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STAND TOGETHER:

Cash Assistance Funds for Undocumented Immigrants in a Time of Crisis

Alice Cottingham and Althea Gonzalez
Report for Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report about a time of desperation, illness, economic crisis, and death for immigrants. It is a report about remarkable collective action to respond with vital cash assistance. It is a reflection on raw truth, and on what has been learned so far in a pandemic that has not yet ended. It is a philanthropic call to action: a call to embrace the best of pandemic funding and forward-thinking, long overdue equity-centered grantmaking, to step up in a larger way to press for systemic change, to stand together.

In March 2020, Covid-19 began to smolder in the U.S. Among the hardest hit have been Black Americans, Latinx people, essential workers, older people, people with comorbidities, and individuals living in poverty. Immigrants, often members of one or more at-risk groups, have been disproportionately affected. Undocumented people are particularly vulnerable as a consequence of often unsafe occupations, crowded living conditions, and lack of access to health care. The pandemic's devastating impact on hours and jobs in many low-wage industries caused widespread economic insecurity and financial ruin for undocumented people as well.

Uprisings in 2020 for racial justice following the murder of George Floyd coincided with rising deaths from Covid-19. Recent calculations found that Covid-19 has slashed the average lifespan of Black and Latinx people in the U.S. by two years. Structural racism compounded by the pandemic proved deadly.

In response, foundations, state and local governments, and community nonprofits worked together. Hundreds of funds provided crisis relief to undocumented immigrants, getting cash to people excluded from federal aid and ineligible for most safety net benefits.

Commissioned by Open Society Foundations and Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR), *Stand Together* analyzes findings from nationwide research, about such assistance to undocumented immigrants and their families during this time. Using an online survey, one-on-one interviews, and literature review, we identified reliable, successful ways to respond, often centered on racial justice and efforts to reach the most marginalized. We describe these, along with a few variations that were equally effective, and also identify quandaries that funders should consider in future crisis responses.

A central theme of the outpouring of pandemic support is familiar from other times of crisis: remarkable efforts helped some, and illustrated just how urgently structural solutions are needed to reach everyone. Relief can never fix inequalities.

But systemic change can. In responding with cash assistance, some foundations came to realize that relief was not enough, and turned to systems change funding. Others reaffirmed their previous commitments to structural change, even as they added direct relief in the early days of the pandemic.

The report ends with recommendations in three categories:

- 1. Philanthropic role and practice
- 2. Partnering with immigrant justice organizations
- 3. Beyond cash assistance to systemic change

The first of these addresses the importance of philanthropy's rapid response to the needs of undocumented immigrants during crises, and incorporating powerful crisis practices into their usual grantmaking strategies. The second urges funders to lift up funding to organizations that have relationships with the most marginalized, and to

continue to direct resources to immigrant infrastructure. The final recommendation encourages grantmakers to aim for the largest goals: fully inclusive federal, state, and local crisis response and other forms of deep structural change that eliminate inequities.



INTRODUCTION

Open Society Foundations and Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees commissioned this report as part of a larger effort to make resources, knowledge, and infrastructure developed during the pandemic known to grantmakers responding to future economic disruptions.

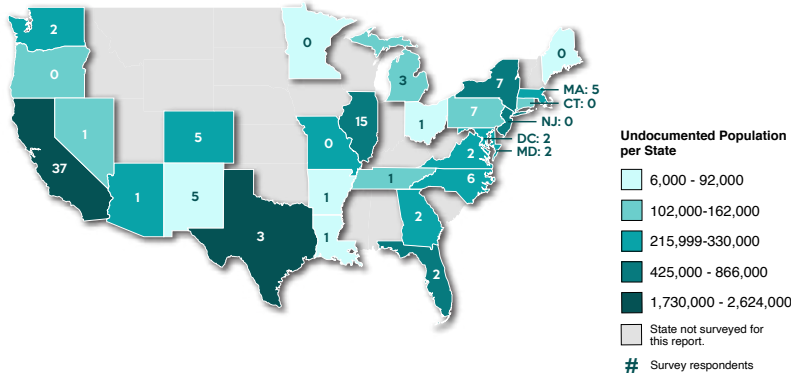
Stand Together describes Covid-19 direct relief funds for undocumented immigrants and records promising practices for crisis grantmaking in immigrant communities. The report addresses issues of particular interest to philanthropy: optimal ways to support and operate these

funds, and other ways foundations might use their power beyond cash assistance. The report draws on information gathered from 30 guides and reports, survey responses from more than 100 funds (76 community-based groups and nonprofits¹, 25 philanthropies, and 12 state and local governments) that provided specifics about their efforts, along with 22 in-depth interviews. For a list of survey respondents and what each gave to beneficiaries, intermediaries, or both, view [Appendix C](#).

¹ These terms are used interchangeably throughout the report.

RESEARCH MAP

States contacted, undocumented population per state, completed surveys per state



Source: Unauthorized Immigrant Population Profile (map). Migration Policy Institute.

All states in color were researched. Total number of returned surveys are shown per state. For a list of survey respondents and what each gave to beneficiaries, intermediaries, or both, see [Appendix C](#).

Unlike other working people who are able to claim unemployment insurance and meet basic needs with public benefits, undocumented people are ineligible for unemployment insurance and most safety net programs. The federal CARES Act, enacted in March 2020, excluded an estimated 15 million undocumented people and their family members, further worsening pandemic-related disruptions of income that deepened poverty. It was not until December 2020, when reported infections and deaths were climbing toward New Year spikes, that federal economic impact payments were extended to family members lawfully present or U.S. citizens; undocumented immigrants remain ineligible for national pandemic aid.

In response, hundreds of foundations, state and local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and informal mutual aid groups around the country took action. They rejected leaving out any human being in the U.S. from crisis relief. Nonprofits, whether they had previous crisis funding experience or not, jumped in and successfully provided cash assistance to immigrant communities. Many grantmakers made direct relief grants for the first time. Others made their first grants specifically to support undocumented people. Many set aside usual philanthropic practices

and tolerated more risk in their grantmaking. Even facing their own pressures during a pandemic, funders seized the opportunity to work differently and improve what they do.

Stand Together focuses on direct relief in the form of cash assistance given to undocumented immigrants. Alongside cash relief, some funding sources offered disbursing organizations separate or supplemental support for general operations, technical assistance, advocacy, and communications. Still others gave help through payments to landlords and utility companies, or material aid, such as grocery vouchers and food. The cash assistance strategies recounted in this report may not have been as successful, or even possible, without the other forms of funding. At the same time, cash assistance, more than any other form of pandemic relief, ensured recipients' dignity and self-determination. These are essential equity goals for crisis response.

FINDINGS

Our research offers several insights into effective assistance strategies during this crisis. We also identify some promising alternative approaches and potential difficulties. Recommendations based on the findings appear later in this report.

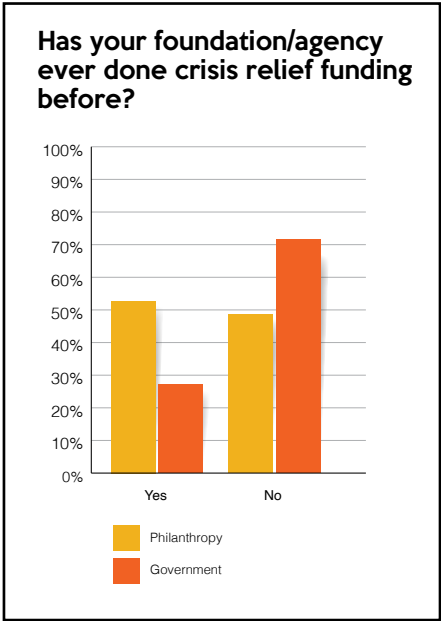
A. CONSISTENTLY EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Our findings highlight clear-cut ways that funders (philanthropies plus state and local governments) and community nonprofits effectively moved money during the pandemic to undocumented immigrants and their families. Some grantmakers and immigrant-focused nonprofits also included policy advocacy to make the most of emergency cash.

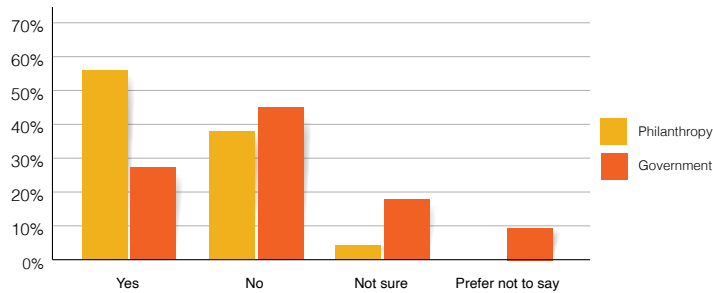
1. Philanthropy Flexed Its Inherent Powers

In responding to the pandemic, many foundations stretched the boundaries of their normal practice. In service of two goals—to get funds rapidly to those who need them and reduce demands on grantees—grantmakers we talked to:

- accelerated strategy development, turning quickly to action
- for the first time made grants for crisis response and/or in support of undocumented immigrants
- streamlined due diligence, sometimes collaborating with other foundations to accept a boilerplate proposal and a common report

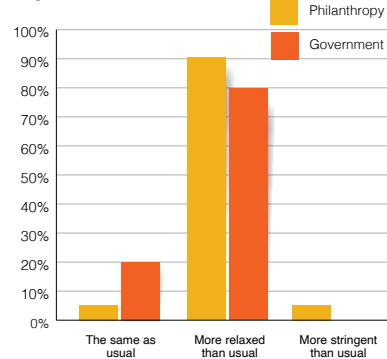


Has your foundation/agency ever provided funding specifically focused on undocumented immigrants before?



- were more open to risk-taking, whether in providing relief for the first time, replacing written applications with phone calls, or relaxing reporting requirements
- frequently coordinated with other foundations, United Ways, and state and local governments, and created or joined funding collaboratives
- gave more flexible support, by allowing grantees to determine how much funding to use for the work of managing funds, and by making general operating grants or converting restricted grants to general operating
- converted previously made grants to support for pandemic relief
- trusted community-based organizations to know what their communities need and to define eligibility for crisis funds
- kept an ear to the ground with on-time data and close contact with grantees to adjust strategies as needed
- even increased their annual payout to exceed the often zealously guarded 5% minimum

In providing direct cash assistance funding, were grantee's reporting requirements:



That is: crisis response revealed that foundations can shrug off some or many of their usual restrictions, processes, and mandates when events demand it. It appears that some grantmaking “needs” are actually habits that can be changed.

