

December 19, 2022

TO: The Honorable Governor Charlie Baker
The Honorable Governor-Elect Maura Healey

FR: The Undersigned Immigrant-Serving Organizations

CC: The Honorable Senate President Karen E. Spilka
The Honorable Speaker of the House Ronald Mariano

**RE: Recommendations to Support Funding and Services for Newly-Arrived
Immigrants to Massachusetts**

We are organizations and service providers that meet regularly to collaborate and share information regarding our collective responses to the needs of newly arrived immigrants in Massachusetts. We write to express our gratitude and support for Governor Baker's proposed \$130M in funding for newly arrived immigrants, and to respectfully request that immigrants and immigrant-serving organizations have a seat at the table for the state's planning and execution of this response.

Our organizations have been meeting since January of this year, initially in response to the needs of Afghan evacuees and Haitian asylum seekers, and then broadening to address the needs of other asylum seekers, Ukrainian parolees, and others who arrive in Massachusetts seeking protection and assistance.

We are deeply grateful—and proud—of our Commonwealth's mobilization to provide resources and services for these and other new arrivals over the last year, beginning with Afghan and Haitian resettlement, and including the welcome and immediate state response to Venezuelan arrivals in September and the most recent \$20M allocation in the Economic Development bill. We are also encouraged by the Baker administration's proposal designating \$130 million in funding to bolster access to emergency resources for recent immigrant arrivals.

With increased numbers of immigrants arriving in Massachusetts from Haiti, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Central America, and Brazil, immigrant-serving, community-based organizations and service providers across the state have worked hard to respond to their immediate needs, including housing, food, clothing, health care, and legal services.

While we welcome the Commonwealth's critical allocation of increased resources, we are gravely concerned about the lack of coordination among state agencies and our organizations in addressing the particular needs of these populations, as well as the state's overreliance on established state contractors that do not typically deal with immigrant arrivals. Coordination among government agencies and immigrant-serving providers is key to ensure a successful process for welcoming new immigrants to Massachusetts, as are the culturally and linguistically competent services that only community based organizations can provide. This is especially the case now, because these immigrants have widely divergent eligibility for assistance depending on their country of origin and conditions of entry into the United States.

We also therefore strongly recommend that the proposed funding be made available for the non-profit providers and frontline community organizations that are already meeting the emergency needs of these populations, and that these organizations have a role in the planning to meet these needs.

We are eager to assist the Commonwealth in coordinating housing and wraparound services for immigrants and refugees, and addressing the time-sensitive needs of those who have come to our state to seek refuge and support. We hope we can look forward to working with both of your administrations and the legislature to ensure the most effective use of the Commonwealth's resources in this endeavor.

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee
Advocacy Coalition

Ascentria Care Alliance

Boston Immigrant Justice Accompaniment
Network

Brazilian Women's Group

Brazilian Worker Center Inc

Catholic Charities Boston

Community Economic Development Center
-New Bedford

Health Law Advocates

IFSI-USA - Immigrant Family Services
Institute

International Institute of New England

La Colaborativa, Inc

Latinos Unidos en Massachusetts

Massachusetts Immigrant Collaborative

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Rian Immigrant Center

Rosie's Place