

Immigration and Nonprofits

by Rick Cohen

An essential component of nearly every definition of a healthy, sustainable community is its inclusiveness.

THIS ISSUE OF THE *Nonprofit Quarterly* examines how nonprofits of all kinds are affected by—and how they can confront—the challenge of serving immigrants in the face of punitive local and state ordinances, hostile public attitudes, and a still-unsettled national immigration reform picture. In this issue and on *NPQ*'s Web site, we offer various perspectives on how nonprofits deliver on their missions on behalf of immigrant constituents and communities.

Why devote the bulk of an issue to immigration issues? Two overarching perspectives should motivate nonprofits—and for that matter, all Americans—to pay attention and get involved.

Immigration: A Human-Rights Issue

This nation's policies—or confusion, ambivalence, and inaction—concerning immigrants coming to the United States constitute a human-rights issue and a scandal. A multipart *Washington Post* series on conditions in this nation's 23 overcrowded immigration detention centers revealed that, over the course of five years, 30 out of 83 deaths were attributable to centers' medical services (or

lack thereof),¹ 15 out of the 83 were attributable to suicide, with a ratio of mental-health staff to mentally ill detainees of 1:1,142 (compared with 1:400 in the Bureau of Prisons).²

This isn't Guantánamo ostensibly holding people thought to be terrorists. This is how the nation sorts through potential refugees and asylees from Mexico, Honduras, Ghana, Lebanon, Somalia, Korea, and elsewhere. They are not terrorists but political and economic refugees looking for a better life. Between 2004 and 2007, more people died while being held by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) than those who died in Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo combined.³ Our nation's treatment of immigrants has earned us the critical scrutiny and condemnation of not just immigrant-rights organizations but also of Human Rights Watch, whose 2009 report on ICE detention of women ought to motivate nonprofits to support changes to U.S. immigration policies and programs.⁴

Creating Healthy Communities

How the United States—and perhaps more directly states and localities—treats immigrants is a bellwether for the kinds of communities our society is committed to building. An essential component of nearly every definition of a healthy,

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The Wasp



A STATUE FOR *OUR* HARBOR.

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sustainable community is its inclusiveness, its ability to welcome diversity, its approach to social equity for people from different social classes and ethnic and racial backgrounds.

Some localities are smart enough to recognize that immigration is a building block for sustainability. Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, for example, launched an Immigrant Employment Council aiming to “(1) promote immigrant well-being, (2) contribute to a prosperous regional economy, and (3) build healthy, vibrant and inclusive communities,” recognizing that attracting and retaining immigrants is important for community progress.⁵ In the United Kingdom, it is built into the government’s Sustainable Communities Plan standards:

Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.⁶

The asset-building strengths of immigrant communities, including those of multiple immigrant populations, can be seen in U.S. neighborhoods as well. For example, the Mission District of San Francisco—50 percent Latino and 11 percent Asian/Pacific Islander—has spawned a variety of positive initiatives capitalizing on the inherent strengths of these populations. The Mission Asset Fund (Fundo Popular de la Misión)⁷ capitalizes and expands on the traditional lending of new immigrants who typically make economic progress through informal lending circles that because of their informality, leave participants without access to mainstream credit (because of a lack of credit scores).⁸ MAF, the Levi Strauss Foundation, the F.B. Heron Foundation, the Gerbode Foundation, the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, and banks such as California Bank are mainstreaming a traditional asset-building practice among immigrant communities. Asset building in immigrant communities does not require losing ethnic identities—our immigrant melting

pots may be more “patchwork quilts” or “mixed salads”—but capitalizing on the strengths and values that motivated immigrants to come to the United States in the first place.

Sometimes, communities simply fail to see the community-building strength and potential of immigration not just within immigrant communities but also for immigrants and so-to-speak long-standing native-born communities. A community dialogue about immigration in Minnesota revealed important community-building dynamics that benefit all kinds of communities, with strong suggestions about how to build on immigrant beliefs and values:⁹

- According to one participant, “It’s sometimes forgotten or not taken into account, but immigrants are really helping fuel the engine of our Minnesota economy.”
- The mayor of the town of Austin, Minnesota, talked about education: “There’s an excitement and energy in our schools. Our programs are growing. I would much rather have the challenges of people coming into our community, and assimilating them rather than a community that’s slowly dying.”
- The report cited the director of the state’s Office of Minority and Multicultural Health that “the key . . . is to build upon a community’s assets and strengths, instead of focusing on deficits and weaknesses. Many immigrants, for example, come to the United States with cultural practices and a traditional diet that are healthier than those of most Americans.”

