



## What is PA FIRE?

The **Pennsylvania Fund for Immigrant Rights and Equity (PA FIRE)** is a pooled fund launched by a cohort of funders and community advocates in partnership with the **Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition (PIC)** to advance a coordinated statewide plan to protect and advance immigrant rights. Powered by 37 PIC member organizations, PA FIRE provides grants to expand vital services, strengthen advocacy, and respond to federal threats, with the goal of achieving long-term systems change across Pennsylvania.

Building on an emergency fund initiated by the William Penn Foundation, PA FIRE broadens support from the Philadelphia region to the entire state, aiming to raise and distribute a minimum of **\$6 million in its first year**, with an aspirational goal of **\$12 million**, to sustain coordinated efforts through at least the end of the current administration.

## Why is PA FIRE needed?

Pennsylvania has the 6th largest population of naturalized citizens among US States. More than one million Pennsylvania residents—8% of the state's population—are immigrants, including 16% of Philadelphia's residents (Census 2023 ACS). Immigrants fuel Pennsylvania's economy, drive entrepreneurship, and sustain workforce growth at a time when the state faces labor shortages and population decline. With Pennsylvania's median age now exceeding the national average, population decline has serious fiscal consequences—fewer residents mean less federal funding for education, infrastructure, and public services. Welcoming and retaining immigrants is essential to reversing this trend and ensuring long-term prosperity for all Pennsylvanians.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration has launched unprecedented attacks on immigrant communities—aimed at detaining and deporting millions while undermining core democratic principles such as freedom of speech, due process, and the right to assembly. Philadelphia—the largest city in a key battleground state—has been explicitly targeted by the administration, and the largest immigrant detention center in the Northeast is located in central Pennsylvania. These realities position the state as both a flashpoint and an opportunity for resistance, solidarity, and systemic change.

Local and national funders must act collectively to protect these foundational rights and the communities under assault. Immigration enforcement reverberates far beyond those directly targeted. Raids, detentions, and deportations strain schools, health systems, legal aid providers, human services, small businesses, and families across the Commonwealth. These downstream impacts demand a coordinated, well-resourced response.

## How was PA FIRE developed?

In the summer of 2024, PIC members began a scenario planning process to prepare for both possible Presidential administrations. Together, they identified the tactics, services, and programs needed to support immigrant communities across the Commonwealth under each scenario. By mapping out the pacing and coordination of these activities, members laid the foundation for a comprehensive, statewide plan.

As the new Trump administration began rolling back federal support for refugee programs, the William Penn Foundation established a pooled fund to sustain refugee resettlement organizations that had lost significant federal funding. While that rapid response fund focused on addressing immediate needs in the Philadelphia region, it helped illuminate the importance of more coordinated, long-term strategies for immigrant rights and equity.

In the spring of 2025, members of Philadelphia's philanthropic community began meeting with community advocates to explore how philanthropy could best align with and strengthen this work. Upon learning about PIC's coordinated plan, the group invited PIC Executive Director Jasmine Rivera to collaborate on charting a shared path forward.

This collaboration led to the formation of an advisory committee and a partnership with Philanthropy Network Greater Philadelphia to organize the **2025 Philanthropic Convening on Immigrant Rights in Pennsylvania**. The convening highlighted member organizations of the Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition implementing key components of the coordinated plan—from rapid response initiatives and service expansion to long-term advocacy, capacity building, and narrative change to counter misinformation about immigrants. It also underscored how immigrant communities are essential to many causes philanthropy supports—from democracy and work force development, from small business development and public health to education and family well-being.

Building on the collective planning by PIC members and momentum in Philadelphia's philanthropic community, the advisory committee partnered with the Foundation for Delaware County to establish **PA FIRE (Pennsylvania Fund for Immigrant Rights and Equity)**.

## What is the statewide coordinated plan?

More than a defensive response, PA FIRE represents a strategic investment in rapid response, community-led organizing, and long-term transformation. The statewide coordinated plan includes key tactics across four pillars of impact. PIC member organizations have signed on to carry out activities based on their communities' needs and organizational strengths, thereby maximizing impact and fostering greater power building and systemic change than any single group could achieve alone.

