



Expanding Immigrant and Refugee Funding in Minnesota

What Foundations and Nonprofits Can Do

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**GRANTMAKERS
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The author of this report would like to dedicate this report to the memory of Nancy Latimer who dedicated her life to family and to enriching the lives of others through her caring, intelligence, and quiet leadership.

About the Author

Jocelyn Ancheta joined the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation in October 2005. As program officer, she manages *Healthy Together: Creating Community with New Americans*, a grantmaking initiative addressing the intersection of three important determinants of health: social connectedness, social adjustment and immigrant integration. Prior to joining the Foundation, she researched and wrote *Immigrant and Refugee Funding Trends in Minnesota*, published by GCIR. Jocelyn was a program officer in Children and Families at The McKnight Foundation for almost 11 years, where she managed Community Support and Connections; the VMB Awards in Human Services; Family Loan Program; collaborative research on eating disorders; and women's legal services. She worked at the Minnesota Department of Traffic Safety as a safety program coordinator monitoring grants in community-based traffic safety programs and emergency medical services. Other nonprofit positions included community worker with Catholic Charities, legal advocate with the Domestic Abuse Project, and project manager for Metro Deaf Senior Citizens. She holds a master's degree from the University of Minnesota, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, and a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota, College of Education/Park and Recreation Administration.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Immigrant and refugee issues have become increasingly significant for Minnesota. For many decades Minnesota was able to take a back seat as other regions of the country wrestled with the challenges that come with immigration. Recent demographic trends, however, make immigration a front-burner issue for the state. During the 1990s alone, Minnesota’s foreign-born population doubled. The resettlement of thousands of refugees from Southeast Asia, Africa, and the former Soviet Union—combined with increased migration from Latin America—have made the state a major player in the immigration landscape and compelled regional foundations to consider how they could best serve new populations in both urban and rural communities.

In this context, GCIR embarked on this research project to understand patterns, trends, and gaps in philanthropic support of immigrants and refugees among Minnesota foundations. The volatility of the federal immigration reform debate and the growing interest in immigrant and refugee integration confirm that this research is both timely and urgent. Through improved understanding of current and emerging trends, foundations and immigrant-serving and immigrant-based organizations can examine their programs and funding initiatives to determine how best to meet the needs and leverage the contributions of the state’s growing immigrant and refugee populations.

History of giving

1. Responding to demographics-driven community needs. Minnesota foundations gave substantial amounts of funding in the 1980s, when African, Russian, and Southeast Asian refugees arrived in large numbers. Despite this rich tradition of giving, many grantmakers interviewed for this report expressed a need to respond more effectively to the state’s increasingly diverse newcomer populations.

2. Support for mainstream groups and immigrant/refugee-led organizations. During the 1980s, general-support grants went primarily to mainstream organizations, especially faith-based resettlement agencies. With the emergence of immigrant/refugee-led organizations, foundations began supporting such organizations with general-support and program grants.

3. Funding concentrated in the Twin Cities, sparse in greater Minnesota. Funding has disproportionately gone to support immigrants and refugees who resettled in the Twin Cities, leaving many newcomers in Greater Minnesota with few programs to meet their needs and facilitate their integration.

4. Most grants to immigrant and refugee programs made within existing fields of interest. Grants to support immigrant- and refugee-related programming are typically made through existing funding categories such as health, housing, education, and legal and other services. Rather than being population-specific, foundation funding tends to be issue-specific.

5. Immigrant- and refugee-focused funding initiatives. Reflecting national trends, only a handful of Minnesota foundations have immigrant- or refugee-specific funding initiatives. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation, The Minneapolis Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, and The St. Paul Foundation have all been leaders in this area.

6. Technical assistance a key element. Most interviewed foundations provide technical support or informal coaching to assist emerging and developing immigrant-led organizations. Program officers often take time to answer questions, explain funding guidelines, strategize, and discuss challenges with executive directors.

Current and emerging funding trends

Research through interviews and group discussions with Minnesota foundations, as well as with local government offices, revealed these current and emerging trends:

1. Fewer resources but higher demand. Many interview respondents observed that while demand for help has risen, public and private resources have become even more limited. Government funding has dropped significantly, but foundations do not view making up for these shortfalls as their responsibility. Moreover, trends in the foundation world, such as donor-designated giving, have put a strain on funding for immigrant/refugee efforts, particularly those that relate to advocacy, organizing, and civic engagement.

2. More information needed about emerging trends. A majority of the foundations interviewed noted that one of the biggest challenges was trying to keep informed on community needs and newcomer populations. The ability to stay current is critical to their ability to invest wisely in the right issues, strategies, and organizations.

3. Foundations making fewer risky grants and asking for more measurable outcomes. Because of pressure on foundations to invest in efforts that can demonstrate measurable impact, program officers are less likely to give grants to start-up organizations, many of which are immigrant-led.

4. Immigrant/refugee communities responding to their own needs. Many organizations, such as the Funders' Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities, the Hmong Women's Giving Circle, and the National Gender and Equity Campaign have emerged to fill their own communities' needs.

5. Foundations interested in continuing to support immigrant and refugee populations. Recognizing that immigrants and refugees have become permanent members of their communities, foundations interviewed indicated their interest in supporting programs that help newcomers, but the overall funding level is not expected to increase. Funders who plan to increase funding noted that the increase would be proportional to community needs. Going forward, overall giving will depend more on endowment and stock performance rather than on the issues.

Recommendations for foundations

1. Increase cultural competence among foundation program staff. Several interviewees discussed the need for all program staff—not just those with immigrant and refugee-specific portfolios—to become culturally competent on issues facing immigrants and refugees so that everyone could better understand the needs of these populations and make appropriate, effective, and coordinated grants.

