

# Responsive Philanthropy

NCRP'S QUARTERLY JOURNAL

JUNE 2019

## IN THIS ISSUE

Confronting anti-Blackness in immigrant justice philanthropy 1

How philanthropy can help stop the invisibilization of Indigenous migrants in the U.S. 3

By ODILIA ROMERO AND XIOMARA CORPEÑO

Divest/invest at the intersections: Immigrant justice and criminal justice reform 7

By LORRAINE RAMIREZ

Funders and donors can build, share and wield power to bolster the pro-immigrant movement 10

By LISA RANGHELLI

A message from the Vice President and Chief Content Officer 2

Member Spotlight 15

Photo courtesy of UndocuBlack Network.



## Confronting anti-Blackness in immigrant justice philanthropy

The philanthropic community that supports immigrant justice has largely overlooked Black immigrant communities and organizations led by Black immigrants. In this Q&A with NCRP, Daranee Petsod, president of Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR), urges funders to confront and overcome this implicit and explicit bias for greater impact.

**NCRP:** How would you describe philanthropy's inclusion of and support for the Black immigrant and refugee community?

**Daranee Petsod:** Very limited. The experiences of Black immigrant and ref-

uge communities are largely absent from the dialogue and strategies of both immigrant rights funders and racial equity funders. Consequently, Black-led immigrant organizations face substantial barriers in securing philanthropic support for their work.

**NCRP:** Why do you think that's the case? Many foundations have adopted diversity, equity and inclusion statements and have stated their concern for racial equity – yet these fundamental gaps remain.

**Daranee:** Two main reasons: lack of

trust and philanthropic silos.

Despite their strong connection to community, Black immigrant leaders experience an external lack of trust in their leadership from funders and others in the immigrant rights movement. Anti-Black racism – whether explicit or implicit, personal or structural – persists due to deep historical roots. In grant-making, it shows up as concerns about organizational structure, capacity, financial management, qualifications of the leadership and expertise of staff, to name a few. (continued on page 14)



challenging grantmakers to strengthen communities

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# A message from the Vice President and Chief Content Officer



Dear Colleagues,

Author, historian and activist Howard Zinn famously wrote: “You can’t be neutral on a moving train. ... Events are already moving in certain deadly directions, and to be neutral means to accept that.”

Our country is at a historic crossroads. Funders are called on to be brave and bold by investing in the social justice movements that are our best hope of moving that train onto a different track, toward a more equitable, just and inclusive future. NCRP’s new Movement Investment Project is a long-term initiative to drive more philanthropic resources to help these critical movements – beginning with immigrant and refugee justice – succeed.

We all have our blind spots. In philanthropy, this shows up in many ways, including the lack of support for grassroots social movement organizations led by people of color women and girls, LGBTQI people and other marginalized communities working the front lines.

Thankfully, we also have people and organizations who are unafraid to speak truth to power, whose wisdom and experiences help us challenge implicit biases. I’m excited to feature some of these brave voices in this special edition of NCRP’s *Responsive Philanthropy* journal.

In a Q&A with NCRP titled “Confronting the anti-Blackness in immigrant justice philanthropy,” Daranee Petsod, president of Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrant and Refugees, urges funders to stop overlooking Black immigrant and refugee communities. She offers practical advice on how grantmakers can confront anti-Blackness in their strategies and practices.

Leading migrant justice activists Odilia Romero and Xiomara Corpeño connect the dots between the historical and systemic erasure and neglect of Native people and the dominant narrative in philanthropy that overlooks Indigenous migrants. They identify how philanthropy can help stop the invisibilization of Indigenous migrants in the U.S.

In “Divest/invest at the intersections: Immigrant justice and criminal justice reform,” Lorraine Ramirez of Neighborhood Funders Group provides an example of how immigrant justice is a necessary lens for many of the issues and communities that grantmakers care about. She invites funders to divest from policies and practices that criminalize and marginalize immigrants, refugees and all people of color, and invest in grassroots organizing for a criminal justice system that truly keeps our communities safe and secure.

Are you ready to help secure a thriving future for all our communities, including immigrants and refugees, but don’t know where to start? In “Funders and donors can build, share and wield power to bolster the pro-immigrant movement,” NCRP’s Lisa Rangelhelli offers tailored tips and discussion questions from our popular *Power Moves* assessment guide.

Finally, NCRP members offer advice for grantmakers to support under-resourced grassroots immigrant and refugee justice movement organizations in, “What’s the one thing you want funders to do differently to support the pro-immigrant and -refugee movement?”

I hope these articles inspire you to amp up your movement philanthropy and help ensure that all our communities flourish. Contact [investinmovements@ncrp.org](mailto:investinmovements@ncrp.org) for questions and to connect with the Movement Investment Project team.

In solidarity,



Timi Gerson  
Vice President and Chief Content Officer

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**Responsive Philanthropy** is the quarterly journal of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

2019, Issue No. 2  
ISBN: 1065-0008

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# How philanthropy can help stop the invisibilization of Indigenous migrants in the U.S.

By Odilia Romero and Xiomara Corpeño

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Indigenous migrants have been neglected and made invisible by prevailing attitudes and practices in the U.S., including philanthropy. Grantmakers can do something about it.

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The deaths of 5 Indigenous children since December 2018 while in Border Patrol custody were not an accident, nor were they merely a consequence of the Trump administration's ruthless attacks against migrants of color. They are a current manifestation of the systemic erasure of Native people in the U.S. that began during the country's founding and continues to today.

The culture of philanthropy has adopted the practice of invisibilization of Indigenous communities. Funders often overlook community models that do not adhere to western governance structures or strategies. The problem only deepens when it comes to resourcing Indigenous migrant organizations.

As the death of these children weigh heavy on all of our humanity, now is the

time for grantmakers to begin challenging the dominant ideas regarding the identities of Indigenous migrants, their existing customary laws, their worldview as well as their cultural and linguistic needs.

## ONGOING INVISIBILIZATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN THE U.S.

The U.S. was founded on the systematic genocide of Native people. The original text of the Declaration of Independence dehumanized them as "merciless Indian Savages" and the citizenship of Native Americans was recognized less than 100 years ago.

