



# FUNDERS GUIDE

## Grants and Immigration Status

Philanthropy plays an important role in addressing the needs and lifting up the challenges facing our country's diverse population of newcomers. This flowchart addresses some common concerns and questions about investing in this dynamic and critically important funding space.

### Q1:

Is your foundation familiar with the demographics of the immigrant and refugee population in your community?

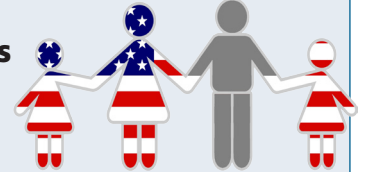
No.

Yes.

A helpful starting point is to familiarize yourself with:

#### Basic facts

- Unauthorized immigrants account for just **one-fourth of the U.S. foreign-born population**—and less than three percent of the total U.S. population.
- Approximately **85% of immigrant families are “mixed-status,”** meaning they include at least one U.S. citizen and least one unauthorized immigrant.
- Nearly half of all unauthorized immigrants have lived in the U.S. for **more than a decade.**



#### Key definitions

- **Immigrants** are persons born abroad who have come to settle in the U.S. (inclusive of all immigration statuses).
- **Lawful permanent residents (LPRs)**, also known as “green card” holders, are legally admitted to reside and work permanently in the U.S.
- **Refugees** are persons legally admitted to the U.S. because they are unable or unwilling to return to their country of nationality due to persecution or fear of persecution.
- **Unauthorized** immigrants are persons residing in the U.S. without legal immigration status.

#### Regional, state, and local data

- Migration Policy Institute’s Data Hub, Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States
- Pew Research Center’s Hispanic Trends Project
- Department of Homeland Security’s Immigration Statistics
- GCIR’s funder-specific tools and resources.

### Q2:

Is your foundation questioning whether it is “legal” to fund work with unauthorized immigrants?

Yes.

No.

**Nothing in the Internal Revenue Service code, immigration law, or other federal statute prohibits foundations from funding organizations that serve the unauthorized.**

In fact, unauthorized immigrants are entitled to most essential community services. Yet when providers ask about immigration status when not required by law, it may compel individuals to decline such services, which negatively impacts community health and safety.



### Q3: Is your foundation leadership apprehensive about providing support to groups that serve unauthorized immigrants?

Yes.

#### They worry that immigrants are a drain on the economy.

- Immigrants are a **net gain to the economy**, and several American cities have come to rely on immigration as a core economic development strategy.
- Studies show that **immigrants' participation in the labor force exceeds their share** of the total population.
- U.S. GDP would grow by an estimated **\$1.4 trillion over 10 years** if large-scale legalization were enacted and citizenship were granted to unauthorized immigrants.

For more on immigrants and the economy, visit:

- Center for American Progress: Immigration
- Immigration Policy Center – The Economics of Immigration: A Resource Page
- The White House – Immigration and the Economy



#### They are concerned that resources will be diverted from the foundation's core priorities.

- More and more funders are recognizing that **immigrants and refugees comprise a growing share of communities** they serve. To achieve their grantmaking goals—whether they focus on health, education, workforce development, poverty alleviation, or others—they must consider the needs of newcomers in their efforts.
- 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.) Funders can help build healthy, strong, and cohesive communities—and still respect U.S. laws.

For more information, refer to GCIR's Immigrant Integration Toolkit.

#### They lack personal experience with immigrants.

- **Direct experience with immigrants** can help foundations understand how these issues fit into their existing priorities. Create opportunities for foundation trustees and senior management to meet immigrants—newly naturalized citizens, farmworkers, youth leaders, etc.—who can share their migration and integration experiences.

No.

### Q4: Is your foundation concerned about eliciting a negative community response?

Yes.

#### Community conversations about immigrants and immigration must be grounded in facts and data

so as not to let emotions, misinformation, and misperceptions take over. Funders can help move the needle by facilitating the dissemination of reliable information and serving as a neutral convener. Some have found it helpful to engage in listening sessions, salons, or other forums in order to surface community concerns and address them in a safe and structured environment. GCIR can help connect you with other funders that have grappled with these issues as well as experts who can provide data and research on a wide range of issues.



No.

Please contact GCIR if you would like any additional information about the information provided above or individualized guidance on how to address these issues within your foundation. [www.gcir.com](http://www.gcir.com)