



# *Resilience & Community:*

SUPPORTING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES  
THROUGH FFF'S COVID-19 RESPONSE FUNDING

## *From Our Senior Director*

When the COVID-19 virus began raging through America's cities in early 2020, immigrant communities and immigrant justice organizations were forced to spring into action. Following years of xenophobic attacks on immigrants from the Trump administration and restrictionist lawmakers, immigrant communities were in the particularly vulnerable position of working in high-risk 'essential' roles, while continuing to live under the threats of deportation, escalating hate crimes, racial injustice, and the death trap of immigrant detention.

In the face of these extreme compounding challenges, immigrant justice organizations across the country mobilized to protect and defend their communities, and advance equitable reforms that would last beyond the initial emergency of the pandemic.

To help groups respond, FFF launched a COVID-19 Response Fund and quickly moved funding across our initiatives to provide additional support to our grantees as they managed the horrendous impacts on their communities and organizations. **Overall, FFF provided \$2,598,000 to support the COVID response efforts of fifty-four grantees in twenty-three states.**

The following report captures how grantees used FFF's rapid response funds and technical assistance support to defend, protect and advance justice for immigrant communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on immigrant communities, and the tremendous responsibilities and operational challenges for immigrant justice organizations, FFF grantees went above and beyond to take care of their communities, win bold, inclusive policy victories, and strengthen the movement for immigrant justice amid a crisis. Grantees used COVID response funding to depopulate detention centers like Irwin, Bristol, and Berks; secure workplace protections for poultry workers and immigrants working in high-risk jobs across the country; combat the rise in anti-Asian hate; and fight for inclusion of immigrants in broader economic relief and healthcare access efforts.

**As funders, what stands out to us is the importance of infusing the movement with flexible, rapid response funding in addition to the core support we provide.** Grantees creatively deployed FFF's rapid response grants and technical support to expand their work and provide mutual aid to meet

urgent and escalating community needs, while continuing to build power, momentum and infrastructure for future fights.

As I write this letter, FFF grantees are working to undo the damage of the past few years and enacting bold policy reforms expanding protections and opportunities for immigrants and their neighbors across the country. Still, the immigrant justice movement faces significant barriers to making its inclusive vision for America a reality. Right-wing forces continue to spin lies and rhetorical attacks on immigrant communities and weaponize the border, wrongfully blaming immigrants for the spread of the COVID pandemic and demonizing migrants seeking refuge.

*Our grantees' accomplishments and resilience throughout the course of the pandemic underscore for us the critical importance of funders responding to the urgent needs in our communities, while also trusting movement leadership to meet and overcome the challenges our communities face.*

Through FFF, funders can support immigrant justice organizations to be resilient in the face of unforeseen external opportunities and threats, continue to build immigrant power, win far-reaching policy victories, and move toward a future where everyone has the freedom to thrive.

We are honored to support FFF grantees in this moment when fighting for immigrant justice could not be more critical. Thank you to all of our funders who made this COVID response support possible and for your ongoing commitment to the immigrant justice movement.



**In solidarity,**  
*Rini Chakraborty*  
Senior Director,  
Four Freedoms Fund

# Background



In 2020, in the face of the most unprecedented global health and economic challenge of our lifetime, Four Freedoms Fund launched a COVID-19 Response Fund and strategy to support immigrant justice organizations to protect and defend immigrant communities throughout and beyond the pandemic. FFF prioritized four key areas for grantmaking based on its deep understanding of what the immigrant justice movement was facing at the time, while also seeking to support work that would build momentum towards longer-term power-building and systems change. The four key areas included:

1. **Freeing People from Detention, Prisons, and Jails:**

FFF supported national, state, and local efforts to release immigrants from detention and provide post-release support; support immigrants who remained detained; advocacy to limit detention and enforcement; and communications and narrative to build the case for decriminalization beyond the crisis. FFF gave preference to organizations that support, organize, and center the leadership of immigrants directly affected by enforcement, detention, and criminalization.

2. **Protecting and Expanding the Safety Net and Economic Supports:**

FFF supported organizations that became the go-to in a moment of profound crisis for immigrant communities. Several of these grants bolstered urgent efforts to organize and defend meatpacking workers and farmworkers abandoned — and in some cases very consciously disregarded — by government officials and agencies, despite working in essential jobs whose conditions put them at extraordinary risk of COVID. Grantees worked to advance inclusive eligibility criteria in federal COVID relief packages; as well as state and local advocacy to ensure undocumented and other marginalized immigrants accessed safe and free COVID testing and treatment, state-level health coverage, state earned income tax credit, cash aid, food assistance, sick leave, rental assistance, and prevention of eviction and utility shut offs. FFF

grantees also stepped up to provide mutual aid and integrated organizing into relief efforts, bringing in new members for long-term advocacy.

