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## WHAT IMMIGRANT-SERVING NONPROFITS NEED FUNDERS TO UNDERSTAND AFTER THE 2016 ELECTION

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### OVERVIEW

Since the election in 2016, immigrant-serving nonprofit organizations have been in the spotlight during a tumultuous environment. They have experienced added pressure for fundraising, scaling up to meet new demand, collaboration, advocacy, and sustainability.

Our working group conducted interviews with staff at immigrant-serving nonprofits in the Greater Los Angeles area to identify themes, best practices, and strategies used by organizations to cope with a political climate characterized by rhetoric and actions targeting minorities and immigrants. We asked the leadership of the organizations to provide recommendations for Foundations and other funders to help create positive change.

Table 1: Number of Organizations by Target Demographic Population

<i>Target Group</i>	<i>Number</i>
Latinx	10
Asian American Pacific Islander	10
Muslim	2
General Population	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>

A total of 29 interviews were conducted over the phone, online, or in-person. Local chapters of national organizations were also included. Organizations offered services in more than 14 languages. The majority served Latinx and/or Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) clients (see Table 1). Organizations also varied in size and grant funding (see Table 2).

Table 2: Summary of Nonprofit Participant Average Characteristics by Size of Organization

	<i># of nonprofits</i>	<i>Ruling Year</i>	<i>Total Revenue</i>	<i>Total Expenditures</i>	<i>Contributions &amp; Grants</i>
More than \$15 million	2	1954	\$396,566,000	\$391,326,000	\$394,021,000
\$5 million to less than \$15 million	4	1982	\$11,861,000	\$11,123,000	\$7,310,000
\$3 million to less than \$5 million	6	1995	\$3,802,000	\$3,745,000	\$3,355,000
\$1 million to less than \$3 million	6	1991	\$1,679,000	\$1,306,000	\$1,523,000
Less than \$1 million	8	1993	\$575,000	\$613,000	\$464,000

Source: Guidestar.org; Values listed are the average of categories. The size of the organization is by total revenue.

## MAJOR TRENDS AND THEMES

### Funding

There has been an increase of funds for nonprofits, particularly those that provide legal services and/or are involved in major social media campaigns.

*I think [another organization] is getting money with social media campaigns. We don't have the same brand recognition and I don't think [donors] identify that what we do is linked to the threats posed by the new administration so now that link is a key part of our messaging.*

Some nonprofits have also been affected by policy changes more than others. Refugee resettlement nonprofits saw immediate budget cuts. Health nonprofits were not affected by cuts, but had changes in client demand.

Nonprofits have experienced a growth of donations and volunteers. These changes impact capacity and staffing. As some organizations grow, they need funding to increase their physical office space.

*There are capacity issues...you can only absorb so much help depending on your infrastructure, we have no more room to put anybody. If we have volunteers wanting to be lawyers in our office, we have real challenges creating space.*

*I'm uncertain how [donor and volunteer] interest will be sustained over time and if it will because those relationships have to be serviced. If we don't service them, donors are going to move onto whatever's next on the front page.*

### Collaborations

Organizations have seen greater intersectionality and overlap in policy arenas:

*People in the health field weren't thinking about their work through an immigrant lens, and immigrant folks weren't updated on what public benefits are available for folks of different immigration status, so a lot of foundations are doing immigration cross-training **so we have the information and resources to benefit whoever walks into our doors.***

Organizations increased advocacy on local and state levels. There are some social service-providers that are experiencing new pressures to start advocacy and policy development efforts.

*On the national level it's defensive, but on the state level, we know that policies are going to create echoing effects. If California passes pro-immigrant policies, then other states will pass similar policies.*

*In the last year and a half, the Executive Director role has changed... **we have prioritized advocacy in a way that we've never done before.***

*Everything becomes a political statement, and we're slowly and carefully crafting our policy and advocacy standpoint. This is one of the hardest times for nonprofits that are not advocacy organizations.*

### Sustainability

Interviewees described ongoing issues of livable wages to sustain their staff. Also, nonprofits identified a need for staff self-care and political education in response to increased demand for services (17 of 26 nonprofits mentioned this issue). Some nonprofits have invested in secondary trauma resources, and others implemented civil rights and social movement training.

*I'm worried about our staff burning out. They carry stress home because if staff hear about a detained client, they worry.*

*Many of us feel personally impacted by things happening at the federal level, so ideally we could have healing spaces where people in the work rejuvenate.*

*We are educating staff about asking [clients] real questions like, are there legal issues stopping you from getting services? Maybe the child is a citizen but the parent isn't, so we're putting the issue on the table and training staff to make our office a safe space.*

## BEST PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES

- Engage in dialogue with funders:

*Some of our funders were incredibly forward thinking in terms of asking what changed after fall 2016, what our new plans were, then wanting to fund for those changes, and wanting to increase our funding.*

- Hire a social worker to collaborate with lawyers, particularly in high-stress cases:

*So much of lawyer time went into social work so we couldn't do as many cases and we're not as good with traumatized kids or asylum seekers. It's great to have someone you can pull in to do a suicide assessment or figure out how to get intensive mental healthcare. Training needs to happen, though, there are complicated things, like, social workers [are] mandated reporters.*

- Create ways to handle volunteer demand through: building an online form for volunteers to fill out and list their skills; starting a volunteer attorney network; and/or learning to say no to volunteers who require too much training:

*Everyone wanted to volunteer at the airport, and we had to tell people, "You're making our job difficult, but bring food." **What do you do with good energy and interest**, is there a way we can say, we don't need your legal help because you don't have experience, but if you can donate a metrocard, one of our unaccompanied minors can get to court.*

- Assess and focus on spaces where nonprofits can be most effective:

*Our organization has thought, "We believe that change happens on all fronts." However, after a lot of discussion with members and staff, we made the decision **to pick a space where we were going to help lead the work, a key role.***

- Trust between nonprofits and clients is critical. Since clients may be nervous, schedule meetings with new clients and their referral sources to build rapport.

## INTERVIEWEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOUNDATIONS

### Overall

- Create and fund initiatives such as the Los Angeles Justice Fund with local government and philanthropy to support nonprofits.

- Provide unrestricted funds that are long-term and sustainable rather than 1- or 2-year grants.
- Proactively engage with staff and board members to understand nonprofit challenges and needs.

### Reporting

- Streamline frequency and reporting requirements, particularly for funding supported by multiple agencies.
- Develop evaluation criteria with nonprofits to include qualitative measures, such as levels of client engagement and time to recruit potential clients.
- Consider time and cost of culturally sensitive services when developing client quotas, such as written and verbal translation and intensive outreach needed before clients step into a nonprofit's door.

### Provide training for staff on topics such as:

- Organizing, developing campaigns
- Collecting data on target constituents (for example, voter registration and neighborhood information)
- How non-immigration lawyers can address client immigration issues
- Health policies and benefits for residents of different status

- Teaching social service providers about federal immigration policies
- Staff self-care in times of crisis
- Management skills for organizational growth

### Areas of Need for Grants

- General operating funds
- Advocacy and organizing efforts
- Engagement practice training for nonprofits starting advocacy work
- Medical, educational, and immigration services for specific groups, such as the AAPI Communities and unaccompanied minors
- Naturalization applications (current funding is about \$100 per application, but private attorneys charge more than \$1,000 per application)
- Smaller ethnic nonprofits that can do culturally relevant practices
- Non-Western approaches to mental and physical health

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#### Credits

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