



Immigrant Support Organizations Come Together to Form Massachusetts Immigrant Collaborative

Covid-19 public health crisis prompted immediate response to support more than 20,000 vulnerable Massachusetts residents

Boston MA (August 21, 2020) – At the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic, diverse and multicultural immigrant support organizations came together to provide direct emergency relief to Massachusetts' most vulnerable residents - immigrant families. The Massachusetts Immigrant Collaborative (originally named the Boston Immigrant Covid-19 Collaborative) was formed with guidance from the Boston Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement (MOIA) with lead funding from the Boston Resiliency Fund to address the urgent need in the community to support those families without a safety net.

"The Massachusetts Immigrant Collaborative serves those families who represent the backbone of our city," said Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh. "My team in the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement is proud to work closely with the partner organizations who work directly with those in need of immediate support. We are drawing on the strengths of the community-based organizations to provide relief and offer a path towards recovery."

Diverse populations of immigrant families in Massachusetts are especially vulnerable during this crisis as they work in frontline jobs in healthcare, food services, retail, tourism, construction, cleaning services, domestic work. Meanwhile, their children are at home without access to meals that the schools provide and with limited access to tools for learning.

Many families are undocumented and not eligible to receive unemployment benefits or relief and need immediate support for basic needs such as groceries, food, pharmacy products, diapers, hygiene products, utilities, childcare and rent.

"Each day, the burden to provide for their families becomes more urgent," said Massachusetts Immigrant Collaborative steering committee members Natalicia Tracy, Patricia Sobalvarro and Ronnie Millar. "Our goal is to provide immigrant families with direct relief with respect for their privacy, dignity and humanity."

Initial funding of \$650,000 from the Boston Resiliency Fund, provided direct, emergency relief to immigrant households regardless of legal status through financial assistance and food assistance. Since April 13, 2020, the Collaborative has supported more than 20,000 immigrants by providing sums of \$50-\$1,000 to households as well as culturally sensitive meals and fresh produce.

The partner organizations include Agencia ALPHA; Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC); Brazilian Workers Center; Caribbean Youth Club; Centro Presente; Boston International Newcomers

Academy's Center for Collaborative Education (BINcA); Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI); ICNA Relief; Immigrant Family Services Institute (IFSI); Rian Immigrant Center; and Sociedad Latina.

The Rian Immigrant Center serves as the lead partner and fiscal agent to ensure efficient and transparent disbursement of funds directly to families in diverse immigrant communities and in coordination with Boston's existing food distribution operators. The steering committee is comprised of Agencia ALPHA Executive Director Patricia Sobalvarro, Brazilian Worker Center Executive Director Natalicia Tracy and Rian Immigrant Center Executive Director Ronnie Millar.

The City of Boston produced a video about the Collaborative which can be viewed [here](#).

For more information, please visit immigrantrelief.org.