



Providing Refuge & Restoring Dignity:

Meeting the Needs of Migrants in a Networked Way

California Dignity for Families Fund Final Learning Report



APPRECIATIONS

This report would not be possible without the commitment and contributions of immigrant justice organizations that work tirelessly to support migrant communities arriving at the southern U.S. border fleeing persecution, violence, poverty, and the devastating impacts of climate change. The wisdom shared by leaders and organization staff shapes the findings included in this report.

California Dignity for Families Fund Nonprofit Partners

- 1** African Communities Public Health Coalition
- 2** Al Otro Lado, Inc.
- 3** Alianza TransLatinx
- 4** Alliance San Diego
- 5** Black Alliance for Just Immigration
- 6** Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project (BLMP)
- 7** Border Angels
- 8** Border Butterflies, a project of Transgender Law Center
- 9** CA Collaborative for Immigrant Justice
- 10** CAIR-LA
- 11** California Immigrant Policy Center
- 12** California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance
- 13** California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
- 14** Casa Arcoiris
- 15** Central American Resource Center of Los Angeles
- 16** Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative
- 17** Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO)
- 18** Centro Legal de la Raza
- 19** Comité Cívico Del Valle, Inc.
- 20** Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo (CIELO)
- 21** Culturally Responsive Domestic Violence Network
- 22** El/La Para TransLatinas
- 23** Familia TQLM
- 24** Haitian Bridge Alliance
- 25** Immigrant Defenders Law Center
- 26** Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice
- 27** Jewish Family Service of San Diego
- 28** Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), Central Valley
- 29** Legal Services for Children
- 30** Mixteco/Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP)
- 31** Mujeres Unidas y Activas
- 32** Muslim American Society Social Services Foundation
- 33** National Center for Youth Law
- 34** Oakland Unified School District, Newcomer Office (fiscally sponsored by the Oakland Public Education Fund)
- 35** Pars Equality Center
- 36** Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans (PANA)
- 37** Pilipino Workers Center
- 38** Public Counsel
- 39** Refugee Children Center
- 40** Refugee Health Alliance
- 41** Students Without Limits
- 42** The Afghan Humanitarian Parole Project, a project of Pangea Legal Services
- 43** TODEC Legal Center
- 44** TransLatin@ Coalition

We owe gratitude to the Advisory Committee that guided the evolution of the Dignity for Families Fund, shared their time, contributed their expertise, and found hope amidst the challenges impacting the immigrant justice movement.

- ▶ **Rosie Arroyo**, Senior Program Officer, California Community Foundation
- ▶ **Dulce Garcia**, Director: U.S.- Mexico Border Program, Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
- ▶ **Ola Osaze**, Steering Committee Member, Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project (BLMP); Lead Advisory, Black Migrant Power Fund
- ▶ **Mitzie Perez**, Finance & Fund Development Manager, California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance
- ▶ **Odilia Romero**, Co-Founder & Executive Director, Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo (CIELO)
- ▶ **Dan Torres**, Chief Equity Officer, California Health & Human Services Agency
- ▶ **Megan Thomas**, President & CEO, Catalyst of San Diego and Imperial Counties
- ▶ **Marissa Tirona**, President, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR)

We also recognize the commitment of the California Dignity for Families Fund Project Team who worked diligently to support nonprofit partners and the Advisory Committee.

- ▶ **Nikki Dinh**, Co-Executive Director, Leadership Learning Community
- ▶ **Ingrid Aguirre Happoldt**, Grantmaking Consultant, CA DFF and Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees
- ▶ **Cairo Mendes**, Director of State and Local Programs, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees
- ▶ **Alexandra Rojas**, Senior Advisor, Tides





About GCIR

As the nation's only immigrant-focused philanthropy mobilizing organization, GCIR creates strategic opportunities to move money and power to immigrant and refugee communities and galvanizes funders to resource a robust immigration and refugee rights power-building ecosystem. Amid continued challenges and significant opportunities for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, we are building on our 33-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.



In solidarity with the immigrant justice movement

Colleagues:

This learning report represents the culmination of an almost two-year undertaking to mobilize philanthropic dollars to provide urgent humanitarian relief to newly arrived migrants, ensure due process for asylum seekers, and support their integration into receiving communities. The California Dignity for Families Fund has been driven forward by bold action in the midst of uncertainty and complexity and has employed purposeful strategies like increasing the visibility of those historically excluded from funding and strengthening the infrastructure for responding to the needs of migrant communities, resulting in a stronger, more networked ecosystem of migrant justice groups across California. The Fund's impact and success is the result of values-forward and purposeful leadership of:

- ▶ The Fund's **Advisory Committee**, who brought their lived experience and movement, community, and government expertise to co-create and implement a strategy that followed the lead of those closest to the ground, distributed funds rapidly and equitably, and worked to strengthen movement infrastructure over the long term;
- ▶ The Fund's **Project Team** who not only stewarded the Fund, but also contributed to collaborative learning environment that facilitated strategic decision-making, adaptive pivots, and honest communication. I would like to single out **Nikki Dinh's** leadership as a purposeful, strategic, and compassionate facilitator and partner whose commitment to our work made much of the Fund's impact and success possible;
- ▶ **Philanthropic partners** who mobilized quickly in May 2021 in response to the call to action and entrusted us to deploy resources in an aligned and networked way;
- ▶ **Senior state leaders** from the Office of Governor Newsom and the California Department of Social Services who were generous and strategic partners throughout the life of the Fund;
- ▶ The **GCIR team**, who provided the backbone infrastructure, communications support, and consultation from inception to implementation, ensuring efficient processes, timely messaging and reporting, and supportive programming; and
- ▶ Most importantly, the **movement and field partners** who work to ensure due process for asylum seekers, support the integration of migrant families and unaccompanied children into receiving communities, and build the political influence of migrants across California. The wisdom shared by those leaders and organization staff shapes the findings included in this report.

Throughout the life of the Fund, we leveraged the power of strategic agility, inclusive learning, and deep collaboration, and this report captures the lessons, learnings, and action the Fund has spurred, along with recommendations to philanthropy for future action. We hope this final report informs the broader immigration justice movement about the ongoing and emerging needs of migrant communities and the state of the nonprofit organizations that provide vital services to these communities.

At GCIR, we talk about doing our work in a networked way, knowing that our collective efforts are what make lasting, durable, and transformational change possible. Although the work of this fund has concluded, our shared efforts to effect transformative change in support of immigrant and refugee communities continues. Let us- together- continue to do just work in just ways.

In gratitude and solidarity,
Marissa Tirona

INSIDE THIS REPORT

- 01** Executive Summary
- 09** Introduction
- 13** Uniqueness of the Fund
- 16** Recent Context of the California Immigration Funding Ecosystem
- 18** Case Story: Establishing a Field- and Advocate-Informed Advisory Committee
- 20** California Migrant Communities
- 28** Case Story: Language Access and Justice is a Human Right
- 35** Network of Nonprofit Partners
- 53** Case Story: Black and Queer Leadership in the Immigrant Justice Ecosystem
- 58** Contributions of the Fund and Opportunities Ahead
- 63** Appendix A: Funding Partners
- 64** Appendix B: Methodological Limitations

Meeting the Needs of Migrants in a Networked Way

The California Dignity for Families Fund (CA DFF or the Fund), is a time-limited collective action fund that provides grants to community-based organizations to help migrant families and unaccompanied children receive humanitarian relief and assistance as they request asylum and resettle in communities throughout the state of California. The Fund, led by Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) and housed at the Tides Foundation, is part of a public-private partnership with Governor Gavin Newsom, who proposed a collective \$25 million investment for services to unaccompanied youth and children in support of the safety and well-being of newcomers. The Fund aims to ensure due process for asylum seekers, support the coordination and integration of migrant families and unaccompanied children into receiving communities, and build the political influence of migrants.

Between 2021 and 2022, the Fund raised nearly \$11 million with the support of 23 funding partners. This included \$2 million in aligned funding distributed through the Los Angeles Justice Fund and nearly \$9 million in general operating support grants to 44 nonprofit partners.

Guiding Principles

The Fund adheres to a set of principles intended to influence how philanthropy engages with impacted communities and how it redistributes resources.

- ▶ **Intentional and purposeful recruitment and convening of an Advisory Committee** that represented migrant communities often excluded from grantmaking priorities, such as Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Latinx, LGBTQIA+, undocumented immigrant, womxn, and youth-serving organizations.
- ▶ **Establishment of and commitment to a clear set of values** that guide the Fund and are in alignment with principles held by the Advisory Committee, particularly movement leader members of the committee.

- ▶ **Inclusion of a grantmaking consent process** that honored the diversity of opinion of the Advisory Committee and welcomed generative conflict and positive tensions.
- ▶ **Adoption of practices that uplift “grantmaking in a networked way”** including (1) following the lead of those closest to the ground; (2) deep commitment to inclusive learning and sharing knowledge with key stakeholders, serving as a network connector; and (3) rapid and equitable distribution of funds to strengthen movement infrastructure over the longer term.

Fund Advisory Committee Members

Rosie Arroyo, Senior Program Officer, California Community Foundation

Dulce Garcia, Director, U.S.- Mexico Border Program, Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)

Ola Osaze, Steering Committee Member, Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project (BLMP); Lead Advisory, Black Migrant Power Fund

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Dan Torres, Chief Equity Officer, California Health & Human Services Agency

Megan Thomas, President & CEO, Catalyst of San Diego and Imperial Counties

Marissa Tirona, President, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR)

¹ For more details, please visit <https://www.gcir.org/CADignityFund>

² See Appendix A for a full list of funding partners.



Purpose of This Executive Summary

This executive summary is intended to provide a brief summary on the current immigration justice landscape in which CA DFF operated between the summer of 2021 and spring of 2023. The summary includes insights and perspectives from multiple stakeholders in the immigration justice system including nonprofit organizations funded by CA DFF, funders that contributed to CA DFF, movement leaders who were part of the Advisory Committee, and directly impacted migrant individuals.

The findings are intended to help inform the broader immigration justice movement about the ongoing and emerging needs of migrant communities and the state of the nonprofit organizations that provide services to these communities. Future opportunities for the immigrant justice ecosystem are also included to serve as a catalyst for the movement. A full report follows the executive summary.

Migrant Communities in California

Over the last six years, migrants have experienced severe and inhumane immigration policies such as Title 42, the removal of DACA for new applicants, and many more policies that aim to restrict entry, deny legal status, remove legal status, and eliminate protections that ensure the fair and humane treatment of migrants by immigration agencies. To support the rights of these migrants, California has taken some critical steps such as making sure that domestic workers have a right to overtime pay, restricting law enforcement collaboration with ICE, and making it legal for all people in California to apply for a driver's license. Despite these efforts, migrants, and in particular newly arrived migrant communities, continue to face numerous challenges accessing vital supports and services to meet basic needs.

Primary Migrant Communities Served

- ▶ Nonprofit partners primarily serve Latinx, Indigenous, Black, Youth, LGBTQIA+, and womxn communities. The primary migrant communities served by the Fund aligns with the Fund's priorities to invest in nonprofit organizations that serve migrant communities who are often excluded from grantmaking priorities.

Existing and Ongoing Needs of Migrant Families and Individuals

- ▶ The most urgent needs among migrant families and individuals, identified by nonprofit partners, **are access to housing, legal services, and language justice.** These needs strongly align with those identified by CA DFF funders and the Fund's Advisory Committee. This alignment bears out the Fund's intention to bring together funders and movement leaders who can speak directly to the needs of historically disinvested migrant communities.

Network of Nonprofit Partners

Understanding that smaller grassroots organizations – often led by the most marginalized immigrant communities – form a crucial part of the immigrant justice system of care infrastructure, the Fund practiced solidarity with organizations serving groups that are often excluded from grantmaking priorities, such as Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Latinx, LGBTQIA+, and womxn.

Overview of Nonprofit Partners

Most nonprofit partners are small organizations that serve coastal urban cities with large concentrations of recent migrants. The largest proportion of nonprofit partners serve urban core areas in southern California, including the Greater Los Angeles Region (25%) and San Diego Region (20%)

- ▶ Many of the nonprofit partners are **young, relatively small organizations**. The majority of funded nonprofits were established in 2005 or more recently, with many established since 2016. A substantial cluster of migrant-serving organizations came into existence shortly after the 2016 election of Donald Trump. The increase in migrant-serving organizations and the growth of immigrant advocacy efforts was a response to the Trump-era anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric, according to nonprofit partners
- ▶ Nonprofit partners stress the **importance of identity and lived experience of senior leaders and staff when serving migrant communities**, particularly when those communities include Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQIA+ migrants. The commitment to racial/ethnic diversity and lived experience is seen in the racial/ethnic identity of nonprofit partners' senior teams and staff. Survey data of nonprofit partners show that over three-quarters of executive leaders identify as people of color with the majority identifying as Latinx, Indigenous, and Arab/Middle Eastern/South Asian.

- ▶ Nonprofit partners identified **a holistic blend of legal and humanitarian supports and services as a best practice model**. Most nonprofit partners offer and advocate for a holistic blend of legal services, community organizing and power building, advocacy and policy support, and basic and humanitarian aid. The most common of these services are legal services, community organizing and power building, advocacy and policy support, and basic and humanitarian aid. Furthermore, most organizations that provide legal services also provide humanitarian support and other services intended to serve the holistic needs of their clients.

Strengthening the Nonprofit Network

Recognizing that the immigrant justice movement has long been under-resourced, a key aim of the Fund was to help create a stronger and more resilient nonprofit network that can effectively fundraise and sustain the movement.

- ▶ According to nonprofit partners, efforts to strengthen the immigrant justice movement should above all emphasize **multi-year general operating support and augment nonprofit staffing capacity** to meet increased demand for immigration services. Multi-year, flexible funding was identified as a key need by over three quarters of nonprofit partners. Organizations are concerned about how to secure sustained funding to meet the growing needs of migrants. Over the past few years, nonprofit partners have observed a diminishing stream of philanthropic funding despite persistent capacity challenges to serve migrant communities. Smaller organizations are particularly vulnerable to decreased philanthropic support because funders tend to overlook smaller organizations in favor of larger, often more established organizations.

³ Immigrant Legal Resource Center. 100+ Policy Changes that Have Devastated Immigrants and Asylum Seekers <https://www.ilrc.org/100-policy-changes-have-devastated-immigrants-and-asylum-seekers>

⁴ Ibid.

- ▶ In addition to multi-year general operating support, nonprofit partners reported needs to **connect to funders and influencers**, increase the **capacity and technical skills** of their staff, improve their **organization’s infrastructure**, and resources to better support the **mental well-being of staff**.

Snapshot of the Current Network of Nonprofit Partners

To better understand the networks and partnerships that exist among nonprofit partners, a modified social network analysis survey was conducted with nonprofit partners at the end of the time-limited Fund. The findings from the survey provide **a point-in-time snapshot of the hubs, networks, and collaborations that exist among nonprofit partners**.

- ▶ The largest proportion of **connections across the CA DFF nonprofit network are taking place at the networking level**, followed by the cooperation level and coalition level. This indicates that organizations are familiar with each other, there is minimal communication, and decisions are made independently. This finding suggests that there is **ample opportunity to deepen connections among nonprofit partners with the goal of strengthening the immigration justice movement**.
- ▶ At the **coalition** level, two organizations emerged as central hubs, with the highest number of overall (both incoming and outgoing) connections – California Immigrant Policy Center (CIPC) and Council on American-Islamic Relations, California.
- ▶ At the **cooperation** level, Refugee Health Alliance emerged as the largest hub followed by Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) and Immigrant Defenders as mid-size hubs.
- ▶ **At the networking level, connections are much more abundant among organizations**, with less centralization around a few hubs. Organizations with the most reported network-level connections were BAJI, Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice, Al Otro Lado, Inc., Immigrant Defenders, and Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project.
- ▶ **Factors that facilitate and hinder collaboration.**The top five factors that help organizations collaborate with each other include having aligned goals/mission/vision, supporting similar populations, personal connections/relationships or a history of partnership between organizations, sharing similar geography/regions, and acquired funding for collaborative efforts. Conversely, partners reported the main factor hindering collaboration hinder immigrant justice organizations is limited staffing capacity – within both their own organization and potential collaborating organizations.

About the survey and levels of collaboration scale

The survey captured the strength of connections among CA DFF nonprofit partners by asking respondents to rate their level of interaction with each other nonprofit partner using the Levels of Collaboration Scale*. The four-point scale included no interaction, networking, cooperation, and coalition, as described further below.

No interaction: not aware of this organization or not currently involved in any way, formally or informally

Networking: aware of the organization, loosely defined roles, little communication, all decisions are made independently

Cooperation: provide information to each other, somewhat defined roles, formal communication, all decisions are made independently

Contributions of the Fund and Opportunities Ahead

The California Dignity for Families Fund was set up as a time-limited pooled fund with the overarching goal of rapidly and equitably distributing resources to nonprofit organizations that serve migrant communities often excluded from grantmaking priorities such as Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Latinx, LGBTQIA+, and womxn. Despite its short lifecycle, the Fund made significant contributions to the immigration justice ecosystem.

Contributions of the Fund

- ▶ The Fund increased nonprofit partners' ability **to serve more migrant communities** – in particular, services for Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Latinx, and LGBTQIA+ communities, and womxn. The resources infused nonprofit partners with energy and staffing capacity to expand existing services into new geographic regions across the state where they were able to reach enclaves of communities they had not been able to reach such as Indigenous agricultural communities.
- ▶ **The multi-year funding strengthened nonprofits organizational infrastructure** by increasing their staffing capacity, financial stability, and ability to plan for their long-term sustainability. A survey administered to nonprofit partners show that the funding helped nearly all of nonprofit partners increase their ability to retain or hire new staff including community residents with lived experiences, organizers, social workers, lawyers, and administrative staff. The survey also found that multi-year funding allowed over three-quarters of nonprofit partners make long-term plans that included hiring staff, focusing on their infrastructure needs, and mapping out the strategic direction of their organization.
- ▶ The CA DFF funding helped infuse more resources into the immigrant justice ecosystem and **strengthened the connections and collaborations among immigrant justice organizations**. Nonprofit partners leveraged additional resources through their increased staffing capacity and connections with additional funders. Through their participation in CA DFF, nonprofit partners increased their awareness of other organizations in the immigrant ecosystem and strengthened their collaborations.

Opportunities Ahead

The Fund proactively engaged Advisory Committee members, nonprofit partners, and funders to share their insights about the opportunities ahead for the immigration justice ecosystem. This section provides an overview of the opportunities ahead.

- ▶ **Double down on multi-year, flexible, and intersectional funding – particularly for smaller organizations typically invisible to traditional funding streams.** Nonprofit partners, Advisory Committee members, and CA DFF funders alike have observed declines in philanthropic funding from both individual donors and foundations; however, the needs of migrant communities are ever-present and rising. To continue to push forward, organizations need the security of multi-year funding that provides them the flexibility to direct resources where needed, engage in longer-term planning, and hire permanent staff. CA DFF contributed to this area, but continued support is vital to strengthen the immigration justice ecosystem. Smaller organizations that play a critical role in the immigration justice ecosystem and often serve the most marginalized are in most need of multi-year flexible funding, according to stakeholders.

Furthermore, multiple stakeholder groups called for philanthropy to move away from siloed funding. These stakeholders stated that siloed funding that restricts spending to specific content areas or issues creates unnecessary competition among nonprofit organizations and, notably, is not aligned with how organizations are serving communities. Stakeholders stressed the importance of *“thinking about the complexities and the intersectionality of people’s identity”* and the intersectionality of the needs that migrant communities face with other issue areas including housing, climate, and criminal justice movements.

