

2021

# CMDC Annual Report





# OUR MISSION

Community Mediation DC (CMDc) works to make DC a city in which mediation is used to build peaceful and resilient communities and to give every DC resident access to high-quality, collaborative conflict resolution services.





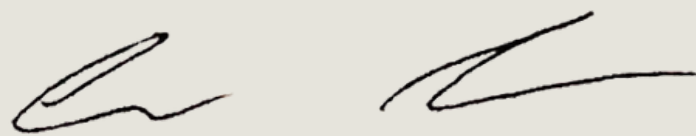
# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Friends of CMDC,

Our 2021 Annual Report is a celebration of Community Mediation DC's impact, staff, volunteers, and mediation participants. Celebration is always important, and especially during the challenges and conflict we faced in 2021. In order to protect the physical health of ourselves and our community, many of us took steps that challenged our relationships, mental health, and sense of community. Many of us have experienced loss, isolation, loneliness, and conflict in ways we couldn't have imagined.

At Community Mediation DC, we know that relationships are so important for our wellbeing, for our survival, and for the strength of communities. I am grateful for our growing team of staff, mediators, and community mediation ambassadors for their ability to adapt and find ways to harness the power of healing and connection even across computer screens. We have been able to offer online mediation for folks who may have never considered in-person mediation. We launched a virtual Community Mediation Ambassador Training program to connect community leaders with each other and with new skills and resources to resolve conflicts in their neighborhoods. And when it was safe to do so, we resumed in-person mediations and trainings, reaffirming our understanding of the ways conflict and relationships can transform when we are present with each other in the same physical space.

I hope this report provides insight into the hard work of our team and the power of community mediation, and I encourage you to stay in touch with us throughout this year to learn more and get involved!



Caroline Cragin



August 2021: First in-person resource fair  
since 2020 with Community  
Connections






# OUR APPROACH

CMDC's approach to justice is community-led, restorative, and racially just. We believe that relationships and neighborhoods can become stronger through conflict and that many conflicts, even violent ones, are better resolved at the community or neighborhood level. Community mediation promotes a bottom-up approach to conflict resolution, empowering self-determined communities to bring all people involved in a dispute into dialogue in order to resolve their own conflicts rather than giving them over to the state.

CMDC mediators create a space for participants to have a difficult conversation, to better understand themselves and each other, and to develop collaborative solutions to the issues they wish to resolve. The type of solutions people develop after they have felt heard and understood and have heard and understood the other participant are qualitatively different – often more collaborative, realistic, and sustainable – than the ideas they come to mediation with. Mediation is a short-term intervention with a long-term impact.



CMDC also works to educate community members about conflict resolution and mediation. By providing community education through conflict management and community ambassador workshops throughout DC, CMDC encourages use of mediation as well as learning and unlearning about conflict transformation through interactive activities and open dialogue.



# OUR HISTORY

2017

## CMDC founded:

A group of mediators and grassroots peacebuilders launch CMDC with the goal of providing free mediation services to DC residents. With support from our Maryland sister centers, CMDC emerges to provide a citywide, community-based infrastructure for resolving disputes, tapping into resources indigenous to communities to prevent violence and reduce the need for police and court intervention.

2018

## First Mediation:

CMDC holds our first mediation session for DC residents, which takes place inside the DC Jail. CMDC receives Georgetown University's Baker Center for Leadership & Governance Innovation Award for this work and launches the first and only pre-release reentry mediation program in DC.

2019

## Housing and Reentry:

CMDC expands Reentry Mediation to DC's Correctional Treatment Facility. With support from the National Association for Community Mediation and JAMS, CMDC joins a learning cohort of other community mediation centers across the US to work at the intersection of mediation and housing security.

2021

## New Programs:

We launched Conflict Coaching and a new Community Mediation Ambassador Training Program to deepen skill-building and connection opportunities for partners and community members.

2020

## Response to Pandemic:

CMDC trains 8 new mediators and builds out online mediation and training opportunities in less than two weeks to increase access to our services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2016

## Community listening sessions:

Participants note that the mediation field is dominated by white attorneys and that grassroots peacebuilding efforts are siloed by territorial disputes in neighborhoods and a lack of funding in schools.