3. **Countering Xenophobia and Anti-Asian Hate:**

FFF supported collaborative efforts to track and combat anti-Asian hate and violence, counter misinformation, and develop intervention strategies at the state and local level to support impacted communities to create systems of safety and accountability. FFF prioritized support to groups that offered concrete, creative, and collaborative plans around addressing xenophobia that were both responsive to the immediate crisis of the pandemic, as well as positioned within a larger understanding of racism and white supremacy and included efforts to deepen meaningful solidarity between immigrant, AAPI and Black communities.

4. **Embracing Immigrants as Essential Workers and Members of Our Communities:**

FFF supported storytelling projects documenting the contributions of immigrants providing mutual aid and performing essential services throughout communities across the US, which were disseminated through social media, podcasts, virtual theater performances, and local media outlets. FFF prioritized proposals that included the effective use of content producers, strong distribution partnerships and potential, and an ability to pivot in real time.



## RAPID RESPONSE FUNDING & CAPACITY-BUILDING

**Rapid Response Funding Process:** FFF launched the COVID-19 Response Fund with an open Request for Proposals to FFF grantees and a streamlined application with decisions issued in a two-week timeframe. FFF received 137 applications from organizations based in 32 states. Ultimately, FFF selected thirty-eight grantees to support through the COVID-19 Response Fund. Twenty-three of the grants were awarded to current FFF grantees.

In addition to grants made under FFF's COVID-19 Response Fund, FFF prioritized immediate support for grantees and COVID-related needs across our various initiatives — awarding a total of **56 grants totaling \$2,598,000 to grantees in twenty-three states, with an average grant size of \$46,392.**

**FFF Capacity-Building, Technical Assistance, and Infrastructure Building:** FFF incorporated capacity-building and technical assistance that resulted in **18 grantees applying for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) SBA loans totaling \$2.26 million**, healing and resilience coaching, and trainings on financial scenario planning and transitioning program work to virtual platforms.

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## ***Grantee Accomplishments***

Grantee accomplishments through this rapid response effort are aligned within the larger, long-term framework through which FFF grants funds to the immigrant justice movement. FFF grantees have mobilized in extraordinary ways to not only provide direct relief but to also advance equitable inclusion and access to protections for immigrant communities throughout the course of the pandemic. The grantee accomplishments highlighted here demonstrate the deeper impact of the COVID-19 Response Fund and parallel rapid response grants in other key FFF portfolios.



*Detention Watch Network staged an artistic protest outside the White House on July 22, 2021, displaying portraits of migrants by artist Angelica Frausto. (André Chung / Detention Watch Network)*

## FREEING PEOPLE FROM DETENTION, PRISONS & JAILS:

Grantees' work to free people from detention and incarceration has been critical to save lives during the pandemic. Due to overcrowding, transfers between facilities, and lack of accountability with health and safety measures, detention centers, prisons and jails have been hotbeds for the coronavirus over the past year, with nearly one in three people incarcerated at federal and state facilities testing positive<sup>1</sup>. FFF rapid response grantees achieved wins to free thousands of individuals and advanced long-term goals of limiting or closing detention through organizing, litigation, advocacy, and narrative.

### Securing Release from detention and incarceration

In the face of daunting challenges, FFF grantees mobilized to save the lives of those in detention through release. **Detention Watch Network (DWN)** launched the nationwide **#FreeThemAll** campaign advocating for the immediate release of people detained in jails and detention centers across the country, resulting in part in the lowest number of individuals detained in 20 years - from a high of 56,000 to 14,000 in March 2021. **Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ICIJ)**'s advocacy led to 350 releases, including those

medically vulnerable. Due in part to ICIJ's persistent advocacy **Adelanto Detention Center** (which can hold nearly 2,000 detainees) currently has fewer than 130. **American Friends Service Committee New Jersey (AFSC-NJ)**'s **#FreeEDC** campaign led to the release of Muhammad Imran, who had been held in detention since 2018, and built momentum for the closure off all detention facilities in the state. **Trans Queer Pueblo (TQP)** successfully advocated for the release of 88 LGBTQ+ migrants from detention and supported 73 LGBTQ+ migrants with post-detention plans. **Faith in Indiana** advocated and won the release of 1,920 people from confinement. **Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC)** raised \$28,000 for bonds to get 7 people released and 10 others were helped with bond hearings. National Immigration Project of the National Lawyer's Guild (NIP-NLG) litigated over a dozen COVID lawsuits, and secured the release of 70 medically vulnerable individuals; won freedom for immigrants in Alabama, Mississippi, Virginia, Louisiana, Maryland, and Colorado; filed a class action lawsuit (*Oldaker v. Giles*) resulting in mass release from the Irwin County Detention Center; and supported the enormous reduction at the Farmville Detention Center (Virginia) which is now nearly empty. Organizations within Decriminalizing Communities Coalition (DCC) mobilized under the banner of **#FreeThemAll** in Minnesota to elevate calls to ICE, state officials, and local officials to release people from all forms of incarceration and detention.

