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- At least 684 nonprofits nationwide provide some form of legal aid to immigrants.
- These providers can be found in traditional, emerging, and new immigrant gateways.
- Nonprofits that provide legal services to immigrants potentially have a larger population to serve than other nonprofits.

Immigrant Legal-Aid Organizations in the United States

Erwin de Leon and Robert Roach

An immigration reform bill has passed the US Senate¹ and is being deliberated in the House of Representatives. Any enacted immigration reform legislation that is comprehensive will include a path to legalization for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants. The Congressional Budget Office projects about 8 million of these individuals will be eligible and apply for regularization of status (Congressional Budget Office 2013).

The application process will be long, arduous, and costly. Under the Senate framework, immigrants will be required to pass background checks; pay penalties and back taxes; submit applications and requisite supporting documents; learn English and civics; and wait at the end of the line, behind others who have been waiting for their applications to go through. Further, the process will only begin after the southern border has been deemed secure. Eligible individuals will need, first and foremost, legal assistance to maneuver this path to legalization.

A majority of undocumented individuals, however, are low income (Capps et al. 2013) and will have difficulties paying penalties, back taxes, and fees. They will have few resources, if any, to secure the services of immigration attorneys. Some will fall prey to notarios,² others will go to extremes to hire expensive lawyers, and many will turn to

immigrant-serving nonprofits providing free legal information and advice. These community-based organizations are best suited to help immigrants with the legalization process (Cordero-Guzman 2005) and, in the long run, with integration into the economic, political, and social mainstream. These nonprofits are embedded in immigrant communities and are mostly founded and run by immigrants, who know the particular needs of their constituents as well as the most effective ways of reaching and assisting them (De Leon et al. 2009).

This brief gives a snapshot of nonprofits that provide legal-aid services to immigrants and their families. These organizations will be at the forefront of immigration reform, guiding millions of unauthorized immigrants through the path to legalization. How many community-based organizations provide legal assistance to immigrants? What other services

Nonprofits that provide legal-aid services to immigrants and their families will be at the forefront of immigration reform.

Table 1. Ten States with the Most Undocumented Immigrants, 2010

STATE	POPULATION
California	2,550,000
Texas	1,650,000
Florida	825,000
New York	625,000
New Jersey	550,000
Illinois	525,000
Georgia	425,000
Arizona	400,000
North Carolina	325,000
Maryland	275,000

Source: Pew Research Center.

do they provide? Where are they concentrated? Are there enough to meet the demand for legal assistance when immigration reform is enacted? Data from the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) can help policy-makers, advocates, and other stakeholders prepare and determine how they can support immigrant-serving nonprofits and, ultimately, the integration of undocumented immigrants.

Undocumented Immigrants in the United States

The Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project estimates 11.2 million unauthorized individuals, or 3.7 percent of the US population, resided in the United States in 2010 (Passel and Cohn 2011). The states with the largest undocumented populations include traditional gateway destinations for immigrants, such as California, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Texas, and emerging and new destinations, such as Florida, Georgia, Arizona, North Carolina, and Maryland (table 1).³

The states with the largest percentage change in undocumented immigrants from 2000 to 2010 are mostly emerging and new destinations: Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Louisiana, Iowa, Tennessee, Maryland, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Missouri (table 2).

Considering the size of the unauthorized population and where they are concentrated, will there be sufficient numbers of qualified nonprofits to provide legal assistance when comprehensive immigration reform is enacted?

Immigrant Legal-Aid Organizations

An analysis of NCCS data indicates at least 684 nonprofits provide some form of legal aid to immigrants.⁴ These providers are dispersed throughout the United States and can be found in traditional, emerging, and new immigrant gateways (figure 1).

Among nonprofits providing legal services to immigrants, the largest group (75 percent) is human service providers (figure 2). This group includes ethnic and immigrant centers (36 percent), general human services organizations (23 percent), legal service nonprofits (19 percent), and other human service nonprofits, such as associations and neighborhood centers (22 percent; see figure 3, page 4).

