



Mapping the Immigrant Infrastructure



An Executive Summary



Mapping The Immigrant Infrastructure



DRAMATIC DEMOGRAPHIC changes in the U.S. population, evidenced by the 2000 census, have generated a lot of excitement about the potential for multicultural community building. One of the key questions that has emerged for researchers, social change organizations, and members of the philanthropic community is, “How can established community-based and philanthropic organizations more effectively work with emerging mutual assistance and immigrant rights organizations to address the concerns of immigrant and refugee families?”

The Mapping the Immigrant Infrastructure Project (MIP) addresses this question by examining the emerging structures of immigrant and refugee associations and organizations, and elaborating the ways in which established community-based advocacy and organizing groups have accommodated the needs of immigrant constituents. Utilizing research methods that include a broad survey, focus groups, interviews with key actors, and case studies, this study elaborates four organizational types and examines the issues they address, as well as what strategies and tactics they use. In addition, our analysis of organizational efforts identifies the ways in which philanthropic support can bolster the immigrant and refugee infrastructure as it adapts to new challenges, addresses the immediate and long-term needs of immigrants, and strives to improve outcomes for immigrant children and families.

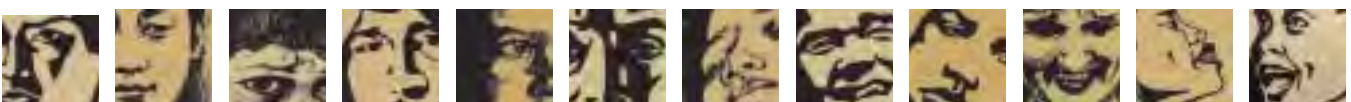




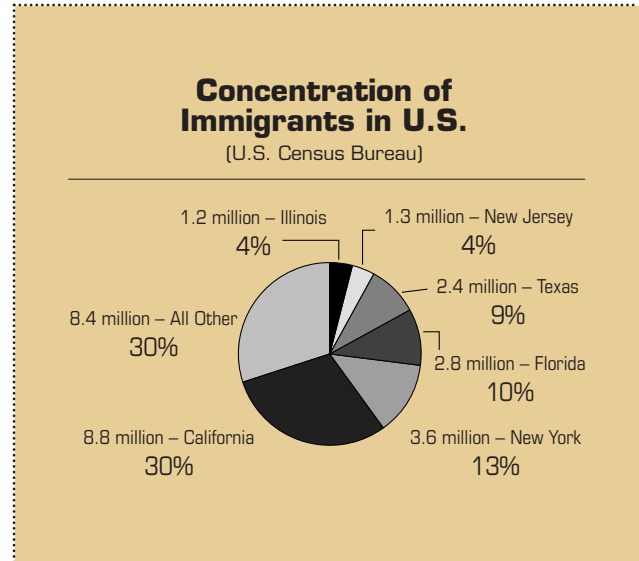
Photo by Henry Cutting

Demography of the Future

Approximately 30.7 million foreign-born people live in the United States — 10.4% of the population, according to the Census Bureau. This represents an increase of 31.5% since 1990, when foreign-born residents represented 7.9% of the population. These immigrants are of varying status under U.S. law. (See chart below.)

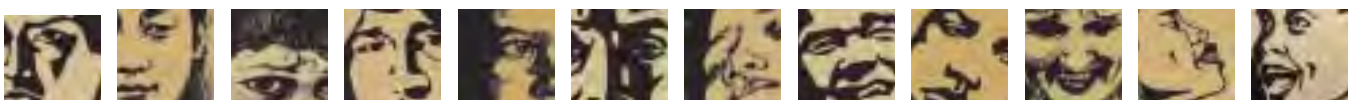
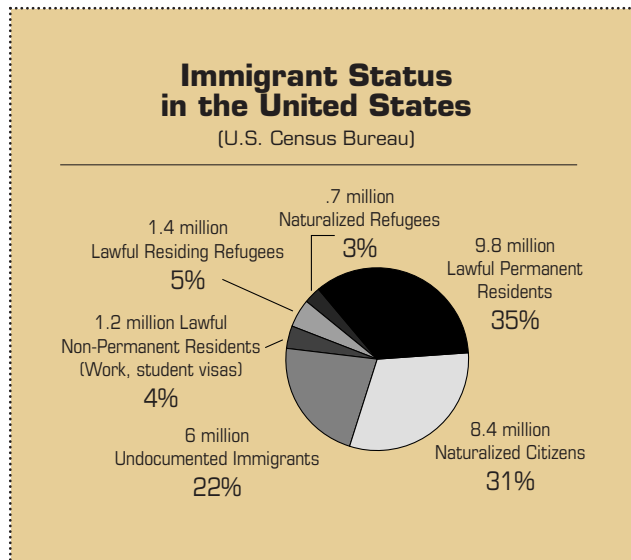
Seventy percent of immigrants to the U.S. reside in six states, with California (30%), New York (13%), Florida (10%), and Texas (9%) accounting for 18 million immigrant residents. Immigrants are not concentrated in a few traditional “gateway” cities, however, but have formed communities in nearly every major city in the country. Almost half of all immigrants live in central cities, versus 28% of native-born residents, and only 5.1% of the foreign-born population lives in rural areas. Thus, although small pockets of new immigrants may be found in suburban Midwestern