Invisibilization stealthily never acknowledges the existence of Native people in real-time. Calling this a "nation of immigrants" upholds the "pull



Indigenous women strawberry pickers. Photo by Antonio Nava.



A Zapotec dancer in downtown Los Angeles. Photo by Antonio Nava.

ourselves up by our bootstraps” American exceptionalism and ignores the atrocious treatment that Native people have and continue to endure.

U.S. government officials simply do not acknowledge the existence of Indigenous migrants – all migrants from Latin America are classified as “Hispanic.” There are very few academic studies on Indigenous people who migrate north to the U.S. because they technically don’t exist according to government statistics.

The Indigenous Farmworker Study is one of the few comprehensive studies that focuses solely on Indigenous people born in Mexico who work in California – the highest-ranking agricultural producer in the country. The study found that many migrants come from the Oaxaca, Guerrero and Chiapas regions. According to the report, at least 30% of farmworkers are Indigenous, making them a significant population in the production of our nation’s food source.

Mexican migrants in California speak at least 30 Indigenous languages; many Indigenous migrants within California speak neither English nor Spanish. Parents cannot communicate with their children’s schools. Medical visits can be

frustrating for both patients and providers. Interactions with police officers can land a person in jail or deported. Lack of access to interpretative services can result in life or death situations.

Indigenous migrants do not come to the U.S. simply to escape poverty or chase the American dream as many believe. Families and individuals are forced off their lands<sup>1</sup> as a result of neoliberal policies and the U.S. war on drugs with the “primary victims [being] poor, migrant, Indigenous and peasant farmers.”<sup>2</sup> Multinational corporations buy out or steal land from Indigenous communities with the support of government officials. Mining companies, industrial farms and other manufacturers regularly use violence to assert their dominance, with murder or torture being commonplace. Pollution from these industries produce catastrophic environmental effects, forcing immediate as well as surrounding communities to flee.

Currently, immigration courts across the country have seen a steady rise in speakers of Indigenous Guatemalan languages in the last 5 years, according to the Justice Department’s Executive Office for Immigration Review, which

oversees the courts. And they are only the most recent additions to the list, which for several years has routinely included Zapotec, Mixtec, Ixil and Popti, languages from southern Mexico and Central America. According to *The New York Times*,<sup>3</sup> U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials encounter the following languages: K’iche’, Achi, Ixil, Awakatek, Jakalteq and Q’anjobal. There are no comprehensive Indigenous language interpretation providers in the U.S. Lawyers and community organizations rely upon untrained community members, including children, to interpret sensitive and complex information.

Indigenous people are often reluctant to disclose that they don’t speak Spanish for fear of being disrespected and denigrated. Even when it becomes obvious that the person is Indigenous, non-Indigenous lawyers, community advocates and interpreters assume that the client has enough Spanish “to get by,” jeopardizing the person’s rights.

For those living in the U.S., hospitals, government institutions and social service agencies use 3rd-party language service providers who do not understand the diversity of Indigenous languages and dialects, which vary from community to community; the language group from 1 town may sound completely different than the language group in another. These for-profit agencies have little to no oversight, and they are contracted by immigration courts to provide interpretation of a language they do not speak nor understand.

#### ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPLICIT RACISM IN MOST LATINX COMMUNITIES

There is a strong, vibrant pro-migrant movement in the U.S., led mostly by Latinx migrants from largely Mexican and Central American countries. But in these regions, there is a distinct approach to the invisibilization of Indigenous people: promoting the myth of *mestisaje*, the

“mixed race” ideology that the people of Latin America assimilated to a mostly European/Spanish culture.

Many Latinx migrants adopt the mestizo identity at varying degrees and are unaware of their implicit bias against Indigenous people from their home countries. Even those who are running organizations that serve migrant communities from Latin America oftentimes perpetuate the notion that Indigenous people are illiterate, dumb and unwilling to speak up. They question the intelligence of Indigenous people who don’t speak Spanish.

In other words, challenges faced by Indigenous migrants are not on the radar of most Latinx communities due to internalized racism and systemic erasure from their consciousness.

### INVISIBILIZATION OF INDIGENOUS MIGRANTS IN PHILANTHROPY

U.S. foundations have largely ignored Indigenous communities as well. Grantmakers tend to hesitate supporting emerging or “fringe” issues. There is an assumption that the actual Native population is “insignificant” in terms of impact outcomes.

Worse still, funders assume that Indigenous-led organizations are nascent without a proven track record of results, ignoring the cultural protocols and systems of Indigenous communities. Funders expect a board of directors and governance structures, and those structures do not necessarily reflect how Indigenous communities organize themselves.

In the current crisis we see at the border, much of the philanthropic funding goes toward crisis management, and supports legal frameworks that ultimately exclude, refuse to serve and evade poor and disenfranchised migrants. Migrants who do not have the proper interpreter during an intake continue to get overlooked. This problem is reinforced by immigration, asylum and refugee laws that were established to barricade entry of non-whites into the U.S.

Edgar Villanueva’s breakthrough book, *Decolonizing Wealth*,<sup>4</sup> provides an excellent philanthropic framework that challenges organizations to reconsider standing idly by as Indigenous communities are continually forced off their ancestral lands, which results in abuse and even death as they seek refuge in the U.S.

What’s happening at the border is part and parcel of 528 years of colonization, which continues today. Despite dominant narratives of the Americas, Indigenous people are not dead nor have they disappeared. They survived and continue to thrive, create and innovate.

Through hometown associations (HTAs), Indigenous communities have created centralized and effective collectives to meet the needs of their people that transcend the concept of borders. These organizations are complex, with volunteer board members elected by their respective communities. HTAs self-finance cultural programs and cultural events that pass Indigenous language, gastronomy and cultural practices to younger genera-

tions. These networks are also used to help individuals and families, referring community members to job opportunities and awarding scholarships to undocumented Indigenous youth.