- ▶ **Focus on narrative shift and building the communications infrastructure of the immigration justice movement.** Nonprofit partners, Advisory Committee members, and funding partners believe there is an opportunity to focus on shifting the way the public views immigrant communities and centering the experiences, hardships, and resiliency of Black and Indigenous migrant communities. There is a need to expand beyond the *“echo chamber”* of the typical advocates in order to bring awareness to the intersectionality of immigration across pressing issues



in the U.S. and transnationally such as environmental justice, civil and labor rights, and housing justice.

The CA DFF seeded an element of the needed shift by resourcing nonprofit partners' that focus on narrative change work to help strengthen the communications capacity of organizations to create "*persuasive communication strategies*" that reach larger audiences. Several funding partners are calling on philanthropy to expansively resource the infrastructure needed for narrative shift work that have been severely underfunded. Funders recognized that narrative shift work "*often gets neglected*" by philanthropy or is delegated to nonprofit organizations that are stretched to capacity to meet the continuum of care needs for migrant and refugee communities.

- ▶ **Strengthen the connective tissue of the immigrant justice movement.** Nonprofit partners understand there is great value in connecting and collaborating with colleagues and are interested in having funders support building partnerships and coalitions in the immigration ecosystem. Connections with peers and complementary players in the field can be instrumental to solving problems, sharing strategies and resources, and reflecting on the challenges and opportunities ahead. While the findings from the Levels of Collaboration Survey show that currently there is a loose network of organizations serving migrant communities, there are a

few organizations that serve as central hubs, particularly organizations that offer advocacy, organizing, and legal services. These hubs can serve as a starting place to build connections and collaborations among a larger number of organizations that serve migrant communities.

Both nonprofit and funding partners agree that there is a need to resource organizations to build partnerships and coalitions. Philanthropy can play an important role in the building of the connective tissue by funding the formation of coalitions and convening spaces for organizations to connect, learn from each other, and strategize.

- ▶ **Uplift and continue to focus on local advocacy and legislative wins.** Several nonprofit partners agreed that the biggest opportunity ahead is ending Title 42 and Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP). However, several stakeholders also recognized that, while not losing sight of federal level work, the focus needs to shift to local advocacy and legislative work. Several noted that opportunities and wins are taking place at the local and state level that need to be elevated and celebrated. Elevating these local victories could help invigorate the movement and demonstrate to funders that progress is happening.

Launched in 2021 in partnership with the state of California, the **California Dignity for Families Fund (CA DFF or the Fund)**, is a time-limited collective action fund that provides grants to community-based organizations to help migrant families and unaccompanied children receive humanitarian relief and assistance as they request asylum and resettle in communities throughout the state. The Fund, led by Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) and housed at the Tides Foundation, is part of a public-private partnership with Governor Gavin Newsom, who proposed a collective \$25 million investment for services to unaccompanied youth and children in support of the safety and well-being of newcomers.

The Fund aims to ensure due process for asylum seekers, support the coordination and integration of migrant families and unaccompanied children into receiving communities, and build the political influence of migrants. The Fund sees the following priorities as fundamental components of developing a strong support system for migrant families, individuals, and unaccompanied youth:

- › **Necessary transactional services** that meet the immediate humanitarian and legal needs at the border and into the initial migration cities.
- › **Coordinated and transitional care** that offers holistic case management and helps expand legal services into the destination regions of migrant families and unaccompanied children.
- › **Transformative opportunities** that strengthen the movement infrastructure over the long term.
- › **Flexible funds** that supplement overall strategy investments and incorporate knowledge of migrant communities often excluded from grantmaking priority-setting.

Purpose of This Report

This report is intended to shed light on the current immigration justice landscape in which CA DFF operated between the summer of 2021 and spring of 2023. The report includes insights and perspectives from multiple stakeholders in the immigration justice system including nonprofit organizations funded by CA DFF, funders that contributed to CA DFF, movement leaders who were part of the Advisory Committee, and directly impacted migrant individuals.

The findings shared in this report are intended to help inform the broader immigration justice movement about the ongoing and emerging needs of migrant communities and the state of the nonprofit organizations that provide services to these communities. Future opportunities for the immigrant justice ecosystem are also included to serve as a catalyst for the movement.

Learning and Evaluation that Accompanied the Fund

Community Centered Evaluation and Research (CCER) designed and implemented a learning and evaluation approach that engaged stakeholders in meaningful ways to learn from the early implementation phases of the Fund and continuously capture growth, successes, and opportunities. Learning questions focused on four areas:

- 1 What are the necessary transactional humanitarian and legal service needs of migrant communities at the border and initial migration cities?
- 2 What coordinated and transitional care is needed across the immigration ecosystem?
- 3 What transformative opportunities exist to strengthen the immigrant justice movement infrastructure?
- 4 How do flexible funds supplement overall strategy investments and incorporate the perspectives of migrant communities often excluded from grantmaking priorities?

⁵ For more details, please visit <https://www.gcir.org/CADignityFund>

⁶ Appendix B provides an overview of the learning and evaluation structure's methodological limitations.

CCER explored these key learning areas by gathering a range of stakeholder perspectives. Stakeholders that contributed their wisdom and expertise included 40 of the 44 nonprofit partners, eight Advisory Committee members, and 14 funding partners.

- ▶ **Interviews.** On an ongoing basis between February 2022 and March 2023, the CCER team conducted 75 in-depth structured interviews with nonprofit partners, Advisory Committee members, CA DFF funders, and CA DFF staff and consultants. The data gathered was analyzed using grounded theory and thematic approaches.
- ▶ **Surveys.** The CCER team administered two surveys. The first survey launched shortly after in-depth structured interviews in the winter of 2022 and gathered brief demographic and key organizational information from 40 funded nonprofit partners. The second, fielded between December 2022 and February 2023, was a network survey completed by 30 of the nonprofit organizations. The network survey captured a snapshot of the level of interactions among nonprofit partners.

What is Ahead in This Report

This report is organized into five sections that share key findings and three case stories that illustrate core elements of CA DFF.

- ▶ **Section 1** underscores unique facets of CA DFF including the guiding principles and grantmaking approach.
- ▶ **Advisory Committee case story** identifies key structural elements of the committee that guided the Fund and highlights the importance of involving and investing in movement leaders to direct the grantmaking process.
- ▶ **Section 2** provides recent context of the immigration funding ecosystem, including the perceived support for the immigration justice movement starting with the Obama administration, the impact of the Trump-era policies and COVID-19 pandemic, and the current state of the movement under the Biden administration.
- ▶ **Section 3** describes the migrant communities being served by nonprofit partners and their ongoing and emerging needs.
- ▶ **Language Justice case story** elevates the critical need for language access, particularly among Indigenous and Black migrant communities.
- ▶ **Section 4** shares an overview of the nonprofit partners, the key supports and services they provide to migrant communities, opportunities to strengthen the nonprofit network, and a snapshot of the current collaboration between nonprofit partners.
- ▶ **Black and Queer leadership case story** discusses the importance of investing in Black LGBTQIA+ leaders in the movement through the journey of Ola Osaze, Fund Advisory Committee member.
- ▶ **Section 5** concludes with the contributions of CA DFF and the opportunities ahead for the immigration justice movement.

CA DFF Timeline



01 UNIQUENESS OF THE FUND

Structure of the Fund

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) led the strategic direction of the Fund, fund development, and overall implementation. GCIR partners with the Tides Foundation- which serves as the fiscal manager for the Fund- to manage and disburse resources to funded nonprofit partners. To incorporate deep-rooted and diverse knowledge, the Fund is guided by an Advisory Committee that leans heavily on the wisdom and expertise of movement leaders, community activists, and individuals with ample government and philanthropic experience.

Guiding Principles

The Fund adheres to a set of principles intended to influence how philanthropy engages with impacted communities and how it redistributes resources. The Fund's principles are grounded in the development of trusting relationships across a broad spectrum of stakeholders and centering the expertise of movement leaders. These principles include:

- ▶ **Intentional and purposeful recruitment and convening of an Advisory Committee** that represented migrant communities often excluded from grantmaking priorities, such as Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Latinx, LGBTQIA+, undocumented immigrant, womxn, and youth-serving organizations.
- ▶ **Establishment of and commitment to a clear set of values** that guide the Fund and are in alignment with principles held by the Advisory Committee, particularly movement leader members of the committee.
- ▶ **Inclusion of a grantmaking consent process** that honored the diversity of opinion of the Advisory Committee and welcomed generative conflict and positive tensions.
- ▶ **Adoption of practices that uplift “grantmaking in a networked way”** including (1) following the lead of those closest to the ground; (2) deep commitment to inclusive learning and sharing knowledge with key stakeholders, serving as a network connector; and (3) rapid and equitable distribution of funds to strengthen movement infrastructure over the longer term.

Fund Advisory Committee Members

Rosie Arroyo, Senior Program Officer, California Community Foundation

Dulce Garcia, Director, U.S.- Mexico Border Program; Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)

Ola Osaze, Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project (BLMP) Steering Committee Member and Four Freedoms Fund (FFF) Deputy Director

Mitzie Perez, Finance & Fund Development Manager California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance

Odilia Romero, Co-Founder / Executive Director, Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo (CIELO)

Dan Torres, Chief Equity Officer, California Health & Human Services Agency

Megan Thomas, President & CEO, Catalyst of San Diego and Imperial Counties

Marissa Tirona, President, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR)

Grantmaking

Between 2021 and 2022, the Fund raised nearly \$11 million with the support of 23 funding partners. This included \$2 million in aligned funding distributed through the Los Angeles Justice Fund and nearly \$9 million in general operating support grants to 44 nonprofit partners (see Exhibit 1).

Funds were distributed to nonprofit partners in an equitable and timely manner according to a set of criteria developed by the Advisory Committee prioritizing:

- ▶ Organizations that balance state and local government strategies.
- ▶ Organizations that support settlement and navigation for migrant children, unaccompanied minors, and refugee youth.

- ▶ Resourcing and strengthening migrant communities often excluded from grantmaking priorities, such as Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Latinx, LGBTQIA+, womxn, and youth-serving organizations.

In addition to the expertise of the Advisory Committee, the grantmaking was informed by research conducted by a grantmaking consultant who interviewed over 40 movement leaders and shared findings with the Advisory Committee, partnerships established with the State of California and LA Justice Fund, GCIR’s learnings and relationships, and findings from the learning and evaluation activities.

Capacity building and wellness grants. In addition to the disbursement of general operating grants to 44 nonprofit partners, the Fund issued an additional \$703,125 in capacity building and wellness grants to 15 nonprofit partners. Nonprofit partners who received the capacity building and wellness grants used the resources to strengthen their organizational infrastructure and support staff healing by providing one-on-one wellness sessions, stipends, and additional time off for staff.

Learning series. The Fund launched a six-part learning series that centered marginalized and invisibilized migrant communities whose experiences are often neglected within the immigrant justice movement. The learning series was intended to create a space to share up-to-date information, encourage inclusive learning, and deepen collaboration between and among nonprofit and philanthropic leaders. Session topics included:

- ▶ Queerness/Transness and Migration
- ▶ Disability Justice and Migration
- ▶ Investing in Black Leadership for Migrant and Racial Justice
- ▶ U.S. Imperialism and Forced Migration
- ▶ Transformative Justice and Generative Conflict
- ▶ Healing Justice



HOW CA DFF PRACTICED

“Grantmaking in a Networked Way”

Leveraging the power of strategic agility, inclusive learning, and deep collaboration. With funders’ balcony view and sphere of influence, create strategic connection points with key stakeholders.

Following the lead of those closest to the ground. Recruit, establish, and resource advisory committees that have deep movement, community, government, and philanthropic experience. For example, the CA DFF Advisory Committee included expertise on the southern California border, transnational issues, and grassroots perspectives often excluded from philanthropic conversations.

Aiming to distribute funds rapidly and equitably, and to strengthen movement infrastructure over the longer term.

⁷See Appendix A for a full list of funding partners.

Exhibit 1: CA DFF Nonprofit Partners

- 01 African Communities Public Health Coalition
- 02 Al Otro Lado, Inc.
- 03 Alianza Translatinx
- 04 Alliance San Diego
- 05 Black Alliance for Just immigration
- 06 Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project (BLMP)
- 07 Border Angels
- 08 Border Butterflies, a project of Transgender Law Center
- 09 CA Collaborative for Immigrant Justice
- 10 Council of American-Islamic Relations-Los Angeles
- 11 California Immigrant Policy Center
- 12 California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance
- 13 California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
- 14 Casa Arcoiris
- 15 Central American Resource Center, Los Angeles
- 16 Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative
- 17 Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO)
- 18 Centro Legal de la Raza
- 19 Comite Civico Del Valle Inc
- 20 Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo (CIELO)
- 21 Culturally Responsive Domestic Violence Network
- 22 El/La Para Trans Latinas
- 23 Familia TQLM
- 24 Haitian Bridge Alliance
- 25 Immigrant Defenders
- 26 Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice
- 27 Jewish Family Services, San Diego
- 28 Kids in Need of Defense, Central Valley
- 29 Legal Services for Children
- 30 Mixteco/Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP)
- 31 Mujeres Unidas y Activas
- 32 Muslim American Society Social Services Foundation
- 33 National Center for Youth Law
- 34 Oakland Unified School District, Newcomer Office (fiscally sponsored by Oakland Public Education Fund)
- 35 Pars Equality Center
- 36 Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans (PANA)
- 37 Pilipino Workers Center
- 38 Public Counsel
- 39 Refugee Children Center
- 40 Refugee Health Alliance
- 41 Students Without Limits
- 42 The Afghan Humanitarian Parole Project, a project of Pangea Legal Services
- 43 TODEC Legal Services
- 44 TransLatin@Coalition

02 RECENT CONTEXT OF THE IMMIGRATION FUNDING ECOSYSTEM

Rapid changes to immigration policy, fluctuating public attitudes, and shifts in philanthropic attention have characterized the volatile political landscape of the immigration ecosystem in recent decades. A high point for immigrant justice arrived with the Obama administration's 2012 announcement of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and the hope of a similar program for parents of American citizens (DAPA). The wins were a step forward for the immigrant justice movement.

However, perhaps due to a lack of urgency in a supportive political climate, philanthropic funding of the movement during the Obama years was sparse. From 2011 to 2015, the thousand largest foundations in the United States gave only 1% of their combined funding to organizations supporting immigrants and refugees, with 50% of these dollars coming from just seven funders. Around the same period, local and state immigrant justice groups were woefully underfunded compared to established national policy organizations, with only 14% of all immigrant justice funding going to state and local organizations, according to the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy's *State of Foundation Funding for the Pro-Immigrant Movement: A Movement Investment Project Brief*. Although Delivering on the Dream, a network of funding collaboratives led by GCIR, launched in 2012 in response to the DACA announcement, immigrant justice funding remained limited.

A Wave of Support to Combat Trump-Era Policies and COVID-19

Multiple Trump-era policies posing dire threats to immigrant families ushered in a period of increased donor activity and political action. These policies included an anti-Muslim travel ban by executive order (2017), the end of DACA (2017), a family separation and internment crisis at

California Immigrant Resilience Fund (CIRF)

The California Immigrant Resilience Fund (CIRF), a state-financed immigrant relief fund, ran between 2020 and 2021 through a public-private partnership with the State of California. CIRF worked with over 60 local partner organizations with long-standing relationships with underserved immigrant populations and local communities to distribute more than \$150 million in direct cash assistance to individuals and families across the state. CIRF also helped immigrant community-based organizations develop the capacity and expertise to quickly mobilize to address future crises and opportunities.

⁸ National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. *State of Foundation Funding for the Pro-Immigrant Movement: A Movement Investment Project Brief*. <https://www.ncrp.org/initiatives/movement-investment-project/our-active-movement-areas/pro-immigrant-and-refugee-movement/state-foundation-funding>

⁹ Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) and National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP). (Presented December 1, 2022). *Transforming the Funding Landscape for the Immigrant Justice Movement*. <https://www.gcir.org/resources/materials-transforming-funding-landscape-immigrant-justice-movement>

¹⁰ Chi de Chinchilla, F. (2023). *10 Years of Delivering For Immigrants: Evaluation of the Delivering on the Dream Project*. Prepared for Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR). <https://www.gcir.org/resources/delivering-dream-final-evaluation>

the California-Mexico border (2018), the Remain in Mexico policy for migrants seeking asylum (2019), and the lowest limits on refugee admissions since the program's creation 40 years earlier (a limit of 18,000 in 2020, and a planned limit of 15,000 for 2021).

As the Trump administration actively enacted policies that harmed immigrant, migrant, and refugee communities, it also created a sense of urgency among pro-immigrant activists and donors and inspired new supporters to join the movement. After the 2016 election, donations surged for immigrant rights and funders began supporting organizations with which they previously had not been politically aligned. While long-standing immigrant justice funders accounted for most of the overall increase in funding, the movement diversified and expanded its pool of major supporters.

For immigrant communities, as for so many others, the COVID-19 pandemic brought a rollercoaster of setbacks, successes, and rapid change. Beginning in March 2020, the pandemic put immigrants (especially those who were low-income or unauthorized) at particular risk through job loss; fear of interacting with the state limited uptake of vaccines; family-level exclusion was embedded in the CARES Act; lack of technological resources impeded remote work and remote school; and lack of access to supportive services left many in need. Both immigrant communities and the organizations directly serving them experienced the stress and trauma of illness and death in families and social networks.

A Renewed Sense of Hope Dwindles

In 2021, as the initial grip of the pandemic began to loosen, President Biden entered the White House and enacted promising changes to federal policy. The new administration reversed many Trump-era immigration policies and continues to work to undo the harm caused by those policies. Ending the Remain in Mexico program, which had forced immigrant families to wait under dangerous conditions in order to claim asylum in the U.S., restoring and promising to fortify DACA, and reversing Trump's historically low refugee admissions cap all reduced fear among immigrants. These changes enabled many new applications and renewals for DACA and provided immigrant justice organizations with renewed hope.

Today, while the Biden administration promises to reform and stabilize immigration policy, many challenges still exist. First, some anti-immigration policies from the Trump administration remain in place. For example, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) made 142,800 administrative arrests in FY 2022, almost doubling their 74,100 arrests in FY 2021, primarily at the Southwest border. Second, some attempted policy changes have been thwarted by inefficient implementation, including delayed repeal of Trump's Title 42 public health order, lack of capacity at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to support employment authorization processing, and ineffective rollout of the new U-Visa process. The Biden administration's attempts to strengthen protections for immigrants have also met legal challenges from opposing political forces. Advocacy on behalf of immigrant communities and active support and funding to enact policy change continue to be crucial to the pro-immigration movement.

¹¹National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP). (2022). State of Foundation Funding for the Pro-Immigrant Movement: A Movement Investment Project Brief. <https://www.ncrp.org/initiatives/movement-investment-project/our-active-movement-areas/pro-immigrant-and-refugee-movement/state-foundation-funding>

¹²Ward, N., & Batalova, J. (March 14, 2023). Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States. Migration Policy Institute. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states>

¹³Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) and National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP). (Presented December 1, 2022). Transforming the Funding Landscape for the Immigrant Justice Movement. <https://www.gcir.org/resources/materials-transforming-funding-landscape-immigrant-justice-movement>

¹⁴Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Provided \$2.2 trillion in direct economic assistance for American workers, families, small businesses, and industries in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/about-the-cares-act>

¹⁵Resource Development Associates. (2022). 2022 Update: Immigration Legal Services in California: A Time for Bold Action. Prepared for Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR). <https://www.gcir.org/resources/immigration-legal-services-california-time-bold-action-0>

¹⁶Ward, N., & Batalova, J. (March 14, 2023). Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States. Migration Policy Institute. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states>

Establishing a Field- and Advocate- Informed Advisory Committee

The CA DFF was led by an Advisory Committee composed of movement leaders and movement-aligned funders who had direct knowledge of the needs, challenges, and opportunities facing the immigrant justice movement. The Advisory Committee serves as a model for how philanthropy can begin to cede its grantmaking power to migrant communities historically excluded from critical decision-making spaces. This case story outlines the process GCIR undertook to convene a body of movement leaders and movement-aligned funders to guide the CA DFF.

