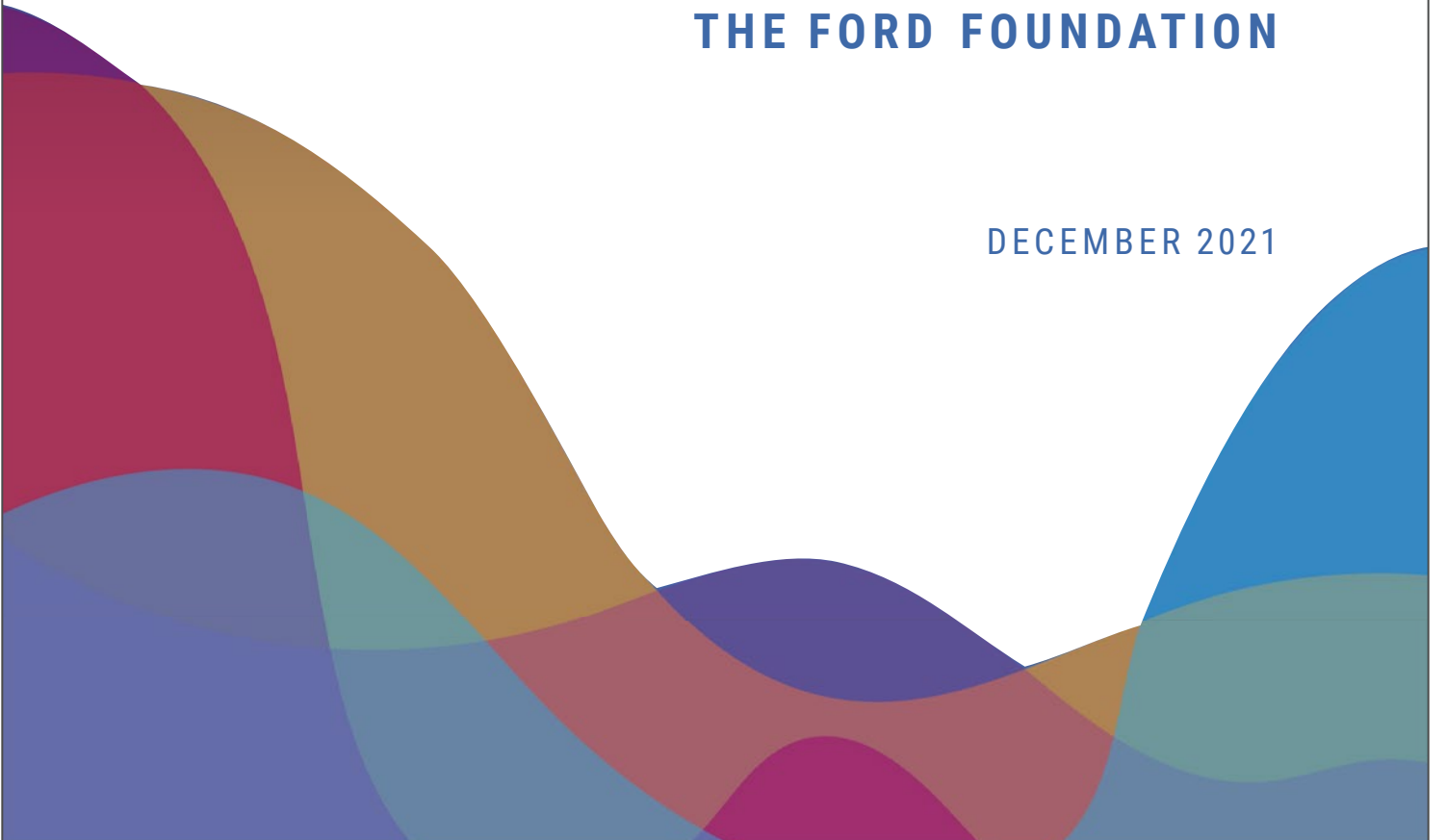


Evaluation of the **Immigrant Rights** Portfolio Strategy (2015–2020)

Summary Report

PREPARED FOR
THE FORD FOUNDATION

DECEMBER 2021



Introduction to the Evaluation

In late 2020, the Ford Foundation commissioned an evaluation of its 2015–2020 Immigrant Rights portfolio strategy. The evaluation offers an independent assessment of accomplishments and challenges experienced by Ford’s immigrant rights grantees and the Foundation itself in efforts to reform immigration detention, deportation, border enforcement, state and local law enforcement collaboration with federal authorities, and immigration consequences of criminal convictions. While the evaluation was principally intended to inform the Foundation’s decisionmaking for the portfolio’s next strategy period, Ford hopes that this report of key evaluation findings also will be useful to its grantees and others within the immigrant rights movement.

The following overarching “evaluation questions” framed the evaluation:

On federal-level advocacy:

- 1) What have been federal grantees’ principal accomplishments in enforcement reform during this Ford strategy period?
- 2) In what areas did Ford’s leadership make particularly important contributions to enforcement reform approaches or tactics?
- 3) How might the outcomes of this period inform Ford’s ongoing efforts to center enforcement reform goals within the broader immigrant justice field?

On state-level advocacy:

- 1) Have Ford’s principal investments in state-based advocacy furthered Ford’s overall Immigrant Rights portfolio objectives?
- 2) What lessons does this period provide for Ford’s future state-oriented enforcement reform work?

Substantive work on the evaluation began in the winter of 2021. Evaluators worked closely with Ford’s Immigrant Rights portfolio program officer, Mayra Peters Quintero, to get her views about the rationale for and implementation of Ford’s 2015–2020 strategy. We reviewed Ford strategy documents and a selection of grant reports. We conducted 38 interviews from late March through late April 2021 on the evaluation topics. The interviewees included Ford staff and grantees; other immigrant rights movement leaders and experts; staff of ally organizations active on immigrant rights; funders in the immigrant rights field; and congressional staffers.

Background to Ford's 2015–2020 Immigrant Rights Portfolio Strategy

Approximately 13.7 percent of the US population was an immigrant in 2019 (over 44.9 million people). Between 10.5 and 12 million of these immigrants lack stable legal status, with sixty percent of that group having lived in the country for 10 years or more. Congress has failed for decades to reform immigration law to meet America's modern needs. Therefore, for most undocumented people, there is no near-term solution; no "line" to join in order to reside securely with their US families.

Instead of making it possible for undocumented residents to come into compliance with immigration law, each year Congress appropriates billions of dollars to permit the US Department of Homeland Security to remove hundreds of thousands of immigrants from the United States. Tens of thousands are detained

every day in prison-like facilities that are remote from family, friends, and legal counsel while their deportation cases are decided. In Fiscal Year 2019 alone, Homeland Security removed over 530,000 immigrants, and detained an average of 50,000 immigrants each day. Black immigrants are disproportionately impacted.

While the plight of undocumented immigrants has worsened, harsh immigration enforcement has become so deeply ingrained in the federal government's daily operations, and the national political discourse, that many Americans now take for granted that detention, deportation, and a militarized border should be central tools of US immigration policy.

Since the 1980s, the Ford Foundation has led philanthropic support for a growing pro-immigrant movement striving for an end to criminalization of immigrants and militarization of the Southern border, and creation of pro-family and rights-respecting immigration policies. Beginning in the early 2000s, Ford has funded directly impacted immigrant community groups that have demanded reforms to immigration enforcement at the federal level. To better support state and local immigrant rights activists, Ford joined with Carnegie Corporation of New York, Open Society Foundations, and other national funders to launch the Four Freedoms Fund (FFF) donor collaborative at NEO Philanthropy in 2003. In 2011–2012, Ford helped spur philanthropic colleagues to establish FFF's ongoing initiative to support enforcement reform efforts. Ford provided enhanced funding and supported the hiring of a dedicated program officer at FFF to lead these efforts.