Nonprofit organizations led by and for Indigenous migrants have also developed in recent years, with a vision of social justice and full integration of human rights for Indigenous communities. They advocate for worker and language rights despite the lack of financial resources from the government and philanthropy.

Imagine what a fully resourced Indigenous migrant movement in the U.S. can do for the freedom and liberation for all Indigenous people in the world. Imagine what it would look like if they have full funding for programs and staff.

### 3 THINGS THAT PHILANTHROPY CAN DO NOW

Grantmakers can do more right now to start addressing the invisibilization of Indigenous migrants such as:

#### 1. Fund Indigenous-led migrant organizations.

Indigenous communities have complex and effective collective structures that are culturally and linguistically relevant, but there is no funding to run programs. Often, leaders have a day job and go unpaid while they do amazing work to help their communities. Do deep homework when you are in the process of identifying nascent Indigenous-led migrant organizations. There is a tendency for funders to rely on tried-and-true organizations such as those that may have already received grants from national grantmakers or their leaders have received numerous awards.

#### 2. Build the capacity of Indigenous-led groups.

Organizations need capacity-building support in order to build infrastructure and develop more Indigenous leaders. Additionally, they need technical support

There is an assumption that the actual Native population is “insignificant” in terms of impact outcomes.

to integrate into the predominantly Western frameworks in philanthropy while also promoting and respecting Indigenous community needs and views. Fund core operating support to allow these organizations the flexibility to continue to grow and strengthen its infrastructure and capabilities (e.g. paid staff, underwrite meeting costs, technology, etc.)

### 3. Fund interpretation language justice initiatives for and by Indigenous people.

Many philanthropic institutions don't fund services aside from legal services or strategies. These strategies leave behind Indigenous people who do not speak Spanish, let alone English, simply because their voices go unheard. Many interpreters often work a separate day job and provide interpretation services when they are available. This creates a need to develop formal networks of Indigenous language interpreters who are trained to

interpret complex legal and medical terminologies and to be advocates for their communities. Value the centrality of language as a social justice concern and provide funding to ensure interpretation and translation services are accessible. ■

*Odilia Romero is an Indigenous Zapotec leader who has organized Indigenous communities from Oaxaca for over 25 years. She is the 1st woman to be elected General Binational Coordinator of the Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations (FIOB). A trilingual interpreter in Zapotec, Spanish and English, she developed a training program for Indigenous-language interpreters and recently founded Comunidades Indigenas en Liderazgo (CIELO). Lear more at mycielo.org.*

*Xiomara Corpeño has been a migrant justice organizer in the U.S. for nearly 20 years. She is currently on a 1-year Migrant Justice Fellowship providing capacity*

*building to migrant leaders both in Mexico and the U.S. who work with the most vulnerable migrant populations such as Indigenous and LGBTQI migrants.*

## Notes

1. For example: Cecilia Niezen, "Farmers struggle for land in Guatemala," Oxfam, August 22, 2013, <https://www.oxfam-america.org/explore/stories/farmers-struggle-for-land-in-guatemala/>.
2. Dawn Paley, *Drug War Capitalism* (Oakland, California: AK Press, November 2014), <https://www.akpress.org/drug-war-capitalism.html>.
3. Jennifer Medina, "Anyone Speak K'iche' or Mam? Immigration Courts Overwhelmed by Indigenous Languages," *The New York Times*, March 19, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/19/us/translators-border-wall-immigration.html>.
4. Visit <https://www.decolonizingwealth.com/>.

## New and Renewed NCRP Members

Arch Community Fund  
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 Blue Shield of California Foundation  
 Capital & Main  
 Center for Effective Philanthropy  
 Center for the Study of Social Policy  
 Citi Foundation  
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 FairVote  
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 Georgia Appleseed  
 Georgia ACT  
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Hope Enterprise Corporation  
 InterAction  
 Jobs With Justice Education Foundation  
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 Joseph H. and Florence A. Roblee Foundation  
 Justice for Families  
 Khmer Girls in Action  
 Latino Union of Chicago  
 LA Voice  
 Lloyd A. Fry Foundation  
 MapLight  
 Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation  
 Meda  
 Meyer Foundation  
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 Mountain Association for Community Economic Development  
 National Birth Equity Collaborative  
 National Housing Resource Center  
 New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice  
 New York Foundation  
 Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition  
 Perrin Family Foundation  
 Public Welfare Foundation  
 Richmond Memorial Health Foundation

Robert Sterling Clark Foundation  
 Rural Forward NC  
 San Francisco Foundation  
 Sagner Family Foundation  
 Schott Foundation  
 Solidaire Foundation  
 Stand Up Foundation  
 Stewart R. Mott Foundation  
 Stupski Foundation  
 The Amy Mandel and Katina Rodis Fund  
 The California Wellness Foundation  
 The Cleveland Foundation  
 The Conservation Fund/Resourceful Communities  
 The David and Lucille Packard Foundation  
 The Dyson Foundation  
 The Fund for New Jersey  
 The George Gund Foundation  
 The Hyams Foundation  
 The Roddenberry Foundation  
 United Way of Greater Los Angeles  
 United We Dream Network  
 Weissberg Foundation  
 Western States Center  
 William and Flora Hewlett Foundation  
 William Penn Foundation  
 Yelp Foundation

# Divest/invest at the intersections: Immigrant justice and criminal justice reform

By Lorraine Ramirez

Now more than ever, grantmakers can't afford a siloed approach to criminal justice reform. The divest/invest frame offers an immigrant justice lens to systemic problems and potential solutions to end the criminalization of immigrants, refugees and communities of color.

The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy's (NCRP) recent Movement Investment Project brief, *The State of Foundation Funding for the Pro-Immigrant Movement*, reminds philanthropy that "our success is rooted in the success of our communities."

As grantmakers, donors and funder affinity groups, our role in social change is to move resources to support power-building in communities of color and low-income communities. For communities to be successful, funders must invest in and follow communities' lead as to what will keep them safe and thriving. Yet communities of color have been systematically divested and stolen from since the colonization of these lands, which fed the growth of philanthropy in this country.