A research fellow at the University of Minnesota’s Center for Democracy and Citizenship summarized the challenge for immigrants and non-immigrants alike if they hope to succeed in building vibrant communities: “[Pakou] Hang suggested, Minnesotans must begin to know one another—to reach across fences and cultures to introduce ourselves to neighbors, no matter what continent they come from, what ethnic group they are, or how long they’ve been in the United States. Likewise, she urged Minnesotans to listen to immigrants’ stories—and to tell their own. ‘We are a country of immigrants,’ she said. ‘We don’t know our stories. We don’t know who we are.’”



But that dialogue has not taken hold in some communities where ignorance and misperception, rather than interaction and engagement, rule. For example, in a St. Louis suburb, Valley Park undertook an expensive multiyear effort in the federal courts to defend an ordinance prohibiting businesses from hiring undocumented immigrants (even though 90 percent of the community is white and less than 3 percent of the population is Latino),¹⁰ and Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, has been the site of repeated anti-immigrant pep rallies in the wake of an all-white jury's acquittal of two high-school football players who stomped a Mexican immigrant to death.¹¹ These events indicate that anti-immigrant sentiment is pernicious and debilitating to successful, livable communities. Quality communities welcome and support immigrants rather than make them the scapegoats for problems with which they have little or no conceivable connection.

Here's why this issue is important to all NPQ readers—and what nonprofits might do to present a human-rights and community-building

alternative to this nation's current attitudes and policies.

Threats to Immigrants Are Threats to the Nonprofit Sector

According to their missions, most nonprofits typically serve people in need, or at least they try to. Sometimes, however, nonprofits fail to keep pace with changing demographics or get caught by surprise when organizational mission conflicts with hostile public attitudes or laws and statutes. These issues aren't intellectual discourses; for nonprofits on the front lines, they are real, concrete, and sometimes quite threatening.

Just ask the organizations that provide services and advocacy for immigrants.

The border-patrolling Minutemen group shows up regularly to protest nearly anything connected to "illegal immigrants," for example, denouncing the Utah Department of Transportation's decision to opt out of local police enforcement of federal immigration laws as pandering. The Minutemen took the opportunity to "shout . . . at Latino

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construction workers at the Matheson Court House [in Salt Lake City], telling them to go back to their home countries . . . [and telling] police to go arrest the workers because they were not legal.”¹² The police politely rejected the Minute-men’s illegal-by-ethnicity charges.

In the small town of Austin, Minnesota, members of the National Socialist Movement—that’s neo-Nazi for most of us—showed up to protest “illegals.” The neo-Nazi organizer of the rally explained the rationale for his gathering: “I am here because I am sick and tired of illegals taking American jobs. They come and come and come, and no one does anything about it.” One of his supporters in the crowd agreed, “This has nothing to do with racism . . . [only] strictly about legal versus illegal immigrants.” Perhaps he innately knows the documentation people carry but suggested that the presence of illegals has caused “a great retirement community [to] turn into a community where my wife and kids are scared to go to the park.”¹³

Imagine living your life with such threats to your daily existence: to face not only the wrath of neighbors but the constant danger of separation from loved ones after an immigration raid.

Described as a “no-traffic-light town” in rural northeastern Iowa, Postville at one time boasted Guatemalan, Mexican, and Somali eateries on its main street given the presence of immigrants who worked in the town’s meat-processing plant. On May 12, 2008, 500 ICE agents conducted the then-largest immigration raid in U.S. history in search of undocumented workers and arrested 389 people. Men and women were deported or put in jail, some women were allowed to stay to care for children, though they have to wear electronic ankle bracelets.

The town is now a disaster area, with shuttered stores, scores of unemployed, and local churches and nonprofits scrounging to provide aid, housing, and lawyers to the victimized workers and families.¹⁴ Postville is not alone. In New Bedford, Massachusetts, a 2007 ICE raid on a leather-goods factory netted 360 undocumented workers, and as in other cases, the business shut down, disgorging immigrant and non-immigrant workers alike.

