CHAMPIONING EQUITY

A Toolkit for Funders Seeking to Invest in Immigrant and Other Bilingual or Multilingual Children

Prepared for the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative by Essey Workie of Multicultural Coaching
Essey Workie is a policy researcher and leadership coach who specializes in immigrant integration, health and mental health, and diversity, equity and inclusion. She is the founder and managing principal of Multicultural Coaching, a boutique consulting and coaching firm based in the Washington DC metropolitan area. Before starting her consulting business in 2017, Essey held several senior leadership roles in government and nonprofit organizations including the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement and a national refugee resettlement agency.

Essey has a master's in social work and a bachelor's degree in psychology and family issues. She trained as an executive leadership coach at Georgetown University and is certified by the International Coaching Federation. She is also a qualified administrator of the Intercultural Development Inventory and a practitioner of the Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory.
The author is grateful to members of the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative (ECFC) and other colleagues who contributed to this project. Shannon Rudisill supported and guided this work as an invaluable thought partner. Rena Large offered helpful insights as an internal reviewer. Liz Bruno and Ellen Roche provided helpful guidance to ensure alignment between this project and ECFC’s racial equity working group.

The author is also grateful for the generosity the following colleagues in the funding community showed in sharing their time, knowledge and stories by participating in in-depth key informant interviews: Ximena Antunez de Mayolo, Dr. Katie Beckmann, Rosa Maria Castañeda, Denise Castillo Dell’Isola, Diana Garcia, Ausannette Garcia-Goyette, Don Hickman and Elise Spang.

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Dear Colleagues,

As members of the funding community, we are largely driven by our values—compassion that drives us to promote the wellbeing of others and a sense of justice that compels us to address the root causes of social problems.

In recent years, we have been alarmed by the uptick in explicit xenophobia and racism, coupled with harsh national policies that threatened the safety and security of immigrant families. In solidarity with longstanding partners like Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR), our funding community spoke up against these policies by issuing joint statements and outlining the harmful effects on children of immigrants, most of whom are born in the U.S.

We believe that we can do better to address the inequities faced by children in immigrant families. We proudly present Championing Equity as a resource for how you can find ways to align and provide support, and on where you can find relevant data to inform your decisions. We’ve included our commitments to you moving forward and profiles of key Champions for Equity within the early learning funding community. From their stories, you’ll see the many entry points to work toward greater inclusion in your portfolios.

Sincerely,

Shannon L. Rudisill

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Shannon L. Rudisill
Executive Director
Early Childhood Funders Collaborative
The Early Childhood Funders Collaborative (ECFC) commissioned Essey Workie, Managing Principal of Multicultural Coaching, to identify promising practices on how to begin funding projects in this space. She interviewed eight individuals—who we consider to be Champions for Equity—spanning six foundations of varying sizes and geographic locations, including the Annie E. Casey Foundation (Casey Foundation), Initiative Foundation, Irving Harris Foundation, James B. McClatchy Foundation (McClatchy Foundation), Rainwater Charitable Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation (Packard Foundation).

Several resounding strategies emerged from the author’s conversations with the champions. We share those with you here, along with a starter set of tools to dive into the data and inform your funding agendas. We encourage you to connect with the champions and continue the conversation. We leave you with next steps to advance this work, including ECFC’s commitments and an open invitation for you to imagine how investing in these children can align with your priorities and inspire action.

The Early Childhood Funders Collaborative exists so that all children can have an equitable opportunity for healthy development and learning, in the context of their families and communities. In keeping with our purpose, we developed this toolkit to help funders understand the makeup of their communities and in turn, provide greater support for the children in immigrant families who comprise them.
Fully 25% of all young children in the U.S. grow up in immigrant families.

**THE POPULATION**

In 2019, about 18 million children in the U.S. had at least one immigrant parent, and more than 5 million of those children were five years old or younger.\(^1\) Eighty-eight percent of children in immigrant families are U.S. citizens and many of these children live in mixed-status families, where at least one member of the family is undocumented.\(^2\) In this toolkit, we refer to U.S. and foreign-born children who have one or more immigrant parents, including children in mixed-status families, as children of immigrants.

Most immigrants arrive to the U.S. from countries in Asia or Latin America—particularly Mexico, China, India, the Philippines and El Salvador—which indicates that most children of immigrants are people of color.\(^3\) Many of these children learn English while also learning the primary language or languages their parents use. They are often referred to as English Learners or English Language Learners, Dual Language Learners or Emergent Bilinguals. These terms could also apply to children whose parents speak a language other than English, even though they were born in the U.S. Second generation immigrants are good examples. In this toolkit, we refer to children who are learning English while learning one or more languages as bilingual or multilingual. In the 2015 to 2019 period, there were more than 11 million bilingual or multilingual children in the U.S. from birth to eight years old.\(^4\) This population is a critical part of a promising inclusive, multilingual future for the U.S.

**Children in the U.S. With at Least One Immigrant Parent (in Millions)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Birth to 6 years</th>
<th>6-17 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2,870</td>
<td>5,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4,466</td>
<td>8,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5,747</td>
<td>11,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>5,410</td>
<td>12,397</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE LANDSCAPE**

Taken together, these characteristics—being an immigrant or the child of an immigrant, simultaneously learning English and one or more languages, and being a person of color—are qualities to celebrate because of the rich family histories and cultures they represent. Research also shows that children who speak more than one language develop cognitive advantages such as enhanced problem-solving, creativity and tolerance of others.\(^5\)

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\(^1\) Migration Policy Institute, "Children in U.S. Immigrant Families," accessed April 12, 2021.


\(^4\) Migration Policy Institute, "Young Dual Language Learners in the United States and by State," accessed July 11, 2021.

Having a multilingual, multicultural society benefits the country since diversity sparks innovation and strengthens the workforce. For example, during the pandemic, the U.S. relied on immigrants who make up a larger share of essential frontline workers in health services, food production and other industries related to the U.S. response. Immigrants also undergird the early learning workforce with cultural and linguistic competence, as they represent 18 percent of childcare workers and program directors.