communities and rural Southern towns, it is in cities where immigrants are particularly concentrated. (See chart, below.)



In recent years, the immigrant population has become increasingly Latino and Asian: 15% of foreign-born people are from Europe, 26% are from Asia, and 51% are from Latin America, including immigrants from Mexico, who represent about one third of the total foreign-born population. As the racial composition of the immigrant population has changed, public support for immigrant families has eroded, and many of the changes in federal policies over the past two decades have limited rights and opportunities for both legal and undocumented immigrants.

In 1986, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) established sanctions for employers who hire undocumented immigrants. In 1996, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant



Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) toughened border enforcement, limited opportunities for undocumented immigrants to adjust their status, made it easier to deport immigrants, and stripped immigrants of many due process rights. Moreover, as part of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reform Act (“welfare reform”), Congress made almost all noncitizens, including legal permanent residents, ineligible for public benefits. Finally, the anti-immigrant backlash following September 11, as reflected in the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act (USA PATRIOT Act) and other measures, has set back immigrant advocacy efforts and placed the civil rights and liberties of many immigrants at risk. The impact of these policies and events has been devastating for many immigrant families and has placed an even heavier burden on immigrant organizations. The immigrant infrastructure examined in this report includes a variety of organizational types that address immigrant needs in this new political context.

DIVERSE APPROACHES TO DIVERGENT NEEDS

Immigrants enter the United States under a wide variety of circumstances. Some arrive after waiting years at refugee camps, often having made a dangerous passage from their homeland to another country on their way to the U.S. Others come on student or professional visas, or through legal family reunification. Depending on their situation, some new immigrants and refugees may need only an orientation to tap into existing social networks. For others, those social networks may not exist in their geographic locale, and they may need a variety of basic services. Financial resources, immigration status, English language facility, familial support, connections to the economic infrastructure, and the ability to interpret and negotiate American culture are a few of the factors that newcomers must navigate in order to become successful participants in U.S. society. With the exception of English-speaking Canadian and European immigrants, when most newcomers arrive to the U.S. they have a set of needs related to survival. As families become more established in their new environment, their needs

change, and different types of organizations may be better able to meet them.

There are literally thousands of organizations in immigrant communities, most of which are voluntary associations that never incorporate. Mapping the Immigrant Infrastructure focused on organizational formations in immigrant communities that are incorporated and/or have attained a significant level of infrastructure and presence in their communities. These organizations respond to three distinct sets of stimuli: (1) the needs of their immigrant constituents; (2) changes in the political environment, particularly attitudes and policies towards immigrants and refugees; and (3) the availability of resources. Given these factors, all of the organizations examined in this report are growing and changing, and most provide a combination of services, cultural space, education (both internally to the constituency and externally to the community at large), and either individual or group advocacy. This said, organizations play different roles in helping immigrants survive and thrive in U.S. society.

This report identifies four general prototypes of organizations that work in immigrant and refugee communities:

- Mutual assistance associations and ethnically based service providers;
- Traditional community organizing groups that have responded to a changing demographic mix;
- Immigrant rights organizations that focus on institutional barriers to the success of immigrant families;
- Crossover organizations that adapt an approach to advocacy, worker rights, economic development, or services utilized in nonimmigrant communities to the distinct circumstances of a particular immigrant constituency.

