



2023 ANNUAL REPORT



VIETLEAD
in solidarity

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A LETTER FROM OUR CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Dear community and supporters,

This past year was the year of the Compassionate Water Cat characterized by tactful and mindful energy. VietLead started the year embarking on a 6 month organization-wide strategic realignment. Together, our team did rigorous reflections on our past years with political study, and grappled with key questions.

We charted a North Star that will guide us for our next three years. This required us to be less externally facing and refocus our energy to internal organizational changes in order to implement our realignment goals. Thank you to the Center for Empowered Politics for your support and consultation.

We also had a leadership transition as Nancy Nguyen, our long-term Executive Director, went on sabbatical and Dương Nghệ Lý joined Lan Dinh to be Co-Executive Directors of VietLead. In addition, we changed our fiscal sponsor to the Center for Empowered Politics Education Fund (CEPEF)!

We also premiered a VietLead produced docuseries, *Taking Root*, chronicling Southeast Asian refugee resettlement in Philadelphia that was shown at the prestigious Tribeca Film Festival, Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival, and several community screenings!

Currently as we write, we are in a moment of global upheaval during the U.S. backed genocide in Palestine, increasing climate disaster, and ongoing displacement of communities. All these external crises and internal transitions have allowed us to be even more grounded in our purpose to build power to shift conditions in our community.

In this upcoming year of the Wood Dragon, as fiery dragon energy is fueled by wood, there will be change and growth: burning down what doesn't serve us and rejuvenating beginnings. In this ninth year of our organization, we are in our era of re-founding.

May Determined Dragon energy support us in fulfilling our role as a Vietnamese base building organization in the greater movement ecosystem for the long haul. This upcoming year, we are excited to build a membership structure to greater engage our community in building out and informing our organization.

We are so grateful to our team for their persistence and our community for your support. We could not do this without you!

In Solidarity,

Dương Lan Đình

Dương Lý & Lan Đình



ABOUT US

VietLead is a grassroots organization working with Philadelphia and South Jersey's Vietnamese & Southeast Asian community. Founded in 2016, VietLead develops culturally resilient and community driven solutions to improve health, increase sovereignty, and strengthen political power by developing "Vietnamese Leadership in Solidarity" with other working-class communities of color.

OUR PROGRAMS

As a base-building organization, VietLead has 5 Core Community-based Programs and 2 Operations-based programs that support org-wide infrastructure and communications. Our multi-faced programs provide direct services to meet community needs while simultaneously building power for structural change.

Health & Healing

Farm & Food Sovereignty

OurRoots Youth

Civic Empowerment

Operations & Resilience

Community Defense

RECLAIMING REFUGEE NARRATIVES

In 2023, VietLead premiered our documentary series, *Taking Root: Southeast Asian Stories of Resettlement in Philadelphia*. *Taking Root* is a docuseries that amplifies the intergenerational impact of structural violence and demonstrates the power of Southeast Asian refugees resisting and rebuilding in America. It follows the history of refugee resettlement in Philadelphia as told by Southeast Asians from Philadelphia, directed by Oanh-Nhi Nguyen, and co-produced by Lan Dinh and VietLead.

As we approach the 50th Anniversary of the U.S. Wars in Southeast Asia in 2025, it is more important than ever for us to reclaim our refugee narratives and challenge anti-Black, anti-Asian, and xenophobic narratives. We will be hosting local screenings and partnering with the **Southeast Asian Relief and Responsibility Campaign** (SEARR) for a national tour to support our Southeast Asian community to grapple with our traumatic pasts, heal together, and fight for local and national changes we need.

TAKING ROOT

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STORIES OF RESETTLEMENT IN PHILADELPHIA



JERSEY YOUTH



*based out of
Camden, NJ*

The **JERSEYROOTS YOUTH** program has come a long way since 2016 when it first began to develop youth leadership in Camden City and Pennsauken Township. This goal has remained steadfast — but the strategy for achieving it is necessarily transforming.

