

10 YEARS OF DELIVERING FOR IMMIGRANTS

Evaluation of the Delivering on the Dream Project

2012-2022

Prepared for Grantmakers Concerned With Immigrants and Refugees

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About Grantmakers Concerned With Immigrants and Refugees

(<https://www.gcir.org/>)

As the nation's only immigrant-focused philanthropy mobilizing organization, we work with more than 140 member institutions, the 1,200 individual grantmakers in our network, our partners in the field, and other philanthropic affinity groups to advance immigrant justice and belonging. Amid continued challenges and significant opportunities for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, we are building on our 32-year history to drive short- and long-term immigrant-related philanthropic investments to advance our vision of a just, equitable, and inclusive society for all.

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INTRODUCTION

When the Obama Administration announced the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrant and Refugees (GCIR) jumped into action. GCIR leadership saw a critical opportunity for galvanizing, coordinating and spurring new investments and energy toward the immigrant justice movement and launched the Delivering on the Dream (DOTD) project. With direct involvement and strategic direction from GCIR leadership, the organization began a custom, relational effort to support locally-based funder collaboratives all across the nation.

For many in this network, DACA was the clearest bright spot and moment of hope over the last ten years. As the program began implementation, the possibility of DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Legal Permanent Residents) sparked further excitement and planning. GCIR's role in building national infrastructure to respond to the DACA opportunity was heralded as a smart strategy to leverage.

Over the next ten years, DOTD would go on to support 27 funder collaboratives in 21 states and re-grant almost \$17 million dollars from national funders. That amount was matched to produce over \$86 million from over 160 local funders for a total of \$103 million raised (note this amount includes grant amounts and administrative costs). The DOTD network began sunseting in 2022 due to a decrease in national funding available.



There was great foresight with GCIR to bring national money and encourage collaboration in the region.

The decade would also bring significant changes including leadership and staff transition at GCIR and the turmoil of vicious anti-immigrant and refugee rhetoric and policy from the 2016 election.

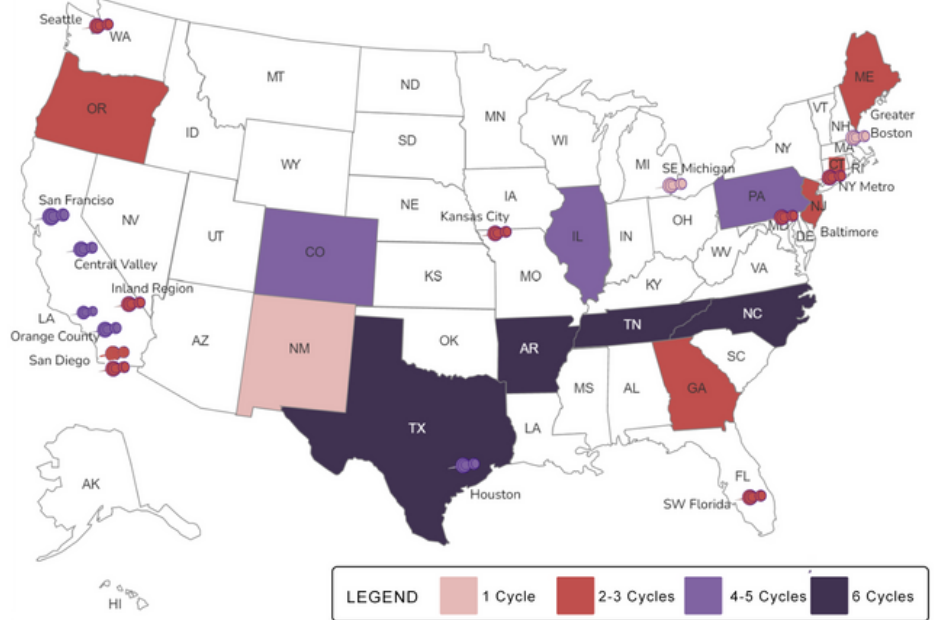
DOTD Timeline



Over this time period, which consisted of 7 funding cycles, collaboratives entered and exited DOTD at various stages with an average tenure of 3 cycles. There were 3 funded collaboratives that lasted one cycle, but the vast majority participated for multiple cycles including 12 funded collaboratives lasting at least 4 of the 7 total cycles. Participation peaked in 2017 with 23 sites participating in the 2017-2019 cycle— 8 of which were brand new to DOTD that cycle.