2. Address gaps in service and information. Respondents highlighted the need for funding programs that build self-sufficiency, expand economic opportunities, and promote engagement of immigrants and refugees, including children, parents, and elders. Foundations can support language and education programs, health and mental health services, and other social and legal services. In addition, they can fund research on various foreign-born populations to guide program development and grantmaking. Finally, capital funding was mentioned to ensure that newcomers have venues to come together to create community.

3. Sustain investment in immigrant and refugee issues. As one seasoned program officer put it, there is still a great deal of “unfinished business.” Although philanthropic giving can never match community needs, respondents believe that flexible dollars, long-term giving, and more risk-taking can help immigrant and refugee groups build and maintain their capacity. General support and capacity building grants are essential to strengthen the long-term viability of immigrant-serving groups, particularly those that are immigrant-led.

4. Build long-term capacity of immigrant-serving nonprofits, especially immigrant-led agencies. Immigrant-serving groups need help overcoming obstacles to attaining and sustaining viability. Solutions include mentoring emerging agencies, providing technical assistance in a broad range of areas, and encouraging intergroup exchanges. It was also recommended that new agencies improve their staffs’ communications skills and develop grassroots fundraising capacity.

Recommendations for immigrant- and refugee-serving organizations

In addition to reflecting on their funding patterns and future trends, grantmakers interviewed also offered suggestions for the consideration of immigrant- and refugee-serving nonprofits:

- 1. Reevaluate mission to reflect evolving organizational capacity and community needs.** Given the evolving nature of newcomer communities, organizations should regularly ensure that their mission statements reflect a realistic sense of their capacity as well as responsiveness to changing community needs.
- 2. Incorporate a human rights and civil liberties framework.** Several foundations made this suggestion to help organizations contextualize their work and connect it to broader justice issues.
- 3. Shift to an empowerment-based approach.** Foundation respondents expressed interest in supporting the leadership development, civic engagement, and advocacy efforts of immigrant and refugee organizations.
- 4. Move from an ethnic-specific focus to a multi-ethnic approach.** Serving multi-ethnic populations may provide some organizations greater stability and reach. This approach, provided that cultural competency can be developed, might open doors to more resources and larger networks.
- 5. Strengthen organizational capacity.** This includes building the executive leadership, strengthening the governance, and expanding the funding base, such as accessing largely untapped resources for immigrant and refugee organizations, e.g., individual donors and bank trusts that support a wide range of charitable endeavors.

Immigrant and refugee issues have become increasingly significant for Minnesota. Although this state has not traditionally been perceived as one of the major immigrant gateways, recent trends make it impossible to ignore the changing demographic landscape. In 2005, for example, more immigrants arrived in Minnesota than in any of the previous 25 years, and Minnesota ranked second only after California in the number of refugee arrivals. These newcomers come from a diverse range of countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia¹ with a strong desire to build new lives for themselves and take advantage of new opportunities; they often also face limited support and significant obstacles.

These trends contributed to increased interest in immigration and refugee issues within the philanthropic community, spurred by several recent events: the resettlement of 5,000 Hmong refugees in Minnesota that prompted a coordinated response from government, nonprofits, and foundations; the introduction of an early iteration of GCIR's Immigrant Integration Framework at our October 2004 national convening in Minneapolis; the 2005-06 Minnesota Meeting's focus on immigration; and most recently, the federal immigration reform debate.

In this context, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation approached GCIR to undertake this study of patterns, trends, and gaps in philanthropic support of immigrants and refugees among Minnesota foundations. The Otto Bremer Foundation also saw the opportunity to build on the burgeoning interest and contributed support to this effort. We thank these foundations for their support and leadership, and hope that the findings of this report will both illuminate and reinvigorate interest in immigrant and refugee issues. This understanding, we believe, is critical to informing current and future philanthropic support of newcomer integration in coming years.

Immigrants taking oath of citizenship, Minneapolis Council of Americanization. Courtesy of Sweet, Minnesota Historical Society

¹ See Minnesota Department of Administration, State Demographic Center, "Record Number of Immigrants Arrived in Minnesota in 2005," available at <http://www.demography.state.mn.us/resource.html?id=18677>.



METHODOLOGY

The research for this project began in January 2005 and ended in March 2006. It was led by project consultant Jocelyn Ancheta, who was a program officer at the McKnight Foundation for almost 11 years and has deep expertise on immigrant and refugee issues. She is now a program officer at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation.

The selection of foundations began with the list of the 50 largest foundations (ranked by amount of giving) in Minnesota. It was cross-checked with the foundations that provided funding to immigrant and refugee programs using the Minnesota Council on Foundations' Grantmakers On Line database. Foundations that showed strong interest in the immigrant and refugee populations were also considered. Finally, a few foundations that were in the top 50 and did not fund newcomer issues were interviewed to determine why they did not focus on this population.

GCIR gathered information through interviews and group discussions with representatives of foundations in the Twin Cities and the directors of the six initiative funds around the state that comprise the Minnesota Initiative Funds. The project also incorporated comments from staff from Hennepin County's Office of Multi-Cultural Services and the State of Minnesota's Department of Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement.

One- to two-hour interviews were conducted with 18 foundations (Appendix A), using a list of questions (Appendix B) that were developed with guidance and suggestions from an advisory committee (Appendix C) familiar with immigrant and refugee issues. In addition to the interviews, GCIR sponsored community group meetings with members of the Hennepin County Multicultural Center, the Southern Minnesota Diversity Dialogue group, the Governor's Workforce Development Council (immigrant subcommittee), and the Create CommUNITY group in St. Cloud, MN to identify funding gaps (Appendix D). Finally, we reviewed annual reports from nine foundations (Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation, Bremer Foundation, Butler Family Foundation, Jay & Rose Phillips Foundation, McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis Foundation, Northwest Area Foundation, Sheltering Arms and Minnesota Women's Foundation), typically from 2003 and 2004, to help determine funding patterns.