MUTUAL ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATIONS & ETHNICALLY BASED SERVICE PROVIDERS

The first task for most new immigrants to the U.S. is securing their survival and the survival of their families. Obtaining employment and housing, addressing issues of child care and schooling, and learning the norms of the new society are among their immediate concerns. The organizations that most often fill these basic needs are mutual assis-

Common Characteristics of Mutual Assistance Associations and Ethnically Based Service Providers

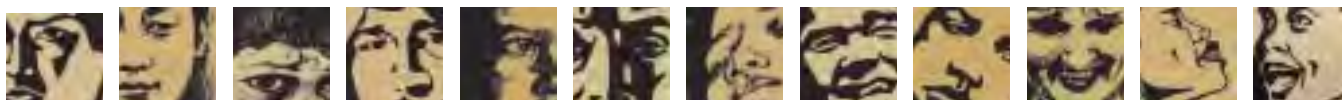
Key Strengths	Challenges	Top Five Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally focused • Meet survival needs of new immigrants • Staffed by immigrant constituents • Grounded in social, familial, cultural values of home country • Multilingual/multicultural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little capacity to intervene in policies that affect their constituents • Gov't funding limits organizational options • Little contact with established advocacy community • Competition for scarce resources possibly weakening immigrant infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health services • Housing services • Immigration processing • Economic development • Translation and ESL services

tance associations (MAAs) or ethnically based service providers. MAAs are usually mono-ethnic organizations grounded in the customs, traditions, and culture of a specific immigrant group, sometimes as narrowly focused as a region or city from the home country. These organizations may be rooted in a religious institution, families or clans, connections from the home country, common politics, or efforts to promote cultural preservation. They are characterized by small, bilingual staffs who often act as interpreters, advocates, and cultural liaisons for new immigrants and refugees.

As MAAs get larger, they may receive government funds to provide services for new immigrants. The Refugee Act of 1980 opened up federal funds for refugee resettlement and established Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGs) that are certified by the government as having the capacity and experience to assist in refugee resettlement. VOLAGs usually receive the bulk of their income from government sources. This funding spurred many informal Southeast Asian associations to incorporate as non-profits—increasing the number by 30% between

1985 and 1991. This phenomenon was mirrored in other communities as African, Asian, and other new immigrant groups utilized government funding to formalize their organizations.

Ethnically based service organizations are similar to MAAs in their provision of service and their multilingual capacity, with a few important differences. First, like Asian Health Services (AHS), based in Oakland, California, they provide services to peoples of multiple national origins who have language and cultural connections. Organizations like AHS that broaden their service and constituent base tend to have larger staffs and access to government funding. For example, the Indochinese Center of Oregon changed its name to the International Refugee Center of Oregon and, through a contract with the state of Oregon, has expanded job placement services to a constituency of new immigrants that includes Southeast Asians and refugees from Africa and the former Soviet Union. Similarly, the Indochinese Community Center in Washington, D.C., has expanded its constituent base and changed its name to Newcomers Community



Service Center. The Alliance for African Assistance in San Diego has also expanded its services and increasingly serves new refugees from the former Soviet Union. Thus, as MAAs struggle to survive, many transform by changing what they're called, whom they serve, and the kinds of services they offer.

Although Tse Haye Teferra of the Ethiopian Community Development Center cautions that MAAs may have become so dependent on government resources and funding that "the rest of the community looks upon them as professional organizations that don't need community support anymore," the fact remains that there is wide variation in the size, mission, and scope of MAAs and ethnically based service providers.

Thus, while these organizations may be viewed on a continuum, with MAAs filling the initial "bridge" role and the ethnically based service providers taking on more of a "settlement" role, the categories are not necessarily discrete. There are, however, some general distinctions between

the two organizational types: MAAs tend to be smaller, mono-ethnic organizations that utilize a mix of paid and volunteer staff, while ethnically based service providers tend to be larger than MAAs, offer specialized services, and have a multinational constituency.

"With the dramatic demographic shifts in urban centers, many community organizing groups have had to find ways to accommodate both the language and cultural differences of immigrant populations."

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING GROUPS

Community organizing groups are usually place-based associations of community residents that actively build the capacity of local leadership to address local issues. These groups are known for their willingness to "speak truth to power" by mobilizing large numbers of community residents to make demands on private and governmental institutions. Immigrants and refugees have always been included in the membership of community organizing groups. However, with the dramatic demographic shifts in urban centers, many community organizing groups have had to find ways to accommodate both the language and cultural differences of immigrant populations, as well as the issues that impact immigrants specifically.

Common Characteristics of Community Organizing Groups

Key Strengths	Challenges	Top Five Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally focused • Most able to integrate concerns of established residents and new immigrants • Internal process reflects multilingual/multicultural constituents • Place-based leadership structure enables new immigrant participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little capacity to affect national policy • Lack of resources to support integrated constituents' concerns (e.g., translation) • Traditional CO tactics may sometimes need to be modified to accommodate the cultural experience and political vulnerability of immigrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education reform • Economic development • Legalization of undocumented • Housing • Welfare reform

Organizations like People United for a Better Oakland (PUEBLO) have had to run their meetings in three languages in order to give a voice to all their members, who speak Spanish, English, and Vietnamese. As Dawn Phillips, the organization’s director, observes, “It’s not just the voting on a particular course of action that’s important, we have to be able to have a real discussion about how different cultural groups see the issue. It’s important, and it takes more time.”

