



Talking Points on Immigration for Funders

Grantmaking and the Role of Funders

- It is a challenge to meet any grantmaking goal—whether in health, education, workforce development, etc.—without considering the needs of your communities’ newest members.
 - Concerned about health? [Three out of five](#) unauthorized immigrants lack health insurance—but that rate drops by more than half for immigrants with legal status.
 - Concerned about education? An average of one child in every classroom [has](#) an unauthorized immigrant parent, and research shows children perform worse in the classroom when worried about their parents’ immigration status.
 - Concerned about workers’ rights? As many as one in four workers in certain industries, such as agriculture, [are](#) unauthorized immigrants, making it challenging or impossible for them to report unsafe working conditions, underpayment, or other workplace violations.
 - Concerned about poverty? One in five unauthorized immigrants is [below](#) the poverty line, but evidence indicates household income of immigrant families who gain legal status rises by [nearly a third](#).
- Immigrants comprise a growing share of the communities that grantmakers serve.
 - *Review the demographics in your community using tools from the [Migration Policy Institute’s U.S. Data Hub](#) or the [Center for Migration Studies’ Data Tool](#).*
- By acting now to address the obstacles that immigrants currently face, foundations can improve the futures of those immigrant’s children and allow them to reach their full potential.
- Foundations can serve as a neutral convener to start conversations about immigration in their communities.
- Lean forward as funders. Addressing the root causes of disparities is the most efficient and cost-effective means of addressing inequality.

Children & Families

- [One in fifteen children](#)—more than one in every American classroom—has at least one parent who lacks legal status.
 - A [growing body](#) of [research](#) shows that fear and uncertainty produced by their parents' immigration status result in children of immigrants:
 - Performing worse on tests,
 - Earning lower grades, and
 - Suffering from clinical levels of anxiety.
- Immigrants are America's future.
 - One in four children in the United States [has](#) at least one parent who is an immigrant.
 - [Eight out of nine](#) children with immigrant parents are U.S. citizens. In other words, [88% of children](#) with immigrant parents in the United States are U.S. citizens.
 - In all, [nine million people](#) are members of families in which there is at least one unauthorized adult and at least one U.S. citizen child—also known as “mixed-status families.”
 - U.S. citizen children of immigrants often have siblings, cousins, and classmates who lack legal status, but are Americans in every other respect. Like their U.S. citizen family members, they grew up knowing only the United States: attending its schools, competing on its sports fields, volunteering in its communities, and believing in the American Dream.

Economic

- Immigrants' skills, energy, and fresh ideas promote economic vitality—in neighborhoods, communities, states, and the country as a whole.
- Immigrants contribute to America's prosperity as workers, consumers, taxpayers, and business owners.

Taxpayers

- Unauthorized immigrants [paid](#) an estimated \$11.8 billion in state and local taxes in 2012—enough to hire more than 200,000 [police officers](#) or 300,000 [teachers](#). (*Visit the [Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy](#) to see [estimates](#) for your state.*)
- Undocumented immigrants and their employers [paid](#) an estimated \$13 billion in Social Security-related payroll taxes in 2010, according to [a report from the Social Security Administration](#)—[equivalent](#) to a year's worth of benefits for more than 900,000 retirees.
- Immigrants [contributed](#) at least \$11 billion more to the Medicare Trust Fund than they took out each year from 2002 to 2009, according to [a Harvard Study](#)—[enough](#) to hire more than 58,000 doctors.

Workers

- Immigrants are more likely than native-born Americans to be in the labor force. In other words, immigrants' participation in the labor force [exceeds](#) their share of the population.
- The economy is not a zero-sum game. More residents mean more consumers. More consumers mean more employment. More employment means more tax revenue.
 - In other words, the economy is like a quilt. The more you add to it, the bigger it gets, and the more people it covers.

Benefits of Legal Status

- Allowing unauthorized immigrants to earn legal status—temporary or permanent—will preserve families and lift children out of poverty.
 - It allows children to focus on school and live without fear of losing their parents.
 - In California, to take one example, the increase in parental earnings as a result of temporary legal status will [bring](#) an estimated 40,000 U.S. citizen children out of poverty.
- Allowing unauthorized immigrants to earn legal status and work permits—such as through [administrative relief](#)—contributes to our shared prosperity.
 - Almost 60 percent of DACA beneficiaries [obtained a new job](#) after receiving DACA, and nearly half have [increased their job earnings](#).
 - If immigrants earn more they will spend more and start more businesses, spurring more economic growth. They will also pay more in taxes.
 - The temporary legal status offered by administrative relief will [raise](#) native-born workers' wages by an average of \$170 and beneficiaries' earnings by six to 10 percent.
 - Administrative relief will also [add](#) nearly 150,000 workers to the labor force and increase U.S. GDP by \$90 billion over the next ten years.
 - The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other major business groups have consistently [supported](#) modernizing our immigration system, as have some of the [largest unions](#) in America.

Immigration System and Administrative Relief

- Our immigration system is outdated. The last major reform was [nearly 30 years ago](#) under President Ronald Reagan.
- Immigration has historically been a bipartisan issue. Every president, Democratic and Republican, has taken executive action on immigration dating back to 1961.

- This system has not kept pace with the demands of a changing economy and an [aging population](#), nor does it provide the workers our country needs in sectors ranging from agriculture to technology.
- The current system breaks apart families; it makes it difficult for legal immigrants' relatives to join them in the United States, while also separating U.S. citizen children from their unauthorized parents through deportation.
- [Administrative relief](#) does not grant amnesty, nor does it lead to a green card or citizenship.
- [Legal experts across the political spectrum](#) believe the executive actions are on solid legal ground.
- [One out of seven](#) immigrants screened for eligibility for deferred action are found to qualify for a permanent form of legal status leading to a green card.

Community Building

- For a community to thrive, all members must feel they belong.
 - The exclusion of some has negative implications for all, e.g., public health and safety.
 - [Widespread reports](#) from law enforcement officials indicate that immigrant-penalizing enforcement measures damage the relationship between police and immigrant communities.
- Modernizing our immigration system benefits immigrants who have deep roots in our country.
 - Two-thirds of all unauthorized immigrants have [lived](#) in the U.S. for more than a decade.
 - [A third](#) of all unauthorized immigrants are parents of U.S. citizens.
 - Others are grandparents, spouses, or siblings—or all three—of U.S. citizens.

*For assistance with grantmaking, please contact [Felecia Bartow](#), associate director, at felecia@qcir.org.
For communications support, contact [Michael Kavate](#), research and communications coordinator, at michael@qcir.org.*