Individual immigrants face the same dynamic. In Bellevue, Washington, ICE agents raided a mobile home park in search of Peruvian and Mexican undocumented immigrants, barging with guns drawn into the homes of immigrants such as Filipino-American Dana Ayala, a U.S. citizen, and her husband, Jesse Ayala, a Mexican immigrant with green-card status, in search of “illegals” (the home contained none).¹⁵ Blanket raids on factories and shops that employ immigrants and on lower-income communities where immigrants tend to live look like racial profiling rather than carefully constructed criminal prosecutions. The victims are generally not the employers, who can sell out and recoup value from their properties, but rather the documented and undocumented immigrants who lose their livelihoods as well as the communities that house them, which often descend into economic turmoil.

Something is significantly wrong with this system. While the nation struggles with comprehensive immigration reform—the slowest-moving issue on the national political landscape—the nonprofit sector must see the needs of immigrants, regardless of their legal status, as a humanitarian issue.

The touchstones for a broad nonprofit agenda on behalf of the humanitarian interests of immigrants in this nation can and should involve the following considerations.

Confronting Punitive Local and State Laws

Localities with punitive local and state ordinances directed against “illegal immigrants” have garnered extensive newspaper coverage of the Virginia suburbs surrounding Washington, D.C., and in Hazleton, Pennsylvania. The local laws passed in these communities, ostensibly directed at undocumented—or what the mainstream press refers to as “illegal” immigrants—were frequently aimed at immigrants regardless of legal status. For example, Hazleton’s 2006 Illegal Immigration and Relief Act Ordinance—on paper aimed at the problem of housing overcrowding in immigrant living conditions—was clear in its true purpose, which in the mayor’s words, was to make Hazleton “the toughest place on illegal immigrants in America.” The message to Latinos was clear: they weren’t welcome, and the mayor boasted of

seeing Latino immigrants leaving “en masse” in the middle of the night.¹⁶

In Virginia, the virulent anti-immigrant hostility is frequently directed at Latino day laborers who gather at official or known locations to be recruited by building contractors and others for short-term work assignments. Herndon, Virginia, for example, became a focal point for the day-laborer issue when a liberal city council approved a nonprofit establishing a formal workers’ center to take the place of the local 7 Eleven as the gathering place for day laborers awaiting work assignment. Once the conditional use permit was passed, the conservative Judicial Watch announced its intention to sue the municipality for “aiding illegal immigration,” the Minutemen set up shop to photograph and monitor alleged illegal activity, and voters elected an entirely anti-immigrant mayor and city council to oppose the center.¹⁷ Although the most recent state legislative session in Virginia had much less than 110 anti-immigrant bills introduced in 2008, one that passed was H.B. 2473, which prohibited loitering at libraries and was aimed at libraries where day laborers congregate waiting for work.¹⁸

On humanitarian and social-justice grounds, nonprofits have to fight against punitive anti-immigrant legislation and ordinances—just as quickly as the anti-immigrant wing of American politics mobilizes for legislation along the lines of the Hazleton and Herndon statutes.

Hostility to Immigrants As the New Racism

Localities and states consider a dizzying array of legislation aimed at “illegal immigrants.” It isn’t hard to scratch beneath the surface and find the motivation is against immigrants, against racial or ethnic identities, regardless of immigration status.

To many, anti-immigrant attitudes constitute the “new racism” in American society, a somewhat indulged racism because some proportion of U.S. immigrant populations are here having crossed the border or having stayed in the country in violation of current rules. It’s easy to be anti-immigrant when one tosses around the “illegal” pejorative. This is especially true in times of economic distress, when the tendency of many societies is to

find victims to blame or penalize.

Even in the 2009 stimulus legislation, some anti-immigrant sentiments bubbled up. Anti-immigrant groups were quick to suggest that “illegal immigrants” would receive 15 percent, or 300,000, of the 2 million jobs estimated to be created in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.¹⁹ In the stimulus package, immigrant opponents pushed for the inclusion of the E-Verify system in the stimulus package, despite lots of evidence—even from conservative opinion sources such as the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page—that E-Verify would be unenforceable and counterproductive.²⁰ Although several anti-immigrant provisions in the stimulus bill were ultimately defeated in Congress, at least one survived: restrictions on H-1B visa holders working for entities receiving Troubled Asset Relief Program, or TARP, funds. The potential result was a reverse migration of H-1B employees who are a major positive force in the nation’s economic progress and revival.²¹

The nation’s economic vortex makes the anti-immigrant agenda increasingly popular. In distressed Oakland County, Michigan (near Detroit), local officials and union leaders have joined forces—using the emotional issues of the economy and returning veterans, to oppose businesses that hire purported undocumented immigrants.

