

# 20 20

## ANNUAL REPORT

Burma Center

---



# CONTENTS

## **1 MISSION, VISION & VALUES**

For a Thriving Burmese Community

## **2 COVID-19 RESPONSE**

Swift action in an unprecedented moment of need

## **3 REFLECTIONS**

from the Executive Director

## **5 PROGRAMMING**

THRIVE, Community Engagement, Health & Wellness

## **9 COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

Snapshot of Resource Navigation and Assistance

## **10 LANGUAGE SERVICES**

Interpretation & Translation

## **11 BY THE NUMBERS**

Income & Expenses / Streams of Revenue / 2020 at a Glance

## **14 SOLIDARITY**

Across the community and the globe

## **15 APPRECIATION**

Burma Center's Partners, Funders, and Board

# FOR A THRIVING BURMESE COMMUNITY

## Mission

The Burma Center empowers Burmese Americans in the Springfield and Battle Creek communities through advocacy, engagement, and education to support the whole person.

## Values

- Excellence
- Responsibility
- Community
- Empowerment
- Justice
- Compassion
- Integrity
- Sustainability

## Vision

We envision a community where Burmese Americans are valued for who they are and their contribution, while being empowered to thrive alongside the people in the Battle Creek area to create a more equitable and inclusive community.





# COVID-19 RESPONSE



## Disproportionate Impact on the Burmese Community

The number of Burmese individuals infected with COVID-19 is significantly high. At the beginning of the pandemic, an estimate of 19% of the COVID-19 positive cases in Calhoun County were Asians, which is mostly made up of members of our Burmese Community. To respond to increasing infection rates, Calhoun County Public Health Department created a task force in partnership with Grace Health and the Burma Center to effectively support and minimize community spread.

## Awareness and Education

At the beginning of the pandemic, the Burma Center created a Crisis Team to implement the **Knowledge is Power** education initiative to:

- Overcome language barriers,
- Debunk misinformation on social media, and
- Provide factual and relevant information regarding COVID-19.

The Burma Center partnered with Dr. Than Oo and Dr. Aye Mar, two Burmese physicians in Battle Creek, to produce a total of 34 videos in multiple dialects of Burmese. To further address language barriers and increase access to critically important information on COVID-19, we translated 67 important documents related to COVID-19 pandemic responses locally and statewide. We also hosted a COVID-19 testing event at the Burma Center parking lot in partnership with Grace Health, where we tested 136 individuals.

## Anti-Asian Discrimination

The Burma Center collaborated with the Michigan Attorney General's Office to host a webinar on hate crimes and reporting protocols for Asian Americans who were targeted because of anti-Asian sentiment and prejudice after the pandemic started.

## Face Mask Distribution

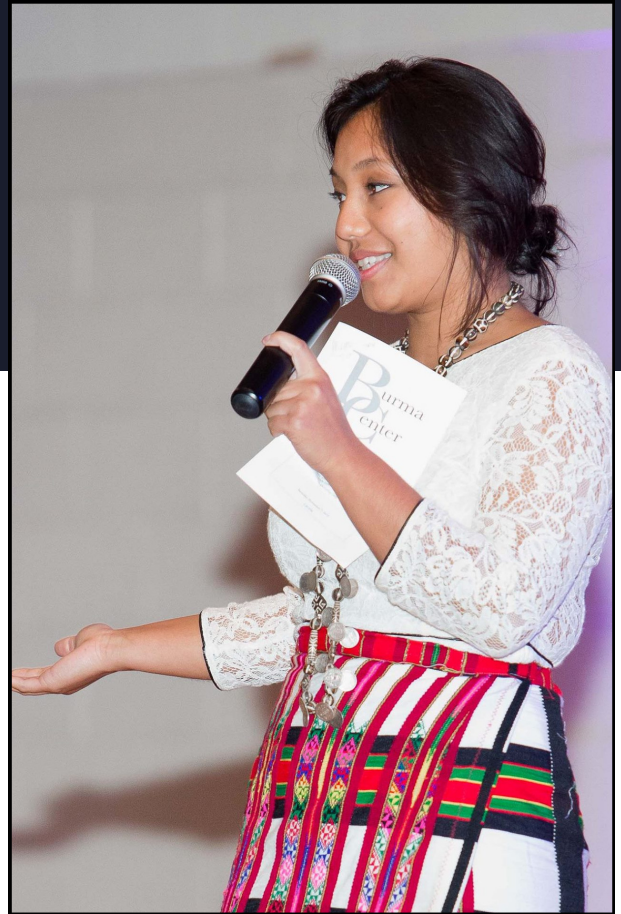
Early in the pandemic when masks were impossible to find, we partnered with Chin Baptist Church Youth Ministry, Seventh Day Adventist Tabernacle, and Grace Health to provide masks to families and essential workers who were infected with COVID-19. We distributed close to 500 fabric masks.





# REFLECTIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Reflecting on all the activities of the Burma Center in 2020, I am genuinely proud of our accomplishments. I am so proud of our staff for their flexibility, commitment, and quick actions to provide comprehensive support for the Burmese community during this difficult time. I am also grateful for the leadership of other organizations, funders, and individuals for the collaboration and innovation in helping us deliver the necessary services to our community.



Through various partnerships, we were able to provide timely information and services related to COVID-19, food insecurity, unemployment, educational support for K-12 students, job opportunities for college students, and so much more. We as an organization survived the pandemic because you believe in us and invested in us. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

What I want to highlight from this annual report is our five-year strategic plan and what you can expect to see in the coming year. We have four program focus areas: Health and Wellness, Education and Career, Community Engagement, and Family Empowerment. Much of our focus under the **Health and Wellness** program has been in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As we reach our vaccination goal in our county, we will begin to shift focus toward increasing awareness of and access to preventative and primary care.

Under the **Education and Career** focus area, we provided virtual tutoring for 42 students in the fall, and we currently have 72 students enrolled in our winter tutoring program. For the first time we will be offering a summer program for elementary students in addition to the secondary programming you may be familiar with. Content for the summer program includes teaching Burmese. Yay!



Regarding **Community Engagement**, we recognize our role as a bridge between the Burmese community and non-Burmese community in understanding and navigating different cultures. We have and will continue to offer cultural awareness training that examines cultural differences. We are also committed to collaborating and showing up in solidarity for other important causes. Quoting the late Dr. Martin Luther King, “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Under the **Family Empowerment** focus area, we intend to continue to provide support to our community through resource navigation. What is new under this umbrella is our advocacy work for democracy in Myanmar. Many in the Burmese community came to the United States as refugees. The current coup in Myanmar is bringing back some of the traumatic experiences that they themselves experienced under the same regime. More importantly, our community members are worried and anxious about their loved ones that are still living in Burma. As the Burma Center, we accept that it is our responsibility to help our community step into their power and channel their energy to take tangible actions that will help the revolution in Burma.

To be successful in the implementation of all the programs mentioned above, it is critical that we have a strong **internal infrastructure**. In the upcoming year, we will be focusing on board development, securing funds to hire additional staff, and building robust organizational policies and procedures.

Thank you for taking time to read our annual report. We appreciate your support and look forward to another fruitful year!

**THA T. PAR**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



# BURMA CENTER PROGRAMMING

The Burma Center's programming emphasizes the following five strategic focus areas:

## **1 / HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

Provide relevant and culturally appropriate resources, educational programs, and referrals to improve physical and emotional health.

## **2 / EDUCATION & CAREER**

To support youth, young adults, and families in their formal educational experience and beyond, to be prepared and better equipped for post secondary education and/or career entry.

## **3 / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

To engage the Burmese community, as well as the greater Battle Creek and beyond communities, to increase access to needed services and programs that support relationship building, leadership, and advocacy.

## **4 / FAMILY EMPOWERMENT**

To offer support for Burmese parents and families in their desire to provide what is most needed for their children, from cradle to career.