Starting with Trusting Relationships

Identifying movement-aligned funders was a critical first step to forming an Advisory Committee committed to ceding power. GCIR staff, in partnership with Fund consultants, engaged a set of movement-aligned funders who brought rich field experience and represented the voices of institutions that leaned into trust-based philanthropy. These leaders, according to GCIR staff, are aware of the power they wield through their philanthropic roles and value the expertise of movement leaders. Movement-aligned funders, along with GCIR staff and consultants, nominated movement leaders to serve on the Advisory Committee. Nominated movement leaders' introduction to the Advisory Committee then came via a series of one-on-one conversations with GCIR staff and consultants intended to create safe and trusting spaces for movement leaders to learn about the mechanics of grantmaking. These one-on-one conversations built trust in the structure and process of the Advisory Committee. A movement leader recalled these initial conversations, saying *"the welcoming and inviting environment made me feel that my feedback would be taken into consideration. Building trusting relationships [with other Advisory Committee members] helped me share my feedback."* This process was particularly important for movement leaders who were serving on an Advisory Committee with equal footing as funders for the first time.

In interviews with CA DFF funders, they identified the structure of the Advisory Committee as a unique and vital characteristic of the Fund that should be elevated as a model for the philanthropic field. However, funders recognized that creating an Advisory Committee that

included movement leaders and funders "takes more coordination and logistical support and funders giving up some of their decision-making power." Despite this inherent challenge, funders agreed that the model ensured that philanthropy addressed the "real needs" of the communities being served. As one funder echoed this sentiment, *"the Advisory Committee is really important because you want people who are closer to the ground and who know the connections that need to be made across the regions. I like the idea of sharing power around disbursement of funds, so it is not a foundation holding that power, but it is more dispersed."*

Developing Shared Values

A key hallmark of the Advisory Committee's initial formation was developing a set of shared values to guide the Fund's grantmaking-making process. Co-creating a set of values provided members with an opportunity to share their experiences and expertise and learn how their values aligned with fellow Advisory Committee members. This was a critical conversation that built a foundation of trust among committee members. A movement leader reflected, "I learned so much from the [values] and how we [as an Advisory Committee] interact with each other." They went on to state, "I felt safe coming into this space because of the values discussion. I have been in spaces where there are community agreements, but this is more than that- what we identified as necessary to do this work in this space is more than agreements- it is our personal values." Reflecting on their experience as Advisory Committee members, all applauded the CA DFF for creating a space where movement leaders directly inform and influence the immigrant justice grantmaking sphere. Furthermore, the five-month-long process of co-creating, learning, and building trusting relationships was critical to unearthing a need to focus on communities who are invisibilized from the immigration justice movement, including Black, Indigenous, Muslim, and LGBTQIA+, and reimagining how the Fund could prioritize these communities.

¹⁷ Resource Development Associates. (2022). 2022 Update: Immigration Legal Services in California: A Time for Bold Action. Prepared for Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR). <https://www.gcir.org/resources/immigration-legal-services-california-time-bold-action-0>

“

Movement leaders are not at the [Advisory Committee] table for diversity, but to lead and shape the table.”

– **Advisory Committee Member**

“

This fund has been values-driven – embracing values of building community. From the beginning, the outreach was very thoughtful. The facilitation and tools that were introduced were carefully selected to ensure that we were balancing and looking at power dynamics. For example, how we, as those with with power and privilege, are checking ourselves.”

– **Advisory Committee Member**

“

I learned so much from the [values] discussion and how we interact with each other. I feel safe coming into this space because of the values discussion and that is different. I have been in places where there are community agreements, but this is more than that – what we identify as necessary to do this work in this space is more than agreements – it is our personal values.”

– **Advisory Committee Member**

“

I hope that [this Advisory Committee] is replicated to allow this space to grow and bring in more community members.”

– **Advisory Committee Member**



03 MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN CALIFORNIA

Over the last six years, migrants have experienced severe and inhumane immigration policies such as Title 42, the removal of DACA for new applicants, and many more policies that aim to restrict entry, deny legal status, remove legal status, and eliminate protections that ensure the fair and humane treatment of migrants by immigration agencies. These policies have broken families apart and prevented people, including children and youth, who are escaping violence, persecution, injustice, and severe poverty in their home countries from obtaining much-needed refuge. California’s approximately 3 million undocumented migrants represent one-quarter (25%) of the nation’s undocumented people. To support the rights of these migrants, California has taken some critical steps such as making sure that domestic workers have a right to overtime pay, restricting law enforcement collaboration with ICE, and making it legal for all people in California to apply for a driver’s license. Despite these efforts, migrants, and in particular newly arrived migrant communities, continue to face numerous challenges accessing vital supports and services to meet basic needs.

This section describes the demographics and most pressing needs of the migrant communities that funded nonprofit partners serve and provides insights from CA DFF funders and the Fund’s Advisory Committee members.

Primary Migrant Communities Served

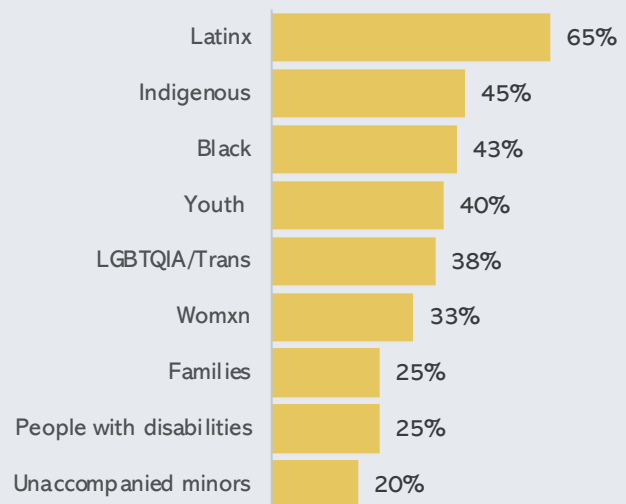
Nonprofit partners primarily serve Latinx, Indigenous, Black, Youth, LGBTQIA+, and womxn communities.

As displayed in Exhibit 2, over half of the nonprofit partners interviewed (65%) reported serving Latinx migrant communities, followed by Indigenous (45%), Black (43%), Youth (40%), LGBTQIA+ (38%), and womxn

(33%). One-quarter of nonprofit partners reported serving families (25%) and people with disabilities (25%). Additionally, 20% of nonprofit partners indicated serving individuals outside the U.S., including people in detention centers and deportees. Similarly, 20% of nonprofits work with unaccompanied minors.

California is home to **3 million undocumented people, representing 25% of the nation's undocumented individuals.**

Exhibit 2. Primary Migrant Communities Served By Nonprofit Partners (n=40)



¹⁸Immigrant Legal Resource Center. 100+ Policy Changes that Have Devastated Immigrants and Asylum Seekers <https://www.ilrc.org/100-policy-changes-have-devastated-immigrants-and-asylum-seekers>

¹⁹HAAS Jr. Buld the Power and Voice of Immigrants. https://www.haasjr.org/our-work/immigrant-rights?gclid=Cj0KCQjw2v-gBhC1ARIsAOQdKY2nQGh3VX_G2xEVCDSL-Vx1sGXXkl4-yh5hJCVstqIY9iRwKAF1FFUgaAqr9EALw_wcB

²⁰bid.

²¹bid.

Analysis by nonprofits' location shows some variation among the migrant populations served. For example, Exhibit 3, which displays a heat map of the regions served by nonprofit partners and the primary populations served, shows that a larger proportion of nonprofit partners in the San Diego region (63%) and statewide groups (60%) served Black migrants. Further, a higher percentage of nonprofit partners in the Los Angeles region (55%) worked

with youth, LGBTQIA+ communities, and unaccompanied minors compared to most other locations. The variation among populations served is likely due to the unique context and needs of the geographic areas where nonprofit partners operate. In general, these findings align with the Fund's priorities to invest in nonprofit organizations that serve migrant communities who are often excluded from grantmaking priorities.

Exhibit 3: Regions Served by Nonprofit Partners Mapped to the Primary Migrant Populations Served

	Bay Area (n=8)	Los Angeles (n=11)	San Diego (n=8)	Central Valley and Central Coast (n=4)	Inland (n=3)	Sacramento (n=2)	Statewide Groups (n=5)
Latinx	50%	73%	62%	100%	67%	50%	40%
Indigenous	50%	46%	25%	50%	67%	0%	40%
Black	25%	37%	63%	0%	33%	50%	60%
Youth	25%	55%	25%	25%	33%	100%	40%
LGBTQIA+	25%	55%	38%	0%	33%	0%	60%
Womxn	13%	37%	50%	25%	33%	50%	20%
Families	0%	27%	25%	50%	67%	0%	0%
People with disabilities	13%	27%	25%	25%	33%	0%	60%
Migrants outside the U.S.	13%	27%	13%	0%	67%	0%	0%
Unaccompanied minors	13%	55%	13%	0%	0%	0%	20%

²²Nonprofit partners were able to select multiple communities their organization serves.

Existing and Ongoing Needs of Migrant Families and Individuals

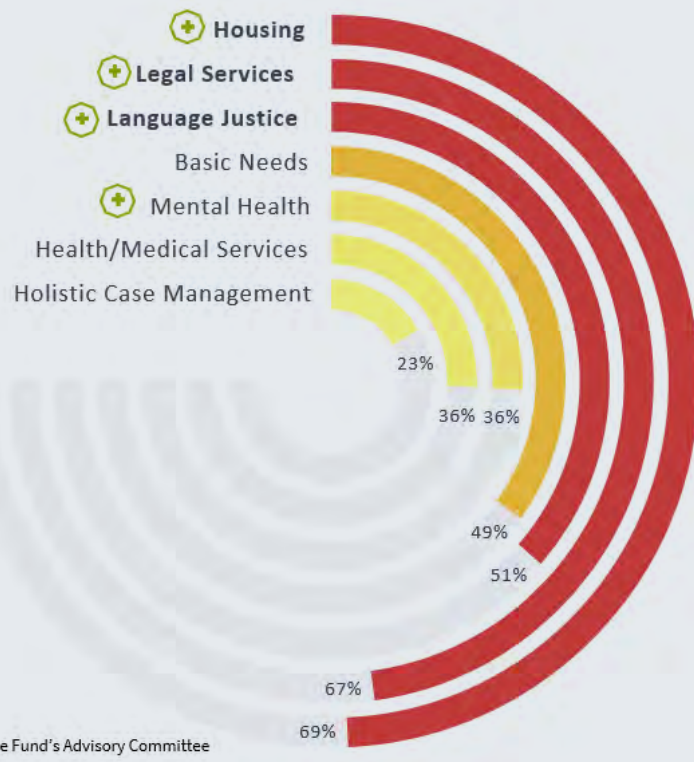
The most pressing needs among migrant families and individuals are access to housing, legal services, and language justice.

As long-term advocates, organizers, and vital service providers for migrants, nonprofit partners shared their unique insights and perspectives about the most pressing needs of the migrant communities they serve. According to nonprofit partners, the most urgent needs among migrant families and individuals are access to housing, legal services, and language justice (see Exhibit 4). These needs strongly align with those identified by funders (Exhibit 5) and the Fund’s Advisory Committee in previous documented evaluation and learning efforts. This alignment bears out the Fund’s intention to bring together funders and movement leaders who can speak directly to the needs of historically disinvested migrant communities. Other critical needs identified by nonprofit partners were access to basic needs or services that provide resources around food security, cash assistance, clothing, and transportation. Mental health services, health services,

and holistic case management that includes legal representation and support obtaining social services were also uplifted as pressing needs for migrant communities. These needs are discussed in detail below.

Secure, affordable, and stable housing. Over two-thirds of nonprofit partners (69%) and 64% of funders identified secure, affordable, and stable housing as a critical need among migrant individuals and families. The Fund’s Advisory Committee members also expressed that housing is a significant need among migrant populations. According to nonprofit partners, migrant families and individuals face dire, unstable, and unsafe housing situations like overcrowding and living in homemade shelters or deteriorated housing. Further, migrant communities face an elevated risk of becoming unhoused, especially during the first few months after entering the U.S.

Exhibit 4. Most Pressing Needs of Migrant Families and Individuals as Reported by Nonprofit Partners (n=40)



Systemic contributors to this housing instability are the lack of housing protections for migrants, the rising cost of rent, limited affordable housing, and the shortage of public rental assistance programs specifically for migrant communities. Nonprofit partners pointed out additional challenges to securing housing, including complicated application processes and paperwork, application fees, rigid eligibility requirements, and high moving costs. As one explained, many migrant families *“don't have all the necessary documents to start a lease. Every time you start a lease, they ask you for a social security number, for bank statements, for moving in fees, and for proof of employment. So there's just a lot of things that our population is just not able to complete.”*

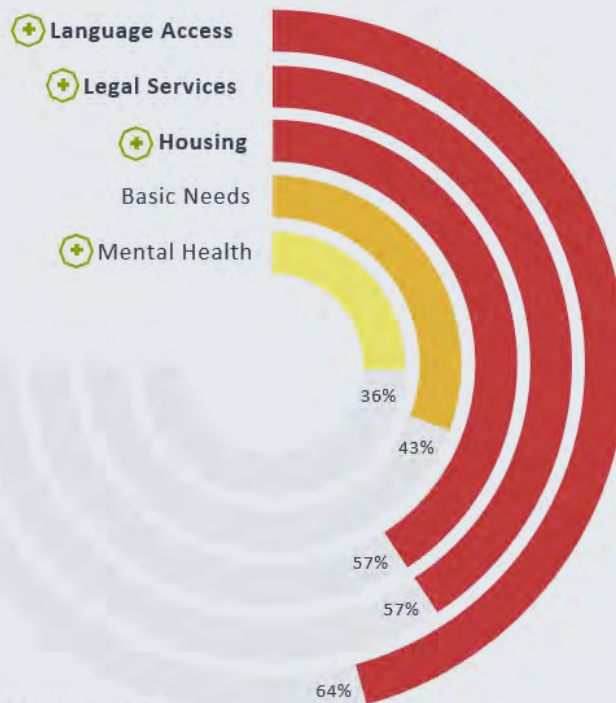
Nonprofit partners were also concerned about the housing challenges that vulnerable migrant communities such as



Families have to move a lot because their housing situations are not stable. There's not a lot of protections. Families might be renting a room from someone else [who] actually holds the lease with a landlord, so it is very removed. And when something comes up and they are at risk of losing their housing, there is not a lot that can be done [when] they are not on the lease.”

– Nonprofit Partner

Exhibit 5. Most Pressing Needs of Migrant Families and Individuals as Reported by Funders



Alignment with the Fund's Advisory Committee

LGBTQIA+ communities, unaccompanied migrant youth, and transitional-age unaccompanied youth experience upon entering the U.S. Nonprofit partners explained that there are limited housing programs for LGBTQIA+ migrant communities: *“Housing services are [a] huge [need]. I get asked on a daily basis [about housing support] especially from the trans communities. Housing services are very limited for trans people especially if they don’t speak English.”* Regarding unaccompanied youth, nonprofit partners reported that they are often placed with *“relatives that already live with multiple families per unit”* or with *“distant relatives that are not able to adequately provide for them.”* This leads to challenging situations for unaccompanied youth who *“think they are coming to a place that is safe but end up experiencing explicit or implicit hostility.”* Transitional-age unaccompanied youth, who are typically between the ages of 15 and 25 years old, are often released to shelters when they have no family or sponsors in the U.S. Lack of stable housing leads many of these youth to drop out of school to seek employment opportunities, and they often end up in unsafe or unhoued situations.

Free or affordable high-quality legal services. Two-thirds of nonprofit partners (67%) and over half of funders (57%) elevated free or affordable high-quality legal services as an urgent need among migrant families and individuals. Nonprofit partners reported a need for legal support in the areas of asylum, humanitarian parole, family reunification, detention, and deportation proceedings. The Fund’s Advisory Committee members explained that in addition to legal services, migrants need to access qualified legal advocates who can provide accurate advice on a variety of legal matters. Advisory Committee members shared that due to lack of legal advocates, migrants are typically forced to seek the support of notaries who may not have the training or familiarity with the legal system to adequately support the legal needs of migrants.

Nonprofit partners supporting migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border underscored the need among asylum seekers to have free or affordable legal representation on deportation defense at the border. As one nonprofit partner explained, *“You simply can’t succeed with asylum cases without a lawyer.”* Additionally, several nonprofit partners explained that Title 42, a public health order implemented in March 2020 under the Trump administration to stop the introduction of communicable diseases, has increased the legal need among refugees and asylum seekers at the border. In response to this rising need, nonprofit partners



Legal services are a huge need because we have a backlog. We still have a steady flow of migrants coming across the border and still not knowing what their rights are. Providers are being asked to do more and playing case manager [roles] and staff are burned out. And we do not have a pipeline of lawyers that we are building.”

– Funder

“invested in [their] litigation team[s] to try to create the systemic change that is needed at the border, and the additional funding [received from the Fund] supported the expansion of their advocacy and litigation team[s] in addition to providing direct services.”

Language justice. Half of the nonprofit partners (51%), 64% of funders, and all Advisory Committee members identified language justice as a vital need among migrant communities. From the perspective of nonprofit partners, language justice is *“fundamental for migrants to access the services and resources they need to resettle in the U.S.”* Nonprofit partners were vocal about the need for migrants to access legal representation, services, and supports in their native language(s). Nonprofit partners highlighted the growing need for language access and justice among migrant Mexican and Central American indigenous groups and African, Haitian, and Afghan refugees. Too often, according to the partners we spoke to, these migrants are *“denied services and legal status due to language access issues,”* raising a critical need to train service providers on language access rights. Many nonprofit partners working closely with unaccompanied youth also stressed their concern for the lack of language justice among these youth, who are often placed in facilities where no one speaks their indigenous language and without access to interpreters.

While language access was raised as a top need among many nonprofit partners, fewer organizations (43%) can fully support the language needs of migrants with trained

²³ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/what-is-title-42-and-what-does-it-mean-for-immigration-at-the-southern-border>

interpreters. More than half of the nonprofit partners (60%) rely on staff to serve as interpreters and translators, and 19% use volunteers to meet the language justice needs of the migrant communities they serve. Nonprofit partners acknowledged this has created disparities, particularly for Black and indigenous migrants. Language access needs are primarily viewed as a need for Spanish-to-English translation which negates the multitude of languages spoken by Black and indigenous communities including Mixteco, Nahuatl, Yucatec Maya, Creole, and Arabic, among others.

Access to basic needs and support navigating social services. Approximately 49% of nonprofit partners and 43% of funders agreed that access to basic needs is vital for migrant communities. For nonprofit partners, access to basic needs means that migrant individuals and families can acquire and secure nutritious and affordable food, cash assistance, clothing, transportation, and basic needs during resettlement in a new country. Migrant communities also need support accessing social services. Nonprofit partners expressed that migrant families and individuals require support navigating the social service care systems to enroll children in public benefits, enroll children in school, seek and secure employment, and access other services that will help them adjust to their new home.