## Freeing children from detention and building momentum to abolish child detention

FFF's Ending Child Detention & Family Separation Initiative grantees **American Friends Service Committee of Florida, Detention Watch Network, Dream Action Oklahoma (DAOK), Families Belong Together, Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees, Haitian Bridge Alliance (HBA), Homies Unidos, ILRC, Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE), MomsRising, National Center for Youth Law, Organizing Communities Against Deportation (OCAD), Physicians for Human Rights, the Shut Down Berks Coalition<sup>2</sup>, Tsuru for Solidarity, Women's Refugee Commission, and The Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights (TYC)** immediately sprang into action and successfully secured the release of 600 children from detention to family, friends, or community sponsors in the U.S. between March 29 – April 23, 2020. As a result of a powerful multi-racial advocacy effort, the **Shut Down Berks Coalition** was instrumental in clearing out families of primarily Black migrants from the Berks family detention center. **Haitian Bridge Alliance** joined the Shutdown Berks Coalition in 2020 and highlighted the multiracial impact of family detention, informing the public that harmful immigration policies fall not only on Latinx immigrants and that immigration impacts Black communities. In February 2021, as a culmination of many years of collaborative organizing and legal work at the state, local, and federal level, all families detained at the Berks prison were released.



2 The Shutdown Berks Coalition includes Free Migration Project, Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition, Sunrise Movement Berks, Make the Road Pennsylvania, CASA Pennsylvania, Stand Up Berks, Tsuru for Solidarity, Shut Down Berks Interfaith Witness, Juntos, Cumberland Valley Rising, The Way Forward, Haitian Bridge Alliance, Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees, Haitian American Voice, Families Belong Together, Moms Rising / Mamas Con Poder, and Families for Freedom.



## Banning For-Profit Prisons and Detention Centers & Ending ICE Contracts

FFF grantees not only successfully advocated for the mass release of people from detention, but used the moment to powerfully advocate to permanently shut down immigrant detention centers. With rapid response support from FFF, **AFSC-NJ** and its partners succeeded in passing a new state law that bans new, renewed, and expanded ICE detention contracts in New Jersey. **AFSC-NJ** successfully pushed the Essex County and Hudson County, NJ jails to end detention agreements, and the Bergen County Sheriff announced they will not accept new detainees. **AFSC-NJ** also sued the private Elizabeth Detention Center for violating COVID public safety rules that could lead to its closure. This victory was part of a larger trend of FFF grantees winning major victories closing down immigrant detention centers and passing legislation banning for-profit prisons and detention centers in four states. **Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR)** helped pass Illinois Way Forward shutting down all remaining ICE detention centers and ending all remaining collaboration between police and ICE in Illinois; **OneAmerica** and **DWN** won a ban on private prisons in Washington that will lead to the immediate shutdown of the Northwest Immigrant Detention Center; and **Causa** and allies won passage of the Oregon Sanctuary Promise Act which blocks private immigration detention facilities in the state.

In an incredible victory for detention advocates and abolitionists, DHS ordered ICE to sever detention contracts with Irwin County, GA and Bristol County, MA. As part of this announcement, DHS Secretary Mayorkas also ordered ICE to terminate its 287g agreement with the Bristol County sheriff's office. This remarkable win could not have been possible without the tireless advocacy of **NIP-NLG**, **DWN**, **Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights (GLAHR)**, and **Sheriffs for Trusting Communities**, and so many others. Both jails are widely considered to be the “worst of the worst” — facing federal investigations for complaints of abuses and repeatedly profiled by advocates in “Expose and Close” efforts. Irwin made national headlines when a former nurse (with support from groups like Project South and GLAHR) filed a whistleblower complaint alleging that women held at Irwin were subjected to unwanted gynecological procedures and forced sterilizations. **NIP-NLG** also worked with key partners to terminate the Howard County (Maryland) Detention Center's ICE contract.



## Building Organizing Infrastructure to Combat Incarceration

FFF rapid response grantees advanced critical organizing infrastructure for decarceration. **New Mexico Dream Team (NMDT)** co-built the first state-wide campaign in New Mexico to document conditions in the Torrance, Cibola, and Otero detention centers. NMDT's campaign elevated stories of directly impacted community members, mobilized and trained over 120 youth for action days, held 63 individual meetings with legislators, and won four new legislative champions for the Private Detention Facilities Moratorium Act to prevent new or expanded detention contracts in NM. **NIP-NLG** strengthened local organizer capacity to fight detention in Louisiana, Alabama, and Georgia. **Faith in Indiana** trained and mobilized parishes, priests, and people of faith to stand up for their neighbors, promote messages and media stories of inclusion, and accompany 18 people to ICE check-ins and court dates without a single deportation. **Mano Amiga** pressed forward on their Cite and Divert campaign, demanding that county officials honor their pledge and kept scores of residents out of jail. **DCC** acted as a hub for alignment and information sharing among organizational members, in order to respond quickly and strategically to the COVID crisis, moving quickly into action to mitigate its impacts on their communities and particularly on incarcerated people and people at risk of detention, deportation and increased surveillance.