These forms of simplification, greater latitude, and respect were much appreciated by grantees. Alliance for a Better Community attributed its success in part to “the flexibility provided by funders to determine additional eligibility criteria (i.e., families with school-aged children) and the flexibility to provide ongoing assistance to the same families.”

As the pandemic's disparate impacts were recognized, many foundations used an equity lens to ensure that relief reached more marginalized communities. Some foundations used pandemic grantmaking to deepen their investment in BIPOC communities and BIPOC-led nonprofits, and reached out to foster relationships with unfamiliar, small, or emerging organizations, recognizing the value of their focus and relationships.

Crisis response revealed that foundations can shrug off some or many of their usual restrictions, processes, and mandates when events demand it.

We are explicitly and unapologetically centering racial equity in this work. Not only will priority be given to organizations that are led by BIPOC and intentionally serving BIPOC communities, but our outreach efforts are also emphasizing the need to ensure that these organizations are aware and feel welcome to the Momentum Fund process.

— United Philanthropy Forum

2. Funders Relied on Community-Based Organizations with Trusting Relationships.

Our research showed that nothing mattered more to effective, widespread distribution of cash assistance than relationships and credibility with community members—hallmarks of immigrant justice organizations. Many such community-based organizations exist because immigrants and refugees built them to advance their rights, increase opportunity, deliver critical services, and build power. They reflect immigrants' vision and hard work.

Nonprofits that organize, serve, and are trusted by immigrants were on the frontline of organizing cash assistance. Arkansas United,

New Mexico Comunidades en Acción y de Fe, and Central Washington Justice for Our Neighbors, to cite a few examples, carried much of the load of informing undocumented people of crisis funds, screening for eligibility, and arranging for and distributing cash. Most funders (philanthropic and government) turned to these groups to distribute relief. Grantmakers already committed to ensuring immigrant integration and liberation provided crucial resources through grants from individual foundations and through immigrant-focused funding collaboratives. In some instances, government support has also been instrumental. Organizations also received funding from individual donors, local businesses and corporations, and national and statewide nonprofit organizations.

In places with few immigrant justice organizations, funders could not solely rely on the known universe of intermediaries to reach all in need since the most marginalized people are often poorly served by white-led, better funded, or longer tenured nonprofits. Organizations that are beneath funders' radar yet are immigrant-focused and include undocumented people among their constituents were also funded to reach places and populations most in need. The California Nail Salon Community Care Fund is a good example, demonstrating the commitment by the California Immigrant Resiliency Fund (CIRF) to go beyond organizations familiar to many funders. The California Healthy Nail Salon

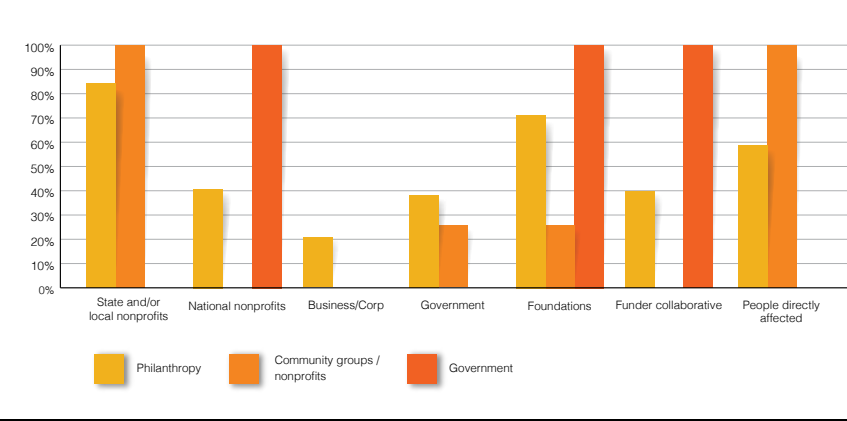
Collaborative partnered with Asian Health Services to disburse cash to undocumented manicurists, who are mainly Vietnamese. It is unrealistic to expect that every experiment in funding groups off the beaten (funding) path will pan out, and some did not. But each success extended access to more immigrants.

Organizations that are not immigrant-focused but include undocumented people among their constituents were also funded to reach places and populations not connected to existing immigrant-specific entities. For instance, the Translatin@ Coalition serves trans people, including undocumented immigrants. To learn more about the challenge the Coalition found in providing crisis cash to one portion of its larger constituency, see the [California Funding Profile](#).

3. Partnering Was Common — and Essential

Despite logistical barriers—lockdowns, the shift to remote work, and the need to balance at-home work with parenting—respondents from all sectors reported that their cash assistance efforts involved multiple partners. Philanthropy and government agency respondents reported that it was crucial to have partners with complementary know-how, skills, and relationships. Nonprofits echoed this, citing their relationships and credibility with

Who did you partner with in your COVID-19 fund? (Choose all that apply)



We partnered with the Ventura County Community Foundation and the McCune Foundation who were able to help us fundraise over six million dollars for the 805UndocuFund.

— Eder Gaona-Macedo, Executive Director, Future Leaders of America

community members in need as the top factor in their success; some also cited the benefits of joint action with foundations.

Foundations and funding collaboratives primarily provided financial support, but some also helped with publicity and advocacy. Nevada's Esperanza Fund was developed cooperatively by immigrant rights advocates, the Governor's Office for New

Americans, and the Emma Lazarus Campaign, with resources from the Open Society Foundations. The Fund collected narratives that persuaded the state to extend its eviction moratorium.

The Philadelphia Foundation and others hosted cash assistance funds for nonprofits, thereby lifting an administrative burden from grassroots groups. The Family and Workers Fund and other philanthropies created virtual spaces for grantees to share emerging cash assistance practices and explore ways to avoid staff burnout.

Philanthropy and government agencies frequently coordinated with one another and with others in their sectors. California's public-private partnership engaged state government and philanthropy statewide. When the Governor announced the state's effort, he named GCIR as a partner, helping to reach prospective donors for CIRF. In Illinois, the state provided

pandemic funding to the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (a longstanding partner); many of ICIRR's member organizations helped immigrants apply and distributed prepaid cards to them. Foundations added resources and more nonprofit partners. In both states, pre-existing relationships laid the basis for powerful cooperation.

Individual immigrant justice organizations are part of and backed by a field infrastructure developed over the last few decades. Many are networked to sister organizations through coalitions and other membership organizations (e.g., Southeast Immigrant Rights Network and National Domestic Workers Alliance), centralized resource hubs (such as the National Immigration Law Center), and joint action (e.g., the *We Are Home* campaign). The web of community and allied organizations was indispensable to the overall direct relief effort seen across the country in the past 18 months.

We have a history of rapid pivoting. The fact that we were willing to build as we executed was important. Coalitions allowed us to leverage other resources and education in the community.

— Santa Cruz Community Ventures

4. As Conditions Evolved, Philanthropy Refocused Pandemic Funding

The effects of Covid-19 have evolved over time and continue to do so. Early in the pandemic, many funders focused their resources on communities at large, such as all low-income residents of a city. More specific and up-to-date information about who was ill, who was dying, and where job losses were most acute helped funders reassess over time where their support should be directed. They used data and frequent check-ins with grantees to refine and pinpoint efforts, rather than remaining fixed on their initial ideas. This dynamic approach enabled grantmakers to add organizations in less visible communities as grantees, and to direct funds to population groups that had been underserved and who often included particularly vulnerable people, such as LGBTQIA+ immigrants. To learn about one example, see the [Colorado Funding Profile](#).

Funders also frequently checked in with grantees to stay up to date on what other support they needed. Many nonprofits were simultaneously building and implementing cash distribution vehicles, identifying needs along the way. Funders responded by naming fiscal sponsors, linking grantees to one another to troubleshoot, and making connections to other funds.

5. Crisis Funds Were Leveraged By Policy Advocacy

We have a shared responsibility to convert the energy and goodwill generated by the crisis to work beyond direct relief to address the root causes of our country's biggest problems, like skyrocketing housing costs, health care access, poverty wage jobs, and immigration policy.

— Emma Lazarus Campaign Executive Summary, International Migration Initiative, Open Society-U.S.

Even the most generous funding reached only a small fraction of those it sought to help. This is not to discount the importance of pandemic funding. Directing cash to people whose lives were disrupted by a pandemic was and is a vital undertaking. But short-term charitable contributions are no substitute for federal crisis aid and stronger safety nets available to all individuals and families.

To wit: The Colorado COVID Relief Fund awarded \$23 million in grants — and received \$100 million in funding requests, more than five times what could be supported. The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights awarded nearly \$22 million over 13 months to about 44,000 people. Illinois' undocumented

population is estimated to be 437,000—nearly ten times the number who received cash. The state of California's Disaster Relief Assistance for Immigrants program moved \$75 million to 150,000 undocumented people—not even ten percent of the 2,625,000 unauthorized immigrants in the state.

Nonprofits are not structured to do mass assistance. That's why we pay taxes to government—to give mass assistance.

— A nonprofit executive director

In pursuit of changes to public policy to create more comprehensive, “government-sized” solutions, some foundations and nonprofits added policy advocacy efforts to their cash assistance work.

- Working with the Emma Lazarus Campaign, the Harris County, TX government used an Open Society Foundations' grant of \$750,000 not for cash assistance, but to expand a text network through which community organizing groups notified nearly 400,000 residents of pandemic resources, and led thousands to “opt in” to organizing for eviction prevention clinics and an eviction moratorium ordinance.

- Maryland advocates worked to expand eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit to include those who lack a social security number but file taxes.
- In 2020, immigration rights organizers succeeded in making Illinois the first state to extend Medicaid coverage to impoverished undocumented immigrants 65 and older. A year later, they won coverage for those aged 55 and up.

Support for policy advocacy is based on the understanding that going after the root causes of inequity is crucial. Transformation requires the will, resources, and

sustained commitment to dismantle structural racism and to upend and replace policy that normalizes exclusion and requires many to live in poverty. Foundations are uniquely situated to press for and fund advocacy for such policy changes.

Starting a crisis fund had the unintended (happy) consequence of jumpstarting exponential growth for our young organization, expanding our capacity for the systems change work at the core of our mission.

— Restaurant Workers' Community Foundation



B. VIABLE OPTIONS

Although there were some common lessons, as outlined above, our research suggests that there was no one “best way”: instead, funders and community organizations approached cash assistance for undocumented immigrants in a variety of successful ways.

