

PA is Ready!: Pennsylvania Funders and Nonprofits Collaborate in New Way to Build Immigrant Legal Assistance, Leadership, and Organizing Capacity

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Introduction

In 2014, after months of pressure and advocacy by immigrant communities and allies, then-President Barack Obama enacted an Executive Order providing temporary work status and deportation relief for millions of undocumented immigrants. Leading up to this announcement, the Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition (PICC) and partner organizations worked together to create *PA is Ready!*, a vehicle for providing quality, high-volume services across Pennsylvania to ensure that all eligible residents would have access to the information and assistance they needed to apply for any new form of relief as well as address existing needs.

Since 2014, *PA is Ready!* has evolved into a flexible model

to respond to rapid changes in the political environment. The model relies heavily on collaboration, though it goes beyond the typical focus of service providers, requiring close partnerships between grantmakers and grassroots organizations, as well as among grantmakers. Challenging the traditional boundaries between funders and grantees, the *PA is Ready!* model is grounded in the belief that immigrants and refugees should have a voice in creating and leading the solutions that affect their communities, including determining how resources are distributed. The model prioritizes commitment to equity and inclusion at every level of the initiative.

The Formation and Evolution of the Coalition

On November 20, 2014, after Congress did not pass federal comprehensive immigration reform, and after months of outreach to the Obama Administration by immigrant communities and advocacy groups, President Obama announced executive actions that would provide temporary relief from deportation and work authorization to as many as five million immigrants across the U.S. The executive actions included an expanded version of the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and a new deferred action program for the undocumented parents of U.S. citizens or lawful permanent resident children, Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA). Estimates were that approximately 51,000 Pennsylvania residents would qualify for these new

programs (Migration Policy Institute).

An estimated 180,000 undocumented immigrants currently live in Pennsylvania, which has one of the fastest growing undocumented populations in the country. Of that number, approximately 50,000 live in Philadelphia County, representing the second biggest undocumented immigrant population among the four largest Northeastern Cities (The Pew Charitable Trusts). Living and working in the shadows under the constant threat of separation from family members, undocumented immigrants are the frequent victims of workplace exploitation and abuse and have limited access to education, health care, and other resources (Centers for Disease Control).

In September 2014, PICC convened member and partner organizations, recognizing that the capacity of organizations across the state would be insufficient to meet anticipated needs if the executive actions then under consideration were implemented. After the announcement of DACA in 2012, organizations in Pennsylvania and across the country had been inundated with requests for application assistance, and many community members became victims of immigration services (or "notario") fraud. Building on these lessons, *PA is Ready!* was created as a vehicle for providing quality, high-volume services across Pennsylvania. The model was designed to ensure that Pennsylvania immigrant community members had access to the information and assistance they needed to apply for both existing and

anticipated forms of immigration relief.

The primary goals of *PA is Ready!* were to:

- Build statewide capacity to provide immigration assistance, including: pre-screening for DAPA, comprehensive legal screenings, citizenship applications, deportation defense packets, and DACA 2012 renewals and applications;
- Build immigrant leadership and organizing capacity to engage in local, state, and federal immigrant rights campaigns;
- Prevent the exploitation of immigrants through immigration service (or "notario") fraud; and
- Reach the diverse immigrant communities in Pennsylvania as defined by national origin and geography.

On the heels of the November announcement, in January 2015 members of *PA is Ready!* collectively met with a group of foundations to educate them about the urgency of the issue and their coordinated plan to respond. At the session, hosted by the Samuel S. Fels Fund and coordinated by PICC, grassroots leaders, undocumented individuals, and other representatives from *PA is Ready!* spoke about the challenges and opportunities that would come with anticipated changes. A young undocumented college student articulated the impact of her status on her family and community as well as her work to organize others. Foundation representatives were moved not just

by the challenges, but also by the courage and tenacity in the group. Funders in attendance saw immigration-related groups coming together with a clear, thoughtful, and collaborative plan to scale up their work in response to a timely issue.

Over the next six months, local funders and members of *PA is Ready!* continued to meet to discuss the evolving plan and strategies to support the work of *PA is Ready!*. A core group of Philadelphia-based funders, including the Samuel S. Fels Fund, The Alfred and Mary Douty Foundation, and The Philadelphia Foundation together committed \$80,000 to the project. This early local support was critical to attracting national dollars and incentivizing other local funders. In June 2015, The Philadelphia Foundation applied for and ultimately received a \$100,000 grant from Open Society Foundations (OSF) to support the work of the coalition that came with a local match requirement. In July 2015, PICC received a grant through the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) to support a staff member to focus on developing the *PA is Ready!* model. By early 2016, The Philadelphia Foundation and PICC had leveraged a total of \$240,000 from seven funders in Southeastern and Central PA. Although implementation of extended DACA and DAPA were put on hold due to a lawsuit by Texas and 25 other states, *PA is Ready!* pressed forward in recognition of the many already unmet needs of immigrant communities across the

Commonwealth.

By the end of 2016, *PA is Ready!* had distributed over \$200,000 through organizations that reached 3,401 individuals in 17 counties, assisting communities with existing 2012 DACA applications, citizenship, and comprehensive legal screenings for other forms of immigration relief. Partners built collective capacity, training 359 new community volunteers from diverse immigrant communities across the Commonwealth. Of those, 70 were trained to provide basic legal screenings with members of their own communities.

After a tie vote in the Supreme Court in June 2016 failed to restore the President's executive actions and subsequent, dramatic changes in the political climate in November, *PA is Ready!* members committed to continue to build on the successes of their collaboration. While the impetus for the formation of *PA is Ready!* was President Obama's executive order, the policy pronouncements and other statements of President Donald Trump following the November 2016 elections created a great deal of fear and uncertainty among immigrant and refugee communities. The need for a robust and organized network of immigrant groups across the state was never clearer, and *PA is Ready!* provided a ready-made vehicle for this urgent work.

Given the new political climate with respect to immigrants and immigration, PICC and *PA is Ready!* Partners are

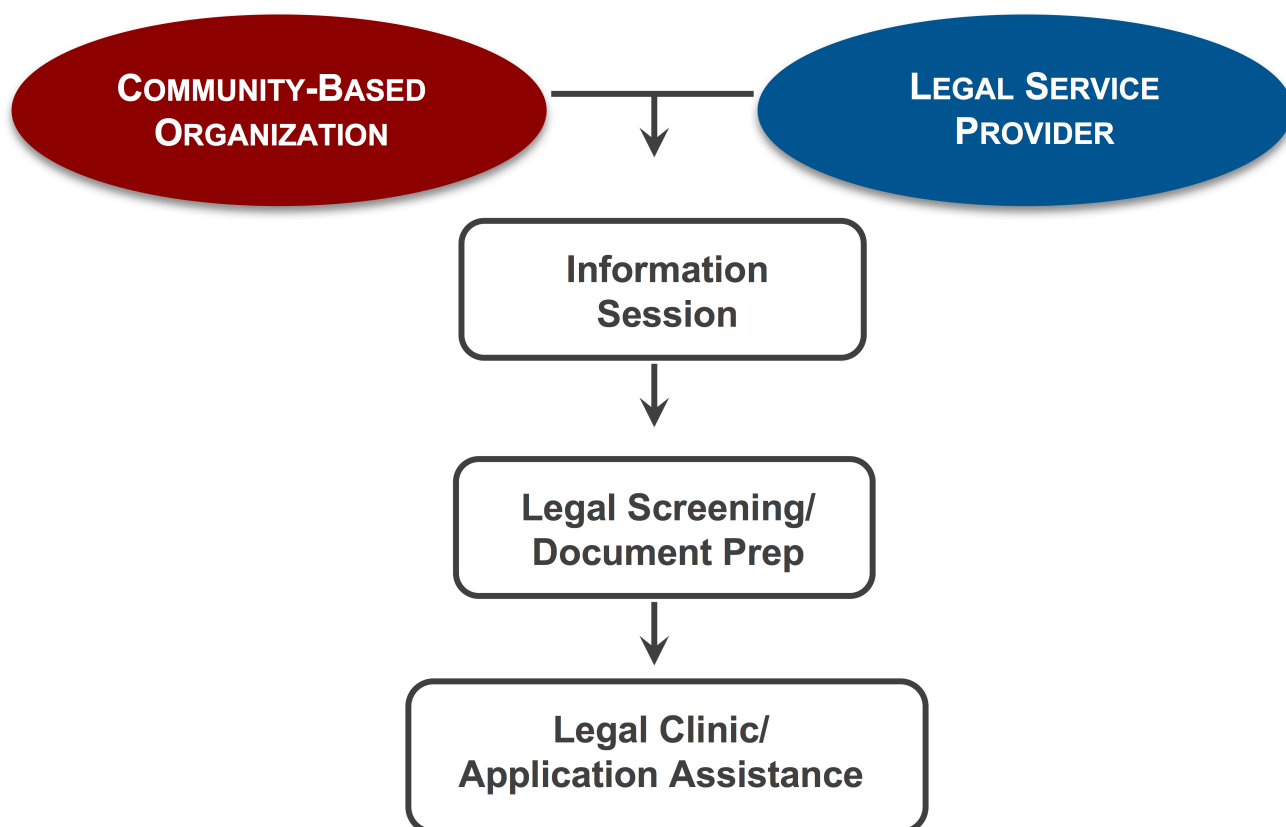
determined to adjust priorities to include a more intentional focus on building organizational capacity and community leadership by funding mentorship projects through organizations. In 2017, *PA is Ready!* has leveraged over \$450,000 of which \$285,000 will be directed to 19 organizations serving 16 counties in the state.

A Service Model with Geographic Outreach and Cross-Sector Collaboration

At the beginning of this process, *PA is Ready!* partners recognized that building local capacity and reaching undocumented immigrants in suburban and rural areas was key to meeting the needs of Pennsylvania's DACA- and DAPA-eligible communities. Yet, in Pennsylvania, immigrant community groups and nonprofit legal service providers are heavily concentrated in Philadelphia County. These Philadelphia-based organizations are stretched thin to provide needed services to immigrant communities in the county as well as surrounding areas, and often have long waiting lists for those seeking application assistance. Thus, accessing information, education, and immigration assistance is even more challenging for immigrants living in more remote suburbs and rural parts of the state. Partners were also committed to ensuring that those immigrant populations who are often overlooked -- such as Asian, Pacific Islander, and African immigrant communities -- were intentionally included in both building the *PA is Ready!* model and in its implementation.

Drawing on local experiences as well as national models, the *PA is Ready!* service model centers on collaboration between community-based organizations (CBO) and legal service providers (LSP). CBOs are generally the trusted voices in a community and are the first place community members go with questions. They provide outreach, basic information about immigration options, and help individuals gather documents that may be needed to apply for legal remedies or to protect themselves and their families if they are detained. LSPs have the expertise and knowledge to assist with applications and legal questions that require knowledge of the law. The *PA is Ready!* model builds on the strengths of each, utilizing the CBO's connection to communities to bring in those seeking assistance, and the LSP's experience to provide individual consultation and application review. The value of this collaborative relationship is embedded in the funding framework, as organizations are eligible for *PA is Ready!* funding only if they apply as a partnership.

PA IS READY! SERVICE MODEL



PA is Ready! also works to support organizations to begin the process of becoming recognized and accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA). This recognition and accreditation is the Department of Justice's official certification of charitable immigration agencies and their staff, and allows non-attorney staff to practice immigration law before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the immigration courts. As of December 2016, six *PA is Ready!* organizations across Pennsylvania were in the process of completing BIA accreditation.

At the heart of *PA is Ready!* is a commitment to building leadership within immigrant communities. The service model explicitly relies on the expertise and input of

community-based organizations to ensure that not only will *PA is Ready!* partners be able to provide high-volume and high-quality services, but they will do so in a way that builds the long-term leadership and capacity of immigrant communities to lead advocacy and organizing campaigns at the local, state, and federal levels. The primary vehicle for this is to recruit and train leaders to become "Community Navigators," or trained individuals who can provide basic non-legal immigration assistance and take on more leadership within community-led initiatives and campaigns.

The concept of community navigators embedded in the *PA is Ready!* model has been effectively used since the 1970s in healthcare settings in the United States as a method to reach members of rural, marginalized, and hard-to-reach communities. In healthcare settings, "promotores" or "community health workers" are community residents who are trained as grassroots health workers to educate their neighborhoods on disease prevention and health and well-being (Centers for Disease Control). The model was also used at the federal and state levels to boost healthcare enrollment through the Affordable Care Act (The Pew Charitable Trusts).

The effectiveness of Community Health Workers has been extensively documented and recognized for a variety of health care concerns. Studies have shown small- and large-scale benefits in preventive care for Latinos when promotores are used as an agent of change (Wasserman,

Bender and Lee).

The model was adapted by the immigrants' rights movement by the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) in cooperation with the Committee for Immigration Reform Implementation (CIRI). According to the Immigration Advocates Network website, between 2014 and June 2016, NPNA partners trained over 7,512 Community Navigators across the United States to educate their communities about their rights, deportation defense strategies, and available forms of immigration relief, nearly doubling the field's ability to reach communities in need of these services. *PA is Ready!* was one of 14 collaborative projects across the country funded by Open Society Foundations and The Ford Foundation using a similar model (Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees).

When Pennsylvania organizations first met in 2014 to develop a collective strategy and service model, it quickly became apparent that the model needed to emphasize building relationships among organizations across the state. Given the very limited capacity to serve immigrants who need assistance, commitment to sharing resources and knowledge was essential. Based on experiences in other collective work in the state, partners agreed to form guiding principles and common goals that would serve as the framework within which all groups would conduct their work.

The established principles were: providing quality service; engaging in a model that centers the leadership and participation of immigrant communities; collaborating with other *PA is Ready!* grantees to provide services; sharing information and expertise with other *PA is Ready!* grantees; and reaching Pennsylvania's diverse immigrant communities (based on geography and country of origin). Along with these principles, the group outlined agreements on how these principles would be acted upon by PICC and partner organizations. These values provided the basis for the service model, as well as all other aspects of the project, including the grantmaking and fundraising processes.

A Transparent and Inclusive Grantmaking Model

The joint values of building immigrant leadership and strengthening relationships were embedded in the grantmaking model. At its inception, *PA is Ready!* established a fundraising committee to lead the development of its project proposal, including its proposed service delivery model and plan for allocation of resources, all subject to review by the broader membership. The Committee included representatives from diverse regions of Pennsylvania, ethnic communities, and types of organizations who envisioned an innovative *PA is Ready!* grant distribution model that is at the core of *PA is Ready!*.

Funds for the project are held at The Philadelphia Foundation and distributed at the direction of the *PA is Ready!* Grantmaking Committee, but it is the makeup of this committee that turns the traditional grantmaking process on its head. *PA is READY!* elects a panel of five to six representatives from participating partner organizations (those typically considered grant applicants) to make grant decisions along with two *PA is Ready!* funders and a representative of PICC. Applications are evaluated against a set of 10 criteria established by the larger membership that align with the coalition's stated goals, principles, and values.

PA IS READY! GRANTMAKING MODEL



PARTNERSHIPS - LEGAL SERVICES/COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS



Conflicts of interest are understandably the first concern expressed by skeptics. Recognizing that a peer-to-peer grantmaking process comes with the dangers of

increasing competition over limited resources and concerns about fairness, the *PA is Ready!* group established four strategies to mitigate these concerns.

First, as referenced above, grantmaking occurs in the context of a coalition that has worked hard to establish trust by collectively agreeing to clear shared goals, values, and principles that guide decisions. When groups first began meeting in 2014, they made a firm commitment to maintaining and strengthening relationships throughout the process. The value of this early groundwork cannot be underestimated.

Second, early in the process, members established a policy of "radical transparency." In practice, this means striving for complete transparency in all facets of the project to ensure that every organization can understand what decisions are being made, who is participating, and the outcome. The idea of "radical transparency" includes maintaining an online spreadsheet available to all participating organizations that itemizes incoming funding, a list of funders, and information on how resources are allocated. Partners can view details such as the amount PICC receives as the coordinator and a listing of the amounts requested and distributed as grants.

When misunderstandings arose on the heels of the first round of grantmaking, the Grantmaking Committee met with the broader membership to provide an opportunity for members to ask questions and share the rationale for

the committee's interpretations of the grantmaking criteria. This forthright communication was essential to averting ongoing tensions.

Third, as with most grantmaking committees, *PA is Ready!* established a recusal process requiring members of its Grantmaking Committee to step out during discussion of their applications. Feedback and final decisions are provided to these committee members in a manner that is consistent with that provided to all other applicants.

Finally, the committee uses data to inform decision-making, allocating grant amounts by locations and demographics of immigrant communities across the state to ensure that allocations are generally aligned with needs rather than influenced by particular organizations and interests.

Building Capacity of Immigrant-Led Organizations

Grantmaking processes are typically onerous for small, grassroots organizations, many of which are led by people of color. For example, a recent report from the African American Leadership Forum showed that Philadelphia African-American-led nonprofit organizations are typically smaller than White-led organizations and struggle to gain access to key social networks which, predictably, limits their access to funding (Philadelphia African American Leadership Forum). The same can be said about

immigrant-led organizations. This provided another rationale for *PA is Ready!* to make intentional efforts to disrupt a cycle that perpetuates existing power structures.

PA is Ready! put in place several practices to help decrease the burden on and build the fundraising capacity of all organizations receiving support:

Technical assistance through the application process is viewed as part of capacity building, ensuring that funds are not directed solely to those organizations with existing capacity but also used to build leadership within communities where there is high need and existing leadership. In 2017, *PA is Ready!* implemented a multi-stage process in which the Coordinator received application drafts and provided feedback to applicants prior to final submission.

A single coordinated application and reporting process reduces the administrative burden on small organizations that typically do not have the capacity to manage multiple applications, particularly in the face of increased community needs. *PA is Ready!* coalition goals drive the application format and reporting requirements to ensure that data collected is relevant and necessary.

In response to lessons from 2016, in 2017 *PA is Ready!* added a mentoring component to funded activities. Mentorship projects provide resources for more established partners who may have specialized expertise

to train and support other members in areas that achieve *PA is Ready!* goals. These projects build on and monetize the expertise within the coalition, creating a stronger and more robust system across the state.

While it comes with challenges, the participatory grantmaking model provides multiple benefits, including opportunities for cross-fertilization between philanthropic institutions and grantee organizations. It also fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. The practice gives grassroots organizations power to decide themselves where the money is directed, shifting primary decision-making to the affected communities.

Participatory grantmaking practices have been around for several decades, and recent research by The Lafayette Practice found that benefits of this approach to grantmaking include innovation, transparency, and flexibility (The Lafayette Practice). They also serve as a "learning hub" for participants, contributing to capacity building on both sides of the grantmaking table.

Grassroots organizations become better-versed in good grantmaking practices, and funders become more grounded in the challenges faced by grassroots groups.

Some have argued that in general, when collective impact efforts fail to engage residents in the first step of the process -- building a common agenda -- it results in an inadequate understanding of the root causes of the issues and an inadequate vision for change. They suggest that

rather than disrupting existing power dynamics, the process reinforces them when this recommended first step is omitted (Tom Wolf). *PA is Ready!* was built with community leaders at the table who were part of forming the agenda and process, including how resources are allocated.

A 2014 D5 Coalition study looked at the systemic factors in the philanthropic sector that facilitate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices among grantmakers and nonprofits (D5 Coalition). Findings suggest that greater power-sharing between funders and grantees leads to a system that is more favorable to DEI practices. Funders in the study characterized as “DEI facilitator foundations” approached their nonprofit partners with a “spirit of humility -- listening to them, learning from them, and viewing them as the true experts on the work.” This approach has been crucial to successful partnership between funders and *PA is Ready!* coalition members, reinforcing mutual learning, and innovation throughout the project.

Fundraising that Builds on Established Support

From the beginning, the vision behind fundraising for *PA is Ready!* was geared toward expanding funds for immigration work, rather than reallocating existing resources. The goal was to bring in new funders to invest in immigration work, and to encourage foundations who

already give to individual organizations to continue that funding rather than redirecting funds from already under-resourced organizations to *PA is Ready!*. *PA is Ready!* was fortunate to start with the support of a core group of local forward-thinking funders who understood the capacity needs of small grassroots organizations.

While the primary goal of fundraising efforts was to build the pooled fund, *PA is Ready!* also aimed to connect grassroots groups with local funders to create sustainable relationships. The Philadelphia Foundation leveraged its role as an anchor funder to help make these connections by convening meetings between supportive grantmaking organizations and coalition members. Some grantmakers are more willing to meet with a local group when an introduction comes from a fellow funder. For example, as a direct result of *PA is Ready!*, a small grassroots group serving African communities in Southeastern PA that had never received foundation funding made a connection with a small grantmaker at a funder convening. In 2016, the organization received its first direct grant.

As a statewide effort, among the challenges for *PA is Ready!* has been the lack of statewide infrastructure among Pennsylvania foundations. Unlike other coalitions that receive support through Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR), a national group that provides immigrant-related resources for the philanthropic sector, Pennsylvania lacks a foundation with a statewide focus on immigration. Although The

Philadelphia Foundation has been willing to support statewide work on immigration, human services, universal PreK, and municipal solvency, community foundations are often strongly tied to grantmaking in their regions, which makes supporting a pooled fund a stretch. Funding for statewide initiatives, particularly those that focus on immigration advocacy, is an ongoing challenge.

There have been successful efforts to create greater connection among foundations across the state on other issues. The Pennsylvania Health Funders Collaborative is one such effort to “improve the effectiveness of local health funding by working collaboratively across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania” (The Pennsylvania Health Funders Collaborative). It has successfully fostered a network of 40 health foundations in Pennsylvania to raise awareness and identify opportunities for shared funding in areas of interest.

In the absence of a ready-made statewide network or a statewide lens/grantmaking perspective among foundations, *PA is Ready!* used demographic data to make the case that there are immigrant communities across the state -- not just in major urban centers -- so the outreach work needs to be conducted statewide. *PA is Ready!* also saw a need to expand the universe of funders who would consider supporting this work, so that foundations committed to serving children and youth, education, health and other topic areas could see the importance of *PA is Ready!*'s work to the issues they care

about.

In 2016, The Philadelphia Foundation organized five funder briefings across the state to provide current and accurate data about changing demographics and the issues impacting local immigrant communities. Through the OSF grant, The Philadelphia Foundation had access to technical assistance from GCIR, which coordinates learning among a network of 14 similar coalitions around the country on behalf of the group of national funders. GCIR brought Migration Policy Institute, an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank to Pennsylvania to present regional data, lending credibility to local initiatives.

The Philadelphia Foundation and PICC also met with smaller groups of funders to share information about the *PA is Ready!* model, facilitate connections with local immigrant groups, and increase awareness of needs and opportunities for collaborative investment.

Lessons Learned

PA is Ready! was a new model, one that required flexibility on the part of participating organizations, as well as breaking out of the traditional service provision mold and commonly accepted “best practices” in the world of grantmaking. Establishing a learning mindset in this process helped partners to see challenges as opportunities to course-correct rather than viewing them

as failures.

Due to a compressed timeline between approval of funding and the beginning of the grant period, grantees were expected to begin implementing projects quickly. For organizations that had used similar models to provide DACA 2012 application assistance, this compressed timeline was difficult, but not unmanageable. For newer organizations or those that were volunteer-led, this push was sometimes overwhelming. Many of these organizations had to recruit and train Community Navigators and volunteers while simultaneously providing information sessions and legal clinics. This resulted in an increased burden on the few experienced members in the group and on the legal service providers, who took on a greater role than originally planned.

With the extended and unanticipated suspension of DAPA implementation, it also became clear that the model needed to expand beyond the focus on pre-screenings and generally be more flexible so that partners could adjust to provide services that better matched the needs of the communities they serve. As the federal executive-level political climate became more hostile to immigrants and refugees, groups were called on to provide services to more than just the undocumented community. It became clear that there would be an increased need for advocacy and organizing by immigrant and refugee communities to defend programs such as DACA, Temporary Protected Status, and refugee resettlement,

while continuing to push for more just and humane immigration policies overall.

In fall 2016, PICC and *PA is Ready!* partners decided to adjust the service model and grantmaking priorities to reflect these lessons from the first year of the program, as well as the changing political climate. These changes included a renewed commitment by PICC as the central agency to provide more regular statewide and regional trainings to ensure that all groups had access to skill-building for their volunteers and Community Navigators. Expanding the service model framework allowed new or smaller groups to partner with more experienced organizations to build their internal capacity in specific areas aligned with *PA is Ready!* goals and principles.

As a result of these adaptations, in 2017 a Philadelphia-based organization with deep experience in community organizing will receive funding to bring community leaders to Pittsburgh to provide training on community organizing strategies to an emerging organization there. The project will also involve a partner from Harrisburg to support this organization through the BIA accreditation process. Aside from building the capacity of the individual organization, the project is expected to result in deeper connections across the state.

While the power relationships between grantmakers and nonprofits are inherently asymmetrical, some grantmakers are beginning to discuss the importance of

acknowledging and addressing this dynamic directly to foster more reality-based relationships that lead to increased effectiveness. An assumption of the *PA is Ready!* model was that bringing grassroots leaders to the decision-making table would help to mitigate this dynamic.

The wealth of experience at the *PA is Ready!* grantmaking table did ground conversations but it also became apparent that power dynamics in grantmaking are at play regardless of one's starting place. The compressed timeline impacted the Grantmaking Committee's ability to ensure common understandings of the criteria and to connect with one another as individuals, a useful tactic to address real or perceived power differences within any group. In 2017, the all-new Grantmaking Committee met for a day-long retreat during which members spent time getting to know one another, learning about the grantmaking process and common pitfalls, and discussing the value of approaching the grantmaking process with humility, openness to new learning, and awareness of the assumptions we all bring to the table.

Keys to Continued Success

Shared values, goals and principles, and a commitment to transparency were all keys to *PA is Ready!*'s success.

Shared goals and principles built trust and established a strong grounding for partners to work together, providing a framework to address tensions along the way. In

addition to the five principles previously outlined, groups committed to shared values of collaboration and transparency. This explicit commitment created open channels of communication and ownership over all aspects of the program.

Another component of *PA is Ready!*'s success was the coordination roles played by PICC and The Philadelphia Foundation. The crucial role of backbone organizations in collective impact work has been well-established. In this context, *PA is Ready!* had twin anchors, with PICC coordinating partner organizations and The Philadelphia Foundation coordinating funders. From the beginning, PICC and The Philadelphia Foundation created a shared strategy to approach local funders to raise the match in 2015 and 2016, and shared the responsibility for educating funders on the unique service and grantmaking model represented by *PA is Ready!*

As the central coordinating agency of the *PA is Ready!* project, PICC fills four core functions: 1) Coordination, 2) Fundraising, 3) Creating and Maintaining Resources, and 4) Organizational Capacity Building and Support. In addition to filling traditional coordination functions, such as organizing regular calls with partner organizations, PICC worked closely with grantees to support them in achieving the project outcomes, and provided additional support when needed. Of particular importance was providing a central location for training, community outreach, and application materials. For small and

volunteer-led community organizations, easy access to trainings and materials helped to get programs up and running quickly, and allowed them to integrate new volunteers and leaders into ongoing work. This also helped ensure consistency across projects. In addition, PICC served as a central contact for fundraising efforts, working closely with The Philadelphia Foundation to meet with funders, put together grant proposals, and write and submit reports. Raising capital for the initiative was a coordinated effort conducted by both umbrella organizations.

An ongoing challenge for *PA is Ready!* -- and the immigrant rights movement in general -- is including the voices and elevating the needs of Asian and African immigrants, especially undocumented members of those communities. As the coordinating agency, PICC took on the responsibility of intentionally reaching out to organizations that served these communities to better understand their needs and how *PA is Ready!* could more effectively address and respond to them.

The Philadelphia Foundation serves an equally important anchor function on the philanthropic end in three primary areas: 1) funder education, 2) fundraising, and 3) technical assistance. As earlier mentioned, in 2016, The Philadelphia Foundation organized five funder briefings across the state and spearheaded efforts to raise dollars for the *PA is Ready!* Fund. The Philadelphia Foundation leveraged the organization's position as a respected

philanthropic institution to engage other funders for what in some parts of the state could be considered a risky endeavor. For funders interested in supporting immigration-related work but unsure how to do so, *PA is Ready!* has proven to be a smart and effective way to engage.

Finally, The Philadelphia Foundation provided substantial and very appreciated technical assistance to the *PA is Ready!* Grantmaking Committee. Having a seasoned foundation representative at the table provided access to knowledge of grantmaking processes and best practices, support in troubleshooting challenges, and connection to the GCIR network for additional technical assistance throughout the process.

A Promising Model for an Uncertain Future

While the primary focus of *PA is Ready!* was to provide access to quality immigration services, the underlying commitments to collaboration and leadership-building among immigrants and refugees ensured that the impact of the project extended beyond the number of completed legal screenings or applications.

PA is Ready! has connected those in large and small cities with rural groups, who are now better poised to engage in statewide advocacy efforts. This was highlighted last fall when there was within the Pennsylvania legislature a last-minute push to pass an "Anti-Sanctuary City" bill that

would have penalized cities and counties across the state with welcoming policies. Due to their greater knowledge of each other, a core group of organizations that had limited prior experience with coordinated advocacy work were able to quickly pull together a strategy that contributed to the defeat of the bill. In early 2017, as immigration enforcement efforts ramped up, the infrastructure and relationships created through *PA is Ready!* provided easy ways for groups to share what was happening in different parts of the state, as well as strategies for rapid response.

The success of this model and the innovative forms of collaboration in both the service and grantmaking areas has created new opportunities to leverage resources. Due to PICC's relationship with NPNA and the successful implementation of the Community Navigator model within *PA is Ready!*, Pennsylvania was chosen as one of seven sites for a national pilot project to expand the model beyond immigration legal services and build more targeted cohorts of trained community members. Because of The Philadelphia Foundation's ongoing relationship with GCIR, *PA is Ready!* will be one of the 16 coalitions around the country to receive national funding through GCIR for the ongoing work in 2017.

PA is Ready! has come to the attention of other foundations interested in its innovative grantmaking model. At least one other local foundation has launched a similar initiative, and national funders have expressed

enthusiasm for what PA is Ready! might teach us about increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in grantmaking.

The rapidly changing political environment requires new approaches to addressing long-standing inequities in immigrant and refugee communities. *PA is Ready!* holds promise as a model to ensure that immigrants and refugees are not only at the forefront of creating solutions that affect their own communities but that they are viewed as equal partners in how resources are distributed, without whose voices we cannot hope to achieve justice.

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Author Bios



Sundrop Carter, J.D. stepped into the role of Executive Director at the Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition after 2 years as Organizing Director. Raised by hippie parents, Sundrop always knew she would be part of movements to advance social justice. She has spent time in various roles, from managing a small renewable energy business in rural Arizona, to organizing in low-income neighborhoods in Philadelphia and Allentown with ACORN.

Before coming to PICC, Sundrop worked with organizations and activist projects supporting immigrant workers fighting for justice at their workplaces. Sundrop received her B.A. from Clark University in Worcester, MA and her J.D. from Brooklyn Law School.



Ana Lisa Yoder, MSS, LSW is Principal and Founder of Yoder Consultancy, an organizational development practice that provides facilitation, consulting and training support to nonprofits and foundations seeking to build more effective organizations. Drawing on 23 years of experience as a senior nonprofit and foundation leader, her work includes developing innovative collaborative initiatives in foundation and nonprofit settings and shaping and facilitating group planning processes. She currently serves as a consultant to The Philadelphia Foundation on PA is Ready! to expand immigrant-related grantmaking across Pennsylvania.

In 2015, Ana Lisa was director of grantmaking and special projects for The Philadelphia Foundation, where she oversaw the annual distribution of the foundation's five million dollars in discretionary funds. Ana Lisa has served on numerous nonprofit boards, currently as Chair of the board of the Homeless Assistance Fund, Inc. She was a founding board member of the Nonprofit Repositioning Fund and served on the 2016 National Conference

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