DOTD's goals are “demonstrating the power of the collective, coordinated, incentivized grantmaking with increased funder support and engagement, expanded field capacity and strengthened service delivery infrastructure, and significant outcomes for affected communities.”¹ With this report, I will review the successes and legacy of DOTD as a

Longevity of DOTD States and Regions



source of power for the immigrant justice movement, outline the benefits and challenges of this innovative model, and provide guidance and recommendations for pursuing similar models in the future.

¹ <https://www.gcir.org/dotd>

Longevity of Collaboratives

Number of participating cycles	Funded Collaboratives (participating years)
1 Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Mexico (2017) • Massachusetts: Greater Boston (2017) • Southeast Michigan (2019)
2 Cycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecticut (2015, 2017) • Missouri: Greater Kansas City (2015 and 2017) • California: Inland Region (2017, 2019) • Florida (2017, 2019) • Washington: Greater Seattle (2017, 2019) • New Jersey (2019, 2021) • Baltimore (2021 and 2022) • Maine (2021 and 2022) • California: San Diego (2021 and 2022)
3 Cycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New York: Metro New York (2012, 2015, 2017) • Oregon (2012, 2014, 2017) • Georgia (2017, 2019, 2021)
4 Cycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California: Los Angeles (2012, 2014, 2015, 2017) • California: San Francisco Bay Area (2012, 2014, 2015, 2017) • Pennsylvania (2015, 2017, 2019, 2021) • California: Orange County (2015, 2017, 2021, 2022) • California: Central Valley (2017-)
5 Cycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illinois (2012, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2021) • Colorado (2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2022) • Texas: Houston (2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2022)
6 Cycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas: Statewide (2012, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2022) • North Carolina (2012, 2014, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2022) • Arkansas (2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2022) • Tennessee (2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2022)

METHODOLOGY

This is an independent evaluation, and communication with GCIR staff was conducted primarily for planning purposes. The scope of this evaluation spanned from October 7, 2022 to December 9, 2022 and consisted of two primary sources of information:

1. Review of materials such as funding reports, DOTD memos, and other internal planning materials and documentation. Observation of one DOTD quarterly call.
2. Fifteen confidential, hour-long, in-depth interviews with DOTD collaborative leads, former GCIR staff and national funders.

Research questions centered on:

- The short and long-term impact of DOTD in the region
- The technical and administrative learnings of managing a network of collaboratives
- The potential and opportunity for relationship and community building among DOTD participants

This evaluation does not include an in-depth review of funding reports from the collaboratives, and all fundraising dollar amounts were provided by GCIR staff.

Interviews Conducted

Category	Name, Organization
Central Valley California Collaborative Lead	Allison Davenport, Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Colorado Collaborative Lead	Rachel Griego, Latino Community Foundation of Colorado
Georgia Collaborative Lead	Gigi Pedraza, Latino Community Foundation of Georgia
Houston Collaborative Lead	Zenobia Lai, Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative
Illinois Collaborative Lead	Alice Cottingham, Illinois Immigration Funders Collaborative
Maine Collaborative Lead	Shima Kabirigi, Maine Initiatives/Immigrant and Refugee Funders Collaborative
New York Collaborative Lead	Leigh C. Ross, New York Community Trust
Texas State Collaborative Lead	Betty Balli Torres, Texas Access to Justice Foundation
Tennessee Collaborative Lead	Kaki Friskics-Warren, The Dan and Margaret Maddox Fund
Fmr GCIR Staff	Aryah Somers Landsberger, FSG
Fmr GCIR Staff	Felicia Bartow, Hyphen
National Funder	Angela Cheng, JPB Foundation
National Funder	Geri Mannion, Carnegie Corporation of New York
National Funder	Ivy Suriyopas, formerly Open Society Foundation, GCIR
National Funder	Rebecca Carson, formerly Open Society Foundation, Four Freedoms Fund

FINDINGS

Effective Strategy

The national match provided validation and created opportunity resulting in long-lasting investments and capacity building

GCIRs's strategy featured innovative core components which were integral to its success. Respondents repeatedly cited a well-known norm in philanthropy: funders follow each other and funders want cover.

The DOTD model required at least two funders in a location to launch a collaborative, and it contributed a national match of a 1:1 ratio (though many local funders exceeded this match).

As soon as you get a couple of funders on, others join. There's lots of need for this with your board by showing cover from all of the other groups.

