



Philanthropic Strategies to Support Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Suzette Brooks Masters



GRANTMAKERS
CONCERNED
WITH IMMIGRANTS
AND REFUGEES

Acknowledgements

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees would like to extend our gratitude to the following individuals for generously participating in interviews on their organizations' grantmaking:

Negar Tayyar, Philanthropic Advisor,
Global Whole Being Fund

Larry Cook, Vice President, and Karen Lee Spaulding, Vice President of Philanthropic Support, John R. Oishei Foundation

Rebecca Carson, formerly Immigration Team Manager, and Wendy Patten, Senior Policy Advisor, Open Society Foundations

Evette Cardona, Vice President of Programs,
Polk Bros. Foundation

Veyom Bahl, Managing Director, Survival,
Robin Hood Foundation

Sarah Martinez-Helfman, President,
Samuel S. Fels Fund

Allie Larson, Project Manager, Community Impact, Greater Twin Cities United Way; & Project Manager, Solidarity MN

Betty Balli Torres, Executive Director, and Jonathan Vickery, Associate Director and Director of Grants, Texas Access to Justice Foundation

Taryn Higashi, Executive Director, and Ted Wang, Director, U.S. Program, Unbound Philanthropy

Vy Nguyen, Director of Special Projects and Communications, Weingart Foundation

We also gratefully acknowledge the J.M. Kaplan Fund for supporting Suzette Brooks Masters' strategy fellowship with GCIR, during which she conducted interviews with the individuals listed above and wrote this report. Aryah Somers Landsberger and Michael Kavate provided editing support and Axie Breen Graphic Design provided design services.

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A participant at a November 2016 immigration rally in New York City. Photo credit: Karen Judlowe Smul.

Glossary

Asylum seekers are persons who enter the United States, with or without lawful status, and apply for protection based on reasonable fear of past or future persecution on account of race, religion, nationality/ethnicity, political opinion, or social group (e.g. gender or sexual orientation).

Immigrants are persons born abroad who have come to settle in the United States, regardless of their legal immigration status or whether they have become U.S. citizens.

Refugees are persons who, after an extensive vetting process, are admitted to the United States due to persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality/ethnicity, political opinion, or social group (e.g. gender or sexual orientation).

Unaccompanied children, as used in this report, are asylum seekers or migrants below the age of 18 who come to the United States on their own, without a parent or guardian.

Unauthorized immigrants, also called **undocumented immigrants**, are persons residing in the United States without legal immigration status, including individuals who entered without lawful status or who entered with a legal visa that is no longer valid.

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Introduction

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past year-and-a-half, the United States has made dramatic changes to how it treats the world's most vulnerable and desperate when they seek refuge and protection within its borders. The number of refugees being admitted to the United States has been cut to historic lows, children are being separated from parents at the border as de facto policy, the country's national network of refugee resettlement agencies is facing an existential crisis, and administrative barriers have been raised against those seeking protection from persecution, including seeking to limit asylum protections for those fleeing gender-based violence. With the number of displaced people around the world at an all-time high, the United States is rolling back longstanding protections for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers at an alarming rate.

Against this urgent backdrop, this report profiles 10 donors' diverse approaches to and strategies for supporting refugees and asylum seekers. Amid serious policy challenges and severe resource constraints, many funders are encouraging their grantees to innovate and adapt existing practices to move beyond "business as usual," supporting systems change work and giving greater voice to refugees and asylum seekers, and mobilizing within the philanthropic community itself to engage in collective grantmaking to share expertise, leverage resources, and maximize impact.

The unprecedented scope, gravity, and urgency of current challenges facing refugees, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied children, as well as the systems and infrastructure that support and protect them, constitute a philanthropic imperative for bold and innovative action, expanded investment, and greater collaboration and coordination. Traditionally, funders have relied on and complemented government-funded infrastructure in providing support to refugees, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied minors, yet such critical resources and leverage points are dwindling at the very moment when needs are acute and growing. This is a time for grantmakers with experience in this space to consider new approaches, particularly strategies for systems-level change. Philanthropy should coordinate both on how to preserve the most vital elements of the asylum protection and refugee resettlement infrastructure, as well as to ensure that individual donor and foundation efforts are as aligned, cohesive, and strategic as possible.



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Syrian refugee families living in tents in Suruc district, Turkey. Photo credit: Orlok / Shutterstock.com

BACKGROUND

Recent Humanitarian Crises Prompt a Philanthropic Response—and a Challenging New Policy Context Increases the Need for Engagement.

The United States has long been a global leader in refugee resettlement. Over the last few decades, more refugees have come to live in America than all other resettlement destinations combined. Moreover, the United States has been a leading financier of humanitarian aid for global refugee programs abroad and has advanced strong protections for asylum seekers within U.S. borders. Sustained federal investment in programs and services for refugees and asylum seekers in the past allowed philanthropy to focus on filling gaps and complementing the services delivered through government-supported infrastructure. Recently, however, grantmakers have been compelled to take a more active and assertive role in this sphere given the dramatic weakening of support for refugees and asylum seekers under the current administration, as well as the urgency spurred by major humanitarian crises in two regions: Central America and the Middle East.

While the Central American asylum crisis is not new—it has its roots in civil wars and regional conflict dating back to the 1970s—the spike in the number of child arrivals on our southern border in the summer of 2014 generated media coverage that caught the nation’s attention. Although there were federally-funded systems and processes in place to address the needs of this vulnerable population, their arrival in large numbers did create strains and lay bare critical gaps. Philanthropy stepped up to provide direct legal and supportive services to the newly arrived asylum seekers and unaccompanied children, as well as to the organizations serving them and U.S. communities where they were resettling.

The Syrian civil war began in 2011 and has displaced millions of Syrians into the neighboring countries of Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. However, it was not until shocking photographs and video footage of fleeing, suffering, and dying Syrians emerged in 2015 that the world’s attention turned to the crisis. In response, then President Obama increased America’s overall commitment to refugee resettlement generally and to taking in Syrian refugees in particular. Philanthropy supported the provision of humanitarian aid along the migration route and funded organizations assisting refugees and asylum seekers arriving in neighboring countries, Europe, and the United States.

These crises, which both gained widespread attention in 2014 and 2015 and continue today, have uncovered growing divisions in America about whether to welcome refugees and asylum seekers, traditionally sympathetic populations that have long enjoyed broad support from past presidents, Congress, and the American public. Fear-based narratives rooted in Islamophobia and national security (directed primarily at refugees) and criminalization (of youth and families fleeing Central America) have sown these divisions and undermined America’s commitment to serving as a humanitarian refuge for some of the most vulnerable individuals around the globe.

These developments have birthed a new crisis that demands philanthropy’s attention: The systematic dismantling of the U.S. system of humanitarian protections for refugees, asylum seekers and other immigrants. Over the past year and a half, the federal government has enacted a series of policies and practices that fundamentally changed how the United States treats refugees and asylum seekers. Refugee admissions for fiscal year 2018 were cut to a maximum 45,000 a year, the lowest limit since the program began in 1980, and actual admissions are on track to be less than half that figure.¹ These reductions have also weakened the national refugee resettlement infrastructure that has welcomed refugees as workers, students, and community members to ensure both their safe arrival and integration. Many local organizations have been forced to close as a result of resettling fewer than 100 refugees per year and the federal government has signaled its intention to further reduce the number of agencies receiving contracts going forward. The deliberate eradication of this vital infrastructure will result in the loss of a lifeline of key skills, expertise, and integration support for refugee communities, losses that will be difficult to reverse when and if refugee admissions increase again to prior levels.

Similarly, the administration has sought to leverage policies, practices, and even public opinion against asylum seekers. Changes to administrative procedures have made it considerably more

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difficult for asylum seekers to present their claims in the United States and to live normal lives while awaiting the resolution of their cases due to, for example, hearing delays and denials of release from detention centers. New guidance also seeks to eliminate gender-based and other forms of violence as a basis for asylum in the United States. This will have an adverse impact on women and girls in particular. Other changes have resulted in more potential asylum seekers being turned away at the border, more children being separated from their parents, more applications being unfairly denied, and more unaccompanied children and asylum applicants being detained and for longer, among other measures. Finally, in numerous public comments advancing a disturbing narrative of criminality, administration officials have depicted asylum seekers, particularly the families and unaccompanied children fleeing Central America, as gang members, frauds, and criminals.

LESSONS FROM THE GRANTMAKER PROFILES

The stark new realities facing refugees, asylum seekers, and the U.S. humanitarian system demand nothing less than a bold, innovative, and urgent response from philanthropy. To lay the groundwork for what that response might look like, and to guide and inspire donors across the country, we profiled the varied approaches taken by 10 different funders and key lessons gleaned from their experience. These profiles are designed to provide a roadmap for supporting refugees, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied children seeking protection in the United States and abroad.

The grantmakers profiled in this report differ in their structure, size, and geographic priorities. Some are responding to global crises (like the Syrian civil war and the arrival of asylum seekers across Europe), while others are addressing the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in the United States (including unaccompanied children and families from Central America). Still others are advancing national strategies, ongoing work in specific states, or very local interventions. As a group, they support a range of approaches – from systems and narrative change to advocacy and organizing, from capacity building to legal and direct service delivery.

These case studies feature donors with programs dedicated exclusively to refugees, asylum seekers, and/or unaccompanied children, and that address newcomer populations more generally. They also highlight donors who assist these populations through the prism of education, workforce, economic development, capacity development, or legal services.