Divestment from these communities and investment in policies and practices that criminalize and marginalize immigrants, refugees and all people of color continue today. Yet funders have too often remained siloed as "immigrant integration" funders or "criminal justice" funders, not acknowledging the deep interconnections.

The question for grantmakers is this: Will you be complicit or will you stand for equity and justice?

## INVESTING IN RACE AND CRIMINALITY

The report titled *The \$3.4 Trillion Mistake: The Cost of Mass Incarceration and Criminalization*<sup>1</sup> by Communities United, Make the Road, Right on Justice and Padres y Jóvenes Unidos detailed

the drastic increase in criminal justice spending over the last 3 decades.

They found that billions of public dollars are put into criminalizing migration and migrants each year while public policies explicitly exclude migrants from access to daily life in the U.S., including jobs, housing, education and health care even though undocumented immigrants pay billions in taxes every year. In order to divest from criminalization, the nation must divest from immigration enforcement.

With some grassroots success at the local level to decrease the amount of people either going to jail or currently incarcerated, city, county and state officials are now increasingly meeting budget demands by filling jail beds with detained migrants.

## Criminalization Affects...



...in every Black, Brown and Indigenous Community.

In April of this year, Funders for Justice (FFJ), a program by the Neighborhood Funders Group, hosted a webinar about the intersections of bail reform and detention bonds.<sup>2</sup>

During the webinar, Angie Junck of Heising-Simons Foundation along with Benita Jain of Immigrant Family Defense Fund and supervising attorney of the Immigrant Defense Project described how the criminal justice system was designed to criminalize and lock up people of color, including immigrants. Current punitive laws are used to arrest and convict as many people as possible, then as additional punishment funnel immigrants into the pipeline of deportation coupled with immigration detention. This mass criminalization comes out of a toxic political narrative that blurs race, migration status, national and border security, and criminality.

For example, Harris County in Houston, Texas, is the 4th largest jail in U.S., with up to 10,000 people housed on any given day. One in every 4 Houston residents was born outside of the U.S. From 2000 to 2013, Houston's immigrant population grew at nearly twice the national rate: 59% versus 33%. Because of the size of the jail and the demographics of the county, it is not surprising that Harris County is 2nd in the U.S. in the number of deportations.

The federal government's investments in wars around the world that ravage lands and communities often drives migration toward the U.S. Yet government officials criminalize and reject migrants from Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, Venezuela, North Korea and Asia – including the visa ban for 5 majority-Muslim nations: Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Somalia.

A simultaneous divestment from public support for migrant people, families and communities results in extremely precarious and dangerous daily conditions for migrants in the U.S.

Because of investments toward war abroad, combined with police and Im-

migration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) removing public funds that support migrant families and communities, Junck and Jain explained that these immigrants face precarious and dangerous conditions in the U.S. each day.

Moreover, there is a proliferation of contracts across the U.S.<sup>3</sup> that allow ICE officials to use both public and private facilities to detain immigrants. The Detention Watch Network provides a helpful overview of how the U.S. government maintains the world's largest immigration detention system, and how that came to be the case.

One place where this is playing out is in the Midwest, where there is often little public transit. Some migrants who have no recourse but to drive in Minnesota are profiled by law enforcement officers, given traffic or vehicle violations, and then turned over to ICE. This is happening across the country.

As a result, noted Nekessa Julia Opoti of the Black Immigrant Collective during a January webinar hosted by NFG about prisons and detention centers, racial justice and the environment in rural places, Black immigrants are 7-9% of the migrant population but make up 25% of those in detention who face deportation. There are sanctuary cities throughout Minnesota, but sanctuary cities are defined in different ways. For example, a city may be a sanctuary, but if the jail is run by the county, county officials may still cooperate with ICE and are not subject to city officials' oversight.

What's happening in the Midwest and around the country is similar to the racial profiling that Arizona's anti-immigrant law SB 1070 legalized in 2010.

## REINVESTING IN MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

When FFJ began looking at the divest/invest frame, it was clear that migrant justice fighters have been at the forefront. Key campaign examples are framing the divest/invest narra-

tive with #Not1MoreDetention and #AbolishICE. In turn, migrant-fueled grassroots organizations such as Mijente, Organized Communities Against Deportations, Poder in Action, Puente, the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights, the Border Network for Human Rights, the Congress of Day Laborers (New Orleans), Juntos (Philadelphia), the Black Alliance for Just Immigration and Silicon Valley Debug actively work to move resources and migrants out of criminalization and into meaningful community safety visions of housing, education, health care and jobs.

These groups and others are involved in ongoing fights to reduce police surveillance and harassment, protect members from deportation, stop new immigration detention facilities and additional beds, and end the criminal prosecution of migrants.

On the U.S.-Mexico border, more than 60 organizations make up the Southern Borders Communities Coalition that is working to "revitalize, not militarize" the border. Members recognize that "schools, health care and roads are better than agents, weapons and drones."

The Defund Hate Campaign from the Detention Watch Network calls to defund the detention and deportation machine. Local campaigns across the country call for direct investments and resources to migrant communities through access to education, health care, housing and other key aspects of healthy communities.

Chicago-based Communities United is investing in migrant communities. FFJ field advisor and co-executive director, Jenny Arwade, said that Communities United has taken on healing justice work as a critical way of being in community with migrants and other Chicago residents as they organize communities to go up against enormous challenges.

The divest/invest framework has been a critical vehicle for Black-brown



alliance-building around community justice reinvestment. Healing justice is important given that families have been torn apart and endured trauma in their communities, Arwade said.

FFJ members have also learned about healing justice from Francisca Porchas Coronado, a Nathan Cummings Foundation Fellow and principle of Resilient Strategies, who recently launched the Latinx Therapist Action Network. Coronado spoke about the immense traumatic impact on migrant communities and the toxic impact on families and individuals, which has immediate ramifications for migrants on the frontlines as well as lasting implications across generations for entire communities.<sup>4</sup>

#### BREAKING THE SILO BETWEEN CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM AND IMMIGRANT JUSTICE

Over the last decade, the bulk of pro-immigrant and refugee funders have focused their efforts on integrating “model” immigrants, i.e. based on legal or employment status, or level of education, into an idealized American society.