But in the context of the sociopolitical landscape in the U.S., systemic disparities often deprive children of immigrants, other bilingual or multilingual children and their families from equitable access to opportunities in education, health, the job market and several other areas. For example, in the realm of education, equitable opportunity would mean that bilingual and multilingual students receive the same level of instruction and have the same quality of instructional materials as other students. But 2019 national data, the most recent available, shows that only 10 percent of bilingual or multilingual students are proficient in reading English by grade 4 compared to 35 percent of all students, and an even smaller share of these children were reading proficient by grade 8.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The funding community can play an important role in counteracting inequities in the education system by ensuring that more children in this core population have access to quality early learning opportunities. While philanthropy cannot fully compensate for systemic issues in public education and other services to families with children, we can leverage public investments, test ideas and contribute to knowledge about effective practices. We can also promote the integration of practice, policy and research in education and other grantmaking areas to lessen the harm of bias and unfair policies like the Trump administration’s family separation policy, which removed children from their parents with no system in place for reuniting families. While non-governmental organizations and the Biden administration’s Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families have reunited some children with their families, more than 2,000 children remain separated from their parents according to the Task Force.

With the nation’s renewed focus on immigrant integration, inclusion and equity, the funding community has an opportunity to help undo the harm caused by the onslaught of anti-immigrant policies and xenophobic and racist rhetoric brought on by the former administration.

It is critical that we meet this moment in history.
MEET THE CHAMPIONS

Ximena Antunez de Mayolo
Program Officer
Rainwater Charitable Foundation

Dr. Katie Beckmann
Program Officer
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Rosa Maria Castañeda
Senior Program Officer
The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Denise Castillo Dell Isola
Program Director for Early Childhood
Irving Harris Foundation

Diana Garcia
Program Research Analyst
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Ausannette Garcia-Goyette
Program Officer
Irving Harris Foundation

Don Hickman
Vice President of Community and Workforce Development
Initiative Foundation

Elise Spang
Senior Learning Advisor
James B. McClatchy Foundation
Foundations often begin investing in children of immigrants and other bilingual or multilingual children (BMC) in response to an internal champion. An internal champion is an employee or director of the foundation’s governing board who advocates on behalf of these children, their parents or other caregivers, and the workforce that supports them. These champions link the foundation’s priorities with opportunities to support these families and address any reservations or fears the foundation may have about including immigrant and other bilingual or multilingual families (BMF) in its portfolios.

Most of the internal champions we interviewed were Program Officers, Directors or individuals holding comparable positions with three exceptions. Two individuals—Don Hickman, Vice President of Community and Workforce Development at the Initiative Foundation, and Diana Garcia, Program Research Analyst at the Packard Foundation—demonstrate that champions can emerge from both senior and junior positions within the organization. As founders of the McClatchy Foundation, Board Vice Chair Susan McClatchy and her late husband, James B. McClatchy, committed to

**STRATEGIES TO GET STARTED**

No matter whether your philanthropic interest is health, mental health, education, family stability or another focus area, you have a role to play in supporting children in immigrant families. It’s time to find out what that role is.

**BECOME AN INTERNAL CHAMPION**

Foundations often begin investing in children of immigrants and other bilingual or multilingual children (BMC) in response to an internal champion. An internal champion is an employee or director of the foundation’s governing board who advocates on behalf of these children, their parents or other caregivers, and the workforce that supports them. These champions link the foundation’s priorities with opportunities to support these families and address any reservations or fears the foundation may have about including immigrant and other bilingual or multilingual families (BMF) in its portfolios.

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**Note:**

In this toolkit, BMC stands for bilingual and multilingual children and BMF stands for bilingual and multilingual families.
serving immigrant families and other BMF 26 years ago when they established the foundation’s purposes—supporting English Learners and protecting the First Amendment. Their example shows that the internal champion may be a founder or member of the governing board. While some foundations were established for the explicit purpose of addressing needs within BMF12; many started exploring how to support these families in recent years and from different entry points ranging from economic success to health and mental health. Rosa María Castañeda, Senior Program Officer at the Casey Foundation who leads the foundation’s work on economic success for immigrant families and is one of the internal champions for immigrant integration and inclusion, notes: “A lot of the evolution in giving portfolios has been shaped by internal leadership advocating for this population of focus.”

That focus increased dramatically in 2018 in response to the Trump administration issuing the family separation policy. The policy, which was first piloted in 2017 in El Paso, Texas, separated children from their parents by sending children to shelters and jailing parents at the border and those who arrived at the border unaccompanied. Meanwhile, Denise and Ausannette worked to develop an area of work focused on the impact that the political discourse was having on immigrant families, particularly mixed-status families with young children.28 The policy sparked national outrage and prompted many in the funding community to take action, with several foundation staff and leaders emerging as internal champions.

Dr. Katie Beckmann, a Program Officer at the Packard Foundation who leads the foundation’s children’s health and early care and education efforts and, along with other colleagues, is a champion for immigrant and other BMF, explained how the family separation policy impacted the way she thought about her work: “The bedrock of the work that we do is the belief that the first five years are incredibly important in a child’s life and it really is those adult relationships that make that foundation strong. And if we’re not able to speak out about what’s in jeopardy at the border with family separation, then what are we doing?”

Two Irving Harris Foundation colleagues—Denise Castillo Dell Isola, Program Director for Early Childhood, and Ausannette Garcia-Goyette, Program Officer—point to heightened anti-immigrant rhetoric as the impetus for including immigrant and other BMF in the foundation’s portfolios. Denise drew attention to the impact that the political discourse was having on immigrant families, particularly mixed-status families with young children, and advocated internally at the foundation to develop an area of work focused on the intersection of immigration and early childhood. When asked about her initial efforts as an internal champion, Denise explained: “I reached out to a couple of my colleagues who are also program officers and said, ‘What are we going to do about what’s happening in our country and the targeting of immigrants?’ And then we thought about rapid response grantmaking and focused in on immigration and early childhood because we were already doing early childhood work and wanted to make the connection.”

The Immigration and Early Childhood Initiative was born out of conversations that Denise began in 2017, which led to the foundation providing supplemental grants to existing grantees working on policy and advocacy efforts on behalf of immigrant and mixed-status families with young children. Then, after the family separation policy began to take effect across the U.S. in Spring 2018, Denise worked with grantees and other partners to think about a strategy for action. The foundation’s infant and early childhood mental health and trauma grantees partners in the Harris Professional Development Network (PDN) developed a statement against the policy. Meanwhile, Denise and Ausannette worked to make the case internally for a budget increase to support a strategy that aligned with its focus on infant and early childhood mental health and trauma and leveraged the expertise of the PDN to better support families and young children. Through a collective effort, the Irving Harris Foundation funded PDN grantees to train professionals on young child development, infant and early childhood mental health and trauma-informed care principles, including trauma related to immigration. These professionals included legal service providers, child advocates, tender age shelter staff, and early care and education providers who worked with children in immigrant families including mixed-status families, children who were separated from their parents at the border and those who arrived at the border unaccompanied.