The organizations that provide legal assistance to immigrants vary in size. Twenty-five percent have annual budgets under \$250,000, 24 percent have budgets between \$250,000 and \$999,999, 24 percent have budgets between \$1,000,000 and \$4,999,999, and 27 percent have budgets of \$5,000,000 and above (see figure 4, page 4). The larger organizations are mainly multiservice organizations that encompass a variety of programs and services.

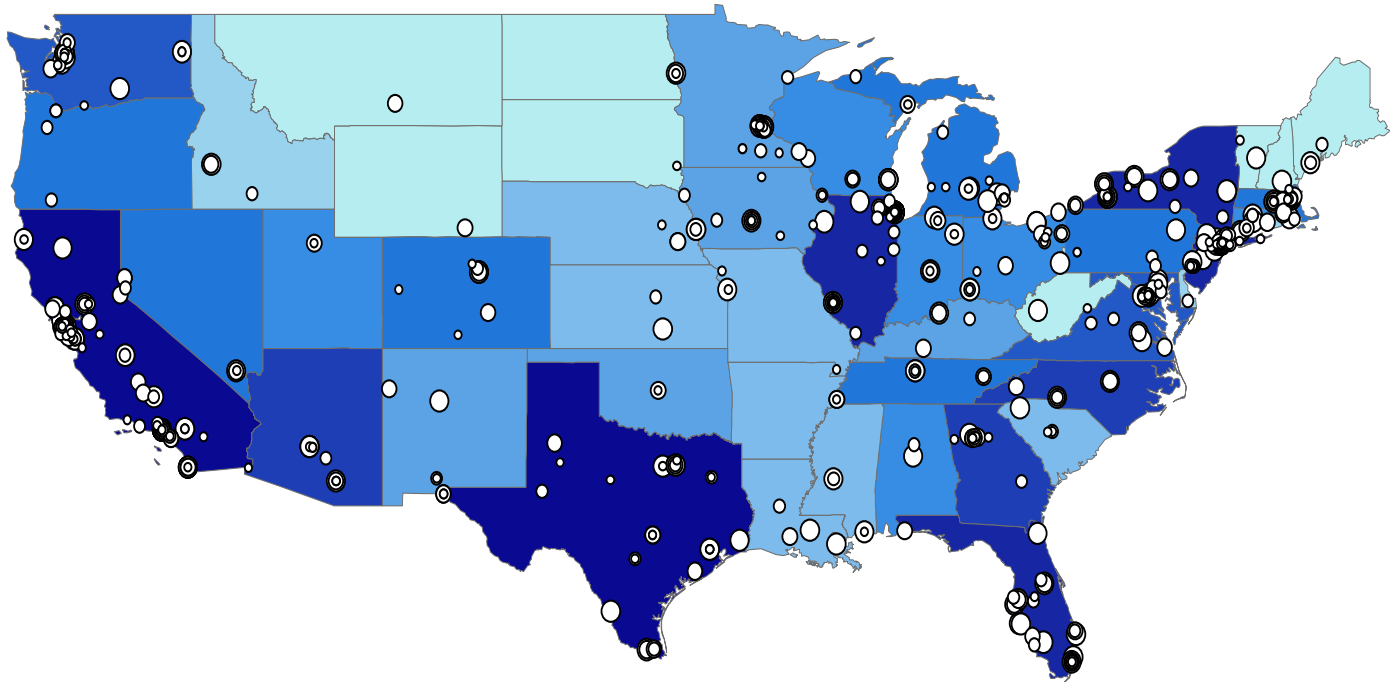
Nonprofits that provide legal aid to immigrants tend to have larger revenues compared to other organizations in the same categories (i.e., human services, public benefit, arts and culture, etc.).⁵ More than half (51 percent) of nonprofits that provide legal services report budgets over \$1,000,000, compared with only 20 percent of other nonprofits (see figures 4 and 5). However,