1. Money Flowed Through Many Channels

Pandemic relief funding originated from many sources, and flowed to one or several recipients on its journey to the ultimate beneficiary. The wellsprings and way stations varied significantly. Philanthropy, state and local governments, and sometimes philanthropy support organizations, as well as some community-based organizations and coalitions, all routed dollars. Methods were context dependent, based on existing relationships, infrastructure, available partners, distribution scope, and innovation. The use of multiple channels enabled maximum flexibility in a time when getting dollars out as speedily as possible was a priority. (See “How the Money Flowed” diagram on following spread.)

A few grantmakers and government agencies gave directly to undocumented immigrants, but most gave via intermediaries, usually community-based organizations or network nonprofits, such as immigrant rights coalitions. Nonprofits gave to other nonprofits, including to their chapters and affiliates (e.g., the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium/NAKASEC) and member

organizations (e.g., the Florida Immigrant Coalition). Some (e.g., AFRICOM in Philadelphia) gave to other community groups who could reach a specific population, whether there was a formal relationship between them or not. Collaborative funds, with varying degrees of shared decision-making and community involvement, also disbursed funding to grantee partners.

2. Funds Were Distributed Using Narrow and Broad Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility for cash relief was framed in three main ways by survey respondents and interviewees. Evidence shows that all of these frames worked to get money to undocumented immigrants.

Respondents were asked to choose one of the following to describe who their funding was intended to benefit (See graph on pg. 18):

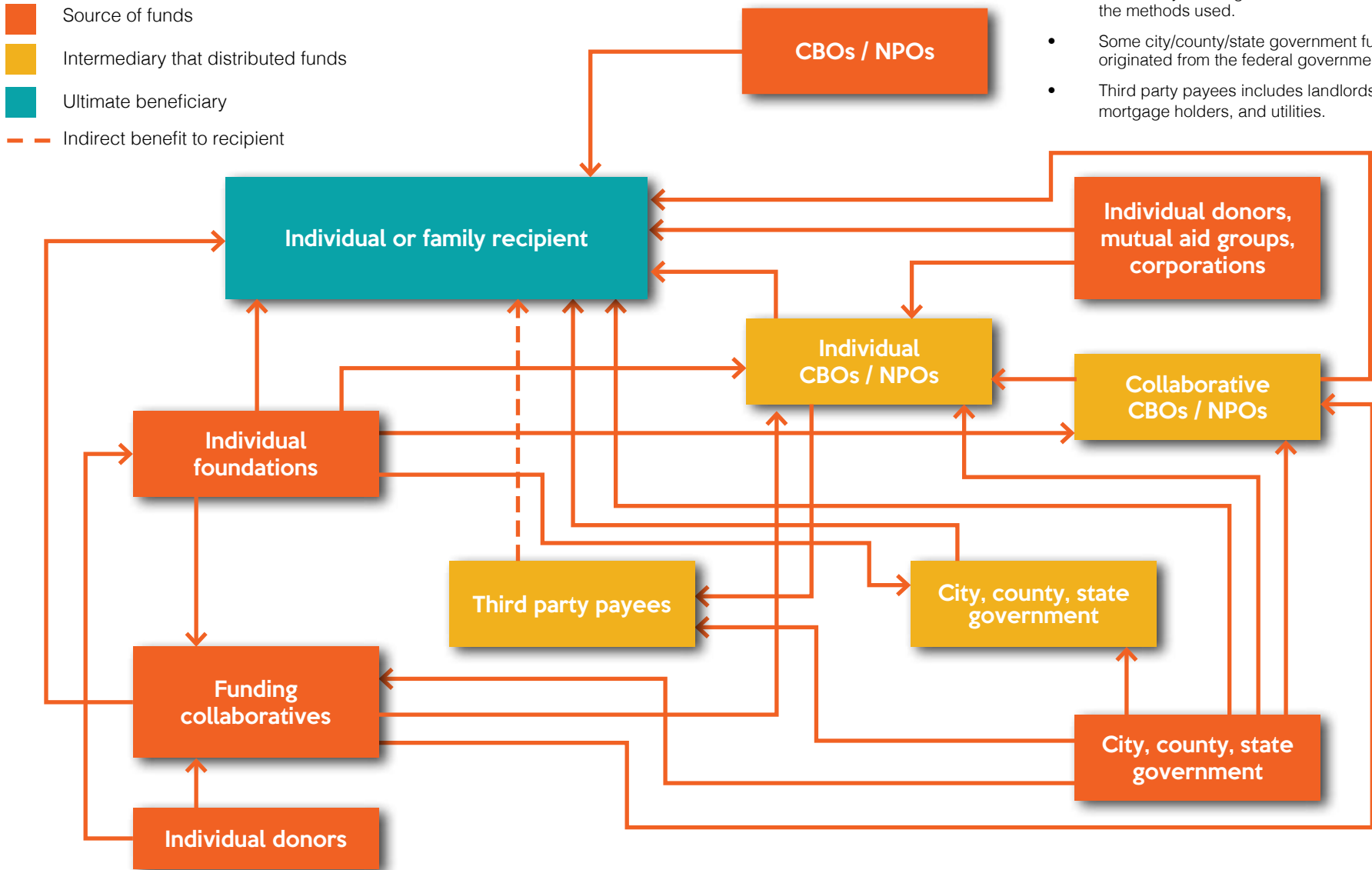
- Solely for undocumented people and their families
- For people left out of the CARES Act, including undocumented immigrants and their families
- For people in need as a result of the pandemic, including undocumented immigrants and their families

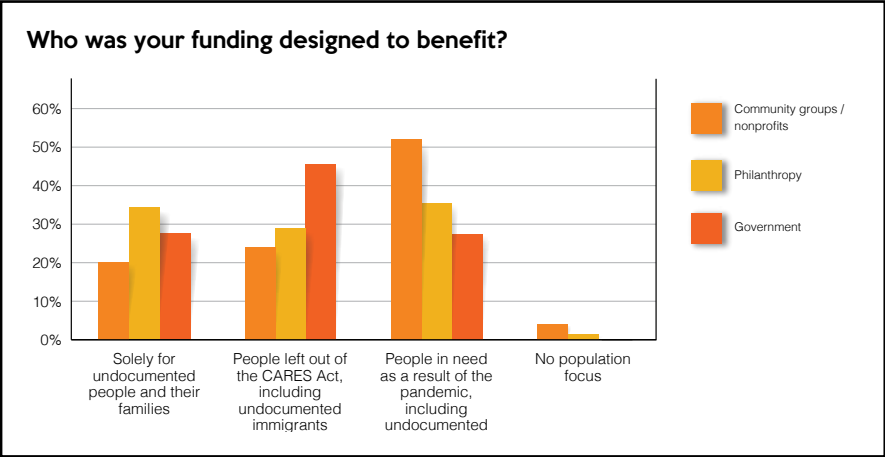
HOW THE MONEY FLOWED

Mapping Pandemic Cash Assistance to Immigrants

- Source of funds
- Intermediary that distributed funds
- Ultimate beneficiary
- Indirect benefit to recipient

- Notes:
- This represents the main ways that money flowed from the source to the ultimate beneficiary, although it's not exhaustive of all the methods used.
 - Some city/county/state government funding originated from the federal government.
 - Third party payees includes landlords, mortgage holders, and utilities.





C. POSSIBLE DILEMMAS

We also found some perplexing or curious takeaways in respondents’ comments. They are not easily resolved, and are included to engage grantmakers in consideration about how they might be addressed.

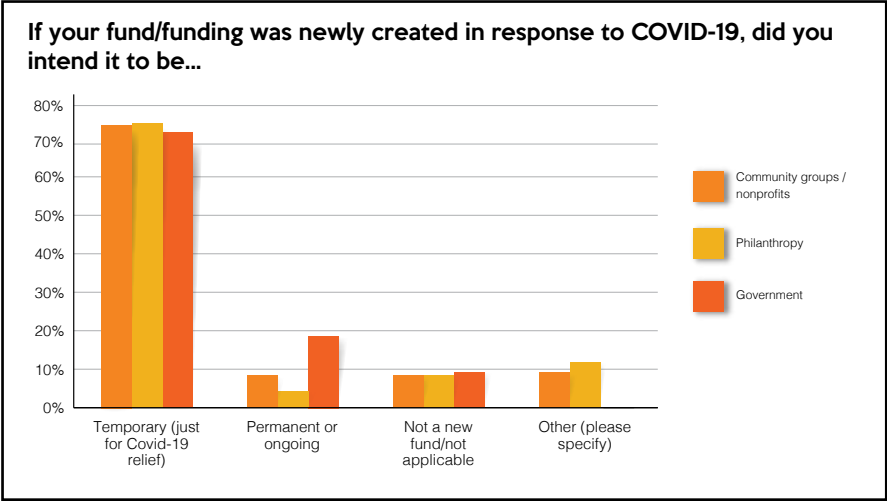
1. Funders Ended Cash Assistance Yet Need Continues

About three-quarters of pandemic-related funds newly created by nonprofits, philanthropy, and government were intended to be temporary. Philanthropic respondents were the least likely to say their intention had been to create a permanent or ongoing fund—just 4% reported doing so.

More than a third (36%) of philanthropic respondents were still funding cash assistance in April and May 2021. But 44% had stopped, even while pandemic needs remained. Many nonprofits surveyed expressed concern that such funding was no longer available from foundations.

The need has not gone away and the change in national leadership has not impacted the needs we see, but it has reduced the sense of urgency that funders previously understood.
— A community-based organization that closed and then reopened its cash assistance fund

The dilemmas funders need to consider is how long to stick with cash assistance, and whether to make exit plans transparent early on, so that grantees can set their expectations accordingly.



2. Delivering Cash Assistance Strained and Strengthened Organizational Capacity

When funding cash assistance, how can grantmakers maximize what benefits grantee organizations and minimize what harms them?

Providing cash assistance had mixed effects on organizations. Community-based organizations said that overall resources were often limited during the pandemic. Some found themselves needing to choose between providing urgently needed cash aid or continuing their core programming, which is also much needed by their communities and to which they are often contractually bound. They seldom had the funding or staffing capacity to do both.

The 25% of community-based organizations that did not receive

funds for related operating costs had to cover the real costs of cash distribution from their own coffers, thus leaching capacity.

