

**PENNSYLVANIA
IMMIGRATION COALITION**

Annual Report 2024

About Us

In 2024, the Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition (PIC) celebrated 20 years of advocating for immigrants, migrants and refugees across the state of Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition leads and supports campaigns decided by member organizations to advance immigrant rights at the local, state and federal levels.

PIC supports grassroots community-led organizations through coalition coordination, training and capacity building, alongside aiding members in increasing immigration services. PIC also builds immigrant electoral power through nonpartisan voter registration and education of new citizens, and directly assists registrants in accessing immigration and social services.



58 member organizations, 27 counties

Our membership includes;

- Grassroots groups
- Social service providers
- Health providers
- Legal service providers
- Advocacy organizations
- Base building organizations
- Labor unions
- Faith communities



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Our Mission

Our mission is to advance immigrants' rights and promote immigrants' full integration into society by advocating with a unified voice for greater public understanding and welcoming public policies throughout Pennsylvania.



Our Values

- **Collaboration** – We are committed to broad-based coalition work and embrace the challenge of finding common ground and building positive working relationships between diverse groups and individuals.
- **Engaging Diversity** – We believe that by working together as diverse immigrant groups we increase our collective power and impact. We are committed to addressing diverse communities' identified needs, reflected within our advocacy, organizing and program work, as well as within PIC's leadership
- **Immigrant Leadership** – We support and facilitate the development of leadership within immigrant communities to ensure that immigrant communities are at the fore in defining and leading our work.
- **Collective Ownership** – Our work moves forward through the time, energy and commitment of our member organizations, community leaders, staff and Board.



Our Members



- ACLAMO Family Centers
- ACLU of PA
- African Communities Together
- Alianzas de Phoenixville
- Amigos Community Center
- ARYSE
- Asian Americans United
- Bernardine Franciscan Sisters
- Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh (BCAP)
- CAIR Pennsylvania
- Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia
- Casa de la Cultura
- Casa San Jose
- Catholic Social Services - Philadelphia
- Ceiba
- Centro de Apoyo Comunitario
- Church World Service - Lancaster
- Coalition of African Communities (AFRICOM)
- Community Justice Project
- Community Legal Services
- Compass Immigration Legal Services
- Esperanza Immigration Legal Services
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Free Migration Project
- Global Switchboard
- Global Wordsmiths
- Greater Reading Immigration Project (GRIP)
- Grupo de Apoyo
- H-CAN Immigration and Refugee group
- Haitian Americans United for Change
- Hello Neighbor
- HIAS Pennsylvania
- Immigrant Rights Action
- International Service Center
- Japanese American Citizens League of Philadelphia
- Juntos
- Justice at Work
- La Puerta Abierta / The Open Door
- Latino Community Center
- Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in PA
- Make the Road PA
- Movement of Immigrant Leaders in PA (MILPA)
- Multicultural Community Family Services
- National Domestic Workers Alliance Pennsylvania Chapter
- Nationalities Service Center
- New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia
- Pennsylvania Immigrant Resource Center (PIRC)
- Pittsburgh LCLAA
- PRIME - Ecumenical Commitment to Refugees
- SEAMAAC
- Sisters of St. Joseph Welcome Center
- United Neighborhood Center of NE PA
- United Stateless
- UUJustice PA
- VietLead
- Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians
- Welcoming the Stranger
- Woori Center



State Legislature

In April of 2024, the Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition released our report *"Immigrants Grow Communities,"* which outlines twenty years of data and statistics on immigration in Pennsylvania and nationwide, highlighting the contributions immigrants have made to population growth, the economy and voting in the state. The report includes various welcoming policies that had been introduced which the legislature can prioritize.

Since June, PIC and PIC members have been meeting with state leadership and members of the House to review the findings of the report and educate on the need for the welcoming policies. Presentations of the report have been given to the Latino and Progressive caucuses and on November 13th, PIC partnered with the House Majority Policy Committee and the Pennsylvania Legislative Latino Caucus for a joint hearing reviewing the *"Immigrants Grow Communities"* report. PIC was joined by Center of Rural Pennsylvania and three members as testifiers: HIAS Pennsylvania, MILPA and ARYSE.