The inequities that immigrant families face, though exacerbated by the family separation policy, predated the policy and persist after it was rescinded by Executive Order in June 2018.21 In response to this and other Trump-era immigration policies, many foundations deepened their awareness and understanding of immigrant families’ unique day-to-day circumstances and needs.

Looking ahead, foundations can leverage the experiences and partnerships of the last few years to shape the policies and programs that affect children in immigrant families.
You can find ways to support immigrant families because there’s many intersecting issues from housing, food, economic justice, education and health. There’s definitely ways to align it to your foundation’s current work and strategy.

– DIANA GARCIA, PACKARD FOUNDATION
No foundation is alike, and each has its own history, mission, culture, and perspective, which may be shaped in part by its location and geographic coverage area. An internal champion understands the foundation’s context and raises awareness about the inequities that immigrant families face by facilitating discussions within the foundation, with grantees and with community partners. Rosa Maria Castañeda (Casey Foundation) suggests doing roundtables:

“Roundtables help unpack what really is very intentional staff education around what are the demographics of immigrant families and who are the organizations serving them.”

Dr. Katie Beckmann (Packard Foundation) emphasizes that a critical first step in raising awareness is to distinguish between federal immigration policy issues and more cross-cutting service areas like education, health and economic security, which impact both immigrant and U.S.-born families and are often part of a foundation’s existing portfolios.

Katie goes on to explain that immigrant families face additional systemic hurdles that diminish their access to important benefits and services. One example of this is the former public charge rule, which made it more difficult for immigrants to get green cards if they received means-tested public benefits like Medicaid, food assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or cash assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Though the Biden administration reversed the public charge rule and dropped its pending appeals with the Supreme Court, fear and skepticism associated with the outdated rule will likely remain in some immigrant communities.13

The initial pandemic relief act is another example of the systemic barriers immigrant families face. The law, which passed in March 2020, excluded more than five million U.S. citizens and legal immigrants in mixed-status households from the $1,200 stimulus payments because it required everyone in the household to have a social security number.14 This policy excluded children whose immigrant parents work and pay taxes in the United States using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number or ITIN. The second pandemic relief act was passed in December 2020 and remedied this issue in part by requiring only one spouse to have a social security number in order to receive the new and retroactive stimulus payments.15 While an incremental improvement from the initial pandemic relief act, this policy does not allow stimulus payments to children if neither parent has a social security card, or in the case...

of single-parent families, the sole parent does not have a social security card. The most recent relief act, the American Rescue Plan Act of March 2021, authorizes stimulus payments to children with social security cards whether their parents have one or not.

Katie encourages colleagues in the funding community who are interested in championing the cause of immigrant families to consider their specific needs and circumstances, which has been a guiding principle in expanding her portfolios. Ausannette Garcia-Goyette (Irving Harris Foundation) adds:

“There may be ways to adapt existing work to be responsive—not only to the needs of immigrant children and their families, but to the individuals who serve them.”

For some foundations, the challenge is not in finding the intersections, but rather in reaching consensus around investing in immigrant families. Rosa Maria Castañeda (Casey Foundation) flags:

“You often have a problem where you can’t get the board to agree on immigrant issues because they see it as too controversial, too explosive. And what ends up happening is you don’t address those issues and inequities in whatever portfolio you lead because you fear the blowback. So I think for philanthropy as a whole, that’s a problem.”

Ausannette Garcia-Goyette (Irving Harris Foundation) acknowledges that some foundations may be hesitant in including immigrant families or other BMF in their portfolios because this population may represent a new area for the foundation. In such cases, Ausannette suggests exploring the foundation’s network to identify experts—like the champions featured in this toolkit—who can share lessons learned. Don Hickman (Initiative Foundation) emphasizes the importance of humility when approaching this work and advises colleagues in philanthropy to:

“Ask for forgiveness—you will make mistakes, but don’t let that paralyze you.”

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17 Ashley Burnside, “10 Things to Know About the Third Round of Stimulus Payments,” The Center for Law and Social Policy, April 15, 2021.
Honor your foundation’s priorities within the current strategy while making a case for furthering those priorities by addressing the needs of immigrant families.

– DR. KATIE BECKMANN, PACKARD FOUNDATION
CHAMPIONING EQUITY

Internal champions need to present data in compelling ways that satisfy the business sense and stir the hearts of decision-makers. Using a mix of data and visual appeals for the initial pitch and as follow-up to show the impact of pilot investments is a promising strategy that can help foundations decide whether to start or renew funding in support of these families.

In the last 30 years, the demographic profile of Minnesotans, as with several other states, has changed in many ways, including becoming more racially diverse because of increased immigration. Don Hickman, who has worked with the Initiative Foundation as a consultant or employee since 1999, has seen many of these changes firsthand. Building on his experience of modifying the foundation’s work in response to demographic shifts in urban and rural areas, Don encourages the funding community to:

“Adjust your theory when the data tells you it’s wrong.”

Many of the champions we interviewed underscored the importance of relying on data to advocate for immigrant families and other BMF.

PRESENT THE DATA

Several identified using a mix of quantitative and qualitative data as a promising practice, particularly when engaging the foundation’s governing board or other decision-makers. Elise Spang, who is the Senior Learning Advisor for the McClatchy Foundation and one of the internal champions within the organization, says:

“It’s important to paint a picture for your board. We use data to tell the story and get our board members excited about the work. We use visuals, photos and video clips whenever possible to show what the work looks like on the ground. And we’re passionate, so our enthusiasm can help translate to their enthusiasm.”

Using a mix of data and visual appeals can also be useful when seeking to demonstrate the impact of a foundation’s investments and justify renewed funding. Denise Castillo Dell Isola (Irving Harris Foundation) stresses the importance of planning for impact from the beginning, noting:

“We were really thinking about what that reach could be and impact from a data and metrics standpoint. And we tried to collect a lot of that.”

Foundations that want to explore investing in children of immigrants, other BMC and their families may benefit from partnering with other foundations as thought partners. Such discussions can shed light on how to select a targeted focus area to add value in this giving space and how to arrange funding portfolios within a foundation’s existing organizational structure.

As foundations develop a funding agenda that includes immigrant families and other BMF, they may need to make decisions about which program areas and activities to prioritize. In describing her funding portfolio, Dr. Katie Beckmann (Packard Foundation) reports focusing on two program areas—children’s health and early care and education—and engaging in numerous activities, including research and analysis, policy development, advocacy, communications, practice-based innovation and litigation support within the two program areas. In contrast, Ximena Antunez de Mayolo, a Program Officer at the Rainwater Charitable Foundation, has one program area, early childhood education, and primarily funds family engagement activities, including developing parent leaders in partnership with schools and grassroots organizations.

