



Immigrant Movement Visioning Process VISION & VALUES STATEMENT November 2019

BACKGROUND

From August 2018 through October 2019, nearly 50 immigrant justice leaders participated in the **Immigrant Movement Visioning Process**¹ to build and strengthen relationships and trust, have courageous conversations, learn together, and emerge with a long-term vision statement articulating what we long for in our shared future and the values we believe are necessary to achieve our ‘North Star.’ This is a living document, and represents a journey of our moral imagination. Envisioning the society we want the U.S. to become over the next 25 years is a significant and challenging undertaking. Given today’s political context, we recognize the vision that emerged from our collective process is aspirational, and will require political power and structural changes to achieve over an even longer period of time.

Our intention is to offer this vision broadly and invite further exploration, shared dreaming, relationship building, analysis, strategizing, and experimentation with how to apply and practice this vision and these values in our work. Our intention is to find new pathways forward to shift power at the local, state, and national levels and achieve the transformational change we believe is needed. We know it will take all of us to build the political power, interdependent communities, and strong movements necessary to pursue this vision.

Having imagined this ‘North Star,’ we now have the equally challenging work to develop a roadmap of how we will build greater political power, change the culture and narrative, develop a policy platform, benchmarks, strategies, and other next steps to help us get closer to achieving our proactive vision for freedom, dignity, and our collective wellbeing.

This vision and values are not intended to be a policy platform or a strategy document. The Five Freedoms below are offered as a light to guide how we should think about and develop systems that embody and preserve our vision and values.

¹ For additional background on the process, see Appendix A.

OUR VISION: FIVE FREEDOMS

All people have inherent dignity and value. Everyone should be able to live in safe and healthy conditions, protected equally under the law. Every human being deserves to embrace their complex histories and backgrounds, to dream, love, imagine, and achieve peace and liberation. We believe that migration policies must be grounded in racial, economic, and gender equity and justice. *We fight for and demand the:*

- **Freedom to Thrive:** All people should have equal agency to make decisions about their life, relationships, community, and future. We envision every person as a full participant in a true democracy, with power and a voice to help shape opportunities for their chosen communities and drive change. Thriving requires effectively leveraging the resources and support that leads to collective abundance, including access to education and health care. Our ability to fulfill our human potential is directly tied to the well-being of others; people thrive when in community and surrounded by their loved ones. Everyone should be able to pursue their dreams, engage in quality and fulfilling work, and live with joy, dignity, and love, regardless of race, gender, gender identity, class, caste, religion, and ability.
- **Freedom to Stay:** All people have the right to stay and belong in the place they call home. People across the globe have a fundamental human right to economic security and physical safety, political and religious freedom, and racial and gender equity. People deserve the freedom to live without fear regardless of whom they love or how they identify. People have a fundamental human right to clean, healthy, and adequate air, water, land, food, education, and shelter. We believe in a connected global community with shared responsibility to each other and to our planet. We imagine a world that honors people's profound connection to their land, and where families and individuals can provide for their loved ones regardless of place of birth.
- **Freedom to Move:** All people should have the freedom to move equitably and be welcomed. Immigration should be a safe and empowering choice that is available to all, rather than an act of desperation, and this principle should be reflected in any set of immigration laws and policies. Migration and return are a natural part of the human experience. People move across towns and cities, across countries, across oceans and continents every day. People move to be free, to seek protection and be safe, to work and eat, to explore, for love, joy, faith, and to realize their full potential.
- **Freedom to Work:** All people deserve the right to safe, fulfilling, and dignified work.

Workers deserve the right to organize to improve the quality of their lives and working conditions, including an income that allows them to flourish. People migrating for work must have the right to work with freedom, mobility, and dignity. When all workers enjoy civil, labor, and human rights, migrant workers and workers in their receiving communities are equals and have the opportunity to improve wages, conditions, and opportunities for all workers together.