## **5 / INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITY**

To align various segments of the organization (i.e. staffing, facility needs, funding, board development, etc.) with the stated goals and strategies of the Burma Center's strategic plan, to ensure the organization is supporting the Burmese community in a way that is sustainable and equitable.



# THRIVE YOUTH PROGRAM

**T**houghtful  
**H**ealthy  
**R**obust  
**I**ndividuals  
**V** with  
ision  
**E** and  
ducation

As first-generation immigrants, Burmese youth and families experience a range of barriers within the local public education system, such as:

- Lack of interpretation and translation services,
- Cultural differences,
- Heavy reliance on technology and required computer savvy, and
- A complex US public education system that is challenging to navigate.

The Burma Center launched the THRIVE youth program to support students and families, ensuring that youth are learning and achieving their academic and social emotional learning goals.

In early 2020 the public schools' decision to conduct classes virtually as a result of the pandemic generated an urgent need for additional academic and technological support for youth. In order to meet this need, the Burma Center expanded our THRIVE program, originally intended for middle school and high school students, to all K-12 students.

The Burma Center provided virtual tutoring support to youth participants by increasing staffing via contracts with college students. During the summer, 22 youth participated (14 high school and eight middle school students). For the beginning of the academic year in the fall, there were 42 students who registered, with a few students on the waitlist.

To monitor and evaluate progress toward achieving individual and collective social emotional learning (SEL) outcomes for participants in the THRIVE Youth Program, the Burma Center partners with KYD Network to conduct the Devereux Students Strengths Assessment (DESSA), a nationally normed behavior rating scale. The Burma Center has also contracted with Formative Evaluation Research Associates to evaluate THRIVE programming.

# THRIVE YOUTH PROGRAMMING

THRIVE is Burma Center's summer and school-year program for K-12 students focusing on:

- Post-secondary education
- Career pathways
- Leadership, writing, & life skills
- Social emotional learning
- Music lessons
- Cultural affirmation



**"Every community should feel a sense of belonging in the greater Battle Creek area, and the Burma Center is providing this to the Burmese community."**  
- Community Partner



## VIRTUAL TUTORING HIGHLIGHTS

- Staff to student ratio is 1:2.
- Three tutoring sessions per week, for 1.5 hours per session.
- In each session, tutors conduct a social emotional wellness check and goal-setting.
- Every session ends with an affirmation for all students.
- Students receive one keyboard or piano lesson per week.



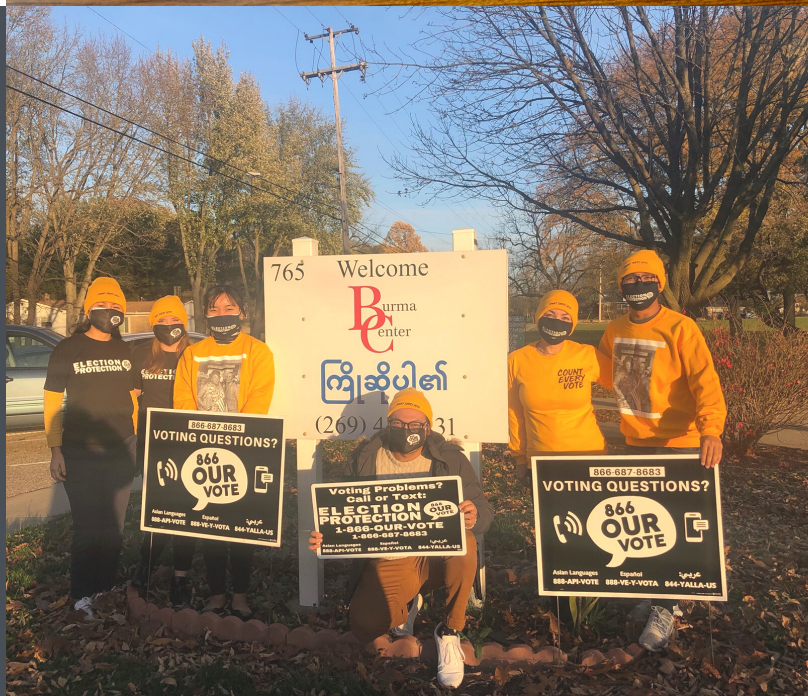




# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Burma Center collaboratively sponsored events promoting:

- 2020 Census
- Candidate forums for the election
- Voter education events
- Interpretation at the polls
- Job fairs
- Hate Crimes Know Your Rights



"The Burma Center provides highly valued services centered in the cultural nuances, values and needs of the Burmese community. It is empowering and affirming for community members to have this resource and advocate."