Ausannette Garcia-Goyette lauded the approach that the Irving Harris Foundation took to identify its specific funding area within the umbrella of supporting immigrant families and other BMF. She noted that the foundation conducted stakeholder surveys and interviews to determine which activities would align with the foundation’s existing priorities and create a unique value-add within this giving space. Based on that work, the Irving Harris Foundation prioritized two sets of work—(1) collaborating with the PDN to engage in the national discourse around family separation, including issuing a public statement against the family separation policy; and (2) addressing knowledge gaps among childcare providers and other frontline workers regarding young children’s development, infant and early childhood mental health and trauma-informed care.

Foundations often organize their funding in support of immigrant families and other BMF in one of three ways—(1) a separate, stand-alone portfolio; (2) a priority that cuts across several program areas; and (3) a hybrid of the two. Rosa Maria Castañeda (Casey Foundation) recommends a sustainable, cross-foundation investment strategy, but acknowledges:

“There’s a tension between whether you should have a dedicated portfolio or separate pockets of work. These are different models. Foundations might pursue it differently.”

Ausannette Garcia-Goyette (Irving Harris Foundation) explains that while an integrated model is generally preferable, if a foundation wants to experiment with seed funding and is not ready to commit to a full portfolio around immigrant families and other BMF, providing a supplemental grant using the separate, stand-alone model may be a good option. While Dr. Katie Beckmann (Packard Foundation) also favors an integrated model that weaves the unique needs of immigrant families into established program areas, she recognizes the benefits of a hybrid model, noting:

“Even though it is embedded in a lot of the work, we have some grants that are focused specifically on this population.”

Most foundations recognize an integrated, cross-foundation investment strategy as the gold standard when arranging giving portfolios in support of immigrant families.
Don’t rush the strategy. Understanding how your foundation can leverage its unique strengths to add value and fill a critically needed gap in the field will help clarify the path for your team and board.

– AUSANNETTE GARCIA-GOYETTE, IRVING HARRIS FOUNDATION
CHAMPIONING EQUITY

In addition to lessons learned about how to arrange funding portfolios within a foundation’s existing organizational structure, several champions recommended learning from and partnering with immigrant-led, grassroots organizations in ways that recognize their assets, promote equity and test new performance frameworks.

Before committing to work with any organization, foundations often evaluate potential partners using a rubric on key measures. Traditional scoring guides may define key measures in ways that value organizational assets such as a respected reputation within the field, well-educated staff and a record of managing large awards, which are common among well-established, prestigious institutions. While such rubrics provide a standardized way of comparing organizations and selecting partners, they may overlook or undervalue other important assets—such as having the trust of the community, being fluent in one or more languages relevant to the target population and embedding an intercultural framework in program and policy development—that are more common among immigrant-led, grassroots organizations.

The champions we interviewed offered practical strategies for validating the trust of the community as a valuable organizational asset. Some general examples include engaging with such organizations by creating an advisory committee, developing focus groups or other informal qualitative input mechanisms, and recruiting community board members. See page 21 for specific strategies employed by the champions at each of their foundations.

Power—defined as the ability to change the rules—comes in many forms. A study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation identifies three primary forms of power in philanthropy: the ability to make decisions, control capital and influence others’ thinking. These forms of power are consistent with the promising practices identified during the interviews we conducted.

Decision-Making

Understanding her power as a member of the funding community, Ximena Antunez de Mayolo (Rainwater Charitable Foundation) states: “I recognize that the educational system is not necessarily built for immigrant families. And I think that puts it on those of us that do have a capacity of influence and power to change it.”

Ximena’s commitment to equity is evident in her family engagement work, which positions parents in leadership and decision-making roles. For example, the Rainwater Charitable Foundation established a Parent Leader Guidance Council to advise the local early learning alliance and is working toward having a parent join the alliance’s leadership team.

PARTNER WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS

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Note:


Ximena also emphasizes the importance of compensating parents and other community members for their contributions. She explains that members of the Parent Leader Guidance Council are compensated for their time and talents. Rosa Maria Castañeda (Casey Foundation) makes a similar point in relation to immigrant-led, grassroots organizations, asserting:

“I think it is important to lift up, empower and give voice to the community organizations that are doing the work of mitigating those equity gaps, but don’t usually get the funding for it.”

Influencing Others

Building on the previous comments about power, Ausannette Garcia-Goyette (Irving Harris Foundation) addresses this third form of power. Through her interactions with immigrant-led, grassroots organizations, she found that many stakeholders highly value access to the foundation’s networks because tapping into the foundation’s social capital gives grassroots organizations an opportunity to share their work with more people with expertise, resources and other forms of power—which often has a multiplying effect on the impact of their work.

Based on a process evaluation commissioned by the Irving Harris Foundation, Ausannette shares:

“Being the connector is as important as being the funder. Your networking support and expertise is equally, if not more, valuable than your funding support. And some of those relationships have continued past the projects we originally supported.”

Rosa Maria Castañeda (Casey Foundation) adds another dimension to the discussion around equity and power-sharing by drawing attention to the role of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) who are part of the funding community. She says:

“People of color who have the content knowledge and connections to the community and work within institutions of power are usually the ones who help bring foundations along toward greater equity.”

This perspective offers an opportunity to deepen the discussion by examining diversity, equity and inclusion within the funding community both as employers experiencing changes in workforce demographics, and as giving institutions whose trustees and executives are mostly white males, in large part due to the longstanding inequitable distribution of wealth in the U.S.21

Many foundations require traditional performance metrics, which may represent a systemic barrier to funding immigrant-led, grassroots organizations. Given the fiduciary responsibilities of trustees, executives and board members, many foundations consider it paramount for grantees to set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound goals and to measure their performance against those goals. Grantees that achieve their performance targets are likely to get funded again, while organizations that do not have the data collection infrastructure in place to evaluate their performance—many of which are immigrant-led, grassroots organizations—are likely not funded at all.

The challenge of needing a system of accountability and committing to greater equity in philanthropy could be addressed at least in part by introducing more innovative ways of measuring success. Rosa Maria cautions colleagues in the funding community:

“We need to stop limiting our understanding of outcomes when we’re dealing with communities of color and in particular, immigrants.”

Elise Spang (McClatchy Foundation) echoes:

“In terms of evaluation and learning, it all looks very different.”