An expanded constituency that includes the interests and needs of new immigrants has the potential to change or reframe the issues that an organization group may address. The Chicago-based Northwest Neighborhood Foundation recently launched a campaign to make undocumented immigrants eligible for driver’s licenses, because, as the organization’s lead organizer notes, “they’re a big part of our constituency.” The Idaho Citizens’ Action Network, a group until recently largely composed of U.S.-born whites, responded to the needs of Latino immigrants by fighting for and winning a farmworker minimum wage bill. In addition, community organizing groups in New York are working to protect undocumented immigrants from political reprisals following the September 11 tragedy, as well as advocating that part of the city’s aid package be targeted at immigrants and refugees.

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

Like MAAs and ethnically based service providers, immigrant rights organizations try to meet the basic needs of immigrants. However, instead of directly providing services, these organizations address the institutional barriers immigrants face by advocating for policies and programs beneficial to immigrant families.

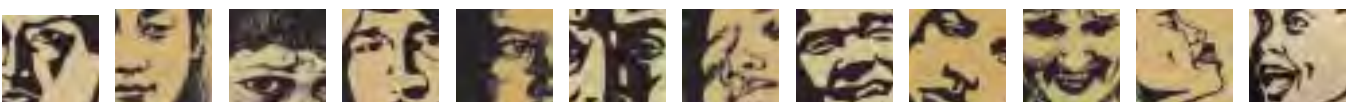
Angelica Salas, director of the Campaign for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), asserts that while initially services are vital, advocating and organizing are critical for addressing the long-term issues. “Providing services

to the poorest of the poor requires enormous resources. This often means that advocacy becomes secondary to the day-to-day challenges of survival. But when you start seeing large numbers of people with the same problem, you need to begin looking beyond direct service as the solution.”

The 15-year-old Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights cites as its mission the promotion of the “rights of immigrants and refugees to full and equal participation in the civic, cultural, social, and political life of our diverse society.” The coalition’s efforts have included initiatives to launch a new legalization program for undocumented immigrants, successful national advocacy for funding for services to address the backlog in



Photo by Harry Cutting



citizenship applications, and a successful effort in the state of Illinois to support interpretation services for immigrants applying for public benefits. Similarly, Oregon-based CAUSA, was successful in defeating an English-only bill and blocking an attempt to end bilingual education in Oregon.

These groups combine issue and policy advocacy with grassroots organizing. The majority of the staff is comprised of legal advocates and organizers, and the organizational arena of activity includes policy analysis and advocacy at the state and national levels. Because these organizations must often address policies formulated at the national level, they tend to be comfortable working on a variety of political levels with a wide variety of partners that include the labor, religious, and political sectors, as well as other immigrant organizations.

“We have to be able to have a real discussion about how different cultural groups see the issue. It’s important, and it takes more time.”

CROSSOVER ORGANIZATIONS

Most organizations examined in this study have multiple means of addressing the needs of their constituents. Some organizations, however, adapt a traditional approach to advocacy, services, worker rights, or economic development in nonimmigrant

communities to the situation of a particular immigrant constituency. These groups tend to do double duty, in that they combine the expertise necessary to be successful in a particular field with a deep knowl-

edge of their immigrant constituents. One of the key characteristics of such crossover organizations is that they tend to provide services as a way to build and maintain their constituency. The Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) in Boston, Massachusetts, for instance, has drop-in services four days a week. CPA’s director, Lydia Lowe, observes, “We

do referrals, we help people with forms, we do a lot to help people know what their rights are. Most of the organizing campaigns we’ve taken up around police brutality, worker rights, and affordable housing started because people came in for drop-in services. We identified issues, and we found people who want to do something.”

A number of organizations, including the Restaurant Workers Association of Koreatown (RWAK), launched by the Korean Immigrant Workers Advocate in Los Angeles, and Viet-AID in Boston—exemplify this new breed of organization.