JerseyRoots youth and staff are working together to achieve a **shared vision for youth of color to grow** emotionally, build solidarity, develop community, and be proud of themselves so they can challenge oppressive systems and create positive change for themselves and their people.



RESILIENT ROOTS COMMUNITY FARM



Our **FARM & FOOD SOVEREIGNTY** team in South Jersey works from our Resilient Roots Farm, a multiracial community farm in Camden, New Jersey. Through Resilient Roots Farm, we strive to accomplish the following:

- Practice cultural foodways that restores Camden's land from abandon and neglect
- Heal from colonial trauma as a multiracial, working-class community by sharing collective love for the land
- Build power to determine what happens to East Camden's land, the neighborhood where Resilient Roots Farm lives

**In 18 Weeks: Harvested
Community
2000 Pounds of Produce**



With over 180 Volunteers

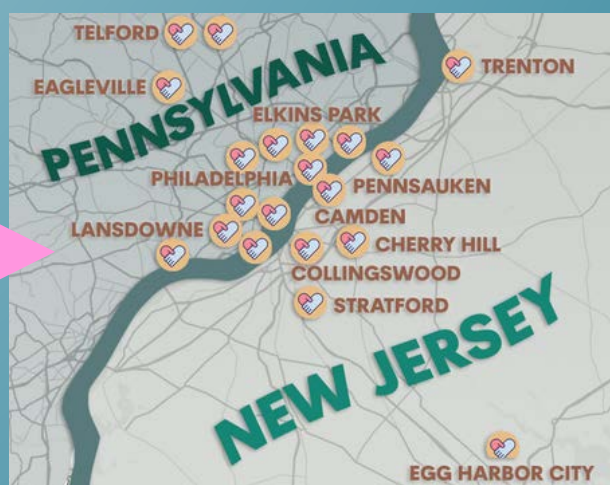


HEALTH & HEALING

The **HEALTH & HEALING** Program works towards a future where our working-class, limited-English proficient, immigrant and refugee community can be safe, healthy, and have resources to meet their material and emotional needs.



- 47 outreach events across 12 counties, towns, and/or cities
- 300 families served
- 120 women supported with breast cancer screenings



To build the foundation for this future, we offer in-language programming, including assistance to access public benefits, patient navigation, and education and outreach around health and workers' rights. In all interactions, **we center language justice, trust, relationship building, and empowerment.**



COMMUNITY DEFENSE

The **COMMUNITY DEFENSE** Program works to free our people from the threat of deportation as a result of criminal convictions. Through our impacted leadership development program, we work with formerly incarcerated Vietnamese and Southeast Asian community leaders (impacted leaders) to lead the fight. Locally, we offer individual case support to seek immigration relief through state pardons and other means with the support of the Free Migration Project. **In 2023, Governor Shapiro pardoned our first impacted community member!**

"I've learned a lot from VietLead organization. Things that I thought wasn't possible and making it possible. VietLead gave me hope when I thought there was none.

- D.P., Community Defense Impacted Leader



Nationally, as a member organization of SEAFN, the **Southeast Asian Freedom Network**, we are working to mobilize for SEARR, the **Southeast Asian Relief and Responsibility Campaign**. Through these tactics, we aim to **build toward a future where our community is no longer fragmented by cycles of violence**, particularly through the criminal punishment system and the harsh immigration system.



CIVIC EMPOWERMENT

The **CIVIC EMPOWERMENT** Team strives to create an informed and aligned voter base within the Vietnamese American community. Historically, Vietnamese American voters have experienced language and social barriers that have hindered their capacity in civic engagement. These barriers are perpetuated by other factors, such as misinformation from ethnic media, leading them to lose motivation and a desire for civic participation.

At VietLead, our goal is to **provide continuous voter education that defies misinformation from all fronts**, bring our community together in solidarity, and unite our comrade organizations to solidify the AAPI voter base.