# COMMUNITY MEDIATION IS:

- Free for everyone in DC
- Voluntary
- Confidential
- A tool to make collaborative decisions
- Supported by non-judgmental mediators
- Available for any type of dispute including neighborhood disputes, workplace issues, roommate or housemate disagreements, co-parenting challenges, school disputes, reentry issues, interpersonal differences, and other difficult conversations
- Used at any stage of dispute, including to prevent conflict
- Requested via referrals from individuals, community organizations, civic groups, schools, police, government agencies, and others







2021: Mediation role-play during training





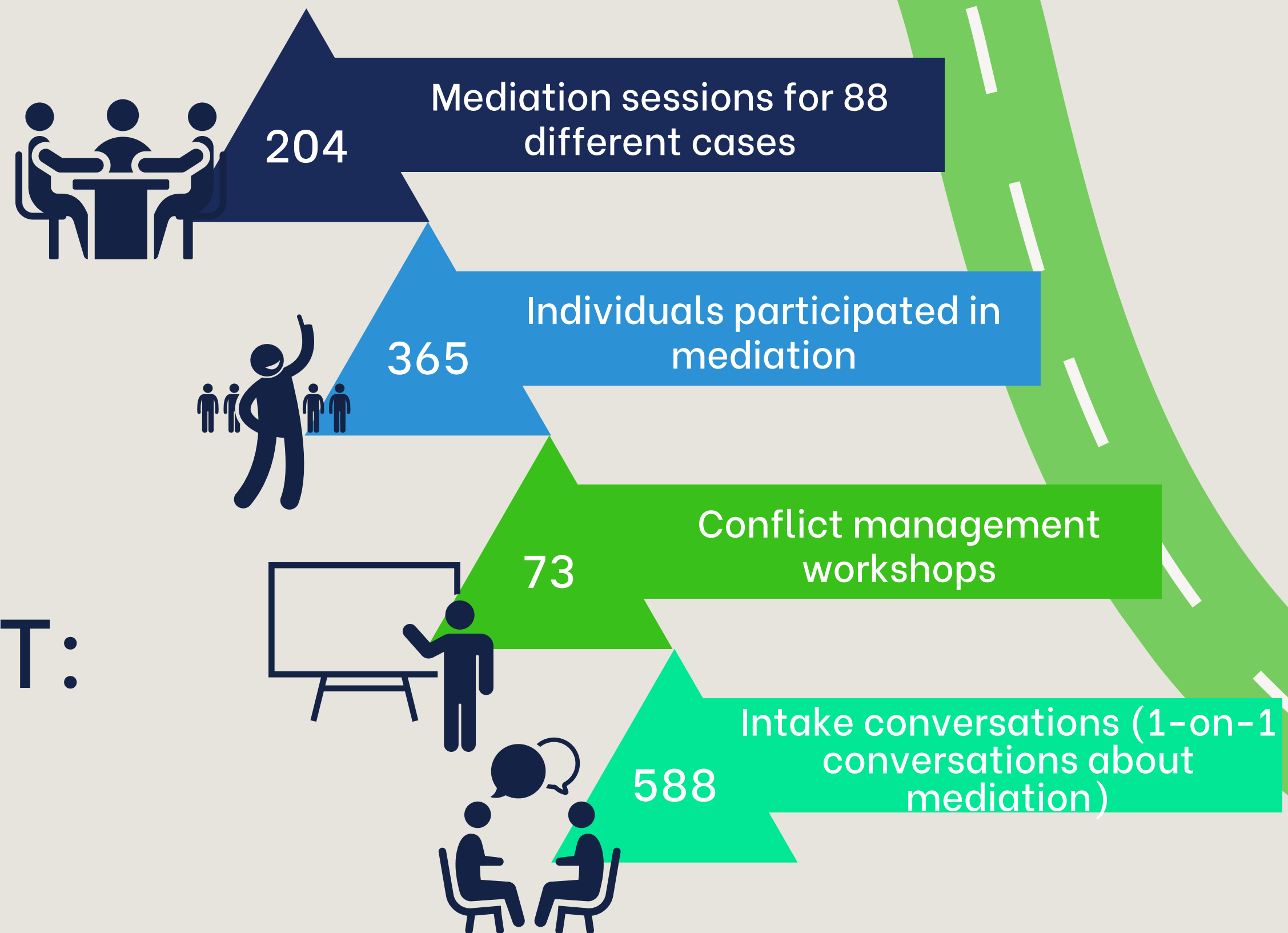
# SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Conflict Coaching: Beginning in 2021, CMDC now offers a one-on-one process in which a trained mediator and coach works with a participant to gain increased confidence and competence in managing interpersonal conflicts and disputes.