“It impacts safety for citizens because we have no knowledge of criminal activity or affiliations of these illegal workers, you name it,” said a county executive. “Is it right that our returning soldiers, law-abiding citizens, and even those citizens who have paid their debt to society after incarceration should have to compete against those who are working in our country illegally? This is not the American way.” Joining the politicians and union officials on the dais was a representative of the anti-immigrant advocacy group the Federation for American Immigration Reform.²² Noting the tendency to blame immigrants and minorities when times are tough, the *Detroit News* called the Oakland County plan “mean-spirited,” an apt description for the animus behind these efforts.²³

It is not hard to see past the public scorn for illegal immigrants as antagonism toward

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immigrants regardless of the documents in their pockets.²⁴ No matter the venue or context, racism is always abhorrent. In the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors, the challenge is always to confront and overcome racism. Nonprofits have to think of themselves as a societal vanguard willing to challenge racism. And today, that means that nonprofits have to stand up against the use of immigration as a virulent form of racism in our society.

The Diversity of Immigration

One thinks of certain regions as intense concentrations of immigrant populations, but the reality is that documented and undocumented immigrants are spread across the nation. There is no option for nonprofits to avoid responding to immigrants and advocating immigrant needs.

Note, however, that localities that initiate anti-immigrant programs and laws do not always contain large immigrant populations. According to the Progressive States Network's classification of immigration laws along a continuum of "integrative" to "punitive," only 11 percent of undocumented immigrants live in the states that have passed punitive anti-immigrant laws, compared with 42 percent residing in states with laws that aim to integrate immigrants into the mainstream.²⁵ The theory that a community has to be a hotbed of documented and undocumented immigrants to provoke an anti-immigrant backlash is clearly false.

Despite press coverage that tends to emphasize Mexican and Central American immigrants, the immigrant population comprises more than Hispanics, and it varies by geography. Most people have begun to grasp the diversity of locales where immigrants and refugees are located.²⁶ But it applies even to the hot-button question of where undocumented immigrants live.

A Pew Research Center report on undocumented immigrants makes this point succinctly: "Unauthorized immigrants living in the United States are more geographically dispersed than in the past and are more likely than either U.S.-born residents or legal immigrants to live in a household with a spouse and children. In addition, a growing share of the children of unauthorized

immigrant parents—73%—were born in this country and are U.S. citizens."²⁷ While the empirical and visible majority of undocumented immigrants is Hispanic (76 percent), including 59 percent from Mexico alone (because of its shared border with the United States), 11 percent of undocumented or unauthorized immigrants are from Asian nations.

The long-standing portals for immigration to the United States—New York, California, Florida, New Jersey, Texas, and Illinois—continue to receive an influx of undocumented immigrants, but significant numbers have also moved to other states, particularly Georgia, North Carolina, and other southeastern states. In other words, nonprofits throughout the country have to recognize that they are not isolated from the challenge of serving the immigrant community, including in regions that have little tradition and even less infrastructure for understanding and addressing immigrant needs.

And the needs vary by type of immigrants, challenging what many people think they intuitively "know" about immigrants in the United States.

- Although Mexicans comprise the largest number of undocumented immigrants residing in the United States, between 2000 and 2008 the largest proportional increases among the top 10 undocumented immigrants' original countries were Honduras (81 percent) and Brazil (72 percent).²⁸
- While the focus of immigrant discussions is often on adults—the workers allegedly taking American jobs, a myth of the first order—the most vulnerable immigrants are often children, many hundreds of thousands residing in a small number of states: 1.4 million first-generation immigrant children in five states alone (California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois, with half the children in California having immigrant parents in 2007).²⁹
- Sometimes "immigrants" are political refugees, including not just well-known refugee populations from Cuba after the revolution or from Vietnam, but of more recent vintage and who fall through the cracks of public policy attention. Between 2005 and 2007, the largest numbers of refugees admitted to the United

States came from, in rank order, Somalia, Burma, Russia, Cuba, and Iran.³⁰

- While Mexican Americans constitute the largest number of foreign-born residents of the United States, the next five, in rank order, are those from the Philippines, India, China, El Salvador, Vietnam, and Korea.³²

If an immigrant wants to come to the United States legally on a temporary visa, the most attractive visas (H-1B specialty occupations and the E1 and E2 traders and investors visas) go to those from a mix of nations that is different from the “immigrant problem” nations: 40 percent of all H-1B visas went to people from India, 10 times as many as those that went to Mexicans or Chinese; the nations with the largest number of E1 to E3 visas were Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom.³³

The Nonprofit Sector Responds

One of the strengths of the nonprofit sector is that through community-based organizations, it is capable of responding to diverse populations and of resisting the tendency to lump everyone into unmanageable stereotypes. As a result, impressive organizations have carried out programs of service and advocacy for nonprofits across the nation—and many are represented in this issue of *NPQ*.

