

With Impact as Our North Star

CLASP
The Center for Law and Social Policy

**Impact Report
2022**

Letter from the President and Executive Director

Dear Friends,

We recently marked three years since the start of the pandemic. During this extraordinary time, we have learned lessons, shared experiences, tested solutions, and revealed realities about the state of our economy, never-ending racial and gender inequities, a democracy under constant siege, and basic human fatigue. Throughout it all, **CLASP has remained nimble and responsive, advancing public policy that meets human needs and upholds human dignity.** At the end of the day, what we seek is impact.

We want impact that is tangible. Impact that is transformative and durable. Impact that guides our efforts at every level. For every challenge we seek to address, we want to create short- and long-term impact for the tens of millions of children and families with low incomes, working people, youth and young adults, immigrants, and communities of color across the nation.

We hold the truths that we need dramatic and fundamental changes and that people who are suffering lack the luxury of waiting for the perfect solution. We develop and support effective compromises that make our eventual goals more achievable and resist those that undermine the world we are working to create. And we never lose sight of that ultimate vision as we build the knowledge and support necessary to win victories along the way.



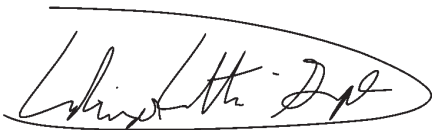
Indi Dutta-Gupta testifies before the U.S. House of Representatives' Select Committee on Economic Disparity and Fairness in Growth in July 2022.

2022 was a year of major changes for CLASP—from the transition of long-time executive director, Olivia Golden, to the beginning of my tenure as CLASP’s new president and executive director. Ushering in a new chapter, CLASP began a journey of realigning our vision and purpose, building on more than 50 years of impact at the local, state, and national levels. We are strengthening that impact by deepening our Hill presence and our partnerships to center people, equity, and our democracy in major policy proposals.

We recognize that **our struggles are interconnected and that solutions are often crosscutting**. This means creating policy solutions that build systems and structures to advance equity and make our democracy more responsive to people who are marginalized and excluded. For our solutions to work, we must deepen our engagement with individuals who have lived experiences with the challenges we address as strategic thought partners and experts. For people to trust us, we must provide valuable research, analysis, and evidence.

We remain ever grateful to our extended family of partners, collaborators, and funders. Your investments—financial and otherwise—have helped CLASP navigate times of uncertainty, opportunity, and threats. As we look ahead, impact will be our North Star, guiding our internal and external strategies, advocacy priorities, and collaborations.

In solidarity,



Indivar “Indi” Dutta-Gupta
President and Executive Director

“For our solutions to work, we must deepen our engagement with individuals who have lived experiences with the challenges we address as strategic thought partners and experts.”



Indi Dutta-Gupta and CLASP staff advocate for affordable child care on the Hill.

Equity Matters—Advancing a Community of Practice

Advancing a robust anti-poverty agenda that centers racial equity requires introspection about our work, partnerships, and collaborations.

Our [racial equity vision](#) at CLASP prioritizes building a sustainable infrastructure to clearly define and embody our unique role and value-add in the broader ecosystem committed to dismantling structural and systemic oppression and inequities. In 2022, CLASP created and put into motion an internal *Racial Equity Transformational Change Plan* and external *Racial Equity Policy and Advocacy Framework*. The process for developing both was staff driven and involved input from the board of trustees.

The *Transformational Change Plan* is a blueprint for advancing CLASP's internal racial equity work in the short, medium, and long term. Focused on five organizational priorities, the plan emphasizes the need to:

- ◆ Expand opportunities for **staff influence and ownership** around organizational and team decision-making.
- ◆ Advance different structures to support **equitable distribution of power** across the organization and grow cross-team collaboration.
- ◆ Strengthen **transparent compensation structures** for more robust, sustainable, and effective communication between finance and staff.
- ◆ Effectively **address microaggressions** through internal accountability mechanisms, policies, and practices.
- ◆ Infuse **community-building and restorative justice practices** to help CLASP center those most impacted in our work and ensure they are part of our decision-making and priority-setting process.



CLASP hired our first deputy executive director for racial equity, [Eddie Martin Jr.](#) The role was recommended in the *Transformational Change Plan* and was elevated to the senior leadership level to inform strategy and organizational direction.