Introductory Note

Many of the grantees of Ford's Immigrant Rights portfolio during this period worked to reform immigration policy, sometimes through legislative, budgetary or other public policy processes. No Ford Foundation funding was earmarked to support any lobbying activity as defined by the Internal Revenue Code. In addition, no Ford Foundation funding was used for any political campaign intervention as defined by the Internal Revenue Code. Each grantee, its proposed activities, and its grant reports after completion, have been carefully reviewed by the Ford Foundation's program and legal teams to ensure compliance with the relevant rules governing private foundations.

Immigrant Rights Portfolio

Theory of Change

Ford became increasingly convinced in 2013-2014 that immigrants' demands for family unity and an end to harsh enforcement would not soon be met through a multi-faceted large-scale immigration reform package in Congress (generally termed "comprehensive immigration reform"),* but that policy-reform tactics used by directly affected immigrants showed promise. The revised Immigrant Rights portfolio strategy therefore focused on enforcement reform advocates and their goals, although Ford also supported the work of civil rights and law reform organizations that had been Ford grantees in prior years. In centering reforms to detention, deportation, and the militarized Southern border more than a year before President Trump's election, Ford was the first major US philanthropy to establish as its principal immigrant rights focus ending the criminalization of immigrants.

Assumptions Underlying Ford's 2015–2020 Immigrant Rights Portfolio Strategy

Ford's 2015–2020 strategy was based on the following assumptions about what would be required to achieve pro-immigrant reforms without escalating the criminalization of immigrants in the interior and militarization of the Southern border.

- To achieve its aims, the immigrant rights movement would ultimately need to be stronger and more influential with policymakers and the public. In particular, the movement would need to supplant opponents' politically potent anti-immigrant messaging with resonant humanitarian and family unity narratives.
- Organizations that spoke for people directly affected by criminalization and militarization would need to be central players in debates on Capitol Hill and in federal agency advocacy. Among others, youth brought to the United States as children (known as "Dreamers"), Black immigrants, and border communities and their sensible strategies for border management needed to be more prominent in DC.
- State and local immigrant organizations needed support that would enable them to deepen and expand policy development, organizing, and mobilizing. Among other local objectives, work to disrupt the arrest-to-deportation pipeline would immediately improve immigrants' lives and eventually transform the policy climate in other jurisdictions, as well as nationally.
- Federal regulatory reform and other non-legislative policy efforts could promote the rights of undocumented immigrants until prospects for congressional action improved. This would require a combination of advocacy, litigation, organizing/mobilizing, and communications strategies and investments.

* Others within the immigrant rights movement shared this general assessment. In 2015, The Atlantic Philanthropies commissioned an Innovation Network study on Atlantic's ten-year \$70-million investment in comprehensive immigration reform campaigns (largely undertaken with 501(c)(4) dollars). In the foreword to the resulting report, Atlantic's CEO noted a critique by some observers that "more people might have gotten relief faster using an incremental strategy" as opposed to betting on one large comprehensive legislative effort. Johanna Morariu, Katherine Athanasiades, and Veena Pankaj, Innovation Network, ["Advocacy, Politics and Philanthropy: A Reflection on a Decade of Immigration Reform Advocacy, 2004–2014,"](#) May 2015, pp. iv–v.

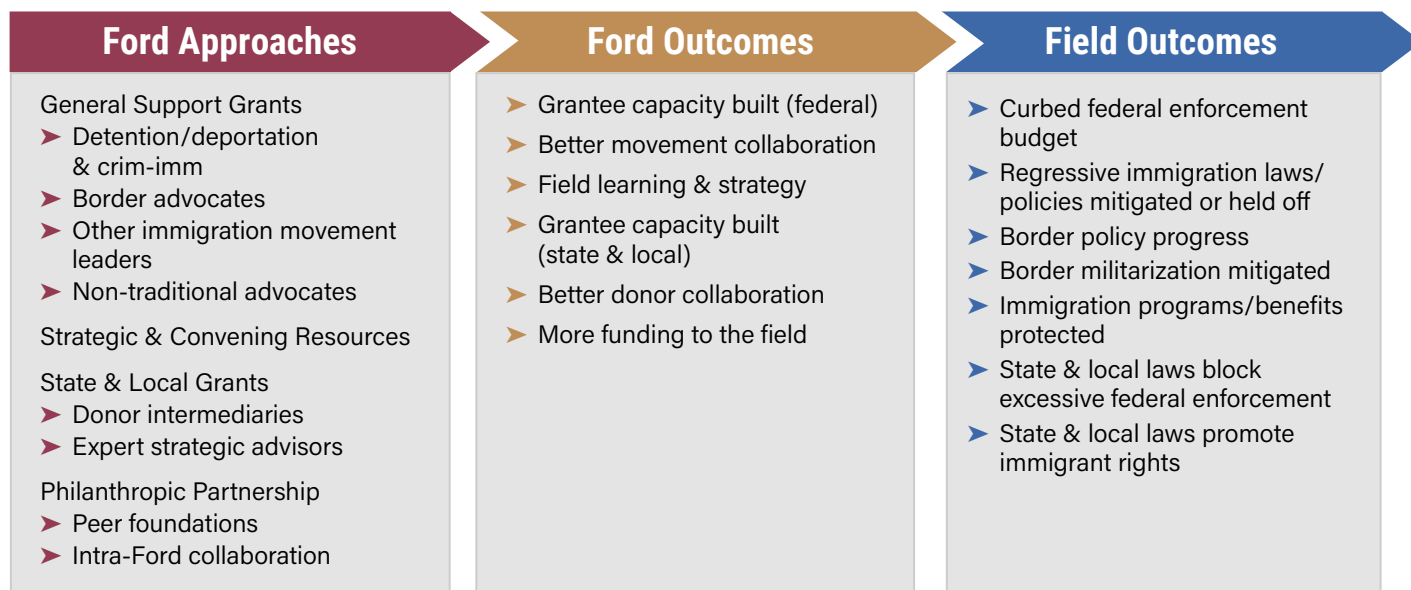
- Forceful and at times even confrontational advocacy was more likely than traditional behind-the-scenes negotiation to erode federal policymakers' unquestioning support of excessive enforcement. (Policies such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a temporary legal status achieved by and for undocumented immigrant youth, suggested this.)

Goals of Ford's 2015–2020 Immigrant Rights Portfolio Strategy

Ford supported grantees' progress toward these medium-term outcomes:

- Punitive federal immigration enforcement policies are blocked or rolled back.
- Congressional appropriations for immigration enforcement in the interior and at the border are decreased.
- Directly impacted communities play key roles in federal policy deliberations.
- The immigrant rights movement as a whole, and progressive allies, prioritize immigration enforcement, and work toward enforcement reform goals.
- Harmful narratives (framing "undocumented immigrants as criminals" and "border crossers as terrorist suspects") are successfully challenged. Pro-immigrant narratives are developed and begin shifting the terms of debate.
- States and localities get out of the business of supporting federal immigration enforcement, instead adopting their own rights-promoting laws and policies.

2015–2020 IMMIGRANT RIGHTS STRATEGY: ASSUMPTIONS, APPROACHES & SUMMARY OUTCOMES



Environmental Factors/Assumptions

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Congressional passage of relief for undocumented unlikely in near term ➤ Overcoming narrative of out-of-control border needed to achieve federal reform ➤ State & local reforms can protect immigrants until federal reforms become feasible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Administrative & regulatory policies can mitigate harsh enforcement until policy climate improves ➤ Bold advocacy most likely to succeed in achieving whatever gains are possible ➤ Major federal progress is contingent on power shifting to make enforcement less of a bargaining chip |
|--|--|

Approaches Pursued by Ford to Achieve its 2015–2020 Immigrant Rights Portfolio Goals

Grantmaking and Nongrantmaking Support to Ford Grantees

- ▶ General support for organizations representing immigrants and others directly impacted by harsh immigration enforcement, including immigrant youth (“Dreamers”), Black immigrants, and border groups.
- ▶ General support for longstanding Ford grantees using mutually reinforcing advocacy-policy change tactics, including litigation, to achieve enforcement reform and other immigrant community priorities.
- ▶ Grantmaking to address some of the movement’s strategic gaps and challenges. This included persuading allies to increase their support of enforcement reform, and supporting pro-immigrant efforts by the faith- business- and law-enforcement sectors. It also included discrete narrative change projects.