- Community Partner



# HEALTH AND WELLNESS

In 2020 Burma Center collaboratively partnered with others to provide:

- COVID-Testing
- COVID-Vaccine Clinics & Education
- Diabetes Education
- Food Distribution
- Flu Vaccines



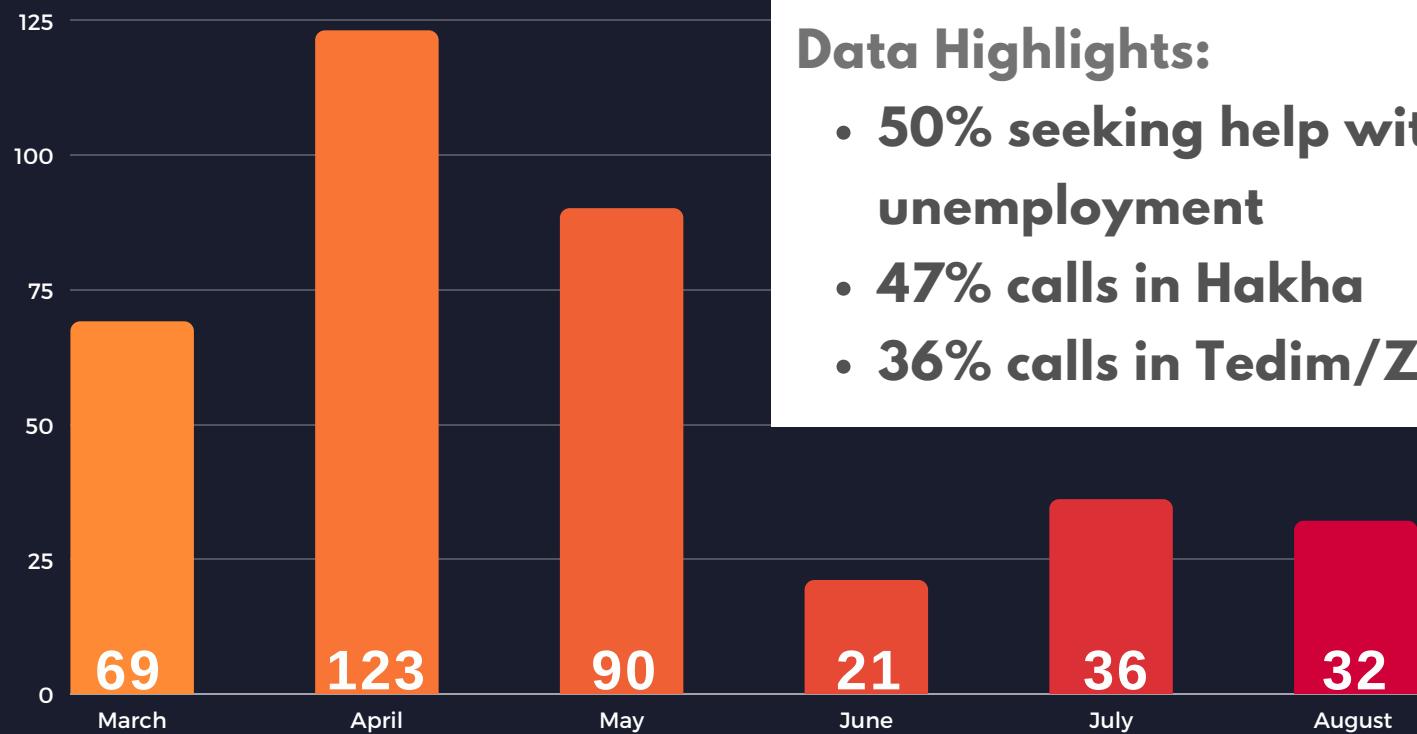
# SNAPSHOT OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT: RESOURCE NAVIGATION & ASSISTANCE

