out a comprehensive policy roadmap for Arizona.



From left: Seema Sandanandan (ASJ), Jill Harris (ACLU), Ana Yanez-Correa (Public Welfare Foundation), Emily Verdugo (AFSC), John Cutler (ACLU), Caroline Isaacs, Matt Lowen, Grace Gamez, Rebecca Fealk (AFSC), Robert Rooks (ASJ), Tarana Burke (AFSC National Office).

Reframing Justice



Our newest project works with formerly incarcerated and convicted people (FICP) and their loved ones to create a multi-media storytelling project about the criminal punishment system in Arizona. The goal of this work is to challenge the narrative and acceptability of justice as punishment and social abandonment, and offer counter-narratives that center justice as radical love and connectedness. We are using video, blogging, photo-essay, and theater to influence the market place of ideas around people who have been system-involved. Read more on page 5.

We are also organizing a cadre of FICP to be drivers of social policy change in Arizona and connect to national mobilization efforts around criminal legal policy. This group, **The NorthStar Collective**, conducts leadership development training and helps place members speak on panels, serve on relevant boards and committees, and participate in local coalitions, such as the Second Chance Coalition, and the Pima County ReEntry Coalition.

Reducing Prison Populations

Another Legislative Victory!

REDUCING CORRECTIONS COSTS

THROUGH SMART AND SAFE
POLICY SOLUTIONS



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For the fifth year in a row, we were successful in passing a progressive sentencing reform bill. SB1126 expands eligibility for a Transition Program that allows people to be released from prison 90 days early into a program providing comprehensive services, including drug treatment, housing, and job assistance. The original bill that created the program excluded people with DWI convictions—despite the fact that these individuals could benefit tremendously from such a program. Including this group means that an additional 2,500 individuals could be released from prison, which, over time, could have a substantial impact on the correctional population.

Drug Sentencing Research

Over the summer, AFSC conducted the first-ever research study into drug sentencing in Arizona. Incredibly, there is no aggregate court and sentencing data on how various statutes are applied in Arizona. Each county keeps their own records, in their own format—some are not even computerized.

AFSC collected data from three counties (Maricopa, Pima, and Yavapai) on drug crimes that resulted in prison sentences in 2015. Through our Public Welfare Foundation funding, we hired four law students to physically go the county courts, go through their files, and upload the relevant data into a spreadsheet that staff member Rebecca Fealk designed.

The results are being analyzed, and will be released in public in January of 2017. This data will be critical in demonstrating the ways Arizona’s harsh sentencing laws are impacting individuals, communities, and our prison population.



Becca Fealk (left) training our summer research interns: Cindy Nguyen, Ektaa Prasher, and Vikram Jaswal

Opposing Prison Expansion and For-Profit Incarceration



Budget Town Halls:

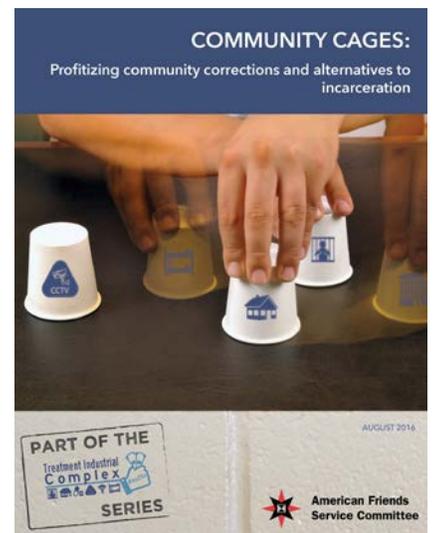
AFSC mobilized constituents to attend a series of State Budget Town Hall discussions around the state, organized by the Chair of House Appropriations Committee. A group of ASU School of Social Work students took it on as a class project and attended two of the four (see photo). There were AFSC representatives and volunteers at every one of the four forums, speaking out against any further spending on prison expansion. In some hearings, our

talking points were picked up by others who had come to talk about education funding or social services. It was a very effective tactic, and it was clear that our message came through.

Victory! For the first time in recent memory, a proposal for more prison beds was not automatically approved by the legislature. In an interesting twist, the FY2017 budget mandates that the Arizona Department of Corrections demonstrate that the prison population has grown significantly before funding for new beds will be approved.

The Treatment Industrial Complex

In August, AFSC-AZ released a report on the Community Corrections segment of the Treatment Industrial Complex. The report details how private prison companies like GEO Group and CCA (now CoreCivic) are rebranding themselves to take advantage of new contracts to provide rehabilitation, reentry services, and “alternatives to incarceration.”



This new development threatens to hijack the national sentencing reform movement and by simply shifting people from one form of correctional control to another.

We held a teleconference to release the report with reporters from the Associated Press, Truthout, PBS Online, Dallas Morning News, Miami Herald and Tucson Sentinel. Director Caroline Isaacs' op-ed on the issue was published in *The Hill*:

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/judicial/292546-private-prison-corporations-must-not-be-allowed-to-hijack>

You can download the full *Community Cages* report from our webpage at:

<https://afscarizona.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/communitycages.pdf>

As part of this project, we collaborated with **Brave New Films**, a non-profit organization that uses media, films, volunteers and internet video campaigns to inform the public, challenge mainstream media with the truth, and motivate people to take action on social issues nationwide.

The result is a high-impact short video describing the Treatment Industrial Complex (TIC) and why it threatens to undermine the movement to end mass incarceration. You can watch it on YouTube or via our website:

<https://afscarizona.org/treatment-industrial-complex/>



Reframing Justice

We recently launched our page the [Reframing Justice Project](#), where you can view videos and other pieces telling the stories of justice-involved people in Arizona. Our first video



tells Kini's story, which touches on many of the common pathways into the criminal punishment system for women and challenges us to think deeply about what justice means and who has access to it. The page also features Michele Keller's photo-essay/blog post- "What No One Wants to Hear", which illustrates what re-

entry post incarceration looks and *feels* like.

In October of 2016, we produced two public storytelling theater events (one in Tucson and one in Phoenix) entitled, “Entre Sueños/In-between Dreams.” Storytellers included three formerly incarcerated people telling their own stories, as well as a group of women who read stories written by women who are still held in Arizona prisons. Directed and produced by acclaimed local actress and educator Marissa Garcia, the performances also featured live music, choreography, and original set pieces. The project was cosponsored by Justice the Works, Arizona Transformative Law and Social Justice, AZ Humanities, Arizona State University, The YWCA of Tucson, Odyssey Storytelling Project, SheWerxx Theater Company, and the *Walking Rain Journal*.

Addressing Conditions of Confinement

We ended the year with our annual Holiday Cards for Prisoners party. We were overwhelmed by the response from our community—our tiny office was crammed with tables, volunteers, and good cheer. Participants included students from Paolo Freire Freedom School (middle school), families of incarcerated people, and Reframing Justice participants, plus a few folks who just heard about it on Facebook! With everyone’s help, we were able to generate a holiday card for every single incarcerated person on our mailing list.



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To earmark your contribution for the Arizona office*, simply write “Arizona office” in the bottom left corner of your check.

**Please note that if you do not explicitly state on your check or otherwise in writing that you want your donation to go to Arizona, it will automatically be deposited into AFSC’s national general fund.*

THANK YOU!



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