How to Share Your Power

1. Create avenues for community groups to influence policies and other key decisions.
2. Compensate community members and grassroots organizations for their contributions.
3. Connect immigrant-led, grassroots organizations with funders, researchers, advocates, elected officials and other influential individuals or organizations.

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Both Rosa Maria and Elise explain that some immigrant-led, grassroots organizations are highly skilled at conducting performance evaluation protocols and outperform larger institutions in performance evaluations. But for community groups without that capacity, foundations could implement these three strategies.

Foundations concerned about funding small, perhaps obscure grassroots organizations may try pairing them with another organization that has higher capacity in performance evaluation, but not as much capacity in community outreach, so that the paired organizations operate in peer learning pods and share the funding, expertise and responsibility for outcomes. One drawback to pairing organizations in this way is the risk of uneven power dynamics between the community organization and the larger, more established organization. Foundations should provide guidance on how money, credit and other proxies for power will be shared between the two organizations to mitigate this.

Another approach is to award grassroots organizations with multi-year funding so that the grantee can build its capacity for performance evaluation within the first year and track measures in year two. Elise says: “At first, we try to capture the story of the work they’re doing and showcase it. We also encourage grantees to share what they’ve learned with other partners that are doing similar work and to problem solve together.”

A third strategy for engaging more immigrant-led, grassroots organizations is offering more flexible funding with broad outcomes that can be achieved in multiple ways. Rosa Maria recommends ‘opening up the aperture’ on what are results. She says: “Sometimes at a foundation level, we’re looking for this one particular outcome. And if you don’t move the needle on that, then that’s all that we want.” Rather than having a narrow definition of success based on a specific set of metrics constructed upfront and focusing exclusively on aspects of the work that relate to those metrics, performance evaluation becomes more about ‘capturing the grantee’s work’ and mining for outcomes.

By starting to value and integrate the many assets that immigrant-led, grassroots organizations have, foundations are advancing closer toward equity.

### How to Balance Accountability and Inclusion

1. Arrange paired funding to minimize perceived risk.
2. Award multi-year funding to build capacity through technical assistance, including peer networks.
3. Offer flexible funding that permits broad outcomes and qualitative measures.

We must balance the distribution of power in fair and impartial ways.
## STRATEGIES USED BY THE CHAMPIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundation</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Design</strong></td>
<td>Pay community leaders, health workers or other community members as trusted messengers who can provide information to others in their community.</td>
<td>Funded a community group that trained family, friend and neighbor (FFN) caregivers on how to use child development principles in activities with children.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation Criteria</strong></td>
<td>Evaluate potential partners on their ability to broker trust within the community of interest.</td>
<td>Increased internal discussion on how to empower grassroots organizations that represent the community’s perspective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding Priorities</strong></td>
<td>Direct funding based on the community’s input.</td>
<td>Contracted with a grassroots organization to engage community members and identify their priorities.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program Improvement</strong></td>
<td>Seek feedback from the affected community and associated workforce to improve programs (i.e., low childcare enrollment rates among English Learner families).</td>
<td>Interviewed 120 teachers, administrators, families and parents and uncovered unexpected barriers to services (such as a requirement that children be potty trained before enrolling and parents’ preferences about which meals and snacks their children receive). Modified programs and enrollment requirements accordingly. <strong>Result:</strong> Saw a 22% increase in enrollment in one year.</td>
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Data is the cornerstone for making sound funding decisions. For funders who want to begin making investments in support of immigrant and other bilingual or multilingual children, there are several data sources and tools to consider.

Some of these include the National Center for Education Statistics, ED Data Express, the National Research Center of Hispanic Children & Families; the Migration Policy Institute’s Young Dual Language Learners Map and the Urban Institute’s Children of Immigrants Data Tool. Please note that these data sources and tools do not represent an exhaustive list and should be viewed as a starting place to explore data.

As foundations review different data sets and tools, it is also important to consider how the data source defines key terms like children of immigrants, bilingual and multilingual children or English Language Learners, since some differences exist. For example, federal data sources from the U.S. Department of Education may use statutory definitions for English Language Learners or rely on state reporting, while data tools from research institutes—including the two that we reference—may use different definitions for English Language Learners and children of immigrants based on proxy measures.

Note:
In this toolkit, BMC stands for bilingual and multilingual children and BMF stands for bilingual and multilingual families.
The National Center for Education Statistics, located within the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences, publishes annual data on the number of children who were identified by schools as bilingual or multilingual, and who are referred to as English Language Learners in this context. This data is taken from the Local Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey. While this represents official data, there are two drawbacks. First, the most recent available data is for the 2018 school year, indicating a three-year delay. Also, the data relies on families disclosing to schools that their children are English Language Learners. Given the stigma that exists in some communities, families may withhold that information from schools, which could lead to an undercount of the number of children who are learning English while learning one or more other languages.

Synthesized data for the fall of 2018, the most recent period available, can be found here and raw data sets for the same period can be found here.

ED DATA EXPRESS

ED Data Express presents state and district-level education data that is collected by the U.S. Department of Education in a user-friendly manner. The site offers data from three sources—(1) EDFACTS; (2) Consolidated State Performance Reports; and (3) the U.S. Department of Education’s budget office. These sources include information related to Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which helps ensure that English Language Learners attain English language proficiency and meet state academic standards.

The most recent data available on the ED Data Express site is for the 2018-2019 school year and can be found here. For more details about ED Data Express, click here.

THE NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER ON HISPANIC CHILDREN & FAMILIES

The National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families (Center) is a research hub that strives to provide policymakers and practitioners with the information they need to better serve low-income Hispanic or Latinx children and families. The Center focuses its research in three areas—(1) poverty reduction and economic self-sufficiency; (2) fatherhood, family structure and family dynamics; and (3) early care and education. The Center is led by Child Trends, in partnership with three universities: Duke University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro and University of Maryland, College Park. More information on the Center can be found here.

MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE’S YOUNG DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS MAP

The Migration Policy Institute (MPI), a nonpartisan research institute in Washington DC, launched a set of data and policy products concerning Dual Language Learners, which features an interactive map that shows the number of children from birth to eight years old who are Dual Language Learners in each state in the 2015-2019 period. The data reflects sociodemographic information about these children and their families, including parents’ education and employment status, languages spoken at home and access to health insurance, among other key indicators. MPI also issued state-specific fact sheets highlighting policies that support Dual Language Learners.

To access the interactive map, click here. The state-specific fact sheets can be found here.