Mental health services. A little over one-third of nonprofit partners (36%) and funders (36%) surfaced the need for mental health services among migrant communities, particularly for unaccompanied youth and LGBTQIA+ communities. Nonprofit partners explained that migrant communities, unaccompanied youth, and LGBTQIA+ communities experience several layers of trauma and even elements of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) related to experiences in their home countries and their experiences migrating to the U.S. As one nonprofit partner shared, *“a lot of youth that we represent suffer or have symptoms of PTSD because of the trauma that they went through in their home country or on the way to the United States. We have a lot of young people who seek additional mental health resources and don’t have access to it.”* Additionally, members of the Advisory Committee and nonprofit partners expressed a rising need for mental health services for migrant individuals and families in detention facilities.

Some nonprofit partners have addressed mental health needs among migrants by making intentional efforts to connect the migrant communities they serve to mental health services and supports. To this point, one nonprofit partner said, *“[A] significant [amount] of staff time*

goes into connecting clients to mental health services.” However, nonprofit partners expressed that community organizations that offer mental health services for free or at low cost are not able to respond to the high number of referrals they receive or provide the ongoing care often needed. As one nonprofit partner put it, *“I would say mental health services [are a pressing need], but we have very limited capacity [to provide those services].”*

Health services. Roughly one-third of nonprofit partners (36%) emphasized the need for health services among migrant communities, particularly for LGBTQIA+ migrants, womxn, and children at the U.S.-Mexico border. Several nonprofit partners highlighted the need for gender-affirming and HIV/AIDS-related health care services among LGBTQIA+ migrant communities. One nonprofit partner explained, *“Trans communities need hormone support, and there are folks with HIV who need medication.”* Additionally, a few nonprofit partners were vocal about the need for pregnant migrants to access routine screenings and emergency medical services at the U.S.-Mexico border. One nonprofit partner also shared that migrants released from detention facilities often experienced physical deterioration while detained and have difficulty accessing health care services once they enter the U.S. One nonprofit partner also shared that despite the recent Medi-Cal expansion for adults aged 50 and older, regardless of immigration status, health care access will remain an urgent need among migrant communities because many will be left out of Medi-Cal’s annual income thresholds. The income maximum threshold for a single person is \$17,609,

“

There are so many Haitian folks and so many African folks that are at the border who are not getting same the recognition and support because they don’t even speak the language of the country that they are in. They don’t speak Spanish and some of them don’t even speak English. So how are they going to navigate a system that is not even built for them? “

– Nonprofit Partner

“

A lot of youth that we represent suffer or have symptoms of PTSD because of the trauma that they went through in their home country or on the way to the United States. We have a lot of young people who seek additional mental health resources and don't have access to them.”

– Nonprofit Partner

\$23,792 for a couple, and \$36,156 for a family of four, according to Cal-Matters.

Holistic case management. Almost one-quarter of nonprofit partners (23%) emphasized a need for an integrated, holistic case management approach that includes legal representation and support securing social services. For example, nonprofit partners expressed that, in addition to legal representation and advocacy, migrant communities need access to culturally sensitive case managers and/or social workers who are experienced in trauma-informed care and who can connect clients to social supports and needed resources. Advisory Committee members agreed that migrant communities need case and family navigators who can help secure basic needs, such as stable housing, and a few shared that many attorneys are serving a dual role of providing legal representation and case/family navigation services to migrant communities. The integration of a holistic case management approach would allow attorneys and legal staff to focus on the legal aspects of their work while trained navigators help with basic needs.

A few nonprofit partners also noted that the holistic case management approach is being elevated by funders as a best practice for how to best meet the needs of migrant communities. These funders are more intentionally funding case management services and are asking potential grantees to identify how they are holistically serving migrant communities. However, nonprofit partners that incorporate holistic case management suggest that

organizations take the time to identify the staffing capacity and resources needed to implement this approach. From their experience, it is often necessary to bring on board a team of social workers who can handle the heavy caseloads and support one another.



“

After years of doing this work our recognition is that legal teams should include social work/case management as well...This is necessary to try to help people stabilize.”

– Nonprofit Partner

²⁴Ibarra, A.B. (February 28, 2022). California is expanding Medi-Cal – but hundreds of thousands of immigrants will still be left behind. Cal-Matters. <https://calmatters.org/health/2022/02/medi-cal-expansion-immigrants/>

LANGUAGE JUSTICE

Language justice is a practice and approach used to create “shared power, practice inclusion and dismantle traditional systems of oppression that have traditionally disenfranchised non-English speakers.” Language justice goes beyond solely providing interpretation and translation services; it is an intentional and meaningful social justice practice that uses interpreters as cultural mediators to ensure that those in need, particularly migrants, refugees, and indigenous migrant communities, are ethically represented, have access to communication, and are empowered to voice their needs, challenges, and experiences. In California, where there are over 200 languages spoken and where more than one-third of the population over five years of age (43%) speak a language other than English at home, language justice is critical to creating inclusion, equity, and greater access to social services and programs for migrant communities and indigenous populations.

The California Dignity for Families Fund identified language justice as a critical need and opportunity to support indigenous, Black, and newly arriving refugee migrant communities. Over half (51%) of CADFF nonprofit partners identified language justice as an essential need for migrant communities highlighting the growing need for language justice services among Mexican and Central American Indigenous groups, African, Haitian, and Afghan refugees. Slightly over two-thirds of CA DFF funders (64%) also elevated language access as a priority to serving the needs of migrant populations. Several funders shared that philanthropy often considers the language needs of Spanish-speaking communities while inadvertently ignoring the broader range of languages spoken by migrant communities, including indigenous languages, Creole, and Arabic. Additionally, CADFF nonprofit partners called out an urgent need for language justice services for unaccompanied youth. “Unaccompanied youth,” explained one nonprofit partner, “are indigenous language speakers whose linguistic needs are not being met while in custody. They are placed in facilities where no one speaks their language.”

To contextualize the critical need for language justice and opportunities ahead for the philanthropic field, public institutions, and nonprofit organizations serving migrant communities in the U.S., this case study highlights the harrowing journey of two migrant Maya K'iche

Defining Language Justice and Language Access*

Language Justice. This case study defines language justice as a practice and approach used to create “shared power, practice inclusion and dismantle traditional systems of oppression that have traditionally disenfranchised non-English speakers.” Through language justice, interpreters are cultural and language mediators who use their skills to accurately represent the needs and experiences of communities.

Language Access. Language access ensures that non-English speakers, including migrant communities and indigenous communities, have access to social services and supports in languages other than Spanish. Traditionally when it comes to language access, as explained by Luis Lopez Resendiz – Director of CIELO’s Indigenous Interpreter Program, “there is a misunderstanding that language access for immigrant rights just means translating from English to Spanish or to any other colonial language.” However, language access is about understanding and acknowledging the linguistic diversity within migrant and indigenous communities and intentionally meeting the language needs of these diverse populations.

indigenous women as they traveled to the U.S. in search of opportunity and safety. The journeys of Antonia and Alba, who are now trained indigenous interpreters at Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo (CIELO), echo the trajectories of many other migrant families who have made the long and treacherous journey to the U.S. to escape imminent violence and persecution, climate change and natural disasters, and human rights abuses. This case story also weaves in the voices of two leaders, Odilia Romero, Co-Founder of CIELO, and Luis Lopez Resendiz, Director of CIELO’s Indigenous Interpreter Program, who tirelessly work to ensure that access to language is elevated as a fundamental human right for all migrant individuals and families. As appropriate, we also incorporate the perspectives of CADFF nonprofit partners and funders who shared their insights and perspectives about language justice through one-on-one interviews.*

²⁵<https://communitylanguagecoop.com/language-justice/>

²⁶<https://mycielo.org/interpreter-project/> and <https://communitylanguagecoop.com/language-justice/>

²⁷<https://www.haasjr.org/perspectives/voices-from-the-field/the-power-of-language-in-building-community>

MAKING THE JOURNEY TO THE U.S.

Faced with a Challenging Decision. Antonia and Alba, aunt and niece through their maternal side, are Maya K'iche, indigenous women from Guatemala. Growing up in Guatemala was not easy for both women. Since childhood, they experienced persecution, racial discrimination, violence, and social marginalization due to their indigenous identity, language, and culture. As Maya K'iche indigenous women, they were viewed as second-class citizens and received no protection from government institutions. They had limited opportunities to advance professionally and gain economic security. Alba explained, *“I went to school to become an accountant, but [I] couldn't get work just because I was indigenous. I tried to look for work with my mother, but when they saw us with our traditional [indigenous] clothing, they didn't even give me one chance to fill out a work application.”* In 2013, after years of enduring discrimination, persecution, and receiving violent threats from organized crime, Antonia and Alba made the difficult decision to migrate to the U.S. in search of greater opportunities and safety. Alba was only 19 years old at the time, and her aunt Antonia faced the cruel reality of having to make the journey to the U.S. with her two-year-old son.

After a Treacherous Journey, a Need for Language Justice Emerges. After leaving Guatemala in 2013, Antonia and Alba's journey to the U.S. led them to ride La Bestia, or the Train of Death, a network of freight trains running all along Mexico from its southern border state of Chiapas to the United States. The 1,450-mile journey on La Bestia is one of the most dangerous and brutal paths to the U.S. due to the violence and harsh conditions that migrants encounter. Their excruciating journey also included crossing the dangerous terrain and rivers with Antonia's two-year-old son, all the while avoiding immigration officials. Their experiences traversing to the U.S. culminated in Alba and Antonia being separated and detained by border patrol agents and placed in what Alba called “la hielera,” or holding cells for migrants, often described as freezers due to the cold temperatures of the detention cells.

During Alba's time in the detention center, her interactions with the U.S. Border Patrol and U.S. customs officials were highly challenging and dehumanizing. With no access to K'iche or Spanish-language interpretation services, Alba was kept in the dark about her detention process and her rights. Moreover, Alba did not understand the content of the immigration-related documents U.S. customs officials asked her to sign. Under these circumstances, Alba did not have a mechanism to communicate her experience and reasons for migrating to the U.S. Recalling her experience,

“

I went to school to become an accountant, but [I] couldn't get work just because I was indigenous. I tried to look for work with my mother, but when they saw us with our typical [indigenous] clothing, they didn't even give me a chance to fill out a work application.”

-Alba

Alba shared:

“I was locked in [a] freezer [detention cell] with other children in Texas. It was very difficult because I was not given an interpreter. I didn't know what was happening. They gave me the application to request asylum, [but] I didn't know what was happening. During my first hearing with a judge, I did not understand him at all because they didn't even give me a Spanish interpreter... [Border patrol agents] only asked us for our personal information, but they didn't even speak Spanish, so it was very difficult to understand each other. They didn't tell [me] they were going to send [me] to a detention center or about the [detention] process. [They just] wanted our signature [on immigration paperwork]. [Border patrol agents] did not understand that we spoke an indigenous language and that we did not speak Spanish.”

Alba's experience mirrors the harsh reality of many indigenous migrants who lack indigenous-language interpreters in immigration proceedings and detention centers at the U.S.-Mexico Border. In 2019, The U.S.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency acknowledged having limited ability to meet the indigenous language request needs of indigenous migrants, and cited the following top ten most requested indigenous languages for interpretation services at the U.S.-Mexico border: M'am, Qu'iche, Konjobal, Quichua, Chimborazo Highland, Kekchi, Ixil, Quichua, Canar Highland, Chuj, San Sebastian Coatán, Acateco, and Quichua, Salasaca Highland.

Language Justice is a Human Right

For Odilia Romero, language is fundamentally connected to human rights. This means that every individual, regardless of their immigration status, identity, or ethnic/racial background, has a human right to speak, understand, and be understood in their native language, their language of preference, or a language they feel comfortable communicating and articulating their needs and experiences. For migrants and, in particular for indigenous migrant communities, whose languages are primarily in oral form, language is fundamental to accessing services both in the U.S. and at the U.S.-Mexico border. As Odilia emphasized, *“Language is fundamental to accessing any type of service. Without language, you’re not going to understand your due process. You’re not going to understand the intake form the [U.S. Border Patrol and U.S. customs officials] are giving you at the immigration detention center. You’re not going to understand a medical diagnosis or how to enroll your kids in school.”*

Similarly, Luis Lopez Resendiz – a Mixteco indigenous man who migrated to the U.S. at the age of 12- views

“

[Border patrol agents] did not understand that we spoke an indigenous language and that we did not speak Spanish.”

– Alba

language access as a human right for indigenous people. Luis adamantly shared: “[our] community has different needs, and they need to access services in a language they can understand, ... it’s [also] important for institutions to understand that indigenous migrants are different from your typical Latino or Mexican immigrant.” To emphasize the importance of cultural awareness, geography, and language diversity when working with indigenous communities, Luis shared the experience of his father accessing services at a Mexican consulate. Luis’s father, whose native language is Mixteco, refused to identify as indigenous while completing his paperwork, mainly because the term “indigenous” triggered memories of past trauma and violence he experienced in Mexico. However, while reviewing the paperwork, the consulate staff member noticed Luis's father's place of origin in Mexico and realized many Mixteco communities live in this area. Recognizing this, the staff member asked Luis’s father, *“Do you speak Mixteco? Are you Mixteco?”* Instantly, Luis’s father felt recognized and accepted for his indigenous identity and was able to access the services he needed in a manner that embraced his heritage.

Luis also explained that indigenous migrant communities need interpretation services and access to information in their native languages to navigate accessing social services and basic needs in their daily lives. *“[It’s important] that we provide services in a language that [migrants and indigenous communities] can understand in every single aspect [of their lives].”* Luis elaborated, *“when they go to the DMV or go to the doctor or request social services at the county, making sure that they get services [in their native languages] is crucial. Even riding the bus [can be challenging]. A lot of folks don’t understand or have a hard time understanding how the bus system works because the information is rarely in Spanish and it’s never in indigenous languages.”*

Antonia’s and Alba’s experiences echo many points that Luis and Odilia uplifted. For Antonia, in particular, not having access to indigenous-language interpreters while trying to obtain legal status in the U.S. was highly challenging. Antonia felt misguided by her immigration attorney, who discouraged her from applying for U.S. permanent residency. Without an indigenous-language interpreter and culturally competent legal services, Antonia

²⁸<https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/lack-of-indigenous-language-interpreters-compounds-border-tragedy/>

²⁹https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ice_supplemental_language_access_plan_07-21-20_508.pdf

³⁰https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ice_supplemental_language_access_plan_07-21-20_508.pdf

³¹National Institute of Environmental Health Services



had no choice but to drop her immigration case at the cost of never truly knowing if she could have obtained U.S. legal permanent residency. Antonia recounted, *“I never had [an interpreter] to help me. I needed an interpreter so much or just someone to give me advice [on my immigration case] ...sadly my immigration case is [still] frozen because no one supported me, and no one helped me.”* Antonia also felt that limited access to interpreters left her with little knowledge of her rights as an immigrant. She had no advocate or trained interpreter to communicate with her in K’iche about immigration law or community resources.

Antonia explained that many indigenous women like herself who lack language justice services are not aware of their rights and fear accessing services and supports related to domestic violence. She also emphasized that during her entire time living in the U.S., not a single

social service agency has ever asked her if she needed an indigenous language interpreter, which according to Antonia, is a common experience among indigenous communities, leaving many with a limited or vague understanding of resources and information. Alba also shared that her greatest barrier as a recent migrant was having limited Spanish and English language skills. As a result, she lacked awareness of vital community resources and social services that could have supported her as she resettled in the U.S. Alba explained that for her and other migrants, lacking language justice services is mentally and emotionally taxing and creates barriers to accessing adequate medical care, understanding documents related to their children’s education, and completing basic paperwork to access social services.

CONNECTING TO CIELO

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic and seven years after migrating to the U.S., Antonia and Alba connected with CIELO, an indigenous women-led nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles, California.

Antonia and Alba's Role In CIELO. As migrant indigenous women, Alba and Antonia were both recipients of CIELO's food pantry and grocery gift card efforts. After receiving these services, Alba started to volunteer at CIELO. As the need for K'iche interpretation grew during the pandemic, CIELO staff approached Alba and offered her a position as an interpreter. Initially, Alba was hesitant because she never thought she could be in a position to use her indigenous language skills to support other migrants like herself. Eventually, she agreed and left her job at a meat packing factory to join CIELO, where she received training and capacity building to prepare for her role as a K'iche interpreter. Now, Alba is a full-time interpreter in CIELO's Center for Indigenous Language and Power. She proudly wears her indigenous attire to courtrooms and has even traveled to detention centers locally and at the border to provide K'iche interpretation to unaccompanied youth. Reflecting on her work at CIELO, she shared,

“CIELO has helped me grow, to speak more to my people, to know more about my people, and to become the real me. After so many years [of discrimination], I didn't dare wear my typical indigenous clothing. I was afraid, but CIELO has helped me feel more confident among people and my community.”

Once Alba connected with CIELO, she encouraged her aunt, Antonia, to join a team of CIELO interpreters to provide K'iche interpretation services at a local shelter that housed unaccompanied migrant youth. Since then, Antonia has received formal training through CIELO and now works as an interpreter at CIELO's office in the Mexican consulate. *“My people need [interpreters],” Antonia explained, “especially those who have a case with immigration. These people need to obtain [legal status]; they need to be legalized, and they need to know their rights. They need [an interpreter] to explain their rights and laws in their languages.”*

Organizational Snapshot: CIELO

Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo (CIELO) was founded in 2016 by Odilia Romero and Janet Martinez, two Zapotec indigenous women, with the mission to serve, advocate, and empower indigenous communities from Latin America in the Los Angeles region and nationwide. Since its inception, CIELO has become one of the few organizations at the forefront of indigenous language justice and access. CIELO intentionally invests, recruits, trains, and hires indigenous women like Antonia and Alba as interpreters, so they can work in the Center for Indigenous Language and Power, which provides access to indigenous interpreters nationwide. Other core services CIELO offers include training and educating service providers and institutions about the importance of providing interpreters and language justice to migrants and indigenous communities. CIELO also strongly focuses on serving indigenous children and youth from Guatemala and Mexico.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, CIELO has experienced rapid growth and provided much-needed COVID-19 resources and relief to indigenous communities in Los Angeles as well as expanded its linguistic services and cultural programming nationwide to 24 states. More specifically, during the pandemic, CIELO established a food pantry program to combat food insecurity among indigenous communities and started the Undocu-indigenous fund, which allocated 1.5 million dollars to undocumented indigenous families. During the pandemic, CIELO also became a critical COVID-19 resource and vaccination hub providing critical linguistic support for indigenous communities navigating access to COVID-19 vaccines. Recently, CIELO also opened offices in the Mexican consulate and began language revitalization workshops to ensure indigenous languages continue thriving and alive among future generations.

THE ROLE THAT PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTITIES CAN PLAY TO ENSURE LANGUAGE JUSTICE IS A HUMAN RIGHT

Alba and Antonia's journey and the conversations with language justice leaders, CA DFF funded nonprofit partners, and CA DFF funders offer the following opportunities for private and public entities to support language justice efforts within the immigration justice movement:

► **Provide direct funding for language justice services.** Like Odilia and Luis, CA DFF funded nonprofit partners and funders alike elevated language justice as a critical need for migrant and indigenous communities. Due to a lack of funding and limited resources, organizations serving migrant communities have little capacity to provide in-person interpreters and primarily rely on internal staff and volunteers or hire individuals who are not professionally trained interpreters to meet their clients' language needs. For Luis and Odilia, increased funding for language justice would expand CIELO's audio-visual translation efforts, which allow indigenous migrant communities to gain greater awareness of social services via audio-visual resources in their native languages. This is particularly important because indigenous languages are mostly oral and have many variants. For example, Mixteco has over 90 linguistic variations. Additionally, due to systemic barriers and social conditions in their native countries, many indigenous communities have limited literacy skills, which prevents them from reading and fully understanding written material. Having funding available specifically for language justice can support organizations to retain trained interpreters, expand language offerings, and increase the number of migrants participating in programming or services. One funded partner who used the CA DFF grant to strengthen their language justice services explained:

“The grant assisted us in continuing to provide language justice for Black asylum-seekers. We often depended on volunteer interpreters, which impacted consistency. With the CADFF funds, we’ve retained professional support...the addition of simultaneous interpretation has greatly increased the numbers of Black asylum-seekers attending [our] workshops. Many Black asylum-seekers speak little, if any, English, so the addition of Kreyol, French, and Spanish has made a big difference in our reach and ability to support these community members.”