Philanthropic Partnership

- ▶ Provide funding and other leadership-level support to donor collaboratives at NEO Philanthropy, Borealis Philanthropy, and the Proteus Fund.
- ▶ Collaborate with other Ford initiatives, including States Working Group and arts and culture programs, where joint funding could support the achievement of mutual goals.

Support for Expert Strategic Advice at Key Junctures of Grantee Campaigns

- ▶ Commission expert analyses of key federal policy episodes; convene grantees for learning sessions.
- ▶ Underwrite experts to provide grantees, especially at the state and local level, with relevant strategic expertise on issues such as state and local policymaking; criminal law-immigration law intersection; and community mobilizing.

Findings

Guide to the Findings Section

This section describes four principal categories of policy change outcomes to which grantees contributed during the 2015–2020 period, and the Ford Foundation’s contributions to grantees’ work in these areas. These outcome areas are federal legislation; federal regulations and policy; litigation; and state and local policy change (achieved through various tactics). The paper then discusses the interim policy change outcomes of development of political will; collaboration (partnership); organizing and mobilizing (public will); and communications and narrative (visibility). A further introduction to interim outcomes is found on page 12.

Federal Legislative Accomplishments

Ford’s capacity and strategy support during the 2015–2021 strategy period permitted grantees and their allies to hold the line against a vast expansion of harsh enforcement in the US interior. It assisted border organizations to push back against militarization measures and helped them successfully promote pro-border policies. (No Ford Foundation funding was earmarked to support any lobbying activity as defined by the Internal Revenue Code.)

- An unprecedented curbing of Congress’s substantial year-over-year appropriations increases for enforcement during the strategy period. For example, FY 2021 appropriations legislation reduced detention beds by 11,000 and reduced detention and transportation funding by approximately \$450 million.
- The adoption in January 2021 of the Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act, with provisions for life-saving rescue beacons.

Policy Change Outcomes

Immigrant rights advocates and organizers achieved substantial policy successes at the federal, state, and local levels during the 2015–2020 Ford strategy period, and also fell short of some goals. While we analyzed many of these outcomes in the course of the evaluation, this report is able to list only a very limited number. It is weighted toward federal-level outcomes to which Ford grantees contributed.

Given the mostly hostile political climate of the 2015–2020 period, the report describes *policy progress* achievements, as well as successful *policy defense*. We looked to the writing on “defensive advocacy” by Liz Ruedy of Democracy Fund, and Sarah Stachowiak and Joel Gutierrez of ORS Impact, for this analysis. Please see their publications listed on page 28.

We are aware that—as is always the case with advocacy—Ford grantees were rarely solely responsible for policy outcomes. The report thus merely seeks to identify important *contributions* by grantees to outcomes achieved by the immigrant rights movement as a whole.

“ Shockingly, in January of 2021, we were able to get near unanimous support in both the Senate and the House, for a bipartisan bill that would place rescue beacons in the desert in remote areas and authorizing funding for forensic work to identify the many thousands of remains... So that was very, very important to us. And that was co-led by Harris and Cornyn.

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

- ▶ Thwarting the Trump Administration's border wall-building, and keeping it to a mere seven percent expansion of existing barriers.
- ▶ Ensuring that 5.5 million members of mixed-status immigrant families would qualify for federal COVID relief, despite having been left out of congressional pandemic funding prior to December 2020.
- ▶ Obtaining House passage in March 2021 of the Dream and Promise Act of 2021 (HR6). HR 6 provides eventual pathways to permanent residence for Dreamers and recipients of two types of temporary status that provide certain immigrants with work authorization and protection from deportation: Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure. It may form the template for future legislation.

Ford contributions to grantee outcomes. Ford's early and consistent support for organizations representing directly affected immigrants was a catalyst for funders and advocates to look beyond the elusive goal of comprehensive reform to consider enforcement reform as a priority worthy of significant focus and effort. In addition to crucial funding of advocates and organizers, Ford's Immigrant Rights portfolio organized learning sessions at key campaign moments (particularly in 2018-2019), underwriting the services of strategy and communications experts.

“ Mayra [Peters Quintero] and Rini [Chakraborty, the longtime coordinator of enforcement reform work at Four Freedoms Fund and now FFF's director] have really done comprehensive, robust intervention funding on this issue—from detention, to the border to fighting at the federal level to limit the amount of resources that are available. They've taken both the thought leadership and [taken] this network of enforcement-focused groups and really turbo boosted their capacity. This is a sea change, and I'm telling you there is no way that that would have happened without Mayra and Rini's work.

—PHILANTHROPY SECTOR

Federal Regulatory and Administrative Policy Accomplishments

The Trump Administration sought to deter both legal and unauthorized migration by systematically exploiting weaknesses in longstanding immigration regulations and policies. Grantees and other movement actors responded to these threats with intensive and effective integrated advocacy and mobilization efforts. Interviewees pointed to this work as a highlight of the strategy period.

- ▶ An outpouring of opposition led by Ford grantees (including litigation by some grantees) forced the Trump Administration to substantially roll back its policy of separating immigrant parents and children arriving at the Southern border—a policy that resulted in many thousands of immigrant family members being lost to one another, some permanently. This modification to the policy informally known as “family separations” likely kept thousands

of additional immigrant families from being torn apart during the remainder of the Trump Administration's tenure.

- ▶ Recipients of "DACA" (a temporary immigration status for undocumented immigrant youth) and TPS holders mounted successful integrated organizing/mobilizing, litigation, and media campaigns to stave off deportation of more than 600,000 DACA recipients and over a quarter-million TPS holders for a period of years.
- ▶ Ford grantees and other advocates and organizers delayed implementation and compelled modifications to the Trump Administration's "Muslim Bans." Banning the entry of immigrants from certain majority-Muslim countries was a key Trump Administration policy priority, but grantee work forced the administration to amend the bans over a period of months until the administration devised a plan that the US Supreme Court was willing to uphold. Calling these policies "a stain on our national conscience" and "inconsistent with our long history of welcoming people of all faiths," the Biden Administration announced the lifting of much of the bans in January 2021.
- ▶ Leadership by Ford grantees produced an extraordinary nationwide cross-sector mobilization to substantially delay Trump Administration "wealth test" regulations, known as "public charge," that would have made it impossible for many low-income immigrants to reunify with family members. The delay permitted advocates to help immigrants prepare for the impact of this harsh and unprecedented change to longstanding policy. At the urging of immigrant communities and their supporters, the Biden Administration has begun to undo the Trump Administration's public charge regulatory expansion.
- ▶ The Biden Administration in its first days issued an executive order to re-establish pre-Trump Administration immigration enforcement priorities. The Biden Administration announced that it intends to focus on arrest and removal of people who pose a danger to US national security, public safety, or border security; and discourage immigration arrests of peaceful protesters and those asserting labor rights.

Ford contributions to grantee outcomes. Ford sustained crucial advocacy at the administrative agency/regulatory and policy level—supporting work by Dreamers, TPS holders, and the Families Belong Together and Protecting Immigrant Families campaigns (which worked to roll back "family separations" and the "public charge" wealth test rules, respectively). This advocacy agenda was especially crucial during the portfolio strategy period, given the Trump Administration's dedication to limiting immigration and immigrants' rights.

Litigation Accomplishments

Ford funded immigrant rights litigation both directly and through donor intermediaries, especially Borealis Philanthropy, during the strategy period. These litigation investments supported close collaboration between immigrant rights litigators and groups undertaking organizing and mobilizing. Funding enabled litigators and their allies to take quick and effective action to counter anti-immigrant policies (and to protect existing favorable policies).

- ▶ Litigation, together with extensive organizing, mobilization, and media work by grantees and many allies, resulted in federal court rulings, including a June 2020 Supreme Court decision, that temporarily reinstated a program that provides temporary immigration protections and work authorization to undocumented immigrant youth (the "DACA" program).