## Phone Calls: March - August 2020

**Total Phone Calls: 371**

**Data Highlights:**

- 50% seeking help with unemployment
- 47% calls in Hakha
- 36% calls in Tedim/Zomi

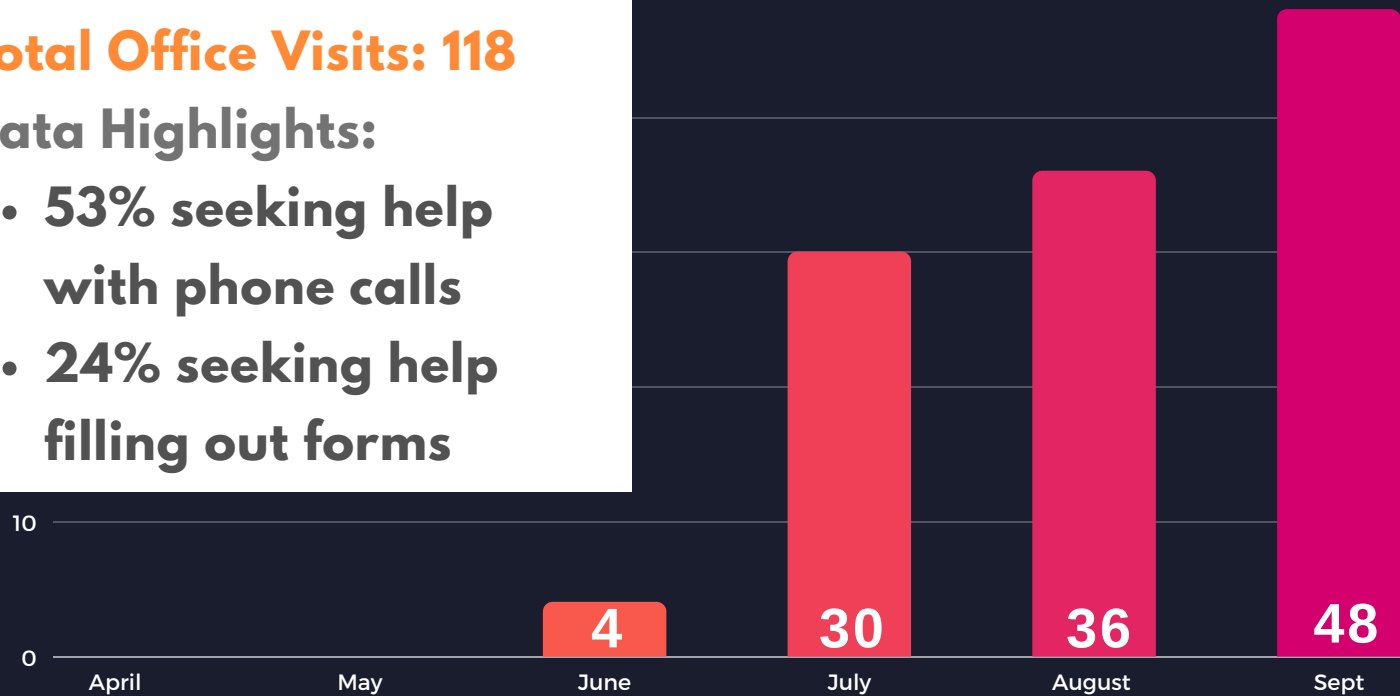


## Office Visits: April - Sept 2020

**Total Office Visits: 118**

**Data Highlights:**

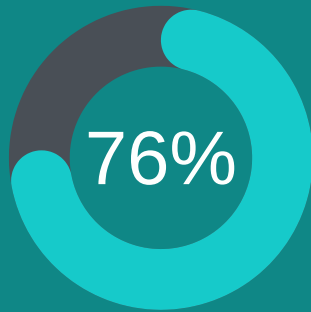
- 53% seeking help with phone calls
- 24% seeking help filling out forms