Responding to demographics-driven community needs

Philanthropic support of immigrant and refugee issues in Minnesota reflects a long tradition of generous giving and responsiveness to the needs of the newest members of the community, including northern European immigrants in the early 1900s and Latino farm workers in the 1970s. For example, in 1925 The Minneapolis Foundation supported “Give Them a Welcome,” a community relations campaign to combat hostility against newcomers. And in 1972 the Bush Foundation made a grant to support a health care facility for the state’s migrant farm workers.

When large numbers of African, former Soviet Union, and Southeast Asian refugees arrived in the 1980s, Minnesota foundations responded with a significant infusion of grant dollars. It was then that many of the larger foundations in Minnesota—eight out of the top 25—began making substantial grants to address immigrant and refugee issues. For instance, the McNeely Foundation made its earliest refugee-related grants in 1981, giving to mainstream resettlement organizations to assist the first wave of Southeast Asian refugees. The McKnight Foundation made similar grants, and its board of directors visited Laos with one of its grantees. In the mid-1980s, grants from the Bush Foundation helped with the resettlement of refugees not only from Southeast Asia but also from Eastern Europe and Soviet bloc countries.

Support for mainstream groups and immigrant/refugee-led organizations

Giving throughout most of the 1980s went to mainstream organizations, primarily faith-based resettlement agencies (e.g., Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, and Jewish Family Services), as well as groups based on the settlement house model (e.g., Neighborhood House, Pillsbury United Communities, and Sabathani Community Center). These organizations received general operating support and program grants to provide multiple services to the newest community residents.

As immigrant- and refugee-led mutual assistance associations (MAA) emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s, foundations provided them general operating support and program grants. Many foundations made grants to groups that serve their target geographic areas. For example, General Mills in the mid-1990s began to support Southeast Asian refugee-led agencies on the North Side of Minneapolis.

Funding concentrated in the Twin Cities, sparse in Greater Minnesota

The majority of grants from foundations interviewed went to support groups working with refugees and immigrants who resettled in the Twin Cities. The Otto Bremer Foundation, which funds communities where its banks have branches in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota, allocated the most funds to organizations working in rural communities of Minnesota. Although a handful of other foundation grants supported work outside the Twin Cities, overall immigrant/refugee funding in Greater Minnesota was sparse.

The Minnesota Initiative Foundations, which consists of six foundations working in six regions outside of the metropolitan area, is one of a few potential sources of funding for immigrant/refugee-related programs in rural areas. With the exception of northwestern Minnesota, which receives very few immigrants, the other five Initiative funds have given some support to both mainstream immigrant-serving groups and immigrant-based organizations to provide services to newcomers. To sustain their efforts over the long term, however, many immigrant-based groups in rural Minnesota need additional sources of funding.

Immigrant/ refugee-related funding within existing fields of interest

With few exceptions (see next section), most foundations interviewed do not have a dedicated stream of funding for immigrant and refugee programs. They tend to give to services or issue-specific efforts rather than to ones that are population-specific. Most interview respondents indicated that immigrant/refugee-related requests are evaluated in the context of the issue, the needs of the particular community, or the capacity of organizations serving them. The categories of grants, in order of preferred giving and reflecting the foundations' overall giving priorities as of October, 2004, included:

- Early Childhood Education
- Mental Health and Social Adjustment
- Health
- Housing
- Youth Enrichment
- Education (Kindergarten-12th grade)
- Education (Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language)
- Capacity Building/Organizational Development/Organizational Effectiveness
- Parenting
- General Operating
- Legal Services
- Food and Clothing

The competition for funding through these foundation grantmaking priorities is fierce. Immigrant-led nonprofits must show strong governance and nonprofit management skills in order to be considered and awarded grants. In addition, they frequently must compete with more established organizations that have longer track records and greater capacity.

Corporate foundations took a similar approach in making their immigrant/refugee-related grants. For example, Wells Fargo Foundation channeled its immigrant/refugee funding through employment and economic development programs for low-income, gateway communities. Thrivent prioritized self-sufficiency programs because the company saw a need for new immigrants and refugees to understand how the economic system works. St. Paul Travelers Foundation, with concentrated funding in the east metro area of the Twin Cities, supported leadership and community development, as well as the general operations of groups serving Southeast Asian refugees. Fingerhut Family Foundation focused on promoting the self-sufficiency and the health and well-being of low-income communities, including newcomers. Best Buy Children's Foundation supported immigrants and refugees through educational programs to improve learning and technology.

In terms of specific populations, funding typically went to help disadvantaged groups, including people of color, low-income groups, or those facing institutionalized barriers to progress. Immigrants and refugees were often considered a subgroup of these broader population categories.

Immigrant/ refugee-focused funding initiatives

In recent years, Minnesota foundations have created initiatives specifically to address immigrant and refugee issues. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, The Minneapolis Foundation, and The St. Paul Foundation have targeted initiatives worth noting.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation's *Healthy Together: Building Community with New Americans* focuses on the social connectedness, mental health, and social adjustment of new community members. The three areas of funding are mental health/social adjustment, organizational development of immigrant-led groups, and fostering exchanges between new immigrants and welcoming communities through the state.

The McKnight Foundation provided a special opportunity grant for legal services and contributed to the Community Sharing Fund at The St. Paul Foundation at the end of 2004. McKnight's parenting focus area supports programs for immigrant and refugee parents to gain knowledge about parenting issues in the context of American culture.

In 2005, The Minneapolis Foundation focused its Minnesota Meeting on immigration. "Immigration in Minnesota: Discovering Common Ground" examined how national immigration policy on such issues as legal immigration levels, guest worker programs, and refugee resettlement affect Minnesota. Although not a funding initiative, the series called attention to issues facing newcomers in Minnesota and the need for the state to implement a coordinated response.