Common Characteristics of Immigrant Rights Organizations

Key Strengths	Challenges	Top Five Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address state/national policy • Use policy advocacy and grassroots mobilization • Often work in coalition with key actors from religious, labor, community groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little funding; few resources • Tend not to work with racial justice groups of established residents • Competition among national policy efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration policy reform • Treatment of undocumented immigrants • Racial/language discrimination • Education reform • Employment conditions

Common Characteristics of Crossover Organizations

Key Strengths	Challenges	Top Five Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally focused • Fill specific needs not addressed by traditional organizations • Provide services in order to maintain constituency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique and largely unrecognized • Attempting to do “mainstream” work with new populations • Often challenged by both mainstream opposition and “allies” in the same field 	<p>(Too few organizations of this type were surveyed to draw conclusions regarding top issues.)</p>

First, they are constituency-specific. KIWA consciously decided to develop a campaign that would include Korean and Latino workers, and Viet-AID’s work is grounded in the Vietnamese community. Second, each of the groups had to modify the approach utilized in the field based on the experiences of their constituents. Viet-AID has added a Vietnamese twist to the “use what you have to get what you need” slogan, accessing almost \$300,000 in business loans, identifying business opportunities, and assisting the setup of 43 new businesses. RWAK brought together Korean and Latino workers in a worker rights campaign that utilizes a combination of direct action, negotiation, and community mobilization to forge one of L.A.’s most successful labor efforts.

Through specific examples of each of these general organizational prototypes, the Mapping the Immigrant Infrastructure has explored the organizational processes, resources, political context, and significant challenges faced by immigrant and refugee families.

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Photo by Henry Cutting

New Dangers for Immigrants

Since September 11, progress on issues of critical importance to the lives of immigrant children and families has slowed, stopped, or reversed. According to our survey, the top issue for immigrant groups is immigration status, and the greatest barrier to success for immigrant families is access to jobs at livable wages. By the fall of 2001, immigrant rights groups had made tremendous strides toward gaining economic and legal rights for immigrants at state and national levels. Such progress included campaigns to make undocumented immigrants eligible for driver's licenses so they can open bank accounts, be insured, and pursue better employment, and to grant amnesty to undocumented immigrants. Much of this work has been undone.

Cathy Tactaquin, director of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, discussed the setback in amnesty efforts. "In the last four years, due to improvements in the economy, the growth and maturation of immigrant communities, greater levels of organization and feelings of empowerment, and the resurgence of organizing in the labor movement that emphasized immigrant workers, legalization has been on the table as a credible political issue. It is now off the table entirely." While regaining ground on the issue of amnesty will be an uphill battle, immigrant organizations now must struggle for the basic civil rights and liberties granted to U.S. citizens. "It's distressing to watch the anti-immigrant backlash," says Taryn Higashi of the Ford Foundation. "We've gone from a place of promise and strength to great vulnerability."

While immigrant-friendly policies have been set back by the aftermath of September 11, the

tragedy has also brought new dangers. Both the rise in anti-immigrant violence and policy changes in reaction to the terrorist attacks have dramatically affected the lives of immigrant families. One of the policy changes with the most serious implications for immigrant residents and U.S.-born citizens alike is the USA PATRIOT Act. As a result of this legislation, the federal government has:

"We've gone from a place of promise and strength to great vulnerability."

- Indefinitely detained without charge over 1,200 people (mostly men of Arab descent), refused to release their names, and denied them access to their families or to attorneys;
- Approved the Justice Department's eavesdropping on conversations between lawyers and detainees when "national security" is at stake;
- Reactivated domestic surveillance procedures for the FBI and CIA;
- Promised to extend the stay of noncitizens who "reliably report" on other immigrants.

These measures have made immigrant organizing efforts, especially around federal policy issues, seem risky and dangerous.

Immigrant rights organizations note that the USA PATRIOT Act is only one part of a new set of barriers facing immigrants. Tactaquin observes "These are restrictions and policies that will be with us for decades to come," warns Tactaquin, "and they are going to be very difficult to change." Tse Haya Teferra, director of the Ethiopian Community Development Council, agrees. His organization assists with the resettlement of African refugees, and after September 11, President Bush reduced the ceiling for refugee admissions by more than 10%. He states, "no matter what happens, some sector is going to accuse foreigners and newcomers of being responsible. We're going to start seeing more legis-





Photo by Tram Nguyen

lation that has a negative impact on immigrant communities.”

The targeting of immigrants, particularly those of Middle Eastern descent, through federal policy is concomitant with a sharp increase in hate crimes against residents perceived to be Middle Eastern and/or Muslim. The Washington, D.C.-based Council on American Islamic Relations reported that by October 22, there had been a total of 959 documented hate crimes against Muslims. The fear in immigrant communities has had a deep impact on the capacity of immigrant organizations, as many immigrants feel compelled to maintain a low profile. “People are afraid to be involved in their community, especially at the advocacy level,” says Xuan Nguyen-Sutter, of the Refugee Women’s Network. “It’s like immigrants and refugees don’t want to be visible anymore. This makes our work doubly difficult.”