New Strategies to Explore and Pursue Inspired by the Profiled Donors' Approaches

Encourage Innovation and Adaptation in Volatile Times. Given the paucity of dedicated philanthropic resources and the magnitude of the challenges facing refugees and asylum seekers and the organizations that support and defend them, several funders have used their grant dollars and expertise to spur grantee innovation and adaptation, including developing program models that can be further refined for local conditions. As an example, to assist local refugee resettlement organizations that are facing unprecedented financial and survival challenges, a few funders are providing management and technical assistance to tackle organizational restructuring, evaluate possible consolidation to ensure sustainability, develop new revenue streams, and broaden service offerings to attract new clients and grant opportunities.

Think Systemically and Creatively. Given the scale of the current crisis facing refugees and asylum seekers, funders should also consider strategies that can have a systemic impact. To address adverse federal and state policy developments, funders may want to invest in organizing and policy campaigns led by impacted voices to support refugees, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied children. Other types of systemic and creative approaches include narrative change work, impact litigation, national advocacy and communications efforts, workforce development and up-skilling, and refugee and asylum seeker integration, particularly through two-generation approaches in schools and communities.

Explore the Benefits of Collective Grantmaking. There are two main reasons why the grantmakers profiled in this report engage in collective grantmaking through pooled funds of various sorts. First, assisting refugees and asylum seekers may fall outside of a core funding

Working with other funders enables each participant in a pooled fund to contribute to a more coordinated and impactful intervention, to make grants at greater scale, and to benefit from the support of peer institutions.



Photo credit: Leon Rafael / Shutterstock

area or be relatively modest. Working with other funders enables each participant in a pooled fund to contribute to a more coordinated and impactful intervention, to make grants at greater scale, and to benefit from the support of peer institutions. Second, the wide-ranging attacks against newcomer populations stretch the capacity of grantmakers and grantees alike to respond adequately to each new crisis. Collective grantmaking can generate disciplined strategies that marshal more resources and address a problem in a flexible and systematic way.

Take a Holistic Approach to Addressing the Needs of Newcomer Populations. Many of the profiled grantmakers have adopted a ‘portfolio’ approach that de-siloes different newcomer populations, breaking down longstanding divides that have separated funders of immigration-related issues and those supporting efforts aimed at refugees and asylum seekers. Paradoxically, the wide-ranging adverse impact of current federal policies on so many newcomers—immigrants (documented and

not), refugees, asylum seekers and unaccompanied children—have challenged funders to take a holistic approach to supporting the foreign-born more comprehensively through their grantmaking. With respect to asylum seekers and unaccompanied children, who do not benefit automatically and immediately from the protections afforded refugees, many funders initially supported them through funding of immigration legal services, but several have sought to combine legal, medical, and psychological wraparound support.

Enhance Existing Support to Grantees by Reevaluating Grant Requirements. Just as collective grantmaking can provide greater flexibility and capacity to grantmakers who want to engage on an issue on a trial or temporary basis or who lack staff capacity or expertise to develop their own grantmaking strategy, it is important for grantmakers to think about how they can provide additional flexibility and capacity to their grantees. Several grantmakers shared their efforts to ease the burden on grantees at this time of great stress: multi-year general support funding, support for flexible legal services capacity (i.e., to serve diverse client populations), and management and organizational support to help organizations minimize their downside risks given the uncertain policy environment.

Leverage Foundations’ Bully Pulpit, Stature, and Convening Power. A few foundations have opted to use their stature in the community to bring attention to the challenges facing refugees and asylum seekers, including the reasons they fled their home countries and the challenges they faced in making the journey to the United States or integrating successfully into their new communities. At a time of deep divisions and rampant misinformation, the voices of respected institutions like philanthropic foundations are vital. They can ease conflict in divided communities, bring key stakeholders together to solve problems collectively, sound the alarm about the urgency of humanitarian crises, and rally other grantmakers to the cause. Today, foundations have a key role to play in modeling empathy and inclusion and should consider raising their voices and flexing their muscles in new ways.

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

A Call to Action Grounded in Shared Learning, Collaboration, and Amplified Giving.

A bold and forward-looking philanthropic response must address the dual challenges of a concerted dismantling of protections in the United States and an unprecedented number of displaced persons needing assistance worldwide. That response must amplify the promising interventions being advanced by current funders, attract new funders and partnerships, and innovate in order to fund interventions at scale. All of these efforts must be grounded in shared knowledge and collective action that address several key aims.

Facilitate Collective Learning to Support Refugees and Asylum Seekers. Since its inception, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) has created donor forums to facilitate both rapid response and long-term funder collaboration on a range of immigrant- and refugee-related issues. To provide more coordination, strategic thinking, and information sharing about the needs of refugees and asylum seekers specifically, GCIR recently launched a new working group, Funders for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (FRAS). In a diverse ecosystem of interested donors, FRAS will provide vital connective tissue and opportunities for strategic collaboration through in-person meetings, virtual learning, peer learning, and resource sharing. More than 40 donors have already joined FRAS and interest is growing.

Promote Long-Term Sustainability. Grantmakers have historically engaged around refugee and asylum issues largely through responses to specific crises, and it remains to be seen whether these investments can be sustained over time to build long-term capacity and resiliency. For example, the investment in holistic approaches to unaccompanied children often focused on short-term rapid response needs; however, these children continued to be in need of this support beyond the one- to two-year grants provided by most funders. Transforming current rapid response activities into sustainable engagement on these issues will not only benefit refugees, asylum seekers, and their communities, but will create an infrastructure better equipped not only to respond to the next humanitarian crisis but also to promote integration and community cohesion.

Expand Private Sector Relationships and Partnerships. At a time when the federal government and some states are withdrawing support for refugees and asylum seekers, philanthropy is grappling with how to better align with the private sector in developing responses to humanitarian crises and bring them to scale. Emerging efforts from a variety of corporations offer examples of how, in partnership with a new generation of private sector leaders, such alliances may take form. The Tent Partnership, an initiative that rallies corporations around refugee and asylum seeker integration worldwide, is an example of one such possible partner for philanthropy.

Engage in Systemic and Strategic Collaboration. There is an ongoing systematic dismantling of the U.S. system of humanitarian protections for refugees, asylum seekers and other immigrants that merits a collaborative and strategic response from grantmakers. Funders could fund an expert analysis of the feasibility of a broad intervention to preserve the aspects of the refugee resettlement system that will enable it to most effectively and efficiently adapt to new realities; and, if deemed feasible, a coherent strategy for philanthropy. Funders could also seek to collaborate in supporting under-resourced legal services systems along the southern border to facilitate protection of families who are being separated and ensure access to asylum.

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1 It should be noted as well that executive orders like the “travel ban” and agency practices have also significantly reduced all types of entrants from 11 countries (Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Mali, North Korea, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen) deemed “high risk,” most of them predominantly Muslim countries.



Unaccompanied child from Central America who received support from St. John's Well Child and Family Center in Los Angeles, CA. Photo credit: St. John's.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING

- **Join Funders for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (FRAS)** to work with and learn from a community of 40+ colleagues. Contact Aryah Somers Landsberger at aryah@gcir.org to become a member or learn more.
- **Attend a GCIR webinar or program** on these issues by contacting Melissa Nop at Melissa@gcir.org to join our listserv. Our programming, particularly our Monthly Immigration Policy Calls, provides regular updates on emerging policy issues affecting refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable populations.
- **Review other publications and resources** on these issues on the GCIR website, such as our report, *Lessons in Rapid Response: What Funders Can Learn from the Unaccompanied Children Humanitarian Situation*, on the philanthropic efforts to respond to the increase in Central American children arriving at the U.S. border.
- **Become a GCIR member** to deepen your connection with a wide array of philanthropic institutions that support immigrant and refugee issues. Contact Harmony Karp Hayes at harmony@gcir.org to learn more.

Global Whole Being Fund

From Crisis to Action: Donors Creating a Holistic Fund. In early 2015, as harrowing footage from the Middle East and Europe opened eyes around the world to the unfolding global refugee crisis, some seasoned Bay Area donors recognized the connections between the crises of forced displacement and the social justice and environmental issues they championed. They created a dedicated donor-advised fund, the Global Whole Being Fund—Caring for Humanity on the Move (GWBF), to explore these cross-sector issues more deeply. In conceiving of the GWBF’s purpose and focus, the donors enlisted the help of an experienced international development professional, Negar Tayyar. Together they agreed that the work of the GWBF would be “heart-led,” supporting approaches and organizations that promoted dignity, respect, and trust, and whose interventions were integrated and holistic. The GWBF’s grantmaking strategies would support an expanded notion of “well-being” that exceeded the traditional basic needs of shelter, employment, and health. They would promote a dignified existence by nurturing emotional well-being through enhanced psychosocial support, and by fostering unity and mutual respect through community building efforts with receiving communities.

Carving out a Unique Grantmaking Approach. The GWBF launched formally in 2016, developed the concept of “people on the move” to guide its grantmaking. This expansive concept seeks to transcend legal categories such as “refugee” or “asylum seeker” to encompass all forcibly displaced persons and other involuntary migrants. Centered on “people on the move,” the GWBF elevates people’s common plight and humanity to avoid the stigmatization of all groups not formally recognized as refugees. While this holistic concept was met with mixed reactions, ranging from relief by organizations on the ground, since it allowed them greater flexibility in serving people in need, to skepticism by some funders focused on prioritizing specific categories of migrants, the GWBF persisted in this approach. In tandem with this expansive concept, the GWBF also wanted to ensure that any efforts it supported would help “people on the move” throughout the different stages of their journeys. For example, asylum seekers need particular types of support during the many years they typically spend in limbo—within host countries—while pursuing their asylum claims. And some people who are formally recognized as refugees but who face long waits in camps or in danger zones flee these dangerous situations and arrive in host countries without formal refugee status. The creators of the GWBF also wanted to support integrated trauma-informed approaches that recognize the unique impact of these individual trajectories and circumstances. The GWBF grantmaking approach also acknowledges the need to build on the capacities of the grant partners and support the well-being of those who serve “people on the move.”