The St. Paul Foundation created the SpectrumTrust in 2004 (formerly known as the Diversity Endowment Funds). A partnership with communities of color, the SpectrumTrust Endowments are statewide funds that consist of a Multicultural Endowment fund as well as four community-specific endowments: Asian Pacific Endowment, Pan African Community Endowment, El Fondo de Nuestra Comunidad, and Two Feathers Endowment for the Indian communities. More than giving out money, Spectrum Trust engages communities of color in all parts of philanthropy as donors, decision makers, and grantmakers.

Providing technical assistance

In addition to grants, almost all foundations interviewed provide technical support or informal coaching to help emerging and growing immigrant-led organizations. Even when funding was not available for start-up support, organizational development or capacity-building efforts, most program officers said they set aside time to discuss challenges with executive directors and help them strategize around possible solutions. Program officers present at "How to Apply" workshops and also help connect grant seekers with others doing similar work. When funders have special initiatives, they organized grantee-only convenings as a strategy to evaluate similar programs, provide special training, or share lessons learned. Corporate giving programs make use of corporate employees to volunteer at various nonprofit boards, provide direct service work, or lead funding drives. Although these common practices are not specifically for immigrant- and refugee-led agencies, most staff interviewed indicated taking more time with these agencies to answer questions and explain funding guidelines.

CURRENT AND EMERGING FUNDING TRENDS

This section summarizes GCIR’s interviews with foundation staff, county and state workers, and nonprofit providers to glean their observations on emerging issues either within their organizations or in the larger philanthropic community as they affect funding for immigrant and refugee issues.

Fewer resources but higher demand

Nearly all interview respondents indicated concern about the decrease in private and public resources available to meet the increased need for support. In an environment of deep government spending cuts, foundations have grappled with their appropriate role, coming to the difficult consensus that it is not their responsibility to close gaps left by the loss of funding from federal and state government—nor is it feasible for them to do so. In addition, some respondents noted that corporate foundations, formerly an important source of general support, have shifted their grantmaking to more closely align with branding and marketing opportunities, and that foundations in general have less flexibility and fewer dollars to respond to emerging needs. Similarly, United Way’s shift to donor-designated giving—combined with the increase in donor-advised funds at community foundations—has reduced funding for immigrant/refugee issues. In this context, immigrant/refugee-serving organizations are finding it difficult to secure funding for general operations and programs, much less advocacy, organizing, and civic engagement efforts, which have always been harder to fund.

More information needed about emerging groups

More than half of the foundations interviewed indicated that it is very difficult to keep pace with the many new organizations that form in response to community needs. With so many nonprofits working in the field and with so many newcomer populations, foundations must weigh many factors in determining how their dollars can best be spent to build capacity and promote sustainability. Foundations interviewed also expressed the need to understand the changing demographics of their areas and improve outreach to new organizations. For example, many program officers noted that foundations need to have a deeper understanding of the emerging African immigrant communities, their needs, and the organizations trying to serve them in order to respond effectively. One senior foundation staff mentioned that her board of directors is open to learning about immigrant and refugee issues and supporting them but there is also a sense of “endlessness” to this effort.

Foundations making fewer risky grants and requiring more outcomes

Many program officers noted a recent trend towards grants that are less risky than in the past due to the need to invest in efforts that can show measurable outcomes. As a result, fewer start-up grants are made, and a greater share of funding is going to more established organizations with track records of measurable outcomes. This is especially detrimental to newer immigrant-led organizations, which have yet to build their capacity to deliver services, establish a track record, and design ways to document outcomes to meet funding requirements.

Immigrant/refugee communities responding to their own needs

While mainstream philanthropic organizations have been in the process of shaping their response to the changing demographic landscape, innovative community-led efforts have sprung up to address specific needs. For example, the Funders' Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities, a grantmaking initiative of Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP), concentrates specifically on building the capacity of Latino nonprofits. In so doing, it also increases philanthropic awareness of Latino issues and stimulates dialogue about how to better serve the Latino community. To date, HIP has made 12 grants totaling \$956,500 to 12 Latino-led nonprofits in Minnesota (including one serving the Fargo-Moorhead area).

The Hmong Women's Giving Circle (HWGC), incubated at the Minnesota Women's Foundation and now housed with the Asian American/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, is another example of community-based philanthropy. HWGC provides opportunities for Hmong women to invest in a joint pool of funding that goes back to empower women in the community. Each member of the Circle must raise \$500 annually from their friends, family, and colleagues to be involved in the decision-making process. In its first year of grantmaking, the HWGC raised \$15,000 to fund non-profit organizations in Minnesota.

Minnesota is one of two pilot states for the National Gender and Equity Campaign (Campaign) of the Asian American/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP). Seeded with a \$2.7 million grant from the Ford Foundation, the Campaign makes long-term investments to support local Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) grassroots movement organizations in their efforts to build equitable and strong communities. It will leverage resources to build infrastructure and support social change work through capacity-building grants and the creation of learning communities. Minnesota-based organizations led by and serving AAPI communities are eligible for funding to explore how their work fits within a social justice framework. The Campaign is supported by The St. Paul Foundation, Northwest Area Foundation, The Minneapolis Foundation, and St. Paul Travelers Foundation.

What's coming down the pike

Many foundations expressed continued support for immigrant and refugee populations, though few indicated they would increase giving. Those who did indicate an expansion in giving said that the additional funding would reflect the increase in the immigrant and refugees' proportion of needs within their giving target areas. For example, General Mills may increase giving to immigrants and refugees in North Minneapolis when there are more immigrant- and refugee-led agencies that work in those neighborhoods. All interviewees recognized that the proportion of giving to immigrant and refugee issues will reflect the size and growth of these populations.