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ADVOCATING BENEFICIAL POLICIES

FOR IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

Despite the challenges of advocating for immigrants in the post-September 11 context, many immigrant rights organizations are working proactively to influence state and national policies including:

- The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund’s (MALDEF) efforts in Texas to defend the rights of immigrant families to receive health care in county hospitals. MALDEF’s struggle started in the courts, but represents the broadening of an immigrant rights campaign to the legislative level.
- The National Immigration Law Center initiative to reinstate public benefits for immigrant families that were revoked in the 1996 “welfare reform” bill. By developing and maintaining a strong constituent base and a broad coalition of organizations, NILC has been able to keep some momentum, despite post-September 11 setbacks.
- The Hate Free Zone Campaign, a coalition in Washington State that emerged after September 11. The campaign was able to pass groundbreaking legislation in defense of immigrants during the height of anti-immigrant violence across the nation.
 - The efforts of Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM) to secure human and civil rights for 1,000-plus post-September 11 detainees held in New York and New Jersey.

These examples of the policy advocacy role of immigrant rights organizations demonstrate the importance of this critical component of the immigrant infrastructure. Immigrant rights organizations tend to be strong in policy analysis. This strength, particularly when connected to grassroots constituents, gives the infrastructure the capacity to understand and react to state and federal policies that affect their communities.



Key Findings

The combination of focus groups, surveys, interviews with key informants and case studies has yielded a rich mosaic of immigrant-initiated efforts to ease the barriers to immigrants' transition from their home countries to U.S. society. From the grassroots volunteer beginnings of the Alliance for African Assistance, to the intentional Korean/Latino worker organizing of the Restaurant Workers Association of Koreatown, the Hate Free Zone Campaign response to September 11 in Seattle, and the state and national policy work of MALDEF in Texas and the National Immigration Law Center, this report describes efforts to:

- Break down language and cultural barriers to services;
- Address issues of workplace health, safety, and wages;
- Serve immigrants irrespective of legal status;
- Advance policies beneficial to immigrants and refugees
- Stem attacks on immigrants;
- Develop and adapt new approaches to business creation and jobs for immigrant populations;
- Coalesce immigrant and established residents around issues of mutual concern;
- Fight for human and civil rights.



A compilation and analysis of the data reveals the following findings and observations:

1 Public policies and institutions have a profound impact on immigrant children and families.

In a changing political environment it will be of increasing importance for immigrants and refugees to have a voice in U.S. policy. Many public systems that are vital to the success of children and families neglect the needs of immigrants. The issue that the majority (72%) of groups and key informants pointed to as the key public policy barrier to the successful transition of immigrant families into U.S. society is immigration status itself. Other barriers cited by the groups surveyed were issues that also require institutional policy change: 63% of respondents pointed to the lack of jobs at livable wages as a major barrier to family stability, 61% cited the inability to communicate in English as a major barrier, 55% cited housing access, and other issues were employment conditions and racial discrimination. These factors are interrelated.

- Limited English ability is an overwhelming barrier to the success of immigrant families and often determines the employment opportunities and services to which immigrants have access. Many immigrant rights groups have taken on language access and language discrimination as a civil rights issue.
- Closely related to the issue of language discrimination is racial discrimination—also cited as a major barrier to immigrant families. The sharp increase in racial profiling and post-September 11 anti-immigrant policies underscore the need for intersections between immigration and racial justice work.
- The 1996 “welfare reform” law has had significant impact on immigrant families. It also engendered splits within the advocacy community between those who were willing to fight only for “legal” immigrants and those who also focused on undocumented residents.

It is clear that in order to address state and national policies affecting immigrant families it is necessary to develop an effective policy-advocacy

apparatus. While mutual assistance associations and ethnically based service providers address individual cases through the provision of services, it is primarily crossover organizations and community organizing groups that have successfully addressed these issues locally and immigrant rights organizations that have successfully intervened on behalf of immigrants in the state and national policy arena.

2 Organizations that are multicultural and multilingual are more effective in serving immigrant communities, but they require greater funding and resources.

The strength of organizations that are culturally and linguistically equipped to serve immigrants lies in the personal experience of the staff, the organizations’ history of serving their communities, and the staff’s ability to understand, communicate with, and empathize with their clients. This capacity is a tremendous advantage for any organization serving a client base as multifaceted as an immigrant or refugee community.