► **Increase capacity building and organizational infrastructure development of language justice organizations.** In addition to funding, newer and fast-growing organizations like CIELO that focus on providing language justice services to migrant communities

need additional organizational infrastructure support, coaching, and professional development opportunities to build staff capacity and solidify their internal organizational infrastructure. For example, Odilia shared, *“for indigenous people organizations, we need capacity development. We are growing. We are now 15 people, and how do we all get on the same page? How do we become more formal? We now need an employee manual. [We need support with] all these things that come with becoming CIELO.”*

► **Implement an education campaign for social service providers.** Antonia, Alba, Odilia, and Luis underscored the critical need to provide ongoing education to social service providers on language justice. Oftentimes, service providers are not aware that there are multitude languages and indigenous dialects other than Spanish that are spoken by migrant communities. As a result, migrants oftentimes are not able to access vital services they need to survive and to resettle in the U.S. CIELO staff stressed the importance of not assuming that all migrant communities from Latin America are monolingual Spanish speakers. *“Organizations say [they do not allocate] funding for language access because all of their staff speak Spanish,”* explained Luis, *“but that doesn’t mean that the population [they serve] speaks mostly Spanish.”* In addition to providing ongoing training, Alba also expressed a need for organizations to have a language access plan to ensure that migrant and indigenous communities are treated fairly and that they receive adequate interpretation services.

► **Increase the visibility and inclusion of indigenous migrant communities and the organizations that provide language justice services.** For Alba and Odilia, language justice is also a matter of increasing the visibility of indigenous migrant communities. To this end, Alba suggested that service providers and private and public entities revise their intake forms and surveys to include an option for migrants to select their indigenous identity. This would lead to an increased understanding and awareness of the true language needs among migrant populations. Odilia also stressed the importance of increasing the visibility of language justice organizations and elevating language justice as an essential service need for migrant communities. Funders and philanthropy have a role to play by creating shared spaces for nonprofit organizations where language access needs and language justice best practices are a central part of the conversation.

*Quotes have been lightly edited for brevity and clarity.

04 NETWORK OF NONPROFIT PARTNERS

Understanding that smaller grassroots organizations – often led by the most marginalized immigrant communities – form a crucial part of the immigrant justice system of care infrastructure, the Fund practiced solidarity with organizations serving groups that are often excluded from grantmaking priorities, such as Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Latinx, LGBTQIA+, and womxn. With guidance from the Advisory Committee, across their four grantmaking cycles the Fund also prioritized:

- ▶ Time-sensitive opportunities
- ▶ Balancing state and local government strategies
- ▶ Coordinated and transitional care
- ▶ Transformative opportunities
- ▶ Migrant children, unaccompanied minors, and refugee youth
- ▶ Strengthening the capacity of immigrant justice organizations and leaders
- ▶ Strengthening immigrant justice hubs and networks
- ▶ Supporting planning and strategizing efforts of the immigrant justice movement

This section of the report provides a broad overview of the nonprofit partners, the services provided to migrant communities, what is needed to support the network of nonprofit organizations, and a snapshot of the existing connections among nonprofit partners.

Building a Culture of “Solidarity Grantmaking”

CA DFF grantmaking was guided by the following practices that worked in unison to create a culture of “solidarity grantmaking.” These practices were adopted by the Advisory Committee and Project Team and are intended to set a model for how future philanthropic efforts can engage with impacted communities.

Follow the lead of those on the ground. Shift power to groups historically left out of the immigration justice space by incorporating their voices in the grantmaking process. For the Fund, this included creating an Advisory Committee composed of funders and movement leaders who speak directly to the needs of historically disinvested migrant communities.

Start with values and relationship building. Be intentional in whose voices are amplified to direct the grantmaking process and, importantly, how you set up safe and trusting spaces to share values and discuss alignment of the work with personal values.

Prioritize mutual learning and transparency. Intentionally create avenues to share information and incorporate different perspective. For the Fund this included sharing real-time information with different public and private actors to keep them abreast of what was emerging.

Minimize reporting requirements. Design grantmaking processes that diminish the application and reporting burden that grantees tend to hold. The Fund invested in a consultant who researched organizations to potentially fund and shared learnings with the Advisory Committee who was then charged with making the final grantmaking decisions. This process replaced lengthy application processes and reporting requirements consisted only of a short conversation with the learning and evaluation team.

Overview of Nonprofit Partners

Most nonprofit partners are small organizations that serve coastal urban cities with large concentrations of recent migrants.

The largest proportion of nonprofit partners serve urban core areas in southern California, including the Greater Los Angeles Region (25%) and San Diego Region (20%) (see Exhibit 6). Another 16% of nonprofit partners serve different migrant communities across the state (statewide organizations), and 14% serve the San Francisco Bay Area Region. Nonprofit organizations located in more rural areas, such as the Sacramento Area (7%), Central Valley (7%), Inland Region (5%), and Central Coast (2%), comprised a smaller share of partners.

This funding pattern mirrors patterns in research indicating higher concentrations of migrant communities in urban centers compared to rural areas. However, data shared by the PEW Research Center shows that population growth for both urban and rural areas was impacted by an increase in the migrant population between 2000 and 2012-16. For example, “immigrants were responsible for a larger share of the overall growth in rural (37%) and urban (38%) counties than in suburban (26%) ones.” This data points to a need to recognize the growth of the immigrant population in rural areas along with the funding that organizations serving migrant communities receive to support this growing community. More importantly, it presents an opportunity for philanthropy to examine its historical under-investment in rural areas and to identify and fund nonprofit organizations that serve migrant families/individuals and unaccompanied youth in rural regions across California.

Many of the nonprofit partners are young, relatively small organizations. The majority of funded nonprofits were established in 2005 or more recently, with many established since 2016 (Exhibit 7). A substantial cluster of migrant-serving organizations came into existence shortly after the 2016 election of Donald Trump. Nonprofit partners noted during interviews the increase in migrant-serving organizations and the growth of immigrant advocacy efforts to combat the Trump-era anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric. A leader of one organization working at the U.S.-Mexico border described how their organization comprised primarily volunteers before the Trump administration, then rapidly grew to 45 employees across two countries. In fact, nearly all funding partners explained that immigration “bubbled up as a huge issue during the

Exhibit 6: Geographic Spread of Nonprofit Partners (n=44)

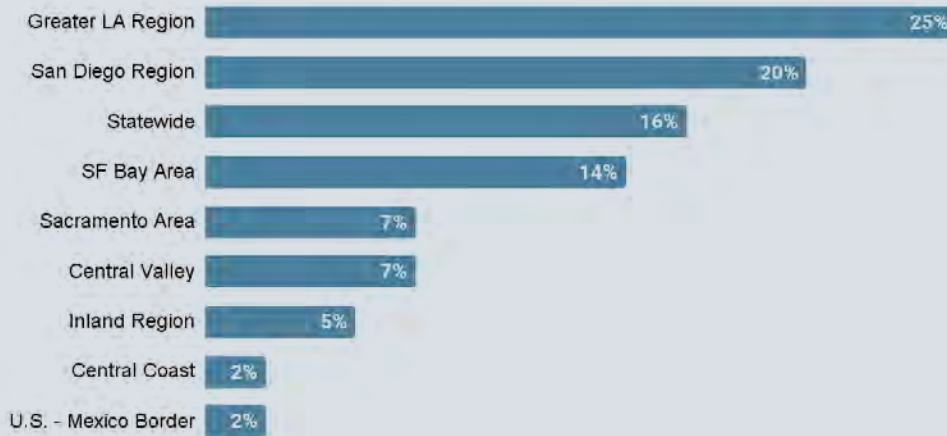
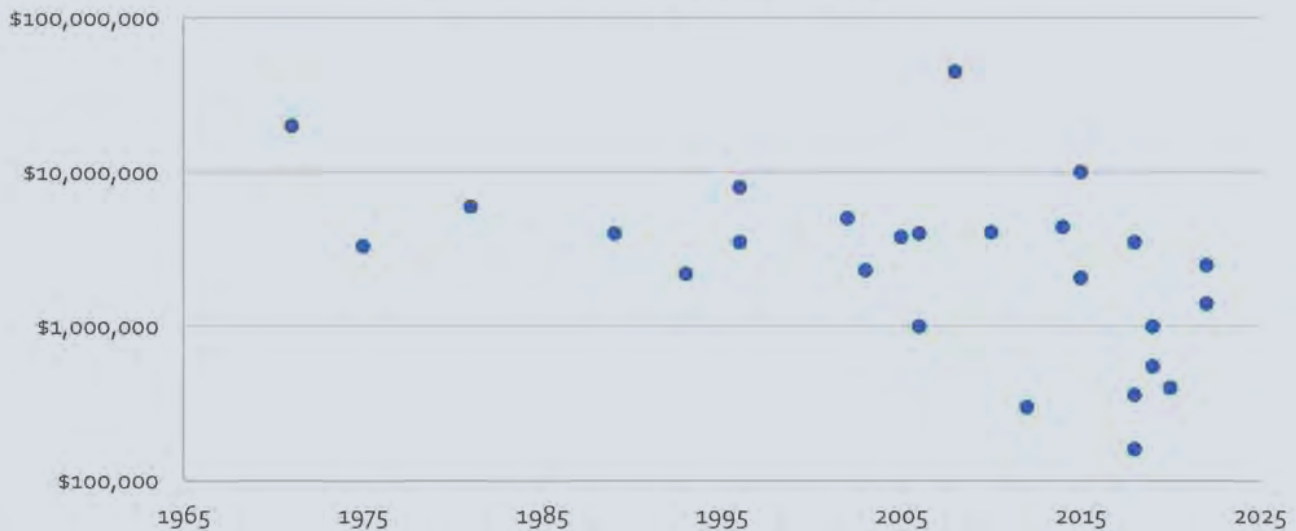


Exhibit 7. Nonprofit Partners' Approximate Annual Revenue by Year Established as a 501(c)3 (n=26)



past administration” for their respective institutions due to the controversial anti-immigration policies and increased humanitarian needs at the U.S.-Mexico border.

The Fund’s nonprofit partners reported a wide range of annual operating budgets that spanned \$160,000 to \$45 million. As noted earlier, the Fund prioritized resourcing smaller nonprofit organizations that tend to serve the most

marginalized migrant communities. Two-thirds of nonprofit organizations reported an annual operating budget of less than \$4 million, and about a quarter (24%) had an annual operating budget between \$4 and \$10 million. Only 10% of nonprofit partners reported an annual operating budget in the \$10 to \$45 million range. Nonprofit partners’ annual operating budget is loosely associated with years

³²“What Unites and Divides Urban, Suburban, and Rural Communities.” Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (May 22, 2018). <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2018/05/22/demographic-and-economic-trends-in-urban-suburban-and-rural-communities/#:~:text=The%20foreign%2Dborn%20population%20is,in%20suburban%20or%20rural%20counties.>

³³It is important to note that Exhibit 7 reflects data collected from a subset of nonprofit partners (26 of the 44 nonprofit partners). The full distribution may differ slightly from the subset captured in Exhibit 7.



Our organization, like many others - especially on the border- grew exponentially during the Trump Administration because people were paying attention. When we grew, we started getting money. It was like a frenzy of reactive work because the policies of the Trump Administration were so hideous.”

– Nonprofit Partner

of serving migrant communities. As might be expected, more recently established organizations reported a lower annual operating budget compared to more established organizations (Exhibit 7). For example, all seven organizations with a reported revenue of \$1 million or less were established as 501(c)3 organizations in 2006 or later, including five of the seven established in 2018 or later.

Nonprofit partners stress the importance of identity and lived experience of senior leaders and staff when serving migrant communities.

Nonprofit leaders and staff strongly emphasized the importance of having senior teams and staff who reflect the communities they serve and share their lived experiences, particularly when those communities include Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQIA+ migrants. Nearly all (89%) senior leaders and staff agreed that it was very important or important that their staff share similar backgrounds with the communities they serve. This commitment to racial/ethnic diversity and lived experience is seen in the racial/ethnic identity of nonprofit partners’ senior teams and staff. Survey data show that over three-quarters (77%) of executive leaders identify as people of color with the majority identifying as Latinx (44%), Indigenous (28%), and Arab/Middle Eastern/South Asian (14%).

Similarly, most (79%) of the nonprofit partners who participated in the survey reported that at least 75%

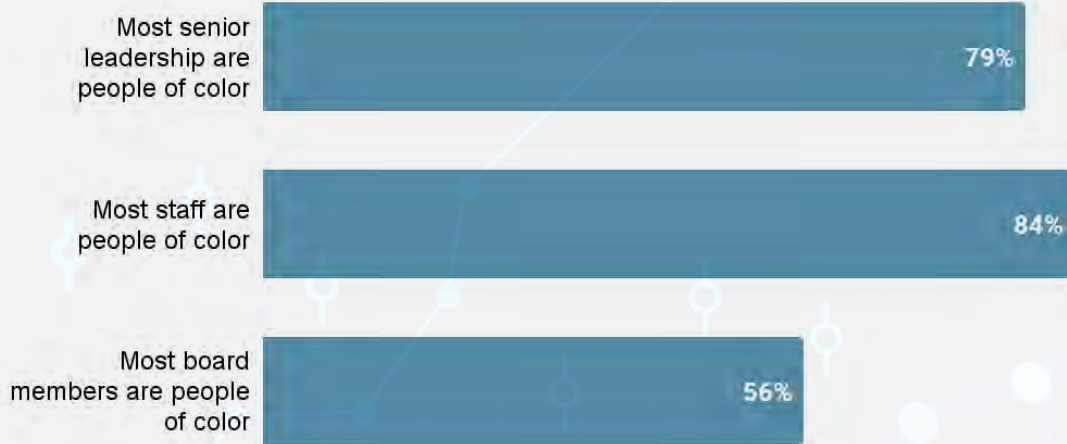
of the senior leadership are people of color (Exhibit 8). Another 84% of nonprofits shared that at least 75% their staff identify as people of color. Fewer boards of directors identified as people of color more generally across nonprofit partners.

Beyond racial and ethnic identity, nearly all nonprofit organizations highlighted that having similar lived experiences as the migrant communities they serve helps build trust and rapport that is essential to providing holistic services. A nonprofit leader described the sentiment held by most:

“I have experienced first-hand what [it feels like] to come as an unaccompanied minor in the United States. I did my own journey many years ago as a 14-year-old crossing the border alongside my 15-year-old brother with no legal guardians or parents that accompanied us throughout the way. I identify with so many of the youth [because] I experienced the same things. They see you as one of them. It is so important for them to identify with us [and it helps] open up levels of communication. It definitely helps to build this rapport between our staff and the population and the community that we support. Our staff is composed of all women of color or Black or Indigenous people.”

Nonprofit partners underscored the value of building the capacity of employees of color and promoting staff with lived experience to maintain racial and ethnic diversity of senior teams and staff. Legal nonprofit partners specified that their recruiting and retention practices and policies ensure that staff, particularly lawyers and legal advocates, share similar lived experiences to those they serve. For example, one shared, *“It is invaluable to have people on staff from targeted immigrant communities who have that lived experience. I don’t think I would say it is a requirement for the job, but there’s no question that it enhances our work. We actively recruit and take a hard look at our recruitment and retention policies to make sure we are reaching those communities for job recruitment.”*

Exhibit 8: Nonprofit Partners with High Representation of People of Color* (n=43)



Key Supports and Services Provided by Nonprofit Partners

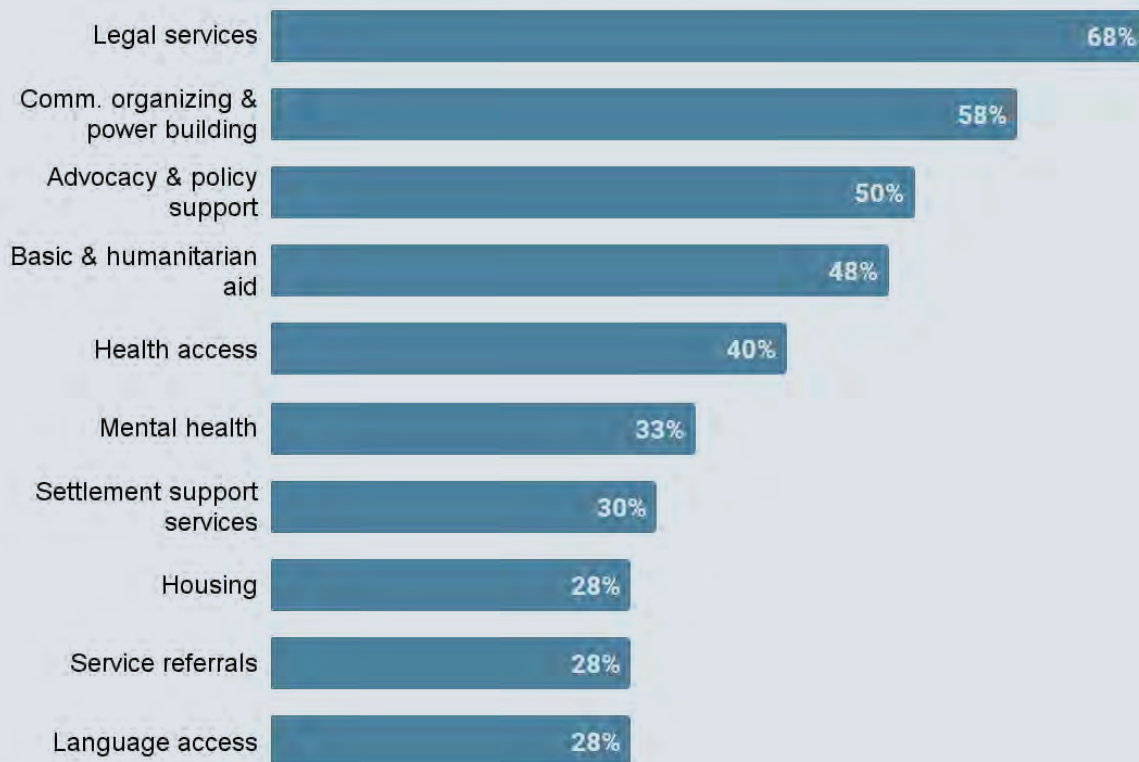
Most nonprofit partners offer and advocate for a holistic blend of legal services, community organizing and power building, advocacy and policy support, and basic and humanitarian aid.

Exhibit 9 shows the range of services offered by the nonprofit partners. The most common of these services are legal services, community organizing and power building, advocacy and policy support, and basic and humanitarian aid.

► **Direct legal immigration services** (provided by **68%** of partners), including family reunification, removal defense, naturalization, asylum, and worker rights, among other litigation supports. Many legal and non-legal nonprofit partners shared that they collaborate to organize free legal and advocacy workshops, such as Know Your Rights workshops, to inform the community about immigration laws and distribute educational materials. To build capacity, legal nonprofit partners also offer “train the trainer” workshops to other service providers.

