

**MIRA**

Massachusetts  
Immigrant & Refugee  
Advocacy Coalition

**MIRA**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2023-2027**

**COALITION**

# Table of Contents

» Letter from the Executive Director	2
» Strategic Planning Process and Committee Membership	3
» MIRA’s Value for Members	4
» Mission, Vision, and Core Values	5
» MIRA Theory of Change	6
» Strategic Issues, Core Strategies, Goals and Objectives	
• Strategic Area #1: Structure	7
• Strategic Area #2: Membership	9
• Strategic Area #3: Messaging and Communication	11
• Strategic Area #4: Racial Justice	12

## LETTER FROM MIRA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear MIRA Coalition Partners,

In 2022, MIRA Coalition celebrated 35 years of advancing the rights of immigrants in the Commonwealth and beyond. The organization also experienced a leadership transition with the departure of MIRA's long time CEO, Eva Millona in 2021 and new leadership as I joined the organization in January 2022, and then structured a new Leadership Team.

Our external landscape also shifted profoundly since MIRA's previous strategic plan. The impact of the Trump presidency, of living through a global pandemic, and the growing diversity and immigrant populations making their home in Massachusetts are all factors of a new reality that MIRA is navigating. Our advocacy and other initiatives remain critical and yet we find ourselves pulled in many directions by the many needs.

Given all of this, 2022 felt timely for a deeper dive into MIRA's vision for the next four years, through a strategic plan.

I am grateful to the members, funders, partners, staff and board who contributed thinking and input to this plan. As is true of all of MIRA's work, the plan is stronger for the diverse contributions and perspectives from across our community. I especially want to thank the members of the staff and board strategic planning committee.

The plan on the following pages is just the beginning of MIRA's vision. It is already an ambitious plan for the next four years, but we are committed to implementing this in a realistic manner. It will therefore be followed by a workplan and operational plan to assess what capacity will be needed to implement this vision over the four-year period.

Finally, as we were concluding this organizational work, MIRA lost one of our long-time leaders, Christine Ntagengwa who was serving as the Senior Director of Programs, died unexpectedly, after contributing so much to this vision. We dedicate this plan to her memory.

In deep gratitude to all,



*Liz Sweet*

## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

MIRA Coalition is the largest coalition in New England promoting the rights and inclusion of immigrants and refugees. We count more than 140 organizations as members, including grassroots community organizations; refugee resettlement agencies, providers of social, legal and health services, faith-based organizations, and civil and human rights advocates. Our coalition is proudly multicultural and multilingual.

MIRA Coalition embarked on a strategic planning process from July 2022 to February 2023. The purpose was to develop a four-year framework for FY2023-2027 to ensure that our work aligns with our stated mission and vision, assess strengths and weaknesses of approaches to the work, and to clarify activities and goals for the organization to then guide staff, members, board leadership, and supporters.

As a coalition, MIRA strongly believes that staff, board, members and other key collaborators are central to the planning effort, and they were invited to provide input throughout the process.

As part of the initial data collection:

- All MIRA member organizations received an electronic link to respond to an anonymous survey on 8/3/22. 40 people responded to the survey.
- 5 stakeholders (funders, donors, national players) were interviewed
- Most members were invited to focus groups organized according to the characteristics of the member organizations (i.e., community/grassroots, legal services, etc.)  
17 members participated in 5 Focus Groups
- 10 staff members completed an electronic survey for staff

Their input was instrumental in discussing the future goals and objectives. In addition, the Executive Director used multiple opportunities to provide an update on the work to different groups and receive feedback throughout the process. This plan will be followed by a workplan to operationalize all these commitments. The strategic planning committee appreciates the participation of the internal and external stakeholders that contributed to the creation of this plan.

### Strategic Planning Committee Members:

- Beth Huang, MIRA Board Member
- Diane Joly, Citizenship Program Manager
- Javier Juarez, Senior Director of Advancement
- Christine Ntagengwa, Senior Director of Programs
- Claudia Marcela Paez, Vice Chair, MIRA Board
- Estefany Pineda, Membership Coordinator
- Jerry Rubin, MIRA Board Member
- Sarang Sekhvat, Political Director
- Elizabeth Sweet, Executive Director



## MIRA'S VALUE FOR MEMBERS

**Many voices joined for immigrant justice.** As a well-recognized statewide coalition, MIRA convenes organizations to amplify the voice of individual organizations and build collective power to advance pro immigrant policy change.