### Pillar 1: Rapid Response and Service Expansion

In the plan's first pillar of impact, involved organizations are focused on increasing awareness of constitutional rights, expanding access to legal and community resources, strengthening organizational preparedness, and ultimately reducing detention and deportations. As a part of this pillar, participating organizations will:

- **Deliver Know Your Rights Workshops** – Equip immigrant communities and allies with essential legal knowledge through in-person and virtual sessions, increasing awareness of constitutional rights and reducing vulnerability to detention and deportation
- **Deliver Community Safety Planning Workshops** – Strengthen workplace and neighborhood preparedness through in-person and virtual sessions, resulting in more organizations with proactive community safety plans in place
- **Expand and sustain community/bail funds statewide** – Increase the reach and resources of immigrant-led financial support networks, expanding access to emergency funds and reducing detention rates
- **Grow the PA Immigrant Family Unity Project (PAIFUP)** – Strengthen capacity to provide free legal representation for individuals in deportation proceedings, ensuring equitable access to counsel and contributing to fewer deportations
- **Conduct targeted research and policy analysis** – Provide timely insights and updates on policy and systems changes, increasing organizations’ knowledge and ability to respond to emerging challenges

## Pillar 2: Building Advocacy Infrastructure and Capacity

In the plan’s second pillar of impact, involved organizations aim to strengthen their ability to organize communities, deliver strong, pro-immigrant messaging strategies, and generate public engagement in the immigrant rights movement in order to put pressure on elected officials. As a part of this pillar, participating organizations will:

- **Train new organizers across PIC member organizations** – Build staff skills in organizing, increasing organizational capacity to actively participate in immigrant rights and justice efforts statewide.
- **Develop a pro-immigrant narrative and messaging strategy** – Craft compelling, values-based communications, increasing public awareness of immigrant contributions and fostering empathy among native-born residents
- **Expand capacity of PIC and member organizations to share pro-immigrant messages** – Strengthen communication channels and outreach, amplifying pro-immigrant messaging and increasing participation in the immigrant rights and justice movement
- **Advance community organizing focused on leadership, civic engagement, and advocacy** – Mobilize communities through leadership development, democratic participation, and demonstrations, increasing awareness of immigrant rights and building collective power to influence policy.
- **Lead deportation defense campaigns** – Advocacy campaigns are either focused on individuals facing detention and/or deportation or closing immigration detention centers in the state, to keep Pennsylvania families united and safe from abuse in detention.
- **Expand community organizing and advocacy to new regions of the state** – Extend grassroots capacity and coordination, broadening the reach of the statewide immigrant rights movement and engaging more organizations in coordinated action.

## Pillar 3: Engaging Community and Enhancing Collaboration

In the plan's third pillar of impact, involved organizations strengthen their connections to one another and with organizations beyond the immigrant-serving nonprofit ecosystem. Organizations aim to deepen collaboration in order to grow the immigrant rights movement throughout the Commonwealth. As a part of this pillar, participating organizations will:

- **Coordinate PIC member organizations involved in PA FIRE to conduct activities and share outcomes** – Strengthen alignment and collaboration across member organizations, increasing coordination and impact of immigrant rights and justice efforts statewide.
- **Connect with organizations that are not primarily focused on immigrant rights** – Build cross-sector partnerships that expand the movement's reach, fostering broader public support and engagement in immigrant justice.
- **Conduct planning retreats for PIC members** – Create dedicated space for shared learning, reflection, and strategic alignment, increasing cohesion and collective capacity for movement building.
- **Provide updates for funders on the realities immigrant communities are facing** – Deepen philanthropy's understanding of immigrant experiences, increasing informed investment and engagement in immigrant rights and justice work across Pennsylvania.

## Pillar 4: Transforming Systems

In the plan's fourth pillar of impact, involved organizations work toward transformational systems change to ensure that immigrants are welcome in Pennsylvania. Organizations will build upon the work done across other pillars of impact to strengthen support for immigrants rights among elected officials. As a part of this pillar, participating organizations will:

- **Advance statewide legislative advocacy** – Engage elected officials and policymakers across Pennsylvania through meetings, education, and advocacy campaigns, increasing knowledge about the positive impact of immigrants and building support for pro-immigrant legislation and welcoming policies.
- **End local collaboration with ICE** – Organize and advocate to reduce and ultimately eliminate partnerships between local government, including law enforcement, and ICE, keeping Pennsylvania families united and safe while deepening trust between immigrant communities and local governments.
- **Hold federal elected officials accountable to immigrant rights** – Mobilize community members and partners to push for local, state, and federal policy changes, increasing advocacy for immigrant rights and building the foundation for pathways to citizenship and a fairer immigration system.
- **Launch coordinated advocacy campaigns** – Promote local, state, and federal policy improvements through public campaigns that engage diverse Pennsylvania residents, expanding access to opportunities for immigrant communities, strengthening welcoming practices, and attracting new residents to the Commonwealth.