## A Lifeline in Detention & Post-Release Support

FFF grantees were a lifeline to those in detention. **AVID in the Chihuahuan Desert** supported 67 individuals detained in 11 different facilities and launched a detention hotline maintaining lines of communication between those in detention, their loved ones, and legal support. AVID was able to provide funds for phone accounts that were prohibitively expensive, which permitted immigrants to use tablet computers for video calls and text messages; and supported several releases by arranging taxis and travel, liaising with families and sponsors, and providing meals and ancillary needs. **Families for Freedom** provided commissary support to nine detained members for needed COVID supplies, food, and phone accounts; and placed 3 released members in quarantine hotels and covered travel expenses for 2 recently released members traveling from Alabama to New York. **Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project (BLMP)** assisted queer and trans migrants from Jamaica, Angola, and Honduras who lacked access to attorneys in detention. **TQP** supported 137 LGBTQ+ migrants in detention. **ILRC** raised \$13,500 for Commissary funds to make phone calls for audio testimonies or to reach attorneys. **New Sanctuary Coalition** held weekly pro se immigration clinics with more than 200 volunteers working through their digital Zoom clinic to support immigrants being held in detention. **ICIJ** provided post-release support of food, transportation, temporary housing, and reunification services.



## Supporting LGBTQ+ Migrants at the Southern Border

The prior Administration's all-out assault against immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers dramatically increased LGBTQ+ immigrants' vulnerability to detention, deportation, violence, and even death. These challenges were magnified by the COVID pandemic in 2020. After the Trump administration shut down the US/Mexico border, migrants were forced to wait for longer periods in Tijuana as they applied for asylum. LGBTQ+ migrants were faced with medical neglect inside detention centers, which became hotbeds for COVID transmission. In the event that LGBTQ+ migrants were released from detention, organizations were forced to work quickly and creatively to find housing in centers that were limiting capacity due to social distancing protocols. All of these challenges had deeply negative impacts on LGBTQ+ migrants' mental and physical health.

**Border Butterflies** partners provided critical housing, medical care, mental health, and legal services to LGBTQ+ asylum seekers, and led fights against criminalization, discrimination, and racial injustice through organizing and advocacy throughout the course of the pandemic. Through the Border Butterflies collaboration, grantees **Arianna's Center**, **BLMP**, **Casa Arcoiris**, **Clinica de Salud y Justicia**, **Community Estrella**, **El/La Para Translatinas**, **Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement**, **Haitian Bridge Alliance**, **Jardin de las Mariposas**, **National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC)**, **Organization Latinas Trans de Tejas**, **San Diego LGBT Center**, **Santa Fe Dreamers**, and the **Transgender Law Center (TLC)** have worked together to develop essential infrastructure, resources and protections to support LGBTQ+ migrants, stepping up in the place of a non-existent social safety net for LGBTQ+ migrants at the border.

# EXPANDING THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET & ECONOMIC SUPPORTS:

FFF grantees quickly organized and mobilized to respond to a worker crisis, where vulnerable immigrants faced exacerbated risks and exploitative practices with little to no access to health care or financial support. At the same time, grantees faced a high demand for COVID support and resources as community members turned to these trusted organizations to meet their basic survival needs and protect their livelihoods, whether as workers or small business owners.

## Extending Relief at the Federal, State and Local Levels

FFF grantees across the country successfully advocated for the inclusion of mixed-status households in the American Rescue Plan. FFF grantees also advanced historic wins which both targeted and ensured inclusion of immigrants in COVID relief at the state and local levels.

As part of NY's Excluded Workers Coalition, **Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM)**, **Adhikaar**, **New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC)**, **African Communities Together (ACT)**, **National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON)**, and **Immigrant Defense Project (IDP)** won a massive \$2.1 billion relief package for undocumented communities and \$2.4 billion in rent and mortgage relief inclusive of undocumented communities.

**Faith in Indiana** advocated for and collaborated with the city of Indianapolis to create a \$425 million COVID relief package, which included funding to expand no-cost testing, contact tracing in communities of

color, and eight testing sites in communities of color not requiring identification; and ensured that an \$80 million rental assistance program was available to every city resident regardless of immigration status. **National Immigration Law Center's** Winning in the States (WITS) initiative supported local advocates' efforts to establish programs that offer cash, housing, and food security assistance to residents excluded from federal COVID relief and accelerated support to six successful campaigns advancing inclusive state earned income tax credit programs.

## Advancing Immigrant Worker Rights

FFF rapid response grantees mobilized to create greater protections for immigrant workers, raise awareness about worker conditions, and advance long-term policy goals. Some grantees were able to advance policy outcomes in places like New York, such as **NYIC's** successful advocacy for the NY HERO Act for permanent health and safety standards, including required PPE, reducing the spread airborne diseases in workplaces, and **Adhikaar's** advocacy to ensure worker demands were reflected in reopening guidelines for nail salons. In other parts of the country, rapid response grantees like **Nebraska Appleseed** and **South Dakota Voices for Peace (SDVFP)** worked with meat and poultry industry workers, farmworkers and domestic workers to build organizing infrastructure and pushed for demands against industrial giants.