Developing a Global Grantmaking Portfolio. Conceptualized to be expansive and holistic, the GWBF next worked to implement the concept of “people on the move” through its grantmaking portfolio. First, GWBF invested significant time in due diligence, learning from both organizations and leaders on the ground at different points in the trajectories of “people on the move,” as well as other funders. Through these conversations, the enormity of the challenges faced by “people on the move” emerged; yet, the GWBF heard clearly from the field that even small contributions matter, and private contributions matter even more today with government aid neither adequate nor predictable. Second, in developing a process for grantees, the GWBF explicitly sought to make the burden low by asking prospective grantees for short proposals. And rather than requiring lengthy grant reports, GWBF instead connects with grantees on a regular basis via Skype/Zoom/FaceTime and WhatsApp to obtain the latest intelligence on gaps, challenges, and opportunities.



Syrian refugees on an overloaded dinghy arrive from Turkey to Molyvos, Lesbos.
Photo credit: Nicolas Economou / Shutterstock.com

The GWBF’s grantmaking strategies support an expanded notion of “well-being” that exceeds the traditional basic needs of shelter, employment, and health.



A mother and her child in the Softex refugee camp in northern Greece in 2016. Photo credit: Alice Aedy

In 2017, the GWBF disbursed \$1.3 million dollars in grants to 16 organizations¹ to meet the following strategic priorities they had developed: to elevate humanitarian support to a holistic level, and to nourish relationships between “people on the move” and their receiving communities. For GWBF, providing holistic support in emergency and humanitarian situations means filling gaps: identifying situations where education, community building, shelter, health care, psychosocial support, rescue missions, non-food items, and healthy food could make a difference, and then supporting those interventions. Key to its approach is its partnership with Help Refugees, a crowdsourcing platform and “intermediate funder” based in the United Kingdom that supports “people on the move” across the migration route from the Middle East to Europe, covering Syria, Lebanon, Greece, France, and the U.K. Help Refugees raised around \$10 million since its inception in 2016 and re-grants the funds it raises to local and grassroots organizations in affected countries. It conducts rigorous due diligence and monitoring, e.g. regular in-person visits. Many of their grantees would be too small and new to attract the attention of foundations and corporations that tend to support the larger humanitarian organizations. With more than 70 projects across Europe and the Middle East, Help Refugees has become an important facilitator of grassroots aid in Europe. GWBF’s largest grant in 2017 was to Help Refugees (\$633,000) and it intends to increase that grant by 50 percent to \$1 million in 2018. By making significant contributions to Help Refugees, GWBF can credibly support work at the local level in a broad geographic area, and do so nimbly.

Strategies to Increase Funding for Forcibly Displaced Communities. Based on the success of the initial rollout of funding in 2017 and implementation of the “people on the move” concept, the GWBF donors are considering new ways to leverage their unique approach. In the face of an increasingly hostile climate for “people on the move,” GWBF is finding that there is a greater interest in engaging, particularly among individual donors but also among some family foundations and institutional donors. This has led to initial conversations about the future of the GWBF, including whether it should be transformed into a pooled fund that could receive contributions from other donors.

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For more information about the Global Whole Being Fund, visit www.gwbf.org or contact Negar Tayyar, Philanthropic Advisor, at negar@gwbf.org.

¹ Help Refugees, Refugee Youth Services, Asylum Access, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, iAct’s Little Ripples, HIAS Pennsylvania, Give Something Back to Berlin, Project Feast, Partnership for Trauma Recovery, Über den Tellerand and Gaia Education/Sicilia Integra. For more information, visit <https://www.gwbf.org/grant-partners/>.

John R. Oishei Foundation

An Inclusive Western New York Grantmaker. The John R. Oishei Foundation (Oishei) is among the largest general-purpose foundations in the Buffalo-Niagara region of Western New York State, awarding approximately \$15 million a year in grants. It seeks to promote economic vibrancy and quality of life in the area for all residents, from birth on. As such, it doesn't focus on any one community, but seeks to be inclusive of all of the region's culturally and racially diverse populations. Oishei seeks to maximize its impact using a range of strategies through five focus areas. In addition to grantmaking, it devotes its time, people, and networks to convening stakeholders around significant issues, leading and participating in collaborative initiatives, sharing knowledge, strengthening the capacity of area non-profits, and nurturing promising leaders. Oishei has just begun intentional work around developing a racial equity lens in the foundation's staffing, grantmaking, and trustee composition and governance. This approach is designed to ensure fairness in dealings with all people of color, including immigrants and refugees, and reflects Buffalo's racially and ethnically diverse community.

A Longstanding Commitment to Newcomers as Part of Integrated Grantmaking. Buffalo is about 6 percent foreign born and a major refugee resettlement destination. Over the last few years, it received 1,500-2,000 refugees annually until the recent restrictions significantly reduced the number of arrivals. Buffalo now boasts a refugee population of about 20,000, served by four refugee resettlement affiliates. It is also one of only two cities in New York State—New York City is the other—with its own Office of New Americans. Buffalo's population, which had been steadily declining for decades, has stabilized recently, in large part due to the arrival of refugees.

The foundation views immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers as integral to the make-up of the larger Buffalo-Niagara community and to the work Oishei funds to benefit the region. Quantifying the magnitude of the support is challenging since a vast number of Oishei's grantees across its program areas likely support refugee and asylum seeker populations indirectly or in a less targeted fashion. Food banks, health, education, workforce, and self-sufficiency programs are prime examples of this indirect or broad-based support.

In addition to this generalized integrated programmatic support, Oishei makes significant and more easily quantifiable direct project grants to support refugees and asylum seekers. In 2017, such grants totaled \$370,000, the vast majority of which was directed to Jericho Road Ministries to expand access to primary care on Buffalo's East Side and to Journey's End Refugee Services for office relocation. Two years earlier, Oishei's total support for refugee and asylum seeker populations reached \$700,000, and included two major grants. The first, an initiative the foundation played a critical role in shaping and scaling, was a \$400,000 grant to Legal Aid of Buffalo and Journey's End Refugee Services to launch a coordinated refugee and asylum seeker legal services project, providing culturally competent, trauma-informed continuum of care to 10,000 clients. The second was a \$200,000 grant to Catholic Charities for a refugee health clinic.

Oishei also participates in the Buffalo Refugee Roundtable Initiative, which facilitates cooperation with refugee resettlement and legal organizations, the City of Buffalo, and statewide advocates such as the New York Immigration Coalition.



JOHN R. OISHEI FOUNDATION



Photo credit: Vadym Zaitsev / Shutterstock.com

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Photo credit: A StockStudio / Shutterstock.com

A Laser Focus on the Evolving Needs of its Community. The foundation prides itself on being nimble and responsive to the evolving needs and unique challenges faced by the area's residents. For example, when the 2008 Great Recession hit, Oishei shifted its funding priorities to put a greater emphasis on basic human needs and self-sufficiency. Now, federal policies enacted by the new administration have heightened fear and anxiety in Buffalo's newcomer community and challenged the sustainability of Buffalo's robust refugee resettlement organizations. Oishei has supported responsive efforts to the impacts of those policies on its community by assisting grantees seeking to adapt to new realities, raising awareness, and spurring collective action in partnership with other community stakeholders and area donors.

Specifically, soon after the first round of executive orders by the administration, Oishei convened the area's refugee resettlement agencies, their trustees, and staff, along with a legal expert to provide information and guidance. Oishei also convened legal service and community-based organizations, as well as area foundations and their trustees. The overarching goal was to understand the orders' local impact and fashion an effective and unified response. Top of mind is the need to help the frontline agencies address significant challenges to their sustainability given steep declines in refugee numbers while still meeting the needs of their refugee clients. Oishei, through its Philanthropic Support office, is working with the resettlement agencies to plan for the future in a strategic fashion, shore up their boards of directors, and engage in organizational development. Together they will discuss how strategic alignments across agencies from different networks and greater cooperation can be adaptive in this volatile and resource-constrained environment.

For additional information about Oishei's programs, visit www.oishei.org or contact Larry Cook, Vice President, at lcook@oishei.org.

Open Society Foundations

Developing a Rapid Response Strategy. The Open Society Foundations (OSF) has a number of long-term, ongoing initiatives and funding priorities that focus on or touch upon migrants. In 2014, images of women and children who had fled violence in Central America to seek protection at the U.S.-Mexico border had saturated U.S. media and by the summer of 2015 the global Syrian refugee crisis and dramatic humanitarian movements in Europe had taken center stage. In late 2015, concerned about the anemic U.S. response to the crisis and a growing backlash against refugees, OSF's U.S. Programs and Open Society Policy Center (OSPC) made rapid response requests for reserve funds to make emergency grants.

In late 2015 and early 2016, OSPC and OSF deployed the first of several grants using the rapid response \$400,000 allocation from OSF's reserve funds as well as a small amount of funds from the OSPC budget to support advocacy to address the escalating threats to refugees and asylum seekers, preserve the U.S. resettlement program, and support a field in crisis. These grants funded a combination of communications, advocacy, and political mobilization efforts by leading organizations¹ to build support for refugees, particularly for those from Syria and Iraq. In the following year's U.S. presidential campaign, sharp anti-refugee, anti-immigrant, and anti-Muslim rhetoric gave sanction to growing opposition to welcoming any foreigners, heightening concerns about the future of U.S. global leadership on humanitarian relief and refugee resettlement. OSF U.S. Programs recognized that neither rapid response funding, such as the special opportunity request for reserve funds, nor reallocating funds amongst grantees, was sufficient to address this historic shift against immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

In addition to moving forward on its rapid response grantmaking strategy, U.S. Programs funded a landscape scan in 2016 to identify threats and gaps in U.S. funding around migration issues, inclusive of asylum seekers and refugees. The scan made the following key findings: the threats to the United States' well-established refugee resettlement system were existential, with long-term sustainability in doubt, putting populations OSF cared about globally at risk; neither the funder community nor the field was equipped to respond to these growing challenges; there was a loss of bipartisan support in Congress for refugee resettlement programs due to a number of factors, including the retirement of important allies; and, finally, a holistic approach to these issues was required because of the widespread demonization of migrant populations, including asylum seekers and refugees, groups that traditionally had elicited compassion and goodwill.