### How does MIRA work with our members?

- Provides timely information, expert analysis, and strategy
- Creates materials to translate complex legal and policy issues for broad public audiences, including immigrant communities
- Listens to communities and member organizations to shape policy agenda
- Facilitates access at Statehouse, including through annual Immigrants Day at the Statehouse
- Organizes and supports campaigns to make policy change at local, state, and federal level
- Convenes member organizations with legislators, funders, and other stakeholders to discuss trends and current immigration issues
- Provides enhanced access to public officials, experts, and contacts across the state through MIRA-convened meetings and workshops
- Hosts trainings on immigration law and other topics, with discounts for members
- Supports media outreach, messaging, and promotional materials
- Provides technical assistance and referrals on benefit access and immigration issues
- Facilitates high-profile exposure through MIRA public events
- Offers leadership development and trainings on organizing and communications, and timely trainings on topics of special concern to immigrants and refugees.
- Convenes regional membership meetings
- Coordinates multiway communication between MIRA staff and members, as well as members to members through a membership coordinator

## MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

### Mission:

MIRA Coalition's mission is to convene, serve, and organize together with our members, community leaders and allies for the advancement of all immigrants across the Commonwealth and beyond. MIRA Coalition places immigrant and refugee voices in the forefront to advocate for the wellbeing of our communities.

### Vision:

Our vision is a Commonwealth - and a nation - where all can thrive, no matter where they come from or how they get here, and all can fully participate in their communities' social, economic, and civic life.

### Core Values

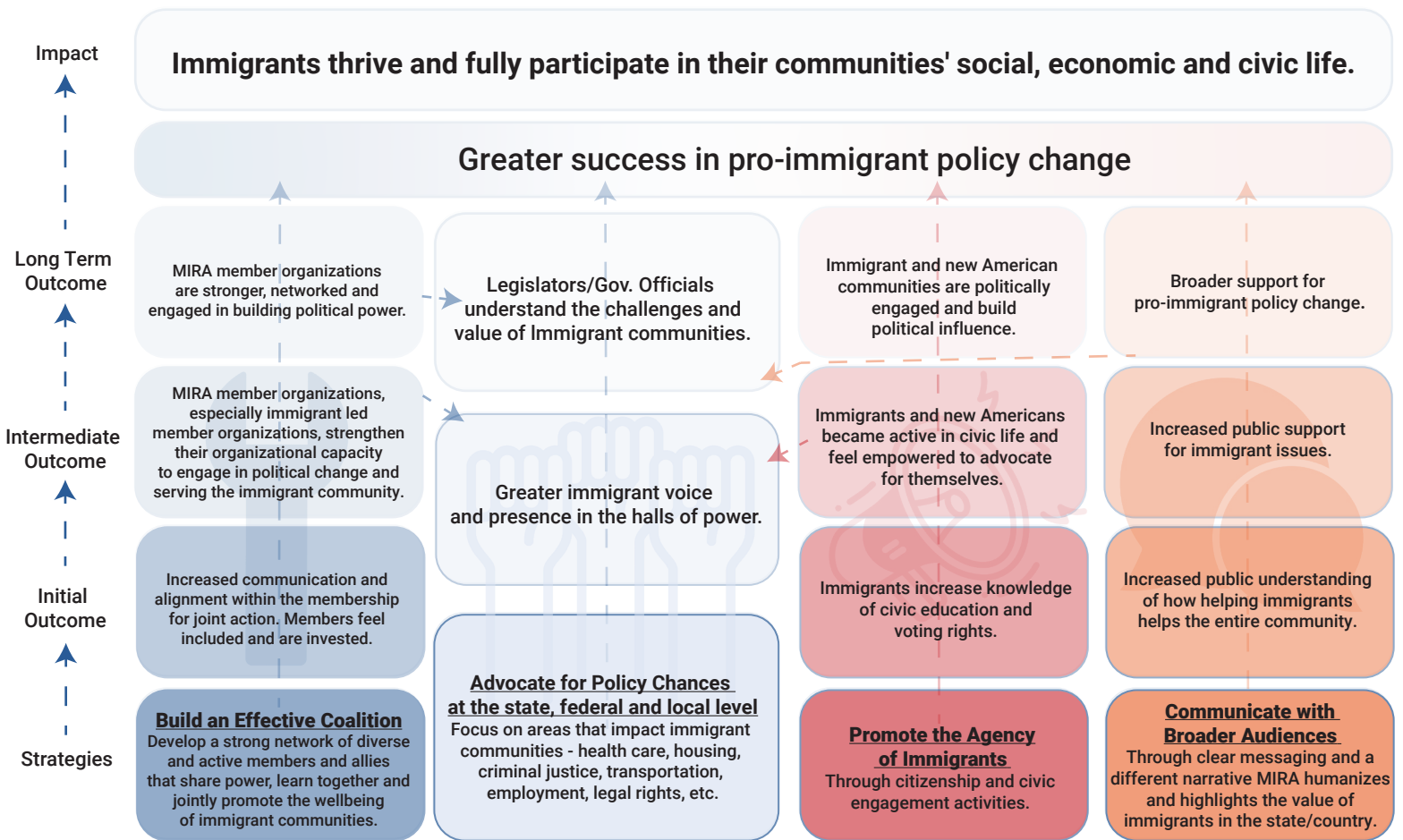
**Immigrant and refugee centered:** MIRA Coalition ensures that immigrant and refugee voices are at the forefront and is guided by those most impacted by the issues. Our work is only possible through the collaboration and contribution from the coalition membership and the community.