Table 2. Ten States with the Largest Percentage Change in Undocumented Immigrants, 2000–10

State	POPULATION		CHANGE IN POPULATION, 2000–10	
	2000	2010	Number	Percent
Alabama	25,000	120,000	95,000	380
Mississippi	10,000	45,000	35,000	350
Kentucky	20,000	80,000	60,000	300
Louisiana	20,000	65,000	45,000	225
Iowa	25,000	75,000	50,000	200
Tennessee	50,000	140,000	90,000	180
Maryland	120,000	275,000	155,000	129
Wisconsin	50,000	100,000	50,000	100
Pennsylvania	85,000	160,000	75,000	88
Missouri	30,000	55,000	25,000	83

Source: Pew Research Center.

Figure 1. Nonprofit Organizations Providing Legal Services to Immigrants in the United States



Sources: NCCS Core Data File-PC (2010) and Pew Research Center.

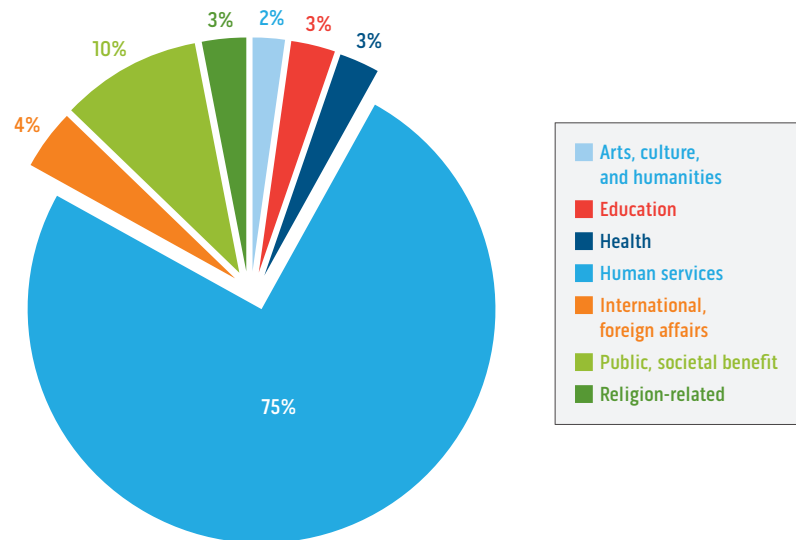
Notes: Shades indicate concentration of unauthorized populations. Dots represent organizations; the size of the dot represents its relative size by 2010 revenue.

larger nonprofits that give legal assistance to immigrants are mainly multiservice organizations, and their budgets cover various programs other than legal services. The data do not reveal exactly how much is allocated to legal programs for immigrants. Disaggregated financial data on multiservice nonprofits are necessary to more accurately gauge of the size of immigrant legal-aid programs.⁶

In the 10 states with the most undocumented immigrants, nonprofits that provide legal services to immigrants would have more people to serve than other nonprofits. For instance, in Texas, the ratio of nonprofits that provide legal aid to immigrants to potential undocumented clients is 1 to 41,250. In contrast, the ratio of other nonprofits to the general population is 1 to 2,916 (see table 3, page 5).

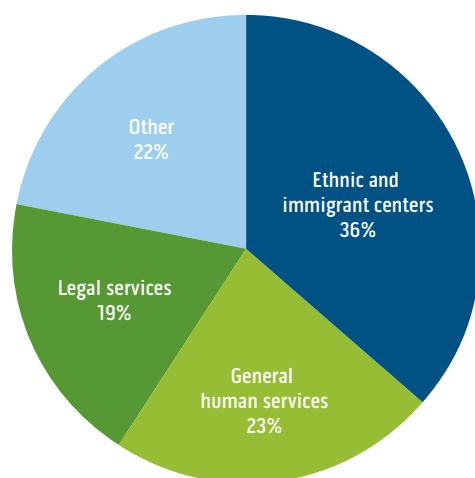
In the 10 states with the largest percentage change in undocumented immigrants, nonprofits that provide legal services to immigrants potentially have a larger population to serve than