3 Multiracial coalitions are an increasingly important means of addressing concerns of immigrant populations.

The tragedy of September 11 and many of the policies passed and proposed in its aftermath have been seriously detrimental to the work for immigrant rights. The movement advocating for legalization of undocumented residents was literally stopped in its tracks. Immigrant leaders expressed concern at the rise in anti-immigrant sentiment and public support for increased racial profiling of immigrants, especially those of Middle Eastern descent. In addition to connecting with each other, immigrant and refugee organizations need to connect with established networks of civil rights and racial justice organizations. In the interviews conducted after September 11, respondents noted that

racial tensions between established residents of all races and immigrants were particularly high. Although this report illustrates, through the work of Padres Unidos and the Restaurant Workers Association of Koreatown, that it is both possible and desirable to build effective multiracial alliances, organizations that consciously build issue-based solidarity between immigrants and established residents are still the exception rather than the rule.

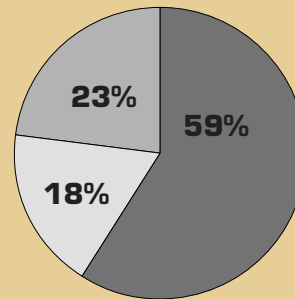
4 Funding sources have a tremendous impact on the scope and efficacy of immigrant organizations.

Although there is wide variation in the resources available to different types of organizations in the immigrant and refugee infrastructure, the sector as a whole is largely underfunded. All told, fewer than a third of the organizations surveyed had budgets over \$1 million, with the largest share (45%) going to MAAs and ethnically based service providers. (See charts, right.) A quarter of community organizing groups had budgets over \$1 million, and only 20% of immigrant rights organizations had budgets over \$1 million. Immigrant rights organizations also had the largest percentage of groups (48%) with budgets under \$250,000.

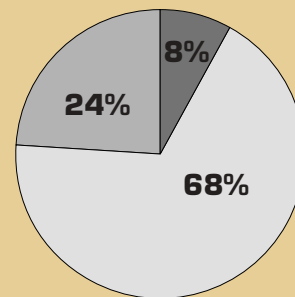
In addition to scant funding, there is wide variation in funding sources. Immigrant rights organizations, the groups in the immigrant and refugee infrastructure that currently conduct most of the issue advocacy and policy work, receive only one third of their money from foundation sources and one quarter from government entities.

These figures have implications for programmatic work. Though smaller in terms of budget and staff size, because immigrant rights organizations receive less government support, they are freer to engage in advocacy and organizing activities. And while government funding has given many MAAs and ethnically based service providers a solid financial base, it may have limited their ability to take on more controversial issues.

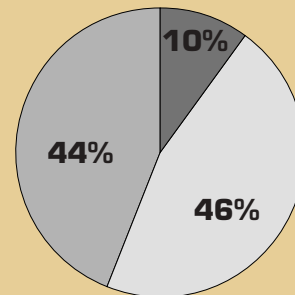
Support for Immigrant Organizations



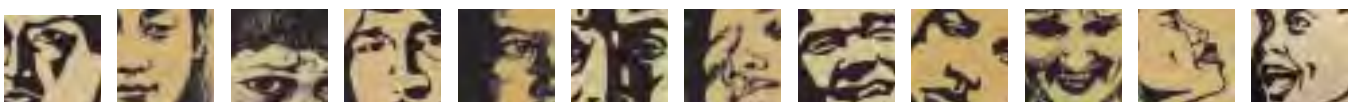
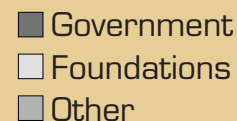
MAAs and Ethnically Based Service Providers



Community Organizing Groups



Immigrant Rights Organizations



5 The ability of immigrant organizations to address the structural barriers facing immigrants is increasingly related to addressing the development and application of national policy.

As noted, since the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act, the U.S. attorney general has indefinitely detained without charge more than 2,000 people, mostly men of Arab descent, refused to release their names, and denied them access to their families or to attorneys. The USA PATRIOT Act has also reactivated domestic surveillance procedures for the FBI and CIA, many of which were outlawed following the domestic spying scandals associated with the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement.

While the legalization of undocumented immigrants continues to be a defining issue in immigrant and refugee communities, all 19 of those interviewed post-September 11 underscored the importance of building the capacity of immigrant organizations to affect national policies. If this advocacy is to include the voices of immigrants and refugees themselves, it is important to build the capacity of the immigrant rights component of the immigrant and refugee infrastructure.

6 Competition for scarce resources may have a negative impact on the immigrant and refugee infrastructure.

The constant struggle for resources among organizations that are part of the immigrant and refugee infrastructure engages groups in time-consuming competitive battles that divert organizational resources and energy. While there is only one comparative case study of this phenomenon in this report—the examination of the Horn of Africa and the Alliance for African Assistance in San Diego—the theme of competition for funding, especially government funding, was mentioned by over half of the key actors interviewed.