20,000
phone calls
2000
households
14,000
texts

Centers our community for effective voter outreach
Each text & call created by our team



PHILLY YOUTH

The **PHILLYROOTS YOUTH** Program has year-round leadership programs for Southeast Asian youth to reconnect to their cultural histories, heal their connection to land, develop their emotional and political capacity, and **grow their sense of belonging and purpose in the world to imagine and implement new ways of transforming their communities.**

In the past, youth have won a victory to address toxic conditions of lead contamination within Furness High School garden, waged a Healthy Schools Campaign with **Our City Our Schools Coalition**, and worked on the Education Platform of **The Alliance for a Just Philadelphia's** 2023 People's Platform that won the phasing back of the 10 Year Tax Abatement, redistributing tax dollars back to public schools!

VietLead's PhillyRoots and Farm Programs are excited to work together this upcoming year to continue developing skills for land stewardship, socioemotional learning, and narrative strategy with the Furness community and Vietnamese Youth in the South Philadelphia region.



FURNESS HIGH SCHOOL GARDEN



The **FARM & FOOD SOVEREIGNTY** Team in Philadelphia works to create growing spaces that uplift our community's resiliency, affirm our community's agency, and promote environmental education and healing. Since we began **Furness High School's Garden** in 2018, we have:

- Supported **alternative learning spaces** for Furness High School's classes
- Supported parents with **growing space**
- Connected students to each other and cultivated their relationships to the land

*At Furness School Garden
We worked with:*

*43 Culturally Relevant Crops
10 School Family Crops
200 High School Students*



OPERATIONS



VietLead's **OPERATIONS** Team plays a pivotal role in sustaining our organization by developing, implementing, and maintaining essential backend systems—including technology, finance, and HR—which facilitate a **safer and more effective work environment** aligned with our core values. Through fostering new work habits and integrating innovative systems, we ensure our team can **navigate and address the ever-present challenges of racial capitalism with resilience and efficiency.**

This past year, to better support our growth and visions for the years to come, the Operations Team facilitated a 6 month process where we transitioned to the Center for Empowered Politics Education Fund as our new fiscal sponsor.



RESILIENCE

The **RESILIENCE** Team was built to create processes for our staff and community's healing and resilience. Internally to VietLead, we build systems of care, socioemotional skills, generative conflict in order to support ourselves in sustaining the future of this work.

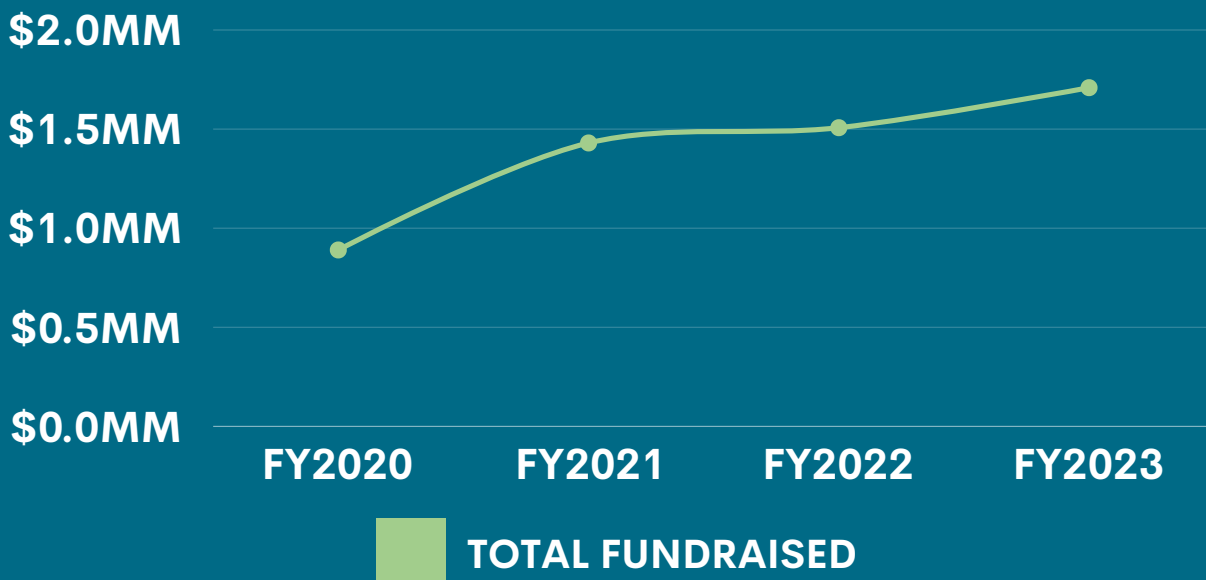
The **COMMUNICATIONS** Team works to support internal reflection and to ensure our community-centered organizational values are embodied in our external communications, including our social media. We recalibrate historical dominant narratives about Vietnamese and Southeast Asian communities through **trauma informed political education and challenging dominant racialized disinformation**. In 2023, our team expanded to develop our Narrative Strategy by rebranding our organization and formalizing structures. We also received important lessons in transformative media organizing when our Communications Coordinator was a 2023 MediaJustice Network Fellow!