Overall giving levels, however, will depend more on funding guidelines, endowment size, and stock performance than on the population-specific issues. In addition, as foundations bring on board more diverse staff, giving to immigrants and other people of color may increase.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOUNDATIONS

Interview respondents offered a wide range of recommendations to improve the effectiveness of foundation support for immigrant and refugee issues. These recommendations range from building the knowledge of immigrant and refugee issues within philanthropy to addressing specific needs facing newcomer populations to building the long-term viability of immigrant-serving and immigrant-led groups.

A. Increase cultural competence among foundation program staff

Several interviewees discussed the need for all program staff to become culturally competent on issues facing immigrants and refugees so they can better understand needs and make appropriate and effective grants. Nearly all foundations interviewed have program staff from various communities of color and immigrant and refugee communities. One interview respondent raised the question about whether the main responsibility for immigrants and refugees should rest mostly on staff with an immigrant or refugee background or whether it should be shared among all staff to increase everyone's cultural competency in the field. This observation also relates to the question about how best to educate all foundation staff about immigrant and refugee issues, to avoid relying mainly on the knowledge and experience of immigrant and refugee staff members.

B. Address specific gaps in service and information

This section compiles suggestions to address gaps facing immigrant and refugee communities and the organizations that serve them. While these suggestions, in many ways, reflect the funding interests of the foundations interviewed, they also offer guidance to foundations wishing to learn about some community needs and identify possible funding strategies.

Self-sufficiency programs. Several program officers pointed out that government funding and general operating support from United Way would ideally continue to support essential programs for immigrants and refugees. Given the possibility of diminished support from these sources, however, the self-sufficiency programs most in need of attention include the following; these needs are more acute in rural areas:

- Language and education: adult basic education and vocational English classes.
- Housing, particularly units that can accommodate larger, extended families.
- Economic mobility: programs that help skilled immigrants and refugees gain the U.S. credentials they need to work in their career field; culturally competent financial literacy programs; and community development strategies that build on community strengths and leadership, and that involve unconventional partners like business.
- Early childhood education: expansion of evening and weekend child care; non-traditional hours of care (evenings, weekends); training to informal care providers, e.g., immigrant/refugee elders, especially in the care of infants and toddlers; cultural competency training to all child-care providers; and development of training curriculum and resources to improve school readiness for children receiving informal child care from family members.

Research on various immigrant and refugee populations. In addition to demographic information about immigrant and refugee communities, foundation program officers are constantly in need of more easily accessible background information about the various groups, including their history, inter- and intra-

group dynamics, and current needs. Such information provides hard data on which to base funding decisions.

Organizing, advocacy, and civic engagement. Such activities give voice directly to immigrants and refugees, engage them in decision-making processes that affect the rights and opportunities available to their families and communities, and facilitate their full participation in civil society.

Health and mental health programs. In addition to increasing access to health care for disadvantaged groups, informants identified the following service gaps for immigrants and refugees in Minnesota: (a) cultural competency of mental health and other health-related issues; (b) HIV+ and AIDS prevention efforts to combat this disease that is so prevalent in African immigrant and refugee communities; and (c) programs for seniors and elders to help reduce isolation and improve mental health and well-being.

Programs for transition-age youth. Immigrant and refugee youth, ages 16 to 22, have less access to programs that help them transition into adulthood. Such programs include academic ESL, mentorship programs, enrichment programs outside of school hours, and programs to promote cultural retention.

Parenting programs. Limited-English-speaking parents are less likely to engage in their children's education. In addition to language barriers, many immigrant and refugee parents may not have familiarity with the school system and how their involvement may benefit their children. More programs are needed to help schools understand different immigrant and refugee communities and how to work with them. Such programs can also help parents understand the school system, learn how to advocate for their children, appreciate why post-secondary education is important, and discover options for financing a college education, among other issues.

Legal services. Culturally competent immigration legal services are crucial, especially in light of severe government restrictions on funding legal services for immigrants.

Capital projects. Gathering spaces play a central role in helping newcomers experience a sense of community, as well as practice and showcase their rich cultural traditions. Foundation support for capital support is important because immigrant- and refugee-led organizations have fewer community members who can provide large gifts and fewer connections to mainstream sources of funding.

C. Provide general operating support and flexible dollars

Such funding has become increasingly scarce as more foundations move toward project funding and/or specific strategic directions identified by their boards of directors. This trend has reduced the availability of funds to support basic but crucial services such as document translation, interpreting, transportation, and general case management. Immigrant-led organizations, with or without funding, must provide these services because they build and maintain trust with the community and provide the foundation for other specialized services. Some immigrant groups, though effective, are simply too small to manage special projects; in such cases, operating grants are the most sensible form of support.

D. Build the long-term capacity of immigrant-serving nonprofits, particularly immigrant-led agencies

Building long-term capacity is a challenge for most nonprofits, and immigrant-serving groups are no different. However, some, especially those that are led by immigrants or refugees, may experience an additional layer of obstacles. To help immigrant-serving groups achieve long-term viability, interview respondents made a number of suggestions.

- Encourage inter-group relationships and exchanges among immigrant-serving nonprofits from emerging groups to established ones.
- Once trust has been established, have more mature nonprofits mentor emerging or struggling agencies.
- Improve the writing and communications skills of nonprofit staff so their authentic voices are clearly reflected in proposals.
- Provide long-term (three+ years) technical assistance and training for directors, board, and staff in the areas of nonprofit management, technology, and leadership development. (The Bi-Cultural Training Program at the Amherst Wilder Foundation for training new Southeast Asian executive directors was cited as a good example for leadership development.)
- Develop fundraising capacity, particularly in grassroots fundraising and individual donor giving programs.
- Invite community-based organizations to the table when issues relevant to their communities are discussed.
- Provide adequate support when requiring collaborations. Such support can help put smaller groups on a level playing field with larger ones, build the capacity of all groups involved, and create the environment needed for true collaboration.