Leveraging Movement Building to Bolster Defense Strategies. To address these threats, OSF U.S. Programs envisioned a new strategy that sought to incentivize greater alignment between its immigrant- and refugee-focused grantees, thereby mobilizing the strength and strategies utilized by the grassroots immigrants' rights movement to defend refugees and asylum seekers. In 2017, OSF U.S. Programs deployed a three-pronged funding effort to support this new strategy. First, it made about half a million dollars in rapid response grants to organizations² tackling refugee and asylum seeker organizing, advocacy, communications, and coordination in the United States. Second, a grant was renewed to a refugee organizer in a large refugee-receiving state and a new grant was made to support impact litigation on the travel ban announced by the Trump administration.³ Third, several existing grantees received additional support to ensure they had the capacity and resources to advocate on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers in addition to immigrants.⁴ For its part, OSPC continued to support legislative advocacy on refugees, while also expanding to include work on access to asylum.⁵ OSF also moved quickly to launch a high profile initiative entitled Communities Against Hate, aimed at combatting the rise in hate incidents, including an open RFP process for local community-based organizations, many of which worked with refugee communities.



Syrian refugees who escaped from Kobane walking on Turkey-Syria border in Suruc. Sanliurfa, Turkey, May 2014.

Photo credit: kafeinkolik / Shutterstock.com

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Broadening Existing Strategies and Spurring Greater Philanthropic

Engagement. As OSF U.S. Programs looks towards 2018, it is expected to increase its funding for refugee and asylum organizations deploying a broad range of approaches—advocacy, organizing, communications, litigation, anti-hate work, and community-centered welcoming approaches with receiving communities. This expansion is viewed as necessary given the continued attacks on the refugee and asylum systems in the U.S., significant capacity gaps in the field, and the spread of fear-based messages that conflate humanitarian migrants with national security threats and criminality. To expand available resources for this important work, OSF U.S. Programs is also interested in increasing philanthropic commitments to humanitarian migrants. Particularly, it seeks to spur greater pro-refugee advocacy infrastructure in certain U.S. geographies that are under-resourced but have high concentrations of refugees and asylum seekers. Further, it wishes to collaborate with other funders to stabilize the U.S. refugee protection system, which is reeling from the impact of reductions in scale and funding amid policy, legal, and rhetorical pressure. These unrelenting challenges have created significant distress and suffering, requiring foundations and donors to rethink grantmaking strategies.

OSF U.S. Programs will strive to embed protection of refugees and asylum seekers in an integrated strategy to support migrants—and do so with more synergy and coordination across OSF’s various programs—as it refines its 2018 strategy and embarks on its four-year strategic planning process in 2019. Specifically, U.S. Programs’ Immigration Team will continue to coordinate closely with its National Security/Human Rights Team, as well as with the Washington Advocacy Office and the International Migration Initiative. The latter’s grants complement those of U.S. Programs, seeking to increase private refugee sponsorship or co-sponsorship, and assist local receiving communities to integrate migrants and mitigate backlash.

Fashioning an Integrated Global Response. The evolution of U.S. Programs’ strategy over the last couple of years for addressing the refugee crisis and the dramatic reversal of U.S. leadership reflects OSF’s evolution more broadly. In late 2016, the Open Society Foundations’ Global Board designated migration as one of its top three priorities, significantly increasing investments in the field and cooperation among its programs, foundations, and offices. This sharpened focus and heightened commitment followed a series of large emergency mobilizations in response to numerous refugee crisis situations (notably in Greece, Jordan, and Lebanon), the surge in anti-migrant populism, and the long-term rise in global migration and displacement.

As a result, OSF has made several high-profile commitments globally, building on its long history of work in defending migrant rights, fighting discrimination against disempowered groups, and advocating for policy reforms. In Greece, OSF incubated Solidarity Now, an NGO that delivers humanitarian, legal, and social assistance services to vulnerable migrants and Greeks. In Lebanon and Jordan, a \$25 million Syrian Refugee Empowerment project is helping refugees to access health care, education, and the labor market. George Soros pledged in 2016 to invest up to \$500 million in private-sector companies pursuing innovations that address the protection, financial inclusion, employment, and integration challenges facing migrants, refugees, and host communities. OSF also expanded its International Migration Initiative, which is placing a greater emphasis on integration in host communities, safeguarding the refugee protection system, and mitigating the exploitation of migrant workers.

Unrelenting challenges have created significant distress and suffering, requiring foundations and donors to rethink grantmaking strategies.



Refugees at the Keleti Railway Station, Budapest, Hungary, in September 2015.
Photo credit: Alexandre Rotenberg/Shutterstock.com

For more information about Open Society Foundations, visit www.opensocietyfoundations.org. If you’d like to connect with the U.S. Immigration Team at OSF, contact Wendy Patten, Senior Policy Advisor, at wendy.patten@opensocietyfoundations.org.

- 1 American Civil Liberties Union, Human Rights First, and MoveOn.
- 2 Organizations included the Migration Policy Institute, the Center for American Progress (with sub-grants to Kids In Need of Defense, Women’s Refugee Commission and Center for Migration Studies), Refugee Council USA for the We Are All America campaign, Church World Service, Human Rights First, International Refugee Assistance Project, and Welcoming America.
- 3 Four Freedoms Fund and Borealis Philanthropy.
- 4 America’s Voice Education Fund, Catholic Legal Immigration Network, American Civil Liberties Union, and National Immigration Law Center.
- 5 Human Rights First.

Polk Bros. Foundation

Place-Based and People-Centric Grantmaking. Chicagoans affected by poverty are a core philanthropic priority for the city’s Polk Bros. Foundation (Polk Bros.), which seeks to improve these individuals’ quality of life by funding efforts to strengthen their families and communities, increase access to quality education and the arts, promote health, and enhance the capacity of Chicago’s non-profit sector. Polk Bros. is one of the largest funders of Chicago non-profits, distributing \$25 million a year to nearly 400 organizations. Since 1988, when Polk Bros. became an independent foundation, it has made grants to support Chicago’s immigrant and refugee communities, seeing them as integral to Chicago’s identity.

Stepping Up: Harnessing Opportunities and Responding to Challenges.

While Polk Bros.’ grantmaking focuses on addressing challenges and harnessing opportunities that enable all Chicagoans to reach their full potential, at times specific policies or situations—positive and negative—impact particular populations in Chicago and demand a specialized response to either maximize potential benefits or mitigate harm. In 2012, for example, when President Obama created the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, Polk Bros. mobilized area funders to help young people apply for DACA, leading to the creation of the Illinois Immigration Funders Collaborative, which continues to operate to this day. Similarly, in response to harsh new federal policies, in June 2017 the Polk Bros.’ board of directors authorized the creation of an Urgent Action Fund. More than \$150,000 in rapid response funds has been deployed from that Fund for immigrants and refugees: to support legal and guardianship planning services, know-your rights trainings, and mental health workshops. Home to over 1 million immigrants and an estimated 12,000 refugees, many from Iraq and other countries included in the administration’s travel ban, Chicago’s refugee and immigrant families, communities, and support infrastructure have been highly impacted by the new policies.

Supporting Refugees Across the Foundation’s Program Areas. While Polk Bros. has always had a commitment to immigrants and refugees living in Chicago, the current policy climate has challenged it to think not only about supportive services but also about advocacy and systems change, specifically with respect to refugees.

Of the \$1.1 million in grants Polk Bros. made to support immigrant and refugee Chicagoans last year outside of the Urgent Action Fund, \$350,000 was directed to nine organizations specifically to support refugee and asylum seeking populations. Most of these grants are included in the Strong Communities portfolio, as well as the Strong Families, Enhanced Capacity, and Education portfolios. Polk Bros. supported a diverse set of organizational initiatives, including domestic violence counseling at Apna Ghar; workforce development at the Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago, the Pan African Association, and Upwardly Global; and family strengthening programs at Refugee One, one of the local refugee resettlement organizations. With these grantees and others,¹ Polk Bros. sought to bolster essential infrastructure in the Chicago non-profit ecosystem for refugees under stress.

In addition, although Polk Bros. does not have an advocacy program per se, they support systems change and advocacy for immigrants and refugees through a \$75,000 grant to the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. Polk Bros. also contributed \$125,000 to the aforementioned Illinois Immigration Funders Collaborative (the Collaborative), which it helped mobilize in 2012, bringing its total grantmaking to nearly \$4 million since inception. While the Collaborative had primarily supported Dreamers since its establishment, it now broadened its focus to include refugees in order to be responsive to the rapidly shifting environment. An estimated 20 to 25 percent of the grants the Collaborative made in

POLK BROS FOUNDATION



Chicago’s Cinco De Mayo parade participants calling for immigration reform and workers’ rights.

Photo credit: Marie Kanger Born / Shutterstock.com

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Photo credit: RefugeeOne.

December 2017 supported refugees. The next round of grants is expected to bring the support level for refugees even higher, with systems-level advocacy, legal services, community education, and organizing now among the Collaborative’s top priorities. In aggregate, grants awarded in December 2017 and approved for early 2018 will equal \$915,000.