Having this national contribution already confirmed provided local funders assurance in their investment. The national match also gave a certain "accreditation" to the collaborative leads as they used it to pursue new donors with a commitment already in hand from a major national funder. In nascent regions, with little track record for supporting

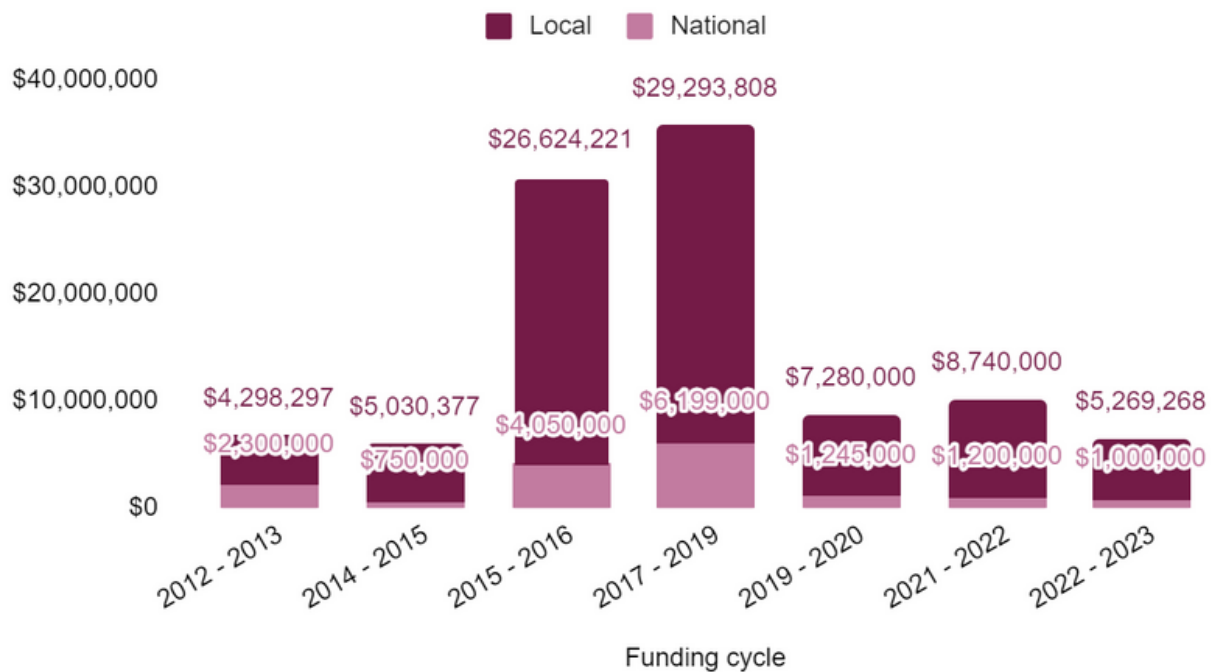
Having the connection to the national network provides us with accreditation. It helps our regional funders feel connected to the national cause.

immigrant-led organizations, the match was also a convincing way to create a feeling of connection to a larger national movement. The match was cited multiple times as a "forcing event" for decision makers.

No matter the actual dollar amount, the existence of the match itself created an opening for prospective funding, and it had a timeline by which local funders needed to act. Without this match, some respondents faced an even steeper climb in attracting new dollars and making immigrant justice investments.

It was proven to be an effective strategy as local funders frequently outraised the match by margins as large as 8:1. Some of this can be attributed to the already successful local fundraising of the more established regions in California, New York or Illinois, but even when those are removed in the final cycle, the margin of local dollars to national match is 5:1.

DOTD Funds Raised 2012-2023



In some regions, the idea of pooling funds or even aligning funds was completely novel and DOTD built infrastructure that stayed fertile well beyond DOTD membership. In the most successful instances, local collaboratives born under DOTD are planning to work together and fund immigration work going forward without the GCIR match. Multiple respondents noted that their local funders are now familiar with many immigrant-led organizations that never would have received their attention previously. These local funders have built their own long-lasting relationships and the grantee organizations have seen their capacity grow significantly because of DOTD.



One collaborative in an emerging region added 40% new funders since joining DOTD and they credit the relationship with GCIR for making it possible.

In another example of DOTD's legacy, two collaboratives explained how their funders would go on to work together on non-immigration issues because of the trust and communication DOTD successfully nurtured. One collaborative was critical in organizing COVID-related funding in the state and another came together to support the 2020 Census count.