- Litigation, combined with the first major intensive mobilization of directly impacted TPS holders, delayed termination of this temporary immigration status program for over a quarter-million immigrants. Eventually, the Biden Administration entered office and extended TPS for these groups.
- Grantee organizers and mobilizers worked closely with litigators on ending family separations in 2018 and making separated families whole.
- The Trump Administration's bans on the entry of immigrants from certain Muslim-majority countries (the "Muslim Bans") were enjoined by federal courts several times over a period of almost 18 months before most of their provisions were upheld by the US Supreme Court in June 2018. Litigation pressured the Trump Administration to narrow the scope of the bans that they eventually put into effect.
- For more than a year, federal court challenges delayed implementation of wealth test ("public charge") regulations that threatened the family reunification of low-income immigrants. The Biden Administration announced a rollback of most public charge changes in early 2021.
- A lawsuit by Ford grantees challenging the Trump Administration's discontinuation of a type of temporary immigration status ("Deferred Enforced Departure") for Liberians was a crucial complement to advocates' efforts to secure enactment of legislation in 2019 that created a pathway to permanent residence for this group.

Litigation during the period also halted or modified many administration policies (such as forced labor in immigration detention centers, and retaliatory deportation of immigrant labor organizers) that harmed the rights and well-being of immigrants but did not have the same media visibility as the issues listed above.

Ford contributions to grantee outcomes. The Immigration Litigation Fund at Borealis Philanthropy, established through Ford's initiative, gave other funders an avenue for critical new philanthropic investment in litigation. It helped make litigation the "tip of the spear" in defending immigrant rights, spotlighting the illegality of Trump Administration actions and protecting pro-immigrant policies in states.

Accomplishments at State and Local Policy Levels

Ford's support through donor intermediaries such as Four Freedoms Fund enabled immigrant rights organizations to strengthen their capacity in ways that supported the state and local level advocacy-policy change achievements outlined below. (Support to Four Freedoms Fund was provided via grants to NEO Philanthropy, a 501(c)(3) public charity. No Ford funding to NEO, other donor intermediaries, or to other immigrant movement grantees was earmarked to support any lobbying activity as defined by the Internal Revenue Code.)

- In California, the passage of the 2016 TRUTH Act (AB 2792) and the 2017 Values Act (SB 54), limiting law enforcement collaboration with US ICE. Taken together with pending legislation (AB 937, the California Vision Act), this body of law would virtually end deportation from interior California by closing off the arrest-to-deportation pipeline.
- Passage of bills in Illinois (SB 31), Washington State (SB 5497), and Colorado (HB 1124) that, in various ways, limited the arrest-to-deportation pipelines in those states. Local

jurisdictions across the country, many in “purple” and “red” states, similarly limited police-ICE collaboration.

“*Some of the most important policy work that writ large was done by attorneys general, sometimes governors, sometimes at the local level to limit entanglement with ICE. [It] was showing that from the outset that states and localities were there for their immigrant community members. So I think it helped create more of a sense of trust in state and local government on immigration issues—which I think is something that was important for that period and also to set up long-term power building and transformational change.*”

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

- ▶ Following an epic battle in 2018, advocates in Oregon successfully protected a sanctuary law dating from 1987, defeating by a 63 to 37 percent margin a ballot measure to repeal it.
- ▶ In Texas, the cities of Austin and San Marcos adopted cite-and-release or divert-and-release measures that keep immigrants out of the deportation pipeline and limit the impact of the criminal justice system on citizens.
- ▶ Closing or stopping the opening of immigration detention centers in Georgia, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and California.
- ▶ Persuading a half-dozen major financial institutions, including Wells Fargo and JPMorgan Chase, to stop financing for-profit prisons: an important impediment for an immigration detention industry that is very highly leveraged.

Ford contributions to grantee outcomes. Ford’s Immigrant Rights portfolio spurred philanthropic colleagues in 2011–2012 to establish a dedicated funding mechanism at Four Freedoms Fund to support grantee efforts to curb state and local government collaboration in arrests, detentions, and deportations. Ford remains a key leader in that initiative. In addition to being a principal funder of state and local enforcement reform advocacy, Four Freedoms Fund also helps immigrant justice funders for whom enforcement reform isn’t a main focus to learn how harsh enforcement affects their philanthropic goals. An interviewee from the advocacy sector described the way they’d observed Mayra Peters Quintero serving her peer grantmakers in that forum, saying Mayra “inspired others to take action through being able to articulate the perspective of grantees; make it real and urgent; and lift up solutions that give people faith that these issues are worth investing in.”

During the strategy period the Immigrant Rights portfolio worked closely with other Ford programs, including the States Working Group, especially in Texas and Florida. These investments helped to better equip tenacious local organizations to advocate for community priorities.

Ford also funded strategic advisors with regional- or national-level expertise to advise state and local immigrant organizers and advocates. Strategic advisors, including Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, National Immigration Law Center, Asian Americans Advancing Justice/Asian Law Caucus, Immigrant Legal Resource Center, Mijente, National Immigrant Justice Center, Immigrant Justice Network, and National Day Laborer Organizing Network, provided critical assists to groups seeking to identify policy openings and shape effective policy proposals and strategies.

Development of Political Will

Grantees' efforts helped open many policymaker's eyes to the harms of overly harsh enforcement and spur them to become champions for reform. These "political will" impacts represent some of the most important advocacy outcomes of the strategy period. (No Ford Foundation funding was earmarked to support any lobbying activity as defined by the Internal Revenue Code. In addition, no Ford Foundation funding was used for any political campaign intervention as defined by the Internal Revenue Code.)

- ▶ 125 members of Congress went on the record during the Trump Administration calling for reduced immigration enforcement appropriations.

“*And when we do congressional briefings, when we have done the storytelling, where we've done our actions, the compelling case we're making is around the impact of deportation and detention. So when you have a growing number of members of Congress siding with us on the need to decrease DHS budgets for deportation and detention, that's a big shift.*

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

- ▶ Helping to block a FY 2018 appropriations bill that would have secured modest status relief for Dreamers in exchange for harmful changes to other immigration categories, additional immigration enforcement, and border wall funding. In early 2019, heading off another flawed bargain that would have severely restricted asylum and diversity visas in return for status for some undocumented immigrants.
- ▶ On enforcement tools and mechanisms, Rep. Chuy Garcia's New Way Forward Act (HR 536) would, among other things, eliminate mandatory detention and prohibit deportation on the basis of criminal convictions older than five years. This groundbreaking bill has 41 co-sponsors.
- ▶ Several candidates for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, including Joe Biden, incorporated grantees' data, analyses, and reform ideas.
- ▶ Enforcement reform grantees, former grantee staff, and policymaker allies of grantees participated to an unprecedented extent in the Biden Administration transition. This likely influenced the incoming administration to declare its deportation moratorium.
- ▶ Grantee mobilizing and advocacy created sufficient policy momentum to persuade the Biden Administration in early 2021 to lift many of the previous administration's bans on immigration from Muslim-majority countries. This advocacy also supported approval by the US House of the NO BAN Act in both 2020 and 2021.

Interim Outcomes

Pages 12 through 17 of this report address "interim" outcomes achieved by grantees. Interim outcomes are changes that help create sufficient salience for policy issues or proposals to be considered on a legislative, regulatory, or judicial docket. The specific interim outcome categories we used were *changes in policymakers' willingness to act* (political will outcomes), *grantees' collaborations with other advocates/organizers* (partnership outcomes), *organizing/mobilizing* (public will outcomes) and *communications/narrative* (visibility outcomes). While grantees accomplished many interim outcomes at the state and local levels, the content of this section reflects the evaluation's principal focus on federal level outcomes.