### *Meat and Poultry Industries.*

**NE Appleseed** convened a statewide coalition of community, worker, farmer, union, and health partners calling for urgent meatpacking COVID protections, while also building public understanding for long-term work-speed standards with nationwide allies. **SDVFP** expanded outreach efforts to multilingual, immigrant, refugee and undocumented communities for the first time across the eastern half of South Dakota, including immigrant workers in the meat packing industry,

and is working to build trust to advocate alongside workers for greater protections. **Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC)** placed stories in mainstream media featuring members in the meatpacking industry in the Tennessee Lookout, the Tennessean, and the Nashville Scene, among others. These efforts successfully framed the narrative about the virus's spread in these communities by underscoring immigrants' overrepresentation as frontline workers.

### *Agricultural Workers.*

**Pioneer Valley Workers Center (PVWC)** launched a coalition unifying over 400 farmworker members in Western Massachusetts to begin speaking about workplace violations, including loss of hours or employment, exposure to COVID due to unsafe working and transportation conditions, and uplifting their essential role in the U.S. food system. PVWC also launched a legislative campaign called Fairness for Farmworkers to end the unjust subminimum wage for farmworkers of \$8.00 per hour (compared to \$13.50 earned in most other industries) and implement overtime. Through story sharing and a survey project with partners at UMass Amherst Labor Center, PVWC began a long-term project called Essential but Excluded, to draw attention to farmworker rights locally and nationwide. PVWC's organizers increased their visits with farmworkers and held regular organizing meetings regarding agricultural workers' concerns.

### *Domestic Workers.*

**TIRRC's** worker organizer, a longtime leader with TIRRC, grew the organization's domestic workers committee from 150 to 900 members, grew their new essential worker committee by 100, and led trainings including COVID safety, workplace rights, digital inclusion, story sharing, and member recruitment. TIRRC members were trained to share their stories in meetings with elected officials and were able to express the importance of workplace protections and immigrant inclusion in relief packages at TIRRC's workers' town hall and at a round table on International Workers Day.



**Voces De La Frontera** launched a successful Essential Workers Rights Campaign in response to the unsafe working conditions for meatpacking workers in Green Bay, WI, filing complaints with OSHA and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and breaking the story in Wisconsin at a time when COVID hotspots were erupting in the meatpacking industry nationally. Voces' advocacy led to winning demands for masks, 6-foot distancing, access to testing, notification of COVID exposure, paid sick days and anti-retaliation protections. Voces also won a campaign for an anti-retaliation settlement for Strauss workers who received a total cash settlement of \$264,000, to be divided among 28 workers.



## Paycheck Protection Program and Small Business Recovery for BIPOC Communities

**American Business Immigration Coalition (ABIC)** worked with partners to enact bi-partisan, pro-immigrant federal policies for the inclusion of ITIN business owners and undocumented workers in the \$377 billion Rubio/Cardin Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), a small business and nonprofit relief appropriation in the \$2 trillion CARES Act. ABIC mobilized critical outreach and technical assistance for numerous employers navigating the opportunity and secured \$8.1 million in PPP loans for 219 small businesses, largely owned by people of color, with an average loan amount of \$37,000. ABIC deepened its role advising senior administration officials from the White House, Small Business Administration (SBA), Department of Treasury and National Economic Council, and testified in Congress adding perspective from national work and demonstrative results with hard-to-reach Black, immigrant, and rural small business. ABIC also created and piloted its Community Navigator Technical Assistance “Hub and Spoke” model focused on Black- and immigrant-owned and rural small business recovery that is now included in the Biden American Rescue Plan with \$100 million in SBA technical assistance funds.

## Strengthening Community Care and People Power Through Mutual Aid and Direct Support

FFF grantees mobilized resources to support their communities through mutual aid as they experienced up to a tripling of community outreach to their organizations for help, and brought in new members to join in longer-term organizing and advocacy. **BLMP** distributed more than \$200,000 in mutual aid to vulnerable Black LGBTQIA+ migrant community members. **TQP's** Radical Wellbeing and Mutual Aid Committee and Fund provided direct emergency support for 100+ TQBIPOC/migrant families, implemented a member-led emergency fund, and led supported organizing campaigns with calls, protest and other actions by fund members. **Families for Freedom's** COVID relief fund supported members outside of detention and their loved ones, granting on average \$300 per month for groceries, utilities, transportation, and other expenses. **NYIC** raised over \$1.2 million in regrants for member organizations operating food pantries and mutual aid services, providing immediate relief through NYC's cash assistance program and emergency COVID care expansion. **Adhikaar** provided nearly \$500K in emergency relief funds to over 750 members, distributed PPE and care packages to 652 households, facilitated language support for over 450 individuals at hospitals, trained 47 members to be mental health peer-supporters,