- ***Freedom to Transform:*** All people have inherent value and deserve to be treated as whole persons. People also make mistakes, sometimes causing harm. Healing for those who experience harm and cause harm is essential to our collective liberation. We believe in a future where people are held accountable for their actions and are able to redeem themselves. Everyone deserves the right to heal and grow beyond their trauma.

We lead with full acknowledgement of the beauty and flaws of people, and commitment to community and governance that is grounded in restorative and transformative justice. In recognition and remembrance of our collective histories, we aspire toward—and invite you to join us in building—a beloved community that includes equitable economic and political opportunity and a social contract rooted in our shared humanity.

CORE VALUES

Throughout the **Immigrant Movement Visioning Process**, we recognized that dreaming our long-term vision is only the beginning of the journey. Equally important is a transformation of our movement for immigrant justice. We developed a core set of values that we are committing to in order to embody the changes we want to see in society. Living these values is not passive; it requires intention, practice, reflection, and courage.

- ***Love:*** We must live our daily lives with a love of humanity and compassion as driving forces for justice and build a more equitable and just society for everyone—including those who may not agree with us. We reject hatred and violence against our communities. We are committed to doing our own personal healing of life traumas and growing so that we can be healthy and whole persons in our families, institutions, communities, and movements.
- ***Equity:*** This country was founded on systems of oppression and white supremacy designed to deny the power and voices of people of color, especially Black and Indigenous peoples, therefore we must unite and build power across race, gender,

gender identity, geography, and class. We are committed to equity based on racial, ethnic, economic, and gender justice, and religious freedom. This requires building equity into existing campaign or other movement structures, especially so that there is collective leadership by those who are directly impacted, and that the movement speaks the multitude of their languages. It also requires a personal, organizational commitment to counter an anti-Blackness and become an anti-racist movement.

- ***Trust & Respect:*** Just as our vision is people-centered, we must center our relationships with each other so that we build a strong and healthy ecosystem. It is critical that we treat each other with dignity and respect. We must develop strong communication skills and practice radical candor—reaching out to each other directly, especially in moments of tension or disagreement. We are committed to do the work to have healthier and stronger relationships, and will prioritize having difficult conversations in a timely manner. We embrace respectful differences and disagreements as we strive for consensus. We will endeavor to build internal democracy.
- ***Solidarity:*** An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us, and we refuse to be pitted against each other. We endeavor to practice radical cooperation, taking time to communicate, strategize, and build alignment around our goals. We are committed to naming the lens and bias that is informing our work, bringing humility and honesty about what we do not know, and being open to challenging our own assumptions and learning from one another. We embrace a discipline of developing the skills necessary to communicate and collaborate.
- ***Leaderful Movement That Centers Directly Impacted People:*** Core to our vision has been a deep commitment to centering the leadership and expertise of impacted people with lived experiences. This includes ensuring that organizations with directly impacted individuals are well-resourced. We recognize citizenship does not fully protect you from the harms of the current immigration and criminal systems, and that the harm is felt by families, loved ones, co-workers, and communities as a whole. We are committed to leadership development for the leaders of tomorrow and to developing a leaderful movement in which young people and all those impacted are building power and participating fully in democracy, and are taking action in furtherance of our vision.
- ***Courage, Creativity, and Discipline:*** With honesty about the conditions we are facing, we are committed to taking risks and putting ourselves on the line, speaking truth to power. These times call for creative solutions and new ways of organizing, advocating, and building power. We are a learning community. We endeavor to be courageous and vigilant about our own blind spots and challenging ourselves and each other to break through our own limiting perspectives and habits. We are committed to bringing a

'beginner's mind' and constantly asking questions and deeply listening to learn. Our communities deserve our rigor and discipline in conducting our work and therefore we strive to follow through with our commitments to the work, each other, and the communities we serve.

- ***Global Awareness and Engagement:*** We live in a world that is interconnected and interdependent. We are committed to widening the lens of our awareness and mutual education. We are committed to a sustainable planet and global community, and to shifting our individual, institutional, and societal behaviors and practices that result in drivers of migration, climate change, and economic inequality such as consumerism and militarism. We are committed to holding accountable those corporate actors that profit from extraction of natural resources, worker exploitation, mass incarceration and other harms to our community. We are committed to building a democracy that is vibrant and participatory, where policymakers are held accountable, and helps us secure and exercise our freedoms. We recognize the impact of the US in the world, and commit to contributing to a more balanced, equitable, and just planet.