Totaling \$500,000, Polk Bros.’ funding for refugees in 2017 was significant in absolute terms and helped to address the key challenges that members of Chicago’s refugee and asylum seeking communities faced—and many continue to face—consistent with Polk Bros.’ core philanthropic goals. Polk Bros. listened to its community and, when particular groups came under fire, it responded and rallied others to the cause.

1 The other grantees supporting refugees in Polk Bros.’ 2017 portfolio are United African Organization, Cambodian Association of Illinois, Centro Romero, and DePaul University Law School.

For additional information about Polk Bros. Foundation, please visit www.polkbrosgdn.org or contact Evette Cardona, Vice President of Programs, at emcardona@polkbrosfdn.org. For information about the Illinois Immigration Funders Collaborative, contact Alice Cottingham, Project Manager, at alicecottingham@gmail.com.

Robin Hood

Fighting Poverty in New York City Must Include Immigrants and their Families.

Robin Hood is an unusual public charity. It was founded in 1988 by five individuals¹ with the sole purpose of combating poverty in New York City. It makes investments in non-profits that it believes will raise the earning power or improve the health of low-income New York City residents. Every year, it must raise the money it will disburse in grants and, for that reason, must continually make the case to its donors why investing in Robin Hood makes sense. Accordingly, its staff members seek to understand how the interventions they fund are causally related to improvements in the lives of low-income New Yorkers and whether they produce measurable social return on investments. This operating model demands rigor and constant analysis, inspiring and requiring Robin Hood to stay effective, cutting-edge, and impactful.

Driven by this imperative, Robin Hood has built itself into the largest organization in New York City focused on poverty elimination, supporting more than 200 non-profit organizations with grants, leadership training, business expertise, and best practices. In 2017, Robin Hood made \$116 million in investments. Its grantmaking strategies fall into four major areas: early childhood and youth; education; jobs and economic security; and basic needs.

New York City has been a magnet for immigrants since it was founded. For this reason, Robin Hood has tackled New York City poverty for the past 30 years with the explicit inclusion of immigrants and their families across its different program areas. Today, poverty affects one in five New Yorkers, or 1.8 million people, and nearly half are immigrants or their children. In 2017, just under a quarter of Robin Hood's overall giving, or about \$25 million, supported immigrants across the foundation's different portfolios. Anchoring its more recent investments in immigrants and refugees is the American Dream Fund, a three-year \$35 million initiative launched in 2014.

Catalytic and Innovative Investments Support Immigrants, Asylum Seekers, and Unaccompanied Children.

Robin Hood takes a holistic view of foreign-born populations in need. Although Robin Hood has supported immigrants and their families since its inception, its growing support of refugees, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied children has evolved in response to circumstances that have driven these vulnerable populations to New York City. While few refugees are resettled in New York City, many of its new arrivals are fleeing violence and persecution. As an example, thousands of unaccompanied children from Central America have come to New York City since 2014, most fleeing violence.

Robin Hood views obtaining legal status for immigrants, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied children as a critical factor in boosting their lifetime earnings and prospects. Among other benefits, gaining legal status confers eligibility to work, financial aid for college, and eligibility for public benefits. While data show that having an attorney quadruples the likelihood that a child's case will be successful, the access to counsel rates for unaccompanied children were too low, preventing many of them from obtaining asylum, Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) status, and other forms of legal relief for which they could qualify.

Robin Hood's grant dollars specifically directed at refugees, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied children more than tripled in recent years, from \$612,000 in 2013 to \$2.1 million in 2017.² Such grants now represent 10 percent of Robin Hood's immigrant-focused



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Dr. Alan Shapiro with a patient at the Terra Firma clinic. Photo credit: Terra Firma

investments. In the mental health arena, Robin Hood supports Terra Firma, which provides integrated services to unaccompanied children, and the Bellevue/ NYU Program for Survivors of Torture. Robin Hood also supports workforce innovator Upwardly Global, which serves many refugees. But the significant growth in giving was driven primarily by two innovative legal services initiatives spearheaded by Robin Hood— Immigrant Children Advocates’ Relief Effort (ICARE) and Immigrant Justice Corps (IJC)— as well as grants to Sanctuary for Families and the New York City Family Justice Centers.

Building on its history of funding legal services and its strong relationships with legal service providers and city government, Robin Hood made a bold investment in 2014, at the height of the unaccompanied child crisis, to establish ICARE, a collaborative of legal service organizations,³ to provide universal representation to unaccompanied children from Central America in immigration proceedings. Robin Hood partnered with the New York Community Trust and the New York City Council to launch this unique representation program. The City Council still supports this program with \$2 million in funding per year and Robin Hood maintains its support at just under \$1 million.

Also in 2014, Robin Hood launched IJC, the nation’s first fellowship program to strengthen the immigration bar and the capacity of New York City’s legal service providers to provide quality representation to immigrants. About a quarter of IJC’s caseload involves asylum, SIJ, and trafficking cases. IJC fellows have served 40,000 immigrant clients since inception, with rates of success consistently exceeding 90 percent. The IJC program has now spread beyond New York City to Long Island, upstate New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Texas, with plans for further expansion.

Driven by the strength of its investments in ICARE and IJC, Robin Hood raised a new restricted fund of \$25 million in 2017. Over the next ten years, this new Immigrant Opportunity Fund will primarily support new investments in legal services, immigrant health care, and innovation in immigration service delivery. It is designed to be flexible, anticipating that new issues will arise requiring a response from Robin Hood and that new solutions will be tested that will scale through partnerships with government and/or the use of technology.

New Federal Policies Put Additional Strain on Local Foundations. Robin Hood’s strategy of solving intractable problems by investing in organizations and programs with proven track records of success is working, but is facing significant headwinds as a result of new federal public policies that are putting more immigrants into legal limbo and creating tremendous uncertainty about the use of public benefit programs. These policies are further impoverishing immigrant and asylum-seeking New Yorkers. In this difficult environment, local foundations like Robin Hood, in partnership with local and state governments, will need to develop new means of mitigating those adverse consequences and identify new levers to achieve positive outcomes.



Unaccompanied immigrant youth participating in Terra Firma’s Youth Enrichment Program on their final day of photography class.
Photo credit: Hugh Siegel/Terra Firma.

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For more information about Robin Hood’s grantmaking, visit www.robinhood.org or contact Veyom Bahl, Managing Director, Survival, at bahl@robinhood.org.

1 The five founders: Paul Tudor Jones, Peter Borish, Glenn Dubin, David Saltzman, and the late Mo Chessa.
2 The aggregate grant amounts to the organizations serving those populations were somewhat larger, about \$1.1 million in 2013, growing to \$4 million in 2017, given that not all grantees served humanitarian populations exclusively.
3 Robin Hood funds six organizations in ICARE: Legal Aid, Make the Road NY, Catholic Charities, Kids in Need of Defense, Safe Passage Project and The Door.

Samuel S. Fels Fund

A Core Mission to Welcome and Support Marginalized Populations in

Philadelphia. In 1935, Samuel Fels, the son of Jewish refugees from Bavaria, and a successful civic leader and businessman, founded the Samuel S. Fels Fund (Fels) as a private independent foundation. His foundation always honored that family history by supporting the aspirations of Philadelphia's immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Today, Philadelphia is home to 200,000 immigrants and refugees, representing 13 percent of the overall population. The influx of newcomers has stabilized Philadelphia's population, which is growing for the first time in years. It is a welcoming city, with strong mayoral support for foreign-born communities. However, the city struggles with the infrastructure to assure that newcomers obtain an equitable education, meaningful employment, and legal and other services essential to their integration and success.

Deepening Community Connections and Building Responsive Grantmaking.

Fels believes in a holistic and integrated approach for newcomers fleeing oppression and seeking a better life. In 2015, with the arrival of a new executive director after 23 years, Fels reached out to the communities and organizations it was serving and realigned its priorities with a narrower and deeper focus on social justice and systems. The foundation understood the need to view Philadelphia's newcomer community holistically, by not dividing immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, but also recognized that external circumstances could create important opportunities or challenges for particular groups within that population at certain moments in time.

With an annual grants budget of \$1.5 to \$1.8 million, Fels now funds in three main program areas: Focused Populations (which includes refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants, as well as youth either in or exiting the child welfare system); Arts and Culture (to preserve, strengthen, and share social or cultural identities and traditions and amplify marginalized voices); and Social, Racial, and Economic Justice (to advance other marginalized communities). In general, the foundation prefers making general operating support grants to organizations providing advocacy and direct services to accelerate the inclusion, integration, and advancement of refugees and immigrants in Philadelphia. It prides itself on being a place where someone could bring a good idea and be heard. Here is an example from several years back: the Nationalities Service Center of Philadelphia (NSC) approached Fels with a capital expenditure request to make bathroom alterations for the comfort of clients who had suffered female genital mutilation. Fels made the grant, even though it did not usually fund capital expenditures. That philosophy of responsiveness continues to this day.

The foundation also tries to anticipate grantee and community needs based on its ongoing dialogue with community stakeholders and grantees. In 2016, Fels approached its refugee resettlement grantees to ask if they needed more resources because of the rise in anti-refugee rhetoric during the presidential campaign and made additional rapid response grants that same year: one to HIAS Pennsylvania (HIAS PA) for volunteer and outreach coordination and one to NSC for resources to meet critical needs for refugees that the federal government's aid did not cover, such as fumigation and funeral expenses.

In 2017, as the policy climate continued to deteriorate, from the executive order on the travel ban to an abrupt decrease in refugee admissions, the refugee community and the refugee resettlement infrastructure in Philadelphia was severely impacted. Although Fels typically did not make large grants, it made \$100,000 grants each to HIAS PA and NSC to enable them to reorganize staffing in light of severe budget pressures stemming from reduced refugee admissions. These grants provided essential support to these two refugee organizations



A traditional lion dance is performed as part of Chinese New Year celebrations in Philadelphia.