DOTD ending is not affecting our ability to fund.

Funders will continue to give and we will continue to come together for quarterly updates.


Distinctions Between Established and Emerging Regions

Emerging regions required a high touch and cautious approach while established collaboratives valued the network above all

The DOTD regions included significant diversity: regional diversity, philanthropic community diversity, differences in their hostility toward immigrants and more. There was significant benefit in bringing together a variety of funders and leaders with a shared purpose across a large, national movement. One respondent stressed the value in this connectivity because of the mix of learning, the enhanced energy from the variety of groups, and the opportunity to organize all of the regions should there be a future opportunity for national policy movement in immigrant justice. There was also benefit in launching the project with the more established, already successful collaborative regions like New York or Illinois. This set DOTD up for success, and when momentum was established, the project could go to a trickier region without requiring that region's participants go out on a limb and be pioneers for the national project.

Having such broad differences across the network produced equally broad results. The larger, established regions stated their value proposition for joining was almost exclusively about the relationship-building and solidarity of mission. The financial benefit of national matching dollars was not large enough to influence their grantmaking or strategy significantly as it was only a small portion of their overall giving. These collaborative leads were instead motivated by the opportunity to connect with other regional funders and support the growth of the movement.

One respondent noted they declined the national match so the funding pool would be larger for the smaller collaboratives, but they retained participation in the network. The GCIR national funders also noted the connection to local funders as a top motivating factor for their participation.



As a national funder I benefited by building relationships with local partners and meeting more institutional partners.

GCIR staff took it upon themselves to directly support the launch of some collaboratives by identifying potential leads, cultivating relationships locally, and providing the technical assistance to move forward. GCIR staff also took it upon themselves to make connections for funders in an informal way. If they saw a potential partnership locally, they were generous with their rolodex and quick to make an introduction. If they saw a shared challenge across funders (ie getting the board bought in), they

connected leaders who already overcame this. The limits to this approach include both the informality and resulting inconsistency of the relationship building over time and the stubborn philanthropic neglect in some regions which would have required a much more robust, focused effort.

Some of the nontraditional regions noted how impressive and effective it was for GCIR staff to take a respectful, flexible approach and encourage “trust-based philanthropy.” GCIR didn’t come in with any “oughts and shoulds;” rather it was a light but consistent touch where the path to success relied on organic and authentic commitments from local funders. A few of these collaboratives benefitted from new funding partnerships directly handed over to them by GCIR staff. Sometimes GCIR staff would meet just one “friendly” and high-potential program officer or a funder with a tangential interest in health or education and incubate the collaborative all the way to its fruition.



A local funder had been trying to bring a DOTD network to the state but did not want to lead the day to day work. They had been trying to find a partner, but were striking out. Another funder heard them speak on this at a conference and decided to raise their hand to co-lead. As it turns out GCIR staff had been cultivating that initial funder for a long time and the pieces finally came together.

Unfortunately, in some of the toughest regions, the model just wasn’t breaking through. Either the relationship building wasn’t deep enough, the political factors too adversarial, or any number of unknown factors that just didn’t produce any growth in a few of the collaboratives over the years. These smaller collaboratives also noted a discomfort in being compared with the larger, established regions in funding size and reporting.

There was a self-consciousness about discussing their progress on calls as it didn't feel like an apples-to-apples comparison. This is not to suggest that these regions should be excluded from this kind of project; rather, they require more innovation and deeper, targeted engagement.



One collaborative used a "severity index" that took different factors into account for assessing how "hard" it may be to reach a certain population in the region. Even though a collaborative in the South may serve significantly fewer cases than NYC, for example, those cases were more difficult to identify and support.

Strategic Use of Funding

Respondents offered ways to stretch the dollars including focusing on local fundraising, permitting various types of collaborative models and offering non-financial membership


As noted previously, the national match dollars were critical components to the strategy while also being a relatively low amount for many of the collaboratives. Given the end goal to leverage local funds, a few respondents suggested re-framing the national match as short term (i.e. 3-5 years).

Many of the collaborative leads considered the match an important spark or even "tipping point," and this "short term, challenge grant" reframing would preserve that benefit but then allow GCIR staff to pivot from national fundraising to supporting local fundraising at a certain point in

the collaborative's lifecycle. Respondents were quick to note how sensitive this funder cultivation can be, and they wouldn't want to intimidate any of them with the deadline that comes with a short timeline. Potentially, with communication from the beginning, local funders would have clearer expectations and may not shy away from the model.