"Miller-Wilson (HIAS PA) noted...After Congress passed the National Origins Act in 1924, which severely limited immigration, the country entered a period of stagnation that resulted in the Great Depression. 'Now that wasn't only because immigrants were kept out, but it certainly was in large part. We stopped creating patents, we stopped inventing, we stopped innovating, we stopped creating new businesses, we stopped hiring, we stopped increasing wages, and disaster ensued,' she said." Pennsylvania Capital Star, November 14, 2024



On July 24th, PIC co-facilitated a day-long retreat to draft a language access in elections bill with Pennsylvania Voice and Latino Justice, with participation from nine members: African Communities Together, Asian Americans United, Casa San Jose, Ceiba, CAIR Pennsylvania, HIAS Pennsylvania, Latino Community Center, Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center and Woori Center. PIC and PIC members will be aiming to have final legislation language introduced in 2025.

In July, the Greater Reading Immigration Project and Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition celebrated the passage of one of the welcoming policies listed in the report, state legislation which expands Pennsylvania teacher certification for non-citizen immigrants with work authorization. Additionally, PIC and PIC members successfully stopped anti-immigrant amendments from moving in the House in July and then again in October.

And in October, AFRICOM and Community Legal Services passed state legislation to exempt African hair braiding businesses from obtaining a cosmetology license, making entrepreneurship for immigrant businesses more accessible.

ICE Resistance

For years, PIC members and staff have been working to break local government collaboration with ICE, shut down detention centers and stop deportations. Since celebrating the closure of the Berks County Detention Center in 2023, Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition members have been organizing to shut down the Moshannon Detention Center, the largest ICE detention facility in the Northeast. In the summer of 2024, PIC convened and facilitated a retreat for Pennsylvania and New Jersey organizations to focus on a regional site fight to shut down the four detention centers across the two states: Moshannon, Pike, Clinton and Elizabeth in New Jersey.

In September, Juntos and the Sheller Center for Social Justice of Temple University released their report, *"In the Shadow of the Valley."* The report—which includes data collected from site visits and interviews of those detained, as well as public records requests—concluded that people in Moshannon are being held under punitive, inhumane and dangerous conditions, including physical and psychological mistreatment, barriers to justice and problems with health and well-being.

Given the incoming Trump administration plans to expand detention, deputize local law enforcement and utilize the military for mass raids and deportations, it is critical that our local elected leaders refuse cooperation with ICE. At the end of the summer of 2024, PIC began a partnership with Villanova University to update a past report on in-state collaboration with ICE.

Local leaders can pass or protect policies that prohibit local law enforcement, prisons, probation and courts from sharing data, communicating with and/or physically collaborating with ICE agents. PIC has already begun conversations with state legislators and the state administration; certain county commissioners; and local city councils and mayors, and will continue to connect with more across the state.



Healthcare

On December 14th, 2023 the End Medical Deportation Coalition—which consists of Free Migration Project, Centro de Apoyo Comunitario, Community Legal Services and PIC—passed the first law in the nation to ban private medical deportations. This historic victory allows the city of Philadelphia oversight on medical repatriation practices and ensures no hospital can force or coerce immigrant patients to return to

their country of citizenship without consent. It also mandates that hospitals must provide in-language information so patients and their caretakers can make informed decisions.

In June, after eight months of advocating in city hall, PIC celebrated the approval of two new city health centers that are set to open in 2026 and will serve the surrounding immigrant communities.

PIC is a proud member of Protecting Immigrant Families, a national coalition of over 700 organizations leading the fight for access to health and social safety net programs for immigrant families. PIC and PIC members partnered with PIF to educate Pennsylvania members of Congress on lifting the five-year bar, an arbitrary five-year waiting period currently hindering lawfully present immigrants' access to assisted housing, vital healthcare

and social service programs, as well as conducting focus groups to hear directly from immigrant community members on the obstacles they faced accessing healthcare the year prior.

And since the beginning of the fall, the Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition has been partnering with the Dornsife School of Public Health at Drexel University, which is currently researching state level opportunities for increased healthcare access for immigrant communities, a top concern cited by PIC members.