supported 216 individuals with medical and housing resources, secured quarantine facilities, and created 15 Nepali language community education videos on topics including health insurance, language access, workers' rights, testing centers, and recovery benefits. **DRUM** launched the Building Power and Solidarity through Safety Campaign, a hugely successful model of community-based leadership that had immense impact in keeping communities safe, connected, and engaged to change their circumstances. DRUM distributed over \$400,000 in relief funds, as well as 16,000 PPE and 600 grocery packages; made 12,000 calls to members and community members to provide safety information; and identified over 2000 potential members, of which over 400 have been recruited into DRUM's membership. **Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC)** raised and distributed \$216,000 to 584 immigrant families excluded from state and federal relief through their Essential but Excluded Fund and engaged communities through digital organizing events, meetings, naturalization clinics, political education, and civic engagement. FLIC's Community Hotline volume more than tripled in the first

few weeks of the pandemic and it launched its Essential Community landing page to engage the high volume of community members reaching out to their organization. **PVWC** successfully advocated for increased resources for undocumented immigrants during the pandemic and distributed over \$750,000 in cash and food relief. **Women Watch Africa** provided \$7,000 total in critical monthly communal COVID support, including food, household essentials, and hand sanitizer to 385 families for 10 months; distributed over 3,500 facemasks; supported 179 households with utility bills and rental assistance; and trained 200 community members in Know Your Rights. **SDVFP** expanded outreach efforts to multilingual, immigrant, refugee and undocumented communities across the eastern half of South Dakota, where their organization's first community outreach organizers reached and provided direct monetary assistance to 1700 immigrant households. **Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM)** supported queer and trans youth with housing support, rent relief efforts, and full compensation to youth leaders for their increased labor during the pandemic.

# COMBATting ANTI-ASIAN HATE & XENOPHOBIA:

In addition to a life-threatening virus and extreme economic hardship, the pandemic also resulted in a sharp uptick of hate incidents and violence targeting immigrant communities, especially AAPI communities. FFF grantees tracked, and countered misinformation, bigotry and violence targeting Asian American and other immigrant communities and built national and local spaces for collaboration, advocacy, and shared learning. FFF grantees also engaged in thoughtful approaches to shift narratives away from law enforcement approaches to hate and instead advance a narrative based in community and driven by proactive solutions that address root causes.

## Movement-Building & Coalition Building for Racial Equity

FFF grantees mobilized to build coalitions and a collaborative movement for racial equity and combatting hate. **Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA)** co-launched [Stop AAPI Hate](#) (SAH) with Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council and San Francisco State University Asian American Studies Department. SAH led the response to the pandemic's unleashing of anti-AAPI hate and has become the leading national reporting and resource center to address the rise in incidents, racism, violence, and discrimination. CAA also provided critical data and resources to support movement building, grassroots coalition building, and racial equity through the Shared Liberation Network, a new national network of AAPI organizations for deep movement building through relationships, political education, self-care, and strategy development to fight racism and xenophobia. CAA is now supporting partners and creating replicable models for countering both immediate harms and the root causes of racial bias. **Coalition of Asian American Leaders Minnesota (CAAL)** led the formation of the Asian Minnesotan Alliance



Photo by Joyce Xi

for Justice (AMAJ), the first alliance of Asian organizations in Minnesota with an analysis and purpose towards ending white supremacy and fighting for liberation. CAAL has also been a lead convener of the Shared Liberation Network. **NAKASEC** hosted a series of Facebook Lives with guests invited to talk about how anti-Asian racism impacts different segments of the AAPI community, including undocumented, adoptees, queer and trans people, to decrease isolation and build community.

## Advocacy with Public Agencies

**CAAL** successfully advocated for policies that address anti-Asian racism and build more inclusive local and state governments to better respond to rising hate incidents and racism. CAAL won policies that close loopholes on hate crimes, allow communities to be co-responders, and provide support to victims of hate; engaged with school districts to better support Asian students; and advocated with government institutions on best practices to support and invest in Asian communities. **CAA**, who reflected on how the public agency response to violence is usually through a law-enforcement lens, partnered with community organizations across the country to push for increased investments for victim and survivor services, intervention and prevention-based programs, cross-racial healing, and solidarity to advance an alternative lens. **CAA** also provided technical assistance and support to agencies and officials, advancing greater understanding of the challenges being experienced in the diverse AAPI community.



## Supporting Victims following Violent Attacks on Asian Communities

**Advancing Justice - Atlanta (AAAJ-Atlanta)** worked with community leaders and national partners in the wake of the March 16, 2021 Atlanta spa shootings to distribute initial emergency payments to help victims with immediate support, such as funeral expenses, medical expenses, and rental assistance; and triaged needs and worked to provide access to free counseling services. Advancing Justice - Atlanta also raised money for the Atlanta 3/16 Survivors Fund to support the enduring needs of the families of the victims who were killed, the victims who were physically injured, and victims who experienced psychological trauma and were present during the attack. AAAJ-Atlanta created the Survivors Fund Task Force and sought community input to decide how these funds should be distributed.