However, a handful of forward-thinking program officers and institutions have responded through “crim-imm” grants to grassroots organizations whose task is to confront the misuse of criminal justice bureaucracies that enforce immigration laws.

Funding for criminal justice reform work has expanded considerably. There are now significantly more grantmaking institutions and money committed toward ending mass incarceration and reforming various elements of the criminal legal system, including policing.

However, increased interest in criminal justice reform has not explicitly included criminal prosecution and detention of immigrants as part of the problem that we need to address. As a result, both undocumented and documented migrants have typically been left behind and further criminalized be-

cause they are not protected by reforms. Instead, “enforcement” gets entirely directed toward them.

The divest/invest frame calls for criminal justice reform and immigrant justice funders to see their common interests in one another’s areas of expertise. It is clear at this historical moment that immigrant detention and migrant criminalization will be transformed only by directly confronting the ills of the broader criminal legal system.

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FFJ also sees the divest/invest frame as critical for any philanthropic institution working to meet its mission. As NCRP’s brief states:

“The core group of pro-immigrant funder allies have important lessons to share with the sector including innovative work to look beyond the pro-immigrant movement as a single issue; funding across portfolios of criminal justice, health equity, gender issues, education, economic equity, civic participation and democracy; and how to move money quickly and effectively to where groups need it most.

Pro-immigrant movement groups work at the intersection of public health, economic security, civil rights, education access, public safety, gender justice and many other issues that philanthropy cares about. Immigrants are moms and dads, entrepreneurs and small business owners, teachers and students, doctors and nurses, caregivers, construction workers and much more. When we embrace the complexity in the history and identities of all people in our communities and enable to them to thrive, those communities become healthier, safer and more prosperous.”

#### DIVEST/INVEST: A CALL TO ACTION FOR FUNDERS

Funders for Justice believes that our collective investments in housing, education, health, transportation, food security and jobs will fail if we do not also proactively work to redirect the nation’s resources away from criminalization of all communities of color, regardless of immigrant status. Our partners in the field are organizing to move funds from criminalization toward the critical work of transforming communities to be truly safe and secure.

In 2017, FFJ launched Divest/Invest: From Criminalization to Thriving Communities, an *(continued on page 13)*

# Funders and donors can build, share and wield power to bolster the pro-immigrant movement

By Lisa Rangelhelli

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Together, the Movement Investment Project and *Power Moves* offer a roadmap for grantmakers about how to support a vibrant ecosystem of pro-immigrant organizations.

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We in philanthropy seem doomed to repeat history. But it doesn't have to be that way.

When NCRP analyzed environmental grantmaking patterns in 2012, we found that the vast majority of funding went to the largest organizations with budgets over \$5 million, even though they comprised only 2% all environmental organizations.

The study concluded that failure to fund organizations at the frontlines of environmental injustice – especially communities of color and other under-resourced groups – contributed to the failure to make significant progress on climate and environmental policy.

Yet it appears that these lessons are not widely embraced in philanthropy, nor are they applied across other issues, including the immigrant justice move-

ment. We're in a moment when grantmakers have an opportunity to leverage power in support of frontline movement organizations and help secure a thriving future for all communities.

## WHY DO WE NEED TO CHANGE?

According to NCRP's new Movement Investment Project brief on immigrant justice, as local communities have been threatened by hateful anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric, funding for the pro-immigrant movement has skewed toward national legal and policy organizations; and regional concentrations in giving do not reflect where the greatest threats lie, even in well-resourced states.

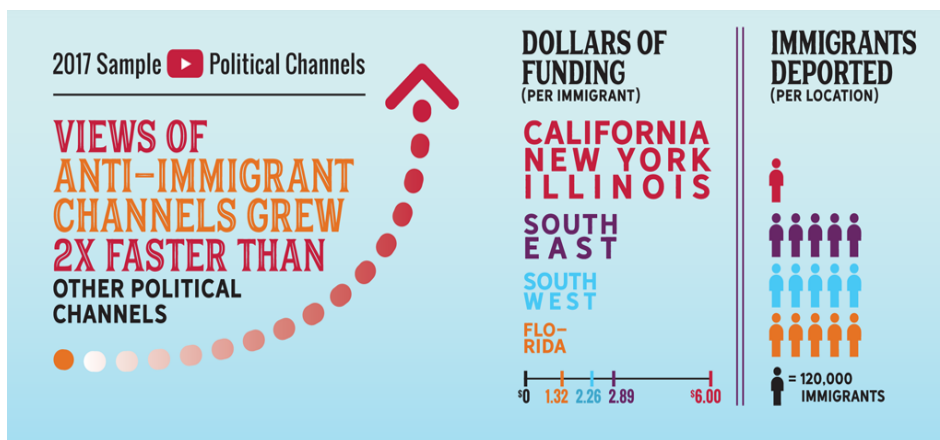
Whatever the issue, funding those most affected by harmful and inequitable policies is a winning grantmaking

strategy. Understanding and ensuring the strength of the full ecosystem of organizations that seek transformative change is also a winning approach.

Farhad Ebrahimi has learned this lesson through leading the Chorus Foundation:

"I've come to the conclusion that what we're collectively referring to is an ecosystem of power – one in which there are different forms of power that behave and interact with each other in different ways.

An ecosystem, of course, is not just a list of things but rather the web of relationships among those things. And, while it can certainly make sense to focus on a particular part of an ecosystem, that focus is always going to be most effective when made in the context of the whole."<sup>1</sup>



From the State of Foundation Funding for the Pro-Immigrant Movement infographic.

## WHAT CAN FUNDERS DO DIFFERENTLY TO BETTER SUPPORT MOVEMENTS, PARTICULARLY THE PRO-IMMIGRANT MOVEMENT?

As Ebrahimi noted, power is a central consideration that should guide grantmaking strategy.