- Several grantees indicated that business interests worked through their contacts to mitigate anti-immigrant legislation in states such as North Carolina, Florida, and Texas. In Florida, for example, business-sector advocates helped blunt the reach of SB 664 in 2020. As a result, Florida law continues to exempt most private employers from “mandatory E-Verify,” an employment-authorization verification system operated by the US Department of Homeland Security that has been criticized for being burdensome and fostering employment discrimination.
- Several types of political will outcomes were achieved through litigation-related mobilizing and communications. Mobilizations and media undertaken around court hearings helped inform elected officials that regulatory policy changes (such as TPS termination) threatened real and imminent harm to immigrant communities. In a more general way, mobilizations and media enhanced the judicial branch’s awareness about the real people whose well-being and futures were at risk from policy changes being challenged in court.

“We were very, very strategic about how we were using the litigation. When we had [court] hearings we were connecting with organizers to amplify it. Who was telling the stories in the press and at rallies? What was the narrative that we were trying to shape?”

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

“[Judges] aren’t a typical advocacy target. The way that we thought about this is that keeping the issue in the press and keeping the urgency and the conversation constant—which we could only do through action-taking and mobilization—will be our way to pressure justices. Because they read the newspaper, their clerks read the newspaper.”

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

Collaboration (Partnership) Outcomes

Enhanced role of directly impacted immigrants in federal advocacy. Directly affected people and their organizations played leadership roles in every major policy campaign and initiative described in this report. Across the board, directly affected people had more visibility and voice than previously. By the end of the strategy period, a number of national immigrant justice campaigns incorporated enforcement reform actors within their leadership and otherwise increased their attention to enforcement priorities.

“The movement has shifted to the grassroots. And I don’t mean state and local when I say that, I mean groups that are base-building... And so that center of gravity has changed. If you look at the makeup of the executive committee of We Are Home versus the executive committee of A4C, you will see the shift right there.”

—PHILANTHROPY SECTOR

Support for enforcement reform among immigrant movement organizations. Immigrant movement organizations across the political spectrum became more supportive of enforcement reform priorities during the strategy period. Fewer groups in the wider movement were willing to publicly suggest that expanded enforcement was the realistic political price for legalizing the undocumented—a change from prior eras in which this trade-off was a feature of proposals challenged by just a few steadfast enforcement reformers.

“In the debate over legalization and using increased enforcement as a trade-off, I think most groups have shifted. It also makes it more difficult to pass legalization, of course. But if the [desired] effect was to ward off those kinds of trade-offs, I think that was resoundingly accomplished.

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

According to many interviewees, the Immigrant Movement Visioning Process (“IMVP”), which received substantial early resources from Ford, strengthened relationships among leaders of immigrant movement organizations. Interviewees said that skills honed through IMVP helped movement leaders to hold more fruitful conversations, even if such deliberations did not create consensus on specific policy proposals or tactics.

“What [IMVP] generated is that when people disagree, they could call each other up. I do not believe that the process created an alignment on how to fight for immigrants, but it created an understanding that we have a shared vision of what we want to see in this country for immigrants and for non-immigrants alike.

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

Allied organizations mobilized against excessive enforcement. Influential ally groups mobilized their memberships to oppose excessive enforcement during the Trump Administration on issues ranging from Dreamers to family separations to immigration enforcement appropriations and the border wall. They included, among others, Moms Rising, Center for Law and Social Policy, Indivisible, CREDO, MoveOn, and Community Change.

“This 2018 moment of family separations was the single biggest power building, transformative moment we’ve had as a movement—in terms of bringing in established progressive infrastructure and organizations, making the connections between movements about what’s at stake here and reaching beyond the choir. Everyone who interacted with this has it in their muscle memory. And it’s our job as organizers to tap into that for the next phase and continue organizing.

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

“The #DefundHate campaign focused on bringing people outside of the immigrant justice movement. And we brought on board lots of progressive groups. And we were very successful, so when we look at the results of what we were able to do. Stopping over seven billion dollars to going to DHS and particularly for detention and deportation, that’s a first-ever win.

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

Mobilization of “non-traditional” allies. To enlarge the tent of enforcement reform allies during the strategy period, Ford also supported some advocates and organizers who had different policy connections than the Foundation’s principal enforcement reform grantees. These included, among others, business, faith-based, and law enforcement groups. Due to a political climate in Washington where the policymaking influence of the center and center-right on immigration is diminished, this work appeared to have more results at the state and local levels. There, for example, faith groups educated their constituents about over-

“I really do feel like it’s a different day now than it was in 2011–2013, when there were negotiations over immigration reform that border groups were either not invited to or intentionally excluded from. I think that there is a widespread recognition that border groups and people who are directly affected by Border Patrol policies need to be present in the room in discussing immigration issues.

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

enforcement through active engagement in campaigns to stop individual deportations and to support legislation limiting arrest-to-deportation pipelines. Business-sector advocates educated state policymakers about the harmful business impacts of proposed anti-immigrant bills and policies.

Ford contributions to grantee outcomes. Due in large part to Ford’s grantmaking and other leadership support, Black immigrant groups and enforcement reform groups, including border organizations, have more resources to do their work. With their enhanced capacity has come increased influence, including a seat at the table in the federal policy discourse.

Ford’s Immigrant Rights portfolio enhanced the capacity and influence of critical immigrant movement actors. For some grantees, including those who received multi-year general operating and institutional strengthening support through Ford’s [BUILD](#) grant program, this helped encourage investments by other philanthropies. Leaders of BUILD grantee organizations told us that the resulting growth in staff that BUILD made possible freed up their leadership for priorities such as cultivating crucial allies.

“For us to be a BUILD grantee, it really empowered us to be able to play a leadership role tapping into those resources to strengthen my internal infrastructure and my staffing gave me more space and my leadership team to be able to map out, ‘OK, who do we need to bring outside of the movement? How do we engage these folks?’

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

Organizing and Mobilizing (Public Will) Outcomes

Many of the largest public mobilizations and protests of the Trump era were linked to immigration issues and the treatment of immigrants. (As described throughout this report, mobilization was integrated with activists’ other advocacy-policy change tactics.)

- ▶ Ford grantees and allies mobilized hundreds of thousands of people in the United States and internationally at hundreds of rallies in opposition to the forcible separation of migrant parents and children at the Southern border. The campaign also gathered over 300,000 petition signatures and mobilized numerous movie and television actors and other influencers. These mobilizations were credited with forcing the Trump Administration to back down, within weeks, on the worst aspects of family separations.
- ▶ Efforts by Ford grantees and colleagues to mobilize opposition to the banning of immigrants from Muslim-majority countries helped shape the perceptions of the public and policymakers alike. The mobilizations conveyed to federal judges the real-world impact of the Muslim Bans, which separated immigrant family members for years, and also impaired the lives and futures of thousands who had planned to travel to the United States for university or for jobs. In tandem with the work of litigators, mobilizations likely influenced the narrowing of the bans (which the US Supreme Court ultimately permitted to go forward in

“I can say very, very clearly the decision to focus [Ford’s] resources on enforcement was a very strategic one in 2015, 2016. Just the numbers of people being directly harmed—the type of terrorizing and anxiety that produced among everyone else. If you’re looking at impact on numbers of people whose lives are affected and where resources are going to support advocacy and organizing and legal work, it feels more like a field now to me.

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

modified form). Organizers' efforts also promoted US House passage of the NO BAN Act in successive Congresses, and influenced the Biden Administration's eventual withdrawal of much of these policies,

- Over a quarter million public comments—a rarely-seen number—were submitted to DHS during the short 60-day comment window on “public charge” regulations in 2018. They came from a wide range of organizations, including health care, public health, nutrition, economic security, disability, child and family advocacy, civil and immigrants' rights, faith and social justice sectors. The vast majority of comments criticized these “wealth test” regulations. Most of the critical comments were generated by Ford grantees and their partner organizations. In the course of litigation challenging the regulatory changes, comments that had been submitted to DHS opposing the administration's action were cited explicitly by federal judges.
- Dreamers, TPS holders, border residents, and other directly affected immigrants mobilized repeatedly to Washington DC to press for a pathway to citizenship and reforms to enforcement and border militarization practices. Ford grantees played a leading role in supporting TPS holders—who had not previously mobilized in numbers—in these efforts.