## Community Trainings

**Houston Coalition Against Hate** provided five virtual bystander trainings in partnership with Hollaback!, training 678 individuals in Hollaback!'s 5D's for safe and effective bystander intervention (Distract, Delegate, Delay, Delegate, and Document) and the interconnected web of racism, bias and discrimination that feeds xenophobia, violence, and anti-Asian/immigrant sentiments. Its first training on March 18, just two days after the Atlanta spa shootings, offered a forum to grieve while also teaching community members how to safely stand up to identity-based bigotry. As part of the Shared Liberation Network, **CAAL** developed a resource website on addressing anti-black racism, a discussion guide for Asian organizations on addressing anti-blackness, curriculum on Asian American History, a 'Reimagining Safety as Asian Americans' workshop, and a Training for Trainers. **CAA** disseminated multilingual resources to

support community action including public safety tips, anti-racism materials, and information about anti-discrimination laws. **PrYSM** partnered with the Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education (ARISE) and the Alliance to Mobilize Our Resistance (AMOR) Network to create an anti-racism response network in Rhode Island, held virtual community meetings, and developed toolkits around anti-Blackness and AAPI-Black solidarity.

## Promoting Inclusive Narratives

**Equality Labs** launched the [Blueprint](#), a new community-based platform with liberation and movements at the core of its reporting, writing, and editorial strategies. This platform is part of a narrative shift strategy to combat hate speech and disinformation that fuel the nationalist, authoritarian, and supremacist politics that have risen across South Asia. Through this strategy, Equality Labs has developed emerging writers through intensive, individualized mentorship and monthly training sessions, and featured 20 authors, centering their voices and leadership in media across a wide spectrum of issues, including abolition, self-care for Dalit trans communities, anti-caste liberation in Sri Lanka, casteism in South Asian LGBTQIA spaces, and workings of caste in Indo-Fijian context. **CAA** released a dozen reports on hate incidents and anti-Asian rhetoric, driving the narrative in major television, radio, and digital media outlets. CAA is seeking to re-shape the narrative to address the root causes of systemic racism; provide culturally responsive mental health resources and community-based models to increase safety and cross-community healing; expand public understanding of the diversity of AAPI communities and intersectionality with race, class, gender, and other identities; and disseminate AAPI voices to counter anti-Asian narratives.



## EMBRACING IMMIGRANTS AS ESSENTIAL WORKERS & MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITIES:

FFF grantees advanced narrative change projects that highlight and reframe the contributions of immigrants and refugees as workers and community members in response to the COVID pandemic.

### Expanding the Reach of Pro-immigrant Narratives

**NILC**, Resilience Force, and Soze Agency launched the [#ImmigrantsAreEssential Campaign](#) to shift the narrative and use art and culture to amplify that immigrants are essential to America. #ImmigrantsAreEssential's powerful work was publicly recognized when it won the prestigious [Shorty Award](#). The campaign produced and promoted 80 original and licensed works of art and videos that were shared over 2,500 times by 1,000 influencers online, as well murals, billboards, and a full-page ad in the Washington Post calling for citizenship for all 11 million undocumented immigrants the day before Biden's inauguration; and activated tens of thousands of Americans from all 50 states to take action in support of immigrant inclusion in federal COVID relief. **Motus Theater** expanded the reach of their autobiographical stories of undocumented leaders to over 220,430 people across the U.S., with a focus on Colorado, North Carolina, Arizona,

Pennsylvania, and Texas, and reached 6,470 additional people through the UndocuAmerica podcast and shared the stories of undocumented leaders in 21 media outlets. Motus grew their reach through strategic collaborations with influential readers, including Reps. Jayapal, Neguse, and Crow; BLM co-founder Patrisse Cullors; UNC president Andy Feinstein; and the Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo; as well as partnerships with faith institutions, and conferences. Motus also hosted a Get Out the Vote virtual event and social media event reaching 1,758,000 screens with the National Domestic Workers Alliance. **Comunidad Colectiva** launched a project to document and memorialize the stories of perseverance of the Latinx undocumented Community in Charlotte, NC throughout the COVID pandemic. The project captured the experience of the pandemic through undocumented eyes and allowed those affected by the pandemic to have a platform to voice their concerns and frustrations. **Refugee Congress** launched the [Refugee Storytellers Collective](#), a fully refugee-led online space, committed to empowering refugees and asylees to share their stories, perspectives, and experiences in ways that can transform the public narrative on refugees and inform the public debate. Their stories have been featured in media coverage reframing refugees and asylees as essential contributors to our communities.

## *Conclusion*

With support from FFF, grantees had the resources they needed to move quickly into action to take care of their communities, free community members from the death traps of immigrant detention, jails and prisons, fight back against xenophobia and Anti-Asian hate, and push for bold reforms that will have lasting impacts for years to come. Looking ahead, FFF is continuing our long-term investments to strengthen the immigrant justice movement's capacity to build on these accomplishments.