URBAN INSTITUTE’S CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS DATA TOOL

The Urban Institute, a nonprofit research organization in Washington DC, hosts an online, interactive Children of Immigrants Data Tool. Individuals can use the tool to create tailored charts and tables by selecting the school year, geographic location, target population, data type and other key indicators. Users can also select from data about the child, parent or family.

The data is taken from the American Community Survey and the most recent available data is 2019. The Children of Immigrants Data Tool can be found here.
Often a champion’s past and cumulative life experience is what informs their work in this space. As you read about the personal and professional journeys of our champions, we encourage you to think about your own story and what led you down the path of philanthropy.

Following are profiles of the eight Champions for Equity interviewed for this toolkit:

- Ximena Antunez de Mayolo | Program Officer, Rainwater Charitable Foundation
- Dr. Katie Beckmann | Program Officer, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Rosa Maria Castañeda | Senior Program Officer, The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Denise Castillo Dell Isola | Program Director for Early Childhood, Irving Harris Foundation
- Diana Garcia | Program Research Analyst, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Ausannette Garcia-Goyette | Program Officer, Irving Harris Foundation
- Don Hickman | Vice President of Community and Workforce Development, Initiative Foundation
- Elise Spang | Senior Learning Advisor, James B. McClatchy Foundation

Note:
In this toolkit, BMC stands for bilingual and multilingual children and BMF stands for bilingual and multilingual families.
The first quality to notice about Ximena is her infectious smile and warm presence. The second is her commitment to children in north Texas and their families.

Her motto is:
"Every kid in Fort Worth deserves to have the best education possible, and every family deserves to have access to that."

As a Program Officer at Rainwater Charitable Foundation, Ximena specializes in early childhood and family engagement. She started her career in philanthropy close to 15 years ago, first in the art sector and later transitioning to education. She approaches her work as an opportunity to promote equity in education for all children, particularly for those from marginalized communities, including English Learners and children living in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods. Most recently, through her family engagement portfolio, Ximena partnered with the local early learning alliance group to establish a parent-led advisory group that offers strategic guidance to the alliance.

Ximena, the daughter of Peruvian immigrants who has lived through every part of the socioeconomic spectrum, sees herself in the faces of children in early learning programs. When Ximena thinks about growing up with immigrant parents in a bilingual home, she is moved with deep respect and compassion for the families that she supports through the foundation. She shares:
"It's really hard to talk to somebody about your family and your kids in the language that is your birth language. If you add having to do it in the language that is not your first language, that's even harder."

The primary source of her inspiration is her mother. Despite growing up in a time and place where education was discouraged for women, Ximena's mother spent most of her life advancing her education and pushing her children to do the same.

As a fitting testament to the power of education, Ximena completed her undergraduate studies at Wesley College and her master's degree at Columbia University. While her father is a highly educated physician, Ximena is the first person on her mother's side of the family to graduate from college. And now, with a bit of poetic justice, Ximena is helping families just like hers tap into the power of education.

Click here to connect with Ximena on LinkedIn. Click here for more information about the Rainwater Charitable Foundation.
At heart, Katie is an advocate for young children. For the last 25 years, she has fought for policies that promote their health and positive development.

Armed with grit and a knack for systems thinking, Katie entered the national stage as the Senior Policy Advisor for Early Childhood Health during the Obama administration. While serving as part of the federal workforce, Katie turned the wheels of government to prevent disease and promote children’s health across multiple early learning programs, including Head Start, childcare, Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge and the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting programs. Katie’s federal experience became a major asset as she transitioned roles from government to philanthropy in 2016. When Katie first arrived at the Packard Foundation to lead its children’s health strategy, she recalls:

“There were so many things that were happening to jeopardize the health of children in immigrant families that we started to have more dedicated investments in this area.”

Through it all, she has remained anchored to her mission of leveraging the health sector and other child and family-facing service providers in a way that helps children lead healthy lives. This work is deeply personal to Katie, who is the daughter of a former refugee. Her mother was born in a refugee camp and arrived at the U.S. when she was the tender age of six months old.

Many of the children that Katie fights for, particularly children in immigrant families who are often also BIPOC, may experience major life events—or in some cases, trauma and toxic stress—at very young ages because of the social and environmental factors that surround them. That is precisely why Katie is sounding the alarm to leaders across health and other systems of care that:

“We really need to support these families from their pregnancies through early childhood and beyond.”

That is also why Katie has dedicated her life to this work, including her academic career, which yielded a doctoral degree in child development from Columbia University and a master’s in public health policy and administration from Yale University.

Click here to connect with Katie on LinkedIn. Click here for more information about the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.
Rosa Maria knows what it is to be a refugee child in the U.S. Arriving as a toddler during the Mariel boatlift, she is now a stalwart champion who keeps the economic success of immigrant families as her north star.

Rosa Maria has many talents and has worked as a researcher, advocate and philanthropist. She studied across disciplines earning two master’s degrees—one in research methods for social policy from the London School of Economics and Political Science and another in public policy from George Washington University.

Six years ago, she joined the Casey Foundation to lead and expand its work around immigrant families. Since then, she has spearheaded several initiatives and contributed to cross-cutting efforts at the intersection of immigrant families and racial equity, two-generational approaches to service delivery, graduation rates among low-income community college students and census participation rates. When asked what motivates her to do this work, Rosa Maria asserted:

“It mattered to me that it was an opportunity to integrate my expertise around family, economic success and immigrants. It offered an opportunity to advance some of what I thought needed to happen as a researcher and advocate.”

Reflecting on the full course of her career, Rosa Maria highlights one idea that compels her to persist in this work is partnering with state leaders to establish an office of immigrant integration that operates as a consistent force for building equity for English Learners. She explains:

“Building the capacity, the infrastructure and the leadership for consistent reflection at the state level on how we are doing around equity for English Learners is something that I think is critical.”

This idea also gained traction at the national level during the 2016 presidential campaign when the Democratic nominee committed to establishing an Office of Immigrant Affairs if elected. The office would have been responsible for coordinating programs and policies across all levels of governments to help refugee and immigrant families integrate into local communities.

Click here to connect with Rosa Maria on LinkedIn. Click here for more information about the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
Denise is a persistent and visionary change agent. Her superpower is seeing the world as it could be and connecting with others to make it so.

That superpower is tied to her strong sense of duty to advocate for Latino and immigrant children. Denise, a former commercial litigator, left corporate law to pursue a career in the nonprofit sector, where she led an early childhood center and studied philanthropy and nonprofit management. Her experience in early childhood and interest in philanthropy aligned when she joined the Irving Harris Foundation. Recalling those days, she reminisced:

“It was serendipitous if you will. It feels like it was what I was meant to do or where I was meant to be.”