► **Community organizing and power-building strategies (58%)** to help the communities nonprofit partners serve use their power and voice. Nonprofit partners shared that they intentionally follow the needs and priorities of the community, which helps inform their policy advocacy campaigns at local, county, and state levels. Nonprofit partners that focus on community organizing and power building undertake strategies including cultivating communities’ political awareness and education, organizing the community on urgent needs as they arise, engaging voters, building a political base, and developing leadership.

Exhibit 9: Primary Services Provided by Nonprofit Partners (n=40)



► **Advocacy efforts (50%)** intended to shift local, statewide, and federal policies. The advocacy efforts undertaken by organizations vary. For example, some focus on congressional and federal advocacy to support family reunification efforts; others facilitate coalitions or networks of nonprofit organizations and federal, state, and local representatives; and others use communication and narrative change strategies to support policy or systems change. A few nonprofit organizations working on advocacy noted that their immigration justice work often, as one put it, *“intersects with climate justice, workers’ rights, and environmental justice.”*

► **Basic and humanitarian aid (48%)** to migrant communities. Aid to support migrant families and individuals includes food and clothing distribution, housing, cash assistance, transportation, and referrals to other services. Nonprofit partners noted that while the state provides humanitarian aid to migrant families, the timeframe this support is sometimes inadequate. For example, nonprofit partners serving refugees voiced that the support offered by the Resettlement Agency is only provided during refugees’ first 30-90 days. This support, while vitally needed, is insufficient because, as articulated by one nonprofit leader, *“The real problems start after the three months when refugees understand all the challenges, and that is when mental health [issues] and domestic violence start.”*

Nonprofit partners identified a holistic blend of legal and humanitarian supports and services as a best practice model.

While over two-thirds of nonprofit partners provide legal services to migrant communities, 53% of these organizations that provide legal services also provide humanitarian support and other services intended to



[We have recognized] after years of doing this work that legal teams should include social work as well, whether that's framed as a social worker, a case manager – that is part of the work that's necessary to help people stabilize.”

– Nonprofit Partner

serve the holistic needs of their clients. In fact, only three organizations reported they only provide legal services to their clients. Most legal service organizations reported that they *“meet the full need of [their] clients by providing direct [humanitarian] services or by partnering with other organizations.”* These legal nonprofit partners strongly believe in viewing their clients as whole people and attempting to meet the entirety of their needs. A legal service provider shared: *“[We provide] holistic legal services that include legal representation and humanitarian support. We try to meet the full scope of needs of our clients by providing direct services or partnering with other organizations.”* Conversely, social service organizations also understand the importance of offering legal support to the migrant communities they serve. A few of these organizations reported that as a result of the funding from CA DFF, they plan to hire attorneys to integrate legal advocacy and representation services for their clients.

Strengthening the Nonprofit Network

Recognizing that the immigrant justice movement has long been under-resourced, a key aim of the Fund was to help create a stronger and more resilient nonprofit network that can effectively fundraise and sustain the movement. Identifying the needs of nonprofit partners, shared here, can increase funders' awareness of opportunities for meaningful support of immigrant justice.

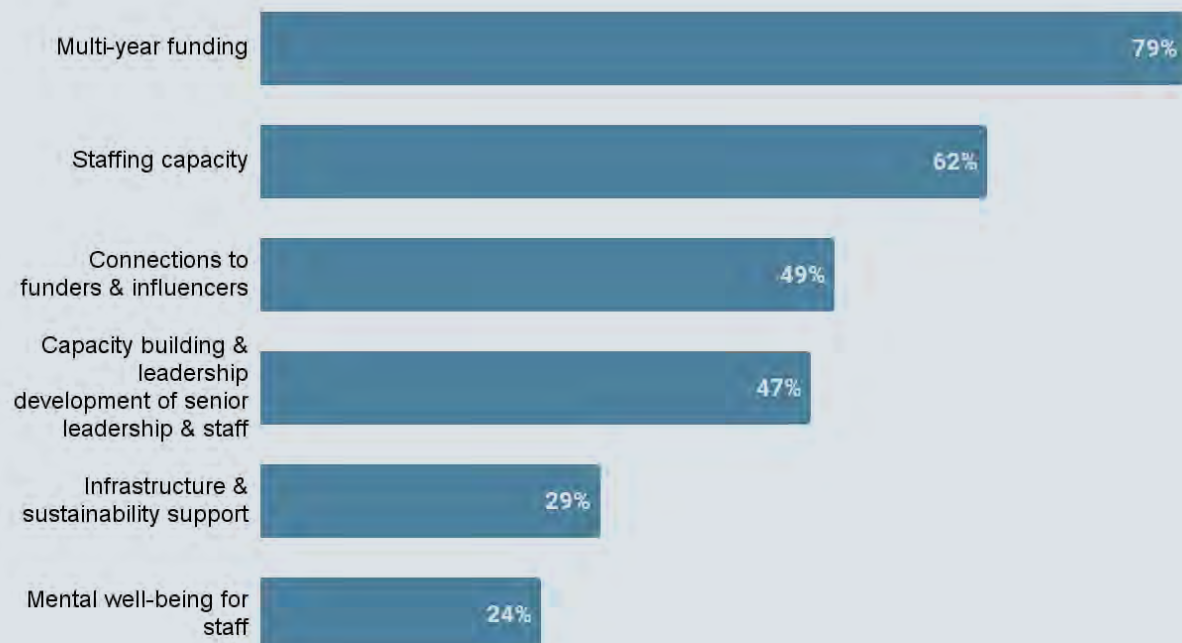
According to nonprofit partners, efforts to strengthen the immigrant justice movement should above all emphasize multi-year general operating support and augment nonprofit staffing capacity to meet increased demand for immigration services (Exhibit 10).

In addition, numerous migrant-serving organizations reported needs to connect to funders and influencers, increase the capacity and technical skills of staff, improve their organization's infrastructure, and better support the mental well-being of staff. More details about these needs, including nuances about the needs of smaller nonprofit organizations and those not traditionally prioritized in grantmaking strategies are detailed below.

- ▶ **Multi-year, flexible funding** (identified by **79%** of partners). Organizations are concerned about how to secure sustained funding to meet the growing needs of migrants. Over the past few years, nonprofit partners have observed a diminishing stream of philanthropic funding despite persistent capacity challenges to serve migrant communities. As one partner detailed, *"We do not have the same volume of individual donations that we used to. A lot of foundations stopped immigration funding when Biden was elected."*

Smaller organizations are particularly vulnerable to decreased philanthropic support. Funders tend to overlook smaller organizations in favor of larger, often more established organizations. At the same time, smaller organizations are often serving more marginalized communities with intersectional identities including Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQIA+. The leader of a smaller organization expressed, *"Larger organizations take funding from smaller organizations and then they subcontract with grassroots organizations. Larger organizations with bigger*

Exhibit 10: Pressing Needs of Nonprofit Partners (n=40)



budgets are taking funding opportunities from smaller organizations.” The resources that are distributed from larger organizations to smaller organizations are not sufficient to sustain smaller organizations that are on the ground providing the services migrant communities need. Several nonprofit partners advocated for directly resourcing smaller organizations and helping them build their organizational infrastructure.

While funding in general is among nonprofit partners’ most pressing needs, there is a particular need for multi-year funding to help sustain and stabilize organizations. According to nonprofit partners, long-term funding commitments help organizations recruit and retain staff and, once they have a stable workforce, address other organizational infrastructure issues. Other nonprofit partners shared that funders need to consider flexible grantmaking strategies such as general operating support. In fact, most of the nonprofit partners noted that what set the California Dignity for Families Fund apart was the flexible core operating support it provided.

Nearly all funders agree that multi-year, flexible funding is the most pressing need for the immigrant justice movement. Furthermore, funders shared that a financial barrier for these nonprofits is that most funding they receive – *“especially for organizations led by people of color,”* noted one – is project-based rather than general operating support. Even when nonprofit organizations receive less flexible project-based funding, particularly from the state and federal governments, it tends to be what a funder described as *“severely underfunded.”* One funder explained that project-based grants commonly use formulas to determine the funding amount needed to resource legal representation cases and to provide basic humanitarian services, but because cases can be stretched out over one to five years, the flow of funds is often insubstantial. For this reason, funders advocate for general operating grants that fund staff, not cases.

Funders also mentioned that a lack of adequate funding is directly tied to other challenges that nonprofit partners face, including limited staffing, insufficient staff salaries, and a lack of capacity-building and leadership opportunities for staff that often leads to staff burnout, fatigue, and turnover. One funder shared that *“nonprofits are training grounds for new lawyers,”* with nonprofits losing their lawyers to the public sector and public defender’s offices that often offer better salaries and benefits.

Responding to Inflation in Real-Time

As inflation rises and everyday prices increase, nonprofit organizations and their staff are among the many who are bearing its burden. Over half (53%) of the organizations shared that they are taking active measures to mitigate the impact of inflation on their staff and the community members they serve. Many have increased their staff salaries, reinstated work-from-home policies, or modified their programming. While concerned about the impact of inflation on the nonprofit infrastructure, most funders affiliated with the Fund acknowledged that their institutions were slow to respond. Slightly over one-quarter (29%) of the 14 funders interviewed during the summer of 2022 had not started conversations about the impact of inflation on their grantees and half (50%) were beginning to have informal conversations about their ability to support grantees to help mitigate inflation effects. Some of these funders explained that while their grantees had sought grant adjustments in the face of rising costs, institutions were limited in what they could do. As detailed by a funder, *“Organizations have been asking for increases in our grantmaking because of the increased cost of living. Our budgets are not increasing because our grantmaking is tied to the economy and [we] are able to provide less money.”*

However, a small group of funding partners (21%) have taken action to help their grantees weather inflation by adjusting their total funding allocations. These institutions have reached out to grantees to learn more about inflation’s impacts on their organizations and staff and are adjusting accordingly. *“We have increased grantmaking, although not across the board, but we have informally increased the ranges of our grants by about 10% of our typical grants,”* shared one. *“We don’t have a solid strategy, but it is something we are cognizant of, and we are asking our grantees how their expenses have changed”* because of inflation. Anticipating a possible recession, the nonprofit partners are calling on philanthropy to increase its overall giving (particularly general operating support), even if foundations must alter their underlying fiscal plans. The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy’s Director of Research, Ryan Schlegel, for example, shared Foundations *“should resist the sector’s ephemeral notion of preserving perpetuity and prioritize the real, immediate needs of their grantees and the communities they serve.”*

- ▶ **Staffing capacity (62%).** The need for increased staffing is interlinked with the lack of funding available for nonprofit organizations serving migrant communities. Smaller nonprofit partners were more likely to report that their staffing shortage was directly tied to the limited funding they received compared to larger nonprofit partners. A smaller nonprofit partner elaborated, “[We need] funding to increase staff capacity to do the work. Staff does this work sometimes on a volunteer basis, but organizations need dedicated staff.” While the need for increased staffing capacity was not a priority mentioned by many funding partners, those who did pointed out that staffing needs are rising due to increased demand for services among migrant communities; falloff after an influx of funding during the Trump administration from philanthropy; and a general shortage of staffing including lawyers, social workers, and back-end support.

Although organizations’ staffing capacity is a longstanding need, several nonprofit partners shared that their organizations grew exponentially during the Trump Administration when funding flowed into the sector to defend against new anti-immigration policies. As the demand for services grew, organizations found it difficult to keep up with their recruitment and hiring and that led to staff burnout and wellness issues. Now working to address the protracted problem, nonprofit partners continue to struggle to hire lawyers, social workers/case managers, psychologists/therapists, back-end administrative support staff, and communications specialists. In rural regions, recruitment challenges are particularly pronounced, especially when hiring immigration lawyers. As one interview participant remarked, *“Recruiting attorneys for the [Central Valley] region is challenging. Nonprofit legal service partners in the region find it difficult to recruit attorneys to come to the Central Valley – it is not as attractive as working in Los Angeles, the Bay Area, or New York.”*

- ▶ **Connections to funders and influencers (49%).** Smaller nonprofit partners noted that their organizations would benefit from connections to key stakeholders in the immigration ecosystem, including funders, policy leaders and elected officials, media outlets, and other nonprofits doing similar work. These nonprofit partners explained that their small organizations do not have robust communication teams or platforms to help promote their services. This need is not yet recognized by funders: funding partners did not identify helping organizations build connections with other funders or influencers as a top priority. This misalignment presents



There has been a high level of turnover [in nonprofit organizations serving migrant communities], and the need is at an all-time high for the services they provide. Unfortunately, for many of the organizations, capacity is lower than it has been because they don’t have the staffing. Even with funding, they haven’t been able to hire. They haven’t had the time and space to do the strategic planning needed to build out [because] they have been responding to the issues that the communities have.”

– Nonprofit Partner

an opportunity for the philanthropic field to assist the immigrant justice movement beyond providing dollars.

- ▶ **Capacity building and leadership development (47%).** Smaller nonprofit partners more often voiced an interest in expanding staff skills and ability to “grow into new roles” through trainings and professional development. This need rose as a priority especially among organizations whose staff have less formalized training but bring rich lived experience and expertise. Nonprofit partners also identified coaching for senior leadership teams as a need to help build the capacity of future leaders in the immigration justice movement. Capacity building requires not only financial support, but appropriately skilled trainers and consultants. Organizations serving indigenous communities stressed the lack of culturally competent consultants available to help build the capacities of their staff. An indigenous leader elaborated, *“It has been difficult to identify consultants that not only speak Spanish but who share similar, if not the same, backgrounds as our staff.”*
- ▶ **Organizational infrastructure and sustainability (29%).** Building the infrastructure of their organization was a top priority for smaller nonprofit partners. To strengthen their organization’s infrastructure, these partners shared that they need to improve their financial, technological,

communication, and other back-end administrative structures. A few organizations shared that they had had helpful experiences hiring consultants to walk them through the process of categorizing the different infrastructure elements, assessing them, and identifying opportunities to build or sustain their infrastructure.

► **Mental health and well-being support for staff (24%).**

Nonprofit partners were concerned about the mental health and well-being of their staff. They shared that because *“burnout is really high in this industry,”* they are working to identify opportunities to support their staff, particularly those who have experienced vicarious trauma. Organizations are taking several steps to address staff mental health, including hosting trainings on vicarious trauma, trauma-informed care, and resilience; instituting sabbatical policies; implementing safety protocols; and augmenting benefit packages.

Funding partners also identified staff wellness as a top priority for nonprofit partners. Several funders shared that their respective institutions are taking active steps to support organizations by setting aside funding specifically earmarked for staff wellness and engaging more closely with organizations to identify how to best support them. One funder commented on the host of challenges organizations are facing, including staff wellness: *“We need to invest in the well-being of staff and leadership development. We don’t have a pipeline of people coming in, but how do we maintain the current staff? Many have experienced secondary trauma, and they know their job does not pay a whole lot either.”*

In direct response to these mental health and well-being needs, the Fund issued an additional \$703,125 in capacity building and wellness grants to 15 nonprofit partners. Nonprofit partners who received a capacity building and wellness grant shared that they plan to use the funds to strengthen their organizational infrastructure and support staff healing and wellness by providing one-on-one wellness sessions, stipends, and additional time. A recipient shared, *“We are likely to use our grant for wellness stipends. As directly impacted undocumented immigrant queer femmes, this work oftentimes leads to burnout and health crisis. We believe in building healthy systems of care and sustainability and have prioritized providing wellness stipends for the team.”*

Snapshot of the Current Network of Nonprofit Partners

To better understand the networks and partnerships that exist among nonprofit partners, a modified social network analysis survey was conducted with nonprofit partners at the end of the time-limited Fund. The findings from the survey provide a point-in-time snapshot of the hubs, networks, and collaborations that exist among nonprofit partners. The snapshot illustrates the nonprofit partners that are more central to the movement and those that are at the periphery.

About the survey and levels of collaboration scale

The survey captured the strength of connections among CA DFF nonprofit partners by asking respondents to rate their level of interaction with each other nonprofit partner using the Levels of Collaboration Scale. The four-point scale included no interaction, networking, cooperation, and coalition, as described further below.

- **No interaction:** not aware of this organization or not currently involved in any way, formally or informally
- **Networking:** aware of the organization, loosely defined roles, little communication, all decisions are made independently
- **Cooperation:** provide information to each other, somewhat defined roles, formal communication, all decisions are made independently
- **Coalition:** share ideas, share resources, frequent and prioritized communication, all members have a say in the decision-making process

The information shared by the 30 nonprofit partners that completed the survey about their levels of collaboration with other nonprofit partners is shared below using a series of network maps created to visualize relationships and help identify patterns and hubs. The levels of interaction were examined and presented below along the coalition, cooperation, and networking levels.

³⁴Developed by Frey BB, Lohmeier JH, Lee SW, Tollefson N, and Johanning ML. (2004). Measuring Change in Collaboration Among School Safety Partners. Levels of Collaboration was modified by the evaluation team.

Reading the Network Hub Maps

Circles: Represent nonprofit partners that completed the survey. Grayed out circles represent nonprofit partners that did not complete the survey.

- ▶ **Lines:** Represent the interactions reported at the coalition, cooperation, or networking level.
- ▶ **Arrows:** Show the direction of an interaction. Arrows point from the responding nonprofit partners to the organization with which they report an interaction.
- ▶ **Organization labels:** Identify nonprofit partners using their agency logos, where available.
- ▶ **Map legend:** Each network hub map represents the levels of interaction based on the level of interaction (coalition, coordination, or networking). The circles that represent the nonprofit partners are surrounded by bars that correspond to the services that organizations reported providing migrant communities..

Key takeaways from the network hub analysis

- ▶ **The largest proportion of connections across the CA DFF nonprofit network are taking place at the networking level** (608 connections), followed by the cooperation level (260) and coalition level (136 connections). This indicates that organizations are familiar with each other, there is minimal communication, and decisions are made independently. This finding suggests that there is ample opportunity to deepen connections among nonprofit partners with the goal of strengthening the immigration justice movement.
- ▶ **At the coalition level,** two organizations emerged as central hubs, with the highest number of overall (both incoming and outgoing) connections – California Immigrant Policy Center (CIPC) and Council on American-Islamic Relations, California, each with 12 reported coalition level connections.
- ▶ **At the cooperation level,** Refugee Health Alliance emerged as the largest hub with 25 reported connections, and Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) and Immigrant Defenders as mid-size hubs with 17 and 15 connections respectively.

- ▶ At the networking level, connections are much more abundant among organizations, with less centralization around a few hubs. Organizations with the most reported network-level connections were BAJI (37), Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice (34), Al Otro Lado, Inc. (33), Immigrant Defenders (30), and Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project (29).

Emerging network hubs at the coalition, collaboration, and networking levels

This section shares the network maps across the three levels of collaboration: coalition, collaboration, and networking levels.

Coalition-level of interaction is the highest level of collaboration and is characterized by sharing of ideas and resources, frequent communication that is prioritized, and ensuring that members have a say in the decision-making process.

Coalition-level network map

At the **coalition** level, network hubs center around the *California Immigrant Policy Center (CIPC)* and *Council on American-Islamic Relations, California (CAIR-CA)*. Exhibit 11 illustrates the coalition network hub with CIPC and CAIR-CA as the larger nodes in the hub.