Communications and Narrative (Visibility) Outcomes

Communications outcomes. Members of directly affected communities served as key spokespeople on immigration issues during the strategy period. The media regularly took up issues communicated by these organizations and other Ford grantees, often adopting the movement's preferred terminology and themes.

- Messages by Ford grantees geared toward “everyday parents” helped ensure that stories about the forcible separation of children and parents at the Southern border in 2018 dominated the major media coverage for days. This in turn helped mobilize the unprecedented nationwide wave of protests against family separations that led to the roll-back of the policy by the Trump Administration.
- Adroit communications work by immigrant youth effectively conveyed the demands of “Dreamers” for reform of the deportation system. It also contributed to maintaining public sympathy and support for immigrant youth advocates through two government shutdowns during which immigration enforcement issues played important roles.

One interviewee noted the impact of communications efforts around Dreamers' legislative campaigns for permanent immigration status and the success they had in sustaining a national conversation “around DACA [temporary immigration status for Dreamers] and the danger DACA was in. Every single week we had coverage in all the major newspapers.” The advocate stressed the importance of Dreamers' decision to highlight the potential human impact of losing crucial DACA protections in their media/communications work.

- Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian (AMEMSA) communities helped ensure that an increasing number of mainstream media outlets

“Family separation [messaging] is very powerful, and it's off the charts. It also helps with a broad range of issues actually connected to that, not just the actual policy that led to the crisis.”

— PHILANTHROPY
SECTOR

accurately depicted policies barring the entry of immigrants from majority-Muslim countries as, in fact, predominantly targeting Muslims (as opposed to merely being neutral “travel bans”). Years after the first ban protests, media outlets continued to feature images of anti-ban protest mobilizations by AMEMSA communities and their supporters when publishing stories on the Muslim Bans.

Narrative change outcomes. Immigrant Rights portfolio staff determined that a major narrative change effort was not realistic during the strategy period, given personnel and funding limitations and the many simultaneous challenges confronting the sector. The portfolio did, though, fund several promising narrative projects. To name just two, [#ImmigrantsAreEssential](#) is a striking visual campaign that garnered a Shorty Award, and [Belonging Begins With Us](#) produced compelling pro-immigrant PSAs and first-person audio stories in conjunction with the Ad Council. The Immigrant Rights portfolio also contributed to an innovative Ford project, *Reclaiming the Border*, to document, disseminate, and archive border stories for ongoing use by border communities.

And a number of the portfolio’s enforcement reform grantees—including Dreamers, TPS holders, Black immigrants and AMEMSA activists—developed effective counter-narratives on the harms that harsh border- and interior enforcement policies inflict on immigrants and their families.

Lessons from the 2015–2020 Ford Strategy Period

The evaluation helped test the assumptions on which Ford’s 2015–2020 Immigrant Rights portfolio strategy was developed. We concluded the following:

- Negative narratives—particularly about an “out of control border”—continued to pose a formidable political obstacle for enforcement reform and immigrant movement objectives more broadly throughout the strategy period. Immigration opponents effectively deployed the argument of “no reform until the border is solved,” a stratagem that hindered advocates’ efforts to solidify majority support in Congress.
- Bold advocacy by directly impacted people—in the streets, in Congress, and in front of courthouses—helped mobilize supporters and galvanize political will of elected officials, as was predicted at the start of the strategy period.
- And the portfolio’s assumptions about alternate paths to policy progress were also affirmed. Federal administrative/policy work, litigation, and state and local advocacy offered significant opportunities to protect immigrants’ rights and—particularly outside of Washington DC—to promote them.

More specifically, the evaluation data provides these lessons:

1) Enhanced support to enforcement reform advocates helps readjust the playing field. With Ford’s support, representatives of directly impacted immigrant communities have taken their proper “seat at the table” in policy debates, and enforcement reform issues have become more prominent. These are significant changes from past strategy periods.

“The focus on impacted people. Which I think is philanthropy-wide but was led by a few people, and Mayra is one of them. That really changed the terrain of the debate, sometimes in ways that we didn’t expect. Like not taking a compromise if it’s going to be a harsh trade off for the rest of the community.”

—PHILANTHROPY SECTOR

2) Well-supported enforcement reform organizers/advocates can achieve policy goals, even in “challenging” policy periods.

Advocates built deep alliances and created more favorable policy outcomes than many would have predicted at the start of the strategy period, and certainly at the outset of the Trump Administration. Among other impacts, in the fall of 2021, congressional leadership proposed in its Build Back Better Act a 10-year program providing work permits and deportation protections for up to 7.1 million immigrants (including but not limited to Dreamers). If enacted, this would be the most significant pro-immigrant legislation in a generation.

Observers of Congress’s decades-long immigration enforcement buildup—which made the Department of Homeland Security by far the nation’s largest law enforcement

“The game has completely changed. The idea that one hundred and thirty plus groups are fighting for legalization without enforcement is bananas. You have big [DC] groups at the table. You have center-right groups.”

—PHILANTHROPY SECTOR

agency—believe it's realistic to expect that interior enforcement will no longer experience underscrutinized and untrammelled growth.

3) Favorable policy outcomes depend on integrated, well-resourced strategies. Support for integrated strategies is needed at the federal, state, and local levels.

Ford supported every type of federal advocacy capacity during the strategy period. All of them turned out to be crucial, especially for defensive advocacy success. A litigator, for example, told us the following:

“Ford has been one of the few foundations that understood the importance of litigation as core to what it is and has invested in over the years. The investments they made prior to 2016 allowed us to have the flexibility to map out that litigation strategy. That’s why we were able to sue the administration [quickly].”

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

Interviewees underscored that philanthropic support for policy development, legislative advocacy, organizing and mobilizing, partnership development, and communications/narrative, is needed in states and localities as well, to enable activists to cultivate and expand pro-immigrant policies—and to hold ground against energized anti-immigrant interests.

4) But in order to achieve immigrant communities’ ambitious enforcement reform demands, there will need to be a much more favorable national political environment.

Immigrant rights opponents are hammering the message of “out of control” border and President Biden’s alleged failure to act, frames that exert a lot of narrative power. This dampens the political will of moderate members of Congress whose districts are not strongly progressive on immigration, constraining the options for enforcement reform.

Given this environment, numerous interviewees stated that the immigrant rights movement needs an improved political environment in order to achieve comprehensive legislated reform without further criminalization and militarization.

“A lot of the interior [congressional] moderates have a media understanding of the border, even if they do that once-in-a-while border trip. And so they’re just not going to be comfortable with [a weaker border enforcement posture].”

—OTHER EXPERT

5) State-level policy change is essential to Ford’s overall enforcement reform goals.

Supporting state and local enforcement reform work benefits immigrants in the near-term and also furthers the broader objectives of Ford’s Immigrant Rights portfolio. Deportation-limiting local policies keep immigrant breadwinners and caregivers with their families. The process of securing these policies educates the general public about the severe toll that detention and deportation takes on their neighbors and co-workers. Some policy reform campaigns, such as limitations on police arrests for minor violations, benefit immigrants and citizens alike, and strengthen connections between these communities. Normalizing enforcement limitations at the state and local levels also builds policymakers’ will to support and/or champion enforcement curbs at higher levels of government.

6) State-level grantees’ work fosters inclusive democracy, which supports an improved immigration policy climate.

Over the past two decades, sustained philanthropic investment in nonpartisan civic engagement and voter mobilization by immigrants has

helped grow their organizations into influential local actors that are hastening political transformation across the country. Arizona and Georgia are two important examples of places where the environment is trending more pro-immigrant due to long-term investment in directly impacted communities.

7) Greater progress can be fostered when joint efforts by criminal justice and immigrant justice advocates are supported. Immigrant sector interviewees, including grantees active at state and local levels, described ways in which their work with criminal justice advocates has directly challenged over-enforcement against Black and brown residents during the 2015–2020 Ford strategy period. Several interviewees underscored that this is where much of the local immigrant movement energy has been in recent years, as policy progress in Washington has stalled. Others noted that immigrants and criminal justice reformers often collaborate by necessity at the local level, and that those initiatives should be fostered by funders of both movements.