Building the capacity of these organizations is crucial for the nation to make headway on integrating immigrants. This issue of *NPQ* does not lay out a “solution” to comprehensive immigration reform. As the 2008 presidential election made clear, our nation’s top political leaders are pretty hamstrung in fashioning—or sometimes even talking about—a framework that is politically salable and pragmatically operational. But this special issue promotes models of what the nonprofit sector should do—even without a comprehensive national solution waiting in the wings.

A nonprofit agenda writ large that encompasses the interests of all nonprofits committed to human rights and livable communities might include several complementary and strategic approaches:

Building on immigrant assets. What many people fail to recognize about immigrant populations is that they bring great assets. Powerful research such as Jason Riley’s *Let Them In*³⁴



makes a persuasive case that immigration is a huge plus for the United States—and a reason why other nations that have restricted immigration have suffered slow or no growth. To think about immigrants and immigrant organizations as deficits misses the contribution of immigrant-focused and immigrant-led organizations in their communities—not just for their members but for their communities.

Building community economic development. This has to be the most obvious widespread strategy: integrating immigrants into community contexts and creating dynamics that welcome and support rather than penalize and victimize immigrants.

Building networks of support. *NPQ*’s recent issue on the national nonprofit infrastructure as well as special reviews of nonprofits tackling issues such as entrenched community poverty attest to the importance of national and regional networks to support smaller, community-based nonprofits.³⁵ The evidence is that these networks are certainly important for immigrant communities and the nonprofits that support them. Organizations such as the National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders, the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities, and the National Coalition for Asian

The most obvious strategy for reform is to integrate immigrants into community contexts.

Pacific American Community Development consistently demonstrate their value to immigrant-focused members. The foundation community can provide crucial resources to community-based members of these and other networks.

Mobilizing immigrant young people. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, “One out of every five children under the age of 18 in the United States was estimated to have at least one foreign-born parent, and one in four poor children had at least one foreign-born parent.”³⁶ The vulnerability of immigrant children in our communities is a challenge to the nonprofit sector’s ability to respond to multiple needs from populations with which the sector may not typically connect. At the same time, nonprofits should encourage the civic and community engagement of young immigrants and share responsibility for building healthy communities.

Addressing disparities in services, resources, and coverage. A recent statement by Senator Max Baucus about immigrants and comprehensive health reform was a head turner. “We aren’t going to cover undocumented workers because that’s too politically explosive,” Baucus noted.³⁷ The punitive anti-immigrant strain in U.S. politics too often shows itself in disparities in health coverage and other critical indicators. For health coverage, the data is compelling: While Latino adults are only somewhat more likely to lack health insurance than whites (34 percent compared with 28 percent), 70 percent of Latino noncitizens lack health insurance. It is a story of vulnerable children as well: 74 percent of Latino children in noncitizen families are uninsured, compared with 17 percent of white children.³⁸ The most obvious disparity between many immigrant groups and non-immigrants is in the area of wealth and income. For all immigrant groups in the United States, poverty rates are 1.5 times higher than for non-immigrants.³⁹ Ensuring that documented and undocumented immigrants do not get stuck as a new underclass is an obvious agenda for the nonprofit sector.

Fighting for employment rights and training. Amid a prolonged recession, nonprofits can help immigrants find jobs and ensure that day laborers’ rights are protected. Frequently,

immigrant workers are deprived of wages by their employers, subject to financial charges of which they were never notified, paid less than minimum wage, and prevented from organizing. The growth of workers centers around the country run by nonprofits—replacing the street corners where day laborers wait for short-term jobs—is worth the support of nonprofits concerned about workforce conditions.⁴⁰ That should also mean standing up against counterproductive ICE raids against purportedly undocumented workers.