Transition-age immigrant and refugee youth need more after-school programs designed to prepare them for the future. Courtesy of Minneapolis Public Schools Adult Basic Education Program, Bruce Silcox, photographer.



Although this study sought to understand patterns, trends, and gaps in philanthropic support of immigrants and refugees among Minnesota foundations, interview respondents also shared a number of ideas to help expand the capacity and strengthen the long-term viability of immigrant-serving organizations. These ideas are shared here for the consideration of our nonprofit readers and those who support their work.

A. Incorporate a human rights and civil liberties framework

A few of the foundations interviewed consider immigrant and refugee issues within the human rights framework. The Otto Bremer Foundation, for example, utilizes this framework to guide its grantmaking. Such a framework, in the view of these foundations, could enable a broad approach to underlying systemic issues and invigorate a coordinated and collaborative response, rather than a piecemeal consideration of individual issues. Consideration of these principles in structuring organizational programs and goals could broaden the pool of potential funders and partners.

B. Take a self-empowerment approach

Immigrant and refugee serving organizations could also take advantage of increased philanthropic interest in supporting projects that promote self-empowerment activities, such as leadership development, civic engagement, advocacy, organizing, and community-based philanthropic initiatives. (See, for example, the description of The St. Paul Foundation's SpectrumTrust, above.)

C. Regularly re-evaluate organizational mission and community needs

Mutual assistance associations, which started as multi-service organizations in order to meet the many needs of their community members, need to adjust their mission statements and focus to reflect their realistic capacity and the changing needs of communities. This could be accomplished through long-range strategic planning.

D. Move from an ethnic-specific focus to a multi-ethnic approach

Some groups—such as the Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association (IMAA) in Rochester, MN—have taken a multicultural approach from the outset, serving all refugees and immigrants. In addition, foundation and nonprofit respondents observed that a number of ethnic-specific mutual assistance associations, in response to resource constraints and evolving community needs, have made a successful shift to serving other immigrant/refugee populations in their communities. This shift is reflected in the services provided, as well as the composition of the board and staff. For example, Latino and Asian groups that served a clientele from one ethnic community now serve multi-lingual populations and have hired culturally and linguistically competent staff. Many also have multicultural, multi-ethnic boards that include skilled professionals (e.g., accountants and attorneys) and mainstream community members with larger networks to help with major capital campaigns and fundraising activities. As part of this transition, “elders” who constituted the original boards continue to play a role as advisory board members. If appropriate for a given organization, a move to a multi-ethnic approach could consolidate efforts to achieve efficiency of scale, appeal to a broader range of funders, and engage new partnerships and alliances.

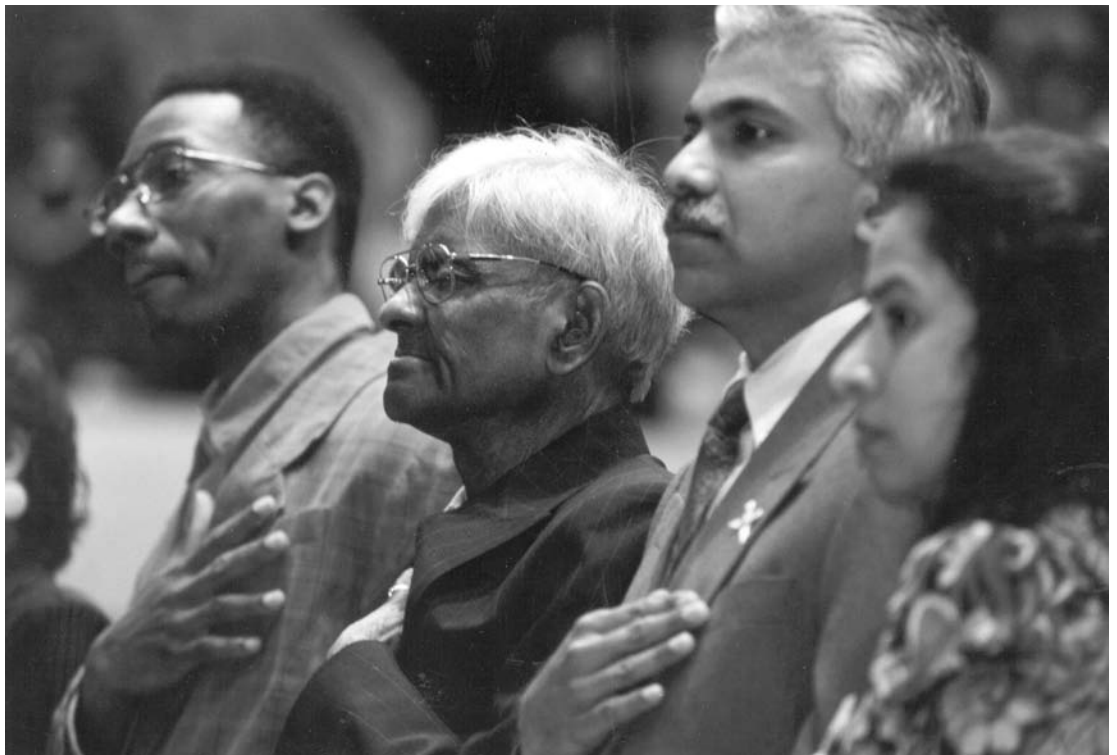
**E. Strengthen
organizational
capacity**

Interview respondents suggested several avenues for developing and strengthening organizational capacity, with the goal of increasing organizational effectiveness and expanding the funding base. These avenues were discussed under the funder recommendations section of the report. In addition, a bank-trust manager suggested that immigrant and refugee nonprofits establish relationships with bank trust officers who oversee giving for well-to-do bank customers. Funding from such trusts tend to focus on what a community needs in specific geographic areas and typically shy away from risky endeavors.