“When you’re in a place where you have little resources, groups work on criminal justice and immigration because you don’t have the luxury of having like a broad ecosystem like New York and California—where they separate by issue-area organizing. But we see this all as interconnected.”

—PHILANTHROPY SECTOR

Questions and Future Considerations for the Movement and the Foundation

Questions for the Immigrant Rights Movement

Many of the immigrant rights movement's ambitious policy progress goals understandably were not achieved during 2015–2020, a period that largely coincided with an anti-immigrant administration in Washington and similarly restrictionist policymakers in many statehouses. The movement continues to face headwinds now.

On the federal level, advocates struggle to achieve a legalization program that avoids the trade-off of enhanced interior enforcement or border militarization. Likewise there are substantial obstacles to obtaining the steep cuts in federal appropriations for immigration enforcement that advocates have sought. Outside of DC, organizers and advocates in many states—including some “blue” ones—face the ongoing task of defeating anti-immigrant proposals and working for policies that permit undocumented immigrants to endure and thrive.

This section identifies some questions that emerged from the evaluation data, especially interviews with advocates, philanthropy, and other experts.

1) How will enforcement reform advocates' increased influence within the immigrant rights movement affect the movement's prospects and options for achieving further policy progress?

Changes in the composition of the immigration advocacy community, and a new internal dynamic in which enforcement reform advocates carry more weight in DC and have less appetite for traditional horse-trading, make for a more complicated policy calculus. Enforcement reform advocates clearly have developed important insider champions for their priorities. But several interviewees said that a significant gap remains between enforcement reform advocates' most ambitious federal-level goals (fundamental changes to enforcement practices and funding) and what the “political market” in DC will bear, especially given a precarious Democratic congressional majority.

Indeed several interviewees stated that the constituencies of movement organizations continue to have important differences in the “bottom lines” that they will accept when it comes to immigration enforcement. The leaders of various groups also have differing assessments about the movement's influence in Congress. This can make it difficult to build alignment about the amount of enforcement to accept in any legislative proposal, and whether and to what extent to publicly support incremental policy progress.

The following interviewee quotations illustrate a range of views about movement power and influence, and how to address policy proposals that fall short of ambitious enforcement reform goals.

“ Organizations that are accountable to a membership base never had a misalignment on... wanting to lead the appropriations fight. Some [thought it would] be picking an impossible fight around a #Defund demand. But I think that for all of the groups that were living the impact of the Trump Administration with their members, it was just like a different take.

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

“ We don't want to lose sight of the fact that relief is our North Star. We can't hem in the conversation on enforcement relief. Hey, you know what happened at the border. Terrible, full stop. [But] there are also six million American kids that are at risk of family separation in the interior of the country. And because of our inability to get reform done, they're also completely at risk... We need to make sure that [kids] are in the best position to succeed, not just for themselves, but for the country. The relief and the enforcement stuff need to go together. I just urge some calibration.

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

“ Can we get real? Like can we get real about what we might lose here and how we decrease, like, how do we narrow that?... There's a level of lack of realness that means we don't get to [facing] it until it's the 11th hour. And then it creates a lot of breakage in the movement and a lot of drama in the movement. So, for example, even if most of the groups at the end would take a deal that increased enforcement at the border for legalization for three million people, most people will never say that.

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

“ So as much as we do support the piecemeal approach, if that piecemeal approach doesn't get us to 11 million [immigrants legalized], that's going to be a failed campaign because we're going to stick to a broken system. And if they allow, in this piecemeal approach, more enforcement at the border, they're going to continue sacrificing our community.

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

Interviewees said that bridging these gaps is not an easy matter. They did not offer any detailed road maps. As a start, several interviewees recommended ongoing work within the IMVP process to expand understanding and trusting relationships among movement actors.

“ At the end of the day, if we don't have trusting relationships, if we're not able to roll up our sleeves to reach some consensus on a piece of legislation or strategy, or worse, we're just not even having those conversations at all, we will keep losing. What I have heard from other folks—because half of us have gone through the IMVP process—we actually now have skills and tools to be able to engage in some of these courageous conversations and get to a place of clarity or agree to disagree.

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

2) Are “moderates” the key to achieving near-term policy goals? And, if so, what does that mean for the movement?

Most interviewees believed that Ford made a wise choice to home in on enforcement reform during the strategy period, which positioned grantees to respond effectively to the Trump Administration's exceedingly harsh policies. When we asked for critiques of Ford's strategy, criticism was aimed less at Ford itself than the approaches some Ford grantees have taken, including strident stances on enforcement, and sometimes confrontational tactics. Some interviewees questioned whether it was realistic or tactically wise to pursue objectives such as

abolition of ICE, or an end to carceral detention, if most of the movement puts legalization for millions of immigrants at the top of the agenda.

Critics suggested that moderates in Congress might assent to status relief for a meaningful portion of the undocumented population. But given the success of opponents' border narratives and the realities of the congressional majority, this could only be achieved if pro-immigrant advocates are open to compromise positions on enforcement. Put another way, these interviewees believed that the Biden era, with its closely divided Congress, demands a "move to the center."

3) How can activists further consolidate and grow support for the movement—including among immigrants?

A principal challenge identified by interviewees was whether the greater public could still be mobilized against harsh enforcement in the absence of Trump Administration excesses to catalyze them. A concern expressed across all categories of interviewees was that the movement cannot be entirely certain of support from progressives who'd be expected to champion immigrant justice. Work is still needed in order to solidify immigrant rights as a core item on the progressive agenda.

🗨️ *We're not paying attention to what people are telling us, people that we think are part of our base. We need to [reckon with] people with recent immigrant experiences voting in line with unequivocally anti-immigrant policy and rhetoric. We need to build a bigger tent. We need to redefine our persuasion voters much more broadly. And I think we need to move away from the idea that sympathy translates into support.*

—PHILANTHROPY SECTOR

🗨️ *All the people who were awakened to the fact that we're not okay kind of came out of the woodwork and wanted to do stuff. And our organizations, we absorbed those people. And they lean middle class and educated. And there's a whole other part of this country that is working class, working poor and less educated that will define the future of American politics. And until we figure out and organize those people, it's going to be tough.*

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

4) How can advocates supplant opponents' harmful and inaccurate "crime" and "national security" messages and narratives that hinder achievement of pro-immigrant policies?

The communications challenges for immigrant rights advocates and organizers are starkly clear from media coverage of the Southern border, not only during but also after the Trump era. A great number of media outlets have echoed immigration opponents by labeling periodic surges in immigrant arrivals at the Southern border a "crisis." This media skew even extends to news organizations that generally don't tend to be slanted to the political Right. The coverage both reflects and perpetuates a political environment in which it is politically risky for moderate policymakers to take rights-respecting, enforcement-limiting action.

We conducted our interviews in the spring of 2021 when a large number of young immigrants was arriving at the Southern border. Interviewees told us at that point that the movement must communicate much more effectively and counter the restrictionists with compelling family unity and humanitarian messages and narratives.

“There hasn't been any articulation of what should be done by the advocates at the border right now in a way that is substantive. And that's why the message is not sticking.”

—OTHER EXPERT

Interviewees also noted that the communications challenge is more complex than simply finding the "right" message(s) and pushing them in a disciplined way. The negative narratives about immigration have taken hold over the years and decades. They tilt the large proportion of the general public's media diet toward responses that militarize the border; criminalize immigrants who are undocumented; and cast suspicion on visible populations that include many immigrants, such as US Muslims. The anti-immigrant movement keeps playing to the public's fears, especially about the border, because it works. And the dominance of anti-immigrant narratives helps explain why even a generally pro-immigrant administration has taken steps to limit access to asylum at the US Southern border, in sharp contrast to its rhetoric on the campaign trail and even its "first days" policy announcements in January 2021. Speaking in the spring of 2021, interviewees said:

“On narrative power, you know, we we have a really tricky issue. I think despite the investments and our capacity, we're getting shown up right now. We're getting our ass kicked. Legalization's going to be overwhelmed by this border battle.”