- ▶ **CIPC** is a relatively new nonprofit partner, established as a 501(c)3 organization in 2018, and reported a mid-range annual budget of \$3,000,000 to \$4,000,000. CIPC serves the Bay Area, Central Valley, Inland Region, Central Coast, Los Angeles, Sacramento Region, and Statewide. CIPC holds a convener role in the immigrant justice movement, and several nonprofit partners reported coalition-level interaction with CIPC due to their participation in CIPC's Regional Capacity Building Project (RCBP). RCBP includes a cohort of immigrant rights organizations across California that aim to build the capacity of regional coalitions with grassroots-led, needs-responsive, and advocacy-oriented approaches to building power. The largest share (35%) of nonprofit partners reported they collaborated most frequently with CIPC at the coalition level of interaction – the highest level of interaction.
- ▶ **CAIR-CA** is among the older partner organizations, established as a 501(c)3 in 1996 and with a long-standing presence in the immigrant justice movement, and is among the more well-resourced organizations

Exhibit 11: Coalition-Level Network Map



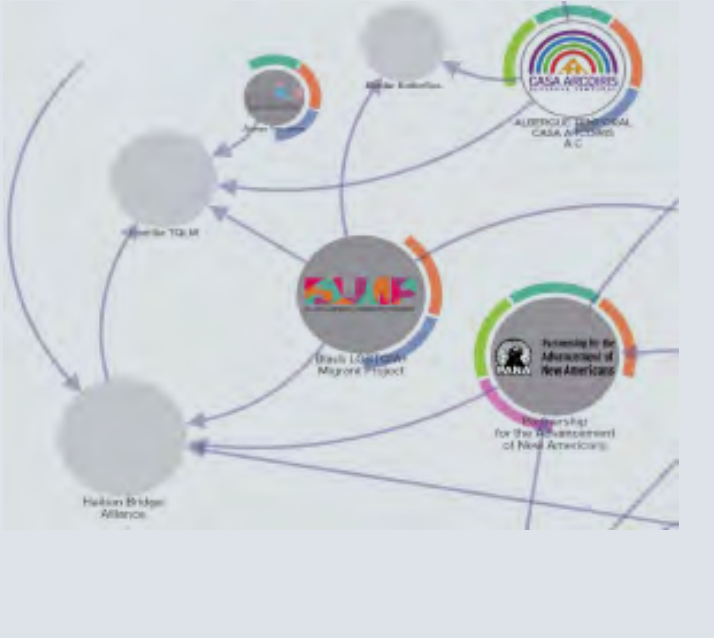
reporting an annual budget of \$8,000,000. CAIR-CA reported serving communities across the state of California. While CAIR-CA was identified as a central hub of the coalition network, it is important to note that most of the coalition level connections were outgoing rather than incoming.

- ▶ **Advocacy and legal services organizations are more likely to serve as central or secondary hubs in the coalition-level network map.** The coalition-level network map identified additional nonprofit partners that play an important role in the network, such as Kids in Need of Defense, Central Valley Immigrant Integrative Collaborative, California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice, and CRLA Foundation. These nonprofit partners reported offering advocacy and legal services to migrant communities suggesting that both of these services are important to the formation of network hubs.
- ▶ **Nonprofit partners that primarily serve Black and LGBTQIA+ migrant communities tend to be disconnected from the central coalition-level hubs; however, these organizations have high levels of interactions amongst each other.** As displayed in Exhibit 12, a sub-hub within the coalition-level network map exists among Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project, Alianza Translatinx, Familia TQLM, Haitian Bridge Alliance, Casa

Arcoiris Albergue Temporal, and Border Butterflies. While the connections at this level are likely impacted by the three organizations that did not complete the survey – Haitian Bridge Alliance, Familia TQLM, and Border Butterflies – this peripheral hub forms a distinct cluster of organizations that serve Black and LGBTQIA+ migrant communities.

- ▶ **Nonprofit partners with smaller annual budgets that serve specific geographic regions are less likely to have coalition-level connections to other nonprofit partners.** Seven nonprofit partners had no reported coalition-level connections – African Communities Public Health Coalition, Border Angels, El/La Para Trans Latinas, National Center for Youth Law, Public Council, Refugee Children Center, and Students Without Limits. Notably, of these seven, three organizations (African Communities Public Health Coalition, Border Angels, and Public Council) did not complete the survey, likely impacting the results. However, three of the four organizations in this group that did complete the survey – El/La Para Trans Latinas, Refugee Children Center, and Students Without Limits – reported lower annual budgets and comparatively limited geographic reach, with service areas immediately around their headquarters. El/La Para Trans Latinas is based in San Francisco and reported their service area as the Bay

Exhibit 12: Peripheral Coalition-Level Hub



At the cooperation-level of interaction, nonprofit partners share information with each other, can have defined roles, engage in formal communication, and make decisions independently.

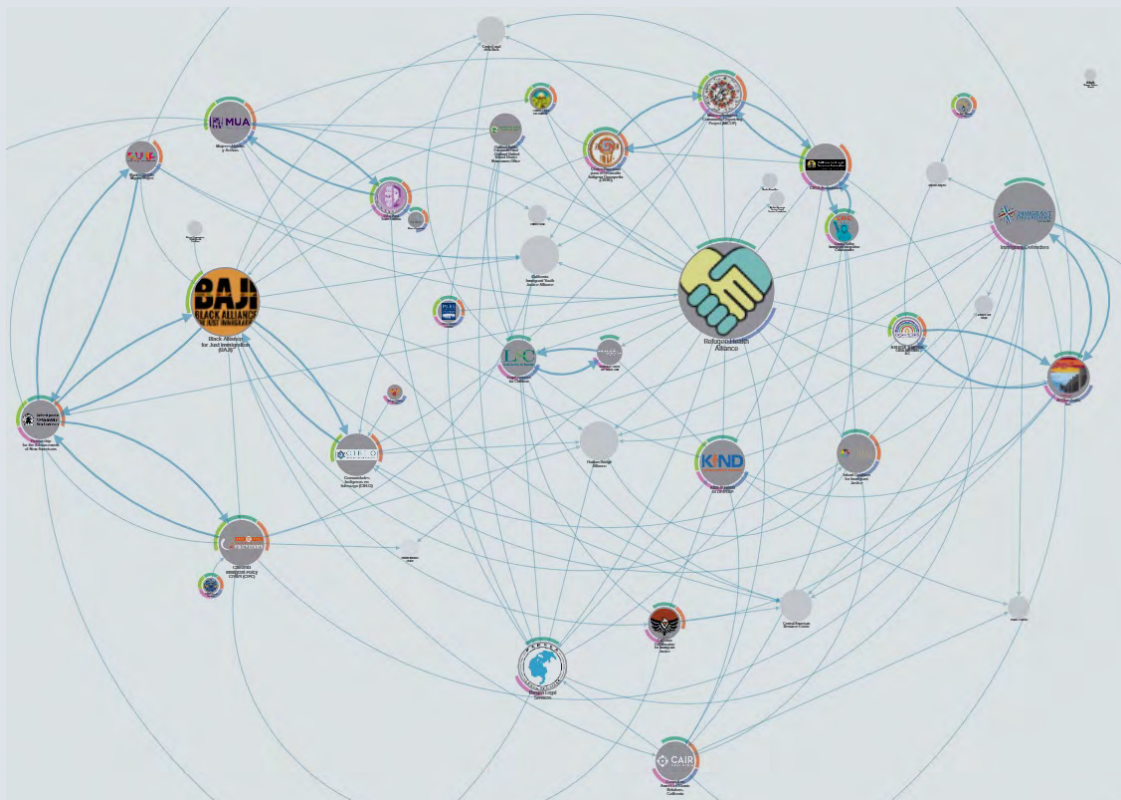
Cooperation-level network map

At the cooperation level, Refugee Health Alliance emerged as the largest hub followed by Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) and Immigrant Defenders as mid-size hubs, as shown in Exhibit 13.

- ▶ Interestingly, **Refugee Health Alliance** is among the youngest organizations, established as a 501(c)3 in 2019, and the lowest-resourced, with a reported annual budget of \$550,000. With headquarters in La Jolla, a service area across the US and Mexico, and activities focused on advocacy and direct services, the organization seems to be able to leverage its resources and foster connections that add value but require fewer resources than coalition-level relationships.
- ▶ **BAJI and Immigrant Defenders** operate statewide with higher budgets, reported at \$4,000,000 and \$10,000,000 respectively, providing opportunities to ally and cooperate with other organizations.

Area, Refugee Children Center is based in the North Hills neighborhood of Los Angeles and reported their service area as Los Angeles, and Students Without Limits is based in San Diego with a reported service area of San Diego County.

Exhibit 13: Cooperation-Level Network Map

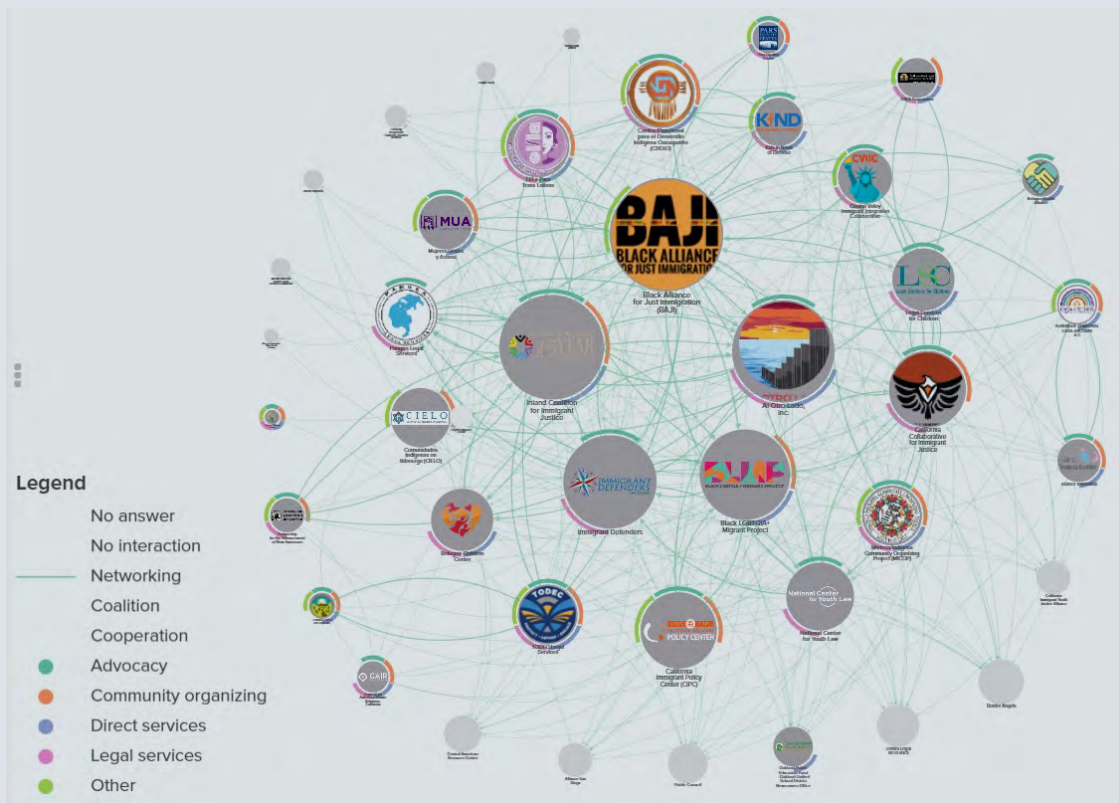


At the **networking level of interaction**, organizations are aware of each other, have loosely defined roles and little communication, and all decisions are made independently.

Networking-level network map

At the **networking** level, connections are much more abundant among nonprofit partners, and there is less centralization around a few hubs. Organizations with the most reported network-level connections were BAJI, Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice, Al Otro Lado, Inc., Immigrant Defenders, and Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project. Of these, BAJI and Immigrant Defenders both had among the highest numbers of reported connections at the cooperation level as well, reflecting reported strong relationships with multiple organizations. Six organizations had less than five reported networking level connections indicating they are less well connected to other nonprofit partners – Border Butterflies, Familia TQLM, Muslim American Society Social Services Foundation, Haitian Bridge Alliance, Students Without Limits, and African Communities Public Health Coalition.

Exhibit 14: Networking-Level Network Map



Factors that facilitate and hinder collaboration

Nonprofit partners shared the factors that facilitated and hindered collaboration with other organizations in the immigrant justice movement. The top five factors that help organizations collaborate with each other include having aligned goals/mission/vision (50%), supporting similar populations (37%), personal connections/relationships or a history of partnership between organizations (33%), sharing similar geography/regions (30%), and acquired funding for collaborative efforts (27%) (see Exhibit 15).

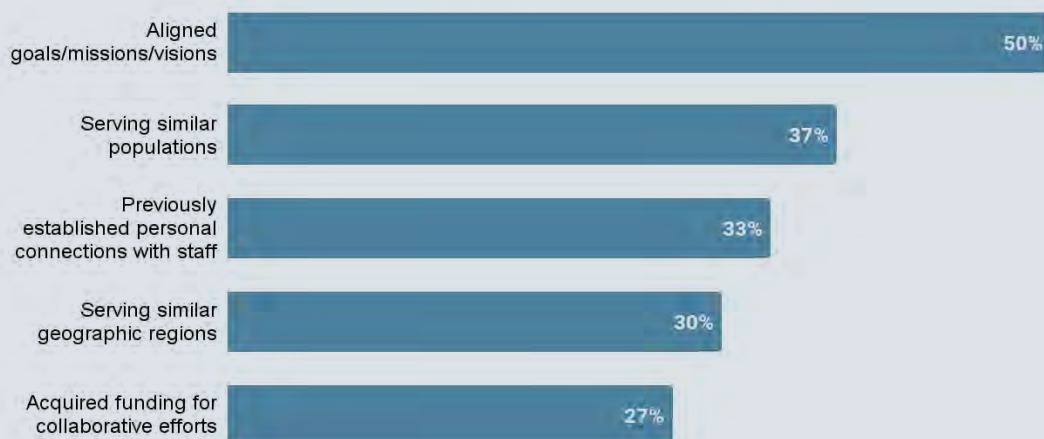
“

Having a shared vision and shared values is critical to successful partnerships. It is also important to be able to recognize what each partner brings to the table, such as what their strengths are but also what areas they need more support.”

– Nonprofit Partner

Conversely, partners reported the main factor hindering collaboration hinder immigrant justice organizations is limited staffing capacity (63%) – within both their own organization and potential collaborating organizations. Nonprofit partners are “*mindful of the capacity of staff [they have] and do not want to burn them out.*” Moreover, the lack of adequate staffing capacity limits organizations from proactively building relationships with other organizations and joining coalition efforts. “*Our staffing capacity limits the number of issues and advocacy efforts we are able to participate in,*” expressed a nonprofit partner who went on to elaborate, “additional funding would allow us to facilitate greater communication between partners, identify opportunities for collaboration with other organizations, and participate more thoroughly with multiple coalitions that advocate for issues that are priorities for our community.”

Exhibit 15: Factors that Facilitated Collaborations (n=30)

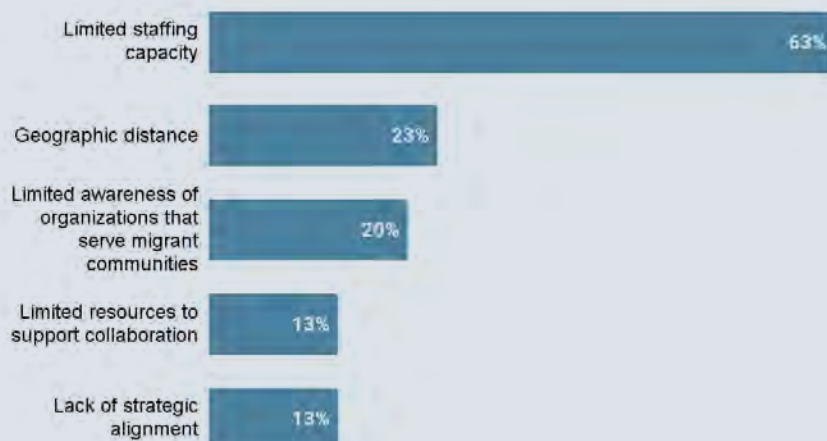


“

What has facilitated our collaboration has been the shared interest in issues happening in the region. The partnership has allowed us to increase our reach and support the community since each organization has unique expertise.”

– Nonprofit Partner

Exhibit 16: Factors that Hinder Collaboration (n=30)



Resourcing Black Lgbtq+ Leadership and Power Building in the Immigrant Justice Movement

Ola Osaze is the lead liaison for the Black Migrant Power Fund, a community-led fund anchored at the Four Freedoms Fund, a collaborative grantmaking fund of Neo Philanthropy. The Black Migrant Power Fund is a community-led fund that moves immediate, no-strings funding to Black-led, grassroots organizations addressing the urgent needs of Black migrant communities and building power with and for Black migrants in the US. Altogether, Ola's identity as a transmasculine queer, experience as an immigrant to the US from Nigeria, and decades-long history as a community organizer and movement builder inform a compelling perspective on the importance of Black and queer leadership in the immigrant justice arena.*

Ola's intersectional lived experience brings deep insight to the need for broader inclusion and coalition-building within immigrant justice efforts.

Many intertwined threads of experience have drawn Ola to organizing and immigrant justice work. Fleeing government instability in Nigeria and the broad social, political, and economic ravages of British colonization, Ola went through forced migration as a teen. These childhood experiences, Ola shared in an interview, *"informed my understanding of what it meant to fight for survival, not just for myself but for my community. It was out of that survival that my family and I came to the US."*

Then, living in North Carolina, Ola experienced anti-Black racism and saw first-hand *"the vestiges of slavery in the South."* Added to that, *"being a queer and trans-Black person"* meant that returning to Nigeria became impossible when the country adopted anti-LGBT laws (an artifact of British penal codes from the colonial era) in the early-to-mid 2000s, leaving Ola to seek legal US status through asylum. It was, Ola said, *"the reality of the homophobic and transphobic experiences that forced me to go the asylum route."* Calling it a moment of awakening, Ola recalled a harsh experience when seeking help from what seemed like a promising resource:

"When I was beginning the process to file for asylum, I remember in New York going to an organization that provided pro bono legal services for undocumented migrants. I was told Black migrants weren't seen as a priority for that organization as far as receiving legal support. I was part of a queer Black community, many of us undocumented or under-documented, many of us being ostracized because of queerness, and dealing with homelessness, unemployment and in-access to healthcare. Being told our needs were not important and treated like we didn't matter—I just remember feeling the brunt of despair in that moment."

Although Ola brought powerful experience to a career in the immigrant justice movement, the movement was not inclusive of Black as well as queer and trans activists. *"There's just so much invisibility of my community within the larger immigrant justice movement here. Many of us arrive [in the US] with homophobic and transphobic ideas and those ideas are also very much part of the fabric of the US."* During the early years of the Trump administration, Ola co-founded the Black LGBTQ+ Migrant Project, or BLMP. Amid *"the onslaught of deeply racist and xenophobic and homophobic and transphobic policies that the Trump administration was churning out... The violence and murders of Black folks across the country, police brutality—there was really a lot happening in that moment. The layers of marginalization meant that all these different identities—migrant, Black, queer, trans, undocumented—were magnified like 1,000-fold."* Despite a compelling mission, however, BLMP kept hitting roadblocks when trying to raise funds. Even with Black migrants caught *"in the crosshairs of the administration, the length we had to go to make that case to funders was really astonishing."* Indeed, some funders of immigration reform efforts simply assumed that Black people were not impacted. Ola, fortunately for the movement, was not deterred and described these challenges as something to *"shake me up, inspire and ground me."*

Ola strives to make visible the Black, queer, and trans migrants who remain largely unrecognized in the immigrant justice movement’s activism and philanthropy.

While there is more public dialogue about anti-Black racism, anti-queer and anti-trans sentiment, and tension about immigration, few consider the Black, queer, and trans migrants who are targeted by all of these attacks at once. “Currently in the US,” Ola noted, “Black LGBTQ+ migrants are both invisible within the Immigrant Justice Movement while being hypervisible to attacks and criminalizing policies and realities. From Florida to South Dakota, there are forces hell bent on legislating us out of existence because we are trans, while at the same time, our immigration system criminalizes migration, renders asylum virtually inaccessible, and strengthens its detention to deportation pipeline.”