Funders need to understand who holds power and how those with power – including grantmakers themselves – use it either to perpetuate or to challenge inequitable and racist policies, programs and narratives.

NCRP's *Power Moves*<sup>2</sup> guide looks at 3 dimensions of power that are highly relevant for philanthropy's role in supporting the pro-immigrant movement. NCRP's extensive research has found that funders who successfully use their privilege and influence to advance equity for marginalized communities follow these guidelines:

### 1. Building Power:

- a. Be explicit about advancing systemic equity for immigrants, refugees and asylees in grantmaker goals, strategies and operations.
- b. Fund diverse and intersectional immigrant and refugee communities to build clout and be their own agents of change.
- c. Fund cross-cutting approaches. Building power may not fit neatly into narrowly defined issue areas. Immigrants and refugees are affected by many issues – such as health, education and the environment – not just those related to their legal rights.
- d. Fund for the long-term while also being responsive to emerging opportunities or urgent crises.

### 2. Sharing Power:

- a. Be highly responsive, inclusive and transparent in communication with existing and prospective grant partners.
- b. Invest in the success of grant partners by providing multi-year general operating support.
- c. Simplify application and reporting processes to reduce language and technological barriers and to avoid further straining the already stretched capacity of many potential grant partners.
- d. Engage with and solicit input from immigrants, refugees and asylees you seek to benefit by going beyond the usual suspects.

### 3. Wielding Power:

- a. Convene grant partners and community stakeholders to advance pro-im-

migrant movement goals while also playing a supportive participant role at other convening tables.

- b. Organize and collaborate with philanthropic peers who share common concerns, as well as with other sectors that are potential allies, such as local government and business officials.
- c. Inform, raise awareness and advocate by using your reputation and expertise to illuminate critical issues and amplify the voices of the most marginalized immigrants, refugees and asylees.
- d. Deploy non-grant financial assets creatively to advance foundation and grant partner goals and shift resources and power to diverse and

intersectional immigrant and refugee communities.

*Power Moves* encourages grantmakers to reflect on each dimension of power by asking questions internally, and also by soliciting honest feedback from grant partners and the communities the funder seeks to benefit. Upon gaining insight from this information, funders can map their progress in each dimension and identify clear next steps for action.

### HOW CAN FUNDERS TAKE STOCK OF POWER CONSIDERATIONS AND IDENTIFY NEXT STEPS?

The Movement Investment Project offers 5 recommendations that come directly from pro-immigrant movement leaders.

The following guiding questions use the *Power Moves* framework to help funders think through how to put those recommendations into practice. These questions, informed by conversations and advice from immigrant- and refugee-led groups, can spur important discussions among funder boards and staff interested in exploring how they can better support the ecosystem of pro-immigrant organizations.

#### Building Power:

1. What are your reactions to the Movement Investment Project's findings that only 1% of funding from the country's largest foundations were explicitly for immigrant and refugees, and only a small fraction of that amount went to base-building organizations? How might you adjust your grantmaking strategy to address these disparities? Even with a tough federal policy environment, immigrant movements can achieve a lot at the state and local levels while also continuing to lay the groundwork for eventual nationwide immigration reform.
2. If you're already funding services for immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers, do these service providers

We in philanthropy

seem doomed

to repeat history.

But it doesn't have

to be that way.

**5 ESSENTIAL PRACTICES**  
FOR DONORS TO SUPPORT THE PRO-IMMIGRANT MOVEMENT

- Give long-term, flexible and capacity building support to frontline groups
- Fund organizing and services
- Help grantees access 501(c)4 funding
- Work with other funders to fund the movement ecosystem
- Support beyond the grant

#InvestinImmigrants  #InvestinMovements  
NCRP.ORG

From the State of Foundation Funding for the Pro-Immigrant Movement infographic.

also organize with and advocate for their constituents? How could you support their efforts or add new community organizing groups to your portfolio?

3. What proportion of your current funding goes to groups that are led by people from the immigrant and refugee communities whom you seek to benefit? Could you shift more funding to immigrant-led organizations? Keep a full picture of who's leading this movement and consider funding the diversity of immigrant, refugee and asylum seeker identities, including Black, Asian American Pacific Islander and LGBTQI.
4. What assumptions and knowledge do you hold about which communities have the leadership and capacity to advance pro-immigrant causes? Remember that many im-

migrant and refugee leaders fear for their safety and may work through informal and invisible networks for their protection. How can you access and build trust with those leaders and networks?

5. In what ways do you think about "risk" in the context of funding pro-immigrant movements? Question your ideas about what a risky grant is. Consider the dire risks that immigrant and refugee communities face every day compared to what may feel risky for a funder who enjoys wealth, privilege and security. What are the risks of *not* investing in experienced leaders who know how to organize their communities?
6. In what ways do you define success when choosing which movements to fund? What are realistic short-term and medium-term signs of progress

toward long-term policy change? When you're funding pro-immigrant movements, progress (i.e. a single win, policy or outcome) will not always be grounded in numbers; it may be intangible, such as growing leaders, learning and building long-term strategy – not just looking toward the next election.

7. Do you seek to build power on key issues such as health, education, jobs or the environment? All of these issues have relevance and potential for impact among immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. If you want to build power in any issue area, invest in their leadership; building pro-immigrant power is not solely about immigration policy.
8. What could you do to support 501c4 organizations that are immigrant-led? How does funding only the c3 parts of a movement's ecosystem hinder progress?

### Sharing Power:

1. In what ways can you streamline processes to make it easier for front-line immigrant and refugee groups to apply and get grants out the door more quickly? Being adaptable and flexible in designing grant processes – with input from communities – will ensure you remove any unintended and unnecessary barriers to receiving a grant.
2. How much of your strategy and vision for immigrants and pro-immigrant movements have been shaped by and with these communities? What can you do to share or even cede power to movement leaders to create that vision and follow their lead?
3. In what ways can you build trust to allow for greater power sharing? Multi-year general support grants are a great way to signal confidence in your grant partners.