7 Intergenerational differences are a key dynamic in many immigrant communities.

The political infrastructure of the home country often plays a strong role in determining leadership styles, organizational forms, and politics of immigrant organizations in the U.S. A key component of this rich political texture is the emergence of new, young political leadership. This dynamic, explored in the case studies of Viet-AID in Boston and the Restaurant Workers Association of Koreatown in Los Angeles, provides important insight for understanding conflict in the context of immigrant and refugee communities.

8 Innovative approaches and experiences of immigrant organizations are an untapped asset.

From the trans-assimilation of customs and organizational forms to the redefinition of traditional U.S. organizational forms to meet immigrant needs, the breadth and scope of creativity and innovation in immigrant and refugee communities is very impressive. The new ways of thinking and working, the solidarity, and the sheer resilience demonstrated in immigrant organizations make important contributions that should be captured for the benefit of all U.S. residents.



Recommendations

The post-September 11 political environment has made many immigrant families in the United States fearful, while new “anti-terrorist” policies have limited their rights and additional policy proposals threaten cuts in both the number of new immigrants allowed into the U.S. and immigrant eligibility for services necessary to successful transition once they have entered. Given the irrefutable fact that immigration status will continue to determine the overall health of immigrant families, it is of paramount importance to strengthen capacity of immigrant organizations to have a voice in the policies that are affecting their constituencies. The following recommendations have been developed to achieve this objective.

1 **Expand the capacity of the immigrant and refugee infrastructure to advocate effectively on state and national policy issues.**

- Build the capacity of immigrant rights organizations to advocate on state and national levels. Core financial support will enable immigrant rights organizations to develop more effective advocacy on state and national issues.
- Provide support for MAAs and ethnically based service providers to work more closely with national advocates.
- Support venues through which community organizing groups can partner with immigrant rights organizations on issues that affect the COs’ immigrant constituents.

2 **Support multiracial coalition efforts that include immigrants at the local, state, and national levels.**

- Promote successful efforts that build alliances between immigrant and nonimmigrant constituents.
- Provide support to effective nonimmigrant organizations to work collaboratively with immigrant rights organizations and MAAs on issues identified as important to both constituencies.
- Fund the development of regional alliances that include significant immigrant and refugee participation. This is particularly important in regions of increasing immigrant presence, such as Nevada, Arizona, Texas, Colorado, Illinois, North Carolina, and portions of Southern California.



- Provide financial support for a national gathering to plan an ongoing alliance of civil rights advocates, civil liberties organizations, and immigrant and refugee organizations. Such a gathering would focus on the development of appropriate strategies and tactics to address the legal rights, civil liberties, and racial profiling of immigrants and refugees.

3 Provide financial resources to initiate cross-training opportunities for immigrant and refugee organizations to discuss best practices, exchange experiences, evaluate approaches, and build relationships.

- Institutionalize regular cross-ethnic gatherings of immigrant and refugee organizations to learn from each other and work toward common goals.
- Create opportunities for developing the capacity of immigrant organizations and established community and advocacy groups to work together on common issues. Helping groups work together to bridge cultural and linguistic differences, and to share strategies and resources, will be of great benefit to low-income communities in general.

4 In determining how to most effectively support immigrant and refugee families, philanthropic organizations should consider the scope of work to be done in immigrant communities, as well as the myriad forms that immigrant advocacy takes.

- The breadth of their needs, and the issues they face, from survival to settlement, to racial profiling, make it unlikely that immigrant families will survive and thrive without an infrastructure capable of addressing the full scope of their needs.
- Established ways to evaluate grant requests may not apply to all groups in this sector. Foundations value well-written proposals, good financial numbers, recognizable organizational processes, and long-range plans that fit into a

trajectory that is comparable to other organizations. These values and assumptions may not be especially useful in the field of immigrant and refugee work, where many organizations that have earned the trust of new immigrants may not fit the standard parameters of a typical foundation grantee. For this reason, funding immigrant and refugee organizations may require a more grounded inquiry into each organization, as well as funding multiple groups that service the same constituency in different ways.

5 In order to develop a public voice for immigrants and refugees, philanthropic organizations should provide financial support to efforts that publicly and consistently communicate how immigrants feel about and respond to the policies and programs that affect their lives.

- Develop a communications initiative that helps the media carry out more objective inquiries into immigrant and refugee issues.
- Establish a Funders' Collaborative that pools funds for state and national immigrant rights organizations to hire consultants to work on advocating in the media for key issues.
- Initiate a national, multilingual immigrant polling project to collect data from immigrant families and reflect on media portrayal of immigrants and refugees.



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