Education

Since 2017, the Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition has created a statewide college access guide for undocumented students in conjunction with the campaign to pass the Pennsylvania Dream Act. The PA Dream Act, if passed, will allow undocumented students from Pennsylvania high schools to access in-state tuition rates, as opposed to international students rates. Over the summer of 2024, PIC updated our college access guide and for the first time, has it available in both English and Spanish.

In September, PIC members and staff supported immigrant principals, teachers, students and families pushing for a Welcoming Schools policy in the Norristown Area School District. The policy ensures school district staff are not permitted to communicate or share student and family data with ICE. On September 23rd, the school board of the Norristown Area School District approved the adoption of the policy. In 2025, it is critical that more school districts adopt the policy to keep students and families protected.



In July, after six years of hard work, the Greater Reading Immigration Project and the Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition celebrated the passage of state legislation that expands Pennsylvania teacher certifications for non-citizen immigrants with work authorization. As school districts prepared for the 2024-25 academic school year, there were 5,000 teacher vacancies across the state. This victory not only opens the door to new opportunities for immigrant teachers but will benefit all children in the Commonwealth. PIC also congratulates Andrea Jeronimo Leco for making history as the first non-U.S. citizen employed as a teacher by a Pennsylvania school district!

Art and Justice



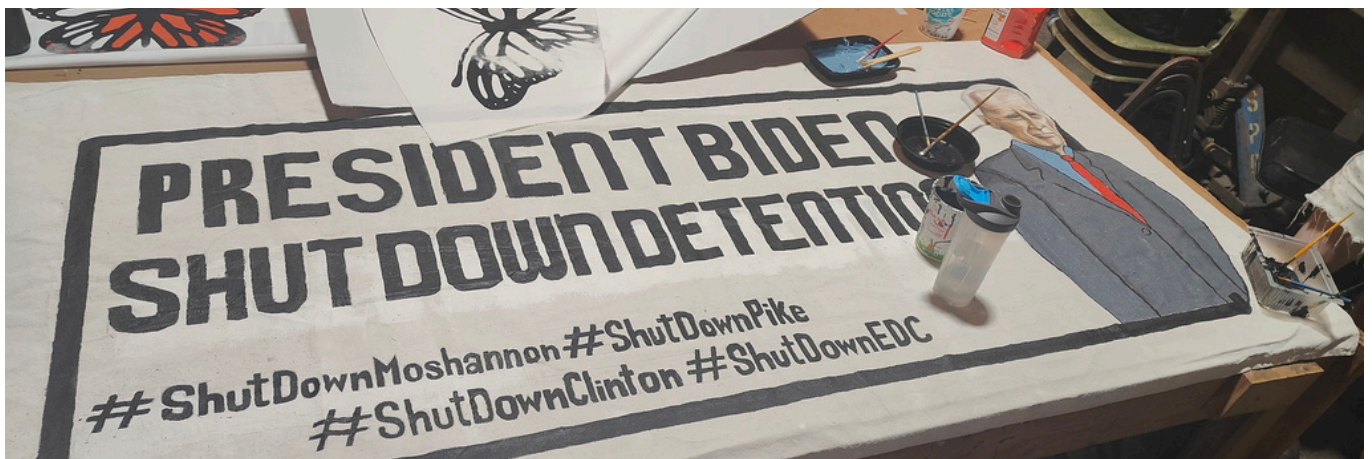
Art has long been a fundamental tool for the immigrant rights movement. Whether through communications, design or art builds for protest signs, art connects and unifies across communities. Throughout 2024 expanding a pro-immigrant narrative has been lifted up as an ongoing need for from members. In conjunction with our report, *"Immigrants Grow Communities: The Impact of Immigrants and Immigration in Pennsylvania,"* PIC has been using social media and traditional media to highlight the facts and contributions of immigrants, migrants and refugees in the commonwealth.

In addition to highlighting the positive, art, graphic design and communications are also tools to educate the public on the

terrible realities of immigrant detention, the incoming plans of the Trump administration and how to know your rights with ICE.

In July, PIC and Imperfect Gallery co-organized the "Immigrants Are Welcomed Here" block party in Philadelphia, in conjunction with an art exhibit, *"Indivisible,"* which featured immigrant artists in the region and was co-curated by our Executive Director. In a time with constant anti-immigrant rhetoric, art creates a venue to celebrate and recognize the community.