Our commitment to racial equity is grounded in the belief that poverty in America is inextricably linked to systemic racism.

In 2022, deepening our engagement with people who have lived experiences of the challenges we address became an organizational priority across all five policy teams— [Youth Policy](#); [Child Care and Early Education](#); [Immigration and Immigrant Families](#); [Income and Work Supports](#); and [Education, Labor, and Worker Justice](#).

These efforts facilitated greater cross-team collaboration, shifting our external approaches and engagement in ways that had noticeable impact on policy solutions we created and advocated for at the federal, state, and local levels. CLASP policy teams prioritized elevating CLASP's leadership role in collaborative networks and expanding their engagement with individuals who have lived experience and organizations that represent them.



CLASP Income and Work Supports team meets with the Community Partnership Group.

As part of our commitment to advancing racial equity and centering the experiences of individuals most impacted, CLASP grounded our benefits access advocacy in with the [Community Partnership Group \(CPG\)](#), a diverse group of activists with lived expertise of poverty.

Youth Policy

- ◆ [New Deal for Youth](#)
- ◆ [Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth \(CCRY\) Network](#)
- ◆ [Policy Advancing Transformation and Healing \(PATH\) Learning Community](#)
- ◆ [Mental Health Advisory Board](#)
- ◆ [National Alliance for Youth and Young Adult Advocates](#)

Child Care & Early Education

- ◆ [Child Care for Every Family Network](#)
- ◆ [United Parent Leaders Action Network \(UPLAN\)](#)

Immigration & Immigrant Families

- ◆ [Children Thrive Action Network](#)
- ◆ [UPLAN](#)
- ◆ [Protecting Immigrant Families Campaign](#)

Income & Work Supports

- ◆ [Community Partnership Group](#)
- ◆ [Disability Economic Justice Collaborative](#)
- ◆ [Protecting Immigrant Families Campaign](#)

Education, Labor & Worker Justice

- ◆ [The Worker Power Coalition](#)
- ◆ [Paid Leave for All Coalition](#)
- ◆ [Good Jobs Collaborative](#)

CLASP's varied approaches to partnership and power sharing created rich solutions and impact across all our policy areas.

Deepening Worker Partnerships and Strategy in Policy

Building worker power is vital to advancing an inclusive and equitable economy and democracy.

"What does workplace justice look like?...It's about making sure that all workers can speak up, form unions, and improve their workplaces without employer harassment or retaliation."

– [Memphis 7](#)

CLASP prioritized relationship building and collaborations with workers. From providing state and local technical assistance and support to the National Black Worker Center on the formation of the [Black Worker Bill of Rights](#), to advancing communications strategies with [Starbucks Memphis 7](#), a group of Starbucks worker-leaders who were fired for organizing—and then won their case to be rehired, CLASP has been redefining our influence in the labor and worker justice arena.

Our policy advocacy efforts yielded positive outcomes including an **expansion of paid leave benefits** in the District of Columbia. At the same time, our [research](#) **exposing the disproportionate denial rates of Black residents** pushed the D.C. Office of Paid Family Leave to evaluate and address its application processes. CLASP continued to help lead the ongoing fight for **access to federal paid leave** through the [Paid Leave for All Coalition](#), where CLASP serves as a member of the executive leadership.

Recognizing the unique value labor unions play in the fight for worker justice and power, we continue to publish relevant and timely materials on the **significance and importance of workers' right to organize and bargain collectively**. This includes being an active member of the Worker Power Coalition advocating for workers' rights and the Protecting the Right to Organize ([PRO](#)) Act.



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CLASP came together with other progressive policy and advocacy organizations, unions, and worker centers to launch the Good Jobs Collaborative, a worker-focused coalition aimed at increasing worker power and racial and economic justice in the workforce system.



Reimagining Public Benefits Access

CLASP works to build more equitable public benefit systems grounded in the expertise and leadership of those with lived experience.

"Poverty is a policy choice based on institutional apathy."

– Maryann Broxton, CPG Member

CLASP recognizes that people with low incomes must interact with multiple benefit programs to receive the support they need. Our approach is two-pronged—fighting for improvements that are possible in today’s political environment and holding space to reimagine systems and develop transformational policies that meet peoples’ needs and guide our long-term advocacy work. Throughout our work, we have collaborated with our [Community Partnership Group \(CPG\)](#), a diverse group of activists with lived expertise of poverty.