Although some nonprofits clearly had funders that did not provide operating support, nearly 90% of funders in our survey did provide funds to cover expenses related to providing cash assistance:

- 40% of grantmakers allowed up to 10% of grants to be used
- 12% allowed up to 20%
- 4% allowed more than 20%
- 32% wrote grant terms that allowed grantees to allocate grant dollars as they wished or provided supplemental general operating grants

Please allow 15 to 20% to be used for overhead and direct costs. We applied for grants to cover costs such as credit card donation fees, checks, printing, bookkeeping, stamps, etc. Our Fund expenses to date exceed \$10,000, and that's barebones expenses that don't account for staff time.

— Hispanic Liaison /
El Vínculo Hispano

Crisis funding is usually short-term, focused, and often restricted. This type of funding does not typically enable the addition of new organizational capacity. However, respondents noted that building certain kinds of capacity during a crisis is feasible, and some said they were strengthened by the work. They added and refined skills (such as individual fundraising, marketing, and technology use), expanded relationships with community members, increased organizational credibility, and raised their public profile. Several foundation grantees leveraged new funder relationships and demonstrated enhanced capacity as a result of participating in cash assistance programming.

3. Sometimes Available Money Was Not Used to Cover Delivery Costs

Although many funders embraced the importance of including operating funds to support providing cash assistance, some community-based

Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo (CIELO) is a women-led, indigenous group with capacity in multiple indigenous languages, an asset that other immigrant-serving entities in LA County frequently tap. When CIRF awarded cash relief funds to CIELO, it bet on that language capacity and grassroots network. Headed by entrepreneurial women, CIELO seized the CIRF data collection platform as an opportunity to increase its efficiency in disbursing funds, grow its technology skills, and use the data collected to map where indigenous immigrants live. CIELO has also developed an outstanding social media presence and its work has been widely covered in the media.

— Daranee Petsod,
fund advisor of CIRF

organizations chose to use 100% of the funds they received for direct relief, even when allowed to allocate a share to cover operating expenses. Their decision was born of commitment to their community members. Staff and volunteers were acutely aware that only a portion of those needing help would receive it. They were the ones talking with desperate, frightened, and grieving people, and when funds were unavailable, turning them away. Organizations received far too little funding to meet their communities'

needs. Interviews suggested that even with more money, some organizations would have continued to eschew using any of it for their operations.

Nevertheless, marginalized communities are best served when their organizations are strong and sustainable. The decision not to use allowable funds for operating costs strained organizations and their people, leading one funder to wonder, "What would have happened if [we had] encouraged/required organizations to use some for their own needs?" Funders should question any strategy that weakens the very organizations that are indispensable resources for communities.

4. Centering the Most Affected Was Important and Challenging

Nothing about us without us. The nonprofit sector has increasingly recognized the necessity and value of including directly impacted people in their work. Sixty percent of nonprofit respondents engaged community members as partners to help publicize funds, disburse money, and conduct advocacy related to the pandemic's economic impact, reflecting organizational equity values.

Strategies to include those directly affected took a number of forms. For the Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition, leaders of immigrant-serving and predominantly grassroots organizations crafted the fund's eligibility guidelines. Many of these leaders were themselves members of the communities they

Having directly impacted folks in our volunteer base that could help us with developing the process contributed to our success

— Massachusetts Jobs with Justice

served. Sometimes proxies took the place of undocumented people. Representatives of four immigrant justice organizations that were members of the Latino Community Fund Georgia came to agreement on guiding principles for pandemic funding. A seven-person board of first- and second-generation immigrants oversaw the Esperanza Fund in Nevada. Many foundations and funding collaboratives in effect delegated community input by granting flexible funds to organizations led by immigrants.

Organizations that did not engage undocumented immigrants cited two reasons:

1. The financial distress and physical and mental health challenges caused by the pandemic rendered community members' involvement impossible, unwise, or secondary to more pressing concerns.
2. Pandemic relief programs that depended on digital communication created a significant barrier to involvement by undocumented people lacking digital access or skills.

As nonprofits and funders redouble their commitment to include affected communities in all aspects of the work, they must be realistic about the challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GRANTMAKERS

Lessons from this relief effort can help philanthropy be ready for future calamities, including natural disasters and other consequences of climate change, as well as health and financial emergencies. Readiness for such events is critical for funders committed to the well-being of undocumented immigrants and other people pushed to the margins, who are always the most profoundly affected.

A. PHILANTHROPIC ROLE AND PRACTICE

1. Hold tight to philanthropy's critical role of providing swift and easy-to-access emergency cash for vulnerable community members in the midst of a crisis.

The federal government moves ponderously and often inequitably. Philanthropy's rapid response to bridge the gap is unquestionably potent.

The philanthropic community came together to provide millions of dollars... The ripple effect to communities meant that lives were saved, people were able to remain in their homes, have food on the table, and protect themselves with personal protective equipment.

— *How We Cared for Each Other*

Some foundations may opt to create standing emergency funds or funding that can be turned on when crises occur. Others may claim a role as crisis funders and work long-term to ensure better preparedness and response. Certain foundations will choose to be significant connectors of information and practitioners, as were the Families and Workers Fund, Emma Lazarus Campaign, and philanthropic support organizations including GCIR and United Philanthropy Forum.

Philanthropy support organizations can also help ensure that lessons learned are preserved and made available as new crises unfold. Guides and case examples written during the pandemic, such as New America's *Establishing Emergency Cash Assistance Programs: Lessons from the Field*, Center for Financial Inclusion's *Designing Municipal Cash Transfer Programs to Mitigate the Economic Impact of COVID-19*, a set of place-specific

reports from the Emma Lazarus Campaign, and others listed in the literature review ([Appendix A](#)), need to remain readily available.

When new national disaster relief resources are created, they must include linguistic and culturally responsive access for undocumented immigrants as a high-risk population. Essential strategies include outreach through ethnic media and popular social media and direct contact with trusted nonprofits. Foundations that care about equity can champion this immigrant-inclusive awareness.

2. Ensure that your philanthropic practices support your goals and the organizations doing work on the ground. Make proven crisis grantmaking approaches your foundation's new normal.

In the words of one foundation program officer, "If funders get out of the mindset of why things are too risky to do, and instead get into the mindset of what's the risk if they don't take action, then they can rethink their approach."

The practices used by foundations while providing crisis relief helped foster mutual trust and respect between grantmaker and grantee and reduced burdens on nonprofits, thereby increasing the value of grants. Longer term, they may well create more fertile conditions for creativity from both parties.

Grantmakers, ask yourselves:

1. How are our unexamined policies, practices, beliefs, and traditions getting in the way of doing the work in service of those we most want to reach? Which of our needs are only habits?
2. Whose interest is being served by our decisions and choices in grants processes? Do we anticipate the impact of our choices on nonprofits and communities?
3. What relationships do we have, or do we need to initiate and nurture, to reach undocumented immigrants who are excluded by oppressive systems?
4. How are we using an equity lens that includes immigrants to bring them into our grants portfolio?
5. If a robust, immigrant-serving infrastructure is important for future crises, what can our foundation do now to be sure that nonprofits are ready?

Their success should encourage grantmakers to pull the following into their everyday work:

- Use simple, streamlined, trust- and respect-based processes for due diligence and grantmaking.
- Make grants flexible and generous, with a minimum of strings and requirements on the front and back ends.

- Fund the costs of providing relief, by providing general operating support or allowing 20% of program support dollars to go toward operating costs. Strongly encourage grantees to cover their real costs, to keep their organizations strong and thereby support their people and communities.
- Leave programmatic decisions to grantees' expertise, thus alleviating a burden for nonprofits and grantmakers alike.
- Add an expense line to the foundation budget for collaborative and crisis funding, to ensure that flexible resources are available.
- Continue to exceed the 5% minimum payout in increased grantmaking.
- Claim anti-racism as a central institutional value and enact policies and practices informed by principles of equity and justice.

Grand Victoria Foundation (GVF) reported on ways it absorbed and continued crisis-tested practices.

- [The Foundation] leaned in even more heavily on its commitment to providing general operating support.
- We now have dedicated funding for future rapid response and collaborative grantmaking.
- We learned how to create a streamlined and expedited application process, and are working to develop processes to decrease barriers to accessing our funding going forward.
- GVF sustained our annual payout of over 5%, exceeding the IRS requirement.
- We leveraged the experience and leadership of the foundation and its staff to influence changes in grantmaking practices aligned with a racial equity lens.

— *How We Cared for Each Other*

B. PARTNERING WITH IMMIGRANT JUSTICE ORGANIZATIONS

1. Prioritize funding to community-based organizations with deep relationships to reach those most harmed by systemic inequities.

First, fund community-based organizations that have deep ties and trusting relationships with their undocumented community members. Having these relationships should be the number one qualification for an organization to provide cash assistance to them in times of crisis. In addition, organizations need to be nimble, responsive, and strategic; assessments of these characteristics should be geared to an organization's developmental stage and resources.

Funders that do not have relationships with these kinds of organizations should turn for direction and connection to philanthropic and government colleagues who do. Immigrant-focused grantmaking collaboratives are an excellent source of knowledge and guidance, as are foundations with immigration portfolios. GCIR is, of course, also a significant resource.

Next, fund organizations with ties to immigrants who are not part of better established groups. Investigate who has not been

reached and which groups have ties to those harder-to-reach populations. Colleagues who work in racial, economic, and social justice fields are good candidates for information and ideas, as are grassroots leaders of more marginalized immigrant communities: undocumented people, Black people, women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and residents of rural areas. Establish relationships and fund these groups next, understanding the ways in which funding can help develop capacity that benefits communities and organizations.

Keep in mind that crises are dynamic, so prepare to shift crisis funding as data and grantee partners indicate which groups are more adversely affected and where resources are most needed.

2. Continue to strengthen and expand immigrant-reaching infrastructure.

Ecosystem investments made in times of relative calm proved critical for communities to be ready in times of crisis. Extending opportunities year-round for leaders and organizations to build capacity, skills, and networks is essential to their preparedness.

Investment is also needed to support new entities engaging those who are currently under-represented—people with less language access, rural residents, LGBTQIA+ people, and others. This will require increased risk tolerance for funders accustomed to funding more well-established organizations. Colleagues that support start-ups and less developed entities can help set realistic expectations of performance, time frame to produce results, potential impact, and additional capacity that may be needed.