# LANGUAGE SERVICES

## Interpretation

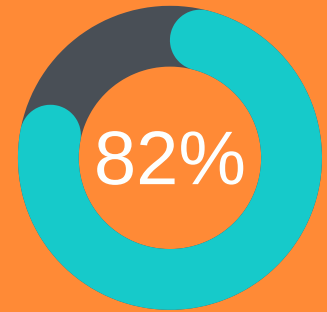
Health/ Medical services accounted for 76% of interpretation services



Interpretation services earned \$59,851 in revenue, or 8% of total income. Other interpretation services included education (15%), court/legal (4%), community (4%), and manufacturing (1%), out of 804 total requests.

## Translation

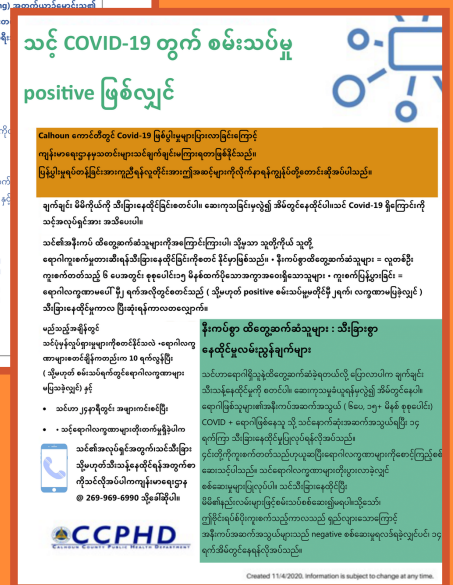
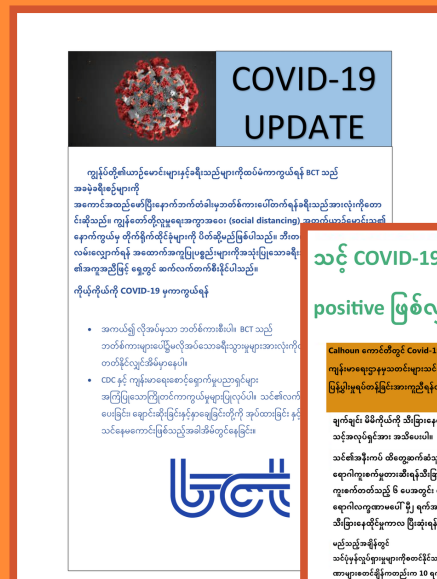
Community requests accounted for 82% of translation services



Translation services earned \$8,928 in revenue, or 1% of total income. Other translation services included education (14%), manufacturing (2%), and medical/mental health (1%), out of 99 total requests.

## special thanks

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, our interpreters were at work in person at multiple sites per day across the region. With the shutdown, that work ground to a halt. Though it picked up again slowly through tele-visits and phone interpretation, many of our contractors had to leave to find more reliable employment in the meantime. As a small organization, we also were not always able to rapidly maneuver the new technologies required. We apologize for the inconvenience and appreciate the patience of those who continued to work with us and invest in us. We are building a robust system now and anticipate a strong comeback as the nation re-opens.



# BY THE NUMBERS

## Income

---

General Business	\$354,285
Facilities	\$156,324
Educational Initiatives	\$211,644
Health & Wellness	\$10,625
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$732,878</b>