**Inclusion:** Centering equity and inclusion for all means a commitment to anti-racism work and respect all individuals regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, or immigration status. MIRA coalition believes that the diverse cultural heritage, languages, traditions, and origins of our staff, board, members, and communities make us stronger.

**Collaboration:** MIRA Coalition's power comes from our broad membership. We partner with organizations, policy makers, supporters, and other stakeholders to advance our mission.

**Capacity Building:** MIRA supports our immigrant and refugee communities with resources and training so we can create change

# MIRA's THEORY OF CHANGE



## STRATEGIC ISSUES, CORE STRATEGIES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### STRATEGIC AREA #1: STRUCTURE

In considering the data that came forward in the SWOC analysis, the Strategic Planning Committee (Committee) identified the need to redesign MIRA Coalition's structure to fully reflect the organization's identity as a membership coalition. This redesign involves two steps. The first is to formalize a mechanism, called a Policy Committee to consult advocacy work with member organizations. The second is to analyze more deeply MIRA's membership, including consideration of membership criteria, and a power mapping of organizations active in immigrant rights in Massachusetts.

#### **Goal 1: Create a structure that sets our work as an organization and a coalition in the same direction**

##### Objective:

- **1.a** Establish a Policy Committee that represents membership with a clear charter including purpose and membership criteria

#### **Goal 2: Strengthen a sustained network that promotes cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships to advance joint action in support of pro-immigrant policy change**

##### Objectives:

- **2.a** Analyze membership and develop membership criteria and categories of membership, according to MIRA's values and goals.
- **2.b** Complete statewide power mapping and overlay with existing membership to identify gaps and opportunities, particularly for regions outside Greater Boston
- **2.c** Increase number of in-person convenings with members and allies
- **2.d** Promote activities and services of organizations of the coalition
- **2.e** Build member capacity, especially of the community based, immigrant led organizations



## STRATEGIC ISSUES, CORE STRATEGIES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### STRATEGIC AREA #1: STRUCTURE

MIRA's most central goal is to make pro-immigrant policy change, which requires a significant amount of lobbying at the state and federal levels. As a 501(c)(3) entity, MIRA is limited in the total amount of lobbying that the organization can undertake, and in some potential political activities. In order to reach the ambitious goals of building pro-immigrant power, the Strategic Planning Committee explored the idea of a related entity to MIRA, a (c)(4), which would require separate governance. Many comparable organizations to MIRA in other states operate a similar entity, allowing more flexibility in lobbying, campaigning and other strategies to influence policy.

The Committee recommends that MIRA begin this process by assessing the landscape for a c4, including the goals, funding and purpose of such an entity. With this information, the MIRA Board could then consider whether or not to approve the creation of a c4.

#### **Goal 3: Create a C4 entity**

Objectives:

- 3.a Gather input and analyze potential for a MIRA associated c4 including landscape, purpose, goals, and donor base for MIRA's Board to vote on approving the establishment of a c4
- 3.b Design governance and operating structure for c4 and draft governance documents
- 3.c Develop communications strategy for c4

MIRA's revised vision, values and theory of change, serve as foundational documents to assess MIRA's existing work for program alignment. This analysis will guide MIRA's approach to current programs and allow for clearer decision making on future programming.

#### **Goal 4: Evaluate MIRA's portfolio of programs and commit to those aligned with MIRA's Mission**

Objectives:

- 4.a Develop criteria for MIRA's programs and evaluate current work according to those criteria
- 4.b Implement criteria into future fundraising and new program development

## STRATEGIC ISSUES, CORE STRATEGIES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### STRATEGIC AREA #2: MEMBERSHIP

As a membership coalition, member organizations are at the heart of MIRA's work. However, the SWOC raised the importance of deeper connection between all aspects of MIRA's work and organizational membership. The SWOC raised aspects of MIRA's work that are already strong and beneficial to members, and areas for improvement. This plan suggests a focus on all those activities that bring meaningful benefit to member organizations, and leveraging the strengths of the existing staff and coalition members.