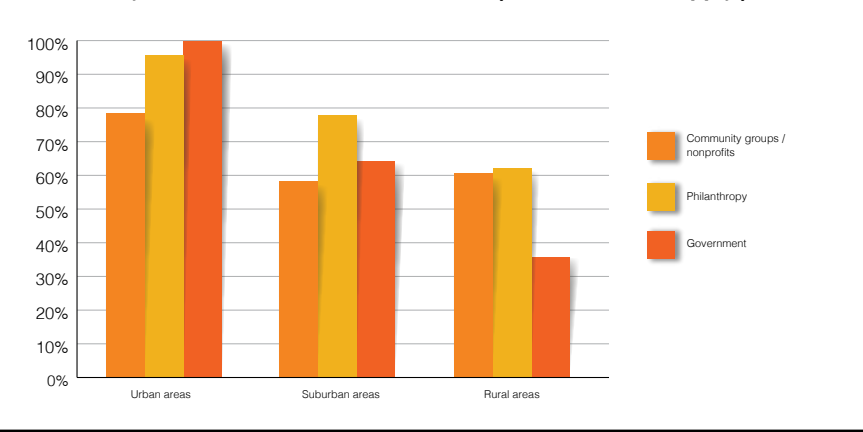
Now that many community organizations have developed systems and policies for distributing cash assistance, should funders seek to maintain that capacity? Making that decision depends on two prerequisites: (1) organizations must evaluate if sustained crisis

capacity is consistent with their mission and strategic priorities; and (2) sufficient funding for that purpose must be secured. Funders might inquire if and how organizations have considered these factors.

Funders must recognize the often-limited organizational infrastructure of rural and BIPOC-led organizations. Provide funding despite organizational development challenges; and support capacity building to improve protocols and access.

— COVID Emergency Grant Funding: Reflections and Recommendations, The Conservation Fund

Where did you fund direct cash assistance? (Choose all that apply.)



Predictable future crises (i.e., climate change-driven weather catastrophes and economic disruptions) and possible large-scale opportunities (such as new paths to citizenship for undocumented immigrants) also will require rapid, agile response from the immigrant justice infrastructure. Going forward, some organizations have and likely will define crisis

response as their core work. Examples include the UndocuFund of Sonoma County, Forward Together New Orleans, and Resilience Force. For other organizations, crisis response experiences can become latent nonprofit capacity that can be reactivated to respond to future crises.

C. BEYOND CASH ASSISTANCE TO SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Acknowledge that cash assistance will never suffice, and respond by also funding and advocating for broad public policy change, including federal crisis assistance for all.

Continue to offer funding past the initial crisis for organizations' work to make structural changes to address the inequities that perpetuated/exacerbated the crisis in the first place.

— National Domestic Workers Alliance

Connect your crisis funding to systems change funding.

- Work for inclusive federal, state, and local crisis response and public policy that supports every person in the U.S., including undocumented immigrants.

- Be a partner to and amplifier of nonprofits that engage their communities in building power to shape, drive, and win structural change.
- Use your institutional power and leadership to transform systems to prevent crises' disparate impact.
- Leverage your social capital to engage other foundations in advocating for and funding public policy that redresses harm.
- Be bold, and play the long game. Overcoming centuries of inequity demands both.

CONCLUSION

Hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants—our neighbors, friends, and family—were excluded from federal pandemic aid but received direct cash relief through funds around the country that responded to the need. Disbursed by community-based organizations, grantmaking foundations, and local and state governments, these funds were a lifeline to many.

Providing direct cash was exhausting and heart-wrenching work. The organizations and people who did it deserve our gratitude, respect, and ongoing support. Grantmakers and non-federal governments also stepped up boldly and creatively to fund these efforts. Their generous resources made relief possible at a momentous scale. They deserve our appreciation and encouragement to continue these innovative, equity-centered practices through the remainder of the pandemic and in the coming years.

Together, these various players across our nation not only recognized, but tangibly affirmed the humanity of those often called essential but too often treated as expendable.

Through surveys, interviews and other literature, representatives of each of these sectors provided a window into how they did it, what made it easier or got in the way, and a vision for future efforts. This report summarizes their insights and ideas. We hope they lift your spirits and provide useful suggestions for ways to continue to *Stand Together*.

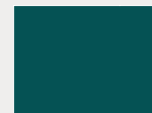


APPENDIX: FUNDING PROFILES

California



Colorado



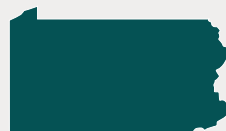
Georgia



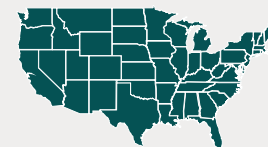
Illinois



Pennsylvania



National





CALIFORNIA

ORGANIZING AND COORDINATING PHILANTHROPY

**Based on interviews with
Blue Shield of California Foundation,
California Immigrant Resilience Fund,
Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition,
Office of California Governor Gavin Newsom,
TransLatin@ Coalition.**

California is home to the country's largest population of undocumented immigrants: 2,625,000 people. It is also the state with the largest public-private partnership formed in response to the exclusion of undocumented immigrants from the CARES Act: commitments of \$75M from the State of California's Disaster Relief for Immigrants (DRAI) and \$75M (to date) from the California Immigrant Resilience Fund (CIRF). The state and CIRF (originally launched and managed by GCIR and housed at the Tides Foundation) worked hand-in-hand to coordinate giving, publicize one another's efforts, and attract donors.

DRAI funding went to 12 larger agencies that had a history of contracting with California's Department of Social Services. Approximately 150,000 undocumented adults received one-time cash assistance of \$500 per adult, with a cap of \$1,000 per household. In its first cycle of funding, CIRF complemented the state's pandemic support by funding 60 nonprofits, leaning toward grassroots organizations. It prioritized a broad cross-section of marginalized undocumented immigrants across the state. In its current, second round of grants, CIRF is funding 45 organizations. Using a framework of racial, economic, and social justice, CIRF seeks to achieve fair, timely, and equitable distribution of cash assistance. CIRF is designed to be a short-term fund during the pandemic, and one that can be reactivated quickly for the next major challenge or opportunity for immigrants.

CIRF refers to the organizations it funds as "local partners" rather than grantees, to stress that getting cash relief in people's hands could not happen without them. Centering the community in decision-making is a primary value. To decide how cash is distributed, each local partner makes its own choices, based on local conditions and wisdom. CIRF aims to get money out to people who have no other resources, which has entailed grantmaking risks. Due diligence was rapid and relied on organizations' reputational capital—generally, a phone call with a group and emails to others who might know of it.

CIRF, originally via GCIR, organized philanthropy to generate a match to state funds by talking with some grantmakers directly and engaging others to recruit their colleagues. The coordinated philanthropic response has been impressive: contributions from more than 70 foundations and 800-plus individual donors, who pooled and aligned gifts to make cash relief available to undocumented people.

CIRF funding partners have played significant roles as donors, philanthropic organizers, and more. One corporate grantmaker, Blue Shield California Foundation (BSCF), filled its part as a self-identified seed funder to give an early \$1M grant, and thoughtfully designed the grant to provide greater than usual funding for administrative costs, to help balance contributions from other grantmakers who wanted their contributions to be used entirely for direct relief. Emphasizing the need for flexible dollars to support the work of fundraising and grantmaking, BSCF Chief Program Officer Carolyn Wang Kong said, "If I had it to do again, I'd make the grant 100% for overhead." Wang Kong was among the funders who reached out to her peers to encourage them to contribute to CIRF.

How did pandemic funding fit into BSCF's larger funding portfolio? As is often the case with funding collaborations, CIRF is capacious enough to incorporate a range of philanthropic interests. BSCF is driven by a vision for health equity. Wang Kong said, "In Covid-19, there is an equity opportunity for all to stay safe from the virus. We asked ourselves: what could we do knowing that wasn't the case?" In addition to grants to CIRF and \$2.6M to several California community foundations, BSCF also supports ethnic media to meet with culturally sensitive health experts, such as a Vietnamese doctor at UC San Francisco. This initiative helps trusted messengers enhance their ability to educate immigrant communities. Wang Kong said, "People were labeled 'hard to reach'—but hard for whom?"

The Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition (LBIRC) and TransLatin@ Coalition (TC) are among CIRF's local partners. Both described formidable challenges to providing cash assistance. LBIRC said the work was more costly than anticipated. TC's sole large donor for emergency aid was CIRF.

When asked how cash assistance strained and strengthened her organization, LBIRC's Executive Director Gaby Hernandez praised CIRF, "For really trusting organizations doing the heavy work on the ground. I'd like to see this in crisis funding AND ordinary times." An example of how disbursing cash assistance strengthened the organization, she said, was LBIRC's tenfold increase in connections with families: from 100 to 1,000. Hernandez was disappointed that local government and foundations let themselves "off the hook to respond," as if a single community-based organization could do it all. She said, "The city sent people to us for funds, rather than providing cash from its own resources."

TC is the sole service provider for trans people of all identities in Los Angeles. On the one hand, receiving funds from CIRF allowed TC to provide badly needed cash to undocumented trans people who had been excluded from the CARES Act. On the other hand, Bamby Salcedo, TC's President/CEO, said very few trans people who were eligible (documented and non-immigrant) received Economic Impact Payments, as a result of their extreme marginalization. This made TC's distribution only to undocumented people challenging, as it had to say no to many other people who were equally desperate, straining relationships between the organization and community members. Salcedo said, "Program support or emergency relief for trans people as a whole would have been a better [eligibility] frame for us." This mismatch with CIRF's specific focus on undocumented people reflects how complex it can be to fund organizations that must respond to systemic inequities that cut across populations and identities—especially if the organizations have limited unrestricted support. Frank conversation between grantmaker and community-based organization can address potential unintended and damaging consequences of restricted funding.

COLORADO

LEVERAGING PHILANTHROPY'S INHERENT FLEXIBILITY

**Based on interviews with
The Colorado Health Foundation**

Foundations can act as fast as they want, when they want to. Will funders sustain practices they used in pandemic funding?

**— Scott Downes, senior program officer
The Colorado Health Foundation**

When the pandemic hit Colorado in March 2020, The Colorado Health Foundation (CHF) helped launch and coordinate the Colorado COVID Relief Fund (CCRF), the state's collaborative fund. Three main partners—the Governor's Office, Mile High United Way, and CHF—took complementary set-up and implementation responsibilities. More than 8,000 individual donors and nearly 100 foundations, corporations, and other funders contributed \$23.6 million, which was disbursed in 1,002 grants over seven rapid-response funding rounds. Immigrants and refugees were one of 15 priority populations from the outset, and about 45% of all grants went to groups serving immigrants and refugees. Undocumented immigrants make up almost half of the state's total immigrant population.