Her work at the foundation has led to investments in trauma-informed training for attorneys, paralegals, child advocates, staff at shelters for unaccompanied children, family support workers and other frontline workers who can support young children coping with immigration-related trauma.

Denise earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from DePauw University and a juris doctor degree from Boston College Law School. Later in her career, she earned a certificate of advanced study in philanthropy from Loyola University. Though she may not have known it at the time, her inner compass and educational pursuits were likely foreshadowing her current work in early childhood advocacy, policy, grassroots organizing and systems-building.

Denise comes from a long line of strong women, including her mother and grandmother. Beyond her formal education, Denise learned about the power of advocacy by watching her mother push for her to get into a good college. Her mother, who passed away several years ago, remains the inspiration for her purpose-driven career overseeing the foundation’s early childhood and immigration work as one of the original Champions for Equity. No doubt, a legacy that would make her mother proud.

Click here to connect with Denise on LinkedIn. Click here for more information about the Irving Harris Foundation.
What is striking about Diana is her quiet strength and laser clarity. She engages the right systems of care to meet children’s comprehensive needs.

Diana’s career centers around early learning, childhood health and immigrant families. She knows the issues well and understands them from multiple perspectives—as the oldest child of immigrant parents, as an early childhood teacher, as a program evaluator and as part of the funding community. From a very young age, Diana was responsible for bridging the language and cultural divides her family experienced when they engaged the local school, doctor’s office or other systems of care.

Those early life experiences led Diana to pursue a career in education. She studied early childhood and special education and public health, culminating in a master’s degree from Hunter College and Emory University, respectively. Leaning on her experiences as a child and as a teacher of pre-kindergarten students in New York City, she crystallized her systems view and began framing school systems as doorways to other services. She explains:

“Children don’t leave their home and personal life when they come into the classrooms. Teachers need to adapt to serve children both emotionally and health-wise so that they can meet educational outcomes. Maybe children are acting out behaviorally because they’re hungry or they didn’t get any sleep at night or they don’t have a place to live. It’s really about understanding the bigger context of things and then using that information to help provide resources or connect parents and family members to referral services.”

This philosophy has informed her work ever since. Diana began working at the Packard Foundation as a Fellow of the Center on Social Sector Leadership, which is part of the Haas School of Business at the University of California Berkeley. After completing her two-year fellowship in 2020, Diana recently began a new post as a Data and Policy Analyst at First 5 Alameda County.

Click here to connect with Diana on LinkedIn. Click here for more information about the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. Click here for more information about First 5 Alameda County.
Ausannette is an independent thinker who speaks and acts with intention. She offers a fresh perspective on policy and programmatic issues.

This has propelled her into increasingly higher levels of responsibility in nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. Recognizing the distribution of power in this world and the life-changing power of education, Ausannette taught English to students and teachers in Japan, Korea and China early in her career. She volunteered with the Peace Corps and later worked as an Associate Director for a nonprofit.

Ausannette grew up in south Texas, where her family has lived for generations—long before Texas was annexed by the U.S. as its 28th state. Having grown up in a border town and seeing the impact of ineffective immigration and anti-poverty policies on families, Ausannette set out to understand the root causes of systemic issues like xenophobia, racism and poverty. She earned a bachelor's degree in political science and government from the University of Texas and a master's in public policy from the University of Chicago.

While still in graduate school and interning at the Irving Harris Foundation, Ausannette, along with other Irving Harris Foundation colleagues and the PDN, used her substantive knowledge and analytical skills to help draft a statement against the Trump administration’s family separation policy. Years later, Ausannette continues to apply her competencies in funding policy development, advocacy and systems-building to lessen the harm caused by that policy by supporting the foundation’s Early Childhood and Immigration Initiative, an effort to address immigration-related trauma and mental health impacts.

She now leads portfolios across early childhood and reproductive health and justice at the Irving Harris Foundation. The driving force for Ausannette’s successful career is her mother, who is a consistent model of what it means to be strong and supportive.

Click here to connect with Ausannette on LinkedIn. Click here for more information about the Irving Harris Foundation.
One of Don’s defining qualities is that he listens to his conscience. Then he takes decisive action.

Don spent the first 20 years of his career as an environmental scientist specializing in water chemistry. He graduated with a bachelor’s degree in biology from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and a graduate degree in biology and water chemistry from Western Colorado State University. In his early years, Don helped low-income, rural communities in New England organize around drinking water quality and lobbied to protect nature and wildlife in Massachusetts.

After sensing it was time to make a change, Don began a new path in the philanthropy sector. That path soon evolved into a passion for serving refugee and immigrant families and advocating for diversity, equity and inclusion. He joined the Initiative Foundation in 1999 as an Environmental Program Officer. Around the same time, Don and his wife decided to add to their family through an international adoption. They adopted their Vietnamese daughter at four months old and welcomed her home to Minnesota, where she met her four-year old brother for the first time.

In the 20 years that followed, Don experienced more changes, including broadening his scope of work well beyond environmental programs and taking on the role of Vice President of Community and Workforce Development. Don noticed that his town and state were changing too and becoming more diverse as immigrants, many of whom were Black or Latinx, restarted their lives in local communities. Don embraced these changes and connected with immigrant parents around the idea that: “Everyone loves their children and is truly appreciative of someone wanting to lend a hand.”

Don sought out learning opportunities to better equip himself to serve people of all backgrounds. He became a certified administrator of the Intercultural Development Inventory and provided training to the foundation’s staff and governing board.

Click here to connect with Don on LinkedIn. Click here for more information about the Initiative Foundation.
Elise is a warrior for literacy and social justice. She finds new tools and techniques to help children of all backgrounds learn to read and write.

The first leg of her professional story starts in the Marshall Islands—an impoverished country located in the remote Pacific between Hawaii and Australia—and takes her to Harlem. Elise taught in both settings and was troubled by the educational inequities apparent in both communities. On her experience in Harlem, Elise explains:

“A lot of students who were in fifth grade and beyond were not reading, which is what led me to focus my graduate studies on language and literacy.”