As federal policymakers struggle to reform the nation's immigration system, communities across the country are grappling with how best to respond to immigrants and refugees who are already part of their schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods. These immigrants arrive with hope for their future as well as special needs similar to those that prior generations of newcomers experienced. Unfortunately, their needs far outweigh the resources, particularly in light of recent government funding cuts and constraints on the allocation of foundation dollars. Yet many foundations across the country are finding ways to respond to these immigrant communities that are living in their midst. Building on their rich history of welcoming newcomers, foundations in Minnesota today are providing support to immigrant- and refugee-serving organizations within their current funding and geographic priorities, while a handful have created special funding initiatives.

But they can do more. GCIR urges Minnesota foundations to consider the recommendations of their colleagues to improve cultural competence within their staff, address a range of pressing community needs, increase general support particularly to immigrant- and refugee-led organizations, and build the long-term capacity of such agencies. GCIR hopes that this report will encourage Minnesota foundations to strengthen and expand their support of immigrant and refugee communities. Given demographic trends and the positive contributions of immigrants and refugees, meeting their human needs and helping them become full participating community members are essential to the current and future vitality of our country.

To realize their hope for a better future for themselves and their families, immigrants will need to cross ethnic and cultural boundaries and work together on broader issues—such as affordable housing and access to health services—that impact all of them.
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APPENDICES

A. Foundations interviewed or surveyed

Carol Berde
Executive Vice President
The McKnight Foundation

Jackie Copeland-Carson, Ph.D
Managing Director/Vice President
Philanthropic Services, US Bank

Amy Crawford
Executive Director,
Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation

José González
Program Officer, Bush Foundation

Bob Hybben
Community Philanthropy Associate
The Minneapolis Foundation

David Jones
Senior Community Relations Specialist
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans
Foundation and Corporation

John Kostishack
Executive Director
Otto Bremer Foundation

Jane Kretzmann
Senior Program Officer,
Bush Foundation

Ruby Lee
Program Officer
The St. Paul Foundation

Valerie Lee
Community Philanthropy Officer
The Minneapolis Foundation

Mark Lindberg
Program Officer
Bremer Foundation

Ellen Luger
Executive Director
General Mills Foundation

Denise Mayotte
Executive Director
Sheltering Arms Foundation

Mary Pickard
President
St. Paul Travelers Foundation.

Karen Reynolds
Consultant, McNeeley Foundation

Carol Robie
Vice President,
Wells Fargo Foundation

Jodi Sandfort
Director, Children and Families
The McKnight Foundation

Donna Sherlock
Consultant, Beverly Foundation and
Fingerhut Family Foundation

Minnesota Initiative Funds Directors/Staff:

Kathy Gaalswyk
President, Initiative Foundation

Rae Jean Hansen
Community Success Officer
Southern Minnesota Initiative
Foundation

John Ostrem
President
Northwest Minnesota Foundation

Tom Renier
President, Northland Foundation

Sherry Ristau
President
Southwest Minnesota Foundation

Nancy Straw
President, West Central Initiative

B. Interview questions asked

Patterns of Giving to Immigrant and Refugee Issues

- How long has your foundation provided grants to organizations serving immigrants and/or refugee populations? How about to specific immigrant-led organizations?
- What propelled your foundation to give to these organizations? What types of grants were provided?
- What type of current support do you provide to organizations serving immigrants and refugees? How about to specific immigrant-led organizations?
- What propelled your foundation to give to these organizations? What types of grants were provided?
- What type of current support do you provide to organizations serving immigrants and refugees? How about to specific immigrant-led organizations?
- Does your foundation provide non-grant support to organizations serving immigrants and refugees and those led by immigrants and refugees? (i.e. convening space, technical support, etc.)

Current and Emerging Trends

- What issues are emerging in philanthropy for these organizations? Are these different or similar issues to what you hear at immigrant and refugee community meetings, celebrations, etc.?
- Will your foundation increase or decrease giving in this area? In what way?

Funding Gaps and Recommendations

- What types of gaps in funding are you aware of for organizations serving immigrant and refugee communities?
- What information would be helpful for your staff and board to increase funding or begin funding other immigrant and refugee issues? How can GCIR help?

C. Advisory Committee

Gus Avenido Refugee State Coordinator MN Dept. of Human Services	Rae Jean Hansen Community Success Officer Southern Minnesota Initiative Fund	Denise Mayotte, Executive Director The Sheltering Arms Foundation
Kathy Fennelly Professor, HHH Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota	VinodhKutty Coordinator, Hennepin County Office of Multi-Cultural Services	Vee Phan Nelson Executive Director Center for Asian Pacific Islanders
José L. González Program Officer, Bush Foundation	Valerie Lee Community Philanthropy Officer The Minneapolis Foundation	Wai Wong-Lai Research and Information Services Manager, Minnesota Council on Foundations
Kaying Hang Program Officer, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation	Mark Lindberg Program Officer, Bremer Foundation	