Photo credit: Jana Shea / Shutterstock.com

Like other foundations struggling to serve communities in crisis, Fels seeks a balance between rapid response and defensive work and more forward-looking proactive grantmaking.



A mother buys produce at the Italian Market in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Photo credit: James Kirkikis / Shutterstock.com

anchoring the local community. By the end of 2017, Fels had made nearly \$700,000 in grants to support immigrants and refugees in Philadelphia through its Focused Populations portfolio. Approximately half of the support was directed to refugees,¹ and most of the other grants served a mixed immigrant, refugee, and asylum seeker population. Additionally, some of the Arts and Culture grants also benefit refugees and asylum seekers.²

Using Other Levers to Support Refugee Communities. Like other foundations struggling to serve communities in crisis, Fels seeks a balance between rapid response and defensive work and more forward-looking proactive grantmaking. It also sees the necessity of partnerships and collaboration. For this reason, Fels and other Philadelphia foundations are strategizing about how to work together more closely to identify and fill funding gaps together. In addition, Fels is in the process of ensuring that its endowment is invested in socially responsible ways that are not contradicting the very goals of its grantmaking. Following board approval of this approach last summer, Fels has already successfully reinvested more than 40 percent of its assets in socially responsible funds that avoid, for example, investment in private prisons and invest in companies that hire refugees. While these are early days and there is much nuance involved in applying the exclusion and inclusion screens, Fels is gratified that the monies beyond its grants are also actively working to change behavior and outcomes consistent with Fels' priorities.

1 The 2017 grantees in the Focused Populations portfolio who support refugees and asylum seekers: African Cultural Alliance of North America, Center for Literacy, HIAS PA, Live Connections, Nationalities Service Center of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Mural Arts Advocates, Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition, and Women's Opportunities Resource Center.

2 Arts and Culture grantees who support refugees: Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture, Fleisher Art Memorial, and Philadelphia Folklore Project.

For additional information about Samuel S. Fels Fund's grantmaking, visit www.samfels.org or contact Sarah Martinez-Helfman, President, at sarah@samfels.org.

Solidarity MN

A New Fund Launches to Support Minnesota's Immigrants and Refugees.

In early 2017, in response to the presidential executive orders targeting immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and visitors from many Muslim-majority nations, 16 foundations¹ from across Minnesota launched Solidarity MN, a donor coalition and collaborative. The group's mission was to “galvanize support for immigrant and refugee communities through a unified philanthropic voice and to invest in the strength and resilience of leaders working around the clock to meet the unique needs of immigrant and refugee families.”²

Minnesota is home to the largest per capita population of refugees nationwide, including the largest concentration of Somali people in the United States. Although it has fewer foreign-born residents per capita than the nation as a whole (8.2 percent versus 13.5 percent), its immigrant and refugee communities have still been severely impacted by the new federal policies. Solidarity MN was established to provide additional rapid response resources to the communities experiencing the impact of those policy changes, such as stepped up enforcement, as well as divisive rhetoric and demonization. To succeed, the collaborative needed to create a message and approach capable of uniting funders across the political spectrum on issues that elicited strong emotions and points of view. It chose a broad and values-based name—Solidarity MN—so the coalition could more easily take part in a wide range of contentious issues impacting Minnesota communities.

Under this expansive umbrella, the coalition brings together funders ranging in size from small grassroots operations to large foundations with substantial endowments, as well as both conservative and progressive funders. In this way, Solidarity MN provides an important new vehicle and entry point into the philanthropic ecosystem. It allows members to respond in a nimble, yet collaborative fashion with a rapid infusion of resources for newcomer communities under stress. It is particularly suited for funders not able to address immigrant and refugee issues through their standing portfolios, who want to help but don't know how, or who are simply seeking to send a strong message of unity. By the spring of 2017, the coalition had found an operational home at Greater Twin Cities United Way and raised \$900,000.

A Strategy Rooted in Supporting the Grass Roots across the State. Solidarity MN granted those funds through three major initiatives. The first was a round of \$2,500 micro-grants totaling \$200,000 distributed to 80 community groups or leaders in the summer of 2017. This rolling RFP, reviewed by a team of representatives from five of the donors, aimed to strengthen immigrant and refugee communities in Minnesota in uncertain times. The need for additional resources to respond to the hostile climate was evident: 212 applications were received in just three weeks. Although Solidarity MN deliberately uses an integrated approach that supports both immigrant and refugee communities, roughly half of the 80 grants awarded, representing approximately \$100,000 in grants, supported refugee communities. The largest number of refugee-reaching grants was directed to East African populations, followed by projects targeting Asian, Middle Eastern, and West African refugees.

The funders in Solidarity MN learned some important lessons from this first grantmaking foray. First, making the application easy and accessible to diverse communities lowered the barriers to entry for applicants and ensured a robust applicant pool. Second, enlisting the assistance of two consultants—a communications firm with deep Latino/a roots and an East African immigrant—provided both additional validation of the opportunity to grassroots groups across the state and useful landscape and demographic analysis to the funders participating in the collaborative. Third, the rolling process made it difficult to be maximally strategic and balanced in the dissemination of funds across regions and affected populations.



solidaritymn

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Aztec dancer at the Minneapolis May Day Parade.
Photo credit: Karla Caspari / Shutterstock.com



A woman wearing traditional Somali clothing near a Mexican food truck in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Photo credit: Wendy van Overstreet / Shutterstock.com

Finally, the collaborative underestimated the demand for resources, leading them to double their initial budget for this initiative from \$100,000 to \$200,000.

Mobilizing Resources for Impacted Communities. Following the administration’s termination of DACA last fall, Solidarity MN deployed \$200,000 in rapid response funding via an invitation-only RFP. Soon thereafter, Solidarity MN launched its third initiative, a \$400,000 grant opportunity seeking to advance the prosperity, safety, and inclusion of immigrant and refugee neighbors, friends, and families. This competitive Strength & Resiliency RFP offered two tiers of support: up to \$25,000 and up to \$75,000 (the latter for larger-scale, statewide, or collaborative work). It attracted many excellent proposals, far exceeding available resources. With input from several local immigrant and refugee leaders in the selection process, Solidarity MN announced its grantees in late January. Half of them support refugee populations directly.³ Cumulatively, Solidarity MN directed a quarter to a third of its grants to support refugee and asylum seeker populations.

Solidarity MN was built to advance a rapid and collective philanthropic response at a time of historic uncertainty. The coalition's members are working to incorporate shared lessons into their individual grantmaking strategies. Solidarity MN hopes to serve as a model for future philanthropic partnership across Minnesota.

For additional information on Solidarity MN, please visit www.solidaritymn.org or contact Allie Larson, Project Manager, at allie.larson@gtcuw.org.

1 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation, Bush Foundation, Catholic Community Foundation of Minnesota, F.R. Bigelow Foundation, GHR Foundation, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Headwaters Foundation for Justice, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, The McKnight Foundation, Minnesota Council on Foundations, Northwest Area Foundation, Pohlad Family Foundation, Minneapolis Foundation, The Saint Paul Foundation, United Ways of Minnesota, and Women’s Foundation of Minnesota.

2 About Us. (n.d.) Solidarity MN. Retrieved from: <http://solidaritymn.org/about-us/>.

3 Refugee-related grantees include: African Career Education and Resource, Inc. to support community organizing work, particularly for legal clinics serving African immigrants and refugees; Afro American Development Association for expanded adult education and employment services for African immigrants and refugees in Moorhead, MN; Asian American Organizing Project for voter engagement; Council on American-Islamic Relations, Minnesota Chapter, for a part-time Greater MN outreach coordinator outside of the Twin Cities; Karen Organization of Minnesota for legal services and citizenship classes for the Karen community in St. Paul and Marshall, MN; Release MN 8 for a full-time Director for civic organizing in MN and nationally; Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment for general program support; Somalia Rebuild Organization for organizational capacity building; and Young Leaders of Mankato for organizational capacity building.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation

Building Capacity to Increase Access to Justice for Low-Income Texans.

Founded in 1984, the Texas Access to Justice Foundation (TAJF) is the largest funder of civil legal aid to the poor in Texas, enabling more than 150,000 low-income Texans to gain access to free civil legal services annually. TAJF is motivated by the vision that all Texans, regardless of income, should have equal access to justice systems. It disburses grants using a series of state and public funding sources such as the Interest on Lawyers' Trust Account (IOLTA) program,¹ as well as private donations designated for specific purposes, such as disaster relief, or populations, such as veterans or victims of sexual violence. Its annual grants budget has recently ranged between \$40 and \$50 million, all of which supports legal services in the state. Approximately ten percent of its annual grants budget, or \$4 million, supports legal services to immigrants and asylum seekers.²

Supporting Flexible Civil Legal Services Infrastructure to Meet the Needs of Immigrants and Asylum Seekers.

In line with its overall mission to fund civil legal services to the poor and strengthen the civil legal aid infrastructure in Texas, TAJF has invested a combination of state funds and private donations to build flexible civil immigration legal capacity across the state. This strategy enables TAJF grantees to build their overall capacity and resiliency, in turn enabling them to adapt and respond to changing circumstances facing their low-income immigrant clients.

The state's unique context informs this strategy. Texas, whose Southern boundary accounts for two-thirds of the U.S.-Mexico border, has recently experienced a dramatic rise in asylum seekers, particularly from Central America, arriving at the border in search of protection. Texas is also home to the second-largest immigrant population in the nation and 1.5 million unauthorized immigrants. It is not surprising, therefore, that Texas held more deportation proceedings in FY 2017 than any other state, further demonstrating the need to strengthen the capacity of the state's under-resourced civil legal aid system. TAJF understands the challenges of supporting infrastructure across such a large state, from border areas and big cities where the legal infrastructure is strongest, to places across Texas with far less infrastructure to meet significant and growing needs.