Community Mediation Ambassador Training: Developed in partnership with Two Brown Girls, CMDC's Ambassador Training is a three-part training series that supports community leaders to build on their existing conflict management and mediation skills and experience, exchange resources and support, learn how to make mediation referrals, and receive stipends for ongoing outreach.



# OUR IMPACT: FROM 2018 TO 2021



# IN 2021:

**170** individuals  
participated in mediation

**2x** as many as 2020

**4x** as many as 2019



“Y’all [mediators] was asking the right questions and stopped me from just focusing on myself. It helped me stop thinking just for me and to be more patient and empathetic. I got to hear the other person’s perspective.” – Participant

“I wanted to do something different. A lot of us are not used to just talking. Mediation was really good for me and I think a lot of other people would need it.” – Participant

“We know we need to now actually do things together and have time where we sit back and just communicate. [Mediation] did help me a lot. We still not perfect; we still have our issues but they’re minute now because the respect level has shifted and there’s no bitterness.” – Participant



# MEET OUR STAFF

Our staff is small but mighty! They do the essential coordination and outreach work needed to keep our organization both limber and responsive.



Caroline Cragin  
Executive Director



Maab Yasin  
Mediation & Training  
Coordinator



Alesia Venese  
Outreach Coordinator





2021: CMDC volunteer gathering



# OUR BOARD

- Natalie Bamdad
- Paul Johnson
- Clayton Aristotle Rosenberg
- Jordan Robinson

A big thanks to our 2021 Board of Directors, mediators, ambassadors, and all volunteers who have dedicated time, effort, and creativity in helping CMDC become the preeminent mediation organization in DC:



# AND VOLUNTEERS

Active Mediators &/or Conflict Coaches:

Akida Jones Mensah  
Astrea Somarriba  
Carissa Janis  
Cawanna King  
Celsey Graham  
Charnal Chaney  
Daniel Dykes  
Darlene Gamble  
David Foster  
Donzell Robinson  
Jason Amirhadji  
Jeffery Kearney  
Kayla Elson  
Keyarnna Davis  
Lauren Javins  
Monique Riviere  
Sadia White  
Safi Harriott  
Sal Corbin  
Sheila Clark-Coleman  
Sherri Davis  
Tracee Ford

Inaugural CMDC Ambassadors & Dedicated Fundraising & Outreach Volunteers:

Angie Whitehurst  
Conor Dirks  
Pepito Garrido  
Phoenicia Lewis  
Shakela Brown  
Beth Sadler  
Carissa Janis  
Kate Whitesell  
Building Blocks DC Credible Messengers







Caroline (center) with CMDC Board Members Paul, Natalie, and Clayton (left to right) planning for 2021





# DONORS

CMDC relies on the generosity of individuals, government agencies, and foundations to grow our work and provide much-needed services and outreach. Thank you to our 2021 donors and to everyone who has helped us spread the word about mediation!

## INDIVIDUALS DONORS

Anonymous (12)

