

# The Four Freedoms Fund

**A Philanthropic Partnership  
Helps Build A Movement**



**A Report From**

*Carnegie*  
CORPORATION  
OF NEW YORK

Written by  
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**Freedom from Fear** CREDIT: FOR FREEDOMS (HANK WILLIS THOMAS AND EMILY SHUR IN COLLABORATION WITH ERIC GOTTESMAN AND WYATT GALLERY OF FOR FREEDOMS), "FREEDOM FROM FEAR," 2018

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**T**he Four Freedoms Fund, which is housed at NEO Philanthropy, a public charity and funder intermediary, was created in 2003 by a group of funders seeking to pool their resources to help grow and strengthen the network of immigrant rights organizations working at the state and local levels across the country.

Over the past 18 years, and with an evolving group of donors, the collaborative has channeled more than \$170 million to various organizations and initiatives. At a time when the prospects for wide-ranging pro-immigrant reforms diminished and when the national debate on these issues grew increasingly divisive, Four Freedoms Fund grantees have succeeded in advancing local and state policies that have yielded important improvements in immigrants' lives. These organizations are leading the charge against harsh anti-immigrant measures advanced by local, state, and federal officials, while mobilizing their communities to advocate for pro-immigrant reform at all levels. Their work has led to national achievements, such as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which grants work permits and temporary relief from deportation to hundreds of thousands of young immigrants. And, following years of ceaseless movement building, voter mobilization, and organizing led by Four Freedoms Fund grantees across the country, President Joseph R. Biden took a range of bold actions in his first days in office in 2021 to restore compassion and justice to various aspects of U.S. immigration policy.

This report provides an overview of the Four Freedoms Fund's history, mission, and recent achievements, with the goal of encouraging more funders to join in the work of growing and sustaining a grassroots-led, nationwide movement for dignity, opportunity, and equal rights.

**The Four Freedoms Fund** was named after President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1941 Four Freedoms speech outlining the fundamental freedoms all people should be able to enjoy: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. The speech was the inspiration for four famous paintings by Norman Rockwell that were published in the Saturday Evening Post. The artists Hank Willis Thomas and Emily Shur, in collaboration with Eric Gottesman and Wyatt Gallery, recently recreated Rockwell's images to reflect the diversity of the United States in the 21st century. The four images are reproduced throughout this report.

## Strategic Priorities

To promote its goals of systemic reform and full integration of immigrants into U.S. society, the Four Freedoms Fund has adopted several strategic priorities. This report describes the collaborative's work across these areas, with perspectives from Four Freedoms Fund donors, grantees, and staff.

### **Building State and Local Movement Infrastructure.**

The Four Freedoms Fund supports a mixed grantee portfolio of state and local organizations across the country. Together, these groups form an infrastructure of diverse organizations that protect, promote, and defend the self-determination, rights, and opportunities of immigrant communities in 30 states.

*"It is because of the Four Freedoms Fund that we have been able to stand up successfully against anti-immigrant policies while achieving surprising success in the work of building a more welcoming and inclusive Tennessee."*

— **Stephanie Teatro**, former co-executive director, Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition

### **Combating Immigration Enforcement and Criminalization of Immigrants.**

Through its Response to Harsh Enforcement Initiative, the Four Freedoms Fund supports a national network of nonprofits working at the regional and community levels to reduce detentions and deportations while advocating and organizing for the humane treatment of immigrants and others in the detention system.

*"When it came to enforcement, funders just didn't want to go there. It was too controversial. The Four Freedoms Fund stepped in and really dug in deep with us to try and figure out what was happening, how enforcement was affecting different communities, and how to work for saner policies."*

— **Andrea Black**, former executive director, Detention Watch Network



**Civic Participation.** The Four Freedoms Fund aims to increase voting rates and vote share among immigrants. An independent analysis in 2019 found that through the work of Four Freedoms Fund grantees, turnout among low-propensity voters increased from 36 percent in 2016 to 44 percent in the midterm elections in 2018.

*“The Four Freedoms Fund has been a key supporter of our work to mobilize our communities to stand up for their interests and vote.”*

— **Becky Belcore**, co-director, National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC)

**Capacity Building.** The Four Freedoms Fund provides targeted capacity-building support for grantees in areas such as strategic planning, communications, policy advocacy, and leadership transitions. This allows its grantees to play an instrumental role in developing a pipeline of immigrant leaders through training, volunteer recruitment, and other activities. Capacity-building efforts include monthly calls, training webinars, grantee peer-learning seminars and retreats, and consulting and coaching focused on specific organizational and management challenges.

*“I started UndocuBlack when I was 23 years old. I had never been an executive director. It was the Four Freedoms Fund that connected me to trainings and coaching that made it possible for me to get through that turbulent time and become a leader.”*

— **Jonathan Jayes-Green**, cofounder and former founding director, UndocuBlack Network, now vice president for programs, Marguerite Casey Foundation

**Rapid Response.** In 2017, the Four Freedoms Fund created a Rapid Response Fund to provide immediate support to grantee organizations struggling to respond to unprecedented attacks on immigrant communities and their rights in the wake of the 2016 election.

*“Working at the border, we are facing crisis situations all the time. The Four Freedoms Fund staff knew we could move quickly, and they gave us rapid-response funding to reach many thousands of people.”*

— **Andrea Guerrero**, executive director, Alliance San Diego

**Strategic Communications.** Communications and messaging training has long been a staple offering of the Four Freedoms Fund’s Capacity Building Initiative. The collaborative also supports efforts to share public opinion research across the immigrant rights community.

*“Capacity-building support from the Four Freedoms Fund has really helped us work across different issues and geographies and equip advocates to make a powerful case for change.”*

— **María Rodríguez**, executive director, Florida Immigrant Coalition

As the United States struggles to achieve a national immigration system that offers safety, opportunity, and equal rights for immigrants, the Four Freedoms Fund is supporting a foundational movement for change. The Fund also provides a one-of-a-kind network for funders interested in these issues to collaborate and learn from peers. As one participating funder stated, “Those relationships you form at a table like this end up adding more value to your work than you ever imagined.”

# INTRODUCTION

**F**amily separation. Mass deportations. High levels of fear and stress in immigrant communities. And contentious discussions in Washington, D.C., and across the country about immigration enforcement, paths to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, and related issues.

Immigration is one of the most hotly debated topics in the United States today. After a number of failed attempts in the last two decades, federal lawmakers are still struggling to reform the broken U.S. immigration system, despite overwhelming public support for change.

In the absence of federal action, something notable has happened. Immigrant-led organizations and networks at the state and local levels have stepped into the leadership void. Across the country, nonprofits and their leaders, staff, and volunteers have been dauntless in their efforts to advance common-sense, humane immigration solutions.

Through collective effort, members of this grassroots movement have made significant progress on behalf of immigrant communities, including expanded access to driver's licenses, higher education, and good jobs, as well as new protections from detention and deportation. More broadly, they have worked in partnership with other advocates to achieve lasting gains on issues ranging from voting rights to worker protections to environmental justice. And they have accomplished this while taking action against proposals and policies that threaten opportunities and rights for immigrants, communities of color, and other marginalized populations.

## A Critical Force

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In addition to their shared goal of building power and advancing immigrant rights, many of these immigrant-led grassroots organizations have something else in common: they are supported by the Four Freedoms Fund, a national donor collaborative created in 2003 by Carnegie Corporation of New York and other foundations to work toward the full integration of immigrants into U.S. democracy.

In its 18 years of existence, the Four Freedoms Fund, housed at NEO Philanthropy, a public charity and funder intermediary, has become a critical force for building a strong infrastructure of local, state-based, and regional organizations working to empower, protect, and defend immigrant communities while advancing a broader vision of inclusion and equal rights for all. The Fund has become a model for how diverse funders can come together to learn, share strategies and ideas, and pool their resources to make a bigger impact on the issues they care about.

“Four Freedoms is such an essential part of the movement at this point that I can’t imagine we could have made the gains we’ve made without it,” said Mayra Peters-Quintero, the senior program officer who oversees the Ford Foundation’s immigrant rights grantmaking. The Ford Foundation was a founding member of the Four Freedoms Fund alongside Carnegie Corporation of New York. “There is no way for individual funders, no matter how big they are, to keep up with what is happening in communities and states on these issues. To have the Four Freedoms Fund serve that function for all of us is a game changer for philanthropy.”



**Freedom of Speech** CREDIT: FOR FREEDOMS (HANK WILLIS THOMAS AND EMILY SHUR IN COLLABORATION WITH ERIC GOTTESMAN AND WYATT GALLERY OF FOR FREEDOMS), "FREEDOM OF SPEECH," 2018

# HISTORY OF THE FOUR FREEDOMS FUND

## Origin Story

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**T**he Four Freedoms Fund was launched in 2003 by five national foundations, each of which had been working individually on immigration issues for many years: Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, Open Society Institute (now Open Society Foundations), Mertz Gilmore Foundation, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (now Knight Foundation). In creating the Four Freedoms Fund, they set out to do something that was rare in philanthropy at the time. They wanted to pool their funds and develop a joint strategy for supporting immigrant advocacy at the state and local levels while building grassroots pressure for broader federal reforms.

“It was a way to be more responsive and strategic and, most importantly, to get more bang for the buck,” said Geri Mannion, director of the Strengthening U.S. Democracy program and the Special Opportunities Fund at Carnegie Corporation of New York. “We had to respond quickly and efficiently in a challenging and constantly changing political environment, where the needs of the grantees were great and growing — which meant we had to come up with a way of doing things differently.”

## A Challenging Time for Pro-Immigrant Policy

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The funders came together at a difficult moment for immigrant communities across the country. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States had fueled anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiment across the nation. Arab-American immigrants were being targeted for detention and questioning by the government. Nonimmigrant foreigners, including students, tourists, and businesspeople, were required to notify the newly created Department of Homeland Security of any change of address, employment, or school. Hate crimes and harassment toward immigrants experienced a sudden spike.

“September 11 changed everything,” Cecilia Muñoz, who was a senior leader at the National Council of La Raza in 2001, told the *Carnegie Reporter* in 2008. “It made the hill we needed to climb much higher, adding a whole new dimension on national security to the debate and increasing the government’s ability to persecute particular people using immigration law.”

## A Focus on Grassroots Efforts

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The Four Freedoms Fund was started with grants totaling \$2.8 million, including \$1 million from Carnegie Corporation of New York. From the beginning, the funders looked to advance pro-immigrant local and state policies and build grassroots pressure for federal reform. Recognizing the need for a robust immigrant rights movement, they focused their collective grantmaking on states and regions with significant and growing populations of immigrants. They worked with state-based groups to build their capacity to advance policy change, communicate with the public and policymakers about the contributions of immigrants to society, form diverse coalitions, and engage more immigrants as active participants in voting and civic life.

“It was pretty clear at that time that local and state work was going to be critical in making sure these places that were experiencing really profound demographic changes could achieve success in creating a welcoming and inclusive climate for immigrants,” said Taryn Higashi, the executive director of Unbound Philanthropy, who was a program officer with the Ford Foundation at the time. “To the extent that we could support good policies at that level, the idea was that it might create momentum for national action down the line.”

For their work conceiving and building the Four Freedoms Fund, Higashi and Mannion received the 2009 Scrivner Award for Creative Grantmaking from the Council on Foundations.



## Evolution

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Over the past 18 years, the Four Freedoms Fund has evolved in its membership, staffing, and strategies while maintaining a focus on supporting and strengthening local, state, and regional immigrant-led groups. During this period, the immigrant rights movement has experienced many highs and lows. The promise of national action on immigration reform has been stymied more than once, even as the federal government granted temporary deportation relief and work permits for young undocumented immigrants via the DACA program. Similarly, many states have embraced intrusive anti-immigrant policies, while others have adopted laws and programs aimed at creating opportunities for immigrants to participate more fully in their communities and the economy.

Following the 2016 elections, the movement had to respond to unrelenting attacks on immigrant rights at the federal level, including family separations, mass deportations, and new restrictions on refugees and those seeking asylum in the United States.

Through it all, the Four Freedoms Fund has stepped up to critical challenges while continuing its long-term strategic investments. In 2020, the Four Freedoms Fund, with a diverse group of 16 donors, distributed 214 grants to 144 organizations in 30 states and the District of Columbia, as well as national support organizations, totaling approximately \$16.4 million. Its staff is widely respected for its expertise and its ability to support grantees to do their best work.

“The Four Freedoms Fund has proven its essential purpose,” said Frank Sharry, a longtime advocate for immigrants and refugees who currently heads America’s Voice, which works to build public support for pro-immigrant federal reforms. “It’s a broker that has connected philanthropy to the important work that’s happening on the ground on these issues, and it’s led the way in building the spine of a grassroots-led movement for change.”

Housed at NEO Philanthropy, the collaborative also has led the way in creating a venue for diverse funders to come together and work alongside immigrant-led organizations to imagine and shape a pro-immigrant agenda at all levels of society.

“It’s easy to become siloed when you’re working in philanthropy,” said Tim Parritt, program officer with the Geneva-based Oak Foundation, an international grantmaker that joined the Four Freedoms Fund in 2015. “Sitting at that table allows us to collaborate with peers and make sure we are getting the most out of our investments. We also get the benefit of the expertise of a wonderful and experienced staff. It’s enriched our work in so many ways.”

Current donors to the Four Freedoms Fund include Carnegie Corporation of New York; the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund; the Ford Foundation; the Grove Foundation; the Heising-Simons Foundation; the JPB Foundation; the Kresge Foundation; Luminate (part of the Omidyar Group); Oak Foundation; Open Society Foundations; Solidarity Giving; Schusterman Family Philanthropies; Unbound Philanthropy; the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation; Wellspring Philanthropic Fund; and other benefactors.

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– Frank Sharry, head of America’s Voice

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# FOUR FREEDOMS FUND 2020 GRANTMAKING

Immigrants account for 13.7 percent of the United States population and come from all over the world. In fact, the five countries with the highest number of U.S. immigrants are geographically dispersed: Mexico, China, India, the Philippines, and El Salvador. While Americans sometimes focus on a single, nearby group or one recently in the news, the country's vast diversity of

immigrants ranges from Kurds in Nashville to Somalis in Minneapolis, from Haitians in Miami to Bangladeshis in Queens, among many others. The Four Freedoms Fund aims to engage with all of these groups, as demonstrated by its grantmaking in 2020. Nearly \$17 million was distributed to grantees throughout the country of which some \$2 million involved rapid-response grants.

## 2020 Grantmaking at a Glance

**216**  
GRANTS TO

**144**  
GRANTEES  
IN 30 STATES +  
WASHINGTON D.C.

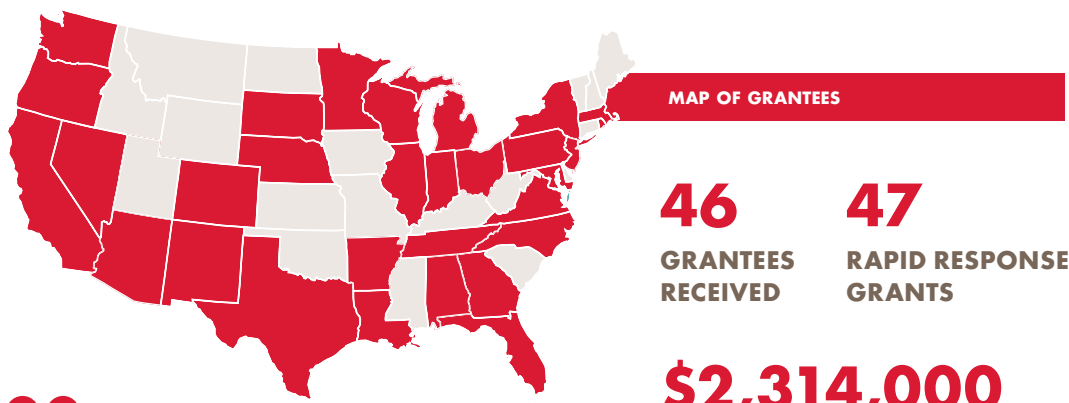
**\$16,587,800**  
TOTAL GRANTS DISTRIBUTED

**90** MULTIETHNIC GROUPS

**25** LATINX-FOCUSED GROUPS

**15** ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER-  
FOCUSED GROUPS

**9** BLACK-IMMIGRANT GROUPS



**46** GRANTEES  
RECEIVED

**47** RAPID RESPONSE  
GRANTS

**\$2,314,000**  
TOTAL RAPID RESPONSE  
GRANTMAKING

To see a full list of organizations that Four Freedoms Fund supports across the country, visit [www.neophilanthropy.org/collaborative-funds/four-freedoms-fund/grantees](http://www.neophilanthropy.org/collaborative-funds/four-freedoms-fund/grantees).

**Sources:** Four Freedoms Fund (March 30, 2021); Pew Research Center tabulations of 2018 American Community Survey

#### D.C. IMPACT:

## How Four Freedoms Fund Grantees Have Influenced Federal Policy

**W**hile the primary focus of the Four Freedoms Fund is to support grantees to amplify their state and local impact, grantees across the country also have played key roles in advancing and protecting pro-immigrant federal policies.

"I think the funders recognized from the very start that you can't have change on the federal level without groups on the ground educating their home communities and policymakers about these issues and building power and vote share for new Americans," said Anita Khashu, director of the Four Freedoms Fund.

National legislative efforts to provide undocumented immigrants with a path to citizenship via comprehensive immigration reform have failed more than once. However, Four Freedoms Fund grantees have helped achieve other important gains for immigrant communities over many years. For example, United We Dream used its support from the Four Freedoms Fund and other donors to build a diverse movement of young immigrants who succeeded in convincing the Obama administration to approve the DACA program through Executive Action in 2012. Since its adoption, DACA has protected more than 800,000 undocumented young people from deportation and allowed them to advance in their education and careers.

"It's clear to me that the Four Freedoms Fund and its funders share our belief that the key to building power and creating change is that the people closest to the pain are closest to the solutions," said Cristina Jiménez,

former executive director of United We Dream. "Those directly impacted lead our organization – the strategy, the analysis, the storytelling, and our campaigns. And the results have been undeniable."

Since 2012, United We Dream and other Four Freedoms Fund grantees have played a critical role in defending DACA from attacks and supporting young people to complete their DACA applications. These groups also have used their organizing and mobilizing resources to achieve other pro-immigrant federal policy reforms. In 2017, for example, the Four Freedoms Fund's Response to Harsh Enforcement Initiative supported the launch of a #DefundHate campaign focused on public education and organizing to reduce funding for U.S. Department of Homeland Security enforcement activities. An independent review of this grantmaking found that with very modest resources, Four Freedoms Fund grantees were able to shift the conversation in Washington from holding the line on spending to reducing spending on federal enforcement and detention. Many of these groups also successfully challenged the addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 U.S. Census questionnaire on the basis that it was a transparent attempt to reduce participation among immigrant communities.

"These groups have shown that supporting and strengthening local and state voices is how you build more power and more pressure for reform at all levels," said the Corporation's Geri Mannion. "It may not happen overnight, but we need to keep supporting these groups to make the case for change." ■

## KEY PRIORITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Since its founding, the Four Freedoms Fund has channeled more than \$170 million toward building and supporting a robust network of local, state, and national organizations working to advance and protect rights and opportunities for immigrant communities. Through general operating support, capacity building, rapid-response grants, and other supports, the Four Freedoms Fund has been a powerful force in building and strengthening a nationwide movement guided by compassion, respect, and a recognition that the United States is a better country when it includes immigrants as active participants in the economy and local communities.

The Four Freedoms Fund focuses on several strategic priorities to advance its goals of systemic reform and full integration of immigrants into U.S. society. These include building state and local movement infrastructure, combating immigration enforcement and criminalization of immigrants, civic participation, capacity building, rapid response, and strategic communications.

### Building State and Local Movement Infrastructure

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Since its inception, the Four Freedoms Fund's grant-making strategy has focused on strengthening state and local groups that are essential to driving pro-immigrant reforms at all levels. The Four Freedoms Fund currently carries a mixed portfolio of nearly 100 organizations across the country. Together, these groups form a network of diverse state and local organizations that protect, promote, and defend the self-determination, rights, and opportunities of immigrant communities in 30 states.

Four Freedoms Fund grantees include groups like the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC), a statewide pro-immigrant network with over 50 member organizations that reflect the wide spectrum of Tennessee's growing immigrant populations — from Latinos to Kurdish refugees to Somalians.

"Four Freedoms has been one of our largest core funders for as long as we have been in existence," said Stephanie Teatro, TIRRC's former co-executive director who is now managing director with Resilience Force. "They played a critical role in helping us grow into one of the largest, most well-established organizations working on these issues in the Southeast. It is because of Four Freedoms that we have been able to stand up successfully against anti-immigrant policies while achieving surprising success in the work of building a more welcoming and inclusive Tennessee."

The Four Freedoms Fund provides long-term general operating funds to grantees along with other forms of support and technical assistance. "We believe in strengthening the network of organizations working to support immigration reform and immigrant justice, and we believe the main way to do that is by providing long-term, flexible funding," said Anita Khashu, director of the Four Freedoms Fund. "Because of our steady focus on a network of immigrant-led state and local groups that are doing great work, we've been able to strengthen and expand the national movement so that people are ready to step up to challenges and opportunities as they come along."

Four Freedoms Fund grantees support a rich variety of communities across the country, reflecting the diversity of U.S. immigrants. Through the LGBT Initiative, for example, the collaborative directs funding and other resources to groups working to protect and defend the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender immigrants, who face a higher risk of detention and deportation than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts because they are more likely to come into contact with law enforcement. Additionally, the Four Freedoms Fund is a key supporter of organizations led by and working for Black immigrants — such as the UndocuBlack Network and African Communities Together — as well as organizations and coalitions focused on young immigrants, women immigrants, and other marginalized populations.





**Freedom from Want** CREDIT: FOR FREEDOMS (HANK WILLIS THOMAS AND EMILY SHUR IN COLLABORATION WITH ERIC GOTTESMAN AND WYATT GALLERY OF FOR FREEDOMS), "FREEDOM FROM WANT," 2018

## STATE IMPACT STORY

### Arizona

**Backstory:** Arizona has drawn international attention in recent years as a hotbed of anti-immigrant sentiment and policymaking, including former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio's harsh anti-immigrant tactics. In 2004, state voters approved Proposition 200, a show-me-your-papers law that required individuals to provide proof of citizenship before registering to vote or applying for public benefits. In 2010, then-Governor Jan Brewer signed the country's strictest anti-immigration bill at the time, SB 1070, which granted police officers the power to detain anyone they suspected of being in the country illegally.

**Four Freedoms Fund Investments:** After SB 1070 was signed into law, the Four Freedoms Fund provided critical seed funding for the formation of One Arizona, a coalition of organizations across the state working in coordination to protect and advance rights and opportunities for immigrants. A key focus of the Four Freedoms Fund's support was capacity building for nonpartisan civic engagement. By helping groups develop skills related to data, youth-led organizing, and year-round voter outreach, One Arizona set out to build the power and voice of immigrant communities, with an emphasis on low-propensity Latino voters and young people.

**Results:** One Arizona has grown to include more than 23 organizations representing diverse communities across Arizona, working side by side to build a culture of civic engagement and democratic participation and registering 190,000 people to vote in 2018 alone. A 2016 evaluation of One Arizona's work found that it contributed to notable increases in voter turnout in federal and municipal elections from 2010 to 2015, particularly among Latino voters. According to the evaluation, One Arizona's member organizations made 1 million successful voter contacts in the five years surveyed and engaged 126,000 unique voters. Following the 2020 election, One Arizona was widely credited with boosting Latino turnout. ■

*"The Four Freedoms Fund was one of the first funders to believe in the work that needed to be done in Arizona, creating a core infrastructure that would help change how we operated as groups and how we worked to create political change."*

— **Francisco Heredia**, city council member in Mesa, Arizona, and former director of One Arizona

According to María Rodríguez, executive director of the Florida Immigrant Coalition, the 66 member organizations of the longtime Four Freedoms Fund grantee are “incredibly diverse,” ranging from labor and faith-based groups to organizations serving farmworkers, students, young immigrants, domestic violence survivors, LGBT people, and immigrants from Haiti, Guatemala, and many other nations.

One of the key strengths of the Four Freedoms Fund, Rodríguez said, is its recognition of and support for the intersectional work that groups like hers are doing every day. “Many people think about the work we are doing and say it’s all about immigration reform, but the truth is it’s much bigger than that. By investing in these coalitions, the Four Freedoms Fund is achieving impact on racial justice, education, child welfare, worker rights, and all these other issues. And working across those issues makes our movement stronger all the time.”

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*“Many people think about the work we are doing and say it’s all about immigration reform, but the truth is it’s much bigger than that. By investing in these coalitions, the Four Freedoms Fund is achieving impact on racial justice, education, child welfare, worker rights, and all these other issues. And working across those issues makes our movement stronger all the time.”*

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— **María Rodríguez**, executive director of the Florida Immigrant Coalition

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## **Combating Immigration Enforcement and Criminalization of Immigrants**

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In the early 2000s, immigration enforcement became a flashpoint as increasing numbers of immigrants across the United States were facing arrest, detention, and deportation. Since 2016, the impacts of criminalization and increased enforcement on immigrant communities have been severe, as families have been separated, immigrants mistreated and held in abhorrent conditions, and detainees often returned to countries with high levels of poverty and violence. The fear in these communities is palpable. Afraid of interactions with government and police, people avoid reporting crimes, and parents are often reluctant to send their children to school.

Andrea Black served as executive director of Detention Watch Network from 2005 to 2013. Established in 1997 by the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project, and Lutherans Immigration and Refugee Service, the network quickly assumed a central role in fighting the explosive growth of the U.S. immigration detention system. As Black took the reins at the organization, it became clear to her that organized philanthropy was reluctant to support its work. “When it came to enforcement, people just didn’t want to go there. It was too controversial,” Black said.

The Four Freedoms Fund became an early lifeline for the network. “They stepped in and really dug deep with us to try and figure out what was happening and how it was affecting different communities and how to work for saner policies,” Black said.

Since the early 2000s, the Four Freedoms Fund’s support for immigration enforcement reform has evolved into a network of partnerships and grants. Through the Response to Harsh Enforcement Initiative, the collaborative supports a national network of nonprofits working at the regional and community levels to reduce detentions and deportations while advocating and organizing for the humane treatment of immigrants and others in the



detention system. Starting in 2013, the Four Freedoms Fund also became a major supporter of #Not1More, a multifaceted campaign led by the National Day Laborer Organizing Network that has drawn national attention to the rise in deportations.

According to Rini Chakraborty, senior director of programs with the Four Freedoms Fund who oversees the Response to Harsh Enforcement Initiative, the collaborative's grantee partners have played a vital role in fighting detention in communities across the country. "Immigration is a federal issue, but the battle lines are always at the local level," she explained.

In May 2017, for example, Texas enacted a sweeping show-me-your-papers racial profiling law — the most extreme anti-immigrant state legislation since 2010, when a similar law passed in Arizona. In response, the Four Freedoms Fund launched a sub-fund allowing national and local donors to pool their resources for a coordinated Texas strategy. Through the new Texas Fund, the collaborative raised more than \$2 million and began making grants to support organizing, public education, and other activities to counter the law's effects.

Texas Fund grantees made great strides in driving local policy changes to reduce profiling and criminalization not just for immigrants but for people of color across the state. For example, grantee Mano Amiga successfully fought to make San Marcos the first city in Texas to adopt a cite-and-release policy ending excessive arrests for nonviolent crimes, a problem largely affecting immigrants and people of color. Other grantees supported the city of Austin to adopt one of the first and most robust Freedom City policies in the nation to reduce racial disparities in policing and to protect immigrants' rights in encounters with police.

After U.S. immigration enforcement policies grew more severe in the wake of the 2016 election, the Four Freedoms Fund and its grantee partners stepped up their work against mass detention. Grantees in many states helped secure the adoption of statewide or local laws and policies that limit the role of police and jails in the federal deportation process. Comunidad Colectiva and partners in North Carolina, for example, mobilized to convince the governor to veto a bill that would have required sheriffs to detain individuals beyond their ordinary release whenever requested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Other grantees convinced local governments to end contracts with private detention facilities and stop the construction of new facilities.

In 2019, the Four Freedoms Fund created a new fund focused on ending child detention. The Fund supports national and local advocacy to reduce the number of immigrant youth in detention, improve conditions for children in custody, and prevent the rollback of due process rights and protections for young people seeking asylum in the United States.

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*"Immigration is a federal issue, but the battle lines are always at the local level."*

— Rini Chakraborty, senior director of programs, Four Freedoms Fund

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#### HOW IT WORKS:

### Funder Collaboration in Action

In addition to committing to a minimum level of financial support, the Four Freedoms Fund's donor members are responsible for reviewing docket materials, making decisions on grant recommendations, and attending donor meetings at least twice a year. Funders also occasionally participate in site visits with grantees.

As necessary, the Fund creates subcommittees of donor members focused on specific issues or priorities, such as immigration enforcement or communications. A steering committee includes representatives from each of the contributing foundations.

While expenditure decisions are the legal and fiduciary responsibility of NEO Philanthropy, the Fund's donors set the overall direction and strategy for its grantmaking and other work. The Fund's expert staff is charged with implementing the strategic direction set by the donors and identifying grantees that fit the strategy.

The work of the Four Freedoms Fund is guided by a shared belief in the power of collaboration and partnership among the funders, between the funders and the staff, and between staff and grantees. Participating

funders regularly and repeatedly say that their participation in the Four Freedoms Fund enables them to amplify the impact of their immigrant rights grantmaking.

"I can't say enough about how important the Four Freedoms Fund was to the work of our foundation and the grantees we work with locally," said Darren Sandow, who was formerly the executive director of the Hagedorn Foundation, a Long Island grantmaker that concluded a sunset process in 2017. In addition to the power that comes from pooling donor resources for greater impact, Sandow cited the learning experience of collaborating with fellow funders and the Fund's expert staff as a key benefit of the Hagedorn Foundation's participation.

"Four Freedoms is really intentional about making sure funders are connecting with and learning from experts at all levels on these issues, including the leaders who are working on the ground in their communities. And we learn so much from each other too," Sandow said. "Those relationships you form at a table like this end up adding more value to your work than you ever imagined." ■

## Civic Participation

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Carnegie Corporation of New York is a longtime supporter of efforts to increase civic participation among U.S. immigrants. The Corporation's president, Vartan Gregorian, spoke of the importance of this work in a 2018 address to 200 newly naturalized citizens at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston. After talking about his own immigrant journey, Gregorian counseled, "As citizens of this country, we can — and we must — participate in the work of our democracy. That means undertaking a myriad of small actions, most of which do not take place on Election Day. Read, learn, listen to others, help your neighbors, speak out against injustice, and vote."

As a cofounder and member of the Four Freedoms Fund, Carnegie Corporation of New York has broadened its support for immigrant civic participation in partnership with funder colleagues. Through its investments in civic participation, the Four Freedoms Fund aims to increase voting rates and vote share among immigrant families, particularly Latinos and Asians. An independent analysis in 2019 found that Four Freedoms Fund grantees helped to increase voter turnout among low-propensity voters from 36 percent in 2016 to 44 percent in 2018, a midterm election during which turnout typically decreases.

Tom Wong, associate professor of political science at University of California, San Diego, said the Four Freedoms Fund played a critical role in focusing grantees' voter outreach efforts on infrequent and low-propensity voters. "Because of the work of Four Freedoms Fund grantees across the country, we saw voting increases among many immigrant voters and voters of color who may not have voted in 2018 and 2020," said Wong, who receives support from the Fund to analyze grantee voter engagement.

The collaborative's member funders believe that increased immigrant civic participation is critical to

advancing pro-immigrant policies and building government bodies that are more representative of the diversity of U.S. communities. According to Henry Der, who has overseen the Four Freedoms Fund's support for civic participation efforts for many years, the collaborative's focus has been on building the capacity of grantees to conduct nonpartisan voter engagement activities focused on mobilizing new American voters and their voting-eligible children to go to the polls.

"From the beginning, we have wanted to help these groups make voter engagement a core part of their overall commitment to organizing immigrant communities," Der said. He added that between 2008 and 2020, the Four Freedoms Fund supported grantees in reaching 13.3 million voters over many election cycles through nonpartisan door-to-door canvassing, phone calls, and other means.

As an example of the impact of the Four Freedoms Fund's investments, Der reflected on how community groups in Arizona formed a nonpartisan voter engagement coalition to increase Latino and immigrant voter participation in the state. In 2018 alone, One Arizona's 23 member organizations registered 190,000 people to vote, including large numbers of young Latino voters. The coalition formed in response to Arizona's enactment of the show-me-your-papers law (SB 1070) in 2010, based on the understanding that immigrant groups and their allies needed to work differently to counter anti-immigrant sentiment in the state. Since then, One Arizona and its partners have helped advance immigrant-friendly policies at the local level while fighting against the harshest anti-immigrant proposals in the state capital.

"If SB 1070 has taught Latinos anything, it's that civic engagement matters greatly — and that a coalition such as One Arizona can transform the state's civic environment to be more inclusive for Latinos and for all Arizonians," according to Shiree Teng and Tom Wong, authors of a 2016 evaluation of One Arizona's work.



## STATE IMPACT STORY

### Colorado

**Backstory:** Colorado was ground zero for anti-immigrant state legislation in the early 2000s. Among the harshest measures was HB 1023, a 2006 law that denied undocumented immigrants access to all forms of public benefits. “That was rock bottom,” said Julien Ross, who was executive director of the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition at the time. Another 2006 measure, SB 90, required police to report suspected undocumented immigrants to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. It was the first show-me-your-papers law in the nation and a precursor to a similar 2010 measure in Arizona that became the focus of a Supreme Court challenge. Colorado attracted further attention on immigration issues as home to anti-immigrant firebrand Tom Tancredo, a longtime member of Congress who ran for president in 2008 and governor in 2010 on anti-immigrant platforms.

**Four Freedoms Fund Investments:** The Four Freedoms Fund began to invest in pro-immigrant organizing and advocacy in Colorado in 2006 and 2007. With the Fund’s support, the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition helped to build organizing capacity among pro-immigrant groups statewide. An important priority for the coalition and its members was building new partnerships with police and other sectors. In the mostly rural and mountainous Colorado Western Slope, the coalition supported community police academies where immigrants could interact with sheriff’s departments and learn more about the criminal justice system while building trust with law enforcement. The coalition also invested deeply in civic engagement and getting out the immigrant vote. It became a critical partner in the Colorado Civic Engagement Roundtable, which includes groups working to increase voting and engagement related to environmental issues, reproductive justice, and other topics.

**Results:** Colorado has experienced a relatively remarkable turnaround on immigration issues in recent years, thanks in large part to the work of the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition and its member groups. In 2012, a surge in voting among immigrant, Latino, and Asian American and Pacific Islander voters resulted in the election of a largely pro-immigrant state legislature. One year later, in December 2013, the state repealed SB 90. Also in 2013, the state adopted a law making driver’s licenses available to all residents regardless of immigration status. The measure attracted strong support from police, agriculture, and other interests. Undocumented students became eligible for in-state tuition at Colorado colleges and universities in 2019. ■

*“We were able to build partnerships with unlikely allies to make the case that Colorado is stronger, safer, and more successful to the extent that we include immigrants.”*

— Julien Ross, former executive director, Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition

In 2020, the Four Freedoms Fund's Civic Participation Initiative supported 33 grantees to conduct nonpartisan civic participation campaigns in 24 states. The grantees aimed to contact 3.9 million voters by phone and text during the year's general election cycle. In addition, the Four Freedoms Fund contracted with the Center on Civic Engagement to offer individualized technical assistance to grantees on issues including appropriate goal setting and targeting for voter engagement, integration of digital tools, and volunteer recruitment. The center also organized an extensive series of continuing education webinars and virtual trainings, including sessions for Spanish-language organizers.

Of course, encouraging civic participation is not just about mobilizing more people to vote. Four Freedoms Fund grantees are also deeply engaged in galvanizing and training immigrants to move into positions of community and public leadership. In February 2018, for example, Arkansas United partnered with Black-led groups to create the nonpartisan New Majority Network, with the goal of building a pipeline of civic leaders and candidates of color. Participants in the network's training programs have since entered careers in public service.

As part of their efforts to increase civic engagement among immigrants, many Four Freedoms Fund grantees also are engaged in naturalization campaigns. Each year, Four Freedoms Fund grantees across the country provide citizenship application assistance to thousands of lawful permanent residents seeking to naturalize, with many receiving fee waivers or reductions. In 2016, for example, the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada partnered with community-based and labor partners to undertake the largest naturalization effort in state history, relying on 306 volunteers and 62 pro-bono lawyers to achieve a 53 percent increase in applications from 2015 to 2016.

## Capacity Building

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From the start, the funders in the Four Freedoms Fund, spurred by a major investment from the Ford Foundation, recognized that building a field of strong immigrant rights groups in states and communities across the country would require focused investments in training, technical assistance, executive coaching, and other supports for nonprofit leaders and their teams. Given that many of these groups had been operating for years with razor-thin budgets and overworked staff and volunteers, the funders set out to support their capacity to develop more sustainable operations and increase their impact over time.

Early on, the funders supported groups to get in-depth aid from the Nonprofit Finance Fund to strengthen their financial health and fundraising. Over the years, this capacity-building work evolved to include support for strategic planning, communications, policy advocacy, leadership transitions, and more. Through the Capacity Building Initiative, the Four Freedoms Fund hosts monthly calls, training webinars, and grantee peer-learning seminars and retreats. It also helps grantees to find consulting and coaching support focused on specific organizational and management challenges as they arise.

Jonathan Jayes-Green is the cofounder of the UndocuBlack Network, a multigenerational network of Black undocumented immigrants organizing and empowering their communities. The Four Freedoms Fund became a critical partner in supporting the growth of the organization, which launched in 2016.

"I started UndocuBlack when I was 23 years old. I had never been an executive director," Green recalled. "And it was the Four Freedoms Fund that connected me to trainings and coaching that made it possible for me to get through that turbulent time and become a leader."

Green is now vice president of programs with the Marguerite Casey Foundation. Green is not alone among grassroots activists who have moved into leadership

positions and greater influence, thanks in part to the Four Freedoms Fund's support of their development and professional growth.

"We really take it to heart that supporting people to move into leadership is a key aspect of this work," said Der. "Many of these are directly impacted people and immigrant community members who never saw themselves as leaders, and we want to help them grow in their power and voice so they can contribute to their communities for years to come."

Four Freedoms Fund grantees are continuously engaged in efforts to develop the advocacy and organizing skills of grassroots leaders. For example, grantee United We Dream has been widely credited with providing training and platforms for young undocumented immigrants to share their stories and build their skills to advocate for DACA and other reforms. State and local coalitions supported by the Fund regularly sponsor similar trainings. Following the spread of COVID-19 in Nebraska's meatpacking plants in early 2020, grantee Nebraska Appleseed trained more than 500 workers statewide on rights and safety and prepared them to share their stories and experiences with the public and elected officials to build support for worker protections.

Julien Ross, who is the former executive director of the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition and now oversees the Four Freedoms Fund's capacity-building support for grantees, said a key priority for the funders has been developing young movement leaders to further their skills and networks. Another recent focus was supporting grantees to attend to the wellness and resiliency of their staff, volunteers, and communities at an enormously stressful and fearful time. In 2018, the Four Freedoms Fund launched the Wellness Fund, which provides mini-grants and pairs grantees with healing and resilience coaches to help individuals and teams address trauma, grief, stress, and burnout. The Four Freedoms Fund also has organized webinars and other training sessions on digital organizing and fundraising, new laws affecting

tax-deductible donations, best practices to prevent and address workplace harassment, and more.

"We try to make very intentional capacity-building investments based on what we are hearing from the community at any given time about their needs," said Ross.

Becky Belcore, co-director at the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC), said she took part in Four Freedoms Fund-supported training and technical assistance on financial forecasting following the advent of the COVID-19 crisis. "They really provide amazing support and coaching so we can stay focused on maintaining the stability and effectiveness of our organizations," Belcore said.

## Rapid Response

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In 2017, the Four Freedoms Fund created the Rapid Response Fund to provide immediate support to grantee organizations struggling to respond to unprecedented attacks on immigrant communities and their rights in the aftermath of the 2016 election. The goal of these grants is to provide quick infusions of financial support to help groups address unforeseen and urgent needs.

Andrea Guerrero, an immigrant from Mexico who is executive director of Alliance San Diego, said the Four Freedoms Fund's support has been essential to ensuring that she and her team can stay effective in a tumultuous time for the communities at the center of their work. "Working at the border, we are facing crisis situations all the time," she said. She recalled how the Trump administration's September 2017 decision to end the DACA program gave those who were already enrolled in it only 30 days to renew their enrollment for another two years. (The White House decision was subsequently ruled unlawful by the U.S. Supreme Court.)

"Thirty days was not a lot of time," Guerrero said, noting that the Four Freedoms Fund staff immediately called

to offer rapid-response funding to support Alliance San Diego's efforts to reach DACA recipients in the region and help them renew their enrollment. "They knew we could move quickly, and they gave us that rapid-response funding to reach many thousands of people," Guerrero said.

Other Four Freedoms Fund grantees have used rapid-response support for a range of activities, such as know-your-rights outreach and training in communities targeted by anti-immigrant law enforcement crackdowns, legal support for deportation defense, and efforts to support immigrants facing family separation and detention.

Director Anita Khashu said the value and importance of rapid-response funding became clear as immigrant groups across the country were struggling to help communities respond to the family separation policy adopted by the Trump administration in 2018, under which the U.S. government separated immigrant children from parents and guardians with whom they entered the country. "These communities are facing attacks and assaults on virtually every front," Khashu said. "It's such a volatile situation, and the changes happen so rapidly that you have to jump in overnight sometimes to make sure these groups have what they need to stay on top of what's really a crisis environment."

Rapid-response funding additionally has been used to strengthen grantees' ability to take advantage of opportune times for pro-immigrant action. In 2019, for example, advocates in 10 states used rapid-response funds and other support from the collaborative to help secure new laws or policies improving access to higher education for immigrant students. Undocumented immigrants are now eligible to pay in-state tuition in 20 states that are home to over three-fourths of all immigrants living in the United States. In addition, the Four Freedoms Fund supported advocates in five states to secure new laws extending or improving access to driver's licenses for immigrants in 2019. More than half of all immigrants living in the country are now covered by such laws.

## Strategic Communications

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Over the last several years, debates about immigration have exposed deep fault lines in American society. Anti-immigrant, anti-refugee, and anti-Muslim sentiment — and actions taken by elected and appointed officials in many jurisdictions since the 2016 election — have forced pro-immigrant groups to rethink their communications strategies and messaging. Among the core questions groups have been wrestling with is how to respond to anti-immigrant rhetoric while conveying how immigrants strengthen the economy and American communities.

From the beginning, the Four Freedoms Fund recognized that immigrant rights groups at all levels needed targeted communications support. Robert Bray, who directed the Four Freedoms Fund's Strategic Communications Initiative starting in 2007, referenced a May 2008 convening of communications staff from national, regional, and state immigrant rights groups as a seminal moment in the movement's progress toward more coordinated and effective communications. Organized by the Four Freedoms Fund, the convening included sessions on messaging and storytelling, along with communications training and networking opportunities.

"This was the first time communications staff for these groups had ever come together like this, and it was an opportunity to get everyone on the same page in terms of how to move hearts and minds on this issue by telling a positive and powerful story about immigrants," Bray said.

The Four Freedoms Fund's support for grantee communications has since evolved to include additional training, webinars, toolkits, and more. The funder collaborative also has sponsored and shared polling data and analyses with grantees on public attitudes toward immigration and effective messaging. In 2012, the Four Freedoms Fund began supporting more than 300 staff and volunteers working with grantees in the Southeast to participate in an annual SPIN Academy training to



## STATE IMPACT STORY

### Tennessee

**Backstory:** Over the past 20 years, Tennessee has been home to one of the country's fastest-growing immigrant populations. As this trend arose at the turn of the 21st century, the state took some early steps to provide a more welcoming climate for immigrants, even becoming one of the first states to allow undocumented residents to apply for driver's licenses. In the years after 9/11, however, the tone and tenor of the conversation about immigrants in Tennessee changed. Between 2008 and 2012, more than 60 anti-immigrant bills were introduced in the state legislature, spurred on by talk radio and a conservative movement seeking to stoke fear of immigrants.

**Four Freedoms Fund Investments:** The Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) has been an anchor grantee of the Four Freedoms Fund for more than a decade. Through general operating support, technical assistance, and other support, the Four Freedoms Fund has supported TIRRC to become one of the more powerful and effective statewide coalitions in the country. "We would not be as strong today if not for the long-term general operating support that Four Freedoms Fund provided to us," said Stephanie Teatro, TIRRC's former co-executive director.

**Results:** Working with a range of partners, TIRRC has led the fight against the adoption of show-me-your-papers policies in Tennessee, as well as a slew of other anti-immigrant measures. Equally important, the coalition has played a critical role in supporting communities across the state to adopt policies and programs that welcome and support immigrants. TIRRC was the key force behind Welcoming Tennessee, a statewide communications campaign aimed at restoring civility and respect to the immigration debate. And when 97 immigrants were arrested in a headline-grabbing raid of a meat processing plant in rural Tennessee in 2018, TIRRC led the way in ensuring that those arrested had access to legal services and other support. TIRRC received support from the Four Freedoms Fund to share its response to the raid with other states where immigrants face similar threats. ■

*"With Four Freedoms Fund support, we were able to develop the advocacy capacity we needed to beat back the worst anti-immigrant bills while building local coalitions to change hearts and minds in communities across the state."*

— Stephanie Teatro, former co-executive director, TIRRC

strengthen their capacity to counter anti-immigrant attacks. Additional SPIN Academy trainings were subsequently added for other regions.

The main result of all this work, Bray said, was improved coordination and alignment across the movement at all levels. “Communications started to ascend in importance for the groups,” Bray said. “It was no longer an add-on, and it became a core activity alongside advocacy and organizing and litigation.”

Francisco Heredia, who served as director of One Arizona from 2013 to 2015 and now sits on the city council in Mesa, Arizona, described how support and training from the Four Freedoms Fund bolstered the movement in his home state. According to Heredia, the Four Freedoms Fund facilitated an intensive effort to provide polling support, training, and messaging, along with advertising support for Spanish-language media, to reinforce One Arizona’s campaign to engage Latino voters as active participants in elections and civic life.

“Support from the Four Freedoms Fund — not only resources but overall guidance on communications and a variety of issues — was instrumental for our success,” said Heredia. “The Four Freedoms Fund was one of the first funders to believe in the work that needed to be done in Arizona, creating a core infrastructure that would help change how we operated as groups and how we worked to create political change.”

Another key communications and outreach effort supported by the Four Freedoms Fund (and by Carnegie Corporation of New York and many funders independently) was the Welcoming America campaign. The campaign supports communities across the country to transform themselves into more welcoming places for immigrants.

More recently, the Four Freedoms Fund has expanded its support for research and training to help grantees communicate more effectively. One result was the creation of the Narrative Research Lab, housed at The Opportunity Agenda, which convenes a monthly call for advocates, funders, communicators, and researchers to share opinion research, reduce duplicative research, and discuss strategy for applying new findings in the real world.

Bobby Clark, a former vice president of programs and communications at the Gill Foundation who as a consultant supported the Four Freedoms Fund’s investments in communications and opinion polling, said the collaborative’s focus on unifying movement groups around effective messaging has contributed to the success of these groups on the ground. “When people are pushing back against family separation and detention, they are using tested messaging to make their case, and that can make a huge difference,” Clark said.

In 2019, the Four Freedoms Fund launched the Technology and Media Initiative in partnership with Luminate, a global philanthropic organization focused on civic participation and digital technology. The goal of the initiative is to support projects that harness the speed and scaling potential of technology and digital media to advance immigrant rights. In other communications efforts, the Four Freedoms Fund provided dedicated rapid-response support to grantees as the COVID-19 crisis began to exact a disproportionate toll on immigrant communities in 2020. The focus of this support: helping grantees communicate with their constituents about how to protect themselves and stay healthy and safe.



**Freedom of Worship** CREDIT: FOR FREEDOMS (HANK WILLIS THOMAS AND EMILY SHUR IN COLLABORATION WITH ERIC GOTTESMAN AND WYATT GALLERY OF FOR FREEDOMS), "FREEDOM OF WORSHIP," 2018



## STATE IMPACT STORY

### Texas

**Backstory:** Texas passed its version of a show-me-your-papers law, SB 4, in May 2017. It was the most extreme anti-immigrant state legislation since Arizona’s SB 1070 went into effect in 2010. In addition to allowing police to question the immigration status of anyone they detained or arrested, the Texas law required police and sheriffs to cooperate with detainer requests from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement or face fines and other punishments. SB 4 also included provisions for punishing local officials who adopted sanctuary policies that would limit local cooperation with federal immigration authorities.

**Four Freedoms Fund Investments:** The Four Freedoms Fund launched a special sub-fund in the fall of 2017 to support the response to SB 4 among pro-immigrant groups and their allies. The focus of the Texas Fund was on pooling donor resources to support local organizing across Texas aimed at reducing law enforcement interactions with immigrants and communities of color. Other priorities included organizing business leaders to exert pressure on Texas lawmakers, conducting research on the economic and human costs of SB 4, and building the infrastructure of a statewide immigrant movement. The Four Freedoms Fund also supported know-your-rights trainings for immigrant residents, deportation defense, hotlines for immigrants dealing with ramped-up enforcement, and other critical services.

**Results:** Across Texas, Four Freedoms Fund grantees have made important strides in pushing through local policies that protect immigrants and other populations from criminalization, overpolicing, and deportation. In Houston, grantees persuaded Harris County to pass a budget that funded immigration defense rather than increasing the number of prosecutors. Meanwhile, the local immigrant coalition in Bexar County worked with the district attorney’s office to develop and launch an innovative pre-court program that allows noncitizens to avoid arrest, booking, and fingerprinting. In addition, support from the Texas Fund helped strengthen collaboration between groups across Texas to promote statewide policy reforms. In contrast with a devastating 2017 legislative session, advocates successfully challenged anti-immigrant legislation during the 2019 session while protecting in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants and laying the groundwork for the eventual repeal of SB 4. ■

*“It’s thanks to Four Freedoms Fund that we were able to move from an all-volunteer organization to having three part-time staff members working on issues of immigration, criminal justice, and civic empowerment. This year, we prevailed on the city to adopt a participatory budgeting process that led to a transfer of funding from militarizing our local police force to supporting community programs that disrupt violence.”*

— Pamela Young, lead organizer, United Fort Worth



## CONCLUSION

Rebecca Carson served as chief of staff for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the agency that oversees the country's immigration system, from 2011 to 2013. Later, she managed the immigration portfolio at Open Society Foundations. As she moved from government to philanthropy, she immediately saw the value of collaborating with other funders on immigration issues. Joining the Four Freedoms Fund provided Carson and her colleagues at Open Society Foundations with a bird's-eye view of the important work that was happening across the country to protect and advance the rights of immigrant communities. It also provided them with a chance, as Carson put it, to "make our dollars do more."

"Four Freedoms Fund is a place where funders can learn from peers and experts, collaborate with groups that are doing the work on the ground, and catalyze things in ways that no funder could do on its own," said Carson, who is now the director of the Inclusive Democracy Programs at the Four Freedoms Fund.

Looking forward, the Four Freedoms Fund will continue to provide a place where funders and movement leaders can work together to plan the next steps in the United States' journey on immigration issues. It is a journey that took a promising turn with President Biden's moves early in his administration on a range of immigration issues, such as ending construction of the US-Mexico border wall and repealing the ban on travel to the United States from five predominantly Muslim countries. And it is a journey that will be shaped and led by Four Freedoms Fund grantees like the Florida Immigrant Coalition.

María Rodríguez, executive director of the coalition, said the donor collaborative has been a critical partner in developing an immigrant rights infrastructure in her state. But her group and others need ongoing support to keep waging what she calls their David-and-Goliath campaigns.

"We're working every day to build a bigger 'we' in our state, and that takes time and focused, flexible support," she said. "Our movement has achieved so much for our communities, but there is so much more to do." ■

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In Memory of a **Great Immigrant**

**Vartan Gregorian (1934-2021)**

12th President of Carnegie Corporation of New York

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**William H. Woodwell, Jr.**, is a writer, editor, and communications consultant who works with leading foundations and nonprofits to tell powerful stories about their work.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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For more information about Carnegie Corporation of New York's immigrant integration portfolio, please contact **Geri Mannion**, director, Strengthening U.S. Democracy Program, at [gpm@carnegie.org](mailto:gpm@carnegie.org).



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