CLASP and the CPG co-authored a [new vision](#) for the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as an anti-racist program**. We also collaborated with diverse individuals who have experienced poverty in Las Vegas, Nevada, and Baltimore, Maryland, to co-create visions of **community-driven solutions that advance economic justice locally**. Related to our evolving work in the disability space, CLASP partnered with a Long COVID research collaborative to co-author a [report](#) on **access to SNAP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) for people experiencing Long COVID**.

In partnership with the CPG, we also **spearheaded research about the Child Tax Credit (CTC)**, demonstrating how monthly payments are critical in helping families afford necessities. These [findings](#) and our [analyses](#) were widely published in local and national media outlets to highlight the importance of restoring the monthly payments.

Extending impact often requires building bridges—in our case connecting people with lived expertise to policymakers and other advocates. CPG members participated in the **White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health** and hosted a webinar on the five pillars that defined the scope of the conference from the perspective of people with lived experience. Representatives from 13 congressional offices participated in that webinar.

◀ [Parker Gilkesson](#) testifies before Congress on the [Racialized History of Fraud in SNAP](#).

A Transformative Vision for Child Care and Early Education

When parents have access to affordable and reliable child care and early education, the impact on their economic circumstances and wellbeing is immensely positive.



Indi Dutta-Gupta advocates for affordable child care on the Hill.

in 2021. The network brings together parents and providers directly involved in and impacted by the inadequacies of the child care sector to **build a racial and gender justice-centered child care vision and infrastructure** that is accountable to those who have been adversely impacted by systemic racism, sexism, and lack of investment.

CLASP 2022 Impact Report

In 2022, CLASP experts continued working to ensure all children have access to affordable quality care. We did so by strategically engaging Hill offices to co-develop important child care legislation; advocating for [equitable implementation](#) of the **American Rescue Plan Act funds**; [making the case](#) for **child care investments**; and providing much-needed [analysis and data](#) in support of effective policies. CLASP also educated policymakers and the larger public on the **urgent need to make real changes** to policies across issues to be more connected and better meet the intersecting and related needs of families.

Throughout our efforts, we ensured our partnerships and engagements at the local, state, and federal levels centered racial equity in policy decisions and proposals. CLASP entered a formal partnership with the United Parent Leaders Action Network (UPLAN) to **collaborate and strategize with parents on federal and state advocacy**. CLASP continues to hold leadership roles in the [Child Care for Every Family Network](#), which we launched



Policy Impacts

CLASP research and advocacy contributed to an **\$8 billion+ appropriation in the Child Care and Development Block Grant** in the [2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act](#), representing a 30 percent increase from the FY22 funding level.

CLASP provided [testimony and research](#) to the Maryland House of Delegates to **inform the legislation around Maryland's child care assistance program**, which now provides timely access to care and removed challenging administrative barriers for people with low incomes.

Building Bridges for Immigration Advocacy

To achieve racial and economic equity in the United States, our nation must remove the systemic barriers that immigrants and their families face in accessing critical supports.

CLASP continued to push for policies that keep mixed-status families together and ensure immigrants' and their families' access to public benefits, in turn promoting better health, economic security, and wellbeing. Central to our work was the CLASP-anchored [Children Thrive Action Network](#), a unique network of 130+ advocates and service providers at the national, state, and local levels who work directly with or on behalf of children in immigrant families to center children in immigration policy advocacy. Through CTAN, we are **consulting with immigrant families to inform our advocacy and deepen engagement with immigrant communities**.

CLASP mobilized with our partners to develop new solutions and continue to urge policymakers to advance more inclusive policies for immigrants and their families:

- ◆ Successfully advocated for the swift finalization of a [new public charge regulation](#) through collaborative public comments.
- ◆ Conducted nine **listening sessions around the country with immigrant parents and youth** to better understand their challenges and inform CTAN's future policy priorities.
- ◆ Coordinated several meetings between Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other federal agencies on the need to mitigate the harm of interior immigration enforcement on children. This led to the [revised “parental interest directive”](#) that will help protect and track parents and legal guardians in ICE custody with the goal of reuniting parents with their children.
- ◆ Created [36 state fact sheets](#) for partners and organized Hill meetings throughout the year, **leading 100+ additional members of Congress to cosponsor the [LIFT the Bar Act](#)**.