#### **Goal 5: Strengthen the aspects of MIRA's work that bring benefit to members**

Objectives:

- **5.a** Strengthen state lobbying to impact issues that are relevant to MIRA members
- **5.b** Consistently communicate MIRA's Massachusetts political analysis including MIRA's efforts, to membership
- **5.c** Maintain ongoing conversations with members to align our lobbying
- **5.d** Leverage expertise within MIRA's membership and when expertise is lacking, build strategic partnerships
- **5.e** Increase member participation in MIRA's efforts
- **5.f** Collect data about coalition members to inform lobbying on state budget, advocate for public dollars and other potential fundraising opportunities
- **5.g** Develop and implement a capacity-building strategy for member organizations.
- **5.h** Create an efficient CRM system to manage membership dues

## STRATEGIC ISSUES, CORE STRATEGIES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### STRATEGIC AREA #2: MEMBERSHIP

MIRA can improve value for members by strengthening communication about the resources and analysis available to member organizations. Over the four years of the plan, MIRA will focus on strengthening communications of MIRA to members, members to MIRA, and members to members.

**Goal 6:** Based on MIRA's value proposition, develop a multi-directional member communication strategy.

Objectives:

- 6.a Develop a clear message to highlight the benefits of being a MIRA member
- 6.b Analyze communication tools and mechanisms for two-way communication with members and implement improved tools and mechanisms
- 6.c Communicate timely and relevant analysis of current immigration issues
- 6.d Ensure that MIRA promotes all trainings and programs to membership
- 6.e Create spaces for members to talk to one another
- 6.f Make MIRA's communications accessible and in languages spoken by immigrants

One of the ongoing requests from member organizations, particularly the smaller or community-based organizations, has been for MIRA to provide greater support around fundraising. Many organizations lack fundraising expertise or capacity and are less connected to potential donors. While MIRA cannot address all fundraising needs, a goal for this phase will be to support community-based member organizations to build fundraising capacity.

**Goal 7:** Increase capacity of community-based member organizations around fundraising

Objectives:

- 7.a Leverage public and private funding for members on housing and language access
- 7.b Develop partnerships with other member organizations and share resources with partners (de-silo org/fundraising)
- 7.c Communicate collective impact of services for immigrants that are common programs for MIRA's members
- 7.e Develop and implement trainings around fundraising

## STRATEGIC ISSUES, CORE STRATEGIES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### STRATEGIC AREA #3: MESSAGING AND COMMUNICATION

One of the pillar strategies identified in the theory of change is to change the narrative and messaging to humanize and highlight the value of immigrants in the state and the country. A particular opportunity for change narrative work includes emphasizing the economic and labor messaging along with other messaging of the value that immigrants bring to Massachusetts.

#### **Goal 8: Develop a broad communications strategy that strengthens the political power of immigrant communities.**

Objectives:

- **8.a** Build a proactive narrative that communicates the value and humanity that immigrants bring to Massachusetts.
- **8.b** Create MIRA resources in multiple languages spoken by immigrant communities, throughout all communications work.
- **8.c** Document stories of immigrants impacted by policies and utilize those stories to shape the public narrative.
- **8.d** Collect data from member organizations to support both impact and need, and strengthen all communications work.
- **8.e** Explore diverse platforms and mediums of communication to reach diverse stakeholders, including video, podcasts, organizing platforms, radio, TV, etc.
- **8.f** Promote media work from member organizations.
- **8.g** Identify and train diverse spokespeople outside MIRA staff to speak on coalition advocacy issues. Share communication tools and training with member organizations and other stakeholders.

## STRATEGIC ISSUES, CORE STRATEGIES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### STRATEGIC AREA #4: RACIAL JUSTICE

MIRA's membership and staff have called for the organization to more deeply engage around racial equity and justice work for several years, including through the development of a staff antiracism task force, and calls for attention to racial justice from members at the annual member meeting and through the SWOC.

Through this process, the Committee articulated a strong commitment to racial equity and the need for investment and training in support of this goal. This investment is essential to achieving MIRA's vision of inclusion for all, where all immigrants thrive and fully participate in their communities' social, economic and civic life.

#### **Goal 9: Center racial equity in MIRA's work, approach, and culture.**

Objectives:

- **9.a** Assess the racial equity strengths and needs of MIRA's staff and board
- **9.b** Provide racial equity educational opportunities for staff and board
- **9.c** Create space for member organization discussion of racial equity work as a coalition
- **9.d** Promote skill building and learning for staff and board around racial equity
- **9.e** Build our knowledge of the relationship between race and immigration
- **9.f** Ensure continuing representation of POC in MIRA's staff and board, and strengthen the pipeline of POC leadership for staff and board
- **9.g** Assess MIRA's programs (including membership, communications, organizing and policy advocacy) for racial justice approach and outcomes
- **9.h** Support leadership development within communities of color
- **9.i** Build pipeline for (underrepresented immigrants) POC civic engagement including registering to vote, voting in state and local elections, speaking on local and state issues, being appointed to local or state boards or positions, and running for office



**MIRA Coalition Strategic Plan 2023-2027**  
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