CCRF's original goals were to provide assistance to community-based organizations to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, support those most impacted, and assist with recovery. At the time, the Fund pegged recovery to begin by June 2020. Fund participants agreed to use an equitable process for selecting nonprofits and for grant distribution. Over time, the intended beneficiaries changed, as data synthesized by a community advisory committee pointed to those most harmed. This resulted, for example, in an early emphasis on funding for food, rental assistance, and PPE for people in congregate settings, and later a more specific focus on communities of color, particularly women of color, facing disproportionate impacts from the pandemic.

CHF contributed \$3.95 million to the COVID Relief Fund for regranting. CHF's executive team reached out to colleagues and joined multiple briefings with Philanthropy Colorado to provide updates and encourage more foundation giving.

"Making sure processes support the work instead of having the work fit the process" was how Scott Downes, senior program officer at CHF, characterized some of CCRF's less typical grantmaking style. This included rapid grantmaking, not getting too far into the weeds of due diligence, minimal reporting requirements, willingness to fund different kinds of organizations when nonprofit infrastructure was limited, and putting aside concerns about reputational risk or taking credit. He was reminded of a conference speaker at a racial justice training, who talked about the importance of noticing who we trust and who we test. "If funders get out of the mindset of why things are too risky to do, and instead get into the mindset of what's the risk if they don't take action, then they can rethink their approach."

In all, CHF provided \$41.9 million in 2020 to support Covid response efforts in the areas of food security, housing and homelessness, primary care, mental health and staff well-being, advocacy and capacity-building, and direct cash assistance. Contributions of \$4.75 million were made to organizations providing direct assistance specifically for immigrant and refugee communities. The board made this funding possible with a 25% increase from its initial budget, to help address the unfolding, long-term implications of the pandemic—a significant departure from the norm of most foundations.



GEORGIA

BREAKING NEW GROUND IN A HOSTILE STATE

**Based on interviews with
Latino Community Fund Georgia**

In Georgia, as in many Southern states, the political environment is unfriendly for immigrants; for undocumented immigrants, even to drive is to risk arrest and deportation. Undocumented students can attend some, though not all, of Georgia's public colleges and universities, but they must pay full out-of-state tuition. State government has not mandated workplace protections against Covid-19, and people working in close proximity in poultry plants and agriculture have died as a result.

Before the coronavirus pandemic hit, the Latino Community Fund Georgia (LCF Georgia) was busy funding Census 2020 organizing. This public charity also was helping to educate other grantmakers about the implications for immigrants and immigration policy of the 2020 U.S. Senate run-off races. Just as community-based organizations had to drop other work to pivot to pandemic relief, LCF Georgia had to shift, too. It has provided \$1.6 million in pandemic grants—twice its previous year's giving—thanks to donors who removed restrictions from Census grants and provided Covid-19 relief funding through larger grants to LCF Georgia, the only grantmaker in the state dedicated to supporting undocumented people.

Executive Director Gilda (Gigi) Pedraza said, "For us, the initial equity considerations were language access and immigration status." Beginning with four member organizations and ultimately involving 23, LCF Georgia has been able to ensure that cash assistance is available statewide while growing its network. In a departure from the usual philanthropic evaluation rubric, LCF Georgia assesses the success of its relief efforts by asking whether recipients feel they have been treated with respect and dignity. Since incorporating pandemic relief into its Census and civic participation work, LCF Georgia has added Portuguese and Mayan languages to its materials, to more fully reflect the diversity of the state's Latinx immigrants.

In a sign of its growing influence, LCF Georgia was invited into philanthropic conversations about racial equity that stemmed from 2020 uprisings. Its participation allowed the organization to tell the story of racial justice in Latinx communities around issues of color, language, immigration status, and perceptions of indigenous people. Pedraza pointed out that racial justice is overwhelmingly presented as a Black/white binary, and pushed to make the definition more inclusive. In addition to engaging others, this helped LCF Georgia to clarify where it stands on colorism, and how it, too, was perpetuating systems of oppression in its own community.

LCF Georgia has also been a close partner to the City of Atlanta's Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs - Welcoming Atlanta (WATL), which contested the City Law Department's initial interpretation that undocumented immigrants were ineligible for federal rental assistance. WATL sought a legal opinion from the private bar, which confirmed WATL's position, and led the City and its distributing partner, United Way of Greater Atlanta, to include undocumented people as recipients.

A grantmaker that has always included undocumented people in its funding, LCF Georgia deepened its knowledge of this part of the immigrant community as it extended direct relief. Pedraza noted, "We knew it's really hard for the undocumented to provide info about rent and other data required for relief resources. But we didn't know HOW hard. Many didn't even know their addresses, because they live in a room together, don't fill out forms, and don't need to know their address, because many landlords handle all transactions through WhatsApp or in person." In parts of the state where the Fund was less grounded, a lack of trust early on was also striking. "No one had ever invested in them before. People called us and asked: What is this card, what's in it for you, what do I need to do for you? People didn't want to believe that we wanted to help."



ILLINOIS

CIRCLES OF POWER AND CARE

**Based on information from
Chicago Community COVID-19 Response Fund,
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights,
Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund,
The Resurrection Project**

Illinois benefits from a long-term immigrant justice infrastructure that includes community-based organizations and coalitions and partners in government and philanthropy. A growing number of state legislators are immigrants, children of immigrants, and/or have worked in immigrant rights and service organizations. In FY22, the state budget includes nearly \$160 million for immigrant and refugee communities.

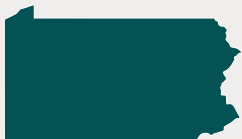
Even in the midst of Covid-19 infections and deaths in the spring of 2021, Illinois organizers and advocates succeeded in securing pro-immigrant state legislation. Legislators passed bills to end cooperation between ICE and state and local law enforcement; extend healthcare to more undocumented people, including Medicaid for people aged 55 and above (building on the win a year earlier that provided eligibility to those 65 and older); and authorized the implementation of a fully funded unit within the Cook County Public Defender's Office to represent people appearing in Chicago's immigration court who are threatened with deportation.

The two largest early pandemic response funds in the state—both pooled funds—were established for metropolitan Chicago (led by The Chicago Community Trust and United Way of Metropolitan Chicago) and for the rest of the state (led by United Way of Illinois and the Alliance of Illinois Community Foundations, in collaboration with the Office of Governor). Together they regranted \$50.5 million from individual, corporate, and foundation contributions. The funds did not specifically focus on immigrants, but included as grantees a number of immigrant-focused organizations and human service organizations that work with immigrants.

Immigrant-specific pandemic giving came from four main sources.

- Using state funds, the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) distributed nearly \$22 million to undocumented immigrants and their families statewide between June 2020 and June 2021, and will disburse another \$30 million between July and December 2021. Funds are managed by ICIRR, and applications and distribution are undertaken by 57 community-based partner organizations.
- The City of Chicago joined with The Resurrection Project, Open Society Foundations' Emma Lazarus Campaign, and other foundations to establish the Chicago Resiliency Fund, which has provided \$9 million in cash assistance to date. Funds are available to people excluded from the CARES Act, including undocumented immigrants.
- The Illinois Immigration Funder Collaborative's funding partners and a handful of new donors, including the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation, contributed nearly \$3.8 million specifically for pandemic response. Two-thirds of these dollars were given to community-based nonprofit intermediaries for cash assistance to undocumented immigrants. The other third was used for general operating grants, to help organizations adapt to remote work and bolster their capacity during the crisis.
- A number of immigrant justice community-based nonprofits received grants from one or more of the funders described above, and also raised money from individuals, local businesses, faith-based institutions, and other foundations to create their own funds for community members. Seven organizations reported that they had disbursed about \$2.3 million to date.

Illinois' history features many highlights: generous refugee resettlement, early development of a statewide immigrant rights coalition, broad support for legalization through IRCA, development of government funding for immigrant services such as naturalization, coordinated response to DACA, and strong policy work to make the state safer and more welcoming to all immigrants. Illinois serves as a model for what is possible with consistent effort.



PENNSYLVANIA

GRASSROOTS-LED COLLABORATIVES

**Based on interviews with
Coalition of African and Caribbean Communities (AFRICOM),
Office of Equity for Mayor William Peduto at City of Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition,
The Philadelphia Foundation**

Two Pennsylvania foundations took advantage of time-tested immigrant-serving networks with a strong history of collaboration to catalyze and quickly deliver significant cash assistance.

Since 2015, the Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition (PICC) has coordinated *PA is Ready!*, a network of grassroots organizations and a participatory grantmaking fund rooted in diverse immigrant communities across the state. The Philadelphia Foundation has been its long-time fiscal sponsor; it provides staff support for the network as well as connections to funders. When the pandemic began, the Alfred & Mary Douty Foundation, an established supporter of the network, approached PICC with \$500,000 funding for cash assistance. PICC immediately mobilized *PA is Ready!* to develop guidelines for the PA Immigrant Relief Fund. This leverage of established infrastructure meant that beneficiaries began receiving money in April 2020.

Fund leaders agreed to collaborate in seeking additional contributions. Each organization raised money (held at the Philadelphia Foundation) for the Fund. Contributions were then equally divided among the member organizations. Together they raised an additional \$186,000 from individual donors, including gifts from donor-advised fund holders of the Philadelphia Foundation.

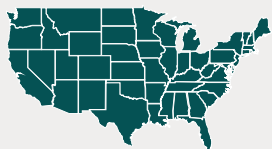
PICC network members agreed to forgo taking any general operating funds from the money raised, in order to provide cash to more people. In their second grantmaking round, they directed more resources to Black immigrant and rural organizations that were being left behind by other funding sources.

There were opportunities and challenges for these networked grassroots organizations. Many, such as AFRICOM in Philadelphia, relied on trusted community leaders and word of mouth to reach those in need and to recommend who should receive funds. Dr. Eric Edi, AFRICOM's President, noted that cash assistance efforts increased the organization's visibility among African and Caribbean immigrants as well as with other funders. "Funders are including BIPOC in their language and in their grantmaking. Funders are now listening and asking questions about our work instead of making assumptions about what our communities need." Yet the pandemic also highlighted challenges. AFRICOM did not have experience with online campaigns or the capacity to work remotely. A grant from another foundation allowed AFRICOM to purchase technology that enabled staff to work from home. This experience has led the organization to add digital equity and connectivity as a new program.