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

“The narrative stuff ties into deeply held beliefs. And to influence and reorient deeply held beliefs in a different direction is hard work. And it's long-term work. We're not going to change the narrative in six months. You hear more groups talking about that as a goal of their work. I think there's certainly more funding going into that—and more capacity ideas, strategies around what that might entail. But it feels to me like it's still at the early stages of development.”

—ADVOCACY SECTOR

Questions for the Foundation

Ford's decision to center enforcement reform in its 2015–2020 Immigrant Rights strategy was largely affirmed by our evaluation research. Despite a somewhat more favorable Washington policy environment, however, Ford's grantees continue to face significant challenges in achieving pro-immigrant policies that avoid further criminalization of immigrants and militarization at the border. This section identifies some questions for the Foundation that emerged from the evaluation data, especially interviews with advocates, philanthropy, and other experts.

1) What roles can Ford play as a private 501(c)(3) foundation to promote an environment where pro-immigrant policy can thrive?

Interviewees stated that the movement must become more influential if it is to achieve pro-immigrant federal policies without paying the price of additional criminalization and militarization. They described several crucial areas of investment to boost the immigrant movement's leverage on policy that could be undertaken by a 501(c)(3) philanthropy.

a) Provide long-term support to organizing and mobilizing. Numerous interviewees noted that philanthropies' long-term patient funding of groups—including for (c)(3) civic engagement—has been key to recent pro-immigrant policy progress in states. This seems like a fruitful area for greater Ford concentration given its dedicated program on civic engagement, its States Working Group efforts, and leadership investments in Four Freedoms Fund.

b) Build communications and narrative that changes the environment. A deeper investment in existing grantees, especially their ability to get on television, could make their communications work faster, broader, and more impactful. Additional investment in groups on the ground—for example, border-region organizers, elected officials, and service providers—could help inject reality into border-related media coverage.

But the work must go beyond real-time communications and messaging. Many interviewees said that the movement must work intently to substitute family unity/humanitarian values for criminality/national security in the minds of voters and policymakers in order to achieve lasting pro-immigrant policies that do not also enhance immigration enforcement.

Creation, translation, driving and measuring the impact of narrative are all essential, and may involve different advocacy actors and collaborations over time.

c) Continue to support development and dissemination of proactive policies, especially by directly impacted immigrant organizations. Interviewees stated that, in this somewhat improved policy environment, *the movement must speak concretely to what it is affirmatively for* by developing and communicating policies that promote family unity, the country's humanitarian leadership, and border policies that improve the lives of border residents.

In particular, interviewees stated that organizations representing directly impacted immigrants should be supported for the full range of advocacy/policy change work—including policy development, policymaker education, work with traditional

and non-traditional allies (such as faith groups and businesses), and engagement with conventional and social media—in addition to their “traditional” organizing and mobilizing roles.

2) Can Ford do more to respond to undocumented immigrants as a population?

Legalization policies proposed in recent decades at the national level all have had features that leave some undocumented people out: They bar some people based on their individual histories (such as criminal convictions), and they have retrospective cut-off dates that eliminate eligibility for recent arrivals to the country. Any temporary or permanent status-granting program enacted in the near term can be expected to do the same. Therefore, even if legalization is enacted in the coming weeks or months, some currently resident undocumented people will remain without relief, as will people who arrive in the United States without authorization in the coming years.

Without a realistic path to legalize their status, undocumented immigrants are and will remain an important segment of American society requiring legal protections and government supports that overlap with—yet are distinct from—protections for other vulnerable populations. Interviewees said that Ford therefore should include immigrants as constituencies of concern across all its thematic priorities.

Several also called on the Foundation to continue to support the development of fundamental immigration law reforms that protect immigrants’ human rights and address labor market and family reunification needs. Such reforms could make authorized migration realistically available, and reduce the need for “legalization” in the future.

3) Can Ford better integrate criminal justice and immigrant rights efforts?

Immigrant movement leaders at both the state and national level noted that their organizations are integrating criminal justice issues into their work, and that allyship is bearing fruit. They called upon Ford—as a national leader in both of these arenas—to help accelerate this integration through joint grantmaking, convening, and ensuring that successful criminal justice/immigrant justice campaigns and projects are well-publicized throughout social justice and law reform sectors.

4) How can Ford help elicit additional philanthropic investment in enforcement reform, especially at the state level?

Several states, including Texas (2017), Tennessee (2018), and Florida (2019) enacted anti-immigrant legislation during the strategy period. And although many localities and several states ended collaboration with US ICE, a large number of jurisdictions did just the opposite.

Unsurprisingly, every state and local immigrant rights organization we interviewed stated that progress could accelerate in their states if additional resources were available for organizing and advocacy work, and for collaboration with other over-policed communities. Several specifically called upon Ford and its national colleagues to spur increased state- and local-level philanthropic investment, so organizations aren’t forced to pay for immigrant rights organizing and advocacy by shifting precious unrestricted dollars.

5) How can Ford's Immigrant Rights portfolio more systematically pursue joint learning with its grantees?

Ford and its grantees share an interest in learning about how activities have contributed to accomplishing organizing and advocacy goals. To further joint learning, Ford instead might consider engaging grantees in a measurement and learning agenda, keeping in mind the need to begin very modestly and with issues that both the Immigrant Rights portfolio and its grantees find highly compelling and actionable in their own work. Such a program should be formalized, and the involvement of any participating grantee should be funded. This would help Ford to build its own knowledge and that of grantees, while acknowledging to grantees the real-world value of this grant "deliverable."

Because its longer-term general support arrangements with grantees foster trusting relationships and dialogue, we feel that Ford is in a strong position to employ this type of measurement and learning system, which could benefit both the Foundation and the overall movement.

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List of Interviewees

Affiliation of interviewees is included for identification only. Interviewees are listed with their affiliation as of March–April 2021.

Advocates & Organizers, Including Ford Grantees

Rebecca Shi, *American Business Immigration Council (ABIC)*
Cecillia Wang, *American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)*
Jon Blazer, *American Civil Liberties Union*
Greg Chen, *American Immigration Lawyers Association*
Frank Sharry, *America's Voice*
Fernando Garcia, *Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR)*
Lorella Praeli, *Community Change*
Silky Shah, *Detention Watch Network (DWN)*
Kerri Talbot, *Emerson Collective, Immigration Hub*
Sarah Benitez & Adrienne Davis Johnson, *Faith in Public Life*
Maria Rodriguez, Isabel (Chabe) Vivent Gramany & Renata Bozzetto, *Florida Immigrant Coalition*
Angel Padilla, *Indivisible*
Jacinta Gonzalez, *Mijente*
Ai-jen Poo, *National Domestic Workers' Alliance (NDWA)/We Belong Together*
Chris Newman, *National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON)*
Heidi Altman, *National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC)*
Marielena Hincapie, *National Immigration Law Center (NILC)*
Matt Lopus, *National Immigration Law Center*
Andrea Guerrero, *Southern Border Communities Coalition (SBCC)*
Michelle Tremillo, *Texas Organizing Project (TOP)*
Carlos Guevara, *UnidosUS*
Cristina Jimenez, formerly *United We Dream (UWD)*

Philanthropy Staff

Anonymous interviewee (philanthropy sector)
Heidi Dorow, formerly *Borealis Philanthropy*
Kavitha Sreeharsha, *Emerson Collective*
Jerry Maldonado, *Ford Foundation/Texas Fund*
Anita Khashu, *Four Freedoms Fund (FFF)*
Angie Junck, *Heising-Simons Foundation*
Tim Parritt, *Oak Foundation*
Adey Fisseha, *Unbound Philanthropy*

Other Experts

Andrea Black, *Independent Consultant*
Andrew McDonald, *BerlinRosen*
Anonymous interviewee (Congressional staffer)
Anonymous interviewee (Congressional staffer)
Michael Leachman & Eric Figueroa, *Center on Budget & Policy Priorities (CBPP)*
Bob Libal, *Independent Consultant*
Muzaffar Chishti, *Migration Policy Institute (MPI)*
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