Elise had already completed her undergraduate studies at Dartmouth College and earned a bachelor’s degree in sociology and education when she was teaching elementary students. After several years in the classroom, she returned to school to get a master’s degree in education, language and literacy with a reading specialist credential from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Elise leveraged her credentials to advance teacher education as a consultant, literacy clinic director, and more recently, as the Senior Learning Advisor for the McClatchy Foundation, where she oversees grants to school districts with pre-kindergarten programs that serve Dual Language Learners. The funding supports four lanes of effort: developing leadership and advocacy competencies among English Learner families and teachers, building educator capacity, family engagement and integrating data. When asked about her work at the foundation, Elise said:

“I have to make sure that we have an assets-based approach to all of our work. In other words, the goal of our foundation is not to simply ensure Dual Language Learners are fluent in English. That’s part of it. But another goal is to lift up students’ home languages and for their school communities to see those languages as an asset coming in.”

Click here to connect with Elise on LinkedIn. Click here for more information about the James B. McClatchy Foundation.
It always comes back to social justice for me. If we want people to engage in an inclusive and equitable society and democracy, we must ensure that we value the diverse assets these kids bring to the table.

– ELISE SPANG, MCCLATCHY FOUNDATION
ECFC commits to sharing our social capital, engaging in policy and advocacy, and investing in leaders of color and immigrants—most notably Black immigrants—as part of the path forward. We welcome you to partner with us as we move to implement these three commitments.

We invite others in the funding community to also consider making commitments that complement existing grantmaking priority areas and align with the research-policy-practice framework that many funders use. We encourage foundations to apply the lessons learned from the champions featured in this toolkit because we know that no matter what social change goal or funding priority a foundation may have—education, health, mental health, family stability, child development, poverty elimination or other—it will only work by honoring the languages, cultures and family histories of this core population.

Note: In this toolkit, BMC stands for bilingual and multilingual children and BMF stands for bilingual and multilingual families.
The success of the next generation depends on how well we serve these children.

Connect Others
We commit to connecting immigrant-led, grassroots organizations with others in our network as a way of sharing our social capital. We will deepen our engagement with immigrant-led organizations by building relationships with coalitions supporting immigrants, including the Children Thrive Action Network. We will invite leaders from these communities to speak in our funder education events, including people with lived expertise and leaders from service providers and advocacy organizations. In some cases, these connections may lead to resource sharing including technical assistance, joint statements on policies or new funding opportunities.

Engage in Policy and Advocacy
We commit to engaging in national and state-level policy and advocacy discussions concerning the intersection of immigrant integration, inclusion and equity, and early childhood. We began this work in 2017 and plan to deepen it in the years ahead by drafting or joining funder statements, commenting on proposed rules, hosting roundtable discussions and webinars tied to equity, and encouraging others to do the same. As we deepen our policy and advocacy engagement, we plan on strengthening our platform so we can amplify the voices of funders and grassroots organizations in our network.

Invest in Leaders of Color
We commit to promoting investments in organizations led by leaders of color, including leaders who are immigrants or have immigrant backgrounds, particularly Black immigrants who may offer unique perspectives related to the intersection of immigration and race. We will engage leaders of color in discussions to identify the most relevant and useful investments for BIPOC in our organization, partnering grassroots organizations and the larger funding community. When hosting pooled funds, we will work to include organizations led by and working with immigrant families. As we work with early childhood funders on a variety of issues—equity for the early childhood workforce, diversifying leadership pathways, defining quality services equitably and family well-being—we will encourage philanthropy to invest in immigrant-led and immigrant serving organizations.
Support Mixed-Methods Research and Data Collection

Research is the foundation for designing smart policy, advocacy and culturally informed services. Foundations could support a mix of quantitative and qualitative research that leads to an evidence-based understanding of immigrant families and other BMF in a community, including the number of children living therein, their cultures and languages. Foundations could also support research to learn more about advocacy groups and service providers led by people in those communities. The mixed-methods research might include surveys, focus groups, key informant interviews and analysis of state and federal data—all of which could be presented to the governing board or other key decision-makers within the foundation.

Trusted research institutes working in this space include the Migration Policy Institute and the Urban Institute. See the Georgetown Immigration Research Guide for a list of additional institutes.

Partner with Advocates from Impacted Communities

In recent years, many foundations expressed a growing interest in incorporating research-based advocacy into their giving portfolios with an eye toward creating systemic changes at the local, state or national levels. Foundation staff from such organizations may opt to partner with advocacy groups who are either part of immigrant and other bilingual or multilingual communities or who work in tandem with service providers and other leaders from those communities. Some examples include the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI), the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC).

The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights offers a list of advocacy groups focused on the border and other membership-based organizations such as the Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM) may also be a good resource for exploring prospective partnerships with advocacy organizations.

Increase Immigrants’ Access to Culturally Responsive Family Services

Foundations can engage their current grantees and other partners to learn whether the programs and interventions the foundation is investing in are culturally responsive to immigrant families and other BMF. Building on the existing body of research and insights from the advocacy community, foundations can elevate service models that are designed to honor the cultures and languages of families from different cultural and racial or ethnic backgrounds. And where organizations are not using such models, foundations can set a standard requiring those service providers to adapt or add strategies so that more immigrant families and other BMF have access to culturally responsive services. Foundations could also fund the development of new models and interventions that support these families.

Making a commitment to increase services to immigrant families is also an opportunity to engage immigrant-led, grassroots organizations in scalable ways that recognize their assets and promote equity. For example, Abriendo Puertas partners with local schools and family-serving organizations to deliver a 10-week, evidence-based curriculum that addresses parenting issues specific to immigrant families. Avance is a similar organization and applies two-generational strategies to enhance parenting skills and parent/child interactions.

Foundations can connect with immigrant serving organizations directly or through national groups like the Refugee Council USA (RCUSA) and UnidosUS, which act as umbrella organizations and have affiliations with local service providers.
Now that you’ve seen how our champions have put deliberate strategies in place at their foundations to support children in immigrant families, it’s time to think about your role in this shared space.

**WRITE YOUR STORY**

What led you to philanthropy? What keeps you in it?
What drives you? What values, experiences or people inspire you to do this work?

**FIND THE INTERSECTION**

What are your foundation’s focus areas?
How do those priorities align with children of immigrants and their families?
How does your foundation currently support children in immigrant families?
And if it doesn’t, what are some ways in which it could?

**START THE CONVERSATION**

How could you spark a conversation within your foundation about investing in children of immigrants, including addressing any reservations it might have about doing so?
What could ECFC do to further encourage members and others in the funding community to support children in immigrant families?

**SHARE YOUR POWER**

Does your foundation currently partner with any immigrant-led, grassroots organizations? If not, can you identify any possible partnership opportunities?
What are some other ways in which your foundation could lend voice and visibility to these organizations?
FOR MORE INFORMATION

Click here to learn more about policies and projects in support of children in immigrant families.

This project is generously supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

This project features additional champions from the following foundations: