

# GREATER BOSTON IMMIGRANT DEFENSE FUND HAS REACHED \$1 MILLION

October 31, 2017



PUBLISHED BY:

[IMMIGRANT ADVANCEMENT](#)

*Local foundations, legal aid programs, nonprofits and corporate partners come together to support immigrant community*

Mayor Martin J. Walsh and the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC) today announced the Greater Boston Immigrant Defense Fund has reached \$1 million in donations, and the \$1 million in funds will support ten organizations in the Greater Boston area. This week, the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC) distributed over \$1 million in private funds to both legal services providers and community outreach organizations, which were awarded after the competitive application process. More than 35 individual organizations responded to the Request for Proposals, and projects were selected based on their potential to enhance legal services capacity, strengthen community education and outreach, and build network infrastructure, in addition to advancing the goals of Defense Fund.

supportive city for all -- qualities that are now more important than ever," said Mayor Walsh. "Through these funds, organizations will be able to better protect and serve immigrants throughout the Boston area, helping the families, friends and neighbors who contribute so much to our city. I'm grateful to all the partners and organizations who made this Fund, and these grants, possible."

"MLAC appreciates the opportunity to partner with the City, the foundations and law firms that have come together to support access to justice for immigrants in Greater Boston," said Lonnie Powers, executive director of MLAC. "The Immigrant Defense Fund gives concrete recognition to the overwhelming need for civil legal assistance in communities affected by policy changes at the federal level."

The Greater Boston Immigrant Defense Fund, [launched on September 13 \(/news/greater-boston-immigrant-defense-fund-announced\)](https://www.boston.gov/news/greater-boston-immigrant-defense-fund-announced), is a public-private partnership and funding collaborative that seeks to strengthen the Greater Boston area's capacity to protect and defend its many immigrant communities, refugees, and temporary status holders by increasing education and access to legal services.

Given the high volume of competitive applications and the growing need for community education and legal services in immigrant communities across the region, the partners will continue to fundraise, with the goal of expanding the fund to more organizations.

---

Corporation (MLAC) and Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI) with input from local funders and immigration advocates. During the course of the two-year pilot period, MLRI, a statewide poverty law and policy center, and legal services Immigration Coalition convenor, will serve as the network coordinator. The Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement will track and evaluate the impact of the initiative.

"Immigrants are vital members of our society. Unfortunately, changes in federal policy have forced many to fear going about their daily life activities. This grant will enable GBLS to work with community-based organizations and provide needed legal support to change this dynamic," said Jacquelynne Bowman, Executive Director of Greater Boston Legal Services, one of the organizations receiving a grant. "We are thankful to Mayor Walsh for spearheading this initiative to ensure that Boston remains a welcoming community."

"In these times of great insecurity and crisis for the immigrant community, it means so much to organizations that not only work directly with these vulnerable communities, but are staffed by immigrants themselves, to know that our city and the civic organizations of the city support and stand with us," said Patricia Montes, Executive Director of Centro Presente, one of the organizations receiving a grant. "Making sure that our communities know about their rights as immigrants, as workers and as human beings who contribute to this society is critical at moments such as these."

The fund is made possible by Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR), a national network of foundations working on issues related to

contributing to the fund include the Barr Foundation, the Klarman Family Foundation, the Boston Foundation, the Fish Family Foundation, the Herman and Frieda L. Miller Foundation, Foley Hoag, Mintz Levin, and the Hyams Foundation, the lead funder for the initiative.

The selected organizations are:

**LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDERS:**

*To enhance legal services capacity*

Greater Boston Legal Services

PAIR Project (Political Asylum / Immigration Representation Project)

MetroWest Legal Services

Northeast Legal Aid

Southeast Coastal Counties Legal Services

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:**

*To strengthen community education, outreach, organizing & referral*

Brazilian Workers Center

Catholic Social Services of Fall River

Centro Presente

---

## Essex County Community Organization

Through their contributions to the cultural, social and economic landscape of the city, immigrants play an essential role in Boston's unique civic life. Foreign-born Bostonians account for 28.4 percent of City's population, and nearly half of Boston's children under that age of 18 lived with at least one foreign-born parent in 2015. Immigrants generate nearly a quarter of the economic output of Suffolk County. In 2014, immigrants contributed \$2.3 billion to the regional economy, generating more than \$116.1 million in state and local tax revenues and approximately 15,000 jobs. Additionally, a high proportion of foreign-born Bostonians are self-employed, which has helped revitalize and reinvigorate many of Boston's neighborhoods.

TAGS: news and announcements

[BOS:311 - REPORT AN ISSUE \(HTTP://WWW.CITYOFBOSTON.GOV/311/\)](http://www.cityofboston.gov/311/)

[PRIVACY POLICY \(/DEPARTMENTS/INNOVATION-AND-TECHNOLOGY/PRIVACY-AND-SECURITY-STATEMENT\)](/departments/innovation-and-technology/privacy-and-security-statement)

[CONTACT US \(HTTPS://WWW.BOSTON.GOV/DEPARTMENTS/MAYORS-OFFICE/CONTACT-BOSTON-CITY-HALL\)](https://www.boston.gov/departments/mayors-office/contact-boston-city-hall)

[ALERTS AND NOTIFICATIONS \(/DEPARTMENTS/DIGITAL-TEAM/CITY-BOSTON-ALERTS-AND-NOTIFICATIONS\)](/departments/digital-team/city-boston-alerts-and-notifications)

[PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS \(HTTPS://WWW.BOSTON.GOV/DEPARTMENTS/PUBLIC-RECORDS\)](https://www.boston.gov/departments/public-records)