Funding should bring people together, but it shouldn't be what keeps them in.

There wasn't one prescribed way the funding had to be distributed to be a member of DOTD, and this allowed local funders to come in at any type of commitment they were able to make. The collaboratives were free to implement a pooled, aligned or mixed funding model. The flexibility was noted as another important way to grow the network, but there were differences in the two approaches worth noting. For the most part, pooled funding created ownership among participants in a useful way. It also gave some funders the ability to join a collaborative even if their priorities were tangentially related but they support the bigger end goal. Aligned funding was generally noted as a good approach if that's what allowed a funder to join. It is still a vehicle for communication and coordination that can build significant trust in a collaborative and may even convert to pooled funding over time.



Maybe there would be more juice for the long haul if there was an inherent capacity building to help grantees become self-sufficient within DOTD. Could frame this as 'start up' money.

Finally, a few respondents offered suggestions to encourage different types of engagement among collaboratives. To preserve the limited national dollars for the more challenging regions, large collaboratives that value the network over the dollars could be offered a non-financial option for membership. This would allow them to continue benefiting from participation in the movement,

relationship building and knowledge sharing, but they wouldn't worry about applying or reporting for grants that were not significantly sizable to them. Other requirements like attendance to meetings or a direct program for encouraging local funders could still be preserved for these large collaboratives in this different tier of membership. As it would happen, GCIR would go on to offer two tiers of membership in Spring 2021 that reflected some of these recommendations from collaboratives.

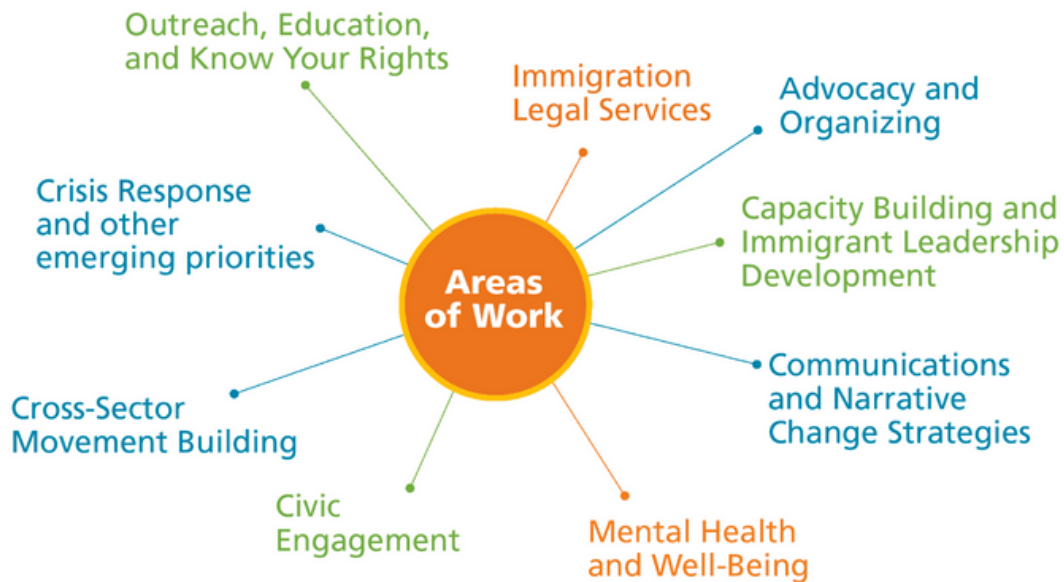
Trust the Local Experts

This work cannot be directive, rather cultivating new funders and growing the pie requires sensitivity and deference

There was a clear principle within DOTD for regarding local leaders as experts and equal partners. This deference to the people most closely connected to the region was a key to success and new projects should replicate it when pursuing this model. In practice, it looks like initial relationship building and donor cultivation where GCIR staff proceeded cautiously and respectfully. Rather than proposing a strict program with strict expectations for all participants, GCIR encouraged local collaboratives to meet the donors where they are on their path to supporting immigrant justice. DACA was the opportune launching pad, but it was the 2016 election that resulted in a significant boost in fundraising. GCIR used these moments to open doors and local funders came with varying incentives and motivations as well as constraints to their involvement. By leading with flexibility and deference, many different regions from various political and philanthropic climates could be welcomed.