Another longstanding Pennsylvania network of immigrant organizations is *Welcoming Pittsburgh*, coordinated through the Mayor's office since 2014. Open Society Foundations-US provided \$500,000 to a nonprofit fiscal sponsor for pandemic cash assistance in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. The Mayor's Office convened *Welcoming Pittsburgh's* leaders, who represent diverse ethnic and cultural groups.

A committee developed the funding criteria. The Mayor's Office designed and managed the simple application process, defined eligibility simply as being ineligible for federal aid, and publicized the fund widely. The organizations provided case management and language assistance. The application asked what additional help was needed (e.g., housing, food, clothing, diapers) so the Mayor's Office could direct applicants to other support. Within a month of receiving funding, groups were getting money out to beneficiaries.

Alaa Mohamed, who coordinated this effort, knew that nonprofits needed operating funds to get money to the people. Yet, as with PICC, this group of grassroots organizations unanimously decided not to accept a share of the funding for their operating expenses. Mohamed said, "The power of what they can do together as a network is important. Levers of success have to be in place: pre-existing relationships with communities and bringing them together for collective, coordinated response. The magic of our work is 100% backed by the magicians that exist in our communities. The community-based organizations are wonderful."



NATIONAL

CATALYZING PHILANTHROPY - FROM CRISIS FUNDING TO STRUCTURAL CHANGE

Based on interviews with
The Families and Workers Fund

The pandemic has laid bare the economic pain experienced by too many for too long in the United States, yet amidst this devastation, we also see a once-in-a-generation opening for change.

— Rachel Korberg, executive director and co-founder,
The Families and Workers Fund

The Families and Workers Fund (FWF) was launched in April 2020 by the Ford Foundation, Schmidt Futures, and Amalgamated Foundation as the first national, multi-donor pooled fund dedicated to addressing the pandemic's economic impacts and their disproportionate effect on low-income and BIPOC communities. The Fund's goal was to pool capital and coordinate to better alleviate the economic hardship facing workers and families nationally and to lay the groundwork for a more equitable recovery. Participating funders include private foundations such as Open Society Foundations, corporate funders such as Morgan Stanley, tech funders including MacKenzie Scott and Jack Dorsey, as well as family philanthropies and individual donors.

FWF became a connector and catalyst for innovation and greater philanthropic investment. The co-funders worked together to develop the fund's strategy, values, and guidelines. They prioritized making grants to grassroots and community nonprofits already in trusting, authentic relationships with the people who most needed these payments. FWF centered trust in grantees and worked to minimize burdens on them, allowing grantees to determine criteria for eligibility, use a flexible percentage of funds for operating costs, and answer an optional short survey for reporting. Co-funders who joined the collaborative knew these were the parameters of giving; the collaborative offered a safe opportunity for some partners to explore a different kind of grantmaking. Some funded FWF grantees directly, in addition to participating in the collaborative.

In its report, *A New Front Line: Community-led Disaster Response Lessons for the Covid-19 Moment*, Amalgamated Foundation, FWF's fiscal sponsor, offered two important insights: (1) "Allocations of federal disaster relief funding intensify structural and racial inequities." (2) In disasters most people give to large nonprofits that are "designed to serve middle class homeowners - not renters, people experiencing homelessness, or immigrants." The observations have certainly been evident in Covid-19 response.

Building on the shared knowledge of co-funders and frontline leaders, FWF focused the majority of its \$9 million in 2020 grants to support organizations led by women, BIPOC people, and/or LGBTQIA++ people through various forms of pandemic giving, including cash assistance. As dollars came into the fund, FWF reassessed the pandemic's changing impact, measuring unemployment and Covid rates in the most vulnerable communities, and focused each successive wave of funding accordingly.

Very quickly it became clear to FWF that no amount of philanthropic investment could meet the need. Instead, the U.S. social safety net needed to work better for everyone. FWF has since pivoted away from rapid-response funding to "repair and reimagine the systems that fuel economic security and opportunity in the U.S." This includes two new goals that build on lessons learned from the Fund's 2020 grantmaking: *Recover Up*, which aims to advance jobs that enable economic security and mobility—especially for those who have been most locked out of the country's prosperity; and *21st Century Benefits*, designed to reimagine the public benefits system so that it better enables families to stay afloat and recover from crises — with an initial focus on unemployment insurance.

METHODOLOGY

As consultants contracted by GCIR to carry out research, we collected and analyzed data from three sources:

We conducted a **literature review** that included 30 reports and guides related to pandemic giving and associated policy change.

Written materials were fleshed out by eight **landscape interviews**, with national and state foundations and a philanthropic support organization, to better understand the ecosystem of pandemic funding that included undocumented people. These sources helped illustrate the range of efforts and informed our thinking about relief funding and its relationship to structural change.

Next, we used an **online survey** to gather information about funds. Online research enabled us to identify funds for pandemic relief created by nonprofits and community groups, foundations, and state and local government agencies. To confine research data to a manageable scale, we worked with GCIR to select 26 states from which to request specifics about funds. The chosen states represent a variety of considerations: places with smaller and larger undocumented immigrant populations; different regions across the continental U.S.; a mix of states that have been longtime destinations for immigrants, and those that are more recent; and states that have immigrant funding collaboratives. We identified more than 550 funds in the 26 states, and sent an online survey to those for which we could find contact information.

Between April and May 2021, we received 113 completed surveys from organizations in 21 states and the District of Columbia that provided pandemic cash relief encompassing undocumented immigrants. Most surveys (76) came from community-based organizations; 25 came from philanthropic entities; and 12 from state and local governments. Data from the surveys has been integrated into the narrative findings and is featured in charts and quotations throughout.

Finally, we conducted 14 **additional interviews** with representatives of funds in five states and two national organizations (one foundation and one nonprofit). Interviews allowed us to go deeper with questions and were invaluable to the recommendations we offer. Interview information is woven into the report narrative and also appears in the [Funding Profiles](#).

THANKS

Thanks first and foremost to the organizations and agencies that completed surveys and the people who made themselves available for interviews. Thank you for giving your valuable time in the midst of a pandemic to share your work so that we could learn from your experiences and share your observations with a wider audience.

Thanks to Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees for trusting us to create this report and to staff members Kevin Douglas and Melissa Nop for feedback and encouragement all along the way.

Thanks to testers who made the survey so much better.

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Cindy Camacho, Senior Program Officer, Julian Grace Foundation	Lilian Jiménez, Esq., Associate Director, Office of Welcoming Centers for Refugee and Immigrant Services, Illinois Department of Human Services
Sundrop Carter, former Executive Director, Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition	Megan McKenna, former Director of Strategy and Development, Mano a Mano Family Resource Center
Kevin Douglas, Director of National Programs, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees	Daranee Petsod, Fund Advisor, California Immigrant Resilience Fund
Scott Downes, Senior Program Officer, Colorado Health Foundation	Magaly Urdiales, Co-Director, Western North Carolina Workers' Center
	Candace Williams, resident genius

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APPENDIX A: LITERATURE REVIEW

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APPENDIX A: LITERATURE REVIEW CONTINUED

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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWEE INFORMANTS

Sandra Barron, Program Operations Associate, International Migration Initiative, Open Society Foundations	Kathleen Kelly Janus, Senior Advisor on Social Innovation to California Governor, Gavin Newsom, State of California
Becky Belcore, Executive Director, NAKASEC	Kaylyn Kovchak, Senior Development Director, National Domestic Workers Alliance
David Biemesderfer, President & CEO, United Philanthropy Forum	Susana Liu-Hedberg, Program Analyst, International Migration Initiative, Open Society Foundations
Emily Butera, Acting Advocacy Director, Open Society US, Open Society Foundations	Linda Lopez, PhD, CEO, Impact Strategies, Inc.
Sundrop Carter, former Executive Director, Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition	Brandán G. Magee, Senior Director of Programs, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Liora Danan, Program Officer, International Migration Initiative, Open Society Foundations	Alaa Mohamed, Policy Coordinator in the Office of Equity, Office of Mayor William Peduto at City of Pittsburgh
Scott Downes, Senior Program Officer, Colorado Health Foundation	Nefeli Mourt, Director of Operations, The Families and Workers Fund
Dr. Eric Edi, President/COO, Coalition of African and Caribbean Communities - Philadelphia	Gilda (Gigi) Pedraza, Executive Director, Latino Community Fund Georgia
Anna Fink, Executive Director, Amalgamated Foundation	Daranees Petsod, Fund Advisor, California Immigrant Resilience Fund, former President of GCIR
Maria Fitzsimmons, Illinois Family Support Program, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights	Eréndira Rendón, Vice President, Immigrant Advocacy & Defense, The Resurrection Project
Ginny Goldman, Senior Fellow and Lead Strategist, Organizing Resilience, Amalgamated Foundation	Laine Romero-Alston, Acting Fair Work Division Director, International Migration Initiative, Open Society Foundations
Ondi Gottesman, Program Operations Associate, International Migration Initiative, Open Society Foundations	Bamby Salcedo, President/CEO & Founder, TransLatin@ Coalition
Elizabeth Guernsey, Senior Program Officer, Open Society US, Open Society Foundations	Carolyn Wang Kong, Chief Program Director, Blue Shield of California Foundation
Gaby Hernandez, Executive Director, Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition	Ana Lisa Yoder, Special Initiatives Consultant, The Philadelphia Foundation

APPENDIX C: SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Nonprofits

Organization and Fund Name (alpha by state)	State	Funding to beneficiaries	Eligibility
Arkansas United - Essential Workers Fund	AR	500K-1M	COVID
ALIENTO - Mixed-Status Family Relief Fund	AZ	100K-500K	UNDOC
Alianza Coachella Valley - Coachella Community Support Fund; Regional Immigrant Community Support Fund; and unnamed funeral fund	CA	1M-5M	COVID
Alliance for a Better Community	CA	500K-1M	CARES
Building Healthy Communities Kern - BHC-Kern COVID-19 RELIEF	CA	1M-5M	CARES
California Human Development	CA	1-100K	UNDOC
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation	CA	1-100K	UNDOC
Central California Environmental Justice Network	CA	100K-500K	UNDOC
Centro del Pueblo - COVID Relief Fund	CA	100K-500K	COVID
Community Legal Services in Palo Alto	CA	100K-500K	UNDOC
Comunidades Indigenas en Liderazgo - Undoc-Indigenous Fund	CA	1M-5M	UNDOC
Cultiva La Salud - La Matriarca Fund	CA	1-100K	UNDOC
Father & Families of San Joaquin - Undocufund, COVID Relief	CA	100K-500K	COVID
Future Leaders of America and 805UndocuFund - 805UndocuFund	CA	5M-10M	UNDOC
Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees - California Immigrant Resilience Fund	CA	10M-50M	UNDOC
Hub Cities Career Center	CA	500K-1M	UNDOC
Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice - Regional Immigrant Support Fund	CA	1M-5M	UNDOC
Jakara Movement	CA	500K-1M	CARES
Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance - KIWA Coronavirus Pandemic Solidarity Project	CA	1M-5M	UNDOC
LA Voice - Rapid Response Fund	CA	1-100K	COVID
Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County - San Mateo County Immigrant Relief Fund	CA	10M-50M	UNDOC
Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition - UndocuFund LBC	CA	500K-1M	CARES