The immigration system presents numerous problems for queer and trans migrants. When Ola worked at BLMP, one of the first deportation defense campaigns they took on involved a gay Nigerian man whose partner had been murdered by an irate mob right before his very eyes. In working on this and many other cases, Ola offers common threads of the trauma, violence, and barriers that LGBTQ+ and/or Black migrants experience.

► **Compounded layers of trauma are coupled with legal representation barriers.** By the time many LGBTQ+ and/or Black migrants make it to the US, they have suffered immense amounts of trauma. Migrants are left to deal with mental health issues and physical and cognitive disabilities due to this trauma, with scarce resources and support to address them. In detention, there are additional layers of violence LGBTQ+ and/or Black migrants experience, including the use of solitary confinement – which happens at higher rates for Black and/or LGBTQ people in detention, medical neglect, longer periods of detention, and sexual assault. Ola shared that trans women are 5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted in detention.

In addition to the trauma, LGBTQ+ and/or Black migrants face serious barriers to receiving adequate legal representation and support. In the case of the gay Nigerian man, it took BLMP many emails and significant outreach to find him an attorney. This was similar to

other situations that BLMP dealt with involving Black LGBTQ+ migrants in detention. Oftentimes those cases were deemed too difficult.

► **After release from detention, criminalization and higher risk for detention and deportation loom. After LGBTQ+ and/or Black migrants are released from detention, they often find themselves unhoused and without work authorization.** “Given the backlog of asylum cases,” as Ola shared, “you’re talking about waiting for months and months before you receive your work authorization document.” Finding housing is limited to a few shelters that accept LGBTQ+ migrants. The lack of housing, food insecurity, inability to access healthcare, the backlog of asylum cases, and the long wait for work authorization render LGBTQ+ migrants, especially those who are BIPOC and undocumented, at risk for further criminalization. Many individuals are forced to rely on street economies for survival putting them at greater risk of being in contact with the police through racial profiling or “walking while trans.”

As Ola transitions into the philanthropic sector, these are the stories and realities they are bringing with them. “This is what motivates me to strategize with funding comrades and colleagues about how we dismantle the barriers within our funding institutions that get in the way of moving substantial financial resources to formations like Border Butterflies,” shared Ola. They went on to explain the dire need for additional funding, “I am also concerned that immigration funding is shrinking. According to NCRP’s recent publication on the immigration funding landscape, barely 1% of funding from the nation’s largest U.S. foundations went to organizations serving immigrants and refugees.”

What can funders do to advance immigrant justice for Black, queer, and trans migrants?

Ola’s insights underscored the following priority roles for CA DFF, Four Freedoms Fund, and other philanthropic groups to support and resource power-building efforts of Black, queer, and trans migrants communities in the immigrant justice movement.

► **Establish more multiyear general operating support mechanisms.** Organizations are in urgent need of multi-year general operating support to ensure stability to plan for power building and long-term systemic change.

► **Invest in people power, not issues, by focusing on leadership development.** Organizations working on building and supporting Black and queer leaders in the movement, but they need funding support. For Ola, this means investing in leadership and organizing skills-building and providing enough resources for base-building. Opportunities abound to support leadership development by funding leaders such as Oluchi Omeoga of BLMP, Jennicet Gutierrez of Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement (Familia: TQLM), and Gabriel Foster of the Trans Justice Funding Project (TJFP). As Ola pointed out, *“There are already folks out here doing this. It’s really up to philanthropy to expand that leadership pool—and resource that expansion—for the betterment and strength of our movement.”*

► **Nurture emerging organizations.** Resource organizations to go from volunteer-run to sustainably staffed. Ola explained that *“the small paid staff, each of whom carries out multiple critical functions, are working under extreme duress, affecting staff mental health, recruitment, and retention.”* Ola also pointed to opportunities to support emerging organizations with funding as well as with culturally competent technical assistance on capacity building and planning for scale. *“We need more capacity building for these organizations to grow and scale up,”* Ola said. Funders can also think beyond 501(c)3 organizations to other ways to make the work happen. *“Money is needed to create the services that allow for surviving and thriving.”* Ola shared a few examples of organizational development support that help strengthen Black and/or LGBTQ+ migrant-led organizations: fundraising and development, grant writing, communications/storytelling/narrative shift, and digital organizing.

► **Broaden the immigrant justice movement** by engaging a more diverse range of communities and building strategic alliances to generate political action from a powerful place of shared priorities. *“This is an opportunity to resource spaces like the Black Migrant Power Fund that has that vision of power building, centering the most marginalized for the long haul. This is an opportunity to resource other spaces that are centering these types of communities and thinking about leadership development in a way that allows our communities to organize,”* Ola urged. It’s time to ask; they continued, how we can resource *“Black, queer, and trans folks and other deeply marginalized communities to lead and sustain organizing and power building for years to come.”*

► **Center Black, queer, and trans folks in philanthropy.** With the ability to fund the most marginalized communities, philanthropy has a responsibility to grow opportunities for these communities to share their voices and make decisions about prioritizing resources. *“The challenge is having access to spaces and organizations where Black, queer, and trans folks are centered, included, and seen as mattering,”* explained Ola. *“There are very few organizations within the immigrant justice movement that center Black, queer, and trans migrants. BLMP, as far as I know, is still the only national organization that does this.”*

► **Self-educate.** Beyond a handful of funders, philanthropy in general, has a long way to go to recognize the range and layers of marginalization in the immigration justice movement. Grantmakers must do the work to learn and spread knowledge about immigrants who remain overlooked or excluded by programs and people that assume a narrow view of who immigrants are. Ola emphasized, for instance, that *“Black migrants in the US are still in this context of scarcity when it comes to resources and funding”* and too many people within the supposed support system lack an understanding of *“what’s fueling Black migration.”*

Efforts to implement community-centered grantmaking are starting to make inroads on advancing a needed paradigm shift in philanthropy.

In the face of much work ahead, Ola offered rays of hope in efforts to expand philanthropic focus on Black and queer leadership in immigrant justice. Philanthropy has long served as a mechanism for wealthy people to give a fraction of an endowment to priorities and strategies of their choosing, with community “beneficiaries” having little to no voice in identifying what is needed and how dollars will be spent. Funders of immigrant justice are part of this dominant culture, yet Ola described growing *“networks of BIPOC, queer, and trans migrants in philanthropy that have a shared objective. Many of us are from the movement, we understand what it’s like... We’re trying to shift the structure [so that] it’s more community centered.”* For Ola and others, *“It’s been incredibly affirming to find those spaces and networks.”*

*Quotes have been lightly edited for brevity and clarity.

05 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE FUND AND OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

The California Dignity for Families Fund was set up as a time-limited pooled fund with the overarching goal of rapidly and equitably distributing resources to nonprofit organizations that serve migrant communities often excluded from grantmaking priorities such as Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Latinx, LGBTQIA+, and womxn. Despite its short lifecycle, the Fund made significant contributions to the immigration justice ecosystem. These contributions are described in this final section of the report along with a summary of the opportunities ahead to strengthen the immigration justice ecosystem.

Contributions of the Fund

The Fund increased nonprofit partners' ability to serve more migrant communities – in particular, services for Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Latinx, and LGBTQIA+ communities, and womxn.

- ▶ **Expanded and seeded new services that allowed nonprofit partners to serve a greater number of migrant individuals and families.** Nearly all (97%) nonprofit partners that responded to the survey conducted at the conclusion of the Fund shared that they were able to increase the services and supports they provide to migrant communities as a direct result of the funding received from the Fund. Nonprofit partners shared countless stories about how the resources helped organizations continue to provide vital services to migrant individuals and families such as humanitarian and legal support services for individuals released from immigration detention centers and newly arrived Afghan and Haitian refugees. For example, one partner expressed that the funding helped more clients receive work authorizations, and another partner served close to 9,000 additional Afghan migrants through the funding.

In addition, the resources infused nonprofit partners with energy and staffing capacity to expand existing services into new geographic regions across the state where they were able to reach enclaves of

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Thanks to CA DFF, [our organization] was able to hire transgender people to provide transgender services thereby creating jobs for community members who would otherwise not be able to obtain employment due to discrimination and marginalization while at the same time serving community members who are monolingual Spanish speakers and who are often not able to identify with people providing services because of gender bias.”

– Nonprofit Partner

communities they had not been able to reach such as Indigenous agricultural communities. For other nonprofit organizations, the resources were critical to launch innovations such as language access services for Indigenous and Black migrant communities, incorporating legal advocacy services and clinics, and developing financial literacy training programs. *“Prior to receiving CA DFF Funds”, explained a nonprofit partner, their organization “only had funding for on-demand interpretation service. We have used CA DFF funds to cover the cost of interpretation services that allow us to schedule sessions in advance and to request specific interpreters so that clients can have the same interpreter for every session.”*

- ▶ **Prioritized migrant communities that are often overlooked by philanthropy.** From its inception, the Fund prioritized resourcing nonprofit organizations that serve migrant communities who are often excluded from grantmaking priorities, including Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Latinx, LGBTQIA+, and womxn-serving organizations, among others. Nonprofit partners uplifted these and other migrant communities they serve who are often unrecognized in the larger migrant ecosystem and rarely included within grantmaking priorities. These targeted communities include youth (including parenting youth); Black/African/Middle Eastern/Southeast Asian refugees; LGBTQIA+ and individuals; womxn; adults and children with disabilities; and older adults.

The multi-year funding strengthened nonprofits organizational infrastructure by increasing their staffing capacity, financial stability, and ability to plan for their long-term sustainability.

- ▶ **Increased staffing capacity to support growth.** Nonprofit partners, particularly small to mid-sized organizations, voiced that a key challenge to meeting the growing needs of migrant communities was their limited staffing capacity. Their respective organizations grew to serve more migrant individuals and families during the anti-immigrant policies of the Trump Administration and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As one nonprofit partner described, *“During COVID-19, our organization grew three times its size without the proper infrastructure. We had to deploy over 25 Indigenous community health workers because our community needed information in their language. We needed to step up because our community needed us.”*



These funds are helping us build a stronger infrastructure by hiring for critical positions to support the growth and retain staff and, most importantly, to support our community and to organize. CA DFF has been the only fund that thought of our well-being and supported us in taking care of our staff, and for that, we are very grateful.”

– Nonprofit Partner

Survey findings show that the funding helped 93% of nonprofit partners increase their ability to retain or hire new staff including community residents with lived experiences, organizers, social workers, lawyers, and administrative staff. *“Without the support of the CA DFF,” shared one nonprofit partner, “we would not have been able to secure a full-time staff for our work around immigrant detention and empowerment of people that were previously detained.”* To mitigate staff turnover, nonprofit partners used the funding to increase the salaries of their staff. The funding was also essential to incorporating staff wellness supports and programs and to increase wellness benefits.

- ▶ **Increased financial stability of small to mid-size organizations.** A substantial proportion (86%) of nonprofit partners that completed the final survey strongly agreed or agreed that because of the Fund they were able to plan for their long-term sustainability. The multi-year funding allowed nonprofit partners to make long-term plans that included hiring staff, focusing on their infrastructure needs, and mapping out the strategic direction of their organization. Importantly, the secured funding opened additional financial opportunities for organizations. A nonprofit partner shared, *“receiving these funds allowed us to move from survival mode onto imagining, planning, and working to continue to grow a sustainable migrant LGBTQIA+ life-affirming and life-sustaining institution.”*

► **Increased visibility of smaller organizations often excluded from grantmaking priorities.** Over three-quarters of nonprofit partners shared via the survey that they strongly agreed or agreed that the funding helped their organization become more visible to private and public funding streams (77%) and helped them establish new or deepen existing relationships with funding institutions (80%). For many nonprofit partners the Fund served to “vet their organization” to newer funders who may have been hesitant to fund them. “As we have talked to other potential funders,” explained a nonprofit partner, “we have been asked if we received funds from CA DFF, when we respond affirmatively we have [received] positive responses from funders.” Nonprofit partners shared that they have also been invited by funders to submit proposals to expand their services to new regions or demographic communities.

“
The partnership [with CA DFF] allowed us to meet other funders and gave our organization visibility and funding.”
– Nonprofit Partner

The CA DFF funding helped infuse more resources into the immigrant justice ecosystem and strengthened the connections and collaborations among immigrant justice organizations.

► **Nonprofit partners leveraged additional resources through their increased staffing capacity and connections with additional funders.** The visibility that the CA DFF brought to nonprofit organizations – particularly smaller organizations that are not typically on philanthropic institutions’ radar – helped secure additional funding. A partner echoed the sentiment held by several nonprofit partners: “Our CA DFF funding and the connections we have built allowed us to gain access to other significant sources of funding, carve out leadership roles in coalitions spaces, and plan long-term.” In conversations with funding partners, several noted that their respective institutions had increased their awareness of other smaller nonprofit organizations

that play a critical role in the immigration justice movement and as a result were now directly funding these smaller organizations.

“
Receiving the CA DFF funding allowed us to receive funding from funders who did not fund us previously.”
– Nonprofit Partner

► **Through their participation in the CA DFF nonprofit partners increased awareness of other organizations in the immigrant ecosystem and strengthened their collaborations.** Nonprofit partners noted that the Fund served to increase their awareness of other organizations in the ecosystem through shared learnings, the nonprofit partner briefing, and the learning series that accompanied the Fund. A few more established and larger organizations shared that the Fund helped them learn more about smaller organizations and identify how to collaborate with them in the future. Nonprofit partners’ that serve as conveners and advocates shared that the Fund was essential to “continuing to build their capacity to support and strengthen their coalition and community building work.”

Opportunities Ahead

The Fund proactively engaged Advisory Committee members, nonprofit partners, and funders to share their insights about the opportunities ahead for the immigration justice ecosystem. The collection of insights for the movement to consider are shared below with the hope that they will catalyze conversations – and most importantly – action for the movement and funders.

► **Double down on multi-year, flexible, and intersectional funding – particularly for smaller organizations typically invisible to traditional funding streams.** As noted previously, nonprofit partners, Advisory Committee members, and funders alike have observed declines in philanthropic funding from both individual donors and foundations; however, the needs of migrant communities are ever-present and rising. To continue to push forward, organizations need the security of multi-year funding that provides them the flexibility to direct resources where needed, engage in longer-term planning, and hire permanent staff. CA DFF contributed to this area, but continued support is vital to strengthen the immigration justice ecosystem. Smaller organizations that play a critical role in the immigration justice ecosystem and often serve the most marginalized are in most need of multi-year flexible funding, according to stakeholders.

Furthermore, multiple stakeholder groups called for philanthropy to move away from siloed funding. These stakeholders stated that siloed funding that restricts spending to specific content areas or issues creates unnecessary competition among nonprofit organizations and, notably, is not aligned with how organizations are serving communities. Stakeholders stressed the importance of *“thinking about the complexities and the intersectionality of people’s identity”* and the intersectionality of the needs that migrant communities face with other issue areas including housing, climate, and criminal justice movements.

► **Focus on narrative shift and building the communications infrastructure of the immigration justice movement.** Nonprofit partners, Advisory Committee members, and funding partners believe there is an opportunity to focus on shifting the way the public views immigrant communities and centering the experiences, hardships, and resiliency of Black and Indigenous migrant communities. There is a need to expand beyond the *“echo chamber”* of the typical advocates in order to bring awareness to the intersectionality of immigration across pressing issues in the U.S. and transnationally such as environmental justice, civil and labor rights, and housing justice.

The CA DFF seeded an element of the needed shift by resourcing nonprofit partners’ that focus on narrative change work to help strengthen the communications capacity of organizations to create *“persuasive communication strategies”* that reach larger audiences. Several funding partners are calling on philanthropy to expansively resource the infrastructure needed for narrative shift work that have been severely underfunded. Funders recognized that narrative shift work *“often gets neglected”* by philanthropy or is delegated to nonprofit organizations that are stretched to capacity to meet the continuum of care needs for migrant and refugee communities.

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As a field, our ability to effectively advance pro-immigrant policies and foster a climate of welcome in local communities hinges upon our effectiveness in building pro-immigrant support and advancing humanizing narratives beyond the base. That will require an effort by our field to get more comfortable and sophisticated in communicating with diverse audiences about the people at the center of immigration issues.”

— Nonprofit Partner

► **Strengthen the connective tissue of the immigrant justice movement.** Nonprofit partners understand there is great value in connecting and collaborating with colleagues and are interested in having funders support building partnerships and coalitions in the immigration ecosystem. Connections with peers and complementary players in the field can be instrumental to solving problems, sharing strategies and resources, and reflecting on the challenges and opportunities ahead. While the findings from the Levels of Collaboration Survey show that currently there is a loose network of organizations serving migrant communities, there are a few organizations that serve as central hubs, particularly organizations that offer advocacy, organizing, and legal services. These hubs can serve as a starting place to build connections and collaborations among a larger number of organizations that serve migrant communities.

Both nonprofit and funding partners agree that there is a need to resource organizations to build partnerships and coalitions. Philanthropy can play an important role in the building of the connective tissue by funding the formation of coalitions and convening spaces for organizations to connect, learn from each other, and strategize.

► **Uplift and continue to focus on local advocacy and legislative wins.** Several nonprofit partners agreed that the biggest opportunity ahead is ending Title 42 and Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP). However, several stakeholders also recognized that, while not losing sight of federal level work, the focus needs to shift to local advocacy and legislative work. Several noted that opportunities and wins are taking place at the local and state level that need to be elevated and celebrated. Elevating these local victories could help invigorate the movement and demonstrate to funders that progress is happening.



Appendix A: Funding Partners

Contributors to the California Dignity for Families Fund are presented below.

- 01 Anonymous
- 02 California Community Foundation
- 03 California Healthcare Foundation
- 04 Crankstart
- 05 Dr. Bronner's Family Foundation
- 06 Emerson Collective
- 07 Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund
- 08 Fineshriber Family Foundation
- 09 Heising-Simons Foundation
- 10 Rosenberg Foundation
- 11 Rosenthal Foundation
- 12 San Francisco Foundation
- 13 Silicon Valley Community Foundation
- 14 Stupski Foundation
- 15 Sunlight Giving
- 16 The California Endowment
- 17 The California Wellness Foundation
- 18 The Grove Foundation
- 19 The James Irvine Foundation
- 20 The WES Mariam Assefa Fund
- 21 Unbound Philanthropy
- 22 Weingart Foundation
- 23 Zellerbach Family Foundation

Appendix B: Methodological Limitations

As with all studies, some limitations should be considered. Below we provide an overview of limitations that readers should consider. Despite these limitations, we strongly believe that the data captured through the lifespan of the CA DFF provide a relevant snapshot of the existing needs, challenges, and opportunities for California's immigration ecosystem.

- ▶ **Social desirability bias:** As with many qualitative and quantitative methodologies that rely on self-reported data, there is a potential risk related to social desirability, or answering questions in ways that respondents deem desirable, particularly when related to complex issues such as immigration.
- ▶ **Reference bias:** There is also potential for variability in how respondents understand or interpret questions. This occurs when respondents use different standards of comparison in their interpretation of a question. This may have particularly been the case for the Levels of Collaboration survey where, despite having definitions for each response category, respondents may interpret the definitions differently.
- ▶ **Number and type of respondent:** While the data gathering activities (particularly the qualitative methodology) had high response rates, proportions and perspectives reported have the potential to change based on the number of perspectives captured. Of note, is that the network survey that included the Levels of Collaboration had a response rate of 68%. The perspective of nearly one-third of nonprofit partners is therefore not reflected in the data.