FISCAL HISTORY



We are so grateful to our funders who support us to make our work possible! Currently, the majority of our fundraising are from foundations and government contracts. We hope to diversify our funding in the upcoming year and invite our community to support our work financially as individual sustainers.



We have grown from an initial team of 6 to 17 full-time and 7 part-time staff! In our organizational growth, we are striving to provide competitive wages to value the labor of our skilled & culturally competent team but still have a long way to go. Thus, the majority of the funds we raise are designated for staff salaries, fringe benefits, wellness & training.

EXPENSE SUMMARY

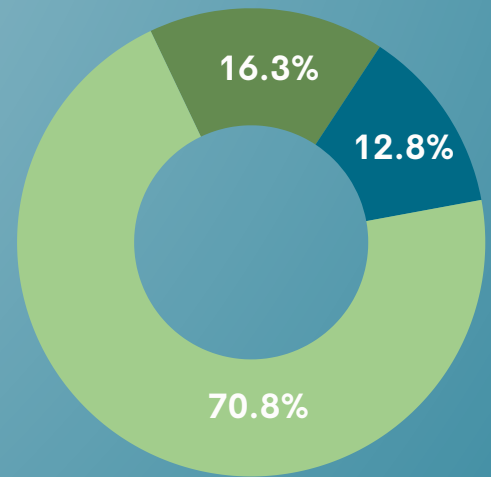
DIRECT COSTS

Gross Salaries	\$978,836
Fringe Benefits	\$209,400
Staff & Personnel	\$1,188,236
Stipends	\$70,000
Supplies & Equipment	\$68,000
Office Rental & Utilities	\$41,586
Staff Training & Special Needs	\$34,000
Travel & Transportation	\$25,463
Communications & Outreach	\$16,559
Honorarium & Contractors	\$12,500
Dues & Subscriptions	\$2,361
Special Events	\$3,500
Operations & Program	\$273,969

INDIRECT COSTS

Insurance Fees (1.4%)	\$24,297
Auditing Fees (1%)	\$17,355
Fiscal Sponsor Fees (10%)	\$173,550
Indirect Costs	\$215,202

TOTAL EXPENSE COSTS **\$1,677,407**



THANK YOU!



At VietLead, we invite you to join our mission to build towards a future of community resilience, compassion, and solidarity. As a worker-led organization, your contribution will support our labor, affirm significance in community organizing, and champion viable and radical visions for social change.

Thank you for directly supporting how we build up Vietnamese community leadership and build a world rooted in solidarity. Please scan the QR code or visit our online donation link directly at:

donorbox.org/vietlead-general-donations

 www.vietlead.org

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 [@vietlead](https://www.instagram.com/vietlead)

 [@vietlead](https://www.facebook.com/vietlead)



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