Flexible multi-year grants that support indirect costs assure that legal services programs have the stability to take on a complex mix of casework. This permits TAJF grantees to both respond to the legal needs of long-term immigrant residents of Texas and address the dynamic circumstances of newly arriving immigrants and vulnerable asylum seekers, who often present difficult and time-consuming cases. Other than TAJF grantee South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project (ProBAR), a project of the American Bar Association Fund for Justice and Education, no other TAJF grantee organization in Texas focuses primarily on asylum work³. But with TAJF support, a number of TAJF grantees are able to take on those cases as part of a broader client base that assures greater sustainability for the organization and holistic legal representation for its immigrant clients. For example, in the late 1980s, TAJF began funding the Political Asylum Project of Austin (PAPA) to assist asylum seekers from Central America. Over time, programs like PAPA—since renamed American Gateways—diversified to serve a broader immigrant population, while maintaining the ability to serve asylum seekers.

Of the eleven TAJF grantees who provide immigration legal services, five engage in significant asylum work: American Gateways, ProBAR, Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES), St. Frances Cabrini Center for Immigrant Legal Assistance/Catholic Charities (St. Frances Cabrini), and Tahirih Justice Center (Tahirih). Those five grantees received 43 percent of the \$7.2 million in grants TAJF made to its immigration grantees from 2015-2017 and of the \$4 million in grants TAJF made in 2017-2018.

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Photo credit: Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)

In line with its overall mission to fund civil legal services to the poor and strengthen the civil legal aid infrastructure in Texas, TAJF has invested a combination of state funds and private donations to build flexible civil immigration legal capacity across the state.

Responding to Urgent Legal Service Needs for Asylum Seekers and Unaccompanied Children.

When the Central American unaccompanied child crisis came to a head in 2014, TAJF responded swiftly. Most of the thousands of child arrivals were fleeing violence or abuse and thus qualified to apply for asylum. After hearing from legal service providers that they were overwhelmed by the numbers of children in need of representation, TAJF convened calls with providers across the state, held an emergency board teleconference, and promptly raised and distributed significant rapid response funds. In July 2014, TAJF awarded \$700,000 in grants to five grantees (in descending order): RAICES, St. Frances Cabrini, ProBAR, Catholic Charities of Dallas Immigration Legal Services, and Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services. It also supported a Justice AmeriCorps Project for nine fellows over two years with a grant of \$630,000 (with the required match provided by Equal Justice Works).



Photo credit: Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)

Recent federal policy changes have left poor communities in the United States living in profound uncertainty and fear. These changes have impacted immigrants and asylum seekers in Texas adversely, compounding the effects of hostile state laws and policies. In spring 2017, TAJF convened its immigration grantees once again to identify the most pressing legal needs in the state. TAJF produced a report summarizing those findings, concluding that additional direct representation was needed, particularly for those in detention centers in Texas. Notably, representation of asylum seekers not in removal proceedings was identified as a gap in service delivery in the state, as was the need to publicize the one-year filing deadline for asylum claims. The report also found that almost half of unaccompanied children in Texas were still unrepresented and that many were applying for asylum on their own, leading to a major increase in the number of asylum hearings.

Based on the report, in the summer of 2017, TAJF's Executive Director requested an additional \$1.5 million challenge grant from the board of directors to target immigrant-specific legal services. Any matched dollars would supplement the foundation's annual grantmaking. To date, TAJF has raised approximately half of the matching funds through GCIR's Delivering on the Dream collaborative, which resulted in an additional \$1.6 million being deployed to fund immigration legal services across the state. TAJF is now working to raise the remainder of the match.

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- 1 Examples of state funding sources: the Basic Civil Legal Services Fund and the Office of Texas Attorney General Crime Victims Civil Legal Services Funds.
- 2 This amount understates TAJF's total grantmaking since it does not include matching funds obtained from partner foundations that TAJF disburses as grants. Moreover, other TAJF grantees also provide legal services to immigrants in limited situations, such as when they are victims of crime, violence or trafficking.
- 3 There may be programs in Texas that provide these services that TAJF does not fund and is not aware of.

For more information about TAJF's grantmaking, visit www.teajf.org or contact Jonathan Vickery, Associate Director and Director of Grants, at jvickery@teajf.org.

Unbound Philanthropy

Responding to a Humanitarian Crisis. In 2014 and 2015, the humanitarian crisis affecting unaccompanied children and families was unfolding in Central America and Mexico against the backdrop of an intensifying global refugee crisis in the Middle East and Europe. Unbound Philanthropy (Unbound), an independent private grantmaking foundation operating in the U.S. and the U.K, pondered how it could best respond, given its exclusive focus on migration, modest size,¹ and the enormity of the challenge. With an overarching mission to welcome newcomers and strengthen communities to ensure that all people can live with respect and dignity, regardless of where they were born, Unbound’s staff and Board felt compelled to develop a thoughtful grantmaking approach.

Building Integrated and Inclusive Grantmaking. In formulating its response, Unbound applied the same discipline and rigor it has used to define its niche within the migration grantmaking ecosystem. Its initial funding in the refugee space was to organizations that sought to improve public understanding of asylum seekers and refugees. It began cautiously with communications grants to Kids In Need of Defense and the Women’s Refugee Commission to address the dramatic increase in unaccompanied children arriving at the U.S. border from Central America, many seeking asylum due to violence in their home countries. Next, Unbound gave a grant to the International Refugee Assistance Program to provide legal aid for refugees, as well as systemic advocacy.

Unbound’s grantmaking approach to the refugee crisis crystallized in an article² for its newsletter, written by Taryn Higashi, Unbound’s executive director. Ms. Higashi reflected on the past divisions between organizations working on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers and those working on behalf of immigrants, and noted that “in recent conversations with leaders in these different fields, we are hearing a compelling case for bridging the divisions.” She remarked that while legal categories such as “refugee” or “asylum seeker” or “migrant” determine people’s trajectories, the human faces and experiences of the people to whom we attach these terms (often members of the same family) make the distinctions unproductive for programming, strategy, and advocacy.

Simultaneously, Unbound was working closely with other funders and grantees, including the funding intermediary known as the Four Freedoms Fund (FFF), to address this divide between immigrant and asylum/refugee-serving organizations, and the silos that had long limited philanthropic investment in refugee issues. Several of Unbound’s longstanding national immigrant-focused grantees³ had already begun to work on refugee and asylum issues, and stories began emerging of similar state-level efforts to break out of such silos. FFF reinforced this trend by funding a communications and organizing project in Texas to support refugee resettlement.

Setting up a Portfolio Rooted in a Core Foundation-Wide Strategy. In 2016, with some due diligence under its belt, Unbound tackled the nuts and bolts of how modest grantmaking could make a meaningful contribution to the refugee crisis. Based on its examination of how to bridge gaps between immigrant-, refugee-, and asylum seeker-focused organizations, Unbound developed an approach that leveraged the foundation’s prior learnings from its immigrants’ rights grantee portfolio, namely the use of civic engagement, leadership development, and targeted advocacy and communications. The first grantee was Church World Service (CWS), one of the United States’ nine national refugee resettlement networks. CWS was already blending its work for immigrants and refugees, as well as developing refugee leaders and organizing communities to support them. As the year unfolded, Unbound noticed growing synergies in funding work to support both immigrants and refugees, since these populations



Regional membership meeting of the Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC).
Photo credit: FLIC

While legal categories such as “refugee” or “asylum seeker” or “migrant” determine people’s trajectories, the human faces and experiences of these people make the distinctions unproductive for programming, strategy, and advocacy.

were now facing so many common challenges, a change from earlier times when refugees had enjoyed preferential treatment.

By 2017, Unbound identified strategic actors in the field who were interested in working across silos to build meaningful partnerships aimed at both rallying public support for refugees and strengthening the voices of refugees and their allies. The 2017 U.S. grants portfolio focused on refugees and asylum seekers totaled nearly \$460,000, a level likely to be maintained in the near term. The larger grants were to CWS, to train refugee leaders in community organizing, storytelling, and leadership for social change, inspired by the trainings that helped the DREAMers so successfully tell their stories to the public, and to a new national coalition and campaign called We are All America, based at the National Partnership for New Americans. This campaign was launched to strengthen welcoming efforts for refugees and asylum seekers nationally, grounded in state-level campaigns. Unbound also supported the campaign's work in Florida and Tennessee with grants to the Florida Immigrant Coalition and the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, and provided matching funds for a project in Arizona.⁴



Sudanese refugee sharing her story during a rally held at the one-year anniversary of the first executive order, featuring refugees speaking about its impact, and with support from City leaders.

Photo credit: Church World Service.

While building this new portfolio, Unbound examined its grantmaking foundation-wide and made several adjustments to foster a more holistic and integrated approach, encouraging grantees that had been primarily focused on other immigrant populations to also address refugee and asylum seeker challenges. Unbound also ensured that a major new initiative that it co-founded, the U.S.-based Pop Culture Collaborative, was designed to drive authentic, just narratives about people of color, immigrants, refugees, and Muslims in the media.

In the U.K., where Unbound has been active for almost 10 years, the program has had a more concerted approach to refugees. In 2015, Unbound deepened its programming in response to the refugee crisis. It helped establish a major new multi-million dollar initiative with the British Red Cross to improve refugee family reunion (working with partner charities and funders), supported Social Finance Ltd to promote community refugee sponsorship with the International Migration Initiative at the Open Society Foundations, and supported Citizens UK to improve the safety of refugee children. Unbound also supports refugee welcoming efforts, with grants to Student Action for Refugees and City of Sanctuary. While the refugee and asylum seeker portion of Unbound's U.K. portfolio is not easily quantifiable, it likely exceeds \$500,000 per year.