## Expenses

---

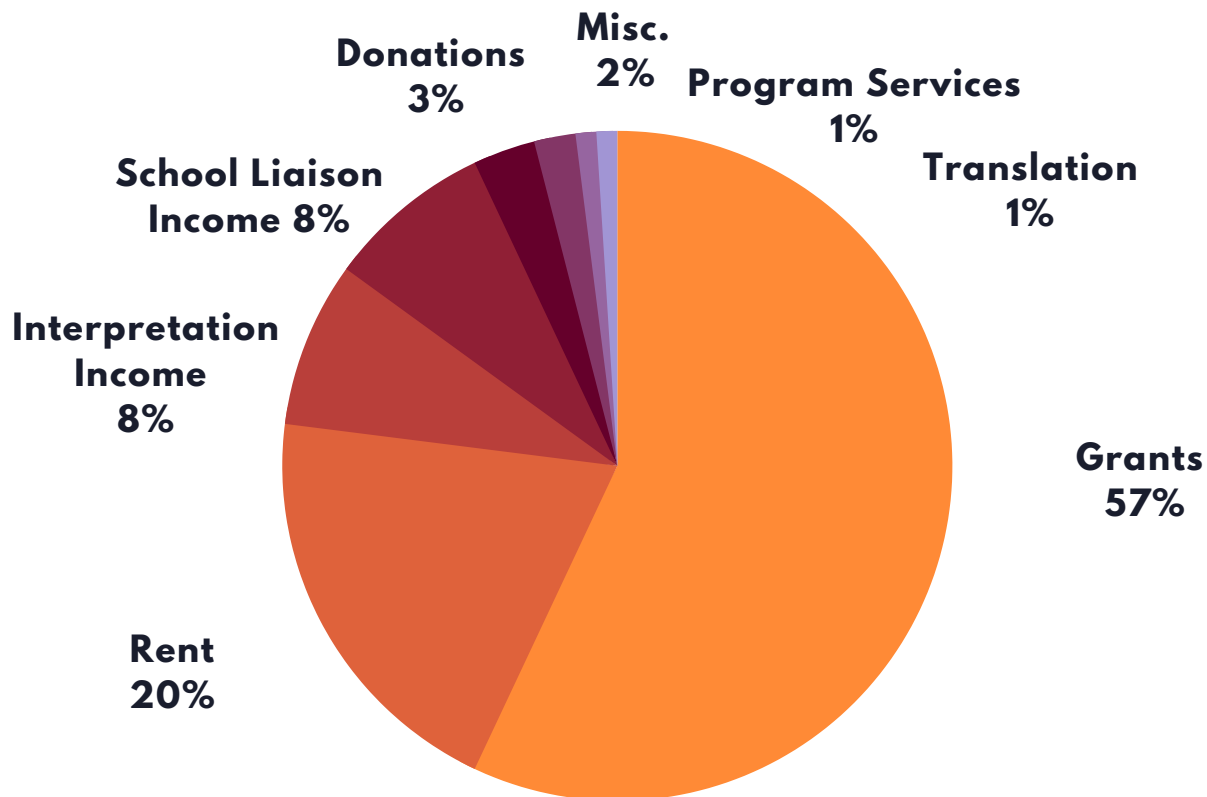
General Business	\$265,569
Facilities	\$141,869
Educational Initiatives	\$75,971
Health & Wellness	\$3,305
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$486,714</b>





# STREAMS OF REVENUE

## By Percentage



## By Amount

Grants	\$419,357
Rent	\$143,291
Interpretation Income	\$59,851
School Liaison Income	\$55,918
Donations	\$19,563
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$16,785
Program Services Income	\$9,185
Translation Income	\$8,928
Total Income	\$732,878



# AT A GLANCE

The local community and funders supported the Burma Center during this most difficult year, which enabled:

**\$246 K**  
**SURPLUS**

---

The responsiveness of the community and funders made up for a budgeted operational deficit and will support programming in 2021.

**43%**  
**EARNED INCOME**

---

Burma Center brought in \$313,521 in earned income. Grants account for slightly more than half of the Burma Center's total revenue (57% or \$419,357).

**\$14.5 K**  
**FACILITIES PROFIT**

---

This year the revenue from the Burma Center facilities brought in \$14,455 profit and accounted for 21% of total income.





# MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY

As a child of Burma who left the country many years ago, it broke my heart learning about the coup on February 1, 2021. As we struggled to comprehend the significance of what has occurred, we gathered at Sojourner Truth Monument Park to create a space for us and demonstrate our solidarity with the people back in Burma. It was the least that we could do from afar.