CLASP staff attend the National Immigrant Inclusion Conference.

In March, Wendy Cervantes wrote an op-ed, [‘We must stop family separation—and we can do it now,’](#) that was published and distributed by [otherwords.org](#).

Powering Up Youth Activism

The unwavering power of youth activism has served, for generations, as the cornerstone for transformative change around an array of intersecting social and economic justice issues.

"CLASP bringing us...to the table, we've been able to share our lived experience, and really talk about how some of these issues hit close to home, and how we believe in the solutions we're presenting."

– Daniel Rosebud, Changemaker

In 2022, CLASP capped off more than a year of collective planning and strategizing among youth leaders from across the country on intersecting issues—including mental health, immigration justice, environmental justice, democracy and civic engagement, disability rights, and safe communities. Our youth policy experts engaged in panel discussions, brought [New Deal for Youth \(ND4Y\) Changemakers](#) to the table with policymakers, and produced invaluable research to illuminate the benefits of youth-focused policies.

We ended a year of captivating and impact-oriented events with a **week of action in the nation's capital**.

CLASP and a diverse group of youth partners also **brought the demands and desires of youth and young adults to Capitol Hill** in 2022. We staged major events, including ND4Y Changemakers holding 30+ discussions with congressional staff to advocate for youth-centric legislative demands and the formation of a Congressional Youth Caucus; releasing a public comment to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on youth homelessness; and leading a townhall and festival on healing and accountability in Atlanta, Georgia. CLASP in partnership with Changemakers prioritized advocating for [23 bills](#) aligned with the ND4Y demands. CLASP youth policy staff also provided recommendations and influenced several bills including the reauthorization of the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) and the [Inflation Reduction Act](#).

Changemakers and CLASP convene in Atlanta. ►

The Inflation Reduction Act included a historic \$3 billion investment in environmental and climate justice block grants, which were advocated for by ND4Y Changemakers.



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Pursuing Community-Centric Solutions in Justice and Mental Health

Public investments in meeting basic needs such as employment, housing, and health care hold the most significant promise in ensuring public safety while ending mass supervision and incarceration.

"Adverse mental health is a consequence of all the -isms, or the Systems of Power, that exist. Solutions must address bigger issues, not just clinical concerns. CLASP is unique in that we look at the systems and structures that impact mental health, which is our value add in the broader mental health space."

– Isha Weerasinghe, Senior Policy Analyst, Mental Health, CLASP

In 2022, CLASP interviewed over two dozen community advocates, practitioners, and systems-impacted individuals concentrated in three states—Arizona, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin—to understand better **how state community supervision systems affect economic opportunity**, with a particular focus on parole supervision. These experiences guided CLASP in fighting for policies that are equitable, just, and meet the needs of individuals impacted by the criminal legal system.

To influence the development of **mental health legislation** in 2022, CLASP staff provided technical assistance, guidance, and research to congressional leaders on services for youth, providing mental health support via telehealth, broadening and diversifying the mental health workforce, and achieving mental health parity. **Some of CLASP's**

youth and telehealth recommendations were reflected in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act passed in June. In addition, CLASP was the lead author of the youth mental health and substance abuse disorders provisions included in the Health Equity and Accountability Act, introduced by Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL).

CLASP supported state and local-level youth mental health systems reform **engaging 57 people in the [Policies Advancing Transformation and Healing \(PATH\) Learning Community](#)** while providing technical assistance to four jurisdictions—Utah, Colorado, Virginia, and Prince George's County (Maryland)—and convening different sectors to collaborate on youth mental health policy.



See CLASP's reports:

- [Relocating Reentry: Investing in Community Repair](#)
- [Designing Equitable Community Violence Intervention Strategies with Employment and Workforce Supports](#)
- [Addressing the Youth Mental Health Crisis Through Equitable School-Based Services](#)



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A special note of gratitude to our universe of individual donors, whose annual, monthly, and quarterly support sustain our work and impact.



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ND4Y Changemakers and CLASP staff create a mural in D.C.

Our Mission

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advancing anti-poverty policy solutions that disrupt structural, systemic racism and remove barriers blocking people from economic justice and opportunity.

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