Context

The development of this vision was grounded in the acknowledgement of our country's worst history and best impulses. We are a settler-colonial nation, founded with the lofty ideals of liberty and equality set against the twin evils of genocide and slavery. To this day, white supremacy and patriarchy infect almost every institution and system in our lives. The immigration system is no exception—and our own movement has not avoided the harms of these forces. We know that we cannot strive for transformation of the immigration system without joining the fights to end white supremacy and patriarchy, both within our movement and in the country we call home.

We believe the U.S. is experiencing a crisis which, at its core, is redefining who we are becoming as a nation. Grounded in this country's racialized and gendered history, and facing the impacts of unbridled capitalism and attacks on our democratic institutions, the **Immigrant Movement Visioning Process** has aimed to envision a world in which we are centering people. We want the U.S. to be a society in which all people are able to live a life of freedom, dignity, safety, and belonging. In this increasingly interconnected global community, we do acknowledge the impact of U.S. actions around the world, and recognize that our ability to thrive today while leaving future generations with a sustainable planet are all interdependent. Our vision is grounded in a firm belief that in fighting for the rights of migrants in the U.S., we are actually fighting for all of us, for the country we want to become.

APPENDIX A

Background On Immigrant Movement Visioning Process

At a time when the U.S. is experiencing virulent anti-immigrant attacks and a rise in explicit white supremacy, white nationalism, and xenophobia, a number of immigrant justice movement allies decided to take a step back from our ongoing work to defend against these attacks and devote attention to envisioning what it would take to create a society in which everyone—including immigrants—can live a life of freedom, dignity, safety, and belonging.

With the level of pain and trauma that immigrant communities are experiencing—as well as the courage and resilience they have manifested—we have greater political clarity of what we are up against. This moment calls on us to co-create and co-develop a long-term vision and narrative for immigrant justice that is not constrained by today's political realities to serve as our North Star. We need an audacious vision to meet our communities' needs and demands, to effectively counter our opponents' regressive and punitive immigration policy agenda, and that inspires our allies and communities to help us conceive a better world for today's children, youth, their families and loved ones, as well as future generations.

We entered this process knowing that because the stakes are so high, we could not afford to squander this moment. A design team identified key leaders representative of the diversity in the movement to join the **Immigrant Movement Visioning Process**. This culminated in a powerful group of around 50 leaders who met over a fourteen-month planning process aimed at building trust and strengthening relationships, dreaming together, committing to coordinating with a diverse spectrum of allies to collectively shape a long-term vision for the immigrants' rights movement, and beginning to develop a shared analysis of what is needed in the short-, medium-, and long-term to shift power at local, state, and federal levels to achieve this vision. The process included the creation of a learning space through webinars, scenario planning, and a landscape analysis conducted by Macro Advisory Partners which increased our collective understanding about a multitude of social, political, and environmental trends, challenges, and opportunities that may impact the lives of migrants as well as the future of migration to the U.S.

Through this planning process, including three in-person retreats, we endeavored to practice the type of transformation we believe is needed within the immigrant justice movement to bring about lasting and transformative change. Over the last 20 years, there have been other

strategy discussions and convenings among immigrants' rights movement leaders, but we believe our visioning plan is the first of its kind to center impacted communities and to be co-led by a majority of individuals affiliated with directly-impacted, membership-based, and immigrant-led organizations. It is especially important that this process has centered groups that have not been traditionally included such as Black and Muslim, Arab, and South Asian (MASA) immigrant communities.

We see this process as the beginning, not the end. Planning together for over a year helped us deepen the relationships and trust necessary to give birth to a collective vision for transformational change, and laid the groundwork for our next steps: expanding the conversation and building alignment around strategies to shift power in the short- and medium-term and achieve our vision in the long term.