Eager to grow the resources directed at humanitarian migrants, Unbound actively cultivates colleagues to co-fund with, capitalizing on the outpouring of support by individuals and smaller foundations to the plight of refugees, and is increasing its communications and collaboration with funders interested in this work.

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Funders interested in learning more about Unbound Philanthropy's grantmaking should visit www.unboundphilanthropy.org. For more information about their approach in the United States, contact Ted Wang, Director, U.S. Program, at twang@unboundphilanthropy.org. For the United Kingdom, contact Will Somerville, Director, U.K. Program, at wsomerville@unboundphilanthropy.org.

1 In 2017, Unbound made \$6 million in grants in the United States and \$3.4 million in the United Kingdom.
 2 Reflections on the Global Refugee Crisis: Bridging Divides, Sharing a Commitment to All Humanity. (n.d.) Higashi, Taryn. Retrieved from: <https://www.unboundphilanthropy.org/reflections-global-refugee-crisis-bridging-divides-sharing-commitment-all-humanity>.
 3 Welcoming America, America's Voice Education Fund, United We Dream, and the National Immigration Law Center.
 4 In addition to the grantees listed, in 2017 Unbound also made grants to the Urban Institute, International Refugee Assistance Project, and Refugee Council USA.

Weingart Foundation

Evolving to Equity-Based Grantmaking in Southern California. Founded in 1951, the Weingart Foundation (Weingart) has relentlessly focused on the people and communities at greatest disadvantage in Southern California. A private, nonprofit foundation, Weingart makes grants to organizations in six Southern California counties: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, and Ventura. It is one of the largest foundations in the region, with an annual grants budget of approximately \$30 million, and immigration-related grantmaking ranging between \$2 and \$5 million each year.

In 2016, Weingart’s leadership concluded that despite the foundation’s efforts, as well as the work of others, challenges were nevertheless still mounting for many Southern California residents, and disparities were widening. In response, they committed to launching an equity agenda that would take steps to tackle the root causes that create and perpetuate inequity. To implement this new grantmaking vision, Weingart now makes all its programmatic decisions with the aim of advancing fairness, inclusion, and opportunity for all Southern Californians, particularly those communities struggling with persistent poverty and inequality.

Consistent, Strategic, and Responsive Support for Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers. Weingart has consistently included newcomers in its grantmaking, as many are low-income and underserved. It views Southern California’s newcomer population holistically, including immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Generally, Weingart provides unrestricted operating support grants to organizations for two years based on the requests for funding it receives. These grants are designed to support the effectiveness and infrastructure of nonprofits advancing equity.

Nevertheless, as a responsive funder, the foundation is always open to addressing emergent needs among vulnerable populations in Southern California, including newcomer communities. Weingart’s particular focus on asylum seekers and refugees began in earnest in 2014, as the unaccompanied child crisis unfolded along the Mexican border and impacted Los Angeles, home to one of the largest Central American communities in the nation. To address this humanitarian crisis, Weingart quickly combined forces with three other area funders (California Wellness Foundation, California Endowment, and California Healthcare Foundation) and the City of Los Angeles to launch a unique pooled rapid response fund at the California Community Foundation. The Our Children Relief Fund sought to create wrap-around mental health, legal, and educational support services for unaccompanied children and raised \$1.3 million in total from foundations and individual donors. Weingart made its contribution of \$150,000 in aligned and pooled funding in September of 2014.

In 2015, Weingart continued to focus on the crisis, making a grant of \$250,000 over two years to St. John’s Well Child and Family Center to create a coordinated, holistic, and trauma-informed care system to support the complex needs of recently arrived unaccompanied youth. In addition, it made other grants that year to support asylum seekers and refugees—to Khmer Girls In Action, Program for Torture Victims, and Public Counsel (for the latter, as a subset of its general legal work).

In recognition of the particular challenges facing newcomer populations, Weingart added a strategic programmatic focus on immigrant integration in 2015, in addition to the grants it was already making through its responsive funding program.



Photo credit: Khmer Girls in Action.

Weingart now makes all its programmatic decisions with the aim of advancing fairness, inclusion, and opportunity for all Southern Californians, particularly those communities struggling with persistent poverty and inequality.

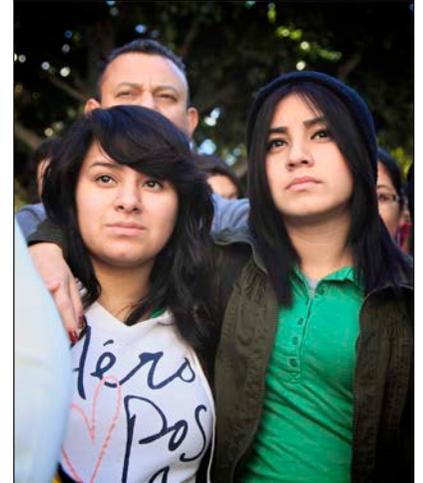
Ramping up Strategic and Responsive Investments for Vulnerable Newcomer Communities.

Beginning in late 2016, Weingart felt compelled to respond to the dramatic threats from federal policy reversals and heightened enforcement activity that would adversely impact immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Southern California. The foundation contributed \$1 million dollars to the LA Justice Fund (the “Fund”), a new \$7.4 million public-private fund dedicated to providing free legal representation to individuals in detention and facing deportation. The Fund includes support to unaccompanied children as a priority population. Weingart took additional action early in 2017, making upwards of \$500,000 in grants to Catholic Charities, Council on American-Islamic Relations California, Program for Torture Victims, Khmer Girls in Action, and African Communities Public Health Coalition, who serve refugees or asylum seekers as a core part of their work. Weingart also made \$500,000 in rapid response grants to shore up the capacity of a few of their grantees at a time of unprecedented challenges, including CARECEN, Public Counsel and Immigrant Defenders. At least some part of these grants targeted asylum seekers and unaccompanied children.¹

As 2017 unfolded, against the backdrop of relentlessly harsh federal actions, Weingart refined its priorities with respect to serving the area’s newcomer population, placing additional emphasis on refugees and asylum seekers (as well as low-income workers and undocumented youth). After convening a listening session with the area’s four remaining refugee resettlement organizations (Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, Interfaith Refugee & Immigrant Service; International Institute of Los Angeles; International Rescue Committee; and Catholic Charities of Los Angeles), Weingart learned that the agencies were struggling to adapt to dramatic funding shortfalls resulting from cuts in the domestic refugee resettlement program, new vetting processes, and travel restrictions. Based on estimates developed by Catholic Charities, in FY2016, approximately 6,000 refugees were resettled in Southern California. That number shrank to 3,000 in FY2017, and has dwindled to just 117 refugees in the first four months of FY2018. As local resettlement organizations have limited capacity to fundraise and expand their revenue streams, Weingart is seeking to support them with unrestricted funds in order to improve their organizational capacity to fundraise and diversify their sources of support, as well as advocate on behalf of refugee communities. Weingart is also partnering with Southern California Grantmakers, a regional association of grantmakers, to raise awareness of these issues in the funder community and increase support for the local refugee resettlement infrastructure. A participant in a number of philanthropy tables, Weingart continues to look for ways to support the growing voice of refugee communities.



Attendees listen to a presentation about the Central American Minors (CAM) program expansion. Photo credit: International Institute of Los Angeles.



Unaccompanied children from Central America who received support from St. John’s Well Child and Family Center in Los Angeles, CA. Photo credit: St. John’s.

Weingart continues to look for ways to support the growing voice of refugee communities.

For additional information about Weingart’s programs, visit www.weingartfnd.org or contact Vy Nguyen, Director of Special Projects and Communications, at vnguyen@weingartfnd.org.

¹ Weingart also made \$350,000 in grants to support grassroots immigration organizations in the Inland Region and supported the Fund for Santa Barbara with \$122,000 to re-grant to groups working with immigrants in the Central Coast.

About GCIR

Founded in 1990, GCIR works with nearly 130 member foundations and, each year, reaches over 1,000 funders to inform and engage them on a wide range of immigration and immigrant integration issues. With offices in Sebastopol and Oakland, California, as well as staff based in the San Francisco Bay Area and Washington, D.C., GCIR serves all parts of the country and works closely with funders in both traditional immigrant destinations and newer gateways. Among its major accomplishments, GCIR has convened a table of California funders for the past decade, guiding \$43 million in funding. GCIR also helped launch and currently supports 20 funding collaboratives in 15 states that have deployed nearly \$55 million to expand the legal services infrastructure across the country.

GCIR's services enable philanthropy to adapt to policy developments in the United States, respond to trends in global migration, and engage with cross-sector partners to address racism, xenophobia, and other injustices that prevent individuals from reaching their full potential. By encouraging funders to take risks and support cutting-edge efforts in their communities, we seek to usher in a new norm for immigration funding across the country that advances social, economic, and racial equity for all.

Join GCIR

Membership dues make it possible for GCIR to provide vital services to grantmakers and guide timely and strategic philanthropic responses to address the most pressing issues facing immigrants and refugees.

The GCIR member network—now nearly 130 members strong and counting—is a community of funders that recognize the immigrant and refugee dimensions of their grantmaking.

GCIR membership is a tangible demonstration of commitment to building an inclusive and equitable society. Members receive exclusive access to individual consultations, a nationwide network of peer foundations, and discounts on GCIR programming.

Contact Stephanie Martinez (stephanie@gcir.org) for more information.



As ICE increases enforcement operations in California, our site visit to the West County Detention Center in Richmond (in partnership with the Bay Area Legal Services Funders Network) gave funders insights on living conditions, the impact of family separation, and the dire need for legal representation for immigrant detainees.

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