As the country and the international community recover from the devastating impacts of the pandemic, the United States has the opportunity and responsibility to learn from past mistakes, reimagine our country's systems, and lead the way globally as a home for those seeking refuge. This unique moment offers the immigrant justice movement a critical strategic opening to rebuild a better, more inclusive nation where everyone can thrive, regardless of what they look like or where they come from.

Due to their relentless and visionary organizing, advocacy, and support for their communities, FFF grantees are emerging from this difficult period stronger and ready to seize this critical moment to transform our country's systems to respect the humanity of all people, regardless of immigration status. FFF is honored to support this powerful movement as it moves America toward a more just and safer future for all.

## About FFF's Rapid Response Fund

In today's extremely volatile political landscape, immigrant justice organizations need both infrastructure and adaptability to pivot in the face of unpredictable developments, respond to threats and community needs as they emerge, and take advantage of critical opportunities to advance reform.

Through FFF's Rapid Response Fund and responsive grantmaking initiatives, FFF coordinates with donors to provide fast, agile funding to address unanticipated threats within immigrant communities, as well as opportunities to advance inclusive immigrant justice policies. When large-scale urgent needs or strategic openings emerge for the immigrant justice movement, FFF coordinates with donors to fund new campaigns or establish new grantee-led initiatives that respond to the moment, while building power to advance lasting systemic change.

FFF's responsive funding and long-term flexible grants have proven critical in building the immigrant justice movement's infrastructure to empower, protect, and defend immigrant communities under all political conditions.

**Funders interested in learning more about FFF's Rapid Response Fund and the work of our grantees should contact FFF Senior Director, Rini Chakraborty at [rchakraborty@neophilanthropy.org](mailto:rchakraborty@neophilanthropy.org).**

# ***Appendix:***

## FFF COVID RESPONSE GRANTEE LIST

[Adhikaar](#)

[AVID in the Chihuahan Desert](#)

[American Business Immigration Coalition](#)

[American Friends Service Committee-New Jersey](#)

[Asian Americans Advancing Justice Atlanta](#)

[Black Alliance for Just Immigration](#)

[Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project](#)

[Border Butterflies](#)

[Causa](#)

[Chinese for Affirmative Action](#)

[Coalition of Asian American Leaders \(CAAL\)](#)

[Comunidad Colectiva](#)

[Decriminalizing Communities Coalition](#)

[Desis Rising Up and Moving](#)

[Detention Watch Network](#)

[Dream Action Oklahoma](#)

[Equality Labs](#)

[Faith in Indiana](#)

[Families for Freedom](#)

[Florida Immigrant Coalition](#)

[Freedom for Florida](#)

[Haitian Bridge Alliance](#)

[Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees](#)

[Houston Coalition Against Hate](#)

[Immigrant Legal Resource Center \(ILRC\)](#)

[Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice \(ICIJ\)](#)

[Kids in Need of Defense \(KIND\)](#)

[Mano Amiga](#)

[MomsRising](#)

[MOTUS Theater](#)

[NAKASEC](#)

[National Immigration Law Center](#)

[National Immigration Project of the](#)

[National Lawyers Guild](#)

[Nebraska Appleseed](#)

[New Mexico Dream Team](#)

[New Sanctuary Coalition](#)

[New York Immigration Coalition](#)

[Organized Communities Against Deportation](#)

[Physicians for Human Rights](#)

[Pioneer Valley Workers Center](#)

[Protecting Immigrant Families Campaign](#)

[Providence Youth Student Movement](#)

[R Street](#)

[Refugee Congress](#)

[Shut Down Berks Coalition](#)

[South Dakota Voices for Peace](#)

[Southeast Asian Coalition/ SEAC Village](#)

[Tennessee Immigrant and](#)

[Refugee Rights Coalition](#)

[The Young Center](#)

[Trans Queer Pueblo](#)

[Tsuru for Solidarity](#)

[Voces de la Frontera](#)

[Women's Refugee Commission](#)

[Women's Watch Afrika](#)



A fund of NEO Philanthropy

**Four Freedoms Fund** is a national funder collaborative that was launched by NEO Philanthropy in 2003. FFF strengthens the capacity of the immigrant justice movement to ensure all immigrants, regardless of immigration status, have dignity, power to shape change, and agency to determine the quality of their life, community, and future. To achieve this goal, FFF believes we need a robust and powerful infrastructure of organizations leading the transformation of our country's systems to be inclusive, fair and just, and grounded in racial, economic, and gender justice. Over its eighteen-year history, FFF has infused the immigrant justice movement with over \$180 million and provided crucial technical assistance to deepen organizational capacity. From an initial handful of grantees in 2003, FFF now supports organizations, coalitions and networks operating in approximately 30 states and Washington DC.

*This image and images throughout this report are from the Shut Down Berks Coalition's event in front of Independence Hall, held as part of the Detention Watch Network's #CommunitiesNotCages National Day of Action*