4. Are immigrants and refugees represented in your organization? How can your employment and recruitment policies better foster inclusion of immigrants and refugees with experience organizing pro-immigrant movements on your staff, board and advisory councils?
5. How inclusive are your feedback processes among these communities? When reaching out, first talk to a pro-immigrant organizer. Be aware of how fear from U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement, police and deportation will affect immigrant and refugee communities' willingness to trust those outside the community. Be patient and proactive to establish trust.
6. Have you considered the value of participatory grantmaking models? Designating a portion of grant funds to pro-immigrant organizers is an effective power-sharing and power-building strategy.

#### Wielding Power:

1. In what ways do you collaborate with and organize other funders to

support a vibrant movement ecosystem? The infographic can be a great conversation starter with your funder networks. There is likely an immigrant and refugee perspective that funders need to understand and address regardless of the geographic or issue focus.

2. Can you leverage your philanthropy and business networks to help open doors to other funders and donors for pro-immigrant movement organizations? Funding for immigrant justice is too top-heavy. For the movement to be sustainable, its champions must bring other funders to the table, particularly at the local level – including 501(c)4 funders.
3. Do you invest in companies that profit from private prisons and detention centers? Consider how your non-grant assets may harm the pro-immigrant cause and how you can proactively use your investments and your power as a shareholder to influence corporate policies.
4. In what ways can you use your credibility and bully pulpit to speak out about deportations and to de-

fend immigrant organizing? If you are a 501(c)3, you can lobby. But even if you are a private foundation, you can engage in public education, research and media relations to support immigrants and refugees. ■

*Lisa Ranghelli is NCRP's senior director of assessment and special projects. She is the primary author of Power Moves: Your essential philanthropy assessment guide for equity and justice.*

## Notes

1. Farhad Ebrahimi, "How to think about power (especially if you have some)," *Responsive Philanthropy*, February 2019, <https://www.ncrp.org/publication/responsive-philanthropy-february-2019/how-to-think-about-power-especially-if-you-have-some>.
2. Learn more about *Power Moves: Your essential philanthropy assessment guide for equity and justice* at <https://www.ncrp.org/initiatives/philamplify/power-moves-philanthropy>.

## Immigrant Justice and Criminal Justice Reform

(continued from page 9)

online toolkit for funders to join in the divest/invest conversation and use the frame to guide their grantmaking.

FFJ asks grantmakers and donors to take action: Change your grantmaking and invest philanthropic dollars into grassroots organizing to end criminalization and especially toward campaigns to move public dollars from police, prisons and immigrant detention. ■

*Lorraine Ramirez is senior program manager of Neighborhood Funders Group's Funders for Justice (FFJ) program. Kung*

*Li, FFJ consultant; Jenny Arwade, FFJ field advisor and co-executive director of Communities United; Ola Osaze, project director of Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project and Angie Junck, program director at Heising-Simons Foundation, contributed to the writing of this article.*

## Notes

1. Learn more at [https://maketheroadny.org/pix\\_reports/Justice%20Reinvestment%20Final%20Report.pdf](https://maketheroadny.org/pix_reports/Justice%20Reinvestment%20Final%20Report.pdf)
2. View the webinar recording at [https://zoom.us/recording/share/zzopucaG-](https://zoom.us/recording/share/zzopucaG-2NixbCi8uhy7v_1541Ael8ejs_7nd8_8_6wlumekTziMw/)

- 2NixbCi8uhy7v\_1541Ael8ejs\_7nd8\_8\_6wlumekTziMw/
3. Tanvi Misra, "Where cities help detain immigrants," *CityLab*, July 10, 2018, <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2018/07/where-cities-help-detain-immigrants-mapped/563531/>.
4. Watch the webinar recording at <https://zoom.us/recording/share/1JPixsbpTSIAXFCLix8cLhixlcq39jYPFbwHOORXTWwlumekTziMw?startTime=1540400499000>.

# Confronting anti-Blackness in immigrant justice philanthropy

(continued from page 1)

The siloed structure of philanthropy presents another barrier to funding for Black immigrant organizations. These groups, which naturally work at the intersection of race and immigration, are often told that they neither fit in the immigration portfolio nor under racial equity. Immigration funders need to deepen their understanding of the Black immigrant experience, and racial equity funders need to integrate immigration into their analysis and strategies.

**NCRP:** *How can philanthropy support pro-immigrant movements in ways that confront anti-Blackness? Have you seen any promising examples?*

**Darane:** Whether you fund immigration or racial equity, make an intentional effort to build relationships and trust with Black immigrant and refugee leaders. Learn about their work and issues facing their communities. Ask questions about how key immigration policies and racial equity issues affect Black immigrant communities specifically. Encourage immigration and racial equity grantees to include Black immigrant-led groups in their work. And if you've made a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, make sure to include anti-Black racism as part of your discussions.

In terms of a promising example, the Annie E. Casey Foundation comes to mind. Casey partnered with us to bring together stakeholders across issue areas affecting children: immigration, child welfare, criminal justice, etc. The convening was intentional about including Black immigrant leaders and created space to discuss anti-Blackness and exclusion, as well as implications for Black immigrant children and children of Black immigrants.

**NCRP:** *What would you say to a funder who says this conversation isn't relevant for them because they're "not an immigration funder" or "we don't get political"?*

**Darane:** Immigration is a defining issue of our time. For funders, immigration does not have to be political, and you don't have to be "an immigration funder" to add an immigrant and refugee lens to your grantmaking.

Immigration policies affect virtually every grantmaking area and every community across the country, both directly and indirectly. Funders cannot support effective service delivery – much less advance racial equity – without intentionally including immigrants and refugees in their funding strategy.

Immigration is central to every funder who cares about creating a

cohesive, equitable and inclusive society. We are all interconnected; what oppresses one oppresses all. To disregard immigration is to amplify and perpetuate the polarization and "othering" that threaten to undermine our pluralistic democracy.

Immigration is about our shared future. Now more than ever, it is imperative that philanthropy embrace immigration as a cross-cutting issue, transcend funding silos and make long-term investments in immigrant communities.