Another show of flexibility was the decision to fund work beyond DACA after the initial first years. Even though successful implementation of DACA was the impetus in the formation of DOTD, once the work began, it was clear that the landscape of needs was much broader for immigrants. This decision was widely regarded as the right call by respondents in an era where the attacks on immigrants came from many directions. The collaboratives welcomed this decision and it solidified GCIR's commitment to uplift the local leaders as experts in their own needs. The collaboratives would go on to fund nine areas of work ranging from leadership development to advocacy to mental health services.

9 Areas of Work

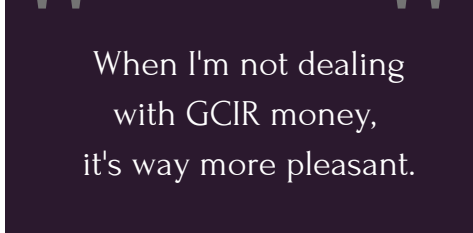


Source: www.gcir.org/dotd

Accept and Expect Reporting Challenges

There is no easy fix for the complex reporting requirements this model requires, but it can be mitigated with proper staffing and planning.

By their nature, funding collaboratives have a complex set of reporting requirements and timelines to meet. It is clear that GCIR staff thought deeply about the reporting and its burden on partners with the seriousness it deserved. Respondents repeatedly noted that GCIR was a good buffer and they mentioned the obvious consideration GCIR was placing on the reporting process including the creation of multiple committees of local funders for revamping the reports. Despite this, the reporting was difficult enough that some collaboratives left the network just to avoid it. One of the top complications was a staggered and unwieldy timeline for submissions. A few collaboratives stopped asking for their own reports to lessen the burden on grantees and get the DOTD report done instead.



When I'm not dealing
with GCIR money,
it's way more pleasant.

To assuage this complication, both local and national funders shared ideas for ease of reporting. There is the potential of getting the information via phone call or in person rather than filling out a form and thereby accepting more casual story telling over formal information gathering. There was also a suggestion

from national and local funders for a more customized report that relates to a recipient's scope of work. The larger, comprehensive report includes listings and mentions of every type of program, but much of that is unrelated to a particular grantee's work, and that creates a psychological and resource burden to fill out. There may also be more flexibility on the timing or data collection required from a national funder, so it's important to always make the ask and even coordinate with them all together when possible.

But the reporting challenge is intrinsic and without an easy resolution. Future projects can plan for this challenge by dedicating adequate staff capacity to the work of planning, wrangling and coordinating.

Create Structures for Relationship-Building

This is a top value-add for all participants. Proactive methods for community building and connecting should be formalized and prioritized

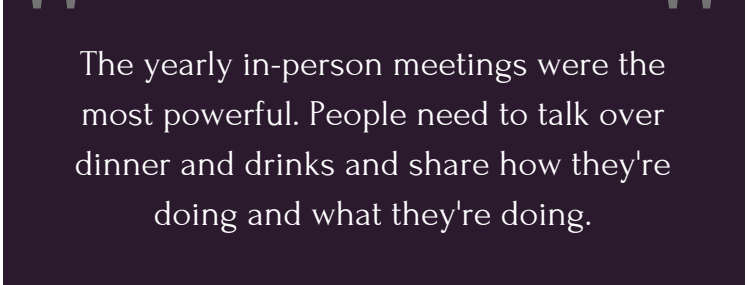
With 27 collaboratives across so many different regions, and with a mandate to bring in new funders to the work, the potential for movement building is impressive. Respondents cited an excitement at being part of such a large network, meeting new partners and hearing about others' work as primary benefits of DOTD. The network met during quarterly calls and in-person retreats, and while some policy discussions were useful, mostly respondents just wanted to get to know each other better. As noted previously, GCIR staff made a point to introduce and connect and encourage relationships, and many collaboratives also took it upon themselves to reach out as they saw opportunities for learning or partnership.

With relationship building as a clear priority for most, if not all, participants, future projects considering this kind of collaborative model should incorporate more direct programming to that end. This includes proactively encouraging collaboration among national funders as well.

Respondents were interested in connecting between and within the two groups of national funders and local funders. Giving more participants a role to play in leading calls or meeting agendas and giving them tasks as part of their membership further encourages ownership and community building.