Each category is interconnected, as each one is necessary in balancing the short-term needs of community members with the long-term transformative work of addressing our broken immigration system and rise in xenophobia.

## What is PIC's role in the statewide coordinated plan?

With a decades-long history of uniting immigrant-serving organizations and advocating for immigrant rights across the Commonwealth, PIC is uniquely positioned to coordinate and implement the statewide plan. PIC's deep relationships with community-based organizations enable it to identify needs, strategically deploy resources, and build capacity in ways that align with each organization's mission, structure, and community context.

### **Coordination and Implementation:**

PIC will serve as the central coordinating body for PA FIRE, ensuring alignment across the 37 participating organizations. By facilitating collaboration and shared strategy, PIC will strengthen the collective impact of immigrant rights and justice efforts statewide.

### **Infrastructure and Capacity Building:**

PIC provides vital infrastructure support to its member organizations, including:

- **Capacity building:** Strengthening organizational effectiveness and leadership development
- **Coordinated communications:** Developing and disseminating shared messaging in collaboration with members
- **Policy engagement:** Liaising with elected officials, city councils, boards, and commissions to advance immigrant rights
- **Knowledge sharing:** Documenting and sharing programming processes, including successes and challenges, to foster learning across the network

### **Key Activities PIC Will Lead:**

- **Coordinate PIC member organizations** involved in PA FIRE to share outcomes, align strategies, and maximize statewide impact
- **Conduct planning retreats** to create space for shared learning, reflection, and strategic alignment, deepening cohesion and collective capacity for movement building
- **Train new organizers** within member organizations to strengthen advocacy and organizing skills, ensuring sustained leadership development across the network
- **Provide regular updates for funders** on the realities immigrant communities are facing, helping philanthropy make informed, equitable investments that reflect community needs.

### **Tracking and Evaluation:**

To effectively monitor the impact of PA FIRE, modest additional dollars will be directed to PIC to

expand staff capacity dedicated to managing the initiative. This staff will track and report high-level metrics such as dollars distributed, trainings held, and individuals served.

Through these roles, PIC will ensure that the statewide plan remains community-driven, strategically aligned, and accountable to the immigrant communities it serves.

**Participating organizations:**

- ACLU PA
- African Communities Together
- AFRICOM
- Alianzas de Phoenixville
- Asian Americans United
- Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh
- CAIR PA
- Casa de la Cultura
- Catholic Social Services of Philadelphia
- Center for Integration and Migrant Support
- Centro de Apoyo Comunitario
- Church World Services of Lancaster
- Community Justice Project\*
- Compass Immigration Legal Services
- Education Law Project of PA
- El Comité de Trabajadorxs
- Emgage
- Esperanza Immigration Legal Services
- Free Migration Project
- Global Switchboard
- Haitian Americans United for Change
- HCAN\*
- HIAS PA
- International Service Center
- JUNTOS
- Justice at Work
- Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in PA\*
- M.I.R.A. Resources
- Make the Road PA
- MILPA
- National Domestic Workers Alliance-PA
- Nationalities Service Center
- New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia
- Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition
- Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center
- The Welcome Project PA
- Unides Para Servir Norristown
- VietLead
- Woori Center

*\*Member organizations active in the coordinated plan but not requesting funds at this time*

## How will funding be distributed?

### Fund Administration

The fund will be hosted and administered by the **Foundation for Delaware County**. Checks should be made payable to: The Foundation for Delaware County, 200 East State Street Suite 304 Media, PA 19063 Re: PA-FIRE. For ACH, please contact Laura DeFlavia at [ldeflavia@delcofoundation.org](mailto:ldeflavia@delcofoundation.org).