Amir Ansari

Karen Azeez

Natalie Bamdad

Renee Bellis

Caitlin Bokum-Fauth

Sarah Brammer-Shlay

Scott Brown

Emma Brownstein

Robert Chaloner

Zachary Chaloner

Shubha Chandra

Susan Chapman

Laura Collins

Diana Curtis

Susan Davis

Olivia DiBiase

Laurel Dieter

Caitlin Dimino

Conor Dirks

Brendan Freehart

Rae Gaines

Geoff Gilbert

Maribeth Giovinazzo

Barrie Grinberg

Vivian Hagerty

Alexa Hassink

Adele Hedden

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Jackie and Joe Palmer

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Lee McAuliffe Rambo

Jordan Robinson

Jasmine Robinson

Mark Robinson

Cari Ross

Margie Schaffel and

Peter Belson

Beth Sadler

Burt and Carol Schein

Leigh Anne Schmidt

Adam Sege

Mira Smith

Jerri Sternstein

Julia Stevens

Rhett Summers

Cecelela L Tomi

Ward Wisler Family

Hannah Willage

Gloria Williams

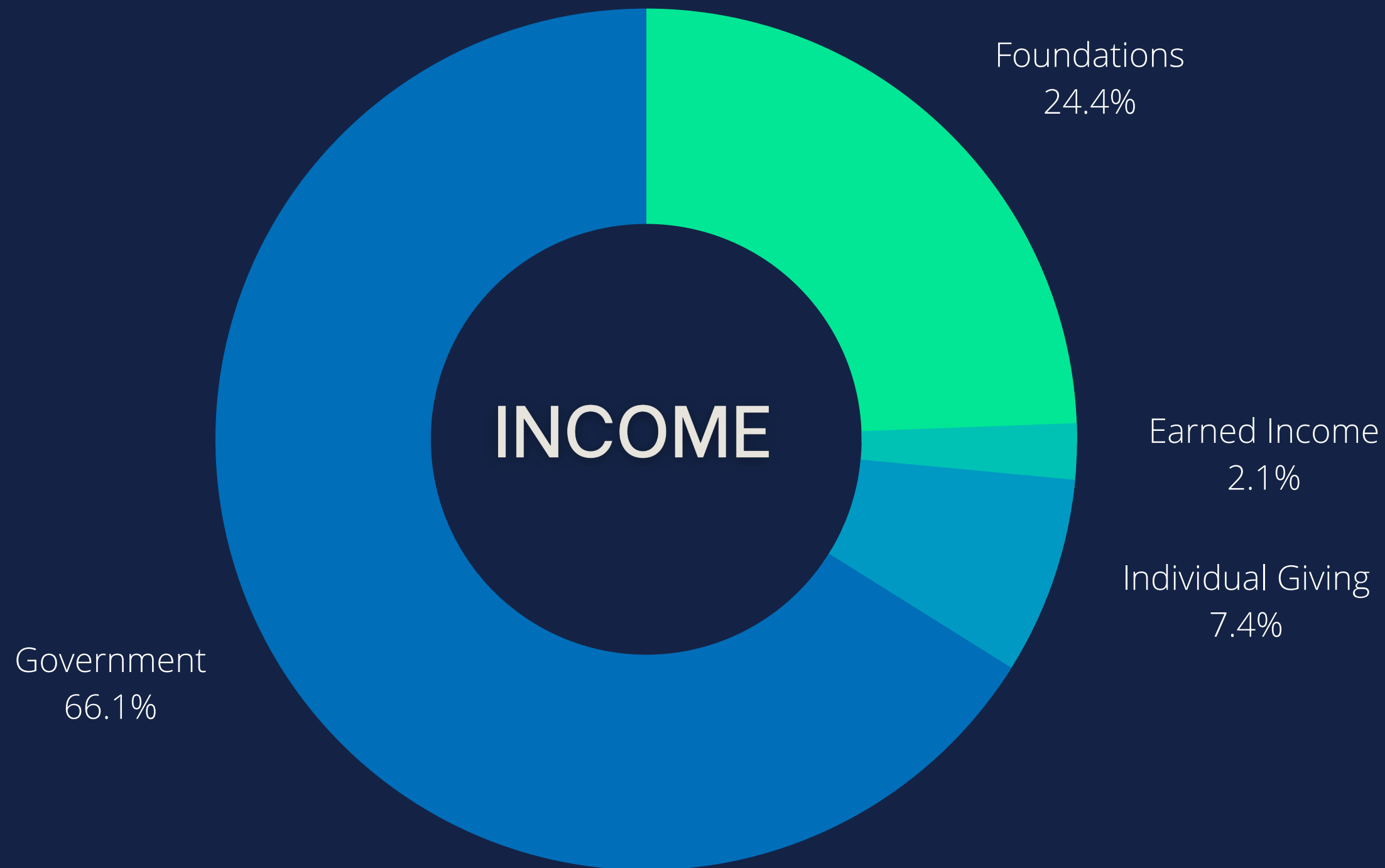
Jenna Ziesenhene

## INSTITUTIONAL FUNDERS

DC Office of Victim  
Services and Justice  
Grants

Lois and Richard England  
Family Foundation  
Fife Family Foundation  
Network for Good

# Funding Summary



Total Income: \$163,804

Total Expenses: \$126,385





Community Mediation Ambassadors  
after completing training