D. Government and community group meeting participants

Hennepin County Multicultural Center September 20, 2005	Janet Beyer University of Minnesota Extension Service, Rochester	Paulette Ford Mankato Public Schools
Angela Albarro, Outreach staff Noemi Alcocer, Supervisor Nina Furman, Outreach staff Abdul Houssein, Outreach staff Hani Hussein, Outreach staff Sue Lor, Outreach staff Mali Menéndez, Outreach staff Tom Monjeah, Supervisor Ladaw Yusuf, Outreach staff	Collin Burk AmeriCorps	Taylor Franklin Northfield Family Services
Southern Minnesota Diversity Dialogue September 29, 2005 <i>(This is the registration roster; some people listed may not have participated in the discussion about immigrant and refugee issues.)</i>	Ernesto Bustos Centro Campesino, Owatonna	Maria Gaytan Workforce Development, Inc.
Haji Abdulkadir Somali-American Organization, Owatonna	Brian Coleman Cultural Diversity Network, Owatonna	Jack M. Geller Center for Rural Policy & Development, St. Peter
Abdulkadir Alasow Minnesota State University	Joanne Cramer Mankato Public Schools	Evelina Giobbe United Way of Steele County, Owatonna
Jocelyn Ancheta Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation	Marsha Danielson Greater Mankato Diversity Council	Trixie Ann Golberg Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Owatonna
Kristy Arend Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association, Rochester	Elise Davis Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Owatonna	Rae Jean Hansen Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Owatonna
Christine Baidoo Cultural Diversity Network, Owatonna	Sue Draayer Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Owatonna	Jennifer Heien Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Owatonna
Brianna Bengtson Northfield Family Services	Robert Duenes Fountain Center, Albert Lea	Sara Heyer Owatonna Parks and Recreation
	Marj Evans-de-Carpio City of Northfield	Michelle Holtorf AmeriCorps
	Dr. Michael T Fagin Minnesota State University, Mankato	Ginny Huntington Le Sueur-Henderson Public Schools
	James Favre Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation	Marcia Jacobs Cultural Diversity Network, Owatonna
	Margaret Favre Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation	Bob Kell Catholic Charities of Montgomery

Glenna Kristy Albert Lea Medical Center/ Mayo Health System	Tom Shea Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Owatonna	Mayor John Ellenbecker Mayor, City of St. Cloud
Heather Kuchinka Southern MN Initiative Foundation, Owatonna	Randy Studier Extension Regional Center, Albert Lea	Silvia Ferraretto Community Services Director, City of St. Cloud
Mary Lou Kudela Greater Mankato Diversity Council	Mary Jane Taylor Cultural Diversity Network, Owatonna	Steve Joul, President Central Minnesota Community Foundation
Tom Kuntz City of Owatonna	Lynn Tchida Northfield Family Services	Decontee Kofa Organizer, Today's Women and Counselor & Staff member, Sexual Assault Center
Melissa Langer Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Owatonna	George Thompson Diversity Council, Rochester	Debra Leigh Professor, St. Cloud State University
Linda Lares SEMCAC, Albert Lea	Jakki Trihey Workforce Development, Inc., Rochester	DeWayne Mareck Council Member, City of St. Cloud
Mandi Lighthizer-Schmidt United Way of Mower County, Austin	Stormy Trom Steele County Food Shelf	Niloufer Merchant Professor, St. Cloud State University
Janet Lundstrom Southern MN Initiative Foundation, Owatonna	Joyce Walker Winona State University, Rochester	Mark Ochu President, NAACP
Gabriel Manrique, Ph.D. Winona State University, Winona	Ann Walter University of Minnesota Extension Service, Albert Lea	Mark Sakry Executive Director, Boys & Girls Club of Central MN & Stearns County Commissioner
Daniel Mayan Blue Earth County Employment Services	Maggie Wolf Northfield Family Services	Joan Vincent Veterans Administration
Lindsay Mollberg Mankato Public Schools	Carol Zetah Steel County Planning & Zoning Commission	Bruce Watkins Superintendent, School District 742
Julie Nigon Adult Basic Education, Rochester	Governor's Workforce Development Council (immigrant subcommittee)	John Wertz Chapter Chair, SCORE and Retired Educator, School District 742
Rick Roy Department of Employment & Economic Development	Create CommUNITY November 3, 2005	Heladio Zavala Executive Director, United Migrant Opportunity Services
Bruce Schwartau University of Minnesota Extension Service, Rochester	Bill Albrecht Publisher, <i>St. Cloud Times</i>	
	Noreen Dunnells Chief Professional Officer, United Way	

E. Foundations whose annual reports were reviewed

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation (2003, 2004)
Bremer Foundation (2004)
Butler Family Foundation (2003, 2004)
Jay & Rose Phillips Foundation (2003, 2004)
McKnight Foundation (2003, 2004)
Minneapolis Foundation (2002-2003, 2003-2004)
Minnesota Women's Foundation (2003, 2004)
Northwest Area Foundation (2004)
Sheltering Arms (2003, 2004)

GRANTMAKERS CONCERNED WITH IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) seeks to move the philanthropic field to advance the contributions and address the needs of the world's growing and increasingly diverse immigrant and refugee populations. With a core focus on the United States, GCIR provides grantmakers with opportunities for learning, networking, and collaboration. Our information resources aim to:

- Enhance philanthropy's awareness of issues affecting immigrants and refugees;
- Deepen the field's understanding of how these issues are integral to community building in today's dynamic social, economic, and political environment; and
- Increase philanthropic support for both broad and immigrant/ refugee-focused strategies that benefit newcomer populations and strengthen the larger society.

Given immigrants' growing numbers and their expanding role in the economic, social, and cultural life of nations across the globe, GCIR has become an invaluable resource to many foundations, whether they have immigrant-specific funding initiatives or wish to incorporate the immigrant and refugee dimension into their core grantmaking programs.

GCIR provides members the opportunity to connect with diverse colleagues, build new skills, increase knowledge, and become part of a dynamic movement to fully integrate immigrants into U.S. society through:

- A one-stop center for high-quality Web-based and printed resources, including in-depth issue reports that help funders quickly grasp the substance of specific topic areas and learn about proven grantmaking strategies.
- Substantive opportunities to learn about emerging trends and share experiences and strategies through member-driven national and regional programs, learning circles, and national convenings.
- Technical assistance and consultation to members wishing to incorporate immigrant and refugee issues into their portfolios or seeking to expand or redirect their immigrant-related grantmaking.

In 2006, more than 1,500 grantmakers took advantage of our information resources and another 1,000 participated in our programs.

For more information, visit www.gcir.org or contact the GCIR office at info@gcir.org or 707.824.4374.

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Taryn Higashi
Ford Foundation

Victor Quintana
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Program at Shelter Rock*

María Teresa Rojas
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Community Foundation*

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