**NCRP:** *What is GCIR doing on this front? How can people plug in?*

**Darane:** We are currently working at the intersection of race and immigration on multiple fronts – from the 2020 census to narrative change, and from family separation to criminalization of immigrants and communities of color. In partnership with ABFE and other philanthropy serving organizations, we hosted a Black History Month webinar that uplifted issues facing Black immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. We also partnered with ABFE to produce a brief capturing key points from that discussion.

We invite funders to reach out to Aryah Somers Landsberger, GCIR's vice president of programs, to learn more about and connect with Black immigrant communities. Please also check out our new website, participate in our programs and support our mission by becoming a member.

Looking ahead to the next decade, GCIR is developing a long-term affirmative vision to guide philanthropic leadership and investment. That vision, with justice and equity as the cornerstones, will be the driving force of our future work. With immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers – including Black immigrant communities – under attack, the time is now for funders to step up. ■



Photo courtesy of UndocuBlack Network.

# What's the one thing you want funders to do differently to support the pro-immigrant and -refugee movement?

A number of NCRP nonprofit members working on immigrant rights and justice offer advice to foundations and donors who want to help secure a thriving future for all our communities.

"Philanthropy is rooted in the love for humanity, literally and etymologically. So we simply ask that funders commit to divesting from anti-human agendas: Those that advocate separation of families, ethnic and religious bigotry, and toxic political discourses. Philanthropists are not mere spectators; they are our leading voices in the public sphere and we want them to take it back from anti-human influences."

Dr. Abbas Barzegar, Director, Research and Advocacy Department  
Council on American-Islamic Relations



Zainab Arain, Manager, Research and Advocacy Department  
Council on American-Islamic Relations

"How funders can support the current moment of the future immigrant rights movement now is resources for long-term hiring, training and development of immigrant leaders of color in all areas of the immigrant rights movement, particularly in organizing, advocacy and legal representation.

This is a critical moment for the immigrant rights movement – more capacity is needed for now and the coming years."

Sara Benitez, Vice President of Organizing and Campaigns  
Faith in Public Life



"For those of us working in the Deep South, investment by funders in the immigrant rights movements is an opportunity for both transformational change and to deliver a high return on investment. An investment in this work in this historically underfunded geographical area brings life-changing impact at the local and ground levels where resources immediately touch communities. Services, organizing and community development are the 3 areas where HICA will continue to build a movement for racial equity and social justice, and we need more funder partnerships to achieve this goal."

Isabel Rubio, Executive Director  
Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama



"In spite of incredible pressures, the grassroots groups and leaders in immigrant and refugee communities are engines for creative anti-poverty initiatives, the development of women and girls and live at the front lines of the nation's eroding civil liberties. 'We don't fund immigrant rights' can't be a response when our problems and our solutions are so interconnected. It is time for philanthropy to take immigrants and refugees out of the constraints of outdated immigrant and refugee program silos and unleash a new wave of creativity and solutions to benefit all communities."

Cristina Jiménez, Executive Director  
United We Dream Network



"It's critical that funders do all they can to support, nurture and incentivize the intersectional ways that the pro-immigrant and refugee movements connect to other issues impacting low-income communities of color. For instance, Iraqi refugees or undocumented immigrants from Central America are also confronted by food insecurity, police accountability and the lack of access to holistic mental health services. We need funders to issue RFPs that allow nonprofits to respond in creatively integrated ways to the multilayered challenges and dynamic opportunities around these movements in this moment."

Rami Nashashibi, Executive Director  
Inner-City Muslim Action Network



"Given the divisiveness drilled into the minds and hearts of Americans every day, we need social justice organizing that intentionally builds cross-race solidarity. It would be wise for philanthropy to STOP funding in 'immigrant justice' and 'criminal justice reform' silos, and instead promote and invest into strategies that seek to confront the criminalization of people of color more broadly. Perhaps this would also encourage more social change organizations to take on the difficult but necessary work to build bridges between Latino and African American communities."

Wes Lathrop, Executive Director  
Faith in Florida



"Mass incarceration and mass detention are not separate issues. Every time a prison gets converted into a detention center and every time criminalization is used to prevent people of color from moving to a new neighborhood, we see the shared agenda behind all efforts to control the movement of Black and Brown bodies. The caging of human beings needs to be abolished, full stop. For that to happen, funders need to break down their funding siloes and start supporting criminal justice reform and immigration justice work under the same abolitionist umbrella."

Ursula Price, Executive Director  
New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice



"It's important for funders to understand that general support funding for capacity building and reacting in the currently anti-immigrant climate is crucial to our movement. In the last few years, we have seen an increase of sweeping anti-immigrant policies at the local level. In Virginia, for example, Culpepper County has signed a new 287(G) agreement, Carolina County has opened a new ICE detention facility, and there were a number of ongoing struggles. Having general support funds allows organizations to have the flexibility to react to unforeseen circumstances that would be detrimental to the immigrant community."

Monica Sarmiento, Executive Director  
Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights



## Select Publications

### ***State of Foundation Funding for the Pro-Immigrant Movement***

by Timi Gerson, Ryan Schlegel and  
Stephanie Peng

April 2019

In this first brief from its new Movement Investment Project, NCRP uses the latest available grantmaking data and feedback from frontline immigrant justice movement organizations to identify how funders can invest more and in better ways in the rich diversity that fuels the success of our country.

### ***As the South Grows: So Grows the Nation***

by Ryan Schlegel and Stephanie Peng

June 2018

The fifth and final report in the series provides a roadmap for Southern and national grantmakers with an interest in building power, wealth and resilience in the South so that Southern leadership can start taking full advantage of philanthropic resources and turn soil and seeds into a sustainable grassroots ecosystem.

### ***Power Moves: Your essential philanthropy assessment guide for equity and justice***

by Lisa Ranghelli

May 2018

The only self-assessment toolkit centered on the role of power and privilege in advancing equity, *Power Moves* helps funders examine how well their practices and strategies build, share and wield power for lasting impact.

visit: [www.ncrp.org/publications](http://www.ncrp.org/publications)

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