A more structured on-boarding process with proactive introductions and more clearly stated expectations and benefits also goes a long way in building a sense of community within DOTD. And the power of in-person convenings cannot be overstated.

This group was hungry for more of these opportunities and the pandemic made each instance that much more precious. While planning a large, in-person convening across so many geographies is too resource-intensive to do frequently, planning regional get togethers, leveraging attendance during other conferences, and just making it a priority to create informal, social gatherings has the potential to build long-lasting bonds and trust.



The yearly in-person meetings were the most powerful. People need to talk over dinner and drinks and share how they're doing and what they're doing.

Conclusion

The Delivering on the Dream Network stepped in and stepped up to maximize the potential of a critical opportunity for undocumented immigrants in the nation. For many, 2012 was a peak. It was a difficult 10 years, but the DACA announcement and the potential for DAPA was cited as the most energizing moment for the movement. DOTD was then able to scale the model and pivot to meeting the needs of immigrants during the dark periods of the Trump Administration. It was during those years, especially, that these local funders found the entree they needed in DOTD to jump-start their support of immigrant justice. It is clear that new funding was unlocked, immigrant-led organizations built long-term funding relationships, and a collaborative grantmaking model such as this is worth replicating.

The lessons learned come not only from the many successful collaboratives which continue to thrive, but from the great efforts meant to break through in difficult regions. There are still a great many areas where philanthropic investment is woefully lacking for immigrant justice work, and after years of efforts by GCIR and DOTD, some of those funders remain stubbornly immobile. If lessons from the last 10 years are applied, philanthropic leaders can build on DOTD's foundation and reach a higher potential for the application of this collaborative grantmaking model. Immigrant-led organizations and the immigrants they serve are not going anywhere, and if anything, these communities are growing. The next ten years require a resurgence of support and the DOTD lessons can provide a promising roadmap.

Success Stories

In their own words

01

Arkansas Delivering on the Dream

Venceremos worked on an investigation led by the House Select Subcommittee regarding the impact of COVID in meat processing plants and poultry companies' negligence to protect workers' health and safety. In October 2021, Director Magaly Licolli served as witness at the first hybrid hearing on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on essential workers in America's meatpacking industry and their communities. Venceremos also helped organize over 200 workers from a Tyson plant in Springdale, AR to sign a workers' petition demanding better working conditions and a wage increase. To do so, they mobilized four national organizations and their networks in support of poultry workers' demands. They supported a workers' rally to deliver a petition signed by approximately 50,000 consumers and a workers' petition at Tyson's headquarters.

02

Colorado Immigrant Funders Collaborative

After ICE allowed Casa de Paz to start visiting detained immigrants again last May, one of their staff members visited a young man named Walter (alias) in the Aurora detention center. A Casa de Paz volunteer had been writing to him for months. When asked if he preferred to receive letters or in-person visits, he said he loved receiving a personal visit, but the letters were even more meaningful. When he received his first letter, it was the first time he had smiled since he was in detention. This was because the letter reminded him that someone outside his prison walls knew about him and cared about him. Walter said that he read the letters each night before falling asleep. And he read them again each morning when we woke up. The letters were a constant reminder that someone in the outside world cared about him, which helped to keep him going.

Success Stories

In their own words

03

Funder Collaborative for Immigrant Families in the Garden State

New Jersey Consortium for Immigrant Children's (NJCIC) legal program has responded quickly to triage several urgent cases and connect unaccompanied children quickly to a legal service provider. For example, in the case of Zoraya (alias), NJCIC's Senior Paralegal was able to quickly establish trust and learned that she had been brutally gang raped in her home country and had been suffering from serious trauma as a result. NJCIC was able to quickly process and refer Zoraya for services to a legal service provider that had capacity to accept her case, and flagged the urgent need for support with the legal service provider.

In other cases, NJCIC has been made aware of upcoming deadlines or of other urgent needs, like conflict in the home, and has been able to similarly prioritize these children for intake and referral. As a central intake hub, NJCIC is now uniquely situated to be able to respond to these kinds of needs. This has a huge positive impact on the provision of services to youth in New Jersey. Before the creation of NJCIC's central intake system, children like Zoraya would likely have had to contact multiple different providers and may not have had success getting an intake due to the overwhelming need for services. NJCIC's intake role also creates efficiencies within the system because multiple legal service providers do not spend resources on intaking the same client population and are able to focus their limited resources on casework.