Organization and Fund Name (alpha by state)	State	Funding to beneficiaries	Eligibility
Mayor's Fund of Los Angeles - Covid-19 Relief Fund & Angeleno Fund	CA	50M+	COVID
Mission Asset Fund - Immigrant Families Fund	CA	10M-50M	COVID
National Day Laborer Organizing Network - Immigrant Worker Safety Net Fund	CA	1M-5M	COVID
On The Move - Emergency Financial Assistance	CA	5M-10M	CARES
Orange County Asian Pacific Islander Alliance	CA	500K-1M	CARES
Proyecto Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project	CA	1-100K	UNDOC
Santa Cruz Community Ventures - UndocuFund Monterey Bay	CA	1M-5M	UNDOC
South Asian Network	CA	500K-1M	COVID
The TransLatin@ Coalition	CA	100K-500K	UNDOC
Todec Legal Center - Unidos Venceremos Fund	CA	10M-50M	CARES
Up Together/Family Independence Initiative - Give Together Now	CA	50M+	none
UpValley Family Centers	CA	500K-1M	CARES
Vision y Compromiso	CA	1M-5M	CARES
Accompaniment & Sanctuary Coalition Colorado Springs - Covid-19 Immigrant Relief Fund	CO	1-100K	CARES
Hispanic Affairs Project - Western Colorado Immigrant Relief Fund	CO	1-100K	UNDOC
UnidosUS - UnidosUS Esperanza/Hope Fund	DC	N/A	COVID
We Count! - Immigrant Worker COVID-19 Fund	FL	100K-500K	UNDOC
Enlace Chicago - Little Village Emergency Assistance Fund	IL	1M-5M	CARES
IL Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights - Immigrant Family Support Project	IL	10M-50M	UNDOC
Immigration Project	IL	1-100K	CARES
Latinos Progresando - Families First Fund	IL	100K-500K	COVID
Little Village Environmental Justice Organization	IL	1-100K	CARES
Mano a Mano Family Resource Center - Tanda Community Emergency Fund	IL	500K-1M	UNDOC

Nonprofits (continued)

Organization and Fund Name (alpha by state)	State	Funding to beneficiaries	Eligibility
The Resurrection Project - Chicago Resiliency Fund & Rapid Relief Fund	IL	10M-50M	CARES
United States Artists - Artist Relief	IL	10M-50M	COVID
University YMCA - NAWC Immigrant Relief Fund	IL	100K-500K	COVID
World Relief Chicagoland - Client Assistance Fund	IL	500K-1M	CARES
Forward Together New Orleans - COVID-19 Relief	LA	500K-1M	UNDOC
Massachusetts Jobs with Justice - Mass Undocufund	MA	1M-5M	UNDOC
Union Capital Boston - COVID Relief Fund	MA	100K-500K	COVID
African Bureau of Immigration and Social Affairs	MI	100K-500K	CARES
Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation	MI	500K-1M	CARES
Church World Service North Carolina - Immigrant Solidarity Fund	NC	500K-1M	UNDOC
Western North Carolina Workers Center - Rapid Response Fund for Immigrant Workers in WNC	NC	100K-500K	COVID
FaithAction International House	NC	100K-500K	CARES
Hispanic Liaison/El Vinculo Hispano - Solidarity Fund	NC	100K-500K	UNDOC
Encuentro	NM	1-100K	COVID
NACA Inspired Schools Network - Stronger Together Relief Fund	NM	100K-500K	COVID
NM Comunidades en Accion y de Fe	NM	1-100K	COVID
Taos Immigrant Allies	NM	100K-500K	COVID
Nevada Community Foundation - Esperanza Fund	NV	1M-5M	CARES
Anonymous	NY	1M-5M	COVID
National Domestic Workers Alliance - Coronavirus Care Fund	NY	10M-50M	COVID
Syracuse Immigrant and Refugee Defense Network - CNY COVID-19 Support For Undocumented Neighbors; NYIC Cash Re-Grant	NY	1-100K	UNDOC
Justice for Migrant Women - Farmworkers' Pandemic Relief Fund	OH	1M-5M	COVID
Casa San Jose	PA	500K-1M	CARES
Coalition of African & Caribbean Communities Philadelphia - Health/Family and Emergency Assistance	PA	1-100K	COVID
Mayor's Fund for Philadelphia	PA	1M-5M	CARES

Organization and Fund Name (alpha by state)	State	Funding to beneficiaries	Eligibility
Nationalities Service Center - We Are All in This Together	PA	100K-500K	COVID
Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition - PA Immigrant Relief Fund	PA	500K-1M	UNDOC
Workers' Dignity	TN	1-100K	COVID
International Rescue Committee	TX	100K-500K	COVID
The Montrose Center - LGBTQ COVID Relief Fund	TX	500K-1M	COVID
Central Washington Justice for Our Neighbors - Mutual Aid	WA	100K-500K	CARES

Funding Key

1-100K	1-100,000
100K-500K	100,001-500,000
500K-1M	500,001-1,000,000
1M-5M	1,000,001-5,000,000
5M-10M	5,000,001-10,000,000
10M-50M	10,000,001-50,000,000
50M+	More than 50,000,000

**No funding totals are given per state or nationally. These 26 states represent only a portion of all the national funding that was allocated and a portion of the funds that operated in each state. There may also be multiple partners involved in one fund.*

Eligibility Key

UNDOC	Solely for undocumented people and their families
COVID	People in need as a result of the pandemic, including undocumented immigrants and their families
CARES	People left out of the CARES Act, including undocumented immigrants and their families

Philanthropies

Organization and Fund Name (alpha by state)	State	Funding to intermediaries	Funding to both intermediaries and beneficiaries	Eligibility
Blue Shield of California Foundation	CA	1M-5M		COVID
California Immigrant Resilience Fund - California Immigrant Resilience Fund	CA	50M+		UNDOC
Horizons Foundation - LGBTQ COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund	CA	100K-500K		COVID
SEC With Intention, LLC	CA	50M+		CARES
The Orange County Justice Fund	CA		100K-500K	COVID
Colorado Health Foundation - Colorado COVID Relief Fund	CO	1M-5M		COVID
Impact Charitable - Left Behind Workers Fund	CO		10M-50M	UNDOC
Families and Workers Fund	DC	5M-10M		CARES
Contigo Fund - Central Florida LGBT+ Relief Fund	FL		1-100K	COVID
Latino Community Fund Georgia - Covid-19 Relief and Recovery	GA		1M-5M	CARES
Crossroads Fund - Critical Response Fund; Technology Funders Collaborative	IL	1-100K		None
Grand Victoria Foundation - Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund	IL	1M-5M		COVID
Illinois Immigration Funder Collaborative	IL	1M-5M		UNDOC
Julian Grace Foundation	IL	500K-1M		COVID
Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts - Critical Needs Covid Response Fund	MA	500K-1M		COVID
Greater Worcester Community Foundation - Worcester Together: Central Mass Covid-19 Relief Fund	MA	1M-5M		UNDOC
Community Foundation of Greater Flint - Greater Flint Urgent Relief Fund	MI	1M-5M		COVID
Grand Rapids Community Foundation - La Lucha Fund	MI	500K-1M		UNDOC
Oak Foundation	NC	500K-1M		COVID
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation	NC	100K-500K		CARES
Con Alma Health Foundation - COVID-19 Emergency Assistance	NM	500K-1M		COVID

Organization and Fund Name (alpha by state)	State	Funding to intermediaries	Funding to both intermediaries and beneficiaries	Eligibility
Brooklyn Community Foundation - Brooklyn Covid-19 Response Fund	NY	100K-500K		COVID
Open Society Foundations	NY	10M-50M		CARES
Restaurant Workers' Community Foundation - Restaurant Workers COVID-19 Crisis Relief Fund	NY	1M-5M		COVID
Philadelphia Foundation - PA Immigrant Relief Fund	PA	500K-1M		CARES

Funding Key

1-100K	1-100,000
100K-500K	100,001-500,000
500K-1M	500,001-1,000,000
1M-5M	1,000,001-5,000,000
5M-10M	5,000,001-10,000,000
10M-50M	10,000,001-50,000,000
50M+	More than 50,000,000

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UNDOC	Solely for undocumented people and their families
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Government

Organization and Fund Name (alpha by state)	State	Funding to beneficiaries	Funding to intermediaries	Eligibility
Office of Governor Gavin Newsome - Disaster Relief Assistance for Immigrants	CA		50M+	UNDOC
Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Office, City of Denver - Denver Left Behind Workers Fund	CO		1M-5M	CARES
Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, City of Atlanta	GA		500K-1M	CARES
Illinois Dept of Human Services	IL		50M+	UNDOC
Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement, Boston - Boston Resiliency Fund	MA		10M-50M	COVID
Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, Baltimore - Baltimore Immigrant Community Fund: Emergency Relief for Immigrant Families	MD		1M-5M	CARES
Office of Immigrant Affairs and Economic Inclusion, Detroit - Detroit UndocuFund	MI		500K-1M	UNDOC
City of Pittsburgh	PA		100K-500K	CARES
Harris County Precinct 1 - Harris County Covid-19 Relief Fund	TX		10M-50M	COVID
City of Charlottesville	VA		1M-5M	COVID
City of Richmond Office of Multicultural Affairs	VA	100K-500K		CARES
City of Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs - Seattle COVID-19 Disaster Relief Fund for Immigrants	WA		5M-10M	UNDOC

Funding Key

1-100K	1-100,000
100K-500K	100,001-500,000
500K-1M	500,001-1,000,000
1M-5M	1,000,001-5,000,000
5M-10M	5,000,001-10,000,000
10M-50M	10,000,001-50,000,000
50M+	More than 50,000,000

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