Figure 2. Nonprofit Organizations Providing Legal Services to Immigrants, by Type

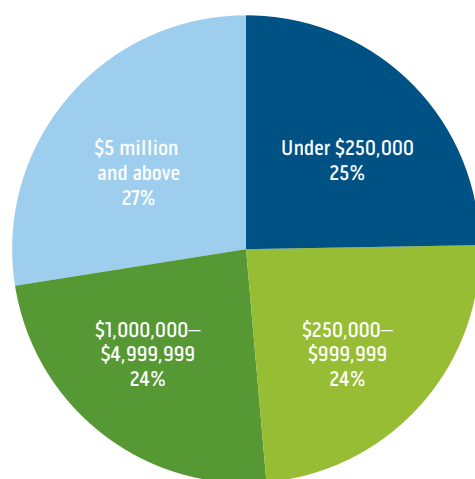


Source: NCCS Core Data File-PC (2010).

Note: Organizations are classified by NTEE major group.

Figure 3. Human Service Nonprofits Providing Legal Services to Immigrants, by Type

Source: NCCS Core Data File-PC (2010).

Figure 4. Nonprofit Organizations Providing Legal Services to Immigrants, by Budget Size

Source: NCCS Core Data File-PC (2010).

other nonprofits. For instance, in Maryland, the ratio of nonprofits that provide legal aid to immigrants to potential undocumented clients is 1 to 27,500 (see table 4, page 6). In contrast, the ratio of other nonprofits to the general population is 1 to 2,182. Alabama is a stark case: the two nonprofits that provide legal services to immigrants could face an estimated 120,000 undocumented individuals. This comes as no surprise; Alabama experienced the largest percentage increase in undocumented immigrants

from 2000 to 2010 (see table 2). Immigrant-serving nonprofits were not founded quickly enough to keep up with the growth of the unauthorized population. Research on immigrant-serving organizations confirms that formation of these nonprofits lags behind the growth and flow of immigrant populations (De Leon et al. 2009).

Implications

Nonprofits that provide legal services to immigrants are dispersed throughout the

United States and offer a range of programs and services. These organizations will be at the front line of immigration reform, assisting undocumented immigrants through the legalization process, particularly with preparing and submitting applications. Analysis of data on hand shows that organizations providing legal services to immigrants would have many more people to serve than nonprofits in general. The ratio of nonprofits that provide legal aid to immigrants to potential undocumented clients is considerable and indicates that organizations will need support to meet the potentially huge demand for legal assistance when immigration reform is enacted.

This brief is only a first step. More data on organizations that provide legal assistance to immigrants are needed. It is not known, for instance, what percentage of multiservice nonprofit budgets goes to legal provision and what the per capita cost of legal assistance is. While about half of identified organizations have budgets of more than \$1,000,000 in 2010, this does not necessarily mean that a significant portion of their resources is currently or could be allocated to legal programs. It is difficult to determine capacity accurately from aggregated budgets and, thus, know where additional capacity is required.

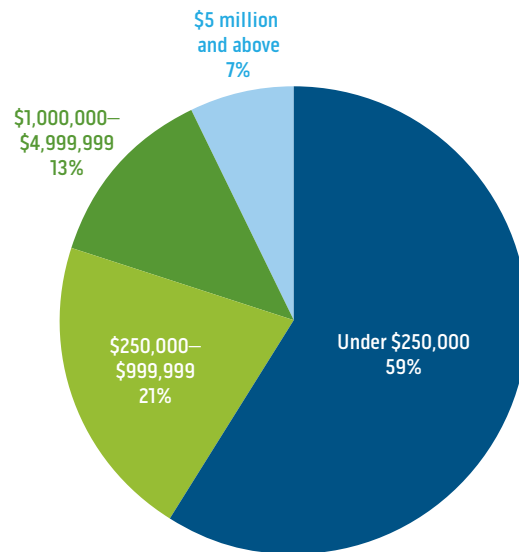
In addition, the revenue sources for immigrant-serving nonprofits need to be understood. Analysis of NCCS data on nonprofits that provide legal aid to immigrants shows that, on average, about 77 percent of legal-aid organizations' revenue comes from contributions and about 20 percent from program service revenue. A more detailed breakdown is necessary to reveal how much support comes from foundations, government agencies, private donations, and other sources and, thus, the avenues for growth.

Information on the capacities of immigrant legal-aid organizations that would reveal gaps is also missing. What is the average staff size of these organizations? How many full-time employees work directly with immigrants? What are the legal credentials of these staff members? What is the ratio of employees to undocu-

mented immigrants? Similar information on volunteers is required for a complete analysis of where additional support can be helpful.

It would be useful to know what immigrant legal-aid organizations and their associations are doing to prepare for immigration reform and how they are planning to deal with the potential surge in demand for their services from undocumented immigrants. Their activities could serve as models for other groups that have yet to prepare as well as reveal where more work can be done. For example, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), has released a manual “to help charitable immigration agencies increase program capacity and prepare for a large-scale [comprehensive immigration reform] program” (CLINIC 2013, 1). CLINIC has also given webinars to their affiliates on getting recognition and accreditation from the Board of Immigration Appeals,⁷ tapping into partnerships,⁸ and managing case-loads for comprehensive immigration reform.⁹

Figure 5. Other Nonprofits, by Budget Size



Source: NCCS Core Data File-PC (2010).

Table 3. Immigrants per Nonprofit Providing Legal Services and Individuals per Nonprofit for the Ten States with the Most Undocumented Immigrants, 2010

State	Undocumented population	Nonprofits providing legal aid to immigrants	Undocumented immigrants per nonprofit providing legal aid to immigrants	Total population	Other nonprofits	Individuals per nonprofit
California	2,550,000	111	22,973	36,637,290	14,891	2,460
Texas	1,650,000	40	41,250	24,311,891	8,338	2,916
Florida	825,000	30	27,500	18,511,620	6,277	2,949
New York	625,000	79	7,911	19,229,752	9,906	1,941
New Jersey	550,000	15	36,667	8,721,577	3,377	2,583
Illinois	525,000	39	13,462	12,745,359	5,198	2,452
Georgia	425,000	13	32,692	9,468,815	3,645	2,598
Arizona	400,000	14	28,571	6,246,816	2,078	3,006
North Carolina	325,000	8	40,625	9,271,178	3,677	2,521
Maryland	275,000	10	27,500	5,696,423	2,611	2,182

Sources: NCCS Core Data File-PC (2010), American Community Survey 2010 Five-Year Estimates, and Pew Research Center.

Table 4. Immigrants per Nonprofit Providing Legal Services and Individuals per Nonprofit for the Ten States with the Largest Percentage Change in Undocumented Immigrants, 2000–10

State	Undocumented population	Nonprofits providing legal aid to immigrants	Undocumented immigrants per nonprofit providing legal aid to immigrants	Total population	Other nonprofits	Individuals per nonprofit
Maryland	275,000	10	27,500	5,696,423	2,611	2,182
Pennsylvania	160,000	14	11,429	12,612,705	5,876	2,146
Tennessee	140,000	11	12,727	6,234,968	2,639	2,363
Alabama	120,000	2	60,000	4,712,651	1,623	2,904
Wisconsin	100,000	9	11,111	5,637,947	2,578	2,187
Kentucky	80,000	7	11,429	4,285,828	1,508	2,842
Iowa	75,000	13	5,769	3,016,267	1,550	1,946
Louisiana	65,000	4	16,250	4,429,940	1,706	2,597
Missouri	55,000	14	3,929	5,922,314	2,742	2,160
Mississippi	45,000	4	11,250	2,941,991	972	3,027

Sources: NCCS Core Data File-PC (2010), American Community Survey 2010 Five-Year Estimates, and Pew Research Center.

Finally, a full picture of the infrastructure available to support unauthorized immigrants through the legalization and integration process has to include the entire network of organizations, public and private entities, and other resources within a community.

This preliminary analysis indicates that various immigrant legal-aid nonprofits could be mobilized to help undocumented immigrants. These organizations are located in areas where unauthorized populations are concentrated. However, the ratio of undocumented immigrants to potential sources of nonprofit legal aid is very high and should be a cause for concern. Adding thousands of new cases to existing case-loads without substantial infusion of resources—funding and staffing and volunteers—is not a realistic scenario. The infrastructure for assisting undocumented immigrants with legal issues is very thin, compared to the projected needs. A concerted effort to assess capacity and plan for expansion is required.

Further analysis will help identify where and how infrastructure and capacity can be built to prepare for comprehensive immigration reform.

Methodology

Lists and directories of organizations that provide legal aid to immigrants were acquired from numerous sources, such as the Catholic Legal Immigration Network and Immigration Advocates Network. These directories are designed for those seeking legal aid; therefore, these lists consist of program names and office locations rather than the official name filed on IRS 990 forms. Often, these programs and centers are contained within larger umbrella-type organizations. Multiple methods were used to identify these organizations by employee identification number (EIN) using available information. First, the NCCS databases were queried for organizations that matched the names and addresses contained in the directories. For those that could not be matched, EIN

numbers were identified through searches of program/organization websites and Google searches of program names. In addition, the NCCS database was queried for organizations whose names included common terms such as “migrant” or “immigration.” After EINs were matched with programs/organizations, data on revenue sources, expenses, and net assets were collected from 2010 tax returns using NCCS databases. The list of organizations analyzed is not exhaustive; there are likely other organizations that provide legal aid to immigrants that have not been identified through the methods employed in this brief. For tables 3 and 4, as well as figure 5, organizations that provide legal aid to immigrants were compared to all other organizations that were similarly categorized. This was accomplished by using NCCS databases to count, by state, the number of organizations with the same National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) codes as the 684 identified legal aid organizations. ■

Appendix. NTEE Codes Included

The following table lists the NTEE codes under which organizations providing legal aid to immigrants were categorized. Organizations in all these categories were calculated and represent the comparison group in the brief. Some categories may not appear to be in scope; this is likely because legal aid is not the primary function of the organization and thus is not categorized in a “related” section.

NTEE CODE & DESCRIPTION

Arts, Culture, and Humanities

A23 Cultural and Ethnic Awareness
A24 Folk Arts
A65 Theater
A70 Humanities
A80 Historical Organizations
A99 Arts, Culture, and Humanities NEC

Education

B03 Professional Societies and Associations
B12 Fund Raising and Fund Distribution
B20 Elementary and Secondary Schools
B21 Preschools
B29 Charter Schools
B50 Graduate and Professional Schools
B60 Adult Education
B70 Libraries
B90 Educational Services
B99 Education NEC

Health Care

E01 Alliances and Advocacy
E02 Management and Technical Assistance
E30 Ambulatory and Primary Health Care
E31 Group Health Practices
E32 Community Clinics
E70 Public Health
E91 Nursing Facilities

Mental Health and Crisis Intervention

F03 Professional Societies and Associations
F60 Counseling
F80 Mental Health Associations

Diseases, Disorders, and Medical Disciplines

G45 Lung Diseases
G81 AIDS

Crime and Legal-Related

I01 Alliances and Advocacy
I03 Professional Societies and Associations
I05 Research Institutes and Public Policy Analysis
I11 Single Organization Support
I19 Support NEC
I51 Dispute Resolution and Mediation
I70 Protection Against Abuse
I80 Legal Services
I83 Public Interest Law

Employment

J20 Employment Preparation and Procurement
J22 Job Training
J30 Vocational Rehabilitation
J40 Labor Unions

Housing and Shelter

L19 Support NEC
L21 Low-Income and Subsidized Rental Housing
L41 Homeless Shelters
L50 Homeowners and Tenants Associations

Recreation and Sports

N01 Alliances and Advocacy

Youth Development

O54 Youth Development—Citizenship

Human Services

P01 Alliances and Advocacy
P02 Management and Technical Assistance
P05 Research Institutes and Public Policy Analysis
P11 Single Organization Support
P12 Fund Raising and Fund Distribution
P19 Support NEC
P20 Human Services
P27 Young Men's or Women's Associations
P28 Neighborhood Centers
P30 Children and Youth Services
P33 Child Day Care
P40 Family Services
P43 Family Violence Shelters
P46 Family Counseling
P60 Emergency Assistance
P62 Victims' Services
P80 Centers to Support the Independence of Specific Populations
P81 Senior Centers
P82 Developmentally Disabled Centers
P84 Ethnic and Immigrant Centers
P99 Human Services NEC

International, Foreign Affairs, and National Security

Q12 Fund Raising and Fund Distribution
Q21 International Cultural Exchange
Q23 International Exchange NEC
Q30 International Development

Q33 International Relief
Q50 International Affairs, Foreign Policy, and Globalization
Q70 International Human Rights
Q71 International Migration and Refugee Issues

Civil Rights, Social Action, and Advocacy

R12 Fund Raising and Fund Distribution
R19 Support NEC
R20 Civil Rights
R22 Minority Rights
R40 Voter Education and Registration
R60 Civil Liberties
R99 Civil Rights, Social Action, and Advocacy NEC

Community Improvement and Capacity Building

S19 Support NEC
S20 Community and Neighborhood Development
S21 Community Coalitions
S22 Neighborhood and Block Associations
S41 Chambers of Commerce and Business Leagues
S50 Nonprofit Management
S80 Community Service Clubs
S81 Women's Service Clubs

Philanthropy, Voluntarism, and Grantmaking Foundations

T03 Professional Societies and Associations
T20 Private Grantmaking Foundations
T23 Private Operating Foundations
T30 Public Foundations
T31 Community Foundations

Public and Societal Benefit

W24 Citizen Participation
W70 Leadership Development
W99 Public and Societal Benefit NEC

Religion-Related

X20 Christianity
X21 Protestant
X22 Roman Catholic
X40 Islam
X90 Interfaith Coalitions
X99 Religion-Related NEC

Unknown

Z99 Unknown

NEC = not elsewhere classified

Notes

1. Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, S. 744, 113th Congress (2013), <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s744>.
2. The American Bar Association (ABA) describes notarios as individuals who represent themselves as qualified to offer legal advice or services concerning immigration or other matters of law, who have no such qualification, and who routinely victimize members of immigration communities ("About Notario Fraud," ABA, http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/immigration/projects_initiatives/fightnotariofraud/about_notario_fraud.html).
3. Immigrant destination definitions are based on Audrey Singer, Susan W. Hardwick, and Caroline B. Brettel, "Twenty-First Century Gateways: Immigrants in Suburban America," Migration Information Source, April 2008, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=680>.
4. Legal assistance ranges from giving referrals and information to representing immigrants.
5. That is, organizations that are classified in the same NTEE major groups as the 684 organizations providing legal services to immigrants. See the appendix on page 7.
6. NCCS data do not break down budgets by program or service.
7. "BIA Recognition and Accreditation for Start-Up and Expanding Programs," CLINIC, <http://cliniclegal.org/resources/bia-recognition-and-accreditation-start-and-expanding-programs>.
8. "Harnessing the Power of Partnerships," CLINIC, <http://cliniclegal.org/resources/harnessing-power-partnerships>.
9. "Case Management for CIR," CLINIC, <http://cliniclegal.org/resources/case-management-cir>.

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