Creating new avenues of foundation funding. Some foundations have taken the initiative to support immigrant organizing and immigrant-rights work. Some champion foundations have supported particular immigrant populations. But this support must be more widespread within philanthropy and geography. Despite strong support of Vietnamese-American civic organizations from the Ford Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, the Barr Foundation, and others, 2007 funding for a sample of these organizations was a bit more than \$700,000, compared with 2005 and 2006 funding of \$1.4 million. The Otto Bremer Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, the Bush Foundation, the California Wellness Foundation, and the California Endowment have been strong funders of specific immigrant organizations or communities. Community foundations such as the Boston Foundation, the Saint Paul Foundation, the Denver Foundation, the Chicago Community Trust, the San Francisco Foundation, and the Seattle Foundation all serve as supporters of immigrant civic organizations, but foundation connection to immigrant organizations remains narrow at the local level.

The Ultimate Solutions

In May the White House, together with a bipartisan group of congressional leaders, was supposed to hold a discussion on immigration reform, but that meeting was rescheduled and postponed indefinitely.⁴¹ Representing a state with a large immigrant population, Senate Democratic Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada ranks immigration reform as one of his three top legislative priorities (along with health-care reform and energy) and

believes that legislation can be passed in 2009 with the help of some Republicans to replace the dozen or so Democratic senators who may oppose a bill.⁴² Somehow, the White House doesn't seem to share Senator Reid's enthusiasm, and who knows where the House of Representatives will come out.

In 2007 a bipartisan immigration reform bill cosponsored by Democratic Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts and Republican Senator John McCain of Arizona (with the encouragement of then-President George W. Bush) was defeated by a wide margin in the Senate. The bill would have created a guest-worker program and a path toward citizenship for undocumented immigrants already in the United States. While we wait for word from the White House regarding the program that President Barack Obama will support, *NPQ* is reluctant to lay out a definitive plan. But an advocacy agenda based on principles of human rights and social justice could include the following measures:

- protecting immigrant workers' rights, including minimal wage, health, and safety standards, particularly for day laborers;
- supporting the creation of well-run and well-funded labor centers linked to on-site services for immigrant children and families;
- encouraging the mainstream financial sector to help documented and undocumented immigrants establish bank accounts and access to other financial services;
- providing avenues for documented and undocumented immigrants to access health, education, employment training and placement, and other services without fear of harassment (and without subjecting sponsoring nonprofits to penalties);
- funding community development corporations to rehabilitate and manage affordable housing for immigrant populations;
- protecting immigrant communities against subprime and predatory lenders that target specific ethnic and racial groups;
- expanding English-language instruction and interpretation services; and
- funding lawyer support through legal aid and legal services to provide representation to immigrant families and workers.

While these responses would be welcome, the underlying problem remains. In a total population of 307 million, the United States has an estimated 12 million undocumented or unauthorized immigrants (4 percent of the population, 5.4 percent of the workforce, and 6.8 percent of students enrolled in elementary or secondary schools)⁴³ caught in a precarious "Don't ask, don't tell" legal limbo. Subject to deportation though many have U.S.-born children, most of these Americans would like to see U.S. immigration law changed so that they can establish a legal right to stay in the country. The major proposals for immigration law reform include guest-worker programs, increases in the allowable numbers of legal visas for migration to the United States (reducing pressures for "illegal" entry), and pathways for undocumented immigrants already in the country to pursue lawful permanent resident status or full citizenship (what some opponents derisively call "amnesty"). Supporters of similar legislation are eager to see what the Obama administration's proposal might really contain.

The key role for nonprofits? Support reasonable reform and counter the anti-immigrant rhetoric and fear mongering by educating nonprofit boards and communities, and tell local and state legislators and members of Congress that immigration reform should be higher on the national-priority agenda.

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26. Consider, for example, these immigrant distributions throughout the country: Arab-Americans in the metropolitan Detroit and Chicago areas as well as Brooklyn/Kings County, New York; Iranians in the Los

Angeles area; Hmong refugees from Laos clustered in California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin; Vietnamese in Texas and in California (the largest concentration of Vietnamese outside of Vietnam is in Orange County, California); Haitians in Brooklyn's Flatbush and East Flatbush neighborhoods as well as Little Haiti in Miami and concentrations elsewhere in Florida, such as Delray Beach, Evanston, Illinois, and throughout the Boston area; and Cubans in Miami-Dade County, Florida, and Hudson County (predominantly Union City), New Jersey.

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