Additionally, the Coalition will launch a communications effort to solicit donations to the fund from the general public in the Philadelphia region and beyond. If you would like to discuss the pooled fund further, contact fund ambassadors

- Leah Reisman ([lreisman@barrafoundation.org](mailto:lreisman@barrafoundation.org))
- Farrah Parkes ([fparkes@genderjusticephilly.org](mailto:fparkes@genderjusticephilly.org))
- Caitlin O'Brien ([cobrien@scattergoodfoundation.org](mailto:cobrien@scattergoodfoundation.org))

### Fundraising Targets and Distribution

Funds will be distributed to PIC's member organizations (list above), which consists of 31 501(c)3 and 7 fiscally sponsored organizations, composed of immigrant leaders, advocates, legal professionals, and community organizers who are working directly with immigrant communities across Pennsylvania. The fund has a goal of raising \$6MM in its first year and an aspirational goal of \$12MM, which will fund near-term elements of the coordinated plan. The fund will remain open at least until the end of the current administration; multiyear commitments to support longer-term systems change work would be particularly impactful.

Funds will be provided to grantee organizations as unrestricted grants, with the understanding that they will be used to carry out tactics or programs of the coordinated plan. The grant cycle will be a year long with up to three disbursements throughout the grant cycle, dependent on fundraising success.

To ensure transparency and accountability of pooled fund management, members who are part of the coordinated plan have voted on their two preferred methods of distribution of grant funds dependent on fundraising outcomes;

- In the event that the fundraising goal is met, members will receive equal grant amounts, or, up to the budget they requested in the plan, until all budget requests have been met after the three disbursements.
- In the event that the goal is not met, allocation decisions will be made with attention to equity. Members have named the following metrics be used in order to prioritize organizations for grant disbursement:
  - *Annual operating size of the organization, prioritizing smaller organizations*
  - *Organizations serving underrepresented immigrant communities*
  - *Funding amount requested in the plan*
  - *Level of need in the community the organization serves (with priority for organizations in rural counties)*

- *Immigrant-led organizations*
- *Newly established organizations*
- *Severity of funding gaps*

In both distribution plans, members have requested the option to opt-out of an upcoming grant disbursement, to ensure funds can be distributed to colleagues most in need. In the month preceding the upcoming grant disbursement, members will be given fundraising status updates in order to confirm with PIC both the distribution method and if they choose to opt-in for that disbursement.

## Tracking and Evaluation

To monitor the impact of the Fund, modest additional dollars will be directed to PIC to add staff capacity to their team to manage the initiative. Staff will be responsible for tracking and reporting out high level output metrics (dollars distributed, trainings held, individuals served, etc.).

## Why should you consider contributing?

Funders are encouraged to support **PA FIRE's coordinated plan**, which ensures equitable resource allocation across 37 immigrant-serving organizations statewide. By investing in a unified approach, funders maximize impact—leveraging the unique strengths of each organization, fostering collective power, and driving systemic change that no single group could achieve alone.

This innovative, democratic pooled fund goes beyond rapid-response funding. It addresses historic underinvestment in immigrant-led organizations while meeting the urgent needs created by ongoing crises, including gaps left by federal funding cuts to refugee resettlement agencies. PA FIRE is not just a defensive strategy; it is a forward-looking investment in **community-led organizing, rapid response, and long-term transformation**.

With your support, PA FIRE can strengthen Pennsylvania's immigrant-led ecosystem, positioning it as a national model for justice, equity, and sustainable change.

## What if my foundation or donor advised fund doesn't focus on immigrant communities/rights?

Even if your foundation doesn't explicitly fund immigrant rights, supporting immigrant communities likely aligns closely with your mission. **Immigrants are whole people whose lives and contributions intersect with nearly every major philanthropic priority**—from education and health to economic growth and civic engagement. Supporting immigrants isn't a niche issue; it's fundamental to advancing equity, opportunity, and well-being for all Pennsylvanians.

Connections across key issue areas:

- **Agriculture & Food Justice:** Immigrants are essential to Pennsylvania’s food system, with nearly 75% of the state’s farmworkers being foreign-born. Their labor sustains a \$132.5 billion agricultural industry and ensures that communities across the Commonwealth have access to fresh, affordable, and culturally relevant food. The state’s own Department of Agriculture recognizes that addressing anti-immigrant sentiment is critical to maintaining a stable, skilled workforce and a just, resilient food system.
- **Democracy & Civic Engagement:** Pennsylvania’s immigrant population plays a crucial role in sustaining the state’s national representation. Immigrants have reversed statewide population decline, helping to preserve federal representation and access to resources. With over 540,000 naturalized citizens now eligible to vote, there is a significant opportunity to strengthen civic engagement and participation across the Commonwealth.

Recent challenges to the constitutional rights of immigrants highlight both a moral and systemic imperative: protecting the rights and dignity of all communities is essential to the health of our democracy. When fundamental rights—such as free speech, due process, and habeas corpus—are weakened, the effects ripple across society, threatening democratic norms more broadly. Supporting immigrant communities not only upholds principles of justice and equity but also strengthens the integrity, resilience, and accountability of our democratic institutions.

- **Education & Families:** Immigrants and their families are integral to Pennsylvania’s communities. About 1 in 6 children in the state live in immigrant households, and there are 411,000 children with at least one immigrant parent. Threats of family separation create toxic stress that undermines children’s educational success, affecting attendance, test scores, and graduation rates, and increasing demand for mental health support. Fear of enforcement also discourages school attendance and strains the child welfare and truancy systems. By supporting immigrant families, we help stabilize communities, sustain the population, and maintain the tax base that funds public education for all children.
- **Women & Girls:** Immigrant women face disproportionate risks—from detention-related trauma to family separation and gender-based violence. Pregnant and parenting women—especially those who are postpartum or lactating—are among the most vulnerable in detention, where reports of medical neglect and poor conditions can lead to serious health consequences. The return of family detention and separation policies has further traumatized mothers and children, causing profound psychological harm and destabilizing families. Further, when primary breadwinners are detained or deported, entire households face housing and food insecurity, putting both adults and children at risk. Protecting immigrant women and families is essential to ensuring safety, stability, and opportunity for all families in Pennsylvania.
- **Workforce & Economic Mobility:** Immigrants are essential to Pennsylvania’s economic strength and upward mobility. Nearly 78% of the state’s foreign-born residents participate in the workforce—far higher than the native-born rate of 59%—and their labor, entrepreneurship, and innovation fuel growth across industries. In 2021, immigrants in Pennsylvania generated \$30.1 billion in spending power, paid \$11.5 billion in taxes, and created \$1.9 billion in business income. By revitalizing main streets, sustaining local

businesses, and contributing to the tax base, immigrants expand opportunity and economic vitality for communities statewide.

- **Health and Healthcare:** Immigrants are critical to Pennsylvania’s healthcare workforce, filling roles from nurses and doctors to home health aides and nursing home staff—positions that are often difficult to fill locally. At the same time, many immigrants face barriers to accessing care due to fear of deportation, which can lead to unmanaged chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension. These health challenges not only put immigrant families at risk but also place additional strain on emergency departments and public health systems, particularly in smaller and rural communities. Ensuring that immigrants can both contribute to and access healthcare is essential to safeguarding the health of all Pennsylvanians.
- **Human Services & Public Safety:** Immigrants often face heightened vulnerability to crime, as perpetrators may target those perceived as less likely to seek help. Fear of enforcement—particularly links between police and immigration authorities—can prevent reporting, ultimately undermining community safety. Ensuring that immigrants can safely engage with the justice system strengthens protections for everyone.

Additionally, detaining or deporting primary breadwinners creates housing and food insecurity, placing entire families at risk of eviction and other negative outcomes. Supporting immigrant families helps stabilize households and communities, promoting both public safety and well-being across Pennsylvania.

Supporting immigrant communities advances the same goals your foundation already values—stronger families, thriving local economies, equitable access to opportunity, and a more just and compassionate Pennsylvania.

## Partners

PA FIRE is coordinated by PIC and an advisory committee, including:

- Amy Eusebio, Amada Strategies
- Caitlin O’Brien, Scattergood Foundation
- Farrah Parkes, Gender Justice Fund
- James Liou, FG Strategy Advisors, LLC
- Jasmine Rivera, Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition
- Juliana Cabrales, Four Freedoms Fund
- Leah Reisman, The Barra Foundation
- Mischico Warren, The Foundation for Delaware County
- Raksmeymony (Rex) Yin, Asian Mosaic Fund
- Shira Hodges, Philanthropy Network Greater Philadelphia

As of May 2026, PA FIRE has secured nearly \$2,000,000 over three years from 22 philanthropic foundations and major donors, as well as dozens of individual allies. The pooled fund is being held at The Foundation for Delaware County.