What felt different, powerful, and healing about this gathering was the people that came to stand with us.

In organizing the event, I saw unity and collaboration among the different ethnic groups from Burma. We had people come from Lansing, Grand Rapids, and Ann Arbor. I saw my non-Burmese friends and representatives of different organizations that came out in the cold to chant with us and to hold us in our pain. We had elected officials (both mayors from the city of Springfield and Battle Creek, our state representative and senator), city government leaders, and law enforcement came out to support us.

Someone asked me, 'What's the point in hosting this demonstration? What can you actually achieve?' Here is my answer: As a Burmese person, I felt seen, valued, and cared for by the people of Battle Creek. This feeling is overwhelmingly comforting and healing. For that I thank all of the people in this community that have worked tirelessly to make a city this inclusive and equitable community. Thank you. I felt it, and I am proud to call Battle Creek my home. #collectiveliberation

Tha. T. Par, Burma Center Executive Director  
February 2021



# APPRECIATION FOR OUR PARTNERS & FUNDERS

2020 was an unparalleled year of grief and joy. Strong partnerships with the organizations and individuals listed here, enabled the Burma Center to advance our mission and strategy. We could only do this through genuine collaboration, and we are grateful for the meaningful partnerships we built and deepened throughout the year.

## A Special Thank You...

### 2020 Funders

Battle Creek Community Foundation  
Battle Creek Unlimited  
Battle Creek Chin Baptist Church  
Comcast  
Guido A. and Elizabeth H. Binda Foundation  
Miller Foundation  
Rising Asian Family  
United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo  
Region  
W. K. Kellogg Foundation

### 2020 Donors

Katie Bagale  
Kathy Grosso  
Andy Hemboldt  
Mary Lian  
Brent Reid  
Nicole Rinckey  
Martha Thawngmung  
Ken Tschuiyama

### 2020 Community Partners

- African American Collaborative
- Battle Creek Chin Baptist Church
- Battle Creek Public Schools
- BC Pulse
- Bronson
- Carewell Services
- Calhoun Area Career Center
- Calhoun County Health Department
- Catalyzing Community Giving
- Gilmore Piano Lab
- Grace Health
- KYD Network
- Lakeview School District
- Michigan Department of Civil Rights
- Michigan Immigrants Rights Center
- Michigan Secretary of State
- New Level Sports Ministries
- Prairie Farms
- RISE
- Seventh Day Adventist Tabernacle
- South Michigan Food Bank
- Southwestern Michigan Urban League
- Summit Pointe
- TRHT
- The Truth & Titus Collective
- United Way the of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region
- Voces

# IN GRATITUDE TO OUR VOLUNTEER BOARD

Our board members are essential to the work of the Burma Center. In 2020, three of our volunteers completed their time of service. For them and for their efforts on our behalf, we express our special gratitude.

*thank you*

*for believing in our mission,  
offering invaluable support,  
and leading our path to success*



**Ken Tsuchiyama**  
6 years of service



**Christina Sawnsset**  
6 years of service



**Joy Chase**  
6 years of service

## Board of Directors

Christina Khim  
Brent Reid

Vicki Rivera  
Tluang Mawi  
Khuatinthang Hlawnceu

Kate Staib  
David Laisum



# YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Burma Center is committed to honoring the dignity and range of experiences of all Burmese community members in the Battle Creek area.

Through deep partnership and trust with others, the Burma Center is actively working to embody its values of community, empowerment, justice, compassion, integrity, sustainability, excellence, and responsibility.

**Please help us in this endeavor. Your financial contribution will support our programs and much, much more!**

## HOW TO GIVE TO THE BURMA CENTER

ONLINE – [BurmaCenterUSA.org/donate](https://BurmaCenterUSA.org/donate)

BY MAIL – Send a check to Burma Center, 765 Upton Ave, Springfield, MI 49037

BY PHONE – Give us a call at (269) 441-1131

## FIND US

[BurmaCenterUSA.org](https://BurmaCenterUSA.org)