And over the summer, Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition partnered with Spiral Q to host two summer community art build sessions with community members; the art was then used for protests and demonstrations for the "Shut Down" detention campaign.



Civic Engagement

In May, the Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition relaunched our civic engagement program. Our program provided new citizens with the resources, knowledge and support to actively participate in the electoral process.

For over fifteen years, PIC has partnered with USCIS to register newly naturalized citizens. With the our dedicated team of volunteers, PIC runs a year-long voter registration drive. After registering new citizens, in 2024, PIC followed up with registrants for one-on-one voter education conversations throughout the summer and fall to answer any questions about voting. For the 2024 general election, PIC ran several GOTV phone banks with our amazing volunteers and sent election protection text messages the day before Election Day to ensure registrants could double check their polling locations or report any issues on election day.

- **Over 150 volunteers trained**
- **3,400 new citizens registered to vote**
- **PIC registrants live in 39 counties across the state**
- **3,200 voter education calls made leading up to the general election**
- **PIC registrants named a total of 25 issues that were most important to them this election season**
- **5,200 election protection texts sent for the general election**
- **11,700 GOTV calls for the general election**

One of our volunteers, Belinda Glijansky said, *"As a naturalized citizen myself, I recall my naturalization ceremony as if it took place recently, though it was many, many years ago. Therefore, it was with admiration and humility that I watched as new Americans accepted the responsibilities and privileges of USA citizenship. I so appreciate having the right to vote! So, I was thrilled to register voters so they could soon exercise this right, too. Most people who registered showed enthusiasm, and some said they would encourage friends and relatives to register and/or vote. Thank you, PIC, for this volunteer opportunity."*



2024 Victories

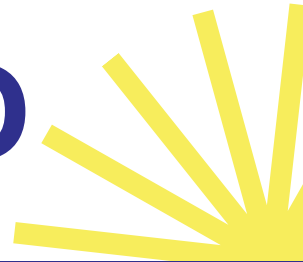
- On December 14th, 2023, the End Medical Deportation Coalition, which consists of Free Migration Project, Centro de Apoyo Comunitario, Community Legal Services and PIC, passed the first law in the nation to ban private medical deportations.
- In June, after eight months of advocating, PIC celebrated the approval of two new city health centers which will begin construction next year to open in 2026 and will serve the surrounding immigrant communities.
- In July, the Greater Reading Immigration Project and PIC celebrated the passage of state legislation that expands Pennsylvania teacher certification for non-citizen immigrants with work authorization.
- In July, and again in October, PIC and PIC members successfully stopped anti-immigrant amendments from passing in the state legislature.
- In September, PIC and PIC members in Montgomery County supported immigrant principals, teachers, students and families won a Welcoming Schools Policy in the Norristown Area School District.
- In October, AFRICOM and Community Legal Services passed state legislation to exempt African hair braiding businesses from obtaining a cosmetology license, making entrepreneurship for immigrant businesses more accessible.



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LOOKING AHEAD



For 20 years, the Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition has advocated for the rights of immigrants, migrants and refugees on the local, state and federal levels. There have been victories throughout the year, but 2024 has also been devastating for the immigrant rights movement, as we've witnessed a rapid escalation of anti-migrant rhetoric, policies and physical attacks.

In preparing for the year to come, we know the incoming administration intends to expand immigration detention; carry out mass raids and deportations; separate families and resume child and family detention; end birthright citizenship; denaturalize new Americans; and dismantle our nation's asylum and refugee system.

The future is scary, but we have hope and we promise our supporters and our community members that we are ready to fight.

Here in Pennsylvania, the immigrant rights movement has a plan to fight back. We will organize, educate and mobilize. We will hold the urgent needs right alongside the long-term organizing needed for structural change. We will provide care as well as political education, services alongside leadership development, and we will do this work locally and nationally because there is no other choice. We will fight back until we win. Because in Pennsylvania and across the nation our communities are strong, they are brilliant and they are powerful.



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Support PLC's efforts to ensure immigrant rights are upheld in Pennsylvania.

Contact



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